



Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations

# Strategic Plan



2025-2027

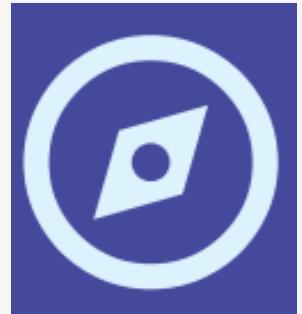
David Gray, Director

Page 1 of 21

Marissa Vogel, Capacity Building Manager

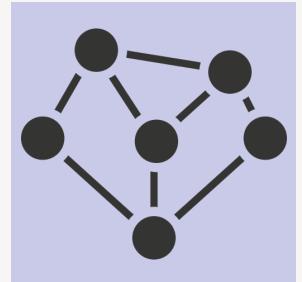
February 4, 2026

# Strategic Plan: What and Why?



## WHAT

- Sets priorities and direction
- Aligns goals, strategies, and measures
- Guides decision-making and investments



## WHY

- Clarifies AHSO's leadership role
- Strengthens system coordination
- Drives accountability and results
- Keeps us focused on what matters most

# Strategic Planning Timeline



# Strategic Plan Workgroup and Process



## Planning Team

- 15 Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations (AHSO) staff, representing 50% of the department
- Responsible for identifying departmental goals, strategies and performance measurements informed by community input

## Process Components

- Stakeholder interviews with 36 organizations, including nonprofits and community-based organizations, healthcare providers, a lived experience advisory group, county agencies, and City departments
- Internal assessments utilizing strategic planning tools and frameworks
- Guiding Principles: Defining our purpose, vision, mission and core values
- Identifying Focus Areas, Goals, Strategies and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

# Our Guiding Principles



“

Our core values ground us in why we show up each day and do this work. As a social worker I take these values seriously, maintaining ethical standards, prioritizing collaboration through a strengths-based lens, and focusing on results that reflect quality and sustainability. **This strategic plan signals our commitment to accountability and meaningful change** within Austin's Homelessness Response System.

”

— **Raven Rojas, LMSW**

Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations



## VISION

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



## MISSION

We serve as the citywide strategic leader to address homelessness in Austin through effective policies, investments, and partnerships.



## CORE VALUES:



### INTEGRITY

Act with transparency, fairness, and respect, honoring our commitments and maintaining the trust of those we serve.



### RESULTS-ORIENTED

Drive results through data-informed, person-centered, forward-looking approaches.



### COLLABORATIVE

Listen, engage, and partner to further progress.

# Our Focus Areas



Austin



## System Leadership

We are a trusted system leader, working collaboratively to ensure an efficient, accessible, and effective homelessness response.



## Impactful Community Investments

We make investments that resolve individual experiences of homelessness and result in meaningful system change.



## Crisis Response System Management

We ensure that people experiencing homelessness have easy access to basic needs, outreach, crisis shelter, and other services to support survival and pathways to stable housing.



## Communications

Through public dialogue and intentional communication with stakeholders, we strengthen community trust, align efforts and drive systemwide impact.



## Invest in Our People

We pursue a culture of continuous learning, creating a collaborative, supportive, and engaging workplace that centers on growth, development, and well-being. Our staff are inspired and empowered to drive meaningful change.

# GOALS: System Leadership

*We are a trusted system leader, working collaboratively to ensure an efficient, accessible, and effective homeless response.*

- Pursue a collaborative effort to develop a shared systemwide strategy aligned with public and private investments to support it, strengthening coordination, filling system gaps, and improving outcomes across the Homelessness Response System.
- Create collaborative spaces across key intervention types to improve alignment and system responsiveness.
- Collaborate internally and with system partners to improve the use of the HMIS, leveraging it for analytic insights to guide planning and funding decisions.
- Expand involvement of people with lived expertise in developing our policies and processes to ensure our programs reflect community realities and support more effective, accessible solutions.

# GOALS: Impactful Community Investments

*We make investments that resolve individual experiences of homelessness and result in meaningful system change.*

- Streamline contracting processes to ensure effective stewardship of resources.
- Support the development and implementation of homelessness diversion and prevention programs to increase housing stability. Collaborate internally and with system partners to improve the use of the HMIS, leveraging it for analytic insights to guide planning and funding decisions.
- Strengthen city-funded rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing interventions so they fully enable participants to achieve long-term housing stability.

# GOALS: Crisis Response System Management

*We ensure that people experiencing homelessness have easy access to basic needs, outreach, crisis shelter, and other services to support survival and pathways to stable housing.*

- Implement a citywide outreach coordination plan.
- Develop a budget framework and plan to expand shelter system capacity by 650 shelter beds.
- Expand Austin's crisis response infrastructure by adding two housing navigation centers to provide access to early interventions, reduce barriers to accessing shelter, provide for basic needs, and support stable housing transitions.
- Implement policies and strategies to increase efficient and effective use of shelter resources.
- Further compliance with local ordinances and state law to reduce harm to housed and unhoused residents through data-informed decision making, evidence-based practices, and collaborative processes.

# GOALS: Communications

*Through public dialogue and intentional communication with stakeholders, we strengthen community trust, align efforts and drive systemwide impact.*

- Implement a centralized platform to improve access and transparency of AHSO programs and investments.
- Strengthen communication channels to build trust, gather input, and promote homelessness system efforts.
- Conduct engagement efforts to ensure community input informs system investments and fosters support among key stakeholder groups.

# GOALS: Invest in Our People

*We pursue a culture of continuous learning, creating a collaborative, supportive, and engaging workplace that centers on growth, development, and well-being. Our staff are inspired and empowered to drive meaningful change.*

- Implement standardized recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and internal frameworks that support consistent orientation and cross-unit understanding of our work.
- Establish internal feedback mechanisms that drive continuous improvement and staff engagement.
- Implement tools, training, and structures that support staff and team growth, well-being, and a culture of collaboration.
- Reassess AHSO's internal organizational design and implement key structural and workflow changes that align staff functions with strategic priorities, clarify roles and responsibilities, reduce silos to strengthen collaboration and enhance operational resilience.

# Measures and Evaluation

## Focus Areas

### System Leadership

- # of new funders and/or increase in funding for homeless response partners
- # of tools and processes developed utilizing HMIS data
- # of individuals with lived expertise that informed a solicitation, policy, procedures

### Impactful Community Investments

- % of contracts with completed monitoring reviews annually as per the monitoring plan
- % of households who enroll in HSO homelessness prevention programs, exit successfully, and do not experience homelessness within a year
- % of individuals served by city-funded housing programs who enter permanent housing and do not experience homelessness again within one year of housing placement

### Crisis Response System Management

- # of agencies formally adopting outreach standards (MOU)
- % increase in shelter beds from 2025
- # of clients utilizing housing navigation center services

### Communications

- % of quarterly website reviews and updates completed on time
- Average attendance per townhall
- # of community engagement initiatives/meetings held

### Invest in Our People

- % of new hires who indicated satisfied/very satisfied with onboarding experience
- # of team-building activities and department-wide events annually
- % of staff that complete 16 hours of training annually

# Implementation Next Steps

## January – March 2026

- Assign AHSO Team Leads and determine project team members for each strategy
- Prioritize assigned strategies and corresponding timelines for completion
- Develop project plans for each strategy, identifying and assigning project tasks to AHSO team members

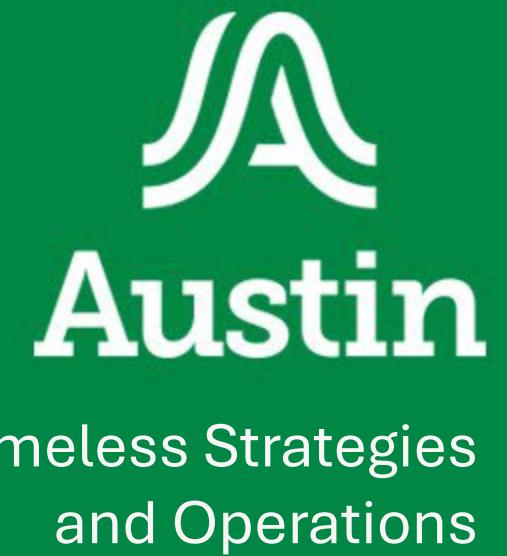
## March 2026:

- Begin quarterly progress reviews by AHSO Leadership Team



# QUESTIONS?

# Thank you!





# APPENDIX

## System Leadership: We are a trusted system leader, working collaboratively to ensure an efficient, accessible, and effective homeless response.

### Goals

Pursue a collaborative effort to develop a shared systemwide strategy aligned with public and private investments to support it, strengthening coordination, filling system gaps, and improving outcomes across the Homelessness Response System.

Create collaborative spaces across key intervention types to improve alignment and system responsiveness.

Collaborate internally and with system partners to improve the use of the HMIS, leveraging it for analytic insights to guide planning and funding decisions.

Expand involvement of people with lived expertise in developing our policies and processes to ensure our programs reflect community realities and support more effective, accessible solutions.

### Strategies

- Convene system partners to coordinate ongoing efforts that address systemwide needs and gaps, enhance program effectiveness, and ensure alignment across programs and funding streams.
  - Establish systemwide goals and measures that enable clearer evaluation and coordination of progress towards shared goals.
  - Pursue new public/private funding.
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- Convene and facilitate Community of Practice meetings quarterly with key stakeholders for each of the intervention types.
  - Develop intentional agendas for recurring meetings, thinking critically about goals and coordinating partners around collective action.
  - Monitor and evaluate Community of Practice meetings to ensure they generate actionable initiatives that improve alignment and system responsiveness.
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- Identify opportunities, including HMIS training program and materials, to increase use of HMIS to record program activities.
  - Work with HMIS administrator to ensure HMIS use is structured in a clear and efficient manner.
  - Clearly communicate and educate partners in the role of data in client outcomes and system management.
  - Develop tools and processes for utilizing HMIS data to inform program management, decision-making, and public communications.
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- Increase involvement of Austin Homeless Advisory Committee (AHAC), Austin Youth Collective (AYC), and others with lived experience to inform the development of policies, procedures, and funding competitions.
  - Work with recruitment partners (Austin Human Resources, Municipal Civil Service) to incorporate pathways for persons with lived experience in our hiring process.
  - Ensure programs receiving AHSO funding demonstrate ongoing commitment to incorporating input from individuals with lived experience in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services.
  - Implement regular formal and informal feedback mechanisms with people currently or formerly experiencing homelessness.

## **Impactful Community Investments:** We make investments that resolve individual experiences of homelessness and result in meaningful system change.

### **Goals**

Streamline contracting processes to ensure effective stewardship of resources.

Support the development and implementation of homelessness diversion and prevention programs to increase housing stability.

Strengthen city-funded rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing interventions so they fully enable participants to achieve long-term housing stability.

### **Strategies**

- Review and revise the contracting process from solicitation and evaluation to contract execution and management to reduce complexity, standardize project implementation, simplify administrative processes, and standardize reporting.
- Develop and implement monitoring policies, procedures, and processes to assess AHSO social service agreements.
- Promote a more inclusive and competitive provider landscape by encouraging broader participation from a diverse pool of applicants.
- Partner with community stakeholders to develop a screening tool for identification and direct assistance to households at-risk of homelessness.
- Contract with providers to facilitate financial and case management support to keep at-risk households in their current housing and resolve their housing crisis.
- Continue to support the development of a diversion program model, which can be scaled across the homelessness response system.
- Continue to develop and implement a rapid rehousing program model which achieves quick connections to housing and stability for participants.
- Continue to develop and implement permanent supportive housing program policies, practices, and resources to ensure low-barrier access to services.
- Incorporate data-driven quality improvement processes to increase project performance outcomes.
- Increase access to affordable units and reduce barriers to housing for households experiencing homelessness.
- Implement landlord recruitment strategies and incentive programs to boost unit availability.

## Crisis Response System Management: We ensure that people experiencing homelessness have easy access to basic needs, outreach, crisis shelter, and other services to support survival and pathways to stable housing.

### Goals

Implement a citywide outreach coordination plan.

Develop a budget framework and plan to expand shelter system capacity by 650 shelter beds.

Expand Austin's crisis response infrastructure by adding two housing navigation centers to provide access to early interventions, reduce barriers to accessing shelter, provide for basic needs, and support stable housing transitions.

Implement policies and strategies to increase efficient and effective use of shelter resources.

Further compliance with local ordinances and state law to reduce harm to housed and unhoused residents through data-informed decision making, evidence-based practices, and collaborative processes.

### Strategies

- Build out and finalize the citywide outreach coordination plan.
- Utilize technology, including HMIS, to ensure real-time data entry, service coordination for outreach teams, prioritization of service requests, automation of project scheduling and GIS mapping.
- Establish standards for street outreach providers, including service expectations and staff training requirements to improve quality and consistency across citywide outreach efforts.

- Acquire properties for new shelter.
  - Explore converting underutilized city properties into shelters.
  - Ensure appropriate allocation of beds for subpopulations, including families experiencing homelessness.
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- Explore converting underutilized city properties into navigation centers.
  - Acquire properties for navigation centers.

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- Use technology to track real-time bed availability across shelter system.
  - Implement strategies to increase participant's resolutions of homelessness through shelter.
  - Develop and implement a training curriculum in support of housing-focused shelter.
  - Explore opportunities to recruit and retain talent.
  - Establish standards for shelter providers, including service expectations and staff training requirements to improve quality and consistency across shelters.
  - Develop and implement a data-driven performance monitoring process to discover and expand positive outcome strategies.

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- Explore models and strategies to reduce harm/resolve homelessness of individuals living in encampments.
  - Review and amend encampment management strategy.
  - Utilize technology to ensure real-time data entry, coordinated responses between encampment management partners, service coordination with outreach teams, prioritization of service requests, automation of project scheduling and GIS mapping.
  - Utilize HMIS to communicate encampment closures.

## Communications: Through public dialogue and intentional communication with stakeholders, we strengthen community trust, align efforts and drive systemwide impact.

### Goals

Implement a centralized platform to improve access and transparency of AHSO programs and investments.

Strengthen communication channels to build trust, gather input, and promote homelessness system efforts.

Conduct engagement efforts to ensure community input informs system investments and fosters support among key stakeholder groups.

### Strategies

- Update the AHSO website encompassing contract and system information, communications, dashboards, and additional resources.
  - Produce an AHSO Annual Report.
  - Develop staffing plan to develop and maintain the website.
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- Launch quarterly townhall meetings for providers and stakeholders.
  - Identify and utilize online platform(s) to receive feedback from the community about AHSO strategic initiatives.
  - Finalize Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
  - Seek ongoing stakeholder feedback to inform AHSO planning.
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- Conduct community engagement to support and inform efforts to grow the Homelessness Response System.
  - Develop an educational campaign for the business community.

workplace that centers on growth, development, and well-being. Our staff are inspired and empowered to drive meaningful change.

## Goals

Implement standardized recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and internal frameworks that support consistent orientation and cross-unit understanding of our work.

Establish internal feedback mechanisms that drive continuous improvement and staff engagement.

Implement tools, training, and structures that support staff and team growth, well-being, and a culture of collaboration.

Reassess AHSO's internal organizational design and implement key structural and workflow changes that align staff functions with strategic priorities, clarify roles and responsibilities, reduce silos to strengthen collaboration and enhance operational resilience.

## Strategies

- Develop AHSO onboarding process for all new employees.
- Develop introductory cross-unit training series to create awareness within units of the varied services AHSO supports.
- Centrally locate all onboarding resources on the Sharepoint site, regularly reviewing to keep information current.
- Work with HR on the recruitment and hiring process to enhance the applicant experience.
- Schedule regular listening sessions or open forums with AHSO leadership.
- Create an AHSO Engagement & Feedback Committee as a forum for staff feedback and engagement initiatives.
- Develop a process or method to collect anonymous feedback that provides a safe space for staff to share concerns/ideas with AHSO leadership.
- Develop and distribute an annual survey through a third party to gather actionable insights on employee satisfaction, communication effectiveness, and organizational culture.
- Organize quarterly team building activities by unit and bi-annual department-wide events.
- Incorporate 360 feedback into mid-year staff and/or annual performance reviews.
- Implement an AHSO-wide project management tool.
- Develop an annual internal training calendar that encompasses job-specific options and required departmental training for leadership and staff.
- Promote wellness policies, flexible scheduling and resources to encourage staff participation in wellness programs/activities.
- Complete an organizational structure assessment in collaboration with Austin Human Resources/external consultant.
- Map internal workflows.
- Redefine team/unit structures with clarified scope and responsibilities.
- Create more opportunities for cross-unit awareness and information sharing to reduce silos.