



COMMISSION ON AGING BUDGET RECOMMENDATION
Recommendation Number: 20230308-7vi
INCREASED EMERGENCY HOUSING AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE TARGETED TO OLDER ADULTS

Strategic Direction: Economic Opportunity and Affordability

Date: March 8, 2023

Subject: FY24 Budget Recommendations

Motioned By: Briesemeister **Seconded By:** Bordie

Recommendation

Increase emergency housing and utility assistance to mitigate the affordability crisis for older adults and to accomplish strategic goals related to housing stabilization, economic opportunity, and affordability.

Background and Rationale

The City of Austin is facing a housing affordability crisis which has garnered national headlines (see [NY Times](#)) and data reports show that the year-over-year increase for one bedroom rent averaged 13.5% from 2021 to 2022 and now costs \$1,680 per month on average. At the same time, [the average Social Security payment](#) in January 2023 totaled \$1,691 per month with many older adults receiving far less such as Supplemental Security Income recipients (aged 65 or older) receiving an average of \$553 per month.

Increased housing supply has significant lead time associated with pre-development and construction while older adults have immediate needs for rent relief. In fact, older adults including older adults of color are disproportionately represented in the homeless population in Austin, TX and many unhoused people report on the Austin Prioritization Index that their last stable housing was in Austin or that they are native born to Austin.

Surveys of older adult residents in Austin have uncovered concerns of affordability and fear of future homelessness. Enacting this recommendation would prevent some older adults from entering into homelessness.

The City of Austin allocated nearly \$40 million in emergency rent assistance during the pandemic. However, budget recommendations for [FY 2022 – 2023](#) (pg. 136) includes only a fraction of previous fiscal year funding at \$6.7 million for emergency housing initiatives aimed at preventing homelessness via supportive services and financial assistance.

Date of Approval: March 8, 2023

Record of the vote:

For: Chair Temperley, Vice-Chair Bondi, Angel, Bordie, Briesemeister, De Maria Nicola, Garcia-Pittman, Lugo, Van Sickle, Van De Putte, Varteressian.

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Bauman, Kareithi, Lopez-Guerrero

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Amy Temperley", is written over a light blue rectangular stamp.

Attest:

Amy Temperley, Chair