Access to Basic Supports

FY 2017 Community Impact Report

Travis County Health and Human Services

Research & Planning Division

FEBRUARY 2018

Access to Basic Supports

FY 2017 Community Impact Report

Travis County Health and Human Services
Research & Planning Division

County Executive
Sherri E. Fleming

Project Leads
Courtney Bissonnet Lucas
Brittain Ayres

Lead Writer
Tonya Pennie

Research & Planning Division
Lawrence Lyman, Division Director
Korey Darling, Planning Manager
Brittain Ayres
Tara Carmean
Rachel Coff
Anna Lisa Conlin
Anne Fine
Courtney Bissonnet Lucas
Rochelle Olivares
Tonya Pennie

Questions or Comments?

For questions or for more information, please contact the Research & Planning Division at HHS_R&P@traviscountytx.gov.

TRAVIS COUNTY
HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES

PURPOSE

Who we are:

A Department of Travis County that serves the community under the guidance of the Commissioner's Court

What we do:

Address community needs through internal and external investments and services

What we strive to accomplish:

Maximize quality of life for all people in Travis County

- Protect vulnerable populations
- Invest in social and economic well-being
- Promote healthy living: physical, behavioral, and environmental
- Build a shared understanding of our community

VALUES

We value helping people.

- We provide accessible, person-centered services with respect and care.
- We work to empower people through our service to them, always honoring the strengths and differences of the individuals and families of Travis County.

We value the accountability and integrity of our staff.

- We value the diversity of our staff and the experience each of us brings to HHS.
- We honor our collective service to the public, including the careful stewardship of public funds.
- We value the quality services we provide to the community in a spirit of shared responsibility.

We value cooperation and collaboration in the community at large and within HHS.

- We are interdependent and connected.
- We treat one another with respect and value effective communication and teamwork.
- We honor our partners in the community and engage with them to more efficiently and effectively serve our clients.

Table of Contents

Introduction 5

Community Conditions 7

Investment Overview 21

Capital Area Rural Transportation System: CARTS–JARC 25

Capital Area Rural Transportation System: CARTS–Rural Transit 27

Caritas of Austin: Community Kitchen 29

Catholic Charities of Central Texas: Immigration Legal Services 31

Central Texas Food Bank: Food Bank 33

Central Texas Food Bank: Mobile Food Pantry 35

Sustainable Food Center: Spread the Harvest 37

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.: Legal Assistance for Access to Benefits 39

Appendix 41

Endnotes 42

Introduction

The Travis County Commissioners Court, through the Travis County Health and Human Services Department (HHS), annually invests over $19.5 million in community-based social service programs. These Department investments align with and supplement our direct services to meet the needs of local residents. Community-based organizations are frequently geographically and culturally embedded in the communities they serve and are often best positioned to provide needed services.

Purpose of Report

The annual Community Impact Report provides an overview of HHS investments in health and human services. The *FY 2017 Community Impact Report* offers highlights of community conditions most pertinent to the services purchased, and details investment, programmatic, and performance information on the Department's social service contracts. This information allows policy makers, program managers, and others to better understand these investments, recognize accomplishments, identify areas for improvement, disseminate lessons learned, and highlight areas warranting further research.

Organization of Report

This report addresses nine issue areas—Access to Basic Supports, Behavioral Health, Child and Youth Development, Housing Continuum, Planning and Evaluation, Public Health, Safety Intervention Services, Supportive Services for Community Living, and Workforce Development—as well as a pilot project under Holistic Family Services. The Investment Overview summarizes information from all nine issue areas and the pilot project. Each issue area section begins with community conditions information and then provides performance highlights about the programs within that issue area. Each program is classified into the issue area most closely aligned to its goals and objectives.

Although this report highlights community conditions for individual issue areas separately, each issue area must be considered in a broader context. Community conditions related to a single issue area may have similar or related root causes and broad-level consequences. Current economic conditions also have a global impact on community conditions.

This report provides detailed information about each program covered by an issue area, including an overview of program goals, services provided, eligibility criteria, and funding. Also captured are each program's performance results, compared to its contractual performance goals, and explanations of notable variance (+/- 10%) between the performance results and goals.

Notes on Methodology

Community conditions discussed in this report reflect the most recent information available at the time of writing. The majority of the social service contracts included in the report followed a fiscal year calendar (October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017) unless otherwise noted. Program and performance highlights are drawn from contracts and reports provided by contracted service providers. Estimates from the American Community Survey have been tested at a 90% confidence level for reliability. In some cases, all noted, estimates were unreliable due to small sample sizes.

Considerations When Reading This Report

Performance results provide only a starting point for understanding the impact of these programs. These summary statistics are not necessarily an indication of the programs' overall performance, but rather a snapshot of their performance over a one-year period. Within these reports, service providers offer explanations for variance in performance, which provides context and meaning to summary results.

Performance results do not reflect programs' full value to and impact on the community. Therefore, it is important to keep the following considerations in mind when reviewing program performance.

Readers should use caution when comparing output and outcome results across programs, as participant characteristics can significantly influence a given program's performance goals and results. For example, performance results may be lower for programs with clients who face considerable challenges (e.g., serious mental illness or addiction issues) and have little social support.

Factors beyond the program's control may also impact the program's performance. For example, the relative scarcity or abundance of jobs in the local economy will impact client employment rates for a workforce development program, regardless of the quality of training and support provided. Without controlling for these factors, the true impact or efficacy of the program on outcomes cannot be discerned.

Readers should also use caution when examining outcome results for programs with less than 30 clients, in which the outcome of just a few clients can greatly affect the program's total outcome result. In these instances, examining percentages may be less helpful than examining raw numbers.

Finally, this report captures a selection of performance measures, which may not reflect the program's full impact on participants and their families, peers, and neighborhood. Performance measures may not all be equal in importance or value to the community.

Community Conditions

Access to Basic Supports Goals and Services

Programs and services within this issue area provide: access to food to prevent hunger and promote wellness; access to transportation for critical needs and to improve transportation utilization; and access to legally entitled benefits for identified populations. Some populations have disproportionately poor outcomes in government systems: veterans, immigrants, and people living in low-income households. Those populations require legal services for fair access and representation within those systems.

Highlights of Community Conditions

The Access to Basic Supports issue area encompasses residents' access to food, transportation, public benefits, and legal rights all of which are basic necessities. Food is critical for life and health, transportation creates connection to society and opportunity, and legal support may be required to protect individuals' legal rights and access to public systems.

Poverty Statistics

Income is a primary determinant of whether one can meet basic needs. Poverty statistics are often used as a proxy measure to describe the number of people or share of the population that, because of income level, may face challenges meeting their basic needs. Poverty thresholds are used for calculating all official poverty statistics and are updated annually by the U.S. Census Bureau.[a] In 2016, the poverty threshold was $12,486 for a single adult and $24,339 for a household of two adults and two children.[1] In 2016, about 12% of Travis County residents (144,605) lived below 100% of the poverty threshold and 27% of residents (315,753) lived below 200% of the poverty threshold.[2] The table below shows the individual and child poverty rates in Travis County from 2012 to 2016.[3] While the number and rate of individuals and children living in poverty has decreased between 2015 and 2016 there are still a significant number of Travis County residents who continue to face economic challenges.

a The term poverty threshold is often misused interchangeably with the term poverty guidelines, also known as the federal poverty income guidelines (FPIG). While the poverty threshold is a statistical tool issued by the U.S. Census Bureau used to calculate the number of people in poverty, the poverty guidelines are a simplified version of the poverty thresholds issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and used to determine financial eligibility for certain programs. For more information on poverty thresholds and poverty guidelines, please see the resources section of this chapter.

Poverty Status by Age Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined, Travis County, 2012-2016					
	2012	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*
Individuals in Poverty	197,657	176,920	193,753	153,579	144,605
Individual Poverty Rate	18%	16%	17%	13%	12%
Children (under 18) in Poverty	67,791	55,554	63,659	48,676	44,289
Child Poverty Rate	26%	22%	24%	18%	17%

Created by: Travis County HHS, Research & Planning Division, 2017
Source data: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 1–Year Estimates, C17001

Poverty status is used to determine eligibility for many public assistance programs but does not reflect what individuals and families need to meet basic needs. The Center for Public Policy Priorities developed a comprehensive methodology for estimating the basic cost of living, using the Texas Family Budgets tool. An interactive online calculator, it estimates that households in the Austin-Round Rock metropolitan area need incomes more than double the poverty threshold to make ends meet.[4,b]

While the cost of living has risen (as should be expected due to inflation), the cost of housing has outpaced the percent change in income. The following table shows that the median household income in Travis County increased by 22% from 2012 to 2016,[5,6] while the median contract rent[c] increased by 24%,[7,8] and the median home price increased by 40%.[9] The cost of transportation as reported by the Consumer Price Index[d] decreased by 11%,[10] while the cost of goods and services and cost of food increased by 4%[11] and 6%[12] respectively.

b Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other government sources, the tool calculates family budgets based on housing and utilities, food, health care, child care, transportation, and other necessities such as clothing and telephone services. Figures vary according to family size, number of adults working, and employer based benefits. It is estimated that households in the Austin-Round Rock metropolitan area with employer-paid health insurance premiums (100% of working adults, 50% of dependents; family pays remaining) require incomes equivalent to 205-230% of the poverty threshold. For example, a single person would need an income of at least $25,630 (205% of the poverty threshold in 2016); a family of four with two children would need at least $55,981 (230% of the poverty threshold in 2016). Those without employer-paid insurance premiums likely need incomes of 217-238% of the poverty threshold to cover the costs of necessities including 100% of their insurance premium through the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

c Contract rent is the monthly rent agreed to or contracted for, regardless of any furnishings, utilities, fees, meals, or services that may be included. (American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2016 Subject Definitions, pg. 16).

d The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumer for a market basket of consumer goods and services.

Change in Income and Costs, 2012-2016						
	Transportation	*Cost of Goods/ Services*	*Cost of Food*	*Housing*		*Median Income*
	Consumer Price Index, Transportation	*Consumer Price Index, All Items*	*Consumer Price Index, Food*	*Median Contract Rent*	*Median Home Price*	*Annual Household Median Income*
	South Urban Area	*South Urban Area*	*South Urban Area*	*Travis County*	*Austin LMA*	*Travis County*
2012	217.6	222.7	232.4	839	230,000	57,368
2016	193.1	231.5	247.5	1,044	323,000	70,158
Percent Change	-11%	4%	6%	24%	40%	22%

Created by: Travis County HHS, Research & Planning Division, 2017
Source data: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index First Half Semi Annual Average; Real Estate Center Texas A&M University, Housing Activity for Austin; 2012 & 2016 American Community Survey 1–Year Estimates, B25058, B19013

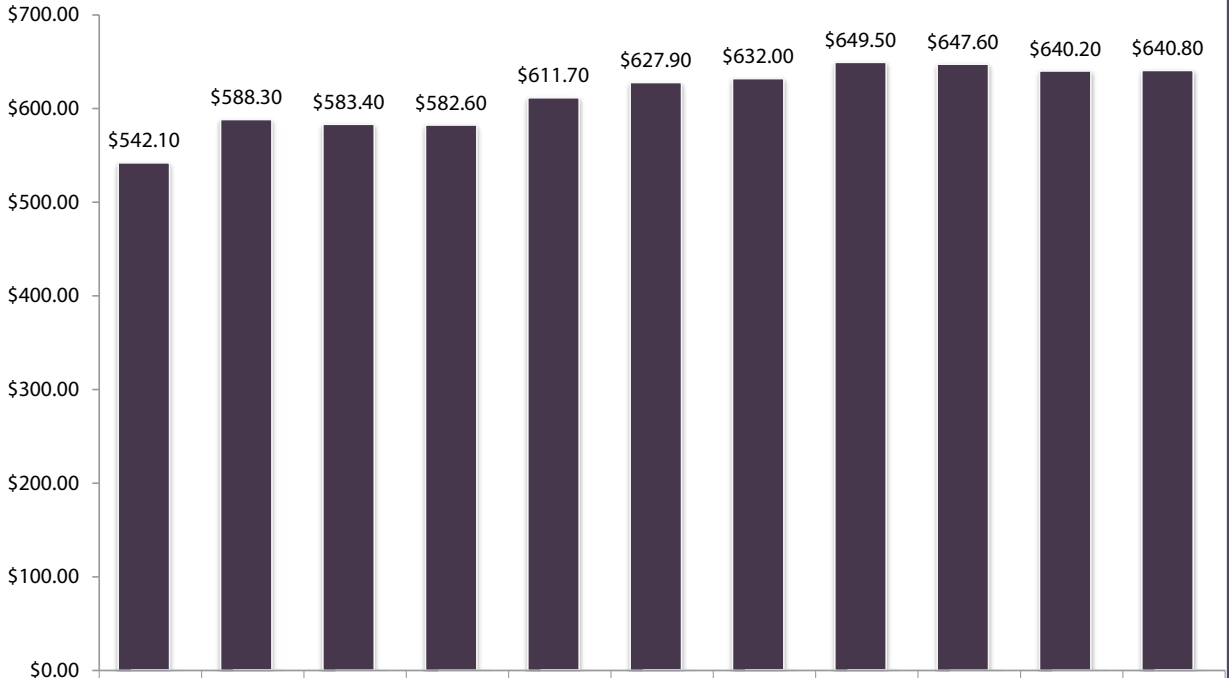
Food

Food is a basic necessity for physical and psychological health and well-being. Food averts hunger and adequate nutrition is essential for optimal physical and mental health. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, food security is the ability to ensure access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.[13] Between 2014 and 2016, about 14.3% of households in Texas were food insecure compared to about 13.0% nationally.[14] In Travis County, an estimated 16.1% of individuals (about 180,830) are food insecure,[15] and about 22.2% of Travis County children (57,780) are food insecure.[16]

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) represents a national standard against which a nutritional diet at a minimum cost is measured, and also serves as the basis for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) allotments.[17] The cost of food has increased by about 18% from 2007 to 2017, according to the TFP. In 2007, a family of four could manage on a food budget of about $542 per month, compared to $641 in 2017.[18]

Monthly Cost of Food, Thrifty Food Plan

Family of Four*, U.S., 2007-2017



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Monthly Cost	$542.10	$588.30	$583.40	$582.60	$611.70	$627.90	$632.00	$649.50	$647.60	$640.20	$640.80
Change from Prior Year	4.6%	8.5%	-0.8%	-0.1%	5.0%	2.6%	0.7%	2.8%	-0.3%	-1.1%	0.1%

*Calculations are for the monthly cost of food in June, using the Thrifty Food Plan, for a family of four with two children 6-8 & 9-11 years.
Created by: Travis County HHS Research & Planning Division, 2017
Source data: United States Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Nutrition, 2007-2017

Calls to 2-1-1, the United Way for Greater Austin Navigation Center,[e] continue to suggest a demand for food-related needs[f] in Travis County. In 2016, 2-1-1 received 58,267 calls from Travis County residents.[19] Of these calls, there were 4,427 calls related to food assistance. Callers with needs related to food pantries represented 3,424 needs. Callers with needs related to existing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits or who were seeking general information about the SNAP program accounted for 421 needs.[20] Readers should use caution and consider the following methodological note when interpreting 2-1-1 data for calls related to Food Stamps/SNAP: Between 2015 and 2016 call data, 2-1-1 changed the logging procedure for recording calls with Food Stamps/SNAP related needs. Call data for 2016 will differ from the numbers previously reported.

e United Way for Greater Austin helps Central Texas residents navigate the health and human services system by maintaining the Navigation Center. The service provides simple, one-call access to call specialists who listen to each caller's situation, assess information and then connect callers to the appropriate nonprofit and/or government resources.

f 2-1-1 reported the number of total calls and unique needs. Some callers may identify multiple needs during one call.

Safety Net Services

The goal of a safety net is to help low-income individuals and families bridge the gap between available income and the cost of meeting basic needs. The safety net includes federally-funded, state-administered benefits and a local network of nonprofit agencies, faith-based organizations, and city and county agencies that fund and/or provide services. The majority of programs target households with incomes at or near the federal poverty threshold, while at the local level and in the nonprofit sector, there often may be more flexibility and focus on tailoring of eligibility to serve low-income and vulnerable residents.

Some of the programs available for those in need of food assistance include: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), in which food benefits are administered through the Lone Star Card which can be used similar to a debit card at authorized food retail locations; the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), a health and nutrition program with a focus on improving the diet of infants, children, and pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women; Feeding Texas, a statewide nonprofit leading a unified effort in response to hunger through a network of food banks with the Central Texas Food Bank locally supporting the needs of Travis County; Meals on Wheels, which provides nutritious meals and supportive services to older adults and persons with disabilities; Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) which provides support to child and adult care facilities and family or group day homes for the provision of nutritious meals and snacks; the School Breakfast Program (SBP), a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions; and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) which is a federally assisted meal program that provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day.

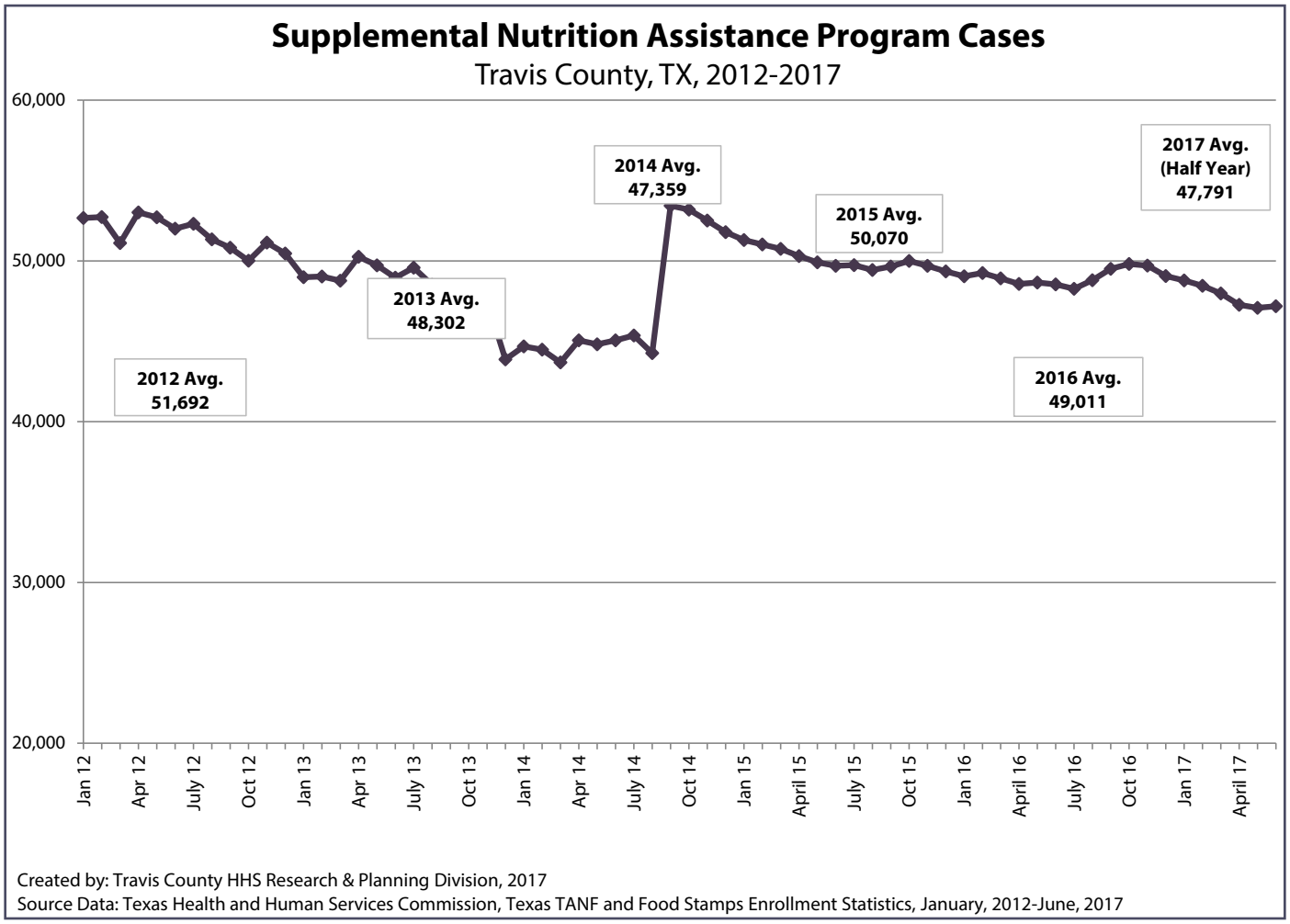
At some point during the year about 1 in 4 Americans participates in 1 or more of the 15 domestic food and nutrition assistance programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).[21] The five largest programs in fiscal year 2016: SNAP, NSLP, WIC, SBP, and CACFP accounted for 96% of the total USDA expenditures for domestic food and nutrition assistance. SNAP accounted for 69%, over two-thirds of Federal food and nutrition spending in fiscal year 2016.[22]

Despite the availability of the aforementioned food and nutrition services, there are gaps in the safety net. In order to be eligible for federal safety net benefits, families must meet income eligibility guidelines typically set at or slightly above the federal poverty income guidelines (FPIG).[g] For example, eligibility for SNAP requires a gross monthly income at or below 130% of FPIG and a net monthly income at or below 100% of FPIG.[23] However, as the cost of living in Travis County has been estimated to require an income of at least twice the poverty threshold,[24] many families may be ineligible for assistance yet not earn enough to fully cover the costs of their basic expenses.

g The 2016 federal poverty income guidelines were $11,880 for an individual and $24,300 for a family of four.

Although enrollment rates fluctuate, residents consistently seek federal benefits assistance to meet their food and nutrition needs. In June 2017, the most recent data shown in the following chart, there were 47,187 SNAP cases in Travis County with 104,252 people (about 9% of all Travis County residents) receiving benefits.[25,26] The majority of SNAP recipients in Travis County were children under 18 years of age (57%) and 35% of recipients were adults ages 18 to 59.[27]

Readers should use caution and consider the following methodological note when interpreting SNAP trend data from the chart: HHSC changed the way SNAP food benefits enrollment is reported by county in September 2014. Enrollment totals beginning with September 2014 will differ from the numbers previously reported.



Created by: Travis County HHS Research & Planning Division, 2017
Source Data: Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Texas TANF and Food Stamps Enrollment Statistics, January, 2012-June, 2017

Transportation

System Overview

Transportation supports the ability to participate in the job market, pursue an education, purchase food or other goods, and obtain medical care or other services. Individuals and households without affordable, reliable access to transportation often encounter barriers to full participation in the community.

Travis County is largely a car-dependent region with 92% of workers who work outside the home driving alone or carpooling to work versus only 3% who use public transportation.[28] While the majority of Travis County households do have at least one vehicle, about 5% (approximately 23,641 households) are without a vehicle.[29] For those without a personal vehicle, public transportation is often a necessity.

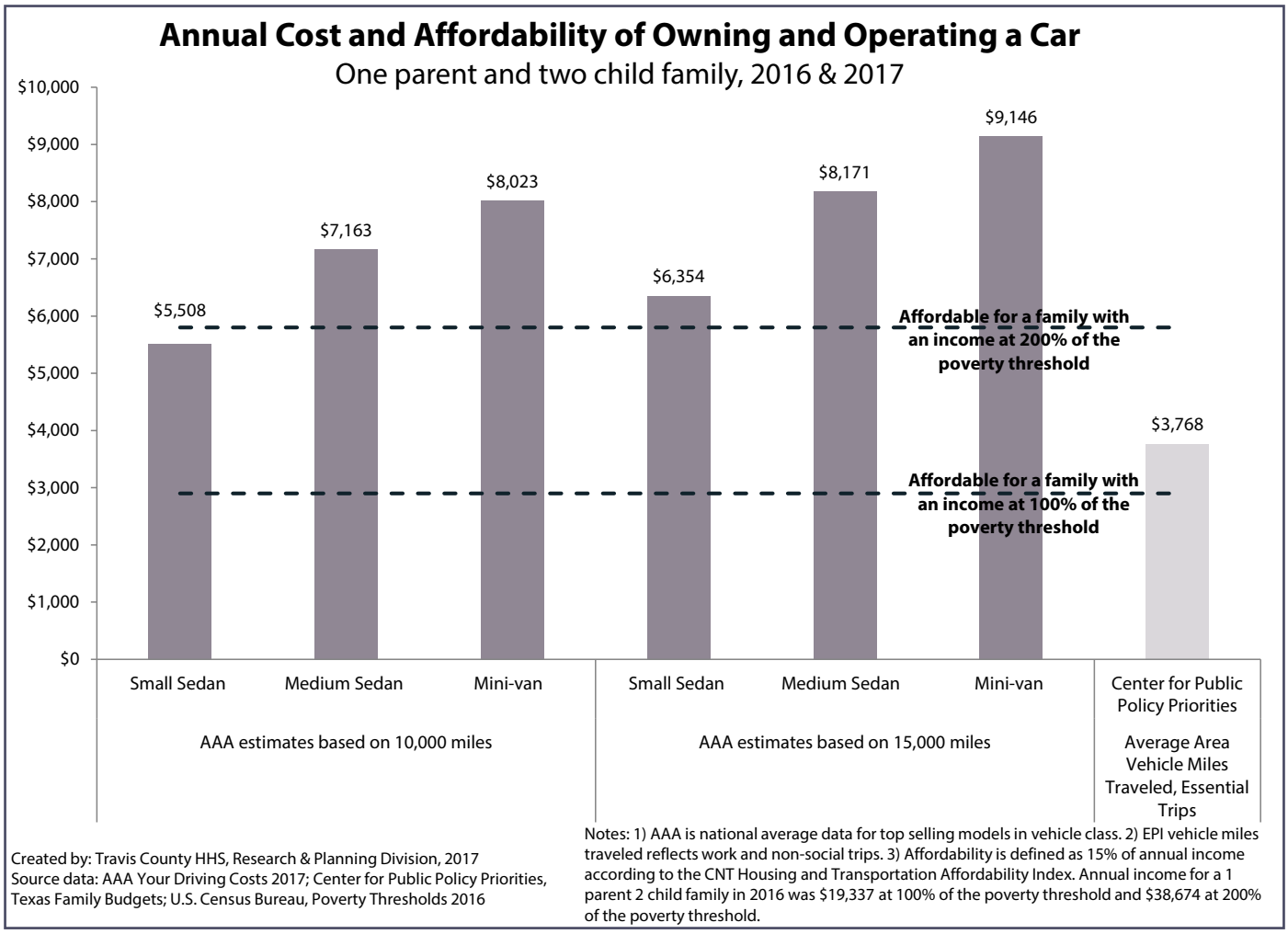
Public transportation, defined as shared passenger service available to the public, includes fixed-route via bus or train and demand response via vans.[30] Public transportation is typically funded through some combination of federal, state, and local government funds, sale tax, and rider fares.[31] There are two public transit providers in Travis County. The Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro) provides urban public transportation services within the member jurisdictions that voted to join Capital Metro and dedicate a one-percent sales tax to public transportation services, including: Austin, Jonestown, Lago Vista, Leander, Manor, Point Venture, San Leanna, and portions of Travis and Williamson counties including the Anderson Mill area.[32] The Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS) provides rural transit and paratransit services in the non-urbanized areas of Travis County (and the non-urbanized areas of other Central Texas counties).[33]

Transportation Challenges and Needs

A discussion of the full range of systemic mobility challenges posed by rapid growth in Central Texas is beyond the scope of this report. However, the high personal costs associated with owning a vehicle and the gaps in the public transportation system are the two most significant barriers to reliable transportation. Such transportation challenges disproportionately affect older adults, people with disabilities, and those with low incomes.[34] Travis County residents living outside of Austin's urban core may find their transportation options particularly limited.

Transportation costs can be a strain, particularly for those with limited incomes. The Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), a nonprofit research and advocacy organization that developed the Housing and Transportation (H+T®) Affordability Index, considers transportation costs to be affordable if

they are 15% or less of household income.[h,35] According to this index, a "typical" Travis County household with the area median income spends 20% of income on transportation costs; a Travis County household with 80% of the area median income spends about 22% of the household income on transportation costs.[36] The costs of owning a car include both fixed costs like insurance and depreciation, and variable or operating costs like fuel and maintenance. The following chart provides estimates of the annual cost of owning and operating a car based on several scenarios, and compares the actual cost of car ownership to the 15% affordability standard for families with incomes at 100% and 200% of the federal poverty threshold (annual incomes of $19,337 and $38,674 respectively for a household with one adult and two children). In almost all scenarios shown in the chart, owning a car may be unaffordable for low-income families.



Created by: Travis County HHS, Research & Planning Division, 2017
Source data: AAA Your Driving Costs 2017; Center for Public Policy Priorities, Texas Family Budgets; U.S. Census Bureau, Poverty Thresholds 2016

Notes: 1) AAA is national average data for top selling models in vehicle class. 2) EPI vehicle miles traveled reflects work and non-social trips. 3) Affordability is defined as 15% of annual income according to the CNT Housing and Transportation Affordability Index. Annual income for a 1 parent 2 child family in 2016 was $19,337 at 100% of the poverty threshold and $38,674 at 200% of the poverty threshold.

h Based on research in communities ranging from large cities with extensive transit to small micropolitan areas with extremely limited transit options, CNT has found that 15% of the Area Median Income (AMI) is an attainable goal for transportation affordability. This 15% standard for transportation affordability is considered in combination with HUD's standard for housing affordability which is 30% of household income.

Although public transportation may be an affordable option for individuals with limited incomes, it may not be available or reliable. According to the Austin/Travis County 2017 Community Health Assessment, for members of the community who do not have personal or family vehicle access, public transportation is a critical need. As the population continues to grow outside the Austin city center, time and cost are significant challenges associated with using public transportation.[37] Additionally, there are some areas that are not served by either of Travis County's public transit providers. The Capital Area Regional Transit Coordination Committee (RTCC) has identified several geographical areas of major service gaps (i.e. with limited to no public transit services) within Travis County boundaries including Cedar Park, Pflugerville, and West Lake Hills.[38] Furthermore, in its summary of priority areas of need, the RTCC's Coordinated Plan states, "There is a pressing need for additional transit service in the communities that are outside of both Capital Metro and CARTS service areas."

Transportation challenges related to both access and cost may also be greater for Travis County residents in unincorporated areas. Based on public input received by Travis County's Community Development Block Grant Program, lack of transportation is an ongoing concern for low-income residents of the unincorporated areas. Lack of transportation can make it difficult for residents to access both public services and basic needs, which tend to be located in more densely populated urban areas. Residents in unincorporated areas also likely have higher transportation costs than residents of more densely developed urban neighborhoods, as they generally must travel farther for work, school and shopping, and have less access to public transit options.[39]

Calls to 2-1-1, the United Way for Greater Austin Navigation Center, continue to suggest a demand for transportation assistance, and indicate some of the types of transportation needs. In 2016, 2-1-1 received 58,267 calls from Travis County residents, including 1,784 calls for transportation needs. Callers with transportation-related needs most often needed transportation to medical appointments, accounting for 602 needs. Other transportation-related calls covered a diverse range of needs, including bus fare (361 needs), gas money (261 needs), senior ride programs (84 needs), and disability-related transportation (89 needs).[40]

Legal Rights and Benefits

For many Texans, particularly those in poverty, access to effective legal service is limited. Civil legal assistance helps individuals who face barriers to obtaining adequate legal counsel to protect their rights in civil legal matters. The two primary funding sources for legal aid in Texas are the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and the Texas Access to Justice Foundation. LSC is an independent nonprofit corporation established by Congress in 1974 to promote equal access to justice and provide high quality civil legal assistance to low-income Americans.[41] LSC awards grants to legal services providers throughout

the U.S. through a competitive grants process.[42] The Texas Access to Justice Foundation was created in 1984 by the Supreme Court of Texas and is the largest Texas-based funding source for civil legal aid. The Foundation administers funds including the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Program, Basic Civil Legal Services (BCLS), Crime Victims Civil Legal Services (CVCLS) Program, Access to Justice Fee (ATJ), and private donations. Funds are granted to legal aid organizations that provide services to low-income Texans throughout the state.[43] The IOLTA Program relies on the interest from funds held in lawyers' trust accounts to support civil legal aid services.[44]

Both sources have experienced or are currently facing a decrease in funding available to provide legal aid for low-income Texans. In 2017 the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies[i] released a proposed budget reducing LSC funding by 24%, compared to 2017. While it is not the complete defunding that was recommended, only $300 million would be allocated for fiscal year 2018 for legal aid services throughout the U.S.[45] IOLTA funds have decreased significantly in recent years due to low interest rates. IOLTA funding has fallen from $20.1 million in 2007 to approximately $4.9 million in 2015, a 75% decline.[46] Due to declines in funding Texas legal aid providers have been forced to lay off staff and cut services, resulting in a lack of resources for in need low-income Texans. There is approximately one legal aid lawyer for every 9,800 Texans who qualify, with Texas ranking 47th in access to legal aid lawyers.[47]

In response to the 2017 Justice Gap Measurement Survey, a national household survey on the justice gap (conducted by the LSC contracted with NORC at the University of Chicago), respondents indicated if they experienced a civil legal problem in the past 12 months and rated the affect the problem had on their life on a five-point scale from "not at all" to "severe." Seven out of every 10 low-income households were found to have experienced at least one civil legal problem. Seventy percent of low-income Americans who personally experienced a civil legal problem reported at least one of the problems affected them "very much" or "severely."[48] Legal assistance may be necessary to address a variety of issues however a discussion of the full range of the legal system is beyond the scope of this report.

Calls to the United Way for Greater Austin Navigation Center, 2-1-1, suggest a demand for legal assistance. In 2016, of the 58,267 calls 2-1-1 received from Travis County residents, 2,724 calls were related to legal needs.[49] Callers with general legal aid and legal counseling needs[j] accounted for 672 and 104 needs respectively.[50]

i The subcommittee is responsible for developing budgets for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, NASA, the National Science Foundation, and other related agencies and grant programs, including the LSC.

j General legal aid and legal counseling needs include those of individuals in need of assistance disputing a decision regarding benefit approval and/or denial, these categories do not include callers needing assistance with the application process.

Public Benefits Legal Needs

Limited and declining resources, restrictions on the uses of funding, and scarcity of legal services in rural areas contribute to the gap between the civil legal needs of low-income individuals and the legal help they receive.[51] In 2016, 12% (96,998) of the cases closed by LSC grantees in Texas were related to helping individuals obtain and retain benefits including food stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and unemployment compensation.[52] Federal benefits programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP), the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, and SSI help to mitigate the effects of poverty,[53] while SSDI helps to provide income stability to workers who are unable to work due to disability.[54] These programs are federal entitlement programs, meaning they are rights granted by law to citizens (and certain non-citizens) who meet the programs' eligibility criteria. The application and eligibility process for federal benefits programs can be laborious, requiring documentation that may be difficult or unrealistic for an applicant to procure and submit within a required time frame.[55] Minor errors or omissions can lead to a denial, or an applicant can be wrongfully denied due to an administrative error.[56] Per program eligibility guidelines, most applicants are low-income and are unable to obtain professional legal assistance to appeal denials unless assistance is free or low-cost.

Immigration Legal Needs

U.S. immigration law is extremely complex and changes frequently and non-citizens without an attorney often lack the knowledge necessary to obtain the immigration benefits, status, or protections for which they might qualify. U.S. immigration law authorizes only licensed attorneys and representatives accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) to represent individuals in proceedings related to applications for immigrant benefits.[57] In immigration court, immigrants have the right to counsel. However, that expense is generally their own responsibility. Because deportation is classified as a civil and not a criminal sanction, immigrants facing removal are not afforded the same constitutional protections under the Sixth Amendment as criminal defendants.[58] In the criminal justice system even if they are facing just one day in jail, all defendants are provided an attorney if they cannot afford one. Generally, immigrants facing deportation do not have this same opportunity and accessing counsel once detained can be a challenge.[59] Many U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities are located in smaller cities, making it difficult to access legal aid resources in larger cities miles away.[60] Additionally, ability to pay is another obstacle as immigrants generally must pay for their own legal services. Those detained are unable to work to pay for counsel and although there are pro bono or reduced fee services available, there are not enough to meet the demand.[61]

Nationally, 37% of all immigrants facing deportation, whether detained or not, had an attorney and only 14% of those detained were able to secure counsel.[62] Individuals who are able to obtain representation are more likely to obtain immigration relief. Among those detained, individuals with representation were twice as likely as unrepresented individuals to obtain immigration relief, 49% with counsel compared to 23% without counsel. Those represented who were never detained were almost five times more likely than unrepresented individuals to obtain relief, 63% with counsel compared to 13% without counsel.[63]

Approximately 203,000 foreign born residents live in Travis County, comprising 17% of the total county population.[64] About 61% (124,742) of Travis County foreign born residents are non-citizens,[65] approximately 25,000 of those non-citizens are below the poverty level;[66] and would likely meet income qualifying criteria for legal aid.

Further Resources

Food and Poverty

Center for Public Policy Priorities – Texas Family Budgets

www.familybudgets.org

The Center for Public Policy Priorities evaluates public policy as it affects low- and moderate- income Texans through independent research and policy analysis, public education, advocacy, coalition-building, and technical assistance. Their Texas Family Budgets calculator is an online public education tool that uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other public sources to measure what families have to earn to cover basic expenses in 27 metropolitan areas of Texas. The calculator measures rental housing and utilities, food, health insurance, child care, transportation, and other necessities.

Food Research and Action Center

www.frac.org

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) is the leading national nonprofit organization working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and under-nutrition in the United States.

United States Census Bureau – Poverty and Poverty Thresholds

www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html

The United States Census Bureau is a leading source of quality data about people and the economy. The Census Bureau Poverty pages include reports on poverty data from several major household surveys and programs. Information also includes research on the Supplemental Poverty Measure.

Poverty thresholds, defined by the United States Census Bureau, are the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status. Thresholds vary according to family size and ages of the members. The Census Bureau provides tables by year of the poverty thresholds by size of family and number of children.

The United States Health and Human Services – Poverty Guidelines

www.aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/

The United States Department of Health and Human Services publishes the annual federal poverty income guidelines used for administrative purposes, such as determining financial eligibility for certain programs. They also provide background information on the poverty guidelines and poverty measurements.

Transportation

Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)

www.campotexas.org

CAMPO coordinates regional transportation planning with counties, cities, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Capital Area Rural Transportation System, Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, and the Texas Department of Transportation. CAMPO updates and releases a long-range regional transportation plan every 5 years. CAMPO also serves as the lead agency for the Capital Area Regional Transit Coordination Committee (RTCC) which works to create efficiencies, eliminate duplication, increase coordination, and address service gaps in the public transportation system.

Travis County Transportation Plan

www.traviscountytx.gov/tnr/transportation-plan/project-overview

Travis County is developing a locally focused transportation plan to identify transportation needs and solutions, incorporate future options and choices, and prioritize improvements in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Legal Rights and Benefits

American Immigration Council

www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/

The American Immigration Council is a leading resource for the development of immigration policies. Through research and analysis, the Council works to promote the development of immigration policies that promote fairness and due process.

Legal Services Corporation (LSC)

https://www.lsc.gov/

Legal Services Corporation (LSC) is an independent nonprofit established to provide financial support for civil legal aid to low-income Americans. LSC provides funding to independent nonprofit legal aid programs throughout the U.S.

Texas Access to Justice Foundation

www.teajf.org/

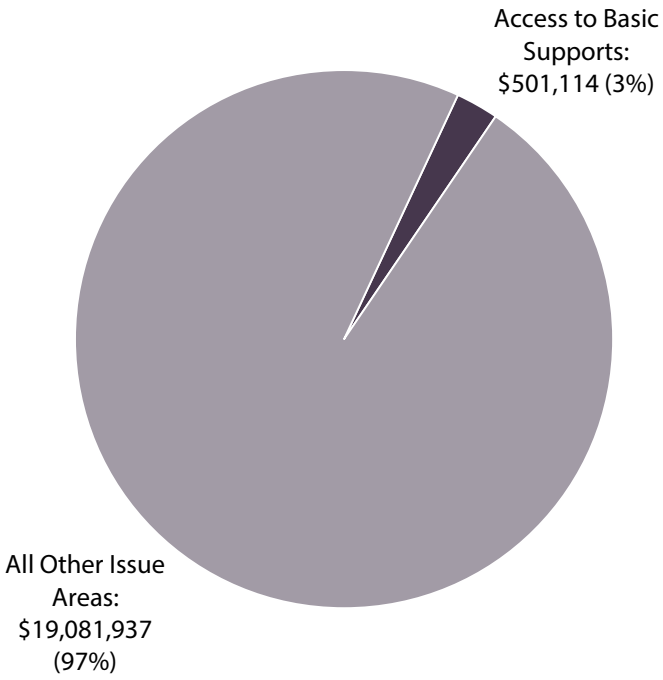
The Texas Access to Justice Foundation (TAJF) is the leading funder of legal aid in Texas. With TAJF grants, legal aid organizations provide free civil legal assistance to low-income Texans.

Investment Overview

Our Investment

HHS has contracted programs that offer basic support services related to food, transportation, and legal rights and benefits. Services may include: food and meals; programs that support access to healthy food; education about nutrition, safe food preparation and handling; transportation and access to transportation to provide health or safety needs and promote access to employment or education; Licensed attorney, Board Accredited Legal representation, or other authorized representation; appropriate consultation for system compliance; prevention activities around fraudulent/predatory practices in legal/benefits systems; legal clinics or helplines; and system navigation assistance.

Investment in Access to Basic Supports and Other Issue Areas, FY 2017



Funding Summary

The FY 2017 Funding Amount reflects 12–month funding (October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017) unless otherwise noted.

Agency Name	Program Name	FY 2017 Funding Amount
Capital Area Rural Transportation System	CARTS-JARC	$75,000
Capital Area Rural Transportation System	CARTS-Rural Transit	$130,755
Caritas of Austin	Community Kitchen	$127,980
Catholic Charities of Central Texas	Immigration Legal Services	$10,305
Central Texas Food Bank	Food Bank	$57,766
Central Texas Food Bank	Mobile Food Pantry	$19,312
Sustainable Food Center	Spread the Harvest	$19,321
Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.	Legal Assistance for Access to Benefits	$60,675

Access to Basic Supports Client Demographics

The table below summarizes the demographics for clients served across Access to Basic Supports service providers. Client demographics are unavailable for the following programs: CARTS-JARC, CARTS-Rural Transit, Food Bank, and Mobile Food Pantry. Note that clients participating in more than one program are counted multiple times.

Gender	Num.	Pct.
Female	1,578	53%
Male	1,371	46%
Transgender	2	0.1%
Unknown	37	1%
Total	*2,988*	*100%*

Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	1,698	57%
Not Hispanic or Latino	1,164	39%
Unknown	126	4%
Total	*2,988*	*100%*

Race		
American Indian and Alaska Native	5	0.2%
Asian	160	5%
Black or African American	323	11%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1	0.03%
White	649	22%
Some other race	1,669	56%
Two or more races	45	2%
Unknown	136	5%
Total	*2,988*	*100%*

Age	Num.	Pct.
Under 5	70	2%
5 to 11	138	5%
12 to 14	62	2%
15 to 17	105	4%
18 to 24	436	15%
25 to 39	705	24%
40 to 54	644	22%
55 to 64	287	10%
65 to 74	218	7%
75 and over	77	3%
Unknown	246	8%
Total	*2,988*	*100%*

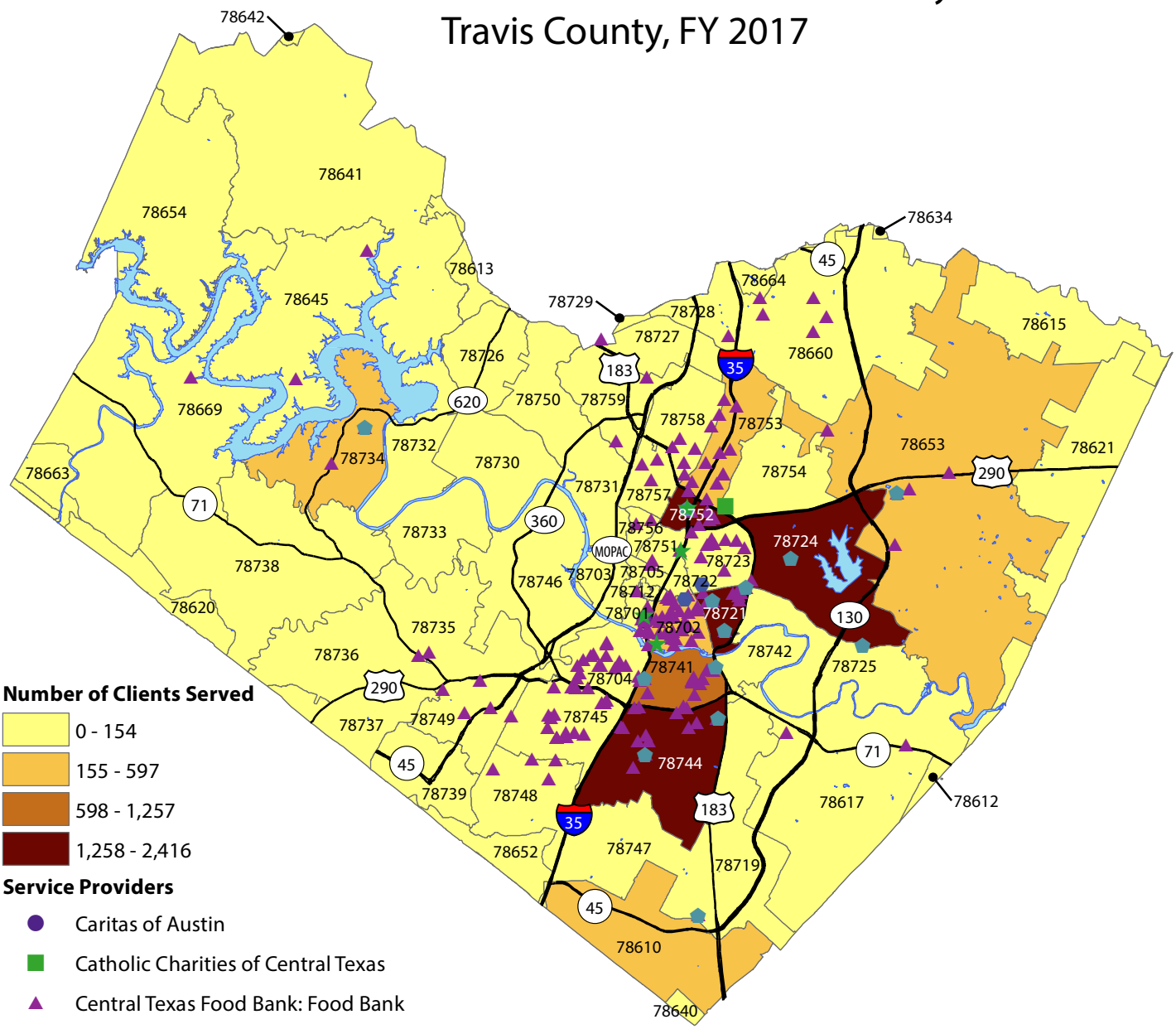
Income		
<50% of FPIG	653	22%
50% to 100%	582	19%
101% to 150%	571	19%
151% to 200%	545	18%
>200%	580	19%
Unknown	57	2%
Total	*2,988*	*100%*

Note: Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

See Appendix for specific income guideline levels.

Access to Basic Supports

Service Provision Locations and Clients Served by ZIP Code
Travis County, FY 2017



Number of Clients Served

- 0 - 154
- 155 - 597
- 598 - 1,257
- 1,258 - 2,416

Service Providers

- Caritas of Austin
- Catholic Charities of Central Texas
- Central Texas Food Bank: Food Bank
- Central Texas Food Bank: Mobile Food Pantry
- Sustainable Food Center
- Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

Service provision locations are not included for the CARTS JARC or Rural Transit programs. JARC serves all clients accessing a specific route serving southeast Travis County while Rural Transit services can be accessed anywhere the client is located.

Source data: Contracted service providers, FY 2017.
This map was created using ArcGIS Online shapefiles.
Created by: Travis County HHS, Research & Planning Division, 2017.

Notes: This map shows 12,966 clients by ZIP code. 541 clients (4% of the total) from all service providers were not included because their ZIP codes were unknown or outside of Travis County boundaries. ZIP codes are not included for Central Texas Food Bank's Food Bank program or the CARTS JARC program. Client ZIP codes for Caritas only reflect clients completing an annual survey, while Mobile Food Pantry ZIP codes reflect the location of the distribution site. Homeless status is likely underrepresented, as clients may report their last known ZIP code or the ZIP code of a shelter.

N
0 2.5 5
Miles

Capital Area Rural Transportation System

CARTS–JARC

Program Description

The goal of CARTS is to provide reliable, friendly, affordable transportation services to every customer, enhancing their quality of life by allowing them to maintain their independence. The JARC route targets the Southeast part of Travis County.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the CARTS–JARC program from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 was $75,000. This investment comprised 18.4% of the total program budget. HHS also funds the CARTS–Rural Transit program, described later in this report.

Eligibility Criteria

This program serves the general public but targets individuals who are low-income, seniors, and persons with disabilities. There are no eligibility requirements to receive services.

Capital Area Rural Transportation System: CARTS–JARC

The CARTS-JARC program met the targeted range of performance for the total number of trips provided.

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Total Number of Trips	64,337	70,000	92%

Capital Area Rural Transportation System

CARTS–Rural Transit

Program Description

The overall goal of CARTS is to provide reliable, friendly, affordable transportation services to every customer within the CARTS district (a Rural Transit District), enhancing their quality of life by allowing them to maintain their independence, and to connect persons within the CARTS District to metropolitan transit resources as needed. The Rural Transit service is provided to support the transportation needs of the community centers operated by Travis County, with a limit of 8,000 hours of service within FY 2017.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the CARTS–Rural Transit program from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 was $130,755. This investment comprised 8.2% of the total program budget. HHS also funds the CARTS–JARC program, described earlier in this report.

Eligibility Criteria

CARTS services in rural Travis County are directed to the general public but the service provided by CARTS in support of the community center program may be targeted for the low-income, seniors, and persons with disabilities in conformance with County policies, subject to agreement by both parties. To be eligible for services, clients must live in Travis County, outside the city limits of Austin. Services requested that originate within the urbanized area of the county will be restricted to those clients registered by the County as eligible.

Capital Area Rural Transportation System: CARTS–Rural Transit

The CARTS–Rural Transit program met the targeted range of performance for both output measures.

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated clients served	368	408	90%
Total number of trips	14,478	14,320	101%

Caritas of Austin

Community Kitchen

Program Description

The overall goal of the Community Kitchen is to assist low-income individuals with basic nutrition by providing a nutritious meal, with no questions asked, to anyone who is hungry. Lunch is served Monday through Friday and diners may receive one meal per day for an indefinite amount of days. The Community Kitchen also offers diners a respite from the heat or inclement weather.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Community Kitchen program from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 was $127,980. This investment comprised 76.2% of the total program budget.

Eligibility Criteria

The Caritas Community Kitchen serves a nutritious meal to anyone that is hungry.

Caritas of Austin: Community Kitchen

The Community Kitchen fell short of expected performance for both measures. Staff explained that Caritas participated in a month-long downtown food pilot (August 15th through September 15th) that changed its food delivery and client model. Instead of serving lunch at the Community Kitchen, the program provided lunch at the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH), managed by Front Steps, to clients enrolled in case management at Caritas of Austin and Front Steps. In total, Caritas served 740 duplicated clients during the pilot period, which resulted in a smaller number of meals served than originally projected (see the output). The pilot project also impacted the number of meals served in the month following, as staff speculate that it took time for clients to transition back to the Caritas location once the pilot had ended.

Staff also reported that some diners expressed dissatisfaction with an increase of others cutting in line, starting fights, and generally acting unruly, which led to fewer than expected patrons satisfied (see the outcome). Staff noted that Caritas is committed to improving client satisfaction and service delivery based on this feedback.

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of meals served	67,729	85,000	80%
Outcomes			
Percentage of unduplicated Community Kitchen patrons provided a meal, who were satisfied with the meal, as measured in the annual survey	80% (163/203)	90% (180/200)	89%

Catholic Charities of Central Texas

Immigration Legal Services

Program Description

The goal of the Immigration Legal Services (ILS) program is to provide high quality, low cost immigration legal services to the residents who live within the 25 county coverage area of the Austin Diocese. Services include family based immigration, services for victims of crime and domestic abuse, asylum, and unaccompanied minor assistance.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Immigration Legal Services program from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 was $10,305. This investment comprised 1.1% of the total program budget.

Eligibility Criteria

This program targets low-income individuals and families who are seeking immigration services. To be eligible for services, individuals must have incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG), except for limited cases where the individual or family has extenuating circumstances. The majority of clients reside in Travis County, although ILS serves most of Central Texas (clients must be residents of the 25 county area of Austin Diocese).

Catholic Charities of Central Texas: Immigration Legal Services

The Immigration Legal Services program exceeded goals for all but one performance measure. Staff explained that they do not determine the types of clients that come to the program and cannot predict exactly what their cases will be. As a result, several outputs were higher than expected while the number of Lawful Permanent Resident applications filed was slightly lower than expected (see the third output). Staff noted that they believe the presidential election and new administration has driven the program's client totals to historic highs, including the suspension of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) on September 5th.

Further, staff reported that US Citizenship and Immigration Services has a heavy backlog of cases and staff do not control how many they adjudicate per quarter. Because of the unpredictability of adjudication timelines, the total number of immigration applications resolved, and thus able to be approved, was lower than expected (see the outcome).

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Total number of clients whose cases are accepted for further immigration legal services	984	720	137%
Total number of clients provided consultations whose cases are not accepted for further immigration legal services	1,028	480	214%
Total number of Lawful Permanent Resident applications filed	68	80	85%
Total number of U.S. Citizenship applications filed	195	40	488%
Total number of applications filed for victims of crimes	38	15	253%
Total number of applications filed for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (1-821D)	375	300	125%
Total number of applications filed for Renewal of Lawful Permanent Resident cards (1-90)	120	50	240%
Total number of family-based petitions filed for family members (1-130)	80	70	114%
Total number of applications filed for other immigration assistance (including: TPS, FOIA, RFE, Waivers, etc.)	65	60	108%
Outcomes			
Percentage of immigration applications approved	98% (462/471)	93% (650/700)	106%

Central Texas Food Bank

Food Bank

Program Description

The goal of the Food Bank program is to provide emergency food assistance to food insecure individuals and households. The Central Texas Food Bank (CTFB) serves as a centralized warehouse for donated and rescued food. The food is re-distributed to the community via a network of 250 hunger-relief charities and social service centers across 21 Central Texas counties, including Travis County. Partner agencies are encouraged to procure additional food through their own resources, but many depend on CTFB for a majority of the food they distribute to clients each year.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Food Bank program from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 was $57,766. This investment comprised 0.5% of the total program budget. HHS also funds the Mobile Food Pantry program, which is described later in this report.

Eligibility Criteria

This program targets individuals who are "food insecure," meaning they lack dependable access to nutritionally adequate food. The neighborhoods served by the program are selected based on prevalence of poverty. In order to be eligible to receive USDA commodities distributed by the Central Texas Food Bank (CTFB), clients must have household income levels at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG). Clients earning above 185% of FPIG will not be turned away but will be provided food other than USDA commodities. Food is distributed through CTFB partner agencies based in Travis County. These agencies serve clients in their immediately surrounding areas.

Central Texas Food Bank: Food Bank

The Food Bank met or exceeded the targeted range of performance across all measures. Staff reported that the Food Bank served more agencies than projected during the contract year, primarily due to the addition of sites through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program in the second quarter of the year (see the first output). Staff also noted that over the past two years, the Food Bank's Agency Relations team has deprioritized form satisfaction surveys while increasing the type and frequency of feedback solicitation through one-on-one conversations, site visits, and Partner Agency conferences. Because of the increased number of opportunities to provide feedback, fewer responses were generated from the form survey reflected in the second outcome.

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated Travis County Agencies served	201	175	115%
Pounds of donated food provided to agencies in Travis County	9,819,578	10,000,000	98%
Number of meal equivalents provided to agencies in Travis County	8,182,982	8,333,333	98%
Outcomes			
Dollars saved by agencies in Travis County	$16,693,283	$17,000,000	98%
Percentage of unduplicated Partner Agencies satisfied	96% (24/25)	90% (45/50)	107%

Central Texas Food Bank

Mobile Food Pantry

Program Description

The goal of the Mobile Food Pantry program is to provide emergency food assistance to food insecure individuals and households. The program is designed to serve communities that are not served by other agencies because of lack of capacity or where no agencies are present. The program has two dedicated Mobile Food Pantry vehicles, capable of transporting refrigerated, non-refrigerated, and frozen items over long distances, ensuring a wide variety of food available to recipients. Before each distribution, the truck is loaded with available meat, produce, bread, and other staple groceries. The vehicle is then driven to centrally located distribution points for regularly scheduled service on a monthly basis, where food is taken directly from the truck and given to Central Texans in need.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Mobile Food Pantry program from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 was $19,312. This investment comprised 5.7% of the total program budget. HHS also funds the Food Bank program , which is described earlier in this report.

Eligibility Criteria

This program targets individuals who are food insecure, meaning they lack dependable access to nutritionally adequate food. The neighborhoods served by the program are selected based on prevalence of poverty. In order to receive USDA commodities distributed by Capital Area Food Bank, clients must have household income levels at or below 185% Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG). Clients earning above 185% FPIG will not be turned away, but provided food other than USDA commodities.

Central Texas Food Bank: Mobile Food Pantry

The Mobile Food Pantry met or exceeded the targeted range of performance for all output measures. Staff reported that in the fourth quarter of the year, the Food Bank started a new site at the VA clinic in 78744. It became one of the program's larger distributions and led to a higher than projected number of unduplicated clients served (see the first output).

Further, staff explained that the reported number of clients served represents unduplicated individuals served in October 2016 and then new households served in each subsequent month. The number of "new clients" had been calculated as individuals, but in actuality represented new households. As a result, the Food Bank under-represented the number of individuals served during the contract year. This methodology will be corrected to reflect individuals, and not households, in FY 2018.

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated clients served	10,166	9,000	113%
Number of duplicated clients served	74,691	80,000	93%
Number of Mobile Food Pantry distributions held in Travis County	137	127	108%
Pounds of food distributed through Mobile Food Pantry distributions in Travis County	796,707	800,000	100%
Number of meals equivalents provided in Travis County	663,922	666,667	100%

Sustainable Food Center

Spread the Harvest

Program Description

Spread the Harvest seeks to reduce financial barriers to food gardening by providing free gardening materials—including seeds, plants, compost, and fertilizer—to individuals, families, schools, places of worship, and public service providers residing or located in the City of Austin and Travis County.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Spread the Harvest program from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 was $19,321. This investment comprised 59.5% of the total program budget.

Eligibility Criteria

The target populations of this program include individuals, families, and institutions that are located in Travis County and face financial barriers to food gardening. Program membership is open to: residents who earn 275% or less of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG); schools located in Travis County; and places of worship and public service providers who work with underprivileged communities.

Sustainable Food Center: Spread the Harvest

The Spread the Harvest program met or exceeded performance goals for all but one measure. Staff explained that the number of gardeners in housing, school, or other group programs receiving resources was higher than predicted due to the fact that many schools with a high number of gardeners enrolled in the Spread the Harvest program at the beginning of the Austin ISD school year (see the second output).

Staff noted that the number of meal equivalents was low in the fourth quarter of the year, which may be due to the fact that the fall planting season had just begun and many gardeners, schools, and other groups do not maintain a summer garden because of the heat (see the third output).

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated individual and non-institutional gardeners receiving resources through Spread the Harvest	1,422	1,500	95%
Number of unduplicated gardeners in housing, school, or other group programs receiving resources through Spread the Harvest (persons may receive services and resources on multiple occasions)	27,776	20,000	139%
Number of Meal Equivalents (garden fresh produce shared by gardeners; 2 meal equivalents fit into one plastic grocery store bag)	9,039	12,162	74%
Outcomes			
Percentage of Spread the Harvest participants choosing "a lot" or "considerably" when asked, "To what extent has Spread the Harvest made it easier for you to grow your own food?"	87% (652/748)	85% (597/700)	102%
Percentage of Spread the Harvest participants choosing "a lot" or "considerably" when asked, "To what extent has participation in Spread the Harvest has made it easier for you to eat healthy food?"	71% (530/748)	75% (525/700)	94%
Percentage of Spread the Harvest participants choosing "agree" when asked, "I am satisfied with services received from Sustainable Food Center."	98% (732/748)	95% (665/700)	103%

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.

Legal Assistance for Access to Benefits

Program Description

The goal of Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's (TRLA's) Legal Assistance for Access to Benefits program is to address the basic human needs of eligible clients by providing legal assistance to obtain, preserve, or increase financial security for clients in their public benefits cases and to obtain available resources and benefits for homeless clients.

TRLA staff assist residents with qualifying for and obtaining public benefits such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps), TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance, and Veterans benefits.

Funding

The total HHS investment in the Legal Assistance for Access to Benefits program from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 was $60,675. This investment comprised 29.8% of the total program budget.

Eligibility Criteria

TRLA provides free legal advocacy and related educational services to low-income persons, most of whom have incomes below 125% of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG). In certain cases, clients may have incomes up to 200% of FPIG but cannot exceed that amount. TRLA's confidential screening process is designed to prioritize clients whose legal problems are life-threatening or life-altering. Clients must be a resident of Travis County and a citizen of the United States or one of the eligible categories on the Eligibility Alien Determination Form.

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.: Legal Assistance for Access to Benefits

The Legal Assistance for Access to Benefits program met both outcome goals but fell short of targets for both output measures. Staff explained that the low number of clients served may be due to staff turnover; however, TRLA has since hired a Public Benefits Paralegal and expects to continue to see an increase of new cases. Staff also noted that they continue to work on cases opened in previous quarters, since they take a significant amount of time to resolve and thus produce an outcome.

Performance Measure	Total Program Performance Results	Total Program Performance Goals	Total Program Performance Goal Achieved
Outputs			
Number of unduplicated clients served	379	550	69%
Number of public benefits legal assistance clients served (duplicated count)	394	570	69%
Outcomes			
Percentage of clients who, because of being provided legal assistance, preserved, obtained, or increased a public benefit	95% (256/270)	95% (344/364)	100%
Percentage of clients who were satisfied with the legal services provided	95% (256/270)	95% (344/364)	100%

Appendix

2017 Federal Poverty Income Guidelines

Most HHS contracts require programs to serve participants with household incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guideline (FPIG) level. Some programs have chosen to follow a more stringent threshold. The following table presents the federal poverty thresholds by household size and income.

Household Size	Income Limits by Household Size				
	50%	100%	125%	150%	200%
1 person	$6,030	$12,060	$15,075	$18,090	$24,120
2 persons	$8,120	$16,240	$20,300	$24,360	$32,480
3 persons	$10,210	$20,420	$25,525	$30,630	$40,840
4 persons	$12,300	$24,600	$30,750	$36,900	$49,200
5 persons	$14,390	$28,780	$35,975	$43,170	$57,560
6 persons	$16,480	$32,960	$41,200	$49,440	$65,920
7 persons	$18,570	$37,140	$46,425	$55,710	$74,280
8 persons	$20,660	$41,320	$51,650	$61,980	$82,640
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add $4,160 for each additional person.					

Data source: "2017 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia," Office of The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, January 26, 2017, https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines.

2017 Austin Median Family Income Guidelines

Some programs may also use Austin MFI guidelines when measuring client incomes. The following table presents the median family income limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Austin-Round Rock, TX Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

Household Size	Income Limits by Household Size		
	Extremely Low*	Very Low (50%)	Low (80%)
1 person	$17,100	$28,500	$45,600
2 persons	$19,550	$32,600	$52,100
3 persons	$22,000	$36,650	$58,600
4 persons	$24,600	$40,700	$65,100
5 persons	$28,780	$44,000	$70,350
6 persons	$32,960	$47,250	$75,550
7 persons	$37,140	$50,500	$80,750
8 persons	$41,320	$53,750	$85,950

*The FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act changed the definition of extremely low-income to be the greater of 30/50^{ths} (60%) of the Section 8 very low-income limit or the poverty guideline as established by the Department of Health and Human Services, provided that this amount is not greater than the Section 8 50% very low-income limit.

Data source: "Austin-Round Rock, TX MSA FY 2017 Income Limits Summary," U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2017/2017summary.odn.

Endnotes

1 "Poverty Thresholds," U.S. Census Bureau, last modified August 11, 2017, https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html.
2 U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis County, C17002, http://factfinder2.census.gov.
3 U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis County, C17001, http://factfinder2.census.gov.
4 "Texas Family Budgets," Center for Public Policy Priorities, last modified November 16, 2017, http://familybudgets.org/.
5 U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis County, B19013, http://factfinder2.census.gov.
6 U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis County, B19013, http://factfinder2.census.gov.
7 U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis County, B25058, http://factfinder2.census.gov.
8 U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis County, B25058, http://factfinder2.census.gov.
9 "Housing Activity for Austin (Austin BoR)," Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, accessed November 14, 2017, https://www.recenter.tamu.edu/data/housing-activity/#!/activity/Local_Market_Area_(LMA)/Austin_(Austin_BoR).
10 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index- All Urban Consumers, South Region All Items, 1982-1984=100 – CUUS0300SAT, accessed November 14, 2017, http://www.bls.gov/cpi/data.htm.
11 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index- All Urban Consumers, South Region All Items, 1982-1984=100 – CUUR0300SA0, accessed December 14, 2017, http://www.bls.gov/cpi/data.htm.
12 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index- All Urban Consumers, South Region All Items, 1982-1984=100 – CUUR0300SAF1, accessed November, 14, 2017, http://www.bls.gov/cpi/data.htm.
13 Alisha Coleman-Jensen, Matthew P. Rabbitt, Christian A. Gregory, and Anita Singh, "Household Food Security in the United States in 2016," U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, ERR-237, September 2017, https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84973/err-237.pdf?v=42979.
14 Ibid.
15 "Map the Meal Gap 2017: Overall Food Insecurity in Texas by County in 2015," Feeding America, accessed November 20, 2017, http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/2015/MMG_AllCounties_CDs_MMG_2015_2/TX_AllCounties_CDs_MMG_2015.pdf.
16 "Map the Meal Gap 2017: Child Food Insecurity in Texas by County in 2015," Feeding America, accessed November 20, 2017, http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/2015/MMG_AllCounties_CDs_CFI_2015_2/TX_AllCounties_CDs_CFI_2015.pdf.
17 "Thrifty Food Plan, 2006," United States Department of Agriculture Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, accessed November 20, 2017, https://www.cnpp.usda.gov/USDAFoodPlansCostofFood.
18 "USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food," United States Department of Agriculture, accessed November 18, 2017, https://www.cnpp.usda.gov/USDAFoodPlansCostofFood.
19 Amy Price, 2-1-1 Director of Community Information United Way for Greater Austin, email message to Tonya Pennie, November 27, 2017.
20 Ibid.
21 Victor Oliveira, "The Food Assistance Landscape, FY2016 Annual Report," U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, ERR-169, March 2017, https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/82994/eib-169.pdf?v=42823.
22 Ibid.
23 "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Eligibility, "United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Program, last modified November 15, 2017, http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility#Income.
24 "Texas Family Budgets," Center for Public Policy Priorities, last modified November 16, 2017, http://familybudgets.org/.
25 "Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Statistics," Texas Health and Human Services, accessed November 8, 2017, https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/records-statistics/data-statistics/supplemental-nutritional-assistance-program-snap-statistics.
26 U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis County, B01001, http://factfinder2.census.gov.

27 "Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Statistics," Texas Health and Human Services, accessed November 8, 2017, https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/records-statistics/data-statistics/supplemental-nutritional-assistance-program-snap-statistics.
28 U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis Country, C08134, http://factfinder2.gov.
29 U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis Country, B08201, http://factfinder2.gov.
30 "CAMPO 2040 Regional Transportation Plan," Capital Area Metro Planning Organization, 2015, 54, http://www.campotexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CAMPO2040PlanFinal.pdf.
31 Ibid.
32 "Service Area Map," Capital Metro, accessed November 21, 2017, https://www.capmetro.org/service_maps/service_area.aspx.
33 "CAMPO 2040 Regional Transportation Plan," Capital Area Metro Planning Organization, 2015, 56, http://www.campotexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CAMPO2040PlanFinal.pdf.
34 "Transportation Disadvantaged Populations: Federal Coordination Efforts Could be Further Strengthened," United States Government Accountability Office, June 2012, http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/591707.pdf.
35 "About the Index," The Center for Neighborhood Technology, accessed November 21, 2017 http://htaindex.cnt.org/about/.
36 "H+T Index (Map for Travis County)," The Center for Neighborhood Technology, accessed November 21, 2017, http://htaindex.cnt.org/map/.
37 "Together We Thrive Austin/Travis County Community Health Plan: Community Health Assessment Austin/Travis County December 2017," Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services, http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Health/CHA-CHIP/CommunityHealthAssessment__December_2017.pdf.
38 "Capital Area Coordinated Plan: A Plan for Coordination of Public Transit-Health and Human Service Transportation Plan," Capital Area Regional Transit Coordination Committee, February 21, 2012, http://www.regionalserviceplanning.org/texas_regions/coordination_plans/archive/2011-2015/12-capital-area/coord-plan-2012.pdf.
39 Moffett, Christy Copeland, Martha Brown, and Elena Rivera. "Travis County Consolidated Plan and Action Plan PY 2014-2018," Travis County, 2015, https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/health_human_services/Docs/cdbg/PY14-18ConPlan.pdf.
40 Amy Price, 2-1-1 Director of Community Information United Way for Greater Austin, email message to Tonya Pennie, November 27, 2017.
41 "Current and Potential Economic Benefits of Legal Aid Services in Texas: 2013 Update," The Perryman Group, February 2013, http://www.teajf.org/news/docs/Impact-of-Legal-Aid-2013-FINAL.pdf.
42 "Who We Are" LSC Legal Services Corporation, America's Partner for Equal Justice, accessed November 29, 2017, https://www.lsc.gov/about-lsc/who-we-are
43 "Current and Potential Economic Benefits of Legal Aid Services in Texas: 2013 Update," The Perryman Group, February 2013, http://www.teajf.org/news/docs/Impact-of-Legal-Aid-2013-FINAL.pdf.
44 "Statement from Richard L. Tate, Texas Access to Justice Foundation, on Increase in Fed Funds Target Rate and the Impact on IOLTA", Texas Access to Justice Foundation December 16, 2015, accessed November 30, 2017, http://www.teajf.org/news/releases/Stmt-FedFundIncrease-2015.aspx.
45 Lee Rawles, "Proposed '18 budget would cut LSC by 24%, increase funds for law enforcement and immigration court," ABA Journal, June 30, 2017, http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/proposed_budget_would_increase_funds_for_law_enforcement_and_immigration_bu.
46 State of Texas Resolution of the Texas Judicial Council, Supporting Funding for Civil Legal Aid in Texas, accessed November 30, 2017, http://www.txcourts.gov/media/1436326/supporting-funding-for-civil-legal-aid-in-texas.pdf.
47 Ibid.
48 "The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-income Americans," LSC Legal Services Corporation, America's Partner for Equal Justice, June 2017, https://www.lsc.gov/sites/default/files/images/TheJusticeGap-FullReport.pdf
49 Amy Price, 2-1-1 Director of Community Information United Way for Greater Austin, email message to Tonya Pennie, November 27, 2017.
50 Ibid.
51 "Current and Potential Economic Benefits of Legal Aid Services in Texas: 2013 Update," The Perryman Group, February 2013, http://www.teajf.org/news/docs/Impact-of-Legal-Aid-2013-FINAL.pdf.
52 "Case Services Provided," LSC Legal Services Corporation, America's Partner for Equal Justice, accessed November 30, 2017, https://www.lsc.gov/state-data-case-services-provided.
53 "What are the Major Federal Safety Net Programs in the U.S.?" Center for Poverty Research, University of California Davis, accessed November 30, 2017, http://poverty.ucdavis.edu/article/war-poverty-and-todays-safety-net-0.

54 "Benefits for People with Disabilities," Social Security Administration, accessed November 30, 2017, https://www.ssa.gov/disability.
55 Travis County Health and Human Services-Access to Basic Supports Issue Area Team, issue area assessment discussion notes, December 14, 2015.
56 Ibid.
57 "News Release: National Initiative to Combat Immigration Services Scams," U.S. Department of Justice, accessed January 19, 2017, http://www.justice.gov/eoir/press/2011/UPILJointRelease%2006092011.pdf.
58 Ingrid Eagly, Esq. and Steven Shafer, Esq., "Access to Counsel in Immigration Court," Special Report, American Immigration Council, September 2016, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/access_to_counsel_in_immigration_court.pdf.
59 Ibid.
60 Kyle Kim, "Immigrants held in remote ICE facilities struggle to find legal aid before they're deported," Los Angeles Times, September 28, 2017, http://www.latimes.com/projects/la-na-access-to-counsel-deportation/
61 Ingrid Eagly, Esq. and Steven Shafer, Esq., "Access to Counsel in Immigration Court," Special Report, American Immigration Council, September 2016, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/access_to_counsel_in_immigration_court.pdf.
62 Kyle Kim, "Immigrants held in remote ICE facilities struggle to find legal aid before they're deported," Los Angeles Times, September 28, 2017, http://www.latimes.com/projects/la-na-access-to-counsel-deportation/
63 Ingrid Eagly, Esq. and Steven Shafer, Esq., "Access to Counsel in Immigration Court," Special Report, American Immigration Council, September 2016, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/access_to_counsel_in_immigration_court.pdf.
64 U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis County, B05002, http://factfinder2.gov.
65 U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis County, B05001, http://factfinder2.gov.
66 U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Travis County, B17025, http://factfinder2.gov.