

Proposal for Better Together Initiative - Facilitator

RFP No. 26-39RFP

Submitted to:

City of McKinney, Texas

Procurement Services

401 E. Virginia Street

McKinney, Texas 75069

Submitted by:

Public and Nonprofit Management Program

The University of Texas at Dallas

800 W. Campbell Road

Richardson, Texas 75080

Project Team Members:

Prof. Ted Benavides

Dr. Elizabeth Searing

Dr. John McCaskill

Dr. Allison Russell

Date: December 11, 2025

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Cover Letter

December 11, 2025

Procurement Services Manager
City of McKinney
401 E. Virginia Street
McKinney, TX 75069

Re: Proposal—Better Together Initiative – Facilitator (RFP No. 26-39RFP; Due 2:00 p.m. CT, Dec. 11, 2025)

Dear Procurement Services Manager,

The Public and Nonprofit Management Program (PNM) at the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences at The University of Texas at Dallas is pleased to submit this proposal to serve as Facilitator for McKinney’s Better Together Initiative. Our four-person team, composed of faculty from the PNM program, brings deep expertise in public and nonprofit management, public finance, strategic planning, project management, and community engagement.

The following proposal outlines our plan to deliver a robust community engagement process, data-driven Needs Assessment, actionable Strategic Plan, and pragmatic Implementation Plan with clear performance metrics. We are committed to providing the City of McKinney with high-quality deliverables that align with your RFP’s scope and schedule, and reflect the values and priorities established by the City and its stakeholders.

If we can answer any additional questions as you evaluate the proposal, please let us know.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Teodoro (Ted) J. Benavides
Project Team Lead | Professor of Practice in Public and Nonprofit Management
School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences
The University of Texas at Dallas
Contact: teodoro.benavides@utdallas.edu

Executive Summary

The Public and Nonprofit Management Program (PNM) at The University of Texas at Dallas submits this proposal to serve as the Facilitator for the City of McKinney's Better Together Initiative. The proposal outlines our relevant experience, qualifications, and references; our proposed approach to the project, including an explanation of each of the primary deliverables; and a cost proposal detailing the main components of the project, expected costs, and narrative summary for each area. The total cost for the proposed project is \$93,750.

Our approach to the project incorporates four key deliverables: 1) Outreach Plan and Community Engagement; 2) Needs Assessment; 3) Strategic Plan; and 4) Implementation Plan.

The **Outreach Plan and Community Engagement** explains how we will engage with community stakeholders throughout the project to incorporate their perspectives, expertise, and lived experiences. This approach will allow us to make use of existing knowledge and resources to inform the development of each of the project's main deliverables. We are committed to producing a project that is representative of the City's stakeholders, with a particular focus on incorporating the voices of individuals experiencing and formerly experiencing homelessness.

The **Needs Assessment** will analyze existing services, resources, and capacities for mitigating homelessness with an eye toward identifying critical gaps. We recognize that a lot of work has already been done by the City and its partners to understand the issue of homelessness in the City. Therefore, we will focus our Needs Assessment first on compiling, synthesizing, and analyzing existing data from a variety of sources, including service providers. This approach will allow us to make the best possible use of existing data and will then point toward any gaps in understanding that require a targeted approach to additional data collection. The Needs Assessment will incorporate qualitative and quantitative data and will serve as the foundation for the Strategic Plan.

The **Strategic Plan** will bring together insights from the Needs Assessment and community engagement activities to generate 5-7 goals and specific strategies for achieving each goal over the next 5-10 years. The plan will also include a theory of change, detailing how goals and strategies will lead to expected outcomes; a section on governance and organizational structure, incorporating insights and recommendations for the City to work with its partners to achieve desired goals; a resource mobilization strategy, suggesting potential funding sources and partnerships to ensure long-term success; and a section about how the City can align its efforts with regional initiatives. The Strategic Plan will also include an implementation strategy to guide the City in moving from intent to impact in enacting the priorities of the Strategic Plan and the Better Together Initiative.

The **Implementation Plan** summarizes how we will approach each phase of the project, including dates, tasks, deliverables, and metrics for success. The expected timeline for the project aligns with the RFP and expectations of the City, commencing in March 2026 and concluding in October 2026.

As faculty with a diverse range of skills and expertise in public and nonprofit management, we bring complementary and extensive experience in the areas of project management, strategic planning and implementation, community engagement, and qualitative and quantitative research. We are uniquely positioned to work with the City and its stakeholders to carry out the work outlined in this plan as demonstrated by our qualifications, selection of past projects, and references. We look forward to leveraging our expertise and existing relationships with the City and its partners to complete the project in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Compliance and Verification

Team Verification: All proposed team members are currently full-time faculty at The University of Texas at Dallas.

Insurance Compliance: The University of Texas at Dallas maintains comprehensive insurance coverage that meets or exceeds the requirements specified in Section XI of the RFP. Certificates of Insurance will be provided within ten (10) calendar days of contract award.

Legal Compliance: Our approach is fully cognizant of and compliant with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. We maintain rigorous quality control processes to handle any errors or omissions in materials developed, including peer review protocols and stakeholder validation procedures.

Relevant Experience and Reference List

Firm Information

Lead Organization: Public and Nonprofit Management Program, School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences, The University of Texas at Dallas

Business Address: 800 W. Campbell Rd., GR 31, Richardson, TX 75080

Team Members and Qualifications

Project Manager: Professor Ted Benavides

Email: tjb051000@utdallas.edu

Telephone: (872) 883-4745

Background and Qualifications: Prof. Benavides serves as a Professor of Practice for Public and Nonprofit Management at UT Dallas. His expertise includes over twenty years in municipal government and public administration involving extensive experience in strategic planning, organizational development, and community engagement and stakeholder facilitation. He has held positions as City Manager and Assistant City manager in Denton and Dallas. Benavides has also published research on local government management and community development and engages with partners in local government and nonprofits through a variety of projects and initiatives. Prof. Benavides will serve as the primary point of contact and overall project manager, coordinating all team activities and serving as the primary interface with City staff and stakeholders. Prof. Benavides served as a member of the team for the McKinney Alliance Mental Wellness Phase 1.

Research Lead: Dr. Elizabeth Searing

Email: elizabeth.searing@utdallas.edu

Background and Qualifications: Dr. Searing is Associate Professor of Public and Nonprofit Management and Fellow, Venise Stuart Professorship in Nonprofit Management and Leadership at UT Dallas. Her expertise includes nonprofit management, with particular emphasis on

nonprofit finance; organizational sustainability and resiliency; program evaluation and implementation; and quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Dr. Searing has worked with numerous community partners through her faculty role and as a consultant. Prior to coming to UT Dallas, she served as the Executive Director of the Institute of Nonprofit Leadership and Community Development at SUNY Albany. Dr. Searing will serve as the research lead for the project, and she will also lead development of the Needs Assessment, ensuring rigorous data collection and analysis that synthesizes existing knowledge and incorporates diverse stakeholder perspectives.

Dr. John McCaskill

Email: john.mccaskill@utdallas.edu

Background and Qualifications: Dr. McCaskill is Clinical Professor of Public and Nonprofit Management at UT Dallas, a Texas licensed CPA, and a LEED Accredited Professional in Building Design and Construction. His expertise includes strategic planning and organizational change, performance measurement, program evaluation, public-private partnerships, and evidence-based policy implementation. During his extensive career in public service, Dr. McCaskill has worked with numerous community partners through a variety of projects. Dr. McCaskill will lead development of the Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan, ensuring recommendations are achievable, measurable, and sustainable. Dr. McCaskill served as a member of the team for the McKinney Alliance Mental Wellness Phase 1.

Dr. Allison Russell

Email: allison.russell@utdallas.edu

Background and Qualifications: Dr. Russell is Assistant Professor of Public and Nonprofit Management at UT Dallas. Her expertise includes nonprofit management, volunteering and civic engagement, public-private partnerships, strategic planning, and stakeholder analysis. Her research utilizes both quantitative and qualitative approaches, including collaborative and participatory methodologies. Dr. Russell has worked with community partners through research, teaching, consulting, and grassroots organizing. Dr. Russell will serve as the lead for Community Engagement, with a focus on ensuring adequate and authentic representation of all key stakeholder groups.

Selected Projects and Reference List

Project	Client	Dates	Scope	Outcomes	Relevance
Organizational Analysis and Fee	City of Royse City, Texas Carl Alsabrook, City Manager carl.alsabrook@roysecity.com	2018	Conducted a business process analysis of the Development Department	Plan adopted	Resulted in a department reorganization and development fee update
McKinney Alliance Mental Wellness Phase 1	McKinney Alliance, City of McKinney, McKinney ISD, and McKinney Chamber Paul Grimes, City Manager pgrimes@mckinneytexas.org	2019	Produced a community wellbeing report	Identified community impact assessments	Development of a concrete action plan
Development fee study	City of Fate, Texas Michael Kovacs, City Manager mkovacs@fatetx.gov	2023	Projections for Commercial Permits and Inspections.	Plan adopted	Resulted in validated commercial permits and inspection fees in conformance with state law

Project Understanding and Approach

The City of McKinney's Better Together Initiative is an opportunity to bring together key stakeholders from across the City who are already working to combat homelessness and assist individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness and synthesize their existing knowledge, resources, and activities. Given the level of effort and investment that the City and community organizations have already put into this issue, our goal is not to reinvent the wheel but rather to make the best possible use of City resources, as well as local expertise and experience, to develop a strategic plan that is responsive to both current needs and future challenges.

To that end, we view our role in this project as twofold: first, we will work with these stakeholders to gather, synthesize, analyze, and present information about what we already know about homelessness in McKinney and existing programs to address it in a clear and succinct format. Second, we will engage stakeholders in a variety of forums (e.g., listening sessions, working groups) to develop, plan, iterate, and implement novel strategies to further address the three different areas of homelessness identified as City priorities. The main priority of our team as facilitators is to bring together stakeholders already working in this space to catalyze ongoing effort, collaboration, and shared commitment to long-term solutions and to leverage their expertise and unique positioning as the foundation for the strategic plan and implementation plan. Our methodology directly supports McKinney's adopted guiding principles for the plan:

- United Community Effort: We will establish cross-sector working groups and facilitate partnerships that break down organizational silos and foster shared responsibility.
- Shared Safety and Well-Being: Both the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan will incorporate the perspectives and concerns of both housed and unhoused community members, ensuring solutions enhance public safety, health, and welfare for all.
- Compassion and Dignity: We will center the voices of individuals experiencing homelessness in our community engagement process, ensuring proposed strategies are reflective of and responsive to their lived experiences.
- Data-Driven Decision Making: We will utilize empirical data from multiple sources, such as PIT counts, HMIS data, community surveys, and service provider records, to inform the Needs Assessment, Strategic Plan, and Implementation Plan. As part of our commitment to streamlining the project and making best use of existing knowledge and

resources, we will first draw upon existing information from key stakeholders before determining the extent and focus of new data collection efforts.

- **Prevention Focus:** Our Strategic Plan will emphasize upstream interventions and system reforms aimed at reducing the frequency and duration of homeless episodes, as well as suggested steps for addressing the root causes of homelessness in the long term.

The following sections outline the scope of homelessness in McKinney, our planned approach, and the proposed timeline.

Project Context: Homelessness in McKinney

McKinney’s homelessness challenge exists within a complex regional and national context. According to the 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count reported by *Community Impact*, McKinney identified 239 individuals experiencing homelessness, representing a 5% increase from 227 individuals in 2023 and an 11% increase from 221 individuals in 2021.¹ Approximately 150 individuals are sheltered at The Samaritan Inn, while approximately 75 remain unsheltered.² However, the McKinney Police Department’s monthly interactions with approximately 100 unique homeless individuals suggest the actual number may be higher.

On its surface, this local trend seems to contrast with regional trends. Dallas and Collin Counties combined saw a 19% reduction in overall homelessness between 2021 and 2024, with 3,718 individuals counted in January 2024 compared to 4,570 in 2021.³ This trend points to the potential of evidence-based strategies, such as those promoted by the All Neighbors Coalition in Dallas, to mitigate homelessness. However, additional factors, such as the short- and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and changing economic conditions, have also influenced regional homelessness trends. Thus, the true story behind these numbers is complex.

¹ Hamilton, S. (2024, November 29). McKinney sees year-over-year increase in homeless population. *Community Impact*. Retrieved from <https://communityimpact.com/dallas-fort-worth/mckinney/government/2024/11/29/mckinney-sees-year-over-year-increase-in-homeless-population/>

² City of McKinney. (2024, November 19). 2024 Homelessness Update. Retrieved from <https://mckinney.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13554010&GUID=3D813140-AC14-4309-A177-C1570CAE0418>

³ Housing Forward. (2024). *Annual Point-in-Time Report*. Retrieved from https://housingforwardntx.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/PIT-2024-Report_2024-07-26.pdf

Additional factors at the local level shape McKinney’s specific context with respect to homelessness. McKinney is both the seat of Collin County and one of the fastest-growing cities in America, with a 2025 population of approximately 235,030 (up 19% since 2020). As the population continues to grow, McKinney faces housing affordability pressures that contribute to housing instability.⁴ Collin County ranks among Texas's most expensive housing markets, with median household incomes of \$120,273 unable to keep pace with rising housing costs for many residents. Taken together, these factors contribute to the root causes of homelessness and the potential risk for homelessness within McKinney.

The three areas of homelessness identified by the City of McKinney as priorities for the Better Together Initiative reflect the complexity of the issue itself, and the fact that the way in which the issue is understood differs greatly among stakeholders. Citizens, businesses, service providers, and policymakers often define the “problem” of homelessness differently. For example, residents may see visible encampments as a detriment to their quality of life or a threat to their property values or personal safety, while service providers and advocates see rising costs of living and systemic poverty as the primary problem. Therefore, a critical aspect of this project will be to engage with these stakeholder groups around how they understand the problem, what they are currently doing to address it and/or their perceptions of current strategies, and their feedback on potential strategies for continued mitigation. We further address this important aspect of the project and how we will engage with this complexity in the Scope of Work below.

⁴ World Population Review. (2025). *McKinney, TX*. Retrieved from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/texas/mckinney>

Scope of Work

Community Engagement and Public Outreach Plan

Community engagement occurs at every step in the process. Our Community Engagement and Public Outreach Plan (CEPOP) will ensure broad, inclusive participation from all stakeholder groups identified in the RFP: individuals experiencing homelessness, property owners, residents, businesses, employees, service providers, faith organizations, city staff, and elected officials, in addition to any other groups which emerge during the process.

- Step 1: Establish Landscape and Definitions (Week 1)

This step tackles two important definitions. First, we need to come to an understanding regarding the definition(s) of homelessness that the project intends to address. Second, we need to draw geographical boundaries around the problem so that we know what population we are most interested in assisting and resources we have available. We will also host a kick-off meeting with the McKinney team.

- Step 2: Identify and Map Stakeholders (Weeks 2-3)

Working with existing resources such as the McKinney Homeless Coalition and Point-in-Time teams, we will conduct a comprehensive stakeholder mapping to identify key individuals, organizations, and constituencies. One of the most challenging parts of this step will be including actual service recipient voices in a way that is useful and respectful; however, we do believe that this is an essential step and aligns with the City's priorities. This mapping will:

- Identify primary, secondary, and tertiary stakeholders
- Assess stakeholder interests, influence, and potential contributions
- Recognize power dynamics and ensure marginalized voices are centered
- Develop tailored engagement strategies for each stakeholder group

- Step 3: Engagement Strategy Design (Weeks 3-4)

The engagement strategy will utilize multiple formats to accommodate different participation preferences:

- Digital Engagement:
 - Design of McKinney-hosted project website with updates, meeting schedules, and feedback mechanisms

- Design and deploy online surveys accessible via computer and mobile devices
- Social media outreach through City and community partner channels
- Virtual meeting options for all public forums
- In-Person Engagement:
 - Community forums at accessible locations throughout McKinney. The number of community forums/public meetings will be a minimum of 10 meetings (4 listening sessions, 2 sessions for needs assessment feedback, 2 sessions for strategic plan workshopping/feedback, and 2 sessions for implementation plan feedback). We may increase this number up to 15 meetings (7 listening sessions and 4 strategic plan workshops, plus the 2 sessions for needs assessment and 2 sessions for implementation plan feedback).
 - Pop-up engagement at high-traffic locations (libraries, community centers, parks)
 - Targeted outreach at locations where unhoused individuals congregate
 - Door-to-door outreach in neighborhoods most affected by visible homelessness
- Supportive Practices to Enable Representative Stakeholder Participation:
 - Compensation (gift cards, meals) for Working Group 1 - Lived Experience Advisory Council. This is designed to increase the likelihood of consistent participation and reduce barriers to participation among this critical stakeholder group. We anticipate providing gift cards for \$25 each following each working group session. The costs are included in the project cost estimate and will range from \$600-\$1200 depending on the final size of the group (6-8 members) and the final number of working group meetings for this group (6-8).
 - Accessible venues with transportation assistance as needed
 - Translation services for non-English speakers, if possible. This service will ideally be provided via Research Team resources.
 - Materials available in multiple formats (written, verbal, visual)

- Step 4: Working Group Formation

We will establish at least five specialized working groups, each meeting 4-6 times throughout the project. Open only to group members, these working groups will allow us to get more specific

feedback from specific key stakeholders in the community and will involve more opportunities to workshop specific components of the plan and receive feedback.

- Working Group 1: Lived Experience Advisory Council
 - Composition: 6-8 individuals currently experiencing or recently experiencing homelessness
 - Focus: Centering perspectives of those most directly affected; reviewing all recommendations for feasibility and dignity
 - Support: Stipends for participation, transportation, meals, flexible meeting times
- Working Group 2: Service Provider Collaborative
 - Composition: Representatives from The Samaritan Inn, faith organizations providing services, healthcare providers, mental health services, substance abuse treatment programs, veterans services, etc.
 - Focus: Assessing service system gaps, coordination opportunities, best practices
- Working Group 3: Business and Property Owner Alliance
 - Composition: Downtown merchants, property owners, commercial real estate representatives, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
 - Focus: Understanding business community concerns, identifying partnership opportunities, addressing symptoms
- Working Group 4: Housing and Economic Development Task Force
 - Composition: Affordable housing developers, Housing Authority representatives, banks/financial institutions, workforce development organizations, etc.
 - Focus: Addressing root causes through housing supply, affordability, employment access
- Working Group 5: Public Services Council
 - Composition: Police, fire, emergency management, hospitals, schools, county services, courts, etc.
 - Focus: Improving system coordination, discharge planning, data sharing, cross-sector collaboration

Each working group will be co-facilitated by a team member and will include both technical expertise sessions and collaborative problem-solving work. Working groups will review findings, vet recommendations, and help champion implementation. Additional working groups will be added if needed.

- Step 5: Public Meeting Strategy

We will organize and facilitate a minimum of ten (10) public meetings, strategically distributed across project phases:

- *Phase 1: Community Listening Sessions (4-7 meetings, March-April)*
 - Format: Brief large group presentations followed by small group discussions and individual conversations
 - Purpose: Introduce project, gather input on concerns and priorities, assess needs. Each meeting focuses on – but is not exclusive to – a major stakeholder group.
 - Locations: Distributed geographically across McKinney to maximize accessibility. Location will be chosen to reflect ease of access to the specific stakeholder group serving as the target of the meeting, i.e., business owners meet at a local business, city employees at city hall, etc.
 - Outreach: Extensive promotion through City channels, media, community organizations, and public posting
- *Phase 2: Needs Assessment Feedback Sessions (2-4 meetings, May-June)*
 - Format: Presentation of preliminary findings with structured feedback opportunities
 - Purpose: Validate findings, fill gaps, ensure community sees itself in the data
 - Locations: Central locations with virtual attendance options
- *Phase 3: Strategic Plan Workshopping/Feedback Sessions (2 meetings, July-August)*
 - Format: Interactive workshops using techniques such as world café, scenario planning
 - Purpose: Co-create vision, mission, goals; prioritize strategies
 - Locations: Accessible venues with breakout space for small group work
- *Phase 4: Implementation Plan Feedback Sessions (2 meetings, September-October)*
 - Format: Presentation of draft plans with structured comment period
 - Purpose: Refine action steps, build buy-in, identify champions
 - Locations: Final meeting at City Hall to emphasize government leadership

All public meetings will be:

- Recorded and posted online for those unable to attend
- Promoted at least 2 weeks in advance through multiple channels

- Accessible to individuals with disabilities
- Scheduled at various times (evenings, weekends) to accommodate work schedules

- Step 6: City Council Presentations

We will attend and present at a minimum of four (4) City Council meetings:

- Presentation 1: Project Launch (March)
 - Purpose: Introduce team, outline engagement plan, establish expectations
 - Format: 20-minute presentation with Q&A
- Presentation 2: Needs Assessment Findings (June)
 - Purpose: Share data, findings, and preliminary themes
 - Format: 30-minute presentation with discussion
- Presentation 3: Draft Strategic Plan (August)
 - Purpose: Present vision, goals, and strategic directions
 - Format: 45-minute presentation with work session discussion
- Presentation 4: Final Plans and Implementation Roadmap (October)
 - Purpose: Recommend adoption of Strategic and Implementation Plans
 - Format: 45-minute presentation with formal action item

Additional work sessions may be scheduled with City Council as needed to address questions or provide deeper dives on specific topics.

- Step 7: Communication, Documentation, and Deliverables

Throughout the engagement process, we will:

- Maintain detailed records of all input received
- Synthesize feedback into thematic summaries
- Report back to participants on how their input influenced recommendations
- Publish regular progress updates through project website and City communications
- Create compelling visual materials (infographics, videos) to communicate findings to a variety of audiences.

Our deliverables and associated timelines are:

- Draft Community Engagement/Public Outreach Plan (March 15, 2026)

- Final Community Engagement/Public Outreach Plan (April 1, 2026)
- Formation of Working Groups (April 15, 2026)
- Public Meetings conducted (March-October 2026)
- Four City Council Presentations delivered (March, June, August, October 2026)
- Comprehensive Engagement Summary Report synthesizing all input received (October 2026)

Needs Assessment

Given the amount of existing knowledge and understanding related to the scope of homelessness in McKinney and its potential causes, our team will approach the Needs Assessment as primarily an opportunity to collect, analyze, and synthesize existing data and information. This includes both real and perceived challenges, plus a thorough understanding not only of the current picture of homelessness in McKinney, but also the antecedents and consequences. By prioritizing the compilation and synthesis of existing data, we will be able to make the best use of existing resources and minimize the need for new data collection. If gaps are identified in the process of gathering and analyzing existing data, we will conduct targeted data collection as needed.

This Needs Assessment will incorporate both quantitative and qualitative information about current homelessness conditions within the City. The Needs Assessment will provide a comprehensive understanding of the current homeless population by quantifying the number of individuals experiencing diverse types of homelessness, ranging from shelter instability to chronic homelessness. This analysis will integrate demographic data, service utilization metrics, and program outcomes with qualitative insights from lived experiences and stakeholder perspectives. The assessment will distinguish between real and perceived impacts on the community to ensure a balanced, evidence-based foundation for the Strategic Plan.

- Quantitative Dimensions

Drawing on stakeholder expertise and existing data, we will compile and analyze quantitative metrics, including but not limited to:

- Population counts of individuals experiencing homelessness (unsheltered, sheltered, chronic, episodic).
- Demographic profiles (age, gender, race/ethnicity, veteran status, family composition).

- Service utilization metrics (shelter occupancy rates, waitlists, emergency medical visits, police calls, food pantry usage).
- Economic indicators (housing affordability index, eviction filings, unemployment rates, median income versus rent).
- Program outcomes (number rehoused, average duration of homelessness, recidivism rates).
- Community costs (public safety expenditures, sanitation, emergency response, and infrastructure impacts).

- Qualitative Dimensions

Drawing on stakeholder expertise and perspective, we will collect and synthesize qualitative insights, including but not limited to the following areas:

- Lived experiences of individuals currently unhoused, captured through community engagement strategies outlined above, with an emphasis on identifying the unique perspectives of specific groups (e.g., youth, seniors, veterans, minorities).
- Perspectives of residents, businesses, nonprofits, and service providers.
- Community sentiment regarding safety, neighborhood cohesion, and confidence in current homelessness mitigation responses.
- Stakeholder feedback on service quality, accessibility, and cultural competency of existing programs.

- Real and Perceived Impacts

The Needs Assessment will explicitly distinguish between:

- Real impacts: Documented increases in emergency room visits, sanitation costs, housing instability rates, or crime statistics.
- Perceived impacts: Community concerns regarding property values, safety, or neighborhood reputation, even when not fully supported by data.
- Synthesis: A comparative analysis of perceptions and empirical evidence to identify alignment or divergence, guiding communication strategies and policy responses.

- Analysis of Existing Programs, Services, and Resources

We will conduct a structured evaluation of the programs, services, and resources currently available to individuals experiencing homelessness. This evaluation will consider both effectiveness and accessibility and will help to identify gaps that limit the City's ability to meet community needs. The University of Texas at Dallas team will:

- Inventory existing programs and resources across municipal, nonprofit, and faith-based providers.
- Compile and analyze program data from providers, including but not limited to service utilization rates (e.g., shelter occupancy, food pantry demand, caseload management), program outcomes (e.g., rehousing success, recidivism rates), service user demographics (e.g., age, veteran status), and accessibility (e.g., geographic coverage, eligibility requirements).
- Review coordination mechanisms among providers to determine efficiency and duplication of services.
- Identify funding streams and sustainability of current programs.
- Compare information from service providers regarding capacity with information about City-wide demand for services (e.g., number of shelter beds vs. estimated number of unsheltered individuals).

The final Needs Assessment will be completed in May 2026 and will include how the following elements influence the three focus areas identified in the RFP (symptoms, experiences, and root causes):

- A comprehensive program and resource inventory of existing infrastructure.
- Analysis of capacity versus demand and identification of service, resource, coordination, and access gaps.
- Comparative analysis of real versus perceived impacts of homelessness.
- Explanation of the different types of homelessness and delineation of different needs and unique challenges of each group.
- Recommendations and key takeaways to serve as the foundation for the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will serve as McKinney's roadmap for addressing homelessness over the next 5-10 years. Building on the Needs Assessment and incorporating extensive stakeholder input, the plan will establish a shared vision, mission, goals, and strategies.

- Vision and Mission Development

Working with City leadership, working groups, and community participants, we will facilitate a collaborative process to develop:

- Vision Statement: A compelling, aspirational statement of what McKinney will look like when the community has effectively addressed homelessness.
- Mission Statement: A clear statement of the community's commitment to preventing and ending homelessness.

- Goal Framework and Strategy Development

We will organize the Strategic Plan around 5-7 major goals that address symptoms, experiences, and root causes of homelessness. These goals will be identified and developed based on findings from the Needs Assessment and community engagement with various stakeholders. While goals will be refined in accordance with our findings from the Needs Assessment and community engagement, we anticipate goals related to the following broad areas:

- Goal 1: Prevention - Reduce Inflow into Homelessness
- Goal 2: Crisis Response - Provide Immediate Assistance
- Goal 3: Housing Solutions - Increase Access to Affordable Housing
- Goal 4: Supportive Services - Address Complex Needs
- Goal 5: Systems Coordination - Build Effective Infrastructure
- Goal 6: Community Response - Reduce Symptoms and Build Support
- Goal 7: Systemic Change - Address Root Causes

For each goal, we will also identify 4-8 specific strategies that include a description of the strategy, rationale and supporting evidence, target population, lead implementing entities and relevant partner organizations, resources required, expected outcomes, implementation timeline, and success metrics.

- Theory of Change

Along with goal and strategy development, we will create a theory of change illustrating how strategies will lead to desired outcomes. The Theory of Change will:

- Show causal pathways from inputs to activities to outputs to outcomes to impact
- Identify assumptions underlying the logic
- Highlight interdependencies between strategies
- Guide performance measurement

- Organizational Structure and Governance

The Strategic Plan will consider the role of organizational structure and governance in the long-term success of the Better Together Initiative. To provide guidance in this area, the Strategic Plan will include elements such as governance structure for ongoing coordination (e.g., McKinney Homeless Coalition evolution); roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group, including the City government; and decision-making processes and accountability mechanisms.

- Resource Mobilization Strategy

As part of the Strategic Plan, we will develop a resource mobilization strategy. Potential funding sources and partnership opportunities might include:

- Federal funding (HUD CoC Program, ESG, CDBG, SAMHSA, HHS, etc.)
- State funding (TDHCA, HHSC, other state agencies)
- Local government resources (general fund, bond funding, tax increment financing)
- Private philanthropy (foundations, United Way, corporate giving)
- Faith community resources
- In-kind contributions and volunteer support

- Alignment with Regional Efforts

The Strategic Plan will explicitly address McKinney's relationship with regional homelessness efforts, for example, through participation in Housing Forward and All Neighbors Coalition, coordination with Collin County and other municipalities, leveraging of regional resources and best practices, and contribution to regional goals

A draft of the Strategic Plan will be shared with City Council and key stakeholders for feedback in August 2026. The Strategic Plan will be finalized in October 2026 and will include:

- Executive Summary
- Vision and Mission statements
- Community priorities, values, and guiding principles
- Goals and strategies
- Theory of change
- Governance and organizational structure
- Resource mobilization strategy
- Cost implications
- Regional alignment
- Performance metrics and measurement framework
- Return on impact/investment (ROI)

Implementation Plan

This document presents the implementation plan for the Better Together Initiative, facilitated by the UT Dallas Team. It outlines key phases, tasks, responsible parties, and deliverables to ensure accountability and transparency. The timeline follows major milestones: Outreach Plan (Mar 26), Needs Assessment (May 26), Draft Strategic Plan (Aug 26), Implementation Plan (Sep 26), and Finalization (Oct 26).

Phase & Target Date	Task	Primary Owners	Key Partners / Support	Dependencies	Resources / Funding	Deliverable	Success Metrics
Phase 1 — Kick-off & Outreach (By Mar 26)	Present Outreach Plan at kick-off meeting	UT Dallas Team	City Housing & Community Development (HCD); Council Ad Hoc Committee; Communications Office	Guiding principles adopted; contract executed	UT Dallas staff time; city meeting logistics	Outreach Plan document + presentation	Plan delivered by Mar 26; ≥30 stakeholders confirmed
Phase 1 — Kick-off & Outreach (By Mar 26)	Establish Working Groups (Symptoms, Experience, Root Causes)	UT Dallas Team	McKinney Homeless Coalition; City departments; Service providers	Outreach Plan approved	Sign-up tools; coordination support	3 working groups chartered	≥3 groups active; ≥2 meetings each by May 15
Phase 1 — Kick-off & Outreach (By Mar 26)	Launch Community Engagement (town halls, focus groups)	UT Dallas Team	Faith groups; nonprofits; One Heart McKinney	Kick-off completed	Event logistics; comms budget	Engagement calendar + event summaries	≥6 events; ≥300 participants
Phase 2 — Needs Assessment (Complete by May 26)	Conduct Existing Conditions Analysis	UT Dallas Team	City data teams; Collin College	Community engagement underway	Data tools; analytics support	Data book + maps	Delivered by May 26; QA sign-off
Phase 2 — Needs Assessment (Complete by May 26)	Complete Program Inventory & Gap Analysis	UT Dallas Team	Service providers coalition	Stakeholder interviews	Survey tools; templates	Gap matrix	≥90% providers represented; top gaps identified
Phase 2 — Needs Assessment (Complete by May 26)	Deliver Needs Assessment Report	UT Dallas Team	HCD; Council Ad Hoc	All analyses complete	Editing; graphics	Report + presentation	Delivered by May 26; ≤5 revisions
Phase 3 — Strategic Planning (Draft by Aug 26)	Draft Vision, Mission, Goals	UT Dallas Team	Council Ad Hoc; Working groups	Needs Assessment delivered	Workshop facilitation	VMG document	Alignment with guiding principles

Phase 3 — Strategic Planning (Draft by Aug 26)	Develop Strategy Portfolio	UT Dallas Team	City departments; nonprofits	VMG approved	Costing templates	Strategy cards	≥15 strategies with KPIs
Phase 3 — Strategic Planning (Draft by Aug 26)	Present Draft Strategic Plan	UT Dallas Team	All stakeholders	Strategy portfolio complete	Review sessions	Draft plan deck	Presented by Aug 26; feedback logged
Phase 4 — Implementation Plan (Draft by Sep 26)	Build Phased Implementation Roadmap	UT Dallas Team	Department leads; provider coalition	Draft strategic plan	PM templates	Roadmap document	Clear sequencing; risks documented
Phase 4 — Implementation Plan (Draft by Sep 26)	Present Implementation Plan	UT Dallas Team	All stakeholders	Roadmap complete	Events; surveys	Presentation + feedback log	Presented by Sep 26; ≥80% feedback addressed
Phase 5 — Finalization (By Oct 26)	Finalize Strategic & Implementation Plans	UT Dallas Team	Council Ad Hoc; HCD	Feedback incorporated	Editing; design	Final plans (PDF + deck)	Approved by Council; published online
Phase 5 — Finalization (By Oct 26)	Public Release & Communications	UT Dallas Team	City Communications Office	Plans finalized	Media kit; website	Press kit + FAQs	Reach ≥25,000 residents

Defining Metrics and Success. These metrics will be divided into five broad categories: antecedents of homelessness; understanding the unsheltered; consequences and symptoms of homelessness; public perception; and partner and stakeholder engagement. Measuring and monitoring each of these will be crucial to the long-term success of the plan. Specific metrics will be determined during the course of the project.

Cost Proposal - Better Together Initiative

Total Contract Value: \$93,750

This Cost Proposal for the Better Together Initiative outlines the allocation of funds across the four major categories of work. Each category includes estimated costs and a narrative explanation to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with deliverables.

Category	% of Total	Estimated Cost	Narrative Explanation
1. Community Engagement / Public Outreach Plan	36%	\$33,750	Covers design and facilitation of inclusive engagement strategies, formation of at least five stakeholder working groups, organization of ten public meetings, and presentation at four City Council sessions. Includes staff time, facilitation, materials, and reporting. This allocation reflects the City's priority to ensure broad-based participation. Costs include facilitation of staff, meeting coordination, outreach materials, and synthesis of feedback into the final report.
2. Needs Assessment	20%	\$18,750	Supports quantitative and qualitative evaluation of current conditions, including demographic analysis, stakeholder interviews, resource inventory, and gap identification. Funds are allocated for data collection, analysis, and preparation of draft and final assessment reports. Resources will be directed toward both quantitative data analysis (population counts, service utilization) and qualitative input (stakeholder interviews, focus groups). The assessment will

highlight existing gaps and recommend best practices.

3. Strategic Plan	24%	\$22,500	Development of guiding vision, mission, and goals; drafting of short- and long-term strategies; and preparation of draft and final strategic plan documents. Includes consultant time for synthesis, writing, and presentation of findings. Funding supports the drafting of a comprehensive plan that articulates vision, mission, and goals. Consultant time will be dedicated to aligning strategies with community priorities and Council direction.
4. Implementation Plan	20%	\$18,750	Preparation of actionable steps, funding/resource identification, partnership framework, and performance metrics. Includes drafting and finalization of the Implementation Plan, with emphasis on measurable outcomes and accountability. This portion ensures the Strategic Plan is actionable. Costs cover development of performance metrics, funding strategies, and partnership frameworks to support sustainability.

Total Contract | 100% | \$93,750

Appendix: Team Member CVs

The CVs for each team member are attached.

Team Members:

- Ted Benavides (Project Lead)
- Elizabeth Searing (Research Lead)
- John McCaskill
- Allison Russell