



REENTRY ROUNDTABLE

AUSTIN·TRAVIS COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT

20
22

ABOUT

The [Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable](#), founded in 2004, is an ongoing forum for system-impacted individuals, community leaders, policymakers, advocates, service providers and academics working to address the challenges to effective reentry and reintegration of persons with criminal histories.

Our **vision** is a connected community that values and supports equity, well-being and upward mobility for persons impacted by the criminal justice system.

Our **mission** is to be a robust network that champions safe and healthy communities through effective reentry and reintegration of persons with justice system involvement by bringing reentry partners together to increase collaboration, reduce duplication, align efforts and strengthen the capacity of persons with justice system involvement and the reentry programs that serve them.

The **long-term outcome** we are working toward is that all persons with justice system involvement have what they need to survive and thrive including access to housing, a stable income, a support network to connect them to needed resources, and access to pathways to upward mobility.

2022 IMPACT



Strategic Plan

The Roundtable developed a new 5-year strategic plan including a new theory of change and an updated mission, vision, and core beliefs in partnership with more than 70 stakeholders, 35 of whom identified as being directly impacted by incarceration.



Diversion Focus Groups

The Roundtable was asked by Travis County to conduct primary research to better understand the experiences of women who had previously experienced reentry from jail or prison and/or who had previously participated in criminal justice diversion programs. In partnership with Community Coalition for Health, the Roundtable engaged 30 women in a series of focus groups.



Faith-Based Convening

The Roundtable hosted the first-ever Faith-Based Leaders Convening in April 2022. The event brought together a diverse group of more than 50 faith leaders from across Central Texas for a day of learning, networking, and visioning.



Civil Rights Strategic Agenda

The Roundtable developed a strategic agenda informed by listening sessions with 60 participants and the goal of ensuring civil rights for persons with criminal backgrounds by increasing rates of housing stability and employment.

FY22-26 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Roundtable aimed to center the voices of persons directly impacted by incarceration throughout the [strategic planning process](#). MEASURE is an Austin-based nonprofit with a mission to use data to empower people impacted by data disparities and the accompanying narrative. MEASURE conducted an equity assessment which included developing a historical timeline of incarceration in Austin/Travis County and conducting focus groups with persons directly impacted by the criminal justice system.

This data provided the basis for the development of the Roundtable's new theory of change: *to ensure that all persons with justice system involvement have what they need to survive and thrive including access to housing, a stable income, a support network to connect them to resources, and access to pathways to upward mobility.*

Lastly, Roundtable stakeholders developed priority areas and five-year goals and strategies including a focus on leadership and career development, peer networking, capacity building, advocacy, and re-envisioning the Roundtable's governance structure.

LEADERSHIP & CAREER DEVELOPMENT
PEER NETWORKING CAPACITY BUILDING
ADVOCACY GOVERNANCE
PEER NETWORKING LEADERSHIP

DIVERSION FOCUS GROUPS

Through [focus groups](#) conducted by the Reentry Roundtable and in collaboration with the Community Coalition for Health, 30 women provided insight about their experiences with diversion programs and reentry from prison and jail.

Focus Group Findings:



Institutional racism may discourage women of color from participating in diversion programs.



Systems must ensure that all eligible diversion program participants are notified of the option to participate so that selection bias does not occur.



Diversion programs should be offered more frequently and more widely, with diverse programming choices.



In general women feel more comfortable in a community-based environment than in an institutional environment.



Discretionary power to return diversion participants to incarceration should remain at judicial level, not with diversion program staff.

DIVERSION FOCUS GROUPS

Participants also shared how they would improve diversion programs, and what, if anything, would they go back in time to change or fix to prevent from being incarcerated or needing a diversion program, and their aspirations for the future.

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Quotes:

- ***I would like to inspire younger girls in the same predicament that I was. I have been through dark times, but I am not alone.***
- ***One day we can convince lawmakers that we are real people.***
- ***My hope would be that other women coming behind us have more opportunities than what were available to us, and those opportunities support their success instead of punishing their failure.***

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FAITH-BASED CONVENING



The Roundtable hosted its first Faith-Based Leaders Convening on April 28, 2022. The event brought together a diverse group of more than 50 faith leaders from across Central Texas for a day of learning, networking, and visioning.

Goals for the convening included:

- Highlighting the impact of faith communities on individuals leaving jail and prison
- Exploring what area faith communities are already doing to support those in reentry
- Helping make connections between faith leaders to coordinate efforts
- Working together to develop direct actions faith communities can take to support those in reentry.

CIVIL RIGHTS STRATEGIC AGENDA

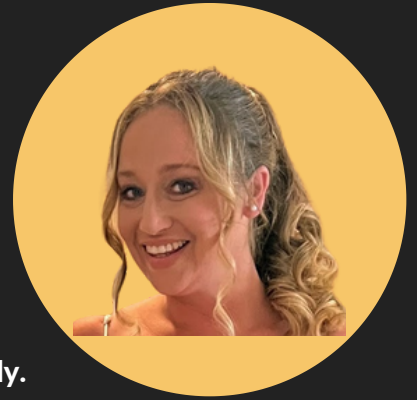
In partnership with the City of Austin and Travis County, the Roundtable developed a [strategic agenda](#) with the goal of ensuring civil rights for persons with criminal backgrounds as measured through increased rates of housing stability and employment. These goals were informed by a series of listening sessions with more than 60 participants based on the intersections of reentry and housing, homelessness, and employment.

The Roundtable Civil Rights Strategic Agenda Work Group developed the following goals and sample strategies with success measures and potential partners such as Travis County's Offices of Justice Planning, Economic Development & Strategic Investments, and Health & Human Services, the City of Austin's Offices of Civil Rights and Housing & Planning, the Downtown Austin Community Court, Housing Authority City of Austin (HACA), and Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO).

GOAL	SAMPLE STRATEGY
Advocate for local legislative and administrative policy changes related to fair chance housing and hiring	Create strong partnerships and advocacy channels with area housing authorities to increase public housing opportunities for persons with criminal backgrounds
Educate employers and housing providers to reduce stigma	Convene employers to share benefits of hiring persons with backgrounds
Partner with State-Level Organizations to impact state policy changes related to fair chance housing and hiring	Reduce barriers to obtaining an occupational license, including eliminating automatic exclusions, vague disqualifying criteria, and broad criminal record inquiries.

ADVOCACY FELLOW SPOTLIGHT

AMANDA CASSIDY-TREJO



This year was a period of life-changing growth both professionally and personally.

I was honored to co-facilitate the Roundtable's Diversion Focus Groups and collect feedback from other women with lived experiences in reentry and diversion as Travis County Commissioners Court explored alternatives to incarceration for women. I walked away recognizing that many of the issues I experienced during reentry continue to exist but had a sense of hope because of the work being done to support these women and hearing about the impact peer support provides which was the same support that was meaningful to me during reentry.

I participated in the Roundtable's strategic planning process which although arduous was a valuable learning experience. The Reentry Advocacy Project (RAP) has been a safe place where I could grow, connect, and support others in the community. I was most excited to provide feedback on leveraging this program and the Roundtable becoming more inclusive of people with lived experiences during the strategic planning process.

Through the Hogg Fellow Academy, I also participated in Federal Immersion week in Washington, D.C. where I learned about key agencies involved in mental health policy, like SAMHSA's Office of Recovery where I would now like to work one day. The professional development opportunities such as the Transformational Leadership Cohort, Justice Involved – Reentry Peer Specialist training, and my Certification in Nonprofit Management and Leadership along with developing and honing my facilitation skills in RAP have allowed me to not only grow my own peer support network but become a stronger resource to people in the community.

If you had asked me two years ago what I would want to be doing, I would have never imagined this would be the life I would get to have.

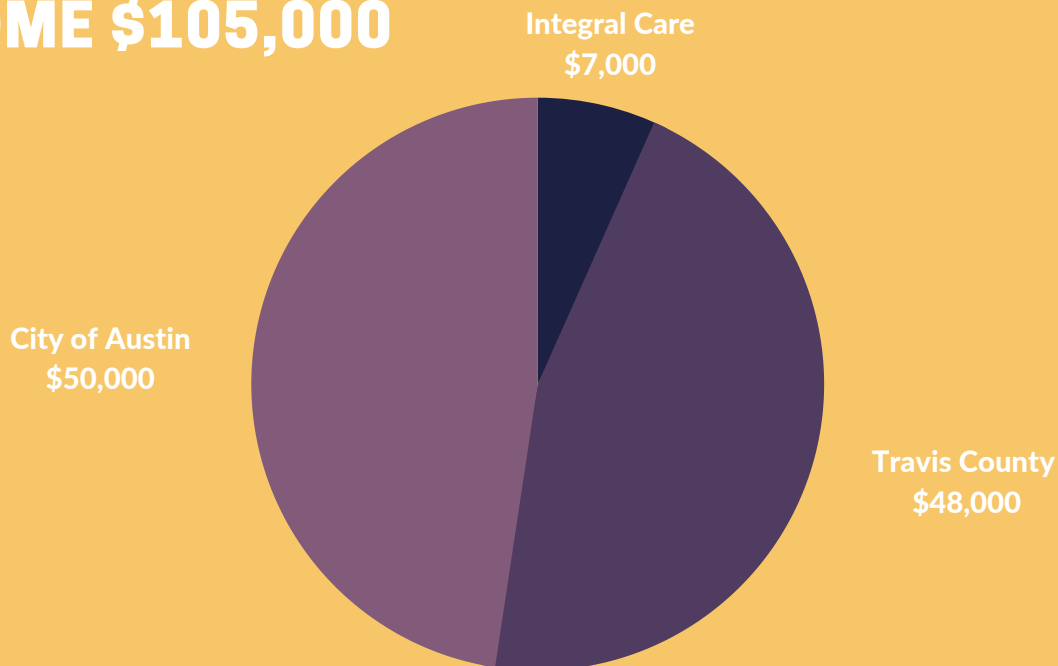
Not only has the Roundtable played an intricate role in my professional life but has also been a part of me becoming a homeowner, a wife, and a full-time mom of 5 kids. The support I have been given has had a profound impact on my life, including getting to connect with community leaders with lived experiences and people who are true allies. As I head toward the end of my fellowship which is bittersweet, I am forever grateful that I had this opportunity.



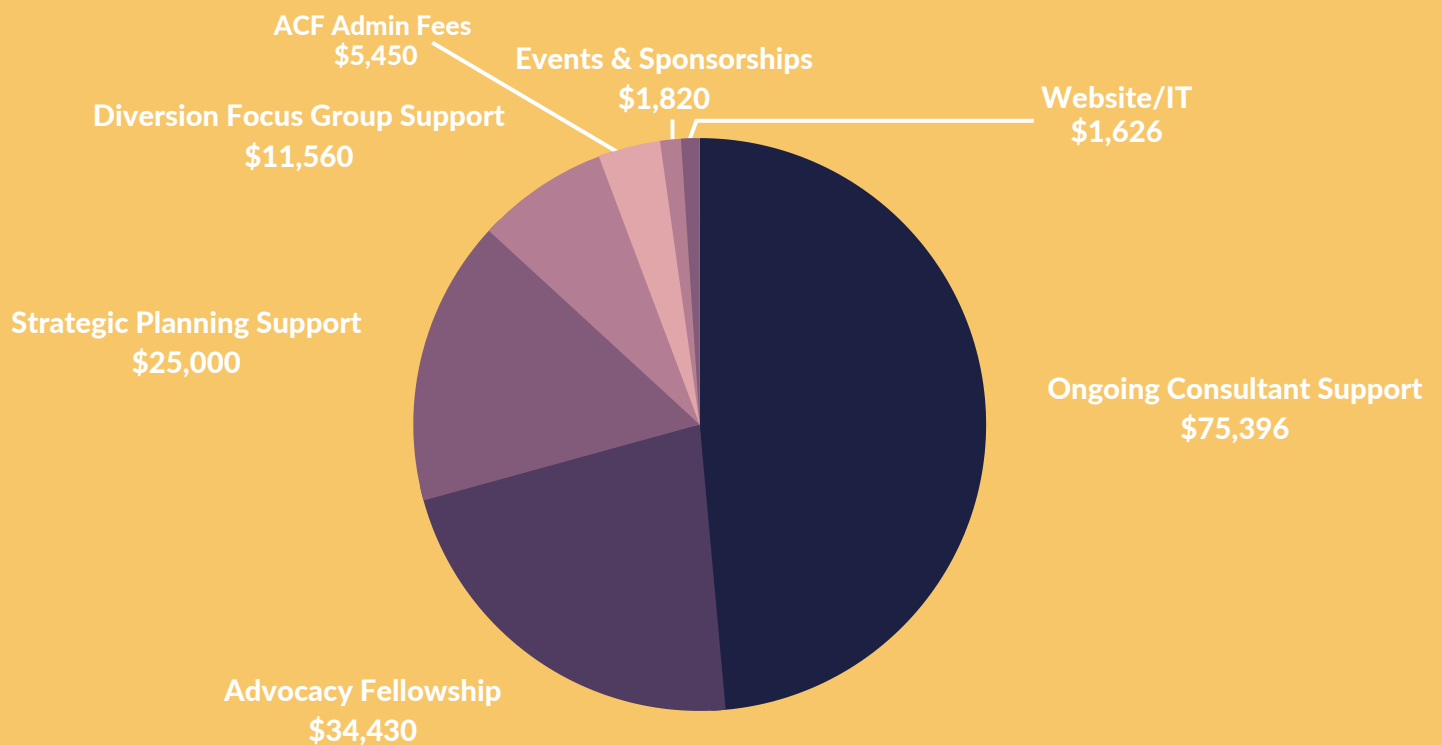
Amanda with the 2021-22 Hogg Foundation's Mental Health Policy Academy Fellowship Cohort—affectionately nicknamed “The Hogg Pound”—on their week-long federal immersion program in Washington, D.C.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

INCOME \$105,000



EXPENSES \$155,282



Note: The discrepancy between income and expenses in FY22 was intentional and for one year only

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships allow the Roundtable to maximize its impact within the community and we greatly appreciate their support and commitment. In FY2021-22, the Roundtable partnered with the following entities on a variety of projects and initiatives:

- Austin Community College
- Behavioral Health & Criminal Justice Advisory Committee -Intercept 4 Reentry Working Group
- Building Promise USA
- City of Austin Civil Rights Office
- City of Austin Equity Office
- Community Coalition for Health
- Diocese of Austin Restorative Justice Division
- Downtown Austin Community Court
- Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO)
- Grant Associates
- Grassroots Leadership
- Indeed
- Integral Care
- Jails to Jobs
- MEASURE
- Mount Zion Church Criminal Justice Ministry
- Reentry Advocacy Project (RAP)
- Sunrise Community Church & Ministries
- Texas Appleseed
- Texas Reach Out Ministries (TROM)
- Texas RioGrande Legal Aid
- The Rock ATX Church
- Travis County Health & Human Services
- Travis County Economic Development
- Travis County Justice Planning
- Unite Us
- Walking by Faith Prison Ministries
- Workforce Solutions Capital Area



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR MEMBERS

Executive Committee

Dr. Charles A. Moody, Jr.
Community Coalition for Health
Chair

Donald J. Tracy
Austin Community College
Past Chair

Melissa Shearer, LBSW, JD
Travis County Mental Health Public Defender
Vice Chair

Cynthia Simons, RPS, MHPS
Texas Center for Justice & Equity
RAP Representative

Planning Council

Sonja Burns
Community Representative

Jennifer Carter
Goodwill Industries of Central Texas

David Clauss, LMSW
American YouthWorks

Helen Gaebler, JD
UT School of Law

Juanita Garcia
Travis Co. Public Defender

Mia Greer, RN, BSN, CLIA
Community Coalition for Health

Darwin Hamilton
Community Representative

Carl F. Hunter II, M.Div
Building Promise USA

Cathy McClaugherty
Travis Co. Justice & Public Safety

Kaleigh Phelan
Capital Area Private Defender Service

Rodolfo (Rudy) Pérez, Jr.,
Travis County Adult Probation

Hank Perret
Community Representative

Joe A. Ramirez
Texas Veterans Commission

Paola Silvestre
Indeed

Louella Tate, Ph.D.
Community Representative

Peter Valdez, LMSW
City of Austin Community Court

Alex Villarreal, LPC
Integral Care