

2025 City of Denton Equity Assessment

Prepared by: Dhru Mukherjee, Ph.D., LCSW-S

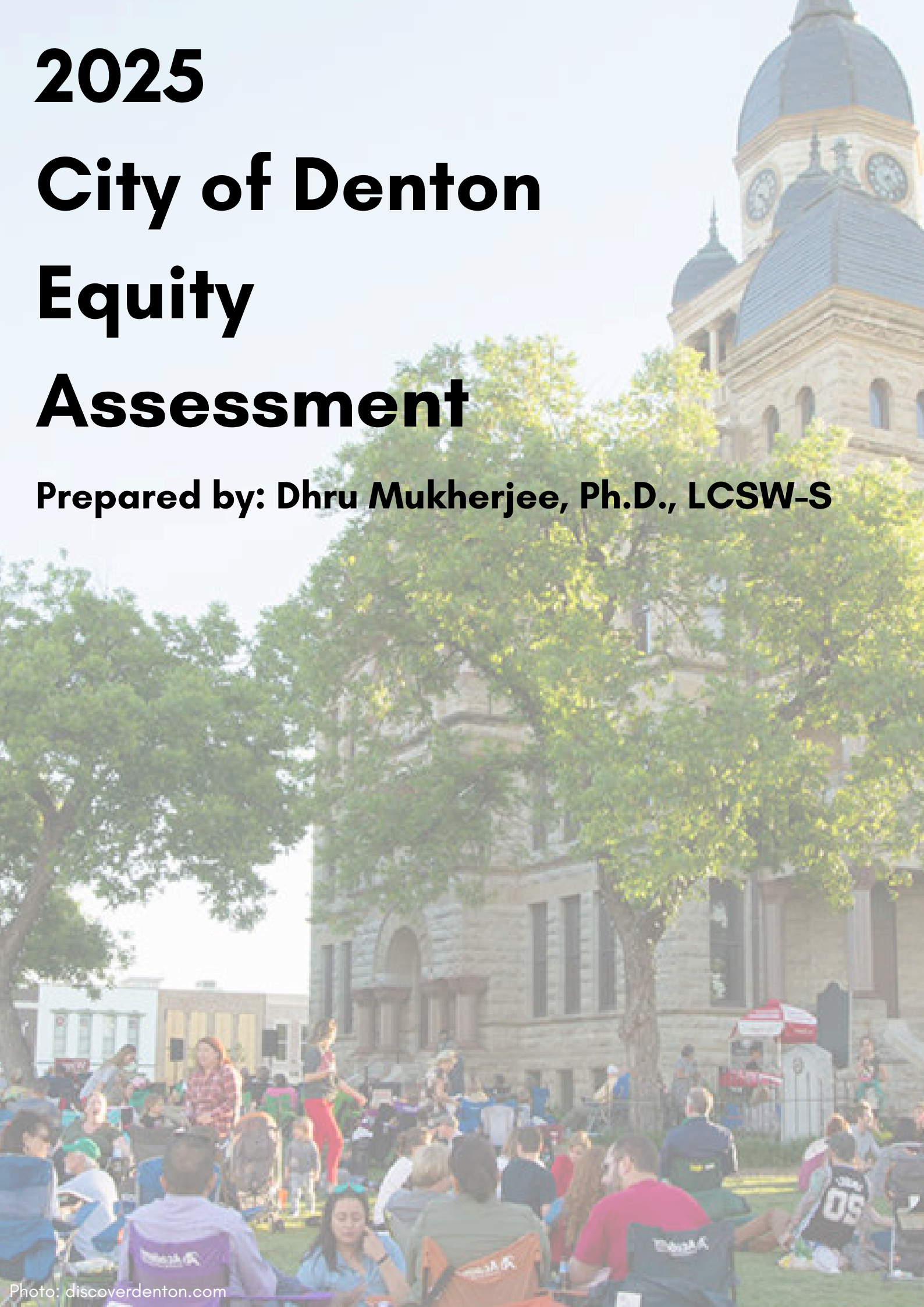


Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary.....	4
Purpose of the Study.....	6
The Setting of the Study.....	7
Methodology.....	8
Map.....	9
The History of Equity in Denton.....	10

EQUITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT..... 12

The Upward Mobility Framework.....	13
Demographic Figures.....	14
Part 1. Dignity and Belonging.....	18
Rewarding Work.....	19
High-Quality Education.....	21
Part 2. Economic Successes.....	26
Opportunity-Rich and Inclusive Neighborhoods.....	27
Healthy Environment and Access to Good Health Care.....	31
Part 3. Power and Autonomy.....	37
Just and Responsive Governance.....	38

RECOMMENDATIONS.....40

Denton Strategic Plan.....	41
Recommendations.....	43

APPENDICES..... 45

Figures.....	46
References.....	47
Glossary.....	49

Introduction



Executive Summary

The City of Denton Equity Analysis report highlights the city's efforts to balance strategic growth with equity, ensuring its rapid development aligns with the community's core values of sustainability, affordability, and quality of life. Denton's exponential population and economic growth, especially pre- and post-COVID, has created both opportunities and challenges as the city plans for a projected population of over 300,000 by 2040. The analysis underscores the critical need for a comprehensive and equitable approach to infrastructure, housing, economic opportunity, and social determinants of health.

Key Findings:

1. Polarization Between Growth and Equity:

- Denton faces a tug-of-war between fostering economic growth and ensuring equity. Historically, growth-focused policies often overlook equity, particularly in areas such as housing, infrastructure, and mobility.
- As Denton continues to enhance quality-of-life initiatives, equity becomes a critical factor in ensuring that all residents benefit from the city's progress.

2. Affordable Housing and Housing Insecurity:

- Housing affordability remains a pressing issue, particularly in high-eviction areas like McKinney Avenue, the Student Housing Triangle, and Evers Park.
- Recommendations include expanding rental assistance programs, providing tenant protection policies (e.g., extended eviction notice periods and mediation programs), and creating clear rental agreements to safeguard vulnerable populations.

3. Economic Opportunity and Workforce Development:

- Denton's young and growing population faces income disparities, with many households categorized as Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed (ALICE).
- Addressing educational gaps, particularly around college readiness, and investing in financial literacy programs will be essential to fostering upward mobility.

4. Investing in Social Determinants of Health:

- Expanding access to essential services and training a workforce focused on equity, such as Community Health Workers (CHWs), will play a pivotal role in improving the city's health outcomes and overall well-being.
- Supporting programs led by organizations like United Way and securing funding for policies promoting housing equity are critical steps forward.

5. Sustainability and Community Identity:

- Denton's unique culture, rooted in its educational institutions and community-centric values, sets it apart from the broader Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Sustaining this identity while accommodating growth requires intentional investments in sustainable infrastructure and environmental initiatives.

Recommendations:

To balance growth and equity effectively, the City of Denton must:

- Prioritize affordable housing development and tenant protections.
- Expand access to education, job opportunities, and financial literacy programs.
- Strengthen partnerships with organizations advocating for equity and lived-experience-informed policies.
- Invest in sustainable and equitable infrastructure to accommodate future growth.

The primary responsibility of the City of Denton is not to assume the primary position in poverty reduction as such; however, participating and supporting an equity-friendly policy ecosystem can promote and include programs and policies to enhance participation of city residents to access and contribute to not only the issue of economic exclusions but also harnesses human capital (workforce development), social capital (civil engagement, etc.) and linkage capital (organizational networks and systems of care) that is essential for sustainable and equitable growth in any community. The city administration's understanding and appreciation of the equity issue is primarily a humanitarian endeavor contributing to a robust and resilient economy and economic mobility that increases the ability of individuals to improve their financial status through access to steady income, asset building, job opportunities that pay a livable wage, and a sense of belonging in the broader community. Economic mobility has profound implications on the quality of life, with more choices available to people and their families. The city's strategic plan encompasses various aspects of economic mobility, including housing, and acknowledges the interlinked nature of overall financial growth and economic mobility; the methodology of this study tackles that spirit while navigating various reports and data that contributed to the creation of this report.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to conduct an Economic Mobility and Opportunity Research Project aimed at identifying gaps in economic mobility for residents of City of Denton, TX, with a specific focus on equity. This research will analyze existing data, including income metrics, mobility indicators, and ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) data, while leveraging upward mobility frameworks to identify and define groups—including, but not limited to, racial and ethnic groups—and geographic areas within the city that experience limited opportunities for economic advancement.

In addition, the study integrates the social determinants of health within the upward mobility framework to examine how factors such as education, housing, healthcare, and community resources influence economic mobility and overall well-being. By understanding these intersections, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the barriers and opportunities affecting economic mobility across diverse populations and areas of the city. The findings will inform the development of strategies to address inequities and improve economic outcomes for residents. The ultimate goal of this assessment is to strategically inform funding priorities and program development. By doing so, we aim to support Denton residents in achieving greater financial stability and wealth-building opportunities, thereby shaping a more prosperous future for our community.



The Setting of the Study

Denton, Texas, situated in the northern Dallas–Fort Worth (DFW) metropolitan area, is home to two prominent universities: the University of North Texas (UNT) and Texas Woman's University (TWU). Established in 1857 as the county seat of Denton County, the city has become one of the fastest growing in the nation. Its population has surged from 113,383 in 2010 to 158,349 in 2023 and is projected to reach 164,096 by 2025—marking an impressive 45% growth over 15 years. Known for its vibrant student population and laid-back, creative atmosphere, Denton has earned comparisons to Austin, with some dubbing it a “mini Austin.” The city’s unique charm is captured by its unofficial slogan, “Keep Denton Weird,” reflecting its eclectic culture, dynamic arts and music scene, and university town spirit. This blend of growth and cultural zeitgeist makes Denton a distinctive and appealing city in North Texas. However, this exponential growth has brought significant challenges, including strains on infrastructure, a housing crisis, rising food insecurity, and a sharp increase in the cost of living. These issues underscore the need for a comprehensive understanding of the city’s equity landscape to inform a coordinated policy response. Addressing these challenges requires targeted efforts from the City of Denton to promote equitable access to resources and opportunities while mitigating the adverse impacts of rapid urban expansion.



Image: cityofdenton.com

Methodology

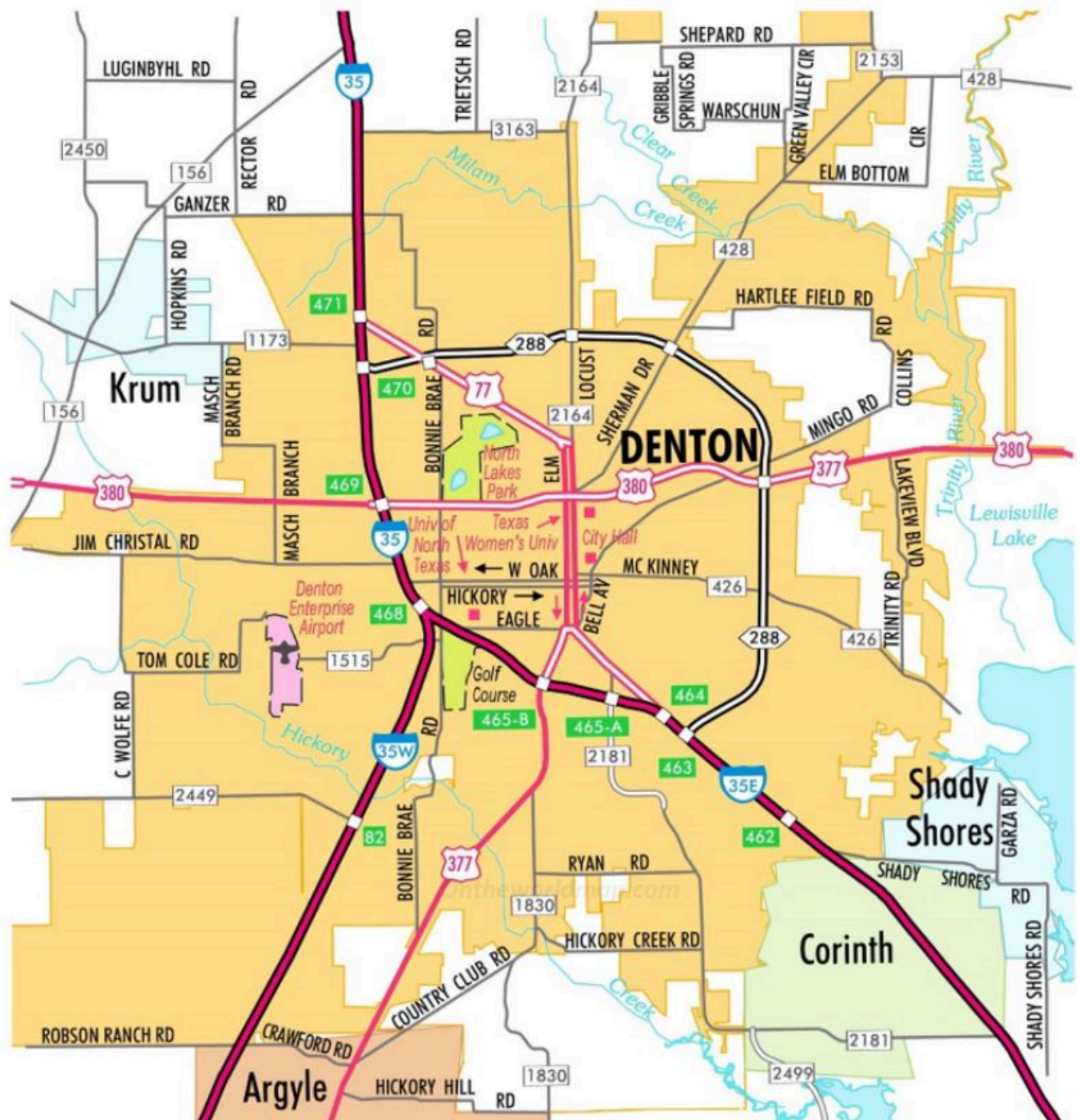
The methodology for the equity analysis study of the City of Denton employs a multi-method approach, integrating various data sources and analytical frameworks to comprehensively assess equity within the community. This approach is essential for understanding the multifaceted nature of equity, particularly in urban settings where diverse populations and socioeconomic factors intersect.

The study utilizes secondary data from multiple sources, including the U.S. Census data, which provides demographic information crucial for understanding the population's composition and socioeconomic status. The 2024 City of Denton Community Survey offers insights into residents' perceptions and needs, while the City's Consolidated Plan outlines strategic priorities and resource allocations that affect equity outcomes. Additionally, ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) data is employed to analyze the financial stability of households, highlighting the challenges faced by low-income families in Denton. Furthermore, homelessness data is integrated to assess the extent of housing insecurity and its implications for community equity.

This data is complemented by various needs assessment studies conducted by United Way, which identify specific community needs and service gaps. The combination of these data sources allows for a robust analysis of equity issues across different dimensions, such as income, housing, and access to services.

In addition to quantitative data, qualitative insights are gathered through personal consultations with key stakeholders, including community leaders, service providers, and residents. These consultations are critical for understanding the lived experiences of individuals affected by equity issues and identifying barriers to access and participation in community resources. Engaging stakeholders ensures that the analysis reflects diverse perspectives and enhances the validity of the findings.

Figure 1. Map of Denton



Source: ontheworldmap.com

The History of Equity in Denton

Established in the late 19th century, Denton has undergone phases of transformation in terms of population, diversity, and socioeconomic shifts. These shifts contributed to the increase in its minority population, particularly the Hispanic and black populations. They led to significant shifts in local policies that aspired to address the chasms of equity and equality.

In the 1870s, Quakertown was a thriving black community comprised of formerly enslaved people who migrated from the White Rock settlement in Dallas County after the Civil War. The railroad era (1900–1950) and early growth spurred economic growth and diversified the agricultural economy, creating clear racial and economic divisions in housing and employment opportunities.

During the segregation period of the 1960s, when housing covenants restricted housing to minorities, economic opportunities were limited, and Quakertown was displaced. During the 1950s to 1980s, Denton saw expansion due to the university population growth, an enrollment surge, and the development of the suburban population. The demographic became more diversified, and efforts to integrate school and public spaces became more prominent in the city.

Housing patterns in Denton saw distinct development between the 1950s and 1980s. Since the 1980s, Denton has experienced significant shifts in residential patterns due to socioeconomic factors, limited affordable housing initiatives, and university growth. Over the past 15 years, the city has seen an astronomical surge in population, accompanied by growing diversity, particularly within the Hispanic and Latino communities, transforming Denton into a more multilingual and increasingly bilingual city.

Pictured on the right are residents of Quakertown.

Source: twu.edu



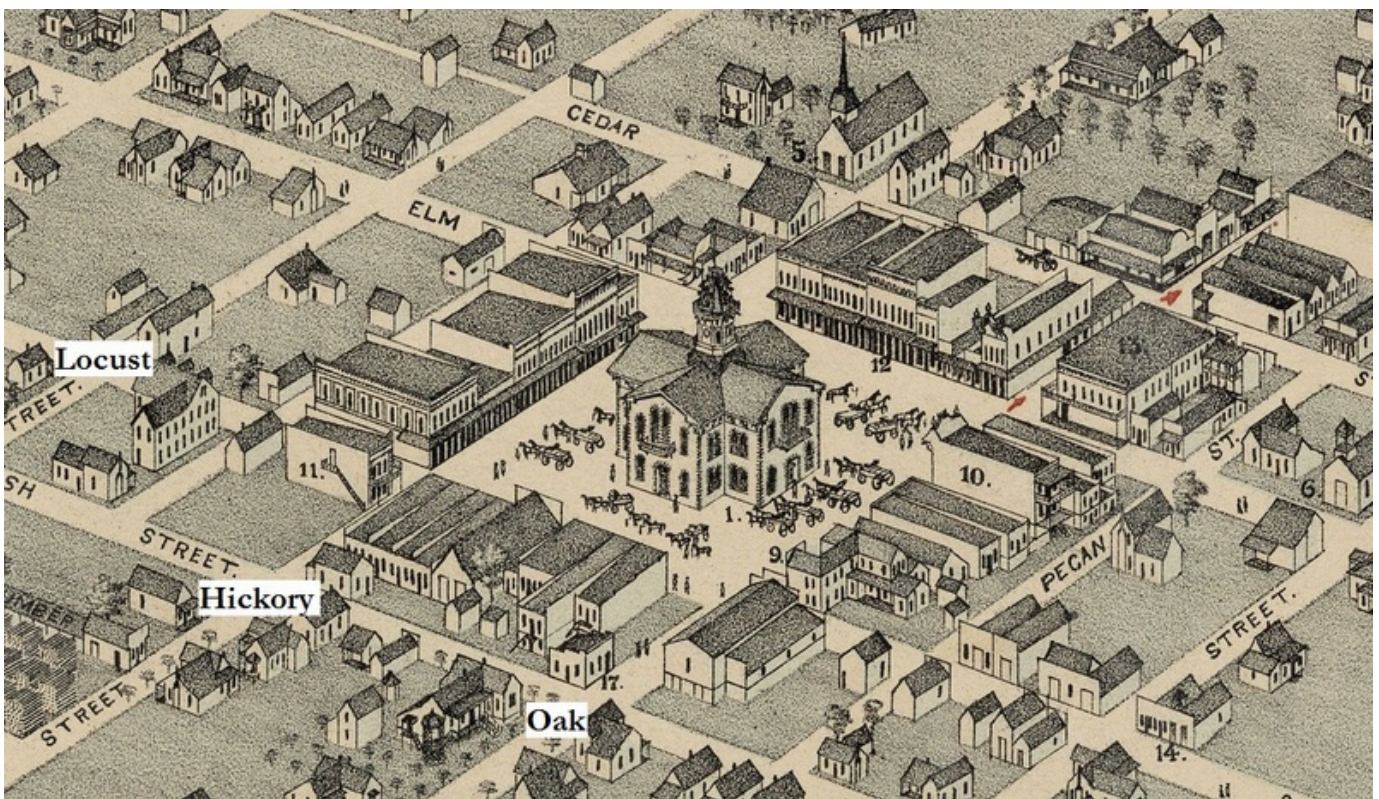
The History of Equity in Denton (cont.)

Income disparities between neighborhoods have become more pronounced during this period. The growing student populations at both universities have further influenced the city's demographics and residential dynamics. One of the most pressing contemporary challenges to equity in Denton is housing.

The rising cost of housing has significantly impacted the city, with student housing development reducing availability for non-student residents. Major concerns exacerbating neighborhood inequality are gentrification and a limited affordable housing inventory.

Food insecurity is another critical issue, particularly in some low-income regions where food deserts are prevalent. These neighborhoods lack access to grocery stores, creating significant barriers to obtaining affordable and nutritious food. While food pantries and community initiatives have stepped in to address this problem, access to essential resources remains challenging for many residents.

These factors collectively shape Denton's current equity landscape, presenting ongoing challenges and opportunities for fostering inclusivity and support within the community.



A map of the Denton square from 1883.

Photo: localwiki.org

Equity Needs Assessment



Photo: Canva

The Upward Mobility Framework

The Upward Mobility Framework, as conceptualized by the Urban Institute, is a strategic approach designed to enhance economic mobility for individuals and families in urban areas.

This framework is based on the recognition that upward mobility is shaped by a complex interplay of factors, including:

- education
- job opportunities
- housing stability, and
- access to essential services.

It underscores the necessity for integrated solutions that address these interconnected dimensions to create an environment conducive to economic advancement. The Upward Mobility Framework posits that economic mobility is not solely determined by individual effort but is significantly shaped by systemic factors and structural inequalities. It recognizes that barriers to mobility often stem from historical and ongoing disparities in access to resources and opportunities. This perspective aligns with the findings of various studies that highlight the importance of addressing these systemic issues to create pathways for upward mobility.

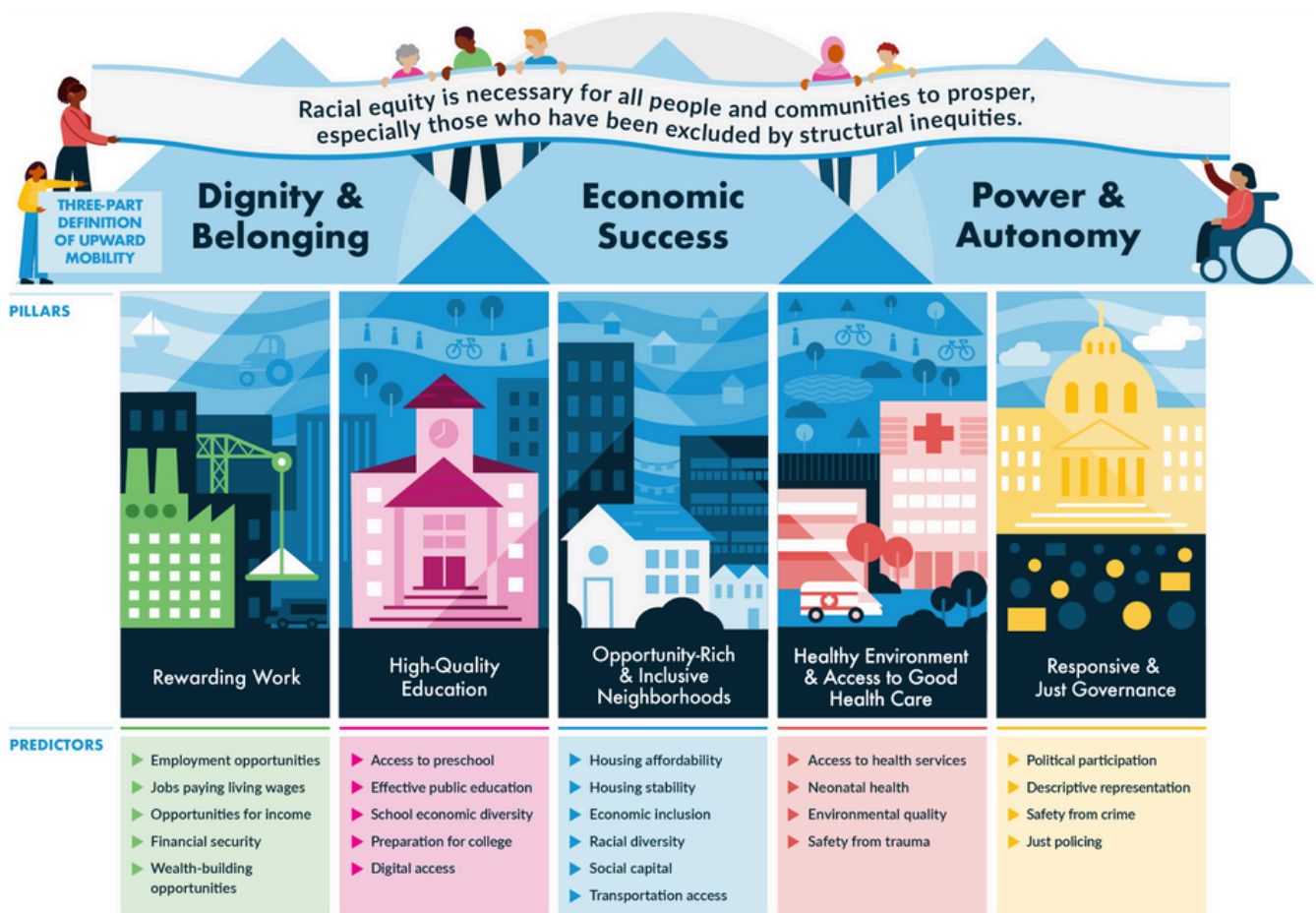


Illustration: upward-mobility.urban.org

Demographic Figures

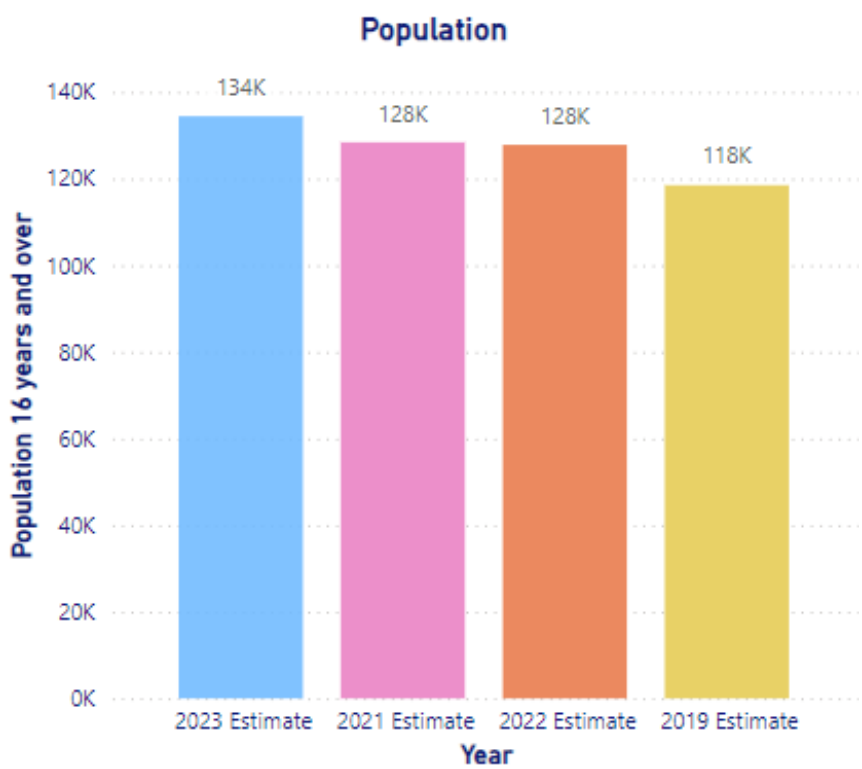


Figure 2. Population Estimate from 2019 to 2023

From 2022 to 2023, Denton gained roughly 7,000 residents.

Lloyd Potter, a University of Texas at San Antonio professor and the state demographer in Texas, attributed the general growth in population of Texas to

- employment opportunities
- geographic attractions such as backyards

Potter expects that the population will continue to rise as quickly as it has in the past 2 years (Peña, 2024).

Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Demographic and Housing Estimates

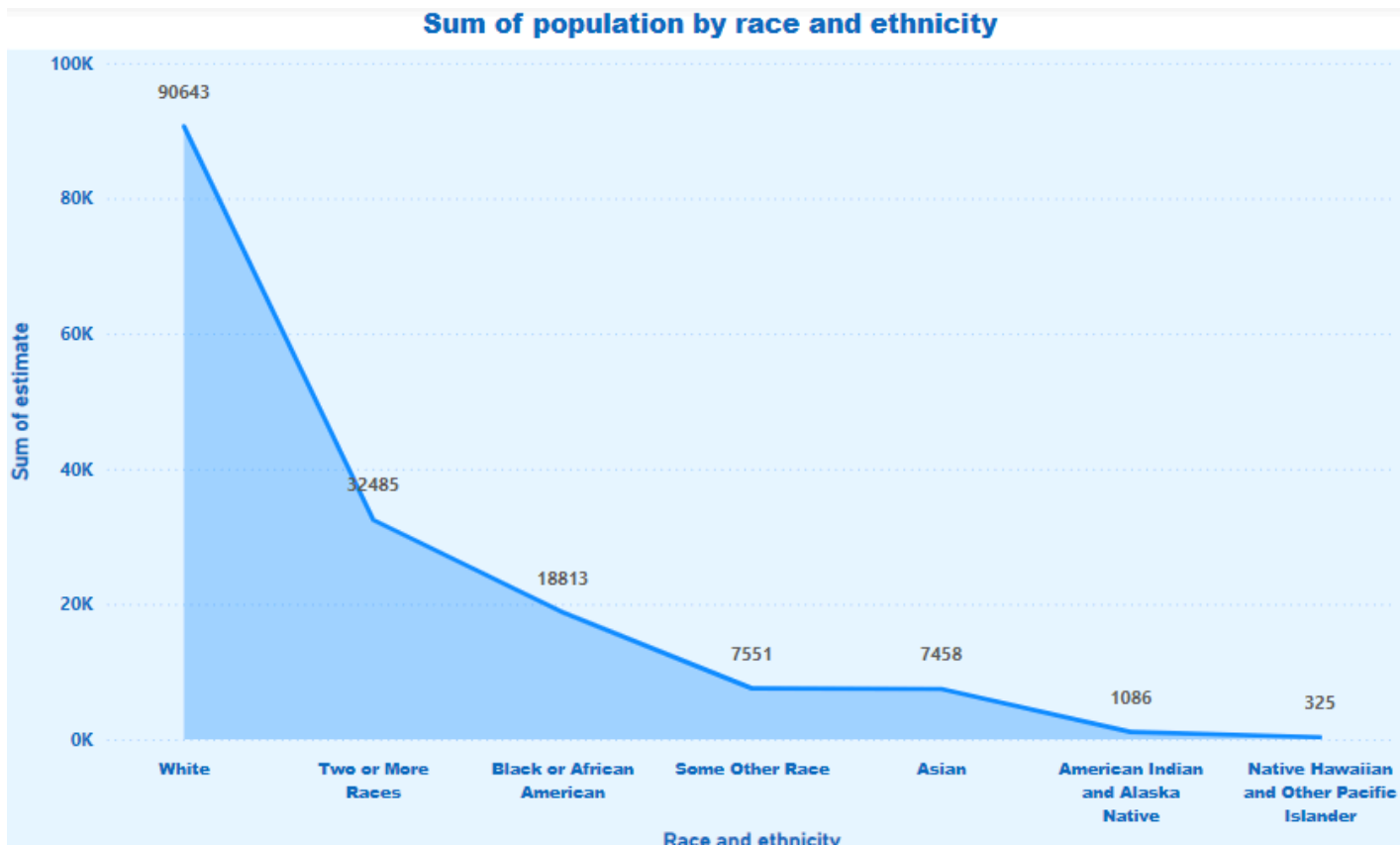
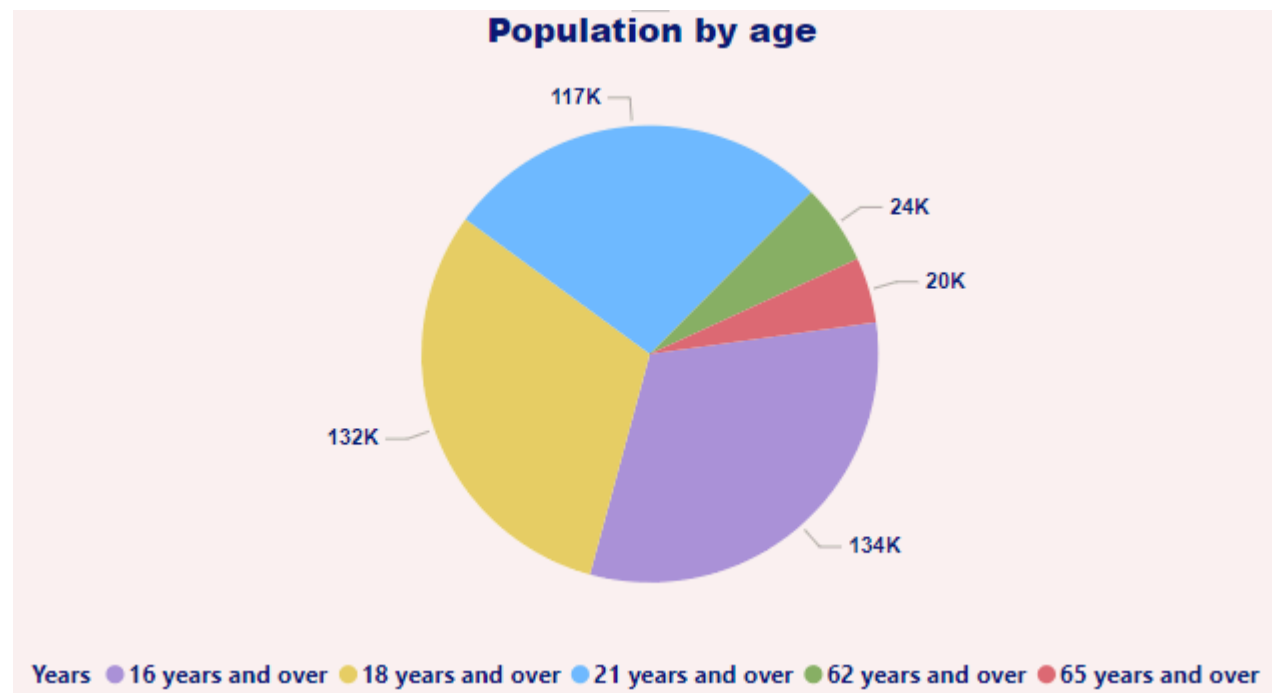


Figure 3. Population by Race and Ethnicity

Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Demographic and Housing Estimates

- The White population is the largest group (90,643), followed by Two or More Races (32,485), and Black or African American (18,813), reflecting the majority population and significant diversity.
- Groups like Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (325) and American Indian and Alaska Native (1,086) represent the smallest populations, emphasizing the varied but less populous racial communities.
- The chart shows a steep decline in population size from the largest group (White) to the smallest, indicating a notable disparity among racial and ethnic groups in the dataset.

Figure 4a. Population by Age



Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Demographic and Housing Estimates

The largest percentage of the estimated population were between the ages of 20 and 34 in 2023 at 32.6%.

- 16.8% under 18
- 12.4% 65 or older

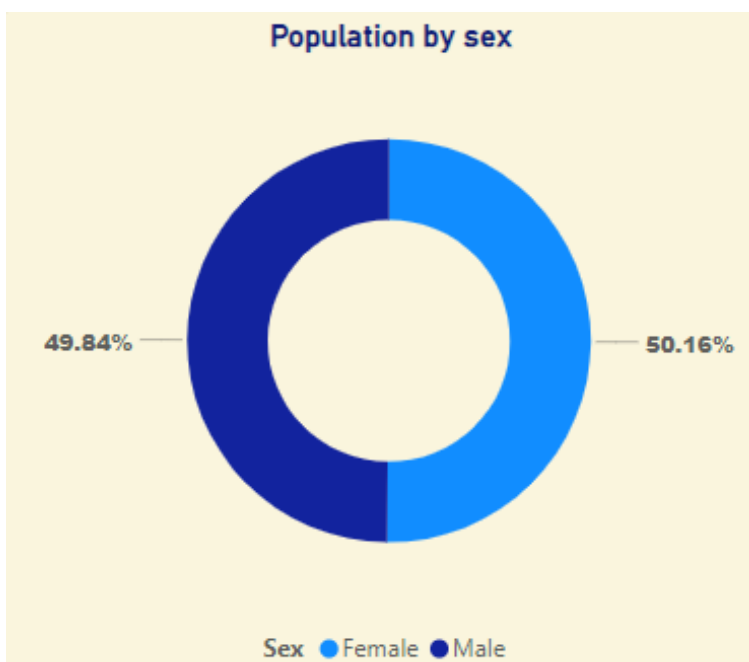


Figure 4b. Population by Sex

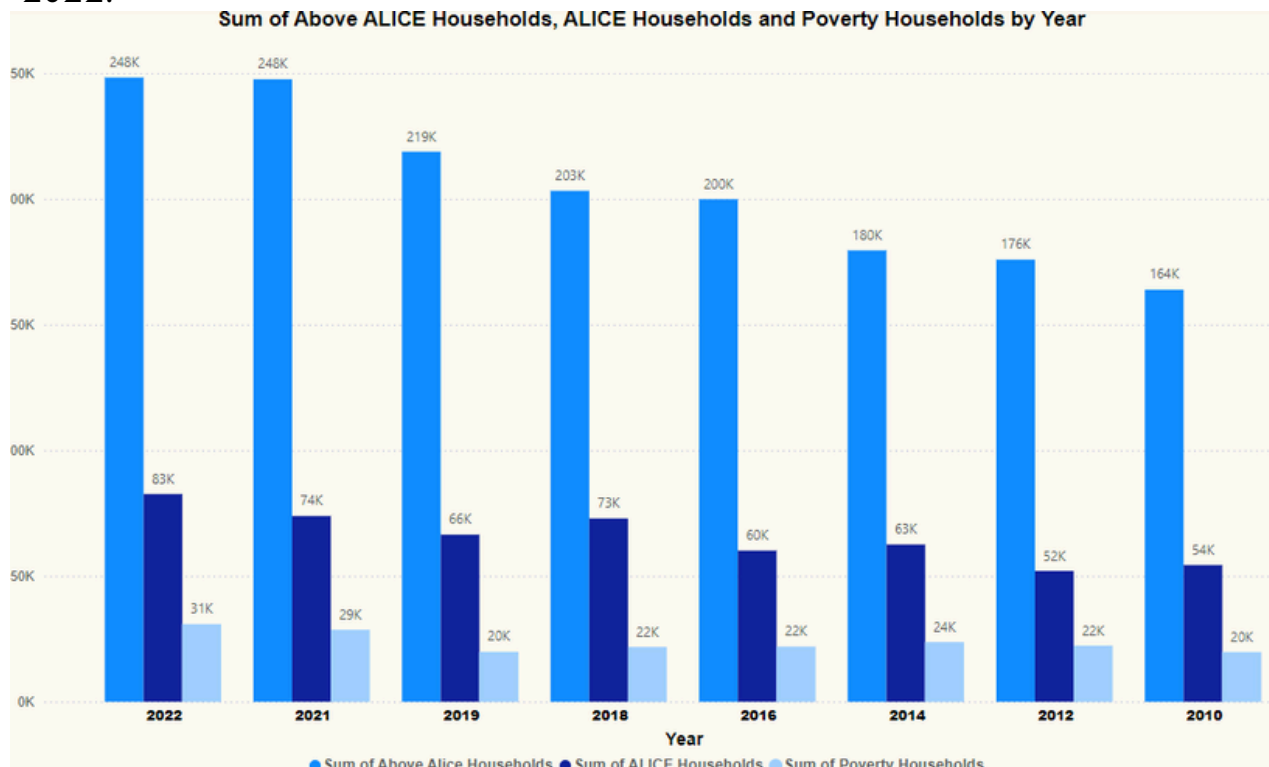
- The chart reveals a nearly equal gender distribution, with only a slight difference of 0.24%, indicating balanced representation between males and females.

Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Demographic and Housing Estimates

Figure 5. ALICE and Poverty Households by Year

Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households are those who are working and making income just above the poverty level but cannot afford basic necessities. Consistently, most households in Denton County are above the ALICE threshold. **However, the estimated number of ALICE and poverty households have both risen since 2019.**

- The data shows an increasing trend in the number of households in poverty and ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) over the years, while the number of households above the poverty line continues to grow, reflecting an overall increase in total households from 2010 to 2022.



Source: United Way, ALICE in Denton County; ALICE Threshold 2021; American Community Survey, 2021

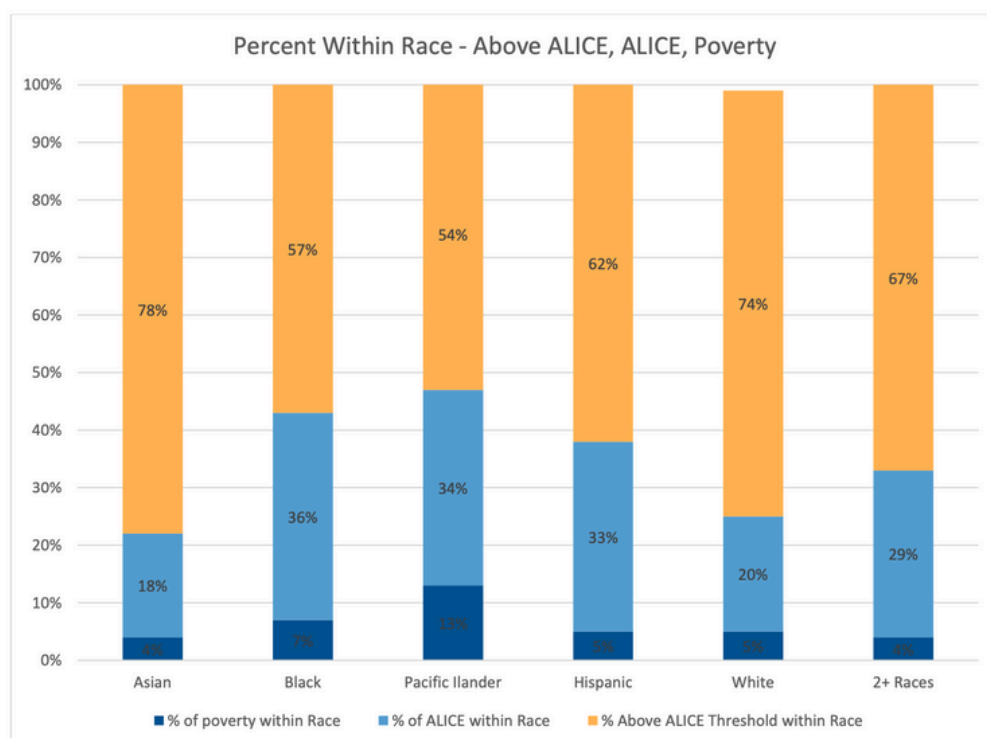


Figure 6. Above ALICE, Below ALICE, Poverty, by Race

(ALICE Threshold 2021; American Community Survey, 2021)

Source: United Way, Community Needs Assessment at a Glance

Denton's population in 2023 was 158,361 and is projected to reach 331,369 by 2040, assuming development continues at its current pace.

Over the last decade, the consumer price index has increased between 2.9% and 7.2% annually, averaging around 3%. However, wage growth has not kept pace with the rising cost of living, exacerbating financial struggles for many residents.

Nearly half of Denton households fall under the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) category, as defined by United Way of Denton County, indicating that while these households are employed, they struggle to meet basic living costs.

Since 2019, United Way has reported that nearly half of Denton's population faces challenges in affording the cost of living, largely due to wages not increasing proportionately with housing costs.

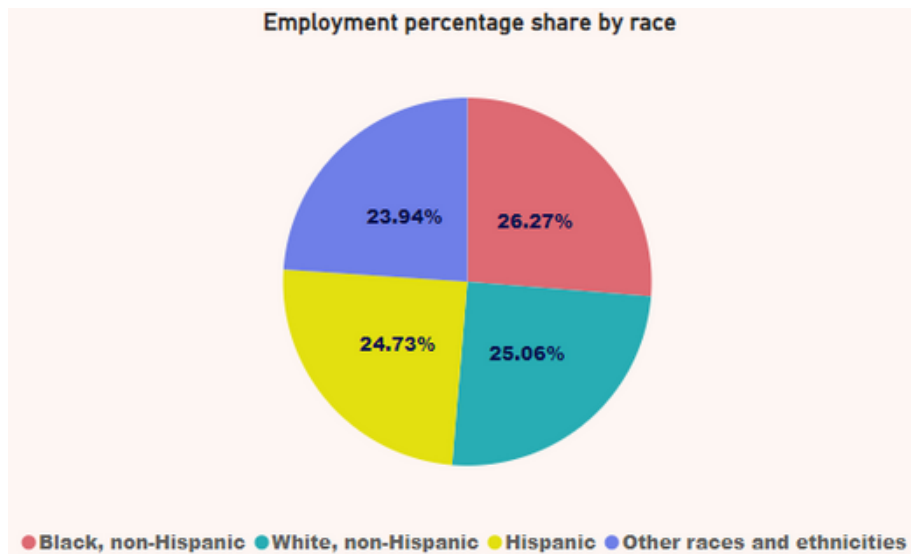


Part 1.

Dignity and Belonging

Rewarding Work

Employment Opportunities



Source: upward-mobility.urban.org

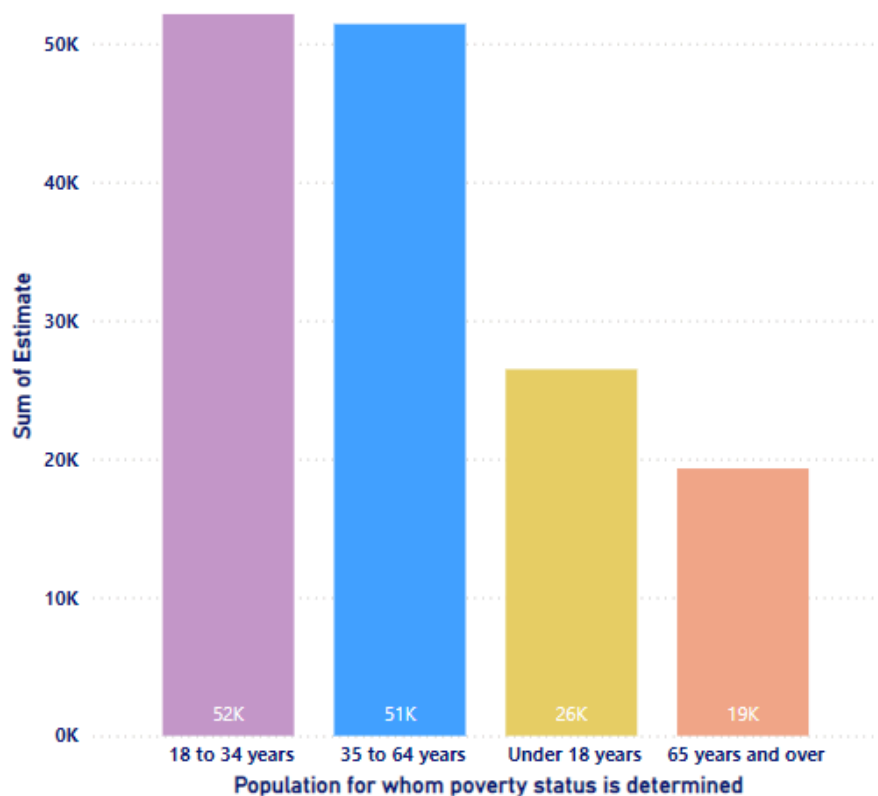
Figure 7. Employment Percentages by Race

Despite the nearly equal share of percentages by race in the workforce, income disparities impact Hispanic, Black, and people of 2 or more races *more than White or Asian populations* as evidenced by the ALICE and poverty data.

The two job categories with the highest percentage of employees in 2021 were administrative or office occupations and sales or related occupations (Data USA).

Poverty

Sum of Estimate by Population for whom poverty status is determined



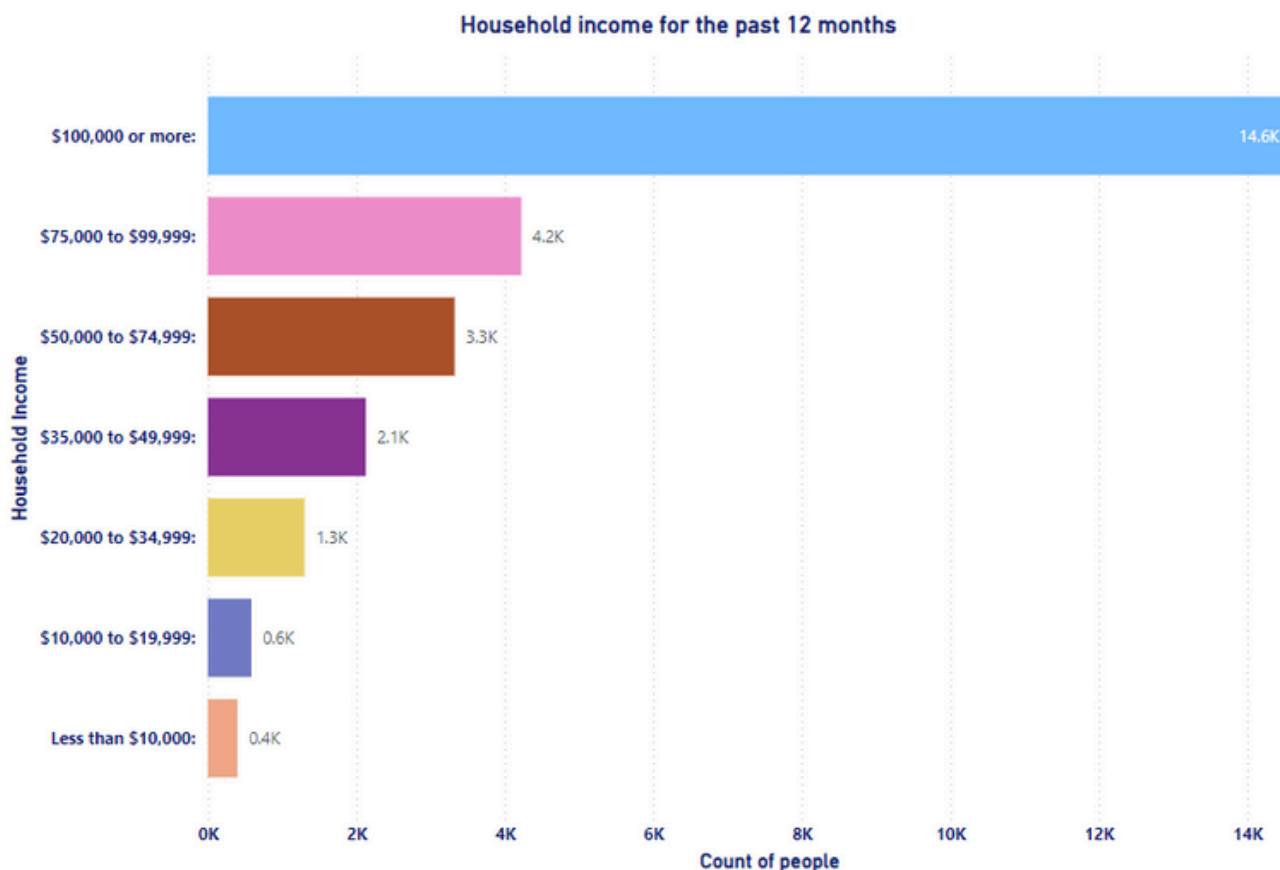
Source: upward-mobility.urban.org

Figure 8. Poverty by Age

Individuals and families with children who are extremely low-income often face a combination of financial pressures, including:

- low-wage employment
- housing costs consuming more than 30% or even 50% of their income
- childcare costs
- medical bills
- elevated transportation costs

Figure 9. Household Income



Source: United Way, ALICE in Denton County; ALICE Threshold 2021; American Community Survey, 2021

Housing and Affordable Living Implications

- Approximately 30% of Denton's population earns less than 50% of the area median income (AMI), which is a common benchmark used to assess housing affordability.
- An assessment, supported by existing data, reveals that there are virtually no housing options available for this segment of the population. For individuals earning less than \$15.60 per hour in full-time positions—many of whom work in entry-level jobs—finding affordable housing is exceptionally challenging (Leia Atkinson, Personal Communication, 2024).
- In 2023, the median household income was \$73,051.
- There is a significant correlation between severe housing problems and household income. Among the four primary housing challenges, being cost-burdened—spending more than 30% or 50% of income on housing—is the most prevalent issue.
- More than half (53%) of Denton Housing Authority (DHA) applications come from individuals with disabilities, yet housing opportunities for this population remain severely limited.
- DHA has observed a growing demand for housing among families earning between 31% and 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Many of these families are severely cost-burdened, often forced to sacrifice essential needs such as nutritious food and healthcare to afford rent. To address this critical issue, Denton urgently requires more affordable housing options to meet the community's unmet needs.

High-Quality Education

Access to Preschool

49.7% of 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in nursery or preschool in 2021, 52% of whom were White and non-Hispanic

Effective Public Education

Denton County Independent School District (Denton ISD) has a student-to-teacher ratio of about 13 to 1. Frederick Mosteller of Harvard university found that preschools with smaller class sizes of 13 to 17 students performed better than larger class sizes.

The Texas Tribune provided **Academic** data for the 2020-2021 school year at Denton ISD:

- 54.2% of students were college-ready for reading.
- 37.8% for math.
- 35.9% for both reading and math.
- The average SAT score was 987/1600, or 61.7%.
- The average ACT score was 22/36, or 61.1%

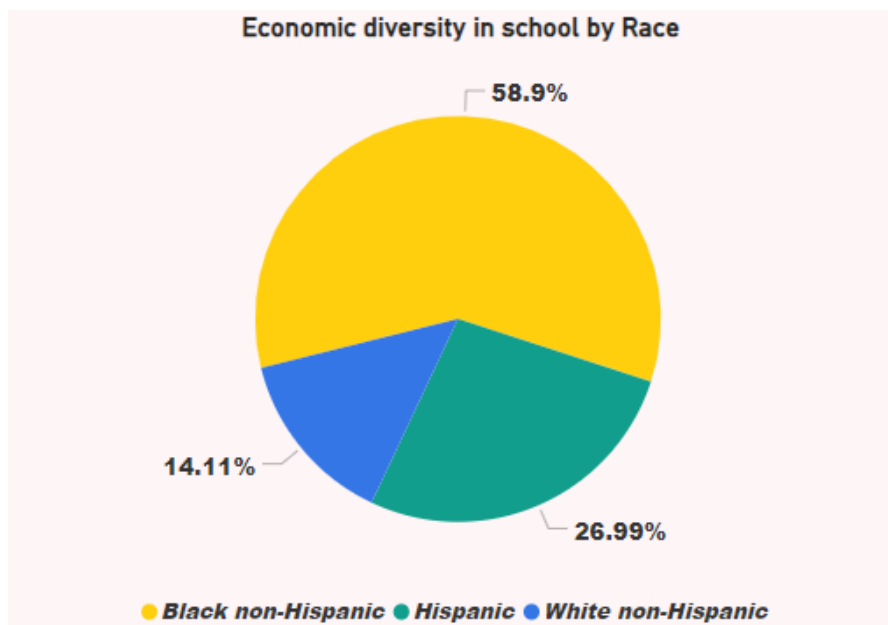
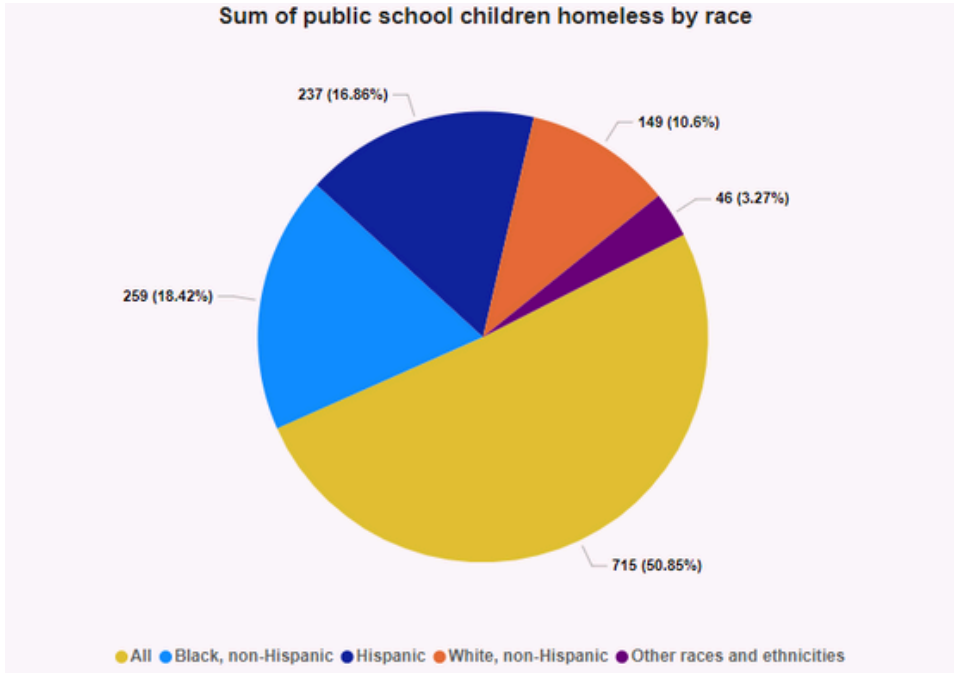


Figure 10. School Economic Diversity by Race

The percentages of students from each race attending high poverty schools are:

- 9.6% Black, non-Hispanic
- 4.4% Hispanic
- 2.3% White, non-Hispanic

Source: Urban Institute, US Department of Education Local Education Agency Data, SY 2021-2022



Source: Urban Institute, US Department of Education Local Education Agency Data, SY 2021-2022

Figure 11. Public School Children Homeless by Race

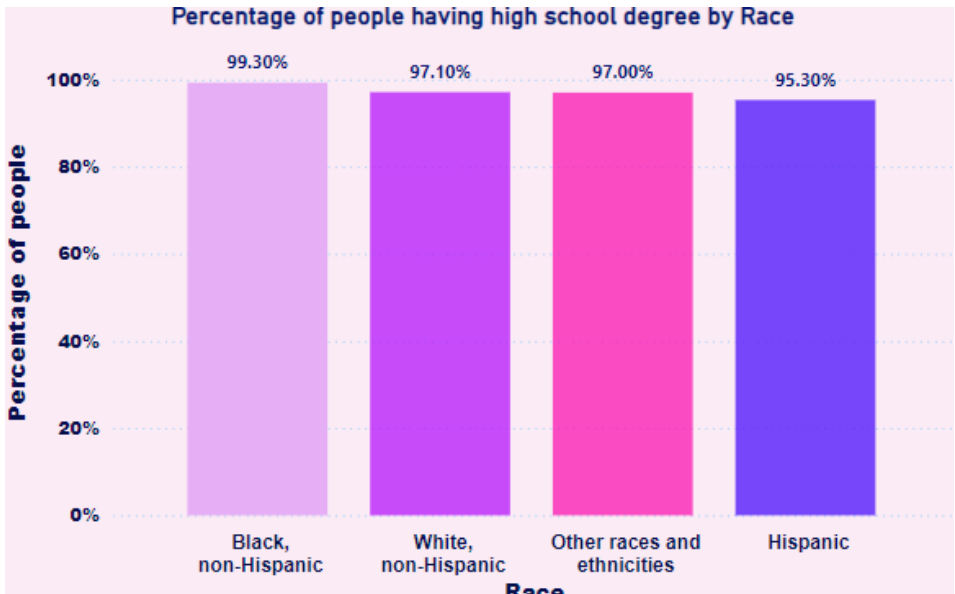
The Texas Tribune also provided **School Economic Diversity** data for 2020-2021:

- 49.3% of students were economically disadvantaged*
- 35.4% of students were at-risk**

*students who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or other public assistance

**students who were at-risk of dropping out, were held back, had poor grades, low English-language proficiency, and/or behavioral difficulties.

Figure 12. 19- and 20-year-olds with High School Degree by Race



Source: Urban Institute, US Census Bureau's 2021 5-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample

Educational Attainment and Earnings:

Of the population 25+ years of age:

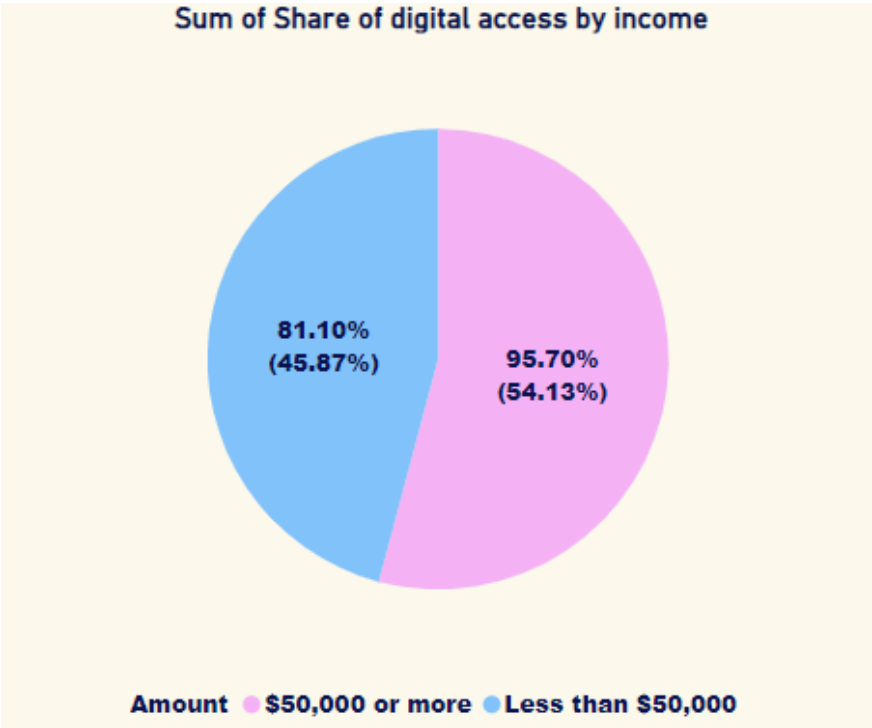
- The educational attainment level with the **highest** percentage of people earning below the poverty level was some college or associate's degree at 13.7%.
 - The level with the **lowest** percentage was bachelor's degree or higher at 7%.

(US Census Bureau, 2023 Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months)

Digital Access

In 2020, the City conducted an infrastructure assessment and identified areas lacking high-speed internet access, including the Preserve at Pecan Creek and nearby blocks. Although cable and fiber connections are generally considered affordable, the 24,423 households in Denton (53.2%) that are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened may find it challenging to afford this essential utility.

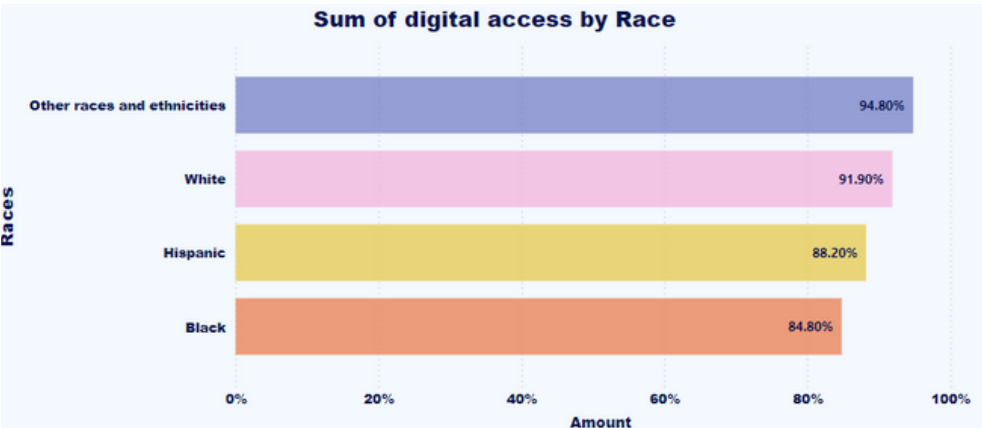
90.2% of households had access to a computer and internet access in 2022 (Urban Institute).



Source: upward-mobility.urban.org

Figure 13. Digital Access by Income

- A significant majority, 81.1%, of the data falls within the "less than \$50,000" category, indicating that most individuals or entities are earning or operating with amounts under this threshold.
- Only 14.6% (95.7% - 81.1%) of the data reaches or exceeds the \$50,000 mark, highlighting that a smaller group exceeds this amount.



Source: upward-mobility.urban.org

Figure 14. Digital Access by Race

- The data shows that individuals from "Other races and ethnicities" have the highest share at 94.8%, followed by White at 91.9%, Hispanic at 88.2%, and Black at 84.8%, indicating a higher representation of diverse racial and ethnic groups in comparison to Black individuals.

Efforts to Increase Equity

Employment

In December 2020, Denton's Economic Development Partnership Board adopted a Strategic Plan to address the city's key workforce needs. The plan focuses on economic recovery strategies, including business retention, workforce development, and community services.

Denton ISD's Career and Technology Education Advisory Committee collaborates with industry partners to provide curriculum guidance and internship opportunities for students. The district offers 31 career skills and certification training programs in 16 career fields.

North Central Texas College (NCTC) has developed certifications and associate degree programs tailored to industry needs, including programs like the Petroleum Technology Certification and Associate Degree options. NCTC also partners with businesses to leverage Skills Training grant funds for workforce development.

The Denton County Workforce Success Leadership Team (WSLT) champions a holistic community approach to workforce development. Their efforts prioritize equitable access to opportunities, enabling individuals and families to enhance their earning potential, achieve success, and thrive.

Digital Access

The City of Denton has implemented the Denton Fiber Initiative with the goal of expanding internet access. By working with broadband internet providers and applying for an Economic Development Administration grant, the city can provide more low- and moderately low-income citizens with affordable internet access.

The City of Denton has also established two Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) to support development and redevelopment projects. These zones are designed to attract high-technology businesses and cater to the residential and leisure preferences of higher-wage professionals. While these initiatives are vital for fostering economic growth and development, balancing this growth with equity remains one of the most significant challenges for city planners in Denton and similar cities. Achieving sustainable growth that benefits all residents requires careful negotiation and strategic planning to ensure equitable outcomes alongside economic progress.

Education

Denton collaborates with several childcare partners, including Denton Christian Preschool, Denton City-County Day School, and Fred Moore Day Nursery School, to provide affordable childcare programs. The City also participates in United Way's Early Childhood Coalition and supports community engagement by distributing an online survey through these agencies. The program aims to enhance community coordination and collaboration in addressing childcare needs and assure of high-quality, affordable childcare programs for families in the community.

Child Care Partners and Programs

Denton collaborates with several childcare partners, including Denton Christian Preschool, Denton City-County Day School, and Fred Moore Day Nursery School, to provide affordable childcare programs.

The City also participates in United Way's Early Childhood Coalition and supports community engagement by distributing an online survey through these agencies. The program aims to enhance community coordination and collaboration in addressing childcare needs and assure of high-quality, affordable childcare programs for families in the community.

Committee on Persons with Disabilities

The Committee on Persons with Disabilities reviews reports and actions related to City programs and presents its findings to the committee. The committee develops actionable recommendations to enhance local services and infrastructure, ensuring better accessibility and support for persons with disabilities.

An aerial photograph of a city street, likely in Denton, Texas. On the left, a large, modern, multi-story building with a yellow sign that reads "WELLS FARGO" is visible. The street is lined with parked cars and some trees. In the background, a large, ornate cathedral with multiple domes and spires is prominent. The sky is overcast. The text "Part 2. Economic Successes" is overlaid in a large, bold, black font on the left side of the image.

Part 2. Economic Successes

Opportunity-Rich and Inclusive Neighborhoods

Housing and Housing Insecurity

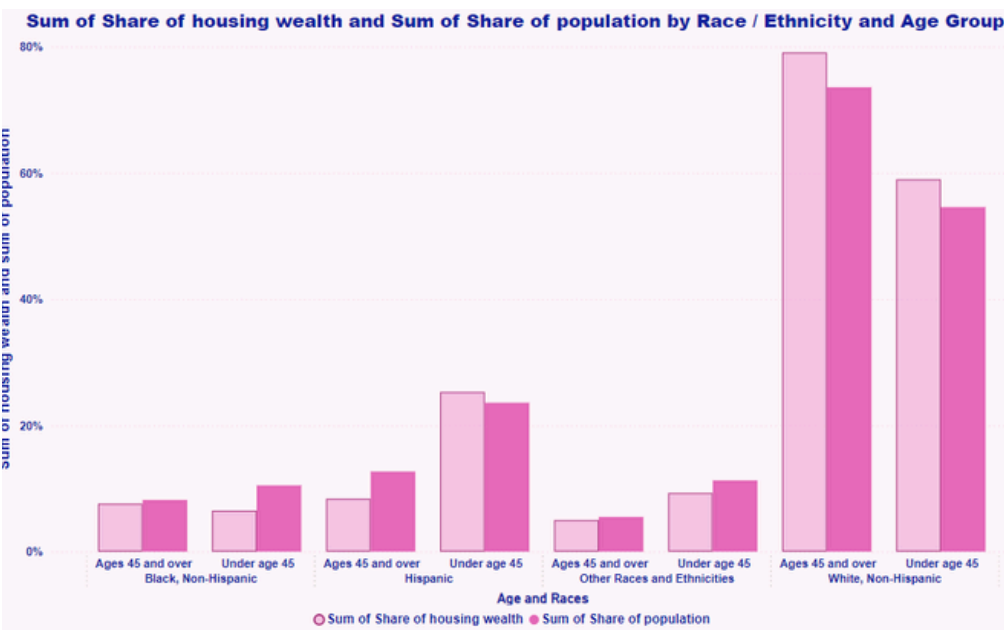


Figure 15. Share of Housing Wealth vs Share of Population by Race/Ethnicity

The data reveals a disparity in housing wealth distribution, with White, Non-Hispanic individuals holding the largest share across both age groups (under age 45 and 45 and over), significantly outpacing other racial and ethnic groups in both age categories, despite their relatively lower share of the population.

Source: upward-mobility.urban.org

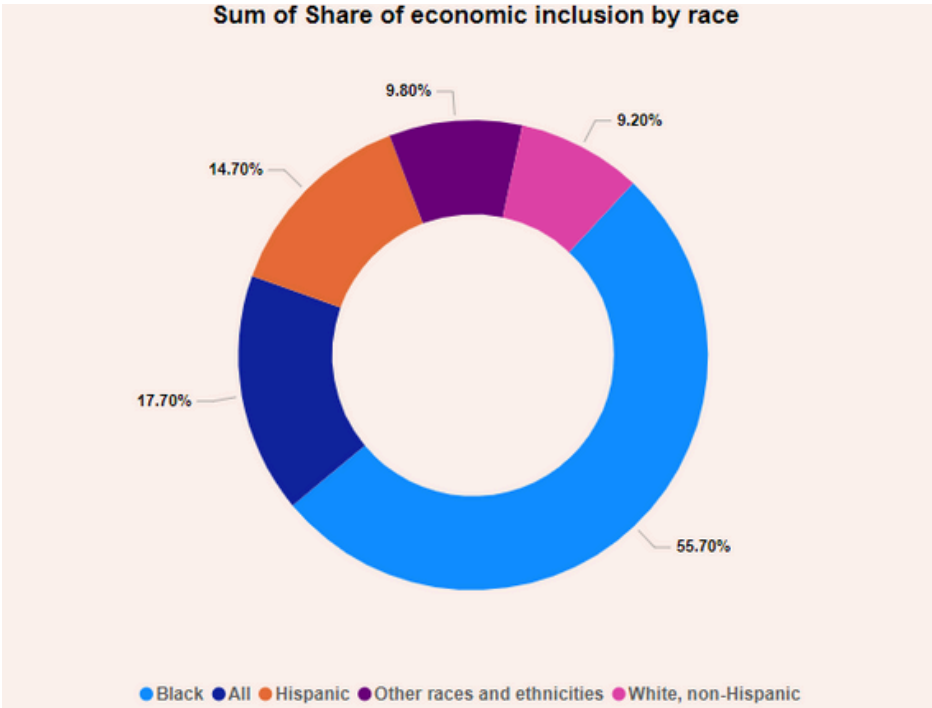


Figure 16. Share of Economic Inclusion by Race

In 2022, Denton had

- 94.21 affordable and available housing units for every 100 **low-income** households
- 58.79 for every 100 **very low-income** households
- 20.67 for every 100 **extremely low-income** households

(Urban Institute, Upward Mobility Data Dashboard)

Source: Urban Institute

While state programs effectively address moderate-income housing, typically targeting households earning 58-80% of the AMI, there are significantly fewer resources dedicated to addressing the needs of lower-income populations, particularly those classified as “very low” and “extremely low” income. This disparity underscores critical challenges in ensuring equitable access to affordable housing.

Homeownership is also becoming increasingly unattainable, even for individuals or couples with stable dual incomes, no children, and professional careers—groups that historically have had easier pathways to homeownership. Rising home prices, coupled with restrictive bank lending practices, exacerbate these challenges. For example, many individuals who could afford mortgage payments lower than their current rent are denied loans, forcing them to remain in the rental market where they face higher costs.

In 2022, Denton experienced approximately 1,000 evictions, averaging three per day or 20 per week, with an annual eviction rate of 4.7%.

By 2023, this rate rose to 5.1%, resulting in about 1,300 evictions, according to an August 2023 report by the Department of Anthropology at the University of North Texas.

Areas with the highest eviction rates include pockets of poverty along

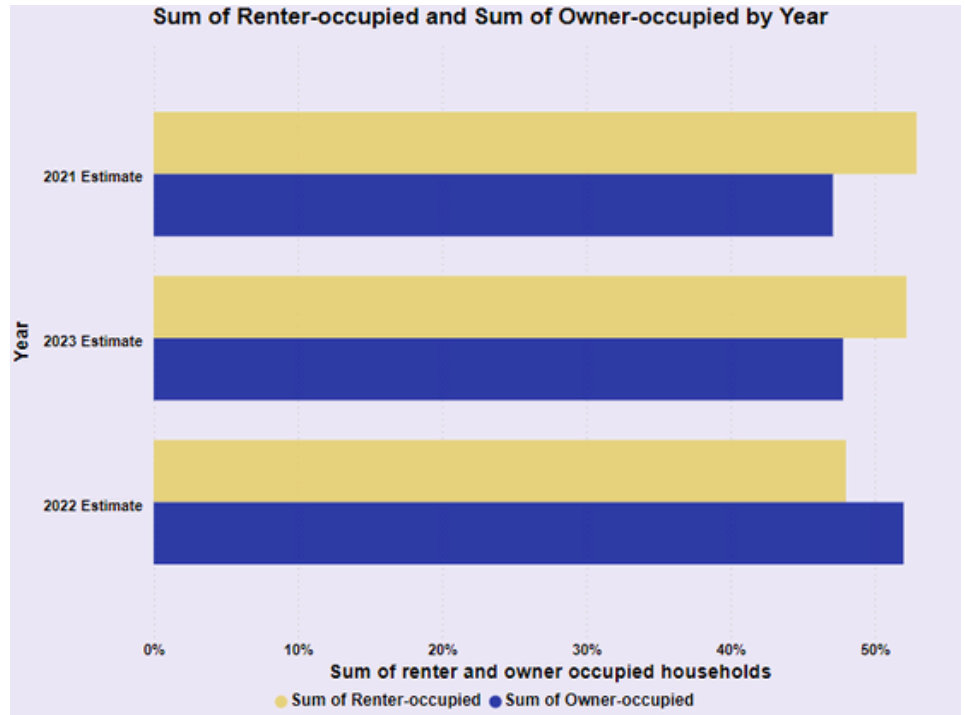
- McKinney Avenue
- the triangle of student housing between Dallas Drive and Fort Worth Drive
- the Evers Park area.

The report noted that this rising eviction trend reflects a broader post-pandemic urban phenomenon not unique to Denton.

While the city has increased the supply of multifamily housing, questions remain about whether this new housing stock is affordable or attainable for renters. The ongoing disparity between wage growth and housing costs underscores many Denton residents' challenges in maintaining housing stability.

Figure 17. Renter-Occupied vs Owner-Occupied Housing Units

- 51% of occupied rented units cost 35% or more of the monthly household income.



Source: United Way, ALICE in Denton County; ALICE Threshold 2021; American Community Survey, 2021

Homeownership is also becoming increasingly unattainable, even for individuals or couples with stable dual incomes, no children, and professional careers—groups that historically have had easier pathways to homeownership. Rising home prices, coupled with restrictive bank lending practices, exacerbate these challenges. For example, many individuals who could afford mortgage payments lower than their current rent are denied loans, forcing them to remain in the rental market where they face higher costs.

A 2025 article detailed a 2024 study conducted by Public Relations students of the University of North Texas's Mayborn School of Journalism and the Dallas Child Poverty Action Lab:

- 65% of Denton landlords charged junk fees to renters, even for services the renter could opt out of, such as doorstep garbage collection and use of a gym.
- Application fees in Denton range from \$15 to \$125.
- Junk fees increased monthly rent by 4% to 10% in the 144 rental communities surveyed.
- Student renters interviewed cited going without food or textbooks due to the high cost of rent.

(Breeding-Gonzales, 2025).

Homelessness

In addition to economic challenges, low- and very low-income households may contend with complex and interrelated issues such as family conflicts, domestic violence, overcrowded living conditions, disabilities among family members, criminal records, behavioral health challenges, or prior experiences with homelessness. These factors further exacerbate their vulnerability and heighten the risk of housing instability or homelessness.

Challenges the city faces include

- a shortage of emergency shelters
- limited affordability in housing assistance resources
- gaps in support services

Additionally, balancing rapid growth with equity remains a complex issue, compounded by

- insufficient rental assistance funds
- inadequate public transportation, and
- limited discharge planning resources.

Addressing these barriers will require strategic collaboration and resource allocation to ensure equitable access to housing and supportive services for all residents.

Transportation

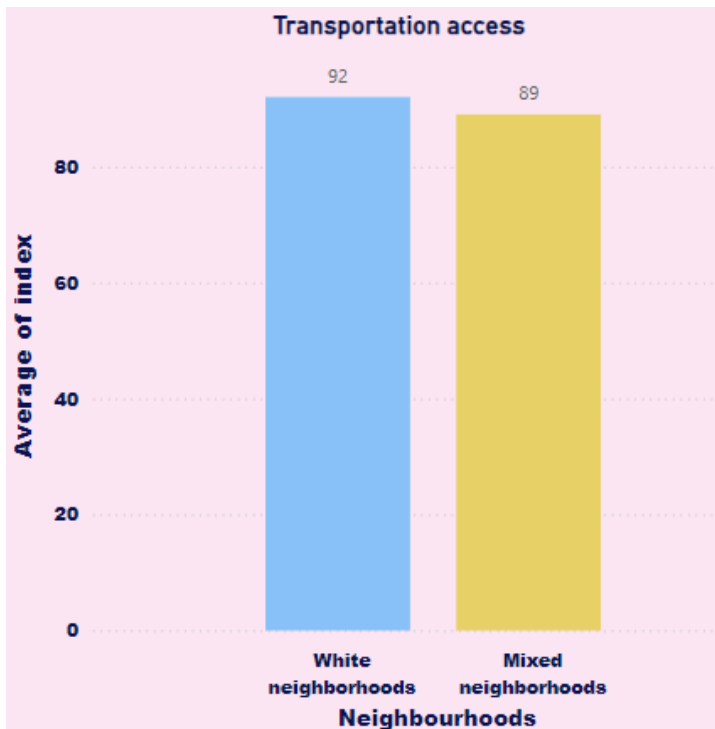


Figure 18.
Transportation Access
by Neighborhood

- In 2019, households earning 80% of the area median income spent 24% on transportation.
- Neighborhood Public Transit Index (2019): Denton city scored 95.5 overall, with
 - 92.4 in White neighborhoods
 - 88.9 in Mixed neighborhoods, all with strong data quality.

Source: upward-mobility.urban.org

Healthy Environment and Access to Good Health Care

Quality of Life

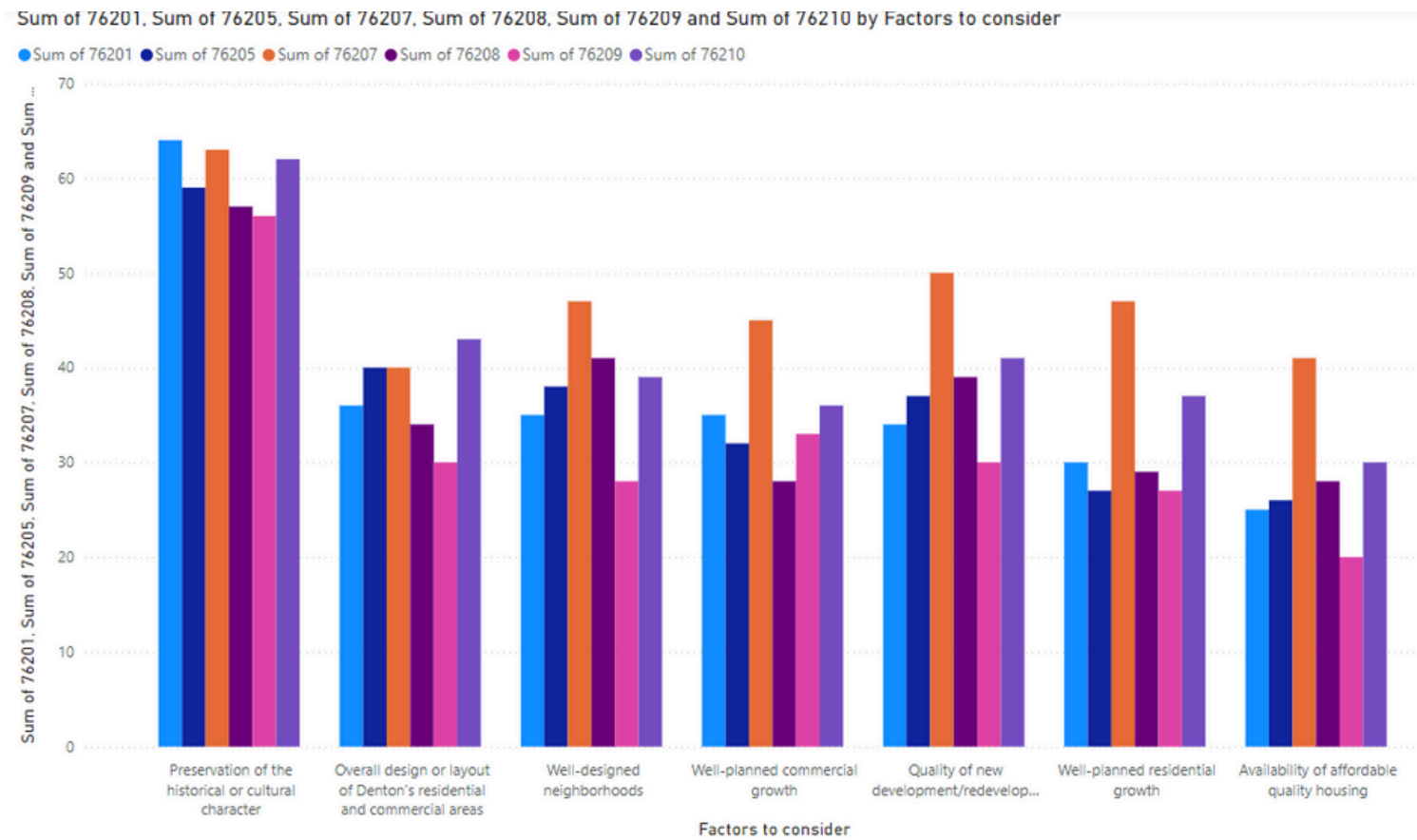


Figure 19a. Community Planning Perceptions by Zip Code

Source: City of Denton, 2024 Community Survey

- Nearly 3 out of 4 of residents rate their quality of life as "Good" or "Excellent", aligning with the U.S. and Texas averages of 67% and 70% respectively.
- Over 75% of residents rate Denton as a place to live as "Good" or "Excellent", aligning with the overall sentiment across the U.S. and Texas
- Denton's appeal as a place to retire surpasses both national and Texas averages, with 61% rating it as "Good" or "Excellent". The "Excellent" ratings have seen an increase of 7 percentage points since 2022.
- With an 80% rating, residents' sense of safety from violent crimes significantly surpasses the 50% average in both the United States and Texas. Their sense of safety from property crimes, at 68%, also notably exceeds benchmark averages
- Nearly 9 out of 10 residents view homelessness in Denton as a major or moderate problem facing the community.
- With an 80% rating, residents' sense of safety from violent crimes significantly surpasses the 50% average in both the United States and Texas. Their sense of safety from property crimes, at 68%, also notably exceeds benchmark averages

Healthy Environment and Access to Good Health Care

Development in Denton

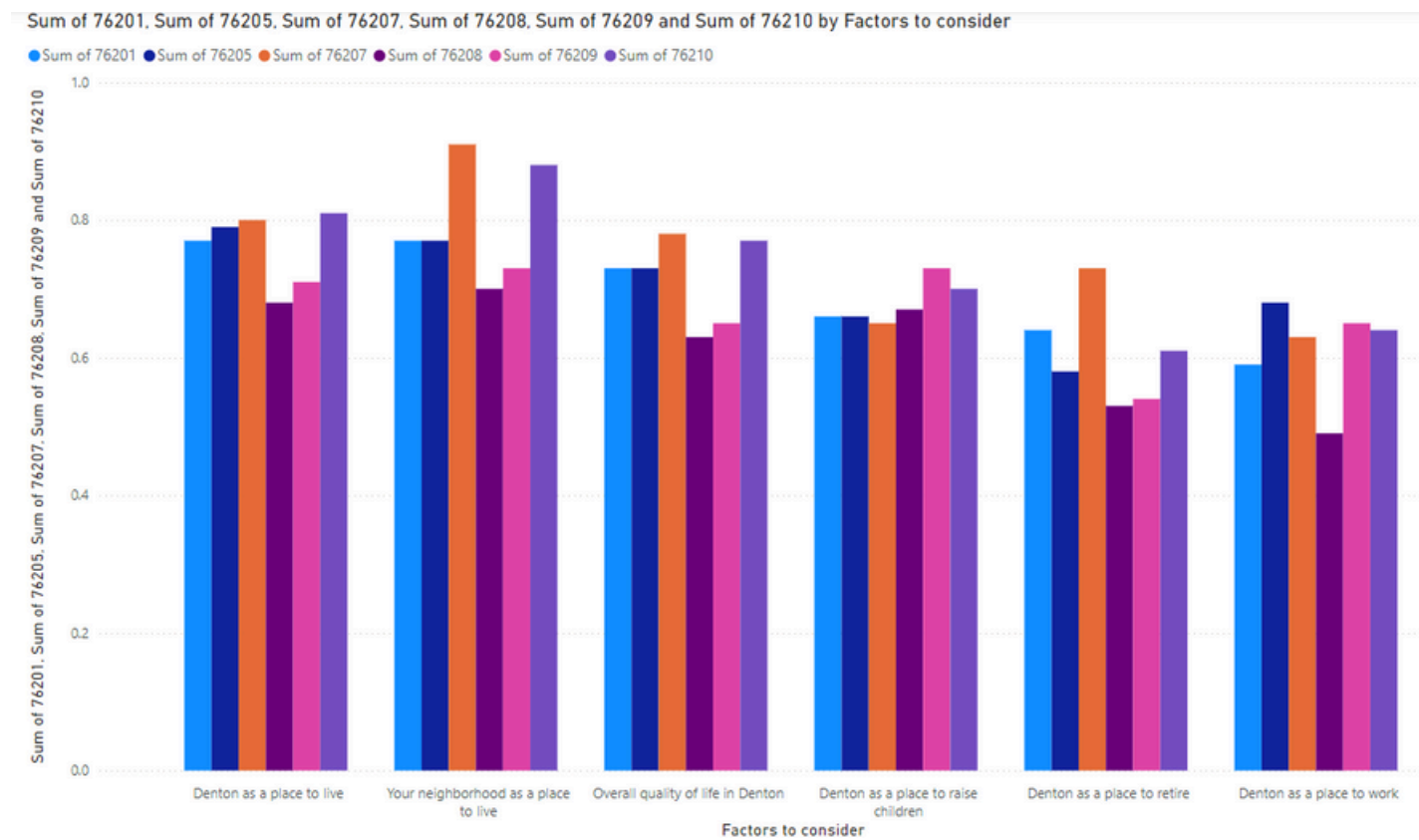


Figure 19b. Community Quality of Life Perceptions by Zip Code

Source: City of Denton, 2024 Community Survey

- The timing of traffic signals and rush hour traffic management received low ratings from residents, at 36% and 23% "Good" or "Excellent" respectively. These ratings are significantly below the average for both the United States and Texas.
- Survey data reveals an encouraging trend in residents' views on public parking, traffic signal timing, and the overall transportation system. Negative feedback has declined since 2022, suggesting improvements in these areas are being recognized
- Since 2022, there has been a significant increase in residents' satisfaction regarding the reliability of water and electric services, with ratings of "Excellent". Notably, the reliability of the City's electric service surpasses both U.S. and Texas averages.

Local governments, private and nonprofit businesses, and the community collaborate to foster sustainable growth, job creation, and a vibrant local economy. The overall quality of these economic development efforts is rated at 47 percent, aligning with the U.S. average but slightly lower than Texas' average. However, Denton's employment opportunities, rated positively by 41 percent of respondents, fall below the U.S. (50 percent) and Texas (56 percent) averages

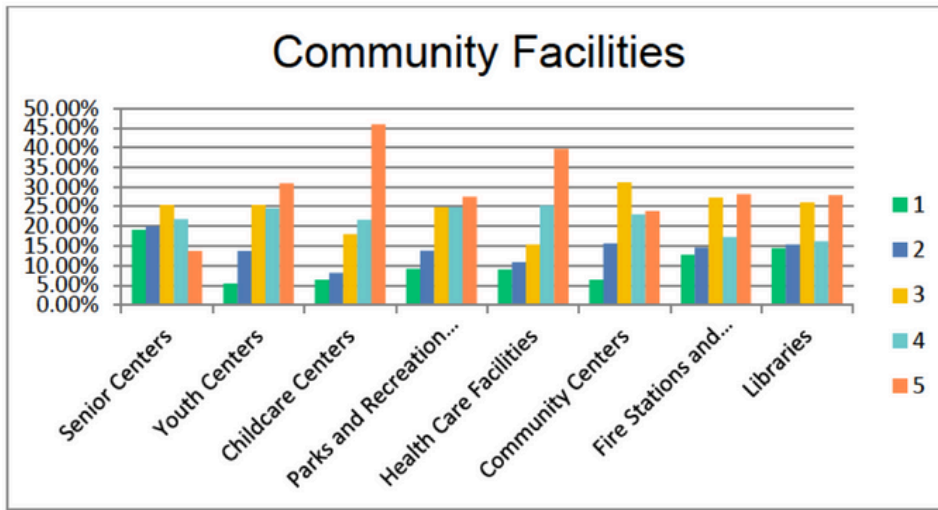


Figure 5: Community Facility Needs

Source: 2023–2027 City of Denton Consolidated Plan

Environmental Quality

Housing units in Denton constructed before 1979 present potential lead paint hazards, particularly those occupied by low- to moderate-income households and minority-owned households, which account for 56% of affected units.

Of the 23,242 cost-burdened households in Denton County (53.1%), approximately 18,638 (80%) are renter households, while 4,604 (20%) are homeowners. Cost-burdened households often cannot afford insurance to cover potential damages from disasters such as floods, fires, or tornadoes. When these events force households to temporarily or permanently relocate, the associated expenses—such as unpaid time off work, higher food costs, lodging, and car rentals—often exceed what insurance covers, leaving vulnerable families with significant financial strain.

Figure 20. Community Facilities

In a public hearing in low- and moderately-low income neighborhoods and in one virtual hearing, the city of Denton's Community Development branch asked community members to prioritize community facility needs. 1 is the top priority and 5 is the lowest priority.

Efforts to Increase Equity

Housing Insecurity

Supportive services play a vital role in programs aimed at assisting individuals experiencing homelessness. These services include case management, mental and physical health care through clinics and social service agencies, and support for daily living activities. Programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, such as Medicaid, SNAP, and TANF, are critical resources. Additionally, various nonprofit organizations in Denton provide complementary services to address the needs of the homeless population.

Key providers include:

- **Texas Workforce Solutions**, offering services and programs to help low-income adults and youth with training and employment.
- **Denton County Veteran's Center**, which provides comprehensive, integrated care through hosted service providers.
- **Texas Veterans Commission**, delivering employment resources and referrals.
- **Denton County MHMR**, offering mental health services, case management, supported housing, counseling, and skills training.
- **Denton County Friends of the Family**, providing safety planning, case management, legal advocacy, and transitional housing for eligible individuals.
- **Our Daily Bread**, which offers food, transportation, laundry, computer and phone access, application assistance, and referrals.
- **Denton Community Health Clinic**, a free medical clinic open to the public.
- **Solutions of North Texas**, providing safe and structured transitional housing for individuals recovering from substance use disorders.

Systemic barriers continue to prevent many residents from transitioning from renting to owning a home. In response, the City of Denton is prioritizing efforts to ensure housing affordability for all income levels. Additionally, initiatives are being developed to improve access to homeownership, creating opportunities for individuals and families who wish to move beyond renting but face significant obstacles in doing so.

Homelessness

Services and facilities in Denton are designed to address the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including chronically homeless individuals, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth. Key programs and initiatives include:

- **Street Outreach (SO) Teams**: These teams connect unsheltered individuals with emergency shelter, housing, and critical services to address immediate needs.

Homelessness (continued)

- Emergency and Transitional Shelters: Emergency shelters provide short-term housing and supportive services for individuals living on the street, offering immediate relief and temporary accommodations.
- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA): TBRA provides short- to medium-term rental assistance to help individuals and families obtain and maintain permanent housing. Populations served include those experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.
- Rapid Re-Housing (RRH): RRH programs offer housing relocation and stabilization services, ensuring homeless individuals and families can transition quickly into permanent housing.
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): PSH programs provide long-term housing assistance paired with supportive services for individuals and families who require ongoing support to maintain housing stability.

Several organizations contribute to these efforts:

- Denton County MHMR administers CoC Grant-funded PSH programs, offering indefinite rental assistance and supportive services for individuals or families with disabilities.
- Giving Grace provides housing, childcare, transportation, and case management services, supporting individuals and families with disabilities in achieving housing stability.
- Salvation Army of Denton offers emergency housing for men, women, and families, along with food, clothing, laundry supplies, transportation, and employment services.
- United Way of Denton County manages the Denton County Homelessness Barriers Fund, supported by the City's general fund, to reduce barriers to stable housing and open doors for individuals and families in need.

The City of Denton benefits from a robust network of agencies and organizations that form a solid infrastructure to address income and homelessness challenges. Key collaborators include Community Development, Denton Housing Authority, the Texas Department of Community and Housing Affairs, Texas Homeless Network, housing providers, local realtors, contractors, and public-private partnerships. Together, these entities can help consolidate collective efforts, expand supportive services, and navigate change to create a meaningful impact.

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) collects and analyzes data to support coordinated efforts in addressing homelessness. Through Coordinated Entry (CE) assessments, housing needs are prioritized, and individuals are placed on the Housing Priority List (HPL). The HPL provides an immediate evaluation of needs and prioritizes the most vulnerable individuals for referrals to housing programs. This system plays a crucial role in assisting individuals experiencing transitional homelessness by facilitating their move to permanent housing, thereby reducing the duration of homelessness.

Additionally, increasing diversion funding is essential to prevent those who are housing insecure from becoming homeless, further strengthening the community's ability to address and mitigate homelessness effectively. Coordinated Entry and the HPL serve as vital tools for data-driven decision-making, enabling targeted interventions and promoting long-term housing stability.

Environmental Quality

To address environmental concerns, the City utilizes Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to assist with necessary repairs and improvements for these homes. The Denton County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan identifies several natural hazards that could cause significant damage in the county, including dam failure, drought, earthquakes, expansive soils, extreme heat, flooding, high winds, lightning, tornadoes, wildfires, and winter storms. Among these, wildfires, flooding, and dam failures are recognized as hazards with predictable geographic vulnerability.

Social Capital

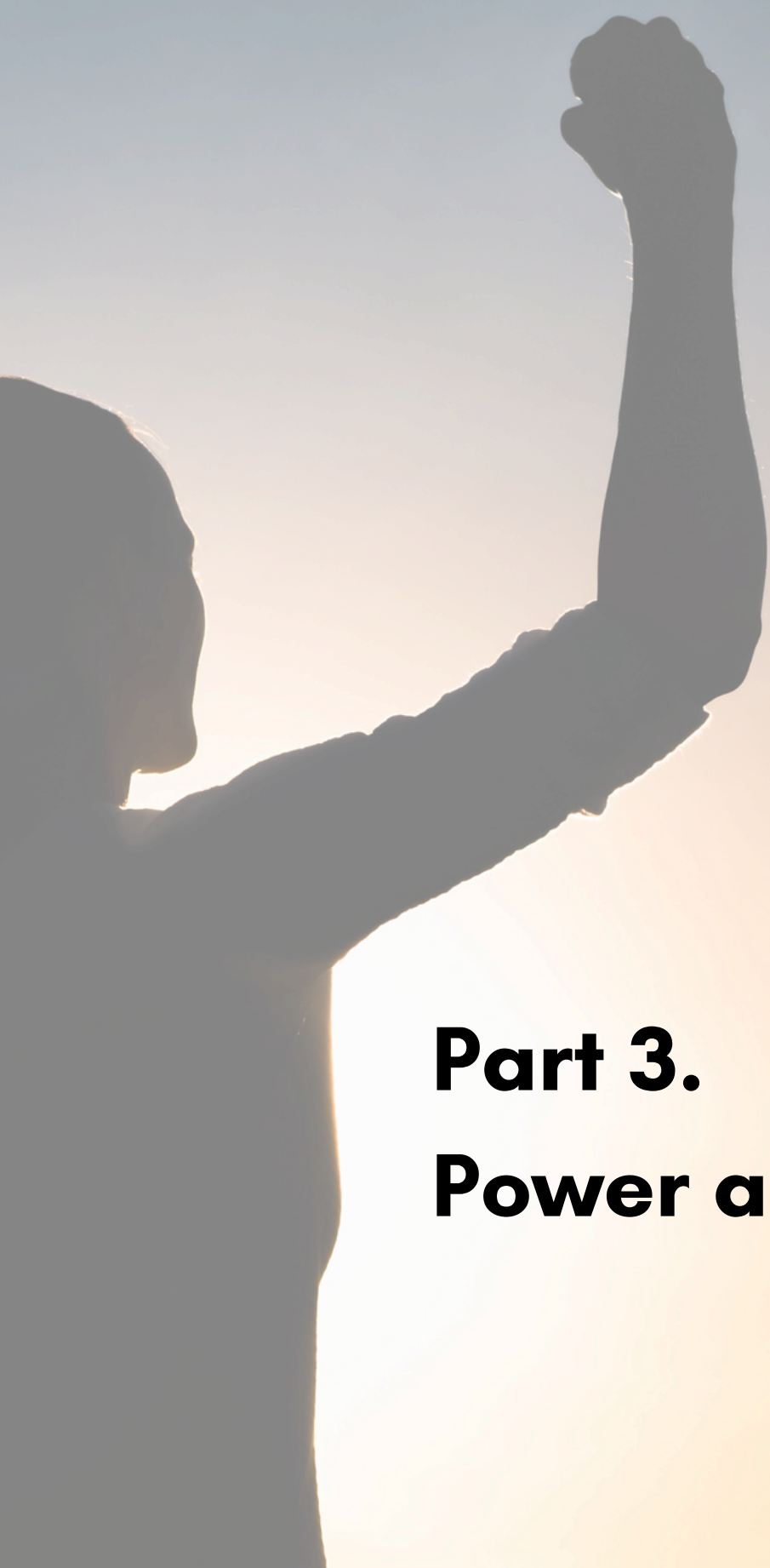
The City of Denton has leveraged Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to create public facilities that support individuals experiencing homelessness. Findings from the 2023-27 Consolidated Plan Survey highlighted a significant need to enhance and expand public facilities to better address community needs.

Economic Inclusion

The City of Denton offers rental rehabilitation and homeownership assistance programs to support low-income households. However, the demand for housing assistance remains high, with the Denton Housing Authority (DHA) waitlist exceeding 13,000 applicants. Additionally, the availability of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) units is declining as property owners are no longer contractually obligated to participate in the program, further exacerbating the housing shortage.

Transportation

In 2023, it was estimated that 91.9% of housing units had occupants with 1 or more vehicles available. For those who do not, the Denton County Transportation Authority operates buses, trains, GoZone ride shares, and community vanpools for large groups of commuters to one or more work locations. Discounted public transit passes are available to every person at the University of North Texas and off-campus student housing. Seniors and people with disabilities are able to make appointments for accommodation.



Part 3.

Power and Autonomy

Just and Responsive Governance

The analysis of crime data highlights significant variations in the frequency of reported incidents across different areas, underscoring the need for tailored community safety measures. High-crime areas include:

- W University Dr with 971 incidents
- S Loop 288 with 868 incidents
- E McKinney St with 703 incidents
- S I 35 E with 457 incidents
- Fort Worth Dr with 338 incidents.

These locations are hotspots for criminal activity, suggesting they may require increased law enforcement presence, improved lighting, or community outreach programs to address underlying issues.

On the other hand, several areas report notably low crime rates, including Westway St, Kerley St, Magnolia St, Foxcroft Cir, and Westgate Dr, each with only 2 recorded incidents. These neighbourhoods demonstrate relatively safe environments, which could serve as models for best practices in urban planning and community engagement. The disparity between high-crime and low-crime areas emphasizes the importance of analysing local conditions and crime patterns to implement effective, targeted interventions that enhance overall community safety and well-being.

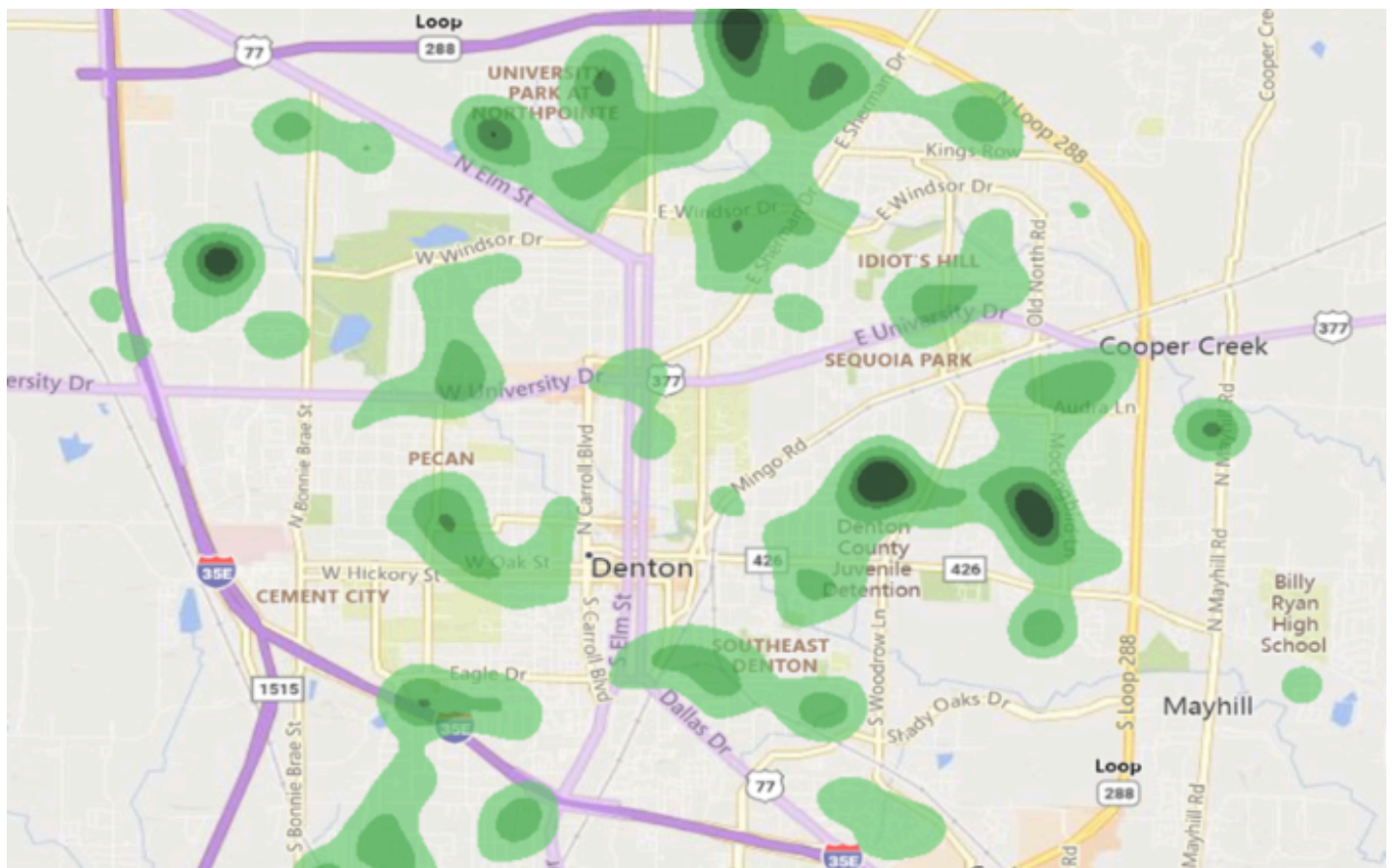


Figure 20. City of Denton Crime Heat Map

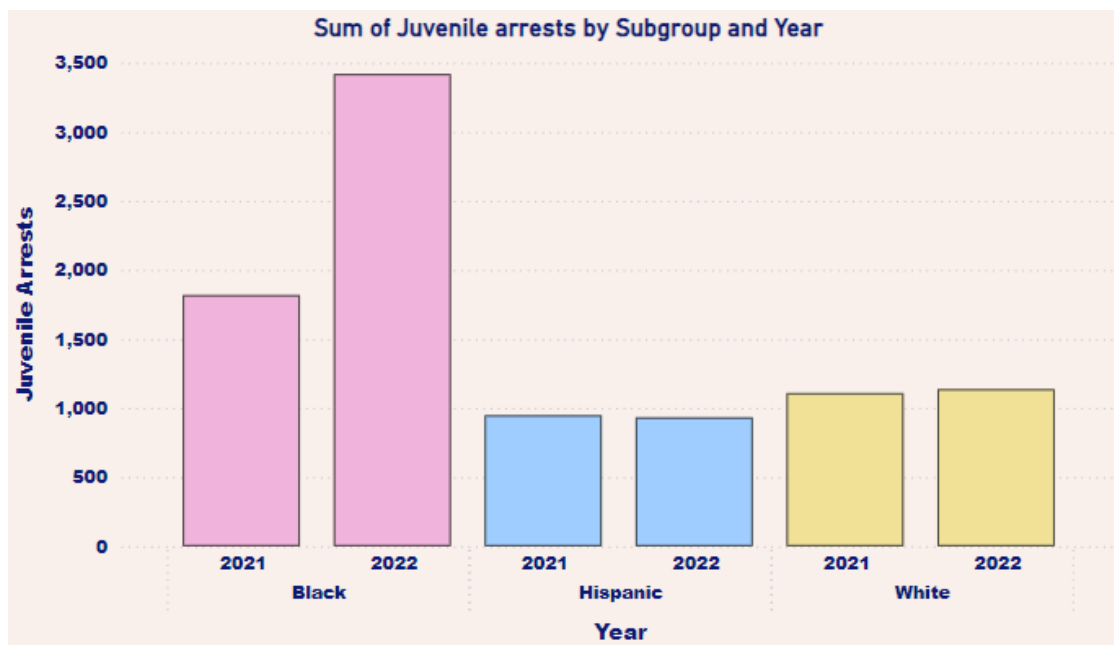


Figure 21. Juvenile Arrests by Race and Year

Source: upward-mobility.urban.org

- Increased significantly from 1,819.2 in 2021 to 3,419.3 in 2022.
- Decreased slightly from 948.5 in 2021 to 933.5 in 2022.
- The most notable change is the sharp increase in arrests among Black youth, while arrests for White and Hispanic youth showed minimal change or slight decline.

Political Participation

In a 2024 Community Survey, participants rated the opportunities they received to participate in community matters.

- Areas with higher percentages of participants rating employment opportunities as excellent or good also had more positive ratings for opportunities to participate in community matters.

50% or more of participants from each zip code rated communication from the city of Denton in different forms such as availability of programs and services, keeping residents informed about key issues, and social media engagement, as excellent or good.

In a May 2024 general election, the number of votes cast was around 11,000 for councilmembers 5 and 6, and 10,529 for the mayor of Denton.

The City of Denton hosts city council meetings twice a month in varying locations, providing a 72-hour notice of the agenda and time. The meetings are televised and available online for those who cannot attend in person. The City's website offers a form to both identify and contact one's council member.

(cityofdenton.com)

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of a group of seven young adults (three men and four women) standing in a circle outdoors. They are all wearing white t-shirts with a logo that reads "RUN FOR RAIN" and "VYEH, PHILIPPINES". They are holding their hands together in the center, forming a human pyramid. The background shows a large green tree on the left and a bright, sunny sky. The overall mood is positive and collaborative.

Recommendations

Denton City Strategic Plan

Denton envisions itself as a vibrant, inclusive community of choice by 2040. As home to two thriving state universities, the city aspires to retain its friendly small-town character while embracing the dynamic energy of a growing, progressive urban center. Denton seeks to be an exceptionally livable city, offering diverse options in employment, lifestyle, and neighborhood settings. The city values its rich heritage, leveraging its assets while making wise, strategic decisions to ensure sound growth, investment, and sustainability. Equity remains a foundational principle, guiding policies and practices that reflect the city's commitment to inclusivity and fairness.

Strategic Focus Areas

1. Organizational Excellence and Collaborative Leadership

Denton prioritizes leadership that is collaborative, respectful, and equity-focused. This includes fostering a safe, healthy, and diverse workforce while actively engaging stakeholders on critical issues. Drawing inspiration from Matthew Desmond's research on poverty, Denton recognizes the importance of building relationships with those experiencing poverty, housing insecurity, and homelessness. By incorporating their lived experiences into policy development and workforce training, Denton aims to strengthen communities and empower its residents.

2. Enhanced Infrastructure and Mobility

Improving infrastructure and mobility remains a key priority. Transportation limitations have been identified as a significant concern for residents. Denton is committed to addressing these issues through affordable, efficient transportation systems that enhance access to education, food, employment, and healthcare. Transportation equity is recognized as a vital factor in addressing social determinants of health, reducing disparities, and fostering well-being across the community.

3. Economic Opportunity and Affordability

Denton's economic strategy focuses on balancing growth, opportunity, and affordability. The city seeks to invigorate the local economy through tourism, job creation, and improved quality of life while addressing challenges to homeownership and rental affordability. Addressing homelessness and promoting equitable economic policies are central to maintaining stability and ensuring that all residents benefit from growth and opportunity.

4. Strengthening Community and Quality of Life

Denton aims to foster a cohesive, unified community identity amidst rapid changes. Data suggests that residents are generally satisfied with their quality of life; however, targeted efforts are needed to address inequities in neighborhoods affected by poverty. The city plans to prioritize these neighborhoods for development and improvement. With two universities and a robust network of schools, Denton is uniquely positioned to enhance educational opportunities, further promoting equity and long-term community growth.

5. Creating and Supporting Healthy and Safe Communities

Denton recognizes the importance of public safety and health in ensuring the well-being of its most vulnerable residents. The city's strategy includes reimagining policing, reintegration programs for formerly incarcerated individuals, and policies that foster trust between residents and law enforcement. By promoting safety and support systems, Denton seeks to build resilient, inclusive communities that prioritize the well-being of all.

Conclusion

Denton's 2040 vision is a bold and inclusive strategy to preserve its character, honor its heritage, and ensure equity in growth and development. By focusing on organizational excellence, infrastructure improvements, economic opportunity, community strengthening, and public health and safety, Denton aims to create a thriving, vibrant future for all its residents.

The equity analysis of the City of Denton reveals a growing disparity that is expected to widen in the near future. This trend is a natural result of economic growth and migration driven by financial opportunities. Denton's strategic plan aims to balance the demands of growth with a commitment to equity, sustainability, and community well-being. To achieve this, the city must invest in programs that promote upward mobility and economic inclusion, such as expanding the Community Health Worker (CHW) workforce to address healthcare shortages and tackling persistent issues like homelessness, housing insecurity, and food insecurity.

Collaboration with Denton's two public universities in areas like workforce development, urban planning, and sustainability will be critical to ensuring that growth remains inclusive. The evolving political landscape surrounding equity also necessitates advocacy, education, and open dialogue to bridge ideological divides. The term "equity" has become increasingly contentious at both local and national levels, making it essential to clarify its meaning, dispel misconceptions, and foster conversations that unite people rather than deepen divisions. Equity is not a zero-sum proposition; it is an investment in social, human, and economic capital that enhances safety, stability, and sustainability for all residents.

Denton has a history of resilience in protecting marginalized populations and fostering economic mobility. The city's policies will play a pivotal role in ensuring that growth benefits all residents rather than exacerbating disparities. A clear, equity-driven strategic vision will be essential in navigating these challenges and creating a more inclusive and thriving community for the future.

Recommendations

Expand Street Outreach Efforts: Increase street outreach initiatives to engage individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, ensuring they have access to services and resources.

Enhance Diversion Funding: Allocate additional resources to Diversion programs aimed at rapidly resolving housing crises and preventing individuals and families from entering homelessness.

Increase Rapid Re-Housing Support: Provide greater funding for Rapid Re-Housing programs for both families and individuals, including resources for housing location assistance and stabilization services to ensure long-term success.

Develop More Affordable Housing Units: Increase the availability of both short-term supportive and long-term permanent affordable housing units for individuals and families with children, addressing the critical need for stable housing options.

Strengthen Landlord Partnerships: Build stronger relationships between service providers and landlords to expand access to independent living options for individuals facing barriers such as low income, past evictions, criminal convictions, or poor credit history.

Cost burden is a significant housing challenge in Denton. Expanding the availability of affordable housing units would help alleviate the financial strain faced by many families. Additionally, increasing homeownership opportunities is a crucial strategy for fostering long-term housing stability and economic security.

Prioritize Affordable Housing Development: Incentivize the development of affordable and attainable housing units rather than solely increasing multifamily housing. Establishing public-private partnerships with developers and offering tax credits or other incentives for affordable housing projects can ensure that new housing stock addresses the needs of ALICE households and low-income residents.

Expand Rental Assistance Programs:

Allocate additional resources to rental assistance programs, targeting households in high-eviction areas like McKinney Avenue, the student housing triangle, and Evers Park.

Expanding access to emergency rental assistance and eviction prevention funds can help stabilize vulnerable renters and reduce displacement.

Advocate for Wage Growth and Job Creation:

Collaborate with local businesses, universities, and workforce development programs to create higher-paying jobs and support industries offering living wages.

Partnering with employers to raise wages proportionately to the cost of living will help reduce financial strain on households.

Implement Tenant Protections:

Adopt stronger tenant protections, such as policies requiring more extended eviction notice periods, mediation programs, and clear rental agreements.

Develop a Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy:

Establish a task force to create a long-term housing affordability plan, including strategies for mixed-income developments, land-use reforms, and inclusionary zoning policies.

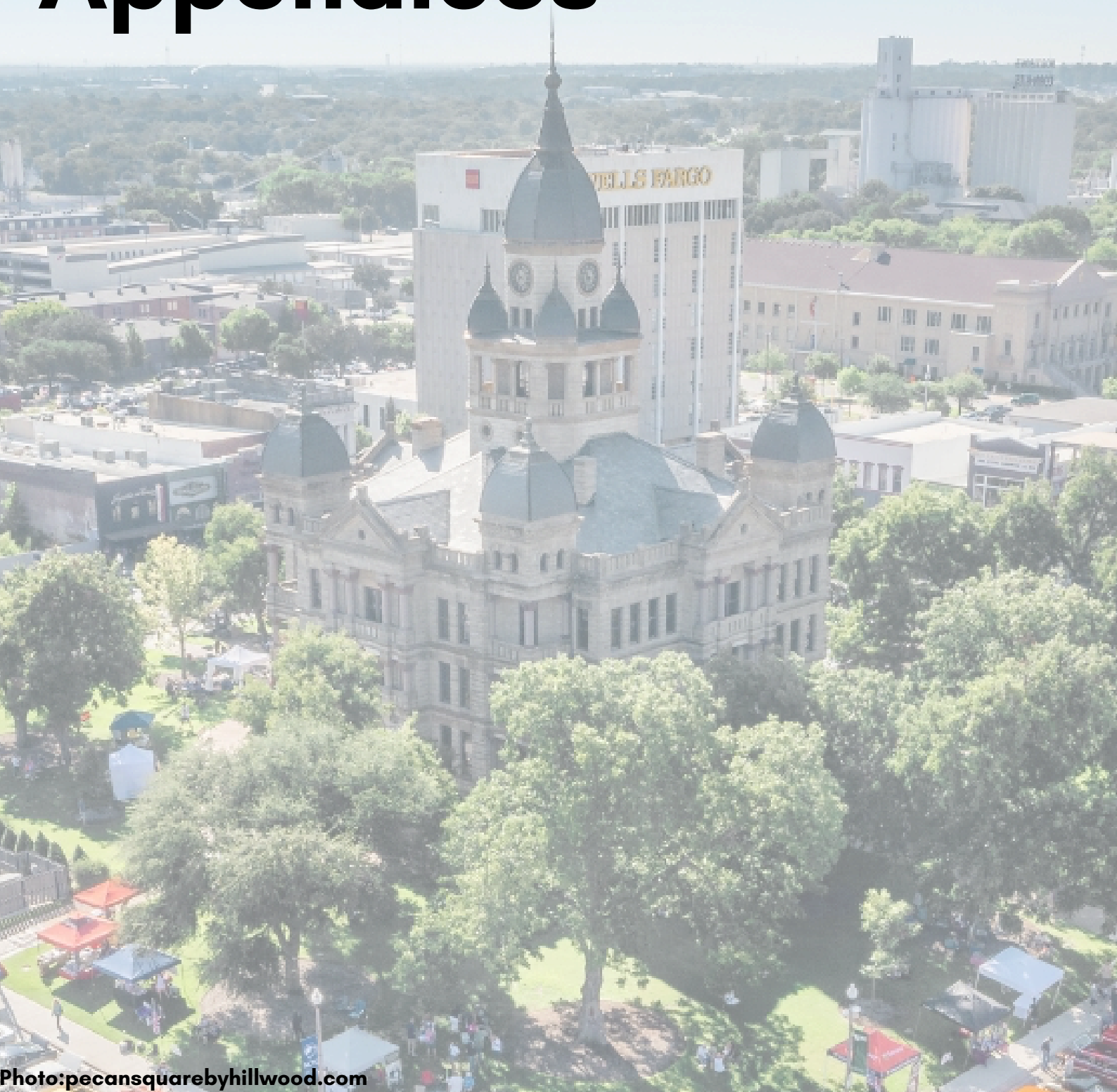
Expand Financial Literacy and Support Services:

Financial literacy programs and resources targeting ALICE households to improve budgeting, savings, and credit-building skills.

Advocate for State and Federal Support:

Engage with state and federal programs to secure additional funding for affordable housing and economic development in Denton. Programs like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and HUD funding can support long-term solutions to address housing challenges.

Appendices



Figures

- Figure 1. Map of Denton
- Figure 2. Population Estimate from 2019 to 2023
- Figure 3. Population by Race and Ethnicity
- Figure 4a. Population by Age
- Figure 4b. Population by Sex
- Figure 5. ALICE and Poverty Households by Year
- Figure 6. Above ALICE, Below ALICE, Poverty, by Race
- Figure 7. Employment Percentages by Race
- Figure 8. Poverty by Age
- Figure 9. Household Income
- Figure 10. School Economic Diversity by Race
- Figure 11. Public School Children Homeless by Race
- Figure 12. 19- and 20-year-olds with High School Degree by Race
- Figure 13. Digital Access by Income
- Figure 14. Digital Access by Race
- Figure 15. Share of Housing Wealth vs Share of Population by Race/Ethnicity
- Figure 16. Share of Economic Inclusion by Race
- Figure 17. Renter-Occupied vs Owner-Occupied Housing Units
- Figure 18. Transportation Access by Neighborhood
- Figure 19a. Community Planning Perceptions by Zip Code
- Figure 19b. Community Quality of Life Perceptions by Zip Code
- Figure 20. Community Facilities

Illustration

The Upward Mobility Framework

References

- Breeder-Gonzales, L. (2025, Jan 18). Junk fees add 5% to Denton renters' bills, new UNT student research shows. *Denton Record-Chronicle*.
https://dentonrc.com/education/junk-fees-add-5-to-denton-renters-bills-new-unt-student-research-shows/article_c28bec6e-dc29-11ef-ab6e-d77f8f6a6d95.html?utm_campaign=blox&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (a). NVSS Life Expectancy Data.
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/usaleep/usaleep.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (b). PLACES Data.
<https://www.cdc.gov/places>
- City Health Dashboard. (2022a). Neighborhood Racial/Ethnic Segregation in Denton, Texas. <https://www.cityhealthdashboard.com/TX/Denton/metric-detail?metricId=16&dataPeriod=2022>
- City Health Dashboard. (2022b). Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Denton, Texas.
<https://www.cityhealthdashboard.com/TX/Denton/metric-detail?metricId=21&dataPeriod=2022>
- City of Denton. (a). 2024 Community Survey. .
<https://www.cityofdenton.com/DocumentCenter/View/9400/2024-Community-Survey-Report-PDF>
- City of Denton. (b). Infrastructure.
https://performance.envisio.com/dashboard/Economic_Development_Strategic_Plan/Strategy-70000
- City of Denton. (c). City Council. <https://www.cityofdenton.com/413/City-Council>
- City of Denton. (d). Final Election Results. <https://www.cityofdenton.com/1127/Final-Election-Results>
- City of Denton Secretary's Office. Final Election Results.
<https://www.cityofdenton.com/1127/Final-Election-Results>
- Data USA. (2022). Denton, Texas. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/denton-tx/#economy>
- Desmond, M. (2017). *Evicted*. Broadway Books.
- Desmond, M. (2024). *Poverty, by America*. Penguin Books.
- Eberstadt, N. (2022). *Men without work* (Second edition ed.). Templeton Press.
- Fourth Economy Consulting. *Holistic Approaches for Reducing Poverty*.
<https://icma.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/Gresham%2C%20OR%20-%20Holistic%20Approaches%20for%20Reducing%20Poverty%20Report.pdf>
- Nelson, A. (2023). 2023 Denton Evictions Report. PDF Document. Obtained from City of Denton.
- Office of Policy Development and Research. State of the Cities Data Systems (SOCDS). <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/socds.html>
- Office of Policy Development and Research. (2024). Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS). <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>

References (Continued)

- Peña, Pablo Arauz. 16 May 2024. Denton gained nearly 8,000 residents in a year, putting city on US Census list of boomtowns.
https://dentonrc.com/news/state/denton-gained-nearly-8-000-residents-in-a-year-putting-city-on-us-census-list/article_7a12c031-a47d-5baf-bd20-8fb69dfd34c6.html
- Piketty, T., 1971. (2022). A brief history of equality (1st ed.). The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 10.4159/9780674275898
- Results for America. Economic Mobility Catalog. <https://catalog.results4america.org>
- The City of Dubuque, I., & Public Works LLC. (2021). The Dubuque Community Equitable Poverty Reduction & Prevention Plan.
<https://www.cityofdubuque.org/DocumentCenter/View/48238/Dubuque-Equitable-Poverty-Reduction-and-Prevention-Plan>
- The Opportunity Atlas. The Opportunity Atlas Denton, Texas.
<https://www.opportunityatlas.org>
- The Texas Tribune. Denton ISD. <https://schools.texastribune.org/districts/denton-isd/#:~:text=Denton%20ISD%20is%20a%20school,and%20English%20language%20learning%20programs>
- The U.S. Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey. data.census.gov
- The U.S. Census Bureau. Census Tract-Level Data. data.census.gov
- United Way. (2024). United Way ALICE Data for ZIP Codes in Texas. Rice University-Kinder Institute: UDP. 10.25612/837.g7oo55l74pk0
- Urban Institute. (a). 2022 Upward Mobility Data Dashboard - Denton, Texas.
<https://upward-mobility.urban.org/dashboard>
- Urban Institute. (b). Mobility Metrics Framework. <https://upward-mobility.urban.org/mobility-metrics/all-metrics>
- Urban Institute. (c). Upward Mobility Framework. <https://upward-mobility.urban.org/framework>
- US Census Bureau. . American Housing Survey. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/data/2023/ahs-2023-public-use-file--puf-/ahs-2023-national-public-use-file--puf-.html>

Glossary

Access to Education – the ability of a student to attend school and learn without, or in spite of, difficult life circumstances.

ALICE – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) is a population of people who earn enough to be above the federal poverty level, but do not earn enough to afford basic needs and often have to sacrifice one necessity for another.

Community Engagement – the ability of members of a community to participate in decision-making and influence local government to enact policies they feel are appropriate.

Disparity – a lack of equal access across different races and identities to opportunities or needs.

Diversity – acknowledgement and inclusion of all people and their identities and perspectives.

Education – the development of basic and advanced skills, as well as general knowledge and social skills, needed to join and contribute to society.

Equity – recognizing that not every person or group of people have the same life circumstances and adjusting access to needs for people who are treated with less fairness and justice.

Food Insecurity – not consistently having access to healthy and affordable food.

Health Equity – recognizing that not every person has equal access to health care due to a lack of medical facilities or health insurance, and adjusting policies to provide more health opportunities for those who are lacking them.

Health Literacy – the ability to understand or receive adequate explanation of one's medical reports as well as finding and understanding information about healthy living.

Housing Insecurity – being at risk of homelessness due to unsafe living conditions, unstable or inadequate income, eviction, and/or a lack of affordable and available housing.

Inclusive – accepting, acknowledging, and considering every person in policy- and decision-making.

Intersectionality – all or some of the identities people have as individuals and as members of a group are connected and inform the way they are treated in society and the discrimination and/or privilege they experience.

Marginalized Communities – groups of people having one or more identity in common and who are often overlooked or treated unfairly in society.

Opportunity Gap – when some groups of people have less access to opportunities for physical and mental health, education, employment, or other advancements.

Glossary (continued)

Privilege – better treatment and more access to opportunities based on an identity or a head start in life, such as generational wealth.

Racial Equity – recognizing that people of different races are not always given the same treatment or fairness, and making efforts to advance people whose race may put them at a disadvantage in society.

Social Capital – access to a healthy support system, genuine connections with others, and a sense of belonging in one's community.

Social Determinants of Health – Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are indicators of a person's wellbeing, including the environment they live in, the access they have to education, healthcare, and transportation, how they are treated in society, and whether they can afford necessities, among other factors.

Structural Inequality – differences in fair treatment and equal access to wealth and advancement opportunities for certain groups of people on a large scale, including in legal systems and governmental policies.

Underrepresented Population – a group of people who do not have representation in areas of society such as education, law enforcement, or government, that is proportionate to their numbers on a larger scale.

Social Vulnerability Index – considering factors such as poverty, education, racial demographics, and household characteristics, a social vulnerability score is assigned to communities indicating vulnerability if an emergency were to occur in the area.