

AUSTIN-ROUND ROCK-GEORGETOWN MSA

COUNTY ANALYSIS

2023

Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays,
Travis, & Williamson



HousingWorks
AUSTIN

Executive Summary

HousingWorks Austin is a nonprofit organization that aims to increase the supply of affordable housing in Austin by providing research, education, advocacy, and thoughtful, workable affordable housing policy recommendations.

The 2023 Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) County Analysis highlights the region's continued rapid growth alongside a relative reduction in the cost of living compared to the previous year. Key indicators show progress in housing affordability: the median home sale price decreased from \$503,000 to \$468,000, and average rent fell from \$1,673 to \$1,577. While the poverty rate remained stable at 10.2%, the median family income rose to \$122,300, reflecting improved economic conditions. Notably, the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA achieved a 29% increase in subsidized housing units compared to 2022, signaling significant strides in addressing housing affordability challenges. As the region continues to grow, these improvements in affordable housing availability provide critical support for low and moderate-income households, helping to alleviate the financial strain associated with housing costs.

Over the past year, the supply of subsidized affordable housing grew substantially:

- From 2022 to 2023, the supply of subsidized affordable housing grew from 74,147 units to 85,325 units across the five county-region.
- All five counties in the MSA saw increases in their affordable housing supply, with Bastrop County's supply increasing by 22% and Travis County's supply increasing by 16% from the 2022 subsidized unit count.
- As Figure I below illustrates, the two-year trend of subsidized unit counts across the five counties indicates the region has made considerable gains in increasing the affordable housing supply, with an additional 9,000 units added in Travis County alone between 2022 and 2023.

Figure I. Subsidized Affordable Housing Units by Austin MSA Counties (2020 to 2023)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2-year Pct Increase
Bastrop	787	775	782	951	23%
Caldwell	713	681	963	1,007	48%
Hays	4,749	4,889	5,921	6,533	34%
Travis	46,375	52,633	58,150	67,298	28%
Williamson	6,462	7,257	8,331	9,536	31%

While Travis County continues to contain a 79% majority of the region's subsidized affordable housing, significant increases in subsidized units in Hays, Caldwell, and Williamson County, two of the fastest-growing counties in the country over the past decade,¹ represent encouraging trends in providing accessible housing options for families outside of the City of Austin and Travis County. Still, the relative availability of subsidized affordable housing is unequally distributed to households in different counties throughout the region.

- As Figure II shows, Travis County households have the greatest access to subsidized affordable housing units, while Bastrop County households have significantly fewer options to choose from.
- Travis County also has the most affordable housing units under development, with 30,004 units planned, a 19.6% increase from 2022, with the majority increase occurring in the City of Austin. Meanwhile, Hays County experienced the largest percentage increase in completed subsidized affordable housing, up 35.2% from 3,625 units in 2022 to 4,902 units in 2023. Williamson County saw the second highest percentage increase in completed affordable housing units at 24.2%, but also recorded the second highest decrease in planned units, with a 30.3% drop from 2022. Caldwell County experienced the largest percentage decrease in planned subsidized housing units, with a 30.8% decline.

Figure II. Subsidized Affordable Housing Units per 100 Households by Austin MSA Counties

	Subsidized Affordable Housing Units	Households	Subsidized Affordable Housing Units per 100 Households
Bastrop	951	33,259	2.9
Caldwell	1,007	15,087	6.7
Hays	6,533	89,328	7.3
Travis	67,298	538,109	12.5
Williamson	9,536	229,906	4.2

Meanwhile, both home sale prices and rents have continued to climb in 2022 to unprecedented levels across the region.

- All 5 counties saw median home sale prices decrease by at least 7.3% from 2022, as the median sale price across the MSA dropped to \$468,000 in 2023.
- Average rent decreased across the Austin MSA to \$1,577, dropping 5.74%. However, Hays and Bastrop Counties saw rent increases of 2.1% and 8.6%, respectively.
- In the other three counties in the MSA – Travis, Williamson, and Caldwell - rents decreased by 5.9%, 8.6%, and 0.1%, respectively, from 2022 to 2023.

The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), the lead agency for the Continuum of Care in Travis County and the City of Austin, conducted the Point in Time (PIT) count - a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January 2023. Based on the most recent PIT count, 1,225 individuals were counted as experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Travis County. Moving forward, the Austin and Travis County community, led by ECHO, will conduct the count every other year. To better understand the scale of homelessness and the resources available throughout the City of Austin, ECHO has created the Homelessness Response System dashboard that can be found on the organization's website. The dashboard provides up-to-date comprehensive data on key performance measures and system flow through the pathways clients take from homelessness to housing.

In addition to providing the PIT counts in Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties as in the previous year, this year data for Bastrop County has been included for the first time in our County Analysis to provide a better understanding of homelessness throughout Central Texas. While looking through this County and Precinct Analysis report, it is important to remember that these numbers are likely undercounting the scale of unsheltered homelessness in the Austin region. Either way, we know that thousands of individuals throughout Central Texas lack safe and affordable housing and struggle with homelessness every day.

As a new addition to this year's County Analysis, we have included information related to the duration of time it takes for people to commute to and from work. Research shows that housing and transportation costs make up the majority of household budgets, and that households living in close proximity to job centers, transit options, educational opportunities, and amenities can reduce their transportation costs. As the region continues to grow and households move further away from central cities, it is critical to understand how transportation choices to and from the workplace relate to housing affordability.

- More than 62% of residents in Bastrop County take more than 30 minutes to commute to and from work, more than any other county. In Caldwell County, more than 54% of residents take more than 30 minutes to commute to and from work. Furthermore, 20% of residents in both counties traveled for over an hour.
- Residents in Travis County have to spend relatively less time traveling to and from work, with 38% of residents traveling over 30 minutes and 6% of residents traveling over an hour.

Despite declines in home sales prices and rents in 2023, the median home price is still high, making homeownership inaccessible for many. Additionally, the amount of cost burdened and extremely cost burdened households is high across the Austin MSA, signaling the need for greater affordability. While Travis County has made strides in affordable housing development, other counties in the region face mounting challenges, from rising rents to decreased planning for subsidized units. Efforts to mitigate housing cost burdens and improve accessibility for low- and moderate-income households are crucial, particularly in rapidly growing and underserved areas like Hays, Bastrop, and Caldwell Counties. Regional collaboration and targeted policy interventions are needed to ensure that the benefits of growth and the challenges associated with it are shared equitably across all counties.

Additionally, the significant number of people experiencing homelessness across the region has brought the need for affordable housing to the forefront for many families. The increase in the subsidized affordable housing supply over the past years across much of the region is an encouraging start, but to ensure that Central Texans of all incomes have access to a safe and affordable home of their choice, regional leaders need to take a strong and unified approach to making affordable housing a priority in all parts of the Austin region.



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Executive Director, HousingWorks Austin

Key Takeaways for the Five-County Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA

BASTROP COUNTY:

- Consistent with last year, Bastrop currently has the least subsidized affordable housing out of all 5 counties in the Austin MSA.
 - Bastrop County contains the highest percentage of homeowners out of all five counties in the MSA, with 79% of residents living in a home owned by the householder.
 - In Bastrop County, 42% of commuters spend 30 to 60 minutes on their daily commute, the highest percentage in this category among the five counties.
 - Of the 5 counties in the MSA, Bastrop Country experienced the largest increase in poverty rate at 1%, reflecting a rate of 11.9% in 2023 and 10.9% in 2022.
 - While the median home price decreased by 7.3% from 2022, the average rent increased by 8.6%.
-

CALDWELL COUNTY:

- In contrast to having the highest percent increase in median home price in 2022, Caldwell County experienced the highest decrease in median home price at 13.7%. However, average rent in this county remained relatively stable, only experiencing a 0.1% decrease since 2022.
 - Caldwell County saw the highest percent decrease in its planned subsidized housing units out of all counties in the Austin MSA, with a 30.8% decrease in planned subsidized housing units from 2022 to 2023.
 - A majority of residents in Caldwell County have to commute for more than 30 minutes to get to and from work.
 - The highest poverty rate of the 5 counties was seen in Caldwell County, at 14.0%.
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Key Takeaways for the Five-County Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA

HAYS COUNTY:

- Hays County still has the highest rate of housing cost burden amongst all counties in the Austin region, with 36% of households paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs (cost-burdened) and 17% of households paying 50% or more on housing costs alone (extreme cost-burdened). However, the percentage of extremely cost-burdened households decreased from 18% to 17% between 2022 and 2023.
- In contrast with last year, the poverty rate in Hays County decreased by 0.7% from 2022 to 2023, the only reduction out of all counties in the MSA.
- Hays County experienced the largest increase in total population, a 4.6% increase from 2022.
- Hays County experienced the highest percent increase, at 35.2%, in completed subsidized affordable housing units from 3,625 units in 2022 to 4,902 units in 2023.
- Hays County now has the highest average rent, at \$1,632 and reflecting just a 2% increase from last year.

TRAVIS COUNTY:

- Although Travis County still contains the highest median home price of all counties in the Austin MSA at \$525,00, the median home price decreased by 7.9% from 2022.
- Travis County is still the most populous in the region, as 56% of the MSA population live in Travis County. Travis also contains the most subsidized affordable housing in the Austin region, with the 67,298 affordable units representing 79% of the affordable housing supply in the MSA.
- Travis County also has the highest median family income, at \$119,793.
- Consistent with 2022, Travis County had the highest number of subsidized affordable housing units in development stages, with 30,004 units of the overall affordable housing in Travis County planned to become available in the near future, reflecting a 19.6% increase from 2022.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY:

- Williamson County has the second highest increase in completed affordable housing units at 24.2%. This county also experienced the second highest decrease in planned affordable housing units, seeing a 30.3% decrease compared to 2022.
- Williamson County households experienced a higher housing cost burden compared to last year. Between 2022 and 2023 cost burdened and extremely cost burdened households increased by 3.3% and 4% respectively, signifying that more households are struggling to pay for housing costs in the County than they were a year ago.
- Williamson County contains the second highest median family income (\$119,776) and lowest poverty rate out of all five counties in the MSA. The poverty rate did not change from 2022, remaining at 6.3% in 2023.

Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA County Analysis Sources & Methodology

The county and precinct analyses are based on a variety of sources and these are mentioned on each county and precinct analysis sheet. The numbers below correspond with the numbers marked on the figure above for reference.

Sources

- **SOURCE 1:** United States Census Bureau, 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey. Precinct Analysis based on methodology 1.
- **SOURCE 2:** Multiple sources are combined to create a comprehensive list for precinct or counties respectively.
 - Housing and Planning Department City of Austin, Accessed 2024
 - Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs, Accessed 2024
 - National Low Income Housing Coalition and Public and Affordable Housing Research Corporation, Accessed 2024
 - Housing Authority of the City of Austin, Accessed 2024
 - Housing Authority of Travis County, Accessed 2024
 - Travis County Housing Finance Corporation, Accessed 2024
 - United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Accessed 2024
 - Various county housing resources.
 - Precinct Analysis based on methodology 3.
- **SOURCE 3:** Austin Investor Interests, Q4 2023, , Precinct Analysis based on methodology 2; Austin Board of Realtors (ABOR), Calendar Year 2023, Precinct Analysis based on methodology 2; United States Census Bureau, 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey. Precinct Analysis based on methodology 1.
- **SOURCE 4:** United States Census Bureau, 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey. Precinct Analysis based on methodology 1.
- **SOURCE 5:** United States Census Bureau, 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey. Precinct Analysis based on methodology 1.
- **SOURCE 6:** Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), Point-in-Time Count 2023; Texas Homeless Network (Bastrop, Hays and Williamson Counties), Point-in-Time Count 2023.
- **SOURCE 7:** United States Census Bureau, 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey. Precinct Analysis based on methodology 1.
- **SOURCE 8:** United States Census Bureau, 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey. Precinct Analysis based on methodology 1.
- **SOURCE 9:** United States Census Bureau, 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey. Precinct Analysis based on methodology 1.
- **SOURCES 10:** United States Census Bureau, 2018-2022 5-Year American Community Survey. Precinct Analysis based on methodology 1.



TRAVIS COUNTY AT A GLANCE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING 2023

DEMOGRAPHICS

35.1

MEDIAN AGE

RACE/ETHNICITY

- 48% White
- 33% Hispanic/Latino
- 8% Black/African American
- 7% Asian
- 4% Other



SUBSIDIZED HOUSING



8,974

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING UNITS OUTSIDE OF AUSTIN CITY LIMITS

6,483 EXISTING SUBSIDIZED UNITS OUTSIDE OF AUSTIN CITY LIMITS

2,491 PLANNED SUBSIDIZED UNITS OUTSIDE OF AUSTIN CITY LIMITS

67,298 TOTAL SUBSIDIZED HOUSING UNITS IN TRAVIS COUNTY INCLUDING THE CITY OF AUSTIN

COST OF LIVING



\$1,605

AVERAGE RENT PER MONTH

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME \$119,793



\$525,000

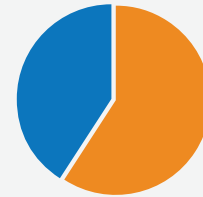
MEDIAN HOME PRICE

RENTER VS. OWNER

41%

RENTERS

521,865



59%

HOMEOWNERS

739,680

SENIOR POPULATION



10.1% AGE 65+

AGE 65+ WITH A DISABILITY



2.8%

HOMELESSNESS

1,225



OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

POVERTY RATE



11.3%

POVERTY RATE

142,451

INDIVIDUALS BELOW POVERTY

COST BURDENED

STATE OF TEXAS

31% ARE COST BURDENED

14% ARE EXTREMELY COST BURDENED

TRAVIS COUNTY

34% ARE COST BURDENED

15% ARE EXTREMELY COST BURDENED

TRANSIT CHOICES

32%

PERCENT OF SUBSIDIZED UNITS WITHIN A FIVE MINUTE WALK OF HIGH FREQUENCY TRANSIT



WORK COMMUTE TIME

21%



Less than 15 minutes

41%



15-30 minutes

32%



30-60 minutes

6%



More than 60 minutes

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Methodology

The 5-MSA County analysis takes information summarized at the county-level from various sources outlined in the list above. Additionally, point data that is associated with distinct addresses, such as the data collected from the sources listed above, is linked to county boundaries by its overlap.

The Travis County precinct analysis is based on a number of resources and different geographical scales. The other four counties are not based on geographical scales. Furthermore, the precinct data is analyzed in the context of the boundaries of the Travis County Precincts. This has led to three separate approaches based on geographic scale of source data:

- 1. Census tract data:** Data available at the census tract level is analyzed based on a methodology developed after conversation with the City of Austin demographic staff. Census tracts are divided according to their overlap with the Travis County Precinct boundaries. Tracts that overlap between two precincts are attributed to one precinct based on the overlap area and the existing land use type. Once all the tracts have been linked to a precinct, the corresponding data is calculated for that precinct. For average values such as median family income and age, the data is weighed for each census tract based on its total population using Microsoft Excel.
- 2. Zip code data:** Data available at the zip code level is analyzed using the Zonal Statistics as Table tool in the Spatial Analyst toolbox of the ArcGIS software. This requires converting vector source data into the raster format and then using the tool to summarize the values of the raster based on the zones of another dataset (Travis County Precinct boundaries in this case). The results from the generated table then provide a value at the Precinct level.
- 3. Point Data:** Data associated with distinct addresses, such as the data collected from the sources above, is linked to Travis County Precinct boundaries by its overlap.

DEFINITIONS

- **Poverty** - The income cutoffs used by the Census Bureau to determine the poverty status of families and unrelated individuals included a set of forty-eight thresholds arranged in a two-dimensional matrix consisting of family size.
- **Subsidized Housing** – Housing that is made affordable through subsidies provided by the government or a separate organization which limits specific units to households making below a certain income. This report defines “affordable” as housing units that restrict subsidized units to households with incomes at 80% of the Median Family Income or below.
- **Cost Burdened** - Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing related costs (rent or mortgage, utilities) are considered cost burdened.
- **Extremely Cost Burdened** - Households that spend more than 50% of their income on housing related costs (rent or mortgage, utilities) are considered extremely cost burdened.
- **Vehicle Miles Traveled** - The average annual auto travel by a household. This includes commute travel, as well as all other daily auto trips.
- **Mass Transit Trips Taken** - The average annual number of fixed-route public transportation trips taken by a household.
- **Planned vs Existing Units** - Existing subsidized units include any development with subsidized affordable housing units which has received a Certificate of Occupancy, Tenant Income Certification, or is noted as Placed-in Service. Planned Units includes any development which has been approved for funds or is listed in the City of Austin’s Affordable Housing Inventory with the column “Status” indicating it is not completed yet.
- **Unsheltered Homelessness** - People sleeping in tents, cars, abandoned buildings, and other places not meant to live in.

LIMITATIONS

- With the release of the 2020 Decennial Census results, the geographies used by the Census Bureau to approximate neighborhood-level demographic summaries (Census Tracts) and the Travis County Commissioners Court Precincts were re-organized to account for the changes in population that have occurred since the last Census (2010). Due to these boundary changes, the relationship between Tracts and Precincts outlined in methodology 1 needed to be updated for this and last year’s analysis. Therefore, the figures in this year’s Precinct reports are not directly comparable to those in previous years, since the demographic totals for Precincts includes the summarized counts for different Census Tracts.
- American Community Survey (ACS) is based on sampling and thus the data from ACS involves a margin of error. This margin of error varies for 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year data, with decreasing levels of margin of error.
- Considering the varied sources, different geographical scales, and multiple methodologies it is important to understand that most of the data for each county and precinct is best evaluated comparatively and not referenced as absolute numbers.
- The Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Dataset from Housing and Urban Development is based on a rotation of 3-year and 5-year ACS data. This limits the availability of the data in certain years.

- The HUD-defined Median Family Income is used in affordable housing developments to set income limits within the Austin MSA. However, since this analysis aims to show MSA-level data disaggregated by county and precinct for comparison within the Austin region, we have used Median Family Income data from the American Community Survey, at the county and Census tract-level. The ACS data will differ from the HUD-defined MFIs since it takes median incomes for all household sizes, whereas the HUD-defined MFI breaks down according to household size.
- Potential undercounting of people experiencing homelessness: The Point in Time counts included in the Homelessness sections of our County and Precinct Analyses represent the number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness on a given night in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care (ECHO is the CoC in Austin/Travis County) conduct an annual or biennial count of people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January to determine the allocation of federal funding to address community needs. However, due to the specific requirements HUD mandates for counting someone as experiencing homelessness during the PIT. There are a number of limitations to the PIT count that likely result in an undercount, including but not limited to issues such as:
 - To count an individual as experiencing unsheltered homelessness, they must be seen and therefore some hard-to-reach individuals may not be counted.
 - The PIT count also does not include people experiencing homelessness if they are in a hospital or jail during the night of the count.
 - Lastly, counts can vary considerably year-to-year due to the geography, weather, and level of volunteer engagement during a specific PIT count.

ECHO publishes a more accurate count of people experiencing homelessness in Austin/Travis County on their Homelessness Response Dashboard online (at <https://www.austinecho.org/dashboard/>), which utilizes information from the intake process that various groups and organizations working to provide services to people experiencing homelessness use.

- Due to rounding, percentages represented in these graphics may not total 100%.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR HOUSING DATA AND INFORMATION

- HousingWorks: [City Council District by District and Community at a Glance Analysis](#)
- HousingWorks: [Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint Scorecard](#)
- Ending Community Homelessness (ECHO): [Homelessness Response Dashboard](#)
- Austin Board of Realtors (ABOR): [Housing Market Statistics](#)
- City of Austin: [Affordable Housing Online Search Tool](#)
- City of Austin: [Austin/Travis County/MSA Demographics Data Hub](#)

SUPPLEMENTAL TABLES - COUNTIES

A. Age and Gender by County in the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area

	Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA (Total)	Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA (%)	Bastrop County	Caldwell County	Hays County	Travis County	Williamson County
Total Population	2,296,377		98,435	46,141	245,351	1,289,054	617,396
Male	1,160,944	50.6%	49,988	23,228	122,589	658,063	307,076
Female	1,135,433	49.4%	48,447	22,913	122,762	630,991	310,320
Population 65+	256,073	11.2%	14,571	6,633	27,660	130,693	76,516
Population 65+ with a disability	75,825	3.3%	5,038	2,969	9,059	36,382	22,377

Source: American Community Survey (2018-22)

B. Race/Ethnicity by County in the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area

	Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA (Total)	Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA (%)	Bastrop County	Caldwell County	Hays County	Travis County	Williamson County
White	1,148,772	50.0%	47,507	16,940	124,306	614,956	345,063
Hispanic/Latino	749,112	32.6%	40,570	25,412	98,944	429,581	154,605
Black/African American	158,684	6.9%	6,132	2,014	8,629	102,001	39,908
Asian	145,753	6.3%	662	319	3,900	91,043	49,829
Other	94,056	4.1%	3,564	1,456	9,572	51,473	27,991

Source: American Community Survey (2018-22)

SUPPLEMENTAL TABLES - PRECINCTS

C. Age and Gender by Travis County Precinct

	Travis County (Total)	Travis County (%)	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4
Total Population	1,289,054		350,771	312,307	329,268	296,708
Male	658,063	51.1%	179,594	159,508	165,543	153,418
Female	630,991	48.9%	171,177	152,799	163,725	143,290
Population 65+	130,693	10.1%	26,266	35,591	42,827	26,009

Source: American Community Survey (2018-22)

D. Race/Ethnicity by Travis County Precinct

	Travis County (Total)	Travis County (%)	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precinct 3	Precinct 4
White	614,956	47.7%	113,099	176,396	212,454	113,007
Hispanic/Latino	429,581	33.3%	145,015	78,620	59,027	146,919
Black/African American	102,001	7.9%	56,023	16,088	11,478	18,412
Asian	91,043	7.1%	23,192	30,106	29,609	8,136
Other	51,473	4.0%	13,442	11,097	16,700	10,234

Source: American Community Survey (2018-22)