

To say the least, the 2020 year has been a challenge for all of us, and the challenges remain in force. As designated "essential workers", we have not stopped serving our job seekers and employers. We have been forced to alter our delivery systems to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic realities and to keep our employees safe. We have also been tasked with delivering new funding streams designed by the Texas Workforce Commission to assist businesses through the COVID-19 crisis. It has been stressful, but I commend my Board staff and the staff of our contractor, for their dedicated work to keep our essential operations running in an

efficient and effective manner.

Our charge as the workforce development board for Cameron County entails not only administering the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs to job seekers and employers, but it also includes a responsibility to facilitate the growth of better paying jobs for our citizens. This requires work with stakeholder partners such as economic development agencies, schools, colleges, community based organizations, collective impact groups, and private industry to identify new demand training programs and new models of training delivery systems that will provide industry with the workers they need—when they need them. Ongoing efforts continue in working with all stakeholders to design programs and apply for funding to finance the growth that is needed in our economy.

## LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**PAT HOBBS** 

This Annual Report will highlight accomplishments of our Workforce Solutions Cameron operations last year. We are optimistic that the State will conquer the pandemic and return to some level of normality in 2021. We will continue to deal with the situation in a positive manner regardless of the setbacks that may be leveled against us. With the support of our Board of Directors and our elected officials, we feel confident that we can continue to do our job for the citizens of Cameron County.

Sincerely,

The Walks

**PAT HOBBS** 

Executive Director, Workforce Solutions Cameron



As Board Chair of Workforce Solutions Cameron, I am honored and humbled to represent a nonprofit organization that represents over 423,000 community members in Cameron County. After 14 years of service on this board, nothing could've prepared us for the changes that COVID-19 would have on not only our organization, community, but the world as a whole.

During these trying times, our board staff and management group, Southwest Key, were given the opportunity to reinvent ourselves and find creative and technological ways to stay in contact with each other and our customers.

Our hearts are heavy for those we lost due to COVID-19, and yet hardened to persevere during this time to help get our local businesses and residents get back on their feet with employment, sanitation, and restart services.

We are growing locally with many new job opportunities and companies coming to our community. We are here to serve you and open our doors to hear your needs. We know it hasn't been easy and there is a lot of work ahead of us, so we welcome your feedback and support in helping us better serve you.

May God bless each one of you!

Linda V. Alaniz

LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR

Your servant,

**LINDA V. ALANIZ**Workforce Solutions Cameron Board Chair



## OUR MISSION/VISION



## VISION

"Workforce Solutions Cameron is the premier, proven provider of high quality workforce resources for Cameron County."



## **MISSION**

"Workforce Solutions Cameron is the local workforce partnership organization devoted to promoting and supporting a workforce structure that provides employers and individuals of Cameron County the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity."

# FINANCIALATIDATA

**FISCAL YEAR BUDGET (2019 - 2020)** — \$42,158,048

**WORKFORCE** \$11,481,423

**CHILDCARE** \$29,886,968

**OTHER** \$789,657

<sup>\*</sup>Funding allocated to Workforce Solutions Cameron is provided primarily through federal and state funds. Additional funds may be secured through public and private grants.





5 Sponsors

518

**Attendees** 

63 Veterans in attendance

18
Schools/Community
Partner Agencies

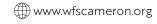
## VETERANS SERVICES

Workforce Solutions Cameron (WFSC) values veterans and the service they have provided to our country. Veterans receive priority of services at the workforce centers. Through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), we have co-located the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) at the workforce centers to better serve veterans and their families and connect them with employment services. Through our annual Red, White, and You! Hiring Event and our Business Services Unit (BSU), we strive to educate employers on the recognizable skills and dedication that veterans bring to the workforce. Veterans receive priority of services at WFS Cameron. Our staff, as well as the TVC Representative, and TWC Veteran Leadership Representative are readily available to assist veterans with access to job placement services, job search resources, training programs, job readiness services, and career development assistance. This year, WFS Cameron served 276 veterans.



276

Total veterans served in Cameron County



## JOB SEEKER SERVICE 12,995

job seekers served

239

ex-offenders served

26

dislocated workers served

166,224

labor force

9,798
employed

## **TRAINING**

166

Total entered employment related to training

116

Adults entered employment related to training

33

Youth entered employment related to training Dislocated Worker

17

Dislocated Worker entered employment related to training



## NON-GUSTODIAL PARENT PROGRAM

Initiated in August 2005 and implemented in 2008, NCP Choices is a collaborative effort between Texas Workforce Commission, the Office of the Attorney General of Texas, the Cameron County Family Court System, and Workforce Solutions Cameron (WFS Cameron). Through this program, WFS Cameron staff provides workforce services to non-custodial parents seeking assistance in finding employment to meet their child support obligations. WFS Cameron also provides NCP participants a variety of employment related services including training to enable them to become job ready. This year, despite the challenges that COVID19 posed, WFS Cameron served 218 NCP participants. The number served was 81% of our annual target which was due changes in the delivery of services from in-person to virtual both at the workforce center and court system.

\$313,592 in child support collections for FY 19/20.

# CHILDCARE SERVICES



The Child Care Services program provides financial assistance to eligible families that helps pay a portion of childcare costs. This enables parents to work, attend school, or complete job training programs and formalize long-term self-sufficiency. WFS Cameron was able to serve an increased number of children, 3,176 in 2018 to 4,996 in 2020.



4,996

Average number of children served per day

3,141

Average number of parents/families served per day

170

Number of childcare providers with agreements

# TSR-TEXAS SCHOOL READY



Developed by the Children's Learning Institute, the Texas School Ready (TSR) combines a research-based, state-adopted curriculum with ongoing professional development and progress monitoring tools. Teachers from child care centers, Head Starts facilities, and ISD pre-kindergarten classroom are able to participant in TSR and are provided tools to help them learn more about the specific instructional needs of the children in their classrooms and how to support, children using engaging lessons and activities. Workforce Solutions Cameron's TSR project worked with 65 pre-school teachers, including 30 from child care centers in 2020, a growth of 7% compared to 2018.

## For 2019-20 program year:

· Number of Child Care Centers who participated: 30

· Number of Head Starts who participated: 24

· Number of ISDs who participated: 6

· Total number of teachers: 65

· Number of Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 teachers

o Y1: 35 o Y2: 21 o Y3: 9

Number of child care teachers: 30Number of head start teachers: 28

· Number of ISD teachers: 6



## CHILD CARE **QUALITY:**

45 Number of providers **Number of TRS certified** 

Number of 2-star certified providers

Number of 3-star certified providers

Number of 4-star certified providers





## **TEXAS RISING** STAR (TRS)

The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program is a voluntary, qualitybased child care system of child care providers taking part in TWC's subsidized child With the help of the TRS's care program. This program is available to Licensed Centers, Licensed Homes, and Registered Child Care Homes and strives to exceed Texas's Minimum Child Care Licensing Standards. Workforce Solutions Cameron had 45 child care providers TRS certified in 2020, a 22% growth from 2018. The number of 4-star and 3-star certified providers increase

by 45% and 37% respectfully since 2018. These providers are monitored yearly and assessed every three years. assessor and mentor, who work closely with current and potential TRS facilities to ensure they are operating with TRS standards and to assist them in maintaining and/or obtaining highest certification desired, providers can aid in the development of the children they serve daily.

## **INTERNSHIPS**

Workforce Solutions Cameron partnered with WFS Lower Rio to implement an internship program with several High schools in the area. Through purposeful outreach and recruitment efforts, eligible High School Juniors and Seniors were offered an opportunity to gain field experience in their career pathway through dual enrollment in a STEM Middle Skill high demand/target occupation.

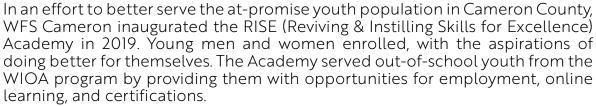
Board WFS successfully placed 20 students interns in Electrician, Computer Support Specialist, Medical Assistant, Automotive Tech, Business Specialist, and Architecture jobs. For ten weeks, students from the San Benito, Los Fresnos, and Brownsville CISD and Rio Hondo and La Feria ISD, attended regular classes and reported to their internship sites to follow through in applying the theories learned in the classroom. The dual enrollment allowed students to earn an industry recognized certificate while in High School. One of the Higher Education institutions was Texas Southmost College where four of the LFCISD students attended the dual credit Electrician course. The internship was completed with a graduation ceremony that involved students walking the stage during Texas Southmost College graduation ceremonies. Student interns Jose Arreola, Ernesto Estrada, Joel Garcia, and Jared Gomez experienced two graduation ceremonies that year.





## SUCCESS

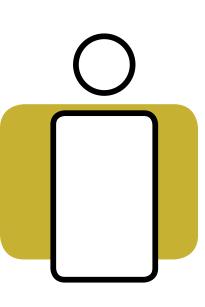
## Gerardo "Jerry" Chavarria



Gerardo "Jerry" Chavarria accepted this new challenge and became part of the first graduating class of WFS Cameron's RISE Academy. Along with other participants, Jerry received a laptop and a tablet to access online training courses on Essential WRK, a mobile learning platform. In March 2020, his efforts led to the completion of the online training as well as his obtention of a GED through the local YouthBuild program. With his new credentials, he was well on his way towards self-sufficiency.

Jerry worked closely with our Youth Specialist to build his resumé and to complete job applications. He soon gained employment with Teleperformance as a Customer Service Representative in the Healthcare division. Being able to empower young men and women to achieve their professional and personal goals is what motivates WFS Cameron staff to strive for excellence!





## STORIES

## Horacio Pena

Horacio Pena visited the Workforce Solutions Cameron office in Brownsville because he wanted to do better for himself and his family. He started working with a Career Coach and soon he started subsidized employment with the Gladys Porter 700 in Brownsville The experience inspired Horacio and he decided to pursue postsecondary training. Months later. Horacio completed his Introduction to Construction Trades program at Cameron County Education Initiative. Having worked closely with Workforce

Solutions Cameron Staff. Horacio found the perfect opportunity to further his professional goals; an on-the-job training (OJT) position at Steel Coast Company. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 concerns, Mr. Pena's OJT was suspended—but that didn't stop him from continuing to believe. During the statemandated quarantine, he remained in contact with Workforce Solutions Cameron staff. Some weeks later, he got a call; Steel Coast Company was ready for him. Today, he's serving as a Shredder Laborer.



"...he
wanted
to do
better for
himself and his
family."

## SUCCESS



Photo: Ryan Flores on his graduation day with his Career Coach, Ms. Idalia Torres by his

## **Ryan Flores**

Ryan Flores was a participant of the WIOA program at the WFS Cameron center in Harlingen, TX. Determined to gain skills in an in-demand career, Ryan pursued the Structural Fitter program at Southern Industrial Career Center in La Feria, TX. Upon graduating, he was placed in subsidized employment while our staff worked hard to find him a full-time position. Our Job Developer matched him to none other than Space X in Brownsville, Texas. Hired as a Technician-Support (Welder Helper), Ryan is proud to be working with one of the most innovative companies on the planet.



## STORIES

Cont.



## Luis Garza

"A lot of the times, people get stuck into thinking they can't do better," Luis Garza said. "There are people out there ready to help you; all you have to do is try." Barriers are nothing new to Luis, but that hasn't deterred him from achieving success. Initially, Luis came into Workforce Solutions Cameron to begin his job search but quickly realized he was in for so much more. "Workforce has helped me pay for my tuition at TSTC in Harlingen; they've also helped with getting me necessary work uniforms and gas cards," he said. "I've completed my 4-week CDL training; I'm so grateful for the opportunity to further my education and provide for my son."

Luis, like most people, was unaware of the many services Workforce provides. While he's appreciative of everyone he's met, there's one person he had to thank. "My career coach has been so helpful in getting me everything I needed," Luis said. "Thank you Ida for helping, caring and understanding; you've made it easier for me to do better with my life." We're happy to announce Luis has been hired full-time as a CDL Driver! We're very proud and confident he will achieve his personal and professional goals!

## SEEDS INDUSTRY FORUMS

WFS Cameron optimizes the conversation between industry experts and students by organizing industry-specific panels across Cameron County. Our efforts to introduce career exploration opportunities to the youth in our region continue as we connect students to the stories of successful professionals in the RGV who offer their insight into the Manufacturing, Healthcare, Construction & Architecture Industries. After a general Question and Answer session posed by a moderator, students get a chance to ask their own questions. These forums are typically closed by a keynote presenter, either a motivational speaker or a highly recognized professional in the field. To maximize the impact of these forums, the conversations are 'live' streamed on Facebook, allowing remote participation by teachers and students from other school districts. Such was the case where these three SEEDS forums left an impression on over 1,300 students who attended:





## SEEDS FORUMS IN 2019-20:

Manufacturing Forum – in collaboration with San Benito CISD and Los Fresnos CISD Healthcare Forum – in collaboration with Brownsville ISD Construction & Architecture Forum – in collaboration with La Feria ISD





## SEEDS 2 STEM CAMP



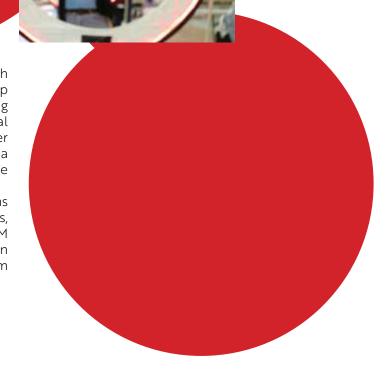
Our first SEEDS 2 STEM Camp took place in October of 2019 and it connected 7th and 8th graders in Cameron County to a variety of educational opportunities that would encourage their pursuit of career pathways and/or entrance into the workforce, in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

The 60 students that participated enjoyed a full day of interactive STEM activities hosted by Reybotics, a robotics company with a focus on supplying educational robotics kits and curriculum.

Students had an opportunity to build and operate 6-legged

robots, prep and launch reusable rockets, develop electrical circuits using intuitive snap-like electrical components and maneuver drones through hoops in a time-based indoor course competition.

Coupled with presentations from robotics professionals, these interactive STEM experiences resulted in positive feedback from students and faculty staff.



## STUDENT HIREABILITY NAVIGATOR



The Student HireAbility Navigator's role is to improve access to employment and training services as well as increase employment opportunities for students with disabilities. The Navigator serves as a resource to support, expand, and enhance the provision of pre-employment transition services that are provided by Vocational Rehabilitative Services and other partners and programs in the service area.

## **Capacity Building**

The Student HireAbility

Navigator's role serves to increase awareness by providing orientation on workforce and VR services through participation in capacity building committees with the Texas A&M Region One Local Transition Group and Vocational Counselor Committee.

### **School Coordination**

The Student HireAbility
Navigator assisted TWSVRS Transition Counselor
in coordinating with
school districts to increase
transitional services for
students in the process

of transitioning to adult work. This included 14 presentations to parent groups in high schools and middle schools throughout the county.

## Employer and Partnership Outreach

A valuable partnership was developed with the Southwest Center on Disability to recruit keynote speaker Diego Demaya. Mr. Demaya is a leading figure in the protection of employment rights for persons with disabilities and he presented during

the National Disability
Employment Awareness
(NDEAM) Campaign
of October 2019.
Collaborations developed for
this campaign included Texas
Southmost College Career
and Employment, TWSVRS and Business Relations
Specialist, Brownsville
Chamber of Commerce, and
Human Resource Manager
for the Navigation District.
A total of 51 employers
attended the training.

## BUSINESS SERVICE UNIT

Valuable services delivered by the Business Services Unit continue to keep local businesses engaged in the workforce system. By updating or enhancing the skills of our current and future workforce through BSU services, it allows local merchants to remain competitive in our evolving economy.

Services provided to businesses, the driving force in our local economy, include recruiting, hiring, training, and upskilling their workforce. BSU representatives also provide labor market information and present a range of available opportunities and

customized training options to meet businesses' changing needs, including on-the-job training, and apprenticeship programs.

The BSU was able to host inperson job fairs for the first two quarters of the program year. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Workforce Solutions Cameron opted to support business' hiring needs through Premier Virtual. This platform allowed us to sponsor virtual Job Fairs and continue to be responsive to local business by connecting them with qualified job seekers.



Future Focused...

## 4 IN PERSON JOB FAIRS



21 VIRTUAL

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Through its social media presence, Workforce Solutions Cameron provides up to date information and quality customer service to the regional public and statewide partners. At the end of FY 2019-20, WFS Cameron had 10,713 Facebook likes and 533 Twitter followers.

WFS Cameron's ever-expanding Facebook blueprint was the case study of a presentation titled, "Take Your Facebook Page to the Next Level," which our Community **Engagement and Communications** (CEC) Team delivered at the 23rd Annual Texas Workforce Conference in Grapevine, TX, in December 2019. The wellattended workshop explored the exponential growth of WFS Cameron's Facebook page in the last few years, and shared best practices and ideas for engaging, interactive social media content.







Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Workforce Solutions Cameron's in-person workshops were halted. To continue preparing jobseekers and the future workforce for the challenges and expectations of the job market, our Community **Engagement and Communications** (CEC) Team committed to making valuable content accessible to the general public by developing original videos, which were grouped in 3 series. Our first series is about "Career Perspectives", this video series teaches individuals how to navigate some of the most popular web applications developed by the Texas Workforce Commission. It is an excellent resource for educators, students, and their parents. Our second series named "Back To Work", focused on an 8 –part videos series containing job readiness and other techniques needed to successfully land a job. Our third series named "Money Sense", is a crash course on financial literacy to help individuals build good habits as they earn and manage their income.

## MONEY SENSE: Financial Literacy Crash Course

- Financial Institutions & Savings
   Accounts
- A Guide to a Healthier Credit Score
- Budgeting

## **BACK TO WORK: A Job Readiness video series**

- Resumé Writing 101
- Job Interview Do's and Dont's
- Preparing for a Webcam Interview
- Top 10 Job Interview Questions
- What to Wear to a Job Interview?
- Unusual Questions in a Job Interview
- Questions for an Interviewer
- Curating Your Social Media as a Jobseeker

## **CAREER PERSPECTIVES: A Career Exploration video series**

- Texas Career Check Walkthrough
- Exploring College Options with Texas Career Check/Texas CREWS
- Jobs Y'all Walkthrough
- Training oppurtunities in Cameron County.

In December of 2019, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) recognized WFS Cameron with the Claimant Reemployment Award in merit to our success rate at reemploying individuals claiming unemployment insurance within ten weeks, and with high level wage replacement.





Left to Right Henry Castillo-Workforce Center Regional Director Veronica Garcia -Human Resource Jorge Vazquez-General Manager Pat Hobbs-Executive Director

## AV LOPEZ SUPERMARKET HONORED AT TEXAS WORKFORCE CONFERENCE VIRTUAL EMPLOYER AWARDS

TWC Employer Awards - AV Lopez Supermarket received the Local Employer Award of Excellence at the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) 24th Annual Texas Workforce Conference Employer Awards held Virtually on December 9, 2021. The award honors private sector employers that are actively involved with Texas Workforce Solutions and have made a positive impact on employers, workers, and their community.

AV Lopez was nominated by Workforce Solutions Cameron for their contribution to our community's workforce and continued collaboration with the workforce center system. AV Lopez Supermarket supports the workforce system by providing employment opportunities to residents of the community they serve as well as providing subsidized employment and on-the-job training for job seekers with barriers to employment. In addition, they have actively participated as a worksite for Summer Earn And Learn program by providing employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities.

The Local Employer Award of Excellence honors one private-sector employer in each local workforce development area whose efforts and initiatives, in relationship with the Texas workforce system, had a positive effect on other employers, workers, and the community. AV Lopez Supermarket uses an innovative approach in meeting their workforce needs by offering individuals with barriers and youth with disabilities an opportunity to enter the labor force.

Workforce Solutions Cameron is among 28 local workforce boards located throughout the state serving Cameron County. The primary goal of TWC and the workforce boards is to meet the needs of Texas employers and workers through locally-designed, market-driven workforce development initiatives and services. All employers, workers and job seekers are encouraged to visit workforce centers for a full array of services.

# BOARD MEMBERS PUBLIC SECTOR BOARD MEMBERS

### **Derek Benavides**

City of Brownsville-Planning and Zoning Committee (Economic Development)

### **Victor Maldonado**

Bishop Enrique San Pedro Ozanam (Public Assistance)

## **Myrna De Coss-Rios**

Brownsville Literacy
Center (Literacy)

## **Carlos Rodriguez**

Texas Association of Letters Carriers (Labor)

## **David Kowalski**

Neighbors In Need of Services, Inc. (Community Based Organization)

## Dr. Debbie Alford

Parliamentarian, Brownsville ISD (ABE)

### Cledia R. Hernandez

Texas State Technical College (Education)

### **Marcos Cardoza**

Lion's Club (Community Based Organization)

## **Deyanira Lopez**

United Way, (Community Based Organization)

### Polo Leal

Texas Workforce Commission (Employment Services)

### **Adrian Dorsett**

Secretary, Brownsville ISD (Education)

## Karla Page

Texas Workforce Solutions (Vocational Rehabilitation)

## PRIVATE SECTOR BOARD MEMBERS

## **Mary Treviño**

M & A Welding Company, LLC

### **Edna Guajardo**

Manuel G. Guajardo,

## Linda V. Alaniz

Board Chair, ERI Funding Group, Inc.

### **Gerardo Martinez**

Rich Products Corporation

### Jesus T. Garcia

Attorney at Law

### **Armando Recio**

Rio Bank-Brownsville

### Jaime Martinez

Board Vice-Chair, Port of Brownsville

### Bea Lopez

HFB

## **Nancy Domingo**

Harlingen Medical Center

### Federico V. Garza

South Texas Management Services

### Joel Benitez

Cameron Pharma, LLC

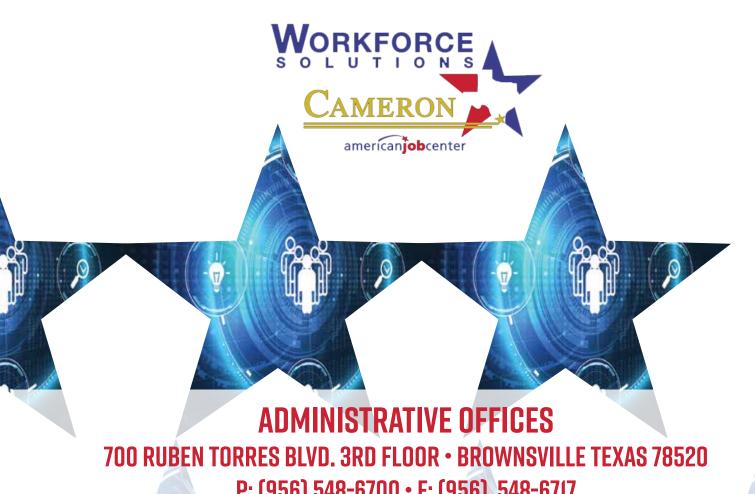
## Freddy Elizondo

Trinity At Harrison Funeral Home, Inc.

### Baldomero Treviño

Mr. B. Motor Company





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