Acknowledgements

Workforce Solutions Borderplex would like to acknowledge and thank its staff, managers, board members, and partners who contributed to this report and its findings. We would like to thank every partner in the Borderplex community who completed surveys, provided information about their services and the Borderplex region, and offered recommendations for the enhancement of the regional workforce development system.

This report was compiled by Public Consulting Group, Inc., who conducted regional data collection and analysis of workforce assets, developed a user-friendly resource inventory (the “Services Navigator”) for use by staff, and crafted strategic recommendations for the board to employ to further align the regional system.
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Project Background

Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) is amidst an exciting, albeit challenging, time in workforce development: the onset of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the ever-growing need to serve more with less. Under WIOA, Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) must use data and analytics to drive decision-making and increase partnerships and collaboration. The legislation provides WSB with an opportunity to braid innovation and technology into service delivery and referral mechanisms across the large Borderplex region in Far West Texas. In order to do so effectively, WSB recognized the need to conduct diligent research and analytics to build an accurate, user-friendly, and engaging resource inventory (the “Services Navigator”) to connect the broader workforce development system in the Borderplex region.

WSB contracted Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) to provide support in data collection and analysis to identify regional assets that play a role in a broader workforce system, potential gaps in service delivery structures and strategies, and opportunities to better align workforce assets to increase system throughputs and performance. This effort aimed to identify regional assets will allow WSB and its partners to recognize potential gaps in service delivery and pursue opportunities to expand regional service coordination. The following table details the objectives of this project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <em>Collect and clean quantitative and qualitative data</em> on the Borderplex region’s current providers of employment and employment-related services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <em>Catalogue workforce “assets”</em> into a user-friendly, online inventory and geographically map them using Geographic Information System (GIS) software for use by staff and partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <em>Determine connection points</em> to allow the regional workforce development system to expand its reach in the communities and leverage limited resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <em>Recognize specific opportunities to leverage and align</em> assets and strategies to strengthen community impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers catalogued a wide array of organizations across the six-county that provide a wealth of workforce development and related services. These “assets” are defined as each organization’s individual access point or unique location(s) within this system. Researchers surveyed and researched organizations that were identified as part of the broader regional workforce development system, gaining information about each organization’s contact information, services, target populations, funding sources, partnerships, and goals. For the purpose of this analysis, the “Borderplex region” includes the six counties under the jurisdiction of WSB, including: El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Presidio, and Brewster.

Given these objectives, researchers analyzed and categorized service providers into four categories of workforce “assets” located in and serving the Borderplex region:

1. Employment Services,
2. Vocational Education and Training,
3. Supportive Services, and
4. Other Assets (other relevant services that contribute to the local workforce system).
At the conclusion of this study, researchers developed:

- a comprehensive, user-friendly asset inventory (the Services Navigator), which takes form as an electronic resource guide to be used by workforce development staff and the broader community to connect job seekers to necessary services across the region;
- multiple Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps, which illustrate the density of assets in the region and provide heat maps of demographic and economic data; and
- this report, which provides extensive analysis of the assets found in the study, their role in the regional workforce system, the backdrop of regional demographics and Borderplex’s economic climate, and recommendations to increase system-wide collaboration, capacity, and alignment.

B. Methodology and Key Findings

Using 2-1-1 (211Texas.org) Texas community service provider data, electronic surveys, chain-referral sampling methodologies, and supplemental research, researchers created an inventory and geographic maps of over 450 workforce assets in the Borderplex region. Researchers created maps with demographic and industry data layers to analyze the densities and gaps of assets relative to each county in the Borderplex region, each asset category, and to local population and economic needs. The following chart illustrates the number of regional assets distributed across the six counties.

\[\text{480 assets were identified across the region.}\]

---

1 Images of these maps are featured throughout this report. WSB leadership will have access to the editable ESRI ArcGIS maps for their internal strategic use.
El Paso County had by far the highest number of assets when compared to the other counties, while four of the five rural counties had fewer than 15 assets each. Brewster County had the second highest number of assets in the region, but still far fewer than El Paso County does.

To examine these differences more closely, the following chart disaggregates the density of assets by County and asset category: Employment Services, Vocational Education and Training, Supportive Services, and Other Assets.

Across the counties and asset categories, it is evident that Supportive Services were the most common asset category in nearly each county. This is in part due to the Borderplex region’s large presence of assets providing healthcare (145 assets); miscellaneous supportive services, including counseling, support groups, and recreation activities (116 assets); and housing and shelter (76 assets). In each
county, Employment Services was the least represented asset category, with only 134 assets in El Paso County and 0-8 assets in each rural county.

The large presence of assets in El Paso County was not surprising given the county’s large population of over 830,000 individuals versus those of the rural counties, which range from approximately 2,200 to 9,200 individuals. Therefore, it was helpful to examine capacity of assets to serve the size of their local populations. To take this into consideration, the following chart demonstrates the same data adjusted for county population estimates. It details the number of assets, or physical service sites, per 1,000 individuals in each county’s population.

![Chart showing assets by category and county per 1,000 people, Borderplex Region.](image)

**Figure 5: Assets by Category and County (Per 1,000 People), Borderplex Region**

Large population differences greatly impacted the number of available assets for each county’s population. When adjusted for population nuances, it appears that the majority of the rural counties had a higher number of total assets for their populations. However, this is potentially skewed given the incredibly low populations in these counties compared to that in El Paso County. The following map visualizes the dispersion of these assets across the six-county Borderplex region.
FIGURE 6: REGIONAL SERVICE MIX, BORDERPLEX REGION

- Employment Services
- Vocational Education and Training Services
- Supportive Services
- Other Assets
The majority of assets were highly condensed in El Paso County, while the large rural counties had very small numbers of assets distributed across each. To further examine the level of connectivity and proximity across each county, the following map illustrates the locations of all workforce assets across the region as well as public transit lines. The regional public transit system, which may allow for individuals to have increased access to assets outside of their direct neighborhoods, did not reach rural counties and parts of El Paso County’s subregions.

![Map of Workforce Assets and Public Transportation Infrastructure](image)

**Figure 7: Regional Service Mix and Public Transportation Infrastructure, Borderplex Region**

The majority of the region’s assets fell within El Paso County, which also had the largest cluster of public transportation infrastructure. While some of the rural counties’ assets fell along transit lines, many of them did not appear to be easily accessible via public transit. This may have implications on the accessibility...
of these assets as well as their ability to adequately outreach, engage, and provide services to local populations.

When examining El Paso County further, researchers aggregated the county’s zip codes into four distinct subregions: West, Northeast, Central and East, and Mission Valley. The following map illustrates asset mix within El Paso County’s subregions.

In El Paso County, slight nuances in asset densities existed across the four subregions. The West subregion (on the northwestern side of the county including Downtown El Paso and bordering New Mexico and parts of Juarez) and the Central and East subregion (on the southeastern side of the county bordering Hudspeth County to the east) had the highest density of assets in the county (144 and 140
assets, respectively). However, within the Central and East subregion, the majority of assets were concentrated on the northwestern part of the subregion, while the large southeast region of the county had very few assets. Additionally, the Northeast subregion (on the northeastern side of the county and including a large part of Fort Bliss) had 81 assets while the Mission Valley subregion (on the southwestern side of the county bordering Mexico) had the fewest number of assets, 51.

![Assets by Subregion, El Paso County](image)

**FIGURE 9: ASSETS BY SUBREGION, EL PASO COUNTY**

To examine these subregional assets' capacity to serve El Paso County's large population, the following chart compares the assets in each subregion to each subregion’s estimate population. While the subregions differed in their estimate populations, they fell within a range of approximately 145,000 to 283,000 residents.

![Assets by Subregion (Per 10,000 People), El Paso County](image)

**FIGURE 10: ASSETS BY SUBREGION (PER 10,000 PEOPLE), EL PASO COUNTY**

These figures illustrate that the concentration of assets in the West subregion, in particular, was significantly higher than those in the other subregions. This is likely attributable to the metropolitan center of the City of El Paso in the West subregion and carries implications around the ability of the county’s assets to adequately serve the populations in each corner of El Paso County.
C. Recommendations

This report unpacks the differences in asset densities and types across counties and within El Paso County, examining potential implications of these differences and how they compare to current demographic and economic trends. The following recommendations provide WSB with tactical approaches to enhance regional collaboration and connectivity and to use the Services Navigator platform to understand and address service gaps – all to better serve job seekers and businesses across the Borderplex region.

1. Employ technological solutions to increase access to services in rural counties

2. Collaborate with Supportive Service providers, schools, and libraries to share resources and provide more holistic experiences to job seekers

3. Develop a plan to partner with assets in the expansion of the Fund Development Plan

4. Convene partners to review and ensure consistency of services across the employment service continuum and develop a common assessment tool

5. Employ the Services Navigator to collaborate with identified regional training programs to further align training programs with industry needs

6. Evaluate veteran populations’ preparedness and fit for employment in growth industries and educate partner staff on the transferability of veteran skills into local industries

7. Expand career pathway and career awareness activities in secondary schools and community colleges to help pipeline students into sustainable local jobs

8. Convene economic development partners to research and expand upon entrepreneurial programs

This report further details the project’s process, data collection methodology, analysis, and key findings identified for regional stakeholders and funding entities to consider in order to further enhance the Borderplex region’s workforce development service delivery system.
II. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) has undertaken many challenges in order to reach its strategic goals of addressing dynamic customer needs; increasing communications and marketing; aligning services, products, and deliverables for the present and future economy; and increasing the impact of support services and resource management. The workforce asset mapping project built upon recent efforts to fulfill these goals and maximize the capacity and effectiveness of the regional public workforce system.

In recent years, WSB has completed and implemented multiple major initiatives and outcomes to reach these strategic goals, highlighted below:

- Increasing veteran hiring across the state through the hosting of 50 employers at the annual job fair, “Hiring Red, White, & You.”
- Increasing awareness of opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Art (STEAM) fields for middle and high school students through the STEAM Fiesta 2.0 program.
- Collaborating with local partners to carry out the El Paso Summer Youth Employment Program for over 125 youth, engaging nearly 20 employers and raising $60,000 in matching funds.
- Partnering with the Department of Rehabilitative Services to host the Breaking Barriers summer youth with disabilities program, empowering over 50 young people with disabilities and involving 20 employers.
- Hosting quarterly Industry Driven Job Fairs throughout the community and industry roundtable discussions, conducting target industry skills gap analyses, and convening Adult Education Literacy Consortium Meetings to assess and address existing training and literacy barriers as observed by the business community.

Most recently, WSB collaborated with research and industry experts to produce a Workforce Solutions Borderplex Fund Development Plan for FY 2015-2017. The research effort aimed to identify and secure funder support for tri-state and bi-national economic prosperity on behalf of the workers of today and tomorrow. The resulting report established performance metric goals to leverage grants and other funding sources to enhance service delivery and build partner networks.

The workforce asset mapping project expanded upon these recent successes to determine new opportunities for collaboration and resource leveraging, understand what service delivery gaps need to be addressed, and explore strategies to enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the regional workforce system. The analysis that follows describes the current presence of partners and services in the region as related to service needs and highlights distinct opportunities to increase partnerships, share resources, expand referral networks and mechanisms, and create more fluid experiences for job seekers and residents of the Borderplex region.
III. PROJECT METHODOLOGY

A. Overview of Methodology

Researchers defined the methodology for this research project in line with the strategic goals identified in WSB’s annual report, *Positioning for Success*, as noted below:

| 1. Customer Needs | WSB recognized the unique challenges and opportunities for special populations with multiple barriers to employment in the Borderplex region, such as those receiving public assistance, English Language Learners, low-income or low-educated individuals, individuals with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and more. Researchers included demographic and economic data layers in the GIS maps to highlight the gaps in resources for the region, illustrating how service delivery strategies can be better tailored to fit the needs of local talent and employers. |
| 2. Communications / Marketing | The findings in this study will allow WSB to develop a presence as the regional leader in workforce data and strategy, as the large scope of the study provided WSB with the findings and recommendations needed to become a thought leader in regional workforce development. |
| 3. Services / Products / Deliverables | In order to align training opportunities to regional economic need, WSB has been working to determine and define the skill needs of employers and current resources available to job seekers. This study highlighted the existence and prevalence of local training programs, examining their industry of focus (e.g. manufacturing, healthcare, etc.) and their involvement of certifications (e.g. industry-recognized credentials). This information, coupled with economic data pertaining to growth industries, helped underline the training gaps that regional resources must work together to fill. |
| 4. Support Services / Resource Management | In today’s economy, public sector service delivery systems are being asked to do more with less. Local workforce centers cannot financially, nor physically, serve all those who need services. In order for WSB to truly impact the community given its existing resources, WSB recognized the need to leverage partnerships, both programmatic and financial, to carry out services. The asset inventory and accompanying analysis demonstrate opportunities for collaboration to allow WSB to manage its resources and increase its impact and presence in the six county community. |

Before engaging in data collection, WSB and PCG defined the data parameters of the project. The Services Navigator includes contact information, programs and services, and target populations of organizations within the “broader workforce development system” in the Borderplex region. As aforementioned, an “asset” is defined as each organization’s access point or unique location(s) within this system.

*FIGURE 11: HIGHLIGHTS FROM POSITIONING FOR SUCCESS*

The “broader workforce development system”

The collection of employment services, vocational education and training assets, supportive service providers, and other assets that all work towards the common goal of investing in human capital development.
Therefore, some large organizations were represented as multiple assets due to their multiple service sites.

During data collection, assets were organized in four categories of workforce assets located in and serving the Borderplex region: Employment Services, Vocational Education and Training Services, Supportive Services, and other relevant services that contribute to the local workforce system (referred to as “Other Assets”). These categories were not mutually exclusive. Assets that provided more than one category of service are accounted for in each category. In relation, some large organizations were represented as multiple assets due to their multiple service sites. The following figures demonstrate these four service categories and the individual services that fall within each:

![Figure 12: Workforce Asset Categories](image-url)
## Employment Services

Service providers that formed the foundation of the workforce development service delivery system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistance Accessing Public Benefits</td>
<td>Access to TANF, SNAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Career Assessments</td>
<td>Educational assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Management Services</td>
<td>Career planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundational Skill Building</td>
<td>Networking, conflict resolution, stress management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Readiness Training</td>
<td>Résumé writing assistance, interview skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Search and Placement Services</td>
<td>Job search techniques, labor exchange services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial or Small Business Development Services</td>
<td>Business plan development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Vocational Education and Training

Organizations that provided basic workforce-oriented education and training, offered subsidies for those seeking vocational education and training, and supported education and training activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Skills Training</td>
<td>GED, computer literacy, ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset Building and Financial Literacy</td>
<td>Personal budgeting, tax assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training that leads to an industry recognized credential or degree</td>
<td>Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training that does not lead to an industry recognized credential or degree</td>
<td>General healthcare related training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Vocational Education and Training</td>
<td>Educational tutoring, internships, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Supportive Services

Service sites that provided necessary support for individuals to achieve and retain meaningful employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Library books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash Assistance or Income Maintenance</td>
<td>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>Child care providers and subsidies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Food pantries, emergency food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goods</td>
<td>Baby supplies, home goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>Physical, mental, or behavioral health care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing or Shelter</td>
<td>Homeless shelters, housing counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Resources</td>
<td>Pro-bono legal services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Public transit, bus vouchers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Workforce Solutions Borderplex**
**Workforce Asset Mapping Report**

### Work Clothing
- Dress for Success programs

### Other Supportive Services
- Foster care services, recreation programs, support groups, counseling, parenting education programs

### Other Assets
*All other workforce assets with which the broader workforce development system was aligning and/or had an opportunity to leverage more strategically.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Centers or Facilities</td>
<td>Senior centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Action or Social Advocacy Groups</td>
<td>Disability advocacy groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charities or Grantmaking Entities</td>
<td>Financing for Training/Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambers of Commerce</td>
<td>Local and regional Chambers of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Related Assets</td>
<td>Emergency services, business services, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 13: ASSET CATEGORIES AND SERVICE TYPES**

### B. Data Collection

Researchers first engaged with staff of the public workforce system who interact with community partners every day “on the ground” as they connect job seekers to services outside of workforce centers. Researchers aggregated multiple lists into a working database, then submitted a detailed data export request to the local 2-1-1 community services data provider, City of El Paso Public Health Department, including taxonomies of service types that fell within the four pre-determined categories. The 2-1-1 export offered over 200 unique organizations providing services within the broader workforce development system.

This data was merged with the working database to develop a baseline database before additional data collection. Researchers then implemented a tiered approach to data collection, involving multiple iterations of data collection to ensure that the entirety of the Borderplex region workforce system’s assets were captured, as detailed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1           | **Existing Workforce Center Partner Lists**  
WSB staff and leaders provided researchers with multiple different lists of local organizations with whom they frequently partner. These lists were combined to develop the first iteration of the working asset database. Additionally, WSB identified their “Tier 1” providers, the assets with which they have the strongest relationships and collaborations. These Tier 1 assets were featured heavily in the interview process. |
| 2           | **2-1-1 Data Export**  
Researchers garnered 205 unique assets from the 2-1-1 data export, which were then cross-referenced with one another and with the working database. This data was cleaned and translated into a working database, which provided additional contact information with which electronic surveys were administered. |
An online survey tool was developed to vet and enhance the data on each asset. The survey included quantitative questions regarding each organization’s contact information, target populations, services, funding sources, and partners. It also included a series of open-ended qualitative questions about each organization’s mission, partners, and recommendations to improve the Borderplex region’s service delivery network. The survey was then submitted to all email addresses collected, allowing for an increase in the accuracy and breadth of existing data.

Additionally, researchers conducted multiple over-the-phone interviews with assets, particularly the “Tier 1” partners. These interviews served to gather local perspectives on the workforce system to establish a deeper regional context in which the studied was conducted.

Given that some organizations did not respond to survey requests, additional online research was conducted to ensure that the inventory accounted for all relevant assets. In those instances, external data sources were used to ensure these organizations were appropriately represented in the inventory. These include, but are not limited to, sources such as the IRS, National Center for Charitable Statistics, Fort Bliss Online Directory, Texas Health and Human Services Commission Community Partner Program Listing, WSB Fund Development Plan, Rio Grande COG Reports, County and city websites, and local Independent School District websites.

In addition to data on workforce assets, researchers examined demographic and economic datasets that provided context and definitions of the boundaries within the Borderplex region. The table below lists each additional data source, its description, and its purpose in this project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Research</td>
<td>Quantitative/Qualitative</td>
<td>Researched online websites of organizations that did not participate in a survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMSI Developer*</td>
<td>Reference data</td>
<td>Collected supportive data on local demographics and industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-year U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates (2011-2015)</td>
<td>Reference data</td>
<td>Collected varied estimates of demographic and socioeconomic variables at the zip code level to examine and map data layers by zip code in El Paso County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market Information</td>
<td>Reference data</td>
<td>Aggregated supportive data on local demographics, economics, and industries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*EMSI uses over 90 Federal, State, and Private data sources. This project primarily accessed U.S. Census Bureau data (ACS), Bureau of Labor Statistics (CPS/CES/OES), and Equifax business level data.
C. Counties and Subregions of Focus

In order to accurately assess the vast Borderplex region, researchers conducted analysis at the regional, county, and subregional levels. Zip code boundaries were employed to both aggregate and visualize data geographically on heat maps. Analysis focused across all six counties of the Borderplex region, as well as within distinct subregions within the most densely populated county, El Paso County. El Paso County was separated into four distinct subregions: West, Northeast, Central and East, and Mission Valley.

The following map illustrates the six counties examined in this analysis, accompanied by the zip codes that constitute each. Given that some zip codes overlap county lines, researchers did extensive research involving the U.S. Postal Service’s zip codes to ensure that all zip code level data was appropriately allocated to counties in the Borderplex region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Zip Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>79821, 79835, 79836, 79838, 79849, 79853, 79901, 79902, 79903, 79904, 79905, 79906, 79907, 79908, 79910, 79911, 79912, 79915, 79916, 79918, 79920, 79922, 79924, 79925, 79927, 79928, 79930, 79934, 79935, 79936, 79938, 79968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudspeth</td>
<td>79837, 79839, 79847, 79851</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following map illustrates the 4 subregions of El Paso County examined in this analysis, accompanied by the zip codes that constitute each. Given that some zip codes overlapped county lines, researchers conducted extensive research involving the U.S. Postal Service’s zip codes to ensure that all zip code level data was appropriately allocated to a subregion.

Data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2011-2015) was obtained at the zip code level and aggregated into the aforementioned county and subregion designations. Calculations of estimate county and subregion populations were used to define the relative density of workforce assets.
that provide specific services and/or serve specific target populations with respect to the number of individuals residing within each county and subregion. The figures below illustrate the total populations within each county and subregion.

When examining county and subregional population nuances, researchers first examined the densities of assets as compared to the estimate populations of individuals living below the poverty level. Under WIOA, workforce systems must prioritize service delivery to “‘public benefits recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient’ when providing career and training services using WIOA Title I Adult funds.” Similarly, it is essential to examine key indicators, such as poverty levels, to identify differing needs in each county and subregion. The following figure presents estimate county populations and subregional populations of individuals living below the poverty level, as well as each county’s and subregion’s poverty rates.
**Figure 22:** Estimate County Populations for whom Poverty Status is Determined & Estimate Populations Below Poverty Level, Borderplex Region

**Figure 23:** Estimate Rural County Population for whom Poverty Status is Determined & Estimate Populations Below Poverty Level, Rural Counties
These figures detail estimate county and subregion populations and populations that were living below the national poverty line. It is clear that multiple counties and subregions in El Paso experienced higher poverty rates compared to the state average (17.3%) and national average (15.5%). Combined with data on the region’s assets, demographics, and other factors, this serves as the baseline for this report’s analysis, which is detailed in subsequent sections of this report.
IV. MAPPING AND ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ASSETS

The primary objective of this analysis was to identify specific opportunities to leverage and align assets and strategies to achieve greater alignment of the services in the Borderplex region. Researchers analyzed the workforce assets in the Borderplex region on an aggregate level based on existing resources and five year trends within the region. Data was collected on poverty, educational attainment, language needs, veteran populations, populations of individuals with disabilities, major employer presence, and other relevant statistics. The majority of demographic data was sourced from the American Community Survey’s 5-Year Estimates (2011-2015) from the U.S. Census Bureau, while unemployment data was sourced from the Texas Workforce Commission. This section provides an analysis of the workforce assets in the Borderplex region (in aggregate, by subregion, and by county) identifying specific opportunities to leverage and align assets and strategies to achieve greater workforce system optimization.

A. Borderplex Region

The Borderplex region, as defined in this study, encompassed the El Paso Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and its surrounding counties. With a combined population of over 2.5 million individuals, the broader North American Borderplex region (including El Paso, TX; Las Cruces, NM; Otero County, NM; and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua) was a fast-growing cross-border region with a fifteen-year growth trend of 30%.\(^v\)

The Borderplex region was part of the top ten largest manufacturing hubs in North America and had an average median household income of $37,285.50, 33% lower than the Texas state average and 28.2% lower than the national average.

Largely influenced by its location along the border with Mexico, the City of El Paso estimated that it experienced a volume of 2,200,283 commercial, noncommercial, and pedestrian traffic transiting across the Zaragoza International Border Bridge in the first half of 2016 alone and an estimated 3,591,433 overall traffic volume in 2015.\(^vi\) This regional determinant has led to the El Paso MSA to record an estimated 690,849 residents of Hispanic or Latino descent throughout each of its six counties in 2015,\(^vii\) which correlates to roughly 81% of the total regional population. Concurrently, approximately 20.5% of the region’s households are limited English speaking, which is higher than the national and state averages (8.7% and 14.2%, respectively). Interestingly, however, between 2010-2013 Net Migration in all six counties has trended downwards by almost 48% as reported by the US Census Bureau,\(^vii\) which could be resultant of a low availability of assets targeting migrant and limited English speaking populations.

Additionally, the region experienced another unique dynamic as approximately 8.6% of the region’s population were veterans, likely attributable to the presence of the Fort Bliss army post and multiple military bases across the state of Texas. Its veteran population was higher than those in the state (5.8%) and in the nation (6.3%). In addition, 26.9% of the region’s population were individuals with disabilities, significantly higher than those percentages at both the national and Texas state levels (20% and 11.6%, respectively). The following charts provide a regional snapshot across all six counties in factors mentioned above and vital demographic information to understanding the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brewster</td>
<td>9,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culberson</td>
<td>2,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>831,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudspeth</td>
<td>3,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Davis</td>
<td>2,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidio</td>
<td>7,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>855,492</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next section analyzes the region’s workforce assets and their service mix and public transportation, category and location, employer services continuum, and targeted populations.
SERVICE MIX AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The study identified a total of 480 assets throughout the Borderplex region. Given the rural nature of the region outside of El Paso County, it is not surprising that El Paso County was home to the majority of the region’s assets (416 assets, or 86.7%), while each of the five rural counties had less than 6% of the total regional asset count. The following table illustrates the number of assets within each county, along with pertinent demographic data.

![480 assets were identified across the region.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>El Paso County</th>
<th>Hudspeth County</th>
<th>Culberson County</th>
<th>Jeff Davis County</th>
<th>Presidio County</th>
<th>Brewster County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Assets</strong></td>
<td>416</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent of Regional Asset Count</strong></td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2015 Estimate Population</strong></td>
<td>831,331</td>
<td>3,165</td>
<td>2,281</td>
<td>2,253</td>
<td>7,190</td>
<td>9,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population Below Poverty Level</strong></td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets per 1,000 People</strong></td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 30: Asset and Demographic Data Overview by County, Borderplex Region*

The following map illustrates the number and categories of assets across the six-county region.
FIGURE 31: REGIONAL SERVICE MIX, BORDERPLEX REGION

El Paso County
Hudspeth County
Culberson County
Jeff Davis County
Brewster County
Presidio County

- Employment Services
- Vocational Education and Training Services
- Supportive Services
- Other Assets
It is evident that the five rural counties possessed far fewer assets than El Paso County did, with assets in Hudspeth, Culberson, and Jeff Davis Counties accounting for less than 2% of the region’s assets. When taking into consideration county populations, and therefore potential service needs, asset densities changed greatly, as demonstrated in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number of Assets per 1,000 People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudspeth</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culberson</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Davis</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidio</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewster</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When controlling for population differences, it is clear that the rural counties had a small presence of services but also had fewer people to serve. This table demonstrates that in El Paso County, there were 0.5 assets for every 1,000 people (or 1 asset per 2,000 people and concurrently 5 assets per every 10,000). Meanwhile, Jeff Davis County boasted the largest number of assets for its population (3.6). While these differences may seem quite large, they are likely attributable to the incredible population differences between El Paso County, which had a central metropolitan area, and the rural counties, which were most more spread out and disconnected from hubs of activity.

The following map displays the region’s workforce assets and locations of major employers in relation to one another and public transportation infrastructure. It also features average poverty rates within each county, demonstrating potential differing levels of need for services. Understanding the proximity of assets and employers to transportation infrastructure is vital to analyzing the accessibility of a necessary services and employment opportunities to local residents.
As seen in this map, the majority of assets and large employers were clustered in El Paso County. Other assets and employers in rural counties were often located on public transit lines, while a few assets in Jeff Davis County and Brewster County were not located near such infrastructure. An overwhelming majority of Borderplex residents reported commuting to work via car, van, or truck by themselves. Fewer than 2% of the population in each county reports utilizing public transportation to get to work. This may be likely attributable to the minimal public transit options and major employers in the rural counties.

With a dispersed geography and high levels of poverty in many of the rural counties, a high percentage of the regional population likely did not have the ability to commute to areas with higher densities of workforce assets and/or employers. This is evident in areas such as Presidio County, with staggered levels of unemployment and minimal public transportation infrastructure. Increasing channels for public transportation or providing a virtual workforce services system would allow the region to bridge this gap in services.

### Investment Strategy

Providing more robust virtual services may help increase access to services in rural counties.
ASSET CATEGORY AND LOCATION

While the density of workforce assets in each county and subregion inform high-level investment strategies, a deeper analysis into the types of assets and service sites in the region helps determine gaps in service and opportunities to align like-services with under-targeted populations. As defined in the Project Methodology, researchers assigned categories to each asset based upon the service(s) that the organization provides. The following figure shows the breakdown of categorical service providers across the Borderplex region. Once again, these categories were not mutually exclusive, as many organizations provided services that fell into more than one asset type.

![Figure 34: Assets by Category, Borderplex Region](image)

The following figure demonstrates the same data, organized by each of the six counties.

![Figure 35: Assets by Category and County, Borderplex Region](image)

When examining each asset category across the counties, El Paso County unsurprisingly had the largest number of assets. Additionally, in nearly each county, Supportive Services was the most common asset category. The majority of these Supportive Service assets were organizations that provide healthcare, miscellaneous supportive services (e.g. counseling), housing or shelter, and food assistance. In El Paso County, Other Assets constituted the second highest concentration of assets, including over 90 assets providing advocacy and community action support and 50 assets providing community centers or facilities.
While it is difficult to compare the categorical asset densities in the rural counties with very few assets, it is evident that Employment Services was the least common asset category in all six counties. Given the region’s notably high poverty rate and low unemployment rate, the lack of Employment Services across the region may have further inhibited the success of individuals with barriers to employment.

The previous maps cataloguing the county’s service mix show the dispersion of workforce assets across the Borderplex region. The following section takes a closer look at the range of Employment Services in the region, identifying potential service delivery gaps and like-services that can be more intentionally aligned to increase system bandwidth.

The Employment Service mix is examined through the lens of the Employment Service Continuum. This continuum, which is broken down into the three phases shown in the figure below, represents the participant flow through the Borderplex region’s broader workforce development system – from intake and assessment, to skill building and job readiness, and on to placement.

The continuum mirrors typical customer flow processes implemented in workforce development regions across the country. The following table describes each phase and references common activities, or services, provided at each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1 – Intake into the broader system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Phase 1 begins with intake into the broader system through a local access point. This access point can be any service site plugged into the broader system that can help the participant navigate the system to find the appropriate programs and/or services. Part of this first phase is assessing a participant’s current career development situation, barriers to employment, needs, strengths, and aspirations. | • Greeting customers and providing of an evaluation of service needs\(^{viii}\)  
• Offering an initial assessment through the welcome process to assist the job seeker in determining the next appropriate level of services |
Phase 2 – Skill building and job readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Common Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Phase 2 is comprised of services that actively case manage participants with the goal of building skills (both hard and soft) and coaching the participant towards job readiness. | • Providing provide career guidance or coaching, coordinating foundational skills training, and referring customers to training  
• Helping create an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and engaging in workforce preparation activities* |
| While case management is typically done on a one-on-one basis, many phase two activities are done in group settings, such as group trainings and workshops that service providers may offer. |

Phase 3 – Placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Common Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Phase 3 encompasses the area in which the workforce system garners a return on its investments made in phases one and two. | • Supporting job search activities and coordinating work experience opportunities and job placements  
• Providing small business start-up supports and guidance |
| Placement and entrepreneurial services directly lead to the most important success measure of the system: meaningful employment and livable wages. Nationally, this is where publicly funded workforce systems can often struggle to reap the returns of efforts in the first two phases of the continuum. |

As aforementioned, the Borderplex region’s employment services were categorized across this continuum. The following chart demonstrates the resulting densities of services in the region across these three phases.
As seen above, it is evident that there was a large concentration of services in the Foundational (Soft Skill) Building (in Phase 2) and Assistance Accessing Public Benefits (Phase 1), service with 67 and 60 assets, respectively. While the region was somewhat consistent in its distribution of assets across the continuum, it does seem to have experienced a shortage of assets in Individual Career Assessments (Phase 1) and Job Search/Placement Services and Entrepreneurial/Small Business Development Services (Phase 3).

This indicates potential inefficiencies or inabilities to properly assess individuals’ career interests and skills during the intake process, the entrance into the workforce development system. Additionally, the smaller presence of services in Phase 3 illustrates possible challenges with the entire continuum, as the end goal of these services are to place individuals into careers and help grow the local economy. The following map pinpoints each Employment Service type provided across the Borderplex region.
TARGET POPULATIONS

In addition to collecting information on specific types of assets, researchers examined populations that each workforce asset targets. For the purposes of this project, workforce assets were considered to serve a specific population if they have programs and/or services tailored to a specific group. While some organizations mentioned that they “served all” populations, this data element was intended to reveal only those that target these particular populations with common barriers to employment.

Identifying targeted populations is crucial for optimization of a workforce system’s service delivery as it reveals gaps in services’ ability to fulfill community needs. The following chart reveals the assets that serve these targeted populations, as deemed by survey responses and online research.

The most commonly targeted populations in the Borderplex region were as follows. These populations had 100 or more assets in the region.

1. Children (ages 0-15),
2. Youth (ages 16-24),
3. Women, and
4. Low-income individuals.

These findings are partially attributable to the high amount of schools, youth programs, community centers, and child care providers targeting and serving children, youth, and women. Many Supportive Services, in particular, reported targeting low-income individuals, which is often the mission of intent of such assets who provide services including cash assistance, goods, food, healthcare, and more.

The least commonly targeted populations in the Borderplex region including the following populations. These populations had 30 or fewer assets in the region.

1. Undocumented immigrants,
2. Formerly incarcerated adults,
3. Refugees/asylees,
4. Formerly incarcerated youth,
5. Migrant workers,
6. Foster youth,
7. Unemployed individuals, and
8. Entrepreneurs/small businesses.

It is not surprising that few assets targeted the first five populations on this list, as there are potential political and legal implications of doing so. Additionally, there were few accurate sources of data that depict the prevalence of these populations in the Borderplex region (and in the nation for the matter). However, given unemployment rates provided from TWC and high levels of poverty as noted in ACS, it can be assumed that unemployed individuals and entrepreneurs/small businesses were not adequately being served.

**Investment Strategy**

Greater investment can be placed in assets to target unemployed individuals and entrepreneurs/small businesses to help build the local workforce.
B. El Paso County

With an estimated total population of 831,331 people, El Paso County was the most populous county in the Borderplex region, and had seen 2.9% population growth over the last five years, significantly less than the state’s growth of 8.7%.\textsuperscript{x} The estimate poverty rate, 22.8%, was higher than that of the state (17.3%) and the nation (15.5%), by almost 5.7%. The county covered approximately 1,014 square miles and comprised 97.2% of the Borderplex region’s total population.\textsuperscript{x} El Paso County had six ports of entry into the U.S. from Mexico, which provided economic benefits to residents, workers, and employers and help support the local economy.\textsuperscript{xi}

The following map demonstrates the asset mix in the county, while the map on the following page shows the same data with estimate poverty levels. According to the TWC, the county’s unemployment rate had seen a great improvement, decreasing from 8.5% in 2012 to 5.3% in March 2017.\textsuperscript{xii}

For the purpose of this analysis, El Paso County’s 34 zip codes were divided into four subregions: West, Northeast, Central and East, and Mission Valley. The four subregions had different populations and resources, and therefore, varied needs and demands. As a result, suggested strategies around system design and service delivery involve nuances specific to each subregion’s needs and unique make-up.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure40}
\caption{Asset Mix, El Paso County}
\end{figure}
While the county had a high number of assets, they were distributed across areas with varying levels of poverty and proximity to the hub of Downtown El Paso. The majority of assets were clustered in this central area, at the intersection of the West, Northeast, and Central and East subregions. While poverty rates in this area were relatively high, there was a large amount of assets in many of them. Conversely, many other areas have significant poverty rates and smaller densities of assets, especially areas in the Mission Valley and Central and East subregions.

**Figure 41: Asset Mix and Poverty Rates by Zip Code, El Paso County**
In addition, in 2015, the average median household income in the county was $47,753, $5,454 less than the Texas state average of that year ($53,207). The subregions’ average median incomes largely ranged, from $28,806 in Mission Valley to $47,980 in the Northeast. Mission Valley had the lowest average median income, $24,401 below the state average, as well as the highest poverty rate at 32.1%, which was 14.8% above the state level.

The chart below demonstrates the average median income in the county by subregion.

To better understand these income level differences across the county, researchers studied the varying levels of educational attainment of its residents, as educational attainment historically correlates to employment and income levels. In El Paso County, 24.5% of adults 25 years old and over had a high school education or equivalency, while only 7.2% had an Associate’s degree and only 14.7% had a Bachelor’s degree.

When examining El Paso County’s educational attainment, it is clear that the majority of the county’s population had received a high school diploma or equivalency (24.5%) or had completed some college but did not receive a degree (22.8%). 15% of the population had less than a 9th grade education, which brings large implications on the basic skills and educational needs of these individuals to make them job ready.
On a subregional level, the Mission Valley subregion had the highest level of individuals ages 25 and over with less than a 9th grade education (25.9%). When examining the other end of the educational attainment spectrum by subregion, Mission Valley had a significantly lower level of individuals with Bachelor’s degrees (6.3%) than the other counties did (14.2-22.0%).

In addition, veterans made up a large portion of El Paso County’s population, accounting for 8.9% of the civilian population over 18 years old, similar to the state average of 7.9%. This represented the second highest density of veteran populations in the Borderplex region, behind Brewster County (10%).
particular, 12.6% of individuals 18 years or older in El Paso County’s Northeast subregion were veterans or active military personnel. The following chart illustrates the county’s veteran population 18 years and over by subregion.

![Figure 45: Veteran Population 18 years and over by Subregion, El Paso County](image)

When studying another priority population under WIOA, individuals with disabilities, researchers determined that El Paso County had the lowest percentage of individuals living with disabilities than any of the other counties in the Borderplex region (13.3% of its population). On a subregional level, the Central and East subregion had the highest percentage of individuals living with a disability, 17.2%.

![Figure 46: Population of Individuals with Disabilities by Subregion, El Paso County](image)
Across the four asset categories, El Paso County had the largest amount of assets providing Supportive Services in every subregion. Combined, the county had 315 assets providing Supportive Services, with the most being present in the Central and East subregion (106 assets). The least common asset category was Employment Services, with only 134 assets providing any type of Employment Services. The map below shows the Employment Service Mix in El Paso County.

When comparing the number of assets by subregion, and taking into account subregional populations, the following findings come to light:
- The West subregion had the most assets and the highest density of assets for its population (8.1 assets per 10,000 people).
- The Northeast subregion had the second lowest number of total assets (81) and only 3.6 assets per 10,000 people.
- The Central and East subregion had the largest population and the second largest number of assets (140), yet only 4.9 assets per 10,000 people. The majority of its assets were clustered in
the central part of the county, near the City of El Paso, while the eastern and southern parts of the subregion had far fewer assets.

- The Mission Valley subregion had the fewest number of assets in total (51) and for its population (3.5 assets per 10,000 people), as well as the smallest population.

The chart below shows the assets available in El Paso County by category and subregion.

![Assets by Category and Subregion, El Paso County](image)

The following sections explore the service delivery mix of El Paso County’s four prescribed subregions, with a focus on the intersectionality of population demographics, workforce assets, employment services, and target populations.
The West subregion had an estimate population of 177,467 individuals, making up 21.3% of El Paso County's population. This subregion was west of the City of El Paso and home the city’s downtown area, the county’s hub of activity, which likely contributed to the high density of services available in the area. The subregion had the greatest density of total assets and the highest number when accounting for population (8.1 per 10,000 people). In 2016, this subregion had 88,612 total jobs and Hospitals (Local Government) as its top growing industry. The top occupations in the area, in terms of job growth from 2015-2016, were registered nurses and personal care aids. The top 3 businesses in this subregion were also in the medical industry: Las Palmas Medical Center, the Hospitals of Providence Memorial, and Visiting Nurse Assistants.

The map above demonstrates the high density of households that were limited English speaking in this subregion, a detail that likely affects service delivery strategies in the subregion. The West subregion also had the highest number of limited English speaking households, making up 30.6% of all households.
in El Paso County. This finding is key, because it is important to support English Language Learners through relevant services such as English as a Second Language courses and translation services.

In regards to its asset density, the West subregion had the highest density of assets in total (144 assets) and relative to its population (8.1 per 10,000 people). Like the county at large, the West had the greatest concentration of assets in the Supportive Services category (101 assets), almost two times the amount of Vocational Education and Training and of Employment Services (50 and 49 assets, respectively). This subregion also had the second highest population living below the poverty level (22.3%).

However, when looking closer at subregional poverty at the zip code level, researchers found that poverty levels varied notably from zip code to zip code. The northern part of the subregion, containing zip codes 79835 and 79821, had the highest population of individuals living below the poverty level in the subregion (over 35% and over 20%, respectively). Furthermore, when the zip codes were combined, they possessed only 5 assets, while they cover approximately one third of the subregion’s land mass. In contrast, the central and southern parts of the West subregion (including zip codes 79932, 79912, and 79922) had lower poverty levels (under 20%) when compared to the northern area of the subregion.

While these nuances exist within the subregion, it is key to note that poverty was apparent in many areas of the West subregion. While it is likely that the wealth of Supportive Services in the subregion could support these impoverished populations, there may be potential to increase the presence of Employment Services and Vocational Education and Training to offer educational and work experiences that support individuals out of poverty. The chart and map that follow demonstrate the asset mix in the subregion by category.

**FIGURE 50: ASSETS BY CATEGORY, WEST SUBREGION, EL PASO COUNTY**
Many of the assets in this subregion were located along public transportation lines, as shown on the following map, likely increasing individuals’ access to their services. The majority of assets were clustered in the southeastern corner of the subregion in Downtown El Paso, while very few assets reach the northern part of the subregion.

In regards to the Employment Services continuum, the West subregion had the highest density of assets providing in Foundational (Soft) Skill Building (28 assets) and Assistance Accessing Public Benefits (27 assets). The subregion had a comparatively low number of assets that provide Individual Career Assessments (8 assets) and Job Search/Placement Services (8 assets). Phase 2 had the strongest presence in the subregion, while Phases 1 and 3, intake and exit points of the continuum, had 30 and 21 assets, respectively.
This map demonstrates the lack of Individual Career Assessments services across the West subregion, and highlights areas where these crucial services are needed in the area.

In regards to population, over 31.3% of the West subregion’s 144 workforce assets targeted children (ages 0-15), while few assets targeted formerly incarcerated adults (1.4%), undocumented immigrants (2.8%), unemployed individuals (3.5%), and formerly incarcerated youth (4.2%). Only 9 assets targeted English Language Learners in the area, which may insufficiently serve the large percentage of limited English speaking households live in this subregion.
The West subregion, despite having the second lowest subregional population, had the highest density of assets per 10,000 people (8.1), and the second lowest poverty rate (21.3%). Greater efforts and attention may be placed on Employment Services and Vocational and Educational Training services in this area to better engage job seekers throughout each point of their career development. There may also an opportunity in this subregion to provide more services to limited English speaking individuals, by providing translator services, providing English classes, or hiring bilingual staff at asset locations.

While there were a large number of assets targeting children ages (0-15 years) and youth (ages 16-24), the West subregion struggled to target services to many at-risk populations including formerly incarcerated adults, undocumented immigrants, unemployed individuals, and formerly incarcerated youth. While it may be a challenge to legally and appropriately serve these populations, there is an opportunity to better engage with many of them by leveraging the wealth of Foundational Skill Building services to increase their employability.
The Northeast subregion was home to 224,550 residents, the second highest population among subregions, making up 27.0% percent of El Paso County’s total population. This subregion, located northeast of the City of El Paso, was one of the largest subregions in terms of land mass. This subregion also had the second lowest density of assets, behind the Mission Valley subregion.

While the Northeast subregion had the highest median household income of all the subregions ($47,980), which was still less than the 2015 Texas estimate ($53,207), 21.3% percent of individuals were living below the poverty level. The Northeast subregion was also home to the largest number of veterans in county, making up 12.6% of the subregion’s civilian population 18 years and over (approximately 21,879 individuals).
The Northeast subregion was home to 34,137 jobs in 2016. In terms of industry job growth, HMO Medical Centers, Hospitals (Local Government), and State Government (Excluding Education and Hospitals) were the leading industries in the subregion. The Facilities Support Services industry saw the most decline, as defined by change in jobs, losing 210 jobs in 2015-2016. The top businesses in the subregion included the El Paso City Sheriff’s Department (Personnel) and International Laundry Services.

Like the other subregions, the Northeast had the highest concentration of assets in the Supportive Service category (69 assets), while the other categories had 24-35 assets. However, the subregion only had 81 total assets for its population of 224,550 – meaning only 3.6 assets per 10,000 people. The chart below illustrates the assets by category available in this subregion.

With fewer Employment Services than any other asset category, the Northeast subregion offered the most services in Phase 2, which mirrored the county at large. Phase 3 services were the least available to the area, with Entrepreneurial Small Business Development Services only being offered by 2 assets. The following chart demonstrates Employment Service Mix in the Northeast subregion.
The subregion’s actual number of individual Employment Services was quite low. Similar to the West subregion, the Northeast had very few assets providing Individual Career Assessments, Job Search and Placement Services, and Entrepreneurial/Small Business Development Services. The following map demonstrates the lack of Individual Career Assessment services in the Northeast subregion.

In the Northeast subregion, children (ages 0-15) were the most targeted population, in part due to the prevalence of child care services, which accounted for 12.2% of all of its Supportive Services. The second most targeted population was veterans and active military, which is appropriate given this subregion was home to the most veterans in the county. There were fewer than five assets for eight target populations in the subregion, including: foster youth, unemployed individuals, formerly incarcerated adults, formerly incarcerated youth, refugees, entrepreneurs/small businesses, migrant workers, and undocumented immigrants. While many of these populations may be hard to serve or identify, there are opportunities to directly target and engage unemployed individuals and entrepreneurs/small businesses within this subregion, especially if these individuals are also veterans.
Northeast Summary

The Northeast subregion had the second highest population across all four subregions and the second lowest density of assets, behind the Mission Valley subregion. The subregion also had the second lowest poverty rate. To support this subregion, greater efforts may be placed in Phases 1 and 3 of the Employment Services Continuum to engage job seekers and ideally help pipeline them into the growing medical and governmental industries in the subregion.

This subregion’s second highest targeted population by workforce assets was veterans and active military, which is appropriate given that it had the highest concentration of this population of all the subregions (12.6% of its population). There are opportunities to better engage the diverse employee pool found in the subregion, especially veterans, and align it appropriately with employer needs.
The Central and East subregion was home to 283,964 residents, making up the largest percent of El Paso County’s total population, 34.2%. Yet this subregion had only the second highest density of assets per 10,000 people (4.9 assets) behind the West subregion (8.1 assets). 19.3% of the subregion’s population lived below the poverty level, which represented the lowest rate of all the subregions’ populations, and the median income was $38,696, the second lowest in the county.

This subregion also had the second highest percent of limited English speaking households in the county, 30.2% of its total population. It also had the second largest population of individuals with disabilities, making up 13.1% of its population. The map below demonstrates the subregion’s assets and the percent of its population living in poverty.

While the high level of poverty in the subregion may be challenging for workforce and economic development leaders to influence, there may be opportunities to leverage these major health and manufacturing employers to increase employment opportunities across the subregion. The top businesses in the area included: University Medical Center in El Paso, Ready One Industries, and Del Sol Medical Center. In 2016, the Central and East subregion was home to 158,228 total jobs. The leading industries in the area (in terms of 2015-2016 change in number of jobs) were Telemarketing Bureaus and Other Contact Centers (632 jobs) and Heavy and Civil Engineering and Construction (302 jobs). Top occupations, in terms of job growth in 2015-2016, in the subregion were Correctional Officers & Jailers and Janitors & Cleaners.
The Central and East subregion had the second largest density of assets per 10,000 people (4.9) and second largest total of assets (140). Similar to other subregions, the Central and East subregion had the highest concentration of services in the Supportive Services category. Additionally, the lowest number of assets by category was in Employment Services, though this subregion had the highest amount of Employment Services of all the subregions in the county. Given the county’s unemployment rate (5.3% in March of 2017)\textsuperscript{11} and the Central and East subregion’s large population of individuals living below the poverty line (20%), this subregion has the opportunity to leverage its existing assets to help support the unemployed and the under employed, especially in the less asset rich communities in the eastern and southern parts of the subregion. The chart below illustrates the asset mix by category in the subregion.

![Assets by Category, Central and East Subregion, El Paso County](image)

**Figure 61: Assets by Category, Central and East Subregion, El Paso County**

The Central and East subregion had 140 total assets. However, when looking at this subregion’s Central and East sides separately, there was a great disparity in the number of assets available between the two. The central side of this subregion, located near the City of El Paso, included 7 of 9 the zip codes (79936, 79935, 79906, 79925, 79853, 79905, and 79903) in the subregion and had 133 of the subregion’s 140. The eastern and southern side included only 2 of 9 the zip codes in the subregion (79928 and 79836) and had the remaining 7 assets in the subregion. When evaluating the asset data on the zip code level, it is evident that the eastern side of the subregion had little access to workforce assets compared to the central side. Specifically, zip codes 79928 and 79836 made up approximately half of the subregion’s geographic area but only possessed 7 assets (of which only 2 provide Employment Services). This highlights a potential opportunity to increase access to assets in the underserved areas by leveraging assets in central part of the subregion.

Unlike the other subregions, Central and East had a fairly even continuum of Employment Services. The highest number of services were provided in Phase 2: Job Readiness Training (13 assets), Case Management (16 assets), and Foundational (Soft) Skill Building (19 assets). However, the subregion was still lacking in Individual Career Assessments, Job Search and Placement Services, and Entrepreneurial/Small Business Development Services, mirroring the regional need to examine and strategize around the beginning and end of the customer experience, Phases 1 and 3. The following chart demonstrates the Employment Service Mix in the subregion.
The map below features the Phase 2 services (48 assets) available in the Central and East subregion.

Over 30% of the Central and East subregion’s 140 workforce assets targeted children (ages 0-15), while few assets targeted undocumented immigrants, refugees, formerly incarcerated adults, and formerly incarcerated youth. The figure below demonstrates the subregion’s assets by their targeted populations. Though these underserved populations are more difficult to serve, there is an opportunity to engage with
these populations in this subregion to create a more qualified, trained, and hirable workforce and strengthen the local economy.

**Figure 64: Workforce Assets’ Target Populations, Central and East Subregion, El Paso County**

**Central and East Summary**

The Central and East subregion had the second highest density of assets of all the subregions, and the second highest amount of Employment Services (44 assets). It also had the largest population and the lowest poverty rate (19.3%). Researchers found a great disparity in the number of assets available between the central side and eastern sides of this subregion, the eastern being greatly undeserved when compared to the central side. There is an opportunity to increase access to assets in the underserved eastern portion by employing virtual services or leveraging local assets to increase service availability in the underserved areas.

To support this subregion’s job seekers, greater efforts can be placed in Phases 1 and 3 of the Employment Services Continuum. There is an opportunity to leverage subregion’s large number of Supportive Services, especially healthcare providers (49 assets), to serve as access points to other services or co-program activities with partners. Additionally, though a high number of assets targeted children (ages 0-15), the Central and East subregion struggled to provide services to undocumented immigrants, refugees, formerly incarcerated adults, and formerly incarcerated youth. These underserved populations are difficult to serve for two critical reasons: there is a lack of available data on these populations and these populations have proven to be historically hard to serve. The subregion may work to better engage these populations so that they become qualified, trained, and hirable employees.
The Mission Valley subregion had approximately 145,350 residents and was the smallest geographic subregion in El Paso County. It had the lowest density of assets of all the subregions, both in total number and per its population. While it was easily accessible to the City of El Paso, it had a far lower density of assets and higher poverty level (32.1%) than the West subregion did (22.3%), which was almost double the national average (15.5%) and the state average (17.3%).

The Mission Valley subregion was home to 31,950 total jobs in 2016. The leading industries in the area (in terms of 2015-2016 change in number of jobs) were General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, and Truckload (113 jobs) and Telemarketing Bureaus and Other Contact Centers (67 jobs). Top occupations, in terms of job growth in 2015-2016 in the subregion, were Heavy Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers and Customer Service Representatives. The top businesses in the area included: A. O Smith Corporation, Osram Sylvania, and Walmart Supercenter. The subregion also had the largest percent of its population living below the poverty level of all the subregions (32.1%), as illustrated in the map below.
The Mission Valley subregion had the lowest number of physical assets in any subregion in El Paso County. When adjusting for population, it only had 3.5 assets per 10,000 people, lower than all other subregions which had 3.6-8.1 assets. Like its neighboring subregions, however, the Mission Valley subregion had the highest density of asset services in the Supportive Services category and the lowest density in Employment Services, followed by Vocational Education and Training. The chart below shows the available assets by category in the subregion.

![Assets by Category, Mission Valley Subregion, El Paso County](chart1)

In regards to the Employment Service continuum, the Mission Valley subregion had the highest density of Employment Services in Phase 2 (20 assets). The presence of Entrepreneurial/Small Business Development Services, in particular, was quite low (2 assets). The following figure and map demonstrate these nuances.

![Employment Service Mix, Mission Valley Subregion, El Paso County](chart2)

The most commonly targeted populations in the Mission Valley subregion were women, youth (ages 16-24), children (ages 0-15), and low-income individuals. Similar to other subregions, the least targeted
The high prevalence of limited English speaking households in the Mission Valley subregion may warrant investments to ELL programs and other support services in the subregion.

Entrepreneurs/Small Businesses were rarely targeted and there were few Employment Services providing them with relevant services as well. There may be an opportunity to work with industries in the region enhance small business development in the subregion and help stimulate local jobs.

**Mission Valley Summary**

The Mission Valley subregion had the lowest density of assets both by total count and when adjusted for its population. The subregion had the highest percent of residents living below the poverty level (32.1%), which as almost double the national average (15.5%) and the state average (17.3%).

The area had a high number of assets that provide Supportive Services, but a small number of assets providing Employment Services and Vocational and Educational Training in area by comparison. More emphasis may be placed on Employment Services and Vocational and Educational Training in this subregion to address the issue of poverty in the community.

The Mission Valley subregion also had a high density of households that identify as limited English speaking (30.2%), and yet only 6 assets targeted English Language Learners in this subregion. The subregion may have struggled to provide services to multiple at-risk groups, though this is likely attributable to the fact that it did not have a wealth of assets in general.
C. Hudspeth County

Hudspeth County was surrounded by New Mexico to the north, the Mexican State of Chihuahua to the south, El Paso County to the west, and Culberson and Jeff Davis counties to the east. It was similar to the other rural counties in the Borderplex region in it was relatively large in size but had a small population (4,566 square miles with approximately 3,165 residents). Hudspeth County also exhibited the highest poverty rate in the Borderplex region, with 41.8% of its residents living below the poverty level.

Given the geographically large size of Hudspeth County compared to the population size, transportation options may allow for increased access to local services. Like the other rural counties, public transit in Hudspeth County was very limited. Individuals may, however, have used the 5311 Public Transportation program, or TRAX, which provides cost efficient coordinated transportation services to the general public. In addition, multiple assets are located along the Union Pacific Railroad Company line through the southern part of the county. For such a large, yet rural county, the alignment of public transportation options, like railroads, with the location of assets becomes more crucial.

![Figure 69: Asset Mix, Public Transportation Infrastructure, and Poverty Rates, Hudspeth County](image)

Of all the rural counties in the Borderplex region, Hudspeth County and Jeff Davis County had the second lowest number of total assets, each with only 8 assets. Even when accounting for population, Hudspeth County only had 2.5 assets per 1,000 people. In addition, Hudspeth County had zero Employment Services, which is important to note given that 41.8% of its population was below the poverty level.
7.8% were unemployed.

Given these challenges, there is a substantial need for greater Employment Services within Hudspeth County. The importance of services which assist job seekers throughout the entire Employment Service continuum (Phases 1-3) are further intensified in Hudspeth County given its high level of poverty. A focus on leveraging the presence of Vocational Education and Training together with Supportive Services assets to begin to provide fill the service gaps left by the lack of Employment Services in the county.

Figure 70: Asset Mix (Per 1,000 People), Hudspeth County

Hudspeth County also had the highest percent of total population with a disability (25.1%) of all the counties in the Borderplex region. While this is certainly a substantial number, Hudspeth County is not alone. In every county in the Borderplex region, aside from El Paso County, at least 20% of the population had a disability.

At least 20% of each rural county’s population had a disability

Additionally, 26.9% of the county’s households were identified as limited English speaking and 20.4% of the population over 25 had a 9th-12th grade education but no diploma (the highest of any county in the region). These demographics represent multiple potential barriers to employment for the residents in Hudspeth County.
Hudspeth County Summary

Hudspeth County had the third lowest asset density of all the Borderplex region’s counties, with 2.5 per 1,000 people. It should be noted that the county’s very small population may slightly skew the analysis, as its few assets appear to have served its population well, yet its population in and of itself was quite small. The county also had the highest percent of population below the poverty level, at 41.8%. Additionally, Hudspeth County lacked any assets providing Employment Services. Furthermore, the county had very high levels of limited English speaking households, individuals with low educational attainment, and individuals with disabilities. These demographic challenges, coupled with the very small presence of assets, warrant attention to potentially large service delivery gaps in the county.

With such high levels of these populations with multiple barriers to employment, Hudspeth County may benefit from greater alignment between Vocation Education and Training assets and the needs of these populations. Proper education and training, from GED courses to English as a Second Language classes, for example, could support those with less education or language barriers. Additionally, the exploration of credential or certificate programs that are appropriately aligned to skill levels of individuals with disabilities could help create new pipelines to employment for these individuals and contribute to the local economy.

Increased access to Employment Services could also support individuals in this county. Hudspeth County was in a unique geographic position, as it is the closest county to El Paso County, the hub of most regional activity, employers, and most assets. WSB may want to explore strategies to leverage assets in nearby El Paso County to serve those in Hudspeth County. With increased access to assets in El Paso County, Hudspeth County may potentially have more resources available to reduce unemployment rates, provide relevant supports to limited English speaking households, increase educational attainment levels, and offer the specialized services needed to best serve individuals with disabilities.

Investment Strategy

- **Assets in neighboring El Paso County may be leveraged to serve the large population in poverty in Hudspeth County.**

- **Training programs for the large populations of individuals with disabilities may also help create more direct pipelines for them into sustainable employment.**
D. Culberson County

Culberson County was surrounded by New Mexico to the North and the Texas counties of Hudspeth, Reeves, and Jeff Davis. Approximately 2,281 individuals resided in this county, 8.8% of whom were veterans. The City of Van Horn, the county seat, was approximately 120 miles from the city of El Paso. The county was best known for the Guadalupe Mountains National Park, which includes Guadalupe Peak, the highest natural point in the state of Texas.

Though Culberson County had the lowest total number of assets when compared to other counties in the Borderplex region, it possessed the second highest density of assets when accounting for population (3.1 assets for every 1,000 residents). However, nearly one third of the population was living below the poverty line, which has large implications for the types of assets and services needed across the county.

Culberson County had the highest concentration of assets in Supportive Services and the lowest in Employment Services, similar to concentrations in the other counties. Though its unemployment rate as of March 2017 was only 4.3%, the county only had 7 assets to serve this at-risk population.
With only one asset providing Employment Services in the entire county and such high levels of poverty, there were likely gaps in the county’s ability to meet local need. Moreover, like some of the neighboring counties, Culberson County experienced great levels of low educational attainment. 25.4% of its population had less than a 9th grade education, while only 7.2% of the population had a Bachelor’s degree.

Given the large dip in post-secondary educational attainment, Culberson County could benefit from Vocational Education and Training that help prepare students to be competitive in today’s employment marketplace. The county had only 1 asset providing Employment Services and 3 providing Vocational Education and Training. In particular, there may be opportunities through some of the County’s major employers (Culberson County Allamore School, Culberson Hospital, Van Horn Secondary School, and Chevron Tire Center) to access educational and employment opportunities in the growing industries involving healthcare and education.

Culberson County Summary
Culberson County had the lowest number of total assets of any county in the Borderplex region and all of its assets were located in the City of Van Horn. However, when adjusting for population, it had the second highest density of assets for its population of all counties in the Borderplex region. It is clear that its small population greatly influenced this ratio, similar to the trend seen in Hudspeth County. Culberson County also experienced some of the lowest educational attainment levels in the Borderplex region and had only one asset providing Employment Services to its local population.

The county may benefit from leveraging Vocational Education and Training, in particular, to help provide individuals with the necessary basic education and technical skills to compete in the labor market. In addition, improved transportation infrastructure may give Culberson County residents the ability to use services in the surrounding counties as needed.
E. Jeff Davis County

Jeff Davis County was unique for its geographical shape, with almost no north-south nor east-west boundaries. The county, home to 2,253 residents, was also home to multiple parks and preserves maintained by federal and state park services, including: Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and Botanical Gardens, Davis Mountains Preserve, and Fort Davis National State Park.\textsuperscript{xvi}

Similar to Brewster, Culberson, and Hudspeth counties, public transit in Jeff Davis County was very limited. The county had access to Interstate 10, U.S. Highway 90, State Highway 17, State Highway 118, and state Highway 166. Therefore, individuals residing in Jeff Davis County rely heavily on their access to major roadways and on the 5311 Public Transportation program, or TRAX.\textsuperscript{xxi} Unlike the other rural counties in the Borderplex region, there were no railroad options found in Jeff Davis County, which renders the lack of public transit more influential.

Jeff Davis County had only 8 total assets – yet when accounting for population, it had the highest density of assets for its population, with 3.6 per 1,000 people. This is likely attributable to the fact that it had the smallest county population within the Borderplex region. Furthermore, when examining the asset mix, it is clear there was a lack of Employment Services, with only one employment service asset in the entire county.
In comparison to the other counties in the region, Jeff Davis County had the highest median income ($50,101) as well as the lowest percent of its population in poverty (5.7%). In terms of poverty rates across the region, Jeff Davis County was certainly an outlier, as its population in poverty was significantly lower than those in other counties.

Additionally, Jeff Davis County had the second highest population of individuals with disabilities (24%) in the region. Furthermore, the county had the highest population of individuals over the age of 25 with a graduate or professional degree, demonstrating that the small population had a relatively high level of educational attainment.

In addition, the major employers in Jeff Davis County included the following:

- Village Farms
- High Frontier High School
- University of Texas at Austin
- Thriftway Clothing
Jeff Davis County Summary

Jeff Davis County, while having both the smallest population and the smallest number of assets, had the highest number of assets for its population (3.6 assets per 1,000 people) – likely attributable to the ratio comparing these figures. It exhibited the highest median household income in the Borderplex region, $50,101, and the lowest poverty rate, 5.6%. Following this trend, across the entire Borderplex region, Jeff Davis had the lowest percent of households that identified as limited English speaking. The county also had the second highest percentage of population of individuals with disabilities. The county’s major employers may leverage the skillsets of this unique population to increase their pipelines into local employment.

As similarly seen in Brewster, Culberson, and Hudspeth Counties, Jeff Davis County was severely lacking in public transportation infrastructure. Unlike the other rural counties, there were no railroad public transit options in Jeff Davis County. Strategies to increase access within and across the counties, physically or virtually, could help support job seekers and individuals with disabilities in Jeff Davis to obtain necessary services. In particular, with a high percent of individuals with disabilities, Jeff Davis County may benefit from establishing sustainable transportation infrastructure to support those who require supplemental transportation support.

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**Investment Strategy**

Increasing relevant services and employment opportunities in Jeff Davis County for individuals with disabilities may enhance career trajectories and contribute to growth of the county-wide economy.
F. Presidio County

Presidio County was home to 7,190 residents and had the third highest total assets of all the counties in the Borderplex region. However, when accounting for population, it had the second lowest asset density of the Borderplex region. As the fourth largest county in Texas by square mile, Presidio County was surrounded on the east by Brewster County, on the north by Jeff Davis County, and on the south and west by Mexico. The county seat, Marfa, was approximately 190 miles southeast of the City of El Paso.

Major highways in the county included U.S. Highway 67, U.S. Highway 90, and Texas State Highway 17. Like the other rural counties, public transit in Presidio County was very limited, though individuals could leverage their access to nearby highways and the 5311 Public Transportation program, or TRAX. The Texas Pacifico Transportation Limited and the Union Pacific Railroad Company were also available in certain areas of the county. The county was fairly disconnected from the rest of the region, and exhibited very few assets, low educational attainment, and high poverty.

![Map of Presidio County](image)

**Presidio County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Assets</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015 Estimate Population</td>
<td>7,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Below Poverty Level</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assets per 1,000 People</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 78: Asset Mix, Public Transportation Infrastructure, Major Employers, and Percent of Population with High School Education and No Diploma, Presidio County*
When examining the asset mix in Presidio County, it is clear that like other rural counties in the region, its highest density of assets was in the Supportive Services category. The county had very few Employment Services (5 assets) to serve its very geographically large area. These few assets were evenly distributed across the Employment Service Continuum, except Entrepreneurial/Small Business Development Services, for which there were zero assets.

Additionally, Presidio County had the highest percent of limited English speaking households throughout the entire Borderplex region. Yet only 6 of the county’s assets provided Basic Skills Training, a service under the Vocational Education and Training category, which includes critical services for English Language Learners such as English as a Second Language courses and Adult Basic Education.
While it may be helpful that the county’s major employers and few assets are typically accessible via public transit, only 4 assets reported targeting English Language Learners, who represent a large portion of the county’s population.

**Presidio County Summary**

Presidio County had the third highest number of total assets, behind only El Paso County and Brewster County, yet the lowest density of assets per 1,000 people, other than El Paso County. When examining growing and declining industries and occupations, it is clear that major employers and assets were relatively accessible via public transit. However, the low amount of assets in general may provide implications on the county’s ability to serve its population.

Additionally, growing occupations and industries in this region aligned with typically lower skills and levels of educational attainment. The top growing occupation in the county was Janitors/Cleaners (excluding maids and housekeepers), with an increase of only 3 jobs from 2015-2016. The top growing industry was Coin Operated Laundries and Dry Cleaners with an increase of only 6 jobs from 2015-2016. With such a large percent of the county’s households identifying as limited English speaking, it is unfortunate that there were not more career opportunities with potentially larger career pathways and higher earnings. Basic Skills Training and related services may be more frequently offered in Presidio County to be used by English Language Learners to provide opportunities to gain more meaningful, sustainable employment. Strategies may also be crafted to explore how supports for local small businesses can offer beneficial career opportunities to English Language Learners while promoting the county economy. The county can collaborate with its county’s major businesses (Presidio Superintendent, Presidio Elementary School, Presidio High School; and U.S. Border Patrol), in education and government, in such initiatives.

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**Investment Strategy**

Existing assets can partner with training providers to create access to Basic Skills Education and ESL classes for the wealth of limited English speaking households in Presidio County.
G. Brewster County

Brewster County, the southernmost county in the Borderplex region, was the largest county in the state of Texas. \(^{viii}\) Due to the county’s large size, its approximate population of 9,235 individuals lived in a very rural environment. The median household income in the county was the third highest in the Borderplex region at $41,001, behind El Paso and Jeff Davis Counties. The county seat was the city of Alpine, one of the only cities in the county. \(^{viii}\)

One of the main attractions bringing visitors into the rural county was the Big Bend National Park. The park, managed by the National Park Service, covered 801,163 total acres and was the largest protected area of the Chihuahuan Desert topography and ecology in the U.S. \(^{xx} \, xx\) Brewster County also had access to the rest of the region through U.S. Highways 67, 90, 385 and Texas State Highway 118. Though it lacked traditional public transit options, the local 5311 Public Transportation program, or TRAX, provided cost efficient coordinated transportation services to the general public. \(^{xvi}\) The Texas Pacifico Transportation Limited and the Union Pacific Railroad Company lines also ran across the northern part of the county and through the city of Alpine.

**Figure 82: Asset Mix, Public Transportation Infrastructure, and Major Employers, Brewster County**
The majority of assets were clustered in the City of Alpine and around Big Bend National Park. This comes as no surprise as Big Bend was one of the largest employers in Brewster County. Other major businesses in Brewster County, Outreach Health Service and Big Bend Regional Medical Center, both fell within the healthcare sector.

In regards to asset density, Brewster County had the highest number of total assets when compared to the four other rural counties (Culberson, Jeff Davis, Hudspeth, and Presidio Counties). When comparing across the entire Borderplex region and adjusting for population, Brewster County possessed the third largest number of assets for its population (2.9 assets per 1,00 people). However, this was likely influenced by the county’s small population. Brewster County’s assets most commonly fell within the Supportive Services category, a common trend across the other counties as well. Similar to the other counties in the region, Brewster County had the lowest amount of assets providing Employment Services. The following map illustrates the county’s service mix across the four asset categories.

Brewster County’s Employment Services assets were most commonly in Phase 2 of the continuum. Overall, Brewster County had a fairly even distribution of Employment Services across the continuum, though this represented only 8 assets. The fewest amount of assets were found in Individual Career Assessments (in Phase 1) and Job Search Placement Services (Phase 3), as found in El Paso County as well. When looking at the county as a whole, Brewster had 8 total Employment Services assets, but after adjusting for population, this equated to less than 1 total employment services asset (0.9).
Furthermore, 27 assets were identified to serve the population of this very rural county. In comparison to the other five counties in the region, Brewster County had the highest percent of its civilian population, 18 years and over, that were veterans (10.0%). This aligns with the statewide trend of large populations of veterans given the region’s proximity to multiple military bases. This finding may illicit the need for targeted strategies to serve the particular service needs of veterans and active members of the military in Brewster County.

Brewster County had the second highest county population in the region and the largest population of veterans – making up 10% of its population. The county had the second highest number of total assets in the Borderplex region, but significantly fewer assets than El Paso County had. Thought it had 2.9 assets per 1,000 residents, the majority of these assets were Supportive Services, while only 8 assets provided Employment Services (less than 1 asset per 1,000 people). With a high veteran population and a low level of Employment Services, Brewster County may benefit from leveraging its existing assets to...
connect veterans to employment or training opportunities with major employers. Aside from Big Bend National Park, the two major employers in the region both fell in the healthcare sector. Successful alignment between the healthcare sector and local Vocational Education and Training, specifically targeting veterans, may help build more sustainable talent pipelines in the county.

Additionally, the fastest growing occupation in the county was Correctional Officer, an occupation that may likely align with the skills and experience of the large local veteran population. In addition, Brewster County residents may use their neighboring counties’ assets to receive more robust Employment Services. Even within the county, there may be opportunities to increase public transit options to destinations where there are high densities or clusters of assets. In Brewster County, this would mean increasing transportation supports to the City of Alpine.

### Investment Strategy

Aligning Vocational Education and Training programs to major employer needs, for veterans in particular, may help more directly pipeline skilled veterans into sustainable local employment.
V. WORKFORCE ASSETS AND REGIONAL INDUSTRY TRENDS

To maximize the broader workforce development system’s impact on the regional community, assets and investment strategies should be consistent across the Borderplex region. This involves a systemic alignment of the inventory and analysis of these assets, provided in this study, to the industry needs of the regional economy. This section explores how assets can further align with regionals needs, examining workforce assets in line with major industries.

As aforementioned, WSB was uniquely situated in the North American Borderplex, a tri-state, cross-border economy that connects El Paso Texas; New Mexico; and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. With a combined population of over 2.5 million individuals, the Borderplex was a fast-growing region with a fifteen-year population growth trend of 30%\(^3\). The largest population in the region resided in Juarez, with 56% of the region’s population (1.4 million), while the El Paso MSA consisted of over 867,000 individuals. The growing maquiladora industry along with the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) National Emergency Grant have played large roles in this regional growth. As a result, the Borderplex ranked 7th in the top ten largest manufacturing hubs in North America. Its unique location provided manufacturing companies with supply chain advantages through production sharing strategies across the border.

The El Paso and Juarez economies were deeply connected, as an estimated 14,000 jobs in El Paso were directly linked to the maquiladora industry in Juarez. For every 10% increase in maquiladora employment, El Paso experienced a 3% increase in total non-farm employment\(^2\). Overall, the maquiladora industry has recovered from the recession while active plants have decreased due to increases in efficiency and plant expansions.

In addition, with total 2013 trade volume of over $90 billion, the El Paso Customs Trade District ranked as the 13th largest district in the US. Mexico provided the District with its largest import and export partner with the District operating a trade deficit totaling net exports of -$12 billion in 2013. In 2016, Gross Regional Product totaled an approximate $34.6 billion, with the Public Sector accounting for the largest proportion of production at 33% followed by Other Non-industries at 11%. The Manufacturing industry accounted for the next most private sector production at 8%, followed by Retail Trade and Health Care and Social Assistance.

A. Major Growth Industries

Data was aggregated from multiple regional and local economic development profiles on the region as well as the workforce asset map’s findings to examine economic and industry needs in the Borderplex region and the relationship between its assets and its growth industries. The figures below highlight regional growth trends across the region and demonstrates all counties, apart from Presidio, individually have exhibited almost 1 or more percent job growth from FY2015-FY2016. Furthermore, forecasts estimated continued job growth with Hudspeth County and Culberson County leading the region with possible double digit growth. Overall, the region exhibited a trend of upward job growth towards 2025 except for Brewster County, which seems to have struggled to recover from the 2007 recession.
In 2016, the labor market in the Borderplex region employed approximately 330,000 jobs, as was a 1.5% increase from 2015. The charts below demonstrate the prevalent trends the regional labor market experienced between FY2015-FY2016. The top five regional industrial sectors included:

- Government,
- Health Care and Social Assistance,
- Retail Trade,
- Accommodation and Food Services, and
- Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services.

These top five industries accounted for 65% of regional jobs. Labor market trends also showed a short-term decrease in jobs across the following industries between 2015-2016:

- Educational Services,
- Information and Administrative Support, and
- Waste Management and Remediation Services

Contrastingly, the Management of Companies and Enterprises, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Construction industries posted the highest annual job growth. Occupational demand increased for customer service representatives, registered nurses, and heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers as they posted increased job gains in the same period. The following tables detail growing and declining industries as set forth in EMSI’s Q1 2017 Data Set, determining each occupation and industry’s growth by change in jobs from 2015-2016.

### Growing & Declining Occupations (Short-Term Horizon)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Change in Jobs (2015-2016)</th>
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<td>Customer Service Representatives</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Clerks, General</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postsecondary Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners</td>
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### Growing & Declining Industries (Short-term Horizon)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Change in Jobs (2015-2016)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing Bureaus and Other Contact Centers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals (Local Government)</td>
<td>585</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Support Services</td>
<td>-280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services</td>
<td>-360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (Local Government)</td>
<td>-483</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Long-term industrial and occupational trends showed the following industries experiencing 31%, 27%, and 20% employment increases respectively since 2010 totaling 7,700 jobs:

- Limited-Service Restaurants,
- Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities, and
- Home Health Care Services.

Contrastingly, these industries experienced the largest number of job losses totaling 2163, 42%, 25%, and 84% percent decreases, respectively:

- Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Carriers,
- Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (Local Government), and
- Drywall and Insulation Contractors industries.

Occupationally these three industries posted the largest long-term gains of 48%, 27%, and 17% respectively accounting for 7,415 jobs:

- Personal Care Aides,
- Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers (Including Fast Food), and
- Retail Salespersons.

Concurrently, Construction Managers, Carpenters, and Childcare workers experienced the largest percentage decrease in jobs with 24%, 15%, and 15%, respectively. These trends [specifically the inclusion of the Health Care Services and Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (Local Government) industries] demonstrated the increased demand for health care services and the trainers or post-secondary teachers needed to provide degrees in those fields, which are currently lacking in the region.

To examine jobs by industry more closely, the following table details the industries (using 2-digit NAICS codes) with the highest number of jobs in the six-county region in 2016.

### Jobs by Industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAICS</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2016 Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>70,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>42,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>42,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>34,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services</td>
<td>25,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>20,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>17,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>14,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Other Services (except Public Administration)</td>
<td>11,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>11,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>9,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>7,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>6,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident that occupations and industries involving healthcare, government, retail trade, and food services made up a large portion of the employment landscape as of 2016. Changes in job growth indicated likely continued growth in occupations and industries involving manufacturing, healthcare, and some realms of education. These findings align well with many of the priority industries indicated by WSB, as detailed in the following section.

B. Regional Industry Training

Given the aforementioned economic trends, the asset mapping survey’s questions were tailored to examine the role of industry in the region’s employment and economic landscape. Participants representing assets that provide “training that leads to an industry recognized credential or degree” were asked to detail the types of industries in which they provide training.

Ten key industries identified were examined to understand the presence of training providers to pipeline individuals into these fields. The Educational and Health Services industry and Professional and Business Services industry proved to have the most assets providing credential-based training among the priority sectors, followed by Information Technology, as noted in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>5,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</td>
<td>3,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Crop and Animal Production</td>
<td>2,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>2,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>1,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Management of Companies and Enterprises</td>
<td>1,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Unclassified Industry</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of credential-based training programs fell into two priority industries:

- **Educational and Health Services**
- **Professional and Business Services**
Furthermore, after consolidating multiple entries in the open-ended “Other Common Industry” field from our survey, results demonstrated that training for entry into the law practice was the highest in demand among other common industries. Law was followed by HVAC, cosmetology and/or hair design, and automotive and diesel technology fields. The following map illustrates the presence of industry trainings that lead to a recognized credential/degree across the Borderplex region, along with each county's major employers and estimate unemployment rate as of March 2017. The majority of these training providers were in El Paso County (35 assets), while fewer than 4 assets across the rural counties provided these services (including zero assets in Hudspeth County and Jeff Davis County).

Additional assets vital to the workforce system were recognized educational postsecondary institutions. Universities in the region included New Mexico State University, Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad
Juarez, University of Texas at El Paso, and additional regional universities. The regional universities experienced a 77,929-combined enrollment with 12,679 degrees awarded at the undergraduate and graduate levels between 2011-2012. 42% of those degrees were awarded in the Education & Humanities subjects followed by 23% in Business, 15% in Engineering, 13% in Health Science, and 7% in Science. Additionally, the top five educational programs awarded included: Health Professions, Business Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians, and Education.

An increase in need for industry recognized degrees may increase the demand for quality instructors to match that demand, however, the occupation of post-secondary teachers is declining regionally. This may point to a need to recruit, train, and retain educational talent to provide such industry-relevant training in the region. Additionally, the manufacturing backbone of the regional economy cannot be ignored and the high amount of degrees awarded in Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians may illicit a need for increased vocational training in these areas.
VI. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section summarizes key findings outlined throughout the report and accompanying recommendations for WSB to increase the region’s collective ability to serve the broader workforce development system.

A. Key Findings

Asset Mix (Borderplex Region)

- 480 assets were determined across the six-county Borderplex region, providing Employment Services, Vocational Education and Training, Supportive Services, and/or other miscellaneous services (Other Assets). These were not mutually exclusive, as many assets provided services within multiple categories.
- El Paso County was the most asset dense county, with 86.7% of the Borderplex region’s assets. The rural counties had far fewer assets, yet also have much smaller estimate populations.
- There was a gap in Employment Services across the region, particularly in Individual Career Assessments and Job Search/Placement Services.
- There was also a large presence of Other Assets, especially Community Action and Advocacy organizations, as well as Supportive Services, including assets that provide healthcare, housing, child care, and food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Estimate Population</th>
<th>Number of Assets</th>
<th>Employment Services</th>
<th>Vocational Education &amp; Training</th>
<th>Supportive Services</th>
<th>Other Assets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>831,331</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudspeth</td>
<td>3,165</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culberson</td>
<td>2,281</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Davis</td>
<td>2,253</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidio</td>
<td>7,190</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewster</td>
<td>9,235</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subregional Comparisons (El Paso County)

- The West subregion and Central and East subregion had the highest densities of assets when compared to the other subregions in El Paso County.
- Again, Supportive Services were the most commonly featured asset category, while Employment Services were the least common.
- El Paso County had much more robust public transportation infrastructure than the other counties, which largely connected the subregions into Downtown El Paso. However, farther away from the city center, each subregion had fewer public transit options connecting individuals to the city (where the majority of assets were concentrated).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subregion</th>
<th>Number of Assets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and East</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Valley</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>416</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Map

- Employment Services
- Supportive Services
- Vocational Education and Training Services
- Other Assets
B. Services Navigator

The recommendations in the following section provide WSB and its partners with insight into opportunities to acknowledge, improve, and expand service delivery networks across the Borderplex region.

In particular, they highlight how system leaders and staff can use the Services Navigator platform, which hosts all data garnered from the asset mapping project, to set the basis for strategic discussions and provide detailed information about local resources to job seekers.

Before unpacking these recommendations, it is critical to understand the Services Navigator’s functionality and ideal uses by varied audiences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Leaders</th>
<th>Agency Staff</th>
<th>Partners &amp; Community Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze reports to craft regional service delivery strategies</td>
<td>Leverage the inventory of assets to connect clients to services</td>
<td>Create connections within a regional network of services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Generate reports on the types and locations of assets across the region</td>
<td>• Access and filter through detailed online records of local service providers</td>
<td>• Identify potential collaborators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Compare the density of assets to local demographic data</td>
<td>• Provide clients with instant “take-away” resources to support case management and facilitate referrals</td>
<td>• Understand service gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use findings when proposing regional strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Access and filter through detailed online records of local service providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide clients with instant “take-away” resources to support case management and facilitate referrals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 90: Services Navigator Uses**
C. Recommendations

1. Employ technological solutions to increase access to services in rural counties

Description

The large land-based, rural nature of the Borderplex region minimized access to necessary services for many residents, especially those living in the five rural counties. Many of these counties experienced high poverty, low educational attainment, and high unemployment (up to 7.8% in Hudspeth County and 11.3% in Presidio County). In addition, the lack of widespread public transportation infrastructure between and within the rural counties further minimized access to services provided by the local assets. Given these struggles, it may be inferred that the region’s current assets cannot adequately fulfill the service needs of many populations.

However, the creation of “brick and mortar” assets is not necessarily the answer, as that brings implications with funding and staffing. Instead, it is recommended that WSB and its partners expand access to relevant services through technology, especially career services. As detailed in their WIOA plan, WSB has invested in a virtual job interview technology, Interviewstream, and is looking to develop a plan to increase its presence with job seekers using a video/teleconference tool. To increase services across the Employment Service continuum, WSB can offer a more robust network of virtual services (such as Individual Career Assessments, Case Management, etc.) to job seekers in the rural counties.

In addition, there were over 35 assets in Fort Bliss, largely Supportive Service assets serving veterans and active military members. WSB can explore the use of technological tools to expand these services to support those outside of Fort Bliss. For instance, WSB and partner staff can employ the search and report features within the Services Navigator to identify services in Fort Bliss that their clients may use. Many only require military identification to access services, therefore the high population of veterans across the region (e.g. 10.0% of the residents in Brewster County) can benefit from these services.

Action Steps

i. Conduct electronic quality assessment surveys across the region’s veteran population (ensuring to include Fort Bliss) to measure the satisfaction with and effectiveness of Supportive Services assets in their ability to serve veteran populations.

ii. Lead focus groups with users of Interviewstream to gauge its ability to increase job readiness and lead to job placements, and identify opportunities to expand its use.

iii. Strategize the selection and rollout of virtual service offerings by convening major regional employers, stakeholders from Fort Bliss and the rural communities, and job seekers to develop a list of priority virtual service needs and using the Services Navigator’s strategic reports to determine service delivery gaps across communities.

iv. Host community events as virtual tools are expanded to showcase their services to the broader community and engage employers and job seekers in their expanded use.

v. Explore and procure a virtual technology solution to provide case management and other relevant career services to job seekers across the entire Borderplex region, similar to the RFQ being developed for virtual job exploration, using findings from previous action items to guide the selection of an appropriate solution.
2. Collaborate with Supportive Service providers, schools, and libraries to share resources and provide more holistic experiences to job seekers

Description

Access was a key factor limiting the employment and educational successes of residents in rural counties. In addition to virtual services, WSB may expand access to necessary services through collaboration with partners to use common assets as “access points” to additional services. In particular, WSB and partners can capitalize upon the prevalence of Supportive Service providers for this purpose. 74.8% of the region’s assets provided Supportive Services, most commonly offering healthcare (145 assets) and miscellaneous supportive services, including counseling, mentorship programs, and recreation programs (116 assets). These assets, as well as schools and libraries, may be employed to share their physical space, staff, and resources to outreach, engage, and train a larger population of job seekers.

To capitalize on this reality, healthcare centers and housing providers, for instance, can offer physical space in which WSB can provide orientations to job seekers. These Supportive Service providers benefit as well, as they can communicate with WSB staff to increase their understanding of the workforce system and employ that knowledge to help navigate their own clients into appropriate Employment Services and Vocational Education and Training. Together, these partners will be able to provide a more comprehensive set of services to an individual, addressing multiple barriers to employment to serve an individual’s multiple needs (especially for priority populations such as individuals with disabilities and limited English speakers). By providing individuals with necessary services across each asset category, WSB and its partners can further support them along their career journey and ensure that duplication of services is not present across the region.

Action Steps

i. Employ the reports within the Services Navigator to create a master list of the region’s Supportive Services and discuss possibilities to establish new or different partnerships with them.

ii. Develop and execute a community collaboration plan to market WSB’s services to these Supportive Service providers, highlighting the shared benefits from co-location and co-programming to incentivize partnerships (as WSB is currently doing with the library system).

iii. Pilot one new “access point” every 3 months in a different location in the region, using this report’s findings and the Service Navigator’s strategic reports to identify high-need areas and collaborating with local partners to leverage their physical infrastructure once a week.

iv. Create a WDB committee involving regional service providers to oversee the coordination and implementation of expanding services at Supportive Services locations.
3. Develop a plan to partner with assets in the expansion of the Fund Development Plan

Description

Many organizations cited the seemingly never-ending need for more funding and resources to serve populations in need. WSB can build upon its findings and strategies from its Fund Development Plan to assess how to partner with regional assets to expand upon these goals.

While funding may always remain a challenge across the public sector, WSB and its partners can collaborate with the wealth of community assets to apply for and secure funding and to advocate for further investment in the region’s assets. This study determined that over 90 organizations in El Paso County alone provided advocacy and/or community action services. Regional leadership can convene and incentivize coordination with these types of assets and their individual funding streams to build the strongest network of collaborators possible. This will allow the strategies set forth in the plan to become integrated across the region.

Action Steps

i. Ensure that the Fund Development Plan’s findings around regional growth opportunities are enhanced with newly discovered information around access to capital and related grant opportunities (using the list of assets in the Services Navigator that serve as charities/grant-making entities as a new data point).

ii. Examine strategic data in organizations’ profile pages in the Services Navigator (e.g. their funding sources) to acknowledge funding streams at play in the region and strategize opportunities to braid resources or co-program.

iii. Develop a shared community understanding of and strategy behind fund development goals in the region by bringing together assets providing advocacy/community actions services to share success stories and brainstorm strategies for effective regional coordination.

iv. Meet monthly with existing partners to discuss and promote the braiding of current resources to ensure that every dollar or funding stream available is used most effectively and appropriately.

v. Coordinate bi-monthly regional fund development meetings, ensuring all relevant stakeholders are present to identify regional priorities and monitor progress on regional goals.

"Funding is always an issue. Our services could be expanded with increased revenue.”
Representative from asset in El Paso County, Central & East Subregion
4. **Convene partners to review and ensure consistency of services across the employment service continuum and develop a common assessment tool**

**Description**

As WDBs prepare for the President’s upcoming budget, they must prepare to address the expected cuts across a variety of their programs. Partners can greatly benefit from shared processes and services to minimize duplication, increase communication, and cut costs. A common referral form and/or tracking system for Employment Service assets, in particular, can help partners “speak the same language” – this will allow them to seamlessly navigate job seekers to the next step in the Employment Service continuum without duplicating intake and assessment processes. If an individual is enrolled in two programs, partners are often helping co-support their individual development. By streamlining efforts and eliminating duplications across the continuum, partners can better minimize costs and efforts, and serve the whole customer.

In the region, the majority of Employment Services fell within Phase 2 of the continuum [Case Management, Foundational (Soft) Skill Building, and Job Readiness]. There was a lack of Individual Career Assessments in Phase 1, which are essential to accurately place individuals into services in Phases 2 and 3 that align with their skill levels and interests. Having consistency in assessment functions for all partners will better prepare and match an individual to the right services in the phase that follows. By establishing a common tool, WSB can help partners accurately and efficiently assess an individual’s multiple barriers to employment and pipeline him/her into the proper support and training in Phase 2 (which will then lead to a better experience in Job Placement in Phase 3). Overall, this may help to reduce service bottlenecks and increase bandwidth to place participants in meaningful employment.

**Action Steps**

i. Convene a roundtable with partners to discuss the creation of a common assessment form and/or tracking system, examining the Services Navigator’s inventory of assets and strategic reports to provide insight into the solution’s format, data needs, and rollout plan (which may require procured support).

ii. Use the Services Navigator’s search filters to identify assets providing employment-based services within each phase of the continuum, inviting leaders from assets providing Phase 1, 2, and 3 services to participate in the roundtable to ensure that the full continuum is represented.

iii. Develop a formal communication plan to pilot and implement the common tool in daily practice.

iv. Assess progress after 6 months of pilot use by convening participating partners in discussions about successes and opportunities for improvement, then adjust the tool accordingly.
5. Employ the Services Navigator to collaborate with identified regional training programs to further align training programs with industry needs

**Description**

WSB is already engaged in multiple efforts to better align regional training and educational programs to industry needs. This is reflected in their local plan’s goal to establish three in-demand certifications for trade/blue collar positions and in their collaboration with the Medical Center of the Americas and Borderplex Alliance to conduct a gap analysis between existing programs and growing industries. WSB can further build on this great work by using the asset mapping findings as a tool to indicate and address gaps as related to its regional asset mix.

First, WSB can communicate with all training programs on its Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to ensure that their programs are in line with regional employment demands over the next 24-36 months. Then, WSB may convene a selection of the region’s Vocational Education and Training assets (183 total) to ensure that their programs are also in line with these needs. A structured approach to mapping training program requirements against industry skill and educational needs will help paint a clear picture for WSB as to which training programs require more investment, as well as which programs no longer fit with industry demand.

**Action Steps**

1. Host a series of roundtable meetings with employers representing in-demand sectors, ideally from each county, to understand the skill and hiring needs.
2. Host a series of roundtable meetings with all identified Vocational Education and Training assets to gauge the relevance of their programs as compared to the industry gap analysis already in progress.
3. Attend existing training provider meetings in the region to share findings from WSB-hosted roundtables and determine opportunities to increase linkages between these discussions.
4. Meet quarterly with a select sample of Vocational Education and Training assets (as determined through the use of filters in the Services Navigator) across the region, as well as each county’s top 2-5 major employers, to identify current county-based career pathways and explore opportunities to better align programs to local employer skills and hiring needs.
5. Survey regional employers to garner feedback on their knowledge of and partnership with identified Vocational Education and Training assets in their respective counties to determine the level of existing collaboration and encourage increased partnership as needed.
6. Hold quarterly community events sharing the success stories job seekers who have benefitted from Vocational Education and Training assets by gaining a meaningful credential/certification that aligns to local in-demand industries.
6. **Evaluate veteran populations’ preparedness and fit for employment in growth industries and educate partner staff on the transferability of veteran skills into local industries**

**Description**

To tap into the large veteran populations across the region, WSB can investigate into the alignment, or lack of alignment, between employers’ skills needs and veterans’ skills and job readiness. As WSB engages in this type of work with its growing industries, it can also use these processes to address employment challenges experienced by veterans across the region.

To do so, WSB may map the skill, competency, and educational needs of growth industries against those common with veterans. This would then involve developing corresponding action plans to help pipeline veterans into local jobs. WSB may call upon the identified regional assets to assist in this effort, providing training to partner staff on the transferability of veteran skills into local industries so that they can properly assess and support job seekers accordingly. WSB can also explore the use of cross-training with Fort Bliss to help WSB staff understand the cultural sensitivities experienced by veterans and members of the military and recognize successful pathways to employment for them in today’s regional labor market.

These efforts allow WSB to support the large population of veterans in the region and attract them to jobs in the region instead of those outside of it. It may also support the hiring needs of local employers, as WSB can identify middle- to high-skill workers in the veteran population who can enter the workforce at a more senior level.

**Action Steps**

i. Facilitate focus groups and roundtables with veterans, both employed and unemployed, and employers to better understand the challenges they face relating to educational and skills gaps, job availability, and Supportive Service needs.

ii. Create a list of assets within the Services Navigator that fulfill veterans’ service needs, as identified in these focus groups, and provide physical “takeaway” lists of these assets in WSB and partner sites.

iii. Co-develop and co-deliver training to WSB staff, with support from veteran-facing partners (identified through the Services Navigator’s search filters), on the transferability of veterans’ skills into local employment and tactics to address the unique barriers experienced by veterans re-entering the workforce.

iv. Collaborate with WSB staff and employer partners to research and map skill, competency, and education needs of growth industries in comparison to common skills in veteran populations.

v. Organize and facilitate career fairs or information sessions on regional military bases to orient soon-to-be veterans to local job market opportunities.

vi. Conduct outreach and orientations through local veterans’ service organizations to educate veterans about WSB (including the full functionality of the Services Navigator) and partner services that may pipeline them into local employment.

vii. Develop and maintain relevant veterans’ family services in order to help transition veteran families to civilian life and increase probabilities of successes of retention in the workforce.
7. Expand career pathway and career awareness activities in secondary schools and community colleges to help pipeline students into sustainable local jobs

Description

Many of the counties in the region exhibited a great deal of low educational attainment, which often negatively correlates to employment opportunities and income levels. On average, 15.1% of the regional population over 25 years old had less than a 9th grade education and 22.6% had some college experience but no degree. To address these barriers, WSB and its partners should tailor Employment Services and Vocational Education and Training to youth populations in particular, engaging individuals at a young age to increase their interest in and aptitude for meaningful careers.

WSB is looking to continue its promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) into post-secondary initiatives, partnering with school districts to reach out to out-of-school youth, and increasing internship opportunities for youth. To further help youth understand local career opportunities, and their educational and employment requirements, WSB can expand its collaborative efforts with regional school districts and community colleges by providing informational sessions and training describing the exciting opportunities in local careers (and the educational requirements and resources available to get into them). This will support WSB’s existing work to engage youth by increasing their awareness of and accessibility to local careers, which may also help fulfill employers’ future hiring needs and stimulate the regional economy by keeping skilled residents working in the region.

Action Steps

i. Develop and execute a structured plan to outreach to regional businesses in order to expand internship, externship, and apprenticeship opportunities through partnerships with the regional educational institutions identified through the Services Navigator’s search filters (e.g. those that provide industry-recognized credentials).

ii. Facilitate focus groups with community college and secondary school partners, especially those offering industry-recognized training as detailed in the Services Navigator’s filters, to develop and improve STEAM programs, specifically involving pathways beginning at the middle school level in order to begin building student interests early.

iii. Assist regional community colleges and secondary schools in conducting regional competitions or fairs in STEAM areas to incentivize student participation and help employers identify talented individuals.

iv. Promote and develop Spanish language programs for youth along with trans-border educational seminars and information sessions around cross-border opportunities.
8. Convene economic development partners to research and expand upon entrepreneurial programs

Description

The study identified a small presence of entrepreneur and small business programs across the region (33 assets), which may be expanded upon or added to in order to further build the regional economy. Given the lack of large employers in many of the rural counties, WSB can explore the potential benefit of increased supports for small businesses to provide local jobs and offer work experiences and internships to young people.

This may involve the convening of economic development partners and existing support programs to assess their capacity to serve entrepreneurs and small businesses and/or introduce new entrepreneurial-focused programs, such as OWN Force, to the region. This effort may tap into new employment opportunities within the region that will stimulate economic growth.

Action Steps

i. Lead focus groups with business and industry leaders to understand potential supply chain gaps that could be filled through local small business support.

ii. Employ the Services Navigator’s search filters to locate existing small business development programs and assess the potential for WSB to create partnerships and formal referral processes with them.

iii. Enhance outreach strategies and referrals to small businesses and entrepreneurs in order to best mentor and assist them during their developmental stages.

iv. Explore the use of entrepreneurial-focused programs, such as OWN Force, to provide the necessary training, supports, and exposure to individuals in preparation for starting their own businesses.

v. Facilitate forums to connect small business owners and entrepreneurs with local and international entities and mentorship programs, such as SCORE, to help build their capacity in marketing their businesses and expanding customer bases.

vi. Coordinate networking events with small businesses and entrepreneurs with regional educational institutions, as identified through the Services Navigator’s search filters, to advertise internship and entry-level employment opportunities to students.

“We want to use small businesses and startups to help attract large employers to the region.”

Representative from asset in El Paso County, Central & East Subregion