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The Rise of Public-Sector Crowdfunding.

Around the country, local governments are soliciting donations for everything from dog parks to public defenders. Is this a practical response to budget cuts or a sign that publicly funded services are in trouble?

Earlier this year, when the new sheriff of Travis County in Texas announced that her officers would not cooperate with federal immigration investigators (part of an ongoing battle over sanctuary city issues), Texas Governor Greg Abbott retaliated by slashing the county's criminal justice funding. The remaining $1.5 million in state grants for 2017 would have helped maintain programs for veterans, sex workers, and parents struggling with substance abuse.

Concerned about the loss of those programs, constituents called state Rep. Eddie Rodriguez for help. To try to make up for the governor's cuts, Rodriguez and a local nonprofit, the Austin Community Foundation, launched the crowdfunding campaign Travis County #StrongerTogether in February. By May, they'd raised more than $150,000, which will cover court program costs from October to mid-November.

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