



SOBERING CENTER

SERVING AUSTIN & TRAVIS COUNTY

#TheSoberingCenter

#BeSafeBeSoberATX

Mission of the Austin/Travis County Sobering Center

The Sobering Center enhances public health and safety by providing a safe place for publicly intoxicated individuals to sober up as an alternative to the emergency room or jail and, where appropriate, to provide a bridge to recovery.



Numbers Served

The Sobering Center has performed over **8,000** intakes since its inception.



Sobering Center of Austin

- No jail or emergency room
- No citations, fines, or medical bills
- No cost for Sobering Center services
- Open 24 hours/7 days a week
- Complete confidentiality
 - We do not notify anyone of a client's admission into the center without consent or subpoena
- Connection to community resources and other services
- Assistance with coordinating transportation home



Admission Criteria

- 18 years or older
- Suspected alcohol or drug intoxication
- No evidence of acute head injury
- No untreated lacerations
- No seizure within the last 24 hours
- No acute gastrointestinal bleeding
- Suicidal/homicidal ideation cleared by a MH professional



SOBERING CENTER

Client is referred/
transported to
the Sobering
Center by Law
Enforcement,
EMS ***or other
referral partner***

NO P.I. CITATION
NO FINES

Intake Medics
do a screening
to ensure it's
safe for the
client to sober
up in our facility

Recovery
Support
Specialists
monitor the
client and
continue to
assess their
needs

SBIRT
Counselors
conduct an
assessment
used to link a
client to the
***appropriate
community
resources***

How it Started

- Founded in 2018 through City/County ILA
- Building from County, Operating funds from City
- ILA expires September 2023



How it's Going

- Law Enforcement and EMS no longer the only paths to the Sobering Center
- Patients are now able to 'hold over' for services
- Puddy in the cracks of a broken system



Outcomes

- Total intakes – 2,032
- Total admitted – 1,884 (93%)
- Number of post-admit transfers made by
 - EMS – 118
 - PD – 33
- Total diversions from ER & jail – 1,789 (88%)
- Successful discharges* – 966 (51% of those admitted)



Outcomes

- 144 seeking treatment (holdovers)
- 96% warm handoff
- 80 holds for referral partners
- 80% return to original care



Cost/Benefit Analysis

Findings

Using data from FY22
(October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022)

Kimberly J. Wilson, DrPH

kimberly.j.wilson@uth.tmc.edu

Costs

	Total	Per Diversion
Direct Costs, SC	\$ 1,503,581	\$ 840.46
Direct Costs, County	\$ 180,000	\$ 186.34
Direct Costs, EMS	\$ 15,915	\$ 8.89
Direct Costs, APD	\$ 6,861	\$ 3.84
Indirect Costs, EMS	\$ 92,106	\$ 51.48
Total Costs	\$ 1,798,464	\$ 1,091.01

- Direct Costs, SC – costs borne by the Sobering Center to deliver its services
- Direct Costs, County – foregone rent on SC facility
- Direct Costs, EMS - medical supplies donated by EMS, EMS costs to transport clients to ER/hospital (non-admits and admit-transfers)
- Direct Costs, APD – APD costs to transport clients to jail (non-admits and admit-transfers)
- Indirect Costs, EMS – foregone reimbursement for patients transported to the SC rather than to an ER/hospital.
- Note: CBA includes only direct program costs. Full budget for SC is \$2,279,750

Benefits: Immediate & Future Diversions

	Number	Total	Per Diversion
ER Diversions	907	\$ 1,333,290	
Jail Diversions	882	\$ 229,408	
Reduction in future ER utilization	649	\$ 953,783	
Total Benefits		\$ 2,381,162	\$ 1,406.64

FY22 BENEFITS NET COSTS

\$718,018

BENEFIT / COST RATIO

1.4

Cost/Benefit Accrual: By Party

Party	Costs	Benefits
Sobering Center	84 %	
Travis County	10 %	3.5%
Austin EMS	6 %	
Police Departments / APD	0.4 %	5.6%
Hospitals		90.9%

Other Benefits Not Included

- Individual benefits of not going to jail or hospital (costs, relationships, record)
- Long-term benefits to the system and individuals related to the organization's role in connecting people to needed treatment
 - Health care savings
 - Reduced crime
 - Improved health / reduced mortality

National Recognition

- IACP Toolkit and Case Study
- National Sobering Collaborative
- Model for Excellence

Strategic Plan Snapshot 2023-2027

VALUES

Compassion

Harm
Reduction

Advocacy

Integrity

Respect

OPERATIONS

Facilities
Services
Staffing

GOALS

- 1) Maximize the use of the Sobering Center as a first line response to intoxication
- 2) Develop into an essential community hub for a more integrated system of care
- 3) Foster a sustainable model for service delivery and access that responds to evolving community needs
- 4) Lead as a center of excellence and innovation locally and nationally

FUNDING

VISIBILITY & ADVOCACY

Outcomes Driven

VISION

We envision a safe and responsible community where substance use is a public health issue that is not criminalized, recovery is supported through early identification, and treatment is accessible when possible.

MISSION

We enhance public health and safety by providing a safe place for publicly intoxicated individuals to sober up as an alternative to the emergency room or jail and, where appropriate, to provide a bridge to recovery.

Where we are Headed

- Immediate Next Steps: Bridge Meds
- MH Diversion Partnership/Continuum
- Central Health

Gratitude and Needs

- Commissioners and Council
- Board of Directors
- Renew ILA
- Facility Renovations



Questions?



Laura N. Elmore, LMSW-AP, Executive Director
lelmore@soberingcenter.org

www.SoberingCenter.org
512-957-1900



@SoberingCenterAustin



@SoberingCenter



@SoberingCenterAustin