



## Rebuilding Systems: Investments in Shovel-Ready Projects

Social Service Navigation, Workforce Development, School-Age Child Care

**United Way for Greater Austin’s five-year strategic plan is centered on community coalition-building as a powerful vehicle for fighting poverty.**

ConnectATX is a United Way led, model community platform for robust, tailored social service navigation that can track when services are received. The Austin/Travis 2-Gen Coalition is a collaborative of service providers and parents focused on increasing economic mobility for whole families and ensuring that families with young children in Travis County are financially stable. The 2-Gen approach serves parents and children simultaneously and leads to better financial outcomes for both generations. The new Early Grade-Level Reading Coalition focuses on ending the racial/ethnic disparities in reading achievement for young school-aged children. The Success By 6 Coalition works to ensure that all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed by addressing disparities in services for children from families with low income and BIPOC communities. The Success By 6 recommendations attached to this document were also submitted to the City by the Coalition Leadership Team.

**The following recommendations for 2.5-year investments align with the goals and strategies of these robust community coalitions AND the City’s strategic outcome of “Economic Opportunity and Affordability”.**

Overarching Goal	Requested Funding	Annual Cost	Total Cost <sup>1</sup>
Provide one-stop-shop for individuals in Travis County navigating social services and accessing benefits	<b>NEW FUNDING to SCALE United Way’s ConnectATX, a free navigation service.</b> ConnectATX builds on the state 2-1-1 system by providing skilled navigators who spend significant time with callers; a robust, easily navigated, mobile-friendly website for self-service searches; a built-in <i>social determinants of health screener</i> for more comprehensive referrals; and closed-loop functionality that determines whether individuals received the services requested. Requested public dollars match philanthropic funding and will allow United Way to create detailed reports about community needs and gaps in social services. As a result of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and other investments in rebuilding post-COVID, we anticipate the social services landscape will become increasingly complex for individuals to navigate – new services, new eligibility requirements. The request will pay for three additional staff members to meet this need.	\$220,000	\$550,000
Increase the availability of workforce development programs leading to a living wage and benefits.	<b>NEW FUNDING to EXPAND a workforce development program targeting young parents with low income.</b> Young parents are significantly less likely to complete job training or post-secondary education and are challenged when navigating the workforce system without significant supports. This funding will expand a 2-Gen United Way program that targets and supports young parents (18-24 years) in participating in middle-skill jobs training. Young parents receive basic income supports of \$400 per week during the 4-6 week job-training programs, as well as intensive case management services, the technology needed to participate in the trainings, and free high-quality child care. Parents are also coached in applying for state child care subsidies and finding child care for when they enter the workforce. Total investment per participant averages \$4,000, which includes the	\$120,000	\$300,000

<sup>1</sup> 2.5-year timeline



	cost of case management and recruitment. This funding request will support 30 young parents enrollment in this program. <sup>2</sup>		
Increase the availability of high-quality, school-age child care for working families living in or near poverty	<b>NEW FUNDING to IMPROVE school-age child care in Austin.</b> ARPA includes significant funding to states to increase the number of child care slots available to working families. We request local funding for the Andy Roddick Foundation’s Learn All The Time (LATT) initiative to improve the <i>quality</i> of school-age child care services for elementary-age children from families with low income in the City of Austin. LATT professionals will use the vetted Youth Program Quality Instrument to assess 36 sites and make site improvement plans. Quality coaches will work with the programs to implement the recommendations. An estimated 1,500 children will benefit from higher quality services annually.	\$100,000	\$250,000
Increase the availability of high-quality, school-age child care for working families living in or near poverty	<b>NEW FUNDING to IMPROVE school-age child care across Travis County which will leverage federal Americorps funding.</b> Data suggests that children living in low-income households have experienced significant learning loss during the COVID crisis, exacerbating an already wide gap in school outcomes. We request funding for United Way to develop and deploy 100 Americorp volunteers (college students or community members) as early literacy and math tutors embedded in out-of-school time programs throughout the County. Federal funding covers most of the stipend cost for Americorp volunteers, but local match is required and funding for administration, training, and quality monitoring will be required. This program will be modeled after similar programs across the country that have reduced or eliminated summer learning loss, and improved school outcomes for participating students.	\$250,000	\$625,000

<sup>2</sup> United Way partners with Workforce Solutions on this project, and the data gathered on participants’ training retention, job seeking, and income increases will be analyzed and shared regularly with WFS staff for systems’ learning and improvements.