



WORSENING



ACTION NEEDED

CURRENT STATE

Family expenses continue to rise faster than family incomes, keeping many Central Texas families living on the edge of their means.

IDEAL STATE

Central Texas is an affordable place to live, work and play.

CONTEXT

There are many definitions and measures around the idea of cost of living, affordability and lifestyle. All of them share the premise that quality of life is lessened if the cost of living keeps a family constantly at the edge of their means.

Sustainability is concerned with balancing the costs and allocation of resources such that meeting one's own basic needs is within reach of every member of a population.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES

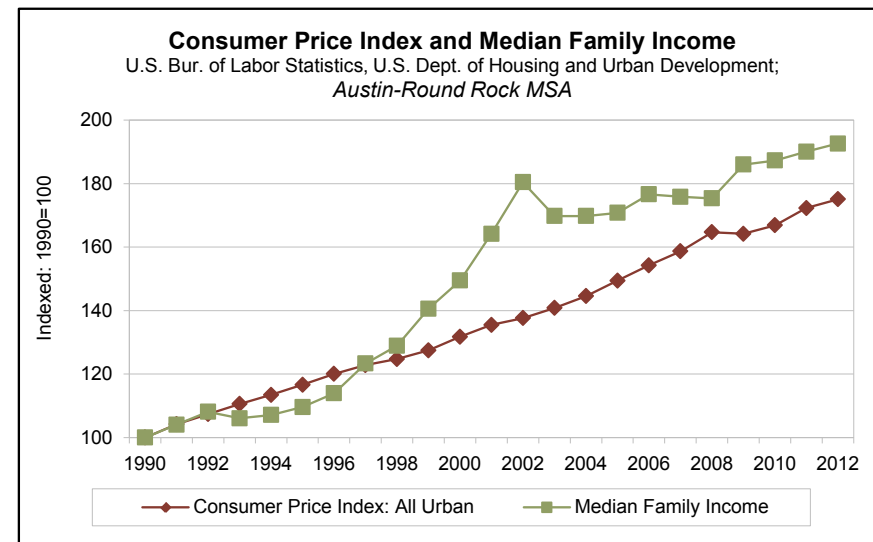
Various Living Wage Calculations

SOURCES

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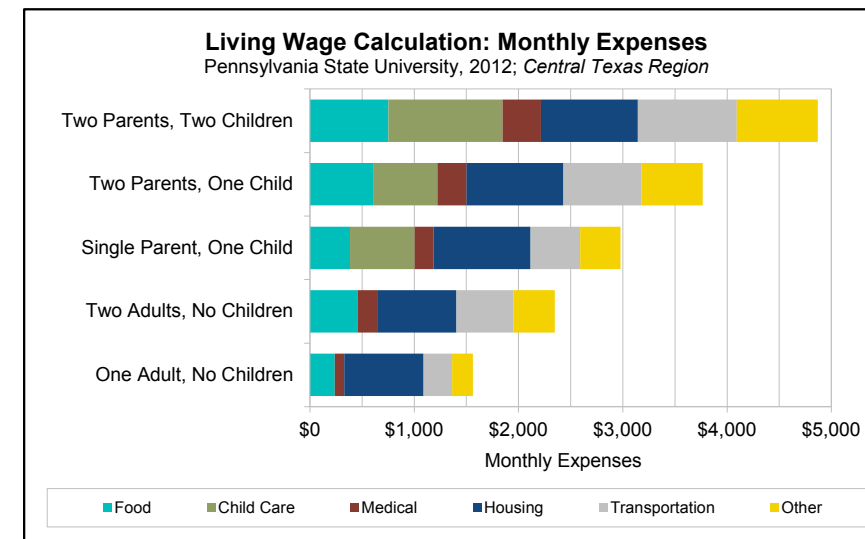
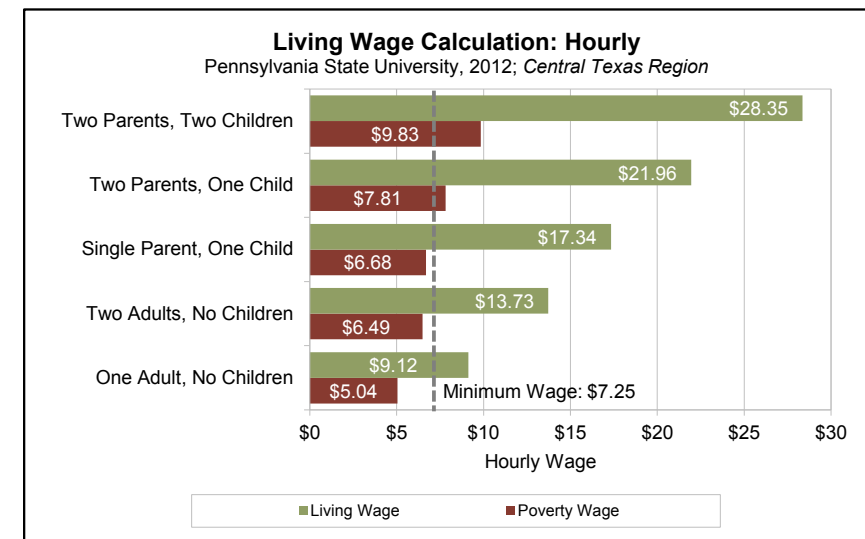
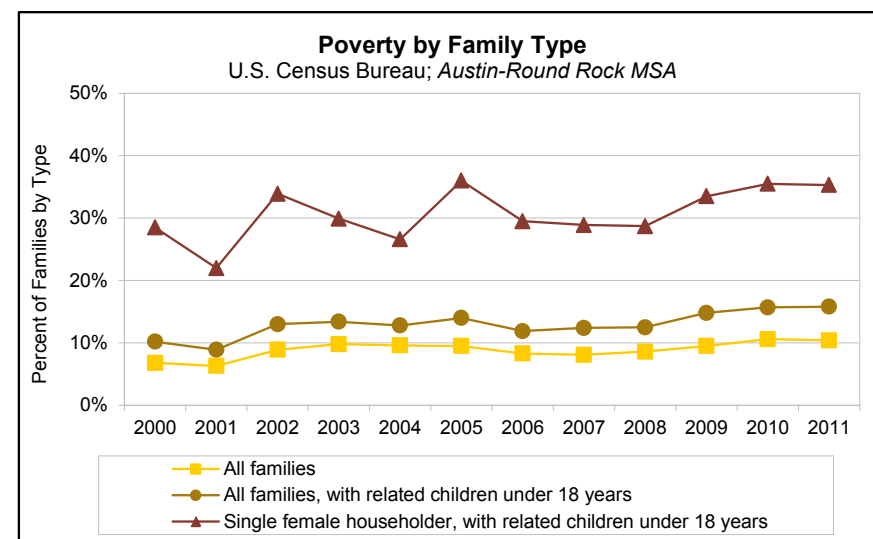
Gap between Income and Household Necessities

- Trends show the gap in our region between Median Family Income and the Consumer Price Index (CPI, a measure that aggregates the prices of a consistent "basket of goods" in different regions and at different points in time) has narrowed since 2002. This suggests that an increasing share of a household's income is being consumed by necessary household costs such as rent, groceries, and transportation.



Family Poverty

- About one-third of Central Texas single mothers and their children live in poverty, as defined by the Census.
- Most definitions of poverty are determined at the national level and can mask large numbers of individuals and families at a local level who have incomes above the poverty line, but who still have difficulty supporting their families.



Living Wage

- A living wage is the income necessary for a family to meet its basic needs.
- The minimum wage in Texas does not amount to a living wage for a single adult with no children.
- While larger families predictably have higher total monthly expenses, single-parent families with children face the greatest challenge in maintaining a living wage, which is more than double the minimum hourly wage in Texas. In 2008, the Center for Public Policy Priorities estimated that 53% of single parents with children in Travis County did not make enough money to meet their basic needs.
- In families with two parents, the minimum wage isn't enough to maintain income above the federal poverty level.
- The cost of child care greatly increases a family's monthly expenses.