**Race & Equity | State of North Texas 2016**

*We all want a bright future for our children,* and we want North Texas to be the place that makes that bright future possible. As the area’s economy and population grow, its future depends on the health, education, and financial security of all its children—across gender, neighborhood, income, race and ethnicity.¹

Recently, Center for Public Policy Priorities and Texas Kids Count Project joined with the North Texas Community Foundation to author a full report on the state of Race and Equity in Fort Worth, Tarrant County, and North Texas. We discovered, despite the area’s economic resources, the data show gaps in children’s health, education, and financial security across race and ethnicity.

**We can “close the gaps”** by intentionally breaking down obstacles and creating equitable opportunities for good health, an excellent education, and economic security for every child in our region.

**Why is this a priority?** Together, we can ensure success for all of our children. By raising the bar in child well-being, we help ensure North Texas economic’s future stays strong and continues to be a global area known for its heritage, resiliency, and growth.

---

Putting Theory Into Practice

How do we put this into context as philanthropists?

At the North Texas Community Foundation, we believe understanding how to focus our lens on race and equity can increase philanthropic effectiveness at every stage of grantmaking.

Here are some of the questions we’re asking ourselves that may be helpful to frame your understanding:

— How is our grantmaking strategy responsive to demographic changes in North Texas?
— If there are racial disparities in the areas where we work, do our strategies align with reasoning about disparities?
— What data, quantitative and qualitative, can help clarify the problems that matter to our community?
— Are the people we aim to serve helping us develop the solutions to the problems we need to solve?
DEMOGRAPHICS

With this report, we want to equip stakeholders in our children’s future with a tool that identifies the most strategic and pressing areas for intervention.

We’ll begin with a look at the changing face and demographics of the North Texas region. Nearly 650,000 children live in the Fort Worth-Arlington metro area, made up of six counties: Tarrant, Hood, Johnson, Parker, Somervell, and Wise. Eighty-four percent of children in the Fort Worth-Arlington metro area live in Tarrant County.

This report focuses on Tarrant County as the metro area’s core in our analysis of children’s financial security, health, and education.

THE PRESENT: Children of color represent the majority of the child population in the Fort Worth area.

TARRANT COUNTY, 2015
TOTAL CHILD POPULATION
533,476

- HISPANIC: 9%
- WHITE: 39%
- BLACK: 16%
- ASIAN, MULTIRACIAL OR OTHER RACE: 36%

*In this report, “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably.

FORT WORTH AREA, 2015
TOTAL CHILD POPULATION
626,319

- HISPANIC: 9%
- WHITE: 37%
- BLACK: 14%
- ASIAN, MULTIRACIAL OR OTHER RACE: 41%
THE FUTURE: Across the eight-county metro area, children of color will represent the majority of the future workforce of Fort Worth.

Growth in the number of children from 1990-2010

THE PAST: Tarrant County has experienced the largest growth in child population in the North Texas area, while Parker County has experienced the fastest growth.
Like many Texas cities, Fort Worth historically segregated places where children live, play, and learn. Up until the 1960s, public spaces like the Fort Worth Zoo, municipal golf courses, and parks were available to Black residents only one day a year, for Juneteenth celebrations.

The Fort Worth area was also home to early resistance against school desegregation efforts. When the Mansfield School District outside the city was ordered by a federal court to allow Black students to enroll, groups of White citizens violently protested and prevented the students from enrolling.

Schools remained segregated long after Brown vs Board of Education, with conflicts around the implementation of busing, magnet programs, and other integration efforts continuing for decades.

Fort Worth has areas of racial, ethnic and income diversity, but children of color are more likely to live in the highest-poverty areas.

“Fort Worth buses continued to segregate black and white riders until well into the 1960s, and downtown department stores has ‘black; and ‘white’ water fountains and restrooms as late as the 1960s. That was the year the Leonard Brothers broke ranks as the first of the big three downtown department stores to take down ‘Colored’ and ‘White’ signs.

By 1963, every department store, theater, and restaurant downtown had been fully integrated. In 1970, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram became the first big-city reporter in Texas to hire a black reporter (Cecil Johnson).”

-Richard Selcer, local Fort Worth historian
As of 2016, Fort Worth is more integrated and prosperous than several peer cities. For example, Fort Worth has lower levels of racial and income segregation than Dallas.\textsuperscript{8}

This is welcome news, because research shows that having less racial and income segregation in a place is better for the economic mobility of its residents, and having more is worse for the chances of escaping poverty.

Current policies and practices do not undo past injustices, however, and barriers in housing, employment and education contribute to far too many children living in poverty and troubling disparities by race and ethnicity in the Fort Worth metropolitan area.

We’ve seen that these disadvantages can be passed on from generation to generation, with a continued profound effect on the present as evidenced that today, one of every three Hispanic and Black children in Tarrant County lives in poverty.\textsuperscript{9}

Research has found that living in a high-poverty area during childhood isolates children from resources and opportunities and can have lifelong effects.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{Twenty-six percent of children in Fort Worth live in high-poverty neighborhoods,} up nine percentage points in just five years, and 19 percent of children in Arlington live in high-poverty neighborhoods, up 12 percentage points over the same time period.

Although the share of Fort Worth children living in high-poverty neighborhoods is still lower than cities like Dallas, Houston and Austin, the rates have increased faster in Fort Worth and Arlington than in other Texas cities.\textsuperscript{11}
Race, place and poverty also affect children’s health. Raising healthy children is about more than just encouraging children to eat vegetables and exercise. Health is also about making sure all children, across race, ethnicity, language or family income, can access healthy meals regularly, live in safe environments, receive preventive health care, and see a doctor when they need to.

### Food insecurity

An estimated 26 percent of children (or 130,880 children) in Tarrant County are food-insecure, meaning they lack consistent access to enough food for a healthy diet. Food insecurity is a symptom of economic instability. When families struggle financially, too often little money is left for food, increasing the chance that children go hungry. When growing children lack essential nutrients, they can experience delays in physical, intellectual and emotional growth.

Hungry children have a harder time focusing in school and are more likely to have social and behavioral problems. Research shows Black and Hispanic children in Texas have rates of food insecurity exceeding 30 percent.

Twenty-six percent of children in Tarrant County lack consistent access to adequate food.

Rates of child food insecurity in Tarrant County, 2013

### Access to health care

Consistent access to health care begins with adequate health insurance coverage. Health coverage for children has improved in Tarrant County and improved the most for Hispanic children. However, Hispanic children are still the most likely to be uninsured. One barrier is jobs that do not offer affordable insurance to families. Hispanic children are the least likely to be covered through their parents’ employers even though their parents have employment rates similar to, or even higher than other racial/ethnic groups.

Research shows that expanding coverage to low-income parents could improve rates even more.

Uninsured rates for Latino children in Tarrant County have improved markedly, but they remain the least likely to have health insurance.

Tarrant County child uninsured rates by race/ethnicity, 2009-2014

Note: Data on uninsured rates for Asian children were not statistically reliable and therefore not reported. Difference between 2009 and 2014 uninsured rates for Black children is not statistically significant.
Maternal and infant health

Overall health and health care access for women before, during, and after pregnancy is critical to babies’ health. Nearly one of every four women (100,000+) in Tarrant County between the ages of 15 and 44 lacks health insurance.28

Additionally, many women who are most vulnerable – the homeless – are women of childbearing age. Most recent data show at least 409 women of childbearing age (14-46) in Tarrant County are living in shelters or transitional housing programs, many caring for children and living with both physical and mental health conditions.29 59 percent of these women were Black, 40 percent White, and 7 percent Hispanic.30

The most common barriers reported by Texas mothers who had late or no prenatal care are being uninsured, not having enough money for the appointment, and not being able to book an appointment.31 Black and Hispanic mothers are most likely to have late access to prenatal care.32

Many women in Tarrant County of childbearing age (ages 15-44) are uninsured and lack access to important preconception and prenatal care.38

Black infants in Tarrant County are at higher risk for premature births, low birthweight and death.

Tarrant County Infant Health Indicators, 201339
(Percentage or rate out of total live births in each racial/ethnic category)

The likelihood of being born preterm or at low birthweight also differs by race and ethnicity. Although many infants born preterm or at low birthweight grow up to be healthy, these two risk factors can both increase the risk of physical and cognitive developmental delays.33

In Tarrant County, Black infants are most likely to be born prematurely or at low birthweight.34 Research shows that chronic stress experienced by mothers increases the risk of low birthweight and preterm births,35 and that even very young children can experience high levels of stress that affect their development.36

Prematurity and low birthweight can increase the risk of physical and cognitive development delays and are also a risk factor in infant mortality.37
EDUCATION

Every child in Fort Worth deserves an education that helps his/her reach his/her full potential. We know that different students need different resources and supports to be successful. However, today our education system often struggles to provide equitable opportunities for all children, threatening their futures and our collective economic security.

Race, ethnicity and economic need in schools are strongly connected and tend to follow patterns of residential segregation and poverty concentration constructed by decades of policy choices and individual behaviors.40

School funding matters for Fort Worth.

The majority of school funding comes from local property taxes generated based on the value of property within school districts.

This means school districts that include homes or businesses with high property values can generate more tax money than school districts that include homes or businesses with lower property values. More financial resources mean better compensation, development and support of teachers and staff, and better access to materials and equipment like books, science labs, art, music and technology.

Because property values are lower in poorer neighborhoods, tax rates are often higher, in order to make up the difference. The three ISDs with the highest property wealth in Tarrant County serve a student population that is 52 percent White, 24 percent Latino and 11 percent Black, while the three ISDs with the lowest property wealth serve a student population that is 63 percent Latino, 20 percent Black and 15 percent White.41

Teacher instability is most likely to affect Black students in Tarrant County.

Students attending schools with more than 20 percent teacher turnover, 2014-1550

Property wealth varies among Tarrant County's school districts, so the state must help provide more equitable funding.51
Race, Ethnicity and economic need are connected in Tarrant County’s public schools.

Two issues related to school funding tend to disproportionately affect Black and Hispanic students: instability in a school’s teacher workforce and teacher experience.

Unstable staffing can negatively affect school climate, educational performance, and school finances. Schools with high turnover rates result in a larger share of first-year teachers.

Although teachers of varying levels of experience and effectiveness teach across schools, research shows that, in general, students in high-poverty schools have worse access to consistently effective teaching throughout their schools.

High-poverty schools also serve more students who are more likely to face out-of-school challenges that create barriers to learning, such as housing instability, food insecurity, and lack of access to health care.

Hispanic and Black students in Tarrant County are more likely to be enrolled in disproportionately low-income school districts.

Although low-income students face additional barriers, high-poverty districts can and do perform well for low-income, Latino and Black students.

But as the data shows, we can still do more to support the success of Hispanic and Black students throughout Tarrant County. Tarrant County educators and employers have expressed serious concern that too many high school graduates arrive unprepared for the studies and employment that await them. A critical opportunity exists for philanthropists, businesses, parents, school leaders, policymakers, and the community to commit to a County-wide effort to reconnect youth with educational opportunity and help them attain future and lifelong success.

Districts in Tarrant County have made progress on supporting high school graduation but still need to close the gaps for Hispanic and Black students.

Tarrant County High School Completion Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2009-2014

*Note: In 2009 and 2010, data are for “Asian/Pacific Islander”*
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Our history has much to teach us about the past and, just as important, about our future. Fort Worth has long demonstrated an ability to adapt and create opportunities as the city grows: from its founding as a military outpost, to its development as a transportation center for the cattle industry, and its status as a world-class city today.

Going forward, our community can be a place where every child has the basic building blocks -- health, education, and financial security--to reach his or her potential. Accomplishing this depends on enacting smart public practices that develop capabilities in all children. By raising the bar and closing the gaps in child well-being across race, ethnicity, income, and gender, we can capitalize on the strengths of our diverse child population, keeping it one of the most dynamic cities in the U.S.

We look forward to continuing this important work with our fundholders, local residents, nonprofit partners, and civic leaders to provide opportunities for our growing and diversifying population. Only together can we realize our shared vision of a healthy, thriving, and sustainable North Texas for all.

This publication is an abridged version of the State of Texas Children 2016 report authored by Jennifer Lee, Research Associate, and Bo La Sohn, Research and Planning Intern, as part of Texas Kids Count, as project of the Center for Public Policy Priorities. Maps created by Kate Vickery and Addison Conley. The research was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Boone Family Foundation, North Texas Community Foundation, and Early Learning Alliance.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, NORTHTEXASCFC.ORG

Full 2016 State of Texas Children Report on Race and Equity

Growing Up North Texas: A Community Assessment for Tarrant County

2016 Donor Perception Report of North Texas Community Foundation

Texas Education Scoreboard

Childs Count Data Center

Health and Wealth County Check-Up