

**BASIC NEEDS –
EMERGENCY FOOD,
CLOTHING, AND SHELTER
URGENT ISSUES AND RECOMMENDED
ACTIONS**

Urgent Issue: Basic Needs resources (food, clothing, and shelter) are fragmented and hard to access.

Data:

- The current demand for services that address immediate needs is often hampered by restrictive eligibility guidelines, the availability of services, lack of dependable and accessible transportation, and a lack of coordination among service providers.
- Navigating through the various agencies that provide different types of assistance can be a very confusing and discouraging process for those seeking services.

Desired Result: People receive seamless, accessible, friendly, and professional customer service through service providers who are closely linked.

SOLUTIONS	ACTIONS	FINANCIAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	HUMAN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXAMPLES OF ONGOING EFFORTS
Increase information sharing among providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build information system that will utilize common intake and eligibility form to facilitate easier access to services and support more effective use of resources across providers. • Distribute an informational newsletter among providers. • Create a paper resource guide and web-based referral tool for providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for technology and software development • Funding to print and distribute newsletter and resource guides 	ITS expertise Desktop Publishing & Printing expertise donated	Travis County Health and Human Services Dept. and others to be determined.
Ensure full eligibility for all programs and promote self-sufficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement policies and procedures that will support shared case management and more effective use of resources across providers. • Create linkages to workforce, education, child-care, Women Infants and Children program (WIC), food stamps etc. • Adjust eligibility (and therefore funding) for Basic Needs services to allow for long-term care. • Adjust operating hours to fit client needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute funding to build information system to connect providers • Funding to allow providers to increase the amount/ frequency of assistance 	Formation of Basic Needs task force to link case management resources (including County, City, CBO's, and congregations)	Case Management Network, Self Sufficiency Coalition
Revitalize neighborhood assistance clusters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold cluster conference (completed on Oct. 6th 2000). • Hold semi-annual city-wide cluster meetings. 	Sponsors to provide meeting space/ refreshments/ administrative support	Basic Needs provider who can coordinate semi-annual cluster meetings	Austin Area Interreligious Ministries/ Travis County

Urgent Issue: Too many people in this community are going without food, shelter, and clothing.

Data:

- Rarely is assistance received by households adequate to address the actual need. For example, the average recipient of assistance from the Travis County Emergency Assistance Program receives \$445 for utilities, \$266 for rent/mortgage, and \$56 for food in a year.
- Most providers also limit the number of times an individual can receive benefits.

Desired Result: Increased resources for basic needs services.

Desired Result: More clients served by utilizing current resources more efficiently.

SOLUTIONS	ACTIONS	FINANCIAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	HUMAN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES	EXAMPLES OF ONGOING EFFORTS
Educate community and funders about basic needs issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute social equity video. • Educate community about living wage. 	Donations to purchase more copies of social equity video	Public speakers to educate large employers about social equity	CAN Social Equity Commission
Make basic needs services a funding priority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess resource needs. • Identify alternative funding sources for Basic Needs services. • Encourage current funders to increase the amount of Basic Needs funding to respond to the rapid growth of Austin’s population. 	\$20,000 (est. annual cost) for a part-time staff person to conduct assessment of supply and demand for services	Basic Needs Committee to identify specific volunteer opportunities	Travis County Health and Human Services, Caritas
Identify where new resources could be applied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess resource needs. • Provide Volunteer Opportunities. • Provide Funding Opportunities. • Contribute in-kind contributions/ donations. 	Basic Needs Committee to identify specific financial investment opportunities	Volunteers to serve on a Basic Needs funding committee - to determine which organizations should receive assistance	