



6 for 6 Policy Agenda

6 Policies for the
City of San Antonio's
6-Month Budget Review

SA2020

Why a Policy Agenda?

San Antonio's shared community vision, co-created by more than 12,000 San Antonians, is made up of nine community results and 51 indicators by which to measure progress. The latest available data, released on January 28, 2024, can be explored at SA2020.org.

This is SA2020's final data release. After 12 years of driving progress toward a shared community vision, SA2020 is dissolving. This decision, made with intentionality and transparency, reflects the cumulative lessons learned from more than a decade of work and shows how we as an organization practice our values. You can read more about the decision on our [blog](#) and [FAQs section](#).

This policy agenda for the City of San Antonio is SA2020's final call to action, informed by our unique bird's-eye view of San Antonio and trusted community experts.

Six months into every fiscal year, which runs October 1 - September 30, the City Manager makes recommendations to City Council for a mid-year budget adjustment. This policy agenda does not exhaustively address the policies and investments necessary to achieve the shared community vision. Rather, it focuses on **6 policies that the City of San Antonio can adapt as early as March 2024, 6 months into its current Fiscal Year**. The policies focus on worker's rights and economic development, civic engagement, environmental sustainability, community safety, housing affordability, mobility, public transportation, and accessibility.

Everything we do at SA2020 begins with the shared community vision and ends with a call to action. Our dissolution is no different. Local nonprofits, organizers, and everyday San Antonians can use this policy agenda to inform their advocacy and engagement during the City's mid-year budget adjustment.

1. Recruit and provide incentives to businesses with low CEO-to-worker pay ratios and guaranteed healthcare benefits for San Antonio’s workers.

The City of San Antonio’s Economic Development Incentive Fund is meant to attract large-scale businesses in targeted industries and other significant investments that will create new jobs and strengthen the local economy.¹ In order to create high-wage jobs and reduce income inequality, the City must account for CEO-to-worker pay ratios, as well as worker benefits, when recruiting and providing incentives to businesses.

From 1978–2022, CEO compensation in the U.S. increased 1,209.2% compared to 15.3% for workers.² To help address this gap, CEO-to-worker pay ratio compares the compensation of the CEO to that of the company’s median employee. A lower ratio of 2:1, for example, means the CEO earns twice that of a median employee, while a higher ratio of 20:1 means they earn twenty times more. Lower ratios signal the creation of higher wage jobs, an investment in workers, and pay equity. Higher ratios contribute to inequality. CEO pay ratio is available for every publicly-traded company.

In 2022, 3.9%—19,962 people—of San Antonio workers, age 16 or older, worked full-time and year-round in the past 12 months and still lived in poverty.³ Further, 17.8% of San Antonio workers, age 19-64, who worked full-time and year round in the past 12 months, did not have health insurance.⁴ The SA2020 Living Wage Dividend⁵ shows that paying people who work full-time and year-round a living wage—instead of the state minimum wage of \$7.25/hour—could increase the annual income per person in San Antonio by \$19,211 and have a \$383 million impact on the local economy.⁶

City of San Antonio Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Allocation(s): \$8,174,540 is available in the Economic Development Incentive Fund (page 230).



2. Reinvest CPS Energy surplus revenue into increased weatherization and utility assistance.

Every year since 2020, San Antonians have faced the “hottest summer on record.”⁷ The rising costs of heating and cooling homes has led to increased utility bills and a revenue surplus for CPS Energy, San Antonio’s publicly-owned utility. As extreme weather continues, the City of San Antonio must proactively plan to use surplus revenue to increase investments in utility assistance and the weatherization of homes. This will help mitigate the effects of climate change, while increasing housing affordability, which includes the cost of utilities.

Surplus revenue must be used to increase the City’s Department of Human Services CPS Energy Utility Assistance and the Affordability Discount Program. As of June 2023, more than 200,000 CPS Energy accounts, or 1 in 5, were past due.⁸ Since then, the CPS Energy Board of Trustees and City Council approved a rate increase that goes into effect February 2024.

A 2019 report commissioned by the City’s Office of Historic Preservation reports that historic homes (built before 1960) must be a component of the City’s housing affordability strategy. The majority of historic homes in San Antonio are in the same districts with the highest rates of poverty: City Council Districts 5, 3, 2, and 1.⁹ Investing more in the weatherization of homes in City Council Districts 5, 3, 2, and 1 would help keep people safe during extreme weather conditions and help families save money on their utility bills. These savings can be reallocated towards rent/mortgage, food, transportation, and other basic necessities.

The Department of Energy has found that weatherizing one home can save approximately \$372 per year.¹⁰ It costs approximately \$5,000 to weatherize one home. Since 2008, CPS Energy’s Casa Verde Program has provided 3,500 free energy efficiency improvements to 30,000 homes.¹¹

City of San Antonio Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Allocation(s): \$1 million to support the weatherization of low-income homes and \$91,174 for emergency financial assistance through delegate agency Catholic Charities (page 179 and 381). CPS Energy surplus revenue has been up to \$80 million in recent years.¹²

3. Immediately and permanently suspend the pilot program that stations an armed police officer at the Central Library, and divert funding towards social work practices that advance community safety.

In November 2023, in an effort to address a rising number of assaults, the City of San Antonio added an armed police officer at the Central Library. This addition is a \$70,000 pilot program that could last up to six months.¹³

Libraries are considered “third places”—spaces beyond home, work, or school that offer people connection and safety.¹⁴ Beyond checking out books, the San Antonio Public Library system offers endless learning resources, Internet access, warming and cooling centers, spaces to apply for jobs and complete homework, and more. This means libraries are especially important to people who do not have other spaces for connection and safety, including people who are disproportionately hurt, and even killed, by police violence.

Police officers threaten the sense of connection and safety for the people who need libraries the most, which keeps SAPL from fulfilling its mission of “chang[ing] lives through the transformative power of information, imagination, and ideas.”

This pilot program must end immediately and funding must be diverted to invest in solutions for community safety that are widely supported by people most impacted by police violence. According to the Library Freedom Project, these solutions may include hiring social workers, hiring staff with lived experiences shared by library patrons (known as peers of peer navigator staff), and partnering with community-based organizations that specialize in community safety and deescalation.

City of San Antonio Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Allocation(s): \$56,116,753 to the San Antonio Public Library (page 204-205).

4. **Reallocate funding within the existing San Antonio Police Department budget to increase investments in SA-CORE necessary to meet San Antonio's call volume.**

SA-CORE enhances the City of San Antonio's response to mental health-related 911 calls by dispatching a multi-disciplinary response team composed of a paramedic, a police officer, and a mental health clinician.¹⁵ In 2022, San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) received 32,190 mental health calls.¹⁶ According to comments during the City's August 2023 Budget Work Session, the number of teams necessary to meet the existing demand is 10-12.¹⁷ The City's Fiscal Year 2024 Approved Budget increased the teams from 1 to 3.

Increasing investments in SA-CORE by re-allocating existing funds within SAPD, prevents the further inflation of the police budget. The City's Fiscal Year 2024 budget includes \$572.3 million for police, an 8.1% increase over the Fiscal Year 2023 Adopted Budget.¹⁸ SAPD makes up 16% of the City's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget. According to the Urban Institute, state and local government spending on police increased from \$45 billion in 1977 to \$129 billion in 2020, an increase of 189 percent.¹⁹

City of San Antonio Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Allocation(s): \$3,540,718 for the expansion of the SA-CORE program from 1 to 3 teams (page 170).

5. Prioritize the assessment and improvements of sidewalks near VIA bus stops in City Council Districts with the highest levels of people with disabilities and people who use public transit.

Beginning Fiscal Year 2024, the City of San Antonio is scheduled to lead a three-year comprehensive sidewalk condition assessment. The City’s Fiscal Year 2024 Adopted Budget additionally includes \$21.5 million for sidewalk improvements resulting in 72 “usable” sidewalk miles. “Usable” sidewalks are not necessarily accessible. Accessibility refers to services and facilities built or modified so that they can be used by people who have a disability. The sidewalk assessment and improvements must specifically prioritize the accessibility of sidewalks within 15-feet of a VIA bus stop within City Council Districts 5, 4, 3, and 2. This is where the highest levels of people with disabilities and who use public transit live.²⁰

City of San Antonio Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Allocation(s): \$500,000 towards a comprehensive sidewalk condition assessment to be completed over the next three fiscal years for a total of \$1.5 million. \$21.5 million for sidewalk improvements (page 99 and 173).



6. End the Friendship City Agreement with Tel Aviv, pending a ceasefire in Gaza, unobstructed humanitarian aid, the safe return of all hostages and detainees—Israeli and Palestinian—and the end to the occupation of Palestine.

The City of San Antonio holds three Friendship City agreements, including with Tel Aviv, Israel.

The City’s Global Engagement Division is responsible for fostering and deepening relationships with Sister Cities and Friendship Cities through “business and economic development, youth and educational exchanges, cultural engagement, technical exchange, and humanitarian assistance.”²¹ Friendship Cities are considered a chance to explore compatibility and develop the expertise and resources needed to maintain consistent programming and potentially establish a more formal Sister City Agreement. This work is done to achieve a broader goal of “promot[ing] San Antonio’s assets” globally. Promoting San Antonio’s assets with Israel in the face of human rights violations, including the most recent ruling by the International Court of Justice, which found it is “plausible” Israel is committing genocide, goes against the City’s organizational value of integrity, which states, “We model ethical behavior.”²²

City of San Antonio Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Allocation(s): \$30,450,084 to the The Economic Development Department which oversees the Global Engagement Division (pages 204-205 and 404-405).



Endnotes

1. City of San Antonio Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2024, page 230, <https://www.sanantonio.gov/portals/0/files/budget/fy2024/Adopted-Budget-2024.pdf>.
2. CEO pay slightly declined in 2022, Josh Bivens and Jori Kandra for Economic Policy Institute, September 21, 2023, <https://www.epi.org/publication/ceo-pay-in-2022/>.
3. American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2022, Table S1701.
4. American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2022, Table S72701.
5. The SA2020 Living Wage Dividend has been estimated by analyzing the correlation between the number of individuals working full-time and year-round and still living in poverty (American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2022) and the living wage per person within Bexar County. The MIT Living Wage Calculation is the hourly rate that an individual in a household must be paid to support themselves. This includes food, childcare, health (including health insurance), housing, transportation, basic necessities (e.g. housekeeping supplies and clothing), civic necessities (e.g. audio/visual equipment), broadband, and taxes. Values were inflated from 2019 to December 2022 dollars using the Consumer Price Index inflation multiplier from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Living Wage for one adult with no children is \$34,091, while the poverty threshold, according to the U.S. Census Bureau for one person with no children is \$14,880.
6. While eligibility for a tax abatement includes a provision that one hundred percent (100%) of the company's new and existing employees at the project location must earn no less than a "living wage," the City of San Antonio's Economic Development Fund uses the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services's definition which is based on the poverty level for a family of four, as determined annually in January, <https://www.sanantonio.gov/EDD/Development-Opportunities/Incentives/Economic-Development-Incentive-Fund>.
7. According to data from National Oceanic and Atmospheric's U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit and Climate Explorer, <https://crt-climate-explorer.nemac.org/about/>. Accessed January 28, 2024.
8. *With 207,000 accounts past due, CPS Energy pushes installment plans to get customers caught up*, Sara DiNatale for San Antonio Express-News, June 27, 2023, <https://www.expressnews.com/business/article/cps-energy-pushes-installment-plans-control-debt-18170772.php>.
9. See SA2020's City Council Profiles at SA2020.org/city-council-profiles to learn about the oppressive history and legacy of redlining on poverty today.
10. Department of Energy, Office of State and Community Energy Programs, Weatherization Assistance Program, <https://www.energy.gov/scep/wap/weatherization-assistance-program>.
11. CPS Energy, Casa Verde Program, <https://residential.savenow.cpsenergy.com/casaverde>. Accessed January 24, 2024.
12. *CPS Energy rebates, favored by Nirenberg, still in budget despite council concern*, Andrea Drusch for San Antonio Report, September 14, 2022, <https://sanantonioreport.org/cps-energy-rebate-san-antonio-budget-windfall/>.
13. *Central Library adds police officer to security detail, sparking concerns at public meeting*, Iris Dimmick for San Antonio Report, December 8, 2023, <https://sanantonioreport.org/central-library-adds-police-officer-to-security-detail-public-meeting-pushback/>.
14. Library Freedom Project, <https://libraryfreedom.org/>. Accessed January 29, 2024.

15. City of San Antonio Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2024, page 81,
<https://www.sanantonio.gov/portals/0/files/budget/fy2024/Adopted-Budget-2024.pdf>.
16. In wake of Melissa Perez shooting, council asks if SAPD has 'gap' in mental health response, Molly Smith for San Antonio Express-News, August 24, 2023,
<https://www.expressnews.com/news/article/sa-core-team-sapd-budget-18324697.php>.
17. August 2023 City Council Budget Work Session,
<https://sanantoniotx.new.swagit.com/videos/269968>.
18. City of San Antonio Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2024, page 80,
<https://www.sanantonio.gov/portals/0/files/budget/fy2024/Adopted-Budget-2024.pdf>.
19. Urban Institute, State and Local Backgrounders: Criminal Justice Expenditures: Police, Corrections, and Courts, February 27, 2023,
<https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/state-and-local-finance-initiative/state-and-local-backgrounders/criminal-justice-police-corrections-courts-expenditures>.
Accessed January 28, 2024.
20. SA2020 City Council Profiles, <https://sa2020.org/city-council-profiles>.
21. City of San Antonio Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2024, pages 404-405,
<https://www.sanantonio.gov/portals/0/files/budget/fy2024/Adopted-Budget-2024.pdf>.
22. City of San Antonio Mission and Core Values,
<https://www.sa.gov/Directory/Departments/CMO/Mission>.

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