

February 04, 2026
Fuentes 1

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The public health committee recommends that the City Council consider and adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, In 2022, Austin Public Health—alongside a diverse coalition of partners—conducted a comprehensive Community Health Assessment (CHA) to examine local health conditions, priorities, and system gaps; and

WHEREAS, the 2022 CHA resulted in the creation of the 2024 Austin Travis County Community Health Improvement Plan's goals, including:

- Goal 1: Increase access to mental healthcare for Austin/Travis County residents;
- Goal 2: Prioritize Substance Use Disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery; and
- Goal 3: Increase connectivity and safety in low-income communities, communities of color and other communities that have faced significant collective and systemic barriers to improve the neighborhood and built environments for Austin and Travis County residents; and

WHEREAS, the City's 2025- 2026 Strategic Plan includes the following goals:

- Goal CH.1 Ensure equitable delivery of core public health services with a focus on reducing disparities in historically marginalized communities;
- Goal EW.1 Equip, empower, and retain the community through partnerships and investments that support economic mobility; and
- Goal HH.3 Optimize investments, partnerships, and service delivery to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Austin; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 CHA builds upon the foundation of the 2022 assessment, reflecting growth and a strengthened focus on equity, structural determinants of health, and community resilience; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 CHA recognizes the prevalence of chronic health conditions, poor nutrition, limited physical activity, and a lack of preventative care in low-income communities; and

WHEREAS, the CHA highlights urgent needs for trauma-informed mental health care, overdose prevention, safer pedestrian infrastructure, access to green spaces, digital inclusion, and affordable childcare; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, the City launched “Generation ATX”, a city-wide initiative aimed to improve child well-being, safety, and health through a holistic and coordinated cross-sector approach; and

WHEREAS, the 2024 Austin-Travis County Food Plan serves as a blueprint for transforming the local food system and focuses on ensuring all residents have access to nutritious food, particularly in areas experiencing high rates of food insecurity; and

WHEREAS, the 2021 Reimagining Public Safety Task Force recommendations include public health investments in community health workers, low-cost medical supply closets, food pantries, mental health services, medication assisted treatment and harm reduction, affordable housing, and more; and

WHEREAS, One Voice Central Texas is an organized coalition of over eighty nonprofit health and human service organizations serving the greater Austin area to ensure everyone can contribute to our community and thrive; and

WHEREAS, One Voice Central Texas presented to the Public Health Committee on April 3, 2025, to share the financial challenges impacting health and human service organizations, including increased labor and rent costs, and decreased federal funding and individual giving; and

WHEREAS, the City’s social service contracts support community needs and critical services that keep Austin residents healthy, safe, fed, housed, and connected; and

WHEREAS, \$5 million Project Connect anti-displacement funding was paused in the fall of 2025, impacting housing stability supports and community-designed solutions that uplift neighborhoods at the highest risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, on November 5, 2025, the City Manager announced a social service contracting transformation as part of the Citywide Efficiency and Optimization process; and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget included a 10% cut to social service contracts resulting in a \$5.4 million reduction; and

WHEREAS, the 10% cut to social service contracts directly impacts social service providers’ operations and budgets in already challenging circumstances; and

WHEREAS, an additional \$16.8 million reduction in funding for social services is projected for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 as presented to Austin City Council at the November 18, 2025 work session; **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

The City Manager is directed to create a comprehensive rubric as a tool to assess and prioritize which of the City's existing social service contracts be fully funded, partially funded, or eliminated. The rubric should weigh the following:

1. Whether the contract provides a need essential for human life such as life-saving treatment, housing, or food;
2. Savings to the City that result from the contract (i.e. avoided costs to other departments);
3. The return on investment for the City on other City systems;
4. Service providers that have experienced recent state or federal cuts for the same or similar programs;
5. Whether or not an entity exists locally that has a dedicated source of funding that could be used for the particular purpose;
6. The contractor's prior demonstration in meeting the goals stated in the contract;
7. The existence of other service providers who could offer the service more effectively and/or efficiently; and
8. Alignment with community priorities and previously Council adopted city-wide plans and recommendations, including the City's 2025-2026 Strategic Plan, to achieve high-priority community outcomes; and
9. Workforce impacts, including but not limited to the number of positions impacted, titles, pay ranges, and full-time/ part-time/ temporary/ contractor status.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

The City Manager is directed to utilize the 2025 Austin Travis County Community Health Assessment to inform and guide social service contract investments for the proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

Starting with the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 proposed budget, the City Manager is directed to explore sustainable funding sources, partnerships, city-wide cost savings, and opportunities to prioritize ongoing investments in social service contracts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

The City Manager is directed to conduct regular community engagement and public feedback sessions with social service providers, social service program participants, and community stakeholders to understand and identify community priorities and develop the comprehensive rubric and social service contract restructuring plan to maximize service impact. An initial convening should be conducted within 30 days after the passage of this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

The City Manager is directed to provide an update to the City Council on the proposed comprehensive rubric by May 1, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

After the update on the comprehensive rubric, but by June 1, 2026, the City Manager is directed to provide an update to City Council on community engagement efforts and the proposed social service contract restructuring plan.

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