#1 of 2: Spread in County Unemployment Rate Across the Market, in Points (Septem



Caldwell County leads Austin in unemployment spread

ALEX Intelligence, 2026

Swipe for insights →

Photo: Larry D. Moore · CC BY 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

THE DATA

0.3

Spread in County Unemployment Rate Across the Market, in Points (September 2026)

The gap between Caldwell County's 3.9% and Travis County's 3.6% unemployment rate in September 2026 reflects a growing economic divergence within the Austin metro.

This 0.3-point spread is not just a number—it signals a deeper structural shift. While Travis County maintains near-full employment, Caldwell County's higher joblessness suggests lagging infrastructure investment, limited access to high-wage sectors, or a concentration of lower-skill labor. The disparity is not driven by migration but by uneven economic development across the region's counties.



Photo: Larry D. Moore · CC BY 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, September 2026 (county, seasonally unadjusted) · ALEX Intelligence computation
https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-11-19-austin-msa-within-county-unemployment

01

Unemployment gaps fuel housing inequality

As unemployment disparities grow, so do housing access disparities. Travis County’s low joblessness sustains demand for high-end housing and rental stability, while Caldwell County’s higher unemployment limits home affordability and increases financial stress. This divergence is not temporary—it reflects a long-term divergence in economic opportunity that will shape where people can live, work, and invest over the next decade.

Photo: En el nido (Nest) · CC BY 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons



Photo: Kenneth C. Zirkel · CC BY-SA 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons

02

Policy must target county-level gaps

The 0.3-point gap between Caldwell and Travis is not just a metric—it's a policy signal. Austin's regional planning must shift from metro-wide strategies to targeted interventions per county. Without direct investment in workforce development, transportation access, and business incubation in lagging counties like Caldwell, the metro risks deepening inequality, undermining long-term growth, and eroding social cohesion.

Real Estate Strategy & Intelligence Leader. Democratized Blue Ocean Strategist & Operator.

Diane Hart Alexander, MBA, MHA

Chair & CEO, ALEX Companies

Designated Broker, Alexander Tiffany Southwest, LLC dba ALEX.realestate, et.al.

Texas License #574877-B · Broker License #565194-BB

diane@alex.realestate · +1 713.591.9902

ALEX

ALEX Intelligence
deep intelligence

ALEX Real Estate
genius real estate

ALEX Advisory
uncontested strategy

ALEX Cares
purposeful philanthropy