

2018 Community Services Block Grant Needs Assessment- Preliminary Findings

Community Development Commission

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Background

- ◉ Austin Public Health serves as the Community Action Agency (CAA) for Travis County and receives federal Community Services Block Grant Funds (CSBG) funds passed through the Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs (TDHCA)
- ◉ Federal regulations require CAA's to conduct needs assessments and use the results to design programs to meet community needs.
- ◉ The Community Development Commission serves as the required CSBG Advisory Board and must formally accept the completed assessment.

Community Needs Assessment Standards

- ◉ Conducted every 3 years
- ◉ Collects current poverty data and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity
- ◉ Collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data on its service areas
- ◉ Includes key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs
- ◉ Governing board formally accepts the completed assessment
- ◉ Informs an outcome-based and anti-poverty focused Community Action Plan

CSBG National Domains

- Employment
- Education and Cognitive Development
- Infrastructure/Income/Asset Building
- Housing
- Health and Social/Behavioral Development
- Civic Engagement and Community Involvement

Methodology

- Secondary Sources: US Census Bureau American Community Survey Estimates, Austin Public Health, Travis County Research and Planning, CSBG Workgroup reports
- Convenience sampling for clients and volunteer sampling was conducted for the broader population through the launch of the online survey which contributes to bias in terms of digital accessibility
- 310 Community Needs Assessment Surveys completed
 - 193 in-person or self-administered
 - 117 online
- 2 focus groups conducted targeting limited English proficient parents and young men of color
- 10 semi-structured interviews with community leaders

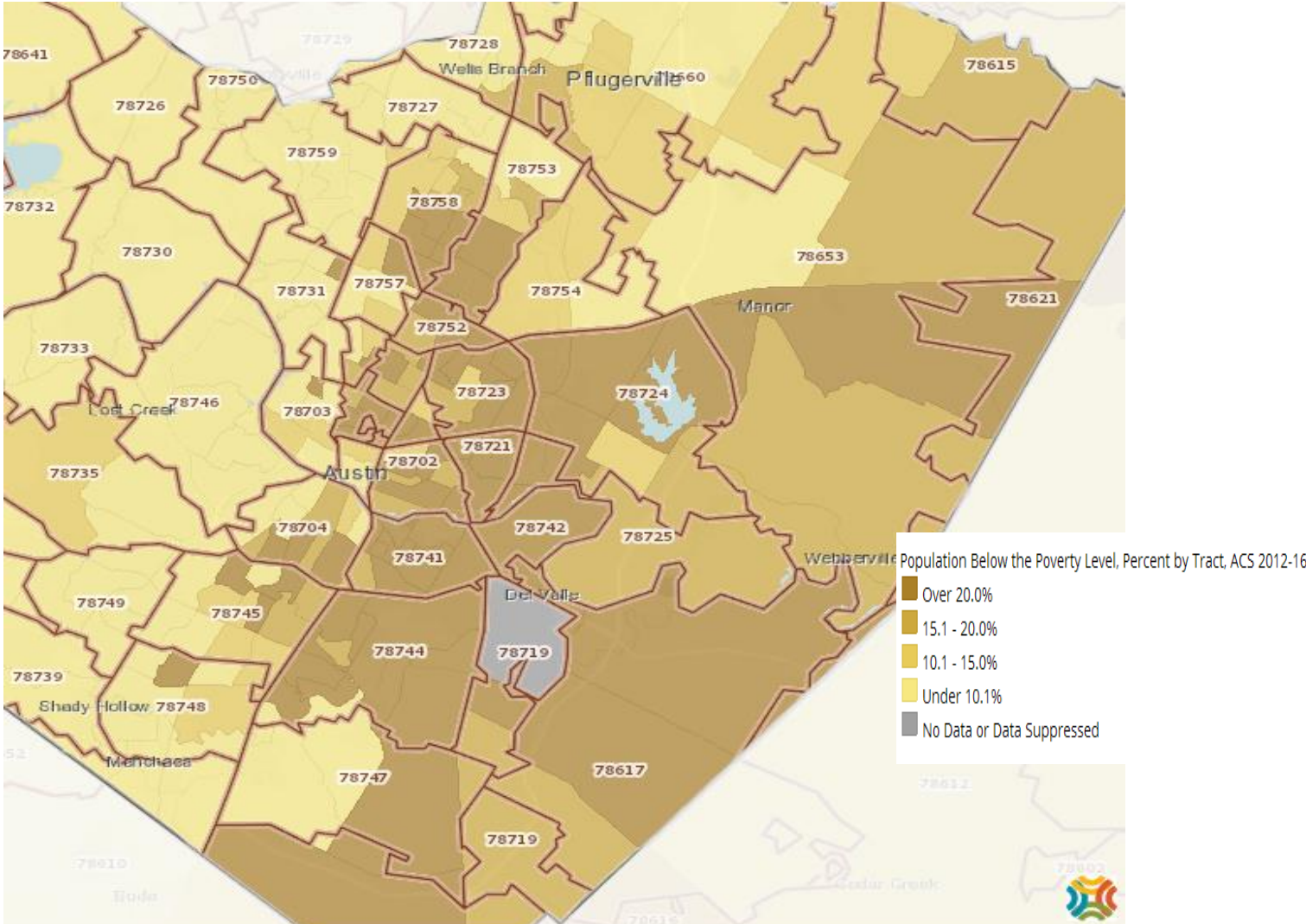
Overall Ranking of Top Needs

1. Housing
2. Employment
3. Education
4. Health and Social/ Behavioral Development
5. Basic Needs

Preliminary Findings - Demographics

- Travis County population growth continues to outpace both that of Texas and the US. The five county Austin metro area added 55,269 people between 2016 to 2017, or nearly the same size of the entire student body of the University of Texas-Austin, ranking the Austin-Round Rock population growth of 2.7% among the fastest-growing in the country,
- The poverty rate in Travis County has declined since the 2015 CSBG Needs Assessment, from 15.9% based on 2013 poverty data, to 12.2% based on 2016 poverty data.
- While Travis County does generally well comparatively, the percentage of the population living in deep poverty (50% of the Federal Poverty Level) is higher than both the state and national average.

Poverty Levels in Travis County



Preliminary Findings - Employment

- The unemployment rate remains below the State and National average at 2.9% as of February, 2018.
- Approximately 63% of those receiving unemployment benefits have less than an associate's degree.
- Among survey participants, 71% said that jobs that pay enough to make ends meet is a serious need.

Preliminary Findings – Education and Cognitive Development

- The number and rate of Head Start programs in Travis County is well below the State and National average. In 78724, there is only one Head Start program for the entire zip code.
- Over half of Central Texas graduates enroll in 2 year colleges after high school, however, the jobs that offer living wages typically require at least a Bachelor's degree.
- The community's feedback consistently pointed to a need for apprenticeships and job skills development, particularly skills related to the tech industry.

Preliminary Findings - Infrastructure/Income/Asset Building

- 28% of Travis County households do not have enough savings to subsist at the poverty level for 3 months in the absence of income (e.g., job loss, health crisis)
- Economic inequality is even more pronounced for households of color. More than 50% lack savings to cover expenses for 3 months, essentially living paycheck to paycheck.

Preliminary Findings - Housing

- Finding safe and affordable housing ranked as the most critical need by the community.
- Renters are especially cost-burdened, with 45% of renters spending more than 30% of their income on housing.
- Families are increasingly priced out from buying homes in Austin and Travis County.
- More than 28,500 families are on the Housing Authority of the City of Austin's waiting list for Public Housing. 1,200 families are waiting for a Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8 housing). More than 80% of those families are extremely low-income.

Preliminary Findings – Health and Social/ Behavioral Development

- Less than 25% of adults ages 18-64 years old have health insurance. More than 32% lack consistent source of primary care. The lack of a consistent primary care provider is even higher for Latinos at 49%.
- Travis County health outcomes generally fare better than State and National averages, however large racial/ethnic disparities still exist in leading causes of death, most notably for diabetes.
- Disparities also persist in maternal and child health, particularly for Black/African-American mothers. These mothers are twice as likely as White and Latino mothers to give birth to babies with low birth weight. Infant mortality rates are also much higher for African Americans in Travis County.

Preliminary Findings – Civic Engagement and Community Involvement

- Nearly all participants in the assessment have identified the need to build trust with the community. A sense of distrust was expressed towards institutions, namely the police and immigration officials.
- Engagement practices typical of many systems are often ineffective in communities of diverse backgrounds and non-traditional work schedules.

“Politicians should show up, just in the same way they request the community to turn out for them. They need to come to our communities to see how we live.” –Focus group participant

Next Steps

- Finalize the 2018 CSBG Needs Assessment
- June 1 - Submit to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs and provide copies to the Community Development Commission
- June 12 - Possible action by the Community Development Commission to formally accept the 2018 CSBG Needs Assessment
- June 12 - Presentation of any recommended changes to designated geographic areas representing the low income sector on the Community Development Commission based on the 2018 CSBG Needs Assessment

Questions or Comments?

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