

Homeless Advocacy Project

2025 Funding and Policy Priorities

*Strengthening Austin's Response to
Homelessness*





Who we are...

- ▶ A group of service providers and advocates that come together monthly to meet with city leaders and others to discuss and address system gaps and needs.
- ▶ What we do:
 - ▶ Meet monthly to coordinate efforts, obtain critical information, and advocate.
 - ▶ Share resources to strengthen services for unhoused neighbors.
 - ▶ Advocate for evidence-based policies that create high-impact solutions.
 - ▶ Champion sustainable funding for unhoused Austinites.

Family Homelessness – A Growing Crisis

➤ The Facts

- 1,284 households with children estimated to be homeless (October 2024)
- All emergency shelters are full – families face long wait lists
- Families and victims of domestic violence have few to no options and are frequently living in unsafe conditions





Austin Family Homelessness Facts

- Families represented 12% of the unhoused population in 2023 and grew to 20% of Austin's total population in 2025.
- During this time period, the city cut funding for emergency shelter beds for families and added over 400 shelter beds for single adults.
- April 2025 - 218 children were on the Salvation Army Family Shelter waitlist
- 2025 - The Homeless Strategy Office requested \$32M for emergency shelter but no dollars are earmarked for family shelter beds.
- ECHO's model calls for 50 family shelter beds, but this would fall short of meeting immediate needs.

Working together for solutions
and policy change



Family Homelessness Funding Solution

- Ensure the \$2M requested for Community Based Shelter is allocated for emergency shelter for families.
- Of that, restore \$250,000 to Foundation for the Homeless to serve 40 families in 2025-2026.
 - Issue an RFP for \$1.75 million to address emergency family shelter needs.

Public Health Crisis

► Needs and Gaps

- Unhoused neighbors spoke up: greater access to showers, restrooms and laundry facilities is a top priority.
- The City's three navigation centers do not have laundry facilities. Mobile services are critical.
- Business owners complain and are negatively impacted by lack of restrooms and hygiene services for the unhoused community.

Solutions:

- Fund showers at the Charlie Center
- Continue laundry contract with Mission Accomplished
- Clarify policy: Austin recreation center facilities must be open to ALL Austinites!



The Workforce Solution Gap

➤ **Issue:**

- 469 unsheltered people in downtown Austin with no employment assistance or workforce development services available in the downtown area.
- This is a **major barrier** facing the unhoused community and impedes their ability to resolve their homelessness.

➤ **Solution:**

- Fund a pilot project in downtown Austin to connect people to employment opportunities and training.
- Partner with City and County Economic Development Departments, local businesses and workforce programs.
- Coordinate with TOOF, Goodwill and Workforce Solutions.



Policy Issues and Recommendations

- **Issue:** A lack of prioritization system for City of Austin shelter beds results in many high-risk neighbors sleeping outside or in unsafe places.
- **Solution:** Establish a prioritization process for shelter entry that makes use of the coordinated assessment tool, as recommended by NAEH.
- **Issue:** Austin does not use an emergency shelter bed management tool.
- **Solution:** Ensure that the new homeless management information system gives providers access to a bed management tool.
- **Issue:** Encampment cleanup procedures are inconsistent and unclear.
- **Solution:** Create a comprehensive communication plan for cleanup procedures and coordinate with homeless service providers and other agencies.

Emails from 2024, after emergency shelter request to City Council was left unfunded

- “We have a lady with a baby and two toddlers on the street...for some weeks due to her husband being incarcerated, and he was the breadwinner.”
- After the family became displaced, the mother missed days of work, and her employer terminated her. The son was living with another family member while the mother was living out of her car, but due to changes in the circumstances with that family member, the son is no longer able to stay there and is now living with the mother in their car.
- I have a 28-year-old female client who is currently living outside with her 7-year-old daughter. Her daughter is in school. The shelters are full right now.
- We are working with a family who has 4 children and is currently living in their car. They are working but not consistently, and trying to obtain funding for a hotel. They are already on the waitlist for Salvation Army family shelter.
- *This is merely a sampling of the requests caseworkers are fielding weekly.*

Family Stories

The Need

Families First Innovative Solutions

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Advocacy Project, contact
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