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**November 2020**  
**Community Strengths and Needs Assessment**  
**Brownsville, TX 78520**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Purpose of CYD Program**

The Community Youth Development (CYD) program was established in 1995 to reduce and prevent juvenile delinquency in zip codes throughout Texas that experienced high incidences of juvenile crime. The purpose of establishing the CYD program was to support local programs that address juvenile delinquency by fostering the development of protective factors. There are currently sixteen (16) Texas zip codes providing CYD program services, one of which is the 78520-zip code in Brownsville.

The CYD program increases the development of protective factors by providing an array of services including mentoring, youth leadership development, recreation, family engagement initiatives and other services that promote the social well-being of youth and their families. Services are provided free of charge to youth ages 6-17, who live or attend school in the 78520-zip code.

The Community Collaborative Committee (CCC) is an important component of CYD designed to foster a community approach to addressing local issues. The CCC is composed of neighborhood residents, school district personnel, Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) members and service providers. The CCC meets quarterly to review and discuss opportunities to address areas of strength and weakness in the 78520 community.

Youth ages 13-17 make up the YAC. This group of teen leaders meet weekly to discern, discuss and respond to issues prevalent in their community. With a goal of promoting youth voice in the 78520 zip code, YAC youth are heavily involved in activities that encourage the development of leadership skills including service learning projects, CYD outreach and awareness efforts, CCC participation and assisting with the Strengths and Needs Assessment.

### **Purpose of the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA)**

The annual CSNA assessment is a guide that aids communities to stay abreast of issues and concerns that exist in the 78520 community. This tool helps organizations identify local resources and community needs for promoting positive youth development. The results of this assessment will inform our organization's strategic plan and focus the development of a list of primary youth service needs. In addition, the information gathered is also used to identify social problems and trends and highlight those services that would assist in preventing juvenile delinquency.

### **Overview of Methodology and Assessment Tools**

The purpose of conducting this assessment is to target the resources and needs of the 78520-zip code.

Methods used to collect this information include:

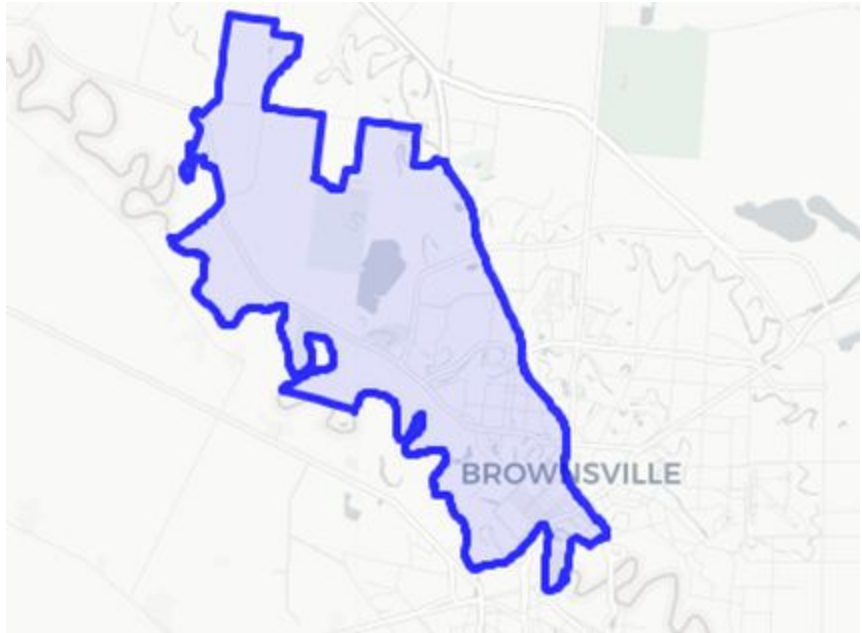
1. Data gathered through various sources including the U.S. Census Bureau, Texas Education Agency and Cameron County Juvenile Probation.
2. Resource information gathered from 2-1-1 Texas and City-Data.com.
3. Community Feedback

Based on the information and data collected, it appears the most effective strategy for overcoming the cycle of poverty in 78520 is through youth educational and workforce development, as enabled by the various supporting efforts within the network of service agencies. Furthermore, a prioritized list of service needs for 78520 is as follows:

- 1) Youth educational and workforce development;
- 2) Family-based support systems designed to limit the instability associated with poverty;
- 3) Life-skills and work-skills programs for young adults in the postsecondary bridge years, defined as ages 16-25;
- 4) Targeted service delivery for young adults with children, particularly single mothers; and
- 5) Professional development services for area nonprofit agencies.

### Community Overview

78520 is an urban zip code, located in south Texas in the city of Brownsville, with a higher than average population density. The area is noted for having some of the city's highest poverty and crime rates. This part of the city is located in City Council District 4 and Congressional District 34 and neighbors the Mexican border.. The zip code is 36.50 square miles in size and is immediately west of Highway 77 and part of the city's downtown area. This area is characterized by high poverty and limited employment opportunities, making up the low end of the economic spectrum in Brownsville, which was identified as the poorest city in America in 2013.<sup>1</sup>



General Demographic Characteristics of 78520				
	78520	Cameron County	Texas	United States
Population	62,414	423,163	40.00%	18.00%

<sup>1</sup> Alexander E.M. Hess, Thomas C. Frohlich, Michael B. Sauter (2013). *America's Richest (and Poorest) Cities*. Retrieved from: <https://247wallst.com/special-report/2013/10/24/americas-the-richest-and-poorest-cities/5/>

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Hispanic Population (%)	93%	90%	111	92.8
Population density (per square mile)	1,690.30	474.60	35.1	38.5
Average Household Income	31.90	31.90	\$64,034.00	\$65,712.00
Median Income (1-person Household)	\$32,355.00	\$41,123.00	\$32,267.00	\$35,672.00
Median Income (3-person household)	\$15,242.00	\$18,431.00	13.60%	12.30%
Population Below Federal Poverty Line	33.40%	25.60%	11.00%	9.00%
Children Below Federal Poverty Line	30.00%	18.00%	19.00%	17.00%
Children eligible for free/reduced lunch	47.00%	37.00%	15.00%	11.00%
Population 25+ with no high school diploma	36.00%	32.00%	30.80%	33.10%
Unemployment	--	9.3%	3%	3.40%
Violent Crime Index	--	13%	24.8	22.7

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2013-18. Source geography: Tract

Data Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2019 - April. Source geography: County

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Data Source: © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC BY-SA, 2019

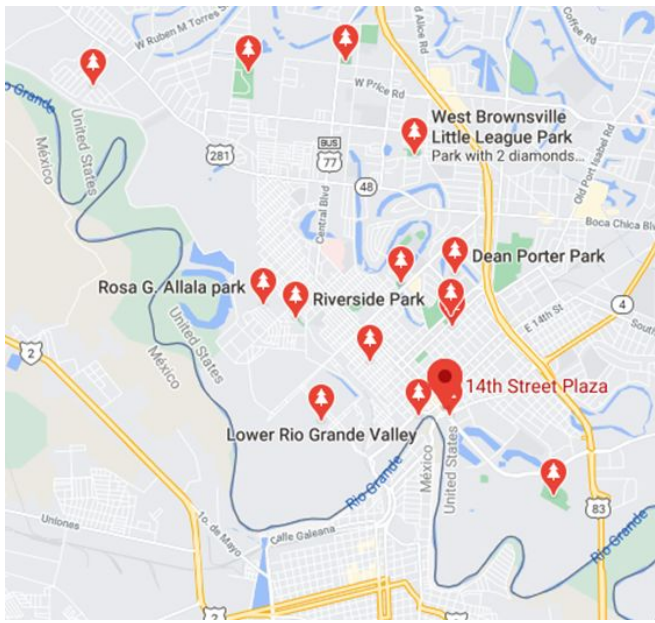
As the data table above indicates, residents of the 78520-zip code face overlapping obstacles that impact the community's path to prosperity. Among them are poor employment prospects, low education attainment, high crime, and vulnerability to changing economic conditions.

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**Notable Locations and Assets**

Brownsville Country Club	Fort Brown	Brownsville Police Department	Stillman House Museum	Historic Brownsville Museum
Southern Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot	Brownsville Fire Department Central Station	La Nueva Libertad	Brownsville Public Library	Brownsville Art League Fine Arts Museum
Miguel Fernandez Hide Yard	Brownsville Fire Department Stations 2,4,7	Cameron County Sheriff's Office	Cameron County Courthouse	Gladys Porter Zoo
La Madrilena	Manautou House	Celaya-Creager House	Charles Stillman House	Sam's Memorial Stadium

**Local Parks**

	Park Name	Location
	1 Brownsville Parks & Rec	1338 E 8th St
	2 Joe & Tony Oliveira Park	104 El Paso Rd
	3 Monte Bella Trails Park	2485 W Alton Gloor Blvd
	4 Riverside Park	15 Riverside Blvd
	5 West Brownsville Little League Park	1295 Cottonwood Dr
	6 Alice Wilson Hope Park	1300 E Levee St
	7 Veterans Park	2500 Central Blvd
	8 Prax Orive Jr. (Sunrise) Park	1245 Palm Blvd
	9 Harry E. McNair Park	350 E St Charles St
	10 Southern Pacific Linear Park	Brownsville, TX 78520
	11 Bike Barn	624 E Madison St

Source: <https://www.cob.us/308/Parks-Recreation>

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	12	14th Street Plaza	Brownsville, TX 78520
	13	Rosa G. Allala park	309 N Park Dr
	14	La Galaxia and La Lomita Park	1501 Calle Espacio
	15	Dean Porter Park	Dean Porter Park Dr
	16	Lower Rio Grande Valley	325 Mexico Blvd
	17	Xeriscape Park	Brownsville, TX 78520

**Institutions of Higher Education**

<b>The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley</b> 1 W University Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520 (888) 882-4026
<b>Texas Southmost College</b> 80 Fort Brown St, Brownsville, TX 78520 (956) 295-3600

**Schools**

Schools in 78520		
Charter/Private Schools		
Raul Yzaguirre School for Success	2255 N. Coria St	(956) 542-2404
IDEA Riverview Academy & Preparatory	30 Palm Drive	(956) 832-5900
Harmony Science Academy	1124 Central Blvd	(956) 574-9555
Brownsville Montessori Academy	36 S. Coria St	(956) 548-1952
Episcopal Day School	34 N. Coria St	(956) 542-5231
First Baptist School	1600 Boca Chica Blvd	(956) 542-4854
Incarnate Word Academy	244 Resaca Blvd	(956) 546-4486
Kenmont Montessori School	2734 N. Coria St	(956) 542-0500
Montessori School	204 Boca Chica Blvd	(956) 542-7576
Saint Joseph Academy	101 Saint Joseph Drive	(956) 542-3581
St. Mary's Catholic School	1300 E. Los Ebanos Blvd	(956) 546-1805
High Schools		
Pace Early College High School	314 W. Los Ebanos Blvd	(956) 548-7700
Veterans Memorial Early College High School	4550 U.S. Military Hwy 281	(956) 574-5600



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Brownsville Early College High School	343 Ringgold Road	(956) 698-1476
<b>Middle Schools</b>		
Stell Middle School	1105 Los Ebanos Blvd	(956) 548-8560
Stillman Middle School	2977 West Tandy Road	(956) 698-1000
<b>Elementary Schools</b>		
Benavides Elementary	3101 McAllen Road	(956) 350-3250
Breeden Elementary	3955 Dana Avenue	(956) 554-4730
Garden Park Elementary	855 Military Hwy	(956) 982-2630
Keller Elementary	2540 W. Alton Gloor Blvd	(956) 547-4400
Longoria Elementary	2400 Van Buren Street	(956) 982-2700
Martin Elementary	1701 Stanford Avenue	(956) 982-2730
Ortiz Elementary	2500 W. Alton Gloor Blvd	(956) 698-1100
Pullam Elementary	3200 Madrid Ave	(956) 547-3700
Putegnat Elementary	730 E. 8 <sup>th</sup> Street	(956) 548-8930
Russell Elementary	800 Lakeside Blvd	(956) 548-8960
Sharp Elementary	1439 Palm Blvd	(956) 982-2930
Skinner Elementary	411 W. St. Charles Street	(956) 982-2830
Villa Nueva Elementary	7455 Old Military Road	(956) 542-3957
Yturria Elementary	2955 W. Tandy Road	(956) 698-0870

**Churches/Places of Worship**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Immaculate Conception Cathedral	1218 E. Jefferson Street, Brownsville TX 78520	956-546-3178
Livingway Family Church	350 W. Ruben M. Torres Blvd	956-548-2223
St. Mary's Catholic Church	1300 E. Los Ebanos Blvd	956-546-1805
Mary Mother of the Church	1914 Barnard Rd, Brownsville, Tx 78520	956-546-3178
First Baptist Church	1600 Boca Chica Blvd, Brownsville, Tx 78520	956-542-5334
Holy Family Church	2405 E Tyler St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-546-6975
Sacred Heart Catholic Church	602 E. Elizabeth st. Brownsville, Tx 78520	n/a
San Pedro Catholic Church	7602 Old Military Rd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-542-2596
St. Joseph's Church	555 W. St. Francis St. Brownsville, Texas 78520	956-542-2709

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Church of the Advent, Episcopal	104 W. Elizabeth St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-542-4123
Our Lady of Good Counsel Church	1055 Military Rd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-541-8341
First Presbyterian Church	435 Palm Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-542-3564
Seventh Day Adventist	3515 Old Hwy 77, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-544-6280
Cristo Jesús La Luz Del Mundo	12 N. Park Dr, Brownsville, TX 78521	956-541-1677
El Buen Pastor United Methodist Church	435 Boca Chica Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-542-4145
Trinity Lutheran Church	901 Boca Chica Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-542-7024
Brownsville Community Fellowship	2414 Central Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-544-4248
Korean Church of Brownsville	409 W. 2nd St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-459-5257
New Life Center United	3665 Old Hwy 77, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-546-6403
El Calvario Lutheran Church	1025 E. 12th St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-546-2350
St. Thomas Chapel	155 E. Jefferson St, Brownsville, TX 78520	n/a
Cross Church- Brownsville	351 E. Los Ebanos Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520	n/a
Divine Providence Church	1175 W. Price Rd #1, Brownsville, TX 78520	n/a
Iglesia Bautista Wes- Brownsville	925 W. St Charles St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-546-3607
Mary Mother of the Church	1914 Barnard Rd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-546-3800
Shamma Christian Center	825 W. St Francis St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-542-2782
Templo Damasco	645 W. Elizabeth St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-982-6896
Primera Iglesia Cristiana Reformada Brownsville	147 Palm Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520	n/a
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	10 E. Elizabeth St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-542-4441
Centro de Fe Internacional	102 E. Elizabeth St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-518-5232
Iglesia Ministerio Cristo Es El Camino	222 E. Elizabeth St, Brownsville, TX 78520	n/a
Espiritu De Gracia	240 W. St Francis St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-546-1897

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Templo Aposento Alto	555 E. Elizabeth St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-986-2299
La Luz Del Mundo Iglesia Del Dios Vivo Columna Y Apoyo De La Verdad	822 E. Adams St, Brownsville, TX 78520	(956) 621-0906
Iglesia Principe De Paz	109 Military Rd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-541-4715
Cristo Jesus-La Luz Del Mundo	1900 Pecan St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-541-1677
Islamic Society of Brownsville	246 Gilson Rd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-546-8011
Jehovah's Witness	2501 La Feria Rd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-542-4444
The Power House Church	1001 Ruben M. Torres Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-542-2999
Iglesia Evangélica Cristiana Espiritual	207 Gilson Rd, Brownsville, TX 78520	N/A
Life Works	1416 W. Alton Gloor Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520	N/A
Universal Church	1401 E Washington St suite c, Brownsville, TX 78520	N/A

### Data Collection Methods

Methods used to collect this information include:

1. Data gathered through a variety of sources including the U.S. Census Bureau, Community Commons, Cameron County Juvenile Probation, 2-1-1 Texas, City-Data.com, and the Texas Education Agency
2. Community Feedback
  - a. Electronic Surveys administered to community youth and adults
  - b. SWOT analysis conducted by the Community Collaborative Committee
  - c. Focus groups
    - i. Parents of CYD program participants (5 present)
    - ii. Youth Advisory Committee (11 youth present)

The following chart explains in detail the personnel involved in the process of conducting this assessment as well as the work plan.

Role	Name	Title	Organization
Project Lead	Alejandra N. Arquisola	Sr. Director Youth & Teen Services	Good Sam

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Primary Team	Marbella Shaw	Asst. Director Youth & Teen Services Regional	Good Sam
Auxiliary Team	Cruz Torres Allan Hernandez YAC Youth Barrio Network	ABC Coordinator YAC Coordinator CYD Participants Varies	Good Sam Good Sam Good Sam See CCC list for details
Final Review	Simon Salas Sarah Ramirez	Chief Executive Officer Chief Development Officer	Good Sam Good Sam

The report preparation and data gathering included time spent researching, reviewing notes, interpreting data, collecting community feedback, and occurred during an extensive 8-week process outlined in the chart below.

Task	Week
Revisions to CSNA community input survey	1
Administer youth surveys	1 & 2
Conduct CCC SWOT for community context	1
Begin Census/Public data gathering	2-5
Demographic Data	2-5
Texas Education Agency (TEA)/School District Data	2-5
Poverty Data	2-5
Crime Data	2-5
Health Data	2-5
Request Juvenile Probation data	3
Compile youth survey data	3
Review youth survey data	3
Trend analysis on historical youth survey data (compare current year to past)	3
Conduct Focus Group: Youth	4
Conduct Focus Group: Parents	5

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Create template to gather interview and focus group data	2
Compile & Interpret Focus Group data	5
Draft Report (Assigned by Report Components)	4 - 7
Final Review	7 - 8
Report Submission	8

### **Mitigating Impacts to Research Due to COVID-19**

Working Remotely: Due to the May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 directive from Texas Governor Greg Abbott, many of the research group(s) conducting aspects of the CSNA may or should be working at home. These include staff conducting data analysis, literature review, manuscript writing, or proposal and progress report writing. Consequently, meetings were conducted remotely, as necessary, with exceptions made for a number of in person staff meetings conducted pursuant to the agency's and CDC social distancing guidelines. All students, post-docs, staff, and faculty involved in research projects had minimal access to information they needed to carry out work remotely. This included access to literature, access to existing datasets and research-related files, and access to virtual-conferencing platforms such asZoom.

### **Results**

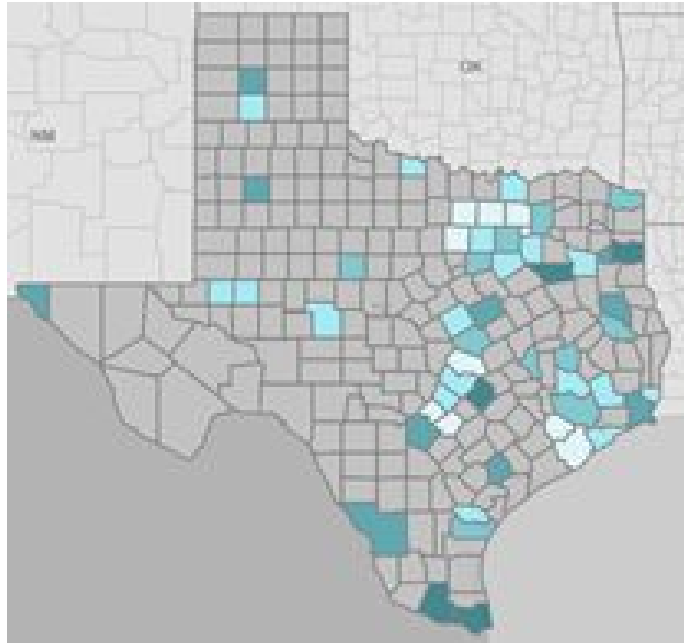
#### **Education**

Brownsville has seen its share of successes and challenges in education. 78520 was the birthplace of the first private and public school in the city of Brownsville. Currently, Brownsville Independent School District, BISD, has 43,028 youth enrolled in the district. Demographics to note are that 89.5% of the youth are economically disadvantaged, 35.6% are in Bilingual or enrolled in ESL education programs, and 98.3% are of Hispanic descent. The Texas Tribune reports that the local district received an A for accountability rating with 67.3 of students considered at risk for dropping out of school. In 2018, 92.8% of students graduating received their high school diploma on time or earlier. The dropout rate was reported at 1.1% which is significantly lower than the national average. According to Children at Risk, 78520 is home to schools with an A and B rating.

There is a strain on financial resources for education as both Rio Grande Valley Schools and Brownville public schools are losing youth from their own districts to local charter schools. Brownsville is home to 9 charter schools that serve 5,754 students. Of these 9 schools, 3 are in the 78520 zip code. Private schools serve 2,166 students enrolled in 13 schools with 8 of the schools serving the 78520 zip code. In 2019, three elementary schools were forced to close due to low student enrollment as well as deteriorating physical conditions of the buildings. It is projected that in the next 10 years enrollment will decline

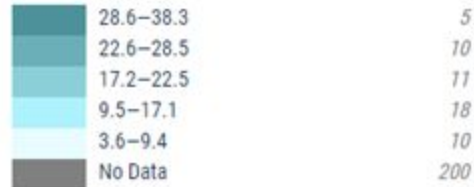
further leading to a \$33 million deficit in school funding due to student outmigration. [This has created a drift in accurate data in regards to overall Brownsville literacy proficiency.]

## Poverty



Poor educational attainment limits lifetime earnings potential and employment opportunities for the residents of 78520. Outcomes that illustrate this disparity can be noted by comparing the average income and median

### Legend



*Italicized numbers indicate the number of geography areas in each data class.*



income figures for households in 78520.

Average household income in 78520 is more than a quarter (27%) of the average for Cameron County, and only 50.5% as much as the state average. Poverty is by far the largest concern in the region as Cameron County is recognized as one of the top 5 poorest counties in the state of Texas as shown in the figure below. Brownsville has 33.4% of its population living below 110% of the federal poverty line with an additional 27% living between 100-199% of the federal poverty line.

Additionally, 47% of children living in 78520 live below the poverty line; this is the highest child poverty rate in the state. With almost half of children living in poverty, the rate of families receiving food stamps is also higher in Brownsville with 23.1% of households receiving SNAP benefits, ranking Brownsville seventh in the nation.

The census figures also show that the gender wage gap between how much women are paid compared to men remains steady in Brownsville. In 2017, women who worked full-time, year-round jobs in Brownsville made 70.75 percent of what men made.

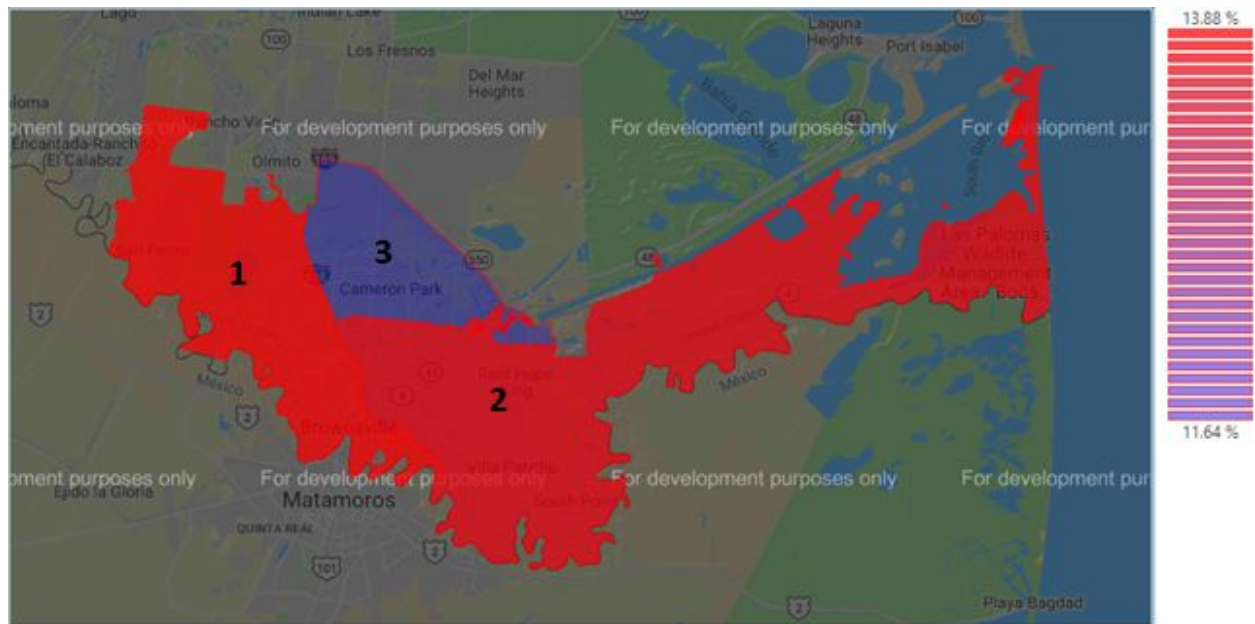
Income and Poverty Figures for Select Demographics			
	78520	Cameron County	Texas
Median household income	\$32,355	\$41,123	\$69,560.00
Population Below Federal Poverty Line (FPL)	33.4%	25.6%	16.0%

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Children Below FPL	47%	37%	22.9%
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These data demonstrate that both women and children stand out as particularly exposed to poverty in 78520. The largest demographic groups living in poverty are Males 6 - 11, followed by Females 6 - 11 and then Females 35 - 44. This information reinforces the need for greater emphasis on service delivery options that address the needs of these two demographic groups.

## Unemployment



#	Zip Code	% Unemployment Rate	National Rank
1	78520	13.88%	2,008
2	78521	13.75%	2,055
3	78526	11.64%	2,976

The rate of unemployment is similarly striking, as reflected in the chart above. Residents of 78520 have an unemployment rate nearly 2 times higher than the state of Texas.

Data Series	Back Data	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020
<b>Labor Force Data</b>							
Civilian Labor Force(1)		160.0	163.1	164.8	170.0	166.7	
Employment(1)		134.4	145.4	146.5	154.1	148.2	
Unemployment(1)		25.6	17.7	18.3	15.9	18.5	
Unemployment Rate(2)		16.0	10.9	11.1	9.3	11.1	

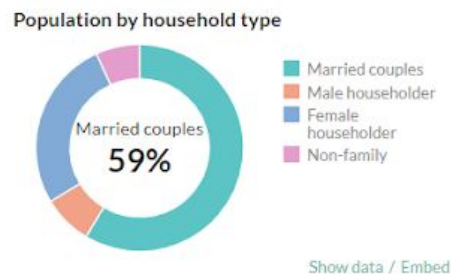


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

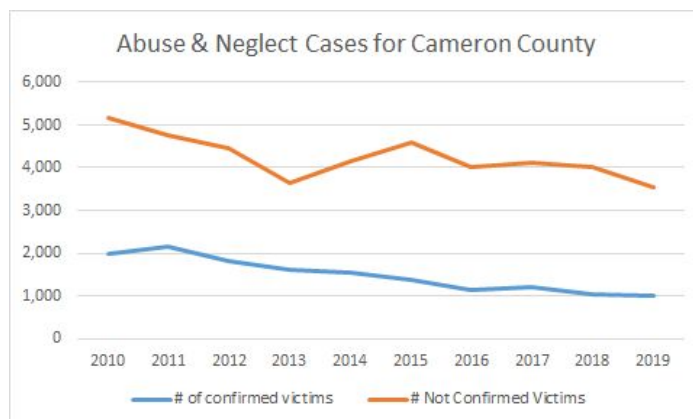
In March of this past year, Brownsville clients began to experience the initial fallout that COVID-19 inflicted upon all communities. Communities of Color have borne the brunt of the effects of living in poverty. The burdens experienced by those most in need include: severe reductions in income due to being laid off or furloughed, a lack of savings to pay for immediate food, rent and health needs, restricted access to public transportation, a lack of free school meals normally received for breakfast and lunch, isolation, contributing to declining mental health, and an increase in anxiety due to the fear of seeking medical care during the pandemic. The chart at left shows the extreme spike in unemployment claims in Cameron County that began to rise in March and continues to remain stubbornly high even as employment has begun to make modest gains, but that progress may be stalling.

## Family

Family is held in high regard in the South Texas region, especially in Brownsville. There are 55,618 households in the city and 17,843 are in the 78520 zip code. The population of the city of Brownsville is 195,061. The population of 78520 is 62,414 with 59% of those being family households, greater than the state average. There is a high percentage of two-parent families, 61.5% according to the census reporter. 27% of households are led by females.. As mentioned above, Brownsville has a lower median household income and per capita income which causes even two person households to struggle with making ends meet. The income gap is further exacerbated for single mothers who will make less because of the income gap and the lack of additional financial support.



Another factor impacting families in 78520 is the prevalence of abuse and neglect. Over the course of the last ten years, confirmed cases of abuse and neglect have trended down slightly within Cameron County. However the graph also shows that unconfirmed cases have declined slowly. This data does not establish



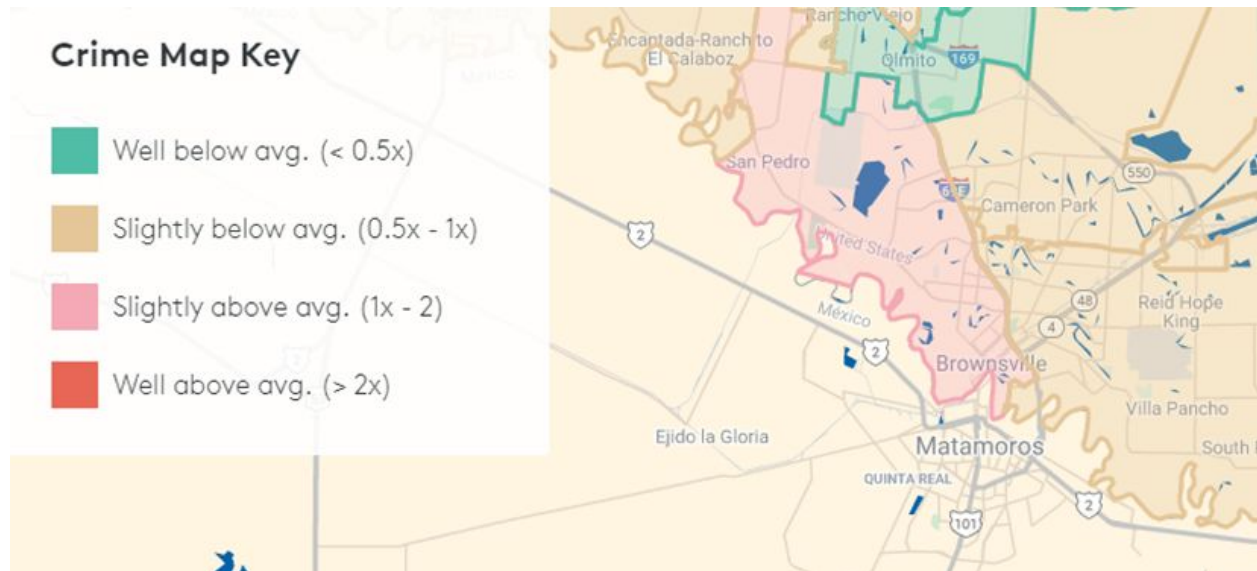
whether abuse and neglect is decreasing, or whether cases have become harder to confirm.

(Data Source: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Open Data Portal)



## Crime

Residents in 78520 experience high crime rates. The total crime rate is 128 making it 1.28 times higher than the national average. The zip code is the epicenter of both violent crime and burglary, setting it well above the county and state levels, as measured by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) crime index. Violent crime is nearly 35% times higher in 78520 than in the rest of Brownsville. (Data Source: © OpenStreetMap contributors, 2019)



This is particularly disastrous for youth within the zip code as trauma is well known to have significantly negative consequences on brain development, cognitive and behavioral functioning, as well as a host of other long-term health measures.<sup>2,3</sup> Unfortunately, the high rates of trauma in 78520 have also resulted in comparatively high rates of juvenile crime arrests compared to the rest of state and nationally as shown in the graph below.

	Cameron County	Texas	United States
Juvenile Violent Crime Index	13.6%	11.8%	11.7%

## Health

Cameron County has an overall population health score of 49, with a rate 3 times higher of uninsured individuals (29%) than the national median (10%), a 17.3% smoking rate, and a life expectancy of 80.1

<sup>2</sup> Bremner, J. D. (2006). Traumatic stress: effects on the brain. *Dialogues in clinical neuroscience*, 8(4), 445-461.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2011). *Exploring the Social Determinants of Health*. Retrieved from: [www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue\\_briefs/2011/rwjf70451](http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2011/rwjf70451).

years. 32.3% of adults in Cameron County are considered to be in poor or fair general health compared to the 18.9% in Texas and 16.7% in the United States. The leading cause of death in the 78520 zip code is Cardiovascular Disease.

### Teen Births

The teen birth rate in Cameron County is staggeringly high, 52.4, twice as high as the 26.1 national rate, Cameron County was the seventh highest, with 840 teen births. Managing the teen birth is considered a priority for the region. 95.42% of all teen mothers were Hispanic/Latinas and a relatively high proportion of these births were to the youngest teens parents, including those under the age of 15. According to the TX Campaign, a baby is born to a teen mother every three hours in the Rio Grande Valley.

### Health care access

Other negative health factors affecting residents of 78520 include lack of health insurance. In Cameron County, over a quarter of the population (38%) is uninsured, as compared to 18.3% for the state. This leads to reactive access to medication, rather than preventative access to medicine, as residents wait to utilize the health care system until they have a serious problem. This phenomenon creates the secondary effect of limiting educational attainment when unplanned, significant health care expenses derail a family's economic stability thereby impacting a student's academic trajectory.

	Cameron County	Texas	United States
Percent Uninsured	29%	18.3%	9.4%
Percent Uninsured Children	13%	10.6%	5.2%

<https://www.towncharts.com/Texas/Healthcare/Cameron-County-TX-Healthcare-data.html>

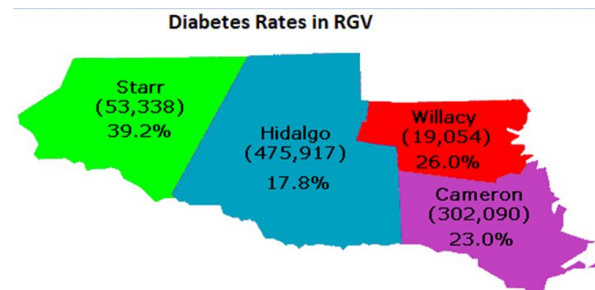
### Environmental Health Risks

Additionally, significant health factors in the area also include a high Mosquito-borne Disease Risks due to environmental factors (land cover, precipitation, and high temperature). In 2016, Brownsville was the second location in the United States to report a locally-acquired case of the Zika virus and in 2005 and 2013 the city experienced dengue fever outbreaks. Individuals living in poverty are at the highest risk of being exposed to disease carrying mosquitoes.

Finally, other environmental risks include unsafe drinking water (14.7% of Cameron County water is unsafe to drink, compared to a 0% national median), a high rate of extreme heat days per year (12.3) and 13.1% of households living in flood hazard zones.

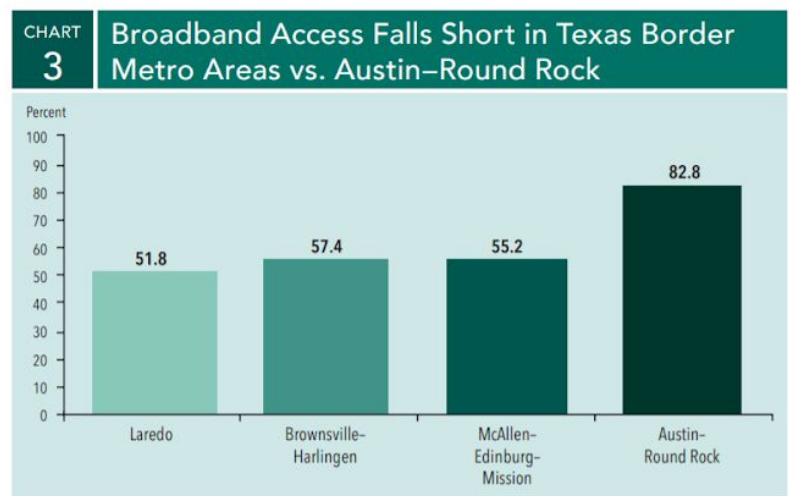
### Food and Nutrition

The overall Food and Nutrition score in the county is 37%, significant health factors in the area include nutrition insecurity with 33.5% of the total Cameron County population having low food access. This data is especially important to consider in light of the regions high rate of diabetes (23%) and obesity (30.9%) prevalence. The image above shows the diabetes rates in the Texas Rio Grande Valley including Cameron County.



### Access to Technology

Technological inequalities are significant in the 78520 zip code and in all of Brownsville as well. This became more apparent during the closures of schools, workplaces and the cities as the COVID-19 Pandemic spread. In a recent study by the Brookings Institution it cited broadband as the “most inequitable infrastructure” in America, with 15% of households not having access to any form of internet service. Therefore, “Brownsville is among the most disconnected cities in the nation.” In fact, Brownsville lacks internet broadband for over half of its residents.



SOURCE: Census Bureau, 2013 American Consumer Survey.

This has also created issues with virtual learning opportunities among the local school districts. BISD has instituted a 100% virtual learning program and spent \$7 million dollars in technology devices. This purchase included 11,000 Chromebooks, 6,000 Ipads, 10,000 internet hotspots and 6,500 laptops. The hotspots were purchased to increase access to the internet and were assigned per family. Another strategy used was to equip buses with hotspots and to dispatch them around the city. Despite these efforts, after the 4th week of virtual learning and declining student engagement, BISD opened its doors to students who were lacking devices and connectivity.

### Community Feedback

Good Samaritan Community Services staff sought feedback from community members to ascertain their perception of assets and needs of the 78520 zip code. Three methods of data collection were used including surveys, focus groups and a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis conducted by the Community Collaborative Committee.

Common themes emerged from all three sources of community feedback. This information is briefly outlined below:

1. Community Assets: Youth programs, culture, a community who gives back, community resources, public library, the schools
2. Community Needs: Summer Camps, College Preparation , Health Programs, and Job Skills training
3. Community Threats: Drugs, Lack of safety, and increasing unemployment rates

### **Youth Surveys**

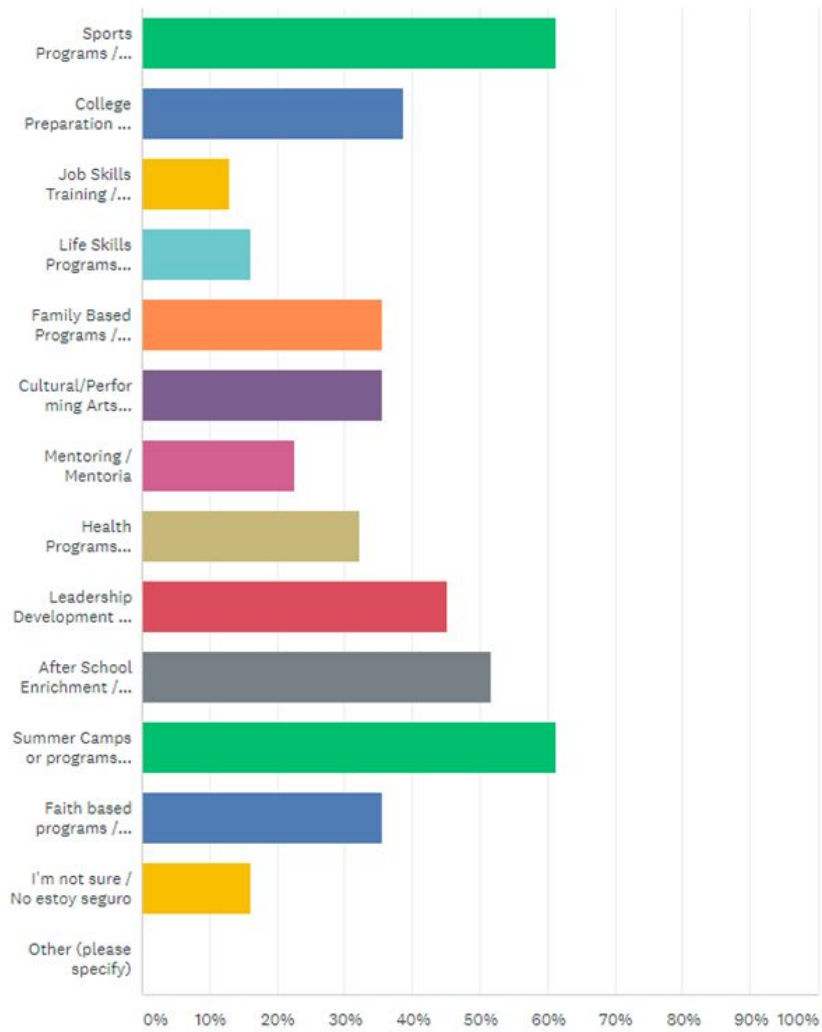
Below are some facts regarding the youth survey responses

1. 31 responses collected of youth ages 11-18
2. 93% live in 78520
3. 51% were female, 48.9 % male

Respondents were asked what services currently exist for youth in the 78520 community.

1. 61.29% youth felt that Sport Programs exist in their community.
2. 61.29% of youth surveyed feel that their are Summer Camps available
3. 51.61% of youth feel that there are after-school enrichment programs available

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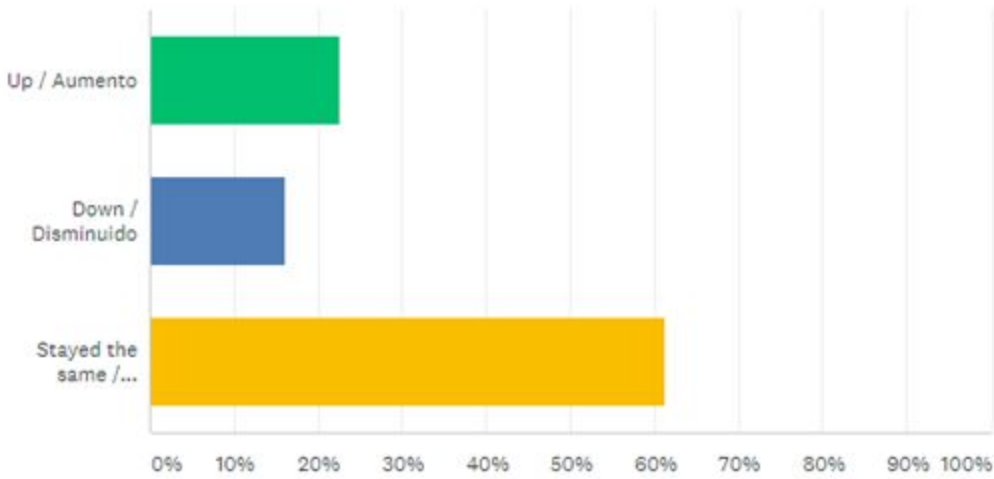


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The youth were asked to identify the top 5 services for youth does the 78520 community needs more of, the chart below shows their responses:

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When asked about crime rates in the 78520 community, 61.29% of respondents believed that crime had stayed the same in the last three (3) years.



The table below summarizes additional findings from the survey:.

Question	% Yes	% No
Do you feel safe in your community at night?	83.87%	16.13%
Do you have access to a park?	87.10%	12.90%
Does the public transportation in your community meet your needs?	67.74%	25.81%
Does your school meet your needs?	96.77%	3.23%
Do you feel involved and engaged in your learning at school?	96.77%	3.23%
Do you have a trusting relationship with at least one adult at school?	90.32%	9.68%
Do you feel proud of an achievement you have made at school or out-of-school activity?	96.77%	3.23%
Are you able to go to the doctor when you're sick?	96.77%	3.23%
How would you rate the accessibility to fresh fruits and vegetables in your community?	77.42%	22.58%
Do you know where youth can access mental health services in your community?	29.03%	70.97%
Do you feel prepared to make healthy choices about nutrition and exercise?	96.77%	3.23%

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Do you think your community had enough resources available during COVID-19?	51.61%	48.39%
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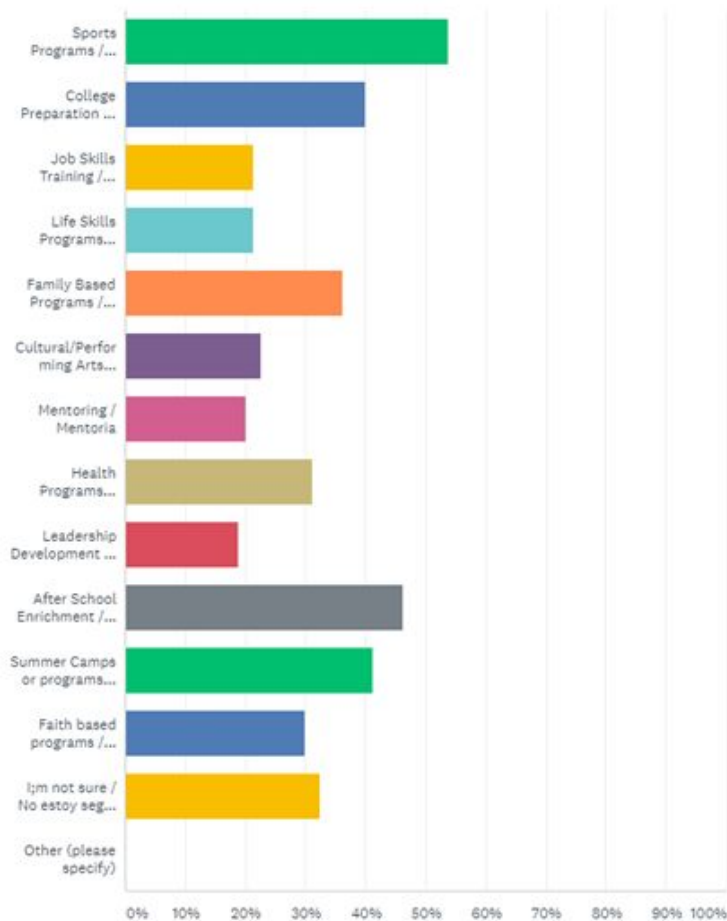
## Adult Surveys

Below are some facts regarding the youth survey responses

1. 81 responses collected of adults
2. 67.90% live in 78520, 60% worked in 78520
3. 67.9% were female, 32.1% male

Respondents were asked what services currently exist for youth in the 78520 community.

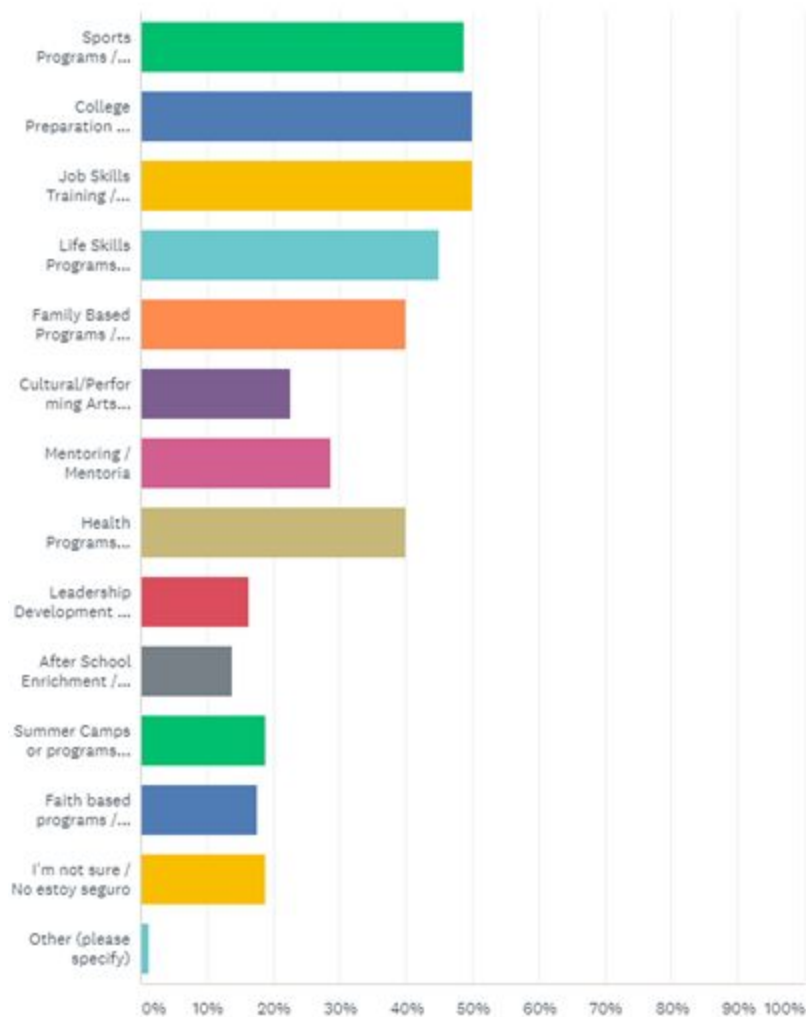
1. 53.75% of adults surveyed feel that their are Sports Programs
2. 46.25% of adults feel that there is after-school enrichment programs available
3. 41.25% of adults surveyed feel that their are Summer Camps available





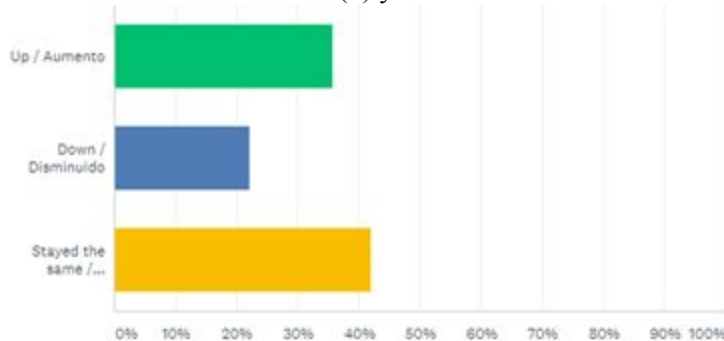
Brownsville 78520  
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Brownsville 78520  
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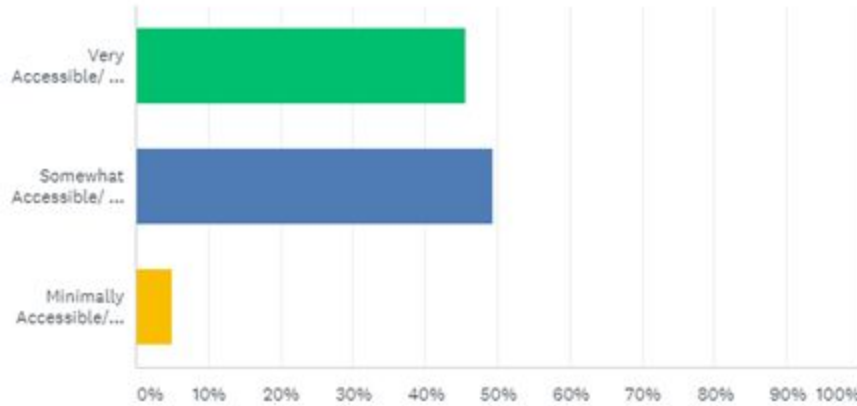
When asked about crime rates in the 78520 community, 41.98% of respondents believed that crime had stayed the same in the last three (3) years.



The table below summarizes additional findings from the survey:

Question	% Yes	% No
Do you feel safe in your community at night?	68.35%	31.65%
Do youth have access to a park?	69.14%	30.84%
Does the public transportation in your community meet your needs?	60.76%	8.38%
Do your schools meet the needs of youth?	87.5%	12.5%
Are most youth involved and engaged in learning at school?	74.07%	25.93%
Do most youth have a trusting relationship with at least one adult at school?	83.54%	16.46%
Is there enough access to doctors for youth?	69.14%	30.86%
Do you know where youth can access mental health services in your community?	29.63%	70.37%
Do you feel youth are prepared to make healthy choices about nutrition and exercise?	40.00%	60.00%
Do you think your community had enough youth resources available during COVID-19?	29.63%	70.37%

When asked to rate the accessibility to fresh fruits and vegetables in their community:



## Focus Groups

Scheduled on different days, at different times, two focus groups were held targeting different audiences: youth and parents.

### YAC Youth Focus Group

Date conducted: 10/15/2020

# Youth Present: 14

Facilitator: Allan Hernandez, YAC Coordinator

Question	Answer
What is the best thing about our community?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Friendly Environment</li> <li>2. Safe</li> <li>3. Small town atmosphere</li> <li>4. Hispanic-centric</li> <li>5. Town Celebration</li> <li>6. Organizations that aid community</li> <li>7. Easy to travel</li> <li>8. Lower prices than surrounding towns</li> </ol>
What can the community do to proactively set youth up for success?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teach practical skills</li> <li>2. Youth groups</li> <li>3. Recreation centers</li> <li>4. Centers for nutrition (healthier food)</li> </ol>

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Who do you think plays an important role in the community? (people/places/organizations)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents</li> <li>2. Teachers</li> <li>3. Trusted Adults</li> <li>4. Counselors</li> <li>5. Therapists</li> <li>6. Police</li> <li>7. Clergy</li> </ol>
<p>What are the biggest threats in the community and why?</p> <p>How can we address some of the items above</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gangs               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Placing Gangs in jail</li> <li>b. Education on Gang Activity</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Violence</li> <li>3. Drugs               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Testimonials from Former Drug Addicts</li> <li>b. Destroying Narcotics</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Illegal activity/crimes</li> <li>5. Schools               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. More frequent drug tests</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Littering</li> </ol>
<p>What improvements would you like to see at Good Sam?</p> <p>What would make you want to come to Good Sam more often?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Available to more zip codes</li> <li>2. More YAC members, less drama</li> <li>3. Building for meetings/ outside of church</li> <li>4. Friendlier staff members</li> <li>5. More committed YAC members</li> <li>6. More people to attend Youth Summit</li> </ol>
<p>What is your opinion of the educational system?</p> <p>Do you feel your school meets your needs?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rigged               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. teach you to only memorize</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Learn Life Skills</li> <li>3. Teach more Taxes</li> <li>4. Content</li> <li>5. Improve</li> <li>6. Different ways of learning besides a paper/cpu</li> </ol>
<p>During COVID-19 Pandemic, have you felt supported by your community?</p> <p>why or why not?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes, community has supported families through various food banks</li> <li>2. Yes, but could improve in Covid testing regulations.</li> <li>3. No, because people have not adhered to state and county precaution parameters established.</li> </ol>
How do we address crime and juvenile delinquency among youth?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Petty crimes get punished as severely as Major crimes.</li> <li>2. Presentations by youth who have been</li> </ol>

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	<p>through the juvenile system and have them share their story.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Education, give students several avenues to divert their focus from violence and crimes.</li> <li>4. Educate the parents- by having parent counselors.</li> </ol>
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Parents Focus Group

Date conducted: 10/29/2020

# Parents Present: 8

Facilitator: Cruz H. Torres Razo, ABC Coordinator and Megan Lopez, Asset Builder

Question	Answer
What is the best thing about your community?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Safe Community</li> <li>2. Parks for youth with special needs</li> <li>3. Always support each other.</li> <li>4. Bike trail</li> <li>5. Clean Community</li> <li>6. Significant food health during the pandemic</li> <li>7. Help for families in need</li> <li>8. Food and House</li> <li>9. School Programs</li> <li>10. Hispanic/Latino Culture</li> <li>11. Charro Days</li> <li>12. Gladys Porter Zoo</li> </ol>
What are the best resources for youth in our community?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School Programs</li> <li>2. Boys and Girls club</li> <li>3. Public Libraries</li> <li>4. Free food at School</li> <li>5. Good Samaritan</li> <li>6. After School Programs</li> <li>7. Parks and Rec Events</li> <li>8. Free Vaccines</li> <li>9. Free Healthcare Clinics</li> </ol>
What are some major challenges facing our youth in our community?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bullying</li> <li>2. Depression</li> <li>3. Poor communication skills</li> <li>4. Peer pressure</li> <li>5. Cyberbullying</li> </ol>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. The need of being accepted</li> <li>7. Drugs</li> <li>8. Drop outs</li> <li>9. Obesity</li> <li>10. Lack of family support</li> <li>11. Bulimia</li> <li>12. Low self-esteem caused by high use of social media</li> </ol>
What programs does the community lack or need more of?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. STEM programs outside of school</li> <li>2. Robotics &amp; Coding</li> <li>3. Technology and access to the internet</li> <li>4. Sports, for all ages</li> <li>5. Doctors</li> <li>6. Art and Culture Programs</li> <li>7. After School programs for working moms with kids</li> </ol>
<p>Do you think our youth are underserved educationally or medically?</p> <p>Are there any certain resources or assets currently available that could help meet these particular needs?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poor treatment of youth with special needs</li> <li>2. Lack of dentists and affordable prices</li> <li>3. Medical/Dental should be offered to everyone</li> <li>4. Working parents don't qualify</li> <li>5. Kids that have autism should be treated like all</li> <li>6. Monthly premium is outrageous</li> </ol>
<p>During COVID-19 Pandemic, do you feel as if the youth were supported by our community?</p> <p>why or why not?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No, I feel we were left to figure everything out on our own</li> <li>2. Youth have had a hard time with virtual learning</li> <li>3. Yes, thank you Good Samaritan.</li> <li>4. Some parents have continued working throughout the pandemic and can not support the kids as we would want to.</li> <li>5. Yes, because we are safe if we don't go out id we do we wear 2 mask and a shield</li> </ol>
Is crime and juvenile delinquency among youth an issue in our community?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes, we had incidents before (including shooting)</li> <li>2. Yes, there has been some incidents at local parks</li> <li>3. The stress from the pandemic has cause major stress for families and increase in crimes</li> </ol>

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How can Good Sam improve?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By letting all kids around the world join?</li> <li>2. Enroll youth who are in great need and feel lost</li> <li>3. Offer all programs to the schools</li> <li>4. Make the new people or kids feel comfortable and safe</li> <li>5. Make the programs safe for kids</li> <li>6. Collaborate with schools to identify the youth with highest needs.</li> <li>7. Ask parents for more help and support, not all the responsibilities should fall on you as an agency</li> <li>8. To continue doing activities and providing guidance to the kids</li> <li>9. Don't make the people and kids scared</li> </ol>
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SWOT Analysis

Date conducted: 11/10/2020

# CCC Members Present: 3

Facilitator: Cruz H. Torres Razo, ABC Coordinator

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The community comes together to meet the needs of our families</li> <li>- Positive friendships and relationships</li> <li>- The community remains connected</li> <li>- On-going love for one another</li> <li>- Everyone knows each other</li> <li>- Access to               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food pantries, parenting classes, family activities, city libraries, trails, parks, and nonprofits</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Tangible assets include               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parks, museums, theater, bike trails, sports park, zoo, resacas, beach</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Lacks               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- jobs that pay a living wage, opportunities for low skill, low education workforce</li> <li>- higher paying jobs, diverse restaurants, and more upscale businesses downtown</li> <li>- support/empowerment for young boys &amp; men</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Low access to Internet Service</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Services for LGBTQ+ and Undocumented Youth</li> <li>- More recreation spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Floodings, hurricanes</li> <li>- Negative media/press coverage</li> <li>- COVID-19</li> <li>- Increasing unemployment rates</li> </ul>

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### Community Strengths in 78520

Despite the challenges facing the residents of 78520, the community retains several resources as well as experiencing several positive trends that represent opportunities for the community. The most consistent strength of the community voiced by residents, leveraged by area agencies is the intangible sense of culture, community and pride among the people who live in the area. In addition to this unquantifiable characteristic, 78520 has access to service agencies, a high rate of homeownership, high graduation rate from high school, and a high proportion of churches and other faith-based institutions.

### Service Agencies

Within the physical boundaries of the zip code there are 14 community resource centers, 17 city parks, 42 churches, 19 schools, and 2 university campuses.

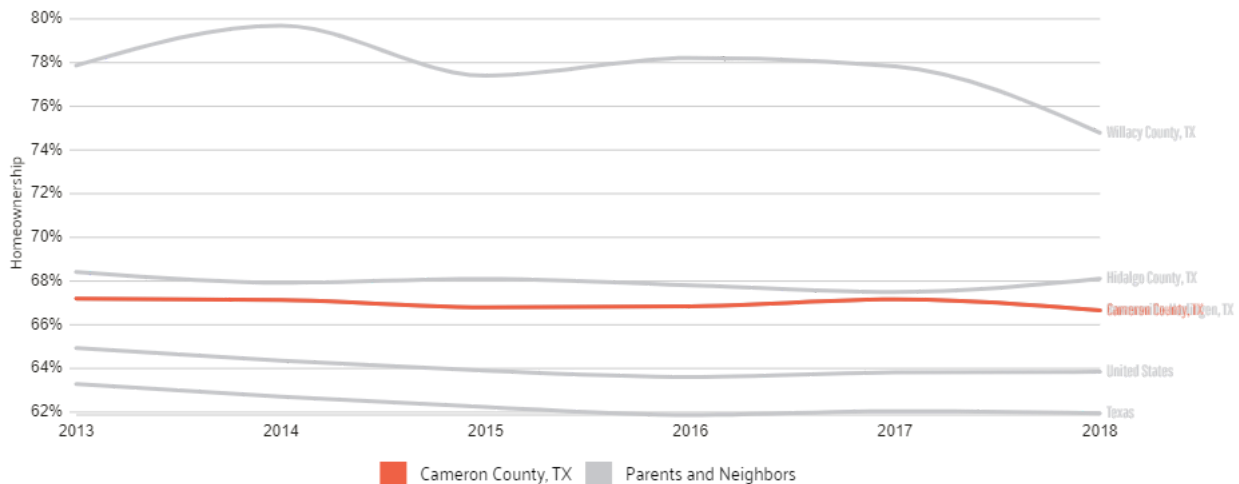
### Community Resources

Name	Address	Phone
Cameron County Indigent Health Program	800 W. Jefferson St. Ste. 180	(956) 389- 3672
Early Childhood Intervention	405 E. Levee St	(956) 504-9422
Brownsville Housing Authority	2606 Boca Chica Blvd	(956) 541-8315
Cameron/Willacy County Community Projects	1144 Professional Drive	(956) 544-6411
Lucio Multi-Service Center	1035 E. 11th St.	(956) 542-3338
Catholic Social Services	955 W. Price Rd.	(956) 541-0221
Child Care Management Services	851 Old Alice Rd.	(956) 546-3141
Habitat for Humanity	1718 Boca Chica Blvd	(956) 550-9020
Homeless Youth Project(BISD)	708 Palm Blvd.	(956) 544-6612
Garden Plaza WIC Clinic	1225 N. Expressway Ste. 2D	1(888) 942-4847
University of Texas - RGV University of Texas - RGV Community Counseling Clinic	1.210 Education and Business University Drive	(956) 882 7792
S.C.A.N. (Serving Children and Adolescents in Need)	705 W. Jefferson St.	(956) 544-3095
Brownsville Literacy Center	245 E. Levee St	(956) 542-8080
Good Samaritan Community Services	104 W. Elizabeth St.	(210) 434-5531



## Homeownership

The homeownership rate in Cameron County is 66.7%, compared to the national average of 63.9%. In 2018, 66.4% of the housing units in Cameron County were occupied by their owner. This percentage of owner-occupation is higher than the national average of 63.9%. The chart by Data USA below shows home ownership in Cameron County compared to other regions.



## Education

Brownsville has seen its share of successes and challenges in the K-12 education landscape.. 78520 was the birthplace of the first private and public school in the city of Brownsville. Currently, Brownsville Independent School District, BISD, has 43,028 youth enrolled in the district. Demographics to note are that 89.5% of the youth are economically disadvantaged, 35.6% are in Bilingual or ESL education programs and 98.3% are of Hispanic descent. The Texas Tribune reports that the local district received an A accountability rating with 67.3 of students considered at risk for dropping out of school. In 2018, 92.8% of students graduating received their high school diploma on time or earlier. The dropout rate was reported at 1.1% which is significantly lower than the national average. According to Children at Risk, 78520 is home to schools with an A and B rating.

## Churches/Places of Worship

With over 42 churches located in the 78520 zip code, a number of different religions are present in the community. The most notable religious location in the community is the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville. Some research suggests that religiousness is associated with lower substance use. Additionally, religious groups often offer young adults after school activities to participate in and such

activities that help keep youth and young adults focused on positive activities, can deter them from engaging in risky behaviors.

### **Gaps in Service**

Based on research and data derived from community feedback, it seems as if the largest gaps in service in our community include health programs and programs for adults. Additionally, the population with the greatest need of services is young adults with children. By focusing on this demographic, service agencies can strengthen the weakest link in the family-systems that are at greatest risk of poverty in the community. Within that population, an even more targeted approach would focus on females, particularly single mothers.

### **Implications of Findings**

- 1) The community continues to lag well behind the state in many key areas of community development, education attainment and performance, and wellbeing. The concentrated nature of poverty in 78520 produces a cycle of generational poverty that families struggle to navigate. The greatest need centers around family engagement programs and systems.
- 2) Not all indicators trend negatively. The community shows several signs of improvement in key areas, such as high school graduation rates. More importantly, the community is poised to make effective use of family-based programs focused on educational attainment. In the case of 78520, the path forward with community development is aligned with the goals of youth development.
- 3) The most effective strategy for overcoming the cycle of poverty in 78520 is through youth educational and workforce development, as enabled by the various supporting efforts within the network of service agencies. This means directing the litany of services available within the community toward setting outcomes for youth to apply themselves academically and professionally. These supporting efforts must be “nested” within the unified purpose of youth educational and workforce development in order to create strategic change.
- 4) A key component of this approach is the menu of work-skills and life-skills programs for young adults in the postsecondary bridge years. These programs provide pathways to success for students who have various limitations that make university attendance impossible. They also create the potential for stability among young adults who have children of their own.
- 5) In addition to poverty, this approach consequently reduces crime and juvenile delinquency.
- 6) In order to apply these findings, Good Samaritan Community Services will:
  - a) Prioritize efforts internal to the agency around supporting youth development. This includes targeting efforts like case management and immediate assistance toward families of students who receive services from the CYD program. It also includes an intentional effort to screen students for additional service requirements that may limit their ability to engage in educational development.
  - b) Apply greater emphasis to the CCC, and its role as an organizing body for community effort.

- a) Expand its outreach to youth and seek greater engagement with their parents and guardians so that they can be serviced by the current adult engagement programs that enhance educational attainment.

### **Prioritized List of Service Needs**

Based on the research and feedback above, the prioritized list of service needs for 78520 is as follows:

- 1) Youth educational and workforce development
- 2) Family-based support systems designed to limit the instability associated with poverty
- 3) Life-skills and work-skills programs for young adults in the postsecondary bridge years, defined as ages 16-25
- 4) Targeted service delivery for young adults with children, particularly single teen mothers
- 5) Professional development services for area nonprofit agencies

### **Conclusion**

The community in the 78520 zip code represents a cross-section of Cameron County that is an essential component of the region's growth and economic success. The number of high school graduation and post-secondary education attainment directly correlates to the region's income stability, homeownership, and health outcomes for residents, thereby contributing to a more extensive tax base and a step closer to the end of generational poverty. For this economic engine to continue to thrive, there needs to be an investment in outcomes that matter.

The data highlighted in this CSNA suggests that the 78520 zip code is a community rich in resources but high in need. The high levels of poverty and criminal activity are prevalent in the community and appear to be significant contributing factors to the abundance of threats. The presence of community-based organizations and resources is crucial to aid the day-to-day crisis youth and families in this area experience. Youth Development Services teach essential character traits such as teamwork, active listening, leadership, effective communication, and approaches to promote workforce readiness. This approach to learning and problem solving has proven to be a successful strategy in helping youth and families learn the tools and exercise the opportunities to improve their social, emotional and economic outcomes.

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## **Appendices**

### **Dissemination Plan**

This CSNA will be released to the public on or after December 19, 2020, it will be available for digital download via [goodsamtx.org](http://goodsamtx.org), printed copies will be available upon request, a summary of the CSNA will be provided to Good Sam Board, YAC youth and CCC on January 2021