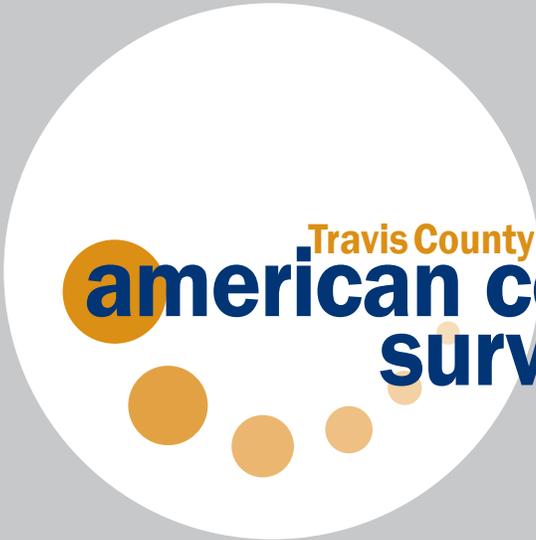


focus on  
**POVERTY**  
in travis county



Travis County snapshot from the  
**american community**  
**survey** 5-year estimates  
2005 - 2009

Summer 2011



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This report was researched and written by the staff at the Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service (HHS/VS), Research & Planning Division. Lead writers were Courtney Bissonnet Lucas, Korey Darling, Anna Lisa Fahrenthold, Lawrence Lyman and Mary Rolle, with the support of Blanca Tapia Leahy (Division Director), and Sherri E. Fleming (County Executive for Travis County HHS/VS).

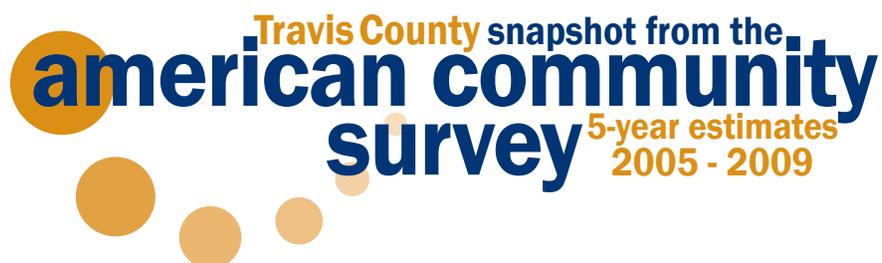
Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service strives to optimize self-sufficiency for families and individuals in safe and healthy communities. We work to address the needs of those living in poverty or at risk of poverty by providing services either directly or through private and not-for-profit agencies.

The Research & Planning Division works to inform our community, find solutions, and ensure effectiveness. Through these roles we seek to improve knowledge and understanding of community needs, create comprehensive solutions to community problems, and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the service delivery system in Travis County. To learn more about our work and for links to our other publications see:

[http://www.co.travis.tx.us/health\\_human\\_services/research\\_planning/default.asp](http://www.co.travis.tx.us/health_human_services/research_planning/default.asp)

## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

For questions or for more information, please contact the Research & Planning Division at [HHS\\_R&P@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:HHS_R&P@co.travis.tx.us).



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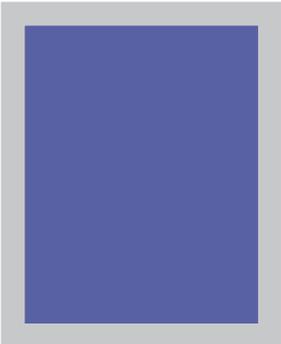
# Introduction



**T**his report uses American Community Survey (ACS) 2005-2009 5-Year Estimates to look at how demographic, social, and employment characteristics, and geography interact with poverty. It also explores how poverty has changed over time. All data in this report are from the detailed tables in the 5-Year Estimates unless otherwise noted.

We have chosen to prioritize an in-depth study of the poverty-related information available in one data set rather than produce a broad assessment of poverty and related issues using a variety sources. While this has allowed a more nuanced and detailed look at the data available through the ACS, we recognize limitations in utilizing a single data source to explore a complex topic and offer some additional data resources at the end of the report. (See Appendix B: Other Data Sources.)

We hope this information is helpful in efforts to design and improve programs, inform or make funding decisions, and shape local policies. We encourage users to borrow and cite this material.



Suggested Citation: Research & Planning Division, "Focus on Poverty in Travis County," Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service, 2011.

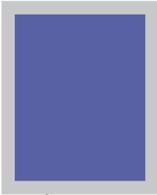
## What is poverty?

In everyday conversation, the term poverty is often used to describe a state of economic hardship. In a more technical sense, poverty is a measure associated with a specific income level. While the majority of the report explores the latter, we thought it was important to first provide some broader context about the issue of poverty.



Data reported in the 2005-2009 American Community Survey estimates that 15% of Travis County residents (144,055 people) live in poverty. Families and individuals living in poverty may face numerous challenges because of their low income levels.

Measures in two U.S. Census Bureau surveys show a clear relationship between poverty and unmet basic needs. About 43% of households with incomes below the poverty threshold are food insecure (i.e. unable to ensure access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members). People living in poverty report difficulty meeting basic needs at about three times the rate of those living at or above the poverty threshold.<sup>1</sup>



Children and youth living in poverty may be at greater risk for poor academic outcomes, as economically disadvantaged students generally have lower Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores and high school graduation rates when compared to the overall school population.<sup>2</sup> Further, educational attainment influences earnings: individuals who graduated high school earn 42% more per year than those who did not.<sup>3</sup> Earnings continue to increase at each additional level of educational attainment achieved.

Living in poverty may lead to or exacerbate behavioral and physical health issues. Several studies have found that individuals facing significant economic strains are at an increased risk of experiencing depression, anxiety, irritability, anger, social isolation, and suicidal ideation.<sup>4</sup> Health disparities often exist according to income level; for example, increased rates of cardiovascular disease are seen in individuals with incomes less than \$25,000. Low incomes may also hinder access to health care, due to the high cost of health insurance and lack of affordable options for low income individuals, and could cause individuals to delay or forgo care.<sup>5</sup>

## Poverty Measurements

There are two different federal poverty measurements. The U.S. Census Bureau develops the Poverty Threshold for statistical purposes while the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services develops the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines to help set program eligibility requirements. These two measures differ slightly due to their purpose and how they are calculated.<sup>6</sup>

### ***The Poverty Threshold***

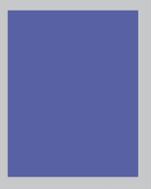
The U.S. Census Bureau updates the Poverty Threshold annually to estimate the number of people in poverty. In 2010, the most recent year available, the Poverty Threshold was \$11,369 for a single adult and \$22,162 for a household of two adults and two children. Households with annual incomes that are under 100% of the Poverty Threshold are counted as living in poverty. The Poverty Threshold is adjusted annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index.

### ***The Federal Poverty Income Guideline***

Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service and many other non-profit and government organizations use the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG) to determine financial eligibility for services. In 2010, the most recent year available, the FPIG was \$10,830 for an individual and \$22,050 for a family of four. The methodology for calculating the FPIG was created in the 1960s and assumes that food costs account for one-third of total household expenses.

### ***Limitations of Poverty Measurements***

Both the Poverty Threshold and the FPIG may underestimate the number of people who face economic hardship. Although the Poverty Threshold and the FPIG are adjusted annually for inflation, shifting household expenses in the past 50 years signal that these measures likely miscalculate the number of people who face economic hardship. These measures also fail to take into account geographical differences in costs such as food and housing prices. The most recent Center for Public Policy Priorities Family Budget Estimator project (updated in 2007) calculates that Travis County families typically need incomes of at least double the FPIG to make ends meet.<sup>7</sup>



In an effort to more accurately gauge economic hardship, the U.S. Census Bureau collects data on individuals and households with incomes at different percentages of the Poverty Threshold, such as 150% and 200%. Different FPIG percentages are used by public, private, and nonprofit agencies to set program income eligibility requirements.

Given the limitations of the Poverty Threshold, the U.S. Census Bureau has encouraged the development of experimental approaches to measuring poverty. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) recommends the adoption of a new poverty measurement which will vary geographically and increase Poverty Threshold income levels. In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau announced it will produce a Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) which will take into account NAS recommendations but will not replace the Poverty Threshold. The U.S. Census Bureau plans to release the SPM in Fall 2011.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to underestimating poverty, current quantitative poverty measures also fail to convey the complexities of poverty. The analysis of ACS data presented in this report signal that there are complex relationships between poverty and age, gender, race/ethnicity, and geography in Travis County.

## **The Data Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates**

As described above, this report utilizes the American Community Survey (ACS) 2005-2009 5-Year Estimates data set. The ACS is one of many surveys conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. It is conducted every year on an ongoing basis and includes questions about social, housing, and economic characteristics. ACS data sets are released as period estimates that represent the characteristics of the population and housing over a specific data collection period of 12, 36, or 60 months.

The 2005-2009 5-Year Estimates data set was chosen for this report because it provides the largest sample size and thus allows us to explore characteristics of smaller sub-populations with greater reliability. The 5-year data set is also unique in that it includes data for small levels of geography (census tracts, block groups, small municipalities) and allows us to study poverty at the sub-county and neighborhood level.

### ***Statistical Testing and Limitations of the ACS***

All of the estimates presented in this report (with few exceptions, all footnoted) have been tested at a 90% confidence level for reliability. In some cases, indicated by an asterisk, estimates are unreliable due to small sample sizes. Our decision to publish unreliable estimates was driven by the need to 1) provide building blocks representing small subsets of the population for future trend analysis and 2) as much as possible, represent the entirety and diversity of our community. In cases where estimates are not reliable, please draw conclusions with caution.

Any comparisons explicitly highlighted in the narrative text have also been tested for statistical significance and can be assumed to be statistically significant unless stated otherwise. Some notable exceptions where statistical significance was not found or not possible to determine have been footnoted. Testing was not conducted on every possible permutation of comparisons between data presented here, so inferences about statistics and trends should be drawn with caution.



### ***Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined***

The U.S. Census Bureau collects and reports poverty data for the “population for whom poverty status is determined.” Poverty-related figures do not include people living in institutionalized group quarters, people in military group quarters, people in college dormitories, or unrelated individuals under 15 years old (children who do not live with a family member). In the 2005-2009 5-Year Estimates for Travis County, the population for whom poverty status is determined includes 949,161 people while the total population includes 966,761 people.

### ***Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months***

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the American Community Survey on an ongoing basis. Poverty status is determined according to the respondent’s reported income during the 12 months prior to the date of the survey.

For more on the American Community Survey, including links to detailed references, please see Appendix A: Methodology.

# Data Highlights

Below are some brief data highlights. As these highlights are limited in the level of context and analysis they provide, readers are highly encouraged to continue reading topics of interest in the body of the report.

*All data from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates unless otherwise noted.*

## **How has poverty changed over time?**

- Travis County has experienced notable population growth over the past decade and a half. The overall population growth rate has increased 20% since 2000 and 70% since 1990.
- The number of people in poverty has increased steadily from 1990, while the overall poverty rate fluctuated from 16% in 1990, went down to 13% in 2000, and returned to 15% in the 2005-2009 dataset. Children consistently have the highest poverty rate (21% in current data set) across sub-groups.

## **How does Travis County compare to other communities and to the state and the nation?**

- An analysis of poverty rates in the U.S., Texas and Travis County since 1990 reveal that, in most age groups and years, Travis County fares better than Texas overall but worse than the U.S. overall.

## **Who is most likely to live in poverty in Travis County?**

- Exploring poverty status by sex, age, race and Hispanic origin, nativity, language spoken, household type, educational attainment, work experience, and employment status, the following groups have a poverty rate greater than the Travis County poverty rate of 15%: *(Only single variables are included below; the report also considers some variables in combination.)*
  - Female-headed households with children, no husband present (36%)
  - Young adults 18 to 24 years of age (34%)
  - Individuals who are unemployed (33%)
  - Female-headed households, no husband present (29%)
  - Individuals with less than a high school education (27%)
  - Foreign born non-citizens (25%)
  - Individuals who are not in the labor force (25%)
  - Individuals who did not work in the previous 12 months (25%)
  - Children under five years of age (24%)
  - Black/African Americans (23%)
  - Hispanic/Latinos (23%)
  - Spanish speakers (23%)
  - Individuals who worked part-time or part-year (22%)
  - Male-headed households with children, no wife present (21%)
  - Children 5 to 17 years of age (19%)
  - Non-family households, female householder (18%)
  - Females (17%)
- Hispanic/Latino children under age 18 make up a significant share of the Travis County population living in poverty. Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American children under five years of age have some of the highest poverty rates in Travis County, 37% and 44% respectively.

## **Where is poverty prevalent in Travis County?**

- Areas along the I-35 corridor and areas east of I-35 generally have higher percentages of individuals living in poverty. This distribution is similar to 2000, although the 2005-2009 data set suggests that the population in poverty is spreading out from the I-35 corridor.

# Changes Over Time

This section examines how poverty has changed in comparison to population over time in Travis County, the state of Texas and the U.S. The total population of Travis County is 966,761, an increase of 20% since 2000 (812,280) and 70% since 1990 (576,407). As the population has grown, the number of Travis County residents living in poverty has also increased. Since 1990, the population in poverty has grown by 62% (89,090 to 144,055). The rise in poverty from 2000 to 2005-2009 was not as dramatic and increased 45% (99,388 in 2000).

Poverty rates have experienced a similar fluctuation. In 2000, the overall poverty rate and the poverty rates of subgroups decreased three to five percentage points from their respective 1990 levels. The 2005-2009 data set reveals that the overall poverty rate (15%) and rates for subgroups have increased since 2000 and are now closer to their 1990 levels.

The greatest exception to this is the child poverty rate which, at 21%, exceeds both 1990 and 2000 levels. This subgroup consistently has the highest poverty rate among all subgroups and experienced the largest percentage increase of seven points from 2000. The population 65 years and older is the only group that did not experience an increase in their poverty rate from 2000 to 2005-2009.

<b>Number and Rate of Individuals in Poverty by Age</b>						
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined, Travis County, 1990, 2000, 2005-2009						
	1990		2000		2005-2009	
	Individuals in Poverty	Poverty Rate	Individuals in Poverty	Poverty Rate	Individuals in Poverty	Poverty Rate
Under 18	25,345	19%	27,214	14%	47,159	21%
18 - 64	58,909	15%	68,185	12%	91,684	14%
65 and over	4,323	11%	3,989	8%	5,212	8%
All Individuals	89,090	16%	99,388	13%	144,055	15%

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

Source data: 1990 Census, P001 and DP-4; 2000 Census P1 and STF3, PCT49; 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B01001 and B17001

Trends in the fluctuation of poverty are similar across Travis County, the state of Texas and the U.S. All experienced a decrease in poverty rates in 2000. Child poverty rates are the greatest out of all subgroups while poverty rates for the 65 and older age group are the lowest.

<b>Rate of Individuals in Poverty by Age</b>									
Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined, Travis County, Texas, United States; 1990, 2000, 2005-2009									
	1990			2000			2005-2009		
	Travis County	Texas	U.S.	Travis County	Texas	U.S.	Travis County	Texas	U.S.
Under 18	19%	24%	18%	14%	21%	17%	21%	24%	19%
18 - 64	15%	15%	11%	12%	13%	11%	14%	14%	12%
65 and over	11%	18%	13%	8%	13%	10%	8%	12%	10%
All Individuals	16%	18%	13%	13%	15%	12%	15%	17%	13%

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

Source data: 1990 Census, STF3, DP-4; 2000 Census STF3, PCT49; 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B17001

# Geographic Comparison

An analysis of all U.S. counties by their population size and overall poverty rates indicate that Travis County is the 42nd most-populous county in the U.S. With respect to population size and overall poverty rate, Travis County is most similar to ten counties in the U.S. They are not the usual counties to which Travis County is compared and include Fulton County, Georgia (Atlanta is the major city), Erie County, NY (Buffalo is the major city), and three counties in Florida.

The following tables highlight how Travis County compares to other U.S. and Texas counties in population size and overall poverty rate. For the purposes of this analysis, U.S. counties were deemed “similar” to Travis County if they met the following criteria: the county’s total population size is within a 200,000 range of Travis County’s total population size (in other words, the county’s total population is between 766,761 and 1,166,761); AND the county’s poverty rate is within two percentage points of Travis County’s poverty rate, or between 13% and 17%.

The table below displays the 10 counties that roughly met these two criteria (Hillsborough County’s population is 200,355 greater than Travis County). Additionally, counties were sorted by their population size and the rank in the table indicates their position out of the 100 most-populous U.S. counties. Median income was added for informational purposes but was not a factor in the analysis.

Most of the counties similar to Travis County using these criteria may be surprising as they are not those typically identified. Travis County has a slightly higher median income than these comparable counties, the state of Texas overall and the U.S. overall. Also notable is that no other Texas county made this list.

## U.S. Counties Similar to Travis County in Population Size and Poverty Rate

Selected U.S. Counties, 2005-2009

Geographic Area (major city)	Rank <sup>a</sup>	Population	Poverty Rate	Median Income
Hillsborough County, FL (Tampa)	32	1,167,116	13%	\$49,594
Franklin County, OH (Columbus)	34	1,124,073	16%	\$49,041
Orange County, FL (Orlando)	35	1,062,344	13%	\$50,352
Pima County, AZ (Tucson)	40	990,213	16%	\$45,885
Fulton County, GA (Atlanta)	41	987,148	15%	\$58,573
Travis County, TX (Austin)	42	966,761	15%	\$54,044
Erie County, NY (Buffalo)	49	914,200	14%	\$46,609
Marion County, IN (Indianapolis)	54	878,881	17%	\$43,858
Hamilton County, OH (Cincinnati)	57	851,867	14%	\$48,363
Duval County, FL (Jacksonville)	58	846,385	13%	\$49,135
Essex County, NJ (Newark)	69	771,353	15%	\$54,176
Texas	n/a	23,819,042	17%	\$48,199
U.S.	n/a	301,461,533	13%	\$51,425

<sup>a</sup> Out of the 100 most-populous counties in the U.S.

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

Source data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B01001, B17001 and B19013

## Texas Counties

The following table displays the seven most-populous counties in Texas. (They are also the only Texas counties that rank in the 100 most-populous U.S. counties.) Travis County is the 5<sup>th</sup> most-populous county in Texas and has a lower poverty rate and a higher median income than the two most-populous counties in Texas (Harris and Dallas counties).

Population, Poverty Rate and Median Income of Most-Populous Texas Counties				
Selected Texas Counties, 2005-2009				
Geographic Area (major city)	Rank <sup>a</sup>	Population	Poverty Rate	Median Income
Harris County (Houston)	3	3,909,790	17%	\$50,569
Dallas County (Dallas)	9	2,383,126	17%	\$47,059
Tarrant County (Fort Worth)	18	1,704,943	13%	\$54,647
Bexar County (San Antonio)	20	1,584,817	17%	\$45,688
Travis County (Austin)	42	966,761	15%	\$54,044
Collin County (Plano)	73	729,514	6%	\$80,545
El Paso County (El Paso)	74	729,396	27%	\$35,249
<i>Texas</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>23,819,042</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>\$48,199</i>

<sup>a</sup> Out of the 100 most-populous counties in the U.S.

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

Source data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B01001, B17001 and B19013

## Austin-Round Rock MSA

The table below displays population, poverty rate and median income data for the Austin-Round Rock 5-County Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the MSA to which Travis County belongs. Travis County is the largest county with 594,323 more residents than the next most-populous county, Williamson County. While there exists a range of range of poverty rates and median income levels, Travis County ranks fairly average in the MSA.

Population, Poverty Rate and Median Income			
Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and Included Counties, 2005-2009			
Geographic Area	Population <sup>a</sup>	Poverty Rate	Median Income
Austin-Round Rock MSA	1,589,393	13%	\$57,109
Bastrop County	71,928	13% <sup>b</sup>	\$50,585
Caldwell County	36,895	19%	\$41,387
Hays County	141,371	18%	\$ 52,409 <sup>b</sup>
Travis County	966,761	15%	\$54,044
Williamson County	372,438	6%	\$69,406
<i>Texas</i>	<i>23,819,042</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>\$48,199</i>

<sup>a</sup> A statistical test for sampling variability or geographic comparison significance was not appropriate due to the use of a controlled estimate in the source data.

<sup>b</sup> This figure is not statistically different from Travis County.

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

Source data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B01001, B17001 and B19013

## Understanding Poverty Estimates and Rates

This report often describes both the number of individuals living in poverty and the poverty rate. Poverty estimates (numbers) tell us how many people in a given group are living in poverty. Poverty rates help us make comparisons between geographies and population groups and identify those groups which are disproportionately represented among the population living in poverty.

American Community Survey data tables provide estimates for the number of individuals who are living in poverty, displayed according to various characteristics (e.g., age, family type, level of education) and geographies (e.g., cities, counties, block groups). The poverty rate for any given group is calculated by dividing the number of people in the group who live in poverty by the total number of people in the group. For example, to calculate the poverty rate for children living in Austin, Texas, you would divide the number of children in Austin who live in households with incomes below the poverty threshold by the total number of children for whom poverty status is determined in Austin. Thus, the poverty rate is the percentage of people living in poverty. In this report, poverty rate and “percent in poverty” are used interchangeably.

The three scenarios below demonstrate why it is important to consider both numbers and rates when using poverty data to answer a question or make a decision.

**High number, low rate:** Some groups make up a large portion of the overall population, but relatively few group members live in poverty. These groups have a high number of people in living in poverty but a low poverty rate.

**Low number, high rate:** Some groups are small in overall size but have many members living in poverty. These groups have a relatively small number of people in poverty but a high poverty rate.

**High number, high rate:** Some groups make up a large share of the county’s population and also have many members living in poverty. These groups will have both a high number of people living in poverty and a high poverty rate.

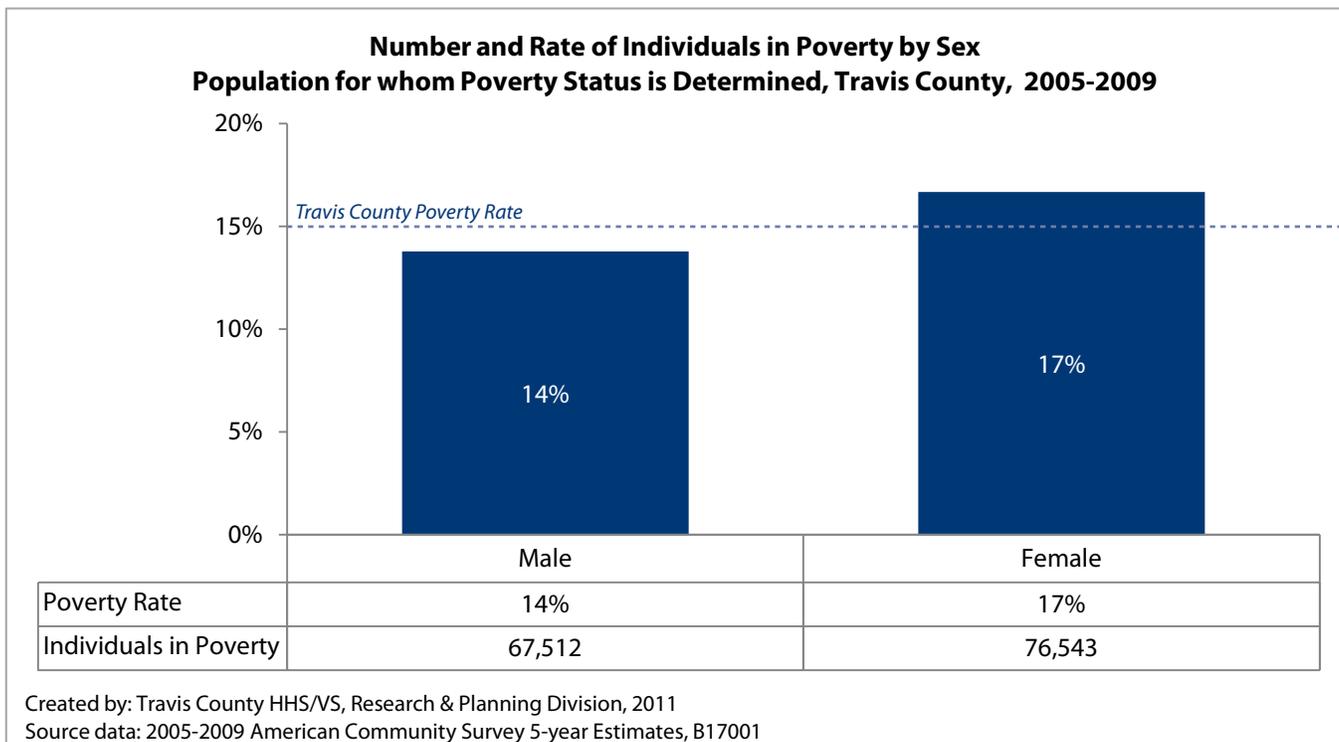
# Demographics

This section explores which demographic groups are most significantly represented among the Travis County population living in poverty. Here we consider sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin independently and in combination. We also look at both the number of people living in poverty and the poverty rate.

Considering each of the individual factors of sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin, females, children, young adults age 18-24, Blacks/African Americans, and Hispanic/Latinos have poverty rates greater than the overall Travis County rate of 15%. Exploring these same demographic characteristics in combination, the groups with the highest poverty rates (25% or greater) include: Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino children and women under age 35 as well as non-Hispanic White and Asian individuals ages 18-24. Hispanic/Latino children are represented among the population living in poverty in the greatest number.

## Sex

In Travis County, the poverty rate among females (17%) is moderately higher than that among males (14%). State and national figures also indicate a three percentage point difference in the poverty rates between the two sexes.

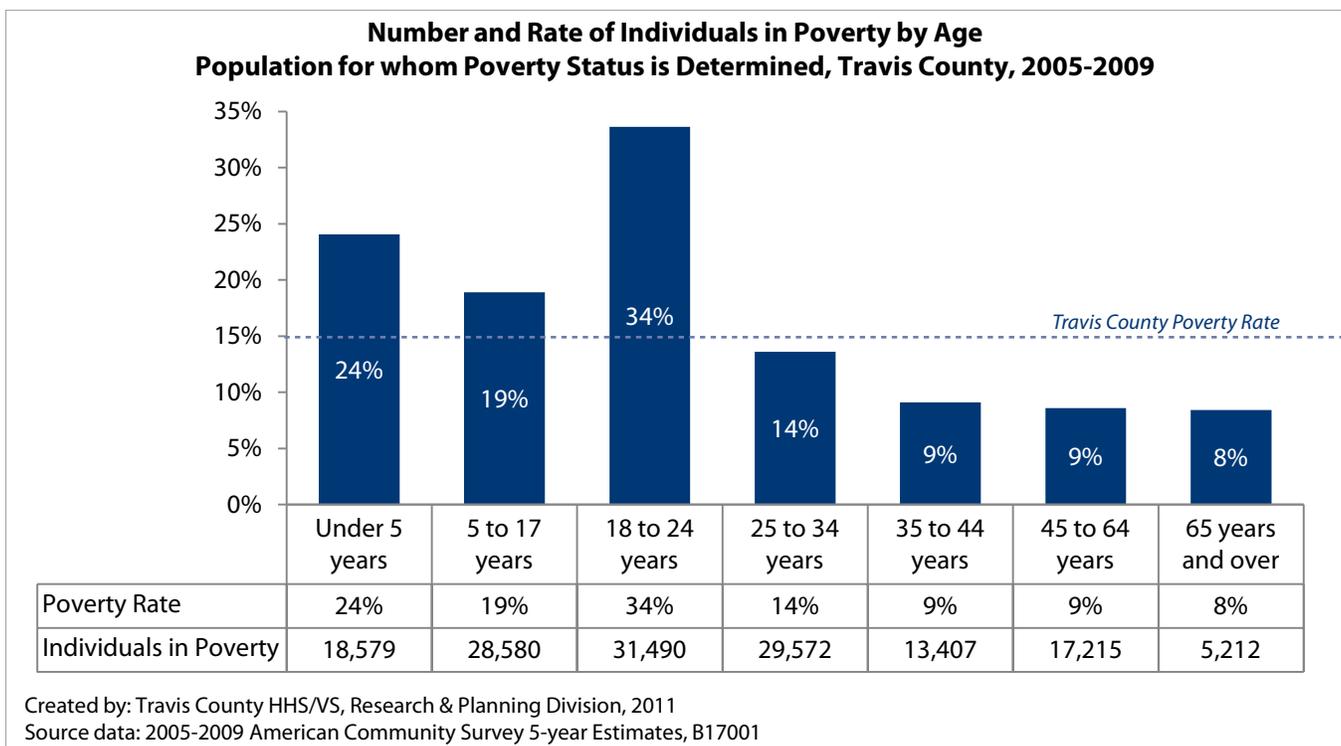


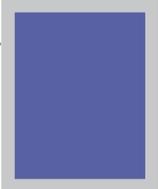
## Age

Poverty rates are the highest among children and young adults. In Travis County, 75% of those living in poverty are under the age of 35 (compared with 68% of those in Texas and 63% in the U.S.).

Travis County young adults age 18-24 have both the highest number living in poverty and the highest poverty rate (34%). Texas and the U.S. have significantly lower poverty rates among their 18-24 populations (25% and 23% respectively). The high poverty rate for 18-24 year olds in Travis County is in part due to the large number of college students living in the community. When the 18-24 age group is excluded, Travis County's poverty rate is two percentage points lower (for Texas and the U.S. this difference is less than one percentage point).<sup>9</sup>

Young children have the second highest poverty rate. Nearly one out of every four Travis County residents under age five lives in poverty. The poverty rate for the 5-17 year old age group (19%) is somewhat lower than that of young children, but still greater than the county's overall poverty rate of 15%.

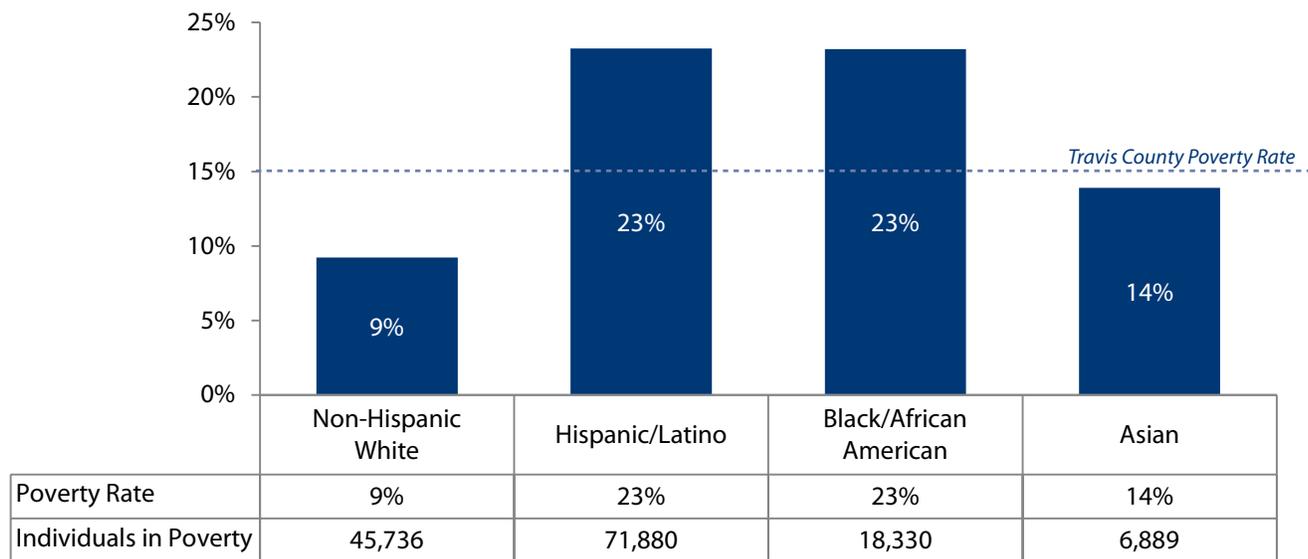




## Race and Hispanic Origin

In Travis County the poverty rate is highest among Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American residents (23% for both groups). Hispanics/Latinos followed by Non-Hispanic Whites make up the largest number of those living in poverty in the Travis County community.

**Number and Rate of Individuals in Poverty by Selected Race and Hispanic Origin  
Population for whom Poverty Status is Determined, Travis County, 2005-2009**



Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011  
Source data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, B17001B, B17001D, B17001H and B17001I

### Definition of Race and Hispanic Origin

The U.S. Census Bureau considers race and Hispanic origin as two separate and distinct concepts. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race. Therefore, individuals reporting their race, such as White or Black or African American, may also be Hispanic or Latino. In limited cases, the Census Bureau does produce data tables that consider race and Hispanic origin simultaneously. Poverty tables are available for the group "Non-Hispanic Whites" but not for any other combination of Race and Hispanic origin.

For this report, we will look at the following categories: Non-Hispanic White, Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, and Asian. The Black/African American and Asian categories may include people of Hispanic origin. Four race categories that comprise an estimated 2% of the Travis County population are not represented in this analysis: American Indian and Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race and Two or More Races. We made these decisions based on the availability of Census data tables and considering sample size and the reliability of the data. A focus on the aforementioned four categories, representing 98% of the county's population, allows a more complex exploration of race and Hispanic origin in relation to poverty and in combination with age and sex.

Texas and U.S. statistics also show disparity in poverty rates by race and Hispanic origin. Just as in Travis County, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino residents across the state and the nation live in poverty at a rate at least 2.5 times greater than that of Non-Hispanic White residents. Nationally, Non-Hispanic Whites make up the largest number of people living in poverty. In Texas, Hispanics/Latinos comprise the largest number.

### Number and Rate of Individuals in Poverty by Selected Race and Hispanic Origin

Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined, Travis County, Texas and U.S. , 2005-2009

	U.S.		Texas		Travis County	
	Individuals in Poverty	Poverty Rate	Individuals in Poverty	Poverty Rate	Individuals in Poverty	Poverty Rate
Non-Hispanic White	18,144,049	9%	974,026	9%	45,736	9%
Hispanic/Latino	9,765,064	22%	2,159,385	26%	71,880	23%
Black/African American	8,951,324	25%	623,899	24%	18,330	23%
Asian	1,409,735	11%	90,693	11%	6,889	14%
All Individuals	39,537,240	13%	3,892,532	17%	144,055	15%

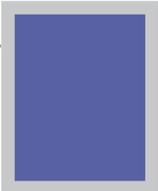
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

Source data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B17001B, B17001D, B17001H and B17001I

## Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin

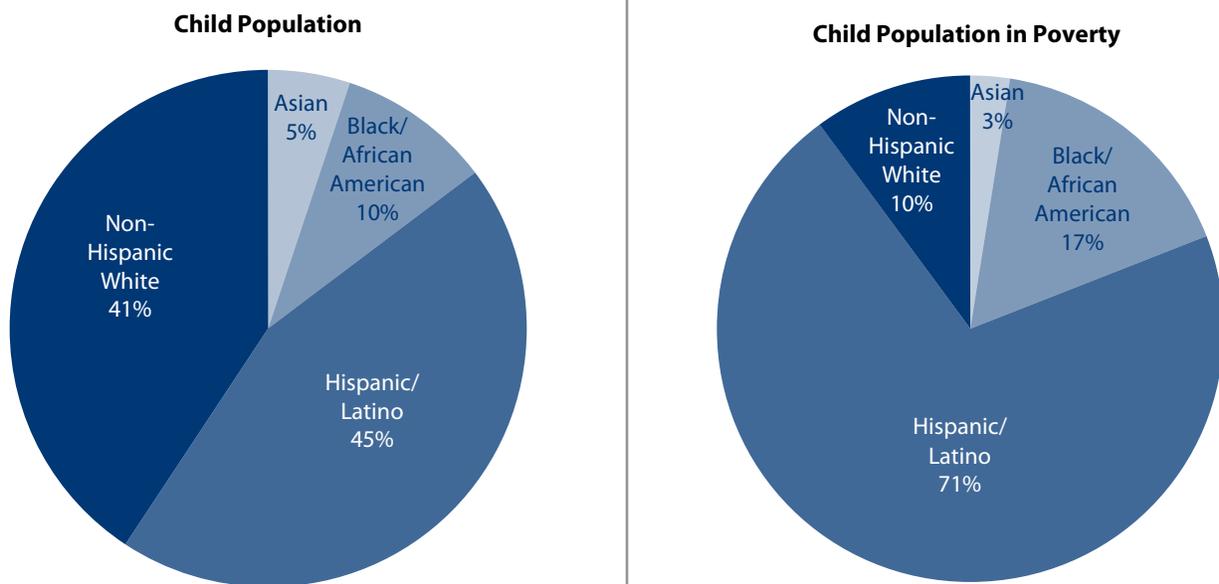
The interplay of the demographic factors of age, sex, race and Hispanic origin reveals some important information about poverty in Travis County. These findings are described below and detailed in the corresponding data table on page 15.

The previous section entitled “Age” explores age as a single variable related to poverty and identifies poverty rates as highest among children and young adults. Yet youth alone is not universally associated with high poverty rates. Only about 6% of Non-Hispanic White children under age 5 live in poverty in Travis County. When age is considered in combination with race and Hispanic origin, the highest poverty rates emerge: Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American children under age 5 have poverty rates of 37% and 44% respectively.



As a demographic group, Hispanic/Latino children under age 18 make up a significant share of the Travis County population living in poverty. Nearly one out of four people living in poverty is a Hispanic/Latino child. Also, as shown in these pie charts, Hispanic/Latino children make up slightly less than half (45%) of the Travis County child population, yet they represent nearly three-quarters (71%) of children who are living in poverty.

**Total Child Population and Rate of Children (under 18) in Poverty by Selected Race and Hispanic Origin, Travis County, 2005-2009**



Note: Figures do not add to 100% due to rounding.  
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011  
Source data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, B17001B, B17001D, B17001H and B17001I

Non-Hispanic Whites and Asians ages 18-24 appear to live in poverty at notably high rates while the poverty rates for all other age cohorts within these two groups are significantly lower. This is likely in part due to the college student effect described previously. (see page 11)

Adding sex as a variable to consider in combination with age, race, and Hispanic origin reveals that Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino young women are also over-represented among the population living in poverty in Travis County. Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino females ages 18-24 and 25-34 experience poverty at a rate greater than their male counterparts. Although less pronounced, this difference in poverty rates is also seen between Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American females and males in the 35-64 age cohort and between Non-Hispanic White females and males in the 18-24 and 25-34 age cohorts.

(see corresponding data table on the next page)

Number and Percent of Individuals in Poverty by Sex, Age, and Selected Race and Hispanic Origin  
Population for whom Poverty Status is Determined, Travis County, 2005-2009

		Total	Non-Hispanic White	Hispanic/Latino	Black/African American	Asian
Total population		949,167	495,722	309,090	78,946	49,599
Number in poverty		144,055	45,736	71,880	18,330	6,889
Percent in poverty		15%	9%	23%	23%	14%
Under 5	Total population	77,217	27,758	37,213	6,110	4,220
	Number in poverty	18,579	1,717	13,762	2,670	321*
	Percent in poverty	24%	6%	37%	44%	8%*
5-17	Total population	151,282	60,667	64,350	15,761	6,873
	Number in poverty	28,580	3,023	19,441	5,075	859*
	Percent in poverty	19%	5%	30%	32%	12%*
18-24 male	Total population	49,115	21,194	20,281	4,304	2,286
	Number in poverty	14,175	7,726	4,072	1056*	1,181
	Percent in poverty	29%	36%	20%	25%*	52%
18-24 female	Total population	44,512	21,494	16,305	4,624	1,678
	Number in poverty	17,315	8,918	5,752	1,697	900
	Percent in poverty	39%	41%	35%	37%	54%
25-34 male	Total population	115,978	57,383	41,834	6,758	8,095
	Number in poverty	13,035	4,210	6,866	804*	856*
	Percent in poverty	11%	7%	16%	12%*	11%*
25-34 female	Total population	101,412	54,059	30,760	7,417	7,399
	Number in poverty	16,537	5,144	7,808	2,178	1,141*
	Percent in poverty	16%	10%	25%	29%	15%*
35-64 male	Total population	180,411	107,440	48,144	13,684	8,600
	Number in poverty	14,193	5,981	5,968	1,481	692
	Percent in poverty	8%	6%	12%	11%	8%
35-64 female	Total population	167,336	101,209	40,303	15,027	8,618
	Number in poverty	16,429	6,215	6,760	2,632	689*
	Percent in poverty	10%	6%	17%	18%	8%*
65+ male	Total population	26,985	19,688	4,376	2,002	765
	Number in poverty	1,908	1,004	511	271*	131*
	Percent in poverty	7%	5%	12%	14%*	17%*
65+ female	Total population	34,919	24,830	5,524	3,259	1,065
	Number in poverty	3,304	1,798	940	466*	119*
	Percent in poverty	9%	7%	17%	14%*	11%*

\*These estimates are not reliable at the 90% confidence level.

Figures highlighted in orange are identified (and described in the preceding text) as having a disproportionately high poverty rate.

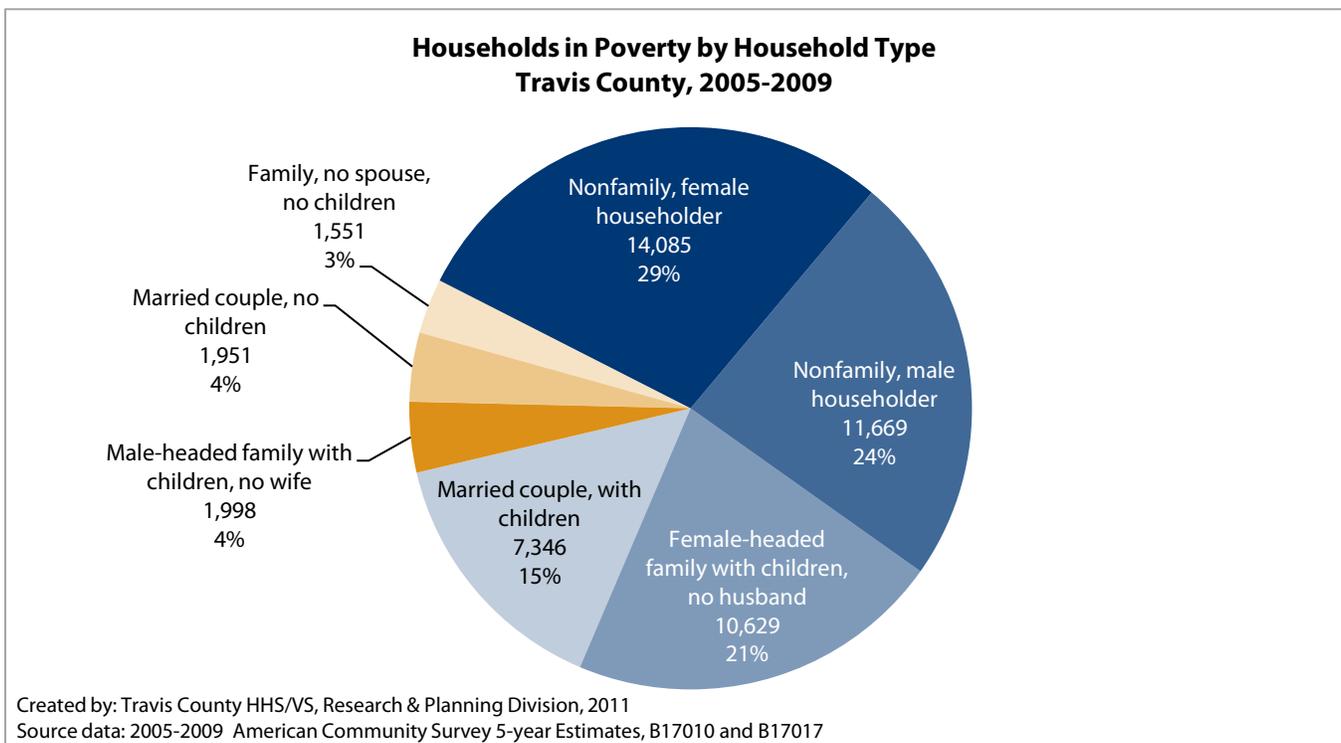
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

Source data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B17001B, B17001D, B17001H and B17001I

# Households and Families

Much of this report explores poverty according to individual characteristics. This section looks at poverty by household and family type. Although poverty exists among all household types, the majority of households living in poverty are either nonfamily households or households that include children. Several factors, including being female-headed, having children, and having no spouse present correlate with notably higher household poverty rates.

Of the 380,211 households in Travis County, an estimated 49,229, or 13%, have incomes below the poverty threshold. Female, then male, nonfamily households make up the largest share of the households living in poverty followed by female-headed households with children, no spouse present and married couple households with children.



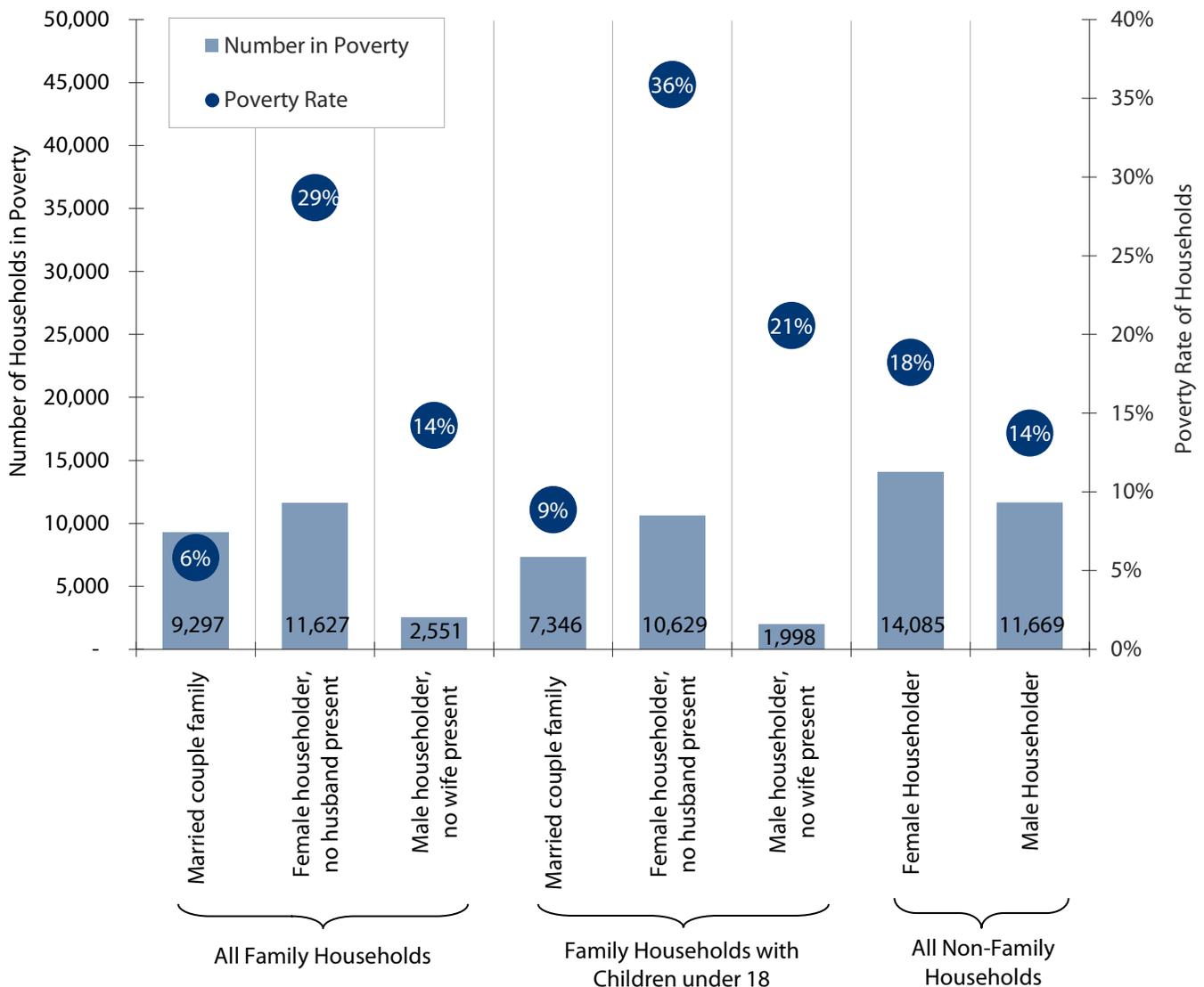
## Definition of Household and Family Type

The U.S. Census Bureau defines a household as a set of individuals who live in one housing unit. A housing unit can be a house, apartment, or mobile home. A household can be made up of a family, an individual living alone, or another group of people living together. The U.S. Census Bureau designates a single person to be the householder for every household. The designated householder is the person who is listed on the first line of the American Community Survey questionnaire and is generally the primary owner or renter of the housing unit.

The 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates defines a husband or wife as a person of the opposite sex who is married to and living with the householder. Family households include one or more people who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Non-family households include householders who live alone or with people whom they are not related to by birth, marriage, or adoption. In 2010 the U.S. Census Bureau began to recognize same-sex marriages and same-sex spouses; however, this data is not reflected in the 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Female-headed households with children, no husband present have the highest poverty rate (36%) of all household types. The poverty rate for their male counterparts is somewhat lower (21%), though still notable. Married couple families have the lowest poverty rate (6%) of all household types. Married couple families with children have a slightly higher poverty rate (9%), but still experience poverty at well under the overall Travis County poverty rate. Among non-family households, female householders have a higher poverty rate (18%) than male householders (14%).

**Number and Rate of Families and Households in Poverty  
by Family Type, by Presence of Related Children Under 18, and by Household Type,  
Travis County, 2005-2009**



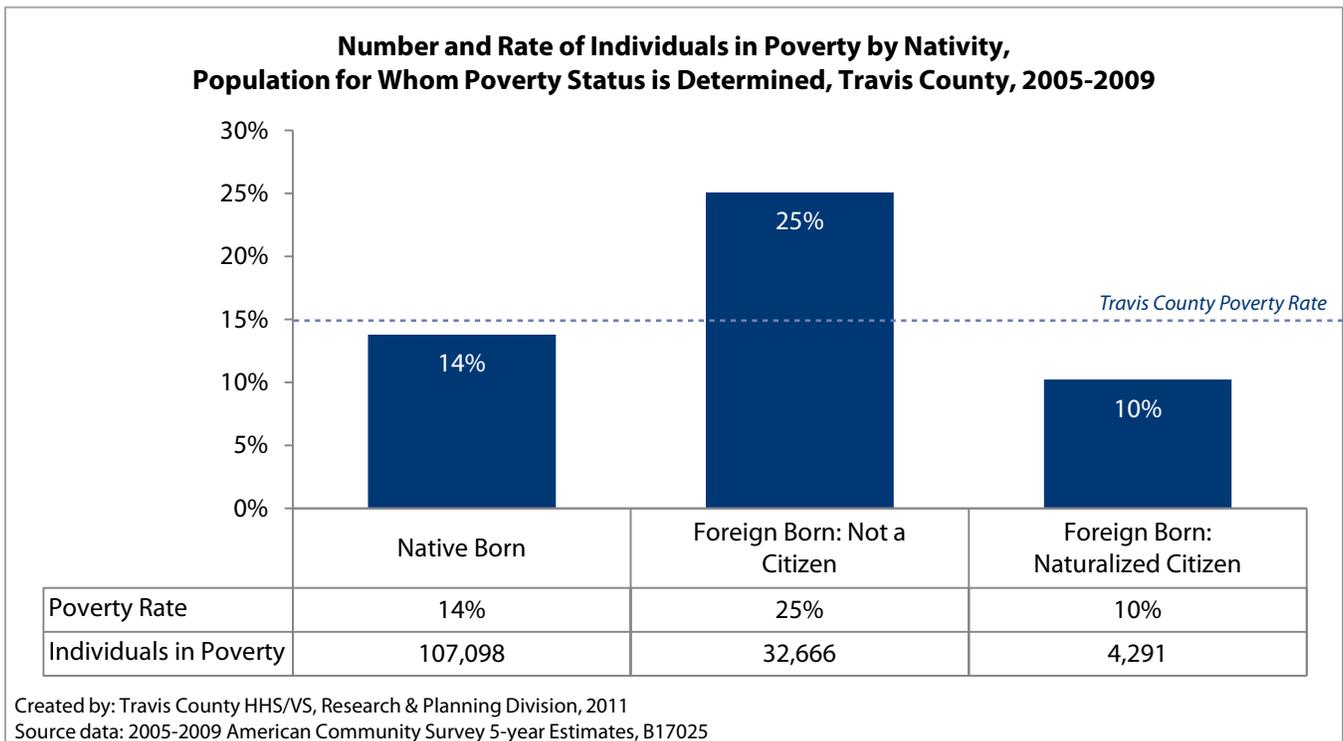
Created by: Travis County HHS/VIS, Research & Planning Division, 2011  
Source data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, B17010, B17017

# Nativity and Language

In this section, we look at poverty status according to two additional factors: place of birth and language spoken at home. Foreign born non-citizens and Spanish speakers emerge with the highest poverty rates, 25% and 23% respectively.

## Nativity

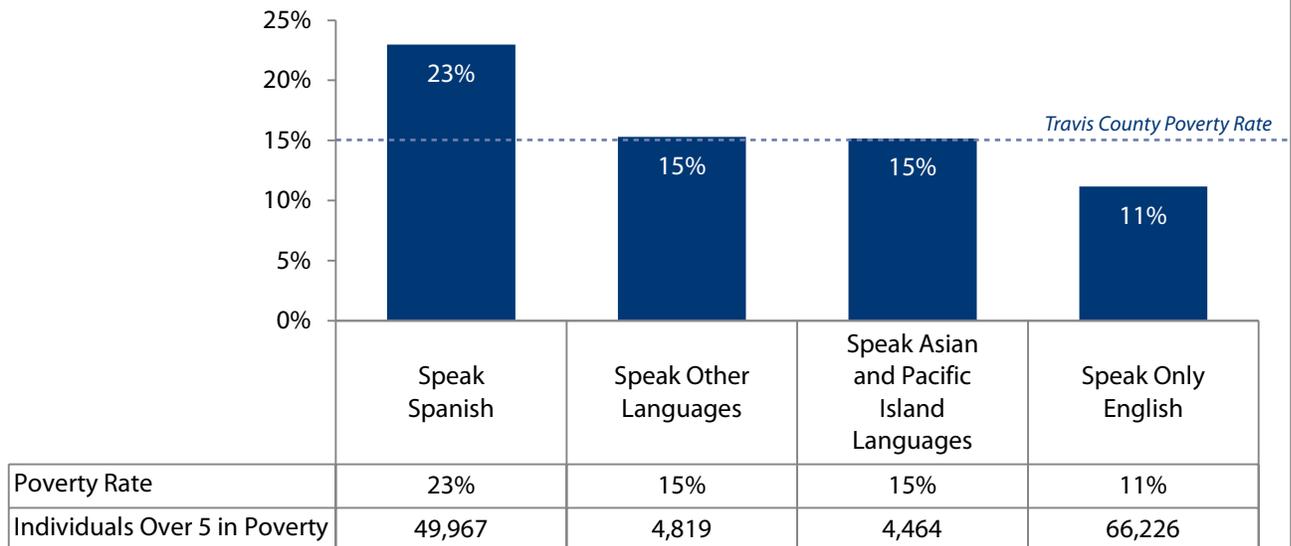
Nativity refers to whether an individual is native born (born in the United States or abroad to U.S. citizen parents) or foreign born (not a U.S. citizen by birth). Here the foreign born population is also differentiated according to citizenship status.<sup>10</sup> Foreign born non-citizens have the highest poverty rate (25%), while foreign born naturalized citizens have the lowest (10%). The native born poverty rate (14%) closely mirrors the overall poverty rate (15%) of the Travis County population. This is unsurprising given that the native born population is much larger than the foreign born population in Travis County.



## Language

While residents of Travis County speak a variety of languages, the two most common are English and Spanish. Accordingly, the majority of individuals living in poverty speak one or both of these languages. Individuals that speak Spanish are disproportionately represented among the poor and have the highest poverty rate (23%). Individuals that speak only English have the lowest poverty rate (11%). The poverty rates of individuals that speak Asian and Pacific Island languages (15%) and other languages (15%) mirror Travis County's overall poverty rate.

**Number and Rate of Individuals in Poverty by Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Older, Travis County, 2005-2009**



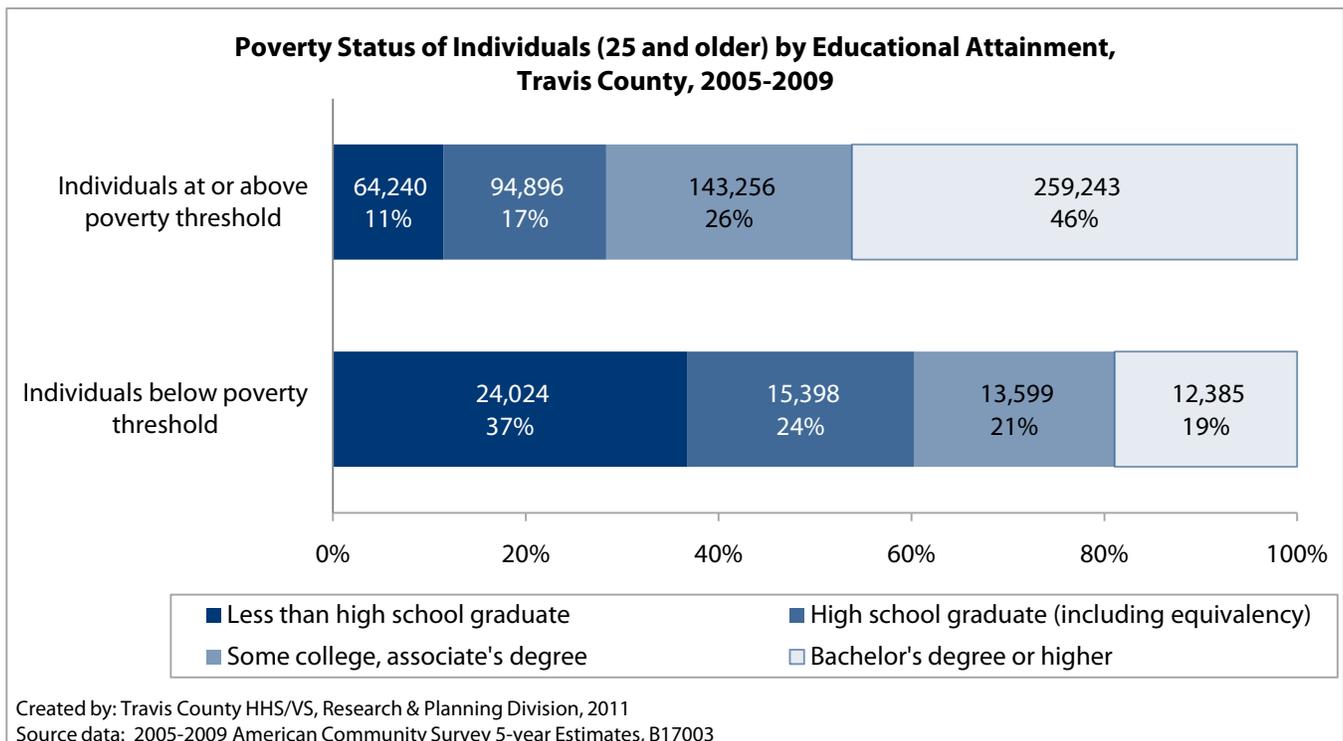
Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011  
 Source data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, B16009

# Education & Workforce Status

Looking at the education and workforce status of residents in poverty, we find that residents in poverty are more likely to have lower educational attainment and less regular employment. The following section provides detail specific to educational attainment (of individuals 25 and older for whom poverty status is determined), work experience within the past 12 months, and employment status (of individuals 16 years and over for whom poverty status is determined).

## Educational Attainment

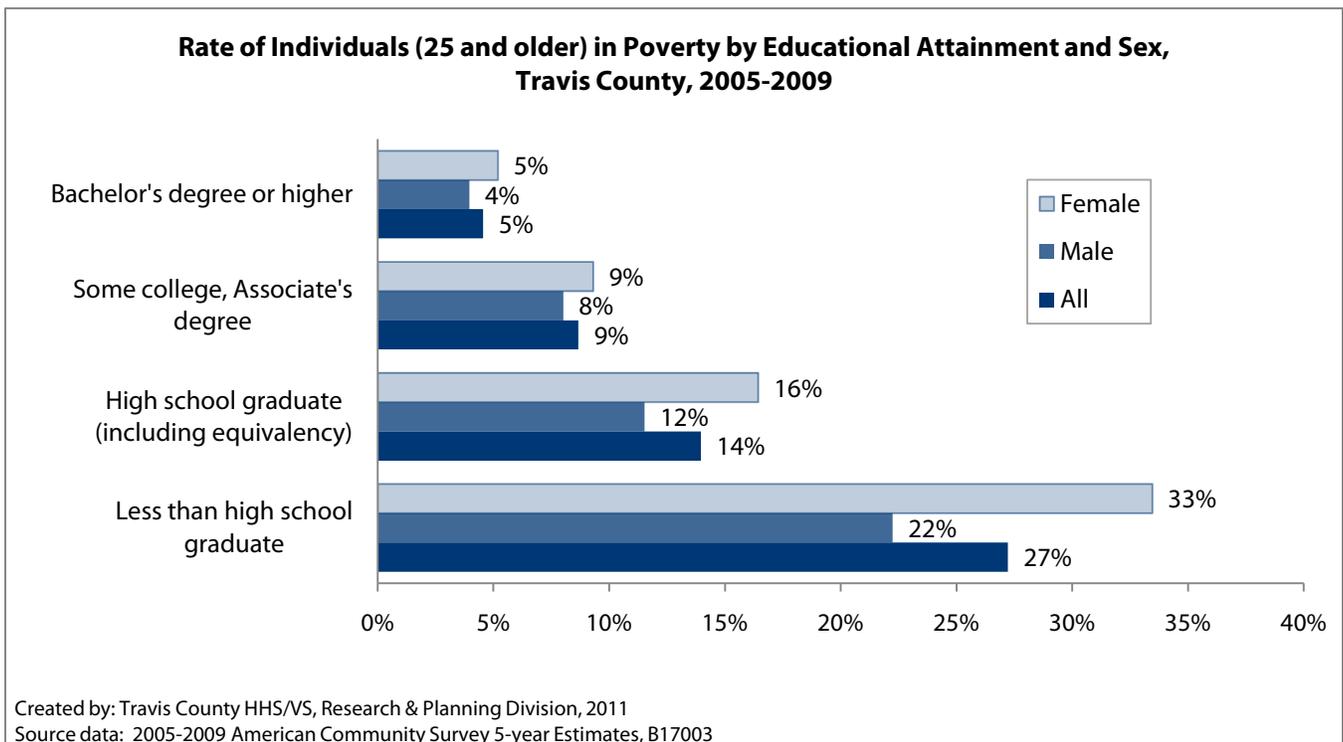
This data shows a strong correlation between education and poverty status. Individuals with low educational attainment are far more likely to have income below the poverty threshold. Among residents (25 years and older) living in poverty, 37% have not graduated from high school, while just 11% have a bachelor's degree or higher. In contrast, 11% of those living at or above the poverty threshold have not graduated from high school, while 46% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Very little variation is seen across sex.

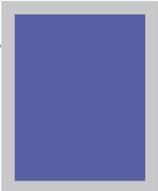




Looking at these same numbers from a different perspective, 27% of all residents (25 and older for whom poverty status is determined) who did not graduate from high school live below the poverty threshold. This number decreases at each subsequent level of higher educational attainment: 14% of those who graduated high school (or equivalency), 9% with some college or an associate's degree, and 5% with a bachelor's degree or higher.

From this perspective, we also find greater variation across sex. Of all women who have not graduated from high school, 33% live in poverty, compared to 22% of men in the same category. At each higher level of educational attainment, women remain more likely to live below the poverty threshold, though the difference between sexes becomes smaller: for high school graduates, 16% of women and 12% of men are in poverty, for those with some college or an associate's degree, 9% of women and 8% of men, and for those with a bachelor's degree or higher, 5% of women and 4% of men are in poverty.

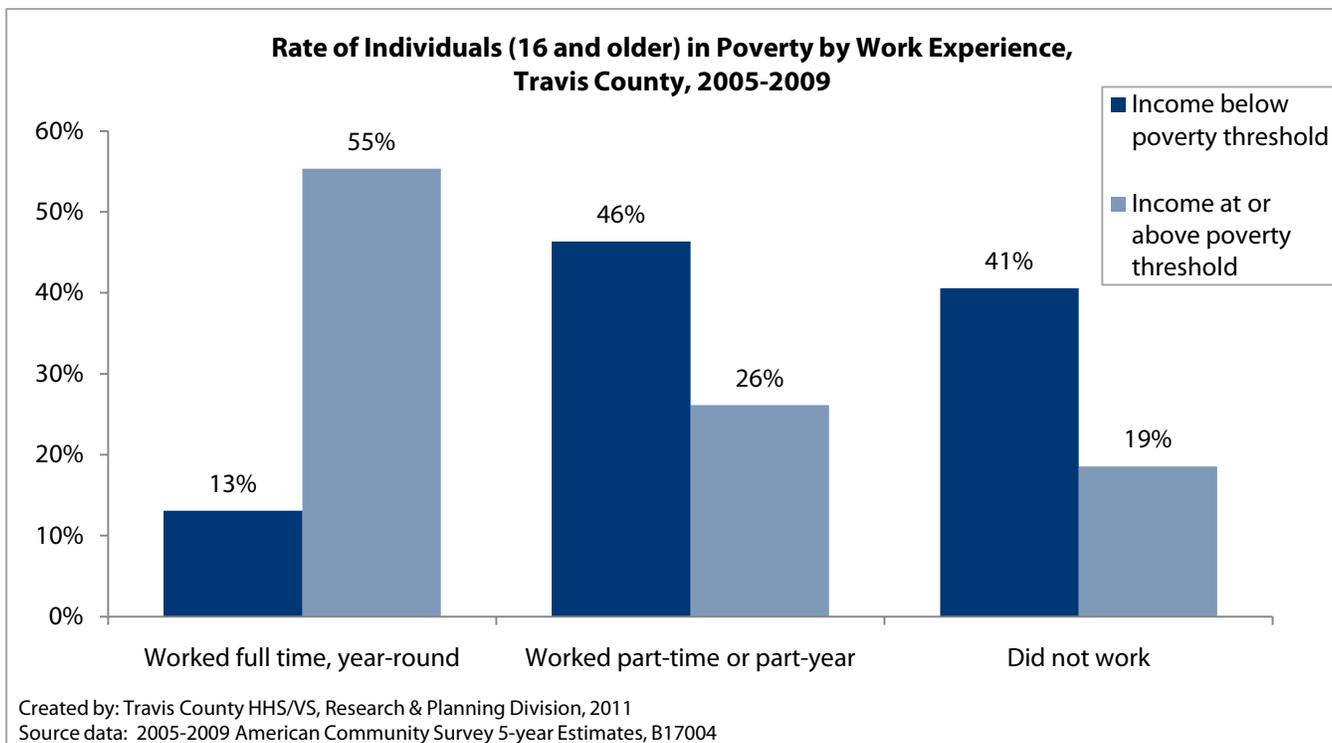


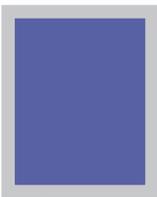


## Work Experience

Within the context of the American Community Survey, there are three options for “work experience”: 1) worked full time, year-round, 2) worked part-time or part-year, or 3) did not work. As with education, the correlation between work experience and poverty is quite strong. Among individuals 16 and over below the poverty threshold, 41% did not work in the past 12 months, while only 19% of those at or above the poverty threshold did not work. Conversely, only 13% of those in poverty worked full time, year-round, compared to 55% of those at or above the poverty threshold. Men are more likely to work full-time yet remain in poverty: nearly 20% of men in poverty worked full-time compared to only 8% of women. Conversely, women in poverty are more likely (48%) to not work than men (32%).

Similarly, of all those residents (16 and over) who worked full time, year-round, just 4% had income below the poverty threshold, while 22% of those who worked part-time or part-year and 25% of those who did not work at all had income below the poverty threshold.

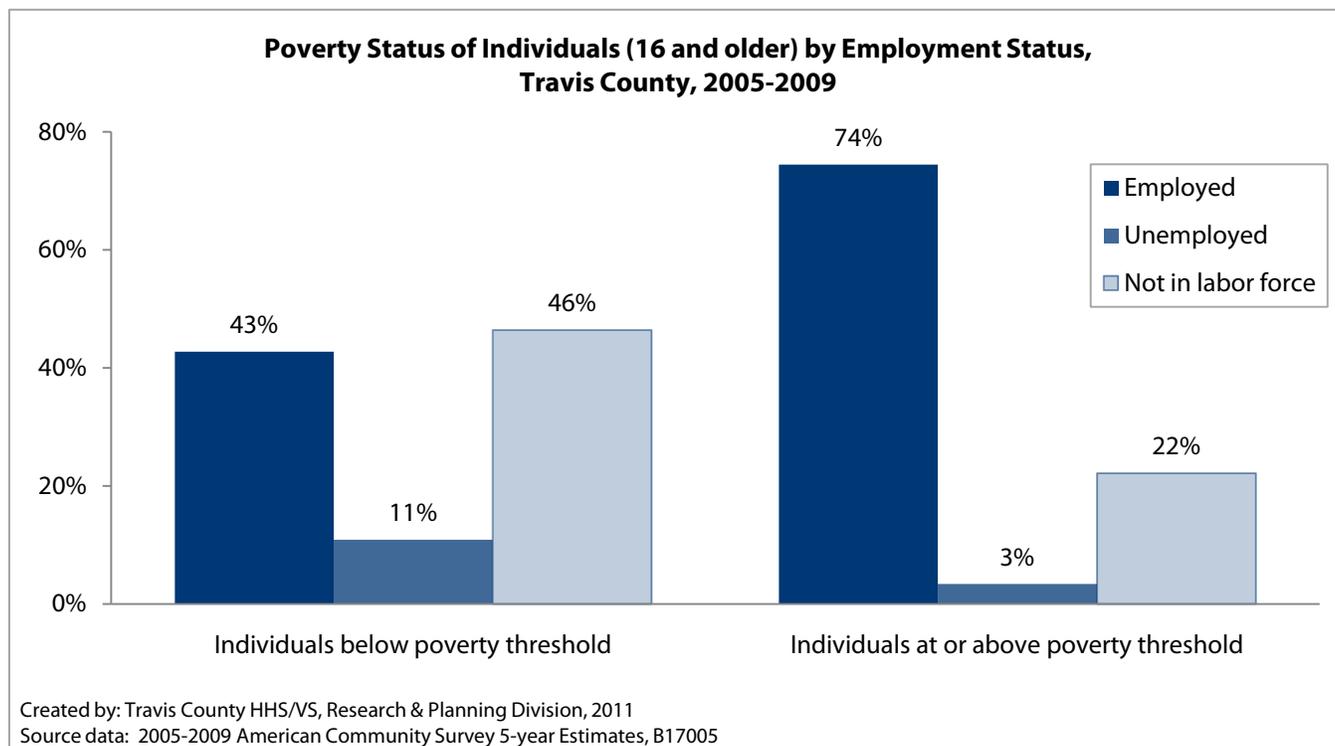




## Employment Status

Within the ACS context, “employment status” is used to describe an individual’s current state, unlike “work experience” which is used to describe experience in the previous 12 months. There are two basic options to describe one’s employment status: 1) in the labor force or 2) not in the labor force. Of those “in the labor force” it is possible to be either a) employed or b) unemployed. As above, we see a correlation between poverty status and employment status. Of those in the workforce, 10% were found to have income below the poverty threshold, of those not in the workforce, 25% were found to have income below the poverty threshold.

Within the workforce, only 8% of those who were employed had income below the poverty threshold, and 33% of those who were unemployed were in poverty. Men whose income fell below the poverty threshold were far more likely to be in the labor force and be employed than women. 63% of men in poverty were in the labor force and 51% were employed, compared to 46% of women in the labor force and 36% employed. Women, either below or above the poverty threshold, are more likely to be out of the workforce.



The majority of individuals, both above and below the poverty threshold, were in the workforce, though a much smaller percentage (54%) are in the workforce and in poverty, compared to 78% who are at or above poverty and in the workforce. For those below the poverty threshold, a much smaller percentage is employed (43% compared to 74%), and a larger percentage is unemployed (11% compared to 3%). The portion of those in poverty who are out of the workforce (46%) is more than double that of individuals at or above the poverty threshold (22%).

# Geographic Concentrations

The following maps display poverty and median household income information for Travis County and Texas as a whole. The 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates offer data for small geographic areas, such as census tracts and block groups. While these small area estimates provide an opportunity to map data at a more granular level, they are not without shortcomings. Since these estimates are based on samples, they all have a margin of error. The margin of error increases as the population size decreases; therefore, a substantial number of these smaller geographic areas have estimates with high margins of error. Because many of these estimates are unreliable at a 90% confidence level, we urge readers to use caution when analyzing and comparing data.

## About Census Tracts and Block Groups

The Census Bureau organizes geographic areas into statistical areas. Statistical areas are defined directly by the Census Bureau and state, regional or local authorities, and include census tracts and urban areas. The primary purpose of statistical areas is to tabulate and present census data. Counties are divided into two statistical areas: census tracts and block groups. "Census tracts generally have a population size between 1,200 and 8,000 people, with an optimum size of 4,000."<sup>11</sup> "Block groups are statistical divisions of census tracts [and] are generally defined to contain between 600 and 3,000 people."<sup>12</sup> For more information, please see [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance\\_for\\_data\\_users/geography/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/geography/).

## Cities and Villages in Travis County

Of the cities and villages located in Travis County, Austin's percentage of individuals living in poverty (18%) was more than double that of Round Rock (7%) and Cedar Park (6%). Over one-third (36%) of individuals residing in Austin had incomes below 200% of the poverty threshold, followed by Round Rock and Pflugerville, both at 21% of the population. Please note that the cities and villages included in the table below are those recognized by the Census Bureau as formally incorporated areas either fully or partially located in Travis County. As such, commonly recognized but not formally incorporated areas, including Del Valle, Oak Hill, and Webberville, do not have Census Bureau data available.

### Population, Poverty Threshold Rates, Median Household Income

Cities and Villages in Travis County, 2005-2009

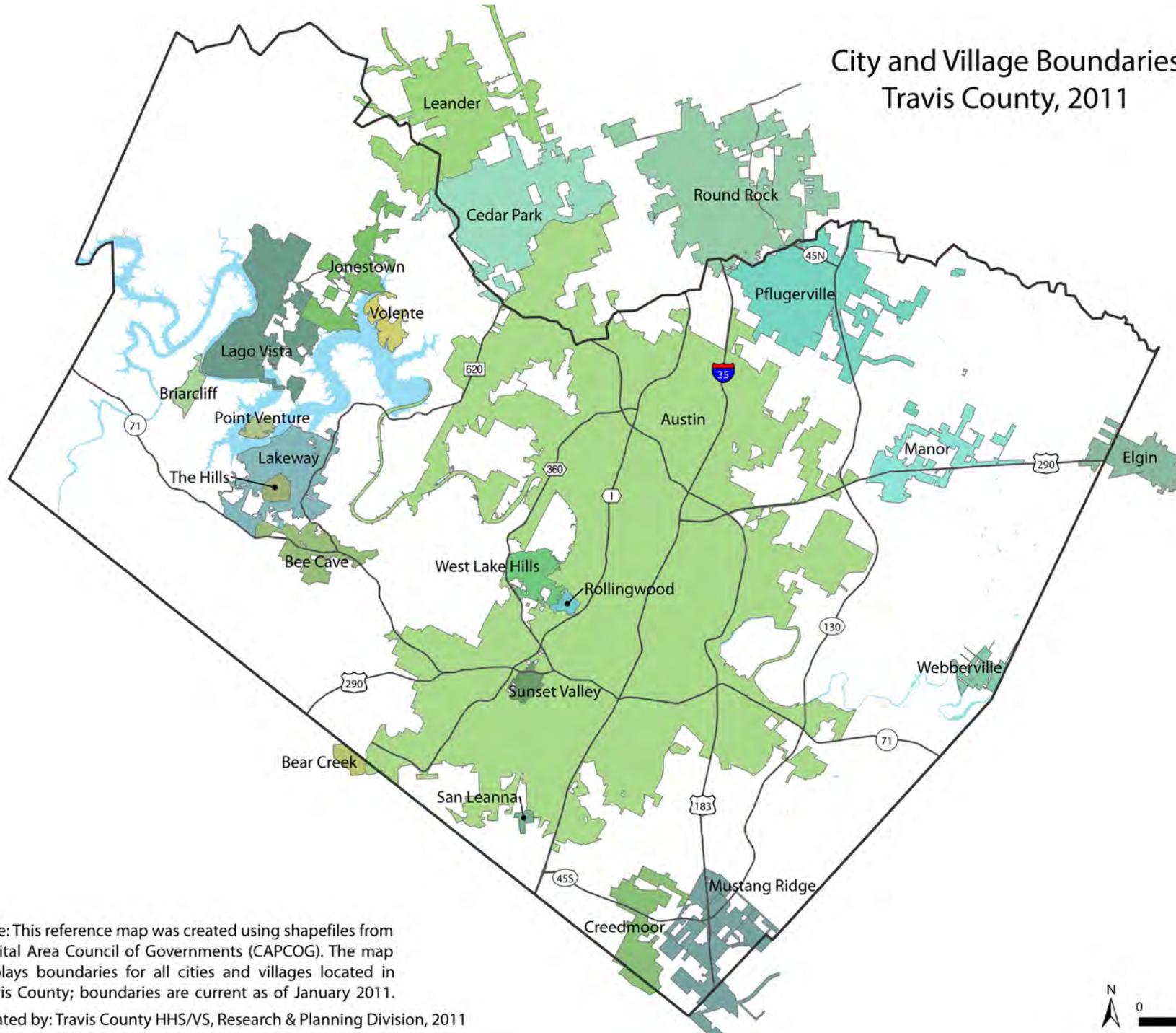
City or Village	Total Population	Under 100% of Poverty Threshold		Under 200% of Poverty Threshold		Median Household Income (in 2009 inflation-adjusted dollars)
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Austin	731,497	128,160	18%	262,224	36%	\$50,236
Round Rock	94,087	6,147	7%	19,813	21%	\$69,892
Cedar Park	54,867	3,102	6%	9,926	18%	\$68,703
Pflugerville	38,615	2,319*	6%	8,279	21%	\$78,939
Leander	22,288	1,072*	5%	4,436	20%	\$68,327
Elgin	10,390	1,820*	18%	4,443*	43%	\$45,493
Lakeway	10,367	432*	4%	1,381*	13%	\$97,706
Lago Vista	6,091	275*	5%	791*	13%	\$68,656
West Lake Hills	3,140	82*	3%	171*	5%	\$157,910
Manor	3,058	190*	6%	966*	32%	\$48,606
Bee Cave	2,573	113*	4%	225*	9%	\$111,442
The Hills	2,485	35*	1%	58*	2%	\$133,261
Jonestown	1,996	125*	6%	486*	24%	\$49,280
Rollingwood	1,520	11*	1%	54*	4%	\$163,167
Briarcliff	1,387	44*	3%	95*	7%	\$91,029
Mustang Ridge	1,160	262*	23%	480*	41%	\$37,226*
Point Venture	1,022*	55*	5%	110*	11%	\$85,685*
Sunset Valley	840*	32*	4%	104*	12%	\$60,107
San Leanna	685	24*	4%	88*	13%	\$80,804
Volente	510*	24*	5%	114*	22%	\$88,500*
Bear Creek	509	23*	5%	26*	5%	\$100,125
Creedmoor	163*	13*	8%	56*	34%	\$28,542*

\*These estimates are not reliable at a 90% confidence level.

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

Source data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C17002 and B19013

## City and Village Boundaries Travis County, 2011



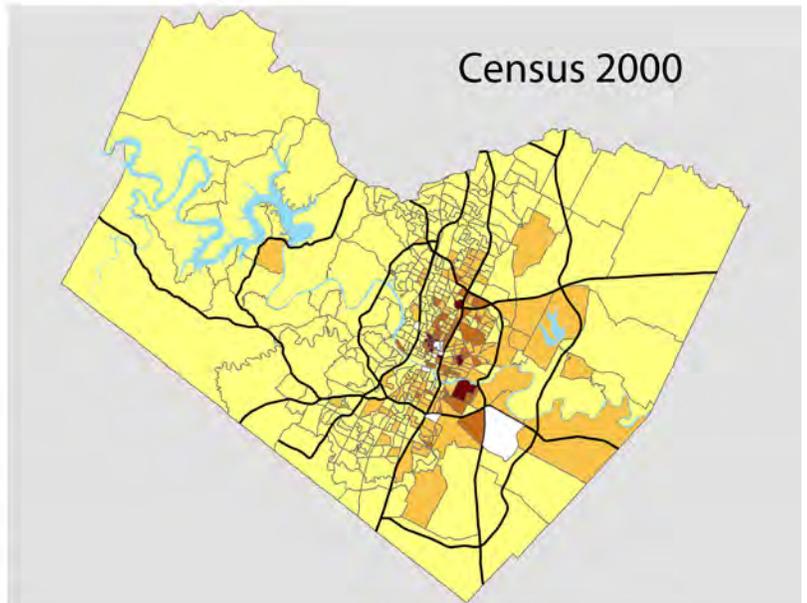
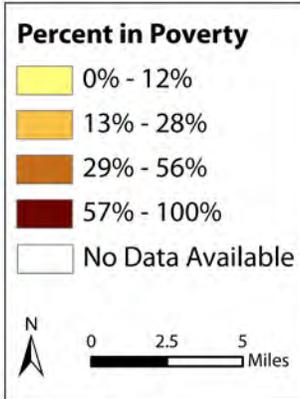
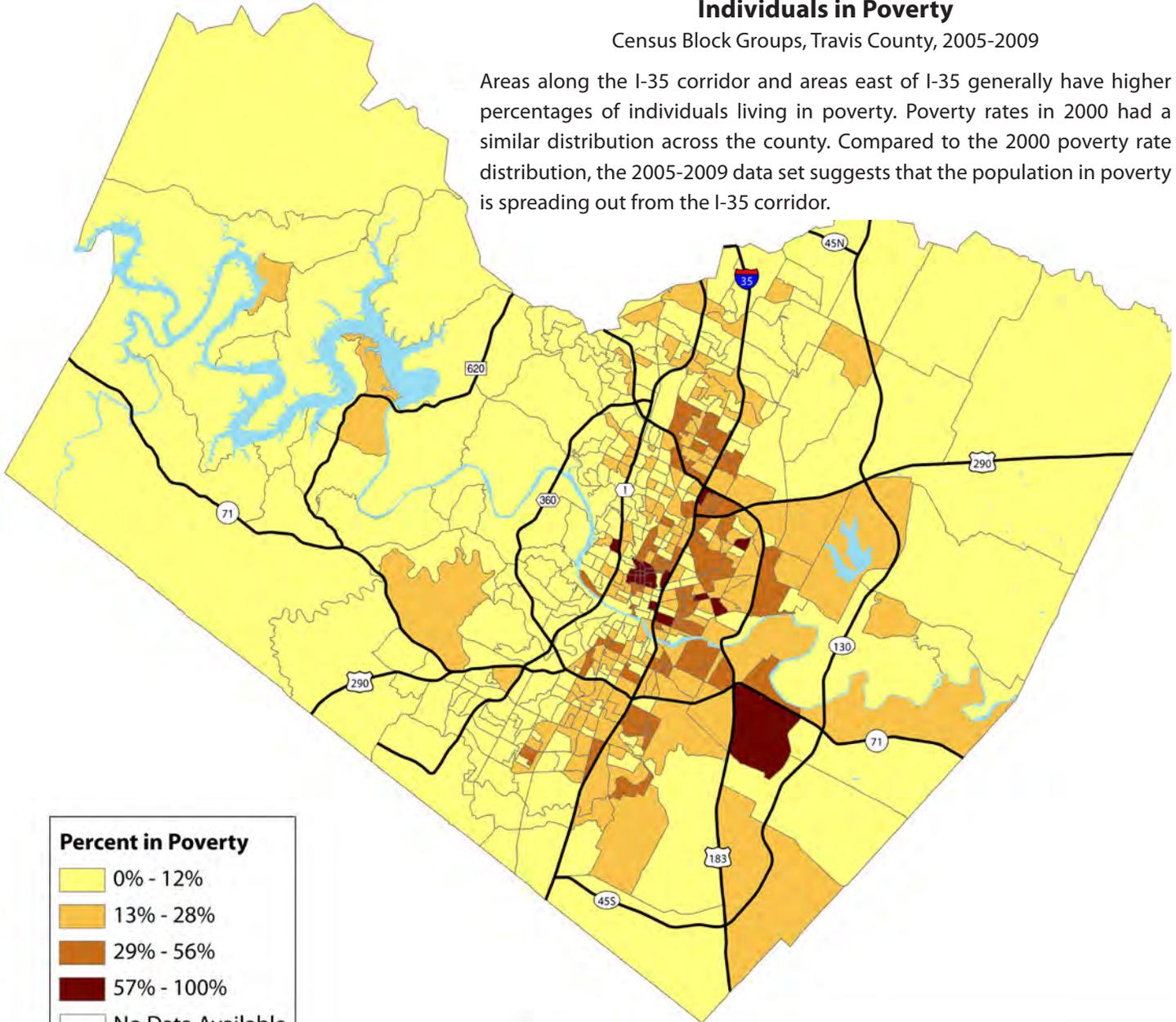
Note: This reference map was created using shapefiles from Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG). The map displays boundaries for all cities and villages located in Travis County; boundaries are current as of January 2011.

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

## Individuals in Poverty

Census Block Groups, Travis County, 2005-2009

Areas along the I-35 corridor and areas east of I-35 generally have higher percentages of individuals living in poverty. Poverty rates in 2000 had a similar distribution across the county. Compared to the 2000 poverty rate distribution, the 2005-2009 data set suggests that the population in poverty is spreading out from the I-35 corridor.



Note: Many of these block groups have poverty estimates that are unreliable. Estimates are based on samples and are subject to a margin of error. Estimates for small areas often have high margins of error. Any inferences should be drawn with caution. Further, the values for the block groups in different classes may not be statistically different. A statistical test is needed to make such a determination.

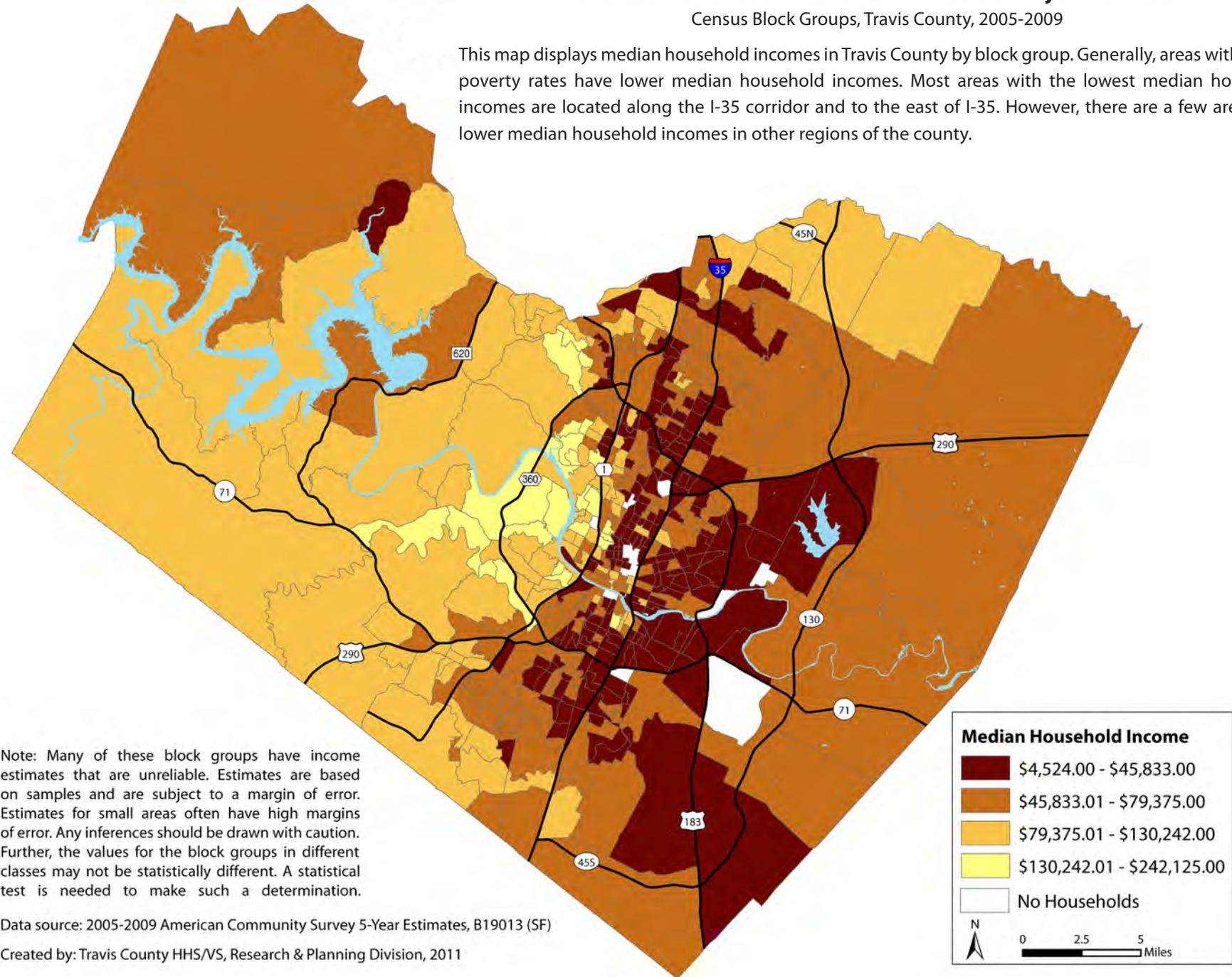
Data sources: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C17002 (SF) and Census 2000, P88 (SF 3)

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

## Median Household Income in 2009 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars

Census Block Groups, Travis County, 2005-2009

This map displays median household incomes in Travis County by block group. Generally, areas with higher poverty rates have lower median household incomes. Most areas with the lowest median household incomes are located along the I-35 corridor and to the east of I-35. However, there are a few areas with lower median household incomes in other regions of the county.



Note: Many of these block groups have income estimates that are unreliable. Estimates are based on samples and are subject to a margin of error. Estimates for small areas often have high margins of error. Any inferences should be drawn with caution. Further, the values for the block groups in different classes may not be statistically different. A statistical test is needed to make such a determination.

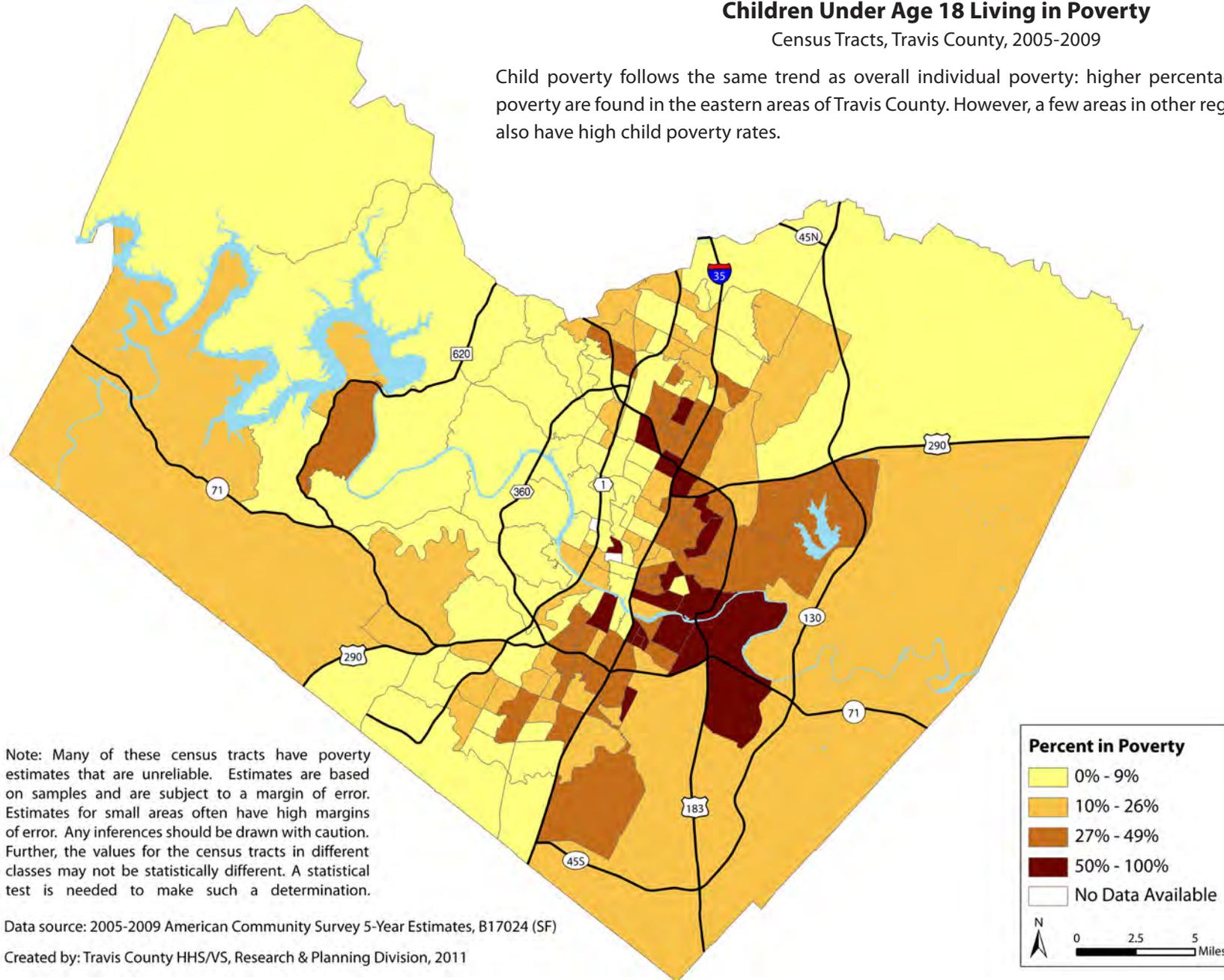
Data source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B19013 (SF)

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

## Children Under Age 18 Living in Poverty

Census Tracts, Travis County, 2005-2009

Child poverty follows the same trend as overall individual poverty: higher percentages of children in poverty are found in the eastern areas of Travis County. However, a few areas in other regions of the county also have high child poverty rates.



Note: Many of these census tracts have poverty estimates that are unreliable. Estimates are based on samples and are subject to a margin of error. Estimates for small areas often have high margins of error. Any inferences should be drawn with caution. Further, the values for the census tracts in different classes may not be statistically different. A statistical test is needed to make such a determination.

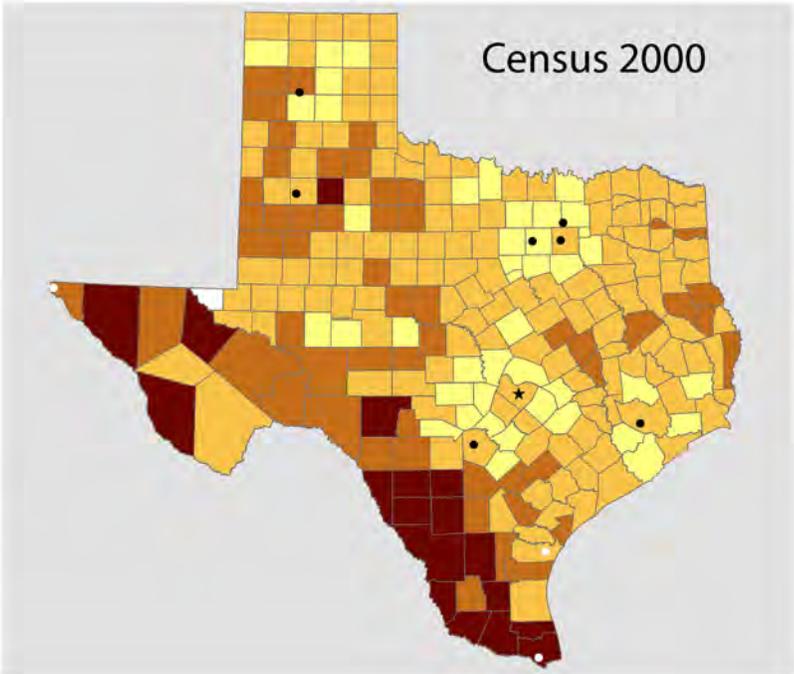
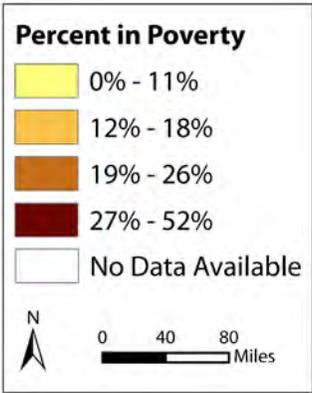
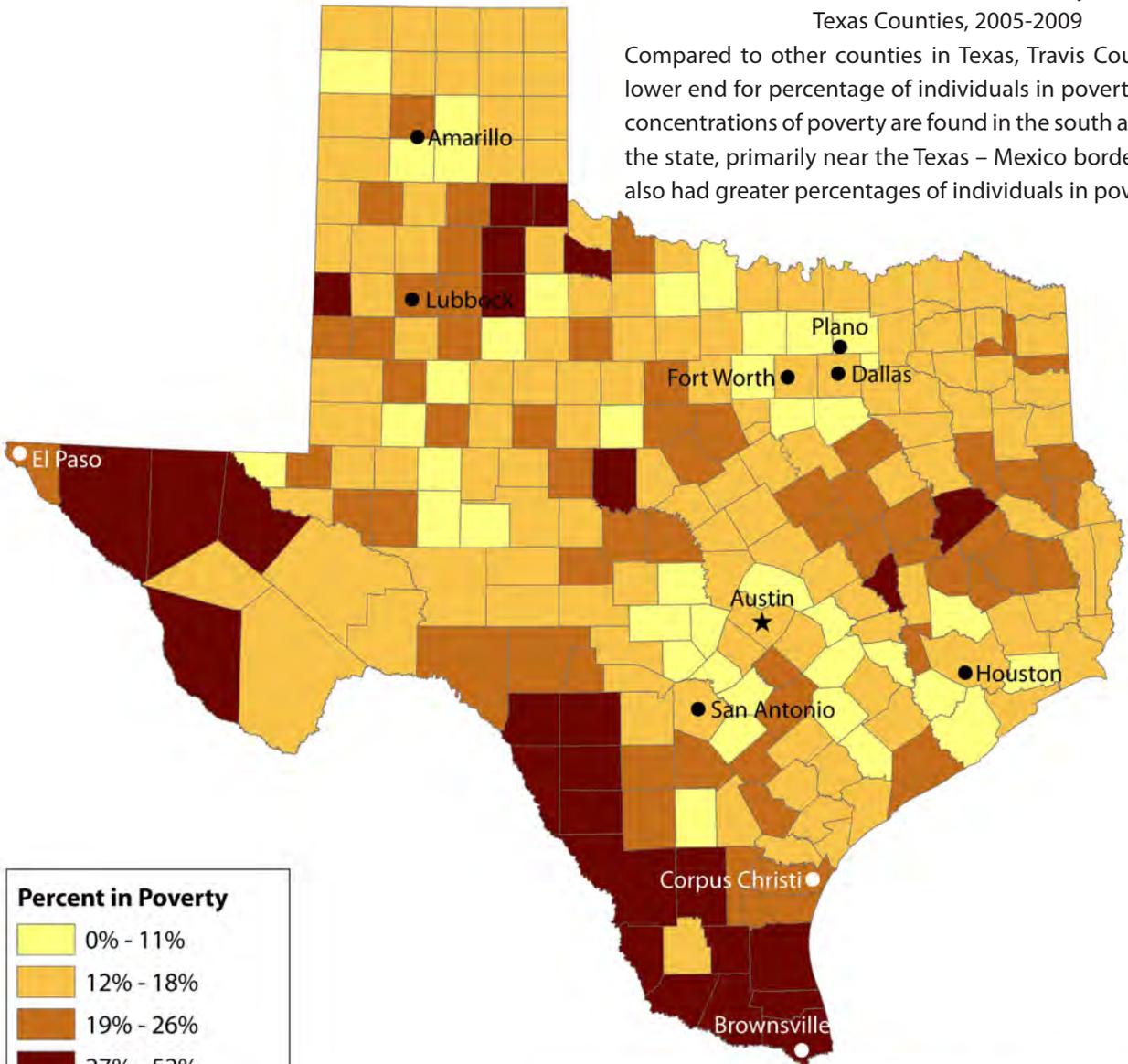
Data source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B17024 (SF)

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

## Individuals in Poverty

Texas Counties, 2005-2009

Compared to other counties in Texas, Travis County is on the lower end for percentage of individuals in poverty. The highest concentrations of poverty are found in the south and the west of the state, primarily near the Texas – Mexico border. These areas also had greater percentages of individuals in poverty in 2000.



Note: Many of these counties have poverty estimates that are unreliable. Estimates are based on samples and are subject to a margin of error. Estimates for small areas often have high margins of error. Any inferences should be drawn with caution. Further, the values for the counties in different classes may not be statistically different. A statistical test is needed to make such a determination.

Data sources: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, C17002 (SF) and Census 2000, P88 (SF 3)

Created by: Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

# Appendix A: Methodology

The U.S. Census Bureau's 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates data set is the primary data source for this report. Data from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Censuses are also referenced for specific trend analyses.

## About the American Community Survey

The American Community Survey (ACS) replaces the long form of the 10-year U.S. 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.<sup>13</sup> 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 2010, data based on a 5-year sample became available for many small areas (state, county, city, town, place, census tracts and block groups).<sup>14</sup>

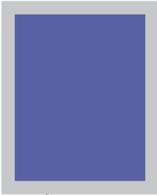
## ACS Methodology

*Sample:* The American Community Survey is conducted every month on independent samples of housing unit<sup>15</sup> addresses (whether vacant or occupied) and persons in group quarters<sup>16</sup> facilities and produces annual or annual average estimates. 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.<sup>17</sup>

For Travis County, the original 2005-2009 (entire 60 month) sample of initial addresses selected was 39,446, and the final number of housing unit interviews (actual sample used to produce results) was 25,628. The group quarters population sample is not available at the county level, but for the entire state of Texas, the initial sample selected was 52,419 and the final number of group quarters person interviews was 41,525.<sup>18</sup>

*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 phone, 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.<sup>19</sup>

*Poverty universe:* Census Bureau surveys typically ask income questions to persons age 15 or older. If a child under age 15 is not related by birth, marriage, or adoption to a reference person within the household, the Census Bureau does not know the child's income and therefore cannot determine his or her poverty status. For the American Community Survey, poverty status is also undefined for people living in college dormitories, military group quarters, and institutional group quarters. Because people whose poverty status is undefined are excluded from Census Bureau poverty tabulations, the total population represented in poverty tables--the poverty universe--is slightly smaller than the overall population.<sup>20, 21</sup>



## Limitations

*Sampling error:* Because the findings are based on a sample, rather than the entire population, 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 size, the smaller the sampling error.<sup>22</sup> For this report, the authors have attempted to minimize this variability by using the 5-Year Estimates data set (which provides a less timely, yet larger and thus more reliable sample) and by using the published margins of error to test all estimates and derived estimates for reliability at a 90% confidence level. Estimates with coefficients of variation<sup>23</sup> of more than 15.49% were 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/](http://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 weakened. 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, 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.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the response rate for the ACS is high (the 2005-2009 response rate for Texas was 97% for housing units and 98% for group quarters).<sup>25</sup>

## Appendix B: Other Data Sources

As noted in the Introduction, we have chosen to prioritize an in-depth study of one data set – the 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates – rather than produce a broad assessment of poverty and related issues using a variety of sources. Given the limitations in utilizing a single data source to explore a complex topic, below are some additional data resources related to the topic of poverty. Please note that this list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of data sources.

### **Assessing Poverty**

2009-2010 Assets & Opportunity Scorecard, The Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED)  
<http://scorecard.cfed.org/index.php>

Provides a comprehensive look at wealth, poverty and the financial security of families in the United States. The Scorecard assesses the 50 states and the District of Columbia on how well residents are faring and what states can do to help residents build and protect assets.

Measuring Poverty at The State Level (2010), The Urban Institute  
<http://www.urban.org/publications/412063.html>

This study implements the modern poverty measure for Minnesota using the American Community Survey (ACS) and simulates the potential effects of alternative safety net policies on poverty. The results show the importance of the modern poverty measure for analyzing state policies and also highlight the numerous decisions and imputations required to implement the new measure.

Poverty – Experimental Measures, U.S. Census Bureau  
<http://www.census.gov/hhes/povmeas/data/index.html>

Provides experimental poverty measures data, including research on supplemental poverty measures and National Academy of Sciences (NAS)–based poverty measures.

Poverty Guidelines, Research, and Measurement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation  
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/>

Provides links to HHS Poverty Guidelines, Poverty Research Centers, and other information on poverty measurement.

Texas Poverty 101 (2010), Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP)  
<http://www.cppp.org/research.php?aid=96>

This brief report describes the official federal poverty measure, how it is used, and the extent of poverty in Texas. Shortcomings of this methodology and alternative measures of economic hardship are also discussed.

### **Estimating the Cost of Living**

Basic Family Budget Calculator (2007), Economic Policy Institute  
[http://www.epi.org/content/budget\\_calculator/](http://www.epi.org/content/budget_calculator/)

Compiles the costs of essentials such as housing, food, child care, transportation and health care in different regions of the country, including the Austin-Round Rock MSA, to provide an estimate of how much families need to get by.

Basic Needs Budget Calculator, National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)  
<http://nccp.org/tools/frs/budget.php>

Shows how much it takes for families to afford minimum daily necessities.

Family Budget Estimator (2007), Center for Public Policy Priorities  
<http://www.cppp.org/fbe/>

Provides data on what it costs families to live in each of Texas' major metropolitan areas by estimating housing, food, child care, health care, transportation, and other basic expenses without relying on public assistance.

# Appendix C: Most-Populous U.S. Counties

## Top 50 Most-Populous Counties in the U.S.

County (Major City)	Rank	Population	Poverty Rate	County (Major City)	Rank	Population	Poverty Rate
Los Angeles County, CA (Los Angeles)	1	9,785,295	15%	Sacramento County, CA (Sacramento)	26	1,375,605	13%
Cook County, IL (Chicago)	2	5,257,001	15%	Nassau County, NY (New York - Long Island)	27	1,354,141	5%
Harris County, TX (Houston)	3	3,909,790	17%	Cuyahoga County, OH (Cleveland)	28	1,296,287	16%
Maricopa County, AZ (Phoenix)	4	3,855,521	13%	Palm Beach County, FL (West Palm Beach)	29	1,268,601	11%
San Diego County, CA (San Diego)	5	2,987,543	12%	Allegheny County, PA (Pittsburgh)	30	1,222,473	13%
Orange County, CA (Anaheim)	6	2,976,831	10%	Oakland County, MI (Troy)	31	1,203,288	8%
Kings County, NY (New York - Brooklyn)	7	2,538,140	22%	Hillsborough County, FL (Tampa)	32	1,167,116	13%
Miami-Dade County, FL (Miami)	8	2,457,044	17%	Hennepin County, MN (Minneapolis)	33	1,136,224	11%
Dallas County, TX (Dallas)	9	2,383,126	17%	Franklin County, OH (Columbus)	34	1,124,073	16%
Queens County, NY (New York - Queens)	10	2,278,860	12%	Orange County, FL (Orlando)	35	1,062,344	13%
Riverside County, CA (Riverside)	11	2,036,304	12%	Contra Costa County, CA (Concord)	36	1,015,571	9%
San Bernardino County, CA (San Bernadino)	12	1,986,635	14%	Fairfax County, VA (Arlington)	37	1,012,751	5%
Wayne County, MI (Detroit)	13	1,977,997	21%	Salt Lake County, UT (Salt Lake City)	38	1,000,299	9%
King County, WA (Seattle)	14	1,858,788	10%	St. Louis County, MO (St. Louis)	39	994,923	9%
Clark County, NV (Las Vegas)	15	1,821,507	11%	Pima County, AZ (Tucson)	40	990,213	16%
Broward County, FL (Fort Lauderdale)	16	1,759,132	12%	Fulton County, GA (Atlanta)	41	987,148	15%
Santa Clara County, CA (San Jose)	17	1,729,378	9%	Travis County, TX (Austin)	42	966,761	15%
Tarrant County, TX (Fort Worth)	18	1,704,943	13%	Milwaukee County, WI (Milwaukee)	43	953,864	18%
New York County, NY (New York)	19	1,620,962	17%	Westchester County, NY (Yonkers)	44	949,050	8%
Bexar County, TX (San Antonio)	20	1,584,817	17%	Montgomery County, MD (Rockville)	45	946,172	5%
Philadelphia County, PA (Philadelphia)	21	1,531,112	24%	DuPage County, IL (Chicago)	46	925,530	5%
Suffolk County, NY (New York - Long Island)	22	1,511,028	5%	Shelby County, TN (Memphis)	47	918,186	19%
Middlesex County, MA (Lowell)	23	1,480,260	7%	Pinellas County, FL (St. Petersburg)	48	915,003	12%
Alameda County, CA (Oakland)	24	1,457,095	11%	Erie County, NY (Buffalo)	49	914,200	14%
Bronx County, NY (New York - Bronx)	25	1,381,529	28%	Honolulu County, HI (Honolulu)	50	902,564	9%

Created by Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2011

Source Data: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, B01001 and B17001

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Travis County HHS/VS, Research & Planning Division, 2010 Community Impact Report Part I: Community Condition Highlights, Basic Needs, available at: [http://www.co.travis.tx.us/health\\_human\\_services/research\\_planning/publications/cir/cir\\_2010\\_pt\\_1/full\\_report.pdf](http://www.co.travis.tx.us/health_human_services/research_planning/publications/cir/cir_2010_pt_1/full_report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Education

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Workforce

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Behavioral Health

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, Public Health and Access to Healthcare

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Frequently Asked Questions Related to the Poverty Guidelines and Poverty, available at: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/faq.shtml>

<sup>7</sup> Center for Public Policy Priorities, Family Budget Estimator Project, available at: <http://www.cppp.org/fbe/>

<sup>8</sup> For additional information about the Supplemental Poverty Measure, see U.S. Census Bureau, Poverty Experimental Measures available at: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/povmeas/>

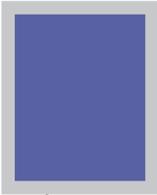
<sup>9</sup> This analysis was informed by a recent study from the University of Wisconsin that showed most of Wisconsin's counties had a lower adjusted poverty rate when the 18-24-year-old age group was excluded and those counties that included University of Wisconsin four-year campuses had poverty rates four to six percentage points lower. A researcher commenting on the study suggested that the high poverty rate among the college population is due, in part, to the less than full-time work or temporary low wages of students. Still, 18-24 year-olds who are not attending school also tend to have low-wage jobs and low wages for this group could be more lasting given their lower level of educational attainment. See La Crosse County University of Wisconsin Extension Office. "Wisconsin Poverty Rates Lower when College-Age Population Excluded, available at: <http://lacrosse.uwex.edu/2011/03/24/wisconsin-poverty-rates-lower-when-college-age-population-excluded/>

<sup>10</sup> Nativity refers to whether a person is native born or foreign born. The native born population includes anyone who is U.S. citizen at birth including: people born in the United States; people born in Puerto Rico or one of the U.S. Island Areas; and people born abroad to a U.S. Citizen parent or parents. The foreign born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen at birth. Foreign born naturalized citizens are those who become a U.S. citizen through naturalization. Foreign born non-citizens include: lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants (e.g., foreign students), humanitarian migrants (e.g., refugees), and unauthorized migrants. See American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2009 Subject Definitions, available at: [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data\\_documentation/SubjectDefinitions/2009\\_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/SubjectDefinitions/2009_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Appendix A. Geographic Terms and Concepts," U.S. Census Bureau, A-12, [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/2010census/GTC\\_10.pdf](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/2010census/GTC_10.pdf) (accessed May 12, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, A-10.

<sup>13</sup> A copy of the questionnaire can be found at: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/SBasics/SQuest/SQuest1.htm>



<sup>14</sup> More information on the ACS multi-year estimates and release schedule can be found at: [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data\\_documentation/2009\\_release/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/2009_release/)

<sup>15</sup> 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 2009 Subject Definitions, page 7.)

<sup>16</sup> 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 2009 Subject Definitions, page 8.) For more information on group quarters, see: [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data\\_documentation/GroupDefinitions/2009GO\\_Definitions.pdf](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/GroupDefinitions/2009GO_Definitions.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> American Community Survey Sample Size Definitions, available at: [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/sample\\_size\\_definitions/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/sample_size_definitions/)

<sup>18</sup> Sample sizes are available on the Census Bureau website's American Fact Finder, 2009 American Community Survey, Tables B98001 and B98002, available at: <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

<sup>19</sup> American Community Survey Accuracy of the Data (2009), available at: [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data\\_documentation/Accuracy/ACS\\_Accuracy\\_of\\_Data\\_2009.pdf](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2009.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Poverty Definitions, available at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/definitions.html>

<sup>21</sup> See American Community Survey/Puerto Rico Community Survey 2009 Subject Definitions, page 101 available at: [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data\\_documentation/SubjectDefinitions/2009\\_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/SubjectDefinitions/2009_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, A Compass for Understanding and Using American Community Survey Data: What State and Local Governments Need to Know. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2009. Available at: [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance\\_for\\_data\\_users/handbooks/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/handbooks/)

<sup>23</sup> 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 State and Local Governments Need to Know, available at [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance\\_for\\_data\\_users/handbooks/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/guidance_for_data_users/handbooks/)

<sup>24</sup> American Community Survey: Must I Respond?, available at: <https://ask.census.gov>

<sup>25</sup> Response rate information is available on the Census Bureau website's American Factfinder, American Community Survey 2009, Tables B98021 and B98022, available at: <http://factfinder.census.gov>