

# Community Investment Budget

The City's budget is a reflection of our values. Those values should be reflected in a city budget created *through an equitable, language-accessible and digitally-inclusive participatory budget process*. Today, **the undersigned organizations join together** to strongly urge the following investments in community health and safety for FY23 totaling \$74.35M or 6% of this year's projected \$1.242B General Revenue budget. This request should be prioritized in the development of the City Manager's Budget and as Council makes decisions that affect the long-term health of the general revenue fund. **Budgets are a reflection of values, and budget decisions are a statement about priorities.** The undersigned groups ask that city management and elected officials prioritize higher wages for lowest paid staff, park/youth/family programming, workforce development and services for those most in need.

- Emergency rental assistance, inclement weather sheltering and eviction protection [\$15M]
- EMS wage increase to help fill more than 100 open positions [\$16M]
- \$22 in 2022 minimum for city workers, contractors [\$19M]
- Resilience hubs with focused services [\$7.5M]
- Park maintenance, safety, equity [\$5.5M]
- Workforce development [\$2.5M]
- Harm reduction services and infrastructure [\$2M]
- Trauma Recovery Center for victims [\$1M]
- SAFE victim service [\$200k]
- Office of Violence Prevention: violence interrupter [\$500k]
- Carver Library staff and services: [\$300k]
- Immigration legal services for low income families [\$1M]
- Homeless services for Black youth and adults [\$1.2M]
- Expand Parent Support Specialist contractual commitment with AISD [\$1.5M]
- Civil Rights Office funding for certain enforcement efforts [\$750K]
- Logistical support for Austinites seeking abortion care [\$100k]
- Animal services to support owner surrender prevention and return to home services [\$300k]

TOTAL REQUEST FOR NEW FUNDS: \$74.35 million

## Proposal detail

| General Fund<br>Additional Amt | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| \$12 million                   | <b>Emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention:</b> With rents jumping an eye-popping 15%-40% (depending on the data source) in just one year, and wages lagging, evictions will unhouse thousands of new families without continued emergency housing assistance from the city. Housing is the foundation of family security and safety. Ultimately, more affordable units is the only real solution, but as Austin transitions away from the overheated market of today to the sustainable market of tomorrow, we should be helping those in greatest need, preventing homelessness with emergency relief. A portion of this funding can also be allocated to organizing and legal representation for people facing eviction. Everyone facing eviction should know their rights and have access to legal representation. |
| \$3 million                    | <b>Inclement weather sheltering:</b> The city needs to fund shelter for people in emergencies and inclement weather with specific attention to sheltering those unhoused people at risk of exposure harm due to weather events.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| \$1.2 million                  | <b>Homeless services</b> with a particular focus on Black homeless youth and adults and homeless survivors of sexual assault and family violence. Black people make up 34% of the unhoused. The City should pursue collaborative partnerships with African American service providers, who are currently providing services and/or need capacity building support.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| \$2.5 million                  | <b>Workforce development:</b> Continue and modestly expand funding for Capital Idea to continue the low income nontraditional student workforce development started with ARPA money. This successful investment should be built into the city budget. Continue and expand funding for mentoring to connect students with Black professionals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| \$16 million                   | <b>EMS:</b> Paramedics are understaffed <i>and</i> the lowest paid of our public safety workers. We rely on them to assist all people in a variety of emergencies. Austin must continue to increase its investment in our city's EMS workers to allow EMS to compete with the private sector for these workers and bring them closer to wage scales for other public safety workers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| \$19 million<br>[estimated]    | <b>Living wage (\$22 in '22):</b> Increase wages for all lowest income city employees to a minimum of \$22/hour so that the city's lowest paid workers – including contract, part time and seasonal workers – can fall behind a bit less when it comes to the steep costs they face to live in this region. Companies contracting with the city should not pay workers less than the wage the city would pay directly for those same services.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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| \$7.5 million | <p><b>Resilience Hubs:</b> The City allocated \$3 million from one time American Rescue Plan Act funds to create Resilience hubs. With no hubs yet created, those funds should be moved to Fiscal Year 2023, create five hubs, and expand the project at two of the five hubs to expand guaranteed Income pilot project as outlined in the RPS Task Force recommendations to benefit at least two of our lowest income communities.</p> <p>Resilience hubs and neighborhood centers must be supplied with critical on-site materials and resources like generators and power banks, landlines and radio/walkie-talkies, first aid and medical equipment, personal hygiene supplies and stored water.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| \$5.5 million | <p><b>Park maintenance, safety and equity:</b> Well maintained and staffed parks are safe parks. We have a long way to go to appropriately staff our more than 300 parks. To this end, we should continue to add parks maintenance staff and park rangers to improve park conditions, clean areas where dumping has occurred and better connect visitors with park environments. We should also expand youth programming offerings including by appropriately staffing recreation centers, through recreation software, and by supporting PARD Cities Connecting Children to Nature in equitably activating the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights through a multilingual, inclusive communications campaign and programming centered in Austin's Eastern Crescent.</p> <p>We support increased base wages for lowest wage workers including lifeguards and youth programming staff.</p> <p>Park safety = Public health. Support and elevate community gardens in Austin's Eastern Crescent to increase resident access to ecotherapy, healthy food, and disaster preparedness with multilingual community engagement shaped by residents directly impacted by food insecurity.</p> |
| \$2 million   | <p><b>Harm reduction services and infrastructure:</b> Anyone struggling with substance use should have access to evidence-based approaches to care. This requires low-barrier access to treatment and an expansion in public health tools, including expanding access to naloxone, fentanyl testing strips, methadone, and more. It also requires a remunerated, highly regarded, and well-trained Community Health Workforce who are from the communities they serve, and serve as a trusted liaison between health and social services and community members. CHWs perform individual health promotion, peer support, service delivery and more. One time funds were allocated in 2020 to treatment and harm reduction services. These funds should be made permanent (build into baseline) with the addition of \$500k over 2020's initial investment.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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| \$1 million | <b>Trauma Recovery Centers (TRC):</b> For the past 3 years Austin survivors have been advocating for a TRC to provide community based trauma informed therapy and case management to survivors living in communities most impacted by violence that receive the least amount of services. We propose adding \$1 million to the appropriate division for creation of this center, in conjunction with Travis County. In addition, money approved in FY 22 for cash assistance to crime victims and culturally specific trauma healing could be migrated to the TRC.                                                                                                                 |
| \$1 million | <b>Immigrant legal services:</b> dedicated immigrant legal services to low-income immigrants in Austin to address the rising number of individuals and families seeking services for deportation defense.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| \$500,000   | <b>Office of Violence Prevention (OVP):</b> The OVP will pilot a violence interrupter program and will need funds for community-based organizations to implement such programming.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| \$200,000   | <b>The SAFE Alliance:</b> Replace grant funding from the US DoJ with permanent local funding to cover coordination, forensic technical review services, victim/survivor counseling, investigative and prosecution services, and related activities. These City of Austin contract employees should be SAFE employees, guaranteeing confidentiality and privilege with survivors that is not available to City employees.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| \$750,000   | <b>Civil Rights Office:</b> The Civil Rights Office was launched last year to investigate alleged violations of the City's civil rights ordinances and to enforce the City's civil rights ordinances. This office ensures that residents of the City of Austin are able to live and work in an environment free of discrimination and violations of tenants' and workers' rights. The Civil Rights Office will need more capacity in their compliance unit to address violation of city priorities like ending wage theft, protecting the rights of tenants, and ensuring compliance of other city's civil rights ordinances. It will also expand to add an adjudicatory function. |
| \$300,000   | <b>Carver Library and Museum:</b> Carver is the centerpiece library, museum and community center serving the historically Black neighborhoods in east Austin, but Carver has not been able to maintain basic operations on their General Fund budget, with barely enough to pay temp workers to cover the front desk. Administrators must choose between culturally competent summer programs or new exhibits. Grant funds for emergency expenses no longer exist. Carver must be put on a stable foundation by increasing its base budget by \$300,000 over 2019 levels (as needed between APL and PARD budgets.)                                                                 |
| \$100,000   | <b>Abortion Access:</b> With the nation's most severe abortion ban in effect in Texas, the majority of Austinites seeking abortion care must now travel to other states. The upcoming decision by the Supreme Court of                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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|               | the United States in summer 2022 will likely even further restrict access to abortion care for Texans. An additional \$100,000 in funding, for a total of \$250,000 in funding for FY22-23, can help ensure that Austinites have the logistical support needed to travel to access abortion care. Additional funds will strengthen the existing program and will focus on travel costs including airfare, gas reimbursements, hotel stays, ride shares, childcare stipends, and food. Now in its second year, the program is also doing outreach work in populations with the least access to reproductive healthcare in Austin/Travis County, including youth, immigrant populations, and communities of color. |
| \$300,000     | <b>Animal Services:</b> Expand programming to reduce owner surrender like expanded services to unhoused families with pets, and pass-through support to community-based programs that divert animals away from the Center before an owner surrender is necessary. Expand free microchipping across the city.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| \$1.5 million | <b>Parent Support Specialists:</b> This has renewed each year after much debate, but not increased or made part of the base budget. It should be included in the Austin Public Health baseline budget with a modest increase of \$210,000 over existing spending level.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

### Endorsing Organizations

Access to Activism  
 Alliance For Safety and Justice  
 Austin Area Urban League  
 Austin Community Law Center  
 Austin Justice Coalition  
 Austin Pets Alive!  
 Avow  
 Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice  
 District 5 for Black Lives  
 Equity Action  
 Friends of Rosewood  
 Fund Texas Choice  
 Go Austin / Vamos Austin  
 Grassroots Leadership  
 Housing Works  
 Indivisible Austin  
 Jane's Due Process

Just Liberty  
 Lilith Fund  
 MEASURE  
 Planning Our Communities  
 Save Our Springs Alliance  
 Statewide Leadership Council  
 Texas Appleseed  
 Texas Civil Rights Project  
 Texas Center for Justice and Equity  
 Texas Fair Defense Project  
 Texas Harm Reduction Alliance  
 Undoing White Supremacy Austin  
 Workers Defense Action Fund  
 Workers Defense Project

