

City of Austin, Texas

Recovery Plan

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
2023 Report (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)



FINANCIAL SERVICES
DEPARTMENT



City of Austin, Texas
2023 Recovery Plan

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

President Joe Biden signed the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) into law on March 11, 2021, apportioning \$1.9 trillion to address the devastating health and economic impacts caused by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Through ARPA, Congress established the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund and Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund. These funds provide a combined \$350.0 billion to eligible state, local, territorial, and tribal governments to meet pandemic response needs and rebuild stronger and more equitable economies.

On May 17, 2021, the United States Department of the Treasury (Treasury Department) issued an interim final rule outlining the eligible and ineligible uses of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) as well as program requirements. The interim final rule remained in effect until March 31, 2022, after which point the Final Rule, adopted by the Treasury Department on January 6, 2022, went into effect.

The Final Rule allows recipients to use this federal aid for one of the following four statutory categories:

1. To respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts.
2. To respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers of the recipient that are performing such essential work, or by providing grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who perform essential work.
3. For the provision of government services, to the extent of the reduction in revenue of such recipient due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, related to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year of the recipient prior to the emergency.
4. To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

The Final Rule forbids recipients from using these federal funds to make deposits into pension funds, service debt service payments, satisfy a judgement or settlement, or replenish rainy day funds. In addition, recipients cannot use this funding to offset a reduction directly or indirectly in net tax revenue due to a change in law after March 3, 2021.

The Treasury Department's allocation methodology for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds resulted in the City of Austin (the City) receiving an allocation of \$188.5 million to help offset lost revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the City's ongoing commitment to supporting Austin residents, businesses, and organizations that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, City Council and staff worked diligently for several months to establish a spending framework for the ARPA allocation. On June 10, 2021, City Council approved an ARPA Spending Framework totaling \$245.0 million, which includes \$188.5 million from ARPA – SLFRF, \$35.3 million from ARPA – Emergency Rental Assistance, \$11.4 million from ARPA - HOME, and \$9.8 million from the City's General Fund Reserves. The first tranche of ARPA – SLFRF funding totaling \$94,241,239 was received by the City on May 19, 2021, and the second tranche of funding of an equivalent amount was received on June 6, 2022.

The Uses of Funds section of this report provides a more detailed overview of the City's intended uses of the ARPA-SLFRF funding, whereas the Project Inventory section provides additional information by project, including key outcome goals, progress to date on those outcomes, and noteworthy challenges or opportunities identified during the reporting period.

As of June 2023, the City has expended \$51.3 million and obligated \$104.6 million of the \$188.5 million ARPA – SLFRF funds.

Uses of Funds

The COVID-19 public health emergency resulted in a significant reduction in revenue for the City. All tax revenue categories, except for property taxes, declined in 2020. The tourism industry, including airport and convention center operations, was hit the hardest due to travel and tourism-related mandates put in effect to help mitigate the spread of the disease. In addition, facility and program revenue were well below budget due to facility closures and program reductions caused by COVID-19.

City staff recalculated the reduction in revenue by using the methodology outlined in the Final Rule. The new methodology allowed for the use of fiscal year end numbers instead of calendar year end numbers and the inclusion of utility revenue. This resulted in an updated growth rate of 5.2% since the average annual growth rate prior to the pandemic did not exceed 5.2% minimum growth rate designated for the calculation.

To calculate the reduction in revenue, actual revenues were compared to a counterfactual trend representing what could have plausibly been expected to occur in the absence of the pandemic. The counterfactual trend began with the last full fiscal year prior to the public health emergency and projected forward with an annualized growth adjustment. Based on the updated calculation, the City experienced a net revenue reduction of \$407.4 million, or 9.3%, during fiscal year 2020, a net revenue reduction of \$449.4 million, or 9.8%, during fiscal year 2021, and no revenue reduction during fiscal year 2022. All tax revenue categories increased in 2022. The reduction in revenue for 2020 and 2021 is well above the \$188.5 million allocated to the City under ARPA - SLFRF. The following is a summary of the calculation for fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022:

Revenue Loss Calculation for Fiscal Year 2020	Revenue Loss Calculation for Fiscal Year 2021	Revenue Loss Calculation for Fiscal Year 2022
Background Information		
1) Fiscal Year End	September	September
Base Year Revenue Period	9/30/2019	9/30/2019
2) Fiscal or Calendar Year	Fiscal	Fiscal
3) Calculation Date	9/30/2020	9/30/2022
Number of Months	12	36
Estimate Revenue		
3) Base Year Revenue	\$ 4,148,519,183	\$ 4,148,519,183
4) Growth Rate	5.2%	5.2%
Counterfactual Revenue	\$ 4,364,242,181	\$ 4,829,924,278
5) Actual Revenue	\$ 3,956,842,855	\$ 4,979,949,325
Reduction in Revenue		
Revenue Reduction	\$ 407,399,326	\$ -
Revenue Reduction %	-9.3%	0.0%

The City is using the \$188.5 million of ARPA - SLFRF funding to help offset this lost revenue and provide relief services and assistance to Austin residents, creatives, non-profits, and businesses to address the needs created by this public health emergency. The table below summarizes the City Council approved ARPA - SLFRF Spending Framework by program area followed by narratives of the services to be provided for each program area.

Program Area	Budget
Health	\$46.3 Million
Homelessness	\$95.3 Million
Economic Development	\$28.1 Million
Resilience	\$6 Million
Creative Sector	\$12.8 Million
Total Allocation	\$188.5 Million

Health - \$46.3 Million

EOC Emergency Response

EOC Emergency Response of \$6.0 million is dedicated to the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office (HSEM) for COVID-19 emergency response expenses that are outside the eligibility, reasonableness, or documentation criteria for reimbursement through the FEMA Public Assistance program. The expenses include support and coordination for public health response and recovery activities under COVID-19, including provision of emergency medical overflow services, public information campaigns, managing logistics and distribution of emergency supplies, and cost recovery work.

Public Health

Public health funding of \$32.1 million is allocated to sustain an enhanced workforce to reinforce the public health infrastructure, including public health emergency planning, testing, vaccination, disease surveillance, case investigations, contract management, public information and communications, nurse and equity assistance lines, and support service functions. An additional \$6.2 million is allocated for the continued enhancement and development of the Austin Health Force platform into a comprehensive system for all 70+ reportable conditions. This funding will also support improvements to the public-facing aspects of COVID-19 testing and vaccinations and support epidemiology and disease surveillance functions.

Community Navigators

Through contractors (referred to as “Community Navigators”), the City allocated \$500,000 to ensure local businesses, non-profit organizations, and creative professionals receive the assistance necessary to recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Activities supported by this funding include outreach and engagement to historically underserved communities; high-quality technical assistance for businesses, civic organizations, and creative professionals; and application assistance for federal, state, and local COVID-19 pandemic-related recovery and resiliency programs.

Colony Park Sustainable Community Health Center

An allocation of \$1.5 million will be used to install critical infrastructure (water, wastewater, and storm water) needed to construct the Northeast Health and Wellness Center in the 208-acre Colony Park Sustainable Community. Residents living in the Colony Park, Lakeside, and nearby

communities, disproportionately experienced higher COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, compounded by their historical experience with higher rates of chronic and preventable diseases. Constructing a health center in this community will improve these outcomes by enhancing residents' access to high-quality and affordable healthcare.

Homelessness - \$95.3 Million

The \$95.3 million allocation for homelessness is divided into eight projects:

- Rapid Rehousing (\$42.5 million)
- Permanent Housing Capital Expense (\$11.1 million)
- Emergency Shelters and Crisis Services (\$25.2 million)
- Other Homeless Support Services (\$7.1 million)
- Supporting Providers (\$2.0 million)
- Landlord Engagement and Move In (\$1.5 million)
- Homelessness System Support (\$3.5 million)
- Targeted Prevention (\$2.4 million).

Consistent with a motion the City Council adopted as part of the ARPA Spending Framework, staff is continuing conversations with Central Texas jurisdictions and philanthropic organizations with the goal of having partners commit significant monetary resources to help address homelessness in Austin. Austin Public Health conducted three solicitations in 2022, one for housing stabilization services for \$41.5 million, another for crisis response services for \$9.0 million, and a third solicitation for \$6.1 million for supportive services. In 2023, two additional solicitations have been conducted, one for targeted prevention of homelessness for \$2.4 million and another for temporary shelter operations for \$15.0 million. The Homeless Strategy Office (HSO) spent \$4.8 million in ARPA-SLFRF funds to purchase two hotels for the purpose of rehabilitating and converting them into permanent supportive housing units for people experiencing homelessness.

Economic Development - \$28.1 Million

Early Care and Education and Early Childhood Support (\$7.5 million)

To enhance Austin's childcare and early childhood education systems, City staff continue to coordinate childcare and early childhood efforts with Travis County officials and local community partners. The types of programs that are supported with these funds include:

- Expanding the Family Connects program (a joint partnership between United Way for Greater Austin and Austin Public Health that provides free in-home nursing visits to all families with a newborn),
- Expanding access to free, dual-language, full-day Pre-K for four-year-olds,
- Expanding Pre-K classes for three-year-olds from half-day to full-day, and
- Providing additional childcare funding to address gaps created for families due to changes in employment status.

High-Quality Affordable Child Care (\$3.5 million)

The ARPA - SLFRF funding is helping to connect more children and families with quality, affordable childcare and provide premium pay to low wage teachers and staff in the childcare sector which includes:

- Sustaining and scaling innovative infrastructure to increase access to affordable high-quality care meeting needs of all families,
- Implementing solutions to address identified gaps and to strengthen the childcare system, and
- Stabilizing the childcare workforce and programs that support families with young children outside of full-time childcare.

Workforce Development

The \$17.1 million total funding allocated for workforce development is divided into the following five projects:

- WorkNOW 2.0 (\$6.6 million): The City of Austin entered into a contract with Workforce Solutions Capital Area (WFS) to offer workforce development training for low-income Austin residents experiencing unemployment or underemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Workforce Development Solicitation (\$6.1 million): The City of Austin entered into a contract with local workforce development contractors that can provide training and services to Austin residents affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Austin Civilian Conservation Corps (ACCC) (\$1.9 million): This program helps Austinites earn income, serve their community, and gain equitable access to skills, training, and certifications which can lead to careers in sustainability and environmental fields. This funding expands on an already existing City program.
- Austin Civilian Conservation Corps (ACCC) - Creative Workers (\$1.0 million): This is a same day work and pay program for people experiencing homelessness to design and paint murals throughout the City. The deployment would include key partners to manage the collection of participants to support services. This project is still in the design phase.
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree Program (\$1.5 million): The contract supports Capital IDEA in its work to deliver training and supportive services to 30 students that are nontraditional, low income, and pursuing a career in the high demand field of healthcare.

The City has obligated \$13.7 million in workforce development funding, including a \$1.5 million contract with Capital IDEA to deliver training and supportive services to low-income students pursuing a career in healthcare, and a \$12.2 million contract with Workforce Solutions Capital Area for workforce development training for low-income Austin residents experiencing unemployment or underemployment.

Resilience - \$6 Million

The \$6 million allocated to resilience activities is divided into the following four projects:

- Resilience Hubs (\$3.0 million): Resilience Hubs are networks of community-focused physical facilities that provide day-to-day services to help build community resilience, but which can also be activated to provide community support during disaster events. City of Austin staff continue to collaborate with the Austin Independent School District (AISD) and Travis County to stand up Resilience Hubs in Austin and Travis County. Pilot Resilience Hubs in six Austin neighborhoods have been confirmed and four additional pilot sites have recently been added to the program.
- Food Security/Food Access (\$2.0 million): Funding provides access to nutritious food to residents who are at or below the federal poverty level or who are experiencing household food insecurity and food system disruption due to COVID-19. This will be achieved by

expanding current programs provided by Austin Public Health and funding community partners.

- Community-Owned Food Retail Initiative (\$500,000): This initiative supports the development of a cooperative and/or non-profit grocery store in an underserved area of Austin. The City contracted with a consulting team to lead community organizing, conduct a business and feasibility analysis, and pilot a community-owned grocery store concept.
- Regional Food Systems Planning (\$500,000): The proposed food system plan is managed by the Office of Sustainability and is centered on equity and resiliency. The project includes the development of a Disaster Food and Drinking Water Appendix to the Emergency Operation Plan, engagement with supply chain stakeholders and development of recommendations, and development of a community food vision including specific metrics, goals, strategies, and a dashboard.

Creative Sector - \$12.8 Million

The total \$12.8 million allocation for creative sector support is divided into the following five projects:

- Austin Arts & Culture Non-Profit Relief Grant (\$2.0 million): This grant program provided one time unrestricted \$20,000 grants to local arts and culture non-profit organizations facing hardships due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. All funding allocated to this project has been spent as of the date of this report.
- Arts Industry Support (\$6.0 million): This relief program supported non-profit cultural contractors who were severely impacted by decreases in Hotel Occupancy Tax funds. A small balance of these funds was spent towards two arts group contractors to deliver an arts exhibition to the public and tourists.
- Austin Music Disaster Relief Grant (\$2.5 million): Staff used these funds to benefit the creative community based on guidance and direction from City Council and collaboration with the Arts and Music Commissions by providing one-time, unrestricted \$2,000 grants to local professional musicians, independent promoters, and music industry workers facing hardships due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. All funding allocated to this project has been spent as of the date of this report.
- Austin Live Music Venue Preservation Fund (\$1.5 million): Staff used these funds to ensure the long-term survivability of live music venues in the City of Austin that have been closed or operated with significantly reduced operations since March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. All funding allocated to this project has been spent as of the date of this report.
- Austin Film Society (\$0.8 million): The City contracted with the Austin Film Society to equitably connect locals with diverse backgrounds to jobs in film and creative media industries through stipend-paid pathways and free training.

Additional Federal Funding

In addition to the ARPA - SLFRF funding, the City also received, or will receive, the following federal funding to help with the pandemic recovery process:

- \$170.8 million allocated to the City under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was used on emergency response and recovery activities.
- \$58.7 million allocated to the Airport under the CARES funding was used for monthly debt payment reimbursements and reimbursement of parking expenses.

- \$14.6 million allocated to the Airport under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) was used for monthly debt payment reimbursements and reimbursement of parking expenses.
- \$1.8 million of CRRSAA-Concession funding was passed through to Airport concessionaires as a credit to their outstanding balances.
- \$54.1 million allocated to the Airport under ARPA was used for monthly debt payment reimbursements and parking expense reimbursements.
- \$7.3 million of ARPA-Concession funding was passed through to Airport concessionaires as a credit to their outstanding balances.
- \$66.4 million allocated to the City under the ARPA-Emergency Rental Assistance program was used to provide emergency rental assistance to income eligible households vulnerable to eviction.
- \$11.4 million allocated to the City under the ARPA-HOME program will be used on affordable housing and services.
- \$73.6 million has been submitted as of June 2023 under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance program, of which \$44.8 million is comprised of actual expenditures and \$28.8 million is estimated costs. The City will be submitting packages to replace the estimated costs with actual costs in the coming months.
- \$26.9 million has been submitted as of June 2023 for vaccine distribution activities by the City under the FEMA-Expedited Vaccine program, of which \$21.2 million is comprised of actual expenditures and \$5.7 million is estimated costs. The City will be submitting packages to replace the estimated costs with actual costs in the coming months.

Promoting equitable outcomes



EQUALITY



EQUITY

Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its community members, and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

On March 8, 2018, the Austin City Council adopted [Strategic Direction 2023](#), or SD23, to help guide priorities and budgeting to proactively address multiple time horizons, more thoughtfully assess performance, and improve community outcomes. Under SD23, the City’s goal is to create a community where every Austinite has choices at every stage of life that allow them to experience and contribute to all of the following outcomes:

	Health & Environment		Enjoying a sustainable environment and a healthy life, physically and mentally.
	Culture & Lifelong Learning		Being enriched by Austin’s unique civic, cultural, ethnic, and learning opportunities.
	Economic Opportunity & Affordability		Having economic opportunities and resources that enable us to thrive in our community.
	Government that Works for All		Believing that city government works effectively and collaboratively for all of us—that it is equitable, ethical and innovative.
	Mobility		Getting us where we want to go, when we want to get there, safely and cost-effectively.
	Safety		Being safe in our home, at work, and in our community.

The following are the values that support Quality of Life in Austin under SD23:

EQUITY: To advance equitable outcomes, the City is leading with a lens of racial equity and healing. Race is the primary predictor of outcomes and it is time to recognize, understand, and address racism at its various levels: personal, institutional, structural, and systemic. Equity is the condition when every member of the community has a fair opportunity to live a long, healthy, and meaningful life. Equity embedded into Austin's values system means changing hearts and minds, transforming local government from the inside out, eradicating disparities, and ensuring all Austin community members share in the benefits of community progress.

AFFORDABILITY: Austinites deserve to experience the necessities of life as affordable and accessible. Simply put, this means a household can afford rent or mortgage, transportation, childcare expenses, utilities, and taxes. This strategic direction lays out strategies to increase economic opportunities and affordable choices across Austin, so that Austinites, families, businesses, City employees, and all generations can thrive.

INNOVATION: In Austin, we define innovation as any project that is new to you with an uncertain outcome. Aimed at addressing pressing challenges that affect our community, human-centered innovation means a new approach to exercising authority and decision-making that starts with the needs, behaviors, and experiences of our community, and continues through a process of questioning assumptions, engaging with empathy, stewarding divergent thought, reflecting, and learning. Innovation is future-oriented around what outcomes could be created together, rather than an analysis of already formed alternatives.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY: Being a sustainable and resilient community requires proactive steps to protect Austin's quality of life now, and for future generations. A sustainable city finds a balance among three goal areas: (1) prosperity and jobs, (2) conservation and the environment, and (3) community health, equity, and cultural vitality. Resiliency is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems to survive, adapt, and grow from difficult times. In Austin, we bounce back stronger.

PROACTIVE PREVENTION: The City embraces the dual responsibility of being responsive to emerging challenges while also dialing up efforts to prevent problems on the front end. For example, this translates into addressing social determinants of health outcomes, rather than only treating the disease. This means investing in preventative maintenance of public assets like bridges, service vehicles, and community facilities. An intentional focus on prevention today leads to a brighter future.

COMMUNITY TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS: Austin is a place where leadership comes from the people. We believe in honoring the spirit and soul of Austin and creating opportunities for civic engagement that are easy, meaningful, and inclusive, and that lay a foundation for lasting relationships. Trust must be earned and through strengthening partnerships with the community, we will make more progress together to advance these six outcomes.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City began to take strides in addressing equitable outcomes for project and service delivery through the creation of SD23, which prescribes reporting detail with greater granularity. Another accomplishment was the establishment of the City's Equity Office whose work is to provide training on racial equity and hold City of Austin programs and services accountable for tracking the metrics as dedicated in SD23.

During the pandemic, the Chief Economic Recovery Officer for the City required departments providing economic stimulus to the community to produce dashboards for each of the economic relief programs provided. This data is available to the public under Economic Impact on [ATXrecovers.com](https://www.austintexas.gov/itd/ATXrecovers). Additional dashboards are created as new programs and projects are launched. Each dashboard includes demographic information about applicants and awardees, as well as other factors that demonstrate historical challenges, such as: legal business structure, industry type, and the City of Austin Council District in which customers reside.

The City is using the revenue replacement ARPA - SLFRF funding in a manner which helps promote the Quality of Life values outlined in SD23. Funding is used to provide relief services and assistance to Austin residents, creatives, non-profits, and businesses that were most affected by this public health emergency and to provide long term resiliency to help support the health of Austin residents and the Austin economy. Equity is central to the City's development of the projects outlined in this report and most projects will focus on achieving more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized and adversely impacted populations, including low-income residents, communities of color, LGBTQIA+ persons, and those living with disabilities.

Staff developed communication and outreach activities, as well as partnered with external organizations, such as Travis County, to improve awareness of, and access to, the various services provided under the ARPA Spending Framework.

Project plans are developed in a manner that ensures equal access and distribution of benefits and services for marginalized groups of the community. Some of these activities include, but are not limited to:

- Addressing challenging racial and geographic disparities in COVID-19 rates of infection, vaccination, and health literacy in an urban area of focus made up of 15 zip codes with high social vulnerability indices and populations of color;
- Developing mobile and multi-lingual friendly applications, FAQs, and support;
- Working with third-party providers to support applicants in their request for support; and
- Addressing transportation challenges that would prevent a resident from receiving benefits.

Projects are also designed with outcomes that are focused on closing equity gaps and universal levels of service. The planned outcomes include, but are not limited to:

- Reducing the rates of homelessness for all Austinites, with a particular focus on reducing the disproportionate harm in adversely impacted populations – African Americans, LGBTQIA+, and people living with disabling conditions;
- Improving housing choice for populations who have historically been subject to discriminatory housing patterns;
- Closing racial, ethnic, LGBTQIA+, and disability community gaps in ownership and leadership of small businesses and non-profits in Austin;
- Ensuring childcare, early childhood education support, and parent education and support programs are available to groups most in need of service, especially households from racial, ethnic, geographic, and socioeconomic groups that are disproportionately impacted by the lack of quality programs;

- Catalyzing food sector business development in underserved areas;
- Addressing challenging racial and geographic disparities regarding COVID-19 rates of infection, vaccination, and health literacy by focusing on an urban area made up of 15 zip codes with high social vulnerability indices and populations of color; and
- Establishing resilience hubs in low-income communities and communities of color, which have traditionally borne the brunt of climate change impacts, to provide hyper-localized, contextually, and culturally relevant solutions to address ongoing stressors in communities and distributed disaster response and recovery efforts.

Additional information on the City's effort to promote equitable outcomes by project can be found in the Project Inventory section of this report.

Community Engagement

In 2020, the Chief Economic Recovery Officer launched a series of focus groups intended to gather real-time feedback on the programs and types of relief needed to allocate the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds. Over the course of several months and 125 unique engagement sessions, staff presented to City Council a framework of opportunities and strategies to provide relief based on the community engagement focus groups. Each of the six focus groups were specifically curated with 5-40 community members representing voices not typically heard in citizen communication. These community members represented multi-racial or ethnic groups, historically marginalized groups like LGBTQIA+ and members of the disability community, as well as intentional inclusion of all City Council Districts and both large and small organizations. Each engagement allowed staff to listen and learn about the real challenges experienced by local business owners, employees, residents, and City staff. Dozens of community members volunteered their time to share personal accounts of the pandemic's impact on their businesses, jobs, and families. These community members also offered their perspective on the types of assistance needed to help communities and businesses survive the pandemic and to become more resilient. While these focus groups were developed to help determine the allocation of CARES funding, the feedback collected is still relevant and helped guide the development of the ARPA Spending Framework and was considered during program design.

Additionally, as part of the approval of the ARPA Spending Framework, City Council directed staff to create a SpeakUp Austin! page and to hold a minimum of two City of Austin community meetings to discuss the spending plan and intended ARPA investments and solicit public feedback. This feedback loop occurred and resulted in over 3,000 resident reviews of the Austin Economic Recovery & Resiliency Plan. The framework is expected to be used to inform recommendations and proposed revisions to the ARPA Spending Framework.

There may be additional community outreach activities at the project level. Additional information on community engagement activities by project can be found in the Project Inventory section of this report.

Labor Practices

The City has a women and minority owned enterprise procurement process that ensures worker safety and compensation. The compliance team reviews solicitations; sets project goals for department solicitations to contract with women and minority owned enterprise contractors or subcontractors; collaborates with project managers to help identify scopes of work on projects; and verifies Compliance Plan information submitted by bidders/proposers which includes labor agreements, community benefits agreements, prevailing wage requirements, and local hiring expectations. Additionally, in 2020 the City hired its first Chief Civil Rights Officer to enforce civil rights anti-discrimination ordinances and federal statutes.

Use of Evidence

While some projects under the ARPA Spending Framework are still being developed, the City seeks to use the ARPA - SLFRF funds to advance the use of evidence-based practices as well as evaluate projects through project evaluations designed to build evidence. Additional information on the use of evidence by project as well as the planned project spending that will be allocated towards evidence-based interventions can be found in the Project Inventory section of this report.

Performance Report

The City will report the full ARPA - SLFRF allocation under the Revenue Replacement – Provision of Government Services expenditure category. As noted previously, the City experienced a net reduction in revenue of \$407 million in fiscal year 2020, and a net reduction in revenue of \$449 million in fiscal year 2021, which is well above the \$188.5 million allocation to the City. While there is no requirement to track specific performance measures for costs reported under the Revenue Replacement – Provision of Government Services expenditure category, the City has chosen to track performance measures where possible in an effort to remain transparent with the use of the funds. Additional information relating to individual project performance measures can be found in the project inventory section of the report.

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

		As of 6-30-23	
6	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement	Cumulative expenditures to date	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
6.1	Provision of Government Services	\$ 51,266,147	\$ 29,143,155

Project Inventory List of Government Services		Cumulative expenditures to date	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
4400-A110	EOC Emergency Response	\$ 2,851,713	\$ 1,638,867
4400-A367	Regional Food Systems Planning	\$ 201,262	\$ 186,245
4400-A375	Resilience Hubs	\$ 97,626	\$ 97,626
5500-A240	Colony Park Sustainable Community Health Center	\$ -	\$ -
5500-A340	Austin Arts & Culture Non-Profit Relief Grant	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -
5500-A341	Arts Industry Support	\$ 5,905,610	\$ -
5500-A342	Austin Music Disaster Relief Grant	\$ 2,528,565	\$ -
5500-A344	Austin Live Music Venue Preservation Fund	\$ 1,471,435	\$ -
5500-A345	Community Navigator Program	\$ 236,103	\$ 139,654
5500-A360	Re:WorkNOW 2.0	\$ 3,276,421	\$ 3,276,421
5500-A362	Austin Civilian Conservation Corps – Creative Workers	\$ -	\$ -
5500-A363	Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree Program	\$ 199,298	\$ 197,770
5500-A364	Workforce Development Solicitation	\$ 1,223,053	\$ 1,223,053
5500-A366	Community-Owned Food Retail Initiative	\$ 33,694	\$ 33,694
7400-A360	Austin Film Society	\$ 607,226	\$ 560,442
8600-A361	Austin Civilian Conservation Corps	\$ -	\$ -
9100-A248	Public Health - IT Project	\$ 1,760,845	\$ 1,055,171
9100-A249	Public Health - Communications Project	\$ 371,474	\$ 364,403
9100-A250	Public Health - Staffing and Support	\$ 8,109,141	\$ 5,636,524
9100-A350	Early Care and Education and Early Childhood Support	\$ 2,659,946	\$ 2,158,108
9100-A351	High-Quality Affordable Child Care	\$ 488,564	\$ 488,564
9100-A365	Food Security/Food Access	\$ 742,111	\$ 599,574
9100-A610	Homelessness - Permanent Housing Capital Expense	\$ 5,455,616	\$ 698,378
9100-A615	Homelessness - Targeted Prevention	\$ -	\$ -
9100-A620	Homelessness - Emergency Shelters and Crisis Services	\$ 2,949,090	\$ 2,805,611
9100-A625	Homelessness - Rapid Rehousing	\$ 5,689,683	\$ 5,689,683
9100-A630	Homelessness - Supporting Providers	\$ 410,900	\$ 368,900
9100-A635	Homelessness - Landlord Engagement and Move In	\$ -	\$ -
9100-A640	Homelessness - Other Homeless Support Service	\$ 1,365,716	\$ 1,333,635
9100-A645	Homelessness - Homelessness System Support	\$ 631,054	\$ 590,831

The City budgeted various government services to be provisioned from the revenue replacement category of the ARPA - SLFRF allocation. Each program area noted in the Uses of Funds narrative has one or more projects to help execute the program objectives. The individual projects are listed in the table above and in greater detail in the Project Inventory section of this report. The Project Inventory section of this report provides additional information by project including detailed information on promoting equitable outcomes, community engagement, labor practices (if applicable), use of evidence (if applicable), and key performance indicators. As City projects were developed and refined, the project names, project numbers and budgeted amounts have been revised. The following table provides a crosswalk of the projects reported in the 2022 Recovery Plan to the projects reported in the 2023 Recovery Plan.

Crosswalk of Project numbers, Project names, and allocated budget from 2022 to 2023

2022 Project Number	2022 Report - Project Name	2022 Allocated Budget
4400-A110	EOC Emergency Response	6,000,000
4400-A367	Regional Food Systems Planning	500,000
4400-A375	Resilience Hubs	3,000,000
9100-A610	Homelessness - Permanent Housing Capital Expense	14,100,000
9100-A615	Homelessness - Targeted Prevention	2,500,000
9100-A620	Homelessness - Emergency Shelters and Crisis Services	10,000,000
9100-A625	Homelessness - Rapid Rehousing	45,000,000
9100-A630	Homelessness - Supporting Providers	5,200,000
9100-A635	Homelessness - Landlord Engagement and Move In	5,000,000
9100-A640	Homelessness - Other Homeless Support Service	9,500,000
9100-A645	Homelessness - Homelessness System Support	4,000,000
5500-A240	Colony Park Sustainable Community Health Center	1,500,000
5500-A340	Austin Arts & Culture Non-Profit Relief Grant	2,000,000
5500-A341	Arts Industry Support	6,000,000
5500-A342	Austin Music Disaster Relief Grant	2,528,565
5500-A344	Austin Live Music Venue Preservation Fund	1,471,435
5500-A345	Community Navigator Program	500,000
9100-A350	Early Care and Education and Early Childhood Support	7,500,000
9100-A351	High-Quality Affordable Child Care	3,500,000
5500-A360	Re:WorkNOW 2.0	7,000,000
7400-A360	Austin Film Society	400,000
5500-A363	Associates in Nursing Degree Program	1,500,000
5500-A364	Workforce Development Solicitation	6,100,000
9100-A365	Food Security/Food Access	2,000,000
5500-A366	Community-Owned Food Retail Initiative	500,000
8600-A361	Austin Civilian Conservation Corps	1,882,478
5500-A362	Austin Civilian Conservation Corps – Creative Workers	1,000,000
9100-A248	Public Health - IT Project	11,572,775
9100-A249	Public Health - Communications Project	10,412,754
9100-A250	Public Health - Staffing and Support	16,314,471
Total Allocation 2022		188,482,478

2023 Project Number	2023 Report - Revised Project Name	2023 Revised Allocated Budget
4400-A110	EOC Emergency Response	6,000,000
4400-A367	Regional Food Systems Planning	500,000
4400-A375	Resilience Hubs	3,000,000
9100-A610	Homelessness - Permanent Housing Capital Expense	11,100,000
9100-A615	Homelessness - Targeted Prevention	2,400,000
9100-A620	Homelessness - Emergency Shelters and Crisis Services	25,188,466
9100-A625	Homelessness - Rapid Rehousing	42,532,514
9100-A630	Homelessness - Supporting Providers	2,000,000
9100-A635	Homelessness - Landlord Engagement and Move In	1,500,000
9100-A640	Homelessness - Other Homeless Support Service	7,127,494
9100-A645	Homelessness - Homelessness System Support	3,451,526
5500-A240	Colony Park Sustainable Community Health Center	1,500,000
5500-A340	Austin Arts & Culture Non-Profit Relief Grant	2,000,000
5500-A341	Arts Industry Support	6,000,000
5500-A342	Austin Music Disaster Relief Grant	2,528,565
5500-A344	Austin Live Music Venue Preservation Fund	1,471,435
5500-A345	Community Navigator Program	500,000
9100-A350	Early Care and Education and Early Childhood Support	7,500,000
9100-A351	High-Quality Affordable Child Care	3,500,000
5500-A360	Re:WorkNOW 2.0	6,600,000
7400-A360	Austin Film Society	800,000
5500-A363	Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree Program	1,500,000
5500-A364	Workforce Development Solicitation	6,100,000
9100-A365	Food Security/Food Access	2,000,000
5500-A366	Community-Owned Food Retail Initiative	500,000
8600-A361	Austin Civilian Conservation Corps	1,882,478
5500-A362	Austin Civilian Conservation Corps – Creative Workers	1,000,000
9100-A248	Public Health - IT Project	6,200,000
9100-A249	Public Health - Communications Project	4,475,000
9100-A250	Public Health - Staffing and Support	27,625,000
Total Allocation 2023		188,482,478

Project Inventory

Project 4400-A110: EOC Emergency Response

Funding amount: \$6,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$4,376,727

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$2,851,713

Project overview

This project supports Emergency Operations Center (EOC) response activities. Expenses include support and coordination for public health response and recovery activities under COVID-19, including provision of emergency medical overflow services, public information campaigns, managing logistics and distribution of emergency supplies, and cost recovery work.

Planning and Cost Recovery continues work begun during COVID-19 on mass care planning, and on cost recovery administration. Cost recovery is expected to continue into calendar year 2024. Some recovery will continue past that date but only estimated expenses through the end of the ARPA-SLFRF grant are included here.

The EOC assumed responsibility for maintaining emergency supplies and pods, as well as moving and distributing emergency supplies during COVID-19. This has continued creating vehicle costs on an ongoing basis.

The remaining funding is available to defray past or future expenses that are not reimbursed by FEMA, but which meet ARPA-SLFRF eligibility guidelines.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

The isolation facility and Alternate Care Site are open to all who have the medical need. While personal protective equipment has been provided to the whole community, particular emphasis has been placed on providing personal protective equipment at events that serve vulnerable populations.

Project 4400-A367: Regional Food Systems Planning

Funding amount: \$500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$298,042

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$201,262

Project overview

Consistent with City Council's direction, \$500,000 for regional food systems planning will support the growth and stabilization of the local food system. The proposed food system plan will be managed by the Office of Sustainability and be centered on equity and resiliency. The project will include three components: 1) Disaster preparedness, including the development of a Disaster Food and Drinking Water Appendix to the Emergency Operation Plan, 2) Food Supply Chain Vulnerability Analysis, including engagement with supply chain stakeholders and development of recommendations, and 3) Development of a community food vision including specific metrics, goals, strategies, and a dashboard.

City staff are actively collaborating with Travis County staff to optimize the alignment of the City and County's food planning efforts.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the weak points in the local food system, resulting in food supply chain disruptions that caused economic harm to households, food service workers, small businesses like grocery stores and restaurants, public institutions like schools no longer accessible for school lunches, and the broader food industry across the region. The crisis demonstrated why we need to build a food system that is more resilient. Strong, dependable local and regional economies are able to pivot quickly to meet changing demands for food. When confronted with supply chain disruptions, local and regional farms, processing plants, distribution channels, and businesses make communities resilient.

The City of Austin will develop a comprehensive food system plan to holistically assess baseline conditions, identify opportunities and provide a blueprint to guide food system goals, activities, and investments. The plan will also provide recommendations to the City and partners on how to best coordinate and synergize local food system work cross-functionally and regionally. Policies within the plan will prioritize improving conditions for those most negatively impacted by the food system.

Awareness: The food planning process will include a significant amount of effort dedicated to community engagement and community involvement. A community Advisory Board will be created to provide leadership for the entire planning process. A series of community engagement sessions will be hosted, including presentations to boards and commissions, to ensure a broad number of community voices can be captured and documented in the process of developing a plan.

Access and Distribution: The food planning process will include multilingual engagement and address transportation challenges across the community.

Outcomes: A comprehensive analysis of the current food system, the State of the Food System, provides additional data behind the inequities of the current food system. The report was published in October 2022. A draft of the Food Plan is expected to be provided to elected officials for review by the first half of 2024.

Negative Economic Impacts: The program has not yet been designed. However, negative economic impacts to disadvantaged groups will be a key consideration in program design. Specific targets and strategies to achieve those targets will be developed as part of program design.

Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities: The development of the food plan aims to channel the voices of those most negatively impacted by food systemic issues in the community. The Community Advisory Committee will inform and aid the formation of Issue Area Groups, thematic working groups that will support the development of goals and strategies around specific pain points across the food system. The food plan will seek to align existing data, research and work within the City and County with the food systems plan aiming it to effectively become a “Plan of Plans”.

The Office of Sustainability hosts a Food Justice Mini-Grants Program, which aims to provide resources to community members working towards transformative change in the food system. The application, the process has been developed to ensure the outcome of this program benefits underrepresented communities. The food justice mini grants will enhance the ability to do outreach to target communities.

Community Engagement

The development of the food plan involves extensive outreach across three different phases: Visioning, Goal and Strategy development, and a Goal review and approval phase. The development of a Public Engagement and Empowerment Plan will outline clear strategies for gathering feedback from mostly impacted communities while empowering community members to continue being involved in local food policy in the future. Engagement will also be supplemented by the work of Community Food Ambassadors, a team of community members focused on supporting outreach to target communities.

Use of Evidence

The first step in a Food Planning process is to develop a baseline assessment, documenting the current conditions in the community through the lens metrics, programs, and policies. An assessment called the State of the Food System Report 2022 was developed and published in October 2022. This report, in addition to metrics and policies, includes trends and challenges in the local food system that could be focal points for the Food Planning process. Data compiled for this report will be used to develop metrics for tracking progress on the goals developed in the Food Plan.

Key Performance Indicators

Output and outcome measures not yet established

Project 4400-A375: Resilience Hubs

Funding amount: \$3,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$322,489

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$97,626

Project overview

On April 8, 2021, Austin City Council passed [Resolution 20210408-028](#), directing staff to engage with school districts, external partners, and communities to conduct a Resilience Hub assessment to identify potential locations throughout the City to serve as Resilience Hubs, including designing and equipping pilot hubs for disasters, and the necessary power and water redundancies.

Resilience Hubs are networks of community-focused physical facilities that provide day-to-day services that help build community resilience but can also be activated to provide community support during disaster events. Resilience Hubs are not a replacement for traditional emergency planning and disaster responses or a substitute for sheltering plans. Resilience Hubs should work with, be a part of, and support the City, County, and Public Health Emergency Response plans. Resilience Hubs are not a cure-all for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery in Austin, but they can serve as an important piece in the puzzle.

City of Austin staff continue their collaboration with Austin Independent School District (AISD) and Travis County staff to explore what it would take to deliver on the resolution's intent. This initiative represents a robust collaborative among key Central Texas agencies, which will yield a strong long-term program aimed at better preparing the community to respond to and bounce back from extreme events.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: The City of Austin is committed to equitably and meaningfully engaging the community to co-design programming and stage community identified resources at Resilience Hub locations. The goal of this work is to expand staff capacity and assist with the community engagement for the City of Austin's resilience strategy and to establish, support, and fund institutions to serve this purpose. To create Resilience Hubs, staff is working closely with the community most sensitive to climate shocks and stressors. In Austin, low-income communities and communities of color are bearing the brunt of climate change impacts, often being hit first and worst and lacking the investment and resources needed to recover. Because of this, Resilience Hub work centers around low-income communities and communities of color in the planning processes, build an equity lens for all staff participating in these processes, and move toward community leadership and ownership to the maximum extent possible.

Awareness: An outreach strategy was created with input from City staff and the Community Advisory Committee to identify the community and gather input to inform development, launch, and support the Resilience Hub Pilot program.

Access and Distribution: Resilience Hubs provide hyper-localized, contextually and culturally relevant solutions to address ongoing stressors in communities and distributed disaster response and recovery efforts. They increase accessibility by bringing City services and support into communities and empowering residents in the selection and distribution of services.

In 2022, the City identified 6 pilot sites to test the Resilience Hub initiative. The 6 sites have been confirmed and 4 additional sites have recently been added to the program. Staff continues to work with adjacent residents including seniors and children, disabled individuals,

and individuals without vehicles to provide needed services before, during and after major events.

Outcomes: The implementation of Resilience Hubs will prioritize communities where these services have the most impact, such as those most impacted by historical disparities and inequities and most vulnerable to climate-related shocks and stressors.

The City is already experiencing the effects of climate change with more extreme heat and flooding. These impacts are expected to become more severe over the next few decades, including more hot days, increased extreme precipitation, and longer droughts. These effects are not felt evenly throughout the city. Communities with fewer resources experience hotter summer days and nights from the urban heat island effect while other communities are more susceptible to flooding. Within these communities, certain populations are more vulnerable to climate impacts, including older adults, children, people of color, people with limited-English proficiency, low-income individuals, people with disabilities, and people with medical illnesses. This project focuses on providing meaningful equity results by inviting residents and trusted community leaders to help design and implement hub operations and programming. The lessons learned from these two hubs will inform future hub planning and provide results at scale.

The Office of Resilience is in conversations with external partners and community groups about adding resilience-related upgrades to Resilience Hubs in the “Eastern Crescent”. Based on community equity and “Eastern Crescent” datasets, the Hubs will be in areas of Austin with traditionally marginalized communities.

Community Engagement

The process to create Resilience Hubs focuses heavily on the values, goals, and needs of the community, and the tasks and costs noted reflect estimates to co-create Resilience Hubs with community members in a meaningful way. This means better, more inclusive, and varied events (house meetings, focus groups, etc.), and costs that reflect the need to reduce barriers for engagement (translation and interpretation, non-traditional outreach and communication channels, childcare at events, etc.). Community engagement costs, however, are estimated and included in the total pilot hub cost estimate.

The selected specialists will conduct a robust, participatory, stakeholder and community engagement process to obtain input and support for the Resilience Hub planning efforts. This community needs assessment will help the City identify programming, planning, policy, and project needs for individuals and neighborhoods as it relates to public health, emergency preparedness, workforce development opportunities, equity, and sustainability across the City, with an emphasis on the six Resilience Hub locations.

Use of Evidence

The goal of this work is to conduct a community needs assessment within the City that could inform the activities at a “Resilience Hub” and where efforts should be prioritized to establish, support, and fund institutions to serve this purpose. The ARPA - SLFRF funds will be used to stand up ten Resilience Hubs in low-income communities. This includes costs for additional technology (solar, battery backup, etc.), community engagement, and an allowance to explore emerging technologies.

Key Performance Indicators

Output and outcome measures and indicators are not yet established. These will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and shared in future reporting.

Project 5500-A240: Colony Park Sustainable Community Health Center

Funding amount: \$1,500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$0

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$0

Project overview

The project will utilize ARPA funding to deliver the engineering and construction of the public infrastructure required for the successful development of the Colony Park Sustainable Community Health Center in partnership with Central Health. The delivery of the Health and Wellness Center will help address the critical health needs of northeast Austin residents, who experienced disproportionate health impacts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: To deliver a healthcare center and services to the [Colony Park Sustainable Community](#), a historically marginalized neighborhood of 208 acres of City-owned property on Loyola Lane between Johnny Morris Road and Decker Lane. In order to deliver this healthcare center and services to Colony Park residents most gravely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, there are necessary infrastructure improvements that must be made.

Awareness: The project is led by a group of community leaders known as the Colony Park Core Team. This “Core Team” consists of representatives from the Colony Park, Lakeside, Agave, Woodland Hills, and LBJ neighborhoods. Together, the Core Team crafted a community-focused vision for this area and the Colony Park Sustainable Community. To unify their vision, they created the Eight Pillars to guide their work:

- Improve mobility, connectivity, and safety of community
- Improve access to health care resources and services
- Improve access to open spaces and activate parks
- Improve access to healthy food resources
- Improve access to economic vitality of community
- Improve educational opportunities
- Improve equal access to workforce housing
- Improve quality of life through accessing available City/County resources

The Core Team, with the support of a contracted third-party community engagement contractor, has been convening community meetings throughout the Colony Park Sustainable Community master planning process. The timeline of activity can be observed [here](#) on the Colony Park website.

Access and Distribution: This infrastructure will help deliver a public health facility that will serve low-income residents of Austin and Northeast Travis County through CommUnityCare, an entity related to Central Health. This population has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outcomes: The agreement between the City of Austin and the regional Central Health organization fills a critical need for healthcare services in northeast Austin. To date, affordable services are non-existent in this community. On February 6, 2020, City Council authorized an interlocal agreement with Central Health to evaluate the suitability of a Health and Wellness Center within the Loyola Town Center of the 208-acre Colony Park Sustainable Community. The opportunity to develop a Health and Wellness Center further aligns the development at the 208-

acre Colony Park site with the City's Strategic Outcomes of Economic Opportunity & Affordability and Health & Environment. On January 4, 2022, the City of Austin and Central Health executed a Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA) for 2.28 acres of land in the Colony Park Sustainable Community. The PSA allows Central Health to acquire land suitable for the design and construction of a Health and Wellness Center. The PSA requires the City to ensure the parcel is properly zoned for land uses consistent with the needs of the proposed development and the regulations of the Colony Park PUD and to complete subdivision and final platting to create a legal lot from the 2.28 parcel. Then on January 31, 2022, the City and Central Health executed an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) authorizing Central Health to reimburse the city to fund their proportionate share of the design and construction of the required public infrastructure for the 2.28-acre site. The ILA also authorizes Austin Public Health (APH) and Austin Public Library (APL) to reimburse Central Health for services provided by their Architecture and Engineering Consultants for preliminary design and cost estimating services necessary to establish long term lease terms for consideration.

The City has received a preliminary engineering report and is now evaluating with the Law Department to ensure the solicitation for building the infrastructure will meet federal regulations.

Community Engagement

In the three-year community engagement and planning process, the Colony Park Core Team developed a COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CHIP) over several engagements with other neighborhood residents. The CHIP is noted on page 12 of the [Master Plan and Design Guidelines](#). The Steering and Core Coordinating Committees participated in a prioritization activity and identified the following priority health issues that would be addressed in the CHIP:

Chronic Disease – Focus on Obesity:

- 1) Reduce burden of chronic diseases caused by obesity among Austin/Travis County residents.

Built Environment – Focus on Access to Healthy Foods:

- 2) All in the community have reasonable access to affordable quality nutritious food.
- 3) Local and regional stakeholders will collaboratively increase accessibility to community resources via safe, active transportation.

Access to Primary Care and Mental/Behavioral Health Services - Focus on Navigating the Healthcare System:

- 4) Expand access to high-quality behaviorally integrated patient-centered medical homes for all persons.

Labor Practices

The City has a women and minority owned enterprise procurement process that ensures worker safety and compensation. The compliance team reviews solicitations; sets project goals for department solicitations to contract with women and minority owned enterprise contractors or subcontractors; collaborates with project managers to help identify scopes of work on projects; and verifies Compliance Plan information submitted by bidders/proposers which includes labor agreements, community benefits agreements, prevailing wage requirements, and local hiring expectations. Additionally, in 2020 the City hired its first Chief Civil Rights Officer to enforce civil rights anti-discrimination ordinance and federal statutes.

Use of Evidence

All \$1.5 million spent towards infrastructure improvement is based on evidence based public health need. The technical advisory group of the Colony Park Sustainable Community consists of subject matter experts from the following City of Austin departments and regional partners:

Austin Energy
Austin Housing Finance Corporation
Austin Fire Department
Austin Police Department
Austin Resource Recovery
Austin Water
CAMPO
CAPCOG
Capital Planning Office
Capital Metro
Austin Code Department
Colony Park Neighborhood Association
Downtown Austin Community Court
Community Development Commission
Communications & Public Information Office
Capital Contracting
Economic Development Department
Fleet Mobility Services
Austin Public Health
Austin Public Library
Housing and Planning Department
Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
Office of Sustainability
Parks and Recreation Department
Development Services Department
Public Works Department
Office of Small Minority Business Resources
Austin Transportation Department
University of Texas - Public Engagement

There are recommendations from these groups on how to achieve the public health goals set by the community. Those reports can be found on the public facing Colony Park Sustainable Community [website](#), under Documents.

Key Performance Indicators

Output and outcome measures not yet established, but may include:

- Number of contracts awarded to women and minority owned enterprises for engineering and construction of the water, wastewater, stormwater, and related infrastructure.
- Number of healthcare providers located in Colony Park.
- Number of behavioral or mental health appointments made by Colony Park residents per year at the Colony Park Central Health healthcare center.
- Median wage of contracted providers delivering engineering and construction of the water, wastewater, stormwater, and related infrastructure.
- Decrease in obesity rates of Colony Park residents.

Project 5500-A340: Austin Arts & Culture Non-Profit Relief Grant

Funding amount: \$2,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$2,000,000

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$2,000,000

Project overview

The Economic Development Department (EDD) launched the Arts and Culture Non-Profit Relief Grant on July 14, 2021. The grant project provided one-time unrestricted \$20,000 grants to local arts and culture non-profit organizations facing hardships due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications for the grant opened on July 14, 2021 and closed on August 2, 2021. EDD contracted with the Austin Better Business Bureau to serve as EDD's third-party administrator for this grant, and EDD contracted with the Austin Revitalization Authority and Mission Capital to provide application assistance for this grant. Awarded applicants were selected for funding based on a scoring matrix. More information about this project, including a dashboard featuring project metrics, is available at www.ATXrecovers.com. All funds allocated to this project have been expended as of the date of this report.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: The relief project aimed to serve registered 501c (3) non-profit organizations with programming that promotes or develops art in any medium (visual, performing, music, etc.), preserves or commemorates historical events and local cultures, or promotes the distribution of ideas. The grant prioritized organizations that have been historically underserved and whose Board demographic makeup and Executive Director are from historically underserved communities. The scoring matrix included criteria for race/ethnicity, gender, LGBTQIA, and disability, with funds being allocated to applicants that scored the highest in these areas.

Awareness: The EDD Marketing & Communications team extended the communication and outreach to the existing 28,000 department contacts via email and social content packaged for partner departments and external organizations, Mission Capital and the Austin Revitalization Authority, to spread the word. All opportunities were listed on the one-stop hub of economic opportunities for Austin: ATXrecovers.com.

Access and Distribution: The ATXrecovers website provided FAQs, checklists, and eligibility requirements for applicants to review prior to applying. Applicants were also offered technical support from City staff as well as Mission Capital and Austin Revitalization Authority. Applications were mobile and multi-language friendly with staff and system capacity to review.

Outcomes: Intended outcomes were to stabilize arts and culture non-profit organizations impacted by COVID-19 and during the pandemic. This became especially critical as the pandemic took a turn for the worse. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City began to take strides in addressing equitable outcomes for project and service delivery. These strides include a City Council adopted five-year strategic plan, called Strategic Direction 2023 or [SD23](#) for short, which prescribes reporting detail with as much granularity as possible. As well as specific metrics on number and percentage of persons who successfully complete workforce development training; number of people moved out of poverty into middle skills jobs; and unemployment rates with the granularity of demographic data. EDD has committed to collecting demographic data (age, gender, race or ethnicity, zip code, and City Council District representation) for all project participants and fund recipients. Another stride taken was the establishment of the Equity Office in the City whose work is to provide training on racial equity and hold City of Austin projects and services accountable to tracking the metrics as dedicated in SD23.

During the pandemic the Chief Economic Recovery Officer for the City required departments providing economic stimulus to the community to produce dashboards for each of the economic relief projects provided. This data is available to the public under Economic Impact on [ATXrecovers.com](https://www.austintexas.gov/ATXrecovers). In 2020, the City provided childcare facilities with economic support and this dashboard is available on ATXrecovers.com, or directly [here](#). As new programs are launched dashboards are provided. Each dashboard includes demographic information about applicants and awardees, as well as other factors that demonstrate historical challenges, such as: legal business structure, industry type, and what City of Austin Council district their customers reside in.

Community Engagement

In addition to community engagement activities discussed in the General Overview section of this report, EDD sought a third-party organization to administer technical assistance and expertise to eligible applicants for the Austin Nonprofit Relief Grant, referred to as a Community Champion. EDD evaluated third parties based on their experience providing a combination of consultation, outreach, recruitment, one-on-one sessions, phone inquiries, document preparation and a technical assistance program that consists of a “tailored” approach to assist in grant deployment. EDD contracted with the Austin Revitalization Authority and Mission Capital to provide application assistance for this grant.

Community Champions have been identified to support the Nonprofit Relief Grant to ensure historically underrepresented communities receive direct correspondence, access, and education on project requirements, timelines, and application materials and general project support as needed. The City prioritizes the focus on entities less likely to receive assistance elsewhere and those most vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 and service delivery. Equitable distribution of information about the relief grant project is the core mission of contracting with Community Champions who have established relationships in the Austin community and can serve in lead roles to support overall recovery efforts.

Key Performance Indicators

Output and outcome measures include the items below and can be found under Economic Impacts “[Austin Arts & Culture Non-Profit Relief Grant](#)” dashboard on [ATXrecovers.com](https://www.austintexas.gov/ATXrecovers):

- Number of applicants and awardees by Leadership or Board demographics
- Open status during the pandemic
- Annual revenue
- Applicants and awardees by arts & culture North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)
- Amount awarded
- Number of permanent employees retained

Project 5500-A341: Arts Industry Support

Funding amount: \$6,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$5,988,318

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$5,905,610

Project overview

This relief program was developed through the Austin [Arts Commission Recommendation 20210920-41.i](#), which was unanimously approved by Austin [City Council](#) on November 18, 2021 (item 9). Grants were distributed to existing Fiscal Year 2021 Core and Cultural Heritage Festival recipients, based on the amount of relief funding already received. These awards supported non-profit cultural contractors who were severely impacted by decreases in Hotel Occupancy Tax funds.

The balance of these funds, \$11,682, was spent towards two arts group contractors to deliver an arts exhibition (UNESCO Media Arts City) to the public and tourists.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: The goal of this program was to retain the current non-profit cultural arts contractors in the Austin area. Additionally, the hourly median wage of creative workers is nearly \$5 less per hour than the hourly wage required to sustain a family in Austin. This demonstrates the struggle to retain creative workers in Austin.

Awareness: All current and eligible cultural arts contractors were contacted. Only one was not interested in accepting funds. All others were able to demonstrate eligibility and accept the award.

Access and Distribution: City staff worked with third party provider, the Better Business Bureau, to distribute the funds to the awardees.

Outcomes: The funds allowed 379 cultural arts contractors to keep in operation in the Austin area serving locals and tourists alike. Disciplines and geography of organizations awarded can be viewed on the "[Arts Community Relief, American Rescue Plan Act](#)" dashboard on [ATXrecovers.com](#).

Community Engagement

The audience for this program was known to the City. Community engagement primarily consisted of the Arts Commission representation and advocacy, Austin City Council, and in communication with current cultural arts contractors as City contracts were extended due to inability to meet performance deliverables because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this community engagement, it was clear to both Arts Commissioners and Austin City Council that these funds could prevent the loss of organizations critical to the cultural fabric of Austin.

Use of Evidence

For over thirty years the City of Austin distributed Hotel Occupancy Tax funds to Austin's creative sector to implement cultural arts projects and experiences for locals and tourists. These funds act as stabilizers to the community in a time of reduced tourism. Disaggregated applicant information (those applied and served) are available by demographics and geography.

Key Performance Indicators

379 of 380 eligible cultural arts contractors were supported in Austin.

Project 5500-A342: Austin Music Disaster Relief Grant

Funding amount: \$2,528,565

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$2,528,565

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$2,528,565

Project Overview

Austin's music industry was one of the first industries impacted by the pandemic due to cancelled shows and performances, including the cancellation of the South by Southwest festival in March of 2020, as a result of the widespread COVID-19 transmission rate. The Austin Music Disaster Relief Grant provided one-time, unrestricted \$2,000 grants to local professional musicians, independent promoters, and music industry workers facing hardships due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. All funds allocated to this project have been expended as of the date of this report.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: Austin's music community was especially hit hard during the pandemic due to lockdowns and rules set in place to keep residents and tourists safe. This impacted both individual music industry workers as well as commercial live music venues. The unemployment rate for the music industry, though overall low for the region, is disproportionately high for non-white Austinites. Additionally, housing and childcare affordability keeps some community members – both historically non-white and residing in east Austin - out of reach of quality childcare solutions and stable housing and therefore forced to remain out of the workforce. Further affordability friction is the hourly median wage of creative workers is almost \$5 less per hour than the hourly wage required to sustain a family in Austin, demonstrating the struggle to retain creative workers in Austin.

The applications and scoring process for the Austin Music Disaster Relief Grant program scored based on ways in which institutions have a historically limited access to historically marginalized communities. This resulted in a higher density of awardees that were from historically marginalized communities without considering factors like race and ethnicity. The aggregated data of applicants and awardees can be viewed on interactive dashboards on [Atxrecovers.com](https://atxrecovers.com).

FY22 Austin Music Disaster Relief Grant

Awareness: The goal of the EDD Marketing & Communications team is to extend the communication and outreach to the existing 28,000 department contacts via email and social content packaged for partner departments and external organizations, to spread the word. All opportunities are listed on the one-stop hub of economic opportunities for Austin: [ATXrecovers.com](https://atxrecovers.com).

Access and Distribution: Staff worked with third party providers and the technical assistance providers established in the Community Navigators project to support applicants in their request for support. In the project design, staff worked with City partners to ensure the applications themselves were mobile and multi-language friendly with staff and system capacity to review.

Outcomes: The City of Austin claims the title of Live Music Capital of the World. The program was established to retain that title by supporting the musicians, independent promoters, and music industry workers present in the Austin area that contribute to the music and tourism economy. The slow return to business and the City's goal of preventing career changes, commercial real estate vacancies, individuals leaving the area, and specific concern for individuals experiencing

retention barriers to due to low income, housing affordability, banking access, or healthcare coverage drove the design of the program.

Community Engagement:

In addition to community engagement activities discussed in the General Overview section of this report, this project conducted additional community outreach and gathered input from the Arts Commission from September 2021 through November 2021, prior to the launch of project offerings.

Use of Evidence

[Guaranteed Income](#) research by Aspen Institute in 2020, indicated simple cash grants could support individuals experiencing life in poverty to achieve stability and meet overhead or living expenses. According to the [Creative Vitality Suite](#), musicians and singers in the Austin MSA earned \$22.66 per hour in 2018, which is nearly 65% below the [median income limit](#) for a one-person household.

Key Performance Indicators

Number of Music Industry Applicants: 3,012

Number of eligible Music Industry Applicants who demonstrate limited access to financial, housing, or healthcare resources: 2,049

Number of Music Industry Awardees who demonstrate limited access to financial, housing, or healthcare resources: 1,131

Number of Music Industry Awardees: 1,231

FY22 Austin Music Disaster Relief Grant

There were 1,231 professional musician, independent promoters, and music industry workers who each received one \$2,000 unrestricted grant. The funds supported long time industry workers who have been music professionals for an average of 17 years. One Live Music Venue Preservation awardee declined an award, so those funds were reallocated to the next highest scoring category of eligible FY22 Austin Music Disaster Relief Grant applicants not yet awarded. General Fund dollars then finished out this scoring category once ARPA-SLFRF dollars were depleted to ensure equity among this scoring category.

Project 5500-A344: Austin Live Music Venue Preservation Fund

Funding amount: \$1,471,435

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$1,471,435

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$1,471,435

Project Overview

Austin’s music industry was one of the first industries impacted by the pandemic due to cancelled shows and performances, including the cancellation of the South by Southwest festival in March of 2020, because of the widespread COVID-19 transmission rate. The Austin Live Music Venue Preservation Fund ensures the long-term survivability of live music venues in Austin that have been closed or operated with significantly reduced operations since March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. All funds allocated to this project have been expended as of the date of this report.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: Austin’s music community was especially hit hard during the pandemic due to lockdowns and rules set in place to keep residents and tourists safe. This impacted both individual music industry workers as well as the commercial live music venues themselves. The unemployment rate for the music industry, though overall low for the region, is disproportionately high for non-white Austinites. Additionally, housing and childcare affordability keeps some community members – both historically non-white and residing in east Austin - currently out of reach of quality childcare solutions and stable housing and therefore forced to remain out of the workforce. Further affordability friction is the hourly median wage of creative workers is almost \$5 less per hour than the hourly wage required to sustain a family in Austin, demonstrating the struggle to retain creative workers in Austin.

The applications and scoring process for the Live Music Venue Preservation program scored based on ways in which institutions have a historically limited access to historically marginalized communities. This resulted in a higher density of awardees that were from historically marginalized communities without considering factors like race and ethnicity. The Live Music Venue Preservation program daylighted most commercial live music venues in Austin are owned and controlled by white residents. The aggregated data of applicants and awardees can be viewed on interactive dashboards on [Atxrecovers.com](https://atxrecovers.com).

Live Music Venue Preservation (All phases)

Awareness: The goal of the EDD Marketing & Communications team is to extend the communication and outreach to the existing 28,000 department contacts via email and social content packaged for partner departments and external organizations, to spread the word. All opportunities are listed on the one-stop hub of economic opportunities for Austin: [ATXrecovers.com](https://atxrecovers.com).

Access and Distribution: Staff worked with third party providers and the technical assistance providers established in the Community Navigators project to support applicants in their request for support. In the project design, staff worked with City partners to ensure the applications themselves were mobile and multi-language friendly with staff and system capacity to review.

Outcomes: The City of Austin claims the title of Live Music Capital of the World. The program was established to retain that title by supporting existing live music venues in the Austin area that contribute to the music and tourism economy. The slow return to business and the City’s goal of preventing career changes, commercial real estate vacancies, individuals leaving the area, and

specific concern for individuals experiencing retention barriers to due to low income, housing affordability, banking access, or healthcare coverage drove the design of the program.

Community Engagement:

In addition to community engagement activities discussed in the General Overview section of this report, this project conducted additional community outreach and gathered input from the Arts Commission from September 2021 through November 2021, prior to the launch of project offerings.

Use of Evidence

[Guaranteed Income](#) research by Aspen Institute in 2020, indicated simple cash grants could support individuals experiencing life in poverty to achieve stability and meet overhead or living expenses. According to the [Creative Vitality Suite](#), musicians and singers in the Austin MSA earned \$22.66 per hour in 2018, which is nearly 65% below the [median income limit](#) for a one-person household.

Key Performance Indicators

Number of Music Venue Applicants: 110

Number Music Venue Awardees: 74

Number of Music Venue Awardees owned and controlled by majority people of color: 26

Live Music Venue Preservation Fund (All phases)

There were seventy-four (74) phase one awardees. Each received \$20,000 in reimbursable expenses related to COVID-19. Forty (40) phase one awardees went on to phase two. These awardees received monthly stipends up to \$140,000 if they completed equity training and provided documentation for reimbursement. Phase two was funded in part through Save Austin Vital Economic Sectors (SAVES) and ARPA-SLFRF.

Project 5500-A345: Community Navigator Program

Funding amount: \$500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$500,000

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$236,103

Project overview

Community Navigators help support local businesses, non-profit organizations, and creative professionals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic by offering application assistance and technical assistance for local, state, and federal relief projects. EDD staff contracted with several experienced, culturally informed, and technically knowledgeable third parties to deliver these services. Currently, the Community Navigators providing services include: Art Spark Texas; On The Money Finance, LLC; Mission Capital; Economic Growth Business Incubator; Business and Community Lenders of Texas; The Volt Studios; Austin Revitalization Authority; Health Alliance for Austin Musicians; and Visual Matters Consulting Group.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: Several questions in the Request for Applications require potential third parties to demonstrate their ability to deliver services to “historically underserved communities.” For the purposes of this Request for Applications, “historically underserved communities” means local communities that have experienced exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination because of City policies and practices. These include communities in the following zip codes: 78617, 78653, 78660, 78702, 78719, 78721, 78722, 78723, 78724, 78725, 78741, 78744, 78745, 78747, 78748, 78752, 78753, and 78754. Additionally, third party contractors must have capacity to deliver services in languages other than English, and they must have capacity to deliver services without discrimination of technological access.

Awareness: In addition to leveraging owned communications assets (e.g., the department’s existing newsletter with 45,000 contacts, social media accounts, etc.), EDD staff will partner with local chambers of commerce, business associations, and commercial districts to inform businesses about the Community Navigator Program. Additionally, EDD staff will contract with third-party organizations to conduct outreach and engagement to raise awareness about the Community Navigator Program services. Outreach and engagement will include marketing materials in languages other than English.

Access and Distribution: Austin businesses and creatives seeking support from the Community Navigator Program will self-select the type of assistance they need.

Outcomes: EDD has set forth objectives of closing racial, ethnic, LGBTQIA+, and disability community gaps in ownership and leadership of small businesses and non-profits in Austin. The application will collect these data points and are used as measures of outreach success. An evaluation rubric, not yet designed for this project, will be deployed to ensure technical assistance is provided to groups most in need of service. All this information will be aggregated and displayed to the public in the form of a dashboard for a comparison of application demographics and service provided demographics.

Negative Economic Impacts: The City’s Chief Economic Recovery Officer published an [Economic Recovery & Resiliency Framework](#) which outlined the economic situation of the community and the metrics to monitor whether equitable outcomes are achieved over the course of the deployment of economic relief (p. 11 and p. 27 of the PDF).

The Community Navigator project will likely target only Austin businesses and creatives who reside or are located in the Austin city limits, but that may change to include the broader MSA region due to the affordability issues in the City. Businesses, non-profits, and creative professionals from Austin's historically underrepresented communities will be especially encouraged to participate in the project.

Community Engagement

As discussed in the General Overview section of this report, feedback collected in 2020 from focus groups which were developed to determine the allocation of CARES funding is still relevant and helped guide the development of the ARPA Spending Framework. This feedback will be considered during project design. In fact, one of the strategies recommended in the Framework reflects the need for workshops, one-on-one coaching, and technical assistance.

Use of Evidence

This program mirrors the [Community Navigator Pilot Program](#) (page 7) occurring at the federal level with the Small Business Administration. The Austin version has localized technical assistance providers and a targeted business audience. As the funds are drawn down and services are rendered, a satisfaction survey will be conducted to determine effectiveness and outcomes. This information will be provided to the public via an interactive dashboard that can be used to compare by applicant attribute such as: race or ethnicity, gender, industry, size, Council Member District, and business structure.

Key Performance Indicators

Total number of businesses or creatives utilizing technical assistance: 267 unduplicated applicants

Number of hours of technical assistance service used: 1,216 hours

Survey results of satisfaction or gaining knowledge or support: Not yet requested of participants

Project 5500-A360: Re:WorkNOW 2.0

Funding amount: \$6,600,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$6,600,000

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$3,276,421

Project Overview

The City of Austin has entered into a contract with Workforce Solutions Capital Area (WFS) to offer workforce development training for low-income Austin residents experiencing unemployment or underemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The target population for workforce development services include City of Austin residents who are unemployed, underemployed, or who are earning less than 85% of State Median Income. The workforce development training program works with individuals to determine training interests, enroll them in safe, short-term job training courses, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship opportunities, and provides job search and placement assistance, including subsidized employment. The Program also provides an array of supportive services including childcare, transportation assistance, digital access, and educational assistance stipends. Training courses align with the Targeted Occupation List identified for Central Texas by WFS and the Texas Workforce Commission. Examples of short-term training courses previously provided include Software Developer, Commercial Driver's License, Multi-Craft Core Curriculum, Certified Production Technician, Phlebotomy, HVAC, Administrative/Office, and Medical Assistant. The target population for these services include City of Austin residents who are unemployed, underemployed, or who are earning less than 85% of State Median Income.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

The City Equity Statement was co-created with over 200 community members who logged over 900 volunteer hours in its creation. In the Austin Strategic Direction 2023, the City has identified equity as a core anchor across all of the strategic outcomes. The City Equity Statement is as follows:

“Racial equity is the condition when race no longer predicts a person’s quality of life outcomes in our community.”

The City recognizes that race is the primary determinant of social equity and therefore, the journey toward social equity begins with this definition. The City recognizes historical and structural disparities and a need for alleviation of the wrongs by critically transforming its institutions and creating a culture of equity.

Goals: The contractors will work with individuals to determine training interests, enroll them in safe, job training courses, and provide job search and placement assistance. In Austin, the industries in-demand both before and during the pandemic include: media production, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, skilled trades, and information technology (IT). The Project also provides an array of supportive services including childcare, transportation assistance, digital access, and educational assistance stipends. These trainings coupled with access to childcare – additionally funded through another Austin project under the American Rescue Plan Act – are expected to result in more Austinites gaining sustainable employment.

Awareness: The goal of the EDD Marketing & Communications team is to extend the communication and outreach to the existing 28,000 department contacts via email and social content packaged for partner departments and external organizations, like Workforce Solutions Capital Area or Capital IDEA, to spread the word. All opportunities are listed on the one-stop hub

of economic opportunities for Austin: [ATXrecovers.com](https://www.atxrecovers.com). In addition to EDD’s outreach efforts, Workforce Solutions Capital Area and Capital IDEA both have extensive community ties and a history of collaborating with area nonprofits and community-based organizations for information sharing sessions as well as for client and service referrals.

Access and Distribution: As mentioned above, staff will work with third party providers like Workforce Solutions Capital Area, Capital IDEA, and the technical assistance providers established in the Community Navigators project to support applicants in their request for support. In the project design, staff will work with City partners to ensure the applications themselves are mobile and multi-language friendly with staff and system capacity to review.

Outcomes: For the ReWorkNow programs, the City expects to serve 800 participants, with 80% of program enrollees successfully completing training which would position participants to be eligible to acquire jobs in the in-demand industries in Austin.

Community Engagement

As discussed in the General Overview section of this report, feedback collected in 2020 from focus groups which were developed to determine the allocation of CARES funding is still relevant and helped guide the development of the ARPA Spending Framework. This feedback will be considered during project design. In fact, several strategies recommended in the Framework identified ways to support workforce development.

Use of Evidence

“[What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of Evidence](#)” published in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, all three contracts will report disaggregated applicant information (those enrolled and served) by demographic and evidence-based groups.

Key Performance Indicators

All contracts were executed mid fiscal year 2022. Performance reports are expected to begin producing in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2023. Expected key performance indicators are:

- Number of workers enrolled in sectoral job training programs
- Number of workers completing sectoral job training programs
- Number of those who successfully completed training and obtained jobs with middle skill wages

Project 5500-A362: Austin Civilian Conservation Corps – Creative Workers

Funding amount: \$1,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$0

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$0

Project overview

This project is a same day work and pay program for people experiencing homelessness to design and paint mural throughout the City. Deployment would include key partners such as a third-party organization to manage expert mural artists, Economic Development Department, and outreach specialists to collect participants for providing daily support services. The City would develop thought partnership with the Mural Arts and Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority.

Applications to third-party organizations open in August 2023.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: Creating lasting, positive effects for residents, inspiring hope and build community, advancing the City’s strategic sustainability & equity goals; pathways to jobs specifically for people experiencing homelessness.

Awareness: The goal of the EDD Marketing & Communications team is to extend the communication and outreach to the existing 28,000 department contacts via email and social content packaged for partner departments and external organizations, to spread the word. All opportunities are listed on the one-stop hub of economic opportunities for Austin: [ATXrecovers.com](https://www.atxrecovers.com).

Access and Distribution:

INSPIRATION/MODEL:

Philadelphia Mural Arts: Color Me Back

Mural Arts Philadelphia’s innovative Color Me Back program offers people experiencing economic and/or housing insecurity an opportunity to make art, earn same-day pay and access social services. In partnership with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), the program reimagines the transit agency’s public spaces with a series of colorful murals adorning its walls and concrete columns. Participants in the program engage with outreach specialists who link them with support services, including social and behavioral health services and potential longer-term employment. Color Me Back positions art as a catalyst for change to create healthier, stronger, and more beautiful communities.

Each participant is paid \$50 cash for three hours of work creating a new public art project. The payment amount was specifically designed to exceed the living wage standard for Philadelphia. Each day of the program, between 80 and 100 individuals gathered to participate in the lottery for one of the twenty daily slots. Those who are selected helped design and paint mural panels which were installed in the concourse. Outreach workers (Certified Recovery/Peer Specialists) have learned that the most-needed services are employment, shelter or housing, and basic needs, such as showers, clothes, and food. In the first 28 weeks of the program, payments were made to roughly 451 people, totaling over \$77,950 for same day work.

<https://www.muralarts.org/program/porch-light/color-me-back-a-same-day-work-and-pay-program>

Outcomes: The project is still being designed.

Community Engagement

As discussed in the General Overview section of this report, feedback collected in 2020 from focus groups which were developed to determine the allocation of CARES funding is still relevant and helped guide the development of the ARPA Spending Framework. This feedback will be considered during project design.

Use of Evidence

The project is still being designed but expects to use evidence-based criteria such as industry demand, educational qualifications, and applicant income. Of the \$1 million allocated by City Council, staff anticipates an administrative fee between 5% and 15% to be incurred.

Key Performance Indicators

Number of jobs supported

Project 5500-A363: Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree Program
Funding amount: \$1,500,000
Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services
Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$1,500,000
Project Amount Expended to Date: \$199,298

Project overview

Economic Development Department (EDD) staff gained City Council authority to execute contracts in Fiscal Year 2022 for the purposes of supporting Austinites economically impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic; train Austinites for careers in the healthcare industry; and provide Austin creatives with job training and placement to complement media production, content generation, and facilities management services. Three contracts currently make up this project.

The contract is with the Capital IDEA to provide education for a Nursing program (and may include other healthcare fields) that leads to a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing or other higher education fields. Capital IDEA provides comprehensive support to low-income, nontraditional students as they build their skills and knowledge and prepare for a new career in a high-demand field. Capital IDEA sponsors nearly 30 career paths in healthcare, information technology, and trades. Healthcare careers are, by far, the most sought after by students, the majority of whom pursue Registered Nursing.

The contract will support Capital IDEA in its work to deliver training and supportive services to 30 students that are nontraditional, low income, and pursuing a career in the high demand field of healthcare. With high starting salaries, benefits, and opportunities for advancement, a career in nursing represents a lucrative opportunity for the economic advancement of low-income adults. Additionally, the demand for Registered Nurses (RN) in the community far outweighs the local supply. Capital IDEA will focus its efforts on helping its students obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

The City Equity Statement was co-created with over 200 community members who logged over 900 volunteer hours in its creation. In the Austin Strategic Direction 2023, the City has identified equity as a core anchor across all of the strategic outcomes. The City Equity Statement is as follows:

“Racial equity is the condition when race no longer predicts a person’s quality of life outcomes in our community.”

The City recognizes that race is the primary determinant of social equity and therefore, the journey toward social equity begins with this definition. The City recognizes historical and structural disparities and a need for alleviation of the wrongs by critically transforming its institutions and creating a culture of equity.

Goals: The contractors will work with individuals to determine training interests, enroll them in safe, job training courses, and provide job search and placement assistance. In Austin, the industries in-demand both before and during the pandemic include: media production, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, skilled trades, and information technology (IT). These trainings (coupled with access to childcare – additionally funded through another Austin project under the American Rescue Plan Act –) are expected to result in more Austinites gaining sustainable employment.

Awareness: The goal of the EDD Marketing & Communications team is to extend the communication and outreach to the existing 28,000 department contacts via email and social content packaged for partner departments and external organizations, like Workforce Solutions Capital Area or Capital IDEA, to spread the word. All opportunities are listed on the one-stop hub of economic opportunities for Austin: [ATXrecovers.com](https://www.atxrecovers.com). In addition to EDD's outreach efforts, Workforce Solutions Capital Area and Capital IDEA both have extensive community ties and a history of collaborating with area nonprofits and community-based organizations for information sharing sessions as well as for client and service referrals.

Access and Distribution: As mentioned above, staff will work with third party providers like Workforce Solutions Capital Area, Capital IDEA, and the technical assistance providers established in the Community Navigators project to support applicants in their request for support. In the project design, staff will work with City partners to ensure the applications themselves are mobile and multi-language friendly with staff and system capacity to review.

Outcomes: For the Nursing program, we expect to serve 30 participants and 80% of program enrollees are on track to earn their BSN (and anticipated successfully completing training which would position participants to be eligible to acquire jobs in the in-demand industries in Austin).

Community Engagement

As discussed in the General Overview section of this report, feedback collected in 2020 from focus groups which were developed to determine the allocation of CARES funding is still relevant and helped guide the development of the ARPA Spending Framework. This feedback will be considered during project design. In fact, several strategies recommended in the Framework identified ways to support workforce development.

Use of Evidence

[“What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of Evidence”](#) published in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, all three contracts will report disaggregated applicant information (those enrolled and served) by demographic and evidence-based groups.

Key Performance Indicators

All contracts were executed mid fiscal year 2022. Performance reports are expected to begin producing the fourth quarter of 2023, aligning with semester completion. Expected key performance indicators are:

- Number of workers enrolled in sectoral job training programs
- Number of workers completing sectoral job training programs
- Number of those who successfully completed training and obtained jobs with middle skill wages

Project 5500-A364: Workforce Development Solicitation

Funding amount: \$6,100,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$5,600,000

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$1,223,053

Project overview

Economic Development Department (EDD) staff gained City Council authority to execute contracts in fiscal year 2022 for the purposes of supporting Austinites economically impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic; train Austinites for careers in the healthcare industry; and provide Austin creatives with job training and placement to complement media production, content generation, and facilities management services. In fiscal year 2023, \$6,100,000.00 will be distributed after a solicitation of additional workforce development concepts and services from third parties through a competitive Request for Proposals.

The purpose of this contract is to provide career and occupational training and skills development specific to jobs in the Healthcare, Information Technology, Skilled Trades and Advanced Manufacturing sectors. This project also provides wraparound support services, and job placement or other career development assistance to individuals living at or below 85% SMI or who meet other target population criteria with the goal of helping program enrollees gain employment at wages of at least \$15/hour. The total projected number of clients served from the contract is 1,700.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

The City Equity Statement was co-created with over 200 community members who logged over 900 volunteer hours in its creation. In the Austin Strategic Direction 2023, the City has identified equity as a core anchor across all of the strategic outcomes. The City Equity Statement is as follows:

“Racial equity is the condition when race no longer predicts a person’s quality of life outcomes in our community.”

The City recognizes that race is the primary determinant of social equity and therefore, the journey toward social equity begins with this definition. The City recognizes historical and structural disparities and a need for alleviation of the wrongs by critically transforming its institutions and creating a culture of equity.

Goals: The contractors will work with individuals to determine training interests, enroll them in safe, job training courses, and provide job search and placement assistance. In Austin, the industries in-demand both before and during the pandemic include: media production, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, skilled trades, and information technology (IT). The Project also provides an array of supportive services including childcare, transportation assistance, digital access, and educational assistance stipends. These trainings coupled with access to childcare – additionally funded through another Austin project under the American Rescue Plan Act – are expected to result in more Austinites gaining sustainable employment.

Awareness: The goal of the EDD Marketing & Communications team is to extend the communication and outreach to the existing 28,000 department contacts via email and social content packaged for partner departments and external organizations, like Workforce Solutions Capital Area or Capital IDEA, to spread the word. All opportunities are listed on the one-stop hub of economic opportunities for Austin: [ATXrecovers.com](https://www.atxrecovers.com). In addition to EDD’s outreach efforts, Workforce Solutions Capital Area and Capital IDEA both have extensive community ties and a

history of collaborating with area nonprofits and community-based organizations for information sharing sessions as well as for client and service referrals.

Access and Distribution: As mentioned above, staff will work with third party providers like Workforce Solutions Capital Area, Capital IDEA, and the technical assistance providers established in the Community Navigators project to support applicants in their request for support. In the project design, staff will work with City partners to ensure the applications themselves are mobile and multi-language friendly with staff and system capacity to review.

Outcomes: For the Skilled trades programs, we expect 70 % of program enrollees to successfully complete training and 30% program enrollees to successfully placed in jobs which would position participants to be eligible to acquire jobs in the in-demand industries in Austin.

Community Engagement

As discussed in the General Overview section of this report, feedback collected in 2020 from focus groups which were developed to determine the allocation of CARES funding is still relevant and helped guide the development of the ARPA Spending Framework. This feedback will be considered during project design. In fact, several strategies recommended in the Framework identified ways to support workforce development.

Use of Evidence

[“What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of Evidence”](#) published in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, all three contracts will report disaggregated applicant information (those enrolled and served) by demographic and evidence-based groups.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance reports are expected to begin producing quarterly following execution in the fourth quarter of 2023. Expected key performance indicators are:

- Number of workers enrolled in sectoral job training programs
- Number of workers completing sectoral job training programs
- Number of those who successfully completed training and obtained jobs with middle skill wages

Project 5500-A366: Community-Owned Food Retail Initiative

Funding amount: \$500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$500,000

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$33,694

Project overview

Consistent with City Council's direction, \$500,000 for regional food systems planning will support the growth and stabilization of the local food system. This project is managed by the Economic Development Department – and project funds will be used to support development of a nonprofit or cooperative grocery store in an underserved area. In 2022, a competitive solicitation was conducted to identify the contractor who will establish the framework of how a community-owned food retail store could be implemented. The contractor selected from that competitive process began work October 2022 and will complete work by December of 2024. The consultant team includes expertise in community outreach and engagement, leadership development, cooperative planning and training, and grocery store development and operations. The project will include three major milestones prior to launching of a pilot program:

- Identification of a core group of community-owned grocery store users, greater than or equal to 300 in number.
- Identification and training of an initial leadership cohort for the grocery store who may serve as a founding Board of Directors.
- Creation of business planning documents for a community-owned grocery store, including pro forma financial budgets, a formal business plan, capital campaign planning, contacts with lenders, general manager search process, and site selection criteria.

As of June 2023, the contractor has completed one of the first major milestones with the onboarding and training of a multilingual steering committee representing diverse communities in Austin's Eastern Crescent, and is continuing work on member/supporter recruitment, business planning, and additional fundraising.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: There is a pronounced food access problem for low income and communities of color in Austin. In 2016, the City's Office of Sustainability worked closely with the University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs to produce a report called "[Food For All, Inclusive Neighborhood Food Planning in North Austin](#)". This pilot planning process and the subsequent report showed clearly how access to food was disproportionately affecting certain communities and the impact was split along racial and geographic lines. Subsequently, the Office of Sustainability [issued a report](#) to City Council outlining the challenges and goals of the food ecosystem. The funding for community-owned food retail implementation prioritizes reaching out to these specific communities and reflecting their voices and perspectives on how this grocery initiative can empower and meet the needs of their communities.

Awareness: The food retail initiative process includes a significant amount of effort dedicated to community engagement and community involvement. A major milestone is the identification of a minimum of 300 committed co-op members or dedicated supporters for the store. A diverse Steering Committee comprised of community members has been created to provide leadership for the entire planning process. Community workshops, one-on-ones, and house meetings have been and will continue to be conducted to ensure a broad number of community members can be heard and recruited into the process of developing a community-based food store.

Access and Distribution: City staff worked with the Purchasing Department to support applicants in their response to the solicitation. The solicitation was distributed to over 450 small business consulting vendors registered with the City of Austin.

Outcomes: The deliverables expected for this initiative include the following:

- Development and implementation of an outreach plan to residents in the “Eastern Crescent” of Austin around community-owned grocery needs and preferences;
- Education and organizing of residents around a community-owned grocery store;
- Development of recommendations on location, characteristics, and development process for a community-owned grocery store;
- Identification of a core group of community-owned grocery store users, greater than or equal to 300 in number;
- Identification and training of an initial leadership cohort for the grocery store who may serve as a founding Board of Directors;
- Creation of business planning documents for a community-owned grocery store, including pro forma financial budgets, a formal business plan, capital campaign planning, contacts with lenders, general manager search process, and site selection criteria;
- Facilitating a pilot-scale launch of a cooperative or nonprofit grocery store; and,
- Financial disbursements and management of funds to member stakeholders and/or pilot grocery store program.

Negative Economic Impacts: This will be included as a part of the contractor’s scope of work.

Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities: The project is still in the business planning and design phase. However, services to disproportionately impacted communities will be a key consideration in project design. Specific targets and strategies to achieve those targets will be developed as part of project design.

The City measures and reports specific metrics on number and percentage of persons who successfully complete workforce development training; number of people moved out of poverty into middle skills jobs; and unemployment rates with the granularity of demographic data. EDD has committed to collecting demographic data (age, gender, race or ethnicity, zip code, and City Council District representation) for all project participants and fund recipients. The City [Equity Office](#) provides training on racial equity and holds City of Austin programs and services accountable to tracking equity-related metrics.

During the pandemic the Chief Economic Recovery Officer for the City required departments providing economic stimulus to the community to produce dashboards for each of the economic relief programs provided. This data is available to the public under Economic Impact on [ATXrecovers.com](#). As new programs are launched dashboards are provided. Each dashboard includes demographic information about applicants and awardees, as well as other factors that demonstrate historical challenges, such as: legal business structure, industry type, and what City of Austin Council district their customers reside in. For more information, see [ATXrecovers.com](#).

Community Engagement

As discussed in the General Overview section of this report, feedback collected in 2020 from focus groups which were developed to determine the allocation of CARES funding is still relevant and helped guide the development of the ARPA Spending Framework. This feedback will be considered during project design.

Project funding is being actively used to build the capacity of community organizations to serve people with significant barriers to services, including people of color, people with low incomes,

limited English proficiency populations, and other traditionally underserved group. For example, the Steering Committee that has been recruited from “Eastern Crescent” communities is multilingual with four (4) languages represented – English, Spanish, Pashto, and Arabic. Project funding supports concurrent translation technology and services, alongside house meetings and community-sensitive workshops.

Use of Evidence

The program is still in the design phase but will be created from use of evidence. In addition, disaggregated applicant information (those applied and served) will be available by demographic and evidence-based groups.

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of community members who attended educational workshops related to this initiative
- Percent of community members who attended educational workshops that believe this will strengthen their food access

Project 7400-A360: Austin Film Society

Funding amount: \$800,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$800,000

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$607,226

Project overview

Financial Services Department staff is using ARPA-SLFRF workforce development funds for initiatives that support Austinites economically impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic that provide Austin creatives with job training and placement to complement media production, content generation, and facilities management services. The contract is with Austin Film Society (AFS) for media production training and public access television facilities management. The \$800K Austin Film Society contract will:

- Provide workforce development training to economically disadvantaged individuals for occupations related to Austin’s creative sector residents and organizations,
- Distribute local content and manage video programming over cable television systems and streaming content services, and provide community access to the Public Access Television Facility and production equipment, and
- Advance access to services, community engagement, and leveraged opportunities.

Timeline: 10/1/2021 to 9/30/2024 with two 1-year extension options.

Link to the website of the project: <https://www.austinfilm.org/austin-public/about-austin-public/>

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

The City Equity Statement was co-created with over 200 community members who logged over 900 volunteer hours in its creation. In the Austin Strategic Direction 2023, the City has identified equity as a core anchor across all of the strategic outcomes. The City Equity Statement is as follows:

Racial equity is the condition when race no longer predicts a person’s quality of life outcomes in our community.

The City recognizes that race is the primary determinant of social equity and therefore the journey toward social equity begins with this definition. The City recognizes historical and structural disparities and a need for alleviation of the wrongs by critically transforming its institutions and creating a culture of equity.

The Austin Film Society contract prioritizes advancing racial equity in the area of media production and workforce training for the creative sector, historically underserved community members, managing the community media/public access production facility and partnership development. Increasing equity while mitigating racism means examining the history of racial segregation and social justice issues in Austin. This includes considering the structural and systemic barriers that have contributed to racial inequities in the community. Government sponsored programs may not always be the best forums to create spaces for genuine, authentic engagement of all members of the community. Cable television, streaming content services, and public facilities are not always relevant to all members of the community to reach everyone. That’s where this contract comes in.

Through this contract, equity means ensuring all members of the Austin community, regardless of background or identity, positively benefit from Media Production Training and Public Access

Television Facility Operations. The contractor shall center its approach in advancing racial equity and elevating equitable outcomes for all people as it relates to the services available to the community. Starting the work to fulfill the contract objectives with communities of color will allow the effort to elevate the voice of members of the community who have historically been underrepresented in media, production, and the creative sector workforce. This will mean focusing more contract resources on building relationships and trust with historically underrepresented communities in the beginning of the process to create a more equitable playing field later in the project implementation. This does not mean that other parts of the community will be left out or ignored, merely that additional resources will be devoted up front to ensure equitable outreach.

Goals: The Austin Film Society contract goals: Offer short term occupational training and non-degree certification to economically disadvantaged trainees, annual goal to be determined, with 3 pathways:

1. Mentorship with IATSE Local 484, local chapter for all professional crew in studio film,
2. Production in the Austin area which includes chapter's Inclusion and Diversity Committee, and
3. Mentorship program.

Awareness, Access and Distribution: The Austin Film Society services are available to anyone who is interested in learning media production skills and creating digital content to air on the cable channels which area also streamed. Community outreach efforts and partnerships established to raise awareness about services.

AFS has memorandums of understanding with Workforce Solutions Capital Area, Capital IDEA, Austin Community College, the Alliance for Media Arts + Culture and Arts2Work.

Outcomes: The Austin Film Society is establishing partnerships that focus on economically disadvantaged individuals.

Negative Economic Impacts: The Austin Film Society offers short term occupational training and non-degree certification to economically disadvantaged individuals – annual goal to be determined. Focus on creative sector industry and workers that were negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Community Engagement

The Austin Film Society is committed to ensuring all Austinites can access the training classes, media equipment, and studio resources available through the community media program at Austin Public. By partnering with public and private organizations, AFS will help Austin's diverse communities understand and connect with the opportunities and services offered at Austin Public. These partnerships are vital to increasing participation from historically disadvantaged communities, and to facilitating civic dialogue and free speech as outlined in the Communications Act of 1986.

AFS will continue to administer services with the following guidelines in order to facilitate community accessibility:

- Maintaining the Producer Portal, public computer stations and remote and on-site content uploading options to maximize opportunities for self-service for users
- Maintain at least 40 hours a week of open access to studios and equipment, with additional hours for specific programs such as workforce development training
- Develop specific access tracks for groups and organizations
- Maintain virtual class options in addition to hands-on, in-person options

- Make classes available to anyone in the community regardless of their connection to the producer program subscription
- Offer classes in English and Spanish, both for virtual and in-person classes
- Offer scholarships to ensure that anyone in the community can access classes, while keeping class prices affordable
- Distribute content on cable access channels 10, 11 and 16, while also providing all content on over-the-top (OTT) services, streaming and on-demand, to make community content accessible via cable or a myriad of internet options

Outreach and community engagement are key ways AFS will maximize community accessibility. Over the last six years, AFS has engaged with 224 local organizations specifically to increase awareness of the opportunities and services offered through Austin Public (AP), and to increase participation from historically disadvantaged communities in Austin. These engagements encompass different modalities through which the services and resources at Austin Public are utilized by these organizations to help further their own missions and goals. Additionally, the organizations help AFS connect to target communities and provide necessary partnerships and feedback to support the community media and workforce development programs.

AFS will also expand access to equipment and training services to the community through partnerships with host organizations. Classes, like orientation, will be taught by AP staff at additional sites around the community, particularly in communities where transportation to the AP facility is challenging. Additionally, AFS will find partners who would like to engage their communities more regularly in the production of public access programming to host mini studios. Community members would be trained on how to use the remote production equipment kits and will be able to distribute content to the AP channels and digital platforms directly from their location.

Use of Evidence

AFS Creative Careers is active in training participants, providing stipends, and helping the graduates land jobs in the creative industry. The workforce development program has entered into a data sharing agreement with the University of Texas Ray Marshall center to track the number of individuals who increase their income following graduation. Additionally, the City will continue to provide participant demographics information.

Key Performance Indicators

The Austin Film Society reports on the Key Performance Indicators detailed below via a progress report and report final performance annually via a progress report. From July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, the following outcomes have been achieved:

- 73 unduplicated program clients have been served.
- 73 workers have been enrolled in sectoral job training programs.
- 48 workers have completed sectoral job training programs.
- 73 individuals have been enrolled in the workforce development program.
- 29 individuals have become employed in a job related to their training following the workforce development program.
- 10 individuals have increased their income following the workforce development program.

Project 8600-A361: Austin Civilian Conservation Corp (ACCC)

Funding amount: \$1,882,478

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$0

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$0

Project overview

ACCC was created through a City Council resolution on May 7, 2020, to employ Austinites experiencing distress because of COVID-19. In 2022, ACCC transitioned to become a program that helps Austinites earn income, serve their community, and gain skills to build more equitable pathways to green career opportunities. The ACCC is now managed by the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) while continuing in cross-departmental collaboration with multiple City stakeholders, including the Offices of Innovation and Sustainability as well as the Economic Development, Austin Resource Recovery, and Watershed Protection departments. ACCC pilots green careers pathway exposure within the City and by partnership with external workforce providers. Internal green career pathways are facilitated through direct hiring of staff into temporary positions that provide exposure to City green careers.

In its first pilot year, ACCC used base funding from City partnering departments to create jobs for 100 individuals over 11 different projects. At the beginning of fiscal year 2022, ACCC was transferred to the Parks and Recreation Department. With the release of the City Climate Equity Plan, which was adopted by City Council in September 2021, ACCC has been aligning its goals with the plan and continues to support conservation, sustainability, and green career pathways into the City and with ACCC partner networks. ARPA-SLFRF funding was allocated to ACCC for use between 2022 and 2024 but will not be used until fiscal year 2023.

The principles that shape the ACCC are as follows:

- Build hope, connectedness, and beauty. While the pandemic prompted the initial creation of the project, the ACCC has long-term potential to contribute to a thriving future for Austin and its residents. ACCC programs provide a positive employment experience for residents who may feel left behind by Austin's prosperity. Their ACCC work builds closer connections with the natural environment and directly improves the city we love.
- Advance the understanding of green jobs. Many jobs, in many sectors, can be green jobs. A green job is not necessarily defined by the type of work but instead how the work is done. It is a lens. Using this lens, the ACCC has the potential to establish work and build pathways into many career fields.
- Pathways, not projects. The ACCC is not just a collection of projects that provide income for residents in need, nor is it only a career training program for professionals to progress in their field. The ACCC establishes job pipelines through a variety of programs, from low-barrier work to advanced training, which allow residents to enter at many points and achieve their career goals.
- Jobs, with training. Many workforce development programs focus on training and education to prepare for jobs but don't provide their participants income during the program. This, in many cases, forces participants to forgo income or other opportunities to make time to participate in the program, and they risk not getting a job after the training. The ACCC provides a job and income along with training, certifications, and experience. Participants can count on income in the ACCC; no one has to hope that their participation will pay off.

- Economic opportunity for individuals. Many initiatives focus on the economic development of businesses, which in turn provide opportunities to individuals. The ACCC focuses on the economic prosperity of individuals -- providing low-barrier income, support, experience, training, and advancement -- which in turn drives positive progress for Austin communities and the environment.
- Equitable access, equitable spaces. According to the City's Climate Equity Plan, there is a lack of diversity in the green job sector and in many natural areas in general. The ACCC will provide equitable access to green and conservation careers and evolve the view of who typically holds them. The project will help communities reclaim spaces and evolve the narrative around the environment, outdoors, and sustainability.
- Meet people where they are. The ACCC strives to build a diversity of community-driven programs that provide the right opportunities at the right time, based on what participants need and want and the barriers they face. Rather than try to fit people to programs, we co-create programs that fit people.
- Regional alignment. Sustainability opportunities do not lie neatly within political boundaries. The ACCC will strive to create and scale collaborations at the local, regional, state, and federal levels to maximize opportunities for residents and positive outcomes.
- New operational practices. A new project as wide-ranging as the ACCC is a rare opportunity. The project will be used to demonstrate new patterns of practice in the City, such as operationalizing equity, focusing on individual economic prosperity, community-led data collection and feedback, and new types of collaborations, staffing models, and project focuses.
- Innovation and advancement. The ACCC acknowledges that many opportunities for advancement in conservation and workforce development do not yet exist. Therefore, the ACCC will constantly strive to identify gaps and opportunities in its program pipelines based on community- and landscape-level feedback and develop new programs to fulfill them.

Project Website: www.austintexas.gov/accc

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

ACCC focuses on job development for individuals in the conservation and sustainability arena and is a re-creation of the historic Civilian Conservation Corp. The roots of the Civilian Conservation Corp are steeped in racist culture. In addition, people of color are substantially underrepresented in the conservation and sustainability field.

Goals: The main goal of ACCC is to focus on green job inequities by working with communities that are underrepresented in the leadership of green jobs and who are disproportionately impacted by of climate change. During the pilot phase, ACCC contracted with Build with Humanity and MEASURE, two local non-profits, to build an understanding of the program's potential users, their current and potential future needs, their desires for income and career training, and their current and potential future barriers to participation. These two organizations are owned and operated by people of color with strong ties to communities of color and other underserved groups that may realize significant benefits from participating in the ACCC but who often face barriers to accessing such programs. Goals for ACCC will focus on addressing the findings in these two reports:

Build with Humanity, "Lived Experience + Austin Civilian Conservation Corps," December 1, 2021 and Shadeequa (Dee) Miller Ph.D. and Janis Bookout,

What Works in Works Programs: Building Equity in the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps, September 2021. Here are some target goals based on the finds of these reports:

- Define core elements of the problem(s) being tackled by the ACCC (community sustainability, employment, and workforce development).
- Define and explore relationships between elements within the current employment system that serves the ACCC’s target audience.
- Prioritize and affirmatively target key points of leverage to understand opportunities to make ACCC more effective.
- Examine barriers to employment within green job sectors both internal and external to the City, such as wage, sick leave and paid time off.

Awareness: In fiscal year 2022, ACCC hired two marketing specialists to build the ACCC website and provide outreach to current and potential participants. ACCC is currently in the planning phase of a Green Job Accelerator Program aimed at building the ACCC network, which will accelerate green workforce provider ideas in both the social for profit and nonprofit sectors.

Access and Distribution: ACCC is aware that administrative requirements needed for City employment can be burdensome or create barriers, and ACCC has worked to build a network of partners to assist with recruitment, green job acceleration, and workforce opportunities.

MEASURE’s research details the lived experience of those economically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic at the neighborhood and community level. The research documents the historical and current experience (and understanding) of conservation-related work in the communities the ACCC program is intended to serve. This will allow ACCC to address barriers to participation (access) and to design a project that is desirable to residents both now and in the future. MEASURE relied on surveys and focus groups and will create feedback mechanisms and metrics to gauge progress and opportunities for improvement.

In addition, in fiscal year 2022, ACCC has expanded pathways for participants into City employment through temporary staff hiring, training, and support in career pathways. Initially ACCC limited participation to people who lived within the city limits, including extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJs). However, many black, indigenous, and people of color cannot afford to live within the Austin city limits, which greatly reduces the number of people who can potentially participate in ACCC’s workforce programs. Accordingly, ACCC is currently working interdepartmentally to expand the geographic focus during the recruitment process to reduce barriers to program access.

Outcomes: Three reports will guide the programmatic outcomes of ACCC. These reports are summarized below:

What Works in Works Programs: Building Equity in the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps conducted by MEASURE’s Shadeequa (Dee) Miller and Janis Bookout. This report provides historical context to workforce development. MEASURE used equity focused focus groups and an online survey to better understand the needs, desires and barriers experienced by communities most impacted by the pandemic in order to improve ACCC. The summary of this report’s finding is detailed in the research section.

Lived Experience & the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps by Build with Humanity presents a system map of the current economic conditions facing Austin communities including micro, meso, and macro level drivers. The recommended points of integration provide effective avenues for service focused on intersection of workforce development sustainable develop and COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

Expanding Pathways to Quality Jobs in Austin's Growing Green Economy, currently in progress by the University of Texas School of Architecture's Community and Regional Planning, will assist with creating a local definition of green jobs for the Austin area.

Negative Economic Impacts: The City Council resolution lays out a basic direction for the ACCC project, and the work initially aligned with it in the pilot phase focuses on outdoor environmental work.

In fiscal year 2022, after the release of reports from local non-profits Build with Humanity and MEASURE, ACCC will focus on expanding pathways into employment in addition to maintaining and expanding the network of external workforce partners. ACCC administration also moved into the Centralized Programs Division. With this transition in administration, ACCC is examining departmentwide and Citywide processes related to hiring, retention, onboarding, and compensation to examine and identify barriers to workforce equity within green jobs. By the end of fiscal year 2022, ACCC will combine and analyze the findings of the two reports to identify barriers and mitigation strategies to equity.

Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities: Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City began to take strides in addressing equitable outcomes for project and service delivery. These strides include a City Council adopted five-year strategic plan, called Strategic Direction 2023 or SD23 for short, which prescribes reporting detail with as much granularity as possible. These metrics include number and percentage of persons who successfully complete workforce development training; number of people moved out of poverty into middle-skills jobs, and unemployment rates.

Community Engagement

MEASURE Certified Educators used equity-focused focus groups and an online survey to better understand the needs, desires, and barriers experienced by the communities most impacted by the pandemic in order to improve the ACCC project. The focus groups informed and guided the development of the online community survey and the creation of the community impact metrics.

The *Lived Experience in the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps* report by Build with Humanity presents a system map of the current economic conditions facing Austin communities that includes micro, meso, and macro level drivers. The recommended points of intervention provide more effective avenues for services focused on the intersection of workforce development, sustainable development, and COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

Use of Evidence

The reports produced by Build with Humanity and MEASURE provided guidelines for program implementation as well as information on the current and future landscape of green jobs in Austin. These reports provided a system mapping framework to better inform the design of ACCC to center equity and to address community workforce needs. The goals of system mapping in this report are to:

- Define core elements of the problem(s) being tackled by the ACCC (community sustainability, employment, and workforce development).
- Define and explore relationships between elements within the current employment system that serves the ACCC's target audience.
- Prioritize and affirmatively target key points of leverage to understand opportunities to make ACCC more effective.
- Scope the domain(s) of exploration we intended to pursue in our lived-experience research with the communities we serve.

Based on this report, ACCC is aligning program evaluation and investment with the action plan provided in this research:

- Implement a community management program for personal and professional support.
- Implement a specific "track"-based learning and career development program.
- Implement a partnership management program.

Key Performance Indicators

The project design is still in the development phase. The project is expected to use evidence-based criteria such as industry demand, educational qualifications, and applicant income.

Outcomes are still being designed given the research in progress on the ACCC pilot. The outcomes will likely include the number of participants who successfully completed training and obtained jobs with middle-skill wages and metrics to align with advancing equity and career placement.

Project 9100-A248: Public Health - IT Project
Funding amount: \$6,200,000
Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services
Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$1,760,845
Project Amount Expended to Date: \$1,760,845

Project overview

Over the next two years, one of Austin Public Health's (APH) main activities related to the COVID-19 emergency response will be to continue the enhancement and further development of the Austin Health Force platform to ensure the platform is updated based on CDC guidance as well as develop the system to be ready for the next pandemic. APH completed the solicitation for a comprehensive disease surveillance system for all 70+ reportable conditions. The contract was awarded to EpiTrax and is currently being developed and implemented. This will also support improvements to the public-facing aspects of COVID-19 testing and vaccinations as well as support epidemiology and disease surveillance functions. APH has also completed a solicitation for a consultant to facilitate a data modernization initiative. ISF Consulting was awarded the contract and will evaluate the current capacity (both staffing and data infrastructure/functionality), identify gaps, and highlight opportunities in public health data infrastructure improvement and workforce needs and development. The outcome will be a Data Modernization Strategic Plan with measurable objectives. The project is in the planning phase and is on track with final deliverables due on March 8, 2024. APH has also purchased new hardware for new staff as well as specialized hardware for specific functions including Accounting, Graphic Design, IT Data Architecture, Epidemiology and GIS Mapping.

Link to website: <http://austintexas.gov/covid19> and https://covid19.austintexas.gov/s/?language=en_US

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Austin, Texas is home to a diverse population of 978,908 people which constitute over 75% of Travis County. The health and socioeconomic disparities in Austin illustrate significant disadvantages for minority populations, particularly amongst Black/African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos/Latinx. APH, in collaboration with partners and community leaders, will provide outreach and vaccination services all populations including Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, people experiencing homelessness, and adults 65 and older by going to community settings where targeted populations reside or gather.

APH will address racial and geographic disparities in COVID-19 rates of infection, vaccination, and health literacy by focusing on an urban area of up of 15 zip codes with high social vulnerability indices and populations of color.

Project outcomes include:

- Outcome: Promote usability, interoperability, data sharing, and integration
 - Improve the management and governance of data across APH
 - Deploy an APH Business Intelligence Strategy that promotes data and information exchange standards
 - Capture data sharing best practices from APH internal and external partners
 - Promote interoperable exchange of data across APH
 - Deploy an APH Business Intelligence Strategy that promotes data and information exchange standards

- Ensure attention to usability and accessibility of all systems and data access throughout the life cycle by engaging user and critical partners
- Increase APH's ability to use, benefit from, and manage advances in real-time electronic health information for public health surveillance, situational awareness, and targeted alerting
- Increase APH's ability to manage electronic health information to inform planning and decision making to ensure continuity of appropriate care during disasters and public health emergencies
- Outcome: Implementation & management of quality IT services that meet the needs of the business
 - Ensure customer satisfaction
 - Consistently meet customer outcomes
 - Elimination of redundancies in processes and technologies through standardization
- Outcome: Protect critical systems and data
 - Ensure regulatory compliance
 - Improve the security and privacy posture of data and information systems
 - Advocate for a secure, cloud environment, consistent with existing regulatory requirements

In order to promote equity, APH will align data strategy with business strategy. This will be accomplished by defining data standards, guidelines, formal processes, rules, and templates for controlled sharing of data to support open sharing while protecting sensitive information. Utilizing the City's Strategic Direction plan as a guide, APH will collect, analyze, interpret, and distribute data throughout its life cycle. The data life cycle refers to the various stages of a data project that offer opportunities to practice greater consciousness of and commitment to equity, fairness, and access.

APH will utilize current funding to address challenging racial and geographic disparities regarding COVID-19 rates of infection, vaccination, and health literacy. This effort will focus on an urban area made up of 15 zip codes with high social vulnerability indices and populations of color.

Community Engagement

During the project, APH will conduct user experience assessments to enhance the design of the system that encompasses the entire user journey. Scope would include accessibility, useability, functionality, and aesthetics.

Key Performance Indicators

Proposed Performance Measures:

Output: Numbers of individuals signed up with an Austin Health Force account = 978,279

Output: Number of individuals tested = 224,030

Output: Number of individuals receiving a vaccine dose = 393,358

Project 9100-A249: Public Health - Communications Project

Funding amount: \$4,475,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$371,474

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$371,474

Project overview

One of the main responsibilities with this funding for Austin Public Health (APH) is to continue public health education and awareness campaigns. This outreach is in the form of education campaigns focused on communities that have barriers to accessing healthcare. APH has hired a team of temporary employees who specialize in behavior change messaging to develop educational materials for disease prevention, emergency preparedness, and awareness of APH services. The APH Communications Unit leverages unpaid media with existing established relationships with traditional news media and develops media toolkits for partners region-wide, elected officials, and community leaders.

Part of this communication strategy includes material translation and interpretation services which will be leveraged by partnerships with local agencies such as area hospitals, churches, non-profits, businesses, and community engagement groups. In addition to the educational material used by Community Health Workers, the team of temporary staff is focusing on behavioral change messaging through multi-media platforms from video PSAs/testimonials to billboards and tabling events. Content includes:

- Employee recruitment
- Weather-related emergency preparedness
- Various vaccine outreach such as Monkeypox, Flu, MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella), and COVID-19
- Awareness surrounding mental health
- Communicable diseases and injury prevention such as opioid/fentanyl overdose, West Nile Virus, Zika, Malaria, Monkeypox, and HIV

The outreach is focused primarily on low-income, disproportionately impacted communities.

Link to the website: <http://austintexas.gov/covid19>

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Austin, Texas is home to a diverse population of 978,908 people and constitutes over 75% of Travis County. The health and socioeconomic disparities in Austin illustrate significant disadvantages for minority populations, particularly amongst Black/African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos/Latinx. APH, in collaboration with partners and community leaders, will provide outreach and vaccination to Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, people experiencing homelessness, and adults 65 and older by going to community settings where the populations of focus reside or gather.

APH will address challenging racial and geographic disparities in COVID-19 rates of infection, vaccination, and health literacy in an urban area of focus made up of 15 zip codes with high social vulnerability indices and populations of color.

APH created the CERC (Communications Engagement Review Committee) which is a group of APH staff members appointed by the Executive Leadership Team to review APH material for cultural and linguistic competency. APH has developed communication procedures for the public with information about COVID-19, vaccination, and other mitigation measures. These procedures,

which include materials and in-person messaging, were developed in accordance with Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS standards), using the top 6 languages in the City's Language Access Plan.

APH will continue to cultivate its existing partnerships through social services contracts APH Language Access Program and the Communications Engagement Review Committee to help develop culturally specific communications and COVID-19 operation strategies.

APH proposes partners employ a patient-centered 'health literate care model' in which providers confirm patient understanding and assess the impact of implementing this approach.

APH continues to use outcome-based performance metrics that measure the reach of media campaigns and strategies by race, ethnicity and/or age.

While funding is allowable throughout the areas that APH serves, APH will focus mainly on challenging racial and geographic disparities in rates of infection, vaccination, and health literacy in an urban area of focus made up of 15 zip codes with high social vulnerability indices and populations of color.

Community Engagement

APH, in conjunction with community partners, will enhance culturally and linguistically appropriate communications, outreach, education, and connections to services to decrease disparities in health literacy and vaccination and overall health outcomes.

Addressing disease disparities will take a comprehensive approach that addresses not only the mitigation of disease, but also one that collaboratively addresses resources and partnerships to support community resilience and other factors that contribute to overall health and well-being. APH utilizes Community Health Workers (CHW) and Community Engagement Specialists (CES), who are individuals with training, lived experience and connections to the people in the community. APH also hires contract interpreters to ensure that in-person interpretation will be available at vaccine and testing sites to provide accurate information to both patient and provider. In addition to interpreters, APH contracts with translators who review and produce content in 8 to 10 languages and align messages with population-specific strategies. APH also has bilingual staff that assures that translated content is updated on its website and that translates content in emergency situations when time precludes the use of a translation vendor. Social media, a growing communication medium, especially through the pandemic response plays a large role in answering individual questions. Public Information Specialists work closely with translators to post in several languages as well as respond to any questions in the language that it was asked. Virtual town halls on social media are also heavily utilized in addition to in-person meetings.

APH funds focused advertising - in print, network media, radio, online and social media advertising, out-of-home, and text services - to reach communities at various touch points, and to be sure that messages are received in various ways to address barriers to credible information. APH also utilizes ATXN to provide media question-and-answer forums and public service announcements that are available in Spanish and other languages to address concerns of communities with vaccine hesitancy and in populations disproportionately affected by diseases such as COVID-19.

Key Performance Indicators

Proposed Performance Indicators:

Output 1: Number of people reached through engagement activities via social media (comments, shares, likes) and click-throughs.

Output 2: Number of promotional and printed materials (flyers, bus wraps, unique place ads) for targeted zip codes.

Outcome 1: Percentage of social media posts per month and text message funding that focuses on priority zip codes.

Outcome 2: Percentage of traditional paid media outreach that is focused on demographics that represent populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Project 9100-A250: Public Health - Staffing and Support

Funding amount: \$27,625,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$19,035,946

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$8,109,141

Project overview

Over the next two years, one of Austin Public Health's (APH) main activities related to the COVID-19 emergency response will be to sustain an enhanced workforce to reinforce the public health infrastructure. These activities include public health emergency planning, testing, vaccination, disease surveillance, case investigations, contract management, public information and communications, nurse and equity assistance lines, and support service functions. In addition to the staffing, APH's response activities have also included general support of departmental operations including an Equity Resource Line for citizens to call for assistance or information, supplies, and the continued function of hygiene stations and sanitation services. Some funding is also used for an investment in staff through training and skills development.

Link to the website: <http://austintexas.gov/covid19>

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Austin, Texas is home to a diverse population of 978,908 people which constitutes over 75% of Travis County. The health and socioeconomic disparities in Austin illustrate significant disadvantages for minority populations, particularly among Black/African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos/Latinx. APH, in collaboration with partners and community leaders, will provide outreach and vaccination services to all populations including Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, people experiencing homelessness, and adults 65 and older by going to community settings where targeted populations reside or gather.

The COVID-19 pandemic response has further highlighted the existing gap of core public health staffing. APH has designated a significant portion of the ARPA allocation for current and future temporary staffing needs for the COVID-19 response and other infrastructure needs. Without additional staffing, APH is not able to sustain response operations and provide core public health and social service programs to the public.

Since December 2019, APH regular staff and hundreds of temporary staff have been on the frontline of the COVID-19 response, working diligently to protect the health and safety of Austin and Travis County, without significant breaks and limited overtime. The work performed includes epidemiology and disease surveillance, including case investigations of positive individuals; working with long-term care providers; staffing call centers, building IT infrastructure, operating testing and vaccination clinics, sharing information to the public through the media and in digital formats; collaborating with community organizations to ensure access to response resources; and providing support functions such as purchasing, finance, IT and human resources.

Notable staffing and support functions that are made possible with this funding are:

- A Research Analyst Senior for the Office of Vital Records to perform data mining of death records.
- Increased capacity for contract management and solicitations.
- Additional staffing on the Planning and Evaluation Team for increased support and capacity for grant research and the Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHA/CHIP).

- Supplemental staff for the Office of Violence Prevention and Community Health Worker training hub.
- Additional staffing for Environmental Health Services to achieve the FDA's standard certification.
- Support services including HR, IT and Finance.
- The purchase of gift cards as an incentive to motivate the unvaccinated population to protect themselves and others by getting vaccinated.
- The purchase of data sets, including hospital data and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) oversampling, for better data analysis.
- Promotional items for distribution to the community for awareness to help improve health.
- Consultants for workforce development and enhancement.
- Facility enhancement including safety and security infrastructure.
- Mobile health clinics.
- A public health recruitment and incentive program for hard-to-fill positions like nurses, phlebotomists, physicians, nurse practitioners, social workers, radiologist techs and lab staff.

APH has been experiencing high turnover and retirements among the regular workforce, similar to what is trending in public health nationwide. If this high turnover and retirement trend continues, APH will more than double its turnover rate due to retirement separations. The vacancy rate and retirement trend have combined to create a critical staffing and sustainability issue for APH that needs to be addressed. APH has and will continue to utilize ARPA – SLFRF funding to implement strategies to encourage existing APH staff to continue their current employment to maintain critical institutional knowledge and competency in public health practice throughout the pandemic response.

The REDI (Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) Plan was developed to embody the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion as well as align with the strategic priorities of Austin Public Health and the City of Austin. This work is necessary to improve outcomes for employees, the community, stakeholders, and customers by addressing inequities at a systemic level. In addition, the Department has further developed and relaunched the Equity Academy for staff. APH also entered into an interlocal agreement with Travis County Integral Care to provide mental health first aid training to all staff. APH also has a Workforce Development Plan, which includes objectives to consider the characteristics of the populations served, and to recruit a diverse workforce reflective of the population served. As data indicates, the current systems to respond to the pandemic require an approach that includes an equity lens to ensure that the most vulnerable in the community have trust in the systems of care and easy access to needed services. Some of the metrics to track progress on these efforts include the diversity of applicants, number of relationships built and changes to recruiting practices.

The Equity Line, funded through APH's ARPA – SLFRF dollars, allows the department to be more responsive to historically underserved populations by providing individuals with information and resources to address health disparities. The Call Center can take calls in various languages through an interpreter line.

APH will continue to utilize funding to address challenging racial and geographic disparities regarding COVID-19 rates of infection, vaccination, and health literacy. This effort will focus on an urban area made up of 15 zip codes with high social vulnerability indices and populations of color.

Community Engagement

The City acknowledges the importance of fostering community within the organization as well as the local communities where City employees, clients, and their families live and work. The City has Employee Affinity groups that accelerate development through mentoring, learning, networking, organizing outreach and service activities, and addressing challenges that are important to the community and the City through targeted initiatives. We believe that strengthening the community externally and internally will help create sustainable change.

The City has a partnership with Careers in Government, which is a Diversity Network designed to promote diversity-committed employers as well as to attract and engage potential applicants. Their network has over 80 job boards in all 50 states providing City job postings with significant national reach. The network includes a Latino job network, African American job network, an LGBTQ job network, a Women's job network and an Asian job network just to name a few. In the last year, APH has vastly expanded its outreach and ability to cast a wider net to ensure it reaches applicants that mirror the community. In addition to increasing hiring and addressing the vacancy rates, human resources staff within APH are undertaking the following activities:

- Reviewing job descriptions
 - Modifying Minimum Qualifications for increased candidate pools
 - Updating outdated job descriptions for relevancy and working to reset unrealistic minimum qualifications
 - Utilizing software to vet job descriptions for inequitable verbiage
- Ensuring we are sourcing applicants in a variety of methods including the following over the last 9 months:
 - 10 career fairs
 - 5 community events/job fairs
 - Registered with Handshake and have been approved by 20 universities
- Building the workforce pipeline by hosting 7 different internship programs in the department and 2 summer youth programs at the high school level annually. APH also has 2 practicums with local nursing programs and will continue looking for ways to expand to more nursing schools.
- Increasing use of Social Media advertisements in-house and with the help of the Human Resources Department
 - Twitter
 - Facebook
 - LinkedIn
- Producing Step Progressions/Career Ladder for succession planning and extended retention
 - Community Health Workers
 - Environmental Health Officers
- Utilizing vacancy/recruitment/national data for justifications
 - Memos to HRD requesting exceptions to hire above the zone for Nursing Family titles
 - Memos to HRD requesting sign-on bonuses for hard-to-fill positions
- Regularly conducts exit interviews to gather quantitative and qualitative data to identify and address department vacancy trends.

APH is committed to focusing on research and data to more clearly identify and outreach to the populations more disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, typically historically marginalized populations. The strategy will be based on local COVID-19 health data, local vaccination data analyzed by race, ethnicity, zip code, and qualitative data concerning vaccine readiness collected

by community partners. It will be built on chronic disease prevention and education practices - culturally relevant messaging, placed-based options, mobile vaccination programs, education support and relationship building, utilizing the community health worker model. The data will be analyzed and tracked on a regular basis to continue to inform outreach efforts.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators:

Outcome: Percentage of staff on payroll by ethnicity and age

Ethnicity	
Asian	4.03%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.13%
Black or African American	18.12%
Choose not to disclose	2.15%
Hispanic or Latino	41.21%
Two or more races	2.42%
White	31.01%

Age	
20-29	19.33%
30-39	23.89%
40-49	23.22%
50-59	19.33%
60+	13.02%

As of pay period ending June 3, 2023

Project 9100-A350: Early Care and Education and Early Childhood Support

Funding amount: \$7,500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Amount Obligated to Date: \$5,742,474

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$2,659,946

Project overview

Any Baby Can is providing premium pay to home visitors and parent education providers who have taken on additional workload due to the pandemic. Any Baby Can will also expand client outreach and develop a new referral network, prioritizing families in high-risk communities.

Austin ISD has expanded four Pre-K classes for three-year-olds from half-day to full-day.

Del Valle ISD is expanding access to free, dual-language, full-day Pre-K for 4-year-olds to families who would not otherwise qualify.

Family Connects is expanding its evidence-based postpartum nurse home visit services to additional families.

United Way for Greater Austin is supporting early childhood and family-support programs and initiatives in Austin/Travis County that align with the goals of the community's Success by Six Coalition strategic plan.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: The goal of Any Baby Can's premium pay stipends is to help retain Ready Families Collaborative staff who are providing direct face-to-face services and reduce turnover rates. The goal of the outreach position is to help increase enrollments to pre-pandemic levels.

The goal of the Austin ISD project is to increase Pre-K programming for 3-year-olds on the east side of Austin because this section of town has been identified as needing more full-day early care and education options.

Del Valle ISD is located in a childcare desert where there is not enough affordable, high-quality childcare. The goal of Del Valle ISD's Pre-K expansion is to increase access to free Pre-K at campuses in which a minimum of 80% of families qualify for the free and reduced lunch program.

The goals of the Family Connects postpartum home visits are to support families, link them with resources they need, reduce maternal anxiety, reduce the need for emergency medical care for infants, and higher quality parenting behaviors, home environments, and childcare choices.

The goals of the United Way for Greater Austin initiatives are to: increase access to Pre-K for children and families; scale efforts that increase the supply of home-based childcare; analyze the community's need for non-traditional childcare; create a shared services alliance to strengthen capacity in the childcare sector; evaluate local impact and return on investment of the Family Connects program; expand capacity for resource and service navigation for families; provide supports to parenting students to improve graduation rates that lead to family-sustaining wages; provide tutoring and literacy supports to students to avoid summer learning loss; and improve the quality of summer and afterschool programming for young children.

Awareness: The Community Outreach Worker at Any Baby Can will take the lead on the creation and coordination of an outreach workgroup made up of Ready Families Collaborative partners that will meet on a regular basis. The outreach worker will be responsible for conducting

direct outreach to potential clients who are referred and helping identify the best Ready Families Collaborative partner for which the client is eligible.

Austin ISD is working to ensure equitable access by making information available to all families about the program on multiple websites, at enrollment events, and during customer service calls from families to the department.

Del Valle ISD has employed a range of outreach methods in both English and Spanish to raise awareness that free, full-day, dual language Pre-K for 4-year-olds is available to all students, including via website, social media, a Pre-K enrollment day, and using fliers and signs.

Family Connects staff offer program services in-person to postpartum clients before they are discharged from the hospital after delivery. These services are also available as a benefit to all City of Austin employees in the postpartum period which is advertised in the employee benefits handbook.

United Way for Greater Austin raises awareness about programs in the following ways:

- Childcare Shared Service Alliance: The Shared Services Work Group presents the purpose and goals of a shared services alliance to childcare providers in Austin-Travis County.
- Home-Based Childcare: The contractor partners with grassroots organizations working with home-based providers to share information on the AVANCE Quality Childcare Matters Program.
- Pre-K Partnerships: UWATX reaches out to childcare programs on the Texas Rising Star quality-rated program list via community meetings held ahead of the start of fall and spring semesters.
- Summer and Afterschool Programming Quality: Andy Roddick Foundation informs out-of-school time providers of the assessment and professional development opportunity through their newsletter and website.
- Support for Parenting Students: Austin Community College Student Advocacy Center scans all students for eligibility, and Advocates (case managers) support their eligible students in applying.
- 2-1-1/ConnectATX: Marketing is done through outreach events, social media, strategic partnerships, and community trainings.

Access and Distribution: The Community Outreach Worker at Any Baby Can started in May 2023 and will coordinate with the outreach workgroup and conduct direct outreach to increase access to and enrollment in Ready Families Collaborative programs. The outreach worker will also work closely with the Success by 6 team at United Way of Greater Austin to implement a closed-loop referral system for the Ready Families Collaborative to help streamline referrals from the ConnectATX system and ensure families are connected to appropriate early childhood services.

Austin ISD's full-day Pre-K for 3-year-olds ensures equitable access to and distribution of services by making this service available to families that meet the eligibility criteria for free Pre-K. The ARPA-funded classrooms serve both English-speaking and limited-English-proficient students as well as students from the refugee population.

Del Valle ISD is offering free, dual-language full-day Pre-K to all four-year-olds because there is a dearth of affordable, high-quality early care and education options in the area. Del Valle ISD also offers free afterschool programs with meals for Pre-K students at all campuses, making Pre-K more accessible for working parents and families with low income. Prior to the start of this

school year, the district held a Pre-K and Kindergarten registration day at all elementary school campuses in April 2022 and four on-campus registration days in late July 2022.

Family Connects offers visits in person, by phone, or virtually. Services are available in English, Spanish, and in other languages using an interpretation service.

United Way for Greater Austin ensures equitable program access and distribution as follows:

- Child Care Shared Services Alliance: Program is focusing on childcare providers serving families receiving subsidies.
- Family Connects Evaluation: Served all births at partner birthing hospitals. Seton Main services most Medicaid births in Austin. Language Access Plan was available for non-English speaking families. The evaluation compared families served to vital records to ensure those served were representative of community.
- Home-Based Childcare: Staff reflect the cultural, linguistic, and lived experience of providers.
- Nontraditional Hour Childcare Study: Equitable access was built into study design and through community work group.
- Pre-K Partnerships: All children served by the PKP are economically disadvantaged and the majority are BIPOC. Professional development for teachers focused on supporting emerging bilingual learners, using equity-centered approaches to managing classroom behavior, and cultivating parent/family engagement in childcare centers.
- Summer and Afterschool Programming Quality: Assessment services available for free to any provider in Austin, reminders provided in meetings, emails, newsletters, etc. Reach out to any provider who expresses interest, even without formal request.
- Support for Parenting Students: Parents recruited from ACC Advocacy Center serving students on financial assistance. All students have low income and the majority of them identify as BIPOC.
- 2-1-1/ConnectATX: 24/7, confidential services. More than 1/3 of call specialists are bilingual, plus translation services with more than 240 languages. Attend community outreach events in high-need zip codes. Share information with federally qualified health centers, food bank, and community-based organizations.

Outcomes: Of the 90 staff receiving premium pay from Any Baby Can, the Ready Families Collaborative was able to retain 88 of these employees, allowing clients to receive uninterrupted, quality services from experienced staff members.

There was high enrollment and teacher retention rates in Austin ISD's full-day Pre-K for 3-year-olds. Anecdotal data collected from Austin ISD families and enrollment data demonstrate that full-day Pre-K options are a high need for families in Austin, and this program is helping meet that need. Access to full-day early childhood programming contributes to kindergarten readiness.

In the 2022-23 school year, Del Valle ISD served 48 four-year-olds in full-day Pre-K with Local Fiscal Recovery Funds who would not otherwise have been eligible.

In the past year, Family Connects has served many families who recently immigrated to the U.S. These families often had higher needs as many had arrived with minimal resources. After receiving a nurse visit where clinical and social/emotional needs were assessed, appropriate referrals to healthcare providers or community resources were provided, along with grocery store gift cards to support basic food needs. Clients have expressed that the postpartum nurse home visit has been very helpful to them. Here are some client quotes highlighting the program's impact.

- “It was a really great visit. It was very reassuring knowing someone was going to come check on me in two weeks. Having a new baby can be overwhelming, I feel all moms can use this service.”
- The gift card and baby supplies (diapers and small cribs) helped a lot. The nurse was very nice and I appreciated that she was checking on me.
- “It was nice to be checked on. I was totally worried about postpartum depression since I've had depression previously, so it felt really good for someone to check on me.”
- “It was really helpful to have someone come by the house especially after a NICU.”

United Way for Greater Austin program outcomes are as follows:

- Childcare Shared Services Alliance: As a result of participating in Shared Services, centers are saving time and money by streamlining automated features needed to comply with Texas Rising Stars regulations. Money saved is redirected to focus on quality improvement.
- Family Connects Evaluation: About 6-8 weeks after the visit, nurses attempt to reach every family for a phone call designed to gather feedback about the services provided. Out of all caregivers with calls completed, 95% reported that their experience with Family Connects was helpful.
- Nontraditional Hour Childcare Study: With the results of the study complete, we have used the data and information to begin informing elected officials about the barriers faced by families and childcare programs, and to make a case to the business community about the impact on recruiting and retaining the necessary workforce.
- Pre-K Partnerships: On year-end surveys, Pre-K Partnership teachers reported that they appreciated and depended on the coaching and professional development they received. Similarly, student performance data indicates the children in Pre-K Partnership classrooms are developing at a rate expected via nationally normed assessments like Teaching Strategies GOLD.
- Summer and Afterschool Programming Quality: Information from observational assessments allows United Way to offer targeted support, identify areas where improvements can be made, and offer professional development.
- Support for Parenting Students: On the end-of-semester survey, students reported that they had been able to reduce work hours or not take on additional jobs because of this program, allowing them more time for their studies and families.
- 2-1-1/ConnectATX: Over 9,800 electronic referrals were placed using the ConnectATX platform, nearly 40% of which were closed loop, resulting in over 1,300 people receiving help with their requested needs.

Community Engagement

Any Baby Can’s outreach worker will conduct direct community outreach to potential clients in the community and refine community engagement strategies as needed in collaboration with the Ready Families Collaborative outreach workgroup.

In Austin ISD, parents, guardians, and community members can choose how to receive messages from Austin ISD that are sent by the District or Campus via School Messenger, social media, webpages, direct correspondence, and from the teacher’s gradebooks via Parent Self-Serve. The district aims to design engagement opportunities that are relational, culturally proficient, and inclusive of the diverse students, families, community members, staff and partner organizations that make up the community. Austin ISD is committed to ensuring that the community understands how their input informs major decisions made by the district and campus leadership and this will be an area of focus for the upcoming school year.

Del Valle ISD strategically marketed the dual language Pre-K program through a variety of channels. Marketing promoting enrollment for the program has included a paid social media campaign and mailed postcards to more than 30,000 residences. The multilingual department hosted several informational sessions for families to learn about the program and ask questions.

Family Connects nurses attempt to contact clients at least three times over a couple of weeks to follow-up. Staff regularly educate healthcare providers and hospital staff on the benefits of the program to their patients so they can accurately explain it to clients. Clients receive a post-visit call around 8 weeks after the nurse visit so they can provide feedback.

United Way for Greater Austin engages the community in the following ways:

- Childcare Shared Services Alliance: Co-design team of local childcare providers and Strategic Planning Work Group including institutional entities.
- Family Connects Evaluation: Developed through a participatory process. Physician and Family Advisory Councils. Client surveys.
- Home-Based Childcare: Continuous improvement process. Cohort model. Participants inform information in sessions. Feedback after each session orally and written. Ongoing alumni network.
- Nontraditional Hour Childcare Study: The study included one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and other community engagement methods. Work was informed by a workgroup made up of community representatives.
- Pre-K Partnerships: Family Council and Directors' cohort also meets regularly.
- Summer and Afterschool Programming Quality: Feedback is provided after each assessment. Partner programs are surveyed twice annually.
- Support for Parenting Students: Participant feedback session and participants participating in planning meetings for Year 2.
- 2-1-1/ConnectATX: Follow-up process to gather client feedback. ConnectATX community engagement team works closely with community-based organizations to gather feedback from their clients.

Use of Evidence

Any Baby Can is distributing premium pay stipends to family support staff working in evidence-based and research-based home visiting and parent support programs (i.e. Nurse Family Partnership, Nurturing Parenting Program, Parents as Teachers).

Austin ISD's Pre-K programs use curriculum and instructional practices from the Texas Education Commissioner's List of Approved Prekindergarten Curriculum and Assessment. In Pre-K for 3-year-olds Austin ISD uses The Creative Curriculum. Austin ISD student progress is assessed in multiple formative ways. The district uses the Texas Education Agency-approved Children's Learning Institute's Engage Assessment to track each student's growth toward kindergarten readiness. The district works with local, regional, and national leaders to ensure that the professional learning approach is evidence and research-based for high-quality practice.

The two-way dual language model used in DVISD's Pre-K program is a research-based model that helps both native English and native Spanish speakers become bi-literate and bilingual. Research shows that children who attend Pre-K are more likely to be ready for kindergarten, less likely to repeat a grade or receive special education services, perform better on third grade reading and math tests, and have higher graduation rates and higher wages as adults.

Family Connects is an evidence-based, universal postpartum support program, that has been shown to reduce symptoms of maternal anxiety by 28%, reduce the use of emergency medical

care for infants by 50%, and reduce Child Protective Services investigations in the first 5 years of life. SLRF funding will also be used to conduct an evaluation of the impact of the local Family Connects program.

The way in which United Way for Greater Austin's initiatives are evidence-based is described below.

- **Childcare Shared Services Alliance**: According to [Childcare Aware](#), evidence shows that providers that are associated with a shared services program are more likely to stay in business and have higher quality ratings.
- **Family Connects Evaluation**: The Family Connects Model is evidenced-based and was established in 2008 through a partnership with the Duke University Center for Child and Family Policy, the Center for Child & Family Health, and the Durham County Health Department. Family Connects Austin/Travis County follows this model and implements it with fidelity.
- **Nontraditional Hour Childcare Survey**: The Urban Institute designed the study around five research questions and conducted both quantitative and qualitative analysis. They analyzed existing survey and administrative data, collected the perspectives of people representing different constituencies in Austin/Travis County, and analyzed existing documents and research to develop policy recommendations.
- **Pre-K Partnerships**: Most U.S. states operate their public preschool programs in a mixed delivery system, in which public preschool and childcare are offered in a variety of settings, including public schools, Head Start programs, community-based childcare centers, private schools, and family childcare homes.
- **Summer and Afterschool Programming Quality**: United Way ensures programs meet evidence-based quality standards by continuously improving over time through regular quality observations accompanied by feedback, coaching, and targeted professional development and training and resources.
- **Support for Parenting Students**: According to the Aspen Institute, a \$3,000 increase in the annual income of families with young children is associated with a 17% increase in the child's future earnings. Also, accelerating parents' postsecondary success is one of the most effective economic mobility solutions for the current and next generation.
- **2-1-1/ConnectATX**: 2-1-1 is part of a state and nationwide model that conforms to the standards & best practices recommended by the National 2-1-1 Partnership, United Way Worldwide, and the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems. Through ConnectATX, each caller is offered a comprehensive Social Determinants of Health assessment. The results of the assessment are linked to referrals using the FindHelp software tool, and then referrals are placed electronically on behalf of the caller using a "closed-loop" referral system that allows staff the ability to see if connections are made and provide advocacy and follow-up if needed.

Key Performance Indicators

Any Baby Can provided premium pay stipends to 90 direct-service Ready Families Collaborative staff. Ninety-eight percent of staff who received premium pay stipends were retained.

Austin ISD served 72 three-year-olds in full-day Pre-K3.

Del Valle ISD served 48 four-year-olds in full-day Pre-K4 in the 2022-23 school year with Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, 45% of Del Valle ISD Pre-K students were kindergarten ready as measured by a phonological awareness assessment. In July 2023, the

district will report on the percentage of students who were kindergarten ready at the end of the 2022-23 school year.

From April 1, 2022, through March 31, 2023, Family Connects achieved the following outcomes:

- Provided 923 postpartum nurse home visits
- Scheduled visits with 85% of families with an eligible birth
- 71% of scheduled visits were completed
- Provided clients with 1534 referrals, 1453 of which were for identified risks
- Achieved 85% referral connection rate
- Achieved a client satisfaction rate of 95%

Since February 7, 2022, United Way for Greater Austin's initiatives funded by Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, have had the following impact:

- 249 children have been served in Pre-K Partnership program classrooms (these children are dual-enrolled in childcare and Austin ISD Pre-K).
- At the start of the 2022-23 school year, 61% of children in Pre-K Partnership classes exhibited age-appropriate skills in oral language. By the second semester of the 2022-23 school year, that rate increased to 82%.
- 71 home-based childcare providers have received instruction in the Quality Childcare Matters program curriculum from AVANCE.
- 26 childcare programs are participating in the shared services alliance.
- 70 parenting students are receiving stipends and credit-earning incentives.
- 10 students have received evidence-based, high-intensity tutoring, including literacy support and language enrichment.
- 22 after-school programs have been assessed using a quality assessment tool and provided support as needed to increase the program quality.

Project 9100-A351: High-Quality Affordable Child Care

Funding amount: \$3,500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services Project

Amount Obligated to Date: \$3,356,881

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$488,564

Project overview

The City of Austin has partnered with the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children and Workforce Solutions Capital Area Board to address gaps in the local childcare sector identified by the Austin/Travis County Success By 6 Coalition that was exacerbated by the pandemic. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Texas is a program of the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children that provides scholarships to early childhood professionals to help them earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or a college degree. Local Fiscal Recovery Funds provide additional wrap-around support to recipients and the childcare programs that employ them, including completion and commitment bonuses, and quality staff retention incentives for sponsoring childcare centers. Workforce Solutions manages the childcare subsidy system and the childcare quality system in the community. Local Fiscal Recovery Funds help WFS connect more children and families with quality, affordable childcare and provide premium pay to low-wage teachers and staff in the childcare sector.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: The goals of the agreement supporting the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Texas program are to incentivize early childhood educators to continue in and complete their course of study; incentivize their employers to support the recipients in furthering their education through the Program; retain qualified teachers in the childcare workforce; and help establish a fairly compensated and stable workforce. These goals will enhance the quality of care provided to the children they serve.

The Workforce Solutions agreement has three program components – Continuity of Care Expansion, Family and Community Engagement Navigator and Supervisor, and Childcare Essential Worker Premium Pay. The goals of Continuity of Care Expansion are to prevent childcare disruptions for children and families. The Community Engagement Navigator and Supervisor roles will reduce the number of families and children on childcare subsidy waitlists, thus improving access to early education for children, and helping parents remain in the workforce. The childcare essential worker premium pay will help retain highly skilled childcare teachers, directors, and center staff.

Awareness: The T.E.A.C.H. Texas program develops an outreach and recruitment plan bi-annually. Events include virtual information sessions, exhibits at early childhood conferences, training sessions, and Open House sessions for community colleges. T.E.A.C.H. Texas is working with community partners including Workforce Solutions Capital Area, United Way of Greater Austin, Austin Community College, and local childcare network groups to recruit applicants. Information is distributed via email blasts, social media, website notifications, and newsletters directly to the eligible population. T.E.A.C.H. staff continue to conduct numerous outreach events each month to keep childcare providers aware of the incentive opportunity. Throughout March 2023, T.E.A.C.H. hosted nine information sessions to help early childhood educators learn about the scholarship components and application process, each with a different focus, including bachelor's degree, associate degree, CDA assessment fee, and application support.

Workforce Solutions staff conduct outreach directly to clients who are on a current waitlist for subsidized childcare, prioritizing families with children under age 3. Workforce Solutions also

reaches out to individuals in training programs. Outreach is conducted by mail, phone, text, and email. Childcare navigators may also arrange in-person or virtual meetings with clients. Applications for premium pay are distributed at childcare centers and announced in childcare provider meetings.

Access and Distribution: To ensure equitable access to wrap-around support for T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients, the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children tracks multiple demographic data points. In 2022, 50% of scholarship recipients were persons of color, 29% were single mothers or grandmothers, 37% were first-generation college students, and the average age of scholarship recipients was 34 years old. Additionally, 97% were English proficient while the remaining 3% preferred Hebrew.

Work Force Solutions provides Childcare Services that are available to income-eligible families in Travis County. Work Force Solutions childcare navigators reached out to families of three-year-olds on the wait list in an effort to connect them with early care and education through public school Pre-K. Through ARPA funding, Workforce Solutions is also expanding access to premium pay for non-credentialed staff of high-quality childcare programs.

Outcomes: During the past year, the T.E.A.C.H program has had 39 unduplicated recipients participating across all three scholarship models. Recipients are continuing to work towards either completing their semester coursework, or for CDA candidates, their observation visit and exam, as a part of their scholarship contract requirements. Thirteen associate degree scholars completed college credit coursework in May 2023 which can be applied to earning their CDA credential. They will be applying for the CDA Assessment Fee scholarship model to complete the credential process. They will be eligible to earn additional wrap-around incentives with that scholarship model as well as the opportunity to continue working towards their associate degree in child development if they choose.

Workforce Solutions awarded 258 childcare staff with premium pay wage stipends in the fiscal year 2022. Workforce Solutions is processing applications for 2023 premium pay wage stipends now and expects to provide 343 teachers with wage stipends using Local Fiscal Recovery Funds this year. Workforce Solutions hired a Family and Community Engagement Navigator who has outreached families with three- and four-year-old children for placement in Pre-Kindergarten Partnership programs and assisted 47 families find an opening for their child in a local childcare program. The supervisor has been able to make a successful connection with the organization Foundation Communities' Financial Health Pathways program to refer Workforce Solutions who exceed income eligibility for one-on-one financial coaching.

Community Engagement

T.E.A.C.H. recipients, sponsor employers, and higher education partners are surveyed each spring. Surveys are sent out in an electronic format and surveys can also be completed by phone. Feedback is collected on the following data points: process, engagement with T.E.A.C.H. staff, scholarship components (coursework, release time, funding, compensation, and sponsor support), engagement with institutes of higher education, and on-going challenges of the early childhood workforce.

Outreach events have allowed T.E.A.C.H. to participate in local community events including Austin PBS activities, Family Based Childcare workgroups, along with other local early childhood consortium groups. These have enabled eligible early childhood educators to learn about scholarship opportunities and the wrap around incentives provided through this additional funding.

The Family and Community Engagement staff at Workforce Solutions reach out to families on childcare subsidies waitlists to see if they are interested in and eligible for other childcare

programs that have openings, such as Head Start, Early Head Start, and area Pre-K programs. They also help families eligible for childcare subsidies find open seats for their children in childcare programs.

Use of Evidence

Every four years, the T.E.A.C.H. Texas program is required by the T.E.A.C.H. National Center to complete a competency assessment to ensure the integrity of the program. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Competency Assessment Tools are designed to help T.E.A.C.H. programs and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® National Center evaluate how well programs are doing in meeting identified benchmarks of success. The tools identify a variety of competency areas, the documentation needed to demonstrate competence for each one, and corresponding benchmarks. The overarching purposes of the competency assessment process are continuous program improvement and quality assurance.

The 2022 annual T.E.A.C.H. Texas data report found that associate and bachelor scholarship recipients had a 91% retention rate of completing their scholarship contract and the commitment period to remain at their sponsoring employer. CDA Assessment Fee scholars had an 85% retention rate which was impacted by the pandemic with access to early learning programs being restricted as this model typically sees retention at a rate of 95% or higher. 2022 also saw a 9% increase in the median wage of early childhood educators to \$12.58 per hour from \$11.50 the prior year. On average, T.E.A.C.H. Texas associate scholars earn 15 college credit hours annually with a 3.3 grade point average while bachelor scholars earn on average 17 college credit hours with a 3.1 grade point average.

Workforce Solutions connects families with quality childcare and supports childcare programs in improving the quality of care they provide. Quality childcare is an evidenced-based intervention as noted in multiple research studies from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Research and Evaluation Clearinghouse. Higher economic well-being among teachers is linked to higher quality interactions between teachers and children at childcare centers. Therefore, premium pay to childcare teachers and staff may contribute to higher quality childcare services for working families.

Key Performance Indicators

- From June 2022--March 2023, T.E.A.C.H provided 49 incentive payments to scholars and four quality retention incentives to scholars' childcare employers.
- In fiscal year 2022, Workforce Solutions Capital Area provided premium pay wage stipends to 258 childcare staff teachers and staff who work in 90 childcare programs in Travis County.
- Between July 2022 and March 2023, Workforce Solutions Capital Area used Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to provide childcare for 53 children through the Continuity of Care Expansion program.

Project 9100-A365: Food Security/Food Access

Funding amount: \$2,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$1,311,675

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$742,111

Project overview

Projects funded in this category provide access to nutritious food to persons who are at or below the federal poverty level or who are experiencing household food insecurity and food system disruption due to COVID-19. This is achieved by expanding current programs provided by Austin Public Health (APH) and funding community partners. Programs track and report on the number of individuals or number of households that are served.

The specific projects expand services through:

- Women Infants and Children (WIC) Shopping and Delivery Program – This project ensures the redemption of food benefits for Travis County WIC clients. Additionally, the project is piloting meal kit services for families and breast pump home and hospital deliveries, in collaboration with Mom’s Place Lactation Center.
- Neighborhood Services Units’ Home Delivery Program – The home delivery services combine the efforts of the Central Texas Food Bank, Austin Public Health Neighborhood Centers, and Amazon to provide shelf-stable food items to Travis County residents.
- Emergency Food Access services through social services contracts. In addition to general food access services, funding is being provided to increase the purchasing power of SNAP recipients.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Goals: There is a pronounced food access problem for low-income and communities of color in Austin. In 2016, the City’s Office of Sustainability issued a report to City Council outlining the challenges and goals of the food ecosystem. The three APH projects are to leverage and expand the use of other federal funding. This includes ensuring families eligible for WIC redeem their food benefits by removing the barriers to access which may include transportation and transportation and increasing the purchasing power of SNAP recipients.

Awareness: For two of the three projects, the eligible residents can benefit from these additional services that are being offered. For the social services agreements, contracting with trusted messengers in the community allows residents to become aware of services. For example, the eligibility requirements for the Neighborhood Services Home Delivery Program include households with: children aged 0-18; adults 60 or older, a person with a disability, an active military member or a veteran.

Access and Distribution: All three projects specifically address access and distribution. Two of the three projects are providing home delivery services. The Emergency Food Access social services project is utilizing trusted community partners to distribute food.

Outcomes: The WIC Shopping and Delivery program is intended to close the gap between participation in the WIC program and redemption of food benefits by offering free WIC grocery deliveries to eligible families. The Neighborhood Services Unit’s (NSU) Home Delivery Program (HDP) is in collaboration with the Central Texas Food Bank and Amazon. The NSU launched a home delivery program in June 2021 to address food insecurity in the City of Austin/Travis County. Eligible individuals (Travis County Resident, “Low Income”) and Target Population (Household

with children 0-18 or Senior 60+) enrolled in the program receive a monthly box of shelf-stable groceries, delivered in a contactless method directly to their home. All groceries and delivery are free of charge. Expanded eligibility in August 2021 included individuals with a disability, veterans, and active military members. In March 2023 alone, 2,219 Households/6,545 Individuals had food boxes delivered to their doorstep. Another of APH's projects, the Nutritious Food Incentive Project (NFIP) focuses on increasing the purchasing power of SNAP participants, increasing their access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Contracted services: The activities carried out by Sustainable Food Center (SFC) through the ARPA-NFIP initiative were successful in increasing the awareness, affordability, and accessibility of healthy foods amongst SNAP recipients across Austin. Through their partnership with the prominent Wheatsville co-op, SFC implemented the Double-Up Food Bucks (DUFB) model into the daily operations of Wheatsville's South Lamar and Guadalupe locations. The incorporation of DUFB at these locations allowed SNAP shoppers to have their fruit and vegetable purchases matched dollar-for-dollar to incentivize healthy eating habits. Coupons representing the matched dollar amount would then be provided to participants that could be used to purchase additional fruits and vegetables during their next shopping excursion. SFC correspondingly combined the DUFB initiative with two, six-week long educational cooking classes for DUFB participants, providing participants with the education and motivation essential to maintaining healthy lifestyle choices.

In the coming year, SFC is expected to partner with grocery retailer Albertson's in addition to continuing its partnership with Wheatsville Co-op. SFC anticipates further expanding its collaborative efforts with local community organizations and nationally recognized retail marketers to identify new strategies and expand their area of influence.

Negative Economic Impacts: Services to address health disparities and the social determinants of health, build stronger neighborhoods and communities (e.g., affordable housing), address educational disparities (e.g., evidence-based tutoring, community schools, and academic, social-emotional, and mental health supports for high poverty schools), and promote healthy childhood environments (e.g., home visiting, childcare).

Community Engagement

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chief Economic Recovery Officer launched a series of focus groups intended to gather real-time feedback on the programs and types of relief needed. Over the course of several months and 125 unique engagement sessions, the City of Austin was able to present to City Council a framework of opportunities and strategies to provide relief based on the community engagement focus groups. Each of the six focus groups were specifically curated with 5-40 community members representing voices not typically heard in citizen communication. These community members represented multi-racial or ethnic groups, historically marginalized groups like LGBTQIA+ and members of the disability community, as well as intentional inclusion of all Council Districts and both large and small organizations. Each engagement allowed staff to listen and learn about the real challenges experienced by local business owners, employees, residents, and City staff. Dozens of community members volunteered their time to share personal accounts of the pandemic's impact on their businesses, jobs, and families. These community members also offered their perspectives on the types of assistance needed to help communities and businesses survive the pandemic and become more resilient. This feedback is still relevant and was considered when developing the framework for emergency food access recommendations.

Use of Evidence

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was observed that many WIC recipients could not redeem their food benefits at grocery stores in Travis County. Community Partners who provided social services to the same demographic were surveyed in 2020 to identify the cause for decreased redemption and to determine if there was a need in the community for shopping and delivery of WIC food benefits. The results of this informal survey demonstrated the need for assistance in the redemption of WIC food benefits mostly due to lack of transportation and child/elder care.

The Nutritious Food Incentive Project (NFIP) is a promising practice among healthy food prices incentive to increase fresh fruit and vegetable sale and consumption, as well as increase the purchasing power of SNAP recipients. In 2019, Healthy Food American conducted a systemic literature review summarizing current research, which supported using pricing incentives to increase the consumption and sale of fresh fruits and vegetables. Specifically, it highlights a study that incentivized SNAP participants purchasing fruits and vegetables and noted an increase in consumption. It recommended more marketing, promotion, and nutrition education activities, which are all components of NFIP.

Key Performance Indicators

- In March 2023 alone, 2,219 Households/6,545 Individuals had food boxes delivered to their doorstep by the NSU Home Delivery Service.
- From May 2022- May 2023, The WIC Shopping & Delivery Program completed 556 unique grocery shopping trips; 329 of those trips also included a benefits card reload service.
- Since starting breast pump deliveries in July of 2022, 20 pump deliveries have been completed to mothers with an immediate need, as identified by Mom's Place Lactation Center.
- Sustainable Food Center estimated a total of 1,378 unique SNAP households reached for the NFIP Program.

Project 9100-A610: Homelessness – Permanent Housing Capital Expense

Funding amount: \$11,100,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$10,471,820

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$5,455,616

Project Overview

This is one of eight projects totaling \$95.3 million in ARPA - SLFRF funding dedicated to a comprehensive, community-wide effort to reduce levels of unsheltered homelessness across Austin. Expenditures began in August 2021 and are anticipated through the remainder of the funding period.

This project fits within a larger three-year community initiative called Finding Home ATX, coordinating investments from public and private sources to achieve three core objectives: (1) house an additional 3,000 individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) add 1,300 new units of affordable housing for the population experiencing homelessness, and (3) build a better Homelessness Response System by ensuring program access and outcomes are equitable, investing in social service provider capacity building, and developing stronger system oversight and performance management functions. The commitment of Austin's City Council to dedicate \$95.3 million in ARPA – SLFRF and \$11.4 million in ARPA HOME-formula funds is being leveraged by an estimated \$124 million from the General Fund, the Housing Trust Fund, and the 2018 GO Bond to advance the goals of Finding Home ATX. Additional committed and anticipated funding is coming from Travis County, State of Texas, Housing Authority, and private funders.

Main activities of this project include close coordination between the Homeless Strategy Division and the Housing Department on a range of strategies to increase housing capacity and leverage housing stabilization supports for individuals to exit homelessness and remain stably housed. Property acquisition, renovation, and associated costs have been funded through this project. ARPA – SLFRF funds are supporting acquisition and current renovations for two properties that were formerly hotels.

Pecan Gardens in northwest Austin (City Council District 6), will be 78 units of permanent supportive housing (PSH) for residents who are older and have been chronically homeless with one or more disabling conditions. City general funds are dedicated to a multi-year supportive services contract with Family Eldercare to operate the facility and provide comprehensive services to the residents. The City's Housing Trust Fund will pay fair market rent for 28 Local Housing Vouchers, added to 50 Project Based Vouchers awarded through the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA).

Bungalows at Century Park in north Austin (City Council District 7), and once renovations are complete it will operate 60 units of permanent supportive housing for persons who have been chronically homeless with one or more disabling conditions. The City is funding a multi-year, general funds contract with Integral Care for service provision and community supports. Fifty of the sixty units will have a rental subsidy voucher awarded through HACA.

The intended impact of this funding is to reduce levels of homelessness across the community by creating more deeply affordable housing units in dispersed geographic locations and connecting these units to a variety of accompanying services and supports for residents. Renovations are underway for both properties and move-ins are scheduled within the next twelve months.

Community Engagement

In August, September and October of 2021, the City's Homeless Strategy Division initiated a community engagement process to better understand stakeholder priorities and further refine and guide the planned investments of the ARPA – SLFRF Homelessness Response projects.

Three strategies were used for community engagement concerning the ARPA-SLFRF Homelessness Response Spending Framework initial design.

1. The Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC) completed a services/funding prioritization survey in August and September of 2021. AHAC is a group of 15 individuals with former or current lived experience of homelessness. This council provides invaluable input on City and community-wide processes, programs, and practices that impact the homeless population across Austin/Travis County. Top priorities from the survey included a variety of supportive and deeply affordable housing, food assistance resources, and access to medical and mental health services, including transportation to appointments.
2. Two public engagement sessions were hosted by the Homeless Strategy Division, Downtown Austin Community Court, Housing and Planning Department and the Communications and Public Information Office – on October 14 and October 18, 2021. Key themes included a) concerns about the impact of public camping ban enforcement and displaced people, b) current gaps and challenges to building capacity within the system, c) calls for immediate response to the crisis situation of homelessness, and d) support for additional investments in mental health and substance use disorder treatment.
3. A *SpeakUp! Austin* ARPA-SLFRF engagement survey was launched publicly October 11 – 27, 2021. The survey attracted 227 responses with representation across all zip codes and Council districts. White respondents were overrepresented and Hispanic/Latinx (ethnicity) respondents were underrepresented as compared to the overall population. Close to 18% of respondents had past or current lived experience of homelessness. Key findings from the survey: 50% favored a balanced approach to investments in shelter and housing, 30% preferred investments in long term housing and supports, while 20% preferred investments in shorter term crisis services and shelter. A desire for regular and varied communication and transparency was expressed by a strong majority of respondents.

This community engagement process and other factors led to several budget adjustments within the initial ARPA Spending Framework:

- Increase of funding for shelter and transition supports
- New funding dedicated to equity and innovation
 - o Service provider capacity building
 - o System oversight and enhancement
 - o Communications
- Increased funding for mental health and substance use treatment
- Decreased funding for rapid rehousing
- Decreased funding for building new housing units

More details can be found in a November 9, 2021 presentation to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of the Austin City Council):

<https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=371747>.

Sustained community engagement continues through several channels:

- The City's Homeless Strategy Officer and the City's Equity Office hold seats on the local Continuum of Care's Homeless Response System Leadership Council, whose composition and practice centers the experience of people with lived expertise and disproportionately impacted communities. Link to more information here: <https://www.austinecho.org/leading-system-change/coalition-leadership/>
- Regular engagement with the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC), which meets every other week, and
- Consistent public updates through community and service provider work groups and committees, quarterly public update meetings, monthly presentations to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of Austin City Council) and during City Council Work Sessions and other publicly held in-person and virtual forums and meetings.

Performance Indicators & Use of Evidence

- 138 affordable housing units preserved or developed
- Project units comprise 11% of the three-year community-wide goal of 1,300 new units

All homeless services contracts require client level data entry into the local Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) database. The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, mandates the use of an HMIS database with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Various required reporting must be generated from this information system. In addition to specific metrics listed for each Homelessness project, the City and community partners use system-wide metrics and dashboards for measuring progress in reducing homelessness. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is the designated Lead Agency for the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care. ECHO also serves as the HMIS Administrator for the local homeless response system of providers. Systemwide performance measures are tracked in multiple ways and ARPA – SLFRF funded programs will be measured individually as well as within the collective impact of the homeless response system.

HUD System Performance Measures: [System Performance Measures - HUD Exchange](#)

Austin/Travis County Homelessness Dashboard: [Performance Monitoring - ECHO \(austinecho.org\)](#)

City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023: [Austin Finance Online \(austintexas.gov\)](#)

This project funds the housing unit component of permanent supportive housing, an evidence-based intervention proven effective for persons who have been chronically homeless with ongoing high needs. The original project budget of \$14.1 million was reduced to \$11.1 million in May 2023, shifting \$3 million to Project 9100-A620: Homelessness – Emergency Shelter & Crisis Services for additional investment in new and expanded homeless shelters. The budget of \$11.1 million is being used to create housing units for people who have previously been unhoused.

[Evidence of Effect of Permanent Supportive Housing on Health - Permanent Supportive Housing - NCBI Bookshelf \(nih.gov\)](#)

[Permanent Supportive Housing Evidence-Based Practices \(EBP KIT\) | SAMHSA](#)

[CoC Program Components - Permanent Supportive Housing \(PSH\) - HUD Exchange](#)

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Equity is central to the City's work to address homelessness, particularly given the disproportionately high incidence of housing instability among African Americans, the LGBTQIA community, and people living with disabilities.

The eight Homelessness projects funded through ARPA – SLFRF collectively focus on achieving more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized, adversely impacted populations, including African Americans, LGBTQIA persons, and people living with disabilities. Project activities are integrated into the local Homeless Response System, and housing referrals will be made via the community's Coordinated Entry System, which is a known standardized entry process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing resources.

Austin/Travis County participated in the first ever cohort of the HUD Racial Equity Demonstration Project from 2020-2021. This work informed stakeholders' concerns that the community's legacy assessment tool tended to de-prioritize African Americans for access to housing programs. A newly formed Equity Task Group led the work to develop a new tool focused on equity across dimensions of race, LGBTQIA status, and disability. This tool was adopted by the Homeless Response Leadership Council and implemented on October 1, 2021.

Homelessness projects are intended to reduce rates of homelessness for all Austinites, with a particular focus on reducing the disproportionate harm in adversely impacted populations – African Americans, persons identifying as LGBTQIA, and people living with disabling conditions. Project outcomes will be disaggregated in key areas to assess progress. While services and resources are funded across the geographic area, the City is committed to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing by ensuring that capital investment is distributed across the community, improving housing choice for populations who have historically been subject to discriminatory housing patterns.

The most recent *Austin/Travis County Racial Disparities Report*, authored by ECHO, analyzes equitable provision of homeless services. Key findings and highlights include evidence of both progress and opportunities for continued improvement: [Austin / Travis County Racial Disparities Report \(austinecho.org\)](https://austinecho.org) Per the report, "In Austin/Travis County in 2021, Black Austinites were over 6 times as likely as White Austinites to be experiencing homelessness. This trend is not new and will continue unless there is intentional effort targeted toward addressing the housing insecurity trends that contribute to homelessness." The City will continue to work closely with ECHO as data is analyzed over the course of the ARPA – SLFRF project implementation period, with a keen focus and commitment to promoting, measuring, and evaluating outcomes for racial equity and service to marginalized communities. The next annual *Racial Disparities Report* is expected to be released in summer 2023.

Project 9100-A615: Homelessness – Targeted Prevention

Funding amount: \$2,400,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$0

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$0

Project Overview

This is one of eight projects totaling \$95.3 million in ARPA - SLFRF funding dedicated to a comprehensive, community-wide effort to reduce levels of unsheltered homelessness across Austin. Expenditures began in August 2021 and are anticipated through the remainder of the funding period.

This project fits within a larger three-year community initiative called Finding Home ATX, coordinating investments from public and private sources to achieve three core objectives: (1) house an additional 3,000 individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) add 1,300 new units of affordable housing for the population experiencing homelessness, and (3) build a better Homelessness Response System by ensuring program access and outcomes are equitable, investing in social service provider capacity building, and developing stronger system oversight and performance management functions. The commitment of Austin’s City Council to dedicate \$95.3 million in ARPA – SLFRF and \$11.4 million in ARPA HOME-formula funds is being leveraged by an estimated \$124 million from the General Fund, the Housing Trust Fund, and the 2018 GO Bond to advance the goals of Finding Home ATX. Additional committed and anticipated funding is coming from Travis County, State of Texas, Housing Authority, and private funders.

Main activities of this project include eviction intervention, landlord mediation, financial assistance, rental subsidies, case management, employment supports and other targeted services for assisting individuals and families at imminent risk of homelessness to remain housed. Service delivery in this project is being outsourced to non-profit service providers through City contracting. \$2.4 million has been allocated for ARPA – SLFRF funded contracts to prevent homelessness through a variety of data-driven strategies. This project has been informed by learnings of the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

Solicitation for Targeted Prevention Services

The Health Equity & Community Engagement Division and Homeless Strategy Division of Austin Public Health issued a competitive solicitation to fund targeted prevention of homelessness on January 31, 2023, closing March 16, 2023. Two recommended proposals totaling \$2.4 million were authorized for contract negotiation and execution by City Council on June 8, 2023. Both contracted programs will run August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024. (In May 2023, \$100,000 of the original project budget of \$2.5 million was shifted to Project 9100-A620: Homelessness – Emergency Shelter & Crisis Services for additional investment in new and expanded homeless shelters.)

The solicitation contained scored sections for applicants to demonstrate their organization’s cultural competency, efforts to advance racial equity, and alignment with National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards for language access. The City’s definition of Equity is the condition when every member of the community has a fair opportunity to live a long, healthy and meaningful life. Equity is imbedded into Austin’s values system and means changing hearts and minds, transforming local government from the inside out, eradicating disparities, and ensuring all Austin community members share in the benefits of community progress. Equity is one of the six anchors of the City’s Strategic Direction 2023, and a core value

driving the implementation of City services. To advance equitable outcomes, the City is leading with a lens of racial equity and healing.

The intended impact of this funding is to reduce levels of homelessness across the community by implementing targeted prevention strategies and resources for those at highest risk of homelessness.

Community Engagement

In August, September and October of 2021, the City's Homeless Strategy Division initiated a community engagement process to better understand stakeholder priorities and further refine and guide the planned investments of the ARPA – SLFRF Homelessness Response projects.

Three strategies were used for community engagement concerning the ARPA - SLFRF Homelessness Response Spending Framework initial design.

1. The Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC) completed a services/funding prioritization survey in August and September of 2021. AHAC is a group of 15 individuals with former or current lived experience of homelessness. This council provides invaluable input on City and community-wide processes, programs, and practices that impact the homeless population across Austin/Travis County. Top priorities from the survey included a variety of supportive and deeply affordable housing, food assistance resources, and access to medical and mental health services, including transportation to appointments.
2. Two public engagement sessions were hosted by the Homeless Strategy Division, Downtown Austin Community Court, Housing and Planning Department and the Communications and Public Information Office – on October 14 and October 18, 2021. Key themes included a) concerns about the impact of public camping ban enforcement and displaced people, b) current gaps and challenges to building capacity within the system, c) calls for immediate response to the crisis situation of homelessness, and d) support for additional investments in mental health and substance use disorder treatment.
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This community engagement process and other factors led to several budget adjustments within the initial Spending Framework:

- Increase of funding for shelter and transition supports
- New funding dedicated to equity and innovation
 - Service provider capacity building
 - System oversight and enhancement
 - Communications
- Increased funding for mental health and substance use treatment
- Decreased funding for rapid rehousing
- Decreased funding for building new housing units

More details can be found in a November 9, 2021 presentation to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of the Austin City Council):

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Sustained community engagement continues through several channels:

- The City’s Homeless Strategy Officer and the City’s Equity Office hold seats on the local Continuum of Care’s Homeless Response System Leadership Council, whose composition and practice centers the experience of people with lived expertise and disproportionately impacted communities. Link to more information here: <https://www.austinecho.org/leading-system-change/coalition-leadership/>
- Regular engagement with the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC), which meets every other week, and
- Consistent public updates through community and service provider work groups and committees, quarterly public update meetings, monthly presentations to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of Austin City Council) and during City Council Work Sessions and other publicly held in-person and virtual forums and meetings.

Performance Indicators & Use of Evidence

- Unduplicated number of individuals/households receiving targeted prevention services
- Percent of households at risk of homelessness that maintain housing

All homeless services contracts require client level data entry into the local Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) database. The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, mandates the use of an HMIS database with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Various required reporting must be generated from this information system. In addition to specific metrics listed for each Homelessness project, the City and community partners use system-wide metrics and dashboards for measuring progress in reducing homelessness. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is the designated Lead Agency for the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care. ECHO also serves as the HMIS Administrator for the local homeless response system of providers. System-wide performance measures are tracked in multiple ways and ARPA – SLFRF funded programs will be measured individually as well as within the collective impact of the homeless response system.

HUD System Performance Measures: [System Performance Measures - HUD Exchange](#)

Austin/Travis County Homelessness Dashboard: [Performance Monitoring - ECHO \(austinecho.org\)](#)

City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023: [Austin Finance Online \(austintexas.gov\)](#)

The Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness states, “communities should consider both the *effectiveness* of various approaches to helping people maintain stable housing and the *efficiency* of these efforts. Efficiency means getting services to people who would benefit the most.” This project will fund data-informed targeted prevention activities and \$2.4 million will be contracted for these services.

[Homelessness Prevention | Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness \(evidenceonhomelessness.com\)](#)

[Turning Off the Tap: A Typology for Homelessness Prevention - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

[Preventing Homelessness: Evidence-Based Methods to Screen Adults and Families at Risk of Homelessness in Los Angeles - Price Center for Social Innovation \(usc.edu\)](#)

[Preventing Homelessness - A Review of International Evidence | The Homeless Hub](#)

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Equity is central to the City's work to address homelessness, particularly given the disproportionately high incidence of housing instability among African Americans, the LGBTQIA community, and people living with disabilities.

The eight Homelessness projects funded through ARPA – SLFRF collectively focus on achieving more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized, adversely impacted populations, including African Americans, LGBTQIA persons, and people living with disabilities. Project activities are integrated into the local Homeless Response System, and housing referrals will be made via the community's Coordinated Entry System, which is a known standardized entry process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing resources.

Austin/Travis County participated in the first ever cohort of the HUD Racial Equity Demonstration Project from 2020-2021. This work informed stakeholders' concerns that the community's legacy assessment tool tended to de-prioritize African Americans for access to housing programs. A newly formed Equity Task Group led the work to develop a new tool focused on equity across dimensions of race, LGBTQIA status, and disability. This new tool was adopted by the Homeless Response Leadership Council and implemented on October 1, 2021.

Homelessness projects are intended to reduce rates of homelessness for all Austinites, with a particular focus on reducing the disproportionate harm in adversely impacted populations – African Americans, persons identifying as LGBTQIA, and people living with disabling conditions. Project outcomes will be disaggregated in key areas to assess progress. While services and resources are funded across the geographic area, the City is committed to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing by ensuring that capital investment is distributed across the community, improving housing choice for populations who have historically been subject to discriminatory housing patterns.

The most recent *Austin/Travis County Racial Disparities Report*, authored by ECHO, analyzes equitable provision of homeless services. Key findings and highlights include evidence of both progress and opportunities for continued improvement: [Austin / Travis County Racial Disparities Report \(austinecho.org\)](#) Per the report, "In Austin/Travis County in 2021, Black Austinites were over 6 times as likely as White Austinites to be experiencing homelessness. This trend is not new and will continue unless there is intentional effort targeted toward addressing the housing insecurity trends that contribute to homelessness." The City will continue to work closely with ECHO as data is analyzed over the course of the ARPA – SLFRF project implementation period, with a keen focus and commitment to promoting, measuring, and evaluating outcomes for racial equity and service to marginalized communities. The next annual *Racial Disparities Report* is expected to be released in summer 2023.

Project 9100-A620: Homelessness – Emergency Shelter & Crisis Services

Funding amount: \$25,188,466

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$5,302,165

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$2,949,090

Project Overview

This project is one of eight projects totaling \$95.3 million in ARPA - SLFRF funding dedicated to a comprehensive, community-wide effort to reduce levels of unsheltered homelessness across Austin. Expenditures began in August 2021 and are anticipated through the remainder of the funding period.

This project fits within a larger three-year community initiative called Finding Home ATX, coordinating investments from public and private sources to achieve three core objectives: (1) house an additional 3,000 individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) add 1,300 new units of affordable housing for the population experiencing homelessness, and (3) build a better Homelessness Response System by ensuring program access and outcomes are equitable, investing in social service provider capacity building, and developing stronger system oversight and performance management functions. The commitment of Austin City Council to dedicate \$95.3 million in ARPA – SLFRF and \$11.4 million in ARPA HOME-formula funds is being leveraged by an estimated \$124 million from the General Fund, the Housing Trust Fund, and the 2018 GO Bond to advance the goals of Finding Home ATX. Additional committed and anticipated funding is coming from Travis County, State of Texas, Housing Authority, and private funders.

Activities of this project include temporary shelter, street outreach, and other crisis services for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. People receiving shelter, outreach and/or crisis services will be connected to the appropriate housing resources and support service programs via the community’s Coordinated Entry System. Initial activities included supplemental shelter supports during extreme cold weather in winter 2021-2022 and bridge shelter costs. The majority of service delivery in this project is being outsourced to non-profit homeless service providers through City contracting. City staff are also carrying out multiple activities and services throughout the community.

Solicitation for Emergency Shelter & Crisis Services

In the first half of 2022, the Health Equity & Community Engagement Division of Austin Public Health issued three consecutive competitive solicitations that included funding from multiple sources, including ARPA – SLFRF funding, local funding, and other federal grant funding (HUD Emergency Solutions Grant). Each focused on a different component of the homeless response system. The Homelessness Crisis Response Services Request for Proposals (RFP) was released on March 31, 2022, and closed May 12, 2022. Eligible activities included emergency shelter, street outreach, and other homeless crisis services. Evaluation of proposals occurred in May and June of 2022 and on September 15, 2022, the Austin City Council authorized negotiation and execution of seven contracts with nonprofit homeless service providers for a total combined amount of \$9 million over two years.

Emergency shelter contracts were awarded to three agencies for an initial one-year term beginning October 1, 2022, totaling \$2,492,168. An additional year brings the combined total to \$4,984,336 for two years of contracted emergency shelter services ending September 30, 2024.

Homeless street outreach contracts were awarded to four agencies for an initial one-year term beginning October 2, 2022, totaling \$2,007,832. A second year of contracted service delivery brings the combined total to \$4,015,664 for two years of street outreach services ending September 30, 2024.

All solicitations contained scored sections for applicants to demonstrate their organization's cultural competency, efforts to advance racial equity, and alignment with National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards for language access. The City's definition of Equity is the condition when every member of the community has a fair opportunity to live a long, healthy, and meaningful life. Equity is imbedded into Austin's values system and means changing hearts and minds, transforming local government from the inside out, eradicating disparities, and ensuring all Austin community members share in the benefits of community progress. Equity is one of the six anchors of the City's Strategic Direction 2023, and a core value driving the implementation of City services. To advance equitable outcomes, the City is leading with a lens of racial equity and healing.

Major Project Updates

In May 2023, Interim City Manager Garza sent a [memo](#) to Mayor and City Council members to outline strategic efforts to address the unsheltered population in Austin through increasing homeless shelter capacity. In June and July 2023, City staff are doubling occupancy of two bridge shelters in the community – Northbridge, which is currently operated by the City's Homeless Strategy Division, and Southbridge, which is currently operated by a contracted service provider. The expansion is primarily being funded with City general fund dollars. Additionally, the City identified a location to stand up a 12-month emergency homeless shelter with 300 beds for individuals who have been living outside. A competitive solicitation for funding temporary shelter operations was issued May 12, 2023 and closed June 1, 2023. Proposals were evaluated in June, and Austin City Council will decide in July whether to authorize negotiation and execution of a contract not to exceed \$9.14 million in ARPA – SLFRF funding beginning August 1, 2023 for shelter operations.

In June 2023, Austin City Council authorized a one-year property lease for \$1,268,256 and a one-year service contract for \$4,563,836 with a nonprofit provider to operate a temporary homeless shelter with 130 beds for 12 months, ending June 2024.

In order to fund the increased homeless shelter capacity critically needed in Austin, original budgets for Projects 9100-A610, 9100-A615, 9100-A625, 9100-A630, 9100-A635, 9100-A640 and 9100-A645 were decreased by a combined total of \$15,188,466. Project, 9100-A620, was increased by the same amount. Hundreds more unsheltered and vulnerable residents of Austin will have the opportunity to sleep inside, receive meals and basic hygiene and daily living resources, and connect with services and housing supports to end their homelessness.

The intended impact of this funding is to reduce levels of homelessness across the community by engaging with persons living unsheltered and creating pathways for connection to services, shelter, and housing.

Community Engagement

In August, September and October of 2021, the City's Homeless Strategy Division initiated a community engagement process to better understand stakeholder priorities and further refine and guide the planned investments of the ARPA – SLFRF Homelessness Response projects.

Three strategies were used for community engagement concerning the ARPA - SLFRF Homelessness Response Spending Framework initial design.

1. The Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC) completed a services/funding prioritization survey in August and September of 2021. AHAC is a group of 15 individuals with former or current lived experience of homelessness. This council provides invaluable input on City and community-wide processes, programs, and practices that impact the homeless population across Austin/Travis County. Top priorities from the survey included a variety of supportive and deeply affordable housing, food assistance resources, and access to medical and mental health services, including transportation to appointments.
2. Two public engagement sessions were hosted by the Homeless Strategy Division, Downtown Austin Community Court, Housing and Planning Department and the Communications and Public Information Office – on October 14 and October 18, 2021. Key themes included a) concerns about the impact of public camping ban enforcement and displaced people, b) current gaps and challenges to building capacity within the system, c) calls for immediate response to the crisis situation of homelessness, and d) support for additional investments in mental health and substance use disorder treatment.
3. A *SpeakUp! Austin* ARPA-SLFRF engagement survey was launched publicly October 11 – 27, 2021. The survey attracted 227 responses with representation across all zip codes and Council districts. White respondents were overrepresented and Hispanic/Latinx (ethnicity) respondents were underrepresented as compared to the overall population. Close to 18% of respondents had past or current lived experience of homelessness. Key findings from the survey: 50% favored a balanced approach to investments in shelter and housing, 30% preferred investments in long term housing and supports, while 20% preferred investments in shorter term crisis services and shelter. A desire for regular and varied communication and transparency was expressed by a strong majority of respondents.

This community engagement process and other factors led to several budget adjustments within the initial Spending Framework:

- Increase of funding for shelter and transition supports
- New funding dedicated to equity and innovation
 - Service provider capacity building
 - System oversight and enhancement
 - Communications
- Increased funding for mental health and substance use treatment
- Decreased funding for rapid rehousing
- Decreased funding for building new housing units

More details can be found in a November 9, 2021 presentation to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of the Austin City Council):

<https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=371747>.

Sustained community engagement continues through several channels:

- The City's Homeless Strategy Officer and the City's Equity Office hold seats on the local Continuum of Care's Homeless Response System Leadership Council, whose composition and practice centers the experience of people with lived expertise and disproportionately impacted communities. Link to more information here: <https://www.austinecho.org/leading-system-change/coalition-leadership/>

- Regular engagement with the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC), which meets every other week, and
- Consistent public updates through community and service provider work groups and committees, quarterly public update meetings, monthly presentations to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of Austin City Council) and during City Council Work Sessions and other publicly held in-person and virtual forums and meetings.

Performance Indicators & Use of Evidence

During first six months of contracted services (reported through March 31, 2023):

- 71 unduplicated individuals received shelter services
- 2,602 unduplicated individuals were served by street outreach teams
- 68% of case-managed households transitioned from homelessness into housing

All homeless services contracts require client level data entry into the local Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) database. The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, mandates the use of an HMIS database with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Various required reporting must be generated from this information system. In addition to specific metrics listed for each Homelessness project, the City and community partners use system-wide metrics and dashboards for measuring progress in reducing homelessness. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is the designated Lead Agency for the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care. ECHO also serves as the HMIS Administrator for the local homeless response system of providers. System-wide performance measures are tracked in multiple ways and ARPA – SLFRF funded programs will be measured individually as well as within the collective impact of the homeless response system.

HUD System Performance Measures: [System Performance Measures - HUD Exchange](#).

Austin/Travis County Homelessness Dashboard: [Performance Monitoring - ECHO \(austinecho.org\)](#)

City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023: [Austin Finance Online \(austintexas.gov\)](#)

A large body of evidence has established shelter as a basic human need. *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* indicates that after physiological and safety needs are met, other aspects of the human condition can be developed and achieved. Studies find that persons living unsheltered have multiple times higher odds of poor physical health, poor mental health, substance use disorders, risky behaviors, experiencing physical assault, and shorter life spans than persons living in shelter. This project funds emergency shelter, bridge shelter and outreach services that will connect people to shelter and housing. The revised amount of \$25,188,466 funded in this project will be used for these services.

[Sheltered Versus Nonsheltered Homeless Women - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

[Interim Guidance on People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness | COVID-19 | CDC](#)

[Unsheltered Homelessness and Homeless Encampments in 2019 \(huduser.gov\)](#)

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355245109> Unsheltered vs Sheltered Adults Experiencing Homelessness Health Care Spending and Utilization

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326709512> Mortality Among Unsheltered Homeless Adults in Boston Massachusetts 2000-2009

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Equity is central to the City's work to address homelessness, particularly given the disproportionately high incidence of housing instability among African Americans, the LGBTQIA community, and people living with disabilities.

The eight Homelessness projects funded through ARPA – SLFRF collectively focus on achieving more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized, adversely impacted populations, including African Americans, LGBTQIA persons, and people living with disabilities. Project activities are integrated into the local Homeless Response System, and housing referrals will be made via the community's Coordinated Entry System, which is a known standardized entry process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing resources.

Austin/Travis County participated in the first ever cohort of the HUD Racial Equity Demonstration Project from 2020-2021. This work informed stakeholders' concerns that the community's legacy assessment tool tended to de-prioritize African Americans for access to housing programs. A newly formed Equity Task Group led the work to develop a new tool focused on equity across dimensions of race, LGBTQIA status, and disability. This new tool was adopted by the Homeless Response Leadership Council and implemented on October 1, 2021.

Homelessness projects are intended to reduce rates of homelessness for all Austinites, with a particular focus on reducing the disproportionate harm in adversely impacted populations – African Americans, persons identifying as LGBTQIA, and people living with disabling conditions. Project outcomes will be disaggregated in key areas to assess progress. While services and resources are funded across the geographic area, the City is committed to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing by ensuring that capital investment is distributed across the community, improving housing choice for populations who have historically been subject to discriminatory housing patterns.

The most recent *Austin/Travis County Racial Disparities Report*, authored by ECHO, analyzes equitable provision of homeless services. Key findings and highlights include evidence of both progress and opportunities for continued improvement: [Austin / Travis County Racial Disparities Report \(austinecho.org\)](https://austinecho.org) Per the report, "In Austin/Travis County in 2021, Black Austinites were over 6 times as likely as White Austinites to be experiencing homelessness. This trend is not new and will continue unless there is intentional effort targeted toward addressing the housing insecurity trends that contribute to homelessness." The City will continue to work closely with ECHO as data is analyzed over the course of the ARPA – SLFRF project implementation period, with a keen focus and commitment to promoting, measuring, and evaluating outcomes for racial equity and service to marginalized communities. The next annual *Racial Disparities Report* is expected to be released in summer 2023.

Project 9100-A625: Homelessness – Rapid Rehousing

Funding amount: \$42,532,514

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$18,909,106

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$5,689,683

Project Overview

This project is one of eight projects totaling \$95.3 million in ARPA - SLFRF funding dedicated to a comprehensive, community-wide effort to reduce levels of unsheltered homelessness across Austin. Expenditures began in August 2021 and are anticipated through the remainder of the funding period.

This project fits within a larger three-year community initiative called Finding Home ATX, coordinating investments from public and private sources to achieve three core objectives: (1) house an additional 3,000 individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) add 1,300 new units of affordable housing for the population experiencing homelessness, and (3) build a better Homelessness Response System by ensuring program access and outcomes are equitable, investing in social service provider capacity building, and developing stronger system oversight and performance management functions. The commitment of Austin City Council to dedicate \$95.3 million in ARPA – SLFRF and \$11.4 million in ARPA HOME-formula funds is being leveraged by an estimated \$124 million from the General Fund, the Housing Trust Fund, and the 2018 GO Bond to advance the goals of Finding Home ATX. Additional committed and anticipated funding is coming from Travis County, State of Texas, Housing Authority, and private funders.

Main activities of this project include a variety of rapid rehousing program and services, using the community's Coordinated Entry System for referral of individuals and families. Rapid rehousing programs must include case management, housing location and placement services, and financial assistance for up to 24 months of rent/utility payments (although, using progressive engagement, typical timeframes are closer to 10-14 months). Most of the service delivery in this project is being outsourced to non-profit homeless service providers through City contracting. City staff are also carrying out multiple activities and services.

Solicitation for Homeless Housing Stability Services

In the first half of 2022, the Health Equity & Community Engagement Division of Austin Public Health issued three consecutive competitive solicitations that included funding from multiple sources, including ARPA – SLFRF funding, local funding, and other federal grant funding (HUD Emergency Solutions Grant). Each focused on a different component of the homeless response system. The Homeless Housing Stability Services Request for Proposals (RFP) was released on January 31, 2022, and closed March 15, 2022. Eligible activities for ARPA – SLFRF funding included both core and supplemental rapid rehousing components such as housing stability case management, financial assistance, housing navigation, transportation assistance, substance use treatment, connection to mental health and medical care, outreach and engagement, employment assistance, peer support, SOAR assistance, landlord outreach and incentives and data entry/reporting costs. Evaluation of proposals occurred in April/May 2022 and on September 1, 2022, the Austin City Council authorized negotiation and execution of eight contracts totaling \$18,550,713 for an initial 12-month term beginning October 1, 2022. One 12-month extension option was authorized, for a total amount of \$37,101,426 over two years.

All solicitations contained scored sections for applicants to demonstrate their organization's cultural competency, efforts to advance racial equity, and alignment with National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards for language access. The City's definition of Equity is the condition when every member of the community has a fair opportunity to live a

long, healthy, and meaningful life. Equity is imbedded into Austin's values system and means changing hearts and minds, transforming local government from the inside out, eradicating disparities, and ensuring all Austin community members share in the benefits of community progress. Equity is one of the six anchors of the City's Strategic Direction 2023, and a core value driving the implementation of City services. To advance equitable outcomes, the City is leading with a lens of racial equity and healing.

Another \$4.4 million has been allocated to Downtown Austin Community Court's (DACC) rapid rehousing program following the spend down of the Emergency Solutions Grant – Coronavirus (ESG-CV) allocation from HUD through the 2020 CARES Act. DACC's ESG-CV funded program ended December 31, 2022 and the ARPA – SLFRF funded program began January 1, 2023. Clients served through the rapid rehousing program receive financial assistance, housing stability services, and intensive case management – and new clients will continue to be enrolled in the program to exit homelessness and become stably housed.

The intended impact of this funding is a reduction in levels of homelessness across the community due to robust short to medium term rapid rehousing supports and financial assistance for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Community Engagement

In August, September and October of 2021, the City's Homeless Strategy Division initiated a community engagement process to better understand stakeholder priorities and further refine and guide the planned investments of the ARPA – SLFRF Homelessness Response projects.

Three strategies were used for community engagement concerning the ARPA - SLFRF Homelessness Response Spending Framework initial design.

1. The Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC) completed a services/funding prioritization survey in August and September of 2021. AHAC is a group of 15 individuals with former or current lived experience of homelessness. This council provides invaluable input on City and community-wide processes, programs, and practices that impact the homeless population across Austin/Travis County. Top priorities from the survey included a variety of supportive and deeply affordable housing, food assistance resources, and access to medical and mental health services, including transportation to appointments.
2. Two public engagement sessions were hosted by the Homeless Strategy Division, Downtown Austin Community Court, Housing and Planning Department and the Communications and Public Information Office – on October 14 and October 18, 2021. Key themes included a) concerns about the impact of public camping ban enforcement and displaced people, b) current gaps and challenges to building capacity within the system, c) calls for immediate response to the crisis situation of homelessness, and d) support for additional investments in mental health and substance use disorder treatment.
3. A *SpeakUp! Austin* ARPA-SLFRF engagement survey was launched publicly October 11 – 27, 2021. The survey attracted 227 responses with representation across all zip codes and Council districts. White respondents were overrepresented and Hispanic/Latinx (ethnicity) respondents were underrepresented as compared to the overall population. Close to 18% of respondents had past or current lived experience of homelessness. Key findings from the survey: 50% favored a balanced approach to investments in shelter and housing, 30% preferred investments in long term housing and supports, while 20% preferred investments in shorter term crisis services and shelter. A desire for regular and varied communication and transparency was expressed by a strong majority of respondents.

This community engagement process and other factors led to several budget adjustments within the initial Spending Framework:

- Increase of funding for shelter and transition supports
- New funding dedicated to equity and innovation
 - Service provider capacity building
 - System oversight and enhancement
 - Communications
- Increased funding for mental health and substance use treatment
- Decreased funding for rapid rehousing
- Decreased funding for building new housing units

More details can be found in a November 9, 2021 presentation to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of the Austin City Council):

<https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=371747>.

Sustained community engagement continues through several channels:

- The City's Homeless Strategy Officer and the City's Equity Office hold seats on the local Continuum of Care's Homeless Response System Leadership Council, whose composition and practice centers the experience of people with lived expertise and disproportionately impacted communities. Link to more information here: <https://www.austinecho.org/leading-system-change/coalition-leadership/>
- Regular engagement with the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC), which meets every other week, and
- Consistent public updates through community and service provider work groups and committees, quarterly public update meetings, monthly presentations to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of Austin City Council) and during City Council Work Sessions and other publicly held in-person and virtual forums and meetings.

Performance Indicators & Use of Evidence

During the initial six months of these nine programs, 1,068 unduplicated households were enrolled in rapid rehousing programs.

The following measure will be reporting during the next cycle:

- Percent of case-managed households that transition from homelessness into housing

All homeless services contracts require client level data entry into the local Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) database. The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, mandates the use of an HMIS database with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Various required reporting must be generated from this information system. In addition to specific metrics listed for each Homelessness project, the City and community partners use system-wide metrics and dashboards for measuring progress in reducing homelessness. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is the designated Lead Agency for the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care. ECHO also serves as the HMIS Administrator for the local homeless response system of providers. System-wide performance measures are tracked in multiple ways and ARPA – SLFRF funded programs will be measured individually as well as within the collective impact of the homeless response system.

HUD System Performance Measures: [System Performance Measures - HUD Exchange](#)

Austin/Travis County Homelessness Dashboard:

[Performance Monitoring - ECHO \(austinecho.org\)](#)

City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023: [Austin Finance Online \(austintexas.gov\)](#)

Rapid Rehousing (RRH) provides short to medium term rental assistance (up to 24 months) and services to assist individuals and families quickly exit homelessness. Per HUD commissioned reports and local data analysis on two federal rapid rehousing programs, this housing intervention has resulted in high rates of housing placement and low returns to homelessness. “Evidence from a randomized controlled trial of homeless families with children shows that families who received priority access to rapid re-housing assistance moved into their own place more quickly and were significantly more likely to be living in their own place during the first year after random assignment than those receiving usual care. It also found that RRH and usual care families returned to homelessness at the same rate, and that RRH was less expensive than usual care.” The original project budget of \$45 million was reduced to \$42,532,514 in May 2023, shifting almost \$2.5 million to Project 9100-A620: Homelessness – Emergency Shelter & Crisis Services for additional investment in new and expanded homeless shelters. Project 9100-A625 funding will be used for rapid rehousing services, using Housing First principles of service delivery and program design. Robust support services include evidence-based practices such as progressive engagement, critical time intervention, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, and harm reduction.

[SSVF Annual Report for FY 2015.pdf \(va.gov\)](#)

[The Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

[Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program \(HPRP\): Year 3 & Final Program Summary \(hudexchange.info\)](#)

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Equity is central to the City’s work to address homelessness, particularly given the disproportionately high incidence of housing instability among African Americans, the LGBTQIA community, and people living with disabilities.

The eight Homelessness projects funded through ARPA – SLFRF collectively focus on achieving more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized, adversely impacted populations, including African Americans, LGBTQIA persons, and people living with disabilities. Project activities are integrated into the local Homeless Response System, and housing referrals will be made via the community’s Coordinated Entry System, which is a known standardized entry process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing resources.

Austin/Travis County participated in the first ever cohort of the HUD Racial Equity Demonstration Project from 2020-2021. This work informed stakeholders’ concerns that the community’s legacy assessment tool tended to de-prioritize African Americans for access to housing programs. A newly formed Equity Task Group led the work to develop a new tool focused on equity across dimensions of race, LGBTQIA status, and disability. This new tool was adopted by the Homeless Response Leadership Council and implemented on October 1, 2021.

Homelessness projects are intended to reduce rates of homelessness for all Austinites, with a particular focus on reducing the disproportionate harm in adversely impacted populations –

African Americans, persons identifying as LGBTQIA, and people living with disabling conditions. Project outcomes will be disaggregated in key areas to assess progress. While services and resources are funded across the geographic area, the City is committed to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing by ensuring that capital investment is distributed across the community, improving housing choice for populations who have historically been subject to discriminatory housing patterns.

The most recent *Austin/Travis County Racial Disparities Report*, authored by ECHO, analyzes equitable provision of homeless services. Key findings and highlights include evidence of both progress and opportunities for continued improvement: [Austin / Travis County Racial Disparities Report \(austinecho.org\)](https://austinecho.org) Per the report, “In Austin/Travis County in 2021, Black Austinites were over 6 times as likely as White Austinites to be experiencing homelessness. This trend is not new and will continue unless there is intentional effort targeted toward addressing the housing insecurity trends that contribute to homelessness.” The City will continue to work closely with ECHO as data is analyzed over the course of the ARPA – SLFRF project implementation period, with a keen focus and commitment to promoting, measuring, and evaluating outcomes for racial equity and service to marginalized communities. The next annual *Racial Disparities Report* is expected to be released in summer 2023.

Project 9100-A630: Homelessness – Supporting Providers

Funding amount: \$2,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$1,090,900

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$410,900

Project Overview

This project is one of eight projects totaling \$95.3 million in ARPA - SLFRF funding dedicated to a comprehensive, community-wide effort to reduce levels of unsheltered homelessness across Austin. Expenditures began in August 2021 and are anticipated through the remainder of the funding period.

This project fits within a larger three-year community initiative called Finding Home ATX, coordinating investments from public and private sources to achieve three core objectives: (1) house an additional 3,000 individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) add 1,300 new units of affordable housing for the population experiencing homelessness, and (3) build a better Homelessness Response System by ensuring program access and outcomes are equitable, investing in social service provider capacity building, and developing stronger system oversight and performance management functions. The commitment of Austin City Council to dedicate \$95.3 million in ARPA – SLFRF and \$11.4 million in ARPA HOME-formula funds is being leveraged by an estimated \$124 million from the General Fund, the Housing Trust Fund, and the 2018 GO Bond to advance the goals of Finding Home ATX. Additional committed and anticipated funding is coming from Travis County, State of Texas, Housing Authority, and private funders.

Main activities of this project include building the capacity of organizations within the Homelessness Response System, advancing equitable access and outcomes, and implementing innovative solutions. Activities have focused on the *Organizational Capacity Building Initiative: Assessment, Acceleration and Small Grants Program*. The City’s Homeless Strategy Division in partnership with the City’s Office of Innovation has allocated \$1 million for the first phase of this project. The purpose of the Initiative is to help organizations prioritize organizational capacity investments, receive small grants and technical assistance to quickly implement short-term capacity investments, and/or participate in a cohort-based accelerator program addressing capacity building needs.

Phase I program timeline:

May 2022	Application open for submission
June 2022	Application submission deadline
July 2022	Awardee notification – 21 organizations awarded
September 2022 – March 2023	Needs Assessment (survey, interview, documents review)
April 2023 – June 2023	10-week Accelerator process
July 2023	Community Showcase

Phase II program timeline:

August 2023 – September 2024

Phase II will include larger, one-time awards that address capacity needs identified in the first phase, incorporate innovative approaches to service delivery, and expand homeless services and resources throughout the Austin community.

Program webpage with more details: [Homelessness Services Capacity Building Program | AustinTexas.gov](https://www.austintexas.gov/department/homelessness-services-capacity-building-program)

The original project budget of \$5.2 million was reduced to \$2 million in May 2023, shifting \$3.2 million to Project 9100-A620: Homelessness – Emergency Shelter & Crisis Services for additional investment in new and expanded homeless shelters.

The intended impact of this funding is to strengthen organizations within the Homelessness Response System to better position them to (1) provide higher quality services to individuals experiencing homelessness and (2) help the community effectively scale services to meet the City’s long-term objective to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

Community Engagement

In August, September and October of 2021, the City’s Homeless Strategy Division initiated a community engagement process to better understand stakeholder priorities and further refine and guide the planned investments of the ARPA – SLFRF Homelessness Response projects.

Three strategies were used for community engagement concerning the ARPA - SLFRF Homelessness Response Spending Framework initial design.

1. The Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC) completed a services/funding prioritization survey in August and September of 2021. AHAC is a group of 15 individuals with former or current lived experience of homelessness. This council provides invaluable input on City and community-wide processes, programs, and practices that impact the homeless population across Austin/Travis County. Top priorities from the survey included a variety of supportive and deeply affordable housing, food assistance resources, and access to medical and mental health services, including transportation to appointments.
2. Two public engagement sessions were hosted by the Homeless Strategy Division, Downtown Austin Community Court, Housing and Planning Department and the Communications and Public Information Office – on October 14 and October 18, 2021. Key themes included a) concerns about the impact of public camping ban enforcement and displaced people, b) current gaps and challenges to building capacity within the system, c) calls for immediate response to the crisis situation of homelessness, and d) support for additional investments in mental health and substance use disorder treatment.
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This community engagement process and other factors led to several budget adjustments within the initial Spending Framework:

- Increase of funding for shelter and transition supports
- New funding dedicated to equity and innovation
 - Service provider capacity building
 - System oversight and enhancement
 - Communications
- Increased funding for mental health and substance use treatment

- Decreased funding for rapid rehousing
- Decreased funding for building new housing units

More details can be found in a November 9, 2021 presentation to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of the Austin City Council):

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Sustained community engagement continues through several channels:

- The City’s Homeless Strategy Officer and the City’s Equity Office hold seats on the local Continuum of Care’s Homeless Response System Leadership Council, whose composition and practice centers the experience of people with lived expertise and disproportionately impacted communities. Link to more information here: <https://www.austinecho.org/leading-system-change/coalition-leadership/>
- Regular engagement with the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC), which meets every other week, and
- Consistent public updates through community and service provider work groups and committees, quarterly public update meetings, monthly presentations to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of Austin City Council) and during City Council Work Sessions and other publicly held in-person and virtual forums and meetings.

Performance Indicators & Use of Evidence

- Increased number of providers in the Homeless Response System
- Increase rate of service delivery to population experiencing unsheltered homelessness
- Improved measures of equitable access and equitable outcomes

All homeless services contracts require client level data entry into the local Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) database. The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, mandates the use of an HMIS database with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Various required reporting must be generated from this information system. In addition to specific metrics listed for each Homelessness project, the City and community partners use system-wide metrics and dashboards for measuring progress in reducing homelessness. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is the designated Lead Agency for the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care. ECHO also serves as the HMIS Administrator for the local homeless response system of providers. System-wide performance measures are tracked in multiple ways and ARPA – SLFRF funded programs will be measured individually as well as within the collective impact of the homeless response system.

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City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023: [Austin Finance Online \(austintexas.gov\)](#)

This project funds community capacity building, equity focused activities and innovation. The analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, as well as various evaluation techniques is being used to measure impact of the investment. The \$2 million allocated for this project will incorporate a combination of evidence-based, data-informed, and innovative approaches to support homeless services providers as they deliver improved and expanded services throughout the community.

[How Local Governments Can Build an Effective Homelessness System | icma.org](#)

[Elevating Cultural Relevance and Racial Equity in Research and Evaluation: Lessons from an Urban Institute Asian American LEAD Collaboration](#)

[Racial Equity - HUD Exchange](#)

[Training - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Equity is central to the City's work to address homelessness, particularly given the disproportionately high incidence of housing instability among African Americans, the LGBTQIA community, and people living with disabilities.

The eight Homelessness projects funded through ARPA – SLFRF collectively focus on achieving more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized, adversely impacted populations, including African Americans, LGBTQIA persons, and people living with disabilities. Project activities are integrated into the local Homeless Response System, and housing referrals will be made via the community's Coordinated Entry System, which is a known standardized entry process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing resources.

Austin/Travis County participated in the first ever cohort of the HUD Racial Equity Demonstration Project from 2020-2021. This work informed stakeholders' concerns that the community's legacy assessment tool tended to de-prioritize African Americans for access to housing programs. A newly formed Equity Task Group led the work to develop a new tool focused on equity across dimensions of race, LGBTQIA status, and disability. This new tool was adopted by the Homeless Response Leadership Council and implemented on October 1, 2021.

Homelessness projects are intended to reduce rates of homelessness for all Austinites, with a particular focus on reducing the disproportionate harm in adversely impacted populations – African Americans, persons identifying as LGBTQIA, and people living with disabling conditions. Project outcomes will be disaggregated in key areas to assess progress. While services and resources are funded across the geographic area, the City is committed to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing by ensuring that capital investment is distributed across the community, improving housing choice for populations who have historically been subject to discriminatory housing patterns.

The most recent *Austin/Travis County Racial Disparities Report*, authored by ECHO, analyzes equitable provision of homeless services. Key findings and highlights include evidence of both progress and opportunities for continued improvement: [Austin / Travis County Racial Disparities Report \(austinecho.org\)](#). Per the report, "In Austin/Travis County in 2021, Black Austinites were over 6 times as likely as White Austinites to be experiencing homelessness. This trend is not new and will continue unless there is intentional effort targeted toward addressing the housing insecurity trends that contribute to homelessness." The City will continue to work closely with ECHO as data is analyzed over the course of the ARPA – SLFRF project implementation period, with a keen focus and commitment to promoting, measuring, and evaluating outcomes for racial equity and service to marginalized communities. The next annual *Racial Disparities Report* is expected to be released in summer 2023.

Project 9100-A635: Homelessness – Landlord Engagement and Move In

Funding amount: \$1,500,000

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$500,000

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$0

Project Overview

This project is one of eight projects totaling \$95.3 million in ARPA - SLFRF funding dedicated to a comprehensive, community-wide effort to reduce levels of unsheltered homelessness across Austin. Expenditures began in August 2021 and are anticipated through the remainder of the funding period.

This project fits within a larger three-year community initiative called Finding Home ATX, coordinating investments from public and private sources to achieve three core objectives: (1) house an additional 3,000 individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) add 1,300 new units of affordable housing for the population experiencing homelessness, and (3) build a better Homelessness Response System by ensuring program access and outcomes are equitable, investing in social service provider capacity building, and developing stronger system oversight and performance management functions. The commitment of Austin City Council to dedicate \$95.3 million in ARPA – SLFRF and \$11.4 million in ARPA HOME-formula funds is being leveraged by an estimated \$124 million from the General Fund, the Housing Trust Fund, and the 2018 GO Bond to advance the goals of Finding Home ATX. Additional committed and anticipated funding is coming from Travis County, State of Texas, Housing Authority, and private funders.

Main activities of this project include a variety of efforts to reduce housing barriers and enhance move in supports for individuals and families. Landlord outreach and engagement, coordination of housing inventory, and administration of move in supports are among the planned services. Most of the service delivery in this project will be outsourced to non-profit service providers through City contracting. City staff may also carry out activities and services. This project will closely coordinate with the 9100-A625 Homelessness - Rapid Rehousing project.

One contract has been executed for \$500,000 for landlord outreach and engagement services. The remaining \$1 million allocated for ARPA – SLFRF funded services is expected to be obligated in contracts in 2023. The original project budget of \$5 million was reduced to \$1.5 million in May 2023, shifting \$3.5 million to Project 9100-A620: Homelessness – Emergency Shelter & Crisis Services for additional investment in new and expanded homeless shelters.

All Health Equity & Community Engagement Division solicitations contain scored sections for applicants to demonstrate their organization’s cultural competency, efforts to advance racial equity, and alignment with National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards for language access. The City’s definition of Equity is the condition when every member of the community has a fair opportunity to live a long, health and meaningful life. Equity is imbedded into Austin’s values system and means changing hearts and minds, transforming local government from the inside out, eradicating disparities, and ensuring all Austin community members share in the benefits of community progress. Equity is one of the six anchors of the City’s Strategic Direction 2023, and a core value driving the implementation of City services. To advance equitable outcomes, the City is leading with a lens of racial equity and healing.

The intended impact of this funding is to reduce levels of homelessness across the community by increasing access for those experiencing homelessness to one of the least affordable and tightest housing markets in the nation.

Community Engagement

In August, September and October of 2021, the City of Austin's Homeless Strategy Division initiated a community engagement process to better understand stakeholder priorities and further refine and guide the planned investments of the ARPA – SLFRF Homelessness Response projects.

Three strategies were used for community engagement concerning the ARPA Homelessness Response Spending Framework initial design.

1. The Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC) completed a services/funding prioritization survey in August and September of 2021. AHAC is a group of 15 individuals with former or current lived experience of homelessness. This council provides invaluable input on City and community-wide processes, programs, and practices that impact the homeless population across Austin/Travis County. Top priorities from the survey included a variety of supportive and deeply affordable housing, food assistance resources, and access to medical and mental health services, including transportation to appointments.
2. Two public engagement sessions were hosted by the Homeless Strategy Division, Downtown Austin Community Court, Housing and Planning Department and the Communications and Public Information Office – on October 14 and October 18, 2021. Key themes included a) concerns about the impact of public camping ban enforcement and displaced people, b) current gaps and challenges to building capacity within the system, c) calls for immediate response to the crisis situation of homelessness, and d) support for additional investments in mental health and substance use disorder treatment.
3. A *SpeakUp! Austin* ARPA-SLFRF engagement survey was launched publicly October 11 – 27, 2021. The survey attracted 227 responses with representation across all zip codes and Council districts. White respondents were overrepresented and Hispanic/Latinx (ethnicity) respondents were underrepresented as compared to the overall population. Close to 18% of respondents had past or current lived experience of homelessness. Key findings from the survey: 50% favored a balanced approach to investments in shelter and housing, 30% preferred investments in long term housing and supports, while 20% preferred investments in shorter term crisis services and shelter. A desire for regular and varied communication and transparency was expressed by a strong majority of respondents.

This community engagement process and other factors led to several budget adjustments within the initial Spending Framework:

- Increase of funding for shelter and transition supports
- New funding dedicated to equity and innovation
 - Service provider capacity building
 - System oversight and enhancement
 - Communications
- Increased funding for mental health and substance use treatment
- Decreased funding for rapid rehousing
- Decreased funding for building new housing units

More details can be found in a November 9, 2021 presentation to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of the Austin City Council):

<https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=371747>.

Sustained community engagement continues through several channels:

- The City’s Homeless Strategy Officer and the City’s Equity Office hold seats on the local Continuum of Care’s Homeless Response System Leadership Council, whose composition and practice centers the experience of people with lived expertise and disproportionately impacted communities. Link to more information here: <https://www.austinecho.org/leading-system-change/coalition-leadership/>
- Regular engagement with the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC), which meets every other week, and
- Consistent public updates through community and service provider work groups and committees, quarterly public update meetings, monthly presentations to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of Austin City Council) and during City Council Work Sessions and other publicly held in-person and virtual forums and meetings.

Performance Indicators & Use of Evidence

- Number of individuals/households receiving move in assistance
- Percent of households who obtain housing due to receiving essential services

All homeless services contracts require client level data entry into the local Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) database. The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, mandates the use of an HMIS database with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Various required reporting must be generated from this information system. In addition to specific metrics listed for each Homelessness project, the City and community partners use system-wide metrics and dashboards for measuring progress in reducing homelessness. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is the designated Lead Agency for the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care. ECHO also serves as the HMIS Administrator for the local homeless response system of providers. System-wide performance measures are tracked in multiple ways and ARPA – SLFRF funded programs will be measured individually as well as within the collective impact of the homeless response system.

HUD System Performance Measures: [System Performance Measures - HUD Exchange](#)

Austin/Travis County Homelessness Dashboard: [Performance Monitoring - ECHO \(austinecho.org\)](#)

City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023: [Austin Finance Online \(austintexas.gov\)](#)

A growing body of evidence is forming around the effectiveness of landlord recruitment and incentives. In January 2022, HUD announced a Landlord Incentive Cohort to evaluate landlord incentives and their effect on landlord participation in the Housing Choice Voucher program. As part of the CARES Act HUD guidance for the Emergency Solutions Grant – Coronavirus (ESG-CV), HUD states, “A proactive landlord engagement strategy is one of the most effective means of increasing the supply of available rental units in your community.” Eligible expenses in the ESG-CV grant include landlord incentives such as: (a) signing bonuses, (b) security deposits, (c) repairing damages incurred by the program participant, (d) cost of extra cleaning or maintenance. The City is using a combination of proven and innovative strategies for landlord engagement, incentives and move in supports for the \$1.5 million allocated for this project.

[COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Grants Management: ESG-CV Notice Summary \(hudexchange.info\)](#)

[Landlord Outreach Strategies - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

[COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Leveraging ESG-CV Landlord Financial Incentives to Expedite Engagement \(hudexchange.info\)](https://hudexchange.info)

[HCV Landlord Guidebook: Education and Outreach \(hud.gov\)](https://hud.gov)

[Microsoft Word - HUD Exchange 1 Title Page](#)

[Landlord recruitment and retention - Local Housing Solutions](#)

[The Landlord Engagement Toolkit: A Guide to Working with Landlords in Housing First Programs – Niagara Knowledge Exchange](#)

[Moving to Work \(MTW\) Expansion – Landlord Incentives Cohort | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Equity is central to the City’s work to address homelessness, particularly given the disproportionately high incidence of housing instability among African Americans, the LGBTQIA community, and people living with disabilities.

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The 2022 *Austin/Travis County Racial Disparities Report*, authored by ECHO, analyzes equitable provision of homeless services. Key findings and highlights include evidence of both progress and opportunities for continued improvement: [Austin / Travis County Racial Disparities Report \(austinecho.org\)](https://austinecho.org) Per the report, “In Austin/Travis County in 2021, Black Austinites were over 6 times as likely as White Austinites to be experiencing homelessness. This trend is not new and will continue unless there is intentional effort targeted toward addressing the housing insecurity trends that contribute to homelessness.” The City will continue to work closely with ECHO as data is analyzed over the course of the ARPA – SLFRF project implementation period, with a keen focus and commitment to promoting, measuring, and evaluating outcomes for racial equity and service to marginalized communities. The next annual *Racial Disparities Report* is expected to be released in summer 2023.

Project 9100-A640: Homelessness – Other Homeless Support Service

Funding amount: \$7,127,494

Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$3,372,522

Project Amount Expended to Date: \$1,365,716

Project Overview

This project is one of eight projects totaling \$95.3 million in ARPA - SLFRF funding dedicated to a comprehensive, community-wide effort to reduce levels of unsheltered homelessness across Austin. Expenditures began in August 2021 and are anticipated through the remainder of the funding period.

This project fits within a larger three-year community initiative called Finding Home ATX, coordinating investments from public and private sources to achieve three core objectives: (1) house an additional 3,000 individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) add 1,300 new units of affordable housing for the population experiencing homelessness, and (3) build a better Homelessness Response System by ensuring program access and outcomes are equitable, investing in social service provider capacity building, and developing stronger system oversight and performance management functions. The commitment of Austin City Council to dedicate \$95.3 million in ARPA – SLFRF and \$11.4 million in ARPA HOME-formula funds is being leveraged by an estimated \$124 million from the General Fund, the Housing Trust Fund, and the 2018 GO Bond to advance the goals of Finding Home ATX. Additional committed and anticipated funding is coming from Travis County, State of Texas, Housing Authority, and private funders.

Main Activities of this project include services for workforce development/employment assistance, behavioral health services, and assistance for accessing benefits. People receiving these services will also be connected to the appropriate housing resources and support service programs via the community’s Coordinated Entry System. Most of the service delivery in this project is being outsourced to non-profit homeless service providers through City contracting. City staff are also carrying out multiple activities and services.

Solicitation for Other Homeless Support Services

In the first half of 2022, the Health Equity & Community Engagement Division of Austin Public Health issued three consecutive competitive solicitations that included funding from multiple sources, including ARPA – SLFRF funding, local funding, and other federal grant funding (HUD Emergency Solutions Grant). Each focused on a different component of the homeless response system. The Homeless Support Services Request for Proposals (RFP) was released on May 31, 2022 and closed on July 7, 2022. Eligible activities included workforce development and employment services, mental health services, substance use treatment and services, and benefits access assistance. Evaluation of proposals occurred in July and August of 2022 and Austin City Council authorized negotiation and execution of 12 contracts in October 2022.

Five behavioral health contracts (including mental health, peer support, wellness, and substance use treatment programs) were awarded totaling \$1,225,000 for the first year, with a one-year extension option. The combined two-year total amount is \$2,450,000 for contracted behavioral health services provided October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2024.

Four workforce development/employment assistance contracts were awarded totaling \$1,336,355 for the first year, with a one-year extension option. The combined two-year amount is \$2,672,710 for contracted workforce development/employment assistance services provided October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2024.

Three benefits assistance contracts were awarded totaling \$500,000 for the first year, with a one-year extension option. The combined two-year total amount is \$1,000,000 for contracted benefits assistance provided October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2024.

All solicitations contained scored sections for applicants to demonstrate their organization's cultural competency, efforts to advance racial equity, and alignment with National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards for language access. The City's definition of Equity is the condition when every member of the community has a fair opportunity to live a long, health and meaningful life. Equity is imbedded into Austin's values system and means changing hearts and minds, transforming local government from the inside out, eradicating disparities, and ensuring all Austin community members share in the benefits of community progress. Equity is one of the six anchors of the City's Strategic Direction 2023, and a core value driving the implementation of City services. To advance equitable outcomes, the City is leading with a lens of racial equity and healing.

Other funded programs include behavioral health services delivered through a homeless mental health and wellness center run by the local mental health authority, and behavioral health case management and crisis services provided on site to persons staying at the Northbridge shelter.

The intended impact of this funding is to reduce levels of homelessness across the community by increasing service capacity and access to supportive services for persons along the continuum of living unsheltered to living in stable housing with improved health, well-being, and adequate resources to meet basic needs.

Community Engagement

In August, September and October of 2021, the City of Austin's Homeless Strategy Division initiated a community engagement process to better understand stakeholder priorities and further refine and guide the planned investments of the ARPA – SLFRF Homelessness Response projects.

Three strategies were used for community engagement concerning the ARPA - SLFRF Homelessness Response Spending Framework initial design.

1. The Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC) completed a services/funding prioritization survey in August and September of 2021. AHAC is a group of 15 individuals with former or current lived experience of homelessness. This council provides invaluable input on City and community-wide processes, programs, and practices that impact the homeless population across Austin/Travis County. Top priorities from the survey included a variety of supportive and deeply affordable housing, food assistance resources, and access to medical and mental health services, including transportation to appointments.
2. Two public engagement sessions were hosted by the Homeless Strategy Division, Downtown Austin Community Court, Housing and Planning Department and the Communications and Public Information Office – on October 14 and October 18, 2021. Key themes included a) concerns about the impact of public camping ban enforcement and displaced people, b) current gaps and challenges to building capacity within the system, c) calls for immediate response to the crisis situation of homelessness, and d) support for additional investments in mental health and substance use disorder treatment.
3. A *SpeakUp! Austin* ARPA-SLFRF engagement survey was launched publicly October 11 – 27, 2021. The survey attracted 227 responses with representation across all zip codes and Council districts. White respondents were overrepresented and Hispanic/Latinx (ethnicity) respondents were underrepresented as compared to the overall population.

Close to 18% of respondents had past or current lived experience of homelessness. Key findings from the survey: 50% favored a balanced approach to investments in shelter and housing, 30% preferred investments in long term housing and supports, while 20% preferred investments in shorter term crisis services and shelter. A desire for regular and varied communication and transparency was expressed by a strong majority of respondents.

This community engagement process and other factors led to several budget adjustments within the initial Spending Framework:

- Increase of funding for shelter and transition supports
- New funding dedicated to equity and innovation
 - Service provider capacity building
 - System oversight and enhancement
 - Communications
- Increased funding for mental health and substance use treatment
- Decreased funding for rapid rehousing
- Decreased funding for building new housing units

More details can be found in a November 9, 2021 presentation to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of the Austin City Council):

<https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=371747>.

Sustained community engagement continues through several channels:

- The City's Homeless Strategy Officer and the City's Equity Office hold seats on the local Continuum of Care's Homeless Response System Leadership Council, whose composition and practice centers the experience of people with lived expertise and disproportionately impacted communities. Link to more information here: <https://www.austinecho.org/leading-system-change/coalition-leadership/>
- Regular engagement with the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC), which meets every other week, and
- Consistent public updates through community and service provider work groups and committees, quarterly public update meetings, monthly presentations to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of Austin City Council) and during City Council Work Sessions and other publicly held in-person and virtual forums and meetings.

Performance Indicators & Use of Evidence

Reported quarterly performance through contracted services to date (through quarter ending March 31, 2023):

- 66 unduplicated individuals receiving workforce development and/or employment services
- 729 unduplicated individuals receiving behavioral health services
- 63 unduplicated individuals receiving assistance to access benefits

All homeless services contracts require client level data entry into the local Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) database. The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, mandates the use of an HMIS database with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Various required reporting must be generated from this information system. In addition to specific metrics listed for each Homelessness project, the City and community partners use system-wide metrics and dashboards for measuring progress in reducing homelessness. The Ending Community

Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is the designated Lead Agency for the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care. ECHO also serves as the HMIS Administrator for the local homeless response system of providers. System-wide performance measures are tracked in multiple ways and ARPA – SLFRF funded programs will be measured individually as well as within the collective impact of the homeless response system.

HUD System Performance Measures: [System Performance Measures - HUD Exchange](#)

Austin/Travis County Homelessness Dashboard: [Performance Monitoring - ECHO \(austinecho.org\)](#)

City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023: [Austin Finance Online \(austintexas.gov\)](#)

Evidence-based service models include coordinated services in behavioral health and employment assistance, as well as standalone services, depending on a person’s needs and abilities. Per SAMHSA, “Employment supports recovery and can help people experiencing homelessness gain income, stable housing, and a sense of purpose.” Studies show persons experiencing homelessness have a higher rate of co-occurring disorders and barriers to health and housing stability, requiring various and multiple supportive services. This project funds supportive services including employment, behavioral health treatment, and assistance accessing public benefits such as SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP food benefits and others. Evidence-based approaches and service delivery include harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and motivational interviewing, among others. The full amount of \$7.1 million funded in this project will be used for these services. The original project budget of \$9.5 million was reduced to \$7.1 million in May 2023, shifting \$2.4 million to Project 9100-A620: Homelessness – Emergency Shelter & Crisis Services for additional investment in new and expanded homeless shelters.

[Homelessness Resources: Employment | SAMHSA](#)

[Employment and Homelessness - HUD Exchange](#)

[The Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Equity is central to the City’s work to address homelessness, particularly given the disproportionately high incidence of housing instability among African Americans, the LGBTQIA community, and people living with disabilities.

The eight Homelessness projects funded through ARPA – SLFRF collectively focus on achieving more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized, adversely impacted populations, including African Americans, LGBTQIA persons, and people living with disabilities. Project activities are integrated into the local Homeless Response System, and housing referrals will be made via the community’s Coordinated Entry System, which is a known standardized entry process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing resources.

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Homelessness projects are intended to reduce rates of homelessness for all Austinites, with a particular focus on reducing the disproportionate harm in adversely impacted populations – African Americans, persons identifying as LGBTQIA, and people living with disabling conditions. Project outcomes will be disaggregated in key areas to assess progress. While services and resources are funded across the geographic area, the City is committed to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing by ensuring that capital investment is distributed across the community, improving housing choice for populations who have historically been subject to discriminatory housing patterns.

The 2022 *Austin/Travis County Racial Disparities Report*, authored by ECHO, analyzes equitable provision of homeless services. Key findings and highlights include evidence of both progress and opportunities for continued improvement: [Austin / Travis County Racial Disparities Report \(austinecho.org\)](https://austinecho.org) Per the report, “In Austin/Travis County in 2021, Black Austinites were over 6 times as likely as White Austinites to be experiencing homelessness. This trend is not new and will continue unless there is intentional effort targeted toward addressing the housing insecurity trends that contribute to homelessness.” The City will continue to work closely with ECHO as data is analyzed over the course of the ARPA – SLFRF project implementation period, with a keen focus and commitment to promoting, measuring, and evaluating outcomes for racial equity and service to marginalized communities. The next annual *Racial Disparities Report* is expected to be released in summer 2023.

Project 9100-A645: Homelessness – Homelessness System Support
Funding amount: \$3,451,526
Project Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services
Project Amount Obligated to Date: \$846,321
Project Amount Expended to Date: \$631,054

Project Overview

This project is one of eight projects totaling \$95.3 million in ARPA - SLFRF funding dedicated to a comprehensive, community-wide effort to reduce levels of unsheltered homelessness across Austin. Expenditures began in August 2021 and are anticipated through the remainder of the funding period.

This project fits within a larger three-year community initiative called Finding Home ATX, coordinating investments from public and private sources to achieve three core objectives: (1) house an additional 3,000 individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) add 1,300 new units of affordable housing for the population experiencing homelessness, and (3) build a better Homelessness Response System by ensuring program access and outcomes are equitable, investing in social service provider capacity building, and developing stronger system oversight and performance management functions. The commitment of Austin City Council to dedicate \$95.3 million in ARPA – SLFRF and \$11.4 million in ARPA HOME-formula funds is being leveraged by an estimated \$124 million from the General Fund, the Housing Trust Fund, and the 2018 GO Bond to advance the goals of Finding Home ATX. Additional committed and anticipated funding is coming from Travis County, State of Texas, Housing Authority, and private funders.

Main activities of this project are performance management of the Homelessness Response System, community engagement, communications, and administrative and strategic oversight of ARPA – SLFRF funded Homelessness projects. Initial project activities include outreach and engagement efforts, staffing and operations for competitive solicitations, contract development, contract management, and strategic planning and reporting. Ongoing and increasing oversight and performance management activities are occurring with the 29 homeless services contracts and programs that began October 1, 2022, totaling over \$52 million, and the 2 new homelessness prevention and 2 new homeless shelter contracts beginning in July and August of 2023 totaling over \$17 million.

The original project budget of \$4 million was reduced to \$3,451,526 million in May 2023, shifting \$0.5 million to Project 9100-A620: Homelessness – Emergency Shelter & Crisis Services for additional investment in new and expanded homeless shelters.

The intended impact of this funding includes accurate, transparent, and effective planning, tracking, evaluating, and reporting of service implementation and the resulting changes in levels of homelessness across the community.

Community Engagement

In August, September and October of 2021, the City of Austin's Homeless Strategy Division initiated a community engagement process to better understand stakeholder priorities and further refine and guide the planned investments of the ARPA – SLFRF Homelessness Response projects.

Three strategies were used for community engagement concerning the ARPA - SLFRF Homelessness Response Spending Framework initial design.

1. The Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC) completed a services/funding prioritization survey in August and September of 2021. AHAC is a group of 15 individuals with former or current lived experience of homelessness. This council provides invaluable input on City and community-wide processes, programs, and practices that impact the homeless population across Austin/Travis County. Top priorities from the survey included a variety of supportive and deeply affordable housing, food assistance resources, and access to medical and mental health services, including transportation to appointments.
2. Two public engagement sessions were hosted by the Homeless Strategy Division, Downtown Austin Community Court, Housing and Planning Department and the Communications and Public Information Office – on October 14 and October 18, 2021. Key themes included a) concerns about the impact of public camping ban enforcement and displaced people, b) current gaps and challenges to building capacity within the system, c) calls for immediate response to the crisis situation of homelessness, and d) support for additional investments in mental health and substance use disorder treatment.
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This community engagement process and other factors led to several budget adjustments within the initial Spending Framework:

- Increase of funding for shelter and transition supports
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 - Service provider capacity building
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- Regular engagement with the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC), which meets every other week, and

- Consistent public updates through community and service provider work groups and committees, quarterly public update meetings, monthly presentations to the Public Health Committee (a Committee of Austin City Council) and during City Council Work Sessions and other publicly held in-person and virtual forums and meetings.

Performance Indicators & Use of Evidence

Primary measures of project and system-wide impacts are longer term in nature and reporting will begin in future reporting cycles.

- Number and percentage of persons who exited programs to a permanent housing destination and returned to homelessness (*HUD System Performance Measure #2*)
 - o Returns to homelessness in less than 6 months
 - o Returns to homelessness from 6 to 12 months
 - o Returns to homelessness from 13 to 24 months
 - o Number of returns in 2 years

All homeless services contracts require client level data entry into the local Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) database. The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, mandates the use of an HMIS database with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Various required reporting must be generated from this information system. In addition to specific metrics listed for each Homelessness project, the City and community partners use system-wide metrics and dashboards for measuring progress in reducing homelessness. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is the designated Lead Agency for the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care. ECHO also serves as the HMIS Administrator for the local homeless response system of providers. System-wide performance measures are tracked in multiple ways and ARPA – SLFRF funded programs will be measured individually as well as within the collective impact of the homeless response system.

HUD System Performance Measures: [System Performance Measures - HUD Exchange](#)

Austin/Travis County Homelessness Dashboard: [Performance Monitoring - ECHO \(austinecho.org\)](#)

City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023: [Austin Finance Online \(austintexas.gov\)](#)

This project funds oversight and performance management of the homeless response system, administration of funded projects, communication, and community engagement. Evidence-based models, best practices, and ARPA - SLFRF Compliance and Reporting Guidance and Rules will be utilized when carrying out activities totaling the \$3.45 million funded for this project.

[Chapter 1: Models and Frameworks | Principles of Community Engagement | ATSDR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

[Community Engagement Matters \(Now More Than Ever\) \(ssir.org\)](#)

[Results for America \(results4america.org\)](#)

[Implementation Oversight for Evidence-Based Programs | The Pew Charitable Trusts \(pewtrusts.org\)](#)

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

Equity is central to the City's work to address homelessness, particularly given the disproportionately high incidence of housing instability among African Americans, the LGBTQIA community, and people living with disabilities.

The eight Homelessness projects funded through ARPA – SLFRF collectively focus on achieving more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized, adversely impacted populations, including African Americans, LGBTQIA persons, and people living with disabilities. Project activities are integrated into the local Homeless Response System, and housing referrals will be made via the community's Coordinated Entry System, which is a known standardized entry process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing resources.

Austin/Travis County participated in the first ever cohort of the HUD Racial Equity Demonstration Project from 2020-2021. This work informed stakeholders' concerns that the community's legacy assessment tool tended to de-prioritize African Americans for access to housing programs. A newly formed Equity Task Group led the work to develop a new tool focused on equity across dimensions of race, LGBTQIA status, and disability. This new tool was adopted by the Homeless Response Leadership Council and implemented on October 1, 2021.

Homelessness projects are intended to reduce rates of homelessness for all Austinites, with a particular focus on reducing the disproportionate harm in adversely impacted populations – African Americans, persons identifying as LGBTQIA, and people living with disabling conditions. Project outcomes will be disaggregated in key areas to assess progress. While services and resources are funded across the geographic area, the City is committed to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing by ensuring that capital investment is distributed across the community, improving housing choice for populations who have historically been subject to discriminatory housing patterns.

The most recent *Austin/Travis County Racial Disparities Report*, authored by ECHO, analyzes equitable provision of homeless services. Key findings and highlights include evidence of both progress and opportunities for continued improvement: [Austin / Travis County Racial Disparities Report \(austinecho.org\)](https://austinecho.org) Per the report, "In Austin/Travis County in 2021, Black Austinites were over 6 times as likely as White Austinites to be experiencing homelessness. This trend is not new and will continue unless there is intentional effort targeted toward addressing the housing insecurity trends that contribute to homelessness." The City will continue to work closely with ECHO as data is analyzed over the course of the ARPA – SLFRF project implementation period, with a keen focus and commitment to promoting, measuring, and evaluating outcomes for racial equity and service to marginalized communities. The next annual *Racial Disparities Report* is expected to be released in summer 2023.



FINANCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Financial Services Department – Accounting and Financial Reporting
P.O. Box 2920, Austin, Texas 78768 | 512-974-2600 | austintexas.gov

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