

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

December 4, 2024

WHEREAS, according to the State of the Homelessness Response System report, the Ending Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) highlights our local Homelessness Response System is in need of approximately \$350 million over the next 10 years; and

WHEREAS, all remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding is encumbered and unable to fund any additional investments in the homeless response system in the future; and

WHEREAS, during the October 22, 2024 work session, the budget office identified an estimated annual cost for ongoing needs for rapid rehousing and emergency shelters at a minimum of \$15.4 million; and

WHEREAS, Austin has a higher rate of people experiencing chronic homelessness than most other cities; and

WHEREAS, the City's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget strategic priorities include optimizing investments, partnerships, and service delivery to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Austin; and

WHEREAS, the City has identified alleviating homelessness as a key priority;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE AUSTIN PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE:

The City of Austin adopts the State of Homelessness Response System report and modeling to inform and guide investments in the homelessness response system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Starting with the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget, the City Manager is directed to explore sustainable funding sources, partnerships, and opportunities to prioritize ongoing investments in a balanced homelessness response system. Investments should include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying which homelessness programs that are currently funded by ARPA should continue and how they will be funded;

- Resources and staffing within the Homeless Strategy Office for collaborating City departments, community organizations, and service providers;
- Strategies to increase capacity utilization of existing interventions such as shelter and rapid rehousing by increasing the placement rates for participants into housing;
- Capital and service funds for Emergency Shelter, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Rapid Rehousing;
- Diversion, navigation, and prevention programs and strategies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to identify any policy or administrative changes necessary to construct and operate the existing PSH units to be completed between 2024-2027 and the 575-650 units of PSH needed each year from 2028-2034. Such recommendations should include modifying the timeline and proposed usage of 2022 affordable housing bonds, prioritization of resources to and within the Housing Department and Austin Housing Finance Corporation, and what percentage of the identified PSH need should be primarily financed by the City versus other local partners.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to provide an update to the Public Health Committee by March 2025. As part of this update, the Manager should identify what funding amounts are needed for one-time capital investments and what are ongoing operational expenses. The report should also include a status update regarding on-going collaboration between regional partner entities including, but not limited to: ECHO, Travis County, Central Health, and Integral Care.