

2010 Poverty Fact Sheet

What is the face of poverty in Travis County?

In 2008, one in seven Travis County residents or 144,336 people were living below the federal poverty level of \$21,200 for a family of four. The Travis County poverty rate (15%) is higher than the U.S. rate (13%) but lower than the Texas rate (16%).

In 2008 in Travis County:

- 19% of children and youth (47,723 persons under the age of 18) were living in poverty
- 16% of women (76,632 persons) were living in poverty
- Nearly 8% of all elderly individuals (4,732 persons) were living in poverty
- 24% percent of all individuals with a disability (17,788 persons) were living in poverty
- 29% of adults without a high school diploma (24,985 persons) were living in poverty

Source: American Community Survey, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=ACS&_submenuid=&_lang=en&_ts=; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/08Poverty.shtml>

Did you know?

Most families living in poverty (84% or 19,447 families) do not receive any type of cash assistance from the government.

72% of households living in poverty (36,587 households) did not receive food stamps.

Source: American Community Survey, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=ACS&_submenuid=&_lang=en&_ts=

What does it really take to get by?

The federal poverty level does not tell the story of those who are struggling to meet their basic needs. Most researchers and policymakers agree that a family must earn at least two times the federal poverty level to meet basic needs. A family is considered to be low-income if they earn 200% of the federal poverty level or \$42,400 for a family of four. This paints a different picture of economic instability in Travis County. Under this definition in 2008:

- Approximately one in three residents (311,005 persons) were low-income.
- 41% of children and youth under the age of 18 (101,504 persons under the age of 18) were low-income.
- One in five older adults or 12,082 persons 65 years or older were low-income.

Sources: National Center for Children in Poverty, http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_892.html; American Community Survey, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=ACS&_submenuid=&_lang=en&_ts=

How does poverty affect my community?

Poverty has many tangible costs for our community:

- Loss of human potential and productivity
- Reduction of workforce readiness and economic competitiveness
- Higher health insurance premiums and doctor bills
- Increased crime and the rising cost of prisons
- Exacerbation of racial divisions
- Family instability and breakup

Source: Wisconsin Community Action Program Association, <http://www.wiscap.org/pdfs/Poverty%20Matters%20-%20Facing%20Poverty%20in%20Wisconsin.pdf>

When should I get involved? Now!

The recent economic downturn has exacerbated the problem of poverty throughout the nation and has pushed many families over the edge into an unstable economic condition. Local agencies are struggling to help our neighbors in poverty meet their basic needs.

In 2008, the United Way Capital Area centralized referral and information system, 2-1-1 Texas, experienced a 40% increase in the number of calls received for basic needs assistance in Central Texas. This increase in demand was most significant in the areas of food (+34%), housing (+25%), and transportation (+20%).

In 2008, Austin Energy received 8,578 requests for utility assistance, a 41% increase from 2007. In spite of Austin Energy's assistance and other efforts, service was disconnected for non-payment of utility bills in an average of 4,100 households per month during 2008, compared with an average of 3,950 per month during 2007.

Sources: 2-1-1 Texas, http://www.unitedwaycapitalarea.org/get_help_2-1-1/documents/2008_needs_and_trends.pdf; Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service: Research and Planning Department, http://www.co.travis.tx.us/health_human_services/research_planning/publications/2009/Community_Impact_2008/03_Basic_Needs.pdf

How can I make a difference?

To learn about how you can **donate your time and money** to local organizations dedicated to providing basic needs and services to people affected by poverty in Central Texas please visit:

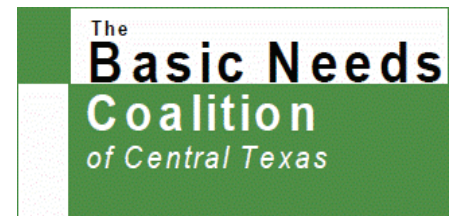
- The "How to Help" page of the Basic Needs Coalition website, www.basicneedscoalition.org
- I Live Here I Give Here, www.ilivehereigivehere.org
- United Way, www.unitedwaycapitalarea.org or www.handsoncentraltexas.org

To learn more about how you can **support public policy initiatives** that create real solutions for adequate healthcare, childcare, living wages, education and disability assistance please visit:

- Center for Public Policy Priorities, www.cppp.org

To **learn more about poverty** in our community, please visit:

- Community Action Network, www.caction.org
- 2008 American Community Survey Analysis, http://www.co.travis.tx.us/health_human_services/research_planning/documents/Travis_County_Snapshot_ACS_2008.pdf



2-1-1 Texas

A [New Entry] Inc.

AIDS Services of Austin

Any Baby Can

Arc of the Capital Area

Austin Stand Down

Austin Tenants Council

Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department

Austin Travis County Integral Care

Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable

Blackland Community Center

Capital Area Food Bank

Caritas of Austin

Catholic Charities of Central Texas

Communities in Schools

Community Action Network

Episcopal Church of the Good Shepard

El Buen Samaritano

Family Connections

Family Eldercare

Foundation Communities

Foundation for the Homeless

Front Steps

Gateway Church

Goodwill Industries of Central Texas

Housing Authority of the City of Austin

Mary House Catholic Worker of Austin, Inc.

Marywood Children and Family Services

Meals on Wheels and More

Micah 6

Physicians Health Choice of Central Texas

Project Hope, Manor ISD

SafePlace

Saheli for Asian Families

Salvation Army

St. Louis Parish Social Ministries

Sustainable Food Center

Texas Interagency Interfaith Disaster Response

Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid

The Care Communities

The Wright House Wellness Center

Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department

Trinity Center

United Way Capital Area

Volunteer Legal Services of Central Texas

Workforce Solutions-Capital Area