



Good Samaritan Community Services

CSNA 2022-2023

Community Strengths and Needs Assessment



Brownsville, TX 78520 zip code





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Introduction

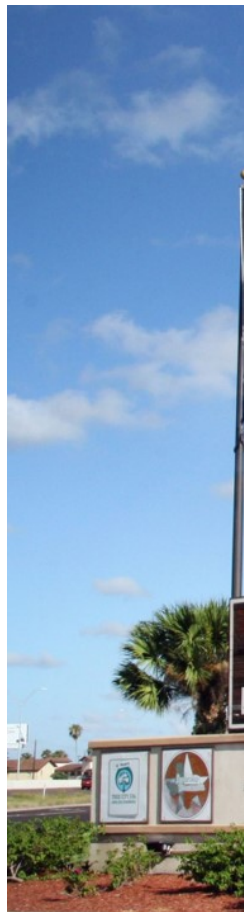
Purpose of the Community Youth Development (CYD)

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. Currently, sixteen (16) Texas zip codes provide CYD program services, including the 78520 zip code in Brownville.

The CYD program increases the development of protective factors by providing various 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 free to youth ages 6-17 who live or attend school in the 78520 zip code.

The Community Collaborative Committee (CCC) is an essential component of CYD designed to foster a community approach to addressing local issues. The CCC comprises 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.

Youths aged 13-17 make up the YAC. This group of teen leaders meets weekly to discern, discuss and respond to issues in their community. To promote 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 in staying abreast of issues and concerns 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 on developing 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 reducing and preventing juvenile delinquency.

Overview of Methodology and Assessment Tools

This assessment aims to target the resources and needs of the 78520-zip code. Methods used to collect this information include:

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

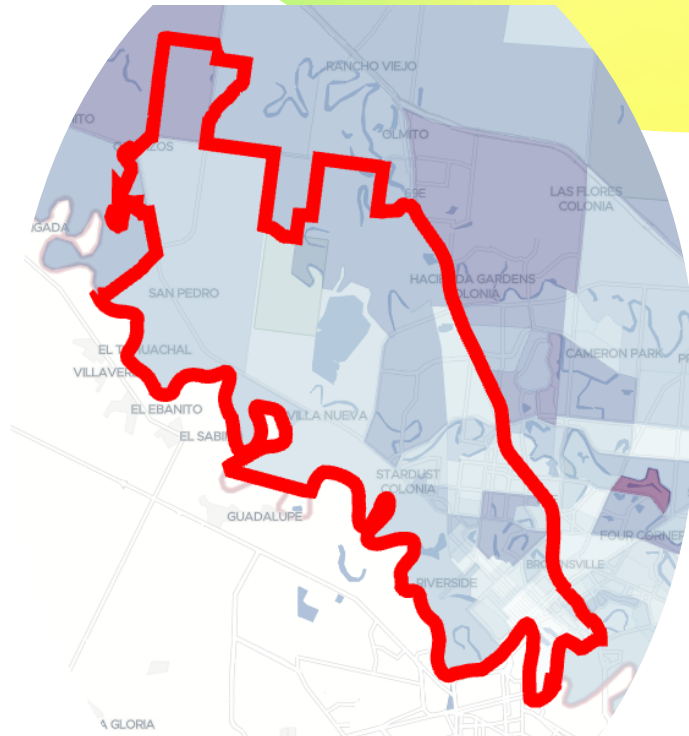




Community Description



78520 is an urban zip code in south Texas in Brownsville, with a higher than average population density. The area has 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 39.7 square miles, immediately west of Highway 77 and part of the city's downtown area. This area is characterized by high poverty (\$17,918 per capita income, about half the amount in Texas: \$34,255) and limited employment opportunities, making up the low end of the economic spectrum in Brownsville, identified as the second poorest city in America in 2018 ("America's poorest cities"). The Spanish Language is spoken by 84% of adults at home, and 29% of the population is foreign-born. ("78520 - Profile data")





General Demographics

	78520	Cameron County	Texas	United States
Population	60,529	426,029	29,527,940	331,893,760
Hispanic Population	93%	90%	40%	19%
Population Density <small>*people per square mile</small>	1,525.1	474.4	113	93.8
Median Household Income	\$42,484	\$48,115	\$66,963	\$69,717
Population Below Federal Poverty Line	26.5%	24.7%	14.3%	12.8%
Children Below Federal Poverty Line	35%	34%	20%	17%
Population 25+ with no high school diploma	34%	28%	15%	11%
Unemployment	-	8.2%	3.9%	3.6%
Foreign-born population	27.5%	22.9%	17.3%	13.6%
Spanish as Language spoken at home, children	75%	15.5 %	14 %	15%
Spanish as Language spoken at home, adults	84%	74%	28%	13%

U.S. Census Bureau (2021). *American Community Survey 1-year estimates*. Retrieved from *Census Reporter*

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, and vulnerability to changing economic conditions.





Notable Locations and Assets

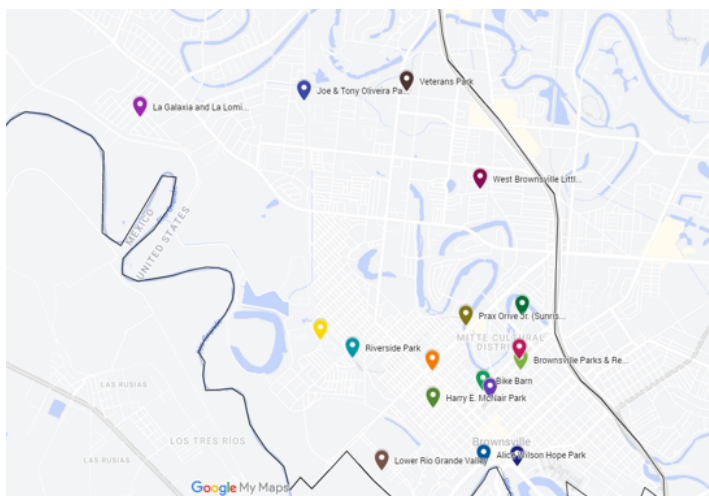
Brownsville Country Club	Fort Brown	Brownsville Police Department	Stillman House Museum	Historic Brownsville Museum
Southern Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot	Brownsville Fire Department Central Station	La Nueva Libertad	Brownsville Public Library	Brownsville Art League Fine Arts Museum
Miguel Fernandez 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

("78520 Zip Code (Brownsville, Texas) Profile)



Local Parks

Park Name	Location
Brownsville Parks & Rec	1338 E 8th St
Joe & Tony Oliveira Park	104 El Paso Rd
Monte Bella Trails Park	2485 W Alton Gloor Blvd
Riverside Park	15 Riverside Blvd
West Brownsville Little League Park	1295 Cottonwood Dr
Alice Wilson Hope Park	1300 E Levee St
Veterans Park	2500 Central Blvd
Prax Orive Jr. (Sunrise)Park	1245 Palm Blvd
Harry E. McNair Park	350 E St Charles St
Southern Pacific Linear Park	Brownsville, TX 78520
Bike Barn	624 E Madison St
14th Street Plaza	Brownsville, TX 78520
Rosa G. Allala Park	309 N Park Dr
La Galaxia and La Lomita Park	1501 Calle Espacio
Dean Porter Park	Dean Porter Park Dr
Lower Rio Grande Valley	325 Mexico Blvd
Xeriscape Park	Brownsville, TX 78520
Washinton Park	700 E Madison St



("78520 Zip Code (Brownsville, Texas) Profile)



Institutions of Higher Education

- 1 The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley**
 1 W University Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78520
 (888) 882-4026
- 2 Texas Southmost College**
 80 Fort Brown St, Brownsville, TX 78520
 (956) 295-3600
- 3 Southern Careers Institute Brownsville**
 Southwinds Shopping Center, 935 North Expy,
 Brownsville, TX 78520
 (844) 783-6569

Schools

Charter and 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
Triumph Public High Schools	944 E Los Ebanos Blvd	(956) 372-1433





Public High Schools

James 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
Brownsville Early College High School	343 Ringgold Road	(956) 698-1476

Public Middle Schools

Stell Middle School	1105 Los Ebanos Blvd	(956) 548-8560
Stillman Middle School	2977 West Tandy Road	(956) 698-1000

Public Elementary Schools

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. 8th 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





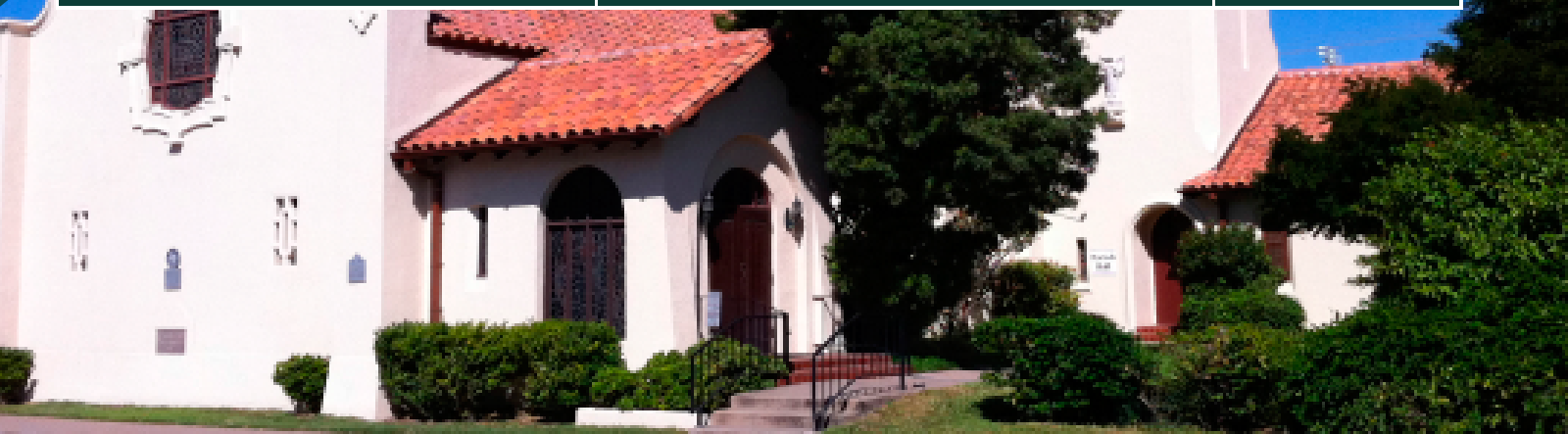
Churches/Places of Worship

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
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
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 West Brownsville	925 W. St Charles St, Brownsville, TX 78520	956-546-3607



Churches/Places of Worship Cont.

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
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
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 Kingdom Hall	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:

- Data was 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
- Community Feedback
 - Electronic Surveys administered to community youth and adults
 - SWOT analysis conducted by the Community Collaborative Committee
 - Focus groups
 - Parents of CYD program participants (5 present)
 - Youth Advisory Committee (11 youth present)

Data Analysis

The following chart explains the personnel conducting this analysis and assessment and the work plan in detail.

Role	Name	Title
Project Lead/ Author	Alejandra N. Arquisola	Sr. Director Youth & Teen Services, Good Samaritan Community Services
Research Assitance	Marby Shaw	Regional Director Youth and Teen Services, Good Samaritan Community Services
Community Feedback Lead	Thessla Luna	Program Coordinator, Good Samaritan Community Services
Final Review	Simon Salas	CEO, Good Samaritan Community Services

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
Compile & Review youth survey data	3
Trend analysis on historical youth survey data (compare the current year to past)	3
Conduct Focus Groups	4, 5
Compile & Interpret Focus Group data	5
Final Review	7- 8



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 Brownsville. Brownsville Independent School District, BISD, has 56 schools serving 40,765 youth. Public Schools in Brownsville Independent School District have an average math proficiency score of 20% (versus the Texas public school average of 37%) and a reading proficiency score of 34% (versus the 42% statewide average). Important demographics to note are that minority enrollment is 99% of the student body (majority Hispanic), more than the Texas public school average of 73% (majority Hispanic). US News reports that 60.9% of the youth attending BISD schools are economically disadvantaged, 41% are English language learners, and 98.5% are of Hispanic descent. (“Brownsville Independent School District - U.S. News Education”)

BISD is ranked #947 of all 1,196 school districts in Texas (based on combined math and reading proficiency testing data) for the 2020-2021 school year. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the state waived accountability ratings for the 2020-2021 school year. The most recent data (2018-2019) reported in the Texas Tribune shows that the local district received an A for accountability rating, with 69.9% of students considered at risk of dropping out of school. (“Brownsville ISD | Texas Public Schools | The Texas Tribune”) Additionally, 93.8% of students graduating received their high school diplomas on time or earlier. The dropout rate was reported at 0.4%, significantly lower than the national average. According to Children at Risk, 78520 is home to schools with A and B ratings. The school district's graduation rate of 93.8% has increased from 90% over five years. There is a strain on financial resources for education as both Rio Grande Valley Schools and Brownville public schools are losing youth from their districts to local charter schools. Brownsville is home to 9 charter schools that serve 7,359 students. Of these nine schools, three are in the 78520 zip code. Private schools serve 2,166 students enrolled in 13 schools, with 8 serving the 78520 zip code. In 2019, three elementary schools were forced to close due to low student enrollment and deteriorating school buildings. It is projected that enrollment will decline in the next ten years, leading to a \$33 million deficit in school funding due to student outmigration.



Economics

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 income figures for households in 78520. The average household income in 78520 is about half the amount in Texas. Poverty is the most significant concern in the region, as Cameron County is recognized as one of the top 5 poorest counties in Texas. Brownsville has 33.4% of its population living below 110% of the federal poverty line, with an additional 27% living between 100-199%. The average household income in Brownsville is \$43,174, with a poverty rate of 26.5%. The median rental costs in recent years have risen to \$794 per month, and the median house value is \$95,700. Only 2% of households in 78520 make over \$200,000 a year.

Additionally, 35% of children living in 78520 live below the poverty line, the highest child poverty rate in the state. With almost half of the 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 and 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

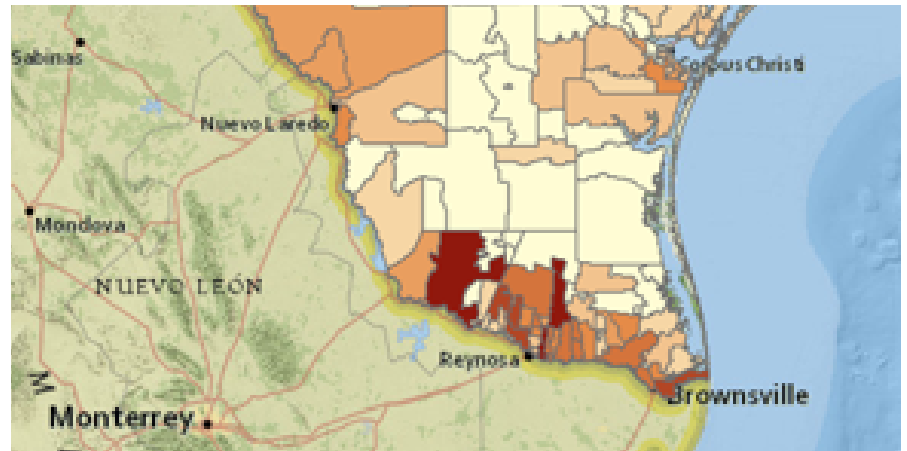
	782520	Cameron County	Texas
Median household income	\$42,484	\$48,115	\$66,963
Population Below Federal Poverty Line (FPL)	26.5%	24.7%	14.3%
Children Below FPL	35%	34%	20%

These data demonstrate that women and children are particularly exposed to poverty in 78520. The largest demographic groups living in poverty are Males 6 - 11, followed by Females 6 - 11 and 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 Rate

Location	Rate
Cameron County	8.2%
Texas	3.9%



The unemployment rate is similarly striking, as reflected in the chart above. Residents of 78520 have an unemployment rate nearly two times higher than the state of Texas. (*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*)

Since 2020 Brownsville residents began to experience the economic fallout that COVID-19 inflicted upon all communities. Communities of Color have borne the brunt of poverty's effects. 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 usually 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.

In 2020, Brownsville’s Chamber of Commerce partnered with the Greater Brownsville Incentives Corporation to establish the COVID-19 Rapid Response Small Business Assistance Program. The COVID-19 Rapid Response, Small Business Assistance Program, assisted over 900 local businesses. In conjunction with one-on-one assistance, the Chamber conducted over 60 educational resource webinars in partnership with the City of Brownsville, Texas Restaurant Association, Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Small Business Administration and other organizations. These educational resource webinars assisted over 24,000 individuals in the community. Additionally, The Port of Brownsville proved resilient in 2020 and reported in August 2021 that it moved a record-setting 11.6 million short tons of diverse cargo with operating revenues of \$37 million.

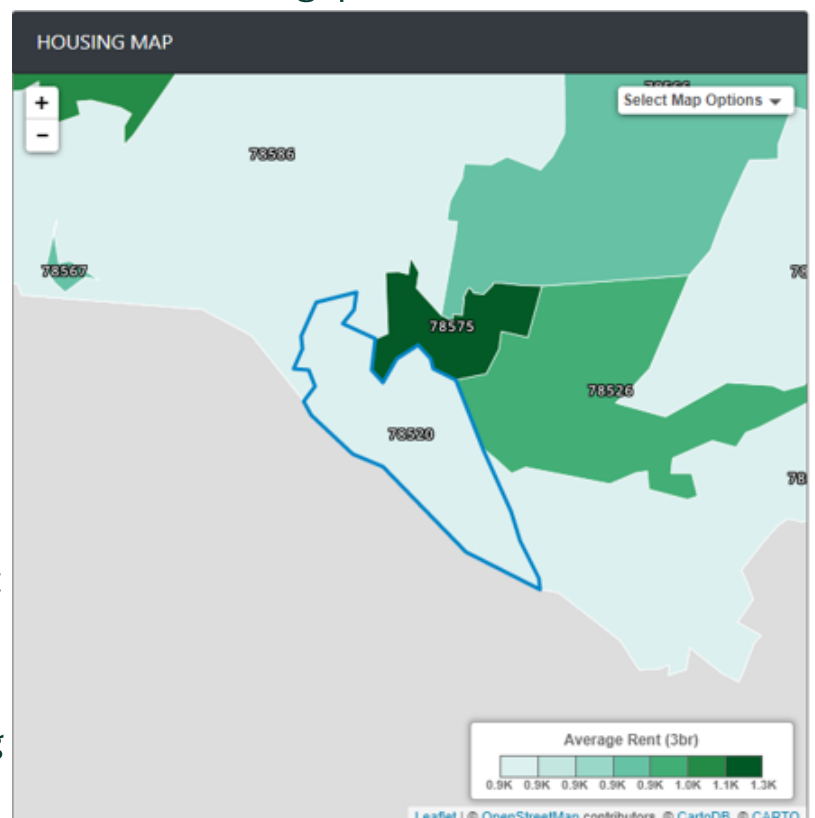


The local economy is predicted to improve in the coming years. The 2014 opening of SpaceX—the aerospace company that chose Boca Chica Beach, twenty miles east of downtown Brownsville, as the home for its launch facility. Texas Monthly reports Cameron County incentivizing the company for the move with tax forgiveness for ten years. (Solomon) In 2021, the company’s owner, Elon Musk, announced giving \$20 million to Cameron County schools and another \$10 million to Brownsville for “downtown revitalization.” The city’s Mayor envisions a Texas space boom that could ultimately rival oil and gas as a part of the state’s economy, based on estimates that it will grow into a trillion-dollar industry over the next twenty years—and one with Brownsville at its heart as the “Silicon Valley of space,” as an international financial advisory group that recently moved into the city declared.

Family Composition

Family is highly regarded in the South Texas region, especially in Brownsville. There are 56,522 households in the city, and 18,844 are in the 78520 zip code. The population of the city of Brownsville is 187,840, making it the most populous city in Texas’s Rio Grande Valley. The population of 78520 is **60,592**, with 31% being family households, higher than the state average. According to the census reporter, there is a high percentage of two-parent families, 58%. Females lead 26% of households. 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. Brownsville has one of the highest shares of Hispanic residents in the United States. Almost 95% of Hispanic residents in Brownsville are Mexican, and 0.8% are Puerto Rican. About 25.9% of people in Brownsville were born outside of the U.S. (“Brownsville, Texas Population 2023”)

The median home cost in 78520 is \$156,400. Home appreciation in the last ten years has been 71.4%, up 14.1%. Homeownership in the zip code is high, with only 36.5% of the population being renters and 57% of units being occupied by owners.



The map on the top indicates that the average rent in the zip code is lower compared to nearby areas.



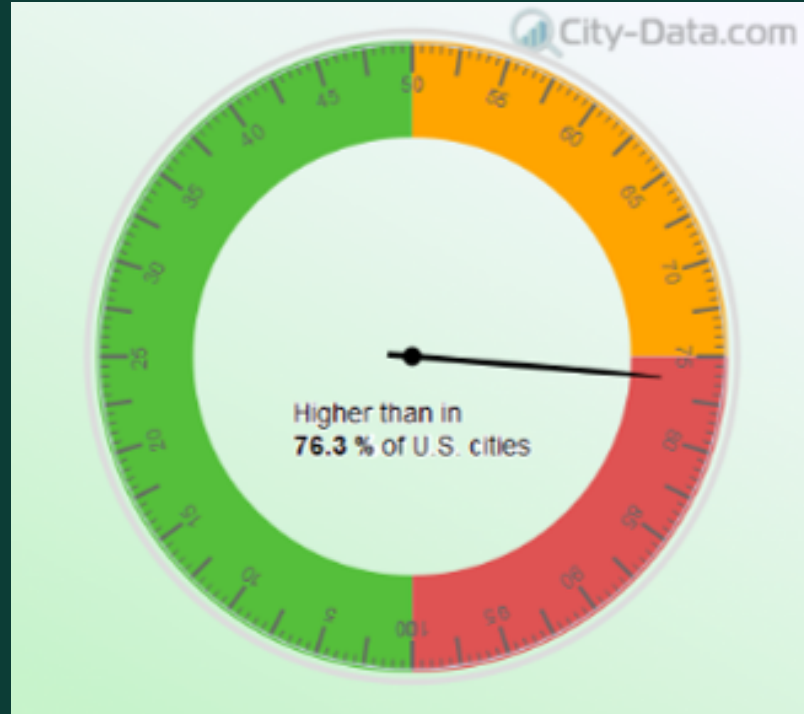
Crime

Residents in 78520 experience high crime rates. The total crime index is 78.08% making it 2.5 times higher than the national average of 30.3%. 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 53.3%times higher in 78520 than in the rest of Brownsville.

(OpenStreetMap contributors, 2019)

This is particularly disastrous for youth within the zip code, as trauma is well known

to have significant negative consequences on brain development, cognitive and behavioral functioning, as well as a host of other long-term health measures., Unfortunately, the high rates of trauma in 78520 have also resulted in comparatively high rates of juvenile crime arrests compared to the rest of the state and nationally, as shown in the graph below.



	Cameron County	Texas
Juvenile Violent Crime Index	13.6%	11.8%

Another factor impacting families in 78520 is the prevalence of abuse and neglect. Cameron County saw 3,209 cases of Domestic Violence reported in 2019. The Cameron County, Domestic Violence Unit, sees up to 1,200 cases annually. However, prosecutors believe numbers should be higher as few cases are reported to authorities. In 2020, the Texas Council on Family Violence reported that three women died in Cameron County by their intimate partner. In 2021, 10,571 survivors were assisted for Domestic violence. (“National Statistics”) According to the Texas Department of Family Protective Services, as of 2021, there were 4,273 confirmed victims of abuse/neglect in Cameron County. In 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 are decreasing or cases have become harder to confirm. (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Open Data Portal)

Health

Cameron County has an overall population health score of 33, with a rate three times higher for uninsured individuals (30.8%) than the national median (11%), a 16.2% smoking rate, and a life expectancy of 81 years. 34.1%of adults in Cameron County are considered to be in poor or fair general health compared to 18.7% in Texas and 19.5% in the United States.



The leading cause of death in the 78520 zip code in Cardiovascular Disease. (Johnson) According to the County Health Rankings Report, 27% of the Cameron County population is obese and has a Body Mass indicator at or greater than 30%. Twenty-one thousand people have diabetes, and over \$182 million is spent annually on diabetic care in our county.

Teen Births

The teen birth rate in Cameron County is staggeringly high, 35.2, twice as high as the 15.39 national rate; Cameron County was the seventh highest, with 695 teen births. Managing 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 teen's parents, including those under 15. According to the TX Campaign, a baby is born to a teen mother every three hours in the Rio Grande Valley. ("Community Health Needs Assessment City of Brownsville Maternal and Child Health")

Health Care Access

Other adverse health factors affecting residents of 78520 include lack of health insurance. In Cameron County, over a quarter of the population (30.8%) is uninsured, compared to 18.7% for the state. This leads to reactive access to medication rather than preventative access, as residents wait to utilize the healthcare system until they have a severe problem. This phenomenon creates the secondary effect of limiting educational attainment when unplanned, significant healthcare expenses derail a family's economic stability, thereby impacting a student's academic trajectory.

Environmental Health Risks

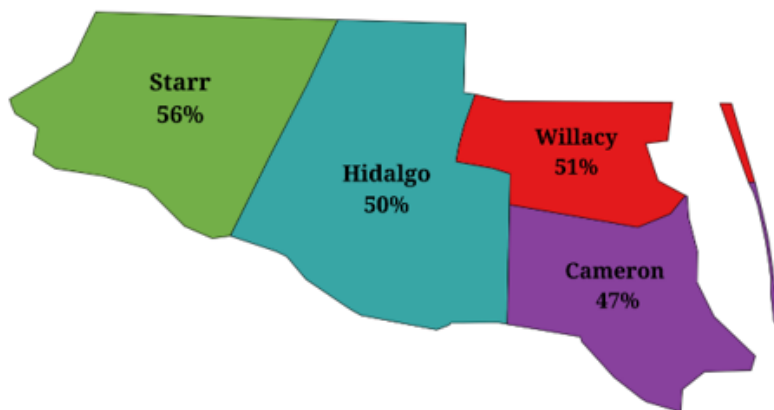
Significant health factors in the area also include high Mosquito-borne Disease Risks due to environmental factors (land cover, precipitation, and high temperature). In 2016, Brownsville was the second location in the United States to report a locally-acquired case of the Zika virus, and in 2005 and 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 2.55 water boil notices a year (4.7% of Cameron County water is unsafe to drink, compared to a 0% national median), a high rate of extreme heat days per year (20.7), and 17.9% of households living in flood hazard zones. Cameron County's FEMA National Risk Index Score is a staggering 50.8, which indicates more risk from natural hazards relative to the 9.1 score of the nation overall. (Johnson)



Food and Nutrition

The county's overall Food and Nutrition score is 28%; significant health factors include nutrition insecurity, with 18% of the total Cameron County population having low food



access. This data is critical to consider in light of the region's high rate of diabetes (16.84%) and obesity (42.2%) 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 all of Brownsville. This became more apparent during the closures of schools, workplaces, and cities as the COVID-19 Pandemic spread. A recent study by the Brookings Institution cited broadband as the “most inequitable infrastructure” in America, with 15% of households without internet access. Therefore, “Brownsville is among the most disconnected cities in the nation.” Brownsville lacks internet broadband for over half of its residents. 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 on technology devices. This purchase included 11,000 Chromebooks, 6,000 I pads, 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 was to equip buses with hotspots and 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 lacked devices and connectivity. In April 2021, the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce and the City of Brownsville partnered to bring the Connect BTX Committee to the business community. Connect BTX advances digital equality and economic growth through strategic partnerships that promote a thriving and digitally empowered community. The broadband expansion is happening in the city, thanks to a \$19.5 million investment in a fiber network (in 2018, Brownsville was also ranked as the second least-connected community in the nation, behind only Laredo).



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.

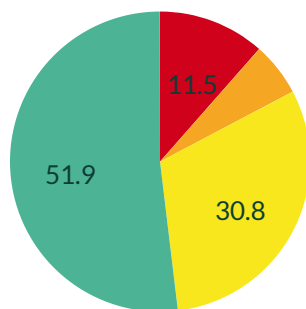
Youth Surveys

Below are some facts regarding the youth survey responses

- 193 responses were collected from youth ages 11-18
- 93% live in 78520
- 51% were female, 48.9 % male

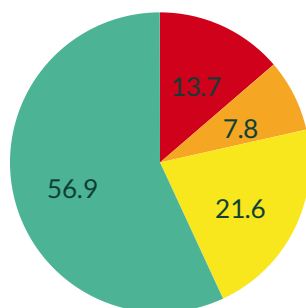
Respondents were asked if they felt they had the following:

1. I have friends who set good examples for me



- Not at all or Rarely (11.5%)
- Somewhat or Sometimes (5.8%)
- Very or Often (30.8%)
- Extremely or Almost Always (51.9%)

2. I have adults who are good role models for me.

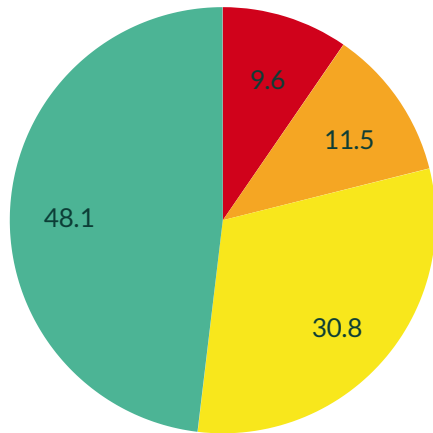


- Not at all or Rarely (13.7%)
- Somewhat or Sometimes (7.8%)
- Very or Often (21.6%)
- Extremely or Almost Always (56.9%)



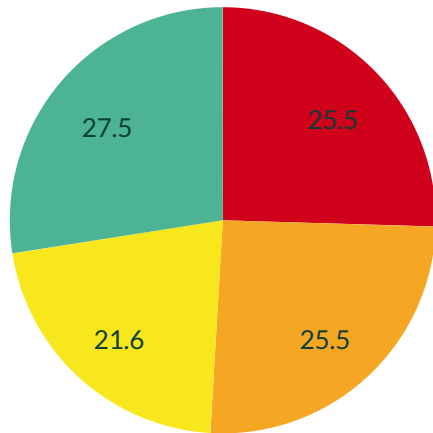
Youth Surveys Cont.

3. I have a safe neighborhood.



■ Not at all or Rarely (9.6%) ■ Somewhat or Sometimes (11.5%)
■ Very or Often (30.8%) ■ Extremely or Almost Always (48.1%)

4. I have good neighbors who care about me.



■ Not at all or Rarely (25.47%) ■ Somewhat or Sometimes (25.47%)
■ Very or Often (21.58%) ■ Extremely or Almost Always (27.47%)

- 53.8% of youth reported having a school that cares about kids and helps them learn.
- 54.9% of youth reported having other adults in their life who care about them.
- 50% of youth reported having a family that sets clear rules for them.
- 53.8% of youth reported having parents who talk to them about doing well in school
- 68.6% of youth reported having a family that gives them love and support.



Focus Groups

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

Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Focus Group

Date conducted: 3/21/2023

Youth Present: 14

Facilitator: Thessla Luna, Program Coordinator

Question	Answer
What is the best thing about our community?	The best thing about our community is how people help each other.
What can the community do to proactively set youth up for success?	Include youth in more things and give them bigger responsibilities. Teach youth more life skills such as taxes.
Who do you think plays an important role in the community? (people/places/organizations)	Places that care about youth like Good Sam.
What are the biggest threats in the community, and why?	A challenge in our community is how police don't always pay too much attention to problems within the community. A way to address this is to voice concerns to the police chief.
What improvements would you like to see at Good Sam?	There are no improvements that are needed. Good Sam is good, and it has helped us a lot.
What is your opinion of the educational system? Do you feel your school meets your needs?	Our educational system is good, and it helps us build most of our future. They could teach us more about life to prepare us for the future.
How do we address crime and juvenile delinquency among youth?	We address it by saying it's wrong and trying to prevent it



Parent Focus Group

Date conducted: 3/15/2023

Present: 7

Facilitator: Thessla Luna, Program Coordinator

Question	Answer
What is the best thing about your community?	Help is available when needed.
What are the best resources in our community?	Housing is available for some, and help with food is available. There are always people willing to assist with food.
What are some major challenges facing our community?	Bills, Economy, inability to pay bills such as water or lights. Not all the community is on the same page about what needs to be done; some want education, others the economy.
What services does the community lack or need more of?	Adult education that is free. Immigration assistance. Safety in the city.
Do you think our community residents are underserved educationally? Do you think community residents are underserved medically? Can you identify current resources or assets that are currently available that could help meet these needs?	Yes, low wages and limited to no medical coverage. Medicare and chip are hard to get. Adults getting continuing education
Do you feel safe in your community? If not, how can that be addressed?	No, the police are not always available. The proper authorities need to be more vigilant about neighborhoods. Maybe more patrols or quicker responses.
How can Good Sam improve?	Good Sam is already doing a lot for our families. Adult education could be one thing they could assist with. No need for improvement.



SWOT Analysis

Date conducted: 11/15/2022

Present: 8

Facilitator: Thessla Luna, Program Coordinator

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

Community Strengths

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 living there. In addition to this unquantifiable characteristic, 78520 have access to service agencies, a high rate of homeownership, a 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

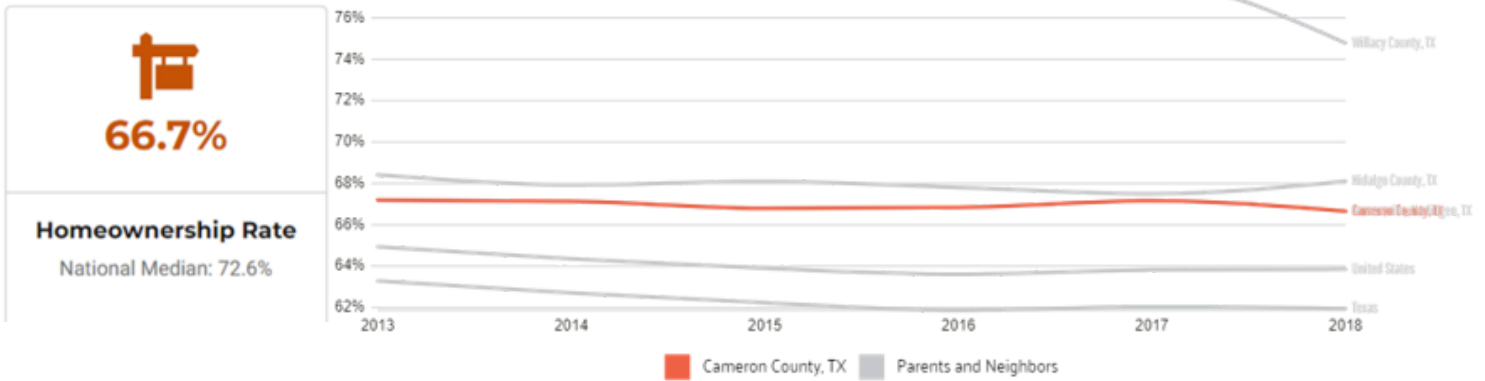
Name	Address
Cameron County Indigent Health Program	800 W. Jefferson St. Ste. 180
Early Childhood Intervention	405 E. Levee St
Brownsville Housing Authority	2606 Boca Chica Blvd
Cameron/Willacy County Community Projects	1144 Professional Drive
Lucio Multi-Service Center	1035 E. 11th St.
Catholic Social Services	955 W. Price Rd.
Child Care Management Services	851 Old Alice Rd.
Habitat for Humanity	1718 Boca Chica Blvd
Homeless Youth Project(BISD)	708 Palm Blvd.
Garden Plaza WIC Clinic	1225 N. Expressway Ste. 2D
University of Texas - RGV University of Texas - RGV Community Counseling Clinic	1.210 Education and Business University Drive
S.C.A.N. (Serving Children and Adolescents in Need)	705 W. Jefferson St.
Good Samaritan Community Services	104 W. Elizabeth St.





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 Data USA chart below shows Cameron County's homeownership 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. 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 diplomas on time or earlier. The dropout rate was reported at 1.1%, significantly lower than the national average. According to Children at Risk, 78520 is home to schools with A and B ratings.

Churches/Places of Worship

With over 42 churches in the 78520 zip code, several different religions are represented in the community. The most notable religious entity 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. Such activities that help keep youth and young adults focused on positive activities can deter them from engaging in risky behaviors.



Gaps in Services

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 at the greatest risk of poverty in the community. Within that population, and even more targeted approach would focus on females, particularly single mothers.

Implications of Findings

- The community continues to lag well behind the state in many critical areas of community development, educational attainment and performance, and well-being. The concentrated nature of poverty in 78520 produces a cycle of generational poverty that families struggle to navigate. The most important need centers around adult education.
- Not all indicators trend negatively. The community shows several signs of improvement in key areas, such as high school graduation rates. In the case of 78520, the path forward with community development is aligned with the youth development goals.
- The most effective strategy for overcoming the cycle of poverty in 78520 is through youth education and workforce development. A vital 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 with various limitations that make university attendance impossible. They also create the potential for stability among young adults with their children.
- In addition to poverty, this approach reduces crime and juvenile delinquency.



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 graduates 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. Community-based organizations and resources are crucial to aid the daily crisis youth and families experience in this area. 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 successful in helping youth and families learn the tools and exercise the opportunities to improve their social, emotional, and economic outcomes.

Recommendations

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

- Youth educational and workforce development
- Family-based support systems designed to limit the instability associated with poverty
- Life skills and work-skills programs for young adults in the postsecondary bridge years, defined as ages 16-25
- Targeted service delivery for young adults with children, particularly single teen mothers

To apply these findings, Good Samaritan Community Services will:

- Prioritize efforts internal to the agency in support of youth development.
- Apply greater emphasis to the CCC and its role as an organizing body for community effort.
- Expand its outreach to youth and families.



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Dissemination Plan

This CSNA will be released to the public on or after April 15, 2023. It will be available for digital download via 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 April 2023.