

ROOT CAUSE OF FOOD INSECURITY:

HOUSING

BACKGROUND

Across the state, Texas households are grappling to keep up with skyrocketing rents and rising unemployment. The end of pandemic relief programs has left many families without the support they need in times of high inflation. These financial strains are leaving many families struggling to meet their basic needs.

THE HOUSING CRISIS IN TEXAS

Buying or renting a home has become increasingly difficult in Texas due to increasing interest rates and rents. Texas has 906,885 extremely low-income renter households and only 25 affordable and available rental homes per 100 extremely low-income renter households.

Texas has also experienced a rise in evictions by landlords, who have been filing more cases even before the pandemic, increasing housing instability. Tenants have fewer protections to keep them housed, which leaves vulnerable Texans shut out from a housing market they simply cannot afford.



HOW FOOD INSECURITY AND HOUSING ARE CONNECTED

Hunger doesn't happen in a vacuum - it's often a symptom of financial hardship. When families are experiencing financial instability, they are dealing with overlapping layers of economic hardships. With housing and food costs being significant expenditures for families, it can often lead families to make tough decisions on whether to pay rent or buy groceries. As a result, many families must make challenging decisions on how they'll spend their limited income - such as eating less, opting for cheaper but less nutritious food, or enduring unsafe living conditions.

Housing instability is a root cause of hunger because it forces vulnerable populations to make impossible decisions between their health and their housing. When households are forced by financial restraints to pick between their basic needs, it can lead to serious physical health issues like diet-related diseases or mental health issues like anxiety and depression. Both food and housing insecurity can contribute to children experiencing poor mental and physical health, further harming a child's physical and educational development.

HOW WE CAN HELP TEXANS

Supporting affordable housing and strong tenant protections can alleviate financial strains for families in Texas - allowing families to allocate more of their budget to essential needs like food without sacrificing their nutrition for housing. **Expanding housing assistance for low-income Texan households will further close the food insecurity gap in the state.**