# Travis County snapshot from american community survey 2010

2011

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**Acknowledgements**

This report was researched and written by the staff at the Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service, Research & Planning Division. Lead writers were Rachel Coff, Anna Lisa Fahrenthold, and Elizabeth Vela, with the support of other division staff, Blanca Tapia Leahy (Division Director), and Sherri E. Fleming (County Executive for Travis County HHS/VS).

**Questions or Comments?**

For questions or for more information, please contact the Research & Planning Division at HHS_R&P@co.travis.tx.us.

# Table of Contents


**About the Chartbook ..... 4**

**Social Characteristics ..... 5**
Age ..... 6
Race and Hispanic Origin ..... 7
Educational Attainment ..... 8
Place of Birth ..... 9
Language ..... 10

**Economic Characteristics ..... 11**
Median Income ..... 12
Household Income Distribution ..... 13
Poverty ..... 14
Income to Poverty Ratio ..... 15
Employment and Age ..... 16
Employment by Industry ..... 17
Employment and Education ..... 18
Earnings and Employment ..... 19
Commuting ..... 20
Health Insurance ..... 21

**Housing Characteristics ..... 22**
Household Type ..... 23
Cost Burden ..... 24
Rent Values ..... 25
Housing Values ..... 26
Median Housing Value ..... 27

**Methodology ..... 28**

# About the Chartbook

## About the American Community Survey

The American Community Survey (ACS) is one of many surveys conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. It includes questions about social, housing, and economic characteristics. While many available data sources address these subjects, the Research & Planning Division has increasingly relied on the ACS as a primary resource to describe current demographics and local conditions. Compared to the more widely-known Decennial Census, which is conducted every 10 years, the ACS is conducted on an ongoing basis and releases data annually. Thus it can provide more up-to-date information, particularly for communities undergoing rapid demographic changes. (For more on the ACS, please see the Methodology section at the end of this chartbook.)

## About the Chartbook

All of the information contained herein is publicly available via the U.S. Census Bureau's website. However, due to time constraints or technical limitations, it may sometimes be difficult to access, analyze, and interpret needed data. By selecting key variables from among the many available, analyzing the data for important relationships and trends, and presenting it here in visual formats, our goal is to provide access to current information describing our community. We hope this information is helpful in efforts to improve programs, influence funding decisions, and shape local policies. We encourage users to borrow and cite this material.

All of the estimates presented in this chartbook (with few exceptions, all footnoted) have been tested at a 90% confidence level for reliability, and where direct comparisons are made, for statistical significance. (For more information on statistical testing, please see the Methodology section at the end of this chartbook.)

# Social Characteristics


Age ..... 6

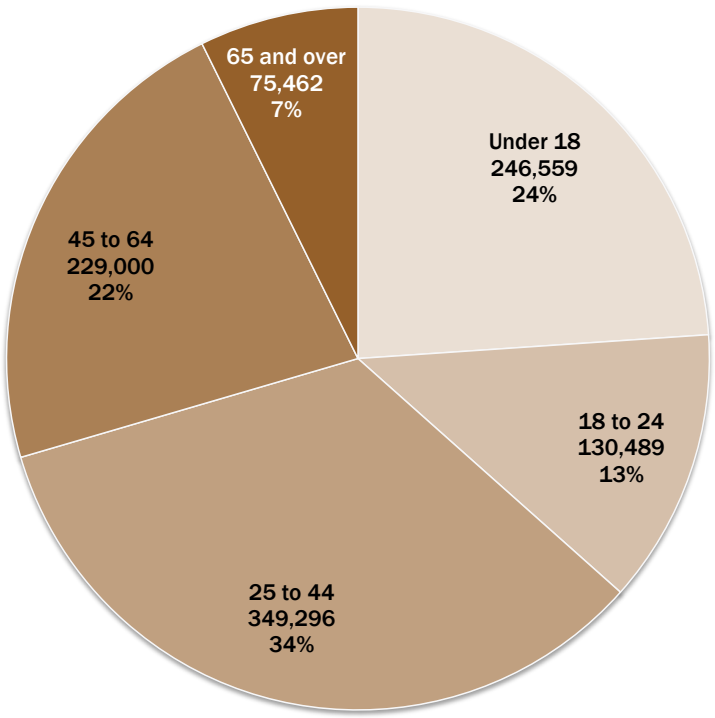
Race and Hispanic Origin ..... 7

Educational Attainment ..... 8

Place of Birth ..... 9

Language ..... 10

# Age




Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011
Source data: 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

**Age Distribution:** Age distribution in Travis County continues to be characterized by a large working age population (18-64). Working age adults comprise about 69% of the county's population. In comparison, the 18-64 year old age group comprises 62% of the Texas population and 63% of the U.S. population.

**Median Age:** The median age in Travis County is 31.8. This reflects a slightly younger population than that of Texas (33.6) and the United States as a whole (37.2).

**Trends to Watch:** Since 2000, the total Travis County population has grown at a faster rate than that of the state. This growth is most notable in the 45-64 age group which grew by 55% compared to 45% statewide and 32% nationally. The child and youth population continues to grow at a faster rate than the population as a whole and experienced a 28% increase from 2000-2010, greater than the rate of growth for this group across the state (17%) and nation (3%).[1]

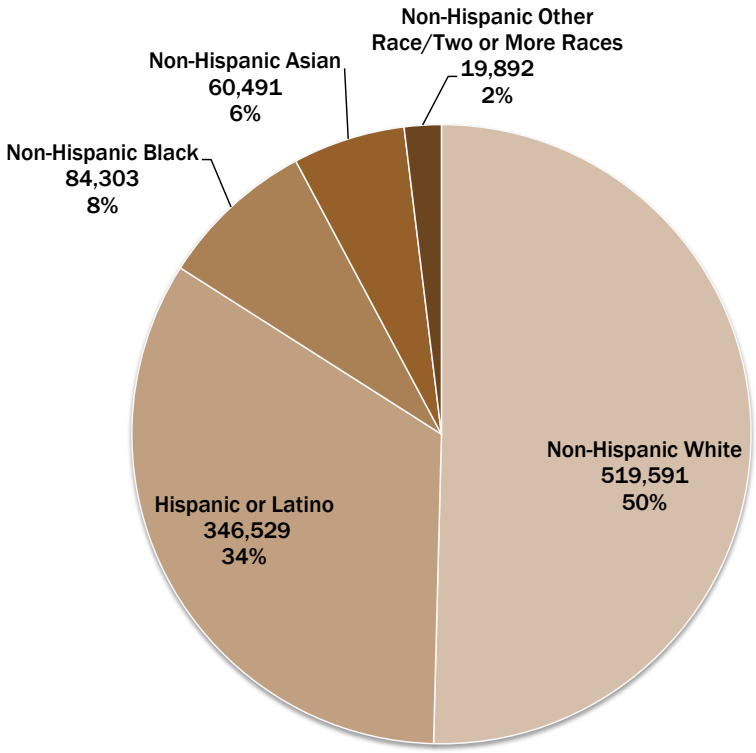
**Growth in Population by Age, Travis County 2000-2010**

| | 2000 | 2010 | Growth | Percent Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Under 18 | 192,547 | 246,559 | 54,012 | 28% |
| 18 to 24 | 118,372 | 130,489 | 12,117 | 10% |
| 25 to 44 | 299,477 | 349,296 | 49,819 | 17% |
| 45 to 64 | 147,450 | 229,000 | 81,550 | 55% |
| 65 and over | 54,434 | 75,462 | 21,028 | 39% |
| Total | 812,280 | 1,030,806 | 218,526 | 27% |

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS Research & Planning Division, 2011. Source: 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

[1] A statistical test for sampling variability was not appropriate for changes over time or geographic comparison due to use of a controlled estimate. Please refer to http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2010.pdf

# Race and Hispanic Origin




Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011
Source data: 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

**Race and Hispanic Origin:** The majority of the Travis County population identifies as Non-Hispanic White (50%) followed by Hispanic or Latino (34%), Non-Hispanic Black (8%) and Non-Hispanic Asian (6%).

**Trends to Watch:** In noting trends since 2000, Hispanics have increased as a proportion of Travis County's population (from 28% in 2000 to 34% in 2010), while the proportion of Non-Hispanic Whites has decreased (from 56% in 2000 to 50% in 2010).[2]

**Geographic Comparison:** The table below provides a comparison of the racial and ethnic compositions of Travis County, Texas and the U.S.

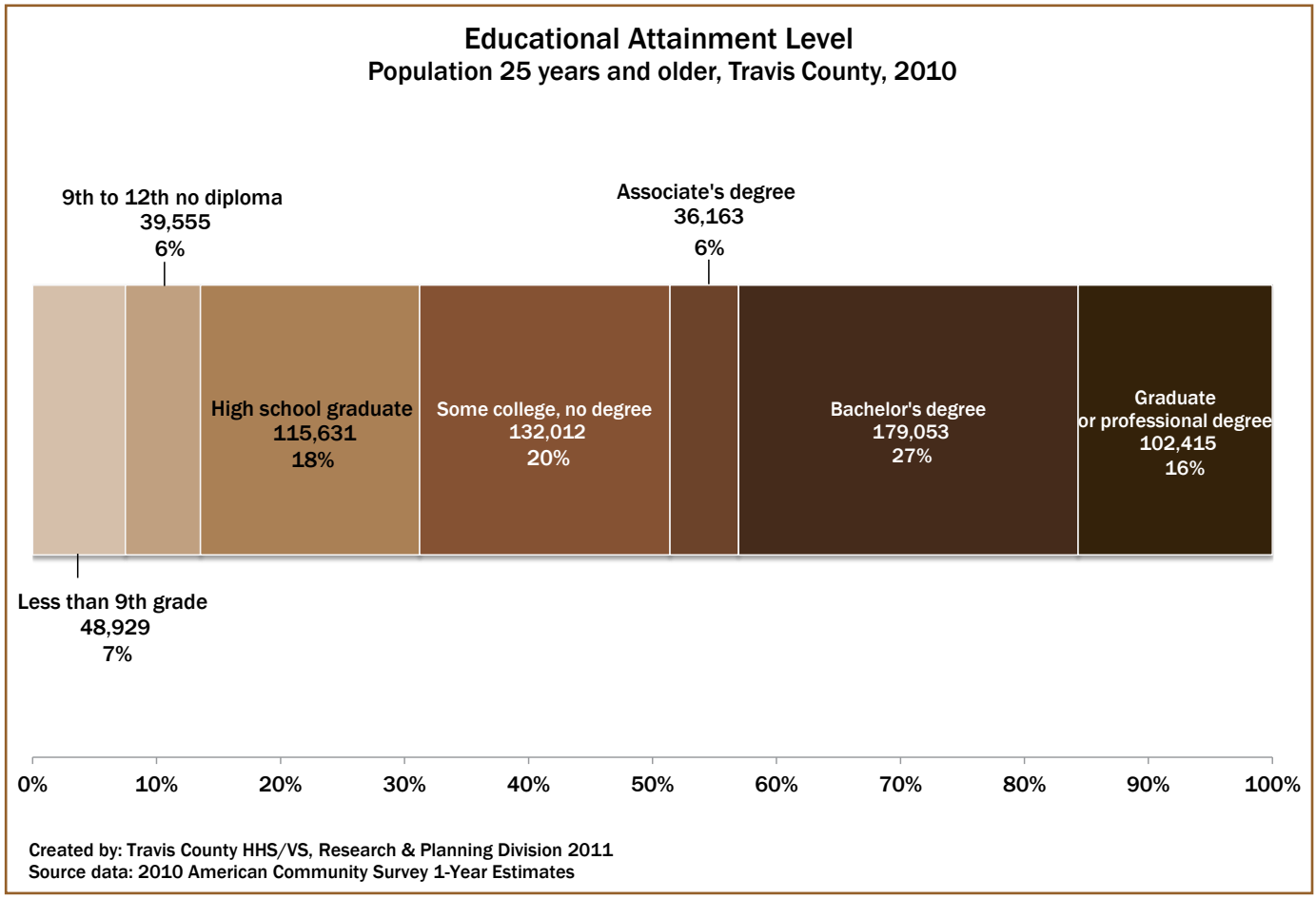
**Population by Race and Hispanic Origin[3]**
**Travis County, Texas & U.S., 2010**

| | Travis County | Texas | U.S. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Non-Hispanic White | 50.4% | 45.2% | 63.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 33.6% | 37.7% | 16.4% |
| Non-Hispanic Black | 8.2% | 11.5% | 12.3% |
| Non-Hispanic Asian | 5.9% | 3.8% | 4.7% |
| Non-Hispanic Other Race/Two or More Races | 1.9% | 1.8% | 3.0% |

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011. Source: 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

[2] A statistical test for sampling variability was not appropriate for changes over time or geographic comparison due to use of a controlled estimate. Please refer to www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2010.pdf
[3] Ibid.

# Educational Attainment



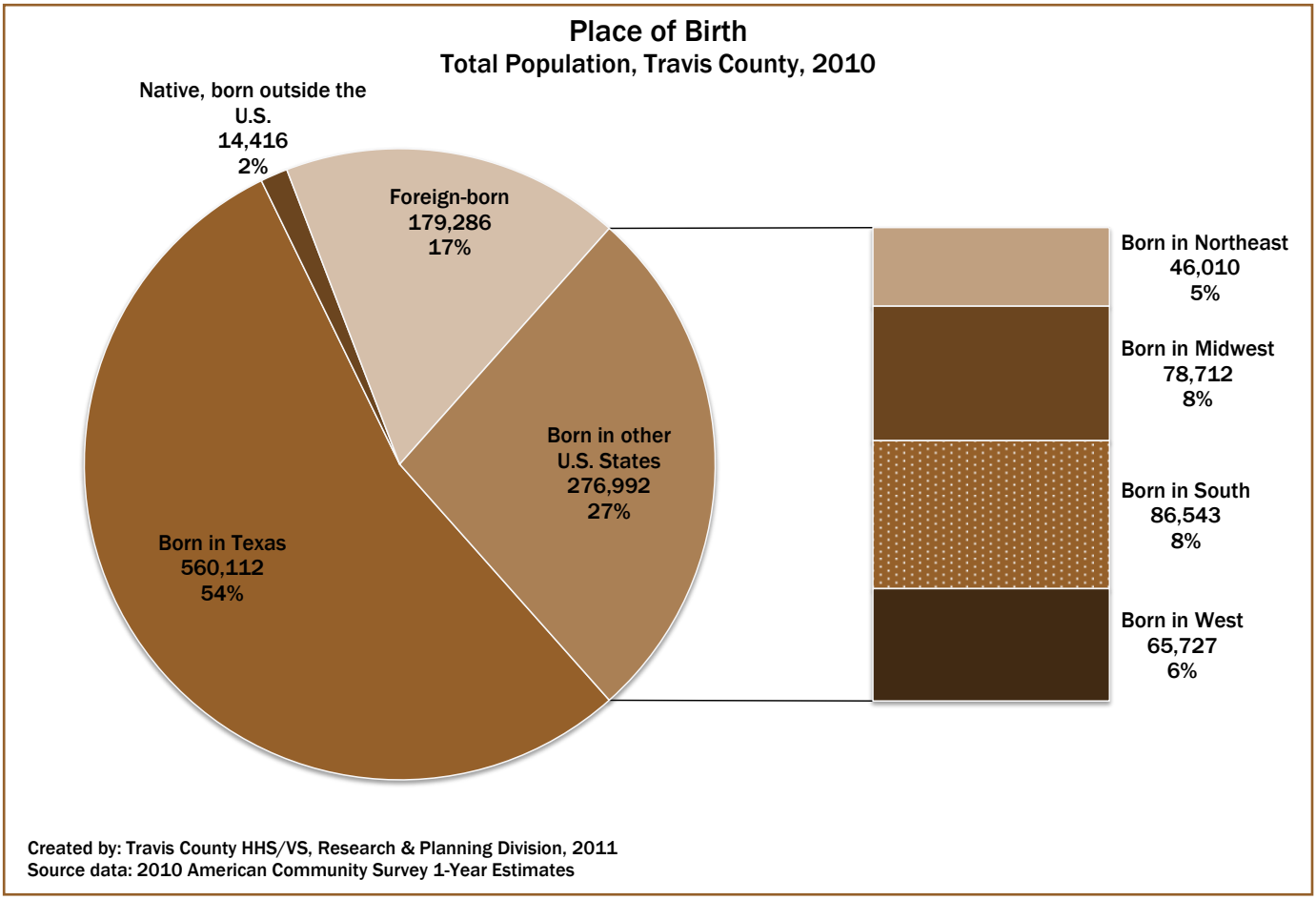

**Educational Attainment Level:** Travis County continues to have a highly educated population. In comparison to state figures, proportionately more Travis County residents have a college degree, and fewer lack a high school diploma.

- 43% of Travis County residents have Bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 26% of Texans and 28% of Americans.
- 14% of Travis County residents report having less than a high school diploma or equivalency compared with 19% of Texans and 14% of Americans.

**College or Graduate School Enrollment[4]:** About 14% of Travis County's population is enrolled in college or graduate school. This compares with about 9% of the Texas population and 9% of the U.S. population.

[4] These statistics include individuals enrolled in school which advances a person toward a college, university or professional school (law or medicine) degree. They do not include people enrolled in vocational, technical, or business school. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2010 Subject Definitions, p. 114)

# Place of Birth




**Place of Birth for the Travis County Population:** About half of Travis County residents (54%) were born in Texas, roughly one-quarter (27%) were born in another state (most commonly in the Southern or Midwestern regions of the U.S.), and 17% of residents are foreign-born.

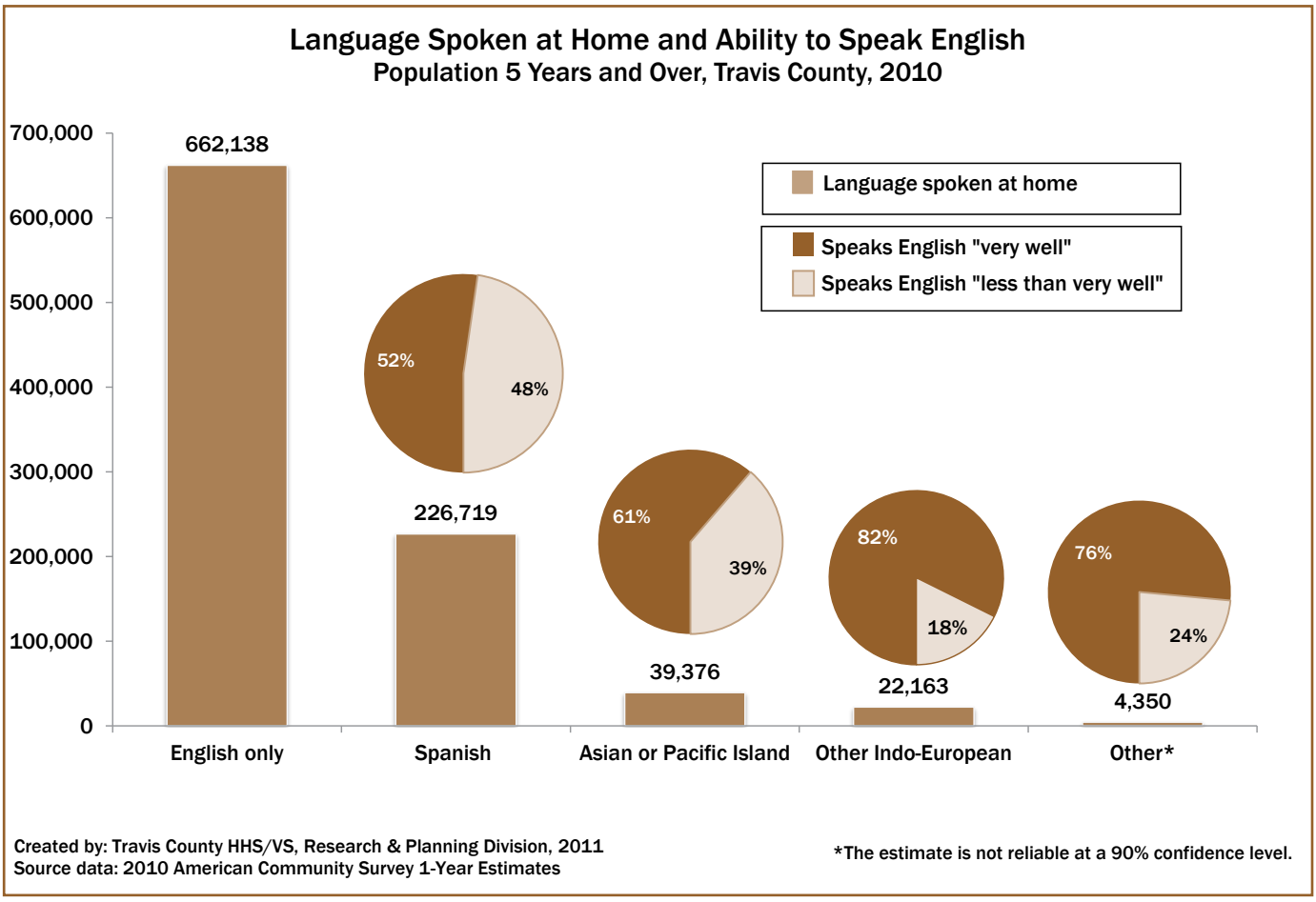
**Geographic Comparison:** In comparison to state and national averages, Travis County residents are:

- *Less likely to have been born in their current state of residence.* 54% of Travis County residents were born in their state of residence compared with 60% of Texans and 59% of Americans. However, the proportion of Travis County residents born in Texas is relatively similar to most other major metropolitan counties in the state (55% of Dallas County residents, 54% of Harris County residents and 55% of Tarrant County residents were born in Texas).[5]

- *More likely to be foreign born.* 17% of Travis County residents are foreign born compared with 16% of Texans and 13% of Americans. However, Travis County has a proportionately smaller foreign born population than both Dallas and Harris Counties, where immigrants comprise nearly one-quarter of the population.[6]

[5] A statistical test for sampling variability was not appropriate for geographic comparison due to use of a controlled estimate. For more information on controlled estimates, please refer to www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2010.pdf
[6] Ibid.

# Language




**Languages Spoken at Home:** Almost one-third of the Travis County population (31% or 292,608 residents) speaks a language other than English at home. In comparison, 21% of U.S. residents and 35% of Texans speak a language other than English at home.

**Ability to Speak English:** 56% of Travis County residents who speak a language other than English at home also speak the English language "very well;" about 44% speak English "less than very well."

**Trends to Watch:** Overall, the number and share of Travis County residents speaking a language other than English at home has grown slightly since 2000 (from 29% or 216,164 in 2000 to 31% or 292,608 in 2010).

**Linguistic Isolation:** 7% of all Travis County households (29,640 households) are linguistically isolated.[7] 84% of linguistically isolated households speak Spanish (24,846 households) and 13% speak Asian and Pacific languages (3,764).

[7] A linguistically isolated household is one in which no member 14 years old and over (1) speaks only English or (2) speaks a non-English language and speaks English "very well." In other words, all members 14 years old and over have at least some difficulty with the English language. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2010 Subject Definitions, p. 46). Please note that the American Community Survey did not use the phrase "Linguistic Isolation" in the 2010 1-Year Estimates. It is included here because the authors believe it is helpful terminology for the purposes of this publication and its intended uses in social services planning.

# Economic Characteristics


Median Income ..... 12

Household Income Distribution ..... 13

Poverty ..... 14

Income to Poverty Ratio ..... 15

Employment and Age ..... 16

Employment by Industry ..... 17

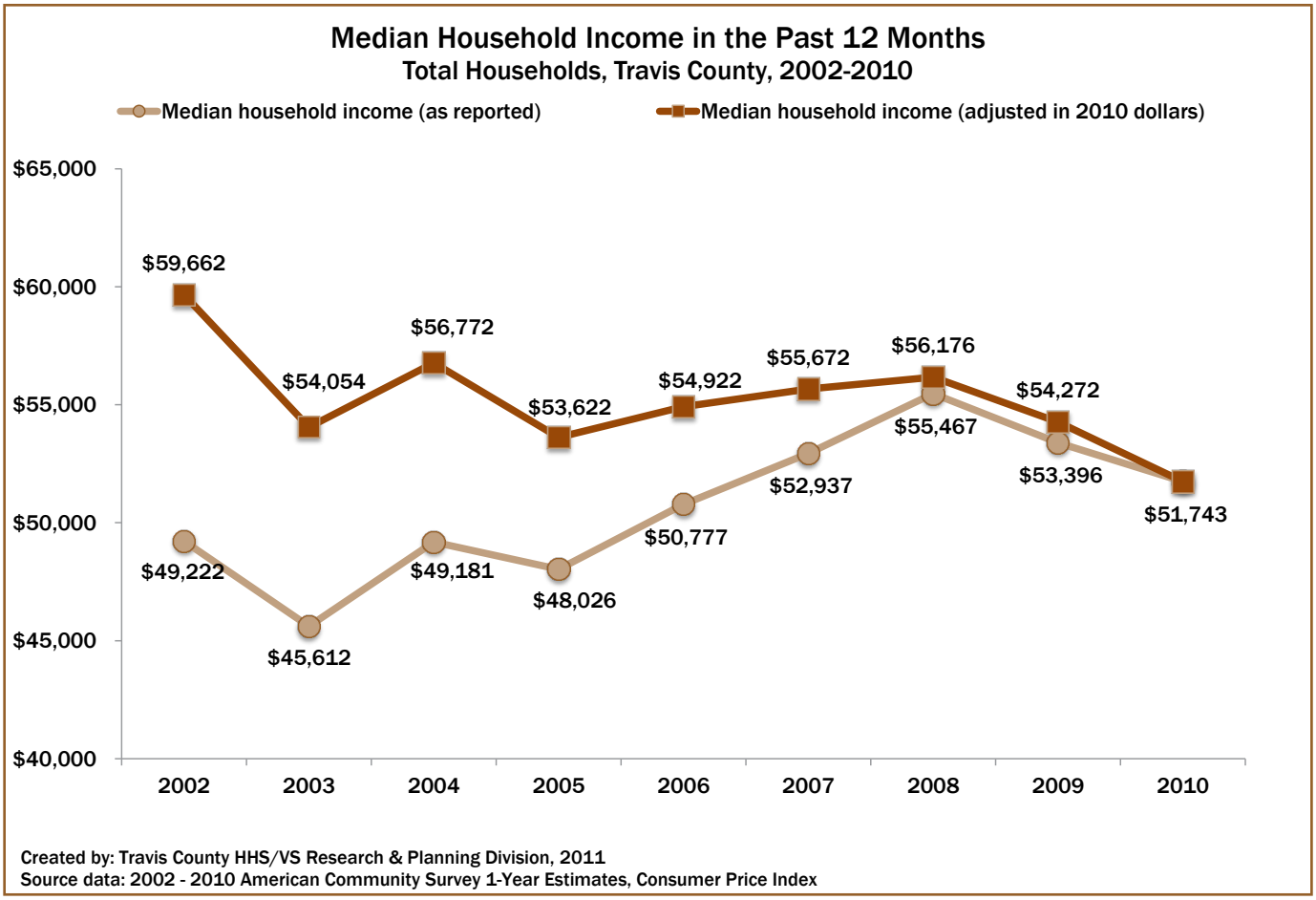
Employment and Education ..... 18

Earnings and Employment ..... 19

Commuting ..... 20

Health Insurance ..... 21

# Median Household Income




**Median Household Income:** Reported median household income has fallen by 7% from the 2008 level. Once adjusted for inflation[8] (indicated by the top line on the chart above), the actual value of Travis County's median household income was almost $8,000 lower in 2010 than in 2002.[9]

**Geographic Comparison:** For the previous decade, the median household income in Travis County has exceeded that of the U.S. and Texas. However, the table below shows that since 2002, median household incomes have decreased 13% in the County but only 3% and 4% respectively in the state and nation over the same period.

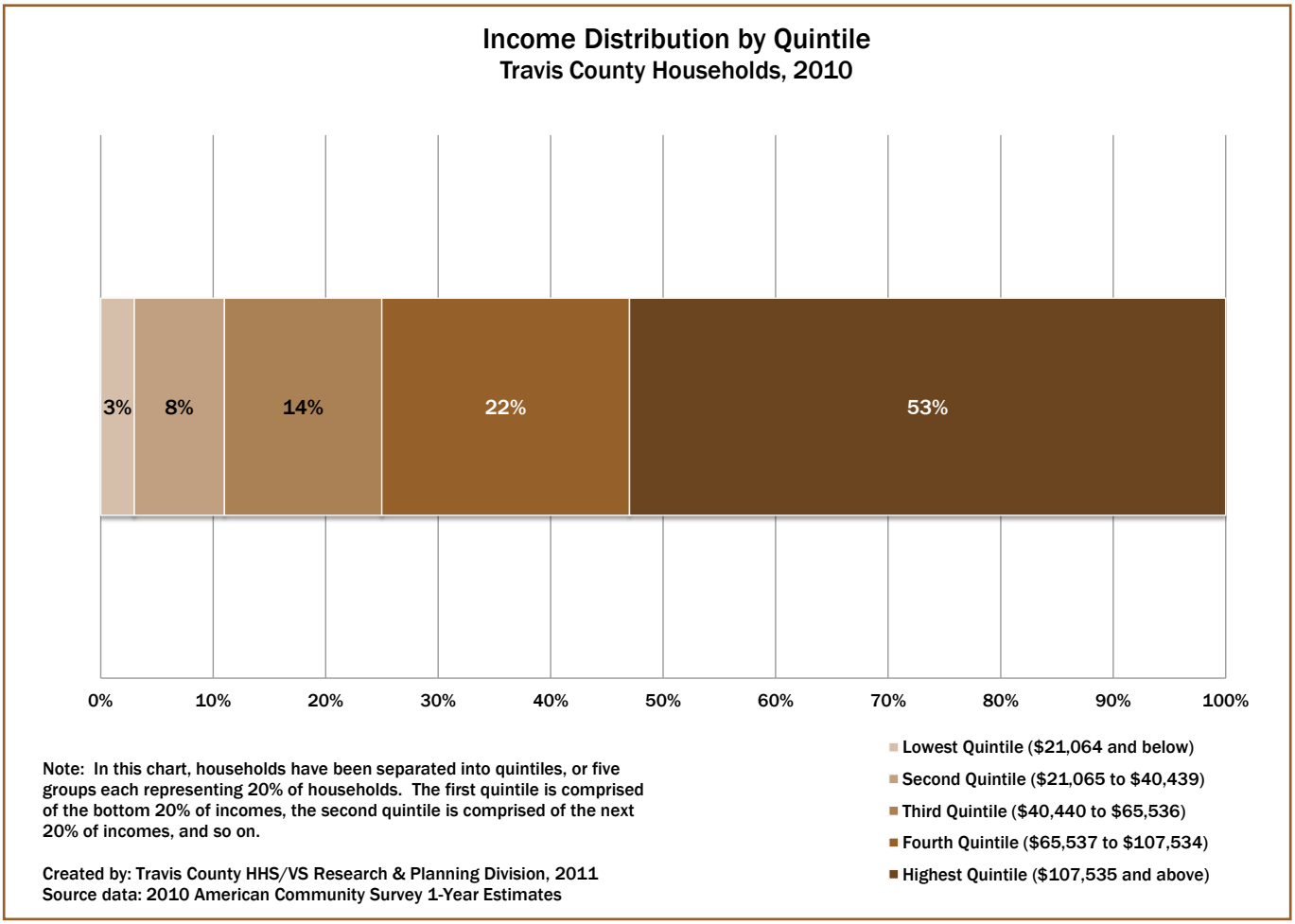
**Median Household Income**
**Travis County, Texas and U.S., 2002 and 2010**

| | Travis County | Texas | U.S. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Median Household Income 2002 (in 2010 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) | $59,662 | $50,151 | $52,189 |
| Median Household Income 2010 | $51,743 | $48,615 | $50,046 |
| Percent Change between 2002 and 2010 | -13% | -3% | -4% |

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS Research & Planning Division, 2011
Source data: American Community Survey 2002 and 2010 1-Year Estimates, and the Consumer Price Index

[8] Inflation adjustment calculation based on Consumer Price Index at: ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpiai.txt.
[9] The American Community Survey asks how much income was earned during the past 12 months. Consequently, a person answering the questions in December 2010 would respond based on income earned between December 2009 and November 2010.

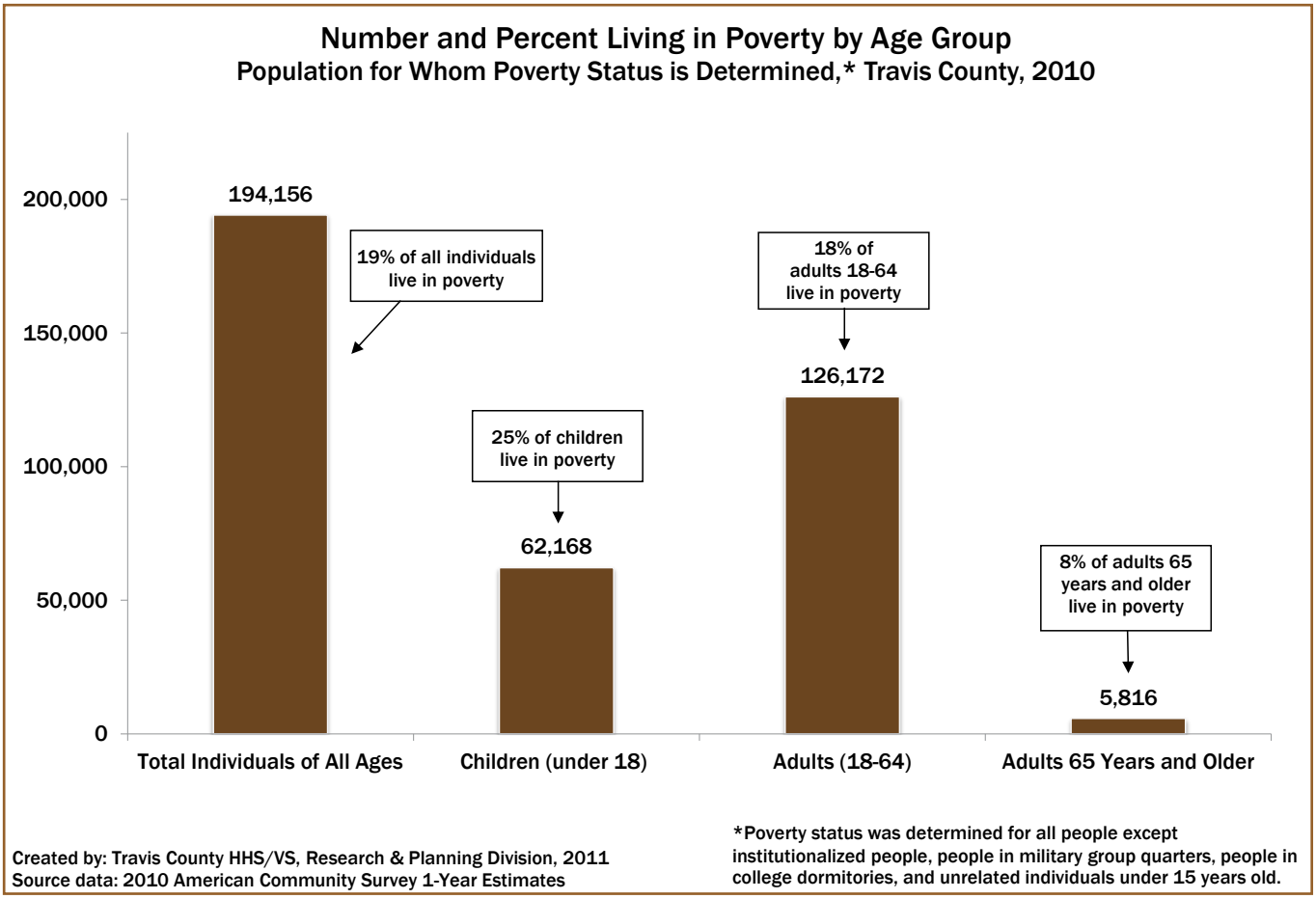
# Household Income Distribution




To assess income distribution, we have separated households into quintiles[10] (five groups, each representing 20% of households). The bottom 20% of households represent about 3% of the county's income, while the top 20% of households represent over half of the county's income (51%).

**Geographic Comparison:** The distribution of household income by quintile is nearly the same in Travis County, Texas as a whole and the U.S. However, the upper limits of each household income quintile are higher for Travis County than for those of the U.S. and Texas.

[10] For shares of household income by quintiles, negative incomes are converted to zero. These measures are the aggregate household income in each quintile as a percentage of the total aggregate income. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2010 Subject Definitions, p. 82.)




**Poverty Rate Trends:** Travis County's poverty rates among individuals (19%) and children (25%) remain significantly higher than in 1999, when 13% of individuals and 14% of children lived below the poverty threshold.[11] The 2010 overall poverty rate in the county has increased by three percentage points from the previous year (16% in 2009). Children are disproportionately represented among the poor, representing just under one-quarter (24%) of the total Travis County population, but comprising 32% of those living in poverty.

**Poverty Estimates and Rates among Individuals and Children, Travis County, 1999-2010**

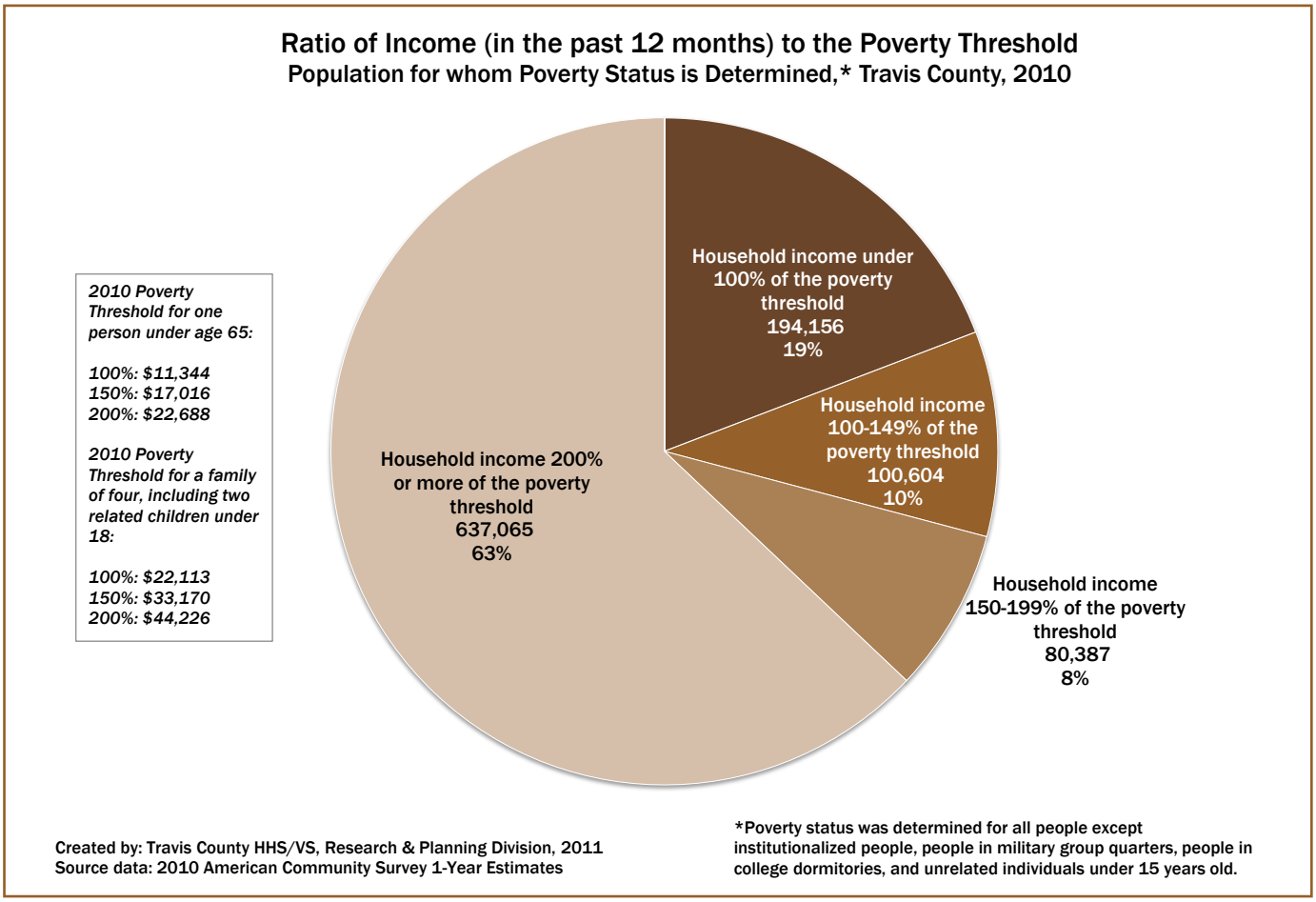
| | 1999 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Individuals in Poverty | 99,388 | 122,607 | 116,231 | 106,765 | 135,240 | 137,687 | 141,223 | 144,336 | 163,630 | 194,156 |
| Individual Poverty Rate | 12.5% | 14.8% | 14.0% | 12.6% | 15.7% | 15.2% | 14.7% | 14.8% | 16.2% | 19.2% |
| Children (under 18) in Poverty | 27,214 | 39,712 | 34,260 | 27,549 | 45,524 | 46,039 | 45,214 | 47,723 | 56,690 | 62,168 |
| Child Poverty Rate | 14.3% | 19.6% | 16.7% | 12.9% | 21.4% | 20.4% | 18.7% | 19.1% | 23.2% | 25.4% |

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011. Source data: Census 2000, American Community Survey 2002-2010 1-Year Estimates.

**Geographic Comparison:** Travis County has a slightly higher proportion of people living in poverty (19%) than the state of Texas (18%) and the U.S. (15%).

[11] The Census Bureau uses poverty thresholds as denoted in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14 described on the Census Bureau's website at http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html. The thresholds consider family size and composition when determining whether an individual is living in poverty and are located at http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/index.html.

# Income to Poverty Ratio




**Ratio of Household Income in the Past 12 Months to the Poverty Threshold:**[12] In Travis County an estimated 194,156 individuals (19% of the total population) live in households with incomes below the poverty threshold. This marks an increase of three percentage points from the 2009 rate (16%). 37% of Travis County residents, or an estimated 375,147 individuals, live at or below 200% of the poverty threshold.

**Geographic Comparison:** The table below shows the ratios of income to poverty in Travis County, Texas, and the nation as a whole.

**Ratio of Income (in the past 12 months) to the Poverty Threshold**
**Travis County, Texas, and U.S., 2010**

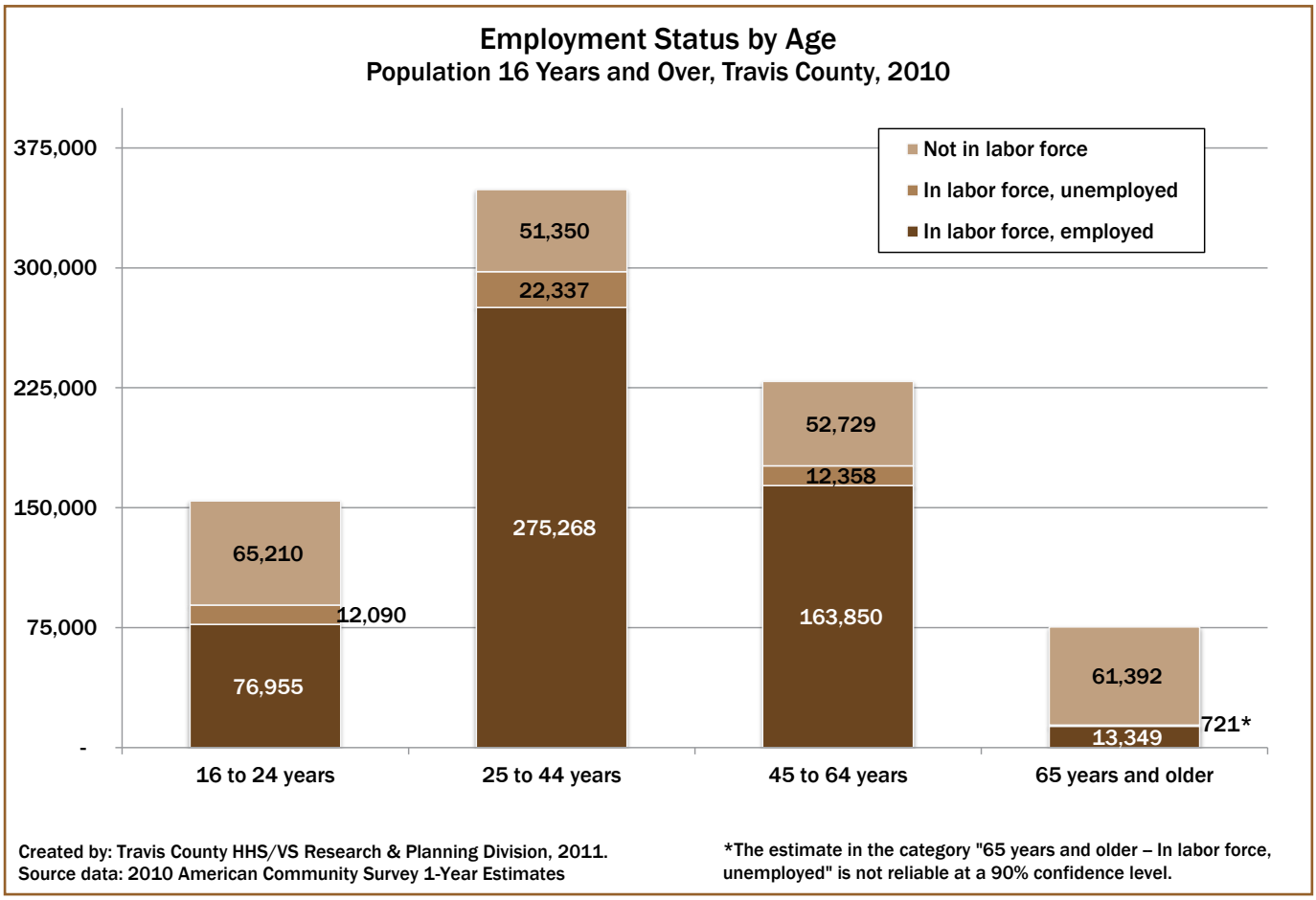
| | Travis County | Texas | U.S. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Income < 100% of the poverty threshold | 19%* | 18%* | 15% |
| Income 100%-199% of the poverty threshold | 18%** | 22% | 19%** |
| Income 200% or more of the poverty threshold | 63% | 61% | 66% |

*The difference between these rates is not statistically significant at a 90% confidence level. **Ibid.

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011 Source data: 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

[12] The Census Bureau uses poverty thresholds as denoted in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14 as described on the Census Bureau's website at www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html. The thresholds consider family size and composition when determining whether an individual is living in poverty and can be found at www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/index.html.

# Employment and Age



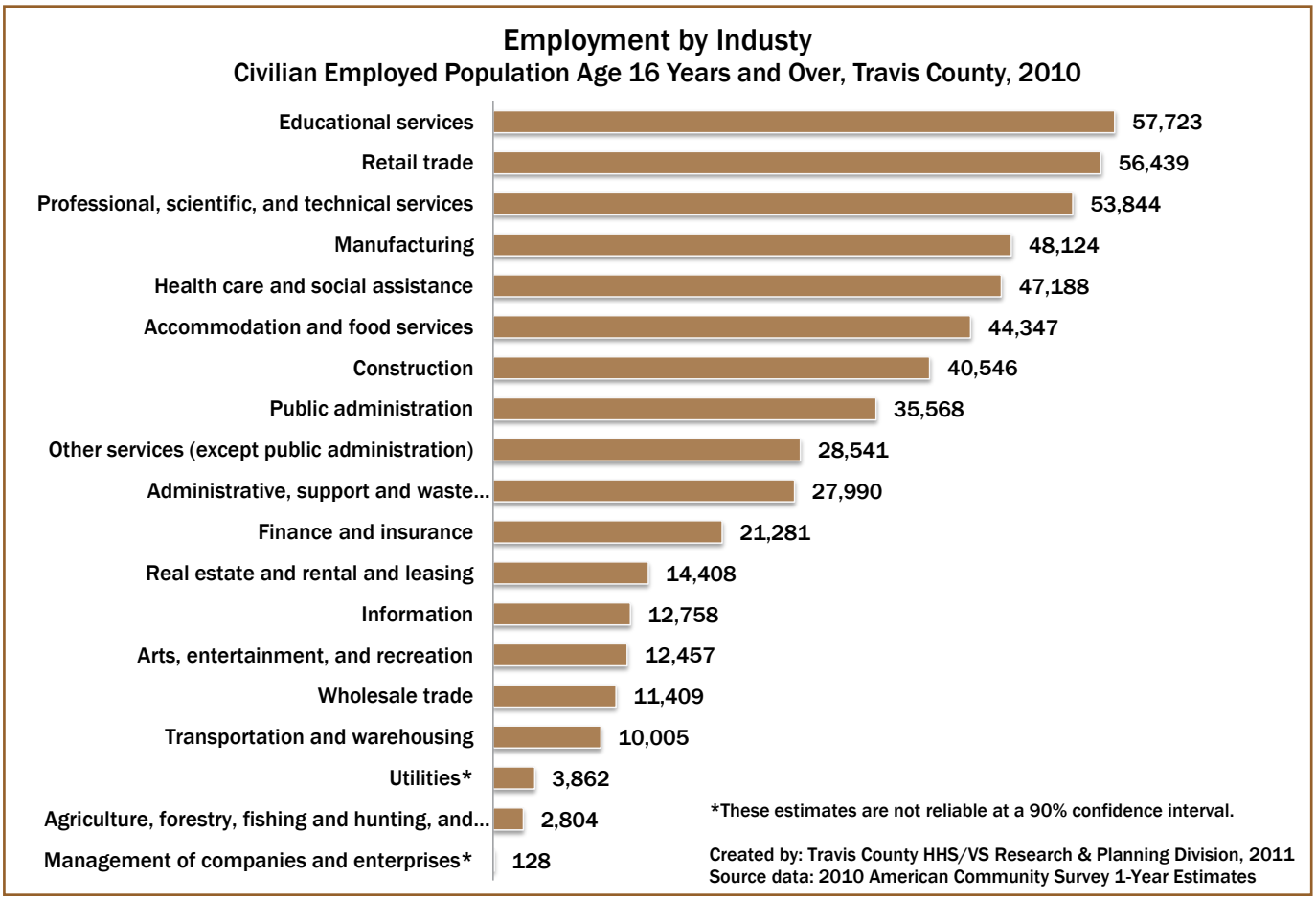

**Travis County's Labor Force:** In total, 71% of Travis County's population age 16 and over (about 577,500 people) is in the labor force. Approximately 47,500 of them were unemployed in 2010. This figure is similar in both number and proportion of our workforce to 2009 figures.

**Labor Force by Age:** Individuals between the ages of 25 and 44 constitute the majority (52%) of Travis County's labor force. The 45 to 64 age group comprises 31% of the labor force, followed by the 16 to 24 age group (15%), and finally those age 65 and older (2%).

**Unemployment by Age:** Travis County's overall unemployment rate (which is the percent unemployed of those in the labor force) was 8% in 2010. By age, the unemployment rate is highest, at 14%, for those 16 to 24 years old; 7% for those 25 to 44 years old; and 7% for those 45 to 64 years old.[13]

[13] Due to sampling error, the unemployment rate of those in the "65 years and over" category, reported at 5% in 2010, is unreliable at a 90% confidence level.

# Employment by Industry

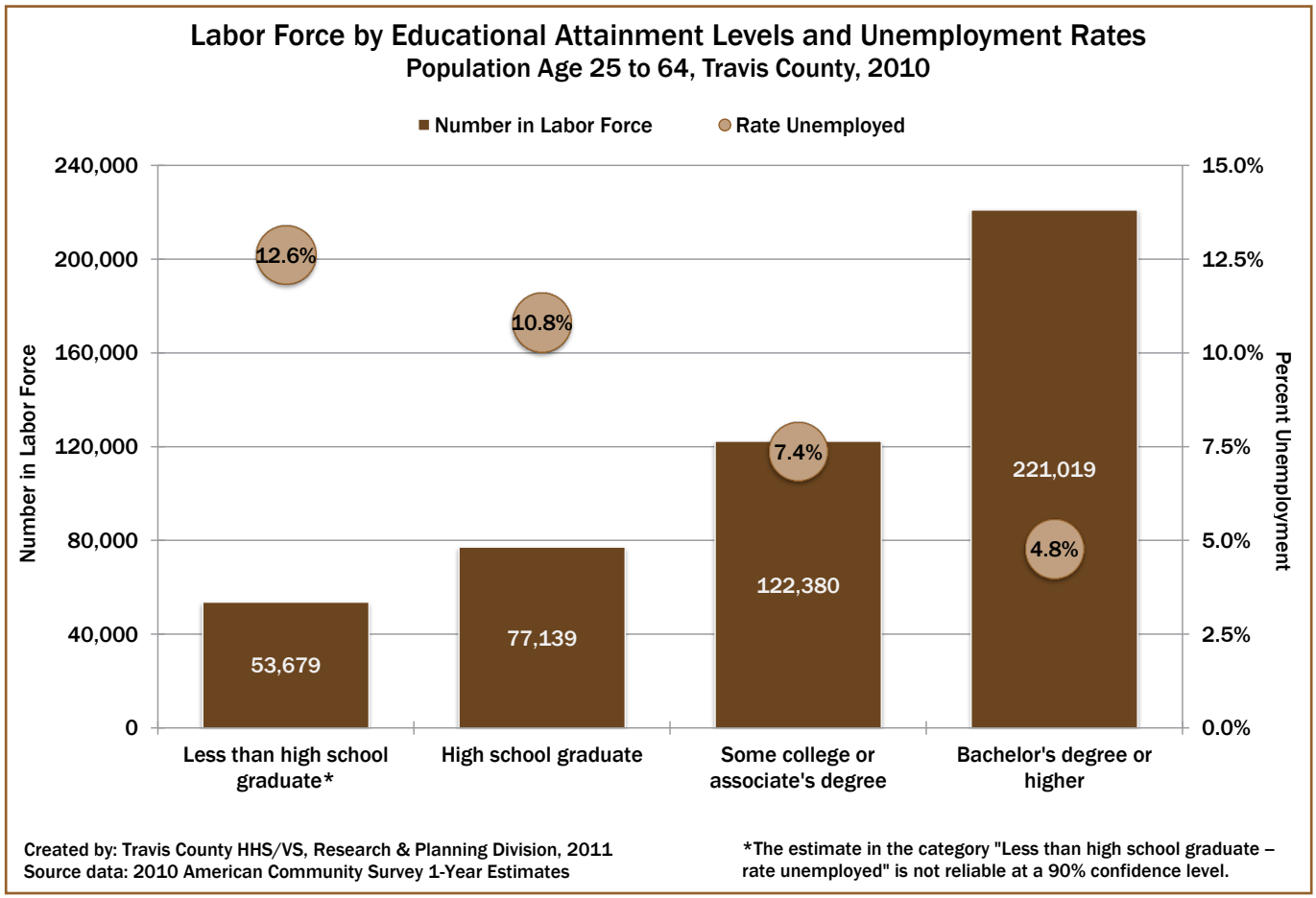



**Labor Force by Industry:** In 2010, half (50%) of Travis County's civilian employed population age 16 and over was employed in the following five industries: retail trade, educational services, professional/scientific/technical services, health care and social assistance, and manufacturing.

**Geographic Comparison:** In general, proportions of Travis County workers by industry are similar to those of major metropolitan counties in Texas as well as the nation and the state as a whole.[14] Some notable differences in Travis County include a slightly higher proportion of workers in professional/scientific and technical services and a slightly lower proportion of workers in transportation and warehousing than in major metropolitan counties in the state, Texas as a whole, and the nation.

[14] Comparisons were made to the following counties: Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, and Tarrant.

# Employment and Education

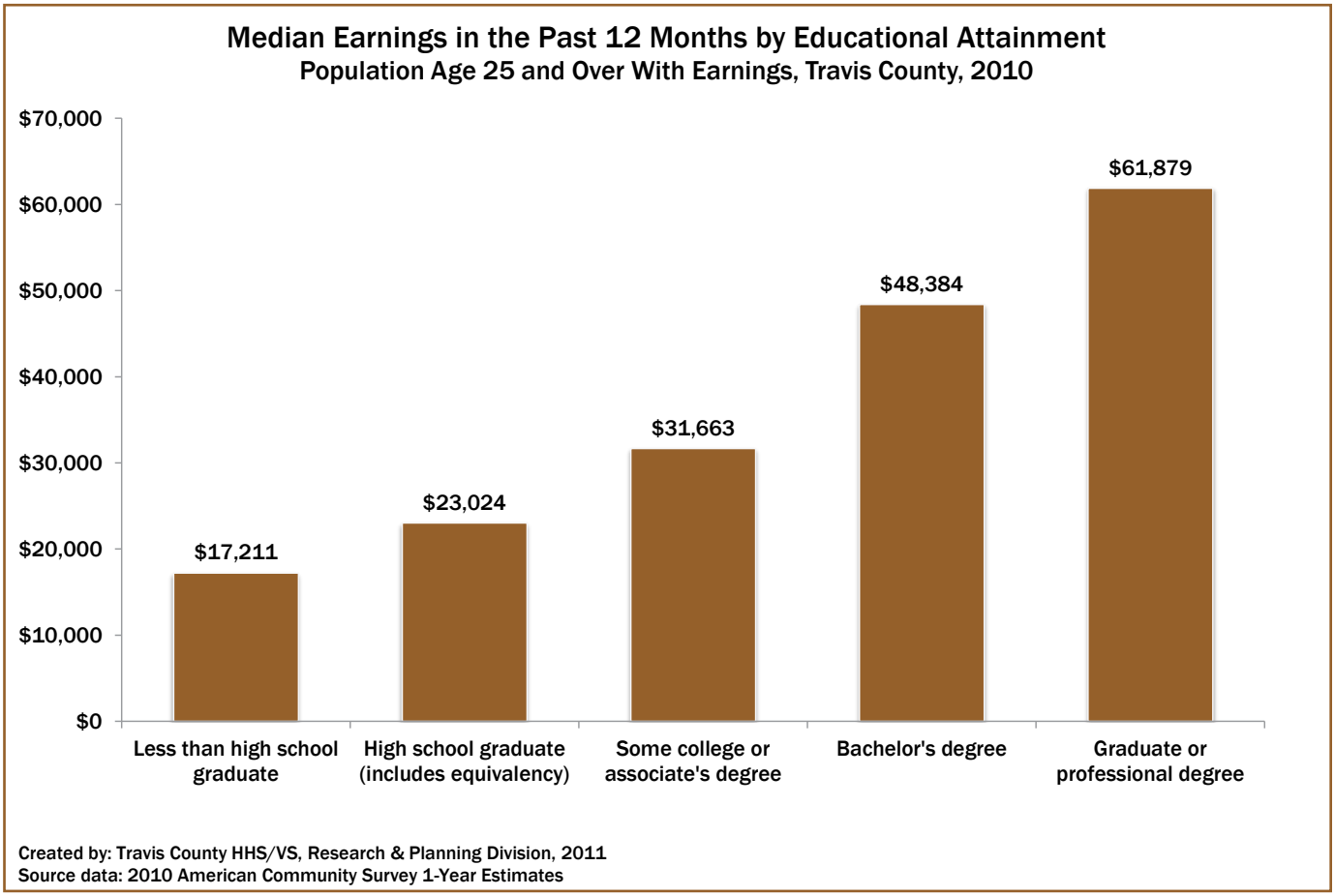



**Educational Attainment in the Labor Force:** Among Travis County workers between the ages of 25 and 64, almost half (47%) have a bachelor's degree or higher, and another one-quarter (26%) have some college or an associate's degree. High school graduates comprise 16% of the labor force, and the remaining 11% have less than a high school degree.

**Educational Attainment and Employment Rates:** Workforce trends generally predict that unemployment decreases as education levels increase. Accordingly, those with the highest educational attainment levels in Travis County also have the lowest unemployment (about 5% unemployment for those with a bachelor's degree or higher), and those with the lowest educational attainment levels have the highest unemployment (about 13% for those with less than a high school degree). In particular, there is a statistically significant difference between the unemployment rates for the categories "High school graduate" and "Some college or associates degree," as well as between the unemployment rates for "Some college or associates degree" and "Bachelor's degree or higher."

**Geographical Comparison:** In comparison to Texas and the U.S., Travis County has a very educated workforce. In Travis County, 47% of workers age 25 to 64 have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 30% for Texas and 33% for the U.S. at large.

# Earnings and Education

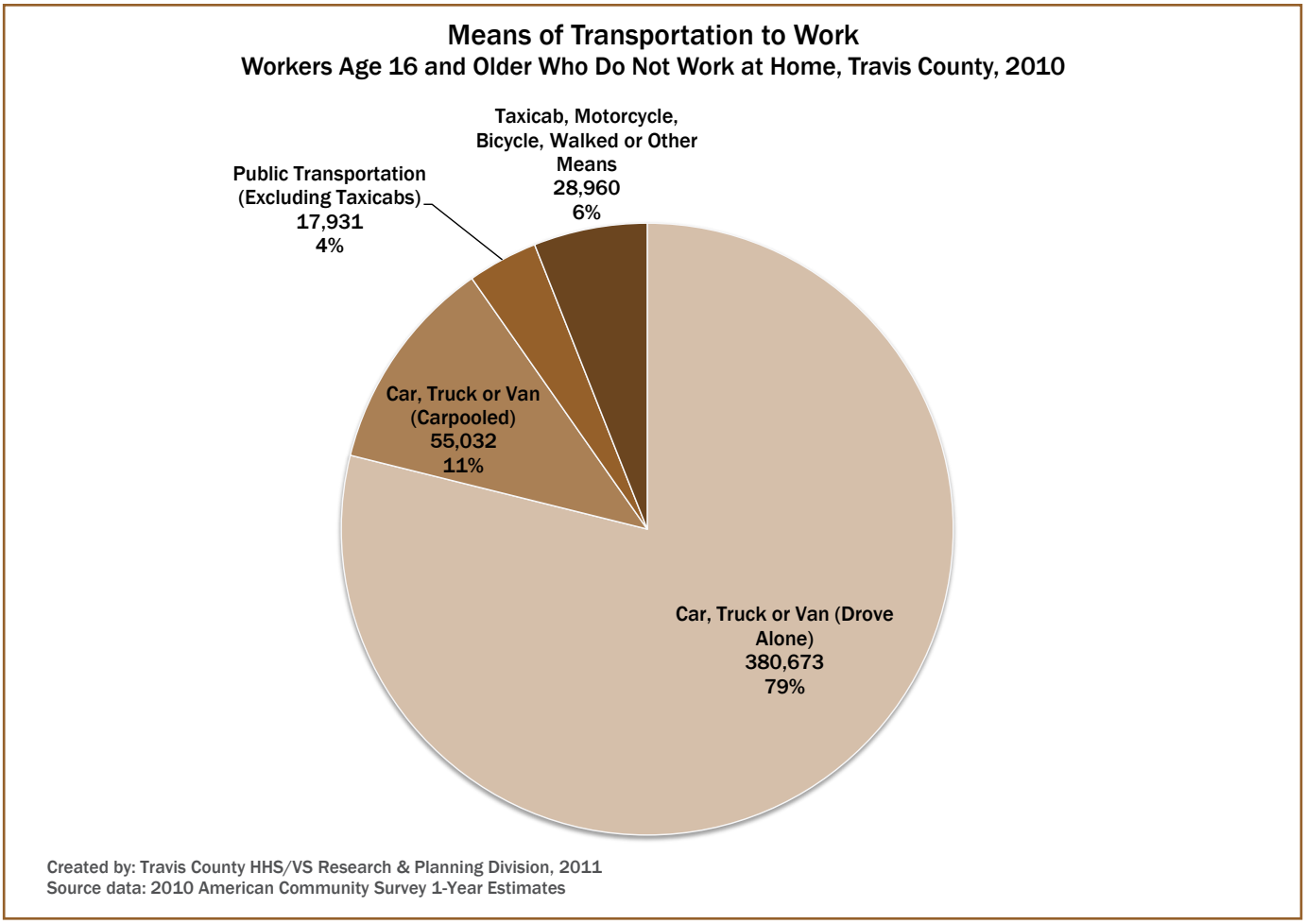



**Educational Attainment and Earnings:** Educational attainment level and earnings are directly related: As education level increases, earnings also rise. The largest incremental percent difference in 2010 was between those with some college or associate's degree and those with Bachelor's degrees (a 53% difference in median earnings).

**Median Earnings and Gender:** For Travis County overall, 2010 median earnings[15] were $35,347. However, median earnings for men ($38,337) are 21% higher than those for women ($31,566).

**Geographic Comparison:** Travis County's 2010 overall median earnings ($35,347) are higher than both those of the state of Texas ($31,799) and those of entire U.S. ($33,298).

[15] The median divides the earnings distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median and one-half above the median. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2010 Subject Definitions, p. 82.)

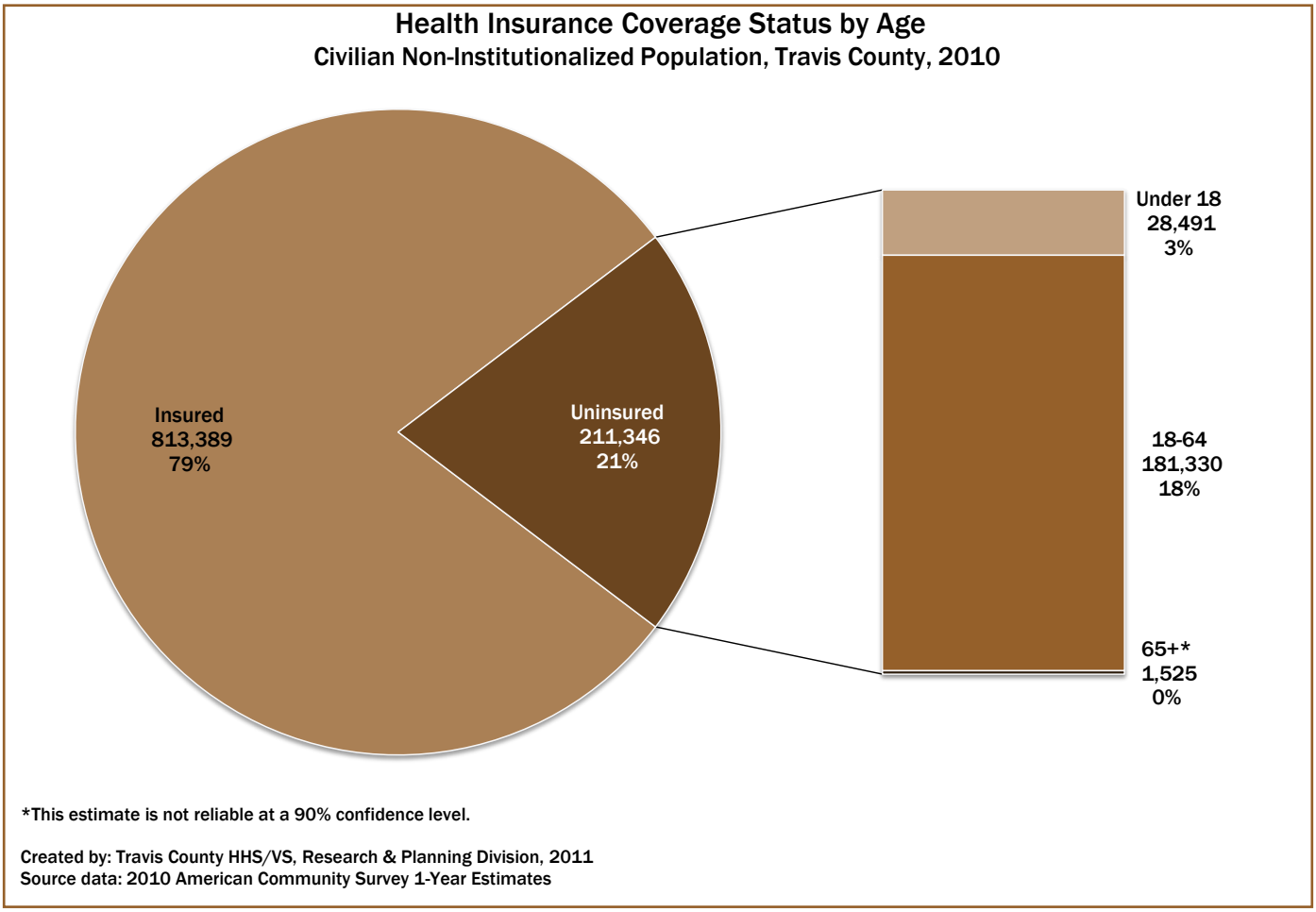



**Means of Transportation:** The vast majority of Travis County workers age 16 and older drive to work alone (79% or more than 380,000 people). 11% (approximately 55,000) carpool while 4% (about 18,000) use public transportation. The remaining 6% (about 29,000) use other means of transportation, including taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or walking. Among all these commuters, the vast majority (68%) travel under 30 minutes to get to work.

**Geographic Comparison:** The proportion of Travis County workers who drive to work alone (79%) mirrors that of the nation but is slightly lower than that of the state (83%). In other major metropolitan counties of Texas, the proportion of commuters who drive to work alone hovers between 81% and 86%.[16] The proportion of commuters using public transportation in Travis County (4%) is similar to the nation (5%) but higher than Texas (2%) and the other major metropolitan counties in the state.

[16] Comparisons counties include: Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris and Tarrant.

# Health Insurance




In Travis County, 21% of residents do not have health insurance.[17] Of these 211,346 uninsured individuals, the majority (181,330 people) are adults between the ages of 18 and 64. Another 28,491 individuals (constituting 3% of the total Travis County population) are uninsured and under the age of 18. Just over 1,500 people age 65 and over are living without health insurance (0.1% of the total Travis County population).[18]

**Geographic Comparison:** Travis County's proportion of uninsured residents (21%) is higher than that of the U.S. (16%) but lower than that of Texas (24%). Other major metropolitan counties[19] in the state reveal a variety of rates of uninsurance, from a high of 30% in El Paso County to a low of 20% in Bexar County.

[17] The Census Bureau broadly classifies health insurance coverage as private health insurance or public coverage. People are considered insured if they were reported to have at least one of the following: Insurance through a current or former employer or union (of respondent or another family member); insurance purchased directly from an insurance company (by respondent or another family member); Medicare for those 65 and over or those with certain disabilities; Medicaid, Medical Assistance, or any kind of government assistance plan for those with low incomes or a disability; TRICARE or other military health care; VA (including those who have ever used or enrolled for VA health care). People who had no reported health coverage, or those whose only health coverage was Indian Health Service, are considered uninsured. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2010 Subject Definitions, pp.68-69.)

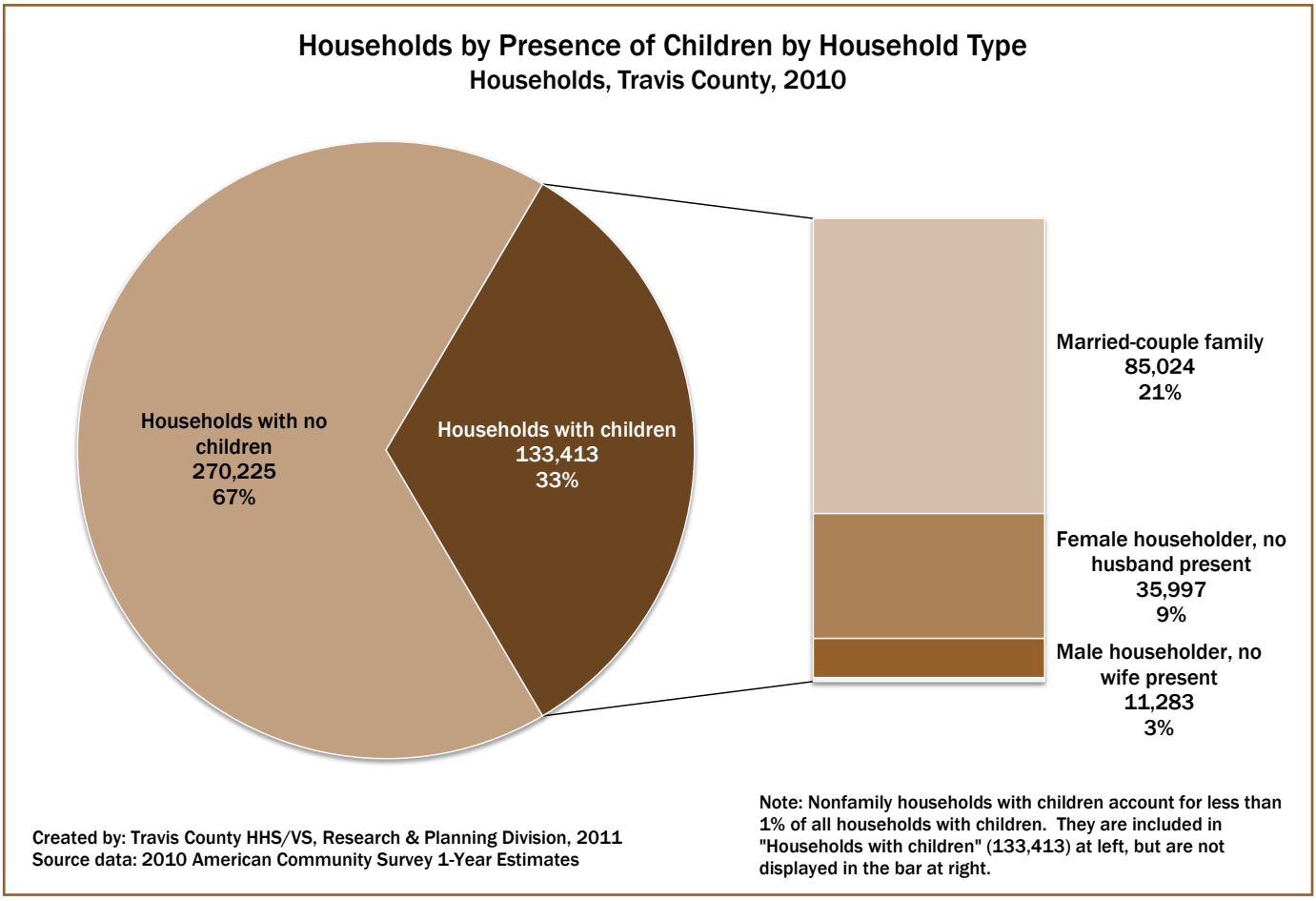
[18] This estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence interval.

[19] Comparison counties included Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris and Tarrant.

# Housing Characteristics

Household Type..... 23
Cost Burden ..... 24
Rent Values..... 25
Housing Values ..... 26
Median Housing Value..... 27

# Household Type



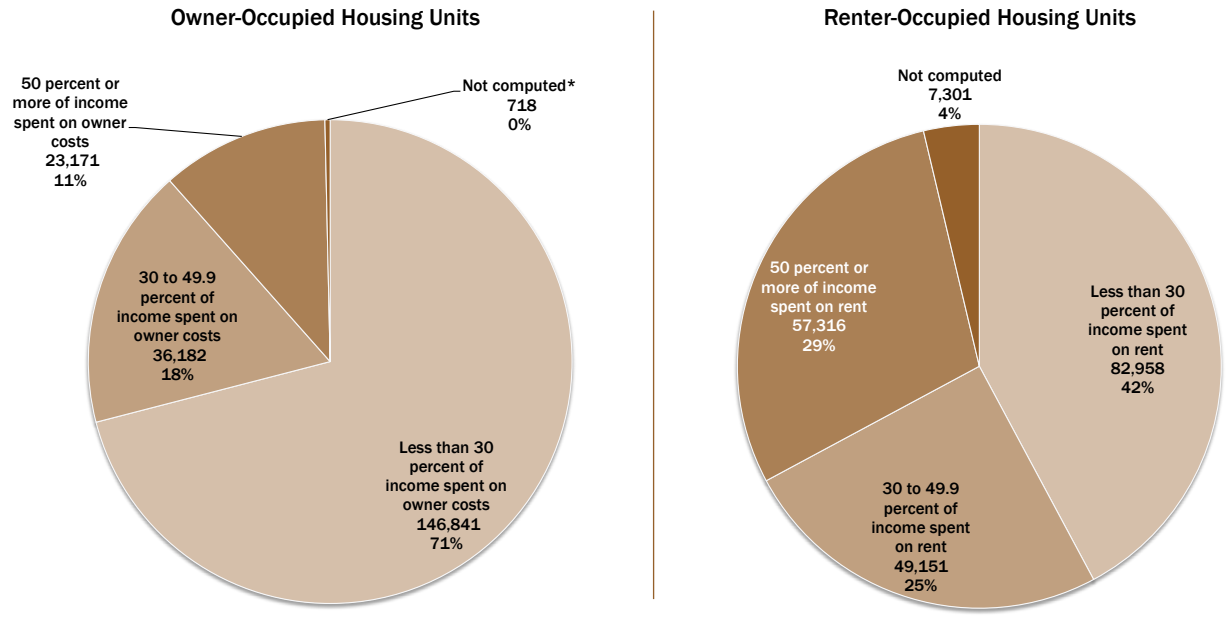

**Households by Presence of Children:**

- About one-third (33%) of Travis County households include children, while the remaining 67% do not.
- Of those households with children, the majority are married-couple families. Approximately 47,300 have one householder (majority female) with no spouse present.

**Geographic Comparison:**

- Travis County's proportions of households with and without children are very similar to those of the entire U.S. However, in comparison to the state average, Travis County households are less likely to include children (38% of Texas households include children).
- Regarding single householders with children with no spouse present, there is no significant difference between Travis County's proportions and those of the state and the nation.

**Percent of Household Income Spent on Housing Costs**
**Travis County, 2010**




*The estimate for this category is not reliable at a 90% confidence level.

Note: Households spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs have a cost burden; those spending 50% or more on housing costs have a severe cost burden.

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011 Source data: 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

**Cost Burden:** In Travis County, 51% of occupied housing units are owner-occupied, and 49% are renter-occupied. A large percentage of both renters and owners in Travis County experience a housing cost burden, which is defined as spending 30% or more of household income on housing costs.[20] However, the percent of households that are cost burdened is much higher among renters than owners. More than half (54)% of renter households spend 30% or more of their income on rent, and over one quarter (29%) of them spend at least half of their income on rent. Comparatively, 29% of owner households spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs and 11% spend at least half.

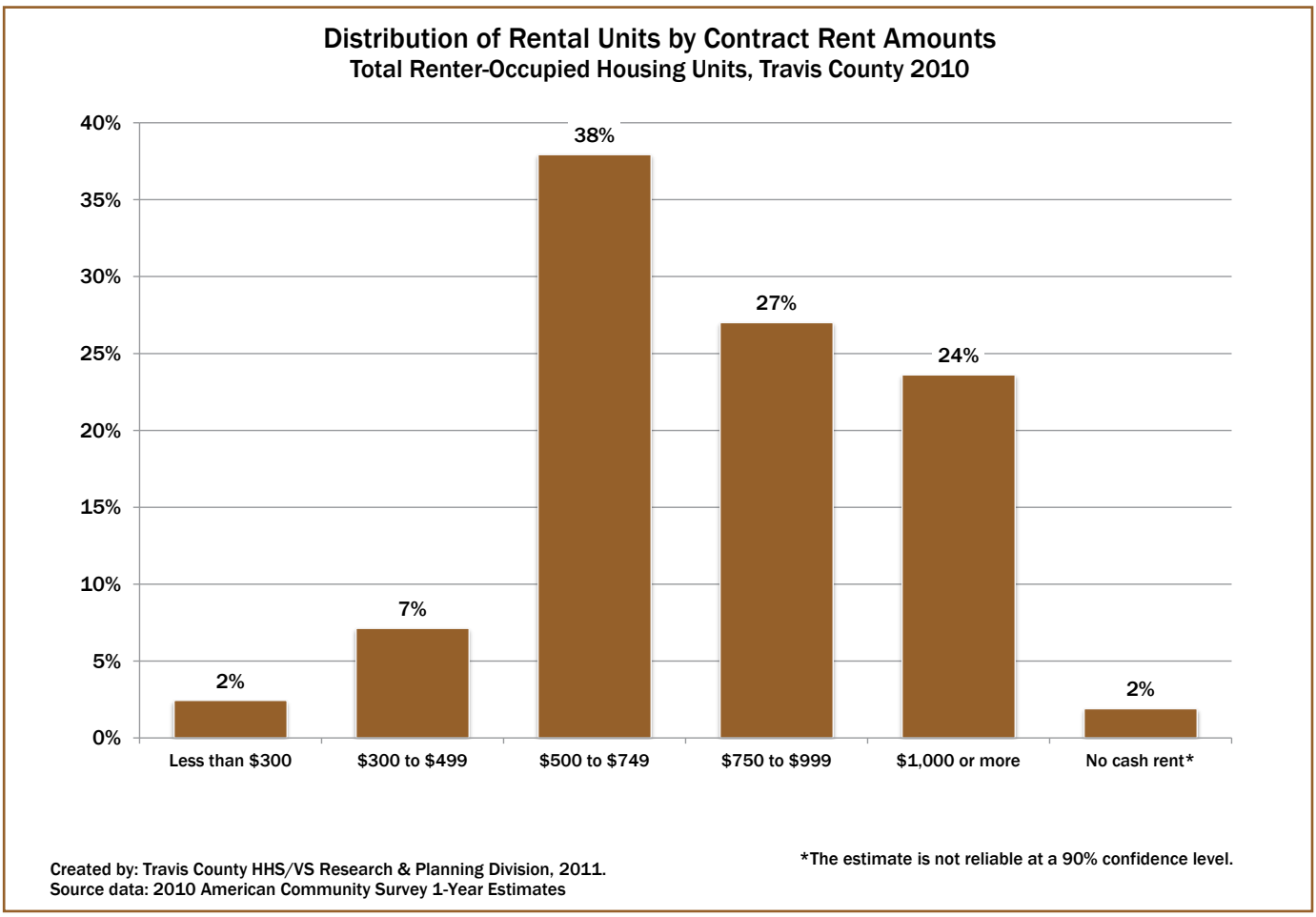
**Geographic Comparison:**

- Travis County renter households experience a higher cost burden rate (54%) than those of the state of Texas (46%), but similar rates to those of the nation and most other metropolitan counties in Texas (Dallas, El Paso, Harris and Tarrant counties).

- Travis County owner households' cost burden rate (29%) is lower than that of the nation (30%), but higher than that of the state of Texas (25%). As compared to other Texas metropolitan counties, the cost burden rate among Travis County owners falls in the middle of the spectrum.

[20] See U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, http://www.huduser.org/publications/affhsg/worstcase00/app_b.html.

# Rent Values



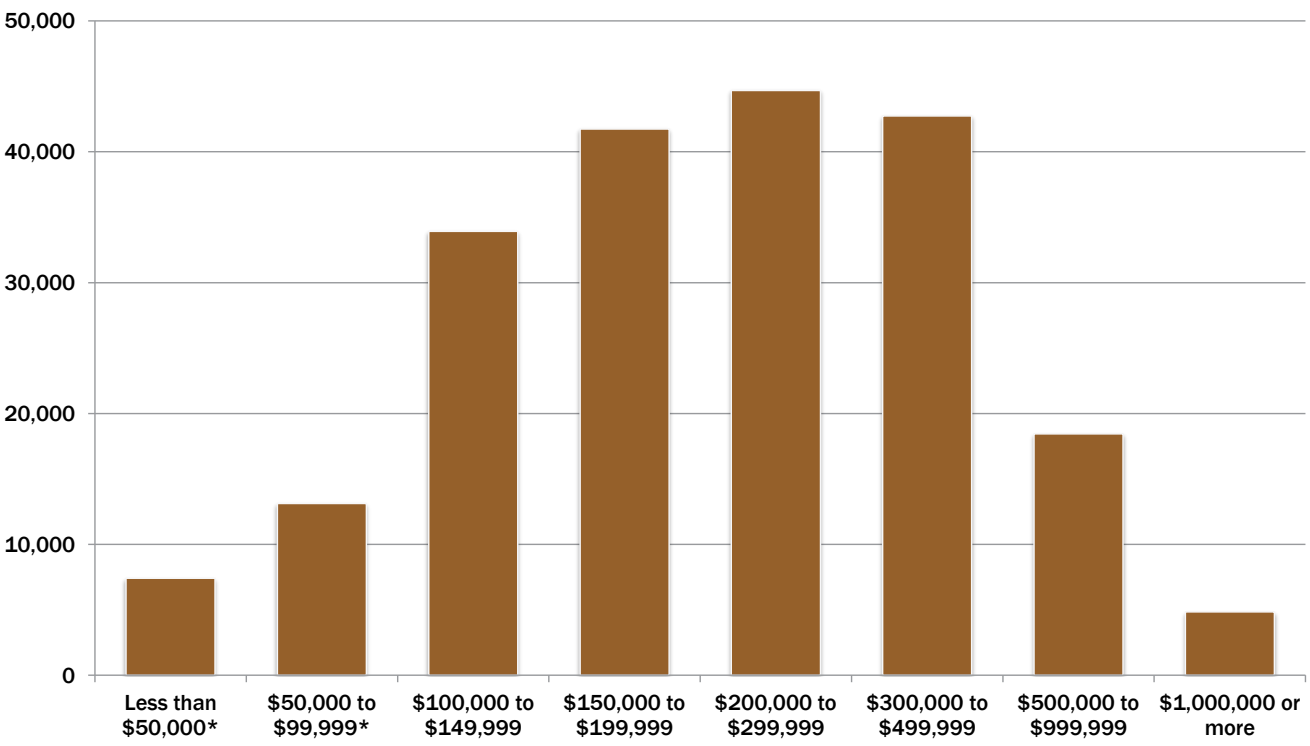

**Contract Rent[21] Distribution:** The Travis County rental market is skewed toward the higher end of rental values. Over half (51%) of Travis County's occupied rental units have rents at or above $750. About 10% (approximately 18,800) of occupied rental units have rents below $500 (not including 2% with no cash rent).[22]

**Median Contract Rent:** The 2010 median contract rent in Travis County is $761, compared to $647 for Texas and $713 for the U.S.

[21] 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 2010 Subject Definitions, p. 15.)

[22] "No cash rent" refers to housing units that are renter occupied without payment of rent. The unit may be owned by friends or relatives who live elsewhere and who allow occupancy without charge. Rent-free houses or apartments may also be provided to compensate caretakers, ministers, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, or others. (American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2010 Subject Definitions, pp. 14-15.)

# Housing Values



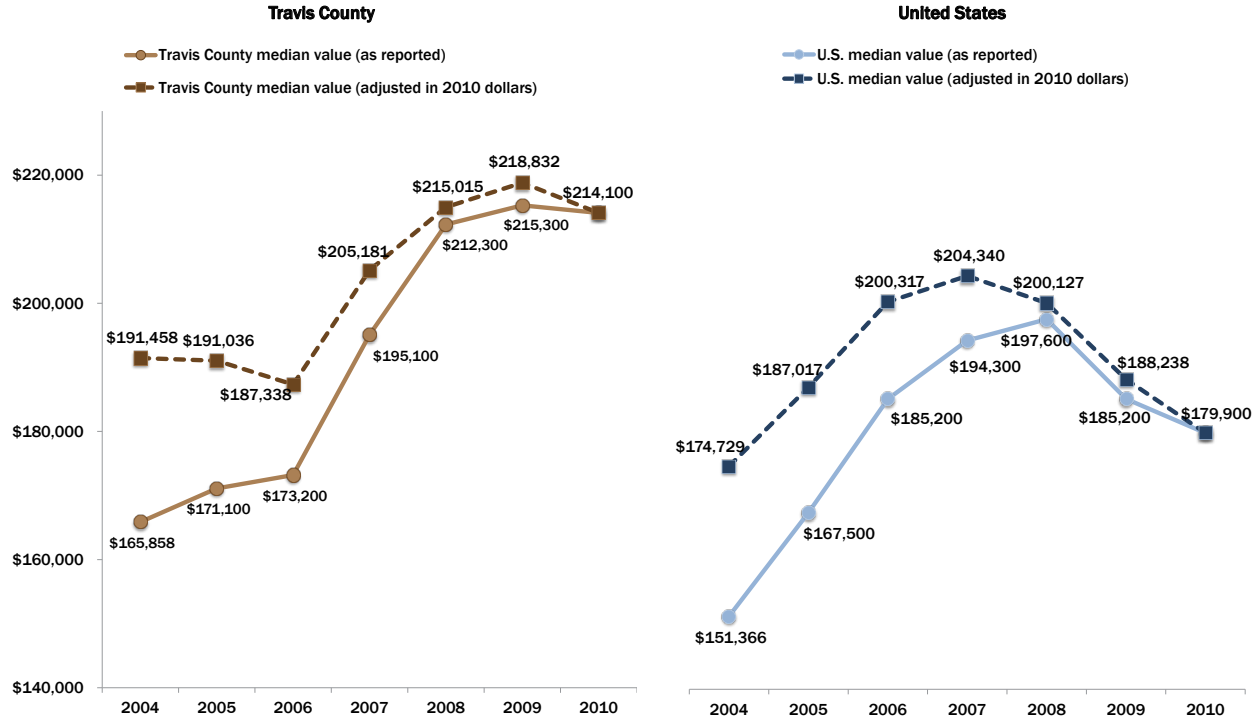

**Housing Value[23] Distribution:** Much of Travis County's owner-occupied housing is clustered in the middle of the value spectrum. Homes valued between $100,000 and $299,999 comprise 58% (approximately 120,300) of owner-occupied housing in Travis County. Only 10% (approximately 20,500) of owner-occupied homes in Travis County are valued at under $100,000.

**Median Housing Value:** The median housing value in 2010 in Travis County was $214,100. This is higher than that of the U.S. ($179,900), and much higher than that of the state of Texas ($128,100).

[23] Value is the respondent's estimate of how much the property (house and lot, mobile home and lot, or condominium unit) would sell for if it were for sale. For vacant units, value was the price asked for the property. (American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2010 Subject Definitions, p. 40.)

# Median Housing Value

**Median Home Values, Actual and Reported, 2004-2010**




Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011
Source data: 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Travis County's median home value exhibited a steady rising in recent years, followed by a leveling off in 2009 and 2010. The reported median home value rose from $173,200 in 2006 to $212,300 in 2008; when adjusted for inflation,[24] the rising trend during these years is still evident, although not as sharp. Between 2008 and 2010, the median home value in Travis County did not experience any significant change.

In contrast, while the reported national median home value also increased between 2006 and 2008, when adjusted for inflation, the U.S. median home values show a relatively flat trend during that same time period. Between 2008 and 2010, the U.S. reported median home value fell from $197,600 to $179,900.

This seems to indicate that while national home values appeared to level off over 2006 through 2008 and then decline from 2009 through 2010, values in the Travis County market continued to rise through 2008 and then leveled off in 2009 through 2010.

[24] Inflation adjustment calculation based on Consumer Price Index at: ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpiai.txt

# Methodology

The U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) is the primary data source for this chart book. Data from the 2000 Census and the 2002-2009 ACS surveys are also referenced for specific trend analyses.

## About the American Community Survey

**The American Community Survey (ACS) replaces the long form of the 10-year U.S. Census or Decennial Census and collects information on an ongoing basis rather than once every ten years. The survey includes questions about demographic, housing, social and economic characteristics.**[i] The ACS employs continuous data collection, with annual results produced at the national, state, city, and county levels as well as smaller geographic areas with a population of 65,000 or greater. In 2008, data based on a 3-year sample became available for all areas of 20,000 or more. In early 2011, data based on a 5-year sample became available for many small areas (state, county, city, town, place, census tracts and block groups).[ii]

## ACS Methodology

*Sample:* The American Community Survey (ACS) is conducted every month on independent samples of housing unit[iii] addresses (whether vacant or occupied) and persons in group quarters[iv] facilities, and produces annual estimates of the total residential population. Each year, approximately 3 million housing unit addresses in the United States and approximately 200,000 residents in group quarters facilities are selected. Surveys are collected from 1/12 of the sample each month. An address will not be included in the ACS survey more than once in a five-year period.[v]

For Travis County, the original 2010 (entire 12 month) sample of initial addresses selected was 8,364, and the final number of housing unit interviews (actual sample used to produce results) was 5,460. The group quarters population sample is not available at the county level, but for the entire state of Texas, the initial sample selected was 12,957 and the final number of group quarters person interviews was 9,953.[vi]

*Data collection:* The ACS is conducted primarily through self-response. The ACS employs two distinct data collection methodologies: one for individuals residing in housing units and another for those residing in group quarters. For participants residing in housing units, three attempts are made to administer the survey: (1) by mail, which includes separate mailings of a pre-notice letter, ACS questionnaire, reminder postcard, and replacement questionnaire if needed; (2) by phone, on a sample of addresses that have not returned the completed paper questionnaire and for which a telephone number is known; and finally (3) by personal interviews with a sample of remaining addresses. Sampling and data collection for group quarters varies by group quarters size.[vii]

# Methodology

**Limitations**

*Sampling error:* Because the findings are based on a sample, rather than entire populations, the results would differ slightly if another sample were drawn or if the entire population were surveyed. This reduces the reliability of the results. A certain amount of variability (called sampling error) is associated with any estimate based on a sample. In general, the larger the sample, the smaller the sampling error[viii]. However, the authors have attempted to minimize this variability by testing estimates and derived estimates for reliability at a 90% confidence level. Estimates with coefficients of variation[ix] of more than 15% were either excluded or footnoted as being unreliable.

*Statistical Significance:* To test the true significance of a difference in estimates, for example between geographic areas or over time, a statistical test should be conducted. Where direct comparisons were made across time or geographies, the authors tested for statistical significance at a 90% confidence level. Note that testing was not conducted on every possible permutation of comparisons between visible figures in this report's charts and tables, so inferences about statistics and trends should be interpreted with caution. However, any comparisons explicitly highlighted in the narrative text can be assumed to be statistically significant. Some notable exceptions where statistical significance was not found or not possible to determine were also footnoted.

For more information and instruction on testing for reliability and statistical significance, as well as general guidance on how to use American Community Survey data, please see the Compass guides published by the U.S. Census Bureau: www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/handbooks/

*Non-response error:* If certain individuals do not respond to the survey, the strength of the findings will be diminished. Additionally, those who respond to the survey may possess certain traits that skew the results differently than if everyone in the sample responds (this is known as selection bias). However, while surveys are often voluntary, response to the ACS is required by law (Section 221 of Title 13, Chapter 7, United States Code) and those who refuse or willfully neglect to respond to the survey are subject to a fine of up to $5,000.[x] The response rate for the ACS is high (the 2010 response rate for Texas was 96% for housing units and 98% for group quarters).[xi]

# Methodology

Endnotes

[i] A copy of the questionnaire can be found at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/SBasics/SQuest/SQuest1.htm

[ii] More information on the ACS multi-year estimates and release schedule can be found at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/2010_release_schedule/

[iii] A housing unit may be a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms or a single room that is occupied (or, if vacant, intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters. Both occupied and vacant housing units are included in the housing unit inventory. Boats, recreational vehicles (RVs), vans, tents, railroad cars, and the like are included only if they are occupied as someone's current place of residence. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2010 Subject Definitions, page 7.)

[iv] In 2006, group quarters were added to the ACS target population of housing units. A group quarters is a place where people live or stay, in a group living arrangement that is owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. Group quarters include such places as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, skilled nursing facilities, group homes, military barracks, correctional facilities, and workers' dormitories. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2010 Subject Definitions, page 8.) For more information on group quarters, see: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/GroupDefinitions/2010GQ_Definitions.pdf

[v] American Community Survey Sample Size Definitions, available at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/sample_size_definitions/

[vi] U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey 1 Year Estimates, Tables B98001 and B98002.

[vii] American Community Survey Accuracy of the Data (2010), available at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2010.pdf

[viii] U.S. Census Bureau, *A Compass for Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What State and Local Governments Need to Know.* U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2009. Available at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/handbooks/

[ix] Coefficient of variation is a measure used to discern the level of reliability of an estimate. It is calculated using the estimate and its standard error. For more information on calculating and using coefficients of variation, see: *A Compass for Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What State and Local Governments Need to Know, a*vailable at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/handbooks/

[x] American Community Survey: Must I Respond?, available at: https://ask.census.gov

[xi] Response rate information is available on the Census Bureau's American Community Survey website at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/response_rates_data/index.php