Item	Request	Notes
Hotel funding for imminent risk situations (i.e. adult & children sleeping in vehicle) and for diversion for those same populations	50,000	Contract with local hotel that agencies can easily access (75 households x 5 nights @ $125 a night)
Access to restrooms, clean drinking and outdoor hydration stations	21,500	Portable restrooms, hand washing stations and hydration stations to be installed in multiple wards across the city, specifically located near encampments where these are urgently needed.
Gift cards for volunteer compensation	8,500	Support the creation of a Homeless Advisory Board as part of the Commision on Homelessness, where those currently or formaly homeless can lend their experiences and expertise to guide policy, procedure and interventions. Paid positions, several hours per month; payment received via gift card
Laundry resources	10,000	$200 per laundry night (in addition to the existing laundry night) in support of Loads of Blessing project, with the goal of assisting employed and/or employment-ready individuals who may be unhoused and a secondary goal of increasing sanitary conditions and remediating the spread of disease
Expansion of GIS mapping platform	10,000	Expansion of the City's current data platform to allow for access and coordination by street outreach service providers as well as City employees, creating a more cohesive appraoch to encampment management and intervention
TOTAL	100,000	

Allentown Commission on Homelessness Budget Request

This strategic budget request from the Allentown Commission on Homelessness is essential for a the City of Allentown to address the immediate needs of its most vulnerable residents while laying the groundwork for long-term solutions. Homelessness is a complex crisis that demands urgent action to prevent more individuals and families from losing their housing, provide safe shelter through emergency hotel stays, and support those living in encampments with basic necessities to ensure dignity and health. At the same time, involving people with lived experience through a dedicated advisory council ensures that solutions are grounded in reality and responsive to community needs. A focused short-term plan allows the city to respond quickly, allocate resources effectively, build trust with affected populations, and coordinate efforts across agencies ultimately creating momentum toward sustainable change.

Summary

Hotel funding for imminent risk situations	• Contract with local hotel that community providers can access (local hotel has been identified to be utilized) • Support for populations such as households with adults and children with limited access to area shelters
Access to restrooms, clean drinking and outdoor hydration stations	• Portable restrooms • Hand washing stations • Water bottle refilling stations
Gift cards for volunteer compensation	• Support the creation of a Homeless Advisory Board • Compensate those with lived experience • Lend their experiences and expertise to guide policy, procedure and interventions.
Laundry resources	• Support the already established Loads of Blessings project • Goal of assisting employed and/or employment-ready individuals who may be unhoused • Increasing sanitary conditions and remediating the spread of disease
Expansion of GIS mapping platform	• Access and coordination by street outreach service providers as well as City employees, creating a more cohesive approach to encampment management and intervention. • Assist with ongoing collaboration amongst community providers, emergency services and other city departments to address the needs of those unsheltered and enabling more proactive data informed responses.

Return on Investment

Overview:
Investing in emergency housing, prevention, sanitation, data systems, and advisory structures yields measurable returns for cities by reducing crisis-system costs, improving public health, increasing housing stability, and strengthening coordination across services. Every dollar spent on targeted homelessness interventions generates significant savings by lowering expenditures in emergency healthcare, law enforcement, and clean-up operations, while improving community well-being and economic stability.

1. Emergency Hotel Stays (When Shelters Are Unavailable)

- **ROI**: Studies show that providing temporary hotel or motel stays can reduce hospital visits and emergency service use by up to 30–40% among participants.
- **Financial Impact**: Average ER visit ($1,200–$3,000) vs. average hotel stay ($100–$150 per night) often results in net public savings within 30–60 days.
- **Community Benefit**: Prevents health deterioration, reduces unsheltered street homelessness visibility, and maintains dignity for medically fragile individuals and families.

2. Homelessness Prevention Funds (Rental Arrears & Eviction Prevention)

- **ROI**: According to HUD and the Urban Institute, every $1 spent on eviction prevention saves $4–$7 in shelter, court, and social service costs.
- **Financial Impact**: Preventing one eviction avoids an average $8,000–$20,000 in downstream public costs (emergency shelter, healthcare, policing, child welfare involvement).
- **Community Benefit**: Keeps families stable, reduces school disruption, and prevents long-term homelessness.

3. Sanitary Solutions for Encampments (Portable Toilets, Water, Handwashing)

- **ROI:** Public health departments estimate that providing sanitation services reduces disease outbreaks and emergency clean-ups, leading to 2–3x cost savings compared to reactive sanitation and enforcement.
- **Financial Impact:** Portable hygiene infrastructure costs far less than repeated biohazard cleanups and hospitalizations from preventable illnesses.
- **Community Benefit:** Improves hygiene, public safety, and neighborhood relations.

4. Homeless Advisory Council Funding

- **ROI:** Engaging lived-experience experts leads to better program design, higher effectiveness, and fewer failed interventions, improving program ROI across the board.
- **Financial Impact:** A small investment in stipends and meeting facilitation can improve the targeting and efficiency of millions in program spending.
- **Community Benefit:** Builds trust, ensures accountability, and grounds city policy in real experience.

5. Laundry Services for Homeless Individuals

- **ROI:** Clean clothing contributes to improved health and employability, reducing healthcare costs and supporting reintegration.
- **Financial Impact:** For every $1 spent, cities save an estimated $2–$3 through reduced illness and improved service engagement outcomes.
- **Community Benefit:** Promotes dignity, hygiene, and participation in workforce and housing programs.

6. Enhanced GIS System for Tracking Unsheltered Individuals

- **ROI:** Data integration improves coordination, reduces duplication of outreach efforts, and helps target resources where they're most effective.

- **Financial Impact:** Streamlined data systems can save 10–20% of operational costs by reducing overlap and improving response times.
- **Community Benefit:** Enables evidence-based decision-making, accountability, and more rapid response to crises such as encampment displacements or severe weather.

Summary ROI Estimate

Across multiple cities and studies:

- **Average Return:** Between $3–$7 saved for every $1 invested in prevention, emergency response, and coordination.
- **Primary Savings Areas:** Emergency medical care, law enforcement, sanitation, and long-term shelter costs.
- **Broader Benefits:** Improved public health, workforce readiness, and community cohesion.