



Austin allocating far less in rental assistance during COVID-19 crisis compared to other Texas cities

The City of Austin allocated \$1.2 million to help those impacted by COVID-19 in early May, but Central Texas Interfaith doesn't believe that's enough.

Author: Kalyn Norwood - May 13, 2020

AUSTIN, Texas — [Central Texas Interfaith \(CTI\)](#) is calling on Austin city leaders to allocate \$40 million to help renters struggling during the [COVID-19](#) crisis.

Earlier this month, the [City of Austin](#) announced it would release [\\$1.2 million](#) to help those impacted by COVID-19. With Austin often considered to be the most expensive city in Texas to live in, CTI doesn't believe the City is doing enough to keep people off the streets.



"Super thankful that [The City of Austin] created the RISE Fund that has been [a] huge help to our Austin community, but there's just more work to be done because there's more need," said Adell Arce with Central Texas Interfaith. "In order to help those working-class members of our society, those that work at restaurants, salons, retail, they need help and they, in essence, have been shut down. And it's our job to help our fellow human beings and offer them relief."

The \$1.2 million from the City of Austin pales in comparison to what other cities such as Dallas, Houston and San Antonio are giving. During this crisis, [San Antonio](#) has allocated \$25 million, the [City of Dallas](#) gave \$13.7 million and [Houston](#) gave \$15 million to help renters.

CTI believes \$40 million from the City of Austin would not only help renters but landlords too.

"The City can and must do more. In addition to providing housing security for families, this will allow dollars to flow to property owners, who themselves have mortgages and employees depending on them," said Miles Brandon with the Central Texas Interfaith. "The time to act bold is now."

"We realize what we're asking for is short-term economic relief for the landlords because the tenants can't pay and the landlords aren't receiving the money, and we understand that and that's why we're asking for the money," Arce said. "It's going to help everyone."

According to CTI, the \$1.2 million the City gave only helped about 1,000 families when around 70,000 needed it. The group is hoping the City can use the money it received through the CARES Act to fill the gap.

The City told KVUE it is working to find additional help for families in need.

"While we recognize that \$1.2 million can only go so far, we are committed to our ongoing efforts to identify and access additional help for these families as soon as we possibly can," said Rosie Truelove, director of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD). "Providing this rental assistance is something we can do right now."

CTI will hold a press conference on this topic on Wednesday, May 13, at 11 a.m. The group hopes to talk to city leaders within the week.

