



EMERGENCY SHELTERS FOR DANGEROUS TEMPERATURES

OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR

DECEMBER 2022



Triggers for Emergency Shelters



35°F with Rain or Wind or
32°F Regardless

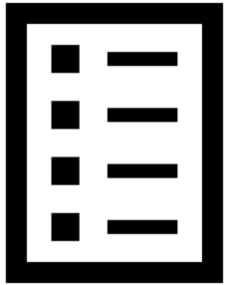


Heat Advisory or
Excessive Heat Warning

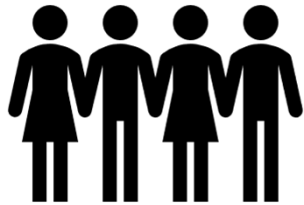
Finding 1: The City did not open cold weather shelters on 4 of the 21 days this year when the forecasted and observed temperatures met the City's cold weather sheltering thresholds.

Date	Forecasted Low Temperature (°F)	Observed Low Temperature (°F)
January 3, 2022	25	28
February 7, 2022	32	28
February 27, 2022	27	24
February 28, 2022	31	30

Finding 2: City management is not providing sufficient oversight of the City's cold weather shelters and heat emergency cooling centers.



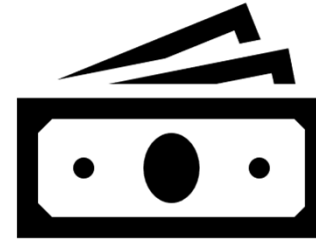
Outdated
Plans



Insufficient
Staffing



Inadequate
Training



Inconsistently
Tracked Funding



Unequipped for
Extenuating
Circumstances

Outdated Plans

Expectation	Cold Weather Plan	Plan for Heat Emergencies
Reviewed Annually	X	X
Nonprofits Provide Staff and Resources	X	X
Nonprofits are the Primary Shelter Providers	X	N/A
Nonprofit Runs the Gathering Site	X	N/A

Insufficient Staffing



The City does not have a process in place to adequately staff its shelters



PARD employees are regularly called upon to staff the City's cold weather shelters



The City's cold weather shelters do not always have security and properly trained staff

Inadequate Training

57%

of respondents did not receive relevant training prior to working at the shelter

46%

of respondents did not receive information about shelter procedures or how to perform their role

Inconsistently Tracked Funding

Department	Tracked	Dedicated Shelter Funds
Parks and Recreation	Yes	\$16,000
Austin Public Health	Yes	No
Municipal Court	Partially	No
Police	Yes, but does not differentiate between shelter types	\$1.9M overtime for special events
Homeland Security and Emergency Management	N/A	N/A

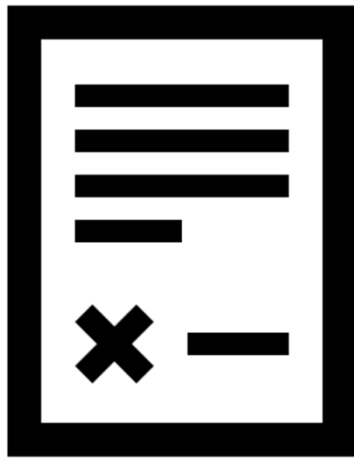
Unequipped for Extenuating Circumstances



Lack of backup generators in the event of a power outage



Lack of shower facilities in the event of prolonged need



Additional Observation: Fiscal Year 2023 budget included \$1.2 million for Austin Public Health to contract out the operation and management of the City's cold weather shelters.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The City Manager should:

- assign responsibility for the oversight and monitoring of the City's shelters
- clarify and communicate the roles and responsibilities of each involved group
- ensure shelters are adequately staffed
- ensure staff are properly trained
- ensure shelter-related expenses are consistently tracked
- ensure shelters are consistently opened according to established plans

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Recommendation 3: The City Manager should determine which services will be provided to shelterees and have provisions for extenuating circumstances like power failures or extended lengths of stay



QUESTIONS