



TEXAS MATTERS

Balanced Budgets, Fiscal Responsibility & Responsible Growth

www.texasmatters.org
@texas_matters
Texas Matters

Texas Matters Principle

Economic opportunity begins with people.

A strong economy creates opportunities for Texans to find meaningful work, start businesses, support their families, and afford the essentials of everyday life. It also provides the resources to invest in education, healthcare, public safety, infrastructure, and the other priorities that strengthen our communities.

Preparing today's workforce, encouraging entrepreneurship, and ensuring Texas remains a place where families can live, work, and build a future are essential to lasting prosperity.

What Matters Most to...?

ME

How can Texas create opportunities for me and my family to succeed?

A strong economy affects our ability to find meaningful work, start a business, buy a home, afford childcare, save for the future, and provide for our families. Understanding what drives economic growth helps us better understand the choices that affect our financial security and quality of life.

US

How do we create an economy where businesses, workers, and communities can thrive?

Thriving communities depend on skilled workers, successful businesses, affordable housing and childcare, strong infrastructure, and investments that support long-term economic growth. When businesses succeed, they create jobs, strengthen local economies, and expand opportunities for future generations.

TOMORROW

What kind of economy do we want to leave to the next generation?

Preparing for the future means investing in today's workforce, supporting innovation and entrepreneurship, building reliable infrastructure, and managing public resources responsibly. The choices we make today will help determine whether future generations inherit a Texas that continues to offer opportunity, affordability, and prosperity.

Why it matters?

A strong economy creates opportunities for Texans to build businesses, find good jobs, support their families, and invest in their communities. Economic prosperity affects nearly every aspect of daily life—from wages and housing to education, healthcare, and quality of life.

Understanding what drives Texas' economy helps citizens make informed decisions and vote with confidence about the policies that shape our state's future.

A strong free-market economy gives individuals the opportunity to start businesses, create jobs, compete fairly, and innovate. It seeks to reduce unnecessary obstacles while maintaining rules that protect workers, consumers, public safety, and fair competition.

1. What makes Texas' economy strong?

Answer

Texas has one of the largest and most diverse economies in the world. While the state has long been known for oil and natural gas, today's economy also includes technology, manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, aerospace, logistics, financial services, and tourism.

Several factors have contributed to Texas' economic growth:

- A growing population and workforce
- A culture of entrepreneurship
- A diverse mix of industries
- Extensive highway, rail, airport, and port systems
- Major universities and research institutions

- Abundant energy resources
- International trade, particularly with Mexico

No single factor explains Texas' success. Rather, it is the combination of people, natural resources, infrastructure, education, and private investment that has helped Texas become one of the nation's leading economies.

Why It Matters

A strong economy creates opportunities for Texans to build careers, support their families, start businesses, and afford the essentials of everyday life. Understanding what drives Texas' economy helps citizens evaluate economic policies, workforce investments, and long-term priorities—and **vote with confidence**.

2. What is a free-market economy?

Answer

A free-market economy is one in which individuals and businesses make most economic decisions—such as what to produce, what to buy, where to invest, and where to work—through voluntary exchange and competition. Government still plays an important role by establishing laws, protecting property rights, enforcing contracts, promoting competition, and protecting public health and safety.

In practice, no economy is completely "free" or completely government-controlled. Most modern economies, including Texas', combine private enterprise with laws and regulations intended to protect consumers, workers, and the public while encouraging innovation and competition.

Why It Matters

Economic systems reflect choices about the roles of individuals, businesses, and government. Understanding how free markets and public policy work together helps Texans thoughtfully evaluate economic proposals, understand the choices before our state, and **vote with confidence**.

3. What Helps Texas Remain Economically Competitive?

Answer

Many factors contribute to Texas' long-term economic competitiveness, including:

- A skilled and educated workforce
- Strong public and higher education systems
- Reliable energy and water infrastructure
- Modern transportation systems
- Access to broadband and technology
- A predictable regulatory environment
- Support for entrepreneurship and innovation
- Research and development
- Access to capital
- A high quality of life that attracts workers and employers

As the economy evolves, Texas will continue to compete for talent, investment, and business growth.

Why It Matters

A competitive economy creates opportunities for Texans today while preparing our state for tomorrow. Understanding the factors that drive long-term economic growth helps Texans evaluate public investments, policy choices, and **vote with confidence**.

4. Why are small businesses important to Texans?

Answer

Small businesses are an essential part of Texas' economy. They provide jobs, introduce new ideas, strengthen local communities, and contribute to economic growth. From family-owned restaurants and farms to technology startups and manufacturers, small businesses help create opportunities across the state.

Because small businesses are often deeply connected to their communities, they also contribute to local leadership, charitable giving, and civic life.

Why It Matters

Small businesses help drive innovation, create jobs, and strengthen communities across Texas. Understanding their role in the state's economy helps Texans evaluate economic policies, public priorities, and the choices that support long-term prosperity—and **vote with confidence**.

4. What barriers make it difficult to start or grow a business?

Answer

Starting a business often requires significant planning, investment, and risk. Entrepreneurs may face challenges such as:

- Access to financing
- Licensing and permitting requirements
- Finding qualified employees
- Rising healthcare and insurance costs
- Affordable childcare for employees
- Housing affordability
- Transportation and infrastructure needs
- Broadband access
- Complex regulations
- Inflation and supply chain disruptions

Some people believe reducing regulations encourages entrepreneurship and investment. Others emphasize the importance of regulations that protect consumers, workers, and the environment. Texans often weigh both considerations when evaluating public policy.

Why It Matters

Entrepreneurs and small businesses help create jobs, strengthen local economies, and expand opportunity across Texas. Understanding the barriers they face helps Texans evaluate economic policies, the tradeoffs involved in regulation and growth, and **vote with confidence**.

5. How does workforce development strengthen the economy?

Answer

Workforce development helps prepare people for available jobs through education, apprenticeships, career and technical education, community colleges, universities, and employer-sponsored training.

A skilled workforce benefits both workers and employers. Individuals gain access to better career opportunities, while businesses are better able to find qualified employees.

Why It Matters

Workforce development creates opportunities for Texans while helping employers find the skilled workers they need to grow. Understanding these investments helps Texans evaluate education and workforce policies, economic priorities, and **vote with confidence**.

6. Why do infrastructure and affordable housing matter to business growth?

Answer

Businesses rely on infrastructure every day. Roads, bridges, airports, railroads, ports, broadband, water systems, and reliable electricity allow goods, services, and people to move efficiently throughout the state.

Affordable housing is also an important economic issue. When workers can afford to live near their jobs, employers may find it easier to recruit and retain employees. Housing costs can influence labor markets, economic development, and community growth.

Why It Matters

Infrastructure and affordable housing **create the foundation for economic opportunity**. Understanding how they support businesses, workers, and growing communities helps Texans evaluate public investments, economic priorities, and **vote with confidence**.

7. Why Does Affordability Matter?

Answer

Affordability refers to how much of a household's income is needed to pay for essential expenses.

Many factors influence affordability, including:

- Housing costs
- Childcare expenses
- Healthcare costs
- Transportation
- Energy prices
- Taxes
- Insurance
- Wages and income

As Texas continues to grow, many communities are exploring ways to expand housing, improve transportation, strengthen the workforce, and encourage economic growth while maintaining affordability.

Why It Matters

Affordability shapes the opportunities available to Texas families and the strength of our communities. Understanding the factors that influence the cost of everyday life helps Texans evaluate economic policies, understand the choices before our state, and **vote with confidence**.

8. How Do State Policies Impact Affordability?

Answer

State policies can influence affordability in several ways, although they are only one of many factors that affect prices.

Examples include:

- Tax policies that influence the overall cost of living.
- Housing policies that affect the availability and cost of homes.
- Investments in roads, transportation, and infrastructure that affect commuting costs and business expenses.
- Workforce and education policies that help prepare workers for higher-paying jobs.
- Childcare policies that influence parents' ability to participate in the workforce.
- Regulations that may affect the cost of doing business.
- Investments in water, energy, and the electric grid that help support reliable services and long-term economic growth.

Many other factors—including inflation, interest rates, global supply chains, weather, energy markets, and consumer demand—also influence prices.

Because affordability is shaped by many interconnected factors, there is no single policy that determines the cost of living.

Why It Matters

Affordability affects a family's ability to live, work, save, and plan for the future. Understanding how state policies can influence the cost of everyday life helps Texans evaluate economic priorities, understand the choices before our state, and **vote with confidence**.

9. What Can State Leaders Do to Improve Affordability?

Answer

State leaders have several tools that may influence affordability over time.

Depending on their priorities and policy approach, they may focus on:

- Supporting a strong economy that creates jobs and increases wages.
- Expanding the supply of housing to help meet the needs of a growing population.
- Investing in transportation and infrastructure to improve mobility and reduce costs associated with congestion.
- Supporting workforce development and education to prepare Texans for higher-paying careers.
- Encouraging entrepreneurship and business growth to increase competition and economic opportunity.
- Reviewing taxes, regulations, and permitting processes that affect the cost of living and the cost of doing business.
- Investing in reliable water and energy infrastructure to support long-term economic growth.
- Supporting access to affordable childcare so more parents can participate in the workforce.

At the same time, many of the prices Texans pay for food, gasoline, consumer goods, and other products are influenced by national and global markets that are beyond the direct control of state government.

For that reason, affordability is often the result of many factors working together rather than a single policy or decision.

Why It Matters

Affordability affects nearly every Texan—from the cost of housing, childcare, healthcare, food, and transportation to the ability to save for the future. Understanding the factors that influence affordability helps Texans evaluate economic policies, understand the tradeoffs involved, and **vote with confidence**.

10. Who has responsibility over economic prosperity?

Answer

- Governor
- Lieutenant Governor
- Texas House of Representatives
- Comptroller
- State Senators
- Mayor
- City Council
- County Judges
- County Commissioners

Vote with Confidence

Economic opportunity affects every Texan. The decisions made by state and local leaders influence the conditions that allow businesses to grow, workers to succeed, families to prosper, and communities to thrive.

As you evaluate candidates and economic policy, consider asking thoughtful questions such as:

Opportunity & Prosperity

- How will this proposal expand economic opportunity for Texans?
- How will it help families build financial security and improve their quality of life?
- How will success be measured?

Jobs & Workforce

- How will Texas prepare workers for the jobs of today and tomorrow?
- What role should education, Career and Technical Education, apprenticeships, community colleges, universities, and workforce training play in strengthening the economy?
- How can Texas continue attracting employers while preparing Texans to fill high-demand jobs?

Entrepreneurship & Small Business

- How will this proposal support entrepreneurs and small businesses?
- What barriers to starting or growing a business should be addressed?
- How can Texas encourage innovation while maintaining fair competition and protecting consumers?

Affordability & Quality of Life

- How will this proposal affect the affordability of housing, childcare, healthcare, transportation, and other everyday expenses?
- How can Texas support economic growth while helping communities remain affordable places to live and work?
- How do affordability and quality of life influence Texas' ability to attract workers and businesses?

Long-Term Competitiveness

- How will Texas continue competing for jobs, investment, and talent?
- What investments in infrastructure, education, water, energy, broadband, and transportation are needed to support long-term prosperity?
- How can Texas encourage innovation and economic growth while responsibly managing public resources?

Accountability & Results

- What evidence supports this proposal?
- What tradeoffs should Texans consider?
- How will leaders measure whether these policies are improving economic opportunity, workforce readiness, and long-term competitiveness?

Reasonable people may support different approaches to strengthening the economy. Understanding the goals, evidence, tradeoffs, and expected outcomes can help Texans thoughtfully evaluate economic policy and vote with confidence.

Texas Matters Takeaway

Economic opportunity is about more than numbers—it is about people.

A strong economy creates opportunities for individuals to build careers, entrepreneurs to start businesses, families to achieve financial security, and communities to prosper. It also helps make it possible for Texans to afford the essentials of everyday life—including housing, childcare, healthcare, transportation, and other necessities that contribute to a high quality of life.

Economic prosperity provides the resources needed to invest in education, healthcare, public safety, infrastructure, water, and the other priorities that support strong communities and long-term growth.

As Texas continues to grow, maintaining a strong economy will require thoughtful leadership, innovation, a skilled workforce, responsible stewardship of public resources, and **policies that encourage opportunity while helping Texas remain an affordable place to live, work, raise a family, and build a business.**

By understanding how Texas' economy works, exploring the choices before us, and evaluating policies based on measurable outcomes, Texans can help build an economy that expands opportunity, supports affordability, and prepares the next generation for lasting prosperity.

**Explore what matters most to everyday Texans.
Understand the choices.
Vote with confidence.**

Trusted Resources

- [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts](#)
- [Texas Workforce Commission](#)
- [Texas 2036](#)
- [Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas](#)
- [Office of the Texas State Demographer](#)
- [Local chambers of commerce](#)
- University-based economic research centers