Rio Grande Valley Information Technology Workforce Assessment

workforce
SOLUTIONS

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THOMAS P. MILLER & ASSOCIATES

This assessment was prepared for Workforce Solutions by Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA).

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board DBA Workforce Solutions, under the direction of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), is one of 28 local workforce development boards located throughout the state and is designed to respond to the needs of Texas employers and jobseekers through market-driven workforce development initiatives. This assessment is a comprehensive regional study that aims to improve the alignment of local talent with the needs of employers, and to support in positioning the Rio Grande Valley region as a competitive hub for the Information Technology (IT) industry.

In March 2021, Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board DBA Workforce Solutions partnered with Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) to jumpstart this effort by conducting an Information Technology Workforce Assessment within the region (counties of Starr, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Cameron) to fully understand the IT industry and the skilled workforce required to support and sustain it. Workforce Solutions defines the IT field as "the development, maintenance, and use of computer systems, software, and networks for the processing and distribution of data." To complete the assessment, TPMA designed methodologies to address four core areas:

> **Workforce Availability**: Identifying the current labor market in the four-county region and where they are concentrated by geography.
>
> **Educational Programs:** Determining current IT educational programs (i.e. certifications and degrees), how they align with in-demand, target IT occupations, and where gaps in education and training exist (if any).[1]
>
> **Infrastructure Capacity:** Reviewing the region's IT infrastructure including technology providers, broadband access in rural areas, current and future projects to strengthen the IT infrastructure and funding opportunities available to provide assistance; and
>
> **Economic Growth Potential:** Providing recommendations on how to grow the IT industry in the four-county region including talent development, funding for projects and infrastructure development, and how to strengthen the existing IT capacity.

To provide insight and recommendations within the development of the scope of work, Workforce Solutions assembled an advisory committee composed of various industry experts in the private sector, banking, education, and local government. This assessment examines the Rio Grande Valley's demographic makeup, labor force, employment characteristics, and the IT industry and its occupational strengths. It also identifies the potential for growth and partners who will lead the way in the future. In addition, the assessment outlines required education attainment levels that will be necessary to staff this growing industry and its supplying feeder industries. The final section of the report contains suggestions and opportunities for future growth through recommendations, best practices, and funding opportunities.

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1. Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board DBA Workforce Solutions has an updated list of target occupations, occupational profiles, demand occupations, and high demand middle-skill STEM occupations. All of these resources can be found at https://www.wfsolutions.org/how-we-help/workforce-intelligence/target-occupations.html.

Economic Overview of the Region

This section provides a concise synopsis of *Labor Market Information and IT Sector Analysis* that addressed the first core area, Workforce Availability.

Geography

The geographic region of Rio Grande Valley includes Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy, and Cameron counties. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board DBA Workforce Solutions serves Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties; these counties are differentiated as the Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Area (LRGV WDA). On the other hand, The Workforce Development Board of Cameron County, which is known as Workforce Solutions Cameron, delivers services solely to Cameron County. Located in the appendix, The *Labor Market Information and IT Sector Analysis* provides additional data specific to Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties in comparison to Cameron County.

Demographics

The four-county region has a total population of 1,391,507 residents. The youth population, 5- to 19-year-olds, account for about 362,000 of the total population--the highest number among age ranges. Residents who are working age make up a considerable number of the total population. Residents aged 20 to 34 years old grew by 5.45% from 2015 to 2020 and are expected to increase by 6% from 2020 to 2025. Table 1 shows population by all ages in the Rio Grande Valley. Population shifts in the Rio Grande Valley vary greatly when stratified by race and ethnicity. The largest ethnic group in the region by far, at approximately 92%, is Hispanic with a population of 1,280,155. This group includes all residents that identify as Hispanic. In addition, this group had a modest 4% increase in percentage of the population from 2015 to 2020. The second-largest group in the region and the only racial group where there was a decline in percentage from 2015 to 2020 was the White, Non-Hispanic group, which had a decrease of 9% over this span of time.[2]

TABLE 1: POPULATION BY AGE, 2015-2020 AND 2020-2025[3]

Age	2020 Population	2020 % of Cohort	Change (2015-2020)	% Change (2015-2020)	Projected Change (2020-2025)	Projected % Change (2020-2025)
Under 5 years	113,469	8.2%	(12,654)	(10.03%)	18,150	16%
5 to 19 years	361,848	34.5%	3,279	0.91%	(13,034)	4%
20 to 34 years	294,245	21.1%	15,202	5.45%	17,353	6%
35 to 54 years	325,537	23.4%	9,655	3.06%	6,083	2%
55 to 64 years	123,986	8.9%	8,476	7.34%	5,835	5%
65 + years	172,422	12.4%	23,085	13.39%	16,541	10%
Total:	**1,391,507**					

Source: Emsi 2021.1

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2   Emsi. 2021.1.
3   Text colored red indicate a negative number or percentage.

As seen in Table 2, the poverty rate in all four counties in the Rio Grande Valley is substantially higher than in Texas and the US while the average median income is also significantly lower. Of all four counties, Starr County has both the lowest median household income at $28,428 and the highest poverty rate at 34.7%. Willacy County has the lowest poverty rate among the four at 27%. However, this rate is still nearly twice that of the poverty rate in both Texas and the US, which is 14.7%. The median household income in Willacy County is below that of Hidalgo and Cameron counties at $31,707. While Hidalgo and Cameron counties have the highest median household income at approximately $39,000, they have a higher poverty rate than Willacy County at 28.9% and 29.7%, respectively.[4]

TABLE 2: POVERTY RATE AND MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

County	Poverty Rate	Median Household Income
Hidalgo County, TX	29.7%	$38,956
Starr County, TX	34.7%	$28,428
Willacy County, TX	27.0%	$31,707
Cameron County, TX	28.9%	$38,551
Texas	14.7%	$61,874
United States	14.7%	$62,843

Sources: US Census 2019; American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Human Capital

The level of educational attainment in the Rio Grande Valley unfortunately lags not only behind other areas in Texas, but also the rest of the United States. Approximately 20% of adults in the Rio Grande Valley have less than a 9th grade education compared to 8% of the state's total population and 5% of the US population. Similarly, 13% of adults in the Rio Grande Valley started high school but did not complete it; this compares to 8% for the state of Texas and 7% for the United States.

However, there is a slight shift when looking at the percentage of the population that completed high school. Approximately 25% of adults in the Rio Grande Valley have a high school diploma, which is the same as the average for Texas, 25%, and nearly the same as it is in the US at 27%. This trend continues when looking at the percentage of people that have attended some college or have an associate's degree. Approximately 18% of adults in the Rio Grande Valley have completed some college and 6% have an associate's degree. 21% of Texans have some college education and 7% have an associate's degree compared to 20% and 9% in the US. Unfortunately, the Rio Grande Valley drops off again after this as only 13% of adults have a bachelor's degree and 5% have some form of post-baccalaureate education as compared to 20% and 11% in Texas and 20% and 13% in the US.

TABLE 3: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Education Level	Regional Population	% of Regional Population	% of Texas Population	% of U.S. Population
Less Than 9th Grade	161,685	20%	8%	5%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	108,448	13%	8%	7%
High School Diploma	201,980	25%	25%	27%
Some College	145,839	18%	21%	20%
Associate's Degree	46,046	6%	7%	9%
Bachelor's Degree	102,596	13%	20%	20%
Graduate Degree and Higher	43,705	5%	11%	13%

Source: Emsi 2021.1

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4   US Census 2019; American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019.

Labor Force and Unemployment

Labor force participation rates quantifies residents actively working or searching for work. The following two tables estimate each counties' average labor force, employment, and variations between them during 2015 and 2020. Hidalgo has the largest number of residents in the labor force; its most recent average labor force in 2020 was 355,829. The average number of employed residents in Hidalgo County in 2020 was 313,804. The differences between the labor force and employment in the region is influenced by a variety of factors related to the economic climate of each county.

In 2015 and 2020, the average labor force for Starr and Willacy counties showed minor differences compared to their respective employment numbers. In 2015, the difference in the average labor force and average employment in Starr County was 3,480. In 2020, the difference in average labor force and average of employment in Starr County was 4,596. In 2015, the difference between averages was only 878 in Willacy County and even less in 2020 with a difference between averages at nearly 800. Those who can be employed are predominantly actively employed or are seeking work in Willacy County. Employment averages between 2015 and 2020 for each county have remained relatively static.

TABLE 4: LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT AVERAGES PER COUNTY, 2015[5]

County	Average Labor Force 2015	Avg. Employment 2015	Difference between Averages
Hidalgo	330,912	304,749	26,163
Starr	25,879	22,399	3,480
Willacy	6,747	5,869	878
Cameron	163,095	151,508	11,587

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015

TABLE 5: LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT AVERAGES PER COUNTY, 2020

County	Average Labor Force 2020	Avg. Employment 2020	Difference between Averages
Hidalgo	355,839	313,804	42,035
Starr	25,834	21,238	4,596
Willacy	6,669	5,872	797
Cameron	165,564	148,277	17,287

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020

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5 The Labor Force and Employment averages were based on data that was not seasonally adjusted. The averages were calculated based on 2015 data and are approximate, not exact numbers.
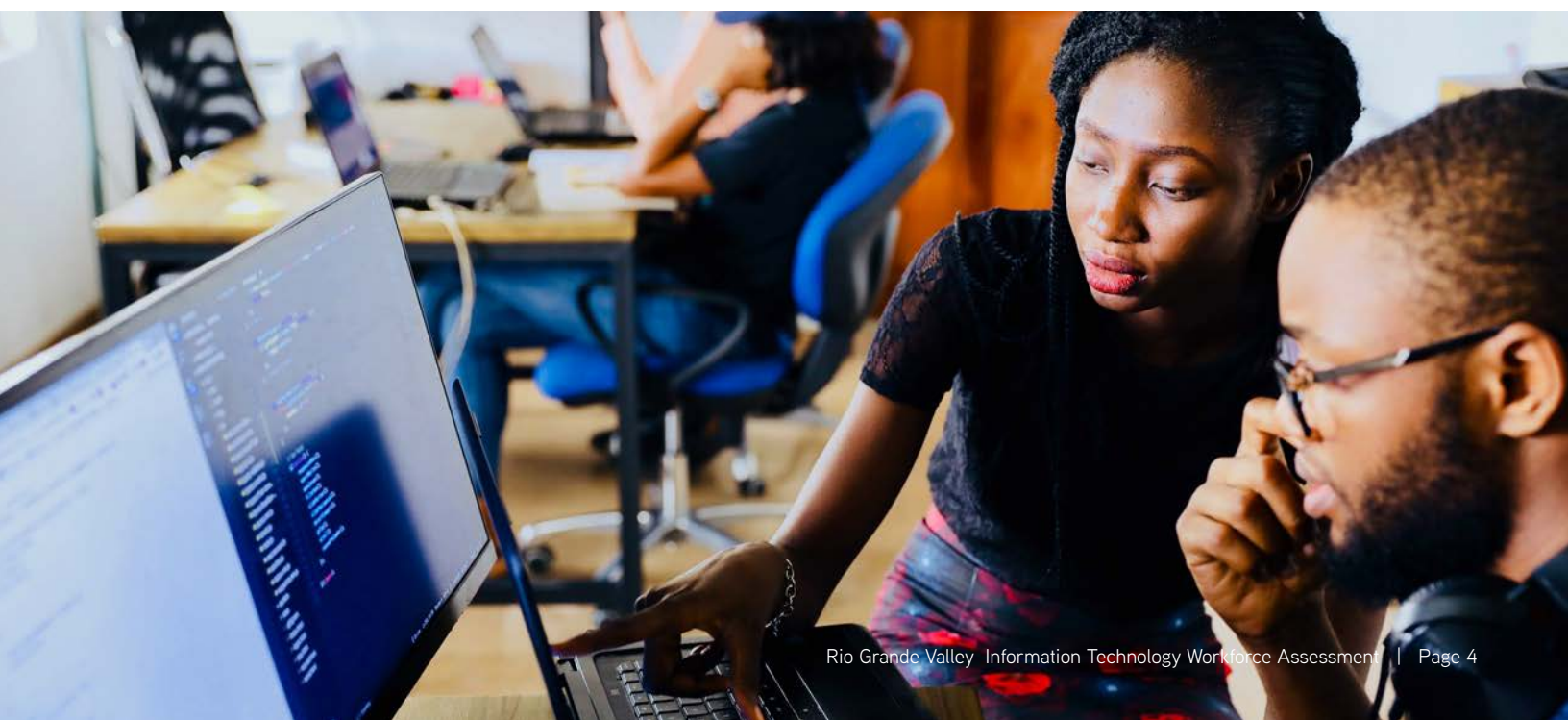
The unemployment rates among the four counties have fluctuated during the decade of 2010 to 2020. The following tables show the average unemployment rates per year.[6] Around the time of the recession in the 2000s, each county experienced rising average unemployment rates. For example, Starr County's average unemployment rate was 17.3% in 2010. Starr and Willacy counties had several years of relatively high average unemployment rates between 2010 to 2013. Between 2014 to 2019, the four counties experienced decreasing average unemployment rates. Unfortunately, likely due to economic circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 average unemployment rates for Hidalgo County (11.9%), Starr County (17.8%), Willacy County (12.0%), and Cameron County (10.5%) increased steadily compared to rates from prior years.

TABLE 6: AVERAGE ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY COUNTY

Year	Hidalgo County Average Unemployment Rate	Starr County Average Unemployment Rate	Willacy County Average Unemployment Rate	Cameron County Average Unemployment Rate
2010	11.8	17.3	14.5	11.2
2011	11.6	16.2	16.5	11.5
2012	10.6	14.5	15.8	10.3
2013	10.3	15.0	15.8	10.0
2014	8.8	13.6	12.3	8.3
2015	7.9	13.4	13.0	7.1
2016	7.8	13.3	12.2	7.2
2017	7.5	11.7	11.0	6.9
2018	6.6	10.0	9.8	6.1
2019	6.2	9.8	8.2	5.5
2020	11.9	17.8	12.0	10.5

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010-2020

Industry Overview

The following table showcases the Top 20 sectors in the Rio Grande Valley by 2-Digit NAICS codes. NAICS, or National American Industry Classification Systems, is a federal standard for understanding businesses and the United States' economy.[7] The fewer the digits within a NAICS code, the more generalized the industry. In comparison, more digits within a NAICS code means a more descriptive, specific industry classification.

The 2-Digit NAICS codes provide a high-level overview of industries in the Rio Grande Valley. Health Care and Social Assistance, Government, and Retail Trade are the top 3 industry sectors in the region.

The Information sector is considered the 16th out of the top 20 sectors by 2-Digit NAICS code in the Rio Grande Valley. The NAICS code for Information is 51 and is described as publishing industries including software and traditional publishing; the motion picture and sound recording industries; broadcasting industries; telecommunications industries; and information services. NAICS code 51, Information, encompasses a wider lens of technical industry compared to using the term "Information Technology."

Between 2015 to 2020, the Information sector loss 3% of its jobs. However, it is estimated to grow about 160 jobs, or 5%, between 2020 and 2025. 2020 location quotients are a measure of the concentration of an industry's employment in the Rio Grande Valley compared to national industry concentrations. A location quotient over 1 means the industry is more prevalent in the region compared to other locations. The location quotient listed in Table 7 remains on the lower end of the industry spectrum in the Rio Grande Valley at 0.44.

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6 The average unemployment rates per county are based on data that has not been seasonally adjusted.

7   NAICS Association. https://www.naics.com/what-is-a-naics-code-why-do-i-need-one/.

TABLE 7: TOP SECTORS IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 2-DIGIT NAICS

Description	2020 Jobs	Job Change (2015-2020)		Job Change (2020-2025)		Avg. Earnings Per Job	2020 LQ
Health Care and Social Assistance	120,557	18,867	19%	19,967	17%	$33,689	2.08
Government	98,810	(193)	(0%)	1,754	2%	$67,223	1.40
Retail Trade	53,815	(4,470)	(8%)	410	1%	$34,115	1.24
Accommodation and Food Services	38,844	2,888	8%	4,213	11%	$18,727	1.06
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	19,490	161	1%	1,164	6%	$32,772	0.76
Manufacturing	13,109	480	4%	640	5%	$57,739	0.37
Transportation and Warehousing	12,258	(9)	(0%)	362	3%	$53,922	0.74
Wholesale Trade	11,584	200	2%	42	0%	$53,984	0.70
Other Services (except Public Administration)	11,311	174	2%	429	4%	$25,684	0.57
Finance and Insurance	11,119	(100)	(1%)	(13)	(0%)	$58,223	0.60
Construction	10,523	270	3%	(121)	(1%)	$49,103	0.49
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	7,974	732	10%	488	6%	$54,076	0.29
Educational Services	7,720	1,691	28%	2,191	28%	$55,612	0.70
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5,041	(565)	(10%)	(520)	(10%)	$37,889	1.18
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,848	(111)	(3%)	(132)	(3%)	$39,136	0.58
Information	**3,529**	**(107)**	**(3%)**	**161**	**5%**	**$57,620**	**0.44**
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,445	560	19%	625	18%	$24,547	0.55
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,837	1,019	125%	797	43%	$67,915	0.27
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,490	(1,188)	(44%)	(165)	(11%)	$96,709	0.83
Utilities	1,277	78	7%	93	7%	$98,048	0.81

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Top IT Occupations

The following 15 occupation are career pathways for Information Support and Services, Network Systems, and Programming and Software Development based on Emsi and O*NET findings. These pathways are prominent in the Information Technology sector and provide more insight into the cross-functional nature of Information Technology. Occupations such as Computer User Support Specialists, Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists, Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts, and Testers had the most jobs in 2020 in the region. Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists, Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts, and Testers saw a positive job change percentage of 50% between 2015 to 2020.

Each Information Technology occupation except Computer Programmers is expected to increase between 7% to 25% in jobs from 2020 to 2025. The Competitive effect indicates an advantage over other occupations--Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers (31), Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists (15), and Computer Systems Analysts have the highest competitive effect. The lowest median hourly wage of the 15 occupations is $18.04 for Computer User Specialists and highest median hourly wage is $66.96 for Computer and Information Research Scientists.

In addition, Workforce Solutions identified Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists; Computer Systems Analysts; Network and Computer Systems Administrators; Computer Programmers; and Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers in their 2021 Demand Occupations List for the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA.[8] Each of these occupations are represented in the top Information Technology occupations below in Table 9.

TABLE 9: TOP INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OCCUPATIONS AT THE 5-DIGIT SOC LEVEL

SOC Code	Description	2020 Jobs	Job Change % (2015-2020)	Job Change % (2020-2025)	Competitive Effect	Median Hourly Wage
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	905	(3%)	7%	4	$18.04
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	484	50%	23%	15	$26.95
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	426	50%	23%	31	$41.71
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	387	3%	7%	7	$28.05
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	329	18%	12%	12	$30.87
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	263	21%	16%	11	$31.88
13-1081	Logisticians	231	74%	10%	6	$29.19
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	194	(18%)	12%	4	$23.41
15-1251	Computer Programmers	139	(6%)	(2%)	0	$36.58
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	138	0%	11%	2	$50.72
15-1245	Database Administrators and Architects	100	(18%)	12%	5	$38.79
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	89	(7%)	22%	3	$31.38
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	79	33%	25%	4	$57.46
15-1257	Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	77	(10%)	13%	4	$25.63
15-1221	Computer and Information Research Scientists	34	26%	7%	0	$66.96

Source: Emsi 2021.1 and O*NET Career Cluster

Table 10 provides a more recent data selection of the top 15 IT occupations in the Rio Grande Valley. The jobs change percentages between 2018 to 2020 and 2015 to 2020 are to some extent similar; there are a handful of occupations with declines during each time frame. From 2018 to 2020, Computer Programmers dropped the most by 26%; however, Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers grew by 26% during this time.

From now until 2030, there is predicted growth in nearly all IT occupations in the Rio Grande Valley except for Computer Programmers. Each occupation with positive job growth has double-digit percent ranges. Information Security Analysts (59%) and Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers (55%) show very high potential for growth.

TABLE 10: TOP INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OCCUPATIONS AT THE 5-DIGIT SOC LEVEL, 2018-2020 AND 2020-2030[9]

SOC Code	Description	2018 Jobs 2018	2020 Jobs 2020	Jobs Change % 2018-2020	2030 Jobs	2020-2030 Jobs Change %
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	855	871	2%	984	13%
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	393	434	10%	639	47%
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	349	361	3%	562	55%
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	362	351	(3%)	412	17%
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	275	275	(0%)	351	28%
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	246	224	(9%)	283	26%
13-1081	Logisticians	140	151	8%	187	23%
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	179	178	(0%)	221	24%
15-1251	Computer Programmers	121	90	(26%)	85	(6%)
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	80	70	(13%)	100	43%
15-1245	Database Administrators and Architects	83	96	15%	119	25%
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	98	84	(15%)	117	39%
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	65	64	(2%)	101	59%
15-1257	Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	63	80	26%	99	24%
15-1221	Computer and Information Research Scientists[10]	<10	36	Insf. Data	40	11%

Source: Emsi 2021.2 and O*NET Career Cluster

Figure 1 shows a comparison between Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA and Cameron County for these occupations in 2020, the year at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cameron County had more occupations that experienced declining jobs compared to occupational numbers in Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA from 2018 to 2020.

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9   2020 jobs data in Table 18 varies slightly compared to the similar data presented in Table 17 due to more recent data extraction from Q2 of Emsi.
10   Computer and Information Research Scientists were estimated to be less than 10 jobs in 2018; therefore, the percent change in jobs between 2018 and 2020 does not have enough data to be determined.

FIGURE 1: TOP IT OCCUPATIONS, 5-DIGIT SOC, COMPARISON BETWEEN LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY WDA AND CAMERON COUNTY, TX, 2020
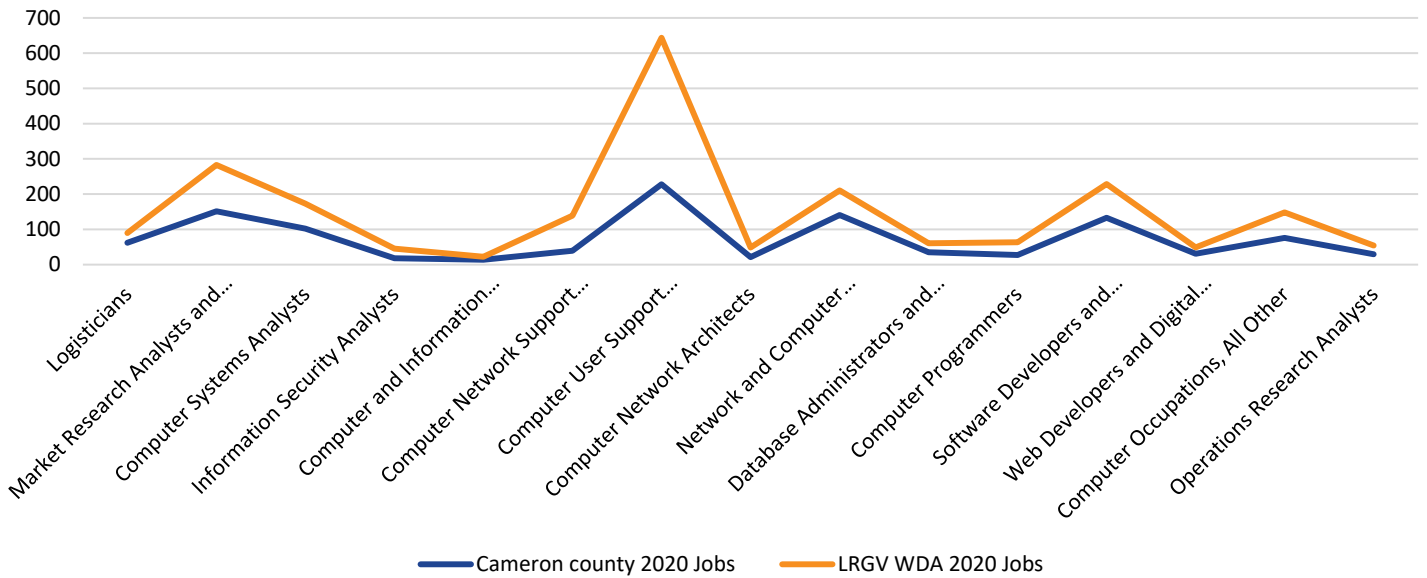
Source: Emsi 2021.2

The following table references the average annual earnings for the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, and the United States to get a holistic sense of earnings in the area compared to other locations.

The Rio Grande Valley poses annual earnings that are slightly decreased compared to Texas and the United States. Information Systems Analysts and Computer and Information Research Scientists in the Rio Grande Valley make on average more than their Texas and national counterparts. Information Security Analysts and Computer and Information Research Scientists make about $134,237 and $143,223 on average in the Rio Grande Valley, respectively. In the Rio Grande Valley, Computer User Support Specialists and Network and Computer Systems Administrators tend to make more noticeably lower annual earnings on average than in Texas and the United States.

TABLE 11: GEOGRAPHIC COMPARISON OF AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS FOR TOP IT OCCUPATIONS

SOC Code	Occupations	Rio Grande Valley Avg. Annual Earnings	Texas Avg. Annual Earnings	US Avg. Annual Earnings
13-1081	Logisticians	$67,214.11	$84,364.80	$78,686.40
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	$61,659.73	$74,193.60	$71,572.80
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	$74,704.13	$102,128.00	$96,158.40
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	$134,237.64	$108,804.80	$104,208.00
15-1221	Computer and Information Research Scientists	$143,223.78	$128,960.00	$127,462.40
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	$53,153.00	$71,531.20	$68,848.00
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	$40,181.99	$52,187.20	$56,555.20
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	$105,042.87	$118,060.80	$115,107.20
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	$62,286.39	$88,836.80	$88,420.80
15-1245	Database Administrators and Architects	$84,000.94	$101,441.60	$96,116.80
15-1251	Computer Programmers	$86,310.56	$95,617.60	$92,622.40
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	$94,292.07	$107,931.20	$111,612.80
15-1257	Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	$58,720.21	$73,881.60	$82,368.00
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	$67,868.02	$85,592.00	$92,414.40
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	$66,267.21	$84,489.60	$90,604.80

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Table 12 provides detail into the cross-functional analysis of the Information Technology industry. Inverse Staffing Patterns suggest the distribution of technical occupations' distribution in regional industries. The 2-Digit NAICS codes in Table 12 show higher level, common industry categories. The top 15 Information Technology occupations earlier mentioned were used to collect this data.

Government; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Health Care and Social Assistance supplied the highest number of top Information Technology occupations in 2020. Health Care and Social Assistance and Management of Companies and Enterprises experienced 49% and 126% positive change from 2015 to 2020, respectively. Most of these industries are expected to increase from 2020 to 2025.
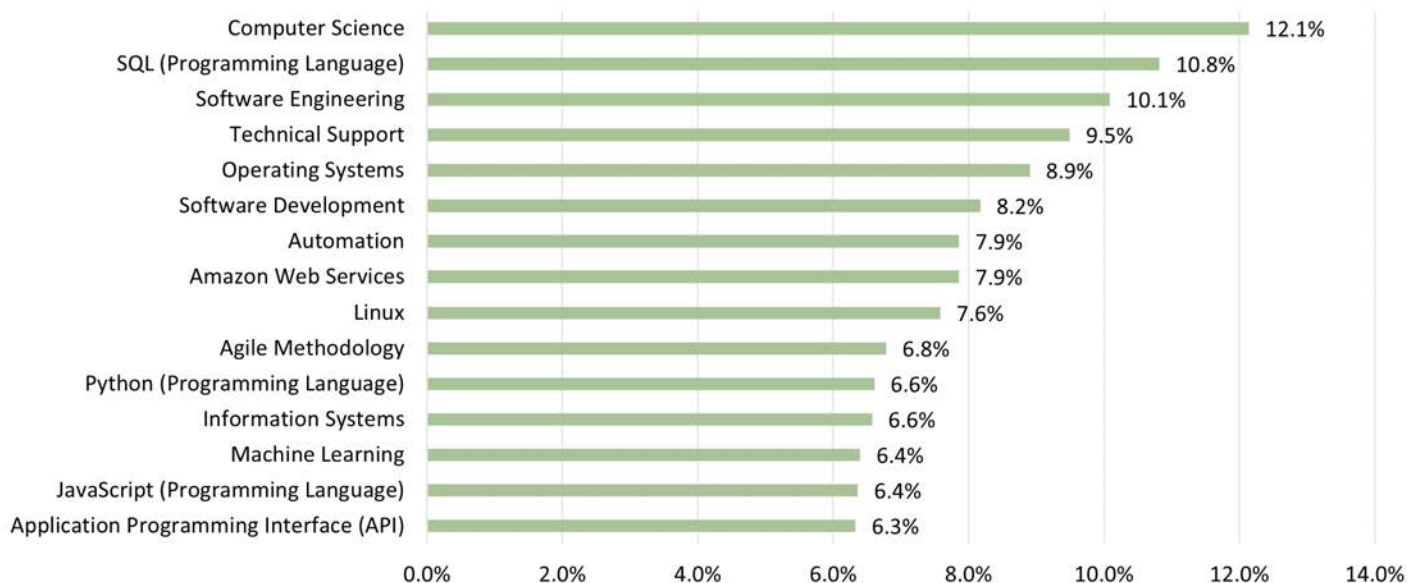
TABLE 12: INVERSE STAFFING PATTERNS, 2-DIGIT NAICS

Industry	Occupation Group Jobs in Industry (2020)	% Change (2015 - 2020)	% Change (2020 - 2025)	% of Occupation Group in Industry (2020)
Government	1,289	0%	2%	33.3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	450	18%	19%	11.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	362	49%	24%	9.3%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	360	3%	12%	9.3%
Finance and Insurance	334	16%	9%	8.6%
Information	244	(2%)	21%	6.3%
Wholesale Trade	206	(4%)	(2%)	5.3%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	172	126%	62%	4.4%
Manufacturing	92	32%	24%	2.4%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	82	15%	11%	2.1%
Educational Services	69	31%	38%	1.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	67	38%	1%	1.7%
Retail Trade	55	(8%)	9%	1.4%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	26	60%	(1%)	0.7%
Utilities	15	16%	24%	0.4%

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Within unique job postings for the top 15 IT occupations, a set of industry specific skills were requested by companies. Hard skills are often tangible skill sets gained through specific programs, education institutions, and other credentialing methods; Figure 2 shows hard skills that are important to Information Technology careers. Multiple hard skills include computer language programs such as SQL (10.8%), Python (6.6%), and JavaScript (6.4%). Computer Science, SQL, and Software Engineering top the hard skills referenced in many job postings. Machine Learning, JavaScript, and Application Programming Interface (API) only showed up in 6.3-6.4% of the job postings in 2020.

FIGURE 2: FREQUENCY OF HARD SKILLS IN JOB POSTINGS, JAN 2020-DEC 2020

Skill	%
Computer Science	12.1%
SQL (Programming Language)	10.8%
Software Engineering	10.1%
Technical Support	9.5%
Operating Systems	8.9%
Software Development	8.2%
Automation	7.9%
Amazon Web Services	7.9%
Linux	7.6%
Agile Methodology	6.8%
Python (Programming Language)	6.6%
Information Systems	6.6%
Machine Learning	6.4%
JavaScript (Programming Language)	6.4%
Application Programming Interface (API)	6.3%

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Figure 3 has the most frequent soft skills. Soft skills are largely noted as interpersonal skills and relate to business acumen. Communications is the most popular soft skill; it appeared in 39.4% of 2020 job postings. Management was prevalent in 25.4% and Problem Solving was in 21.6% of job postings. Verbal Communication Skills, Presentations, and Integration showed up the least in 7.2-8% of 2020 job postings. Operations, Customer Service, Leadership, and Detail Oriented are examples of other soft skills that appeared relatively often in job postings.

## FIGURE 3: FREQUENCY OF SOFT SKILLS IN JOBS POSTINGS, JAN 2020-DEC 2020
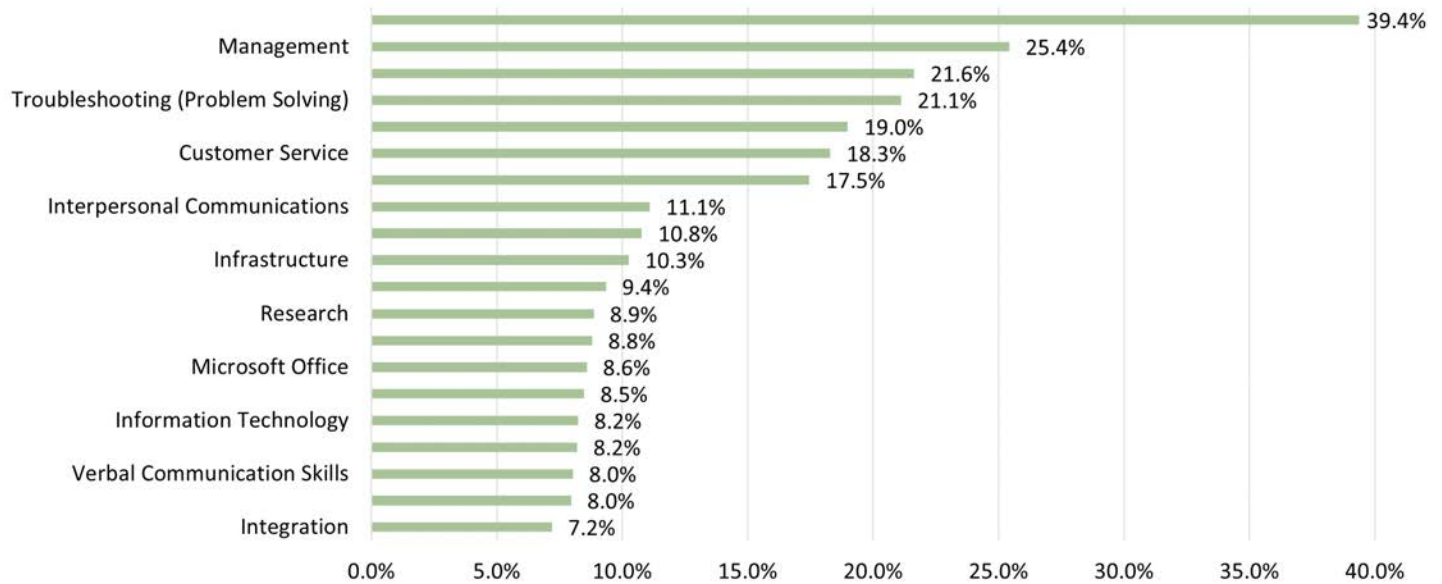
Source: Emsi 2021.1

Future Growth and Demand

Future growth and in-demand industries and occupations are determined from the data analyzed above. Among all sectors, the top three by 2-Digit NAICS in 2020 are Health Care and Social Assistance, Government, and Retail Trade. Health Care and Social Assistance; Management of Companies and Enterprises; and Educational Services are expected to grow greatly into 2025. Specific to the Information sector, it is projected to grow jobs by 5% into 2025. Table 13 highlights details on how the top 15 IT occupations will grow in the next decade. Many of the top 15 IT occupations have competitive median hourly wages. Out of the top 15 IT occupations in the Rio Grande Valley, 14 are predicted to grow from 2020 to 2025. All of the top 15 IT occupations are predicted to grow from 2020 to 2025 with the exception of Computer Programmers.

As previously mentioned, Inverse Staffing Patterns were filtered by the top 15 IT occupations through the 2-Digit NAICS industries. Government; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Health Care and Social Assistance; and Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services have the highest percentage of the IT occupations in their industries. These sectors are projected to increase in jobs into 2025 as well. Finance and Insurance and Wholesale Trade have high percentages of these occupations.[11] It will be important to support these industries' growth in order to provide more technical careers in the Rio Grande Valley.

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11   Emsi 2021.1.

TABLE 13: RIO GRANDE VALLEY TOP 15 IT OCCUPATIONS JOB GROWTH, 2020-2030
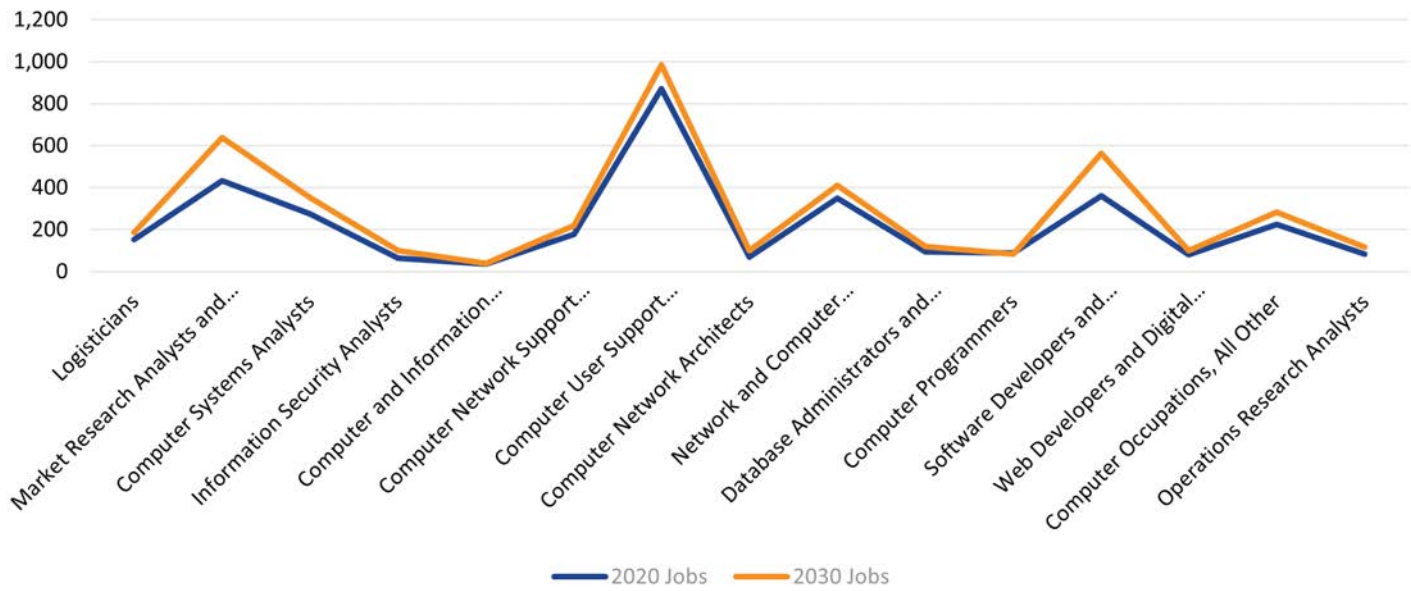
Source: Emsi 2021.2.

Priorities for Growth

In addition to the four core areas, TPMA identified three main priorities based on the regional landscape and data analysis. They are (1) Broadband and Rural Development; (2) Education and Training; and (3) Community Development. Specifically, these priorities reference how new funding opportunities could be used in the Rio Grande Valley. TPMA found ten funding opportunities from seven funding sources that could contribute to regional growth in its IT industry sector. Additional information can be found in the *Funding Scan* located in the appendix.

- **Priority #1: Broadband and Rural Development**

  o Broadband is a major regional growth barrier in many rural areas in the nation and it has been an area of concern in the Rio Grande Valley as well. There are challenges with broadband access and implementation in the area. Taking advantage of broadband funding opportunities is critical to expand access and reliability. There are resources specifically allocated to rural economic mobility to ensure these communities thrive and have needed resources.

- **Priority #2: Education and Training**

  o It is critical to secure funding to support skill-building and training for Information Technology positions at multiple levels of education. This will provide the necessary skills for traditional IT career pathways—enabling learners to fulfill IT positions in the Rio Grande Valley. Strong partnerships with employers are essential for creating buy in, vetting the curriculum, training, and internships.

- **Priority #3: Community Development**

  o Community development resources should be applied broadly to community needs that impact Rio Grande Valley residents and the workforce. Local talent must have access to supportive services such as intensive case management, childcare, and transportation as needed.

Training Opportunities

To address the core area of Educational Programs, TPMA examined education and training providers that offer IT technical courses and programs in the Rio Grande Valley. There are a total of 146 programs of study, organized by 10 different categories. The programs of study span different industry sectors and prepare students for occupations that require technical IT skills. In addition to the programs of study, which result in a degree or certification, the Rio Grande Valley has about 70 short-term IT offerings. The short-term IT offerings are online courses that serve as introductions and preparation to an IT industry certification or a high school course such as AP Computer Science. The *Education and Training Mapping* in the appendix further explains the research on educational programs and how they link with IT occupations and broader industry sectors.

Table 14 shows the training provider categories and programs of study. Community colleges have a great impact on the four-county region. Community colleges account for the highest number of Information Technology programs of study, with 76 programs total. Technical schools have the second highest number of IT program offerings at 26. Information Technology Non-profit organizations and universities, namely University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley, also offer several IT programs of study.

TABLE 14: PROVIDERS AND PROGRAMS OF STUDY IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

Provider Category	Number of Programs
Technical School	26
College	5
Community College	76
Government Education Provider	5
Healthcare Institute	3
Information Technology Non-profit Organization	10
Online Coding Bootcamp	4
Public School District	6
Training Center	1
University	10
Total:	**146**

Programs of study are predominantly located in Cameron and Hidalgo counties. Willacy and Starr lack providers in their counties; specifically, Willacy does not have any education and training providers with IT programs of study in its county.

TABLE 15: PROGRAMS OF STUDY BY COUNTY

County/Counties	Number of Programs
Hidalgo	94
Hidalgo/Cameron/Starr	3
Cameron	33
Cameron/Hidalgo	10
N/A*[12]	6
Total:	**146**

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12   N/A* due to main location outside of 4-County region/program is only online.

When it came to the programs of study that were most closely aligned with traditional IT occupations (the top 15 IT occupations), TPMA categorized them by Information Technology, Computer Science, and Cybersecurity. Out of the 146 total programs of study, there were 103 programs of study that aligned closely with the top 15 IT occupations. Table 16 exemplifies the breakdown of IT programs of study. Most programs broadly fit into Information Technology. Computer Science accounts for 24 programs of study and Cybersecurity has 5 programs of study; 1 program covered Computer Science and Cybersecurity. While Computer Science programs did have some Cybersecurity elements, Cybersecurity is greatly underrepresented.

TABLE 16: IT INVENTORY PROGRAMS

IT Inventory Program Categories	Number of Programs
Information Technology	73
Computer Science	24
Computer Science/Cybersecurity	1
Cybersecurity	5
Total:	**103**

TPMA utilized two sources to gather information on education outcomes of the programs of study: the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Texas Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). NCES has data on educators in Texas. NCES has their own categories for programs--TPMA compared programs found with the categories of programs by NCES, which has program completion rates.

Table 17 shows that 827 program completions in IT were given from 2019 to 2020. Computer and Information Sciences, General, Undergraduate Certificates topped the list with 304 completions. Computer Science Bachelor's Degrees (102) and Computer Science Associate's Degrees (73) were popular programs. Computer and Information Sciences also had many program completions for Bachelor and Associate's Degrees.

TABLE 17: NCES COMPLETION DATA 2019-2020

NCES Categories:	Completion Data 2019-2020
Computer Programming, General Associate's Degrees	29
Computer Programming, Specific Applications, Associate's Degrees	1
Computer and Information Systems Security/Auditing/Information Assurance, 1-2 Year Certificates	8
Computer and Information Systems Security/Auditing/Information Assurance, Associate's Degrees	53
Computer and Information Systems Security/Auditing/Information Assurance, Bachelor's Degrees	0
Computer Science, Associate's Degrees[13]	73
Computer Science, Bachelor's Degrees	102
Computer Science, Master's Degrees	11
Computer and Information Sciences, General, Less than 1 Year Certificate	8
Computer and Information Sciences, General, Undergraduate Certificates	304
Computer and Information Sciences, General, Associate's Degrees	67
Computer and Information Sciences, General, Bachelor's Degrees	78
Computer Systems Networking and Telecommunications, Associate's Degrees	26
Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design, Associate's Degree	5
Computer Engineering, General, Bachelor's Degrees	33
Computer Support Specialist, Less than 1 Year Certificate	29
Total:	**827**

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2019-2020.

TPMA examined the Texas eligible training provider list as well. Only Texas State Technical College, Harlingen; Southern Careers Institute, and Texas Southmost College were eligible training providers in the Rio Grande Valley that showed IT program data for the state. It must be noted that the NCES and ETPL program completions are separated since there could be some reporting overlap.[14] The ETPL data does show a high number of certificates that are from Computer Support Specialist and Computer Information Technology programs.

TABLE 18: ETPL IT PROGRAM COMPLETIONS

Summary of ETPL Program Completions	Number
Certificates	105
Associate's Degrees	26
Total:	131

Source: Texas Workforce Commission, 7/1/2018 - 6/30/2020.

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13   Computer Science, Associate's Degrees include distance education program.
14   For example, ETPL Computer Support Specialist programs are likely counted in the NCES Computer Support Specialist's category. NCES and ETPL data is separated to avoid duplicating program outcome data. Numbers may vary slightly due to when program completion data was aggregated.

Career Pathway Development

The Employment and Training Administration utilized subject matter experts to create a in demand industry specific competency models. The IT Competency Model is illustrated below:

FIGURE 4: USDOL ETA IT COMPENTENCY MODEL
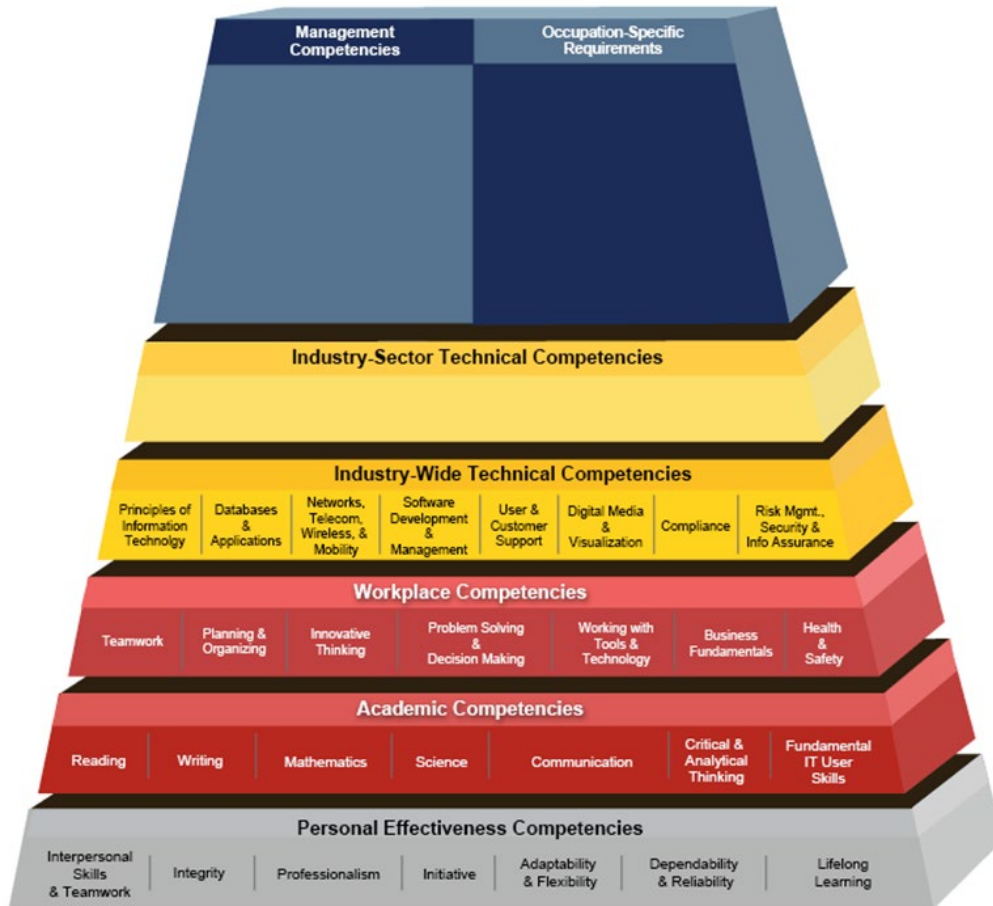
Source: Competency Model Clearinghouse by the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

The IT Competency Model echoes the hard and soft skills that are in-demand in the region and expressed in descriptions of training programs. The model also used occupations from O*NET's Career Cluster, which overlaps many top IT occupations in the Rio Grande Valley.

The following visual was made to present reverse mapping of some of the programs of study found in the Rio Grande and how they correspond with requirements for IT occupations.[15]

The visual below is a snapshot of reverse mapping IT occupations. The visual presents degree outcomes from local education and training providers that meet the typical education requirements for the top 15 IT occupations. This helps to bridge how education and training programs are satisfying occupational competencies in the Rio Grande Valley.

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15   Workforce Solutions' "Information Technology: Secondary and Postsecondary Alignment to RGV LMI, Inventory of local IT educational programs" was used to help create this visual.

FIGURE 5: IT ENTRY LEVEL EDUCATION AND MEDIAN HOURLY EARNINGS IN THE REGION

This shows typical entry-level education for the Rio Grande Valley and median hourly earnings
(this is for all four counties)

SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE

INDUSTRY-BASED CREDENTIALS

South Texas College Continuing, Professional, and Workforce Education:

- AWS System Operations Certification Bundle
- Java Programmer and Python Design
- Oracle SQL and PL/SQL + Python Developer
- Oracle SQL and PL/SQL + Python Developer + Java Programmer
- Web Applications Developer: HTML, CSS, PHP, Vue, SQL
- C++ Programmer Competency

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE

Texas State Technical College

- Associate of Applied Science, Computer Networking & Systems Administration
- Associate of Applied Science, Computer Programming
- Associate of Applied Science, Cybersecurity
- South Texas College
- Associate of Applied Science, Information Systems
- Associate of Applied Science, Cybersecurity Specialist
- Texas Southmost College
- Associate of Applied Science, Computer Information Systems
- Associate of Applied Science, Computer Web Development

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

UTRGV

- Bachelor of Science, Computer Science
- Bachelor of Science, Cybersecurity
- Bachelor of Science, Computer Engineering

MASTER'S DEGREE

UTRGV

- Master of Science, Computer Science
- Master of Science, Information Technology

CERTIFICATE EXAMPLES:

South Texas College:
- Cybersecurity Specialist Certificate

Texas Southmost College:
- Certificate of Proficiency Level 1- Computer Information Systems
- Certificate of Proficiency Level 1- Computer Web Development

SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE
(Recommend connecting to Industry-based credentials)
Computer User Support Specialists (15-1232) ($18.04)

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE
Computer Network Support Specialists (15-1231) ($23.41)
Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers (15-1257) ($25.63)

BACHELOR'S DEGREE
- Logisticians (13-1081) ($29.19)
- Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists (13-1161) ($26.95)
- Computer Systems Analysts (15-1211) ($30.87)
- Information Security Analysts (15-1212) ($57.46)
- Computer Network Architects (15-1241) ($50.72)
- Network and Computer Systems Administrators (15-1244) ($28.05)
- Database Administrators and Architects (15-1245) ($38.79)
- Computer Programmers (15-1251) ($36.58)
- Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers (15-1256) ($41.71)
- Computer Occupations, All Other (15-1299) ($31.88)
- Operations Research Analysts (15-2031) ($31.38)

MASTER'S DEGREE
- Computer and Information Research Scientists (15-1221) ($66.96)

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Lessons Learned from Stakeholder Engagement

Two surveys were conducted to grasp the understanding of IT training opportunities and fulfillment of IT careers in the Rio Grande Valley. One survey was for Education and Training Providers and the other survey was for Employers. The surveys consisted of both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The complete survey analysis can be found in *Stakeholder Engagement: Survey Analysis* in the appendix. Stakeholder engagement addressed the core areas of Educational Programs and Infrastructure Capacity.

The Employer survey underscored that the local workforce needs to adapt to become more proficient in IT-related skills and skills such Cybersecurity (Network Security), Microsoft 365 Office Suite, and Data based management are in-demand. It also analyzed recruitment strategies such as Social Media and discussed recruiting barriers such as having to outsource to third party contractors. Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic was assessed and workforce challenges were discussed from the pandemic. Employers noted that broadband, unplanned financial burden, security/confidentiality concerns, and lack of IT support or equipment were challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Education and Training Provider survey confirmed findings previously mentioned about training opportunities. 73% of Education and Training providers responded that their institutions offer Computer Science/Information Technology programs and they elaborated on if they were degree-based, non-credit, or online, among other program options. Besides the Information Technology industry, they thought that Financial Services, Healthcare, and Manufacturing are supported through their technological programming. The providers have had to adjust to pandemic era challenges as well. The pandemic is a major reason why learning adjustments, such as online and hybrid, had to be implemented. Education and Training Providers mentioned barriers for their learners during the COVID-19 pandemic; those enrolled in their programs experienced issues with connectivity and being unable to access facilities during the pandemic.

Determining Regional Assets

In connection with the core area of **Infrastructure Capacity**, a scan of the region's assets was completed. Research and partner resources were used to determine different organizations and their services. This signifies the existing infrastructure in the region and where opportunities could be sought to expand infrastructure. The *Asset Inventory* consists of 165 organizations and websites that correspond with 8 categories:

1. Economic Development Organizations

2. Housing

3. Other Community-based Organizations

4. Other Education and Training Providers

5. Regional Technology Infrastructure

6. Information Technology (IT) Education and Training Providers

7. Transportation

8. Workforce Development Organizations

The Asset Inventory determined that the organizations provide a variety of outreach/referral, career and training, and supportive services, among others, in the Rio Grande Valley.

Workforce Gaps

While there are many IT programs of study and short-term courses in the Rio Grande Valley, the programs of study could align more closely with regional specific IT career pathways. Technical certifications and program certificates can familiarize the workforce with skills, but they must satisfy the typical entry-level education for the IT occupations employer requirements so that graduates meet career standards. There are many Information Technology/Information Systems programs of study, but a much lower number of Cybersecurity programs. For example, South Texas College and the University of Rio Grande Valley are leading the way and started 4-year degree programs in Cybersecurity and Information Technology. In the ever-expanding digital world, there is an increased need for Cybersecurity professionals. The Rio Grande Valley needs to have expanded access to additional Cybersecurity programs of study opportunities to meet the requirements for the regions high demand IT occupations such as Information Security Analysts, among other cyber security IT positions.

The analysis determined a lack of education and training providers for IT in Willacy and Starr counties. There must be either education and training providers accessible in these counties or access to online programs for residents of these counties. If not, this gap of training access will contribute to workforce gaps due to an inadequate number of residents who meet the typical education standards for IT careers. Also, TPMA's analysis of the assets of the Rio Grande Valley found that there could be more information technology employers in the area; the full *Asset Inventory* can be found in the appendix. There are a number of residents who commute out of the Rio Grande Valley already and it is important to have employment options within the four counties. Opportunities to fund some of these areas for improvement are referenced in the *Funding Scan.*

Conclusion

Workforce partners, economic development organizations, and education and training providers are driving the Rio Grande Valley to become an IT hub. The Rio Grande Valley has an IT foundation for further change and development. It also has a base of high performing industries outside of the IT sector which require careers with technical IT skill capabilities. In addition to its current work, collaboration between education and training providers and employers will help to translate necessary training into business environments. Workforce Solutions and the Rio Grande Valley should continue to communicate and welcome technical IT industry to the area. The Rio Grande Valley could be a prime candidate for broadband and rural economic development funding, which could help to fuel the growth of the IT industry through multiple community channels. The last sections include the IT Trends, regional IT takeaways, and recommendations to finalize what was achieved from the IT Workforce Assessment report.

IT Trends

- The Information Technology industry has been growing at an accelerated rate and is expected to continue growing. With this high demand and rapid pace of development, qualified skilled labor will continue to be in high demand

- Specifically, Computer and Information Technology occupations are expected to increase 11% from 2020 to 2029

- Median annual wages for occupations across the board in the United States is $41,950; however, Computer and Information Technology occupations have a median annual wage of $91,250, which is about $50,000 higher[16]

- For smart rural communities to thrive and adapt, Deloitte research found that education, the economy, mobility, public safety, sustainability, and quality of life will be important[17]

- A propensity towards automation will largely affect popular occupations in the United States and workers will need to learn new skills or risk being displaced

- Technological skills are constantly evolving and early education and continued training will be necessary for workers to stay up-to-date on necessary job competencies[18]

- The COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic era have influenced a new wave of virtual work and technical skills

- Information Security Analysts and Operations Research Analysts are two out of the top 20 fastest growing occupations in the United States[19] [20]

Regional IT Workforce Assessment Takeaways

The following summarizes project takeaways:

- The Rio Grande Valley has approximately 800,000 residents who are work-aged and active in the labor force

- The four counties have very high unemployment rates as of late, primarily from the COVID-19 pandemic; however, these rates should see improvement due to the economic upturn

- Poverty rates in the Rio Grande Valley remain higher than Texas and United States's averages while median household income remains lower than Texas and the United States

- Government; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Health Care and Social Assistance; and Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services are the top industry sectors with high percentages of technical careers

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16   "Computer and Information Technology Occupations." Bureau of Labor Statistics. May 14, 2021. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/home.htm.

17   "The Promise of Smart Rural Communities." Deloitte. September 27, 2019. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/the-promise-of-smart-rural-communities.html.

18   "The Future of Work in America: People and Places, Today and Tomorrow." McKinsey Global Institute. July 11, 2019. https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-in-america-people-and-places-today-and-tomorrow.

19   "Fastest Growing Occupations." Bureau of Labor Statistics. April 9, 2021. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm.

20   For additional reading and information, the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education has a comprehensive Technology workforce plan, which can be found here: https://www.mass.edu/strategic/documents/2014-05-05DHETechnologyWorkforcePlan.pdf.

- Overall, Health Care and Social Assistance, Government, and Retail Trade are the largest sectors in the Rio Grande Valley

- Computer User Support Specialists; Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists; and Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers have the most jobs in the Rio Grande Valley

- Median annual wages for IT occupations in the Rio Grande Valley are $58,637[21]

- The Rio Grande Valley has a foundation of IT education and training providers, predominantly at the post-secondary level, that offer a range of programs and short-term offerings

- Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board DBA Workforce Solutions is leading IT collaboration in the area through its work with Mission EDC, the IT Taskforce, and Rio Grande Valley Cybersecurity Regional Pathway Network, among others

- The Rio Grande Valley has many organizations and resources for supportive services, such as housing, childcare, and transportation, which augment residents' participation in the workforce

- The presence of SpaceX and economic development organization's openness to business requiring technical skills are important to attracting IT-related industries

    o From January 2021 to June 2021, SpaceX has made 438 job postings in the Rio Grande Valley[22]

- Education and training providers and employers address similar needs of workforce talent, but these entities' relationships should be strengthened with increased engagement and collaboration

- Broadband and rural communities' needs are being vocalized at the state and national level; the Rio Grande Valley is a prime candidate to take advantage of funding opportunities and collaborate on projects to expand IT infrastructure

    o The city of Pharr, Texas serves as an example. In 2018, the National Digital Inclusion Alliance listed Pharr as the second least connected city in the United States with populations over 65,000.[23] City officials are now rolling out three phases of fiber installation to allow local residents to have internet access. They are collaborating with Graybar for materials and STX Underground LLC, which is in Brownsville, to help implement this project. A total of $40 million dollars and 2.1 million feet of fiber optic cable will used over a about a year.[24]

Additionally, Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board DBA Workforce Solutions and Workforce Solutions Cameron are drawing attention to workforce needs and have existing relationships with local partners. Workforce Solutions' IT Advisory Committee is a primary example of this collaboration. University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley, South Texas College, and Region One Education Service Center are significantly advancing IT competencies and awareness in the Rio Grande Valley. And for the rural and diverse communities of the four-county area, 165 organizations offering a variety of employer, career, and business, among other services, is creating a difference in the lives and employment of residents.

21   "State of the Information Technology Industry Report." Workforce Solutions.
22   "Unique Job Postings by Company." Emsi. 2021.3.
23   "Brownsville, Pharr among least 'Wired' Cities in Nation." Rio Grande Guardian. March 24, 2021. https://riograndeguardian.com/brownsville-pharr-among- least-wired-cities-in-nation/.
24   "South Texas City Investing in Fiber Optics to Connect All." The Monitor. August 3, 2021. https://www.govtech.com/network/south-texas-city-investing-in-fiber-optics-to-connect-all?fbclid=IwAR3-2gec3U85hxAEYze_x2CD96teL45JjJ1PGHIigZw8y5AlXk1_LW1_y-U.

Recommendations

TPMA has learned about the IT industry in the Rio Grande Valley and researched IT industry trends across the nation to create recommendations for Workforce Solutions consideration and implementation in the future. They are differentiated by short and long-term recommendations

Short-Term
- (Economic Development Organizations) The state of Texas is currently targeting rural areas for broadband development and the local government is committed to expanding broadband. Additionally, SpaceX has a valuable presence and is building the aerospace industry, which requires technical careers. Existing broadband efforts and SpaceX's reputation can be leveraged and advertised by economic development organizations to attract technical employers to the area.

    o **Workforce Solutions** has the workforce and employment data to assist economic development organizations in their efforts to attract business; economic development typically uses labor market data to attract industry partners. It could be an opportunity to create a housing study or community asset mapping with recent data. Workforce Solutions can be persuasive in recommending additional IT employers are welcome to the area and the region supports a skilled workforce.

- (Economic development organizations; Education and Training Providers; and Employers) While there are current connections and partnerships, in the near term these relationships could be strengthened. Meetings, events, job fairs are a few examples of ways in the near term that partnerships could become stronger.

    o **Workforce Solutions** has ties to each other these partners and play an active role in developing partnerships among them. Workforce Solutions was able to support the Mission EDC CyberMission Career Expo in March 2020 that was for students exploring different jobs. It also gave exposure to those in attendance such as University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley, CompTIA, and McAllen Independent School District about local careers.

- (Education and Training Providers, K-12 and post-secondary institutions): These Education and Training Providers have made changes to classroom learning to cope with pandemic challenges. Training institutions should continue to offer these online learning opportunities and create additional online offerings. This will continue technical competencies are gained regardless of whether a physical campus is nearby.

    o **Workforce Solutions** can provide suggestions for online offerings that are particularly needed for target IT occupations in the region.

- (Regional Stakeholders) It is clear that there are several industries in the Rio Grande Valley which have a high percentage of occupations requiring technical IT skills. Regional stakeholders should be knowledgeable about cross-sector IT skills in other significant industries such as Healthcare and Social Assistance.

    o This is another opportunity for **Workforce Solutions** to share their labor market data with partners so that other stakeholders understand high-growth, technical industries. Workforce Solutions has successfully done this with Rio Grande Valley Technology Association by sharing important IT labor market data at meetings with its members.

Long-Term
- (Workforce Solutions and local workforce partners) Workforce organizations should take advantage of workforce, community development, and broadband grants to further grow services and training. Many funding opportunities span multiple years and could provide long-term, positive change to the region.

    o **Workforce Solutions** is knowledgeable about state and federal workforce funding opportunities and researches new funding. Workforce Solutions has provided trainings with Mission Economic Development Corporation and Edinburg EDC through its High Demand Job Training Grants' initiative. Moreover, the Skills Development Fund (SPF) Covid-19 Special Initiative has allowed Workforce Solutions to cover costs for and complete trainings with local employers.

- (Economic development organizations; Education and Training Providers; and Employers) Sector partnerships are often 501©(3) organizations that are dedicated to expanding training and workforce for an industry sector. While collaboration by economic development, education and training providers, and employers in the near term is important, establishing a sector partnership in the long-term would allow for structured partnership towards the IT industry. The sector partnership could closely coordinate how these partners are all working towards IT outcomes and how they connect with IT career pathways.

  o **Workforce Solutions** has expertise on the IT sector and target occupations. Workforce Solutions can be involved in helping to establish an IT sector partnership in the region. Workforce Solutions understands the significance of partnerships as illustrated by its IT Advisory Committee, IT Taskforce, and work with the Rio Grande Valley Cybersecurity Regional Pathway Network's Steering Committee.

- (Community-based Organizations and Education and Training Providers) As found through the Asset Inventory, Willacy and Starr counties have fewer organizations to provide services as well as education and training providers to supply educational needs. Existing community-based organizations and education and training providers should be involved in ways to extend services to these counties and possibly enabling new organizations to come to these counties.

  o **Workforce Solutions** should expand access of supportive services within these two counties, which would directly aid low-income families and individuals with opportunities to participate in IT skills training opportunities.

- (Employers and Education and Training Providers) Employers and Education and Training Providers need to be intentional about creating regional career pathways that directly align with the IT jobs. It is important to discuss development of regional career pathways with employers in order to validate alignment of training opportunities that match skills required and typical education outcomes for certain occupations.

- While there are IT offerings in the Rio Grande Valley, not all of the certifications and degree outcomes are aligned with an IT career pathway. This will take some time to collaborate and implement IT career pathway models.

  o **Workforce Solutions** is well-versed in understanding career pathways and can tap into state and federal workforce networks that have current models of IT career pathways. Then, Workforce Solutions can share this information with employers and education and training providers to make sure pathways conform to local needs.

- (Employers and Education and Training Providers) In addition to career pathways, apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities could be developed. The federal government and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has numerous resources on establishing Registered Apprenticeships. While there is prevalent IT programs in the Rio Grande Valley, there was less evidence of work-based learning such as internships. These should be developed over time assist the talent pipeline to local employers and retain talent from leaving for jobs outside the region.

  o **Workforce Solutions** has the resources and expertise to help these stakeholders create apprenticeships and work-based learning. For example, the Texas Workforce Commission approved a new IT Registered Apprenticeship program and Workforce Solutions can discuss how this program could be utilized locally in the Rio Grande Valley.[25]

Appendix

Labor Market Information
Workforce Avilability

Labor Market Information

The following report presents a summary of past, current, and projected labor market trends for the Rio Grande Valley. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board DBA Workforce Solutions hired consulting firm, Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA), to assess the IT industry's education and training programs and workforce in the Rio Grande Valley.[26] The project is 100% federally funded through the Texas Workforce Commission.

As noted in TPMA's proposal, the report corresponds with the area of Workforce Availability. The geographic region includes Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy, and Cameron counties, which will be referred to as the Rio Grande Valley throughout the report. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board DBA Workforce Solutions serves Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties; these counties are referred to as the Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Area (LRGV WDA) throughout the report. The Workforce Development Board of Cameron County, Workforce Solutions Cameron, delivers services only to Cameron County.

An overview of the geographic region consists of the demographics, educational attainment, labor force, unemployment, and commuting patterns of residents. In addition to an industry and occupational analysis, the report details the Information Technology sector in the Rio Grande Valley to gain an understanding of its Information Technology needs. Lastly, the report includes information about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the region.

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26   Equal Opportunity Is The Law, Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Board Dba Workforce Solutions Is An Equal Opportunity Employer/Program And Auxiliary Aids And Services Are Available Upon Request To Individuals With Disabilities. Tty/Tdd Via Relay Texas Service At 711 Or (Tdd) 1-800-735-2989/1-800-735-2988 (Voice).

Overview of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Region

Demographics

The four-county region has a total population of 1,391,507 residents. Population growth has varied widely amongst the different age groups in the Rio Grande Valley. The number of children under the age of 5 declined by about 10% from 2015 to 2020. Conversely, the youth population who are 5 to 19 years old account for about 362,000 of the total population, which is the highest number among age ranges. Residents who are working age make up a considerable number of the total population. Residents aged 20 to 34 years old grew by 5.45% from 2015 to 2020 and are expected to increase by 6% from 2020 to 2025. Table 1 shows population by all ages in the Rio Grande Valley.

From 2015 to 2020, the number of young adults between the ages of 20 and 34 increased at a rate of 5.45% while the number of middle-aged adults between the ages of 35 and 54 increased at a lower rate of about 3%. The age groups that saw the largest increase in percent change since 2015; however, were the 55 to 64 and 65+ age groups. The number of adults between the ages of 55 and 64 increased by 7.34% while the number of adults that were 65 years of age or greater increased by a remarkable 13.39%.

Those under age 5 are expected to increase by 16% between 2020 and 2025. Those 65 or older will grow by 10%. Residents aged 35 to 54 are predicted to grow the least from 2020 to 2025 at 2%.

TABLE 1: POPULATION BY AGE, 2015-2020 AND 2020-2025[51]

Age	2020 Population	2020 % of Cohort	Change (2015-2020)	% Change (2015-2020)	Projected Change (2020-2025)	Projected % Change (2020-2025)
Under 5 years	113,469	8.2%	(12,654)	(10.03%)	18,150	16%
5 to 19 years	361,848	34.5%	3,279	0.91%	(13,034)	4%
20 to 34 years	294,245	21.1%	15,202	5.45%	17,353	6%
35 to 54 years	325,537	23.4%	9,655	3.06%	6,083	2%
55 to 64 years	123,986	8.9%	8,476	7.34%	5,835	5%
65 + years	172,422	12.4%	23,085	13.39%	16,541	10%
Total:	**1,391,507**					

Source: Emsi 2021.1

The rate at which the population has grown in the Rio Grande Valley has dropped precipitously in the time between 2010 and 2020. The largest decrease was right at the beginning of the decade as the population growth rate plummeted from 4% to just over 1.5%. While this was a tremendous decline for the Rio Grande Valley, this drop brought the growth rate in line with the population growth rate of the state of Texas, which fluctuated between 1.5% and 2% between 2010 and 2020. However, the growth rate in the Rio Grande Valley continued to sink past this mark, going below 1% in 2013 and below 0.5% in 2018 before rebounding to close to 1% in 2020. For reference, the population growth rate in the United States remained roughly close to 0.5% to 0.75% during this time.

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51 Text colored red indicate a negative number or percentage.

FIGURE 1: POPULATION CHANGE, 2010-2020
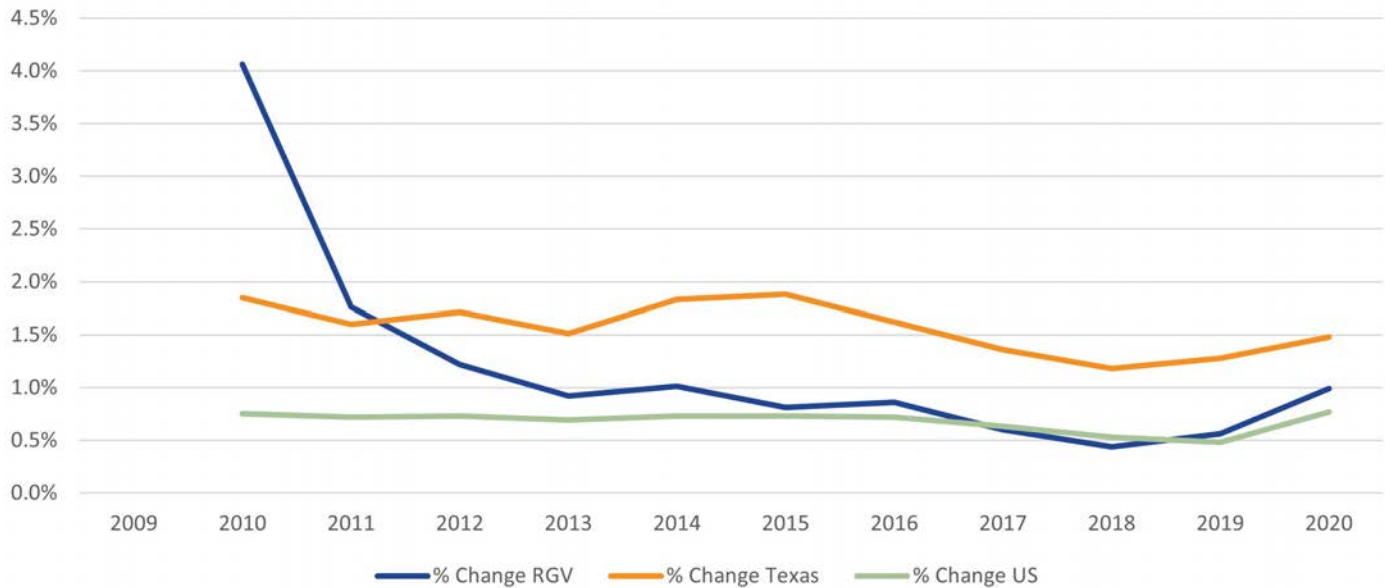
Source: Emsi 2021.1

Population changes in the Rio Grande Valley varied greatly when stratified by race and ethnicity. The largest ethnic group in the region by far, at approximately 92% of the cohort, was Hispanic. This group includes all residents that identify as Hispanic. This group had a modest 4% increase in percentage of the population from 2015 to 2020. The second-largest group in the region and the only racial group where there was a decline in percentage of the cohort from 2015 to 2020 was the White, Non-Hispanic group, which had a decrease of 9% over this span of time.

The remaining ethnic groups represented less than 1% of the cohort each but had widely variable percentage changes. The Asian, Non-Hispanic and American Indian, or Alaskan Native, Non-Hispanic groups had increases of 3% and 7%, respectively. The most growth of any group was seen in the Two or More Races, Non-Hispanic and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic as they grew by 16% and 22% respectively in this span of time. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic is expected to grow the highest between 2020 and 2025. White, Non-Hispanic is predicted to continue to decline by 7% into 2025.

TABLE 2: POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Race/Ethnicity	2020 Population	2020 % of Cohort	2015-2020 % Change	2020-2025 % Change
White, Non-Hispanic	90,591	6.5%	(9%)	(7%)
Black, Non-Hispanic	5,827	0.42%	9%	7%
American Indian, or Alaskan Native, Non-Hispanic	1,094	0.08%	7%	4%
Asian, Non-Hispanic	11,125	0.80%	3%	5%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	244	0.20%	22%	15%
Two or More Races, Non-Hispanic	2,471	0.18%	16%	11%
Hispanic	1,280,155	92%	4%	4%

Source: Emsi 2021.1

In Table 3, the poverty rate in all four counties in the Rio Grande Valley is substantially higher than in Texas and in the US while the average median income is also significantly lower; the poverty rates are from 2015 to 2019. Of the four counties, Starr County has both the lowest median household income at $28,428 and the highest poverty rate at 34.7%. Willacy county has the lowest poverty rate among the four at 27%. However, this rate is still nearly twice that of the poverty rate in both Texas and the US, which is 14.7%. The median household income in Willacy County is below that of Cameron and Hidalgo counties as well at $31,707. While Cameron and Hidalgo counties have the highest median household income at just shy of $39,000, they have a higher poverty rate than Willacy County at 28.9% and 29.7%, respectively.

TABLE 3: POVERTY RATE AND MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

County	Poverty Rate	Median Household Income
Cameron County, TX	28.9%	$38,551
Hidalgo County, TX	29.7%	$38,956
Starr County, TX	34.7%	$28,428
Willacy County, TX	27.0%	$31,707
Texas	14.7%	$61,874
United States	14.7%	$62,843

Sources: US Census 2019; American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Educational Attainment

The level of educational attainment in the Rio Grande Valley unfortunately lags not only other areas in Texas, but also when compared to the United States. Approximately 20% of adults in the Rio Grande Valley have less than a 9th grade education compared to 8% of the Texas population and 5% of the US population. Similarly, 13% of adults in the Rio Grande Valley started high school but did not complete it; this compares to 8% of adults in Texas and 7% of adults in the US. However, there is a slight shift when looking at the percentage of the population that completed high school.

Approximately 25% of adults in the Rio Grande Valley have a high school diploma, which is the same as it is across Texas, 25%, and nearly the same as it is in the US at 27%. This trend somewhat continues when looking at the percentage of people that have attended some college or have an associate degree. Approximately 18% of adults in the Rio Grande Valley have completed some college and 6% have an associate degree. 21% of Texans have some college education and 7% have an associate degree compared to 20% and 9% in the US. Unfortunately, the Rio Grande Valley drops off again after this as only 13% of adults have a bachelor's degree and 5% have some form of post-baccalaureate education as compared to 20% and 11% in Texas and 20% and 13% in the US.

TABLE 4: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Education Level	Regional Population	% of Regional Population	% of Texas Population	% of U.S. Population
Less Than 9th Grade	161,685	20%	8%	5%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	108,448	13%	8%	7%
High School Diploma	201,980	25%	25%	27%
Some College	145,839	18%	21%	20%
Associate's Degree	46,046	6%	7%	9%
Bachelor's Degree	102,596	13%	20%	20%
Graduate Degree and Higher	43,705	5%	11%	13%

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Labor Force

Labor force participation rates quantify the residents actively working or searching for work. The following two tables estimate each counties' average labor force, employment, and differences between them during 2015 and 2020. Hidalgo has the largest number of residents in the labor force; its most recent average labor force in 2020 was 355,829. The average number of employed residents in Hidalgo County in 2020 was 313,804. The differences between the labor force and employment for all four counties is influenced by a variety of factors related to the economic and workforce climate of each county.

In 2015 and 2020, the average labor force for Starr and Willacy counties showed minor differences compared to their respective employment numbers. In 2015, the difference in the average labor force and average employment in Starr County was 3,480. In 2020, the difference in average labor force and average of employment in Starr County was 4,596. In 2015, the difference between averages was only 878 in Willacy County and even less in 2020 when the difference between averages was nearly 800. Those who can be employed are predominantly actively employed or seeking work in Willacy County. Employment averages between 2015 and 2020 for each county have remained relatively static.

TABLE 5: LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT AVERAGES PER COUNTY, 2015[52]

County	Average Labor Force 2015	Avg. Employment 2015	Difference between Averages
Cameron	163,095	151,508	11,587
Hidalgo	330,912	304,749	26,163
Starr	25,879	22,399	3,480
Willacy	6,747	5,869	878

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015

TABLE 6: LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT AVERAGES PER COUNTY, 2020

County	Average Labor Force 2020	Avg. Employment 2020	Difference between Averages
Cameron	165,564	148,277	17,287
Hidalgo	355,839	313,804	42,035
Starr	25,834	21,238	4,596
Willacy	6,669	5,872	797

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020

Unemployment

The unemployment rates among the four counties have fluctuated during the decade between 2010 to 2020. The following tables show the average unemployment rates per year.[53] Around the time of the recession in the 2000s, each county experienced rising average unemployment rates. For example, Starr County's average unemployment rate was 17.3% in 2010. Starr and Willacy counties had several years of relatively high average unemployment rates between 2010 to 2013. Between 2014 to 2019, the four counties experienced decreasing average unemployment rates for the most part. Unfortunately, likely due to economic circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 average unemployment rates for Cameron County (10.5%), Hidalgo County (11.9%), Starr County (17.8%), and Willacy County (12.0%) increased steadily compared to rates during the years prior.

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52   The Labor Force and Employment averages were based on data that was not seasonally adjusted. The averages were calculated based on 2015 data and are approximate, not exact numbers.
53   The average unemployment rates per county are based on data that has not been seasonally adjusted.

TABLE 7: AVERAGE ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY COUNTY

Year	Cameron County Average Unemployment Rate	Hidalgo County Average Unemployment Rate	Starr County Average Unemployment Rate	Willacy County Average Unemployment Rate
2010	11.2	11.8	17.3	14.5
2011	11.5	11.6	16.2	16.5
2012	10.3	10.6	14.5	15.8
2013	10.0	10.3	15.0	15.8
2014	8.3	8.8	13.6	12.3
2015	7.1	7.9	13.4	13.0
2016	7.2	7.8	13.3	12.2
2017	6.9	7.5	11.7	11.0
2018	6.1	6.6	10.0	9.8
2019	5.5	6.2	9.8	8.2
2020	10.5	11.9	17.8	12.0

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010-2020

The following graph includes the average unemployment rates of each county compared to those of Texas and the United States during the same time frame. Texas and the United States had lower average unemployment rates than the Rio Grande Valley at the beginning of the decade. For example, the average unemployment rate of Texas was 8.2% and the United States' rate was 9.6% in 2010 while the four counties' unemployment rates were 11.2% or higher. Texas and the United States follow similar average unemployment rate trends throughout the decade, but most of their unemployment rates were slightly below the Rio Grande Valley average unemployment rates. Texas and the United States show drastic differences in the years 2019 and 2020 like in the four counties. Texas's average unemployment rate in 2019 was 3.5% and its rate in 2020 was 7.7%. The United States' average unemployment rate in 2020 was 3.7% and its rate in 2020 was 8.1%. All geographical areas showed higher average unemployment rates at the end the decade.
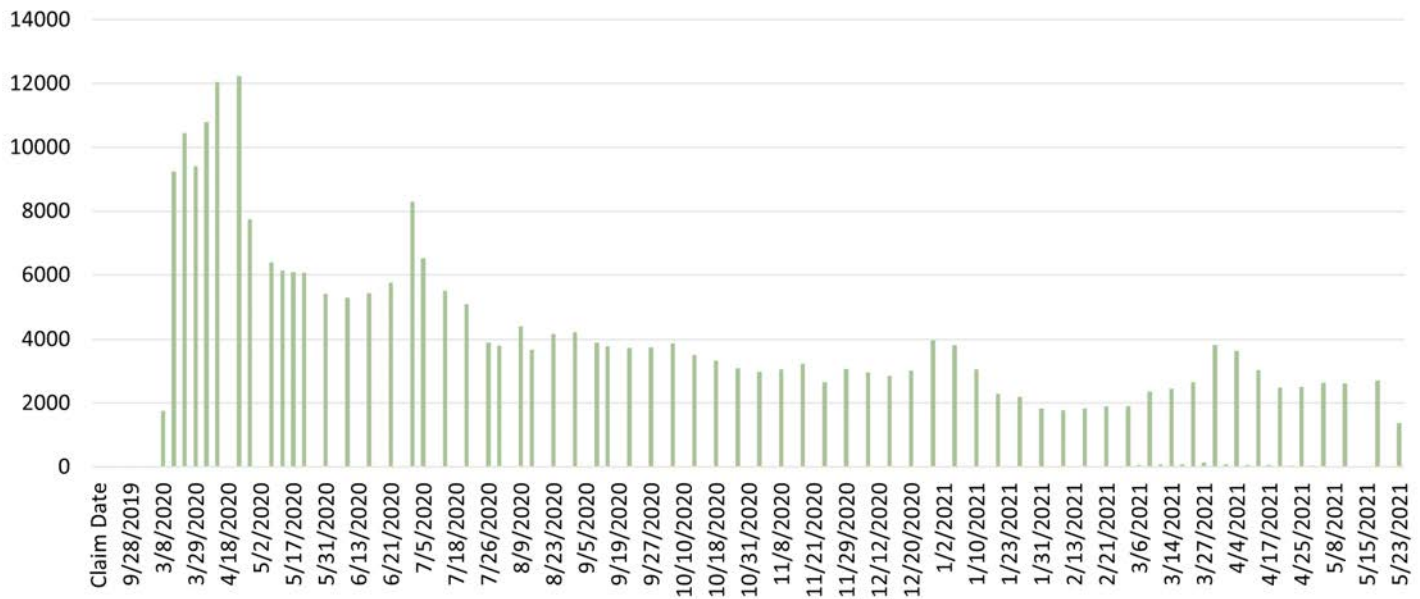
FIGURE 2: AVERAGE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES PER COUNTY, TEXAS, AND THE UNITED STATES, 2010-2020
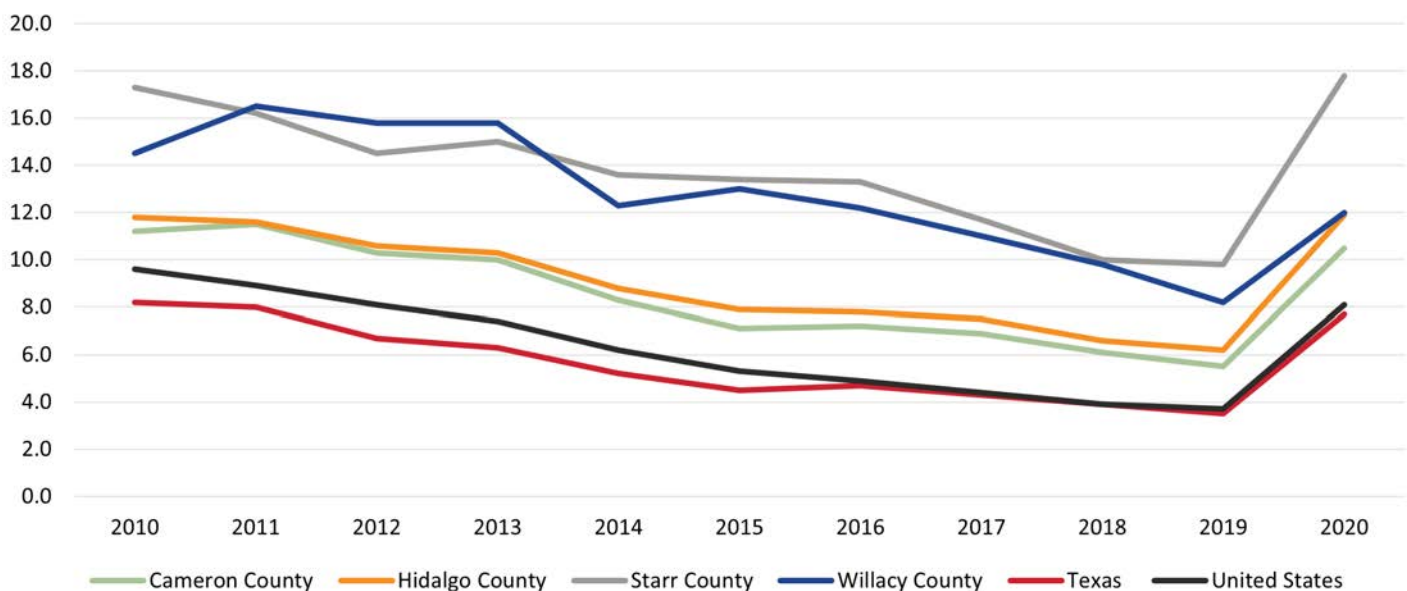
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010-2020

Unemployment Insurance Claims
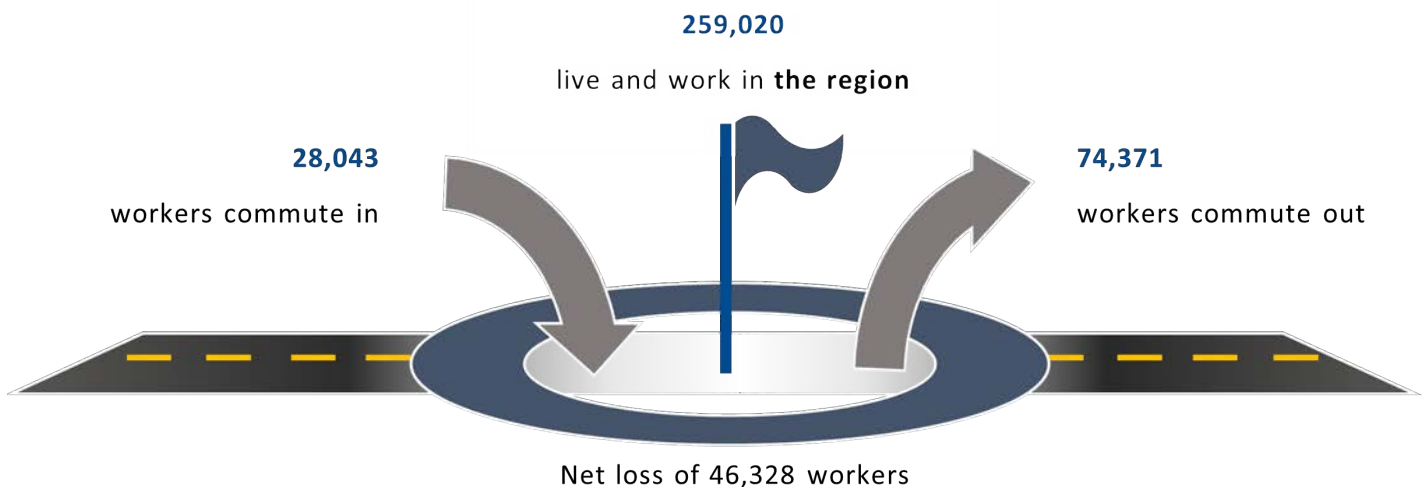**FIGURE 3: UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMS 3/2020 – 5/2021**

Unemployment had its largest effect between March 2020 to the end of June in 2020. A slow decrease of claims followed and remained relatively stable at 4000 and continued to decrease through August, demonstrating the effects of the spikes in positive COVID 19 cases. 2021 indicated the lowest point of unemployment, with marginal increases through

Commuting Patterns
Analyzing the commuting patterns of inbound and outbound workers can give a better understanding of the living and work opportunities in the Rio Grande Valley. For example, if a region has more outbound than inbound workers, the region likely has fewer or less desirable job opportunities. On the other hand, if it has more inbound than outbound workers, the region's jobs are usually more numerous and high quality than surrounding areas. Figure 3 showcases the Rio Grande Valley's commuting habits.

In terms of the Rio Grande Valley, nearly 260,000 workers live and are employed in the four counties. Over 74,000 workers commute out and more than 28,000 workers commute in. This means that the Rio Grande Valley is losing some workers, 46,328, to competitive industries and jobs outside of the four counties. It will be important to evaluate what competitive industries are in the Rio Grande Valley and to assess what the 4-county region can do to maintain workers in the area.

FIGURE 3: COMMUTING PATTERNS IN/OUT OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGION

259,020

live and work in **the region**

28,043

workers commute in

74,371

workers commute out

Net loss of 46,328 workers

Industry Analysis
Understanding Industries in the Rio Grande Valley

Prior to investigating the Information Technology industry, an analysis of the industry and occupational outlook of the Rio Grande Valley has been determined. The following data will provide an understanding of the types of employment of residents.

Table 8 showcases the Top 20 sectors in the Rio Grande Valley by 2-Digit NAICS codes. NAICS, or National American Industry Classification Systems, is a federal standard for understanding businesses and the United States' economy.[54] The fewer the digits within a NAICS code, the more generalized the industry. In comparison, more digits within a NAICS code mean a more descriptive, specific industry classification.

The 2-Digit NAICS codes provide a high-level overview of industries in the Rio Grande Valley. Health Care and Social Assistance, Government, and Retail Trade fall within the top 3 industry sectors in the region. Management of Companies and Enterprises; Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction; and Utilities make up the lowest 3 industries in the Rio Grande Valley.

There are sectors that have grown between 2015-2020 and are expected to grow between 2020 to 2025. Health Care and Social Assistance rose by 19% from 2015 to 2020 and is expected to rise again by 17% from 2020 to 2025. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Educational Services; and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation all saw double digit percent job change from 2015 to 2020. Wholesale Trade and Retail Trade are expected to change the least between 2020 and 2025.

The highest average earnings per job was in the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction sector at $96,709 and the lowest average earnings per job was in the Accommodation and Food Services sector at $18,727.

In Table 8 in the farthest right column, the 2020 location quotients are a measure of the concentration of an industry's employment in the Rio Grande Valley compared to national industry concentrations. A location quotient over 1 means the industry is more prevalent in the region compared to other locations. As seen in the column on the far right in Table 8, the top 3 sectors all show location quotients over 1, which underscores their high concentration in the Rio Grande Valley. Furthermore, in relation to Information Technology, the Information sector is considered the 16th out of the top 20 sectors by 2-Digit NAICS code in the Rio Grande Valley. Between 2015 to 2020, the Information sector saw a decrease in 3% of its jobs. However, it is estimated to grow about 160 jobs, or 5%, between 2020 and 2025. Its location quotient listed in table 8 remains on the lower end of the industry spectrum in the Rio Grande Valley at 0.44.

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54   NAICS Association. https://www.naics.com/what-is-a-naics-code-why-do-i-need-one/.

TABLE 8: TOP SECTORS IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 2-DIGIT NAICS

Description	2020 Jobs	Job Change (2015-2020)		Job Change (2020-2025)		Avg. Earnings Per Job	2020 LQ
Health Care and Social Assistance	120,557	18,867	19%	19,967	17%	$33,689	2.08
Government	98,810	(193)	(0%)	1,754	2%	$67,223	1.40
Retail Trade	53,815	(4,470)	(8%)	410	1%	$34,115	1.24
Accommodation and Food Services	38,844	2,888	8%	4,213	11%	$18,727	1.06
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	19,490	161	1%	1,164	6%	$32,772	0.76
Manufacturing	13,109	480	4%	640	5%	$57,739	0.37
Transportation and Warehousing	12,258	(9)	(0%)	362	3%	$53,922	0.74
Wholesale Trade	11,584	200	2%	42	0%	$53,984	0.70
Other Services (except Public Administration)	11,311	174	2%	429	4%	$25,684	0.57
Finance and Insurance	11,119	(100)	(1%)	(13)	(0%)	$58,223	0.60
Construction	10,523	270	3%	(121)	(1%)	$49,103	0.49
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	7,974	732	10%	488	6%	$54,076	0.29
Educational Services	7,720	1,691	28%	2,191	28%	$55,612	0.70
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5,041	(565)	(10%)	(520)	(10%)	$37,889	1.18
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,848	(111)	(3%)	(132)	(3%)	$39,136	0.58
Information	**3,529**	**(107)**	**(3%)**	**161**	**5%**	**$57,620**	**0.44**
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,445	560	19%	625	18%	$24,547	0.55
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,837	1,019	125%	797	43%	$67,915	0.27
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,490	(1,188)	(44%)	(165)	(11%)	$96,709	0.83
Utilities	1,277	78	7%	93	7%	$98,048	0.81

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Figure 4 shows the top 20 sectors in the Rio Grande Valley at the 2-Digit NAICS level through a very recent lens; it covers job totals for 2018, 2019, and 2020. The percentages on the right show the negative in red and positive or neutral (0%) percentages in black of job growth/decline between 2018 to 2020. Several industries such as Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (12%) indicate declines. This contrasts to Health Care and Social Services (5%), Educational Services (18%), and Utilities (11%) that increased from pre-pandemic to the height of the pandemic.

It is important to note that most industries do not have significant job fluctuations between 2018 to 2020. Also, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic influenced different industry jobs, so this is a contributor to the job totals in 2020.

FIGURE 4: RIO GRANDE VALLEY INDUSTRY MATRIX 2018-2019-2020, 2-DIGIT NAICS
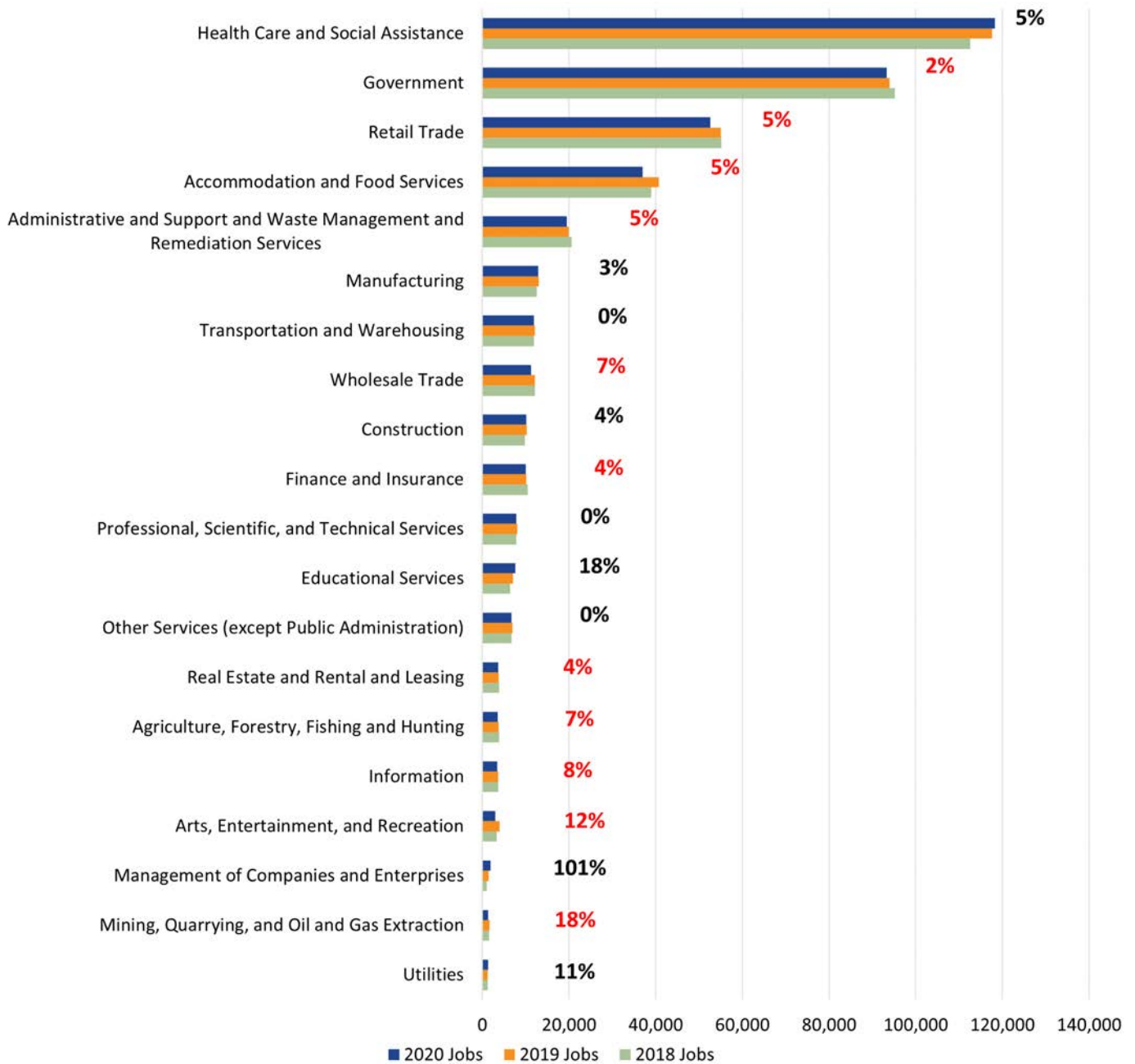
Source: Emsi 2021.2

Moreover, the figure below illustrates job increases and decreases recorded or expected from the years of 2015, 2020, and 2025. It provides a greater range of comparison and projection. It provides a visual representation of past and predicted job changes based on the top 20 sectors in the region by 2-Digit NAICS codes. For the most part, these sectors are expected to have steady jobs into 2025 that correlate with the jobs in the previous years of 2015 and 2020.

FIGURE 5: RIO GRANDE VALLEY INDUSTRY MATRIX 2015-2020-2025, 2-DIGIT NAICS
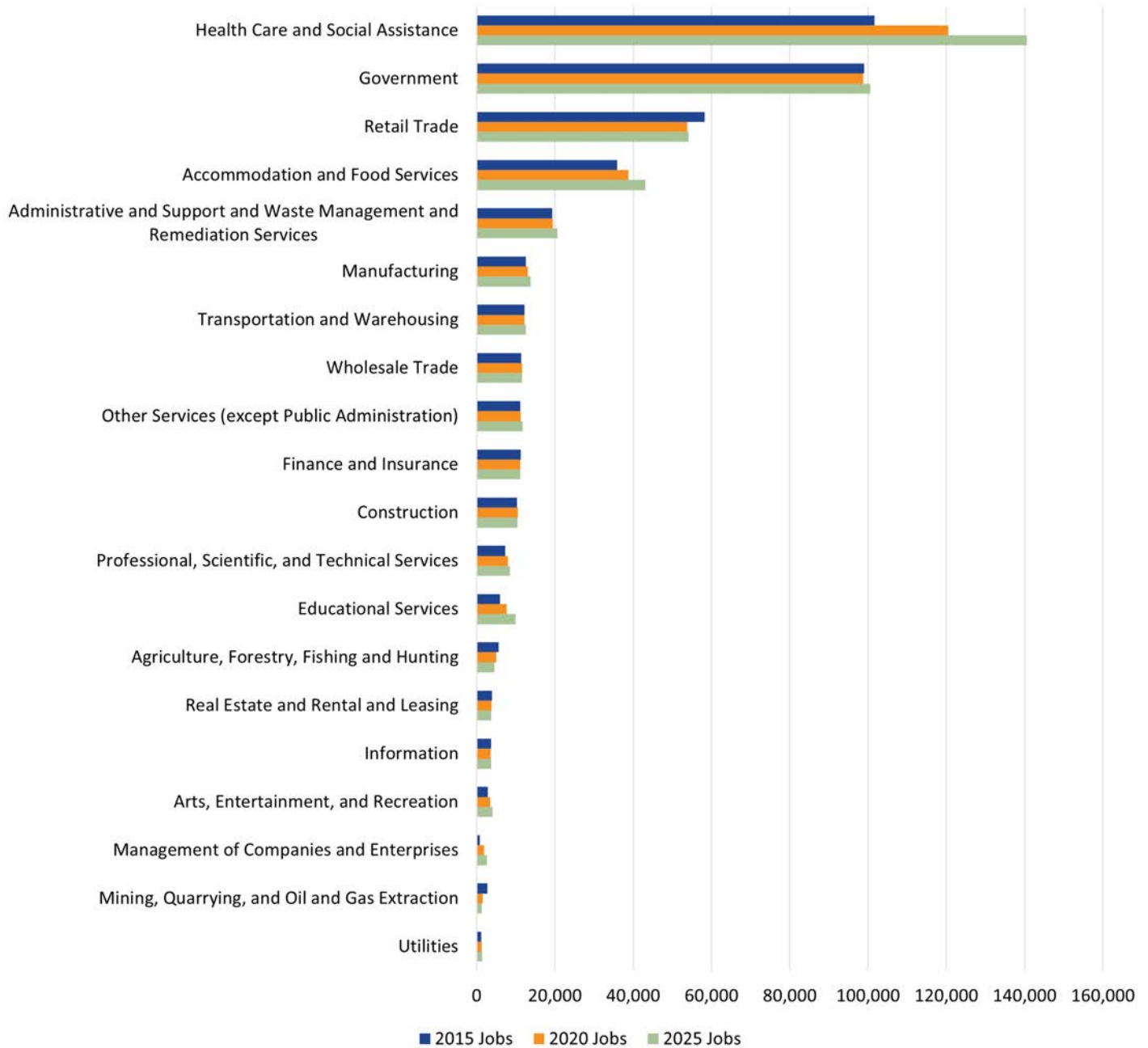
Source: Emsi 2021.1

It is important to look at data regarding the Top 20 sectors by 5-Digit NAICS as well. Due to the NAICS codes with increased digits, the table below breaks down sectors in the Rio Grande Valley more specifically. Education (Local Government), Home Health Care Services, and Restaurants and Other Eating Places are the top 3 sectors at the 5-Digit NAICS level and are relatable to those sectors previously found at the 2-Digit level. Besides Home Health Care Services, Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities and Telephone Call Centers have the highest location quotients at 4.04 and 3.59, respectively. Except for 3 sectors, the sectors are expected to increase in jobs from 2020 to 2025.

TABLE 10: TOP 20 SECTORS IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 5-DIGIT NAICS

Description	2020 Jobs	Job Change (2015-2020)		Job Change (2020-2025)		Avg. Earnings Per Job	2020 LQ	Competitive Effect
Education (Local Government)	55,052	(2,123)	(4%)	387	1%	$62,468	2.45	(2,126)
Home Health Care Services	45,974	3,759	9%	6,666	14%	$18,561	10.61	(2,356)
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	33,980	2,692	9%	3,935	12%	$18,376	1.19	2,991
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	23,733	7,208	44%	6,214	26%	$16,119	4.04	2,301
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	20,542	1,952	10%	1,433	7%	$55,095	1.26	1,501
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	13,317	542	4%	575	4%	$71,217	0.97	(118)
Offices of Physicians	11,764	1,241	12%	1,234	10%	$70,668	1.55	760
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	8,459	339	4%	155	2%	$37,083	1.16	315
Federal Government, Civilian, Excluding Postal Service	8,069	1,040	15%	636	8%	$147,474	1.20	707
General Merchandise Stores, including Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	7,182	(870)	(11%)	86	1%	$30,898	1.26	(1,168)
Education (State Government)	6,459	(658)	(9%)	(767)	(12%)	$60,032	0.81	(829)
Elementary and Secondary Schools	6,320	1,650	35%	2,095	33%	$60,065	1.96	1,335
Temporary Help Services	6,087	1,209	25%	555	9%	$24,040	0.77	1,407
Department Stores	5,692	(1,528)	(21%)	(265)	(5%)	$26,361	2.04	127
Telephone Call Centers	4,991	645	15%	484	10%	$34,681	3.59	929
State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	4,276	(313)	(7%)	137	3%	$74,163	0.66	(296)
General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance	3,971	100	3%	158	4%	$58,085	1.76	11
New Car Dealers	3,970	(45)	(1%)	184	5%	$65,098	1.26	(48)
Commercial Banking	3,958	(290)	(7%)	(294)	(7%)	$56,600	0.99	(708)
Child Day Care Services	3,657	429	13%	264	7%	$21,036	1.44	315

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Occupational Analysis

The occupational analysis provides more depth into the types of jobs that fall under the top sectors in the Rio Grande Valley. SOC codes, or the Standard Occupational Classification system, is a federal category for certain occupations.[55] The more digits per SOC code, the more specific the occupation. Fewer digits within a SOC code designate more general occupation categories.

The 2-Digit SOC code occupations provide a high-level view of certain occupations. Healthcare Support Occupations, Office and Administrative Support Occupations, and Sales and Related Occupations are the most popular occupations in the Rio Grande Valley. Art, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations; Computer and Mathematical Occupations; and Architecture and Engineering Occupations had the lowest number of jobs in 2020.

Several occupations are predicted to increase by double-digit percentages through 2025. Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations are expected to yield a 13% increase in jobs. Community and Social Service Occupations are estimated to increase by 16%. Computer and Mathematical Occupations are supposed to grow 12% and Architecture and Engineering Occupations at 10% from 2020 to 2025, which could certainly increase technical jobs. Many of these occupations have thousands of annual openings in the Region. Average hourly earnings vary from $10.49 for Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations to $42.27 for Management Occupations.

TABLE 11: TOP OCCUPATIONS IN RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 2-DIGIT SOC

SOC Code	Description	2020 Jobs	% Jobs Change 2015-2020	% Job Change 2020-2025	Annual Openings	Average Hourly Earnings
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	72,983	10%	17%	11,004	$10.72
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	57,784	(5%)	2%	7,397	$14.84
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	42,791	(2%)	1%	6,563	$15.61
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	42,635	3%	4%	4,281	$22.36
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	39,221	5%	11%	7,851	$10.49
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	30,456	(2%)	4%	4,238	$15.34
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	25,616	8%	13%	2,250	$35.54
11-0000	Management Occupations	15,822	36%	9%	1,902	$42.27
51-0000	Production Occupations	15,225	14%	3%	2,484	$15.20
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	13,468	(2%)	4%	1,633	$17.92
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	13,256	2%	4%	1,633	$22.08
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	11,913	3%	5%	1,689	$11.22
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	11,323	17%	9%	1,324	$29.97
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	9,928	15%	1%	1,498	$17.68
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	8,597	9%	12%	1,626	$11.58

SOC Code	Description	2018 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Jobs Change (2018-2020)	Jobs 2030	Jobs Change % 2020-2030
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	8,318	32%	16%	1,198	$21.88
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	3,608	(6%)	(5%)	650	$12.05
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	3,398	14%	4%	540	$21.92
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	3,223	5%	12%	312	$32.56
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	2,649	21%	10%	372	$35.25

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Table 12 includes recent job data and projections up to 2030. Of the top occupations across sectors in the Rio Grande Valley, Healthcare Support Occupations (6%); Architecture and Engineering Occupations (5%); and Business and Financial Operations Occupations (4%) grew the most from 2018 to 2020. Several occupations such as Construction and Extraction Occupations and Computer and Mathematical Occupations had minimal growth (1%) over these few years.

The decade between 2020 to 2030 gives a good projection into what types of occupations will remain competitive over the years. Community and Social Service Occupations (33%); Healthcare and Support Occupations (29%); and Computer and Mathematical Occupations (25%) are supposed to increase at the highest rates into 2030. Nearly all the occupations suggest growth rates, except Construction and Extraction Occupations, are expected to remain steady. Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations are expected to decrease 19%.

TABLE 12: TOP OCCUPATIONS IN RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 2-DIGIT SOC, 2018-2020 AND 2020-2030

SOC Code	Description	2018 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Jobs Change (2018-2020)	Jobs 2030	Jobs Change % 2020-2030
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	67,521	71,526	6%	92,252	29%
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	57,811	54,148	(6%)	55,622	3%
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	44,000	41,058	(7%)	41,495	1%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	40,725	41,226	1%	44,916	9%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	40,532	38,233	(6%)	45,969	20%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	29,635	29,937	1%	31,703	6%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	24,655	25,648	4%	30,858	20%
11-0000	Management Occupations	13,782	15,482	12%	17,928	16%
51-0000	Production Occupations	14,540	13,599	(6%)	14,261	5%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	13,229	12,911	(2%)	13,849	7%
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	13,115	12,802	(2%)	13,537	6%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	11,176	10,994	(2%)	12,006	9%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	10,082	10,728	6%	12,635	18%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	9,458	9,589	1%	9,575	(0%)

39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	7,876	7,628	(3%)	9,517	25%
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	6,731	6,940	3%	9,220	33%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	2,622	2,664	2%	2,166	(19%)
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	2,836	2,643	(7%)	2,848	8%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	2,838	2,859	1%	3,594	26%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	2,280	2,399	5%	2,821	18%

Source: Emsi 2021.2

Relatedly, the top occupations at the 5-Digit SOC increase in their specificity. Retail Salespersons; Office Clerks, General; and Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive have significantly decreased in job percentage by 17%, 13%, and 19%, respectively. However, nearly all the top 20 occupations boast a positive job change percentage between 2020 and 2025.

TABLE 13: TOP OCCUPATIONS IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 5-DIGIT SOC

SOC Code	Description	2020 Jobs	% Jobs Change 2015-2020	% Job Change 2020-2025	Average Hourly Earnings	Typical Entry-Level Education	Typical On-the-Job Training
31-1128	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	62,312	12%	17%	$10.12	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	16,723	21%	12%	$9.72	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	13,935	(17%)	2%	$12.05	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
41-2011	Cashiers	12,973	11%	(2%)	$10.86	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	11,386	(13%)	0%	$13.48	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	8,468	1%	4%	$12.82	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training
29-1141	Registered Nurses	8,020	9%	14%	$34.93	Bachelor's degree	None
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	7,918	(7%)	5%	$26.47	Bachelor's degree	None
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	7,175	8%	4%	$11.18	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	6,106	(9%)	5%	$26.65	Bachelor's degree	None
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	6,048	1%	9%	$9.32	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	5,947	(19%)	(1%)	$14.25	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5,853	(3%)	4%	$19.71	Postsecondary nondegree award	Short-term on-the-job training
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	5,560	3%	3%	$12.07	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	5,453	8%	5%	$11.06	Some college, no degree	None
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	5,287	31%	7%	$41.30	Bachelor's degree	None
25-3031	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	4,788	22%	3%	$10.86	Bachelor's degree	None
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	4,636	(5%)	4%	$26.29	Bachelor's degree	None
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4,567	(5%)	6%	$11.34	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	4,060	(2%)	5%	$13.27	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term on-the-job training

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Table 14 illustrates the top occupations at the 5-Digit SOC level with more recent job data and a longer prediction into the future. At this granular occupation level, the table reveals more specific job decline from 2018 to 2020. Of the 20 occupations, 13 show job decline from 2018 to 2020 and 6 show double-digit percentage declines. Again, the economic downturn from the pandemic could have affected these decreases in jobs. The positive job change for occupations such as Registered Nurses and Substitute Teachers, Short-Term during this same time period relate back to the significant industries like Healthcare and Social Services and Educational Services within the Rio Grande Valley.

Most occupations at this level show job growth from 2020 to 2030. The job decline of Fast Food and Counter Workers (5%); Office Clerks, General (1%); and Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive (3%) are still low into 2030.

TABLE 14: TOP OCCUPATIONS IN RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 5-DIGIT SOC, 2018-2020 AND 2020-2030

SOC Code	Description	2018 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Jobs Change % 2018-2020	2030 Jobs	Job Change % 2020-2030
31-1128	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	57,308	61,701	8%	80,057	30%
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	17,214	16,196	(6%)	19,278	19%
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	14,954	13,440	(10%)	14,067	5%
41-2011	Cashiers	13,275	12,871	(3%)	12,283	(5%)
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	11,726	10,328	(12%)	10,236	(1%)
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	8,382	7,924	(5%)	8,602	9%
29-1141	Registered Nurses	7,582	7,880	4%	9,725	23%
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	7,929	7,298	(8%)	8,084	11%
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	6,906	6,905	(0%)	7,449	8%
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	6,310	5,599	(11%)	6,244	12%
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	6,581	5,767	(12%)	6,928	20%
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	6,106	5,105	(16%)	4,976	(3%)
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5,727	5,295	(8%)	5,541	5%
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	5,302	6,110	15%	6,327	4%
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	5,204	5,113	(2%)	5,718	12%
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	4,888	5,537	13%	6,079	10%
25-3031	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	4,770	5,936	24%	6,263	6%
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	4,404	4,446	1%	4,821	8%
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4,816	4,039	(16%)	4,494	11%
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	3,977	3,742	(6%)	4,064	9%

Source: Emsi 2021.2

The figure below illustrates the typical entry-level education for the top 100 occupations by 5-Digit SOC in the Rio Grande Valley. In addition to the table above, this figure gives a more representative sample of what levels of education are held by employees in these occupations. High school diploma or equivalent seems to be the education credential most prevalent for the top 100 occupations at 41%. A high percentage at 21% of occupations have some college, but no degree and 18% have a Bachelor's degree in these occupations. Associate's degrees and Master's degrees are sparse and make up only 1% each of the top 100 occupations' education level.

FIGURE 5: TOP 100 OCCUPATIONS IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 5-DIGIT SOC, TYPICAL ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION[56]
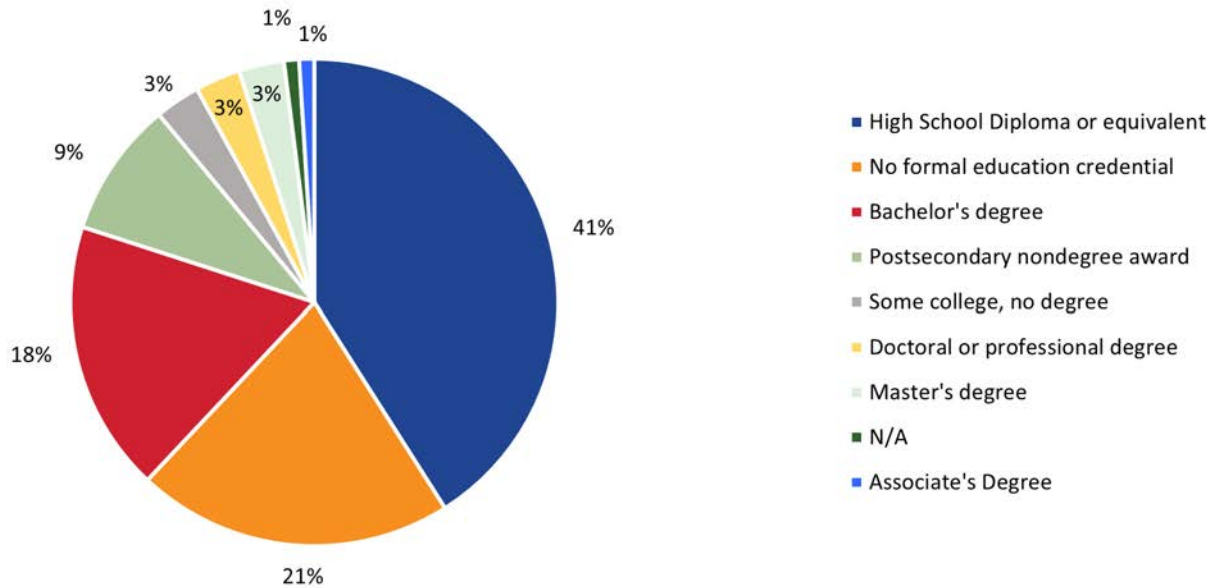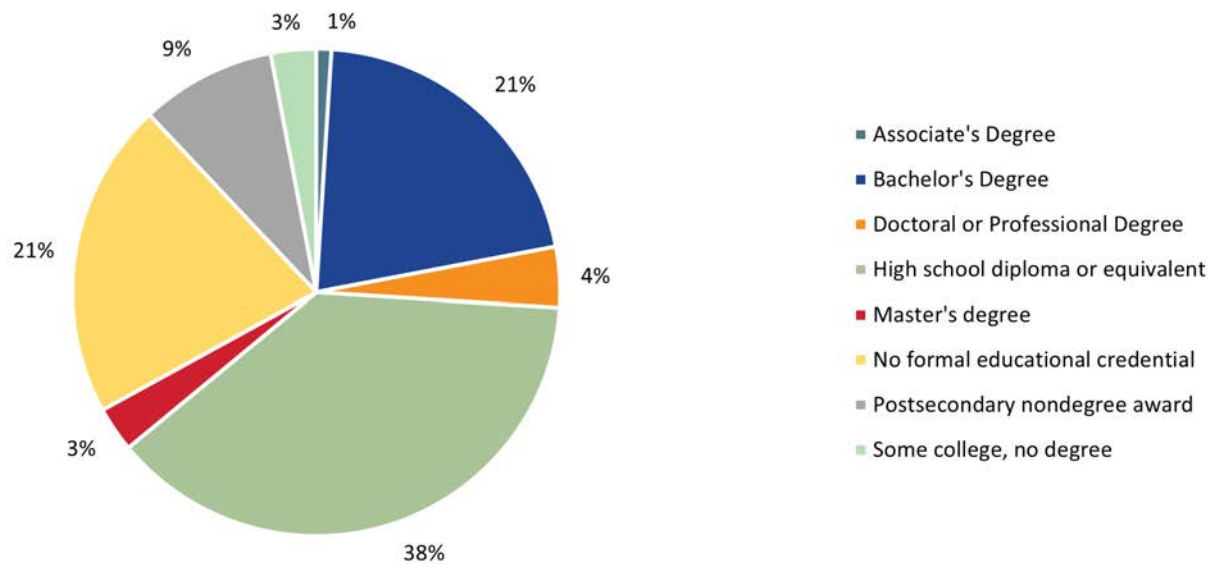

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Figure 6 pertains to the top 100 occupations' typical entry-level education at the 5-Digit SOC for the Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Area (LRGV WDA), which is Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties. The educational attainment is very similar to the totality of the Rio Grande Valley, which includes the three counties previously mentioned and Cameron County. For the three-county area, High school diploma or equivalent is most often the typical entry-level education credential. Rio Grande Valley has a few credentials with higher percentages in typical entry-level attainment—likely due to increased population—and mirrors closely with those in the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA.

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56   "N/A" in Figure 5 and 6 pertains to Military-only Occupations that did not list a typical entry-level education.

FIGURE 6: TOP 100 OCCUPATIONS IN LRGV WDA, 5-DIGIT SOC, TYPICAL ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION

Legend:
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Doctoral or Professional Degree
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Master's degree
- No formal educational credential
- Postsecondary nondegree award
- Some college, no degree

Source: Emsi 2021.2

The figure below represents typical on-the-job training in the Rio Grande Valley. Most of the top 100 occupations in the Rio Grande Valley do not have an on-the-job training component; 39% do not have on-the-job training. 37% of the top 100 occupations have short-term on-the-job training and 20% have moderate-term on-the-job training. Very few occupations have an apprenticeship.
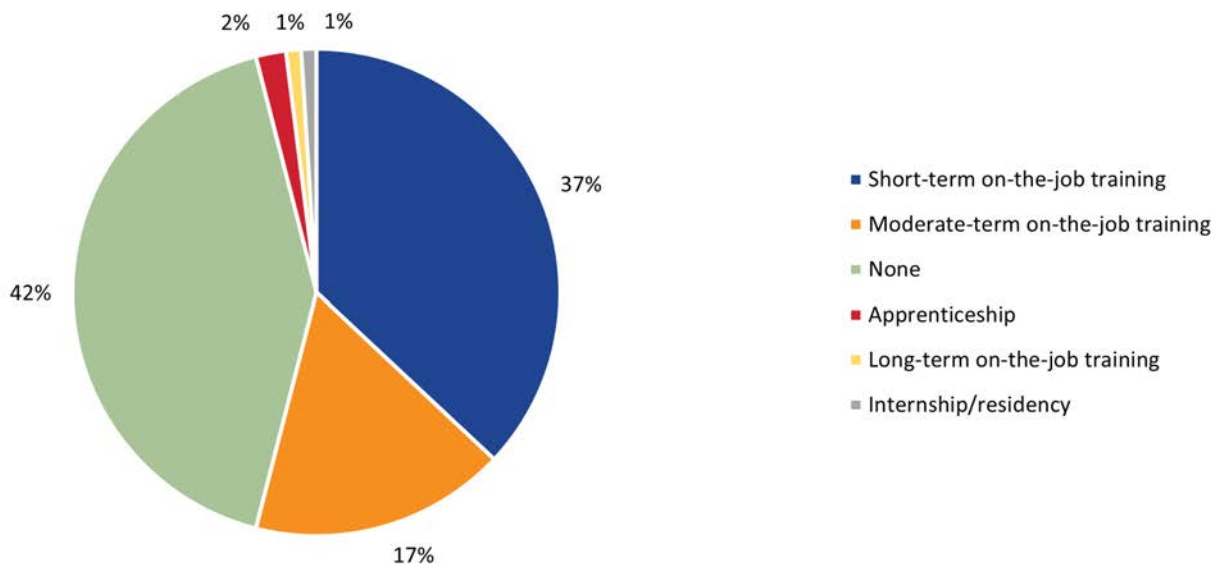
FIGURE 7: TOP 100 OCCUPATIONS IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 5-DIGIT SOC, TYPICAL ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Legend:
- Short-term on-the-job training
- None
- Moderate-term on-the-job training
- Apprenticeship
- N/A
- Internship/Residency
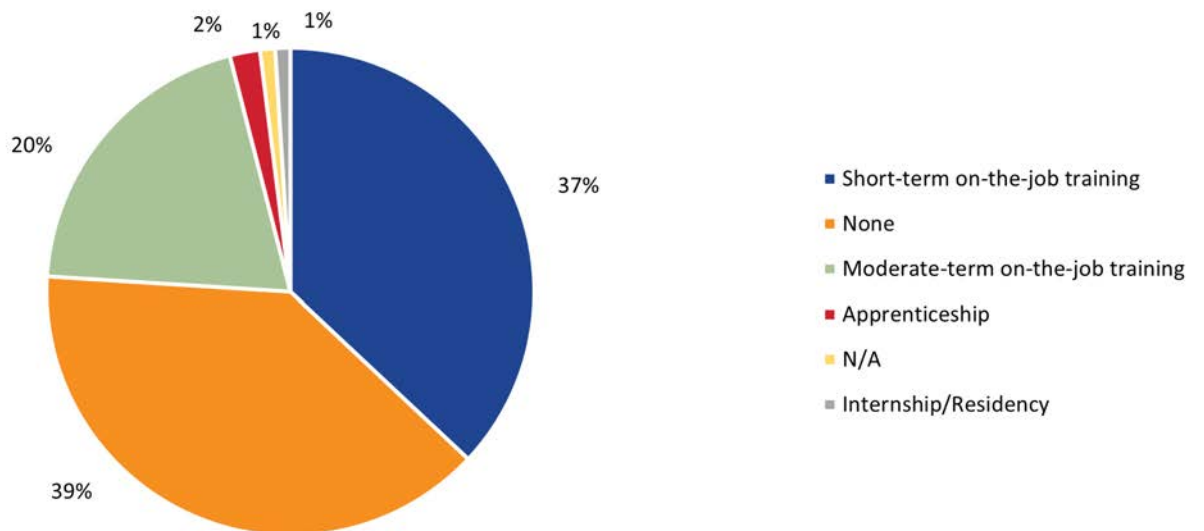
Source: Emsi 2021.1

In comparison, Figure 8 has the top 100 occupations' on-the-job training for the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA. The Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA has a slightly higher percentage of occupations that do not usually require any on-the-job training compared to the Rio Grande Valley as a whole. For the most part, the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA and total four-county region show very similar training requirements.

FIGURE 8: TOP 100 OCCUPATIONS IN THE LRGV WDA, 5-DIGIT SOC, TYPICAL ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Legend:
- Short-term on-the-job training
- Moderate-term on-the-job training
- None
- Apprenticeship
- Long-term on-the-job training
- Internship/residency

Source: Emsi 2021.2

Lastly, Table 15 documents the top 20 hiring companies in the Rio Grande Valley during 2020. The hiring companies represent a plethora of industry sectors and hire for a variety of occupations. The companies work in Healthcare, Food Service, and Education, among others. The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Idea Public Schools, and Dollar General Corporation contributed the most unique job postings in 2020 with 1,376, 1,332, and, 1,094 unique postings respectively. Lowe's Companies, Inc., Spectrum, and Aveanna Healthcare had the lowest number of unique job postings in 2020. Wal-Mart, Inc., Pizza Hut, Inc., and the Home Depot had postings with the longest median posting duration in 2020.

TABLE 15: TOP 20 HIRING COMPANIES IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY, JAN 2020-DEC 2020

Company	Unique Postings Jan 2020-Dec 2020	Median Posting Duration Jan 2020-Dec 2020
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	1,376	40
Idea Public Schools	1,332	41
Dollar General Corporation	1,094	53
Wal-Mart, Inc.	867	132
7-Eleven, Inc.	757	75
Pizza Hut, Inc.	747	259
Tenet Healthcare Corporation	723	53
HCA Holdings, Inc.	643	48
Universal Health Services, Inc.	604	66
CRST International, Inc.	599	22
UnitedHealth Group Incorporated	591	43
Care.com, Inc.	585	12
Space Exploration Technologies Corp.	554	66
The Home Depot	542	92
CVS Health Corporation	534	59
Bolt Express, LLC	528	44
Heb Grocery Company, LP	468	23
Aveanna Healthcare	466	51
Spectrum	457	10
Lowe's Companies, Inc.	453	31

Source: Emsi 2021.1

IT Sector in the Rio Grande Valley

As noted in the industry section, the Information industry was ranked 16th out of the Top 20 Industry Sectors by 2-Digit NAICS code in the Rio Grande Valley. The NAICS code 51, for Information, encompasses publishing industries, including software and traditional publishing; the motion picture and sound recording industries; broadcasting industries; telecommunications industries; and information services.[57] However, a full evaluation of the Information Technology industry and its occupations is important to accurately assess its footprint in the region. The following section will provide a detailed analysis of the Industry Technology sector, top occupations, job titles, companies, and job posting analytics.

Table 16 addresses the Information sub-sectors. Wired and Wireless Communications Carriers, Motion Picture and Video Exhibition, and Television Broadcasting are the 3 Information sub-sectors with the most 2020 Jobs. Wired and Wireless Communications Carriers and Motion Picture and Video Exhibition jobs are projected to increase through 2025. Average annual earnings ranged from $31,182.00 for Periodical Publisher jobs to $74,008.00 for Software Publisher jobs.

The location quotients in Table 16 refer to the occupations' concentrations in the Rio Grande Valley compared to other locations nationally. According to their 2020 location quotients, Periodical Publishers, Software Publishers, and Cable and Other Subscription Programming were less concentrated industries in the Rio Grande Valley compared to others. The competitive effect, which indicates how the change in jobs is due to regional competitiveness, is highest for Wired and Wireless Telecommunications Carriers.

TABLE 16: TOP 10 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUB-SECTORS AT THE 5-DIGIT NAICS LEVEL IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

Description	2020 Jobs	Job Change (2015-2020)	2025 Jobs	Avg. Annual Earnings	2020 Location Quotient	2020 Competitive Effect
Wired and Wireless Telecommunications Carriers	1,911	403	2,255	$61,280	1.09	628
Motion Picture and Video Exhibition	504	12	524	$49,159	1.46	73
Television Broadcasting	383	(42)	374	$71,032	1.03	(38)
Newspaper Publishers	294	(245)	163	$31,830	0.83	(53)
Other Telecommunications	122	(246)	59	$54,695	0.52	(255)
Radio Broadcasting	117	40	91	$54,221	0.53	50
Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	88	16	108	$61,477	0.09	3
Periodical Publishers	29	(20)	31	$31,825	0.13	(10)
Software Publishers	29	18	38	$74,008	0.02	14
Cable and Other Subscription Programming	15	(54)	<10	$57,204	0.10	(42)

Source: Emsi 2021.1

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57 "Information: NAICS 51." United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag51.htm.

The following 15 occupations fall into the career pathways of Information Support and Services, Network Systems, and Programming and Software Development based on Emsi and O*NET findings. These occupations are prominent in the Information Technology sector and provide more insight into the cross-functional nature of Information Technology. Computer User Support Specialists, Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists, Software Developers, and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers had the highest jobs in 2020 in the Rio Grande Valley. Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists and Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers saw a positive job change percentage of 50% between 2015 to 2020.

Each Information Technology occupation except for Computer Programmers is expected to increase between 7% to 25% in jobs from 2020 to 2025. Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers (31), Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists (15), and Computer Systems Analysts (12) have the highest competitive effect. The lowest median hourly wage of the 15 occupations is $18.04 for Computer User Specialists and highest median hourly wage is $66.96 for Computer and Information Research Scientists.

Also, Workforce Solutions identified Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists; Computer Systems Analysts; Network and Computer Systems Administrators; Computer Programmers; and Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers in their 2021 Demand Occupations List for the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA.[58] Each of these occupations are represented in the top Information Technology occupations in Table 17 below.

TABLE 17: TOP INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OCCUPATIONS AT THE 5-DIGIT SOC LEVEL

SOC Code	Description	2020 Jobs	Job Change % (2015-2020)	Job Change % (2020-2025)	Competitive Effect	Median Hourly Wage
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	905	(3%)	7%	4	$18.04
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	484	50%	23%	15	$26.95
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	426	50%	23%	31	$41.71
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	387	3%	7%	7	$28.05
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	329	18%	12%	12	$30.87
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	263	21%	16%	11	$31.88
13-1081	Logisticians	231	74%	10%	6	$29.19
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	194	(18%)	12%	4	$23.41
15-1251	Computer Programmers	139	(6%)	(2%)	0	$36.58
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	138	0%	11%	2	$50.72
15-1245	Database Administrators and Architects	100	(18%)	12%	5	$38.79
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	89	(7%)	22%	3	$31.38
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	79	33%	25%	4	$57.46
15-1257	Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	77	(10%)	13%	4	$25.63
15-1221	Computer and Information Research Scientists	34	26%	7%	0	$66.96

Source: Emsi 2021.1 and O*NET Career Cluster

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58   "2021 Demand Occupations List." Workforce Solutions. 2021.

Table 18 provides a more recent data selection of the top 15 IT occupations in the Rio Grande Valley. The jobs change percentages between 2018 to 2020 and 2015 to 2020 are similar on some levels; there are handful of occupations with declines during each time frame. From 2018 to 2020, Computer Programmers dropped the most by 26%; however, Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers grew by 26% during this time.

The decade from 2020 to 2030 predicts growth in nearly all IT occupations in the Rio Grande Valley, except for Computer Programmers. Each occupation with positive job growth is in the double-digit percent range. Information Security Analysts (59%) and Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers (55%) show very high growth.

TABLE 18: TOP INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OCCUPATIONS AT THE 5-DIGIT SOC LEVEL, 2018-2020 AND 2020-2030[59]

| SOC Code	Description	2018 Jobs 2018	2020 Jobs 2020	Jobs Change % 2018-2020	2030 Jobs	2020-2030 Jobs Change %
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	855	871	2%	984	13%
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	393	434	10%	639	47%
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	349	361	3%	562	55%
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	362	351	(3%)	412	17%
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	275	275	(0%)	351	28%
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	246	224	(9%)	283	26%
13-1081	Logisticians	140	151	8%	187	23%
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	179	178	(0%)	221	24%
15-1251	Computer Programmers	121	90	(26%)	85	(6%)
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	80	70	(13%)	100	43%
15-1245	Database Administrators and Architects	83	96	15%	119	25%
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	98	84	(15%)	117	39%
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	65	64	(2%)	101	59%
15-1257	Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	63	80	26%	99	24%
15-1221	Computer and Information Research Scientists[60]	<10	36	Insf. Data	40	11%

Source: Emsi 2021.2 and O*NET Career Cluster

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59   2020 jobs data in Table 18 varies slightly compared to the similar data presented in Table 17 due to more recent data extraction from Q2 of Emsi.
60   Computer and Information Research Scientists were estimated to be less than 10 jobs in 2018; therefore, the percent change in jobs between 2018 and 2020 does not have enough data to be determined.

Figure 9 presents a comparison of the top IT occupations in 2018 for the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA (Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties) versus Cameron County, Texas. The Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA has slightly higher numbers of these jobs throughout 2018, which is likely due to the greater population in this area. Cameron county and the three-county area both show Computer User Support Specialists as the occupation with the most jobs.

FIGURE 9: TOP IT OCCUPATIONS, 5-DIGIT SOC, COMPARISON BETWEEN LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY WDA AND CAMERON COUNTY, TX, 2018[61]
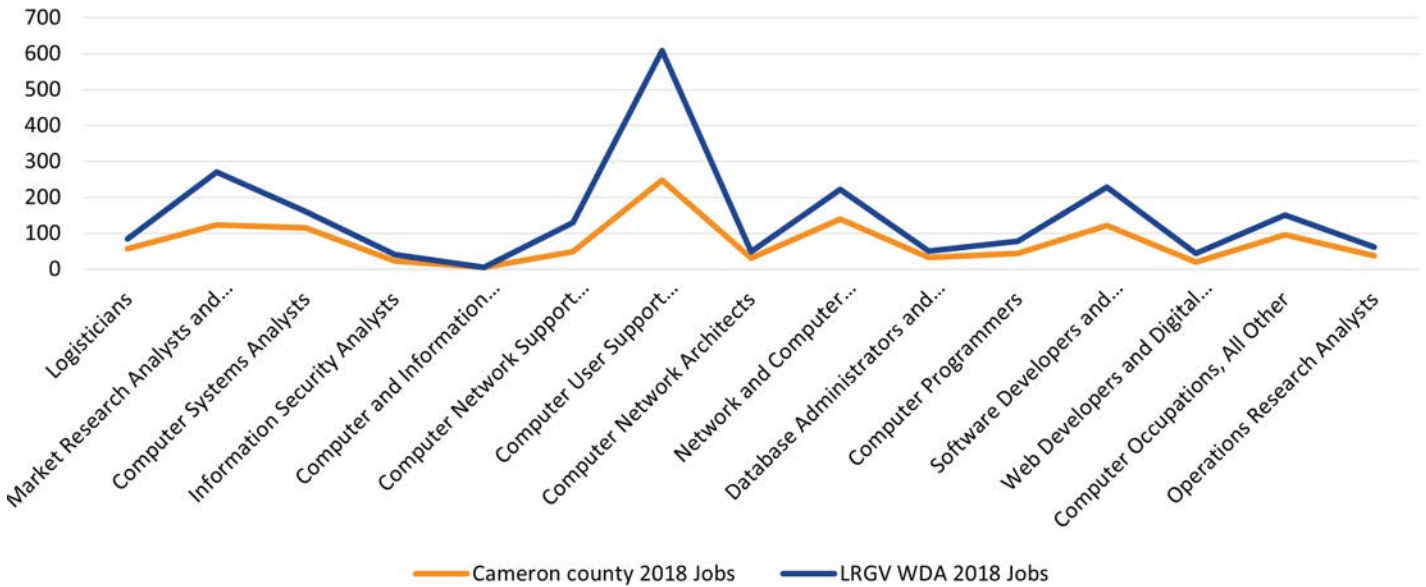
Source: Emsi 2021.2

Figure 10 also shows a comparison between Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA and Cameron County for these occupations in 2020, the year at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The occupational numbers for 2020 are similar to those in 2018. Cameron county has more occupations that experienced declining jobs compared to occupational numbers in Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA from 2018 to 2020.

FIGURE 10: TOP IT OCCUPATIONS, 5-DIGIT SOC, COMPARISON BETWEEN LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY WDA AND CAMERON COUNTY, TX, 2020
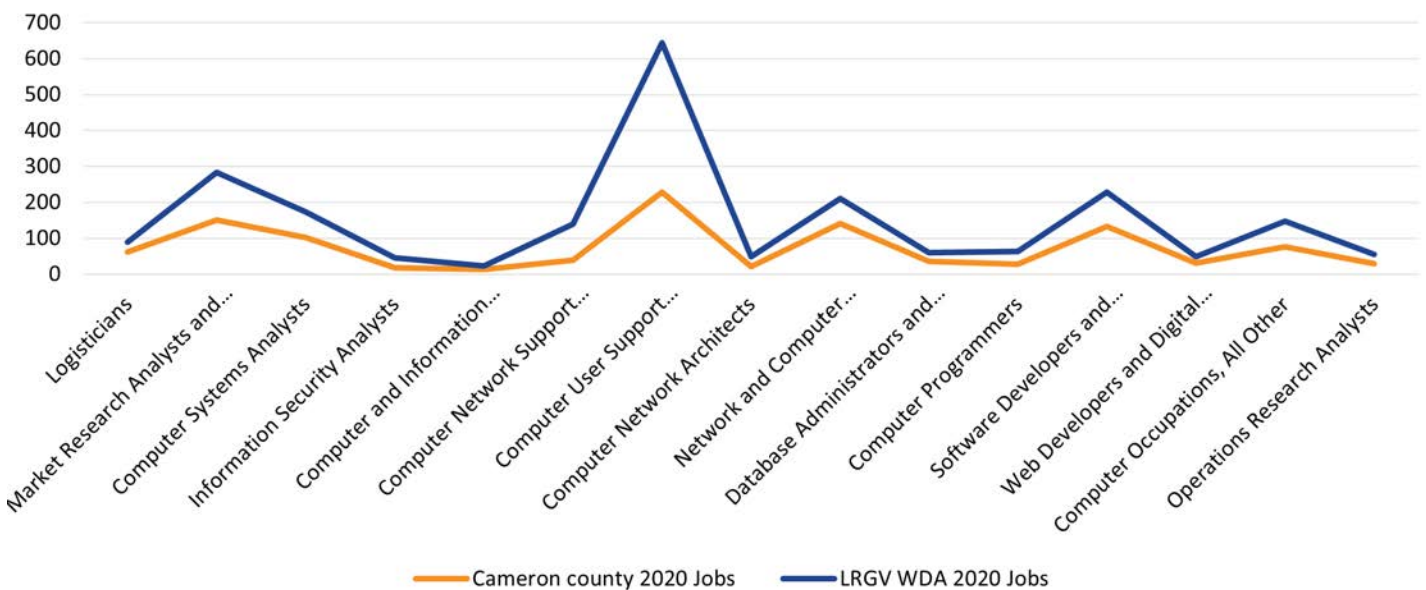
Source: Emsi 2021.2

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61   Computer and Information Research Scientists were estimated to be less than 10 jobs in 2018 for both Cameron county and LRGV WDA; the graph above shows an estimated number of 5 jobs for reporting purposes.

The following table references the average annual earnings for the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, and the United States to get a holistic sense of earnings in the area compared to other locations.

The Rio Grande Valley poses annual earnings that are slightly lower than those in Texas and the United States. Information Systems Analysts and Computer and Information Research Scientists in the Rio Grande Valley make on average more than their Texas and national counterparts. Information Security Analysts and Computer and Information Research Scientists earn an annual average of $134,237.00 and $143,223.00 respectively in the Rio Grande Valley. In the Rio Grande Valley, Computer User Support Specialists and Network and Computer Systems Administrators tend to make noticeably lower annual earnings on average than in the United States and Texas.

TABLE 19: GEOGRAPHIC COMPARISON OF AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS FOR TOP IT OCCUPATIONS

SOC Code	Occupations	Rio Grande Valley Avg. Annual Earnings	Texas Avg. Annual Earnings	US Avg. Annual Earnings
13-1081	Logisticians	$67,214.11	$84,364.80	$78,686.40
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	$61,659.73	$74,193.60	$71,572.80
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	$74,704.13	$102,128.00	$96,158.40
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	$134,237.64	$108,804.80	$104,208.00
15-1221	Computer and Information Research Scientists	$143,223.78	$128,960.00	$127,462.40
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	$53,153.00	$71,531.20	$68,848.00
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	$40,181.99	$52,187.20	$56,555.20
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	$105,042.87	$118,060.80	$115,107.20
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	$62,286.39	$88,836.80	$88,420.80
15-1245	Database Administrators and Architects	$84,000.94	$101,441.60	$96,116.80
15-1251	Computer Programmers	$86,310.56	$95,617.60	$92,622.40
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	$94,292.07	$107,931.20	$111,612.80
15-1257	Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	$58,720.21	$73,881.60	$82,368.00
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	$67,868.02	$85,592.00	$92,414.40
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	$66,267.21	$84,489.60	$90,604.80

Source: Emsi 2021.1

The following table contains average annual earnings of each top IT occupation per county. It must be noted that some average annual earnings could not be determined due to insufficient data in certain counties, which means there are not enough jobs in these occupations locally and is dependent on the county's population. Willacy and Starr counties have much lower labor force participation rates, defined as those actively employed or looking for employment, so that factors into their earnings data for these occupations as well.

Based on the data reported, there are similar trends in average annual earnings for the four counties, with some exceptions. For example, Information Security Analysts in Cameron County average over $32,000.00 per year and Hidalgo County Information Security Analysts average close to $89,000.00 per year, which is an earnings gap of nearly $60,000.00. However, Computer Network Architects and Computer Programmers in Cameron County make significantly higher average annual earnings compared to these same occupations' average annual earnings in Hidalgo County. Computer User Support Specialists make very similar wages throughout all four counties.

TABLE 20: AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS OF TOP IT OCCUPATIONS BY COUNTY IN RIO GRANDE VALLEY

SOC Code	Occupations	Cameron county Avg. Annual Earnings	Hidalgo county Avg. Annual Earnings	Starr county Avg. Annual Earnings	Willacy county Avg. Annual Earnings
13-1081	Logisticians	$70,766.85	$70,101.01	$88,076.21	-
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	$60,523.84	$64,118.23	$65,616.76	-
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	$73,103.67	$70,469.27	-	-
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	$32,473.34	$88,864.22	-	-
15-1221	Computer and Information Research Scientists	$140,226.11	$140,167.48	-	-
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	$64,143.45	$50,864.04	$49,710.93	-
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	$38,348.01	$43,039.69	$42,351.49	$45,074.48
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	$108,239.05	$61,196.93	-	-
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	$52,140.28	$69,238.96	$67,339.37	-
15-1245	Database Administrators and Architects	$95,888.16	$85,213.88	-	-
15-1251	Computer Programmers	$99,766.25	$78,607.86	-	-
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	$85,193.40	$100,958.07	-	-
15-1257	Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	$59,307.81	$53,510.13	-	-
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	$75,061.27	$70,218.60	$66,613.42	-
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	$45,055.52	$65,772.54	-	-

Source: Emsi 2021.2.

Figure 11 shows median hourly wages for the top IT occupations for the Rio Grande Valley's four-county region. Computer and Information Research Scientists make the highest median hourly earnings at $66.10. Computer and Information Research Scientists are also the occupation that typically requires the highest entry-level education, a master's degree, and has the lowest number of available jobs in these occupations. Computer User Support Specialists make the lowest median hourly earnings at $18.65.

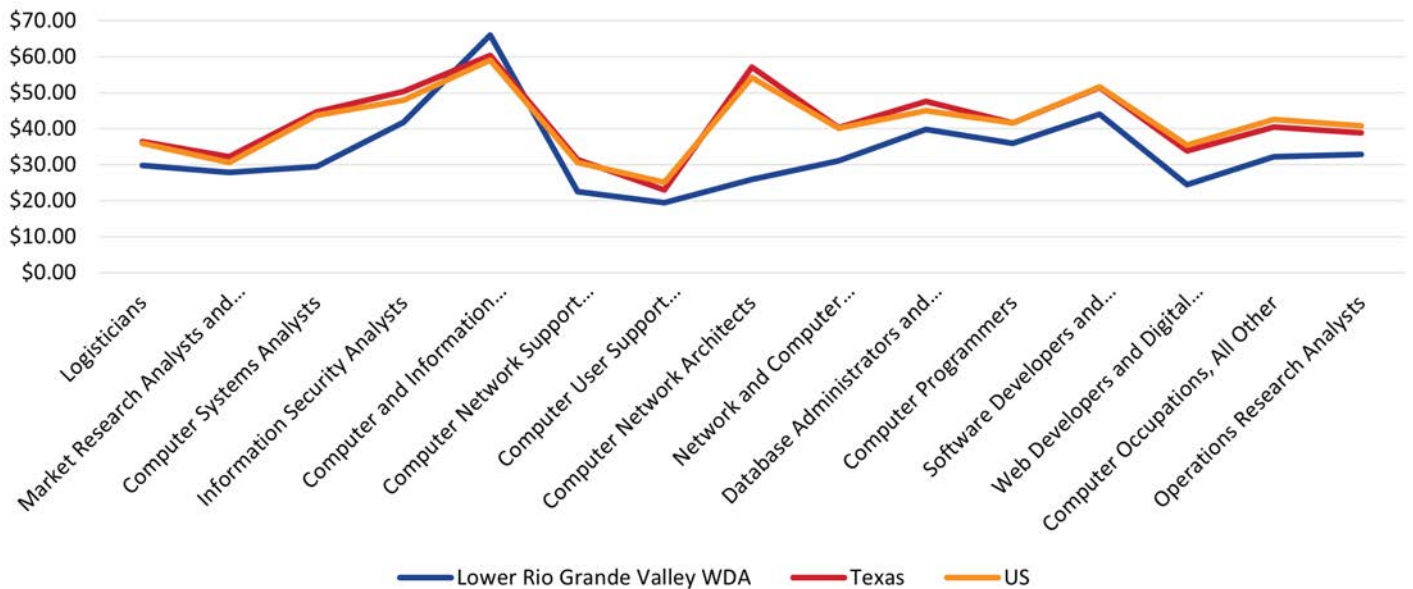**FIGURE 11: MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES FOR TOP IT OCCUPATIONS, RIO GRANDE VALLEY**
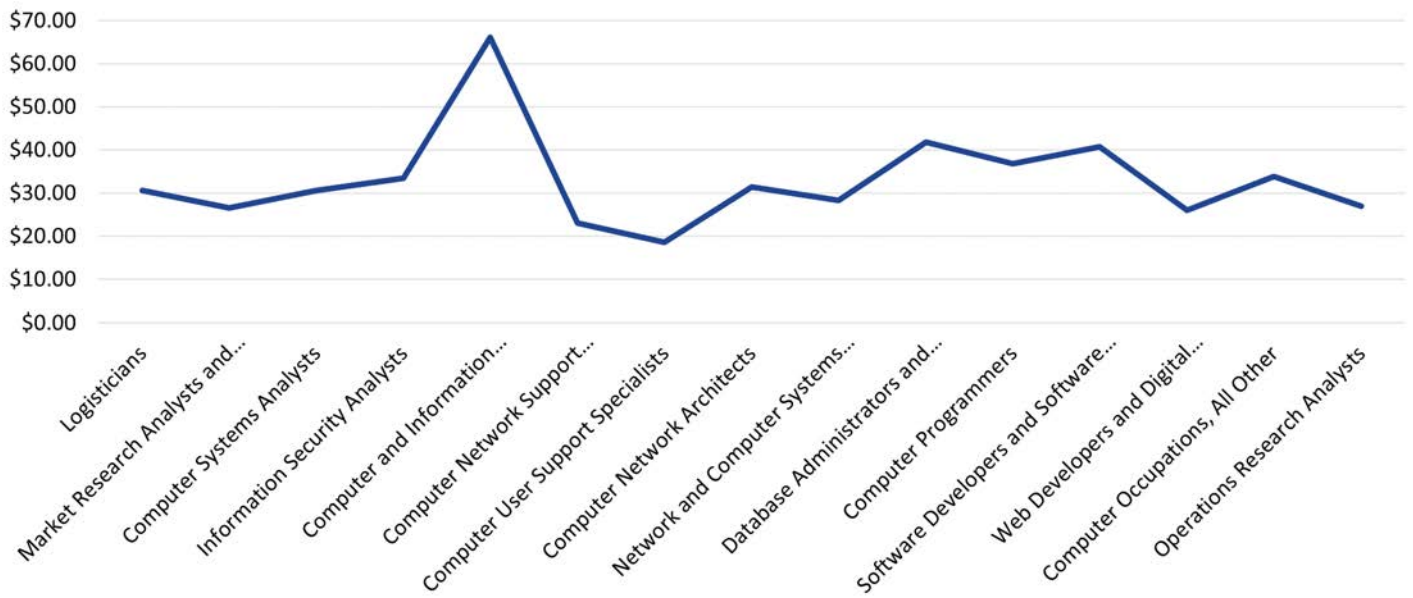
Source: Emsi 2021.2

Figure 12 provides the median hourly wages for the top IT occupations for the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA (the three-county region), Texas, and the United States. The Lower Rio Grande WDA shows slightly lower median hourly wages compared to Texas and the United States for most of the IT occupations.

There are a few occupations that are quite lower compared to Texas and the United States. For example, Computer Systems Analysts in the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA earn a $29.49 median hourly wage while these occupations make median hourly wages of $44.70 in Texas and $43.71 in the United States. Computer Network Architects also lag in median hourly wages in the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA compared to Texas and the United States.

Computer and Information Research Scientists in the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA is the only occupation that makes higher median hourly wages than in Texas and the United States; these scientists earn an estimated $6.00 more per hour in the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA.

FIGURE 12: GEOGRAPHIC COMPARISON OF MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES FOR TOP IT OCCUPATIONS, LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY WDA, TEXAS, AND US

Source: Emsi 2021.2.

Figure 13 presents median hourly wages for the top IT occupations for the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA compared to those in Cameron County. These median hourly wages diverge in each area for the occupations of Information Security Analysts, Computer Network Architects, and Operations Research Analysts. For example, Information Security Analysts earn a median hourly wage of $9.27 while those in the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA typically earn a median wage of $41.77 per hour, which is a difference of over $30.00 in median hourly wages. These occupational median hourly wages in the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA and Cameron County could be compared to Texas and the United States to determine median hourly wages that come closer to state and national standards.

FIGURE 13: MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES FOR TOP IT OCCUPATIONS, LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY WDA VERSUS CAMERON COUNTY
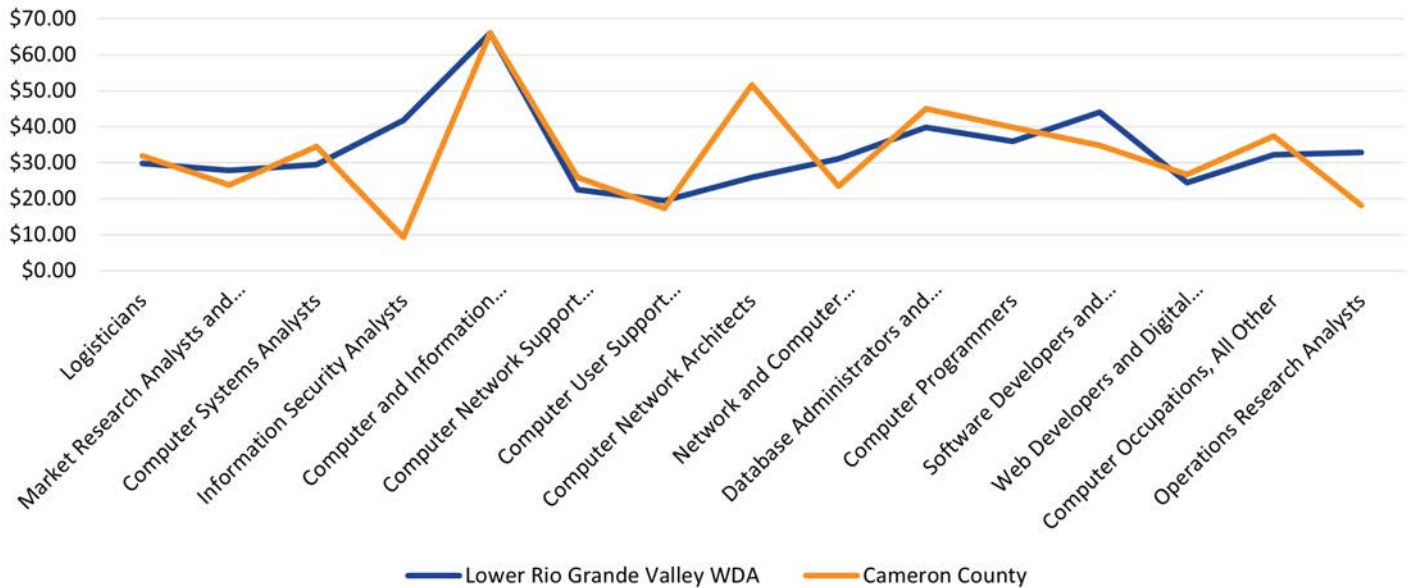
Source: Emsi 2021.2

Additionally, the pie chart below shows the typical education requirements for the top IT occupations in the Rio Grande Valley. The majority, 73% of occupations, require a bachelor's degree. An associate degree is required by 13% of the occupations. Lastly, 7% of the occupations require a master's degree and 7% require some college, but no college degree.

FIGURE 14: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR TOP IT OCCUPATIONS, 5-DIGIT SOC
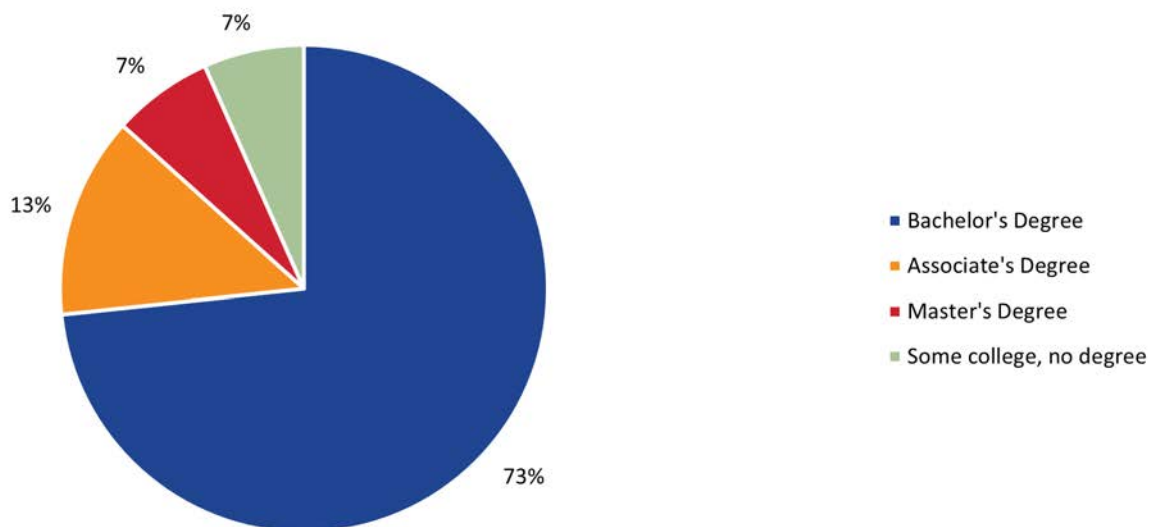
Source: Emsi 2021.1

Table 21 below provides more detail into the cross-functional analysis of the Information Technology industry. Inverse Staffing Patterns reflect the distribution of technical occupations' distribution in regional industries. The 2-Digit NAICS codes in the table below show higher level, common industry categories. The top 15 Information Technology occupations previously mentioned were used to gather this data.

Government; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Health Care and Social Assistance supplied the highest number of top Information Technology occupations in 2020. Health Care and Social Assistance, and Management of Companies and Enterprises experienced 49% and 126% positive change from 2015 to 2020, respectively. Most industries are expected to increase from 2020 to 2025.

TABLE 21: INVERSE STAFFING PATTERNS, 2-DIGIT NAICS

| Industry	Occupation Group Jobs in Industry (2020)	% Change (2015 - 2020)	% Change (2020 - 2025)	% of Occupation Group in Industry (2020)
Government	1,289	0%	2%	33.3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	450	18%	19%	11.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	362	49%	24%	9.3%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	360	3%	12%	9.3%
Finance and Insurance	334	16%	9%	8.6%
Information	244	(2%)	21%	6.3%
Wholesale Trade	206	(4%)	(2%)	5.3%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	172	126%	62%	4.4%
Manufacturing	92	32%	24%	2.4%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	82	15%	11%	2.1%
Educational Services	69	31%	38%	1.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	67	38%	1%	1.7%
Retail Trade	55	(8%)	9%	1.4%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	26	60%	(1%)	0.7%
Utilities	15	16%	24%	0.4%

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Table 22 shows industries by 5-Digit NAICS; therefore, the industries are more granular and specific. As in Table 21, the table below shows the Rio Grande Valley industries with high concentrations of technical occupations. The Government industry is broken down into the specifics of Local, State, and Federal Government, which have some of the largest numbers of Information Technology jobs in the Rio Grande Valley. The Management of Companies and Enterprises, Engineering Services, and Home Health Care Services are predicted to increase steadily from 2020 to 2025. Management of Companies and Enterprises is projected to rise 62% and Engineering Services are expected to increase 29% from 2020 to 2025. Offices of Physicians and Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, and Payroll Services supply the lowest percentage of top Information Technology occupations in their respective industries between 1.2 to 1.3%.

TABLE 22: INVERSE STAFFING PATTERNS, 5-DIGIT NAICS

Industry	Occupation Group Jobs in Industry (2020)	% Change (2015 - 2020)	% Change (2020 - 2025)	% of Occupation Group in Industry (2020)
Education (Local Government)	470	(12%)	1%	12.1%
Education (State Government)	217	(15%)	(12%)	5.6%
Federal Government, Civilian, Excluding Postal Service	207	26%	14%	5.3%
Computer Systems Design and Related Services	193	20%	25%	5.0%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	190	18%	9%	4.9%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	172	126%	62%	4.4%
Wired and Wireless Telecommunications Carriers	172	6%	27%	4.4%
Temporary Help Services	135	32%	8%	3.5%
Telephone Call Centers	126	6%	22%	3.2%
Federal Government, Military	121	54%	2%	3.1%
Commercial Banking	120	12%	1%	3.1%
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	117	21%	4%	3.0%
Home Health Care Services	88	64%	26%	2.3%
Insurance Agencies and Brokerages	80	54%	6%	2.1%
Management Consulting Services	78	(18%)	7%	2.0%
State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	78	(2%)	7%	2.0%
Office Administrative Services	54	(20%)	4%	1.4%
Offices of Physicians	51	13%	16%	1.3%
Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, and Payroll Services	48	73%	11%	1.2%
Engineering Services	46	52%	29%	1.2%

Source: Emsi 2021.1
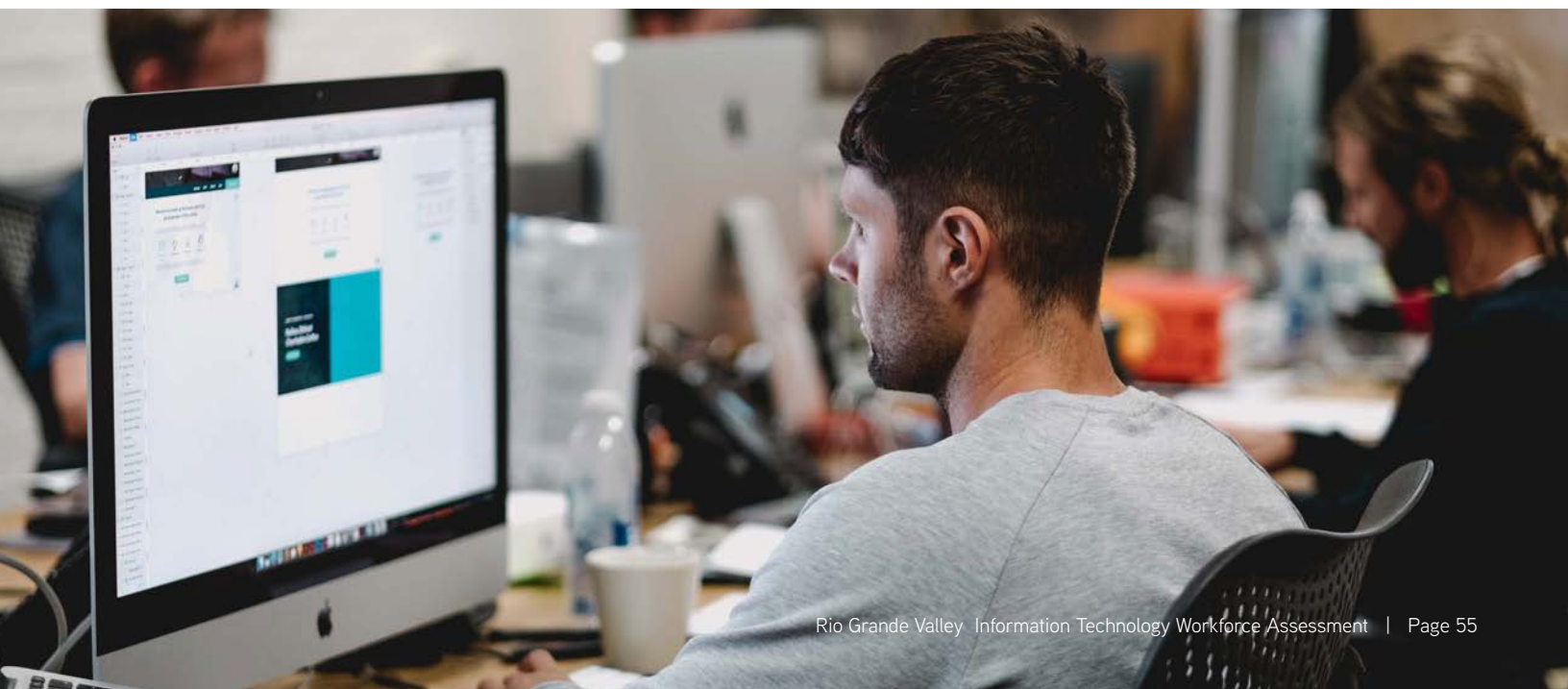
Job Posting Analytics

Job Posting Analytics highlight recent data pertaining to job titles, occupations, and companies present in the Rio Grande Valley job postings. The data is pertinent to the Information Technology sector in the region and job posting activity in 2020 and 2021.

Table 23 has job titles that appear in the Rio Grande Valley job listings. The job titles are based on the top Information Technology occupations in the Rio Grande Valley; there are many similarities in the results below. Software Engineers, Software Developers, and IT Specialists topped the list with the most unique job postings in 2020. The lowest number of unique job postings fell under the job titles of .NET Software Engineers, Network Engineers, and Windows Software Engineers; .NET Software Engineers had 15 unique postings, and Network Engineers and Windows Software Engineers had 14 unique postings in 2020. As of the active postings in late February and March of 2021, Software Developers, Front End Developers, and .NET Software Engineers had the most postings.

TABLE 23: TOP INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY JOB TITLES, 2020 POSTINGS AND LATEST ACTIVE POSTINGS

Job Title	Unique Postings Jan 2020-Dec 2020	Latest 30 Days Active Postings (March 2021)
Software Engineers	93	7
Software Developers	55	12
IT Specialists	34	2
Project Managers	30	4
Technical Support Representatives	22	4
Mission Support Specialists	22	1
Front End Software Engineers	21	0
Data Entry Specialists	21	3
Help Desk Technicians	20	8
IT Technicians	19	4
Client Support Associates	19	0
Front End Developers	18	10
English/Spanish Teachers	16	3
Operations Analysts	16	1
Biometricians	16	0
Installation Technicians	15	0
Network Technicians	15	3
.NET Software Engineers	15	6
Network Engineers	14	1
Windows Software Engineers	14	0

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Similarly, Table 24 shows the most common information technology occupations prevalent in unique job postings in 2020. Among the highest unique job postings, Computer User Support Specialists had 761, Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers had 553, and Computer Occupations, All Other, had 328 in 2020. Computer Network Support Specialists had 27, Computer Network Architects had 25, and Computer and Information Research Scientists had 15 unique job postings, which made up the occupations with the fewest postings.

TABLE 24: TOP INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OCCUPATIONS, UNIQUE JOB POSTINGS 2020

Occupations	Unique Job Postings Jan 2020-Dec 2020
Computer User Support Specialists	761
Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	553
Computer Occupations, All Other	328
Computer Systems Analysts	301
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	177
Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	177
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	135
Information Security Analysts	102
Computer Programmers	101
Logisticians	89
Operations Research Analysts	53
Database Administrators and Architects	31
Computer Network Support Specialists	27
Computer Network Architects	25
Computer and Information Research Scientists	15

Source: Emsi 2021.1

The job postings' companies feature those actively hiring in the four-county region and span a variety of industries. Featured companies provide a range of education, technical and software, and business services. Table 25 has the unique job postings and the average time the job posting was maintained during 2020. Computer Task Group, Incorporated with 250, Crowdstrike, Inc. with 152, and Revature with 147 comprised the highest unique job postings in 2020.

Large-scale information technology and software companies such as Dell Inc., Oracle Corporation, and Dish Network L.L.C. had unique job postings in 2020. The University of Kansas Hospital, Kelly Services, Inc., and Dish Network L.L.C. had job postings that remained posted for the longest duration in 2020. Jackson Hewitt Tax Service Inc., Intellicom, Inc., and Bureau of Customs and Border Protection had the fewest unique postings (between 21 to 20 postings).
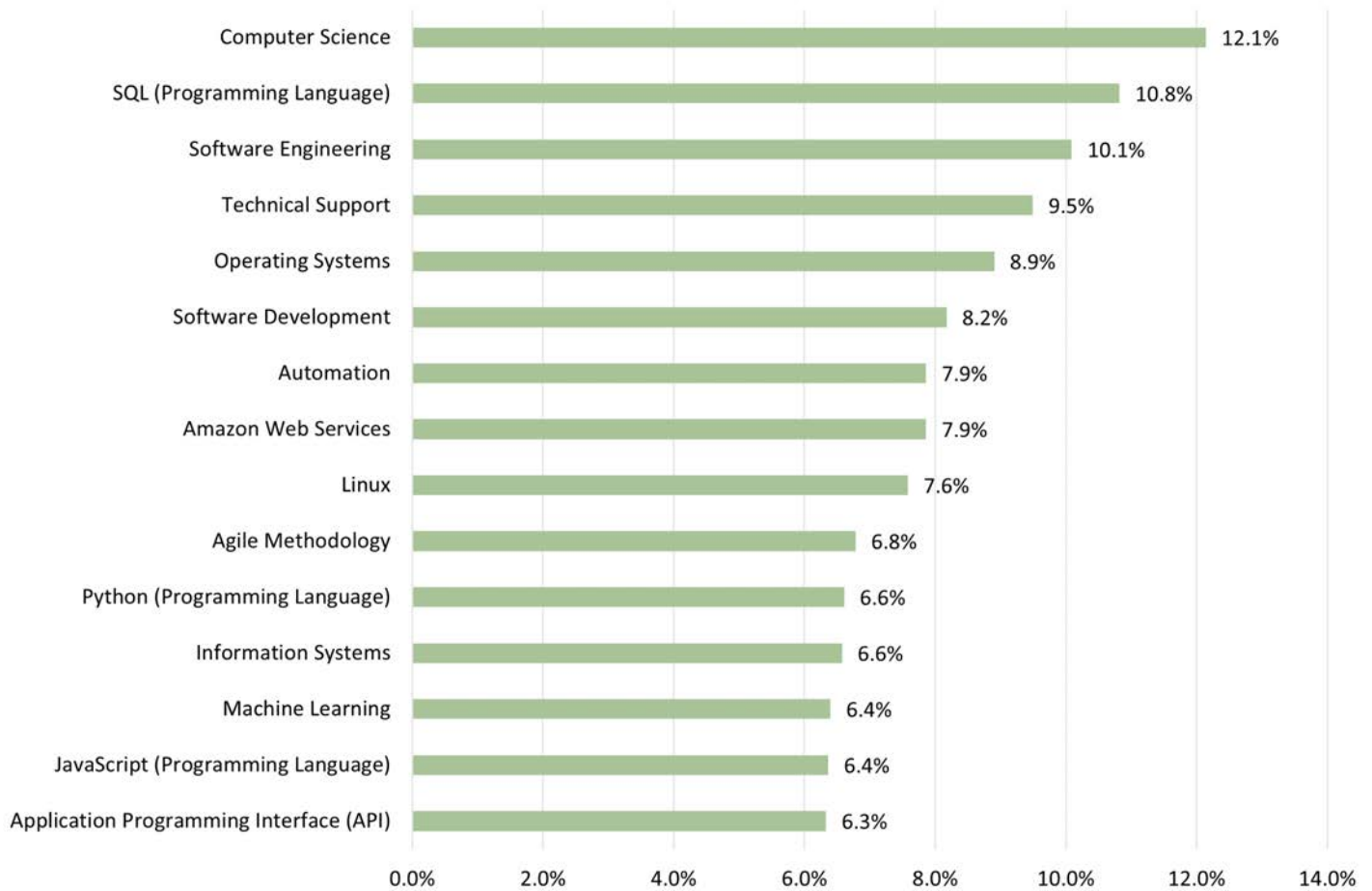
TABLE 25: TOP IT COMPANIES, UNIQUE JOB POSTINGS AND MEDIAN POSTING DURATION 2020

Companies	Unique Postings from Jan 2020- Dec 2020	Median Posting Duration from Jan 2020-Dec 2020
Computer Task Group, Incorporated	250	31
Crowdstrike, Inc.	152	9
Revature	147	35
Jobot	106	10
Kelly Services, Inc.	53	106
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	49	26
Space Exploration Technologies Corp.	49	65
Dell Inc.	48	9
Automatic Data Processing, Inc. (ADP)	45	79
South Texas College	30	30
Idea Public Schools	28	65
Army National Guard	25	24
Humana Inc.	25	25
Oracle Corporation	22	71
Dish Network L.L.C.	22	94
Kforce Inc.	22	22
The University of Kansas Hospital	21	174
Jackson Hewitt Tax Service Inc.	21	32
Intellicom, Inc.	20	52
Bureau of Customs and Border Protection	20	17

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Within the unique job postings, a set of skills were requested by companies. Hard skills are often tangible skill sets gained through specific programs, education institutions, and other credentialing methods. Figure 15 shows hard skills that are important to Information Technology careers. Multiple hard skills include computer language programs such as SQL (10.8%), Python (6.6%), and JavaScript (6.4%). Computer Science, SQL, and Software Engineering top the hard skills referenced in many job postings. Machine Learning, JavaScript, and Application Programming Interface (API) only showed up in 6.3-6.4% of the job postings in 2020.

FIGURE 15: FREQUENCY OF HARD SKILLS IN JOB POSTINGS, JAN 2020-DEC 2020

Skill	Percentage
Computer Science	12.1%
SQL (Programming Language)	10.8%
Software Engineering	10.1%
Technical Support	9.5%
Operating Systems	8.9%
Software Development	8.2%
Automation	7.9%
Amazon Web Services	7.9%
Linux	7.6%
Agile Methodology	6.8%
Python (Programming Language)	6.6%
Information Systems	6.6%
Machine Learning	6.4%
JavaScript (Programming Language)	6.4%
Application Programming Interface (API)	6.3%

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Figure 16 has the most frequent soft skills required for posted jobs. Soft skills are largely noted as interpersonal skills and relate to business acumen. Communications is the most popular soft skill; it appeared in 39.4% of 2020 job postings. Management was prevalent in 25.4% and Problem Solving was in 21.6% of job postings. Verbal Communication Skills, Presentations, and Integration showed up the least in 2020 job postings at between 7.2-8%. Operations, Customer Service, Leadership, and Detail Oriented are examples of other soft skills that appeared relatively often in job postings.

FIGURE 16: FREQUENCY OF SOFT SKILLS IN JOBS POSTINGS, JAN 2020-DEC 2020
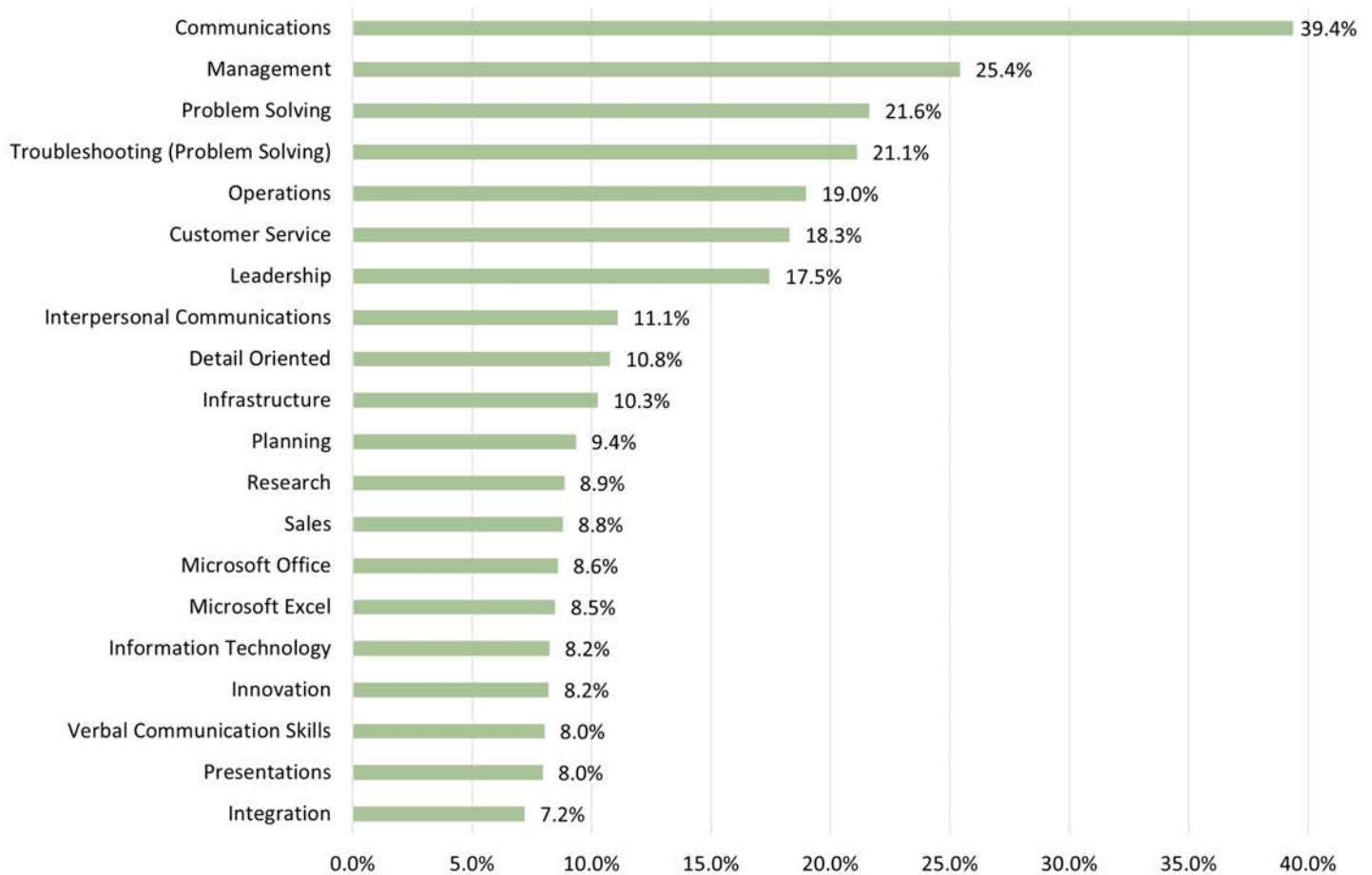
Source: Emsi 2021.1

COVID-19

The Rio Grande Valley has been hit hard with more cases than average across the state, hindering industry, increasing pressure on local facilities and resources as cases increase. The high case count has had a profound impact on the local economy, driving up unemployment rates, evictions, and the formation of a volatile job market.

As shown in Table 26, Hidalgo County has had the most cases at 84,460, which is also the county with the highest population of residents in the Rio Grande Valley. Cameron County has had a high number of cases in relation to its population; reporting 38,357 residents testing positive for COVID-19. Cameron also has the highest mortality rate at 4%. Recently, Texas has reopened and eliminated restrictions leading to a decline in unemployment as businesses prepare for more normal operations. Increasing vaccination and a considerable decrease in daily case counts are slowly bringing consumers back to more traditional consumer behavior.

TABLE 26: CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 11/2020-3/2021

County	Number of Cases	Number of Deaths	Mortality Percentage
Cameron	38,357	1,572	4%
Hidalgo	84,460	2,754	3%
Starr	9,262	284	3%
Willacy	2,546	86	3%
Texas	2,779,668	48,212	2%

Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Unemployment claims by numbers

The following table shows COVID-19 cases per age group. when considering COVID-19 cases, it is important to note the disparate effects of the virus on different age groups. Groups between 20 and 49 had similar rates of spread, between 19.3% and 22%, of cases in the state. Older demographics show the lowest numbers, which emulates national trends considering the effect of vaccine distribution. Fatalities are a small percentage of cases recorded. However, the highest death rate (22%) is in the age group between 30-39.

TABLE 27: CASES OF COVID-19 BY AGE GROUPINGS IN TEXAS, 11/2020-3/2021

Age Groupings	Number of Cases	Percentage of Cases per Age Group in Texas
1 year	269	0.4%
1-9 years	1,290	1.7%
10-19 years	3,501	4.6%
20-29 years	15,292	19.9%
30-39 years	16,883	22.0%
40-49 years	14,783	19.3%
50-59 years	12,408	16.2%
60-64 years	4,464	5.8%
65-69 years	3,005	3.9%
70-74 years	1,788	2.3%
75-79 years	1,170	1.5%
80+ years	1,846	2.4%
Pending DOB	13	0.0%
Total	**76,712**	**100%**

Source: Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) 2021.1

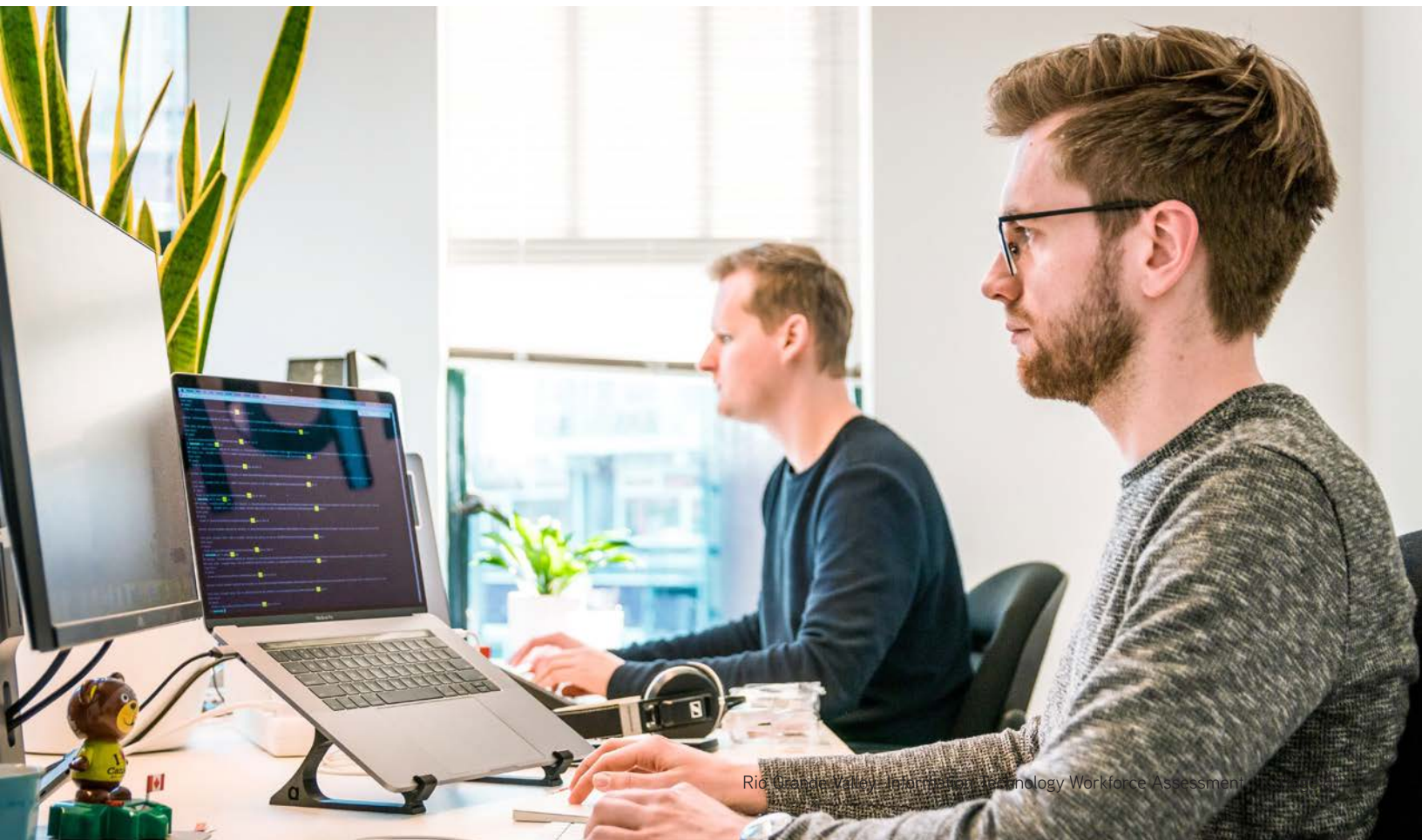Rio Grande Valley Information Technology Workforce Assessment

Table 28 shows the statistics related to fatalities in Texas. Fatalities by age groups in Texas are dominated by those aged 80 and older; with a fatality rate of 34%. Those aged 70 to 79 show lower mortality rates at 13.4%. The age groups least affected by COVID-19 related mortality can be reported as those 4 grouping between <1 year and 29 years, with rates at or below 0.5%

TABLE 28: FATALITIES BY AGE GROUPINGS IN TEXAS, 11/2020-3/2021

Age Groupings	Number	Percentage of Fatalities per Age Group
<1 year	6	0.0%
1-9 years	11	0.0%
10-19 years	32	0.1%
20-29 years	227	0.5%
30-39 years	760	1.6%
40-49 years	2,219	4.7%
50-59 years	5,154	11.0%
60-64 years	4,375	9.3%
65-69 years	5,649	12.0%
70-74 years	6,295	13.4%
75-79 years	6,293	13.4%
80+ years	15,965	34.0%
Unknown	0	0.0%
Total	**46,986**	**100%**

Source: Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) 2021.1

Table 29 documents the COVID-19 cases by race/ethnicity, and Table 30 explains each group's racial makeup in the state of Texas. COVID-19 has had disparate effects on different races and ethnic groups. The Hispanic population has had the highest rate of cases in the state; this group makes up 36.3% of cases while representing an estimated 38% of the state population. This segment is closely followed by the White demographic with a rate of spread of 34.1%, while representing 70% of the population in the state. Other ethnicities like Pacific Islanders and Asian groups have lower representation in the area yet these groups have a been significantly affected by the pandemic. To put this trend into perspective, the Asian population of Texas is at 12% and accounts for 16.8% of cases.

TABLE 29: CASES OF COVID-19 BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN TEXAS, 11/2020-3/2021

Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Asian	942	1.2%
Black	12,850	16.8%
Hispanic	27,870	36.3%
Other	466	0.6%
White	26,140	34.1%
Unknown	8,444	11.0%
Total	**76,712**	**100%**

Source: Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) 2021.1

TABLE 30: POPULATION BY RACE IN TEXAS, 11/2020-3/2021

Population by Race	Number	Percentage
Population Reporting One Race	24,466,560	97%
White	17,701,552	70%
Black	2,979,598	12%
American Indian	170,972	1%
Asian	964,596	4%
Pacific Islander	21,656	0%
Other Race	2,628,186	10%
Population Reporting Two or More Races	679,001	3%
Total Hispanic Population	**9,460,921**	**38%**
Total of all Races	**25,145,561**	**100%**

Source: Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) 2021.1

Fatalities related to COVID-19 expose in greater detail the disproportionate effects across different ethnicities and communities. The highest level of fatalities is seen in the Hispanic population that represents a considerable segment of the state's population; a similar number is seen in the White population that represents at least double the Hispanic population in the state.

TABLE 31: FATALITIES BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN TEXAS, 11/2020-3/2021

Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Asian	977	2.1%
Black	4,635	9.9%
Hispanic	21,773	46.3%
Other	255	0.5%
White	19,321	41.1%
Unknown	25	0.1%
Total	**46,986**	**100.0%**

Source: Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) 2021.1

## Economic Climate and Unemployment Insurance

From April to May 2021, Thomas P. Miller & Associates with the assistance of Workforce Solutions disseminated two surveys to determine points of view from employers and educators in both English and Spanish speaking communities along the Rio Grande Valley, including Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties. The purpose of the surveys was to identify challenges, trends, and the necessary steps to make Information Technology an active industry and driving force behind the local economy.

Results of the surveys suggest there is evidence that the industry has suffered because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Surveys also show that employers have encountered issues with the transition to remote work. There were 23% of employers who cited issues with support and equipment while 15% were concerned with access to reliable broadband. Of the employers surveyed, 31% experienced unplanned financial burdens associated with the adaptation measures and restrictions due to the pandemic; the same percentage responded that security and confidentiality were issues too.

Employers and educators responded to questions about IT related skills and IT programs, which underscored the need for IT competencies in the Rio Grande Valley. Employers mentioned limitations of existing staff, which meant having to consistently outsource tasks in some cases. Educators showed interest in increasing community investment and partnerships to scale back the digital divide. As online education grows and gains popularity, training tools and courses are shifting in nature. There is increasing demand for the acquisition of basic skills and computer knowledge.

Figure 17 represents recent unemployment claims for the Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development Area, which includes Hidalgo, Willacy, and Starr counties. Unemployment claims were made in a disproportionate amount by age groups 18-44, which make up a dominant part of the labor force. Older employees aged 55-64 also had relatively high claims at 10.15%. Those nearing retirement age had low claims at about 3%. This data correlates with the demographic makeup of current population and shows how the pandemic has affected employment for certain age groups.

FIGURE 17: UI CLAIMS BY AGE GROUP FOR LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY WDA
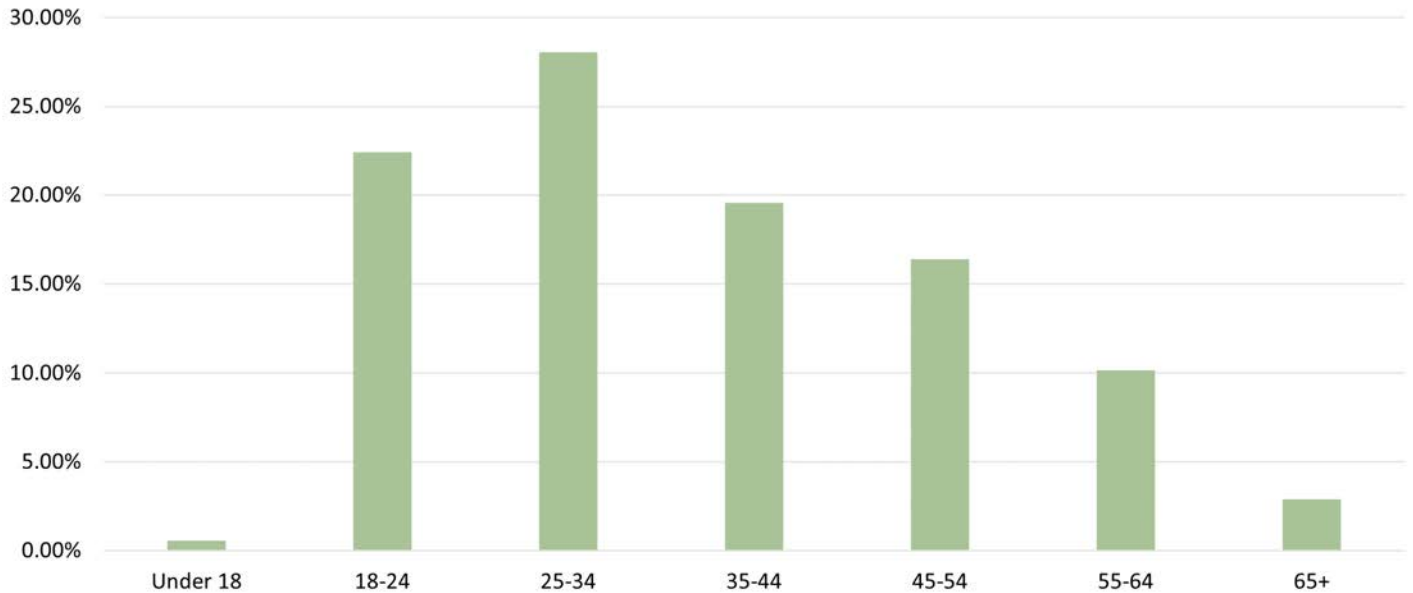
Source: "UI Data Lower Rio Claims." Workforce Solutions. 2021.

Figure 18 shows more detail related to unemployment claims by race for Hidalgo, Willacy, and Starr counties. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hispanic population has been disproportionately affected in terms of unemployment, with nearly 90% of all claims affecting this community exclusively, the effect of their claims dwarf other demographic segments in the area. White employees saw less of an effect; this group experienced a 7.7% growth in claims while other ethnic groups saw marginal changes. This is due in part to the ethnic diversity and population distribution of the region.

FIGURE 18: UI CLAIMS BY RACE FOR LOWER RIO GRANDE WDA
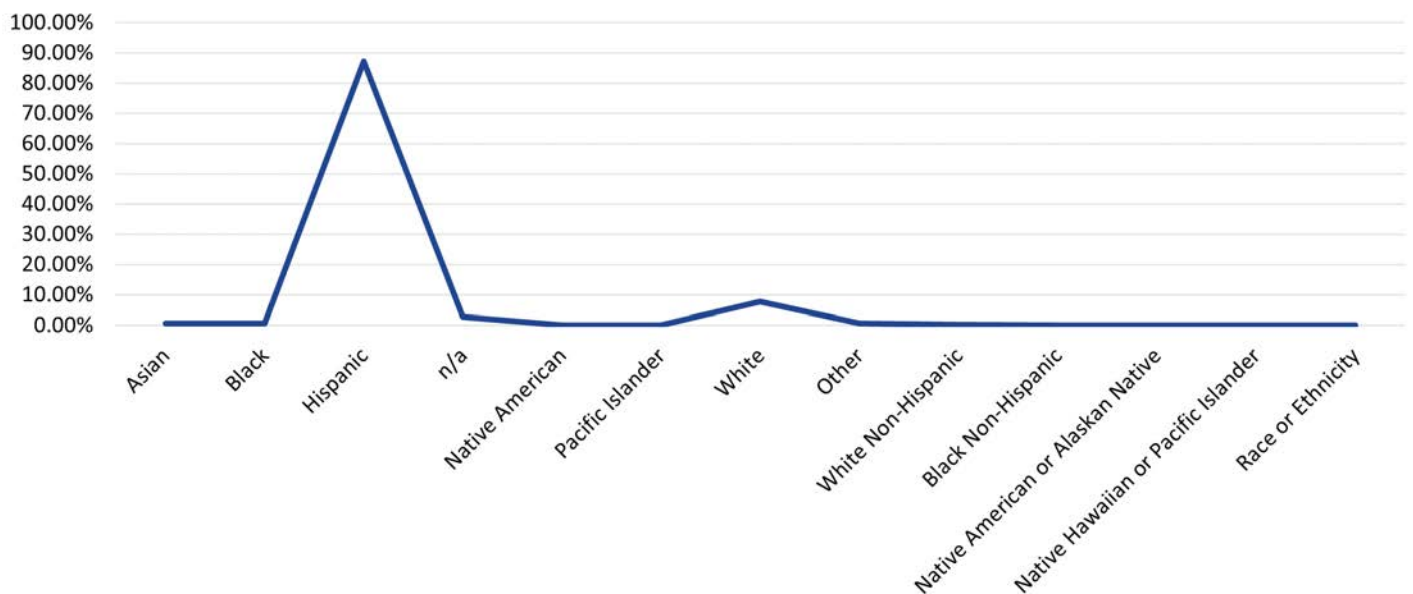
Source: "UI Data Lower Rio Claims." Workforce Solutions. 2021.

As indicated in Figure 19, industries such as Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services have consistently experienced higher unemployment claims than other industries and related occupations. Industries related to Information have suffered a lesser impact over time but have seen similar peaks around January and March 2021 totaling approximately 600 claims at its highest levels. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services demonstrate a higher sensitivity with a considerably larger peak in unemployment trends in the same period, totaling nearly 2,500 claims.

FIGURE 19: UNEMPLOYMENT WEEKLY CLAIMS BY INDUSTRY, 10/24/2020-3/6/2021
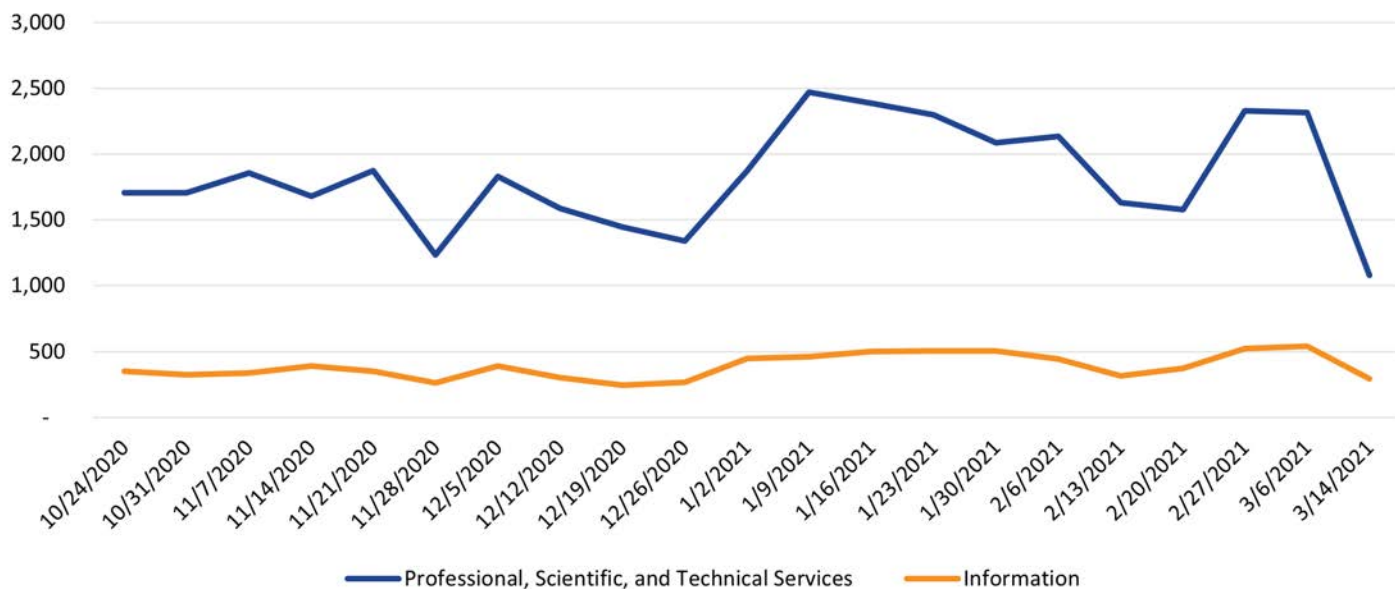

Source: Texas Workforce Commission

Figure 20 shows unemployment claims by week in the Lower Rio Grande Valley WDA throughout most of 2020 and into 2021. Commensurate with the start of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and safety measures, unemployment followed as businesses closed and production slowed across most markets. Unemployment claims began rapidly increasing in late March 2020, peaked in April 2020, and followed by a slight drop in claims in May 2020. A brief spike in late June and early July of 2020 reflects the momentary growth in COVID-19 cases and new adaptation measures to decrease spread. Global supply chains drastically decreased their output as prices of raw material and specialized services soared. Shipping became a more significant concern with additional barriers in freight restrictions, staffing issues, and access.

Claims maintained relatively steady rates for the latter half of 2020. A decline in active cases as markets began to stabilize and industry adapted to the pandemic resulted in lower claim counts at the start of 2021. The year of 2021 through May has been drastically different in unemployment claims compared to those that occurred during the same time in 2020.

FIGURE 20: UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS BY WEEK FOR LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY WDA, 2/23/2020-5/23/2021
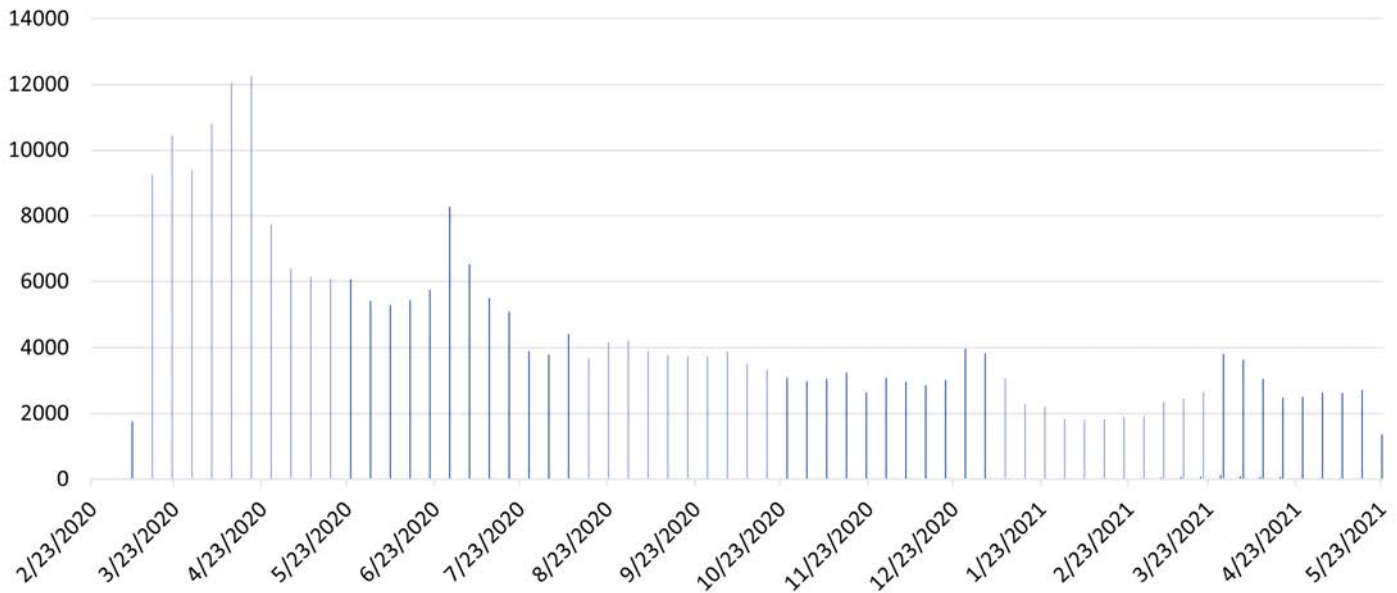
Source: "UI Data Lower Rio Claims." Workforce Solutions. 2021.

Figure 22 details the unemployment claims between March 2020 and March 2021 for all four counties in the Rio Grande Valley. Hidalgo and Cameron counties have seen most of the weekly claims over the past year. Both have experienced similar trends with spikes and points of recovery in similar time frames, often correlating with periods of high restrictions. However, Hidalgo County experienced a larger impact overall. Starr and Willacy counties, with lower populations of approximately 70,000 and 22,000, respectively, have had fewer claims and direct impacts compared to Hidalgo, with over 500,000 residents job loss or instability, and Cameron, with over 300,000 residents experiencing job loss or instability.

FIGURE 21: WEEKLY UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS BY COUNTY, 3/7/2020-3/6/2021
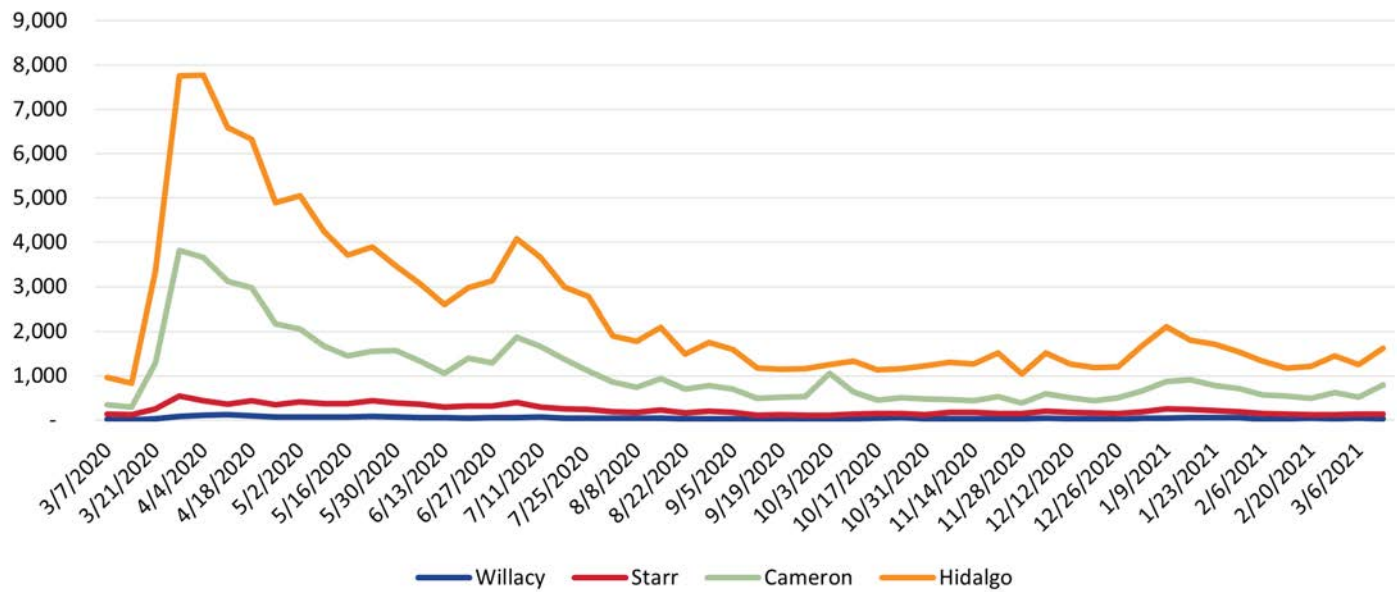
Source: Texas Workforce Commission

Texas Workforce Commission
Trends for Weekly Initial Unemployment Claims
Since January 1, 2000
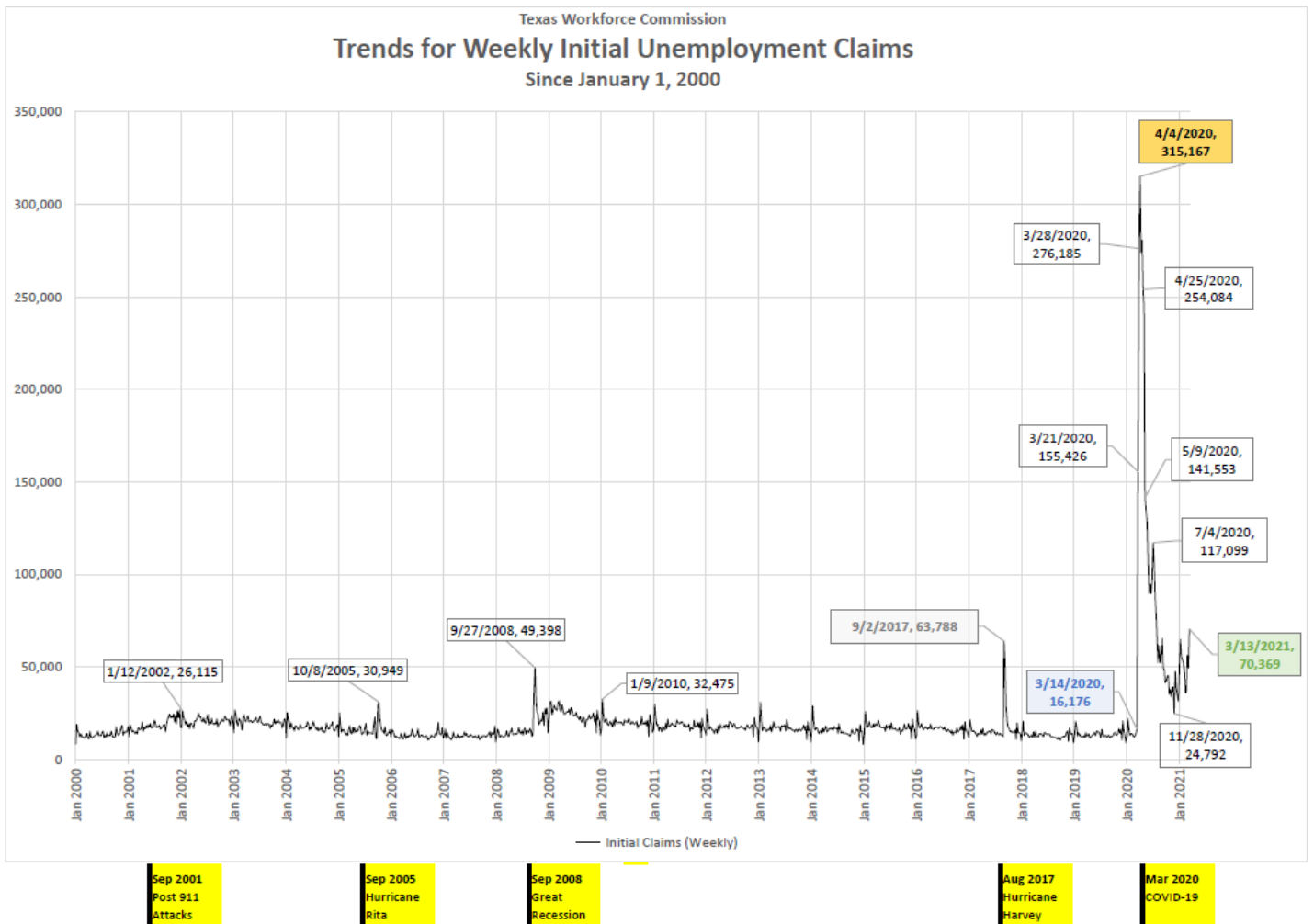
Source: U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)
https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/claims.asp
https://www.dol.gov/ui/data.pdf
Note: Most recent week reflects advance claims which are not directly comparable to claims reported in prior weeks.

Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Data
Latest USDOL News Release for Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims

To more clearly understand the impact of the pandemic on the economy, Figure 22 contrasts the unemployment claims across other economically devastating events of the recent past, including Hurricane Harvey and 9/11.

COVID-19 has brought the largest number of unemployment claims by far in the last 20 years with its peak in April of 2020. Considering the uncertainty around economic trends and social precautions, strategies could be put in place that safely encourage the workforce and the recovery of businesses.

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62   2021. "Trends for Weekly Initial Unemployment Claims." Texas Workforce Commission. https://www.twc.texas.gov/news/unemployment-claims-numbers #trendsForWeeklyInitialUnemploymentClaims.

Conclusion

The following bullet points provide a summary of highlights from the analysis:

- The workforce-aged population increased from 2015-2020

- The recent unemployment rates per county have been higher than Texas and the United States; however, as of 2020, the labor force is largely employed or seeking employment

- At the 2-Digit NAICS level, the Information industry was the 16th out of 20 top industries in the Region

  o Government; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Health Care and Social Assistance are popular industries with information technology careers

- Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists; Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers; and Computer Systems Analysts are particularly competitive in the Rio Grande Valley

- Computer Task Group, Incorporated, Crowdstrike, Inc., and Revature are top companies hiring Information Technology talent in the Rio Grande Valley

- COVID-19 has had a significant effect on unemployment claims across the region and younger aged workers experienced the highest rate of unemployment claims in 2020

- Hidalgo and Cameron counties have suffered the largest COVID-19-related impacts, which correlates with their considerably larger populations than Willacy and Starr counties; therefore, magnifying the economic impact in the Rio Grande Valley

- Sectors related to IT, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services have experienced a very high number of claims throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

TPMA will continue to utilize this labor market analysis during the upcoming planning phases to identify and analyze gaps and recommend areas for improvement to support a thriving Information Technology sector in the Rio Grande Valley.

Case Studies
Economic Growth Potential

Case Study #1
Digital El Paso

Theme: Economic Development

Like Rio Grande Valley, El Paso, Texas is a border region that has had connectivity issues for years. In 2007, Cisco partnered with the city/county of El Paso, El Paso Independent School District, and the City Housing Authority, to launch a public private partnership called Digital El Paso in an effort to provide adequate internet access for its residents and local businesses. Through their efforts, Cisco built out a wireless mesh network that aims to bring internet access to rural communities and underserved areas in the El Paso Del Norte region. Cisco was able to partner with industry leaders like Intel, Accela, and Panasonic to deliver outdoor wireless mesh networks. Intel provided funding for the digital inclusion and wireless site surveys; Panasonic provided laptops for the City's field applications; and, Accela provided its popular land management software for city inspection, permit, and code compliance applications. [27]

Through their efforts, Digital El Paso brought a variety of engagement and mobile-first strategies throughout the city. El Paso was able to expand its free Wi-Fi system to buses, public buildings, facilities, libraries, and some parks and recreational locations. In 2018, El Paso's Department of IT services upgraded its core network with application-centric infrastructure.

- The City's IT department implemented SIRE, an online agenda management system allowed for creation of City Council agendas and giving the public access to livestream sessions.

- Rebranding its budget think tank initiative "Chime In", allowing the public to make suggestions on how to save money or improve services.

- They launched "Ask Laura," an AI powered virtual information officer that answers site visitors' questions on open bid and awards.

- Additionally, they were able to launch apps like the 311 Mobile App, which offers mobile, multilingual service requests, tracking capabilities and a pay-by-cell app for remote payment of parking meters.

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27   "El Paso, Texas Launches Digital-Inclusion Initiative with Cisco Wireless Mesh Network" Cisco Newsroom, published March 06, 2007, https://newsroom.cisco.com/press-release-content?type=webcontent&articleId=3034919.

In 2020, El Paso relaunched Digital El Paso, this time expanding partnerships with the Borderplex Alliance, which is a regional non-profit dedicated to economic development and prosperity, and El Paso Collaborative of Academic Excellence—a collaboration of education, business, and civic leaders. It also partnered with El Paso Community Foundation, an organization providing philanthropic services in the region; Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas - EL Paso Branch; Microsoft; Rio Grande Council of Governments, Region 19, an education service center; and the University of Texas at El Paso.[28] The current Digital El Paso is going to collaborate with Doña Ana County to participate in the Dallas Federal Reserve's Digital Inclusion Initiative to improve regional broadband access.

The Dallas Federal Reserve, a branch of the Federal Reserve System, developed the following best practices to improve regional access to broadband. These best practices served as guidelines of El Paso's broadband initiative.

- Banks should make investments in infrastructure, with a loan for a middle-mile-fiber-optic project and support adoption programs through grants that provide computers and technical assistance/training to LMI families.

- Initiatives need to consider the barriers to adoption that communities experience: access, cost, relevance, perception, and skills.

- Communities must consider internet speed that will meet their economic development goals.

- Training programs for youth and adults should cover internet safety and security[29]

Being a border town, El Paso's broadband initiative can serve as a best practice guideline for the Rio Grande Valley. Workforce Solutions in Rio Grande Valley can develop partnerships with tech companies and through them, seek federal and state funding opportunities that will help expand broadband throughout the region; these are ways to respond to the core area of **Economic Growth Potential.** Workforce Solutions can also work with community leaders in their local ecosystem to develop a region wide plan for closing the digital divide.

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28   "El Paso County to Join Digital Inclusion Initiative to Expand Broadband Internet Access" El Paso Times, published June 23, 2021, https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/2021/06/23/el-paso-county-join-three-year-program-expand-internet-access/5321595001/ .
29   "Closing the Digital Divide: A Framework for Meeting CRA Obligations" Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas Community Development, page 10, Revised December 2016, https://www.dallasfed.org/~/media/documents/cd/pubs/digitaldivide.pdf.

Rio Grande Valley Information Technology Workforce Assessm

Case Study #2
Cape Coral Strategic Plan

Theme: Workforce and Business Development

With the expansion of the digital age in modern times, cities nationwide have been harnessing technology to efficiently improve their communities. Annually, The Center for Digital Government conducts the "Digital Cities Survey" to identify these communities and Cape Coral, Florida has consistently been identified as one of the topmost technologically advanced cities in the US. For the past few years Cape Coral has continuously ranked top three in the 125,000 – 250,000 population categories for the most advanced city.[30]

Cape Coral was able to implement initiatives because their core objectives aligned with the local government's strategic priorities. The local government's priority is to provide exceptional services to its constituents by enhancing the quality of life and prioritizing investments in the future. [31] One of Cape Coral's strategic objectives was to make it one of the safest cities in America. The City was able to implement the following initiatives to make their city a safe place to live:

- Development of a heat map dedicated to tracking crime trends throughout the city.

- Development of a tool that sends alert codes to law enforcement officers if the address that they are going to has had altercations in the past five years.

- Development of tools designed to give police and first responders more accurate directions for service calls.[32]

With the implementation of technology, Cape Coral government processes became more efficient. They set goals for their IT staff to automate 10 manual processes each year. Updating processes included automizing procurement cars so that the city can match receipts to their corresponding purchase, and implemented an artificial intelligence enabled captioning system that transcribes city meetings.

Workforce also plays a crucial role in the city by offering training in cyber security. They perform regular phishing tests and provide open lines of communication that allow employees to stay alert for cyberattacks. [33]

The City's Information Technology Plan has a goal to make the IT department the lead or secondary supporting department within the city's infrastructure. Through their strategic planning, the city of Cape Coral has designated four high level strategic priorities:

30   "Information Technology Plan FY 2021-2023" Cape Coral, https://files1.revize.com/revize/capecoralfl/department/information_technology_services/docs/Information_Technology_Plan.pdf.
31   "Strategic Plan" Cape Coral, https://files1.revize.com/revize/capecoralfl/OpenGov/City%20of%20Cape%20Coral%20-%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf
32   "Digital Cities 2019: Winners Gear Up for a New Decade" Government Technology, published November 12,2019, https://www.govtech.com/dc/articles/digital-cities-2019.html?page=4.
33   "Digital Cities 2019: Winners Gear Up for a New Decade" Government Technology, published November 12,2019, https://www.govtech.com/dc/articles/digital-cities-2019.html?page=4.

- The expansion of the Information Technology's strategic role within departments and other government agencies

- The facilitation for the greater access to technology for its residents.

- The development and maintenance of world-class security measures to safeguard IT systems while balancing business needs.

- Attract and retain a talented staff.

Cybersecurity is a crucial component to growing economic development in the Rio Grande Valley. Workforce Solutions could work closely with local government to implement similar strategic initiatives. The more organizations and corporations dedicated to efficient and sufficient IT processes and strategies, then the more advanced the Rio Grande Valley will be in the IT sector. Workforce Solutions has started doing this through its IT initiatives. Workforce Solutions should help develop and offer more training programs to Rio Grande Valley residents in the cybersecurity field so that they can attract businesses and develop a robust IT sector.

Case Study #3
Licking County, Ohio Career Pathways

Theme: Workforce and Business Development

The Columbus, Ohio region is one of the leaders in economic growth and prosperity in the Midwest. The region has 62 college and university campuses as well as a younger more educated population that the national average.[34] Despite their efforts, the region struggles to retain student and experienced professionals in the IT field. In addition, current immigration policies make it difficult to retain foreign STEM graduates. These hurdles are making it difficult for the region to attract and retain a talented and diverse workforce. Licking County, Ohio was able to understand these issues and developed a program that offered certifications to high school students for careers in technical fields. The county has been able to expand this program to adults as well.

The county has developed Career and Technology Education centers, or C-TEC programs that offer training for high school students and adults. These centers offer curriculums that prepare their graduates in a career in the technical fields. The goal of this program is help students meet their career objectives as well as provide pathways for secondary education.[35]

C-TEC's high school curriculum offers free programs for high school students. One of the programs they offer is a robust electronic and computer technology training course that prepares them for the CompTIA A+, CompTIA IT Fundamentals, Microsoft MTA and the PC Pro certification. In addition, students that enroll in this program may be offered college credits in certain local institutions.[36] To enroll in the program, students must successfully obtain credits in English, Social Studies, Math, Science, Physical Education, and Health, in addition to maintaining a 2.0 G.P.A.

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34   "Columbus Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy", Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, accessed July 19, 2021, https://www.morpc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Columbus-Region-CEDS-vF.pdf.
35   " C-TEC, accessed July 18, 2021, https://c-tec.edu/home.
36   "Course Description Guide", CTEC, accessed July 19, 2021, https://www.c-tec.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server_76652/File/High%20School/C-TEC%20High%20School%20Programs/2019-20%20Course%20Guide%20(FINAL).pdf.

C-TEC's adult education training offers a program in cybersecurity in which adults will earn core IT certifications. The program is 900-hours of training and costs $10,065; scholarships are available to those who quality. After the completion of the program, graduates will be able to earn the following credentials:

- CompTIA A+

- CompTIA Network+

- CompTIA Security+

- CompTIA Server+

- CompTIA PenTest+

- Cisco CCNA

- LPI Linux Essentials

- OpenEDG Python PCEP[37]

C-TEC has been a successful educational training program for the region with a 90% graduation rate. Of the students who have graduated through the programs, 96% are employed or continuing their education. [38]

Despite having an educated workforce, finding occupations that align with an individual's technical skills has posed a challenge. In order to align local curriculum and skills development opportunities with employment opportunities, TPMA partnered with GROW Licking County Community Improvement Corporation, OhioMeansJobs Licking County, the Licking County Educational Service Center, and a group of regional partners to develop and implement a career pathway builder. By using regional up-to-date data, stakeholders can use job postings data to determine which occupations needed a similar set of skills and then later were able to verify the data through subject matter experts and employers.[39]

Based off data received from the skills gap analysis, the following recommendations were established:

- Recruit diverse and nontraditional talent in addition to focusing on skilled-based hiring to maximize the talent pool.

- Focus on employability skill development through work-based learning, sector strategies and career pathways.

- In order to retain talent, improve job quality by implementing innovative strategies with employers[40]

Workforce Solutions and Rio Grande Valley can implement a similar program in the region by forming stronger partnerships with local universities, school districts, and other education and training providers. This case study relates to both of the core areas of **Educational Programs** and **Infrastructure Capacity**. These partnerships will allow companies in the region to have access to local talent. Workforce Solutions can partner with local companies like SpaceX to develop training programs that will provide students with the technical training they need to obtain positions in the companies. By following best practices established in Licking County, Ohio, Workforce Solutions can help diversify the region's workforce and retain local talent that will supply the next generation of qualified workers.

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37   "Cyber Security", CTEC, accessed July 19, 2021, https://www.c-tec.edu/ae/programs/it.
38   C-TEC, accessed July 19, 2021, https://c-tec.edu/ae.
39   "Career Pathway Builder Methodology", Licking County Works, June, 2021,
40   "Skills Gap Analysis and Career Pathways Development" Licking County Works, accessed July 19, 2021, https://lickingcountyworks.com/skillsgap

Case Study #4
Byte Back

Theme: Workforce and Business Development

Byte Back is a nonprofit organization that was formed in 1997 to help the minority community advance in the tech field. It was developed as a response to the emerging tech boom and legislation changes to affirmative action and welfare.

Byte Back is an excellent example of a program aimed at training the workforce. They offer inclusive training opportunities for groups that have a harder time breaking into the tech sector. 95% of the students enrolled are people of color and 61% of them are women.[41] The structure of the nonprofit has allowed it to be named as "One of the Best" nonprofits by the Catalogue for Philanthropy in 2010, 2014, 2018, and 2019.[42] Recently, Byte Back won $1Million CAD in the TD Ready Challenge, a program that offers grants to organizations that have designed scalable and/or replicable solutions that are innovative and impactful. After winning this grant, Byte Back was able to expand to Baltimore, Maryland, where they proceeded to teach more than 50 students in the first six months.

Byte Back offers tech training for low-income minority residents which helps graduates develop tech skills that are in demand as well as launch careers that allow them to make a livable wage. Companies hire graduates from Byte Back because they are a diverse group who are experienced and technically advanced.

Byte Back currently offers the following free tech career training pathways:

- Computer Foundations is a beginner's course that is divided into two parts. The first part takes 24 in-classroom hours to complete. This course teaches students basic computer skills. After the completion of this course, graduates will be able to perform basic tasks on computers such as creating folders, and opening files. The second part dives into common Microsoft Office software such as Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, and Word.

- The Administrative Professional Track trains students to receive the Microsoft Office Specialists certifications. Students can get certified in Microsoft Excel and/or Word. The Microsoft Word course is a 6-week (80 hour) course that teaches students everything they need to know in order to earn their MOS Word certification. The Microsoft Excel course is a 7-week course that prepares students to earn a MOS Excel Certification.

- CompTIA Certification is a 16-week course that also offers a professional workshop that helps students apply for jobs. This certification teaches students the industry standard for becoming computer support technicians.[43]

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41   Byte Back, accessed July 18, 2021, https://byteback.org/apply/courses-tracks/.
42   Byte Back, accessed July 18, 2021, https://byteback.org/about-us/our-history/.
43   Byte Back, accessed July 18, 2021, https://byteback.org/apply/courses-tracks/.

Through their efforts, Byte Back has had positive outcomes in its communities. In their 2019 annual report, there were 685 students that took classes through the organization, and of those, 167 were able to progress at least one level. Of the students that graduated, 57 students were hired and on average were able to earn $23,463 more annually than they did previously.[44]

The courses designed by Byte Back were tailored to predominantly fit the needs of low-income families of whom have not had proper exposure to basic computing skills. The Rio Grande Valley can implement similar workforce and business development classes for low-income families through the assistance of Workforce Solutions; this will better prepare individuals for careers in the tech industry. The program could be designed and tailored to fit the needs of the community and workforce. This also corresponds with the recommendation to increase online, accessible IT programs so that many residents can learn with fewer barriers. With the influx of aerospace and healthcare sectors in the region, Rio Grande Valley can potentially offer courses tailored around those industries too. This will help amplify salaries and support low-income individuals and families, which is important since the Rio Grande Valley tends to have higher poverty rates and lower median household income.

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44   "2019 Annual Report" Byte Back, accessed July 19,2021, https://byteback.org/about-us/reports-financials/2019-annual-report/.

Case Study #5
Broadband and IT Expansion in Mitchell, South Dakota

Theme: Broadband Infrastructure

Rural cities across the nation have been facing connectivity issues for years. Recently, it has become critical that the digital divide is putting certain communities at a disadvantage because they do not have access to proper broadband. Mitchell, South Dakota came across this issue early on and was able to successfully implement measures that advancing their city into the digital age.

This small town with a population of 15,000 invested early in its broadband efforts. The City of Mitchell has been developed around the productivity revolution in agriculture. The automation of the farming industry has transformed into a capital-intensive business which employs a small percentage of the workforce. Also, the talented and skilled regional workforce began to seek opportunities elsewhere that better aligned with their skillsets.[45] In order to retain talent and develop the local workforce, the City began to develop and implement a broadband infrastructure. The City's efforts resulted in fiber being installed throughout the entire city, connecting every business, school and nearly every residence. The successful broadband infrastructure brought two telecom service companies that currently employ 500 of the 15,000 residents in the city. These telecom companies allowed for employees to branch out and develop other local cybersecurity and IT firms, an example of successfully expanding the City's IT sector. [46]

The City of Mitchell is part of a large statewide effort led by the state Governor, Kristi Noem. South Dakota invested millions in developing sustainable high-speed internet throughout its communities. In 2019, the local government was able to approve and allocate $5 million to the develop Connect SD broadband program.[47] This program is a public-private partnership that has a goal of bringing high-speed services to all its residents. During the first round of funding in 2019, Connect SD was able to provide eight companies with funding for broadband projects. One of those companies was Mitchell Telecom. The company used the funds to expand out its fiber optic network connecting 250 homes and 7 businesses around Mitchell.[48]

45   "Mitchell, South Dakota", Intelligent Community, accessed July 19, 2021, https://www.intelligentcommunity.org/mitchell_south_dakota

46   "This Small Town Shoes How rural Communities Can bridge the digital Divide", Government Technology, published November 17, 2020, https://www.govtech.com/magazines/gt-special-issue-nov-2020-this-small-town-shows-how-rural-communities-can-bridge-the-digital-divide.html.

47   "Connect SD Broadband", South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development, accessed July 19, 2021, https://sdgoed.com/public-records/connectsd/.

48   "Eight Companies to receive South Dakota Broadband Funding", Government Technology, Published May 29, 2019, https://www.govtech.com/network/eight-companies-to-receive-south-dakota-broadband-funding.html.

In addition to Connect SD, South Dakota was able to secure funding from the Federal Reconnect Program. The Federal ReConnect Program is a federal program that provides funding and grants to fund broadband projects in rural areas.[49] Between the state and federal funding, South Dakota was able to leverage more than $25 million dollars in broadband upgrades statewide. These upgrades were able to impact 6,500 homes and about 150 companies.[50]

Mitchell, South Dakota has also put emphasis on educational training. In an effort to bridge the gap between technical career schools and universities, Southeast Technical College of Sioux Falls and Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU) of Mitchell announced a program where students graduating from Southeast Tech will be able to transfer credits to complete a bachelor's degree from DWU. Currently, this program will cover accounting, business administration, law enforcement to criminal justice, marketing and media design. The objective behind this program is to train highly qualified students and bring them into the region's workforce.

South Dakota's broadband implementation can serve as guideline for other communities. Their success shows that the proper way to successfully implement broadband structures is to harness state and federal resources. To implement a similar structure, Rio Grande Valley should work with the state government to develop sustainable programs that can create adequate broadband infrastructure in the region. This will add to its **Economic Growth Potential.** The pandemic has brought awareness to the digital divide so now more than ever, legislatures are developing solutions to close the digital divide. The nationwide broadband issue has created numerous federal funding opportunities like the ReConnect Program for rural areas. Rio Grande Valley can leverage these funding opportunities and develop a proper broadband infrastructure for the region.

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49   "ReConnect Loan and Grant Program", USDA, accessed July 19 2021, https://www.usda.gov/reconnect.
50   "Connect SD Broadband", South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development, accessed July 19, 2021, https://sdgoed.com/public-records/connectsd/.
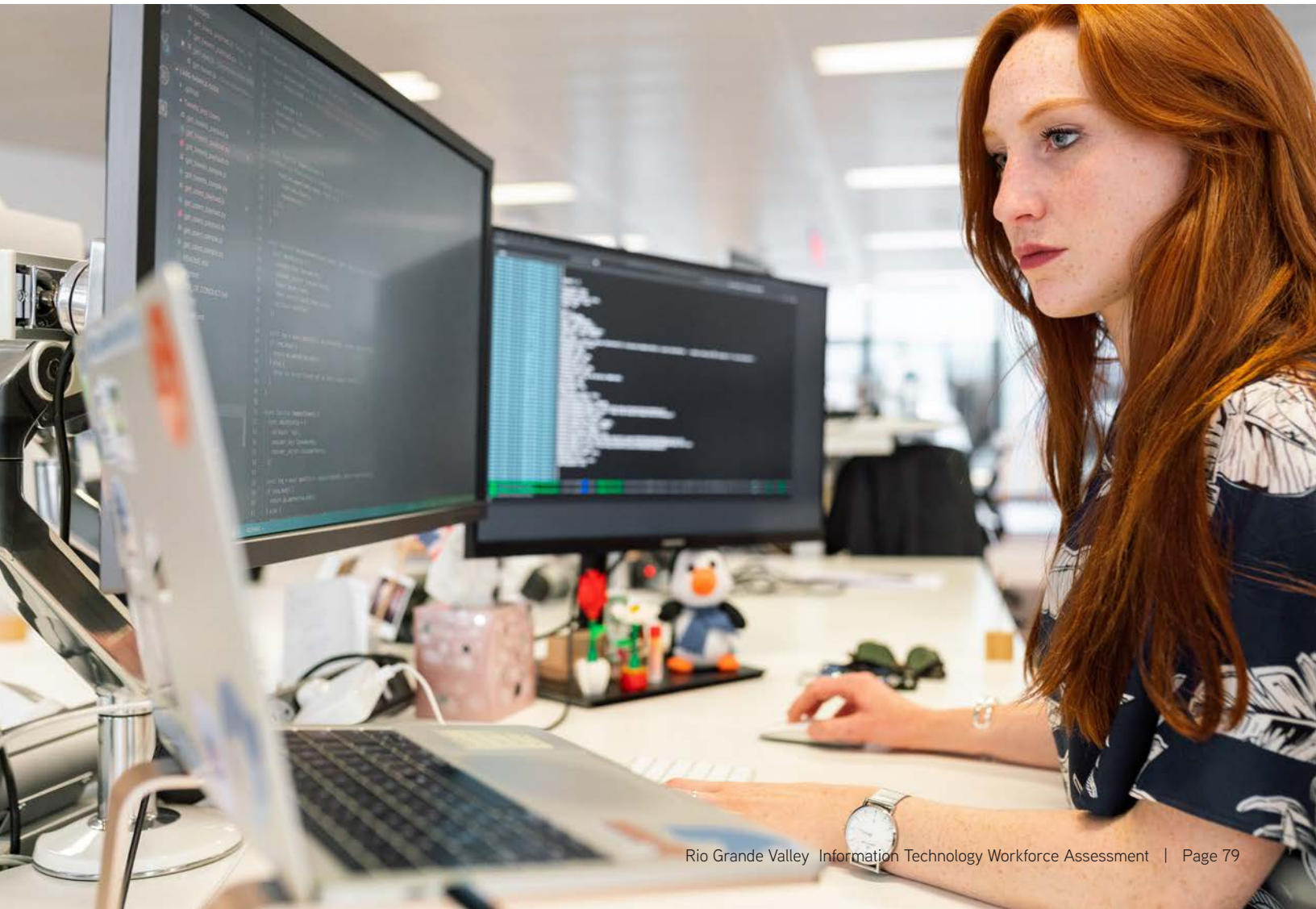
Stakeholder Engagement:
Survey Analysis
Educational Programs and Infrastructure Capacity

Introduction

In April 2021, TPMA worked with Workforce Solutions staff to design and administer a survey to better assess how the Rio Grande Valley region's Information Technology sector can be equipped to fulfill the needs of the dynamic industry. The survey was accessible until the end of May 2021. The survey consisted of 18 multiple choice and open-ended responses and was distributed via the client's network in addition to the Chamber of Commerce, employers, and Region One ESC. In addition, TPMA initiated email and phone outreach to gather more survey responses. Of the 16 employers that started the survey, 14 completed most of its questions.

Summary of Findings

This survey helped uncover surprising details about employers in the Information Technology sector located in the Rio Grande Valley. While the general assumption is that jobs in the technology sector are growing and that the workforce needs to adapt to become more proficient in IT-related skills, these survey responses indicate that this may not always be the case. Additionally, this survey also helps to shed some light on the types of skill sets that companies are looking for and the direction in which they are leaning for recruiting and professional development. Finally, the IT sector has not been immune to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and this survey identified challenges faced by companies in this space
during the pandemic.

Employer Demographic Profile

Of the employers who participated in the survey, more than 80% of employers resided in Hidalgo County (86%); 7% resided in Willacy County; 7% resided in Cameron County; and none resided in Starr County. Of the 14 people who participated in the survey, 42% of the survey participants held the titles of either Operations Manager, Executive Director or CEO. 12.5% of the survey participants were from Netsync, an IT consulting firm based out in Houston and 7% were from VTX1, a telecommunication provider firm. The rest of participants were from federal and local government entities.

IT Workforce Employer Assessment

Number of positions that require computer/information technology skills

Given that this survey was directed towards employers in the IT sector, this was an interesting finding in that more than half of respondents indicated that they have fewer than 25 positions that require computer/information technology skills. While there is a possibility that this result is due to small overall company size, this is still surprising in a day and age where jobs in nearly every sector require these skills.

- 27% require 50 or more positions
- 13% 25 to 49 positions
- 20% 10 to 24 positions
- 40% 9 or less positions

Percentage of time that IT-relevant positions utilize computer technology skills

This finding is more in line with expectations in the IT sector as about 80% of respondents stated that IT-relevant positions utilize computer technology skills at least 50% of the time.

- 60% require IT skills 100% of the time
- 20% require IT skills 75% - 50% of the time
- 13% require IT Skills 50% or less of the time

Sourcing computer/information technology needs

Survey respondents were divided on how their companies handle information technology needs. While over 60% of respondents said their companies handled IT needs internally, over 40% said that their companies at least partially outsource IT needs. The answer to this particular question is likely very company-dependent since the convenience of outsourcing needs may vary by company and their cost allowances.

- 40% outsource
    - Of the 40% that outsource, 83% completely outsource whereas 17% partially outsource
- 60% keep it internal

Recruiting employees

Survey respondents were divided fairly evenly on the method by which their company recruits employees. The ease of online job postings could explain why 30% of companies utilize this method, but interestingly enough, social media was the second highest response at 26%. As companies continue to reach out to millennial talent, social media may become an overt form of talent acquisition for companies.

- 26% use Social Media
- 30% use Online job posting
- 17% use local educational partners
- 13% use staffing agencies

In demand IT skills

There was a diverse range of answers when survey respondents were asked what they considered to be "in-demand IT skills". While the typical answers of Microsoft Office and spreadsheet management were present, it is interesting to note that Cybersecurity and Cloud computing were among the top responses as well. Given how vulnerable compa nies can be to malicious viruses in the digital age, having a strong cybersecurity department is paramount. Additionally, it is in a company's best interest to have employees proficient in this new technology with the increasing shift to cloud computing and storage. The following show the percentages of each in-demand IT skill chosen in the survey:

- Cybersecurity (Network Security) 13%
- Microsoft 365 Office Suite 13%
- Data based management (Constant Contact, Access, etc.) 10%
- Help desk technical support 10%
- Creates and maintains spreadsheets 5%
- Manages company social media resources 6%
- Various web-based customer services 8%
- Cloud and distributed computing 6%
- Online Research 3%
- Financial statistical analysis 5%
- Web architecture 5%
- Middleware and integration software 2%
- User interface design 6%
- Data presentation 5%
- SEO 2%
- Other 5%
- Software revision control systems 2%

Challenges presented by the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic brought forth numerous unforeseen difficulties for businesses in all sectors. Based on these survey responses, it appears as though companies in the IT industry also suffered. Given the incredible transition to working from home for many IT professionals, it makes sense that nearly 70% of respondents answered that they faced challenges related to broadband, lack of IT support/equipment or security concerns.

- 31% unplanned financial burden
- 15% Broadband
- 23% Lack of IT support/equipment
- 31% Security/confidentiality concerns

Structure of work-based learning opportunities Gaining knowledge in the information technology sector can be challenging as there may not be sufficient technical resources available to the ordinary resident. Thus, it makes sense that the majority of work-based learning opportunities were through some kind of local education provider. However, this number could go down in favor of online resources and video tutorials as learning continues to transition online.

- 75% partner with local education provider
- 12.5% partner with workforce development board
- 12.5% other

Open-Ended Responses

Effectiveness of IT recruitment strategies

Employers who reported on their satisfaction of IT recruitment were provided the opportunity to offer open-ended comments on their experiences with effective recruitment strategies.

- Employers were effectively able to recruit because they are able to maintain great working relationships with local talent providers.
- Employers felt that there is a lack of qualified candidates for upper -level positions
- Instead of recruiting, employers outsource to third party contractors.

Greatest concerns with IT workforce talent pool

Employers' greatest concern with the IT workforce talent pool is the limited skilled workforce and the inability to retain local talent.

Adapting to new information technology-based operation processes due to the pandemic

Employers that offered insight into how their company adapted to information technology -based operations were able to adhere to CDC guidelines and shifted their operations virtually or outsourced processes.

Workforce Solutions addressing workforce challenges

Employers voiced their suggestions for how Workforce Solutions Workforce Development Board can address their challenges:

- Offer experience programs and training certifications for current employees
- Facilitate conversations by bridging gaps between stakeholders and the local IT community
- Offering incentives for local businesses
- Partnering with local industry partners to offer internships and job shadowing opportunities
- Work more closely with school districts and post -secondary institutions

Education and Training Provider Survey Analysis

Summary of Findings

In April and May of 2021, TPMA and Workforce Solutions also deployed a survey catered to Education and Training providers in the area to understand learning programs for IT occupations. Of the 14 educators that started the survey, 11 answered most questions. While there appears to be a great interest in starting computer science and information technology programs at institutions in the Rio Grande Valley, this survey highlights many impediments that remain for learners; these range from lack of degree-based programs to insufficient community resources and outreach.

Educator and Training Provider Demographic Profile

The educators who participated in this survey were evenly distributed between the different counties (except Willacy county) in the Rio Grande Valley with approximately 27% of survey respondents being from each of Hidalgo, Cameron and Starr counties. Of the 11 people who participated in the survey, 45% of the survey participants were either in a Director or President role.

Education and Training Provider Assessment for the IT Workforce

Institutions that offer computer science/information technology programs of study With the incessant integration of technology into more and more of our daily lives, it should come as no surprise that knowledge of computer science and information technology is highly sought after by businesses of all kinds. In order to provide this knowledge to an increasingly information technology-centric workforce, more and more institutions offer programs to increase proficiency in computer science and related fields and this is also true in the Rio Grande Valley. According to our survey, 73% of respondents indicated that their institutions offer computer science/information technology programs.

- 73% offer computer science/information technology programs
- 18% do not offer these programs
- 9% N/A

Institutions that offer a degree-based program of study in computer science/information technology

The majority of survey respondents indicated that their institution offers some form of computer science/ information technology programs with about 15% being degree based. Additionally, the majority of survey respondents still utilize some form of classroom training, it was interesting to note the integration not only of online learning but also third party resources to supplement the curriculum taught. This integration may also have been accelerated by the greater shift to online learning and work due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Degree based 15%
- Term Based (Spring, Summer, Fall) 4%
- Noncredit (Credentialed) 4%
- Open enrollment 15%
- Classroom 22%
- Online 11%
- Hybrid 11%
- Third Party Collaboration (Coursera, Google Comp TIA, etc. Direct) 11%

The most in-demand IT programs currently offered by these institutions

There was a wide array of answers, such as Computer Science, Computer Maintenance, Introduction to Technology, etc., when it came to in-demand IT programs. It appears that the IT programs offered in the Rio Grande Valley allow for more traditional, high-level technical competencies rather than targeted or more in-depth training opportunities for interested members of the workforce to gain proficiency in a specific IT skill. Participants were responsive about a number of programs:

- Computer Science (18%)
- Microsoft Office Applications (9%)
- Data Analytics (9%)
- Operating Systems (9%)
- Introduction to Technology (9%)
- Computer Maintenance (9%)
- SDET (9%)
- Adobe Suite (9%)
- Career preparation (9%)
- Principles of Applied Engineering (9%)

Regional industries supported by these programs

It should come as no surprise that the industry most supported by these programs is Computer/Information Technology. However, there is room for improvement in the types of training and courses offered by these institutions in regard to nearly every other s ector. More computer science and information technology programs tailored to industries like Financial Services, Healthcare, and Manufacturing could lead to a more skilled workforce capable of optimizing tasks and improving efficiency and performance in a variety of sectors.

- Computer/Information Technology (64%)
- Financial Services (27%)
- Healthcare (18%)
- Manufacturing (18%)
- Insurance (18%)
- Animal Science (9%)
- Agriculture (9%)

Open-Ended Responses

Typical recruitment strategies and their effectiveness for students and adult learners interested in enrolling in computer/IT education and training programs Recruitment strategies for these institutions vary from flyers, word of mouth and high school visits to social media and even the local newspaper. Survey respondents indicated that these techniques have been effective in recruiting students and working adults that are interested in obtaining a computer science/IT education. A possible addition to these recruitment strategies could be community outreach events and open houses specifically targeted towards working adults to highlight the benefits of becoming proficient in areas of information technology and computer science.

Coordinating curriculum development with the needs of today's IT workforce talent needs

The majority of survey respondents indicated that their curriculum is developed and enhancedthrough conversations with local employers about IT needs not only for their business , but for the community as a whole. This seems like an excel lent method to provide interested individuals with skills that are actually in demand by employers.

Challenges with students and adult learners enrolled in computer science/IT-specific programs

Challenges faced by students and adult learners in the Rio Grande Valley include learning basic IT skills for first-time learners, college readiness and in some instances, a lack of resources such as consistent Wi-Fi.

Expanding access to computer/IT educational and training programs to rural and

multilingual populations Only 2 survey respondents indicated that their institution had some established program to expand computer/IT access to rural and multilingual populations and only 1 explicitly stated how they are doing so by providing laptops to students so they could continue to learn during the COVID-19 pandemic. More institutions could make it a priority to expand access for students and working adults of these populations.

Hardships as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

As relayed by multiple survey respondents, challenges that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic included limited internet connectivity and access to computers for students to continue their program at home. Respondents alluded to the need for greater community investment, particularly in providing reliable internet access to homes, in order for students to continue learning efficiently in today's environment.

Collaboration with regional workforce development or economic development

organizations to support a skilled computer/information technology workforce Only 2 survey respondents indicated that they collaborate with regional workforce development teams or a similar organization and there were no specifics given in either response. Another answer in a survey highlighted the involvement of local employers for the development and enhancement of the IT curriculum to ensure that in -demand skills are being taught. It was also mentioned that the Texas Workforce Commission and similar organizations should be involved and could perhaps help in the same way.

Appendix A: Employer Survey Questions

Which county does your business reside in:

- Hidalgo
- Cameron
- Starr
- Willacy

The IT Field involves the development, maintenance, and use of computer systems, software, and networks for the processing and distribution of data. How many positions within your company require computer/information technology skills to perform their duties?

- 50 or more
- 25 to 49
- 10 to 24
- 9 or less

For the positions that do require computer/information technology skills, what percentage of these positions requires utilizing their computer technology skills?

- 100%
- 75% -50%
- 50% or less
- Other:_____

Do you outsource your company's computer/information technology needs to a third party/subcontractor?

- Yes
- No
- Partially: ____100% _____50% _____25%

How do you typically recruit new employees to meet your company's computer/information technology (IT) needs?

- Staffing Agency
- America Job Center
- Local Educational Partners
- Online Job Postings
- Social Media
- Newspaper, etc.
- Other: _____

Are your IT recruitment strategies effective? Why/why not?

What IT skills (technical and soft) are most in-demand by your company? Choose as many as applicable -

- Microsoft 365 Office Suite
- Creates and maintains spreadsheets
- Utilizes Point of Sale System
- Data Base Management (Constant Contact, Access, etc.)
- Cybersecurity (Network Security)
- Help Desk technical support
- Manages company social media resources
- Various Web Based Customer Services
- Cloud and distributed computing
- Online research, statistical analysis, and data mining
- Financial statistical analysis and data mining
- Middleware and integration software
- Web architecture and development frameworks
- User interface design
- Software revision control systems
- Data presentation
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)/Search Engine Marketing (SEM),
- Mobile App development
- Other_____

How has your company adapted new information technology-based operation processes due to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Has the pandemic created opportunities for new IT skills based positions within your company?

- Yes or No

What challenges has the Covid-19 pandemic created for your company and current workforce? Please check all that apply.

- Broadband
- Lack of IT support/equipment
- Unplanned financial burden
- Security/confidentiality concerns

What are your greatest concerns with the IT workforce talent pool in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Region?

Does your company offer any types of work-based learning opportunities (apprenticeships, on-the-job training, internships, job shadowing, etc.)?

- yes:_____ or no:_____
  - If so, how are these programs structured ?
  - Partner with local education provider
  - Partner with Workforce Development Board
  - Other:_____

How can Workforce Solutions Workforce Development Board address your workforce challenges?

Appendix B: Education and Training Provider Survey Questions

Does your institution or campus offer computer science/information technology programs of study?

Please list your computer science/information technology (IT) education and training programs that you offer? Select all that apply about your programs:

- Degree Based (3 credit hour or more)
- Term Based (Spring, Summer, Fall)
- Noncredit (credentialed)
- Open enrollment
- Classroom
- Online
- Hybrid
- Third Party collaboration (Coursera, Google, CompTIA, etc.)
- Other:_____

What are the most in-demand IT programs offered by your institution?

What regional industries do these programs support?

- Financial Services
- Insurance
- Healthcare
- Computer/Information Technology
- Transportation and Logistics
- Manufacturing
- Animal Science
- Agricultural and/or Biosciences
- Other:_____

How do you typically recruit students or adult learners interested in enrolling in computer/ IT education and training programs?

- Are your IT recruitment strategies effective? Why/why not?

Does your institution have the capacity and resources to expand these programs?

How does your institution coordinate curriculum development with employers to meet the needs of today's IT workforce talent needs?

What are some of the most common knowledge, competencies, and skills taught in IT curricula?

What are some of the greatest challenges with students and adult learners who enroll in your computer/IT-specific programs?

What strategies has your organization found effective to expand access in computer/IT educational and training programs to rural and multilingual populations?

How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected your institution's access and computer/IT education and training programming offerings?

How does your organization work with regional workforce development or economic development organizations to support a skilled computer/information technology workforce to meet today's computer/IT workforce skill needs and gaps?

Asset Inventory
Infrastructure Capacity

INTRODUCTION

Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) has put together this resource inventory that represents the local infrastructure in the Rio Grande Valley. The organizations supply at least some type of services that impact the labor force's ability to work in the IT industry. This guide can be utilized to understand the existing infrastructure that affects the workforce and to identify potential partnerships and opportunities that would expand the IT industry in the Rio Grande Valley.

TPMA acknowledges Workforce Solutions, the Texas Workforce Commission, and the Rio Grande Valley Partnership, among others, whose websites with partner organizations and information were utilized greatly in the formation of this resource guide.

USING THIS RESOURCE MAP

The following pages contain sections on each of the **8** categories. There were **165** organizations and websites found in total that are resourceful for the four-county area of Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy, and Starr counties. The categories are numbered and defined and the organizations that fit within them are listed.

1. Economic Development Organizations
2. Housing
3. Other Community-based Organizations
4. Other Education and Training Providers
5. Regional Technology infrastructure
6. Information Technology (IT) Education and Training Providers
7. Transportation
8. Workforce Development Organizations

After the breakdown of each category, there are organization tables in alphabetical order for all of the resources found. There are tables on each one and they provide general contact information, the services, service area, and eligible populations for those services. TPMA describes one or more service types based on the definitions below. The tables about the organizations are labeled by color of service type as well.

Outreach/Referral Services: Recruits and/or provides referrals to workers, students, employers in need of education/workforce development services

Career Services: Provides services, such as career guidance, counseling, job placement, etc., to students and/or workers in search of work opportunities

Employer Services: Provides workforce development/educational services, including recruiting assistance, workers assessment and screening, and on-site training, directly to employers

Training Services: Provides education/training programs or funding for students and/or workers to receive education/training needed to locate a new job or advance in current job

Support Services: Provides funding for students/workers to receive supports, such as transportation, childcare, work clothes, and equipment/tools, needed to succeed in job or education/training to get a job.

Business Services: Provides economic development and business activity in the region that in turn assists and places local workforce in jobs

POLICIES & PRIORITIES

Nation-wide

Information Technology is one of the major topics of concern in the United States in the 21st century. Recent COVID-19 pandemic policies have heightened actions regarding technology use, access, and funding. The following paragraphs highlight federal policies and measures that are relevant to the Information Technology sector in the United States:

- **Nation Broadband Plan:** It was established by the Federal Communications Commission in early 2010. It includes ways to amplify economic development and jobs in areas like Healthcare, Education, and Homeland Security.[1]
    - Federal code cites the following definition: "Broadband internet access service is a mass-market retail service by wire or radio that provides the capability to transmit data to and receive data from all or substantially all internet endpoints, including any capabilities that are incidental to and enable the operation of the communications service, but excluding dial-up internet access service."[2]
    - Texas Utilities Code defines "Broadband service," which is an Internet service that allows for a download speed of 25 megabits per second or faster and an upload speed of three megabits per second or faster.[3]

- **American Jobs Plan:** All kinds of infrastructure—whether it be digital or physical—is the main theme of this plan. It will utilize about $2 trillion dollars in the next ten years. The plan includes transportation infrastructure, building and community infrastructure, and electronic infrastructure. It discusses broadband speeds, coverage, transparency, and adoption. It underscores infrastructure gaps in rural and tribal communities that were highlighted during the pandemic and funding is being dedicated to fill these gaps. The Plan is also focused on Workforce Development to create jobs for years to come.[4]

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1 "National Broadband Plan." Federal Communications Commission (FCC). https://www.fcc.gov/general/national-broadband-plan.
2 47 CFR § 8.1. https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/47/8.1.
3 "Utilities Code Sec. 181.048. (1)(a)(b)." Government of Texas. https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/UT/htm/UT.181.htm.
4 "Fact Sheet: The American Jobs Plan." The White House. March 31, 2021. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/.

- **American Rescue Plan:** This plan is primarily focused on the effects of the COVID-19 on the United States, especially those financially impacted by the downfall of the economy. The plan accompanies $1,400 per person checks. It discusses a national vaccination program and relief for businesses, families, and schools. Also, it mentions modernizing cybersecurity systems federally to protect against digital breaches.[5]

There are additional laws such as the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability (DATA) Act and Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act that speak to more specific access and security issues when it comes to Information Technology.[6][7]

Texas

- **Connected Nation Texas** is a public and private initiative the is dedicated to the use of broadband. It emphasizes governmental, industry, and community partnerships regarding broadband. Their website has analysis, policy and research, and resources that are important for the state.[8]

- **Governor's Broadband Development Council** was started in 2019. Internet for underserved communities is a major component of the council. It is supposed to look into broadband benefits for education, law enforcement, and health care delivery, among others.
    - Governor Greg Abbott said that broadband access is an emergency item in his 2021 State of the State Address.
    - U.S. Representative Henry Cuellar is addressing broadband issues in the Rio Grande Valley and spoke specifically to the border and rural areas.[9]

- The **Texas Education Agency** have been intertwined with funding for electronic devices and Wi-Fi hotspots during the pandemic and dealing with transitions to schooling.

- The table on the following page was created by Connected Nation Texas to show the different broadband speeds in rural areas and how many households are being served.[10]

5 "President Biden Announces American Rescue Plan." The White House. January 21, 2021. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/legislation/2021/01/20/president-biden-announces-american-rescue-plan/.
6 "Broadband DATA Act." Library of Congress. https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/1822.
7 "Federal Laws." Drexel University Information Technology. https://drexel.edu/it/security/policies-regulations/fed-laws/.
8 For more information, read "Broadband in Texas: A Briefing Prepared for the Governor's Broadband Development Council." Connected Nation Texas. April 2020. https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/business/Texas_Broadband_Briefing_Book_-_April_2020.pdf.
9 "Podcast: Cuellar: Getting broadband to rural areas is now one of my top issues." Rio Grande Guardian. December 27, 2020.
10 "Broadband Expansion in Texas: Bringing Fast Internet to More Texans." Texas Comptroller. February 2021. https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/fiscal-notes/2021/feb/broadband.php.

RURAL Texas Statewide Broadband Availability Estimates by Speed Tier

Among Fixed Technologies: Cable, DSL, Fiber, Fixed Wireless

Speeds	Unserved Rural Households	Served Rural Households	% of Served Rural Households
10 Mbps Download x 1 Mbps Upload	85,994	2,820,629	97.04%
25 Mbps Download x 3 Mbps Upload	281,119	2,625,504	90.33%
50 Mbps Download x 5 Mbps Upload	500,084	2,406,539	82.80%
100 Mbps Download x 10 Mbps Upload	903,348	2,003,275	**68.92%**

The current FCC definition of broadband is a minimum speed of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload.
Help improve the maps: https://connectednation.org/texas/feedback
Source: *Connected Nation Texas*, 2020.

Rio Grande Valley

- Through the state of Texas's broadband concerns, the Rio Grande Valley has come up as a location to address, particularly due to its rural and southern areas that are in need of broadband connections

- Local government entities, economic development organizations, education institutions, and non-profit organizations are interested in technological skill-building and access

- The National Digital Inclusion Alliance's Worst Connected Cities 2018 listed Brownsville and Pharr were as the first and second least connected cities in the United States with populations over $65,000, respectively[11]

- Region One ESC has a Technology Advisory Council that meets regularly and provides IT training resources for the Rio Grande Valley

- Economic Development corporations in the Rio Grande Valley have links to State of Texas incentives to attract investment to the area

11 "Brownsville, Pharr among least 'Wired' Cities in Nation." *Rio Grande Guardian*. March 24, 2021.

CURRENT PROJECTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- SpaceX creates and launches spacecraft. It has been in South Texas in recent years and has greatly impacted Boca Chica in Cameron County and the greater Brownsville area. Mayor of Brownsville, Trey Mendez, is excited about SpaceX's growth and the potential that South Texas has for becoming a destination for the space industry. Ample technology-skilled jobs are required for such complex rockets and space endeavors.[12]
  - There are departments of Information Security and Information Technology- Infrastructure Design and Support, which require positions such as an IT Systems Administrator. These positions are similar to the top 15 IT occupations within the Rio Grande Valley.

- In April 2021, eleven public school districts in the Rio Grande Valley received Jobs and Education for Texans (JETS) grants. The money will go towards training for in-demand professions so it could be dedicated to information technology training.[13]

CATEGORIES[14]

1) Economic Development Organizations

There are a total of **24** organizations that fit this category. These organizations provide information on business and industry and implement strategies to attract them to the Rio Grande Valley. Many list incentives and showcase local partnerships that are important to local economic growth.

- Border Trade Alliance
- Brownsville Chamber of Commerce
- Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation
- CEED - The Center of Education
- Edinburg Economic Development Corporation
- Lower Rio Grande Development Council
- McAllen Chamber of Commerce
- McAllen Economic Development Corporation
- Mission Chamber of Commerce
- Mission Economic Development Corporation
- Pharr Economic Development Corporation
- Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce
- Raymondville Chamber of Commerce
- RGV Angel Network
- RGV Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- RGV Partnership
- Rio South Texas Economic Council
- South Padre Chamber of Commerce
- Starr County Industrial Foundation
- Texas Technology Consortium
- University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley FabLabs
- University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley Small Business Development Center
- Weslaco Economic Development Corporation
- Women's Business Center Rio Grande Valley

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12 "Brownsville Sees Impact throughout the Years thanks to SpaceX." *Valleycentral.com*. May 2021.
13 "Rio Grande Valley Area ISDs Awarded Nearly $2.7 Million in Grants." *Texas Workforce Commissio*n. April 16, 2021.
14 Each Tableau map represents organization's zip codes within Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Starr counties in order to show the local footprint of resources. Other organizations and websites that are outside of these locations are not present on the maps; however, their information is included within the document.
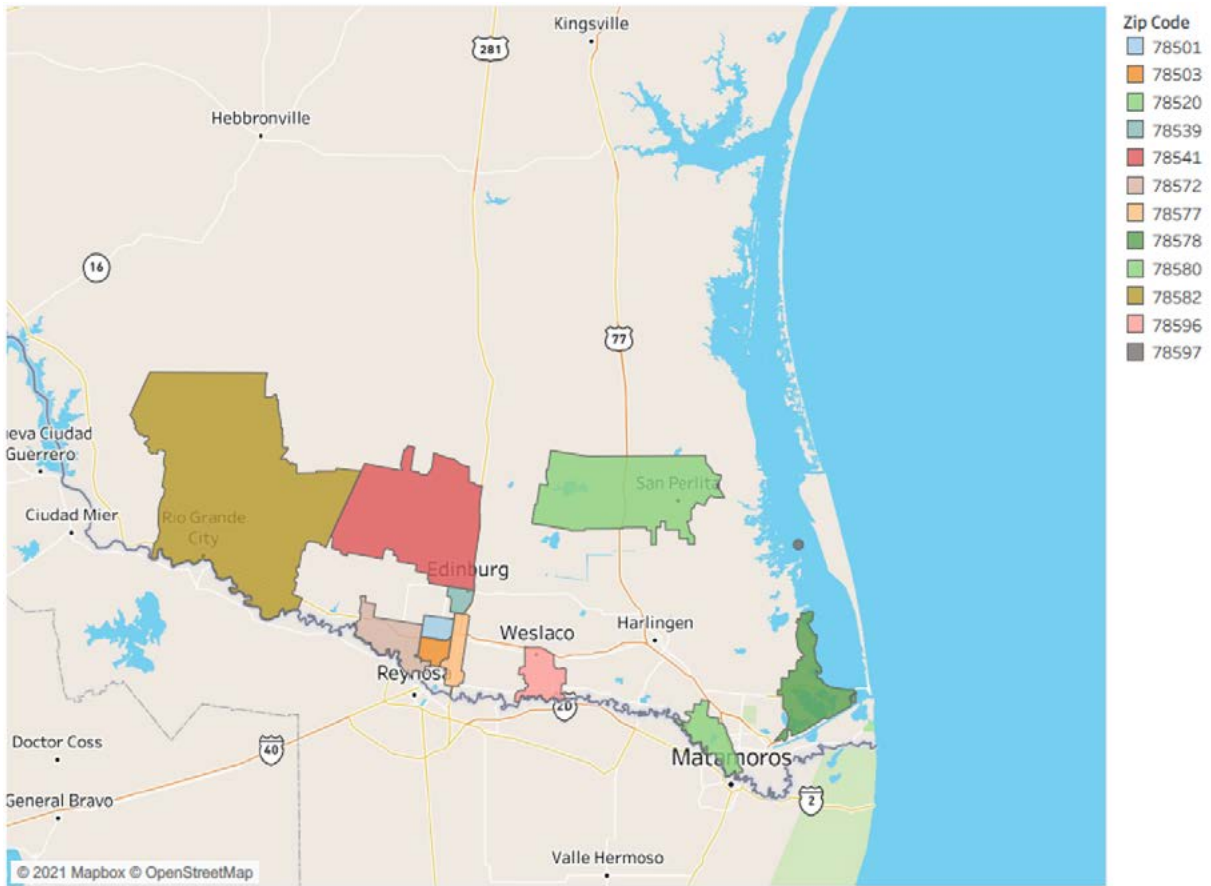
Source: Tableau. 2021.

2) Housing

There are a total of **13** housing organizations identified. They provide necessary housing options, especially for vulnerable and low-income populations. These organizations are designated under supportive services and impact residents who could partake in the labor force.

- Advocacy Resource Center Housing
- Affordable Homes of South Texas
- Alamo Housing Authority
- Community Development Corporation of Brownsville
- Edinburg Housing Authority
- Housing Authority of Starr County
- Housing Authority of the City of Roma
- Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo
- McAllen Housing Authority
- Pharr Housing Authority
- Rio Grande Apartment Association
- Rio Grande Habitat for Humanity
- South Texas Collaborative for Housing Development, Inc. (STCHD)
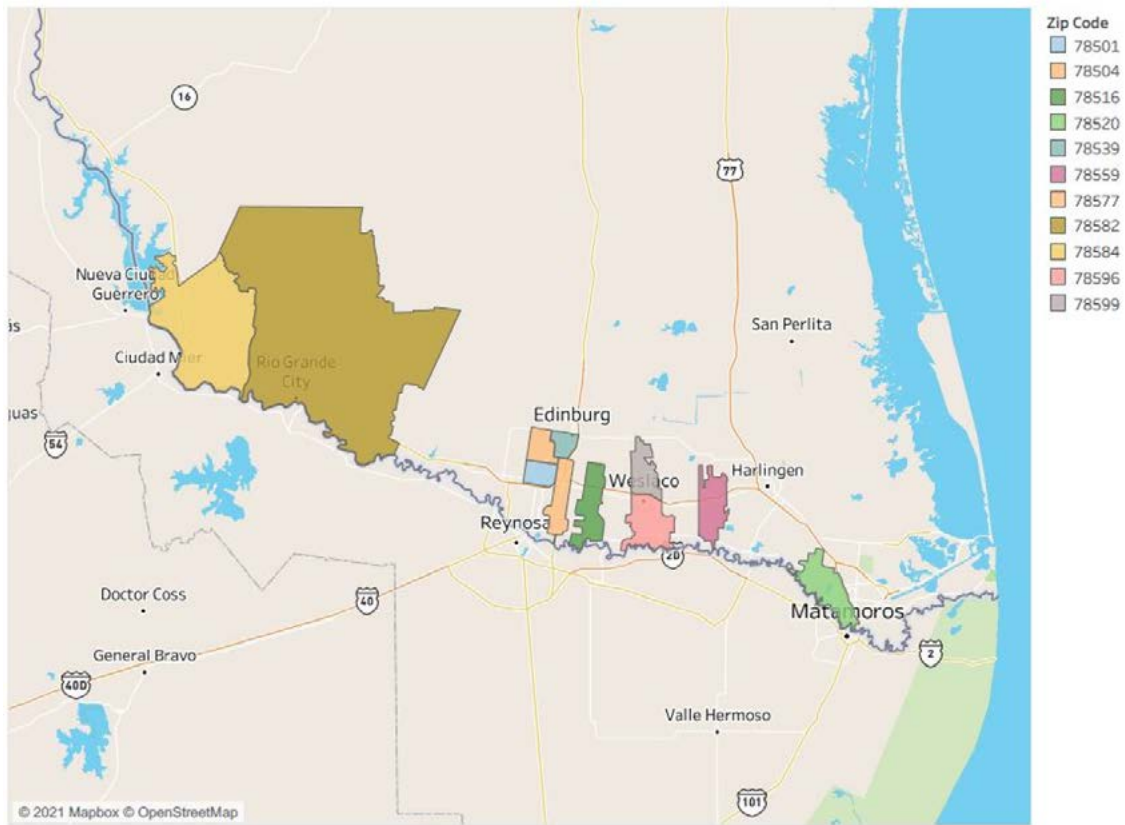
Source: Tableau. 2021.

3) Other Community-based Organizations

Other Community-based organizations consist of **35** different options. These organizations provide a broad range of important services that influence how the workforce lives and thrives in the Rio Grande Valley. The supportive services of these organizations touch upon quality of life indicators, which factor into residents' ability to work. Many of these organizations target special populations such as low-income families, at-risk youth, and veterans.

- A World for Children
- American Red Cross
- Amigos Del Valle Inc.
- Angels of Love
- Avance
- Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty
- BCFS Health and Human Services
- Brownsville Community Foundation
- Brownsville Public Utilities Board
- Buckner Missions and Humanitarian Aid
- CASA of Hidalgo County
- CASA of Cameron & Willacy Counties
- Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley
- Colonias Unidas Organization
- Communities Unlimited

- Community Council of the Rio Grande Valley
- Edinburg Child Care Inc.
- Good Neighbor Settlement House, Inc.
- Good Samaritan Community Services, Cameron County
- Healthy Communities of Brownsville, Inc
- Hidalgo County Community Service Agency
- Hope Family Health Center
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (RGV subsection)
- Llano Grande Center
- MHP Salud (Migrant Health Program)
- Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone Corporation
- South Texas Afghanistan Iraq Veterans Association

- South Texas Health System Volunteer Services
- Texas A&M University Colonias Program
- Texas Child Care Solutions
- Texas/Mexico Border Coalition Community-Based Organization
- TMR Charities/ Project Vickie
- United Way of South Texas
- United Way of Southern Cameron County
- University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley- Veterans Services Center
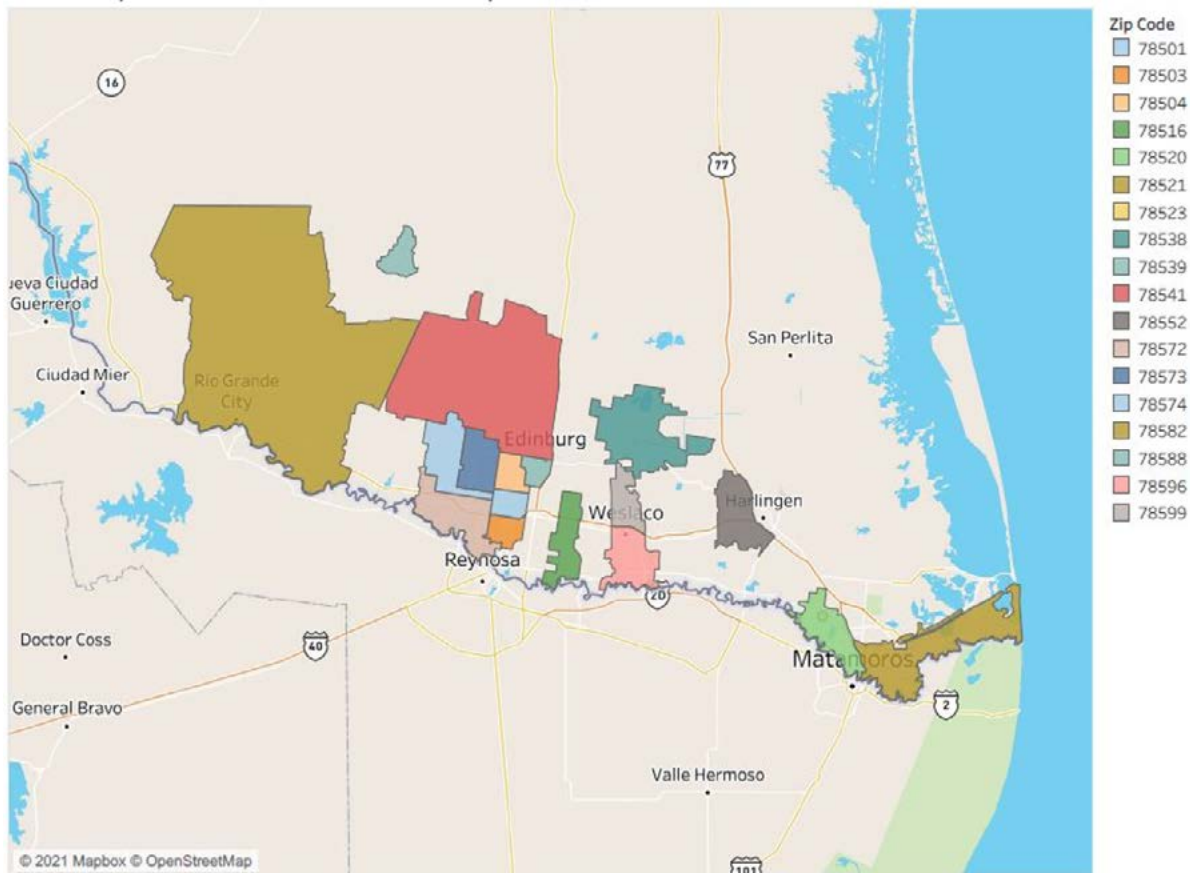
Source: Tableau. 2021.

4) Other Education & Training Providers

The Other Education and Training Providers are 30 education institutions, school districts, and centers in the Rio Grande Valley. This category is separate from IT Education and Training Providers because they provide other career programs and skill-building competencies that are important to the area's workforce; the programming is not necessarily for direct IT occupations. In the previous Education and Training Mapping of the Rio Grande Valley, the school districts, among others, below were not identified as having current IT programming so there is an opportunity to connect with some of these educators in the future to spur IT programs.

- American Society for Engineering Education
- Arise Support Center
- BiG Heroes
- Brownsville Literacy Center

- Communities in Schools of Cameron County
- Edcouch-Elsa ISD
- Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District

- Harlingen Area Educational Foundation
- La Feria Independent School District
- La Joya Independent School District
- Lasara Independent School District
- Lyford Independent School District
- McAllen Career Institute
- Mercedes ISD
- Monte Alto Independent School District
- Raymondville Independent School District
- Rio Grande City Consolidated Independent School District
- Rio Grande Valley Engineering Initiative
- Rio Grande Valley Linking Economic & Academic Development (LEAD)

- Rio Grande Valley Literacy Center
- Roma Independent School District
- San Isidro Independent School District
- Sharyland Independent School District
- South Texas Manufacturers Association
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Texas OnCourse
- TexPrep
- Valley Alliance of Mentors for Opportunities and Scholarships (VAMOS)
- Valley View Independent School District
- Vanguard Academy
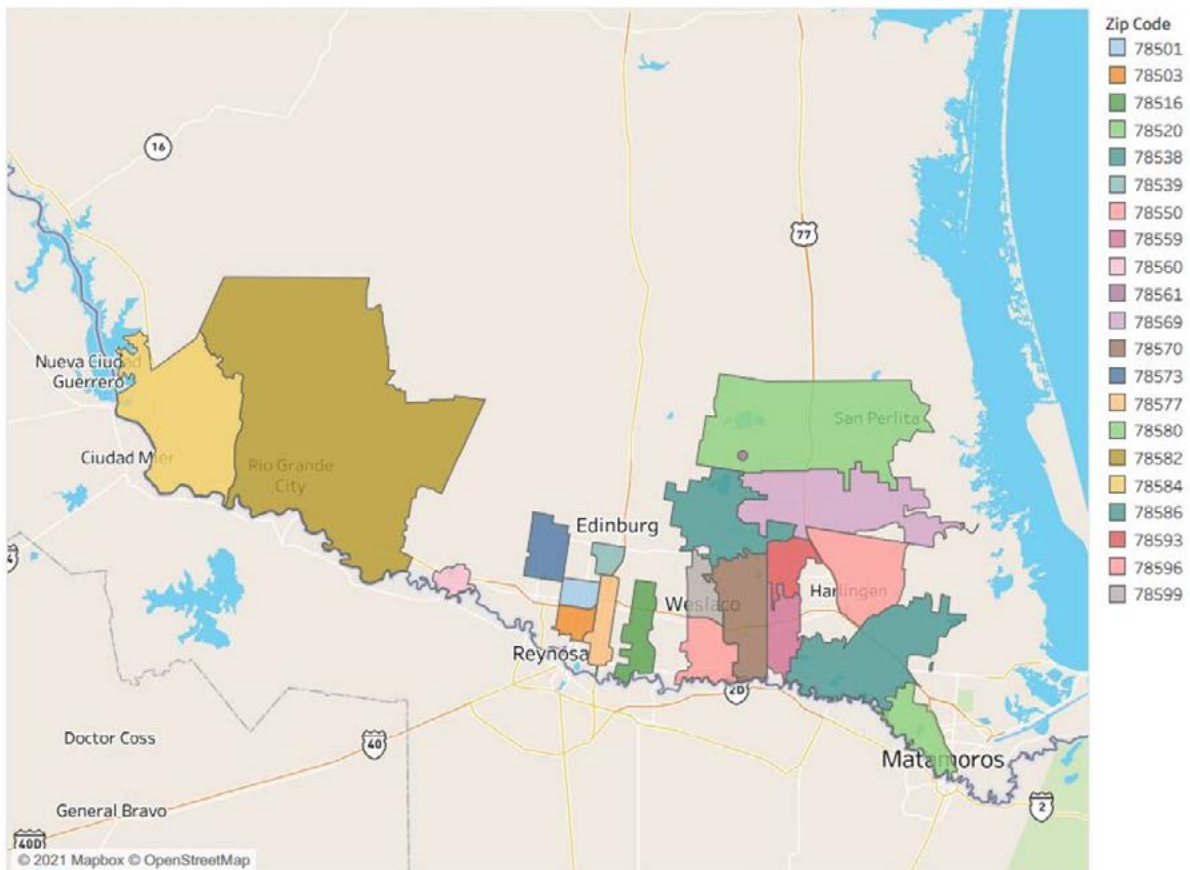
Source: Tableau. 2021.

5) Regional Technology Infrastructure

The Regional Technology Infrastructure identifies **11** technological stakeholders in the Rio Grande Valley, particularly technology businesses and staffing. There certainly could be increased technology business and electronic infrastructure. The staffing recommendations were found from previous job posting data and from the employer survey deployed in April 2021; a few employers said they use staffing companies to fill technological positions.

- Express Employment Professionals
- Kelly Services
- Kforce
- LG Electronics
- Magic Valley Electric Cooperative
- Netsync

- SpaceX Launch Facility
- Spectrum
- Ttech
- United Launch Alliance
- VTX1 Companies
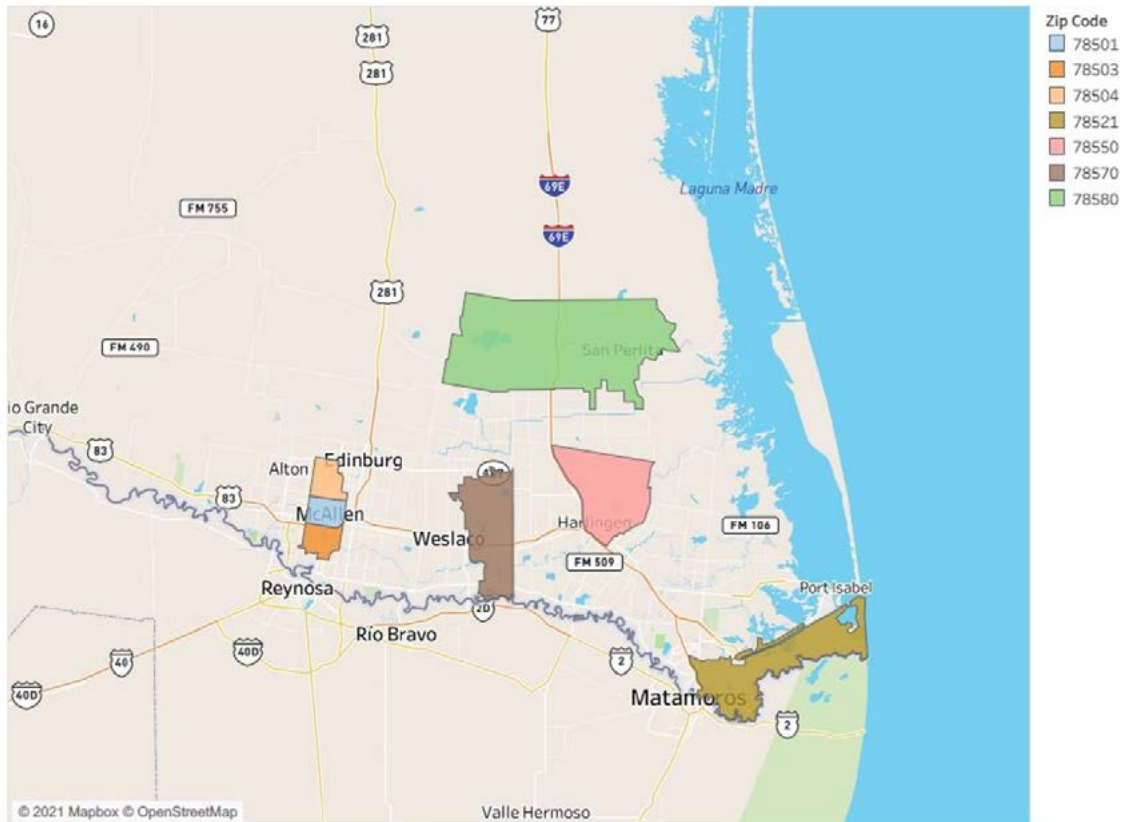
Source: Tableau. 2021.

6) IT Education & Training Providers

The majority of the IT Education and Training Providers **(29)** were identified in the previous Education and Training Mapping. Additionally, there are some online websites and a few other organizations found to provide IT courses and learning. These providers offer education and training programs in Information Technology, Computer Science, and Cybersecurity that directly lead to IT career pathways. There are also programs that are more cross-sector and require some capacity for IT skills such as a Medical Coding competency for Medical Coding and Billing programs.

- Brownsville Independent School District
- Cameron County Education Initiative
- Codeacademy
- Code #RGV
- College of Health Care Professions
- Coursera
- Data General Assembly

- FIRST Alumni Association
- Health Sciences Institute at DHR Hospital
- Information Technology Association
- McAllen Independent School District
- Mission Consolidated Independent School District
- Nucamp
- OnRamps through the University of Texas

- Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD
- Project Lead the Way
- Region One Education Service Center
- Rio Grande Valley College
- Rio Grande Valley Technical Training Initiative
- Rio Grande Technology Association
- South Texas College
- South Texas Training Center

- South Texas Vocational Technical Institute
- Southern Careers Institute
- Texas Association of Government Information Managers (TAGITM)
- Texas Southmost College
- Texas State Technical College
- University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley
- Valley Grande Institute
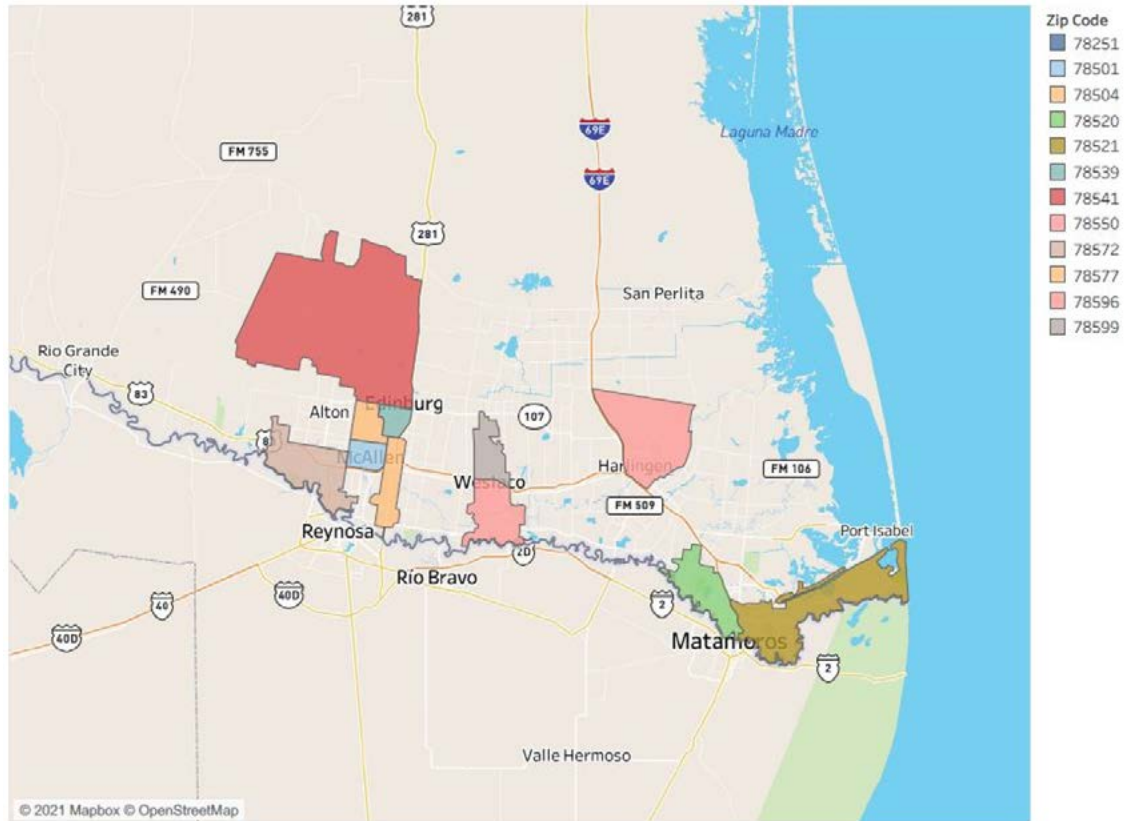
Source: Tableau. 2021.

7) Transportation

The **5** organizations below assist in the technology infrastructure of the Rio Grande Valley. This is significant because transportation is a necessary need in order to be able to work. Public transportation and roadway access are needed for commuting workers to work effectively.

- Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA)
- Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority (HCRMA)
- Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Valley Metro Transit Center
- Valley Transit Company
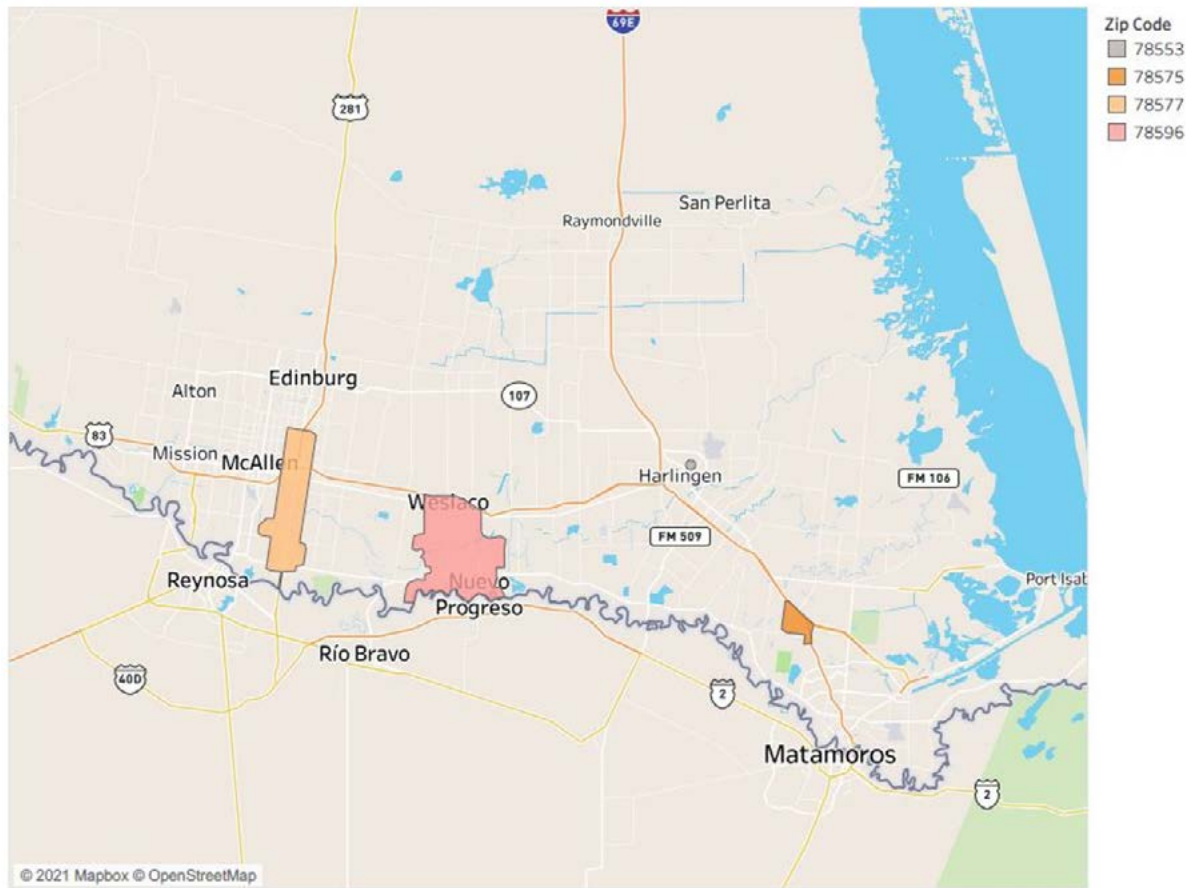
Source: Tableau. 2021.

8) Workforce Development Organizations

The Workforce Development Organizations **(18)** offer a multiple of services that affect the local workers. The organizations include federal and state career search and resourceful websites and workforce development boards. They have the most detailed information on needed skills, local programming, and job listings.

- JobCorps
- Jobs Y'all
- My Next Move
- My next move for veterans
- MySkills myFuture
- O*NET
- Rio Grande Valley Laredo Electrical - Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee
- Texas Career Check
- Texas Internship Challenge

- Texas Reality Check
- Texas Veterans Portal
- Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
- TexVet
- TWC Help Wanted Website
- Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement
- Workforce Solutions Cameron
- Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley
- WorkinTexas.com

Source: Tableau. 2021.

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF ORGANIZATIONS

A World Children 🟠

It is a nonprofit that contracts with and is licensed by the State of Texas to provide foster and foster-to-adopt services for abused and neglected children across the State.

Address: 2917 N 23rd St., McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** 1-800-273-1074 **Email:** awfccontact@awfc.org **Website:** www.awfc.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Adults who want to adopt, foster, or who know of a child being neglected

Advocacy Resource Center Housing 🟠

It provides tenant assistance and education about tenants' rights and obligations under the law and provide rent assistance to eligible low-income families living in Hidalgo County, Texas.

Address: 2507 Buddy Owens Ave, McAllen, TX 78504 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 631-4277 **Website:** n/a	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Low income families in need

Affordable Homes of South Texas ●

Affordable Homes of South Texas, Inc.'s purpose is to provide housing for qualifying low-Income families within McAllen, Texas and Hidalgo County.

Address: 1420 Erie Ave McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 687-6263 **Email:** info@ahsti.org **Website:** ahsti.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Any household with income less than 80% of the median income, collections cannot exceed $3000 (not counting medical), and must be a US citizen, DACA or permanent resident

Alamo Housing Authority ●

Alamo Housing Authority is a housing authority that participates in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), and Public Housing programs.

Address: 309 N. 9th Street Alamo, TX 78516 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 787-2352 **Email:** info@apartmentsmart.com **Website:** affordablehousingonline.com/housing-authority/Texas/Alamo-Housing-Authority/TX064	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Any household that is 30-120% below the AMI Band.

American Red Cross ● ●

The American Red Cross of South Texas serves four counties: Willacy, Cameron, Hidalgo and Starr County. Under the leadership of our board, it continues the proud tradition of helping Valley residents prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Address: 6914 West Expressway 83, Harlingen, TX 78552 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 423-0523 **Website:** redcross.org	**Services:** Support Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents in need

American Society for Engineering Education ● ●

The American Society for Engineering Education is a nonprofit organization of individuals and institutions committed to furthering education in engineering and engineering technology. It accomplishes this mission by promoting excellence in instruction, research, public service, and practice; exercising worldwide leadership; fostering the technological education of society; and providing quality products and services to members.

Address: 1201 West University Drive, Edinburg, TX 78539 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (202) 331-3500 **Website:** asee.org	**Services:** Support Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Must come from an engineering background

Amigos Del Valle Inc.

The Mission of Amigos Del Valle, Inc. is to positively impact the quality of life in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas through the provision of diversified and effective human services, community development activities and advocacy, which are directed to low-income families; and with special emphasis in assisting the elder population to maintain active, healthy and independent lives.

Address: 1116 N Conway Ave., Mission, TX 78572
County: Hidalgo County
Phone: (956) 213-9400
Email: advrgv@gmail.com
Website: advrgv.org

Services: Support Services
Service Area: Rio Grande Valley
Eligibility: Low-income households with emphasis on the elder population

Angels of Love

Angels of Love is an organization dedicated to helping abused women and children through education, support groups, legal advocacy and awareness events. This 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has served the community for over 8 years.

Address: 409 W. Nolana Ave., McAllen, TX 78504
County: Hidalgo County
Phone: (956) 972-0685
Website: angelsoflove.love

Services: Support Services
Service Area: Rio Grande Valley
Eligibility: Open to women and children who are victims of domestic violence and abuse

Arise Support Center

Each Center offers educational programs and workshops for Youth and Adults that focus on personal development and leadership. ARISE runs two cycles of programs each year (Jan-April/Aug-Nov), and a Summer Program for children. ARISE Adelante also focuses on social justice issues such as immigration, housing, and the environment.

Address: 1417 S. Tower Rd. Alamo, TX 78516
County: Hidalgo County
Phone: (956) 783-6959
Website: ariseotex.org

Services: Training Services & Support Services
Service Area: Rio Grande Valley
Eligibility: RGV Residents

Avance

Established in 1973, AVANCE (Uh-vahn-say) is a national, non-profit organization, primarily serving Texas, that meets hard to reach, low-income families where they are. Meaning "advance" or "progress," AVANCE serves as a trusted guide to assist under-resourced families of young children in overcoming isolation and lack of opportunity.

Address: 118 N. Medina St., San Antonio, TX 78207
County: Bexar County
Phone: (210) 270-4630
Website: avance.org

Services: Support Services
Service Area: Rio Grande Valley
Eligibility: Low income families in need

Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty ●

The Texas Hunger Initiative's Rio Grande Valley Regional Office, located in McAllen, Texas, exists to empower residents of the Rio Grande Valley to gain equal access to healthy food through creative problem-solving and engaged collaboration.

Address: 200 S. 10th St., McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 802-0654 **Name:** Elaine Hernandez **Position:** Regional Director **Email:** Elaine_Hernandez@baylor.edu **Website:** baylor.edu/hungerandpoverty/index.php?id=864997	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** RGV Residents

BCFS Health & Human Services McAllen ● ●

Our mission is to help at-risk young adults and foster youth transition into independent adulthood and self-sufficiency, and provide a safe place for youth to access community resources.

Address: 211 N. 15th St., McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 630-00104 **Email:** info@bcfs.net **Website:** discoverbcfs.net/mcallen	**Services:** Support Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Adults with disabilities, youth from foster care, low-income parents, families in crisis, minors separated from their families, orphaned children overseas, families who want to foster or adopt, victims of domestic violence, homeless young men, expectant mothers and more.

BiG Heroes ● ●

Believe in God's (BiG) Heroes is a God-centered non-profit organization which seeks to provide continued educational opportunities to young adults with intellectual disabilities post high school that seek employment.

Address: 814 Boca Chica Blvd., Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** 1-888-411-HERO **Email:** info@bigherotx.org **Website:** bigherotx.org	**Services:** Training Services & Career Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Young adults with intellectual disabilities post high school that seek employment

Border Trade Alliance ●

The Border Trade Alliance (BTA) is a grassroots, non-profit organization that serves as a forum for participants to address key issues affecting trade, travel and security in North America. Working with entities in Canada, Mexico and the United States, the BTA advocates on behalf of policies and initiatives designed to improve border affairs and trade relations among the three nations. BTA is North America's premier authority on issues affecting the U.S. northern and southern borders, representing a large grassroots network of over 4.2 million public and private sector representatives, including business leaders, chambers of commerce and industry, academic institutions, economic development corporations, industrial parks, transport companies, customs brokers, defense companies, manufacturers and state and local government agencies. One of its key issues is enhancing technological infrastructure.

Address: 2020 N. Central Ave. Suite 750, Phoenix, AZ 85004 **County:** Maricopa County **Phone:** (602) 266-7427 **Website:** thebta.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** National **Eligibility:** Any North American Resident

Brownsville Chamber of Commerce ● ●

The Chamber of Commerce is involved with business in Brownsville and provides services to members.

Address: 1600 W University Blvd., Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 542-4341 **Email:** info@brownsvillechamber.com **Website:** brownsvillechamber.com	**Services:** Employer Services & Business Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Those engaged on local business

Brownsville Community Foundation ●

The Brownsville Community Foundation was founded with the mission of improving the lives of people in Brownsville by creating a permanent endowment in order to respond to community needs. It is also provides a vehicle and service for donors with varied interests while serving the philanthropic community.

Address: 1950 Parades Line Rd., Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 572-0304 **Name:** Diane Milliken Garza, Ph.D **Position:** Exec. Director & Consultant to the Board **Email:** dmgarzaphd@gmail.com **Website:** brownsvillecommunityfoundation.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=20&Itemid=102	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Brownsville Residents

Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation 🟠 🔴

From shovel-ready sites, a well-trained bilingual workforce, and an open and inclusive ecosystem of entrepreneurship, Brownsville is a major industrial and manufacturing center. The city's well-developed infrastructure, interconnected transportation network, and unsurpassed quality of life – including over 100 miles of hiking and biking infrastructure – make it a major tourism, international trade, and logistics hub. The Community Improvement Foundation celebrates the resiliency of the Brownville Community in the face of crises impacting the social, economic and physical health of our nation and borderplex region.

Address: 500 E. Saint Charles St., Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 545-0353 **Email:** info@bcic.us **Website:** brownsvilleedc.org	**Services:** Business Services & Support Services **Service Area:** Brownsville **Eligibility:** Brownsville Residents

Brownsville Independent School District 🟣 🟢

Brownsville Independent School District (BISD), encompassing 95 square miles, is the largest employer in the Rio Grande Valley. Approximately 7,000 employees have accepted the challenge of serving a population of almost 46,000 students. BISD recognizes and addresses the unique cultural lifestyle of South Texas with a broad selection of academic activities and programs for all students. They also offer classes such as Web Development and Networking Systems.

Address: 1900 E. Price Rd., Brownsville, TX 78251 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 548-8000 **Website:** www.bsid.us	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Students

Brownsville Literacy Center 🟣

It addresses English-as-a-Second Language/Basic Literacy Skills -- Classes serve students who are non-literate or semi-literate in their native language. Instruction builds basic pre-literacy skills like holding writing instruments, recognizing letters, shapes, numbers, and writing names and addresses.

Address: 245 E. Levee St., Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 542-8080 **Website:** ez.utrgv.edu/agency/detail/?agency_id=54237	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Classes serve students who are non-literate or semi-literate in their native language

Brownsville Public Utilities Board ●

Under the charter, management, operation and control of the city's combined water, wastewater and electric utility systems were delegated to the BPUB Board of Directors.

Address: 1425 Robinhood Dr., Brownsville, TX 78521
County: Cameron County
Phone: (956) 983-6121
Email: customerservice@brownsville-pub.com
Website: brownsville-pub.com

Services: Support Services
Service Area: Cameron County
Eligibility: Residents of Brownsville

Buckner Missions & Humanitarian Aid ●

Buckner Domestic Missions and Humanitarian Aid provides humanitarian aid to Buckner programs (Family Hope Center, STAR, Foster Care and Adoption) and ministry partners across the Rio Grande Valley.

Address: 3780 N. Bentsen Palm Dr., Mission, TX 78574
County: Hidalgo County
Phone: 877-767-7426
Website: buckner.org

Services: Support Services
Service Area: Rio Grande Valley
Eligibility: Residents of the RGV

Cameron County Education Initiative ● ● ●

CCEI is committed to providing debt-free education, training, and career preparation programs to the citizens of Cameron County.

Address: 3140 E Ruben M Torres Blvd., Brownsville, Texas 78521
County: Cameron County
Phone: (956) 641-4800
Website: myccei.org

Services: Training Services, Employer Services, & Career Services
Service Area: Cameron County
Eligibility: Residents of Cameron County

Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA) ●

The Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority (CCRMA) works on behalf of the citizens of South Texas to provide congestion relief, traffic safety, and viable alternative routes in this era of time conservation and efficiency. The CCRMA's mobility solutions encompass highways, railways, air travel, and seaports.

Address: 3461 Carmen Ave., Rancho Viejo, TX 78575
County: Cameron County
Phone: (956) 621-5571
Email: info@ccrma.org
Website: ccrma.org

Services: Support Services
Service Area: Cameron County
Eligibility: Residents of Cameron County

CASA of Cameron & Willacy Counties ●

CASA of Cameron and Willacy Counties has continued to serve abused and neglected children in Texas by providing trained community volunteers to be a voice for children within the courts.

Address: 1740 Boca Chica Blvd., Suite 300, Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 546-6545 **Email:** advocates@casaofcw.org **Website:** casaofcameronandwillacy.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Cameron County & Willacy County **Eligibility:** Residents of Cameron and Willacy County

CASA of Hidalgo County ●

The mission of CASA of Hidalgo County Inc. is to speak for the best interests of the children in the courts by promoting and supporting quality volunteer representation to provide each child a safe, permanent, nurturing home.

Address: 1001 S. 10th St. Edinburg, TX 78539 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 381-0346 **Website:** casaofhidalgo.com/us	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of Hidalgo County

Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley ●

Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley Catholic Charities is the charitable branch of the Diocese of Brownsville. Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley has projects that provide assistance to the poor and most vulnerable population in our community. It is part of the larger family of Catholic Charities USA and Caritas Internacionalis.

Address: 955 W. Price Rd., Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 307-8090 **Website:** catholiccharitiesrgv.org/Home.aspx	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Men, women, children, and infant refugees

CEED – The Center of Education ● ● ●

The Center for Education and Economic Development is a dynamic co-working facility managed by Mission EDC. CEED's goal is to help create an Entrepreneurial, Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (E-STEAM) ecosystem which will lead to more sustainable businesses and a 21st Century ready workforce in the City of Mission.

Address: 801 N. Bryan Rd., Mission, TX 78572 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 379-6016 **Email:** info@missionedc.com **Website:** missionceed.org	**Services:** Training Services, Support Services, & Career Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of Mission City

Codeacademy 🟣

It wants to create a world where anyone can build something meaningful with technology, and everyone has the learning tools, resources, and opportunities to do so. It provides online learning for coding languages and IT subjects.

Address: 575 Broadway, 5th Floor New York City, NY 10012 **Website:** codeacademy.com	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** National **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

Code #RGV 🟣 🟢

CodeRGV is a nonprofit that creates tech entrepreneurs and skilled professionals for local jobs by educating, promoting, and certifying professionals. We strive to promote community participation and collaboration to invigorate creativity, innovation, and the local economy.

Address: 601 N. Main St B, McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 410-CODE **Email:** info@codergv.org **Website:** codergv.org/about	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

College of Health Care Professions 🟣

The College of Health Care Professions offers a variety of health care programs designed to prepare students for their challenging and rewarding careers in specific allied health care professions. CHCP takes a unique approach to teaching. We use a combination of lectures, labs, and hands-on training to fully prepare students for their health care career of choice. Our career-focused healthcare programs not only give students the knowledge to succeed but provide them with the opportunity to learn and practice the skills necessary for success.

Address: 1917 W Nolana Ave. Suite 100, McAllen, TX 78504 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (512) 617-5700 **Website:** chcp.edu	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Texas, including the Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students wanting to go into the health care professions

Colonias Unidas Organizations

Colonias Unidas, is a non-profit community-based organization whose mission is to improve the lives of colonia residents in Starr County, a rural community which has one of the highest level of poverty in the country. At the present time, Colonias Unidas is focused on providing educational and cultural opportunities to families in an effort to improve their quality of life. We operate an after school program as well as adult educational programs. We also have also organize health fairs, cultural and art projects, and other community activities.

Address: 8019 Embassy St. Rio Grande City, TX 78582 **County:** Starr County **Phone:** (956) 487-0964 **Website:** idealist.org/en/nonprofit/ cb2be841ff794681ad079031c5b964a6-colonias- unidas-rio-grande-city	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Starr County **Eligibility:** Residents of Starr County

Communities in Schools of Cameron County

The mission of Communities In Schools is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Address: 356 N Sam Houston Blvd., San Benito, TX 78586 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 554-7954 **Email:** kmontejano@ciscameroncounty.org **Website:** ciscameroncounty.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Residents of Cameron County

Communities Unlimited

Communities Unlimited serves seven states in the southern United States, an area with many rural communities, a high minority population, high poverty and food insecurity. Where you live, what you look like or how much money you have should not determine access to opportunities.

Address: 3 East Colt Square Dr., Fayetteville, AR 72703 **Phone:** (479) 443-2700 **Website:** communitiesu.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents in need

Communities Council of the Rio Grande Valley

The Community Council of the Rio Grande Valley is a non-profit organization that offers a centralized, comprehensive, cross-category set of resources to individuals, families, groups and service organizations in Starr, Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy counties. It is organized to provide a program of services in terms of three major components: Information & Referral Services, Community and Development Planning and Volunteer Action Services.

Address: P.O Box 182 Weslaco, TX **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** 877-541-7905 **Email:** ccrgv@ccrgv.org **Website:** ccrgv.org	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services and Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents of Rio Grande Valley

Community Development Corporation of Brownsville

CDCB is a multifaceted affordable housing organization devoted to utilizing collaborative partnerships to create sustainable communities across the Rio Grande Valley through quality education, model financing, efficient home design, and superior construction.

Address: 901 East Levee St., Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 541-4955 **Website:** cdcb.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Brownsville **Eligibility:** Must have a loss of income directly related to COVID-19; must be a Brownsville resident; must be a United States Citizen or have eligible immigration status, and/or can qualify based on income

Coursera

Coursera partners with more than 200 leading universities and companies to bring flexible, affordable, job-relevant online learning to individuals and organizations worldwide. We offer a range of learning opportunities—from hands-on projects and courses to job-ready certificates and degree programs.

Address: 381 East Evelyn Ave., Mountain View, CA 94041 **Website:** coursera.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** National **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

Dash General Assembly

Dash is a fun and free online course that teaches about the basics of web development through computer projects.

Address: n/a **Website:** dash.generalassemb.ly	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Global **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

Edcouch-Elsa Independent School District ⬤

The mission of Edcouch-Elsa I.S.D. is to produce responsible graduates who can compete confidently in a dynamic global society by providing an individualized, nurturing educational foundation that draws strength from our community's spiritual roots and rich cultural heritage as we face the challenge of the new millennium.

Address: P.O Box 127 Edcouch, TX 78538 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 262-6000 **Website:** eeisd.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students

Edinburg Child Care Inc. ⬤

Edinburg Child Care, Inc., has been incorporated for over 20 years, is experienced in assisting home based and child care centers in the nutritional needs of their day care children. Facilitate the reimbursement to homes and centers that care for children for meals served. Training of homes and centers administrators to provide nutritional foods to all children.

Address: 1332 W. University Dr., Edinburg, TX 78539 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 383-6789 **Email:** edinburgchildcare@hotmail.com **Website:** edinburg-child-care-inc.tripod.com	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Eligible day care homes that have 12 children or less qualify for this program

Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District ⬤

The Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District is located in the Educational Center of the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. Edinburg is a three-time "All-America City, " and is also home to the University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley and to the Region One Education Service Center.

Address: 411 N. 8th Avenue, Edinburg, TX 78539 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 289-2300 **Email:** romeo.cantu@ecisd.us **Website:** ecisd.us	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students

Edinburg Economic Development Corporation ● ● ●

At the northernmost point of the Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg is the gateway to South Texas. Anchored by the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley campus, and home to the county seat for Hidalgo County, Edinburg is an ideal location for businesses looking to expand in the RGV. Our location provides access to other major metros, business hubs, and tourist destinations like San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Monterrey, South Padre Island and beyond. Our proximity to the border opens up more markets and consumer communities. Put your business on the map, and watch it take off.

Address: 415 West University Dr., Edinburg, TX 78541 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 388-8207 **Email:** economicdevelopment@cityofedinburg.com **Website:** edinburgedc.com	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Employer services, & Business Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of Edinburg, Texas

Edinburg Housing Authority ●

The Edinburg Housing Authority was first established in 1949. It is a government assisted housing agency directly supervised and funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Address: 910 Sugar Rd, Edinburg, TX 78539 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 383-3839 **Website:** edinburgha.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Low-income families, elderly, and people with disabilities

Express Employment Professionals ● ● ●

Express Employment Professionals is one of the top staffing companies in the U.S. and Canada. Every day, we help people find jobs and provide workforce solutions to businesses. McAllen, TX Express provides a full range of employment solutions that include full-time, temporary, and part-time employment in a wide range of positions.

Address: 504 North 10th Street Suites B1, B2, & B9 McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 664-9675 **Website:** expresspros.com/McAllenTX	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Support Services, Career Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Job Seekers

First Alumni Association 🟢 🟣

We are proud to have the FIRST Alumni of the Rio Grande Valley starting in spring, 2019. This association will support the teams of the RGV through mentorship and event support. Alumni members are any student that participated on a FIRST team in the Rio Grande Valley.

An example of technology programming is the FIRST Tech Challenge. It requires teams (up to 15 team members, grades 7-12) are challenged to design, build, program, and operate robots to compete in a head-to-head challenge in an alliance format.

Address: 5211 S McCool Rd., Suite C Edinburg, TX 78539 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (603) 666-3906 or 800-871-8326 **Website:** firstinspires.org/alumni/alumni-groups	**Services:** Career Services and Training Services IT Education and Training Providers **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students

Good Neighbor Settlement House Inc. 🟠

The Good Neighbor Settlement House is a non-profit multi-service agency in Brownsville Texas serving needy men, women and children by providing the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, showers and hot meals.

Address: 1254 E. Tyler St., Brownsville TX, 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 542-2368 **Website:** goodneighborsettlement.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Homeless or near homeless residents of Brownsville

Good Samaritan Community Services, Cameron County 🟠

Good Samaritan actively serves as a place of change, reaching out to support thousands of people working to improve their lives and to overcome the challenges of poverty.

Address: 104 Elizabeth St. Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (210) 434-5531 **Website:** goodsamtx.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Cameron County Residents

Harlingen Area Educational Foundation ●

The HAEF was established in 1990 as an independent non-profit to promote quality education in HCISD schools and provide supplemental programs to support at-risk youth and lower dropout rates The Foundation provides means for underfunded educational programs and activities, which are used to facilitate student achievement and skill development and to expand community involvement for individuals, business and civic organizations. In addition, the foundation provides scholarships for students who are in financial need. As of 2020, the HAEF has provided $500,000 in scholarships and grants.

Address: 1407 N 77 Sunshine Strip Harlingen, TX 78550 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 430-9500 **Website:** hcisd.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Students

Health Sciences Institute at DHR Hospital ● ●

DHR is the region's only physician-owner hospital, now one of the largest in the nation. For example, they have a Medical Coding Specialist program that requires technical skills.

Address: 5501 McCool Rd. Suite C Edinburg, TX 78539 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 362-8677 **Website:** dhrhealth.com	**Services:** Training Services & Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents; students and adult learners

Healthy Communities of Brownsville, Inc. ●

Its mission is to develop and foster environmental, educational, and healthy living programs through community partnerships and grassroots efforts.

Address: P.O BOX 1621 Brownsville, TX 78523 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 543-5404 **Email:** hcb@healthybrownsville.org **Website:** healthybrownsville.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Residents of Brownsville

Hidalgo County Community Service Agency ●

Its mission is to improve the quality of life and promote self sufficiency of the low income and vulnerable households of Hidalgo County by providing effective, efficient, and comprehensive services through partnerships and direct funding.

Address: 2524 N. Closner Blvd Edinburg, TX 78541 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 383-6240 **Email:** chcsa@co.hidalgo.tx.us **Website:** hidalgocsa.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of Hidalgo County

Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority, (HCRMA) ●

The Hidalgo County RMA's purpose is to provide Hidalgo County with opportunities to accelerate needed transportation projects, through the direction of a local board making local choices about local mobility needs that enhance the quality of life and economic growth for all residents in our region. The HCRMA is committed to doing its part to help ensure a bright and prosperous future for our community through innovative projects in financing transportation endeavors.

Address: 203 W. Newcombe Ave. Pharr, TX 78577 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 402-4762 **Email:** contact@hcrma.net **Website:** hcrma.net	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of Hidalgo County

Hope Family Health Center ●

Community HOPE Projects Inc, doing business as Hope Family Health Center, is a 501(C)3 not for profit organization providing primary medical, counseling, integrated behavioral health, peer support services, case management, and wellness programs to the uninsured living in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas.

Address: 2332 Jordan Rd., McAllen, TX 78503 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 994-3319 **Email:** hopefamilyhealthcenter@gmail.com **Website:** hopefamilyhealthcenter.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Uninsured residents of Rio Grande Valley

Housing Authority of Starr County 🟠

Starr County Housing Authority is a housing authority that participates in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), and Public Housing programs.

Address: 1988 N. Charco Blanco Rd., Rio Grande City, TX 78582 **County:** Starr County **Phone:** (956) 487-3216 **Website:** affordablehousingonline.com/housing-authority/Texas/Starr-County-Housing-Authority/TX396	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Starr County **Eligibility:** Low-income Households in Starr County

Housing Authority of the City of Roma 🟠

Roma Housing Authority is a housing authority that participates in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), and Public Housing programs.

Address: 469 Canales Circle Roma, TX 78584 **County:** Starr County **Phone:** (956) 849-1159 **Website:** affordablehousingonline.com/housing-authority/Texas/Roma-Housing-Authority/TX449	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Starr County **Eligibility:** Low-income Households in Roma city

Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo 🟠

The Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo provides low-income families and individuals with housing that is decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable. The Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo is committed to providing opportunities for families to become self-sufficient.

Address: 1800 N. Texas Blvd. Weslaco, TX. 78599 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 968-8669 **Email:** teresav@hidalgocha.com **Website:** hidalgocha.org/en/index.html	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** A family that receives assistance under Section 8 HCV Program that is willing to participate and enter into a 5-year FSS Contract of Participation

Information Technology Association 🟢 🟣 🔵

The Information Technology Association (ITA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation specialized in providing academic, professional development, and experiential learning opportunities to information technology professionals, IT-oriented entrepreneurs, IT economic development professionals, our community, and other stakeholders.

Address: 801 N. Bryan Rd. Mission, TX 78572 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 233-7006 **Email:** agarcia@stita.org **Website:** itassn.org	**Services:** Career Services, Training Services, Employer Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents of Rio Grande Valley

Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (RGV subsection) 🟢 🟣

IEEE is the world's largest technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity. IEEE and its members inspire a global community to innovate for a better tomorrow through its highly-cited publications, conferences, technology standards, and professional and educational activities. IEEE is the trusted "voice" for engineering, computing and technology information around the globe.

Brownsville Campus: One West University Boulevard, Brownsville, TX 78520 SETB 1.550 **Brownsville Phone:** (956) 882-6605 **Edinburg Campus:** 1201 West University Drive Edinburg TX 78539 ENGR 1,294 **Edinburg Phone:** (956) 665-3510 **County:** Hidalgo County **Email:** coec@utrgv.edu **Website:** r5.ieee.org/rgv	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** UTRGV Students

Job Corps 🟣 🟢 🔵

Job Corps is the largest nationwide residential career training program in the country and has been operating for more than 50 years. The program helps eligible young people ages 16 through 24 complete their high school education, trains them for meaningful careers, and assists them with obtaining employment. Job Corps has trained and educated over two million individuals since 1964.

Address: 200 Constitution Ave NW, Suite N4463 Washington, DC 20210 **Phone:** 800-733-5627 **Email:** NationalOffice@jobcorps.gov **Website:** jobcorps.gov	**Services:** Training Services, Career Services, & Employer Services **Service Area:** National **Eligibility:** Job Seekers

Jobs Y'all 🟣 🟢 🔵

The Jobs Y'all career exploration campaign and website launched in 2018 to raise awareness about the opportunities and benefits of Texas industries, to inspire and attract young Texans to explore careers, and understand the education and training needed to best position themselves for where the jobs will be when they enter the workforce.

Address: n/a **Email:** jobsyall@twc.state.tx.us **Website:** jobsyall.com	**Services:** Training Services, Career Services, & Employer Services **Service Area:** Texas **Eligibility:** Job Seekers

Kelly Services 🟢 🔴

Kelly Services is a large staffing agency and has a local office in Rio Grande Valley.

Address: 2200 Trenton Rd. #4b, McAllen, TX 78504 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** 1-800-535-5901 **Website:** kellyservices.us	**Services:** Career Services & Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Job Seekers

Kforce 🟢 🔴

Kforce is a solutions firm that builds and manages expert teams in technology and finance & accounting. It delivers on your business objectives by combining a global KNOWLEDGEforce®—its namesake—with flexible delivery and an unmatched drive for excellence.

Address: 601 NW Loop 410 Suite 200, San Antonio, TX 78216 **Phone:** 1-877-4KFORCE **Website:** kforce.com	**Services:** Career Services & Business Services **Service Area:** Texas **Eligibility:** Rio Grande Valley Residents

La Feria Independent School District 🟣

La Feria ISD is committed to excellence through a system of family, community, and educational values where learners are empowered to become leaders that will positively impact the world.

Address: 203 E. Oleander, La Feria, TX 78559 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 797-8300 **Website:** laferiaisd.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Residents of Cameron County

La Joya Independent School District 🟣

La Joya Independent School District is committed to providing Educational Excellence through rigor, relevance, relationships and personal responsibility. We are the integral part of learning where students become successful and productive contributors to our global society. We embrace, with passion, the commitment to continuous improvement, collaboration and accountability that will allow our students to imprint the world.

Address: 201 E. Expwy. 83 La Joya, TX 78560 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 323-2000 **Website:** lajoyaisd.com/19653	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students

Lasara Independent School District ●

Lasara ISD will provide the necessary resources for holistic educational experiences utilizing passionate and nurturing staff that emerges well rounded, diverse lifelong learners.

Address: 11932 Jones St. Lasara, TX 78561 **County:** Willacy County **Phone:** (956) 642-5466 **Website:** lasaraisd.net	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Willacy County **Eligibility:** Students

LG Electronics ●

It is electronic appliance provider located just across the border from the Rio Grande Valley and important for access to electronic devices.

Address: 3805 Plantation Grove Blvd. Reynosa, Mexico **Website:** lg.com/mx	**Services:** Business Services **Service Area:** Global **Eligibility:** Residents

Llano Grande Center ● ●

The Llano Grande Center is a local non-profit that works to revitalize the youth community. Its goals include creating access to higher education, engaging students in community change initiatives and developing leadership that respects local history and culture.

Address: 1 Yellow Jacket Dr. Ste 1 A Edcouch, TX 78538 **County:** Hidalgo County **Website:** llanogrande.org	**Services:** Support Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of Edcouch, Texas

Lower Rio Grande Development Council ● ● ●

The LRGVDC promotes cooperation among local units of government and provides forums and opportunities for them to work with economic interests and citizen groups in order to improve the region's health, safety, and general welfare and to plan for future development.

Address: 301 W. Railroad, Weslaco TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 682-3481 **Name:** Manny Cruz **Position:** Executive Director **Email:** mcruz@lrgvdc.org **Website:** lrgvdc.org	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Support Services, & Training Services **Service Area:** Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties **Eligibility:** Residents of Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties

Lyford Independent School District ●

This school district offers education offerings for students residing in Lyford, Texas.

Address: 8240 Simon Gomez Rd. Lyford, TX 78569 **County:** Willacy County **Phone:** (956) 347-3900 **Website:** lyfordcisd.net	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Willacy County **Eligibility:** Students

Magic Valley Electric Cooperative ●

A not-for-profit, member owned cooperative dedicated to providing their members with the most reasonable electricity rates possible. Their rate structure is designed to clearly reflect the Cooperative's delivery and power supply costs.

Address: 1311 S Cage Blvd, Pharr, TX 78577 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** 1-866-225-5683 **Website:** magicvalley.coop	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents of Rio Grande Valley

McAllen Careers Institute ● ●

McAllen Careers Institute has programming for the Pipefitting and Welding industries.

Address: 2000 N 23rd St. McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 618-5800 **Email:** info@mcallencareersinstitute.com **Website:** mcallencareersinstitute.edu	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents of Rio Grande Valley

McAllen Chamber of Commerce ● ● ●

The McAllen Chamber of Commerce has a membership of 2,000 and a staff of 21 people. The McAllen Chamber is the largest chamber in a 15 county area and is broadly seen as the most innovative, cutting edge and progressive chamber in the region. The staff of the McAllen Chamber has been integral in creating and developing cooperative efforts in the region. The mission of the McAllen Chamber of Commerce is to help McAllen businesses be successful and make money, accelerate connections, create economic momentum, and enhance the image and quality of place of McAllen. The Chamber will also lead, partner, or applaud efforts to improve McAllen.

Address: 1200 Ash Ave., McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 692-2871 **Website:** mcallen.org	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Business Services, & Employer Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of McAllen, TX

McAllen Economic Development Corporation

The McAllen Economic Development Corporation (or MEDC) is a non profit corporation funded by the City of McAllen to generate job growth by attracting new industry and helping existing companies to expand. Part of McAllen's success has been the explosive growth of Reynosa, Mexico. Just across the United States – Mexico border, both communities have collaborated to create one of the most recognized industrial sectors home to several fortune 500 companies. The MEDC is committed to being a single point of contact to industrial businesses; whether your manufacturing needs are in McAllen or Reynosa, we provide services at no cost to the companies seeking cost effective manufacturing strategies to maintain a competitive edge in today's global economy.

Address: 6401 S. 33rd Street McAllen, TX 78503 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 682-2875 **Email:** info@mcallenedc.org **Website:** mcallenedc.org	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Business Services, & Employer Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of McAllen, TX

McAllen Housing Authority

The McAllen Housing Authority is a governmental entity created by the City of McAllen, Texas in 1939 for the acquisition, development, modernization, operation, and administration of public housing programs. The primary purpose of the Authority is to provide safe, decent, sanitary, and affordable housing to low income and elderly families in the City of McAllen, Texas. The housing programs are operated in accordance with the Housing and Urban Development guidelines.

Address: 2301 Jasmine Ave. McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 686-3951 **Website:** mcallenha.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of McAllen, TX

McAllen Independent School District

The McAllen Independent School District (MISD) is a multicultural community in which students are enthusiastically and actively engaged in the learning process. Students demonstrate academic excellence in a safe, nurturing and challenging environment enhanced by technology and the contributions of the total community. They offer AP Computer Science courses and a computer literacy class.

Address: 2200 Tamarack Ave. Portable 69, McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Name:** John L. Wilde **Position:** Director for Student Support **Phone:** (956) 618-6031 **Email:** John.Wilde@mcallenisd.net **Website:** mcallenisd.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students

Mercedes Independent School District

Mercedes ISD is an educational organization providing a versatile educational experience grounded on the belief that all students can succeed.

Address: 950 W. Sixth Street, Mercedes, TX 78570 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 514-2000 **Website:** misdtx.net	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students

MHP Salud (Migrant Health Program)

MHP Salud promotes the Community Health Worker (CHW) profession nationally as a culturally appropriate strategy to improve health and implements CHW programs to empower underserved Latino communities.

Address: 3102 US-83 BUS G Weslaco, TX **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 968-3600 **Website:** mhpsalud.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Low-income residents of Rio Grande Valley

Mission Chamber of Commerce

The Greater Mission Chamber of Commerce is a Rio Grande Valley based public organization focused on enhancing the local economy and community.

Address: 202 W. Tom Landry Rd., Mission, TX 78572 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 585-2727 **Email:** gmcc@missionchamber.com **Website:** missionchamber.com	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Employer Services, and Business Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of Mission, TX

Mission Consolidated Independent School District

Mission EDC, a component of the City of Mission, Texas, is tasked with creating jobs, attracting capital investment, improving the quality of life and strengthening the workforce in Mission, Texas. Mission EDC accomplishes its task by focusing in five areas: Entrepreneurship and STEAM Education, Business Expansion and Retention, Recruitment, Infrastructure and Transportation and Quality of Life. They also have a Career and Technical Education department.

Address: 1201 Bryce Dr., McAllen, TX, 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 323-5500 **Website:** mcisd.net	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students

Mission Economic Development Corporation 🟡 🔴 🔵

Mission EDC, a component of the City of Mission, Texas, is tasked with creating jobs, attracting capital investment, improving the quality of life and strengthening the workforce in Mission, Texas. Mission EDC accomplishes its task by focusing in five areas: Entrepreneurship and STEAM Education, Business Expansion and Retention, Recruitment, Infrastructure and Transportation and Quality of Life.

Address: 801 N Bryan Rd., Mission, TX 78572 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 585-0040 **Email:** info@MissionEDC.com **Website:** missionedc.com	**Services:** Employer Services, Outreach/Referral Services, & Business Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents of Hidalgo County

Monte Alto Independent School District 🟣

Monte Alto Independent School District is a public school district based in the community of Monte Alto, Texas.

Address: 25149 1st St., Monte Alto, TX 78538 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 262-1381 **Website:** montealtoisd.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students

My Next Move 🔵 🟢

It is a career exploration website.

Address: n/a **Email:** onet@onetcenter.org **Website:** mynextmove.org	**Services:** Employer Services & Career Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Job Seekers

My Next Move for Veterans 🔵 🟢

It is a career exploration website for veterans.

Address: n/a **Email:** onet@onetcenter.org **Website:** mynextmove.org/vets	**Services:** Employer Services & Career Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Veterans

mySkills myFuture 🟢

Its purpose is to deliver integrated, easy-to-understand workforce information that helps job seekers, students, workers, workforce intermediaries, and employers develop their capacity and make sound economic decisions in the new economy.

Address: n/a **Phone:** 1-877-US2-JOBS **Email:** info@careeronestop.org **Website:** myskillsmyfuture.org	**Services:** Career Services **Service Area:** National **Eligibility:** Job seekers and other workforce development organizations

Netsync 🔴

The company works businesses in a variety of industries to determine and implement the best solutions and technologies that deliver business transforming results.

Address: 2500 West Loop South, Suite 410, Houston, TX 77027 **Phone:** (713) 218-5000 **Website:** netsync.com	**Services:** Business Services **Service Area:** Texas areas including Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Businesses, among others

Nucamp 🟣

Nucamp is an affordable bootcamp based on the West Coast, but with staff nearby in Brownsville, Texas. Bootcamp options include Web Development Fundamentals; Front End Web and Mobile Development, Full Stack Web and Mobile Development; and Backend, SQL, and DevOps with Python.

Address: n/a **County:** Cameron County (staff located there) **Email:** info@nucamp.co **Website:** nucamp.co	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

O*NET 🟢

O*NET is an occupational data base that includes Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities, among other information, on SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) codes for occupations. There is also information about industry clusters that connect with occupations.

Address: n/a **Website:** onetonline.org	**Services:** Career Services **Service Area:** National **Eligibility:** Job seekers and members of other organizations interested in occupational data

OnRamps Course through University of Texas at Austin (Computer Science: Thriving in Our Digital World) 🟣
Through the University of Texas at Austin, there are distance learning opportunities for students, teachers, and districts as well as professional development opportunities. There is a Computer Science course that students could take advantage of and relates to the Texas College and Career Readiness Skills.

Address: Office of Strategy and Policy, The University of Texas at Austin, 2616 Wichita Street, BWY #101 STOP A7300, Austin, TX 78712 **Website:** onramps.utexas.edu	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

Pharr Economic Development Corporation 🟡 🔴 🔵
Pharr EDC's goal is to further economic development in their region by attracting new businesses, increasing local employment, and expanding awareness of the opportunities in Pharr. The EDC ensures that Pharr offers business owners the resources they need to prosper in today's economy. Pharr EDC builds opportunities that will steer business in the right direction and helped to create the Pharr Technology Incubator.

Address: 1215 South Cage Blvd., Pharr, TX 78577 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 402-4332 **Website:** pharredc.com	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Employer Services & Business Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Those engaged in local business

Pharr Housing Authority 🟠
The Pharr Housing Authority is dedicated to housing for Pharr residents in need.

Address: 104 W Polk Ave., Pharr, TX 78577 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 787-4217 **Email:** info@pharrha.com **Website:** pharrha.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Low-income residents

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District 🟢 🟣
As educational leaders, the PSJA team is engaged and empowered to connect all students with innovative instruction, outstanding facilities, technology, skills, and social-emotional support while prioritizing health and safety for all – from early childhood through their chosen career. They also have STEM Summer Camps.

Address: 601 E Kelly Ave., Pharr, TX 78577 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 354-2000 **Website:** psjaisd.us	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students

Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce 🔴

The Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to Port Isabel tourism and business. It is a lively community with shopping and amenities, fishing, boating, and other vacation opportunities. It is also 30 minutes away from Mexico.

Address: 421 E Queen Isabella Blvd., Port Isabel, TX 78578 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 943-2262 **Email:** director@portisabel.org **Website:** portisabelchamber.com	**Services:** Business Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Those engaged in local business

Project Lead the Way 🟣

Through our programs, students develop in-demand, transportable skills – such as problem solving, critical and creative thinking, collaboration, and communication – that they will use both in school and for the rest of their lives, on any career path they take. As PLTW students progress through grades PreK-12, they are empowered to explore career paths, engage in problem solving and process thinking, develop technical knowledge and skills, and build communication skills.

Address: n/a **Website:** pltw.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students

Raymondville Chamber of Commerce 🔴

The Chamber of Commerce is celebrating 70 years as an organization whose mission is that of attracting new businesses, promoting existing businesses, creating tourism promotion and assisting with economic development in Raymondville and Willacy County.

Address: 700 FM 3168, Raymondville, TX 78580 **County:** Willacy County **Phone:** (956) 687-5115 **Website:** welcomehomergv.com/business/ raymondville-chamber-of-commerce	**Services:** Business Services **Service Area:** Willacy County **Eligibility:** Business

Raymondville Independent School District 🟣

School District with elementary, middle, and high schools.

Address: 419 FM 3168, Raymondville, TX 78580 **County:** Willacy County **Phone:** (956) 689-8175 **Website:** raymondvilleisd.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Willacy County **Eligibility:** Students

Region One Education Service Center 🟢 🟣

The Region One Education Service Center is part of a state-wide system of 20 regional education service centers created in 1965 by the 59th Texas Legislature to assist school districts across the state. Located in South Texas on the United States/Mexico border, Region One ESC serves 38 school districts and 10 charter school systems in the eight county areas of Brooks County, Cameron County, Hidalgo County, Jim Hogg County, Starr County, Webb County, Willacy County, and Zapata County.

Address: 1900 W Schunior St, Edinburg, TX 78541 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 984-6000 **Website:** esc1.net	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students and educators in local schools

Rio Grande City Consolidated Independent School District 🟣

It is an educational organization that exemplifies achievement, creditability, and commitment in preparing all students to meet the academic, creative, and social challenges and responsibilities of our society.

Address: 1 S. Fort Ringgold, Rio Grande City, TX 78582 **County:** Starr County **Phone:** (956) 716-6700 **Website:** rgccisd.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Starr County **Eligibility:** Students

Rio Grande Habitat for Humanity 🟠

Since 1988, Habitat for Humanity of the Rio Grande Valley has been dedicated to the ideal that all people deserve to own a home that is both comfortable and affordable.

Address: 412 W Ash Ave., McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 686-7455 **Email:** info@habitatrgv.org **Website:** habitatrgv.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents in need

Rio Grande Valley Angel Network 🟡 🔴 🔵

The Rio Grande Valley Angel Network (RGVAN) is an organization that strives to impact the economic prosperity of the Rio Grande Valley and provides a platform that benefits both entrepreneurs and investors. RGVAN members not only invest; they also mentor entrepreneurs and connect them to business resources, providing critical support to the success of early stage business.

Address: 307 E. Railroad St., Weslaco, TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 357-0167 **Email:** laurie.simmons@utrgv.edu **Website:** rgvan.org	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Employer Services, & Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Business

Rio Grande Valley Apartment Association 🟠

RGVAA represents apartment owners and management companies with single family and multi-unit residential properties. The Association also represents member companies that provide products and services to the rental industry.

Address: 536 South Texas Blvd. Ste. 113, Weslaco, TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 994-9995 **Website:** rgvaptassoc.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Those renting in area

Rio Grande Valley College 🟢 🩷

Located in the border city of Pharr, Texas and established in 2008, RGV College was the vision of educators and entrepreneurs whom have guided this institution's growth into one of the most sought after vocational schools in the Rio Grande Valley for its A+ grade level education. RGV College exists on the principle that all individuals, regardless of race, age, previous education, or economic background can take advantage of the benefits acquired through Vocational Education. It has a Medical Coding and Billing Specialist program that requires IT skills.

Address: 5419 N Cage Blvd, Pharr, TX 78577 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 781-6800 **Website:** rgvcollege.edu	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

Rio Grande Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 🔴

The mission of the RGV Hispanic Chamber is to promote economic development & assist businesses to access the Hispanic market through networking, promoting education and nurturing leadership.

Address: 801 E Fern Ave. #131, McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 928-0060 **Website:** rgvhcc.org	**Services:** Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Hispanic business representatives

Rio Grande Valley Partnership 🟡 🟢 🔵 🩷 🔴

We drive advancement in the Rio Grande Valley by unifying stakeholders in the spirit of collaboration and regional progress and by being an influential advocate for the region.

Address: 322 S Missouri Ave., Weslaco, TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 968-3141 **Email:** info@rgvpartnership.com **Website:** rgvpartnership.com	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Career Services, Employer Services, Training Services, Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Businesses and other organizations can be members

Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone Corporation 🟠

The RGV Empowerment Zone has participated in and managed a myriad of programs and projects with a variety of partners throughout the years. Current program focus is on the following: Community Youth Development, Victims of Crime, and Community Services Directory.

Address: 416 South Alton Blvd., Alton, TX 78573 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 424-3276 **Website:** rgvez.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Community members

Rio Grande Valley Engineering Initiative 🟣

The Rio Grande Valley Engineering Initiative makes it possible for engineering students in the Rio Grande Valley to earn a Texas A&M-Kingsville degree. The first goal of the initiative is to accommodate students who receive their first two years of instruction from Rio Grande Valley community colleges, and allow them to transfer to A&M-Kingsville for their third and fourth years of college.

There are Junior and Senior-level classes in Chemical Engineering, Environmental Engineering, and Natural Gas Engineering. This program is intended for students with or near completion of an associate's degree in pre-engineering from a community college.

Address: 312 N. International Blvd, Weslaco, TX 78599 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (361) 593-4857 **Website:** tamuk.edu/engineering/riogrande/index.html	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** College-level students

Rio Grande Valley Laredo Electrical - Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee 🟢 🟣 🔵

The Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC), represent the parties to the local Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) - The National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). It has dedicated time to develop an efficient training program so the apprentice can, through a systematic program of schooling and on-the-job training, become a well-qualified electrical worker.

Address: 224 N McColl Ste. D, McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Website:** ibewlu1015.webs.com/trainingeducation.htm	**Services:** Career Services, Training Services, & Employer Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Those seeking electrical apprenticeships

Rio Grande Valley Linking Economic & Academic Development (LEAD) ●●●

Rio Grande Valley Linking Economic and Academic Development (RGV LEAD) develops and manages collaborative projects that bring employers and educators together to help students set and achieve college-and-career goals.

Address: 322 S Missouri Ave., Weslaco, TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 405-3082 **Email:** rgvlead@rgvlead.org **Website:** rgvlead.org	**Services:** Career Services, Training Services, & Employer Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students, educators, and employers

Rio Grande Valley Literacy Center ●●

It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community based organization that offers adult education classes to people who need help achieving their educational and career goals.

Address: 1005 W. Gore Ave, Pharr, TX 78577 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 961-4299 **Website:** rgvliteracycenter.org	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Adult learners

Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization ●

The RGVMPO is a federally funded program that works with Rio Grande Valley communities and the Texas Department of transportation to plan for the region's future transportation needs. The MPO also serves as a collaborative structure of committees and organizations that creates partnerships to address this region's needs.

Address: 510 S. Pleasantview Dr., Weslaco, TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 969-5778 **Website:** rgvmpo.org/about/default.htm	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** n/a

Rio Grande Valley Technical Training Initiative (RGVTTI) ●●

The Rio Grande Valley Technical Training Initiative (RGVTTI) is a partnership between TSTC and Texas A&M Engineering Extension service (TEEX) to help our South Texas communities with technical training. The Chancellors for both colleges saw a need to provide education and training to workers in the Rio Grande Valley, and the partnership was born. RGVTTI provides educational opportunities to advance the skills of the local workforce.

Address: 1902 N. Loop 499, Harlingen, TX 78550 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 364-4603 **Contact**: Jerry Briones **Email:** jerry.briones@tstc.edu **Website:** tstc.edu/workforce/maritime-welding	**Services:** Training Services & Career Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Workers in the area

Rio Grande Valley Technology Association

The Technology Association's purpose is to connect all Information Technology sectors within the region through collaboration, networking, influencing education, and strengthening the community by promoting local resources.

Address: n/a **Email:** rgvtechassoc@gmail.com **Website:** rgvta.org	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Training Services, Employer Services, & Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Technology infrastructure stakeholders in the area

Rio South Texas Economic Council

The Rio South Texas Economic Council (RSTEC) is a public and private association of economic development interests within the four southernmost Texas counties—Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy—formed to enhance knowledge of the area's many assets; to foster the growth of the local economy; and to enhance the area's competitiveness in order to attract capital investment and jobs.

Address: 301 West Railroad St., Building D, Weslaco, TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 647-7832 **Email:** info@riosouthtexas.com **Website:** riosouthtexas.com	**Services:** Employer Services & Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Those engaged in economic development

Roma Independent School District

Roma I.S.D. is located on the Texas-Mexico border in the heart of Starr County and is a leading provider of Pre-Kinder to 12th Grade education for more than 6,000 students. With its headquarters in Roma, Texas, Roma ISD is comprised of 10 campuses including six elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school and one alternative learning center. Students are provided a full range of services, educational options and extracurricular activities to meet their diverse needs.

Address: 608 North Garcia Street, P.O. Box 187, TX 78584 **County:** Starr County **Phone:** (956) 849-1377 **Website:** romaisd.com	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Starr County **Eligibility:** Students

San Isidro Independent School District ●

San Isidro Independent School District is a Texas Education Agency Region One school district located in Starr County, Texas. The school district encompasses 275 square miles of our rural farming community centered around San Isidro, Texas. San Isidro serves over 260 students at our elementary/junior high school and high school campus.

Address: P.O. Box 10 5175 FM 1017, San Isidro, TX 78588 **County:** Starr County **Phone:** (956) 481-3110 **Website:** sanisidroisd.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Starr County **Eligibility:** Students

South Padre Chamber of Commerce ●

The South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce is a membership based non-profit business organized to advance the business interests of its members making South Padre Island a premier location to live, work, vacation, and do business.

Address: 610 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, TX 78597 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 761-4412 **Email:** info@spichamber.com **Website:** spichamber.com	**Services:** Business Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Those engaged on local business

South Texas Afghanistan Iraq Veterans Association ●

The South Texas Afghanistan Iraq Veterans Association is a non-profit organization which helps ease the transition for military members of all branches and their families from military to civilian life. Our goal is to help, advocate, educate, assist veterans to any needed resources, funding, medical care and emotional support.

Address: 519 E Madison St, Brownsville, TX 78521 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 266-7521 or (956) 435-9922 **Email:** staivargv@gmail.com **Website:** staivargv.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Veterans and their families

South Texas Collaborative for Housing Development (STCHD) 🟠

South Texas Collaborative for Housing Development, Inc. (STCHD) is a is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2009 to provide decent and affordable housing to low and moderate-income families throughout Texas other than Dallam, Lubbock, Hudspeth, and Orange counties. Additionally, STCHD provides loans and investment products, development services, and other related activities to promote both economic and community development in traditionally underserved areas.

Address: 118 N. Main St., La Feria, TX 78559 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 797-2324 **Website:** stchd.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Low-income families in need

South Texas College 🟣

South Texas College offers more than 127 degree & certificate options, including associate degrees in a variety of liberal art, social science, business, math, science, technology, advanced manufacturing, and allied health fields of study.

Additionally, South Texas College is the only community college in the State of Texas to offer 5 baccalaureate degrees. South Texas College has a faculty and staff of more than 2,200 to serve the college's five campuses, two higher education centers, and one virtual campus. Also, it offers IT degrees such as Computer Science and Cybersecurity Associate's Degrees.

Address: 3201 Pecan Blvd, McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** 1-888-468-6782 **Website:** southtexascollege.edu	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

South Texas Health System Volunteer Services 🟠

At the South Texas Health System, there are more than 350 student and adult volunteers helping to provide high-quality service to patients and their families. Because South Texas Health System is the largest hospital system in the Rio Grande Valley, there are many volunteering opportunities to choose from.

Address: 301 W Expressway 83, McAllen, TX 78503 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** 1-888-468-6782 **Website:** volunteersotx.org/agency/ detail/?agency_id=52501	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Student and adult volunteers interested in assisted those in need

South Texas Manufacturers Association 🔵 🔴

The South Texas Manufacturers Association (STMA) is a 501(c)6 Trade Association and membership driven organization committed to advancing manufacturing in the Rio Grande Valley and South Texas Region.

STMA has grown to a current membership of over 218 companies by focusing on providing high quality information and support to the manufacturing sector. The Association works with area economic development corporations, other trade associations, regional workforce development boards, college, and public school districts, region's manufacturers, and other businesses that provide services and support to the manufacturing sector in the region.

Manufacturing is an important industry in the area that has occupations requiring IT skill sets.

Address: 6620 S. 33rd St. Building J Ste 16, McAllen, TX 785033 **County:** Hidalgo County **Website:** stma-tx.org	**Services:** Employer Services & Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Organizations invested in manufacturing in the Rio Grande Valley

South Texas Training Center 🟣

South Texas Training Center is committed to providing the highest standard of education while preparing students for employment and career advancement in today's job market. They provide low cost, affordable education, including financial aid for those who qualify. They have a Medical Coding and Billing Specialist program, which requires IT skills.

Address: 213 E. Ferguson Avenue, Pharr, TX 78577 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 782-7100 **Website:** southtexastraining.com	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Cameron and Hidalgo counties **Eligibility:** Student and adult learners

South Texas Vocational Technical Institute 🟢 🟣

The South Texas Vocational Technical Institute is an accredited career institute that provides quality training programs for careers like dental assisting, automotive service, and more. They offer a Medical Coding and Billing Specialist program, which requires IT relevant skills.

Address: 1600 N Westgate Dr, Weslaco, TX 78599 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** 1-866-480-9776 **Website:** stvt.edu	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Cameron and Hidalgo counties **Eligibility:** Student and adult learners

Southern Careers Institute 🟢 🟣

Southern Careers Institute is a technical school with campuses throughout Texas and includes a few online programs as well. It offers a variety of programs in the fields of medical, pharmacy, business, technology, and skilled trades such as Automotive, HVAC, and Welding. It contributes to the growth of Texas communities. Examples of IT programming are Computer Support Specialist, Data Science, and Software Developer.

Address: 1122 Morgan Blvd, Harlingen, TX 78550 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** 844-783-6569 **Website:** scitexas.edu	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Cameron and Hidalgo counties **Eligibility:** Student and adult learners

SpaceX Launch Facility 🔴

SpaceX makes rockets and other spacecraft. SpaceX is creating a facility in Cameron County and is recruiting local talent for IT occupations. The Rio Grande Valley is hoping to become a destination for the Space Industry and this industry requires talent with technological skill sets.

Address: 52448- 54298, Boca Chica Blvd, Brownsville, Texas 78521 **County:** Cameron County **Website:** spacex.com	**Services:** Business Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Local job seekers with IT backgrounds can apply for job openings

Spectrum 🟠

The location in McAllen provides mobile, television, internet, and voice services. This is important for accessing electronic devices and wireless services.

Address: 8001 N 10th St Suite 100, McAllen, TX 78504 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** 888-406-7063 **Website:** spectrum.com/locations/tx/mcallen/8001-north-10th-street	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Residents needing IT equipment

Starr County Industrial Foundation 🔴

Created in 1974 the Starr County Industrial Foundation (SCIF) is a non-profit organization founded and supported by local government and business leaders that are committed to further develop and diversify the local economy through sound, controlled economic growth. Over the years SCIF has developed a core competency in a varied spectrum of administrative and promotion roles which has placed it in a position to capitalize industrial and economical development in the Starr County region.

Address: 601 E. Main St., Rio Grande City, TX 78582 **County:** Starr County **Phone:** (956) 487-2709 **Email:** info@starrcounty.org **Website:** starrcounty.org	**Services:** Business Services **Service Area:** Starr County **Eligibility:** Local economic development specialists and businesses

Texas Association of Governmental Information Technology Managers (TAGITM) 🟣 🔴

The Texas Association of Governmental Information Technology Managers (TAGITM) began in 1978 as The Texas Association of Governmental Data Processing Managers (TAGDPM). It is a not-for-profit organization that provides information systems professionals a forum for generating ideas, sharing problems, and developing solutions. Its purpose is to enable the cities, counties, school districts and appraisal districts within Texas to realize the full potential of automation benefits.

Address: PO Box 200363, Austin, TX 78720 **County:** Starr County **Phone:** (512) 220-4295 **Email:** info@tagitm.org **Website:** tagitm.org	**Services:** Training Services and Business Services **Service Area:** State of Texas including Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Information systems professionals or there are membership options for counties, municipalities, school districts, government agencies, and software vendors, among others

Texas A&M University Colonias Program 🟢 🟣 🟠

The Texas A&M University Colonias Program helps increase self-sufficiency and enhances the quality of life for colonias residents all along the Texas-Mexico border.

Address: 3516 E. Expressway 83, Weslaco, TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Contact:** Laura Trevino **Phone:** 877-447-9355 **Email:** ltrevino@arch.tamu.edu **Website:** colonias.arch.tamu.edu	**Services:** Career Services, Training Services, and Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents of colonias in need of assistance

Texas Career Check 🟢 🟣

It is a career and education website supported by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

Address: n/a **Website:** colonias.arch.tamu.edu	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including the Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Texans seeking career and education information

Texas Child Care Solutions ⬤

The Texas Child Care Solutions website was developed by the Texas Workforce Commission. The purpose of Texas Child Care Solutions is to provide parents and child care programs access to resources and information to assist them in making informed choices to meet their child care and program needs. Texas Child Care Solutions connects Texas parents and child care programs with up-to-date child development information, ideas and on-the-ground resources.

Address: n/a **Website:** texaschildcaresolutions.org	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including the Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents in need of child care programs

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) ⬤

The mission of the THECB is to provide leadership and coordination for Texas higher education and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through 60x30TX, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.

Address: 1200 E. Anderson Lane, Austin, TX 78752 **Phone:** (512) 427-6101 **Website:** highered.texas.gov	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including the Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Education institutions seeking information on higher education in Texas; students can also utilize this information, such as college options on their website

Texas Internship Challenge ⬤ ⬤ ⬤

The Texas Internship Challenge is a partnership among the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Texas Education Agency (TEA) and The Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), who challenge employers to offer paid internships and make it easy for students to search and apply for them.

Address: 101 East 15th Street, Austin, TX 78778 **Phone:** (512) 463-4210 **Website:** txinternshipchallenge.com/vosnet/Default.aspx	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Career Services, and Employer Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including the Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students seeking internships to earn a salary or cover school credit and employers seeking interns

Texas OnCourse 🟣

As a state-funded initiative to improve college and career readiness, our mission is to equip all Texas students for an educational and professional future that unlocks their potential. It can be used by career-seeking students after high school, educators, and schools in Texas.

Address: n/a **Email:** info@texasoncourse.org **Website:** texasoncourse.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including the Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students, teachers, and schools interested in education and training

Texas Reality Check 🟢

Texas Reality Check will show you how much your living expenses will cost, and the amount of money you will need to earn to pay for them. It includes an Occupation calculator to determine wages compared to personal costs. It is website supported by the Texas Workforce Commission.

Address: n/a **Website:** texasrealitycheck.com	**Services:** Career Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including the Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Texans seeking information on wages and occupations

Texas Southmost College 🟢 🟣

Texas Southmost College currently offers the first two years toward a bachelor's degree, along with career and technical education leading to certificates and associate degrees, college preparatory studies to prepare students for college-level work, workforce training, and continuing education.

Examples of IT programming include Computer Information Systems, Computer Web Development, and Computer Science.

Address: 80 Fort Brown St, Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 295-3600 **Website:** tsc.edu	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

Texas State Technical College 🟢 🟣

Texas State Technical College System is a coeducational two-year institution of higher education offering courses of study in technical vocational education for which there is demand within the State of Texas. Texas State Technical College System shall contribute to the educational and economic development of the State of Texas by offering occupationally oriented programs with supporting academic course work, emphasizing highly specialized advanced and emerging technical and vocational areas for certificates or associate degrees.

Examples of their programming related to IT include Computer Networking and Systems Administration, Computer Programming, and Cybersecurity. Many programs are offered online and can be used by students who reside in Rio Grande Valley counties in addition to Cameron county.

Address: 1902 N. Loop 499, Harlingen, TX 78550 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (254) 799-3611 **Website:** tstc.edu	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

Texas Technology Consortium 🟡 🔵 🔴

The Texas Technology Consortium (TTC) is the statewide association that brings together corporate, nonprofit, academic, and legislative leaders to assist in developing policies that will ensure a robust and efficient business environment for technology-driven firms in Texas. Because technology is integral to every organization, regardless of size or function, TTC membership is open to companies, nonprofit groups, institutions, and individuals.

By providing educational and collaborative opportunities that inform and support our members, policy makers and government leaders, we will build a more robust technology business environment.

Address: 7413 Turnbuoy Dr, Austin, TX 78730 **Phone:** (512) 694-0082 **Contact:** Deborah Giles **Email:** deborah@textc.org **Website:** textc.org	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Employer Services & Business Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Non-profits, Education institutions, state and local governments, and businesses of different sizes are eligible to become members and take advantage of services

Texas Veterans Pool 🟡 🟢 🔵 🟣 🟠

The Texas Veterans Portal is a Texas government website that connects veterans, their families, and caregivers to the benefits and services earned through their military service. Examples of services include Education and training, Employment and career, and housing and loans.

Address: n/a **Phone:** (Veteran Crisis Line:) 1-800-273-8255 **Website:** veterans.portal.texas.gov	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Career Services, Employer Services, Training Services, and Support Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** U.S. veterans and and their families

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) 🟡 🟢 🟣 🟠

The Texas Workforce Commission is the state workforce branch. It has a Texas Industry Partnership Program. The Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) program supports collaborations between local workforce development boards and industry partners through the leveraging of matching contributions of cash or qualifying expenditures for occupational job training. Match funds must support certain WIOA activities and focus on six designated industry clusters, including Information Technology.

Address: 307 W 13th St, Fort Worth, TX 76102 **Website:** twc.texas.gov	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Career Services, Training Services, Support Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Job seeking youth and adults, especially target populations under WIOA, who are in need of employment, job supports, or training opportunities

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Help Wanted Website 🟢 🟣

It is a career and technical engine search engine.

Address: n/a **Website:** texasgenuine.org	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Job Seekers

TexPREP 🟣

The Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program (TexPREP) provides students the opportunity to develop a passion for engineering and a stronger foundation in science and mathematics by exposing them to current research and student lab facilities, preparing them through interactions with faculty and college students, and inspiring them with hands on activities in a university environment.

Address: 1201 West University Dr. Learning Center Bldg., (ELCTR) Rm. 100, Edinburg, TX 78539 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 665-3794 **Email:** prep@utrgv.edu **Website:** texvet.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Students

TexVet ● ●

Since 1927, the mission of the Texas Veterans Commission has been to advocate for and provide superior service to veterans that will significantly improve the quality of life for all Texas veterans, their families, and survivors. It includes employment services.

Address: n/a **Website:** utrgv.edu/texprep	**Services:** Training Services & Support Services **Service Area:** State of Texas, including Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Veterans

TMR Charities/ Project Vickie ●

It focuses on technology access for low income families. TMR Charities was started working with our partners to provide refurbished computers for those in need.

Address: 2801 Galveston Ave. McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 322-2115 **Email:** info@tmrcharities.org **Website:** tmrcharities.com	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Low-income families in need

Ttec ●

Ttec brings together the optimal blend of rules-based processing and human intervention to execute best-in-class research, decision-making, and closure. Its solutions are customized to meet the specific regulatory and business needs of each industry.

Address: 1812 S. 16th St., McAllen, TX 78503 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** 800-835-3832 **Website:** ttecjobs.com/en	**Services:** Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Job Seekers

Texas/Mexico Border Coalition ●

The coalition is supposed to establish and maintain the health, social, and economic integrity; and the survival of small rural communities along the Texas-Mexico border by being an advocate for change while focusing on the plight of rural communities. It provides information, education, and training to address needs unique to the historically un-served and underserved, rural communities. Also, it provides a voice at local, state, and national levels of government to bring equality to the communities in the 38-county Texas-Mexico border region.

Address: P.O. Box 127, San Isidro, TX 78588 **County:** Starr County **Phone:** (956) 481-3256 **Email:** tmbc@tm-bc.org **Website:** tm-bc.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Starr County and border region **Eligibility:** Rural community residents

United Launch Alliance

It is a space organization. It has more than 100 years of launch history with the Atlas and Delta rocket families to achieve more than 140 consecutive launches since 2006.

Address: 2800 Airport Dr. Harlingen, TX 78550 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 425-4447 **Email:** contact.us@ulalaunch.com **Website:** ulalaunch.com	**Services:** Employer Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** n/a

United Way of South Texas

The United Way is dedicated to education, health, financial stability, and other community support.

Address: 113 W. Pecan Blvd. McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 686-6331 **Website:** unitedwayofsotx.org	**Services:** Training Services & Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo and Starr counties **Eligibility:** Residents

United Way of Southern Cameron County

The United Way is dedicated to education, health, financial stability, and other community support.

Address: 634 E. Levee St., Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 548-6880 **Website:** unitedwayrgv.org	**Services:** Training Services & Support Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Residents

University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley

The University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley is a major university in the Rio Grande Valley. It has undergraduate and graduate level offerings for Information Technology, Cybersecurity, and Computer Science; there are certain programs that are offered online. It connects with multiple partners in the Region.

Address: One West University Blvd., Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 665-7989 **Email:** admissions@utrgv.edu **Website:** utrgv.edu/en-us/index.htm	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Cameron and Hidalgo counties **Eligibility:** Students or professionals seeking IT education degrees/outcomes

UTRGV FABLABS ● ●

Housed primarily in the jewelry studio within the School of Art, Visual Arts Building the UTRGV FABLAB aims to make technology both physically and intellectually accessible for educators, students, and citizens of the Rio Grande Valley. Applied activities will foster education, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the region, benefiting from, and contributing to the larger DIY "maker movement." Due to our location within the visual arts we focus on interdisciplinary projects involving collaboration between STEAM areas which are historically separate, such as the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the School of Medicine, and the School of Art.

Address: 2412 S Closner Blvd., Edinburg, TX 78539 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 665-3480 **Email:** fablab@utrgv.edu **Website:** fablabs.io/labs/utrgvfablab	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents, students, and educators

University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley, Small Business Development Center ●

The UTRGV SBDC provides confidential, one-to-one business advisement at no cost for growth-oriented businesses! Advanced business training is also available for free or at a low cost to help you address today's business challenges. The UTRGV SBDC provides pre-venture and startup business assistance for free! Basic business training is also available at no cost to help you through the initial planning process.

Address: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley CESS Building, Suite 1.200 1407 E. Freddy Gonzalez Drive **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 665 7535 **Email:** sbdc@utrgv.edu **Website:** utrgv.edu/sbdc	**Services:** Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents seeking business training

University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley, Veterans Services Center ● ●

The center assists students in certifying education benefits, advocating for services, developing projects to unite the university with our local community, providing counseling services specifically for veterans, and promoting student involvement through the Student Veterans of America National Organization. We are proud to assist those who have served our country and are committed to helping military students and their military families start or continue their education. Our ultimate goal at UTRGV is to provide an academically challenging environment to help you succeed in the next phase of your professional life.

Address: Brownsville - Cavalry Hall 104 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 882-4026 **Email:** veteranservices@utrgv.edu **Website:** utrgv.edu/veterans	**Services:** Outreach/referral Services and Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Veterans

Valley Alliance of Mentors for Opportunities and Scholarships (VAMOS) ●

The Valley Alliance of Mentors for Opportunities and Scholarships (VAMOS) is dedicated to making the dream of a college education a reality for graduating high school seniors of the Rio Grande Valley. As members of the community, we witness the ambition and motivation of earning a college degree within the hearts and minds of our youth.

Address: 800 N. Main St., Suite 410, McAllen, TX 78501 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 800-4085 **Email:** info@vamosscholars.org **Website:** vamosscholars.org	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Service area residents attending 4-year college with a GPA of 2.5 and above.

Valley Grande Institute ● ●

It is a technical school that trains for health care professions. The Medical Insurance Coder and Billing Technician program requires IT skills.

Address: 345 S. Texas Blvd Weslaco, TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 973-1945 **Email:** info@vgi.edu **Website:** vgi.edu	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students and adult learners

Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement ● ●

Its mission is to formulate new institutional relationships in the Rio Grande Valley that simultaneously address employers' needs for skilled workers and prepare the area's unemployed and underemployed residents with high-skill, high-wage jobs identified in the region.

Address: 417 S Ohio Ave, Mercedes, TX 78570 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 903-1900 **Email:** info@vidacareers.org **Website:** vidacareers.org	**Services:** Career Services & Training Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Working adults

Valley Metro Transit Center ●

It is the transit department of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. It provides transportation to all four counties.

Address: 301 W Railroad, Weslaco, TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 682-481 **Website:** lrgvdc.org/valleymetro	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents

Valley Transit Company ●

Valley Transit is a full-service bus operation with intercity, airport shuttle, charter and package express service. The company employs more than 150 professionals trained to provide quality customer service and serves South Central Texas and Northern Mexico with more than 50 daily schedules.

Address: P.O. Box 530010, Harlingen, TX 78553 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 423-4710, ext. 203 **Email:** info@valleytransitcompany.com **Website:** valleytransitcompany.com	**Services:** Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents

Valley View Independent School District ●

Valley View Independent School District is a division 5A school located in Hidalgo/Pharr Texas area and is dedicated to the education and well-being of the students. A growing community of approximately ten square miles supports the district by actively participating in the education of the students. The district includes four elementary schools, one fifth grade campus, one early college school, one junior high, and one high school. Valley View is committed to the education of the students and offers advanced placement programs, counseling for higher education, after-school activities, and other school-related programs.

Address: 9701 S. Jackson Road., Pharr, TX 78577 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 340-1000 **Website:** vviewisd.net	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students

Vanguard Academy ●

Vanguard Academy's purpose is to prepare students to be successful in their continuing education, to create positive learning habits and working ethics, to prepare students to be successful in their careers and to teach students to be responsible and respectful.

Address: 1200 E Kelly Ave, Pharr, TX 78577 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 781-1701 **Website:** vanguardacademy.education	**Services:** Training Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo County **Eligibility:** Students

VTX1 Companies ● ●

The Cooperative was established in April 22, 1952 with the purpose of providing telephone service to rural subscribers deemed unfeasible by the larger companies. Today, they are growing stronger than ever before, moving forward to an exciting future, creating dynamic opportunities along the way and upholding its mission to serve others and provide them with a quality experience while maintaining exceptional customer service and support.

Address: 881 E. Hidalgo Ave., Raymondville, TX 78580 **County:** Willacy County **Phone:** 844-439-8891 **Website:** vtx1.net	**Services:** Support Services & Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Residents and business in need of telephone and connection service

Weslaco Economic Development Corporation 🟡 🔵 🔴

The Economic Development Corporation of Weslaco (EDCW) is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the creation of jobs through recruitment of new industry and helping existing companies relocate and/or expand. Our objective is job creation and adding wealth to the city of Weslaco.

Address: 275 S. Kansas Ave. Suite A, Weslaco, TX 78596 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 969-0838 **Email:** weslacoedc@gmail.com **Website:** weslacoedc.com	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Employer Services, & Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Business and industry partners

Women's Business Center Rio Grande Valley 🟡 🟢 🔴

The mission of the Women's Business Center Rio Grande Valley is to enable and empower women entrepreneurs by providing programs and services focused on advocacy, education, support, and outreach.

Address: 1600 University Blvd., Brownsville, TX, 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** (956) 542-5322 **Email:** info@joinwbc.com **Website:** joinwbc.com	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Career Services, and Business Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Local businesswomen

Workforce Solutions Cameron 🟡 🟢 🩷 🔵 🟠

Workforce Solutions Cameron is the local workforce partnership organization devoted to promoting and supporting a workforce structure that provides employers and individuals of Cameron County the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity.

Address: 700 Ruben M. Torres Blvd., 3rd Floor Brownsville, TX 78520 **County:** Cameron County **Phone:** 800-735-2989 **Email:** info@wfscameron.org **Website:** wfscameron.org	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Career Services, Training Services, Employer services, and Support Services **Service Area:** Cameron County **Eligibility:** Residents seeking education and workforce services

Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley ● ● ● ● ●

Workforce Solutions (WFS), under the direction of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), is one of 28 local workforce development boards located throughout the state. This workforce development board serves Starr, Hidalgo and Willacy counties through a network of partners. The primary goal of TWC and the 28 local workforce development boards is to respond to the needs of Texas employers and workers through locally designed market-driven workforce development initiatives.

Address: 2719 W. University Dr. Edinburg, TX 78539 **County:** Hidalgo County **Phone:** (956) 380-0008 **Email:** info@wfsolutions.org **Website:** wfsolutions.org	**Services:** Outreach/Referral Services, Career Services, Training Services, Employer Services, and Support Services **Service Area:** Hidalgo, Starr & Willacy counties **Eligibility:** Residents seeking education and workforce services

Work in Texas ● ● ● ●

WorkInTexas.com is an online application that offers job seekers immediate and continuous access to job matching services. Even when job seekers are not logged on WorkInTexas.com continues to match job openings with qualified job seekers and generates notices to alert them to potential job opportunities. Job seekers can also browse thousands of job postings including all Texas state agency jobs, refer themselves to open positions, complete resumés and/or state applications and maintain them online.

Address: n/a **Website:** workintexas.com/vosnet/Default.aspx	**Services:** Career Services, Employer Services, Training Services, Support Services **Service Area:** Rio Grande Valley **Eligibility:** Student and adult learners

APPENDIX

Additional Campus Contact Information

South Texas College, Starr County Campus
Address: 142 FM 3167, Rio Grande City, TX 78582
Phone Number: 956-488-8181

South Texas College, Technology Campus
Address: 3700 W. Military Hwy., McAllen, TX 78503
Phone Number: 956-872-6100

South Texas College, Technology Campus
Address: 400 N. Border, Weslaco, TX 78596
Phone Number: 956-447-6600

South Texas College, Online Campus
Phone Number: 956-872-2598

South Texas Training Center, San Benito Campus
1901 W. Hwy. 77 Sunshine Strip, 1901 US-77 BUS, San Benito, TX 78586
Address: 1901 W. Hwy. 77 Sunshine Strip, 1901 US-77 BUS, San Benito, TX 78586
Phone Number: (956) 399-9698

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg Campus
Address: 1201 W University Dr, Edinburg, TX 78539
Phone Number: 956-882-4026

Funding Scan
Economic Growth Potential

INTRODUCTION

The funding scan details federal, state, and private foundation funding opportunities for Workforce Solutions to utilize available dollars towards the Information Technology industry in the Rio Grande Valley. Thomas P. Miller (TPMA) highlights a total of 10 opportunities for funding from 7 funding sources. The funding opportunities are categorized into 3 priorities that are representative of growth areas in development and training for Rio Grande Valley communities. TPMA has also ranked the funding sources by their alignment, competitiveness, capacity, and potential award amount in connection with Workforce Solutions and the Rio Grande Valley.

Goal

The goal of this funding scan is to offer a multitude of funding opportunities that Workforce Solutions, or a combination of Workforce Solutions, education institutions, and other partners, can apply for and utilize funding toward the betterment of the IT industry.

PRIORITIES

TPMA has identified 3 priority areas that are most significant to build up IT competencies, infrastructure, and development in the Rio Grande Valley:
• Priority #1: Broadband and Rural Development
o Broadband is a major topic across the nation, and it has been a common topic addressed in the Rio Grande Valley too. There are issues with broadband access and adoption in the area. These funds would help to expand broadband and make it more feasible for various populations to use it. There is also money specifically dedicated to rural needs and growth to make sure these communities thrive and have needed resources.
• Priority #2: Education and Training
o This funding will contribute towards skill -building and training for Information Technology positions at multiple levels of education. It could provide necessary learning for traditional IT career pathways; therefore, students and adult learners would have the required training to fulfill IT positions in the Rio Grande Valley. Partnerships with employers could be created for training purposes, such as internships, and would help retain students to the area if they are aware that employment connections exist.
• Priority #3: Community Development
o Community development funding could be applied broadly to economic development and community needs that impact Rio Grande Valley residents and its workforce. Local talent needs to have access to business and industry and supportive services, such as childcare and transportation, for the labor force to be able to work successfully and fulfill IT openings.
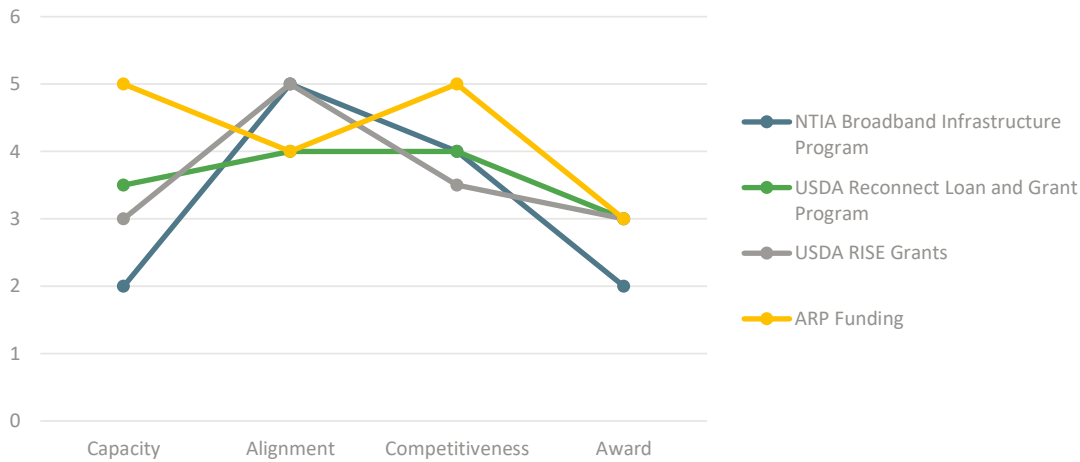
Funding Opportunities

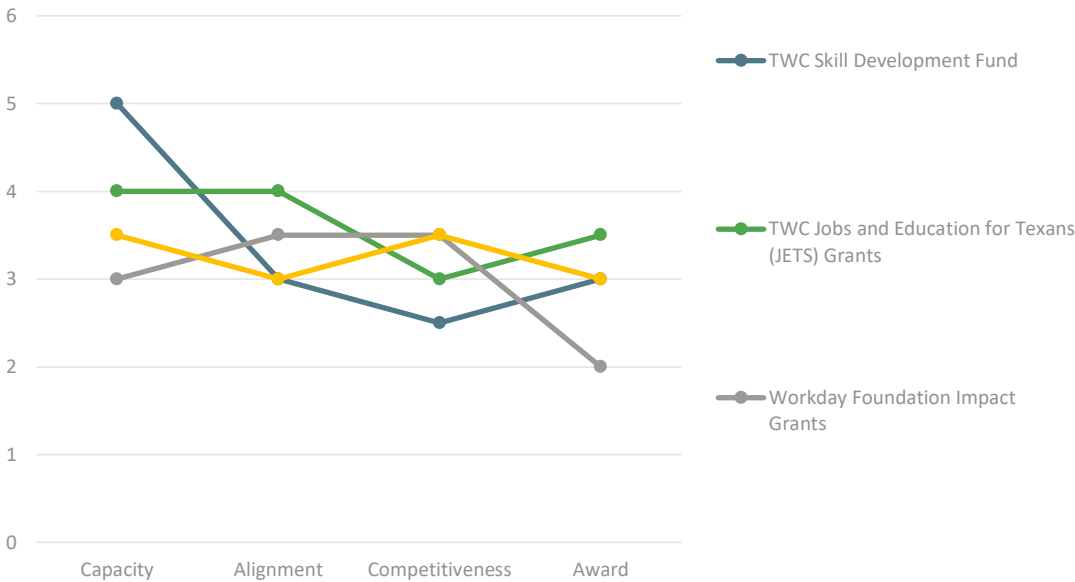| Priority #1: Broadband and Rural Development	
National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), Broadband Infrastructure Program	USDA Rise Grants
USDA Reconnect Loan and Grant Program	ARP Funding
Priority #2: Education and Training	
TWC Skill Development Fund	Workday Foundation Impact Grants
TWC Jobs and Education for Texans (JETS) Grants	National Science Foundation, Innovative Technologies for Students and Teachers (ITEST)
Priority #3: Community Development	
Economic Development Administration (EDA) Planning and Local Technical Assistance	
The Raul Tijerina Jr. Foundation	

Opportunity Rankings

The funding opportunity rankings consider a variety of factors to assess how they could be used in the Rio Grande Valley. Each factor (alignment, competitiveness, capacity, and potential award amount) is ranked on a scale from 1 to 5; with 5 indicating the most aligned for the area, most competitive, most time required by staff to pursue, and highest potential award amount. While 1 designates the lowest alignment, least competitive, requires the least amount of time from staff, and low potential award amount.

In terms of capacity, the typical award amounts, total funding dollars, and duration of the grants were evaluated. The alignment is based on the purpose of increasing the skills for and prevalence of the IT industry in the Rio Grande Valley. TPMA determined grant opportunities that closely match regional needs and allow for growth potential in the sector. The competitiveness of the funding opportunities also compared the total funding dollars, applicant eligibility requirements, and specificity and criteria of each opportunity. Lastly, the frequency of awards and grant periods were assessed as well. These are estimates that give some direction and insight into promising funding opportunities for the Rio Grande Valley.
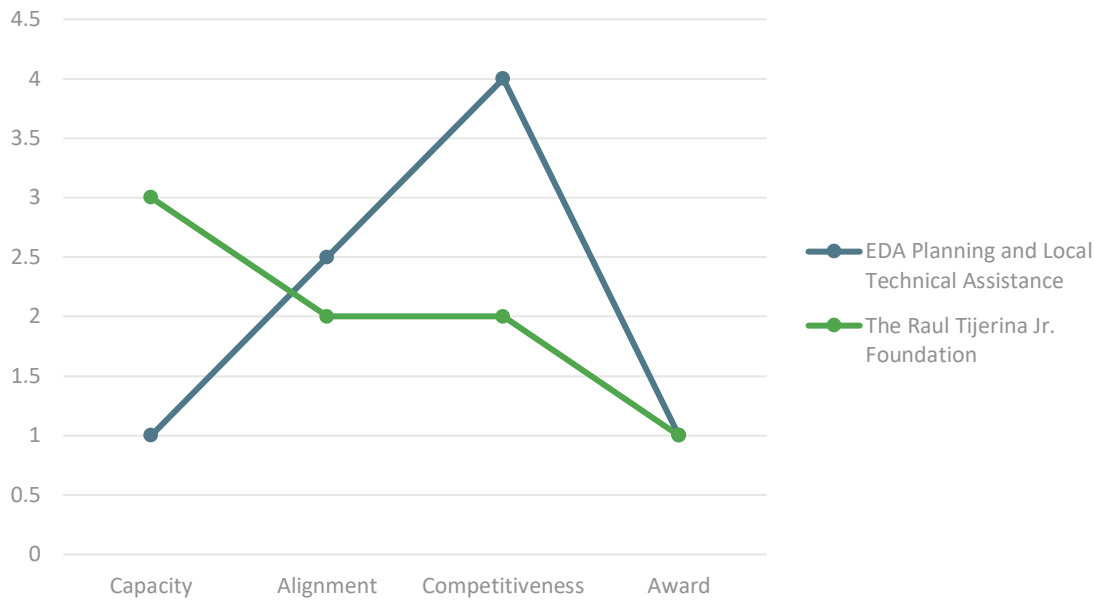
PRIORITY #1 OPPORTUNITY RANKINGS

Legend:
- NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Program
- USDA Reconnect Loan and Grant Program
- USDA RISE Grants
- ARP Funding

PRIORITY #2 OPPORTUNITY RANKINGS

Legend:
- TWC Skill Development Fund
- TWC Jobs and Education for Texans (JETS) Grants
- Workday Foundation Impact Grants

PRIORITY #3 OPPORTUNITY RANKINGS

Proposed Timeline

The following tables show information about application submission and grant deadlines. Several are accepted on a rolling basis or do not have a deadline listed so their suggested timelines are flexible.

Priority 1: Broadband and Rural Development	Months (July 2021- June 2022)											
	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
NTIA, Broadband Infrastructure Program												
Create a covered partnership with a broadband service provider	X											
Submit application		X										
Expected Award					X							
USDA Reconnect Loan and Grant Program												
Ensure proposal meets all service area requirements; Submit application	*No deadline											
USDA RISE Grants												
Prepare proposal	X											
Submit Application		X										
ARP Funding												
Request funding through Treasury Submission Portal	*(Subject to change) No deadline listed currently											
If receive funds, must complete progress reports												

Priority 2: Education and Training	Months (July 2021- June 2022)											
	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
TWC Skill Development Fund												
Accepted on rolling basis and grants typically last 12 months												
TWC Jobs and Education for Texans (JETS) Grants												
Applications reviewed quarterly and website updates with deadlines	*Must be submitted by an education institution or independent school district											
Workday Foundation Impact Grants												
Must email the Workday Foundation with description of work												
National Science Foundation, Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST)												
Prepare Proposal	X											
Submit proposal		X										

Priority 3: Community Development	Months (July 2021- June 2022)											
	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
EDA Planning and Local Technical Assistance												
Applications accepted on a rolling basis												
The Raul Tijerina Jr. Foundation												
Optional Letter of Inquiry												
Grant applications accepted on a rolling basis												

Priority #1: Broadband and Rural Development
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION (NTIA), BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Purpose
Through the United State Department of Commerce, the Broadband Infrastructure Program provides federal funding to deploy broadband infrastructure to eligible service areas , meaning census blocks in which broadband service is not available at one or more households or businesses.

Priorities
In awarding grants under this program, the Assistant Secretary will give priority to applications for covered broadband projects as follows, in decreasing order of priority:

1. Projects designed to provide broadband service to the greatest number of households in an eligible service area.
2. Projects designed to provide broadband service in an eligible service area cannot qualify as (1) a county, city, or town that has a population of more than 50,000 inhabitants; and (2) the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town of more than 50,000 inhabitants.
3. Projects that are cost-effective and occur in mostly rural regions.
4. Projects designed to provide broadband service with a download speed of not less than 100 megabits per second and an upload speed of not less than 20 megabits per second.
5. Other broadband projects that qualify under the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Application Process
Applications must be submitted by covered partnerships, which are a State, or one or more political subdivisions of a State, and at least one provider of fixed broadband service.

Applications must be completed by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on August 17, 2021. Pre-applications are not being accepted for this program. A complete application packet consists of several forms and required submissions.

NTIA anticipates wrapping up the award process around November 15, 2021. NTIA expects the earliest start date for awards would be November 29, 2021, and then to keep this opportunity open on a rolling basis.

Recommendations
The grant is most concerned with providing broadband to those who do not currently have access to 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream service. To make the application more competitive, it is important to be intentional with the geographic area so that it does not overlap with a significant percentage of individuals who have qualifying service. There are towns in Rio Grande Valley that could qualify and apply for this funding to receive needed broadband speeds.

More information can be found at: https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/grant-programs/broadband-infrastructure-program.

Priority #1: Broadband and Rural Development
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USAD) (1) RECONNECT LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAM

Purpose
Program offers funding options such as loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in rural areas that do not currently have enough access to broadband. Its focus is internet eConnectivity.

Priorities
The funding can go towards:
- Construction or improvement of facilities, such as buildings and land, required to provide fixed terrestrial broadband service
- To fund reasonable pre-application expenses
- To fund the acquisition and upgrade of an existing system that is not currently providing sufficient access to broadband service (eligible for 100 percent loan requests only)

For certain awards, the project will have to show how it will generate revenue to cover project costs. Other funding and technical stipulations will be evaluated.

Application Process
For all funding categories, applicants must propose to build a network capable of providing service to all places in the proposed funded service area at the certain defined speeds.

Round 3 (the upcoming cycle of ReConnect) has yet to be announced; however, it is expected to be released any time with additional details. There is typically a 6-week window to submit applications.

Recommendations
Workforce Solutions is an eligible applicant, and this is an additional way to implement broadband in the Rio Grande Valley; it would open up broadband adoption and access to households, facilities, and schools, among others. These funding opportunities have commenced the past few years and many projects and states that have similar chara cteristics to the Rio Grande Valley have taken advantage of it.

Additional information can be found at: https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/program-overview.

Priority #1: Broadband and Rural Development

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) (2) RISE GRANTS

Purpose

The Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant Program provides 4-year grant assistance to that will lead to high-wage jobs, increase the formation of new businesses, support industry and contribute to assets in eligible low-income rural areas.

Priorities

RISE grant funds can be used to:
- Build or support a business incubator facility
- Provide worker training to assist in the creation of new jobs
- Train the existing workforce with skills for higher-paying jobs
- Develop a base of skilled workers and improve their opportunities to obtain high -wage jobs in new or existing local industries

Application Process

The application must be submitted by 11:59pm Eastern time on Aug ust 2, 2021. They are interested in applications that show close collaboration with partners in the area and address industry clusters. Grant amounts are awarded competitively with a minimum of $500,000 and a maximum grant amount of $2,000,000. They must s erve rural, low-income communities.

Recommendations

The RISE funding covers multiple workforce and industry development aspects that could be strengthened in the Rio Grande Valley. The grant would assist with business connections, worker training, increased wages, and industry growth. The grant could be catered towards the IT sector and dedicated to its occupations and related business. Also, the 4-year assistance is a lengthier period of funding compared to other opportunities and will gi ve ample time to develop rural areas.

Additional information can be found at: https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/ruralinnovation-stronger-economy-rise-grants.

Priority #1: Broadband and Rural Development

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP) FUNDING

Purpose

The American Rescue Plan gives counties flexibility to decide how best to use Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to meet the needs of their communities.

Priorities

Infrastructure improvement has become a major focus of the American Rescue Plan. Counties may use their recovery funds for maintenance of infrastructure or pay -as-you-go spending for new infrastructure. Proposed rules regarding the ARP designate that infrastructure should cover water, sewer and broadband projects.

Application Process

Texas counties will receive their allocation directly from the Treasury Department in two portions: The first 50% will arrive beginning in May 2021; the remaining 50% will arrive about 12 months later. Each county's allocation generally will be based on its share of the U.S. population. The county allocation information can be found at:
https://www.naco.org/resources/featured/state-and-local-coronavirus-fiscal-recovery-funds.

Important dates related to the American Rescue Plan's recovery funds:
- March 3, 2021: The beginning of the funds' "covered period."
- July 16, 2021: Deadline to comment on Treasury's interim final rule.
- Aug. 31, 2021: Deadline to submit first interim report to Treasury.

- Aug. 31, 2021: Deadline for counties with populations greater than 250,000 to submit first recovery plan performance report to Treasury.
- Oct. 31, 2021: Deadline to submit first quarterly project and expenditure report. This reporting date applies to all counties.
- Dec. 31, 2024: Deadline for counties to obligate all recovery funds for specific projects and programs or risk having Treasury claw back the funds.
- Dec. 31, 2026: Deadline for counties to spend all recovery funds and complete all associated projects or return the funds to Treasury.

Recommendations

The American Rescue Plan is one of the most significant federal acts for infrastructure in years. Since all counties receive an allocation, it is necessary to take advantage of these funds. Each Rio Grande Valley County could utilize these funds to develop its broadband infrastructure. Currently, eligible states, cities, counties, etc. can use the Treasury Submission Portal to receive funding.

For more information about requesting funding, please visit: https://home.treasury.gov/policyissues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscalrecovery-fund/request-funding.

Priority #2: Education & Training
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (1) SKILL DEVELOPMENT FUND

Purpose

These grants can support training opportunities for Texas businesses and their employees to increase skill levels and wages for workers in Texas. It is important to collaborate with economic development representatives, business partners, and eligible grant applicants, which include public community or technical colleges, the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), community-based organizations in partnership with one of these entities, or a local Workforce Development Board.

Priorities

Training should correlate with business partner's industry based on the following:
- Business partner's needs are reflected in the curriculum;
- The employer or training providers' location facilitates classes ;
- Flexible class schedules to minimize impact to employers; and
- Speaks to company's needs and real work situations .

Wages paid to trainees must be equal to or greater than the 25th percentile prevailing wages for the same or similar occupations in the business's area. Other aspects in order to receive funding include:
- Positive economic impact on the local region of the awardee;
- Applicant's current and past performance on Skills Development Fund grants;
- Equal distribution of grants awarded across the Texas;
- Including small and medium-sized businesses;
- Financial stability of the business partners; and
- Cost per trainee for Skills Development Fund grants should be around $2,000

Application Process

A business, consortium of businesses, or trade union should determine a training need. They should partner with an eligible grant applicant to satisfy the specific training needs. Businesses work with the grant applicant to submit proposals, develop curricula, and implement training. The Skills Development Fund pays for the training, the eligible applicant administers the grant, and businesses focus on job creation and skill development. TWC accepts project proposal submissions throughout the year and a grant usually lasts one year. Also, TWC can provide technical assistance to the help with projects and proposals, which is strongly recommended before sending a final proposal.

Recommendations

This is a great opportunity for Workforce Solutions to partner with IT Education and Training institutions, business partners, and economic development entities who can dedicate their expertise towards sector growth. It offers benefits for all collaborative partners. The Rio Grande Valley could augment its career pathways towards IT occupations and fulfill needs of businesses.

For more information: https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/skills-development-fund#overview.

Priority #2: Education & Training
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (2) JOBS AND EDUCATION FOR TEXANS (JETS) GRANTS

Purpose

The Jobs and Education for Texans (JETS) grants are an annual state allocation of funds to education institutions and independent school districts.

Priorities

There is an emphasis on up-and-coming industries and competitive occupations. Also, the TWC is interested in the creation or expansion of dual credit programs.

Other factors that will especially be taken into account include unemployment rates in program counties and poverty rates in communities with education institutions.

Application Process

Eligible educational institutions or school districts can apply for JET funding. The 2021 application is now closed; however, historically it opens every year. In terms of recent cycle information, the 2021 cycle opened on 3/26/2021 and closed on 5/18/2021. This funding will open again in the future.

The JET Advisory Board meets every quarter or as needed to review applications and recommends grant awards.

Recommendations

Numerous independent school districts in the Rio Grande Valley received JETs grants in the previous allocation period. Although these funds are for education institutions and school districts, Workforce Solutions should be an advocate and collaborator in education and training in the Rio Grande Valley. There could be potential to work closely with awardees and to determine how Workforce Solutions can assist and supply expertise on occupational and industry needs. The educators can in turn use this information to build education and training programs that match IT career pathways.

For more information: https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/jobs-education-texans-jet-grantprogram.

Priority #2: Education & Training
WORKDAY FOUNDATION IMPACT GRANTS

Purpose

The Workday Foundation is supportive of forward-thinking organizations that prepare people for technical careers.

Priorities

It prioritizes career pathways that unleash human potential. The Workday Foundation attempts to positively impact communities and support employees through charitable contributions. It is focused on creating meaningful employment, decreasing poverty, and transforming lives.

Application Process

The foundation is open to inquiries that are passionate about its priorities. It accepts inquiries from organizations making workforce development programs and will review if it matches their mission. Interested organizations can reach out to foundation@workday.com. If the Workforce Foundation is interested, then they will request additional information.

Recommendations

Workforce Solutions should come up with an impactful project that will gain the attention of the Workday Foundation. Workday is a leading software company, and it would afford an opportunity for Workforce Solutions to learn from their technology expertise. It is important to address equity in the funding inquiry and how it will help underserved populations, such as narrowing gender, income, and race gaps in technical jobs; there are underserved populations in the Rio Grande Valley and this could be leveraged in the project inquiry.

Additional information can be found at: https://www.workday.com/en-us/company/corporateresponsibility/workday-foundation.html.

Priority #2: Education & Training

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS (ITEST)

Purpose

ITEST is an applied research and development (R&D) program providing direct student learning opportunities in pre-kindergarten through high school (PreK-12). The learning opportunities are based on using technology to increase knowledge and awareness in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and information and communication technology (ICT) careers.

Priorities

ITEST favors projects that help students build technological competencies such as:
1. increase awareness and interest in STEM and ICT occupations
2. motivate students to pursue appropriate education pathways to those occupation
3. develop an understanding of STEM that adds to critical thinking, reasoning, and communication skills necessary for STEM growth and Information and Communication Technology jobs

Application Process

There is about $25,000,000 to $30,000,000 in funds for about 22 to 30 awards. The proposal must be received by August 13, 2021.

All ITEST proposals must address how they are:

- designing innovations that meet ITEST program goals which include innovative use of technologies, innovative learning experiences, STEM workforce development, strategies for broadening participation, and strategic partnerships
- measuring outcomes through high-quality research which includes high-quality research design, project evaluation, and dissemination of findings

The full proposal should present the objectives ; rationale for its methods; qualifications of the grantee; implications on scientific, engineering, and education infrastructure; a nd the amount of funding needed.

The grant review process will take about six months. Awards are usually made within 30 days after the program division/office makes its recommendation.

Recommendations

This grant is a great source of funding for creating career pathways towards STEM fields at a young age. Funds can be used to create education programs for K-12 students at local schools that can ignite interest and train students on technological skills. This is another opportunity for Workforce Solutions to apply and work together with education and training providers, especially in making IT programming at institutions that do not currently have IT programs.

For more information: https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/nsf20_1.pdf .

Priority #3: Community Development
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (2) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) PLANNING AND LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Purpose
The funding opportunity can increase the capacity of local or state organizations, higher education institutions, and other qualifying applicants who are dedicated to economic development programs. The funding information mentions projects like feasibility studies, impact analyses, and disaster resiliency plans.

Priorities
Earlier in 2021, the Economic Development Administration updated their investment priorities to include the following:
- Equity
- Recovery & Resilience
- Workforce Development
- Manufacturing
- Technology-Based Economic Development
- Environmentally-Sustainable Development
- Exports & Foreign Direct Investment

Application Process
The award maximum is $300,000. There are no submission deadlines at this time. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until the publication of a new Planning and Local Technical Assistance Programs announcement, cancellation of this announcement, or all available funds have been utilized.

Applications must be sent to the Austin, Texas EDA regional office (there is a NOFO number associated with the office) and grant proposals can be submitted electronically.

Recommendations
The funding opportunity would promote economic development that could be catered towards the IT industry in the Rio Grande Valley and provide for other necessary workforce supports, especially since Technology-Based Economic Development is an investment priority. It is a pivotal time post-pandemic to build up communities that were negatively affected by the previous economic downturn and this funding would accelerate that process. Also, the funding runs into the Fiscal Year of 2023 so this signifies potential for a longer funding engagement and will be more impactful.

For additional information: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/viewopportunity.html?oppId=332137 and https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEDA/bulletins/2ccd92e.

Priority #3: Community Development
THE RAUL TIJERINA JR. FOUNDATION

Purpose
The Tijerina Foundation is completely dedicated to South Texas communities and are advocates for organizations that deal with:
- Youth, education and literacy
- Health and wellness
- Community development and community service
- Culture, arts, history and heritage
- Nature and environmental conservation

Priorities
The Foundation emphasizes grants that create lasting impacts and advantages that span more than the grantee and into the community at large. They are also involved in "seed money" grants, in which leads to innovative and unique programs or services that correlate with future sustainability.

Application Process

The diagram below summarizes the application process. The Foundation welcomes optional letters of inquiry and grant applications throughout the year. [57]
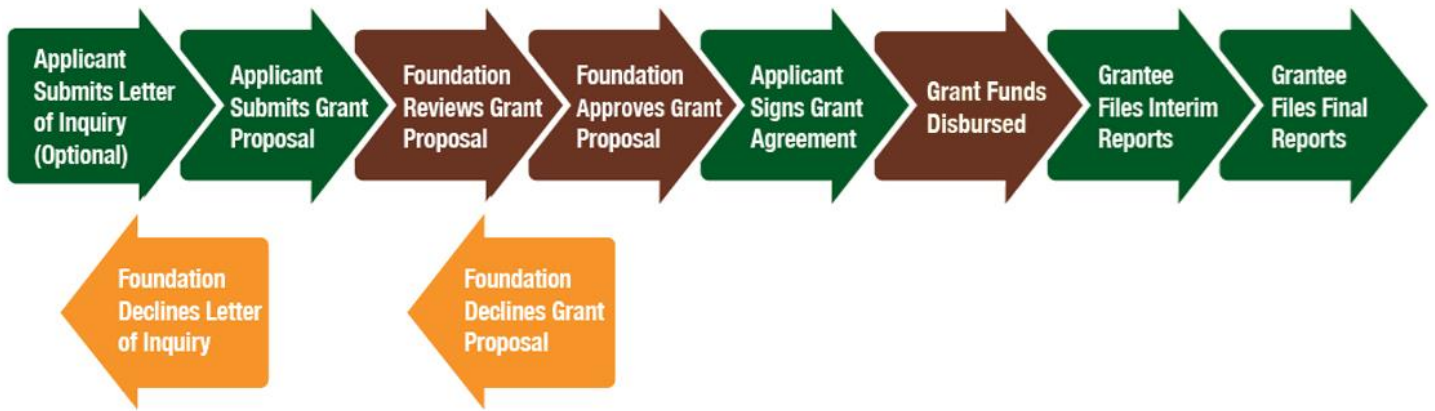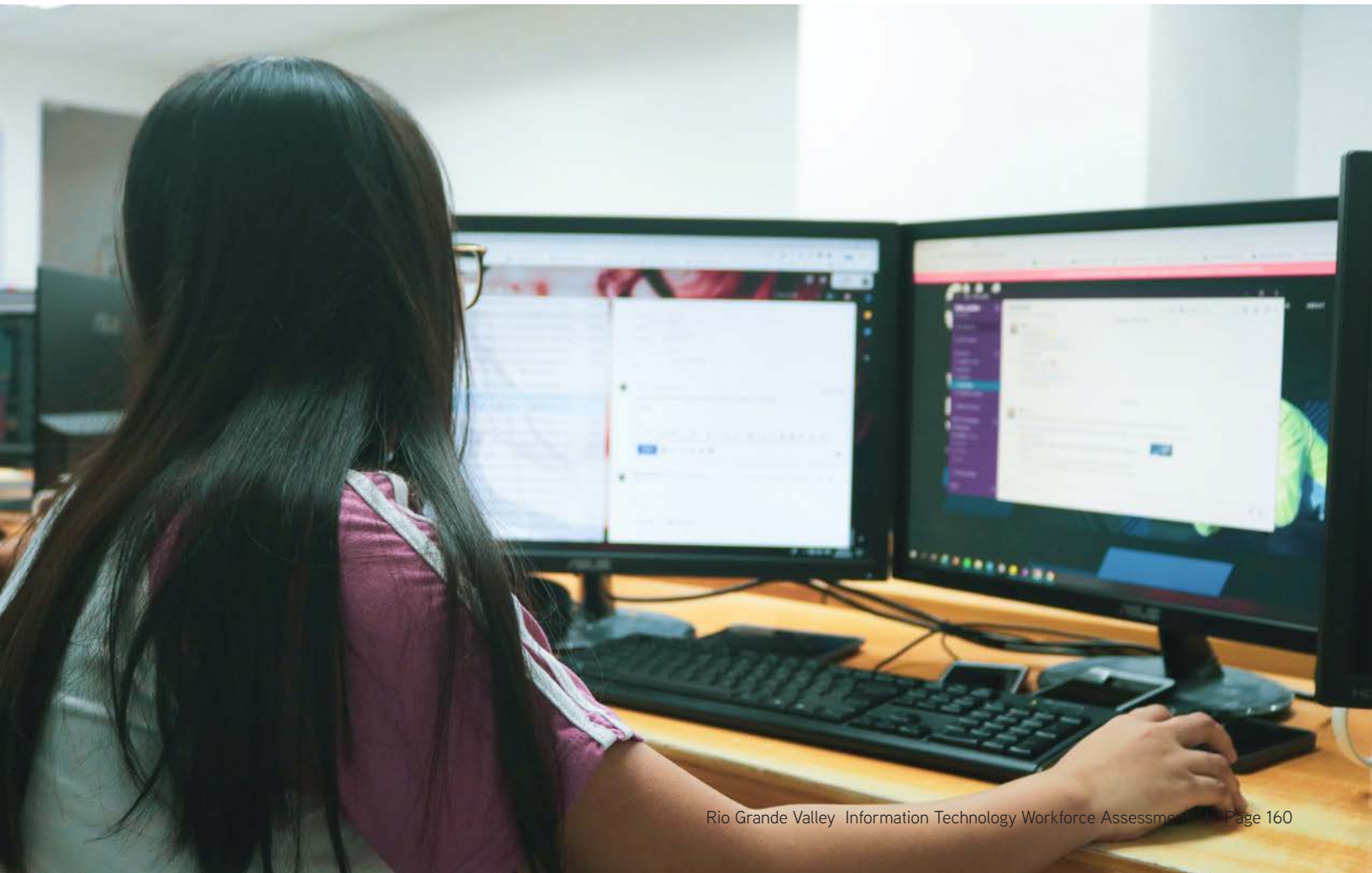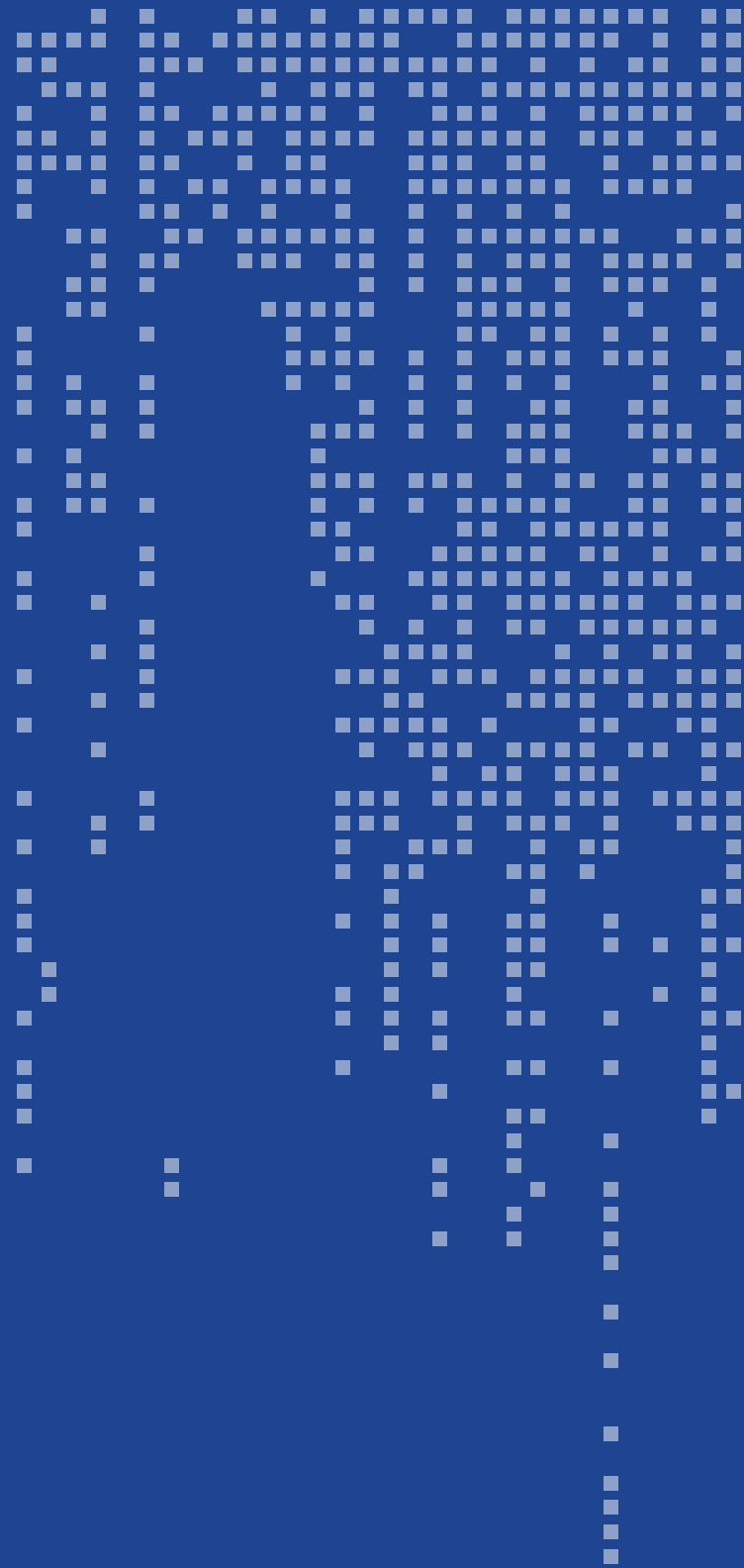

Recommendations

As an organization solely focused on the Rio Grande Valley, the Raul Tijerina Jr. Foundation is a promising source for grant funding. It is recommended to discuss the long -term benefits of the project's purpose for the community and to express how it will strengthen the region.

Workforce Solutions could address youth, education, and community development for a strong application.

For additional information: https://www.raultijerinajrfoundation.org/.

57 "Grants Eligibility." The Raul Tijerina Jr. Foundation. 2021.https://www.raultijerinajrfoundation.org/eligibility/.

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