

COVID-19 FOOD NEEDS IN TRAVIS COUNTY 2-1-1 CALL ANALYSIS SUMMARY REPORT

JULY 2020

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INTRODUCTION AND FINDINGS

Introduction

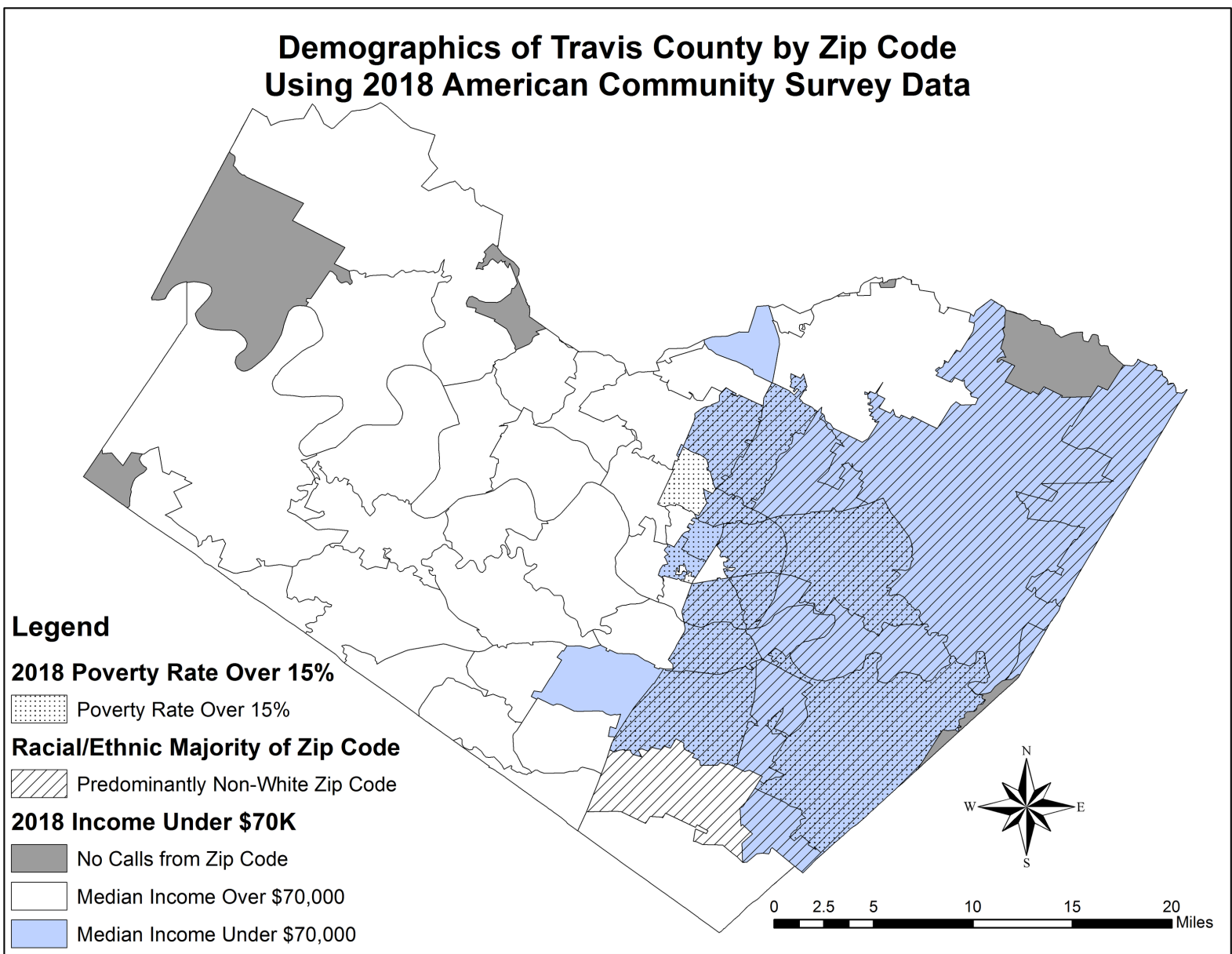
In early April 2020, the City of Austin Office of Sustainability reached out to Dell Medical School and UTHealth School of Public Health in Austin for assistance in identifying areas where there are unmet food needs in Austin pertaining to COVID-19. The team from the UTHealth School of Public Health analyzed 2-1-1 call data from January-June 2019 and January-June 2020 and performed geospatial analyses with 2-1-1 call data and access to food need assets to identify areas with unmet food needs related to COVID-19 in Travis County that was presented in previous reports. This work expands on those reports and analyzes July 2020 data. Through these analyses we were able to gain greater understanding of food needs among 2-1-1 callers from Travis County as well as identify areas with high volume and percentage of food need calls with limited access to food assets.

Demographics of Callers

According to the 2019 2-1-1 Trends Report from the United Way for Greater Austin, a typical caller to 2-1-1 are single mothers who are having issues with economic and food insecurity factors. The findings of from our 2020 analysis validated these findings, in that callers to 2-1-1 are most commonly women, primarily speak English or Spanish, and have called 2-1-1 previously (but there was an increase in first time users in April 2020). There is higher call volume to 2-1-1 in the Eastern Crescent of Travis County. Many of the zip codes that make up the Eastern Crescent of Travis County have higher poverty rates, have a lower median income, and are predominantly racial/ethnic minority, according to 2018 American Community Survey data as shown in **Figure 1**.

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Figure 1: Demographics of Travis County by Zip Code Using 2018 American Community Survey Data



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Overall and Food Need 2-1-1 Call Trends

In order to contextualize the seasonality and trends of 2-1-1 call data, we compared January-July 2019 call data to January-July 2020 call data. Typically call volume is high in January, then fluctuates to peak in July, as evident in the 2019 data. However, the following occurred in July 2020:

- Increased overall call volume in July 2020 than in 2019 (7008 vs. 6409 calls).
- There was over 1.34 times the food need call volume in July 2020 than in 2019 (2140 vs. 1595 calls).
- There was an increase in overall call volume from June (6763 calls) to July 2020 (7008 calls)
- There was a slight decline in food need call volume from June (2147 food calls) to July 2020 (2140 food calls).
- The majority of calls to 2-1-1 in July 2020 were regarding health/mental health, food, and housing issues, which was also the case in March-June 2020.
- Connectatx.org had 2338 page visits during July 2020, however what pages the user visited and the location of the determined cannot be determined at this time.

When analyzing by week as seen in **Figure 2** of note:

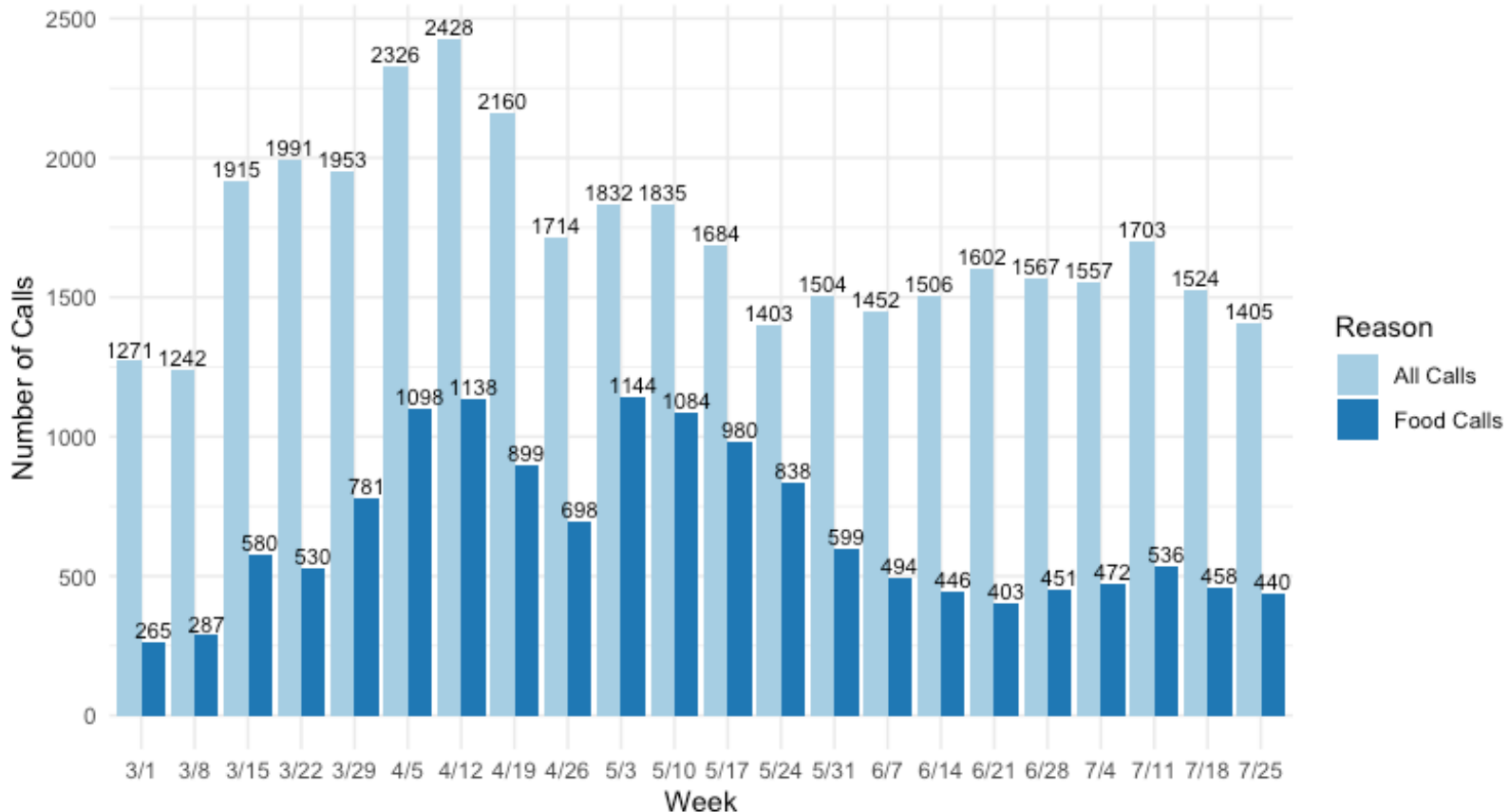
- For a detailed discussion of the call trends for March-June 2020, please see the previously developed March/April, May, and June Reports.
- Overall call volume declined week to week from 6/28-7/10, and then increased during the week of 7/11, and then declined every week during the rest of July.
- Food need call volume rose slightly from 6/28-7/10, but then followed similar trends by increasing the week of 7/11, and declined every week during the rest of July

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Overall and Food Need 2-1-1 Call Trends Continued

- The rise in call volume during the week of July 11th, could be due to the rise in COVID-19 cases in Travis County during this time period.
- Additional analysis of August data could help shed light on how food needs are being experienced by Travis County residents during the continued COVID-19 pandemic and to help determine if food call volume is stabilizing.

Figure 2: Overall and Food Need 2-1-1 Calls in Travis County from March-July 2020 by Week



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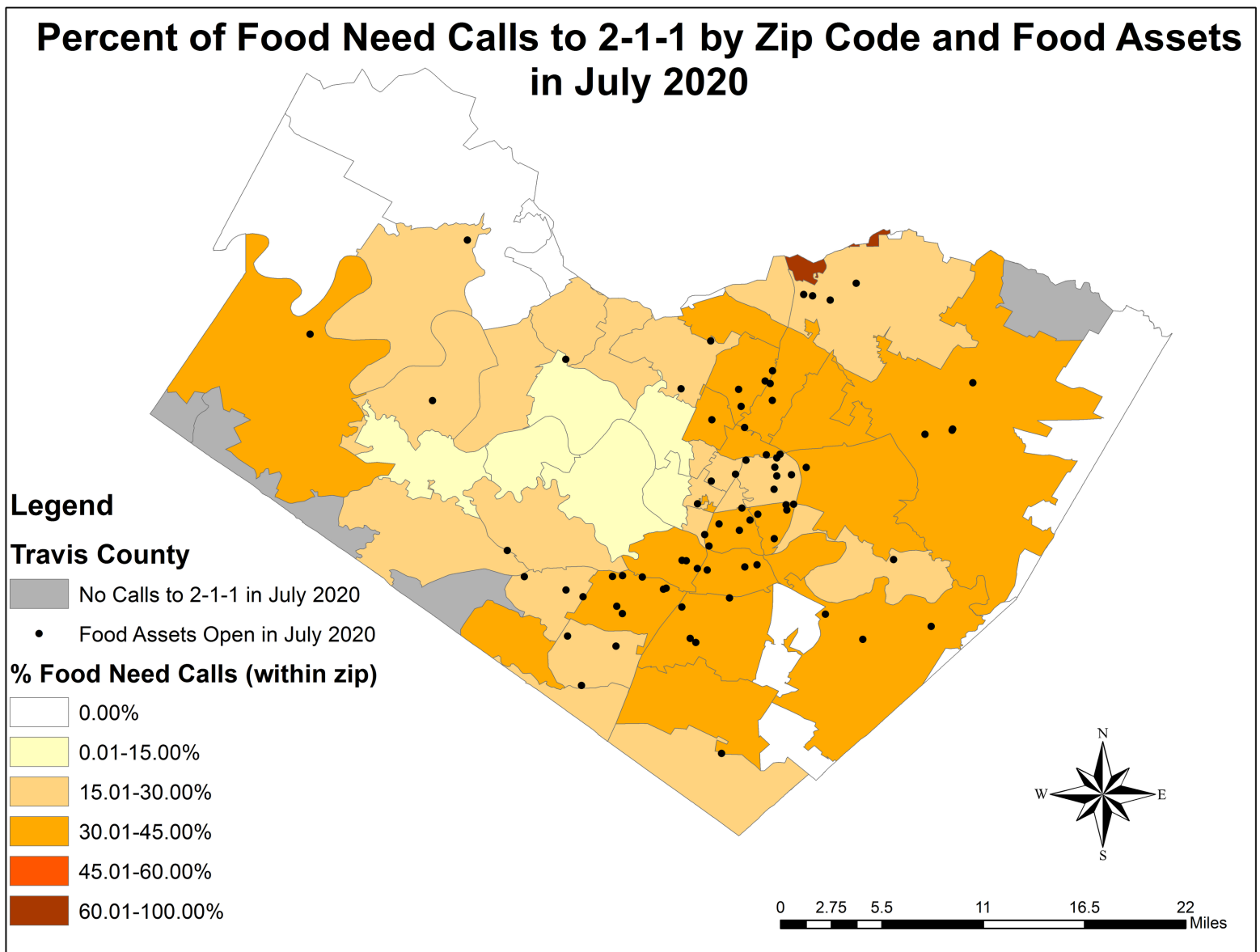
Spatial Examination of Food Need 2-1-1 Calls – July 2020

Spatial analysis of the 2-1-1 overall and food call data for Travis County required translating the 2-1-1 call data from July 2020 to be mapped by zip code and including locations of COVID-19 food assets that were listed on ConnectATX.org that were located in Travis County and open during the respective month. With this analysis there were several key trends:

- The majority of callers to 2-1-1 (overall and for food needs) were from zip codes located in the Eastern Crescent of Travis County.
- Areas with the highest proportion of their calls regarding food needs in July and locations of COVID-19 food assets are shown in **Figure 3**.
- There were more zip codes in Travis County that had residents that called 2-1-1 in July 2020 than in June 2020.
- There was an increase in the number of zip codes that had over 30% of the calls to 2-1-1 were regarding food needs in from June (32.76%) to July (37.70%), however this was still a much lower percentage than May 2020 (78.57%).
- Additionally, there were more zip codes in July 2020 that had no calls to 2-1-1 regarding food needs than in March-June 2020.
- There are pockets throughout Travis County that do not have COVID-19 food assets located within the zip code. These pockets located within the Eastern Crescent are particularly alarming given the high call volume to 2-1-1 and the historically underserved communities in these areas.
- This could demonstrate a potential stabilization of food need calls to 2-1-1, however further analysis of August 2020 data is needed to determine if needs are stabilizing.

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Figure 3: Percent of Food Need Calls to 2-1-1 by Zip Code and COVID-19 Food Needs Assets in Travis County in June 2020



CONCLUSION

Conclusion and Recommendations

Given our analysis, zip codes with potential unmet food needs have been identified. There are a couple of key zip codes of interest as areas with unmet food needs, specifically: 78754 and 78747. Both of these zip codes are located in the Eastern Crescent and are zip codes that had a high overall and food need call volume to 2-1-1 in March through July 2020. Additionally, there are COVID-19 food assets only located in neighboring and not within the zip code as of June 2020. As of the end of September, a local non-profit will be adding emergency food delivery to the 78747 zip code. The impact of the strategic placement of this asset could potentially be measured by analyzing October 2-1-1 call data.

While there are other zip codes with a high proportion of food needs calls within zip code outside of the Eastern Crescent of Travis County, these areas have a relatively small total call volume, thus future analysis should be conducted to further examine these trends. Furthermore, the greatest call volume of food needs calls to 2-1-1 exists in other zip codes in the Eastern Crescent that do have food needs assets located within the zip code. These resources should not be shifted or removed given the high need in these areas. Continued analysis of 2-1-1 call data in August 2020 can help further identify call trends and areas with unmet food needs and can help elucidate whether the findings from July 2020 demonstrate a potential stabilization of food need calls to 2-1-1 or if these findings are a byproduct of increased health/mental health calls due to a rise in COVID-19 cases during this period.

**For Additional Questions, Please Contact Kathryn Janda at
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