

HOMELESS STRATEGY DIVISION

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Homeless Strategy Officer
March 15, 2023



HOMELESS STRATEGY DIVISION

- **History**

- Fall 2018 Homeless Strategy Officer position created
- January 2020: HSD created as division within Austin Public Health
- January 2021: permanent Homeless Strategy Officer joins HSD
- Current Staffing: 12 FTE; 15 temporary/grant-funded

- **Primary Roles**

- **Strategy:** Recommend policy improvements, implementation planning, evaluate system performance
- **Cross-Departmental Coordination:** for effective delivery of social services, public safety, and public space management
- **Community Collaboration:** develop and manage relationships with partners and stakeholders in the homeless response system and beyond
- **Communication & Community Engagement:** primary point of contact for media, community groups, and constituents.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE & CAPACITY

- **Individuals and families are re-housed daily**
Historically, between 1,700 – 1,900 households are placed into housing annually through the homeless response system.
- **Once housed, most people remain stable**
 - Only 8% of those served through permanent housing programs return to homelessness within two years.
- **System Capacity has historically been insufficient to meet needs. A 2020 report estimated community wide gaps of:**
 - 3,146 units of permanent supportive housing
 - 1,720 rapid rehousing beds, and
 - 900 shelter beds
- **Significant Unmet Need:**
 - **HUD PIT:** 2,506 (932 SH; 1 574 UNSH) Jan 2020
 - **ECHO Statistical Analysis:** 4,565 (818 SH; 3838 UNSH); Dec 2022
 - **Downtown**

SCALING THE SYSTEM: FINDING HOME ATX 2022-2024

House 3,000 People

- Over and above baseline of 1,700/year
- Rental Assistance & Social Services
- Prevention, Shelter, Street Outreach, Behavioral Health, Employment, Benefits

Create 1,300 New Housing Units

- Set aside for the people exiting homelessness

Secure 1,700 Private Market Rental Units

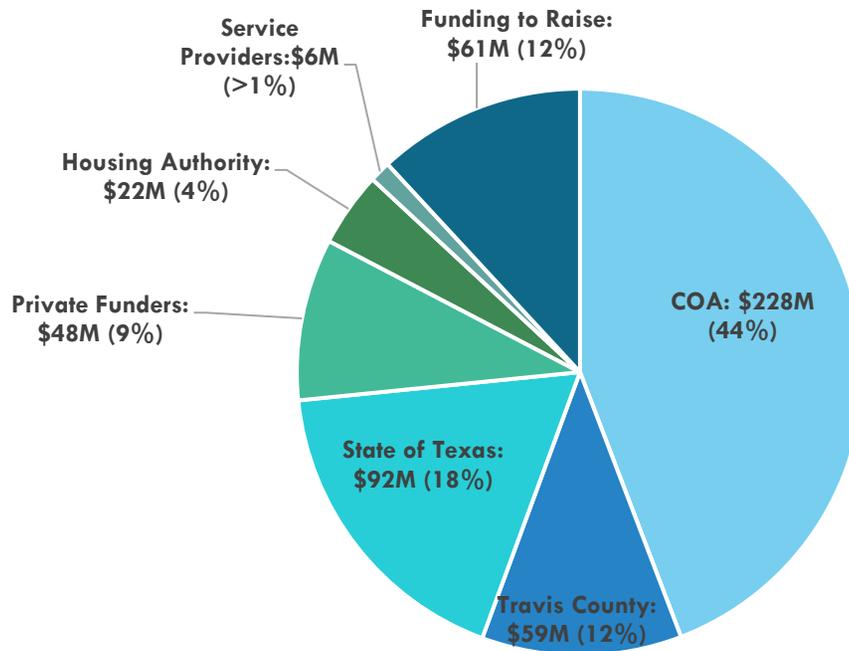
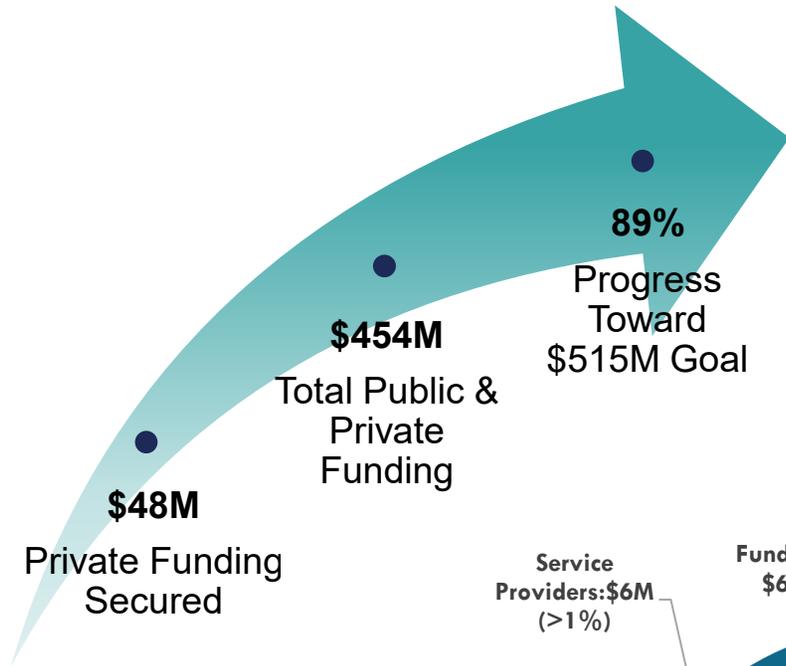
- Landlord Engagement
- Risk Mitigation
- Incentives

Strengthen the Homelessness Response System

- Capacity Building, Data & Analysis, Equity, and Innovation

Finding Home ATX Investment Plan	
PROGRAMMATIC EXPENDITURES	\$218M
1. Crises Services	\$23M
2. Core Housing Programs (PSH & RRH)	\$178M
3. Support Services	\$18M
SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE	
4. System Capacity Building	\$20M
CAPITAL INVESTMENTS	
5. Capital Investment	\$266M
CONTINGENCY	
6. Contingency	\$10M
TOTALS	\$515M

SCALING THE SYSTEM: FINDING HOME ATX 2022-2024



As of 02/22/2022

EXPANDING CAPACITY

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT — HOMELESSNESS

As of December 31, 2022

ARPA Investment Plan Category	Council Approved Allocation	Commitments	Spent
Crisis Services	\$10.0M	\$10.0M	\$0.8M
Core Housing Programs	\$55.0M	\$44.4M	\$1.7M
Support Services	\$7.0M	\$7.0M	\$0.4M
System Capacity Building	\$9.2M	\$2.4M	\$0.1M
Capital Investment (Housing Units)	\$25.5M	\$10.1M	\$4.8M
TOTAL	\$106.7M	\$74.0M	\$7.8M

Notes:

- Commitments include formally encumbered funds, second year of approved contracts, and funding approved for internal hiring.
- HSD provides quarterly updates to City Council on commitments and expenditures to date, as well as any recommended adjustments to the investment plan for unobligated ARPA funds.
- \$11.4M in HOME-ARPA funds in the Capital Investment category cannot be committed until they are received by the City from HUD.

CITY OF AUSTIN ARPA FUNDING

EXPECTED IMPACT



Program Type	Persons served annually
Rapid Rehousing	1,052
Emergency Shelter	320
Street Outreach	2,604
Employment Services	192
Benefits Enrollment	145
Behavioral Health	297

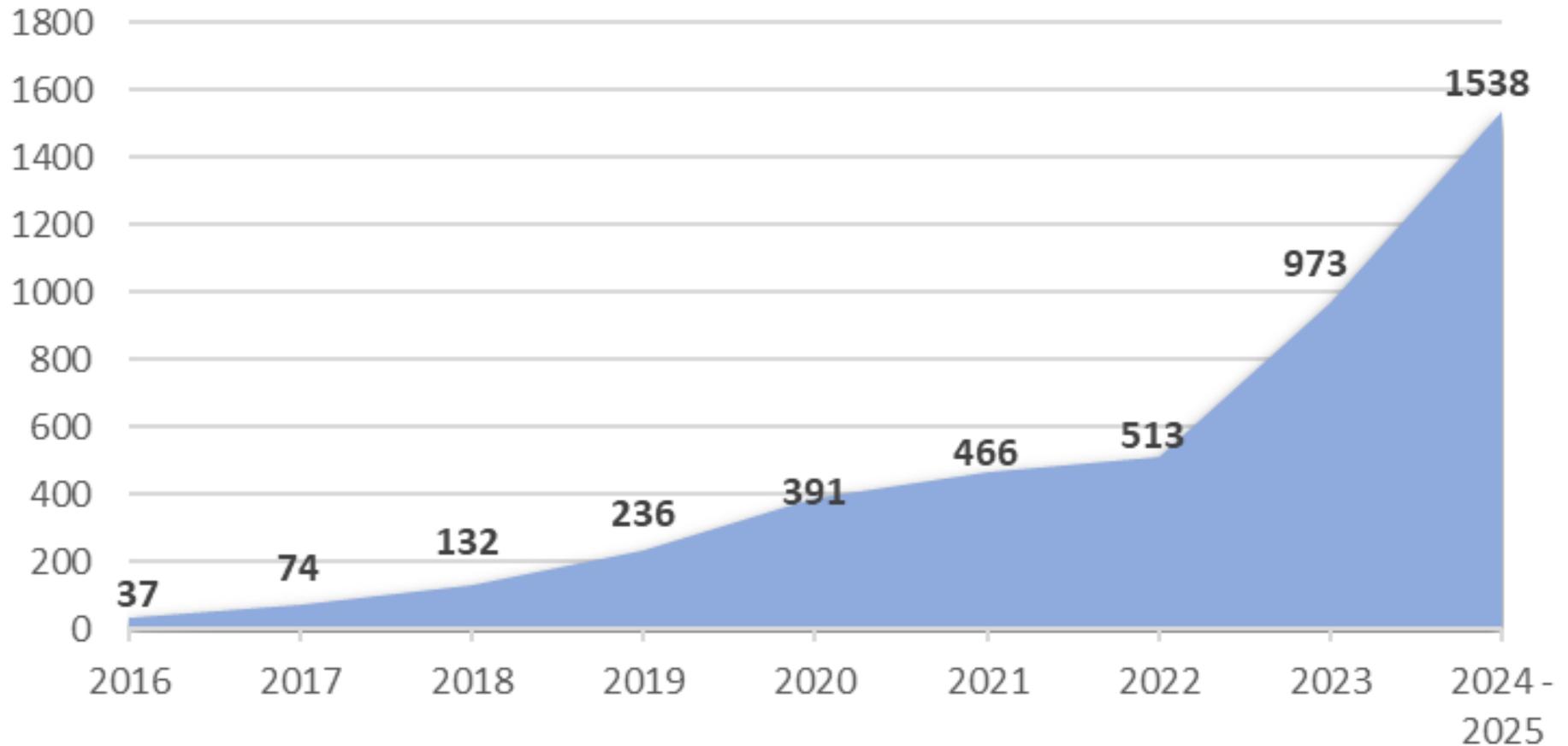
- ARPA Contracts currently expected to extend to 2 years
- Doesn't include small provider capacity building program with 21 organizations enrolled

PIPELINE — ‘CONTINUUM OF CARE’ UNITS

2021 PORTFOLIO POISED TO TRIPLE

Housing Dedicated to People Exiting Homelessness

Cumulative Units: Austin/Travis County



HOUSING SPOTLIGHT



BALCONES TERRACE

Foundation Communities
123 units total: 50 PSH Units



Construction

On track for June 2023 completion.



PECAN GARDENS

City of Austin/Family Eldercare
78 PSH Units



Pre-Construction

Permits and Construction Bids
Projected Completion Q3 2023



BUNGALOWS AT CENTURY PARK

City of Austin/Integral Care
60 PSH Units



Pre-Construction

Permits and Construction Bids
Projected Completion Q3 2023



ESPERO AT RUTLAND

Caritas of Austin
171 units: 101 CoC/PSH



Construction

On track for June 2023 completion.



SEABROOK SQUARE

Integral Care
262 Units Total; 60 PSH Units



Pre-Construction

Projected Construction Start
Q3 2023



CADY LOFTS

SIG Ventures/Endeavors
100 PSH Units



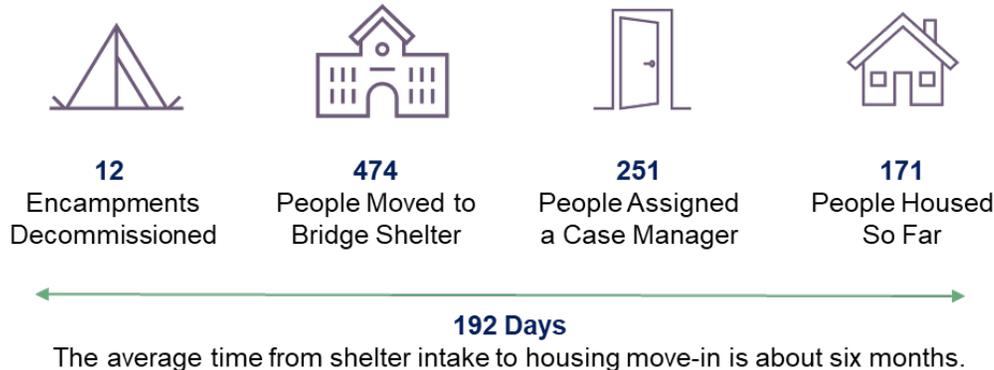
Pre-Construction

Projected Construction Start
Q3 2023

HOUSING-FOCUSED ENCAMPMENT ASSISTANCE LINK (HEAL)

More Than 470 People Moved to Shelter

Since the initiative's inception in June 2021, the HEAL Initiative has compassionately closed twelve high acuity encampments and moved over 470 unhoused residents to bridge shelter.



Encampments That Have Received HEAL Intervention

1. Terrazas Branch Library
2. Menchaca / Ben White Blvd.
3. Lady Bird Lake / Buford Tower
4. 183 / Oak Knoll
5. Old San Antonio Road / Slaughter Creek
6. IH-35 Frontage Road / St. Johns Avenue
7. West Bouldin Creek
8. Adjacent St. John Neighborhood Park
9. Gillis Park
10. Roy Guerrero Park
11. Gustavo "Gus" Garcia District Park
12. **Pack Saddle Pass / Ben White Blvd.**

85% of encampment occupants accept offer of shelter

HEAL Initiative Site #10

Roy G. Guerrero Park & Krieg Softball Complex

Early Prop. B enforcement activities achieved compliance at encampments near East Riverside Drive/Pleasant Valley and East 7th Street/Pleasant Valley. The resulting migration led to camping at Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center and the Hike and Bike trail. These groups then converged at Roy Guerrero Park/Krieg Field Softball Complex.

3 Months Pre/Post HEAL analysis conducted by APD reveals:

- Substantial reductions to most of the top 20 APD call and incident types to Roy Guerrero Park and the surrounding area.
- Positive impacts upon 911 call center volume, public safety resource burden, and neighborhood climate.

Top 20 Call Types

3 Months Pre/Post HEAL Intervention at Roy G.

Reduction of 876 Calls to Park & Surrounding Area

- 39% hotshot top priority disturbance
- 31% shots fired
- 30% disturbance other
- 25% check welfare urgent
- 23% suspicious person
- 21% auto theft service
- 18% burglar alarm

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION



HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (HEM)

The City of Austin recently established a centralized encampment management structure, based on incident response principles, to streamline reporting, assessment, and data-driven response.

Prior to the creation of the Homeless Encampment Management (HEM) Team, decentralized response has contributed to:

- Consolidation of populations into large encampments with concentrated public health and safety impacts including increased 911 call volume and wildfire hazard.
- Unmanaged migration to sensitive areas resulting in environmental quality impacts, protected habitat interference, and widespread scarring of green spaces.
- Inefficiencies as areas previously cleared have been repopulated.

HEM NEXT STEPS

- Enhancement of the HEM reporting and tracking app.
- Formal adoption of draft encampment response policies and procedures.

HEM UNMET NEEDS

- Sufficient resources and capacity for waste and debris removal to support mitigation efforts.

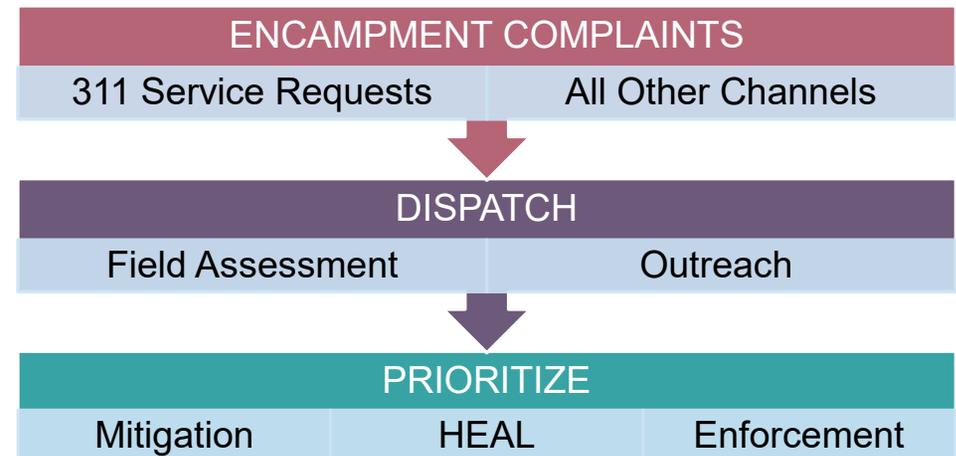


Homeless Encampment Reporting and Tracking App



New Encampment

View / Update Encampments



ON THE HORIZON

COUNCIL DIRECTIVES

- Assessment and Recommendations for community-wide Emergency Shelter system (early May)
- Assessment and Recommendations for Cold Weather Shelter (June)
- Rental Housing Development Assistance program review & recommendations
- Human trafficking identification training for community partners
- Assess funding/legal options to retain bridge shelter capacity
- Austin Civilian Conservation Corp assessment/collaboration

OTHER PROJECTS

- Multiple solicitation processes: ARPA, AT Home (multi-funder PSH), ARCH, Southbridge
- Homeless Encampment Management Team – continued development
- Cold Weather Shelter Program planning 2023/24
- Engaging with Faith-Based Communities
- Communications Plan

CHALLENGES

- Housing market: identification of willing landlords for clients with rental assistance
- Salvation Army Downtown shelter closure
- Staff turnover, shortages across community service providers

CITY OF AUSTIN INVESTMENTS, FY23

\$79.1M Homeless Spending Appropriations by Core Component

\$6.7M Reducing Inflow/Prevention (8.5%)

- Rent & utility assistance, case management, legal assistance, tenant relocation

\$20.3M Crisis Response (25.7%)

- Emergency shelters, street outreach & navigation, behavioral health, EMCOT, Homeless Outreach Street Team, Downtown Austin Community Court

\$45.5M Housing Stabilization - Services & Capital (57.5%)

- Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing services, local housing vouchers, capital projects

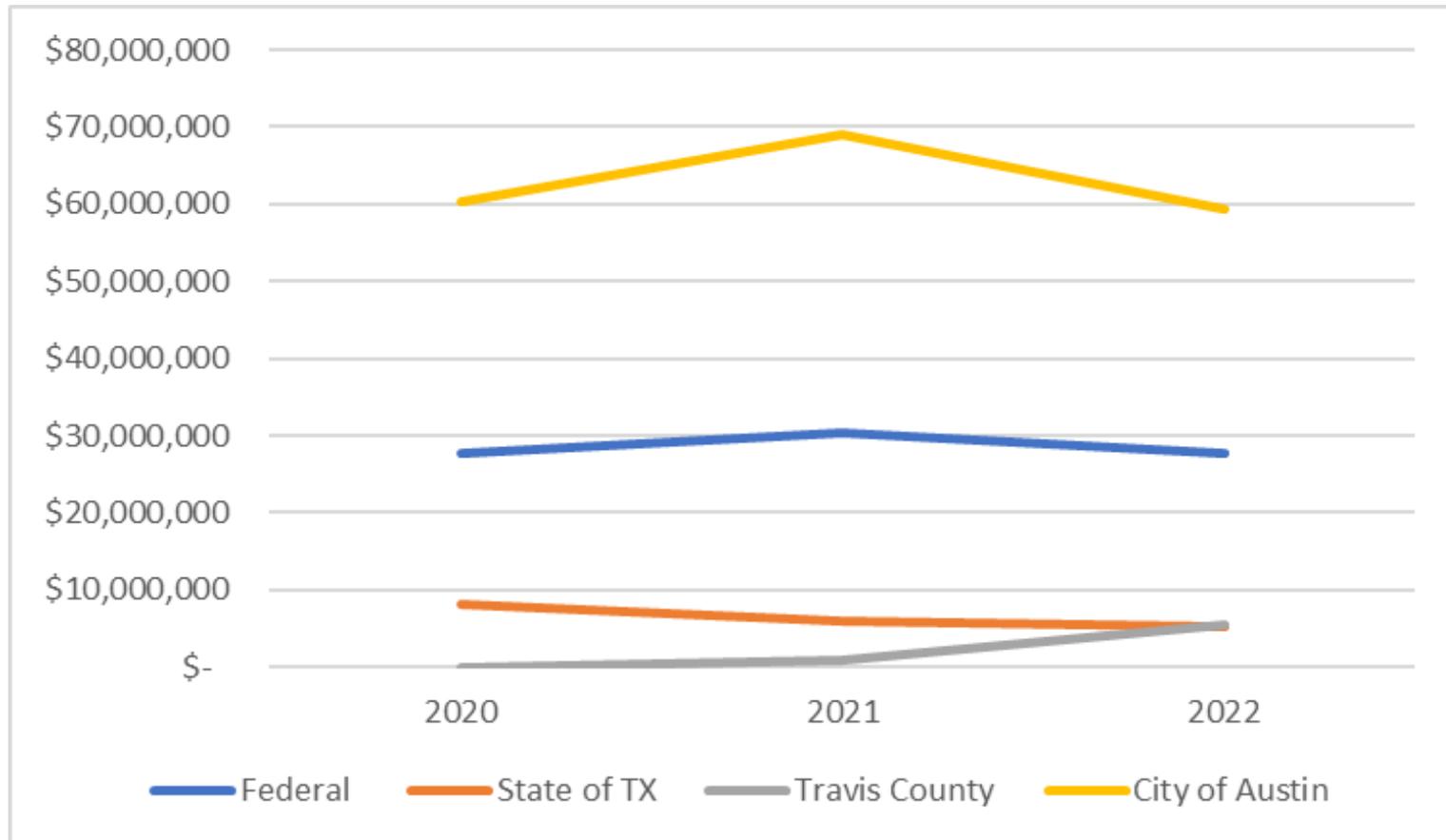
\$6.7M Public Space Management (8.5%)

- Clean up services, contracts, and staff, downtown public toilets, pet support services, Homeless Strategy Division

Figures include City general funds, bond-funded capital investments, state and federal grants, but *not* pandemic-related CARES Act or ARPA funding.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT LEVELS

CITY INVESTMENTS ARE APPROXIMATELY 68% OF TOTAL FUNDING 2020-2022



- Based on public reporting sources, and *original* funding source
- Reflects ongoing funding and excludes ARPA/COVID Emergency Relief Funding
- City of Austin funding reflects appropriations to 16 City departments involved in aspects of homelessness response

HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT: ENFORCEMENT

Proposition B took effect on May 11, 2021 when the City Council officially certified the May 1 election results.

The Austin Police Department promptly began a phased enforcement approach:

Phase 1: May 11 to June 12 , 2021

- Community engagement and education
- APD provided referrals and verbal warnings, except in the case of imminent threats to health or safety.

Phase 2: June 13 to July 10 , 2021

- APD generally issued written warnings.

Phase 3: July 11 to Aug. 7, 2021

- If a written warning was already issued, APD then proceeded to cite.
- Arrests for violating the camping ordinance were only utilized in situations where individuals refused to vacate areas that were been deemed dangerous for the public (e.g. flood prone or wildfire danger, next to a busy or high-speed roadway, etc).

Phase 4: Aug. 8 and thereafter

- If an APD officer issues a citation and the individual does not stop the prohibited conduct (e.g. voluntarily leave the area), APD will arrest the individual for violation of the camping ordinance, regardless of whether the area is specifically deemed dangerous for the public.
- When APD does arrest an individual for violation of the camping ordinance, that person is processed through the Downtown Austin Community Court whenever possible.

**Enforcement generally met with voluntary compliance
334 Citations to Date**