

Executive Summary

Budget stabilizing Revenue Replacement, One Safe Houston, and One Clean Houston initiatives take the majority of funding from the State & Local Fiscal Relief Funds, while other ARPA investments make holistic investments lifting up Houstonians

The ARPA funding that the Biden Administration has provided has helped to prevent major budgetary cuts and layoffs and fund evidence-based solutions. Again, it cannot be overstated that the State and Local Fiscal Relief Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act have been critical to addressing the secondary impacts of the pandemic.

In Houston, the City has sought to holistically address public safety and combat illegal dumping with this flexible funding.

The second quarter of 2023 saw significant resources expended on One Safe Houston Initiatives for Crisis Call Diversion (CCD), Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams (MCOT), and backlog funding for the Houston Forensic Science Center. Continued investment in domestic violence programs with the Domestic Abuse Response Teams (DART) and Victim Service Advocates helps to address one of the most important law enforcement interventions with increased support to victims. Investment in the Houston Police Department itself through targeted overtime for patrol enhancement and cadet retention funding have made clear that public safety remains Houston's number one priority.

The One Clean Houston initiative saw increased expenditures in Bulk Waste and Anti-Litter programs that are targeted to vulnerable communities. Kicking off these expanded programs will directly address the increased need for services while planning for longer term progress with cameras for increased prosecution.

Additional expenditures on Arts & Culture stabilization funding, increased constituent referral services for the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities, Digital Literacy Equity in the Houston Public Library system combine to show the remainder of ARPA funding.

The following programs have shown significant spending in the second quarter of 2023.

Crisis Call Diversion

The Crisis Call Diversion (CCD) program is a collaboration between the Houston Police Department, Houston Fire Department, Houston Emergency Center and the Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD, with the express purpose of decreasing the volume of

non-emergency mental health-related calls for service for both HPD patrol and HFD emergency medical services and reducing the use of these personnel for non-emergency responses.

The project is fully staffed and underway. So far in 2023, the program has processed 3,337 calls. Over the last 5 quarters, HPD has seen a decrease in calls being processed by CCD. The CCD team continues to refer clients to any necessary mental health services.

Out of the \$816,420,00 budgeted by City Council, so far \$292,770.96 has been spent.

Mobile Crisis Outreach Team

The Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) is an interdisciplinary mobile team composed of psychiatrists, registered nurses, licensed master's level clinicians, bachelor level clinicians, and psychiatric technicians specializing in crisis intervention. Community-based in Harris County, MCOT provides services to children and adults who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

Just like CCD, the project is fully staffed and underway. The program tracks on-scene crisis responses, interactions and outcomes of the responses such as response time and time on-scene, types of services and supports offered, post crisis follow up, transporting and/or completing referrals to other services, and involuntary emergency detention orders and calls that result in police involvement. Metrics on the presence of police at crisis incidents and the use of involuntary hospitalization are crucial for transparency with community members.

The total MCOT calls and the calls relating to a possible criminal matter are both seeing a decrease.

Out of the \$11,871,469.00 budget, the project has expended \$3,778,499.07.

Case Backlog Reductions

When crime rates rose, the strain on crime scene investigation units began to grow. While there is funding being invested in the front end of preventing crime, these funds are aimed at solving the crime once it happens to get perpetrators off the streets and seek closure for victims.

This program provides funding to the Houston Forensic Science Center for toxicology case outsourcing, overtime for crime scene investigation and firearm investigation staff, and funding for training of new analysts.

Additional funding has been allocated to provide training to firearms analysts, to upgrade the E-discovery and the Justice Trax system, to provide temporary labor to support

backlog reduction from the Harris County Backlog Reduction Program, and to outsource Digital Multimedia.

A key component of this project is to expand the number of available staff in order to have a long-term solution to the case backlog due to COVID-19 employee absenteeism and increase in crime.

The program has expended \$1,160,116.72 of a budgeted \$4,950,000.00 amount.

Domestic Abuse Response Team

The Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) program provides for specially trained, two-person mobile teams consisting of one HPD officer and one victim advocate. The teams respond to “high risk” domestic violence crime scenes at the request of the primary responding police unit for the purpose of making on-scene danger assessments. The team then reaches out to the victims to engage and connect them with needed emergency services.

The project is fully staffed and underway. The evidence shows that the most calls for service involving domestic violence in Houston are in underserved, minority, and lower socioeconomic areas with multiple barriers to service such as language, religion, and fear of police.

Budgeted with \$3,615.822, so far DART has expended \$1,506,025.28.

Victim Service Advocates

The Victim Services Division contains a Victim Advocacy Unit that initiates follow up on cases involving crime victims via phone, in person and through virtual platforms. This follow-up consists of meeting the needs of the victim by offering the appropriate referrals and assistance specific to each victim. The Advocacy Unit also has an On-Call Team, which consists of on-call supervisors, advocates, and officers who respond to media worthy incidents in order to assist the victims and their families directly affected by the incident.

The project is fully staffed and underway. Since January 1, 2022, ARPA Victim Advocates have provided outreach to 3,861 victims of domestic violence where 71% were women and 82% were victims of color.

This demonstrates that domestic violence continues to plague disadvantaged and underserved communities in need of enhanced services to provide specific resources for each victim regarding cycle of violence education, counseling, and CVC (crime victim compensation) so that they may begin the healing process from violent and traumatic events.

Budgeted for \$1,335,843.18, the program has expended \$667,078.20.

Overtime Patrol Enhancements

The One Safe Houston Initiative is a comprehensive violence reduction initiative that links research-based strategies to improve public safety and reduce the harms caused by violent crime. HPD officers work specific details to deter the engagement of violent crime in hot spot neighborhoods. ARPA has funded overtime where the funding is directly focused on advancing community policing strategies in those communities experiencing an increase in gun violence associated with the pandemic.

The project is complete though FY 2023 with a total of \$20,291,545.86 spent on the program. When measuring murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault rates over the last three years, the majority of months in 2022 and 2023 had lower crime rates than in 2021.

Cadet Retention Incentives

The increase in violent crime after the COVID-19 Pandemic has caused an economic harm to the citizens of Houston. The City of Houston recognizes that in order to reduce violent crime, our city needs the human resources and ability to target this surge of violent crime. Hiring additional police cadets to then become police officers would greatly assist in our fight against crime.

Since COVID, HPD has experienced challenges with recruiting enough cadets to keep up with attrition as well as growing the number of officers.

HPD has established a \$10,000 Cadet Retention Incentive to be distributed to attract and retain incoming police cadets. The hiring incentive will not only attract incoming cadets, but it will also be structured to encourage retention once the cadets become officers.

The Cadet Retention Initiative will provide \$10k additional compensation to cadets. The compensation will be distributed in three phases. After reaching certain milestones, incoming cadets will receive the following retention incentives:

1. Sign-Up Incentive: \$2,500 (Paid within 30 days of beginning the Police Academy)
2. Mid-way Incentive: \$2,500 (Paid after completing 3 months)
3. Completion Incentive: \$5,000 (Paid after completion of Police Academy and TCOLE requirements)

The total Cost of the program is \$7,270,000 and includes 727 anticipated cadets. As of June 30, the program had expended \$2,198,591.25 for 157 cadets in 2023.

Bulk Waste

As a result of COVID-19, waste streams have increased for City-provided services - showing a clear need for additional resources. With higher set-out rates, the department has experienced an influx of heavy household debris, landscape and debris. Houston's experience is also being reported by other solid waste agencies statewide and nationwide (Solid Waste Association of North America and Municipal Waste Management Association).

This program initiative is funding additional bulk waste crews to collect bulky material. Crews are placed in areas of high- volume debris generation or clear illegal dumpsites in abused areas of the City. As Houston enters the peak of hurricane season, flood mitigation is a priority given the city's five-year history of significant flood events and the challenges that the City must overcome if homes flood and people are temporarily housed in congregate shelter settings during the pandemic.

With \$7,999,200.00 in funding budgeted, the program has already expended \$702,383.83 on services.

Anti-Litter Campaign

As part of the One Clean Houston initiative launched by Mayor Turner in March 2023, the goal of the anti-litter campaign is to combat, reduce, and extinguish the behaviors that contribute to litter in Houston's neighborhoods. One Clean Houston initiative is a comprehensive plan to address pervasive illegal dumping and its negative impacts on the health, safety and quality of life of Houston residents.

One Clean Houston recently released a comprehensive Community Toolkit in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese designed to provide community members with essential information and resources to participate actively in the fight against illegal dumping. The toolkit offers a range of practical tools, guidance, and educational materials that empower residents to take decisive action in maintaining a clean and sustainable environment.

The One Clean Houston initiative focuses on three key areas to address the issue and clean up Houston's neighborhoods, especially areas repeatedly targeted by individuals committing illegal dumping.

- Rapid cleanup
- Better enforcement
- Prevention and education

As this program launches, information on the amount of litter collected and the number of calls to certain locations will be collected and reported in the annual performance report.

So far, \$336,490.00 out of \$1,333,333.00 budgeted for the program has been expended.

Arts & Culture Stabilization Funding

COVID-19 had a devastating impact on the arts and cultural sector's ability to host public gatherings, which has resulted in historic losses of earned income due to canceled performances, exhibitions, and gig work for creative workers. One of the City of Houston's main investments into the arts and cultural ecosystem is through the Hotel Occupancy Tax, which saw a loss in income in 2020 and 2021 that totaled \$11,600,000.

Houston City Council approved a \$5 million investment of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the Arts Sector. The Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) will distribute the funds through this Houston Arts and Cultural Stabilization Grant Program to arts and cultural organizations during this calendar year.

To assist the arts and cultural sector in a strong and equitable recovery, MOCA, in collaboration with Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA), will distribute the federal ARPA funds via an open application. M-AAA, the regional arts organization that empowers community through art for the six-state region that includes Texas, is a trusted partner with a track record of helping the city efficiently distribute federal funds.

Of the \$5,000,000.00 budgeted, \$1,000,000.00 has been distributed.

Constituent Referral Program

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted people with disabilities; destabilizing access to direct service providers, straining already limited financial resources for a population struggling to survive on a fixed income, and exacerbating the need for affordable and accessible housing.

Throughout the COVID-19 emergency, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) staff have fielded thousands of calls from people with disabilities, direct service providers, family members, and professionals seeking relief and referral services throughout the Greater Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land census statistical area.

This demand has strained MOPD's limited staff capacity and has highlighted the need for additional technological solutions to better open, track, and close out case management requests. MOPD has utilized ARPA funds to support a community liaison program by increased hiring as well as acquiring an online client relationship management system. This client management system will allow the MOPD staff to provide on the spot reliable information and resources to clients, the ability for the liaisons to track clients, and print/share reports as needed.

This program is the frontline to recovery services for people with disabilities in the southeast Texas region. MOPD is the only local government agency of its kind providing case management and referral services to people with disabilities.

\$1,095,984.17 is budgeted for the program with \$83,763.37 expended by June 30th.

Digital Literacy

Developing capacity of Digital Literacy instruction and skill development is critical for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. To prepare the workforce for the current and future job markets, the City of Houston Public Library (HPL) provides digital literacy skill education in areas that lack access to broadband.

The Mayor's Office for Adult Literacy will partner with local adult and family literacy providers that meet specified criteria to develop community computer labs geographically located throughout the city to facilitate access to digital and computer literacy within under-resourced communities.

This project also provides Digital Literacy and Digital Equity Navigators who are trained professionals that teach digital literacy to adults and provide sufficient technology support to ensure that the technology in these computer labs is effective.

The project will also expand the "Community Tech Kit Initiative" through the City's Library and Office of Complete Communities. The expansion will help learners obtain a laptop, a computer, and a hotspot for adult learners residing in targeted communities.

The project is underway. Three partner organizations for literacy labs have been identified with a tentative project launch in the next quarter. The City is working on filling the technology positions. The hotspots have been purchased, delivered, and deployed as expected.

The program is budgeted for \$3,875,130.17 and expended \$1,781,517.56 through the quarter of 2023.