



Note: Due to time constraints, this recommendation was provisionally authorized by the CDC (March 8, 2022) for submission to COA Budget recommendation portal prior to text being finalized. The CDC will vote to memorialize this finalized version at **April 12, 2022** meeting for procedural prudence. As such, highlighted items will be updated accordingly on the finalized recommendation

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
FY22/23 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION 20220331-02**

Date: March 31, 2021

Subject: Increase Economic (Direct) Assistance For Renters

Motioned By: Vice Chair Karen Paup

Seconded By: Commissioner Cheryl Thompson

Authored By: Commissioner Kendra Garrett

Recommendation

The Community Development Commission recommends that the City Manager increase the budgeted amount for economic assistance to renters by at least an additional \$15MM, with suggested allocations of \$5MM to be disbursed through Austin Public Health (APH) Neighborhood Services Unit and \$10MM to be disbursed through Housing and Planning Department (HPD) rental assistance programs. We recommend that these dollars be allocated from the general revenue and/or from applicable federal funds allocated to the city through whichever configuration results in the least and/or most flexible restrictions on expenditure to assure that economic relief most quickly reaches Austinites who will require it.

Rationale

Over the last year and half, the City's RENT program has provided \$35MM in rental assistance to over 8,000 households. That is a tremendous feat! This funding source, along with food distribution, utility assistance, and many organizations and neighbors help out residents in need have staved off thousands of evictions and reduced the likelihood of a family from falling into poverty. We cannot thank the city enough. However, two years later, Austin residents are still affected by the pandemic, compounded by high gas prices, high inflation, and federal interest rate hikes. With food, household staples, and rents increasing, we cannot afford to lose sight of making sure our residents remain stably housed and able to financially meet life's other demands.

In early March 2022, Travis County (TC) [announced](#) that \$9M of TC general revenue and ARPA funds will be used for rental assistance. This is in addition to the \$18MM TC has spent on rental assistance due to the impact of Covid-19. In less than a week, the county received nearly 4,700 applications, effectively forecasting complete extinguishment of that funding source. March 1, 2022 also marked the final expiration (per State statute) of Travis County's moratorium on evictions "Travis County recognizes there is still a great need for rental assistance. We remain committed to prioritizing and serving our most vulnerable communities," said Pilar Sanchez, TC HHS.

We recommend that the City strive to continue to meet the need for assistance by providing \$5 to \$10M in additional rental/economic funding for residents, as the effect of the pandemic lingers for many Austin residents.

Date of Approval: March 08, 2022

Vote: A motion to provisionally approve the recommendation was approved on Vice Chair Paup's motion, Commissioner Thompson's second, on a 9-0-0 vote.

Absent: Joe Deshotel, Bertha Delgado, Miriam Garcia, Michael Tolliver, Kendra Garrett

Against: None

Attest: *CDC Private Sector Appointee, Commissioner Kendra Garrett*

Date: 03/31/2022