TEXAS FORWARD
Data-Driven Solutions for Our State's Future

Hello *y hola!*

Welcome to the inaugural issue of **Texas Forward**, your data-driven guide to key issues shaping our state. In this digest, we cut through the noise to provide a clear, evidence-based look at the challenges and opportunities facing Texas. We'll connect our research to conversations happening in Austin and in communities across Texas, showing how data can elucidate and inform the path toward a better future for all Texans.

In this issue:

BACK TO SCHOOL

THE REAL STORY IS IN THE NUMBERS: ENROLLMENT VS. ATTENDANCE

As students and teachers across Texas head back to the classroom this month, enrollment numbers are on the minds of policy makers and educators alike. Learn more about public school funding.

SUMMER HUNGER

THE LINGERING IMPACT OF POLICY DECISIONS

As the summer season winds down, thousands of Texas families continue to face heightened obstacles to accessing the food they need to be healthy. Explore the distinct challenges faced by Texans of color.

DATA FOR RESILIENCE

SPOTLIGHT: THE SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX

Recent flooding in the Texas hill country is a stark reminder that where and how we invest our state dollars matters. Explore how your community ranks on the Social Vulnerability Index and learn why it matters.

We believe data drives powerful change. This newsletter is a tool to spark dialogue and inspire collaboration.
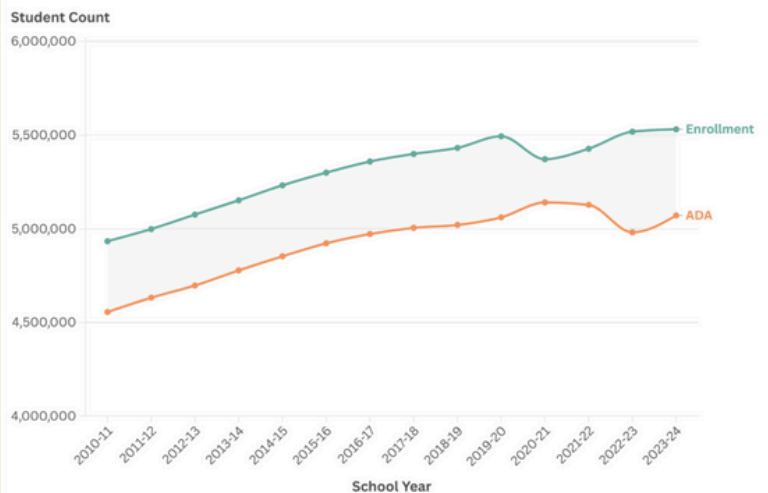
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The Real Story is in the Numbers: Enrollment VS Attendance

As students and teachers across Texas head back to the classroom this month, enrollment numbers are on the minds of policy makers and educators alike. The crucial metric for school funding in Texas, however, is Average Daily Attendance (ADA), not enrollment. With the 89th Legislative Session behind us, understanding the gap between how many students are on the roster and how many are in their seats is more critical than ever. Since 2020, a widening gap between enrollment and ADA has created significant funding volatility for Texas schools, directly impacting district budgets and resources, reinforcing the need for data-driven strategies to improve student attendance statewide.
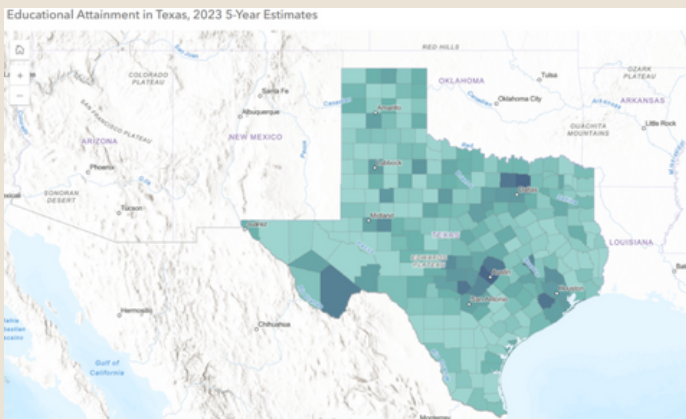
Visit Our Interactive Visualization Tool to Learn More

Funding Gaps Created by Attendance-Based Student Counts

Data Source: TEA Enrollment in Texas Public School, 2023-24 for 2011-2024, Fiscal Size Up, 2024-2025 • Notes: Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 includes additional student attendance to maintain district funding during the COVID-19 pandemic. ADA for fiscal year 2022 includes the Operational Minutes Adjustment to hold districts harmless for decreased attendance rates due to the pandemic for the first four six-week periods of school year 2021–22.

Down the Road

Educational Attainment in Texas, 2023 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment Shapes Texas' Future

Our interactive visualization of American Community Survey (ACS) data shows the estimated percentage of adults with at least a bachelor's degree by county.

There is a clear link between regional educational attainment and the economic and social well-being of our communities.

Explore the data for yourself!

Summer Hunger and the Lingering Impact of Policy Decisions

As the summer season winds down, thousands of Texas families continue to face heightened obstacles to accessing the food they need to be healthy. This crisis is not experienced equally across all communities, with distinct and persistent disparities impacting Texans of color.

The data shows that food insecurity disproportionately affects Black and Hispanic communities. Their consistently high rates, above the state average, underscore the need for equitable policies and targeted solutions to ensure all Texans have access to the nutrition they need to thrive.
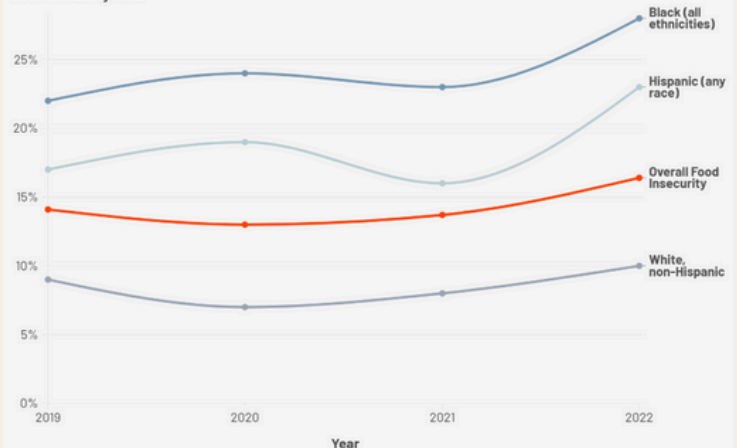
Explore food insecurity rates in Texas from 2019 to 2022

Food Insecurity Rates in Texas, 2019-2022

By Race and Ethnicity

Enter series to show

Food Insecurity Rate

- Black (all ethnicities)
- Hispanic (any race)
- Overall Food Insecurity
- White, non-Hispanic

Year: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022

Source: Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap 2019-2022 data. • Data for other racial groups, such as Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American Texans, were not available.

Food Security Mapped

Storymaps help people explore data through visualization, providing an opportunity to "click through" maps that tell stories about specific regions and the experiences of the people who live in them.

EXPLORE THE FULL FOOD SECURITY STORYMAP

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Food Insecurity in Texas

Understanding Hunger and Access Challenges Across the State

Kaitlan Wong
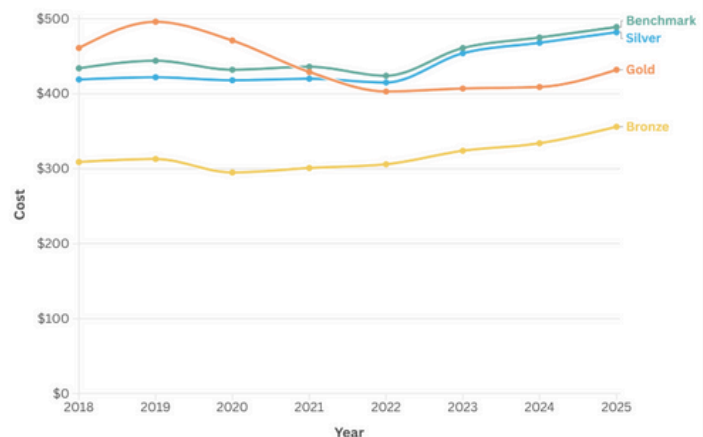May 30, 2025

Every Texan Spotlight

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO MAKE HEALTHCARE MORE AFFORDABLE

Tracking the average monthly premium for individual health insurance plans in Texas reveals a steady increase for most plans since 2020. The Kaiser Family Foundation notes that several factors will contribute to increasing costs, including the 2025 expiration of enhanced premium tax credits which make coverage more affordable. Consequently, out-of-pocket premium payments may rise by over 75% on average. The numbers show the growing financial pressure on households and highlight the urgent need for solutions that improve healthcare affordability.

AVERAGE MONTHLY PREMIUM FOR INDIVIDUAL HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS IN TEXAS

Trends in Marketplace Health Insurance Premiums in Texas (2018–2025)

Average lowest-cost monthly premiums by plan type: Bronze, Silver, Benchmark, and Gold

Source: KFF analysis of data from Healthcare.gov, state rate review websites, state plan finder tools and state provided data, October 2024. • Premiums are monthly. Premiums were analyzed using the lowest-cost premium for each metal tier (bronze, silver, and gold) and the second-lowest-cost silver (benchmark) premium for a 40-year-old in each county and weighted by county plan selections. In some state-based marketplaces, the premium data for some years are at the rating area level or zip level and are mapped to counties before weighting by county plan selections. For more information on sources and methodology, see: How ACA Marketplace Premiums Changed by County in 2024.

WHY IT MATTERS

Our team's analysis is informing critical conversations with policymakers and advocates, offering clear evidence that informs how state leaders can improve health care affordability. Every Texan gathers and analyzes data, and then we use it!
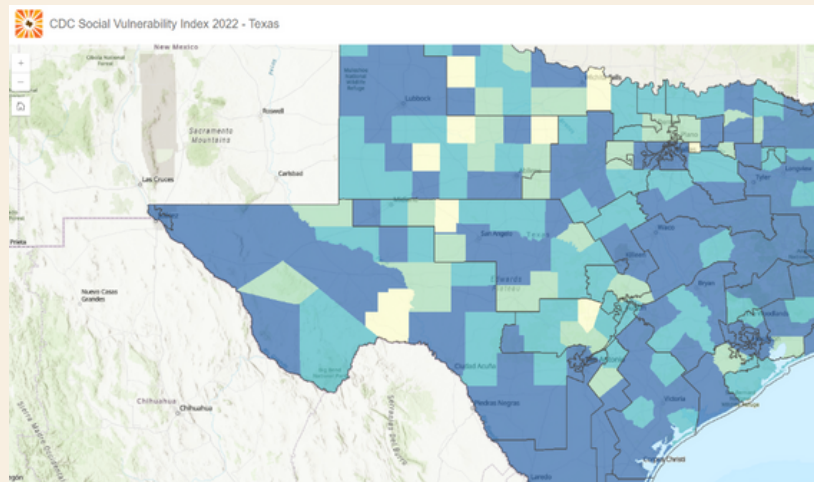
Learn more about our HEALTH CARE WORK.

Data Spotlight

Data for Resilience: The Social Vulnerability Index

Recent flooding in the Texas hill country is a stark reminder that where and how we invest our state dollars matters. The CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) offers powerful insights to guide equitable disaster preparedness and recovery across Texas. When leaders work with data analysts to identify and understand communities most at risk based on factors like poverty, housing, and transportation access, the SVI becomes a tool that helps prioritize investments - reducing harm and building long-term resilience.

As the Legislature convenes for special sessions, this data tool offers a roadmap for smarter, more equitable decisions.

Explore the SVI map to see how your community ranks and why it matters.

CDC Social Vulnerability Index 2022 - Texas

Dive Deeper

Dive deeper into the numbers driving our education and health analyses. Visit our Data Hub.

receive updates on our legislative advocacy and earned expertise. Sign up for our Perspective Newsletter

Got a data conundrum that needs a data-driven answer? We'd love to hear from you. Data@everytexan.org

With Thanks and Data,

EVERY TEXAN