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2017 Community Status Report



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of Amarillo & Canyon

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**Evaluation
Essentials**



Education, health, income stability and having one's basic needs met are the tenants of the United Way of Amarillo & Canyon. When a community is able to meet the needs of its people the health of that community is visible through the economy, work force, educational systems and overall "look" of the city. Poverty continues to be an issue we strive to eradicate and we are making progress but the fight is not yet over. We still have a ways to go. Here at the United Way of Amarillo & Canyon we will continue to fight poverty by making impacts in **EDUCATION, HEALTH** and **INCOME STABILTIY**. The Community Status Report provides up to date data regarding these areas. With this we can see how the needle has moved positively in some areas along with seeing the areas which need to have a continued and perhaps stronger focus.

United Way of Amarillo & Canyon has a unique issue where the city of Amarillo sits directly in the middle of two counties, Potter and Randall. These two counties are also very different from each other and represent two sides of America. However these differences are beginning to become more alike as times goes on. The main strength of both counties is a vibrant Amarillo economy. The socio-economic gap between the two counties is continuing to shrink, however poverty continues to be much higher in Potter County and affects people of all ages, children to elderly. Graduation rates for Randall County continue to be high with Potter County graduation rates improving. This is an encouraging statistic for we know that education is the cornerstone for positively affecting poverty.

Poor health is a main challenge for both Potter and Randall County. In this data we see elevated rates of several diseases which can be debilitating and at times fatal. On top of these Potter County has elevated sexually transmitted infections, domestic violence and a high rate of births to unmarried mothers. It is important to note that single mothers with a one income household are not able to make enough money to provide for their families. This is an issue which is strongly associated with poverty rates. Randall County faces a challenge of an elevated suicide rate which has dramatically increased in 2015.

Amarillo's population continues to grow. This growth however is occurring in Randall County which added 2,049 residents to the population in one year. With this growth it will be important to continue to focus on educational attainment for the community. With an educated community comes a strong, vibrant workforce. Companies will want to locate to the Amarillo area when there is a skilled workforce ready to take the jobs they offer.

This year you will see a few new topics contained in the report. We are sharing more data on single parents, teenage fathers, refugees and gay and lesbian couples.

So you can see that we have made headway but still have challenges to tackle. United Way of Amarillo & Canyon is committed to doing just this. By providing resources and support for our community we are helping connect the dots. A community working together is a much stronger, smarter community who can take on the tough issues life has to offer and provide solution and opportunity where challenge once sat. United we can fight this battle on poverty.

David Hemphill

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D. Hemphill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

President, Board of Directors
United Way of Amarillo & Canyon

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Potter and Randall Counties are very different from each other and represent two sides of America: Potter County is a minority county that struggles with poverty, illness, and many other social stresses; Randall County, on the other hand, is an affluent, educated county with fewer people in difficult circumstances.

Despite these differences, the two counties are becoming more alike. Socioeconomic indicators of median income and unemployment, as well as health and education indicators show a convergent trend between the two counties. This can be largely attributed to the significant population growth in Randall County, which added 2,049 new residents in a single year. The population of Potter County remains stable. Another notable demographic trend is a growing share of minorities in both counties.

Main Strength

The main strength of both counties is the vibrant Amarillo economy, which is reflected in very low unemployment rates in both counties. In addition to low unemployment, Potter County's median income, which has been stagnant for several years, had begun to grow in 2015. The community also shows positive changes in the area of education. Randall County has a strong high school graduation rate, and Potter County's rate is improving. Further, Amarillo ISD has shown marked improvements in math achievement among third and eighth graders, outperforming both Region 16 and Texas.

Main Challenges

The main challenge shared by both Potter and Randall Counties is poor health. Both counties have elevated rates of heart disease and stroke, cancer, diabetes, and a rapidly growing syphilis rate.

Potter County continues to struggle with poverty. The poverty rate among all ages increased in Potter County in 2015. In addition to poverty, Potter County also struggles with high rates of STIs (especially chlamydia and gonorrhea), elevated rates of domestic violence, and a high rate of births to unmarried mothers. Randall County, on the other hand, continues to struggle with the elevated suicide rate.

Special Topics

Further the current report revealed the poor economic condition of single mothers in both counties. Single mothers in Potter and Randall Counties do not make enough to support their families. Single fathers appear to fare better than single mothers, though they too experience elevated levels of poverty. Married couples fare best of all, enjoying higher income, better education, and even higher participation in SSI.

New data on refugees in Amarillo suggest that they have lower rates of enrollment in public assistance programs, while the new data on gay and lesbian couples reveal that they represent a very small proportion of Amarillo households (less than 1%).



MISSION STATEMENT

**IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH THE
CARING POWER OF OUR COMMUNITY.**

INTRODUCTION

United Way of Amarillo and Canyon provides services to the residents of Potter and Randall Counties targeted to improve community outcomes in the areas of income, education, and health.

The 2017 Community Status Report was commissioned by the United Way of Amarillo and Canyon to provide a comprehensive overview of trends for Potter and Randall Counties in education, income, health, and also inform the community on the most vulnerable populations of Potter and Randall Counties. The report also includes an overview of the demographic changes in the community, which can potentially have an influence on the key areas of interest. Trends in these areas are highlighted below, using data from various state and federal sources.

The report is based on data for the five most recent years available. Most of the trends reflect the data from 2011 to 2015, yet some of the trends represent data collected over a different time frame. When possible, data for the United States, Texas, and Lubbock County are included for comparison.

New to the 2017 Community Status Report:

- Overview of the best paying jobs that do not require a college degree in the United States and Amarillo
- Overview of the cost-of-living data in Amarillo
- Deaths from heart disease includes deaths from stroke
- Deaths from cancer includes deaths from all forms of cancer
- Overview of childhood obesity in the United States and the school-based interventions that combat it
- Status comparison of single parents and married couples with respect to income, employment, education, poverty, and public assistance program participation
- Overview of research on teenage fathers
- New local data on refugees with respect to region of origin, age, religion, and public assistance program participation
- Data on gay and lesbian couples

DEMOGRAPHICS

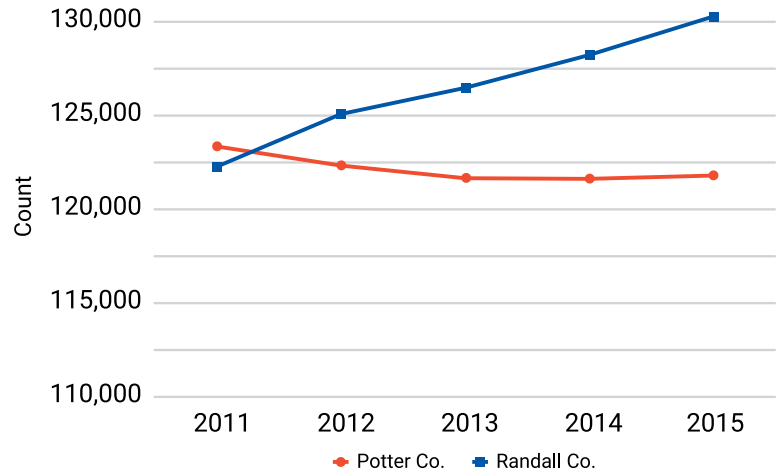
The age and race distributions, as well as the magnitude of the local population deepen our understanding of educational, economic, and social trends in the community. They are commonly referred to as demographic characteristics. Each year the Community Status Report begins with a brief description of these demographic trends and highlights their importance throughout. In 2015, the two most notable demographic trends included the burgeoning population of Randall County and an increasing number of minority residents in both counties.

The population of Randall County grew by 2,049 people in a single year

Randall County continues to experience significant population growth. The population of Randall County grew by 1.6% in one year, reaching 130,269 people in 2015. In comparison, the population of Potter County remained stable, increasing by only 0.1% from 2014 to 2015. Such rapid population growth in Randall County is bound to create significant shifts in every area of community life.

The second notable demographic trend is the changing racial landscape in both counties. The proportions of White and Black residents continue to decrease in both counties, while the proportions of Hispanic and “Other” racial groups continue to rise. The “Other” racial category includes many diverse ethnic groups such as Asians, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and those who identify as having more than one race. The change in the racial landscape of the community can be attributed to many factors such as increased migration of minorities into the area as well as higher birth rates for minority groups (Passel, Livingston, & Cohn, 2012).

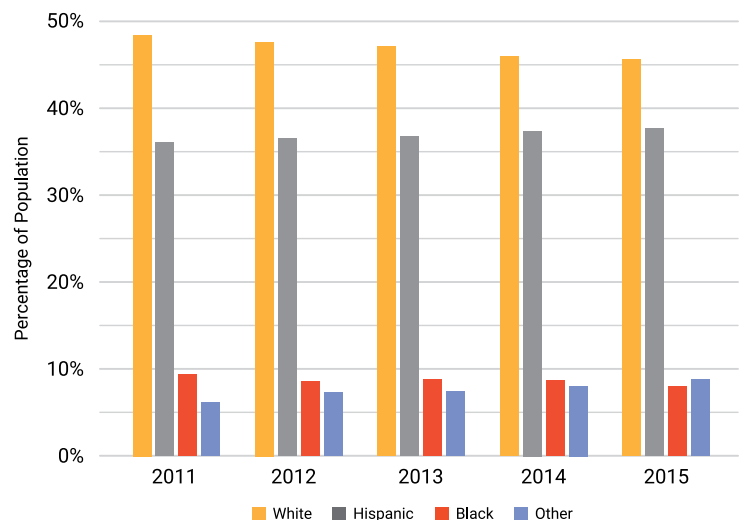
COUNTY POPULATION
Potter and Randall Counties
American Community Survey



The racial differences are especially pronounced when broken down by age. Among the children of Potter County, Hispanics comprised the majority - 49.1%. Among the elderly, however, Hispanic comprised only 16.3%. In Randall County, Hispanic children comprised 28.5% of all children, while Hispanic elderly - 5.7% of all the elderly of Randall County. These changes are predictive of racial distribution of the future: both counties are likely to continue experience increases in the minority population.

What is also notable is the growing proportion of children in the “Other” racial category in Potter County, which grew from 4.6% in 2014 to 10.0% in 2015. Randall County also had a high proportion of children in this race category – 8.6%. In comparison, Lubbock County had 6.3% of children of “Other” racial groups, similar to that of Texas at 6.5%.

RACIAL COMPOSITION
Potter County
American Community Survey



EDUCATION

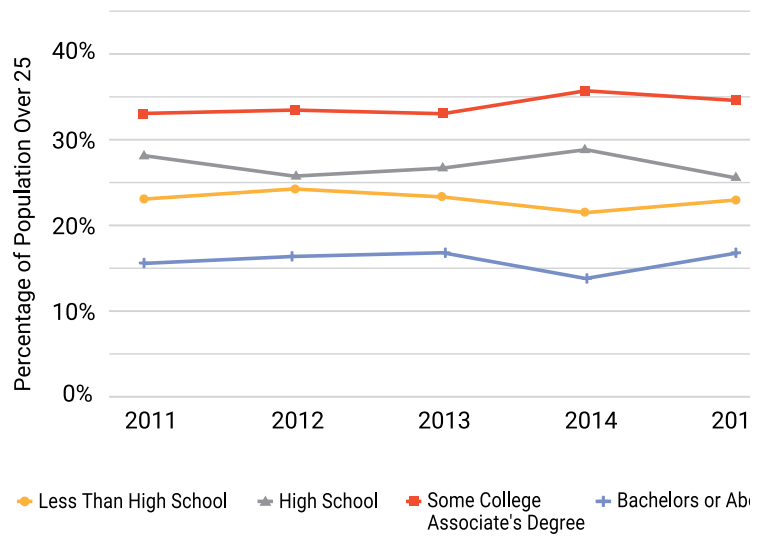
Education remains a critical stepping-stone towards success in America. In the past 20 years, greater levels of education have been linked to better job prospects and higher wages (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013). Previous Community Status Reports discussed an increased demand for higher education reported in the research literature. These projections raised concerns for the Amarillo community, where a large proportion of people (over 80% in Potter County) do not hold a bachelor's degree. In Potter County in 2015 the proportion of residents with a bachelor's degree or above was only 16.8%, and in Randall County – 31.6%.

Fortunately, recent job growth numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017) suggest that the demand for advanced education may have been exaggerated. According to the recent job growth report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 6 out of the 10 fastest growing occupations do not require a bachelor's degree (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). It appears that individuals who hold a high school diploma and certain types of professional certificates can have job security and good wages. It is noted that a post-secondary education, to

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS

Potter County

American Community Survey



There are still 30 million blue collar jobs in America that pay over \$35,000 a year. They require a high school diploma and some post-secondary training, such as a certificate or an associate degree.

include vocational skills and certifications, will provide jobs with higher earning potential with possible opportunities to advance. The fastest growing blue-collar occupations in the United States are presented in the table below.

Occupation	Percentage	Median Annual Wage	Required Education
Physical therapist aides	39,0%	\$ 25 680	High School
Home health aides	38,1%	\$ 22 600	High School
Commercial divers	36,9%	\$ 49 090	High School
Nurse practitioners	35,2%	\$ 100 910	Bachelor
Physical therapists	34,0%	\$ 85 400	Bachelor
Statisticians	33,8%	\$ 80 500	Bachelor
Ambulance drivers and attendants, except emergency medical technicians	33,0%	\$ 23 850	High School

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections

A recent report from the Center of Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University (2017) also highlights well-paying jobs that do not require a bachelor's degree. The report, *Good Jobs That Pay Without a BA*, and the accompanying site www.goodjobsdata.org provide a wealth of information on occupations that pay over \$35,000 and are accessible to high school graduates or people with some postsecondary training (Carnevale, Strohl, Cheah, & Ridley, 2017).

The report sheds additional light on the Bureau of Labor Statistic numbers discussed above. According to the report the decline in manufacturing in the United States has led to the disappearance of many well-paying, blue-collar jobs. However, new industries in healthcare, construction, support services, and leisure have been creating new jobs at unprecedented rates. The report estimates that the U.S. economy currently has 30 million jobs that pay over \$35,000 (and average \$55,000) and do not require a bachelor's degree. However, many of these jobs do require a high school diploma coupled with some sort of professional post-secondary certificate.

“There are still 30 million good jobs that do not require a bachelor’s degree but a high school diploma and some sort of post-secondary education (certification vocational training, associate degree). These good jobs pay an average of \$55,000 per year and a minimum of \$35,000 annually” Carnevale, Strohl, Cheah, & Ridley (2017).



These blue-collar occupations in the Amarillo Area are listed in the table below. On the low end of the pay scale are community and social services jobs paying an average of \$37,931 a year, and on the high end of the pay scale are fire-fighter and a few other protective services jobs paying an average of \$50,245 a year.

Transportation	\$ 43 209
Business and Financial Operations	\$ 48 972
Fire Fighting and Other Protective Services	\$ 50 245

Source: American Community Survey * Average Annual Earnings for 2011-2015

Early Childhood Education

The journey to a high school diploma and post-secondary education starts long before high school. Research shows that high quality pre-school programs, especially for economically disadvantaged children, can lead to a significant increase in the high school graduation rate (Heckman et al., 2010). Furthermore, children who participate in these programs benefit from them in other important ways. They are much less likely to become addicted to drugs or be incarcerated as adults. These children are also more likely to take an active parental role in raising their children, which could help break the multigenerational cycle of poverty, crime, and drug use (Heckman et al., 2010).

Enrollment in such programs is hard to track due to a large variety of educational settings in which preschool programs are provided. However, data are available on enrollment in publicly subsidized early education programs. These programs are income-based, which means their enrollment rates are closely tied to the poverty rate in the community.

Program enrollment data for 2015-2016 for Texas counties was not available. Past data presented in the table on the right shows as expected that a much higher percentage of Potter County children (49.7%) were enrolled in programs than in Randall County (4.2%). The difference is likely due to Potter County having a greater proportion of families in poverty. All regions' enrollment rates decreased from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015. Potter County decreased by 6.4% and Randall County by 8.7%. The decreases in enrollment are closely related to increasing income and decreasing poverty rates, but can also have been driven by other factors (such as funding).

K-12 Education

The next major developmental milestone on the path to high school graduation comes in



2013-2014	28.20%	24.00%	49.70%	4.20%
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KIDS COUNT report

third grade, when children are expected to achieve reading proficiency. Research shows that third grade reading is a key predictor of future educational achievement (Lesnick, Goerge, Smithgall, & Gwynn, 2010).

The 2015–2016 school year was the third school year since the introduction of the new STAAR test. Even though STAAR is not without its controversies, three years of test results can shed some light on the relative performance of K-12 students across various educational regions of Texas.

Grade Math	2014-2015	75.0%	76.0%	75.0%
	2015-2016	82.0%	83.0%	89.0%
Grade Reading	2014-2015	85.0%	86.0%	86.0%
	2015-2016	87.0%	87.0%	87.0%
Grade Math	2014-2015	72.0%	76.0%	83.0%
	2015-2016	82.0%	83.0%	89.0%

2015-2016 Texas Academic Performance Report and Texas Reporting Performance System, Educational Agency

3rd Grade Reading and Math. Amarillo ISD third graders outperformed their peers in Region 16 and in Texas on passing rates in both Reading and Math (see Table STAAR performance scores). Amarillo ISD third graders had 1.3% higher passing rate on Reading than Region 16 and 4.1% higher passing rate than Texas. Unfortunately, in all three areas reading performance dropped in 2015-2016 school year. Compared to the previous year, Amarillo ISD had a 1.3% decrease in passing rate for Reading, while in Region 16 and Texas passing rates dropped by 3.8% and 5.2% respectively. Math performance, on the other hand, had improved in all three areas (by 18.7% in Amarillo ISD, 9.2% in Region 16, and 9.3% in Texas). Amarillo ISD’s gains are quite remarkable. These gains put Amarillo ISD third graders 7.2% ahead of Region 16 and 8.5% ahead of Texas passing rates for Math.



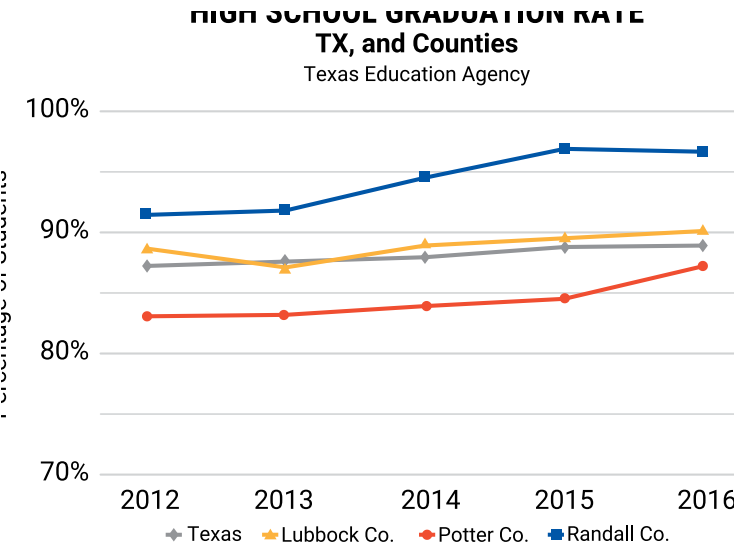
8th Grade Reading and Math. Eighth grade is another important milestone towards high school graduation. Research shows that the majority of dropouts occur in ninth grade, the so-called “9th grade shock” phenomena (Pharris-Ciurej, Hirschman, & Willhoft, 2012). Eighth grade performance indicators include the youth who will drop out of high school and, therefore, paint a more accurate picture of the community’s educational attainment. Amarillo ISD eighth graders performed on Reading (STAAR Literary Arts) on par with Region 16 and Texas. They, however, outperformed both Region 16 and Texas on Math by 7.2% and 8.5%, respectively. Like the third graders, the eighth graders performed better on

Math in the 2015–2016 school year than they did the year before, with a 7.2% increase in the passing rate.

High School Graduation.

High school graduation rates forecast an encouraging outlook in both Potter and Randall Counties. Potter County’s high school graduation rate has been on an upward trajectory since 2011, but last year it achieved a more dramatic increase of 3.7%, which helped reduced the gap between Potter County and Texas.

Randall County’s consistently high graduation rate dropped only slightly to 96.5%. Randall County continued to outperform all three of the other regions on high school graduation rates. In 2016, Randall County had an 8.3% higher graduation rate than Texas and 10.0% higher graduation rate than Potter County.



SAT/ACT

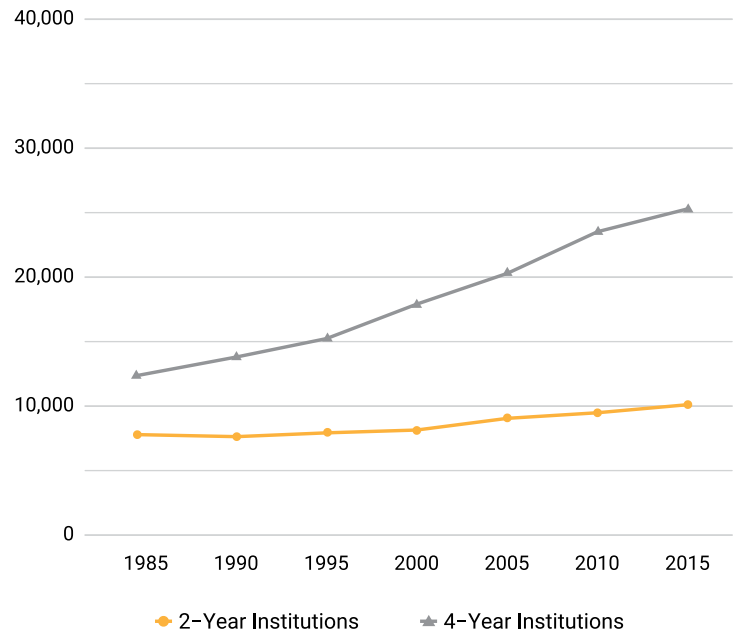
Passing the SAT/ACT exam is the next academic milestone for youth who want to continue their education past high school. SAT/ACT scores also serve as an important indicator of college readiness. In 2013, Amarillo ISD made a decision to cover the cost of the SAT/ACT for all students interested in taking them, which resulted in increased test participation. In fact, in 2015 (the most recent year available) 96.0 % of the 12th-grade students took the tests, an increase of 48.0 % from the previous year. Due to such a dramatic increase in participation, SAT/ACT passing rate dropped by 27.0%. Therefore, the performance on SAT/ACT should not be compared to previous years until the participation rates in the district stabilize.

Cost of Post-Secondary Education

The 2016 Community Status Report highlighted the issue of rising cost of college education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the cost of higher education continues to rise in both 2-year and 4-year institutions. Considering that the average cost of a 4-year bachelor's degree is nearly three times as high as the average cost of a 2-year associate degree (\$74,528 vs. \$19,172¹ at a public institution), acquiring an associate degree or a certificate for a promising occupation is a wise career move for many Potter and Randall County residents.

An average 4-year bachelor's degree costs \$74,528, while an average 2-year associate degree costs \$19,172

USA
National Center for Education Statistics



INCOME

Potter and Randall Counties have a long history of providing abundant economic opportunities for their residents. In fact, rapid population growth in Randall County can partially be attributed to the strong economy in the region. The Community Status Reports typically cover two major areas of economic well-being: income and employment. This year, a third indicator, the cost of living, has been added.

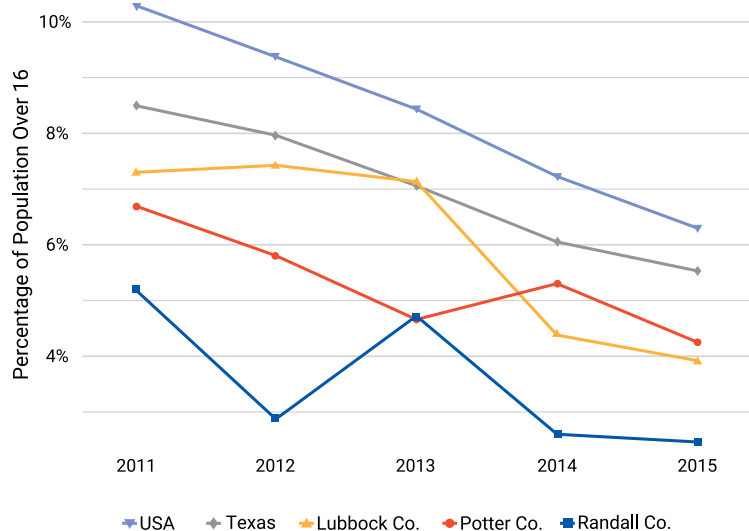
Unemployment and Labor Force Participation

Gainful employment is the foundation of a prosperous society. Potter and Randall Counties continued to show strong employment numbers in 2015. Both counties experienced a decrease in unemployment rates by 20.8% in Potter County and 3.8% in Randall County. Both

counties also maintained lower unemployment rates than those of the state and nation. Potter County's unemployment rate was 23.6% lower than Texas' 33.3% lower than the average unemployment rate in US. Randall County's unemployment rate was 54.5% lower than Texas' and 60.3% lower than US'.

UNEMPLOYMENT
US, TX, and Counties

American Community Survey



¹ Calculated based on the Cost of College data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Low unemployment rates indicate that Amarillo economy is strong and capable of absorbing the influx of the new labor force

When it comes to labor force participation, the trends in the two counties have frequently been mirror images, and 2015 was no exception. Potter County, which had a lower percentage of the population in the labor force, experienced an increase in labor force participation (by 6.6%). On the other hand, Randall County with high labor force participation, experienced a 12.8% decrease. United States, Texas, and Lubbock County all experienced a decrease in labor force participation by 0.5%, 0.6%, and 7.4% respectively.

Median Household Income

Median household income is an indicator of the economic well-being within the community. Unlike mean income, median income is not affected by a few very high-income earners and, therefore, paints a more accurate picture of the community as a whole.

Median income predictably reflects the trends in labor force participation. In 2015, the median household income in Potter County continued an upward growth pattern, reaching \$40,536, a 5.6% annual increase. This is consistent with lower unemployment and higher labor force participation reported in 2015.

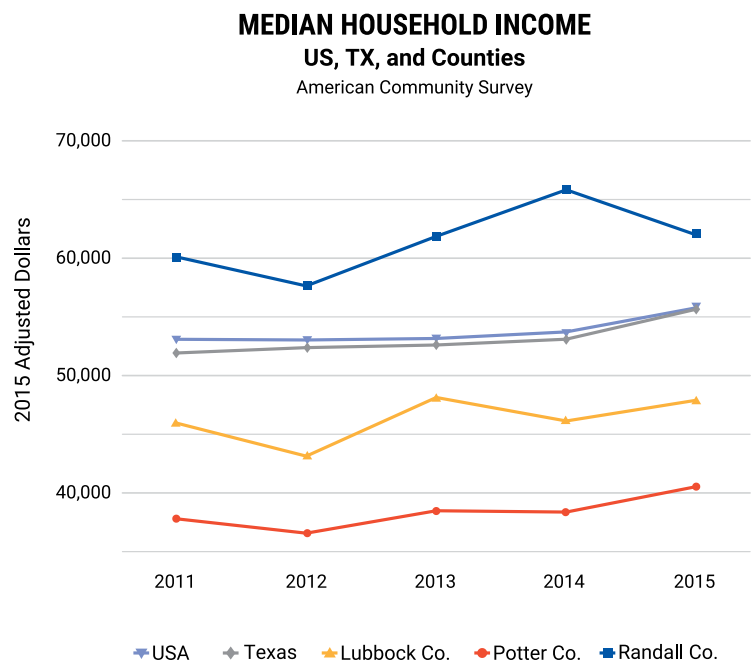
In Randall County, the median household income increased quite dramatically in 2014, reaching \$65,827, but in 2015 it dropped back to \$61,984. This again is consistent with the lower labor force participation reported in Randall County in 2015 than in 2014. The income fluctuations in Randall County were undoubtedly affected by the dramatic population growth. At the same time, low unemployment



rates in both counties indicate that the economy in the Amarillo area remains strong and is capable of absorbing the influx of the new labor force.

Despite the fluctuations in the median income, Randall County continues to be much more affluent than Potter County—the median income in Randall County in 2015 was still 52.9% higher than the median income in Potter County.

The 2015 median income in Randall County was 52.9% higher than in Potter County



Cost of Living

To create a more complete picture of the community the data on the cost of living in Amarillo was explored. Cost of living estimates reflect a measure of all household expenses families typically incur. Unlike employment and income data, the cost of living estimate is not uniformly calculated for all counties in the United States. The estimate reported here has been provided by the Center for Public Policy Priorities (2017), which calculates this statistic for several major metropolitan areas of Texas. The estimate includes six major expense categories: housing, food, childcare, medical, transportation, and other necessities. The cost of living varies de-

pending on family size. This report is generated from data on four household types: single individuals, single parents (mothers and fathers) with two children, and married couples with two children. The significance of the two children is based on the fact that a married couple with two children is the most typical family type in the Amarillo area. Likewise, a single parent with two children is the most typical family size among single-parent families. Cost of living estimates, along with median income for all four family types, are provided in the table below.

Health insurance costs on average \$5,189 for a single individual and \$10,758 for a family of four.

Family Type	Insurance		Median Income	
	Self Funded	Employer Funded	Potter County	Randall County
Single Adult	\$ 22 743	\$ 17 554	\$ 22 024	\$ 30 403
Single Mother, Two Children	\$ 39 851	\$ 29 051	\$ 19 910	\$ 26 000
Single Father, Two Children	\$ 39 851	\$ 29 051	\$ 30 217	\$ 41 467
Married Couple, Two Children	\$ 48 724	\$ 37 966	\$ 56 393	\$ 92 486

Source: Center for Public Policy Priorities, Family Budget Data Tool; Converted to constant 2015 dollars

Notably, cost of living is greatly affected by insurance type. The difference in the cost of living between families with self-funded and employer-funded insurance policies is remarkable. The additional health insurance cost averages over \$5,189 for a single individual and \$10,758 for a family of four.

On average, single individuals in Randall County earn enough money to provide for themselves, regardless of insurance type. In Potter County, single adults can cover their basic expenses, if their employer pays their entire insurance premium. Otherwise, they live below the average cost of living. Single mothers in both Potter and Randall Counties do not make enough money to provide for their families, regardless of the type of insurance they have. Single fathers fare much better than single mothers and are able



to cover the cost of living, if they live in Randall County; however, if they live in Potter County, they will need their employer to fund their insurance. Married couples fare best of all, as they earn enough income to provide for themselves regardless of the insurance type or the county of residence.

HEALTH

“The power of community to create health is far greater than any physician, clinic, or hospital.”
~ Mark Hyman

Healthy communities begin with healthy residents. Every year the Community Status Report covers a host of health-related indicators: from deaths due to heart disease, to drug abuse, to suicide. These indicators show where our community stands in its overall physical and psychological health.

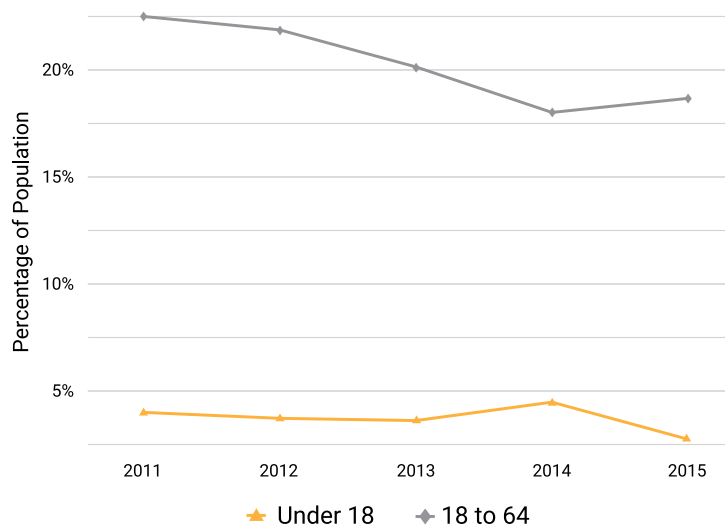
Health Insurance. Access to health insurance is an important predictor of overall health. Individuals who do not have adequate access to health insurance tend to use less preventative care and more emergency medical services. This results in adverse health outcomes for uninsured individuals, as well as greater financial strain on their families and society (Golden & McGlynn, 2005). Reduction of the number of uninsured individuals was one of the primary goals of the Affordable Care Act (ACA, 2009). According to a recent analysis of the impact of ACA on healthcare coverage, between 7 million and 16.4 million previously uninsured individuals acquired health insurance through ACA.

In Potter County, the 2015 trends in the proportion of uninsured varied by age groups. The proportion of uninsured children in Potter County in 2015 fell by 40.0% (from 4.5% to 2.7%), while the proportion of uninsured adults increased by 3.9% (from 18.0% to 18.7%). In Randall County in 2015, the proportion of uninsured fell both among children and adults of working age. Among children, the uninsured rate decreased from 3.3% to 1.1% (a 66.7% reduction), and among adults it dropped from 9.9% to 9.4% (a 5.1% reduction).

UNINSURED BY AGE GROUP

Potter County

American Community Survey



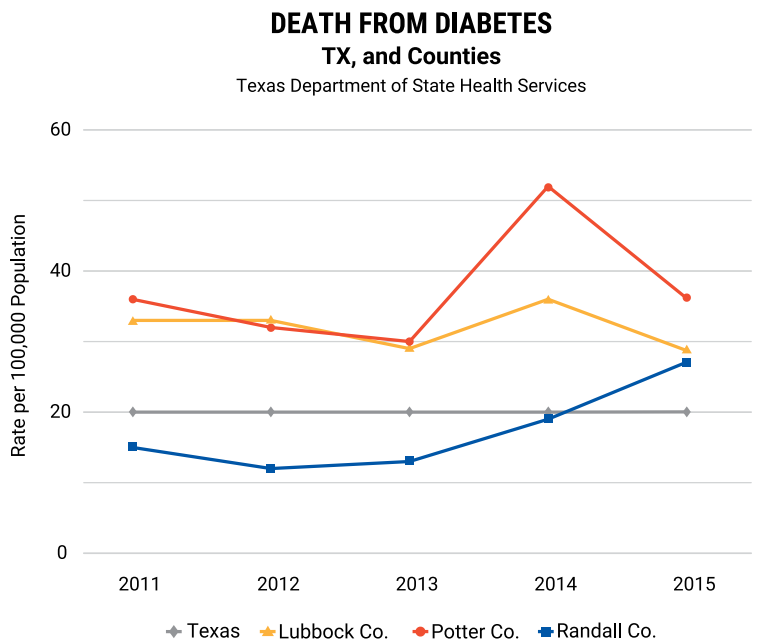
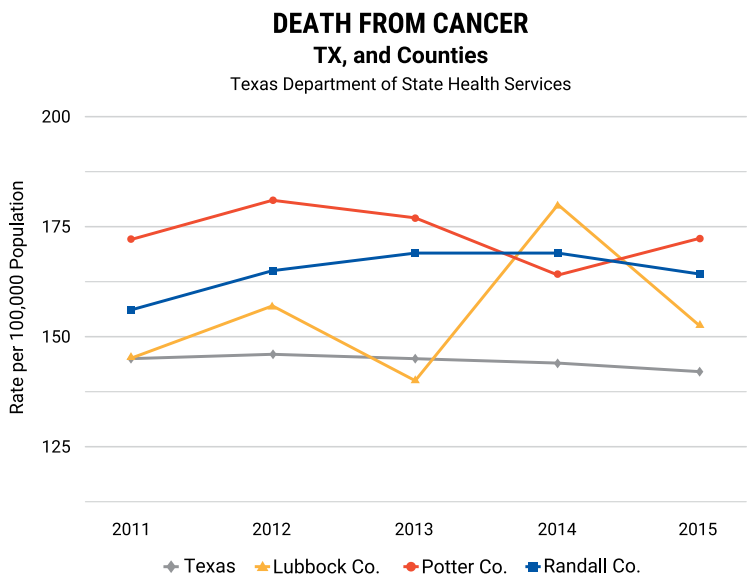
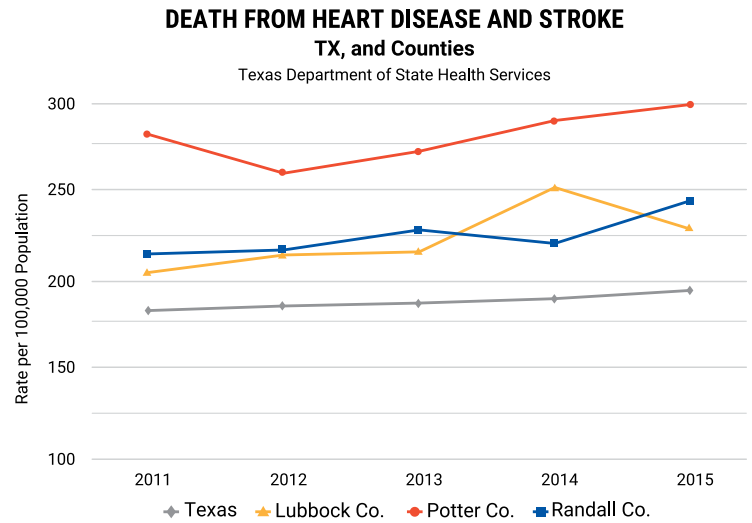
Mortality. Heart disease remains the number one killer in Potter and Randall Counties, followed by cancer, accidents, and diabetes. The mortality indicators in this year's report are reported differently than in previous years. The heart disease indicator includes cardio vascular diseases and stroke; the cancer indicator includes deaths from all types of cancers; accidents include motor vehicle accidents and other accidents. In addition to these four indicators we also include statistics on death from suicide, as a measure of mental health.

Heart Disease. The rates of death from heart disease (and stroke) increased in 2015 in both counties, in Potter County by 2.6% and in Randall by 11.2%. In both counties, the rate of death from heart disease (and stroke) was the highest in 5 years. In 2015, Potter County had a rate of 299.7 deaths per 100,000 population, 56.3% higher than the rate in Texas. Randall County had a rate of 244.7, which was 24.5% higher than that in Texas. Therefore, both counties continue to have elevated rates of death from heart disease (and stroke). In addition to these alarming statistics, it is important to note that Randall County's rate is growing at a faster pace than Potter County's (11.2% growth in Randall County vs. 2.6% growth in Potter County).

Cancer. Both Potter and Randall Counties have elevated rates of death from cancer compared to Texas. In 2015, Potter County's death from cancer rate was 21.4% higher the Texas rate, while Randall County's rate was 15.6% higher than Texas rate. Potter County had a 5.1% increase in the rate in 2015, while Randall County had a 2.8% decrease. As with heart disease, cancer continues to be an area of concern for both counties.

Accidents. Death from accidents followed the predictable pattern of most other causes of mortality. Potter County had a 24.0% higher rate than Randall County (50.9 vs. 41.1). At the same time, Potter County experienced a 13.7% decrease in the rate of death from accidents, while Randall County had a 5.3% increase from 2014 to 2015. Both Potter and Randall Counties, however, had an elevated rate of death from accidents compared to the average Texas rate. Potter County's rate was 40.6% higher than the Texas rate, and Randall County's rate was 13.4% higher than the Texas rate.

Diabetes. Diabetes is closely linked with heart disease and stroke. Among adults with diabetes 65 years of age and older, 68% die from heart disease, and another 16% die from stroke (AHA, 2017). Both Potter and Randall Counties



experienced an increase in the rate of death from diabetes in recent years. Potter County saw a dramatic increase in the rate from 30.0 per 100,000 individuals in 2013 to 52.0 in 2014. In 2015, the rate dropped to 36.1, but still remained 80.3% higher than the average Texas rate. In Randall County, the rate of death from diabetes increased to a historic high of 27.0 in 2015, a 42.6% increase compared to that of the previous year. Randall County's rate of death from diabetes was 35.2% higher than the average Texas rate. Elevated diabetes rates in both Potter and Randall Counties continue to be an area of concern.

Combating Childhood Obesity in Schools: Back to Basics

Previous community status reports addressed the link between heart disease, diabetes, and obesity, and how these conditions can be improved with physical activity and good nutrition. The links between these conditions are especially strong for obese children. According to the World Health Organization (2017), childhood obesity can have long-term adverse effects on children's health. Childhood obesity can lead to cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders (especially osteoarthritis), and certain types of cancers including endometrial, breast, and colon cancer.



According to a study on historic rates of obesity among children, the obesity rate in the 1930s was 0% for American boys and 2% for American girls (von Hippel & Nahhas, 2013). In 1993, 63

years later, the obesity rate rose to 12% among boys and 14% among girls. Childhood obesity rates peaked in the mid-2000s and then began to decline. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2017), obesity among school-age children in the United States declined from the high of 13.9% in 2003–2004 to 9.4% in 2013–2014. Despite the recent positive trends, obesity remains a significant public health issue for U.S. children (CDC, 2017).

Most scientists agree that obesity is related to the ratio of energy intake to energy “expenditure,” the so called “energy balance.” Childhood obesity has been linked to higher energy intake (particularly in the form of soft drinks and snack foods high in fat and sugar) and reduced physical activity (Anderson & Butcher, 2006). Childhood obesity is taking a toll not only on the health of our children but on the private and public wallets. The estimated costs of childhood obesity to the nation amounts to \$14.3 billion per year (Cawley, 2010).

What can schools do to help reduce the obesity rate among their students? Research suggests returning to the basics: physical activity and quality nutrition.



Physical activity in schools. The two primary ways in which children can engage in physical activity at school are physical education (PE) classes and recess. Research shows that PE in school is an important protective factor against childhood obesity. Children who participate in mandated PE classes are less likely to be obese. Moreover, as the number of minutes spent in PE increases, obesity decreases (Cawley, Frisvold, & Meyerhoefer, 2013). Fortunately, Texas requires 135 minutes per week in PE classes with at least moderate physical activity. However, this requirement falls short of the AHA recommendation of 150 minutes of physical activity in elementary school and 225 minutes in middle and high school (AHA,

2012). Further, Texas does not require daily access to PE or daily access to recess in schools (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2010). Unfortunately, many schools are cutting down recess time to allow more time for test preparation. These school practices go against the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day (AHA, 2013) and, undoubtedly, contribute to childhood obesity. Incorporating PE and recess back into the school daily schedule can help combat childhood obesity as well as improve academic performance, behavior, and attitude of children during the school day (Cawley et al., 2013).

“Children must be physically active at school and learn about keeping healthy through exercise and a balanced diet.” American Heart Association

In addition to PE and recess, the CDC suggests the following strategies to help children be more active in school: incorporating physical activity into the educational process throughout the school day (such as “Brain Breaks!” and “Take 10!” at <http://take10.net/>), offering engaging after-school physical activities (see “Kids on the Move” by Afterschool Alliance), and encouraging children to walk to school (KidsWalk-to-School, CDC, <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/11316>). For more ideas on physical activities in the school setting, see Lee, Wechsler, & Balling (2006).



Nutrition in schools. Another aspect of healthy weight is good nutrition. The science behind the relationship between poor nutrition and obesity in children is solid (AHA, 2012; Lee et al., 2006). Previous Community Status Reports presented evidence that a “southern diet” (a diet high in fried foods, processed meats, and sweetened beverages) is contributing to obesity and heart disease in southern states (Shikany et al., 2015). Despite the public outcry and legislative efforts of the previous administration to improve school nutrition, little has been done in this area in Texas. From flavored milk to highly processed lunches to junk food fundraisers, schools abound with foods high in sugar and unhealthy fats. In 2013, the Texas Department of Agriculture imposed \$73,000 in fines on eight Houston high schools that violated Texas Public School Nutrition Policy.

With the exception of fines, the Texas Department of Agriculture can do little to prevent schools from serving junk foods on their campuses due to the legislative resistance in Texas. Therefore, it has been relegated to the schools themselves to take an active stand against junk food and make every effort to provide quality nutrition to students. One way to improve the quality of school nutrition is through the Farm to School Program by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Farm to School provides grant money, educational resources, and other assistance to participating schools (for more information visit <http://www.squaremeals.org>).

**“Physically active children are more likely to thrive academically and socially.”
American Heart Association**

Schools can participate in the Farm to School Program by starting a school garden, installing a salad bar, or arranging food delivery from local farmers, for example. The 2015 evaluation of the program revealed that participation in the Farm to School Program improved children’s knowledge about nutritious foods, increased their fruit and vegetable consumption, and had a positive impact on their academic performance (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2016).

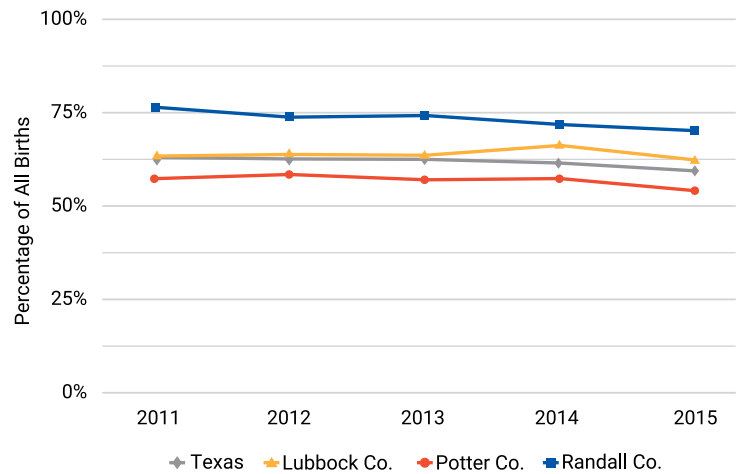
Mothers and Babies. Mahatma Gandhi profoundly said that the true measure of any society can be determined by how it treats its most vulnerable members. For this reason, newborns continue to be an important priority for the United Way of Amarillo & Canyon. Another reason why newborns are so important is that adverse prenatal and postnatal outcomes could result in a significant financial burden on the society. Gestational diabetes alone, with its adverse outcomes, could cost society nearly \$5.5 billion over the lifetime of those babies (Peterson et al., 2015).



Prenatal Care. The first step to a healthy birth is quality prenatal care, which should begin in the first trimester. Unfortunately, the proportion of women who begin their prenatal care in the first trimester continued to decline in 2015 in both Potter and Randall Counties. Potter County, which had a lower rate of participation in prenatal care in the first trimester than Texas, Lubbock, and Randall Counties, experienced a further decline in 2015 by 5.2% (arriving at 54.8%). Randall County had a higher partici-

CARE RECEIVED IN FIRST TRIMESTER TX, and Counties

Department of State Health Services

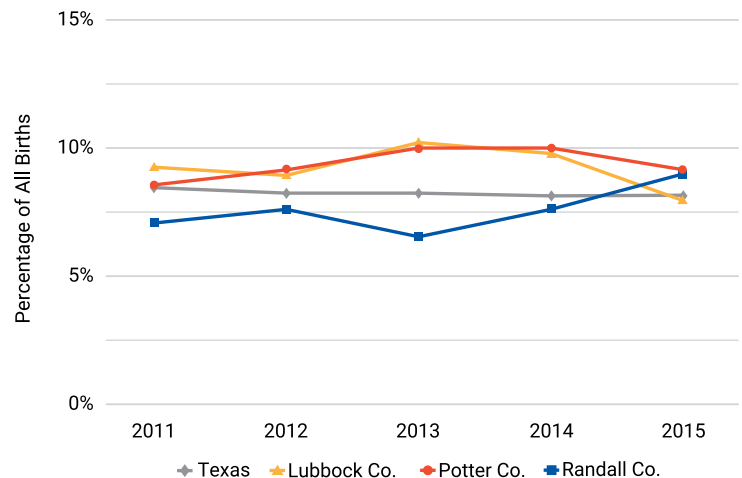


ipation rate than Lubbock and Texas (70.6% vs. 62.4% and 59.7%, respectively), but it too experienced a 2.1% decline. In fact, the rate of participation in prenatal care declined in all four of these regions.

Low Birth Weight Babies. Low weight at birth can be associated with in many adverse outcomes for the baby. Low birth weight babies can have subnormal growth patterns and neurodevelopmental problems, as well as a greater susceptibility to illnesses (Hack, Klein, & Taylor, 1995). In 2015, the proportion of low birth weight babies in Potter County decreased by 8.0%, but in Randall County it increased by 19.7%. As a result, Potter and Randall Counties had practically the same rates of low birth weight babies (9.2% vs. 9.1%). Potter and Randall Counties’ rates were higher than those in Lubbock County and in Texas by approximately 13%.

LOW BIRTH WEIGHT BABIES TX, and Counties

Department of State Health Services

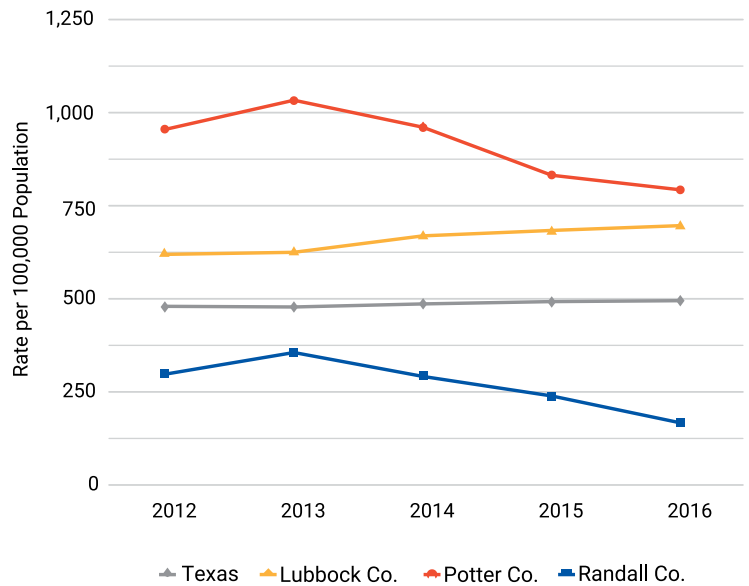


Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Unlike other indicators in the health section, the rates for STIs are available for the year 2016, one year ahead of the other health indicators. Historically, STIs, especially chlamydia and gonorrhea, have been a significant issue in Potter County. Fortunately, both chlamydia and gonorrhea rates as well as HIV rates are going down in Potter County. In 2016, the chlamydia rate dropped 5.3%, while the gonorrhea rate dropped 11.0%. Despite these positive changes, Potter County's rate for chlamydia and gonorrhea still exceeded the Texas rates by 58.5% and 123.8%, respectively. The HIV rate in Potter County dropped in 2016 quite dramatically, by 47.6%. This is very encouraging considering that in 2015 the HIV rate jumped nearly three times higher than the rate of the year before. The 2016 decrease in the HIV rate put Potter County's rate below the Texas rate (as was the case prior to the 2015 increase).



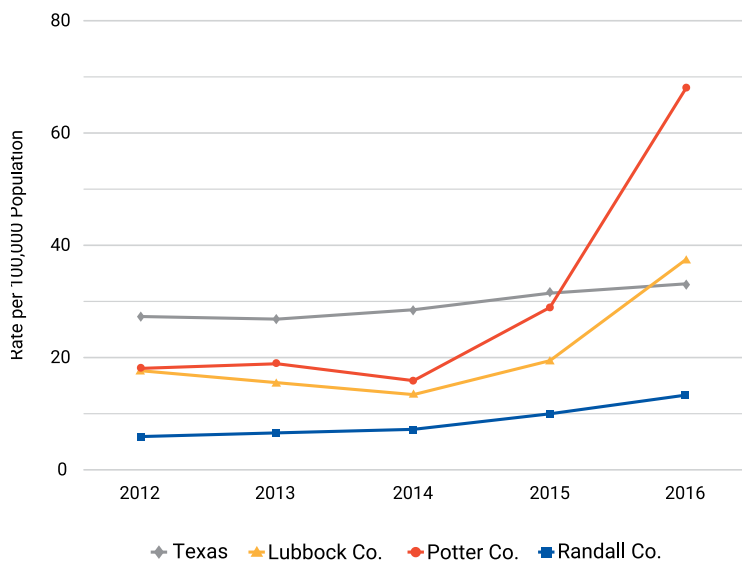
These positive trends, however, are somewhat overshadowed by the explosion in the syphilis rate in Potter County, which first increased by 85.3% in 2015 and then again by a staggering 135.4% in 2016. The 2016, the syphilis rate in Potter County was twice as high as the average Texas rate. Despite the recent explosion syphilis is still dwarfed by chlamydia. Overall, among all STIs reported in Potter County, chlamydia remained the biggest concern. The 2016 chlamydia rate in Potter County was 783.7 per 100,000 population, compared to 329.0 for gonorrhea, 67.9 for syphilis, and 10.8 for HIV.

**CHLAMYDIA RATES
TX, and Counties**
Department of State Health Services



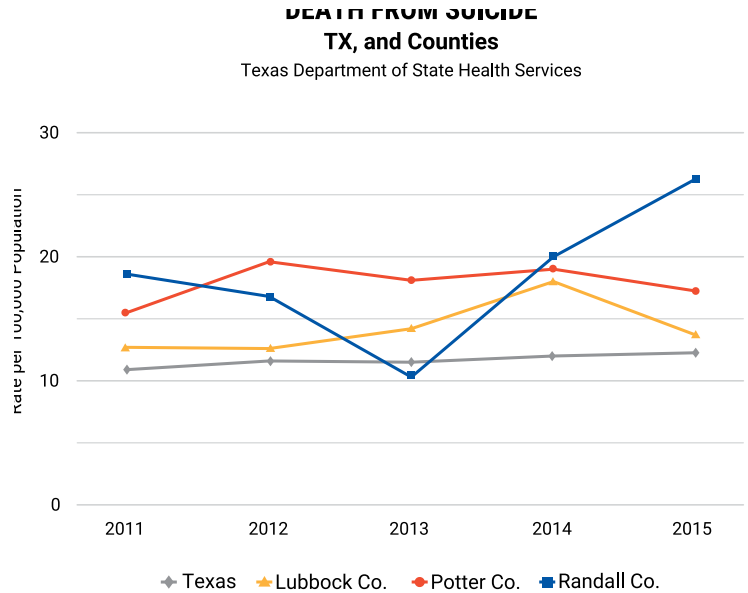
Unlike Potter County, in Randall County, STIs have not been a major issue. Historically, Randall County had lower STI rates than Texas, Lubbock County, and Potter County. This pattern continued in 2016. However, like Potter County, Randall County experienced a significant increase in the syphilis rate, first in 2015 by 42.7% and then again in 2016 by another 28.3%. Despite these increases, the Randall County syphilis rate remained well below the Texas rate.

**SYPHILIS RATES
TX, and Counties**
Department of State Health Services



Suicide. Rates of death by suicide had divergent trends in the two counties. Potter County had a 34.4% lower death from suicide rate than Randall County. Such disparity between the counties happened predominantly due to a dramatic increase in the suicide rate in Randall County, which increased by 31.4% in 2015. At the same time, Potter County's death from suicide rate decreased from 19.0 in 2014 to 17.4 in 2015 (a 9.3% decrease). Both counties have higher rate of death from suicide than Texas, on average; Potter County's rate exceeded the Texas rate by 40.6%, while Randall County's rate exceeded the Texas rate by 91.9%. Therefore, mental health remains a public health issue in both counties.

Drug Abuse. Data on drug abuse is difficult to track due to its illegal nature and the social stigma associated with it. One of the ways drug abuse can be tracked is through the enrollment in the state-run drug treatment programs. Only state-funded drug treatment programs report their data to Texas Department of State Health Service, which makes it publicly available. These programs are income-based and predominantly serve low-income individuals. Therefore, the data come with severe limitations. Specifically, counties with significant socioeconomic differences (such as Potter and Randall Counties) cannot be compared to one another due to differences in the median income and poverty rates. The data on enrollment in state-funded drug treatment programs is also questionable because it is highly dependent on funding. In 2016, it appears that all three counties (Lubbock, Potter, and Randall) experienced a decline in program participation, which is probably indic-



ative of decreased program funding more so than decreased drug abuse. Nevertheless, it is still possible to discern from the data which substances are more popular in which counties. In all three counties meth and alcohol were the two most common substances, followed by marijuana. In Potter County, meth dominated the treatment scene, whereas in Randall and Lubbock Counties, meth and alcohol treatment participation was about equal.



VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The encouraging trend of shrinking poverty observed in the Amarillo area between 2012 and 2014 continued in 2015 in Randall County, but not in Potter County. In Randall County, the poverty rate dropped by 19.1%, while in Potter County it increased by 7.5%.

On a larger scale poverty is shrinking both in the United States and in Texas, though the decreases are more modest. The poverty rate in the United State and Texas in 2015 dropped by 5.2% and 7.6%, respectively. These decreases are very significant, considering that for 2011–2014 the poverty rate in the United States decreased less than 2% per year, and in Texas—less than 3% per year.

The poverty rate dropped by 19.1% in Randall County, while it increased by 7.5% in Potter County.

Poverty Among Children.

In 2015, Randall County’s childhood poverty rate dropped by 19.3%. This is encouraging news considering that the childhood poverty rates in Texas and the United States decreased only 6.6% and 4.2%, respectively. In stark contrast, the childhood poverty rate in Potter County rose by 9.8%. Yet, this rate pales in comparison to the alarming 39.4% increase in poverty among children in Lubbock County, which reported a decrease for the previous 3 years.

Poverty Among Adults.

In 2015, poverty rates for adults of working age (24–64 years) decreased in Randall County, Texas, and the United States. Randall County’s decrease of 22.3% was much greater than the decreases for Texas (8.2%) and the United States (4.9%). On the other hand, the adult pov-

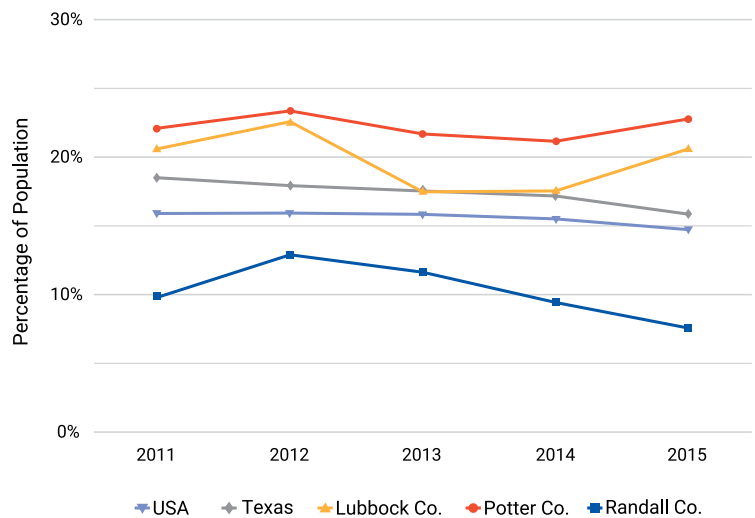
erty rate increased by 5.1% in Potter County. It was a much smaller increase, however, compared to Lubbock County where the poverty rate among adults increased by 11.7%.

Increasing poverty rates in Potter County affected populations of all ages, from children to the elderly

INDIVIDUALS IN POVERTY

US, TX, and Counties

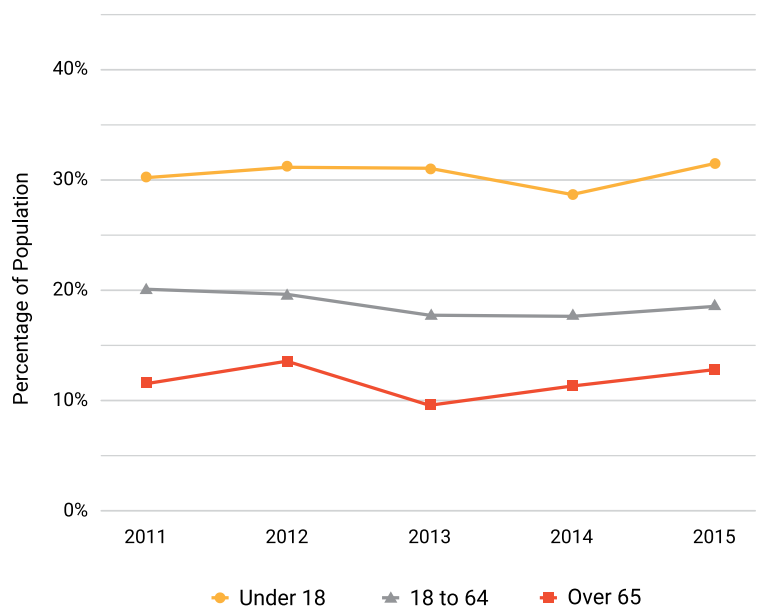
American Community Survey



POVERTY BY AGE

Potter County

American Community Survey



Poverty Among the Elderly.

Typically, poverty rates among the elderly have much greater stability over time than do poverty rates in younger age groups. However, Potter County experienced an alarming increase of 13.3% in the poverty rate among the elderly in 2015. On the other hand, the poverty rate in Randall County decreased by 4.0%. This was a reflection of the change in the poverty rates among the elderly in the United States, Texas, and Lubbock County, which dropped by 4.3%, 5.7%, and 4.1%, respectively.

The above statistics paint a clear picture that increasing poverty rates in Potter County have affected populations of all ages, from children

to the elderly. Growing poverty rates, in the face of decreasing unemployment, increasing labor force participation, and stable median income is puzzling.

Participation in Public Assistance Programs

In recent years, Potter and Randall Counties had marked differences in enrollment in public assistance programs due to significant differences in the two counties' median incomes.

Considering that, in 2015, the poverty rate in Potter County increased and in Randall County decreased, one would expect similar changes in enrollment in public assistance programs. However, trends in enrollment in public assistance programs in 2015 were not as straightforward as expected. The data on the enrollment in public assistance programs is presented in the table below.

Medicaid. Medicaid is a publicly subsidized health insurance program for low-income individuals. Despite divergent poverty trends, Medicaid enrollment increased in both counties. In Potter County, the enrollment rate rose by 5.6% and in Randall County - by 6.7%. These increasing trends were consistent with burgeoning Medicaid enrollment rates state- and nationwide.

CHIP. Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides health insurance to low-income children. Unlike Medicaid, CHIP enrollment in 2015 dropped in Potter and Randall Counties, as well as the state and nation, by 30–40%. Potter County had the largest decrease in CHIP enrollment (40.0%), while Randall County had the smallest (33.3%). These changes in public insurance plans were undoubtedly related to the rollout of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2014.

SNAP. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the food stamps, provides food assistance to individuals in need. Similar to CHIP, SNAP enrollment in 2015 fell in Potter and Randall Counties, as well as state- and nationwide, though not as dramatically as the insurance program. Potter County, with the highest SNAP enrollment rate of 21.0%,



experienced a 3.2% drop between 2014 and 2015. Randall County, with the lowest SNAP enrollment rate of 7.2%, experienced a similar decrease of 4.0%.



TANF. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is a short-term (typically, one-time) cash assistance program provided to families in immediate crisis. The short-term nature of this program makes it very different from the other public assistance programs. The enrollment in TANF did not change significantly in 2015, remaining very low in Potter County (0.3%) and in Randall County (0.1%).

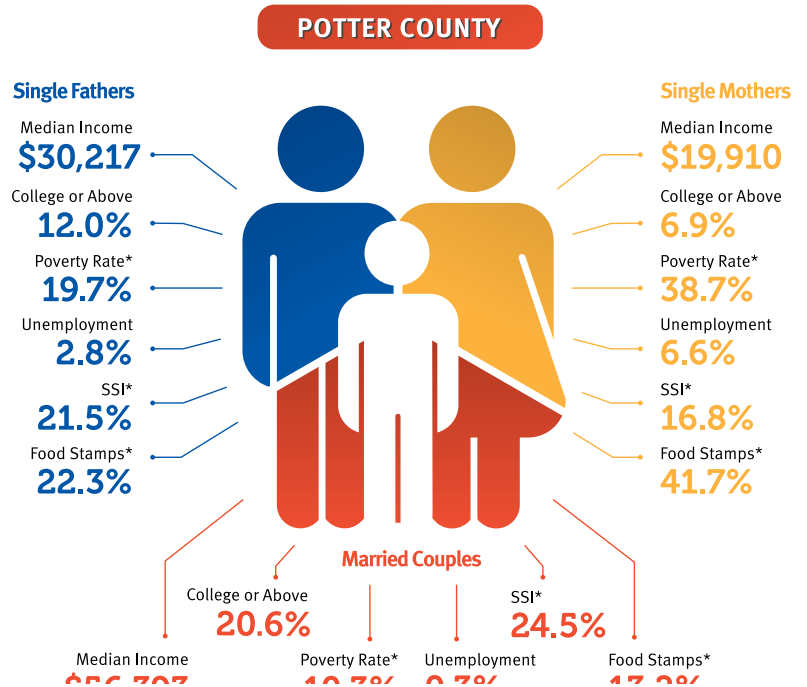
It appears that, in the face of increasing poverty, Potter County residents actually reduced their participation in public assistance programs (with the exception of TANF and Medicaid). This dynamic may be an area of concern for Potter County.

Single Parents

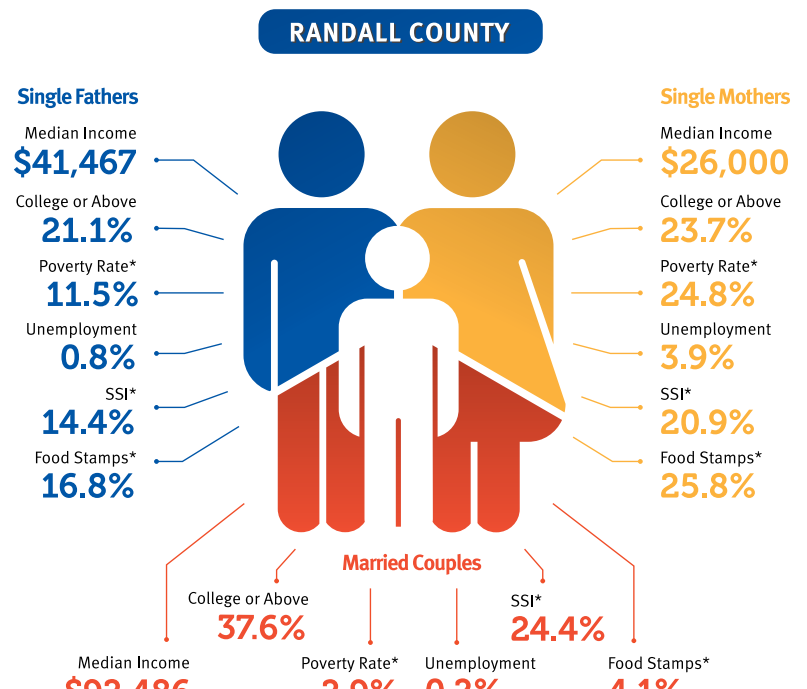
Single parents face many conflicting demands. Meeting financial needs of the family, spending quality time with children, being involved in children's schools, and negotiating the relationship with the noncustodial parent are some of the main challenges that single parents have to tackle single-handedly. It is no wonder, then, that single parents reported greater levels of psychological distress than their two-parent counterparts (Hope, Power, & Rogers, 1999).

The infographics below contrast several key characteristics of single parents and married couples in Potter and Randall Counties reported for the time period between 2011 and 2015.

FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18



FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18



Single Mothers

Single Mothers' Median Income. Single mothers of Randall County earn, on average, 30.6% more than single mothers in Potter County. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, single mothers in both Potter and Randall Counties, on average, do not earn enough to cover the \$29,051 cost of living.

In both Potter and Randall Counties an average single mother does not earn enough to cover the \$29,051 cost of living.

When comparing single parents' income to the income of married couples one has to account for the possibility of only one income for single parent versus two incomes for married couples. Therefore, to adjust the median family income for total the number of potential income earners, this report compares 50% of a married couples' income to the income of a single parent. This insures an 'apples to apples' comparison of incomes. Subsequently in this report 50% of a married couples' income will be referred to as 'half-income'.

When compared to married couples, single mothers earn significantly less than half-income of married couples. The difference in income between single mothers and married couples is much more pronounced in Randall County, where married couples' half-income is 77.9% higher than a single mother's income.

Single Mothers' Education. Educational patterns of single mothers are divergent in Potter and Randall Counties. In Potter County, for the majority of single mothers (52.9%), the highest educational attainment is a high school diploma. In Randall County, on the other hand, the majority of single mothers (70.0%) have at least some postsecondary experience (either some college, or associate degree, or a college degree). Among them 23.7% have a college degree or above.



The most staggering difference in educational attainment in Potter County is between married couples and single mothers. Nearly three times as many married couples as single mothers in Potter County have a college degree (198.6% difference). The educational attainment of married couples is reflected here by the educational attainment of the head of the household as reported on the survey form. In other words, if the head of a married household has a college degree, then the married couple is considered to have a college degree. If the head of the household does not hold a college degree, the married couple is considered to not to have a college degree regardless of the educational attainment of the other family members.

The difference between college-educated single mothers and college-educated married couples is less pronounced in Randall County, where the proportion of married couples who hold a college degree is 58.6% higher than the proportion of single mothers who went to college (37.6% vs. 23.7%).

In Potter County, nearly three times as many married couples as single mothers have a college degree (198.6% difference).

Poverty Among Single Mothers. In both Potter and Randall Counties, single mothers have the highest poverty rate of the three family types. In Potter County, the poverty rate among single mothers (38.7%) is nearly three times as high as that of married couples (10.3%). In Randall County, the poverty rate among single mother (24.8%) is eight times as high as that of married couples (2.9%). This suggests that inequality between family types is much greater in Randall County.



Single Mothers' Unemployment. Unemployment rates in both counties are low for all family types. However, single mothers in both counties are consistently more likely to be unemployed than single fathers and married couples. In Potter County, single mothers' unemployment rate is 21 times higher than that of married couples and in Randall County is it 18.5 times higher than that of married couples. Even with the staggering difference between single mothers and married couples in both counties unemployment rates are still low compared to state and national rates.



Single Mothers' Welfare. There are many types of public assistance programs, also known as welfare programs, that serve different purposes and have varying eligibility criteria. Among these programs are the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, available to individuals with disabilities, SNAP (food stamp program), TANF (temporary cash assistance), Medicaid, CHIP (children's health insurance), and a few others. In this section on single parents, we report data on the SSI program and SNAP. TANF,

Medicaid, and CHIP data were not publicly available by family type.

SSI is a public assistance program for individuals with disabilities. The participation of single parents in this program is surprisingly low compared to that of married couples. In fact, in both counties married couples are more likely to receive SSI benefits than single parents. In 2015, 16.8% of single mothers in Potter County received SSI, which is 31.4% lower than married couples in Potter County. In Randall County, 20.9% single mothers received SSI compared to 24.4% married couples (a 14.3% difference). This finding is inconsistent with the rest of the economic data on single parents and deserves further investigation. It is also peculiar that SSI program participation was greater in the more affluent Randall County than in Potter County (20.9% and 16.8% respectively). The use of SNAP or food stamps is much more prevalent among single mothers than other family types. In Potter County, single mothers were three times as likely to utilize SNAP as married couples (41.7% vs. 13.2%). In Randall County, the proportion of single mothers enrolled in SNAP was six times as high as married couples (25.8% vs. 4.1%). Between the two counties SNAP enrollment was 61.6% higher in Potter County than in Randall County, which is consistent with higher poverty rates among single mothers in Potter County.

In both counties married couples are more likely to receive SSI benefits than single parents.



Single Fathers

Single Fathers' Median Income. Single fathers in both Potter and Randall Counties fare much better than single mothers. In Potter County, the income of single fathers is 51.8% higher than that of single mothers and 6.7% higher than the half-income of married couples. In Randall County, single fathers make 59.5% more than single mothers, but they make 12.0% less than married couples. In both counties, single fathers' median income was higher than the \$29,051 cost-of-living needed for a single parent with two children (the typical number of children in a single-parent household).



Single Fathers' Education. Single father families report lower educational attainment than other family types. In both Potter and Randall Counties, single father families have the greatest proportion of individuals with high school diploma or less. In Potter County, the difference is small: 54.2% of single fathers versus 52.9% of single mother did not advance past high school. In Randall County, the proportion of single fathers with high school education or less was 27.0% higher than single mothers (38.1% and 30.0% respectively). Furthermore, in Randall County single fathers are less likely to have a college education: only 21.1% of single fathers had a college degree or above compared to 23.7% of single mothers and 37.6% of married couples. In Potter County, on the other hand, single fathers with a college degree

comprised 12.0%, compared to 6.9% of single mothers and 20.6% of married couples. It is noteworthy that single fathers of Randall County are less educated than single mothers, but make higher wages. This discrepancy could be an



indication that Randall County single fathers pursue better paying jobs than do single mothers. On the other hand, it could be a sign of a gender-based earnings gap.

In both Potter and Randall Counties single fathers' median income was higher than the \$29,051 cost-of-living.

Poverty Among Single Fathers. The poverty rates of single fathers in both counties is lower than those of single mothers, but higher than those of married couples. In Potter County, the poverty rate for single fathers is 91.3% higher than that for married couples. In Randall County, however, the poverty rate of single fathers is almost three times as great as that of married couples, while single mothers' poverty rate is 8.5 times greater than married couples'. Again, it appears that inequality between single parents and married couples is more pronounced in Randall County than in Potter County.

Single Fathers' Unemployment. The unemployment patterns of single fathers in Potter and Randall Counties are divergent. In Potter County, single fathers' unemployment was 2.8% in 2015, less than half that of single mothers (6.6%) and nearly 10 times that of married couples (0.3%). In Randall County, the unemployment rate of single fathers (0.8%)

resembled more closely that of married couples (0.2%), while single mothers lagged behind with an unemployment rate of 3.9%. However, it is important to put things in perspective: even the highest unemployment rate, that of single mothers in Potter County at 6.6%, was comparable to the average unemployment rate in the United States at 6.3%.

Single Fathers' Welfare. The proportion of single fathers receiving SSI benefits in Potter County (21.5%) was lower than that of married couples (24.5%) and greater than that of single mothers (16.8%). In Randall County, single fathers had the lowest rate of enrollment in SSI (14.4%), while single mothers and married couples had higher rates of enrollment (20.9% and 24.4%, respectively).



The patterns in SNAP enrollment were consistent between the two counties, with single fathers having lower enrollment rates than single mothers and higher enrollment rates than married couples. These statistics are consistent with data on median income and poverty among these family types.

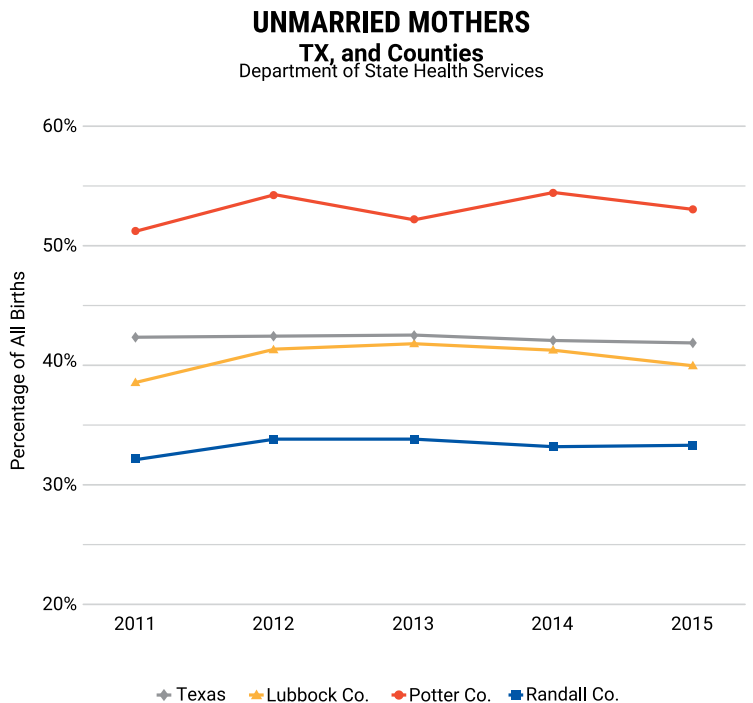
Other Sources of Data on Single Parents

Single parenthood is not a stable condition. Research shows nearly 20% of single parents live with a cohabiting partner and people transition in and out of single parenthood through remarriage and divorce (McLanahan & Jencks, 2015). It is estimated, therefore, that nearly 50% of

Nearly 50% of American children live in a single parent home at some point in their lives

American children live in a single parent home at some point in their lives (McLanahan & Jencks, 2015). These changing dynamics make single parenthood an elusive statistic to track. In addition to the statistics provided by the American Community Survey discussed so far, there are two important indicators that can shed light on the trends in single parenthood: the trend of birth to unmarried mothers and the trend of birth to teen mothers. The data on unmarried and teenage mothers are collected by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services.

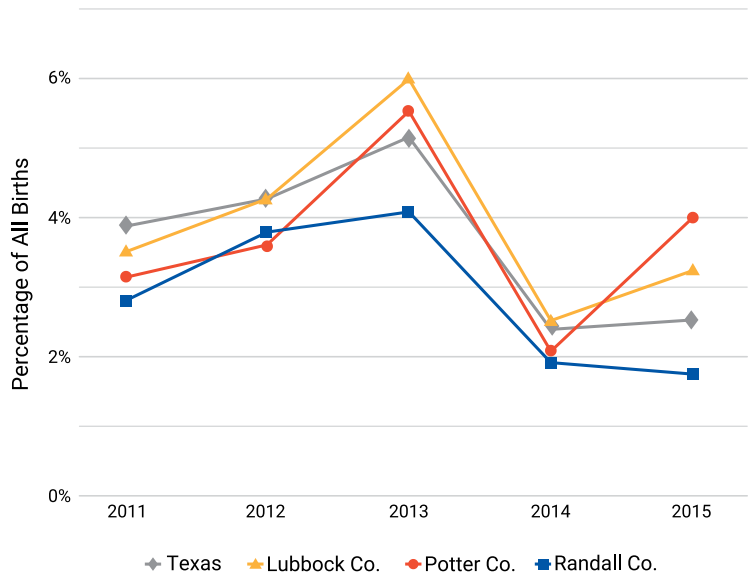
Birth to Unmarried Mothers. Births to single mothers and single parenthood are connected in many ways. In fact, the biggest cultural trend in single parenthood of the second half of the 20th century was a 700% growth in births to single mothers (Census Bureau, 2010). In Potter and Randall County the percent of birth to unmarried mothers did not change substantially in 2015. In Potter County, the proportion of birth to unmarried mothers decreased by 2.9% and in Randall County it increased by 0.3%.



Birth to Teenage Mothers. Another important statistic closely tied to single parenthood is births to teenage mothers. A teenage mother is much more likely to be a single mother. Research estimates that nearly 92% of teenage mothers are not married at the time of the baby's birth (Scott, Steward-Streng, Manlove, & Moore, 2012). Birth to teenage mothers is a low occurrence event (less than 6% in Potter and Randall Counties), and the numbers fluctuate between years. In 2015, Potter County experienced a dramatic 95.2% increase in birth to teenage mothers, while Randall County experienced a 10.5% decrease. Unfortunately, teen births rates also increased in Lubbock County (by 42.0%) and in Texas (by 4.2%). The trends in birth to teenage mothers appear to be synchronized in Texas, in Lubbock County, and in Potter County, in that they tend to rise and fall together between the years.

Teenage Fathers. Statistics on teenage fathers is not routinely collected by federal and state agencies and, therefore, only available through research articles. A recent research study on teenage fathers by Scott et al. (2012) revealed that 9.0 % of young men between the ages of 12 and 19 became fathers before their 20th birthday. Among them, 62.0% reported that the mother of their child was 19 years old or younger. Furthermore, only 8.0% of teenage fathers were married to the mother of their child, and only 44.0% of teenage fathers were living with their child when the child was born. Boys who became fathers as teens were more likely to have additional children by the age of 22–24, often with new partners. Teen fathers who lived with their children at the time of birth were also much more likely to live with them at the age of 22–24 (62.0% still resided with their children). On the other hand, Scott et al. (2012) reported that only 28.0 % of teen fathers who did not reside with their child at birth were living with their child at the age of 22–24.

**BIRTHS TO WOMEN UNDER 18 YEARS OLD
TX, and Counties**
Department of State Health Services



This study has some very important implications. First, teenage pregnancy prevention efforts can benefit from targeting teenage boys as well as girls. It appears that boys who become teenage fathers are likely to continue to father additional children with new partners in their early 20s. Second, teenage fathers' residence at the time of the baby's birth is very important. Teen fathers living with their child at birth are more likely to still be living with their child later in life.

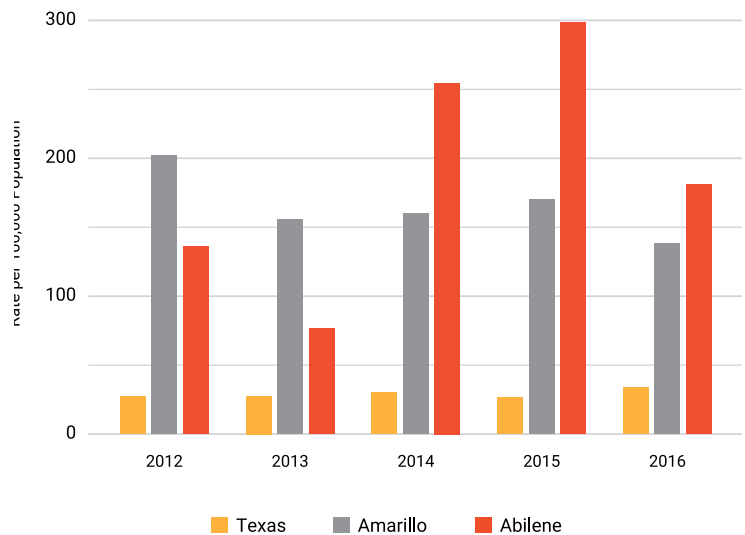
Refugees

The city of Amarillo is one of the major refugee resettlement areas in Texas. Due to its strong economy and the presence of two resettlement agencies in Amarillo, the city receives a much greater number of refugees than many neighboring cities, including Lubbock and Abilene. Amarillo received 346 newly arrived refugees in 2016, and Abilene, another major hub for refugee settlement in North Texas, took in 224. In comparison, Lubbock did not receive any refugees in 2016. After adjusting for population size, the city of Amarillo received refugees at the rate of 137.2 per 100,000 in population, three times the rate of Texas overall.



Refugee statistics are hard to track for several reasons. First, the “refugee” status is a temporary immigration status assigned to newly arrived refugees only. Once the newly arrived refugee settles, usually between 3 and 9 months, they can apply for a change of immigration status, typically a permanent residency card—a “green card.” Upon the receipt of a green card, refugees are no longer tracked in statistical databases as refugees, but instead become “foreign-born residents” or “foreign-born citizens.” The refugee data presented in this report, therefore, does not reflect the refugee population as a whole, but rather reflects only individuals with a current refugee status. Second, newly immigrated people, including refugees, tend to be highly transitory.

REFUGEE ARRIVALS BY REGION OF RESETTLEMENT
Texas, Amarillo, Abilene
Refugee Processing Center



Upon the receipt of a new immigration status, former refugees are likely to move to places with a better economy, closer to relatives, or to a larger ethnic group.

Last year the Community Status Report extensively covered general topics of refugee resettlement such as refugee selection and screening, resettlement decisions, and economic and crime impacts of refugees in resettlement communities. The infographic below contains a snapshot of the most important facts from that discussion. Out of 65.3 million refugees world-wide only 77,000 resettle in the United States, which represent 0.01%. Before arriving to the US refugees go through an intense screening process, which then continues for several weeks upon their arrival to US. The screening process includes an extensive background check and 3 biometric screening tests. Upon the receipt of the official refugee status, refugees are resettled in one of the 190 locations throughout the United States, including Amarillo and Abilene. Refugees tend to be employment-oriented, usually finding jobs within the first 30-90 days, and lead quiet lives. Research shows that newly arrived immigrants tend to commit fewer crimes than their native-born counterparts (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Unlike the data in the 2016 Community Status report summarized above the current Community Status Report will focus on refugee data specific to Potter and Randall Counties and the city of Amarillo.

AMARILLO REFUGEES

KEY FACTS

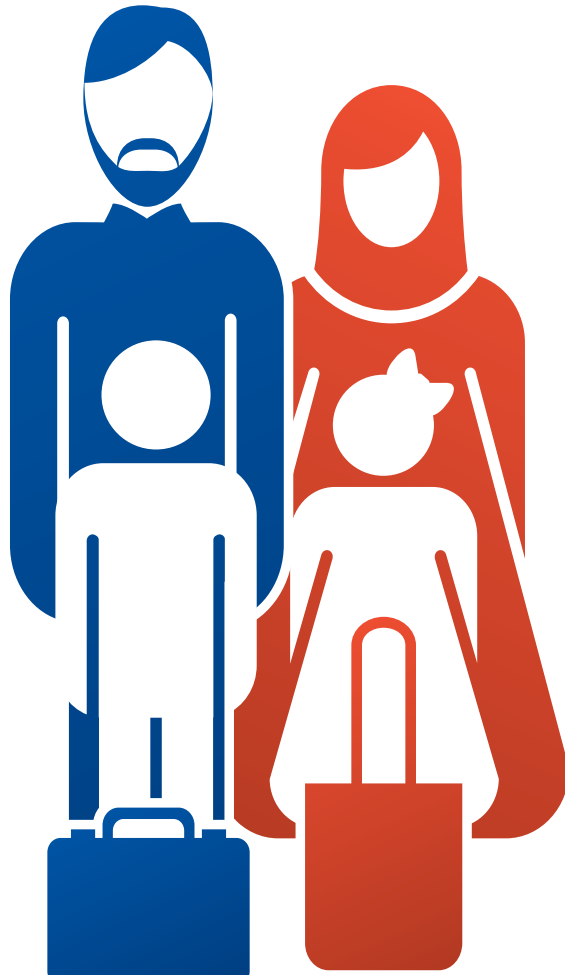
1.5 million refugees worldwide
 0.1% resettle in US (0.1%)
 go through 3 stage biometric security screening

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

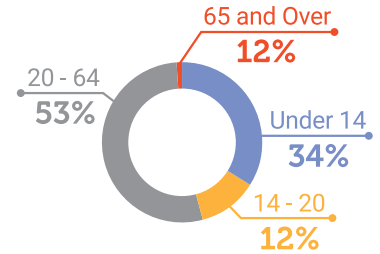
Food aid 4.2%
 Cash .9%
 Job trainings 5.6%
 Health assistance 1.1%

EMPLOYMENT FACTS

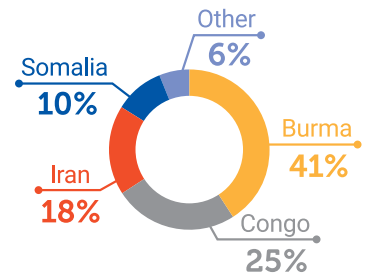
100% live in 190 locations across the US
 75% employment within 10 miles



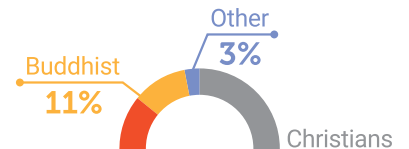
AGE



ORIGIN



RELIGION



Refugees' Region of Origin

Southeast Asia (more precisely, the country of Burma) continues to be the main region of origin of the incoming refugees. Of the 346 newly arrived refugees who resettled in Amarillo in 2016, 177 were Burmese, another 111 came from the African continent (Somalia and Congo), and the remaining 58 came from the Middle East (Iran and Iraq).

Refugees Demographic Characteristics

Precise demographic characteristics of newly arrived immigrants are not published by the U.S. Department of State. However, the U.S. Department of State provides aggregated character-

istics of refugees by the county of origin. This report will focus on the Burmese refugees, which represent the largest ethnic group (41.0%) that arrived in Amarillo between 2012 and 2016.

The reason so many Burmese refugees come to the United States is the ongoing brutal civil war. The Burmese civil war, which has been going on for over 30 years, is characterized by ethnic genocide that is practiced by both conflicting sides. For more details about the Burmese civil war, see the 2016 Community Status Report.

Following are some of the most notable demographic characteristics of Burmese refugees. The majority of them is under the age of 20, and nearly one third is under the age of 14. Christianity is the dominant religion among the

refugees, with 63.1% Christian, 23.2% Muslims, and 11.1% Buddhist. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of refugees do not have a high school diploma, which is to be expected considering that many of the newly arrived refugees are children. Secondary education degree holders comprise 29.2% of the refugees, while another 1.7% hold a postsecondary credential.

Refugees' Participation in Public Assistance Programs

This year's Community Status Report includes new information on program participation among the individuals with a refugee status. The data are not limited to newly arrived refugees, but rather represent all the individuals with a refugee status.



Refugees' TANF Enrollment. Among all the TANF recipients, refugees comprise a very small minority: 0.4% of Texas, 1.1% of Amarillo, and 3.2% of Abilene TANF enrollees. Between 2014 and 2016, Amarillo had a lower refugee enrollment rate than Abilene, and the enrollment trends were divergent: the proportion of refugee enrollees was increasing in Abilene and decreasing in Amarillo.

Refugees' MEDICAID Enrollment. The proportion of refugees enrolled in Medicaid was higher than that enrolled in TANF. In Amarillo, 4.2% of Medicaid enrollees were refugees



in 2016, compared to 2.3% in Abilene and 1.0% in Texas. Unlike TANF, Medicaid enrollment in Amarillo was nearly twice as high as that in Abilene.

Refugees' SNAP Enrollment. SNAP, the food stamps program, is the most popular among the refugees. SNAP provides food assistance to individuals in need, and its eligibility criteria are more inclusive than those of many other public assistance programs. Refugees comprised 5.6% of enrollees in SNAP in Amarillo, 2.8% in Abilene, and 1.3% in Texas. As with Medicaid, the refugee enrollment in Amarillo was twice as high as that in Abilene.

Refugees' CHIP Enrollment. The proportion of enrolled children in CHIP with a refugee status comprised 1.9% in Amarillo, 2.5% in Abilene, and 0.5% in Texas. Unlike Medicaid enrollment, Amarillo refugees had a lower enrollment rate than Abilene refugees.

Overall refugees participate in the public assistance programs at much lower rates than native-born residents of Amarillo.

Lesbian and Gay Couples. Lesbian and gay populations are hard to track, because the Census Bureau does not currently ask people about their sexual orientation. However, research indicates that 3.5% of the American population identifies as gay or lesbian (Gates, 2011). The same study found that about 8.2% of Americans reported to have engaged in same-sex behavior at some point in their lives, while 11% reported at least some same-sex attraction.

The U.S. Census Bureau does not ask people about their sexual orientation. However, the American Community Survey does include a question to determine the number of individuals who cohabit in same-sex relationships. The proportion of population in same-sex relationships is very small: less than 1% in all regions. In Potter and Randall Counties, the proportion of couples in same-sex relationships, fluctuated considerably over recent years. On average, between 2011 and 2015, Randall County had 142 same-sex couples, which represents 0.3% of all households. Randall County had 47 gay couples on average between 2011 and 2015, which represents 0.1% of households. By comparison, the US and Texas each had 0.4% gay and lesbian couples, while Lubbock had 1.0%.

Domestic Violence. Domestic violence can be directed towards any member of the family, but more often than not the victims of domestic violence are women. Between 2011 and 2015 women were nearly 4 times more likely to be abused than men in Potter County and in Randall County.

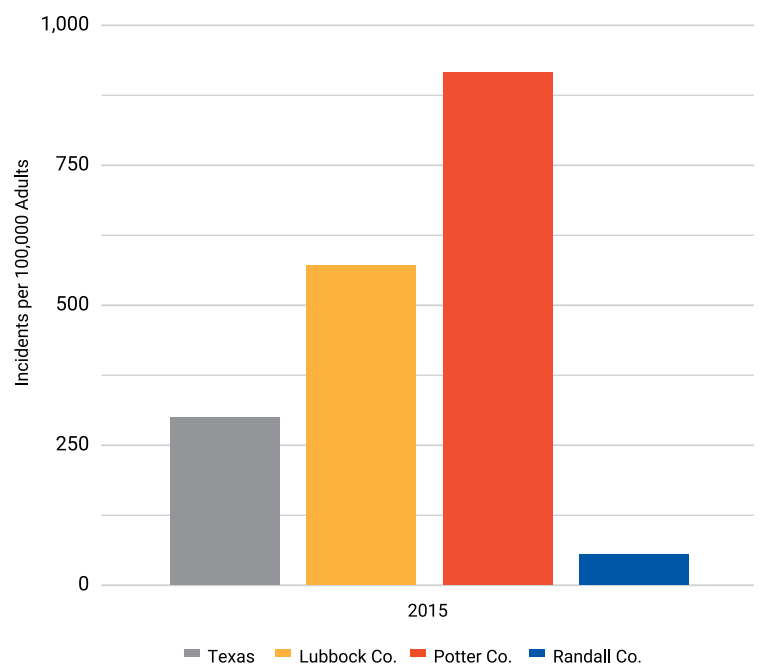
At the same time the rate of violence against women in Potter County was 17 times greater than in Randall County, and 3 times greater than in Texas on average. The analysis of abuse against man revealed a similar pattern: Potter County rate was 16 times that of Randall County, and three times that of Texas. Pov-



erty tends to be a strong predictor of domestic violence, because financial pressure can generate a lot of relational stress. However, Lubbock County, which has a poverty rate only 9.6% lower than Potter County (20.6% vs. 22.8%), has a 37.6% lower domestic violence rate than Potter County. Clearly, the high rate of domestic abuse in Potter County cannot be explained by poverty alone and is a major area

**FAMILY VIOLENCE AGAINST WIFE
TX, and Counties, 2011–2015 Average**

Crime in Texas Report



of concern.

Child Abuse. Child abuse and neglect spiked in 2014 in both Potter and Randall Counties, breaking a 5-year downward trend. Fortunately, in 2015 the rate went down in both counties dropping below the 2013 levels. The downward trends of child abuse and neglect appear to continue.

Elderly and Disabled Abuse. Abuse and neglect of elderly and disabled dropped in Texas, Lubbock County, and in Potter and Randall Counties by roughly 40%. Such a uniform reduction in rates potentially signifies change in agency funded or reporting requirements.



Homelessness

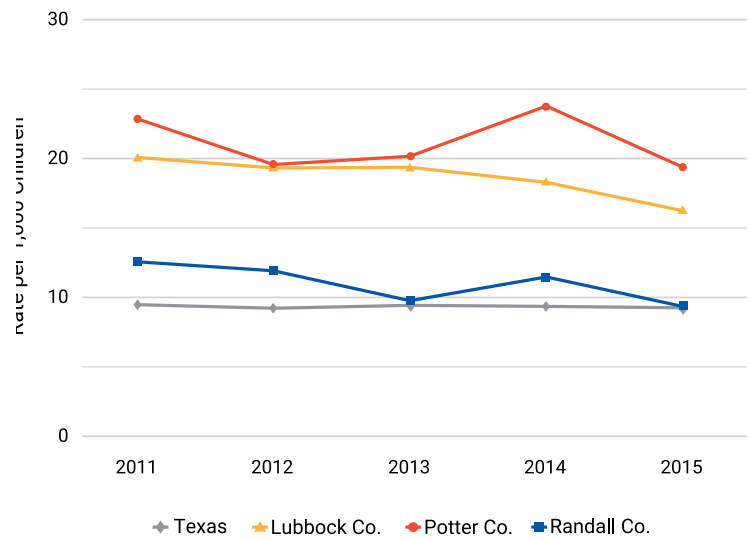
Homelessness can be an elusive target to track. Some people become homeless for brief periods of time during the year. They may stay at a hotel, with friends and family, or live in their car. Such short-term homelessness is virtually impossible to track. Many homeless individuals reside in homeless shelters and on the streets. They are counted once a year during the Point In Time Count (PIT). Of course, the weather has a major effect on the number of homeless counted. On a very cold winter day homeless people are more likely to seek shelter and be counted than on a warm day.

According to the most recent PIT report conducted in the city of Amarillo on January 26th, 2017, the number of homeless individual in-

CONFIRMED VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

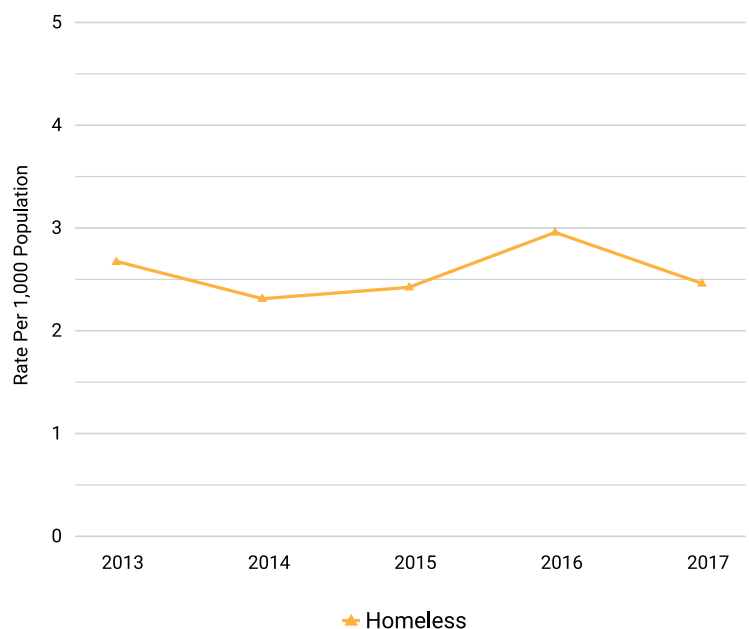
TX, and Counties

Texas State Data Center



HOMELESSNESS PIT, City of Amarillo

US Department of Housing and Urban Development



creased from 592 to 678 (by 14.5%). However, when adjusted for the rapidly growing population of Amarillo, the rate of homelessness actually decreased by 17.2%.

CONCLUSION

Many of the trends in Potter and Randall Counties discussed in previous Community Status Reports continue to be true today. Potter and Randall Counties represent two coexisting American realities. One is a minority community that struggles with high poverty, low educational achievement, poor health outcomes, and a large proportion of people in difficult circumstances. The other is an affluent, predominantly White community that is better educated, enjoys better health, and experiences lower levels of stress in other areas of community life. These differences become even more pronounced in the city of Amarillo, which is shared by both counties. Interstate I-40, metaphorically, represents the great American socioeconomic divide.

Demographic trends remained consistent for both counties in 2015. Randall County continued to experience significant population growth, while the number of people in Potter County remained stable. Both counties experienced growing minority population, with a notable increase in non-Black, non-Hispanic minorities. This is especially true for the younger generations. With the younger generation becoming more diverse in Randall County the two counties will look more similar to each other over time.

Socioeconomic Convergence between Potter County and Randall County

Socioeconomic trends can vary from year to year, but socioeconomic data continue to reveal a pattern of convergence of the two counties in many areas of interest. The 2016 Community Status Report identified a deviation from this convergent phenomenon that occurred in 2013 and 2014. However, the 2015 data show the return of the convergence. This convergence is evident in median income and the unemployment rate, as well as in education and in health.

Common Strengths and Challenges

The main strength of both counties is their low unemployment rate, which indicates that the Amarillo economy remains strong, despite the influx of new residents. Potter and Randall Counties have consistently had lower unemployment rates than Texas and the United States. In addition to low unemployment, Potter County's median income, which has been stagnant for several years, had begun to grow in 2015. Though decreasing, the median income in Randall County still remains higher than the median income in Potter County, Texas, and the United States. The community also shows positive changes in the area of education. Randall County has a strong high school graduation rate, and Potter County's rate is improving. Further, Amarillo ISD has shown marked improvements in math achievement among third and eighth graders, outperforming both Region 16 and Texas during the 2015-2016 school year. Finally, in 2015 both Potter and Randall Counties had a significant drop in the rate of child abuse. In fact, for both counties the 2015 child abuse rate was the lowest since 2008.

The single most important challenge shared by both Potter County and Randall County is health. Both counties have elevated rates of death from heart disease (and stroke), cancer, and diabetes. These illnesses are especially worrisome, considering that the rate of death from them in both counties is considerably higher than in Texas. Scientific evidence links various forms of heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer to obesity,

sedentary lifestyle, and a diet high in sugar and processed fats. The Amarillo and Canyon communities can benefit from interventions that promote healthy lifestyles for adults and children. Schools in particular can play an important role in overcoming the childhood obesity epidemic by modifying their daily schedule to include PE classes and recess, and limiting children's exposure to fast food during the school day.

Unique Challenges

Potter County faces many obstacles including growing poverty rates, high rates of STIs (especially chlamydia and gonorrhea), elevated rates of domestic violence, and a high rate of births to unmarried mothers. A rise in median income in the face of increasing poverty can be a sign of gaping economic inequality in Potter County.

Randall County has much fewer challenges than Potter County. In addition to poor health outcomes, Randall County continues to struggle with the elevated suicide rate.

Special Topics

This year's report contained new data on single parents, teenage fathers, refugees, and gay and lesbian couples.

The new data revealed that single mother families were the most disadvantaged among family type. Single mothers struggled financially to a much greater extent than single fathers and married couples, even though their educational attainment was similar, even superior, to that of single fathers. A surprising finding was that, despite lower incomes, single mothers had lower enrollment rates in SSI than married couples.

Single fathers were "sandwiched" between single mothers and married couples on many socioeconomic indicators, with the exception of education. Single fathers' median income was closer to that of married couples, but their poverty rate was closer to that of single mothers. The combination of a higher median income and a higher poverty rate can be indicative of a greater socioeconomic inequality between single father families and the other family types. Despite elevated poverty rates, single fathers tended to have low rates of enrollment in public assistance programs.

Regarding teenage fathers, research revealed the probability of them being involved in their children's lives was small. This low probability undoubtedly contributes to the number of single mothers. Furthermore, after having a baby as a teenager, they were likely to father additional children before the ages of 22-24. Therefore, teen pregnancy prevention efforts should target teenage boys as well as teenage girls to achieve better outcomes.

New data on refugees revealed that they participated in public assistance programs at a lower rate than native-born citizens, while new data on gay and lesbian couples revealed same-sex cohabitation is quite infrequent in Potter and Randall Counties, comprising less than 1% of Amarillo households.

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Unemployment	Randall Co.	\$61 984	↓	US, TX, Lubbock Co., Potter Co.	Lubbock Co., Randall Co.
	Potter Co.	4,20%	↓	US, TX	
	Randall Co.	2,50%	↓	US, TX, Lubbock Co., Potter Co.	
Graduation Rate (2015)	Potter Co.	87,70%	↓		TX, Lubbock Co., Randall Co.
	Randall Co.	96,50%	↓	TX, Lubbock Co., Potter Co.	
SAT/ACT	Amarillo ISD	13,80%	↓	Amarillo ISD	TX, Region 16
	Region 16	18,40%	↓		TX
Uninsured Adults	Potter Co.	18,70%	↓	TX	US, Lubbock Co., Randall Co.
	Randall Co.	9,40%	↓	TX, Lubbock Co., Potter Co.	US
Heart Disease*	Potter Co.	299.7 per 100,000	↓		TX, Lubbock Co., Randall Co.
	Randall Co.	244.7 per 100,000	↓	Potter Co.	TX, Lubbock Co.
Adolescent Mothers	Potter Co.	4,10%	↓	Lubbock Co.	TX, Randall Co.
	Randall Co.	1,70%	↓	TX, Lubbock Co., Potter Co.	
Chlamydia (2016)	Potter Co.	783.7 per 100,000	↓		TX, Lubbock Co., Randall Co.
	Randall Co.	171.3 per 100,000	↓	Lubbock Co., Potter Co.	TX
Meth (2016)	Potter Co.	77.17 per 100,000	↓		Lubbock Co., Randall Co.
	Randall Co.	41.42 per 100,000	↓	Potter Co., Lubbock Co.	
Poverty	Potter Co.	22,80%	↓		US, TX, Lubbock Co., Randall Co.
	Randall Co.	7,60%	↓	US, TX, Lubbock Co., Potter Co.	
SNAP (2016)	Potter Co.	21,2%	↓		US, TX, Lubbock Co., Randall Co.
	Randall Co.	7,3%	↓	US, TX, Lubbock Co., Potter Co.	
Child Abuse	Potter Co.	19.38 per 1000	↓		TX, Lubbock Co., Randall Co.
	Randall Co.	9.35 per 1000	↓	Potter Co., Lubbock Co.	TX

WEB RESOURCES

Afterschool Alliance <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/>

American Community Survey <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>

American Heart Association <http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>

Bureau of Labor Statistics <https://www.bls.gov/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/>

Good Jobs That Pay Without a BA <https://goodjobsdata.org>

KIDS COUNT <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

KidsWalk-to-School, CDC <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/11316>

Medicaid.Gov <http://www.medicaid.gov/>

National Center for Education Statistics <https://nces.ed.gov>

National Farm-to-School Network <http://www.farmentoschool.org/>

Office of Refugee Resettlement <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/refugee-arrival-data>

Pew Research Center <http://www.pewresearch.org/>

Texas Department of Health and Human Services <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us>

Take 10! <http://take10.net/>

Texas Department of Public Safety <https://www.txdps.state.tx.us/>

Texas Educational Agency: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us>

United States Census Bureau <http://www.census.gov/acs>

World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/en/>

GLOSSARY

Adolescent Mothers – women under 18 who gave birth to a baby within a given year. The relationship status for adolescent mothers is not determined. Adolescent mothers can be married, divorced, widowed, or cohabiting.

American Community Survey – The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities a fresh look at how they are changing. The ACS replaced the decennial census long-form in 2010 and thereafter by collecting long-form type information every year rather than only once every 10 years. Questionnaires are mailed to a sample of addresses to obtain information about households – that is, about each person and the housing unit itself. The American Community Survey produces demographic, social, housing, and economic estimates in the form of 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year estimates based on population thresholds. The strength of the ACS is in estimating population and housing characteristics. It produces estimates for small areas, including census tracts and population subgroups. Although the ACS produces population, demographic and housing unit estimates, it is the Census Bureau’s Population Estimates Program that produces and disseminates the official estimates of the population for the nation, states, counties, cities and towns, and estimates of housing units for states and counties. For 2010 and other decennial census years, the Decennial Census provides the official counts of population and housing units. For more information, visit <http://www.census.gov/acs>.

CHIP – Children’s Health Insurance Program. CHIP provides low-cost health coverage to children in families that earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid. In some states, CHIP covers pregnant women. Each state offers CHIP coverage, and works closely with its state Medicaid program. <https://www.healthcare.gov/medicaid-chip/childrens-health-insurance-program/>

Cost of Living – The total cost of all expenditures based on family size and type of insurance. The estimate includes six major expense categories: housing, food, childcare, medical, transportation, and other necessities.

Dropout Rate – All students who dropped out of high school in a particular year divided by the total number of students that year. Students who drop out, re-enroll, and then drop out again are counted twice.

Ethnicity – The fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition. Ethnicity relates to cultural aspects of the group such as nationality, language, belief, and values. “Hispanic” is an ethnicity.

Family – A group of two or more people who reside together and who are related. This includes parents with children, grandparents raising children, married couples, single parents, cohabiting individuals, etc.

Family Violence – An act by a member of a family household against another member that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or a threat that reasonably places the member in fear of imminent physical harm. Family members include individuals related by consanguinity (blood) or affinity, marriage or former marriage, biological parents of the same child, foster children, foster parents, and members or former members of the same household (including roommates).

Graduation Rate – All students who received a high school diploma in a given year divided by the total number of students. The graduation rate does not include students who continued on to another year of high school or who received a GED. Both of these categories of students are accounted for in completion rates available from TEA.

Half-Income – Fifty percent (50%) of a married couple's income. This income statistic is useful for making a comparison with single parents income.

Household – One or more people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence. A household can consist of a single person and also includes all families.

Intimate Partner Violence Against Wife – An act by an intimate partner against the wife that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or a threat that reasonably places the wife in fear of imminent physical harm. Wives include current wives, exwives and cohabiting female partners.

Married Couple's Educational Attainment - The educational attainment of married couples is reflected here by the educational attainment of the head of the household as reported on the survey form. In other words, if the head of a married household has a college degree, then the married couple is considered to have a college degree. If the head of the household does not hold a college degree, the married couple is considered to not to have a college degree regardless of the educational attainment of the other family members.

Median Earnings – Median earnings divide earnings distributions into two equal groups, one having earnings above the median and the other having earnings below the median. Median earnings include income from gainful labor (such as wages and bonuses), but do not include other sources of income, such as dividends, government assistance, and inheritance.

Median Income – Median income divides income distribution into two equal groups, one having income above the median and another having income below the median. Median Income includes income from all sources, including dividends, public assistance, and other forms of non-earned income.

Medicaid – A social healthcare program for families and individuals with low income and resources. The Health Insurance Association of America describes Medicaid as a "government insurance program for persons of all ages whose income and resources are insufficient to pay for health care." (America's Health Insurance Plans (HIAA), pg. 232). Medicaid is a means-tested program that is jointly funded by the state and federal governments and managed by the states. Each state currently has broad leeway to determine who is eligible for its implementation of the program. <http://www.medicaid.gov/>

Race – A local geographic or global human population distinguished as a more or less distinct group by genetically transmitted physical characteristics such as skin color, eye color, hair color, and bone/jaw structure. There are three major races: Caucasian, Mongolian, and Negroid.

Refugee - a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. Refugee immigration status is temporary in the United States, typically lasting between 1 and 3 years. Refugee are eligible to apply for a change of residency status, typically a permanent residency card—a "green card." Upon the receipt of a green card, refugees are no longer tracked in statistical databases as refugees, but instead become "foreign-born residents" or "foreign-born citizens."

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