

**State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio**



**Meeting Minutes
City Council Budget Work Session**

Council Briefing Room
City Hall
100 Military Plaza
San Antonio, Texas 78205

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg
Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4 Teri
Castillo, Dist. 5 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6 Marina
Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8 John
Courage, Dist. 9 | Marc Whyte, Dist. 10

Wednesday, August 28, 2024

2:00 PM

Council Briefing Room

The City Council convened a Budget Work Session in the Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:05 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

PRESENT: 11 – Nirenberg, Kaur, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito, Pelaez, Courage, Whyte

ABSENT: None

ITEMS

1. Staff presentation on the FY 2025 Proposed Budget focusing on, but not limited to, the following City Departments or Initiatives: [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Justina Tate, Management & Budget]
 - A. Human Services
 - B. Neighborhood and Housing Services
 - C. ARPA Update
 - D. Health

Mark Carmona, Chief Housing Officer introduced the departments and partners. He listed accomplishments of the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) Housing: 1) \$84.9 million leveraged \$642 million to construct 24 projects that would build 156 homes to be sold to families making less than 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI); 2) Build or rehabilitate 4,188 multifamily affordable rental units; 3) Preserved 1,366 homes through the City's Major Rehabilitation and Minor Repair Program; 4) Community meetings on renters' rights and responsibilities were attended by 322 residents; 5) Housing Commission meetings and 49 Housing Commission Subcommittee meetings were hosted; 6) 14 City-wide property tax exemption and protest workshops were attended by 875 residents; and 7) The team participated in the SA to DC and held their first legislative agenda coordination meeting.

A. Department of Human Services (DHS)

Director of DHS, Melody Woosley, presented the \$271 million FY 2025 Proposed Operating Budget which was a 2.5% increase over FY 2024 with no change in staff positions. The DHS Budget was broken down by the following categories: \$32 million to end homelessness, \$30.3 million for older adult independence, \$19.3 million for family strengthening, \$173.7 million for early childhood education and childcare, and \$16.1 million for youth success.

Woosley stated that the City's Proposed Budget included \$44.2 million for homelessness, 65% of which was from Federal grants. Woosley listed FY 2025 Key Homelessness Strategies which included diversifying housing solutions for the chronic unsheltered population, expanding centralized shelter coordination, increasing low-barrier shelter options, and offering 72 new Permanent Supported Housing (PSH) units. She stated that other strategies included improving youth homelessness coordination through the Youth Provider Summit, and reducing family homelessness through prevention, streamlining of voucher utilization, and rapid rehousing. She estimated that in FY 2025, 500 unsheltered individuals would be served at the San Antonio Metropolitan Ministries (SAMM) low-barrier shelter which served 325 in FY 2024.

In FY 2024, Woosley stated that 1,100 homeless encampments were cleaned up resulting in 2,500 tons of debris and she anticipated 1,300 encampments to be cleaned up in FY 2025. Woosley reported that encampment residents were given 48 hours' notice and the average time from complaint received to abatement was 11 days. In FY 2025 Woosley proposed streamlining the Homeless Hotline, Benefits Navigation, and the Neighborhood Housing Services Department (NHSD) Rental Assistance which was launched in 2020 as a pandemic response. She noted that the response streamlining was expected to better serve residents seeking assistance, streamline access, simplify the customer experience, and improve data collection and staff efficiency.

Woosley redocumented \$30.3 million for older adult independence programs broken down as \$19.2 million for twelve comprehensive senior centers, \$2.2 million for 32 part-time senior centers, \$6.4 million for senior nutrition, and \$2.3 million for transportation to senior centers for those within five miles of the center. The new 16,167 square foot Robinette Multi-Generational Center was expected to open in November of 2024. Additionally, the Proposed Budget continued investments aligned with the Senior Services Strategic Plan including continuing the extended Senior Center Hours through FY 2026 with \$3.1 million ARPA Funding which serviced 3,324; providing Benefits Navigation and Financial Counseling to support financial security and fraud/abuse reporting and prevention for 1,200 seniors; and the SAVES Volunteer Property Tax Assistance program.

Woosley proposed discontinuation of the Mobile Shower Program which would save \$62,478 as the program served fewer than 100 residents each year. She recommended continuation of outreach to neighborhood non-profits and congregations to add more available fixed showers in addition to showers available at Christian Assistance Ministries (CAM) Corazon Ministries, and Haven for Hope. She also proposed to reduce community use hours for Senior Centers at a savings of \$275,000.

Woosley listed the following Capital Projects which included improvements to the parking lot at Café College, expansion of the West End Senior Center Expansion for \$8 Million, renovations to Ella Austin Community Center Renovation for \$23.2 million, a new senior center at Kenwood for \$9 Million, and plumbing improvements to the Council District 1 Frank Garrett Community Center plumbing for \$1.7 million funded by Tax Notes, Prior Debt Proceeds, and Certificates of Obligation.

Finally, Woosley noted that the FY 2025 Proposed Budget continued funding for 52 agencies and 97 Programs at a cost of \$25.2 million. She stated that a Request for Proposals (RFP) process was planned to begin in FY 2025 for the next two-year funding cycle (FY 2026-2027).

B. Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD)

Director of NHSD, Veronica Garcia provided an overview of the department services which included housing policy through the SHIP, housing stability, home rehabilitation and preservation, development and tax increment financing, grants management, and the Affordable Housing Bond. Garcia presented the \$93.7 million FY 2025 Proposed Budget which was a 6.4% increase over FY 2024 with no change in staff positions.

Garcia proposed \$2.4 million in efficiencies for FY 2025 focused on right-sizing development incentives which was comprised of a \$1.5 million decrease in the City Fee Waiver Program and a \$762,500 reduction to the Inner-City Development Fund which supported development in inner-city neighborhoods with public infrastructure, infill affordable housing, or business retention/recruitment support. She noted that another reduction of \$114,000 was recommended for the Eastside Promise Zone contracts that were expiring and would no longer require Federal reporting.

Garcia listed the following ongoing community investment including \$2 million for City fee waivers, funding within the Inner City Incentive Fund and TIF, \$100,000 for eviction prevention, \$4.7 million for rental and relocation assistance, \$1.7 million for down payment assistance with up to \$40,000 for first-time homebuyers, \$8.7 million to assist 52 residential units with major rehabilitation, \$8 million to assist 455 residential homeowners with minor rehabilitations which also included \$500,000 from CPS Energy's Casa Verde Program, and \$1 million for white roofs to assist with urban heat islands.

The 2022 Affordable Housing Bond included \$40 million for rehabilitation of rental units and had completed 234 homes with \$13.2 million remaining; \$35 million for rental production and had completed 228 homes with \$6.9 million remaining; \$25 million for PSH and 41 homes had been completed and all funding spent; and \$5 million for production of affordable homes for homeownership and 19 homes had been completed and all funding spent, according to Garcia.

Garcia stated that housing costs were rising and highlighted three SHIP programs such as Transit Oriented Development (TOD) of housing near VIA's Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) lines, creation of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) on the properties of existing homes as housing options, and the use of Community Land Trusts.

Garcia stated that Public Information Campaigns included 14 Property Tax Help workshops which had 875 attendees and assisted with 91 exemptions and 409 protests filed onsite; a Rentwise Program that provided online resources and a Renters' Guide, tenant and landlord-focused information sessions, and a tenants Know Your Rights video series; and a campaign to increase awareness of housing affordability and prevent homelessness, as well as connect people to affordable housing programs and resources which also included a video series in production connecting housing and homelessness.

Garcia reported that 477 PSH homes were being built or were already completed. She stated that PSH combined affordable housing assistance with voluntary support services, including case management, to address the needs of people experiencing chronic or long-term homelessness. Garcia closed her presentation by stating that PSH was being rebranded as accessible housing as a part of the change in the housing narrative.

C. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) update

ARPA Executive Officer Gwen Estrada reported that the City had been awarded \$326.9 million in ARPA funds since May 2021; these funds had a deadline of being obligated by December 2024 and spent by December 2026. She noted that currently, \$231 million or 71% of ARPA Funds had been spent; \$93.4 million was committed and \$5.8 million was available to be reallocated. Estrada explained that \$2.1 million came from agency contracts and \$3.7 million was from earned interest. She proposed that \$3.1 million would be utilized to continue the extended hours at the Senior Centers. She mentioned that because of the short timeline needed to allocate and spend the funds, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was not recommended.

D. San Antonio Metro Health Department (Metro Health)

Director of Metro Health Dr. Claude Jacob provided an overview of the department's \$91.2 million Proposed Budget which was 12.9% greater than in FY 2024. Jacob noted that \$41.1 million was from grants and the remainder was from the General Fund.

Department Core Functions listed by Jacob were to prevent diseases, violence, and mental health crises; promote mental health and community resilience, maternal child health, and healthy eating and active living; protect the community from food borne and vector borne illness, and protect the environment.

Jacob highlighted programmatic priorities for FY 2025 established under the SA Forward Strategic Plan that included the following programs. 1) Access to Care: Unlocked Program will connect 155 recently released jail detainees to medical and social services that are tailored to their needs, to promote successful re-entry into the community and reduce recidivism. 2) Data & Technology Infrastructure: Implement three data public dashboards for Respiratory illnesses, Tuberculosis, HIV & Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI). 3) Food Insecurity & Nutrition: Healthy Corner Stores Initiative will expand to six additional participating stores, resulting in more than 50 member stores in areas with limited access to healthy food options. 4) Health Equity & Social Justice: 30% of coalition partners will implement systems change initiatives and reduce food insecurity. 5) Mental Health & Community Resilience: SA-CORE team members will respond to 4,000 mental health-related 9-1-1 calls. 6) Violence Prevention: At least 11,500 domestic violence survivors will accept services from Metro Health programs.

Jacob reported on the distribution and outreach effort for the citywide signage educating residents about

and offering help for victims of domestic violence. He outlined results and performance metrics related to violence prevention.

Jacob stated that the department was in year three of a five-year, \$10 million investment for the University of Texas School of Public Health San Antonio which was budgeted for FY 2025 at \$2 million. He reported that County, State, and Universities have each contributed financially to establish a collaborative School of Public Health. He noted that the first cohort of students for experiential learning had been placed with affiliated organizations and the second student cohort of 35-70 students for Fall 2025 was being recruited. Jacob added that the next step was to submit a proposal of a doctoral program to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for approval.

Efficiencies recommended by Jacob included continuation of the Trauma Informed Care Certification Program with in-house staff at a savings of \$346,087 and a \$110,000 reduction to the Budget of Project Worth, which was a program that connected teens to social services, youth programming, and facilitation services. Jacob stated that these reductions would not adversely impact services.

DISCUSSION:

Discussion was held on all Items simultaneously.

Mayor Nirenberg commented that it was good to have these departments grouped together as they were critical to dealing with the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Mayor Nirenberg recommended utilizing the \$2.7 million for resiliency such as \$1 million for housing assistance, \$1.1 million to support the Close to Home centralized landlord engagement program, and health equity resources for the South Side of town at a cost of \$600,000 over two years.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez was interested in seeing a list of projects funded over the last five years in the Center City Incentive Fund and requested a map of services provided under ARPA to ensure that the East Side was supported noting that there was a health equity issue on the East Side as well as the South Side. He recommended expansion of the transportation service radius for senior centers to the entire council district.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia supported funding the Center for Health Equity in South Texas Initiative with \$600,000 in ARPA funding over two years and clarified that the area included the East Side as well. She noted the disparate health outcomes for persons who lacked access to health care, particularly those with diabetes, asthma, and in need of healthy food and mental health treatment.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia spoke in support of the new Robinette Senior Center. She expressed concern that most of the funds were from grants and that the \$21.1 million indirect investment from Police, Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) services would be harmed when the grants ran out. City Manager Erik Walsh clarified that the indirect investments were from the General Fund. Deputy City Manager Maria Villagomez noted that the low barrier shelter and permanent supportive housing were Federally funded.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked how many of the homeless count were families versus single individuals. Woosley stated that she would collect the demographic information about homeless and

provide it in a follow-up memorandum. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked why DHS expected a lower number of calls on the hotline for FY 2025. Woosley stated that there was a spike in calls in 2023 but they had decreased; City Manager Walsh explained that there would be a restructuring of the Program to help improve access to services which meant people would not be calling the hotline.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia commented that the State Comptroller had called for more housing to be built as there was a housing shortage statewide. She requested clarification on the reductions included in NHSD's Budget. Garcia stated that the one-time Opportunity Home Rehabilitation Fund was not included in the new Budget, the incentive funds were being reduced and the department recommended swapping the funding source for white roofs from General Fund to the Resiliency, Energy Efficiency, and Sustainability (REES) Fund. Councilmember Rocha Garcia supported additional investment in housing and asked about the \$6 million in rental assistance. Garcia stated that due to lower staffing levels they needed to spread the assistance application periods throughout the year.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked how often the ARPA dashboard was updated as she noted discrepancies between what was presented today and what was on the dashboard. Estrada explained that the dashboard included all ARPA awards, and her presentation only included the \$326 million.

Councilmember Viagran supported funding for the South Central Texas Center for Health Equity noting that EMS wanted to take residents to the nearest hospital and there were only 120 beds in her council district. She noted that her residents were often unable to pay doctor bills, so they simply stopped going to the doctor altogether. She noted that there were genetic diseases and other unpreventable diseases such as cancer that caused inequities for those who lacked access to health care.

Councilmember Viagran leaned toward providing utility assistance or preserving existing housing stock with the remaining ARPA funds and recommended \$200,000 to \$250,000 in ARPA Funds for arts to help provide emotional support. She wanted to look further into the need of small businesses as well as senior living facilities and childcare centers in underserved areas. She suggested the addition of health workers to guide residents to digital resources for healthcare. Councilmember Viagran supported more funding for mental health services and suggested going to schools and senior centers to talk about STIs.

Councilmember Viagran presented a hot spot map of homeless encampments in Council District 3 and recommended more outreach and innovative solutions for repeat areas. Woosley stated that DHS would add the location to their list of hot spots and would assess environmental barriers. Councilmember Viagran suggested converting mobile homes from purely rentals into homeowner parks or developing affordable mobile home parks as this was an affordable option on the South Side, noting that soil erosion was making it difficult to build regular homes.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito commented that the City was investing a lot in homelessness only to find the problem was getting worse and asked what would have the most immediate impact in FY 2025. Woosley stated that the most immediate impact that residents would see would be to have more encampment sites abated and illegal dumping sites cleaned up which residents often confused with homeless camps. Woosley offered increasing outreach and relationship building.

City Manager Walsh commented that homelessness was not going away but recommended being diligent

and consistent in cleaning up the camps. Councilmember Alderete Gavito mentioned her Council Consideration Request (CCR 2023-0023) to prioritize encampment cleanups in sensitive areas with the intent to connect unsheltered residents with already available and accessible services but it was frustrating to see the problems continue and encampments return to the same locations.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito stated that residents on the brink of homelessness called her council district office, but they could not find help because hotlines were only staffed during regular business hours. She supported allocating funds to remove the barriers for families to seek shelter. Woosley replied that the alignment of different intake processes to include the hotline call takers and benefits navigators which would begin October 1, 2024 was targeting these individuals.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito commented that the targets for FY 2025 were lower for those sheltered coming from the street which was estimated to be 530 in FY 2024 but targeted only 500 for FY 2025. Woosley stated that the target could be adjusted and would likely be higher but FY 2024 was the first year this measure was tracked.

Councilmember Whyte expressed concern that the homeless encampments continued to pop up and asked about cleanup time. City Manager Walsh reported that the average for the year response time was 18 days but in the past month was 11 days. Councilmember Whyte recommended doing something different and noted that this was a lot of money being spent on homelessness and the encampments did not seem to be going away. According to Councilmember Whyte, the Mayor of the City of Beaumont reported that the homeless problem was affecting property values and residents were afraid to let their kids go out and play. Councilmember Whyte requested targets for FY 2024 noting the presentation only included estimates. Woosley noted that all targets had been met or exceeded unless they were a new measure.

Councilmember Whyte commented that Family Strengthening included giving \$150,000 to a group called American Gateways which began receiving ARPA Funding of \$400,000 and now they were getting General Fund dollars to provide legal services for non-citizens of the United States when their target was San Antonio residents and suggested that many clients came from the Migrant Resource Center (MRC).

Councilmember Whyte did not support spending General Funds on non-citizens and recommended spending that on streets, animal care, and other core City services. Woosley noted that legal services for residents had been funded since 2018 as a priority set by the City Council. Councilmember Whyte wanted to know who on the City Council supported that funding.

Mayor Nirenberg offered to pull up the vote slip. City Manager Walsh stated that the \$150,000 was to service San Antonio residents and was not for individuals at the MRC because they were not considered residents. Woosley noted that residents were defined as persons who lived in San Antonio for at least six months. City Manager Walsh indicated that American Gateways may very well serve individuals from the MRC but the City was not funding that work through the delegate agency contract. Mayor Nirenberg clarified that the Budget for the FY 2024 contract was voted on by this City Council in September of 2023 with the Adopted Budget.

Councilmember Castillo supported \$600,000 for the South Central Texas Center for Health Equity, \$1 million for housing issues and \$150,000 in UT Health's Dental Clinic using ARPA funds. She recommended more full-time staff for NHSD and commented that \$30 million for major/minor

rehabilitation targeted three fewer homes than last year. Garcia reported that the major rehabilitation number was going down in the General Fund but the Bond Funds were supplementing the program to bring up the numbers. Councilmember Castillo recommended increasing funding and staffing to support more homeowners with title clearance and other services. Garcia indicated that the Budget for title clearance was \$100,000 and the assistance of experts such as St. Mary's School of Law was needed so the work was time consuming.

Councilmember Castillo supported shifting the hours of the hotline and navigators to accommodate working families. She emphasized that the City Council was planning to vote on demolishing affordable housing and building market rate housing and was appalled that jail was talked about as a housing option then we could not blame DHS for the housing outreach efforts. Councilmember Castillo requested a breakdown on the number and types of rooms/beds available at each provider's location. Woosley stated that DHS would work with key partners to help make inventory more accessible and available.

Councilmember Castillo asked what would happen to the showers and suggested that these could be donated to a non-profit. She offered to help strategize on getting more seniors to participate in the Tax Reduction Program.

Councilmember Castillo supported Councilmember Viagran's recommendation to educate youth and seniors on STIs and asked Jacob about Metro Health's statistics. Dr. Anita Kurian, Assistant Director of Metro Health reported that since 2019, there had been a large number of cases of maternal STIs and noted that Metro Health had a case management program called Healthy Beats that connected pregnant women to health services for STI screenings to prevent babies from being born with STIs.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda noted that in 2019, a study was commissioned to develop innovative strategies and the results demonstrated that San Antonio was doing great and just needed to fund Haven for Hope at a greater level but she felt this was a complex issue since residents were frustrated and our unhoused population was growing along with our City as a whole. Her solution was to invest more in housing and homeless services.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if there was a cost to keeping the mobile showers parked at Haven for Hope or CAM and whether we could sell them. Woosley stated that the showers would be better if they were fixed and not mobile as there were issues with being able to use them in the winter and they needed to be repaired regularly. City Manager Walsh noted that we would not be compensated for the showers if they were donated to a non-profit.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended that delegate agencies should not become dependent on City funds and recommended that the City develop an off-ramp. Woosley stated that if the agency was providing an essential service to the community, performing well, submitted a good proposal, and the funding was available they would be recommended for funding. City Manager Walsh stated that staff would develop options for the off-ramp for agencies.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported funding for the dental health program and commented on the variety of public health work performed by Metro Health such as vector control noting the recent discovery of mosquitos with West Nile Virus in Council Districts 6 and 7. Councilmember Cabello Havrda mentioned that the Public Safety Committee was focused on mental health and commented that the SA Community Outreach and Resiliency Effort (CORE) mental health multidisciplinary team target was 1,500 calls but 2,500 was the actual number of calls received in FY 2024.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked which program would be the most affected by the end of ARPA funding and requested information on agencies that received funds and whether they had recovered. Councilmember Cabello Havrda supported Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez's request to expand transportation to the senior centers.

Councilmember Courage quoted Section 3 of the City Charter and noted that the services presented today all provided for the welfare, health, morals, comfort, safety, and convenience for our residents. Councilmember Courage thanked Metro Health for working with his office on the gun exchange program. He requested a breakdown on how much money was spent on children's health, senior health, and mental health.

Councilmember Courage noted that DHS funded 52 agencies and asked if their allocation from the City was cut by 50%, would their services be cut in half. Woosley noted that they would serve less but the City did not fund any agency 100%. Councilmember Courage requested a breakdown of the number of people served in each area by agency through General Fund, ARPA Funds, and the capital expenditures. Councilmember Courage supported using ARPA Funding to expand the senior center hours and recommended using the remaining \$2.7 million for youth services as requested by many members of the public during the Charter Review Commission process.

Councilmember Courage requested a breakdown of the number of housing units that were built or under construction specifically targeting seniors and youth aging out of foster care.

Councilmember Courage did not think there was a city in the United States without drug addiction, alcoholism, mental illness, financial, health, and other reasons people became homeless. He recommended funding for more beds to treat mental illness and addictions and housing options for after they were treated such as temporary, supportive, or affordable housing. Councilmember Courage supported the delegate agencies providing wrap-around services and did not recommend any reductions in those services. He also thought people needed jobs to help them afford housing.

Councilmember Pelaez noted that the UT Dental Program served kids at Haven for Hope and that he supported funding for that program.

Councilmember Pelaez recalled that at one time, the City Council thought mobile showers were important and bringing those services to the people was important to help people get jobs and get off the streets. Woosley stated the outreach workers could provide a ride to a location with a fixed shower, and more partnerships with congregations and non-profits that had showers in the neighborhoods. Councilmember Pelaez suggested that too often homeless people were not being thought of as someone's child, sibling, or parent and these were often people addicted to drugs or alcohol or affected by mental illness. He added that homelessness was a human crisis that needed to be treated with compassion but was also a complex problem of public safety. Councilmember Pelaez recommended collecting feedback from the homeless themselves.

Councilmember Kaur recommended increasing the target for Veteran's Housing services for FY 2025 and asked why the mobile shower was not successful. Woosley stated that until recently a vendor had to be hired to move the mobile shower and pipes were often broken while traveling, and it only held enough water for 12 showers and had to empty greywater after 12 showers with the three stalls.

Councilmember Kaur requested a report on the delegate agency performance. She asked about assistance with utilities. Woosley stated that the department managed the Residential Energy Assistance Partnership (REAP) Account and the targeted expenditures and the metric was for the City, not CPS Energy's target. Councilmember Kaur suggested that there would be an efficiency to purchase the hygiene kits already assembled.

Councilmember Kaur commented that in 2023, over 3,000 applications were received for the Minor Home Rehabilitation Program and asked what was the largest barrier and requested a breakdown by council district with an explanation of why they weren't assisted for 2024. Garcia indicated that there was education now being provided on the front end to ensure homeowners had what they needed before applying. Garcia stated that the Program included a forgivable loan and not a grant and required residents to move out during the renovation; the goal was to produce stronger applications. Councilmember Kaur requested a breakdown of applications received in FY 2024 by council district and how many were assisted. She supported using the \$2.7 million for these programs if funding was indeed the issue as well as how we were evaluating multifamily for rehabilitation, housing stock by council district on the dashboard as well as wait list by AMI levels.

Councilmember Kaur suggested providing legal support for estate planning or wills. Garcia stated that they were referring to the Mexican American Unity Council (MAUC) and UTSA but did not pay the agencies for services beyond the title clearing service. Councilmember Kaur recommended educating landlords on tenant rights. She asked if NHSD had more employees where would the biggest need be. Garcia indicated that home rehabilitation needed more staff to process those applications and manage the process as well as the rental assistance team as many of these were ARPA Funded temporary employees.

Councilmember Kaur requested information on businesses that turned down the Domestic Violence signage and why they did not want them as well as how many calls resulted from the new signage. She also wanted to know the number of survivors not accepting services and why. Councilmember Kaur asked how many immunization nurses were on staff as there seemed to be a great demand. She also requested data for how Metro Health decided STI mobile truck placement, SA CORE metrics, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) enrollment numbers along with those actively receiving follow-up services.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia clarified that American Gateways provided protections for violence against women's act, DACA, permanent residency and family-based petitions, and invited her colleagues to attend a workshop on Saturday September 14, 2024 in her council district to provide legal services to people who would eventually become citizens.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked, within the \$396.9 million in ARPA funding, how much funding directly assisted residents, local artists, non-profits, and small businesses and how many were served and whether it was listed in the dashboard under economic relief noting that any financial turmoil could affect resiliency. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if the City used reserved funding between 2020 and 2024 and the current reserve balance. Villagomez stated that the financial policy was a 15% General Fund minimum ending balance with 10% Budget ending reserve and was \$300 million between the two but none of the reserves had been spent. Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended rightsizing the Budget and asked if emergency equipment one-time expenditures were all spent. Estrada stated that not all the equipment funding had been spent but most of it had.

Councilmember Castillo recommended donating the showers to Harper's Chapel. She stated that outreach around Haven for Hope was expected by the nearby Gardendale Community. She requested a Portland Loo or collaboration with VIA to open their restrooms at the Central station and to cleanup in the area as well.

Councilmember Castillo observed struggles that parents were dealing with and supported investment in parenting, mental health, and youth. She supported the investment in parks and the Frank Garrett Center.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito supported Metro Health's work to mitigate the West Nile Virus and to reduce violence in the community, particularly gun violence.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito supported using \$2.7 million in the remaining ARPA allocation to help people at risk of becoming homeless to stay in their homes through rental assistance and also supported \$150,000 for the Dental Clinic.

Councilmember Whyte supported expansion of transportation to senior centers. He commented that the scope of work included in the American Gateways contract included free immigration legal services for San Antonio Residents and those at risk of deportation. Councilmember Whyte noted that \$2.8 million was for Family Strengthening and asked if this was for the American Gateways contract. Woosley stated that Family Strengthening included funding for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA), utility assistance, and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) job training.

Villagomez stated that one of the goals was to keep families together by providing legal services so it was classified under Family Strengthening as sometimes one parent was being threatened with deportation and they were all residents. Councilmember Whyte stressed that he did not support free legal services.

Councilmember Viagran supported the equity component and acknowledged the complexity of providing services to residents regardless of the color of skin, language spoken, or their immigration status. Councilmember Viagran stated that if we had the money and capacity to fix all the streets, we would still need money to give to our delegate agencies as there was more to quality of life than streets. She questioned how much work would we push to our staff if we did not have delegate agencies.

Mayor Nirenberg closed the dialogue by warning that the City Council should not relitigate last year's Budget. He stressed that Housing and Homelessness was not the same response as it had been done forever and ever and drastic improvements had been made under the SHIP and Housing Bond. Clearly the reason San Antonio continued to get allocations of unused funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was because our efforts were working, asserted Mayor Nirenberg.

However, Mayor Nirenberg noted that four years ago the bottom dropped out of the economy and more people were experiencing housing insecurity resulting in homelessness nationwide. In the past year, our unsheltered homelessness numbers decreased and the total homeless numbers were flat so Mayor Nirenberg asserted that during the pandemic we did not have the services to connect people but there had been massive improvements and if our only solution was to sweep encampments it would simply pop up somewhere else as it was not a solution nor was putting people in jail.

Mayor Nirenberg recommended setting people on a pathway out of homelessness through low-barrier shelters, permanent supportive housing, and affordable housing adding that our City had never permitted public camping. He suggested that if we were doing a better job on domestic violence, child abuse, and the foster care system we would not have as much homelessness as it was a symptom of other issues.

Mayor Nirenberg declared that San Antonio was moving in the right direction and urged his colleagues not to forget that the effort in creating transformative change was moving in the right direction adding that it was expensive and people were frustrated but services and jobs including the Ready to Work Program were the pathway forward.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was not held.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Approved

**Ron Nirenberg
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk**