

Community Investment Budget

Priorities for FY 2026 - 2027

The City's budget is a reflection of our values. This year, Austin is navigating real fiscal constraints - but those constraints do not lessen our responsibility to meet the needs of our residents. Working families, low-income communities, and the historically underserved are facing increasing pressure from housing costs, economic instability, and gaps in essential services. The pressure Council feels to ensure the long-term stability of Austin as a whole pales in comparison to the pressure families feel day-to-day in this city as they seek out their own stability.

We expect that every budget decision be grounded in equity, safety, transparency, and a clear commitment to protecting the most critical services Austinites rely on. In recent years, the City has made important, though modest, progress in areas like worker pay and community-based safety programs. This is not the moment to reverse that progress. Instead, the City should prioritize maintaining those gains, avoiding harmful cuts, and ensuring that the well-funded Austin Police Department does not receive additional funding.

In a constrained year, the choices the City makes matter even more, and investing in community care is not just the right thing to do, it is the most efficient use of public dollars. Investments in housing stability, reentry support, justice-involved folks, workforce development, public health, sustainability, and violence prevention reduce reliance on more expensive emergency responses, decrease strain on public systems, and prevent crises before they occur. **The Community Investment Budget invests upstream, where interventions are less expensive and more effective.** Strategic investments in prevention and community-based services save money over time while strengthening public safety and community wellbeing. The City should reject the proposed \$16.8 million reduction in social service contracts and maintain funding for programs that provide essential services to Austin residents. The Community Investment Budget is supportive of current ongoing efforts to protect social services.

We urge Council to focus on protecting essential programs, supporting City workers, and making targeted investments that address well-documented gaps in services. Austin's budget should continue to move us toward a city that is more equitable, more resilient, and better able to meet the needs of all who call it home.

Funding Items

- Office of Violence Prevention (\$4.3M)
- Inclement Weather Shelter Model (\$4.5M)
- Re-entry Grant Funding (\$1.5M)
- Workforce Development (\$2M)
- Emergency Rental Assistance (\$4M)
- Tenant Education, Stabilization Support, and Community-based Agreement Support (\$300K)
- Solar Incentives to Expand Equitable Access to Rooftop Solar (General Fund (GF) neutral)
- Early Childhood Education & Development (\$500K)
- Austin Police Oversight (\$260K)
- Family Stabilization Grant (\$3M)

- Austin Public Health - Immigrant Support: Legal Services (\$570K)
- Austin Public Health - Immigrant Support: Mental Health Services (\$250K)
- Austin Public Health - Dedicated Community Health Worker Strike Team (\$750K)
- Community Coalition Crisis Response (\$2.3M)
- Survivor Support and Shelter Stability (\$4M)
- Prepared Meals (\$300K)
- Austin Public Health - Maternal Support (\$600K)
- Expand Violet Keepsake Storage (\$500K)
- Supportive Services at City-Owned Housing Properties (\$1M)
- COLA for City Workers (\$7M)
- 911 Joint Emergency Communications

No Cuts:

- EMCOT 24/7
- General Fund transfer to the Housing Trust Fund
- Harm Reduction Funding
- Permanent Supportive Housing Production and Services
- Rapid Rehousing
- Austin Climate Action and Resilience
- Parent Support Specialists
- Park Maintenance and Safety
- Austin Public Library: Passport navigation and fee support, library staff and hours
- Staff connected to implementation of the Austin Climate Equity Plan in any department (relevant programs within Watershed Protection, Transportation and Public Works, Austin Energy, Austin Water, Austin Resource Recovery, Financial Services)
- Equity Division

No Funding:

- Increases to APD budget
- AI surveillance
- Incentives for data centers
- Austin Energy rate increase without a rate case and engagement of a consumer advocate to represent residential customers.

GF Amount	Issue (Full Descriptor)
[\$3.5M] TRC [\$800K] CVI	Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) • In keeping with its mission the OVP has supported programs that prevent violence before it happens and break cycles of victimization. The trauma recovery center (TRC) has served hundreds of Austin survivors and needs additional funding to meet the current demand. We are requesting \$3.5M to allow the TRC to continue serving the community at the appropriate level. • Community Violence Interventions (CVI) funding through OVP is another crucial program that has helped reduce violence in Austin. An increase in funding to \$800K would allow ATX Peace and other CVI orgs to continue working in the community to prevent violence.
[\$4.5M]	Inclement Weather Shelter Model

	The City should fund an additional \$4.5 million in addition to what is currently allocated for inclement weather shelters. Significant gaps remain in service provision during inclement weather. These gaps include direct outreach to neighbors in need, operational support, community feedback and engagement, and continual model review and evolution. For people going to city-owned emergency centers in emergencies and inclement weather, a system that precipitates limited-to-no access to adequate notice and resources for preparation is less than ideal and can lead to further traumatization of already vulnerable populations going through an active crisis. It is important to note that inclement weather is not exclusive to extreme cold, but also includes extreme heat, wind, fire, and rain. This funding should include continuation of existing inclement weather center programming, while expanding the lens of inclement weather response to include multi-layered approaches of support shelters and centers must attend to and provide for the needs of unhoused people and others in need of emergency relief, which may or may not receive support from the Austin Resilience Network. This response does not work in a silo and must be paired with wrap-around service provision throughout transition into shelter to ensure the health and safety of Austinites during inclement weather. Funding for inclement weather support must address: • Model review, expansion, and evolution • Increasing the budget per person for food • Administrative Personnel to ensure clients receive services they are applicable for • Service provider mental health services • General operations expansion • Professional services including but not limited to culturally competent mental health personnel • A dedicated mental health space in each shelter • Supplemental programmatic services • Larger grants to singular grant holders shall have maximum flexibility to distribute funds with only high level reporting requirements to encourage public-private collaborative models and service provision. • Training of Austin & Travis County employees • Supplies neighbors can exit with to transition back to their normality • Improved and expanded transportation to and from camps • Upgraded sleeping supplies • Shelter & Services specifically for families • Wrap around service provision from street to shelter • Transport staffing and alignment
[\$1.5M]	Re-entry Grant Funding Create a grant program to provide funding for community based organizations delivering reentry services to formerly incarcerated residents. Grants should support programs that help people secure stable housing, access employment opportunities, obtain identification and benefits, receive case management, and navigate barriers that often follow involvement with the criminal legal system. Community organizations are frequently best positioned to provide trusted, culturally responsive support that reduces recidivism and strengthens long-term stability.
[\$2M]	Workforce Development Technology Workforce Access and Placement Grants:

	Increase grant funding for community-based organizations, training providers, and workforce intermediaries engaged in skills training, job placement, and professional networking that help low-income Austin residents qualify for and secure good-paying technology jobs. Funding should support efforts to broaden Austin's technology workforce and expand access to career advancement opportunities for residents earning under \$50,000 annually, receiving government assistance, or who lack a high school diploma or college degree. (1 million) Youth Mentorship and Career Connection Grants: Increase grant funding for organizations that mentor young Austinites, connect them with working professionals across industries through internships, fellowships, and direct career exposure, and identify and remove barriers to educational and career success. Priority should be given to programs serving young people earning under \$50,000 annually, from households receiving government assistance, or without a high school diploma or college degree. These programs build long-term pathways to economic mobility through mentorship, hands-on work experience, and professional networks in communities where those opportunities have been hardest to access. Eligible organizations must be headquartered in Austin with a demonstrated track record of serving the target population; have an annual operating budget under \$1 million; and be a community-based, locally operated nonprofit. Applications from organizations whose leadership reflects the communities they serve will receive priority consideration in the scoring process. (\$500,000) Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Career Training Grants: Increase grant funding for organizations providing training, certification, placement, and career readiness programs that connect residents to good-paying jobs in advanced manufacturing and technology sectors. Funding should prioritize pathways into stable, high-demand occupations for workers earning under \$50,000 annually, receiving government assistance, or without a high school diploma or college degree. Eligible organizations must: be headquartered in Austin with a demonstrated track record of serving the target population; have an annual operating budget under \$1 million; and be a community-based, locally operated nonprofit. Applications from organizations whose leadership reflects the communities they serve will receive priority consideration in the scoring process. (\$500,000)
[\$4M]	Emergency Rental Assistance Restore funding for the City's I Belong In Austin (IBIA) emergency rental assistance program and maintain direct rental assistance as a core homelessness prevention strategy. Following post Prop Q budget reductions, Austin reduced funding for rental assistance and shifted remaining resources primarily toward eviction settlements, resulting in the closure of the public rental assistance portal. At a time of rising housing instability and continued eviction pressures, reducing access to direct rental assistance will place more households at risk of displacement and homelessness. Restore funding to the prior \$4 million level and ensure that residents can continue accessing emergency assistance for rent, relocation, storage, and related housing stabilization needs. Emergency rental assistance is one of the most cost-effective tools available to prevent homelessness, reduce displacement, and avoid more expensive

	downstream interventions in emergency response and shelter systems.
[\$300K]	Tenant Education, Stabilization Support, and Community-based Agreement Support Create a new program to provide tenants with education on their rights, assistance with negotiating Tenant Relocation Assistance, including mobile home park redevelopment, and other forms of stabilization support. These new services should be provided in conjunction with legal representation in order to leverage that work and ensure that residents are provided with legally sound advice.
[\$1M]	Solar Incentives to Expand Equitable Access to Rooftop Solar Apply existing Austin Energy incentives for rooftop solar to a residential Solar Standard Offer program, which allows for the deployment of rooftop solar without customer/property owner investment. This will be collected via the Energy Efficiency Services Fee, so there will be no fiscal impact.
[\$500K]	Austin Economic Development for Early Childhood Education and Development: The following are not currently covered by the City of Austin nor Raising Travis County Initiative allocations for the Austin/Travis County Family Child Care Educator Network (formerly Building Comprehensive Network)(FCCE): • \$75K Sustained funding for the Austin/Travis County Family Child Care Educator Network (Austin/Travis County FCCE Network) partnership with HomeGrown to support strategies for home-based child care • \$325K Implementation of a direct assistance program pilot for childcare providers Partner with HomeGrown Thriving Providers Project to address the economic instability of home-based child care providers caused by low wages for their care work and Austin’s affordability crisis. ○ Focuses on those providing FFN relative care (family members caring for children to whom they are related) ○ Provides economic support and pathway to become listed providers • \$100K for Program Coordinator role at Austin Economic Development to sustain the City’s commitment to home-based child care and to build partnerships to ensure the impactful network implementation already begun is fully realized.
[\$260K]	Fully Fund Austin Police Oversight Restore and fund the positions lost in the prior budget cycle to ensure Austin Police Oversight has the staffing capacity necessary to fulfill its mission of independent accountability and public transparency. Adequate staffing is essential for data analysis and distribution, timely complaint intake, case tracking, community engagement, policy review, and responsive service to residents navigating the oversight process. Without sufficient personnel, delays increase, transparency suffers, and public trust is undermined.
[\$3M]	Family Stabilization Grant [\$3M] reinstate funding and continuation of existing criteria, including those with families. Funding for the Family Stabilization Grant needs to be moved to the Austin Public Health base budget: • Permanent allocation of at least \$1.3 million or more towards Family

	Stabilization Grants in the budget ○ Ideally, increase to \$3 million increase to \$3 million to meet greater needs and higher cost of living in Austin ● Recommendation to prioritize families with children birth to three years of age as a potential strategy for getting it reinstated where there may be some reluctance to continue it more broadly
[\$1.57M]	Austin Public Health Restore Austin Public Health funding to Fiscal Year 2025 levels and increase investment for continued immigrant supports: ● \$570K legal representation services ● \$250K mental health services \$750K Implementation of climate resilience and disaster preparedness commitments Investment in Austin Public Health (APH) is critical to fulfill the city's commitments to better prepare for disasters, enhance equitable emergency response, and leverage trusted relationships between Community Health Workers (CHWs) and communities to ensure public health interventions are accessible and effective in reducing harm and saving lives. Austin Public Health seeks to expand the role of CHWs in emergency preparedness and response. This initiative will strengthen APH's Community Health Worker Hub (CHW Hub) and the Community Health Worker Alliance of Central Texas (CHW ACT) to develop a transformative, data-driven community education and preparedness training. Using an all-hazards approach, CHWs will enhance community preparedness, response, and recovery efforts through: 1. Swift and Safe Deployment – Ensuring the rapid mobilization of CHWs to high-need areas in Austin/Travis County using best practices and a data-driven approach. 2. Community Needs Identification – Leveraging CHWs' expertise to assess and address the immediate public health needs of at-risk populations, fostering resilience and recovery. 3. Austin Resilience Network (ARN) Integration – Strengthening Austin's Resilience Network (ARN) by linking affected residents with city and community resources that help them prepare for, endure, and recover from disasters. The ARN provides a flexible and equitable model for resilience, expanding the capacity of previous Resilience Hub efforts. 4. CHW Safety – Providing the necessary resources and training to protect CHWs during emergency outreach operations. To implement this initiative effectively, we urge funding to support the following positions:

	• 4 Community Health Worker III positions: Community Health Workers (CHWs) will be trained using an APH-developed curriculum that covers climate change, climate health equity, and community resilience. By hiring and training CHWs directly from historically marginalized communities, this initiative enhances equity and cultural competence, fostering trust and engagement. CHWs can play a critical role in preventing loss of life by reaching communities most vulnerable to climate change, addressing misinformation, and strengthening resilience through culturally responsive communication and support. • 1 Training Specialist Sr position: Essential in developing a comprehensive, all-hazards curriculum that equips CHWs with the knowledge and skills needed to address climate change, health equity, and community resilience. • 1 Emergency Plans Officer Sr position: Will assist in the development and implementation of technical systems, support operational readiness, and ensure an effective community education and preparedness campaign. The position will also collaborate with the Austin Public Health's (APH) Community Health Worker Hub (CHW Hub) and the Community Health Worker Alliance of Central Texas (CHW ACT) to transform community health education and emergency preparedness efforts. • 1 Public Health Nurse position: Will play a vital role in supporting response and recovery initiatives by providing direct healthcare services during emergencies. Their expertise will enhance emergency preparedness efforts by offering vaccines, conducting health assessments, and addressing urgent medical needs in affected communities. Working alongside Community Health Workers, the PHN will ensure a coordinated approach to public health outreach, helping to prevent disease outbreaks, provide critical health education, and support community resilience in the aftermath of disasters. Their presence will strengthen APH's ability to deliver timely, equitable, and accessible healthcare services when they are needed most.
[\$2.3M]	Community Coalition Crisis Response Program While COVID caused multiple closures of supportive services during critical times it also allowed for the evolution of a local, community driven coalition model that currently engages 100s of volunteers from local neighborhoods, restaurants and communities to collaborate in an effort to support the most marginalized during Texas' inclement weather crisis. A multi-year fund directly supporting the efforts of the coalition that currently provide direct outreach, community engagement, shelter-in-place support, and crisis response services to vulnerable communities during emergencies and inclement weather conditions. Prioritize community based organizations, separate from shelters, to ensure assistance can be provided even when shelter thresholds have not been met. Funding should support collaboration and community-driven neighborhood efforts including the engagement of local churches and privately owned & operated warming centers and pop-up shelters with annual budgets of \$250,000 or less. These current efforts support an additional 1,000 people during winter storms, hail, floods, heat warnings, and weather crises.

	Model Expansion: \$150,000 -- This allocation will support a current model review and multi-year expansion to include measurable outcomes and engagement, to include ongoing assessments of access to needs and supplies including basic needs, and the establishment of a mentorship program pairing experienced organizers with newcomers to foster knowledge exchange and capacity building within the community-led response network. Community Collaborative Preparation Efforts, Supply Drives & Meals: \$200,000 -- Funding to support community-led efforts in preparing for crises, including: • organizing supply drives for essential items such as blankets, food, water, hygiene products, and other necessities • purchasing preparation supplies for shelter-in-place support, including sleeping bags, tarps, and meals for individuals facing crises or inclement weather conditions • engaging local restaurants & businesses in providing donations & on site support • Expansion of storage of shared supplies Capacity Building for Collaborative Organizations: \$250,000 Funds dedicated to providing support growth among neighborhood organizations dedicated to providing their neighbors with support during crises, increasing access to food & services. Prioritize organizations with annual budgets of \$250,000 or less. Temporary Shelters & Mobile Services Stations: \$250,000: Budget for establishing, re-establishing and maintaining temporary and mobile warming/cooling stations and pop up shelters in locations accessible to vulnerable communities, providing a safe haven during crises or inclement weather. This includes support in re-engaging churches & previous safe havens closed due to Covid. Personnel, Training, and Education for Community-Led Shelters: \$150,000 -- Allocation for hiring personnel, such as part-time employees (PTEs), and providing training and education for community members involved in operating and managing community-led shelters and warming centers.
[\$3M]	Survivor Support and Shelter Stability Provide grant funding to stabilize and expand funding for shelters and community-based organizations that provide services to survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and family violence. These services are essential to public safety and public health. Shelters in Austin serve hundreds of survivors and children at any given time, and without sufficient funding, families fleeing violence may be forced to remain in dangerous situations or face homelessness. Funding should prioritize organizations providing emergency shelter, transitional housing, legal advocacy, counseling, and wraparound services to ensure survivors have a safe pathway to stability.
[\$300K]	Prepared Meals Include funding for prepared meals in the City's safety net funding to address people with disabilities and older adults in order to serve these growing populations. Prepared meals allow people to remain in their home when they are not able or no longer able to prepare them. These meals can serve as an upstream solution to persons becoming unhoused or needing to move to a group home. Other government funds that have traditionally supported the delivery of prepared meals to our most vulnerable adults have been cut.

[\$600K]	Austin Public Health - Maternal Health Grants Grant funding to expand access to vital reproductive healthcare through perinatal services and the addition of four full-time doulas to our community. These services reduce infant and maternal mortality and improve health outcomes. Any investment in reproductive health care access will also reduce the need for more costly emergency interventions later on, it is critical to our sustainability as a community.
[\$500K]	Violet Keepsake Storage Increase funding for the Violet KeepSafe Storage program to expand access to secure storage for people experiencing homelessness. Operated through the Austin Community Court, Violet KeepSafe provides free storage for vital documents, identification, medications, work equipment, clothing, bedding, family keepsakes, and other personal belongings that are often essential to securing employment, accessing services, and transitioning into stable housing. The existing Violet Keepsake Storage program has been at capacity for years, meaning people whose encampments are swept have nowhere to store their belongings and they lose everything.
[\$1M]	Supportive Services at City-Owned Housing Properties Provide \$1 million in recurring funding for supportive services at City-owned housing properties, including properties such as Spring Terrace and Arbor Terrace, that serve residents exiting homelessness, Permanent Supportive Housing clients connected through Coordinated Entry, and deeply affordable housing residents at risk of homelessness. These services are essential to helping residents remain stable, healthy, connected to care, and housed. Residents in these properties often have significant needs related to housing stability, behavioral health, benefits access, healthcare navigation, and crisis prevention. Without ongoing supportive services, residents are more likely to become destabilized, increasing the risk of housing loss, emergency system involvement, and returns to homelessness. Recurring funding will help ensure that City-owned housing assets are paired with the services necessary to fulfill their public purpose: keeping vulnerable Austinites safely and stably housed.
[\$7M]	Cost of Living Adjustment for City Workers Austin cannot provide high-quality public services without retaining the workers who make those services possible. The budget should continue to prioritize cost-of-living adjustments and wage increases for city employees, particularly frontline and lower-paid workers facing rising housing, healthcare, and transportation costs. Competitive compensation reduces turnover, improves service delivery, and recognizes the essential role public workers play in keeping Austin running.
City passed deadline delivery of budget estimate	Joint Emergency Communications Department Austin's emergency communications system should be structured around public safety outcomes, not housed within a law enforcement agency by default. Creating a Joint Emergency Communications Department would allow for a more civilian-led, service-oriented model that better aligns dispatch decisions with the full range of

	emergency responses, including mental health, medical, fire, and non-police interventions. This change would improve accountability, reduce continued issues with emergency response times, and create a more modern emergency response system.
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Endorsing Organizations (more endorsements pending)

Equity Action

Alliance for Safety and Justice (Just Safe)

Crime Survivors Speak

Avow Texas

Jane's Due Process

Students Engaged in Advancing Texas (SEAT)

Austin Area Urban League

Texas Harm Reduction Alliance

Universal Tech Movement

VOCAL-TX

Austin Justice Coalition

Ground Game Texas

Undoing White Supremacy Austin

Austin Community Law Center

Workers Defense Action Fund

Meals on Wheels Central Texas

Texas Civil Rights Project

No ALPRs Coalition

Foundation Communities

Advocates for Social Justice Reform

UpTogether

GO AUSTIN/VAMOS AUSTIN

Lilith Fund

Grassroots Leadership

Hands Off Central TX

Austin Mutual Aid

Finish the Five

United Workers of Integral Care

AFSCME Local 1624

Austin DSA

Community Resilience Trust

Earth Day Austin

Public Citizen

Mama Sana Vibrant Woman

Black Mamas ATX

Partners in Parenting