

One Voice Central Texas Asks You to PUT PEOPLE FIRST

"... The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped"- Hubert H. Humphrey

One Voice Central Texas is a coalition of over 75 nonprofit health and human service organizations unified by the common value that people come first. We represent the community's support network for children and the elderly, opportunity youth, the hungry and the homeless, persons with disabilities, those who are not literate, those who are immigrants, and victims of violence. We are also the voice for all the rapidly growing populations in our community who are unable to access a standard of living that supports their health, safety, security, and general welfare. Our region is witnessing dramatically growing financial gaps between the different segments of our community, confirmed in the recently released CAN Community Indicators report.

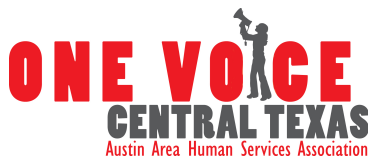
We bring you three messages today:

Human Services are a Vital Link to Creating a Safe & Sustainable Community. We ask you to Put People First by recognizing that human services are a vital link in creating a sustainable community and reducing costlier interventions and should be ranked as a critical priority on par with public safety and transportation. One Voice Central Texas is committed to partnering with community leaders, residents, and organizations to invest in the talent and creativity of our residents and support them in reaching their full potential. We are also dedicated to focusing compassion and services on our most vulnerable residents to ensure that their basic needs are met. We ask you to Put People First as you determine how to best utilize your resources.

Our Human Services Infrastructure is Strained by Increasing Poverty. Our community's human services infrastructure is straining under the weight of trying to help rapidly increasing numbers of families overcome or alleviate the devastating effects of poverty. The nonprofits that are members of One Voice Central Texas provide the essential services that are critical in addressing the needs of so many of our residents. We are fortunate to have numerous nonprofits in this community that are recognized for their effectiveness, innovation and ability to leverage millions upon millions of state, federal and private dollars. However, please hear us when we tell you very clearly that our current resources are not meeting the community's need, and in fact we are falling behind. At the same time that federal and state funding has been falling, local investments have not kept pace.

Support of Effective Organizations and Collaborations Produces Economic Benefits for Everyone. We ask you to support nonprofits that demonstrate effectiveness and quality of service. The economic strength of Austin and health of its citizens depends on an effective, accountable, and proactive nonprofit sector. One Voice Central Texas is committed to advancing public confidence and support for the nonprofit sector by exemplifying ethical practices, accountability and the highest standards of quality service. We ask you to support us in building the capacity within nonprofits and adhering to the highest standards.

Austin has the creativity, resources, dedication, and leadership to create a sustainable community where basic resources are provided and all residents are healthy, educated, safe, and live as independently and productively as possible. We ask for your partnership in embracing this vision, identifying the issues, and supporting the solutions required to make sure that this is achieved.



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THE CHALLENGE: The rate of poverty in Austin is growing and overall funding for social services has not kept up with the demand for services.

- Over the last decade or so, the number of people living in poverty in Austin grew by 77% (The Brookings Institute).
- Almost 200,000 Travis County residents live in poverty, including 1 in 4 of our children (2012 American Community Survey). The population of children under 6 living in poverty is growing at a faster rate than the child population overall ([United Way for Greater Austin, 2012](#)).
- Over the last ten years rents have risen 50% while the median income rose just 9% (Texas A&M Real Estate Center).
- Despite the expansion of healthcare coverage through the Affordable Care Act, 1 in 5 Travis County residents under age 65 do not have health insurance ([CAN Dashboard, 2014](#)).
- A two-parent, two-child household with employer-based health insurance needs to earn \$25 per hour to meet the costs of living in Travis County ([Center for Public Policy Priorities](#)).
- 1 in 5 Central Texans suffers from a debilitating mental health condition (Mayor's Mental Health Task Force).
- The Austin MSA has the fastest growing population of pre-seniors (ages 55-64), and 3rd fastest growing community of people ages 65 and older in the nation. 37% of Travis County seniors have a disability and 5,600 have an unmet housing need ([Mayor's Task Force on Aging, 2013](#)).
- On any given day, there are over 2,000 homeless individuals in Travis County (ECHO).

In the ten years between the City of Austin's 2003/2004 and 2013/2014 budgets, the City Health and Human Service budget for social services contracts increased 68.5%, while the City's overall budget increased 73.7%.

THE SOLUTION: Increase investments in human services to create a strong network and infrastructure. The human services network is the bridge to prevention and intervention strategies that achieve long-term economic benefits for everyone! Some examples include:

- **Early Education:** Every \$1 invested in a high-quality, pre-kindergarten (pre-k) program returns up to \$17 per participant (The Institute for a Competitive Workforce, 2010).
- **After School:** Every \$1 invested in afterschool programs will save taxpayers approximately \$3 (The Rose Institute of Claremont-McKenna College, September 2002).
- **Youth:** It costs \$20,000 a year for a youth to be incarcerated at Travis County's Juvenile Gardner Betts facility and a fraction of that, often less than \$1,000 per youth to provide prevention and intervention services.
- **Workforce Development:** Every \$1 invested in workforce services returns \$1.63 over 5 years and fully \$2.74 over 10 years to participants through increased earnings and employer productivity ([Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, 2008](#)).
- **Substance Abuse:** A number of cost benefit studies of substance abuse treatment have found returns of \$4-\$7 per \$1 spent ([Miller, 2012](#)).
- **Senior Services:** Medicare spends \$39,091 a year, or \$3,258 per month, for nursing home care per individual (DADS, 2013). It costs approximately \$96 a month (MOWAT) to deliver a home meal and approximately \$1,600 a month to provide in-home care services (American Association of Service Coordinators).