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 budgeting process*. **The undersigned organizations jointly** urge the following investments in community health, affordability, sustainability and safety for FY24 totaling $98.7 million or 7.5% of this year's roughly $1.3 billion General Revenue budget. This request should be prioritized in the development of the City Manager's Proposed Budget and as Council finalizes it. Austin's **budget is also a reflection of our city's priorities.** Austin should center its community needs in its budget, as articulated below. The undersigned groups ask that City management and elected officials prioritize the community issues listed below, which include but are not limited to, appropriate across the board pay increases for city staff to address inflation, park/youth/family programming, workforce development and services for those most in need. In recognition of the need for equitable resource support we ask that BIPOC led & served organizations be prioritized.

- Parent Support Specialists [$2.4M]
- Tenant Notification & Relocation Assistance Ordinance [$500,000]
- Emergency Rental Assistance, Eviction Defense, and Tenant Legal and Support Services [$16M]
- Inflation Adjustment for City Workers [$4M]
- Ebook Licensing Fees [$1M]
- Workforce Development [$5.9M]
- EMS Wage Increase [$14.7M]
- Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Victim Services [$1.2M]
- Office of Violence Prevention [$500,000]
- Implementation of the Austin Climate Equity Plan [$685,000]
- Park Maintenance, Safety, Equity, and Restoration [$3.9M]
- Carver Library and Museum [$300,000]
- Tenant Education, Stabilization Support, and Community-based Agreement Support [$600,000]
- Displacement Prevention and Reentry Navigators [$1.5M]
- Estate and Probate Planning for Seniors [$300,000]
- Fair Housing Education, Support, and Testing [$500,000]
- Emergency Supplemental Assistance for Low Income Residents [$300,000]
- Inclement Weather Response [$4.5M]
- Crisis Response [$4M]
- Street Outreach Services, Case Managers, and Peer Support Specialists [$4M]
- Project-based Permanent Supportive Housing Voucher [$3M]

- Service funding for Permanent Supportive Housing [$3M]
- Reentry Housing Support [$500,000]
- Austin/Travis Co EMS Community Health Paramedics [$1M]
- Early Childhood Education and Development [$1.25M]
- Resilience Hubs [$4.5M]
- Harm Reduction Services and Infrastructure [$1M]
- Immigration Legal Services for Low Income Families [$1M]
- Equity Office [$800,000]
- Guaranteed Income Program [$3M]
- Logistical Support For Austinites Seeking Abortion Care [$250,000]
- Pregnancy and Infant Care Resources for Pregnant People and New Parents [$250,000]
- Food Sovereignty and Food Systems-Related Funding [$2M]
- Non-congregate Shelter [$11.25M]*

TOTAL REQUEST FOR NEW FUNDS: $98,685,000

Proposal detail

Additional General Fund Amount	**Description**
$2.4 million	**Parent Support Specialists:** Our PSS serve some of our most vulnerable students and their families, often becoming first responders when families face crises. They help get families involved in their students' education, which is tied to increased academic outcomes and student success beyond Austin ISD. This additional CoA funding will help us attract and retain experienced staff who are often a true lifeline for children and their adults, and will allow the district to create leadership pathways among the PSS. It will elevate the base pay to at least $25/hour for 533 PSS and create 16 PSS lead positions at $30/hour. The current funding system is a patchwork of grants and district money that often means job insecurity for the team and uncertainty for campuses and students. Ensuring one funding source that takes into account the rising cost of living in Austin helps us eliminate that uncertainty and retain staff who are vital to student success.

$500,000	**Tenant Notification & Relocation Assistance Program** Tenants are being displaced every day due to increased development, resulting in rapid gentrification and displacement. Austin City Council approved the Tenant Notification & Relocation Assistance Ordinance in 2016, yet funding was never established for the Tenant Notification & Relocation Assistance Program. Invest $500,000 ($2,000/person for up 250 people) in the Tenant Notification & Relocation Assistance Program, to mitigate the harm to communities being displaced.
$16 million	**Emergency Rental Assistance, Eviction Defense, and Tenant Legal and Support Services:** Continue, expand, and build on the I Belong in Austin program that stabilizes tenants by providing emergency rental assistance and assists displaced residents by providing funding for moving costs, storage costs, and legal fees. The program should be adjusted to allow residents moving outside of the City of Austin to utilize funding for moving and storage. It is also critical to align the program and these services for tenants with legal support. While continuing to fund existing programs to provide eviction defense and legal services to tenants, it is critical that the City expand programs to address the vast need for legal services. This includes legal representation for residents who are threatened with an eviction so they can have appropriate legal representation at JP court, but also other forms of legal representation to defend a resident's rights and protect their quality of life.
$4 million	**Inflation Adjustment for City Workers:** City employees continue to work for below market wages and struggle with the increased cost of living in Austin like all workers do. Austin's service departments -- parks, development, health, libraries and more -- cannot function without adequate staffing. Last budget cycle, Austin improved wages for the lowest wage workers and those positions are getting filled but low wages for the rest of city staff continue to result in vacancies in critical areas where we need to be serving our community. Citywide, employees require a 2% increased cost of living adjustment in '23-'24 in addition to the 3% projected in the baseline budget.
$1 million	**Ebook Licensing Fees:** The library system is feeling financial pressures related to e-books due to high licensing fees for every time an e-book is accessed. Funding would help libraries meet the demand for popular e-books.

$5.9 million	**Workforce Development:** Provide funding for programs focused on: ● technical certifications and guaranteed employment programs ● soft skills development ● apprenticeships and on-the-job experience ● mentorship ● developing industry acumen ● building social capital ● schooling needs and vocational scholarship to the students who are homeless or live below the poverty line ● opportunities of entrepreneurship, technology and manufacturing jobs Continue and expand funding for mentoring to connect students with Black professionals. Ensuring organizations have the funding they need to expand workforce development programs, we can support the City of Austin's Master Workforce Plan. Program goals must include: ● empowering Black Austinites through leadership development, community engagement, and increased civic awareness. With a goal of developing and supporting exceptional Black leaders, and providing opportunities for them to make a positive impact in our community, we are requesting $500,000 be allocated toward this effort. This will help to strengthen our city and shift the narrative of Austin's growing racial divide; ● improving employment outcomes for persons with criminal histories through strategies of enhanced collaboration, employment assessments, and job development. We are requesting $250,000 be allocated toward this effort.
$14.7 million	**EMS Wage Increase**: Paramedics are understaffed *and* the lowest paid of our public safety workers. APD funding consisted of 35% of overall '22-'23 General Funds, AFD at 18%, and EMS at a mere 9%, despite the ever-increasing need for EMS 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. The Public Safety Commission recommends pay parity with police and fire and this figure represents pay parity.
$1.2 million	**Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Victim Services:** Replace grant funding from the US DoJ with permanent local funding to

	cover coordination, forensic technical review services, victim/survivor counseling and related activities. These City of Austin contract employees should be employees of nonprofits that guarantee confidentiality and privilege with survivors that is not available to City employees. This funding should aid clients in securing housing, accessing job training, mental health support, financial support, and a resource network. A portion of this funding should also be allocated specifically to support victims who are immigrants.
$500,000	**Office of Violence Prevention** (OVP): The City should expand the Office of Violence Prevention's violence interrupter program to better prevent interpersonal and community harm and improve public safety in Austin.
$685,000	**Implementation of the Austin Climate Equity Plan:** ● **Sustainable refrigerant oversight and management ($50K):** Office of Sustainability to contract with an entity to conduct an inventory of refrigerants at facilities and develop a plan to manage those refrigerants responsibly on an ongoing basis, and develop a plan and develop recommendations for programs, policies and other strategies to address refrigerant leakage and proper disposal in the Austin community. ● **Sustainable purchasing ($100k):** Central Procurement to write a contract to develop an updated sustainable purchasing plan for the City. ● **Explore sustainable funding ($200k):** Financial Services to pursue a contract with a sustainable finance consultant to assist the City to identify, assess and pursue high-potential funding opportunities and novel finance mechanisms, including through the possible creation of a new climate-related infrastructure finance authority or regional climate funding collaborative. ● **Multimodal Equity Ambassadors ($35k):** provide an annual $3K stipend for 11-12 Ambassadors to assist in the equitable implementation of the ATXWalkBikeRoll plan. ● **Make the Climate Equity Engagement Associate in the Office of Sustainability a permanent position. ($100k)** ● **One additional FTE within the Purchasing Department** to serve as a Sustainable Purchasing Manager to oversee development of and ongoing implementation of the sustainable purchasing plan. **($100k)**

	• **One additional FTE to the Office of Sustainability** to oversee and pursue sustainable funding and finance mechanisms to enable the City to tap into multiple sources of funding to implement the ACEP, including grants and competitive funding opportunities, philanthropic funds, green bonds, and new federal funding sources for climate action, including the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the federal Inflation Reduction Act. **($100k)**
$3.9 million	**Park Maintenance, Safety, Equity, and Restoration**: 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, adding hours, and continuing funding for Cities Connecting Children to Nature. • 3 FTE collaborative Program Coordinator Positions in the PARD Museums and Cultural Programs Division to be formally called -- Wellness and Food Security Program Coordinators or informally Garden Coordinators. • Park reforestation and habitat restoration, consistent with Climate Equity Plan, to include engagement with volunteers. • A cost-benefit study to determine the cost of converting PARD temporary workers at 30-40 hours per week to FTEs. This study will include looking at the risks that uninsured workers take on themselves, the services costs (utilities including electricity and internet costs, computer maintenance, vehicle maintenance, and fuel) temporary and other workers provide and City benefits of the work of the temporary workers. If a person is working at least 30 hours a week for the City, they should have access to health benefits, time offer and other core benefits, regardless of department.
$300,000	**Carver Library and Museum:** 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 temporary 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.)
$600,000	**Tenant Education, Stabilization Support, and Community-based Agreement Support:** Create a new program to provide tenants with education on their rights, assistance with formalizing community-based agreement support in the case of redevelopment 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.
$1.5 million	**Displacement Prevention and Reentry Navigators:** Expand the displacement prevention navigator program and make this pilot program permanent. It is critical to connect vulnerable residents to affordable housing opportunities, including expanding the existing pilot program to provide support to justice-involved persons to address their unique hardships in the housing market. The displacement prevention navigators help connect vulnerable residents to services and programs in a culturally-competent and community-focused manner with the aim of community stabilization. The City should expand on the program funded last year, partner with organizations doing similar work currently, and provide this service in additional neighbors that are vulnerable to gentrification. In addition it is critical to provide support to justice-involved persons for reentry into the housing market, including maintaining a list of landlords willing to lease and work with justice-involved persons. Displacement prevention and reentry navigation services must include community connectors that conduct outreach and education but also navigators that can provide enrollment support for affordable housing and reentry programs. The City should explore opportunities to partner with community-based organizations to provide services for displacement prevention and reentry support, specifically organizations that have expertise in these areas.
$300,000	**Estate and Probate Planning for Seniors:** Create a new program to provide low and moderate income homeowners with estate and probate planning to help stabilize communities and protect

	intergenerational wealth. This new program would ensure that elders in BIPOC communities have access to estate planning services in their lifetime and heirs can manage an intestate probate process.
$500,000	**Fair Housing Education, Support, and Testing:** City funds should be utilized to provide education and support to residents regarding fair housing to ensure that residents are aware of their rights and can fight back against racism and discrimination in the housing market. This funding should include resident education and outreach, supporting residents in investigating and reporting violations, and fair housing testing. The latter involves individuals acting as prospective clients in the housing market to proactively test whether they are illegally being discriminated against based on race, ethnicity, or other characteristics protected under fair housing law. Considering previously available federal funding for this purpose may become unavailable, it is critical for the City to fund such services to protect resident rights.
$300,000	**Emergency Supplemental Assistance for Low Income Residents:** City funds should be designated to launch a pilot program that provides emergency gap funding to lower income families that earn less than 60% Median Family Income and are experiencing hardships. Many low income families may be one hardship away from losing housing or other basic needs and it is critical to fill this gap. These funds would be a one-time direct cash assistance payment for emergency needs outside of rental, mortgage, or tax payments. These funds can be used to supplement losses due to a hardship or be used to cover emergency household expenses.
$4.5 million	**Inclement Weather Response:** The City should fund an additional $4.5 million in addition to the current $1.2 million currently allocated for inclement weather response. Significant gaps remain in service provision during inclement weather. These gaps include the direct outreach to neighbors in need, operations, 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 to care through grants to community-based organizations. These shelters and a larger multi-tiered weather response model work in collaboration with Resilience Hubs. 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 Resiliency Hubs. This response does not work in a silo and must be paired with wrap around service provision in and outside the 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 ● Materials related to weatherization ● Administrative Personnel to ensure clients receive services they are applicable for ● Service provider mental health services ● General operations ● Professional services including but not limited to culturally competent mental health personnel ● A dedicated mental health space in each shelter ● Supplemental programmatic services ● Collaborative models and service provision — which shall include a mix of grants (in amounts, purview, and reporting requirements) to organizations working in collaboration. Larger grants to singular grant holders shall have maximum flexibility to distribute funds with only high level reporting requirements to ensure money is distributed efficiently. ● 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 ● Capacity building for community-based organizations doing the work ● Wrap around service provision from street to shelter ● Transport staffing
$2.6 million	**Crisis Response:** To address the gap that exists between the crisis response services the CoA provides and existing needs, the City

	must provide additional grant funding to support the multiple community organizations providing direct outreach & shelter-in-place support during crises and inclement weather. Since Winter Storm Uri, it is evident that the majority of our unsheltered community is unable to access the Inclement Weather Shelter (IWS) system. As we build capacity in the Inclement Weather Shelter (IWS) system, it is critical to support and fund current community-led Crisis Response for our vulnerable communities who are living unsheltered. The City's reliance on community-led organizations for shelter-in-place support, temporary shelters and mobile warming stations that typically serve an additional five hundred (500) people. Thus, in addition to existing inclement weather shelter resources, funding must be provided to other community-based organizations to fill the gap, particularly those already doing this without City funding. It is necessary that in disbursing these funds, priority is given to organizations that effectively collaborate and support community-led warming centers and pop-up shelters. Funding would be used to provide: ● Community collaborative preparation efforts & supply drives ● Preparation supplies for Shelter in Place support & meals ● Temporary Shelter supplies including meals ● Temporary shelters & mobile warming stations ● PTE's & training community led shelters
$4 million	**Street Outreach Services, Case Managers, and Peer Support Specialists:** The City must invest in a significant increase in funding to expand the case management workforce if we wish to truly address homelessness. Currently, people experiencing homelessness face a six-month waiting list to access case management services. Case managers across Austin are facing caseloads upwards of 25 people at a time. These funds should be utilized to ensure an increase in traditional case managers available in traditional social service settings, as well as a significant investment in street-based outreach teams that are rooted in a peer outreach model. The City must provide low-barrier funds for teams of people with lived experience with homelessness, mental health support, substance use, and incarceration to reach folks and provide connections to housing and case management.
$3 million	**Project-based Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Voucher:** Funding must be dedicated to the City of Austin Housing Trust Fund

	for project-based vouchers. Such funding allows for the creation of PSH units tied to a specific site, which increases the city's desperately needed PSH capacity while avoiding the pitfalls of scatter-site housing and tenant-based voucher programs in a tight housing market with frequent experiences of income discrimination.
$3 million	**Service Funding for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** As new PSH units come online, the City should set aside dollars to cover the operating and service costs for units. These dollars will need to be expanded in the future and other funding sources identified to support all the PSH units coming online within the next several years. It is crucial that PSH units come paired with appropriate funding for operations and support services.
$500,000	**Reentry Housing Support:** The city must provide funding to support justice-involved persons in accessing the housing market by providing support for them in addressing the unique hardships they face when searching for housing. This includes financial assistance for justice-involved persons with paying deposits and fees required to access housing upon reentry.
$1 million	**ATCEMS Community Health Paramedics:** To address opioid epidemic, mental health first response, and non-emergency medical calls that do not require an entire ambulance.
$1.25M	**Early Childhood Education and Development:** Support home-based registered child care providers and licensed Family, Friend, Neighbor (FFN) caregivers with professional development and economic relief to address concerns about lack of access to retirement and family leave support during emergencies. Direct assistance to 75 home-based registered and FFN providers + Austin Public Health operational costs. [$1M] Establish an Early Childhood Advisory Council for the Mayor's Child Care Initiative consisting of providers, inclusive of home-based registered child care providers and licensed Family, Friend, Neighbor (FFN) caregivers and parents to share their lived experience, expertise, and needs to inform the priorities of the initiative. [$250,000]

	Invest: ● $200,000 to stipend EC Advisory Council participants ● $50,000 for operating support
$4.5 million	**Resilience Hubs**: 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 2024 to create five hubs. 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. When resilience hubs are used as heating/cooling centers to address heat mitigation priorities, resource them with funding to provide extended hours and family-friendly environments, and stock them with basic needs items, shelf-stable food and diapers, and other critical needs. In addition, at those sites ensure there are dedicated bilingual staff members who are informed about weather conditions and social service supports for residents who come there. The City ***must*** invest at least $4.5M to address the funding transition from ARPA Funds to the City's base budget.
$1 million	**Harm Reduction Services and Infrastructure:** Opioid use and overdose deaths have reached epidemic proportions in the U.S., and Texas is no different. Here in Travis County, there were 118 fentanyl deaths in the first six months of 2022 — the same number as all of 2021. People who inject drugs are also at significant risk of experiencing new incidences of HIV and Hepatitis C. Harm reduction relies on evidence-based practices and practical tools to reduce the risk of fatal overdose and complications from drug use through non-judgmental care and support. Austin has only one comprehensive harm reduction program, primarily serving Austin's unhoused community, and offering drop-in and outreach services including overdose reversal medication (naloxone) and training, wound care, recovery coaching, referrals to HIV and HCV testing, substance use treatment, housing and other services.

	Since the investments from 2020, the need for harm reduction services has grown considerably as overdose deaths and homelessness increase. Additional funds are needed to meet the growing demand for services with additional staff, operating hours 7 days per week, and expanded services. Not only is an increase in overdose reversal and prevention supplies needed, but low-barrier and needs-based implementation efforts need to be prioritized, as do the grassroots organizations led by the people who are most directly affected
$1 million	**Immigrant Legal Services for Low Income Families:** Dedicated immigrant legal services to low-income immigrants in Austin to address the rising number of individuals and families seeking services for deportation defense. These services include, but are not limited to, legal representation, Pro Se representation, and community outreach to ensure as many people in need of these services are able to access them.
$800,000	**Equity Office:** The CIB assumes and supports continuing the Equity Office at current $2.9M funding levels and adding $800k to ensure that it can expand its work guiding major departments like PARD in planning and implementing improved East side services while continuing PISAB Undoing Racism and other anti-racism trainings for city staff and community members.
$3 million	**Guaranteed Income Program:** Expand the Guaranteed Income program, invest: ● $2M to maintain service levels as currently served in Fiscal Year 2023 for 135 households, at $12,000/household + $1M in operating support
$250,000	**Logistical Support for Austinites Seeking Abortion Care:** With one of the nation's most severe abortion bans in effect in Texas, Austinites seeking abortion care must travel hundreds or thousands of miles to other states where abortion is legal. Additional City funding of $250,000 can support Austinites traveling to access abortion care, including support for airfare, gas reimbursements, hotel stays, ride shares, childcare stipends, and food. Now in its third year, this funding was limited last year to support with education and outreach for contraception and reproductive health care. Austinites seeking abortion care in other states need support from the City and current funding is not sufficient.

$250,000	**Pregnancy and Infant Care Resources for Pregnant People and New Parents:** Pregnant people and new parents in Texas need ongoing and tangible support in the form of pregnancy resources and infant care items. In light of Texas's near-total ban on abortion and persistently high maternal mortality rates, these resources are more important than ever. We recommend increased funding to existing Austin Public Health programs that support pregnant people, parents, and children.
$2 million	**Food Sovereignty and Food Systems-Related Funding:** There is a need for more support for Black and Brown people working in food production, education and retail, as this space is overrepresented by the non-BIPOC population. As our city only produces about 10% of our food, partnered with a growing population, funding for local food production within the context above is vital to achieving Austin's sustainability goals. Funding should be allocated to business development support for local food growers and retailers, training restaurants on local food procurement, creative programs that integrate food banks and food access with community building like the "kid's cafe" after-school programs, congregate meal programs, pop up farmers' markets to expand access and more.
$11.25 million*	**Non-congregate Shelter:** City funding should support services for a minimum of 500 new non-congregate shelter beds. Non-congregate shelters are nationally recognized to provide better health and safety outcomes for clients, and are thus a HUD requirement for HOME-ARP and other federal funding sources. The City of Austin should follow suit by providing non-congregate shelter options and respective services, including an expansion of respite care beds and safe shelter spaces exclusively for LGBTQIA+ populations, women, families with children, and people seeking protection from domestic violence.

*Since the beds have not yet been created by the City, this funding should be utilized as beds come online. Depending on when the beds are available, the cost in the '23-'24 fiscal year could range from $7.5 million to $15 million.

Endorsing Organizations

ACLU of Texas
Alliance for Safety and Justice
Austin Area Urban League
Austin Community Law Center
Austin Environmental Democrats
Austin Justice Coalition
Austin Mutual Aid
Austin Young Democrats
Austin Urban Technology Movement
Avow
Black Lives Veggies
Black Mamas ATX
Community Resilience Trust
Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice
District 5 for Black Lives
East Austin Conservancy
Education Austin
Equity Action
Fruitful Commons
Fund Texas Choice
Go Austin / Vamos Austin
Grassroots Leadership
Ground Game Texas
Hungry Hill Foundation
Just Liberty
Lilith Fund
M.I.S.M.A.
Planning Our Communities
PODER
Pro Choice with Heart
Public Citizen
Save Our Springs Alliance
Sierra Club, Austin Regional Group
Statewide Leadership Council
Sunrise Movement Austin
Survive2Thrive Foundation
Sustainable Food Center
Texas Center for Justice & Equity
Texas Fair Defense Project
Texas Harm Reduction Alliance
Texas Women's Justice Coalition
The NICE Project
Tomorrow's Promise Foundation
Undoing White Supremacy Austin
University Democrats
Zilker Neighborhood Association

Resolutions of Support from:

- **Public Safety Commision**
- **Environmental Commission**
- **Joint Sustainability Committee**