



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Veronica Briseño, Chief Economic Recovery Officer, City of Austin  
**DATE:** September 23, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Economic Recovery Programs Update

This memorandum summarizes the City of Austin’s progress implementing several programs that the Austin City Council adopted through [Resolution No. 20200326-088](#), [Resolution No. 20200409-086](#), [Resolution No. 20200423-040](#), [Resolution No. 20200507-023](#), and [Resolution No. 20200604-040](#). **To date, the City distributed more than \$37.5 million to support and sustain local businesses, non-profit organizations, and residents that are financially impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, more than \$20 million is either currently being distributed or will soon be distributed in the coming weeks.** Table 1 on the next page shows the implementation schedule for all economic recovery programs. The Program Development Matrix in Appendix A provides more information on progress to date for each program. Appendix B features personal accounts from grant and loan recipients describing the impacts of these grant programs in their own words.

### Program Impact

The City of Austin distributed more than \$37.5 million to support and sustain local businesses, non-profit organizations, and residents that are financially impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and more than \$20 million in additional support is either currently being distributed or will soon be distributed through various programs – such as the Relief of Emergency Needs for Tenants (RENT) program, the Relief in a State of Emergency (RISE) Fund, the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps, and the relaunched Austin Non-Profit Relief Grant. More information about these programs is either currently available or will soon be available online at [ATXrecovers.com](https://www.austintexas.gov/ATXrecovers).

To the greatest extent possible, City staff continue to prioritize equity, need, and vulnerability as they create and implement these programs. Equity strategies used by City staff include circulating press releases and promotional materials in multiple languages; allowing applicants to complete and submit their applications in multiple languages; offering one-on-one application assistance to anyone who needs support; and scoring applications to account for demographic factors including race, ethnicity, and gender.

Below are summaries of each economic recovery program’s impacts on the Austin community.

- The [Austin Childcare Provider Relief Fund](#) awarded \$1.05 million in grants to 72 of 120 applicants. Sixty-eight recipients were center-based childcare providers and four were family care childcare providers. These providers collectively served 1,557 children receiving childcare subsidies.
- The [Austin Creative Space Disaster Relief Program](#) awarded \$987,943 in grants to 32 of 65 applicants. Collectively applicants requested \$3.7 million in financial assistance, which was nearly four times the \$1 million available in the fund. Grant recipients included live music venues (12), arts nonprofits (11), theaters or performance venues (7), museums or art galleries (1), and independent artists (1).

- The [Austin Creative Worker Relief Grant](#) awarded \$3.36 million to 1,877 of 5,502 applicants. Half of the funds was awarded to the 907 applicants that scored highest on the program’s equity matrix. The remaining funds were distributed through a lottery, resulting in 970 additional awards.
- The [Austin Economic Injury Bridge Loan Program](#) awarded \$645,000 in small business loans to 19 of 70 approved applicants. Fifty-one applicants declined the loan offer either due to acceptance of other federal disaster assistance or non-acceptance of loan terms.
- The [Austin Music Disaster Relief Fund](#) awarded \$1.5 million in grants to 1,497 performing musicians impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds were awarded on a first come, first serve basis.
- The [Austin Non-Profit Relief Grant](#) awarded \$3.6 million in grants to 221 to non-profit organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately \$2.4 million remains in the fund, which will be distributed in late September through the relaunched Austin Non-Profit Relief Grant with revised program eligibility. City staff anticipate applicants’ request for aid will exceed the remaining program balance.
- The [Austin Small Business Relief Grant](#) awarded \$16.2 million in grants to 885 of 2,526 applicants. Applicants submitted more than \$120 million in eligible reimbursement requests for this program, which was nearly seven times the total program fund.
- The [Relief of Emergency Needs for Tenants \(RENT\)](#) pilot awarded \$1.27 million in May, serving 1,681 households by providing direct rental assistance to landlords for one month.
- The [Relief in a State of Emergency \(RISE\) Fund](#) awarded \$9.2 million in direct support to more than 7,800 households.

**TABLE 1: ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION CALENDAR**

April 2020	May 2020	June 2020
Austin Economic Injury Bridge Loan Program	Relief of Emergency Needs for Tenants (RENT) Pilot	Austin Creative Space Disaster Relief Program
Relief in a State of Emergency (RISE)		Austin Music Disaster Relief Fund
July 2020	August 2020	September 2020
Austin Childcare Provider Relief Grant	Austin Music Disaster Relief Fund	Austin Non-Profit Relief Grant
Austin Non-Profit Relief Grant	Austin Creative Worker Relief Grant	Relief in a State of Emergency (RISE 2.0)
Austin Small Business Relief Grant	Relief of Emergency Needs for Tenants (RENT)	
October 2020*	November 2020	December 2020
Austin Civilian Conservation Corps Technical Assistance Program	TBD	TBD
Worker and Customer Safety Program		

\*Dates subject to change.

## Five-Phase Program Development Approach

City staff is tracking their progress using the five-phase approach created by the City of Austin Economic Development Department. This model allows staff and stakeholders to monitor program development from ideation through implementation. The deliverables and activities for each phase is based on lessons learned from previous grant programs that the Economic Development Department administered. Exhibit A provides more information on progress to date for each program.

### Phase One

- **Key Deliverable:** **Complete mission-critical foundational milestones**
- **Types of Activities:** Assign Economic Development Department staff to a project team  
Draft program guidelines and application materials  
Draft scopes of work and contracts for third-party administrators  
Identify internal and external support services  
Receive input from other City departments, as necessary  
Complete sector research and data analysis

### Phase Two

- **Key Deliverable:** **Finalize program materials for City Council/City Manager approval**
- **Types of Activities:** Receive Law Department review of program materials  
Receive Equity Office review of program materials  
Finalize all program documents created in Phase One  
Interview potential third-party administrators  
Conduct contract negotiations with the third-party administrator

### Phase Three

- **Key Deliverable:** **Receive necessary City Council/City Manager approvals**
- **Types of Activities:** Receive City Council approval for third-party contracts  
Complete internal staff briefings regarding third-party relationships  
Host kick-off meetings with the third-party administrator  
Finalize a communications and stakeholder engagement plan  
Establish a framework for collecting and reporting metrics and data

### Phase Four

- **Key Deliverable:** **Manage successful program implementation**
- **Types of Activities:** Provide regular updates to the City Council and City executives  
Implement the communications and stakeholder engagement plan  
Review eligible and complete applications  
Host/record webinars and/or information sessions  
Track data for future reporting  
Distribute funds to applicants  
Display information on a data dashboard  
Analyze real-time program performance  
Provide support services for stakeholders (e.g. application assistance)

### Phase Five

- **Key Deliverable:** **Program completion and closeout**
- **Types of Activities:** Report final program metrics  
Complete compliance reviews  
Verify all third-party contract deliverables are complete  
Produce program summary highlighting lessons learned

## Conclusion

City staff is working to ensure each program effectively and equitably addresses the needs of local businesses, non-profit organizations, and residents impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Our Economic Recovery Strike Team will update this memo every 10 business days. Please contact me at [Veronica.Briseno@austintexas.gov](mailto:Veronica.Briseno@austintexas.gov) if you have questions regarding this update.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, Deputy City Manager  
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Sylvia Holt-Rabb, Acting Director, Economic Development Department  
Susana Carbajal, Assistant Director, Economic Development Department  
Rosie Truelove, Director, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development  
Stephanie Hayden, Director, Austin Public Health  
Lucia Athens, Chief Sustainability Officer

Appendix A. Program Development Matrix (Programs Listed Alphabetically)

Fund	Funding Allocation	Program Description	Phase	Actions Completed Since Previous Memo	Tasks for Next 14 days
<b>Austin Childcare Provider Relief Grant</b> (formerly the Childcare Support Fund)	\$1.05 million	Grants up to \$50,000 for eligible childcare providers in Austin.	Phase 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awarded initial allocation and the additional \$148,000 from Mayor Pro Tem Garza.</li> <li>• Amended the contract with United Way for Greater Austin to include the disbursement of \$148,000 donated by Mayor Pro Tem Garza.</li> <li>• Finalized distribution of funds to all awarded childcare providers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete program closeout.</li> </ul>
<b>Austin Civilian Conservation Corps (ACCC)</b>	\$2 million	Partnerships with existing workforce development non-profits to train and employ Austinites for sustainability projects.	Phase 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created contract amendment with American Youthworks for ACCC.</li> <li>• Reviewed recruiting and data collection strategy with Equity Office.</li> <li>• Made formal connection between Carpenters Union program and Community First Village to add service component.</li> <li>• Reviewed draft scope of work for Carpenters Union.</li> <li>• Austin Safely Creates program scope of work accepted and agreement being finalized.</li> <li>• Received proposals from user experience research groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize recruiting and data collection guidelines to incorporate in all agreements.</li> <li>• Complete American Youthworks agreement and begin recruiting.</li> <li>• Complete Carpenters Union agreement and target to begin recruiting the week of October 5.</li> <li>• Begin recruiting for Austin Safely Creates program.</li> <li>• Finalize user research scope of work and draft agreement.</li> <li>• Advance new projects and identify funding sources.</li> </ul>
<b>Austin Creative Space Disaster Relief Program</b>	\$1 million	Grants up to \$50,000 for for-profit live music venues, performance spaces, art galleries, arts-	Phase 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informed applications of their award / non-award status.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with grantees, Law Department, and Purchasing Department to collect the remaining</li> </ul>

Fund	Funding Allocation	Program Description	Phase	Actions Completed Since Previous Memo	Tasks for Next 14 days
		focused nonprofits and individual artists facing temporary or permanent displacement.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met with several applicants who did not receive an award to review their applications and scores.</li> </ul>	<p>outstanding required items needed to execute the last group of contracts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing payment schedules based on the executed contracts for each Grantee.</li> <li>Distribute checks to grant recipients.</li> </ul>
<b>Austin Creative Worker Relief Grant</b>	\$3.5 million	Mini-grants to individual creative-sector workers.	Phase 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sent award / non-award notifications to all 5,502 applicants.</li> <li>Issued checks to grant recipients.</li> <li>Updated program dashboard with information about program applicants and awardees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold lessons learned meetings with the third-party administrator (Austin Better Business Bureau) and technical assistance provider (Texas Accountants and Lawyers for the Arts).</li> <li>Request City Council to ratify contract amendment with the Austin BBB.</li> <li>Close out program.</li> </ul>
<b>Austin Economic Injury Bridge Loan Program</b>	\$5.6 million	Loans up to \$35,000 to support local, small businesses until they receive federal Economic Injury Disaster Loans.	Phase 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August 2020 marked first payment for 10 borrowers; September 2020 marked first payment for remaining 9 borrowers.</li> <li>Began discussing available options for loan forgiveness program.</li> <li>Completed draft loan forgiveness program working documents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete discussion for proposed loan forgiveness program.</li> <li>Send loan forgiveness program offer to all 19 borrowers.</li> </ul>
<b>Austin Music Disaster Relief Fund</b>	\$1.5 million	Grants of \$1,000 to support performing musicians that have not received other COVID-19 financial relief.	Phase 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notified all applicants of the status of their applications.</li> <li>Referred applicants to the Austin Creative Worker Relief Program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all awarded applicants receive their checks.</li> <li>Close out program.</li> </ul>

Fund	Funding Allocation	Program Description	Phase	Actions Completed Since Previous Memo	Tasks for Next 14 days
<b>Austin Non -Profit Relief Grant</b>	\$6.35 million	Grants up to \$20,000 for expenses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.	Phase 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reopened program application with revised program eligibility to distribute remaining \$2.4 million. Apply at <a href="http://ATXrecovers.com">ATXrecovers.com</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close application on October 9, 2020.</li> <li>Complete review applications for eligibility and ineligibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Austin Small Business Relief Grant</b>	\$16.5 million	Grants up to \$40,000 for expenses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and/or for purchases to comply with safety requirements.	Phase 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met with third-party administrator (Austin Better Business Bureau) to commence program closeout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all awarded applicants receive their checks.</li> <li>Close out program.</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial Property Owner Relief Grant</b>	\$1 million	Grants to commercial landlords that agree to enter long-term leases with tenants that deliver community benefits.	Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff will incorporate this program into recommendations for the Austin City Council in response to <a href="#">Resolution No. 2020917-062</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be determined.</li> </ul>
<b>Relief in a State of Emergency (RISE)</b>	\$12 million	Direct financial assistance to underserved communities impacted by COVID-19.	Phase 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accepted applications for the \$10 million program between September 14, 2020 and September 21, 2020.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the randomized selection process by October 6, 2020.</li> <li>Distribute funds to selected applicants between September 23, 2020 and October 30, 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>Relief of Emergency Needs for Tenants (RENT)</b>	\$12.4 million	Multi-month rental assistance for households earning up to 80% Median Family Income (MFI).	Phase 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opened application on August 19, 2020. Apply at <a href="http://austintexas.gov/RENT">austintexas.gov/RENT</a>.</li> <li>Finalized the selection of grant recipients to assist with the community outreach component of the RENT program (<a href="#">see the September 16, 2020 memorandum to Mayor and Council</a> for more information).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue random selection drawings until the funds are expended.</li> <li>Application is available via <a href="http://austintexas.gov/RENT">austintexas.gov/RENT</a> and <a href="http://ATXrecovers.com">ATXrecovers.com</a>.</li> </ul>

Fund	Funding Allocation	Program Description	Phase	Actions Completed Since Previous Memo	Tasks for Next 14 days
<b>Technical Assistance Program</b>	\$1 million	The Technical Assistance Program will focus on classes, workshops, and individual coaching for grantees' relevant needs.	Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying specific technical assistance to support relief programs and vulnerable populations.</li> <li>• Identifying community champions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft scopes of work and targeted deliverables to support relief programs and vulnerable populations.</li> <li>• Discussions with community partners.</li> </ul>
<b>Worker and Customer Safety Program</b>	\$1.5 million	Contract with counseling services provider to expand access for workers dealing with COVID-19-related mental health challenges.	Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development Department staff met with Austin Public Health staff to discuss potential partnership on program implementation and to begin reviewing existing contracts with mental health providers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize review of existing mental health contracts that the City of Austin has executed.</li> <li>• Host meeting between the Economic Development Department, Austin Public Health, and the City of Austin Employee Assistance program.</li> </ul>



## Appendix B. Personal Accounts from Grant and Loan Recipients

The following quotations provide a snapshot of the feedback City of Austin staff received from economic recovery program recipients. These are direct quotes from recipients, but names and identifying information were removed for privacy.

### Respondent 1

Thank you very much! It will be a huge help during this difficult time.

### Respondent 2

OH MY GOD!

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

I'm literally in tears right now!

You have no idea what this means to my little business. Thank you for making the struggle a little less frightening ♡☐

### Respondent 3

OMFG! Thank you soooo much! I appreciate everyone that has been processing all these applications and putting in work behind the scenes to help the community. You are beautiful and amazing!

### Respondent 4

I'm so absolutely touched and deeply grateful for this grant. To be recognized as someone who contributes to the Austin creative community is in itself a honor. Thank you so much for making it possible for me cover my expenses and stay safe. I very much hope that I'm able to give back one day. For a city, such as Austin, to see its artists as vital and deserving of assistance is incredibly validating; it makes me feel hopeful.

### Respondent 5

Wow. I don't know how to thank you. And can't tell you how much I appreciate the information along with the grant. Please tell everyone involved that they've made feel very appreciated. It's been a while!

Thank you so much! you're literally changing/saving my life!!

### Respondent 6

Thank you. Being an evangelist for the arts in this city has been a source of much joy, and has provided many "sensitivity" struggles as well. This grant affirms my commitment to nontraditional "commercial" endeavors and truly makes me feel like an important member of this community. My heart is happy and thankful. This means a lot to me. I'm very grateful. You just did a good deed, City of Austin. My resolve to reward your efforts on my behalf is strong.

### Respondent 7

Amazing news! I am so thankful. This grant is absolute relief. My quality of life, ability to create and opportunity to work are greatly aided by this helping hand. Austin will be a better place in the future because of these efforts.

### Respondent 8

Thank you so much! This will help me pay the mortgage next month! Y'all are awesome!

Respondent 9

Thank you so so so much!! This is such a blessing and relief to hear. Again thank you.

Respondent 10

Thank you SO much! This is such an incredible help and truly makes a world of difference for me and all the other recipients.

Respondent 11

Thank you so very much this is absolutely incredible. I am sincerely grateful for your help. Thank you so so so much. I'm finally going to be able to feed myself and my doggo properly.

Respondent 13

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I am so thankful and grateful for this grant. This is such a honor and again thank you for your generosity and graciousness.

Respondent 14

Thank you so much! This helps a lot in these times, and it makes it that much easier to keep working creatively in Austin. I'll work hard to keep making a positive impact on the incredible community we have

Respondent 15

Thank you so much. This goes such a long way. I truly appreciate and am grateful for this acceptance. I also appreciate the other resources mentioned in the message.

Respondent 16

I feel very grateful to have received this grant. Thank you

Respondent 17

Thank you to the City of Austin and the BBB. I'm truly grateful. This truly means a lot to me and will be a HUGE help in furthering my art and surviving! Thank you SO much!!

Respondent 18

Wow! Thank you guys so much! This will help a lot. It has been a while since I've gotten any real work. A million thanks!

Respondent 19

What a lovely email to find in my in-box. I greatly appreciate receiving notice that I have been selected to receive this grant.

Respondent 20

Thanks for selecting me as recipient of the 2nd Austin Creative Worker Relief Grant. The funds you have so gratuitously provided me, will ease me pay the bills that the covid-19 pandemic & economic hardship have downed on me.

Respondent 21

Oh wow, thank you so much! This is the best news. Thank you for all of y'all's hard work in this and for helping local creatives during this time. We're so lucky to live in such a great city. I'm so grateful for y'all!

Respondent 22

Thank you so much! This really came at time as a true blessing and I feel so much support from my peers and from my community to continue to follow and walk in my path to use music to heal. Thank you so much

Respondent 23

I am very grateful and surprised to have been selected as a grant recipient! Thank you to the BBB Heart of Texas for your generosity and kindness in making this Austin Creative Worker Relief Grant available to the city's residents.

Respondent 24

Thank you so much! My family is very relieved and this helped us so much. Many blessings to you.

Respondent 25

Thank you for your work and continued efforts to help stabilize our people of this wonderful nation. These resources truly do help us sustain through these difficult times and even avoid more dangerous financial situations. Your unseen efforts are equally appreciated. Prosperity, health and content living to you and yours.

Respondent 26

Thank you! Couldn't come at a better time because I wasn't sure how I was going to pay October rent, and my computer just crashed and needs almost \$1000 in repairs.

Respondent 27

Sincerely, it makes me feel very blessed... As well, I told her I do not have enough words to say THANK YOU to United Way for Greater Austin, the Honorable Mayor Pro Tem Delia Garza, and the City of Austin. COVIT-19 changed our world and lives, but having this help and support is not hard to handle it. Thank you again and again to all of you.

Respondent 28

The \$20,000 additional grant that we recently received will go a long way towards maintaining and improving the high-quality childcare and bilingual education that our students receive at Angels Care & Learning Center. We intend to utilize these funds for the betterment of our school and our staff.

Respondent 29

Thank you so much!!! A special thanks to everyone that continues to look out for me and have my back. This pandemic has thrust a lot of people into an uncomfortable position that is not new to Women of Color business owners. We have been passed up for so long that we are used to dealing with this type of struggle.

Respondent 30

Thank you very much for taking care of us. You guys have made our day. I'm forever grateful to y'all. This is truly a blessing and a huge relief to my budget. I love Austin!!!