



Austin Mutual Aid - 2021 End of Year Statement

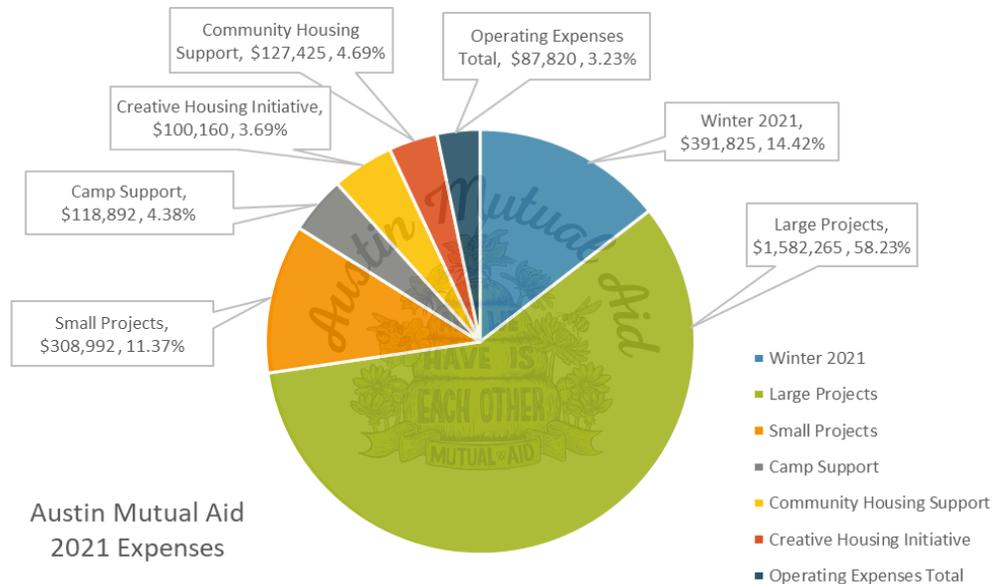
In 2021, AMA experienced considerable growth and transformation. [Mistakes were made](#) in early 2021, and in response to that the org took corrective action at the direction of the organizing community. A diverse group of BIPOC, queer people, and people with lived experience stepped up to assume day to day operations and the overall responsibility of Austin Mutual Aid moving forward. This transition began early June and was complete by July.

When the small group of community organizers that currently drive the work of Austin Mutual Aid took on this responsibility, our primary goals for the remainder of 2021 were to listen to the direction of partners in the community, ensure a complete transition from the founders of AMA and their financial accounts, and to redistribute the funds that were raised, approximately \$2.9M, primarily during fundraising done in response to Winter Storm Uri. A detailed spreadsheet of the AMA accounting for 2021 can be found [here](#). This is a simple breakdown:

Total Raised in 2021:
\$2,946,844

Spending categories

Winter 2021: \$391,825
Large Projects: \$1,582,265
Small Projects: \$305,992
Creative Housing Initiative:
\$100,160
Community Housing Support:
\$127,425
Camp Support: \$118,892
Operating Expenses: \$87,820



Remaining at year's end:
\$232,464

In response to the unprecedented winter storm that hit Austin in 2021, funds raised by the community were offered as reimbursement to anyone that was able to cover the cost of hotel stays for our unhoused neighbors. It was previously reported in a financial statement published in April 2021, that \$345,003 had been spent on hotels, and \$102,802 had been spent on supplies in response to the storm. However, after employing the assistance of a professional bookkeeper and financial analyst, those amounts were \$268,774 for hotels and \$40,878. Other categories included at that time were "Solidarity Support" & "Emergency Aid", which are now included in the Stipends totals for the purposes of this final report.

Once the new team took responsibility for the day to day operations of AMA, we spent the rest of the year reallocating back to the community the majority of the remaining funds, at the direction of the community. We held nine community meetings, attended by community organizers representing over 35 grassroots community organizations as well as community spokespeople of various unhoused and marginalized groups in Austin. With their direction, Austin Mutual Aid reallocated funds to 19 large projects totalling \$1,301,688.

We also took direction from a small group of BIPOC and queer community organizers, and people with that stepped up to evaluate dozens of applications to fund small projects. From their recommendations, we redistributed funds to 90+ local organizations and grassroots efforts, for 121 small projects totalling \$203,756.

Many community initiated efforts to help our unhoused neighbors by various organizations happened during 2021. Some were driven by individuals experiencing homelessness themselves, others kicked off by ally orgs wanting to find new ways to find sustainable solutions. Austin Mutual Aid joined these efforts, and launched the Creative Housing Initiative (CHI) pilot in the Summer of 2021.

The CHI was inspired, in part, by the work done during the Freeze of 2021 to shelter our unhoused neighbors, and also by the desires and ideas from unhoused neighbors. This initiative was conceived in order to create a new method of directly addressing homelessness, as well as learn about the barriers to housing. Through a housing first model we worked directly with the unhoused members of the community on a one-on-one basis, in order to meet their individual needs with dignity and compassion. By the end of 2021 we had spent \$100,160 on this initiative. While we are no longer sheltering participants in hotels, this is an ongoing initiative, as we continue to foster relationships with our participants and neighbors.

It was a joy to be able to facilitate the redistribution of funds raised to some truly incredible organizations that are doing some amazing work in our community. We would like to highlight just a handful of these projects. For purposes of this report, we have categorized the community organizations that received funds reallocations as follows:

Community Support | Camp Support | Health | Food | Community Impact

Community Support

[Black Tran Leadership of Austin](#) received \$100,000 for their planned expansion and sustainability. “Our goals are centered around building a better quality of life by creating housing opportunities, personal and professional development trainings, and building a safer community for Black trans people living in Austin.”

[Survive 2 Thrive](#) - In addition to the \$75,000 the community elected to reallocate to S2T for DV survivor family housing and Hurricane Ida relief, They also had previously received \$153,000, for a total of \$228,000. With their support, AMA was able to join their existing relationships with providers, which allowed us to reserve large blocks of hotel rooms during the 2021 freeze. This proved to be an essential part of our efforts during that deadly storm.

Other organizations receiving large reallocations of funds focused on community support include:

[10,000 Fearless First Responders](#) - \$32,000

[DAWA](#) - \$50,000

Camp Support

[ATX Camp Support/Stop The Sweeps](#), a long standing supporter of the unhoused community in Austin for several years, were chosen to continue and sustain their vital service to our unhoused neighbors, and assume the camp support and mutual aid reimbursement function that AMA had undertaken for a time last year. At the community’s direction, and in addition to thousands of dollars in Camp Support & mutual aid reimbursements, we reallocated \$351,000 to ATX Camp Support, \$36,000 of which was for the PhoneZone project, “for a year of phones through T-Mobile; to be disbursed through STS Open Collective.”

Other organizations receiving large reallocations of funds focused on camp support include:

[Austin Atheists Helping the Homeless](#) - \$24,675 for their bus pass program

[Drive By Howdy](#) - \$50,000

[Little Petal Alliance](#) was yet another notable receiver of reallocated funds for their various efforts to support the unhoused community. They received \$72,766 requested for multiple projects, and \$25,305 in verified reimbursements for camp support, hotels and mutual aid.

Community Impact

[Challenger Newspaper](#), a 95% street written newspaper, a program that “connects people on the street and gives them the opportunity to write for the paper on their own terms,” received \$10,000. Their proposal states they, “Plan to use the money to enhance our Laptop Program we've had for 10 yrs.”

Other organizations receiving large reallocations of funds focused on community impact include:

[Homes Not Handcuffs](#) - \$40,000

[The Museum of Human Achievement](#) - \$50,000

[Voices of Austin](#) - \$50,000

Food

[Save the Food](#), which “rescue more than 5,500 pounds of food each week”, and then “sort and cull the food, and give it away to more than 500 hungry or food insecure [low income and unhoused] people at more than 25 community locations every week,” received \$50,000 to expand their operation.

Other organizations receiving large reallocations of funds focused on food include:

[Carol's Kindness Food Pantry](#) - \$50,000

[Safe Table/Little Herds](#) - \$50,000

Health

[Central Texas Allied Health Institute](#), recently featured on Queer Eye Austin edition, has their Ana Lark COVID Vaccination Clinic on Tillery Street, a “no barrier” clinic in the heart of East Austin, utilizes “students and faculty to serve the eastern crescent community by providing walk up testing and vaccination five days a week with or without an appointment.” Last year Austin Public Health notified CTAHI that their “operations grant would be defunded.” As a result, the community decided they should receive reallocation of funds totalling \$100,000 to help sustain the clinic.

Other organizations receiving large reallocations of funds focused on health include:

[ATX Mental Health Fund](#) - \$50,000

[Recovery Alliance ATX](#) - \$50,000

[Primrose](#) - \$50,000

Financial Report

In order to compile a thorough and transparent accounting of AMA Donations and Expenses, we hired a Nonprofit Financial Consultant with 15 years of experience in financial analysis.

In an unprecedented moment, AMA raised nearly \$3 million dollars in Freeze Relief over the course of six weeks, exclusively using Venmo and GoFundMe campaigns. This overwhelmed the initial systems in place for tracking expenses and illustrated the need for greater organizational structure. In the summer of 2021, AMA

closed the personal Venmo accounts that were being used, hired a professional bookkeeper, opened an AMA Business account, and shifted all accounting procedures to Quickbooks.

The original Venmo and GFM account detail was necessary to reconcile and categorize the expenses from February - May 2021, and that data was spread over two Venmo accounts and three personal bank accounts held by the previous AMA leadership. Our finance team reviewed every single transaction in each one of these accounts to determine the legitimacy of each expense before categorizing it in our financial report.

Given the volume of data and the deficiencies of the original method of bookkeeping, our team has taken painstaking efforts to reconcile every transaction, reimbursement, and supporting documentation. We have at times found ourselves waiting for documents that would complete our financial picture to a greater degree of accuracy, but priority was placed on ensuring a 100% accurate report.

In order to remedy the original shortfalls, AMA has implemented an Accounting Policies and Procedures manual, including several levels of review, transparency, and separation of responsibilities. We have also updated our [Reimbursement Policies](#) to ensure all future expenses are accompanied by standard documentation and review procedures.

Our leadership now includes a Finance Team and regular calls to review monthly finances. We fully anticipate an audit from the IRS given the volume of donations received without an official 501c3 certification, and we are confident that our new team will successfully meet the task.

Much of the work of Austin Mutual Aid that was done up until now involved building the plane as we were flying it. Sometimes that includes trusting people until they give you a reason not to. We don't want to lose the trust of our colleagues and comrades in this often difficult work that is ever changing, often exhausting and confusing, but invariably worth it. We will continue to strive to leave the paths we cross better than we found them, whenever possible, and search for the lessons in those situations where solutions remain elusive.

Mutual Aid is not charity. Solidarity with our neighbors that have the greatest need means meeting them where they are at, and striving to help our neighbors with big hearts, lots of privilege, and the best of intentions, to understand how to be the best neighbors we can be. To that end, our goals for the remainder of this year will begin to pivot toward education, advocacy, outreach and community engagement on topics such as mutual aid and harm reduction.

We want to express our sincere gratitude for the trust placed in us by those that donated to the winter relief efforts in 2021. We also appreciate those that took the time to help us understand how to share those funds with the community in the least harmful ways possible.

Solidarity, not charity - Austin Mutual Aid

