

Encampment Management Prioritization Initiative

Public Health Committee Update

David Gray, Director



Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations
December 3, 2025

Our Vision:

Everyone has
access to stable
housing and the
support they
need to thrive.



What we'll cover:

- Background and context
- Goals of the initiative
- Departments involved
- Process overview
- Ongoing efforts
- Final outcomes
- Financial impacts
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations
- Q&A



Why Now?

- Central Texas weather is unpredictable.
- The risk of wildfire, floods, and severe winter weather increases during the fall and winter.
- Travis County and the City of Austin announced disaster declarations in October.
- AHSO saw a need to get ahead of severe weather risks by proactively connecting people with resources and shelter and removing debris from public spaces.



Goals of the Initiative



Ensure unhoused Austinites receive the services they need



Shelter placement ahead of potential wildfire or severe weather



Restore public spaces through focused cleanup operations across high-impact areas



Provide for the safety and security of all involved: individuals being served, City staff, and the public

Goals of the Initiative



Maintain communication and situational awareness throughout the operation through tracking and reporting



Keep City leadership and key stakeholders informed



Maintain transparency with the media and the public, and ensure consistency in communications across departments



Limit the impact to ongoing City services

Citywide Approach

First Touch/ Outreach/ Service Connections

- Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations
- Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services
- Austin Animal Services

Operational Security

- Austin Police

Cleanup Operations

- Austin Resource Recovery
- Austin Transportation and Public Works
- Austin Watershed Protection
- Austin Parks and Recreation

Planning and Logistics

- Austin Emergency Management

Joint Information System

- Austin Communications and Engagement
- Austin 3-1-1
- Austin Government Relations



Process Overview



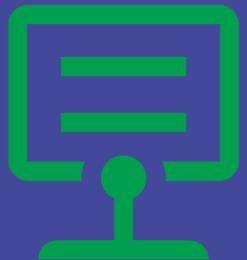
1. Site Identification & Assessment

- Locations prioritized based on health/safety risks, environmental hazards, community reports (via 311), and departmental needs.
- Cross-departmental teams conduct scouting and site assessments.



2. Outreach & Engagement

- AHSO & ATCEMS conduct in-person outreach days or weeks in advance.
- Most individuals receive verbal and written notice **at least 72 hours** before cleanup.
- Outreach teams offer shelter, medical referrals, service connections, and real-time support.
- Engagements include safety checks, case management connections, and barrier assessment.



3. Notice & Preparation

- Notices posted on-site, with date and time of planned operations.
- Individuals informed of property rights and given enough time to gather essential belongings.
- Shelter connection is highly encouraged but not forced.

Process Overview



4. Operational Cleanup

- ARR, ATPW, AWP, and APR crews begin debris removal after notice and outreach.
- Crews engage individuals remaining on-site and re-offer services.
- Property is handled according to City guidance and state law.
 - **Kept:** IDs, medications, tents, bicycles, documents, functional personal items.
 - **Not kept:** Shopping carts, unsafe items, bulk materials, furniture



5. Safety & Security

- APD maintains safety, enforces work-zone perimeters, and ensures compliance with state and local camping regulations.
- Focus is on voluntary compliance.
- Citations or arrests used only when necessary.



6. Environmental Restoration

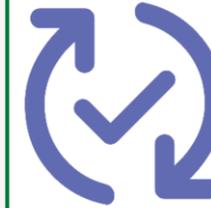
- Debris removal, hazard mitigation, and restoration of waterways, parks, and public rights-of-way.
- Encampment sites revisited multiple times to ensure they remain clear and safe.

Post Cleanup & Ongoing Management



Property Retrieval & Documentation

- Personal belongings are inventoried as needed and stored for retrieval if not collected on-site.
- Crews document conditions with before and after photos.



Proactive Prevention & Follow-up

- Teams revisit known encampments regularly to prevent re-establishment.
- Residents can report concerns through Austin 3-1-1.
- Continuous canvassing of greenbelts, waterways, parks, highways, and wooded areas.



Integration of Lessons Learned

- Improved coordination.
- Enhanced, service-first pathways.
- Clarification and further definition of procedures.



After-Action Report (In Progress)

- Full findings, metrics, and recommendations delivered to Mayor and City Council.
- Future planning and consideration of regularly scheduled, large-scale operations.

Final Initiative Results

Operational Totals	
Sites Visited	669
Individuals Engaged	1212
Sheltered	181
Connected to Services	87
Returned to Camp	109
Citations ⁺	71
Arrests ⁺⁺	22
Tonnage Collected	731.35

- ✦ Citations issued for:
 - Camping in a public area
 - Possession of drug paraphernalia
- ✦✦ Most arrests were for outstanding warrants

Tonnage by Department	
 Austin Resource Recovery	435.63
 Austin Transportation and Public Works	191.77
 Austin Watershed Protection	103.95

Estimated Financial Impact - \$838,753

Expense / Dept	AHSO	ATCEMS	APD	ARR	ATPW	AWP	APR	AEM	AAS	ACE	Totals
Labor	\$16,879.00	\$56,400.00	\$190,486.00	\$ 129,247.00	\$ 209,803.00	\$ 118,415.00	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 9,243.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 3,380.00	\$ 831,853.00
Operations									\$ 5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00
Other costs									\$ 1,900.00		\$ 1,900.00

Estimated Personnel Impact – 369 Staff

Staffing	AHSO	ATCEMS	APD	ARR	ATPW	AWP	APR	AEM	AAS	ACE	Totals
Employees Involved	6	28	111	80	60	63	9	6	1	3	369

Key Lessons Learned

Dedicated Resources Improve Outcomes	Encampment management is most efficient when staffing, equipment, and shelter capacity are intentionally aligned and focused on this work.
Government Entities Should Work Together	Collaboration from DPS and other state partners would reduce displacement into greenbelts and help maintain access to services.
Earlier Outreach and Engagement	Involving external outreach teams five to six weeks in advance improves likelihood individuals accept support before operations begin.
Refined Reporting Processes	Operational reports should be gathered the within one business day to allow time for complete data review (e.g., tonnage, site completion details).
Standardized Documentation	Crews benefitted from formal, consistent training on photo and field documentation practices.
Media Access Planning	Pre-identifying safe, accessible sites for media visits ensured opportunities for transparent coverage.

Future Recommendations: Standard Operations

Sustain Dedicated Resources:

Maintaining resource levels similar to the three-week initiative would improve outcomes during standard operations.

Expand ATPW Support:

Incorporating the Street & Bridge team, alongside ATPW's TxDOT contract project manager, would strengthen field capacity.

Integrate APR Litter Abatement:

Adding the APR litter abatement team would improve site cleanup and reduce environmental impacts.

Improve Site Access in Sensitive Areas:

Identify access points in locations with environmental constraints to ensure safe use of cleanup equipment (e.g., skid steers).

Ensure Full Departmental Engagement:

Consistent participation from all partner departments is essential for coordinated, effective encampment response.

Upgrade Data & Mapping Tools:

Transition to an ArcGIS-based system for tracking sites and progress, with formal training for all staff entering data.

Future Recommendations: Enhanced Operations

Improved Coordination & Alignment

- Build in a longer lead time (5–6 weeks) to fully integrate outreach before operations begin.
- Conduct more formal site walk-throughs so crews can plan resources, notifications, and sequencing.
- Start with larger or harder-to-access greenbelt sites to allow adequate time for complex cleanups.
- Request earlier input from departments to prevent unexpected late additions.

Improved Advance Safety Planning

- Strengthen coordination between site locations and APD Districts, especially along highway corridors.
- Ensure every field team has APD support during operations.

Improved Team Assignments

- Match staff skills to conditions in the field—for example, prepare ATPW teams for wooded or off ‘right of way’ areas.
- Improve planning for multi-department sites requiring ATPW, Watershed, APR, and ARR collaboration.

Future Recommendations: Enhanced Operations

Improved Training & Operational Standards

- Provide refresher training on distinguishing personal property from debris.
- Offer surge-prep training, including equipment needs and troubleshooting.
- Reduce meeting frequency to streamline daily operations (moving from four to one was effective).

Improved Use of Data and Technology

- Use ArcGIS for real-time site tracking and progress updates, with formal training for crew leads on data entry.

Improved Shelter & Outreach Integration

- Maintain surge elements such as on-demand shelter options at the time of enforcement and a dispatch-style outreach model throughout operations.

Questions?



FY2025

CoC NOFO

DECEMBER 2025



Understanding the FY 2025 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)



Who We Are



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ABOUT ECHO



The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is the **backbone of our community's Homelessness Response System**. As the lead agency for the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care, **we lead and align a coalition responsible for planning and implementing community-wide strategies to end homelessness**. We work alongside people with firsthand experience of homelessness and nonprofit, government, and philanthropic partners to **build a future in which everyone in our community has housing of their choice that provides a foundation for optimal health, success, and stability**. Learn more: austinecho.org



Roles & Process



Austin/Travis County CoC Competition

HUD

- Provides Parameters of CoC Competition Requirements in NOFO
- Scores the collaborative application and reviews the project applications.
- Awards project applications based on a compilation of those reviews. Historically, highest ranked projects are more likely to get awarded

Leadership Council (local CoC Board)

- Creates local funding policies within the HUD NOFO parameters
- Decides who is submitted to HUD by ranking in order of priority for funding

ECHO

- Provides technical assistance to providers and Leadership Council, as well as administrative support for the competition
- Submits on behalf of the CoC the project applications and a collaborative application with narrative and data elements



New Policy Priorities



Federal Guidance for FY2025

Ending the crisis of homelessness on our streets	CoCs expected to direct resources towards outreach, intervention, and assistance consistent with Executive Order on “Ending Crime and Disorder on America’s Streets.”
Prioritizing treatment and recovery	CoCs expected to prioritize projects that provide treatment and services needed to recover and regain self-sufficiency, including on-site treatment and participation requirements in services.
Advancing public safety	CoCs expected to cooperate with law enforcement to advance public safety. HUD cited the Supreme Court decision in <i>Grants Pass v. Johnson</i> as upholding the authority of local governments to prohibit public camping.
Promoting self-sufficiency	CoCs expected to prioritize projects that help lead to long-term economic independence for individuals and families. This would allow them to exit homelessness and prevent future returns to homelessness.
Improving outcomes	CoCs should prioritize projects that promote self-sufficiency, increase employment income over government assistance, and promote treatment and recovery.
Minimizing trauma	CoCs should encourage the use of trauma informed care, ensure safety of program participants, and access to ‘safe, single-sex spaces’ for women.

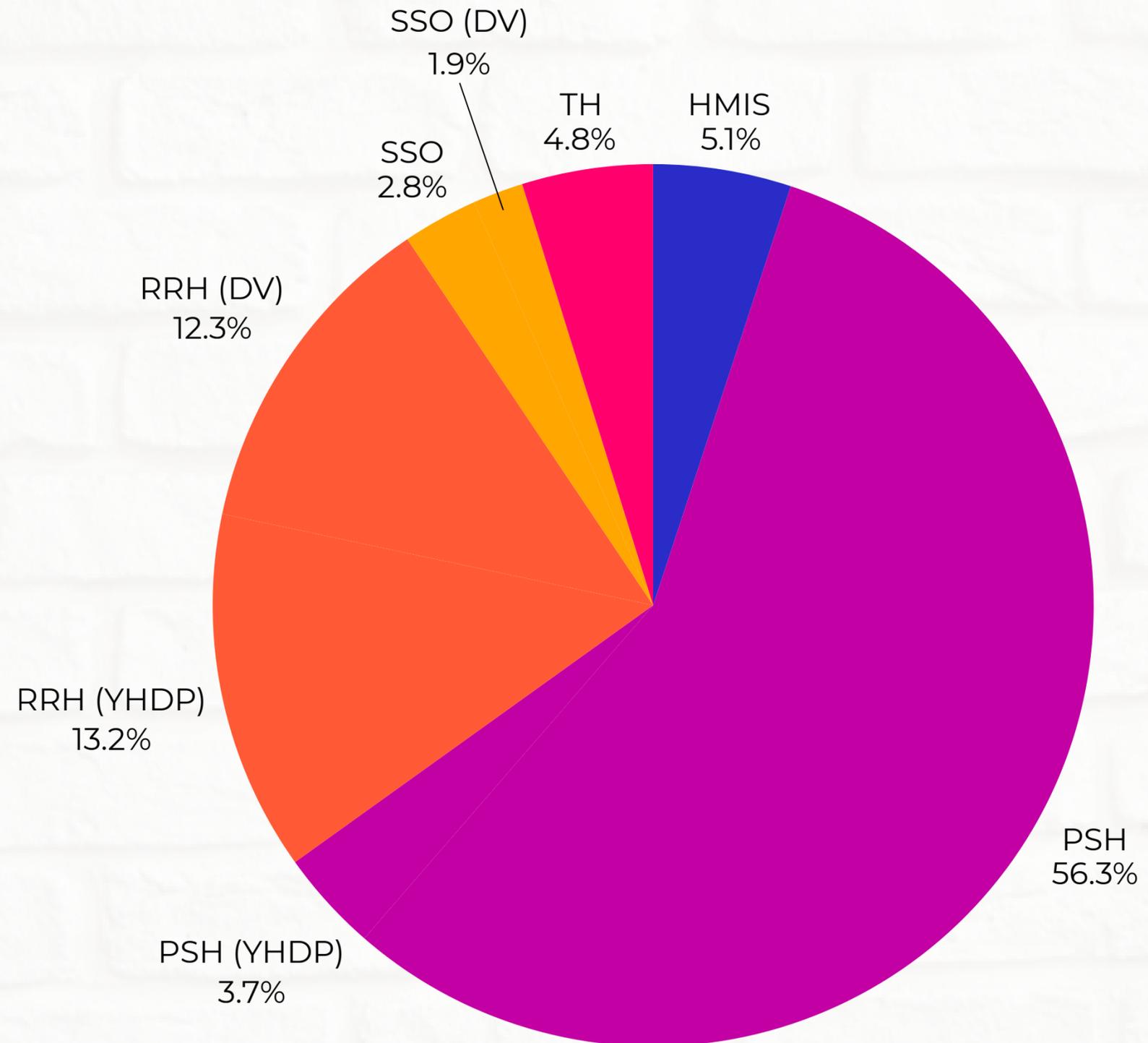


Current Funding



Applicant Name	Project Name	Notes	Project Component	Restriction (DV or YHDP)	Total
ECHO	HMIS Consolidated Renewal FY2024		HMIS		\$679,306.00
Integral Care	CFIV PSH Program	New Project - no waiver yet, site-based	PSH		\$612,448.00
The SAFE Alliance	SAFE Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	Site Based	PSH		\$700,000.00
Integral Care	Kensington PSH 2024	Site Based	PSH		\$297,685.00
Caritas of Austin	My Home	Tenant Based	PSH		\$2,309,606.00
HACA	Onward FY 2024	Integral Care - Service Provider Match, Tenant Based	PSH		\$993,620.00
HATC	Upward	Integral Care - Service Provider Match, Tenant Based	PSH		\$1,518,808.00
Integral Care	Fresh Start FY2024	Tenant Based	PSH		\$606,908.00
LifeWorks	YHDP PSH renewal yr. 2	Tenant Based	PSH	YHDP	\$500,460.00
LifeWorks	LifeWorks CoC PSH transition yr. 1	Tenant Based	PSH		\$523,680.00
The SAFE Alliance	DV Rapid Rehousing Project - Combined		RRH	DV	\$1,645,468.00
LifeWorks	Youth Rapid Re-housing Collaborative - renewal yr. 8		RRH	YHDP	\$1,774,364.00
The SAFE Alliance	SAFE SSO-CE Project		SSO	DV	\$249,761.00
Sunrise Community Church	Sunrise Citywide Coordinated Entry Renewal		SSO		\$370,040.00
The SAFE Alliance	SAFE Supportive Housing Program		TH		\$645,547.00
					\$13,427,701.00

Current Funding



Funding Available



Estimated Annual Renewal Demand (ARD)	\$13,427,701
CoC Planning Grant	\$671,385
CoC Bonus Amount	\$2,685,540
DV Bonus Amount	\$1,219,961
Tier 1	\$4,028,310
Tier 2 - (ARD + CoC Bonus and DV Bonus) minus Tier 1	\$13,304,892



New Requirements



**Historically 90% of our grant was safe and renewed by HUD.
This year, only 30% is safe.**

- *30% cap on Permanent Housing including Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Rapid Rehousing (RRH), and joint Transitional Housing-RRH (TH-RRH)*
- *CoCs will be forced to reallocate any permanent housing in excess of this limit to any other type of project*
- *New PH projects created through reallocation must still be within the 30% limit and meet new project quality and threshold criteria*

Shift in federal priorities

- *Permanent Housing (PSH and RRH) to serve ages 62+, individuals with a physical disability/impairment or a developmental disability (not including substance use disability or mental health diagnosis)*



New Opportunities



New funding is available if we get awarded and can create projects in line with NOFO priorities.

- *\$2.7 million in new “Bonus” funds*
- *\$1.2 million in new “DV Bonus” funds*

We must create:

- *Transitional Housing*
- *Supportive Services Only (SSO)*
 - *Street Outreach*
 - *Coordinated Entry*
 - *SSO Stand Alone (can provide services for non-housing clients)*



Leadership Council Decisions



Leadership Council has decided to prioritize Site Based PSH over Tenant Based, which includes:

- SAFE - \$700K for two PSH sites
- Integral Care - \$298K at the Nellie
- Integral Care - \$612K at Community First! Village
- All RRH will be required to transition to Transitional Housing
 - SAFE - \$1.65M
 - LifeWorks - \$1.78M

Total RRH	\$3,419,832.00
Total PSH (tenant and site-based)	\$8,063,215.00
Site Based PSH Total	\$1,610,133.00
Tenant Based Total	\$6,453,082.00

30% Permanent Housing Cap	\$4,028,310.30
Total RRH and PSH	\$11,483,047.00
Total to Transition/Reallocate	\$7,454,736.70



Other Changes



- *Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) projects are competed*
- *Transitional Housing projects are required to provide 40 hours a week of supportive services*

HUD reserves the right to reduce or reject a project application for the following new reasons:

- *Evidence that the project has previously or currently conducts activities to subsidize or facilitate racial preferences or other forms of illegal discrimination or conducts activities that rely on or otherwise use a definition of “sex other than as binary in humans”*
- *Evidence that the project operates drug injection sites or “safe consumption sites,” knowingly distribute drug paraphernalia, permit the use or distribution of illicit drugs, or conduct any of these activities under the pretext of “harm reduction.”*



Other Changes



Renewals Changing Project Design

- *New Transitional Housing Projects will be required to provide 40 hours of customized supportive services to participants (except for participants over age 62 or with a physical/developmental disability).*
- *New Supportive Services Street Outreach Projects will have to demonstrate a history of working with first responders and law enforcement.*



30% PH Cap



What to know

- HUD will remove or reduce PH projects if the 30% cap is exceeded
- Our CoC must reallocate a portion of existing PH renewal grants into new project types (TH, SSO-SO, SSO, SSO-SS)
- Some renewal projects will need to reapply as New/Transition Projects with a different intervention type to stay in the collaborative application.

Eligible new project types

- Transitional Housing
- SSO-Street Outreach
- SSO-Supportive Services
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Projects
- DV Bonus: new TH and SSO-CE/SSO-SO projects that meet DV Bonus criteria
- PH renewals converting to one of these eligible new project types



Current Efforts



ECHO staff have been educating and providing technical assistance to potential applicants that meet NOFO guidelines.

ECHO staff have been coordinating with the City and other system partners to strategize around maximizing funding gains while minimizing potential harm to clients.



Next Steps



Leadership Council

December 5

- **Due date for Renewals**
 - *Will decide PSH 30% Cap*
 - *RRH*

December 12

- **Due date for New Applications**
 - *All PSH and RRH not included in cap will either:*
 - *Apply for a Transition Grant for Supportive Services Only or Transitional Housing; or*
 - *Decide to Reallocate the Funding (give up the grant and will be available for other new project applications)*

January 14, 2026
Full Applications due to HUD



Next Steps



HRS, Leadership Council, & ECHO

After January 14

- For current PSH projects using the new HUD definition, coordinate to determine pathways for people who may no longer be eligible to stay in PSH
- Create plan for new Transitional Housing programs and determine community referral process

May 2026 (anticipated)

- HUD makes award decisions
- Work with Leadership Council, funders, and policy makers to support people in programs who are impacted; support agencies to shift program models as needed



Q&A



Thank you!

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