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## Your Information

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**Your Name**

Felicia Pena

**Your Commission**

Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission

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**After question three, which questions from the flowchart are you prepared to answer?**

Is there funding?  
Which department holds the funding?  
Which orgs receive it?  
How is success measured?  
What are the impacts, and gaps?

## Root Cause Analysis

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**Story: What did you hear from the community?**

There is a need to expand mental health services for the Latinx community, including LGBTQIA+ communities, veterans, youth, families, and survivors of abuse. Addressing mental health concerns within these communities can potentially stop cycles of abuse and trauma. We also heard that victims of crimes are not receiving the appropriate support they need to process and heal from the traumatizing event they witnessed and/or experienced.

**Problem: What is the problem you identify?**

There is a lack of affordable and accessible mental health resources for women, families, LGBTQIA+ communities, veterans, and survivors of abuse and the agencies that are currently providing these services need additional funding to expand services. Additional funding is needed to allow agencies to hire additional social workers, expand to provide services in schools and additional neighborhoods/communities, and align with City of Austin efforts to serve Latinx communities.

**How does the problem show up in your community? Who is most impacted by the problem?**

Lack of mental health resources can lead to issues in the home, work, school, and public. Untreated mental health issues leads to an increase in overall suicide rates, and suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the US for people of all ages. Characteristics of mental health problems may be misinterpreted by APD, and lead to unnecessary arrests and criminal records. Communities that are most impacted by this issue are Latinx women, families, LGBTQIA+ communities, veterans, and survivors of abuse.

**Is there funding to address the problem?**

Yes

<b>Do multiple departments administer these funds?</b>	No
<b>Which department holds the funding?</b>	Austin Public Health
<b>Which organization(s) or program receives the funding?</b>	Austin Travis County Integral Care; Samaritan Center for Counseling & Pastoral Care Inc; Con Mi Madre; Austin Child Guidance Center; LifeWords; Any Baby Can; People's Community Clinic; AISD; and more that have probably yet to be identified.
<b>How is success measured in the contract/department? How does this align with SD2023?</b>	<p>Most of the contracts include the following Output Measure in the contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total Number of Unduplicated Clients Served</li> <li>- Number of clients provided professional counseling and/or specialized group services</li> </ul> <p>Most of the contracts include the following Outcome Measure in the contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of individuals making progress on their treatment plan goal(s)</li> <li>- Number of individuals evaluated for progress on treatment plan goals(s)</li> <li>- Percent of individuals making progress toward their treatment plan goals</li> </ul> <p>Success is measured differently depending on the contract. For example, Austin Child Guidance Center includes the following additional Outcome Measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of individuals demonstrating improved life skill(s)</li> <li>- Number of individuals participating in the activity</li> <li>- Percent of individuals who demonstrate improved life skills</li> </ul> <p>Most of these align with Health &amp; Environment.</p>
<b>What are the impacts of the funding?</b>	<p>Most of these programs are geared towards helping lower-income families and underserved communities. Some funding is set aside for specific mental health needs, like the Underserved African American Program . The Underserved African American Program is expected to serve 30 unduplicated children that will be provided onsite services through this program, as well as 30 unduplicated family members that will be provided onsite services through this program. Although there is specific funds set aside for minorities and underserved communities, the gap continues to persist. There is a lack of affordable and accessible mental health resources. Additionally, APH has no collective report for client satisfaction.</p>

**Considering all of the information you have or have not collected above, how do we solve for this problem?**

The Commission recommends expanding mental health services for the Latinx community, including LGBTQIA+ communities, veterans, youth, families, and survivors of abuse. Allocating funding to organizations that are already providing mental health services to minority communities but lack the resources to expand services is one way to solve this problem. Focusing on providing counseling, therapy, and mental health resources to Latinx people who have experienced trauma or abuse can lead to a decrease in issues and abuse in the home. Families who have experienced trauma, incarceration, deportation, or abuse benefit from counseling and addressing their mental health may lead to stopping the cycles of abuse and trauma within families.

We also strongly encourage partnerships with the Office of Police Oversight and Austin Police Department as they work on de-escalation practices when addressing crime and conflict with minority and/or vulnerable populations.

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