



# Homeless Strategies and Operations Update

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Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations | May 5, 2026

David Gray, Director

# City Council Resolutions

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Update Regarding City Council Direction in Resolutions  
No. 20251106-024 and 20251106-025

# Resolution No. 20251106-024

Directs the City Manager to:

- Develop a plan to prioritize, expand, and align the operations of street and community outreach for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Develop a street outreach sequence, aligned with a proposed encampment management sequence, for people experiencing homelessness to gather personal belongings and outreach workers to provide appropriate resources and housing connections
- Develop a process to review and report circumstances when the street outreach and encampment management sequence is not followed for any reason
- Produce a feasibility study to expand the Violet KeepSafe Storage program
- Create a homeless encampment management dashboard and a public reporting dashboard of the performance of service providers



Encampment abatement near critical infrastructure, 2025

# Progress on Resolution No. 20251106-024

## Violet KeepSafe Storage (VKS)

- VKS operates 7 days a week, 7:00am-7:00pm (*closed daily from 11:00am-1:00pm*)
- Employs individuals with lived experience as best practice
- Fiscal Year 2025 Data:
  - 648 VKS participants served
  - 86 average interactions with VKS participants per day
- 2020: Oversight of program shifted to Austin Community Court
  - Unfunded program; absorbed into Community Court due to critical community need
- 2021: Expanded to 7-day operations; increased capacity from 100 to 350 participants
- Expansion underway: Upgraded storage solutions allow for a more accessible and dignified experience; enabled expansion to 400 participants within existing resources in FY 2026
  - Exploring partnership with HSO for additional 50 bins
- Costs for additional locations vary widely and depend on key operational decisions



# Resolution No. 20251106-025

Directs the City Manager to:

- Develop an implementation plan for a homeless encampment management dashboard
- Develop measures of encampment management
- Create a process for the public to report any concerns regarding the general welfare of residents experiencing homelessness and concerns regarding encampments via Austin 3-1-1



Pets & their People are Connected to the Austin Animal Center Homeless Pet Outreach Program, 2025

# Progress on Resolution No. 20251106-025

## Streamlined Austin 3-1-1 Service Request Process

### Current State

- No dedicated Austin 3-1-1 Service Request
- No pathway to request street and community outreach
- No technology platform to synthesize Austin 3-1-1 and other encampment-related data

### Future State

- Dedicated Austin 3-1-1 Service Request will be introduced
- Residents empowered to report encampments and request non-emergency outreach
- Immediate hazards will continue to be routed to 9-1-1
- Austin 3-1-1 data will feed into a homeless encampment management technology solution to guide action and track progress across Austin

### Implementation Status

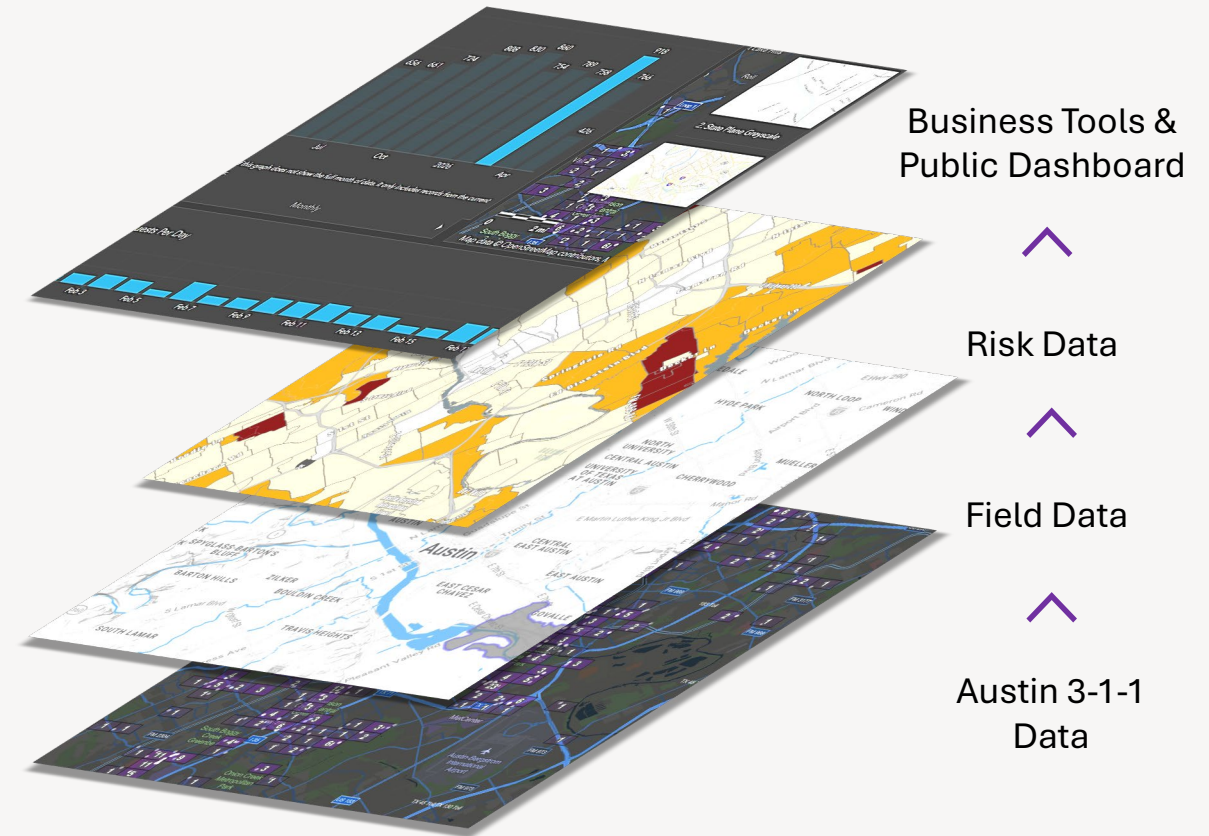
- Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations is working with the Austin Energy 3-1-1 team to develop the new Service Request
- Testing is anticipated later this year before a public launch

# Progress on Resolution No. 20251106-025

## Homeless Encampment Management Dashboard

### Implementation Status

- Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations is collaborating with Austin Technology Solutions, Austin Energy 3-1-1, and a leading Geographic Information Systems vendor to develop a suite of innovative solutions
- The solutions will intake encampment information from Austin 3-1-1, facilitate business processes, and this data will feed into a public-facing dashboard
- Testing is anticipated to begin later this year, and the full solution will roll out simultaneously with the dedicated Austin 3-1-1 Service Request



# Street & Community Outreach

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Overview and Update

# HSO Street & Community Outreach

## Street & Community Outreach (SCO)

Outreach connects unhoused residents to stabilizing systems of care and provides needed resources

### Core Values:

- **Trust:** we build strong relationships with unhoused residents, system partners, and our community
- **Person-Centered:** we meet clients where they are geographically and in life, and honor client motivation and choice whenever possible
- **Wellbeing:** we promote staff work-life balance so outreach professionals can do their best work sustainably



Homeless Outreach Street Team (Integral Care) at Republic Square Park, 2026

# Street & Community Outreach Goals & Activities

**Reduce Morbidity  
& Premature Mortality**

**Identify Pathways to  
Safety and Housing**

**Improve Our Response to  
Unsheltered Homelessness**

**Assess Needs**

HSO SCO will conduct an initial, individualized client needs assessment to identify urgent concerns and prioritize service provision

**Distribute Supplies**

Meet the immediate survival needs of residents experiencing unsheltered homelessness by distributing supplies (hygiene, inclement weather supplies, bus passes, naloxone) in compliance with local and state laws.

**Coordinate Services & Referrals**

HSO SCO staff will connect clients to healthcare resources, navigation, diversion, shelter, and other community assets

**Increase Stability**

Support clients to sustain connection and engagement over time, with the intention of improving quality of life and achieving positive housing outcomes

# Community Collaboration & Partnerships

To ensure an effective and consistent outreach response to unsheltered homelessness, HSO is developing a citywide, coordinated effort with other outreach service providers, including but not limited to the Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST) and Austin Community Court mobile court program.

- **Happening Now - Weekly Coordination Calls**

- A time and place for system partners to share information, resources, and gain knowledge
- HSO SCO is intentionally building relationships, fostering collaboration, and improving the quality of service to clients and our community

- **Summer 2026 - Biweekly Case Conferencing**

- Intended to facilitate collaborative review of clients with complex needs
- Will establish continuity of care, coordinate multi-system intervention, reduce service duplication, and accelerate outcomes

- **Summer 2026 - Monthly Housing “Be On the Look Out” (BOLO) & Engagement Meetings**

- In collaboration with ECHO, these meetings will focus on locating and engaging clients who have been referred to or enrolled in housing programs through the Coordinated Entry process

# Coordination with Homeless Encampment Management

Outreach is a vital step in the homeless encampment management process. SCO staff attend weekly HEM Planning & HEM Logistic meetings to ensure awareness of upcoming encampment abatements, and to schedule engagement of unhoused residents before 72-hour vacate notices are posted. This coordinated approach helps to minimize the destabilizing affects of displacement.

## Geographic Coverage

- The HSO SCO program is comprised of 3 teams, with 2 staff assigned to each
- Coverage will be divided into North, Central, and South areas
- Geographic assignment ensures staff and service provider consistency and enhanced familiarity with partners, neighborhoods, and clients
- Assignment aligns with Homeless Encampment Management's geographic areas



# Public Space Management

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Overview

# Public Space Management Overview

- Works with multiple City Departments and external partners to coordinate encampment responses
- Provides assessment of the homeless encampments on public property in the City of Austin
- Works with City of Austin Code Enforcement when encountering encampments on privately owned property
- Coordinates the clearing and cleaning of encampments



Encampment cleaning in the East Austin area, 2025

# Public Space Management Team

- Goal of clearing and cleaning the location to restore to original condition
- If the encampment has active residents, connect the individuals to outreach for access to resources before any enforcement or cleaning is scheduled
- Once Outreach is complete, the Public Space Management team provides at minimum 72 hours notice of pending closure
- Life & Safety: during disasters, the team is also sent out to assist with notification of potential weather disasters such as flash flooding or high wildfire risk



Homeless encampment located in the East Austin area, 2026

# Homeless Encampment Management

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Overview

# Homeless Encampment Management Overview

## Homeless Encampment Management (HEM)

The HEM process provides a consistent response across the City and help reduce health and safety risks at high-priority sites, while maintaining public spaces and connecting individuals to services.



Homeless encampment in South Central Austin, 2025

# Why HEM Exists

## Proposition B (2021)

- 58% of Austin voters supported making it a criminal offense (Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine) for anyone to sit, lie down, or camp in public areas
- Prop B also prohibits solicitation of money or other things of value at specific hours and locations

## Texas Penal Code 48.05 (2021)

- Creates a statewide Class C misdemeanor for camping in public places without authorization
- Prohibits setting up shelters (e.g., tents, bedrolls) on property managed by local or state entities, allowing law enforcement to issue citations and remove encampments
- Cities are required to comply with the camping ban



South Austin, 2026  
Tents and debris in homeless encampment area

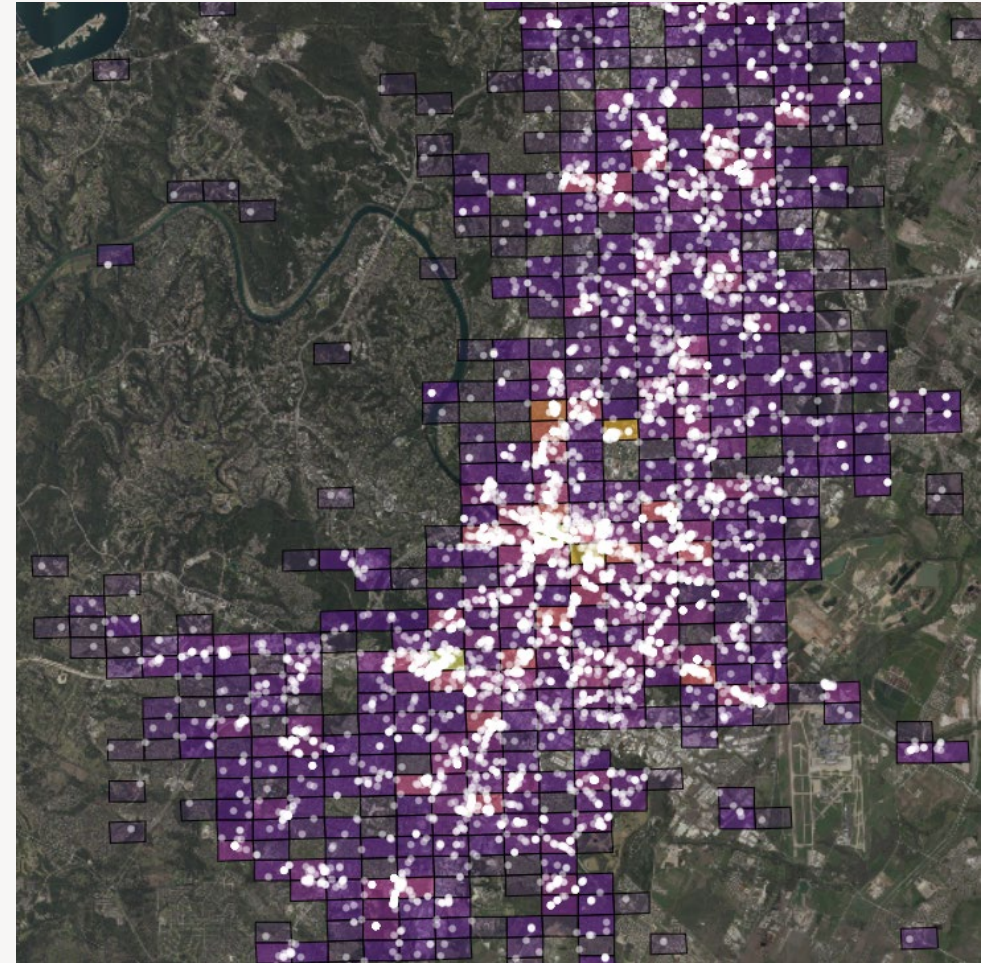
# HEM Process



# Why is there a change in HEM operations?

Previously, HEM operations were three days per week with a focus on one Austin region per day – North, Central or South.

- Insufficient staffing to keep pace with approx. 700 monthly Austin 3-1-1 service requests
- Does not allow crews to consistently follow-up or maintain previously cleaned locations
- Leads to recurring encampment activity
- Little sustainable reduction in risk or hazards
- Erosion of public confidence
- Can't do their best work sustainably



Homelessness-related 3-1-1 Service Requests, 12 months visualized

# What is Changing?

- New structure is launching mid-May 2026.
- Six HEM Teams will work five days per week citywide:
  - **HEM 1 – North Austin** (APD and Austin Resource Recovery)
  - **HEM 2 – Central Austin** (APD and Austin Resource Recovery)
  - **HEM 3 - South Austin** (APD and Austin Resource Recovery)
  - **HEM 4 – Roadways** (APD and Austin Transportation & Public Works)
  - **HEM 5 - Waterways** (APD and Austin Watershed Protection)
  - **HEM 6 – Litter Abatement** (Austin Parks & Recreation)
- Additional departments will provide operational support
  - Homeless Strategies and Operations: Assigns sites to outreach and HEM Teams
  - Emergency Management: Supports day-to-day planning operations, performance tracking, and logistical support
  - Communications and Engagement: Assists with communications to City Council, media, and public



Central Austin, 2026  
Unhoused residents were connected to shelter prior to encampment abatement

# Prioritizing Locations for HEM Baseline Operations

Criteria include:

- Housing-Focused Encampment Assistance Link (HEAL) Initiative sites
- Life safety risk (flood/fire/traffic)
- Austin 3-1-1 service requests and elevations

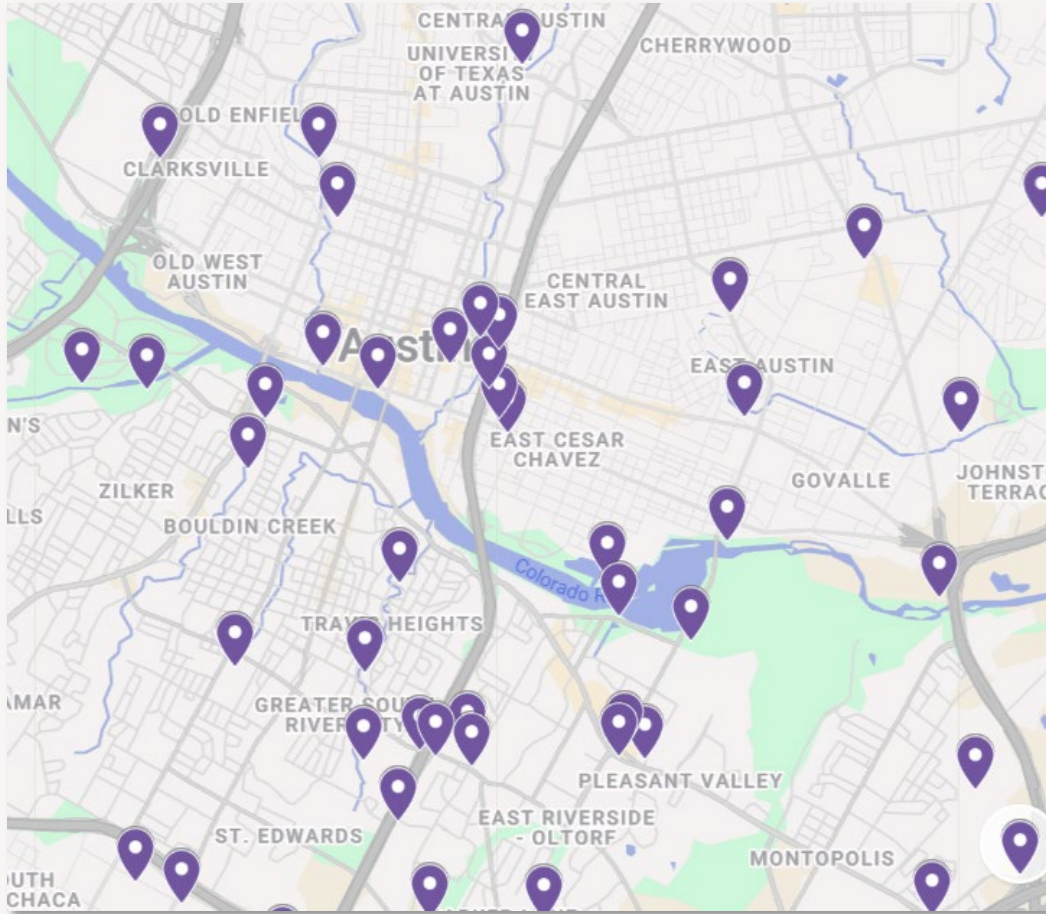
Other factors include, but are not limited to:

- Population health
- Subpopulations (e.g., kids, seniors)
- Proximity to sensitive locations (e.g., schools)
- Environmental impacts and hazards (e.g., fire/flood risk, environmentally sensitivity)
- Number of individuals in campsite
- Illicit activity/behavior

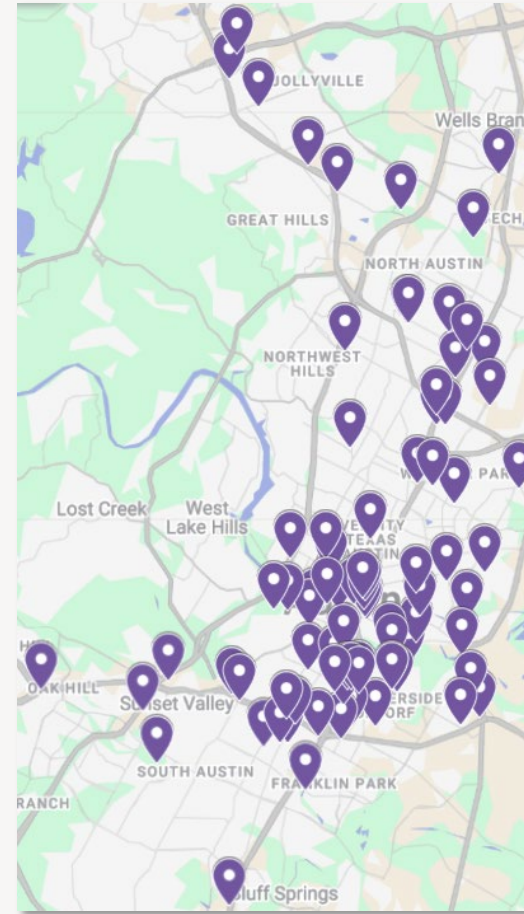


Southeast Austin 2025  
Encampment debris prior to encampment abatement

# Baseline Locations



Central Austin



Citywide



Find the interactive map at [bit.ly/hematx2026](https://bit.ly/hematx2026) or scan the QR code above

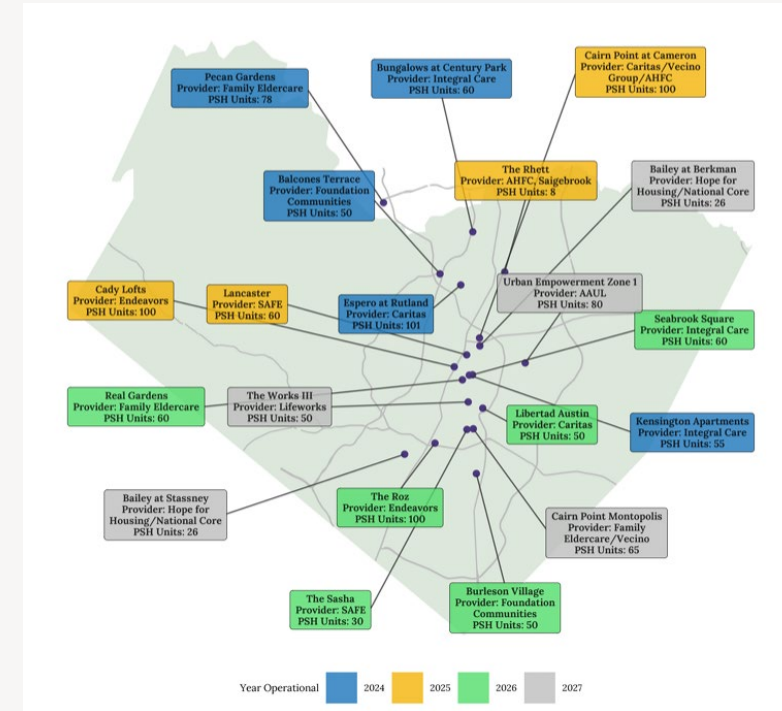
# Performance Metrics

- **Site Visits:** Total number of visits to sites by HEM Teams (include repeated visits)
- **Unique Sites Visited:** Total number of distinct sites visited by HEM teams
- **Debris Removal:** Total amount of debris collected and removed by HEM teams
- **Shelter Connections:** Total number of unique individuals connected to shelter
- **Supportive Services Connections:** Total number of unique individuals connected to supportive services
- **Shelter/Service Acceptance:** Percent of individuals who accept shelter or services
- **Citations:** Total number of unique individuals who receive a citation
- **Arrests:** Total number of unique individuals arrested
- **Workload:** Number of 3-1-1 homeless encampment service requests received
- **Response Timeliness:** Average number of days to respond to 3-1-1 homeless encampment service requests
- **Cost Efficiency:** Average cost per encampment management operation
- **Repeat Activity:** Percentage of encampment sites with repeat activity within 30/60/90 days

# Reaffirming Our Service Commitment

HSO remains committed to expanding services in our community

- City and regional partners increased permanent housing inventory by 630% since 2024
  - City funding (capital, social services, and local housing vouchers) supported 1,122 new units
  - City and County AT-HOME RFP: \$6.7M for supportive services
- HSO shelter capacity is at an all-time high
  - HSO added more than 400 new beds since 2023
  - 100 additional beds expected to open this year at the first phase of the Esperanza Community
  - 325 more beds are expected to open in the next three years at the second phase of the Esperanza Community
- HSO is in the process of opening the South Austin Housing Navigation Center



Permanent Supportive Housing Pipeline. Source: ECHO



# Questions?

# Thank You!

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Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations