Austin's Action Plan to End Homelessness

October 2018 Progress Report

Last February the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) and partners published the Austin Action Plan to End Homelessness, which was endorsed by the City Council in April 2018. Since this is a community plan and takes all partners working together to achieve outcomes, ECHO reached out to workgroups and other organizations in August and September to document progress made. This update captures their responses; ECHO will continue to collect missing information, communicate across the community to gather feedback on the Plan and to document progress as well as to note needs and gaps and set priorities.

Report Summary

The Plan proposed 72 actions across five strategies – ***Outreach and Shelter, Housing and Services, Addressing Disparities, System Effectiveness, and Community Commitment***. Many organizations have moved forward with positive changes that strengthen homeless services and the system as a whole. Some are ongoing actions and others will be difficult to fully implement until adequate resources are brought into the system.

Outreach and Shelter - Coordination of outreach has increased dramatically, due in large part to the hard work of the City-wide Outreach and Navigation Workgroup. Mobile teams and pop-up resource clinics are expanding and a new navigation center is set to open by the end of the year. An *alternatives to panhandling* pilot has begun also.

The ARCH RFQ to establish a new contract for services has been released and City leaders are working with the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) to transform the shelter to focus more on clients served. The addition of 89 housing vouchers will help move people experiencing homelessness into permanent supportive housing. Finally, the Youth Homeless Demonstration Project began on October 1st, and partners are working on a goal to end youth homelessness by 2020, which includes a benchmark to offer immediate shelter to any youth identified.

Housing and Support Services – The community and service providers have worked diligently to bring more funding into the system. The City's FY2019 budget includes increased funding for Rapid Rehousing (RRH) with a proposed total of $721,000 for the year. The Pay for Success (PFS) funding model is moving forward with a 2019 budget identified by all parties. The target population and service model is being piloted and 14 clients have been housed. Planning

for use of The Waller Creek TIRZ has begun and the community is working together to pass the Affordable Housing bond, Prop A, in November.

Service providers are working collaboratively on new initiatives. The Sobering Center opened in September, providing much needed space for people to stay temporarily and avoid jail. The Income and Employment Workgroup has brought more providers on board, refined processes, and started a pilot program that will give the community important information about services needed in 2019. Integral Care and ECHO continue to expand the SOAR program, training more people and helping clients get Social Security Disability Income, and get off the streets.

Addressing Disparities – Partners are collaborating to address gaps in the system by forming new workgroups. ECHO is forming a group to focus on the Violence Against Women Act, and Caritas is exploring one to address disparities among Veterans experiencing homelessness, and services provided to them.

People with lived experience are a critical part of the system, and the iTeam has made great progress by forming the Austin Homeless Advisory Committee (AHAC). Additionally, more peer support specialists are working in the community and strengthening the delivery of services.

System Effectiveness - Training continues to be a priority for the system; a detailed list of trainings that have been provided is included in the full report below. ECHO manages two technical assistance (TA) portals: 1) TA for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database 2) TA requests for requesting trainings on best practices and/or program assistance on improving performance outcomes and/or federal regulation compliance.

The VAWA Task Group created a community-wide Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Policy and Emergency Transfer Plan Procedure to ensure the safety of community members experiencing violence and/or human trafficking. The policy expands across HUD funded/covered programs to offer equal access to housing resources regardless of funding source.

Community Commitment – ECHO is partnering with the Downtown Austin Alliance to do system mapping, Action Plan implementation, and to get more businesses involved. Additionally, the healthcare community has stepped up to address needs like SOAR, and the tech community has partnered with the iTeam to explore innovative solutions to help people experiencing homelessness.

The iTeam's Building Empathy Campaign launched this Summer to raise awareness about people experiencing homelessness and has promoted empathy and understanding. Finally, ECHO is

partnering with Influence Opinions, a public relations firm, to create a community campaign to build support for increased funding and community involvement in finding solutions to homelessness.

In summary, many stakeholders are working together to move different strategies forward. The Action Plan remains a working document and implementation will be ongoing, ECHO will continue to work closely with the City and County and will accept input and feedback from stakeholders across the community, refine our focus, and prioritize whenever feasible. Within that framework, we are planning the following timeline for the upcoming year:

2018

- ➢ Ongoing – ECHO will lead stakeholders working on all facets of the system to scale solutions and to identify and pursue all sources of funding to bolster the community's work to end homelessness

- ➢ October – Present draft update to Membership Council

- ➢ October 15 – Send progress report to Austin Public Health/City Council

- ➢ October – Gather stakeholder input on budget to get an accurate picture of current expenditures on solutions to homelessness

- ➢ October – December – Work with Downtown Austin Alliance and consultant on system mapping and implementation of Action Plan. Gather stakeholder input on goals for 2019

2019

- ➢ January – Bring community goals for homelessness services and housing for 2019 before Membership Council for approval

- ➢ April – Report on the progress made on goals, and outline specific resources and dollar amounts needed to address homelessness within each area of the plan

- ➢ August – September – ECHO and stakeholders to participate in City and County budget advocacy to ensure that adequate resources are secured to move the plan forward

Please read the full report below for a detailed update on the plan's implementation. All of the items highlighted in blue are proposed actions from the Action Plan to End Homelessness. The paragraphs following each report community progress on all of these proposed actions.

Austin's Action Plan to End Homelessness
October 2018 Progress Report

System Components to End Homelessness in Austin/Travis County
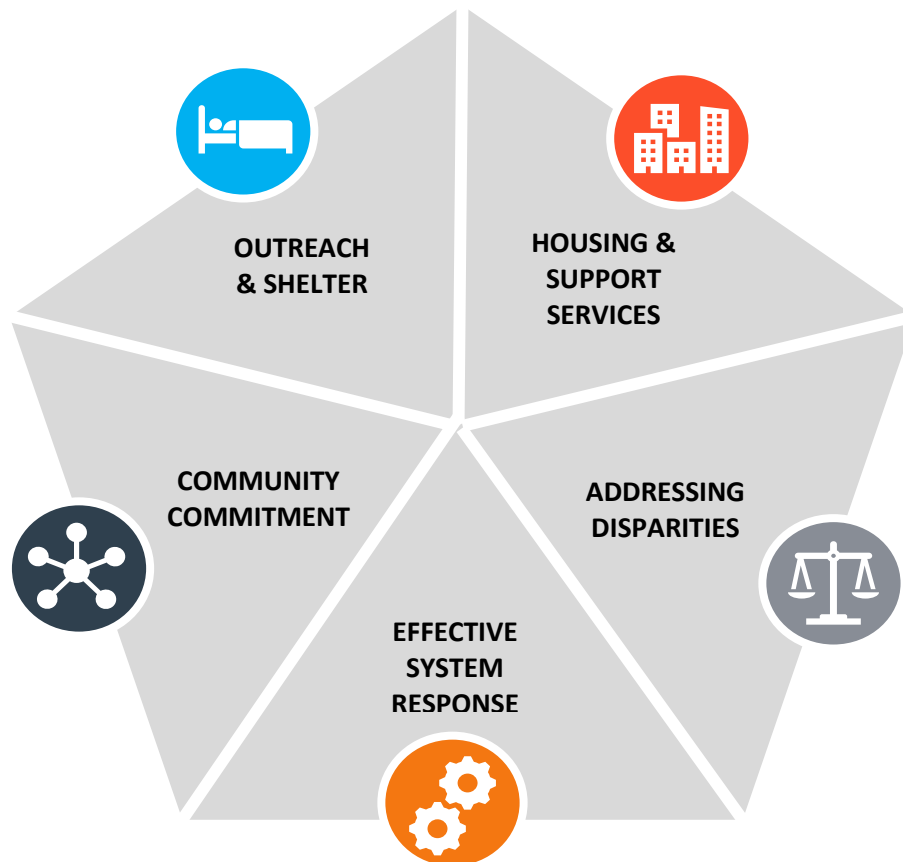
Outreach and Shelter

More Outreach

1. Create more mobile outreach teams to cover and respond to all geographic areas within Travis County, ensuring complete and systematic coverage of all areas.

Coordination of outreach has increased dramatically. Dozens of community workers meet regularly in a City-Wide Outreach Workgroup led by ECHO to address needs in specific geographic areas and to review by-name lists of clients needing engagement. Gaps are being identified and overlap and duplication has reduced. ECHO navigators, who focus on North and South Austin, started in May and are increasing coordination capacity as well as modeling navigation through the Pay for Success (PFS) pilot.

In addition to the mobile outreach efforts listed in the Action Plan, Austin Public Health, Central Health, ATC EMS, StreetMed, the Travis County Constables, Precincts 2, 3 and 4, and the Travis County Sherriff's Office HOPE Team all partner to do outreach.

Community Care is creating two new mobile teams and piloting home visits. Pop up Resource Clinics (PURC) are scheduled in new locations, Oak Hill and Wells Branch. Seton and ECHO are working to identify a location to pilot a housing and healthcare navigation center.

More effective Outreach

2. Design and implement guidelines standardizing effective practices for outreach workers across the system

The City-Wide Outreach group is documenting current practice/situation and developing a navigator checklist. It will include tools and resources to navigate clients for self-resolution, diversion, and housing planning. The iTeam is also working on a navigator checklist.

ECHO revised and strengthened an outreach tips document and the City-wide group has also increased community buy-in and use of the "Be on the Lookout" and "Intensive outreach" lists, which helps outreach workers re-engage with clients.

3. Determine the role of the HOST team moving forward

The HOST team continues to work downtown and in West campus. With expanded City funds, HOST is adding a peer position and will potentially add FTEs with APD and EMS. The HOST team is doing more case management, and some SOAR applications for Social Security Disability Income for some clients. ECHO and Integral Care lead an effort to expand SOAR capacity and are piloting a partnership with CommUnity Care to make sure clients can be examined by a physician, which speeds along the SOAR

> *The City-Wide Outreach and Navigation Workgroup has worked collaboratively to strengthen process and client services*

application. A Chaplain is now joining the HOST team whenever feasible. HOST collaborates with others doing outreach and the discussion about whether or not or when to expand the model to other parts of town continues to be discussed. The COA included funding for HOST in its FY2019 budget.

4. Enhance engagement strategies that outreach teams use with persons who are not interested in entering shelter or service agencies

The iTeam's Life University gives individuals who are homeless the opportunity to engage in continuing education, the arts, etc. regardless as to where they are living.

HOST and other outreach teams focus on connecting clients with immediate and basic needs to services.

In response to the Council resolution to address panhandling, Austin Public Health has contracted with the Other Ones Foundation to conduct a pilot program to divert people who are pan-handling to day labor services. The pilot will serve five clients per day who will work six hours a day at $15 an hour.

Outreach and Shelters as Platforms for Housing Access

5. Re-orient outreach & shelter services to focus on assisting households to rapidly exit into housing, better linking clients to housing options

The ARCH

The City hired the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) to lead a shelter transformation workshop in April to redefine the scope of services for the ARCH RFQ and to improve our homeless services system and focus on access to shelter and permanent housing. The ARCH RFQ described what a housing-focused shelter should look like, including increased capacity for case management and access to housing programs for all shelter clients. The NAEH will return this Fall to assist stakeholders with design improvements for shelter coordination, the coordinated entry system and housing programs. Austin Public Health renewed regular meetings with downtown stakeholders to devise a plan to improve the safety and health for people in and around the ARCH. The City has proposed $232,000 beyond the adopted FY2019 budget to address the ARCH revitalization and safety.

Other Shelters –

Salvation Army - The Salvation Army is building additional shelter for women and children at the Tannehill property as part of their recent Capital Campaign.

LifeWorks – The PORT is set to be up and running in October to provide youth with transitional housing followed quickly by permanent housing (RRH).

Safe - SAFE data shows they are only able to serve 33% of the survivors referred by APD.

ECHO workgroups have moved forward to improve the connection between outreach, engagement and housing. The Coordinated Assessment script has changed to provide a more accurate description of Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and to coach clients on how to develop their own housing plan. The PSH workgroup is working on speeding up the time from voucher receipt to move in and the Be on the Lookout List (BOLO) shared with outreach and navigation teams helps find individuals next in line for housing.

6. Increase rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing program funding and capacity so outreach & shelter programs can connect people to stable housing

The COA has proposed $477,000 in new funding for outreach and navigation in the FY2019 budget.

ECHO and Integral Care worked with the Housing Authority of City of Austin to secure 89 new rental vouchers that will become available in January 2019. They are targeted for use with the Pay for Success initiative to expand Permanent Supportive Housing for chronically homeless individuals who are frequent users of healthcare and the criminal justice system. Other individuals with disabilities will also be eligible to apply for these vouchers.

ECHO worked with the Travis County Housing Authority to apply for Family Unification Vouchers and if awarded, the vouchers could be strategically applied with new and ongoing youth programs.

The Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP) funds three new programs starting Oct 1: Rapid Rehousing Plus, Diversion and PORT, which combines shelter-like transitional housing with rapid rehousing. LifeWorks is partnering with Caritas of Austin, SAFE, AISD, CPS, Travis County Juvenile Probation and ECHO to implement these new programs that focus on young adults. The Austin Youth Collective adds the voice of young adults with lived experience to the national dialogue working to end youth homelessness by 2020.

> **Partners have increased funding and improved strategies for housing services.**

7. Streamline referral flow between outreach shelters, housing programs and other homeless services

The City-wide Outreach and Navigation Workgroup is making progress on this, and Sunrise Community Church operates the Compass Network, which also helps with this goal. The ARCH RFQ outlines best practice coordination which will help expedite referrals and improve service to individuals experiencing homelessness.

The iTeam is developing a resource guide to better direct service providers and clients to available resources. Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services is working on a project called the Collaborative Care Communication Center (C4). It is intended to be a force multiplier for the Homelessness Outreach Street Team and as a pivot point for first responders to be able to connect people experiencing homelessness to community resources that could increase their quality of life. The pilot is intended to start this Fall.

More Shelter and Day Services throughout City/County

8. Locate additional smaller shelters and day services throughout City/County (Consider using publicly owned spaces or churches already engaged)

In October, Seton announced a partnership with ECHO, CommUnity Care and SAFE to open a new navigation center that combines housing services with healthcare for the homeless and addresses human trafficking; it should be open before the year ends.

In response to the City Council Resolution, the City Manager's office leads exploration on how Waller Creek TIF/ITRZ can be used to fund capital needs for shelter and resource centers.

Churches around the city are offering services but there is a need to coordinate faith-based efforts with social services to improve effectiveness.

9. Consider creating specific shelters to meet the specific needs of certain subpopulations, such as families, persons experiencing chronic homelessness, people needing respite services, persons currently using substances

The Permanent Outreach Rapid Transitions (PORT), a transitional living facility at Lifeworks opened October 8th to shelter and rapidly house youth experiencing homelessness. The Sobering Center opened in September.

Low Barrier Day Services/Low-Barrier Shelters

10. Shift model from sheltering people overnight (with late entry and early exit) to a model that provides a place for someone to be 24/7 and provides a safe place for people to be during the day – *all while accessing services to quickly move on to stable housing*

New ARCH model to begin April 2019. The COA has also proposed $50,000 for a pilot for a day navigation center.

11. Integrate diversion training and services more broadly into the system, including shelters and outreach teams

ECHO provides funds for diversion, and the city-wide Outreach group now has access to these funds.

The 2019 City budget adds two FTEs for the Library Department to hire two social workers to assist clients visiting libraries. ECHO has requested that these new staff be part of the City-wide Outreach Workgroup and be trained in coordinated entry (CE) and diversion.

HOST promotes family reunification and now receives funds from the City for client assistance.

ECHO publicized that NAEH offered online training on diversion in September.

ECHO navigators attended fundamentals of mediation training in Cleveland in September to hone diversion skills.

Housing and Support Services

Bring RRH and PSH to Scale

1. Increase resources to bring Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-housing program assistance to scale

The City's FY 2018 budget allocated $400,000 in annual funding for rapid re-housing programs with an emphasis on housing for people in shelters, aiming to house 103 individuals. The funding was awarded in the summer to LifeWorks, Family Eldercare and Casa Marianella.

The City FY2019 budget includes more funding for RRH dedicated to downtown shelters; if adopted, total RRH funding provided by City will be $721,000.

YHDP has RRH funding for 75 youth.

The community advocated at City budget hearings for additional funding for housing.

The RRH workgroup is developing CoC written standards.

With funding from the City NHCD and St. David's Foundation, ECHO contracted with Caritas to launch the Frequent User PFS pilot in May.

> *Pay for Success and YHDP are two initiatives that started in the past six months and have great promise for housing more people experiencing homelessness.*

ECHO advanced the PFS transaction, securing budget commitments from Central Health, CCC, Travis County, City of Austin and Episcopal Health Foundation for FY2019. These funds make up the "end-payor" commitment to reimburse investors only if the PFS program succeeds in reducing hospitalization and jail bed days and bookings (and maintaining housing stability.) The St. David's Foundation will fund some of the services provided in client homes to complete the project. A contract among all parties will be consider for signature this Fall.

HACA, HATC, Front Steps, Integral Care, and Caritas are increasing move-ups to create more PSH capacity.

The Youth Homeless Demonstration Project launched in October and will provide RRH through Lifeworks, SAFE, Caritas, and ECHO.

2. Increase funding for additional rental housing assistance and subsidies

ECHO and Integral Care worked with the Housing Authority of City of Austin to secure 89 new rental vouchers that will become available in January 2019 and be targeted for use with the Pay for Success initiative to expand Permanent Supportive Housing for chronically homeless individuals who are frequent users of healthcare and the criminal justice system. Other individuals with disabilities will also be eligible to apply for these vouchers.

In July, the Travis County Housing Authority applied for Family Unification Vouchers with the support of ECHO and the Department of Family and Protective Services. If they are awarded they could be strategically applied with new and ongoing youth programs. Awards are expected to be announced in October or November.

Create low-barrier, low-cost housing opportunities within current rental market

3. Increase flexible funding to incentivize landlords to house persons exiting homelessness, and make units affordable and low-barrier

Though no new funding has been identified for this critical component, ECHO has added 12 new partner properties that have agreed to low-barrier screening criteria so that more people experiencing homelessness have access to rental units.

4. Maximize partnerships with Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) so persons experiencing homelessness have access to project based vouchers and units in affordable properties, including PHA properties

ECHO and the Housing Authority of the City of Austin are exploring using small-area market rents in Housing Choice Voucher programs. This would allow clients with vouchers to access more expensive rental units in higher-opportunity areas. ECHO has received technical assistance on how to pursue a "homeless preference" at apartments that were built or rehabbed with HUD "multi-family" funds. ECHO is planning a meeting with these apartment communities to explore a homeless preference.

5. Encourage preferences in the awarding of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to increase investments for housing targeted to people experiencing homelessness

ECHO hired True Casa Consulting to explore how Austin can use the LIHTC program in conjunction with the potential new affordable housing bonds to expand creation of low barrier housing. ECHO has shared suggestions with NHCD for amendments to its Rental Housing Developer Assistance program that would ensure more low barrier units are created.

6. Work with City and County to better align all eligible federal funding to address this effort

ECHO is working with the City and County to align CoC and ESG funds and in the coming months work will begin on new five year Coordinated Plans for HUD funding. This will allow all three entities to examine how best to align federal funding.

7. Increase future availability of affordable, low-barrier housing units

The Keep Austin Affordable Bond Campaign is promoting this principle. The adoption of Prop A in November will move this forward.

ECHO is working with the City on developing a structure to ensure that some units are low-barrier.

Lifeworks is in the process of building 29 permanent housing units.

8. Preserving current affordable units within the market

Multiple strategies are being reviewed to allow communities to remain affordable, but none are directly related to dedicating preserved units to homeless programs.

9. Educate local public officials and developers on the need to dedicate affordable housing units to persons experiencing homelessness and on the effectiveness of the Housing First approach

ECHO addressed the City Council during the debate on the size of the potential affordable housing bonds to inform Council that housing must not only be affordable but it must be low barrier and should not screen renters out because they are low income, or have prior rental or criminal history, for example.

ECHO participated in meetings held by NHCD regarding the Rental Housing Developers Assistance to underscore the need for developers to build units dedicated to low-barrier/affordable housing.

ECHO is meeting with experienced developers who have a track record of building quality housing for the chronically homeless as we seek to expand development capacity in Austin.

The Re-entry Roundtable published the Texas Criminal History Screen Guide for Rental Property to educate property owners on how to accommodate tenants who have been involved in the criminal justice system.

10. Ensure CodeNEXT promotes the development of both affordable and low-barrier housing units throughout the City

N/A, but advocacy is ongoing.

11. Partner with relevant public entities to ensure all unused or underused land/ developments/ funding sources are capitalized for affordable housing

> *A Community Brain Trust group has been meeting to discuss investment of the funding anticipated from the Waller Creek TIRZ*

City Council asked staff to develop a plan to invest the $30 million anticipated from the Downtown Waller Creek TIRZ to include solutions to homelessness. Assistant City Manager Sara Hensley is leading a community group to develop a menu of options. However, no City property has been identified for developing affordable/low barrier housing, with the exception of connection to the soccer deal at McKalla Place.

12. Reduce local opposition to affordable and low-barrier housing for persons experiencing homelessness by de-stigmatizing homelessness

ECHO is holding public meetings to share the impact of our work, increasing social media presence and sending newsletters about the needs the community is addressing.

The iTeam has launched a Building Empathy Campaign that placed ads on buses to raise public awareness.

The Keep Austin Affordable PAC is working to educate the community about the benefits of developing more affordable housing.

13. Expand and diversify capacity to develop housing dedicated to ending homelessness

As Austin grows rapidly, more market-rate and income-restricted housing are needed to meet the increasing demand. The Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint calls for ambitious goals through a variety of tools that include density bonus programs, tax increment financing, land

development code changes, among others. High occupancy rates and expensive market-rate rents make housing those experiencing homelessness even more difficult.

14. Dedicate Landlord Outreach Specialists to resolve housing conflicts and find new housing placements when necessary to avoid returns to homelessness

This function is currently performed by ECHO, Caritas, Integral Care, Front Steps, and HACA's landlord outreach specialists; more staff have been added in this area recently, in part to meet the needs of the YHDP.

15. Create a better understanding of the eviction process by creating eviction prevention guidelines and increase case management and client knowledge of process

ECHO is working with University of Texas graduate students on a project to assist with producing guidelines which should be completed by December.

16. Develop a community understanding of maintaining landlord relationships through trainings, and staffing support

ECHO offered two webinars to the CoC on the eviction process.

Two new landlord outreach specialists started at ECHO in September and will increase capacity.

17. Increase meaningful community connections and a sense of purpose for the newly housed

At Lifeworks, a resource center, access to staff, ad-hoc meetings, and peer support services are available to youth.

18. Increase availability of mental health services

Integral Care has launched a forensics ACT Team that works in conjunction with their mobile services unit. The agency will begin doing outreach with the constables in Travis County Precinct 2.

ECHO and Integral Care have trained 52 case managers on the SOAR method for applying for SSI/SSDI benefits which can lead to other benefits including healthcare coverage.

ACT, MCOT and E-MCOT have also helped improve availability and access to services.

Lifeworks is helping make psychiatric services more accessible to those exiting homelessness.

19. Expand detox services, residential/after care treatment, Intensive Outpatient Treatment, Medical Assisted Treatment, and community-based wraparound supports by Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors.

Austin's Sobering Center opened in August 2018 and provides an alternative to incarceration for people who may otherwise be arrested for public intoxication. The Center is coordinating with the City-wide Outreach Workgroup, IC, EMS and others to coordinate services.

The COA has proposed $50,000 for a respite care pilot.

20. Increase peer support specialists in the community to improve client navigation into systems.

Caritas has hired two peer support specialists for the Pay for Success Pilot. HOST now has a peer on the team, and Lifeworks is expanding their peer support staff members.

21. Advance the work of the *Employment and Income Workgroup* by enhancing referral pathways from homeless assistance programs to employment programs, increasing its network of participating programs, and tracking outcomes.

Key partners in this effort are ECHO, Front Steps, Caritas, and the Texas Veterans Commission.

Great progress is being made on addressing income and employment for people experiencing homelessness through SOAR and the activities of the workgroup.

Progress is being made on getting homeless service providers in the same room as employment providers, and case managers are becoming more aware of services. The workgroup revised the referral tracking form to better indicate each client's plan, give them choices, and to provide client-level case updates in one place. The resource guide is continually updated. The group will share best practices with the community in 2019 after they've had time to analyze system gaps and strengths, and pilot outcomes.

A VISTA worker started at ECHO in August to conduct outreach to employers and develop an employment resource guide for the community.

ECHO and Integral Care are working to formalize and expand the SOAR system. The program trained 52 new caseworkers and started a pilot with the Complex Primary Clinic. 46 clients are in the process of SOAR navigation and have pending applications. On average, it takes 91 days from application submission to receive a decision in Austin and there is a 63 percent approval rate.

Front Steps recently announced a new employment resource called the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) which will provide employment services (training, assessments, tools, job placement, skills building, etc.)

Goodwill is offering a computer basics class every Monday.

Addressing Disparities

Addressing barriers to exiting homelessness

1. Implement the Pay for Success initiative with a target population of frequent users of criminal justice and emergency healthcare systems

The St. David's Foundation, Central Health, the Episcopal Health Foundation, Meadows Foundation, as well as other funders, generously provided funding for this pilot.

ECHO leads the pilot that housed the 14th client in September. The target is to house 250 people over five years. An evaluator has been hired for the project, and ECHO recently released a Request for Qualifications for service providers for the full project.

2. Ensure the homelessness system & programs consistently evaluate service data to ensure all sub-populations are reached, and outcomes are equitably achieved by everyone

System providers are working on filling the gaps for subpopulations. ECHO is committed to continuously improving program monitoring and evaluation and incorporation measures related to equitable enrollment and outcomes into performance discussions.

3. Better tailor outreach, staff recruitment or development, and service delivery models to address subpopulations' specific barriers (e.g. conducting affirmative marketing, training on cultural competency, providing safe and inclusive services, changing program, policies & practices to address barriers)

Integral Care holds monthly mental health meetings with stakeholder groups to coordinate services.

University of Texas graduate students are working on cultural competency training and will produce a report in December.

4. Create new partnerships with stakeholders already working to address racial disparities

ECHO is continually creating new partnerships with stakeholders working to address racial disparities. Future partnerships of interest include the City of Austin's Equity Office and groups like Measure, a local nonprofit working to address disparities in the criminal justice system.

A Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) task group is looking to be identified as a formal workgroup to partner with other victim services group and be advisors on community cases. An emergency transfer plan policy to access housing has already been put in place, and the task group is getting a written proposal prepared to present to the Local Policy and Practice Workgroup.

Membership Council is exploring new membership opportunities in the coming months.

Addressing Individual and System Barriers to Housing

5. Hire additional landlord outreach specialist with real estate expertise who can efficiently find housing and can negotiate lower screening criteria for persons experiencing homelessness

ECHO has a contract with the COA and also brought on two new community housing liaisons in September.

6. Increase current network of Landlord Outreach Specialists who collaboratively maximize housing opportunities

ECHO and workgroup participants are committed to working with other agencies toward this goal.

7. Standardize a low-barrier tenant screening criteria industry wide for affordable housing units

ECHO and other partners are working to lower criminal background screening requirements for housing through the Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable.

8. Increase implementation of Housing First principles system-wide to reduce barriers to housing among subpopulations

ECHO's Community Housing team is analyzing data for a report and anticipates it will be released in October.

9. Analyze root causes that place subgroups at higher risks of homelessness

The Veterans Initiative workgroup is considering starting a subgroup on racial equity in services among veterans. They are in the data collection phase and analyzing populations and services.

10. Address root causes through broader system coordination with the criminal justice, housing, foster care, CPS system

Lifeworks coordinates closely with Child Protective Services and the foster care system. The agency also works with jail liaisons to assist youth and ensure they are safe and have a plan for housing.

Gardner-Betts has hired a housing liaison to serve youth in the system.

The Austin Independent School District is doing an analysis of student households to assess risk for homelessness.

Leveraging People's Agency

11. Consistently include more persons with lived experiences of homelessness in all decision-making bodies

The iTeam leads the Austin Homeless Advisory Committee (AHAC) to inform their efforts and provide input on homeless services in Austin.

12. Incorporate expertise from persons experiencing homelessness in development and management of programs

Representatives from the Youth Advisory Council are part of the CoC Membership Council.

ECHO has a person with lived experience on its board of directors.

13. Improve staff diversity across the homeless response system, including leadership roles, to reflect the population being served

Integral Care, Caritas, and Sunrise Church have hired peer support specialists.

14. Provide leadership and training for programs to hire persons with lived experiences

Peer support specialists in the community have helped make this happen. Caritas and Integral Care are two agencies that have made headway in hiring people with lived experience.

15. Continue to implement Housing First principles, where client has choice in location and type of housing

ECHO is working on a report addressing this and staff are in the data cleanup phase. The team expects to produce a report in October.

16. Create affordable housing opportunities all over the city,

> **More peer support specialists at agencies provide needed expertise to address complex individual and community challenges.**

The Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint has affordable housing goals for each council district to ensure access to affordable housing across the City. Partners also acknowledge the need to incentivize change in the property code. The Housing Bond, which we anticipate will be approved in November, will help accomplish this goal.

System Effectiveness

1. Continue streamlining existing processes across agencies and programs

Workgroups have robust discussions each month aimed at streamlining and improving homeless services.

2. Strengthen cross-system partnerships through formalized agreements, shared investments, and dedicated system-level staff

The PFS initiative involves healthcare, criminal justice and housing programs and requires a contract with private funders, end-payors, a third-party evaluator and service providers.

Constable offices in precincts 2, 3, and 4 have informal agreements to do outreach to people experiencing homelessness.

3. Invest in training and staff development to ensure high quality services are provided across all programs and to ensure continuity as well as all having the tools they need to do their jobs

Integral Care offers mental health first aid training.

Poverty simulation trainings are offered through the Junior League.

The Texas Homeless Network does trainings through its annual conference in September.

Housing Works offers workshops on affordable housing.

LifeWorks to provide quarterly trainings on the Strengths Based Model.

ECHO coordinated the following trainings:

- Provided Equal Access: Creating Safer Spaces for Trans and Non-Binary Persons in Homeless Services workshop presented by Shane Whalley.
- Partnered with SAFE Alliance to provide Violence Against Women Act workshop
- Partnered with Integral Care through the Health Community Collaborative to offer three 2-day Motivational Interviewing trainings to providers across the community.
- ECHO provided a Rapid Rehousing webinar series focused on cross training materials with Landlord Outreach Specialists. (posted on AustinECHOlistings.org).

4. Increase alignment and impact of current funding through consistent contract requirements and performance management

ECHO uses and updates CoC funded Performance Scorecards to rate and rank program effectiveness and provide support to programs not meeting performance standards.

A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Policy was approved by Membership Council in May 2018 and applies to CoC funded projects. The PIP Policy ties into the COC Reallocation Policy to ensure that high performing projects are prioritized for funding over lower performing projects. The PIP Policy is initiated when projects are not meeting baseline criteria for grant management or system performance measures and includes technical assistance.

Quarterly Performance Scorecards are completed by COC funded projects and reviewed by ECHO. Performance Scorecards score projects based on performance related to grant management and system performance measures. Scorecards have been revised to include more rigorous measures. All measures on the scorecard are vetted and approved through the HUD CoC and ESG Committee and the Membership Council.

ECHO staff have been meeting with VSP using a comparable HMIS database to improve reporting communication and ensure reports generated across HMIS and HMIS comparable vendors match.

HUD requires each CoC to track null and missing value information as well as other data quality concerns. The rates of data quality issues per each response element that impacts the system performance measures is submitted to HUD. HUD reviews this and includes the data quality piece in its larger evaluation of the system performance measures.

HUD provided programming specifications to ensure consistency and will provide more resources to help CoCs test the accuracy of their systems to access data.

5. Use more qualitative feedback from clients to inform change

The City of Austin iTeam created the AHAC to help inform change.

All HUD funded agencies have persons with lived experience in decision-making roles.

LifeWorks established the Austin Youth Collective to ensure the voices of youth are integral to decision-making for YHDP.

6. Increase funding towards trainings, technical assistance services, and community dialogues to improve capacity of providers

ECHO brought the community together for numerous trainings to increase knowledge and consistency in homelessness services.

Workgroups are continually evolving to address the needs of stakeholders, clients and the community. They provide a venue for all to discuss system improvements and capacity.

- ECHO and IC partnered to use available Healthy Community Collaborative funding on training opportunities for the community.

- ECHO created partnerships with agencies in the community to coordinate the annual trainings listed in the previous section
- ECHO hosted a webinar series to cross-train RRH providers on Landlord Outreach Services – recorded webinars are posted on AustinECHOListings.org
- ECHO launched a Technical Assistance portal on its website for agencies to request TA and training services
- ECHO created a RRH Case Management Workgroup that is focused on providing training and staffing support
- ECHO is participating in Technical Assistance funded by HUD to engage HUD funded multi-family properties to create a preference to house homeless households

7. Increase use of performance-based contracts that tie contract outcomes to community-wide goals

The COA is moving in this direction.

8. Improve the capacity of the CoC and funders to monitor program performance and assess cost effectiveness

ECHO monitors system performance through quarterly reports and system performance. ECHO continues to update CoC Quarterly Performance Scorecards to align with HUD recommended strategies for measuring and monitoring performance.

9. Align investments to cost-effective efforts that end homelessness

ECHO provided more support and community initiatives related to RRH intervention, and the community continues building support through workgroups. ECHO and Lifeworks secured YHDP funding that focuses on RRH initiatives.

The Independent Auditor of the City of Austin published three of four reports on City activity related to homelessness; a fourth report is expected this Fall.

10. Shift funding towards high performing interventions and programs, recognizing subpopulations' needs and barriers

ECHO and the Membership Council agreed to use more performance-based information when rating and ranking projects for renewal in the HUD CoC competition. The group created a Performance Improvement Plan Policy for COC-funded projects that is tied to the Reallocation Policy and Procedures.

11. Evaluate the extent to which program models are implemented successfully

The City of Austin is creating a city-wide map of homelessness services that captures how those experiencing homelessness interact with City services. Data comes from Police, EMS, Watershed Protection, Parks and Recreation, and the Code Department. This tool will allow the City to best utilize limited resources and measure the effectiveness of strategies on a neighborhood level and across the entire City.

Evaluation will occur in the Income and Employment workgroup in 2019.

12. Increase use of competitive funding

The CoC/Membership Council has implemented a Performance Improvement Plan policy to better assess programs' strengths and needs, and to allocate funding through this lens.

13. Ensure staff compensation reflects experience and expected outcomes

The City of Austin pays $15 an hour.

14. Staff programs have caseloads based on best practices to prevent staff burnout
15. The system (programs, agencies, actors) promotes office cultures that support self-care among staff to prevent burnout (e.g. staff workshops, counseling)
16. Increase training opportunities for staff to improve performance

ECHO is committed to providing ongoing training opportunities related to disparities awareness. In the last year ECHO has provided a training opportunity to the CoC related to creating safe spaces for trans and non-binary individuals, and in collaboration with CoC partners put on a full-day training on race and inequality. NAEH trainings are shared with partners.

17. Programs consider all tools available to incentivize staff (e.g. recognition, competitive salaries, bonuses)

18. Increase staff and resources to prevent discharge into homelessness from correctional facilities, hospitals, and mental health and foster care systems

Gardner Betts is hiring a staff person dedicated to housing and stability.

19. Ensure formerly homeless households maintain housing stability through supportive services

St. David's is granting three million dollars to organizations serving low-income and formerly homeless individuals to increase community connections and wrap-around services. They are funding community-based, on-site supports like community gardens.

20. Support research on effective homelessness prevention strategies, and re-orient current prevention programs to support those effective practices. Capture prevention data and root causes of homelessness and their weight.

An ECHO volunteer started research on this topic in September.

21. Ensure effectiveness of prevention programs, reducing the time it takes to provide assistance to eligible clients

22. Continue re-orienting transitional housing investments towards a Rapid Re-housing model
    The FY2019 City budget includes increased funding for RRH; a new proposal would raise total funding to $721,000.

23. Provide technical assistance to existing Transitional Housing programs to improve efficiency of service delivery and reduce time spent and cost

24. Raise funds to implement Austin/Travis County Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness

A federal grant and other funders enabled YHDP to begin October 1.

Community Commitment

1. Create a dedicated local funding stream to meet the large unmet need at appropriate scale

ECHO continues advocacy with community leaders and partners. Sources under consideration include the Downtown Waller Creek TIRZ that could be used in $10M increments for capital expenses and a Tourism Public Improvement District created by hotel owners for use over the next 10 years and then renewable. The TIRZ funding must benefit the area identified within the Waller Creek area. All Austin hotels would be part of the TPID should it be created.

The City's Housing Trust Fund currently has seven million dollars. The County is also exploring development of a fund.

The $250 million dollar affordable housing bond, if passed in November, will bolster development funding.

Community First Village has secured private donors to build an expansion.

Federal legislation has passed to make more funding available for PFS.

> **The iTeam has brought bold new thinking and innovation to the homeless services system in Austin**

2. Expand the base of support across sectors

ECHO is partnering with the Downtown Austin Alliance to hire a consultant to draft an Action Plan Implementation diagram, a process used by many businesses to plot growth and strategy. This diagram will help articulate funding priorities for both the public and private sectors. The healthcare community, specifically St. David's Foundation, Central Health, CommUnity Care and Seton/Ascension, have contributed more resources to fund efforts to end homelessness.

ECHO held a stakeholder meeting on July 31st to present homelessness system successes, discuss the Action Plan to End Homelessness, and to celebrate elected officials, the business community, and foundations' commitment to move the Plan forward.

The iTeam has partnered with the design and tech community on projects such as the service design hustle and the block chain challenge.

3. Create an options menu for the public to be involved in the solutions

The iTeam has created a valuable resource for the public to use, and ECHO is updating its website to include this and other resources to ensure that the public has the information it needs to help people experiencing homelessness.

4. Create an electronic platform for volunteers to support the work of ending homelessness across systems

The University of Texas School of Social Work students are working with ECHO on a project to address this. It will be completed in December.

5. Create a communication strategy that encourages people to give to food and service organizations for the homeless, rather than directly to panhandlers or others experiencing homelessness

ECHO is partnering with Influence Opinions to create a communications strategy geared toward increasing resources and public engagement to end homelessness.

The iTeam's Building Empathy Campaign promotes public awareness on the issue of homelessness.

Homelessness Awareness Week in November will provide an opportunity for partners to educate the public; ECHO is considering having a guest speaker at the Fall meeting to contribute to this goal.