

Poverty

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

Eastside Community
Connection

Episcopal Church of the
Good Shepherd

Family Eldercare

Foundation Communities

Goodwill Industries of
Central Texas

Housing Authority of the
City of Austin

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

Trinity Center

United Way Capital Area

Did you know...?

- The 2005 Federal Poverty Guideline was \$19,350 a year for a family of four. (*US Department of Health and Human Services.*)
- In 2004, 12.6 % of Travis County residents lived below this federal poverty level. However, of single parent households headed by a female, 19.4% were under the poverty level (*2004 American Community Survey.*)

- In Travis County, people with a physical disability are 1.5x 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 Center for Public Policy Priorities has 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 \$44,044 to cover basic expenses, a figure more than double the federal guideline. (*Center for Public Policy Priorities, 2001*)

- Of the 193,287 families in Travis County, 11,526 of them made less than \$10,000 (*Census Bureau, Small Area Income/Poverty Estimates, 2004.*)

- Texas ranks 1st as the state with the highest percentage of low income, uninsured children (*US Census, Current Population Survey, 2004.*)

- Education is generally seen as a path to success and people in poverty are less likely to attain an adequate level. In Travis County, 41,915 people over the age of 25 completed less than a 9th grade education (*2004 American Community Survey.*)

- The Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) has 4,000 people on the waiting list for one of their 1,928 units in public housing (*HACA, 2005.*)

- Fifty-eight percent of AISD students are considered “economically disadvantaged” and are eligible for free or reduced lunches (*AISD, 2005.*)

- Out of 91,949 children between ages 5 to 17 attending schools in AISD, there were 19,102 children living below the federal poverty line in 2003 (*American FactFinder.*)

Estimated Cost of Living Austin/San Marcos MSA	Two Parents Two Children
Housing	\$858
Food	\$418
Child Care	\$569
Medical	\$727
Transportation	\$391
Other Necessities	\$321
Tax Payments & Credits	\$386
Annual	\$44,044
Hourly	\$22
% of Federal Poverty Level	252%

School District	Austin	Eanes	Manor	Del Valle	Lago Vista	Lake Travis	Round Rock	Elgin	Hays	TOTAL
No. Enrolled	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%

Poverty

What Causes Poverty? *Experts in social policy cite numerous factors that contribute to 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 at the same time they have 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 language barriers might suffer from exclusion. People who are excluded can be deprived of resources, lack social protection and also have to fight social stigma.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT...

- Poverty USA, www.povertyusa.org
- Center for Public Policy Priorities, www.cppp.org
- Joint Center for Poverty Research, www.icpr.org
- National Center for Children in Poverty, www.nccp.org
- "Introduction to Public Policy", www2.rgu.ac.uk/publicpolicy/introduction/needf.htm

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 are providing much needed services to people in poverty such as clothing, food, rent, and utility assistance. Find donation and volunteer opportunities by visiting www.basicneeds-ctx.org.