

**LOWER RIO
GRANDE VALLEY
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**



DRAFT

2017

**ANNUAL
PRODUCTIVITY REPORT**

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

2017

ANNUAL PRODUCTIVITY REPORT

**LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Member:

I am proud to state that this edition of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's (LRGVDC) Annual Productivity Report marks fifty (50) years of progressive accomplishments for our region. As you know, the primary purpose of the LRGVDC continues to be a forum for the membership to coordinate and implement regional activities through a Regional Strategic Plan Process. Our membership within Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties shares a unique "Community of Interest" and the region has been fortunate in the excellent leadership provided by our Rio Grande Valley elected officials.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the time and effort invested by the Membership, Board of Directors, Advisory Committee Members and the LRGVDC staff. We could never achieve our objectives without this high degree of commitment and cooperation.

As the LRGVDC embarks on its fifty-first (51st) year of progress, I look forward to working with each of you and I want to thank you again individually and collectively for your support and assistance.

Sincerely,

Mayor Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez
LRGVDC President

CHAPTER 1

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mayor Ambrosio “Amos” Hernandez City of Pharr	President
The Hon. Norma G. Garcia Member-at-Large	1st Vice-President
Mayor David Suarez City of Weslaco	2nd Vice President
Mayor James E. Darling City of McAllen	Secretary
Judge Aurelio “Keter” Guerra City of Pharr	Treasurer
Mayor Tony Martinez City of Brownsville	Immediate Past President

REMAINING BOARD MEMBERS

Commissioner Alex Dominguez Cameron County	Mayor Benjamin “Ben” Gomez City of San Benito
Commissioner David Fuentes Hidalgo County	Mayor Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez City of San Juan
Commissioner Pilar Garza City of Alamo	Ms. Veronica Gonzales University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Mayor Rick Morales City of Donna	Mr. Paul Hernandez South Texas College
Commissioner Daniel A. Guzman City of Edcouch	Mr. Javier De Leon Texas State Technical College
Councilman Gilbert Enriquez City of Edinburg	Mr. Troy Allen Delta Lake Irrigation District
Mayor Chris Boswell City of Harlingen	Mr. Ronald Mills Willacy County Navigation District
Commissioner Esmeralda Lozano City of La Feria	Mayor Rick Cavazos Member-at-Large
Mayor Alma Moron City of La Villa	Mayor Pro-tem Eddy Gonzalez Member-at- Large
Mayor Henry Hinojosa City of Mercedes	Mr. Arturo Ramirez Grassroots Organizations
Mayor Pro-tem Norie Gonzalez Garza City of Mission	

MEMBERSHIP

COUNTIES

Cameron County
Hidalgo County
Willacy County

CITIES

Alamo
Bayview
Brownsville
Combes
Donna
Edcouch
Edinburg
Granjeno
Harlingen
Hidalgo
Indian Lake

La Feria
La Joya
La Villa
Laguna Vista
Los Fresnos
Los Indios
Lyford
McAllen
Mercedes
Mission
Palm Valley

Palmhurst
Pharr
Primera
Progreso Lakes
Raymondville
San Benito
San Juan
San Perlita
Santa Rosa
South Padre Island
Weslaco

REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Harlingen C.I.S.D.
McAllen I.S.D.
Mercedes I.S.D.
Monte Alto I.S.D.
PSJA I.S.D.
Rio Hondo I.S.D.
South Texas College
Texas State Technical College
Weslaco I.S.D.

SPECIAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

Agua Special Utility Group
Brownsville Navigation District
Brownsville Public Utility Board (PUB)
Cameron County Drainage Dist. #1
Cameron County Drainage Dist. #5
Delta Lake Irrigation District
East Rio Hondo Water Supply Corporation
Economic Development Corporation of Weslaco
Harlingen Irrigation District CC #1
Harlingen Waterworks Systems
Hidalgo & Cameron Counties Irrigation District #9
Hidalgo County Irrigation District #6
Hidalgo County MUD #1
Laguna Madre Water District
McAllen Economic Development Corporation
McAllen Public Utilities Board
Military Highway Water Supply
North Alamo Water Supply
Port Isabel/San Benito Navigation District
Port Mansfield Public Utilities
Port of Harlingen Authority
Rio South Texas Economic Council
Sharyland Water Supply Corporation
United Irrigation District
Valley MUD #2
Workforce Solutions Cameron

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Mayor Rick Cavazos
Los Indios, Texas

Mr. Eleazar "Yogi" Garcia, Jr.
Raymondville, Texas

Mr. Brian Godinez
McAllen, Texas

Commissioner Leo Munoz
Weslaco, Texas

Ms. Diana Serna
Mercedes, Texas

Ms. Ann Cass
San Juan, Texas

Hon. Norma G. Garcia
Donna, Texas

Com. Pete Garcia
San Juan, Texas

Mr. Eddy Gonzalez
Edcouch, Texas

Ms. Veronica Gonzalez
Edinburg, Texas

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Arturo Ramirez
San Juan, Texas

CHAPTER 2

STAFF

LRGVDC STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

Ron Garza	Executive Director
Debby Morales	Executive Assistant
Anna M. Hernandez	Director of Human Resources
Amy Lee Atkinson	Human Resources Specialist I
Rebecca Mariscal	Human Resources Specialist I
Rick Carrera	Operations Manager
Carolina Leal	Purchaser II
Eduardo Alvarado	Inventory Specialist V
Jesus Ayala	Custodian II
Victor Casas	Custodian I

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Jose L. Gonzalez	Director
Richard Flores	Manager I
Mary Villarreal	Program Specialist I - Contractors
Elida V. Carranza	Program Specialist I – Subrecipients
Mary L. Rojas	Administrative Assistant IV
Aime Garcia	CSR I - Receptionist
Israel Yañez	Contract Tech II

Case Management:

Marilu Fuentes	Program Specialist IV
Jaime Garza	Case Manager III
Viviana Moreno	Case Manager II
Dora C. Moreno	Case Manager II
Rosie Recio	Human Services Technician IV
Aleida Tirado	Human Services Technician III

Elder Rights

Veronica “Roni” Alegria	Case Manager II
Molly Segovia	Ombudsman I

Care Transition Intervention

Maricela Olivarez	Temp
Veronica Rafael	Temp
Adalinda Gaytan	Case Manager I
Yadira Flores	Case Manager I

ADRC

Miguel Garcia	CSR II – Housing Navigator
Bettina Escalon	CSR II – LCA
Alma Salinas	CSR II
Rolando Florez	CSR II
Mary Torres	Temp ADRC
Angela Hernandez	Temp ADRC

Harlingen Office of Area Agency on Aging

Debra Lachico	Program Specialist IV
Katherine Martinez	Case Manager II
Monica Rocha	Case Manager II
Anna Treviño	Ombudsman I
Anna De Leon	Case Manager II
Amenda Garcia	Human Services Technician III
Terri Lozano	Case Manager II
Rosemary Valdez	Case Manager II

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Terrie G. Salinas	Director
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FINANCE

Crystal Balboa	Director
Joanna Saenz	Assistant Director
Alma Guerrero	Financial Analyst I
Olga Arias-Hernandez	Accountant III
Celeste A. Nepomuceno	Accountant I
Anabel Saldaña	Accountant I
Abigail Vasquez	Accountant I
Prescilla Delgado	Accountant I
Diana De Anda	Accounting Technician II
Adalia Gonzalez	Accounting Technician I
Yoli Cuellar	Accounting Technician I

HIDALGO COUNTY
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Andrew Canon	Director
Linda De la Fuente	Assistant Director
Gloria Banda-Gonzalez	Administrative Assistant
Luis M. Diaz	GIS Specialist/Planner I
Miguel Arispe	GIS Specialist
Fernando Cantu	GIS Specialist
Jon Ray Bocanegra	Transportation Planner I
Braulio Garza	Transportation Planner I
Berenice Gonzalez	Transportation Planner I

HOMELAND SECURITY

Manuel Cruz	Director
Maria Juanita (Jayni) Saenz	Planner I
Dennis Moreno	Research Specialist I
Diana	CJD Liaison
Nancy	CJD Liaison

REGIONAL PLANNING & SERVICES

Maricela (Marcie) Oviedo	Director
Ludivina (Ludy) Saenz	Assistant Director
Valerie Ramos	Program Administrator
Brenda Salinas	Technician III

9-1-1

Juan E. Chapa	Program Supervisor II
Jose A. Garcia, Jr.	Program Supervisor II
Raul Madero	Program Supervisor II
Magdalena (Maggie) Garza	Program Supervisor II
Jessica M. Reyna	Program Specialist II
Hector N. Chapa	Planner I
Dorina Moya	Planner I
Oscar L. Garza	Planner I
Eusebio (Juan) Tores, Jr.	Planner I
Mary N. Strough	Planner I
Jennifer Ochoa	Planner I
Jose Luis Hernandez	CSR III
Rosemary Contreras	CRS III
Cruz D. Carrizales	CRS II
Leonel Valdez	CRS II

Alfredo Garcia	CRS II
Sellenne Isabel Vallejo	CRS II
Savannah Arredondo	CRS II
Jaqueline Castillo	CRS II
Ariana Morales	CRS II
Jose Gutierrez	CRS II

REGIONAL POLICE ACADEMY

Ron Garza	Coordinator/Director
Randall Snyder	Training Coordinator
Monica Cantu	Administrative Assistant I

VALLEY METRO

Thomas Logan	Director
Maribel Contreras	Manager I
Sarah Dierlam	Manager I
Gabriel Zuniga	Program Supervisor II
Minerva Gonzales-Flores	Program Supervisor II
Christopher Garcia	Program Supervisor I
Dora Cruz	Risk Management Specialist I
Yolanda Hernandez	CSR II
Jessica Sandoval	CSR I (Scheduler/Dispatcher)
Leo Ordonez	CSR I (Scheduler/Dispatcher)
Michael Quinones	CSR I (Scheduler/Dispatcher)
Doris Elias Mendoza	Maintenance Clerk I
Nancy Sanchez	Administrative Assistant III
Guillermo Zapata	Program Supervisor II
Jorge L. Ortega-Castillo	Transportation Mechanic II
Santiago Velasquez	Transportation Mechanic I

Fernando Castillo	Vehicle Driver III
Paul Dulcet	Vehicle Driver III
Gilbert Morales	Vehicle Driver III
Fernando Rodriguez	Vehicle Driver III
Alfred Rogers	Vehicle Driver III
Veronica Aguilar	Vehicle Driver II
Rodolfo Alejandro	Vehicle Driver II
Rumaldo Avalos	Vehicle Driver II
James Benson	Vehicle Driver II
Guillermo Carrillo	Vehicle Driver II
Martin A. Caceras	Vehicle Driver II
Xavier Claudio	Vehicle Driver II
Juan Davila	Vehicle Driver II
Jose De La Garza	Vehicle Driver II
Sean Deloatch	Vehicle Driver II

Rafael Diaz	Vehicle Driver II
Jose Galvan	Vehicle Driver II
Ceferino Garcia	Vehicle Driver II
Emilio Gutierrez	Vehicle Driver II
Roberto Guzman	Vehicle Driver II
Andrew Hernandez	Vehicle Driver II
Juan Hernandez	Vehicle Driver II
Andres Martinez	Vehicle Driver II
Felipe Miranda	Vehicle Driver II
Everado Morales	Vehicle Driver II
Pedro Olivera	Vehicle Driver II
Juan M. Parga	Vehicle Driver II
Hector Pompa	Vehicle Driver II
Armando Robledo	Vehicle Driver II
Andres Rodriguez	Vehicle Driver II
Rodolfo Rosales	Vehicle Driver II
Jose Salinas	Vehicle Driver II
Robert Salinas	Vehicle Driver II
Dan Sanchez	Vehicle Driver II
Julio Sanchez	Vehicle Driver II
Jesus Segura	Vehicle Driver II
Carl Wright	Vehicle Driver II
Aiza Galvan	Vehicle Driver II
Elias A. Lopez	Vehicle Driver II

VALLEY METRO RAINBOW LINE – ZAPATA COUNTY

Leticia Gazca	CSR I (Schedule/Dispatcher)
Jacinto Barrera	Vehicle Driver I
Andres Benavides	Vehicle Driver I
Eleazar Diaz	Vehicle Driver I
Romeo Garcia	Vehicle Driver I
Maria Dolores Gonzales-Cantu	Vehicle Driver I
Maribel Ricano	Vehicle Driver I
Javier Rico	Vehicle Driver I
Rosaisela Zamora	Vehicle Driver I

CHAPTER 3

LRGVDC FACTS

LRGVDC FACTS

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) is the Regional Council of Governments for the three southernmost counties in Texas (Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy) having an area of 3,643 square miles and a population of 1,293,788 according to the 2016 U.S. Census population estimates from the Texas State Data Center.

The LRGVDC is designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration as an Economic Development District and by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as the local water quality planning entity. Also, it is designated by the State of Texas as the Area Agency on Aging, and the local body to develop the comprehensive plans and programs for Criminal Justice, Health Concerns, Water Supply, Transportation, Solid Waste, and 9-1-1 Emergency Communications.

Membership in the LRGVDC consists of the governing bodies of each of the three (3) counties, thirty-three (33) municipalities, one (1) regional education institution, nine (9) educational institutions, twenty-six (26) special governmental units, one (1) grassroots representative and ten (10) members-at-large, five of whom are selected by the General Membership and five who are elected by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is named annually in accordance with the Bylaws and serves as the policy-making body of the organization. The budget for 2017 was \$26,783,447.

This 2017 Annual Report will serve as the Report on the State of the Region for those Federal and State agencies that fund the LRGVDC. It also provides this organization the opportunity to review the accomplishments of 2017 and develop plans for the future. The programs and activities conducted by the LRGVDC relate to and affect all citizens of the Valley, and a detailed explanation of all LRGVDC programs is reported in this publication.

Historically, the LRGVDC has maintained a balanced budget, complied with all grant conditions, and collected and expended funds in a manner consistent with sound management principles, as reflected by our independent audits.

The LRGVDC is an organization established for (and capable of) solving regional problems on a local basis, and to provide for planned and orderly growth in the future.

CHAPTER 4

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The LRGVDC is an Economic Development District (EDD) designated and authorized by the U.S. Department of Commerce and Economic Development Administration (EDA). EDA has six offices throughout the United States with our Regional Office being located in Austin, Texas. The Austin Region oversees a five-state area consisting of Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. EDA's national policy is to invest in the growth, expansion, and creation of businesses that will establish a foundation for sustainable job growth.

Economic and Business Development

The purpose of the LRGVDC's Economic Development Department is to generate and retain jobs and stimulate industrial and commercial growth. The Economic Development District provides grants for infrastructure development, local capacity building, international trade, manufacturing, and business development through EDA. It finances long-term investments to help diversify local economies and foster the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit that is abundant in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV). Economic Development is vital to the urban growth of the RGV and its proactive stand on energy conservation and developing an educated and qualified workforce will help plan for a premier quality of life.

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (A): Enhance marketing strategies to current and potential residents and visitors which highlight the region's high quality of life factors such as outdoor recreational activities, ecotourism, and geographic assets.

Implementation Strategies:

- Partner with recreational, tourist, state and local governments to create a Regional Marketing Plan to enjoy, promote, and protect the area's natural beauty and recreational opportunities.
- Promote and educate the public on ecotourism and the region's historical significance while protecting the RGV's wildlife and natural beauty.
- Help identify the RGV's environmental, and recreational potential in order to foster sound economic development benefits for each community.
- Create and develop a "Regional" marketing strategy to market the RGV as one region.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Support tourism by promoting and attending regional events. Promote regionalism and provide public education/training on the RGVs natural assets and economic benefits.	Yes
2)	Assist in the coordination of developing one (1) Regional Marketing Plan that is comprehensive and inclusive of rural and urban tourist attractions and recreational	Yes

	opportunities.	
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Regional Strategic Plan Goal (B): Diversify economic development of the entire region (urban and rural) by developing collaborative strategies, resources, and initiatives between business, industry, and government.

Implementation Strategy:

- Enable/encourage an ever-advancing infrastructure to properly serve the demands of a growing regional economy.
- Encourage continued development of new industry clusters that encourage job growth and business expansion, thereby, creating a stronger and more stable economy.
- Explore benefits of Regional Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) designation.
- Create a regional Geographic Information System (GIS) and economic database.

	Measureable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Provide technical assistance on regional infrastructure development projects.	Yes
2)	Partner with economic development organizations in developing and identifying industry clusters.	Yes
3)	Assist the Large Cities Coalition in exploring the benefits of a Regional MSA.	Yes
4)	Seek financial resources to expand the centralized GIS/Economic Data Base.	Yes

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (C): Maintain international competitiveness by increasing foreign trade and direct investment opportunities.

Implementation Strategies:

- Provide education, regional training, and information to promote trade as a vital component of the region's economy.
- Identify and support the infrastructure needed to support the advancement of international trade i.e., (ports and bridges) including education on national free-trade policies.
- Support border security and training initiatives using high technology for faster transportation of goods and products.
- Help local businesses forge connections with foreign trade groups, international governments, and global companies and help strengthen existing relationships.

	Measureable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Provide technical assistance and training to businesses to	Yes

	prepare them for dealing in international trade.	
2)	Partner with higher educational institutions and manufacturing companies to improve international communication with trade alliances, global companies, and international governments.	Yes
3)	Research international technology projects and training initiatives that focus on securing the border, as well as transporting goods and services faster and more securely across international boundaries.	Yes

While diverse in setting, the RGV will collaborate and work together as one region in order to leverage resources, engage our leaders, and build comprehensive strategies that are essential for our workforce’s prosperity and quality of life.

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (D): Ensure the region’s human capital development includes essential strategies and resources to effectively prepare a well-educated, highly skilled professional and technical workforce.

Implementation Strategies:

- Support the advancement of emerging technology for job creation, communication, and collaboration among businesses, manufacturing, and educational entities.
- Support educational programs such as: leadership training, financial literacy, drop-out prevention, retraining efforts, etc.
- Promote public dissemination of information by providing internet training, adult education classes and grant writing training in order to improve access to workforce resources and job training opportunities.
- Encourage employer “Alternative Financing Programs” such as tuition reimbursement and internship opportunities in order for students to obtain higher education degrees.

	Measureable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Meet with state and local workforce commissions to plan and develop workforce strategies that include emerging technologies and collaboration among businesses, manufacturing, and educational entities.	Yes
2)	Provide technical assistance in developing training programs, i.e., leadership, grant writing and drop-out prevention.	Yes
3)	Provide technical assistance to businesses and workforce organizations in creating internship opportunities.	Yes
4)	Support financial literacy by providing classes using the MoneyWise curriculum.	No longer providing classes

A well-balanced plan to diversify the region’s economy and help communities prepare for unexpected downturns by ensuring that a trained and educated workforce is available can strengthen our economic resiliency.

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (E): Strengthen economic resilience through the advancement of emerging high-tech and high value industries (e.g., healthcare, tourism, construction, etc.), reinvestment of agricultural/aquaculture and plans for effective disaster recovery.

Implementation Strategies:

- Promote the research and development of new technologies for the purpose of attracting high value industries.
- Help increase access to GIS technology and broadband connectivity in rural and urban areas.
- Support the space technology and infrastructure needed to attract more aerospaceport related businesses and innovative technology companies.
- Provide support, technical assistance, and innovative opportunities for the expansion of agriculture and agriculture-related businesses, including aquaculture.
- Support economic disaster recovery.

	Measureable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Support economic resilience by promoting and attending regional events.	Yes
2)	Assist in the coordination and collaboration of efforts to attract high-tech and high-value industries.	Yes
3)	Work with agricultural providers, community groups, and other agencies to provide support and technical assistance to the agriculture and aquaculture sector for business development opportunities.	Yes
4)	Provide assistance to emergency management offices to ensure continuity of operations for businesses and their economic recovery.	Yes

The small business sector is the highest employer and has had that distinction over larger businesses and manufacturing companies for years. Therefore, it is critical to maintain and strengthen our economy by enabling business growth, retention, and development. As a vital link to our economic stability we should ensure the viability of all small businesses.

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (F): Improve economic disproportionality through diversified strategies for small business incubation, entrepreneurial innovation, information, technology infrastructure and access to capital.

Implementation Strategies:

- Support the development of business incubators, high growth businesses, and entrepreneurial technology centers to enhance economic development and international competition.
- Support and continue to provide Financial Literacy Programs, such as MoneyWise to the public.
- Provide assistance to rural communities in gaining access to information technology and training specializing in economic models and GIS.
- Identify financial resources and help businesses obtain access to capital to retain, expand, or create new businesses.
- Promote, educate, and train businesses on the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program and other energy efficiency programs that will save money and conserve energy.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Provide technical assistance and grant administrative services to local governments, educational institutions, special districts, and economic development corporations for economic and business development.	Yes
2)	Assist and support efforts to develop more business incubators, entrepreneurial training facilities, and innovative research and products.	Yes
3)	Support and attend local, regional, and state business and commerce events. Provide information on available financial resources and grant opportunities.	Yes
4)	Conduct trainings or provide information on the MoneyWise Financial Literacy Program.	No longer providing classes
5)	Partner with local and state programs/organizations that provide information technology and GIS.	Yes
6)	Obtain designation as a PACE District in order to administer, promote, and educate businesses on the PACE Program.	Yes

CHAPTER 5

**ENVIRONMENTAL
RESOURCES
&
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Environmental Resources and Community Development Department provides RGV governmental entities with a variety of services for urban and rural growth. Through funding from the Texas General Land Office, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and Texas Water Development Board the department provides a wide range of technical assistance, planning, education, and outreach services to ensure appropriate infrastructure and housing development for the Region. The department also strives to conserve and protect our most precious natural resources which include water, our native habitat, agriculture and the environment.

Community Development Program

The LRGVDC Administers the State of Texas' allocation for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for non-entitlement communities. As part of this effort, it supports the Regional Review Committee, a body appointed by the governor with responsibility for identifying regional priorities and establishing scoring procedures for community development grant funds.

The program is funded by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). The TDA is dedicated to helping rural Texans strengthen their communities by providing funds for basic public facilities and infrastructure needs.

Regional Strategic Plan Goals (A, B, D): Expand the availability of suitable and affordable housing options for all RGV families and residents. Ensure appropriate housing and resources are available to underserved populations which may include economically disadvantaged, elderly, displaced women and children, and those with chronic health conditions and disabilities. Promote and protect fair housing rights for all residents of the RGV.

Implementation Strategies:

- Promote development of affordable housing facilities for the elderly and citizens needing modified accommodations.
- Encourage RGV communities to establish housing programs for families in need.
- Ensure fair housing for all residents of the Lower RGV.
- Distribute printed material at housing events to promote public awareness of Fair Housing.
- Attend Fair Housing meetings to increase knowledge of fair housing trends in order to effectively continue to work with other entities to address ongoing issues and improve quality of life for residents.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Support Regional Review Committee (RRC) and provide technical assistance to non-entitlement communities in the region and technical support to the RRC and TDA staff.	Yes

Housing Program

The Texas General Land Office (GLO) was designated as the entity responsible to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the grant administration of the CDBG Disaster Recovery funding on behalf of the State of Texas. In this capacity, GLO is responsible for execution of the CDBG grant award, development of Action Plan amendments, completion of quarterly reports, and the end of the award report. GLO will also oversee the distribution of CDBG funds for all non-housing disaster activities. GLO was designated as the agency responsible for housing activities and will continue to administer disaster recovery funding for those activities. Regional Councils of Governments (COGs) in the areas most impacted by the disasters have developed Methods of Distribution (MODs) for housing and non-housing funds not termed as categorical competitive activities or set asides (affordable rental housing, innovative housing approaches, and title clearance and legal assistance).

The LRGVDC received funds to administer the housing program for the LRGVDC Region. The LRGVDC has adopted a regional approach to disaster recovery housing programs in an effort to address issues present in the various fair housing documents reviewed. The regional approach will help ensure housing needs are addressed throughout the area, achieve economies of scale, ensure program consistency, and build organizational capacity. Various documents related to fair housing were provided to staff and consulting firm to develop housing programs in a manner that those issues would be addressed in conjunction with housing recovery associated with Hurricane Dolly.

Housing activities to be undertaken will vary depending upon completion of the “Needs Assessment” required by GLO. The primary objective is to ensure that each eligible family is placed in a habitable home that conforms with standard specifications including local and state building codes, housing quality standards (HIS), energy efficiency and necessary elevations to meet flood zone requirements. The Disaster Recovery Program will directly improve housing infrastructure while at the same time reviving the local economy by creating jobs for contractors and general laborers. The program will also bring forth a positive, long-term change for all communities within the region.

Regional Strategic Plan Goals (B, D): Ensure appropriate housing and resources are available to underserved populations which may include economically disadvantaged, elderly, displaced women and children, and those with chronic health conditions and disabilities. Promote and protect fair housing rights for all residents of the RGV.

Implementation Strategies:

- Promote efforts to reduce the number of substandard and dilapidated dwellings.
- Promote development of affordable housing facilities for the elderly and citizens needing modified accommodations.
- Partner with Housing Providers and local communities to assist with the rehab expenditures of subsidized rental housing units which serve the senior communities.
- Partner with cities to meet all housing needs and land development.
- Ensure fair housing for all residents of the Lower RGV.
- Distribute printed material at housing events to promote public awareness of Fair Housing.
- Attend Fair Housing meetings to increase knowledge of fair housing trends in order to effectively continue to work with other entities to address ongoing issues and improve quality of life for residents.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Perform the successful implementation of Housing Disaster Recovery Funds available to the LRGVDC Region and comply with GLO deadlines and bench marks for utilization of Disaster Funds available.	Yes

Water Quality Management Planning

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is the designated agency responsible for developing and updating the State of Texas Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP). The WQMP identified water quality issues, formulated alternatives, recommended cost effective solutions and provided current monitoring of conditions. This work plan serves as a basis to accomplish necessary regional water quality planning data for construction funding, and aiding the management, coordination, and enhancement of natural resources in the Rio Grande Valley.

Regional Strategic Plan Goals (C, D): Support water conservation measures by addressing water quality and quantity concerns. Improve flood control/drainage.

Implementation Strategies:

- Support Implementation of Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan.
- Coordinate efforts to develop and research education and outreach material.
- Increase education and outreach activities to improve public awareness.
- Support the maintenance of the EDA “Regional Economic Adjustment Plan for Building Disaster Resilient Communities” for flood control.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	LRGVDC will disseminate information on Water Quality Programs to the public by attending public meetings, presentations to educational institutions and providing updates to TCEQ for inclusion on the TCEQ website and the LRGVDC's website.	Yes

Regional Water Resource Planning

The Rio Grande is our main source of water. Drought, international treaty issues, and increased demand are impacting long-term water availability. Because of this, the LRGVDC is leading efforts to develop strategies for long-term water supply alternatives.

The LRGVDC has been designated as the political subdivision to assist the Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group (RGRWPG) (Region M) which is the designated group to develop the Eight County Regional Water Plan as required by Senate Bill 1. The Region is composed of Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Maverick, Starr, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata Counties. This plan has been successfully completed for 2016 and the LRGVDC will continue to coordinate RGRWPG's future water supply planning activities.

Regional Strategic Plan Goals (A, C): Encourage innovative projects and initiatives which promote environmentally sustainable development. Support water conservation measures by addressing water quality and quantity concerns.

Implementation Strategies:

- Involve community leaders to the greatest extent possible.
- Update Regional Water Supply Plan including system upgrades.
- Support implementation of Regional water Supply Plan (Region M).
- Encourage public participation and seek federal legislative and state support for the implementation of the plan.
- Cooperation between local, state, federal and international entities to address water supply and maintain safe water flow levels.
- Maintain and implement regional water supply plans.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Attend all RGRWPG meetings, and fulfill Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) requirements regarding water plan updates.	Yes

Regional Solid Waste Management Planning

The LRGVDC is the stated designated agency for solid waste management issues in the region. The Solid Waste Management program, funded by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), includes the development of the regional Solid Waste Management Plan, carried out under the guidance of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC). The main focus of the Solid Waste Department is to assist local governments and communities with solid waste management issues important to the region.

Regional Strategic Plan Goals (A, B, E): Encourage innovative projects and initiatives which promote environmentally sustainable development. Promote recycling and waste reduction through development of effective disposal systems for sewage, solid waste, tires, brush and hazardous materials. Protect, conserve and restore regional ecosystem and native habitat.

Implementation Strategies:

- Disseminate information on the economic benefits of establishing sustainable development projects.
- Support implementation of “Smart Growth” ordinances and other regulations that preserve open space and agriculture projects.
- Promote use of alternative energy sources.
- Encourage responsible, sustainable economic development and efficient use of land infrastructure resources.
- Improve awareness for protection and conservation of our natural resources.
- Promote public environmental education programs that help reduce illegal dumping, increase code compliance and local enforcement and conduct community cleanup events.
- Increase and expand on recycling programs and promote proper waste reduction, recycling and reuse programs both for solid waste materials.
- Support regional recycling and solid waste reduction initiatives and community alliances in order to promote recycling programs, policies and projects.
- Develop more environmental education programs to address these goals.
- Assist and promote proper waste collection and minimization sites within the county’s rural areas including colonia areas.
- Implement LRGVDC Regional Solid Waste Management Plan.
- Promote habitat restoration.
- Promote nature recreation.
- Improve the awareness and understanding of natures’ habitat.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Distribute the plan and inventory to all appropriate entities.	Yes
2)	Coordinate and conduct Solid Waste Advisory Committee meetings as required.	Yes
3)	Maintain a resource center of regional solid waste	Yes

	information and reference materials.	
4)	Assist TCEQ with the review of all permit applications for municipal solid waste management facilities submitted to the LRGVDC.	Yes
5)	Prepare a proposed Implementation Project Funding Plan to identify specific projects, project categories and regional funding priorities for the Region and conduct public meetings as required by TCEQ.	Yes
6)	Select projects for funding on a competitive basis.	Yes
7)	Conduct a Request for Applications (RFA) process to announce the availability of funding and to solicit applications.	Yes
8)	Conduct an application process for all competitive and non-competitive applications.	Yes
9)	Conduct an initial screening of all applications to identify projects that meet the minimum screening criteria for project selection.	Yes
10)	Coordinate with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee to review and rank all applications and project proposals.	Yes
11)	Submit information on projects selected for funding to the TCEQ.	Yes
12)	Establish a list of additional projects from the applications submitted, to be funded if and when additional funding becomes available.	Yes
13)	Ensure that all projects meet private industry notification process.	Yes
14)	Enter into legal agreements with each sub-grant recipient to award funding and set the standards and requirements that must be adhered to by the sub-grant recipient.	Yes
15)	Administer and manage each sub-grant in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.	Yes
16)	Establish and administer a financial management program to make reimbursements to sub-grant recipients.	Yes
17)	Complete Progress, financial and final result reports on all projects funded.	Yes

CHAPTER 6

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The LRGVDC – Area Agency on Aging is designated as one of twenty-eight (28) Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) in the State of Texas under the Older Americans Act of 1965 as amended. The LRGVDC is also one of twenty-two (22) Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) in the State. It is the representative agency of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission for the Lower Rio Grande Valley and functions as the coordinating and planning agency for services to persons who are 60 years of age or older. The overall objective of the Area Agency on Aging is to improve the quality of life for older persons through the development and expansion of a comprehensive and coordinated social service delivery system at the regional level. The Area Agency on Aging is legally eligible to conduct direct services, as any other Council Program. The Area Agency on Aging has continually provided direct services through access and assistance services which consist of case management, information, referral, and assistance, legal awareness, legal assistance, and long term care ombudsman. Most project funds are subcontracted to social service agencies in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties.

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (A): Encourage development of a comprehensive strategy to address the impact of our local aging population.

Implementation Strategies:

- Strategize to connect available resources directories such as 2-1-1, Area Agency on Aging, Aging and disability Resources Center, etc. to create a more seamless network of access.
- Expand and enhance community senior centers to promote quality aging in a socially engaging manner.
- Increase advocacy and support from local community leaders to initiate and implement evidence-based programs that show outcome based results.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Implementation of all local strategies identified in the Area Plan.	Yes
2)	Implementation of scope of work under the ADRC Contract.	Yes

CHAPTER 7

HOMELAND SECURITY
&
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

HOMELAND SECURITY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice Planning

Passage by the Sixty-Seventh Legislative Session of Senate Bill 127 marked the establishment of the Criminal Justice Division (CJD) of the Office of the Governor. The Bill charged the Criminal Justice Division with administering state funds and limited amounts of federal funds to local and state criminal justice agencies through Regional Councils of Government (COG's), such as the LRGVDC. The Criminal Justice Division provides funds for crime reduction programs that are locally planned, designed and coordinated through the local governments.

Regional planning activities include an effort to coordinate and consolidate the activities of criminal justice agencies within the three-county region and to maximize available funds and resources. This process involves identifying the local crime problem, system resources, goals and objectives and projecting program and funding needs.

Technical assistance is made available through CJD and the COG in order to facilitate the funding application process developed by local governments on behalf of the criminal justice agency. This assistance is provided in order to assure that projects developed are consistent with the needs identified and to not duplicate services or programs. Funds for the activities of the LRGVDC's Regional Criminal Justice Coordination Program are obtained from the Criminal Justice Division of the State of Texas.

Prevent violent and juvenile related crimes in the Rio Grande Valley and reduce violent crime.

The Governor's CJD directive is for the LRGVDC to focus on the enhancement of the RGV's capabilities by the creation and support of programs to prevent crime, provide service and treatment options, enforce laws, train staff and volunteers, and the restoration crime victims to full physical, emotional, and mental health.

Violent Crime: Violent crime remains a serious problem. It continues to inflict a heavy toll on communities across the RGV, limiting the quality of life for its citizens, paralyzing neighborhoods, and stretching local, state, and federal law enforcement resources to their limits. While a small number of cities are equipped to handle issues involving violent crimes such as rape, assaults, kidnapping, homicide, and gun violence, many smaller cities and towns are easily overwhelmed by the violent and criminal activity that gangs bring to their communities.

Juvenile Crime: The ongoing rise of urban violence involving our youth is particularly troubling. Often local law enforcement efforts are hampered by a lack of resources to implement creative programs that would stem the violent criminal activity involving

young people in our communities. Municipalities need to work with their community organizations to develop programs with the highest potential for benefit in their community to begin addressing this issue.

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (C): Prevent and reduce incidents of violent crimes across the RGV.

Implementation Strategies:

- Reduce the number of rapes, assaults, kidnappings, and homicides in the RGV by building the capacity of law enforcement agencies and providing equipment.
- Train law enforcement, schools, and youth centers on subject matters of child and adult abuse and sexual assault.
- Raise public awareness of family violence, violence in the workplace, schools, adult and teen dating situations, stalking, and hate crimes.
- Criminal Justice Computerized Criminal History (CCH) data entry awareness to ensure requirements meets state and federal regulations and mandates.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Assist as many as twenty-six (26) entities, which include local governments, non-profit agencies, and school districts in the development, coordination, and operation of twenty-six (26) projects within the three-county region funded through the Criminal Justice Division of the State of Texas.	Yes
2)	Analyze the three (3) county criminal justice environments and establish goals, priorities, and standards for criminal justice, juvenile justice, victim restoration, and crime stoppers programs that increase public safety and reduce crime.	Yes
3)	Conduct three (3) grant workshops grant application workshops within the LRGVDC area of responsibility (Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy).	Yes
4)	Provide outreach material such as pamphlets and/or promotional items on crime prevention and deterrence to ten (10) agencies.	Yes

Increase Technology for Public Safety

The Governor’s CJD directive is for the LRGVDC to promote the use of resources available in our region for coordination of services provided by law enforcement agencies, family violence centers, and civic groups for increased safety and protection for victims. Communities want and must need to feel safe in their respective environments. Therefore, public safety should include increasing the number of police officers on patrol with better response times; providing alternatives for expelled

students and gang activities; providing advanced technology and upgrades to law enforcement equipment; and decreasing drug distribution and contraband trafficking. There is a compelling need for technological equipment for the regions' law enforcement agencies.

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (E): Ensure regional agencies and personnel maintain adequate access to technological advancements in law enforcement equipment and resources.

Implementation Strategies:

- Continue to improve automation of imaging, fingerprinting, and mug shot systems.
- Work towards setting up a database to link local law enforcement agencies together and eventually with other agencies nationwide.
- Establish infrastructure to promote uniform information sharing among agencies to facilitate planning; install CAD systems in all law enforcement departments.
- Purchase interoperability equipment to move from level 4 to 6 (P25) compliance.
- Work with law enforcement agencies to promote the use of the data to combat gang activities.

	Measureable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Ensure that networking amongst the agencies remains in existence through the facilitation and notification to all local, state, and federal agencies of our grant workshops and planning process held in all three counties. Estimated attendance of sixty (60) participants is expected for the workshops.	Yes
2)	Provide technical assistance, as needed, to as many as twenty-six (26) eligible entities in the development of their grant applications with direction n where to seek statistical data.	Yes
3)	Provide guidance to fifty-seven (57) public safety agencies in identifying the standard and up-to-date computer hardware and software for law enforcement offices, radio communications equipment, and mobile data terminals for patrol units.	Yes

Homeland Security

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, much has been accomplished to improve prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation capabilities and coordination processes in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Councils of Government (COG's) are provided homeland security grant funds

to perform homeland security planning and emergency preparedness related activities within their regions. As a result, the approach that the LRGVDC has taken in addressing emergency planning across all jurisdiction functional disciplines, has improved the effectiveness of emergency response providers.

In 2002, the 107th Congress of the United States of America passed H. R. 5005, otherwise known as the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which established the Department of Homeland Security. As a result of the passage of the Homeland Security Act, all of the states are actively participating in the President's initiative in securing the United States and its borders against terrorism and all hazards, whether man-made, technological or natural.

Although few in numbers, maximum efforts have taken place to protect the homeland within the LRGVDC region; the LRGVDC along with the region's first responder community continues striving to support and provide the finest possible assistance to the population within the region. Due to Homeland Security Funding Programs, this region is better off today than ever before. When combined with the approximately \$35 million allocated to the region for homeland security since 2002, these programs as well as funds have provided the region increased capacity to respond with overwhelming capability to potential threats that face our communities and the citizens.

Enhance Homeland Security in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

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

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

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (A): Enhance Homeland Security in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Implementation Strategies:

- Secure and provide homeland security grant funds to perform homeland

security planning and emergency preparedness related activities within the region.

- Enhance and maintain emergency and strategic plans for first responders.
- Provide forums on emergency response activities for homeland Security.
- Assist local governments in completing risk/threat/capability assessments as required by Department of Homeland Security.
- Provide additional training opportunities to enhance first responder's capabilities.
- Aid local governments and response organizations in meeting requirements for adopting and implementing National Incident Management Systems (NIMS).
- Assist jurisdictions in updating and creating emergency management plans.
- Assist in the completion of a regional assessment for newly-created jurisdictions and update regional assessments.
- Distribute state guidelines and eligibility requirements to forty-six (46) jurisdictions on the basic and intermediate level of emergency preparedness.

	Measurable Outcomes:	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Conduct at least one (1) planning workshop with the Homeland security Advisory Committee to update the LRGVDC Homeland Security Strategic Plan – Implementation Plan.	Yes
2)	Assist and participate in one (1) regional communications exercise and request participation from 100% of the jurisdictions that have utilized homeland security funding	Yes
3)	Assist in identifying regional capability gaps by conducting one (1) regional state preparedness report workshop.	Yes
4)	Enhance the Threat and Hazard identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) by conducting, at a minimum, one (1) workshop	Yes
5)	Identify and define needs to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from an incident, man-made or natural, by disseminating state and federal preparedness guidelines to all forty-three (43) jurisdictions	Yes

Improve the Capability of Local Governments to Prepare for and Respond to Terrorist and other Hazardous Incidents.

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

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (B): Improve the capability of local governments to prepare for and respond to terrorist and other hazardous incidents.

Implementation Strategies:

- Provide and coordinate specialized training opportunities of state courses for local first responders.
- Determine and identify Homeland security training shortfalls requirement within the region and implement strategies to address the issues.
- Recognizing, responding to, and reporting precursor activities and crimes must be incorporated into law enforcement, homeland security and medical/EMS first responder personnel training and activities across the region.
- Conduct training to recognize the indicators of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) presence and know how to respond appropriately.

	Measureable Outcomes:	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Continue to assist the forty (40) current eligible jurisdictions over the course of the year in maintaining eligibility status and assist newly eligible jurisdictions with standards to maintain eligibility status.	Yes
2)	Distribute state guidelines and eligibility requirements to forty-three (43) jurisdictions on the basic, intermediate, and advanced level of emergency preparedness.	Yes
3)	Continue to facilitate the new implementation requirements of NIMS to forty (40) current eligible jurisdictions within the region.	Yes
4)	Assist in coordinating two (2) Incident Command System (ICS) Courses for first responders in order to meet the NIMS standards and NIMS certification of local jurisdictions' first responders as well as senior level management and elected officials.	Yes

Provide Resources and Assistance to Local Agencies to Establish and Maintain a Statewide Interoperable Communication Radio System.

Interoperability Communications is the ability of public safety agencies (e.g., police, fire, EMS) and service agencies (e.g., public works, transportation, public health, and hospitals) to talk within and across agencies and jurisdictions via radio and associated communications systems, exchanging voice, data and/or video with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, and when authorized. Emergency responders must have direct communications between agencies and practitioners via wireless radio and associated communications systems to exchange voice, data and/or video with one another. Direct communications must be available in real time, when needed, and when authorized, in order for responders to adequately discharge their obligation to protect life and property in a safe, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (C): Provide resources and assistance to local

agencies to establish and maintain a statewide interoperable communication radio system.

Implementation Strategies:

- Enhance standard operating procedures and training for all public safety.
- Disseminate information to all jurisdictions on Homeland Security Grant programs, annual state requirements, and deadlines and continue to enhance the region’s Regional Interoperability (RICP) on a yearly basis to identify and close any gaps.
- Establish Level 6 of Interoperable Communications.
- Enhance funding mechanism for the maintenance and upkeep of the regional Radio System and Spanish Severe Early Weather Warning Notification System and increase regional coverage.

	Measurable Outcomes:	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Collaborate with existing Homeland Security Advisory Committee, other Steering Committees, and three (3) counties to identify the best avenue to continue to enhance a statewide interoperable communications system.	Yes
2)	Encourage the forty-three (43) jurisdictions to participate as a region and develop projects that will improve the LRGVDC region and coincide with the LRGVDC RICP and State Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP), which addresses interoperable communications standards and procedures.	Yes
3)	Disseminate information to the forty-three (43) jurisdictions on homeland security grant programs, state and federal requirements, and deadlines which will continue to enhance the region’s RICP on a yearly basis to identify and close any gaps.	Yes
4)	Conduct one (1) focus group session and update the status of the region’s capabilities.	Yes

To Increase Individual and Community Preparedness, Response, and Recovery in the Region

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

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (D): Increase individual and community preparedness,

response, and recovery in the region.

Implementation Strategies:

- Support initiatives of the LRGVDC Citizen Corps and volunteers in the region.
- Promote individual and community preparedness, response and recovery capabilities at the local level.
- Identify training and volunteer opportunities that build the capacity of citizens to prepare for and respond to emergencies in the communities of the RGV.
- Continue to support agencies that initiate and sustain Community Emergency Response teams (CERT) and MRC programs.
- Support regional efforts to build medical surge capability.
- Include the People with Access and Functional Needs (PAFN) population in preparedness and response plans.

	Measurable Outcomes:	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Provide resources to one (1) Citizen Corps Council.	Yes
2)	Provide guidance to two (2) agencies or community groups in CERT training.	Yes
3)	Provide assistance to the Regional Citizen Corps Council, Harlingen Citizen Corps Council/CERT, and Rio Grande Valley CERT in establishing future volunteers for the need of the region throughout the year.	Yes
4)	Through the Homeland Security Advisory Committee, encourage forty-three (43) jurisdictions to participate in making their communities safer, stronger and better prepared in order to prevent and respond to all crimes and disasters by engaging with their communities and providing them with preparedness material.	Yes
5)	Assist in the coordination of one (1) community outreach meeting.	Yes
6)	Collaborate with faith based agencies, local community organizations, and two (2) organizations of higher education within the region.	Yes

CHAPTER 8

REGIONAL POLICE ACADEMY

REGIONAL POLICE ACADEMY DEPARTMENT

Regional Police Academy

The Regional Police Academy (RPA) delivers the Basic Peace Officer Certification (BPOC) course as stipulated by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE). Currently the BPOC is set at a minimum of 643 contact hours; however, as delivered by the RPA, the BPOC consists of at least 818 hours. The RPA includes subjects suggested by local agencies: OC Spray, Standardized Field Sobriety testing (SFST), and expandable baton to name a few. Additionally, the RPA provides in-service training to existing law enforcement officers to accommodate state mandated continuation education requirements. The RPA provides professional training and professional development to the region. Such courses include, but are not limited to: Decisions for Teens, Alcohol and Other Drug Awareness, Distracted Driving, Safety Awareness for Juvenile Probation and Juvenile Detention Officers, safety Awareness for Transit Operators, etc. Upon request, the Regional Training Center can design courses tailored to meet the needs for stakeholders.

Within the region, emphasis is placed on upgrading and increasing the availability of training for law enforcement officers. The State of Texas, through the Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), requires a minimum of 643 hours of training for participants in the Basic Peace Officer Course.

In addition to this basic training, TCOLE requires each peace officer to receive a minimum of 40 hours of professional development within each 24 month training unit and a total of 80 hours of professional development within each 48-month training cycle. As part of this ongoing training, each officer must receive training in topics specified by the state legislature each biennium. Officers must also receive specialized training in areas unique to their duty assignments and their individual license level (basic, intermediate, advance or master). For many officers, the level of certification can mean higher pay, promotion, and transfer.

Attrition in law enforcement, the ever changing criminal sophistication, and demands of stakeholders necessitates a program of continuing education from the Basic Peace Officer Course to specialized advanced training. In addition, changes in state and federal statutes, court decisions, development of new procedures and techniques, and the development of advanced technology require that continuously updated training is provided. Improved training and education enhances the law enforcement officer's capabilities to perform the more complicated and intricate nuances required and demanded by modern society and allow officers to specialize in certain areas (e.g. investigations, homicide, juvenile justice, family violence, traffic, etc.).

This law enforcement training is provided through the LRGVDC's RPA and Training Center. The RPA is monitored by TCOLE and the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor to ensure that training needs and standards comply with state requirements and meet the needs of the agencies serviced by the RPA. Funds for the operation of the LRGVDC RPA and Training Center are obtained from the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor, tuition and other fees.

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (A): Promote the development of highly qualified law professionals by providing quality education and training in alignment with requirements set forth by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE).

Implementation Strategies:

- Provide the basic certification courses for those individuals wishing to obtain their Texas Peace Officer license or Telecommunicators license.

Measurable Outcomes:		Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Conduct Basic Peace Officer Course throughout the region through day and night course offerings.	Yes
2)	Maintain TCOLE contractual obligations through ongoing communications with state agency personnel, attend required conferences/training, and update BPOC curriculum as revised.	Yes

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (B): Provide continuing professional development instruction and resources to ensure law enforcement personnel remain dynamic, skilled, and proficient across the region.

Implementation Strategies:

- Provide professional development opportunities for incumbent TCOLE licensees (peace officers, county jailers, telecommunicators, and school marshals) to maintain their license proficiency and acquire higher level proficiency certificates based on the license(s) held (basic, intermediate, advanced, master).
- Provide professional development opportunities for those individuals wishing to attain instructor level certifications and/or proficiency certifications as subject matter experts.
- Facilitate professional development opportunities.

	Measurable Outcomes:	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Conduct a minimum of twenty-five (25) in-service trainings utilizing Academy staff instructors and adjunct instructors throughout the region.	Yes

CHAPTER 9

9-1-1 DEPARTMENT

9-1-1 DEPARTMENT

The 9-1-1 Department provides quicker access for assistance with an emergency to the public who need law enforcement, fire protection and emergency medical services in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The 9-1-1 Department also provides administrative functions under the LRGVDC by maintaining the 9-1-1 database, location validation, updating maps, providing appropriate 9-1-1 training to call takers and staff, and educating the public on proper use of 9-1-1.

In 1987 the 70th Legislature of the State of Texas passed House Bill 9-1-1 which allows for the planning, financing, and implementation of Enhanced 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone Service in communities throughout the State of Texas. It required counties with a population of 120,000 or more to have 9-1-1 emergency service by September 1, 1995. A city or county with a population of less than 120,000 can also participate by resolution of its governing body. House Bill 9-1-1 requires each of the 24 Regional Planning Councils of Governments to develop a plan for providing 9-1-1 services throughout their geographic territory. The plan includes: levels of 9-1-1 service, equipment and operational standards, cost of service, administration, budget and funding allocations, and more. The LRGVDC Regional 9-1-1 Plan was developed in 1989 and the LRGVDC is currently implementing and maintaining that plan.

Regional 9-1-1 Plan

Through coordination with the Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC), telephone companies, local governments, and public safety entities, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties received 9-1-1 services in September 1992. Hidalgo and Willacy counties fully implemented Phase II 9-1-1 system during the fall of 2008, while providing continued training of Call Takers at Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) and upgrading current equipment. As of October 2016, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties have fully implemented Text-to-9-1-1 for all the PSAPs as well.

Regional Strategic Plan Goals (A, B, C): Provide a continuous, reliable operation of regional 9-1-1 systems. Implement emerging Next Generation 9-1-1 technologies. Promote 9-1-1 public safety education to all public, private, and educational agencies.

Implementation Strategies:

- Harden cyber security in the 9-1-1 call centers and administrative offices.
- Provide accurate, reliable, and current GIS data to all of our PSAPs.
- Establish Memorandums of Understanding with emergency service districts to improve medical pre-arrival instructions and minimize delays at the arrival of emergencies.
- Implement continuous improvement best practices for 9-1-1 call centers and administrative offices.
- Perform cell phone tower testing to align sectors to correct PSAP, validate new smartphone technology, and prove compliance with federal standards.
- Confirm location data is transferred between neighboring 9-1-1 jurisdictions.
- Provide long term recorder and generators used for 9-1-1 calls.
- Provide professional development and certifications to our telecommunicators

and administrative staff.

- Transition from older telephone legacy networks to newer cloud and service based networks and servers with required security for NG911.
- Implement backup networks that tie regional PSAPs to state and national ESInets.
- Ensure compatibility of emerging Smartphone applications that feed 9-1-1 call centers.
- Certify customized geolocation equipment through testing with approved labs.
- Maintain state formatted geospatial data and servers used to route NG911 calls.
- Use signage, graphics, animation, and maps to tell the real story to at risk communities.
- Promote compliance with Kari’s Law in businesses, government offices, and universities.
- Collaborate with neighboring 9-1-1 entities to synergize goals (South Texas 9-1-1, TARC, CBCOG, MRGDC, CC911, RGVAUG).
- Participate in state committees and conferences (PETS, TNT, SCAUG).
- Adopt standards and certifications developed through national and international associations NENE, Mexico NENA, APCO, and ESRI).
- Improve public education activities through geospatial analysis within the region.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Maintain and implement the regional 9-1-1 plan for Hidalgo and Willacy Counties.	Yes

CHAPTER 10

VALLEY METRO

VALLEY METRO

(Public Transit Services)

The need for public transportation services has long been recognized as one of the Lower Rio Grande Valley's priorities. The LRGVDC administers and operates both rural and urban systems. Valley Metro provides a much-needed service to the population of the region, particularly the elderly, disabled, students, veterans, and the economically disadvantaged.

As the designated recipient for both state and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding, Valley Metro operates transit service in the McAllen urbanized area (most of Hidalgo County), Harlingen urbanized area (covering Harlingen, San Benito, and neighboring cities), and the non-urbanized areas of Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy, Starr, and Zapata Counties. Valley Metro is the lead agency for regional public transportation planning and coordinates the Regional Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) composed of transit, workforce, health and human services, and non-profit organizations among others.

Service in the McAllen Urbanized area reaches Mercedes, Weslaco, Donna, Alamo, San Juan, Pharr, Mission, Edcouch, Elsa, La Villa, La Joya, Peñitas, Alton, Palmview, Edinburg, and most cities located adjacent to Interstate I-2 through fourteen (14) bus routes. The routes assist low-income people, the disabled, veterans, students, the elderly, and others to reach medical appointments, schools, training sites, shopping locations, and employment-related services. The routes connect with Valley Metro's rural routes and routes operated by Metro McAllen at the McAllen Central Station. Service in the Harlingen urbanized area reaches Harlingen, San Benito, La Feria, Combes, and Santa Rosa through five (5) bus routes. These routes connect at the Valley Transit Company bus station in downtown Harlingen and to the transit system in Brownsville through the La Plaza terminal. Service in rural areas is provided through seven (7) flexible routes in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Starr Counties, demand-response and commuter bus service routes in Starr, Willacy, and Zapata Counties.

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

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (A): Establish a seamless transportation system to increase connectivity and accessibility for people and freight, emphasizing regional planning efforts to meet the growing population demands of the region and ensure strategic development of urban and rural areas.

Implementation Strategies:

- Maintain and or increase transit ridership.
- Coordinate new and existing services with other transit providers.
- Continue to maintain a healthy relationship with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in

the region.

	Measurable Outcomes	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Increase one-way passenger trips by at least 2.5% over the previous year on both rural and urban systems for the span from January 2017 to January 2018.	Yes
2)	Introduction of ADA Para-transit service in both Hidalgo and Cameron urbanized areas.	No
3)	Secure additional funding through 85 th legislative session for additional transit service.	No
4)	Continue to attend and contribute as a member of the regional MPO boards.	Yes

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

Regional Strategic Plan Goal (B): Further adopt and implement multi-modal transportation infrastructure, policies and resources to develop healthier, safer, livable communities.

Implementation Strategies:

- Increase stakeholder involvement in project planning, design and implementation.
- Build upon existing relationships to cross reference new and existing methods/policies.
- Develop new marketing strategies to promote Valley Metro services as a whole.

	Measurable Outcomes:	Accomplished Yes/No
1)	Attend at least fifteen (15) public outreach activities for stakeholders throughout the service area.	Yes
2)	Hold at least one open house in conjunction with the Hidalgo County MPO to discuss the annual program of projects.	Yes
3)	Continue to coordinate the RTAP and attend the local MPO meetings.	Yes
4)	Introduction of Valley Metro Marketing Campaign Plan.	No

Client comfort and satisfaction begins with nurturing a safe and reliable bus system by all transit staff. By concentrating on prevention of accidents/incidents, the transit

providers strive to ensure every customer has a great experience when being transported. Staff must be updated on the industry's top safety practices and must encourage passengers to practice safety at all times.

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