



This is the fourth of four weekly emails being sent to you by The Arc of the Capital Area in observance of Poverty Awareness Month. This week's focus is on food security in Travis County.

POVERTY QUESTION OF THE WEEK: Who is hungry and who is feeding the hungry?

Demographics of Food Pantry Clients in Travis County:

- 81% of food pantry clients are female.
 - 67% live at or below the poverty line.
 - 21% work full or part-time.
 - 30% are disabled or retired.
- (Capital Area Food Bank)

An analysis of food providers for low-income individuals and families by zip code showed:

- 13 of the 24 Travis County zip codes with high poverty levels do not have a food provider, representing 6,946 poor, or 75% of all the people in poverty without access to a food provider.
 - Limited evening hours and limited hours on Saturdays may pose a serious challenge for the working poor in accessing food pantries.
 - While in general, pantries appear to have an adequate supply of food, there are shortages of dairy products, fresh produce, and fresh or frozen meat, impacting the nutritional health of adults and children living in poverty.
 - Transportation may pose an obstacle to pantry utilization, especially in rural areas with little to no access to public transportation.
- (BNC Travis County Food Provider Survey Results, 2007)

Availability of Prepared Meal Provision in Downtown Austin:

- 9 of 10 meal providers are open to the public.
 - Breakfast is provided to the public by at least 1 provider 5 days a week, with an additional day for women. Smaller providers serve breakfast. Weekly breakfasts served by each is between 150 and 225.
 - Lunch is covered by at least 2 providers 7 days a week, each serving between 300 and 2,275 weekly meals.
 - Dinner is provided 7 days a week, with at least 2 providers for 6 of those days. 2 of the 3 dinner providers serve more than 1,500 weekly dinners.
- (BNC Travis County Food Provider Survey Results, 2007).

Join Caritas of Austin, the Basic Needs Coalition, and leaders from faith-based organizations on February 13 at the Mexican American Cultural Center for Poverty Roundtable 2008. This educational forum is an opportunity for Austin's faith community leaders to examine the reality of hunger. Presentations will focus on effective

collaborative models for organizing faith-based resources. Advanced registration is required and the faith community will be given priority. A light lunch will be provided.

- WHAT:** Poverty Roundtable 2008
- WHO:** Representatives from the BNC Food Security Committee and leaders from Central Texas faith-based organizations
- WHERE:** Mexican American Cultural Center, 600 River Street
- WHEN:** Wednesday, February 13, 10:00 a.m. To 1:30 p.m.

We hope over the past several weeks you have learned more about the cost of poverty and what it means to be poor in Central Texas. As a member of our community, you can be a part of the solution to poverty.

Consider these opportunities:

1. Let your Federal and State elected officials know what you think about issues regarding poverty. To be connected by telephone to the office of any U.S. House Representative or Senator, call 1-202-224-3121. To contact any state legislator, start at www.capitol.state.tx.us.
2. Continue to visit the BNC website at <http://www.basicneeds-ctx.org> which will be updated throughout the year with information and progress on systemic solutions.
3. Contribute in-kind or financial contributions to local BNC Partners. Visit the Basic Needs Coalition website for a complete listing. www.basicneeds-ctx.org
4. To volunteer, contact the United Way Capital Area's Volunteer Center at 2-1-1 or visit <http://www.handsoncentraltexas.org/> for opportunities to help out. Or Visit the Basic Needs Coalition's website for any volunteer opportunities.

About The Basic Needs Coalition: The Basic Needs Coalition is a coalition of nearly 40 public and private social service providers working together to serve people in need in our community. The Coalition is comprised of non-profit organizations, local governmental agencies, faith-based organizations and community advocates. <http://www.basicneeds-ctx.org>