



# Travis County

## **Section II:**

Citizen Participation

2006-2010 Consolidated Plan,  
Amended August 2007



## **A. Citizen Participation Plan**

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this plan is to outline the method by which Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service (TCHHSVS) will encourage public participation in the planning and implementation of its HUD-funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Travis County is required to prepare and submit a Consolidated Plan every five years and Action Plans on an annual basis (24 CFR Part 91). The consolidated planning process requires that each jurisdiction adopt a citizen participation plan (24 CFR Part 91.105).

Travis County's Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) outlines the notification procedures by which residents, public agencies and other interested parties will be notified of public hearings and the opportunities available for public to comment on needs, planned use of funds and performance of all CDBG funded projects. In addition, the plan outlines how Travis County will ensure accessibility of all meeting notices, public hearings, and posted documents for public review to all segments of the population, including people with unique needs, language barriers, or limited ability.

### ***Background/References***

24 Congressional Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 91.105

### ***Policies and Procedures***

#### **A. Jurisdiction**

Travis County intends to administer CDBG funded projects in the unincorporated areas of the County. Travis County is in a unique position due to the fact that the population in the unincorporated areas of the county is large enough for Travis County to be considered an Eligible Metropolitan Area. As such, community development and housing opportunities in geographic areas outside of the incorporated cities and villages in Travis County will be considered.

#### **B. Citizen Participation and Access to Meetings**

Travis County's Citizen Participation Plan provides residents, public agencies and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to local meetings and records. Travis County encourages citizen participation in the development of its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP), Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), particularly in low- to moderate- income target areas.

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities and non-English speaking populations will be made. Meetings will be made accessible by choosing locations that are ADA compliant, when available. In addition, Census data will be analyzed to identify areas where non-English speakers

reside. If more than 25% of the population within the precinct speaks a language other than English, interpreters speaking those languages may be present at public hearings.

### **C. Notice of Public Hearings**

Travis County HHSVS will post notices of the public hearings, including the times, dates, and locations, at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the hearing. Notices may be posted in any of the following ways: Newspapers of general circulation, Travis County Community Centers, social service agencies that target low- to moderate- income residents, Travis County website, public access TV station, radio, mail outs, list serves, etc.

### **D. Public Hearings**

#### ***Consolidated Plan:***

Travis County's Consolidated Plan is developed through a collaborative process. Citizen Participation is critical to the development of the Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan is a strategic plan that identifies needs and sets priorities, outcomes and objectives in the unincorporated areas of Travis County for a five-year period.

To elicit public input on the needs of those living in the unincorporated areas of Travis County for the development of the Consolidated Plan, Travis County HHSVS will hold public hearings at several locations throughout the County in two different formats to acquire information. Public Hearings are held at two different times throughout the development of the Consolidated Plan. All hearings will include an overview of the amount of funds expected from CDBG, the purpose and intent of CDBG dollars, and eligible activities.

1. Public hearings will be held to inform the Needs Assessment, and will ask participants for input regarding their housing, community development and public service needs.
  - a) Two (2) meetings will be held at Travis County Commissioners Court during the normally scheduled voting session. These public hearings will be held in the traditional public hearing format with oral testimony.
  - b) At least one (1) public hearing will be held in each of the four (4) precincts. These hearings will be structured as an information session regarding the uses of CDBG, with facilitated discussion and decision-making for meaningful, comprehensive input from participants regarding their housing, community development and public service needs.
2. After the development of the Consolidated Plan for public comment, public hearings will be held to inform and enable the community to comment on the proposed uses of CDBG funds.
  - a) During the thirty (30) day review period, two (2) public hearings will be held at the Travis County Commissioners Court during the normally scheduled voting session. These public hearings will be held in the traditional public hearing format with oral testimony.

***Annual Action Plan:***

Each year the County must submit an annual Action Plan to HUD reporting how the year's funding allocation for CDBG will be used to achieve the goals outlined in the five-year Consolidated Plan. In the year that the Consolidated Plan is developed, the public hearings for input on the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Plan will be held at the same time. The public hearings will be outlined in the following manner:

1. Public hearings will be held to ask participants for input for the year's proposed Action Plan, including funding allocations.
  - a) One (1) hearing will be held at Travis County Commissioners Court during the normally scheduled voting session. These public hearings will be held in the traditional public hearing format with oral testimony.
  - b) At least one (1) public hearing will be held in each of the four (4) precincts. These hearings will be structured as an information session regarding the uses of CDBG, with facilitated discussion and decision-making for meaningful, comprehensive input from participants.
2. After the development of the Action Plan for public comment, public hearings will be held to inform and enable the community to comment on the proposed uses of CDBG funds.
  - a) During the thirty (30) day review period, two (2) public hearings will be held at the Travis County Commissioners Court during the normally scheduled voting session. These public hearings will be held in the traditional public hearing format with oral testimony.

***Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports:***

The County is required to submit annually by December 30th a CAPER to HUD that describes the County's progress in meeting the goals within the Consolidated Plan.

1. After the development of the CAPER for public comment, a public hearing will be held to receive oral comment on Travis County's performance.
  - a) During the fifteen (15) day review period, one (1) public hearing will be held at the Travis County Commissioners Court during the normally scheduled voting session. The public hearing will be held in the traditional public hearing format with oral testimony.

**E. Surveys**

For the development of the five-year Consolidated Plan, surveys will be used in various ways in order to assess citizens' perceptions of their needs. Surveys will be sent via list serve to public agencies that serve residents in the incorporated areas. Surveys will also be used to collect data at the public hearings. In addition, survey boards will be placed in five (5) of the Travis County Community Centers as well as other strategic locations to increase resident participation in the information gathering process. Surveys will be available in both English and Spanish. For other accommodations, contact the CDBG office at 854-3460.

**F. Access to Information, Records and Response to Public Comments**

Information will be provided to residents, public agencies and other interested parties, including those most affected by proposed projects. Opportunities to receive information, review documents and submit comments will be provided with reasonable notice and time allowed. The information will be retained and available for public review for no less than five years after approval by Travis County Commissioners Court.

Throughout the CPP, Travis County Commissioners Court is mentioned as a source of information. Travis County Commissioners Court is televised and close captioned on the public access channel, and repeats several times throughout the week. The Travis County Commissioners Court agenda is posted via the Travis County website prior to each voting session in accordance with applicable laws. The County website is located at [www.co.travis.tx.us](http://www.co.travis.tx.us).

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities and for non-English speaking populations will be made upon request and as appropriate. To request information, documents, records or accommodations, contact via telephone at 512.854.3460 or via mail to:

Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service  
CDBG Program  
P.O. Box 1748  
Austin, TX 78767

***Citizen Participation Plan:***

Travis County HHS/VS will draft the Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) and present it to the Travis County Commissioners Court during a regularly scheduled voting session. After presentation to Travis County Commissioners Court, the CPP will be posted for written comment for one (1) week prior to approval by the Travis County Commissioners Court.

Comments on the CPP may be received via phone and email to the Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service CDBG staff. The CPP will be posted on the Travis County website and copies will be located at the seven (7) Travis County Community Centers for public review.

***Consolidated Plan:***

Travis County HHSVS will draft the Consolidated Plan and present it to the Travis County Commissioners Court during a regularly scheduled voting session. After presentation to Travis County Commissioners Court, the Plan will be posted for written comment for thirty (30) days prior to approval by the Travis County Commissioners Court.

Comments on the Plan may be received in writing via email or regular mail to the Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service CDBG staff. The Plan will be posted on the Travis County website and copies will be located at the seven (7) Travis County Community Centers for public review. Summaries of the Plan may be available at other locations throughout the unincorporated areas of Travis County. Notification of availability of the draft will appear in newspaper(s) of general circulation.

***Annual Action Plan:***

Travis County HHSVS staff will draft the Annual Action Plan and present it to the Travis County Commissioners Court during a regularly scheduled voting session. After presentation to Travis County Commissioners Court, the Action Plan will be posted for written comment for thirty (30) days prior to approval by the Travis County Commissioners Court.

Comments on the Action Plan may be received in writing via email or regular mail to the Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service CDBG staff. The Plan will be posted on the Travis County website and copies will be located at the seven (7) Travis County Community Centers for public review.

***Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER):***

Travis County is required to submit annually by December 30th a CAPER to HUD that describes the County's progress in meeting the goals in the Consolidated Plan.

Travis County will draft the CAPER and present it to the Travis County Commissioners Court during a regularly scheduled voting session. After presentation to Travis County Commissioners Court, the CAPER will be posted for written comment for fifteen (15) days prior to approval by the Travis County Commissioners Court.

Comments on the CAPER may be received in writing via email or regular mail to the Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service CDBG staff. The CAPER will be posted on the Travis County website and will be located at the seven (7) Travis County Community Centers for public review.

Travis County will document and report all public comments from citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties in preparing its final submissions. Public comments will be considered when feasible and beneficial, preceding final approval of Travis County Commissioners Court.

For public comment on the Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan or CAPER contact:

Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service  
CDBG Program  
P.O. Box 1748  
Austin, TX 78767

**G. Amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan**

Once approved by the Travis County Commissioners Court, any changes to the Citizen Participation Plan must go through a fifteen (15) day public comment period after the draft presentation to the Travis County Commissioners Court. Any written comments may be sent to the above referenced address.

Travis County will document and report all public comments from citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties in preparing its final submission. Public comments will be considered when feasible and beneficial, preceding final approval of Travis County Commissioners Court.

## **H. Substantial Amendments to Consolidated Plan/Action Plan**

When the location or beneficiaries of a project proposed under the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan are changed, the scope of the project is increased or reduced by more than 25%, or a new project is funded that was not originally subject to public review, Travis County HHSVS shall amend its plan. The amendment process includes public notice, a thirty (30) day public comment period, and a public hearing at Travis County Commissioners Court.

As necessary, such notice may also include a public hearing in the precinct in which the project has been changed or added. Amendments to the Consolidated Plan may take place at any time during the program year.

Travis County will document and report all public comments from citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties in preparing its final submissions. Public comments will be considered when feasible and beneficial, preceding final approval of Travis County Commissioners Court.

## **I. Technical Assistance**

Technical assistance will be made available by appropriate Travis County staff to assist low- and moderate-income representative groups or agencies that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under this consolidated plan. Appropriate staff will be assigned based on expertise required for the specific proposal. The TCHHS/VS Executive Manager determines the level and types of assistance to be provided at any time based on a number of considerations including, but not limited to, space, expense, and staff workloads.

## **J. Response to Complaints**

During the CDBG planning and implementation process, complaints and feedback are encouraged and expected. All complaints must be in writing. If a person is unable to provide the complaint in writing for any reason, assistance may be provided.

Complaints need to include the resident's name, address and daytime telephone number, if applicable, in case TCHHSVS staff need to clarify the nature of the complaint.

### **Complaints or Grievances need to be sent to:**

Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service  
CDBG Program  
P.O. Box 1748  
Austin, TX 78767

All written complaints will receive a timely written response mailed within fifteen (15) days of receipt of it. This written response will provide appropriate, substantive feedback to the resident. If CDBG Staff is unable to be compliant with the fifteen (15) day period, the complainant will be notified of an approximate date a response will be provided.

It is up to the discretion of the Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service Department to determine if a public hearing regarding an issue is needed. If a public hearing is needed, appropriate notice and location(s) of the hearing will be made, depending upon the implications of the issue.

## ***Effective Date***

Upon approval of Travis County Commissioners Court, The Citizen Participation plan is effective as of 4/11/06.

## **B. Citizen Engagement**

### ***Executive Summary***

Effective citizen engagement was critical in determining areas of need, barriers to services, underserved populations, and gaps in existing services in the unincorporated areas of Travis County. Both Travis County residents and service providers were contacted to provide information on the aforementioned topics. Methods used to acquire input included public hearings, a provider forum, and online and written surveys. The following pages detail Travis County's efforts to engage the public in determining community needs.

Common themes emerged from both residents and providers. Barriers, gaps and needs in the unincorporated areas converged around similar crucial elements including: infrastructure (water/wastewater, roads, and utilities), workforce development, home repair, increased amounts of and access to affordable housing, improved access to and increased amounts of social services, and expanded transportation and child care services. Specific underserved populations identified by both residents and providers include: the elderly, youth, persons with disabilities, and persons who speak English as a second language.

**Primary needs discussed in public hearings** include water and wastewater infrastructure, code enforcement and cleanup of dumping, home repair, and small business loans. In the area of public services, the primary needs identified were senior and youth services, legal advocacy and education for housing issues, and increased access to transportation services.

**Primary needs discussed in provider consultations** include identification of client needs in unincorporated areas, resources for housing (especially infrastructure for affordable housing development), housing education, improved roads, services accessible to people speaking languages other than English, and increased access to transportation and child care.

**Primary needs identified in the on-line provider survey** include job creation, improved accessibility for disabled persons, neighborhood infrastructure improvements, affordable housing (both rental and owner), housing information and referral, home repairs, transitional housing, job training and childcare.

**Primary needs identified in the resident written surveys** include neighborhood infrastructure, job creation, improved accessibility for disabled, park improvements, home repairs, water/septic repair or installation, senior services, job training, and emergency food assistance.

In addition to the aforementioned summaries, this section summarizes the results of citizen engagement efforts for Travis County's amendment of its original Consolidated Plan. After final

submission of the original Consolidated Plan, HUD discovered an error in the amount initially allocated to Travis County. Subsequently, Travis County’s allocation was reduced from \$2,449,337 to \$838,659. Due to the scope of the reduction, the substantial amendment process was initiated. The amendment process occurred in October and November of 2006 and included one public hearing and a fifteen-day public comment period.

At the time of the November 2006 amendment, Travis County chose only to address the Action Plan for program year 2006, and to re-evaluate the strategic direction later. In August of 2007, Travis County addressed the strategic direction as it relates to the reduced allocation. The amendment to the strategic direction results from the information gathered through the citizen engagement process in 2006 and 2007, and the original needs assessment data gathered in 2006. While the amendment to the strategic direction is not required to go through a public comment period, the scope of the change is substantial enough to warrant Travis County’s interest in eliciting public comment.

Concurrent with the changes to the strategic direction, staff assessed the progress of each project and made recommendations to the Travis County Commissioners Court to substantially amend the Year One (PY06) Action Plan. The substantial amendment process was instituted due to the deletion of the Youth and Family Assessment Center Flex Fund Expansion, a public service project.

The amendment to the 2006-2010 Consolidated Plan’s strategic direction and the substantial amendment to the PY06 Action Plan occurred at the same time as the draft of the PY07 Action Plan. Two public hearings were held to receive comment during the 30-day public comment period.

Information below details the results from each of the four original engagement methods (public hearings, provider consultations, online provider surveys, written resident surveys) as well as the amendment engagement efforts. Detailed notes are found in Attachments A, B, C, and D.

**Public Hearings**

In Travis County’s initial consolidated planning process, a total of seven (7) public hearings gathered information from residents on their community development, housing, and public service needs. At each hearing, participants received information on the anticipated CDBG allocation, eligible activities, and the project planning process, and were given time to comment on their needs. See Attachment A for detailed public hearing results.

The hearings were held according to the schedule below:

	Locations of Hearings	Dates/Times of Hearings
Community-wide Hearing	Travis County Commissioners Court, Granger Building	Tuesday, April 11, 2006 9:00am
Precinct 1	TNR Satellite 1 (9301 Johnnie Morris Road)	Monday, April 17, 2006 7:00pm
Precinct 2	Travis County Community Center, Pflugerville	Saturday, April 22, 2006 10:00 am

Precinct 3	West Rural Community Center, Oakhill	Wednesday, April 26, 2006 7:00pm
Precinct 3	Northwest Rural Community Center, Jonestown	Thursday, April 27, 2006 7:00pm
Precinct 4	South Rural Community Center, Del Valle	Thursday, April 20, 2006 7:00pm
Community-wide Hearing	Travis County Commissioners Court, Granger Building	Tuesday, May 2, 2006 9:00am

Two community-wide hearings were held in Commissioners Court on April 11<sup>th</sup> and May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006. At these hearings, comments were taken in the traditional hearing format. At the first hearing on April 11<sup>th</sup>, two representatives from non-profit social service providers attended and testified on behalf of the clients they served. They expressed a need for increased services for adult victims of domestic violence, improved transportation, road repairs, and services for the elderly. At the second and final public hearing on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, one resident attended and testified on his own behalf. The resident expressed a need for a road repair on a road leading to his residence that is currently inaccessible to emergency vehicles.

Five public hearings were held at public facilities in rural areas, one each in Precincts 1, 2, and 4, and two in Precinct 3 due to its size. At these hearings, comments were received after information regarding the intent of CDBG funds was presented. All participants were given several minutes to comment on their needs, which were then listed on large pieces of paper on the wall. After each resident commented on his or her needs, facilitated decision-making was used to determine priorities. After the lists were completed, each participant was given three sets of three dot stickers to place on the paper next to the potential project ideas they felt were most important. For each participant, three dots could be placed in public services, three in community development, and three in housing. One of the public hearings in Precinct 3 had only one participant. Therefore no prioritization was done on the needs identified by that resident.

## Summary of Results

### Precinct 1

Twenty-nine (29) residents attended, two of whom were representatives of non-profit agencies speaking on behalf of their clients. The primary concerns for residents were expressed as follows:

- Most of the testimony dealt with a lack of access to running water. Residents in economically disenfranchised areas had wells that were running dry, and no infrastructure to access the area water utility.
- Residents also discussed strong need for waste water systems, fire hydrants, clean up of dumping and code enforcement, erosion abatement and flood control.
- Regarding housing, the primary need expressed was for home repair and greater access to affordable housing.
- Regarding public services, legal advocacy, an additional community center, and youth services led in priority needs.

### **Precinct 2**

No residents attended the public hearing in Precinct 2.

### **Precinct 3**

Six (6) residents attended, three of whom were representatives of Travis County Departments. The primary concerns for residents were expressed as follows:

- The primary concerns were the need for waste water systems, road repairs, and a small business loan.
- Regarding housing, the primary needs identified were home repair and more affordable housing, especially rental housing.
- In the area of public services, needs expressed were services for the elderly/homebound (meals and healthcare), training for emergency workers, and legal advocacy.

### **Precinct 4**

Twelve (12) residents attended, two of whom were representatives of non-profit agencies speaking on behalf of their clients. The primary concerns for residents were expressed as follows:

- Primary needs in regards to neighborhood development included a need for a multi-use facility in the area's County Park, road improvements, utility infrastructure, water/waste water systems, and small business loans.
- In the area of housing, residents expressed need for home repair and down payment assistance.
- Regarding public services, the primary needs were for youth services, transportation, homebuyer education, and senior services.

## **Public Hearing to Amend the Consolidated Plan, November 2006**

On September 25th, Travis County received notification via telephone that its Consolidated Plan was disallowed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The plan was disallowed due to an error in the calculation of Travis County's allocation amount for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. A letter explaining the Plan's disallowed status arrived on October 9, 2006. The initial allocation of \$2,449,337, is now reduced to \$838,659.

Due to the scope of the reduction, the substantial amendment process was initiated. To expedite the amendment, HUD allowed Travis County to be temporarily out of compliance with its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP). HUD allowed for a 15-day public comment period rather than the 30-day comment period outlined in the CPP.

The public comment period for the amended Consolidated Plan commenced November 15, 2006, and ended November 29, 2006. In addition to posting the Plan for public comment, a public hearing was held in the Commissioners Courtroom on November 28, 2006. A summary of the public comments is included in Section V of the Plan. Detailed results of the public comments submitted in writing and collected during the public hearing can be found in Attachment B.

## **Citizen Participation to Amend the Consolidated Plan, August 2007**

At the time of the November 2006 amendment, Travis County chose only to address the Action Plan for program year 2006, and to re-evaluate the strategic direction later. In August of 2007, Travis County addressed the strategic direction as it relates to the reduced allocation. The amendment to the strategic direction results from the information gathered through the citizen engagement process in 2006 and 2007, and the original needs assessment data gathered in 2006.

While the amendment to the strategic direction is not required to go through a public comment period, the scope of the change is substantial enough to warrant Travis County's interest in eliciting public comment. During the information gathering public hearings for the PY07 Action Plan, feedback from citizens was requested to assist the Court with narrowing the strategic direction. A dotting exercise detailed in Appendix A details the exercise conducted and the results. In addition, the Court requested citizen feedback during the last phase of the citizen participation process.

Concurrent with the changes to the strategic direction, staff assessed the progress of each project and made recommendations to the Travis County Commissioners Court to substantially amend the Year One (PY06) Action Plan. The substantial amendment process was instituted due to the deletion of the Youth and Family Assessment Center Flex Fund Expansion, a public service project. The services to 30 youth will still be provided, but through the Travis County General Fund. In addition, timelines for projects were updated and more detailed information was provided for the Substandard Road Street Improvement project located in Apache Shores and the Land Acquisition Project with Habitat for Humanity. The approved Citizen Participation Plan requires a 30-day comment period along with one public hearing at the Travis County Commissioners Court.

During the week of June 4, 2007, Travis County published a Public Notice announcing and summarizing the proposed amendment to the strategic direction, the substantial amendment to the PY06 Action Plan and the draft of the PY07 Action Plan. The notice appeared in several area newspapers that target the unincorporated areas of Travis County. The 30-day public comment period commenced June 20, 2007 and ended July 19, 2007. Two public hearings were held at the Travis County Commissioners Courtroom during the 30-day public comment period on June 26, 2007, and July 10, 2007, to receive testimony for all three actions.

The changes to the changes to the strategic direction are located in Section IV and Appendices A & B. The changes related to the substantial amendment to the PY06 Action Plan are located in Section V and Appendix B.

### ***Provider Consultation Forum***

On May 10, 2006, twenty-seven representatives from twenty-two agencies attended a facilitated forum. After a presentation on Travis County's anticipated CDBG allocation, funding intent, eligible activities, and preliminary results from the provider survey, representatives were broken into two groups: Public Services and Housing/Community Planning. See Attachment B for the detailed consultation results.

## Summary of Results

### Agencies Attending

- Neighborhood Housing Services of Austin
- Capital Area Food Bank
- Texas Reach Out
- Austin Tenants Council
- Austin Habitat for Humanity
- SafePlace
- True Light
- Foundation Communities
- DA's Office, Re-entry Roundtable
- Community Action Network
- City of Austin Housing
- Services for the Elderly
- Arc of the Capital Area
- Children's Wellness Clinic, University of Texas
- Prevent Blindness Texas
- Capital IDEA
- The Family Link
- WorkSource (Local Work Force Development Board)
- Palmer Drug Abuse Program
- Goodwill
- MHMR (Local Mental Health, MR Authority)
- Travis County Housing Finance Corporation

### Services Offered

Agencies attending the forum served a wide range of clients, from low- to moderate- income groups and all special populations, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, youth, ex-offenders, and victims. Agencies offered a full range of services, including all eligible activities under CDBG housing and public services efforts.

### Barriers to Services

Public service providers discussed the limited availability of transportation, a lack of childcare options, language barriers, and lack of awareness of services as barriers to receiving services.

Housing providers discussed the difficulty in identifying clients most in need in the unincorporated areas. A key barrier to finding affordable housing in the unincorporated areas was not the cost of the lot on which to build, but rather the cost of the necessary infrastructure (i.e. water/waste water systems, utility lines, sidewalks, and drainage systems). In addition, they discussed the difficulty of finding affordable housing for people with very low incomes due to the cost of housing, as well as getting enough low income families qualified to buy a home. Other barriers include outstanding utility debt, lack of transportation, lack of childcare, language barriers, and a lack of code enforcement.

### Gaps in Existing Services

Public service providers identified the following service gaps in the unincorporated areas: transportation, lack of services in the area, poor/substandard roads, language barriers, and isolation. Housing providers identified gaps in housing services for home repair, affordable housing programs, and public education regarding resources and services.

### Underserved Populations

Public service providers identified underserved populations as: people who speak English as a second language, immigrants, dropouts, the homeless, people with cognitive and physical disabilities, the working poor, people with substance abuse issues, at-risk youth, victims, and offenders.

Housing providers identified underserved populations as: people who speak English as a second language, teen parents, low- to very low-income residents, people with disabilities, the elderly, and people with a criminal history.

## ***Provider Surveys***

An electronic survey was utilized to collect information from housing, community development, and public service providers in Travis County. See Attachment C for the detailed results of the provider survey. Providers were asked to limit responses to a maximum of three representatives per agency. The survey had a total of 48 respondents from the following agencies:

1. Austin Travis County MHMR Center (2)
2. Austin/Travis Co. Health & Human Services
3. Adult Probation
4. Services For The Elderly, Inc. (2)
5. Santa Barbara Catholic Church
6. Housing Authority of Texas
7. Austin Tenants' Council
8. Family Eldercare
9. Palmer Drug Abuse Program
10. Austin Interfaith
11. Austin Tenants Council (2)
12. Prevent Blindness Texas
13. Lisa's H.O.P.E. Chest
14. Advocates for Human Potential
15. BCL of Texas
16. Foundation Communities (2)
17. Texas Reach Out Inc.
18. Skillpoint Alliance
19. WorkSource
20. Texas Low Income Housing
21. Faith in Action Caregivers - Northeast Austin
22. SafePlace
23. Communities in Schools
24. The Arc of the Capital Area
25. Capital IDEA (2)
26. Austin Public Library
27. Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, Inc. (3)
28. Neighborhood Housing Services
29. East Austin Economic Development Corporation
30. Academic Research Associates
31. City of Austin
32. HTMLaddict.com
33. Breast Cancer Resource Center
34. Diocese of Austin
35. Del-Valle ISD
36. UT School of Nursing Children's Wellness Center
37. Heart House
38. Capital Area Food Bank
39. Jewish Family Service
40. Network for Life of Austin, Inc.
41. St. Louis King of France Catholic Church

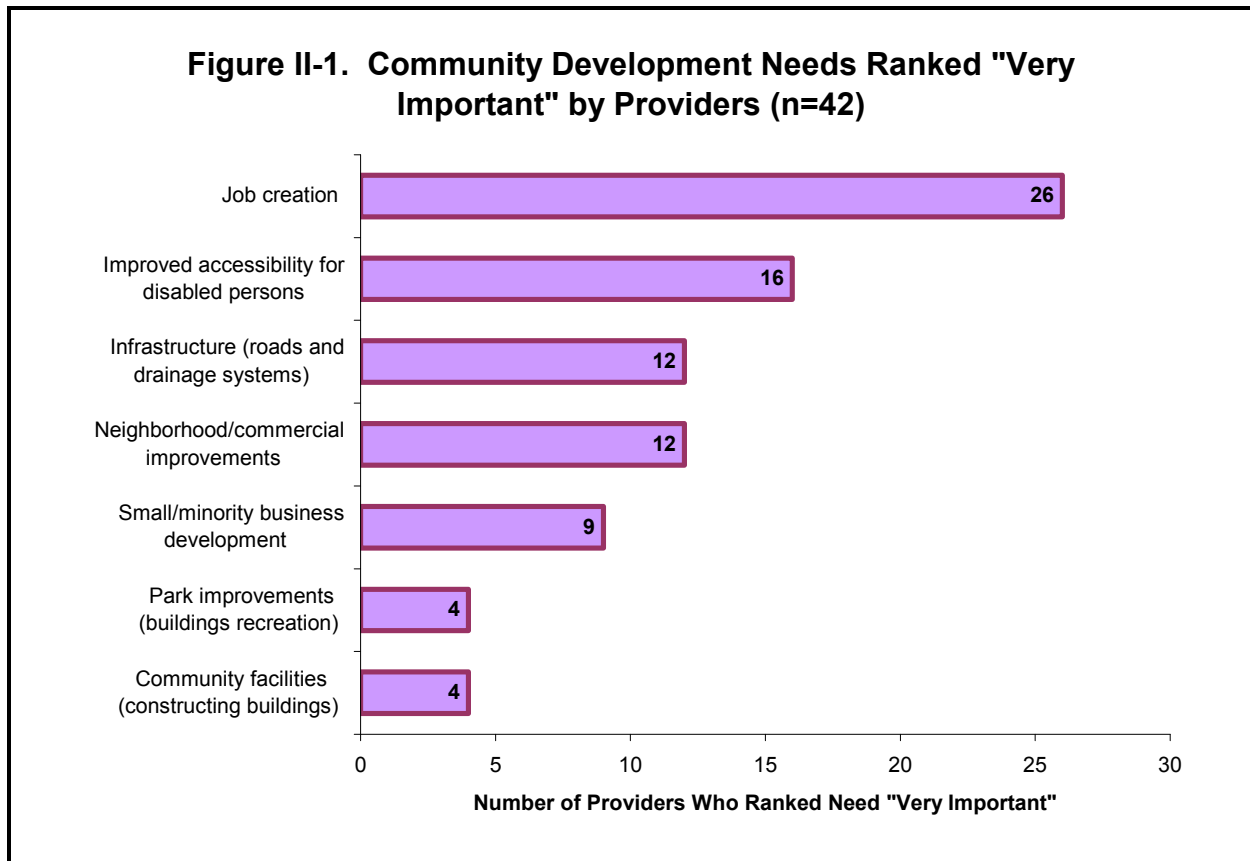
## **Summary of Results**

### **Community Development Needs**

The highest needs identified (marked as somewhat or very important) were:

- Job creation (35 of 42 respondents)
- Improved accessibility for disabled persons (30 of 42)
- Neighborhood improvements (23 of 42)
- Small/minority business development (22 of 42)
- Community facilities (21 of 42)

Least important identified needs were park improvements and roads and drainage systems.



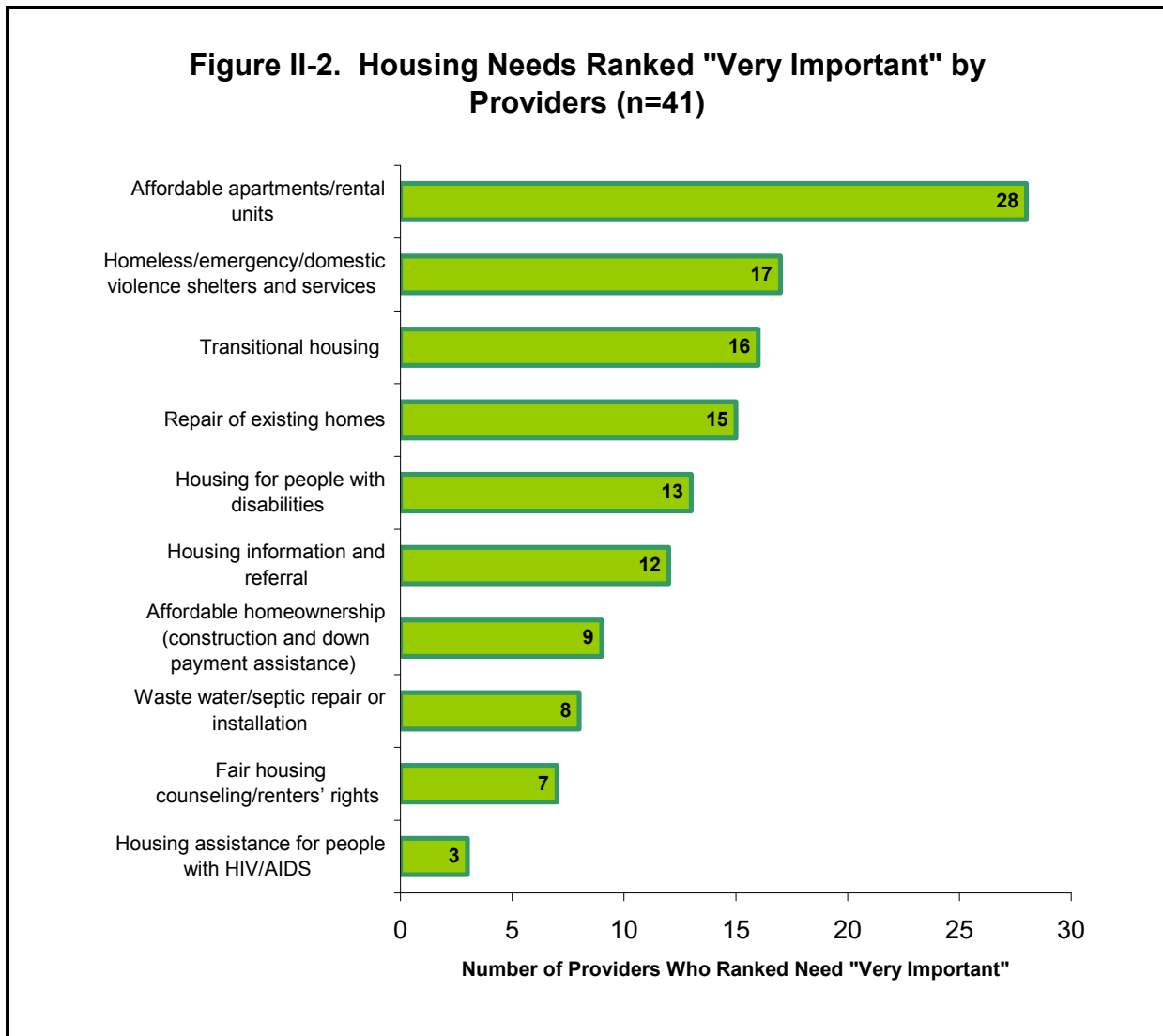
### Housing Needs

The majority of clients served by providers are renters. (Marked as 1 or 2 priority by 33 of 41 respondents.)

The highest needs identified were:

- Affordable rental units (33 of 41 respondents)
- Housing information and referral (32 of 41)
- Affordable homeownership (29 of 41)
- Repair of existing homes (28 of 41)
- Transitional Housing (27 of 41) and housing for people with disabilities (27 of 41).

The least important identified needs were wastewater/septic repair and housing assistance for people with HIV/AIDS.



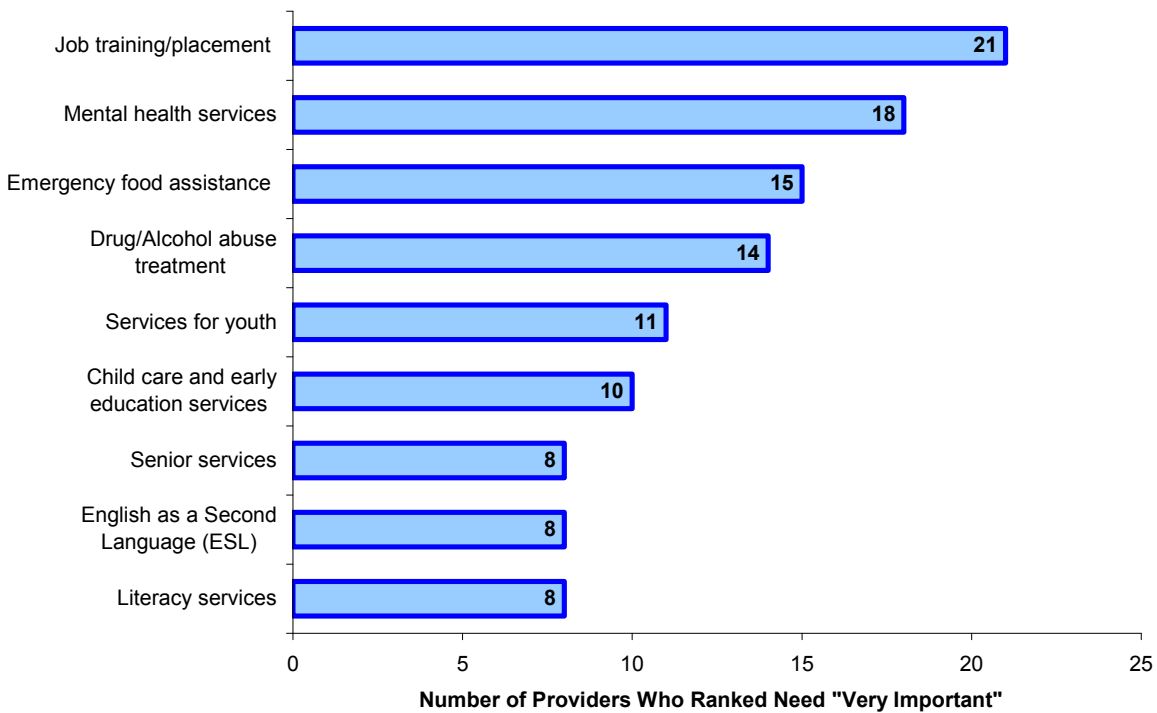
### Public Service Needs

The highest needs identified were:

- Job training and placement (32 of 41 respondents)
- Childcare and early education (30 of 41)
- Mental health services (29 of 41)
- Drug/alcohol abuse treatment (27 of 41)
- Emergency food assistance (26 of 41)

The least important identified needs were senior services and English as a second language services.

**Figure II-3. Public Service Needs Ranked "Very Important" by Providers (n=41)**



## Resident Surveys

Surveys were available at the public hearings and at each rural community center. In addition, several surveys were completed and submitted by mail. A total of thirty surveys were received.

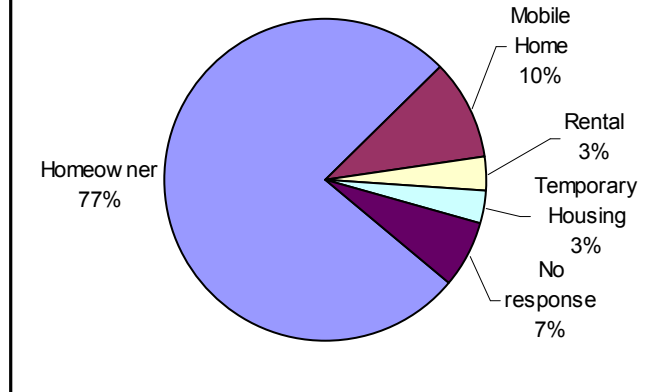
See Attachment D for detailed results of the resident surveys.

### Summary of Results

#### Characteristics of respondents:

Survey respondents' household sizes ranged from 1 person to 8 people, with an average household size of 3.2 people. The monthly housing costs of survey respondents ranged from \$0 to \$1,900, with an average monthly cost of \$505.25. The majority of survey respondents were homeowners, as illustrated by Figure II-4 at right.

**Figure II-4. Housing Type of Survey Respondents (n=30)**



### Community Development Needs

Seven items were included in the list of community development needs, with a blank space for “other need” if respondents wished to specify an additional concern. Respondents ranked needs on a scale of 1 to 5, and also selected their top three priorities from the list. Figure II-5 shows the average rankings of each need.

<b>Figure II-5. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>Need</b>	<b>Average Ranking*</b>
Infrastructure	1.40
Job creation	1.47
Improved accessibility for disabled	1.47
Park improvements	1.53
Community facilities	1.63
Neighborhood/commercial improvements	1.63
Small/minority business development	1.73
Other community development need	2.13

*\*Note: 1 = Highest ranking, 3 = neutral, 5 = lowest ranking*

### Housing Needs

Ten items were included in the list of housing needs, with a blank space for “other need” if respondents wished to specify an additional concern. Respondents ranked needs on a scale of 1 to 5, and also selected their top three priorities from the list. Figure II-6 shows the average rankings of each need.

<b>Figure II-6. HOUSING</b>	
<b>Need</b>	<b>Average Ranking*</b>
Repair of existing homes	1.20
Waste water/septic repair or installation	1.27
Affordable homeownership	1.63
Housing for people with disabilities	1.63
Homeless/emergency/domestic violence shelters and services	1.70
Fair housing counseling/renters' rights	1.73
Affordable apartments/rental units	1.87
Housing information and referral	2.03
Housing assistance for people with HIV/AIDS	2.13
Transitional housing	2.27
Other housing need	2.27

*\*Note: 1 = Highest ranking, 3 = neutral, 5 = lowest ranking*

**Public Service Needs**

Nine items were included in the list of public service needs, with a blank space for “other need” if respondents wished to specify an additional concern. Respondents ranked needs on a scale of 1 to 5, and also selected their top three priorities from the list. Figure II-7 shows the average rankings of each need.

<b>Figure II-7. PUBLIC SERVICES</b>	
<b>Need</b>	<b>Average Ranking*</b>
Senior services	1.40
Job training/placement	1.43
Services for youth	1.60
Rent/utility/food assistance	1.63
Child care and early education services	1.67
Drug/alcohol abuse treatment	1.80
Mental health services	1.80
Literacy services	2.00
English as a second language	2.03
Other public service need	2.33

*\*Note: 1 = Highest ranking, 3 = neutral, 5 = lowest ranking*

**Notes:**

1. Some survey respondents did not complete the survey as directed. Several respondents assigned X marks to priority needs rather than numerical rankings. In these instances, the highest priority ranking was assigned to the needs marked with an X, and all others were assigned a neutral value.
2. Some respondents did not complete the priority needs sections of the surveys. For this reason, although there are 30 surveys in the sample, priority needs may not add up to 30.