

April 7, 2020

Dear City Manager Spencer Cronk, Mayor Steve Adler, and Members of City Council:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, write at a time of great uncertainty and peril for the Austin community at large. The COVID-19 pandemic is ripping the fabric of our community apart and shining a spotlight on what most already knew: Deeply embedded economic inequities will cause long-lasting and harsher consequences on Austin's Black and Brown communities.

With the implementation of social distancing measures and the local stay at home order, thousands of Austinites have lost their jobs overnight. In the last 26 days, Austin has canceled major conventions, festivals including SXSW, and restaurants have cut labor forces in half, leaving many folks with a sudden and unexpected loss of income, with the potential of this being long term. At the national level, a stimulus package provided by the federal government will only benefit individuals with a social security number, excluding people who work in the cash economy and undocumented families, some of our most vulnerable residents.

Unemployment benefits do not cover undocumented families, people who live in the cash economy and contractors or informal/formal small businesses that may not have unemployment insurance. The federal stimulus package will assist some, but not Austin's most vulnerable. The Austin environment has rapidly changed in a matter of 14 days, and 14 days from now, our reality could be drastically different as folks continue to be laid off of work and home costs increase as people are being quarantined. Food banks, social service providers, and churches will continue to deliver services and serve as our front-line, but placing the entire responsibility on their shoulders is not fair nor is it the right thing to do as there are so many specific needs that will not be able to be covered by such service providers.

For these reasons we call on City Manager Spencer Cronk, Mayor Steve Adler and members of City Council to:

- Ensure that Austin's Black and Brown communities will not be left out of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts.
- Allocate \$10 million for cash assistance to be given in a one-time cash transfer to families experiencing financial hardship brought by COVID-19.
- No restrictions on how cash transfers should be spent or managed by the recipients shall be placed.



helping people gain power

Anyone who is experiencing hardship should be able to receive the one-time cash transfer regardless of their citizenship status, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and age.

Ensure that the money allocated for cash-transfers is awarded to [Family Independence Initiative](#) who has stated that 100% of the funds will go directly to the most vulnerable families in Travis County by committing to not charge overhead or any other operational cost.

By allowing impacted families to make their own financial decisions, we are inviting others to respect people's agency and allow them the opportunity to decide what works best for them. A local unconditional cash transfer assistance program is one of the many needed solutions for our Black and Brown communities that now find themselves stretching food, baby formula, or experiencing housing insecurity. Now is the time to give emergency cash directly to people so they have the ability to get through this crisis.

Taking the above action of allocating \$10M for cash assistance as a response to COVID-19 is an immediate way of ensuring that Austin's most vulnerable communities are not excluded from the COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts. We request that you all take immediate action in allocating the \$10M for cash assistance.

If you have any questions, please contact Claudia Munoz at cmunoz@grassrootsleadership.org.

Signed,

Organizations:

Communities of Color United
Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry
Hansen & Taylor PLLC
Trinity Church of Austin - UCC & UMC
Saffron Trust Womens Foundation
Austin NAACP
RAICES
DAWA Fund
Heritage Auto Haus
Texas Fair Defense Project
Undoing White Supremacy Austin
Youth Rise Texas
Mama Sana Vibrant Woman
Center for Public Policy Priorities
Go Austin/ Vamos Austin (GAVA)



helping people gain power

allgo

Austin Creative Art Center

Grassroots Leadership

Breakthrough Central Texas

Austin Sanctuary Network

Alliance for African American Health in Central Texas

VELA

Mainspring schools

MISMA

Red Salmon Arts Executive Director

ICE Fuera De Austin

Mama Sana

Individuals:

Elizabeth Garcia

Denise Gilman

Janet Cook

Cherelle VanBrakle

Samuel Berg

Jennifer Owens-Jofré, PhD

Snehal Patel

Lourdes Kaman

Miriam Conner

Peggy Morton

Ginny Fredricks

Shavone Otero

Silvia Nora Hansel

Whitney Drake

Rev. Dr. Sid Hall, III

Sarah Little

Kimberly Holiday

Jacklynne Horne

Zoha Shafiq

Amanda Avery

Jonathan Maurel

Arielle Lewis Zavala

Angelica Wynne Burchenal

Caitlin Staib

Lauren Gaines

Mitchell Velona

grassroots leadership

helping people gain power

Jasmine Gonzales

Erik ross

Libby

Taylor Filtsch

Wade Mitchell

Jane German

Julie Ann Nitsch

Matheus Alves Cornacioni

Raquel Pena

Dax Foster

William R Wilson

Thomas Green

Megan sparks

Jackie Milliken

Ben Combee

Melissa Knight

Mariesha Klos

Sharon Vigil

Amanda Jasso

Amit Motwani

Amit Motwani

Lashay Cairo

Jaymie L Rivera Clemente

Belinda Clark

Misael Ramos

Kayla

Danielle

Raksha Vasudevan

Eric Tang

Raj Patel

Abigail

Nathan Sanchez

Christine Hoff Major

AprilSouth-Bannin

Rachel Young

George Majewski

Ruben Esquivel

Cliff Kaplan

Gigi Newman

Paula X Rojas



helping people gain power

Amanda Zappler
Julia Decker
Jason Phelps
Greg Romero
Christina Barboza
Tanuja Jagernauth
Kimberly Curette
Alice Fox Metz
John Gorman
Jennifer Davis
Taylor Barnes
Judd Farris
Michael Griffith
Hudson Baird
Anne Larcom
Fiona McGovern
Elvin Santiago
Yvonne Keyrouz
Erika Maassen
Donna Wisor
Christopher Stanton
Michael Mitchell
Barbara Terry Noblin
Krissie Marty
Emma Skogstad
Priscilla Hale
Emmy Laursen
Rae Fredericks
Elena Colon
Rose Rapp
Rafael
Gretchen LaMotte
Tiek Johnson
Kanoa Arteaga
Karen De Witt
Anita Privett
Julia Smith
Isabelle Atkinson
Janet M Dawes
Justin G



helping people gain power

Anabel Gomez
Mike Siegel
Belén Ruiz
Amanda Afifi
Nekosi Nelson
Daniela Genny WEIL
Miranda Korpela
Trachell Trice
Taylor Huntley
Jeanette Monsalve
Ana María Rea
Niniye Monsalve
Mary Watts
Colin Swanson
Nakia Winfield
Diana Briceno
Surabhi Kukke
Michelle Mejia
Colleen Legge
Anna-Lisa Plant
Maria Alejos
Octavio Hinojosa
Lilia Rosas
Adela Meraz
Alvaro Segovia
Maritza De La Pena
Hoguer Estrada
Jorge Salcedo
Maria Ochoa
Debora Chaparro
Luis Rangel
Estela San Germán
Esmeralda
Andres Leal Lemuz
Roberto Baez
Silvana Torroco
Gloria Martinez
Jennifer Roman
Rachel Caballero
María V Wittebort



helping people gain power

- Hetty Alyse Borinstein
- Becky Cavanaugh
- Ron Wittebort
- Aaron Ralls
- Evelin Arzola
- Rachel González-Martin
- George Soulayrac
- Victoria Davis
- Derek Eckert
- Jesús Nazario
- Samery Martinez
- Liliana Bolanos Pérez
- Felipe Vargas
- Cinthia Estrada
- Aatish Gandotra
- Ernestina Resendiz
- Beth Perry
- Michel
- Bertha L. Rodríguez
- Ernesto Falcon
- Julieta Benavides
- Danea Johnson
- Pablo Chacón
- Pete Rivera
- Claudia Ochoa
- Johana Haces
- Alginet Galeno
- Manuel Lanz
- Shamika Alexander
- Pablo Chacon