

**2018-2019 BUDGET QUESTION**  
***Response to Request for Information***

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**DEPARTMENT:** Watershed Protection

**REQUEST NO.:** 158

**REQUESTED BY:** Tovo

**DATE REQUESTED:** 9/4/18

**DATE POSTED:** 9/6/18

**REQUEST:** Please provide a descriptive plan regarding how Watershed will be responding to encampments. Will this work be done in tandem with case workers or other social service providers? Can this funding amount be used to invest in public restrooms, as well?

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**RESPONSE:**

At present, Watershed Protection Department (WPD) responds to homeless camp cleanups on an on-call basis, such as through 3-1-1 generated work orders or calls received directly from citizens. This work is currently performed by WPD Field Operations personnel and is funded through the Department's annual operating budget. It is anticipated that some amount of this work will continue to be performed with in-house resources, particularly relatively small cleanups or when quick action may be required (e.g., storm water flow conveyance concerns).

With the funding approved in WPD's FY19 proposed budget, the Department will contract with an outside vendor to supplement in-house resources for homeless camp cleanups. This plan is under development in advance of the start of the fiscal year and will be implemented as soon as the procurement of a vendor is complete.

The utilization of an outside vendor is intended to reduce the burden placed on WPD personnel, improve public safety, and allow the Department to implement a more comprehensive approach that will include coordination with ongoing COA wraparound services provided by the City's Homelessness Outreach Street Team (HOST) team, and other social services providers.

WPD is exploring the use of a contract similar to the one currently being used by TxDOT via the Texas Institute for Blind and Handicapped (TIBH). Further, WPD will leverage from the lessons learned by TxDOT including draft guidelines to approach and interact with persons experiencing homelessness such as Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training.

Funding in the FY19 WPD proposed budget does not include investment in public restrooms, however, the Austin Transportation Department is currently contemplating construction of two restrooms in the downtown area. There is also potential for a restroom at Waterloo Park as part of the ongoing district improvements.