

Lifting Up Communities Through Small Business Growth

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's BizConnect Program | San Antonio, Texas

About

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation harnesses the power of business to create solutions for the good of America and the world. The U.S. Chamber Foundation uses EIG's Distressed Communities Index (DCI) to identify economically vulnerable communities to advance initiatives that strengthen communities through small business growth and resiliency.

Harnessing the DCI for Community Selection

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation has employed the DCI across its economic empowerment initiatives, including the Coalition to Back Black Businesses, the Save Small Business Fund, and most recently, BizConnect. BizConnect is a development and mentorship program for small businesses in economically distressed areas. In its pilot phase in San Antonio, TX, the DCI was crucial for identifying economically distressed areas where interventions could have the biggest impact in strengthening communities. It informed the participation of the 19 businesses that received coaching, networking opportunities, and financial assistance to advance their economic success and resiliency. The Foundation plans to continue using the DCI to select future locations for the BizConnect initiative.

DCI SCORE

70.2

At Risk

DCI PROFILE

San Antonio, Texas*

	SAN ANTONIO	NATIONAL
NO HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	18.2%	11.5%
POVERTY RATE	19.1%	12.8%
ADULTS NOT WORKING	24.3%	21.4%
HOUSING VACANCY RATE	10.2%	7.8%
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$51.5K	\$65K
CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT	-4.5%	5.8%
CHANGE IN ESTABLISHMENTS	1.8%	3.1%

“The Distressed Communities Index is critical to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s small business resiliency work and is a key part of BizConnect’s success. By allowing us to assess community needs across specific economic indicators, the DCI allows us to target support for communities where it can make the biggest impact.”

- Shanique Streete, Executive Director, Programs, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

In many ways, distressed communities embody left-behind America, and they frequently bear signs of profound disconnection from the country’s overall economic success. In the average distressed community, **23%** of the population lives below the poverty line, **34%** of the prime working-age adult population are out of work, and **19%** lack a high school diploma.

*Average Across San Antonio Communities Served



Image courtesy of Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce

Supporting Small Business Owners in America and Strengthening Communities

BizConnect guided participants on how to tackle top challenges faced by small business owners, from cash flow and access to capital to customer acquisition and inflation. Participants gained crucial insights into strategic thinking, financial management, the value of networking, and the importance of a competent team and task delegation. Ultimately, the skills learned will make small businesses and, in turn, their communities more resilient to disasters, economic uncertainty, and a constantly changing economy.

The Distressed Communities Index (DCI) is a tool for measuring the comparative economic well-being of U.S. communities and helps illuminate local disparities across the country. In all, the DCI captures more than 99% of the U.S. population and nearly 26,000 zip codes. By powering initiatives such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s, the DCI aids the creation of a resilient national economy. The DCI is used by nonprofits targeting grants for small businesses, companies seeking to cultivate inclusive supply chains, healthcare practitioners conducting research on patient outcomes, state/local governments targeting services, and reporters looking for economic insights, to name just a few examples. **For more information and to license the DCI visit eig.org/distressed-communities.**