



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Austin Travis County Public Health Commission

Recommendation Number: (20240403-005): Expansion of Emergency Housing & Rental Assistance Program

WHEREAS, the Austin/Travis County Public Health Commission ("ATC PHC") serves as an advisory body to the City Council and Travis County Commissioners Court concerning public health programs, projects, services, public health and human services needs, and approaches for improvement.; exploring the best/evidence-based public health practices for areas that need improvement and provide recommendations; providing an annual formal recommendation on the improvement of the overall public health programs, projects, regulations, and services within the governing entities in the city and the county; working to inform strategies that address health disparities that impact health outcomes for underserved populations; and gathering input from the community on budget and programming recommendations to share with policymakers and health agencies annually; and

WHEREAS, those aged 65 years and older, represent the fastest-growing age group in Austin, expanding from 55,695 (7.0% of 2010 population) to 91,733 (9.5% of 2020 population), and growing at a rate of 64.7%; and

WHEREAS, Austin continues to face a housing affordability crisis, particularly impacting renters that have seen multiple years of rental increases, and

WHEREAS, the Age-Friendly Austin Community Feedback Survey indicates that older city residents want to age in-place for as long as possible and respondents who are experiencing unstable housing cited this was due to lack of affordability and gentrification; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has provided funding for the RENT program, now referred to as "I Belong in Austin" which has successfully provided renters emergency assistance for rent, moving, and storage/relocation to prevent eviction, displacement, and homelessness; and

WHEREAS, I Belong in Austin served a significant number of Austin individuals over 60 (14% of the total served) and continues to have an extensive waitlist, over 800 people when the program began this year and quickly grow to 4,000 before being capped indicating the continuing need for assistance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission on Aging encourages the Austin City Council to allocate \$15 million to support I Belong in Austin in the next fiscal year based on an evaluation of the program's effectiveness in mitigating the affordability crisis and accomplish strategic goals related to housing stabilization, economic opportunity, and affordability.

Date of Approval: April 3, 2024

Record of the vote: 7-0, Commissioner Crookham absent

Attest:  _____

Larry Wallace Jr., Chair