Note on Data Collection, Survey Instruments, and Inclusion:
The data collection for this brief was conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data collection efforts across many survey instruments have yet to fully address the need to include the diverse identities of Texans. Therefore, the demographic breakdown provided in this brief primarily reflects binary, cisgender sex-disaggregation of data. Such binary focus excludes important information about transgender and gender nonconforming populations. The categories of race and ethnicity utilized also do not adequately reflect the multiracial and multiethnic population of Texas. The way that many primary sources for data collect racial and ethnic data must evolve to be more inclusive and representative of the geographic, social, and cultural dimensions that define the concepts.

Demographic Characteristics of Texas Women and Children

☑️ In 2021, 16% of Texas women were living in poverty, compared to 14% of women nationwide.

☑️ 20% of Texas children were living in poverty in 2021, compared to 17% of children nationwide.

Birth rates show that Texans are diverse.
Live births per 1,000 people in Texas by the mother’s race/ethnicity, 2005-2019


Note: White, Black, and Other are non-Hispanic. Other includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, and two or more races, not broken down due to small sample sizes.
In 2021, 434,357 Texans reported having given birth in the past 12 months. Of those Texans:

- Almost one in four (24%) were living 100% below the poverty level.
- Almost half (46%) are Hispanic or Latina/o.

Texas has the third highest fertility rate in the nation at 60 births per 1,000 women, with only Nebraska (62 births per 1,000) and North Dakota (67 births per 1,000) ranking higher. The national fertility rate is 51 births per 1,000 women.

The fertility rate is higher for Texas women living 100% below the poverty level, at 90 births per 1,000 women.1

In 2020, the teen birth rate in Texas was 22 births per 1,000 females (15-19 years of age).2

Non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic/Latina women in Texas disproportionately experience unexpected outcomes in labor and delivery that result in significant consequences to their health. Non-Hispanic Black women are most likely to die due to pregnancy-related complications compared to women of other races.3

Most pregnancy-related deaths in Texas are preventable.4

The preterm birth rate in Texas is 11.4%, compared to the national rate of 10.5%.5

Black women have a preterm birth rate of 14.8%, which is 41% higher than the rate for all other women, and 59% higher than the lowest rate (9.3% for Asian and Pacific Islander women) in Texas.6

The infant mortality rate in Texas is 5.2 deaths per 1,000 live births, compared to the national rate of 5.4 deaths per 1,000 live births.7

The percentage of low birth-weight babies born in Texas was the same as the national rate in 2020, with 8.2% of live births weighing less than 2,500 grams (5.5 pounds).8

Black mothers are most likely to give birth to low birth-weight babies. In 2020, 13.3% of Black women that gave birth had low birth-weight babies, compared to 6.8% of non-Hispanic white women.9

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1 Fertility rate is for women 15-50 years.
2 National KIDS COUNT analysis of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Total teen births in Texas. https://datacenter.kidscount.org/
4 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 National KIDS COUNT analysis of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Low birth-weight babies in Texas. https://datacenter.kidscount.org/
5% of Texans live in a maternity care desert. In 2020, 10% of Texas women that gave birth received late or no prenatal care, compared to 6% of women nationally. In 2020, Texas was among six states (Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma) where 5% or less of births were attended by licensed midwives. In 2020, 10% of Texas women that gave birth received late or no prenatal care, compared to 6% of women nationally. Black women in Texas had the highest rate of receiving late or no prenatal care at 14%, twice the rate for non-Hispanic white women (7%).

Sources:
- Ibid.
Extend comprehensive Medicaid coverage for postpartum women to 12 months after pregnancy, as recommended by maternal health experts.

Expand Medicaid to ensure that women have timely access to needed medical care, not only in the year after pregnancy but also well before.

Significantly increase funding to Texas’ Family Planning Program to meet needs in communities across Texas and address enrollment barriers in the Healthy Texas Women program.

Reduce unintended teen pregnancies — and high-school dropout rates — by authorizing the Texas Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to cover contraceptives, a benefit already covered by 48 other states.

Expand equitable access to midwife and doula services, such as by passing legislation to ensure that Medicaid covers doula services.

What Can Texas Legislators Do?

Source: Every Texan analysis of 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates PUMS.

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