



## MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council Members

From: Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager

Date: December 17, 2021

Subject: Response to Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Rider 1 Regarding Austin Police Department Budget

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This memo provides a response to the Fiscal Year 2021 Council adopted Budget Rider 1 related to the Police Department Budget. The City's Reimagining Public Safety work continues to be informed by the [public safety reform](#) resolutions adopted by City Council in 2020 while recognizing the impacts of passage of Proposition B by Austin voters in May 2021 and House Bills 1925 and 1900 which became effective on September 1, 2021.

My October 1, 2021 [memorandum](#) provided an update highlighting initiative work that has occurred since June 2020 including items funded in the Fiscal Year 2022 adopted budget that address focus areas identified in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget rider such as funding for the Office of Violence Prevention for technology as well a grant program for community focused prevention/intervention efforts, increased funding for Victim Services, and development of a public education campaign regarding emergency service use.

Reimagining public safety is an effort undertaken by many City departments working together with public safety leaders. The following are additional focus areas mentioned in Budget Rider 1:

- Established the Austin Public Health Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) with the hiring of the OVP Manager on June 7, 2021. The OVP has developed its program strategy and is working to build infrastructure and engage key stakeholders to implement a public health approach anchored in equity to support marginalized communities in Austin and Travis County who have been disproportionately impacted by violence.
- OVP has developed priorities for 2022 that include community-engaged planning, establishing programs that invest in addressing the root causes of violence, and establishing the voice of the office to support prevention and safety in the community. To date, this has included:
  - Promoting and resourcing a safe gun storage campaign.
  - Engaging national violence prevention consultants on data analysis, capacity building, and pilot programming development for Community Violence Intervention.

- Funding youth-focused violence prevention programs.
  - Launching a website ([www.austintexas.gov/ovp](http://www.austintexas.gov/ovp)).
  - Identifying and applying for federal funding for standard firearm surrender protocol (as prioritized by Council in Resolution No. [20210422-059](#)).
  - Fully staffing the new office.
- The Homeless Strategy Division is developing investment priorities for American Rescue Plan Act funds based on community engagement conducted in October 2021 focusing on core housing, new housing, crisis services, system capacity building and supportive services such as mental health/substance abuse treatment, employment services and benefit enrollment.
  - In addition, the Homeless Strategy Division, in partnership with other City departments and partners, began Phase Two of the Housing-Focused Encampment Assistance Link (HEAL) initiative in November which moved 15 individuals from encampments on City parkland to temporary bridge shelter. The goal is to house at least 200 individuals during Fiscal Year 2022.
  - With the passages of Proposition B and House Bill 1925, the Homeless Strategy Division has been working with the Downtown Austin Community Court and partners to provide response and expanded services such as Violet KeepSafe Storage and case management for those individuals impacted by these two actions.

While many of the items requested in Budget Rider 1 have been completed, pre-empted by changes in state law, or are in progress, the staff is committed to its reimagining public safety efforts and will keep the City Council and public informed on progress. This communication and previously posted [Reimagining Public Safety](#) information serves as the response to this request.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
 CMO Executive Team  
 Chief Joseph Chacon, Austin Police Chief  
 Adrienne Sturup, Interim Austin Public Health Director  
 Dianna Grey, Homeless Strategy Officer  
 Michelle Myles, Office of Violence Prevention Manager