

## Austin Realigns Homelessness Services to Streamline Delivery

### Positive Stories / Lessons Learned from HPRP: Community Success Story

HPRP Grantee:	City of Austin
CoC Name and Number:	TX-503 - Austin/Travis County CoC

### Latest CoC Point-in-Time Count:

Total persons in ES:	778	Total persons in TH:	559
Total persons in Safe Haven:	16	Total unsheltered persons:	1,004
Total persons, sheltered and unsheltered:	2,357		

In the city of Austin, HPRP spurred a transformation of social services provision by bringing together new and existing homelessness prevention and homeless assistance services into one system. The City had previously supported a variety of services through individual contracts with non-profits: one organization provided one-time utility assistance, while others combined rental assistance with case management; different nonprofits offered rapid-rehousing services via a rapid re-housing demonstration, while more provided shelter and associated emergency assistance.

HPRP marked the first occasion when prevention, homeless assistance and housing location services were provided as part of one program. Austin had already recognized that households seeking assistance needed easier ways to access social services, instead of moving from program to program until they found the assistance they needed. With HPRP, organizations began aligning their intake processes to give and take referrals, creating numerous entry points and expedited paths to appropriate assistance. “HPRP really gave us a leap forward – a ‘step’ is too modest – in recognizing how each organization is only one door to the social services system. Now we have utility assistance tied to rapid

re-housing tied to case management,” says Susan Gehring, Austin’s Community Based Resources Manager.

A result of HPRP’s design and scope is its influence on how Austin will fund social services in the future. The city recently began a competition to re-procure social services, and is looking to support a program that incorporates different services as HPRP did. The expected benefits are reduced administrative overhead, more integrated uses of data systems, improved client access to services, and increased collaboration among providers. In short, Austin is using the HPRP model to create a more comprehensive continuum of care within one funded program, and aims to promote such integration in the remainder of its community services.

*\*Names have been changed for confidentiality.*

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