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**RESIDENTS AT ARCH AND 8TH STREET HOMELESS SHELTERS TO RECEIVE  
JOB TRAINING THROUGH AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

*New Partnership with ACC Will Offer 25 Guests HVAC Certification*

**AUSTIN** – Unhoused guests staying at the ARCH and 8th Street homeless shelters will soon be able to take a training program in heating and air conditioning maintenance through Austin Community College. Because HVAC technicians are in such high demand in Austin and surrounding areas, certified graduates can expect strong job opportunities.

“We see this as more than a training program – it’s a housing program,” said Kevin Lee, Director of Operations for Urban Alchemy, the nonprofit that manages the shelters. “Some of our guests only need to find good-paying jobs in order to get their own apartments. We’re so grateful to the college for giving them this opportunity.”

ACC’s Luis Castillo, Manager for the Skilled Trades, and Maria Arce Garcia approached the ARCH eight months ago to start this program. After much collaboration between the ARCH, Workforce Solutions, and ACC, the program is expected to launch in September and will take 20 weeks to complete. Participants will take three classes per week at the ARCH shelter. Even before the students earn their official certificates, ACC will bring to class employers, some of which ACC has had a partnership with for over ten years. These employer visits will help the students enter the workforce with salaries that will help them achieve financial independence.

The program is free to ARCH and 8th Street guests due to sponsorship from Workforce Solutions. Participants will also be official students of ACC and can access student resources such as computer labs on campus, the campus library, and more.

“We are excited to start this class at the ARCH. ACC is indeed for everyone in the community, and we look forward to educating and empowering the students residing here,” said Marci Shrull, Austin Community College Coordinator.

Assuming the program goes well, Urban Alchemy and ACC plan to continue their partnership and offer more skills-training programs in the future.

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### **About Urban Alchemy**

Founded in 2018, Urban Alchemy brings a fresh approach to the problems of homelessness, crime, and challenging street conditions faced by communities throughout the nation. Currently operating in and around San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, and Austin, Urban Alchemy’s unique approach provides meaningful, well-paid jobs to the formerly incarcerated. These Practitioners leverage their emotional intelligence and leadership skills to empathize and de-escalate, helping create safe communities, clean communities, and housed communities.

### **About Austin Community College**

Austin Community College is a nationally recognized college serving Central Texas as the primary gateway to higher education and technical training opportunities. Our mission is to provide open-door access to an affordable college education for students who want to earn a degree, learn a marketable skill, or advance their careers. We pride ourselves on offering an extraordinary learning experience that puts every student on their path to success.