Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations

Strategic Plan

2025-2027

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Message from the Director

Austin deserves to be a city where **everyone has a safe place to live and the opportunities to thrive.** This belief is at the heart of Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations work, and it drives our partnerships, policies and investments across the community.

While the City of Austin has long been committed to addressing homelessness, Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations became a stand-alone department in 2023 to provide focused leadership and coordination across the Homelessness Response System. As a growing team, we are building on years of dedicated work while also helping to shape a stronger, more unified system response for the future.

This plan reflects the insight, experience, and collaboration of many. We are deeply grateful to the individuals and organizations who contributed their time and knowledge to its development, from providers and people with lived experience, to funders, City staff, and partners across sectors. We also want to thank our staff, whose commitment and creativity ensure this work moves forward every day.

Over the next two years, we will build on the progress our city has made while addressing the urgent and evolving challenges of homelessness. Our strategic plan is both ambitious and practical: it identifies the actions we will take together, the values that guide us, and the measurable ways we will track our progress.

Homelessness is not solved by one organization alone. It requires a coordinated, systemwide response grounded in compassion, accountability, and collaboration. With our partners across sectors, and with the voices of those most directly affected, we are committed to leading with integrity, focusing on results, and driving forward solutions that make housing stability a reality for more Austinites.

Together, we can create a stronger, more resilient **community for all**.

— David Gray,
Director, Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations

Strategic Planning Process & Timeline

2025

Jan/Feb	Mar/Apr	Apr/May	May/June	July/Aug	Aug/Sep
Vision	Purpose	Mission	Goals	Action Plans	Plan Finalized
Core Values	Role	Focus Area		• Strategies	Communication
SWOT Analysis	Focus Areas	Success		• KPIs	Plan
Stakeholder Input		Statements			

In 2023, Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations (AHSO) was established to lead the City's efforts to address homelessness. As we stepped into this role, we recognized the importance of not only clarifying what we do, but also how we do it, and why. Our first strategic plan needed to reflect both the urgent realities of homelessness in Austin and the values, purpose, and vision that unite our team and partners.

We began this work with a leadership retreat that set the stage for honest reflection and dialogue. From there, we created a Strategic Planning Workgroup of 15 staff representing half of our entire department. This group, comprised of staff from every unit within AHSO, became the backbone of the planning process. Their role was to gather ideas, synthesize input, and ensure that every perspective across AHSO was reflected. In many ways, this process was as important as the final plan: it demonstrated that strategy is not something handed down from leadership, but something built together.

Throughout the eight-month journey, we designed multiple opportunities for staff at all levels to engage, question, and contribute. Staff worked together to define AHSO's core values, understand our purpose, refine our mission, and discuss ideas for how we could best serve as the citywide strategic leader to addressing homelessness in Austin. Through activities like a SWOT analysis and ecocycle mapping, we candidly assessed our strengths, challenges, and evolving role within Austin's Homelessness Response System.

Community Input

Our work was informed not only by internal reflection, but also by the voices of those working and living in the Homelessness Response System. We engaged 36 organizations, including nonprofits and community-based organizations, healthcare providers, a lived experience advisory group, county agencies, and City departments, to better understand the needs and opportunities in our system. Their input was invaluable to inform the priorities and focus areas of our strategic direction.

The result is a plan that reflects shared ownership, co-created by the staff who will carry it out and by the partners and community members who support and guide our work. It is aligned with the City of Austin's Citywide Strategic Plan, incorporating the strategies and measures so the two directives complement one another. The plan is ambitious yet grounded, practical yet values-driven. Above all, it represents a collective commitment to lead with integrity, stay focused on results, and collaborate across the system to ensure that every Austin resident has access to stable housing and the support they need to thrive.

> " The entire process stood out to me. It brought together a **very diverse group of people with varying opinions and worldviews.** Through collaboration, we were able to reach consensus, which speaks to the strength of **our shared commitment and values.** "
>
> — **Chinazo Anya,**
> Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations

🚀 Our Guiding Principles

Defining our purpose, mission, and core values was not a one-day exercise. Over several months, staff explored what it means for AHSO to lead, what our community most needs from us, and the principles that will guide decisions and keep us accountable in our everyday work.

AHSO's vision, mission, and core values are more than just words on a page. They are the compass for every policy, investment, and partnership we pursue. These guiding principles are a living framework. As the needs of Austin and the Homelessness Response System evolve, we will revisit these commitments to keep them relevant and authentic.

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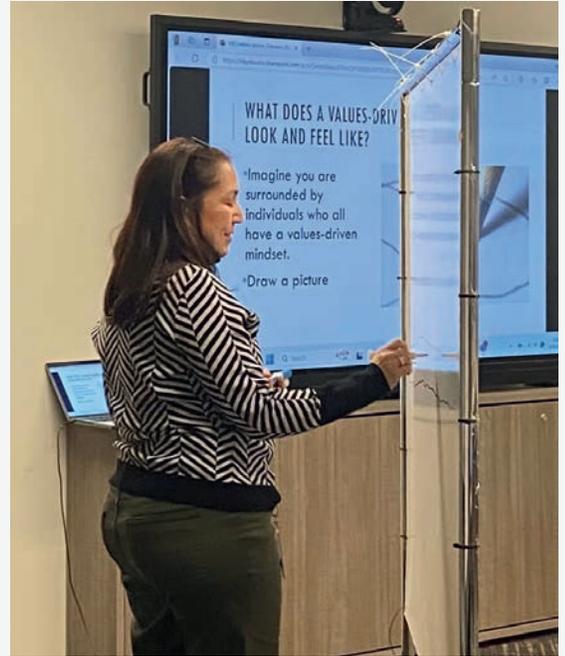
Our core values ground us in why we show up each day and do this work. As a social worker I take these values seriously, maintaining ethical standards, prioritizing collaboration through a strengths-based lens, and focusing on results that reflect quality and sustainability. **This strategic plan signals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

"

— Raven Rojas, LMSW
Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations

Our Compass:
Keeping Us On Course

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.

AHSO Strategic Plan 2025-2027

Our vision is bold: Everyone has access to stable housing and the support they need to thrive. Through eight months of listening, analysis, and collaboration, AHSO staff identified **five focus areas and objectives** that will guide our work over the next two years. We believe these areas capture critical levers for high-impact change and will keep us centered on the purpose and values that drive our decisions:

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.

Having defined what success looks like, the next step is a clear roadmap. The following goals and strategies outline the actions that will guide us toward this vision, with more in development to address system gaps in case management and behavioral health services. We are committed to refining this roadmap over time, informed by community input and a dedication to ongoing learning and improvement.

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

	Goals	Strategies
1.1	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.	**A.** Convene system partners to coordinate ongoing efforts that address systemwide needs and gaps, enhance program effectiveness, and ensure alignment across programs and funding streams. **B.** Establish systemwide goals and measures that enable clearer evaluation and coordination of progress towards shared goals. **C.** Pursue new public/private funding.
1.2	Create collaborative spaces across key intervention types to improve alignment and system responsiveness.	**A.** Convene and facilitate Community of Practice meetings quarterly with key stakeholders for each of the intervention types. **B.** Develop intentional agendas for recurring meetings, thinking critically about goals and coordinating partners around collective action. **C.** Monitor and evaluate Community of Practice meetings to ensure they generate actionable initiatives that improve alignment and system responsiveness.
1.3	Collaborate internally and with system partners to improve the use of the HMIS, leveraging it for analytic insights to guide planning and funding decisions.	**A.** Identify opportunities, including HMIS training program and materials, to increase use of HMIS to record program activities. **B.** Work with HMIS administrator to ensure HMIS use is structured in a clear and efficient manner. **C.** Clearly communicate and educate partners in the role of data in client outcomes and system management. **D.** Develop tools and processes for utilizing HMIS data to inform program management, decision-making, and public communications.
1.4	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.	**A.** 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. **B.** Work with recruitment partners (Austin Human Resources, Municipal Civil Service) to incorporate pathways for persons with lived experience in our hiring process. **C.** Ensure programs receiving AHSO funding demonstrate ongoing commitment to incorporating input from individuals with lived experience in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services. **D.** 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	Strategies
2.1	Streamline contracting processes to ensure effective stewardship of resources.	**A.** 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. **B.** Develop and implement monitoring policies, procedures, and processes to assess AHSO social service agreements. **C.** Promote a more inclusive and competitive provider landscape by encouraging broader participation from a diverse pool of applicants.
2.2	Support the development and implementation of homelessness diversion and prevention programs to increase housing stability.	**A.** Partner with community stakeholders to develop a screening tool for identification and direct assistance to households at-risk of homelessness. **B.** Contract with providers to facilitate financial and case management support to keep at-risk households in their current housing and resolve their housing crisis. **C.** Continue to support the development of a diversion program model, which can be scaled across the Homelessness Response System.
2.3	Strengthen city-funded rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing interventions so they fully enable participants to achieve long-term housing stability.	**A.** Continue to develop and implement a rapid rehousing program model which achieves quick connections to housing and stability for participants. **B.** Continue to develop and implement permanent supportive housing program policies, practices, and resources to ensure low-barrier access to services. **C.** Incorporate data-driven quality improvement processes to increase project performance outcomes. **D.** Increase access to affordable units and reduce barriers to housing for households experiencing homelessness. **E.** 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	Strategies
3.1	Implement a citywide outreach coordination plan.	**A.** Build out and finalize the citywide outreach coordination plan. **B.** 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. **C.** Establish standards for street outreach providers, including service expectations and staff training requirements to improve quality and consistency across citywide outreach efforts.
3.2	Develop a budget framework and plan to expand shelter system capacity by 650 shelter beds.	**A.** Acquire properties for new shelters. **B.** Explore converting underutilized city properties into shelters. **C.** Ensure appropriate allocation of beds for subpopulations, including families experiencing homelessness.
3.3	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.	**A.** Explore converting underutilized city properties into navigation centers. **B.** Acquire properties for navigation centers.
3.4	Implement policies and strategies to increase efficient and effective use of shelter resources.	**A.** Use technology to track real-time bed availability across shelter system. **B.** Implement strategies to increase participant's resolutions of homelessness through shelter. **C.** Develop and implement a training curriculum in support of housing-focused shelter. **D.** Explore opportunities to recruit and retain talent. **E.** Establish standards for shelter providers, including service expectations and staff training requirements to improve quality and consistency across shelters. **F.** Develop and implement a data-driven performance monitoring process to discover and expand positive outcome strategies.
3.5	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.	**A.** Explore models and strategies to reduce harm/resolve homelessness of individuals living in encampments. **B.** Review and amend encampment management strategy. **C.** 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. **D.** 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	Strategies
4.1	Implement a centralized platform to improve access and transparency of AHSO programs and investments.	**A.** Update the AHSO website encompassing contract and system information, communications, dashboards, and additional resources. **B.** Produce an AHSO Annual Report. **C.** Develop staffing plan to develop and maintain the website.
4.2	Strengthen communication channels to build trust, gather input, and promote homelessness system efforts.	**A.** Launch quarterly townhall meetings for providers and stakeholders. **B.** Identify and utilize online platform(s) to receive feedback from the community about AHSO strategic initiatives. **C.** Finalize Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. **D.** Seek ongoing stakeholder feedback to inform AHSO planning.
4.3	Conduct engagement efforts to ensure community input informs system investments and fosters support among key stakeholder groups.	**A.** Conduct community engagement to support and inform efforts to grow the Homelessness Response System. **B.** Develop an educational campaign for the business community.

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

Implementation and Evaluation

AHSO recognizes that implementing this plan is a continuous cycle of action, measurement, and improvement. To guide this work, we have developed a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned with each strategic goal. These KPIs serve as measurable benchmarks that help us track progress, assess impact, and ensure accountability across our initiatives.

Each KPI was selected to reflect both the outcomes we aim to achieve and the processes that drive meaningful change. By monitoring these indicators, we can identify what's working, where adjustments are needed, and how to allocate resources most effectively. This data-driven approach allows us to remain responsive to the evolving needs of Austin's Homelessness Response System and the communities we serve.

Our team will track these metrics and regularly review, using insights to refine strategies and inform future planning. **See Appendix for the full list of KPIs developed for each goal.**

Projects Underway

As part of AHSO's evolving strategic plan, several key initiatives are already in motion to strengthen the Homelessness Response System.

Citywide Street Outreach Coordination

In summer of 2024, AHSO launched a summer street outreach pilot with four community-based organizations to respond to heat-related needs of unhoused individuals. This pilot brought together several partners under a shared purpose, fostering mutual learning and demonstrating how proactive coordination can help us better respond to the daily needs of our unhoused neighbors. Building on insights from this pilot program, AHSO is currently planning to expand its street outreach team and launch a citywide, geographically coordinated outreach initiative aimed at reducing unsheltered homelessness.

Diversion Program Model

The Diversion Demonstration Project, a partnership with Sunrise Navigation Center and University of Texas School of Nursing, is a 3-year program which launched this year to offer short-term assistance to individuals who are newly unhoused or at risk of losing their housing. The program is designed not only to meet immediate needs, but also to serve as a learning model that can be scaled across the city. With a strong commitment to continuous quality improvement, the partners are working to ensure the approach remains responsive and effective as housing crises evolve. At the end of the project, a comprehensive evaluation will offer community-informed recommendations for how diversion strategies can be integrated into Austin's broader efforts to prevent and end homelessness.

Rapid Rehousing Rebuild

With the aid of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, AHSO grew its portfolio of Rapid Rehousing (RRH) programs substantially. As a result, many lessons have been learned to inform what AHSO would like RRH to look like in the future. The RRH program rebuild seeks to establish unified standards, reflecting our commitment to ensuring high-quality and consistent services are provided to our unhoused neighbors across all our RRH providers.

Real-Time Access to Essential Resources

Launched in August 2025, Open Now, a real-time digital platform helps individuals experiencing homelessness and those that support them quickly find essential resources such as cooling centers, drinking water, healthcare, food, hygiene amenities, and recovery services. Developed from input from people with lived experience, the tool reflects our commitment to clearer communication, greater transparency and stronger community awareness by making vital services visible and accessible to all.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the AHSO strategic planning team and staff who contributed their time, knowledge, and insight over an eight-month planning process to help shape AHSO's inaugural Strategic Plan.

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A special thank you to these Austin departments, nonprofit organizations/agencies, and community groups who participated in stakeholder interviews, providing invaluable feedback to help inform our strategic plan:

Austin Community Court
Austin Fire
Austin Homeless Advisory Council (AHAC)
Austin Housing
Austin Parks and Recreation
Austin Police
Austin Public Health
Austin Public Library
Austin Resource Recovery
Austin Watershed Protection
Austin/Travis County
Emergency Medical Services (ATCEMS)
A New Entry
Austin Area Urban League
Black Men's Health Clinic
Capital Metro
Caritas of Austin
Casa Marianella
Central Health
Downtown Austin Alliance

Endeavors
Ending Community Homelessness
Coalition (ECHO)
Family Eldercare
Foundation Communities
Homeless Advocacy Project
Housing Authority of
the City of Austin (HACA)
Hungry Hill
Integral Care
LifeWorks
Pfaith House
SAFE Alliance
Salvation Army
Sunrise Navigation
The Other Ones Foundation
Travis County Constables
Travis County Health and
Human Services
Urban Alchemy

Stakeholder Engagement & Key Learnings

A strategic plan is only as strong as the voices that shape it. During February and March of 2025, we conducted one-on-one interviews with 36 internal and external partners within the Homelessness Response System (HRS). From these conversations emerged insight about the ways we currently support the system, where we can strengthen partnerships, and our evolving role as the citywide strategic leader to address homelessness in Austin. The themes we heard informed the development of our five focus areas as well as the goals and strategies defined in this strategic plan.

How AHSO Supports the HRS

Strategic Collaboration – Regular engagement through AHSO meetings ensures coordination and alignment among service providers, City departments, and policymakers.

Outreach & Shelter Coordination – AHSO connects people to shelter and shelter services, facilitating emergency response, and coordinating outreach teams.

Funding & Contracting Support – Organizations rely on AHSO for financial support, contract facilitation and compliance to sustain their work.

Information & Resource Sharing – Organizations benefit from updates, reports, and strategic insights shared by AHSO.

Advocacy, Policy & System Navigation – Organizations look to AHSO to shape homelessness policies, advocate for funding allocations, and to guide legislation and systemwide best practices.

How AHSO Can Strengthen Partnerships

Enhanced Coordination and Collaboration – Strengthening alignment between City departments, intergovernmental agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

Stronger Policy & Legislative Leadership – Taking on a more active role in shaping policies and advocating for systemic improvements.

Improved Communication & Transparency – Organizations want more frequent updates and clarity on AHSO's role and services.

Operational Efficiency & Process Streamlining – Agencies need clearer and faster processes for funding applications, contract renewals, and reporting.

Greater Engagement with Grassroots Organizations – To strengthen the system, smaller community-based organizations need more intentional inclusion in citywide initiatives and clear pathways to compete for or partner on funding opportunities.

AHSO's Role in the Homeless Response System (HRS)

Crisis Response System Coordination – AHSO plays a key role in overseeing and coordinating prevention, outreach, diversion, navigation and emergency shelter programs to connect individuals experiencing homelessness to resources.

Leadership in Policy & HRS Governance Support – AHSO is expected to play a central role in setting HRS policies, shaping citywide planning, and ensuring effective system governance.

Contract Funding & Oversight – Organizations depend on AHSO for funding, managing and overseeing contracts, and ensuring contract compliance to ensure the efficient use of City funding for homelessness programs.

Public Engagement & Communication – Stakeholders view AHSO as well-positioned to enhance public communication and transparency in funding allocations as well as engaging community stakeholders to shape the system's long-term strategy.

Advocacy for System Change and Resources – partnering with community stakeholders, serving as a central voice to influence and drive policy and resource decisions.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Focus Area	Goal	KPIs
System Leadership	1.1	**A.** Participation rate of key system partners and stakeholders (e.g., major funders, providers (grassroots to larger organizations), agencies, individuals with lived experience) **B.** # of systemwide goals and measures finalized and adopted **C.** % of identified gaps prioritized with recommended actions **D.** # of new funders and/or increase in funding for homeless response partners
System Leadership	1.2	**A.** # of meetings held quarterly for each intervention type **B.** # of stakeholders attending the meetings for each intervention type **C.** Post-meeting satisfaction survey results **D.** # of initiatives or action plans that result in measurable improvements
System Leadership	1.3	**A.** % of AHSO hires trained in the use of HMIS within 3 months of hire **B.** # of opportunities identified to increase the use of HMIS **C.** # of meetings with HMIS administrator to provide feedback and strategize for system improvements **D.** # of tools and processes developed utilizing HMIS data
System Leadership	1.4	**A.** # of meetings with Austin Homeless Advisory Committee (AHAC) annually **B.** # of meetings with Austin Youth Council (AYC) annually **C.** % of AHSO staff members with lived expertise of homelessness **D.** Response rates of quarterly shelter surveys

Focus Area	Goal	KPIs
		E. # of individuals with lived expertise that informed a solicitation, policy, procedures F. % of vendors that attest an ongoing commitment to incorporating lived experience input
Impactful Community Investments	2.1	A. % of new contract executions completed within three weeks of funding determinations B. % of contract renewals completed in four weeks C. % of contracts with completed monitoring reviews annually as per the monitoring plan D. # of applications from agencies not currently funded by AHSO E. # of solicitation trainings provided annually
Impactful Community Investments	2.2	A. # of households receiving AHSO homelessness prevention assistance B. % of households successfully exited from AHSO homelessness prevention programs to permanent housing destinations C. % of households who enroll in AHSO homelessness prevention programs, exit successfully, and do not experience homelessness within a year D. # of partnerships for diversion and homelessness prevention E. % of households successfully diverted from homelessness through diversion assistance F. # of households receiving diversion assistance
Impactful Community Investments	2.3	A. Improved scorecard measures: i. % of individuals served by city-funded housing programs who enter permanent housing and do not experience homelessness again within one year of housing placement ii. Average time from program referral to program entry iii. Average time from program entry to housing placement iv. % households with increased income v. % of households who exit the project to a permanent housing destination vi. % of projects that increase their scorecard score annually B. # of landlord recruitment initiatives to grow unit availability
Crisis Response System Management	3.1	A. % of outreach teams using mobile HMIS entry B. Average response time from service request to outreach deployment C. # of agencies formally adopting outreach standards (MOU) D. % of clients enrolled in an Outreach project who have completed an initial or updated Coordinated Assessment in the last year E. Average time from Coordinated Entry referral to housing project Move-In for clients enrolled in an Outreach project F. % of clients who exit positively (to temporary, transitional, or permanent housing destinations)
Crisis Response System Management	3.2	A. % increase in shelter beds from 2025 B. % increase in shelter beds for families and other subpopulations from 2025

Focus Area	Goal	KPIs
Crisis Response System Management	3.3	A. # of new Navigation Centers established B. # of clients utilizing housing navigation center services
Crisis Response System Management	3.4	A. # of training opportunities established for shelter providers B. Increase in Rapid Exit exits from emergency shelters C. Decrease in length of time from housing referral to housing move-in for shelter clients D. Increased income and non-cash benefits attainment for shelter clients E. % of shelters utilizing HMIS for real-time bed availability F. Annual shelter bed utilization rate of 90%
Crisis Response System Management	3.5	A. # of alternative models or strategies researched B. % of encampment closures with 72 hour postings
Communications	4.1	A. % of quarterly website reviews and updates completed on time B. Annual report published by target date
Communications	4.2	A. # of townhalls held per year B. Average attendance per townhall C. # of townhall feedback surveys received D. # of action items or follow-ups generated from townhalls
Communications	4.3	A. # of community engagement initiatives/meetings held B. # of community members engaged C. # of business stakeholders reached through campaign materials or events D. # of partnerships or collaborations formed with local businesses
Invest in Our People	5.1	A. % of new hires who complete onboarding milestones within 90 days B. % of new hires who indicated satisfied/very satisfied with onboarding experience C. % of onboarding resources reviewed and updated every six months D. # of recruitment/hiring practices modified to improve the applicant experience
Invest in Our People	5.2	A. # of listening sessions/open forums with Leadership Team annually B. % of Engagement & Feedback Committee members attending regular meetings C. % of staff participating in annual employee survey D. # of team-building activities and department-wide events annually E. % staff that participate in 360 reviews
Invest in Our People	5.3	A. # of AHSO staff trained and actively using project management tool B. % of staff that complete 16 hours of training annually C. # of staff participating in wellness programs/activities
Invest in Our People	5.4	A. % of staff who indicate having clarity of team/unit scope and responsibilities following review with manager B. # of cross-unit activities/collaborations

Glossary

Austin Homeless Strategies and Operations (AHSO)
The City of Austin department that serves as the citywide strategic leader to address homelessness through effective policies, investments, and partnerships.

Behavioral Health Services
A range of services designed to promote mental well-being, and the prevention and treatment of mental health and substance use concerns. Services for unhoused individuals may include mental health care, substance use treatment, and other supportive interventions.

Case Management Services
Individualized support to help unhoused individuals and families identify and resolve housing, health, and resource issues needed to achieve housing stability and long-term self-sufficiency.

Citywide Strategic Plan (CSP)
A shared City of Austin blueprint that guides decision-making and drives progress toward the City's goals. Developed by staff from every department, the CSP reflects a citywide commitment to accountability, equity, and results.

Community of Practice
A group of providers and stakeholders that gather regularly around a specific intervention area with the goal of learning how to do it better.

Crisis Response System Management
Coordinated efforts to ensure that people experiencing homelessness can quickly access basic needs, emergency shelter, and pathways to permanent housing.

Emergency Shelter
A facility that provides temporary or transitional shelter for persons who are experiencing homelessness, often along with basic services like meals, hygiene facilities, and navigation services for longer-term support.

Diversion
An approach that helps people at imminent risk of or who have recently entered homelessness to avoid entering or quickly exit the homeless system by providing immediate problem-solving and, when needed, short-term financial assistance to remain housed or find alternative housing.

Encampment Management
Coordinated strategies for cleanup and/or closure of homeless encampments.

Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS)
A shared information database used by homeless service providers to collect client-level information, track services, and measure system outcomes.

Homelessness Response System (HRS)
The coordinated network of service providers, funders, government agencies, and community partners working together to prevent and end homelessness in Austin.

Housing Focused Shelter
Shelter programs that offer a tailored path to permanent housing, with services and resources focused on helping participants exit quickly, either independently or through formal housing support.

Housing Stability
When an individual or household consistently has a safe, secure, and affordable place to live, without threats of eviction, frequent moves, or homelessness.

Impactful Community Investments
Strategic, effective, and efficient use of public resources to support city-funded programs and services, such as prevention, diversion, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Specific, measurable metrics used to track progress toward goals and strategies outlined in the strategic plan.

Lived Experience / People with Lived Expertise
Individuals who are currently or have previously experienced homelessness and whose insights help shape policies, programs, and funding decisions.

Navigation Centers
Low-barrier facilities that provide immediate access to basic needs, housing assessments, and connections to longer-term housing options.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
A housing intervention for individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness that provides long-term supportive services and ongoing rental assistance to address significant barriers to housing stability and to assist individuals in achieving housing security and wellness.

Prevention
Programs and services designed to keep individuals and families from becoming homeless, such as rental assistance or mediation with landlords.

Rapid Exit
Strategies that help unsheltered and emergency shelter participants quickly transition into housing with the support of services and a minimal level of financial assistance.

Rapid Rehousing (RRH)
A housing intervention for individuals and families experiencing homelessness that provides time-limited rental assistance and supportive services.

Street Outreach
Engagement with people living in unsheltered locations through services designed to meet basic needs, build relationships, and connect them to housing and supportive services.

System Gaps
Areas within the larger community or Homelessness Response System where services, resources, or coordination are insufficient to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

System Leadership
AHSO's role in convening partners, aligning policies and funding, and setting shared goals to strengthen the Homelessness Response System.

Austin

Homeless Strategies and Operations

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The City of Austin's Homeless Strategies and Operations (AHSO) envisions a community where everyone has access to stable housing and the support they need to thrive. AHSO coordinates shelter, housing, and outreach efforts across the community, working with partners to connect residents to safe, stable homes and supportive services.