LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN
2015 – 2020

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OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN PROCESS

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) is a Regional Council of Governments formed under Texas Law to deal with problems and planning needs that cross the boundaries of individual local governments that require regional attention. The LRGVDC coordinates planning efforts, provides a regional approach to problem solving through cooperative action, and provides direct services. The LRGVDC also serves an important role in assisting state and federal agencies in their respective programs in the Region.

The LRGVDC has facilitated preparation of this Five-Year Strategic Plan that identifies the region’s assets, challenges, trends, vision statement, goals, objectives, specific tasks, potential resources, and expected outcomes for implementation over this five-year period. This regional planning effort comprehensively considered all of the needs within the Planning Region, and was accomplished through a public forum process that incorporated region-wide involvement.

The LRGVDC will continually seek to encourage plan implementation and will provide coordination to assessing its progress. Achievement of goals and strategies involves a broad spectrum of entities and individuals and no single party can be held responsible for implementation of all plan recommendations. However, through regional coordination of efforts, the Vision for this region can be realized. The LRGVDC's Annual Work Program (AWP) will be the implementation tool for this organizations’ contribution to the achievement of identified goals. Essentially, plan implementation will depend on regional cooperation and support received on the part of Valley residents, businesses, governmental officials, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, economic development organizations, and countless others that are stakeholders in the economic future of this region.

The LRGVDC will update this Strategic Plan every two years to ensure that this document will continually serve as a guide for the comprehensive future development of this three-county region. This documented strategic planning process supports LRGVDC's general legislative purpose (Local Government Code, Chapter 391), to “make studies and plans to guide the unified far reaching development of a region, eliminate duplication, and promote economy and efficiency in the coordinated development of a region".
GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF REGION

Geography:

The Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) region includes the counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy. This three county area covers approximately 3,052.34 square miles, and is located in the southernmost portion of Texas. The LRGV is extremely different from any other area of Texas and is also distinct from the rest of the border regions fronting along Mexico. The region is somewhat isolated from other metropolitan areas of Texas. It is 236 miles south of San Antonio, Texas and 152 south of Corpus Christi, Texas. The area is bordered by Mexico to the south, the Gulf of Mexico to the east, and rural areas of Starr, Brooks, and Kennedy counties to the west and north. The region is also very diverse and each of the three counties is physically and economically unique. Cameron County is located at the tip of Texas and comprises 890.92 square miles and is home to 18 cities. Hidalgo County comprises the western half of the region and is the largest of the three counties and home to 22 cities spreading over 1,570.87 square miles. Hidalgo County is also the fourth largest county in the state. Willacy County is located to the north of Cameron County encompassing 590.55 square miles and home to 3 cities. It is the smallest of the three counties.

Population:

According to the 2010 Census, the total estimated population for Cameron County, Brownsville-Harlingen Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), is 406,220. This represents an increase in population of 21.2% since 2000. It is home to the largest city in the three county region, Brownsville, which is also the county seat and has the largest population.

Hidalgo County, McAllen-Edinburg-Mission MSA, comprises the western half of the region and is the largest of the three counties spreading over 1,583 square miles. According to the 2010 Census, the total estimated population is 774,769. This represents an increase in population of 36.1% since 2000. The southern half of Hidalgo County is more densely populated and virtually all of its manufacturing and business operations. Hispanics account for 90.6% of the overall population. The largest city in this county is McAllen and the county seat is the City of Edinburg. The northern half is sparsely populated and is still agricultural; however, within the past couple of years the area has seen an increase of urban development.

Willacy County, Raymondville MSA, lies to the north of Cameron County and encompasses 597 square miles. According to the 2010 Census, the total estimated population is 22,134. This represents an increase in population of 10.2% since 2000. Willacy County is primarily rural, having a few small cities and towns, and is home to agricultural, mining and ranching operations. The county seat of Raymondville is also its largest city in the county.
There are forty-three cities in the three county area which house thirty (30) school districts, four (4) Universities, Community Colleges, and Technical Colleges, twenty-eight (28) Irrigation Districts, four (4) Port Facilities and nine (9) International Bridges, 26 miles of coast line, and Chemical Plant(s).

Transportation Infrastructure

The LRGV relies on its unique transportation infrastructure such as thoroughfare, railroads, air and gulf waters to link to other parts of the country and the world. There are three major transportation routes linking areas of the region: Interstate 69E, Interstate 2, and Interstate 69C (I-69 corridor). Interstate 2 runs east to west from the City of Brownsville to McAllen and westward towards Laredo. Interstate 69E runs north-south from the City of Brownsville, runs concurrently with highway Interstate 2 to the City of Harlingen, and then North to Raymondville and out of Willacy County towards the City of Kingsville and the City of Corpus Christi. Interstate 69C is referred to as the I-69 corridor that runs north to South. It begins at the U.S./Mexico International Bridge in Reynosa, Mexico and runs through the cities of Pharr and Edinburg through the northern boundary of Hidalgo County.

This region boasts nine (9) Ports of Entry into Mexico; four (4) bridges are located in Cameron County and five (5) bridges in Hidalgo County of which one (1) international crossing is located in “Los Ebanos”. Each county has one bridge dedicated to truck traffic. In Cameron County it is the Los Indios Bridge which closely borders the Mexican City of Valle Hermoso (population 658,524). It is situated between Harlingen and San Benito. In Hidalgo County, the Pharr Bridge is located in the City of Pharr, which borders the Mexican City of Reynosa (population 607,532). According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection FY2011 Data, there were 10.5 million vehicle crossings and almost 5 million pedestrian crossings within the nine ports of entries.

This region has four (4) ports along the Gulf of Mexico. These are the Port of Harlingen, Port Mansfield, Port Isabel/San Benito and the Port of Brownsville. These ports link the region to the Gulf and East Coasts of the United States, and Mexico. These land and seaports provide routes for export of recyclable materials, agricultural products, and electronic appliances from the region. They provide easier access to a broader range of markets than may be feasible to reach by land from other areas of Texas, the United States, and Mexico.

In addition to land and water accessibility, this region has five (5) airports. The largest commercial airports are located in the cities of McAllen and Harlingen. They are international airports as is the City of Brownsville airport, which provides commercial services. The airports located in the cities of Weslaco and Edinburg continue developing into successful general aviation airports and they are designated “International Ports of Entry.” As of 2008, one hundred and seventy six (176) Twin Industrial (Maquila) Plants were identified to be located in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties.
The Lower Rio Grande Valley has established itself as the front door to the global marketplace because of its strategic location between Mexico, Canada, and the State of Texas. During the planning process of establishing goals and objectives for the Regional Strategic Plan, the following vision statement was discussed and established:

**AS THE INTERNATIONAL FRONT DOOR TO THE GLOBAL MARKET PLACE, THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY IS COMMITTED TO ENSURE REGIONAL PROSPERITY AND SUSTAINABILITY TO ALL SECTORS AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND SECURITY TO ITS RESIDENTS.**
CURRENT VALLEY TRENDS

Valley trends are very similar to state and national trends. A detailed listing of these trends is referenced below.

The Valley also recognizes that in order to remain competitive it has to diversify its economy, support small business development, increase its technological capabilities, and maintain its labor force competitiveness and employability. These issues are crucial to the Valley’s economic future.

Along with progress come challenges. The LRGV’s urbanization has led to a reduction of its wildlife habitat and a reduction of agricultural land. Lawsuit abuse continues to be a major problem in the Valley as well as the loss of some of its educated labor force. Small, rural cities are losing large numbers of college graduates. After graduation these students tend to stay in the larger, metropolitan cities outside of the LRGV Region.

TRENDS

- DIVERSIFIED INTERNATIONAL MARKETS
- RECOGNITION OF TOURISM AS GROWTH INDUSTRY
- INCREASING TAX BURDENS
- INCREASE IN TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITIES/NEEDS
- SMALL BUSINESSES REMAIN AS PRIMARY EMPLOYERS
- INCREASING GOVERNMENTAL REGULATIONS
- RISING COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC HEALTH CARE NEEDS FOR GROWING INDIGENT AND SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION
- DIVERSIFICATION FROM AN AGRICULTURAL BASE
Trends Continued.

- REGION CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE BRAIN DRAIN AS COLLEGE GRADUATES LEAVE REGION FOR BETTER JOBS
- INCREASE SERVICES FOR VETERANS
- INCREASING NEED FOR EMERGENCY TEMPORARY SHELTER SERVICES TO HOUSE VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIMES
- INCREASE SAFE ROOMS (SHELTERS) FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, MAN-MADE, AND NATURAL DISASTERS, WHICH CAN SERVE AS COMMUNITY PUBLIC ROOM FOR EVACUATION.
- INCREASING NEED FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EXERCISES
- INCREASING DEMAND FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES
- CONSISTENTLY HIGH DROP-OUT RATE
- INCREASING NEED FOR AFFORDABLE/TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
- INCREASING NEED FOR COORDINATION AND SUPPORT OF REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING
- STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
- INCREASING DEMAND FOR REGIONAL/ INTERSOCIABLE COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE
- RISING CRIME RATE
- INCREASE IN DOMESTIC AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIMES
- INCREASE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE-LONG CONTINUING EDUCATION TO MAINTAIN LABOR FORCE COMPETIVENESS AND EMPLOYABILITY
- INCREASING NEED FOR AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS
- INCREASING DEMAND ON WATER SUPPLY
- URBANIZATION:
  A. REDUCTION OF WILDLIFE HABITAT
  B. REDUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND
- INCREASING POPULATION OF RESIDENTS AND NON-RESIDENTS
- INCREASE IN OBESITY AND DIABETES
Trends Continued.

- INCREASING NEED FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
- INCREASING NEED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND MAINTENANCE
- INCREASE NEED FOR COORDINATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACROSS COUNTY LINES
- INCREASING NEED FOR FUNDING DRAINAGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
- FOCUS ON HIGH TEEN PREGNANCY AND 2ND/PREGNACY RATE
The following assets were identified for the Region:

ASSETS

- STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION THAT OFFER ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

- HUMAN RESOURCES
  A. ABUNDANT TRAINABLE WORK FORCE
  B. YOUNG WORK FORCE
  C. TRAINING AND WORK AVAILABILITY FOR PERSON’S WITH DISABILITIES

- INFRASTRUCTURE
  A. PORTS OF ENTRY
  B. SHIPPING PORTS
  C. RAIL
  D. AIRPORTS
  E. INTERSTATE/HIGHWAY SYSTEMS
  F. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

- HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

- AVAILABILITY OF LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT

- NATURAL RESOURCES

- QUALITY OF LIFE

- RECREATION

- TOURISM
- INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
- CULTURAL DIVERSITY
- CLIMATE
- AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS
- MULTI COMMODITY INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY
- REGIONAL MEDICAL SCHOOL
- GROWING EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE
- IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE 25 YEARS AND YOUNGER CATEGORY
- COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
- PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING
- UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-RIO GRANDE VALLEY
- LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
- ENERGY
- GROUND AND SURFACE WATER
The following challenges were identified for the Region:

<table>
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<th>CHALLENGES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• UNEMPLOYMENT RATE</td>
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<td>• RAW WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY</td>
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| • INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE AND EXPANSION:  
  A. DRAINAGE  
  B. ROADS/HIGHWAYS  
  C. WATER/SEWER TREATMENT PLANTS |
| • ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR THE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED AND PERSON’S WITH DISABILITIES |
| • AFFORDABLE/STANDARD/TRANSITIONAL HOUSING |
| • POVERTY LEVEL |
| • EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN THE 25 YEAR AND OLDER CATEGORY |
| • CRIME PREVENTION |
| • ENHANCED REVENUE STREAM SUPPORTING EXPANSION OF REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES |
| • BORDER RELATED ISSUES (VIOLENCE, IMMIGRATION, AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION ETC...) |
| • LOW VOTER TURN OUT |
| • LACK OF TECHNICAL SKILLS IN THE WORKFORCE AND THE INCREASE COMPETITION OF THE WORKFORCE OUTSIDE OF THE AREA |
| • INCREASE NEED FOR COORDINATION OF TRANSPORTATION POINTS OF ALL 4 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS ACROSS ALL 3 COUNTY LINES |
| • COORDINATION OF TRAUMA VICTIMS AMONG ACUTE CARE PROVIDERS |
| • FUNDING FOR ADVERTISMENT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AVAILABILITY AND ROUTES |
| • THE NEED TO ADDRESS THE IMMIGRATION REFORM ISSUES AND INCREASING POPULATION |
| • LOSS OF VEGETATION WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS |
VI. GOALS AND STRATEGIES
AND
LISTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE GOALS

- Reduce Drug and Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling
- Reduce Drug Related Crime
- Increase Alcohol and Drug Prevention
- Reduce Violent Crime
- Reduce High Drop-Out Rates for Middle and High School Students
- Reduce Juvenile Crime
- Increase Technology for Public Safety
- Reduce Child Abuse and Neglect
- Enhance Security and Courthouse safety
- Establish Mental Health and Mental Disability Centers
- Enhance Public Safety Intelligence Gathering and Sharing Resources to Reduce Local Gang Violence
- Deliver the Basic Peace Officer Certification (BPOC) course to those in the region who wish to become Texas peace officers at competitive market rates
- Conduct Specialized Training for Victims of Crime and Support Groups

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Increased technology and public safety for cities of Sullivan City, Penitas, Edcouch, Edinburg, Harlingen, Port Isabel, Pharr, Laguna Vista, Brownsville, Los Fresnos, Palmhurst, Raymondville, and Mission.

Enhanced and established victim service agencies Cameron County District Attorney’s Office, Willacy County District Attorney’s Office, Harlingen Police Department, Pharr Police Department, Women Together Foundation, Estrella’s House, Monica’s & Maggie’s House, Friendship of Women and Family Crisis Center. Rio Grande Valley empowerment Zone, Alamo Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), Cameron/Hidalgo County Veterans Court.

Enhanced and established programs to address juvenile crime and prevention, school truancy and gang reduction programs for Cameron County, Willacy County, San Benito, McAllen, San Juan, Pharr, La Joya ISD, Willacy County Juvenile Probation, and Raymondville ISD.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Reduce drug and human trafficking and human smuggling

OBJECTIVE: Conduct specialized training for law enforcement agencies to include intelligence sharing

Establish courts and hire prosecutors for the prosecution of drug and human trafficking/smuggling crimes. Secure technology/equipment needed for the apprehension of drug and human traffickers. Initiate and establish K-9 units, including the purchase of the canine, maintenance and training. Employ additional law enforcement personnel to deal with drug interdiction. Provide all agencies with grant writing technical assistance and grant management.

STRATEGIES:

- Seek and secure additional funding to provide opportunities with specialized training, to include intelligence sharing.
- Funds to establish courts and to hire prosecutors to prosecute drug and human trafficking/smuggling crimes.
- Provide training to all law enforcement agencies that currently have or in the process of establishing K-9 units.
- Hire more law enforcement personnel for specific tasks on drug and human trafficking/smuggling crimes.
- Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meets state and federal regulations and mandates.
- Funds to establish emergency services to victims of human trafficking/shelter resources.
- Seek funding to secure shelter management that houses human trafficking victim's.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

All local, state and federal law enforcement and advocacy centers
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Reduce drug related crime

OBJECTIVE: Establish/enhance multi-agency drug enforcement task force

Raise awareness and involvement of drug related issues in the community, and in rural areas. Develop professional training programs to facilitate the identification, infiltration of, and elimination of drug trafficking organizations and related crimes. Establish/enhance drug impact courts to primarily prosecute drug related cases. Supply equipment and technology to combat drug crime in all jurisdictions. Identify and design drug free zone maps and raise awareness in the identified areas. Establish/enhance a centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation. Acquire funding for the effective and efficient prosecution of drug offenders. Initiate efforts to develop and enhance law enforcement components in school districts. To properly equip law enforcement agencies in small municipalities and rural areas. To reduce drug trafficking and the incidence of drug-related crime.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to increase number of felony drug arrests. Number of misdemeanor drug arrests. Number of arrests involving crime with an established drug nexus (money laundering, home invasion, kidnapping, extortion, homicide). Number of reports written attributed to the investigation of drug trafficking and related crime. Number of persons receiving counseling for committing drug offenses or drug related crime. Number of persons attending presentations to raise awareness about drug trafficking/related crime. Operate programs to apprehend drug traffickers. Operate programs to identify drug free zones. Operate programs to prosecute drug traffickers. Dismantle targeted drug trafficking organizations for each approved initiative. Increase the number of persons receiving substance abuse counseling by 5%. Increase 5% of youth/adults receiving evidence-based substance abuse prevention services. Reduce the number of referrals for violations in drug free zones-3%. Reduce the number of targeted trafficking organizations by 3%. Reduce the number of referrals for violations in drug free zones by 3%.

STRATEGIES:

- Seek and secure additional funding to provide opportunities with specialized training, to include intelligence sharing.
- Funds to establish drug courts and to hire prosecutors to prosecute drug related crimes.
- Securing additional funding resources for youth substance abuse programs.
- Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meet state and federal regulations and mandates.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

All local, state, and federal law enforcement, Palmer Drug Abuse Program (PDAP), Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc., Neighborhood Watch Programs and Schools.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Increase alcohol and drug prevention

OBJECTIVE: To reduce the incidence of alcohol and substance abuse in the community

To inform the public of existing resources to address alcohol & drug prevention. To reduce the incidence of underage drinking and youth related substance abuse.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal is to create brochures, resource guides for the public through media methods, schools and youth centers. Increased referrals for alcohol/substance abuse services. Support and promote awareness month for alcohol/substance abuse. Participate in events to distribute brochures and resource guides. Establish or enhance additional neighborhood crime watch programs and Crime Stoppers throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

STRATEGIES:

- Support and expand public information and education programs on alcohol and substance abuse that include information about early warning identifiers.
- Establish/enhance Neighborhood Watch and Crime Stoppers programs.
- Set up crisis management training for school personnel.
- Establish after school programs (i.e. Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)) to inform students of the dangers of underage drinking and substance abuse.
- Coordinate awareness months for alcohol/drug abuse with schools, parks/recreation centers and boys & girls club or any other facility providing services to youth.
- Seek greater involvement from the media and medical community for public information and education endeavors.
- Create an awareness program on prescription drug abuse, synthetic drugs/energy drinks. (Bath salts, incense, and the like).
- Create taskforces to conduct covert operations to deter the selling of alcoholic beverages and tobacco to minors.
- Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meets state and federal regulations and mandates.
- Make programs more accessible.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) and all other alcohol and drug prevention programs in the LRGV, Local, state and federal law enforcement. Hospital districts. Faith based organizations. LRGVDC Police Academy, City Parks & Recreation Programs, local boys & girls clubs, schools and Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc., SADD and Tropical Texas Behavioral Health.
GOAL: Reduce violent crime

OBJECTIVE: Provide victims with a multidisciplinary team for investigations, therapy/counseling and treatment services

Reduce the number of rapes, assaults, kidnappings, and homicides in the Rio Grande Valley. Provide assistance to victims of sexual abuse, family violence and human trafficking. Train law enforcement, schools and youth centers on subject matters of child and adult abuse, and sexual assault. Collaborate and network agencies in the best interest of child and adult abuse victims and their non-offending family members. Raise public awareness of family violence, violence in the workplace, schools, adult and teen dating situations, stalking, hate crimes, and human trafficking. Create programs that will reduce the number of family violence perpetrators. Establish supervised visitation centers for court ordered visitation. Find employment and assistance with housing for victims of family violence. Promote awareness of child and adult abuse and neglect through prevention programs. Offer access to assistance and services, including treatment, to victims of violent crime. Provide legal services to victims of violent crime. Expedite the processing of protective order hearings by the court system. Access to legal assistance to undocumented victims of violent crime. Present trainings for forensic interviewers and specialized forensic personnel to assist with the investigation of crimes against children and adults. Establish forensic laboratories in the Rio Grande Valley. Improve security in all County Court and Administrative facilities. Provide training on tracking and monitor known sex offenders in the community. To raise community awareness of the threat of internet sexual predators. To inform parents on how to prevent their children from falling prey to internet sexual predators. To train law enforcement personnel, educators, and social service workers to deal with cases involving victims of internet sexual predators.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to apply for and operate programs that provide direct and/or referral services to victims of all types of violent crime. Install security systems in facilities used for providing victim assistance and other criminal justice related services. Increase the number of victims provided with services by 10%. Increase the number of facilities (i.e., facilities used for providing victim assistance and other criminal justice related services) with operational, functioning security systems.
STRATEGIES:

- Locate avenues for funding assistance and treatment services, to victims of violent crime.
- Search methods to target programming for victims of sexual assault and family violent crimes.
- Request funding for community outreach and educational services.
- Apply for funding to cover training of law enforcement to investigate child and adult sexual assault.
- Pinpoint sources to maintain and provide ongoing technical assistance for medical records associated with sexual assault.
- Create intervention programming for abusive spouses and parents.
- Conduct public information and education campaigns to raise awareness on human trafficking, internet sexual predators and methods for preventing violence in the home, workplace, school, and in dating situations.
- Establish furnish housing alternatives for victims of Violent Crimes and Family Violence.
- Provide housing alternatives for victims of violent crimes.
- Schedule visitation centers for court ordered visitation.
- Maintain courts for the sole purpose of conducting protective hearings.
- Schedule anger management, conflict resolution therapy, and treatment programs for youths.
- Establish individual sexual assault, homicidal grief counseling, and support groups for victims (adults/children) of sexual assault and family violence.
- Install security technology and facilitate the placement of security personnel at all County Courts and Administrative facilities.
- Set-up and establish a comprehensive centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.
- Work with the Victim’s Compensation Fund Division to link up to their computer systems to access cases, do updates, and assure better services to victims and more prompt payment to service providers.
- Strengthen working relationship between family violence assistance centers and law enforcement community.
- Raise community and public safety awareness on gang recruitment.
- Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meets state and federal regulations and mandates.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

All local, state, and federal law enforcement. Neighborhood Watch Programs and schools, Children’s and Adult Advocacy centers. Hospitals and Faith based organizations.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Reduce high drop-out rates for middle and high school students

OBJECTIVE: Collaboration, sharing policies and best practices with all school districts throughout the LRGV region

Reduce school truancy by providing parenting classes for truancy, mentoring, counseling, guidance, character education and intensive training to truant/delinquent behavior. Increase attendance and academic achievement. Increase the collaborative efforts of key stakeholders such as school district officials, Justice of the Peace & Municipal Courts and local law enforcement. Reduce the incidence of juvenile related crime, drug use and delinquency. Assistance in control efforts and alternatives to gang participation by juveniles. Offer alternatives to dropping out to include flexible scheduling, adult education classes, and “Early Start” programs. Increase “official” contact by 10% with parents/guardians of truant/delinquent youth being served after referrals of the Justice of the Peace and Municipal Court. Awareness presentations, information seminars for parents and students to help in understanding school attendance laws - increase understanding by 10%. Raise community youth awareness on the dangers of underage drinking through prevention programs. Parenting classes for truancy and other related issues. Enforce the truancy law. Provides training for all professionals addressing truancy.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to apply for and operate programs and community facilities that address truancy, drop-outs, family violence, teen dating violence, and drug abuse and gang activity. Apply for and operate programs that provide anger management training and parenting skills for teens. Apply for and operate programs to hire truancy officers and prevention/ intervention programs. Reduce truancy rate in targeted population group by 5%. Reduce incidence of bullying and aggression by peers and professionals in schools by 5%. Reduce the number of teen pregnancies by 5%. Increase high school graduation rate by 5%. Reduce the incidence of teen dating violence in schools by 5%.

STRATEGIES:

- Acquire funding to furnish juvenile services (i.e., counseling, substance abuse in-patient and out-patient, residential services).
- Acquire funding for juvenile prevention programs that will allow the schools to hire and/or enhance school law enforcement officers.
- Acquire funds for community outreach programs that target local youths.
- Complete applications for parental involvement programs.
- Coordinate programs to train and educate personnel on behavior disorders, drug abuse and truancy issues.
- Acquire funding for gang and juvenile offender intervention.
• Acquire funding for youth facilities and centers for after school programs.
• Continue to seek funding to establish after school educational and recreational programs.
• Continue to address the underlying factors of what is the cause of truancy.
• Acquire funding for college access programs.
• Increase Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meets state and federal regulations and mandates.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Youth centers and all school districts in the LRGV. Child Advocacy Centers and local, state and federal law enforcement.
GOAL: Reduce juvenile crime

OBJECTIVE: Reduce juvenile related crime and drug use by identifying programs and training to help interdict the recruitment of youth into crime organizations

Target and decrease gang participation among the juvenile population. Provide increased services to juvenile services, e.g., alternative schools, counseling, and after school mentoring. To reduce the truancy and drop-out rate in area schools. Aim to control the juvenile violent crime caseload more effectively and efficiently. Provide emergency shelter and residential services for juveniles. Increase employment opportunities for youth. Foster entrepreneurial skills in youth. Promote and maintain safety in school environments. Train and educate school personnel and families about behavioral disorders and juvenile issues. To provide assistance for youth and families with special needs such as mental impairment and learning disabilities. Minimize juvenile caseloads. Provide vocational training for youth. Prepare youth for adult independence, including parenthood. Prevent the incidence of family violence. Discourage graffiti and gang markings. Set up community/local teen advisory boards. Provide emergency shelter and residential services for juveniles. Raise community and public safety awareness of juvenile gang recruitment by organized crime groups. It has become evident that criminal organizations, i.e. Drug Organizations, are utilizing gang members to help further the criminal enterprise. Young gang members are being utilized to steal vehicles for the purpose of transporting and distributing drugs and act as enforcers.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to apply for and operate programs and community facilities to address truancy, drop-outs, drug abuse, gang activity, and family violence. Apply for and operate programs to hire juvenile officers, juvenile probation officers, juvenile corrections officers, juvenile warrant officers, juvenile prosecutors, and educational enforcement authorities. Apply for and operate programs that provide anger management training and parenting skills. Apply for and operate programs and community facilities to address truancy, drop-outs, drug abuse, gang activity, and family violence. Apply for and operate programs to hire juvenile officers, juvenile probation officers, juvenile correction officers, juvenile warrant officers, juvenile prosecutors, and educational enforcement authorities. Apply for and operate programs that provide anger management training and parenting skills. Reduce truancy rate in targeted group by 3%. Increase reporting of abuse by 5%. Reduce juvenile sexual assault cases by 2%. Reduce graffiti by 10% in local areas. Reduce repeat offenders associated with violent crimes by 2%. Reduce bullying and aggression in local schools by 3%.
STRATEGIES:

- Establish anti-gang programs in the community.
- Hire additional juvenile probation officers, juvenile law enforcement officers, juvenile correction officers, juvenile warrant officers, and juvenile prosecutors.
- Establish one or more juvenile residential program centers.
- Initiate parental involvement programs in area schools and youth organization/programs. Initiate Communities in Schools (CIS), Just Say No, Save Alternatives to Violent Environment’s (SAVE), “Stay in School”, “Expect Respect”, and other prevention programs in area schools and communities.
- Increase law enforcement collaboration that handles gang activity and other juvenile crime.
- Set up “One Stop” Youth Entrepreneurship Programs.
- Maximize use of existing community centers, schools, and other facilities in the community.
- Coordination in making K-9 Units accessible to school campuses.
- Establish school-based and community-based mentoring, educational, and recreational programs.
- Establish counseling centers and support groups for youth and families to deal with behavioral disorders, mental impairment, and other juvenile issues.
- Develop a system of service delivery to bring desperately needed mental health services to youth in a family-driven, culturally competent, and strength-based approach to service planning.
- Establish vocational training programs for youth.
- Establish programs that provide life and parenting skills for youths and their families.
- Establish programs that educate youth about family violence.
- Set up a coalition to address juvenile issues or concerns.
- Establish programs to set up community and county-wide teen advisory boards.
- Establish programs that provide anger management training for youths.
- Identification and tracking of juvenile gang members.
- Collaborate with mental health professionals, school districts and law enforcements to identify at risk youths population.
- Provide counseling to help steer at risk kids from gang participation.
- Identify and promote training that will re-direct at risk youth population.
- Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meets state and federal regulations and mandates.
- Observe the reduction in the number of members and disband gangs.
- Collaboration with region one for data collection.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

All local, state and federal law enforcement. Youth centers and all school districts in the LRGV. Region One Education Service Center.
GOAL: Enhance technology for public safety

OBJECTIVE: Continue to upgrade technology for law enforcement agencies

Continue to improve automation of imaging, fingerprinting, and mug shot systems. Provide portable defibrillators to help reduce the number of cardiac arrest incidents where the law enforcement officer is the first to respond. Ensure that all portable radios are programmed and law enforcement is trained in interoperable capabilities. Provide standard law enforcement equipment as well as computer software and hardware to law enforcement agencies. Link separate local law enforcement computer systems. Purchase courtroom programs and equipment for prosecution. Provide accurate and efficient data collection, data compilation, and data sharing. Provide for locally relevant, ongoing evaluation of programs to improve program implementation. Purchase security and surveillance cameras for city, county, schools and youth centers.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to create programs to provide current technology and equipment to law enforcement and prosecuting agencies. Keep law enforcement and social service agencies better prepared to utilize equipment and technology to its maximum capability. The county and surrounding jurisdictions will be prepared and equipped to mitigate and respond to emergency calls for service.

STRATEGIES:

- Work towards setting up a database to link local law enforcement agencies together and eventually, with other agencies nationwide.
- Work towards computerizing imaging, fingerprint, and mug shot systems in city and county jails.
- Install heart defibrillators in court house and in as many law enforcement vehicles as possible.
- Establish infrastructure to promote information sharing among agencies to facilitate planning. Install CAD Systems in all law enforcement departments.
- Work towards increasing equipment budgets for law enforcement departments.
- Work towards linking separate local law enforcement computer systems.
- Install hardware and software for courtroom presentation of evidence.
- Establish a centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program implementation.
- Purchase interoperability equipment to move from level 4 to 6.
- Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meets state and federal regulations and mandates.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:
All local, state and federal law enforcement. County District Attorney, County Clerks and/or District Clerks offices in the LRGV.
GOAL: Reduce child abuse and neglect

OBJECTIVE: Developing a comprehensive multidisciplinary response to child abuse

Establish separate child-friendly facilities for interviewing and providing services to child victims and their families. Preventing or reducing trauma to children caused by multiple contacts with professionals and involvement with the courts. Increase community understanding of child abuse. Identifying and developing funding and marketing strategies. Maintaining open communication and case coordination among community professionals and agencies involved in child protection efforts. Enhance the skills of professionals and volunteers who support child abuse intervention such as the local Children's Advocacy Center. Developing and negotiating interagency agreements and protocols.

Measureable Outcome for this specific goal is to increase prevention education. Apply for more facilities. Create awareness campaign. Increase awareness by 10%. Provide 2 alternate shelters for the Region. Increase services by 10%.

STRATEGIES:

- Child abuse and neglect has increased and there is a need for Children’s Shelters and more Crisis Centers.
- Increase child abuse services, prevention and education by 10%.
- Increase successful child abuse investigations and prosecution by 6%.
- Schedule development and interagency discussions to negotiate agreements and protocol.
- Create awareness materials and meetings to market information.
- Provide educational opportunities for professions and volunteers.
- Promote awareness to community.
- Increase prevention facilities and alternate housing for victims.
- Advocate methods of communication with court and legal agencies.
- Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meets state and federal regulations and mandates.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

All local, state and federal law enforcement, Child Protective Services, Child Advocacy Centers, Hospitals, Health Clinics and Faith Based Organizations, Schools and Youth Centers.
GOAL: Enhance security and courthouse safety

OBJECTIVE: Specialized training for court personnel and court house security personnel

Court clerks will coordinate and manage cases for expedited service to patrons. Schedules will be distributed to all courts on a weekly basis. Court cases will be assigned according to Judge expertise and past experience. Procedures will be put in place for moving and containing prisoners, scheduling cases dealing with children during slow periods to cause fewer traumas to victims, and for training, awareness, and promotion to the community with information on safety and procedures for special cases.

STRATEGIES:

- Security will be analyzed and all systems upgraded.
- Acquire funds to add additional personnel.
- District Attorney, County Clerk and District Clerk will meet once a week to coordinate and cooperate in meeting timing disposition of cases.
- Court schedules will be distributed, posted, and mailed to all involved parties.
- Apply for funding to update and acquire additional security system for court house and court rooms.
- Request funds for set up of special rooms for children involved in court cases "Safe Room" Counselors and or designated social workers will manage Safe Room. Awareness campaign to communities.
- Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meets state and federal regulations and mandates.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

All local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, County Courts, District Attorneys, District Clerks and County Clerks.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Enhance mental health, suicide prevention and mental disability centers

OBJECTIVE: Increase the number of programs providing mental health services

Increase the number of referrals for mental health services. Increase access to mental health services in rural areas. Increase community education and prevention education regarding mental health issues. Increase emergency residential facilities for adults/children. Establish group homes. Establish long term residential facilities. Increase support groups. Increase personnel to work with persons with mental health issues. Secure funding to provide continued education to law enforcement and Justice of the Peace in working with person with mental health issues. Secure funding to purchase equipment, technology, and assessment tools. Secure funding to purchase adequate transportation to safely transport person with mental health issues.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal are to apply for funding to increase treatment services for mental health and mental disability. Apply for funding to increase outreach efforts in rural areas for the provision of mental health and mental disability services. Increased programs providing mental health and mental disability services. Increased mental health outreach efforts in rural areas. Increase awareness Prevent and address Bullying, cyberbullying, social networking, sexting and etc. Apply for funding to increase treatment services for mental health and mental disability. Apply for funding to increase outreach efforts in rural areas for the provision of mental health and mental disability services. Increased programs providing mental health and mental disability services. Establish a local Task Force to include judges, Law Enforcement, mental health providers to address mental health related issues that affect first responders.

STRATEGIES:

- Increase programs providing mental health and mental disability services for indigent and low income populations.
- Increase emergency residential facilities for adults/children with mental health issues.
- Establish group homes for persons with mental health issues.
- Establish long term residential facilities for persons with mental health and behavioral issues.
- Purchase transportation means to safely transport persons with mental health issues.
- Hire trained law enforcement officers to safely transport persons with mental health issues.
- Increase awareness in the community on mental illness and substance induced psychosis.
- Establish more support groups for families and persons with mental health issues.
• Prevent and address bullying, cyber-bullying, social networking, sexting, etc.
• Train law enforcement personnel and Justice of the Peace Officers on dealing with persons with mental health issues.
• Establish mental health clinics on post-secondary campuses to train counselors, social workers, and medical professionals with hands on training.
• Increase funding to hire additional personnel to work with persons with mental health issues.
• Establish prevention programs on mental health issues to include school prevention. Purchase equipment, technology, assessment tools to work with mental health issues. Increase the number of programs providing mental health services.
• Provide alternatives for residential services.
• Properly train on how to secure a mental health patient during transport.
• Apply for funds to provide group and halfway houses with adequate staff to manage patients.
• Collaborate and network with all mental health professionals.
• Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meets state and federal regulations and mandates.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

All local governments (i.e. city and county), state and federal law enforcement, youth centers, hospitals and faith-based organizations, mental health and mental retardation, schools and local and state behavioral centers.
GOAL: Enhance public safety intelligence gathering and sharing resources to reduce local gang violence

OBJECTIVE: Establish a database and computer program capable of being accessed by all local law enforcement agencies to combat local violent criminal organizations as well as transnational gangs

With the lack of resources at hand, combating violent criminal organizations such as transnational gangs and drug cartels continues to be a challenge and top priority for all law enforcement agencies. These organizations have infiltrated our society and continue to pose a great threat to Texas citizens and their way of life. Gangs have become bolder and more sophisticated in their participation in organized crime. These groups aggressively promote dangerous drugs to adults as well as youth alike and are the source of violence, racketeering, human trafficking and smuggling, prostitution, money laundering, and illegal weapons sales. Defeating these organizations requires multi-agency coordination and most importantly cooperation and interaction among agencies and jurisdictions. In order to address this issue, local criminal justice strategies envision a law enforcement network in which cross boundary coordination and support, and multijurisdictional and interagency operations are standardized.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal is to apply for funding to reduce the debilitating impacts of agency and jurisdictional boundaries on counter gang operations. Successfully combating these criminal organizations also requires a statewide information sharing enterprise in which information and intelligence sharing across agency and political boundaries is routine. The database will establish a database to aid in the interdiction of gang related crime, thus reducing juvenile gang crime on local UCR reporting by 20% over the next five years.

STRATEGIES:

- The RGV Chief’s Association and the LRGVDC will appoint a blue ribbon committee to draft a plan to locate the technology that will be used to track relevant gang activity.
- Create a regional task force to oversee the operations and data entry of gang related activities.
- Work with law enforcement agencies to promote the use of the data to combat gang activities.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, Cities, Counties, State and Federal Law Enforcement, County District Attorneys, County Clerks, District Clerks
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Deliver the Basic Peace Officer Certification (BPOC) course to those in the region who wish to become Texas Peace Officers at competitive market rates

OBJECTIVE: Provide the basic peace officers certification course at a more affordable rate

The LRGVDC Regional Police and Training Center (RPA) is charged with providing the Basic Peace Officer Course for individuals in the region to allow those officers to sit for the state exam to become Texas Peace Officers. Most small agencies don’t have the resources to send potential employees to the course; therefore, the LRGVDC Regional Police Academy and Training Center (RPA) fills that need. Currently, the RPA’s success rate as measured by Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) is 91% for the three-year period of September, 2009 through August 31, 2012.

The RPA trains approximately 60 cadets per year by offering the BPOC at least two (2) times per year. The RPA plans to offer a night class (part-time academy) during the year making the annual total approximately 90 cadets trained per year as Texas peace officers.

Per the Texas Occupations Code and TCOLE Rules, those wishing to become Texas peace officers must satisfactorily complete the Basic Peace Officer Certification (BPOC) course. Currently the state requires a minimum of 618 contact hours in the basic academy program. The RPA exceeds the minimum standard based on the needs of the law enforcement agencies here in the Lower Rio Grande Valley region. For example, the RPA includes instruction on expandable batons, OC spray, TASER (as requested), Verbal Judo, transnational border violence, human trafficking, civil rights, and other topics which prepares graduating cadets for the rigors of law enforcement here in the Lower Rio Grande Valley region of the state.

The RPA works with organizations and other entities to keep the cost of the BPOC and in-service courses affordable. The current cost of tuition for the BPOC is $2,200. Other academies in the state charge $3,000 or more. The RPA is one of two (2) open academies in the lower Rio Grande Valley; UT Brownsville is the other open academy and tuition at UT Brownsville is $2,500, payable at least three (3) days prior to the 1st day of class. The other academies here in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Pharr, Hidalgo County, McAllen) are closed academies, which mean they only offer the BPOC to their employees.

1 An “open academy” is one that allows qualified members of the public to attend. A “closed academy” only permits employees of the agency to attend their academy program.
STRATEGIES:

- Offer the BPOC as an open academy for those candidates who are qualified to attend based on TCOLE Rules and the Texas Occupations Code.
- Offer topic areas beyond the minimum required by TCOLE and the Texas Occupations Code for completion of the BPOC.
- Offer topic areas in the BPOC which result in specialty certifications: Armament Systems & Procedures (ASP) Tactical Baton, Verbal Judo, Pepper spray, also known as Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray, Standard Field Sobriety Testing (SFST), Pressure Point Control Tactics (PPCT) Defensive Tactics, TASER, etc.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Conduct specialized training for victims of crime and support groups

OBJECTIVE: To recruit and train homicidal grief services

Provide homicidal grief support and services to survivors of murdered victims in the Rio Grande Valley.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal is reduce homicide (murders) by 5%. Increase homicidal support services and support groups by 25%.

STRATEGIES:

• Increase crisis trauma to homicide co-victims.
• Increase prevention and education programs.
• Increase support services and groups.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

RGV Families and Friends of Murdered Children, RGV Empowerment Zone – Victims of Crime Prevention / Restoration Programs.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Foster and Support Small Business and Entrepreneurial Initiatives for Domestic and International Markets
- Increase Domestic and International Trade
- Assist Rural and Urban Communities to Incorporate Information Technology as a Tool for their Economic Development
- Promote Research, Development, Marketing and Distribution of Agricultural/Aquaculture Products Appropriate to the Region
- Increase Domestic and International Tourism
- Create and Expand Industries and Business Development in the Lower Rio Grande Valley
- Develop a Regional Economic Adjustment (EAP) Plan for Creating Disaster Resilient Communities
- Provide a Business Hurricane and Information Training (B-HIT) Program and Collaborate with Other Programs for Disaster Recovery

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Provided technical assistance to cities, universities, economic development corporations, navigation districts and port of entry
- Provided grant administration services to cities/counties, economic development corporations, and navigation districts
- Created the “Stir Biz Up” program to educate, inform, and provide certification classes to construction companies in order to help increase their skills for competing for contracting opportunities in the housing industry
- Conducted financial literacy trainings to small businesses using “MoneyWise” program
- Provided Basic GIS Trainings for small, rural cities; Chambers of Commerce; and Economic Development Organizations. Trainings included: Getting Started with GIS; Basic Editing Techniques; and Using Basic Geo-Processing Tools
- Conducted two annual B-HIT Workshops and was successful in incorporating Economic Recovery with Emergency Management and Hurricane Preparedness
- Conducted several “mini workshops” on the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
- Created a “Local Resource Guide for Disaster Preparedness & Economic Recovery”
- Currently Administer the Regional Small Cities Coalition (RSCC) under the auspices of the Economic Development Department
- Applied for and was awarded an EDA grant for the Center for International Economic Development Opportunities (CIEDO) to attract businesses, programs, and services to the Valley (Groundbreaking event held June 17, 2014)
Pictures denote projects funded through the LRGV Economic Development District by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration:

Port of Brownsville

Port of Port Isabel

Anzaldua International Bridge

Center for International Economic Development Opportunities (CIEDO) Building – LRGVDC Weslaco

Basic GIS Training for Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Corporations

Basic GIS Training for Members of the Regional Small Cities Coalition (RSCC)
City of Santa Rosa EDA Technology Center

Donna Independent School District Technology Center

Screen Houses at the Citrus Center – Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Citrus Budwood Certification Program

City of Hidalgo State Farm Arena – Hockey Ring

Brownsville – Palo Alto Battlefield’s Visitors Center

EDA Grants were awarded for the World Birding Centers in Mission, Weslaco and Brownsville:
LRGVDC’s Stir Biz Up” Program

UT-Brownsville’s International Innovation Entrepreneurship Program
Jose Gavino, Program Director

Abel Moya, Owner & Trainer, American Safety Consulting OSHA 10-Hour Certification Training for Construction Companies

Willacy County EAP Public Meeting – Raymondville

Starr County EAP Meeting – Rio Grande City

Cameron County EAP Public Meeting - San Benito

Hidalgo County EAP Public Meeting – McAllen

Regional EAP Colonia Outreach Meeting Green Valley Farms – San Benito

Regional EAP Colonia Outreach Meeting Charro #2 - Edinburg
2011 Regional B-HIT Conference – South Padre Island

Sponsor & Support MACC Training

Continuity of Operations Training – City of Alton

Sponsor & Support Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Trainings

REGIOANL SMALL CITIES COALITION (RSCC)

2014 Regional Small Cities Coalition (RSCC) Officers

(From L to R: Representing the Cities of Sullivan, Rio Hondo, Lyford, Combes, and Donna)

RSCC Meeting in City of La Feria with USDA Staff

RSCC Meeting in City of La Feria with USDA Staff
GOAL: Foster and Support Small Business and Entrepreneurial Initiatives for Domestic and International Markets

OBJECTIVE: Identify All Types of Small Business Needs and Opportunities

Small businesses are the largest employers in the Valley and nationwide, therefore, it is imperative that we provide technical assistance and support to small businesses. This business sector is vital to the region’s overall economy and more emphasis is needed on developing mentoring and entrepreneurial programs.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Increase and improve public infrastructure to attract economic development; Promote and increase access to small business incubators; Market and increase access to these funding sources; Increase rural business development and sustainability; Create women mentoring and business training programs; Develop educational entrepreneurial programs in schools and higher education institutions; Continue providing Financial Literacy; Create a business alliance; Increase funding and local resources; Increase insured employees and job retention by retaining existing businesses and creating a Small Business Directory.

STRATEGIES:

- Support the need for expanding and improving public infrastructure.
- Support the development of Small Business Incubators.
- Promote Micro-loan and Revolving Loan Fund Programs.
- Promote and support rural business development.
- Promote and support women-owned businesses.
- Support the development of educational entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Continue the “MoneyWise” Financial Literacy Program.
- Coordinate with other entities (GEAR UP) on financial literacy.
- Create and develop a business alliance for new or expanding businesses.
- Educate and inform Valley Legislators on the economic development needs of the small business community.
- Access to affordable health insurance for self-employed small businesses.
- Facilitate new business development through education of building requirements and planning regulations.
- Promote State and International incentive programs for small businesses.
- Training and support for improving the quality of customer service.
POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Increase Domestic and International Trade

OBJECTIVE: To Encourage the Continued Expansion of Domestic and International Trade

This area is considered the gateway to global commerce because of its strategic and logistic location. It is in the Valley's best interest to aggressively pursue international trade for economic growth. Mexico is the United States’ “second largest export market” with over $303 billion in total value of exports (2010). Although international trade is an integral part of our economy, it is of vital importance to increase border security to ensure a safe environment to conduct business.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Increase activity on international trade; Develop programs to help link small businesses with companies who deal internationally; Increase domestic and international trade; Develop a regional border security and training facility to facilitate international trade.

STRATEGIES:

- Continue to provide technical assistance to businesses for international trade.
- Create a small business trade program.
- Support infrastructure development for ports of entry and navigation districts.
- Support border security and training initiatives using high technology.
- Create a HUB Center in order to coordinate and conduct business with international partners.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Assist Rural and Urban Communities to Incorporate Information Technology as a Tool for Their Economic Development

OBJECTIVE: Provide Access to Information Technology to Rural and Urban Communities

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is made up of 44 cities of which 80% are small, rural cities with populations less than 20,000. Rural areas need additional support and funding for technological grant projects in order to attract higher paying jobs. Technological advancement is also critical for our larger cities in order to attract domestic and international companies to the Valley. Technology is a major force in our economic future. (Information technology is the technology involving the development, maintenance, and use of computer systems, software, and networks for the processing and distribution of data.)

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Identify resources for grant availability; Identify financial resources to expand technical training and education; Enhanced funding opportunities for rural areas; Attract high tech industries for the purpose of creating higher-paying jobs. Provide cities with the latest technology including more access to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and space transport infrastructure.

STRATEGIES:

- Identify resources to help rural and small urban communities to access and acquire technology.
- Support the expansion and financial assistance for technical and academic training.
- Support changes in eligibility criteria to allow easier access to state funds for rural areas.
- Promote the research and development of new technology for the purpose of job and wealth creation.
- Increase GIS training and funding opportunities.
- Support the technology to develop space transport infrastructure.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC/LRGVEDD & 9-1-1 Department; EDA, USDA, Cities/Counties, Higher Education Institutions, School Districts, Federal & State Agencies/Legislators, Texas Municipal League, Texas Association of Counties, Digital Communication Companies, Homeland Security, Private Sector, Non-Profit Organizations, EDCs, Manufacturer Associations, Cell Phone Companies, Broadband Providers, Cable Companies, Space X.
GOAL: Promote Research, Development, Marketing and Distribution of Agricultural/Aquaculture Products Appropriate to the Region

OBJECTIVE: Identify Markets for Locally Grown Agricultural/Aquaculture Products and Agricultural Services

The Valley's continuous population growth has claimed valuable land for residential and commercial use; however, this region's roots are based on agriculture and aquaculture. In order to safeguard this economic foundation, we must focus on diversifying and adding value to existing agriculture and aquaculture products.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Increase the number of alternate products produced; Enhanced marketing of value added products; Create legislative action and tax incentives for our local farmers.

STRATEGIES:

- Support research for “alternate products” that can be grown in the Region.
- Support value added industries.
- Develop incentives programs and legislative action to encourage purchase of locally grown products.
- Research “green” products and byproducts.
- Promote “sustainable agriculture” in order to sustain the economic viability of farm operations.
- Market and support “Farmer Market Days” region wide.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Increase Domestic and International Tourism

OBJECTIVE: Market the Region for Its Recreational and Tourism Facilities

This unstable economy has redirected families spending habits and it now makes good sense to “keep travel local” and visit the many wonderful tourist attractions in our Valley towns. This area is extremely rich in history and culture; therefore it has much to offer both local and international tourists. These tourist attractions have helped grow our region’s economy and perpetuate more interest on recreational facilities for our local residents as well.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Expansion of Historical preservation sites and increased marketing; Increased educational awareness and marketing of historical preservation and eco-tourism; Increased eco-tourism activities and a coordinated promotional tourist campaign; A World Class Birding Center, sub-centers throughout the Valley, and increase eco-tourism and environmental awareness.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote and support local tourist attractions.
- Promote and protect historical preservation sites.
- Provide education on historical preservation and eco-tourism in schools.
- Market World Birding Centers internationally and nationwide.
- Provide financial support for recreational facilities and activities.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Create and Expand Industries and Business Development in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

OBJECTIVE: To Create and Develop A Regional Marketing Strategy

The limitless opportunities for economic prosperity must be addressed as a regional marketing strategy. In order to attract businesses, economic data must be centralized and easily accessible so the Valley can be marketed as one region. Smaller, rural cities that lack financial resources for marketing should be included in the overall picture and individual profiles can be updated to help in this effort.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Create an economic database of information to attract businesses; create marketing strategies for the region and promote it as one region. Increase international marketing opportunities; regional trainings on available resources; and assist in updating Valley profiles for each city. Need to continue sponsoring and supporting the Regional Small Cities Coalition in order to provide economic stability and diversification to small, rural communities.

STRATEGIES:

- Create an economic database of regional statistics to attract businesses.
- Identify and inventory existing marketing strategies and the coordination of regional marketing efforts.
- Market the Valley as one region.
- Support the Rio South Texas Economic Council (RSTEC).
- Identify and promote International activities.
- Promote “regional training conferences” on available federal, state, and local resources.
- Update the LRGVDC’s regional community profiles as a marketing tool for small cities.
- Continue to sponsor and support the Regional Small Cities Coalition.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Develop a Regional Economic Adjustment Plan (EAP) for Creating Disaster Resilient Communities

OBJECTIVE: Conduct a Regional Assessment of Flood Control/Drainage Systems Infrastructure for Economic Recovery

Due to hurricanes and other natural disasters, the Valley is prone to severe flooding. These natural disasters cause enormous financial burdens on the citizens and local governments of the region. In order to minimize these hardships, the LRGVDC has developed a program to address these issues and coordinate flood control through its “Regional Economic Adjustment Plan for Creating Disaster Resilient Communities”.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Enhance flood control; Update maps to identify flood and drainage areas in need of attention; Review Adequate Levee System; Establishment of a Regional Flood Control/Drainage Task Force or Entity; and Develop a Regional flood/drainage plan identifying capital improvement projects for the Valley.

STRATEGIES:

- Support the Regional Economic Adjustment Plan by providing annual updates.
- Support coordination of flood control activities for the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
- Request FEMA Update their maps in order to identify flood prone areas.
- Support Federal funding opportunities to rehabilitate levees under jurisdiction of U.S. IBWC.
- Continue the development of the EAP’s regional flood/drainage plan by incorporating needed infrastructure and initiatives for Capital Improvement Projects.
- Conduct an economic disaster survey to assess and inventory important economic assets.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Develop a Business Hurricane and Information Training (B-HIT) Program for Disaster Recovery

OBJECTIVE: Provide Businesses with Information and Training Resources to Assist in their Economic Recovery after a Natural Disaster

Natural disasters such as hurricanes can disrupt businesses and ruin lives, however, when a business is destroyed or shut down in a small, rural area, it can affect the entire community. It is imperative to provide these businesses with the necessary disaster recovery tools so they can help rebuild their communities and recover economically. Also, information and training materials on emergency preparedness are extremely useful in reaching the public.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Help business owners create their own COOP; distribute vital information on emergency preparedness and disaster recovery resources; conduct an annual conference on economic development and emergency preparedness; create and distribute “B-HIT Resources Booklets”; and help coordinate and join efforts with existing emergency management/preparedness agencies in serving the general public.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide information and training materials on emergency preparedness.
- Distribute information and checklists for hurricane preparedness.
- Conduct a regional economic disaster recovery conference.
- Provide information and resources on economy recovery strategies.
- Create a “B-HIT Resource Booklet”.
- Coordinate services and trainings with existing emergency management and emergency preparedness agencies/programs.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

EMERGENCY 9-1-1
CAMERON COUNTY 9-1-1 DISTRICT
EMERGENCY 9-1-1 GOALS

- To provide a direct access to public safety agencies
- Enhance 9-1-1 system to NG911 technology
- Provide Location Validation Function (LVF) for 9-1-1 call routing and 9-1-1 address validation
- Continue Public Education Program and Dispatcher training
- Educate and encourage the Public to register for Reverse 9-1-1®

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Cameron County 9-1-1 District has implemented R911® for its citizens and continues to enhance the implementation of GIS/Mapping for 9-1-1.
GOAL: To provide direct access to public safety agencies

OBJECTIVE: Promote county-wide and regional cooperation between federal, state, and local public safety agencies

9-1-1 is the number everyone dials when there is an emergency. In major events, the emergency may require assistance from other agencies, therefore, regional cooperation between all public safety agencies is vital.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal are to have a license/certification program and provide accurate and efficient service.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote coordination and support of public safety programs for Cameron County.
- Upgrade equipment with NG911 technology.
- Continue the 9-1-1 certification program for public safety.
- Work with all local, state and federal emergency management agencies to ensure the public’s safety.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Cameron County 9-1-1 District City and County Law Enforcement, TXDPS, State/Federal Agencies, Homeland Security, and TRAC-V.
GOAL: Enhance 9-1-1 system to NG911 technology

OBJECTIVE: Provide direct access to emergency communication and new emerging technology and quality of service to its citizens, thus reducing response time

Implementing new technology, Cameron County 9-1-1 strives to provide up-to-date equipment to our citizens of Cameron County, thus providing better service by also utilizing TTY to hearing impaired citizens and cell phone technology which includes GPS coordinates.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal are increased services to ensure the safety of the public by utilizing new technology.

STRATEGIES:

- Enhance the 9-1-1 communication network.
- Provide up to date equipment.
- Provide training to our telecommunicators.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Cameron County 9-1-1 Board, Law Enforcement Agencies, Fire Departments, EMS, Sheriff Department, Cities and Counties, LRGVDC, DSHS.
GOAL: Provide Location Validation Function (LVF) for 9-1-1 call routing and 9-1-1 address validation

OBJECTIVE: Maintain our LVF for 9-1-1 addressing for NG911

An essential part of protecting the public is the maintenance of crucial databases and communication functions such as LVF and address validation.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Maintain an accurate database.
- Maintain GPS on all addresses.
- Continue GIS Training.
- Continue validating addresses.

**POTENTIAL RESOURCES:**

Cameron County 9-1-1 Board, Law Enforcement Agencies, Fire Departments, EMS, Sheriff Department, Cities and Counties, LRGVDC, DSHS, National Emergency Number Association (NENA), Texas Emergency Number Association (TENA), ESRI, URISA.
GOAL: Continue public education program and dispatcher training

OBJECTIVES: Provide public education materials to the public and identify dispatcher training needs

Continue to educate the Public on 9-1-1 and the changing technology as we move to NG911 and FCC mandates.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal are a better understanding of 9-1-1 and continue dispatcher training to better service our county.

STRATEGIES:

- Participate in public events and public talks.
- Continue our 9-1-1 Presentations.
- Continue Dispatcher training.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Cameron County 9-1-1 Board, Law Enforcement Agencies, Fire Departments, EMS, Sheriff Department, Cities and Counties, LRGVDC, NENA, TENA, Public Educators of Texas (PETS), Rotary Clubs, Mobile Home Parks, Schools.
GOAL: Educate and encourage the public to register for Reverse 911 (R9-1-1)

OBJECTIVES: Educate the public so they can understand how we can help them in major catastrophic events

In addition to local emergencies that may occur in our daily lives, there are catastrophic events that can affect us regionally or statewide. These types of emergencies require special training and public information. The public is also encouraged to register their cell phone in the R9-1-1 system.

STRATEGIES:

- Reach out to public with presentations.
- Work with the Mobile Providers.
- Work with the Media.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Cameron County 9-1-1 Board, Law Enforcement Agencies, Fire Departments, EMS, Sheriff Department, Cities and Counties, Mobile Providers, Media, Public Events.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal are to get more people to register their cell phones on R9-1-1®.
HIDALGO & WILLACY EMERGENCY 9-1-1 GOALS

- To encourage efficient access to emergency care and public safety services
- Enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of 9-1-1 emergency reporting system
- Implement an Enterprise Geospatial Database Management System (EGDMS) for 9-1-1 call routing and 9-1-1 physical address validation
- Expand regional 9-1-1 public education program
- Improve public awareness of 9-1-1 program funding for the counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

LRGVDC 9-1-1 is proud to be one of the few 9-1-1 agencies across Texas to have a dedicated GIS department. This unique feature allows our agency the ability to closely monitor local issues that affect 9-1-1 service, such as changes to city limits and other jurisdictional boundaries, and reflect those changes in our 9-1-1 system within 24 hours. All GIS tasks are handled in house by well trained staff members to provide the ability to verify data in our GIS with classic field verification techniques.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: To encourage efficient access to emergency care and public safety services

OBJECTIVE: Promote cooperation between local, state, and federal public safety agencies as well as cell phone providers in our region

The coordination and cooperation of federal, state and local public safety agencies is a crucial part in Emergency Management. However, it is in 9-1-1’s best interest to collaborate with these agencies in case of an emergency. Whenever there is an emergency, 9-1-1 is the first thing that comes to mind, however, sometimes the emergency may require assistance from other agencies.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal are to increase coordination of public safety activities, provide a more accurate and efficient service, and establish a license/certification program.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote coordination and support of public safety programs for the region.
- Replace outdated equipment with the state of the art equipment.
- Establish a 9-1-1 certification program for public safety telecommunicators.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, City & County Law Enforcement, TXDPS, State/Federal Agencies, Homeland Security, TRAC-V.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of 9-1-1 emergency reporting System

OBJECTIVE: To continue to provide direct and equal access to 9-1-1 and improve overall quality of service for our regions callers in a financial and ethically responsible manner

With emergence of new communication technologies, we strive to provide a high standard of service to our callers. Currently, integrated and stand-alone TTY technology allow direct and equal access to members of the community who may be hard of hearing or speech disabled, as required by the FCC. SMS messaging or text to 9-1-1 service is major upcoming project that will allow for even more ways to access 9-1-1.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal are increased availability of services to ensure public access to emergency services by dialing 9-1-1, reduce the turnover rate in 9-1-1 system operations, increase efficient use of financial resources by promoting consolidation of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).

STRATEGIES:

- Enhancement of regional 9-1-1 communication network, including ability to handle SMS messaging and other next generation 9-1-1 functions.
- Provide ongoing telecommunication training to 9-1-1 call takers.
- Support equitable administration of 9-1-1 funds for the region.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, 9-1-1 Regional Advisory Committee, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, EMS, sheriff departments, cities and counties, Cameron County Emergency District, DSHS.
GOAL: Implement an enterprise geospatial database management system (EGDMS) for 9-1-1 call routing and physical address validation

OBJECTIVE: Maintain and develop geospatial data utilized for locating 9-1-1 callers. Also, incorporate next generation geodatabase schemas that will help with future next generation 9-1-1 requirements

With the increase demand of Geographic Information System (GIS) data, we must maintain, develop and implement new database schemas that will be used to locate 9-1-1 callers. The implementation of geospatial routing will allow us to develop new strategies to provide our citizens with the best possible service.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal are to maintain an accurate and efficient EGDMS for the local region, integration of systems that utilize GIS data such CAD. GIS data sharing among local, state and federal agencies such as DPS and FBI.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide and utilize GIS training and networking opportunities for LRGVDC 9-1-1 staff.
- Maintain and update 9-1-1 GIS data for LRGVDC 9-1-1 coverage area. Establish regular communication with city and county planning agencies to discuss updates and changes that affect 9-1-1 service.
- Exchange data with other GIS departments in the region.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, 9-1-1 Regional Advisory Committee, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, EMS, sheriff departments, city and county planning departments, Cameron County Emergency District, DSHS, RGVAUG, SCAUG, ESRI, TNRIS, URISA, NENA.
GOAL: Expand regional 9-1-1 public education program

OBJECTIVE: Improve the public's understanding of how the 9-1-1 emergency reporting system works and share useful information to promote correct and effective use of 9-1-1

Public education, in regards to health and safety, remains one of the most needed resources in our region. To address part of this, LRGVDC 9-1-1 has developed a 9-1-1 public education program to help the citizens of Hidalgo and Willacy counties understand how to properly utilize our evolving 9-1-1 emergency reporting system.

Measurable outcomes for this specific goal are less abuse of the 9-1-1 system, better emergency response to cell phone callers, increase public education awareness at all levels starting with children, teenagers, adults and senior citizens.

STRATEGIES:

- Partner with area fire prevention and police crime stopper programs to help spread message of how and when to properly report emergencies.
- Provide training opportunities to aforementioned agencies and the general public in an effort to strengthen overall understanding of 9-1-1 and its capabilities.
- Create a library of downloadable and printed materials for distribution at community events.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, 9-1-1 Regional Advisory Committee, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, EMS, sheriff departments, Proyecto Azteca, Cities and Counties, Cameron County Emergency District, DSHS, PETS, TNT, NPEF, NENA, Schools, Boy & Girls Clubs, Daycares.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Improve public awareness of 9-1-1 program funding for the counties of Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy.

OBJECTIVE: Educate and inform elected leaders and our public of how they can help their corresponding 9-1-1 programs receive complete funding

Educate and inform elected leaders, and general public, in regards to how 9-1-1 funds are administered throughout the State of Texas. Also, help local legislators understand the differences between the 3 types of 9-1-1 administrating entities in Texas (RPC’s, Home Rule Cities, and Communication Districts), and how they receive their funding.

STRATEGIES:

- Visit and educate State legislators on 9-1-1 challenges and issues that directly affect our residents, and why the funds are needed.
- Present to State legislators facts regarding how becoming a 9-1-1 communication district will positively impact service for residents in our area.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

State Legislators, LRGVDC, 9-1-1 Regional Advisory Committee, Law Enforcement Agencies, Fire Departments, EMS, Sheriff Departments, Cities and Counties, Cameron County Emergency District, DSHS, PETS,TNT, NPEF, NENA, Schools, Boy & Girls clubs, daycares.
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES
ENIRONMENTAL GOALS

- Conserve & protect the region’s Natural Resources while planning for orderly growth. (air, water, land, wildlife & minerals)
- Improve the system of Waste Reduction, Recycling & Disposal of sewage, solid waste, brush & hazardous materials
- Increase & conserve the supply of raw & treated water and eliminate water and environmental pollution problems
- Improve flood control/drainage
- Improve water quantity/quality

ACOMPLISHMENTS

- The region’s recycling rate has increased to about 20%
- Recycling centers have been established and are operating because of TCEQ/LRGVDC funding available
- Community awareness on environmental issues, water quality and water quantity issues
- The region has used CDBG Disaster Recovery funds to provide long term flood/drainage in order to protect and restore communities and continue to create a stable secure environment for individuals and families.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Conserve & protect the region’s natural resources while planning for orderly growth (air, water, land, wildlife & minerals)

OBJECTIVE: Encourage innovative projects which promote sustainable development

The conservation and protection of our natural resources is one of gradual evolution motivated initially by concerns over management of water resources. Efforts were later broadened to include protection of air, land, and water and hazardous and non-hazardous waste. The rapid population growth on both sides of the Rio Grande has meant increased demands for the region on the ability to pay for environmental infrastructure, to include capacity to treat drinking water and wastewater treatment and solid waste disposal. Coordination amongst all agencies, local, state, federal, private, non-profit and international agencies is necessary to accomplish objectives and improve and maintain quality of life for everyone involved.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to increase employment opportunities for sustainable development and encourage responsible, sustainable economic development; the efficient use of land infrastructure resources; provide leadership and policy guidance for these initiatives.

STRATEGIES:

- Disseminate information on the economic benefits of establishing sustainable development projects.
- Support implementation of “Smart Growth” ordinances and other regulations that preserve open space and agricultural projects.
- Involve community leaders to the greatest extent possible.
- Promote use of other alternative energy sources.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Improve the system of waste reduction, recycling and disposal of sewage, solid waste, brush and hazardous materials and develop responsible practices

OBJECTIVE: Update and implement regional solid waste management plan

The need to improve waste reduction, recycling, and disposal of sewage, solid waste, brush and hazardous waste which must be clearly understood by everyone involved from community leaders to the public sector.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to involve as many individuals as possible on development of Regional Solid Waste Management Plan, so that everyone understands the need for this type of programs.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote public education to reduce illegal dumping, increase enforcement and conduct cleanups.
- Increase and expand recycling programs and promote waste reduction and reuse.
- Develop programs for household hazardous waste collection.
- Support regional recycling initiatives and alliances to promote recycling initiatives and alliances to promote recycling programs, policies and projects.
- Develop more programs to address this goal.
- Assist and promote in establishing waste collection sites within the county’s rural areas including colonia areas.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Increase & conserve the supply of raw and treated water and eliminate water and environmental pollution problems.

OBJECTIVE: Maintain and implement regional water supply plan

Senate Bill 1 enacted by the Texas Legislature to address issues and concerns related to water conservation, water supply and drought management initiated the development of Regional Water Plans. The Regional Water Plans address a wealth of information to include population, water demands, water supply and key factors that impact water supply and water quality.

STRATEGIES:

- Update Regional Water Supply Plan including system upgrades.
- Support implementation of Regional Water Supply Plan (Region M),
- Support more funding for IBWC (water supply and drainage projects).
- Encourage public participation and seek federal legislative and state support for the implantation of the plan.
- Support efforts of the RGRWA in areas of seawater and Brackish Groundwater Desalination.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Improve flood control/drainage

OBJECTIVE: Coordinate drainage/flood control programs throughout the region and increase enforcement of limiting construction in flood prone areas

Improving flood control/drainage can only be accomplished with coordination and collaboration within all agencies involved, especially when creating and managing current and future projects that affect this goal.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to update FEMA maps, enhance flood control and have an adequate levee system.

STRATEGIES:

- Support the maintenance of the EDA “Regional Economic Adjustment Plan for Building Disaster Resilient Communities” for flood control.
- Encourage establishment of a regional task force to address flood control and drainage issues.
- Support coordination of county flood control activities for the region.
- Update FEMA maps
- Support Federal funding opportunities to rehabilitate levees under U.S. IBWC jurisdiction
- Include colonias in the discussion of needed drainage.
- Develop a clearinghouse for all drainage projects being conducted in the region so we can clearly see where work is being done and where work needs to be done.
- Develop a clearinghouse similar to MPO for all drainage projects.
- Work towards drainage codes in all cities where retention ponds and other non-engineered drainage solutions are developed by cities.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Improve water quality

OBJECTIVE: Improve the awareness and understanding of water quality issues

Improving water quality can only be accomplished by understanding and acknowledging that actions and measures must be planned and executed. Decades of human use along with urban growth have strained and degraded the quality of our water. Comprehensive Education and Outreach must take place to ensure that everyone involved understands the issue and how to address them properly.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to update FEMA maps, enhance flood control and have an adequate levee system.

STRATEGIES:

- Coordinate efforts to develop and research education and outreach material.
- Increase education and outreach activities to improve public awareness.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES GOALS

- Develop a Plan for Livable Communities for All Ages
- Use of Ergonomic Safety Approaches in Promoting Healthy and Safer Working Conditions for Farm Workers and the region
- Improve Health of Farm Workers Primary and Secondary Prevention
- To Develop a Comprehensive Network of Public/Private Service Delivery Systems that Promotes Healthy Communities
- To Identify & Enhance a Network of Public/Private Service Delivery Systems to Promote Healthy Communities
- Use of ergonomic safety approaches in promoting healthy and safer working conditions for the region
- Support and Improve Maternal and Infant Health Issues in South Texas
- Improve Mental Health Services in the Lower Rio Grande Valley
- Increase awareness of mental health services in the Lower Rio Grande Valley
- Improve prevention and treatment services for substance abuse
- Improve prevention and treatment services for substance abuse
- Promote regional services for Veteran’s in South Texas
- Increase professional volunteer opportunities to utilize the wealth of experience and talents available in the community

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Set up the web resource site for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities – www.lrg.tx.networkofcare.org
  
The LRGVDC is the designated Aging and Disability Resource Center for the Lower Rio Grande Valley. It is the trusted resource to improve access to long-term care services to the aging and disabled.

- The LRGVDC is the CBO for the Community-based Care Transitions Program under Section 3026 of the Affordable Care Act with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). It coordinates with community services to reduce the 30-day hospital re-admission rate.
GOAL: Develop a plan for livable communities for all ages

OBJECTIVE: Assist local communities to develop a plan to meet the impact of an aging population and maintain the infrastructure for all ages

Work with local community leaders to assess their resources within their communities. Work with local community leaders and the private sector to develop local plans. Provide training and technical assistance to local community leaders to address different aspects on the impact to their communities by an increasing aging population.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to have a development of a livable community for all ages.

STRATEGIES:

- Work with local community leaders to assess their resources within their communities.
- Work with local community leaders and the private sector to develop local plans.
- Provide training and technical assistance to local community leaders to address different aspects on the impact to their communities by an increasing aging population with challenges and disabilities.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, Area Agency on Aging, Counties, Cities, Universities, Colleges, Private Sector, State and Federal Agencies, School of Rural Public Health Community Health Centers, Promotora Programs, and Hope Family Center.
GOAL: Use of ergonomic safety approaches in promoting healthy and safer working conditions for farm workers

OBJECTIVE: Improve health of farm workers through primary and secondary prevention

Assess farm worker awareness of occupational safety; especially ergonomic practices. Discuss findings with farm workers, healthcare providers, community organizations, and health policy makers. Develop educational/informational materials on farm workers. Seek funding to support pilot programs and evaluation.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to have improved ergonomic safety of farm workers.

STRATEGIES:

- Assess farm worker awareness of occupational safety, especially ergonomic practices.
- Discuss findings with farm workers, healthcare providers, community organizations and health policy makers.
- Develop educational/informational materials on farm workers.
- Seek funding to support pilot programs and evaluation.
- Create a smoke free workplace that will protect employees and benefit businesses by cutting down on cost of health and insurance benefits.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Texas Migrant Council, L.U.P.E., South Texas Center, DSHS, MHP, Milagros Program at STC, Farm Bureau, USDA, United FARM Workers, School of Rural Public Health, LRGVDC, CDC, NIOSH, private foundations, Schools, Universities, other related agencies and other available funding sources, TRLA, Workforce Solutions, MET.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Improve health of farm workers primary and secondary prevention

OBJECTIVE: Assess and improve farm workers’ living standards and access to medical care

Assess farm worker awareness of the health significance of living standards & FQHC’s. Discuss findings with farm workers, healthcare providers, community organizations and health policy makers. Encourage public participation. Seek funding to support pilot programs and evaluation.

Measurable Outcomes is to have functional families by encouraging public participation to support funding for pilot programs and make farm workers aware of the health significance of living standards.

STRATEGIES:

- Assess farm worker awareness of the health significance of living standards & FQHC’s.
- Discuss findings with farm workers, healthcare providers, community organizations and health policy makers.
- Encourage public participation.
- Seek funding to support pilot programs and evaluation.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, Texas Migrant Council, L.U.P.E., South Texas Center, DSHS, MHP, Milagros Program at STC, Farm Bureau, United Farm Workers, USDA, School of Rural Public Health, Promotora Programs, CDC, NIOSH, private foundations, UFW, United Migrant Opportunity Services, HHSC, MET and other related agencies.
GOAL: To develop a comprehensive network of public/private service delivery systems that promotes healthy communities

OBJECTIVE: Maximize coordination and partnership building between federal, state and local agencies or employers

Support the continuation of a standardized set of data to be used by public and private sectors for service delivery. Support the expansion of a regional information and referral system. Develop a free consumer-friendly resource guide to aid the community to locate specific services. Develop family education programs that facilitate and promote self-help in managing stressful situations.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to have a standard data list to facilitate referrals, an operating system with annual update, empower communities including seniors to locate services with minimal effort and support, as well as to help alleviate family stress and promote caregiver wellness.

STRATEGIES:

- Support the continuation of a standardized set of data to be used by public and private sectors for service delivery.
- Support the expansion of a regional information and referral system.
- Develop a free consumer-friendly resource guide to aid the community to locate specific services.
- Develop family education programs that facilitate and promote self-help in managing stressful situations, traumas and critical incidents.
- The need of sharing information on a local level for it to have an impact in the public community.
- Integration of medical and health research into health practice.
- Coordinate with local Community Based Organizations, Faith based Communities, and local governments to seek financial support for humanitarian aid toward undocumented individuals.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

HHSC, LRGVDC- AAA, Higher Education Institutions, State/Federal Agencies, Non-Profit Organizations, CCRGV, Private and Public Entities, School of Rural Public Health, 211, TTC-MHMR, Adult Literacy, Community Services, UTPA Center on Aging and Health, Red Cross, Financial Institutions, Job Readiness Training, Boys & Girls Clubs, Domestic Violence Shelters, Faith Based Communities, and Baylor University.
GOAL: To identify & enhance a network of public/private service delivery systems to promote healthy communities

OBJECTIVE: Coordinate the identification of social infrastructure needs, including but not limited to nutrition access, social services access, preventive healthcare, emergency healthcare, and general healthcare

Conduct public forums to identify Regional needs. Identify projects that meet identified needs and develop a comprehensive service delivery plan that incorporates service integration.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to identify unmet needs and resources as well as to promote the program to meet regional needs, strategic prevention framework being implemented and to promote a comprehensive service delivery plan for Health & Human Services providers.

STRATEGIES:

- Conduct Public Forums to identify Regional needs.
- Identify projects that meet identified needs.
- Develop a Comprehensive Service Delivery Plan that incorporates service integration.
- Include information like supporting farmers markets to make the availability and support within the community.
- Include mental health prevention services as part of community-wide critical incidents.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: To develop a comprehensive network of public/private service delivery systems that promotes healthy communities

OBJECTIVE: Identify and develop programs to prevent, reduce, and control type II diabetes

Assess current programs in the region and elsewhere. Discuss findings with community organizations, schools, healthcare providers & policy makers. Develop informational materials on discuss findings with community organizations, schools, healthcare, providers & policy makers. Develop information materials on diskettes for the general public. Seek funding to support preventative efforts. Support the development of a Regional Diabetes Research Institute.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to have compendium of programs available with types of clients, efficacy, etc., implementation of pilot programs and other changes to make interventions more appropriate, increase public awareness of appropriate diabetes control methods, increased efficacy of diabetes prevention & control at all ages, and build a Regional Diabetes Research Institute.

STRATEGIES:

- Assess current programs in the region and elsewhere.
- Discuss findings with community organizations, schools, healthcare providers & policy makers.
- Develop informational materials on diskettes for the general public.
- Seek funding to support preventative efforts.
- Support the development of a Regional Diabetes Research Institute.
- Coordinate educational efforts with Medicaid State Office and Managed Care Organizations.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

South Texas Center, other universities faculty and research findings (UTB, UTPA, etc.) local hospitals, local diabetes control programs, nonprofit organizations, CBO’s, LRGVDC, School of Rural Public Health, CDC, NIH, private foundations, DSHS, and American Diabetes Association.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Use of ergonomic safety approaches in promoting healthy and safer working conditions for the region

OBJECTIVE: Improve health for the regional workforce through primary and secondary prevention

Use ergonomic approaches developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to evaluate and improve local practices.

Measurable Outcome for this specific goal is the number of policies that are adopted by business owners.

STRATEGIES:

- Use ergonomic approaches developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to evaluate and improve local practices.

- Create a smoke and drug free workplace that will protect employees and benefit businesses by cutting down on cost of health and insurance benefits.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, Texas Migrant Council, L.U.P.E., South Texas Center, DSHS, Migrant Health Promotion, Milagros Program at STC, Farm Bureau, CDC, NIOSH, School of Rural Public Health, private foundations and other available funding sources, TRLA, Workforce Solution, CVF, and DARS, MET.
GOAL: Support and improve maternal and infant health issues in South Texas

OBJECTIVE: Use “Healthy Mother” principles (PAHO) to assess services and suggest improvements

Assess current services and health education approaches. Discuss findings with healthcare providers, community organizations and health policy makers. Develop informational materials on maternal and infant services. Seek funding to support pilot programs and evaluation.

STRATEGIES:

- Assess current services and health education approaches.
- Discuss findings with healthcare providers, community organizations and health policy makers.
- Develop informational materials on maternal and infant services.
- Seek funding to support pilot programs and evaluation of specific issues (i.e. autism, early onset of diabetes).

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

South Texas Center, DSHS, medical association, Blue Book list of health practitioners, WIC, Holy Family Birthing Center, local organizations dealing with pregnancy, birth and infants, School of Rural Public Health, Domestic Violence and Homeless Shelters, LRGVDC, CDC, NIH, private foundation, hospital foundations, and WIC Easter Seals’ ECI (Healthy babies initiative).
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Improve mental health services in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

OBJECTIVE: Maintain mental health services appropriate for the population

Develop a handbook of services available with credentials of staff, types of clients, etc. Discuss findings with mental health providers & policy makers. Obtain and disseminate educational materials on mental health for general public. Seek federal and state legislative support for implementing process; seek other funding opportunities. Assess and develop programs/facilities for vulnerable populations (e.g., children, Veterans) for the RGV. Recruit mental health providers.

**Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to develop a regional handbook for easier access to MH services, recommend specific improvements in services offered and in preventative measures, increase public awareness of mental health issues, addition or reconfiguration of programs to achieve the most effective prevention, a manual of programs available with target populations (e.g., afterschool programs), and increase mental health services in the RGV.**

**STRATEGIES:**

- Develop a handbook of services available with credentials of staff, types of clients, etc.
- Discuss findings with mental health providers & policy makers.
- Obtain and disseminate educational materials on mental health for general public.
- Seek federal and state legislative support for implementing process; seek other funding opportunities.
- Assess and develop programs/facilities for vulnerable populations (e.g., children, Veterans) for the RGV.
- Recruit mental health providers.
- Provide mental health services to brain injured or brain surgery victims.
- Develop a strategy to address the need of prescriptions when no physician is available.
- Develop community-based information (PSAs) to educate the community on efficacy based treatment options.

**POTENTIAL RESOURCES:**

C-BIRD, Mental Health Initiative Collaboration, TTBH, South Texas Center, Hospitals, School of Rural Public Health and all Domestic Violence Shelters, LRGVDC, TRAC-V, DSHS, private foundations, National Institute of Mental Health, SAMHSA, Schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, related organizations, Homeless Shelters, RAHC, higher education, HHSC, CBO’s, Judicial System, Veteran Organizations, Veterans Health Services, Trauma Centers, Modern View, and South Texas Epilepsy Center.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Increase awareness of mental health services in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

OBJECTIVE: Improve mental health services appropriate for the population

Discuss findings with local organizations & policy makers. Encourage public participation. Seek federal and state legislative support for preventative support for preventative programs and other funding sources. Train peace officers to become licensed as mental health officers.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to recommend specific improvements in programs offered, increase public awareness of mental health issues, addition or reconfiguration of programs to achieve the most effective prevention, and to train peace officers to become licensed mental health peace officers.

STRATEGIES:

- Discuss findings with local organizations & policy makers.
- Encourage public participation.
- Seek federal and state legislative support for preventative programs and other funding sources.
- Train peace officers to become licensed as mental health officers.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, C-Bird, Mental Health Initiative Collaboration, Schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, School of Rural Public Health, related organizations, DSHS, private foundations, NIMH, SAMHSA, TCOLE, Mental Health Peace Officer curriculum, Mental Health Director, and Crisis Intervention Techniques Course.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Improve prevention and treatment services for substance abuse

OBJECTIVE: Maintain and increase services to meet the continuum of care needs

Obtain funding opportunities for universal, indicated, and selected population to prevent substance abuse in all populations. Obtain funding opportunities for gaps in treatments services for all populations. Develop resource materials on substance abuse prevention and treatment. Seek federal and state legislative support for infrastructure development to meet gaps in services.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to support funding for prevention in schools, communities, colonias and other rural areas. Funding approved for FY 09-11. Support funding for treatment service expansion to underserved communities, such as an Adolescent Treatment Facility in Cameron/Hidalgo, increase public awareness of substance abuse issues. Public Resource Center in Pharr/Brownsville. Additional services to meet the continuum of care, improve access, and decrease substance abuse.

STRATEGIES:

- Obtain funding opportunities for universal, indicated, and selected population to prevent substance abuse in all populations.
- Obtain funding opportunities for gaps in treatments services for all populations.
- Develop resource materials on substance abuse prevention and treatment.
- Seek federal and state legislative support for infrastructure development to meet gaps in services.
- Develop a resource directory with credentials of staff, types of client's services, etc. for substance abuse individuals seeking services.
- Develop housing options (transitional housing / detox centers) for individuals with substance abuse issues.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc., SAMHSA/CSAP, DSHS, Office of the Governor, HHSC, NIH, and TDHCA.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Improve prevention and treatment services for substance abuse

OBJECTIVE: Assess and develop evidence based programs proven effective to the Population and develop a provider network to increase services

STRATEGIES:

- Assess and develop evidence based programs proven effective to the population.
- Develop a provider network to increase services.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:


Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to have resources of evidence based programs providers can implement (approved through SAMHSA) and increase in substance abuse services in the RGV. Region 11 Plan for services submitted to DSHS.
GOAL: Promote regional services for Veterans in South Texas

OBJECTIVE: Generate support for Veteran health care programs

Support Expansion of Veterans Outpatient Clinic and other Health Services. Identify funding opportunities for Veterans and their families (include services for behavioral health and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Support the development of a new Veteran’s hospital.

STRATEGIES:

- Support Expansion of Veterans Outpatient Clinic and other Health Services.
- Identify funding opportunities for Veterans and their families (include services for behavioral health and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).
- Support the development of a new Veteran’s hospital.
- Identify funding and support for community based services for veterans and their families.
- Voucher system for veterans. Since we do not have a hospital.
- Improve the current voucher system and continue to support and enroll doctors to support the voucher system for veterans.
- Support affordable housing programs for veterans, to include modifications for disabilities for veterans whether or not they have DVA assistance.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

USDVA, Texas Veterans Land Board, all Veteran Organizations, School of Rural Public Health, Cities/Counties, LRGVDC, Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc., Modern View, and SAMHSA/CSAT.
GOAL: Increase professional volunteer opportunities to utilize the wealth of experience and talents available in the community

OBJECTIVE: Promote the development, improvement, and enhancement of existing volunteer organizations

Develop a referral service that will link professional volunteers to areas of need. Develop a clearinghouse of services and volunteers. Identify agencies that need volunteers and implement a mentoring program for youth.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal is to create an organized and up-to-date database of Volunteers and Volunteer Programs for the region. Identify and utilize these valuable resources.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop a referral service that will link professional volunteers to area of need.
- Develop a clearinghouse of services and volunteers.
- Identify agencies that need volunteers.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

RSVP, United Way, DSHS, Volunteer Organizations, CCRGV, LRGVDC, Red Cross, Health and Human Services Commission-Office of Eligibility Services, School of Rural Public Health, Chamber of Commerce, 211, Cameron County, Homeless Coalition, DADS, Community Council of the Rio Grande Valley, Domestic Violence Shelters, Professional Organizations, Boys & Girls Clubs, Boys & Girls Scouts of America, Mana de Hidalgo, Youth Professionals, Police Explorers and local City Parks & Recreation Centers.
HIDALGO COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
HIDALGO COUNTY
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION GOALS

- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvement and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
- Establish a Rural Planning Organization (RPO) for the rural areas of the Region not covered by an existing MPO.

Links: www.hcmpo.org
GOAL: Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users

OBJECTIVE: Decrease the number of vehicle-vehicle and vehicle-pedestrian incidents through the transportation planning process

The HCMPO initiated the Incident Management Program (IMP) in 2005 to address safety in Hidalgo County. It has dedicated the last 4 years to processing accident reports from cities in Hidalgo County for the years of 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and is currently working on 2007, in an effort to give insight to the cities of the locations where most of the accidents or “hot spots” are taking place.

**Measurable Outcomes:** through the identification of high incident areas, the HCMPO hopes to better plan for additional safety attributes which will lower the amount of vehicle collision incidents.

**STRATEGIES:**

- The HCMPO’s IMP identifies and analyzes highway safety problems and opportunities.
- The HCMPO’s IMP is based on accurate and timely safety data provided directly by the police departments in Hidalgo County.
- The HCMPO’s IMP is a continuous program which enables the study of existing “hot spots” and the identification of new ones, analyzing the behavior and progression of “hot spots”.
- The results from the IMP are incorporated into the HCMPO’s website, giving insight to the cities about their accident problem areas, giving them an opportunity to address them.
- The HCMPO’s IMP results will be a key element of the project selection criteria utilized for project ranking in the 2010-2035 MTP update, making safety a factor in the transportation planning process.
- By incorporating the IMP results into the project selection criteria of the 2010-2035 MTP update, the HCMPO will also be incorporating safety as a factor in the TIP.

**POTENTIAL RESOURCES:**

Cities/Counties, LRGVDC, FHWA, TxDOT, local law enforcement agencies and Private Sector.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users

OBJECTIVE: Provide a transportation plan that mitigates the possible sudden disruptions of the transportation system by either man-made or natural disasters

The terrorist events of September 11th, 2001, emphasized that effective coordination and communication among the many different operating agencies in a region is absolutely essential. Such coordination is needed to allow enforcement, security, and safety responses to occur in an expeditious manner, while at the same time permitting the transportation system to handle the overwhelming public response to the incident. The public needs to have clear and concise information about the situation and what actions need to be taken.

Although the immediate organizational response to security incidents and disasters will be the responsibility of security and public safety agencies, there is an important role that MPOs can play in promoting coordinated planning in anticipation of unexpected events or natural disasters. The MPO can also provide a centralized location of information on transportation system conditions as well as local and national responses that might be useful in an emergency. Hurricane and disaster evacuation plans are a good starting point and may be sufficient for the types of incidents anticipated.

Measurable Outcomes: through proper planning the HCMPO will facilitate evacuation routes and measures should incidents occur that require an evacuation of the area due to natural or manmade incidents.

STRATEGIES:

- **Prevention**- It has several components ranging from stopping an attack to providing improved facility designs that prevent large scale destructions. Surveillance, monitoring, and sensing technologies will play an important role in the prevention phase of an incident.
- **Mitigation**- Reducing the harmful impact of an attack as it occurs and in the immediate aftermath. It entails identifying the most effective routes for emergency vehicles as well as for the evacuation of large numbers of people.
• Monitoring- Recognizing that an incident is underway, characterizing it, and monitoring its development.
• Recovery- Facilitating rapid reconstruction of services after an incident.
• Investigation- Determining what happened in an attack, how it happened, and who is responsible.
• Institutional Learning- Conducting a self-assessment of organizational actions before, during, and after an incident.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight

OBJECTIVE: Provide access to all mode of transportation regardless of age or abilities

The metropolitan transportation planning process requires the participation of citizens, state, local and federal agencies, public and private transportation operators, the private sector, and other stakeholders, it is possible to identify the mobility needs for populations such as minorities, the underserved, the elderly, and the disabled amongst others, in order to provide them with more accessible, affordable, and efficient public transportation thru programs such as JARC and New Freedom. It is also possible to determine the needs for the mobility of goods by addressing factors such as congestion, air quality, and safety, amongst others.

Measurable Outcomes: provide opportunities for all citizens to have greater access to many modes of transportation such as bicycling, hike/bike trails, and mass transit. Preserve right of way for future projects so as to minimize the negative impacts upon the community and environment with better project planning.

STRATEGIES:

- Special transportation studies and projects such as a multimodal study, a regional transit plan, a hazmat study, and a congestion management study Encourage establishment of a regional task force to address flood control and drainage issues.
- Implementation of the bicycle plan in 1996 aids in increasing the accessibility and mobility of people by providing an alternative to the use of the roadway network.
- Right of Way preservation in the Thoroughfare plan increases the accessibility and mobility of freight by securing expansion potential when future additional lanes or the widening of existing ones is necessary in a roadway to accommodate a considerable increase in freight movement.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Cities/Counties, LRGVDC, TxDOT, FTA, Valley Metro, McAllen Metro, local cycling groups, Workforce Solutions and Private Sector.
GOAL: Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvement and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns

OBJECTIVE: Promote energy conservation and improve the quality of life thru the effort by all stakeholders to give priority to the most critical projects in the community

Enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements, since stakeholders establish priorities thru a collaborative effort taking into consideration the vulnerable aspects and needs of: the sensitive environmental areas; colonias; populations such as minorities, the underserved, the elderly, and the disabled; federal lands, historical markers and natural preserves; public transportation; congestion, and economic development, amongst others.

STRATEGIES:

- Special transportation studies and projects such as a multimodal study, a regional transit plan, a hazmat study, a congestion management study, an incident management program.
- Aid in promoting energy conservation and improving the quality of life by utilizing an alternative mode to the highway system and by promoting a healthier mode of transportation in the community.
- Improvement of the transit system enhances the environment, promotes energy conservation, and improves the quality of life by reducing the number of vehicles in the highway system and at the same time by reducing the emission of contaminants as a direct result from having fewer vehicles on the roads.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

OBJECTIVE: Assure a planning process that invests in and preserves the current infrastructure

Special transportation studies such as a pavement roughness index incorporated in the congestion management process study, or a TMMP, aid in identifying the needs and funding levels required for rehabilitation and maintenance, making the preservation of the transportation system a priority.

Measurable Outcomes: a reduction in the cost of replacing, repairing and constructing additional infrastructure through the preservation of the current system. Multi-modal transportation encouragement and promotion such as cycling, and mass transit will reduce the number of daily users on the current system and thus extend the useful life of the system and reduce replacement costs.

STRATEGIES:

- Right of Way preservation via the Thoroughfare plan also preserves the existing transportation system by securing expansion potential for future additional lanes.
- Promote multi-modalism which could cause an increase in the use of the transit system, walking and bicycling, which would assist in the preservation of the existing transportation system by having fewer vehicles on the roadways.
- Preservation of the existing transportation system by determining the age of the existing roads, placing emphasis on roadways older than 20 years.
- Evaluate the connectivity between different modes of transportation such as highways, pedestrian and bicycle lanes, public transit routes, school routes, and amongst others.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Cities/Counties, Valley Metro, Metro McAllen, Bicycling Advocacy Groups, LRGVDC, TxDOT, FHWA, FTA and Private Sector.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Support the establishment of a Rural Planning Organization (RPO) for the rural areas of the Region not covered by an existing MPO

OBJECTIVE: To address the needs and desires for continued infrastructure and transportation needs within the region that are not necessarily addressed by a Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The HCMPO supports effort by the LRGVDC to address and meet the needs for transportation planning in areas not served by an MPO. A RPO could address transportation needs for citizens outside of Census defined Urbanized Areas, and coordinate efforts with existing MPO’s to produce a seamless transportation planning effort.

STRATEGIES:

- Support the LRGVDC in creation of RPO’s.
- Provide partnerships for the seamless planning efforts of the region as a whole.
- Provide information and support in transportation planning for the region as a whole.
- Provide staff support for the identification of current and future transportation projects so efforts are continuous and coordinated.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Cities/Counties, LRGVDC, FHWA, TxDOT, Regional mobility Authorities and Private Sector.
HOMELAND SECURITY
HOMELAND SECURITY GOALS

- Enhance Homeland Security In The Lower Rio Grande Valley
- Provide the Resources to Maintain a Comprehensive Local Emergency Management Program and Assist in Enhancing Local Emergency Management Plans
- Improve The Capability Of Local Governments To Prepare For And Respond To Terrorist And Other Hazardous Incidents By Providing Suitable Training For Emergency Responders
- Provide Resources And Assistance To Counties And Cities To Establish And Maintain A Statewide Interoperable Radio Communication System That Is Accessible By Local, Regional, State And Federal Responding Agencies when needed
- Enhance and Promote Citizen Volunteer Programs Under The Citizen Corps Program (CCP) Within The Region
- Strengthen The Capacity of Communities To Address Public Health Issues Along The U.S./Mexico Border
- Bi-National Coordination Of Health Awareness Campaigns
- Increase The Security of The Region Regarding Environmental and Bio-Terrorist Threats

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Assist in establishing NIMS Implementation Plans to ensure compliance for individual jurisdictions and completed the NIMS requirements throughout the region.
- New employees completed the NIMS IS 100, 200, 700, and 800 courses; ICS 300-400 trainings were conducted.
- Assisted in updating Emergency Management Plans before the 5th anniversary plan dates to meet state requirement levels (Intermediate or Advanced).
- Regional Implementation Plan was revised.
- Hidalgo and Cameron Counties secured grant funds to develop a Hazard Mitigation Action Plans.
- Conducted various training opportunities for first responders throughout the region.
- Enhanced communication, cooperation and coordination between local, state and federal Public Safety.
- Support local, state, and federal law enforcement operations such as Operation Unified Alliance, Operation Stonegarden, Operation Borderstar which gathers valuable intelligence and operating methods.
- Established a Joint Operations Intelligence Center (JOIC) in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
• Implemented a regional Law Enforcement Emergency Regional Response Team (LEERRT) SWAT.
• Drills/Full-Scale Exercises to include Bi-National Terrorism HAZ-MAT event, UTB Active Shooter Exercise.
• Increased interdiction by Law Enforcement to reduce drug trafficking and human trafficking.
• Increased surveillance along the border within Public Safety due to the implementation of Un-manned Aerial Vehicles, UAV.
• Established the Texas Border Security campaign (DPS “Operation Border Star” and “Operation Stonegarden”).
• Improved interoperable communications in the region.
• Created a Regional Interoperable Communications Plan and Standard Operating Procedure that includes P25 digital radio equipment.
• Creation of Rio Grande Valley Communications Group Governance Committee to oversee regional communications implementation.
• Conducted communications exercises to test interoperable communications to include weekly testing.
• Accomplishment of the State’s NECP Goal 2.
• Secured funding for the Border Interoperability Demonstration Project.
• Standardization of all mobile (ACU-1000) interoperable communication systems.
• Funded P25 digital radios through SHSP grant funds.
• Conducted interoperability basic training and certified COM-L’s (Communication Leaders), which has produced two certified COM-L’s and one COM-T.
• Upgraded Regional Interoperable Communications Plan (RICP) and SOP has been updated and revised.
• Assisted with Operation Lone Star is a joint military and civil authority strategic national stockpile exercise with a focus on medical readiness, mass prophylaxis response, which encompassed nearly 10,000 participant’s region-wide.
• Conducted Emergency Management Planning Grant (EMPG) required exercises.
• Increased training for public through Citizen’s Academy Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Programs.
• Specialized equipment purchased for the Sight/Hearing impaired and Non-English speaking persons.
• Utilize social media for bi-lingual/bi-cultural information.
• Enhanced public health capabilities such as mass fatality management, medical surge, mass prophylaxis, and CBRNE detection, response and decontamination.
• Cooperative efforts with the Department State Human Services (DSHS) as it relates to Zoonatic activity and other potential outbreaks.
• CBRNE Awareness Training for local public health and public safety personnel.
• Assessment, discovery, and interdiction capabilities for chemical threats are in place.
• Systems are in place to identify sources for substances identified as potential chemical attacks.
• Local first responders are trained and equipped to quickly detect chemical, biological and radiological materials and/or exposure at the scene of a major incident.
• Local medical facilities are included in the Critical Infrastructure Identification Plan.
• Local, State, and Federal agencies in CBRNE defense successfully identified chemical or radiological materials through inspections, surveillance, security, counterintelligence, and infrastructure protection efforts.
• Local first responders, including fire rescue and emergency medical services (EMS), recognized the presence of chemical, biological or radiological materials during emergency responses and took appropriate measures to respond.
• Law Enforcement CBRNE out of state training.
• Implementation of Spanish NOAA Severe Early Weather Warning Notification System.

Links:  http://www.governor.texas.gov/homeland
GOAL: Enhance homeland security in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

OBJECTIVE: Coordinate efforts for Homeland Security

Homeland security in the LRGV region encompasses all efforts, both strategic and tactical, that optimally position our region to prevent, protect from, prepare for, and respond to all hazards. The term “all hazards” refers to all disasters, both human-caused and natural, from a terrorist attack to a catastrophic hurricane. Homeland security includes all activities aimed at preventing terrorist attacks within the region, gathering intelligence and analyzing threats, reducing vulnerability, protecting our critical infrastructures, and coordinating responses to all hazards.

Although the LRGV region has dedicated significant resources to the prevention of terrorist acts and protection of our critical infrastructures and key resources, not every disaster can be prevented. The region must continue enhancing its capabilities and prepare to respond and recover from man-made and natural disasters. Addressing the consequences of a disaster requires a unified effort encompassing multiple jurisdictions and disciplines, including emergency management, law enforcement, firefighting, public works, public health, citizen volunteers, recovery workers, health and safety professionals, emergency medical services and the private sector. Our goal is to minimize loss of life in the event of a disaster and normalize life during the recovery process as rapidly as possible. We will build on the significant success achieved to date.

Councils of Government (COG’s) are provided homeland security grant funds to perform homeland security planning and emergency preparedness related activities within their regions. As a result, the approach that the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) has taken in addressing emergency planning across all jurisdiction functional disciplines has improved the effectiveness of emergency response providers.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to update the strategic plan for emergency response, provide additional training opportunities to enhance first responder’s capabilities, establish a seamless communication system, increase in the number of forums on emergency response, identify critical gaps and sources of funding to target priority project, and meet state and federal requirements and compliance.
STRATEGIES:

- Enhance and maintain a strategic plan for first responders.
- Facilitate coordinated Homeland Security training opportunities.
- Support implementation of a regional seamless communications system to enhance Homeland Security.
- Provide forums on emergency response activities for Homeland Security.
- Assist local governments in completing risk/threat/capability assessments are required by Department of Homeland Security.
- Aid local governments and response organizations in meeting requirements for adopting and implementing National Incident Management System (NIMS).

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Provide the resources to maintain a comprehensive local emergency management program and assist in enhancing local emergency management plans

OBJECTIVE: Ensure that the regional evaluation of the region’s local government capabilities is complete for all jurisdictions by encouraging inter-jurisdictional emergency management programs to incorporate smaller cities

The LRGV region’s ability to prevent terrorist attacks, combat violent criminal organizations, and ensure disaster preparedness requires thorough, integrated planning at every level. Effective planning is the key to building the ability to shape the future. Emergency Management Plans are a clear indicator of how well prepared jurisdictions, agencies, and individuals are to prevent, protect, respond to and recover from all hazards. For LRGV jurisdictions, corporations and businesses, and individual citizens to be ready to handle the full array of hazards they may experience, they must be familiar with the plans that concern them. They must routinely validate the effectiveness of their plans, and ensure that a changing environment has not rendered a key portion of a critical plan un-executable.

Through a current and up-to-date Emergency Management Plan local governments have addressed the issues of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. The plan cites the legal authority for conducting emergency operations, describes the hazards that the community faces, explains the general concept of emergency operations and assigns responsibility for emergency planning and operations. LRGV jurisdictions must conduct periodic reviews and updates of homeland security related plans. As a minimum, plans should be reviewed annually and updated every five years. They are reviewed and updated more frequently as situations warrant. Developing and maintaining the plan is a crucial and vital task, and the LRGVDC will assist with preparing and/or updating the jurisdictions’ respective emergency plan. If there is insufficient staff at the smaller jurisdictions, meetings will be conducted between the larger neighboring jurisdictions or their County entity in securing an inter-jurisdictional or joint ordinance that will cover the smaller jurisdiction in the Emergency Management Plan.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to establish effective regional collaborations and increase the regions level of readiness by maintaining local emergency management plans, establish communication “WEB EOC” for the region’s Emergency Operation Center (EOC’s) and secure preparedness funding. Provide assistance to those counties and cities that have Emergency Management Plans, which are outdated or do not meet state standards. Train cities and counties with limited staff and resources to develop their own plans. Distribute Emergency Management Plans with command staff and regional entities.
STRATEGIES:

- Review and assist with the writing of emergency management plans.
- Provide a mechanism for entities to collaborate on the emergency management plans to eliminate duplication or over reliance on an agency.
- Assist in the completion of a regional assessment for newly-created jurisdictions and update regional assessments.
- Identify any improvements needed in the system to provide hazard information and emergency preparedness and response guidance to local Emergency Management Coordinator’s (EMC’s) and general public.
- Provide legal documents and state guidelines establishing an emergency management program and plans through Commission Court Orders, City Ordinances and Joint Resolutions.
- Distribute state guidelines and eligibility requirements to forty-six (46) jurisdictions on the basic and intermediate level of emergency preparedness.
- Continue to facilitate the implementation requirements of NIMS for the thirty-five (35) currently eligible jurisdictions within the region. Update the current thirty-five (35) approved emergency management plans and specific annexes with new NIMS standards.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Improve the capability of local governments to prepare for and respond to terrorist and other hazardous incidents by providing suitable training for emergency responders

OBJECTIVE: Maintain a listing of state and federal courses to include information on terrorist CBRNE events and WMD

Preventing a terrorist attack requires law enforcement, security personnel, medical/EMS first responders and volunteers trained to recognize the suspicious activities, tradecraft, and precursor crimes that often precede a terrorist attack. These can include theft of explosives or chemicals used in explosives, surveillance activities, rental of self-storage space to store chemicals or mixing apparatus, unusual deliveries to residential or rural addresses, signs of chemical fires or toxic odors in hotels or apartment complexes, the modification of vehicles to handle heavier loads, small test explosions in remote areas, and other suspicious activities.

Recognizing, responding to, and reporting precursor activities and crimes must be incorporated into law enforcement, homeland security and medical/EMS first responder personnel training and activities across the region. Combating violent criminal organizations requires law enforcement officials, security personnel, and citizens who can recognize the indicators of a growing gang presence and know how to respond appropriately. Training to recognize and combat the spread of violent criminal organizations must be an indispensable part of the training regimen for law enforcement personnel at every level in every jurisdiction.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide a specialized training listing of state courses for local first responders.
- Establish a program to expand training opportunities through training provided by state-level associations and existing competent training providers.
- Determine the homeland security training requirements within the State, and develop an implementation strategy to address shortfalls.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to meet state and federal training requirements and to identify and address significant training needed within the region.
POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Provide resources and assistance to counties and cities to establish and maintain a statewide interoperable radio communication system that is accessible by local, regional, state and federal responding agencies when needed

OBJECTIVE: Identify the Communication vulnerabilities and/or deficiencies within the COG region and secure funding resources for agencies to meet identified needs and deficiencies

Communications interoperability is the ability of public safety agencies (e.g., police, fire, EMS) and service agencies (e.g., public works, transportation, and hospitals) to talk within and across agencies and jurisdictions via radio and associated communications systems, exchanging voice, data and/or video with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, and when authorized.

Successful response to major emergency incidents requires a coordinated response by public safety and public service men and women from multiple agencies and jurisdictions. Emergency responders must have direct communications between agencies and practitioners via wireless radio and associated communications systems to exchange voice, data and/or video with one another. Direct communications must be available in real time, when needed, and when authorized, in order for responders to adequately discharge their obligation to protect life and property in a safe, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

National and regional level public safety information systems provide unique and invaluable capabilities to the homeland security communities within the region. Local jurisdictions must fully leverage state and federal information sources and channels and remain engaged in all state level technology initiatives so that information continues to flow within the region in a way that optimally supports investigative and intelligence activities in Texas. Regional level development ensures the provision of robust, interoperable communications among and between local, regional, state, and federal partners.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to establish accountability on existing inventory and evaluate requirements and use the information when making recommendations on distribution of regional funding. Enhance standard operating procedures and training for all public safety. Establish Level 6 of Interoperable communications.
STRATEGIES:

- Facilitate the collection of data and equipment on regional communication systems and information on the jurisdictions in the region.
- Collaborate with existing Homeland Security Advisory Committee, Rio Grande Valley Communication Group and other Steering Committees and three (3) counties to identify the best avenue to continue to enhance a statewide interoperable communications system by the target date of 2015.
- Encourage the forty-six (46) jurisdictions to participate as a region and develop projects that will improve the LRGVDC region and coincide with the LRGVDC Regional Interoperability Communications Plan (RICP) and State Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) which addresses Interoperable communications standards and procedures.
- Disseminate information to the forty-six (46) jurisdictions on homeland security grant programs, annual state requirements, and deadlines and continue to enhance the regions RICP on a yearly basis to identify and close any gaps.
- Assist local officials and emergency responders in identifying training needs.
- Establish a funding mechanism for the maintenance and upkeep of the Regional Radio System and Spanish Severe Early Weather Warning Notification System.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, Cities/Counties, TXDPS, TDEM, Media, EMS Providers, Health Care Providers, Cameron & Hidalgo Counties Local Emergency Planning Committee, DSHS, FEMA, TEEX, 211, ARES, NOAA, FBI, TRAC V, PSAP’s, PW, CBP, ATF, National Guard, RGVCG. Institutions of Higher Education, LEERRT, School Districts and Public Health and USCG.
GOAL: Enhance and promote citizen volunteers under the Citizen Corps Program (CCP) within the region

OBJECTIVE: Establish a community-wide network of neighborhood groups and provide an all hazard incident preparedness program in Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training program

Following the tragic events that occurred on September 11, 2001, state and local government officials have increased opportunities for citizens to become an integral part of protecting the homeland and supporting the local first responder community. In over 95% of all emergency, bystanders or victims themselves are the first to provide emergency assistance or perform a rescue. Officials agree that the formula for ensuring more secure and safer communities consists of preparedness, training, and citizen involvement in supporting first responders.

Citizen Corps Programs were created to help coordinate volunteer activities that will make our communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to any emergency situation. The programs under the Citizen Corps umbrella provide opportunities for people to participate in a wide variety of measures to make their families, their homes, and their communities safer from the threats of crime, terrorism, and disasters of all kinds. Citizen Corps programs build on the successful efforts that are in place in many communities around the country to prevent crime and respond to emergencies. Programs that started through local innovation are the foundation for Citizen Corps and this national approach to citizen participation in community safety.

The LRGVDC Citizen Corps Program has created a committee to provide citizens in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties with guidance and opportunities to volunteer through the Citizen Corps Program. Participants can learn all about public safety, emergency preparedness, crime prevention, and health issues. Volunteer opportunities include:

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations, Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers. VIPS serves as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs, The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Program helps medical, public health and other volunteers offer their expertise during local emergencies and other times of community need. MRC volunteers could be active or retired health professionals or any citizens interested in health issues, An expanded Neighborhood Watch Program (NWP) incorporates terrorism awareness education into its
existing crime prevention mission, while also serving as a way to bring residents together to focus on emergency preparedness and emergency response training, and Fire Corps supports fire departments by encouraging citizen advocates to serve in non-emergency roles. Fire Corps actively involves citizens in public education; training, volunteer efforts focused on fire prevention and safety.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Expand the Texas Citizen Corps by establishing and sustaining the LRGVDC Citizen Corps Councils in the region.
- Maintain and expand training and exercise programs to prepare volunteers for disaster and emergency support.
- Continue to seek funding to develop, operate and conduct CERT courses for citizen participation in incident management.
- Plan, conduct and evaluate public education programs for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.
- Support medical surge capability using volunteer resources.
- Establish plans, procedures, and protocols for special needs populations.

**POTENTIAL RESOURCES:**

LRGVDC, Cities/Counties, TXDPS, TDEM, Media, EMS Providers, Health Care Providers, Cameron & Hidalgo Counties Local Emergency Planning Committee, DSHS, FEMA, TEEX, 211, ARES, NOAA, FBI, TRAC V, PSAP’s, PW, CBP, ATF, National Guard, USCG Institutions of Higher Education, LEERRT, School Districts and Public Health and Education institutions.
GOAL: To strengthen the capacity of communities to address public health issues along the US/Mexico Border

OBJECTIVE: Further enhance and sustain a comprehensive regional mass casualty incident response capability during the first hours of an incident

To organize and hold public forums and develop advocacy training for community based groups and organizations and help raise awareness of basic health issues in the community. Health-related emergencies are a homeland security focus because optimal detection and rapid response can protect citizens from loss of life or long-term adverse health effects. Disease surveillance allows us to predict, observe, and minimize the effects of an outbreak, which may prevent the disease from spreading to become an epidemic or pandemic.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to strengthen the Capacity of Communities, Address Public Health Issues along the US/Mexico Border, Inventory of legislation and regulations that affect cross-border collaboration, to develop written Policies to enhance Forum Proceedings and Publications, and Validation of the roles in Health Institutions.

STRATEGIES:

- Enhance the awareness of Community Leaders to Affect Public Health Policy.
- Assess the impact of the legislation in the US and in Mexico that affect cross-border collaboration.
- Hold Public forums and Develop Advocacy Training for Community Based Groups and Organizations.
- Raise awareness of basic health issues in the community.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Bi-National coordination of health awareness campaigns

OBJECTIVE: Coordinate schedules of awareness campaigns

The region has achieved unprecedented success in improving our ability to share awareness of available medical resources throughout the region. The coordination of international border health issues, coupled with a rapid increase in surge capacity of laboratory and epidemiology resources, produced significant contributions to understanding the disease and developing targeted disease control and communication strategies.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to Increase awareness on health issues at both sides of the border, Inventory of Activities, Health Professionals Participation, and Inventory of Activities and Citizens Participation.

STRATEGIES:

- Organize Sister City Health Campaigns in health promotion and disease prevention at the grass root level.
- Develop training opportunities for health care professionals.
- Support the organization of the US-Mexico Border Bi-National Health Week.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Increase the security of the region regarding environmental and bio-terrorism threats

OBJECTIVE: Maintain and upgrade the disease reporting system in the region

The region will maximize the use of mutual aid to help ensure enough of the right resources are available when and where needed. The region will strengthen CBRNE response and decontamination capabilities to prevent and deter acts of terrorism. Early detection of a biological or chemical event is essential to minimizing loss of life. Health-related emergencies are a focus because optimal detection and rapid response can protect citizens from loss of life or long-term adverse health effects.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to revise disease reporting process, Implementation of steps identified to the improved reporting system, increased public knowledge of the disease reporting system, and Implementation of the revised disease reporting system.

STRATEGIES:

- Assess current system and update disease reporting procedures.
- Support the implementation of the revised disease reporting process.
- Encourage public participation in improving the disease reporting system.
- Seek federal and state legislative support to implement the process.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, Cities/Counties, TXDPS, TDEM, Federal & State Agencies, Media, EMS Providers, Health Care Providers, Cameron & Hidalgo Counties Local Emergency Planning Committee, DSHS, FEMA, TEEX, 211, ARES, NOAA, FBI TRAC V, PSAP’s, PW, CBP ATF, National Guard Institutions of Higher Education, LEERRT, School Districts and Public Health and USCG, USCBP.
HOUSING AND SHELTER
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

HOUSING AND SHELTER GOALS

- Provide Available, Decent and Adequate Housing for Valley Residents
- Provide Adequate and Affordable Housing for the Elderly and Individuals with “Special Needs”
- Provide Adequate and Accessible Emergency shelter
- Promote Fair Housing

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Regional Needs Assessment in coordination with Round 2 Housing Guidelines
- Development of the FHAST Form in accordance with the State’s Analysis of Impediments
- Every year the LRGVDC Board of Directors approves and passes a resolution in support of Fair Housing
- Development of printed material to promote public Fair Housing law awareness
- Promotion of Fair Housing awareness by distributing information and printed materials
- LRGVDC Section 3 Plan was developed and is being implemented by LRGVDC
- Section 3 Advisory Committee was established
- A local Section 3 Certified Subcontractors pool was established
- With Disaster Recovery Funding an estimated 800 applicants within the three County Region will have their homes reconstructed/rehabilitated
- About four entities will receive disaster recovery funds to reconstruct multi-family units across the three counties. (San Benito, Pharr and Willacy County)

G&G

E-Con Group, LLC.

J.W. Turner Construction
GOAL: Provide available, decent and adequate housing for valley residents

OBJECTIVE: Assure adequate and affordable housing opportunities for families in the Valley

Increase home ownership opportunities for low income families in the Tri-County area and support neighborhood and community revitalization efforts.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are to reduce the number of substandard housing, increase shelter for the homeless, increase adequate and affordable housing, increase the community’s housing market, and expand opportunities for affordable housing construction.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote efforts to reduce the number of substandard and dilapidated dwellings.
- Partner with Homeless shelters and assist with financial assistance for shelter beds.
- Encourage Valley communities to establish housing programs for families in need.
- Develop support services to maintain individuals/families in their homes.
- Assist partners in developing & offering support services and resources empowering Valley Residents with information to prevent foreclosures.
- Create a system of transitional housing units.
- Provide workshops on home ownerships.
- Increase the region’s 24-hour emergency shelter facilities.
- Establish a case worker network.
- Expand information & referral services to include information on housing opportunities.
- Encourage additional eviction counseling predatory lending education and homebuyer education programs.
- Support the local Housing Authorities with a (fill in the blank with a #) of rehabilitated homes over the next two years.
- Expansion of availability of Credit Counseling, when considering home ownership.
- Create or work toward regional building codes that are the same across the region.
- Include weather sustainable construction as well as energy efficient construction beyond what the latest codes call for.
- Support UTPA efforts on research of the housing stock in the region.
- Development of appropriate mortgage products readily available in the region.
- Increase education opportunities in skill trades for construction workers.
- Standardize or create a uniform code enforcement mechanism.
- Continue to work on Nimbyism issues.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:
PHA, HUD, LRGVDC, Cities/Counties, Secretary of State, Homeless Shelters, Faith-based organizations, Housing Authorities, Private Sector, United Way, Existing Service Providers and TDHCA.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Provide adequate and affordable housing for the elderly and individuals with “special needs”

OBJECTIVE: Assure adequate and affordable housing opportunities for the elderly and individuals with special needs

Creating opportunities for adequate and affordable housing in the Tri-County region to benefit the elderly and individuals with disabilities & their families, so they can enjoy a barrier free home.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are reduce the number of substandard housing, increase shelter for the homeless, increase adequate and affordable housing, increase the community’s housing market, and expand opportunities for affordable housing construction.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote development of affordable housing facilities for the elderly and citizens with special needs.
- Promote educational awareness of housing needs for individuals with special needs.
- Partner with Housing Providers and Local Communities to assist with the rehab expenditures of the subsidized rental housing units which serves the senior communities.
- Enable partners to provide vouchers to reduce the cost of rent as an emergency financial assistance for the elderly and individuals with special needs.
- Partner with the Cities to meet all housing needs with the land development in the area.
- Provide financial assistance in form of vouchers to partners for opportunities to assist the elderly, disabled, veterans and their families with their utilities.
- Support non-profits with technical assistance with training and financial support to increase the capacity to provide resources for exploring housing options.
- Provide people with disabilities and elderly in the Tri-County area with opportunity to improve their home with modifications, such as building a ramp, installing grab bars, widening doors and more (applicants must have documentable disability).
- Promote development of adequate and affordable housing for elderly or other individuals who want to transition from a skilled nursing facility to the community.
- Encourage building contractors and developers to consider the construction of new homes to age in place and accessible for disabled individuals.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

PHA, HUD, LRGVDC, Cities/Counties, Secretary of State, Homeless Shelters, Faith-based organizations, Housing Authorities, Private Sector, United Way, Existing Service Providers and TDHCA.
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: Provide adequate and accessible emergency shelter

OBJECTIVE: Assure emergency shelter availability

Promote adequate housing and basic shelter in the Tri-County area to assist the needs of the homeless.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are reduce the number of substandard housing, increase shelter for the homeless, increase number of emergency shelters and services, increase adequate and affordable housing, increase the community’s housing market, and expand opportunities for affordable housing construction.

STRATEGIES:

- Promote the development of an emergency shelter for children (ages 0-17), specifically for teen moms and illegal immigrants.
- Provide emergency shelter during disaster declarations and unforeseen issues.
- Encourage existing agencies to maintain communications with Texas Homeless Network.
- Support community efforts for the renovation and rehabilitation of existing Homeless shelters.
- Encourage agencies to establish a strong proactive Continuum of Care to develop and coordinate the implementation of the strategic homeless plan and provide a process for responding to new needs of the homeless.
- Provide technical support to agencies that offer counseling services for homeless.
- Develop guidelines to evaluate outcomes and ensure that the greatest number of homeless individuals and families are served.
- Provide disaster preparedness education training and volunteer opportunities to help communities in the event of a disaster.
- Redefine Homelessness in the region and promote at the State and Federal level.
- HUD definition of Homelessness should also include 3 generation of relatives living in one house.
- Seek and secure additional funding to provide opportunities with specialized emergency shelter.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:
PHA, HUD, LRGVDC, Cities/Counties, Secretary of State, Homeless Shelters, Faith-based organizations, Housing Authorities, Private Sector, United Way, Existing Service Providers, TDHCA, and Texas Homeless Network.
GOAL: Promote fair housing

OBJECTIVE: Ensure fair housing for all residents of the Lower Rio Grande Valley

Participate in establishing an open and inclusive community committed to fair housing and to promote appropriate activities by private and public entities to provide or advocate for integration and equal housing opportunities for all residents and prospective residents of the Lower Rio Grande Valley as stated in the National Fair Housing Resolution adopted by the LRGVDC on April 26, 2012.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal are more stable integrated and balanced residential patterns, improvement of economic stability, community health, and human relations in all communities through diversity and integration.

STRATEGIES:

- Distribute printed material at Housing events to promote public awareness of Fair Housing.
- Attend Fair Housing meetings to increase knowledge of fair housing trends in order to effectively continue to work with other entities to address ongoing issues and improve quality of life for residents.
- Adopt a resolution that supports testing in the region and require local jurisdictions to pass similar resolutions.
- Participate in any testing recommended or implemented by other organizations such as state and local communities.
- Work with local/regional groups, the State and HUD to create the testing.
- Seek out additional funding sources and avenues that would allow for annual testing at the regional level.
- Coordinate sessions with the 20 Housing Authorities regarding low income properties and housing units for elderly/disabled.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

PHA, HUD, LRGVDC, Cities/Counties, Secretary of State, Homeless Shelters, Faith-based organizations, Housing Authorities, Private Sector, United Way, Existing Service Providers and TDHCA.
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GOALS

- To provide an effective and efficient public transportation system
- Increase public participation in public transportation
- Improve safety and security practices
- Continue the development of regional transit infrastructure

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Rebranded services under METRO (Metro McAllen, Valley Metro, Brownsville, Metro)
- Upgraded the entire fleet with new buses
- Expanded span of service and days of service in Hidalgo County
- Improved cost effectiveness and efficiency measures by more than 10%
- Began implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems technology
- Completed revision of regional public transportation plan
- Noteworthy ridership increases in FY 2012 across the region
- Connected the three major cities (McAllen, Brownsville, Harlingen) in the RGV in FY 2012
- FTA award for highest percent incurred in ridership in Texas.
GOAL: To provide an effective and efficient public transportation system

OBJECTIVE: To maintain or increase transit ridership

Providing an effective transit system is vital to a region’s economic development by transporting workers to jobs at a low cost and enabling the general public by providing mobility throughout the region. Furthermore, increased efficiency allows the transit system to save resources and allocate them in high need areas.

Transit provider strategies will be measured by the following outcomes: Raising awareness in public transportation; provide uniform and affordable transit service to the community; introduce route modifications that are cost effective; promote greater recognition of public transportation; increase mobility throughout the region; provide more efficient and effective scheduling, and monitoring of routes that promote a more user friendly transit system; provide cost-effective alternative modes of transportation to commuters; increase convenience of payment method for transit users; and provide services that attract a wide range of people.

STRATEGIES:

- Display regional transit information at areas of public interest.
- Implement a base fare across the region.
- Continue to restructure and expand the route system where necessary.
- Continue the development of a strong brand for public transit.
- Increase connectivity of routes throughout the region.
- Establish an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) for dispatching, scheduling, monitoring, and public information access.
- Introduce multi-modal transportation alternatives to the Rio Grande Valley, such as ridesharing, vanpool, bicycle sharing, and pedestrian improvements.
- Expand fare payment options.
- Diversification of transit riders.
- New potential UTRGV transportation partnerships.
- Reach out to the communities that have no transportation.
- Increase advertising marketing.
- Develop coordination efforts among the 3 major transit providers when establishing transportation Routes.
- Develop coordination efforts among major transit providers, institutions of higher learning, and space exploration industries to address the need of connectivity while continuing to increase ridership and the level of public transit service provided.
- Establish a reliable consistent source of local revenue to support Regional Public Transit.
POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Valley Metro, Metro McAllen, Brownsville Metro, LRGVDC, MPO's, TxDOT, FTA, Educational Institutions, HHSC, Workforce, Economic Development Corporations, Municipal Planning Departments, Non-profit organizations, private transit providers, LRGVDC's 2011 Regional Transit Plan.

GOAL: Increase public participation in public transportation

OBJECTIVE: Increase stakeholder involvement in project planning, design and implementation

Community involvement is essential to public transportation services as it can dramatically impact a person’s and/or a community’s quality of life. Projects being proposed to policymakers are of higher quality if they’ve undergone a thorough public involvement process.

Measurable Outcomes for the strategies in this goal are to receive input from the public on transit programs and services.

STRATEGIES:

- Continue to participate in community outreach, market transit, and engage the public.
- Use social media to educate the public.
- Seek funding to increase public awareness regarding transportation services.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Valley Metro, Metro McAllen, Brownsville Metro, LRGVDC, MPO’s, TxDOT, FTA, Educational Institutions, HHSC, Workforce, Economic Development Corporations, Municipal Planning Departments, Non-profit organizations, private transit providers, LRGVDC’s 2011 Regional Transit Plan.

GOAL: Improve safety and security practices

OBJECTIVE: Increase riders’ safety by providing information/education on all applicable safety policies and general safety precautions

Client comfort and satisfaction begins with nurturing a safe and reliable bus system by all transit staff. By concentrating on prevention of accidents/incidents, the transit providers strive to ensure every customer has a great experience when being transported. Staff must be updated on the industry’s top safety practices and must encourage passengers to practice safety at all times.

Measurable Outcomes for the strategies listed below are to mitigate seatbelt accidents/incidents and increase the awareness of safety and security issues/dangers in the workplace that are particular to transit staff.

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage the use of seatbelt and all other precautionary measures.
- Continue to provide annual safety and security trainings for all staff members.
- Increase safety training meetings for drivers.
- Provide customer service training and announcement system training for drivers.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Valley Metro, Metro McAllen, Brownsville Metro, LRGVDC, MPO’s, TxDOT, FTA, Educational Institutions, HHSC, Workforce, Economic Development Corporations, Municipal Planning Departments, Non-profit organizations, private transit providers, LRGVDC’s 2011 Regional Transit Plan.

GOAL: Continue the development of regional transit infrastructure

OBJECTIVE: Provide facilities that allow passengers increased access to the bus

The Rio Grande Valley is a rapidly growing area that requires added capital investments in transit infrastructure and modes. Terminals, bus stops, mixed-use facilities and the like allow the community more opportunities to ride public transportation and are a vital resource in community enhancement projects.

Measurable Outcomes for the strategies below are to provide more bus stops for our growing region; develop regional planning strategies; enable long range transit planning by having sustainable local funding; improve bus fleet to retain comfort and reliability; and construct transit facilities in towns across the Rio Grande Valley.

STRATEGIES:

- Implementation of a comprehensive bus stop program.
- Continue to develop regional transit coordination planning among all transit providers.
- Develop a sustainable funding source for transit.
- Develop a fleet replacement plan.
- Coordinate with municipal and county governments the development of transit facilities and modes that coincide with their plans.
- Develop advertising where private entities can provide or adopt a bench on routes for passengers.
- Coordinate with other transit agencies on the use of facilities for passenger transfers and transportation information for riders.
- Develop a driver training academy for all public transit providers.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Valley Metro, Metro McAllen, Brownsville Metro, LRGVDC, MPO's, TxDOT, FTA, Educational Institutions, HHSC, Workforce, Economic Development Corporations, Municipal Planning Departments, Non-profit organizations, private transit providers, LRGVDC’s 2011 Regional Transit Plan.

REGIONAL POLICE ACADEMY
& TRAINING CENTER
REGIONAL POLICE ACADEMY & TRAINING CENTER GOALS

- Deliver updated training on techniques, procedures, laws and any other areas organic to law enforcement and corrections
- Provide professional development opportunities for law enforcement personnel to maintain their state peace officer licenses and complete courses designed to fulfill the requirements for the different levels of peace officer licenses (basic, intermediate, advance and master)
- Provide professional development opportunities for corrections personnel to maintain their state county jailer (corrections) licenses and complete courses designed to fulfill the requirements for the different levels of county jailer licenses (basic, intermediate and advance)
- Provide professional development opportunities for telecommunicators to obtain their state license
- Offer instructor level courses: TCOLE Basic Instructor, Advance Instructor, Police Firearms Instructor, Patrol Riffle Instructor, etc.
- Offer certification courses in specific areas such as ASP, PPCT, SFST, Add Taser etc.
- Offer the Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC) for those individuals wishing to attain their Texas peace officer license
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- High success rate on state exam by academy cadets exceeding state requirement
- Delivery of legislatively mandated and in-service courses for law enforcement personnel
- Delivery of legislatively mandated and in-service courses for corrections personnel
- Delivery of legislatively mandated and in-service courses for telecommunicators
- Expanded basic peace officer academy to the Hidalgo location, both day and night courses
- Participation in safety courses for school children and juvenile detainees
- Delivery of cultural diversity and safety programs for juvenile probation and juvenile detention officers
- Partner in the Elder Abuse Awareness program
- Delivery of custom courses of interest to law enforcement personnel (i.e. Autism Awareness, Officer Survival, Cartel and Zetas, gangs, interviewing techniques, weapons awareness, etc.)
GOAL: Delivered updated training on techniques, procedures, laws and any other areas to the Law Enforcement and Corrections Professions to the region's public safety community

OBJECTIVE: Provide professional development opportunities throughout the region for law enforcement, corrections and support staff

The ever changing environment of public safety demands law enforcement and corrections professionals who are ready to meet those challenges while protecting the lives and properties of the community. As the Texas legislature meets each biennium, Texas laws change and evolve; therefore, law enforcement and corrections professionals must be cognizant of changes to safely enforce and uphold the laws of the United States and the State of Texas. Such laws include federal and state constitutional, statutory and case laws enacted by the appropriate legislative body and/or enacted by executive mandate and/or court ruling.

Measurable outcomes for this goal are the number of officers trained throughout the two-year training unit and four-year training cycle as established by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) and the number of courses offered during the reporting cycle.

STRATEGIES:

- Offer in-service courses for peace officers and other law enforcement officials.
- Offer state mandated courses for peace officers.
- Officer in-service courses for county jailers (corrections officers).
- Offer in service courses for telecommunicators.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Provide professional development opportunities for law enforcement personnel to maintain their State Peace Officer licenses and complete courses designed to fulfill the requirements for the different levels of Peace Officer Licenses (basic, intermediate, advance and master)

OBJECTIVE: Ensure that law enforcement personnel receive training and professional development in the performance of their duties and responsibilities

As laws change through legislative or executive action and/or court mandate, officers are required to keep abreast of those changes. Officers are afforded different levels of proficiency based on years of service and professional development accomplishments. Those levels of proficiency are indicated in the level of license each officer has: basic, intermediate, advance, master.

Measurable outcomes for this goal are the number of courses offered and the number of officers completing those courses. The final outcome is how officers respond to situations in the real-world environment.

STRATEGIES:

- Provide professional development opportunities to Texas peace officers and other law enforcement officials as defined in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure.
- Continue to provide professional development opportunities throughout the region.
- Develop courses designed to confront current issues law enforcement officers encounter in the performance of their duties.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Provide professional development opportunities for corrections personnel to maintain their state county jailer (corrections) licenses and complete courses designed to fulfill the requirements for the different levels of county jailer licenses (basic, intermediate, advance and master)

OBJECTIVE: Provide Professional Development Opportunities throughout the Region for Corrections Officers

The ever changing environment of public safety demands law enforcement and corrections professionals who are ready to meet those challenges while protecting the lives and properties of the community. As the Texas legislature meets each biennium, Texas laws change and evolve; therefore, law enforcement and corrections professionals must be cognizant of changes to safely enforce and uphold the laws of the United States and the State of Texas. Such laws include federal and state constitutional, statutory and case laws enacted by the appropriate legislative body and/or enacted by executive mandate and/or court ruling.

STRATEGIES:

- Offer in-service courses for county jailers.
- Offer state mandated courses for county jailers.
- Officer in-service courses for county jailers (corrections officers).

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:


Measurable outcomes for this goal are the number of jail officers trained during the training cycle and the number of corrections courses offered during the reporting cycle.
GOAL: Provide professional development opportunities for telecommunicators to obtain their state license

OBJECTIVE: Provide Professional Development Opportunities throughout the Region for Telecommunicators

The ever changing environment of public safety demands law enforcement and corrections professionals who are ready to meet those challenges while protecting the lives and properties of the community. Texas now issues licenses to Telecommunicators, which includes dispatchers and emergency call takers.

Measurable outcomes for this goal are the number of telecommunicators who successfully complete the licensing courses and pass the state licensing exam.

STRATEGIES:

- Offer in-service courses for telecommunicators.
- Offer state mandated licensing courses for telecommunicators.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Offer instructor level courses: TCOLE Basic Instructor, Advance Instructor, Police Firearms Instructor, Patrol Rifle Instructor, etc.

OBJECTIVE: Offer courses which are required for participants to become licensed as an instructor per the rules of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE)

To ensure that law enforcement and corrections officers and telecommunicators receive quality professional development, the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement is tasked with providing training throughout the state. However, due to the size of the state, TCOLE depends on regional and local agencies to deliver professional development to licensees. The LRGVDC RPA provides opportunities for licensed professionals to become instructors to aid in the delivery of professional development throughout the region.

STRATEGIES:

- Offer the Basic and Advance Instructor courses.
- Offer the Police Firearms and Patrol Rifle Instructor courses.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Offer certification courses in specific areas such as ASP, PPCT, SFST and TASER

OBJECTIVE: Offer courses which are required for specialty training in areas such as tactical baton use (ASP, Monadnock, PPCT), field sobriety testing (SFST) and defensive tactics (Verbal Judo, PPCT, TASER)

Officers have to rely on profession skills to diffuse situations. At times, officers must elevate their level of control techniques to overcome the resistance exhibited by subjects upon arrest, during disturbances or during similar situations. To ensure that officers act within acceptable standards and the federal and local laws, officers must be trained on methods and techniques from verbal control techniques to deadly force encounters. Many of the techniques and devices in use today by law enforcement and corrections officers are manufactured by private companies and those companies provide instruction on the proper use of the technology or method. Officers receive such training and teach other officers how to properly use/deploy techniques and methods as situations dictate.

Measurable outcomes for this goal are the number of participants who successfully complete courses designed for the use and deployment of methods and techniques to assist officers in deescalating situations (ASP, TASER, PPCT, Verbal Judo).

STRATEGIES:

- Offer the Basic and Advance Instructor courses.
- Offer the Police Firearms and Patrol Rifle Instructor courses.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

GOAL: Offer the Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC) for those Individuals wishing to attain their Texas Peace Officer License

OBJECTIVE: Ensure that cadets receive the required training as stipulated by TCOLE to attain Peace Officer Licenses and other courses in the BPOC which are essential to the law enforcement profession, but in excess of the required curriculum for licensure (TASER, OC Spray, SFST, etc.)

To become a peace officer in Texas, one must complete the licensing requirements as established in the Texas Occupations Code and TCOLE Rules. One of the requirements is that one must successfully complete the Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC) and the standards of the BPOC must adhere with the rules set forth by TCOLE and the Police Academy Advisory Committee. Additionally, the Academy’s success is measured by the percentage of cadets who successfully pass the licensing exam on the first attempt. The Academy must maintain an 80% or higher first-time success rate to maintain its standing to offer courses through TCOLE.

STRATEGIES:

- Continue to offer the BPOC curriculum as stipulated by TCOLE and the Texas Occupations Code.
- Offer courses beyond the BPOC to enhance cadets’ performance as law enforcement officers (PPCT, TASTER, OC Spray, SFST, etc.).

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

TCOLE Rules and Regulations, the Texas Occupations Code, PPCT Defensive Tactics, Armament Systems and Procedures (ASP), Monadnock Batons and Training Equipment, TASER, OC Defensive Pepper Spray, Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) and similar technologies and techniques.
WORKFORCE & JOB TRAINING
WORKFORCE AND TRAINING GOALS

- Develop a Regional Coordinated System
- To Mobilize Education and Training Resources into a Seamless

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Co-Sponsored the first annual State of the Workforce Conference with the Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Solutions, Cameron County Workforce Solutions, and Rio Grande Valley Partnership

- The LRGVDC Economic Development Department joined the Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Solutions, Cameron Workforce Solutions, and Rio Grande Valley Partnership in forming a “Regional Workforce Group”
GOAL: Develop a regional coordinated system

OBJECTIVE: Central depository of data/information for the region

The need for a centralized data base for employees and employers has been a long-term goal for the region and statewide. Agencies are now implementing programs to address this need, but progress has been slow.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Consider applying as one MSA in order to obtain more federal and state funding for job training and create a regional workforce database.

STRATEGIES:

- Explore benefits of Regional MSA designation.
- Identify a central data collection agency.
- Develop a standardized data set.
- Develop models for public dissemination of information.
- Support and promote designation of an International Metropolitan Statistical Area.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

LRGVDC, Cameron Workforce Solutions, Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce, Rio Grande Valley Partnership Cities/Counties, Universities, private and non-profit public organizations, and HMIS.
GOAL: To mobilize education and training resources into a seamless system

OBJECTIVE: Improve access to resources opportunities for education entities

Workforce Agencies must collaborate with educational institutions to best prepare tomorrow’s employees and to provide easy access to available resources.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Increase public access to resources for adult education thru internet resources; Increase multi-lingual educational opportunities; Increase number of graduates with post-secondary degrees; Increase number of community leadership pool; Reduce regional drop-out rates; Enhance knowledge of scientific, mathematical and literary principles; Increase the number of grant submissions for educational entities; Increase availability of technical assistance and support services focused on increasing and retaining a more educated workforce.

STRATEGIES:

• Encourage coordination of adult education providers.
• Encourage access to Internet resources.
• Identify all multi-lingual educational programs.
• Encourage educational opportunities for attaining post-secondary degree.
• Encourage educational opportunities for leadership training and development.
• Promote life-long continuum (Pre-K and beyond) programs for drop-out prevention and recovery, alternative education/after school youth programs.
• Encourage the implementation of scientific, mathematic and literary principles in elementary and middle schools.
• Improve access to grant writing training.
• Identify and strengthen clearinghouse resources.
• Increase in the number of professional degree programs available.
• Encourage using more financial literacy programs.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

Higher Education Institutions, Rio Grande Valley Linking Economic and Academic Development (RGV LEAD), Inc., School Districts, Region One, Public Libraries, CCRGV, Advisory and Non-Profit Organizations, Literacy Task Force, Charter Schools, Workforce Solutions, Homeless Shelters & Domestic Violence Programs, and Cameron County Homeless Coalition; Cities/Counties, RGVP, LRGVDC, SW Non-Profit Resource Center, VIDA.
GOAL: To mobilize education and training resources into a seamless system

OBJECTIVE: Support a coordinated system between employers and educational providers to maximize learning skill training for the region’s workforce

Current Trends are changing for the existing workforce. Technical training has increased and academic education has decreased due to the types of jobs immediately available. Employers, Workforce agencies and job training programs need to combine both academic and technical training in order to provide good paying jobs for Valley residents and meet the demands of the private sector.

Measurable Outcomes for this specific goal: Identify target occupations and educational resources; provide Annual updates of targeted occupational and industry training systems (code enforcement, city planning, public administration); Increase efficiency in achieving an educated workforce and job placement; More students enrolled in apprenticeships; Increase the number of programs and enrollment in workforce training and recognized certification programs by both American and Mexican job markets.

STRATEGIES:

- Continue identification of workforce needs and educational provider capabilities and utilize the annual updates.
- Continue Annual Updates of Targeted Occupational Study of the Lower Rio Grande Valley in coordination with the Texas Workforce System.
- Establish real world skills and life-long learning training programs.
- Strengthen apprenticeship opportunities.
- Increase access to workforce training in small cities and communities.
- Develop Bi-national standards of training, certification and re-certification.
- Improve the transition from Community college to University through articulated agreements and 2+2 programs.
- Establish Employer “Alternative Financing Program” for students, such as tuition reimbursement and internship opportunities in order to obtain higher education degrees and keep students from getting into debt.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES:

IMPLEMENTATION

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) has made the Regional Strategic Plan a top priority for the past forty-five years. The nucleus of this Plan was formulated under the U.S. Department of Commerce; Economic Development Administration (EDA), when the LRGVDC was first “designated an Economic Development District”. The first plan was used as a funding tool to identify the Region’s economic development needs, goals, and priorities. Throughout the years, the Regional Plan has continued to serve in this capacity, however, the number of goals, objectives and strategies have increased due to the addition of new departments and programs. It is also important to note, that agencies and organizations outside the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council’s area of responsibility adopted this Regional Plan as their own.

The process of updating and developing a working plan has continued and is only changed every two years by the residents of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. This regional planning effort considered all program areas and developed expected outcomes to be achieved. The LRGVDC is committed to taking the lead and working with all of the agencies, organizations, and programs listed in the Regional Strategic Plan, but encourages other stakeholders to conduct their own meetings to review the Plan and provide the LRGVDC with their input.

After completing several work sessions throughout the three-county area, a “Final” draft Plan will be presented to the public at a regional meeting and then presented to the LRGVDC Board of Directors. Upon the Board’s approval, the LRGVDC will make this document available to attendees, public officials, federal and state legislative members, service providers, cities, and counties via email, CDs, or access through the LRGVDC’s website.

It is the intent of this process to ensure that the schedule for updating the Regional Strategic Plan coincides with the State’s Legislative Session so that our representatives may use this information for their planning purposes.

“The LRGVDC is also committed to making this planning process a truly regional effort of which no single agency or entity can be held responsible for implementing all of the goals and strategies contained therein.”

### VIII. ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAA</td>
<td>AREA AGENCY ON AGING</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFIS</td>
<td>AUTOMATIC FINGERPRINT IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM</td>
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<td>ALEC</td>
<td>ALTERNATIVE LOCAL EXCHANGE CARRIER</td>
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<td>ALI</td>
<td>AUTOMATIC LOCATION IDENTIFICATION</td>
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<td>APS</td>
<td>ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARES</td>
<td>AMERICAN RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICES</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>ARMAMENT SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES</td>
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<td>ATF</td>
<td>ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWP</td>
<td>ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM</td>
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<td>BDRC</td>
<td>BUILDING DISASTER RESILIENT COMMUNITIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>BH &amp; ET</td>
<td>BORDER HEALTH &amp; EDUCATION TARGET</td>
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<tr>
<td>BHit</td>
<td>BUSINESS HURRICANE INFORMATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPOC</td>
<td>BASIC POLICE OFFICERS COURSE</td>
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<tr>
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ED - EDUCATION
EGDMS - ENTERPRISE GEOSPATIAL DATABASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
EGDMS - ENTERPRISE GEOSPATIAL DATABASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
EMPG - EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING GRANT
EMS - EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
EOC - EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
EPA - ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
ESC - EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
ESRI - ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE
ETJ - EXTRA TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION
EWIDS - EARLY WARNING INFECTIOUS DISEASE SURVEILLANCE
FAA - FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
FBI - FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FEMA - FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
FHAST - FAIR HOUSING ACTIVITY STATEMENT TEXAS
FHWA - FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
FQHC - FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTER
FTA - FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
GED - GENERAL EDUCATION DEGREE (HIGH SCHOOL)
GIS - GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM
GPS - GLOBAL POSITIONING SATELLITE
HCLEPC - HIDALGO COUNTY LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE
HCMPO - HIDALGO COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
HHS - HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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MIS - MAINTENANCE INFORMATION SYSTEMS
MMRS - METROPOLITAN MEDICAL RESPONSE SYSTEM
MRC - MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS
MSA - METROPOLITAN STATISCAL AREA
MTP - METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN
NADO - NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS
NADBANK - NORTH AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
NECP - NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
NEDS - NATIONAL ELECTRONIC DISEASE SURVEILLANCE
NENA - NATIONAL EMERGENCY NUMBER ASSOCIATION
NG911 - NEXT GENERATION 911
NIH - NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON HEALTH
NIMH - NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MENTAL HEALTH
NIMS - NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
NIOSH - NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
NOAA - NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NPEF - NATIONAL PUBLIC EDUCATOR FORUM
NWP - NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM
OC - OLEORESIN CAPSICUM (OC “PEPER” SPRAY)
OES - OFFICE OF ELIGIBILITY SERVICES
ORG - ORGANIZATION
OSHA - OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
PAHO - PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
PBS - PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEM
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