

TRAVIS COUNTY BUDGET UPDATES

AUSTIN TRAVIS COUNTY
FOOD POLICY BOARD

APRIL 10, 2023

AGENDA



Travis County FY24 Budget Process



HHS FY24 Budget Requests related to Food



ARPA/LFRF Update



Discussion: FPB Role, Interests,
Engagement Strategies

FY24 BUDGET PROCESS

FY23 COUNTY BUDGET SUMMARY

How Travis County Allocates General Fund Resources



Justice
System

\$199.89 Million
16.98%



General
Government

\$178.77 Million
15.19%



Corrections
&
Rehabilitation

\$158.22 Million
13.44%



Public
Safety

\$118.97 Million
10.11%



Health & Human
Services

\$82.80 Million
7.03%



Infrastructure
&
Environmental
Services

\$41.94 Million
3.56%



Community
&
Economic
Development

\$38.08 Million
3.23%



The County's General Fund maintains the following cash reserves:
The Unallocated Reserve, Allocated Reserves, General Purpose Reserves, and Special Purpose Reserves
\$329.32 Million
27.97%

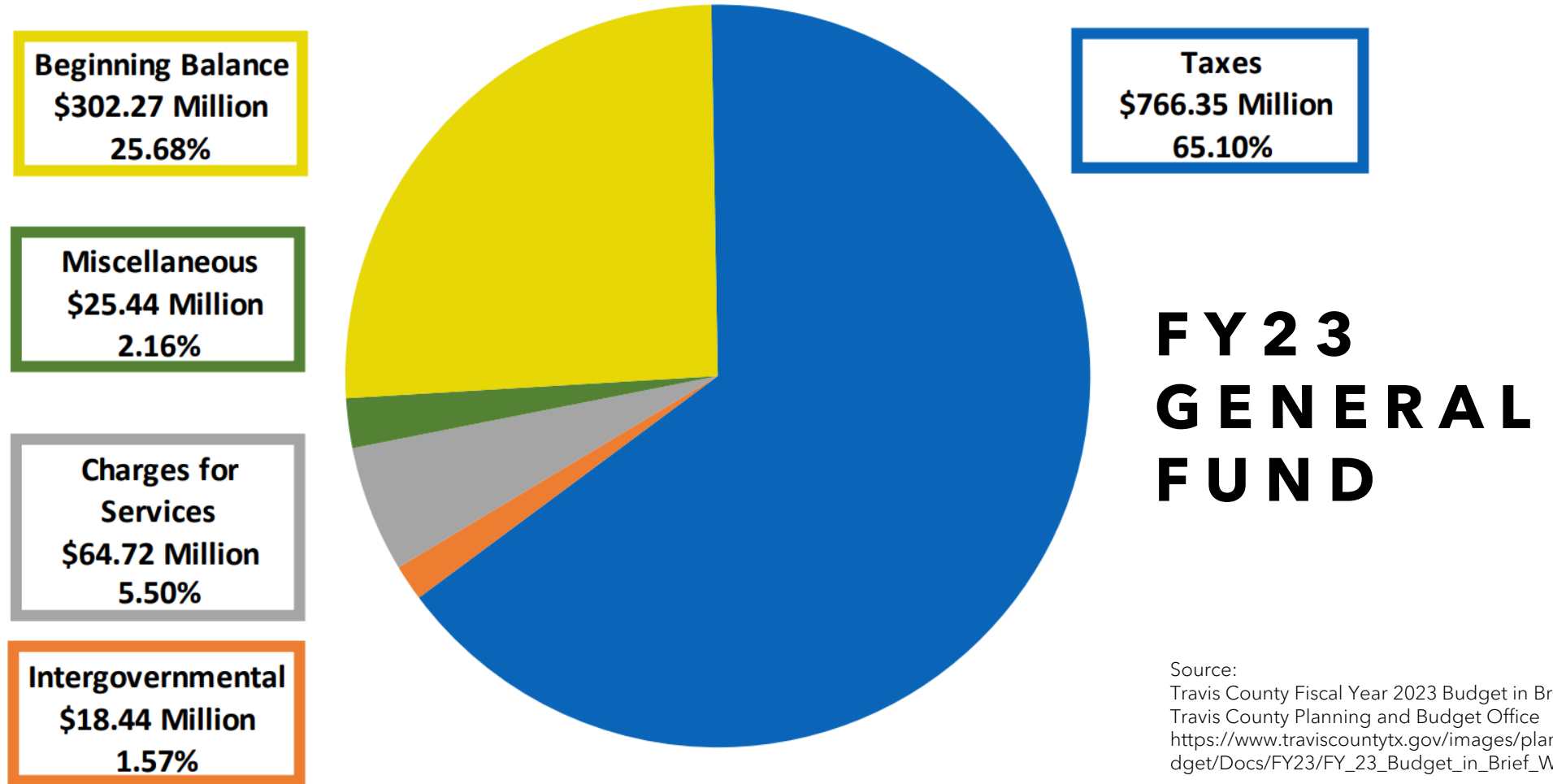
Transfers to
Other Funds
\$29.23 Million
2.48%

Total Budget (all funds):
\$1,557,426,250

General fund:
\$1,177,219,691

Source:

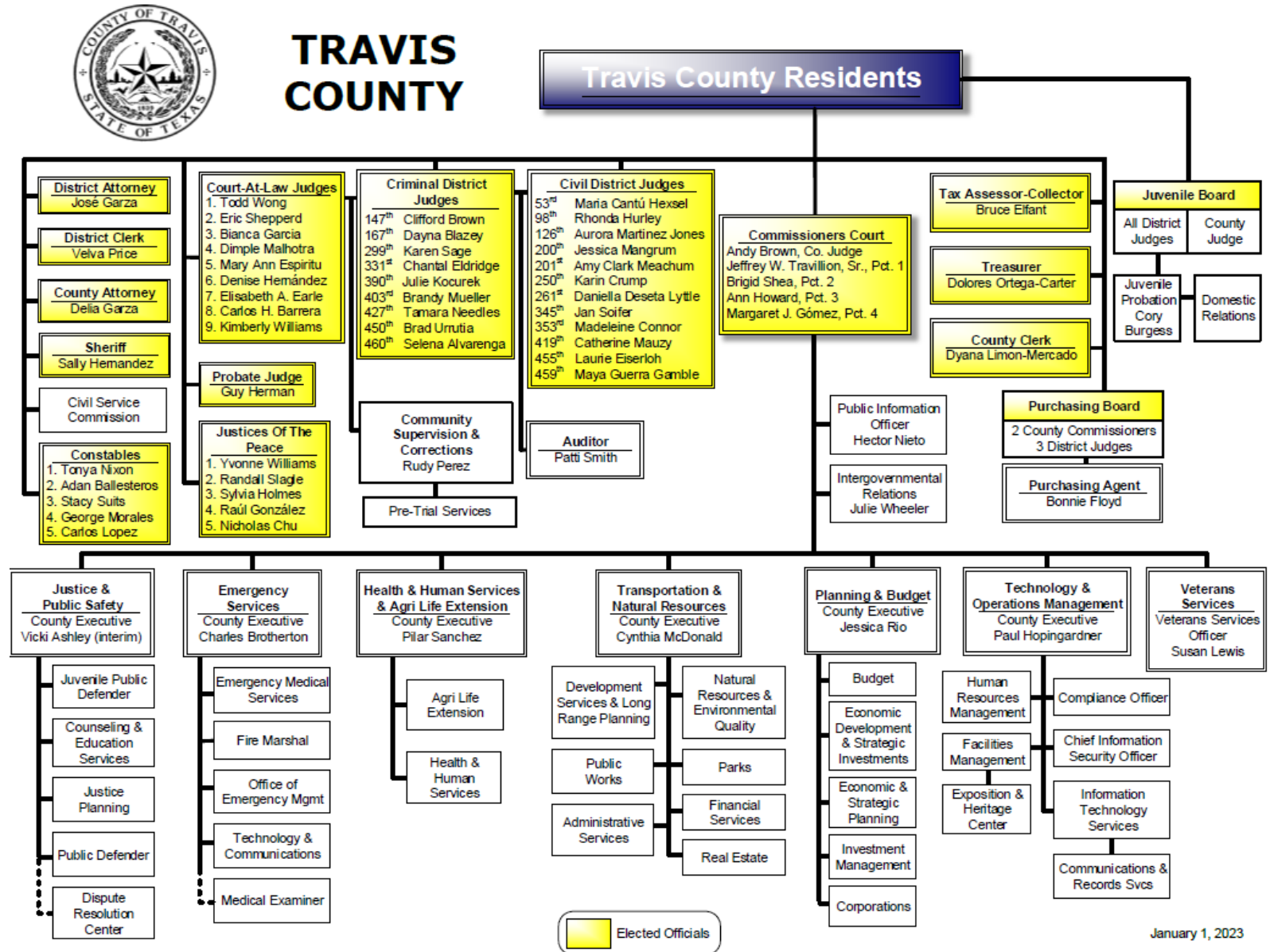
Travis County Fiscal Year 2023 Budget in Brief,
Travis County Planning and Budget Office
https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/planning_budget/Docs/FY23/FY_23_Budget_in_Brief_Web.pdf



**WHERE DOES THE GENERAL
FUND COME FROM?**

WHAT DOES IT PAY FOR?

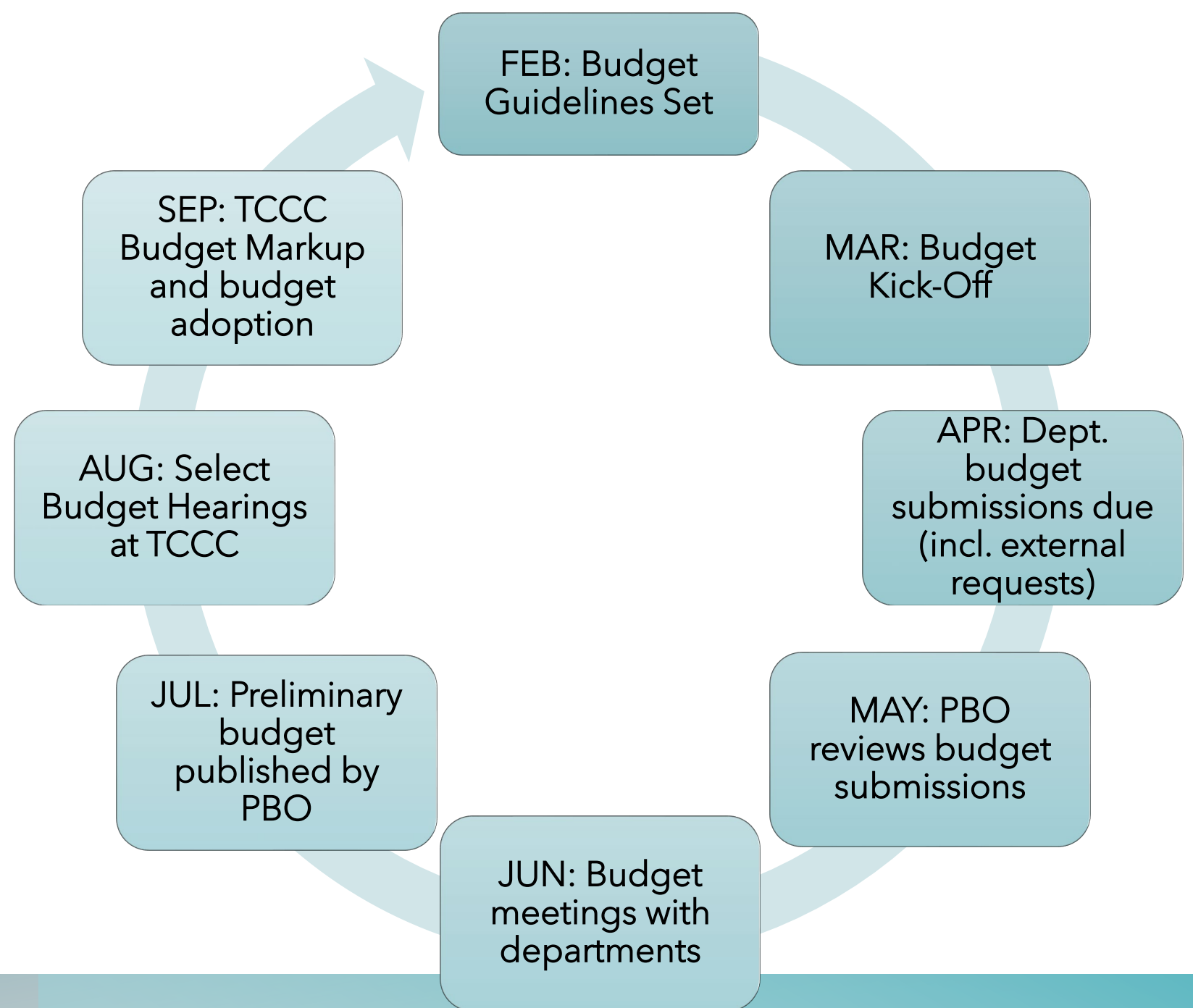
- Much of the County operates to fulfill the mandates of the criminal legal system, other critical public services
- The Commissioners Court sets the budget for the entire County, but only provides direct oversight of a selection of departments



A RESOURCE CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENT

- The County's tax revenue base is fairly stable, but limited/not diverse
- State Legislature's revenue caps on local government (2019) created a more conservative budgeting context
- In budget considerations, Court must balance the needs of the community, departments, and the County's own operational cost drivers
- "Normal" budget process is happening in parallel with significant federal pandemic response funding flowing through the County

TRAVIS COUNTY BUDGET PROCESS



Notes:

PBO = Travis County Planning and Budget Office
TCCC = Travis County Commissioners Court
Visualization is a general reference. Specific dates for each phase may vary year-to-year.

BUDGET INFORMATION ONLINE

<https://www.traviscountytx.gov/planning-budget>

TRAVISCOUNTYTX★GOV

Directory ▾ Government ▾ Justice ▾ Business ▾ Resident ▾ Online Services ▾

ENHANCED BY G

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Austin-Travis County's COVID-19 Community Level is currently Low. View the latest COVID-19 information

Budget

[Economic Development & Strategic Investments](#)

[American Rescue Plan Act](#)

[Request Information](#)

You are here: Planning & Budget

Planning & Budget

The Planning and Budget Office facilitates the efficient and effective use of county resources for the community's benefit. The department works with Travis County government organizations on planning, researching, and evaluating budgetary and policy issues; integrating county-wide spending and strategic plans; and prepares the county's budget.

Budget



[Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Documents](#)



[Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Development](#)



[Financial Policies & Budget Rules](#)



[Prior Year Budget Documents](#)



[Financial Summaries](#)



[Interactive BudgetDashboard](#)

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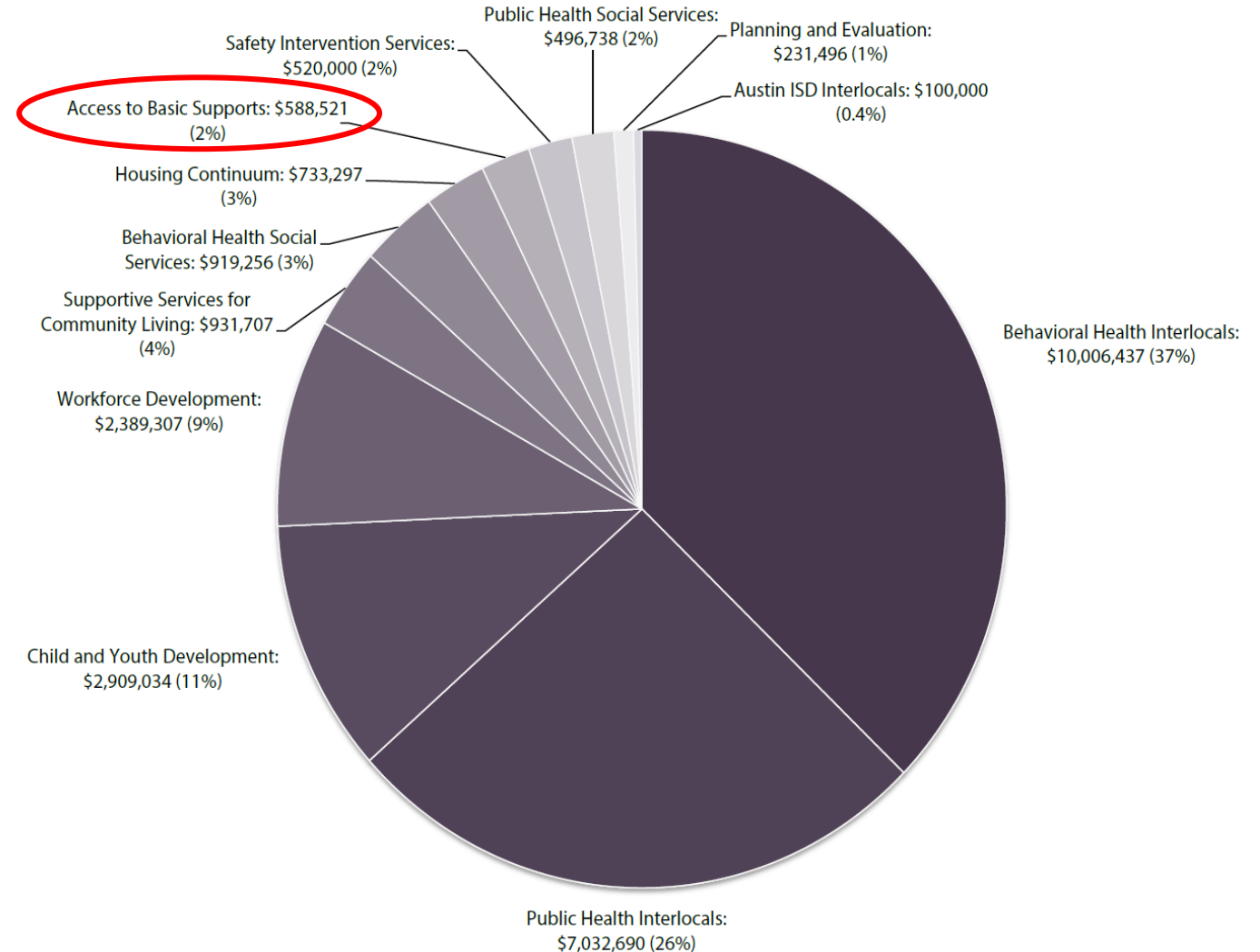
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FY24 HHS BUDGET REQUESTS WITH FOOD-RELATED IMPACTS

HHS SOCIAL SERVICE INVESTMENTS

- In FY22, over \$26 million in purchased general fund social services in Travis County
- Span a range of human service issues and populations
- Contracts with nonprofit and community-based organizations
- Interlocals with Austin Public Health and Integral Care
- We are preparing several FY24 budget requests related to social service investments



Note: Not included in the social services investments: HHS direct services and ARPA-LFRF and other federal pandemic response funds

FY24 BUDGET REQUESTS: MAINTENANCE OF SERVICES

- Travis County's ongoing social services investments have remained static in most issue areas; NPO/CBO partners/contractors are operating in an environment of rising costs
- HHS is asking for 20% across-the-board increase in social services for FY24
 - Excludes: One-time funding; Public Health Interlocal (has its own formula for regular increases), part of Behavioral Health Interlocals (already received partial increase in FY23)
- Total amount requested: \$2,972,067
 - Would raise overall social service investments from \$18,251,894 to \$21,223,961
 - Would raise Access to Basic Supports from \$588,521 to \$706,225

FY24 BUDGET REQUESTS: UNDERFUNDED ISSUE AREAS

- Current social services investment system remains inadequately resourced:
 - COVID-19 exacerbated existing health and social inequities among already disproportionately impacted populations
 - Impacts of our investments have been further eroded by rising costs
 - Issue areas in this request represent critical resident needs that the County has not funded at a substantively meaningful or effective level
- Total amount requested: \$3,700,000 for four issue areas

UNDERFUNDED ISSUE AREAS

Issue Area	Current investment	Requested increase	New Total
Access to Basic Supports Provides access to food to prevent hunger and promote wellness, and to public benefits for eligible populations to support basic needs	\$588,521	\$1,000,000	\$1,588,521
Housing Continuum Prevention of eviction and homelessness; Promotes access to safe, decent, affordable and stable housing.	\$733,297	\$1,200,000	\$1,933,297
Supportive Services for Community Living Promotes independence and well-being of older adults and people with disabilities, who need/can benefit from supports for living in the community.	\$931,707	\$700,000	\$1,818,048
Safety Intervention Services Prevent victimization [unfunded], promote safety and well-being for victims, and reduce barriers to well-being for people with involvement in the criminal justice system [unfunded].	\$320,000	\$800,000	\$1,120,000

WHAT ABOUT PANDEMIC FUNDING?

- Some of these areas have received allocations of federal pandemic response funds
 - Supportive Housing most significantly (~118.3M in LFRF) primarily for construction of affordable housing
 - Food to a much lesser extent (~8.3M in LFRF)
- These federal dollars will expire (must be fully expended by 2026)
- While Travis County cannot maintain pandemic-level investment from the General Fund, the community does need ongoing meaningful supports in these areas

BUDGET OBSERVATIONS

- What has our ongoing GF investment in Food purchased services looked like?
 - One of our smallest issue areas
 - No significant infusions outside emergency funding
- HHS has submitted versions of these requests annually for FY 2019-2023, and ad-hoc issue area requests in the 4-5 years before that
 - Planning & Budget Office has not recommended these requests for inclusion in the preliminary budget due to Budget Guidelines
 - Court has declined to fund/prioritize during Budget Markup
- HHS will likely continue to submit these requests as part of our role as advocates

BUDGET OBSERVATIONS

- Historically, which issue areas have received additional investments?
 - Workforce Development, Early Childhood
- Recently, which issue areas have received new investments?
 - Supportive Housing (ARPA/LFRF), Behavioral Health
- What factors can help support a budget request?
 - Organized planning structures, community plans with County support/involvement
 - Current community context, public awareness
 - Vocal and present community advocates
 - Court champions

UPDATE ON TRAVIS COUNTY ARPA/LFRF FUNDING

**(AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT,
LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS)**

CURRENT STATE OVERVIEW

- The American Rescue Plan Act provided large infusion of federal funding to local governments for pandemic recovery efforts
- Travis County's total allocation was approx. \$247M
- All funds must be committed by the end of 2024 and expended by the end of 2026
- Court has had several rounds of action already to allocate majority of the funds
- As of 4/4/23, approx. \$51M remains in the unallocated balance (\$50,964,249)

PROCESS FOR FINAL DECISIONS

- Budget Office collected requests during 2022
 - HHS submitted several, including continuation of LFRF food contracts for one additional year
- Late 2022, Court members completed individual preliminary interest sheets (internal forms)
 - Indicated the requests/projects they wanted to consider further, along with any notes/questions
- Jan-Mar 2023, Budget Office aggregated results to create short(er) list of projects that one or more Court members were interested in, and worked with departments to compile more detailed backup
 - Included responses to Court questions, analysis on eligibility, implementation feasibility, and risk
- There are still more requests than there are funds available
 - HHS's Food request is among those still under consideration

PROCESS FOR FINAL DECISIONS

- Tues 3/21: PBO presented analysis report, outlined overall process steps/dates
- Tues 3/28: PBO provided markup worksheet, procedural items for project list cleanup
- Tues 4/4: Budget scrubbing to finalize the total unallocated balance
- Thurs 4/6: Budget Markup worksheets due from Court members back to PBO
- Mon 4/10: Budget Markup worksheets to be posted online
- **Thurs 4/20: Special Voting Session**
 - PBO will take the Court through a budget markup process
 - Court will take votes to select the projects/requests they will fund
 - Likely to allocate all remaining LFRF dollars

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FOOD POLICY BOARD

FOOD POLICY BOARD ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COURT

- Travis County has no set institutional processes around Boards/Commissions beyond the appointment process
- Room for flexibility: Can shape methods for Appointees to communicate with their appointers or the full Court based on personal preferences
- Consider other examples: CPS Board, Early Childhood Council, new Public Health Commission, others?
- Can FPB County Appointees ...
 - Establish method(s) for regular, general communication?
 - Play a role in targeted, timely communications?
 - Build on Food System Planning work?

ENGAGING & INFORMING TCCC

Written communication, Letters of Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate one consistent message to all Court members• Many parties can sign on to demonstrate unified voice
Public Comments at Court sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can provide 3 minutes comments on any agenda item• Easy to access by phone or in person• One-way communication, no dialogue or questions
Constituent calls to Court members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often speak to staff; might get a return call from the Court member• Can communicate interests, learn about Court member priorities/positions
Meeting with individual Court members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited to 1-2 Court members (more than 2 = quorum)• Requires more logistical work; calendars/workloads may not always permit• Allows more in-depth, individualized, candid interchange and focus• Focused conversation with clear goals and messaging
Agenda item at Commissioners Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must be sponsored by a Dept. or Court member• Work with sponsor to create and vet content• Allows full Court to ask questions, respond, have dialogue• Requires more availability and flexibility (items run late, out of order, can be postponed)

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

- What role does the FPB see for itself vis-à-vis County budget processes?
- What interests, if any, does the FPB have around the pending LFRF decisions in April 2023?
- What interests, if any, does the FPB have around the general budget process for FY24 and HHS's budget requests with food-related impacts?
- What questions do you have about the engagement and communication strategies shared today?

QUESTIONS?

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