

HOUSING + AFFORDABILITY

One of Austin's greatest existential crises is affordability. Its greatest assets are its people, and as the cost of living continues to rise, wages have not kept up and many struggle to afford to live here. We must ensure our artists, musicians, hospitality workers, and working families can continue to live, work, and thrive in Austin.

Mayor Steve Adler has prioritized affordability, leading the push among Texas mayors for higher wages, lower costs of living, and more affordable housing so that Austin can remain a diverse community. Austin leads the state in job growth, worker protections, city wages, job training, and investment in affordable housing.

Affordable Housing by the Numbers

- No major US city is building more homes per capita than Austin.
- In September 2015, Austin had 21,539 subsidized affordable housing units.
- In 2021, Austin had 46,630 subsidized affordable housing units with 20,508 planned subsidized units.
- Since 2015, Austin has created over 6,000 affordable housing units.

(Source: [Austin Business Journal](#); [HousingWorks](#); [HousingWorks](#); [data.austintexas.gov](#); [Kinder Institute](#))

2018: Progress on the \$250M Affordable Housing Bond

In November of 2018, voters approved \$250 million in affordable housing bonds by nearly 73%. The proposition provided funding for the creation, rehabilitation, and retention of affordable rental and ownership housing.

- \$100M for land acquisition
- \$94M for rental housing development assistance
- \$28M for Acquisition & Development (A&D) Homeownership Program
- \$28 million for home repairs

(Source: [CoA](#))

2022: \$350M Affordable Housing Bond Campaign

HousingWorks and Civic Economics studied the impact of bond funds authorized in 2013 (passed before Mayor Adler's first term) and 2018 for affordable housing. Developing and rehabilitating the remaining 2013 and 2018 bond-funded projects supported 7,466 jobs with \$609M in labor income and yielded a total economic impact of \$1.08B, through 2021. The operation of these developments made possible by bond funding provides a recurring annual impact, long after the development is in place. All told, these developments produce ongoing annual economic impacts of \$101.3M, including more than 700 jobs with labor income of \$42.1M.

With much of the 2018 bond funds having been spent, Mayor Adler and a coalition of affordable housing partners are pursuing a bold investment – a \$350M housing bond. The bond will invest billions in affordable homeownership programs, home repair and rehabilitation, and purchasing properties to create more affordable housing.

(Source: [HousingWorks](#))

Wages and Workforce

The Austin City Council recently adopted an amendment to increase the city employee minimum wage from \$15 to \$20, after CM Cronk's proposed budget included an increase to \$18. This change comes after an increase to a \$15 minimum wage for city employees in the 2015-2016 budget.

Mayor Adler was also a proud partner in the development of the Austin Metro Area Master Community Workforce Plan. The comprehensive plan lays out a common framework for collaboration between the region's workforce development organizations and educational institutions. The Master Community Workforce Plan will invest millions of dollars and focus on helping 10,000 economically disadvantaged Austin residents achieve financial stability and success through employment in middle-skill jobs.

During Mayor Adler's two terms on Council, he was a leading voice in support of two progressive workforce policies: fair chance hiring and paid sick leave.

- Council passed Austin's fair chance hiring ordinance, which prohibits private employers with 15 or more employees from asking about a job applicant's criminal history, 8-2 in March 2016, and it took effect in April 2017.
- The paid sick leave ordinance was approved by Council in February 2018. It required private employers in Austin to provide employees at least six to eight days of paid sick leave per year, depending on the size of the company.