



Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board

Budget and Resources Workgroup

Memorandum: FY22 - 23 Budget Recommendations

March 11, 2022

The Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) collaboratively addresses the quality-of-life issues of all residents in the downtown Austin, West Campus, and a portion of East Austin communities through creative and rehabilitative approaches to public order citations. The Court seeks to hold people responsible while also offering help to change behavior; and the DACC Case Management team aims to end homelessness by providing comprehensive, long term case management services and housing assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness regardless of criminal justice involvement.

Homelessness has been identified, by City Council, as the top priority for the city strategic plan, and as a strategic outcome indicator in Austin's strategic direction. To address the growing needs of our neighbors experiencing homelessness, DACC must be supported and adequately funded. The Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board supports the mission of the Court and its case management services as an integral part of the continuum of care provided by an array of stakeholders and partners providing much needed services to high needs individuals experiencing homelessness in our community.

DACC leadership has been flexible and intentional in its approach to serve the most in need during these difficult times and has accomplished extraordinary work. However, data shows that community programs for individuals experiencing homelessness are running at capacity and demand for services greatly exceeds the supply. In the 2021–22 fiscal year, DACC received none of the twelve permanent Case Manager positions it requested. For that reason, and due to the intensive long-term needs of existing clients, the waiting list for DACC services has barely changed since last year. **Roughly 260 individuals experiencing homelessness await assignment to a DACC Case Manager.**

- For more than 7 years, DACC functioned without adequate space for its operation. Its current location at One Texas Center is more spacious, but only temporary and less proximate to other downtown services. It is vital that DACC be provided a permanent home and continued support for the fleet of vehicles its Case Management team uses to provide community-based services.
- By the end of this fiscal year, DACC will own nine case manager fleet vehicles in addition to renting eight vehicles. To maintain the status quo in a more cost-effective manner, the Court needs funding to purchase eight vehicles.
- Funds for up to twelve additional permanent Case Manager positions, along with an additional vehicle and corresponding social service dollars per case manager, to serve the 260 individuals experiencing homelessness on DACC's waiting list.

- Additional social service support dollars to include funding for rental assistance and intensive wrap-around services for clients served by dollars associated with a DACC Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG).
- Funds to enhance the Violet KeepSafe Program.
- Ongoing funding for the Homeless Health and Wellness collaborative with Integral Care and the Downtown Austin Alliance to continue positively impacting DACC clientele and waiting individuals by treating individuals with complex medical needs.
- Funding to retain two community service crew leaders whose funding from Austin Resource Recovery is being discontinued.

DACC is serving Austin's most vulnerable citizens and stabilizing their lives to the benefit of the entire Austin community. The Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supports the DACC services and the Courts request for resources to continue providing needed services to its clients. **The Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board urges City Council to allocate funds and explore all available means to avoid setbacks and instead increase DACC's efforts to address homelessness in Austin.**

Respectfully submitted by the Budget and Resources Workgroup on behalf of the Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board.

Darilynn Cardona-Beiler

Chair, Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board

Lea Downey Gallatin

Vice-Chair, Downtown Austin Community Court Advisory Board

Jeff Steinley

Community Stakeholder