

# Community Investment Budget

The City's budget is a reflection of our values. Austin is a progressive city, but budget processes are by nature conservative. Each budget is built on the prior one, and such a process makes the city resistant to change, regardless of the priorities expressed by voters and those they elect to address the urgent needs of today. Austin's budget process even fails to account for predictable expansion of important programs due to population growth (e.g. more parks require more park services.) Incrementally, we demand that city departments address housing, health and safety in new ways where the old ways have failed, and prioritize population appropriate service expansion guided by equity and sustainability across all departments.

**The undersigned organizations jointly** urge the following priority investments in community health, housing, affordability, sustainability and safety for FY24 totaling **\$76.3 million or 5.5%** of this year's roughly \$1.4 billion General Revenue budget.

We further ask that items marked "ongoing" be funded in the baseline budget to be released by the City Manager. In recognition of the need for equitable resource support we ask that BIPOC led & served organizations be prioritized.

- Parent Support Specialists [\$2.4M] ongoing
- Tenant Relocation Assistance Program [\$1M] ongoing
- Emergency Rental Assistance, Eviction Defense, and Tenant Legal and Support Services [\$10M]
- Forensic Nursing, Austin Health Department [\$328k] ongoing
- Mental Health 1st Response [\$4M] ongoing
- Library books/materials [\$900k]
- Reentry navigators for jobs/housing formerly incarcerated [\$1.4M] ongoing
- Workforce Development [\$3.46M ]
- Office of Violence Prevention [\$500k]
- Implementation of the Austin Climate Equity Plan [\$1.335M]
- Improve rebates for residential and commercial landscape conversions [\$400,000, Austin Water Utility Revenue]
- Increase Leak Detection Programs [\$2.28M, Austin Water Utility Revenue]
- Park Maintenance and Safety [\$2M] ongoing
- Tenant Education, Stabilization Support, and Community-based Agreement Support [\$300k] ongoing
- Displacement Prevention Navigators [\$1M] ongoing
- Fair Housing Education, Support, and Testing [\$350k]
- Emergency Supplemental Assistance for Low Income Residents [\$300k]
- Inclement Weather Response [\$4.5M] ongoing
- Community Crisis Response [\$2.3M] ongoing
- Street Outreach Services, Case Managers, and Peer Support Specialists [\$4M]



<p>\$1M</p>	<p><b>Tenant Relocation Assistance Program:</b> Tenants are being displaced every day due to increased redevelopment that results in demolition of market-affordable housing with higher rental rates, resulting in rapid gentrification and displacement. Austin City Council approved the <a href="#">Tenant Notification &amp; Relocation Assistance Ordinance</a> in 2016, yet the formula to calculate a tenant relocation fee was never completed for the Tenant Relocation Assistance Program. In addition, the <a href="#">developer fund</a> outlined in the ordinance can be seen as equivalent to an impact fee, which is preempted by State law, and the city is not collecting this fee.</p> <p>Invest \$1,000,000 (\$2,000/person for up to 250 people) in the <a href="#">Tenant Relocation Assistance Program</a>, to mitigate the harm to communities being displaced.</p>
<p>\$10 million</p>	<p><b>Emergency Rental Assistance, Eviction Defense, and Tenant Legal and Support Services:</b> Continue, expand, and build on the I Belong in Austin program that stabilizes tenants by providing emergency rental assistance and assists displaced residents by providing funding for a system of collaboration among rental assistance navigators, moving costs, storage costs, and legal fees. The program should be adjusted to allow residents moving outside of the City of Austin to utilize funding for moving and storage. It is also critical to align the program and these services for tenants with legal support so they can have appropriate legal representation at JP court, but also other forms of legal representation to defend a resident's rights (like probate advice) and protect their quality of life. We believe the minimum funding for rental assistance for the coming FY is \$8M which will fund year three of the current contract at originally proposed service levels plus \$2M for legal services. City must assess actual demand for rental assistance, craft a plan to meet that demand, and increase funding in FY 25/26 to meet that demand.</p>
<p>\$328K</p>	<p><b>Forensic Nursing staff</b> SAFE Alliance provides forensic nursing to collect evidence from survivors, but there are not enough nurses and the payment rate is set too low to hire in today's market and ensure that rape kits are available 24/7 to survivors.</p>
<p>\$2.4M</p>	<p><b>EMS weekend drinking rapid response</b> Downtown Area Command - \$1.750 million (includes CASTMED) Rainey Street - \$150k</p>

	Lake Med - \$500k
\$4M	<p><b>Mental Health First Response</b>  Ensure that those seeking mental health first responders or that are triaged to mental health first responders through 9-1-1 always receive qualified mental health first responders 24/7, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Call Center Clinicians (C3)</li> <li>- Expanded Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (EMCOT), and</li> <li>- Community Health Paramedics (CHPs) coupled with Integral Care clinicians.</li> </ul>
\$900k	<p><b>Library Materials:</b> Last year the materials budget was increased by just a little and the library is falling further and further behind the demand for books as the city grows. The Library Commission recommended a 6% increase (about \$400k) to the materials budget just to prevent the library from falling further behind, and we believe even more is needed. In past years, the CIB has included a \$1M request just for e-books, where wait times routinely exceed six months because the library can afford so few digital licenses. This year we recognize that all materials are important to those who order them, and the central role of a library is to provide books. The Library recently estimated that \$1.8M in additional materials funds would be needed to eliminate wait times. We recommend the library materials budget be increased by \$900k this year, and the library staff be directed to put forward a plan, including needed future funds, to eliminate wait times for all library materials, but with special emphasis on audio books, which can be a lifeline for seniors, starting next fiscal year.</p>
\$1.4M	<p><b>Ending discrimination against formerly incarcerated Re-entry connectors for jobs and housing</b>  Hire four formerly incarcerated and/or unhoused organizers in the Homeless Strategy Division to meet with newly released people along with three social workers to help them connect to housing and jobs, qualify for programs etc.</p> <p><b>Reentry Housing Support:</b> The city must facilitate justice-involved persons in accessing the housing market by providing support for them in addressing the unique hardships they face when searching for housing. This includes maintaining a list of landlords that will house someone with a criminal background, policy work to improve local policy related to criminal background checks, along with financial assistance for justice-involved persons</p>

	with paying deposits and fees required to access housing upon reentry [our proposal for direct assistance \$500k].
\$3.46MM	<p><b>Workforce Development:</b></p> <p>1 FTE in Economic Development primarily focused on expanding apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities in both unionized and nonunion sectors, especially in tech, for jobs at or above the City of Austin minimum wage for workers with no college education or workers returning to the workforce after a period of incarceration. (\$80,000)</p> <p>Workforce development grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(\$800k) Increase grant funding to entities engaged in workforce training, job placement and networking aimed at qualifying and placing low income Black and Latine communities and other communities historically marginalized or underserved in good paying tech jobs and diversifying Austin’s technology workforce.</li> <li>(\$500k) Increase grant funding to entities engaged in mentoring Black youth and young adults, connecting young people with Black professionals, identifying and removing</li> <li>(\$100k) Increase grant funding to work with the ED food plan coordinator (see below) on food production, processing and distribution job creation, with emphasis on jobs paying at or above the City of Austin minimum wage and available to those returning to the workforce after a period of incarceration.</li> </ul> <p>Workforce development contracts (\$2,000,000):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Developed by the Texas Workforce Investment Council, “Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024–2031” guides the state’s workforce system partners in the administration of training and development programs that promote the continued development of a well-educated, highly skilled Texas workforce. We urge Austin City Council to align with the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan 2024-2031 and support the development of technical apprenticeships, skills-based, and work-based learning with a \$2,000,000 investment for four \$500,000 multi-year contracts for underserved communities that are Black, Latinx, and</li> </ul>

	<p>low-income. With the infusion of AI, expansion of apprenticeships at the federal and state level, and cybersecurity moving up to the top of the priority skills list, we must have a focal point on technical workforce development to fill the 2030 projected 85,000,000 jobs being unfilled. (\$2,000,000)*</p>
<p>\$500,000</p>	<p><b>Office of Violence Prevention (OVP):</b> The City should expand the Office of Violence Prevention’s violence interrupter program to better prevent interpersonal and community harm and improve public safety in Austin.</p>
<p>\$2.68 M (water utility rev)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Improve rebates for residential and commercial landscape conversions</b> (\$400,000, Austin Water Utility Revenue): As recommended by the Joint Sustainability Committee, this funding using water utility revenue would help residential and commercial customers transition to climate-tolerant turf and native landscaping to reduce water bills and help the City meet water conservation goals while facing extreme droughts and declining lake levels.</li> <li>● <b>Increase Leak Detection Programs</b> (\$2.28M, Austin Water Utility Revenue): As recommended by the Joint Sustainability Committee, this funding using water utility revenue would help the Austin Water Utility identify leaking infrastructure to reduce utility costs and improve overall system integrity that will have long-term water savings for both the utility and its customers. Leak detection can reduce water waste, which will be important as the City needs to identify and prioritize water conservation methods to reduce the likelihood of hitting a costly water consumption trigger with the LCRA.</li> <li>● <b>Avoid Unnecessary Capital Expenses.</b> The proposed Austin Water Utility Cost of Service Study would substantially increase water and wastewater rates for customers throughout the City of Austin, with some of the greatest increases to residential customers using the least amount of water. These customers are often lower-income customers. The Austin City Council should avoid dramatic rate increases for lower-income customers and maintain progress block-rate structures, as much as possible. To avoid cost increases, major capital expenses that can be delayed until future years or reimagined with alternative, lower-cost infrastructure should be employed.</li> </ul>

\$1.335M

**Implementation of the Austin Climate Equity Plan:**

- **Climate Equity Plan Project Manager (\$150,000):** Office of Sustainability needs additional staff to track and coordinate implementation of the Climate Equity Plan.
- **Outreach and Engagement for Sustainability Incentives (\$320,000):** Many city sustainability incentive programs are underutilized, especially among low-income households. Additional community outreach by trusted organizations can increase the effectiveness of these programs. Office of Sustainability needs a Community Engagement Specialist to manage this work and oversee creation of a website that can be a one-stop-shop for all sustainability incentives. \$200,000 would be for grants, contracts, and stipends for community leaders and community-based organizations to do direct outreach to promote sustainability incentive programs in targeted Austin communities, in partnership with the Office of Sustainability.
- **Sustainable purchasing (\$295k):** \$125,000 Central Procurement to hire a sustainable purchasing contractor and/or purchase needed software and databases to develop a Sustainable Purchasing Plan that sets minimum standards for all products, materials and services purchased by the city; and \$170,000 for a Sustainable Purchasing Director position at the Purchasing Department.
- **Incentives and Education for Pro-Climate, Pro-Health Foods (\$200,000):** Due to the large amount of resources that it takes to produce meat, dairy and eggs, reducing consumption of these foods is one of the most effective ways for people to reduce their impact on the climate and the environment in general. Plant-based alternatives are available, but many people aren't familiar with these foods or their benefits, and some plant-based foods can be more expensive. The Climate Equity Plan and the Austin/Travis County Food Plan calls for programs and incentives to make pro-climate, pro-health food choices more affordable. These funds should go to the Office of Sustainability to coordinate with Public Health multi-lingual public education and marketing campaign to promote pro-climate/pro-health plant-based meat, dairy and egg alternatives, and identification of opportunities to provide effective incentives for pro-climate/pro-health foods at local restaurants and grocery stores.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Low carbon concrete (\$150,000):</b> Producing concrete emits CO2 through needed energy production and the chemical process. Funds would go to the City Engineer division of Austin Transportation and Public Works Department to test low-carbon concrete.</li> <li>● <b>Sustainable Construction Procurement Coordinator (\$120,000):</b> The City of Austin has multiple departments that issue requests for proposals (RFPs) for building and other construction projects and purchase construction materials, including concrete. There is currently a lack of consistent emphasis on sustainable construction materials and practices. There is also a need for additional coordination and leadership to implement low-carbon concrete standards for City of Austin projects to reduce emissions as quickly as possible.</li> <li>● <b>Make the Climate Equity Engagement Associate in the Office of Sustainability a permanent position. (\$100k)</b> Community engagement is an ongoing need as the city works to implement the Climate Equity Plan. This was a temporary position that expired.*</li> </ul>
\$2M	<p><b>Park Maintenance and Safety:</b> Well maintained and staffed parks are safe parks. We have a long way to go to appropriately staff our more than 300 parks. To this end, we should continue to add parks maintenance staff to improve park conditions, clean areas where dumping has occurred and better connect visitors with park environments. As of May 2024 PARD estimates it is more than 70 FTEs down from what would be best practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least 16 new FTEs for regular maintenance needs. According to the formula based on 2014 maintenance, PARD reports they need at least 16 new FTEs to keep up with the maintenance demands based on the acquisition of new land and the opening of newly built parks and amenities that need care. If they don't get at least these 16 positions, the city will see a decline in regular park maintenance.</li> </ul> <p>4 current temp positions within the maintenance team are dedicated specifically to unhoused encampment clean ups on parkland. These 4 positions spend everyday cleaning up the debris from abandoned encampments and as a dedicated team they prevent maintenance schedules being disrupted by pulling maintenance jobs off regular maintenance to respond to encampments. These positions should be</p>



	<p>put in this year's budget as FTEs, but at a minimum they should be added as temps for another year.</p> <p>PARD should conduct a study of how to expand its “grow zones” where climate smart mowing is appropriate thus saving considerable funding for this item. Mowing is necessary in some recreational areas but is not necessary or even desirable in many other areas where rewilding is better for water protection, biodiversity, shade and beauty.</p>
\$300,000	<p><b>Tenant Education, Stabilization Support, and Community-based Agreement Support:</b> Create a new program to provide tenants with education on their rights, assistance with formalizing community-based agreement support in the case of redevelopment, including mobile home park redevelopment, and other forms of stabilization support. These new services should be provided in conjunction with legal representation in order to leverage that work and ensure that residents are provided with legally sound advice.</p>
\$1M	<p><b>Displacement Prevention Navigators:</b> Expand the displacement prevention navigator program to include more neighborhoods and expanded availability and make this pilot program permanent. It is critical to connect vulnerable residents to affordable housing opportunities. The displacement prevention navigators help connect vulnerable residents to services and programs in a culturally-competent and community-focused manner with the aim of community stabilization. The City should expand on the program funded last year, partner with organizations doing similar work currently, and provide this service in additional neighbors that are vulnerable to gentrification. Displacement prevention and reentry navigation services must include community connectors that conduct outreach and education but also navigators that can provide enrollment support for affordable housing and reentry programs.</p>
\$350,000	<p><b>Fair Housing Education, Support, and Testing:</b> City funds should be utilized to ensure that residents are protected from racism and discrimination in the housing market and that designated low income units are actually open to low income applicants. This funding should be used to contract services to support residents in investigating and reporting fair housing violations, fair housing testing and low income unit availability. Results of testing shall be reported to the appropriate enforcement agency.</p>

<p>\$300,000</p>	<p><b>Emergency Supplemental Assistance for Low Income Residents:</b>  City funds should be designated to launch a pilot program that provides emergency gap funding to lower income families that earn less than 60% Median Family Income and are experiencing hardships. Many low income families may be one hardship away from losing housing or other basic needs and it is critical to fill this gap. These funds would be a one-time direct cash assistance payment for emergency needs outside of rental, mortgage, or tax payments. These funds can be used to supplement losses due to a hardship or be used to cover emergency household expenses. When funded, we urge distribution be based on need.</p>
<p>\$4.5M</p>	<p><b>Inclement Weather Shelter Model :</b> The City should fund an additional \$4.5 million in addition to what is currently allocated for inclement weather shelters. Significant gaps remain in service provision during inclement weather. These gaps include direct outreach to neighbors in need, operational support, community feedback and engagement, and continual model review and evolution. For people going to city-owned emergency centers in emergencies and inclement weather, a system that precipitates limited-to-no access to adequate notice and resources for preparation is less than ideal and can lead to further traumatization of already vulnerable populations going through an active crisis. It is important to note that inclement weather is not exclusive to extreme cold, but also includes extreme heat, wind, fire, and rain. This funding should include continuation of existing inclement weather center programming, while expanding the lens of inclement weather response to include multi-layered approaches of support Shelters and centers must attend to and provide for the needs of unhoused people and others in need of emergency relief, which may or may not receive support from the Resiliency Hubs. This response does not work in a silo and must be paired with wrap-around service provision throughout transition into shelter to ensure the health and safety of Austinites during inclement weather.</p> <p>Funding for inclement weather support must address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Model review, expansion, and evolution</li> <li>● Increasing the budget per person for food</li> <li>● Materials related to weatherization</li> <li>● Administrative Personnel to ensure clients receive services they are applicable for</li> <li>● Service provider mental health services</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General operations expansion</li> <li>● Professional services including but not limited to culturally competent mental health personnel</li> <li>● A dedicated mental health space in each shelter</li> <li>● Supplemental programmatic services</li> <li>● Larger grants to singular grant holders shall have maximum flexibility to distribute funds with only high level reporting requirements to encourage public-private collaborative models and service provision.</li> <li>● Training of Austin &amp; Travis County employees</li> <li>● Supplies neighbors can exit with to transition back to their normality</li> <li>● Improved and expanded transportation to and from camps</li> <li>● Upgraded sleeping supplies</li> <li>● Shelter &amp; Services specifically for families</li> <li>● Wrap around service provision from street to shelter</li> <li>● Transport staffing and alignment</li> </ul>
<p>\$1.3M</p>	<p><b>Community Coalition Crisis Response Program:</b> While Covid caused multiple closures of supportive services during critical times it also allowed for the evolution of a local, community driven coalition model that currently engages 100s of volunteers from local neighborhoods, restaurants and communities to collaborate in an effort to support the most marginalized during Texas' inclement weather crisis. Multi-year fund directly supporting the efforts of the coalition that currently provide direct outreach, community engagement, shelter-in-place support, and crisis response services to vulnerable communities during emergencies and inclement weather conditions. Priority to be given to community based organizations separate from shelters so that assistance can be provided even when shelter thresholds have not been met. Funding should support collaboration and support community-driven neighborhood efforts including the engagement of local churches and privately owned &amp; operated warming centers and pop-up shelters with annual budgets of \$250K or less. These current efforts support an additional 1000 people during winter storms, hail, floods, heat warnings &amp; weather crisis.</p> <p><b>Model Expansion:</b> \$150,000 -- This allocation will support a current model review and multi year expansion to include measurable outcomes and engagement, to include ongoing assessments of access to needs and supplies including basic needs,</p>

and the establishment of a mentorship program pairing experienced organizers with newcomers to foster knowledge exchange and capacity building within the community-led response network.

**Community Collaborative Preparation Efforts, Supply Drives & Meals:** \$200,000 -- Funding to support community-led efforts in preparing for crises, including

- organizing supply drives for essential items such as blankets, food, water, hygiene products, and other necessities.
- purchasing preparation supplies for shelter-in-place support, including sleeping bags, tarps, and meals for individuals facing crises or inclement weather conditions.
- engaging local restaurants & businesses in providing donations & on site support
- Expansion of storage of shared supplies

**Capacity Building for Collaborative Organizations:** \$250,000  
Funds dedicated to providing support growth among neighborhood organizations dedicated to providing their neighbors with support during crisis, increasing access to food & services. Prioritize to be given to organizations with annual budgets of \$250,000 or less.

**Temporary Shelters & Mobile Services Stations:** \$250,000:  
Budget for establishing, re-establishing and maintaining temporary and mobile warming/cooling stations and pop up shelters in locations accessible to vulnerable communities, providing a safe haven during crises or inclement weather. This includes support in re-engaging churches & previous safe havens closed due to Covid.

**Personnel, Training, and Education for Community-Led Shelters:** \$150,000 -- Allocation for hiring personnel, such as part-time employees (PTEs), and providing training and education for community members involved in operating and managing community-led shelters and warming centers.

\$4 million

**Street Outreach Services, Case Managers, and Peer Support Specialists:** The City must invest in a significant increase in funding to expand the case management workforce if we wish to truly address homelessness. Currently, people experiencing homelessness face a six-month waiting list to access case management services. Case managers across Austin are facing caseloads upwards of 25

	<p>people at a time. These funds should be utilized to ensure an increase in traditional case managers available in traditional social service settings, as well as a significant investment in street-based outreach teams that are rooted in a peer outreach model. The City must provide low-barrier funds for teams of people with lived experience with homelessness, mental health support, substance use, and incarceration to reach folks and provide connections to housing and case management.</p>
<p>\$ 8 million</p>	<p><b>Strengthen Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and create a bridge to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):</b></p> <p>There are approximately 600 people in rapid rehousing (RRH) programs right now who qualify for permanent supportive housing (PSH.) In 2019 HUD <a href="#">shared guidance</a> for localities to use RRH as a “bridge” to PSH. HUD emphasized that in order for RRH to work for people who qualified for PSH—those chronically homeless, people with disabilities, and/or chronic health conditions—cities would need to ensure adequate PSH units for people to exit RRH stably housed. In order to transition these individuals from RRH to PSH, the City needs to fund additional PSH vouchers and services.</p>
<p>\$4 million</p>	<p><b>Service Funding for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):</b> As new PSH units come online, the City should set aside dollars to cover the operating and service costs for units. These dollars will need to be expanded in the future and other funding sources identified to support all the PSH units coming online within the next several years. It is crucial that PSH units come paired with appropriate funding for operations and support services.</p>
<p>\$1.575M</p>	<p><b>Early Childhood Education and Development:</b></p> <p>In order for child care to be successful, there needs to be an investment in the Early Childhood system. There is and continues to be a need for City of Austin investment in Early Childhood Education (ECE) &amp; Child Care both to sustain the existing child care workforce who are providing the essential care working families depend on and to address gaps in availability of affordable (subsidized) care for those still in need.</p> <p>We urge the City Council to invest in a multi-year allocation through Austin Public Health for Early Childhood Education and Development to support home-based licensed registered child care</p>

providers and [Family, Friend, Neighbor \(FFN\) caregivers](#) with professional development and economic relief.

\$500,000 Early childhood education and development scholarships

- Addresses the current WFS waitlist for child care subsidies by providing an alternative option for affordable care.
- Directly dispersed to child care centers & home-based supports parents with high needs, prioritizing local home-based.

\$500,000 Pilot Early Childhood mini-grants providing emergency financial relief for home-based licensed providers and Family, Friend, Neighbor (FFN) caregivers

\$250,000 Pilot an ECE no-cost lending libraries & EC resource centers for child care providers and families (toys, curriculum, technology, etc) available at Austin Public Health Neighborhood Centers and Austin Public Library libraries.

\$250,000 Funding a future contract with a qualified nonprofit, selected through a competitive bidding process, to provide Health Insurance Support & [HealthCare.gov](#) navigation specifically for the childcare care workforce:

- Education and support about required documentation
- Scheduling appointments with EC providers when they are available

\$75,000 [Building Comprehensive Networks Grant](#)

The [Building Comprehensive Networks \(BCN\) Grant](#), from [Home Grown Child Care](#), is about building a [network/ resource hub](#) for Austin/Travis County home-based providers. Home Grown defines comprehensive networks as “... durable infrastructure that are positioned to tackle the big issues facing our home- based child care sector: quality; sustainability; provider well-being; and connecting providers and families to additional services.”

In November 2024 the City of Austin, Austin Public Health, will have the opportunity to apply in FY 2025 and FY 2026 for up to \$75,000 per year in implementation grant funds that can be used to build the provider network. The implementation funds will require a 100% match from the City of Austin. When planning the FY 2026 budget, the City of Austin will need to include transition

	<p>funding to include an Austin/Travis County comprehensive network into the FY 2027 baseline budget.</p>
\$15M	<p><b>Resilience Hubs:</b> When there is a climate stressor or shock resulting in residents seeking shelter, water, backup power or other emergency needs, non-city/non-agency community groups adjacent to the facilities fill a critical role to the public and need direct city investment and collaboration. The community-based organizations include, but are not limited to, churches and neighborhood groups that can or do help people at home with weatherization, community resilience, and disaster preparedness.</p> <p>We urge the city to invest \$15M (\$500,000-\$1,000,000/group) for 15-30 community groups with established relationships with the communities adjacent to resilience hubs.</p>
\$1 million	<p><b>Harm Reduction Services and Infrastructure:</b> Continue \$1M funding and put in the baseline. The overdose epidemic -- including the potential for mass deaths from accidental fentanyl poisoning as Austin recently experienced -- will not be eliminated by arrest and prosecution, but must be met as a health care problem starting with direct assistance from harm reduction programs. Harm reduction relies on evidence-based practices and practical tools to reduce the risk of fatal overdose and complications from drug use through non-judgmental care and provision of naloxone. Austin has only one comprehensive harm reduction program, primarily serving Austin's unhoused community, and offering drop-in and outreach services including overdose reversal medication (naloxone) and training, wound care, recovery coaching, referrals to HIV and HCV testing, substance use treatment, housing and other services.</p> <p>Additional funds are needed to expand hours of operation and to reach more people. Not only is an increase in overdose reversal and prevention supplies needed, but low-barrier and needs-based implementation efforts need to be prioritized, as do the grassroots organizations led by the people who are most directly affected</p>
\$250k	<p><b>Immigrant Legal Services for Low Income Families:</b> While we believe the need is far greater, we align with the Hispanic/Latinx Quality of Life Commission recommendation for \$700k continued funding (<b>ongoing</b>, to be included in the baseline) plus a modest \$150k increase. In order to track the increased demand</p>

	for services if SB 4 is authorized by the courts, we recommend an additional \$100k for the legal services provider to report on service demands in addition to providing the needed services.
\$800,000	<b>Equity Office:</b> The CIB assumes and supports continuing the Equity Office at current \$2.97M funding levels and adding \$800k to ensure that it can expand its work guiding major departments like PARD in planning and implementing improved East side services, continue to protect the city’s equity goals in the implementation of the climate and food plans, work with the OPO as it restarts its oversight of APD, while continuing PISAB Undoing Racism and other anti-racism trainings for city staff and community members.
\$3M	<b>Family Stabilization Grant:</b> Expand the Family Stabilization Grant, an expansion of the <a href="#">successful Austin Guaranteed Income Pilot</a> and invest \$2.7M to increase service levels compared to Fiscal Year 2024 for 225 households, at \$12,000/household + \$300,000 in operating support.
\$250,000	<b>Logistical Support for Austinites Seeking Abortion Care:</b> With one of the nation’s most severe abortion bans in effect in Texas, Austinites seeking abortion care must travel hundreds or thousands of miles to other states where abortion is legal. Additional City funding of \$250,000 can support Austinites traveling to access abortion care, including support for airfare, gas reimbursements, hotel stays, ride shares, childcare stipends, companion travel, and food. Now in its fourth year, the City’s Reproductive Health Grant funding was significantly constrained two years ago, limiting funds to education and outreach for contraception and reproductive health care only. Austinites seeking abortion care in other states need support from the City. Reestablishing logistical abortion funding is critical to meet the healthcare gaps of City residents.
\$670,000	<b>Capacity building grants.</b> Building Capacity for small, local neighborhood organizations addressing food insecurity and accessibility. Priority given to BIPOC-led organizations with annual budgets of \$60k or less: \$220,000k -- this will be a one time expense.  The following recommendations were also approved by the Joint Sustainability Committee. <b>Food Plan Implementation Full Time Employee - \$150,000/year</b>



- (1) Food Plan Project Manager be added to the Office of Sustainability (est. \$150k)-- The Austin/Travis County Food Plan will soon be completed. The plan includes a number of strategies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Austin Climate Equity Plan also includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food consumption and to improve carbon sequestration as part of food production. This work is complex and has the potential to yield significant emissions and equity benefits. In addition to implementing the Food Plan, this position should be responsible for implementation of the strategies related to food consumption and food production in the Climate Equity Plan.

**General Budget Recommendation - Food Plan Coordinators within relevant city departments Food Plan Coordinator, Full Time Employee - Austin Public Health: \$120,000/year**

Create one full-time equivalent position within Austin Public Health to support the implementation of the Austin/Travis County Food Plan once approved. In addition to facilitating the implementation of the Food Plan within the purview of APH, this position should be responsible for aligning those Food Plan strategies related to food consumption and food access with existing programs within Austin Health Department. **Food Plan Coordinator, Full Time Employee - Austin Resource Recovery: \$120,000/year**

Create one full-time equivalent position within Austin Resource Recovery to support the implementation of the Austin/Travis County Food Plan once approved.

- (1) Food Plan Project Coordinator be added to Austin Resource Recovery. (est. \$120,000) In addition to facilitating the implementation of the Food Plan within the purview of ARR, this position should be responsible for aligning Food Plan strategies related to waste reduction, food recovery and organics diversion programs already established within Austin Resource Recovery.

**Food Plan Coordinator, Full Time Employee - Economic Development Department: \$120,000/year**

	<p>Create one full-time equivalent position within the Economic Development Department to support the implementation of the Austin/Travis County Food Plan once approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● (1) Food Plan Project Coordinator be added to the Economic Development Department. (est. \$120,000) In addition to facilitating the implementation of the Food Plan within the purview of EDD, this position should be responsible for aligning Food Plan strategies related to economic development, infrastructure investment and financial assistance with programs already established within EDD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Food Plan Coordinator, Full Time Employee - Equity Office: \$120,000/year</b></p> <p>Create one full-time equivalent position within the Equity Office to support the implementation of the Austin/Travis County Food Plan once approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● (1) Food Plan Project Coordinator be added to Austin Resource Recovery. (est. \$120,000) In addition to facilitating the implementation of the Food Plan within the purview of the Equity Office, this position should be responsible for aligning Food Plan strategies related to equity, access and food justice with programs already established within the Equity Office.</li> </ul>
\$850,000	<p><b>East Austin Performing Arts Funding:</b> Historically underserved districts like Six Square do not have the economic advantage of higher visibility areas like downtown, which in turn, hinders artists who live and perform in East Austin. The City of Austin supports cultural music operations, however other performing arts disciplines, such as theatre and dance, have unique needs for spaces to rehearse and perform. East Austin arts organizations struggle to cover costs of rent, facilities, personnel, marketing, and other operating costs. Through the Cultural Arts Funding Program, the City of Austin recognizes the performing arts has a significant function in the community and has made investments through the Nexus, Thrive, Elevate and CSAP programs, however due to performing arts companies' unique needs, additional funding and funding stability is needed. The City of Austin should aggressively support arts organizations and individuals who primarily serve East Austin through rent reimbursement, non-restricted funding of operational costs, artists subsidies, and childcare vouchers.</p>

\$500,000	<b>Austin Retail Food Initiative:</b> Invest \$500,000 for the Austin Retail Food Initiative for startup costs associated with the pilot for a community owned grocery cooperative in Del Valle to serve residents in southeast Austin.
\$1,000,000	<b>Budget for the Resilience Office:</b> To bolster the city's ability to prevent and respond to crises, as well as improving baseline community strength and resilience, this funding will facilitate such operational activities such as: the development of resilience programs, coordinating efforts through and with resilience hubs, enhance community-based emergency preparedness, and strengthen community health initiatives through partnerships with local groups and city departments. This investment is crucial for sustainable urban development and enhancing the well-being of all residents.

\*Joint Sustainability Committee budget recommendations:

<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=424461>

\*\*State workforce planning: Accelerating Alignment

[https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/twic/System\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_2024-2031.pdf](https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/twic/System_Strategic_Plan_2024-2031.pdf); Texas

Workforce Investment Council - <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/twic>; Texas Workforce Report -

[https://lmi.twc.texas.gov/shared/PDFs/Workforce\\_Report.pdf](https://lmi.twc.texas.gov/shared/PDFs/Workforce_Report.pdf); Tech talent is still hard to find, despite layoffs in the sector:

<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/technology/tech-talent-gap-and-skills-shortage-make-recruitment-difficult.html>