Travis County snapshot from american community survey 2006

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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, Korey Darling, and Veronica Neville, with the support of other Division staff, Blanca Tapia Leahy (Division Director), and Sherri E. Fleming (Executive Manager).

Questions or Comments?

For questions, more information, or to request a presentation, please contact the Research & Planning Division at R&P_HHS@co.travis.tx.us.

About the Chartbook

Why the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey 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 turned to the American Community Survey as a primary resource to describe current demographics and local conditions, for several reasons. Compared to the more well-known Decennial Census, which is conducted every 10 years, the American Community Survey is conducted on an ongoing basis and releases data annually. Thus it can provide more recent and accurate information, particularly for communities undergoing rapid demographic change. (For more on the American Community Survey, please see the Methodology.)

Why a report on the American Community Survey?

All of the information contained herein is publicly available via the U.S. Census Bureau's website. However, we have found that for many people, due to time constraints or technical limitations, it can be difficult to access, analyze, and interpret the data you need. By selecting key variables from among the many available, analyzing the data for important relationships and trends, and presenting it here in visual formats, we hope to provide our readers with more access to the most current information describing our community.

What's different about this report?

The *Travis County Snapshot from the 2006 American Community Survey* is a redesigned version of R&P's annual analysis of American Community Survey data. This year, we reformatted the report as an annual chart book. This chart book has several objectives:

Provide a point-in-time snapshot of our local community. Rather than conduct a trend analysis over time, for the most part only current (2006) data was referenced. This chart book is intended to show, at a glance, the current "state of affairs" for Travis County.

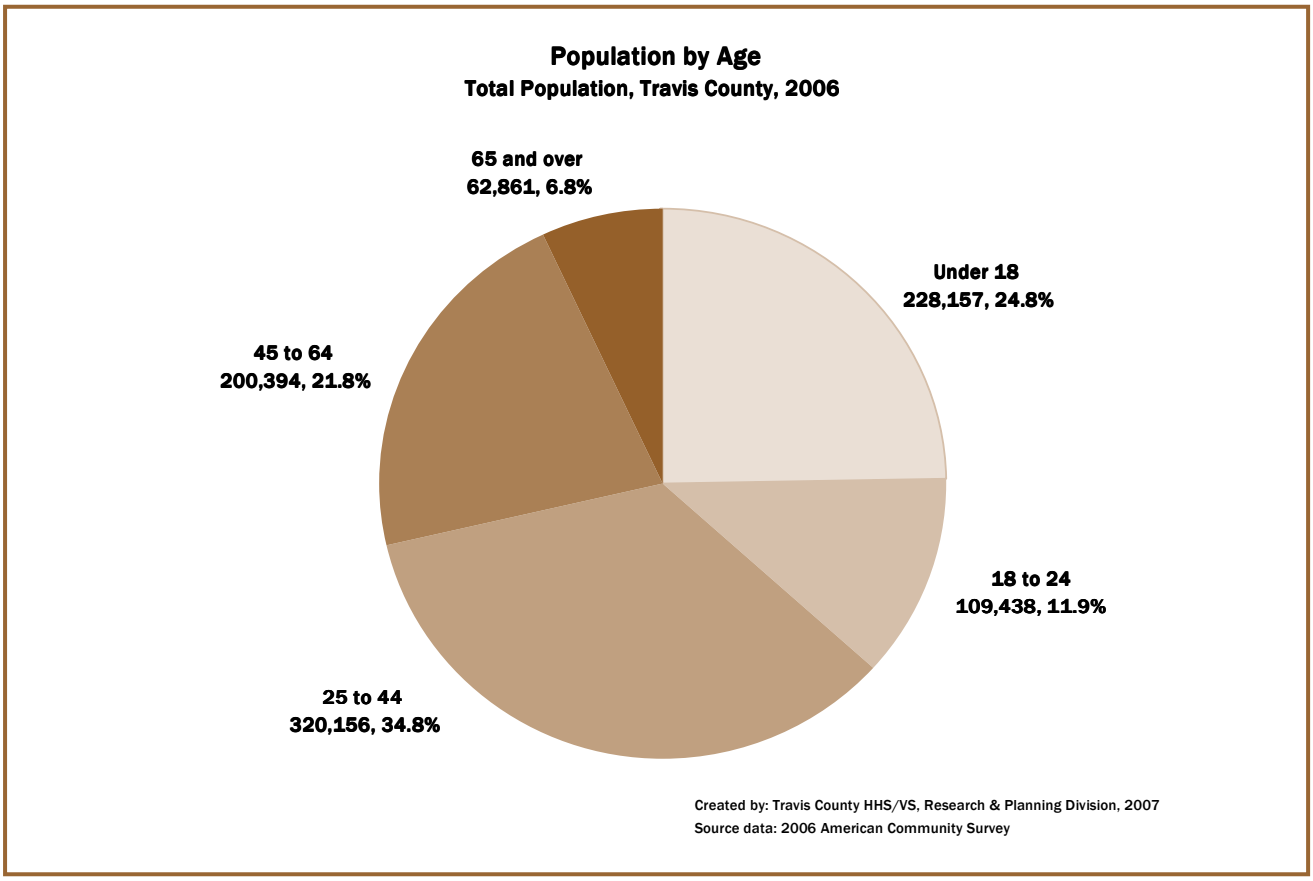
Summarize community conditions, rather than be specific in nature. We elected not to focus on particular sub-sets of the population, but rather to describe the demographic landscape of the entire community.

Be informative, accessible, and reproducible to the readership. To this end, we present data in easy-to-read visual formats, including charts and tables, along with some text to both provide context and highlight meaningful information. We hope these visual representations are useful to our readers in their efforts to improve programs, influence funding decisions, and shape local policies. We encourage our readers to borrow and cite this material.

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Age

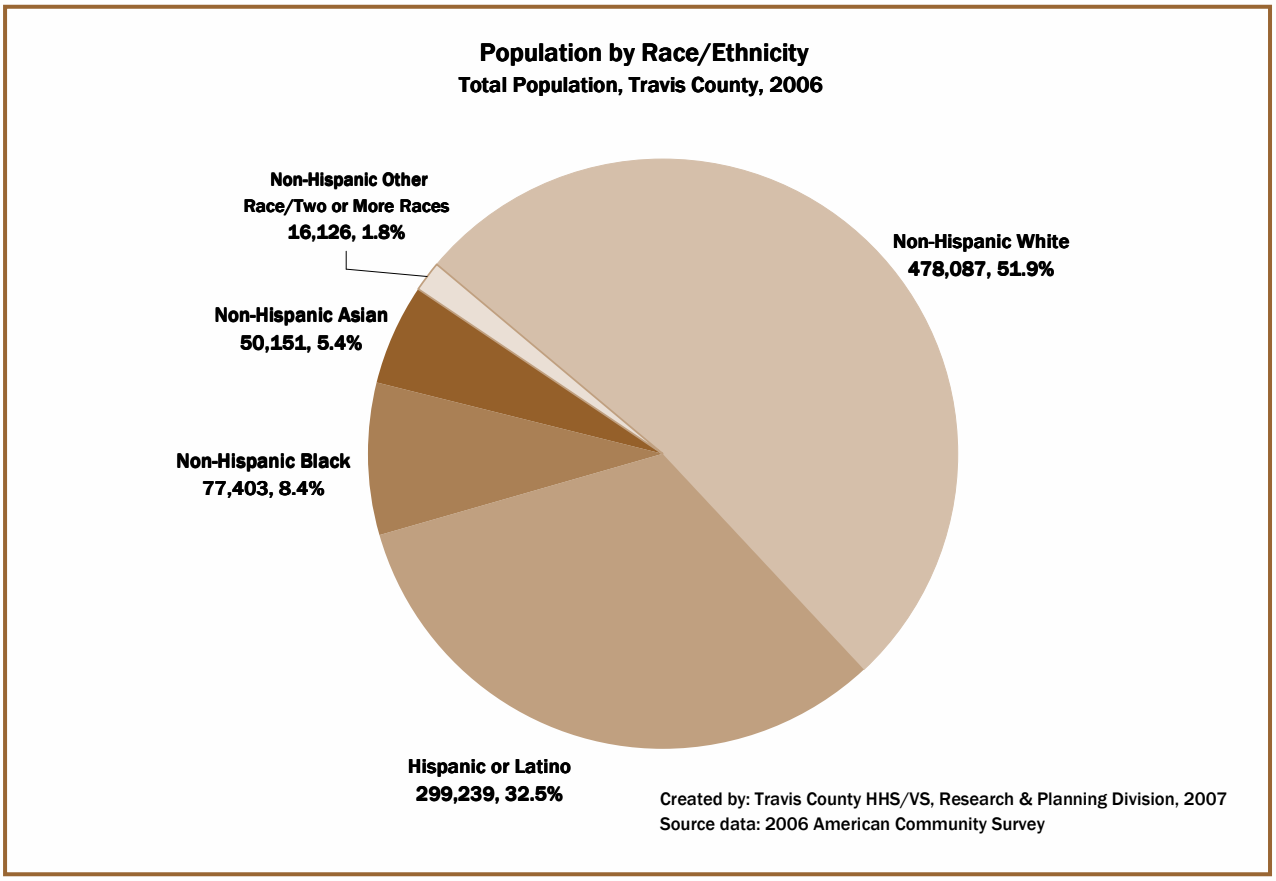


Age Distribution: Age distribution in Travis County continues to be characterized by a large working age population (18-64). Working age adults comprise about 68% of the county's population. In comparison, the 18-64 year old age group comprises 62% of the Texas and 63% of the U.S. population.

Median Age: The median age in Travis County is 32.0. This reflects a relatively younger population than that of Texas (33.1) and the United States as a whole (36.4).

Trends to Watch: In Travis County, the 45-64 year old group is growing at the fastest rate. (Between 2000 and 2006, the 45-64 year age group grew by 36%. In comparison, the total Travis County population grew by 13 %.) This mirrors national trends and is likely mostly a result of the aging of the baby boomer generation.

Race and Ethnicity



Race and Ethnicity: The majority of the Travis County population identifies as Non-Hispanic White (52%) followed by Hispanic or Latino (33%), Non-Hispanic Black (8%) and Non-Hispanic Asian (5%).

Trends to Watch: In noting trends since 2000, the Asian and Hispanic groups continue to show increases in number and share from year to year.

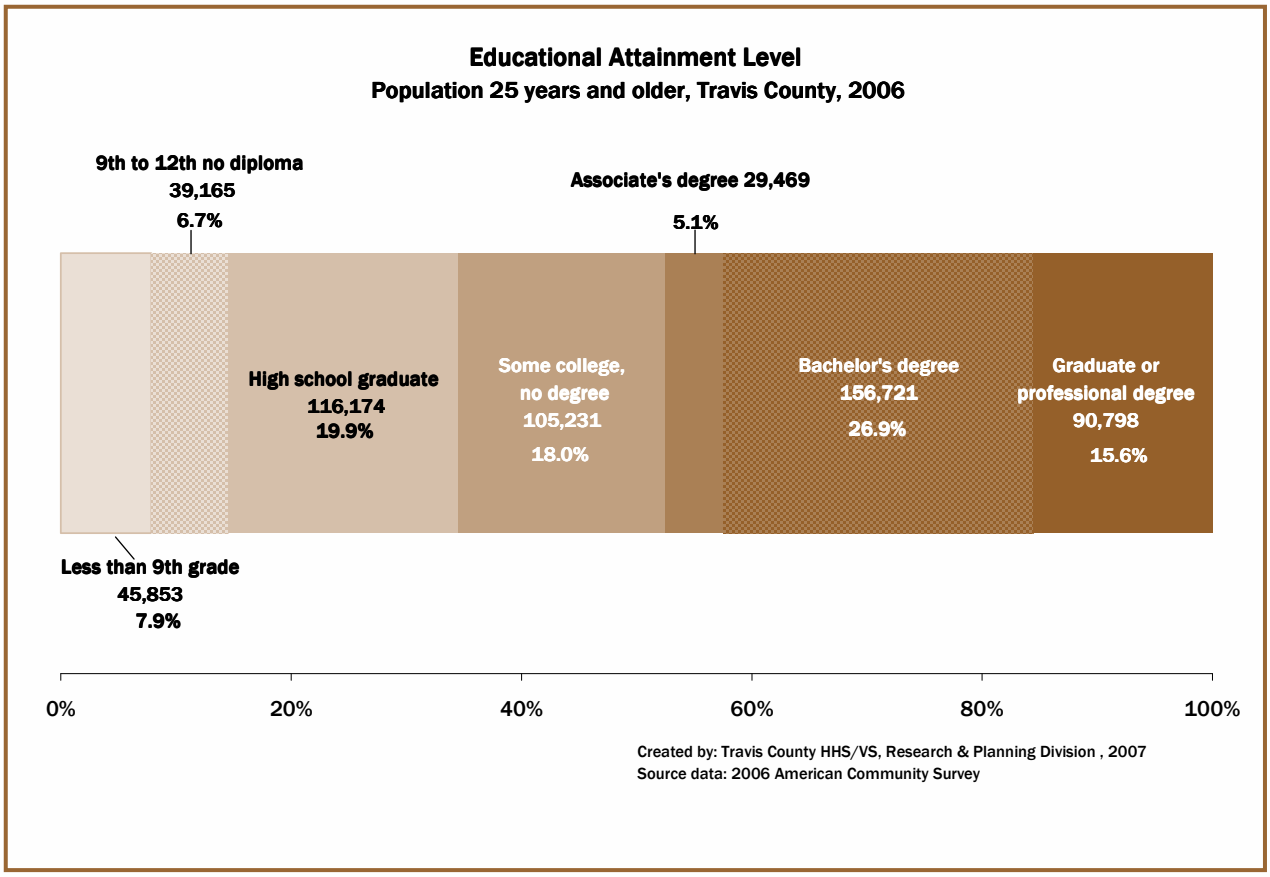
Geographic comparison: The table below provides a comparison of the racial and ethnic compositions of Travis County, Texas and the U.S.

Population by Race/Ethnicity
Travis County, Texas & U.S. 2006

	Travis County	Texas	U.S.
Non-Hispanic White	51.9%	48.1%	66.2%
Hispanic or Latino	32.5%	35.7%	14.8%
Non-Hispanic Black	8.4%	11.4%	12.2%
Non-Hispanic Asian	5.4%	3.3%	4.3%
Non-Hispanic Other Race/Two or More Races	1.8%	1.5%	2.5%

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS Research & Planning Division, 2007
Source data: American Community Survey, 2006

Educational Attainment



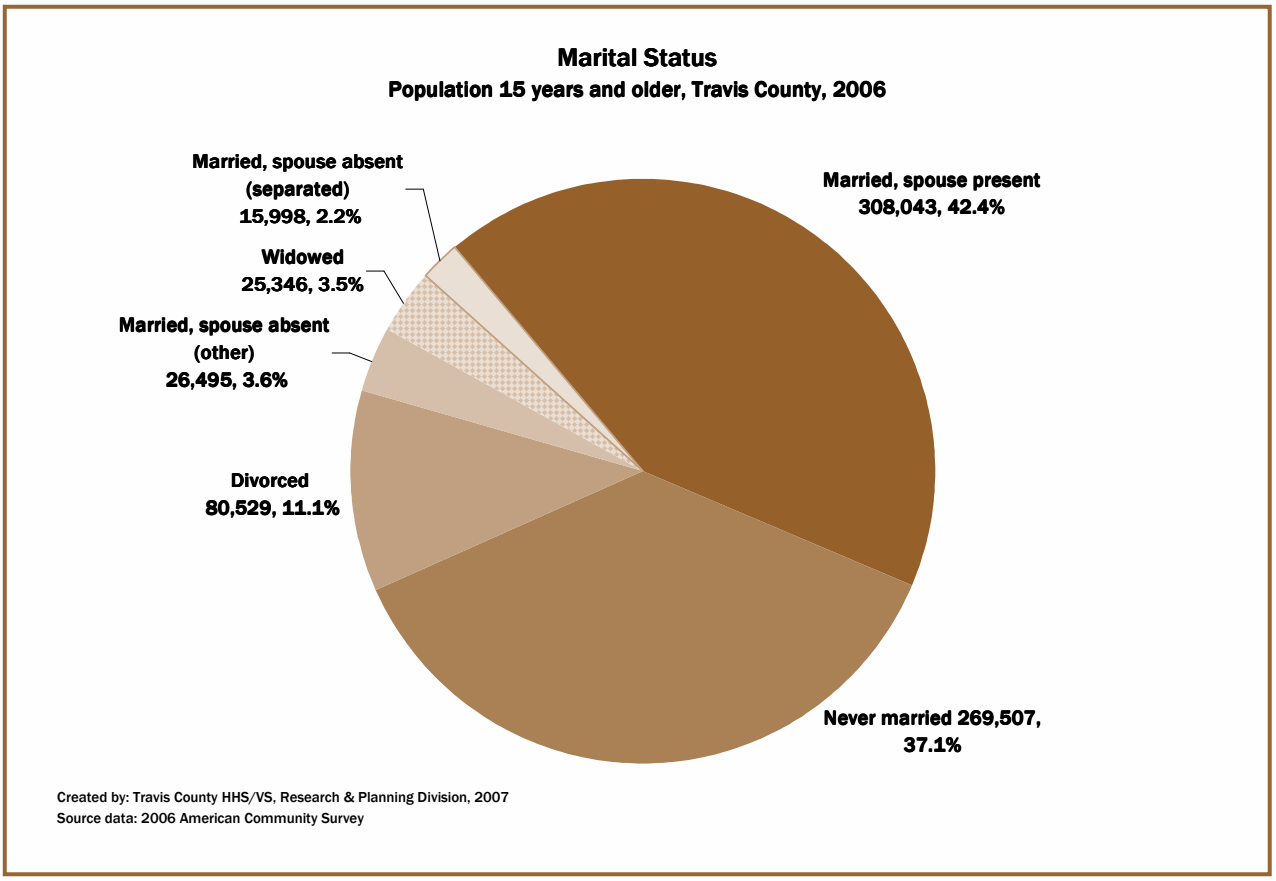
Educational Attainment Level: Travis County continues to have a highly educated population. In comparison to state and national figures, proportionately more Travis County residents have a college degree, and proportionately fewer lack a high school diploma.

- 42% of Travis County residents have Bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 25% of Texans and 27% of Americans.
- 15% of Travis County residents report having less than a high school diploma or equivalency compared with 21% of Texans and 16% of Americans.

College or Graduate School Enrollment:[1] About 12% of Travis County's population is enrolled in college or graduate school. This compares with about 8% of the Texas population and 9% of the U.S. population.

[1] 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.

Marital Status



Marital Status by Sex: In Travis County, 42% of the population identifies as currently married, spouse present. This rate is nearly the same for women (43%) and men (42%). However in other categories there are more notable differences between the sexes:

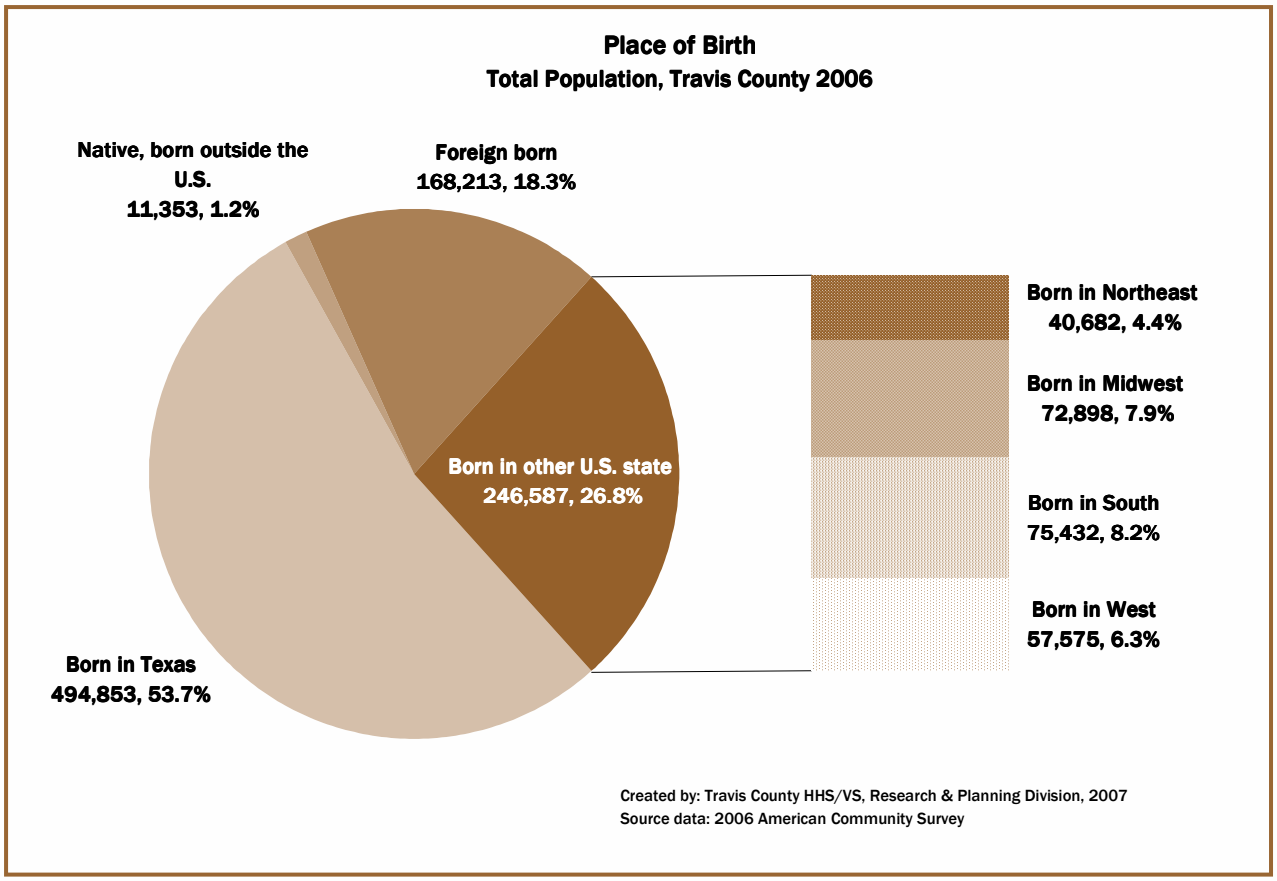
- Women were more likely than men to be separated, widowed or divorced
- Men were more likely than women to have never been married or identify their marital status as married, spouse absent (other)

Geographic Comparison: Compared to state and national figures, Travis County residents are more likely to have never been married, less likely to be currently married, and less likely to be widowed.

- 37% of Travis County residents have never been married compared to 30% of Texans, and 31% of Americans.
- 46% of Travis County residents are married[2] compared to 51% of Texans and 50% of Americans.
- 3.5% of Travis County residents are widowed compared to 5.6% of Texans and 6.4% of Americans.

[2] Includes married, spouse present and married, spouse absent (other). Does not include married, spouse absent (separated).

Place of Birth



Place of Birth for the Travis County Population: About half of Travis County residents (53.7%) were born in Texas, roughly a quarter (26.8%) were born in another state (most commonly in the southern or Midwestern regions of the U.S.), and about 18% of residents are foreign born.

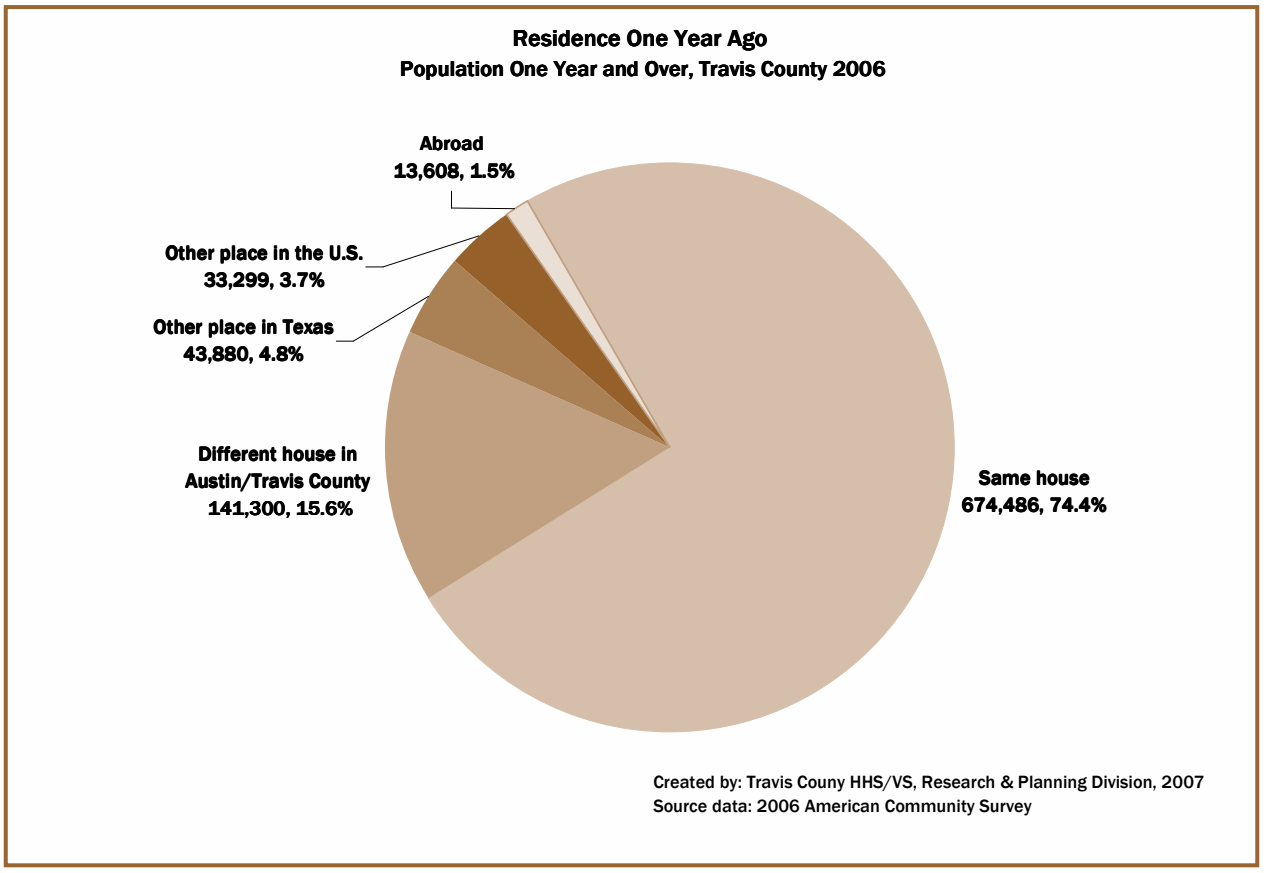
Geographic Comparison: In comparison to state and national averages, Travis County residents are:

- *Less likely to have been born in their current state of residence*. 53.7% of Travis County residents were born in their state of residence compared with 60.9% of Texans and 58.9% of Americans. Other major metropolitan counties in Texas, including Dallas 53.8%, Harris, 53.2%, and Tarrant 55.1%, also have a relatively larger share of residents born outside the state.

- *More likely to be foreign born;* 18.3% of Travis County residents are foreign born compared with 15.9% of Texans, and 12.5% of Americans. However, Travis County has a proportionately smaller immigrant population than both Dallas and Harris Counties where immigrants comprise nearly a quarter of the population.

- *More likely to have been born in another U.S. state than other Texans, but less likely to have been born in another U.S. state than Americans as a whole;* 26.8% of Travis County residents were born in another U.S state compared with 22.1% of Texans and 27.3% of Americans.

Migration



Community of Residence One Year Ago, Travis County: In 2006, about 90% of the Travis County population had lived in the Austin/Travis County community one year before, while 10% of the population was newly arrived, or returning to Austin/Travis County from elsewhere. The 10% newly arrived or returning portion of the population represents a larger share than in prior years.

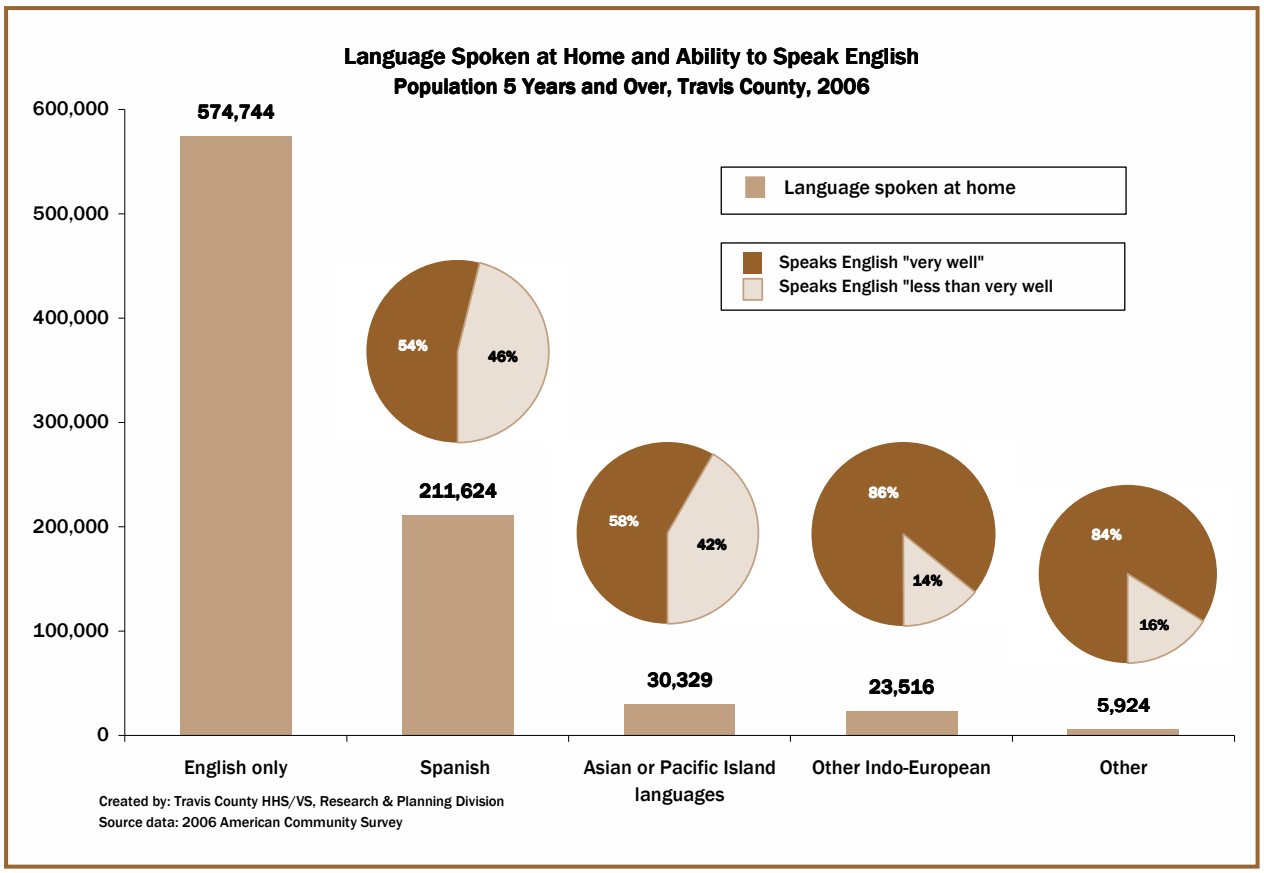
Geographic Comparison: Compared to Texas and U.S. averages, Travis County residents are (in all scenarios) more likely to have lived somewhere different one year ago. (Texas residents as a whole are almost as likely to live in a different city within the same state)

Residence One Year Ago
Population One Year and Older, Travis County, Texas & U.S., 2006

	Travis	Texas	U.S.
Same house	74%	80%	83%
Different house in same city/county	16%	12%	10%
Other city/county in same state	5%	4%	3%
Other city/county in a different state	4%	3%	3%
Abroad	2%	1%	1%

Created by Travis County HHS/VS Research & Planning Division, 2007
Source data: American Community Survey, 2006

Language



Languages Spoken at Home: Nearly one-third of the Travis County population (32% or 271,393 residents) speaks a language other than English at home. In comparison, 20% of the U.S. residents and 34% of Texans speak a language other than English at home.

Ability to Speak English: 58% of Travis County residents who speak a language other than English at home also speak the English language "very well"; about 42% 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 since 2000 (from 29% or 216,164 in 2000 to 32% or 271,393 in 2006).

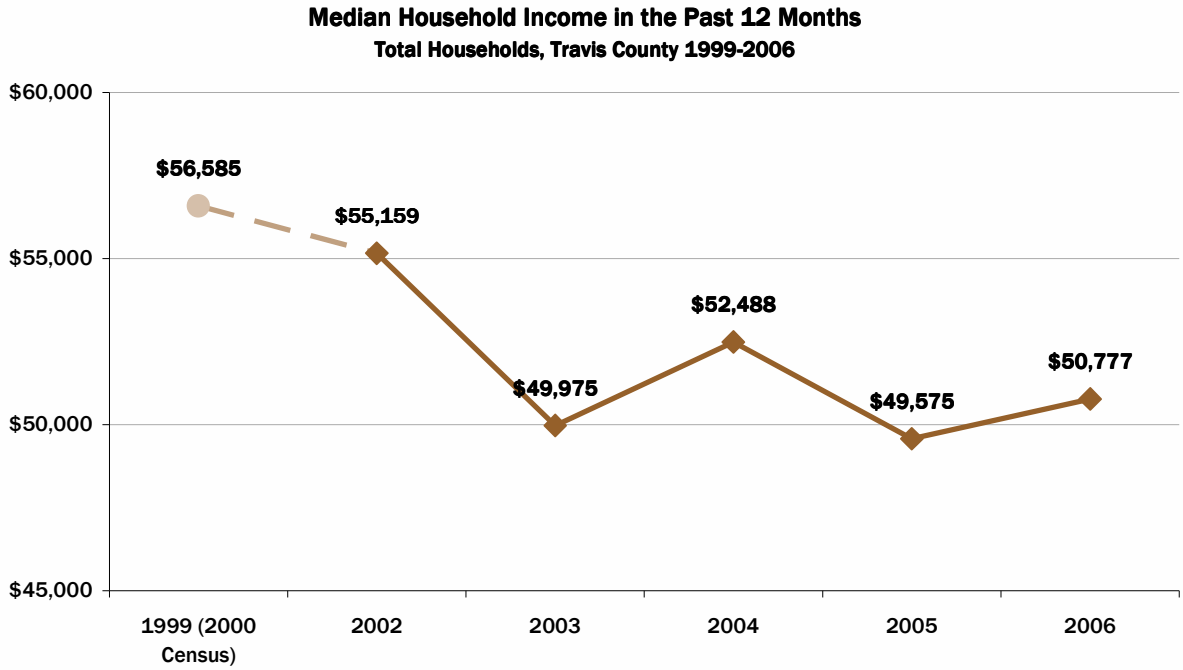
Linguistic Isolation: 7.3% of all Travis County households (26,760 households) are linguistically isolated.[3] The majority of these households speak Spanish (22,553 households) or Asian or Pacific Islander languages (3,229 households).

[3]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 English.

Economic Characteristics

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Median Income



Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2007
Source data: 2006 American Community Survey

All monetary values are expressed in 2006 inflation-adjusted dollars. 2000 Census references income in 1999; all other years are income in the past 12 months.

Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months: Following a downward trend in the early part of the decade, Travis County's median household income has fluctuated since 2003. It remains nearly $6,000 lower than in 1999.[4]

Geographic Comparison: Since 1999, the median household income in Travis County has consistently exceeded that of the U.S. and Texas. While this remains the case, the county's median household income is falling at a faster rate than the nation or state. Subsequently, the difference in median income between the county and state/nation is shrinking.

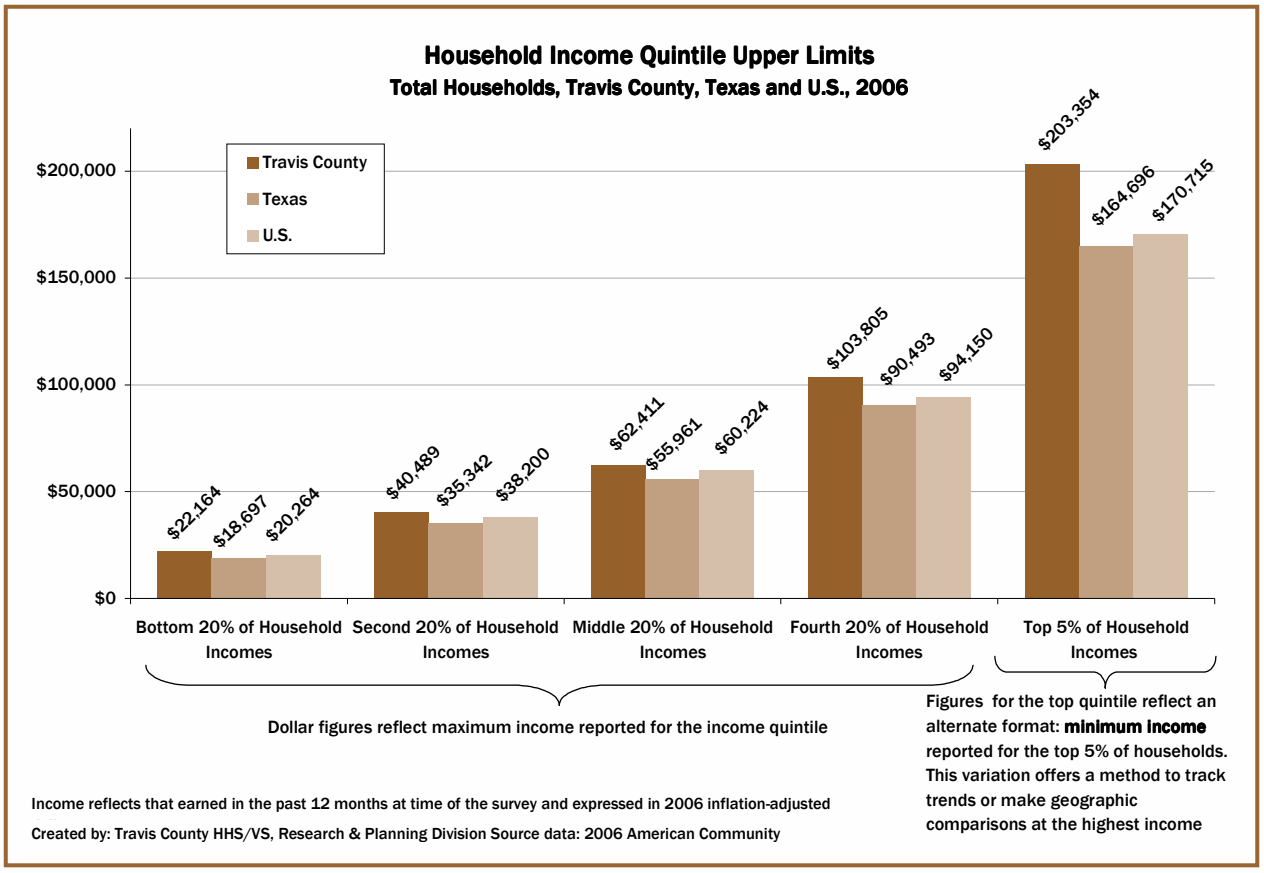
Median Household Income (in 2006 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)
Travis County, Texas and U.S., 1999 and 2006

	Travis County	Texas	U.S.
Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months 1999	$56,585	$48,315	$50,816
Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months 2006	$50,777	$44,922	$48,451
Percent Change between 1999 and 2006	-10%	-7%	-5%

Created by Travis County HHS/VS Research & Planning Division, 2007
Source data: American Community Survey, 2006

[4] The 2000 Census reflects income earned during calendar year 1999. However, the ACS is a monthly survey that asks how much income was earned during the past 12 months. Consequently, a person answering the question in January 2006 would answer based on income earned between January 2005 and December 2005 and a person answering the questions in December 2006 would respond based on income earned between December 2005 and November 2006.

Household Income Distribution

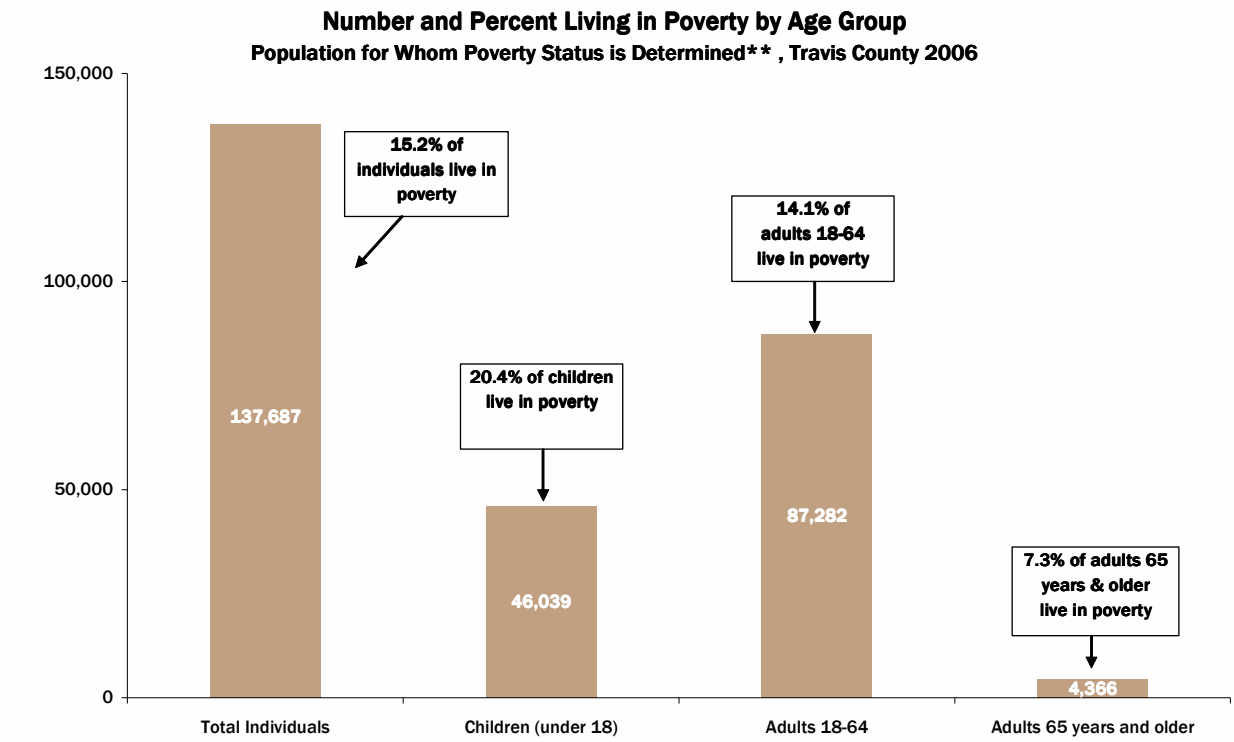


Distribution of Income in the Past 12 Months: One method for assessing income distribution is to separate incomes into quintiles or five groups each representing 20% of household incomes. For example, the first quintile is comprised of the bottom 20% of incomes and the fifth quintile of the top 20% of incomes.

Geographic Comparison: When comparing Travis County's income quintile distribution to the U.S. and Texas:

- Travis County's household incomes are higher than that of the U.S. or Texas across the entire income distribution.
- Travis County's lower-income households (the bottom 40% of incomes), however, have only slightly higher incomes than those of the U.S. and Texas.
- The greatest geographical difference exists among higher income households. For example, Travis County households in the 4th quintile report a maximum income that is $10,000 higher than that of the US and over $13,000 higher than that of Texas.

Poverty (Individuals)



Poverty Rates: Travis County's poverty rates among individuals (15%) and children (20%) remain higher than in 1999 (Census 2000), when 13% of individuals and 14% of children lived below the poverty threshold.[5] Poverty rates in 2005 (16% poverty rate, and 21% children's poverty rate) were similar to the current (2006) figures.[6]

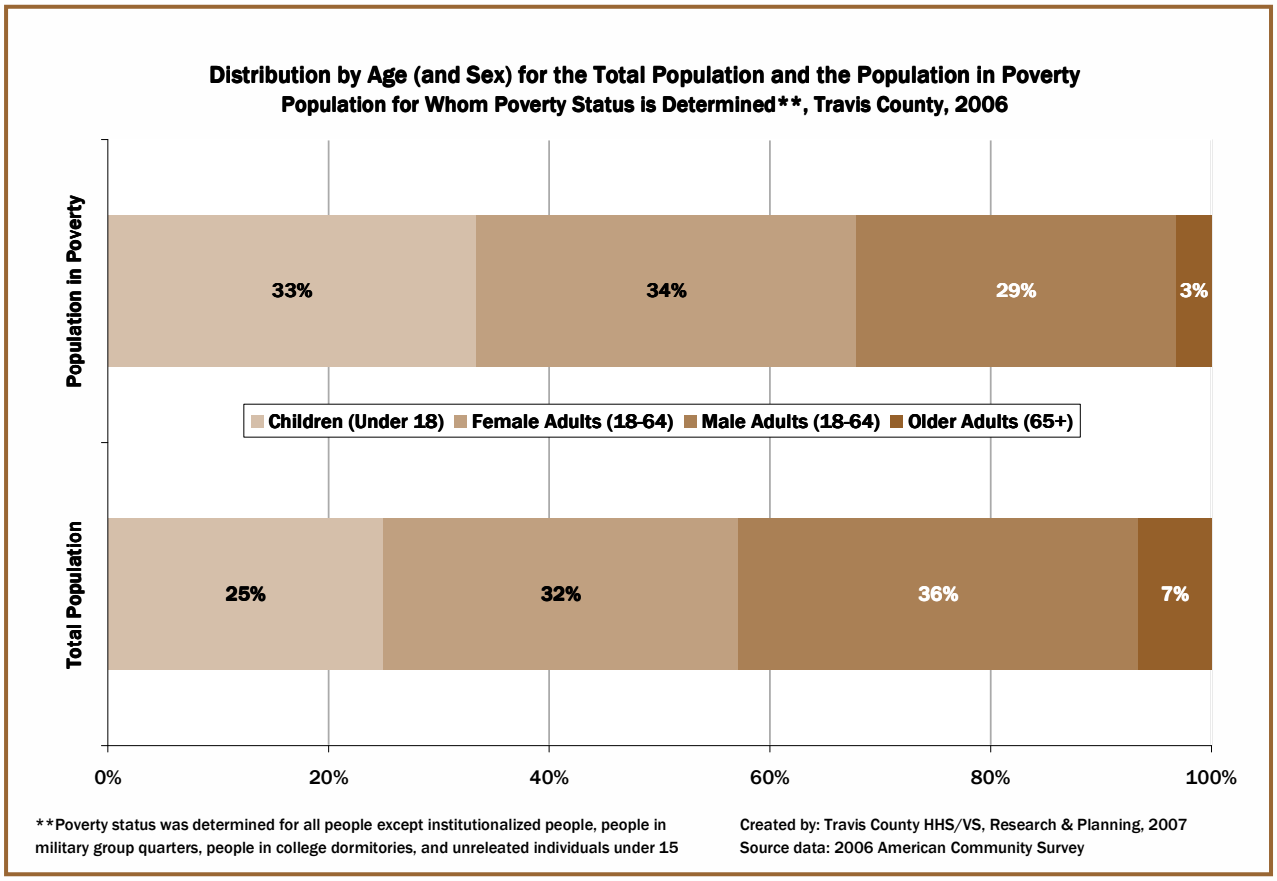
Geographic Comparison: Travis County has a higher poverty rate (15%) than the US (13%), but a lower rate than Texas (17%). Within subpopulations, the following trends are evident:

- Travis County has a higher child poverty rate (20%) than the U.S. (18%) but a lower child poverty rate than Texas (24%)
- Travis County has the same adult poverty rate (14%) as Texas, and a higher adult poverty rate than the U.S. (12%).
- Travis County has a lower rate of poverty among older adults (7%) than the state (12%) or nation (10%).

[5] The Census Bureau uses poverty thresholds as denoted in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14. These thresholds consider family size and composition when determining whether an individual is living in poverty and can be found at: http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh06.html.

[6] The Census added individuals living in group quarters to the 2006 ACS sample and does not recommend a direct comparison of ACS poverty data at the individual level between 2005 and 2006

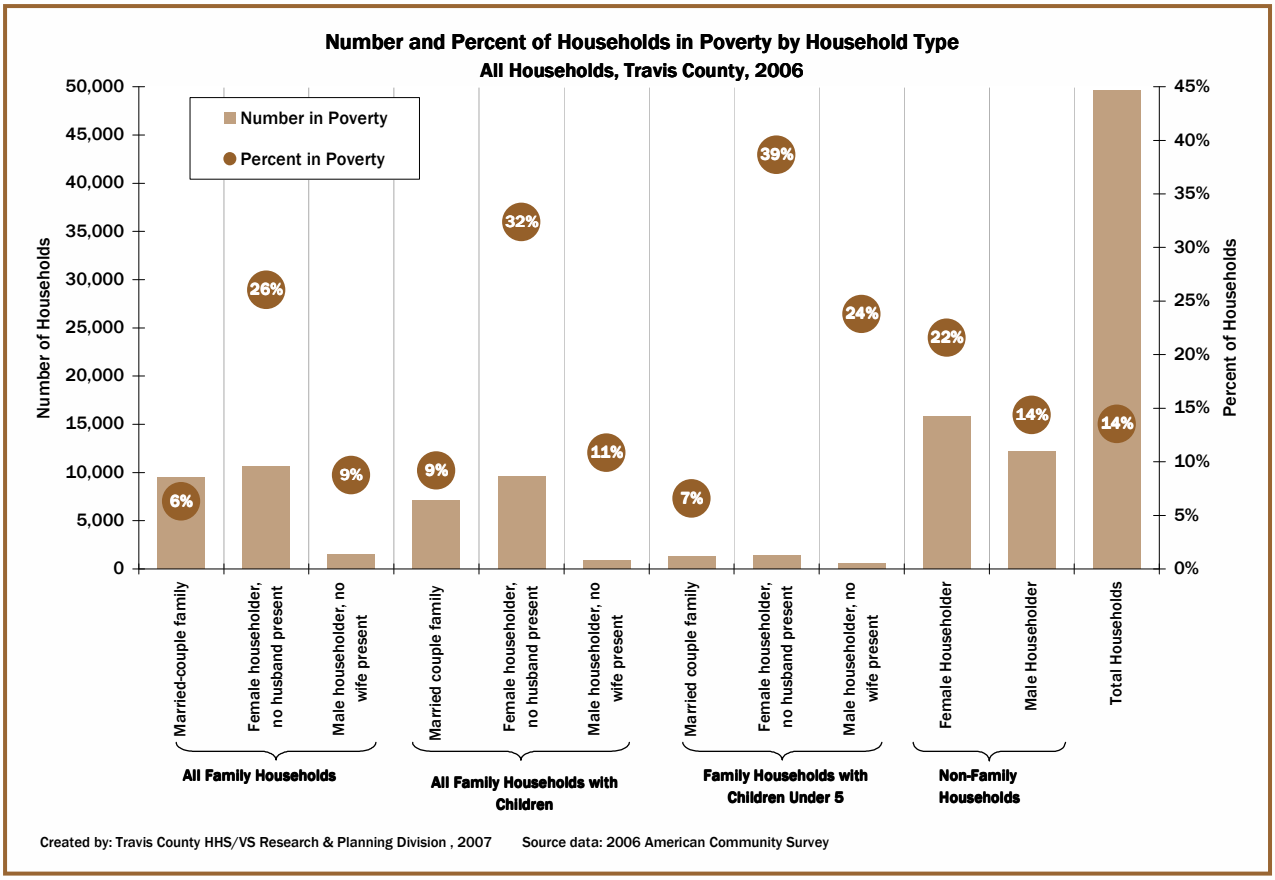
Poverty (Individuals)



Age and Sex Distribution of Individuals in Poverty: Children and female adults are disproportionately represented among the poor, the overrepresentation being especially prominent among children. (Children make up one-quarter of the total Travis County population, but comprise one-third of those living in poverty).

Trends to Watch: Because the children's poverty rate has increased, children comprise a larger share of the poor than they did in 1999, whereas the shares of poor adults (both male and female) and elderly have decreased during that time.

Poverty (Households)



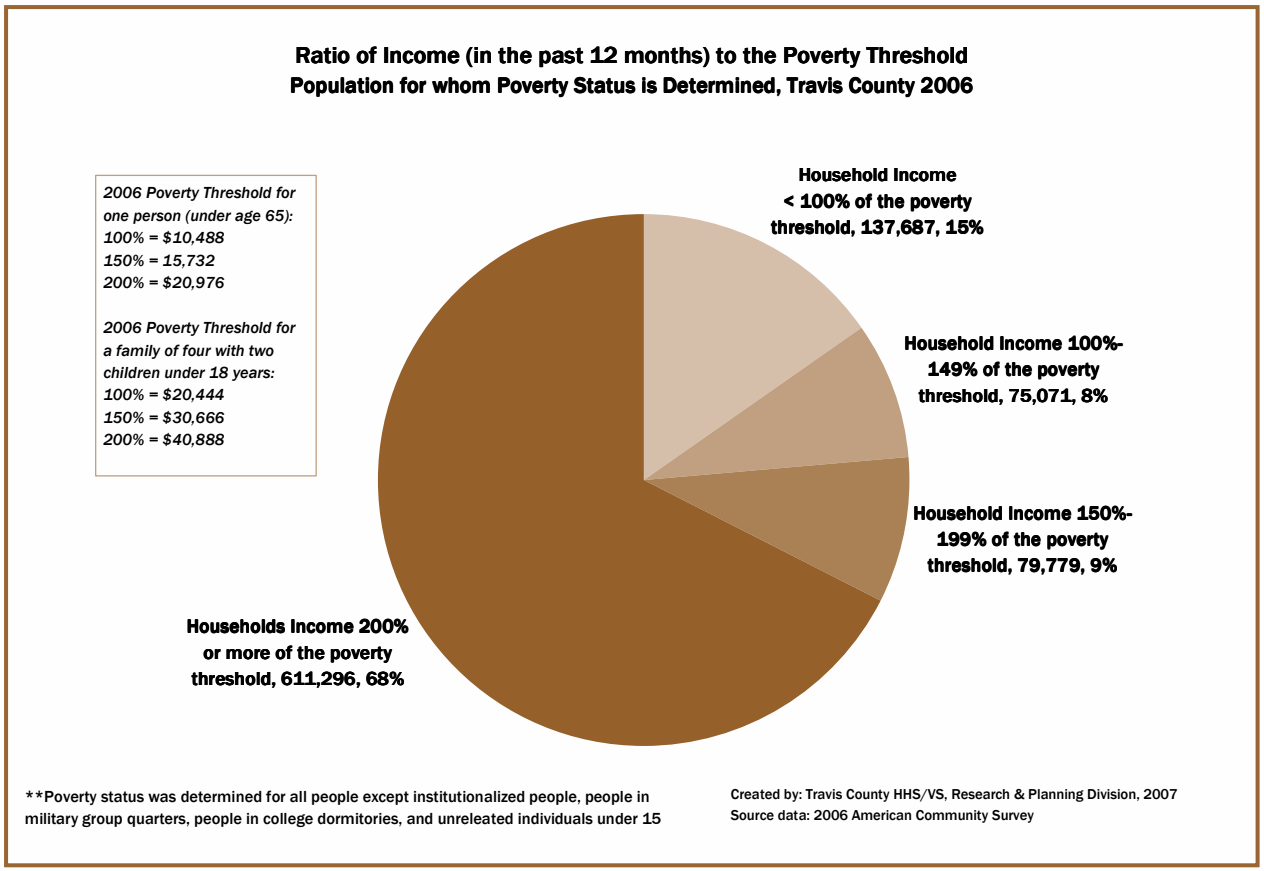
Household Poverty Rate: An estimated 49,648 Travis County households (about 14% of all households) have incomes that fall below the poverty threshold.

Household Poverty Rates and Household Type: Female headed households have the highest poverty rates. For example, single female headed households with children have a poverty rate (32%) that is roughly 3 times higher than the rates for married couples with children (9%) and single male headed households with children (11%).

Geographic Comparison: Travis County has an overall household poverty rate (14%) that is greater than that of the U.S. (13%) but less than that of Texas (15%). The same statement is true about family households: In Travis County 10.4% of family households have incomes that fall below the poverty threshold, compared with 9.8% of U.S. family households and 13% of Texas family households.

Although some variation exists, Travis County single parent family households appear *less likely to* fall beneath the poverty threshold than their counterparts across the state and nation. For example, 32% of Travis County female headed households with children have incomes below the poverty threshold compared with 42% in Texas and 37% across the U.S.

Income to Poverty Ratio



Ratio of Household Income in the Past 12 Months to the Poverty Threshold: In Travis County an estimated 137,700 individuals (15% of the total population) live in households with incomes below the poverty threshold. When expanding the lens to 200% of poverty, almost a third (32%) of Travis County residents, or an estimated 292,500 individuals fall under this threshold.

Geographic Comparison: As compared to national statistics, Travis County has a slightly greater share of residents living in households with incomes at or below 200% of the poverty threshold. In comparison to state figures, Travis County has a proportionately smaller share of residents living in households with incomes at or below 200% of the poverty threshold.

Ratio of Income (in the past 12 months) to the Poverty Threshold
Travis County, Texas, & U.S., 2006

	Travis County	Texas	U.S.
Income < 100% of the poverty threshold	15%	17%	13%
Income 100%-199% of the poverty threshold	17%	21%	18%
Incomes 200% or more of the poverty threshold	68%	62%	69%

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2007
Source data: 2006 American Community Survey

Receipt of Public Benefits

Households Receiving Public Benefits, Travis County, 2006	Travis County		Texas		U.S.	
	Number of Households	Percent of all Households	Number of Households	Percent of all Households	Number of Households	Percent of all Households
Households with Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	6,884	1.9%	297,094	3.7%	4,419,328	4.0%
Households with Public Assistance Income	4,099	1.1%	125,653	1.5%	2,624,441	2.4%
Household that received Food Stamps in the past 12 months	23,710	6.5%	797,179	9.8%	9,019,877	8.1%

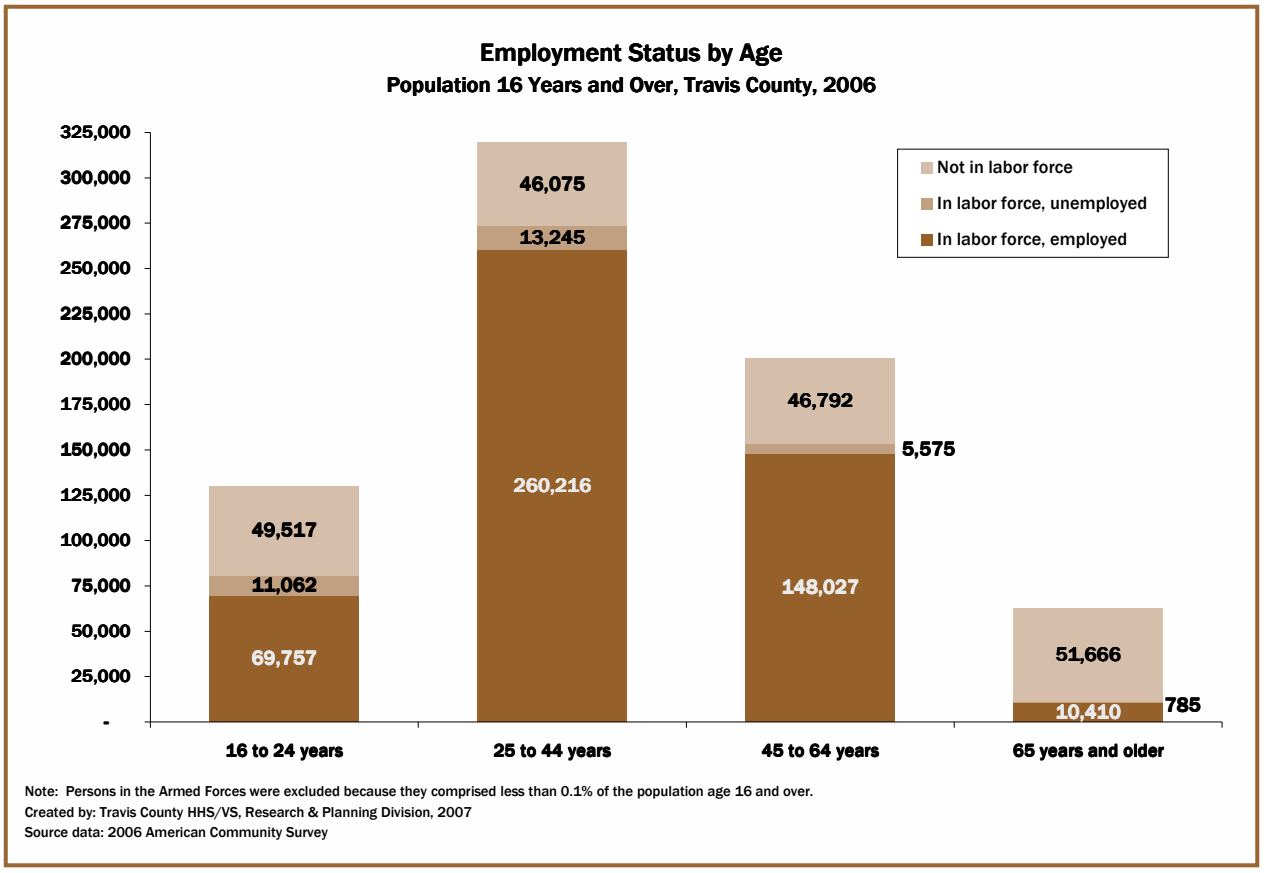
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2007

Source data: 2006 American Community Survey

Receipt of Benefits over Time: The share of Travis County households receiving SSI and Public Assistance Income has remained relatively stable since 2004. The share of Travis County households receiving food stamps has risen slightly over the past five years, from 4.7% in 2002 to 6.5% in 2006.

Geographic Comparison: Compared to Texas and the U.S., proportionately fewer Travis County households receive these three public benefits.

Employment and Age

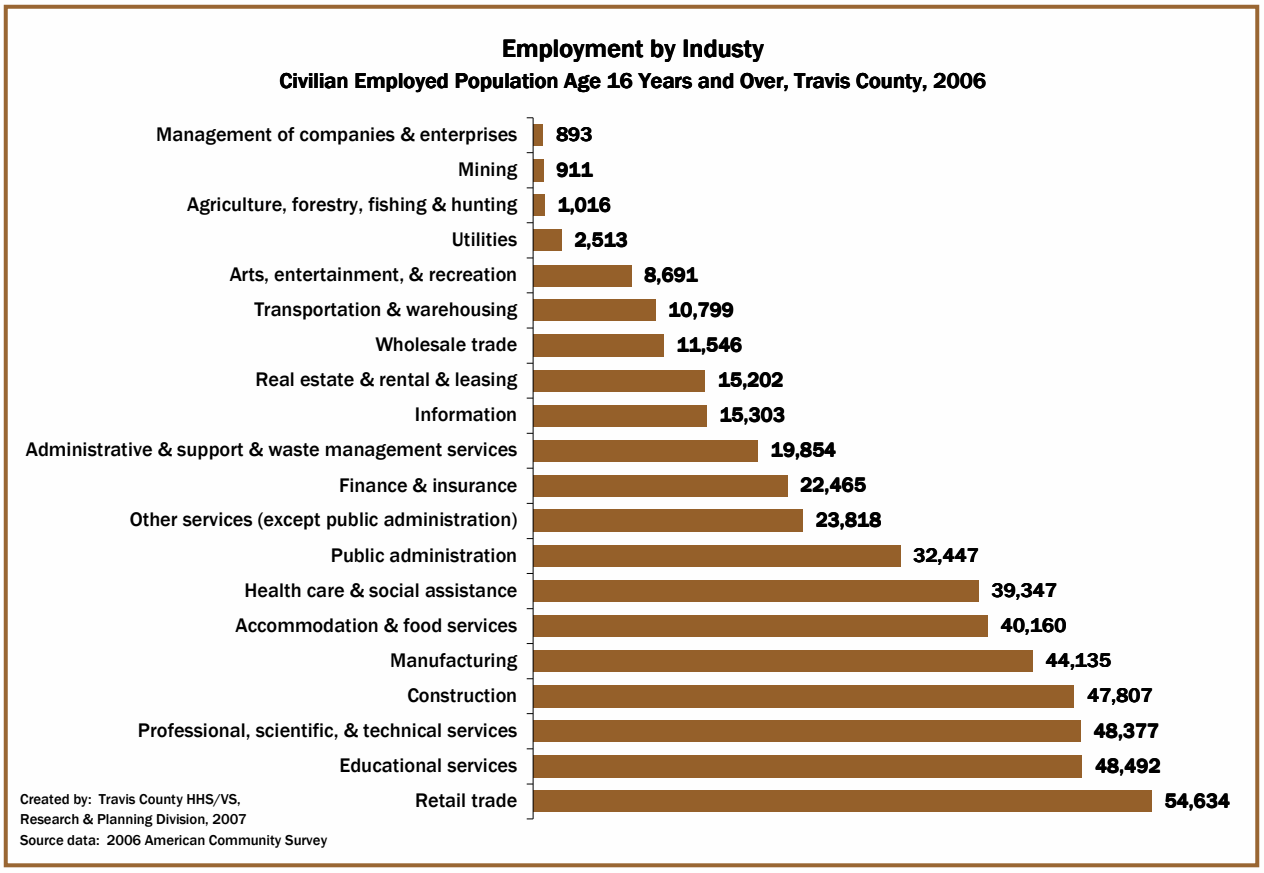


Travis County's Labor Force: In total, 73% of Travis County's population (about 520,000 people) is in the labor force. Approximately 30,700 of them are unemployed.

Labor Force by Age: Individuals between the ages of 25 and 44 constitute the majority (about 53%) of Travis County's labor force. The 45 to 64 age group comprises about 30% of the labor force, followed by the 16 to 24 age group (about 16%), and finally those age 65 and older (about 2%).

Unemployment by Age: Travis County's overall unemployment rate (which is the percent unemployed of those in the labor force) is 6%. By age, the unemployment rate is highest, at 14%, for those 16 to 24 years old; 5% for those 25 to 44 years old; 4% for those 45 to 64 years old; and 7% for those 65 years and older.

Employment by Industry

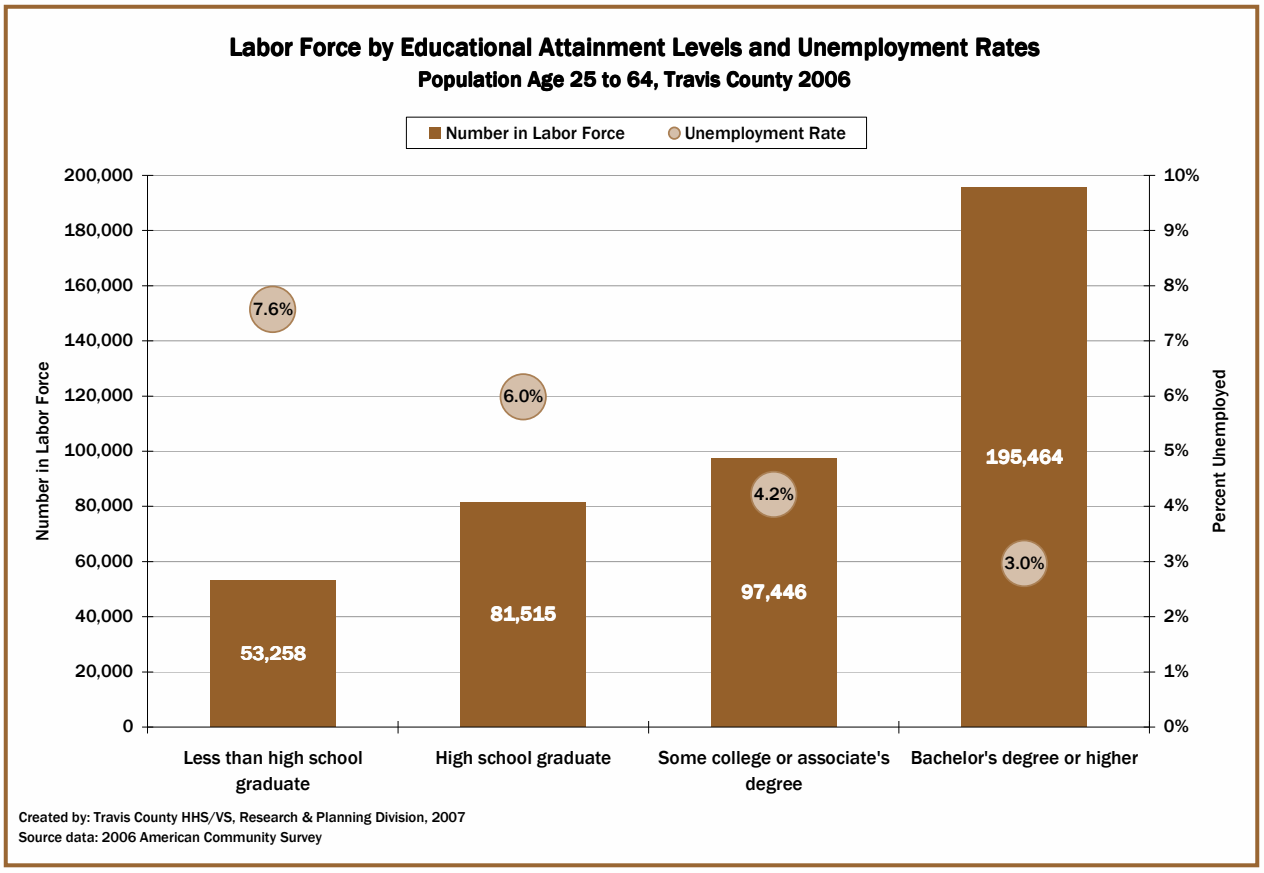


Industries: Over half (58%) of Travis County is employed in the following six industries: Retail trade, educational services, professional/scientific/technical services, construction, manufacturing, and accommodation and food services.

Occupations: By occupation, the majority (55%) of Travis County works in: (1) professional and related occupations (25%), (2) management, business and financial operations occupations (17%), and (3) office and administrative support occupations (13%).

Geographic Comparison: Compared to four other metropolitan counties in Texas (Bexar, Dallas, Harris, and Tarrant Counties), Travis County's labor force has higher shares of workers in the following industries: public administration; educational services; and professional, scientific and technical services.

Employment and Education

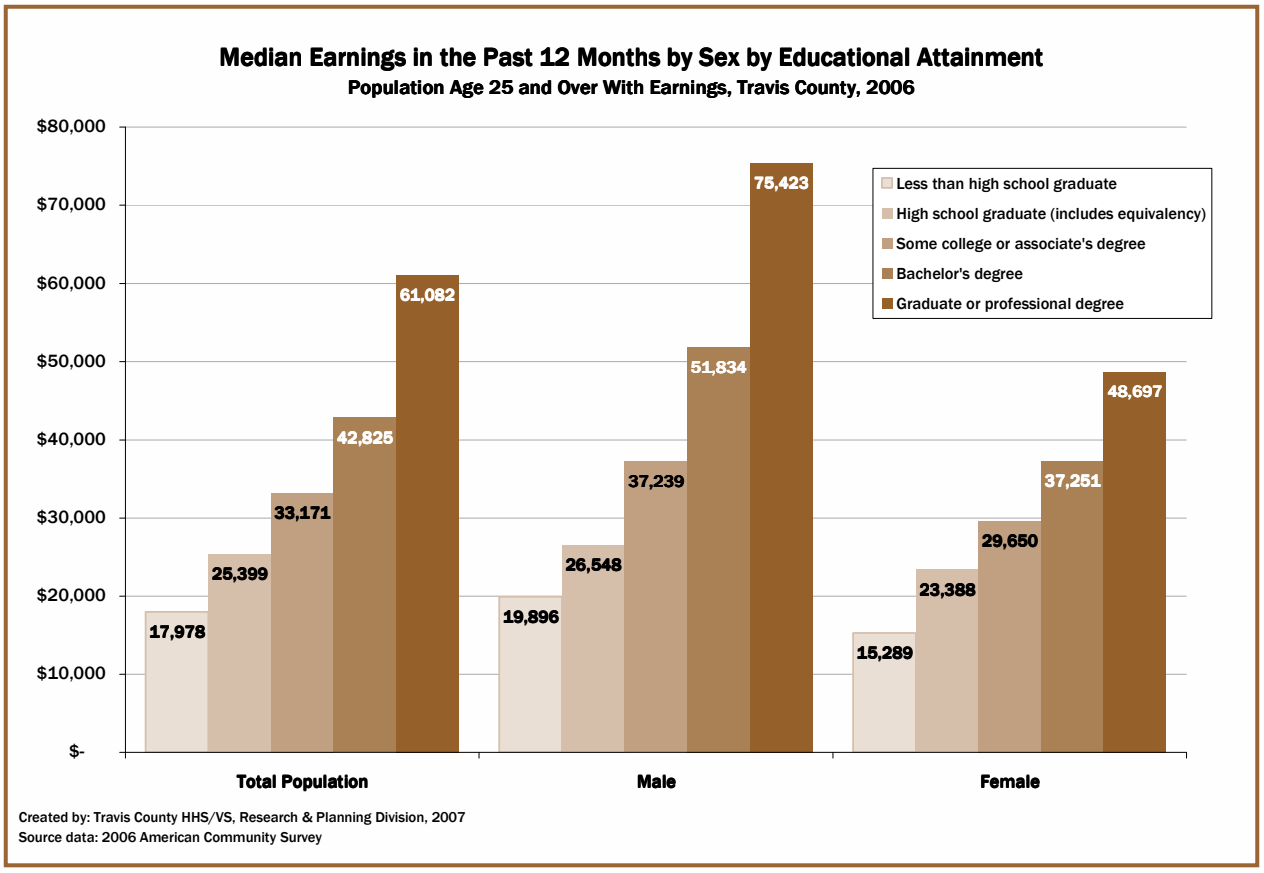


Educational Attainment in the Labor Force: Among Travis County workers between the ages of 25 and 64, almost half (46%) have a bachelor's degree or higher, and almost one-quarter (23%) have some college or an associate's degree. High school graduates comprise 19% of the labor force, and the remaining 12% have less than a high school degree.

Educational Attainment and Employment Rates: Unemployment decreases as education levels increase. Unemployment is highest (8%) among those with less than a high school degree, and lowest (3%) among those with a 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, 46% of workers age 25-64 have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 29% for Texas and 32% for the U.S. at large.

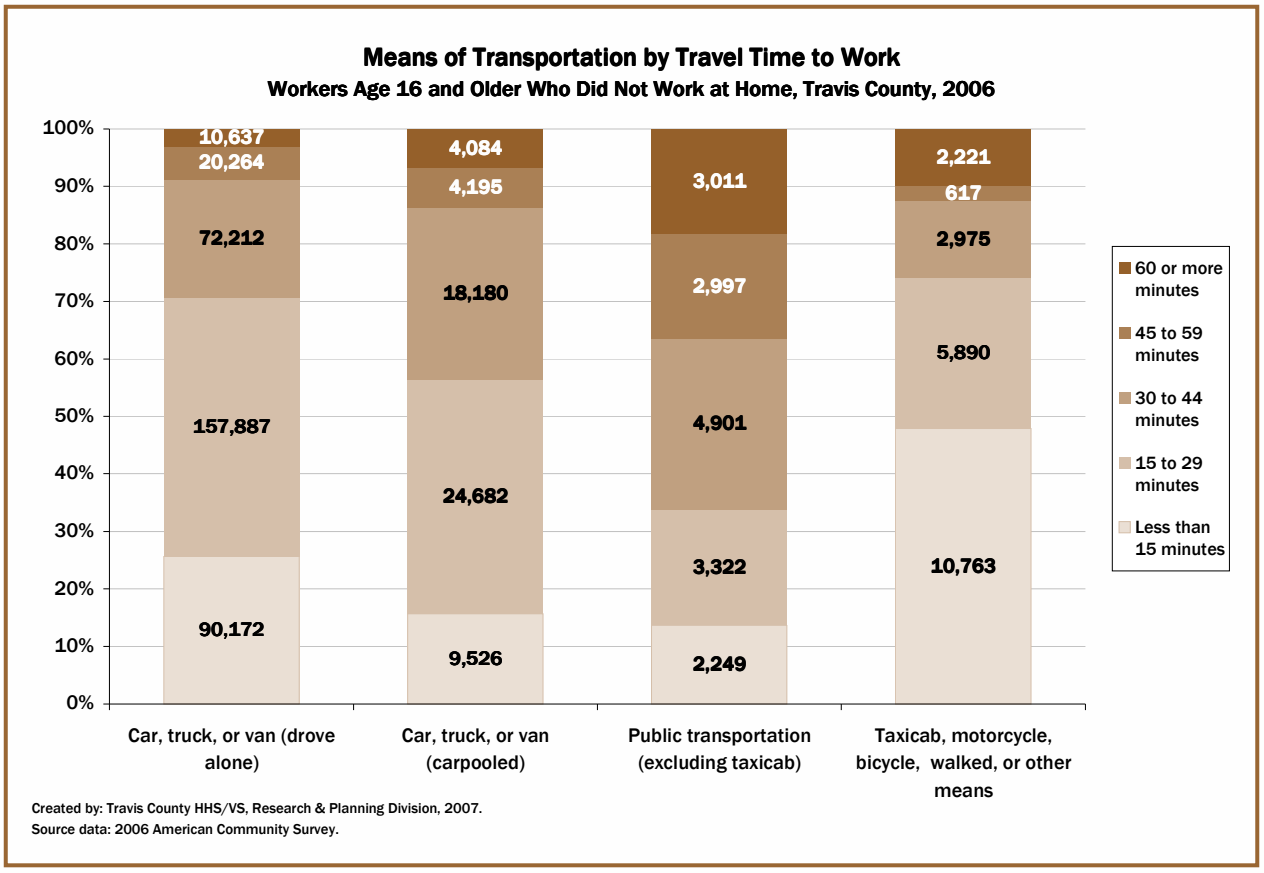
Earnings and Education



Educational Attainment and Earnings: Educational attainment level and earnings are directly related: As education level increases, earnings also rise. The largest percent increases in median earnings are between those with less than high school education and high school graduate or equivalency (a 41% increase), and between those with bachelor's degrees and graduate/professional degrees (a 43% increase).

Earnings and Gender: For the county overall, median earnings are $34,712. However, median earnings for men ($38,205) are higher than those for women ($30,545). This is also true at all levels of educational attainment. The disparity is most evident at the levels of bachelor's and graduate/professional degrees, at which median earnings for men are 39% and 55% higher than women's respectively.

Geographic Comparison: Compared to other metropolitan counties in Texas, Travis County's overall median earnings ($34,712) are slightly higher than those of the counties of Bexar ($28,859), Dallas ($29,935), Harris ($31,213) and Tarrant ($33,262).



Means of Transportation: The vast majority of Travis County commuters who do not work at home are single drivers. 78% (approximately 351,200) drive to work alone in a car, truck or van. 13% (approximately 60,700) carpool in a car, truck or van. Only 4% (about 16,500) use public transportation. The remaining 5% (about 22,500) use other means of transportation, including taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, and walking.

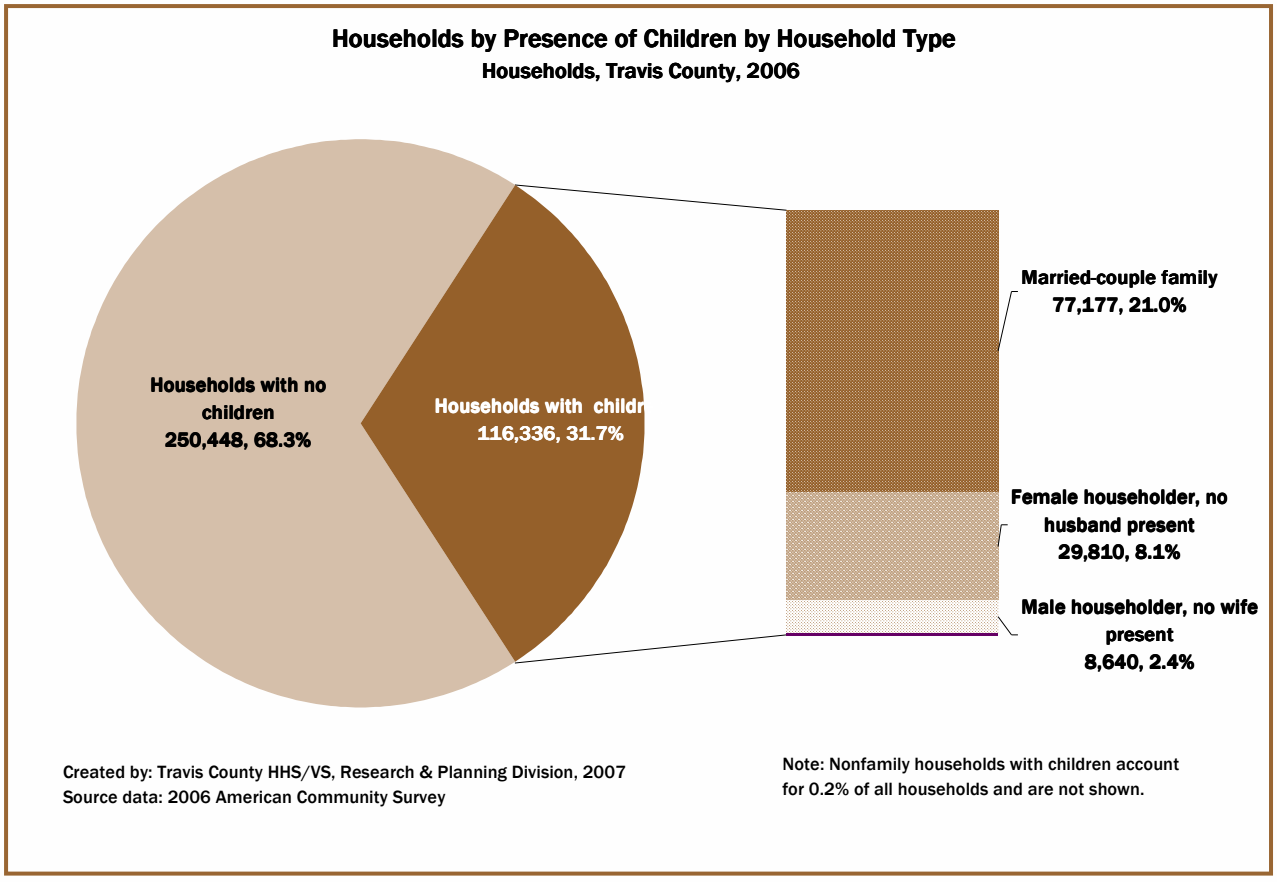
Geographic Comparison: Travis County's proportions of single drivers, carpoolers, public transportation users and other commuters are very similar to those of other metropolitan areas in Texas and the U.S. population at large.

Commute Times: Commuting times in Travis County vary by means of transportation. For those driving alone, the large majority of commutes are under 30 minutes. Commutes for carpoolers are slightly longer but remain under 30 minutes for the majority. Conversely, for those relying on public transportation, the large majority of commutes are 30 or more minutes in duration. Almost one-in-five commutes using public transportation is 60 or more minutes.

Housing Characteristics

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Household Type



Households by Presence of Children: 32% of Travis County households include children, while 68% do not. In comparison to state and national averages Travis County households are less likely than to include children (40% of Texas households and 35% of U.S. households include children).

Geographic Comparison, Households with Children by Household Type: The breakdown of households with children by type is similar across the local, state and national statistics:

Households with Children by Household Type
Travis County, Texas & U.S., 2006

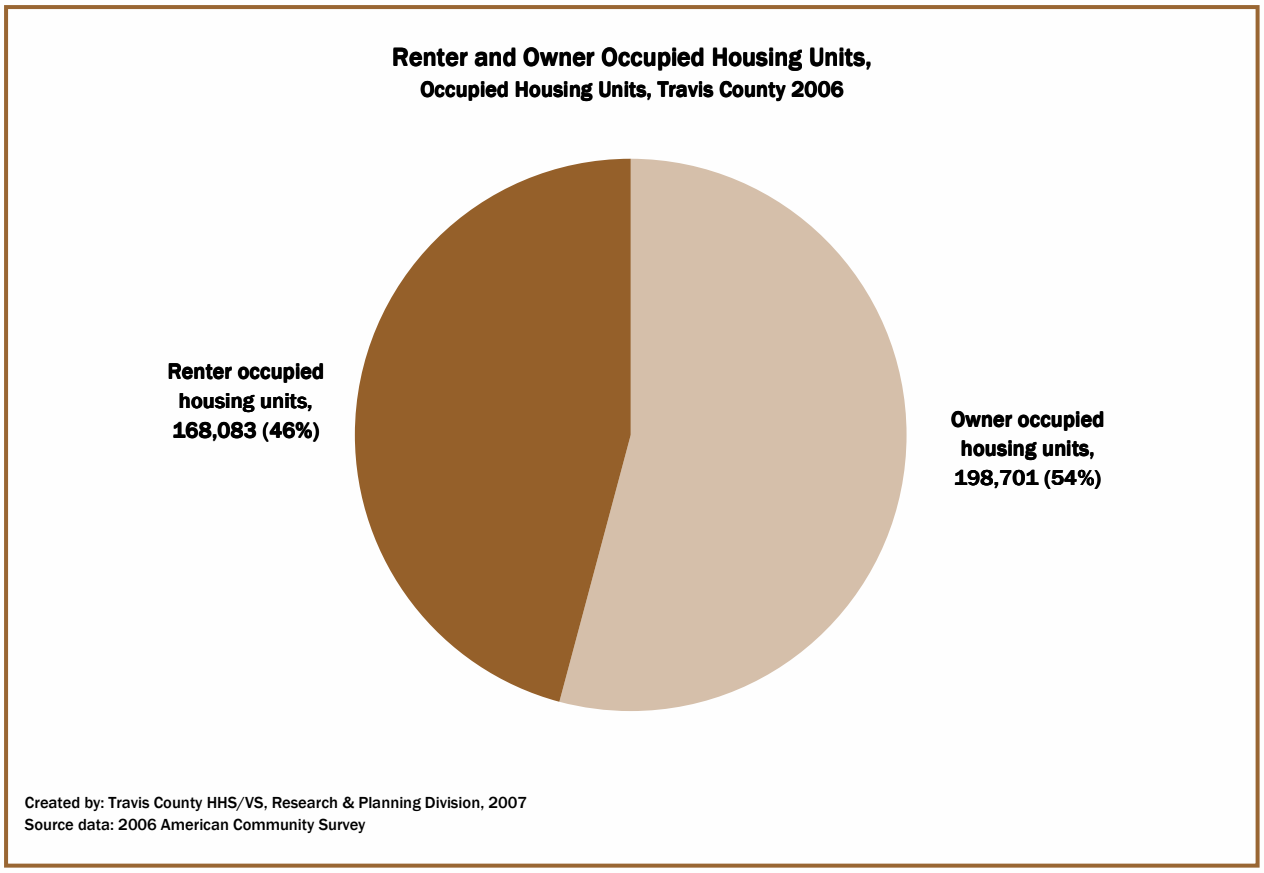
	Travis County	Texas	U.S.
Married-couple family	66%	67%	66%
Male householder, no wife present	7%	7%	8%
Female householder, no husband present	26%	25%	25%
Nonfamily households	1%	1%	1%

Created by Travis County HHS/VS Research & Planning Division, 2007 Source data: American Community Survey, 2006

Family and Nonfamily Households:[7] 57% of Travis County households are family households while 43% of households are nonfamily households. In comparison to state and national averages Travis County households are less likely to be family households (70% of Texas households and 67% of U.S. households are family households.)

[7] Family households are households made up of persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption. Nonfamily households are those in which an individual lives alone or with non-relatives only.

Housing Tenure

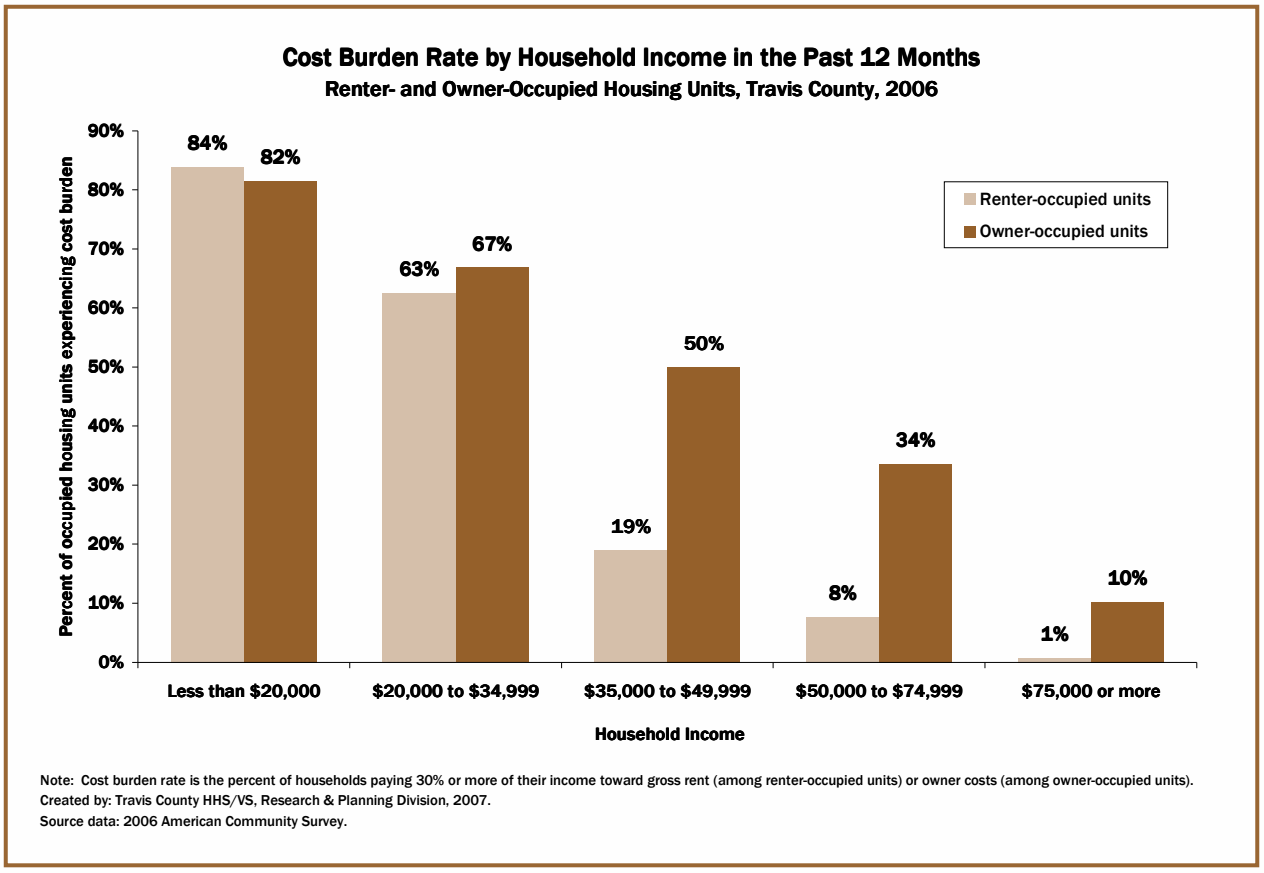


Housing Tenure: Owner-occupied housing units comprise just over over half (54%) of occupied units in Travis County. Renter-occupied housing units represent 46%.[8]

Geographic Comparison: Compared to other Texas metropolitan counties, Travis County's share of owner-occupied units is comparable to Dallas County (56%) and Harris County (58%), while Bexar, El Paso and Tarrant Counties each have a higher owner-occupancy rate of 64%.

[8] "A housing unit is owner occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for…All occupied housing units which are not owner occupied, whether they are rented for cash rent or occupied without payment of cash rent, are classified as renter occupied," (American Community Survey Puerto Rico Community Survey: 2006 Subject Definitions, p. 21, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2006/usedata/Subject_Definitions.pdf).

Cost Burden and Income

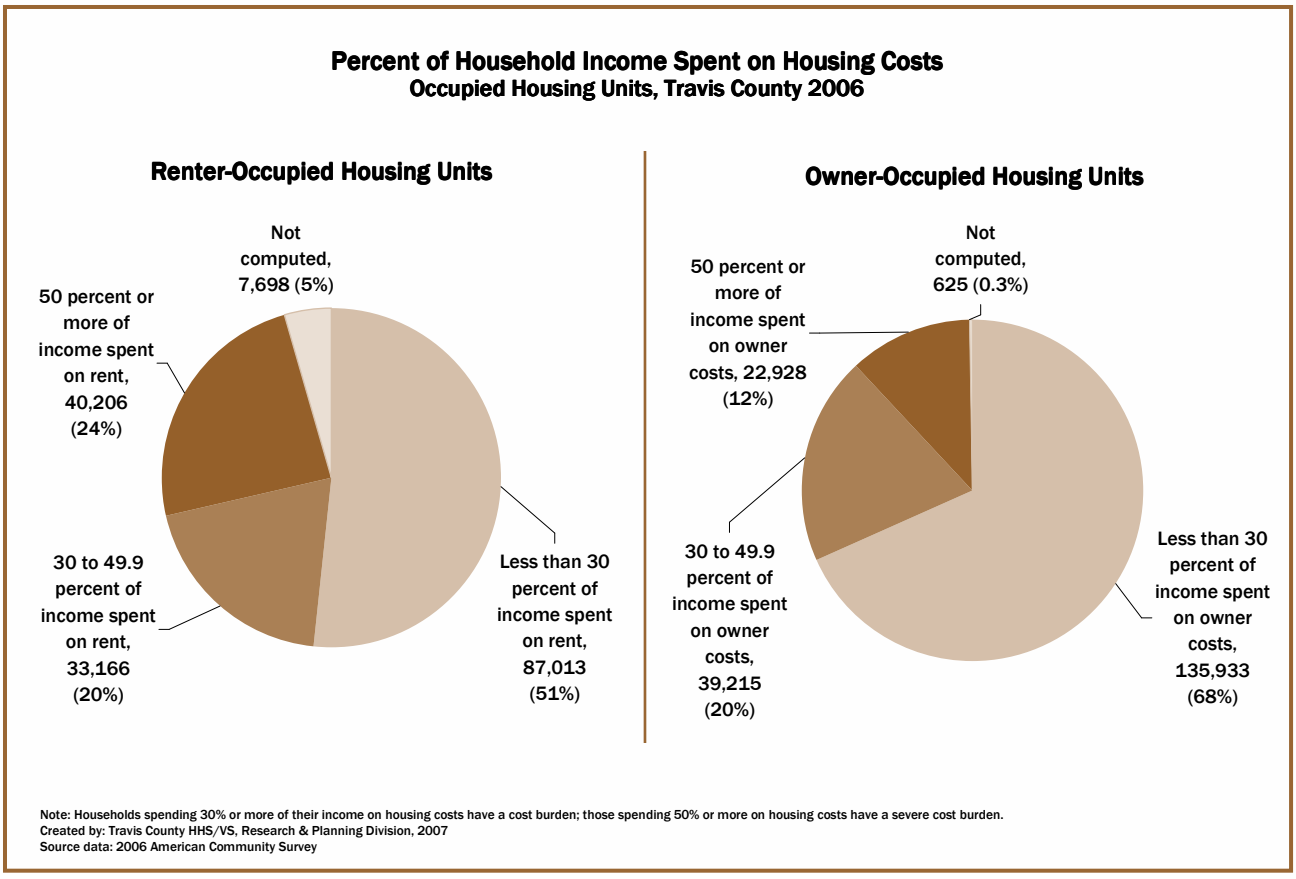


Note: Cost burden rate is the percent of households paying 30% or more of their income toward gross rent (among renter-occupied units) or owner costs (among owner-occupied units).
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2007.
Source data: 2006 American Community Survey.

Cost Burden and Household Income: Households spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs are defined as being cost burdened. Cost burden seems to be associated with income. Among both renters and owners, a higher percentage of lower income households are cost burdened. Accordingly, the higher the income, the lower the cost burdened rate.

Renter Versus Owner Cost Burden: Among renters, households making less than $35,000 have a high risk of being cost burdened, but that risk decreases sharply for households with incomes $35,000 or greater. However, the same is not true for owners, for whom as income increases, the cost burden rate decreases more gradually.

Renter vs. Owner Cost Burden

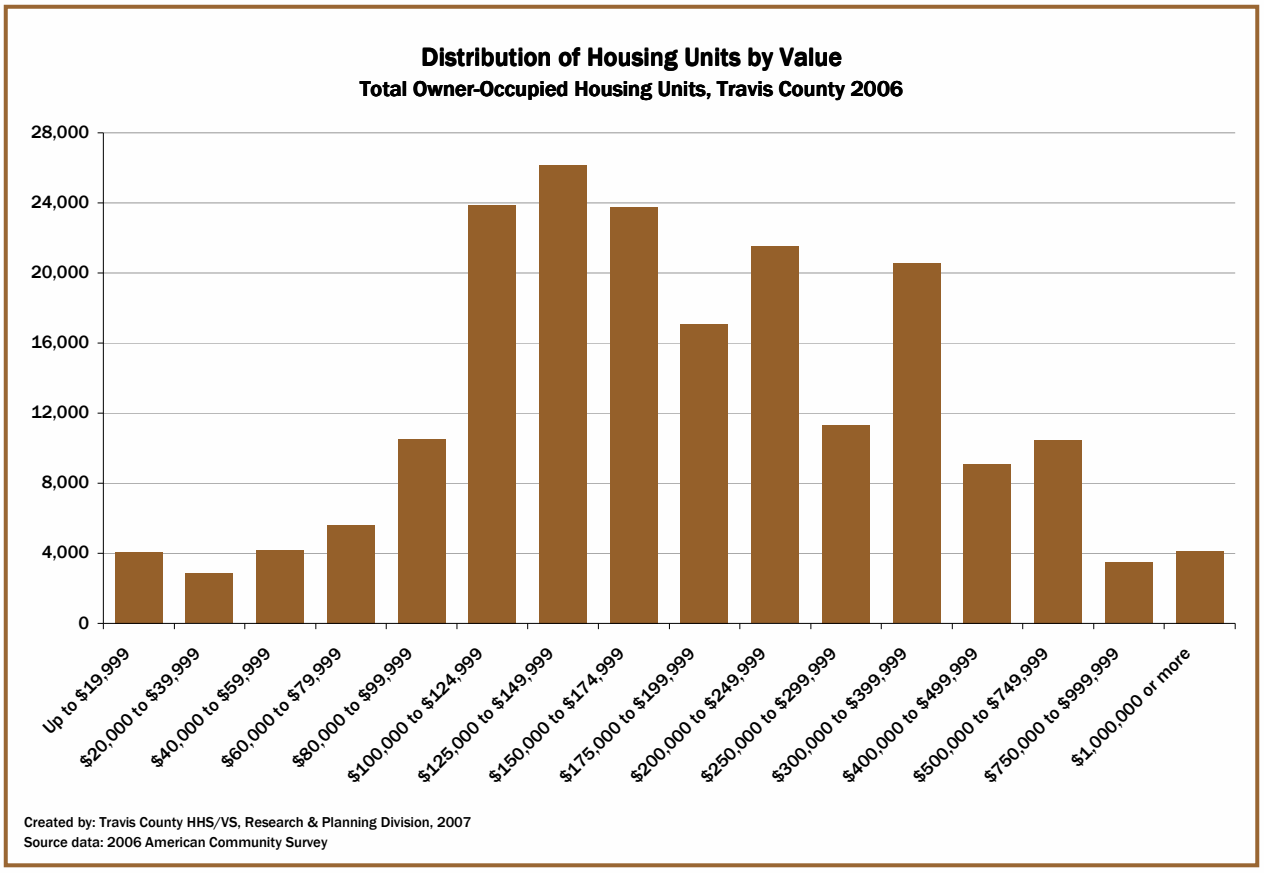


Note: Households spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs have a cost burden; those spending 50% or more on housing costs have a severe cost burden.
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2007
Source data: 2006 American Community Survey

Cost Burden for Renters and Owners: 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. However, the percent of households that are cost burdened is much higher among renters than owners. 44% of renter households spend 30% or more of their income on rent, and nearly one quarter spend at least half. Comparatively, close to one-third of owner households spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs and 12% spend at least half.

Geographic Comparison: Travis County renter households experience similar cost burden rates to those of the nation, the state of Texas, and other metropolitan counties in Texas (Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris and Tarrant counties). For Travis County owner households, the cost burden rate is similar to that of the nation, but slightly higher than that of the state of Texas. As compared to other Texas metropolitan counties, the cost burden rate among Travis County owners falls in the middle of the spectrum.

Housing Values

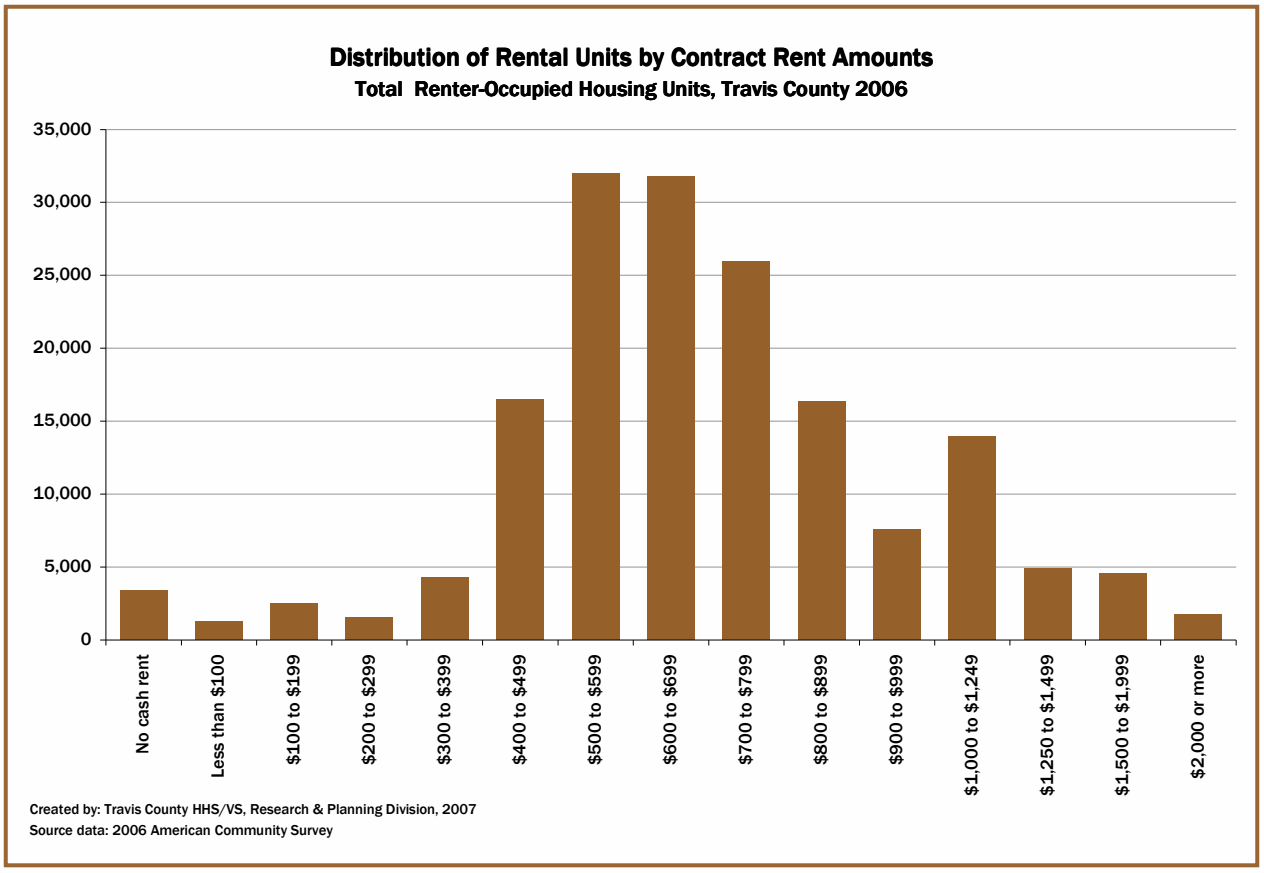


Housing Value Distribution:[9] Much of Travis County's owner-occupied housing is clustered in the middle of the value spectrum. Homes valued between $100,000 and $299,999 comprise 62% (approximately 123,700) of owner-occupied housing in Travis County. Only 14% (approximately 27,200) of owner-occupied homes in Travis County are valued at under $100,000.

Median Housing Value: The median housing value is $173,200.

[9] Housing value data is based the survey respondent's estimate of the value of the house, mobile home or condominium that they own, as well as the land upon which it sits (American Community Survey Puerto Rico Community Survey: 2006 Subject Definitions, p. 24-25, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2006/usedata/Subject_Definitions.pdf).

Rent Values



Contract Rent Distribution:[10] The Travis County rental market is skewed toward the higher end of rental values. About half (53%) of Travis County's occupied rental units have rents between $500 and $799, and 29% have contract rents at or above $800. Only 17% (approximately 29,400) of occupied rental units have rents below $500.

Median Contract Rent: The median contract rent is $677.

[10]"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 Puerto Rico Community Survey: 2006 Subject Definitions, p. 8, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2006/usedata/Subject_Definitions.pdf).

Substandard Housing

Substandard Housing Characteristics, Travis County 2006							
Housing tenure	Number of Households	Lacking complete kitchen facilities		Lacking complete plumbing facilities		Overcrowded	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner Occupied Households	198,701	568	0.3%	307	0.2%	4,622	2.3%
Renter Occupied Households	168,083	1,295	0.8%	554	0.3%	10,259	6.1%
All Occupied Households	366,784	1,863	0.5%	861	0.2%	14,881	4.1%

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2007.

Source data: 2006 American Community Survey.

Lacking Complete Kitchen/Plumbing Facilities: A very small number of Travis County households fall into the categories of lacking complete kitchen facilities[11] or lacking complete plumbing facilities.[12] The majority of these households are renter-occupied.

Overcrowding: The U.S. Census Bureau has no official definition of overcrowding. However, one common definition of overcrowding is a household with more than one occupant per room.[13,14] Travis County has a much higher rate of overcrowding among renter households (6%) than among owner households (2%).

Geographic Comparison: Among all occupied households, Travis County has slightly lower rates of lacking complete kitchen and plumbing facilities than are observed for Texas and the U.S. Travis County's overcrowding rate is higher than that of the U.S. but lower than that of Texas.

[11] Complete plumbing facilities include: (1) hot and cold piped water, (2) a flush toilet, and (3) a bathtub or shower. All three facilities must be located inside the housing unit but not necessarily in the same room.

[12] Complete kitchen facilities include: (1) a sink with piped water, (2) a range or cook top and oven, and (3) a refrigerator. All three kitchen facilities must be located in the housing unit but they need not be in the same room.

[13] Rooms include living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, finished recreation rooms, enclosed porches suitable for year-round use, and lodger's rooms. Excluded are strip or pullman kitchens, bathrooms, open porches, balconies, halls or foyers, half-rooms, utility rooms, unfinished attics or basements, or other unfinished space used for storage.

[14] This measure of overcrowding is adopted herein with the caveat that cultural norms do influence the perception of overcrowding, and what constitutes overcrowding may be defined differently among various cultures.

Methodology

The Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey (ACS) is the primary data source for this chart book. Data from the 2000 Census and the 2002-2005 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 and collects information on an ongoing basis rather than once every ten years. The survey includes questions about demographic, housing, social and economic characteristics.[15] Annual results are produced at the national, state, city, and county levels as well as smaller geographic areas with a population of 65,000 or greater.[16] Beginning in 2008, data (based on a 5 year sample) will be available for all areas of 20,000 or more.

ACS Methodology

Sample: The original 2006 (entire 12 month) sample for Travis County was 7,744 and the number of interviews (actual sample used to produce results) was 5,065.[17] Surveys are collected from 1/12 of the sample each month.

Addition of Group Quarters to the 2006 Survey: This year group quarters were added to the ACS target population of housing units. Because the individuals living in group quarters may comprise particular characteristics, their addition may cause an increase or decrease to a statistic from last year when there would not have been a true change had they been included in the past. For this reason, comparison of the 2006 and past ACS surveys is discouraged by the Census on statistics that may be closely connected to the characteristics of group quarters.[18] Group quarters include group residential facilities such as: "college residence halls, residential treatment centers, skilled nursing facilities, group homes, military barracks, correctional facilities, workers' dormitories, and facilities for people experiencing homelessness."[19]

Data collection: 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, 2) by phone and 3) by personal interviews. Data collection for the group quarters[20] sample occurs in two phases—interviewers contact the Group Quarters Administrators and then conduct surveys with a sample of individuals from the selected facility. For details on the sampling and data collection methods, please see the Census's Design and Methodology paper.[21]

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

[16] The Census 2006 Data Users Handbook: The American Community Survey, Census Bureau p. 15. http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/Handbook2006.pdf

[17] Census website: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/SBasics/SSizes/SSizes06.htm. The lower number of interviews than the original sample is due to non-existent or non-residential addresses, units that were not sampled for a follow-up personal interview and non response (The Census 2006 Data Users Handbook: The American Community Survey, Census Bureau p. 11).

[18] For specific guidance on comparisons, please see: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/compACS.htm.

[19] Design and Methodology, American Community Survey, Technical Paper 67 – Unedited Version, p. 8-1, Census Bureau, May 2006.

[20] The Census defines small group quarter facilities as those with 15 or fewer people on Census 2000 day. They also sample the group quarter facilities closed on Census day with the small group quarter facilities, (Design and Methodology, American Community Survey, Technical Paper 67 – Unedited Version, p. 4-8, Census Bureau, May 2006).

[21] Design and Methodology, American Community Survey, Technical Paper 67 – Unedited Version, p. 4-1, Census Bureau, May 2006.

Methodology

Limitations

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. This chart book simply reports on the changes observed and does not test for significance. For this reason, the statistics and trends reported should be interpreted with caution.

Sampling error: Because the findings are based on a sample, rather than the entire populations, the results would differ slightly if another sample was drawn or if the entire population was surveyed. This reduces the reliability of the results.[22]

Non-response error: If certain individuals do not respond to the survey, the strength of the findings will be weakened. Also, known as selection bias, those that responded to the survey may possess certain traits that skew the results differently than if everyone in the sample responded. However, while surveys are often voluntary, response to the ACS is mandatory through Title 13, United States Code, and those that neglect to respond to the survey are subject to a fine of up to $5000.[23] Thus the response rate for the ACS is high (Texas 2006 response rate was 97.1% for housing units and 97.4% for group quarters).[24]

[22] The Census 2006 Data Users Handbook: The American Community Survey, Census Bureau p. 6.
[23]Additional detail at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/SBasics/What/What1.htm
[24]Response rate information at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/acs-php/quality_measures_response_2006.php.