

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members
FROM: Adrienne Sturup, Director
DATE: April 6, 2022
SUBJECT: Social Services Youth Solicitation Process

This memorandum provides clarification regarding Austin Public Health's social services youth solicitation process. In previous years, Austin Public Health (APH) conducted one large bid process for all Social Services funding. The most recent process was in 2014 when \$13,815,277 was available for award. Since that time, there have been key environmental factors driving a revised process:

- Council direction via Strategic Direction 2023 for solicitations to be by issue area.
- 2018 APH-Equity office feedback sessions with vendors who had been unsuccessful in the solicitation process.
- 2019 Social Service Audit Report.
- Participation in the Harvard Kennedy School of Business/Bloomberg Project focused on advancing equity through the contracting process.
- Year over year increases in Social Service funding via Council directed cost of living allowances, budget recommendations from Boards and Commissions, and pilot projects to Items From Council. (i.e., panhandling)

Alignment with Strategic Direction 2023

Per the direction provided by Council through Strategic Direction 2023, Austin Public Health has moved to conduct issue area solicitations. On May 20, 2020, Austin Public Health staff presented a plan to begin the solicitation process. The entire presentation and recording of this meeting can be found at <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-council/2020/20200526-hhsc.htm>.

The table below outlines the plan for releasing the issue area solicitations with revised dates and funding amounts in the Green Columns.

Issue Area Solicitations	Planned Release date (May 2020)	Planned Amount Solicited (May 2020)	Revised Release Date	FY22 Funding Amount
Youth	Jan-21	\$ 5,146,156	Jul-21	\$ 5,675,364
Behavioral Health	Sep-21	\$ 2,154,111	Nov-21	\$ 1,656,550
Homeless	Sep-21	\$ 9,659,617	Jan-22	\$ 11,271,011
Basic Needs	Jan-23	\$ 6,113,975	Nov-22	\$ 6,813,305
Early Childhood	Jan-23	\$ 2,275,791	Jan-23	\$ 3,157,203
Workforce Development	Jan-23	\$ 2,876,631	Jan-23	\$ 3,495,079



Health Equity	Jan-24	\$	2,302,212	Oct-23	\$	3,231,183
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The presentation also highlighted changes to the process in response to and based on recommendations from the feedback sessions, the Social Service Audit, and the Harvard Kennedy School project:

- Lack of transparency
- Concerns about equity
- Concerns about legacy agreements
- Application process/requirements
- Reporting/reimbursement requirements

Youth Services Solicitation Process

Funding Priority Feedback from Community Input Sessions

APH collected feedback via virtual listening sessions held over Teams and Zoom and online surveys distributed in English and Spanish. One session involved professionals within the field of youth services, one session requested feedback from parents/guardians/caregivers, and one session requested input from young people. The questions asked were designed to help identify the categories for priority consideration during this solicitation.

Communication with Youth Issue Area Grantees

Austin Public Health informed all funded agencies of the planned solicitation timeline during the annual grantee meeting in 2019 and 2020. APH staff met with all youth-funded agencies on June 3, 2021 to inform them of the youth solicitation process and the plan for renewing agreements for shortened term for FY22. As a follow-up to the meeting, notifications were sent to all agencies with a required acknowledgement of awareness of the decreased funding amount and shortened term due to the upcoming solicitation.

Solicitation Release and Applications Received

On July 28, 2021, the department released the Youth Solicitation with a deadline for applications on September 23, 2021. Non-mandatory pre-bid meetings took place on August 4, 2021, and August 5, 2021, to provide an overview of the solicitation process and respond to potential applicants' questions. Additional documentation and information related to this solicitation can be found at <https://www.austintexas.gov/article/aph-youth-issue-area-solicitation>.

APH received 38 applications with requests for awards of \$12,267,512.

Alignment with City of Austin and Austin Public Health Priorities

The application process required all applicants to:

- choose at least one performance outcome from a list pre-selected as appropriate for the issue area and explain how the proposed program supports the outcome selected
- explain how their program will promote racial equity and complete an abbreviated self-assessment as part of the application
- demonstrate alignment with strategies from the Community Health Improvement Strategy and Strategic Direction 2023

- explain alignment and implementation of Cultural and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards.

Evaluation Teams

Evaluators included representation from Austin Public Health from the Community and Family Support Unit, Austin Healthy Adolescent Program, Neighborhood Services Unit, and Contract Compliance Unit. Additional evaluators included staff from the Equity Office, Austin Public Library, Downtown Austin Community Court, and Parks and Recreation Department.

Evaluation Factors

Applications were reviewed and scored by the evaluation panel based on responses in the following sections:

- Experience and Cultural Competence
- Program Design
- Data-Informed Program Management
- Cost Effectiveness

Additional factors were:

- Fit with the identified City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023 goal metrics: SD23 – EOA.F.1, the number, and percentage of students graduating from high school
- Appropriateness of fit of type of proposed services and the goals of the funding (Youth Services) with consideration for other issue areas which we are currently or will soon compete, such as Behavioral Health and Workforce Development that may be a better fit

Other Factors Considered

Application scores from Evaluation Panels were ranked and presented to Austin Public Health's Health Equity and Community Engagement Division leadership. Due to the large number of high scoring applications for this competition, additional criteria when determining awards:

- Distribution of funds among organizations serving racially and economically diverse priority populations as demonstrated in the application or agency reports
- Distribution of funds among a diverse range of service types within Youth Services and reasonableness of cost per client served
- Past spending and performance

The 17 agencies selected were ranked by score to determine the proportion of requested funding awarded. No agency was recommended for 100% funding to achieve equitable distribution goals and build community capacity. Agencies scoring 96 and above were recommended for award at 95%, and agencies scoring lower were recommended at decreasing intervals until the total funding was exhausted.

If you have any questions or if I can provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (512) 972-5010 or via email at Adrienne.Sturup@austintexas.gov.

Cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Stephanie Hayden-Howard, Assistant City Manager