



 **DASHBOARD**  
**2014**  
key socioeconomic indicators  
for Greater Austin & Travis County

# INTRODUCTION

This fifth annual CAN Dashboard report highlights some of the demographic changes in Travis County and the Austin area and provides an update for each of the 17 indicators on the dashboard. The report also highlights the greatest disparities for each indicator, and summarizes the community collaborations and initiatives that are working to move each indicator in the right direction. The report concludes with a set of recommendations, drawn from the other work of CAN, for ways our community can respond to the challenges of growth, demographic changes, income disparity and unequal opportunity.

## community dashboard 2014

2014

### table of contents

Austin has topped the [Forbes](#) list as the fastest growing city in America for the fourth year in a row. This growth brings opportunity but also challenges. The low-income population is growing at about twice the rate as the overall population. Much of this population growth is occurring in outlying areas, where there is not easy access to public transportation, jobs, training, childcare, and services.

Our community suffered less than most during the last recession, yet many families and individuals are even further behind than they were before the recession began. There are concerning patterns of deepening income inequality and income segregation.

The repercussions of demographic changes can be felt across our community and across systems from education to healthcare to criminal justice. This report is the beginning of a conversation that CAN wants to have with the community. A conversation about what we can do together to promote equity and opportunity for all people.



Introduction .....	1
Demographics .....	3
Moving toward a common vision .....	5
CAN Community Dashboard .....	6
<b><i>We are safe, just &amp; engaged indicators</i></b>	
crime .....	7
proportionality of jail bookings .....	8
voter turnout .....	9
<b><i>Our basic needs are met indicators</i></b>	
low-income .....	10
food insecurity .....	11
housing cost-burdened .....	12
vehicle miles traveled .....	13
homeless .....	14
<b><i>We are healthy indicators</i></b>	
health insurance .....	15
mental health .....	16
smoking .....	17
obesity .....	18
air quality .....	19
<b><i>We achieve our full potential indicators</i></b>	
kindergarten ready .....	20
high school graduation .....	21
college success .....	22
unemployment .....	23
Recommendations .....	24

## challenges

Following are few highlights of some of the challenges outlined in this report.

- The low-income population is growing at almost twice the rate as the overall population and household income, when adjusted for inflation, is below where it was before the recession began, especially for Hispanic households.
- Much of the low-income growth has occurred in the suburbs, creating transportation and service challenges.
- Increased diversity, with a large Hispanic population and a fast-growing Asian population, means cultural and linguistic proficiency are more important than ever.
- African Americans are disproportionately represented among those booked into jail and among students receiving disciplinary referrals.
- The high cost of housing creates challenges for families who must also find room in their budgets for food, transportation, health care, child care and other necessities.
- Even though educational outcomes have improved overall, there are disparities for low-income students.
- Unemployment rates for Blacks, Hispanics and people with disabilities are higher than the overall rate.

## How do we promote equity and opportunity?

The CAN Dashboard report and its companion website [www.CANcommunitydashboard.org](http://www.CANcommunitydashboard.org) provide an overview of the overall social health and well-being of Austin and Travis County.

The CAN Community Dashboard website includes an electronic version of this report with hyperlinks to referenced research as well expanded data, tables and citations on community demographics and each of the dashboard indicators.

## mission

CAN is a partnership of governmental, non-profit, private and faith-based organizations which leverage mutual resources to collectively improve social, health, educational and economic opportunities in our community.



### CAN Partner organizations

- Austin Chamber of Commerce
- Austin Community College
- Austin Independent School District
- Austin Travis County Integral Care
- Capital Metro
- Central Health
- City of Austin
- City of Pflugerville
- Community Justice Council
- Del Valle Independent School District
- Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
- Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Huston-Tillotson University
- interfaith Action of Central Texas
- Manor Independent School District
- One Voice Central Texas
- Seton Healthcare Family
- St. David's Foundation
- St. Edward's University
- Travis County
- United Way for Greater Austin
- University of Texas at Austin
- Workforce Solutions– Capital Area

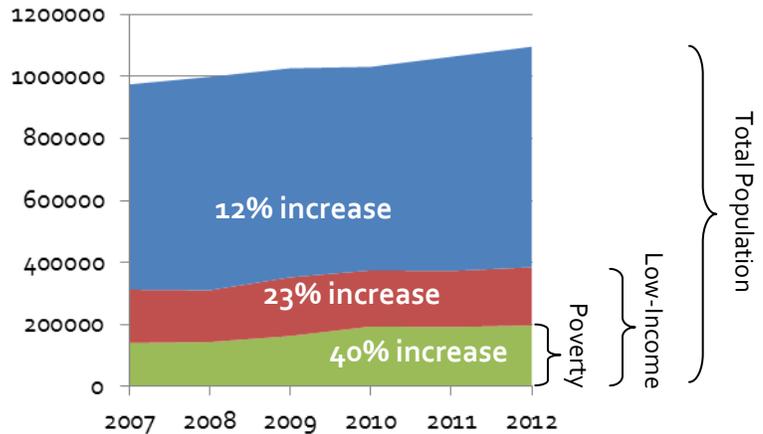
# COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

## fast growth

Travis County's population increased by 12% in the five year period from 2007 to 2012. The percentage of people with low-incomes, those earning less than 200% of the federal poverty level, grew at almost twice the rate as the population as a whole.

Based on data produced by the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), CAN estimates that about 59% of residents who moved to Travis County between 2011 and 2012 moved from another county in Texas, 30% moved from another state, and 11% arrived from a foreign country.

Travis County Population Growth, 2007-2012



Source: American Community Survey, 1-year Population Estimates

## low-income sprawl

This map of the five-county Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) depicts the change in the number of people who are living below 200% of the federal poverty level over time. While some inner city census tracts experienced a decline in low-income populations over the 12 year period, many outlying areas had large increases, reinforcing patterns of income segregation.

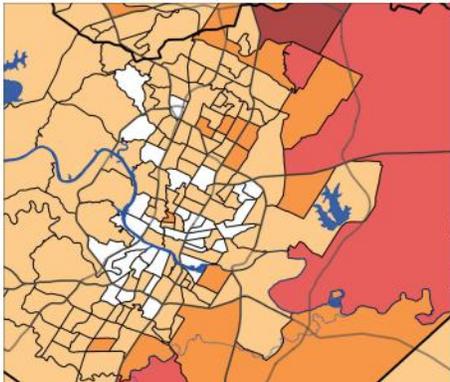
### Legend

- County
- Highway
- Lake
- River

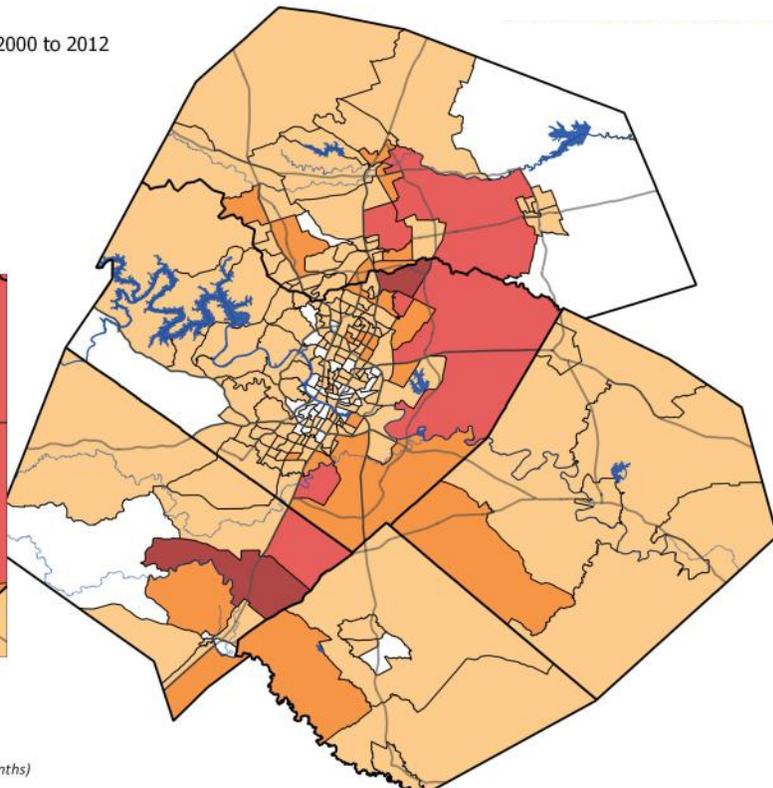
### Change in a Census Tract's Low-Income Population, 2000 to 2012

- 1500 to 0
- 0 to 2000
- 2000 to 4000
- 4000 to 6000
- 6000 plus

### Inset: Central Austin

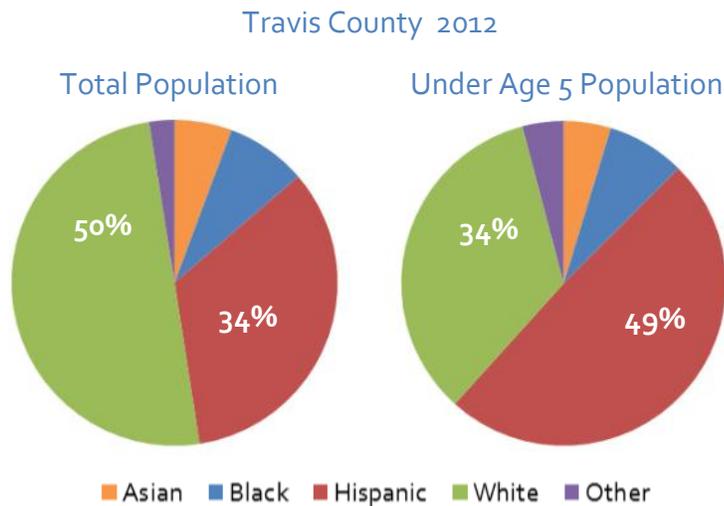


Low Income Population Change By Census Tract, 2000 to 2012



Map produced by CAN from U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census SF3 and 5-year, 2008-2012 American Community Survey data. (Table P088: Ratio of Income in 1999 to Poverty Level and Table C17002: Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months)

## diversification



We live in a “no majority” community with no one racial or ethnic group comprising more than half of the total population. One-half of the Travis County population was White in 2012, according to the American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 34% were Hispanic, 8% were Black, 6% were Asian and 2% were Other.

When looking at the population under the age of 5, the proportion of Hispanics and Whites is basically flipped. Almost half of all young children are Hispanic and 34% are White.

Though small as a percentage of the total, the Asian population is growing at the fastest rate.

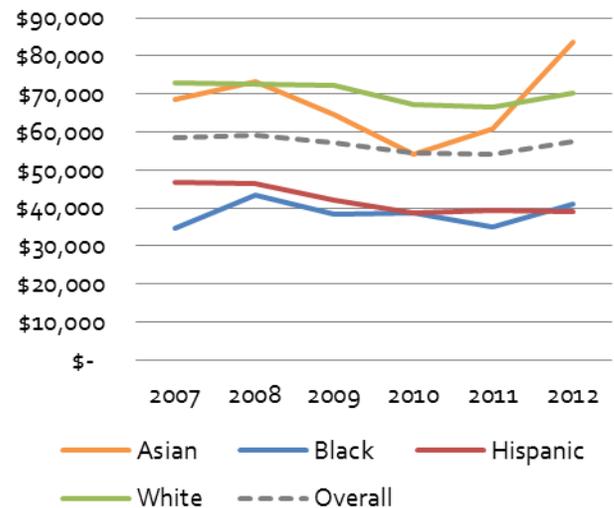
Source: American Community Survey, 1-year Population Estimates

## income disparity

There is a great difference in Median Household Income by race and ethnicity. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median income for all households in Travis County was \$57,368 in 2012. The median incomes of Hispanic (\$39,076) and Black (\$40,978) households were significantly lower than those of Asian (\$83,544) and White (\$70,324) households.

When adjusted for inflation, households earned less in 2012 than before the recession began. While both White and Hispanic households have experienced a decline in income since 2007, Hispanic households have been especially hard hit. Hispanic household income fell from \$46,850 in 2007 to \$39,076 in 2012—a decline of \$7,774. The incomes of Black and Asian households have increased. Black household income in 2012 was 18% higher than it was in 2007. Asian households saw a 22% increase in income over the past five years.

Travis County Median Household Income, Adjusted for Inflation



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## young population

Travis County has a comparatively young population, with more than 260,000 children and a large young adult population. Travis County has a larger young working age population than both the state and the nation. According to American Community survey 1-Year Estimates, people between the ages of 25 and 34 comprise 18% of Travis County’s population, compared to 14% of the Texas population and 13% of the U.S. population.

Although the over 65 population is growing at a fast rate, it comprises only 8% of the total population, compared to 10% of the Texas population and 14% of the U.S. population.

# MOVING TOWARD A COMMON VISION

The Community Dashboard provides an annual snapshot of the overall socioeconomic health and well-being of Travis County and the greater Austin metro area and launches an annual conversation among the CAN partner organizations and the community as a whole. Each year, we consider: Are we moving closer toward our shared vision for all people? What collaborative efforts are helping? Are these efforts sufficient? **What more is needed?**



The **Common Vision** was adopted by the CAN Board of Directors in 2008 after a year of community discussion.

**Community Indicators** were adopted by the CAN Board of Directors in 2009. The first Community Dashboard report was released in 2010.

The **Strategic Framework for Action**, found on the back cover of this report, was developed in 2011-2012 and summarizes strategies identified by stakeholders across many jurisdictions and disciplines.

Each year the CAN Community Council and the Board of Directors convene conversations on issues facing our community and use this information to inform the annual [CAN Work Plan](#).

## OUR VISION

<p><b>We are safe, just &amp; engaged</b></p>	<p>We are free from abuse, neglect, crime, violence, and injustice.</p> <p>We respect and value diversity.</p> <p>We are aware, socially connected, and contribute to our neighborhoods, individual communities, and the community at large.</p> <p>We have the opportunity and willingness to lead by utilizing our talents, passions and interests to improve the community.</p>
<p><b>Our basic needs are met</b></p>	<p>We live in a community where the basic needs of all are met.</p> <p>We live in affordable and stable housing with access to open space and public amenities.</p> <p>We have safe, affordable, accessible, and reliable transportation.</p>
<p><b>We are healthy</b></p>	<p>We live, work, learn, and play in accessible, safe, clean, and healthy physical environments.</p> <p>We have adequate nutrition, and achieve and maintain optimal physical and behavioral health.</p>
<p><b>We achieve our full potential</b></p>	<p>We have the education, skills, and opportunities to achieve our full potential and lead meaningful, joyful lives.</p> <p>We have adequate income, resources, and supports to live independent lives.</p>



# DASHBOARD

(Data is for Travis County unless otherwise noted.)

baseline  
(5 year data history)

most recent

goal

target

Status\*  
(≤5 year trend)

We are safe, just & engaged

Our basic needs are met

We are healthy

We achieve our full potential

	baseline (5 year data history)	most recent	goal	target	Status* (≤5 year trend)
Crime rate per 100,000 population	5,546 in 2008	4,806 in 2012	reduce crime rate	1% annual reduction	BETTER
Proportionality of jail bookings across all races and ethnicities	disproportionality ratio of 2.5 for Blacks in 2008	disproportionality ratio of 2.6 for Blacks in 2012	proportionate jail bookings	proportionality by 2017	UNCHANGED
Percent voter turnout National/Presidential election State/Gubernatorial election	64% in 2008 39% in 2006	58% in 2012 36% in 2010	increase voter turnout	65% in 2016 40% in 2014	WORSE
Percent of residents who are low-income (<200% of the federal poverty threshold)	32% in 2008	36% in 2012	reduce low-income	30% by 2017	WORSE
Percent of residents who live in food insecure households	16% in 2009	18% in 2012	reduce food insecurity	15% by 2017	WORSE
Percent of cost-burdened households (pay 30% or more of income for housing)	36% in 2008	38% in 2012	reduce cost-burdened households	36% by 2017	WORSE
Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita	28.5 miles per day in 2008	23.4 miles per day in 2012	reduce VMT	21 miles per day by 2017	BETTER
Number of people identified in the annual point-in-time homeless count	2,087 in 2010	1,987 in 2014	end homelessness	1,000 by 2017	BETTER
Percent under age 65 who have no health insurance	24% in 2008	21% in 2012	reduce uninsured	20% by 2014	BETTER
Percent of adults who report poor mental health	17% in 2011	21% in 2012	reduce poor mental health	15% by 2017	WORSE **
Percent of adults who are smokers	16% in 2011	15% in 2012	reduce smoking	12% by 2020	BETTER **
Percent of adults who are obese	19% in 2011	24% in 2012	reduce obesity	17% by 2020	WORSE **
Attainment of national ambient air quality standards	2008 in attainment	2012 in attainment	achieve EPA standards	attainment	UNCHANGED
Percent of Central Texas children who are kindergarten ready	52% in 2010	53% in 2013	increase kinder-ready kids	70% by 2015	UNCHANGED
Percent of Central Texas students who graduate from high school in four years	78% Class of 2008	89% Class of 2012	increase HS graduation	95% Class of 2015	BETTER
Percent of Central Texas high school graduates who earn a post-secondary credential within 6 years	28% Class of 2003	30% Class of 2007	Increase college success	To be determined	BETTER
Unemployment rate	7.3% in January 2010	4.6% in January 2014	reduce unemployment	4% in 01/2017	BETTER

\* Status is based on the 5-year trend line, where data are available.

\*\* Year-to-year change is within the margin of error and may not be statistically significant.

# WE ARE SAFE, JUST AND ENGAGED



**Goal:** reduce crime rate

**Target:** 1% annual reduction

## crime occurred at a rate of 4,806 per 100,000 population in Travis County

The crime rate in Travis County decreased by 2% from 2011 to 2012, surpassing the target of reducing crime by 1% a year. The crime rate for Travis County is higher than the state, the nation, and the average of Texas' six most populous counties (Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, Tarrant, and Travis).

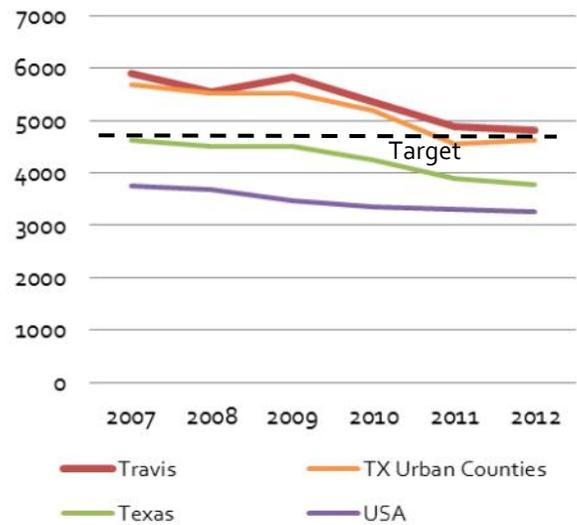
The Austin Police Department received a Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation grant, that will extend through 2015, to fund the [Restore Rundberg](#) Initiative. Three crime "hotspots" in the neighborhood account for 12% of all crime city-wide. The police department is working with community members in the Rundberg area to identify ways to reduce crime.

Another initiative to target "hotspots" is the Drug Market Initiative which seeks to address crime in the areas around 12th Street and Chicon. Efforts to reduce crime in this area will be reinforced by the [Rosewood Choice Neighborhood Transformation Grant](#) which will develop a new plan for the aging Rosewood Courts public housing complex and the surrounding neighborhoods to offer a mix of housing, services, and jobs.

A [Mental Health Planning Grant](#), funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, will assist in the development of a community-wide strategic plan to address the needs of people diagnosed with severe and persistent mental disorders and co-occurring substance use disorders who are incarcerated in the Travis County jail. The goal is to create a seamless continuum of care for this population.

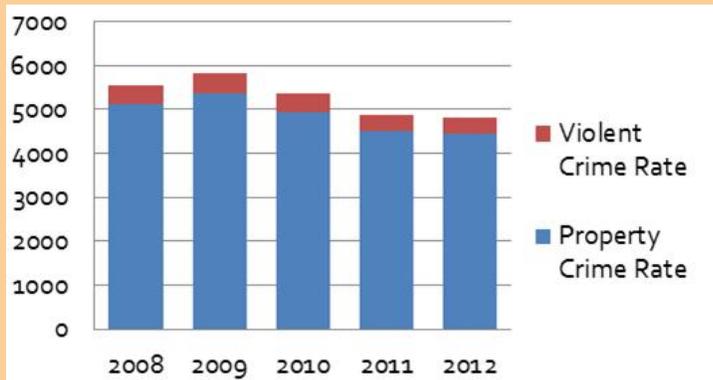
Other local initiatives and strategies that will help continue to reduce crime include problem-solving courts and dockets, such as the [Adult Drug Diversion Court](#), [Travis County Juvenile Drug Treatment Court](#), [Downtown Community Court](#), [Project Engage](#) and the [Mental Health Public Defender's office](#).

Crime Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Reports and Federal Bureau of Investigation

Travis County Crime Rate per 100,000 Population



Source: Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Reports

**Violent Crime:** murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault

**Property Crime:** burglary, theft, auto theft

Property crime is the main driver of the overall crime rate, impacting many more people than violent crime each year. Both the property and violent crime rates in Travis County have been trending downward.

# jail bookings are not proportionate for all races in Travis County

People arrested by law enforcement agencies in Travis County are generally booked into the Travis County jail. Blacks are disproportionately overrepresented in jail bookings compared to their representation in the adult population. In 2012 the disproportionality ratio for Blacks was 2.6, which indicates a high disproportion of overrepresentation. The causes of disproportionality are complex, cross many social systems, and are experienced in communities across the country.

According to the [Sentencing Project](#), a national nonprofit which promotes sentencing reform and research on criminal justice issues, the causes of disparity in the criminal justice system can include differing levels of criminal activity, inequitable access to resources, law enforcement emphasis on particular neighborhoods, legislative policies, and decision making by criminal justice practitioners at one or more stages in the criminal justice system.

"[Breaking Schools' Rules](#)," a report that tracked nearly 1 million Texas public school students for six years, found even greater disparities in disciplinary referrals in public schools. Local criminal justice and public education leaders responded with the creation of a Breaking Schools' Rules Work Group that is analyzing data and considering policy changes to help reduce disparity. New laws passed by the Texas legislature prohibit schools from ticketing students for Class C misdemeanors, which include infractions such as disorderly conduct or skipping school.

The Travis County Sheriff's Office sponsors "[Building Bridges Brick by Brick](#)," an on-going conversation between the community, law enforcement, educators and other systems leaders. Their "First Saturdays" conversations seek to promote trust, respect and understanding.

The [Center for Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities](#), under the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, was created by the State Legislature in 2011 to address disproportionality found in many state systems. The local Advisory Committee has worked with others to create [Undoing Racism Austin](#), an effort to enhance awareness about institutional racism and bias. The Austin YWCA, Interfaith Action Central Texas, and Huston Tillotson University also host regular dialogues and events on issues of diversity, inclusion and racism.

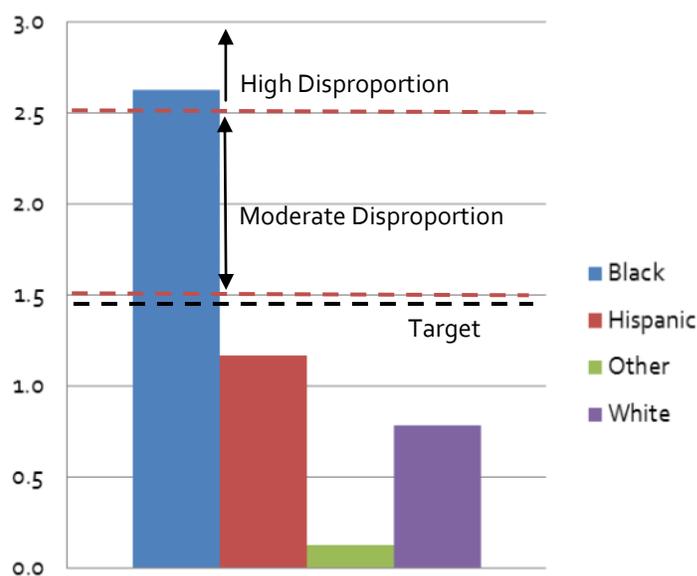
The [CAN Cultural Competency, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) Work Group has developed on-line resources and information to help organizations promote diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence.



**Goal:** proportionate jail bookings for all races and ethnicities

**Target:** proportionality by 2017

Disproportionality Ratios for Bookings into the Travis County Jail, 2012



Source: Travis County Sheriff's Office and the American Community Survey 1-Year Population Estimates



Blacks were 3.3 times more likely than Whites to be booked into the Travis County jail. Black students were 4.8 times more likely than White students in Austin ISD to be removed from the classroom and placed in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs.

# Voter turnout of 58% in Travis County

Voter participation in the 2012 national election was down from the previous presidential election. The [Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network](#) explains that voting impacts civic participation of all kinds. People who do not vote are less likely to self-identify as stakeholders in their communities. They are less likely to volunteer, contact their elected officials or participate in public life. Frequent voters are more likely to engage in community affairs, serve on boards and commissions and even enter public service themselves.

The November 2012 election included charter amendments for the City of Austin that will establish a Single Member District form of government and will move local elections to November in even-numbered years. It is the hope of proponents that the election of council members from 10 geographic districts will result in greater participation in the electoral process. Voters will put the new “10-One” form of local government to the test in the November 4, 2014 election. Important State offices, including governor, will hopefully draw greater than usual voter interest.

[Leadership Austin](#) is working to increase civic engagement and enhance community dialogue around issues in advance of the transition to the new 10-One form of government. Leadership Austin Essentials Class has conducted a civic engagement assessment for each of the ten districts. Leadership Austin is also partnering with KUT, KLRU, Community Impact, the Annette Strauss Center for Civic Participation and League of Women Voters of Austin to hold a series of education forums for potential candidates and the community. The forums will be televised and highlights will be shared in the Community Impact neighborhood newspapers.

The [Travis County Elections Division](#) now allows voters to vote from any polling location in Travis County on election day, rather than being required to vote from a specific precinct location. This makes voting on election day just as convenient as voting early. The [Travis County Tax Office](#) conducts regular deputy voter registration training sessions to increase voter registration throughout the community.

The [Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Participation](#) encourages voting among young adults with programs such as University of Texas Votes. The Institute also holds “Why Bother” symposiums to help people understand why “bothering” to vote matters. According to the Institute’s [Texas Civic Health Index](#), Texas ranks last among the 50 states in voter turnout.

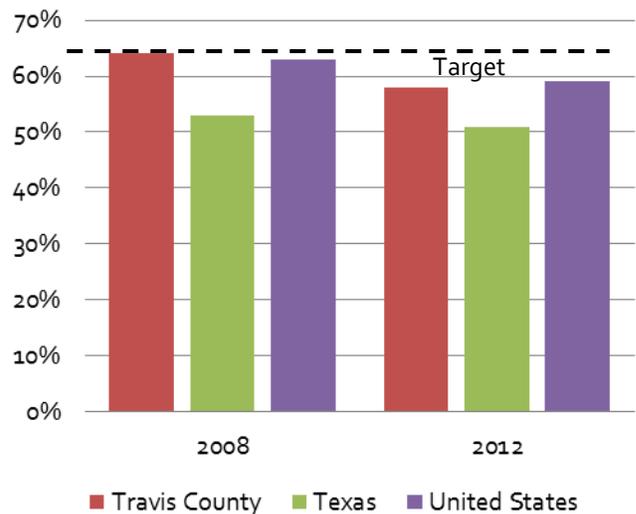


**Goal:** increase turnout

**Targets:**

- 40% in 2014 State/ Gubernatorial election
- 65% in 2016 National/ Presidential election

Voter Turnout of Citizen Voting Age Population in National/Presidential Elections



Source: Travis County Clerk, United States Elections Project, and the American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates



Voters between the ages of 18 and 24 are least likely to vote. Initiatives such as [UT Votes](#) encourage younger people to get into the habit of voting.

# OUR BASIC NEEDS ARE MET

## 36% of Travis County residents are low-income

The percent of people in Travis County who are low-income remained constant in 2012, but is still higher than pre-recession levels. From 2007 to 2012, the share of people living below 200% of the federal poverty level grew by 23%, almost twice the 12% growth rate for the population as a whole.

The [Urban Institute](#) defines low-income as earning less than 200% of the federal poverty threshold. In 2012, that was \$46,566 annually for a family of four with two children. An estimated 385,000 people in Travis County fell below this income level in 2012. People who are low-income fare worse on almost every Community Dashboard indicator.

The [Center for Public Policy Priorities](#) (CPPP) [Family Budgets](#) tool estimates the income a family needs to make ends meet in each of Texas' 26 metro areas. According to this tool, a family of four in Austin, without employer sponsored health insurance, would need \$63,012 a year to cover the costs of basic necessities including housing, food, child care, health care, transportation and taxes. Liveable City Austin and One Voice Central Texas are working to enhance awareness about how affordability challenges are impacting individuals and families.

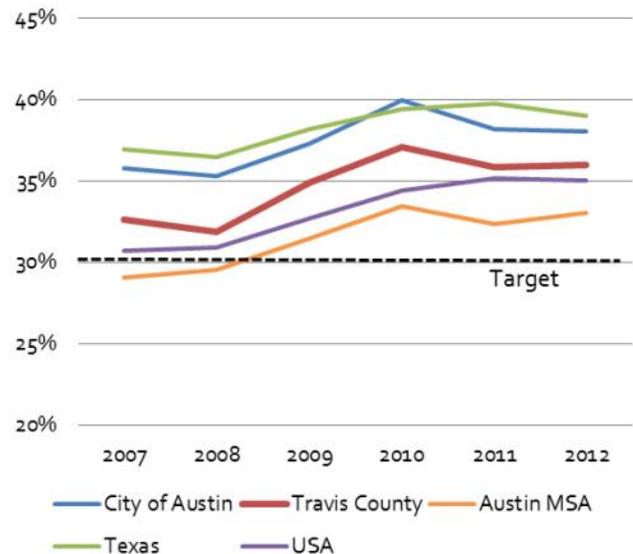
CAN has been taking a closer look at the civic infrastructure needed to expand equity and opportunity. This includes everything from how our community is designed to how we provide services and supports. The CAN Policy Forum in November 2013, [Today's Choices, Tomorrow's Future](#), featured conversations on the increasing suburbanization of poverty and what can be done to create accessible, connected communities in which all people have access to education and resources to improve their lives. CAN also evaluated the gaps and needs in the social service safety net for the greater Austin area. The report "[Our Community is Changing—Are We Ready? The State of the Safety Net in the Austin Metro Area](#)" includes recommendations for improving our community's response to the changing needs of its population. CAN will continue to expand its analysis of safety net resources, barriers and system improvements through a series of [Safety Net Forums](#) in 2014.



**Goal:** reduce percent who are low-income

**Target:** 30% by 2017

Percent of People Who are Low-Income



Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates



Children are most likely to be low-income. Forty-six percent of all children in Travis County live in low-income households. Seventy-three percent of children who live in single-parent headed households are low-income.

# 18% of Travis County residents live in food insecure households



**Goal:** decrease the percent of people who are food insecure

**Target:** 15% by 2017

In 2012, 18% of people in Travis County lived in households that lacked access to enough nutritious, safe food for an active, healthy life, according to [Feeding America](#), the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity. While the national rate has declined since the recession ended in 2009, the local rate has increased. Feeding America estimates food insecurity using USDA state estimates and local U.S. Census Bureau demographic data.

Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department has worked with Travis County, Central Health, St. David's Foundation, Seton Healthcare Family, Austin Travis County Integral Care, Capital Metro and the University of Texas to develop a [Community Health Improvement Plan](#) (CHIP). The health assessment and plan were developed with input from hundreds of Austin and Travis County residents. The CHIP identified three action strategies to promote access to affordable, healthy food:

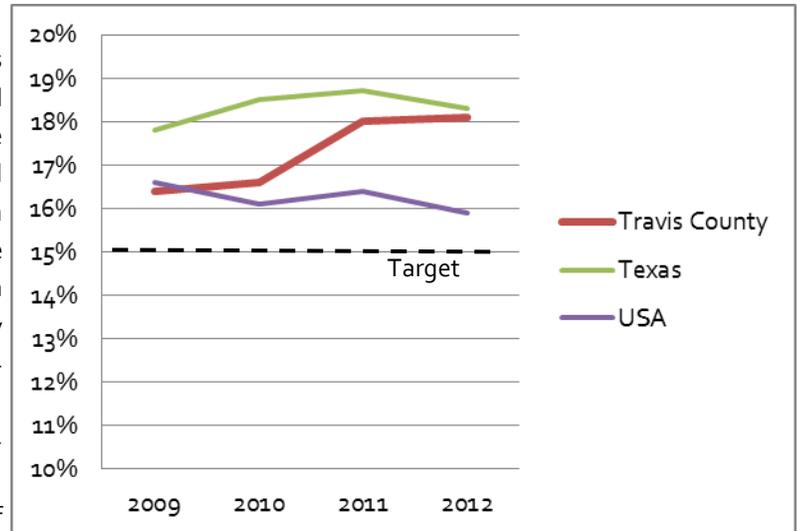
1. Ensure that people who qualify for food benefits are enrolled in them.
2. Promote the production and distribution of healthy food in areas of the city that do not currently have access to healthy food.
3. Develop policies that restrict unhealthy food choices in targeted areas.

Many food insecure residents are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), however, the [Texas Food Bank Network](#) estimates that about 43% of those who are income-eligible in Travis County do not receive SNAP benefits.

The Texas Legislature passed a bill in its last session requiring schools in which 80% or more of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch to offer free breakfast to all students. This law will take effect for the 2014-2015 school year. According to the Center for Public Policy Priorities, Elgin, Del Valle and Pflugerville ISDs have already begun introducing universal breakfasts on some campuses.

The [Sustainable Food Policy Board](#) serves as an advisory body to the Austin City Council and the Travis County Commissioners Court to improve the availability of safe, nutritious, locally and sustainably-grown food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need.

Percent of Who Live in Food Insecure Households



Source: Feeding America



Approximately 181,020 Travis County residents were food insecure in 2011. Hunger is especially prevalent in the eastern crescent of Travis County. According to an Assessment by the [Sustainable Food Center](#), there are five zip codes that do not have a single full-service grocery store.

# 38% of Travis County households are housing cost-burdened

The percentage of households in Travis County that are housing cost-burdened decreased in 2012, but is still higher than pre-recession levels and is also higher than the state and the nation. The [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) (HUD) considers housing to be affordable when households pay no more than 30% of their income on housing costs and utilities.

[City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development](#) reports that rental rates and housing prices have grown at a faster rate than medium income. Finding affordable housing is even more difficult for very low-income households. The [Urban Institute](#) reports that Travis County has only 13 affordable units available for every 100 households earning 30% of the area's median family income or less. Travis ranked 5th worst among the nation's 100 most populous counties in this gap.

Participants in the [2013 CAN Policy Forum](#) identified planning for housing and transportation together as a top priority. [HousingWorks](#) is working with the City of Austin to create an affordable housing preservation strategy and to study the jobs/housing balance.

In November 2013, voters in the City of Austin approved \$65 million in general obligation bonds for affordable housing. The bonds will finance the construction and preservation of affordable rental and ownership housing.

The [Colony Park Sustainable Community Initiative](#) is a community planning process to design a Master Plan for 300-acres of publicly-owned land to include housing, transportation, employment, services and recreation. The Housing Authority of the City of Austin received a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to develop a [Rosewood Choice Neighborhoods](#) Plan. This plan to redevelop the Rosewood Courts public housing complex will preserve deeply affordable units but could also include housing that is affordable to a mix of incomes.

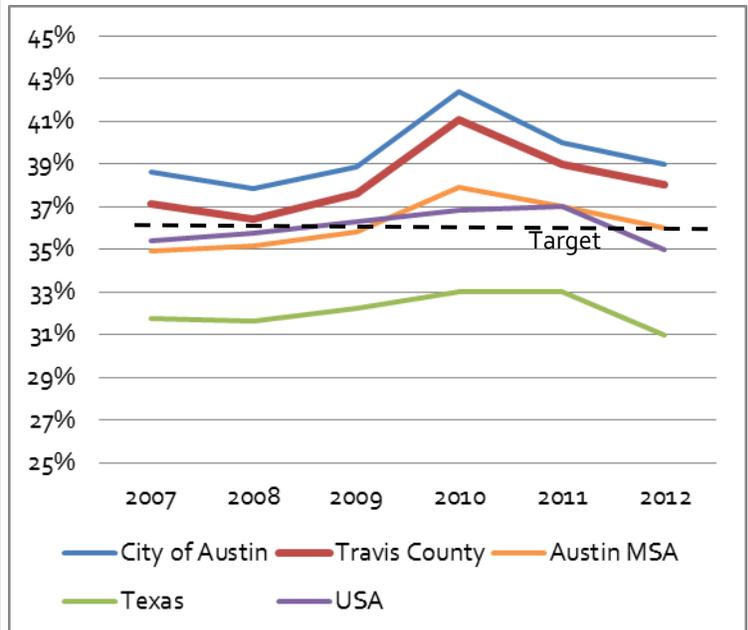
The City of Austin is working with a citizens' commission to rewrite its complex land development code. [CodeNEXT](#) is expected to increase housing options and affordability.



**Goal:** reduce percent of households that are cost-burdened

**Target:** 36% by 2017

Percent of Households that are Cost-Burdened



Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates



Nearly half (49%) of all renter households are housing cost-burdened. [Capitol Market Research](#) predicts that, even with new and planned rental construction, rental rates will continue to increase for the first half of 2014.

# 23.3 daily vehicle miles per capita in Travis County



**Goal:** reduce vehicle miles traveled per capita  
**Target:** 21 miles per day by 2017

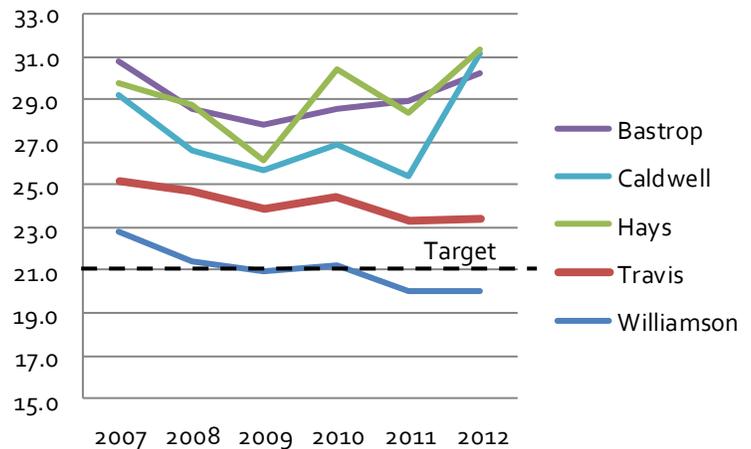
Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita held steady in 2012, but the overall trend over the past five years has been moving in the right direction. Surrounding counties with the highest VMT rates are those whose residents must travel the longest distances to core work centers. One consequence of a high VMT per capita is congestion. The [INRIX Annual Traffic Scorecard](#) rates Austin as the fourth worst city for traffic in America.

Some strategies to reduce VMT include regional planning that links housing and jobs, increasing public transit options to reduce reliance on automobiles, and promoting alternatives such as car pooling and telecommuting.

The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) is now working with stakeholders to update the regional transportation plan. The existing [CAMPO 2035 Plan](#) supports CAN goals to reduce VMT by targeting transportation investments to support Activity Centers throughout the region that link housing and employment. The [CAMPO 2040 Plan](#) will be completed in 2015.

[Project Connect](#) is a partnership between the City of Austin, Capital Metro, Lone Star Rail, CAMPO, and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority that promotes cross-jurisdictional cooperation toward regional high-capacity transit that is linked to local commuter and urban transit systems. Project Connect has developed locally-preferred alternatives for the North Corridor, the area including Georgetown, Round Rock, Hutto, Pflugerville, and Central Austin. Project leaders are working to develop plans for the Central Corridor. The work group has prioritized an alignment connecting the ACC Highland Campus and East Riverside area for the first investment in high capacity transit. The final details will be determined by summer 2014 in time for policy makers to consider placing a bond initiative for urban rail on the ballot in November 2014.

Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled per Capital



Source: Texas Department of Transportation



Suburbanization and urban sprawl create congestion and traffic challenges. Those without transportation options or with long commutes have difficulty accessing jobs, training and needed services.

Interstate 35 is one of the most congested roadways in Texas. [Mobility 35](#) is a Texas Department of Transportation effort to work with stakeholders to identify short- to mid-term strategies that will manage traffic flow along IH35 between Georgetown and San Marcos.

The [Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority](#) is working with stakeholders to manage traffic and provide tolled options that also benefit transit in Travis and Williamson Counties. The [SH71 Express Project](#) and the [Mopac Improvement Project](#) are two roadways they are currently addressing.

People with no transportation options are at risk when they cannot access needed services. The Regional Transit Coordinating Committee has completed a new [Coordinated Plan for Public Transit and Health and Human Services](#).

# 1,987 people are homeless in Travis County



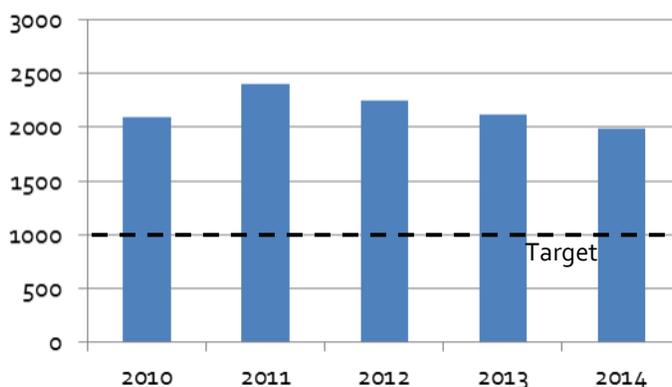
**Goal:** end homelessness

**Target:** 1,000 people identified in the annual Point-in-Time Count by 2017

The number of people without permanent shelter who are identified in the annual Point-in-Time count has declined over the past four years. Even though the number of people identified as homeless has declined, there is a strong demand for homeless services. The [Ending Community Homelessness Coalition](#) (ECHO) reports that over 14,000 people received homeless services in 2013 and that emergency shelters consistently serve between 1,886 and 2,817 men, women, and children every week. One of every five people who received homeless services in 2013 was a child.

ECHO coordinates the application for Austin/Travis County homeless services funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and manages the process for awarding \$5.4 million in HUD funding to agencies that provide homeless services. ECHO also leads community planning efforts to promote a collaborative approach to ending homelessness. In addition to collaborating with housing and homeless service providers, ECHO partners with healthcare providers, behavioral healthcare providers, the criminal justice system and groups like the Reentry Roundtable. This coordinated approach is important to ensure that each person receives the services best suited to their needs.

Austin-Travis County Annual Point-in-Time Count



Source: Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO)

A few initiatives that have the potential to significantly impact homelessness in our community include:

- *Coordinated Assessment:* ECHO is working with stakeholders to develop a client-centered approach in which non-profits across the community will use the same assessment tool to determine the right intervention to establish and maintain stable housing. A shared database will allow agencies to make effective referrals so that people can access the help they need.
- *Rapid Rehousing:* Some people who fall into homelessness can quickly regain housing stability with short-term financial and case management support.
- *Permanent Supportive Housing:* people with more chronic issues can benefit from a “housing first” approach that provides permanent supportive housing—with no conditions—and ongoing support for health, mental health and substance abuse issues.

In November 2013, Austin voters approved the issuance of \$65 million in general obligation bonds for affordable housing. This bond funding will help leverage other funding streams to allow Austin to further develop its continuum of affordable housing.



The majority of people identified as homeless in our community are men. Blacks and veterans are over-represented among people who are homeless. A substantial number suffer with a severe mental illness and chronic substance abuse.

# WE ARE HEALTHY

## 21% of those under age 65 in Travis County have no health insurance

The State of Texas has a higher rate of people with no health insurance than any other state in the nation. Even though local rates have improved since 2008, the percentage of those with no health insurance remains high. [Get Texas Covered](#), an initiative of the Texas Hospital Association, estimates that uncompensated care costs the average Texan \$1,800 a year in higher health insurance premiums.

The [Affordable Care Act \(ACA\)](#) will expand health insurance coverage to more people. The Act requires individuals to have insurance or pay a penalty. [2-1-1 Health Connect](#) is a partnership between Central Health and the United Way for Greater Austin to connect people who call 2-1-1 with health insurance enrollment assistance.

The Texas Legislature's decision to not expand Medicaid to all Texans living below the poverty threshold has left a "coverage gap" for people who earn too little to qualify for insurance subsidies on the Marketplace but who still do not qualify for public health insurance. Most Texans at the poverty level and those who are unauthorized residents are left to rely on the local safety net for healthcare services. [Central Health](#) provides access to healthcare for uninsured and under-served residents. The Medical Assistance Program (MAP) connects people who do not qualify for other health insurance options with healthcare services, available on a sliding scale fee. Central Health reports that enrollment in MAP has increased 164% since 2005.

Central Health, the University of Texas at Austin and Seton Healthcare Family are partners in the development of a new medical school and teaching hospital that will greatly expand access to healthcare for uninsured residents and training for future healthcare professionals. Two new clinics, the [Southeast Health & Wellness Center](#), expected to open later this year, and the newly opened Dove Springs Clinic expand access to physical and behavioral health services in southeastern Travis County.

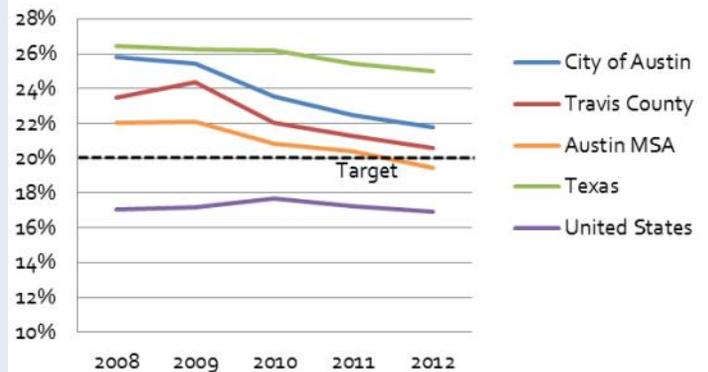
Central Health is the lead agency for a six county [Regional Healthcare Partnership Plan](#), a 5-year project that is part of a state-wide 1115 Medicaid Waiver. The Plan seeks to transform the delivery system to provide higher quality healthcare at a lower cost. Every \$1.00 of local funds is being matched by \$1.40 of federal funds. In the second year of the project, all regional partners together received \$129 million in federal dollars to fund these efforts.



**Goal:** reduce percent of people under age 65 who are uninsured

**Target:** 20% by 2017

People under Age 65 With No Health Insurance



Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates



People between the ages of 18 and 64 are least likely to have health insurance. Many low-income children qualify for health coverage through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and adults over 65 have access to Medicare.

People who are undocumented residents do not qualify for insurance on the Marketplace or for Medicaid or Medicare.

## 21% of adults in Travis County report poor mental health

Twenty-one percent of Travis County residents reported poor mental health in 2012, which represents an increase from the previous year. The local rate is now roughly equal to the state and national rates. Emotional problems can impair a person's thinking, feelings, and behavior, and, over time, can become increasingly serious and disabling.

Days that include stress, depression and problems with emotions are considered "poor mental health days" in the [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#) (BRFSS) survey, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control. The BRFSS collects data through phone interviews. In 2011 the surveying process was expanded to include people with cell phones as well as people with landlines. As a result, the 2011 and 2012 data are not comparable to previous years' data.

There has been a movement to integrate health and behavioral health care. The [Affordable Care Act](#) (ACA) requires that health insurance plans cover mental health and substance use disorder services. Locally, the [Austin/Travis County Community Health Improvement Plan](#) designated access to primary health and behavioral health care one of its four "priority areas." Austin Travis County Integral Care has worked with Central Health to integrate the provision of both health and behavioral health services in clinics.

Central Health's [Regional Healthcare Partnership Plan](#) includes several 1115 waiver projects to improve behavioral health services. [Austin Travis County Integral Care](#) will operate eleven of these initiatives that include mobile crisis intervention, hospital and jail diversion, chronic disease prevention, expanding prescriber capacity, and telemedicine. Integral Care also offers Mental Health First Aid training to law enforcement, health care providers, school personnel, landlords and others in the community so they can respond appropriately to people experiencing a mental health crisis.

A new [Seton Psychiatric Emergency Department](#) is anticipated to open this year, so that people experiencing a psychiatric emergency can be treated in the most appropriate setting.

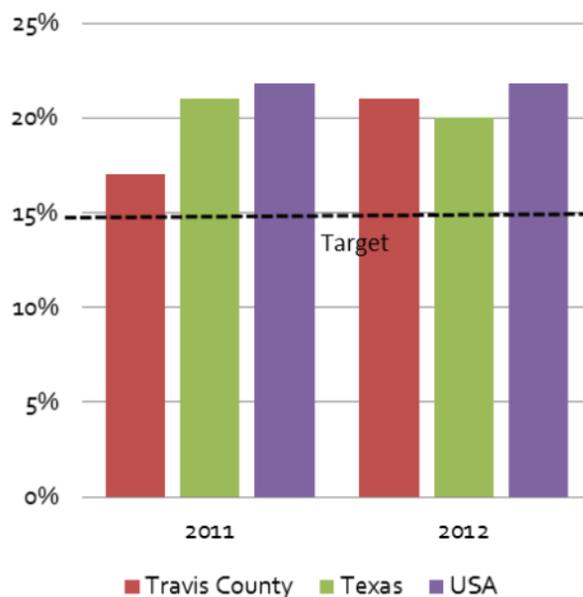
Health and mental health professionals, judges, law enforcement and housing providers are working together through a [Mental Health Planning Grant](#), funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, to develop a community-wide strategic plan to address the needs of people diagnosed with severe and persistent mental disorders and co-occurring substance use disorders who are incarcerated in the Travis County jail.



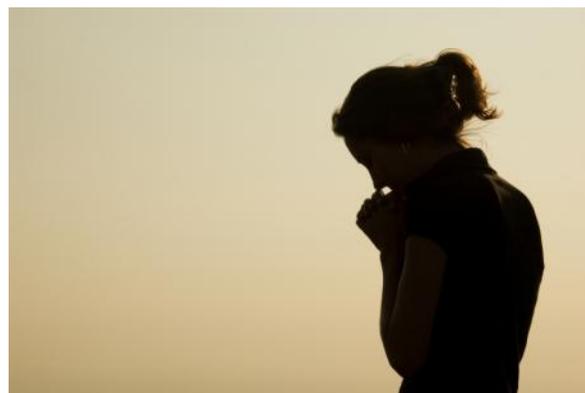
**Goal:** reduce percent of people reporting poor mental health

**Target:** 15% by 2017

Adults Who Report Poor Mental Health



Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System



People earning less than \$25,000 per year were more likely to report poor mental health to the BRFSS surveyors than those earning \$75,000 or more.

# 24% of adults in Travis County are obese

The rate of obesity in Travis County increased from 2011 to 2012, but was still lower than the obesity rates for the state and the nation. The [Austin/Travis County Health & Human Services Department](#) reports that about two-thirds of Travis County adults and one-fifth of children are overweight or obese. The Department estimates that chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer, account for about 3 of every 4 deaths. Travis County residents pay an extra \$751 each year through taxes and insurance premiums, in order to cover healthcare costs related to preventable disease.

The #1 Priority in the [Austin/Travis County Community Health Improvement Plan](#) is to reduce chronic disease by reducing obesity. The report calls on community partners to reduce obesity by working together to promote physical activity, improve access and quality of programs that promote physical activity among young people, and enhance the built environment to create more opportunities for physical activity.

Central Health is the lead agency for a six-county [Regional Healthcare Partnership Plan](#) that describes how the region will transform healthcare delivery as part of a state-wide 1115 Waiver. The Plan includes several initiatives to address obesity, including a family and child obesity initiative by Dell Children's Medical Center.

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation is funding two neighborhood efforts to engage the community in fighting obesity. [Go Austin! Vamos Austin!](#) Dove Springs and [Go Austin! Vamos Austin!](#) 78745 are initiatives led by community members in partnership with community organizations.

[Children's Optimal Health](#) has worked with Austin ISD, Manor ISD and Del Valle ISD to hold childhood obesity summits at which they shared maps and data and raised awareness about childhood obesity in those communities.

The [Austin Chronic Disease Prevention and Control](#) program works to promote healthier lifestyles and reduce health disparities. The [Healthy Places, Healthy People](#) website shares practical information to empower businesses, non-profits, schools and everyday people to create lasting changes.

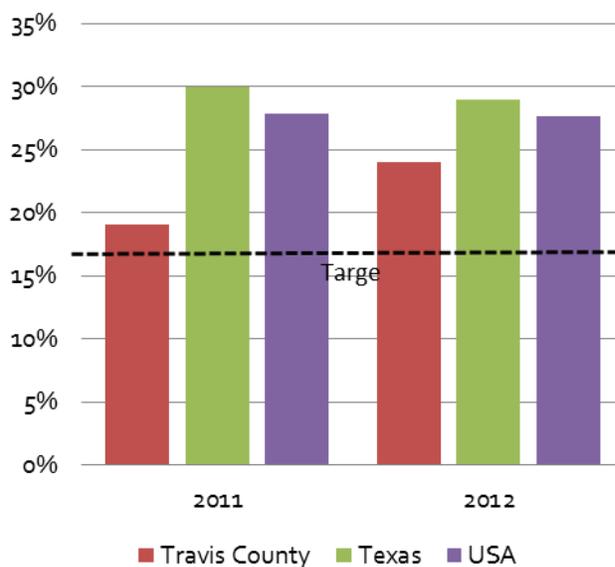
The [Mayor's Health and Fitness Council](#) promotes healthy workplaces by certifying employers who comprehensively address tobacco-free living, physical activity, and nutrition.



**Goal:** reduce percent who are obese

**Target:** 17% by 2020

Percent of Adults Who are Obese



Source: Texas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System



Obesity rates are disproportionately high among low-income people who may not have access to healthy food or to safe, walkable neighborhoods and recreational opportunities. People with lower educational levels, Blacks, Hispanics and people with disabilities also have higher rates of obesity.

# 15% of adults in Travis County are smokers

The percent of Travis County residents who smoke decreased slightly in 2012 and was lower than the state and the nation. Tobacco is the #1 cause of preventable death and disability in our community, according to the [Austin/Travis County Health Department](#), which says an average of 11 people die every week in Travis County due to tobacco use.

Under the [Affordable Care Act](#) healthcare law, insurers can charge tobacco users up to 50% more than non-smokers for health policies. The Act also allows employers and insurance providers to offer premium discounts and other incentives to participate in wellness programs, including smoking cessation.

The Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department received a \$7.5 million [Communities Putting Prevention to Work](#) grant in 2010 to address tobacco use. The effort's [Live Tobacco Free](#) media campaign helped spread the message that tobacco causes more deaths than AIDS, crack, heroin, cocaine, alcohol, car accidents, fire, suicide, and murder—combined; and let people know of free cessation workshops and treatment. Grant efforts achieved state level impact through collaborating with the Texas State Comptroller to redesign the required signage at all tobacco point of sale locations throughout the state. The campaign was also successful in convincing many workplaces, hospitals, universities, service providers and apartment complexes to go tobacco-free. The website includes an [interactive map](#) of tobacco-free locations as well as tips and resources for going tobacco-free.

CAN is working with other service providers to create a new Travis County Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition. The Coalition will work with Travis County school districts to share information about the health effects of substance abuse and to encourage prevention.

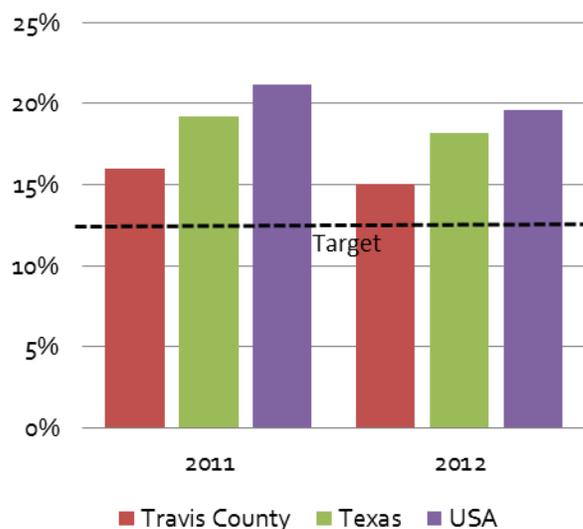
The [Mayor's Health and Fitness Council](#) is focused on providing community connections, building alliances and supporting the implementation of best practices and programs that truly affect positive change to healthy lifestyles. Among other activities, the Fitness Council promotes healthy workplaces by certifying employers that have health initiatives to comprehensively address tobacco-free living, physical activity, and nutrition.



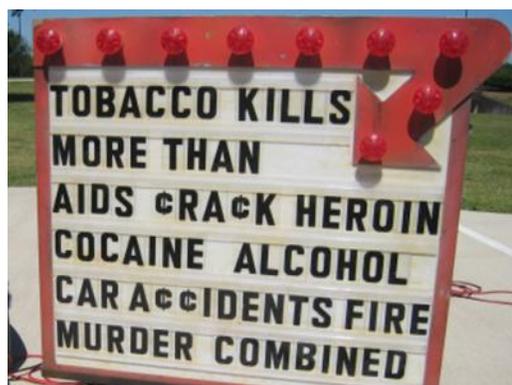
**Goal:** reduce percent who smoke

**Target:** 12% by 2020

Percent of Adults Who Smoke



Source: Texas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System



Smoking is most prevalent among the young. Eighteen percent of people between the ages of 18 and 29 were smokers in 2012. Men are more likely to smoke than women.

# Austin area is in attainment of national air quality standards



**Goal:** attainment

**Target:** continue to be in attainment through 2017

The Austin area is in attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets standards for allowable levels of six air pollutants. Locally, ozone is the only pollutant that frequently approaches levels the EPA deems unhealthy. While air ozone levels have been steadily improving in the Austin area, the EPA is considering reductions in the allowable level of ozone. If proposed standards are approved, Austin will no longer be in attainment and will face federal sanctions.

Poor air quality causes irritation to the throat and lungs, results in diminished lung capacity, and aggravates asthma and other respiratory problems. These health issues result in increased health care costs, lost time from work, and increased school absences.

The [Clean Air Coalition](#) is a collaboration of local governments in our five-county region working together to achieve clean air in Central Texas. In 2012, the Clean Air Coalition entered into an Ozone Action partnership with the EPA. Ozone Action provides a framework to help regions improve air quality and also allows for increased involvement and support from the EPA.

[Commute Solutions](#), a program of the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, strives to educate the public and employers on the health, environmental and economic benefits of alternative transportation modes and commuter practices. Using alternative modes of transportation is the single greatest action an individual can take to reduce their carbon footprint.

The Office of Sustainability's [Climate Program](#) works to make Austin the leading city in the nation in the fight against climate change. In recognition of these efforts, the City of Austin received a national 2013 Climate Leadership Award from the EPA. This award recognizes the City of Austin's achievements in reducing its carbon footprint and in providing tools for citizens to reduce their own impact on the environment. The [Sustainability Action Agenda Progress Report](#) highlights progress our community has made on a number of fronts to protect sustainability.

Attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards, 2013	
Carbon Monoxide	Attainment
Lead	Attainment
Nitrogen Dioxide	Attainment
Ozone	Attainment
Particle Pollution	Attainment
Sulfur Dioxide	Attainment

Source: Capital Area Council of Governments



The elderly, children, pregnant women and people with asthma and other respiratory problems suffer the most from poor air quality.

# WE ACHIEVE OUR FULL POTENTIAL

## 53% of children enter kindergarten school ready

Fifty-three percent of Central Texas kindergarteners were “school ready” according to *Ready, Set, K!*, a measure developed by the [E<sup>3</sup>Alliance](#) with the help of experts from across the region. A sample of students from area school districts were assessed during the first six to nine weeks of kindergarten across four domains of child development: social/emotional, language and communication, early literacy, and mathematics.

Children are born ready to learn. What takes place between birth and kindergarten greatly determines whether a child will enter school ready for success. Early gaps in competencies can lead to a wide range of problems that are significantly more difficult, as well as more expensive, to address later on.

United Way for Greater Austin, the City of Austin, Travis County, Austin ISD, and other stakeholders have worked together to create a [2012-2015 School Readiness Action Plan](#) for Austin/Travis County with specific goals, strategies and progress measures for improvement. Having a clear plan has created greater funding and focus on early education and care. Some accomplishments of the program include \$500,000 in new Travis County funding for early childhood education, a National League of Cities Award, the creation of a Business Alliance for Early Childhood, and more Head Start slots for 3-year olds.

The collaboration is now working on a School Readiness Action Plan 2015-2018 to be published in May 2015. The effort seeks to make early childhood one of our community’s top civic priorities and to increase local investments in early childhood programming.

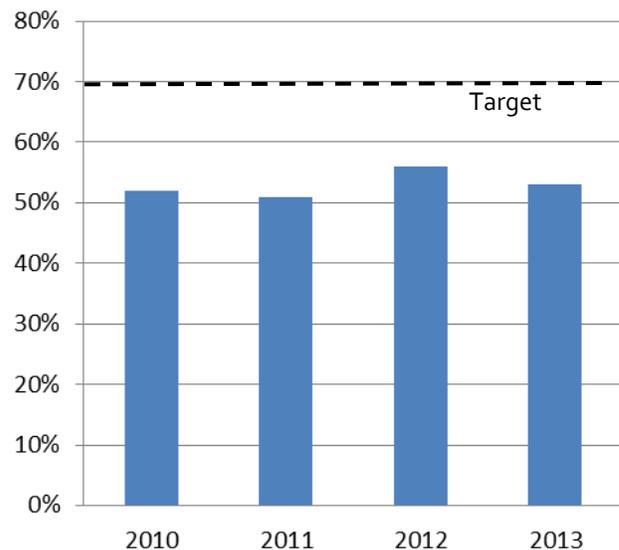
One strategy that is encouraged is to provide full-day pre-k to all qualified four-year olds so they can make a smooth transition to kindergarten. The State of Texas funds half day pre-k for students who have limited English proficiency, are economically disadvantaged, have an active duty military parent, or are homeless. [Austin ISD](#) goes beyond the state requirements to offer a full-day program to qualified children. In addition, children who do not qualify can pay monthly tuition to attend the pre-k program.



**Goal:** increase percent of children who enter kindergarten school ready

**Target:** 70% by 2015

Percent of Central Texas Children Who Enter Kindergarten School Ready



Source: E<sup>3</sup> Alliance



Students who qualified for free or reduced-price school lunches and students of all income levels who did not participate in pre-kindergarten programs were more likely to enter kindergarten already behind their peers.

# 89% of Central Texas students graduate from high school in four years



**Goal:** increase percent who graduate from high school in four years

**Target:** 95% for the Class of 2015

Graduation rates have steadily increased in Central Texas and across the state. Eighty-nine percent of students in the Class of 2012 in Central Texas graduated in four years. Low-income students' graduation rates are lower than their non low-income peers. Male students of color, who are also low-income, have the lowest graduation rates. The [E<sup>3</sup> Alliance](#) estimates that, over the course of their lives, dropouts from the Class of 2012 will cost the community \$410 million in lost income, reduced tax revenue, and increased social expenditures.

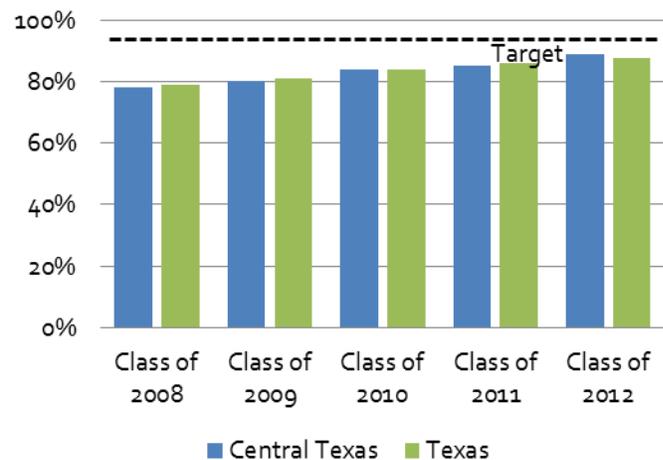
One important strategy for improving high school graduation rates is to eliminate achievement gaps in middle schools. [RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas](#) is an E<sup>3</sup> Alliance effort to transform middle school teaching and learning and implement targeted interventions for students who fall behind. Having completed the second year of implementation, demonstration schools in six Central Texas school districts are outperforming comparison schools.

Another strategy for increasing graduation rates is to increase school attendance rates. [Missing School Matters](#) is an initiative of the E<sup>3</sup> Alliance and other local partners to increase school attendance at all grade levels. Absences are highly correlated to performance. Ninth graders who are retained a grade are ten times more likely to drop out than their peers.

The [Austin Chamber of Commerce Education Progress Reports](#) track and assesses the K-12 performance of 13 area school districts. For each district, a team of business volunteers and school district staff track performance trends on a common set of metrics. The goal is to facilitate discussions about local efforts to improve each school district. The Austin Chamber annually recognizes school districts and area high schools that have made the most progress in achievement and in increasing high school graduation rates and direct to college enrollment rates.

The Joint Subcommittees of the Austin City Council, AISD Board of Trustees, and Travis County Commissioners Court have created a Mentoring Advisory Council to promote student mentoring. The Joint Subcommittees' School and Family Work Group has made recommendations to support neighborhood schools by improving family stability. Recommendations include promoting family-friendly housing through CodeNEXT, creating rental assistance programs, and develop long-range affordable housing plans.

Four Year High School Graduation Rates



Source: E<sup>3</sup> Alliance



[E<sup>3</sup> Alliance](#) reports discrepancies in graduation rates by socio-economic status. For the Class of 2010, 92% of non low-income students graduated within four years while only 73% of low-income students graduated. Graduation rates were the lowest for low-income Black males (66%) and low-income Hispanic males (68%).

# 30% of high school graduates earn a post-secondary credential within 6 years



**Goal:** increase college success

**Target:** To be determined

An analysis of Texas Education Research Center data by the [E<sup>3</sup>Alliance](#) found that 30% of Central Texas high school graduates in the Class of 2007 earned a degree or certificate at a Texas college or university within 6 years of graduating from high school. Ninety percent of those students earned a bachelor's degree. The data do not include the estimated 7% of Central Texas students who attend college out of state.

Access to a good job requires training beyond high school. The U.S. Department of Labor, as cited in the [2012 State of the Workforce](#) report for the Austin MSA, estimates that 85% of high-demand jobs require education beyond a high school diploma.

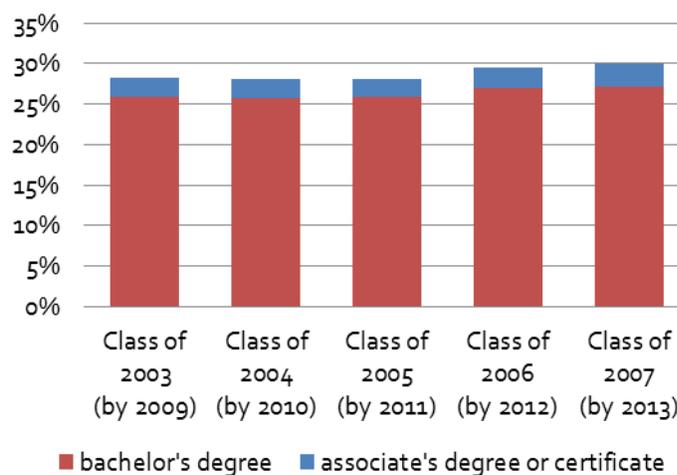
The Austin Chamber of Commerce [Plan for 2015](#) includes 15 school districts and 10 institutions of higher education. The goal of the effort is to raise to 70% the share of local graduates who enroll in college directly after high school and to improve by 50% the number of students who complete college and earn a certificate or degree. Through their [Financial Aid Saturday](#) program, Chamber volunteers have helped 2,500 families file Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms—one of the first hurdles to applying for college.

The University of Texas at Austin, Austin Community College, Texas State University, Austin ISD, and other statewide partners have formed the [Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color](#) to coordinate services and programs to help underrepresented male students experience college success. The University of Texas at Austin also has an [African-American Male Research Initiative](#) that works to increase academic success among Central Texas students in middle school through post-secondary education and employment.

The [Austin College Access Network](#) (ACAN), facilitated by the E<sup>3</sup>Alliance, is a collaborative of community-based organizations dedicated to improving first generation college participation and success. ACAN has tripled the number of students receiving direct support services in the last six years to over 6,900 low income and first generation college students.

CAN is convening a College Persistence and Success Work Group, that includes ACAN members, ACC, UT Austin, Texas State University, Houston Tillotson University, St. Edward's University and Concordia University. The group is sharing information, research and best practices and is exploring ways in which the community can better prepare and support students to improve college success.

Percent of Central Texas High School Graduates Who Earn a Post-Secondary Credential Within 6 Years



Source: E<sup>3</sup> Alliance



While 38% of students who are not low-income earned a degree or certificate, only 12% of low-income high school graduates in the Class of 2007 earned a post-secondary credential within six years.

## 4.6% of Travis County workers are unemployed

Unemployment rates continued a downward trend after hitting a ten-year high in 2010. Travis County's monthly unemployment rate is lower than both the state and nation. According to [Workforce Solution's State of the Workforce Report](#), Central Texas has seen significant growth in low-wage jobs. Even though the employment picture has improved, household income, as discussed on page 4 of this document, has not.

The [Austin Opportunity Youth Collaborative](#) is a new effort to connect youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not in school or employed, to education and workforce opportunities. [Workforce Solutions—Capital Area](#) serves as the backbone organization for the effort. Other partners include youth-serving organizations and Austin Community College (ACC).

[Accelerating Connections to Employment \(ACE\)](#) is part of a multi-state, grant-funded consortium to help low-income, lower-skilled job seekers earn the skills and credentials to compete for high-demand jobs. Workforce Solutions partners with ACC to provide participants with basic skills, job readiness training, support services, and internship and long-term career navigation.

[ACC Transitions](#) is a free, 12-week college prep program at Austin Community College. Transitions provides intense preparation to achieve college-level math, writing and reading proficiency. Students receive help preparing for college entrance exams as well as career and college counseling.

ACC's transformation of the former [Highland Mall](#) into a state-of-the-art center for innovative learning and training will lead to expanded opportunities, with the first phase opening in the fall of 2014.

The [Austin Chamber of Commerce Opportunity 3.0](#) economic development plan for Austin calls for greater diversification of the local workforce and strengthened relationships between employers and post-secondary schools to produce the high-skill, high-wage workers employers demand. The Greater Austin Asian Chamber, the Greater Austin Black Chamber and the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber provide important connections for small businesses and play critical roles in expanding economic opportunity to diverse populations.

[Goodwill Industries of Central Texas](#) provides employment assistance for the hardest to serve—people who have disabilities, lack education, have criminal backgrounds, or are facing homelessness. Its new Excel Center will help adults earn high school diplomas.

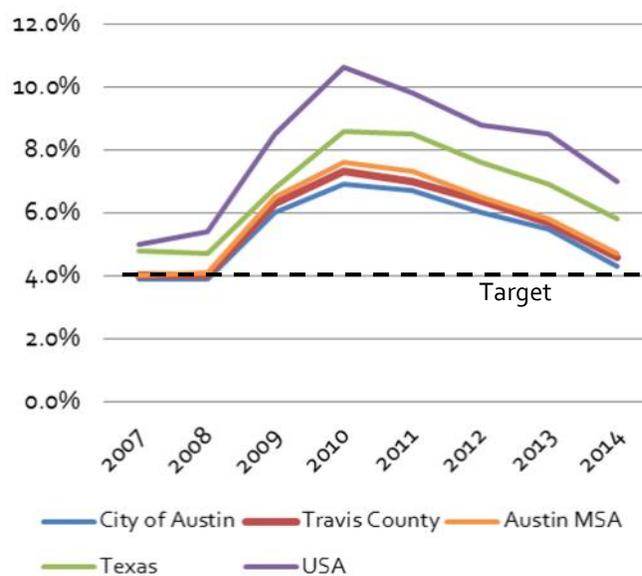


BETTER

**Goal:** reduce percent who are unemployed

**Target:** 4% by 2017

January Unemployment Rates



Source: Texas Workforce Commission



While the monthly rate is most timely, the annual unemployment rate, as reported by the American Community Survey, allows for comparisons among groups. In 2012, the annual unemployment rate, was 8.4% for Hispanics and 12.1% for Blacks. This is significantly higher than the overall rate of 7%.

The greatest disparity is for people with disabilities. In 2012, 16% of people with disabilities in Travis County were unemployed compared to 6.4% of people with no disabilities.

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD



The CAN Community Dashboard provides a snapshot of how our community is doing toward achieving our common vision. It is part of a process, diagramed at left, that has taken us on the following path over the past year:

- CAN held a Policy Forum in the fall of 2013, [Today's Choices, Tomorrow's Future](#), which considered how the suburbanization of poverty is impacting people and what policies can promote sustainable growth and a shared future of equity and opportunity.
- The report [Our Community is Changing—Are We Ready? The State of the Safety Net for the Austin Metro Area](#) considered the implications of these changing demographics on our social service safety net.
- A series of [Safety Net Forums](#) in 2014 will continue the conversation about our safety net and how it can be improved.
- The [CAN Community Council](#) 2014 forums are focused on exploring the unique challenges facing vulnerable populations and the community collaborations that exist to coordinate efforts to address them.

Following is a summary of some of the findings of CAN's work. For each of the four vision areas of the Community Dashboard, we highlight the strategies that can help us achieve the vision and the barriers and issues standing in the way of improvement. Finally, we share recommendations for action we can take to address our community's changing needs.

## Vision: We Are Safe, Just & Engaged

### Strategies to Achieve Vision

promote safe communities

- embrace diversity & expand opportunity
- engage and empower people

### What's Standing in Our Way

- A criminal record creates barriers for employment, housing and obtaining licensing, credentials, and public benefits.
- The complex criminal justice system is especially cumbersome for people who cannot afford legal services.
- Courts are centrally located and inaccessible for many with limited transportation.
- Providing culturally and linguistically proficient services is particularly challenging for small providers.
- Our community is better able to meet the needs of English and Spanish-speakers, but those who speak other languages have difficulty finding services in their language.
- There is a limited supply of multi-lingual and culturally proficient workers and translators.



## Vision: Our Basic Needs Are Met

### Strategies to Achieve Vision

crisis, safety net, and long-term care and services  
connect people to resources  
affordable housing linked to work, services, transit

### What's Standing in Our Way

- People have difficulties paying rent and utilities. When “affordable” housing is sub-standard, tenants are hesitant to report conditions for fear of losing their housing or seeing rents increase.
- The tight rental market limits housing options for renters with criminal histories, disabilities, or poor credit.
- A lack of transportation options and traffic congestion limit access to employment, higher education, and services.
- Many lack the financial literacy to build assets and avoid credit mistakes.
- While emergency food assistance is available, regular access to healthy food is challenging, especially in areas considered food deserts.



## Vision: We Are Healthy

### Strategies to Achieve Vision

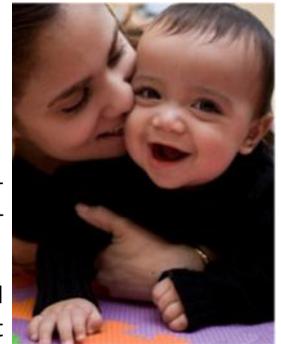
access to an integrated health care continuum

promote healthy behaviors

healthy and safe community environment

### What's Standing in Our Way

- Health services in short supply include adult dental care, mental health services, substance abuse services, long-term chronic disease management, and services for those aging in place.
- Low and uncertain reimbursement rates for Medicare and Medicaid create a disincentive for health providers to accept these patients. As more people gain access to health insurance under the Affordable Care Act, the competition for limited providers will increase.
- A lack of access to services creates difficulties, especially for those in suburban and unincorporated areas.
- No access to providers who are linguistically proficient can mean the difference between life and death, especially in the areas of health and behavioral health.
- Many individuals lack the health education to understand the consequences and costs of risky behaviors.



## Vision: We Achieve Our Full Potential

### Strategies to Achieve Vision

education and support for families

successful transitions throughout the educational continuum

align workforce and economic development

### What's Standing in Our Way

- Funding silos and program-specific requirements can limit a provider's ability to serve families in the most effective way.
- The lack of affordable child care, especially care available at flexible times, is a barrier to employment and training.
- There is a need for on-the-job training and adult basic education tied to occupational training for low-income workers who are working several jobs.
- Students and workers need information about high demand occupations and the programs that can help them develop the skills to secure those jobs.
- Immigrants and refugees face challenges having their workforce credentials recognized in the U.S. labor market.
- Small business owners often lack access to capital and the business and financial skills to help their businesses grow and succeed.





## Recommendations to address our changing needs

### *Respect me and talk to me in a way I can understand.*

**Enhance the capacity for our community to provide culturally and linguistically proficient services.** This could include professional training for interpreters and translators; recruiting our growing multi-lingual population into these professions; and establishing a centralized hub for agencies, business, and non-profits to find trained interpreters and translators for various languages.

Ensure that **community leadership and the professional workforce mirror populations served.**

### *Provide services where I am.*

**Provide transportation-accessible, co-located services in strategic locations throughout the region and in outlying areas.** Also, use technology in new ways to provide services where clients live.

### *Consider my whole family.*

**Take a whole family, wraparound approach to service delivery.** Sometimes, there missed opportunities to address inter-generational issues within families. Enhanced collaboration, resource-sharing, and flexible funding will allow providers to holistically serve individuals and families.

### *Create an accessible community where housing, jobs and services are linked.*

Policymakers, service providers, and consumers must **consider housing and transportation together.** Access to transportation, jobs, goods, and services should be considered when making housing choices, locating services, or setting policy. Greater integration and coordination of transportation resources among providers can lead to improved service and more efficient use of resources.

### *Work together.*

**Build our community's data-sharing capacity** in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services.

**Approach service delivery regionally and provide flexible funding,** across jurisdictional boundaries and disciplines, to achieve the most efficient use of public resources.

**Provide coordinated, community-based outreach** to new and under-served residents to connect them to resources, and maximize enrollment in public assistance programs. Help people understand the entry points to the range of services that provide a pathway to self-sufficiency.

**Collaboration among funding entities** to maximize resources, leverage mutual efforts and create bigger impact in the community. Funders can play an important role in improving the system by collaborating, measuring the same outcomes, and supporting community-wide planning to meet the needs of specific populations.

### *Involve me in improving my community.*

**Build on the assets of individuals and communities and empower them to achieve goals.** Help people understand and value their own strengths and skill-sets. Work with community organizations, churches, schools, and neighborhoods to build on the assets that are already in place. Engage communities in solving their own neighborhood problems. Fund capacity-building and grassroots leadership development.

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION



## can DASHBOARD

The *Community Dashboard 2014* report was published by CAN on May 7, 2014. Learn more about CAN at [www.canatx.org](http://www.canatx.org).

Citations in this report are hyperlinked in the on-line version of the report. The report and additional data and analysis are available at [www.CANcommunitydashboard.org](http://www.CANcommunitydashboard.org).

The CAN Community Dashboard 2014 report and the accompanying website were produced by:

Vanessa Sarria, Executive Director;  
Mary Dodd, Assistant Director;  
Chantel Bottoms, former Sr. Research Analyst;  
Kevin Paris, Research Assistant;  
Hannah Brown, Research Assistant; and  
Michael Danburg, Web Site Developer.

Special thanks to the CAN Board of Directors for providing oversight of this work; members of the CAN Dashboard Steering Committee for providing research, advice and input; and to the Travis County Commissioners' Court for printing the report.