

Exhibit C – Scope of Work

I. Introduction

The City of Austin (City) seeks proposals in response to this Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified nonprofit organization or government entities (Offerors) with demonstrated experience to provide homelessness prevention services to residents of Austin/Travis County. The City will fund programs that provide rental assistance, financial assistance, and supportive services to households at risk of homelessness.

II. Background and Purpose of Funding

Background

The City of Austin is deeply committed to ending homelessness and has worked with community partners to assemble and coordinate investments across the Homeless Response System.

In the Spring of 2021, leaders from the City of Austin participated in the Summit to Address Unsheltered Homelessness, working closely with a wide variety of stakeholders to develop a community-wide implementation strategy to significantly reduce the unsheltered homeless population in Austin. Summit participants included individuals with lived experience, social service providers, social justice advocates, local governments, local philanthropies, and issue area experts. The Summit resulted in an ambitious three-year community-wide investment plan, known as Finding Home ATX, which aims to:

- a. house an additional 3,000 people between 2022 and 2024
- b. create 1,300 new affordable housing units
- c. strengthen the community's Homeless Response System

Overall, the Finding Home ATX investment strategy calls for \$515 million from public and private sources to fully implement the three-year plan. The City has pledged over \$225 million from a variety of sources, including Emergency Solutions Grant – CARES Act (ESG-CV), the City of Austin General Fund, the Housing Trust Fund, proceeds from General Obligation Bonds designated for affordable housing, and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

In order to help achieve these goals, the Finding Home ATX strategy calls for investments in programs that address homelessness or the risk of homelessness at critical junctures in a person's housing journey. In particular, the initiative calls for \$11.5 million to be invested over 3 years in targeted prevention programs that will help persons at risk of homelessness address their housing instability issues in order to avoid experiencing homelessness. The collective leadership of Finding Home ATX will seek the remainder of the investment from other private and public sources.

A concurrent, but unrelated, solicitation for emergency rental assistance has been released by the Austin Housing Finance Corporation, titled *I Belong in Austin*. While both solicitations aim to provide financial assistance to households at risk of homelessness, the contracts and programs will be managed by different entities and funded through different sources. Offerors to this solicitation may submit applications to the *I Belong in Austin* solicitation, as well as this RFP, as the application reviews will not be informed by one another.

Solicitation Objectives

The objectives of this funding are to fund Homelessness Prevention Program(s) to provide or connect households at risk of homelessness to time-limited rental assistance, financial assistance, and services that can resolve periods of serious housing insecurity, thereby helping participants avoid episodes of homelessness.

III. Funding and Timeline

Department: Austin Public Health

Services Solicited: Homelessness Prevention Programs

Available Funding: Up to \$2,000,000 total available in one-time funding through the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Relief Funds

Anticipated Number of Awarded Agreements: APH anticipates awarding up to eight (8) agreements

Anticipated Term of Agreements: Awards are expected to be made for a term of 12 months, beginning August 1, 2023. Funding is contingent upon budget availability, Austin City Council approval, and agreement over contract terms, including compliance and performance expectations.

Minimum Request: \$250,000

Awarded programs will be structured as a reimbursable-based agreement as defined below:

- Reimbursable Agreement- An Agreement where an agency is reimbursed for expenses incurred and paid through the provision of adequate supporting documentation that verifies the expenses.

The City of Austin reserves the right to determine the availability of funds for advances and/or extensions on payments on an individual basis pending expressed need and negotiation with each awardee.

IV. Services Solicited

Program Services

Homelessness Prevention (HP) projects are designed to help households most at risk of homelessness in resolving their immediate housing instability and avoiding episodes of homelessness. Components of the project may include financial assistance to address outstanding rental arrears or unpaid housing-related obligations (e.g., utility bills), time-limited rental assistance, and supportive services to connect participants to mainstream resources, mediation with housing providers and/or property managers, increasing participant income to address the causes of housing instability, and/or re-location of tenants to a more suitable unit, if appropriate. Additional programming details are included later in this section.

Homelessness Prevention programs have the greatest impact on homelessness when they a) effectively target assistance to those households most likely to end up experiencing homelessness, and b) successfully assist those clients in stabilizing their housing. APH is specifically interested in proposals for homelessness prevention programs that clearly demonstrate the ability to achieve both of these aims.

Homelessness Prevention Programming

Potential homelessness prevention programming may include:

1. **Outreach and Engagement:** activities intended to identify, engage, receive referrals for, and enroll eligible households.
2. **Housing Stability Case Management:** to directly assist program participants in resolving immediate housing crises to maintain stable housing, as well as assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of other services in the community, to connect individuals to public benefits, and to secure needed identification and documentation. May include mediation with property managers or owners to identify and resolve outstanding housing stability issues.
3. **Financial Assistance:**
 - a. Rental Assistance: Rental assistance, including rental arrears and time-limited rental assistance to units leased to the participants, so long as the unit meets rent reasonability as outlined in 24 CFR 982.507 and passes Habitability Standards as outlined in 24 CFR 576.403(c).
 - b. General Housing Assistance:
 - i. Utility expenses, including arrears, deposits, and ongoing utility expenses
 - ii. Application fees and security deposits, including double deposits, if necessary to assist households when relocation to another housing unit is the optimal solution to their crisis
 - c. Direct Client Assistance:
 - i. **Moving Costs:** In cases where relocation of a household is necessary, funds may be utilized to pay for moving costs, such as truck rental or hiring a moving company. Programs may pay temporary storage fees for up to 30 days, provided that the fees are accrued between the date the program participant begins receiving program assistance and two weeks after the program participant moves into a new housing unit. Payment of temporary storage fees in arrears is not eligible.
 - ii. **Transportation Assistance:** to assist participants to travel to and from locations related to medical care, employment, child-care, or other social services, as well as prospective housing units. The costs of vehicle repair are eligible with APH contract manager authorization.
 - iii. **Child Care Voucher:** Costs to connect participant households with childcare services provided through a state-licensed childcare provider.
4. **Employment Assistance:** to assist individuals in securing employment, acquiring skills, and/or increasing immediate earning potential. Such activities may include: employment screening, assessment, or testing; structured job skills and job-seeking skills; training and tutoring, including literacy training and pre-vocational training; counseling or job coaching; and referral to community resources. Funding deployed via this solicitation is not intended to fund comprehensive employment programs, but rather programs that offer employment-focused assistance and/or referrals as a supplement to homelessness prevention programming.
5. **Housing Navigation:** activities necessary to assist program participants in identifying new housing options, if appropriate, such as:
 - a. Development of an action plan for locating housing
 - b. Assessment of housing needs and preferences

- c. Identification and mitigation of barriers to tenancy, including a participant's previous rental, credit, or justice-involvement history. criminal or credit history
 - d. Housing search assistance, including housing option identification
 - e. Outreach with housing owners and property management teams
 - f. Support for rental application fees and completing and understanding leases
6. **Legal services:** Services provided by licensed attorneys and by person(s) under the supervision of licensed attorneys, for advice and representation in matters that interfere with the participant's ability to retain and maintain housing. Legal services for immigration and citizenship matters and issues related to mortgages and homeownership are ineligible.

Duration of Assistance: Eligible participants can receive rental assistance for up to 6 months, with the option for a 3-month extension and alignment with the program contract term. Recognizing the utilization of Progressive Engagement, Homelessness Prevention projects should only provide participants with the minimum amount of monthly rental assistance and services/case management to maintain maximum housing stability. Doing so allows for financial and staff resources to be provided to as many households as possible. Participants may continue to receive direct client assistance and supportive services, such as case management, for up to 1 month after rental assistance ends.

Collaborative Applications: Offerors who propose Homelessness Prevention programs composed of multiple partner agencies must ensure that participant eligibility and assessment criteria, access to services and resources, and program design are reasonably uniform across partners. Offerors may outline in their application modest variations from the collaborative's overall program design to meet the unique needs of a sub-population, as necessary to meet the unique needs of the subpopulation.

Subcontracting: Costs associated with procuring eligible program services as outlined in this section ("IV. Services Solicited") from third party or contract vendors is an eligible cost for this project.

V. Data Collection and Reporting

Offerors must comply with the following data requirements:

1. Organizations receiving funding through this solicitation for homelessness prevention and homeless intervention services are required to utilize the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track and report client information and program services for participants.
2. Organizations are required to adhere to all requirements of HMIS utilization as outlined in the [ECHO HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual](#) of the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care.
3. Organizations are required to assist individuals with the collection of documentation to determine eligibility for both project participation and rental subsidy assistance, including appeals of rejection of eligibility, if applicable.
4. Organizations will establish and track performance measures that align and [HUD's System Performance Measures](#).

Expenditures necessary to meet the above requirements are eligible under this solicitation.

Performance Measures

On a quarterly basis, the awardee(s) will be required to report on the following:

Outputs:

1. Number of unduplicated individuals served in a 12-month period

Outcomes:

1. Percent of households at risk of homelessness that maintain housing
Numerator: The number of households at risk of homelessness that maintain housing
Denominator: The total number of households receiving services
2. Percentage of those receiving homelessness prevention program services who exit the program to stable destinations and do not return for additional services within the following 6 months
Numerator: The number of households who exit program services to stable destinations and do not return for additional services within 6 months
Denominator: The total number of households who exit program services to stable destinations

VI. Principles of Service Delivery

- **Trauma-Informed Practices:** Successful Offerors will apply [the principles of trauma-informed practice](#) to program and service delivery: safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, and empowerment. Examples of applied principles may include an expanded food choice that honors an individual's health preferences and needs, education, program co-creation with those directly impacted, resource referrals, and discreet delivery of services that avoid or eliminate stigma.
- **Progressive Engagement:** [Progressive engagement](#) is a person-centered approach to ending someone's homelessness which tailors the assistance received based on each individual or household's unique situation and needs. Progressive engagement starts small by helping people with their immediate housing needs. As greater (or lesser) needs are identified, the level of support is adjusted, to ensure participants receive necessary assistance to resolve their housing crisis.
- **Language Access Plan:** Offerors will have, or be in the process of developing, a [Language Access Plan](#). A language access plan is a document that guides the implementation of translation and interpretation services. Language access plans include a four-factor assessment that links service provision with the languages spoken in a grantee's geographic service area.
- **Collaboration with Community:** Successful Offerors will commit to participating in local working groups, such as The Homeless Response System Leadership Council's committees and workgroups, and engage with community stakeholders.
- **Incorporating Perspectives from People with Lived Experience:** Programs and related tools should be designed, managed, and evaluated with active input from individuals with lived experience of homelessness.

- **Proactive Referral to Other Services:** Offerors should actively offer information on and referrals to other community services that may benefit program participants.
- **Program Accessibility:** Programs should actively seek to eliminate barriers to participant’s access to services, which may include but are not limited to historical programmatic practices, lack of transportation, limited communication abilities, sobriety requirements, immigration status, etc.
- **Equitable Service Delivery:** Offerors must ensure that programs are providing services that meet the needs of diverse populations, considering systemic, institutional, and environmental barriers and inequities that exist and seeking to mitigate the effects on participant outcomes.

Best Practices

All supportive services programs are encouraged to incorporate the following best practices:

- **Evidence-based Practices:** Evidence-based practices are those which have been developed from research, are found to produce meaningful outcomes, can be standardized and replicated, and often have existing tools to measure adherence to the model. The Offerors are encouraged to use evidence-based practices in their proposed program designs.
- **Preventing Duplication of Services:** Agency must ensure that participants are not receiving duplicative services from another provider for homelessness prevention when assessing for enrollment.
- **Livable Wage:** The City of Austin recommends offerors follow Strategic Direction measure EOA.C.3 and pay at least a livable wage to all staff working on the program.¹

VII. Participant Selection and Eligibility

Household Eligibility

Homelessness Prevention programs will serve individuals and households who meet the criteria of “At Risk of Homelessness” and “At Imminent Risk of Homelessness” as defined in 42 USC 11360. Please see Section XI. Definitions.

Participant Prioritization

Preference will be given to proposed programs that do not establish additional program eligibility or prioritization criteria based on participant subpopulation, such as limiting the program to only serve a particular age range or type of household.

Participant Selection

Offerors must develop and utilize a participant needs assessment tool when determining which eligible participants receive services and assistance. The Offeror’s proposed tool must be approved for use by City

¹ [EOA.C.3 - Dollars-per-hour wage that an individual must earn to support a family in Austin | Open Data | City of Austin Texas](#)

of Austin staff (to include APH Health Equity and Community Engagement Division and the Homeless Strategy Division).

An Offeror’s participant needs assessment tool must be used to determine if a possible participant, if but for the assistance received by the Homelessness Prevention program, would likely enter an emergency shelter or stay in an unsheltered location because of their current circumstance and/or other factors that lead to a higher risk of homelessness. Offerors who can submit a currently used or drafted tool will receive preference through higher potential awarded points in application scoring. Offerors will incorporate vulnerability factors including but not limited to:

- a. Previous experiences of homelessness
- b. Living doubled up and not being a leaseholder
- c. High levels of rental arrears
- d. Having young children

Additional priority factors may include the structural inequities present in the geographic location of the participants' current residency as well as a balance of internal referrals with those from other sources (e.g., walk-in access). When designing or updating a needs assessment tool, Offerors should use local data, such as ECHO’s [Travis County Homelessness Vulnerability map](#), to identify common risk factors of the population which experiences homelessness compared to the general population, including reviewing common characteristics such as the presence of disabling conditions or little or no income. Further information can be found in HUD’s [How to Design, Scale, and Fund a Homelessness Prevention Program During COVID-19](#).

Coordinated Community Approach

Austin does not currently have a coordinated, centralized process or assessment tool to determine who receives or is prioritized for homelessness prevention services. Awardees are expected to participate in any future community planning activities and initiatives to design and implement a coordinated, centralized access, assessment, prioritization, and referral process for homelessness prevention eligible participants. If such a process is created and endorsed by the City of Austin, awardees will be required to work with their contract manager to develop a timeline to integrate the community process into the awardee’s enrollment and eligibility process.

VIII. Application Evaluation

A total of 100 points may be awarded to the application. All applications will be evaluated as to how the proposed program aligns with the goals of this RFP and whether each question has been adequately addressed.

RFP 2023-001 ARPA Homelessness Prevention Programs Evaluation Rubric		
Form 1: Offer Sheet	Offerors must print, sign, scan and upload signed forms.	No points, but Offeror must submit signed form.
Form 2: RFP Proposal		
Part 1: Fiscal and Administrative Capacity	Agency Information	No points awarded, but Offeror must pass threshold defined in Offeror Minimum

		Qualifications below.
Part 2: Scored Proposal		
Section 1: Experience and Cultural Competence	Agency Experience and Performance and Agency Operations	5 points
	Principles of Service Delivery	5 points
	Cultural Competence and Racial Equity	5 points
		15 points total
Section 2: Program Design	Program Work Statement	
	Program Goals and Objectives	5 points
	Program Clients Served	5 points
	Assessment	10 points
	Outreach	5 points
	Program Services and Delivery, Program Accessibility, and Evidence-Based Practices	20 points
	Planning with Other Agencies	5 points
		50 points total
Section 3: Data Informed Program Management	Performance Measures	10 points
		10 points total
Section 4: Cost Effectiveness	Program Staffing and Time	5 points
	Program Budget and Funding Summary	5 points
	Cost Effectiveness	10 points
		20 points total
Form 3	Number of individuals served/ total budget = Cost Analysis	
		5 points total
		Total: 100 points
Form 4: COA Certifications and Disclosures	Offerors must print, sign, scan and upload signed forms.	No points, but Offeror must submit signed form.

IX. Applicant Minimum Qualifications

- Agencies, board of directors, or leadership staff submitting a proposal must have a minimum of two years established, successful experience providing services.
- Be a non-profit organization or quasi-governmental entity able to conduct business in the State of Texas, and legally contract with Austin Public Health.

- Have submitted all applicable tax returns to the IRS and the State of Texas (e.g., Form 990 or 990-EZ and state and federal payroll tax filings).
- Be eligible to contract and are not debarred from contracting with the City of Austin, State of Texas and Federal government, according to SAM.gov, and State and City Debarment information.
- Be current in its payment of Federal and State payroll taxes.
- Not owe past due taxes to the City.
- Have the ability to meet Austin Public Health’s standard agreement terms and conditions, which includes Social Services Insurance Requirements.
- Have an active Board of Directors that meets regularly and reviews program performance, financial performance, and annually approves the agency budget. The Board of Directors shall have a strong commitment to fundraising to ensure well-funded, sustainable programs and operations.

X. Application Format and Submission Requirements

See **Exhibit B: Solicitation Provisions, and Instructions for all requirements.**

The Application must be submitted in the Partnergrants database. No late submissions will be accepted. Responses should be included for each question.

Please note: Only name your uploaded documents with letters and numbers. To reduce possible submission and/or review delays, please ensure any attached file from your local drive DOES NOT contain any special characters. Letters and numbers are acceptable.

Offerors Initial Steps: Registration

1. Confirm your organization is a registered vendor with the City of Austin.
 - To find the City of Austin Vendor Number please visit Austin Finance Online and search for the organization’s legal name.
 - To register to become a potential City of Austin vendor, go to Austin Finance Online to register.
2. Be a registered user in the Partnergrants system. The proposals will be submitted through this web-based system.
 - To register, visit Partnergrants and click on “Register Here.”
 - Note that the organization’s City of Austin Vendor number is required to complete registration in Partnergrants.

Offeror Initial Steps: Pre-Application

3. Complete an Annual Agency Threshold Application in the PartnerGrants database.
 - This form must be submitted once per 12 months and remains valid for all competitions closing within that time period. The threshold application will be reviewed by APH staff and the agency will be notified once approved.
 - Once logged into PartnerGrants, click on “Opportunity” and then opportunity title “Annual Agency Threshold Application-Applicants for Funding Start Here” to complete a new threshold application.
 - Submit one per agency per 12-months and note the submission date for future use
4. Complete an **Intent to Apply form** for each proposal the offeror plans to submit by the due date identified in Form 1 – Offer Sheet.

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RFP 2023-001 ARPA Homelessness Prevention



- Once logged into PartnerGrants, click on “Opportunity” and then opportunity title “RFP 2023-001 ARPA Homelessness Prevention” and complete an Intent to Apply form including a Threshold Certification verifying completion of Step 3 above.
 - Offerors may submit more than one Intent to Apply form and must submit a unique Intent to Apply form for each proposal per the guidelines of the RFP.
5. Register with SAM.gov
- In order to enter a contract with the City of Austin for this funding, you must be a registered vendor with the Federal Government by completing a registration in Sam.gov. The Federal Government estimates registration takes at least 14 hours. You must go through full registration, not just obtain an ID. Assistance can be provided by the Sam.gov team.
 - On April 1, 2022, the entire Sam.gov system transitioned so get started now because it could be very difficult to obtain assistance during this transition time from the Sam.gov helpdesk.
 - APH estimates from start to finish the registration process takes at least 4 weeks. Note that APH is NOT able to work with Sam.gov on your behalf or ask about the status of your registration. Your registration must be viewable to the public and not made private or restricted.

XI. Definitions

At Risk of Homelessness

The term "At Risk of Homelessness " means, with respect to an individual or family, that the individual or family—

- a. has income below 30 percent of median income for the geographic area;
- b. has insufficient resources immediately available to attain housing stability; and
- c. Meets one or more of the following:
 - i. has moved frequently because of economic reasons;
 - ii. is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
 - iii. has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated;
 - iv. lives in a hotel or motel;
 - v. lives in severely overcrowded housing;
 - vi. is exiting an institution; or
 - vii. otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.

At Imminent Risk of Homelessness

For purposes of this RFP, the terms "at imminent risk of homelessness" means an individual or family who—

- a. will imminently lose their housing, including housing they own, rent, or live in without paying rent, are sharing with others, and rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, as evidenced by—
 - i. a court order resulting from an eviction action that notifies the individual or family that they must leave within 14 days;
 - ii. the individual or family having a primary nighttime residence that is a room in a hotel or motel and where they lack the resources necessary to reside there for more than 14 days; or
 - iii. credible evidence indicating that the owner or renter of the housing will not allow the individual or family to stay for more than 14 days, and any oral statement from an individual or family seeking homeless assistance that is found to be credible shall be considered credible evidence for purposes of this clause;
- b. has no subsequent residence identified; and
- c. lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.