

SECTION V.

DISABILITY AND ACCESS

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Disability and Access

This section examines the housing experience and access to opportunity for Central Texas residents with disabilities. In addition to analyses of publicly available data and findings from the community engagement process, this section includes information from relevant needs assessments and other studies. The needs of persons with disabilities are rarely captured in secondary data. This is because of the complexity of needs and correlation between disability and age. As such, much of this section focuses on an analysis of primary data, collected through focus groups and surveys.

Integration of Housing and Services

The Supreme Court's 1999 decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* requires states "eliminate unnecessary segregation of persons with disabilities and to ensure that persons with disabilities receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs."¹ This landmark civil rights decision held that Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits unjustified segregation of individuals with disabilities.² While the decision addressed the needs of individuals seeking to leave institutional settings, it also applies to the state's provision of treatment, services, and supports to prevent institutionalization. To establish compliance with Title II of the ADA, the Supreme Court allowed public agencies the opportunity to develop plans (known as *Olmstead* Plans) to comply with the decision's integration mandate, rather than compliance through litigation.

¹ <https://www.ada.gov/olmstead/>

² https://www.ada.gov/olmstead/q&a_olmstead.htm

Olmstead in Texas—the Texas Promoting Independence Plan³. In response to the *Olmstead* decision, Texas’ Health and Human Services Commission (HCSC) began the Promoting Independence Initiative (Initiative) in response to Executive Order GWB 99-2 and strengthened by RP-13. The HCSC appointed members to the Promoting Independence Advisory Board (now Independence Advisory Committee) and charged them with crafting the first Promoting Independence Plan, submitted to Governor in 2001. The most recent version of the plan was updated in 2016 and is informed by the analysis and the recommendations in the 2016 Promoting Independence Advisory Committee Stakeholder Report⁴. Implementation of the Initiative has required a transition of Texas’ long-term services and supports (LTSS) system from an institutional orientation to a community-based system, a process that is ongoing and supported by legislative action and appropriations and Health and Human Services (HHS) policies. In addition to legislative action and state action, litigation has also prompted change.⁵

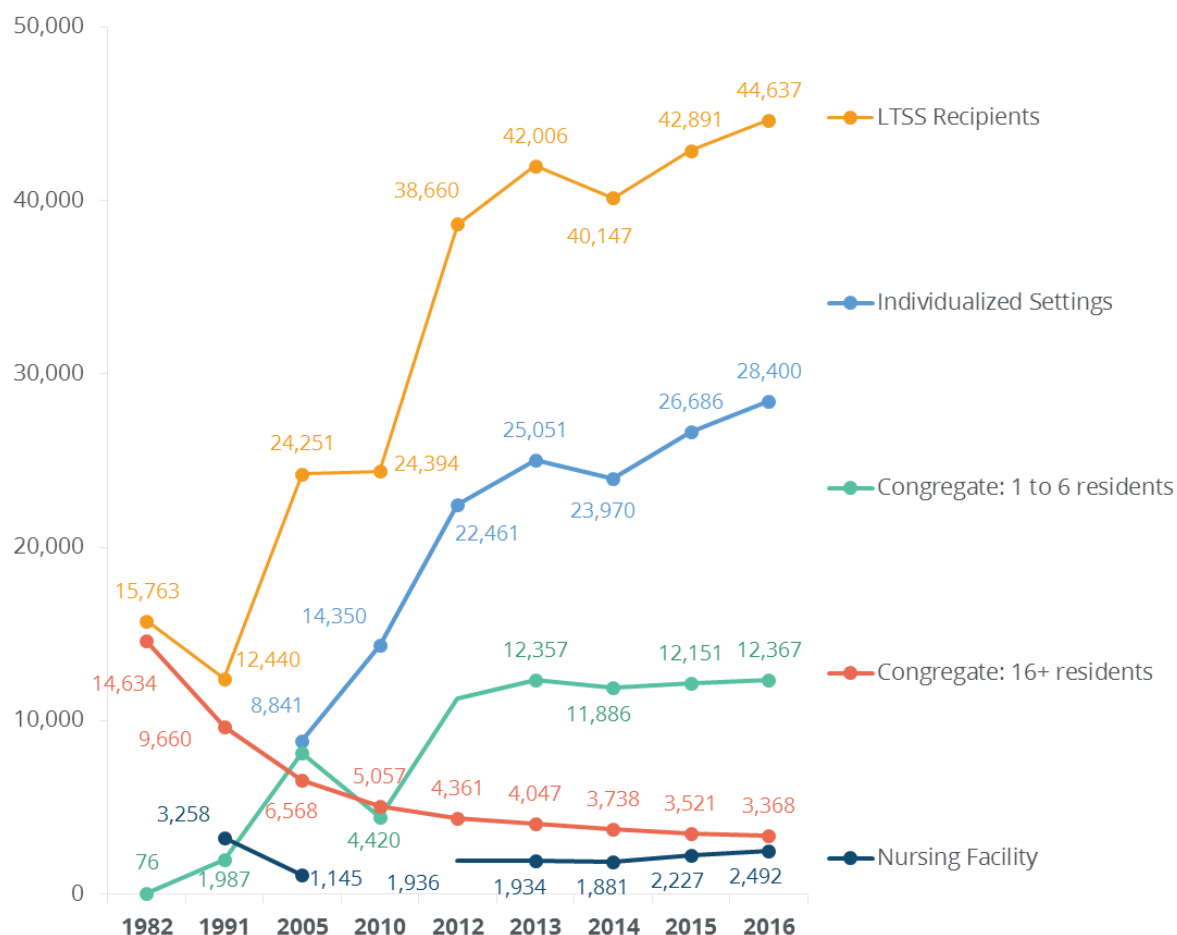
From 2001 through 2016, more than 44,000 Texas residents with disabilities moved from institutional settings to the community. Figure V-1 demonstrates the growth in the number of Texans receiving LTSS and living in individualized settings.

³ <https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/laws-regulations/reports-presentations/2017/revised-tx-promoting-independence-plan-2016-sept-1-2017.pdf>

⁴ <https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/laws-regulations/reports-presentations/2017/piac-2016-stakeholder.pdf>

⁵ A notable case is *Seward et. al. v. Perry, et. al; United States v. Texas*, originally filed in 2010, which asserted that the State warehoused residents with intellectual or developmental disabilities in nursing homes. The State reached an interim settlement agreement in 2013, and a month-long trial in U.S. District Court concluded in November 2018. A ruling is forthcoming.

Figure V-1.
Trends in In-Home and Residential Supports for People with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities, Texas, 1982-2016



Note: LTSS = Long Term Supports and Services. Congregate settings of 7 to 15 residents not shown for simplicity. In 2016, 502 residents lived in congregant settings with 7 to 15 residents. Individualized settings include the resident's own home, a family home, or a host/family foster home.

Source: Root Policy Research from Larson, S.A., Eschenbacher, H.J., Anderson, L.L., Taylor, B., Pettingell, S., Hewitt, A., Sowers, M., & Bourne, M.L. (2018). In-Home and Residential Long-Term Supports and Services for Persons with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities: Status and trends through 2016. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Research and Training Center on Community Living, Institute on Community Integration. <https://risp.umn.edu/>

Another approach to understanding the extent to which residents with disabilities are able to choose community living is to look at the population of group quarters. Data on the number of residents with disabilities living in group quarters—correctional facilities, skilled nursing facilities, and non-institutionalized group settings—are only available at the state level. As shown in Figure V-2, persons with disabilities comprise 12 percent of Texas population, and 34 percent of the group quarters population.

- As estimated by the ACS, more than 17,000 Texans with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 64 live in non-correctional institutional settings (i.e., skilled nursing facilities⁶).
- People with disabilities comprise 26 percent of the Texas adult corrections population, twice the rate we would expect based on share of population alone.

Figure V-2.
Residents of Group Quarters, by Disability Status, State of Texas, 2017

	With a Disability		No Disability		Total	
Total population	3,298,334	12%	24,121,278	88%	27,419,612	100%
Group quarters population	207,440	34%	397,159	66%	604,599	100%
% Living in group quarters	6%		2%		2%	
Institutionalized group quarters						
Adult correctional facilities	67,264	39%	195,480	94%	262,744	69%
Skilled nursing facilities	98,657	57%	4,944	2%	103,601	27%
Ages 18 to 64	17,283		1,305		18,588	
65+	81,374		3,639		85,013	
Other institutionalized setting	5,979	3%	7,705	4%	13,684	4%
Total institutionalized	171,900	100%	208,129	100%	380,029	100%
Non-institutionalized group quarters						
Non-student group housing	28,738	81%	58,497	31%	87,235	39%
Student housing	6,802	19%	130,533	69%	137,335	61%
Total non-institutionalized	35,540	100%	189,030	100%	224,570	100%
Group quarters population						
Under age 18	4,355	2%	10,356	3%	14,711	2%
18 to 64	113,434	55%	379,048	95%	492,482	81%
65+	89,651	43%	7,755	2%	97,406	16%
		100%		100%		100%

Source: Root Policy Research from 2013-2017 ACS.

State and local in-home and residential supports. For many residents with disabilities, the promise of the *Olmstead* decision—the opportunity to live in the most integrated setting—is not possible without LTSS. In addition, people with disabilities living in the community may be at risk of institutionalization if LTSS supports are insufficient. Beginning in 2008, the Texas Legislature appropriated funding (~\$71M) to enable Texas to participate in the federal Money Follows the Person Demonstration program. The Legislature provided additional funding in 2013 to participate in Community First Choice, a federal option that provides a 6 percent increase in federal matching funds for Medicaid to

⁶ We believe that the ACS definition of skilled nursing facility is inclusive of the large (16+ resident) congregate living settings shown in Figure V-1.

support attendant and habilitation options for people with disabilities on the Texas STAR+PLUS Medicaid program. Texas participates in a total of six Medicaid waiver programs and one Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver.

Wait lists for community services. Texas maintains an interest list for community-based programs, and Figure V-3 presents the number of Texans on a program Interest list and the number of years on the list⁷. Residents on an Interest list are not necessarily eligible for a program; eligibility determinations are made as funding becomes available, and residents are considered in the order in which they expressed interest (first come, first serve). As shown, demand for community-based supports remains high and exceeds available resources.

Figure V-3.
Size of Community Living Program Interest List and Years on List, 2018

	Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS)		Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD)		Home and Community-based Services (HCS)		Medically Dependent Children's Program (MDCP)	
May 2018 Interest List	67,038		416		93,284		16,840	
Years on Interest List								
Less than 1 year	6,511	10%	153	37%	8,479	9%	2,226	13%
1 year up to 2 years	6,066	9%	179	43%	8,973	10%	2,637	16%
2 years up to 3 years	5,588	8%	93	22%	8,577	9%	3,986	24%
3 years up to 4 years	4,809	7%			7,087	8%	4,914	29%
4 years up to 5 years	4,810	7%			6,900	7%	3,077	18%
5 years up to 10 years	29,706	44%			38,969	42%		
10 years or longer	9,545	14%			14,299	15%		

Source: Root Policy Research from <https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/records-statistics/interest-list-reduction>.

State housing resources to support deinstitutionalization. “One of the barriers to successful relocation from an institutional setting is the lack of affordable, accessible, and integrated housing. Integrated housing is defined as normal, ordinary living arrangements typical of the general population. Integrated housing is achieved when individuals with disabilities have the choice of ordinary, typical housing units located among individuals who do not have disabilities or other special needs.”⁸ State housing resources allocated to support residents with disabilities moving to integrated settings include:

- **TDHCA’s Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program (Section 811 PRA).** Eligible populations include people with disabilities exiting institutions who are eligible

⁷ <https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/records-statistics/interest-list-reduction>

⁸ 2016 Revised Texas Promoting Independence Plan, p.45.

for LTSS through a Medicaid waiver. Although Texas was approved for funding for 250 and 296 units in 2012 and 2013 TDHCA found that developers required incentives to participate in the program. As such, subsequent QAPs included points for Section 811 PRA participation. Tax credit developments in the Austin-Round Rock MSA are eligible.

- **Project Access vouchers.** TDHCA originally received 35 Section 8 vouchers for the Project Access program in 2001. When the program ended in 2003, the TDHCA board chose to continue funding the 35 vouchers, and voted to expand the program to 140 vouchers in 2013, and plans to expand to 165 households in 2019. The voucher “recycles” when the cost of the Project Access voucher is absorbed by a local public housing authority.
- **Amy Young Barrier Removal Program.** The Amy Young Barrier Removal program is funded by the Texas Housing Trust Fund and administered by TDHCA. The program offers one time grants up to \$20,000 for home modifications for people with disabilities. The grant recipient may be a tenant or a homeowner and must be income qualified. In FY 2019, funding for the Amy Young Barrier Removal Program in Central Texas region is more than \$150 million.⁹ Participation in the program is not exclusive to residents with disabilities leaving institutions, but it can be used to support a transition.

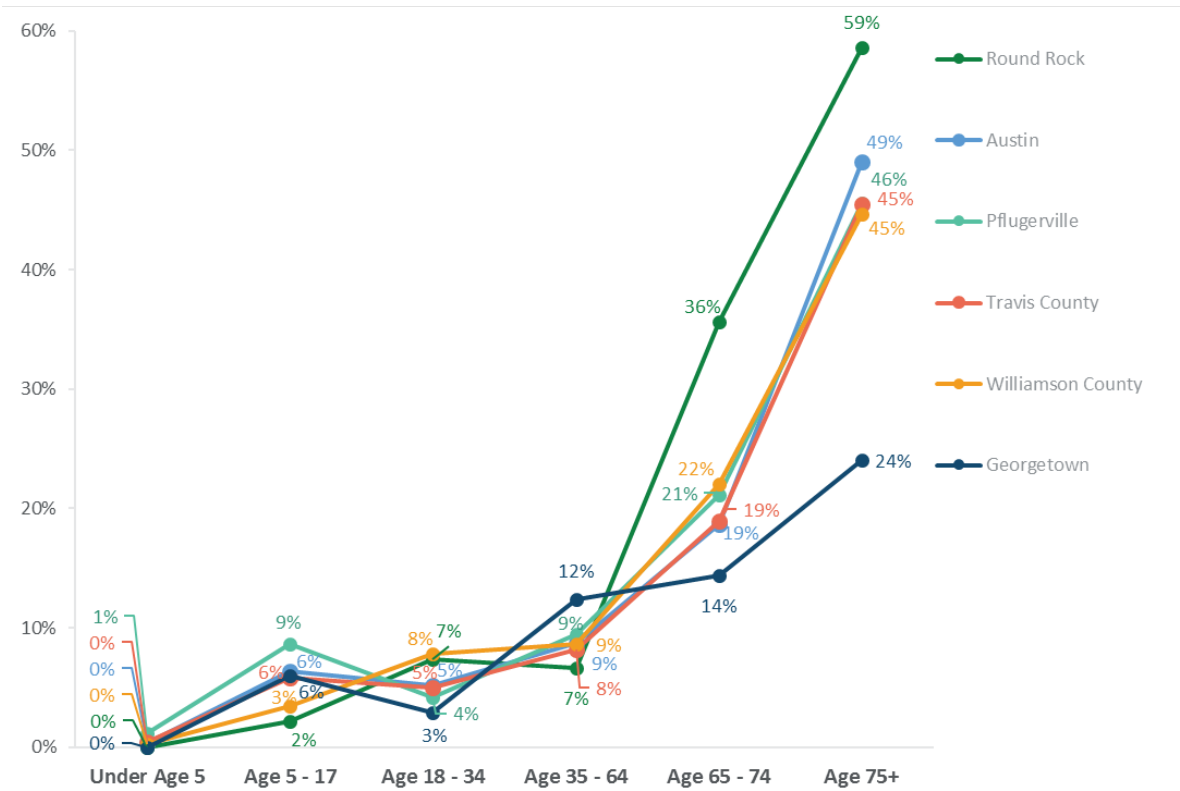
Population Profile

Nearly 150,000 residents of Central Texas have a disability, about 9 percent of the regional population.

Age. The incidence of disability increases by age. For example, eight percent of Central Texas residents ages 35 to 64 have a disability. This proportion jumps to 20 percent for the 65 to 74 age cohort and more than doubles to 45 percent of the population age 75 and older. Figure V-4 presents the proportion of each jurisdiction’s population with a disability by age cohort. That only 24 percent of Georgetown’s population age 75 and older has a disability suggests that Georgetown’s older adults with disabilities are moving out of the City. Round Rock’s higher incidence of disability in its oldest age cohort suggests that Round Rock attracts more older adults with disabilities than would be expected, given the regional average.

⁹ <http://tdhca.state.tx.us/htf/single-family/docs/19-AYBRP-NOFA.pdf>

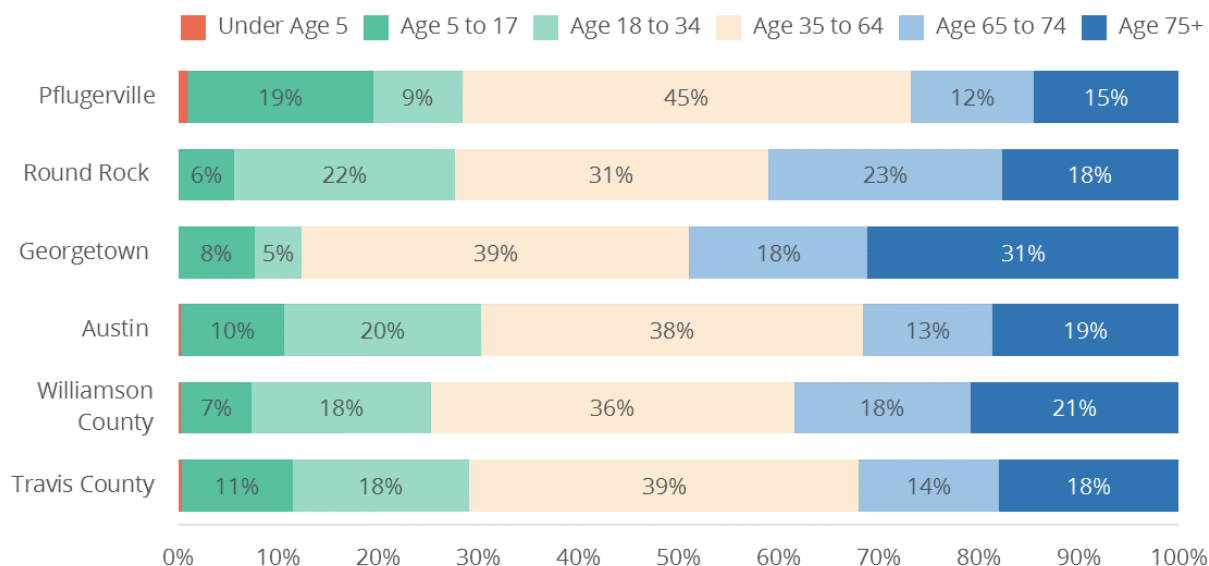
Figure V-4.
Share of Residents with Disabilities by Age Cohort, 2017



Source: Root Policy Research from 2017 ACS for all jurisdictions except Pflugerville (2013-2017 ACS).

Figure V-5 presents the age distribution of residents with disabilities by jurisdiction. It demonstrates that while people with disabilities comprise a near majority of the population ages 75 and older, this age cohort is not the greatest proportion of residents with disabilities. Rather, in each jurisdiction, residents ages 35 to 64 comprise the greatest proportion of residents with disabilities. In Pflugerville, nearly one in five residents with disabilities are between the ages of five and 17, about twice the rate of other communities.

Figure V-5.
Age Distribution of Residents with a Disability, by Jurisdiction



Source: Root Policy Research from 2017 ACS for all jurisdictions except Pflugerville (2013-2017 ACS).

Household size and composition. The resident survey provides information about the household size and composition of Central Texas residents with disabilities.¹⁰ The median household size among survey respondents whose household includes a member with a disability is two members, and 12 percent live in large households (five or more members). Types of household composition vary by jurisdiction among survey respondents from disability households. Among households that include a member with a disability¹¹:

- Nearly two in five have **children in the home** (39%). Nearly half (46%) of Pflugerville and 44 percent of Round Rock disability households have a child under 18 in the home, compared to 17 percent in Georgetown and 28 percent in Austin.
- One in four (24%) **live with a spouse/partner only**. This is higher in Travis County (34%) and Georgetown (31%), and lower in Williamson County (15%).
- Slightly more than one in five (22%) **live with a spouse/partner and children**. This household composition is most likely in Round Rock (36%) and Pflugerville (36%), and least likely in Austin (17%) and Georgetown (11%).

¹⁰ It is important to note that data from the survey for Travis and Williamson counties *exclude* responses from Austin, Round Rock, Pflugerville, and Georgetown. More detail about the survey approach and analysis is found in Section VII.

¹¹ Note that the household member with a disability may be the respondent or another member of the household (i.e., the respondent's child, roommate, or family member).

- Nearly one in five (18%) **live alone**. Residents with a disability are most likely to live alone in Austin (23%), Williamson County (20%), and Georgetown (17%) and much less likely to live along in Pflugerville (10%), Travis County (9%), and Round Rock (2%).
- Less than one in five (17%) **live in multigenerational households**. Living with other adult family members is most common in Round Rock (30%) and Williamson County (24%).
- Nearly one in 10 (8%) **are single parent households**. This household type did not vary much by jurisdiction; and
- Slightly more than one in 20 (7%) **live in households that include roommates/friends**. This household type is most prevalent in Austin (9%) and Georgetown (9%).

Type of disability. Figure V-6 presents the number of residents with disabilities by jurisdiction and shows the prevalence of different types of difficulties captured in the 2017 ACS. Among residents with disabilities, ambulatory and/or cognitive difficulties are most common, followed by independent living difficulties and hearing difficulties. There is some variation by jurisdiction in the proportion of residents with different difficulties. For example, 47 percent of Austin residents with disabilities have a cognitive difficulty compared to 30 percent of Pflugerville residents with disabilities.

Figure V-6.
Disability Population, Type of Difficulty, by Jurisdiction

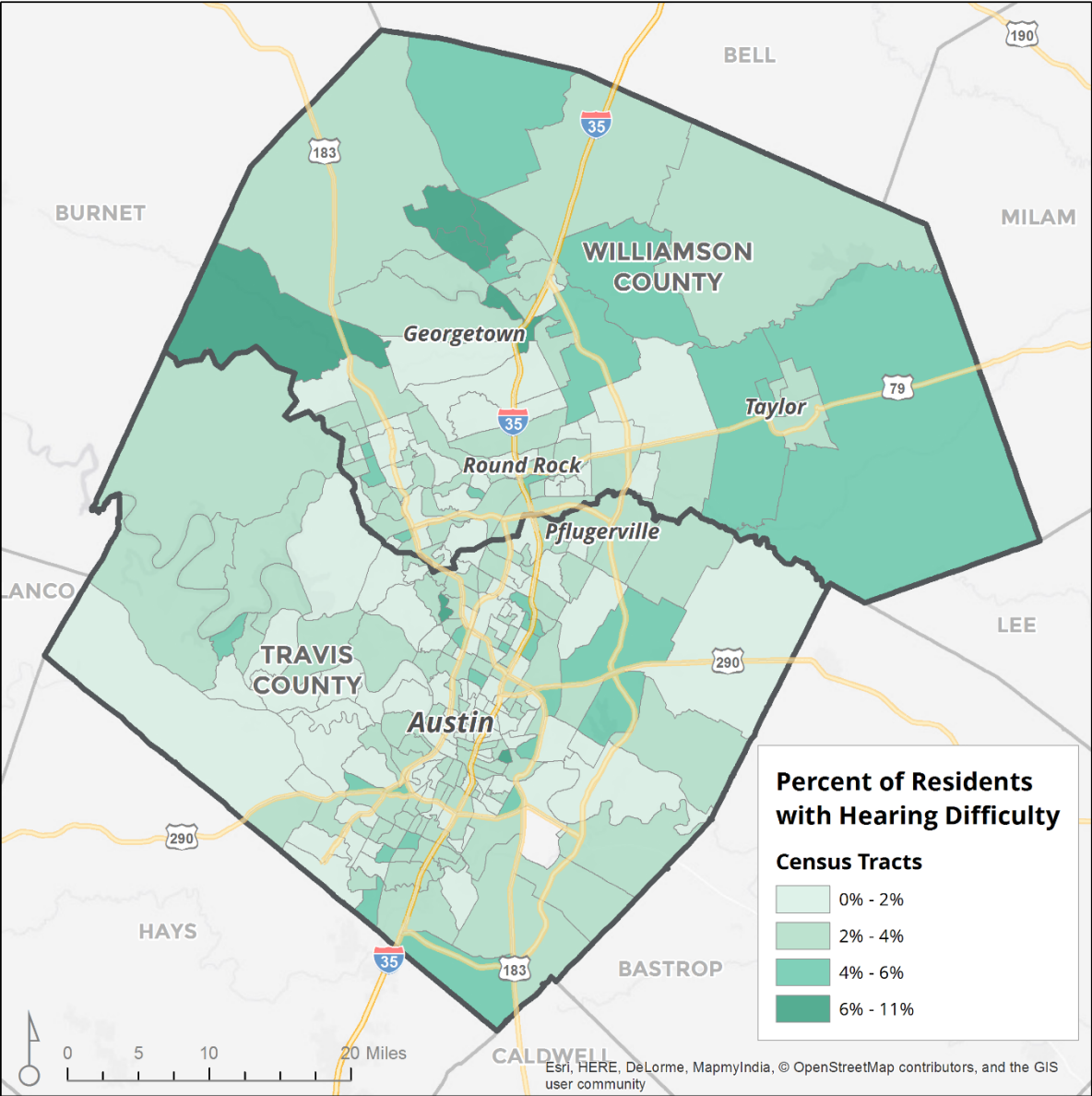
	Travis County		Austin		Round Rock		Pflugerville		Georgetown		Williamson County	
Residents with a Disability	100,869		81,664		10,351		5,390		7,815		51,704	
Type of Difficulty												
Vision difficulty	19,617	19%	14,397	18%	1,238	12%	706	13%	1,208	15%	7,479	14%
Hearing difficulty	25,385	25%	19,008	23%	3,396	33%	823	15%	2,177	28%	14,906	29%
Ambulatory difficulty	42,753	42%	34,923	43%	4,810	46%	2,271	42%	2,678	34%	22,945	44%
Cognitive difficulty	45,764	45%	38,077	47%	4,221	41%	1,602	30%	3,574	46%	20,900	40%
Self-care difficulty	14,060	14%	11,506	14%	1,894	18%	233	4%	1,183	15%	7,655	15%
Independent living difficulty	32,814	33%	26,459	32%	3,839	37%	1,726	32%	2,450	31%	17,945	35%

Source: Root Policy Research from the 2013-2017 ACS.

Section II examined where people with disabilities live in the region. HUD maps demonstrated that persons with disabilities live throughout the region. Figures V-7 through V-12 present where residents with disabilities live by type of difficulty. As shown in Figure V-7, residents with hearing difficulty live throughout the region with somewhat higher

proportions living in more rural areas in Williamson County and neighborhoods in northwest Austin and east Austin.

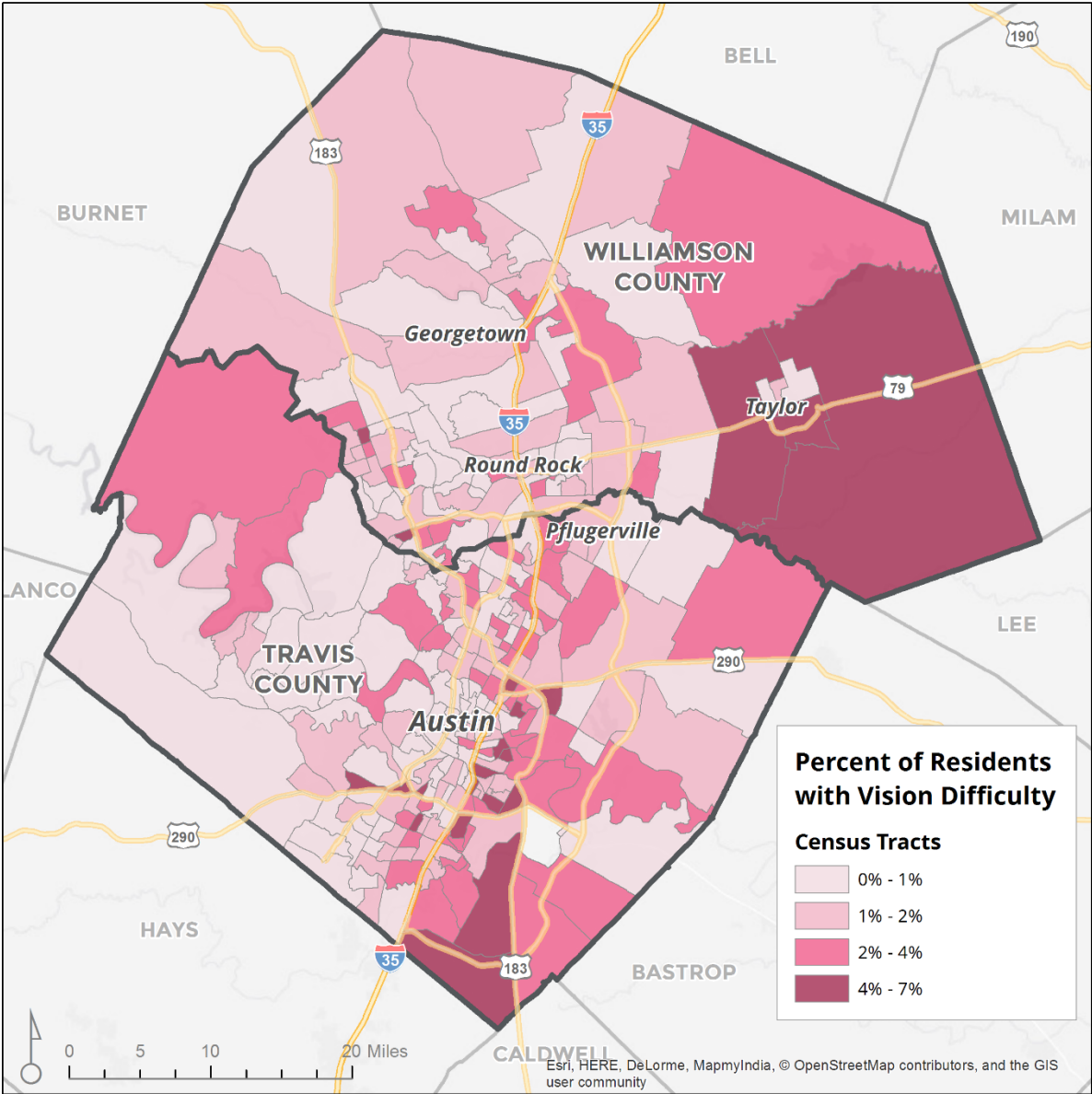
Figure V-7.
Percent of Residents with Hearing Difficulty, by Census Tract



Note: The ACS defines hearing difficulty as being deaf or having serious difficulty hearing.
Source: Root Policy Research from the 2013-2017 ACS.

As with residents with hearing difficulties, residents with vision difficulty are also dispersed throughout the region, with somewhat higher proportions in east Williamson County and on the east side of I-35 in Austin and south Travis County.

Figure V-8.
Percent of Residents with Vision Difficulty, by Census Tract

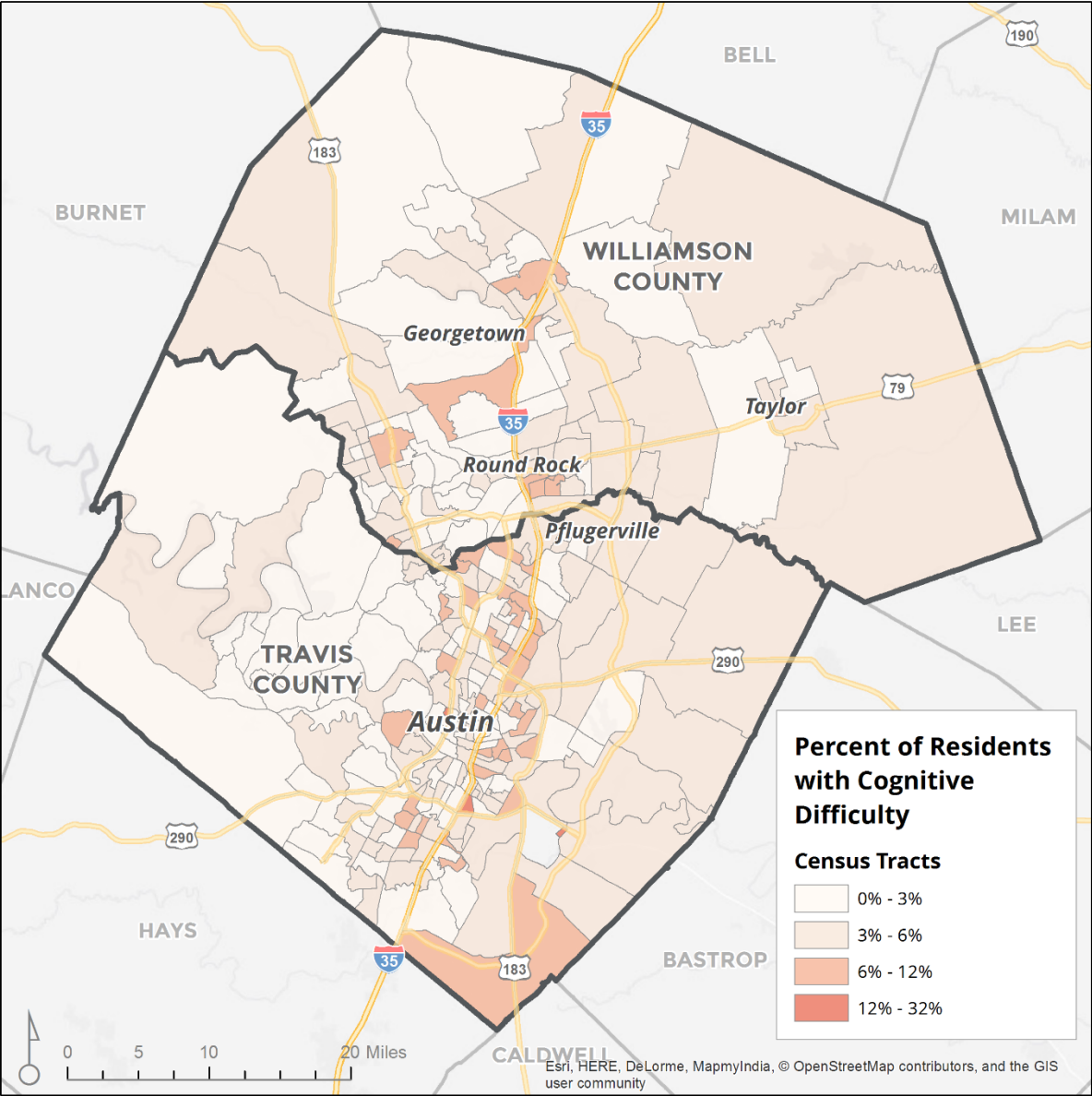


Note: The ACS defines vision difficulty as being blind or having serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses.

Source: Root Policy Research from the 2013-2017 ACS.

Residents with a cognitive difficulty are more likely to live along the I-35 corridor and less likely to live in rural areas.

Figure V-9.
Percent of Residents with Cognitive Difficulty, by Census Tract

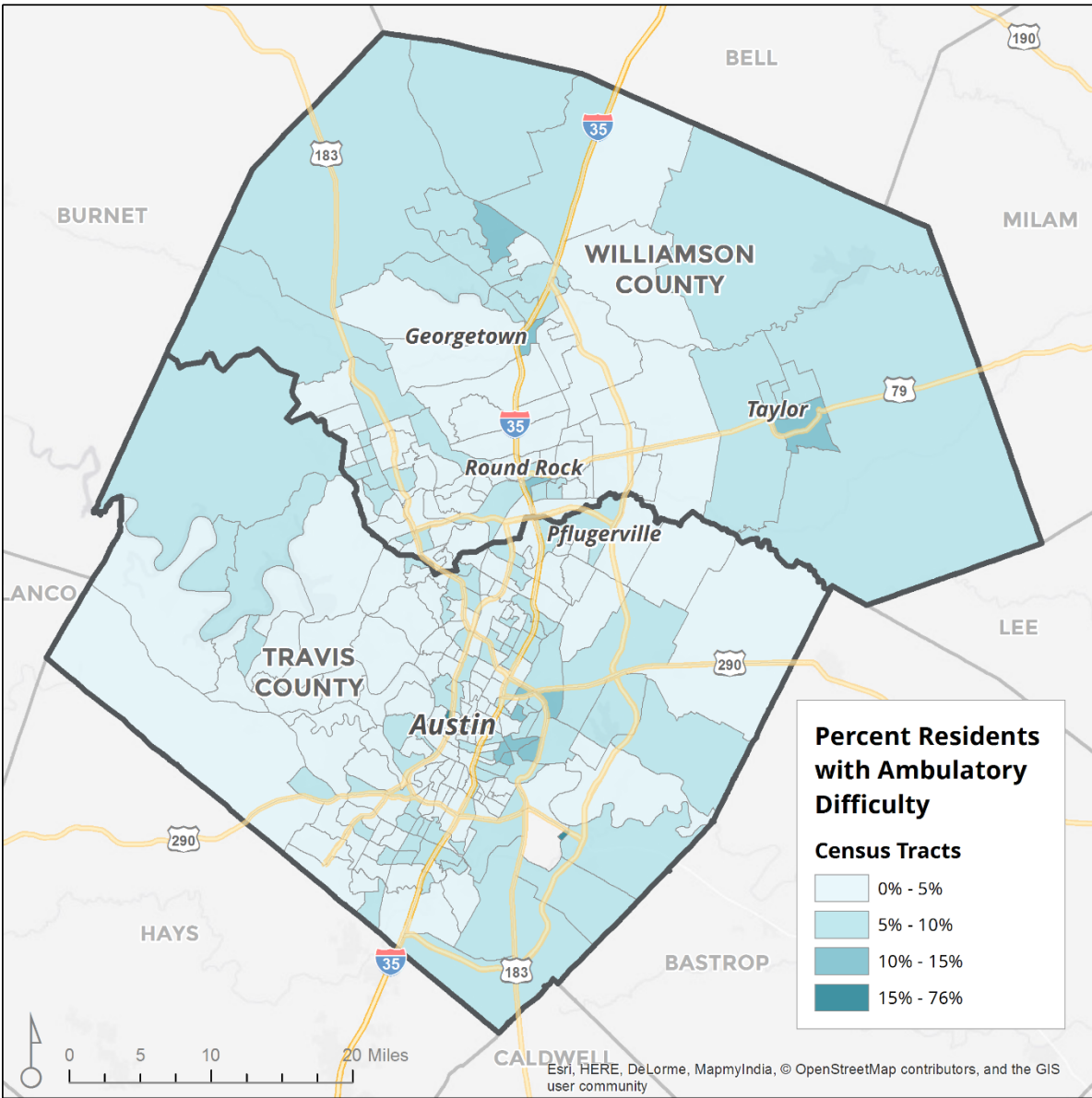


Note: The ACS defines cognitive difficulty as having serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions due to a physical, mental or emotional condition.

Source: Root Policy Research from the 2013-2017 ACS.

With respect to residents with ambulatory difficulties, the pattern of dispersion across Census tracts is very similar to the map of where residents with cognitive difficulties live. In Austin, there are higher concentrations of residents with ambulatory difficulties east of I-35. In Williamson County, Census tracts in Georgetown, Round Rock and Taylor also have a higher proportion of residents with ambulatory difficulties.

Figure V-10.
Percent of Residents with Ambulatory Difficulty, by Census Tract

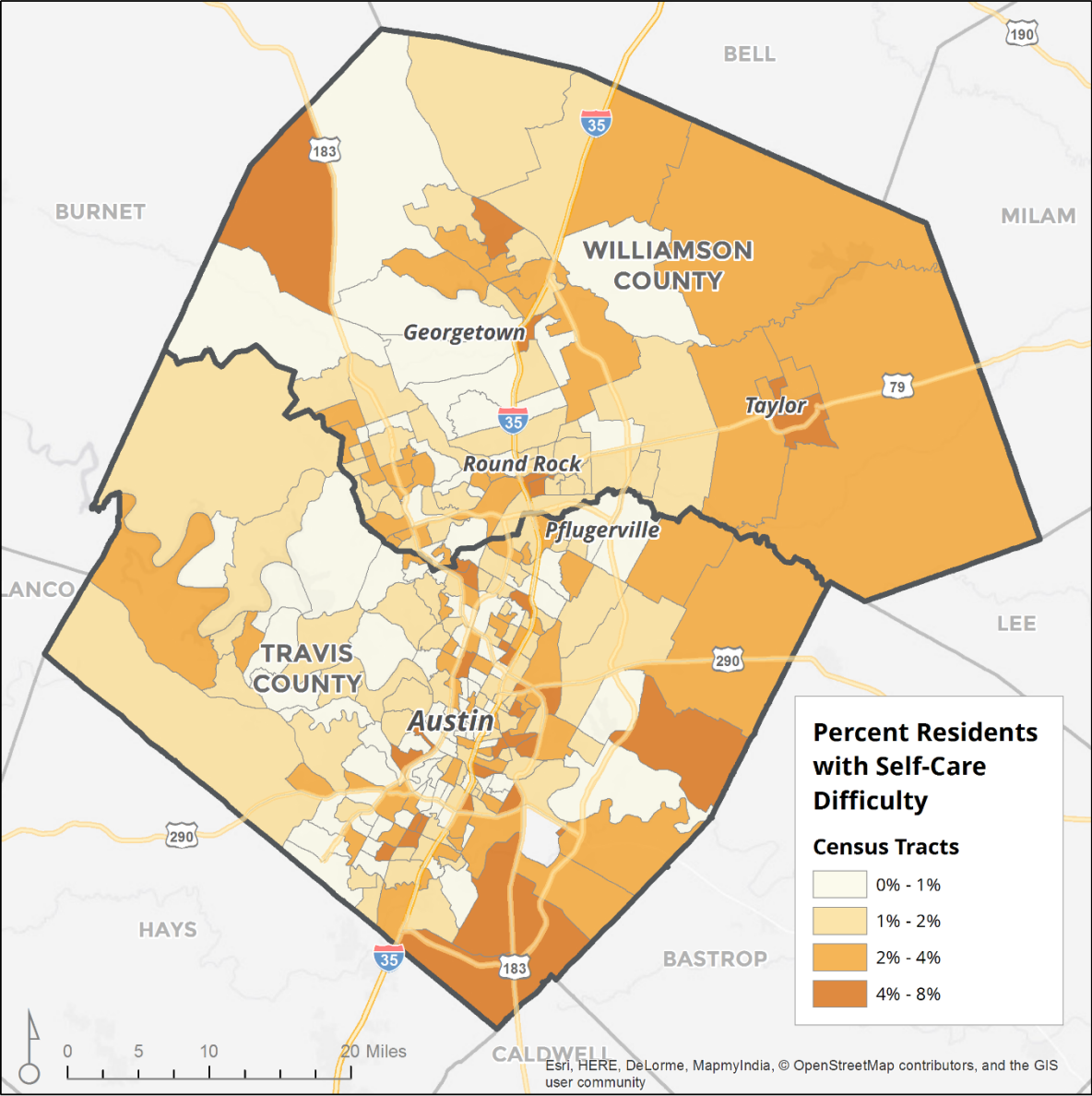


Note: The ACS defines ambulatory difficulty as having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.

Source: Root Policy Research from the 2013-2017 ACS.

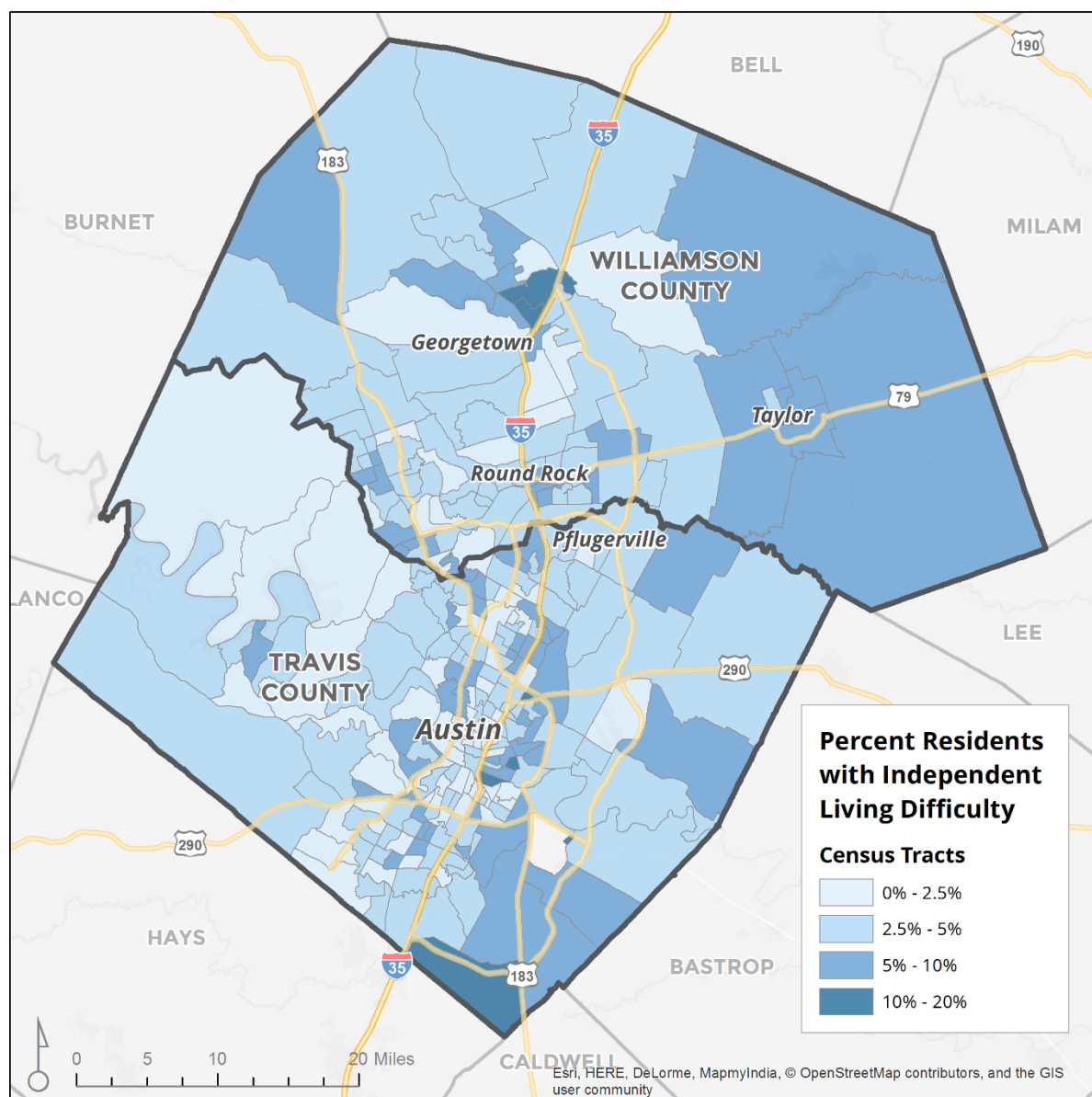
Residents with self-care difficulties live throughout the region, and in all types of neighborhoods. Rural tracts in both Williamson and Travis counties have between four and eight percent of the population with self-care difficulties.

Figure V-11.
Percent of Residents with Self-Care Difficulty, by Census Tract



As with residents with self-care difficulties, residents with independent living difficulties live throughout the region, and higher proportions of the population with independent living difficulties can be found in both rural and urban settings.

Figure V-12.
Percent of Residents with Independent Living Difficulty, by Census Tract



Note: The ACS defines independent living difficulty as having difficulty doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor's office or going shopping, due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition.

Source: Root Policy Research from the 2013-2017 ACS.

Income and poverty. Median individual earnings for residents with and without a disability who have earnings are shown in Figure V-13. On average, the median earnings of residents of Central Texas who have a disability are \$11,700 less than residents with earnings who do not have a disability.

**Figure V-13.
Median Earnings**

Note:

Residents ages 16 and older with earnings. Data not available for Pflugerville.

Source:

Root Policy Research from 2013-2017 ACS.

	Median Earnings		Difference
	<i>With a Disability</i>	<i>No Disability</i>	
Travis County	\$25,614	\$37,305	(\$11,691)
Williamson County	\$28,041	\$41,024	(\$12,983)
Austin	\$24,336	\$36,492	(\$12,156)
Georgetown	\$24,448	\$35,377	(\$10,929)
Round Rock	\$26,998	\$37,711	(\$10,713)

Among all respondents to the Central Texas Fair Housing Survey¹² conducted for this study, the median household income is \$50,000 up to \$100,000. Among survey respondents whose household includes a member with a disability, more than one in five (22%) have annual household incomes less than \$25,000 compared to seven percent of households that do not include a disability. The share of disability households with incomes less than \$25,000 varied by jurisdiction:

- Georgetown (29% have incomes less than \$25,000);
- Austin (25%);
- Round Rock (22%);
- Williamson County (17%);
- Travis County (11%); and
- Pflugerville (11%).

Disability income. The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program is a cash assistance program providing monthly benefits to eligible low income residents with a disability, residents who are blind, and older adults. In 2018, the maximum monthly federal SSI payment for individuals was \$750 per month and \$1,125 for couples. Recipients of SSI are able to earn some income, but SSI payments decrease if income exceeds a monthly limit. Figure V-14 presents Federal SSI monthly maximum SSI payments, income limits, and monthly income. An individual receiving the monthly federal maximum and earning the monthly maximum income from wages will have a monthly income of \$2,335 and an annual individual income of \$28,000.

¹² See Section VII. Community Engagement Findings for a comprehensive analysis of the survey.

Figure V-14.
Monthly Federal SSI
Income, 2018

Note:

If income exceeds monthly income limits, the monthly SSI payment is reduced.

Source:

Root Policy Research from Social Security Administration Publication No. 05-10003, February 2018.

	Individual	Couple
Monthly SSI Payment (maximum)	\$750	\$1,125
Monthly Income Limits		
Income only from wages	\$1,585	\$2,235
Income not from wages	\$770	\$1,145
Maximum total income		
If income earned from wages	\$2,335	\$3,360
If income not earned from wages	\$1,520	\$2,270
If no additional income	\$750	\$1,125

Not all residents with a disability meet the eligibility requirements for receipt of SSI, and SSI is not the only federal benefit program available to people with disabilities. Among survey respondents from households that include a member with a disability, about 12 percent report earning disability benefits. The share of surveyed households with disability income ranged from five percent in Georgetown to 15 percent in Travis County.

Poverty. Figure V-15 presents the proportion of residents living in poverty by age and disability status. As shown, in each jurisdiction except Georgetown, children with disabilities are more likely than other children to live in poverty, and this higher likelihood of living in poverty continues for residents with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 64 living in each of the participating jurisdictions. In general, **residents with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 64 are twice as likely to live in poverty as their 18 to 64 year old neighbors without disabilities.** Among adults age 65 and older, the disparity in poverty rates between people with and without disabilities remains for residents of Austin and Travis County, but narrows significantly among older adults living in Pflugerville, Round Rock, Georgetown, and Williamson County.

Figure V-15.
Percent of Population in Poverty, by Disability and Jurisdiction

	Under Age 18 % in Poverty		Ages 18 to 64 % in Poverty		Age 65 and Older % in Poverty	
	<i>With</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>With</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>With</i>	<i>No</i>
	<i>Disability</i>	<i>Disability</i>	<i>Disability</i>	<i>Disability</i>	<i>Disability</i>	<i>Disability</i>
Travis County	25%	19%	22%	12%	12%	7%
Austin	30%	21%	24%	14%	13%	8%
Round Rock	32%	11%	16%	6%	7%	6%
Pflugerville	18%	11%	10%	5%	5%	6%
Georgetown	4%	8%	18%	9%	5%	3%
Williamson County	15%	8%	15%	6%	7%	4%

Source: Root Policy Research from the 2013-2017 ACS.

As shown in Figure V-16, households that include a member with a disability are twice as likely to receive food stamps than households that do not include a member with a

disability. Compared to other jurisdictions, a greater proportion of Austin and Travis County households that include a member with a disability received food stamps than similar households in Round Rock, Pflugerville, Georgetown, and Williamson County.

Figure V-16.
Households Receiving Food Stamps in the Past Year, by Disability and Jurisdiction

	Disability Households		Non-Disability Households		All Households	
	# Receiving Food Stamps	%	# Receiving Food Stamps	%	# Receiving Food Stamps	%
Travis County	14,120	19%	22,618	6%	36,738	8%
Austin	11,671	20%	19,414	6%	31,085	9%
Round Rock	984	14%	1,664	5%	2,648	7%
Pflugerville	434	11%	558	4%	992	5%
Georgetown	490	8%	499	3%	989	4%
Williamson County	3,392	10%	5,011	4%	8,403	5%

Note: Disability households include at least one member with a disability.

Source: Root Policy Research from 2013-2017 ACS.

Accessible and Affordable Housing

This section examines the extent to which persons with disabilities are able to exercise fair housing choice and are housed in the most integrated setting appropriate for their needs.

As specified in federal regulations: “The most integrated setting is one that enables individuals with disabilities to interact with nondisabled persons to the fullest extent possible, consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 USC. 12101, et seq., and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC 794. See 28 CFR. part. 35, App. A (2010) (addressing 25 CFR 35.130).” Under this principle, derived from the Supreme Court’s decision in *Olmstead vs. L.C.*, institutionalized settings are to be avoided to the maximum possible extent in favor of settings in which persons with disabilities are integrated into the community.

Different types of modifications, accommodations and/or services may be needed to allow individuals with disabilities to live in integrated settings. For example, persons with physical disabilities may need units with universal design or accessibility features, both within the private market and publicly-supported housing stock, specific to their needs. Persons with other types of disabilities may require access to services and support—e.g., transportation assistance, personal care services—they need to live independently. Many persons with disabilities need housing that is affordable, as well as accessible. Affordability is a particularly acute concern for those relying on disability benefit programs like SSI.

Current housing choice and preferences. Similar to survey respondents overall, most of the respondents whose household includes a member with a disability are

homeowners (67% overall v. 60%). Homeownership rates among disability households participating in the survey are:

- Highest among Travis County respondents (86%), Williamson County (73%), and Pflugerville (72%); and
- Lower in Round Rock (58%), Georgetown (53%), and Austin (50%).

Regionally, one in 25 households (4%) are precariously housed¹³; this rate doubles to eight percent for households that include a member with a disability. Among survey respondents whose household includes a member with a disability, the proportion who are precariously housed varied by jurisdiction. Disability households are most likely to be precariously housed in Georgetown (18%) and Round Rock (14%) and are least likely to be precariously housed in Williamson County (6%) and Travis County (2%).

Most important factor when choosing current home. When choosing their current home, cost, liking the neighborhood, low crime/safety, proximity to work, and the type/layout of the home were most important to respondents whose household includes a member with a disability. These most important factors are very similar to respondents overall.

Desire to move. Regionally, about two in five (37%) survey respondents would move out of their current housing if they had the opportunity. Respondents whose household includes a member with a disability are more likely to want to move (46%). For these households, the desire to move is driven by wanting to live in less costly housing, becoming a homeowner, living in a bigger house/apartment, wanting to move to a different neighborhood, and to live in a more walkable/rollable/bikeable area. For those that want to move, the primary reasons why they have not are: can't afford to live anywhere else, can't pay moving expenses/deposits, can't find a better place to live, job is here, and family reasons.

Housing challenges. Households that include a member with a disability may experience housing challenges related to needed modifications to the home or accommodations from their housing provider. Overall, **one in five households** that include a member with a disability **live in a home that does not meet the needs of the resident with a disability**, as shown in Figure V-17. The proportion of households living in homes that do not meet the accessibility needs of the member with a disability varies among the participating partners, ranging from a low of 10 percent of Williamson County respondents to 33 percent of Georgetown respondents, with Travis County (25%), Austin (21%), Round Rock (20%), and Pflugerville (19%) in between.

Among these households, the improvements or modifications needed include:

¹³ Precariously housed includes residents who are currently homeless, those staying with friends or family ("couch surfing"), or living in transitional or temporary housing.

- Grab bars (64% of residents whose housing does not meet the accessibility needs of the member with a disability);
- Wider doors (39%);
- Ramps (31%);
- Fire alarm/doorbell made accessible for person with hearing disability/deaf (19%)
- Service or emotional support animal allowed in the home (18%);
- Stair lifts (17%);
- Reserved accessible parking spot by entrance (17%); and
- Alarm to notify if a non-verbal child leaves the home (7%).

Figure V-17.
Housing Challenges Experienced by Residents with Disabilities

Percent of Residents Experiencing a Housing Challenge	Disability
My home does not meet the needs of the household member with a disability	21%
I have a disability or a household member has a disability and cannot get around the neighborhood because of broken sidewalks	13%
I worry if I request an accommodation for my disability my rent will go up or I will be evicted	13%
I can't afford the housing that has accessibility features (e.g., grab bars, ramps, location, size of unit, quiet)	9%
My landlord refused to make an accommodation (e.g., reserved accessible parking spot, electronic lease copy, etc.) for my or my household member's disability	4%
My landlord refused to make a modification (e.g., grab bar, ramp, etc.) for my or my household member's disability	4%
My landlord refused to accept my therapy/companion/emotional support animal	2%
I am afraid I will lose my in-home health care	1%
My landlord refused to accept my service animal	1%
I worry about the consequences of requesting an accommodation	1%

Source: Root Policy Research from the 2018 Central Texas Fair Housing Survey.

Lack of accessible housing units. In focus groups, residents with disabilities described the significant difficulty they experience when trying to find housing that meets their accessibility needs. A lack of radius in the bathroom, to allow a wheelchair to turn, is the most common barrier to accessibility they experience. Focus group participants with disabilities describe making tradeoffs in the accessibility of a housing unit for affordability, or access to transit, or other factors.

“My son has cerebral palsy. Our current apartment has ramps—the last one didn’t; but the stove’s burners are situated so that my son gets burned when he tries to use the stove. We really need an accessible kitchen and accessible appliances.” (Disability focus group participant)

Stakeholders noted the growing population of older adults with disabilities throughout the region, but especially in Williamson County and Travis County who need accessibility modifications to their home, but are unable to afford the modifications.

With respect to new construction, stakeholders would like to see builders and developers include more adaptable units in both single and multifamily construction.

Other ADA and disability accommodation challenges. Residents with disabilities experience other challenges that range from landlords or property managers who refuse to make reasonable accommodations or who don’t think about the impact of operational or property changes on their tenants with disabilities. More than one in 10 residents with disabilities (13%) worry that if they request a reasonable accommodation their rent will go up or they will be evicted, and about one in 20 have had a housing provider refuse an accommodation (4%). Several residents with wheelchairs described how security gates installed at their buildings have the unintended consequence of making it more difficult to enter the property, as automatic gates close more quickly than the resident is able to cross through, often damaging the wheelchair. Mailbox heights are another common difficulty, as mailboxes are hung too high to be reached by a person in a chair.

Lack of affordable housing. For residents with disabilities, particularly those who rely on Social Security or disability income, rising rents exacerbate the difficulty they experience finding and retaining housing that they can afford. Two in three respondents whose household includes a member with a disability worry that their rent will increase more than they can afford to pay.

As costs continue to increase in the more transit-rich urban core, residents with disabilities experience significantly diminished housing choice and end up living in neighborhoods with inadequate transit access. High housing costs also impact the availability of personal attendants, making it more difficult for residents with disabilities to secure these needed services that support living in integrated neighborhoods.

Several of the disability focus group participants who lived in market rate apartment buildings felt that the housing they could afford was in unsafe areas and in very poor condition. *“There’s dogs, and drugs, and men drinking. It’s very dangerous.” (Disability focus group participant)*

Barriers to homeownership. Among survey respondents with disabilities who rent, half (51%) want to buy a home, but can't afford the downpayment. The proportion wanting to buy is slightly lower than the regional average (58%). Among those who seriously looked for housing in the past five years, one in 10 households that include a member with a disability were denied mortgage lending (similar to the regional rate, 8%).

Difficulty finding landlords who accept housing vouchers. Focus group participants estimate that about two percent of landlords accept Section 8 or other housing vouchers, further increasing the difficulty of finding housing that meets their needs. *"People don't take Section 8. I applied to almost 20 apartments."* (Disability focus group participant)

3X income policies and source of income policies. In focus groups, participants with disabilities who had recently searched for rental housing expressed difficulty finding landlords who did not require 3X the rent in income. Some stakeholders suggest that these requirements, particularly when posed to residents living on Social Security or Disability income, disparately impact residents with disabilities.

Among households that include a member with a disability, who were denied housing to rent or buy in the past five years, "landlord didn't accept the type of income I earn (social security or disability benefit)" was among the top five reasons they were denied housing.

Difficulty finding landlords who accept tenants with poor credit. Households that include a member with a disability are nearly twice as likely as others to report that they have difficulty finding a landlord due to bad credit/evictions/foreclosure history (17% v. 10% of regional respondents). Among those who seriously looked for housing in the past five years, one in 10 disability households were denied housing to rent due to their eviction history (11% v. 7% regionally).

Similar to residents, stakeholders identified prior rental history, especially evictions, as a significant barrier to housing. Stakeholders noted that even in cases where a tenant won an eviction hearing and was not evicted, the filing is still on their record. Stakeholders recommend better practices for expunging records and to include lookback limitations on old evictions. In their experience, people of color are disproportionately impacted by evictions. Outstanding rental debt is also a significant barrier to housing. Stakeholders describe a *"tacit agreement among landlords not to accept a tenant with outstanding rental debt. It's treated differently than other types of debt (student loans, auto, etc) and there is potential for discrimination here."*

Lack of supportive services or spectrum of supportive housing options. A number of focus group participants had recently transitioned into independent living from a more structured, institutional setting. While these residents had participated in independent living classes, once they transition into their new homes, there is little support. *"They're left to flounder a bit in the transition."* (Stakeholder focus group participant) Residents whose household includes a member with a disability are more likely than other survey respondents to say they "need help taking care of self/home, but can't afford help" (13% v. 5% of regional respondents).

- *“We need ‘graduated transitioning’ housing, where you can get better, get a job, establish credit, finances, and eventually be more independent. It’s too hard to get out of public housing.” (Behavioral Health and Recovery focus group participant)*
- *“There is a real need for personal care homes in Williamson County versus assisted living.” (Behavioral Health and Recovery focus group participant)*
- *“More space. We are five in one bedroom. My son has ADHD and needs his space but can’t have it. My other son, a three year old has sensory disorder so it’s hard for him to get a moment of silence.” (Resident with a disability)*
- *“We have no public transit in our neighborhood. One of us is mobility impaired and walking 30 minutes to the closest stop is not an option. Another can’t drive due to disability.” (Resident with a disability)*

Stakeholders serving primarily elderly and disabled residents expressed concern about Board and Care Homes. In their experience these homes are increasingly the only affordable option for very low income seniors and non-elderly disabled. Some are *“total garbage, with rodents, pests, slimy and unfilled swimming pools, bunk beds in the garage and mattresses on the floor of living rooms. They serve a needed gap, but are the underbelly of housing.” (Stakeholder focus group participant)* They want to see increased regulation or strengthened enforcement of existing Board and Care Home regulations. Stakeholders serving the substance abuse recovery community are very concerned that recovery homes are being misclassified as Board and Care Homes. From their perspective, in the recovery home model residents function as a family unit, and outcomes for long term stability and recovery are strongest when these residents are integrated into the community amongst other families living in single family homes. In Austin, for example, Board and Care Homes are not a use by right in single family zoning districts. Were recovery homes to be classified as Board and Care Home, this type of housing would be restricted to multifamily zones, disparately impacting people in recovery.

Criminal history. Among survey respondents who seriously looked for housing in the past five years, people with disabilities are twice as likely as other home seekers to be denied housing to rent due to their criminal history (11% v. 6%).

Displacement experience. Regionally, 14 percent of respondents to the survey experienced displacement—having to move out of a home or apartment when they did not want to move—in the region in the past five years. Households that include a member with a disability are more likely than regional respondents to experience displacement (23%). When considered by housing situation, displacement rates vary dramatically. As with other survey respondents, homeowners are much less likely than renters and the precariously housed to have experienced housing displacement in the past five years—nine percent of homeowners compared to 41 percent of renters, and 50 percent of the precariously housed.

Reasons for displacement experienced by more than 10 percent of households that include a member with a disability include:

- **For homeowners**¹⁴—rent increased more than I could pay when I was a renter (40%), property taxes/other costs of homeownership (30%), and personal reasons/relationship reasons (15%);
- **For renters**—rent increased more than I could pay (36%), personal reasons/relationship reasons (23%), mold or other unsafe conditions (15%), landlord selling home (12%), and lost jobs/hours reduced (11%); and
- **For precariously housed residents**—rent increased more than I could pay (43%), personal reasons/relationship reasons (31%), evicted because I was behind on the rent (26%), lost jobs/hours reduced (20%), health/medical reasons (20%), landlord wanted to rent to someone else (14%), landlord refused to renew my lease (11%), and evicted for no reason (11%).

Experience with housing discrimination. Overall, 17 percent of the survey respondents whose household includes a member with a disability say that they experienced discrimination when they looked for housing to rent or buy in Central Texas. This varies by housing situation, from 11 percent of homeowners and 26 percent of renters to 31 percent of those who are currently precariously housed. The majority of these experiences occurred in the past five years. The top reasons offered for the discrimination they experienced are race or ethnicity, income, disability, criminal history, national origin and familial status. Respondents with disabilities' description of the reason they felt discriminated against include:

- *"Apartments—even some built by Community Foundations—do not have accessible bathrooms and showers. This creates an unaffordable barrier that discriminates against people with physical disabilities."*
- *"Because I don't have a physical disability. Most landlords don't believe you unless you have papers on you. You get the body scan and the frown, and then the 'all our units are full'."*
- *"I have a large service dog that helps me walk."*
- *"I have a criminal history, but the incidents occurred when I was uninsured, so my mental illness was not being treated. I explained this to leasing agents and stressed that I now have insurance and am receiving regular treatment. I also advised that I have a strong support network should my symptoms return. They did not seem sympathetic to my situation and refused to consider my application."*

¹⁴ Note that the current housing situation—homeowner, renter, precariously housed, may be different from the respondent's housing situation at the time the displacement occurred.

- *"My service animal was called a pet and not allowed."*
- *"Given the runaround in the application process, excessive deposits, unreasonable income requirements, excessive inspections."*
- *"I felt limited by the fact only one company manages HUD 811 properties in Austin."*
- *"I had independent contractor income at the time and banks were very hesitant to lend to us. My husband has a physical disability and that can affect how we are treated."*
- *"She talked to me as if my understanding was that of a three to five year old child."*
- *"Turned down because my husband is in a wheelchair."*

In focus groups, participants discussed their experiences with housing discrimination.

- **Residents with disabilities** report ADA requests being ignored, and accommodation requests being denied. The majority of focus group participants with disabilities living in market rate housing do not receive timely repairs, and most are afraid to ask for repairs out of fear of rent increases.
 - One Section 8 voucher holder with a disability shared that her rent is \$1,000/month but that other tenants in her building in similar units who do not receive a voucher pay \$650/month. She believes that she and her sister are charged more because they are both disabled and have a housing voucher.
 - Landlord refused to put in a ramp;
 - Being charged extra money for a first floor apartment;
 - Being refused a request for a first floor apartment by a housing authority ("*I was told, 'you get what you get'*");
 - Receiving a noise violation even though the noise was due to a child's disability; and
 - 3X the rent income policies seem designed to exclude people with disabilities who rely on disability income; focus group participants see these policies as a "legal" way to keep out people with disabilities.

"When they find out you're disabled, it's even worse—harder—to find an apartment. I think they think we'll hurt the property because we're disabled." (Disability focus group participant)

"When you request a first floor apartment, they charge you extra money for being on the first floor." (Disability focus group participant)

- When asked directly about housing discrimination, participants in **a behavioral health and recovery** focus group described how their personal history, including criminal history, are barriers and that landlords use that record as an excuse to not

rent to someone with a history of mental illness. *"I wonder how much my mental health is taken into consideration."* Another participant described his experience with differential enforcement of HUD lease terms based on the property manager or staff's preferences. *"In the HUD apartments, they have rules. But some groups can go beyond the rules. Special people get special privileges."*

- Stakeholder perspectives on disability and housing discrimination:
 - Cost-burdened households are more likely to be members of protected classes, especially single parents, people with disabilities, minority households;
 - The Austin Tenants Council averages 130 reasonable accommodation cases annually, typically related to denial of support animals, structural issues/ADA compliance, and mold or other sources of respiratory distress;
 - Stakeholders who advocate for the substance abuse recovery community perceive the City of Austin's move to regulate recovery homes as Board and Rooming Houses has the result of discriminating on the basis of disability as this housing use is not allowed by right in districts zoned for single family homes. *"For recovery to work, residents must be integrated into the community; if these homes are not allowed by right in single family neighborhoods, this is discriminatory."*

Response to housing discrimination. Almost universally, residents who believe they have experienced discrimination in housing do not file complaints, and most do "nothing," preferring to find a different place to live or not wanting to press living in a place where they are unwelcome. Some populations are afraid to assert their rights out of fear of retaliation or not wanting to cause trouble.

"A lot of Hispanic moms are not getting the resources their children should because the moms are scared of the state." (Disability focus group participant)

Access to Opportunity

The previous chapter focused on access to opportunity for members of all protected classes, including residents with disabilities. This section expands on that discussion with additional information and local efforts specific to increasing access to opportunity for residents with disabilities.

Healthy neighborhoods. With respect to healthy neighborhood attributes, survey respondents whose household includes a member with a disability had similar ratings as those of other members of protected classes, with two exceptions: residents with disabilities were slightly more likely to agree that there are grocery stores convenient to where they live and slightly more likely to agree that the neighborhoods in their area have the same quality of parks and recreation facilities. Transportation access and accessible first and last mile connections (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks) from transit to community

amenities like parks and grocery stores are a more significant barrier than access to the amenities.

"The McBeth Rec Center in Travis County has great programs for residents with disabilities; social activities, etc. But, there's no bus that serves the center. So, people have to use MetroAccess; I don't know how else they get there." (Disability focus group participant)

In focus groups, residents with disabilities described how the large numbers of homeless and others loitering around their buildings at the Mary Lee Foundation campus make them feel unsafe when leaving their apartments.

"They make it so you can't go outside because it isn't safe." (Disability focus group participant)

Barriers to better access community amenities, facilities, and services, including health care. When asked what is needed in Central Texas to help the person with a disability in the household better access community amenities, facilities or services such as parks, libraries, government buildings, cultural facilities, and festivals/events, the greatest number of survey responses related to access to public transportation services. Overall, survey responses fell into five general categories:

- Access to transportation

- *"A bus system that actually works in south Austin."* (Austin survey respondent)
- *"Accessible, convenient and usable transit. Cedar Park does not have transit of any kind."* (Williamson County survey respondent)
- *"Better Bus service in far South Central area."* (Travis County survey respondent)
- *"Having these amenities in the neighborhood OR public transportation. Currently, there is NOTHING and NO ACCESS to public transportation. Nearest bus stop is 10 miles away."* (Travis County survey respondent)
- *"Low cost public transportation outside of the Austin City limits."* (Pflugerville survey respondent)

- Accessible parking

- *"Parking for disabled people, shuttle if needed when the parking for the disabled are all taken."* (Pflugerville survey respondent)
- *"Handicap parking closer to Capitol or golf cart shuttles from distant parking. Plenty of shade and seating at events."* (Georgetown survey respondent)

- Inclusive spaces and events

- *"An all access park in Southwest Austin and public transport for the disabled."* (Austin survey respondent)
- *"Festivals need more golf carts for those with poor walking capabilities to get around inside of festival grounds."* (Travis County survey respondent)

- *“Shade, running water restroom facilities, and smooth walkways.” (Pflugerville survey respondent)*
- More welcoming and understanding environments
 - *“A peer to attend with, accommodations for emotional support animals, more community education about autism. I’d love for people to understand my son makes verbal noise and can’t help it.” (Round Rock survey respondent)*
 - *“A supportive group or an event to celebrate disabilities.” (Round Rock survey respondent)*
- Mental health care access
 - *“Easier access to care gives for mental health.” (Pflugerville survey respondent)*

Welcoming neighborhoods. To understand the extent to which Central Texas residents feel welcome in their community, respondents rated their degree of agreement with the following statement: *I feel that people like me and my family are welcome in all neighborhoods in my city.* Respondents whose household includes a member with a disability are less likely to feel welcome in all neighborhoods than regional respondents (47% v. 57%).

In a number of focus groups, residents with disabilities described feeling unwelcome.

Section VII includes a discussion of survey respondents’ perceptions of neighbor support for different types of housing, including housing uses specific for residents with disabilities and persons recovering from substance abuse. Overall, residents do not agree that their neighbors would be supportive of locating any of the housing types in their neighborhood, and the degree of disagreement varies by housing use and type. For example, residents strongly disagree that their neighbors would support housing for people recovering from substance abuse. While still disagreeing, respondents tend to think their neighbors would be more likely to support new housing for low income seniors and people with disabilities than low income housing in general, new apartment buildings, and housing for people recovering from substance abuse.

Example of welcoming and inclusive local government culture. The City of Round Rock’s Parks and Recreation Department has an Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation¹⁵ program area, and “strive(s) to create equal access to recreation, to help enhance an individual’s quality of life.” Programming includes arts and enrichment activities, aquatics, camps, fitness, social activities and special events, such as the Trunk or Treat event providing a trick or treating alternative for children with disabilities. In 2012 Round Rock opened the Play For All Park, and recently more than doubled its size. The Department also highlights their commitment to providing Inclusion Services. “The Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department promotes the power of choice to enhance the quality of life for

¹⁵ <https://www.roundrocktexas.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/recreation/air/>

individuals of all abilities. We do this by providing diverse, accessible recreation in an environment that fosters dignity, success, and fun. Through inclusion services, the department may provide reasonable staff support for those who prefer other Round Rock Parks and Recreation programs and/or activities. To request inclusion services, please call our administrative office at 512-218-5540 at least one month before the start of a program or class to discuss any accommodations that may be necessary.”

The City of Austin has a visitability ordinance which requires that all new single family, duplex, and triplex units are visitable, and that at least 10 percent of multifamily units are accessible and 25 percent are adaptable.¹⁶ The City also supports the Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities. The Committee members participate on a number of City task forces and chairs three subcommittees: Access and Public Policy, Education and Employment, and Awards and Outreach.

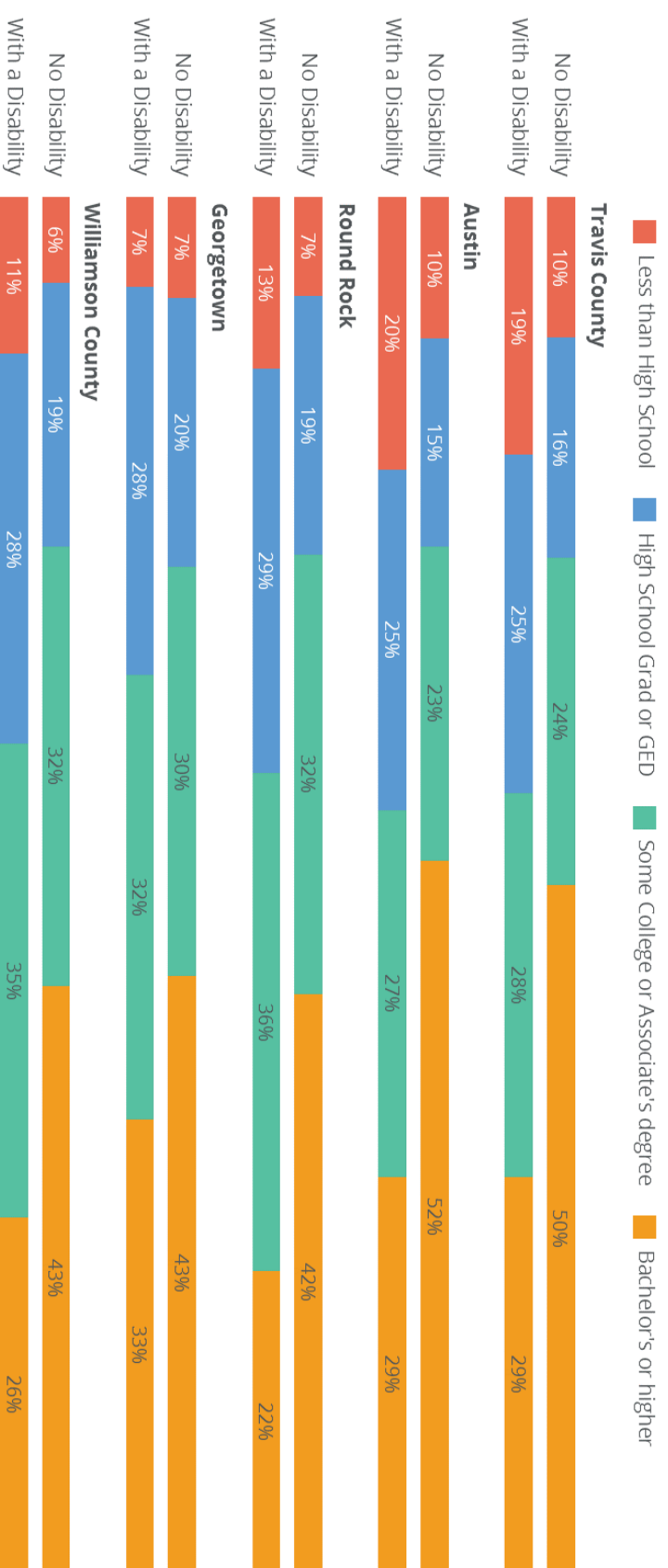
Education. Section IV included a detailed look at public school education opportunities. During the community engagement process, issues related to access to education for children with disabilities was not explicitly raised as a barrier, with one exception. In a focus group with mothers who are domestic violence survivors, one of the participants shared her story about learning that a UT Charter school serving children with mental illness. She described how the program has benefitted her son; the other mothers, several who mentioned they had children with PTSD or other behavioral health challenges were surprised that such choices were available. This suggests that knowledge of specialized programs or choices are not readily known by people who may need them most.

Another parent with a child with a disability in the Austin ISD shared that the *“Austin ISD has been very good accommodating the needs of my disabled child—accommodating her 504 plan, providing transportation.”* (Disability focus group participant)

Figure V-18 compares the educational attainment of residents age 25 and older with a disability and without a disability. As shown, residents with a disability are more likely than residents without a disability to have less than a high school diploma/GED, and these rates are higher among residents with disabilities living in Austin and Travis County. In focus groups with residents with disabilities, participants did not raise any issues or describe particular challenges associated with accessing continuing education.

¹⁶ <http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/HR/ADA/coa-ada-impl-report-2015.pdf>

Figure V-18.
Educational Attainment, by Disability Status and Jurisdiction



Note: Data not available for Pflugerville.

Source: Root Policy Research from 2013-2017 ACS.

Transportation and mobility. Transportation is the most significant barrier residents with disabilities must overcome in many aspects of their lives, but is particularly a barrier to living in the most independent, integrated setting possible. Without access to transportation, independent living is not truly available, as a lack of access to transportation limits where people can live, where they can shop or work, worship, go to school, and participate in the community. Among survey respondents whose household includes a member with a disability, nearly three in 10 identified *I can't get to public transit/bus/light rail easily or safely* and this is higher than the rate of respondents overall (21%).

Accessing paratransit. Under the ADA, providers of fixed route bus service are required to provide paratransit services within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius of the fixed route line. Figures V-19 and V-20 map the ADA service areas for CapMetro/Metro Access on a weekday morning and a Saturday afternoon. Figure V-21 presents the Round Rock paratransit service area and Figure V-22 is the City of Georgetown's GoGeo transit routes. Paratransit service areas and times of availability are tied to when the fixed route system is running.

Each transit provider operates its own paratransit service and provides its own certification process for determining a resident's eligibility for paratransit as defined by the ADA (49 CFR PART 37.123). All of the operators require at least 24 hour notice to schedule a trip, and generally riders are given a window of arrival 15 minutes before or after their scheduled time.

- The MetroAccess website does not provide a downloadable copy of the eligibility application online; residents interested in applying must call MetroAccess eligibility staff or email the eligibility staff team.¹⁷ The eligibility process includes completing an application and providing verification from a medical professional, an in-person interview and orientation by staff, a functional assessment (as needed), discussion of alternative transportation options for those deemed ineligible for services.¹⁸ Riders must be recertified every four years. MetroAccess riders can book rides online or by phone; the phone option includes an automated telephone system available 24/7 and a call center operating during business hours.
- Round Rock's paratransit eligibility process requires an application, healthcare provider verification, and an interview. The application is available online¹⁹ and completed forms can be mailed or emailed to the Round Rock Transit Coordinator. Information about service areas, reservations, and other procedures are only available

¹⁷ <https://www.capmetro.org/eligibility/>

¹⁸ <https://www.capmetro.org/accessguide/#!>

¹⁹ <https://www.roundrocktexas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ADA-Eligibility-Application.pdf>

in a PDF found under the website heading “What are the rules for Paratransit Service?”²⁰ However, the PDF does not include a phone number for reservations.

- CARTS offers discounted fares for residents with disabilities and the application for this discount is available online.²¹ It is unclear if this form plus a medical professional’s verification comprise the process for determining CARTS paratransit services. All of CARTS buses and vans are wheelchair accessible. To schedule a ride, passengers call 800-456-RIDE. A ride can be requested online, but will not be confirmed until a call center reservationist calls the requestor back (within 24 hours).

GoGeo customers follow the same process for eligibility determination and ride scheduling for paratransit services as other CARTS customers. (CARTS operates GoGeo.) The GoGeo Transit website states that “Eligibility and screening through a paper application is provided by the Capital Area Rural Transportation System” but no links to the application or eligibility information are provided.²²

²⁰ <https://www.roundrocktexas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ADA-Complementary-Paratransit-Policies-and-Procedures.pdf>

²¹ http://www.ridecarts.com/images/uploads/pdfs/Disability_Form.pdf

²² <https://gogeo.georgetown.org/paratransit-schedule/>

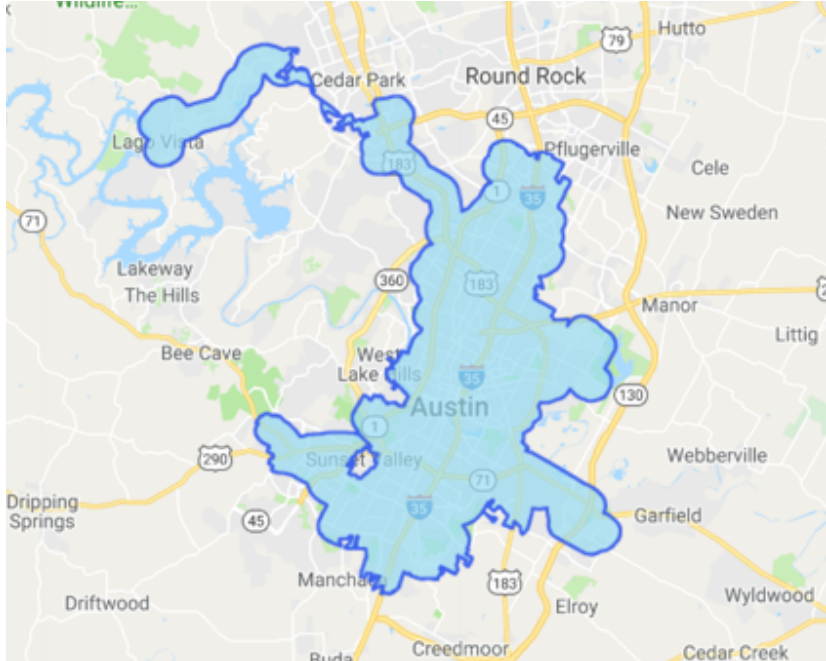
**Figure V-19.
ADA Service
Corridor, Morning
Commute**

Note:

CapMetro ADA Corridor Map for services from 6:30 am to 9:30 am, Monday thru Friday.

Source:

https://www.capmetro.org/service_maps/ada001.aspx.



**Figure V-20.
CapMetro ADA
Corridor, Saturdays**

Note:

CapMetro ADA Corridor Map for services from 6:00 am to midnight.

Source:

https://www.capmetro.org/service_maps/ada001.aspx.

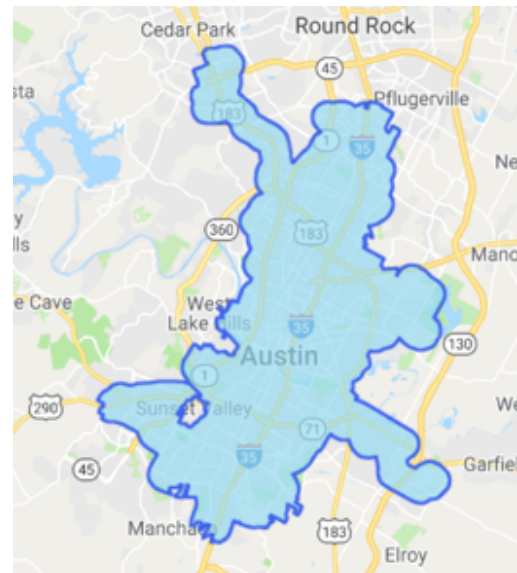


Figure V-21.
Round Rock
Paratransit Service
Area

Source:
City of Round Rock.

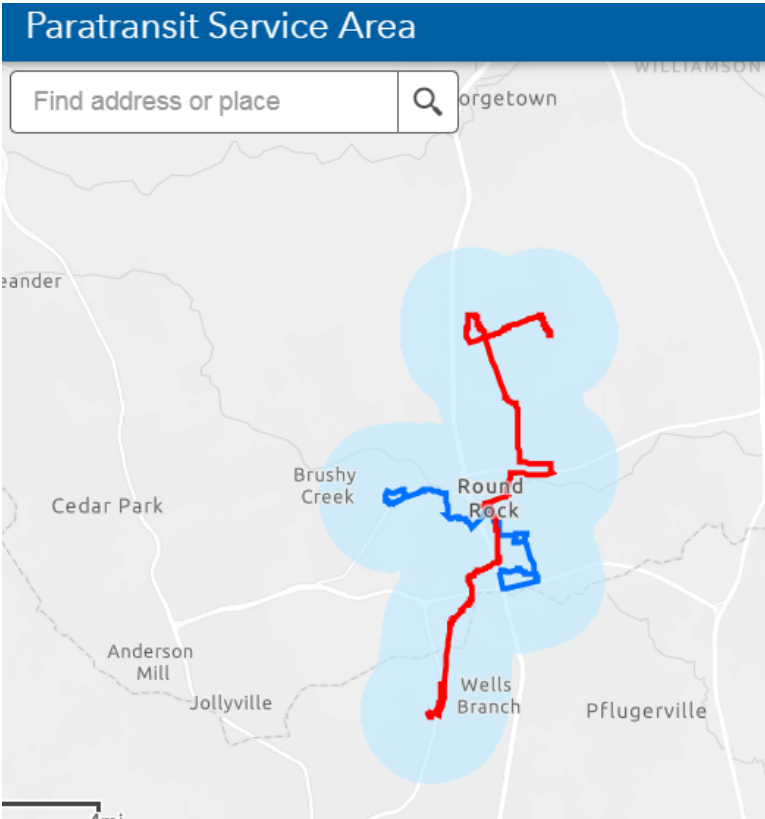
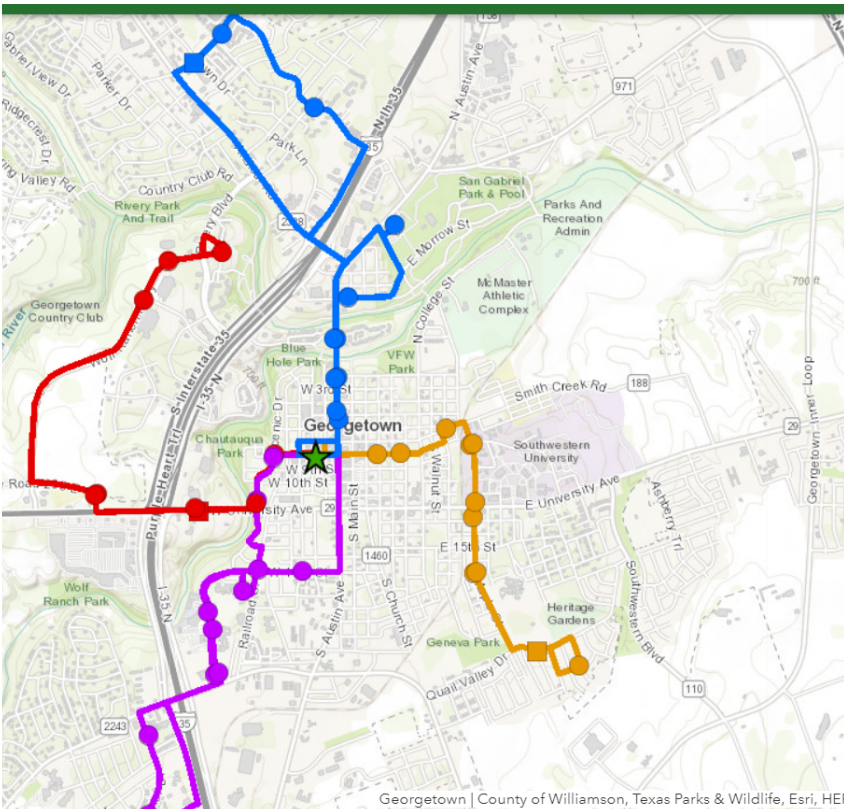


Figure V-22.
City of Georgetown
GoGeo Routes

Source:
City of Georgetown.



For residents with disabilities who are transit dependent, or who must rely on paratransit services, transportation is a significant barrier. Challenges are tied to service routes, frequency and hours of service, as well as operations policies and communications. With respect to paratransit and bus transportation, these include:

- Challenges associated with CapMetro/Metro Access:
 - MetroAccess must be scheduled three days in advance and it is typical to spend an entire day going back and forth from one appointment due to arrival and departure times. *"Most of the time, I get to places way too early and I have to sit outside and wait until the building or the office opens."* (Disability focus group participant)
 - *"The MetroAccess application is only available online."²³* (Disability focus group participant) For residents without Internet access or who do not know how to use the Internet, the application can be requested by phone. However, focus group participants who requested MetroAccess applications by mail never received them.
 - Recent CapMetro changes to services and routes resulted in *"slightly improved service from East Austin to West Austin, but in order to make that improvement they cut service and routes from the North to the South."* (Disability focus group participant)
 - *"Now I have to take three buses and leave the house at 5:00 am so that my kids are at school by 7:30."* (Disability focus group participant)
 - *"Either send more funding to Cap Metro to get handicapped people around the city easier, or have an outside oversight board that will stop them from kicking people off the service. My girlfriend's condition worsened over the year, and they still kicked her off to get more buses for their service that competes with Uber and Lyft. That's WRONG."* (Austin survey respondent)
- Lack of bus service in Travis and Williamson counties, including a lack of routes to programs and facilities serving residents with disabilities.
 - *"Public bus on Buttercup Creek Blvd & Bell Boulevard."* (Williamson County survey respondent)
 - *"Transport service that does not require smart phone."* (Pflugerville survey respondent)
 - *"The transportation in Pflugerville for seniors who cannot drive is TERRIBLE we need help!"* (Pflugerville survey respondent)

²³ Note that the study team was unable to find the application on the MetroAccess website.

- *"Improve mobility. There are no Metro buses in Pflugerville." (Pflugerville survey respondent)*

Lack of first and last mile connections. An incomplete sidewalk network or inaccessible sidewalks, curbs without curb cuts, or broken sidewalks further restrict the places where residents with disabilities can go. One in four survey respondents whose household includes a member with a disability identified *inadequate sidewalks, street lights, draining, or other infrastructure in my neighborhood* as a challenge, somewhat higher than the regional average (20%). Disability focus group participants shared that there are many places downtown, including on routes to and from bus stops, that are not accessible for people in wheelchairs or using walkers.

"At the bus stop near Frontier Valley and Riverside, when you get off the bus there's not a ramp." (Disability focus group participant)

"The incomplete sidewalk and ramp network becomes series of dead ends." (Disability focus group participant)

"The City of Austin (public works) has been good in responding to their sidewalk master plan. The problem? Lack of funding. State and federal funds should be invested in this type of infrastructure." (Disability focus group participant)

Employment. Figure V-23 presents the share of Central Texas residents with disabilities ages 18 to 64 who are in the labor force and the percent who in the labor force but are unemployed. Overall, nearly three in five (59%) working age residents with a disability are in the labor force, and this is lower than the labor force participation rate of residents with no disability (84%). Overall, the unemployment rate of residents with a disability is 6 percent, twice the rate of residents with no disability (3%). Both labor force participation rates and unemployment rates vary widely by disability type. For example, residents with a hearing difficulty have the highest labor force participation rate (74%), but also the highest unemployment rate (16%).

Figure V-23.
Labor Force
Participation and
Unemployment,
Central Texas
Residents Ages 18 to
64 with a Disability

Note:

All data are restricted to the working age population, residents ages 18 to 64.

Source:

Root Policy Research from 2017 ACS.

	Population	% of Population	
All residents ages 18 to 64	1,169,911	100	100%
Residents ages 18 to 64 with a disability	85,201		7%
	% In the Labor Force	% Unemployed	
All residents ages 18 to 64	81%	3%	
With no disability	84%	3%	
With a disability	59%	6%	
With hearing difficulty	74%	16%	
With vision difficulty	66%	6%	
With cognitive difficulty	50%	9%	
With ambulatory difficulty	43%	5%	
With self-care difficulty	19%	6%	
With independent living difficulty	34%	9%	

Labor force participation and unemployment rates among working age adults with a disability vary by jurisdiction. Labor force participation is highest for residents with a disability living in Austin, Travis County and Pflugerville, and lowest in Georgetown and Round Rock. More than one in 10 (13%) of Round Rock residents with a disability in the labor force are unemployed.

Figure V-24.
Labor Force
Participation and
Unemployment Rates,
by Jurisdiction

Note:

All data are restricted to the working age population, residents ages 18 to 64.

Source:

Root Policy Research from 2017 ACS.

	% in the Labor Force		% Unemployed	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
Austin	64%	85%	5%	3%
Travis County	62%	84%	5%	3%
Round Rock	46%	84%	13%	5%
Pflugerville	62%	86%	3%	4%
Georgetown	43%	75%	0%	5%
Williamson County	53%	83%	8%	4%

Support for community-based, integrated employment. Under the Money Follows the Person Demonstration, Texas participated in an Employment Pilot to support community-based, integrated employment opportunities for residents with disabilities. One of the two pilot program participants was Bluebonnet Trails Community Services based in Round Rock and serving residents of Bastrop, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Lee, and Williamson County. UT conducted an evaluation²⁴ of the Employment Pilot and identified

²⁴ https://disabilitystudies.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/DADS%20Report%20_FINAL.pdf

barriers experienced by both participants and providers in expanding access to integrated employment. These include:

- Participant barriers to integrated employment:
 - Fear of losing benefits;
 - Transportation issues;
 - Family support (or lack thereof); and
 - Safety concerns;
- Provider barriers to successfully supporting integrated employment opportunities for consumers with disabilities:
 - Staff turnover;
 - Difficulty finding and hiring qualified employment specialists; and
 - Reimbursement rates for services

Since the Employment Pilot, Bluebonnet Trails has continued to provide supported employment services for people with mental health and intellectual developmental disabilities.²⁵

“(We need) a law where they wouldn't lose their disability income if they worked. Housing in Austin is too expensive. A person needs to work and keep all of their income. The poverty line guide needs to be raised.” (Resident with a disability)

²⁵ <http://bbtrails.org/supported-employment-services/>