

# 2022 Annual Report

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**The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is the backbone of our community's Homelessness Response System. As the lead agency for the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care, we lead and align a coalition responsible for planning and implementing community-wide strategies to end homelessness. We work alongside people with firsthand experience of homelessness and nonprofit, government, and philanthropic partners to work toward a future in which everyone in our community has housing of their choice that provides a foundation for optimal health, success, and stability. Learn more ending homelessness in our community: [austinecho.org](http://austinecho.org)**

# Housing Always

**Housing ends homelessness.** It's a phrase we repeat often in social services because it's fundamental to the work of ending homelessness. Whatever it is that pushes someone into a housing crisis, our first goal is to reconnect that person to a safe, stable place to live of their choice as quickly as possible and provide the supports they want and need to remain stably housed long-term.

In Austin and Travis County, we believe strongly in this Housing First approach, an [evidence-based](#) national best practice, and it's shown significant success in our community. **Since 2017, housing providers in our local Homelessness Response System have connected more than 10,000 people to permanent housing paired with individualized supportive services. More than 9 in 10 people who use these programs remain stably housed two years later.**

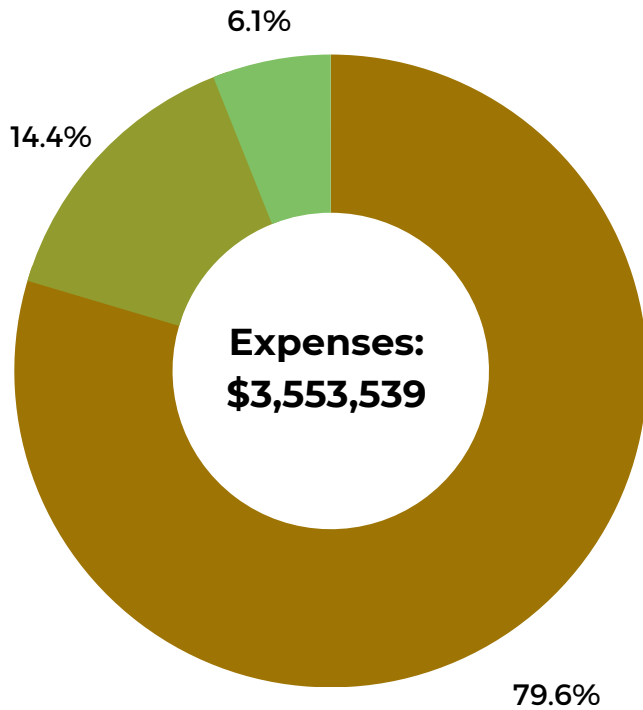
Short-term strategies that meet people's immediate needs are essential in any effective response system when they center the experiences of people we serve. Yet these strategies alone can't end homelessness. Regardless of the short-term approaches a community takes, ending homelessness will always require long-term investment in permanent places for people to live. This requires us to think beyond Housing First.

Ending homelessness means  
**Housing Always.**



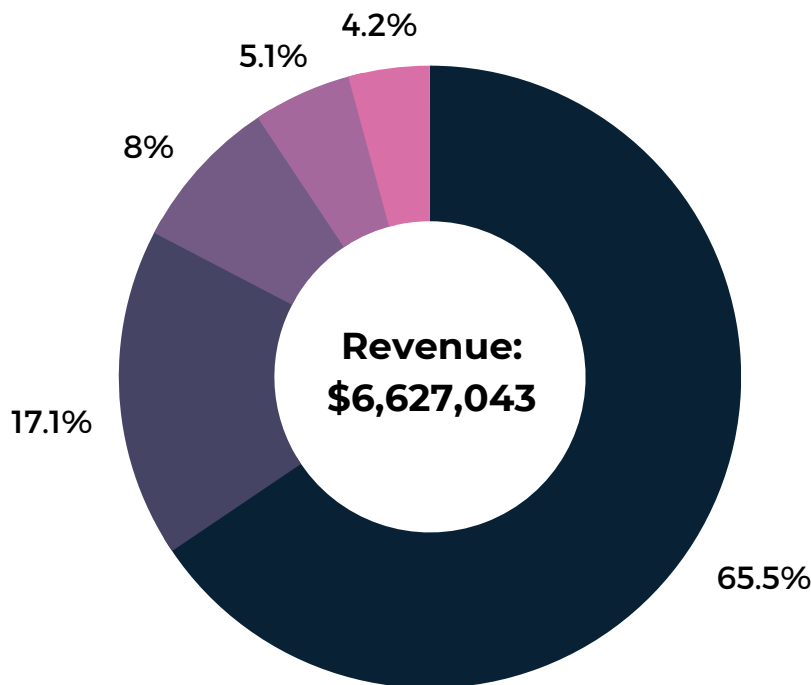
# Financials

based on 2021 audited financial statements (2022 yet to be audited)



- Program Services (79.6%)
- Management & General (14.4%)
- Fundraising Expenses (6.1%)

Revenue in 2021 substantially outpaced 2020 due to a number of factors, including a one-time pandemic-related loan forgiveness, contributions from foundational supporters, and the national fundraising campaign during the 2021 Winter Storm. ECHO passed much of this financial support through to partner organizations in our community through competitive grants, which will be reflected in future financial reports. Meanwhile, ECHO's expenses dropped from 2020 to 2021, due in part to the elimination of office costs in the first half of the year.



- Contributions (Individuals, Corporations, & Foundations) (65.5%)
- Grants (Non-federal) (17.1%)
- Grants (Federal) (8%)
- PPP Loan Forgiveness (5.1%)
- Service Fees (4.2%)
- Other (0.03%)

# Financials

## MAJOR DONORS

over \$5,000

### 2021

**Gerson Lehrman Group**  
**Samsung**  
**UnitedHealthCare - Housing &  
 Health Initiative**  
**St David's Foundation**  
**National Philanthropic Trust**  
**ATX<sub>1</sub> Freedom Healing &  
 Abundance Fund**  
**Morris Levinson Foundation**  
**MFI Foundation**  
**Frank Schubert**  
**Adam Morrison**  
**Donna Carter & Michael Gagarin**  
**Presidium**  
**Nimes**

### 2022

**Donna Carter & Michael Gagarin**  
**Bezos Day 1 Families Fund**  
**Glimmer Austin**  
**WoodNext Foundation**  
**PNC**  
**Indeed**  
**Samsung**  
**National Instruments**  
**Morris Levinson Foundation**  
**St. David's Foundation**  
**MFI Foundation**  
**Presidium**  
**Nimes**

**Thank you to all our generous donors!**

# Foundational Support

## St. David's FOUNDATION

### THANK YOU!

ECHO would like to express our deep gratitude for the ongoing support St. David's Foundation provides the Homelessness Response System in Austin and Travis County. In addition to generous contributions to support the day-to-day operations of ECHO, **St. David's Foundation provided the resources for two major initiatives our organization undertook in 2022:**



#### ART OF THE HEART

Data for Equity grant

"The Art of the Heart is to Hear with the Ear" is a qualitative research project that uncovered reasons Black unhoused people do and do not engage with homeless services in the Austin/Travis County Homelessness Response System. The research, based on information from 34 people with firsthand experience of homelessness revealed the significance of lived expertise and compassion in service delivery as it relates to trust of homeless service providers in the system.

[Interactive Project](#) [Full Report \(PDF\)](#)

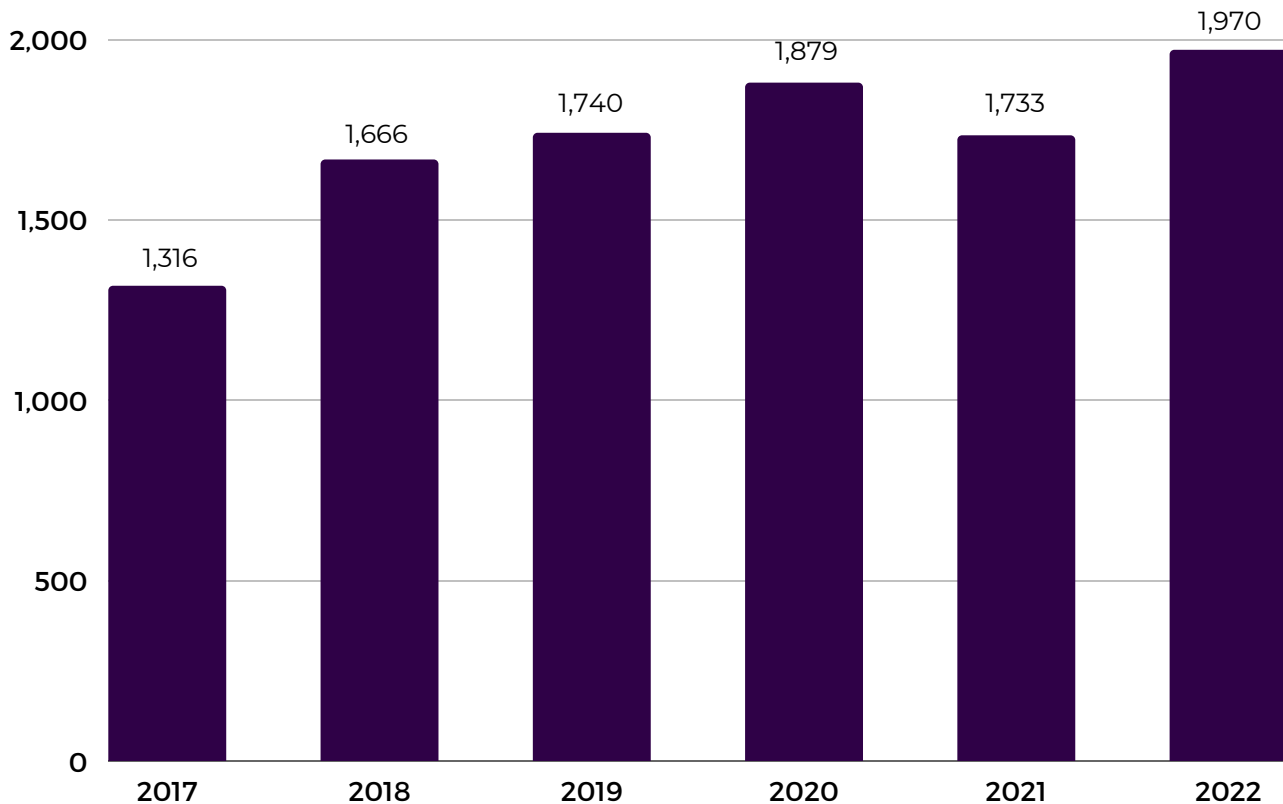


#### ASOC

Outreach & Diversion

St. David's Foundation contributed \$2 million to establish the Austin Street Outreach Collaborative (ASOC). ECHO passed the funds through to three organizations in the community to hire 12 full-time outreach positions with the goal of growing a system to connect people to housing and services equitably across all parts of our community. Funding was awarded in April. See page 14 to see the impact ASOC made in the last eight months of the year.

# Housing Successes



**Housing providers in the Homelessness Response System connected 1,970 people to permanent places to live in 2022.** This total includes Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for people who need long-term supports, Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) for folks who can re-establish stability with time-limited supports, and Minimal Housing Assistance (MHA) for people who can end their own homelessness with a short-term one-time solution.

**Since 2017, our housing partners in the community have connected more than 10,000 people to new housing options paired with the right kinds of support people want and need.** More than 90% of people housed through one of these programs remains stably housed two years later.

[Find more data on our Homelessness Response System Dashboard.](#)

# Housing Pipeline



The Austin/Travis County community continues to prioritize the creation of site-based Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to meet the urgent needs of our unsheltered neighbors. **By 2026, we anticipate more than 1,000 new units will open, the first 300 by the end of 2023.** [Learn more about some of the units in the pipeline as part of the Travis County Supportive Housing Collaborative](#)

Site-based PSH units are built because of the vision and courage of the agencies who develop and operate them, as well as local, state, and private funders who make the vision possible. **Our thanks to the City of Austin, Travis County, our local housing authorities, and service providers stepping into new roles to help build our community's rehousing system.**

## AT HOME INITIATIVE

This innovative five-year initiative involves seven partners, including ECHO, collaborating to provide housing and support services for 200-250 people experiencing chronic homelessness who are medically vulnerable and frequently end up in places like emergency rooms or jails. After a long process, 2022 saw the final planning steps necessary to begin connecting people to places to live.

**The first tenants that are part of this initiative will move into Espero at Rutland, a new PSH community operated by Caritas of Austin, in 2023.**



# By the Numbers



## COMMUNITY DATA REQUESTS

filled by the Research & Evaluation Team

In addition to fulfilling more than **75 data requests** from community partners and researchers, the R&E Team continues to update and refine our Homelessness Response System Dashboard. Community stakeholders and journalists are becoming increasingly familiar with the Dashboard and the reliability of the data presented.

[Explore the Dashboard](#)



## DIVERSIONS/RAPID EXITS

managed by the Coordinated Entry Team

ECHO provided community partners with new funding to support Diversion and Rapid Exit services in 2022 through the Austin Street Outreach Collaborative (see page 14). These funds helped support **211 households** in quickly ending their homelessness in the second half of last year through [one-time financial support](#).



## NEW HMIS USERS

trained by the HMIS Team

As more organizations and people use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), it becomes stronger as a tool to understand how best to meet people's needs. The **318 new users** represent 10 new agencies who are now contributing data to HMIS.

# By the Numbers



## **HOUSING PARTNER ENGAGEMENTS** facilitated by the Strategy Team

Austin's housing market proved an unpredictable barrier in 2022 as rents spiked dramatically and occupancy rates reached record levels. This coincided with an influx of pandemic-related tenant-based resources into the community. ECHO's Community Housing Team engaged **138 landlords, property managers, property owners, and real estate professionals** over the course of the year to unlock new units for people ending their homelessness.



## **NEW HOUSING PROGRAMS** supported by the HMIS and Coordinated Entry Teams

Housing providers are leveraging new funding streams to set up new housing options for people who are ending their homelessness. These **20 new programs** expand the scope of HMIS in the community and will ramp up the number of people referred to housing units through the Coordinated Entry System when organizations are ready to start leasing.

# By the Numbers



## **NEW COMMUNITY ASSESSORS**

trained by the Coordinated Entry Team

ECHO trained **25 new assessors** to complete Coordinated Assessments (CAs). This brings the total to more than 60 at 21 organizations in our community. Our partners completed more CAs in 2022 than ever before.

[Up-to-date list of CA providers](#)



## **NEW SOAR ASSESSORS**

supported by the Strategy Team

[SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery \(SOAR\)](#) is an important model for getting people experiencing homelessness federal benefits. These **7 new assessors** contributed to 56 people getting access to their benefits in 2022. Austin/Travis County is the top-performing community in Texas and a leader nationally, with around 300 people being approved for benefits since 2017.



## **COMMUNITY TRAININGS**

provided by the Strategy Team

From LGBTQ+ Equal Access to the fundamentals of motivational interviewing, ECHO's Strategy Team brought **12 training opportunities** to the community for free in 2022. Hundreds of community members took part in the virtual trainings, which were recorded and uploaded to [our YouTube channel](#).

# CoC Grant Competitions

**Ten service providers in Austin and Travis County were awarded a total of \$18.7 million** in federal funds for fiscal year 2022 through two Continuum of Care funding competitions.

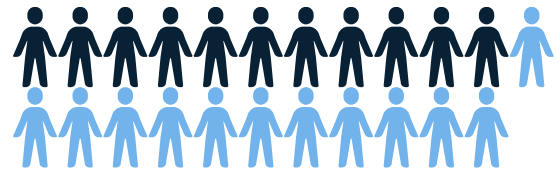
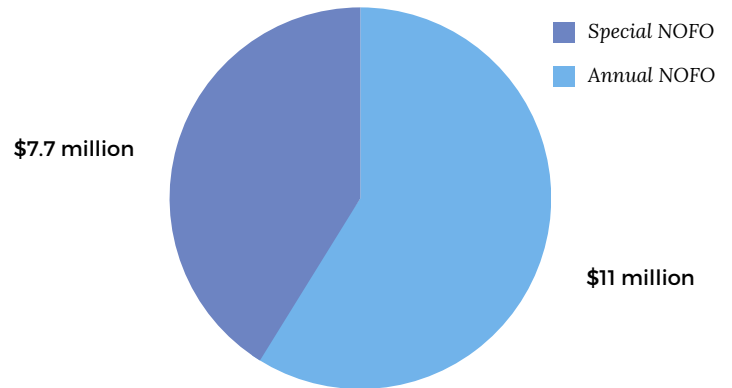
About \$11 million of the total comes from the annual CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). These funds support Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), Transitional Housing (TH), and diversion programs for people ending their homelessness, as well as some of the administrative costs associated with the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

## [2022 CoC Grant Competition Awards](#)

## SPECIAL NOFO

For the first time, HUD released a second NOFO in parallel with the annual competition to address unsheltered and rural homelessness. ECHO's Strategy Team facilitated a collaborative planning process that involved two of our community's lived experience consulting groups, the Austin Youth Collective (AYC) and the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC); meetings with service, healthcare, and housing providers; and a broad community stakeholder meeting. Two Austin agencies received a combined \$7.7 million for PSH projects. **Both awardees are first-time recipients of CoC funds in our community.**

## [2022 Special NOFO Grant Awards](#)

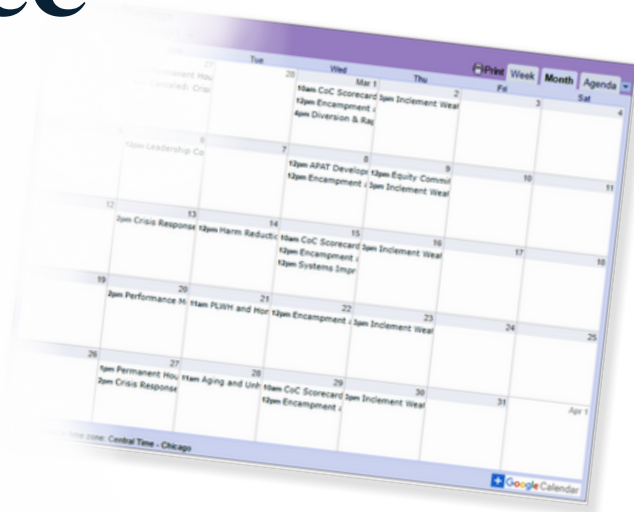


*Nearly half (11/23) of the people engaged to serve as independent reviewers for project applications across both NOFOs have lived experience of homelessness*

# CoC Governance

Leadership Council made significant strides in its first full year as our reimagined CoC governing board. Meetings of Leadership Council and associated Committees and Workgroups are listed on our website and are open to the public unless otherwise noted.

[Find meetings and get involved](#)



## COMPENSATION POLICY

Members of Leadership Council who have firsthand experience of homelessness led the creation of a governance-wide compensation policy to pay people with lived experience and community equity advocates. The group determined the pay through a market analysis of the cost of living and current consultant rates. ECHO secured a funding stream in 2022 and contracted with The Other Ones Foundation (TOOF) to distribute payments by either cash, check, or direct deposit. **By the end of 2022, our community was paying 25 people with lived experience and equity advocates across governance.**

[Read the Compensation Policy \(PDF\)](#)

## ROADMAP

Leadership Council and ECHO collaborated to create the CoC Board's first Roadmap for the Council, Committees, and Workgroups. Committees provided feedback during the creation of the ambitious guiding document, which will be revisited and revised yearly to create sustainable work plans that move our community closer to ending homelessness.

[Explore Governance materials](#)

# Community Funding

ECHO began directly funding organizations in our community in 2022, leveraging generous support from the St. David's Foundation and WoodNext Foundation to pass **\$2.5 million in competitive grants to 21 organizations** providing direct care to people experiencing homelessness.

## ASOC

Through a process developed and conducted by people with firsthand experience of homelessness and stakeholders in our Homelessness Response System, ECHO awarded three agencies funding in 2022 to establish the [Austin Street Outreach Collaborative \(ASOC\)](#). This initiative is intended to build a stronger infrastructure for racially equitable, data-driven, and sustainable service delivery for the unhoused population. **We Can Now, Urban Alchemy, and Sunrise Homeless Navigation Center** were selected to receive funding to hire 12 full-time outreach positions between them and distribute \$500,000 in direct assistance over two years.



**Meet the inaugural members of the Austin Street Outreach Collaborative**

# Community Funding

## ASOC

Contracts began in April 2022. In the last **nine months** of the year, ASOC:

2,300

engaged **2,300**  
households in  
services

1,100

completed **1,100**  
**Coordinated**  
**Assessments**

135

connected **135**  
households to  
places to live

## Microgrants

ECHO leveraged funding from the WoodNext Foundation to create new partnerships with organizations serving people living outside. In 2022, ECHO issued a request for interest and **identified 18 agencies to receive \$25,000 microgrants to fund direct assistance through diversion and rapid exit services.** The selection process prioritized agencies who were new to the system and engaged with a population that was having difficulty reaching other system access points due to systemic oppression and other barriers. The first six agencies were awarded and began using the funds in the final weeks of the year.

# Finding Home ATX

The collaborative effort launched in 2021 to house 3,000 people in three years, [Finding Home ATX](#), pushed ever closer to our overall fundraising goal last year and began seeing dollars translated to doors. **Through the end of 2022, Finding Home ATX partners:**



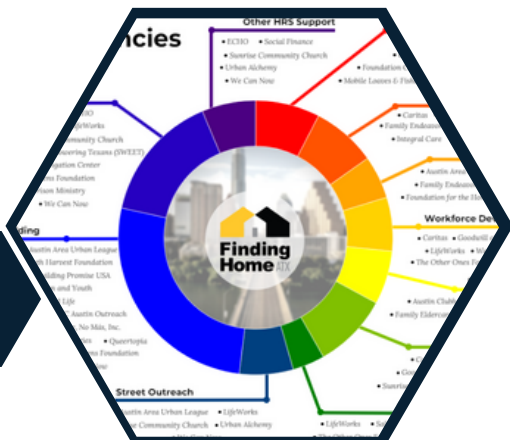
raised **more than 90%** of our **\$515 million goal**



contributed to **1,400 new housing units**



housed **625 people in new projects**



In addition to scaling up available housing in our community, the initiative is **expanding the universe of providers** receiving formal funding to work to end homelessness.

[Explore funded providers](#)

# Advocacy

## BUS PASS DISTRIBUTION

On behalf of direct service organizations

ECHO partnered with the Transit Empowerment Fund (TEF) to **distribute 20,000 31-day, 7-day, and 1-day bus passes to direct service organizations** to provide to people living outside. This agreement was a portion of the [7,000 monthly passes](#) TEF provided as a stopgap to increase bus access while our partners at the Texas Harm Reduction Alliance and others fought for - and won - a permanent free fare program set to launch in 2023.



## TENANTS' RIGHTS ORDINANCES

Preventing homelessness

In his final action as an Austin City Council Member, now-U.S. Rep. Greg Casar spearheaded the effort to enshrine protections for renters in our local ordinances. **ECHO staff advocated for the measures** as a way to prevent evictions and help people remain stably housed. Our Community Housing Team [spoke in support of the measures](#), and members of ECHO's Advocacy Committee testified in front of City Council about the need for the protections, which [passed in October](#).



# Advocacy

## CADY LOFTS

Creating new PSH choices

ECHO joined the chorus of voices led by the Austin Justice Coalition in supporting a zoning change to allow plans for a new Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) development to move forward in the high opportunity Hancock neighborhood. **These advocacy efforts convinced local neighborhood leaders to drop their opposition to the development.** Cady Lofts, paving the way for 100 new units of PSH.



## HACA SCREENING CRITERIA

Eliminating legal system barriers

The Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) took a large step to serve our unhoused neighbors in 2022 by removing all but the mandatory minimums for all our community's Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) in its updated [HCV Administrative Plan](#). This followed years of advocacy and conversations from Leadership Council, providers, advocates, and ECHO on the need to lower screening barriers in order to make it as easy as possible to connect people with places to live.

**Thank you, HACA!**



# Admin

## Office Space

In the Summer of 2022, ECHO began working with HPI Real Estate Investments to locate a new office space that meets the needs of our growing organization and desire for a central community space. The HPI team was wonderful to work with and kept ECHO's mission and desire to have an accessible space for our partners in the community at the forefront. **We were thrilled to enter into a lease at [210 Barton Springs Rd., Suite 400.](#)** ECHO is excited to open this space up to the community and for this space to be a hub for the Homelessness Response System now and in the future.

[See the space before we moved in](#)



Some of the pieces of art [adorning our new office walls](#), created by artists with firsthand experience of homelessness through our nonprofit partner [Art from the Streets](#)

# Admin

## Strategic Planning

A workgroup of ECHO staff, Board members, and the co-chairs of our Homelessness Response System Leadership Council engaged the firm Racial Equity Partners (REP) in 2022 to facilitate the organization's first long-term strategic planning process. REP conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis through **interviews and focus groups with 43 people in our community, ECHO Board members, and all 33 ECHO staff members employed at the time.**

## STAKEHOLDERS

engaged by REP

- Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC)
- Austin Youth Collective (AYC)
- Additional lived experience group (not AHAC/AYC)
- Leadership Council
- “Traditional” service providers
- “Non-traditional” service providers
- Black-led organizations

- Summit Funders Group representatives
- Foundation leaders
- Local Business Leaders
- Homeless Strategy Office, City and County staff representatives
- Non-profit housing providers
- Local Public Housing Authorities representatives
- Stakeholders in the real estate industry
- Advocates (Austin Justice Coalition, HousingWorks)

The analysis informed a multiyear strategic plan that is responsive to the needs of our organization, our community, and our shared goal of a future without homelessness. ECHO plans to share our strategic plan with the community to highlight the ways the diverse voices who contributed are impacting the next several years of our organization's work. This will be an ongoing conversation with our community to hold ECHO and our partners accountable to the goals and priorities we've defined together.

# Looking Forward

The plan includes a new Mission, Vision, Racial Equity Acknowledgement, and Values - **a recommitment to our community and the core beliefs that drive our work to end homelessness in Austin and Travis County.**

## Vision

Everyone in our community has housing of their choice that provides a foundation for optimal health, success, and stability.

## Mission

We lead and align a coalition to administer an effective Homelessness Response System (HRS)—centered in racial equity, informed by the needs and expertise of people experiencing homelessness, and accountable to systemically marginalized communities.

## Acknowledgement

Historic, structural, and systemic racism in our community has resulted in people of color, especially Black people, being more likely to become homeless in our community. ECHO is therefore committed to centering racial equity in its work with providers, community partners, and community members.

## Values

- Leadership – *Advocate alongside the people we serve.*
- Passion – *Serve our community with drive and commitment.*
- Racial Equity – *Promote policies, programs, and performance monitoring to reduce racial disparities in homelessness and advance reconciliation efforts.*
- Diversity and Collaboration – *Seek diverse voices and unique perspectives to best serve our community.*
- Courage – *Have hard conversations, take personal and organizational accountability, and take risks and make changes when needed.*
- Continuous Improvement
  - Lived Expertise – *Affirm that people are experts in their own circumstances and couple their expertise with data to inform our system.*
  - Data Informed Decisions – *Promote and value evidence and data to impact solutions.*
  - Innovation – *Foster and lead innovation in the HRS.*

# Connect with Us

 [facebook.com/atxecho](https://facebook.com/atxecho)

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 [www.austinecho.org](http://www.austinecho.org)

