



# 2018 Community Services Block Grant Community Needs Assessment



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17. Rachel Farley, Program Coordinator, Austin Public Health
18. Donna Sundstrom, Assistant Director, Community Services Division, Austin Public Health

## Executive Summary

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Austin Public Health conducts a Community Needs Assessment every three years in accordance with the requirements of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Austin Public Health receives CSBG funding to support the programs of the Neighborhood Centers through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. The last CSBG Community Needs Assessment was conducted in 2015.

Austin/ Travis County is often ranked as one of the best places to live. Individuals and families pursuing economic opportunities move to the region. However, Travis County does not equally provide opportunities for all its residents. Children in low income families do not experience the same income mobility as children from families with higher incomes. Travis County ranks better than only about 13 percent of counties in the U.S..<sup>1</sup> Comparatively, a child growing up in Dallas would have slightly better opportunities for income mobility than a child in Austin. A growing body of research has demonstrated that the neighborhood in which you live has an impact on the opportunities you have. Research has suggested that places with high levels of economic and racial segregation, a dwindling middle-class, higher exposure to violence, under-resourced schools, and fewer two-parent households can all contribute to poverty.

One of the goals of the report was to continue to delve into the key findings highlighted in the 2015 report and identify the trends that data suggest are becoming deep-rooted realities, namely population growth, suburbanization of poverty, affordability issues, and racial/ethnic disparities. Another goal was challenging how poverty is defined and measured. By examining economic mobility, the core goal is to increase actions towards tackling the causes of poverty, while continuing to provide anti-poverty assistance to alleviate the conditions it creates.

### Overview of Key Findings

- While the population of Travis County continues to grow, populations of neighboring counties have increased at even higher rates. From 2010 to 2017, Travis County's population grew by 19.7%, while Williamson County grew by 29.6% and Hays County by 36.5%. Housing costs in Travis County may factor into growth in neighboring counties, as low to moderate income families seek more affordable housing elsewhere.
- Overall, the rates of poverty in Travis County have not made significant improvements since the wake of the Great Recession in 2009. The poverty rates determined for 2012 to 2016 are nearly the same as the poverty rates based on 5-year estimates between 2005 and 2009.

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<sup>1</sup>The New York Times. (May 4, 2015). The Best and Worst Places to Grow Up: How Your Area Compares. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/05/03/upshot/the-best-and-worst-places-to-grow-up-how-your-area-compares.html>

- Racial and ethnic disparities persist across many indicators. The percentage of people in color living below the poverty line in Travis County is higher than the percentage of people of color overall. The Black/African-American population constitutes 8.3% of the total population, but 21.55% of the people living in poverty.
- Children under the age of 18 have higher rates of poverty (21%). This is especially significant when compared to the percentage of population they represent (23%).
- Housing was identified as the most critical need by the community. 28,000 families are on the Housing Authority of the City of Austin waiting list for public housing, and nearly half of renters are cost burdened.
- The need for affordable quality child and dependent care is likely a factor in the higher unemployment rates for women. While Travis County's unemployment rate is only 2.9% overall as of February, 2018, the unemployment rate for a woman with a child is 5.9%, and increases to 9.10% for a woman with more than one child. More than half of survey participants identified high quality child or dependent care you can afford as a serious need.
- Owning a vehicle costs Austin residents an estimated \$12,481 a year, and costs slightly more in the outlying areas. A typical household will spend 20 percent of their monthly income towards transportation. It is also nearly all the income for a person living under poverty, based on the 2016 poverty threshold of \$12,486.
- According to recent ACS 5-year estimates, **nearly one-fifth of the population (19.3%) in Travis County falls below the 125% threshold and would be eligible for CSBG-funded services if they sought assistance at the Neighborhood Centers.**
- Low-income households continue to lose ground in the central core of Austin, and are increasingly concentrated in the outlying areas of Travis County and surrounding areas. These households are then faced with increased transportation costs to get to jobs in Austin, which further strains household finances.
- As low-income households are moving out of the central core of Austin, accessing resources provided through many health and social service providers, such as Austin Public Health's Neighborhood Centers, becomes more difficult. New strategies, partnerships and facilities will be needed to help these households access needed services.
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding remains in jeopardy at the Federal level, and the primary CSBG allocation for Travis County decreased in 2018. In addition, balancing increased CSBG requirements with service provision and the need for increased outreach strains current capacity.

## Background on Community Needs Assessment

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Austin Public Health receives funding through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) which supports the work of its six (6) Neighborhood Centers and three (3) outreach sites. CSBG requires that each eligible entity submit a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) for the area served. For Austin Public Health, the area served is Travis County. The CNA then guides an annual action plan for the use of CSBG funds designed to meet community needs.

In 2015, the US Department of Health and Human Services established the CSBG Organizational Standards. These standards set forth the expectations for the Community Needs Assessment including:

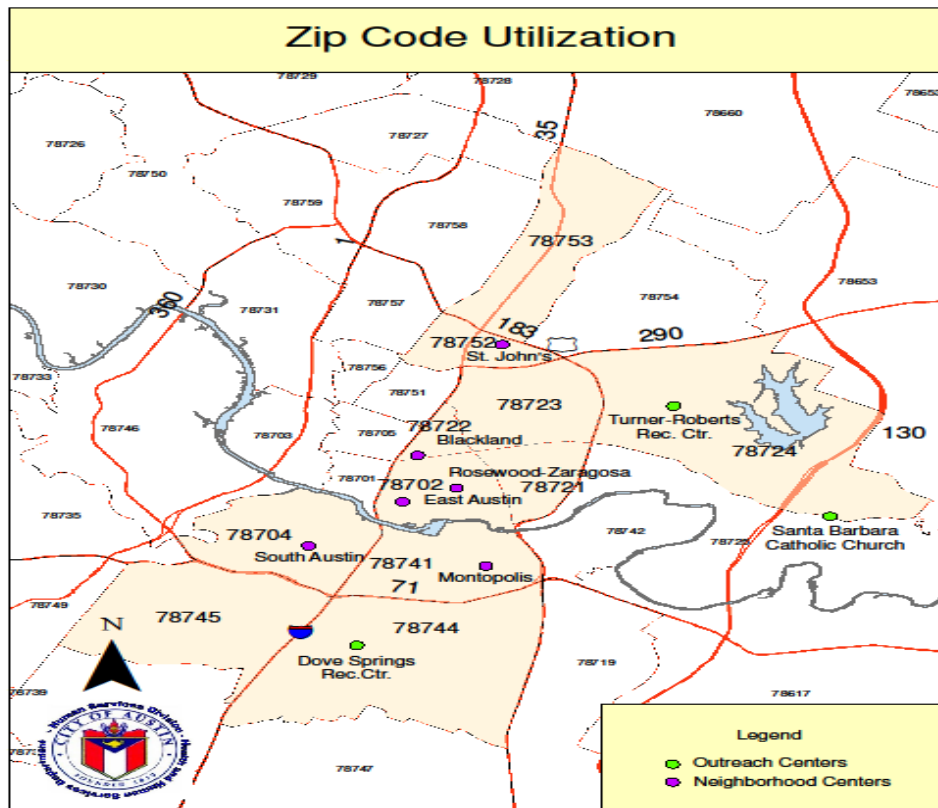
- Information must be collected directly from low-income individuals.
- Information must use information gathered from key sectors of the community, including community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector, public sector and educational institutions.
- Collects current poverty data and its prevalence related to gender, age, race/ethnicity
- Collects and analyzes both quantitative and qualitative data on the service area
- Includes key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty

Austin Public Health staff established a CNA workgroup, facilitated by Sara Acevedo, Public Health Educator, to help guide the Needs Assessment process. The workgroup included staff from the Neighborhood Centers, members of the Community Development Commission which serves as the CSBG Advisory Board, staff from Workforce Solutions, the United Way, ECHO (Ending Community Homelessness Organization), Neighborhood Housing and Community Development and Travis County Research and Planning. The workgroup helped develop the goals of the CNA, gave important input on data collection tools, helped provide research and data and assisted with making key contacts in the community.

Austin Public Health staff then conducted surveys, focus groups and interviews to gather data for the Needs Assessment. This data was then compiled and analyzed along with other quantitative data sources to produce the final Community Needs Assessment report.



## Austin Public Health Neighborhood Centers Profile



Austin Public Health operates six (6) Neighborhood Centers and three (3) outreach sites. These include:

- 1) Blackland Neighborhood Center
- 2) East Austin Neighborhood Center
- 3) Montopolis Neighborhood Center
- 4) Rosewood-Zaragosa Neighborhood Center
- 5) South Austin Neighborhood Center
- 6) St. John Community Center
- 7) Dove Springs Recreation Center (outreach site)
- 8) Turner Roberts Recreation Center (outreach site)
- 9) Santa Barbara Catholic Church (outreach site)

The Neighborhood Centers offer a multidisciplinary team to assist low income individuals and families with a wide variety of needs, in partnership with numerous community agencies. The services provided include the following:

- Food pantries
- Healthy Options Program for the Elderly (HOPE)
- Fresh Food for Families
- Mobile Food Pantry
- Food recovery and distribution programs
- Assistance applying for SNAP and other benefits
- Clothing
- Assistance with transportation (bus passes)
- Income tax assistance
- Notary Public services
- Summer fan distribution
- Referrals for rent and utility assistance
- Social work case management services for people facing barriers to employment and self-sufficiency
- Job search assistance
- Job coaching and counseling
- Help with budgeting and money management
- Preventive health services such as blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol screening
- Flu shots
- Health education classes
- Pregnancy testing and reproductive counseling
- Child passenger safety education and seat installation
- Seasonal programs such as helping applying for Blue Santa

## Community Needs Assessment Results Overview

The needs were ranked based on all the sources of data used during the assessment process. The ranking is provided below, as required by Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. However, the community emphasized that these needs are closely interrelated. The ranking system is not an indication that needs ordered higher or lower on the table are less important, but rather sheds light on the real tradeoffs people with limited financial and time resources must make to survive.

Domain		Needs Ranking					Final Ranking
	Quantitative Data	Community-Wide Surveys	Service Providers Surveys	Focus Groups	Interviews	CAA Service Providers	
Housing	1	1	1	3	2	1	<b>1</b>
Employment	4	3	2	4	3	2	<b>3</b>
Education	5	5	5	2	4	4	<b>5</b>
Health	3	2	3	1	1	5	<b>2</b>
Basic Needs	2	4	4	5	5	3	<b>4</b>
Other Needs Identified		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child care and Youth Services</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Neighborhood Improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Money Mgmt.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Child care and Youth Services</li> </ul>		

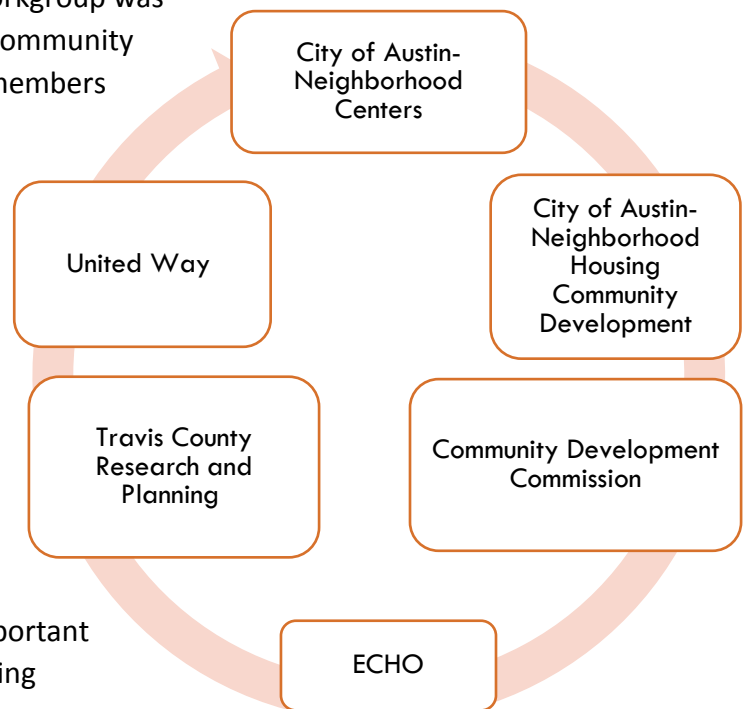
# Community Needs Assessment Process Overview

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## CSBG Assessment Workgroup

The CSBG Community Needs Assessment Workgroup was comprised of Austin Public Health staff and community partners serving Travis County. Workgroup members were invited to participate because of their special knowledge relative to the CSBG domains assessed in this report, as well as by geographic areas. Workgroup members familiar with domain-specific issues shared relevant reports and data and helped determine best methods for data collection.

Austin Public Health conducts over ten assessments. Therefore, collaboration in terms of sharing data and reports was an important consideration made in the assessment planning process. In addition to considerations made to survey fatigue, it was imperative to build community trust. Continual assessments might undermine efforts of conveying that the community is truly being heard.



## Workgroup Commitment

Workgroup members were asked to commit to no more than 6 meetings over the months of February to May. The first meeting was in February; two meetings in March and one meeting in April were scheduled. The initial summary report to the Community Development Commission, CSBG Advisory board, was scheduled for May 8, with the final report being provided in June for acceptance.

The workgroup helped primarily with the following tasks:

1. Data Collection Methodology Planning
  - a. Provide recommendations for gathering qualitative information from the community
  - b. Develop a plan for collecting information from each source (e.g. surveys, focus groups, key stakeholder interviews)

- c. Provide feedback on surveys and interview questions designed for data collection
- 2. Data Analysis
  - a. Help identify narratives, themes, and perceptions from the data
  - b. Provide feedback on the trends and findings identified
- 3. Identify community assets and strengths

Assessment Goals
Determine level of poverty in Travis County
Identify needs experienced by individuals and families outside city limits within Travis County
Identify needs experienced by families providing unpaid caregiving to children or persons with disabilities
Assess how well the needs of low income individuals and families are currently being met
Identify service barriers that limit effectiveness of the current service system

Task	Start Date	End Date	Total Weeks
Planning	February 12	March 2	3
Data collection	March 5	March 30	4
Data Analysis	April 2	April 20	3
Prepare Report	April 23	May 4	2
Present Draft to CDC	<b>May 8</b>		
Submit final report	June 1		

# Data Collection Methods

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## Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data was retrieved from the Community Commons database, a website with access to many datasets and data visualization tools. The most recent American Community Survey 5-year and 1-year estimates were most frequently used to collect data on the conditions of poverty in Travis County. ACS 5-year estimates were used to measure indicators requiring a larger sample size, and ACS 1-year estimates were used to compare changes between years.

Reports produced by Travis County Research and Planning Division were also referenced for the community needs assessment.

## Qualitative Data Sources

### Survey Instrument

**Participant Description.** Participation in the assessment process was open to all Travis County residents. A comprehensive assessment entailed the participation of people between the ages of 17 and older who can speak to the complex needs faced by people living under poverty. Therefore, recruitment of survey participants was geared towards agencies that predominately serve low-income persons or community events located in neighborhoods identified in the 2015 Community Needs Assessment as a high needs geographic area. In addition to collecting feedback from agencies' clients, the survey was made available online to the broader community to capture the perceptions of needs by all Travis County residents.

**Sampling Procedures.** A 271-sampling size was determined to meet a 90% confidence level based on the total Travis County population. The survey instrument aimed to determine needs and the level of services provided. The survey was tested prior to administering in the community. The length of the survey was estimated to take 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The self-administered surveys would take about 20 minutes to complete, while the surveys administered face-to-face by staff from the Neighborhood Centers and the online survey would take about 15 minutes. The survey was available to participants in English and Spanish.

The chart below lists the dates, times, and locations of outreach events in which survey administration was conducted. The sampling relied on available participants during outreach events, or convenience and voluntary sampling procedures. Participants chose to either complete the survey on their own or have it administered by staff. The survey was posted on Austin Public Health's social media platforms and shared with social service agencies contracting with Austin Public Health.

Date	Venue	Location	Event
Friday, March 9, 2018	Rosewood Zaragosa Neighborhood Center	78702	Healthy Options for the Elderly
Friday, March 9, 2018	Dove Springs Recreation Center	78744	Fresh Food for Families
Wednesday, March 14, 2018	Turner Roberts Recreation Center	78724	Mobile Food Pantry
Thursday, March 15, 2018	St. John Community Center	78752	Healthy Options Program for the Elderly
Saturday, March 17, 2018	Rosewood Zaragosa Neighborhood Center	78702	Summer Youth Employment Orientation
Monday, March 19, 2018	Sacred Heart Catholic Church	78723	Social Ministries meeting
Tuesday, March 20, 2018	South Neighborhood Center	78704	Fresh Food for Families
Tuesday, March 20, 2018	Church of Christ of East Side	78721	Health Equity Unit Outreach Event
Thursday, March 22, 2018	Blackland Neighborhood Center	78722	Healthy Options Program for the Elderly
Thursday, March 22, 2018	St. John Community Center	78752	Healthy Options Program for the Elderly
Saturday, March 24, 2018	Rosewood Zaragosa Neighborhood Center	78702	Summer Youth Employment Orientation
Monday, March 26, 2018	Del Valle High School	78617	Mobile Food Pantry
Tuesday, March 27, 2018	St. John Community Center	78752	Fresh Food for Families
Wednesday, March 28, 2018	Rosewood Zaragosa Neighborhood Center	78702	Fresh Food for Families
Thursday, March 29, 2018	Little Walnut Creek Library	78758	My Library Keeps Me Healthy Event

A total of 440 surveys were collected and 310 were completed fully. Staff administered paper surveys to help clarify survey items or concepts. A total of 193 paper surveys were completed, and 117 surveys were completed online. The main disadvantage of online surveys concerns the representativeness of the respondents, particularly to people with limited access to the Internet and the elderly.

**Limitations.** The questions were designed to inquire about the community's needs in Travis County. Survey questions did not ask respondents to provide a personal account of their own needs, instead the questions were aimed to understand the needs of the broader community. Most outreach was conducted during traditional working hours, Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 5:00. However, two events were conducted on Saturdays. Therefore, feedback from workers might be underrepresented in the survey results. Most of the surveys were administered during mass food distribution events which may have produced skewed results related to food security.

## Focus Groups

Focus groups were determined as more conducive to gaining insight into communities that, due to the same barriers experienced in accessing services (e.g. language, disabilities, transportation) made it challenging to administer surveys. For this reason, focus groups were conducted in locations where participants regularly meet.

Two focus groups were conducted to obtain qualitative information around the needs faced by specific communities:

- Immigrant community: parents with children under 18 years
- Opportunity Youth: men of color ages 17 to 22 in the workforce

The dates and the community partner who helped coordinate the focus group are listed below.

Date	Venue	Participants' Neighborhood	Organizing Partner
Tuesday, March 27, 2018	Travis County Community Center	Northeast Austin	Community Youth Development Programs
Wednesday, March 28, 2018	Guerrero Elementary School	Rundberg	AISD Department of Communications and Community Engagement

## Key Informant Interviews

Semi-structured interview questions were developed to gain key informant's perspective on the top five needs in Travis County, barriers to accessing social service system, and assets that should be leveraged in Travis County. The criteria for selecting key informants was based on the data gaps identified during preliminary analysis of survey data and other sources. Key informants were selected because of their close contact with the target population and their special knowledge of their needs.

Interviews also provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships with key leaders with shared community goals, while also increasing the visibility of the services provided by the Neighborhood Centers.

Organization Represented
Austin Community College, Adult Basic Education
Literacy Coalition
Austin City Council
Church of Christ of East Side
St. John's Episcopal Church
Islamic Center of Greater Austin
Vietnamese American Community of Austin Texas
City of Austin, ADA Program Manager
Austin Electrical Training Alliance
Travis County Commissioners



## Travis County Overview

**Population Growth.** Travis County population growth continues to outpace both that of Texas and the US. A recent report from the Census Bureau with 2017 population estimates extended Austin's streak for the seventh consecutive year as the fastest-growing metropolitan area. Travis County alone has made population gains of 19.7% between 2000 to 2017, and counties surrounding Austin have added over 55,000 people to the area between 2016 to 2017.<sup>2 3</sup> In other words, the population grew 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 percent among the fastest-growing in the country.

Population growth from 2000 to 2013 was reported at 30.9 percent for Travis County in the 2015 Community Needs Assessment. Interestingly, the counties intersected by Interstate-35, Williamson and Hays County, that have quicker access to the economic hub that is Austin have experienced the greatest increases in population growth rates, nearly reaching or surpassing rates for Travis County in 2013.

### Population Percent Change by County, 2010-2017

Travis County	Williamson County	Hays County	Caldwell County
19.70%	29.60%	36.50%	11.20%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (PEP), Updated annually. Population and Housing Unit Estimates (V2017)

**Shifting Age Groups Across Counties.** The in-migration rate, in contrast to population growth rates, assesses changes in residence within a one-year period. Of the 1,133,239 persons residing in Travis County, an estimated 8.09 percent relocated to the area, according to the latest American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Persons who moved to a new household from outside of their current county of residence, from outside their state of residence, or from abroad are considered part of the in-migrated population. Persons who moved to a new household from a different household within their current county of residence are not included.

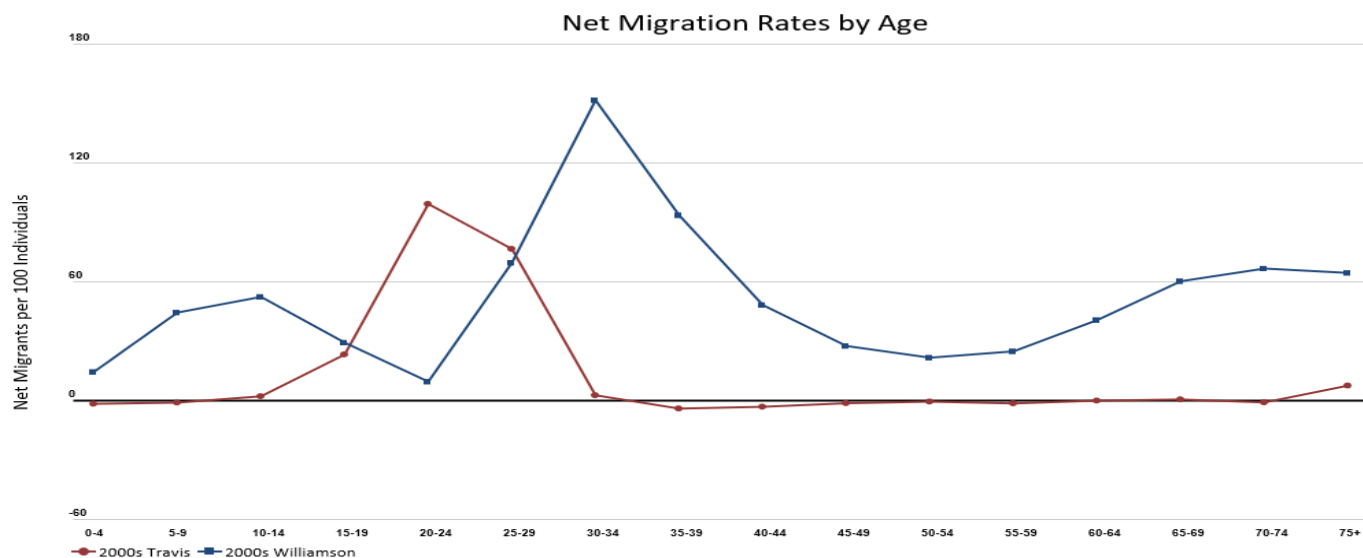
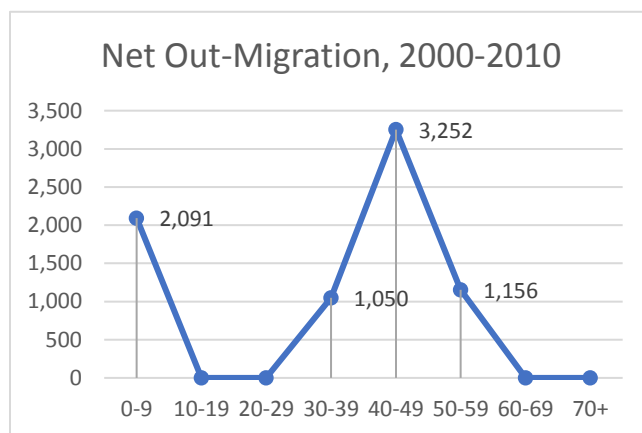
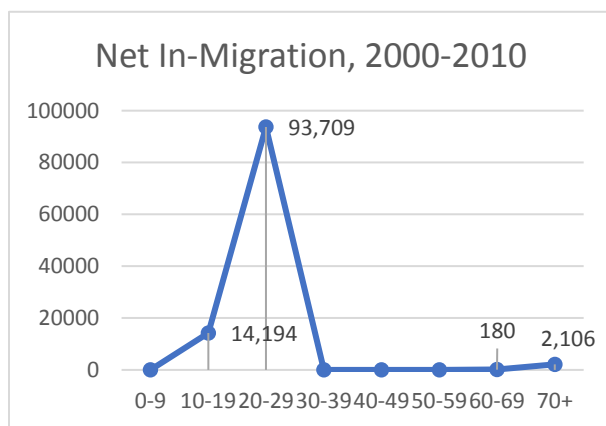
Report Area	Total Population	Population In-Migration	Percent Population In-Migration
Travis County, TX	1,133,239	91,717	8.09%
Texas	26,586,083	1,801,847	6.78%
United States	314,813,229	19,417,258	6.17%

Created by: Community Commons. Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau, Population Estimates, table PEPANNRES-Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010-July 1, 2017

<sup>3</sup> Population growth still on trend. (2018, March 22). [Statesman Interactives]. *The Austin American-Statesman*. <http://www.statesman.com>

People moving to Travis County have tended to be younger, partially because of the universities and colleges that attract students to its campuses. According to the most recent net migration estimates provided by the University of Wisconsin, the largest group of people moving into the County was between the ages of 20 to 29 years old. Whereas, children under the age of 9 and aging adults were moving out of Travis County.<sup>4</sup> Comparatively, migrants moving to Williamson County tend to be nearing the ages of childrearing, between the ages of 30 to 39, or reaching the age of retirement, around 65 years old and older.



Winkler, Richelle, Ken Johnson, Cheng Cheng, Jim Beaudoin, Paul Voss, and Katherine Curtis. Age-Specific Net Migration Estimates for US Counties, 1950-2010. Applied Population Laboratory, University of Wisconsin- Madison, 2013. Web.

<sup>4</sup> Created by: Community Commons, Data source: University of Wisconsin Net Migration Patterns for US Counties, 2000 to 2010. Winkler, R., Johnson, K.M., Cheng Cheng, Beaudoin, J., Voss, P.R., & Curtis, K.J. Age-specific net migration estimates for US counties 1950-2010. (2013). [Data tool]. Applied Population Laboratory, University of Wisconsin- Madison. Retrieved from: <http://www.netmigration.wisc.edu/>.

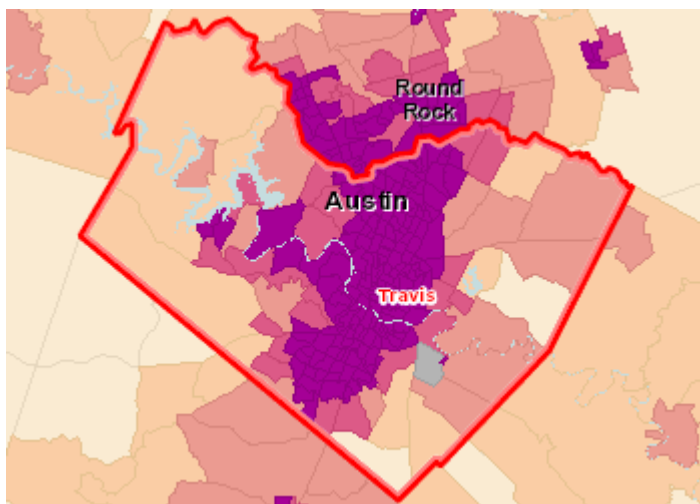
**Geographic Distribution of Opportunity: Urban, Rural, and Suburban.** A total of 1,148,176 people live in the 991.79 square mile area of Travis County, and more than 907,000 people live in the City of Austin according to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2012-2016 5-year estimates. The population density for this area, estimated at 1,157.68 persons per square mile, is greater than the national average population density of 90.19 persons per square mile.

### Urban and Rural Population

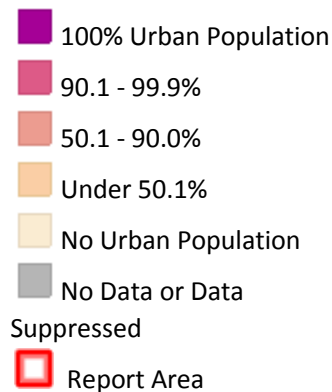
This indicator reports the percentage of population living in urban and rural areas. Urban areas are identified using population density, count, and size thresholds. Urban areas also include territory with a high degree of impervious surface (development). Rural areas are all areas that are not urban.

Report Area	Total Population	Urban Population	Rural Population	Percent Urban	Percent Rural
Travis County, TX	1,024,266	968,305	55,961	94.54%	5.46%
Texas	25,145,561	21,298,039	3,847,522	84.7%	15.3%
United States	312,471,327	252,746,527	59,724,800	80.89%	19.11%

Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census. 2010. Source geography: Tract



**Urban Population, Percent by Tract, US Census 2010**



Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census. 2010.  
Source geography: Tract

## Travis County Population Profile

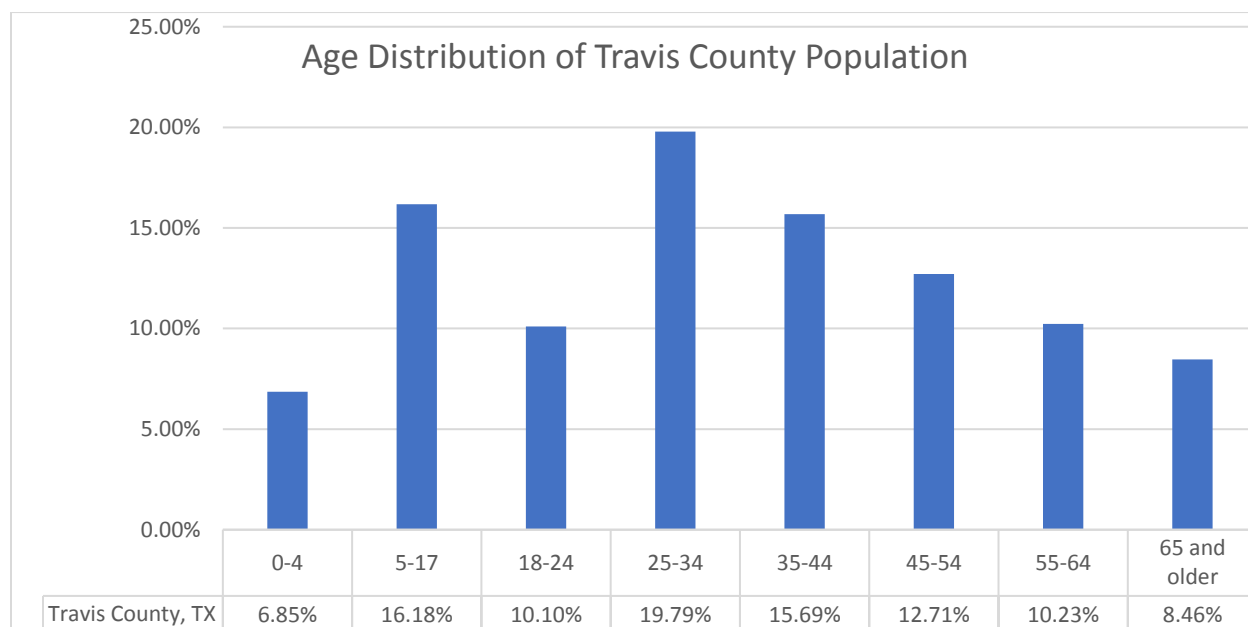
**Gender.** Gender data collected from the survey instrument during the community needs assessment captured a wider variation of gender identities than what is typically available in

Census data. The gender demographics provided in the charts below, however, do not reflect the full spectrum with which individuals in Travis County might identify. All gender identities are relevant to the needs assessment process, as it raises visibility of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender community's strengths and needs unique to their experience.

A total of 569,977 females resided in Travis County according to the 2012-2016 ACS 5-year estimates. Females represented 49.64 percent of the total population in the area, which was less than the national average of 50.81 percent. The male population (50.36%) was slightly higher than the national average (49.19%). A total of 578,199 males resided in Travis County.

Report Area	Total Population	Female Population	Percent Female Population	Male Population	Percent Male Population
Travis County, TX	1,148,176	569,977	49.64%	578,199	50.36%
Texas	26,956,435	13,577,270	50.37%	13,379,165	49.63%
United States	318,558,162	161,792,840	50.79%	156,765,322	49.21%
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract					

**Age Distribution of the Population.** In 2016, the percent of the population between the ages 15 to 34 was higher than Texas (14.53%) and the US (13.62%).



Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract

**Racial and Ethnic Diversity.** Travis County, HHS, Research and Planning Division reported that nearly half of the Travis County population identifies as White Non-Hispanic. The next largest group, Hispanics/Latinos, make up 34 percent of the population, followed by non-Hispanic Black/African-Americans at 8 percent and non-Hispanic Asians at 6 percent. These figures do not make a distinction between the US-born and foreign-born population.<sup>5</sup>

Population growth trends relative to the Black/African-American community have been different from that of many growing metropolitan areas. As of 2010, the population was reported to have declined sharply (5.4%)—the only fastest-growing city to have a drop in the Black/African-American population.<sup>6</sup> Recent ACS reports showed an increase in the number of Black and African Americans between 2010 and 2016, but the total population fell from 8.4 percent to 7.9 percent.<sup>7</sup>

Faith leaders and youth representatives of the Black community pointed to affordability as a key factor in moving to other neighborhoods, namely to North Austin and Pflugerville, to save on housing costs and live in safer neighborhoods. Interestingly, youth mentioned improvements in distressed neighborhoods, but experienced exclusion from using the new developments and reaping the benefits of the changes.

**Nativity or Place of Birth.** Less than one-fifth of the Travis County population (17%) were foreign born, and almost one-third of the population speak a language other than English at home.<sup>8</sup> However, only about 7 percent of households in Travis County are isolated from the broader English-speaking community due to linguistic differences, according to the most recent ACS 5-Year Estimates. The higher percentage of linguistically isolated population in Travis County than the US (4.48%) reflects the unique geographical location of the state in which it is located. The percent of linguistically isolated population is higher in Travis County than the National average, but less than the State's percentage (7.77%).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Travis County, Research and Planning Division. (2017). *Travis County snapshot from the American Community Survey 2016*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/2016-ac-snapshot.pdf](https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/2016-ac-snapshot.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> The Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis. The University of Texas at Austin. (2014, May). Outlier: The case of Austin's declining African American population (Issue Brief: First in a series). Austin, Texas: Eric Tang, PhD.

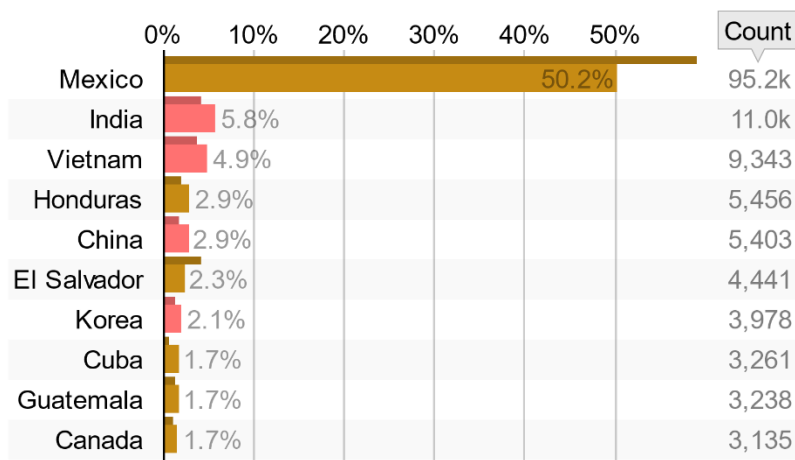
<sup>7</sup> Data source: 2006-2010, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP05

<sup>8</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning Division. (2017). *Travis County snapshot from the American Community Survey 2016*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/2016-ac-snapshot.pdf](https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/2016-ac-snapshot.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Community Commons, Data source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

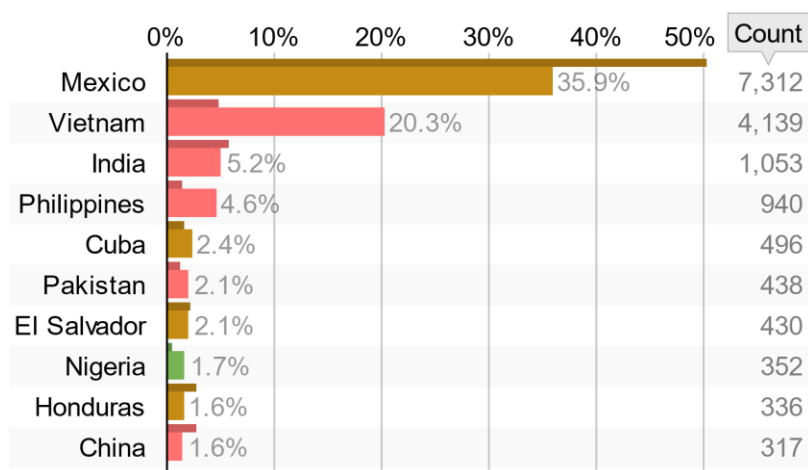
Most of the foreign-born population was born in Latin America, and Mexico makes up at least half of the total foreign-born population. Honduras, El Salvador, Cuba, and Guatemala are the countries most represented, after Mexico, in the Latin American population.<sup>10</sup>

The chart below illustrates the percent and total of foreign-born by country of birth in Travis County.



Created by: Statistical Atlas. (2015). Languages in the Austin area.(v1.0.9545:9546M). [Data tool]. San Francisco, CA: Cedar Lake Ventures.  
Retrieved from: <https://statisticalatlas.com/metro-area/Texas/Austin/Languages#figure/speaking-english-very-well>

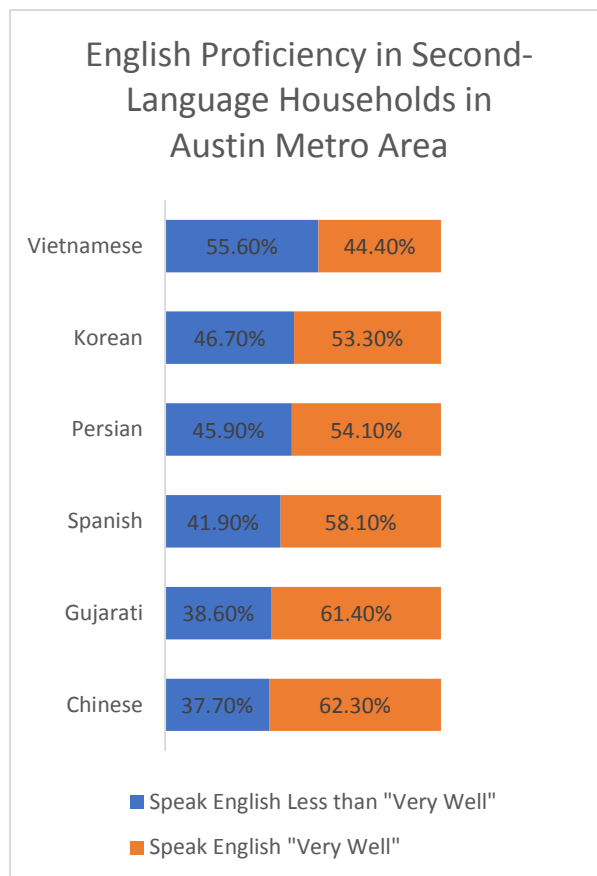
The chart below illustrates the distribution of the foreign-born which is strikingly concentrated in Northeast Travis County, and its diversity was fondly recognized by focus group participants as a core strength.



Created by: Statistical Atlas. (2015). Languages in the Austin area.(v1.0.9545:9546M). [Data tool]. San Francisco, CA: Cedar Lake Ventures.  
Retrieved from: <https://statisticalatlas.com/metro-area/Texas/Austin/Languages#figure/speaking-english-very-well>

<sup>10</sup> Statistical Atlas. (2015). Languages in the Austin area.(v1.0.9545:9546M). [Data tool]. San Francisco, CA: Cedar Lake Ventures. Retrieved from: <https://statisticalatlas.com/metro-area/Texas/Austin/Languages#figure/speaking-english-very-well>

**Language Diversity.** Nativity, or place of birth, is not always a reliable indicator in determining language access needs. For example, people born in India constitute the second largest group of people born abroad in Travis County<sup>11</sup>. The South Central Asian (e.g. India and Pakistan) population is more than twice as large as the linguistically isolated population born in South Eastern Asia (i.e. Vietnam and Philippines), according to figures reported by Migration Policy Institute. About 14,200 were born in India and 2,400 were born in Pakistan. Yet, more than 70 percent of Urdu and Hindi speaking households, two of the most commonly spoken languages in the region, speak English “very well.” Comparatively, 44 percent of households in which Vietnamese is spoken and 58 percent of Spanish speaking households can speak English “very well.”<sup>12</sup>



Created by: Statistical Atlas. (2015). Languages in the Austin area.(v1.0.9545:9546M). [Data tool]. San Francisco, CA: Cedar Lake Ventures. Retrieved from: <https://statisticalatlas.com/metro-area/Texas/Austin/Languages#figure/speaking-english-very-well>

Spanish is the foreign language most commonly spoken in homes, although variations of the language might exist due to regional differences of the language. The percentage of households that speak Spanish is higher than the National average, but slightly lower than the State average of 29.5 percent. A greater proportion of Spanish-speaking households live in the counties surrounding Travis County, except for Williamson County where 14.8 percent speak Spanish.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Migration Policy Institute. (2016). U.S. Immigrant Population by State and County [Data hub]. Retrieved from: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-immigrant-population-state-and-county>

<sup>12</sup> Statistical Atlas. (2015). Languages in the Austin Area .(v1.0.9545:9546M). [Data tool]. Retrieved from: <https://statisticalatlas.com/metro-area/Texas/Austin/Languages#figure/speaking-english-very-well>. San Francisco, CA: Cedar Lake Ventures.

<sup>13</sup>Statistical Atlas. (2015). Languages in the Austin Area .(v1.0.9545:9546M). [Data tool]. Retrieved from: <https://statisticalatlas.com/metro-area/Texas/Austin/Languages#figure/speaking-english-very-well>. San Francisco, CA: Cedar Lake Ventures.

As agencies and service providers strategize ways in which to engage with the full diversity represented in its population, language assistance is more likely needed by the populations identified in the figure opposite.

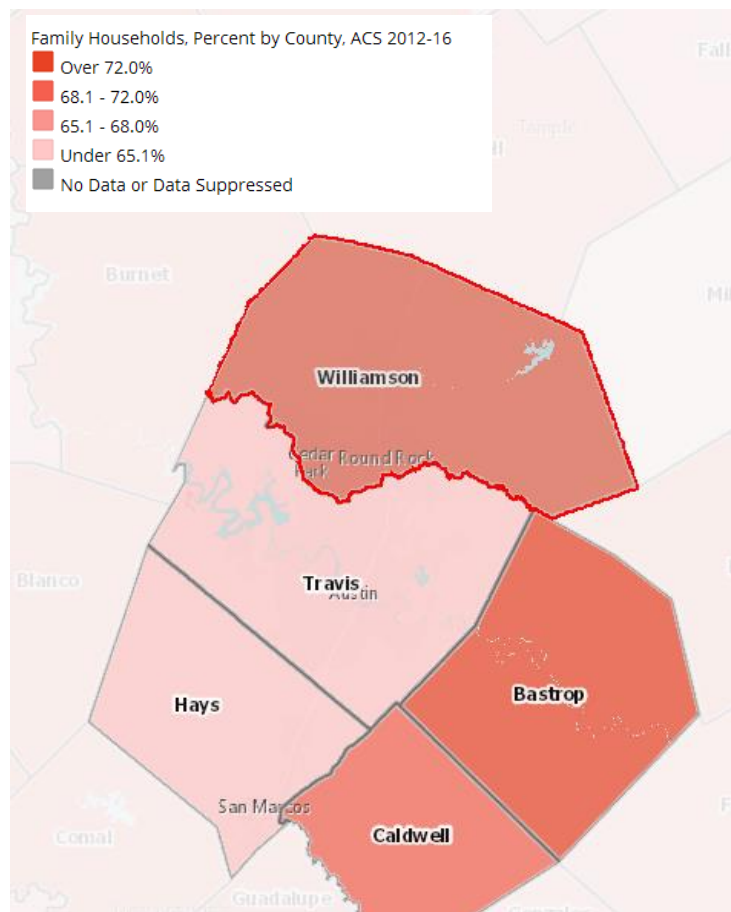
## Household and Family Type

The growing population has resulted in a low vacancy rate of residential units in Travis County (7.7%).<sup>14</sup> Of the 474,749 residential units available in Travis County, 437,831 are occupied and indicate the number of total households.

### Family Households

As defined by the US Census Bureau, a family household is any housing unit in which the householder is living with one or more individuals related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption. The chart illustrates the percent of family households in Travis County and the surrounding counties. 56.7 percent of all households in Travis County are occupied by families, and the percent has not changed much since 2010. More than 65 percent of households in the counties surrounding Austin are occupied by families. For example, in 2016 Williamson County families made up more than 73 percent of households.<sup>15</sup>

**Minors as Dependents.** Since 2012, households with children and without children have remained consistent relative to the total households, according to Travis County, Research and Planning Division.<sup>16</sup>



Created by Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimate

<sup>14</sup> Community Commons, Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

<sup>15</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

<sup>16</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research and Planning. (2017). *Travis County snapshot from the American Community Survey 2016*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/2016-ac-snapshot.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/2016-ac-snapshot.pdf)



According to the most recent the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, about 30 percent of all occupied households in Travis County are family households with one or more children under the age of 18.<sup>17</sup>

Report Area	Total Households	Total Family Households	Families with Children (Under Age 18)	Families with Children (Under Age 18), Percent of Total Households
Travis County, TX	437,831	248,106	130,782	29.87%
Texas	9,289,554	6,450,049	3,468,630	37.34%
United States	117,716,237	77,608,829	37,299,113	31.69%
Created by: Community Commons Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract				

Data on the relationship of the caregiver to the minor is less readily accessible, but important in understanding as the caregiver might experience unique assets and needs that differ from parents. Of the 134,570 family households with children, 32 percent (42,816 households) have one householder with no spouse present, according to Travis County reports using 2016 ACS 1-year estimates. As of 2012, data has been collected by the Census Bureau to determine the number of grandparents who live with and are responsible for their grandchildren. In Travis County, 3.3 percent of the population over 30 live with their grandchildren and nearly 8,600 grandparents are responsible for their grandchildren.<sup>18</sup>

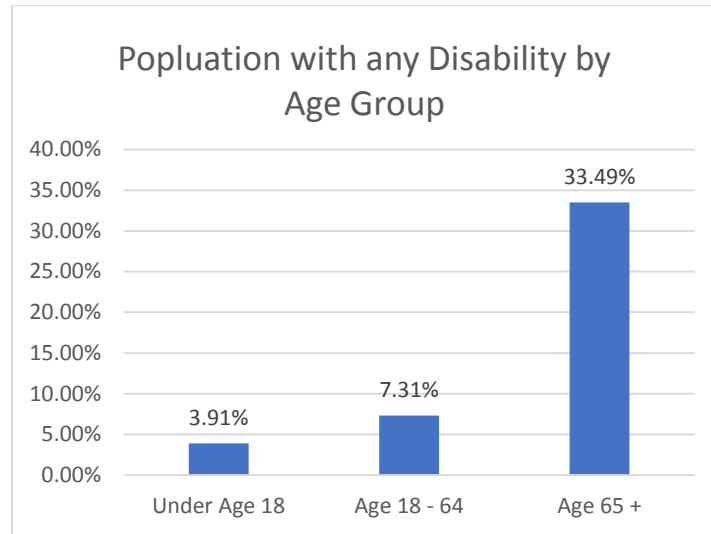
**People with disabilities.** In 2016, 8.7 percent of the population in Travis County was identified as having a disability.<sup>19</sup> This indicator reports the percentage of the total civilian non-institutionalized population with a disability. This indicator is relevant because disabled individuals comprise a vulnerable population that requires targeted services and outreach by providers.

Report Area	Total Population (For Whom Disability Status Is Determined)	Total Population with a Disability	Percent Population with a Disability
Travis County, TX	1,140,612	99,231	8.7%
Texas	26,478,868	3,083,141	11.64%
United States	313,576,137	39,272,529	12.52%
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract			

<sup>17</sup> Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

<sup>18</sup> Data Source: 2016 ACS 1-year Estimate, Table S0201, B10050

<sup>19</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-year Estimates



Created by Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

### Population Receiving Supplemental Security Income

The SSI program is a cash assistance program that provides monthly benefits to low-income aged, blind, or persons with a severe disability. Over 99,000 people in Travis County have a disability and nearly 27 percent live 125 percent below poverty (26,403 people).<sup>20</sup> Despite that being the case, only about 17,000 people received SSI benefits in 2016.<sup>21</sup> The cash assistance program provided up to \$9,000 to beneficiaries in Travis County, a sum which could help parents/caregivers of children with a disability offset the loss of income due to labor force disruptions and extra expenses. Monthly expenses for an individual with no children in Travis County would need to earn at least \$27,000 a year to cover housing, food, medical expenses, and transportation.<sup>22</sup>

*"There should be some kind of support system [families caring for a person with a disability], even setting up groups to vent and talk about their experience can help or even have mentors to advocate for them."--Interview participant*

Caring for underage children comes with a greater set of resources than those readily available to a caregiver of an adult. Unlike parents, caregivers of adult children with a disability and/or aging parents must apply to gain legal guardianship rights, or conservatorship. Caring for aging parents often means that caregivers' tasks increase over time as parent's independent functioning diminishes.

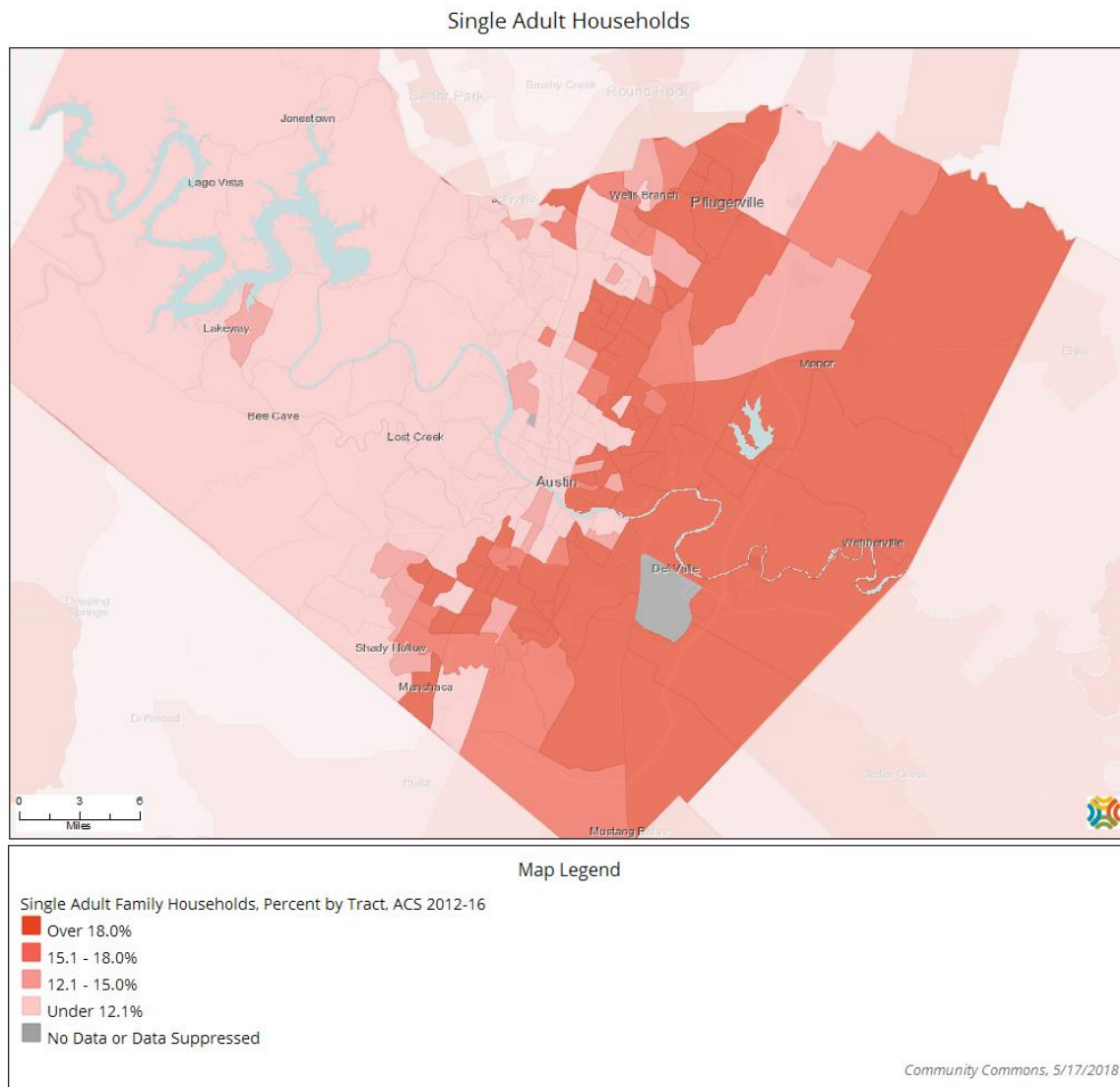
<sup>20</sup> Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1703

<sup>21</sup> SSI Recipients by State and County, 2016, Source: Social Security Administration, Master Beneficiary Record and Supplemental Security Record, 100 percent data; and U.S. Postal Service geographic data. Retrieved from [https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi\\_sc/2016/tx.html](https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_sc/2016/tx.html)

<sup>22</sup> Center for Public Policy Priorities. (2017). Texas family budgets. [Data tool]. Retrieved from: <http://familybudgets.org/>

## Nonfamily Households

Nonfamily households describe a residential unit occupied by the householder alone or with one or more unrelated individuals, e.g. roommates.<sup>23</sup> According to 2012-2016 ACS estimates, 43.3 percent of households are non-family households.<sup>24</sup> 31.2 percent of non-family householders in Travis County live alone, which is higher than the percent of people living alone in Texas and the USA.<sup>25</sup> The map below illustrates the areas in which single householders are concentrated.



<sup>23</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). Current population surveys: Subject definitions. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentation/subject-definitions.html#householdnonfamily>

<sup>24</sup> Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501

<sup>25</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S2501

## Key Findings on Causes and Conditions of Poverty

Since the 2015 CSBG Needs Assessment, indicators have suggested that the economic situation for families has improved. The median income brought into family homes has increased, poverty rates have declined, and unemployment continues to drop to near a record-breaking low. At the same time, measuring other aspects of poverty indicates that it has become more concentrated and dispersed in the outlying areas of Austin and Travis County.

Following the framework from the last needs assessment, a summary of causes and conditions of poverty and identified needs in Travis County are listed below. The goal is to track trends more easily in between assessment periods. Comparisons were made where compatible data sources were used. The other sections of the report provide a detailed report on the quantitative causes and conditions of poverty, as well as perspectives on the issue by community members. Quotes that convey the significance of the issue or fill in the gaps quantitative data are interspersed throughout the appropriate sections.

### **Causes and conditions of poverty: Demographics**

- The population in Travis County continues to outpace the State of Texas and the United States, making population gains of 19.7 percent from 2000 to 2017. The population percent change is more striking in the surrounding counties of Williamson (30%) and Hays County (37%).
- The poverty rate remains at recession-era levels. From 2005 to 2009, the 5-year time during the economic downturn, the poverty rate was reported at 15 percent. According to the latest 2012 to 2016 5-year ACS estimate, the population under poverty was reported at 15.21 percent.
- Racial and ethnic disparities persist across many indicators documented throughout the report. The share of people of color in poverty is strikingly disproportionate to the total population size. The Black/African-American poverty rate comprises 8.3 percent of the total population and 21.55 percent of people living under poverty.
- Persistence of poverty across generations and its prevalence in groups historically segregated from economic and social opportunities is a key factor for the stagnant economic mobility in communities
- Travis County ranked as one of the worst places for children from poor families to achieve greater economic security as adults, ranking only better than 13 percent of US counties.

### **Causes and Conditions of Poverty: Housing**

- About 35 percent of households in Travis County are cost-burdened, and nearly half of renters, more than homeowners, spend a higher portion of their income towards housing.

- More than 28,000 families on the Housing Authority of the City of Austin waiting list for public housing, and more than 1,000 are awaiting Housing Choice Vouchers.

### **Causes and Conditions of Poverty: Economy and the Education System**

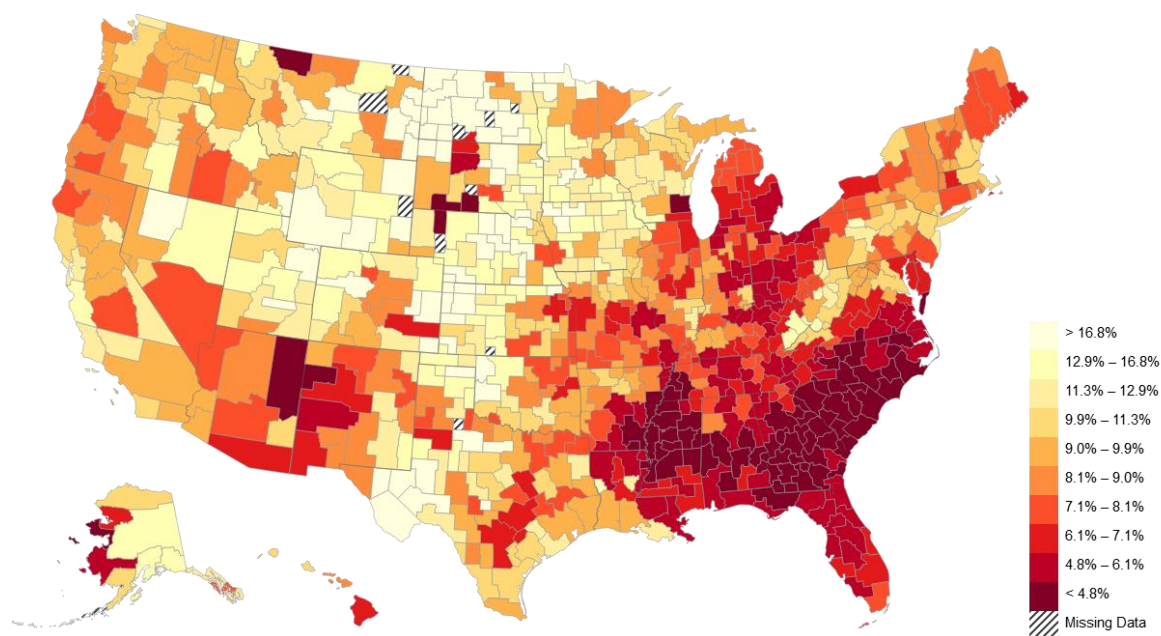
- The median family income in Travis County earns more than \$81,000. However, families of color will earn about \$46,000. Asian American families are the exception. The median family income for Asian American families is more than what is expected for Travis County overall.
- The percent of Travis County residents receiving public assistance such as TANF and SNAP is less than Texas and the US overall percentage. However, this would not suggest that fewer people need such assistance. The percentage of the population living in deep poverty is higher than the State and National rate.
- An individual with no children would need to earn at least \$27,000 a year or \$13 an hour to cover monthly expenses, not including savings, and a person with one child would need to earn over \$42,000 or \$20 an hour.
- At least 28 percent of Travis County residents do not have liquid savings in case of an emergency, and for households of color, nearly half do not have enough savings to subsist without an income for three months.
- The unemployment rate is near record-breaking low, but the rate is much higher for women with a child (5.9%) and twice as high for women with more than one child (9.10%).
- Fewer Head Start facilities are available to families as a form of child care. The rate of Head Start programs in Travis County is nearly half of the rate for the United States. In zip codes where many single parents are moving, only 1 to 2 programs are available. The lack of affordable and high -quality child care acts a main barrier to families seeking to earn income.
- Austin's workforce is a mismatch for the employment opportunities available. The job qualifications require a higher level of educational attainment, and 63 percent of people receiving unemployment benefits have less than an associate's degree.

### **Causes and Conditions of Poverty: Health**

- Nearly a quarter of adults do not have health insurance and lack access to health care to prevent conditions from becoming worse.
- More babies born to Black/African-American mothers are low birth weight. Black/African-American mothers are also more likely to go into preterm labor. There is growing consensus on the impact of racial discrimination over the course a woman's life.

## Economic Mobility and Poverty

**Economic Mobility.** According to the ranking of opportunities established by the Equality of Opportunity Project, a child growing up in the low-income household in Travis County (25<sup>th</sup> percentile of the income distribution) would earn about \$1,960 less than the average national income as a young adult. Boys growing up in families with low-incomes would lose more. Travis County ranked as one of the worst places for children from poor families to achieve greater economic security as adults, ranking 320<sup>th</sup> of 2,478 counties in the US. Travis County fares better than only 13 percent of US counties.<sup>26</sup> The map below demonstrates upward mobility rates by commuting zones. The Austin Metro Area shows lower levels of upward mobility, indicated by the darker red colors.



Created by: The Equality of Opportunity Project. (Research). (2014). Upward mobility rates by commuting zones. [Map]. Retrieved from: <http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/data/>

Recent research led by the Equality of Opportunity Project is largely considered robust in characterizing neighborhoods with greater opportunity for people seeking to climb the economic ladder, otherwise known as upward mobility. The conclusions from this research project determined that places can have a causal effect on a child's outcomes. Neighborhoods found to have greater upward mobility tend to have five factors in common:

<sup>26</sup> Aisch, G., Buth, E., Bloch, M., Cox, A., & Quealy, K. (2015, May 4). The best and worst places to grow up: How your area compares. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/05/03/upshot/the-best-and-worst-places-to-grow-up-how-your-area-compares.html>

1. Less racial and economic segregation
2. A greater proportion of a middle class
3. Lower rates of violent crime
4. High quality schools
5. Larger share of two-parent households

This report identifies areas where higher rates on these specific indicators are located in Travis County as a reference to the potential mobility that low-income individuals and families might experience if they were to live in areas of higher opportunity. These indicators are relevant to understanding poverty from the broader lens of economic mobility, in addition to determining income poverty solely by demographic characteristics as the Federal Poverty Guidelines would define it.

## Income

The median family income in Travis County earns more than \$81,000, which is \$10,000 more than families on a national level.<sup>27</sup> However, a closer examination of the data shows racial and ethnic disparities in the median income brought home to Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino families. 56 percent of White families will earn over \$75,000, while only 32 percent of African American families and 29 percent of Latino families bring home that same amount.<sup>28</sup>

Monthly expenses for an individual with no children in Travis County would need to earn at least \$27,000 a year or \$13 an hour to cover housing, food, medical expenses, and transportation. This individual would be living paycheck to paycheck, making no contributions towards an emergency savings. A person with a child living in Travis County would need to earn over \$42,000 or \$20 an hour.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

<sup>28</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

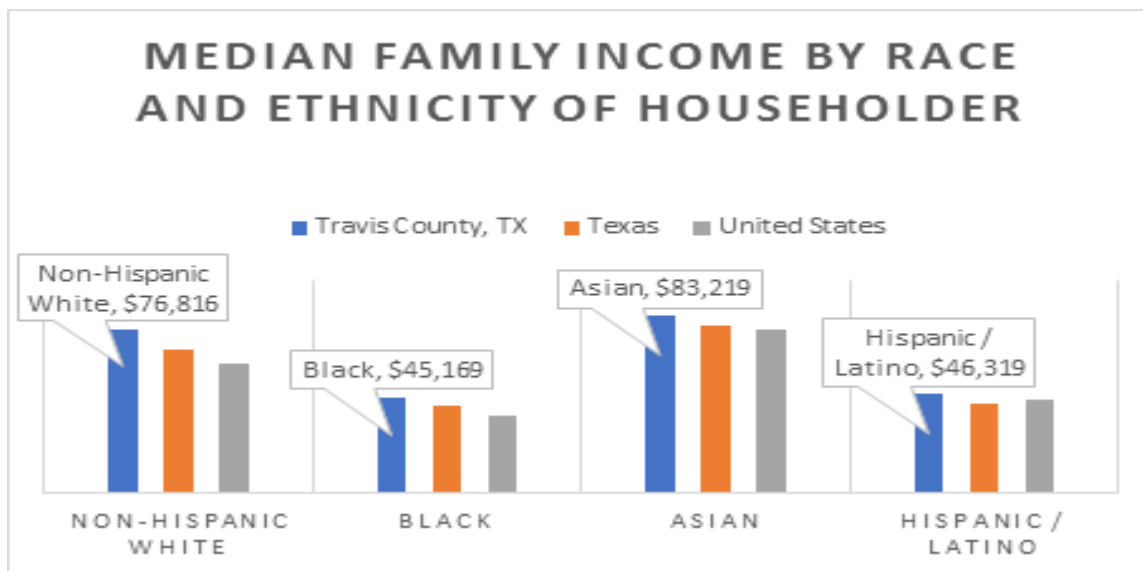
<sup>29</sup> Center for Public Policy Priorities. (2017). Texas family budgets. [Data tool]. Retrieved from: <http://familybudgets.org/>

## Median Family Income

This indicator reports median family income based on the latest 5-year American Community Survey estimates. A family household is any housing unit in which the householder is living with one or more individuals related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption. Family income includes the incomes of all family members age 15 and older.

Report Area	Total Family Households	Average Family Income	Median Family Income
Travis County, TX	248,106	\$113,896	\$81,822
Texas	6,450,049	\$88,231	\$64,585
United States	77,608,829	\$90,960	\$67,871

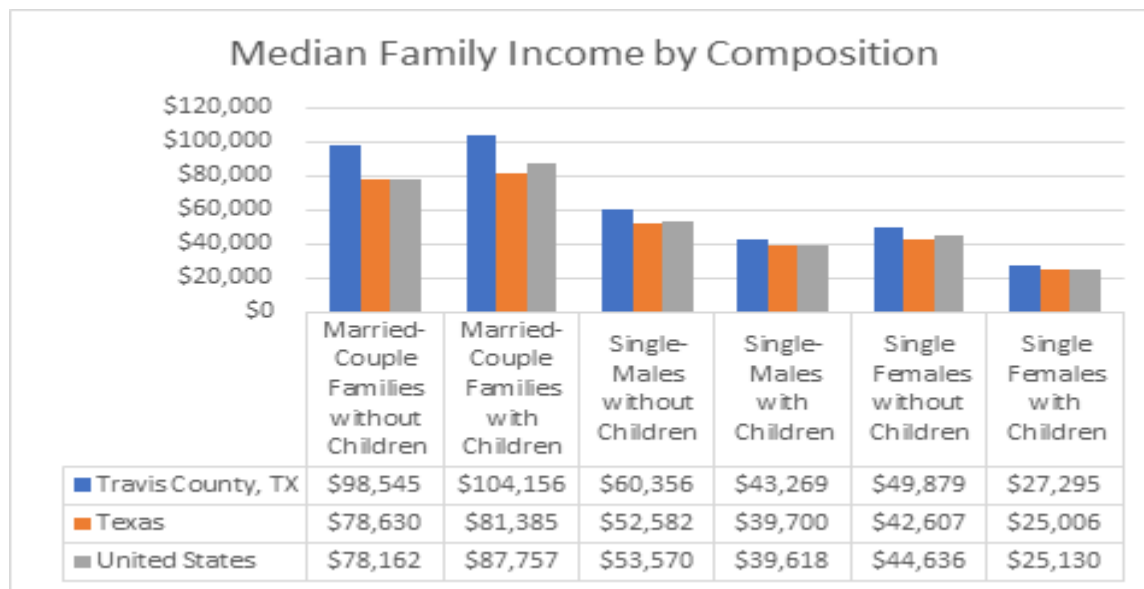
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimate



Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Source geography: Tract



Median family income varies by household composition. A couple, potentially earning two incomes and have no dependents, can earn at least \$55,000 more than a single parent with children. A smaller source of income and additional expenses such as child care stretches each dollar brought into families' homes.

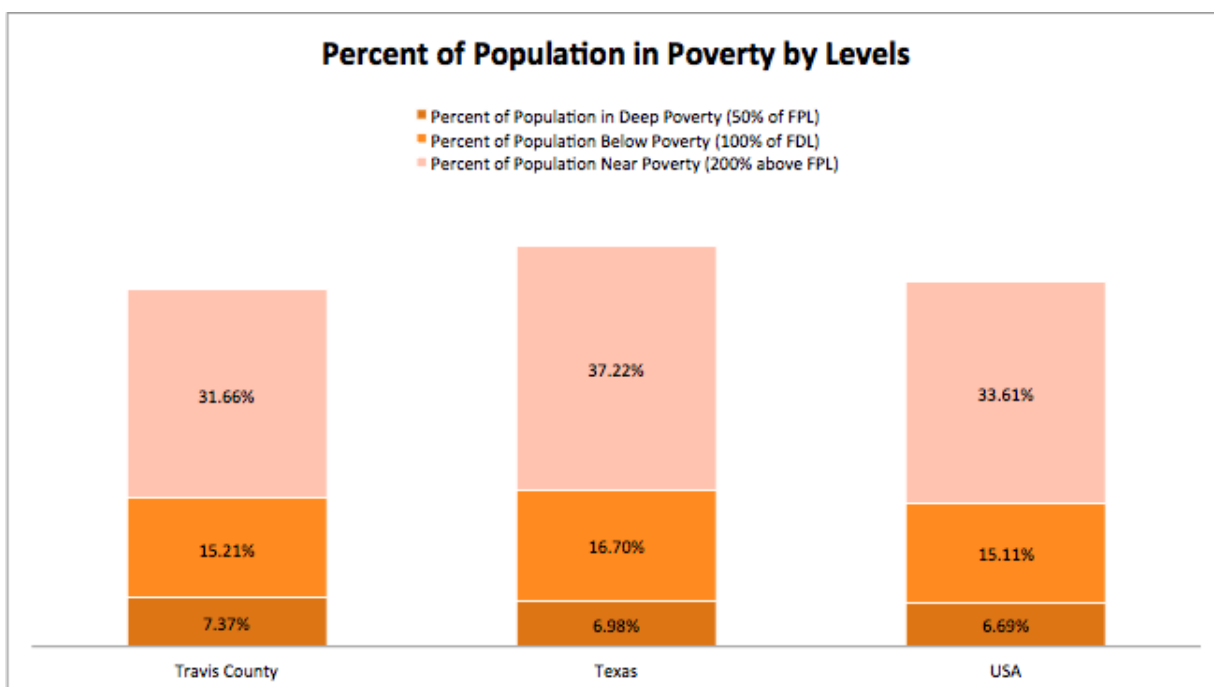


Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Source geography: Tract

## Income Poverty

The Census Bureau uses two measures to count the number of people living under poverty, both of which are determined by estimates of the level of income needed to cover basic needs, namely the cost of a minimum food diet. The poverty threshold is adjusted for family size, composition and age of the householder. Variations in cost of living by region are not factored into the poverty count, and are measured with respect to income alone.

However, social services might account for the variations in cost of living by using one of the various levels of poverty to determine eligibility for services. The chart below illustrates the spectrum of levels of poverty: 100 percent is below poverty, 125 percent is near poverty, and deep poverty is determined at 50 percent of the Federal Poverty Line. People may receive CSBG-funded services if their household income falls below 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Line. According to recent ACS 5-Year Estimates, **nearly one-fifth of the population (19.3%) in Travis County falls below the 125% threshold and would be eligible for CSBG-funded services if they sought assistance at the Neighborhood Centers.**<sup>30</sup>



Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

<sup>30</sup> Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1703

**Deep and Persistent Poverty.** While Travis County does generally well comparatively, the percentage of the population living in deep poverty is higher than both the state and national average. According to the 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, over 89,000 people in Travis County live in deep poverty. People living in deep and persistent poverty are more likely to experience multiple compounding challenges: chronic illness, disability, addiction, or homelessness.<sup>31</sup>

Overall, the rates of poverty have not made significant improvements since the wake of the Great Recession in 2009. The poverty rates determined for 2012 to 2016 are nearly the same as the poverty rates based on 5-year estimates between 2005 and 2009.<sup>32</sup>

ACS 5-Year Estimate	Deep Poverty Less than 50%	Below Poverty Less than 100%	Near Poverty Less than 125%
<b>2005-2009</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
2008-2012	8.3%	17.5%	22.1%
<b>2012-2016</b>	<b>7.37%</b>	<b>15.21%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>
Data Source: 2005-2009, 2008-2012, 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1703			

<sup>31</sup> Lei, S., (2013). *The unwaged war on deep poverty*. Retrieved from The Urban Institute website: <https://www.urban.org/features/unwaged-war-deep-poverty>

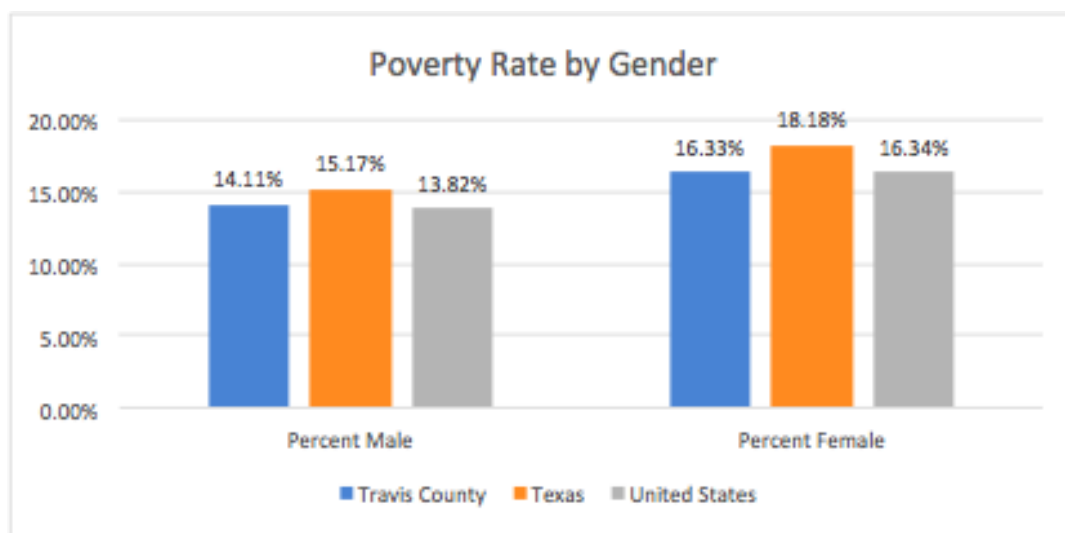
<sup>32</sup> Data Source: 2005-2009, 2008-2012, 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, S1703

**Women in Poverty.** Women make up a little less of the total population, yet 11,000 more females than males live under poverty in Travis County.<sup>33</sup> Even though women have increased their presence in higher-paying jobs traditionally dominated by men, such as professional and managerial positions, women continue to be overrepresented in lower-paying occupations. This may also contribute to gender differences in pay.

A report by Pew Research found that women are twice as likely as men—26 percent versus 13 percent—to work part-time. Naturally, that has a significant impact on the relative earnings of women and men if one looks at weekly earnings.<sup>34</sup>

Report Area	Total Male	Total Female	Percent Male	Percent Female
Travis County, TX	79,909	91,114	14.11%	16.33%
Texas	1,966,846	2,430,461	15.17%	18.18%
United States	21,012,839	25,919,386	13.82%	16.34%

Created by Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates



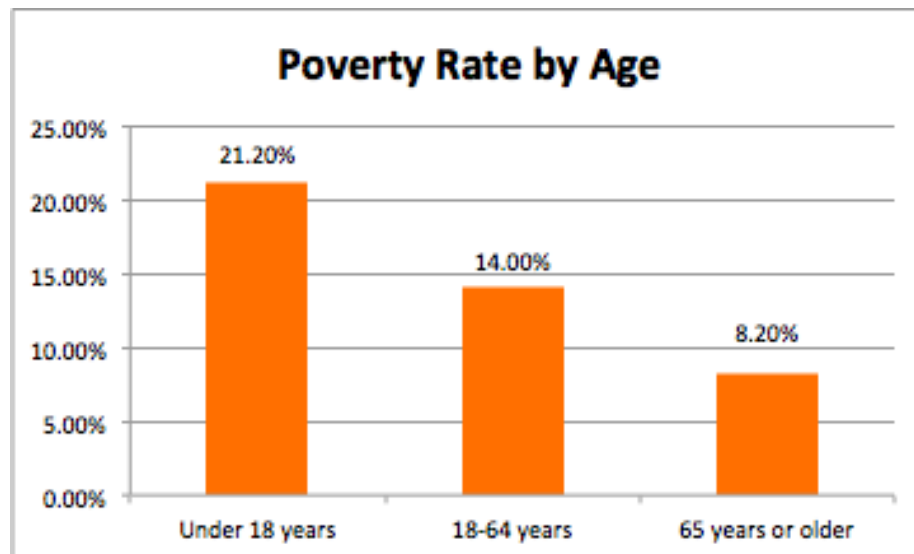
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

<sup>33</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

<sup>34</sup> Kochhar, R., (2013). *How Pew Research measured gender pay gap*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center website: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/12/11/how-pew-research-measured-the-gender-pay-gap/>

**Poverty and Age.** Travis County Research and Planning found that the age groups with highest rates of poverty tend to be younger. Children under the age of 18 (21%) and 18 to 24 year-olds (35%) had highest rates of poverty overall.<sup>35</sup>

The chart below illustrates the percentage of the age group living under poverty set at 100 percent.

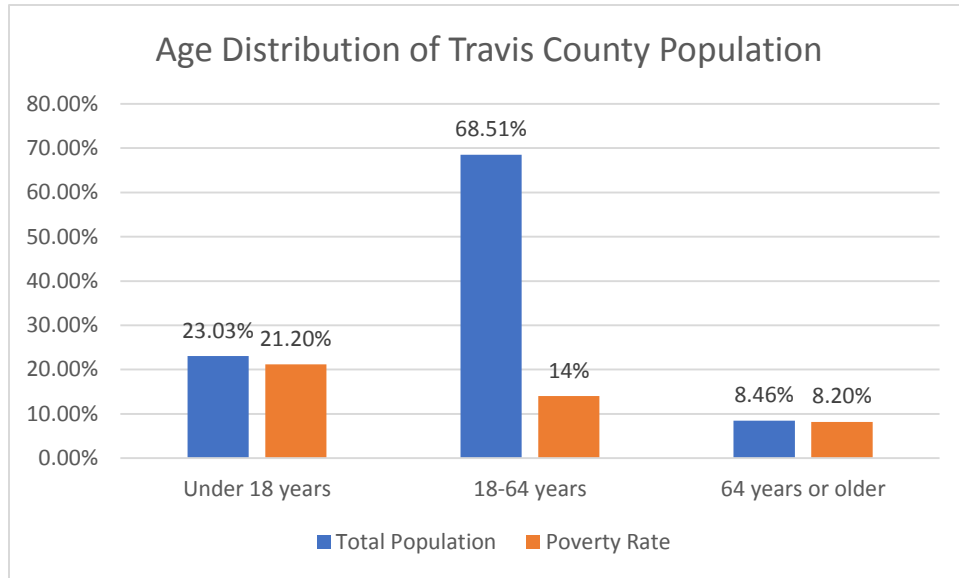


Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1703

Another way to think about poverty is relative to the age distribution of the total population. The percent of children under 18 living under poverty is 21 percent, and they comprise 23 percent of the total population. Adults between the ages of 18 to 64 make up 68.5 percent and 14 percent of the age group live under poverty.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning. (2018, April). *Travis County poverty brief*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/travis-county-poverty-brief-2018.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/travis-county-poverty-brief-2018.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1703



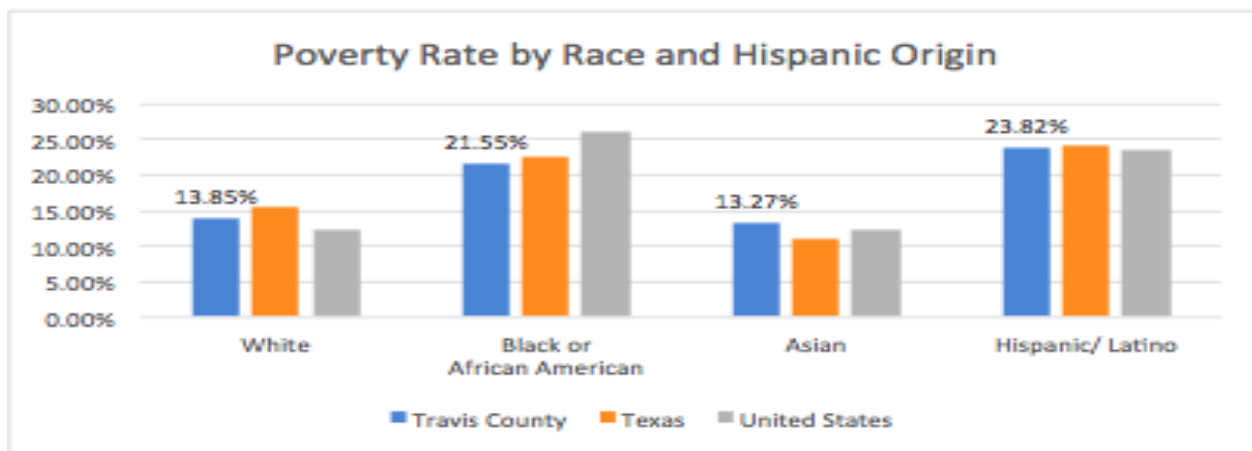
Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Tables S1703,

The number of students eligible for free and reduced price lunch provides an additional measure to assessing children living under poverty. Within Travis County, 94,536 public school students or 51.48% are eligible for Free/Reduced Price lunch out of 183,637 total students enrolled. The threshold for eligibility is set by USDA and children whose household receives an income 185% below the Federal Poverty Line are eligible for the program.

Report Area	Total Students	Number Free/Reduced Price Lunch Eligible	Percent Free/Reduced Price Lunch Eligible
Travis County, TX	183,637	94,536	51.48%
Texas	5,300,635	3,123,844	58.94%
United States	50,611,787	25,893,504	52.61%
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NCES - Common Core of Data. 2015-16. Source geography: Address			

## Disparity in Racial and Ethnic Poverty Rates

Economic inequality also impacts the rate of poverty found in the Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino communities. Black/ African-Americans (21.55%) and Hispanics/ Latinos (23.82%) have rates of poverty greater than the overall Travis County rate (15.21%).<sup>37</sup> The share of people of color in poverty is strikingly disproportionate to the total population size. For example, while the Black/ African American population makes up 8.3 percent of the total population in Travis County, a disproportionate percentage live under poverty.



Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Public Assistance Income

Public assistance is another source of income, in addition to wages earned from employment, that helps families stay above the poverty line. Public assistance programs, also known as anti-poverty programs, are geared towards individuals' who meet income eligibility criteria. Although the threshold to become eligible varies by program, the criteria is generally based on an individual's or household's income levels. The most commonly known public assistance programs are Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

The indicators outlined in this section display the percent of the population receiving various anti-poverty programs. The results are below those of Texas and United States, suggesting an underutilization of public assistance programs.

**Households Receiving TANF.** This indicator reports the percentage households receiving public assistance income. Public assistance income includes general assistance and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Separate payments received for hospital or other medical

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<sup>37</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

care (vendor payments) are excluded. This does not include Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or noncash benefits such as Food Stamps.

Report Area	Total Households	Households with Public Assistance Income	Percent Households with Public Assistance Income
<b>Travis County, TX</b>	437,831	5,808	<b>1.33%</b>
<b>Texas</b>	9,289,554	147,100	1.58%
<b>United States</b>	117,716,237	3,147,577	2.67%
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract			

**Households Receiving SNAP Benefits.** This indicator reports the estimated percentage of households receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. This indicator is relevant because it assesses vulnerable populations which are more likely to have multiple health access, health status, and social support needs; when combined with poverty data, providers can use this measure to identify gaps in eligibility and enrollment.

Report Area	Total Households	Households Receiving SNAP Benefits	Percent Households Receiving SNAP Benefits
Travis County	437,831	38,749	<b>8.85%</b>
Texas	9,289,554	1,220,336	13.14%
United States	117,716,237	15,360,951	13.05%
Note: This indicator is compared with the state average. Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract			

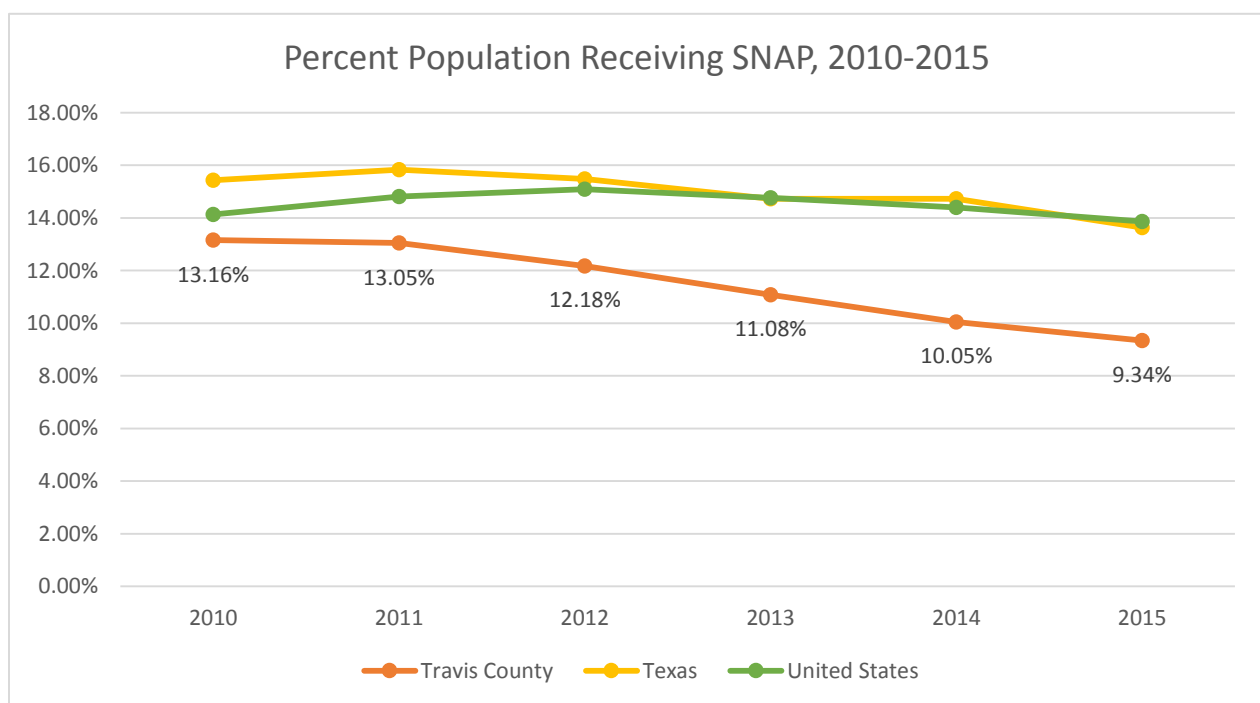
15.2 percent of the population in Travis County has experienced food insecurity at some point in 2016. Food insecurity is the household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Every year the rate of food insecurity has declined after reaching a high of 18 percent in 2012.<sup>38</sup>

	Food Insecure Population, Total	Food Insecurity Rate
Travis County, TX	174,100	<b>15.2%</b>
Texas	4,277,540	15.4%
United States	41,204,000	12.9%
Data Source: Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap 2016.		

<sup>38</sup> Community Advancement Network, Dashboard (2017). *Key socioeconomic indicators for Greater Austin and Travis County*. Retrieved from <http://canatx.org/dashboard/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017-CAN-Dashboard-FINAL-FOR-WEB-9.21.17.pdf>



The chart below displays the declining percentage of the population receiving SNAP benefits. While the rate of food insecurity has declined since 2012, the number of people enrolled in SNAP does not match the number of people likely eligible for assistance. In 2016, an estimated 60 percent of food insecure people (about 104,460 individuals) likely met the income eligibility for Federal Nutrition Assistance.<sup>39</sup> However, only 38,749 households received SNAP benefits, according to the 2012-2016 ACS 5-year Estimates. A report prepared by the City of Austin, Office of Sustainability indicated more research is needed to identify the factors contributing to the enrollment gap.<sup>40</sup>

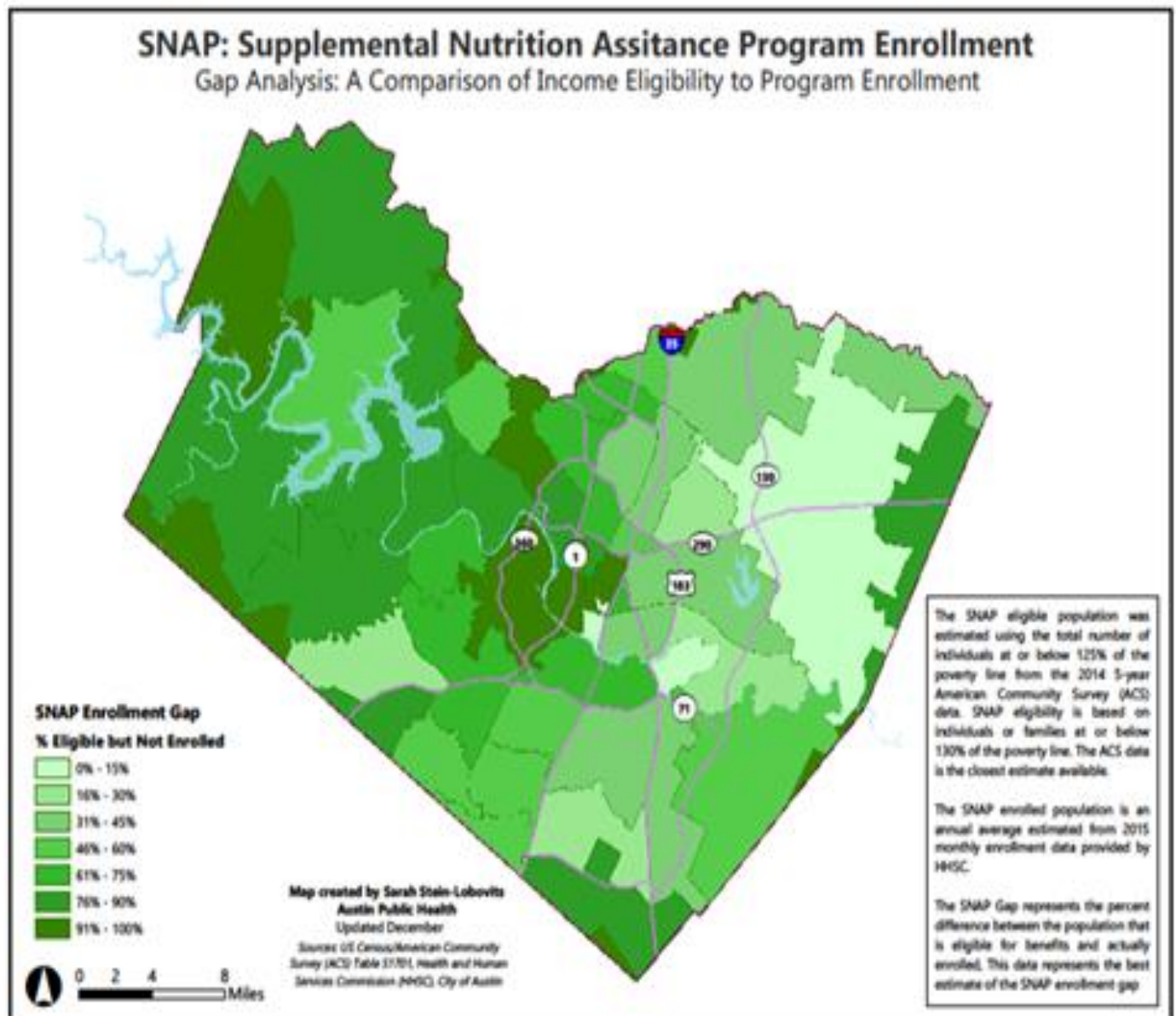


Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, [Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates, 2015](#). Source geography: County, Note: This indicator is compared with the state average.

<sup>39</sup> Feeding America, (2018). Map the meal gap 2018: Overall food insecurity in Texas by county in 2016. Retrieved from Feeding Texas website: [www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/2016/overall/TX\\_AllCounties\\_CDs\\_MMG\\_2016.pdf](http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/2016/overall/TX_AllCounties_CDs_MMG_2016.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> City of Austin, Office of Sustainability. (2018). Austin's healthy food access initiative. [Presentation at the Downtown Austin Community Court.]

According to service providers' feedback, the cumbersome application process likely contributes to the underutilization of SNAP benefits. Applicants must meet three tests (i.e. gross monthly income, net income, and minimum assets amounts) as part of the SNAP application process. For a family of three, who meets all eligibility requirements, the maximum monthly amount allotted would be \$504.<sup>41</sup>



Created by: City of Austin, Office of Sustainability, Healthy Food Access Initiative, Source: ACS, Table S1701, Health and Human Services Commission, City of Austin

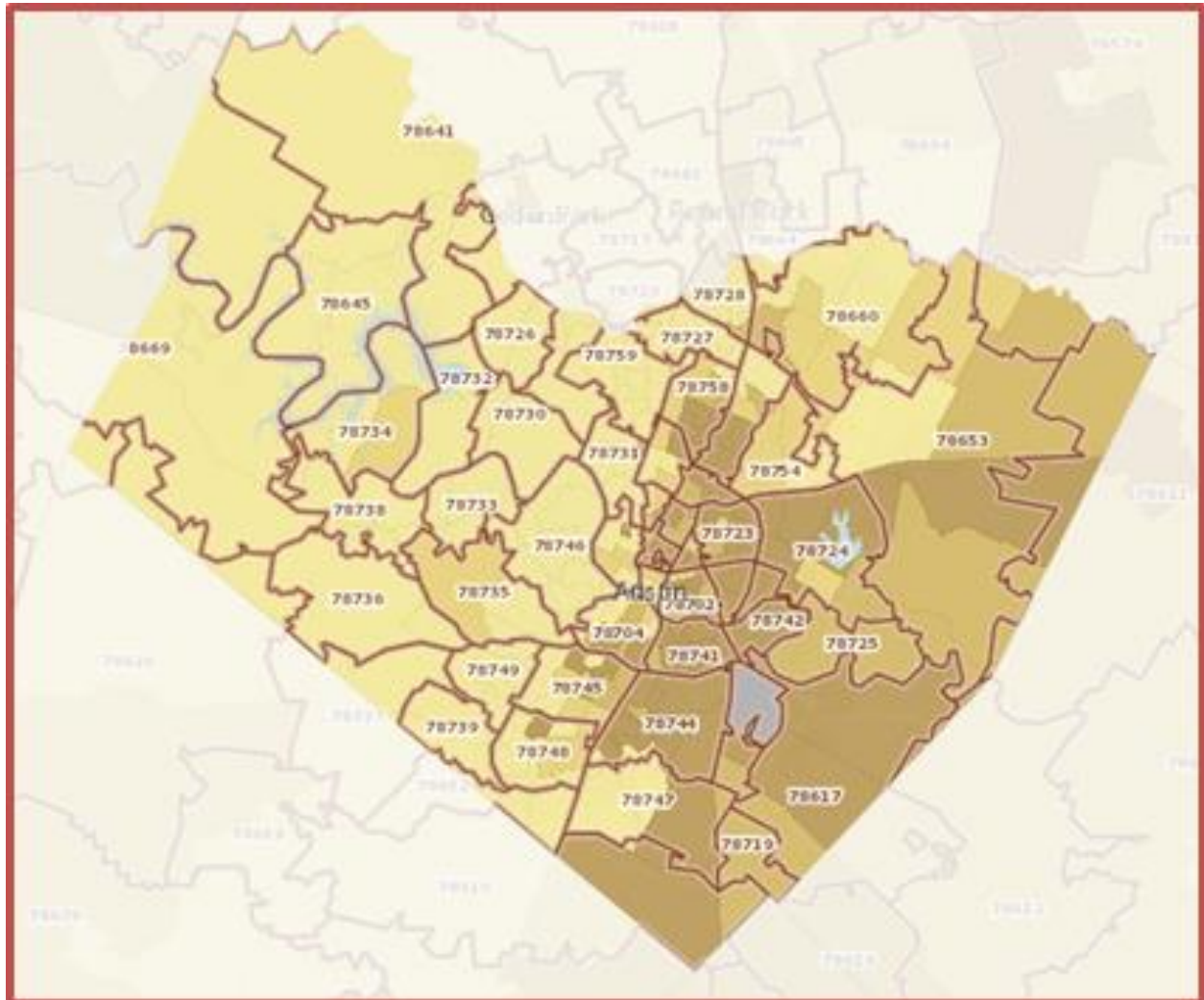
<sup>41</sup> Center on Budget and Public Priorities. (2018, February). *A quick guide to SNAP eligibility and benefits*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/11-18-08fa.pdf>

**Food Insecure Population Ineligible for Nutrition Assistance.** This indicator reports the estimated percentage of the total population and the population under age 18 that experienced food insecurity at some point during the report year, but are ineligible for State or Federal nutrition assistance. For example, a family ineligible for food assistance might face a situation in which their income must be allocated towards an unexpected expense, such as a car repair. A large percentage of ineligible people experiencing food insecurity must access other resources such as emergency food pantries for their nutritional needs.

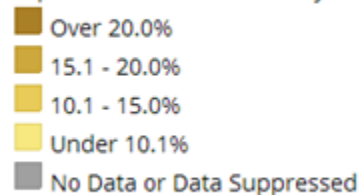
Report Area	Food Insecure Population, Total	Percentage of Food Insecure Population Ineligible for Assistance	Food Insecure Children, Total	Percentage of Food Insecure Children Ineligible for Assistance
Travis County, TX	189,390	34%	63,780	35%
Texas	4,653,290	30%	1,899,310	30%
United States	48,770,990	29%	17,284,530	31%
Created by: Community Commons, Date Retrieved: April 10, 2018, Data Source: <a href="#">Feeding America. 2014</a>				

## Geographic Distribution of Poverty

15.1 percent of the population in Travis County lives below poverty. However, the map below clearly illustrates the uneven distribution of poverty. Poverty continues to be more pervasive in neighborhoods along the highway and to the east of I-35.



Population Below the Poverty Level, Percent by Tract, ACS 2012-16



Created by Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Concentrations of Poverty.** Travis County, Research and Planning Division identified zip codes where more than 50 percent of the population lives 200 percent below poverty, and all the zip codes identified, except for 78704 near UT campus, were in the east side.<sup>42</sup>

The chart below illustrates the Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) with concentrated levels of poverty. ZCTAs are approximations of the zip code areas established by the Census Bureau. Concentrations of poverty were determined when more than 50 percent of the population live under poverty.

<b>ZCTAs with over 50% of Individuals Living below 200% of Poverty Travis County, 2012-2016</b>					
ZCTA	Estimate	Percent	ZCTA	Estimate	Percent
78705 (central/UT area)	15,163	76%	78744 (southeast)	25,583	54%
78724 (east)	14,678	62%	78721 (east)	6,551	54%
78741 (southeast)	31,382	61%	78617 (southeast)	12,277	52%
78752 (northeast)	11,266	57%	78723 (east)	16,124	50%
78753 (northeast)	30,545	55%	78719 (southeast)	881*	50%*

Created by Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning Division. Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimate

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<sup>42</sup> Travis County, Health and Human Services, Research and Planning Division. (2018, April). *Travis County poverty brief*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/travis-county-poverty-brief-2018.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/travis-county-poverty-brief-2018.pdf)

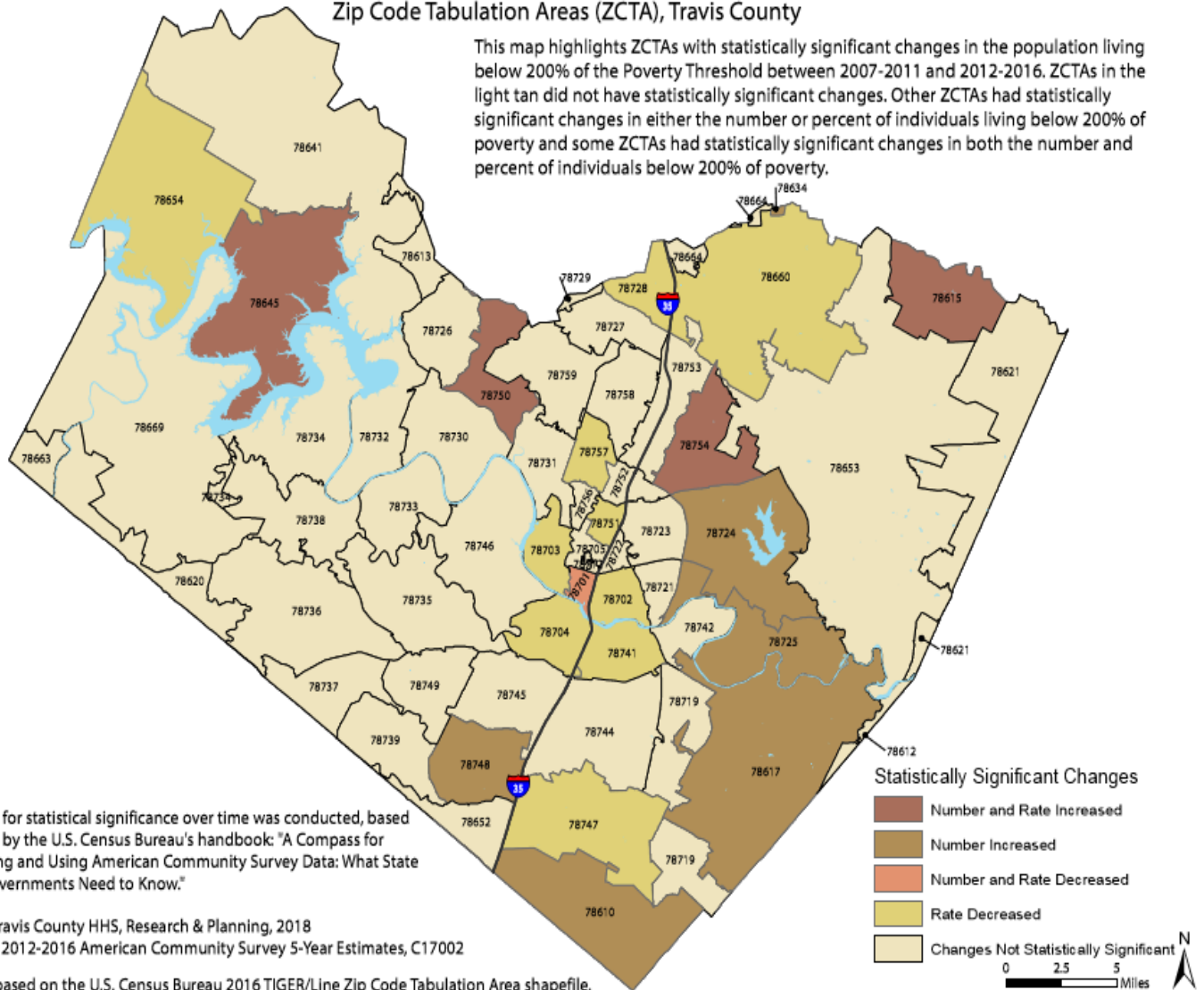
**Poverty Rate Changes.** Changes in the number and rate of people living under poverty indicate that it is shifting away from the urban core, or in other words, moving to the suburban areas. The areas with statistically significant increases, both in terms of the number and rate of poverty, were all located outside the urban core. Half of the areas that experienced decreases in the rate of poverty surround downtown Austin.<sup>43</sup>

### ZCTAs with Statistically Significant Changes between 2007-2011 & 2012-2016

Individuals Living Below 200% of the Poverty Threshold

Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTA), Travis County

This map highlights ZCTAs with statistically significant changes in the population living below 200% of the Poverty Threshold between 2007-2011 and 2012-2016. ZCTAs in the light tan did not have statistically significant changes. Other ZCTAs had statistically significant changes in either the number or percent of individuals living below 200% of poverty and some ZCTAs had statistically significant changes in both the number and percent of individuals below 200% of poverty.



Note: Testing for statistical significance over time was conducted, based on guidance by the U.S. Census Bureau's handbook: "A Compass for Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What State and Local Governments Need to Know."

Created by Travis County HHS, Research & Planning, 2018

Source data: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C17002

This map is based on the U.S. Census Bureau 2016 TIGER/Line Zip Code Tabulation Area shapefile.

<sup>43</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning Division. (2018, April). *Travis County poverty brief*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/travis-county-poverty-brief-2018.pdf](https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/travis-county-poverty-brief-2018.pdf)



## Asset Poverty

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*"Many of our clients are just one crisis away from poverty." -Workgroup Participant*

Asset building opportunities help individuals and families establish a safety net in case of a crisis, such as a change in health status, loss of employment, or divorce. A safety net also helps families financially manage more positive changes such as the birth of new child or retirement. All households benefit from establishing a kind of savings plan should their circumstances change. The social service system has been known to function as a safety net, helping households lacking a safety net from spiraling into poverty.

Financial assets are resources that are invested in property or saved in accounts that can earn interest. The most common type of assets for all family types and backgrounds is a personal vehicle. Other types of assets include a savings account, retirement accounts (e.g. IRAs and 401(k) plans), owning a business, or shares in equity.

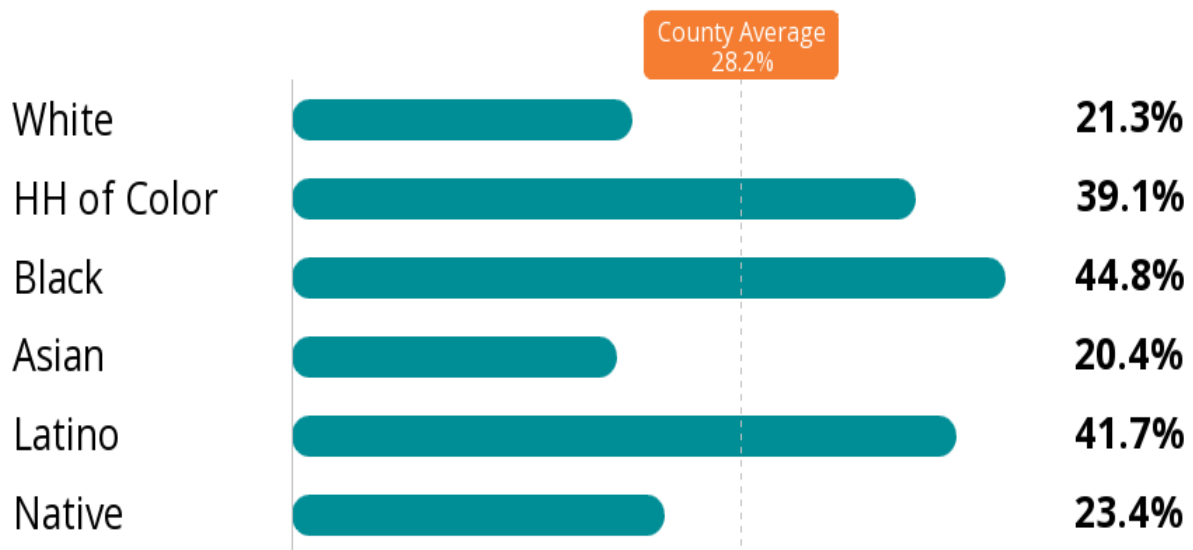
Assets, or an individual's investments, have the potential of yielding more earnings when larger investments are made over longer periods of time. Naturally, higher income households have greater opportunities to generate higher returns on accumulated investments for their families. Moderate to low-income families are constrained to fewer asset building opportunities because of the smaller sum of money available to them and the limited access to banking options.

This section provides an overview of the financial assets and banking access in Travis County. These indicators are relevant because they represent opportunities for families to achieve financial stability, while also promoting intergenerational economic mobility for their children.

**Asset Poverty.** Despite decreases in income poverty rates, asset poverty rates continue to touch large swaths of the Travis County population. Asset poverty reflects a household that lacks the financial assets to cover at least three months of living expenses in case of loss of income. Asset poverty has ramifications for children of color as well. Children can either inherit wealth or poverty along with the other associated racial and ethnic disadvantages documented throughout the report.

At least 28 percent of Travis County residents are asset poor, and the rate is higher for households of color, according to estimates reported by Prosperity Now Scorecard.<sup>44</sup> Nearly 40 percent of all households of color are asset poor. The chart below illustrates the percentage of households in Travis County without sufficient net worth to subsist at the poverty level for three months in the absence of income.

## Asset Poverty Rate in Travis County, TX



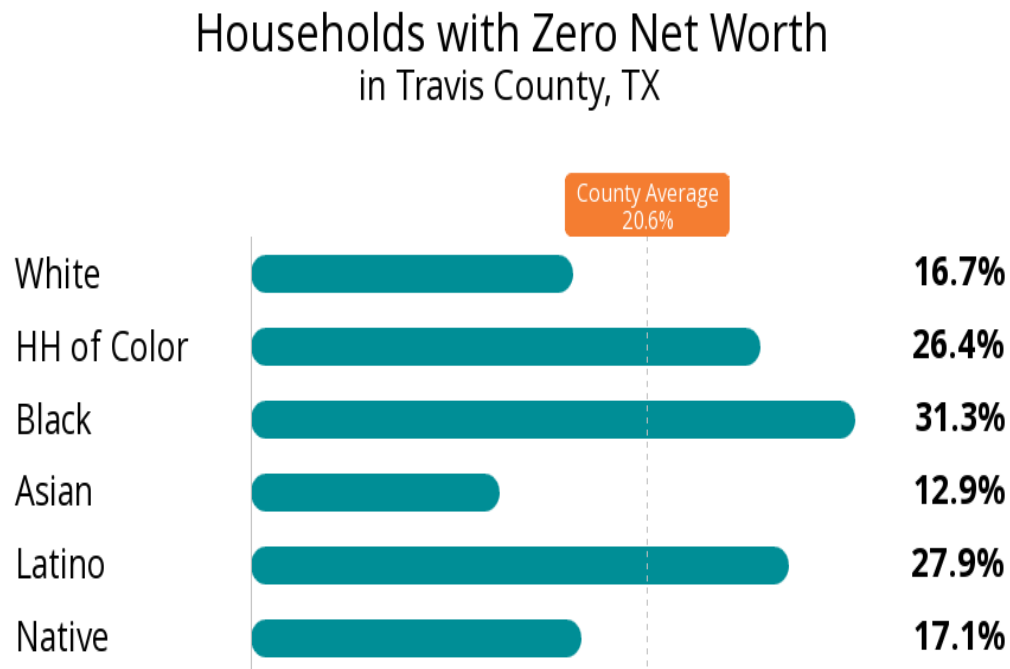
PROSPERITY NOW  
SCORECARD

Source: Prosperity Now Estimates Using SIPP and ACS, 2013

<sup>44</sup> Prosperity Now. (2018). Scorecard (version 2018.04.02) [data hub]. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <http://scorecard.prosperitynow.org/data-by-location#county/48453>



**More Debt than Income.** Nearly one-fifth of all households in Travis County have zero or a negative net worth.<sup>45</sup> Net worth is calculated as the gross assets minus liabilities such as debt. The chart below illustrates the households who owe more than they earn.



PROSPERITY NOW  
SCORECARD

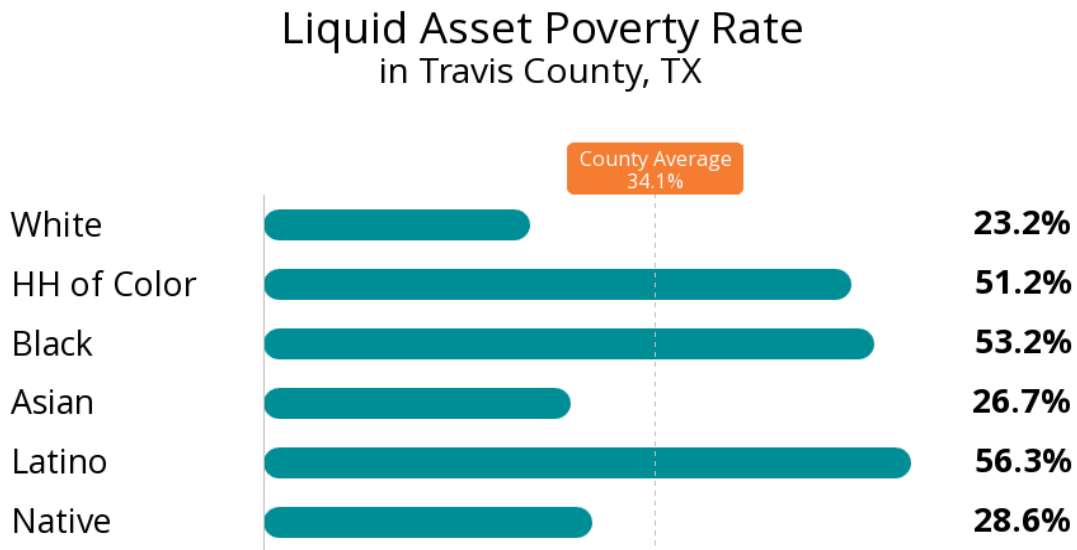
Source: Prosperity Now Estimates Using SIPP and ACS, 2013

**Households Lacking Savings.** Liquid assets are sources of readily available cash, namely a savings account. While over 34 percent of all Travis County households do not have savings, which is concerning, the liquid poverty rate for households of color is greater than 50 percent.<sup>46</sup> That is, without savings towards an emergency fund, more than 50 percent are in many ways are living paycheck to paycheck. If a household's circumstances do not remain constant and predictable, without other financial assets to tap into such as a vehicle or a home, that household is more vulnerable to spiraling into poverty.

<sup>45</sup> Prosperity Now. (2018). Scorecard (version 2018.04.02) [data hub]. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <http://scorecard.prosperitynow.org/data-by-location#county/48453>

<sup>46</sup> Prosperity Now. (2018). Scorecard (version 2018.04.02) [data hub]. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: <http://scorecard.prosperitynow.org/data-by-location#county/48453>

The chart below displays the percentage of households without sufficient savings to pay for at least three months of expenses.



PROSPERITY NOW  
SCORECARD

Source: Prosperity Now Estimates Using SIPP and ACS, 2013

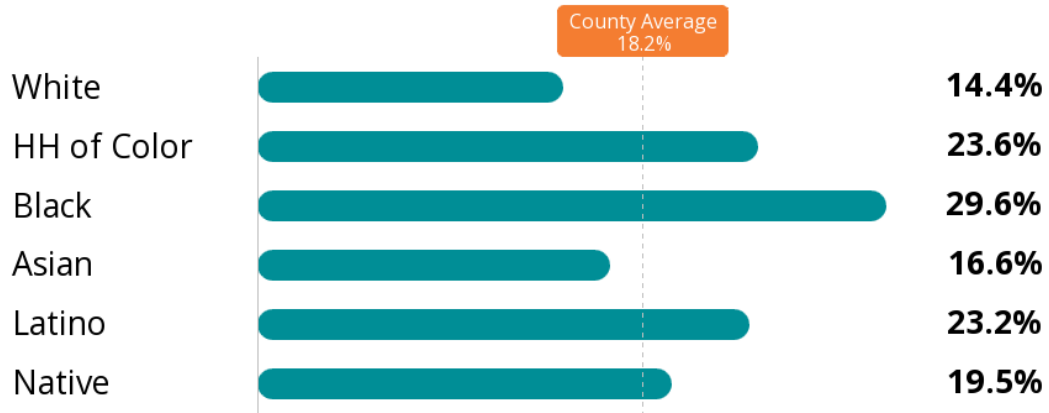
**Access to Financial Services.** Over half of survey respondents said getting a loan without using a pay day loan, title loan or pawn shop was a serious need. Respondents also expressed needing help with investing in their children’s college education and starting a business.

*“Acceso a prestamos para personas queriendo emprender un negocio y [ayudar con] a padres indocumentados con hijos en la Universidad/ Access to loans for people wanting to start a business and help undocumented parents with children in college.”*

Consistent with the survey results, Prosperity Now Scorecard estimated that a greater proportion of households of color use non-bank alternatives. These non-bank alternatives are generally found in neighborhoods where more people of color live, and their services are often more expensive than at a traditional bank.<sup>47</sup> The chart below illustrates the percentage of households that have a checking and/or a savings account and have used non-bank alternatives to meet their credit and financial needs in the last 12 months as of 2015.

<sup>47</sup> Graves. S.M. (2003). Landscapes of predation, landscapes of neglect: A location analysis of payday lenders and banks. *The Professional Geographer*, 55(3), 303-3017.

## Underbanked Households in Travis County, TX

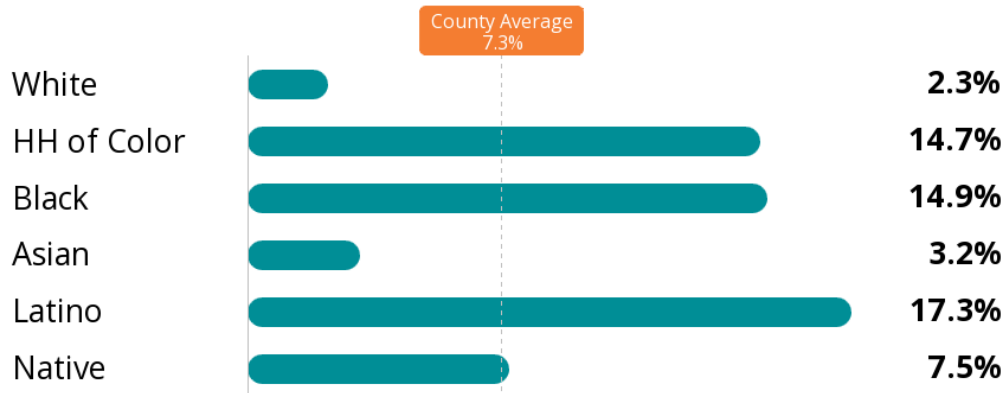


PROSPERITY NOW  
SCORECARD

Source: Prosperity Now Estimates Using FDIC and ACS, 2015

The chart below displays the disproportionate percentage of households without a checking or savings account, based on 2015 data.

## Unbanked Households in Travis County, TX



PROSPERITY NOW  
SCORECARD

Source: Prosperity Now Estimates Using FDIC and ACS, 2015

## Infrastructure

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Infrastructure reflects the physical structures (e.g. roads, health care facilities, recreational centers, grocery stores) built in a neighborhood. Two themes relative to infrastructure needs emerged during the outreach process of the assessment. First, more mobility options are needed to help people reach social and economic opportunities located outside of low-income neighborhoods. Jobs, educational opportunities, and social services are in places where low-income people generally do not live. Second, more services located within low-income neighborhoods are needed.

*"Access to transportation...to work, to the clinic, and circular routes to the grocery store. If you give me a bus that runs every 15 minutes, but it goes way across town and I have take two buses to get to the market and wait another 30 minutes to get home--that does not help me." --Interview Participant*

### Transit Mobility and Equity

Transportation costs, typically a household's second-largest expenditure after housing costs, are largely a function of the characteristics of the neighborhood in which a household lives. The population that is increasingly moving away from the areas of concentrated economic and educational opportunities, will need to own more vehicles and rely upon driving them farther distances, increasing their cost of living.

There are over 610,000 commuters in Travis County—the clear majority drive alone during their commute (75%).<sup>48</sup> Since 2011, that percentage has increased from 71 percent to 74 percent in 2014.<sup>49</sup> Vehicle ownership costs Austin residents an estimated \$12,481 a year, and costs slightly more in the outlying areas.<sup>50</sup> A regional typical household will spend 20 percent of their monthly income towards transportation, which is more than the 15 percent recommended for transportation.<sup>51</sup> It is also nearly all the income for a person living under poverty, based on the 2016 poverty threshold of \$12,486.<sup>52</sup>

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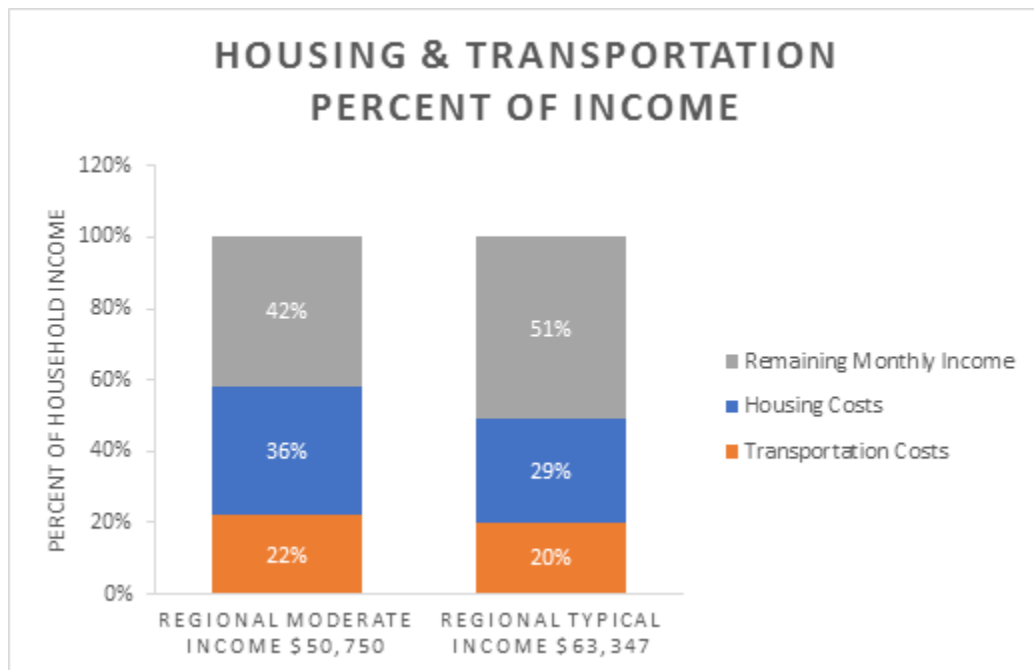
<sup>48</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: County

<sup>49</sup> Community Advancement Network, Dashboard (2017). *Key socioeconomic indicators for Greater Austin and Travis County*. Retrieved from <http://canatx.org/dashboard/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017-CAN-Dashboard-FINAL-FOR-WEB-9.21.17.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> Center for Neighborhood Technology (2003-2018). Housing + Transportation Affordability Index. [Location efficiency tool]. Retrieved from: <https://dev.htaindex.cnt.org/map/>

<sup>51</sup> Center for Neighborhood Technology (2003-2018). Housing + Transportation Affordability Index. [Location efficiency tool]. Retrieved from: <https://dev.htaindex.cnt.org/map/>

<sup>52</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning Division. (2018, April). *Travis County poverty brief*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/travis-county-poverty-brief-2018.pdf](https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/travis-county-poverty-brief-2018.pdf)



Data source: Center for Neighborhood Technology. Housing + Transportation Affordability Index

Public transit is a more affordable option. Capital Metro, the local public transit system, offers a monthly pass that costs \$41.25 and a reduced fare to qualified riders.<sup>53</sup> However, as noted by the interview participant quoted above, unless public transit is frequent, reliable, accessible and easy to navigate, many residents will not consider it a viable option.

The chart below illustrates transportation patterns of workers in Travis County. Only 3 percent of workers use public transit. Capital Metro, the local public transit system, reported ridership was down 5.4 percent from March 2017 to March 2018.<sup>54</sup> In fact, more people will drive more than an hour each way (5.78%) than will take public transit (3.3%).<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority. *Our fares*. Retrieved from Capital Metro website.

<sup>54</sup> Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority. (2018, March) *Monthly ridership report*. Retrieved from: [https://www.capmetro.org/uploadedFiles/New2016/About\\_Capital\\_Metro/Data\\_and\\_Statistics/2018-03-Monthly-Ridership-Web-Report.pdf](https://www.capmetro.org/uploadedFiles/New2016/About_Capital_Metro/Data_and_Statistics/2018-03-Monthly-Ridership-Web-Report.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Report Area	Workers 16 and Up	Percent Drive Alone	Percent Carpool	Percent Public Transportation	Percent Bicycle or Walk	Percent Taxi or Other	Percent Work at Home
Travis County, TX	612,192	74.4%	9.8%	3.3%	3.1%	1.4%	8%
Texas	12,237,558	80.3%	10.6%	1.5%	1.9%	1.4%	4.3%
United States	145,861,221	76.4%	9.3%	5.1%	3.4%	1.2%	4.6%
Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: County							

While public transit is a significantly more affordable mobility option, compared to car ownership, it is no longer an attractive mode of transportation when accessibility and reliability are considered. The Greenlight Institute describes transportation as accessible if it is physically available near people’s homes and easy to navigate, regardless of physical capabilities or cultural and linguistic differences.<sup>56</sup>

As the quote below poignantly describes, public transit is not an option accessible to everyone. The aging population, for example, cannot reach the locations either because of a disability or because their working caregivers cannot drive them to the bus stop.

*“The [Vietnamese] elders need transportation, they want to get out and do something healthy...during the day the grandchildren go to school, and their children go to work. They are alone, and that can be depressing. The bus only comes to a particular location to pick up a group of people, but the elders cannot get to that particular location. That service is not working well.” –interview participant*

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<sup>56</sup> Creger, H., Espino, J., & Sanchez, A.S. (2018). *Mobility equity framework: How to make transportation work for people*. Oakland, CA. Retrieved from: <http://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Mobility-Equity-Framework-Final.pdf>

## Digital Inclusion

Information technology has in some ways replaced the need to reach a physical destination, similarly the social service navigation system has become digital. Digital capabilities have the potential to expand outreach and improve access, but virtual access cannot replace the physical access for all. Access to devices with the capability to connect to the World Wide Web needs to be addressed in conjunction with increasing internet service.

While access to broadband internet is higher than the state and national average, internet use varies among geographic location.<sup>57</sup> An assessment on access to technology resources and literacy was conducted in 2011 and 2014.<sup>58</sup> Based on survey results from 2014, it found in areas like Del Valle, 35 percent of survey respondents did not have internet access at home, and residents in southeast Austin (78741), where more than 50 percent of individuals live below 200 percent below poverty, nearly a quarter lack internet access and a personal computer.<sup>59</sup> Approximately 55,000 people in Austin do not use the internet. Nearly half indicated it was not relevant to meeting their needs, and 3 out of every 5 internet non-users reported that it was cost-prohibitive.

Like any mode of transportation, the quality of the infrastructure (e.g. reliability, speed, and cost) are factors considered by the client as they experience the social service navigation system. In-person assistance is still the preferred mechanism for connecting with services according to community feedback.

### Infrastructure - Broadband Access

The table below reports the percentage of population with access to high-speed internet. This data source represents both wireline and wireless internet providers. This indicator is important because access to technology opens opportunities for employment and education.

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<sup>57</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: National Broadband Map. 2014. Source geography: County

<sup>58</sup> Straubhaar, J., Chen, W., Spence, J., Correa, J., & Machado-Spence, N. (2011). *The Austin internet and citizens project*. University of Texas-Austin. Retrieved from: [http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Telecommunications/The\\_Austin\\_Internet\\_and\\_Global\\_Citizens\\_Project.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Telecommunications/The_Austin_Internet_and_Global_Citizens_Project.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> City of Austin Data Portal. *2014 Austin digital assessment individual answers*. [Dataset]. Retrieved from: <https://data.austintexas.gov/City-Government/2014-Austin-Digital-Assessment-Individual-Response/xp28-5kft>

### Percentage of Population with Access to Broadband Internet (DL Speeds > 25MBPS)

Report Area	Total Population (2014)	Access to DL Speeds > 6MBPS	Access to DL Speeds > 10MBPS	Access to DL Speeds > 25MBPS
Travis County, TX	1,150,996	100%	100%	88.18%
Texas	26,979,078	99.77%	99.58%	65.75%
United States	322,610,903	99.42%	99.24%	86.71
Data Source: National Broadband Map. 2014. Source geography: County				

### Internet Use by Zip Code

Report Area	Internet Users	Non Internet Users	Home Internet Access	Smartphone Usage Rates	PC (LAPTOP AND/OR DESKTOP) OWNERSHIP
78747	63%	37%	94%	96%	98%
78721	76%	24%	88%	52%	88%
78702	80%	20%	81%	83%	73%
78745	80%	20%	90%	85%	90%
78741	82%	18%	76%	85%	76%
78751	84%	16%	83%	72%	84%
78736	86%	14%	100%	83%	100%
78617	88%	13%	65%	73%	69%
78744	88%	12%	91%	78%	83%
78754	92%	8%	100%	88%	100%
City of Austin, Data Portal, Data Source: 2014 Austin Digital Assessment					



## Healthy Food Access

The percent of the population with low food access in Travis County is higher than the rates for the State and the US. Approximately, three in ten Travis County residents live in areas with low food access, or in other words are far from a supermarket or large grocery store.<sup>60</sup> Residents living in low food access areas must drive to purchase groceries. Public transit to grocery stores is a need discussed above and might not seem to be a reliable mobility option to people with limited financial and time resources.

Report Area	Total Population	Population with Low Food Access	Percent Population with Low Food Access
Travis County	1,024,266	324,191	<b>31.65%</b>
Texas	25,145,561	6,807,728	27.07%
United States	308,745,538	69,266,771	22.43%

Note: This indicator is compared with the state average.  
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, [USDA - Food Access Research Atlas](#). 2015.  
Source geography: Tract

The map below displays the location of food deserts across Travis County based on conditions in 2015.<sup>61</sup> A food desert is defined as a low-access and low-income Census tract, where a substantial number or share of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store.<sup>62</sup> This indicator is relevant because it highlights populations and geographies facing food insecurity. The map illustrates the changes in where food deserts are located. New areas designated as food deserts are primarily in the outlying areas of Travis County.

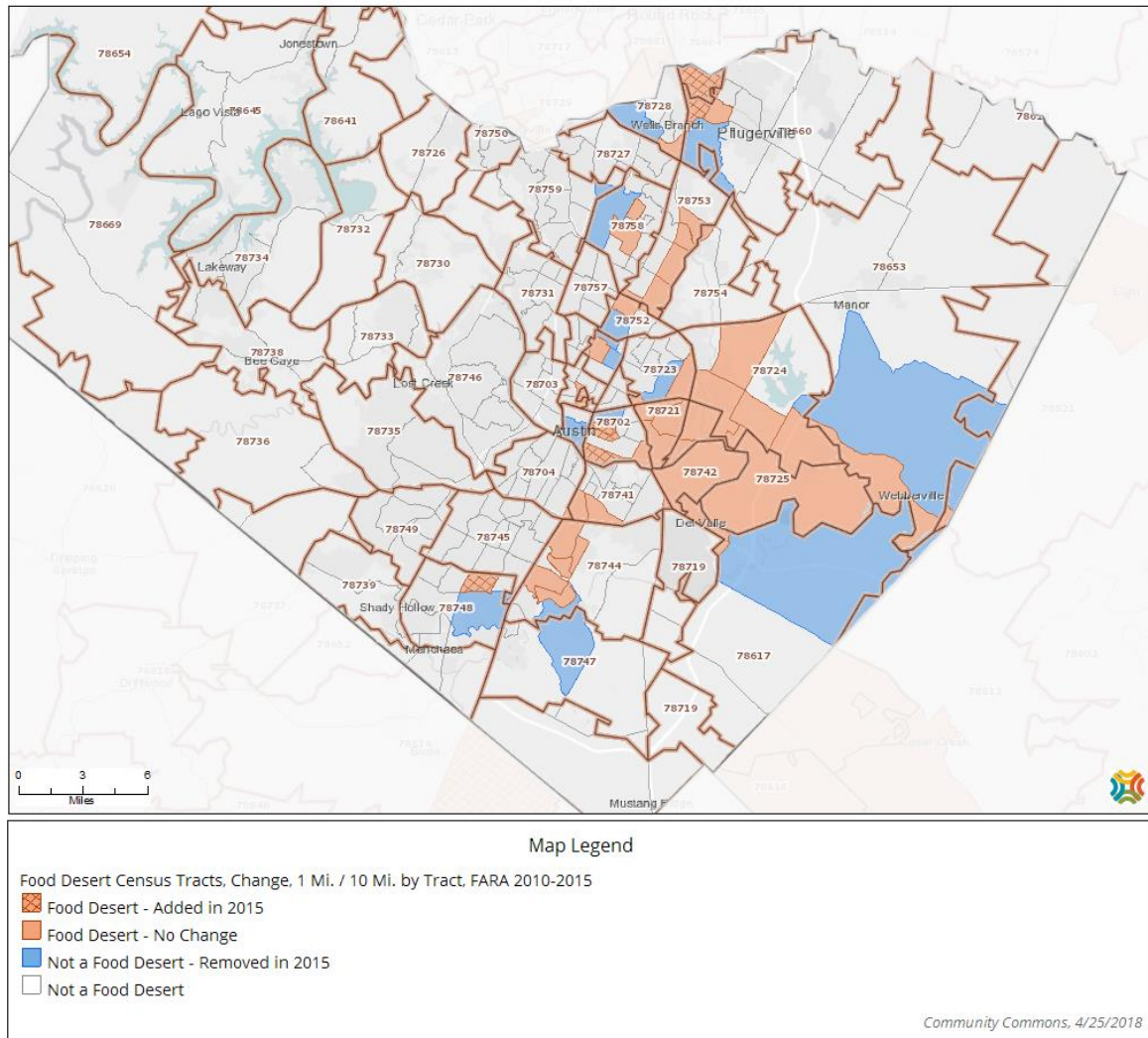
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<sup>60</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, [USDA - Food Access Research Atlas](#). 2015. Source geography: Tract

<sup>61</sup> Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, USDA - Food Access Research Atlas: 2010-2015

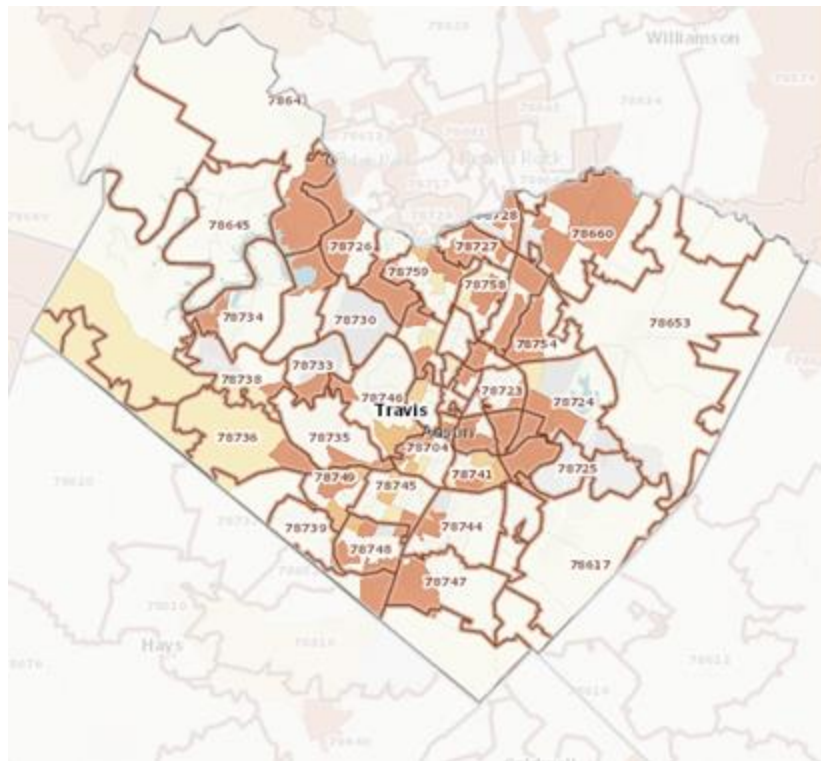
<sup>62</sup> United States Department of Agriculture; Economic Research Service. (2017). Documentation. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/documentation/>

Food Desert Change by Census Tract, 2010-2015



## Food Access- Population with No Vehicle

People lacking reliable transportation are particularly impacted by food insecurity. Almost 6% of households in Travis County do not own a vehicle, a total of 24,543 households.<sup>63</sup> Most households with no vehicle are renters.



## **Food Access – Lack of WIC-Authorized Food Stores**

This indicator reports the number of food stores and other retail establishments per 100,000 population that are authorized to accept WIC Program (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) benefits and that carry designated WIC foods and food categories.

Report Area	Total Population (2011 Estimate)	Number WIC-Authorized Food Stores	WIC-Authorized Food Store Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.)
Travis County, TX	1,063,141	64	6
Texas	25,733,170	2,357	9.1
United States	318,921,538	50,042	15.6

Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, USDA - Food Environment Atlas. 2011. Source geography: County

<sup>63</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Housing

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*"Where you live determines the type of schools you go to. Good schools are in good neighborhoods and give homework." - Focus Group Participant*

The impact of place on children's outcomes does not escape even the youngest residents of Austin. Youth participants in the assessment did not include housing specifically in their ranking, but prefaced the community's needs with the quote above. The educational prospects, and subsequent employment opportunities, are a result of the neighborhoods in which families can afford to live. Across data sources, all have ranked housing as the highest need. The needs specific to homeowners and renters varied, but overall "finding safe and affordable housing" was deemed as the most critical of all.

**Travis County Atypical Tenure Rates.** Travis County has attracted many people to move to the area, many of which rent. The tenure rates, or the type of residential occupancy (i.e. renter-occupied or homeowner-occupied) provide some insight into the demands of the housing market. In Travis County, 48 percent of all residential units are rented (210,241 households), and 52 percent are occupied by the homeowner (437,831 households).<sup>64</sup> These tenure percentages, or homeowner and renter percentages, are not typical of national tenure patterns and likely reflect the increasingly more expensive cost of homeownership. For example, in 2016, homeowners comprised about 64 percent of households in the United States, and only 36 percent were renters.<sup>65</sup>

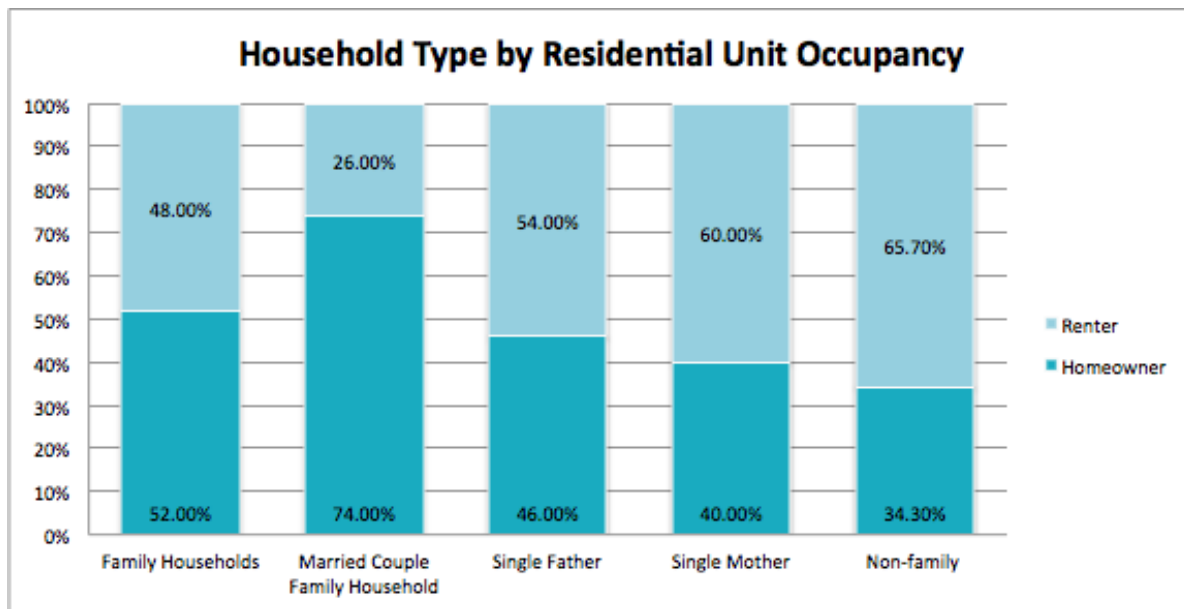
The chart below illustrates the tenure rates by family composition. Family households are slightly more likely to be homeowners than non-family households. Most families with two parents lived in their own home (74%).<sup>66</sup> In contrast, single parent householders were more likely to be renters.

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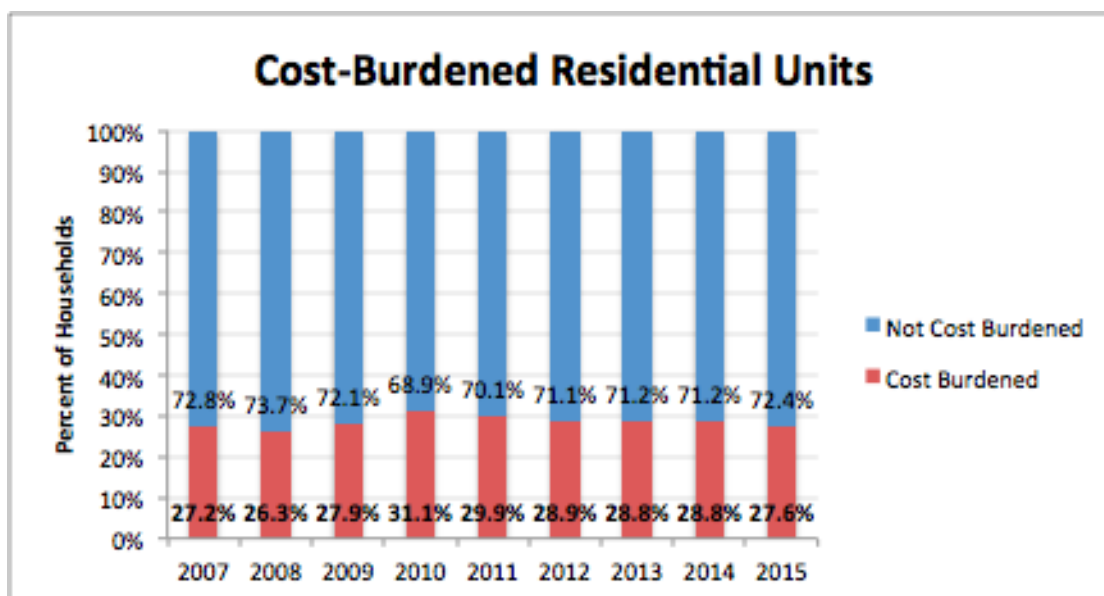
<sup>64</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

<sup>65</sup> 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

<sup>66</sup> Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1101



Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1101



Created by: City of Austin, Open Data Portal, Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2011-2015 5-Year Estimate

**Affordable Housing Needs.** Affordability is typically measured by comparing housing costs to the total household income. Households are cost burdened if costs exceed 30 percent of their monthly income. Based on 2012 to 2016 ACS 5-year Estimates, 35 percent of households or about 156,000 households were cost-burdened.<sup>67</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research and Planning Division reported renters, more than homeowners, were impacted by affordability issues.

<sup>67</sup> Community Commons, 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Nearly half of renters are cost-burdened, and 21 percent are severely cost-burdened, or spend more than half of their monthly income on rent. Comparatively, 22 percent of homeowners are cost-burdened.<sup>68</sup>

The table below shows the percentage of households by tenure that are cost burdened. Cost burdened rental households represented 47.32 percent of all the rental households in Travis County. The data for this indicator is only reported for households where tenure, household housing costs, and income earned was identified in the American Community Survey.

Report Area	Number of Rental Households	Percent of cost-burdened renters	Number of Owner Households (w/ mortgage)	Percentage of cost-burdened Owners (w/ mortgage)	Number of Owner Households (No Mortgage)	Percentage of cost-burdened Owner Households (No Mortgages)
Travis County	210,241	<b>47.32%</b>	160,646	29.12%	66,944	<b>14.55%</b>
Texas	3,542,096	44.35%	3,389,912	27.23%	2,357,546	12.45%
United States	42,835,169	47.27%	48,016,540	30.62%	26,864,528	14.04%

Created by Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Note: Data for this indicator is only reported for households where tenure, household housing costs, and income earned was identified in the American Community Survey

## Homeowners' Needs

**Steep and Rapid Increases in Housing Price.** A recent report on housing conditions pointed to the growth in population and low housing supply as factors in the steep and rapid increases in housing prices. The vacancy rate (7.78%) in Travis County is well below Texas (11%) and the United States (12%).<sup>69</sup> The influx of people that once were concentrating in the central and areas surrounding near downtown Austin is now showing patterns of high migration rates in the outlying counties, or suburbs, as evidenced by the higher rates of population growth in Georgetown, Cedar Park, Round Rock, and Pflugerville. Nonetheless, the housing market in Austin continues to grow and break records year after year both in terms of sales volume and

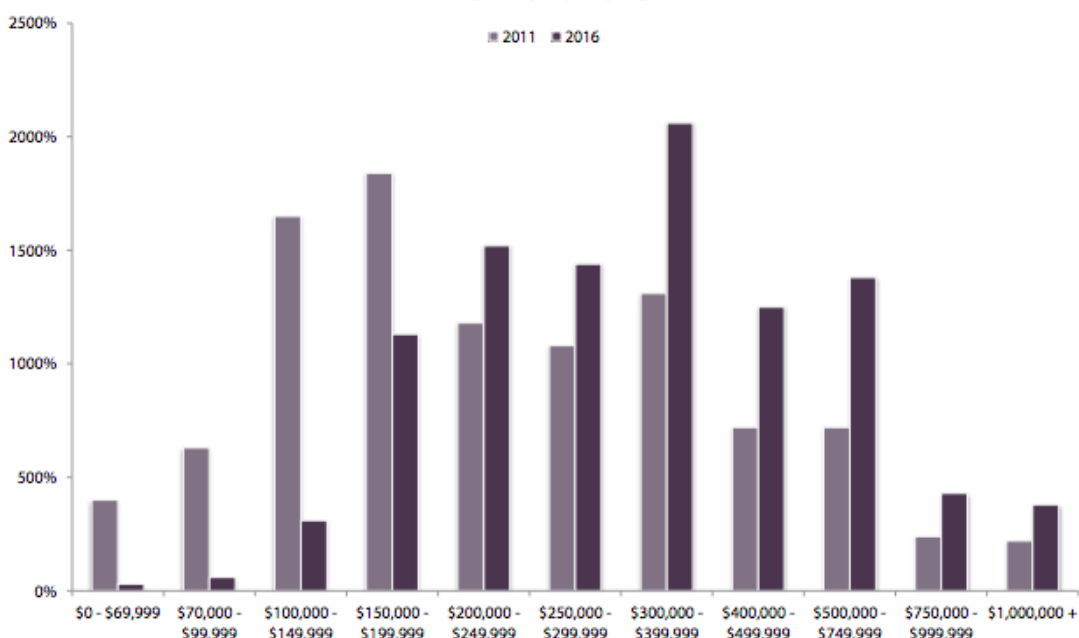
<sup>68</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning. (2018). *Housing continuum, F7 2017 community impact report*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/cir-2017/housing\\_continuum.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/cir-2017/housing_continuum.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

median value of family homes. In 2017, the median family home price sold at a record-breaking \$362,000 and more than 9,000 sales were made in one month.<sup>70</sup>

Moderate and low-income families are increasingly priced out from buying homes. Between 2011 and 2017, the Travis County median home price rose by 50 percent and the average home price rose by 46 percent.<sup>71</sup> The chart below illustrates the price of homes sold in 2016 were mostly priced between \$300,000 and \$399,000, compared to the \$150,000 to \$199,000 price range in 2011—only 5 years prior. A nearly 50 percent increase in the cost of housing, compared to an increase of 9 percent in Median Family Income during that same period would force a family with moderate and low-incomes to make significant tradeoffs in order to save sufficiently for a home.<sup>72</sup> An increasingly expensive housing market would suggest that a family who postpones a home purchase would only make their financial goal unattainable.

**Price Distribution of Homes Sold in Travis County, TX  
2011 and 2016**



Created by: Travis County HHS, CDBG Office, 2017  
Source data: The Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University

<sup>70</sup> Austin Board of Realtors. (2018, January 18). December 2017 market report. [Market report]. Retrieved from: <https://www.abor.com/statsdec17/>

<sup>71</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning. (2018). *Housing continuum FY 2017 community impact report*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/cir-2017/housing\\_continuum.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/cir-2017/housing_continuum.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning. (2018). *Housing continuum FY 2017 community impact report*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/cir-2017/housing\\_continuum.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/cir-2017/housing_continuum.pdf)



**Skyrocketing Housing Costs: Taxes & Utilities.** In tandem with rising property values, property taxes have escalated. In 2017, the owner of an average Austin home paid \$7,607 in property taxes, \$517 more than the previous year.<sup>73</sup> Although rates might remain constant, the hike in property value still manages to increase taxes paid for homes.

Utilities also play a factor in housing affordability. Overall, prices for utilities have increased partially because of needs to finance the additional capital and infrastructure projects to keep up with the growing population demand. This is particularly concerning for low-income individuals and families displaced to areas outside of the City limits where electricity and water bills are likely more expensive. The Austin Energy Annual Report for fiscal year 2017 found that monthly bill averages for comparable electric utilities were less expensive than the state averages. Austin customers pay a monthly average of \$92 and state customers pay about \$129.<sup>74</sup> Not only do Austin Energy residential customers pay less for electricity than the state average, they also use less.

Water costs have dramatically increased over the years as well. Travis County HHS, Research and Planning Division, 2017 Housing Continuum Community Impact Report found that water rates have increased by 123 percent from 2000 to 2014.<sup>75</sup> In 2019, Austin Water Utility plans to increase water rates another 31 percent. Residents outside of the Austin Water Utility service area might be subjected higher water rates by the private water utilities companies growing in areas of Texas.<sup>76</sup>

**Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Homeownership** The disparity in homeownership accounts for much of the racial/ethnic wealth divide. Studies have suggested that the leading contributor to

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<sup>73</sup> Taboada, M. B., Huber, M., & Osborn, C. (2017, October 17). Average Austin property tax bill hits \$7,600, up \$517 from last year. *The Austin American-Statesman*. Retrieved from <https://www.mystatesman.com/news/local/average-austin-property-tax-bill-hits-600-517-from-last-year/esmlWxSwzgnZiCxDWuhSwM/>

<sup>74</sup> Austin Energy. (2017). *Austin Energy annual report FY 2017*. Retrieved from: <https://austinenenergy.com/wcm/connect/2bf5363c-0e64-48eb-8e70-10d536a9d18a/2017corporate-annual-report.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mdGThZV&CVID=mdGThZV&CVID=mdGThZV&CVID=mdGThZV&CVID=mc8Nnq2>

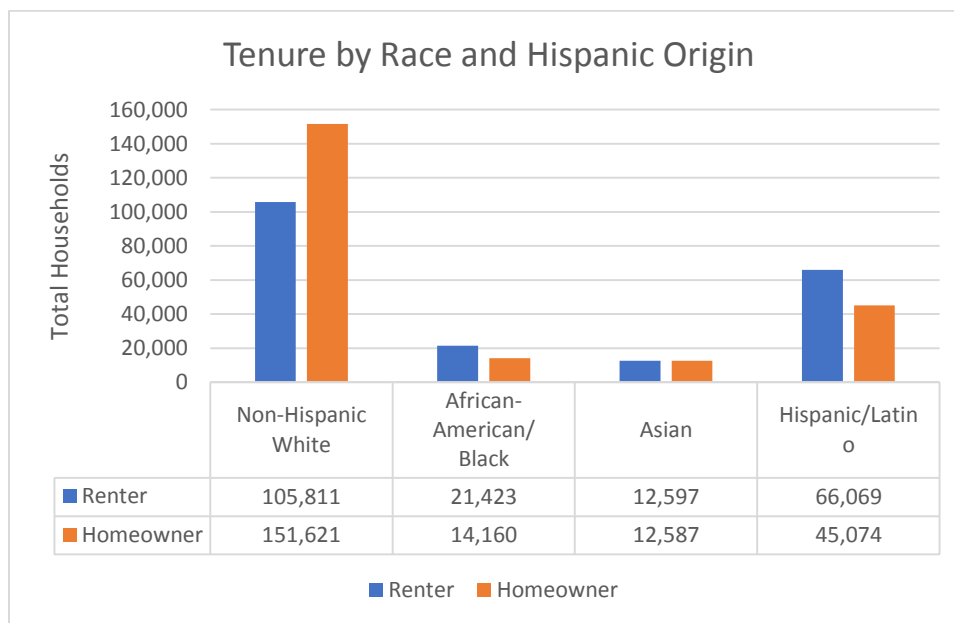
<sup>75</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning. (2018). *Housing continuum FY 2017 community impact report*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/cir-2017/housing\\_continuum.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/cir-2017/housing_continuum.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> Dexheimer, E. (2016, October 14). Growth of large private water companies brings higher water rates, little recourse for consumers. *The Austin American- Statesman*. Retrieved from: <https://www.statesman.com/news/special-reports/growth-large-private-water-companies-brings-higher-water-rates-little-recourse-for-consumers/rVA2nmHLJwllHaE6RwjEsK/>



the wealth divide is due to the number of years of homeownership.<sup>77</sup> Both national and local county data indicate homeowners of color are disproportionately underrepresented.

During the first quarter of 2018, the national homeownership rate for non-Hispanic White householders was the highest at 72.4 percent. Homeownership rates reported for Black/African American householders was the lowest at 42.2 percent and rates for Latino/Hispanic at 48.4 percent.<sup>78</sup> In Travis County, homeownership rates are lower than national trends. However, more non-Hispanic White householders were homeowners than African-American/ Black (40%) and Latinos/ Hispanic householders (41%).<sup>79</sup>



Data source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Tables B25003H, B25003B, B25003D, B25003I

**Housing Cost Relief: Refinancing Loan Products.** Homeowners aiming to reduce monthly housing costs have the option of applying for a loan to refinance their mortgage. However, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data suggests that residents in east Austin receive a higher proportion of loan denials than in other portions of the city. Based on 2016 HMDA reports, the top two reasons for denials are the applicant's debt-to-income ratio and credit history. The percentage of loan denials due to debt-to-income ratios was similar among white

<sup>77</sup> Urban Institute. (2015). *Housing policy levers to promote economic mobility*. Retrieved from: <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000428-Housing-Policy-Levers-to-Promote-Economic-Mobility.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2018, April). *Quarterly residential vacancies and homeownership during first quarter 2018*. (Release number: CB18-57). Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/files/currenthvspress.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> Data source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, B25003H, B25003B, B25003D, B25003I

applicants and applicants of color (about 29%).<sup>80</sup> With respect to credit history, however, the difference between white applicants and applicants of color is striking. Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino applicants had a greater proportion of their applications denied due to credit history, (31% and 30% respectively). Only 18 percent of applications of non-Hispanic Whites were not approved because of credit issues.<sup>81</sup>

Survey respondents indicated a need for financial counseling and expressed feeling confused about the process. Workshops aimed to assist homeowners with the loan application process and secure a more affordable and stable mortgage were specified as money management needs.

*"Uno paga mas cuando quiere refinanciar su casa porque no sabe. One pays more when you refinance your home because we don't know how [refinancing process]." --Survey participant*

## **Home Repairs**

After housing affordability, the next highest need identified by homeowners was home repairs. However, there is a lack of sources that measure the need for home repairs. The 2014 Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis referenced the results from their survey. It found that 72% of homeowners and 66% of renters reported that their home needed some sort of repair.<sup>82</sup> Consistent with this information, the CSBG survey found that homeowners ranked needs for home repairs higher than renters. Both homeowners and renters identified finding affordable and safe housing as the most critical need as it relates to housing.

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<sup>80</sup> Home Mortgage Disclosure Act. (2016) Table 8-3 Refinancing Denials. Retrieved from: <https://www.ffiec.gov/hmdaadwebreport/AggTableList.aspx>

<sup>81</sup> Home Mortgage Disclosure Act. (2016) Table 8-3 Refinancing Denials. Retrieved from: <https://www.ffiec.gov/hmdaadwebreport/AggTableList.aspx>

<sup>82</sup> City of Austin, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development. (2014). *Comprehensive housing market analysis*. Retrieved from [https://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/NHCD/2014\\_Comprehensive\\_Housing\\_Market\\_Analysis\\_-\\_Document\\_reduced\\_for\\_web.pdf](https://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/NHCD/2014_Comprehensive_Housing_Market_Analysis_-_Document_reduced_for_web.pdf)

## Renters' Needs

*"The housing situation is very expensive for people, regardless of their immigration status. The situation is very difficult because there is no quality housing. It is very expensive. They simply re-paint and remodel the same old apartments. The service to the community is bad because we do not have the voice to be heard and to have problems fixed. We have to put up with it." –Focus group participant*

**Steep and Rapid Increase in Rent.** The high occupancy rate has also contributed to increases in rent. The gross rent from 2011 to 2016 increased by nearly \$300 (\$918 and \$1,191 respectively).<sup>83</sup> Moreover, the high demand for housing magnifies competition among rental applicants, particularly people with poor credit, rental history, or criminal backgrounds. Applicants considered for a rental unit must meet stringent screening criteria. The most recognized lease form, the Texas Apartment Association Rental Application, asks for occupants' contact information, social security numbers, rental history, income, and criminal history. Even with the financial assistance of a housing voucher, applicants who do not meet the criteria contend with the possibility of becoming homeless or uprooting to find a more affordable neighborhood, region, or county.

**Substandard Housing.** Travis County has a higher rate of substandard housing units than both Texas and USA rates.<sup>84</sup> Renters are particularly subjected to substandard housing which impacts health outcomes for families and children. Survey respondents identified the need to know more about their legal rights as tenants. Participants in focus groups expressed a need for more responsive apartment management and landlords. They indicated that the extent of apartment repairs is cosmetic (e.g. wall painting) and fails to address more costly structure conditions (e.g. wall deterioration). The high demand for housing has provided little incentive to property management to improve residential units' conditions, and the general fear of retaliation is particularly salient in the immigrant community who said they feel they lack the recourse to advocate for safe housing conditions for their families.

The following chart reports the number and percentage of owner- and renter-occupied housing units having at least one of the following conditions: 1) lacking complete plumbing facilities, 2) lacking complete kitchen facilities, 3) with 1.01 or more occupants per room, 4) selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income greater than 30 percent, and 5) gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than 30 percent. Selected conditions provide information in assessing the quality of the housing inventory and its occupants. This data is used to easily identify homes where the quality of living and housing can be considered substandard.

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<sup>83</sup> Data Source: 2014, 2016 ACS 1-Year Estimates, Table B25064

<sup>84</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Report Area	Total Occupied Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units with One or More Substandard Conditions	Percent Occupied Housing Units with One or More Substandard Conditions
Travis County	437,831	161,820	36.96%
Texas	9,289,554	3,002,430	32.32%
United States	117,716,237	39,729,263	33.75%

Created by Community Commons, Note: This indicator is compared with the state average.

Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey, 2012-16](#). Source geography: Tract

**Social Connection.** Renters who frequently move may prevent families from developing durable long-lasting attachments to their neighborhoods. Low-income students changed campus during school year at higher rates (12%), comparatively only 4 percent of non-low-income students changed schools during the school year 2015-2016.<sup>85</sup> Results of the survey suggest that renters tended to live less time in the same neighborhood (less than 3 years) than homeowners (more than 16 years). Families new to a neighborhood are likely to be unfamiliar with local assets or, in cases where families uproot their lives to the outlying areas of Austin, become ineligible for social services available to residents of Travis County.

### Public Housing Needs

The Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) administers three federally subsidized programs. From 2016 to 2017, HACA provided housing to 18,656 people and rental vouchers for 6,100 residential units. Federal funds are left at the table, as 20 percent of families with vouchers must return the assistance due to high rents and the lack landlords who accept vouchers<sup>86</sup>

Currently, the Fair Housing Act and the Housing Choice Voucher Program, colloquially known as Section 8, has a waiting list of 1,200 families. More strikingly, over 28,500 families are on the HACA waiting list for public housing. The families on waiting lists are overwhelmingly cash-strapped, earning less than \$24,400 a year for a 4-person household as determined by HUD. A typical family of four waiting for public housing could afford a monthly gross rent of \$670 at most, but as recent trends have indicated would fall short \$513.

<sup>85</sup> Avery, R., Tidd, S., & Dominguez, S. (2017, April 7). Student Mobility and Chronic Absenteeism. Retrieved from: <http://e3alliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/E3-3D-Mobility-Chronic-Absence-040417.pdf>

<sup>86</sup> City of Austin FY 2016-2017 CAPER Report

	Number of families		Percent of total families	
	Public Housing	Housing Choice Voucher	Public Housing	Housing Choice Voucher
Waiting List Total	28,592	1210	--	--
Extremely low income (less than 30% AMI)	25617	992	90%	82%
Very low income (30-50% AMI)	2560	183	9%	15%
Low income (50-80% AMI)	363	30	1%	2%
Data Source: Housing Authority of the City of Austin, 2018 Public Housing Authority Annual Plan				

The City of Austin, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development office (NHCD) works closely with HACA in meeting some of the unmet housing needs. In 2016 to 2017, NHCD assisted over 3,500 families with housing needs.<sup>87</sup>

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Families Assisted				
Program	CDBG	HOME	ESG	HOPWA
White	649	51	1026	209
Black or African American	439	43	725	147
Asian	15	2	18	6
American Indian or American Native	3	0	21	3
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0	8	1
Other	20	2	138	0
Hispanic	392	40	396	97
Source: City of Austin, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office, FY 2016-2017, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report				

<sup>87</sup> City of Austin, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office (2017). FY 2016-2017 CAPER Report. Retrieved from [http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/FY\\_2016-17\\_CAPER\\_Final\\_\\_002\\_.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/FY_2016-17_CAPER_Final__002_.pdf)

Long waiting lists often frustrate and dishearten people trying to find affordable housing. A client experiencing homelessness explained the challenges of navigating the housing assistance system and expressed frustration with finding housing that he could afford on a fixed income.

*“They’re not making money off the homeless and disabled. When you need services they just hand out pamphlets and pay lip service.”*

## Homelessness

ECHO recently reported over 7,000 people experience homelessness every year in Travis County.<sup>88</sup> The population experiencing homelessness is diverse. The population can range from people who were incarcerated, representing at least a quarter of the homeless population, to families with children (11 percent).<sup>89</sup> According to Del Valle school staff, at least 150 students enrolled in Del Valle Independent School District were experiencing homelessness this school year, 2017-2018.

Homelessness is most visible in downtown Austin, but also in neighborhoods along I-35 such as St. John’s and Rundberg. An increasing number of the homeless population is dispersed across semi-rural and rural areas, challenging service providers to connect with the target population.

ECHO’s report also discusses the challenges in providing sufficient housing services. Emergency shelters are full on a nightly basis, as it has become difficult to transition people from the shelters into available housing. Faith-based organizations provide a brief respite for people while waiting for housing services and have access to resources separate from the greater network of service providers.

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<sup>88</sup> Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) (2018). *Austin’s Action Plan to End Homelessness* [Working Document].

<sup>89</sup> Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) (2018). *Austin’s Action Plan to End Homelessness* [Working Document].

## Education

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In the education section of the report, the indicators assessed begin with early childhood education, post-secondary, and finally adult basic education. These levels of education were selected because of their relevance to low-income families. While education from kindergarten to high school is certainly critical in creating a pathway to upward mobility, the goal of the section is to examine the educational opportunities that create free time to working families and assess young people's transition into post-secondary opportunities (e.g. vocational school, college, or labor force). Finally, adult basic education discusses the skills most critical for promoting greater social and economic integration.

### Early Childhood Education

Early education, or the years prior to kindergarten, has shown to have a positive impact on lower-income households and children's educational outcomes. As of 2016, there were more than 94,000 children under 6 years old in Travis County.<sup>90</sup> Educational programs also serve the dual purpose of meeting child care needs, which is an increasingly essential service as more women participate in the labor force and single parent households increase. At least 68,000 children live with a single parent.<sup>91</sup> This number does not reflect situations in which a child might live with a non-parent caregiver, such as a grandparent. Roughly 65 percent of children live with parents who both work.<sup>92</sup>

Child care costs are an expensive budget item for a family. Travis County, Research and Planning reported, costs for child care for a family with two children on average will pay \$1,003 a month in Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Area.<sup>93</sup> Head Start, Early Head Start, child care subsidies, and pre-kindergarten are some of the options available to low-income families. However, survey respondents indicated that child care was one of the least provided services in the community.

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<sup>90</sup> Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimate, S0901

<sup>91</sup> Kids Count Data Center. [Data hub]. Data Source: Census Bureau's Decennial Census, Summary File 4 (1990, 2000) and American Community Survey (5-year averages) for all other years. Retrieved from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/3059-children-in-single-parent-families?loc=45&loct=5#detailed/5/6741/false/1607,1572,1485,1376,1201,1074,1000,939,11,1/any/8192,8193>

<sup>92</sup> Travis County, Research and Planning Division, Child and Youth Development. (2017). *Community impact report*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/cir-2017/child\\_and\\_youth\\_development.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/cir-2017/child_and_youth_development.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning Division, (2017). *Child and youth development community impact report*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/cir-2017/child\\_and\\_youth\\_development.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/cir-2017/child_and_youth_development.pdf)

Respondents were asked to answer how well current services met various needs. According to the results, child care services were among the least offered in the community. More services were offered to meet housing, employment, education, health services, and basic needs. Indicators on the availability of Head Start facilities substantiates the community's feedback.

**Head Start.** Low-income families are eligible for Head Start, an early education program. However, the rate of programs available in Travis County is well below state and national average.<sup>94</sup> The indicator below reports the number and rate of Head Start program facilities per 10,000 children under age 5. Head Start facility data is acquired from the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) 2018 Head Start locator. Population data is from the 2010 US Decennial Census.

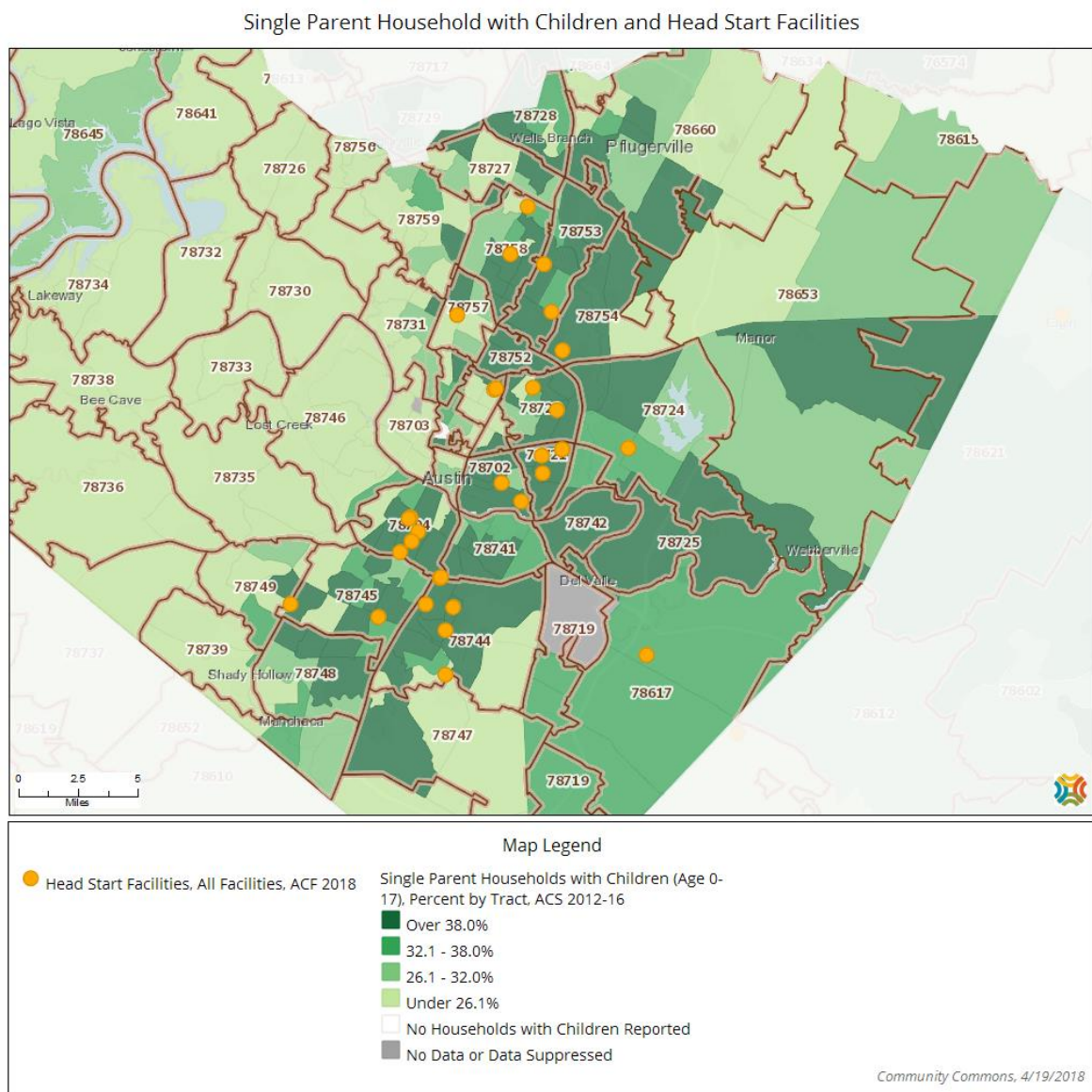
Report Area	Total Children Under Age 5	Total Head Start Programs	Head Start Programs, Rate (Per 10,000 Children)
Travis County, TX	75,774	31	3.3
Texas	1,928,473	1,219	5.02
United States	20,426,118	18,886	7.18
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Department of Health Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. 2018. Source geography: Point			

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<sup>94</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: US Department of Health Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. 2018. Source geography: Point



The map below illustrates the distribution of single parents. The darker color green indicates a higher percent of single parent householders. The yellow dots concentrated along I-35 identify all the Head Start facilities in Travis County. The map highlights areas such as 78724, where more than 38 percent of households are single parents have access to only one Head Start facility. It is also one of the top zip codes that called 211 requesting child care assistance in 2017, the highest volume of calls came from Dove Springs and Rundberg.<sup>95</sup>



<sup>95</sup> United Way for Greater Austin. (2018). 2017 Travis County 211 child care caller needs and zip codes . [Unpublished raw data].

## High School Education (9th-12th grade)

Quality education creates a path to upward mobility. Numerous studies indicate education and poverty status are strongly correlated. Individuals with lower educational attainment more likely to have income below poverty level. The higher educational level is attained the greater the chances of higher earnings.

Graduation rates have improved in Travis County and disparities across racial and ethnic groups have closed, according to Community Advancement Network's 2017 report.

**High School Graduation Rate (EdFacts).** Within the report area 92.9% of students are receiving their high school diploma within four years. Data represents the 2015-16 school year.

This indicator is relevant because research suggests education is one the strongest predictors of health ([Freudenberg Ruglis, 2007](#)).

Report Area	Average Freshman Base Enrollment	Estimated Number of Diplomas Issued	On-Time Graduation Rate
Travis County, TX	10,083	7,945	78.8
Texas	350,368	264,275	75.4
United States	4,024,345	3,039,015	75.5
<a href="#">HP 2020 Target</a>			> =82.4
Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NCES - Common Core of Data. 2008-09. Source geography: County			

## Population with No High School Diploma

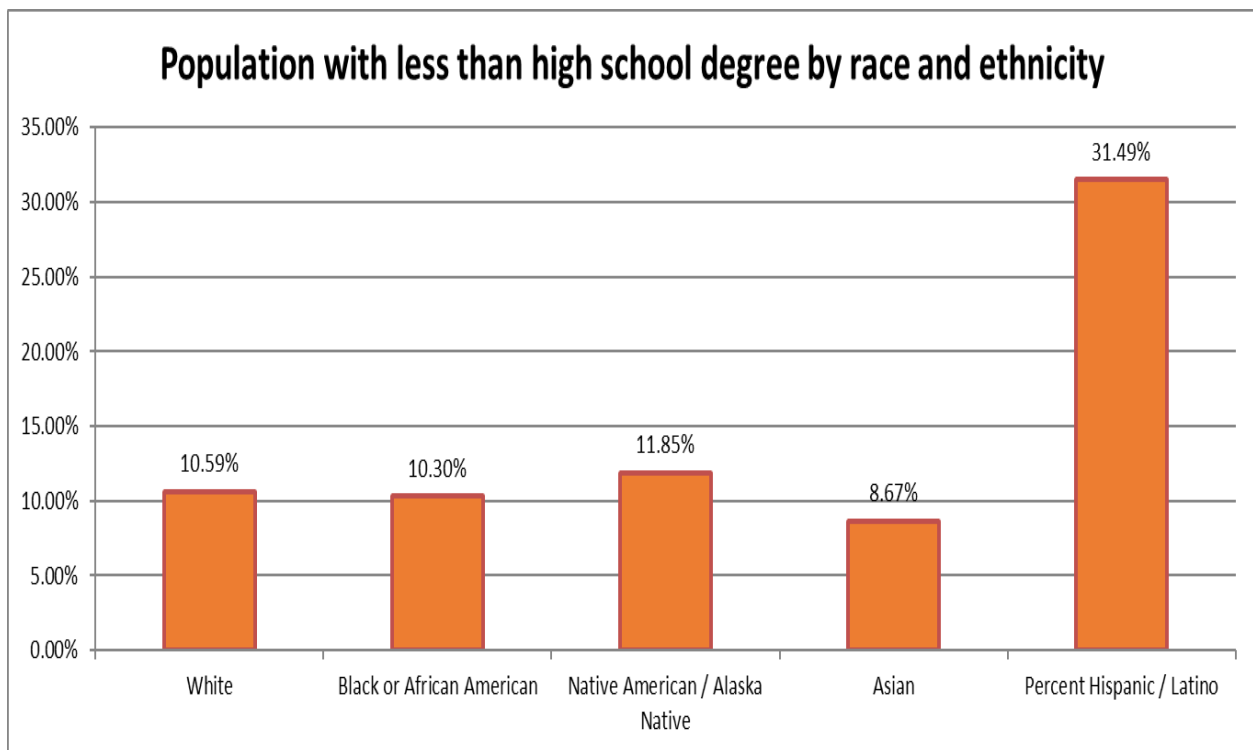
Within the report area there are 90,921 persons aged 25 and older without a high school diploma (or equivalency) or higher. This represents 11.84% of the total population aged 25 and older. This indicator is relevant because educational attainment is linked to positive health outcomes ([Freudenberg Ruglis, 2007](#)).

Report Area	Total Population Age 25	Population Age 25 with No High School Diploma	Percent Population Age 25 with No High School Diploma
Travis County, TX	767,787	90,921	11.84%
Texas	17,085,128	3,015,952	17.65%
United States	213,649,147	27,818,380	13.02%
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract			

## Population with No High School Diploma by Gender

Report Area	Total Male	Total Female	Percent Male	Percent Female
Travis County, TX	46,993	43,928	12.22%	11.46%
Texas	1,517,464	1,498,488	18.23%	17.11%
United States	14,145,422	13,672,958	13.72%	12.37%

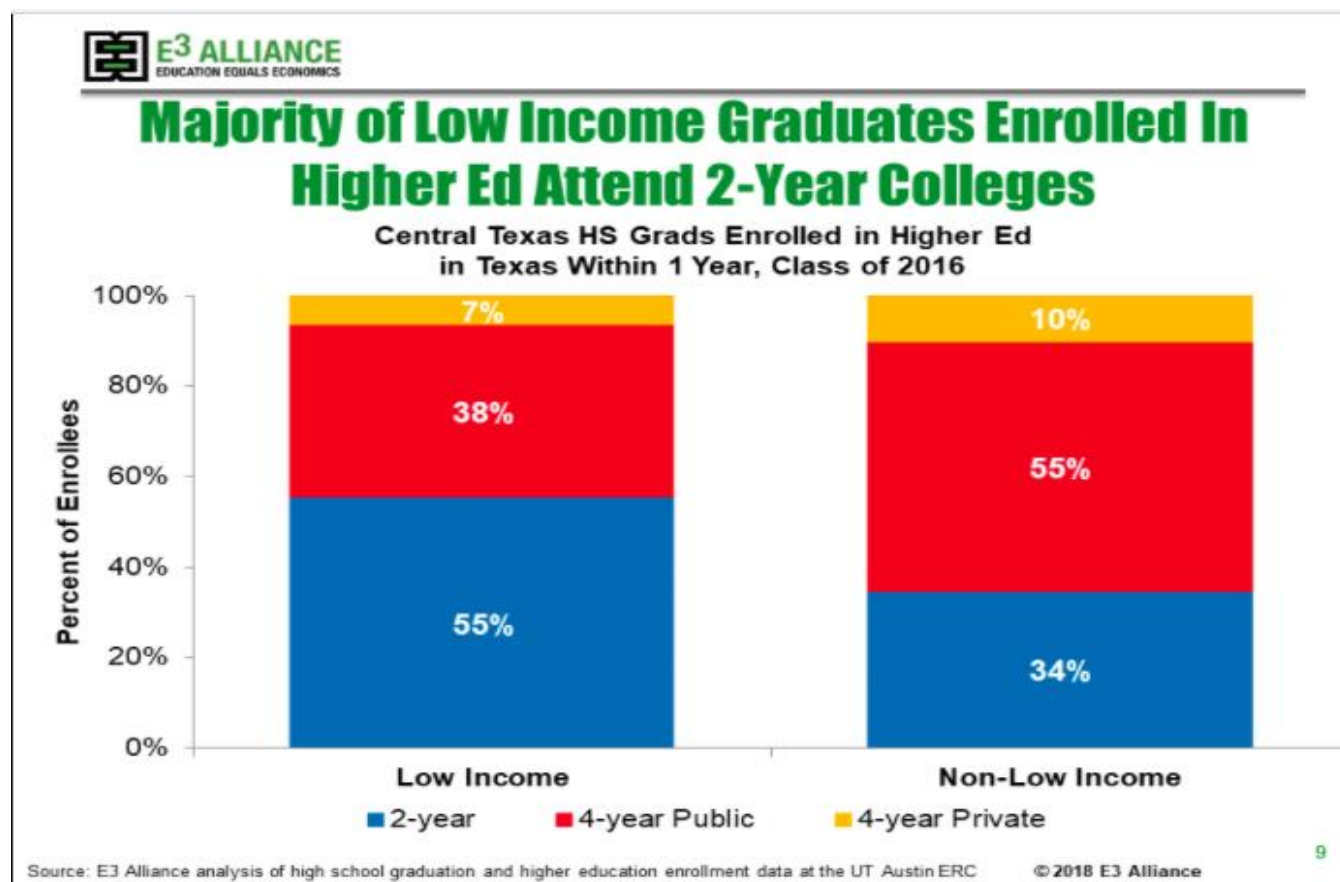
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract



Community Commons, Data source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

## Post-Secondary Education and Higher Education

In terms of high school data, graduation rates have improved in Travis County, there is still room for improvement particularly the type of higher education opportunities pursued. Over half of Central Texas graduates enroll in 2-year colleges, however the jobs that offer living wages typically require at least a Bachelor's degree. Yet, feedback from focus groups and interviews pointed to the need for apprenticeships and job skills training that is hands-on and geared towards the jobs that are available, specifically in the tech industry.



### Population with Bachelor's Degree or Higher

46.45% of the population aged 25 and older, or 356,611 have obtained an Bachelor's level degree or higher. This indicator is relevant because educational attainment has been linked to positive health outcomes and higher earnings.

Report Area	Total Population Age 25	Population Age 25 with Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Percent Population Age 25 with Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Travis County, TX	767,787	356,611	46.45%
Texas	17,085,128	4,800,677	28.1%
United States	213,649,147	64,767,787	30.32%
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract			

### Population with Associate's Level Degree or Higher

51.91 percent of the population aged 25 and older, or 398,543 have obtained an Associate's level degree or higher. This indicator is relevant because educational attainment has been linked to positive health outcomes.

Report Area	Total Population Age 25	Population Age 25 with Associate's Degree or Higher	Percent Population Age 25 with Associate's Degree or Higher
Travis County, TX	767,787	398,543	51.91%
Texas	17,085,128	5,961,337	34.89%
United States	213,649,147	82,237,511	38.49%
Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract			

## Adult Education Needs

The Department of Education defines adult basic education as efforts to provide postsecondary education and support services that help adults become employed in occupational sectors important to local economies. The advancements in technology and its presence in the Travis County economy have increased the need for continued education opportunities for adults. Key informants who participated in the assessment identified the following content areas as the most critical for fostering greater social and economic integration.

- Digital literacy
- Basic literacy skills
- Life skills development
- Financial literacy
- English classes

**Adapt to Diverse Learning Styles and Needs.** The community's feedback consistently pointed to a need for apprenticeships and job skills development, particularly skills related to the tech industry. However, feedback lacked specificity in terms of the exact "computer skills" needed, which might indicate a need to raise awareness on the desirable hard skills employers seek in their applicants.

Interviews and focus groups suggested adapting lessons to the community with considerations to the diverse learning styles of adults. The primary need noted was enhancing the effectiveness of education programs. Teaching strategies that are hands-on and practical were discussed as most engaging for youth. The immigrant population suggested providing English classes according to the language proficiency of the student. Too often, the classes were an introductory workshop to English and did not prepare students to confidently converse, write, or understand English in its different social contexts. 57 percent of survey respondents said ESL classes were a high need.

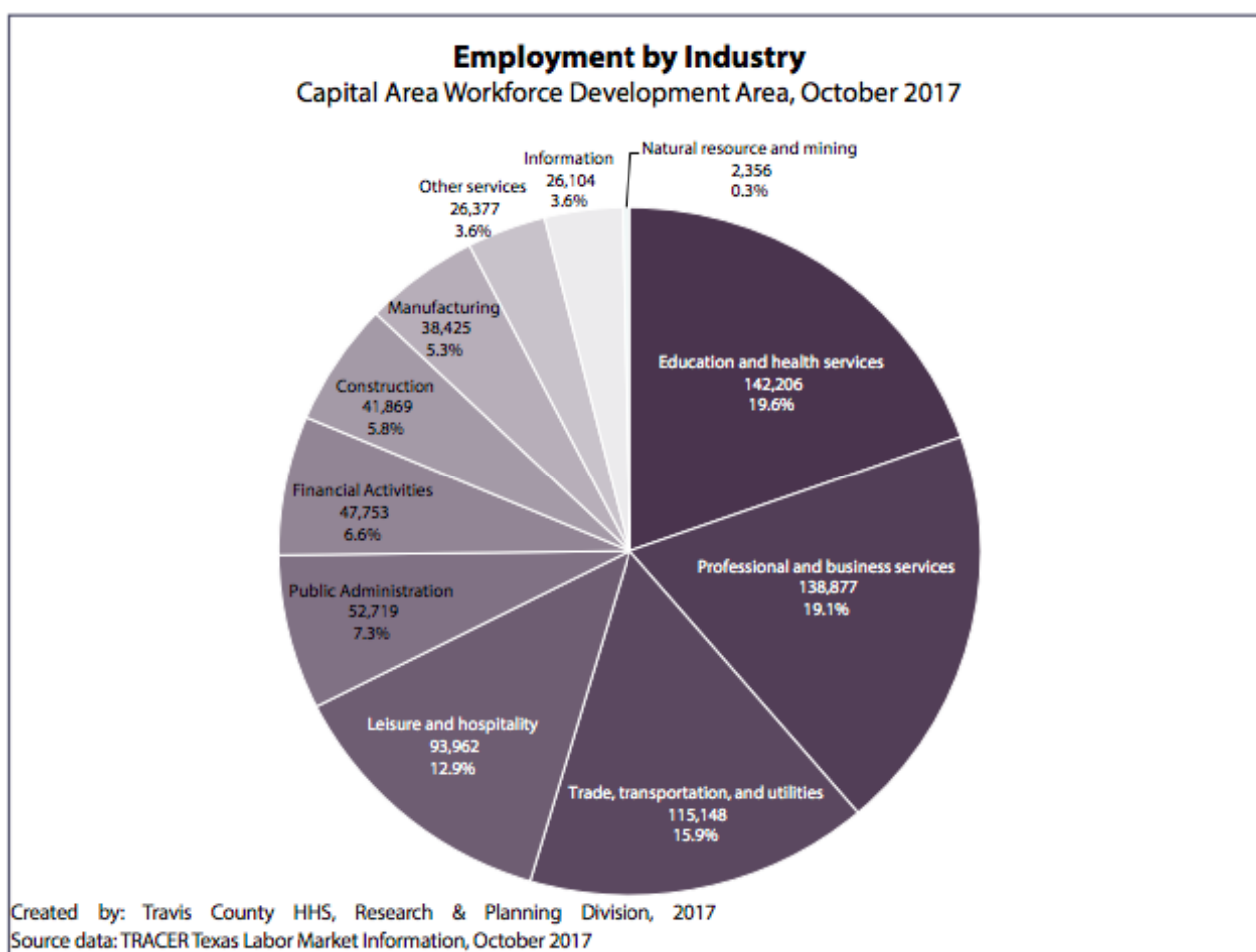
**Financial Literacy.** Results from the survey indicated that 56 percent think "education on how to budget, improve credit, and reduce debt and increase savings" as a serious need. In that same vein, respondents specified that money management classes should use realistic budgets and increase education around accessing financial products from financial institutions or applying for benefits.

## Employment

Economically, Travis County proves to be prosperous by many measures. The unemployment rate is low, labor-force participation is high, and the general levels of educational attainment are above the national average. The disparities documented in poverty, housing, and education persist in employment. When data specific to females, especially with children, and people of color are examined, the economic measures are less prosperous.

### Economic Opportunity in Neighborhoods.

The top 5 employment industries are healthcare, hospitality and food services, retail trade, professional services and education services in absolute employment terms. Travis County Research and Planning Division reported education and health services as the largest industries to employ in Travis County, making up nearly 20 percent of the economy.<sup>96</sup>



<sup>96</sup> Travis County, HHS, Research & Planning. (2017). *Workforce development community impact report*. Retrieved from: [https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/cir-2017/workforce\\_development.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/cir-2017/workforce_development.pdf)

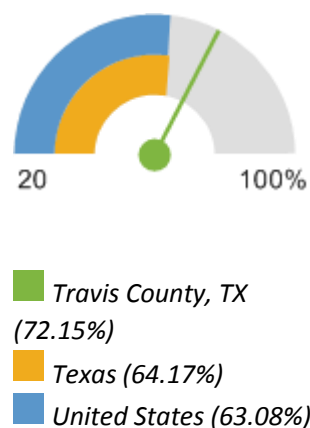
## Labor Force Participation

The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines labor force participation as the sum of employed and unemployed persons. The labor force participation rate is the labor force as a percent of the civilian non-institutional population. As of April 2018, the labor force for Austin-Round Rock MSA was 1,191,200, an increase of 42,700 when compared to the same time last year, according to the Texas Workforce Commission.<sup>97</sup>

The table below displays the labor force participation rate for the report area. According to the 2012 to 2016 American Community Survey, the labor force participation rate is 72.15 % overall. However, male workers (87.8%) make up a higher percentage of the labor force than female workers and the participation declines to as low as 62.5 percent for female workers with children.

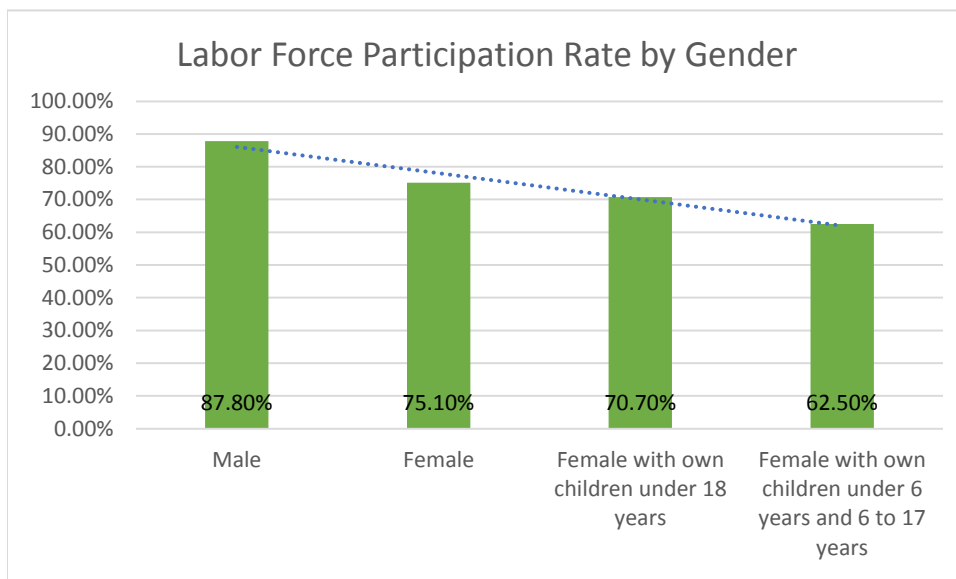
Report Area	Total Population Age 16	Labor Force	Labor force Participation Rate
Travis County, TX	908,990	655,847	72.15%
Texas	20,599,223	13,219,523	64.17%
United States	253,323,709	159,807,099	63.08%
<i>Note: This indicator is compared with the state average.</i> <i>Data Source: US Census Bureau, <a href="#">American Community Survey, 2012-16</a>. Source geography: County</i>			

Labor Force Participation Rate

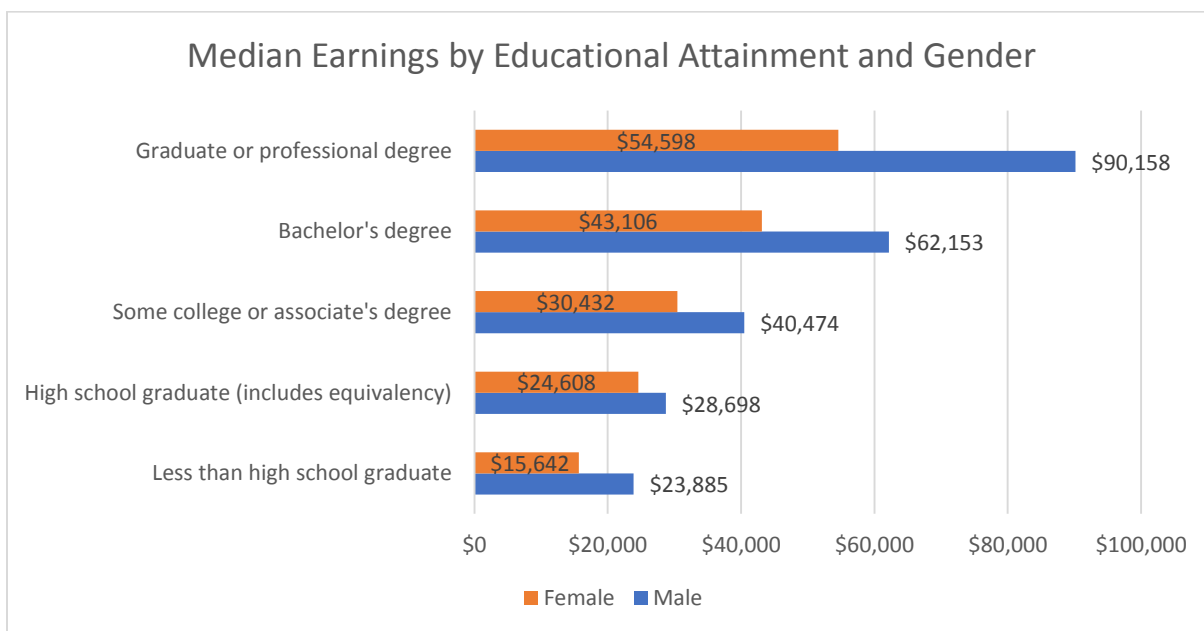


<sup>97</sup> Texas Workforce Commission. (2018, May 18). *Texas economy adds 39,600 positions in April*. Retrieved from <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/news/texas-economy-adds-39600-positions-april>





*Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: County*



Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-year Estimates, Table S1501

**Unemployment Rate.** At 2.9 percent the unemployment rate is below the state and national average (4.1 and 4.4 respectively).<sup>98</sup> This indicator is relevant because unemployment creates

<sup>98</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2018 - February. Source geography: County

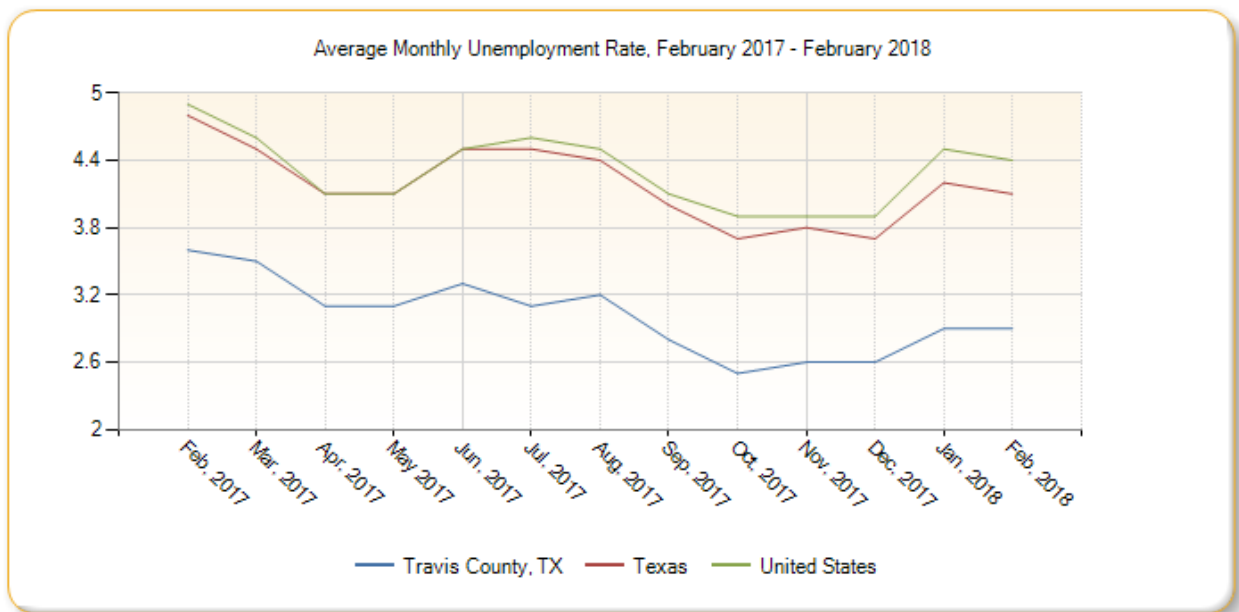
financial instability and barriers to access including insurance coverage, health services, healthy food, and other necessities that contribute to poor health status.

Report Area	Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Travis County, TX	720,742	699,587	21,155	2.9
Texas	13,811,924	13,241,913	570,011	4.1
United States	162,581,545	155,381,962	7,199,583	4.4

Data Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2018 - February. Source geography: County

The chart below illustrates the declining unemployment rate from February 2017 to February 2018. According to the Texas Workforce Commission, the unemployment rate reported in February 2018 was lower than the rate around the same time of the year in February 2017.<sup>99</sup>

Created by Community Commons, Data Source: Data Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2018 - February. Source geography: County



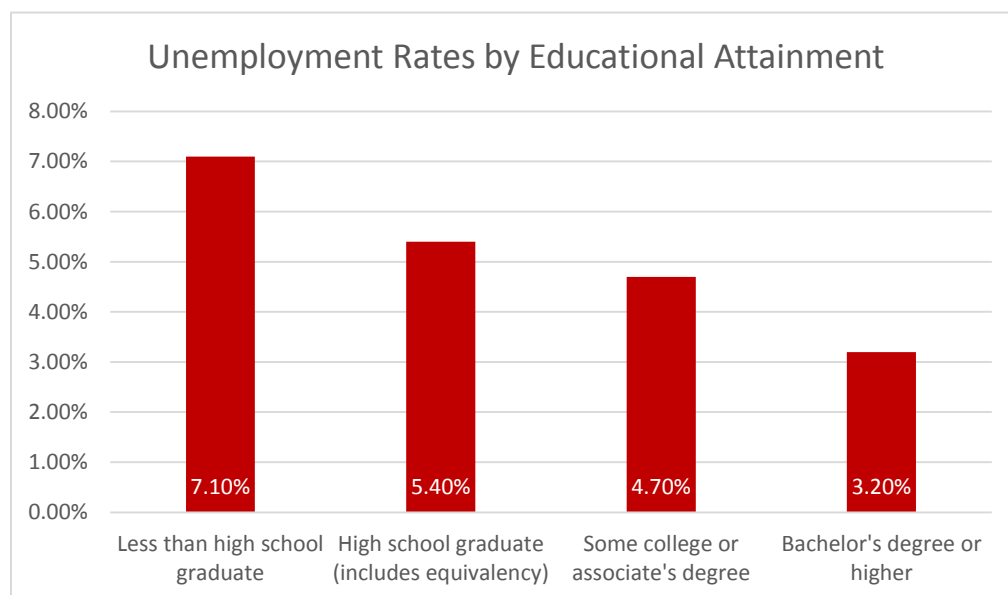
<sup>99</sup> Texas Workforce Commission. (2018, April). *LMCI economic profiles: Austin Round Rock MSA*. Retrieved from: [http://www.tracer2.com/admin/uploadedpublications/1712\\_austinmsa.pdf](http://www.tracer2.com/admin/uploadedpublications/1712_austinmsa.pdf)

## Characteristics of the Unemployed

**Unemployed Mothers.** The rate of unemployment casts a different picture when examined by gender and whether a woman has children. 9.1 % of mothers with more than one child (under 6 and 6-17 years) do not have a job, are actively looking for a job, and are available to work.

Unemployment Rates by Gender		Unemployment Rate
Male		4.70%
Female		4.80%
Female with own children under 18 years		5.90%
Female with own children under 6 years and 6 to 17 years		9.10%
Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S2301		

**Mismatch Workforce and Employment Industry Educational Needs.** While there are seemingly lots of employment opportunities, those receiving unemployment benefits tend to have lower educational attainment. Approximately 63 percent had less than an associate's degree.<sup>100</sup> There is strong correlation with the educational attainment and employment status of an individual. The employment industries that pay on the higher end of the wage spectrum tend to require higher levels of education.



Data Source: 2012-2016  
ACS 5-Year Estimates

<sup>100</sup> Workforce Solutions Capital Area.

## Characteristics of Workers Earning Wages Below Poverty

A more nuanced picture of people living below the poverty line is found in the working population. High and stable wages and stable full-time employment can keep many out of poverty. Nearly half of all jobs created in 2016 were paying on the lower end of the wage spectrum (a median annual wage between \$20,000 to \$40,000.) Two of the top five employment industries, hospitality/food services and retail trade, pay a low average wage. The need for jobs with living wages was consistent with survey responses. Among survey respondents, 71 percent said that “jobs that pay enough to make ends meet” is a serious need.

There is a markedly steep drop in jobs created that pay \$20-\$30 an hour, and most of jobs pay between \$10-\$20. Our survey results are consistent with the data presented and the community has expressed a serious need for jobs that pay a living wage.

### Poverty Status by Work Experience

	Total Population	Less than 50% under Poverty	Less than 100% under Poverty	Less than 125% under Poverty
Worked full-time, year-round	444,633	0.40%	3.20%	5.30%
Worked less than full-time, year- round	204,342	12.20%	24.10%	29.80%
Did not work	144,093	21.60%	33.90%	39.50%

Data Source: 2012-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1703

## Health

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The disparities documented in poverty, housing, education, and employment continue to persist in health. The opportunities available in the neighborhoods in which people of color live are largely disparate, both in terms of access to healthcare facilities and affordability. Because health insurance, a key indicator in determining access, is heavily dependent on the employment status, the lack of gainful and stable full-time employment impacts workers earning low-wages and part-time employees.

Poverty is key barrier to accessing healthcare. The supply and accessibility of facilities and physicians, the rate of uninsurance, financial hardship, transportation barriers, cultural competency, and coverage limitations affect access.

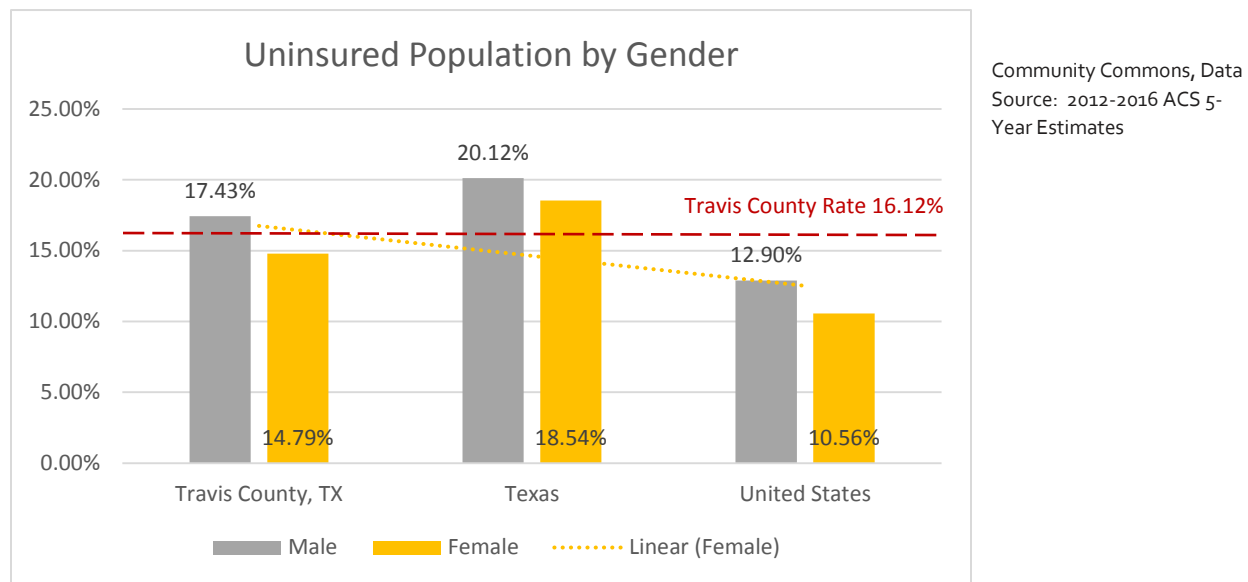
### Healthcare Access

**Uninsured Population.** The lack of health insurance is considered a key driver of health status. This indicator reports the percentage of the total civilian non-institutionalized population without health insurance coverage. This indicator is relevant because lack of insurance is a primary barrier to healthcare access including regular primary care, specialty care, and other health services that contributes to poor health status.

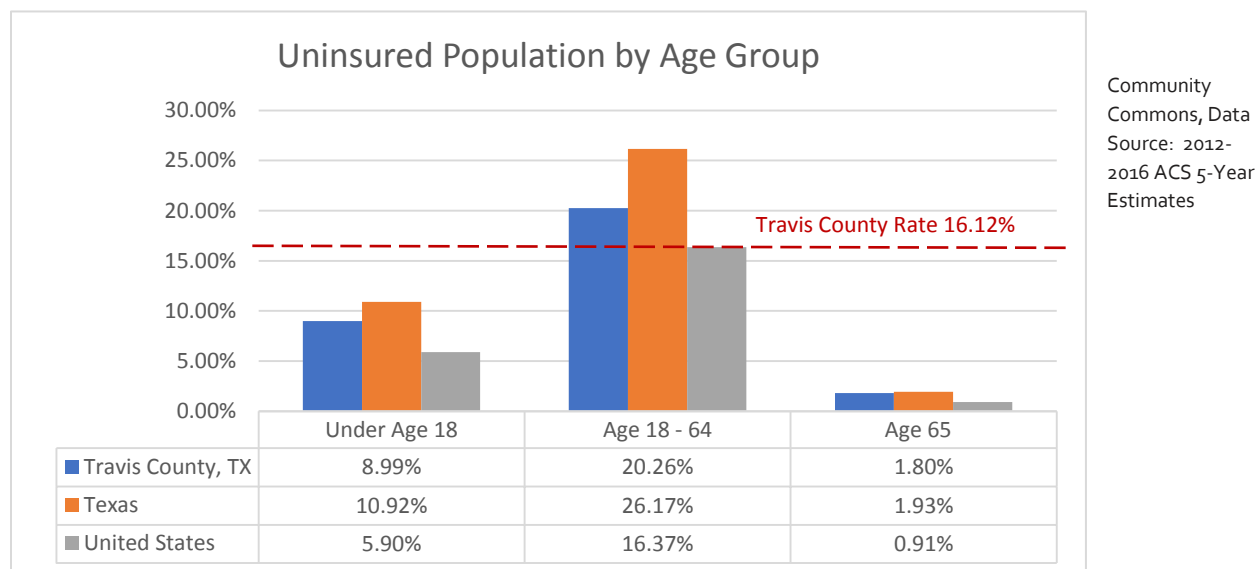
Report Area	Total Population (For Whom Insurance Status is Determined)	Total Uninsured Population	Percent Uninsured Population
Travis County, TX	1,140,612	183,833	16.12%
Texas	26,478,868	5,114,811	19.32%
United States	313,576,137	36,700,246	11.7%

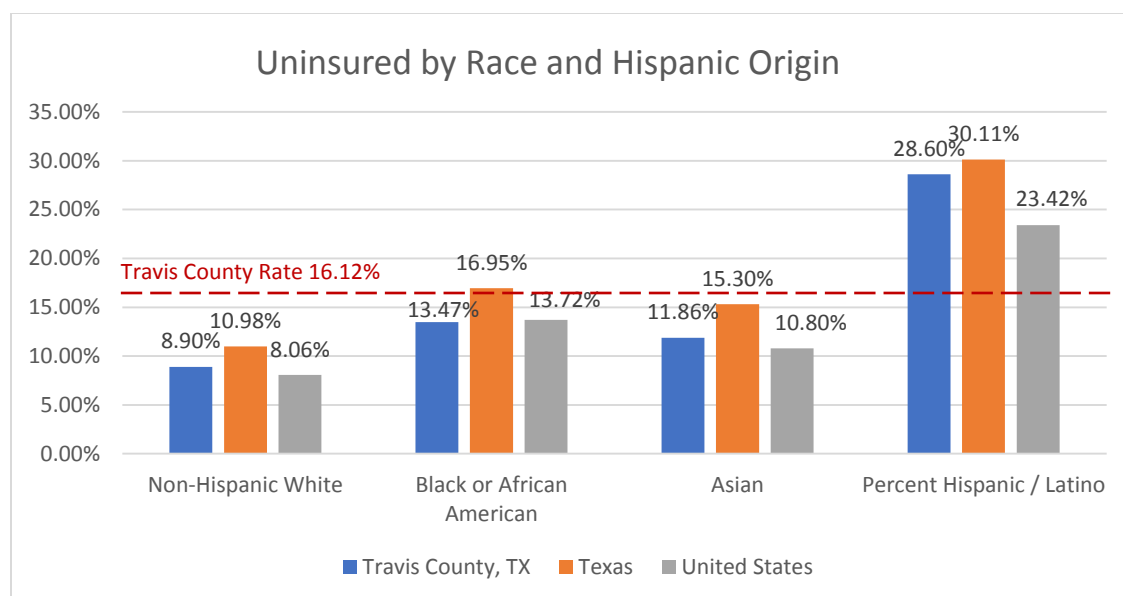
Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2012-16. Source geography: Tract

The chart below shows the percent of uninsured women in Travis County is much higher than the US and only slightly better than Texas. The percent of uninsured is lower for males in Travis County than Texas.



Nearly a quarter of the population between the ages 18 to 64 do not have health insurance and for many healthcare services are not affordable--that is a total 158,390 uninsured population of working age adults.





Community Commons, Data Source: 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The percent of uninsured Hispanics/Latinos is the highest by all three levels of comparison: local, state and national.<sup>101</sup> Nearly half of Hispanic/Latino adults could not think of at least one person who they think of as their personal doctor or health care provider. This indicator is important because access to regular primary care is important to preventing major health issues an emergency department visits.

Affordable care was identified as the most critical need related to health care by survey respondents. Cost of care can act as a barrier to seeking medical attention. The uneven distribution of primary care physicians compared to specialists can also be contributing factor to less regular doctor visits. Travis County Research and Planning reported that as of January 2017, there were 2,348 doctors licensed as specialists and 1,261 licensed in primary care.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Additional data analysis by CARES. 2011-12. Source geography: County

<sup>102</sup> Travis County Research and Planning, Public Health Community Impact Report.  
[https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health\\_human\\_services/Docs/cir-2017/public\\_health.pdf](https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/cir-2017/public_health.pdf)

Report Area	Survey Population (Adults Age 18+)	Total Adults Without Any Regular Doctor	Percent Adults Without Any Regular Doctor
Travis County	754,465	247,201	32.77%
Texas	18,375,873	5,946,509	32.36%
United States	236,884,668	52,290,932	22.07%
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Additional data analysis by CARES. 2011-12. Source geography: County			

## Health Behaviors

Health behaviors such as poor diet, a lack of exercise, and substance abuse contribute to poor health status. The environment can play a role in facilitating physical activity that lead to healthy habits. Travis County residents can count on outdoor spaces conducive for physical activity. Communities from diverse social and economic backgrounds all highlight Austin's green spaces as one of its core strengths.<sup>103</sup> However, built recreational spaces have been identified as a need by the community to further promote wellness.

Time constraints can also act as a barrier to engaging in physical activity. As noted below, within the report area, 124,362 or 15.6% of adults aged 20 and older self-report no leisure time for activity, based on the question: "During the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise?". This indicator is relevant because current behaviors are determinants of future health and this indicator may illustrate a cause of significant health issues, such as obesity and poor cardiovascular health.

Report Area	Total Population Age 20	Population with no Leisure Time Physical Activity	Percent Population with no Leisure Time Physical Activity
Travis County, TX	829,080	124,362	15.6%
Texas	18,700,536	4,292,049	22.9%
United States	234,207,619	52,147,893	21.8%

Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2013. Source geography: County

<sup>103</sup> City of Austin, Austin Public Health. (2017). *Community Health Assessment Austin/ Travis County*.

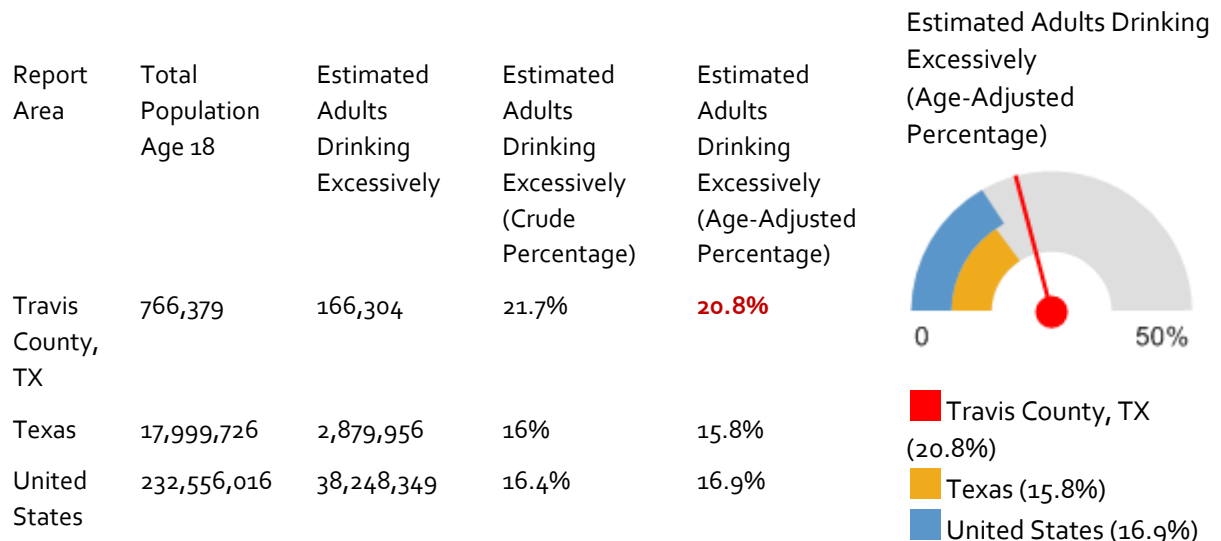


**Fewer Females than Males with No Leisure-Time.** The percent of the population with no leisure time to engage in physical activity is smaller than both State and US rates. However, about 10,000 fewer females than males participated in physical activity.<sup>104</sup>

Report Area	Total Males with No Leisure-Time Physical Activity	Total Females with No Leisure-Time Physical Activity
Travis County, TX	56,848	67,514
Texas	1,881,127	2,410,928
United States	23,209,824	28,938,104

Created by Community Commons, Note: This indicator is compared with the state average.  
Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion](#). 2013. Source geography: County

**Alcohol Consumption.** This indicator reports the percentage of adults aged 18 and older who self-report heavy alcohol consumption (defined as more than two drinks per day on average for men and one drink per day on average for women). This indicator is relevant because current behaviors are determinants of future health and this indicator may illustrate a cause of significant health issues, such as cirrhosis, cancers, and untreated mental and behavioral health needs.



Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Accessed via the Health Indicators Warehouse. US Department of Health Human Services, Health Indicators Warehouse. 2006-12. Source geography: County

**Signs of Impact on Reducing Smoking.** An estimated 59.64% of adult smokers in Travis County attempted to quit smoking for at least 1 day in the past year, which is slightly less than the percent of smokers in Texas and the United States. However, the percent of Black/African-American (76.14%) and Hispanic/Latino (65.78%) smokers attempting to quit smoking was

<sup>104</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2013.

much higher by all three levels of comparison: County, State, and National. White non-Hispanics had the lowest rates of attempting to quit smoking. This indicator is relevant because tobacco use is linked to leading causes of death such as cancer and cardiovascular disease and supporting efforts to quit smoking may increase positive health outcomes.

**Prevalence of Substance Use in Neighborhoods with Concentrated Poverty.** Nearly 300 drug overdoses resulted in death between 2015 to 2016—the leading drug type was opioids, which accounted for 191 of the deaths.<sup>105</sup> In 2017 over 850 people in Travis County called 2-1-1 with a substance use related need, according to United Way for Greater Austin.

While males only account for 21 percent of calls to 2-1-1, they accounted for 55 percent of substance abuse related calls. 2-1-1 clients in Travis County presenting with substance use needs were significantly more likely to be under the age of 55 than overall callers.

78753, the zip code with the highest number of substance use calls in 2017, is also where more than 50 percent of individuals live 200 percent below poverty. Nearly all zip codes with more than 50 percent of concentrated poverty, except for 78705 located near UT campus, accounted for most of substance use calls.

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<sup>105</sup> City of Austin, Austin Public Health. (2017). *Drug overdose deaths and poisoning hospitalizations*. [data brief] Retrieved from: [www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Health/Epidemiology/Drug\\_overdose\\_data\\_brief\\_\\_9-28-2017.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Health/Epidemiology/Drug_overdose_data_brief__9-28-2017.pdf)

## Primary Care

*"The screenings are important, but there is still more work to be done in terms of connecting patients to medical care, a doctor they can see regularly and receive personalized recommendations on health screenings according to their family history and risk."-Workgroup Participant*

**Lack of High Blood Pressure Management.** In Travis County, 37.6 % of adults, or 280,380, self-reported that they are not taking medication for their high blood pressure according to the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (2006-2010). The percent of Hispanic/Latino adults (32.63%) not taking medication was the highest of racial/ethnic groups. 20 percent of White and 16 percent of Black/African American adults' rates reported not taking medication.

This indicator is relevant because engaging in preventive behaviors decreases the likelihood of developing future health problems. When considered with other indicators of poor health, this indicator can also highlight a lack of access to preventive care, a lack of health knowledge, insufficient provider outreach, and/or social barriers preventing utilization of services.

Report Area	Total Population (Age 18 )	Total Adults Not Taking Blood Pressure Medication (When Needed)	Percent Adults Not Taking Medication
Travis County, TX	745,301	280,380	<b>37.6%</b>
Texas	17,999,726	4,036,853	22.4%
United States	235,375,690	51,175,402	21.7%

**Data Source:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Additional data analysis by CARES. 2006-10. Source geography: County

## Health Outcomes

Measuring morbidity and mortality rates allows assessing linkages between social determinants of health and outcomes. By comparing, for example, the prevalence of certain chronic diseases to indicators in other categories (e.g. poor diet and exercise) with outcomes (e.g. high rates of obesity and diabetes), various causal relationships may emerge, allowing better understanding of how certain community health needs may be addressed.

**Travis County Breast Cancer Incidence Rate Higher than Texas Rate.** Cancer is the leading cause of death in Travis County, and it is important to identify cancers separately to better target interventions.<sup>106</sup> The breast cancer incidence rate in Travis County (119.7) is greater than the State (111.5), but less than the National rate (123.5)<sup>107</sup>. The rate is highest for White (121.5) and Black/African-American women (122.4). This indicator reports the age adjusted incidence rate (cases per 100,000 population per year) of females with breast cancer adjusted to 2000 US standard population age groups (Under age 1, 1-4, 5-9...80-84, 85 and older).

The cancer mortality rate has steadily decreased every year from 2003 to 2014, according to Austin Public Health.<sup>108</sup> This indicator reports the rate of death due to cancer per 100,000 population. Figures are reported as crude rates, and as rates age-adjusted to year 2000 standard<sup>109</sup>

**Depression in Medicare Population Steadily Increasing.** The indicator below reports the percentage of the Medicare fee-for-service population with depression.

Report Area	Total Medicare Fee-for-Service Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries with Depression	Percent with Depression
Travis County, TX	76,158	13,071	17.2%
Texas	2,215,695	377,096	17%
United States	34,118,227	5,695,629	16.7%

Community Commons, Data Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. 2015. Source geography: County

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<sup>106</sup> City of Austin, Austin Public Health. (2017). *Community Health Assessment Austin/ Travis County*.

<sup>107</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: State Cancer Profiles. 2010-2014. Source Geography: County

<sup>108</sup> City of Austin, Austin Public Health. (2017). *Community Health Assessment Austin/ Travis County*.

<sup>109</sup> Community Commons, Data source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2012-2016. Source geography: County

The percent of Medicare population showing depression is higher than Texas and the United States, and has steadily increased over time from 2010 to 2015.

Report Area	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Travis County, TX	15.2%	16.1%	16.3%	16.3%	16.9%	17.2%
Texas	14.8%	15.7%	16.2%	16.6%	17%	17%
United States	14%	15%	15.5%	15.9%	16.2%	16.7%

Created by Community Commons, Data Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. 2015. Source geography: County

**Diabetes the Largest Health Disparity.** The incidence rate of diabetes is less than State and National rates, however it is one of the leading causes of death in Travis County. Mortality rates for Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino are more than twice as high as the White population--one of the largest health disparities reported by Austin Public Health Community Health Assessment 2017.<sup>110</sup>

This indicator reports the percentage of adults aged 20 and older who have ever been told by a doctor that they have diabetes. This indicator is relevant because diabetes is a prevalent problem in the U.S.; it may indicate an unhealthy lifestyle and puts individuals at risk for further health issues.

Report Area	Total Population Age 20	Population with Diagnosed Diabetes	Population with Diagnosed Diabetes, Crude Rate	Population with Diagnosed Diabetes, Age-Adjusted Rate
Travis County, TX	829,359	53,079	6.4	7.3%
Texas	18,709,042	1,734,167	9.27	9.18%
United States	236,919,508	23,685,417	10	9.19%

Created by Community Commons, Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2013. Source geography: County

<sup>110</sup> City of Austin, Austin Public Health. (2017). *Community Health Assessment Austin/ Travis County*.

**Pregnancy in Adolescence.** The teen birth rate in Texas is among the highest in the US<sup>111</sup>. The rate in Travis County, however, fares better than Texas overall. Hispanic/Latina (85.6) women have the highest teen birth rate of all racial/ethnic groups—twice as high as the overall rate for Travis County.

This indicator reports the rate of total births to women age of 15 - 19 per 1,000 female population ages 15 to 19. This indicator is relevant because in many cases, teen parents have unique social, economic, and health support needs. Additionally, high rates of teen pregnancy may indicate the prevalence of unsafe sex practices.

Report Area	Female Population Age 15 - 19	Births to Mothers Age 15 - 19	Teen Birth Rate (Per 1,000 Population)
Travis County, TX	33,491	1,500	44.8
Texas	914,438	50,294	55
United States	10,736,677	392,962	36.6

Created by Community Commons, Data Source: US Department of Health Human Services, Health Indicators Warehouse. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2006-12. Source geography: County

**Birth Outcomes and Black/African-American Babies.** About 7.7 percent of all babies born in Travis County are born weighing less than 2,500 grams, or low birth weight, faring only slightly better than Texas (8.4%) and the US (8.2%). Low birth weight and preterm birth increase the risk of infant mortality and other health problems across their lifespan. According to a 2014 study, low birth weight increases the risk for chronic disease, and it is also associated with increased risk for early menopause<sup>112</sup>.

The charts below illustrate the percentage of low birthweight and preterm births<sup>113</sup>. The rates are alarmingly high for Black/African-American babies. 16.2 percent of all births to Black/African-American mothers were born weighing less than 2,500 grams, and 17.8 were premature.<sup>114</sup>

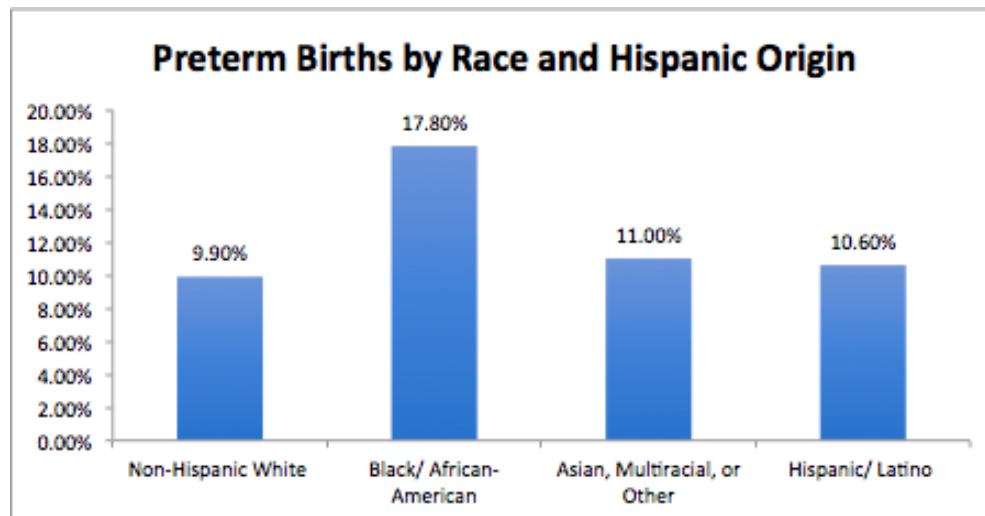
<sup>111</sup> CDC Stats by State on Teen Birth Rate. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/teen-births/teenbirths.htm>

<sup>112</sup> NIH (2014). Low Birth Weight: Impact on Women's Health. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4268017/>

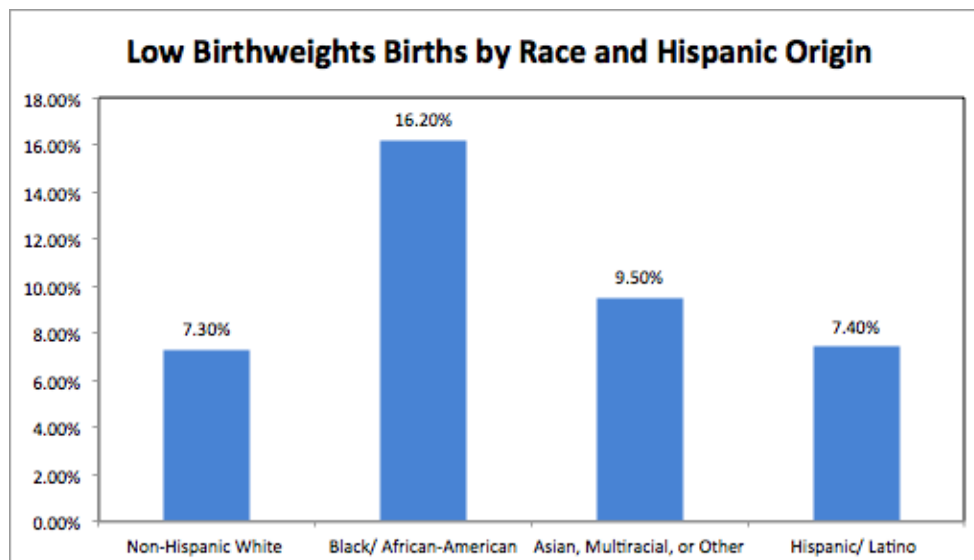
<sup>113</sup> Kids Count Data Hub, Data Source: Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of State Health Services.

<sup>114</sup> Kids Count Data Hub, Data Source: Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of State Health Services.

There is growing consensus among researchers that racial discrimination over the lifespan of Black/African-Americans increases the risk of pre-term labor.<sup>115</sup>



Kids Count Data Center, Data Source: Texas Department of State Health Services.



Kids Count Data Center, Data Source: Texas Department of State Health Services.

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115 Chatterjee & Davis (2012, December 20). How racism may cause Black mothers to suffer the death of their infants. *NPR* Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/12/20/570777510/how-racism-may-cause-black-mothers-to-suffer-the-death-of-their-infants>

**Communicable Diseases/ Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV.** The incidence of chlamydia and gonorrhea is significantly higher than State and US infection rates. The indicators report incidence rate of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV cases per 100,000 population. These indicators are relevant because it is a measure of poor health status and indicates the prevalence of unsafe sex practices.

Report Area	Total Population	Total Chlamydia Infections	Chlamydia Infection Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.)
Travis County, TX	1,120,954	7,322	653.19
Texas	26,446,529	131,069	495.6
United States	316,128,839	1,441,789	456.08
Data Source: US Department of Health Human Services, Health Indicators Warehouse. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. 2014. Source geography: County			

Report Area	Total Population	Total Gonorrhea Infections	Gonorrhea Infection Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.)
Travis County, TX	1,120,954	2,206	196.8
Texas	26,438,623	35,322	133.6
United States	316,128,839	350,062	110.73
Data Source: US Department of Health Human Services, Health Indicators Warehouse. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. 2014. Source geography: County			



Report Area	Population Age 13	Population with HIV / AIDS	Population with HIV / AIDS, Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.)
Travis County, TX	927,314	4,218	454.86
Texas	21,386,032	73,959	345.83
United States	263,765,822	931,526	353.16

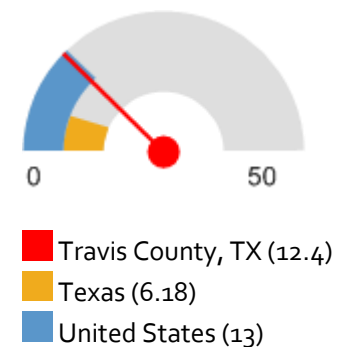
Data Source: US Department of Health Human Services, Health Indicators Warehouse. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. 2013. Source geography: County

**Nearly Twice as Many Deaths by Suicide in Travis County than Texas.** This indicator reports the rate of death due to intentional self-harm (suicide) per 100,000 population. Figures are reported as crude rates, and as rates age-adjusted to year 2000 standard. Rates are re-summarized for report areas from county level data, only where data is available. This indicator is relevant because suicide is an indicator of poor mental health.

Report Area	Total Population	Average Annual Deaths, 2010-2014	Crude Death Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.)	Age-Adjusted Death Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.)
Travis County, TX	1,148,713	143	12.4	12.4
Texas	10,415,322	608	5.84	6.18
United States	318,689,254	42,747	13.4	13
<a href="#">HP 2020 Target</a>				<= 10.2

Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics System. Accessed via CDC WONDER. 2012-16. Source geography: County

Suicide, Age-Adjusted Death Rate (Per 100,000 Pop.)



**Traffic Congestion and Pedestrian Safety.** The third leading cause of death in Travis County, after cancer and heart disease, is unintentional injury. Car accidents that result in death of a person not in a motor vehicle is higher in Travis County (4.5) than the average annual rate (per 100,000 population) for Texas (3.6) and the US (3.1).<sup>116</sup> According to Austin Public Health's Community Health Assessment, traffic mortality rates spiked in 2015.<sup>117</sup> The focus group participants in the Rundberg neighborhood adamantly expressed the need for safety, especially for pedestrians. The increasing traffic flow from outlying suburbs into the City of Austin primarily travels through their area, as the one of the largest corridors (Lamar) intersects the neighborhood.

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<sup>116</sup> Community Commons, Data Source: US Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Fatality Analysis Reporting System. 2011-2015. Source geography: County

<sup>117</sup> City of Austin, Austin Public Health. (2017). *Community Health Assessment Austin/ Travis County*.

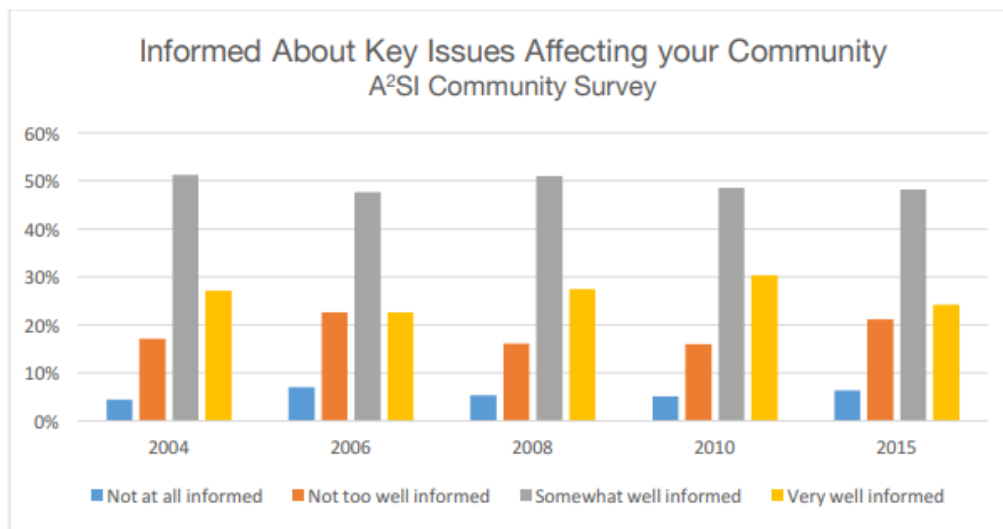
## Civic Engagement and Community Involvement

Civic engagement reflects volunteerism and engagement in community, philanthropic activity, access to culture and the arts, and political participation. Voter turnout, newspaper readership, and membership in societies and social clubs have long been indicative of healthy civic engagement. When levels of political participation, civic involvement, and social connectedness are relatively high, a region enjoys the benefits of civic health.

Political participation in Texas remains extremely low. Voter turnout in Texas ranks 47<sup>th</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> in voter registration. There are disparities in the age groups registered to vote. In Texas, the demographics of registered voters tend to be more than 55 years old and have at least a Bachelor's degree. Adults ages 18 to 24 and Texas residents with less than a high school degree participate the least.<sup>118</sup>

While voting and political participation is a critical indicator of civic participation, there are other ways that Travis County residents engage in their communities. Key informants interviewed expressed the need to be creative in increasing civic engagement by identifying non-political spaces more relevant to the community service providers seek to serve. Some examples of community leadership identified were Parent Teacher Associations and tenant meetings.

Approximately 72 percent of Austin area residents report feeling informed about key issues that are affecting their community, which is down from the approximately 78 percent that reported feeling informed in 2008 and 2010. In 2015, approximately 28 percent of Hispanics reported feeling not at all or not too well informed about issues affecting their community, the highest of all race/ethnicity categories.



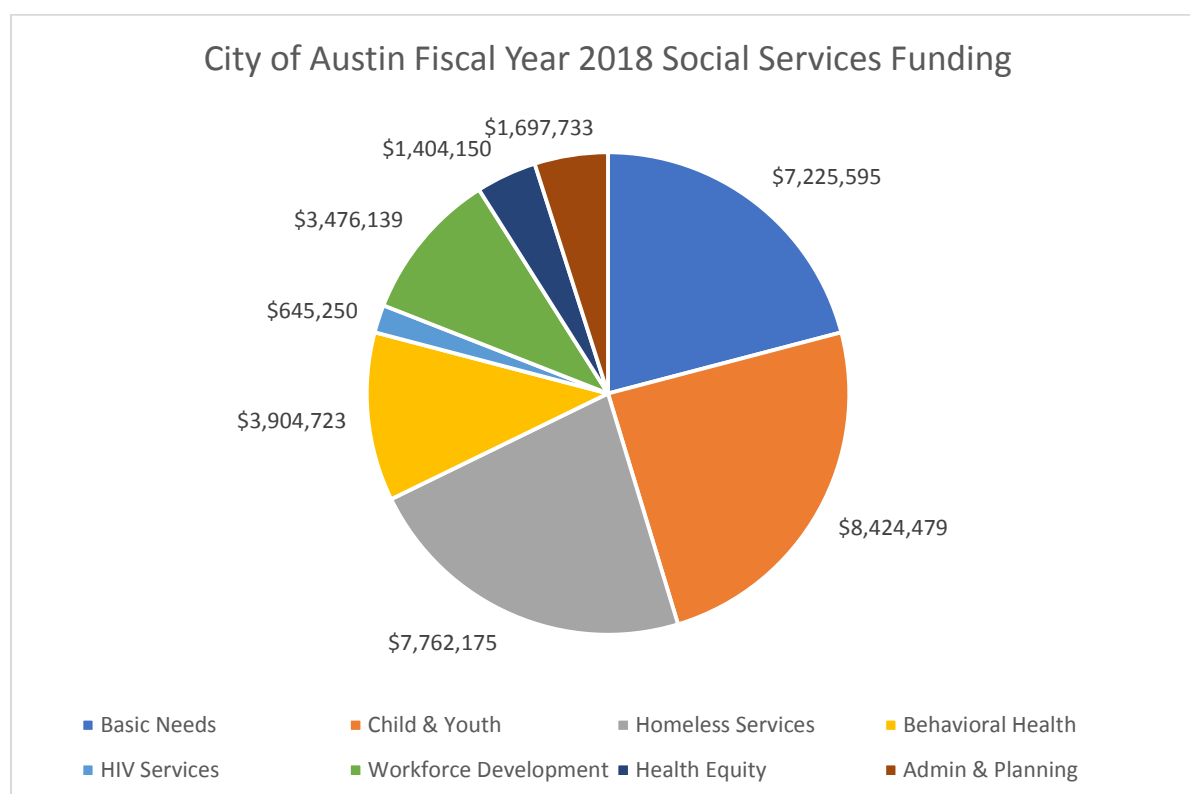
<sup>118</sup> Jennings, J., & Einsohn Bhandari, E. (2018). Texas Civic Health Index. University of Texas-Austin. Retrieved from: [https://moody.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/2018-Texas\\_Civic\\_Health\\_Index.pdf](https://moody.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/2018-Texas_Civic_Health_Index.pdf)

## Community Strengths and Assets

*“These communities are resilient and should be sources of motivation that inform best practices.” City of Austin Council Member Gregorio “Greg” Casar*

### Continued Investment in Anti-Poverty Programs

As noted in the 2015 CSBG Needs Assessment, the City of Austin has relied upon the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) as the primary source of support for its six neighborhood centers and three outreach locations. The neighborhood centers and outreach locations continue to be a trusted source of assistance for many of Travis County’s low income residents. The City of Austin and Travis County policymakers have also continued to demonstrate their commitment to the funding of social services in their respective budgets. In Fiscal Year 2018, the City invested more than \$34 million in social service contracts with non-profits and other agencies as indicated below:



Source: City of Austin Social Services Policy Unit

Travis County also supports seven Community Centers that serve low-income families and are key partners with Austin Public Health's Neighborhood Centers. In addition, according to the Travis County FY 2017 Community Impact Report, annual investments of over \$19.5 million are made to community-based social service programs.<sup>119</sup>

In addition to public investments in community based programs, United Way and area foundations invest in the well-being of our community. United Way for Greater Austin (UWATX) reports it will invest a total of \$1.466 million in grants to fund early childhood education and 2-Generation (2-Gen) programs in 2018-2021. The St. David's Foundation reported that it planned to invest more than \$75 million to help low-income people connect to a full range of health services.<sup>120</sup>

## Community Resources and Partners

Austin Public Health, through its work with the Neighborhood Centers, partners and coordinates with many local organizations to leverage the CSBG funds provided to Travis County. The following list includes a sample of the organizations with whom Austin partners directly, in addition to other organizations who provide these services to Travis County residents.

*Austin/Travis County Community Resources by Type of Service*

Type of Service	Neighborhood Center Partnering Agencies	Other Community Resources
Food	Central Texas Food Bank, Wheatsville Food Coop, St. John Episcopal Church, HEB, Sprouts, HHSC Community Partner Program, WIC	Caritas of Austin, Micah 6 at UPC, Austin Baptist Chapel, Greater Mount Zion Baptist, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Hope Lutheran Church, Hope Food Pantry, The Store House, El Buen Samaritano, St. Edwards's Baptist Church, Church of Christ Hyde Park, Salvation Army Shelter, University Presbyterian Church, Cristo Rey SVDP, Eastside Community Connection, Olivet Helping Hand Center, , St. Andrews Presbyterian St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Bannockburn Baptist Church, Dolores Catholic Church, Mision Cristiana Intl/LIDS, Bread For All, Travis Heights Food Pantry, Travis County Community Center at Del Valle, Travis County Community Center at Post Road, Lake Travis Crisis Ministries, Mission Possible, Bethany Faith Food Pantry, Trinity Center, Welcome Table, St. Austin SVDP, Dorcas Passion Ministries, Christian Life Church (C.L.C.), Austin Cornerstone Church Food Pantry,

<sup>119</sup> Investment Overview FY 2017 Community Impact Report Travis County Health and Human Services Research & Planning Division, Courtney Bissonnet Lucas and Brittain Ayres, Project Leads

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.unitedwayaustin.org/04/2018/united-way-for-greater-austin-awards-2018-2021-community-investment-grants/Accessed 5.25.18>

		Haynie Chapel Food Pantry, St. Elizabeth, Pflugerville First UMC, Eternal Faith Baptist, Kingdom of God Christian Center, Dorcas Passion Ministries, Covenant United Methodist, Hands of Love, Feed the Community, Vineyard Christian Fellowship
Basic Needs	Central Texas Food Bank, Travis County Health and Human Services and Veteran's Services, Austin Diaper Bank, Transit Empowerment Fund, Recycled Blessings	Round Rock Area Serving Center, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Charities of Central TX, El Buen Samaritano, Salvation Army
Rent and Utility Assistance	Easter Seals of Central Texas, Inc.; Catholic Charities, Travis County Health and Human Services and Veteran's Services; Austin Tenant's Council	Caritas of Austin, Baptist Community Center, Greater Mt. Zion, Immanuel Lutheran Church, St. Vincent de Paul Societies, Catholic Charities of Central Texas, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Westover Hills Church of Christ, Christian Service Center
Employment	Workforce Solutions Capital Area; Skillpoint Alliance, The City of Austin Human Resources Department Dewitty Job Training and Employment Center	Goodwill, Austin Area Urban League, Inc, Austin Travis County Integral Care-Developmental Disabilities Services Division, Ascend Learning Center, Capital IDEA, The City of Austin-Parks and Recreation Department Senior Programs and Services, Easter Seals Central Texas Inc, WIA Youth Services, Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHHS), Travis County Criminal Justice Planning and Comprehensive Workforce Development Program, Travis County Offender Workforce Development Program
Affordable Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing	City of Austin and Travis County Housing Authorities; Blackland Community Development Corporation; City of Austin, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development	Foundation Communities, Permanent Supportive Housing Programs, local Community Development Corporations, Austin Habitat for Humanity, Austin Tenants' Council, Green Doors, Family Eldercare, Lifeworks, St. George's Senior Housing, Inc., Foundation for the Homeless, Front Steps, SafePlace

Emergency Shelter		Austin's Resource Center for the Homeless, Salvation Army, Safeplace, Foundation for the Homeless, Ending Community Homelessness Organization
Public Health	Central Health Community Care; HHSC Community Partner Program; Travis County Health and Human Services and Veteran's Services; Texas Department of State Health Services – Public Health Region 7; University of Texas at Austin – School of Nursing; American Heart Association, WeViva, Integrated Care Collaboration	El Buen Samaritano, People's Community Clinic, Volunteer Healthcare Clinic, Austin Travis County Integral Care, Seton, SafeKids, Sendero, United Healthcare, Blue Cross, Blue Shield, Seton, Planned Parenthood, AIDS Services of Austin, Inc, Health Alliance for Austin Musicians, Integrated Care Collaboration, Insure-A-Kid, Manos de Cristo, MedSavers Pharmacy, People's Community Clinic, St. David's Foundation, Any Baby Can, – Children's Wellness Center, University of Texas at Austin –Community Women's Wellness Center, HealthStart Foundation, Marathon Kids, Austin Speech Labs, Breast Cancer Resource Centers of Texas, , Lone Star Assoc. of Charitable Clinics, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Volunteer Healthcare Clinic, SIMS Foundation, , The Care Communities, WeViva, Wright House Wellness Center
Mental Health	Austin Travis County Integral Care	Austin Child Guidance Center, Capital Area Counseling, Austin Recovery, Christi Center, Jewish Family Service of Austin, Waterloo Counseling Center, Center for Survivors of Torture
Education – literacy, GED, financial assistance, ESL	Austin Community College, Workforce Solutions, Austin Free Net	Literacy Coalition, Any Baby Can, Huston Tillotson University, La Fuente Learning Center, Lifeworks, ACE: A Community for Education, American Youthworks, The Austin Project, Capital IDEA, Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, BookSpring, The Austin Project, Austin Partners in Education
Child Care	Child, Inc.	Workforce Solutions, Any Baby Can
Public Benefits	Texas Health and Human Services Commission	

Child/Youth Development	Child Inc., AISD Parent Liaisons	Asian American Resource Center, The Austin Project, Austin Young Men's Business League, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Texas, Inc, Boys and Girls Clubs of the Capital Area, City of Austin – Parks and Recreation Department, Extend-A-Care for Kids, Heart House Austin, The Junior League of Austin, Morning Star Rising, River City Youth Foundation, YMCA Austin, Austin Area Urban League, Austin Child Guidance Center, Any Baby Can, Austin Children's Services, AVANCE, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Austin Area, CASA of Travis County, Child Inc., Council on At-Risk Youth, Extend-A Care for Kids, Lutheran Social Services of the South, Open Door, Preschools, Partnerships for Children, The Settlement Home for Children, Southwest Key Programs, Inc., Urban Roots, YMCA of Austin, Communities In Schools, Wonders & Worries, Austin Area Urban League, LifeWorks, Center for Child Protection
Senior Services	Family Eldercare	AGE of Central Texas, Capital City Village, Drive A Senior, Meals on Wheels and More, The Arc of Capital Area
Disability Services	Easter Seals Central Texas	The Arc of the Capital Area, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

**Colocated Services.** Bricks and Mortar costs are reduced when one-stop locations are created for people to access services. School teachers and faculty, in particular, have strong relationships with the community. The St. John Community Center is one such facility, wherehas Pickle Elementary co-located with Parks and Recreation and Austin Public Library. Austin Public Health also offers services in conjunction with Austin Parks and Recreation at Dove Springs Recreation Center and Turner Roberts-Recreation Center. Other Neighborhood Centers, such as East and South Austin, are co-located with CommunityCare clinics. Partnerships with Travis County Community Centers are also expanding services into areas such as Del Valle.

**Collaboratives.** Austin is a unique environment for service providers in that collaboration is actively sought and sustained. The Community Action Network involves a wide array of stakeholders, and the Interfaith Action of Central Texas which coordinates between faith-based agencies and nonprofits were two examples provided in the key informant interviews.



**Communication Strengths.** Austin is known to draw international crowds to local events such as the SXSW Festival. Program and services' visibility can be maximized by using the local and minority media outlets such as The Villager, KAZI radio station, El Mundo and the Chronicle. Minority media, more than mainstream, is a source of information that is trusted by the community. In that same vein, faith-based organizations with a long history of commitment and its own pool of resources (e.g. benevolence fund) are trusted by the community and can serve as a mechanism to relay information about services available. Austin Public Health is expanding its use of all types of media, and expanding partnerships with the faith-based community to increase awareness of Neighborhood Center services.

**Spirit of Community Service.** People who represent the communities most often underserved want to generate positive change in their own communities. There is potential to improve the conditions of poverty by harnessing the community's personal stake in the issues. Austin Public Health, through the Community Development Commission, which serves as the CSBG Advisory Board, works closely with low-income communities to ensure they have a voice in what services are offered and how funds are best directed to meet community needs.

## Gaps in Services and Barriers

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*"The ones that need services can't show up. Services should be redesigned to reach those communities as well" –Interview Participant*

Gaps in services and barriers were identified primarily from key informant interviews and focus group feedback. In terms of gaps, two main themes emerged: enhancing people's experience with the social service system and increasing services for children.

The overarching need for affordable housing in a preferred neighborhood is the platform by which other needs emerge (e.g. lack of access to reliable transportation, proficient schools, employment opportunities, and health care facilities). As low-income people are increasingly displaced, current services do not align with where they live.

The primary barriers identified, the lack of community trust and the lack of community outreach, reflected the need to invest in strengthening the relationship between the service providers and the community. Distrust coupled with the lack of outreach create barriers that hinder community engagement. Lack of reliable transportation and high quality and reliable child care were the tangible barriers identified.

### **Navigating Social Services**

- The social service system is complex and confusing to navigate. The services and resources are perceived as abundant, but challenging to locate. Lack of real-time information on the availability of services by geographic region makes identifying services challenging and gaps difficult to determine.
- Lack of outreach to outlying areas to raise awareness of programs and services available.

### **Efficiency and Effectiveness**

- Colocation of services: Need to increase collaboration between agencies to increase wraparound social services.
- Engage with more job placement agencies to help disseminate job postings among service providers and faith-based organizations

### **Guided and In-Person Assistance.**

- Frustration with application process and lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

### **Community Trust**

- Funding for agencies that have proven to be trusted by the community should have greater weight assigned in determining awarding funding, as suggested by an interview participant.

- Need to foster a welcoming environment and take into consideration the stigma associated with welfare and social services and decrease fear in the immigrant community of using services
- Tailor communications appropriately to the audience, e.g. language and capabilities

#### **Education and Child Care**

- Lack of high quality childcare
- Lack of safe spaces for kids during peak hours between 3:00 to 7:00 pm such as homework centers and recreational activities
- Lack of system to help young adults move from school into the workforce

#### **Employment**

- Lack of subsidized child care to help with job search and maintaining employment
- Lack of reliable transportation and assistance for auto repairs which can impose as a barrier to accessing services or commuting to work

## Trends for Travis County

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The Community Advancement Network is a collaborative comprised of agencies aiming to enhance the social, economic, educational, and health wellbeing of people in Austin and Travis County. As a result, CAN developed benchmarks to track the progress made to tackle social and economic issues. Every year the 17 indicators identified are reexamined to assess if the dial has moved in the right direction. A baseline of 2011 was established and compared to that year. Because the CAN's assessment areas align with the goals of this report, CAN's findings have been included. The indicators that have not made progress are discussed below.

**Fostering Safety and Mental Health.** The proportionality of jail bookings across races and ethnicities has not changed since 2011. Black/African-Americans in Travis County are disproportionately involved in the criminal justice system and more likely of becoming a victim of violent crime, based on national data. Focus group participants with just a few years into adulthood reiterated the message of living with heightened sense of insecurity. The school setting was described as a punitive environment and not a place for learning and exploration. The youth were knowledgeable of the inequities reported in CAN's report. This awareness points to one of the most commonly identified barriers, the need to repair and build a trusting relationship with all Travis County residents.

**Health.** The uninsured population has decreased since the last assessment in 2015. Cancer mortality and drug overdose rates have steadily decreased, as well.

The percent of adults who report poor mental health and obesity has become worse since 2011. Black/African-Americans and low-income people were more likely to report poor mental health. Suicide and depression in the Medicare population is increasing. From 2005 to 2014, chlamydia and gonorrhea incidence rates have rapidly and alarmingly increased.

**Basic Needs.** The percent of residents who live in food insecure households has increased from 2011 to 2015. Children were more likely to experience food insecurity. 24 percent of children were food insecure in 2014. Yet, the SNAP enrollment is less than the State and the US.

**Transportation.** More people in 2015 are commuting alone than in 2011. Longer commutes have been attributed to the "drive until you qualify" philosophy that many families have adopted in search of affordable housing. As discussed in previous sections of the report, the displacement of Austin residents increases transportation costs and commute times, making it difficult to support parental engagement in children's school and general activities.

**Housing.** The number of people who were homeless on a given day has remained about the same. Renters more than homeowners are more likely to be cost-burdened.

**Education.** The percent of kindergartners who are school ready dropped from 2012 to 2016. Children in families with low-incomes are less likely to be kindergarten ready. Only 28 percent

of low-income children were ready to start school, compared to 61 percent of moderate-income children.

#### Indicators Showing Progress

**Housing.** According to the Austin Board of Realtors, the regional housing market is slowly beginning to normalize. Homes are spending more time on the market and the pace of both home sales and price growth is stabilizing. Housing options for moderate and low-income households will still be needed.

**High School Completion.** High school graduation rates have improved for all racial and ethnic groups over the last 10 years, according to CAN's 2017 report.

**Population Growth.** The pace of growth has slowed down for the City of Austin, however the population growth patterns will be settling increasingly more in the suburbs (e.g. Round Rock, Cedar Park Pflugerville).

**Employment.** Unemployment rates continue to steadily decrease in Travis County.

## Top 5 Needs for Travis County by Domain

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### Housing

**Affordable Housing.** Residential units that are affordable and located in neighborhoods with greater opportunity for economic mobility is especially needed to tackle historical policies and practices that have under-served communities of color.

### Infrastructure

**Infrastructure and Development.** Transportation that is accessible and reliable in neighborhoods with concentrations of poverty is needed. More specifically, circular routes of high frequency (every 15 minutes) that facilitate mobility of persons to the nearest grocery store, clinic, and employment opportunities.

Increase collaboration between the City of Austin and Travis County governments to ensure increased service delivery in the outlying areas of Austin and Travis County.

### Education

**Early Childhood Education.** Safe and affordable places where children can make gains in their development during their first years of life is needed. Child care, preschool, day cares are examples of centers aiming to enhance learning, while also providing caregivers flexibility to participate in the labor force.

**Job Skills Development.** The community's feedback consistently pointed to a need for apprenticeships and job skills development, particularly skills related to the tech industry. However, feedback lacked specificity in terms of the exact "computer skills" needed, which might indicate a need to raise awareness of the desirable hard skills employers seek in their applicants.

**Varied Levels of English Classes.** English classes of different levels are needed to further increase students' language proficiency. Limited English proficient workers who have received high skilled training in their native country need English level classes appropriate for the workers' respective workplace.

### Employment

**Living Wage Jobs.** The jobs being created are largely low-wage occupations. More jobs are needed that pay enough to make ends meet and provide benefits to accommodate personal circumstances that can occasionally interrupt work commitments.

**More Hands-On Jobs.** Jobs need to be created that the workforce is prepared to perform. Need additional positions that can be filled with relatively less training. People living under poverty, especially caregivers, have less time and financial resources to invest in costly and lengthy educational opportunities.

## Health

**Healthcare Access and Affordability.** Nearly a quarter of the population between the ages 18 to 64 do not have health insurance and for many healthcare services are not affordable.

**Continuum of Care.** Screenings are helpful but a continuum of care is need to help people get treatment with a consistent healthcare provider, which is key to improving health outcomes.

**Support for People with Disabilities and their Families.** Women and families with dependents need additional financial and emotional support. Financial support is needed to compensate the lack of income generated for providing care and support groups to help families manage different needs.

## Civic Engagement

**Expand Outreach.** Expand outreach to outlying areas and areas where services are needed.

**Foster Community Cohesion and Integration.** Increase awareness of the diversity in immigration patterns to appropriately engage in cultural activities that create a sense of safety and inclusion.

**Engagement of the Aging Population.** Health status, fixed-income restrictions coupled with increasing cost of living, and lack of transportation are challenges in maintaining social and service connection with the aging population. Limited English speakers are especially vulnerable to isolation.

## Needs Domain National Goal and Services

Identified Needs	Domains	National Goal #	Goal Type	NPIs	Current Services/ Activities	Future Services/ Activities
Affordable Housing	Housing	1	Community and Family	CNPI4a; CNPI4b; CNPI4e; CNPI4h	Rent and utility assistance	Continue to build partnerships with NHCD, Austin Tenant's Council, ECHO, HACA, Foundation Communities and others
Infrastructure Development	Infrastructure/ Income/Asset Building	2	Community	CNPI3a; CNPI 3b	2012 and 2018 City of Austin Bonds	Continue to build partnership with Travis County and explore new partnerships to expand service delivery to outlying areas of Travis County
Early Childhood Education	Education and Cognitive Development	1	Community	CNPI2a; CNPI2b;	Child Inc. Partnership and co-location of services	Support the work of the Early Childhood Council and continue development of partnership with CCMS



<b>Identified Needs</b>	<b>Domains</b>	<b>National Goal #</b>	<b>Goal Type</b>	<b>NPIs</b>	<b>Current Services/ Activities</b>	<b>Future Services/ Activities</b>
English as a Second Language Classes	Education and Cognitive Development	1	Family	FNPI2f	None	Explore partnership with Literacy Coalition to offer ESL classes through the Neighborhood Centers
Living Wage Jobs	Employment	1	Community and Family	CNPI1c;CNPI 1e; FNPI1e; FNPI1f	Partnerships with Workforce Solutions and Skillpoint Alliance; Self-Sufficiency Case Management Services	Continue partnerships with Workforce Solutions and Skillpoint Alliance; Self-Sufficiency Case Management Services
Support for People with Disabilities and their Families	Health and Social/ Behavioral Development	1	Family	FNPI 4e; FNPI5f; FNPI 5g; FNPI 5h	Healthy Options Program for the Elderly; Rent and utility assistance; Preventive Health Screenings and Linkages to Primary Care	Continue to build partnerships with Family Eldercare, Easter Seals and other agencies providing support for people with disabilities and their families

<b>Identified Needs</b>	<b>Domains</b>	<b>National Goal #</b>	<b>Goal Type</b>	<b>NPIs</b>	<b>Current Services/ Activities</b>	<b>Future Services/ Activities</b>
Expand Outreach	Civic Engagement and Community Involvement	3	Agency and Community	CNPI 3a; CNPI3b	Development of Neighborhood Services outreach plan; Update of website and social media	Staff training and implementation of outreach plan

# Austin Public Health's Neighborhood Centers: Strengths, Assets, and Challenges

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## Background

Austin Public Health's Neighborhood Centers serve as the Community Action Agency for Travis County and have a long history of serving the low income residents of Austin and Travis County. The Neighborhood Centers are a trusted source of support for many of Travis County's most vulnerable citizens.

## Strengths and Assets

**Diverse, Multidisciplinary Team** – Neighborhood Center staff bring a wealth of experience and training to their work in the community. Community workers and Administrative associates use their experience and knowledge of social services to connect with the communities we serve. Licensed social workers provide self-sufficiency case management and crisis intervention services to give people a hand up. Registered nurses conduct health screenings and prevention education to help prevent chronic disease and educate the community about how to better care for their health. Center Managers bring experience and knowledge from the fields of social work, professional counseling, workforce development, and organizational leadership. Staff represent a diverse range of backgrounds and work together to provide wraparound services to clients.

**Community Partnerships** – Neighborhood Center staff work with a broad range of internal and external partners to offer a variety of services to clients and leverage CSBG funds to maximize capacity.

**Quality, Customer Service** - Neighborhood Center staff consistently receive high marks for the customer service they provide to the community. Through ongoing training and staff development, Neighborhood Center staff seek to continually build their knowledge and skills to better serve the community.

**Organizational Standards** – In 2017, the Neighborhood Centers met 100% of the CSBG organizational standards.

**Broad Range of Programs** – Neighborhood Centers offer a wide range of programs that help low-income individuals and families meet basic needs, increase their self-sufficiency or family stability and take better care of their health.

## Facilities and Growth

The Rosewood-Zaragosa Neighborhood Center has been serving Austin residents since it was built in 1974 and the majority of the six neighborhood centers were built in the 1970s and 1980s. The newest facility, the St. John Community Center, was built in 2001, relocating Neighborhood Center services from another building in the same area. In 2012, a bond was passed to build a new facility in the Montopolis Neighborhood which will be co-located with Parks and Recreation, and is set to break ground in 2018.

Three new Neighborhood Centers have been proposed in the 2018 bond process. Facilities have been proposed in the Colony Park, Dove Springs and North Austin area to address the growth of the low-income populations in these areas.

Austin Public Health has also continued to expand its partnerships with the Travis County Community Centers and has begun offering health screenings at the Del Valle, Post Road and Palm Square locations.

**Outreach Locations** – Staff provide services not only in Neighborhood Centers, but also in three outreach locations in the Austin’s Colony, Colony Park and Dove Springs neighborhoods to increase the reach of our services.

**Crisis Intervention** - The Neighborhood Centers have a team of social workers dedicated to crisis intervention who have helped Austin respond to crises such as floods in the Dove Springs area and Hurricane Harvey.

**Community Development Commission** – Eight members representing the low-income populations of Travis County serve on Austin’s Community Development Commission. Each representative is nominated and elected by their community and bring their unique skills and ideas to the work of the Commission.

## Challenges

**Resources** – In recent years, CSBG funding has been continually at risk at the Federal level. CSBG currently funds 16 of the 35 staff of the Neighborhood Centers, leading to uncertainty about future programming and availability of services. In addition, the funding allocated to Travis County in 2018 decreased, which has decreased the availability of CSBG funded services.

**Outreach** – A 2017 audit conducted by the Office of the City Auditor found that Austin Public Health “should develop and implement an outreach plan to create awareness for Neighborhood Center services.” The CSBG Needs Assessment Survey also highlighted the need for greater outreach to improve the awareness of Neighborhood Center services.

**Gentrification** - The 2017 City Auditor’s report also noted Austin Public Health “should identify strategies to improve accessibility of Neighborhood Center services and expand service delivery into areas with high concentrations of low-and moderate-income residents.” As the urban core where the Neighborhood Centers were built in the 1970s and 1980s becomes less affordable, low and moderate income residents are increasingly moving to outlying areas of Travis County and surrounding counties.

## APPENDICES

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1. Survey Tool and Results
2. Interview Tool and Results
3. Focus Group Questions and Feedback
4. Other Data