

24 **WHEREAS**, a guaranteed income empowers recipients to address their
25 most urgent needs and provides a cushion for unpredictable expenses, external
26 shocks, and volatility; and,

27 **WHEREAS**, the mission statement in the City of Austin's Strategic
28 Direction 2023 highlights the values of economic opportunity and equity, which
29 are echoed throughout the numerous outcomes, indicators, anchors, and strategies
30 that guide the City's priorities and governance; and,

31 **WHEREAS**, the City's 2023 Strategic Direction Anchors itself to Equity,
32 Affordability, Innovation, Sustainability and Resiliency, Proactive Prevention,
33 Community Trust and Relationships and Across ALL Outcomes- Values
34 supporting Quality of Life in Austin; and,

35 **WHEREAS**, one of the City's Strategic Direction 2023 Strategic Anchors is
36 EQUITY, which means to advance equitable outcomes, and the City is leading
37 with a lens of racial equity and healing, and understanding that race is the primary
38 predictor of outcomes, therefore it is time to recognize, understand, and address
39 racism at its various levels: personal, institutional, structural, and systemic; and,

40 **WHEREAS**, one of the City's Strategic Direction 2023 Strategic Anchors is
41 INNOVATION, which means that, in Austin, we define innovation as any project
42 that is new to you with an uncertain outcome; aimed at addressing pressing
43 challenges that affect our community, human-centered innovation means a new
44 approach to exercising authority and decision-making that starts with the needs,
45 behaviors, and experiences of our community, and continues through a process of
46 questioning assumptions, engaging with empathy, stewarding divergent thought,
47 reflecting, and learning; and,

48 **WHEREAS**, one of the City’s Strategic Direction Strategic Anchors is
49 **PROACTIVE PREVENTION**, which means that the City embraces the dual
50 responsibility of being responsive to emerging challenges while also dialing up
51 efforts to prevent problems on the front end; and,

52 **WHEREAS**, one of the City’s Strategic Direction 2023 Strategic Anchors is
53 **COMMUNITY TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS**, which means that Austin is a
54 place where leadership comes from the people; and,

55 **WHEREAS**, the City of Austin can lead in the state of Texas by launching a
56 more elaborate guaranteed income initiative and cash-based program through
57 policies that help working people and families become more resilient to financial
58 emergencies, make rent, cover childcare, and put food on the table as a response to
59 the coronavirus pandemic; and,

60 **WHEREAS**, providing a baseline of stability and security to Austin
61 residents can have an economic ripple effect, providing much needed boosts to our
62 local economy and small businesses; and,

63 **WHEREAS**, Austin City Council has successfully begun implementing
64 direct aid programs, passing the Relief in a State of Emergency (RISE) Fund,
65 Resolution No. 20200409-081 and Ordinance No. 20200409-087, to allocate and
66 appropriate funds to provide direct relief services and direct financial assistance to
67 vulnerable Austin-area residents in underserved communities, who have been
68 impacted by COVID-19 and who may not receive other forms of assistance; and,

69 **WHEREAS**, the City of Austin’s Equity Office partnered with local
70 community groups like the Family Independence Initiative (FII) to distribute direct
71 cash aid to Austin residents, and through this partnership between FII and the City

72 of Austin’s Equity Office, FII distributed more than 2.6 million dollars directly to
73 over 1,300 Austin families and individuals in 2020; and,

74 **WHEREAS**, according to surveys of recipients conducted by FII, 93%
75 reported they would use the funds from such direct cash aid for basic needs such as
76 housing, food, utilities and other bills, and 53% identified their race/ethnicity as
77 Hispanic/Latino, 29% as Black, and 11% as white, while 77% of recipients
78 identified as females and the average household size was 4; and,

79 **WHEREAS**, the City of Austin's Austin Public Health, Equity Office, and
80 other City departments have worked to implement and fund equity grant programs,
81 driven by community needs and designed to support work on-the-ground reaching
82 specific populations; and,

83 **WHEREAS**, cities across the country have begun to implement guaranteed
84 income pilot programs to provide a steady and reliable income stream that helps
85 recipients respond to needs as they arise and at their own discretion; and,

86 **WHEREAS**, previous and ongoing experiments of universal basic income
87 programs have found the following results for participants: better educational
88 outcomes, substantive improvements in physical and mental health, significant
89 reduction of predatory debt, and greater confidence in having basic necessities met,
90 with no appreciable impacts on the labor market; and,

91 **WHEREAS**, the Economic Prosperity Commission’s budget
92 recommendation 20210129-003b in January 2021 encourages the development of a
93 universal basic income program, similar to that of cities facing affordable housing
94 crises such as Stockton, CA, to help combat displacement, curb houselessness, and
95 help individuals out of houselessness; and,

96 **WHEREAS**, the Hispanic Quality of Life Commission’s recommendation
97 20210310-5a in March of 2021 highlights the need for universal basic income,
98 guaranteed income, and/or other form of regular payments to be examined, piloted,
99 and explored with individuals/families in most need of chronic circumstances; and,

100 **WHEREAS**, the most recent report from the Community Equity
101 Reinvestment Working Group of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force
102 expressed support and included their recommendations for immediate, direct
103 economic support for Austin residents as a means toward more long term and
104 sustainable investment in communities of color and working class families; and,

105 **WHEREAS**, the Austin City Council has begun setting the foundation to
106 make a more elaborate guaranteed income pilot possible, having facilitated a few
107 successful initiatives, such as the RISE Fund, and the City has proven the
108 infrastructure, mechanisms, and expertise needed to launch such a pilot for a
109 guaranteed income program; and,

110 **WHEREAS**, in addition to the multiple RISE programs implemented by the
111 City of Austin, there are innovative pilot programs occurring locally as well as
112 nationally, one example of which is a recent partnership between FII and local
113 philanthropic funds (\$1.2M) that partnered with 125 families on a 12-month pilot
114 starting in March; this initiative will have invested \$12,000 per family over 12
115 months (\$1,000/month), and a baseline report of this pilot will be shared in June
116 2021; and,

117 **WHEREAS**, the City of Austin is continuously exploring new approaches
118 to anti-displacement, housing stabilization, and public safety through the work of
119 the Innovation Office, Equity Office, Neighborhood Housing and Community
120 Development; and,

121 **WHEREAS**, on March 4, 2021, Austin City Council committed to
122 acknowledging and correcting the City’s systemically racist practices and
123 eradicating the effects of the City’s systemically racist past practices in Resolution
124 No. 20210304-067, and guaranteed income programs also serve as a form of repair
125 for the historic and structural economic inequities that Black, indigenous, and other
126 communities of color have faced for hundreds of years nationally and locally;

127 **NOW, THEREFORE,**

128 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

129 The City hereby affirms its commitment to furthering the economic security
130 of its residents, recognizing that the key to Austin’s prosperity is its people. The
131 hard work, resilience, and diversity of Austin’s communities have driven its
132 success, and the city thrives when we prioritize equity in investing in residents,
133 especially those who have been historically excluded from the same opportunities
134 as others in our economic efforts.

135 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

136 The City Manager is directed to conduct a study on current and past direct
137 cash assistance efforts, including tracking the current 12-month pilot with FII as
138 well as measuring the impacts of past and future RISE Fund allocations. The City
139 manager is directed to develop actionable recommendations on how the city or
140 other public or private partners could continue or build upon similar direct aid
141 programs, outlining the findings and exploring what future implementations of a
142 more robust guaranteed income initiative can look like for the City of
143 Austin. Specific attention should be given to understanding how race and gender
144 equity is being furthered through these direct aid programs by considering the
145 selection process of the families involved in the pilot programs and the recipients

146 of past RISE Fund allocations, as well as tracking the impact the direct cash
147 assistance has had on their housing stability, economic opportunities, and mental
148 well-being.

149 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

150 The City Manager is directed to amend the Federal Legislative agenda to
151 indicate support for a guaranteed income and advocate for it at the federal level.

152 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

153 The City Manager is directed to report back to Council by August 1, 2021,
154 with the analysis and report requested by this Resolution.

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158 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2021 **ATTEST:** _____
159 Jannette S. Goodall
160 City Clerk
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