

TEJAS HEALTH CARE: COMMUNITY NEEDS & INSIGHTS

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GRANTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The logo is a circular emblem with a white background and a black dotted border. It is set against a light blue square background. The text "Tejas Health Care" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with "Tejas Health" on the top line and "Care" on the bottom line. Below this, the tagline "| Health Care For All |" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font, enclosed in vertical bars.

**Tejas Health
Care**
| Health Care For All |

SNAP SHOT OF FAYETTE AND LEE COUNTIES

What we know:

- Population Data
- Maternal Health Access
- Health Care Access
- Day Care/Preschool Access
- Social Determinants of Health
- Environmental Concerns
- Food Insecurity

POPULATION TRENDS

La Grange, Texas – Population Trends (2018–2023)

La Grange has experienced modest population growth over the past five years:

- 2018: 4,616
- 2019: 4,648
- 2020: 4,391
- 2021: 4,418
- 2022: 4,453
- 2023: 4,541

[Neilsberg+1 Biggest US Cities+1](#)

This represents a total decrease of approximately 1.98% over the five-year period, indicating a steady but slow population growth.

Giddings, Texas – Population Trends (2018–2023)

Giddings has shown a more consistent upward trend in population:

- 2018: 5,084
- 2019: 5,122
- 2020: 4,989
- 2021: 5,057
- 2022: 5,139
- 2023: 5,254

[Best Neighborhood+6Biggest US Cities+6Neilsberg+6WikipediaNeilsberg](#)

This reflects a total increase of approximately 2.24% over the five-year period, suggesting a more robust population growth compared to La Grange.

UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Fayette County, Texas – Unemployment Trends (2018–2023)

Fayette County experienced relatively low unemployment prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a sharp but temporary increase and gradual stabilization:

- **2018:** 3.3%
- **2019:** 3.1%
- **2020:** 5.5% (*pandemic-related spike*)
- **2021:** 5.0%
- **2022:** 4.0%
- **2023:** 4.0%

Lee County, Texas – Unemployment Trends (2018–2023)

Lee County followed a similar pattern, with consistently low unemployment rates and a strong post-pandemic rebound:

- **2018:** ~3–4% range
- **2019:** ~3–4% range
- **2020:** ~6% peak (*pandemic impact*)
- **2021:** ~4–5%
- **2022:** ~3–4%
- **2023:** ~3.5%

Unemployment rose significantly during 2020 but has since declined and stabilized slightly above pre-pandemic levels, indicating a moderate but steady labor market recovery.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (LAUS), via FRED

EDUCATION LEVELS

Fayette County, Texas – Educational Attainment (Adults Age 25+)

Fayette County's population is largely high-school educated, with a smaller share holding post-secondary degrees:

- **Less than High School Diploma:** ~18%
- **High School Diploma or Equivalent:** ~57%
- **Some College / Associate Degree:** ~20%
- **Bachelor's Degree or Higher:** 24–28%

Lee County, Texas – Educational Attainment (Adults Age 25+)

Lee County shows a similar educational profile, with slightly lower levels of advanced degree attainment:

- **Less than High School Diploma:** ~18%
- **High School Diploma or Equivalent:** ~59%
- **Some College / Associate Degree:** ~22%
- **Bachelor's Degree or Higher:** 23–24%

Key Take Away:

While a majority of adults have completed high school, fewer than one-third hold a bachelor's degree or higher, indicating a workforce still centered on skilled trades, manufacturing, and service-based employment.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS 5-year estimates), via FRED and Statistical Atlas [fred.stlouisfed.org], [statisticalatlas.com]

INCOME LEVELS

Fayette County, Texas – Household Income Overview

Fayette County reports a relatively strong median household income compared to many rural Texas counties, with steady growth over recent years:

- **Median Household Income (2023–2024):** ~\$76,500
- **Per Capita Income:** ~\$43,600
- Majority of households earn between \$50,000 and \$100,000

Income levels in Fayette County are slightly below the U.S. median, but comparable to the Texas average.

Lee County, Texas – Household Income Overview

Lee County's income levels are more modest and show slightly greater variability over time:

- **Median Household Income (2023):** ~\$66,000–\$71,000
- **Per Capita Income:** ~\$40,000
- Concentration of households in the \$40,000–\$75,000 income range

Income levels in Lee County fall below both Texas and U.S. medians

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE); American Community Survey (ACS), via FRED and Neilsberg

MORBIDITY/MORTALITY RATES

Fayette County vs. Lee County, Texas

	Fayette County, Texas	Lee County, Texas
Morbidity (Common Conditions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heart disease and stroke are leading chronic conditions• Significant cancer burden (lung & breast)• Chronic respiratory illness linked to smoking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher prevalence of diabetes and obesity• Higher rate of poor self-reported health• Elevated cardiovascular disease risk
Mortality (Leading Causes of Death)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heart disease (primary cause)• Cancer• Stroke and chronic respiratory disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heart disease (primary cause)• Cancer• *Unintentional injury and stroke (*Farm Accidents)
Life Expectancy & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life expectancy near Texas average• Moderate premature death rates• Better access to local healthcare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life expectancy slightly lower• Higher premature mortality (YPLL)• Hospital desert with provider shortages

Key Takeaways

Both counties face chronic disease burdens, but **Lee County experiences higher mortality risk, largely driven by healthcare access limitations**, while Fayette County shows relatively more favorable outcomes tied to better service availability.

Sources: Texas DSHS; County Health Rankings, County Health Rankings; RHT Compass, HRSA

MATERNAL HEALTH ACCESS

Texas faces a significant maternal healthcare crisis, with over 45% of counties classified as "maternity care deserts," areas lacking birthing facilities or maternal care providers. This shortage disproportionately affects rural communities and communities of color.

In Fayette County, 11% of residents are without health insurance, and 7% are on Medicaid or other means-tested forms of public insurance. The median household income is \$62,872, and 11% of residents live in poverty. texascommunityhealthnews.org

In Lee County, 15% of residents lacking health insurance and 11% enrolled in Medicaid or other public insurance programs. The median household income is \$56,696, and 12% of residents are in poverty.

In Texas, 20.4% of residents received inadequate prenatal care compared to 14.8% in the U.S. Black individuals are 28% more likely to receive inadequate prenatal care in high-vulnerability areas, while Hispanic pregnant individuals are 24% more likely. [chron.com+1 en.wikipedia.org+1](https://www.chron.com/en.wikipedia.org)

Chronic health conditions are increasing in the U.S., and individuals with chronic health conditions are 43% more likely to have a preterm birth than those without. In total, 66% of counties in Texas have a high burden of chronic health conditions and a high rate of preterm birth.

MATERNAL HEALTH ACCESS

Birth Rates in Fayette and Lee Counties

According to the U.S. Census Bureau estimates:

- **Fayette County:** In 2023, there were **259 births**, maintaining the same number as in 2022.
- **Lee County:** In 2023, there were **204 births**, a slight increase from the 195 births in 2022.

Birth Rates per 1,000 Women (Ages 15–44)

The birth rate per 1,000 women aged 15–44 in 2023 was:

- **Fayette County:** Approximately **9.52** births per 1,000 women.
- **Lee County:** Approximately **11.27** births per 1,000 women.

These rates are below the Texas state average of **12.89** births per 1,000 women in 2022.

MATERNAL HEALTH ACCESS

Location	2025 Low Birthweight Rate	Data Notes
Fayette County	8%	In Fayette County, Texas, 8% of babies had low birth weights (under 5 pounds, 8 ounces).
Lee County	8%	In Lee County, Texas, 8% of babies had low birth weights (under 5 pounds, 8 ounces).
Texas	9%	Consistent statewide benchmark

Low Birthweight Comparison (*Low birthweight = babies born under 2,500 grams / 5 lbs 8 oz*)

- **Fayette County:** 8% (multi-year average from local health planning data)
- **Lee County:** Data is suppressed or not publicly reported in many datasets due to small birth counts Texas range 8%
- **Texas** (statewide): 9% of births
- **United States:** ~8.6%

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

MATERNAL HEALTH ACCESS

Women in Fayette and Lee Counties, Texas, face significant challenges in accessing maternal healthcare due to limited local facilities and systemic barriers.

Where Do Women Deliver?

Both Fayette and Lee Counties are designated as maternity care deserts, meaning they lack hospitals with obstetric services. Residents often travel to larger medical hubs for delivery, such as:

Fayette County: Residents may travel to hospitals in Austin, San Antonio, or Houston for maternity care.

Lee County: Residents may travel to hospitals in Austin or Houston for maternity care.

These long distances can be particularly challenging during emergencies, as timely access to care is crucial for maternal and infant health.

MATERNAL HEALTH ACCESS

Barriers to Maternal Healthcare

Several factors contribute to the difficulties women face in accessing maternal healthcare in these counties:

- **Hospital Closures:** Many rural hospitals have closed their labor and delivery units due to financial constraints, particularly those serving low-income populations reliant on Medicaid.
- **Provider Shortages:** There is a significant shortage of obstetricians and gynecologists in rural areas, leading to limited prenatal and postpartum care options.
- **Insurance Issues:** Medicaid reimbursement rates are often insufficient to cover the costs of maternity care, discouraging hospitals from offering these services.
- **Transportation Challenges:** The average distance to maternity care in Texas is 30.6 miles, which is 4.5 times farther than women in areas with full access to care.
- **Financial Constraints:** High rates of uninsured individuals and poverty in these counties make it difficult for women to afford necessary prenatal and delivery care.

Addressing these issues requires comprehensive policy changes, increased funding for rural healthcare facilities, and initiatives to attract and retain healthcare providers in underserved areas.

HEALTHCARE ACCESS – DATA

Fayette County, TX

Population: Approximately 25,247 residents, with 25% aged 65 or older.

texascommunityhealthnews.org+1 texascommunityhealthnews.org+1

Health Insurance Coverage:

89.7% of residents have health insurance.

11% are uninsured, which is lower than the state average of 17.1%.

Healthcare Access:

Primary care physicians in the county see an average of 4,258 patients annually, a 34.4% increase from the previous year.

The county has been designated a Health Resource Shortage Area, indicating a need for additional healthcare providers.

[Data USA+1 U.S.](https://data.usa1.us)

[News+1 texascommunityhealthnews.org](https://news1.texascommunityhealthnews.org)+1 [texascommunityhealthnews.org](https://news1.texascommunityhealthnews.org)+1

Health Outcomes:

Life expectancy is 77.4 years, slightly above the national average of 75.8 years.

The county reports a 20.5% rate of residents without health insurance, higher than the state average of 11.5%.

HEALTHCARE ACCESS – DATA

Lee County, TX

•**Population:** Approximately 18,240 residents, with 20.7% aged 65 or older.

[Census.gov+1](#) [texascommunityhealthnews.org+1](#)

•**Health Insurance Coverage:**

15% of residents are without health insurance, slightly below the state average of 17.1%.

[CoverMile.com Insurance](#)

[Marketplace+2](#) [texascommunityhealthnews.org+2](#) [texascommunityhealthnews.org+2](#)

•**Healthcare Access:**

The county has been designated a Health Resource Shortage Area, indicating a need for additional healthcare providers.

[texascommunityhealthnews.org+1](#) [texascommunityhealthnews.org+1](#)

•**Health Outcomes:**

Life expectancy is 76.4 years, slightly above the national average of 75.8 years.

The county reports a 22.9% rate of residents without health insurance, higher than the state average of 11.5%. [US News Real Estate](#)

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACCESS

Indicator	Fayette County	Lee County
Rural Status	Rural	Rural
Mental Health HPSA	Yes	Yes
Hospital Desert	No	Yes
Primary Public Provider	Bluebonnet Trails (La Grange)	Bluebonnet Trails (Giddings)
Suicide Risk	Elevated (rural trend)	Elevated (rural trend)
Depression Risk (MHA)	Moderate–High	High
Social Vulnerability	Moderate	High (0.79)

<https://rhtcompass.com/tx/counties/lee>

<https://healthdata.dshs.texas.gov/dashboard/mental-health/mental-health>

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACCESS

Fayette County, Texas (La Grange): Mental Health Indicators

- Designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)
- Poor mental health days at or slightly above rural Texas averages
- Higher suicide rates than urban counties (statewide rural trend, 2013–2023)
- Elevated depression risk compared to many urban Texas counties

Substance Use & Co-Occurring Conditions

- Key needs identified (2023 assessment):
 - High rates of substance use (especially alcohol)
 - Significant co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders
- Reflects broader rural Texas behavioral health trends

Access to Care

- Designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)
- No local hospital residents travel 20–40+ miles for inpatient or emergency care
- Extremely limited provider availability:
 - ~2.3 primary care providers per 10,000 residents
 - Fewer than 1 mental health provider per 10,000 residents

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACCESS

Lee County, Texas (Giddings)

Mental Health Indicators

- Designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)
- High rates of severe depression risk (2020–2025 screening data)
- Elevated psychological distress among adults and young adults
- High Social Vulnerability Index (SVI: 0.79), linked to greater mental health risk and limited access

Substance Use & Behavioral Health Needs

- Key concerns include alcohol and methamphetamine use
- High need for co-occurring mental health and substance use treatment
- Increased demand among justice-involved individuals
- Trends consistent with broader rural Texas patterns

Access to Care

- No local hospital residents travel 20–40+ miles for inpatient or emergency care
- Extremely limited provider availability:
 - ~2.3 primary care providers per 10,000 residents
 - Fewer than 1 mental health provider per 10,000 residents

DENTAL CARE ACCESS

- Fayette County is designated as a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area (Dental HPSA) by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), indicating an insufficient number of practicing dentists to meet population needs.
- HRSA designation reflects high population-to-dentist ratios, common in rural Texas counties. The county has very limited private dental practices, with many residents relying on single-provider offices or traveling to neighboring counties (Washington, Austin, Colorado) for routine or specialty dental care. [rhtcompass.com]
- Fayette County is also a hospital desert, compounding challenges for dental care coordination referrals and emergency oral health needs.
- Dental Safety-Net Access Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and sliding-fee dental clinics are not consistently available within the county, forcing reliance on neighboring county clinics.
- Limited Medicaid accepting private dentists Texas DSHS notes that rural residents must often rely on regional or mobile dental services where local capacity is insufficient.

www.dshs.texas.gov

DENTAL CARE ACCESS

- Lee County, Texas (Giddings) Dental Workforce & Shortage Status Lee County is not currently designated as a county-wide Dental HPSA, according to HRSA classifications. www.rhtcompass.com. However, this does not indicate adequate access, but rather that dentist-to-population ratios narrowly exceed federal shortage thresholds.
- Provider Availability Lee County has very few practicing dentists, generally concentrated in or near Giddings, with minimal specialty dental services available locally.
- Like Fayette County, Lee County is a hospital desert, increasing dependence on out-of-county care for advanced oral health treatment and emergency dental needs.
- Medicaid and Safety-Net Limitations Despite the technical absence of a dental HPSA designation, access for low-income residents remains limited, particularly for adults on Medicaid (limited adult dental benefit participation).
- Uninsured residents Statewide, Texas has one of the highest numbers of dental shortage areas in the nation, and rural counties without formal designations often experience similar access gaps. www.tdmr.org

CHILDCARE ACCESSIBILITY – SOLUTIONS

Fayette County, TX

- **Head Start Programs:** REACH Services, Inc. offers comprehensive child development services for low-income families with children aged 4 and younger, including infants and toddlers. (reachservicesinc.org)
- **Early Childhood Education:** The Fayette County School District provides early learning programs to prepare preschoolers for kindergarten. ([Lee County School District](#))
- **Accessibility:** The county is committed to ensuring digital accessibility for all individuals, including those with disabilities. ([Fayette County, TX](#))

Lee County, TX

- **Childcare Deficit:** A community survey revealed a deficit of as many as 1,600 childcare slots in Lee County. Approximately 77% of parents with children aged five and under found it difficult to find childcare, primarily due to lack of openings. Childcare providers reported challenges related to staffing, space, and funding. ([TSPR](#))
- **Early Learning Collaborative:** The Lee County School District participates in the state's Early Learning Collaborative program, providing high-quality early childhood education pre-K programs to 4-year-old students. ([Lee County School District](#))
- **After-School Care:** The Lee County Youth Center offers after-school care from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on school days and full-day care during the summer. Scholarships are available. (childcare.workforcesolutionsrca.com)
- **Support for Students with Children:** Lee College has been awarded a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to support student-parents. The grant will provide financial assistance for licensed childcare providers and help create a more family-friendly campus environment. ([Bluebonnet News](#))

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TACKLING THE CRISIS

Affordable housing in Fayette County is limited and difficult to access, with only a small number of subsidized units spread across communities like La Grange, Flatonia, and Schulenburg, and many properties operating with long or effectively closed waitlist particularly for Housing Choice (Section 8) vouchers, which have been closed locally for years. According to Affordable Housing Hub, income limits and fair market rents (around \$1,020/month for a 2-bedroom) still leave very low-income households cost-burdened, while rising home values, reported by Zillow to be near \$391,000 in parts of the county put, homeownership out of reach for many residents.

https://thecitizen.com/2026/01/23/fcda-strategic-plan-highlights-housing-target-industries-for-fayettes-future/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Recent updates tied to La Grange economic development efforts affecting housing in Fayette County (including development authority strategy) show a clear shift toward “attainable” and workforce housing rather than traditional subsidized housing. A 2026 strategic plan connected to the Fayette County Development Authority emphasizes the need for a countywide housing study, stronger coordination with developers, and more mixed-use and workforce housing projects to address a shortage of options for both younger workers and downsizing residents .

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TACKLING THE CRISIS

Giddings offers relatively affordable housing compared to larger Texas cities. The median home price is approximately \$250,000, significantly lower than in nearby Austin. However, the housing market is becoming more competitive, with the median home sold price increasing by 9% from the previous year (2024). Additionally, the city has a vacancy rate of 11.9%, indicating a need for more housing options. [Giddings EDC Rocket Homes](#)

While Giddings remains relatively affordable, both La Grange and Giddings face challenges in providing sufficient affordable housing options. La Grange's growth is constrained by limited new construction and infrastructure issues, whereas Giddings is experiencing increased demand and rising prices. Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning, investment in infrastructure, and policies that promote affordable housing development.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Fayette County: Environmental Concerns

1. Fayette Power Project (Coal-Fired Power Plant)

The Fayette Power Project, a 1,600 MW coal-fired power plant near La Grange, has been at the center of several environmental issues: [The Austin Chronicle](#), [AshTracker.org](#), [Global Energy Monitor](#)

•**Groundwater Contamination:** Between 2011 and 2019, 14 of 23 groundwater monitoring wells near the plant showed contamination above federal advisory levels for substances like arsenic, cobalt, and selenium. These contaminants are linked to coal ash disposal practices. [AshTracker.org](#)

•**Air Pollution:** The plant emits significant amounts of sulfur dioxide, contributing to haze and respiratory issues. A 2023 EPA haze rule aims to reduce such emissions, which could increase operational costs for the plant. [The Austin Chronicle](#)

•**Vegetation Damage:** Local pecan growers have reported declining tree health and reduced nut production, attributing these issues to sulfur dioxide emissions from the plant. [Global Energy Monitor](#), [TriplePundit](#)

•**Water Pollution Incident:** In 2015, Baylor Creek near the plant turned an unusual creamy-yellow color, raising concerns about potential toxic contamination. Residents and environmental groups urged the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to investigate. [Sierra Club](#)

2. Proposed Fracking Waste Injection Well

In 2023, a proposal for a fracking waste injection well in Fayette County sparked opposition from environmental groups and residents. Concerns centered on potential groundwater contamination and the long-term environmental impact of such facilities

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Lee County: Environmental Concerns

1. Proposed Composting Facility

In 2024, Austin-based Break It Down LLC proposed a commercial composting facility in Lee County.

Residents expressed concerns about: <https://www.kbtx.com+1> <https://www.kbtx.com+1>

Odor and Traffic:

Potential for unpleasant smells and increased truck traffic disrupting the rural community.

<https://www.kbtx.com>

Water Contamination:

Risk of runoff contaminating nearby creeks and ultimately Lake Somerville, a vital water source for surrounding areas [.https://www.kbtx.com](https://www.kbtx.com)

Environmental Precedent:

Fears that approval of the facility could set a precedent for similar projects in other rural communities [.https://www.kbtx.com](https://www.kbtx.com)

Residents and local officials have actively opposed the project, urging the TCEQ to hold public hearings and reconsider the permit.

FOOD INSECURITY

Fayette County

Food Insecurity Rate:

Approximately 11.7% of the population, equating to about 2,860 individuals.

[Stacker+1](#) [Stacker+1](#)

Annual Food Budget Shortfall:

Approximately \$1.65 million, indicating a substantial gap between the need for food assistance and available resources.

Local Initiatives:

Amen Food Pantry Mission: To provide supplemental assistance to Fayette County residents who are experiencing financial hardship.

Lee County

Food Insecurity Rate:

Approximately 12.0%, affecting around 2,090 individuals. [U.S. News+2](#) [Stacker+2](#) [U.S. News+2](#)

Annual Food Budget Shortfall:

Approximately \$1.24 million, reflecting a significant need for increased food assistance. [Stacker](#)

Local Initiatives: Since 2004 Giddings Area C.A.R.E. Center is organized exclusively for the assistance with spiritual, emotional, physical and material needs of people in crisis, hardship, and poverty, more specifically to provide food resources to the hungry and others without means to satisfy their basic human needs.

CNA SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Total participants in the community forum – 245 total responses

- **Giddings (Lee County) - 12**
- **La Grange – (Fayette County) - 11**

Summary of Response Percentages

- **Access to Health Care Services: 26.9%**
- **Access to Education and Childcare: 19.6%**
- **Preventive Health and Wellness: 22.4%**
- **Social Determinants of Health: 15.9%**
- **Environmental Concerns: 9.8%**
- **Food Insecurity: 5.3%**

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES (66)

Key Insights:

. Patterns:

- Transportation & affordability challenges.
- High demand for mental health services.
- Limited access to specialty care.
- Primary care stretched with long waits. (Tejas?)

. Outliers:

- Impact of St. Mark's Medical Center closure.
- Limited availability of telehealth for mental health.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE (48)

Key Insights:

. Patterns:

- Lack of affordable childcare, especially after-school and for infants.
- Need for more after-school, early childhood, and extracurricular programs.

. Outliers:

- Long waitlists for childcare services (e.g., Head Start).

PREVENTIVE HEALTH AND WELLNESS (55)

Key Insights:

. **Patterns:**

- High demand for recreational and wellness programs.
- Desire for more parks, trails, and affordable recreation.

. **Outliers:**

- Frustration with limited wellness program growth.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (39)

Key Insights:

. Patterns:

- Lack of affordable housing and need for home repairs.
- Limited transportation options (no Uber, limited public transit).

. Outliers:

- Suggestion for more county-level transportation services.
- Divergent views on the need for affordable housing development.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS (24)

Key Insights:

- **Patterns:**

- Concerns about water quality, especially arsenic in well water.
- Desire for more environmental sustainability and pollution control.

- **Outliers:**

Specific concerns about pollution from local industries, particularly the power plant.

FOOD INSECURITY (13)

Key Insights:

- **Patterns:**

- Limited access to affordable grocery stores.
- Community support for food assistance programs.

- **Outliers:**

- Unequal access to grocery stores, with some residents facing long travel distances.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- **Healthcare Access** remains the largest concern.
- **Lack of Community Infrastructure** like affordable housing, childcare, and recreational programs.
- **Environmental Concerns & Food Insecurity** are less frequent but important issues.

Both counties face significant challenges in healthcare access, community infrastructure, and food insecurity. Fayette County has a slightly lower food insecurity rate, while Lee County has a higher vulnerability in housing and transportation factors.

HEALTHCARE ACCESS – KEY PRIORITIES

Key Issues:

- Transportation barriers to medical services.
- Affordability of care, especially for mental health and dental services.
- Need for more mental health providers.
- Loss of St. Mark's Medical Center.

Potential Solutions:

- Expand transportation options (e.g., rideshare programs, public transit).
- Increase telehealth services for mental health.
- Implement subsidized healthcare programs and outreach.

CHILDCARE ACCESSIBILITY – SOLUTIONS

Key Issues:

- High childcare costs and limited availability, especially for infants.
- Need for more after-school programs.

Potential Solutions:

- Subsidized childcare programs.
- Expand after-school and flexible childcare options.
- Incentivize childcare providers to increase capacity.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TACKLING THE CRISIS

Key Issues:

- Limited affordable housing and the need for home repairs.
- Mismatch between housing and transportation.
Disconnect between **where people can afford to live** and **where jobs, services, or transit options are located**.

Potential Solutions:

- Develop affordable housing projects with incentives for developers.
- Implement home repair programs.
- Reevaluate zoning laws to allow affordable housing development.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Key Issues:

- Water quality concerns (arsenic in wells).
- Pollution from local industries.

Potential Solutions:

- Improve water filtration and provide education on safe water practices.
- Advocate for stricter environmental regulations for industries.

FOOD INSECURITY – EXPANDING ACCESS

Key Issues:

- Limited grocery options and food deserts.
- Support for food assistance programs.

Potential Solutions:

- Support local farmers markets and mobile grocery stores.
- Expand nutrition education and grow-your-own programs.

MOVING FORWARD

- ✓ **Collaborate** with local government, non-profits, and businesses to secure funding.
- ✓ **Prioritize** immediate needs like transportation and childcare.
- ✓ **Engage** community members to ensure solutions meet their needs.

Key Takeaways:

- **Access to healthcare is the most pressing issue.**
- Addressing transportation, childcare, housing, and environmental concerns will improve quality of life.
- Collaborative efforts will be needed to drive meaningful change in the community.

CONCLUSION

The closure of St. Mark's Medical Center in Fayette County, TX has significantly impacted the community's ability to grow and thrive. Access to quality healthcare is a cornerstone of any sustainable community, and the loss of this facility deters new professionals and families from relocating to the area. Without essential services, such as a local hospital, the county faces increased difficulty in attracting and retaining the workforce needed to support economic development.

In addition to healthcare access, other critical infrastructure challenges—such as a shortage of affordable housing, limited childcare options, and lack of recreational and cultural programs—further hinder Fayette County's growth. These factors collectively create barriers that make it difficult for the community to attract investment and ensure long-term prosperity.