

Poverty

Did you know...?

- AIDS Services of Austin
- Any Baby Can
- Arc of the Capital Area
- Austin/Travis County Mental Health Mental Retardation
- Austin Tenants Council
- Austin/Travis County Health & Human Services Department
- Capital Area Food Bank
- Caritas of Austin
- Catholic Charities of Central Texas
- Community Action Network
- Communities in Schools
- Eastside Community Connection
- Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd
- Family Connections
- Family Eldercare
- Foundation Communities
- Foundation for the Homeless
- Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
- Housing Authority of the City of Austin
- Marywood Children and Family Services
- Meals on Wheels and More
- Micah 6
- SafePlace
- Salvation Army
- St. Louis Parish Social Ministries
- Sustainable Food Center
- Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid
- Travis County Health & Human Services and Veterans Service
- Travis County Re-entry Roundtable
- Trinity Center
- United Way Capital Area

- The 2006 Federal Poverty Income Guideline is \$20,000 a year for a family of four. *(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)*
- In 2005, an estimated 15.7 % (135,240) of Travis County residents were living below the federal poverty level. The Travis County poverty rate is higher than the U.S. rate (13.3%) but lower than the Texas rate (17.6%). *(2005 American Community Survey)*
- In Travis County, people with a physical disability are 1.5 times more likely than the general population to live in poverty. Residents with a mental disability live in poverty at almost twice the general rate. *(2004 American Community Survey)*
- The Economic Policy Institute estimated that in order to afford to live in the Austin/San Marcos MSA, a family of two parents and two children needs a household income of \$43,584 to cover basic expenses, a figure more than double the federal guideline. *(Economic Policy Institute, Basic Family Budget Calculator, September 2005)*
- The percentage of Travis County married couple families living below poverty is 5.2% compared to 33.7% percent of families headed by females without husbands present who live below poverty. *(2005 American Community Survey)*
- An estimated 4,695 or 8.3% of the senior population (ages 65 years and older) in Travis County have incomes at or below the poverty level. *(2005 American Community Survey)*
- Education is generally seen as a path to success and people in poverty are less likely to attain an adequate level. In Travis County, 35,075 people over the age of 25 completed less than a 9th grade education and an additional 40,799 went to high school but didn't earn a diploma. *(2005 American Community Survey)*
- The Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) has 4,903 people on the wait list for one of their 1,928 units of public housing and 5,833 on the wait list for Section 8 vouchers. *(HACA, November, 2006)*
- In Travis County, 18% of families with children under the age of five had an income below the poverty level. 47% of households headed by unmarried women with children under five were living below poverty. *(2005 American Community Survey)*
- Out of 166,661 school age children in Central Texas, over 26,000 were living below the federal poverty line in 2003 *(2003 US Census Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates)*

Estimated Cost of Living Austin/San Marcos MSA <i>(www.epinet.org)</i>	Two Parents Two Children
Housing	\$912
Food	\$587
Child Care	\$720
Health Care	\$430
Transportation	\$358
Other Necessities	\$405
Monthly Taxes	\$220
Monthly Total	\$3,632
Annual	\$43,584
% of 2006 Federal Poverty Level	218%

School District	Austin	Eanes	Manor	Del Valle	Lago Vista	Lake Travis	Round Rock	Elgin	Hays	TOTAL
No. 5-17 yrs.	91,949	8,669	2,846	7,355	1,010	4,353	38,968	3,324	8,187	166,661
No. in Poverty	19,102 21%	360 4%	513 18%	2,187 30%	50 5%	287 7%	2,135 5%	551 17%	895 11%	26,080 16%

(2003 US Census Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates)

Poverty

What Causes Poverty? *Experts in social policy cite numerous factors that contribute to poverty:*

About Poverty

LOW WAGES & LACK OF BENEFITS/UNEMPLOYMENT/UNDEREMPLOYMENT

More than two-thirds of all poor families with children include one or more individuals who worked (*Poverty USA, 2003*). However, much of this employment is in service jobs that pay low wages and have few, if any, benefits. Employment is related to low education and skill levels.

VERY YOUNG OR VERY OLD AGE

Children, especially the very young, are completely dependent on their parents to meet their basic needs. Likewise, although many are healthy and stable, the elderly are at risk of increased dependency. They may also suffer from illness, physical disability or mental impairment.

MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental illness includes a vast number of functional and non-functional conditions. Because it is identified through behavior, mental illness is often understood as a social problem, prohibiting people from living successfully in their communities.

DISABILITY

People with disabilities have very different physical and learning challenges, but lifestyle limitations are common. The disabled tend to have low incomes and, at the same time, special needs. They are also at risk of isolation due to social stigma.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Exclusion happens when people are not part of ordinary life networks. The homeless, ex-prisoners, people with AIDS, people with disabilities and for whom language is a barrier often suffer from exclusion. People who are excluded can be deprived of resources, lack social protection and have to fight social stigma.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT...

- Poverty USA, www.povertyusa.org
- Center for Public Policy Priorities, www.cppp.org
- Economic Policy Institute, www.epinet.org
- Joint Center for Poverty Research, www.jcpr.org
- National Center for Children in Poverty, www.nccp.org
- "Introduction to Public Policy", www2.rgu.ac.uk/publicpolicy/introduction/needf.htm
- Central Texas Sustainability Indicators Project, <http://www.centex-indicators.org/>
- 2005 American Community Survey Analysis:
http://www.co.travis.tx.us/health_human_services/research_planning/pdfs/ACS_2005.pdf
- Community Action Network, www.caction.org

How Can You Make a Difference?

- Support public policy initiatives that create real solutions for adequate healthcare, childcare, living wages, education and disability assistance.
- United Way Capital Area provides a referral hotline for basic needs assistance. Dial 2-1-1 or visit www.volunteeraustin.org for volunteer and donation opportunities.
- Agencies in the Basic Needs Coalition provide much needed services to people living in poverty such as clothing, food, rent, and utility assistance. Find donation and volunteer opportunities by visiting www.basicneeds-ctx.org.