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City of Austin Partners with Housing Connector and Zillow to Expand Housing Access for Residents Facing Housing Instability

AUSTIN, TX – Housing Connector, a nonprofit that uses Zillow-powered technology to remove barriers to housing and match people with vacant units, has officially launched in Austin. In partnership with the City of Austin’s Homeless Strategy Office, Housing Connector will connect property owners and managers with local nonprofit service providers to increase housing access for individuals and families in need and help them sustain it long-term.

“Housing Connector is built on the belief that no unit should sit vacant while there are people in need of a home,” said Shayna Dunitz, Managing Director of Housing Connector in Austin. “We are excited to bring our model to Austin and work alongside the City and local service providers to ensure more residents have access to stable housing.”

David Gray, Homeless Strategy Officer at the City of Austin, emphasized the importance of innovative partnerships in addressing housing access: “Housing Connector’s model is a valuable addition to our efforts to increase housing opportunities in Austin. By bridging the gap between property owners and service providers, they bring a solution-oriented approach that benefits both landlords and residents in need.”

Since 2019, Housing Connector and Zillow have partnered to help people with barriers get stably housed. The Zillow Rentals platform hosts the Housing Connector search platform, where property partners can upload available units, and local nonprofit service providers and their clients can find vacant inventory in real-time. Zillow’s search tool streamlines the housing search process for service providers, eliminating the need to manually check property eligibility and availability, offering renters long-term housing options that are instantly accessible through the platform. Housing Connector provides financial and tenant support to property owners and managers, who in return modify tenant screening criteria (such as credit score, income-to-rent ratio requirements, and rental history) for potential renters, making units accessible that previously were out of reach.

The majority of those targeted for support through the Housing Barrier Reduction Fund from the city of Austin earn less than \$21,000 a year, while the typical rental in Austin costs \$20,112, according to Zillow data. Housing Connector has already housed more than

9,000 residents across its existing markets and is committed to replicating that success in Austin.

“We know that solving the housing crisis requires collaboration, and our approach is designed to align incentives so that everyone wins—residents, property owners, and service providers,” said Shkelqim Kelmendi, CEO of Housing Connector.

Many local organizations are already engaged in seeing how Housing Connector’s platform can support their work. For more information about Housing Connector, visit www.housingconnector.com or contact Shayna Dunitz at ShaynaD@housingconnector.com.

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