

Travis County snapshot from
**american community
survey 2011**

2012



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Acknowledgements

This report was researched and written by the staff at the Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service, Research & Planning Division. Lead writers were Tara Carmean, Rachel Coff, and Elizabeth Vela, with the support of other division staff, Blanca Tapia Leahy (Division Director), and Sherri E. Fleming (County Executive for Travis County HHS/VS).

Questions or Comments?

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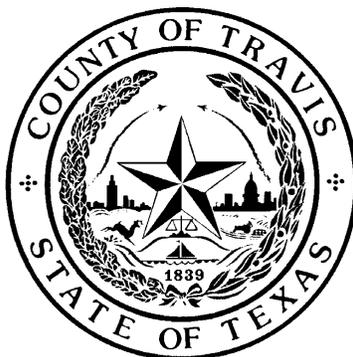


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About the Chartbook



About the American Community Survey

The American Community Survey (ACS) is one of many surveys conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. It includes questions about social, housing, and economic characteristics. While many available data sources address these subjects, the Research & Planning Division has increasingly relied on the ACS as a primary resource to describe current demographics and local conditions. Compared to the more widely-known Decennial Census, which is conducted every 10 years, the ACS is conducted on an ongoing basis and releases data annually. Thus it can provide more up-to-date information, particularly for communities undergoing rapid demographic change. (For more on the ACS, please see the Methodology section at the end of this chartbook.)

About the Chartbook

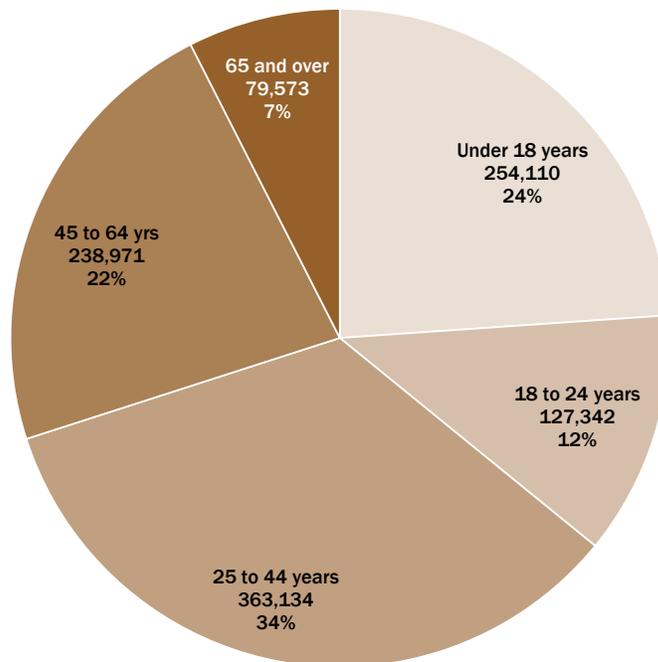
All of the information contained herein is publicly available via the U.S. Census Bureau's website. However, due to time constraints or technical limitations, it may sometimes be difficult for users to access, analyze, and interpret needed data. By selecting key variables from among the many available, analyzing the data for important relationships and trends, and presenting it in the chartbook in clear, accessible visual format, our goal is to provide current information describing the Travis County community. We hope this information is helpful in efforts to improve programs, plan community investments, and shape local policies. We encourage users to borrow and cite this material.

All of the estimates presented in this chartbook (with few exceptions, all footnoted) have been tested at a 90% confidence level for reliability. When direct comparisons are made, tests have been performed for statistical significance. (For more information on statistical testing, please see the Methodology section at the end of this chartbook.)

Social Characteristics

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Population by Age
 Total Population, Travis County, 2011
 (n = 1,063,130)



Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2012
 Source data: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B01001

Age Distribution: Age distribution in Travis County continues to be characterized by a large working age population (18-64). Working age adults comprise about 69% of the county's population. In comparison, the 18-64 year old age group comprises 62% of the Texas population and 63% of the U.S. population.

Median Age: The median age in Travis County is 32.1. This reflects a slightly younger population than that of Texas (33.7) and the United States as a whole (37.3).

Trends to Watch: Since 2006, the Travis County total population has grown at a faster rate than the state. This growth is most notable in the 65 and older age group which grew by 27%, compared to 16% state-wide and 11% nationally.

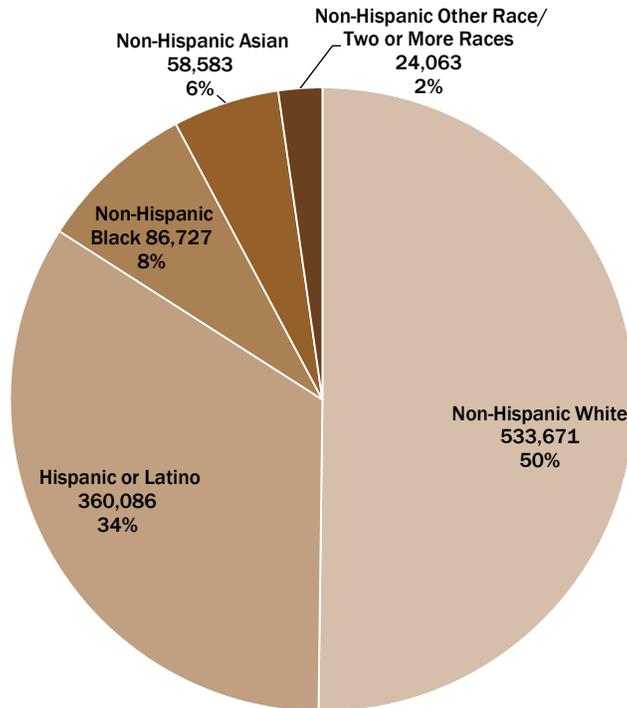
Growth in Population by Age, Travis County 2006-2011

	2006	2011	Growth	Percent Change
Under 18	228,157	254,110	25,953	11%
18 to 24	109,438	127,342	17,904	16%
25 to 44	320,156	363,134	42,978	13%
45 to 64	200,394	238,971	38,577	19%
65 and over	62,861	79,573	16,712	27%
Total	921,006	1,063,130	142,124	15%

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS Research & Planning Division, 2012. Source data: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B01001.

Race and Hispanic Origin

Population by Race and Hispanic Origin
Total Population, Travis County, 2011
 (n = 1,063,130)



Created by : Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2012
 Source data: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B03002

Race and Hispanic Origin: Half of the Travis County population identifies as Non-Hispanic White (50%) followed by Hispanic or Latino (34%), Non-Hispanic Black (8%) and Non-Hispanic Asian (6%).

Trends to Watch: In noting trends since 2006, Hispanics have increased as a proportion of Travis County's population (from 32% in 2006 to 34% in 2011), while the proportion of Non-Hispanic Whites has decreased (from 52% in 2006 to 50% in 2011).¹

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

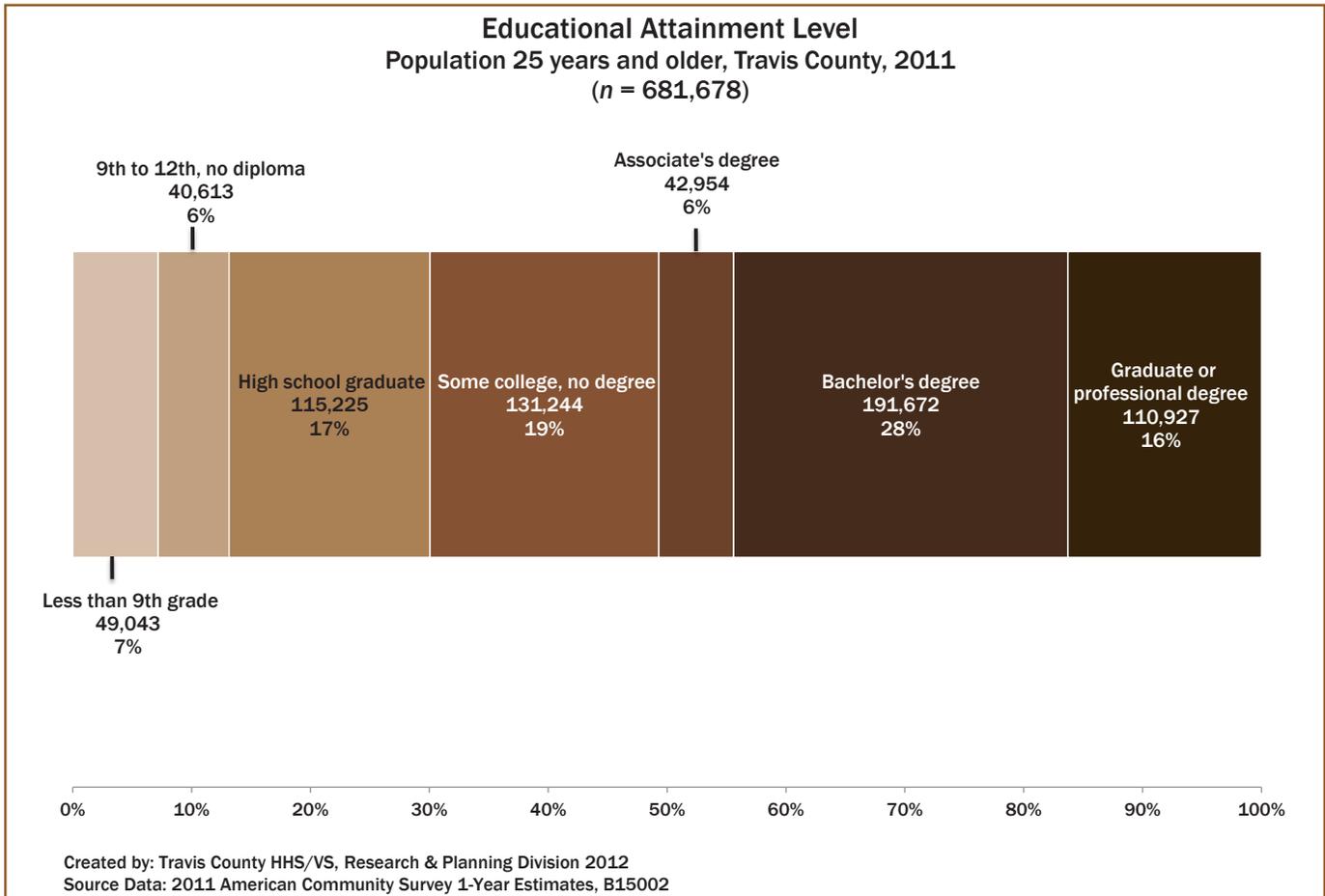
Population by Race and Hispanic Origin
Travis County, Texas & U.S., 2010

	Travis County	Texas	U.S.
Non-Hispanic White	50%	45%	63%
Hispanic or Latino	34%	38%	17%
Non-Hispanic Black	8%	11%	12%
Non-Hispanic Asian	6%	4%	5%
Non-Hispanic Other Race/Two or More Races	2%	2%	3%

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2012. Source: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B03002.

¹ A statistical test for sampling variability was not appropriate for changes over time or geographic comparison due to use of a controlled estimate. For more information on controlled estimates, please refer to www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2011.pdf

Educational Attainment



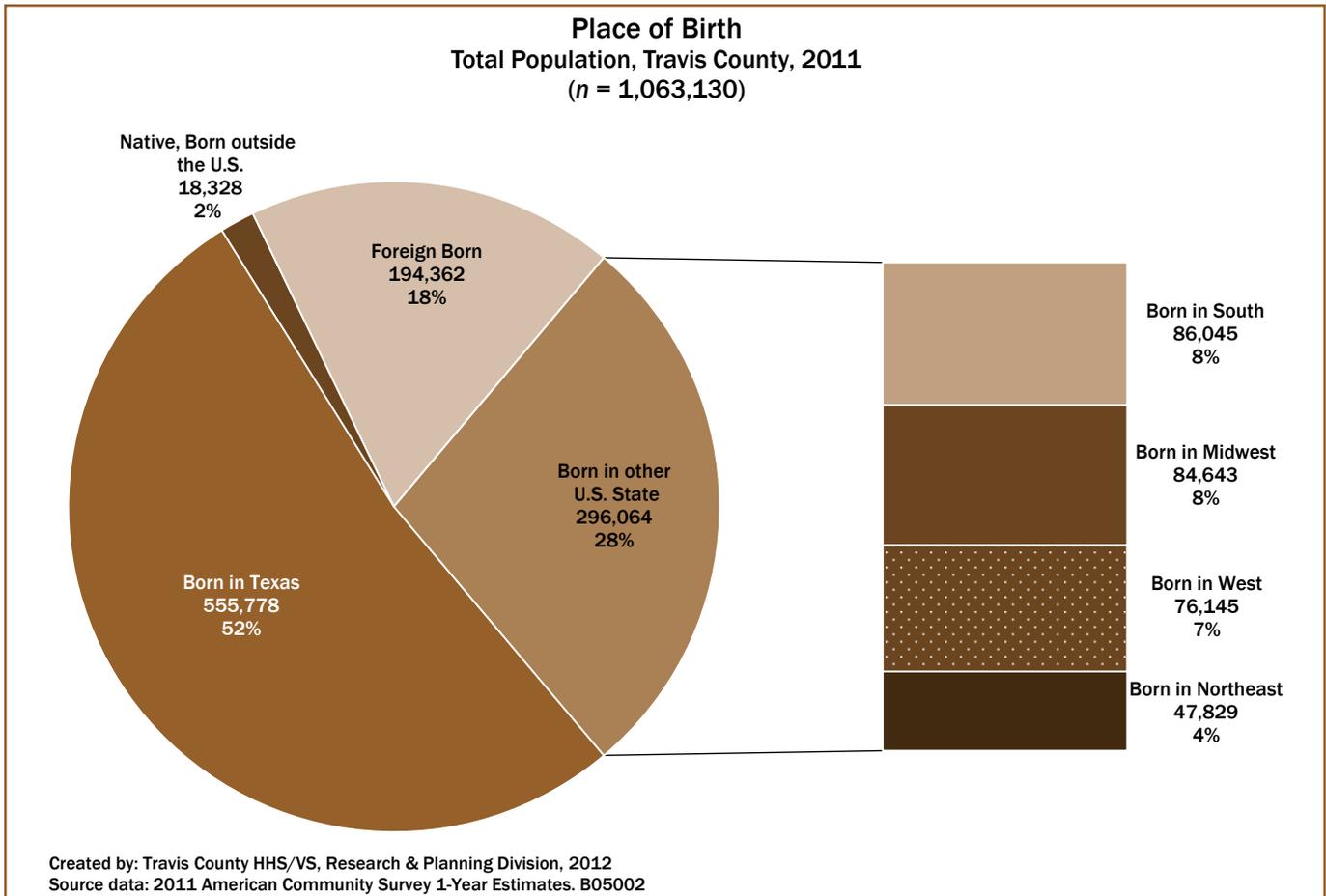
Educational Attainment Level: Travis County continues to have a highly educated population. In comparison to state figures, proportionately more Travis County residents have a college degree, and fewer lack a high school diploma.

- 44% of Travis County residents have Bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 26% of Texans and 29% of Americans.
- 13% of Travis County residents report having less than a high school diploma or equivalency compared with 19% of Texans and 14% of Americans.

College or Graduate School Enrollment:² About 13% of Travis County's population is enrolled in college or graduate school. This compares with about 9% of the Texas population and 10% of the U.S. population.

² These statistics include individuals enrolled in school which advances a person toward a college, university or professional school (law or medicine) degree. They do not include people enrolled in vocational, technical, or business school. (American Community Survey/ Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, p. 115)

Place of Birth



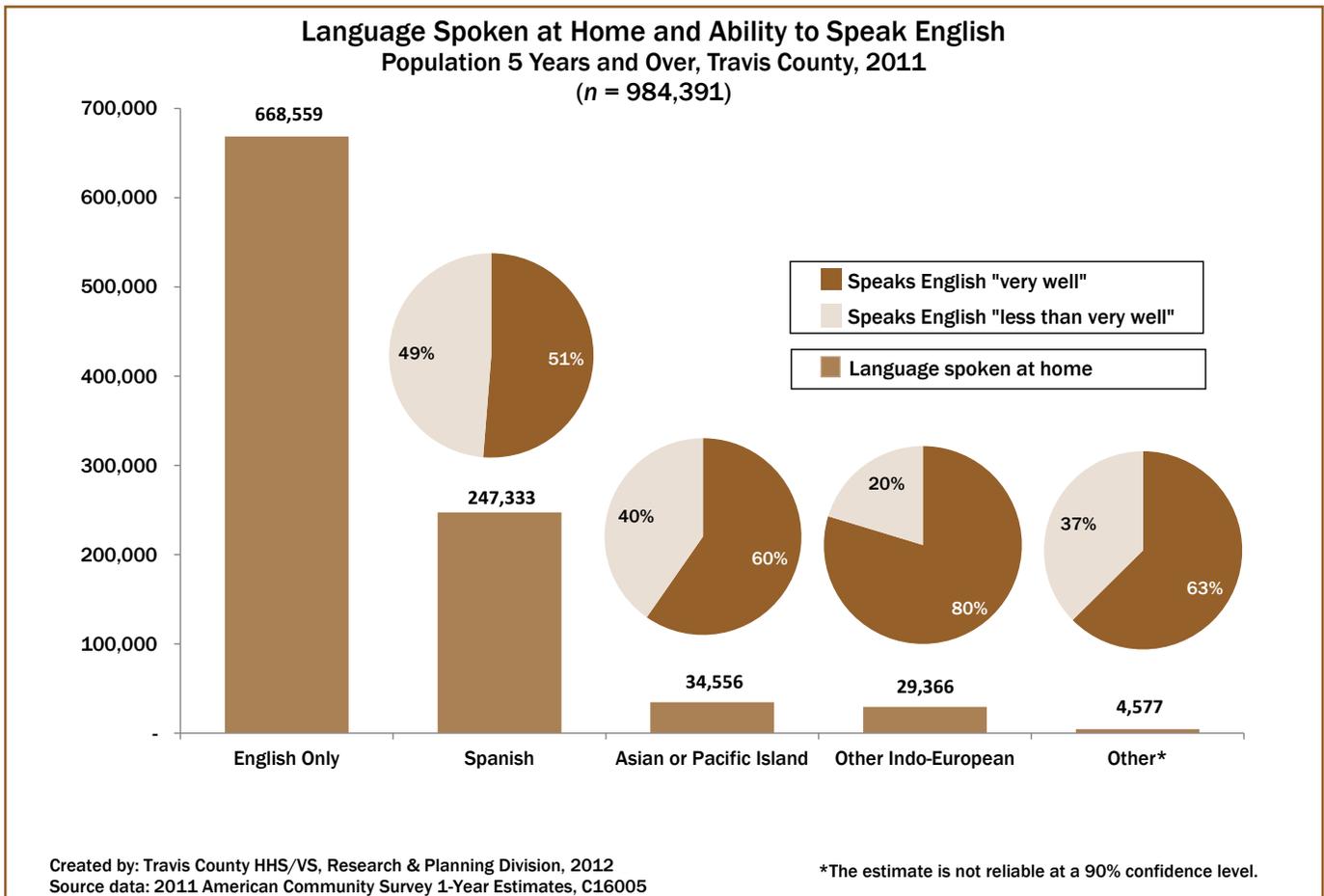
Place of Birth for the Travis County Population: About half of Travis County residents (52%) were born in Texas, roughly one-quarter (28%) were born in another state and about 18% of residents are foreign born.

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

- *Less likely to have been born in their current state of residence.* 52% of Travis County residents were born in their state of residence compared with 61% of Texans and 59% of Americans. However, the proportion of Travis County residents born in Texas is relatively similar to most other major metropolitan counties in the state (55% of Dallas County residents, 54% of Harris County residents and 57% of Tarrant County residents were born in Texas).³
- *More likely to be foreign born.* 18% of Travis County residents are foreign born compared with 16% of Texans and 13% of Americans. However, Travis County has a proportionately smaller foreign born population than both Dallas and Harris Counties where immigrants comprise roughly one-quarter of the population.⁴

³ A statistical test for sampling variability was not appropriate for geographic comparison due to use of a controlled estimate. For more information on controlled estimates, please refer to www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2011.pdf

⁴ Ibid.



Languages Spoken at Home: Almost one-third of the Travis County population (32% or 315,832 residents) speaks a language other than English at home. In comparison, 21% of U.S. residents and 35% of Texans speak a language other than English at home.

Ability to Speak English: 55% of Travis County residents who speak a language other than English at home also speak the English language "very well;" about 45% speak English "less than very well."

Linguistic Isolation: 8% of all Travis County households (30,829 households) are linguistically isolated.⁵ 82% of linguistically isolated households speak Spanish (25,375 households) and 13% speak Asian and Pacific languages (4,032).⁶

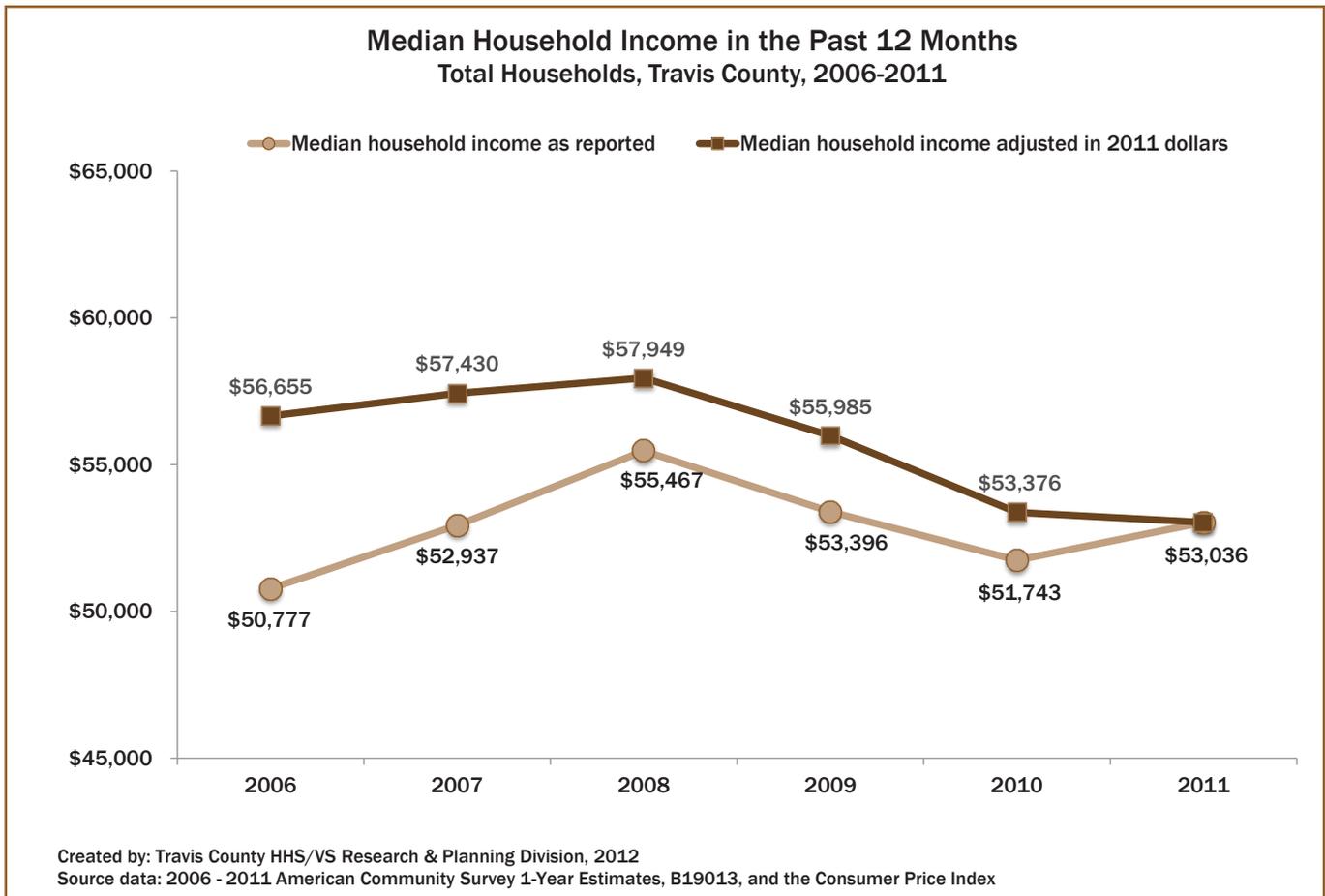
5 A linguistically isolated household is one in which no member 14 years old and over (1) speaks only English or (2) speaks a non-English language and speaks English "very well." In other words, all members 14 years old and over have at least some difficulty with the English language. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, p. 46). Please note that the American Community Survey did not use the phrase "Linguistic Isolation" in the 2011 1-year estimates. It is included here because the authors believe it is helpful terminology for the purposes of this publication and its intended uses in social services planning.

6 This estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence interval.

Economic Characteristics

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Median Household Income



Median Household Income: Reported median income has fallen by 4% from the 2008 level. Once adjusted for inflation⁷ (indicated by the top line on the chart above), the actual value of Travis County's median household income was almost \$3,500 lower in 2011 than in 2006.⁸ Though not shown in the chart, since 2002, the real value of median household income has decreased by more than \$8,500.

Geographic Comparison: Median household income is consistently higher in Travis County than in the U.S. and Texas. The table below shows that since 2006, the real value of median household incomes has decreased at a similar rate in the county and the nation but remained more stable across the state over the same period.

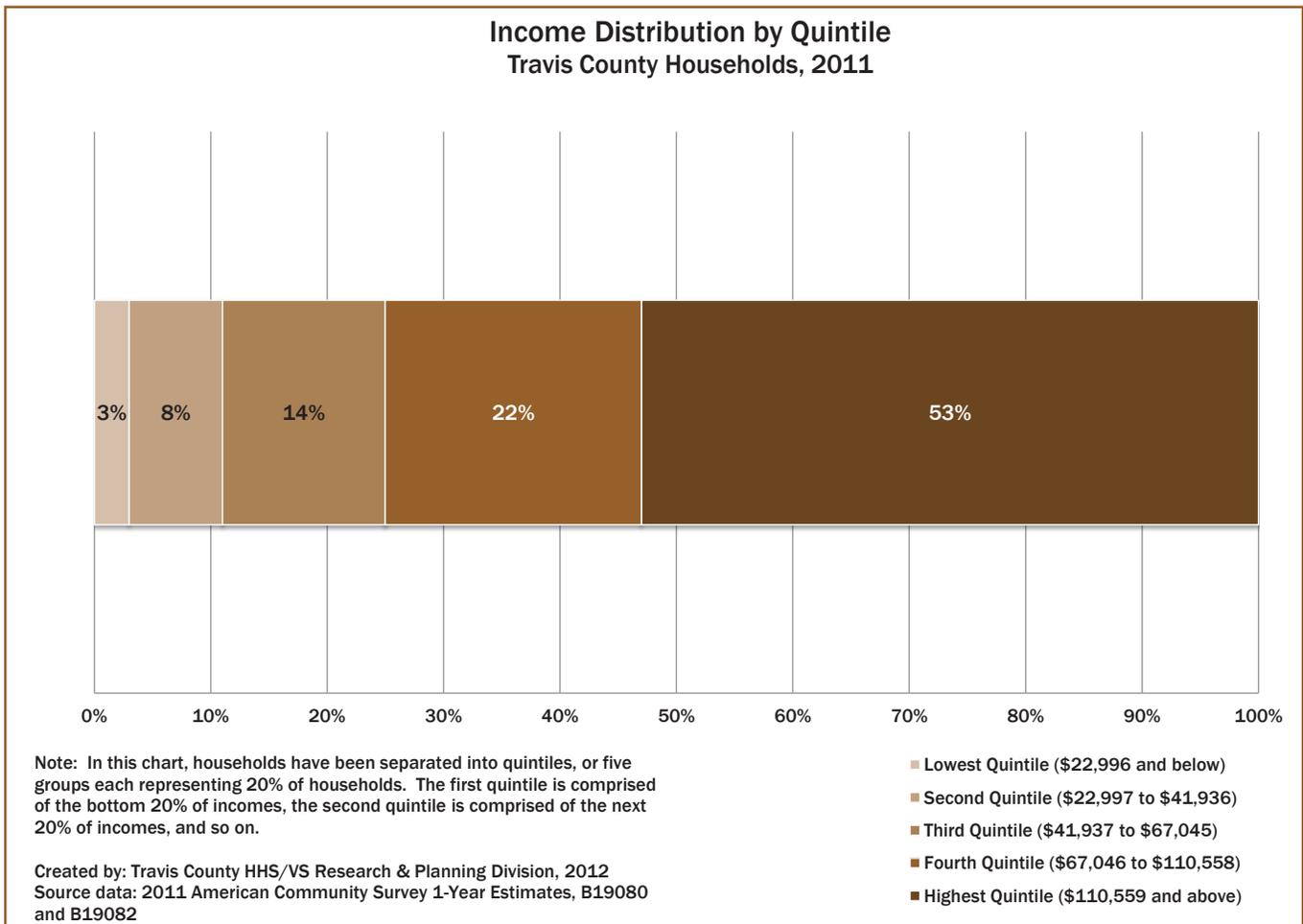
Median Household Income			
Travis County, Texas and U.S., 2006 and 2011			
	Travis County	Texas	U.S.
Median Household Income 2006 (in 2011 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)	\$56,655	\$50,123	\$54,060
Median Household Income 2011	\$53,036	\$49,392	\$50,046
Percent Change between 2006 and 2011	-6%	-1%	-7%

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS Research & Planning Division, 2012. Source data: ACS 2006 and 2001 1-Year Estimates, B19013, and the Consumer Price Index.

7 Inflation adjustment calculation based on Consumer Price Index at: [ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpi.txt](http://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpi.txt).

8 The ACS is a monthly survey that asks how much income was earned during the past 12 months. Consequently, a person answering the questions in December 2011 would respond based on income earned between December 2010 and November 2011.

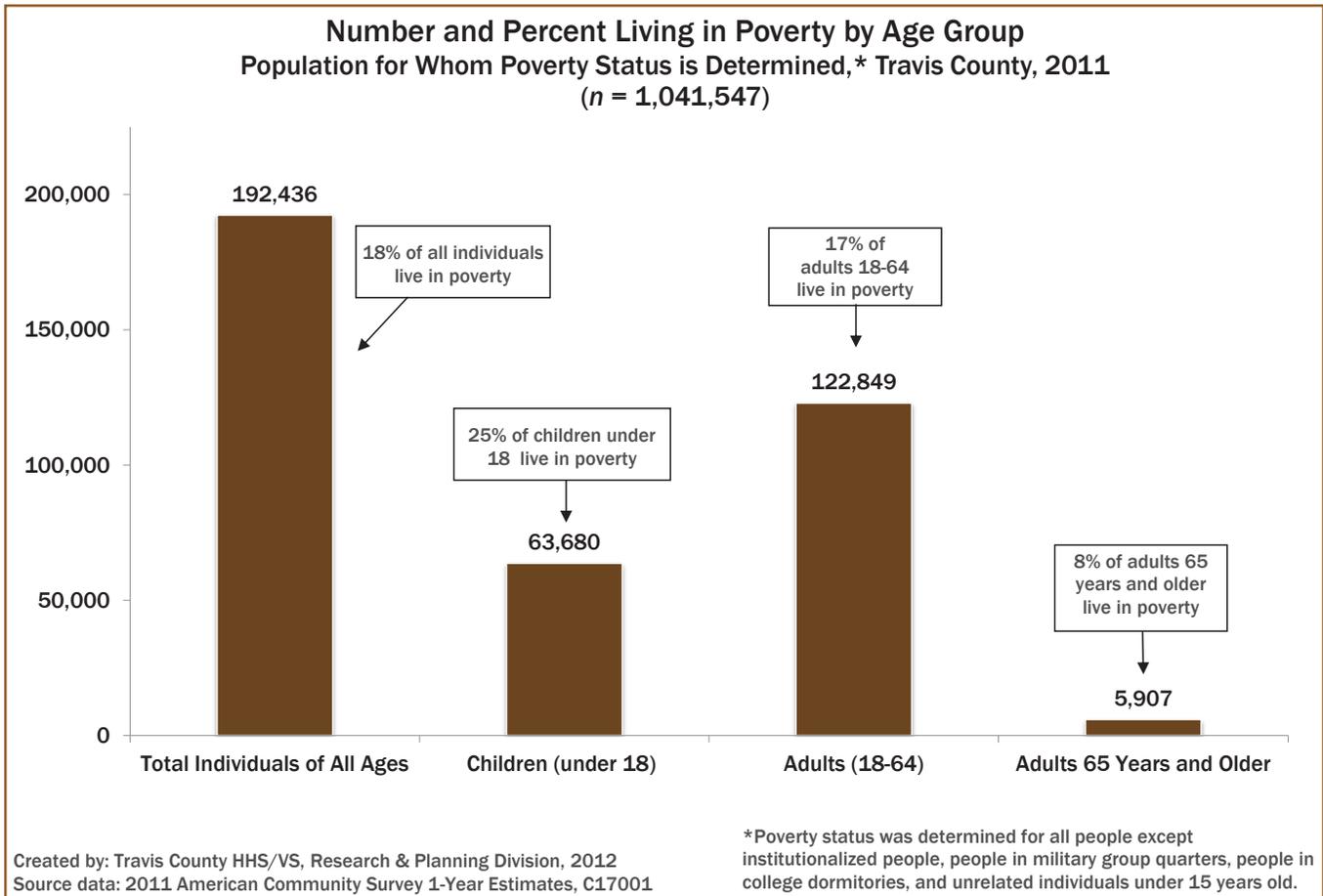
Household Income Distribution



To assess household income distribution, we have separated households into quintiles⁹ (five groups, each representing 20% of households). The bottom 20% of households represent about 3% of the county's income, while the top 20% of households represent over half of the county's income (53%).

Geographic Comparison: The distribution of household income by quintile is nearly the same in Travis County, Texas as a whole and the U.S. However, the upper limits of each household income quintile are higher for Travis County than for those of the U.S. and Texas.

⁹ For shares of household income by quintiles, negative incomes are converted to zero. These measures are the aggregate household income in each quintile as a percentage of the total aggregate income. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, p. 81.)



Poverty Rate Trends: Travis County's poverty rates among all individuals (18%) and children (25%) remain significantly higher than in 1999 (not in the chart), when 13% of individuals and 14% of children lived below the poverty threshold.¹⁰

Poverty Estimates and Rates among Individuals and Children, Travis County, 2006-2011						
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Individuals in Poverty	137,687	141,223	144,336	163,630	194,156	192,436
Individual Poverty Rate	15%	15%	15%	16%	19%	18%
Children (under 18) in Poverty	46,039	45,214	47,723	56,690	62,168	63,680
Child Poverty Rate	20%	19%	19%	23%	23%	25%

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2012. Source data: American Community Survey 2006-2011 1-Year Estimates, C17001.

Geographic Comparison: The proportion of persons of all ages living in poverty is the same in Travis County (18%) and the state of Texas (18%) and slightly higher than that of the U.S. (16%).

¹⁰ The Census Bureau uses poverty thresholds as denoted in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14 described on the Census Bureau's website at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html>. The thresholds consider family size and composition when determining whether an individual is living in poverty and can be found at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/index.html>.

Income to Poverty Ratio

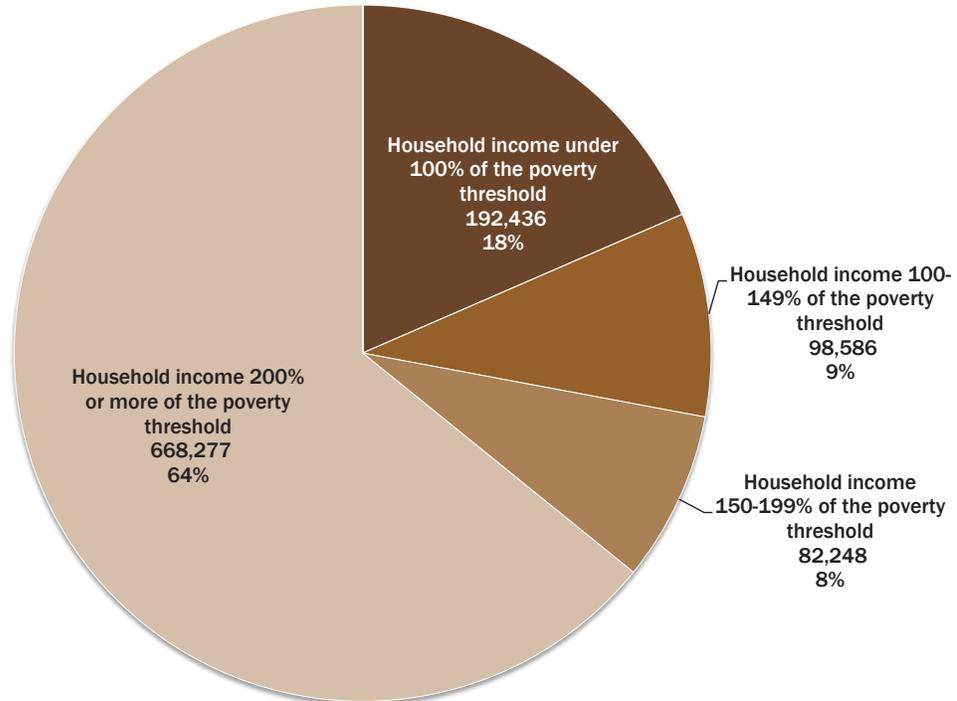
Ratio of Income (in the past 12 months) to the Poverty Threshold
Population for whom Poverty Status is Determined,* Travis County, 2011

2011 Poverty Threshold for one person under age 65:

100%: \$11,702
150%: \$17,553
200%: \$23,404

2011 Poverty Threshold for a family of four, including two related children under 18:

100%: \$22,811
150%: \$34,217
200%: \$45,622



Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2012
Source data: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B17002

*Poverty status was determined for all people except institutionalized people, people in military group quarters, people in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years old.

Ratio of Household Income in the Past 12 Months to the Poverty Threshold:¹¹ In Travis County an estimated 192,436 individuals (18% of the total population) live in households with incomes below the poverty threshold. More than one-third (36%) of Travis County residents, or an estimated 373,270 individuals, live at or below 200% of the poverty threshold.

Geographic Comparison: The table below shows the ratios of income to poverty in Travis County, Texas, and the nation as a whole.

Ratio of Income (in the past 12 months) to the Poverty Threshold
Travis County, Texas, and U.S., 2011

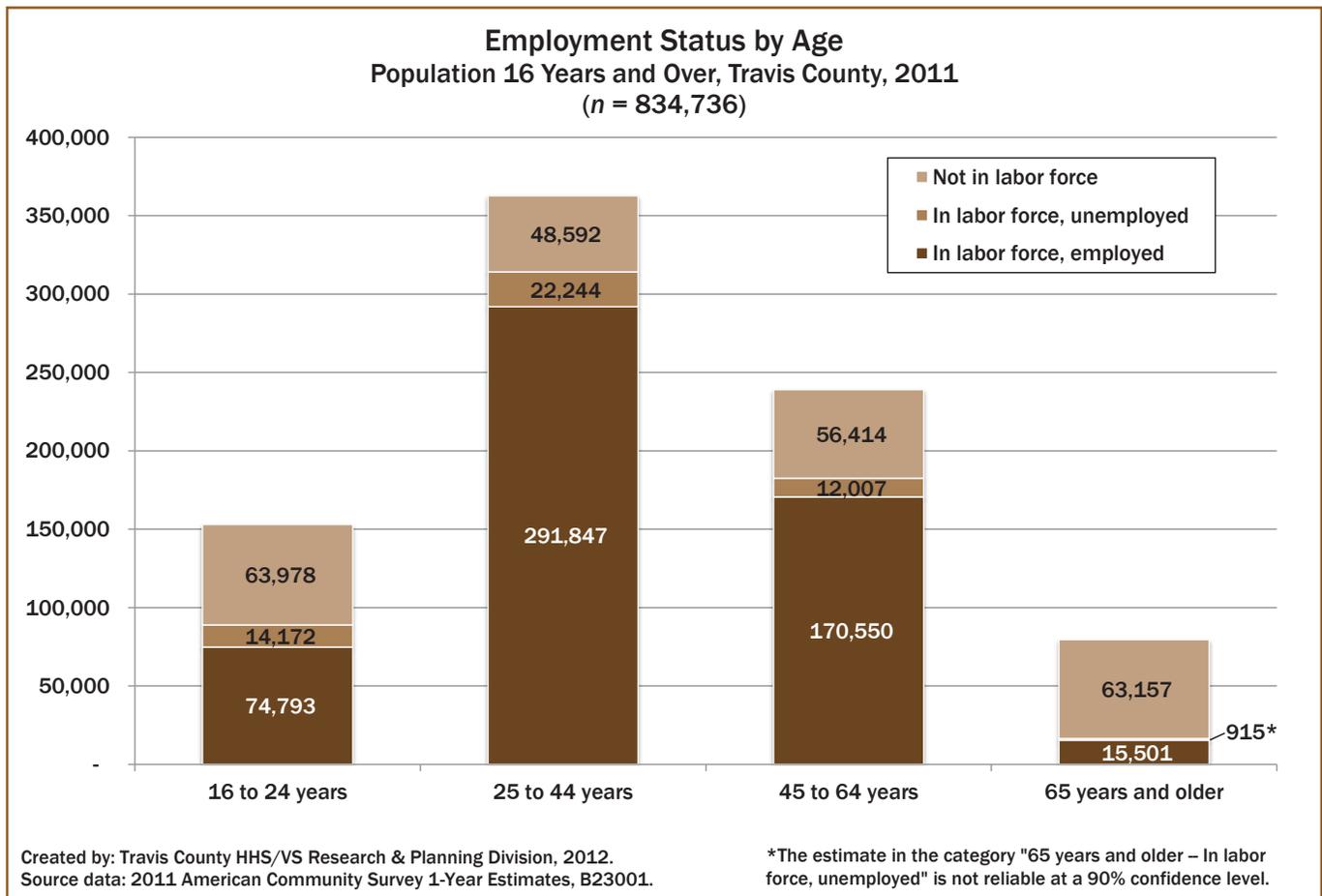
	Travis County	Texas	U.S.
Income < 100% of the poverty threshold	18%	18%	16%
Income 100%-199% of the poverty threshold	17%	21%	19%
Income 200% or more of the poverty threshold	64%*	60%	65%*

*The difference between these rates is not statistically significant at a 90% confidence level.

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2012. Source data: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B17002.

¹¹ The Census Bureau uses poverty thresholds as denoted in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14 as described on the Census Bureau's website at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html>. The thresholds consider family size and composition when determining whether an individual is living in poverty and can be found at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/index.html>.

Employment and Age



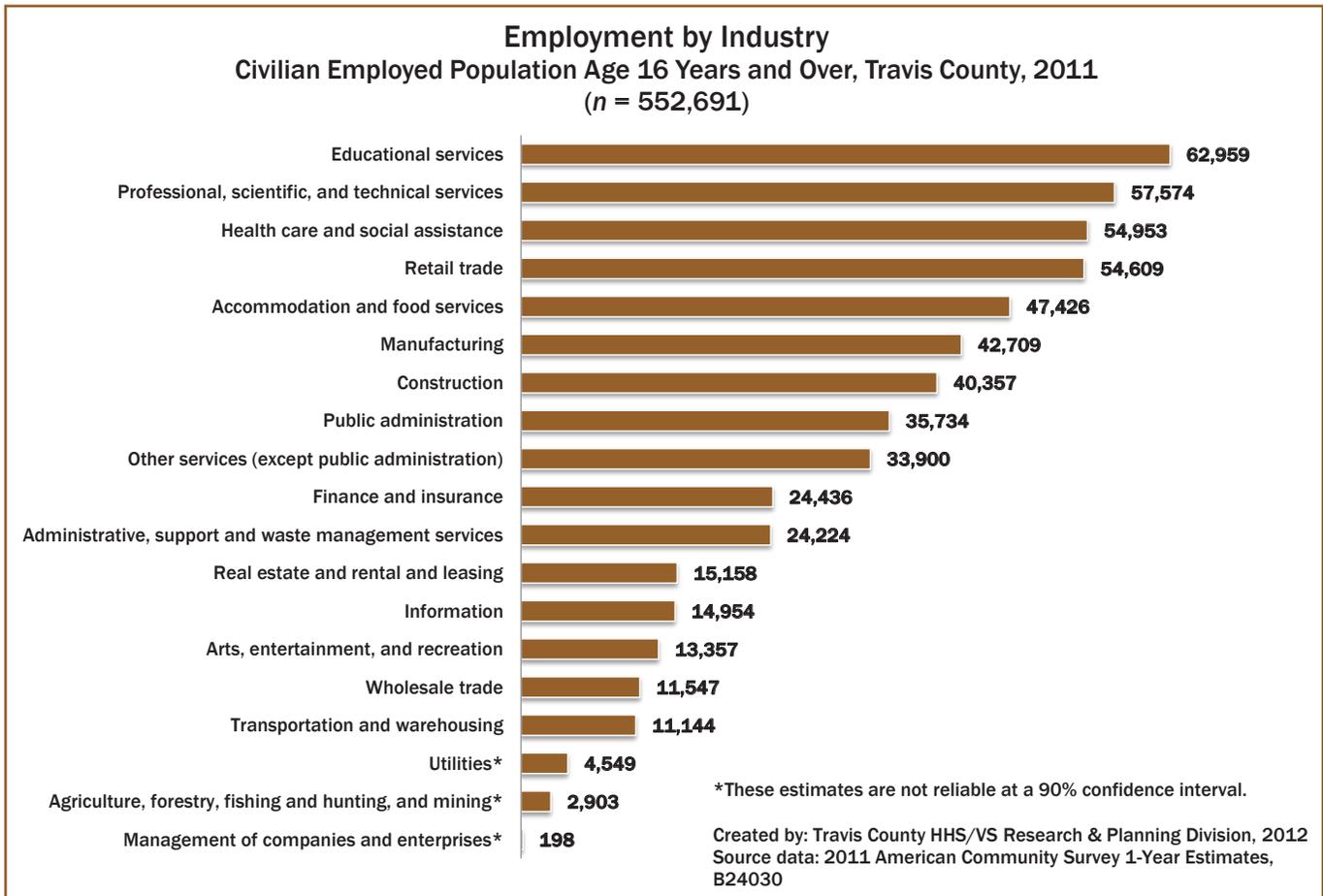
Travis County's Labor Force: In total, 72% of Travis County's population age 16 and over (about 602,600 people) is in the labor force. Approximately 49,300 of them were unemployed in 2011. This figure is similar in both number and proportion of our workforce to 2010 figures.

Labor Force by Age: Individuals between the ages of 25 and 44 constitute the majority (52%) of Travis County's labor force. The 45 to 64 age group comprises 30% of the labor force, followed by the 16 to 24 age group (15%), and finally those 65 years and older (3%).

Unemployment by Age: Travis County's overall unemployment rate (which is the percent unemployed of those in the labor force) was 8% in 2011 (no change from 2010). By age, the unemployment rate is highest, at 16%, for those 16 to 24 years old; 7% for those 25 to 44 years old; and 7% for those 45 to 64 years old.¹²

¹² Due to sampling error, the unemployment rate of those in the "65 years and over" category, reported at 6% in 2011, is unreliable at a 90% confidence level.

Employment by Industry

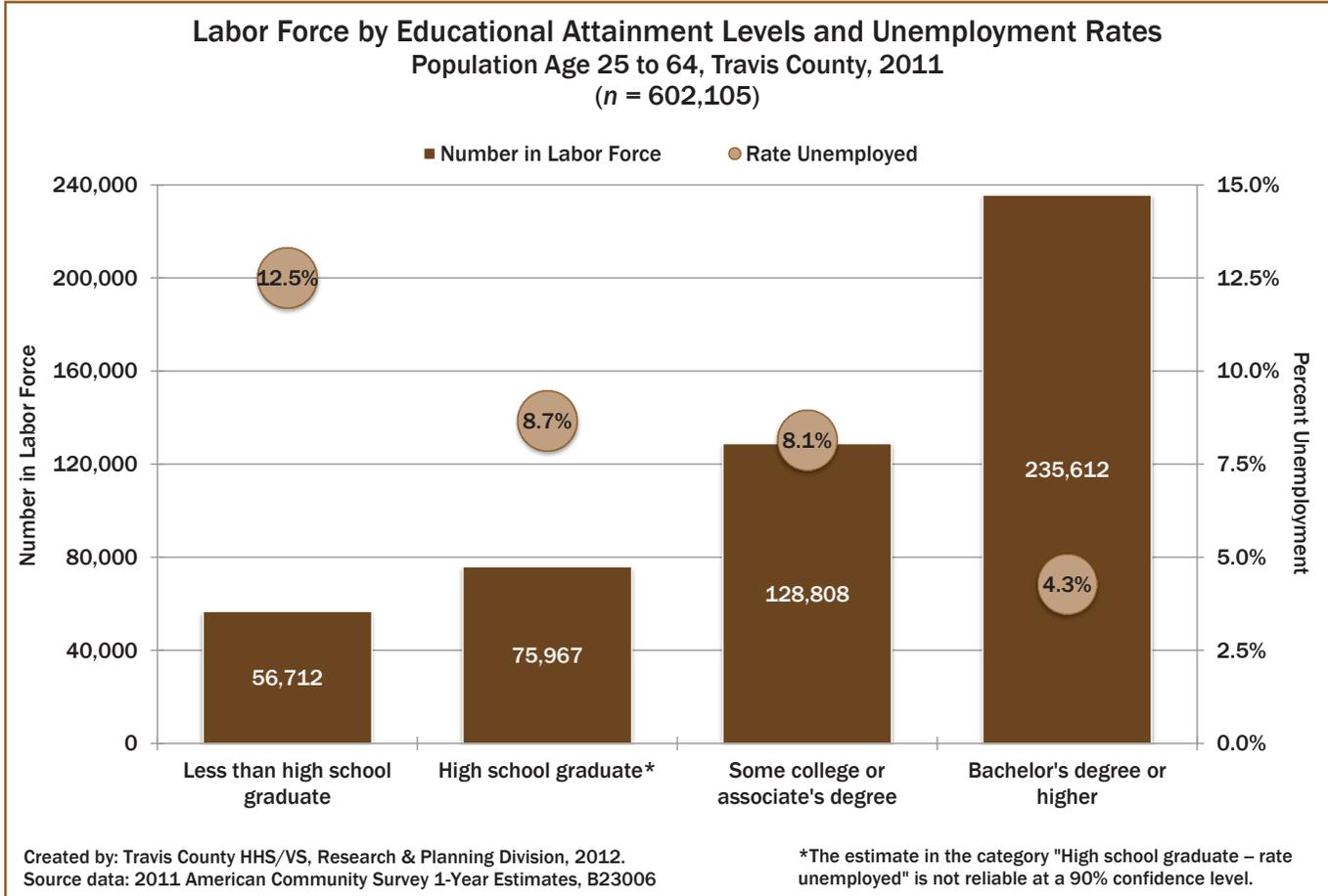


Industries: Half (50%) of Travis County’s civilian employed population age 16 and over is employed in the following five industries: educational services, professional/scientific/technical services, health care and social assistance, retail trade, and accommodation and food services.

Geographic Comparison: In general, proportions of Travis County workers by industry are similar to those of other major metropolitan counties in Texas as well as the nation and the state as a whole.¹³ Some notable differences in Travis County include a slightly higher proportion of workers in professional/scientific and technical services and a slightly lower proportion of workers in transportation and warehousing than in other major metropolitan counties in the state, Texas as a whole, and the nation.

¹³ Comparisons were made to the following counties: Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, and Tarrant.

Employment and Education

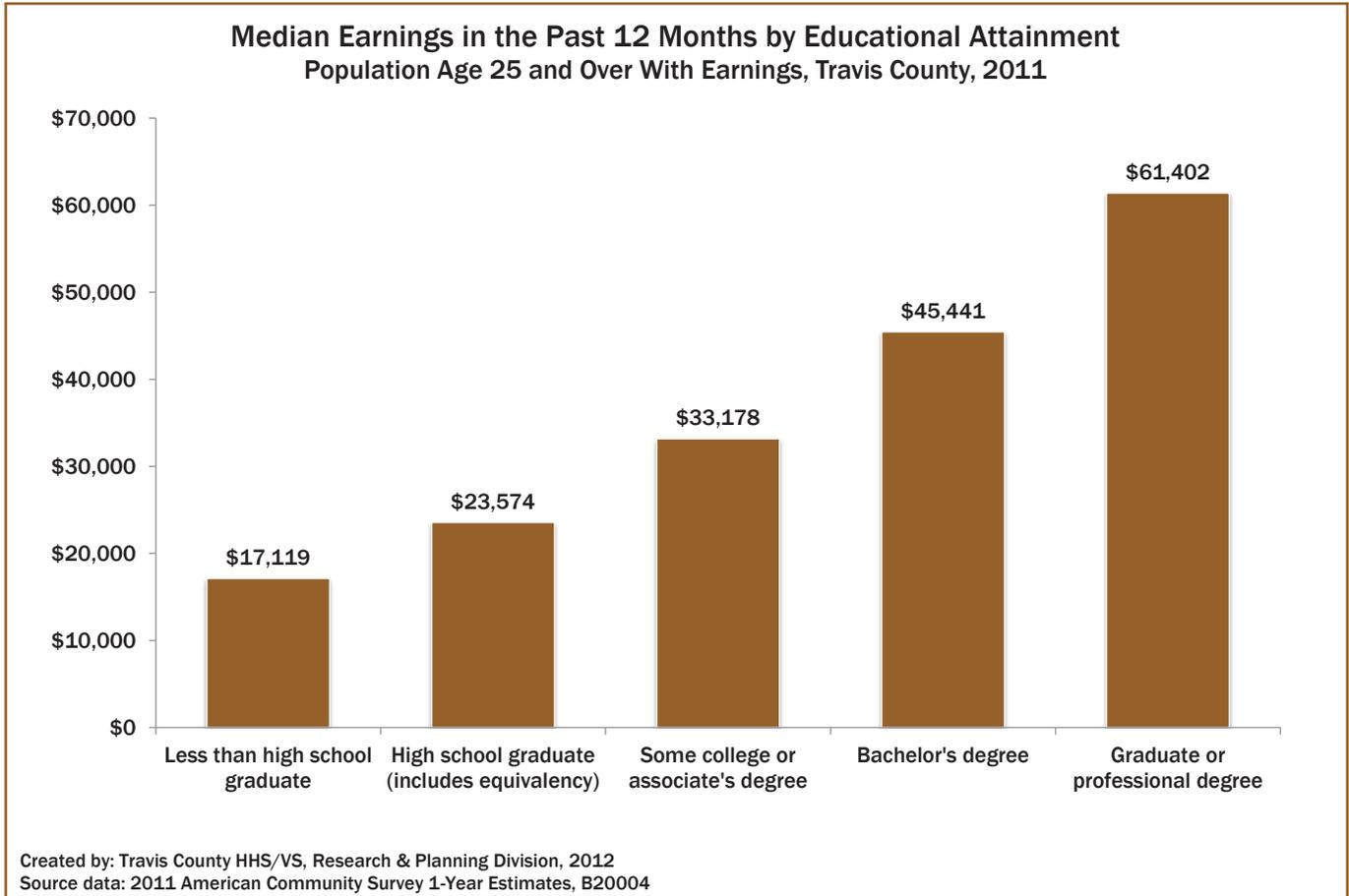


Educational Attainment in the Labor Force: Among Travis County workers between the ages of 25 and 64, almost half (47%) have a bachelor’s degree or higher, and another one-quarter (26%) have some college or an associate’s degree. High school graduates comprise 15% of the labor force, and the remaining 11% have less than a high school degree.

Educational Attainment and Employment Rates: Workforce trends generally predict that unemployment decreases as education levels increase. Accordingly, those with the highest educational attainment levels in Travis County also have the lowest unemployment (about 4% unemployment for those with a bachelor’s degree or higher), and those with the lowest educational attainment levels have the highest unemployment (about 13% for those with less than a high school degree). In particular, there is a statistically significant difference between the unemployment rates for “Some college or associates degree” and “Bachelor’s degree or higher.”

Geographic Comparison: In comparison to Texas and the U.S., Travis County has a very educated workforce. In Travis County, 47% of workers age 25 to 64 have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 31% for Texas and 33% for the U.S. at large.

Earnings and Education



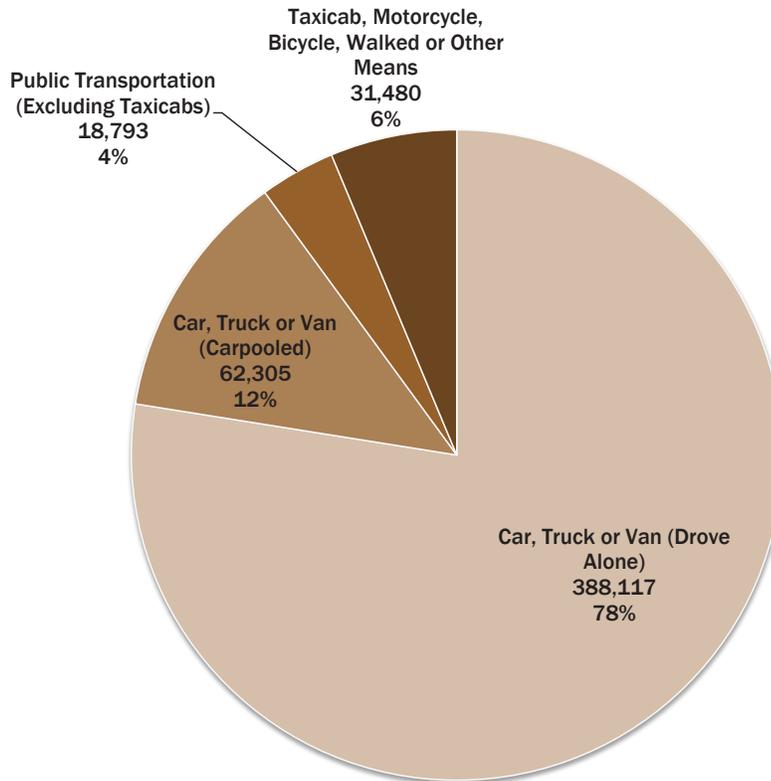
Educational Attainment and Earnings: Educational attainment level and earnings are directly related: As education level increases, earnings also rise. In 2011, median earnings rose steadily (by between 35%-41%) with each incremental increase in education level.

Median Earnings and Gender: For Travis County overall, 2011 median earnings¹⁴ are \$35,561. However, median earnings for men (\$39,050) are 24% higher than those for women (\$31,413).

Geographic Comparison: Travis County's 2011 overall median earnings (\$35,561) are higher than both those of the state of Texas (\$32,769) and those of entire U.S. (\$34,334).

¹⁴ The median divides the earnings distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median and one-half above the median. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, p. 81.)

Means of Transportation to Work
Workers Age 16 and Older Who Do Not Work at Home, Travis County, 2011



Created by: Travis County HHS/VS Research & Planning Division, 2012
Source data: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, C08134

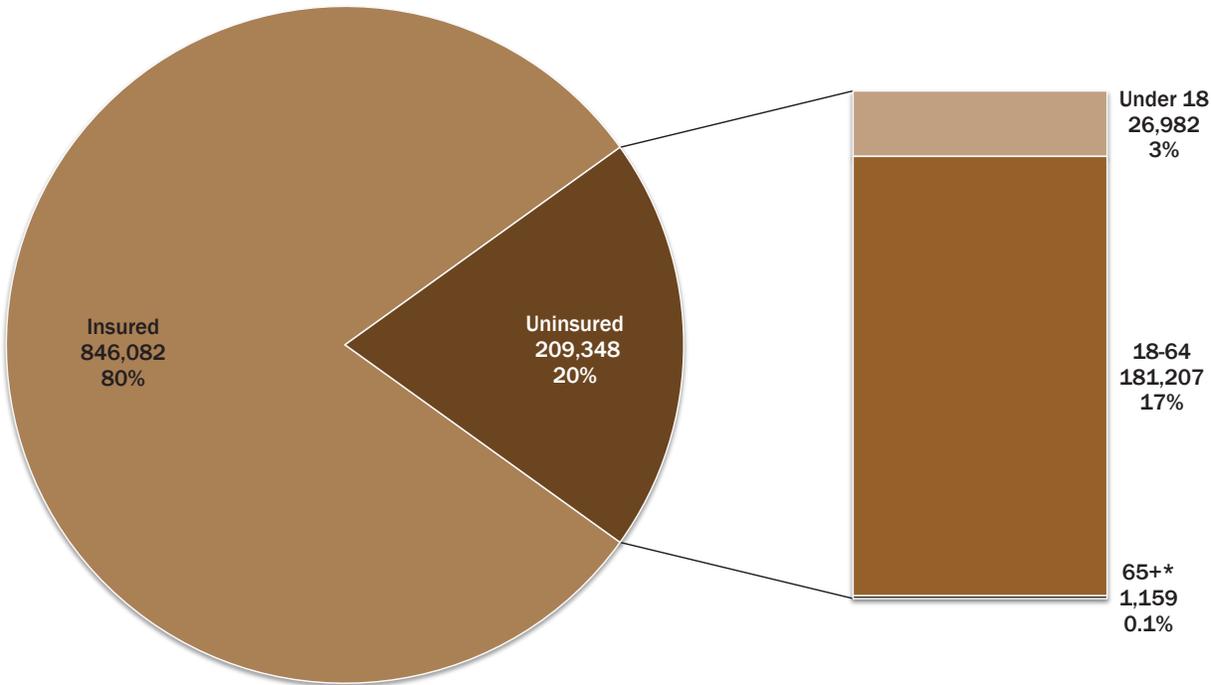
Means of Transportation to Work: The vast majority of Travis County workers aged 16 and older drive to work alone (78% or more than 380,000 people). While 12% (approximately 62,000) carpool, only 6% (about 31,000) use other means of transportation, including taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle or walking. The remaining 4% (nearly 19,000) use public transportation. Among all these commuters, most (66%) travel under 30 minutes to get to work.

Geographic Comparison of Means of Transportation to Work: The proportion of Travis County workers who drive to work alone (78%) is lower than that of the nation (80%) and the state (83%). In other major metropolitan counties of Texas, the proportion of commuters who drive to work alone hovers between 80% and 86%.¹⁵ The proportion of commuters using public transportation to get to work in Travis County (4%) is similar to the nation (5%) but higher than the state of Texas (2%) and other major metropolitan counties in the state.

¹⁵ Comparison counties include Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris and Tarrant.

Health Insurance

Health Insurance Coverage Status by Age
 Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population, Travis County, 2011
 (n = 1,055,430)



*This estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence level.

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2012
 Source data: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B27001

In Travis County, 20% of residents do not have health insurance.¹⁶ Of these 209,348 uninsured individuals, the majority (181,207 people) are adults between the ages of 18 and 64. Another 26,982 individuals (constituting 3% of the total Travis County population) are uninsured and under the age of 18. Just over 1,150 people age 65 and over are living without health insurance (0.1% of the total Travis County population).¹⁷

Geographic Comparison: Travis County's proportion of uninsured residents (20%) is higher than that of the U.S. (15%) but lower than that of Texas (23%). Other major metropolitan counties¹⁸ in the state reveal a variety of rates of uninsurance, from a high of 28% in El Paso and Dallas Counties to a low of 20% in Bexar County.

16 The Census Bureau defines coverage to include plans and programs that provide comprehensive health coverage. People are considered insured if they report having at least one of the following: Insurance through a current or former employer or union (of respondent or another family member); insurance purchased directly from an insurance company (by respondent or another family member); Medicare for those 65 and over or those with certain disabilities; Medicaid, Medical Assistance, or any kind of government assistance plan for those with low incomes or a disability; TRICARE or other military health care; VA (including those who have ever used or enrolled for VA health care). People who had no reported health coverage, or those whose only health coverage was Indian Health Service, are considered uninsured. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, pp.68-69.)

17 This estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence interval.

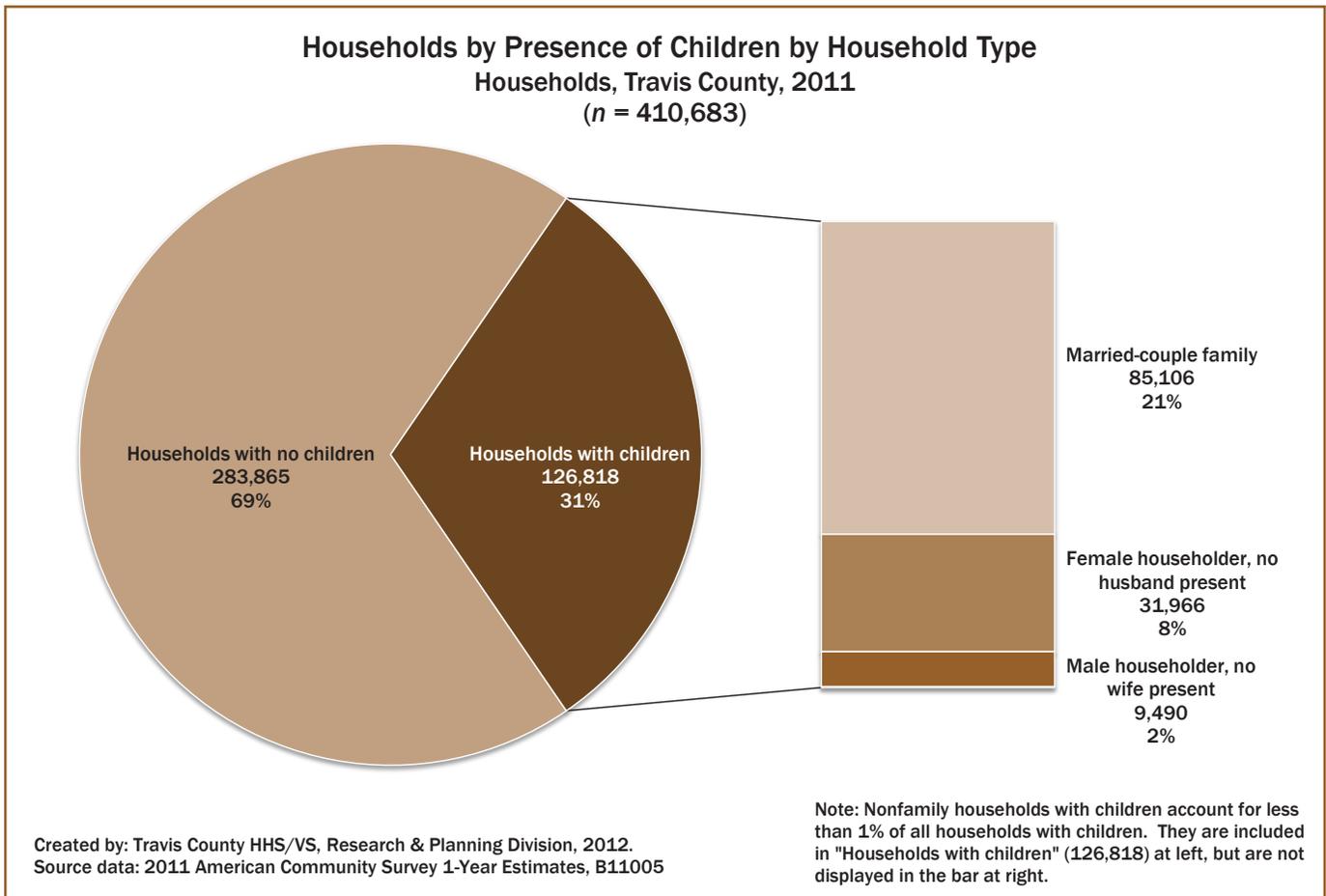
18 Comparison counties include Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris and Tarrant.

Housing Characteristics



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Household Type



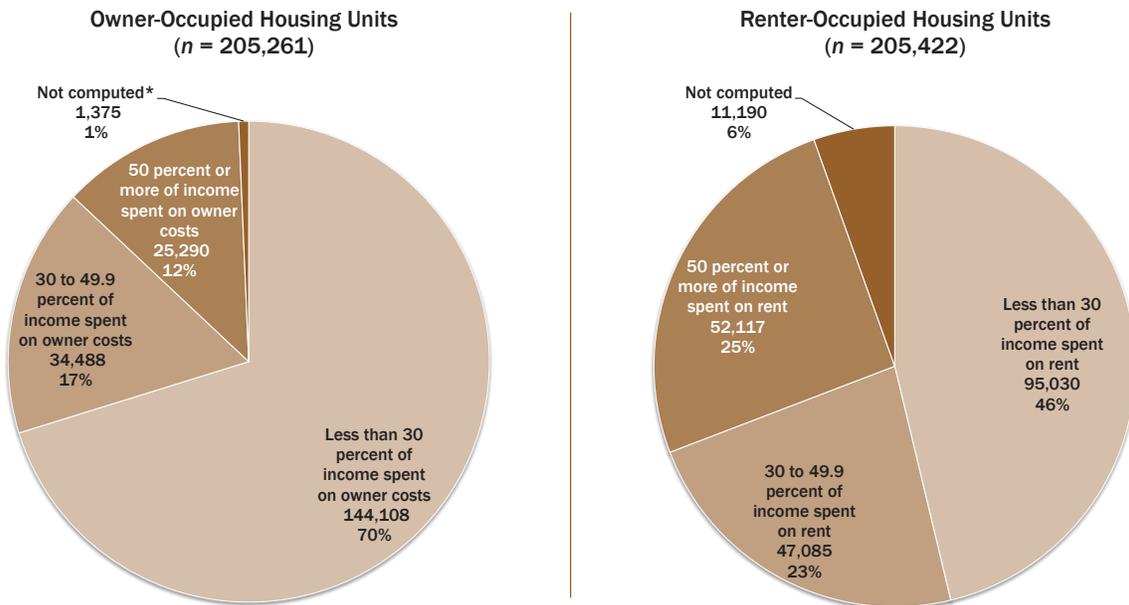
Households by Presence of Children:

- About one-third (31%) of Travis County households include children, while the remaining 69% do not.
- Of those households with children, the majority are married-couple families. Approximately 41,500 have one householder (majority female) with no spouse present.

Geographic Comparison:

- In comparison to state and national averages, Travis County households are less likely to include children (38% of Texas households and 33% of U.S. households include children).
- Regarding single householders with children with no spouse present, there is no significant difference between Travis County's proportions and those of the state and the nation.

Percent of Household Income Spent on Housing Costs Travis County, 2011



*The estimate for this category is not reliable at a 90% confidence level.

Note: Households spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs have a cost burden; those spending 50% or more on housing costs have a severe cost burden.

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2012

Source data: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, B25070 and B25091

Cost Burden: In Travis County, occupied housing is evenly split (50% each) between owner-occupied and renter-occupied units. A large percentage of both renters and owners in Travis County experience a housing cost burden, which is defined as spending 30% or more of household income on housing costs.¹⁹ However, the percent of households that are cost burdened is much higher among renters than owners. About half (48)% of renter households spend 30% or more of their income on gross rent,²⁰ and one quarter (25%) of them spend at least half of their income on gross rent. Comparatively, 29% of owner households spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs²¹ and 12% spend at least half.

Geographic Comparison:

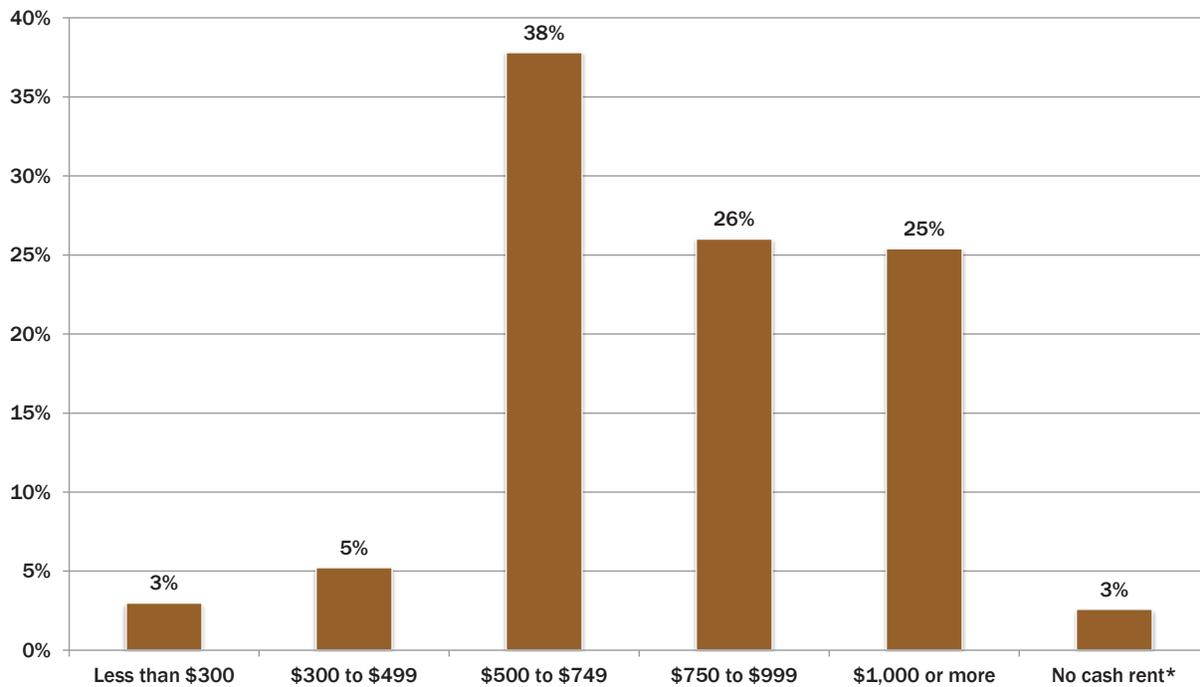
- Travis County renter households experience a slightly lower cost burden rate (48%) than that of the nation (49%), but the rate is not significantly different from that of Texas or other metropolitan counties in Texas (Dallas, El Paso, Harris and Tarrant counties).
- Travis County owner households' cost burden rate (29%) is higher than the state's (25%) but about the same as the nation's (30%). As compared to other Texas metropolitan counties, the cost burden rate among Travis County owners falls towards the high end of spectrum (higher than Bexar, El Paso and Tarrant counties, and on par with Dallas and Harris counties).

19 See U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, http://www.huduser.org/publications/affhsg/worstcase00/app_b.html.

20 Gross rent includes the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities and fuels if these are paid by the renter. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, p. 31)

21 Owner housing costs include the sum of payments for mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, or similar debts on the property; real estate taxes; fire, hazard, and flood insurance on the property; utilities and fuels; and where appropriate, monthly condominium fee and mobile home costs. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, p. 17)

Distribution of Rental Units by Contract Rent Amounts
Total Renter-Occupied Housing Units, Travis County 2011



Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2012
 Source Data: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, C25056

*The estimate is not reliable at a 90% confidence level.

Contract Rent Distribution:²² The Travis County rental market is skewed toward the higher end of rental values. Over half (51%) of Travis County’s occupied rental units have rents at or above \$750. Eight percent (approximately 16,846) of occupied rental units have rents below \$500 (not including 3% with no cash rent).²³

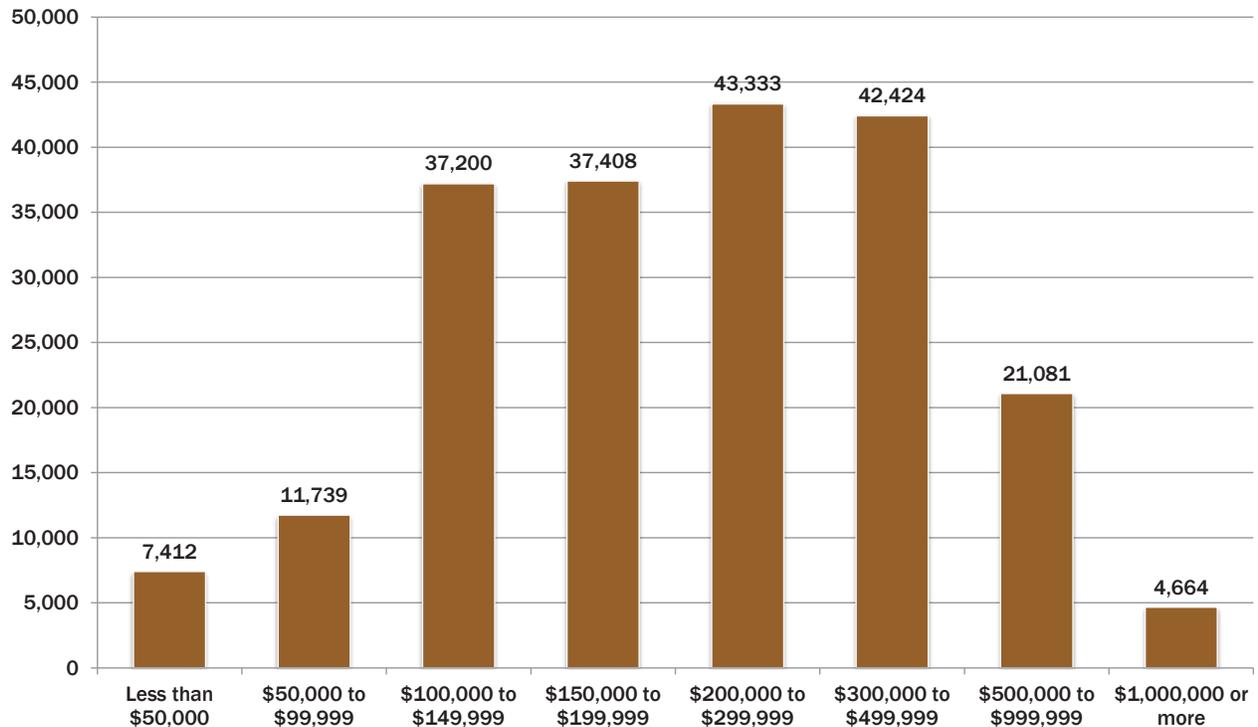
Median Contract Rent: The 2011 median contract rent in Travis County is \$769, compared to \$660 for Texas and \$727 for the U.S.

²² Contract rent is the monthly rent agreed to or contracted for, regardless of any furnishings, utilities, fees, meals, or services that may be included. (American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, p. 15.)

²³ “No cash rent” refers to housing units that are renter occupied without payment of rent. The unit may be owned by friends or relatives who live elsewhere and who allow occupancy without charge. Rent-free houses or apartments may also be provided to compensate caretakers, ministers, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, or others. (American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, pp. 14-15.)

Housing Values

Distribution of Housing Units by Value
Total Owner-Occupied Housing Units, Travis County, 2011



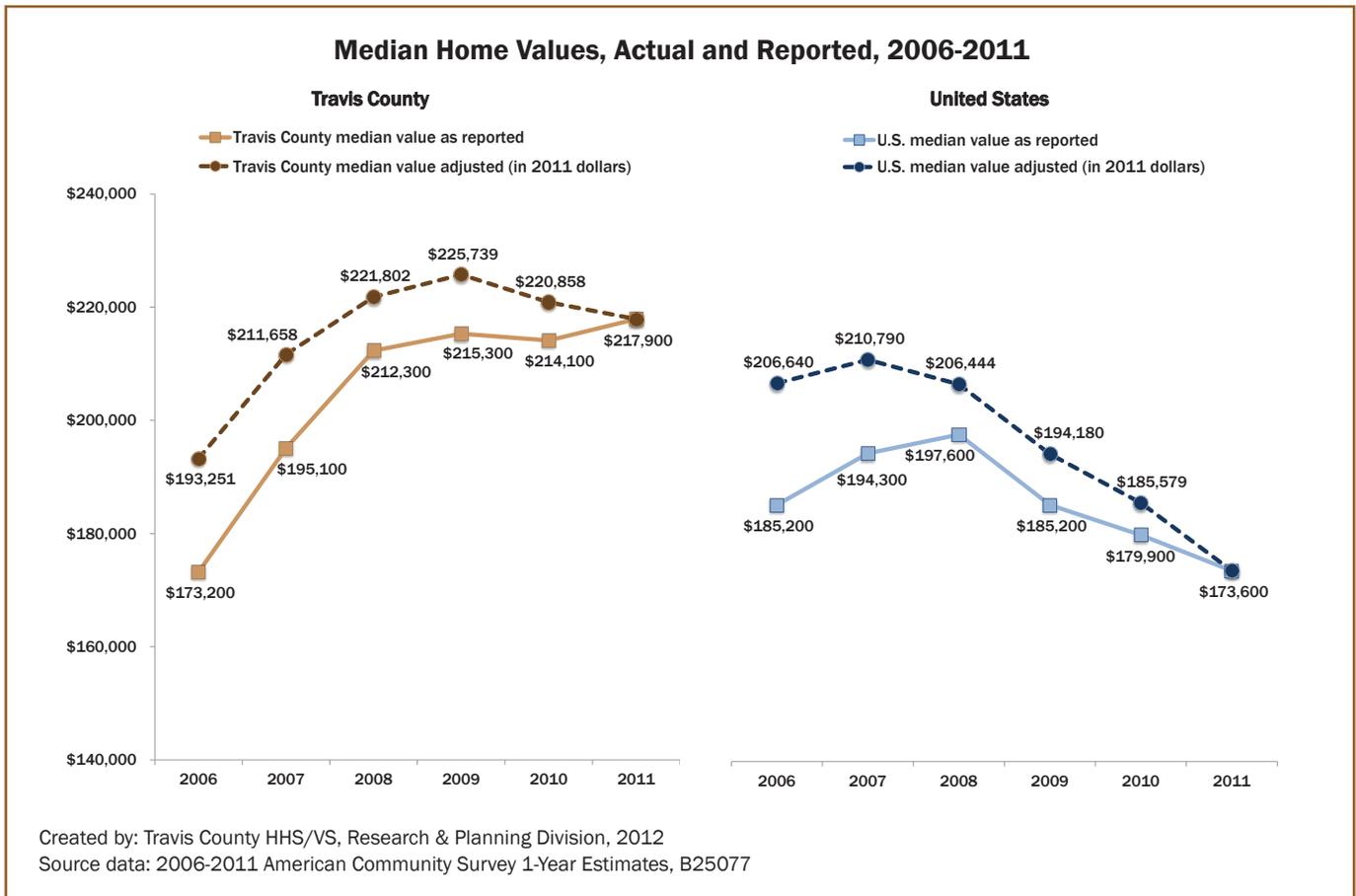
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS Research & Planning Division, 2012
Source data: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, C25075

Housing Value Distribution:²⁴ Much of Travis County's owner-occupied housing is clustered in the middle of the value spectrum. Homes valued between \$100,000 and \$299,999 comprise 57% (approximately 118,000) of owner-occupied housing in Travis County. Only 9% (approximately 19,150) of owner-occupied homes in Travis County are valued at under \$100,000.

Median Housing Value: The median housing value in 2011 in Travis County was \$217,900. This is higher than that of the U.S. (\$173,600), and much higher than that of the state of Texas (\$127,700).

²⁴ Value is the respondent's estimate of how much the property (house and lot, mobile home and lot, or condominium unit) would sell for if it were for sale. For vacant units, value was the price asked for the property. (American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, p. 40.)

Median Housing Value



Travis County's median home value exhibited a steady rising trend from 2006 to 2008 (from \$173,200 in 2006 to \$212,300 in 2008). When adjusted for inflation,²⁵ the rising trend during these years is still evident, although not as sharp. The median home value leveled off after 2008, and has not experienced any significant change in subsequent years.

In contrast, while the reported U.S. median home value also increased between 2006 and 2008, when adjusted for inflation, the U.S. median home values show a relatively flat trend during that same time period. Over the past three years, the reported national median home value has fallen annually, from \$197,600 in 2008 to \$173,600 in 2011. When these values are adjusted for inflation, the decreasing trend appears more pronounced.

This seems to indicate that while national median home values were relatively flat in 2006 through 2008 and then fell significantly through 2011, values in the Travis County market rose through 2008 and then held steady through 2011.

25 Inflation adjustment calculation based on Consumer Price Index at: <http://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpi.txt>

Methodology

The U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) is the primary data source for this chart book. Data from the 2006-2010 ACS are also referenced for trend analyses.

About the American Community Survey

The American Community Survey (ACS) replaces the long form of the 10-year U.S. Census or Decennial Census and collects information on an ongoing basis rather than once every ten years. The survey includes questions about demographic, housing, social and economic characteristics.²⁶ The ACS employs continuous data collection, with annual results produced at the national, state, city, and county levels as well as smaller geographic areas with a population of 65,000 or greater. In 2008, data based on a 3-year sample became available for all areas of 20,000 or more. In early 2011, data based on a 5-year sample became available for many small areas (state, county, city, town, place, census tracts and block groups). Also in early 2011, changes in sampling design were made that have increased the reliability of small tract estimates.²⁷

ACS Methodology

Sample: The American Community Survey (ACS) is conducted every month on independent samples of housing unit²⁸ addresses (whether vacant or occupied) and persons in group quarters²⁹ facilities, and produces annual estimates of the total residential population. Each year, approximately 3 million housing unit addresses in the United States and approximately 200,000 residents in group quarters facilities are selected. Surveys are collected from 1/12 of the sample each month. An address will not be included in the ACS survey more than once in a five-year period.³⁰

For Travis County, the original 2011 (entire 12 month) sample of initial addresses selected was 8,212, and the final number of housing unit interviews (actual sample used to produce results) was 5,365. The group quarters population sample is not available at the county level, but for the entire state of Texas, the initial sample selected was 12,936 and the final number of group quarters person interviews was 10,469.³¹

26 A copy of the questionnaire can be found at: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/SBasics/SQuest/SQuest1.htm>

27 For more information on reliability improvements, go to http://www.census.gov/acs/www/about_the_survey/2011_acs_improvements/.

28 A housing unit may be a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms or a single room that is occupied (or, if vacant, intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters. Both occupied and vacant housing units are included in the housing unit inventory. Boats, recreational vehicles (RVs), vans, tents, railroad cars, and the like are included only if they are occupied as someone's current place of residence. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, page 7.)

29 In 2006, group quarters were added to the ACS target population of housing units. A group quarters is a place where people live or stay, in a group living arrangement that is owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. Group quarters include such places as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, skilled nursing facilities, group homes, military barracks, correctional facilities, and workers' dormitories. (American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2011 Subject Definitions, page 8.) For more information on group quarters, see: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/GroupDefinitions/2011GQ_Definitions.pdf

30 American Community Survey Sample Size Definitions, available at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/sample_size_definitions/

31 U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey 1 Year Estimates, Tables B98001 and B98002.

Methodology

Data Collection: The ACS is conducted primarily through self-response. The ACS employs two distinct data collection methodologies: one for individuals residing in housing units and another for those residing in group quarters. For participants residing in housing units, three attempts are made to administer the survey: (1) by mail, which includes separate mailings of a pre-notice letter, ACS questionnaire, reminder postcard, and replacement questionnaire if needed; (2) by landline telephone, on a sample of addresses that have not returned the completed paper questionnaire and for which a telephone number is known; and finally (3) by personal interviews with a sample of remaining addresses. Sampling and data collection for group quarters varies by group quarters size.³²

Limitations

Sampling Error: Because the findings are based on a sample, rather than entire populations, the results would differ slightly if another sample were drawn or if the entire population were surveyed. This reduces the reliability of the results. A certain amount of variability (called sampling error) is associated with any estimate based on a sample. In general, the larger the sample, the smaller the sampling error.³³ However, the authors have attempted to minimize this variability by testing estimates and derived estimates for reliability at a 90% confidence level. Estimates with coefficients of variation³⁴ of more than 15% were either excluded or footnoted as being unreliable.

Statistical Significance: To test the true significance of a difference in estimates, for example between geographic areas or over time, a statistical test should be conducted. Where direct comparisons were made across time or geographies, the authors tested for statistical significance at a 90% confidence level. Note that testing was not conducted on every possible permutation of comparisons between visible figures in this report's charts and tables, so inferences about statistics and trends should be interpreted with caution. However, any comparisons explicitly highlighted in the narrative text can be assumed to be statistically significant. Some notable exceptions where statistical significance was not found or not possible to determine were also footnoted.

For more information and instruction on testing for reliability and statistical significance, as well as general guidance on how to use American Community Survey data, please see the Compass guides published by the U.S. Census Bureau: www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/handbooks/

Non-Response Error: If certain individuals do not respond to the survey, the strength of the findings will be diminished. Additionally, those who respond to the survey may possess certain traits that skew the results differently than if everyone in the sample responds (this is known as selection bias). However,

³² American Community Survey Accuracy of the Data (2011), available at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2011.pdf

³³ U.S. Census Bureau, *A Compass for Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What General Data Users Need to Know*. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2008. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/handbooks/ACSGeneralHandbook.pdf>

³⁴ Coefficient of variation is a measure used to discern the level of reliability of an estimate. It is calculated using the estimate and its standard error. For more information on calculating and using coefficients of variation, see: *A Compass for Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What General Data Users Need to Know*, available at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/handbooks/ACSGeneralHandbook.pdf>

Methodology



while surveys are often voluntary, response to the ACS is required by law (Section 221 of Title 13, Chapter 7, United States Code) and those who refuse or willfully neglect to respond to the survey are subject to a fine of up to \$5,000.³⁵ The response rate for the ACS is high (the 2011 response rate for Texas was 97% for housing units and 99% for group quarters).³⁶

³⁵ American Community Survey: Why Were You Selected? available at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/about_the_survey/why_were_you_selected/

³⁶ Response rate information is available on the Census Bureau's American Community Survey website at: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/response_rates_data/index.php

