



2022 REPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS



"The Lone Star State is brimming with promise."

— GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT



“The men and women of law enforcement put their lives on the line every day to keep Texans safe, and they deserve our enduring support and gratitude.” —Governor Abbott signs **Back the Blue** legislation into law to stop cities from defunding the police and enhance penalties for criminal activities that interfere with or harm law enforcement. Above, the Governor is joined for the June bill signing by members of the Texas Legislature and law enforcement. [Read more.](#)

Contents

[Letter from the Governor](#) 3

[Sessions Summary](#) 4

[Jobs and Economy](#)..... 10

[Pandemic Recovery](#)..... 23

[Border Crisis](#)..... 30

[Public Safety](#)..... 35

[Texans Serving Texans](#)..... 44

[The First Lady’s Report](#) 52

[Looking Ahead](#)..... 56

[Top Texas Touts](#)..... 58

Letter from Governor Greg Abbott

Texas shines as a beacon of hope, prosperity, and freedom!

As the ninth-largest economy among the nations of the world, Texas is an economic and innovation powerhouse, offering unmatched opportunities for families and businesses to grow and succeed.

The Lone Star State continues to lead as a top state for population growth, for job creation, and for attracting job-creating capital investments, thanks to our unwavering commitment to economic freedom and our young, educated, skilled, and diverse workforce.

As we have seen in years past, when tested by fire, flood, or hurricane, Texans respond with resilience and calm resolve.

Just as we overcame those challenges, we continue to overcome the challenges of the global pandemic. And with neighbors helping neighbors, our communities are rebounding.

To broaden the path to opportunity for more Texas families, we delivered on our promises in the 87th Legislative Sessions to build a healthier, safer, freer, and more prosperous future for all.

Among our top priorities were ensuring Texans have access to high-quality healthcare, improving public safety, protecting personal liberty, getting Texans back to work, and further unleashing the state's dynamic, robust economy.

I am proud to say that Texas has smashed previous employment highs, and at the end of 2021, we stood at a record 13,059,600 jobs—the most ever and growing! In the coming year, we will continue to build on this success and ensure an even brighter Texas of tomorrow.

As always, it is a blessing to have the fabulous First Lady of Texas by my side also serving you. With her faith, grace, and strength, Cecilia is a powerful advocate for volunteerism and service; I am so proud of all that she is doing, especially for the children of this state.

As we look to the horizon in 2022 and see opportunity unbounded, I invite you to also look back at all we accomplished together. There is a recurring theme in the pages ahead: **A better, stronger Texas—together!**



87th Legislative Sessions Summary

Opportunity is what Texas is all about!

As Texans, we never shy away from challenges, we embrace them. We adapt and overcome; we grow stronger as a result. In the 87th Legislative Sessions, we continued that legacy.

Healthier Texas

As the world continues to battle COVID-19, we have advanced strategies that protect Texans from the virus and are developing long-term solutions to provide Texans better access to healthcare by:

- **Expanding** telemedicine so that every Texan in every region of the state can benefit;
- **Increasing** access to voluntary COVID-19 vaccinations across the state;
- **Building** on past accomplishments to expand mental health support to Texans; and
- **Extending** coverage to pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid to six months post pregnancy.

Safer Texas

Texas has always been a law-and-order state, and we must keep it that way. In the 87th Legislative Sessions, we ensured that our law enforcement officers will have the support and resources they need to keep Texans safe by:

- **Fortifying** our efforts to secure our border and expanding efforts to crack down on human trafficking and drug smuggling;
- **Preventing** cities from defunding the police;
- **Providing** law enforcement with tools and training to ensure the safety that their communities deserve;
- **Enhancing** public safety protections; and
- **Reforming** a flawed bail system to keep dangerous criminals off our streets.

Bills signed by Governor Abbott:

[87th Legislative Session](#)

[Second Called Session](#)

[Third Called Session](#)

“Our priorities were centered around hardworking Texans and building a state that is safer, freer, healthier, and more prosperous. With my partners in the House and Senate, we kept those promises and delivered one of the most conservative legislative sessions our state has ever seen.”

—Governor Greg Abbott

Freer Texas

Whether you’re a newcomer to our state or your family has been here for generations, we all unite around the ideals of freedom and personal liberty. We have a duty to keep Texas the freedom capital of America. In the 87th Legislative Sessions, we accomplished this by:

- **Preventing** any government entity from shutting down religious activities in Texas;
- **Safeguarding** Second Amendment rights in the Lone Star State;
- **Passing** laws to protect election integrity;
- **Protecting** Texans from wrongful censorship on social media platforms; and
- **Ensuring** every unborn child with a heartbeat will be saved from abortion.

More Prosperous Texas

Texas is a land of unmatched opportunity, and we must continue to foster an environment that encourages new investments, entrepreneurship, and job creation. In the 87th Legislative Sessions, we continued to unleash our economic might, expand opportunity, and create a brighter future for generations of Texans to come by:

- **Balancing** the budget without raising taxes;
- **Establishing** civil liability protections for individuals, businesses, and healthcare providers that operated safely during the pandemic;
- **Expanding** broadband access throughout the state;
- **Improving** reliability of the electric grid;
- **Delivering** regulatory relief for businesses, preventing a large spike in unemployment insurance rates, and ensuring PPP loan forgiveness is not taxable;
- **Providing** property tax relief; and
- **Investing** in workforce development to ensure a continuing pipeline of skilled Texans for Texas jobs.

Responsible State Budget

When the 86th Legislative Session adjourned in 2019, no one could have predicted the challenges that would arise in the intervening years. We experienced a confluence of crises not seen in generations.

While the state of Texas saw a brief yet steep fiscal decline due to the pandemic, our resilient economy rebounded rapidly—and we remain the envy of the nation.

In the 87th Legislative Session, I submitted a budget to the Texas Legislature recommending strategic investments to help build a healthier, safer, freer, and more prosperous Texas for all.

In June 2021, I was proud to sign a two-year state budget that included nearly all of those recommendations and which is responsible, conservative, and within all spending limits.

My partners in the Legislature additionally passed supplemental appropriations bills in the second and third special sessions to address specific issues.

During the second special session, the Legislature provided some property tax relief, provided additional border security funds, and appropriated money to address capacity issues in the foster care system.

The Legislature provided additional property tax relief during the third special session and also strategically allocated much of the state's portion of the American Rescue Plan State Relief Funds with a focus on one-time expenses.

Addressing Needs

The 2022-2023 state budget addresses Texas' needs and priorities while remaining fiscally responsible. This budget:

- Continues the state's commitment to **public education** by fully funding the school finance system strengthened by HB 3 and also provides for an additional \$664 million for targeted programs to help students and schools affected by the pandemic. Schools also benefited from a substantial increase in federal funding, totaling over \$16 billion.

“I was proud to sign a two-year state budget that makes strategic investments to help build a healthier, safer, freer, and more prosperous Texas—while ensuring the budget remained responsible, conservative, and within all spending limits.”

—Governor Greg Abbott

- Provides \$60 million for **supplemental special education services**, continuing the program created by my office to help students with special needs.
- Continues the state’s work to strengthen both the **Teachers Retirement System** (TRS) and Employees Retirement System (ERS), including maintaining current health insurance premiums for TRS-Care. The ERS retirement fund for state employees was completely transformed into a cash-balance plan for new employees, a change that offers employees greater flexibility and limits the state’s financial risk.
- Invests substantially in the state’s **higher education system**, including \$110 million in additional funds for student financial aid programs. During a special session, the Texas Legislature provided additional funding for higher education, including \$20 million for regional universities to improve their student success programs, \$15 million for technical and community colleges to provide additional **reskilling** and **upskilling** programs, and a \$325 million down payment for \$3 billion in capital improvements at higher education institutions across the state.
- Includes \$321.3 million to finish construction of the **Austin State Hospital** and **San Antonio State Hospital**, as well as fund planning for a state hospital in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, with full funding for its construction provided in the third special session.



Vista Hills Elementary School in El Paso is one of 26 exemplary Texas schools named as [2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools](#); just 325 schools were recognized across the nation. (Photo: Vista Hills Elementary School)

SESSIONS SUMMARY: BUDGET

- After I named it an emergency item in 2019, the Legislature created the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium to improve access to these critical **mental health services**. After increasing the funding to \$118.5 million in the regular session, the Legislature added an additional \$113 million during a special session to expand mental health initiatives for children, pregnant women, and women who are up to one year postpartum.
- Fully funds the Department of Family and Protective Services' request to be in compliance with federal requirements. During the special session, the Legislature provided an additional \$90 million to increase the capacity of **foster care** providers, focusing on serving children with the highest level of need and promoting long-term viability of child placements.
- Provides more than \$3 billion to help **secure the border**. This includes border surge funding, additional border security equipment, an additional state trooper recruit school, and the \$1.8 billion appropriation by the Legislature in the second special session for additional public safety personnel, border wall construction, additional tactical marine units, and grants to local cities and counties for their expenses related to border security.
- Appropriates \$57.6 million to further combat **human trafficking**.
- Includes \$139.2 million for salary increases for state-commissioned **law enforcement**, provides \$25 million of appropriations from the Legislature for bullet-resistant body armor and **body-worn cameras** for law enforcement, and provides \$22 million for bullet-resistant windshields for Department of Public Safety vehicles.
- Provides \$100 million for the Safe and Supportive School Program at the Texas School Safety Center to continue our commitment to **school safety**.
- Provides \$26.5 billion for **highway planning** and design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, maintenance, and preservation; the bill also includes \$200 million to extend, improve, and maintain coastal barriers and **infrastructure** projects.
- Provides \$4.2 million to enhance the Public Utility Commission and other regulatory response related to oversight of ERCOT activities to improve **electric grid reliability**.
- Funds the creation of the State Broadband Development Office, which was also allocated over \$500 million of federal funds to enhance **broadband coverage**.
- Allocates \$60 million in general revenue to the Texas Division of Emergency Management for eight regional warehouse and staging sites, including equipment, supplies, and personnel, to expedite **disaster response** statewide.

During a special session, the Legislature allocated additional federal funding, notably to:

- Pay off all the debt in the **Unemployment Trust Fund** (\$7 billion) to limit any tax rate increase on Texas employers.
- Provide \$2 billion for **surge medical staff** to support our hospitals and nursing facilities.
- Allocate \$180 million for **pandemic recovery grants** to Texas businesses in communities across the state related to tourism, travel, and hospitality.
- Construct a new state **mental health hospital** in Dallas (totaling \$237 million).
- Provide \$75 million in grants to support **rural hospitals** and nursing facilities.
- Provide nearly \$400 million for recruitment and retention bonuses at the state's highest-need **medical centers**, such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
- Ensure that the state's programs to support **victims of crime** do not see a decrease in funding (totaling \$160 million).
- During a special session, the Legislature also increased the cap on the residence **homestead exemption** from \$25,000 to \$40,000, providing immediate tax relief to Texans.

This budget funds critical priorities for the biennium, but there is more work to be done. I pledge to continue working with Texans to ensure this state remains the best place to live, work, build a business, and raise a family.



Texas is the proud home to 11 Tier One research universities, including The University of Texas at Austin, among the state's 37 public four-year universities, seven public university systems, and 50 community college districts.

**13.1 MILLION
JOBS**

at the end of 2021

**9TH-LARGEST
ECONOMY**

in the world



**BEST STATE
FOR BUSINESS**

17 years in a row

**TEXANS
PRODUCE 9%
of U.S. GDP**

**TOP STATE:
POPULATION
GROWTH**

over the year & decade

**230+
CORPORATE
HEADQUARTERS**

attracted since 2015

Jobs and Economy

Freedom is a magnet!

When choosing where to relocate, expand their businesses, and grow jobs, more and more innovative industry leaders find themselves at home in the Lone Star State. They recognize the competitive

business advantages found only in Texas. And they are in good company.

Texas has earned the Best State for Business title for a record 17 years in a row. The nation's leading CEOs cite our pro-growth policies—with



In November, Governor Abbott announces a new \$17 billion Samsung semiconductor manufacturing facility in Taylor, which will create thousands of high-tech jobs. The Governor is joined by Dr. Kinam Kim, Vice Chairman and CEO of Samsung Electronics Device Solutions Division. [Read more.](#)

no corporate income tax and no personal income tax—along with our young, growing, and diverse workforce, easy access to global markets, robust infrastructure, and predictable regulations.

Those unique Texas advantages are why the Lone Star State leads the nation in attracting capital investments and relocation and expansion projects, including more than 230 new corporate headquarters since 2015, with more announced this year than any other year—and more yet to come.

And those advantages are the reasons why Texas is growing—while states like California, New York, and Illinois recently lost population. People vote with their feet, and Texas is the top state for population growth.

Now at 29 million Texans and counting, almost half of our growth is newly born Texans. They represent a continuing strong and diverse workforce, as Texas is by far the stickiest state: More than 8 in 10 born in Texas stay in Texas.

Businesses are drawn to this growing and skilled talent pool across a wide range of industries, from aerospace, biotech, corporate services, and finance, to advanced manufacturing, energy, high-tech, and more.

In addition to a strong workforce pipeline, Texas offers unique logistic advantages with our central

location and easy access to global trade and supply chain routes via air, land, and sea.

Businesses thrive here because of the Lone Star State's economic advantages, including lower land costs with fewer land-use restrictions, lower energy costs, lower costs of living, faster permitting, and added civil liability protections for businesses, as well as the opportunity for creative collaboration with other transformative business leaders within and across industries.

Texas also offers room for businesses of all sizes to grow—and succeed. In fact, across every region of Texas, innovative startups are growing alongside the world's biggest brands, including nearly 50 Fortune 500 corporate headquarters.



Governor Abbott kicks off Texas Small Business Week in May with Juan Meza, owner of Juan in a Million, a thriving small business in Austin.

We are seeing increasing business investments in our urban centers as well as our smaller rural communities. Our local, regional, and statewide economic development teams continue to partner together to develop existing local business, attract new business, and retain the talent that fuels continuing business success.

When attracting businesses and jobs from across the country and around the globe, one Texas advantage tops them all: We want businesses to succeed in Texas, because when businesses succeed in Texas, all Texans succeed.

Attracting Major Investments and Jobs

The Texas Enterprise Fund (TEF) is part of the Lone Star State's incredible continuing job-creation success story. Administered within my Economic Development and Tourism Office, TEF is a competitive incentive tool for new projects promising significant high-wage job creation and capital investment where one Texas site is competing with other viable sites in other states.

In Fiscal Years (FY) 2020–2021, TEF:

- Helped to attract nearly \$2.8 billion in new capital investments; and
- Led to the creation of more than 3,900 new direct jobs, plus thousands more indirect jobs at existing local and small businesses in communities across the state.

The \$27.9 million in TEF awards invested in job creation in FY 2020–2021 also helped to close the deal on the corporate headquarters relocations of Waterlogic and Wesco, a major expansion by Microsoft, and other job-creating business investments.

Projected Return on FY 2020–2021 TEF Projects

Cresson: \$40 million investment by Wagners CFT, LLC; 304 new jobs

Dallas: \$126 million investment by Digital Realty Trust, L.P.; 200 new jobs

Ennis: \$264 million investment by Freshpet, Inc.; 427 new jobs

Fort Worth: \$40 million investment by Ariat International, Inc.; 75 new jobs

Fort Worth: \$7 million investment by Wesco Aircraft Hardware Corp.; 239 new jobs

Grapevine: \$1.6 million investment by Waterlogic USA, Inc.; 164 new jobs

Irving: \$31 million investment by Microsoft Corporation; 575 new jobs

Lewisville: \$134 million investment by Ericsson, Inc.; 410 new jobs

San Antonio: \$235 million investment by Navistar, Inc.; 437 new jobs

San Antonio: \$3 million investment by QTC Management, Inc.; 254 new jobs

Seguin: \$58 million investment by CSP of Texas, LLC; 190 new jobs

Sinton: \$1.8 billion investment by Steel Dynamics Southwest, LLC; 592 new jobs

Vidor: \$40 million investment by Optimus Steel, LLC; 55 new direct jobs

With TEF fully funded for FY 2022–2023, we will continue helping Texas communities to diversify our booming economy and attract even more well-paying jobs for hardworking Texans all across the Lone Star State.

Supporting Small Business Recovery and Jobs Growth

Small businesses are fueling local jobs growth as Texas continues to lead the nation in an economic resurgence. There are more than 3 million small businesses in Texas, representing more than 9 in 10 of all businesses in the Lone Star State and employing nearly half of the Texas workforce.

Texas leads the nation for small business jobs growth and is the top state for jobs created by Black business owners, Black women business owners, Hispanic women business owners, and veteran women business owners.

The [Office of Small Business Assistance](#) within my Economic Development and Tourism Office is the principal advocate for small business owners in Texas.

Over the past two years, the Small Business Assistance team:

- Provided direct, technical assistance to more than 1,500 Texas entrepreneurs;
- Assisted more than 900 entrepreneurs and small business owners with permit and licensing inquiries; and
- Provided COVID-19 resource referrals and published a recovery web page for Texas small businesses and communities.

Also in response to the pandemic, the Small Business team launched the [Governor's Small Business Webinar Series](#), connecting Texas entrepreneurs across the state with local, state, and federal experts on COVID-19 and disaster assistance resources.

**3 MILLION
SMALL BUSINESSES**
No. 1 for jobs growth



The webinar series continues to provide aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners with timely, relevant, and actionable advice through a virtual platform on small business funding, business development and marketing, starting a business, public procurement, and more.

- The team has conducted 30 webinars, assisting more than 17,000 Texas small businesses.

Most recently, the team launched the [Governor's Small Business Resource Portal](#).

This helpful online tool is the most convenient resource for aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners, providing a customized list of contacts to help start or grow a business in Texas.

- Since its inception, the Small Business Resource Portal has served nearly 6,000 users across Texas.

MORE JOBS NEWS:

Governor Abbott Announces:

- [FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies Facility](#) in **College Station-Bryan***
 - [New \\$17 Billion Samsung Manufacturing Facility](#) in **Taylor***
 - [Expansion of CBRE's Workforce](#) in **Dallas** and **Richardson***
 - [Texas Instruments' Potential \\$30 Billion Investment](#) in **Sherman**
 - [National Semiconductor Centers](#) Texas Task Force
 - [D6 Headquarters Relocation](#) to **Sulphur Springs***
 - [New Leprino Foods Facility](#) in **Lubbock***
 - [New Knauf Insulation Facility](#) in **McGregor***
 - [MD7 Headquarters Relocation](#) to **Allen***
 - [New Corrigan OSB Facility](#) in **Polk County***
 - [New Cacique, LLC Facility](#) in **Amarillo***
 - [Great Lakes Cheese Expansion](#) into **Abilene***
 - Texas Wins [Ninth Gold Shovel Award](#) for Job Creation and Business Investments
 - Texas Wins Site Selection's [Governor's Cup for Record-Shattering Ninth Year](#) in a row
- *TEF offer extended for FY 2022–2023



Governor Abbott joins Texas small business owners for a roundtable in September hosted in Dallas by Goldman Sachs' 10,000 Small Businesses program. [Read more.](#)

Connecting Texans to Higher-Paying Jobs

To connect more Texans to in-demand skills training for higher-paying jobs and faster career advancement, the [Texas Workforce Investment Council](#) within my office assists with strategic planning and evaluation of the Texas workforce development system. The 19 members of the system represent business, organized labor, education, community-based service providers, and eight state agencies.

Through this collaboration last year:

- More than 4 million Texans took advantage of workforce development and education services through 23 programs, 28 local workforce development boards, independent school districts, community and technical colleges, and six state agencies.
- Over 622,000 Texans completed a degree, certificate, or other educational credential.

An average of
4.5M TEXANS
have participated in
workforce system
programs & services
annually since 2015



- Almost 577,000 Texans completing programs gained employment or enrolled in additional education or training.
- More than 420,000 Texans completing programs stayed employed or subsequently enrolled in further education or training.
- Students earned more than 116,000 industry-based certifications in our public high schools, community and technical colleges, and the Windham School District, as well as through training administered by local workforce boards.

In 2020-2021, I was proud to award:

- More than \$5.5 million in [Texas Talent Connection](#) grants for education and workforce skills-training programs leading to job placement, increased wages, and improved job retention, as well as programs serving populations with special needs; and
- An additional \$3.7 million in Texas Talent Connection funding to support innovative projects that will keep Texas moving in the right direction for training our future workforce for key jobs in our state's growing economy.

I also signed a bill formally establishing the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative, which launched in 2016 when I charged the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board with strengthening the critical linkages between education, workforce programs, and Texas employers.

Stimulating Travel and Tourism Jobs

The multibillion dollar travel and tourism industry in Texas is a vital part of the state and local economies. The industry experienced a decade of expansion from 2010–2019 coming out of the Great Recession. Travel activity generated an economic impact of \$169.8 billion in 2019, creating 1 in 10 Texas jobs across industries and in all regions of the state.

Travel was among the hardest hit industries from the global pandemic. When travel began to

recover, [Travel Texas](#) within my Economic Development and Tourism Office focused on providing relevant, timely information and inspiration on safe travel, road trips, virtual tours, and outdoor getaways.

As more people felt safe traveling, Travel Texas built on the continuing positive momentum of the “Let’s Texas” campaign with new advertising taking into account travel concerns.

The campaign launched in March 2021 with modified messaging to highlight safe travel and



To promote travel and tourism around the Lone Star State, Travel Texas launched an integrated social and digital campaign to celebrate an iconic aspect of Texas food culture, called “It’s Not May. It’s BBQ Month.” [Explore more.](#)

1 IN 10 TEXAS JOBS created by TRAVEL & TOURISM



encourage future travel based on the state of recovery within Texas.

Knowing tourism industry partners would need as much assistance recovering from the pandemic as possible, Travel Texas greatly expanded the co-op advertising and marketing program and offered additional ways for partners to leverage the state's investment in tourism promotion.

This included no-cost and low-cost ways for destinations, attractions, hotels, and other tourism industry partners to reach consumers. Overall, the co-op program saw a record-breaking number of participants.

The travel and tourism industry is resilient. A stronger than expected spring and summer, driven by leisure travel and increasing tourism promotion, delivered much-needed revenue to travel industry businesses.

Texas is well-positioned as travel continues to recover.

Travel Texas milestones over the previous biennium and legislative sessions include the following:

- In FY 2021, advertising-influenced travelers from out-of-state spent \$1.85 billion—an increase of 18% from the previous year.
- 70% of advertising impacts in FY 2021 were realized following the launch of recovery advertising in March 2021.
- Intent to visit Texas among ad-aware households increased during the pandemic, indicating promotions were resonating with the intended audience.
- Travel Texas received the largest appropriation to date for tourism promotion in the FY 2022–2023 state budget.
- Travel Texas was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce for \$12,156,922 that will be used to assist communities throughout Texas with co-op advertising.
- And \$180 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding was appropriated for tourism, travel, and hospitality grants to support industry recovery in Texas.

Promoting Media Production in Texas, Growing Local Jobs

The Texas Film Commission in my Economic Development and Tourism Office promotes Texas as the premier destination for film, television, commercial, animation, visual effects, video game, and extended reality (XR) production. This past year marked the [Texas Film Commission](#)'s 50th anniversary.

The [Film Friendly Texas](#) program connects media industry professionals with skilled

community liaisons to provide local expertise and production support. Through the Film Friendly Texas training and certification process, communities large and small are readied to help match local businesses with production-related needs, creating jobs for Texas-based crew members and local residents, as well as spurring on-site spending at local small businesses.

Joining more than 150 certified communities last year were **Alvin, Anahuac, Boerne, Denison, Glen Rose, Lubbock, Mont Belvieu, Pilot Point, Port Arthur, and Bastrop County.**



The Texas Film Commission maintains a statewide locations database with images of more than 8,000 [prospect production destinations](#) in the Lone Star State. Above, Albert Dance Hall in **Albert-Stonewall**. (Photo: Fredericksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau)

A snapshot of job-creating successes last year includes:

- The [Texas Moving Image Industry Incentive Program](#) created 11,305 local jobs and generated approximately \$339 million of in-state spending through 43 projects. To qualify for grant funds on eligible expenses, 70% of paid cast, crew, and extras must be Texas residents and 60% of production days must be in Texas.
- With the support of the Texas Film Commission, AMC Networks filmed *Fear the Walking Dead* (Seasons 6 and 7) in **Austin, Bastrop, Bee Cave, Cypress Mill, Del Valle, Dripping Springs, Giddings, Georgetown, Gonzales, Johnson City, Lockhart, Manor, New Braunfels, Round Rock, San Marcos, Spicewood, Taylor, Thorndale, and Umland.**
- The series constructed major sets in rural communities and remote locations and

created more than 2,910 local cast and crew jobs yielding approximately 1,800 nights in Texas hotels. Total estimated in-state spending by the production was \$96 million over 13 months.

- The Texas Film Commission listed 87 projects on its [job hotline](#), including job openings in TV and film, games design and development, and animation, as well as casting calls, for another 561 new local jobs in 2021.
- Major metro areas continue to see steady production activity. Film Friendly communities across Texas, including **Arlington, Amarillo, College Station, Fort Worth, Houston, Killeen, Lubbock, San Antonio, and Waco**, hosted a range of 2021 productions.

Texas is also a premier destination for digital media industries, creating jobs in animation, video games, and extended reality production. With more than 192 video game companies headquartered in Texas and 35 college programs dedicated to digital media curriculum, digital media artists in Texas are developing video game titles and animated series such as *Star Wars: The Old Republic* and *Masters of the Universe: Revelation*.

Finally, the Film Commission partners with the nonprofit Texas Archive of the Moving Image to preserve Texas-related moving images—including home movies, advertisements, local television, community films, and more—through the Texas Film Round-Up and makes them available to the public and educators.

ATTRACTED
\$339 MILLION
in media production
spending



Promoting Texas Music, Growing Local Jobs

The music industry in Texas, including music businesses and music education, created just under 100,000 permanent jobs, with \$4.4 billion in annual earnings, and generated more than \$10.8 billion in annual economic activity in the pre-pandemic year of 2019, up from almost 95,000 jobs and \$8.5 billion in annual activity.

The added ripple effects from music businesses and music education bring the total impact to more than 210,000 permanent jobs, \$8.8 billion in earnings, and \$23.7 billion in annual economic

activity. Texas also realized approximately \$440 million in tax revenue.

The [Texas Music Office](#) (TMO) within my Economic Development and Tourism Office continued expansion of the [Music Friendly Communities](#) program this past year to foster best practices among music communities, create a more interconnected music industry, and grow local jobs in Texas.

Brenham, Dallas, Dripping Springs, El Paso, Grand Prairie, Odessa, Port Aransas, Round Rock, San Marcos, and Vidor were certified in 2021 after months of teamwork with the office,

bringing the total to more than 30 Music Friendly Communities.

Collaboration is a key component of the program, which TMO facilitated by conducting the third annual Texas Sounds and Cities Conference, bringing together current and potential Music Friendly Communities from across the state for a day of panels and roundtable discussions at Globe Life Field in Arlington.

To assist music businesses affected by the pandemic, TMO cohosted multiple Governor's Small Business Webinars on the Small Business Administration's Shuttered Venue Operators Grant, providing application information for Texas music venues and music-related business owners.



TMO's Education & Community Grant Program, funded through the sale of Texas music specialty license plates, provides music instruments and lessons for school children in need around the Lone Star State.

The webinars focused on business recovery from the pandemic impacts culminated with an online workshop cohosted by U.S. Senator John Cornyn, coauthor of the bill that enacted the funding for the grant.

- TMO also provided information on available assistance for music businesses and artists, including unemployment assistance to more than 350 individuals in collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission.
- TMO continued its communications and marketing programs, including monthly newsletters, online news posts, and social media engagements, reaching more than 3.6 million constituents.

To further promote Texas music and music businesses, TMO expanded its weekly music and industry news radio program [*The TMO's Texas Music Mixtape*](#) into an hour-long show. Produced in collaboration with KOOP Radio 91.7 FM, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, the show reaches hundreds of thousands of listeners through FM and HD radio, online streaming, and show archives which can be listened to on demand.

"Music is a big part of the Texas brand. A vibrant music industry in local communities across the Lone Star State not only adds to quality of life, it is a competitive advantage, helping Texas to attract major capital investments, culturally diverse talent, and new jobs across industries."

—Governor Greg Abbott

TMO also secured a grant from the Cain Foundation and partnered with Kessler Presents to promote Texas music business opportunities

nationwide at events such as Americana Fest, Folk Alliance International, and during the virtual 2020 South by Southwest (SXSW).

Additionally, TMO cohosted a virtual, streaming program entitled *Back Stage with Austin City Limits* in collaboration with the Texas Film Commission, celebrating the Film Commission's 50th anniversary.

- At the end of FY 2021, TMO had 15,946 confirmed music businesses listed on the [Texas Music Industry Directory](#) hosted on TMO's website.

Finally, TMO's Education & Community Grant Program, funded through the sale of [Texas music specialty license plates](#), provides opportunities for the next generation of Texas musicians: \$22 from the purchase of every Texas music specialty license plate goes directly to providing music instruments and lessons to schoolchildren in need around the state.

In addition, this program partners with nonprofit organizations to foster the development of young musicians throughout the state so they can continue the development of their craft, regardless of financial challenges.

Pandemic Response and Recovery

With Texans helping Texans, we can overcome any challenge.

Texans have been battling a colossus—an invisible enemy that tested our faith and fortitude. I’ve seen firsthand the pain and personal hardships that families endured. I have also witnessed the stoic heroism of so many as they selflessly cared for their neighbors. Our hearts are with those who have suffered from COVID-19, and we will mourn for every single Texan who lost their life to the virus.

We were each called upon to act responsibly, to protect the most vulnerable among us, and to follow health precautions as we re-engaged in the economy. Lives and livelihoods depended on our actions.

I am grateful that you responded as Texans; I know you will continue to do so in the months ahead. Together, we are stronger.

Even before COVID-19 was first detected in Texas, I leveraged state, federal, and local resources, as well as private-sector support, to help mitigate the spread and protect the health and safety of Texans all across the state.

This proactive strategy included:

- **Mobilizing** state agencies
- **Leveraging** federal funding
- **Removing** regulatory roadblocks
- **Working** with local leaders
- **Keeping** Texans informed
- **Expanding** access to healthcare
- **Surging** supplies and medical personnel
- **Helping** families, small businesses, and communities to cope



Governor Abbott meets with medical staff at DHR Health in **Edinburg** in September and celebrates the facility’s designation as a Level 1 Trauma Center, expanding access to quality healthcare in the Rio Grande Valley. [Read more.](#)

**767 MILLION
UNITS OF PPE
DISTRIBUTED**

**14,000
SURGE
MEDICAL STAFF**



**3.66 MILLION
E-LEARNING
DEVICES**

**39 MILLION+
VACCINE
DOSES**

**400,000
COURSES OF
MONOCLONAL
ANTIBODY THERAPEUTICS
ALLOCATED**

**\$5.4 BILLION
EMERGENCY
SNAP FOOD BENEFITS**

Economic Impact

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the State's fiscal position was strong. Revenues exceeded expectations, and the state budget was sound—even with historic investments in public education and property tax reduction.

The pandemic then initiated a series of swift and severe pressures on the economy.

Despite these unpredictable conditions, sound and conservative fiscal management preceding the pandemic put Texas in a strong position to respond. The State took decisive action, utilizing all available resources, and our resilient economy is resurging.

Federal Funding

Texas was one of the first in the nation to ensure that a portion of the state's Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) allocation, authorized through the federal CARES Act, was distributed to local governments that did not receive funding directly from the U.S. Treasury Department.

- Coronavirus Relief Fund: \$11.24 billion
- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund: \$1.29 billion
- Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund: \$441.46 million
- Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus: \$141.85 million
- Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding: \$42 million
- Emergency SNAP Food Benefits: \$5.4 billion

Much of this supplemental funding flowed through existing state agency programs.

COVID-19 Resources in Texas:

Vaccine Information and Locations:

COVIDVaccine.Texas.gov

Testing and Therapeutics Locations:

Meds.TDEM.Texas.gov

The State assumed significant costs, including funding services normally left to local governments to provide during a disaster, such as PPE procurement, testing, surge medical staffing, vaccine administration, and alternate care sites.

SNAPSHOT: PPE Distributed

The State engaged directly in an unprecedented mass procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) which was distributed by the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) throughout the state.

Early in the pandemic, the State's shipments often became the only lifeline to these critical supplies as healthcare providers' reserve stocks dwindled and normal supply chains slowed dramatically.

TDEM's efforts were supported by the Texas Military Department, other state agencies, and private entities.

Critical PPE distributed:

- More than 485.9 million masks
- More than 31.6 million gowns
- More than 238 million gloves
- Nearly 12 million face shields

SNAPSHOT: Testing

In a matter of weeks, the State established a statewide COVID-19 testing infrastructure with a priority focus on assisted living facilities and nursing homes.

Testing capacity was expanded exponentially through a partnership with state agencies, local governments, FEMA, and private providers. Drive-through and community-based locations were established; mobile testing teams were deployed. Targeted testing programs were launched for seniors, schools, frontline workers, small businesses, and more. Locator maps were posted online for testing sites around the state.

SNAPSHOT: Operation Pony Express

To move supplies quickly across the state at the onset of the pandemic, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Aviation Operations Division was tasked with providing air support for Operation Pony Express.

Comprised primarily of fixed-wing assets, aircrews conducted flights at night and during all weather conditions. DPS crews flew nearly 1,000 hours, transporting more than 1,440 boxes of COVID-19 samples, sterile test kits, ventilators, and other equipment around Texas.

SNAPSHOT: Healthcare Access

Healthcare access and capacity was dramatically expanded in communities all across Texas by my temporary waiving of certain regulations that then allowed:

- Emergency and expedited licensing of healthcare professionals, including nurses, physician assistants, emergency responders, and others;
- Expansion of hospital capacity;
- Expansion of patient access to telemedicine;
- Increase in the pharmacy workforce;
- And more.



Weeks before the first positive COVID case in Texas, Governor Abbott activates the State Operations Center in January 2020 and then declares a State of Disaster in March to authorize the use of all available state resources. Shown above with DSHS Commissioner Dr. John Hellerstedt (seated left), the state's chief medical advisor.

With substantial assistance from the State, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and TDEM, surge medical staffing was deployed to hotspots around the state:

- Nearly 14,000 surge medical staff were deployed by DSHS at the peak, helping to fill 26,000 positions in total; and
- 229 hospitals were supported by this surge staff statewide.

In partnership with the State, the Department of Defense also surged medical specialty teams to assist in mitigation efforts.

To further expand healthcare access and in coordination with DSHS and local partners, TDEM deployed alternate care sites (ACS) across Texas. ACSs are temporary or converted spaces that expand hospital capacity by providing acute, non-acute, or hospital care to individuals outside of traditional locations.

SNAPSHOT: Vaccines Administered

Texas was an early national leader in a rapid, voluntary vaccine rollout, prioritizing the most vulnerable to relieve the burden on hospitals and reduce the number of fatalities. DSHS dedicated substantial resources to vaccine distribution.

DSHS full-time public health personnel administered vaccinations at state clinics, community events, and other vaccination sites across Texas. They also expanded their reach by partnering with local healthcare providers to create Vaccine Allocation Teams. Together, they administered nearly 200,000 doses of vaccines at 4,700 separate events.

Statewide totals (as of 01/03/2022):

- Doses administered: 39,431,870
- People vaccinated: 19,407,637
- People fully vaccinated: 16,504,702
- People vaccinated with additional doses: 4,836,084

More: [Texas DSHS Vaccine Dashboard](#)

The State and TDEM also launched a State Mobile Vaccine Pilot in January 2021 to ramp up voluntary vaccination efforts in underserved areas of Texas. The program was then expanded to communities across the state and to groups of five or more Texans who could call 844-90-TEXAS to schedule a mobile vaccine clinic for groups of friends, families, employees, volunteers, and more. Many of the mobile teams are staffed by Texas National Guard members coordinated by TDEM.

SNAPSHOT: Therapeutics Administered

Texas is the gold standard in the nation for ensuring broad-based access to the available monoclonal antibody therapeutics. These drugs are effective at keeping patients out of the hospital, and Texas prioritized educating physicians, dialysis technicians, and infusion nurses on the effectiveness of these therapeutics.

The State, TDEM, and DSHS established and expanded antibody infusion centers in areas most impacted by COVID-19. These state-supported regional infusion centers are in addition to the antibody infusion treatment provided by more than 200 private health providers across Texas.

The infusion treatment is free for Texans who test positive and have a doctor's referral.

DSHS allocated approximately 400,000 courses of monoclonal antibody therapeutics to Texas providers, including the regional infusion centers.

- Infusion treatments administered by the regional infusion centers: more than 99,960 (as of 01/04/2022)

DSHS also created mobile infusion teams that can travel anywhere in the state to provide treatment to people who are unable to travel to a regional infusion center or another provider.

- Those teams have administered infusions to more than 12,000 Texans.



Governor Abbott launches the Save Our Seniors initiative in February 2021 to provide voluntary vaccinations to homebound seniors, coordinated by TDEM, DSHS, HHSC, and the Texas Military Department, as well as local governments and external partners. Shown at a press briefing with TDEM Chief Nim Kidd, the state's chief emergency management advisor. [Read more.](#)

SNAPSHOT: Health and Human Services

At the onset of the pandemic, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) quickly activated 2-1-1 option 6 to connect Texans to critical information and resources.

- More than 1,088,964 Texans dialed 2-1-1 seeking referrals on testing, antibody treatment, and vaccinations.

HHSC also launched the first-of-its-kind statewide COVID-19 mental health support line and text chat helping Texans experiencing anxiety, stress, or emotional challenges.

- 20,326 calls were made to the mental health support line since its inception.

To help families in need, HHSC also provided:

- \$5.4 billion in emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program food benefits to 1.5 million Texans since April 2020.

Through a joint effort with the Texas Department of Agriculture and Texas Education Agency, HHSC provided:

- \$6 billion in Pandemic-EBT food benefits to families who temporarily lost access to free or reduced-priced school meals due to COVID.

To ensure access to healthcare for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) clients, HHSC allowed the use of telemedicine and telehealth services, including mental health care; physical, speech, and occupational therapies; and components of well-child visits. Texas Medicaid allowed rural health care centers to be paid for telehealth services and waived office visit copayments for CHIP clients.

HHSC established training, guidance, and emergency rules to give long-term care

More details on critical actions taken:
[Governor Abbott's Proactive Response to the Coronavirus Threat](#)

providers, child care operations, and hospitals regulatory flexibility. HHSC assisted with implementing precautions, helped coordinate resources including staffing, PPE, and testing, and investigated facilities with outbreaks.

HHSC also coordinated and distributed the rollout of vaccines at its 10 inpatient state psychiatric hospitals and 13 state-supported living centers.

SNAPSHOT: Workforce Programs

To help Texans facing job losses, the Texas Workforce Commission doubled its call centers, quadrupled its server capacity, and instituted an automated chat bot to help Texans get the unemployment benefits they needed.

- From 2020–2021, TWC paid out more than \$56.5 billion in benefits to 3,209,042 Texans.

To spur recovery, TWC established a new job search website, [MyTXCareer.com](https://mytxcareer.com), to help get Texans back to work. Recognizing many workers needed to upskill, TWC partnered with Metrix Learning to offer all Texans more than 5,000 free resume-boosting online classes in a wide variety of coursework. Local Workforce Development Boards also initiated virtual job fairs across Texas.

TWC also deployed a package of recovery programs to aid impacted industries.

- TWC allocated \$72 million in funding to provide training, education programs, and other services to support individuals and employers impacted by COVID-19.
- The child care industry is a crucial component for Texans returning to work. To date, TWC has approved a \$4 billion investment in Child Care, including tuition assistance to working families and direct, one-time aid to providers.

- TWC's Restaurant Recovery program used one-time donated funds to assist restaurants adapting to new business models and provided free training for restaurant workers to meet certification requirements.

All this was done without any increase in unemployment tax rates for Texas businesses, in turn, spurring a remarkable jobs turnaround.

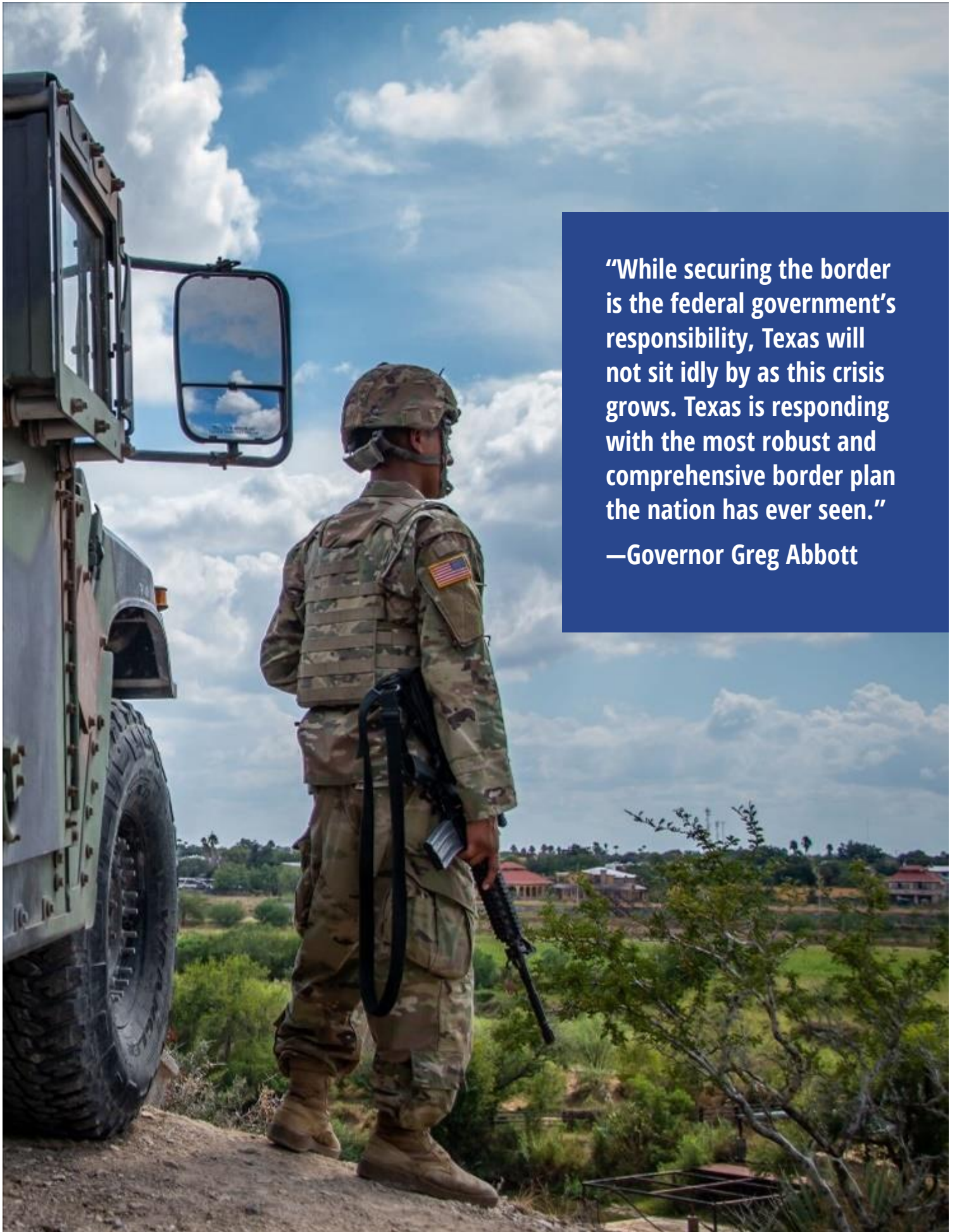
SNAPSHOT: Education Programs

To assist students, families, and teachers, the State committed approximately \$400 million to Texas schools through its CRF allocation:

- Over 3.66 million e-Learning devices were purchased;
- Over 874,000 hotspots were provided for Texas students;
- More than 800 local education agencies utilized the State's bulk purchase program;
- 415 school districts participated in the Texas Home Learning Program and more than 2 million students were reached;
- The Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund supported over 17,000 students receiving need-based financial aid;
- Over 40,000 students from 93 institutions received Emergency Education Grants; and
- Almost 12,000 students received Reskill and Upskill Grants.

Other emergency relief programs included:

- The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs launched the **Texas Rent Relief Program**, the first in the nation to provide over \$1 billion in assistance.



“While securing the border is the federal government’s responsibility, Texas will not sit idly by as this crisis grows. Texas is responding with the most robust and comprehensive border plan the nation has ever seen.”

—Governor Greg Abbott

Border Crisis

Texas is surging unprecedented resources to secure the border and keep Texans safe.



The federal government's open-border policies have led to a crisis at our southern border as record levels of illegal immigrants, drugs, and contraband pour into Texas. The border crisis doesn't just affect Texans living along the border; it's being felt by communities throughout Texas and the United States.

With an uptick in deadly drugs like fentanyl, dangerous gang activity, and human trafficking across our state, I have taken significant action to secure the border in the wake of the federal government's inaction.

These significant actions include:

- Signing laws that provide **\$3 billion** in funding for Texas' border security efforts;
- Launching **Operation Lone Star** and deploying 10,000 Texas National Guard and Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) personnel;
- Directing state assets to facilitate the **arrest and jailing** of individuals trespassing or committing other state crimes in Texas;
- Signing a budget authorization to **build the border wall** in Texas;
- Signing a law to make it easier to **prosecute smugglers** bringing people into Texas;
- Signing 15 new laws cracking down on **human trafficking** in Texas;
- Signing a law enhancing penalties for the manufacturing and distribution of **fentanyl**;
- Issuing a border crisis **disaster declaration**;
- Issuing an executive order **preventing transportation** of illegal immigrants by non-governmental entities;
- Taking **legal action** to require federal enforcement of the Remain in Mexico and Title 42 policies in Texas; and
- **Building the Texas border wall** to combat illegal immigration and stop the smuggling of drugs and people.

This unprecedented response by our state to secure the border and combat the crisis would not be possible without the tireless commitment of the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Texas National Guard, and our local law enforcement partners across the state.

Our efforts to secure the border will only be effective if we continue to work together, make criminal arrests, protect landowners, rid our communities of dangerous drugs, and **provide Texans with the support they need and deserve.**



Governor Abbott launches Operation Lone Star in March to secure the Texas–Mexico border. Shown with DPS Director Colonel Steve McCraw (left of the Governor above), Texas Military Department Adjutant General Tracy Norris (right of the Governor), and members of the joint forces of more than 10,000 personnel deployed with air, ground, marine, and tactical security assets.

**OPERATION
LONE STAR
LAUNCHES
MARCH 4, 2021**

**MORE THAN
10,000
PERSONNEL
DEPLOYED**



**85,790+
APPREHENSIONS
& REFERRALS**

**9,600+
CRIMINAL
ARRESTS**

**36.5 MILLION
LETHAL DOSES
of FENTANYL SEIZED
through OPERATION LONE STAR**

**“We literally could not
control this or have even
some semblance of control
without DPS, National Guard,
all the other local
stakeholders...”**

U.S. Border Patrol Agent

Operation Steel Curtain

To repel potential caravans of immigrants and transnational criminal organizations illegally crossing the border at low-water points from Del Rio to Brownsville, DPS and the Texas Military Department employed Operation Steel Curtain tactics. This included placing physical barriers, including large steel containers and razor wire, as well as personnel and equipment along the border in order to block and deter criminal activity and stop violations of state law.

Border Wall Construction

On June 16, 2021, joined by Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, Speaker Dade Phelan, Senate Finance and House Appropriations Chairs Jane Nelson and Greg Bonnen, and members of

the Legislature, I announced the State of Texas' plan for the border wall and authorized the transfer of \$250 million as a down payment to launch construction. I also directed the Texas Facilities Commission to hire a program manager to oversee its construction. And in September, a program manager was selected to lead the process of planning and executing the border wall.

In December 2021, just six months after announcing that Texas would build its own border wall, I was proud to debut construction of the first phase of the Texas border wall being built on state land in Rio Grande City.

To learn more about the progress in building the Texas border wall or to voluntarily donate to the project, visit BorderWall.Texas.gov. As of the end of 2021, donations totaled more than \$55 million.



Governor Abbott gives the command to install the first section of the Texas border wall in Rio Grande City in December. [Read more.](#)

Public Safety

Texas will remain a law-and-order state.

To answer the call of duty, to willingly stand between the people you serve and dangers that threaten them—that is a higher calling only the best can answer.

I am proud of the work of my [Public Safety Office](#) (PSO) in supporting our courageous first responders, emergency management personnel, victim service providers, and other criminal justice professionals.

- In FY 2020–2021, PSO distributed more than \$755 million to improve public safety in communities across the state.

Preparing Texas

Preparing for emergencies: Responding to critical incidents, terrorism, and disasters involves proactive planning, ongoing training, and the efficient deployment of resources.

- PSO invested \$195 million to support personnel, training, and operational costs associated with law enforcement, first responders, and emergency management and planning.

Equipping first responders: In 2020–2021, more than \$158 million in federal and state funds were administered to promote public safety, reduce crime, enhance terrorism preparedness efforts, improve the criminal justice system, and equip officers with necessary equipment.



Trooper Will Henry Simon II is joined by his son at the Texas DPS training graduation ceremony in July, where Governor Abbott delivered the keynote address to the largest DPS class in the state’s history. (Photo: Wes Rapaport, Nexstar Media Group)

DISTRIBUTED \$755 MILLION to improve public safety across TEXAS



This funding from PSO included:

- \$8.7 million for equipment to law enforcement agencies;
- \$50.8 million for SWAT, EOD/Bomb, HAZMAT, and search and rescue teams;
- \$12.4 million for information technology and cybersecurity equipment;
- \$36.2 million for interoperable emergency communications equipment;
- \$11.1 million for personal protective equipment including ballistic protection for first responders; and
- \$39.5 million for planning, training, and exercises for state, regional, and local first responders and emergency managers.

Looking forward, my PSO will distribute:

- An additional \$25 million of appropriations from the Legislature for bullet-resistant body armor and body-worn cameras for law enforcement.

First responder mental health: As part of PSO's commitment to supporting law enforcement, the First Responder Mental Health Grant Program provides critical crisis services, peer support groups, professional therapy and counseling, and legal advocacy to support first responders in addressing the direct and vicarious trauma they experience throughout their careers.

- PSO provided \$3.7 million that served over 3,700 first responders.

Law enforcement and school marshal training:

To become a licensed peace officer in Texas, a recruit must successfully complete over 800 hours of accredited topics and hands-on training to prepare them for the challenges of police work, as well as ensure Texans are served by highly trained, ethical law enforcement personnel.

- Since 2020, PSO has provided more than \$8 million to support quality, cost-effective training for law enforcement.
- These funds have led to over 4,400 certified courses provided to more than 51,000 peace officers across Texas.

Championing law enforcement: As a fierce opponent of any efforts to defund police operations, I signed into law multiple bills to counteract attempts to defund police operations:

- Requiring a county with a population of more than 1 million to hold an election to obtain voter approval before implementing a

reduction or reallocation of funding for a primary law enforcement agency; and

- Authorizing my Public Safety Office to determine if the adopted budgets of municipalities with populations of 250,000 or more defunds their police departments; if a city adopts a budget reducing appropriations to its police department, they will be classified as a “defunding municipality” until the funding reductions are reversed.

These bills financially punish large cities and counties that cut police budgets and prohibit them from raising new property tax revenues. A defunding municipality is prohibited from raising public utility rates or annexing new land,

and a city reducing its police budget must let residents of neighborhoods annexed in the past 30 years vote to de-annex themselves. This resulted in the successful reversal of police department reductions by municipalities, including Austin.

Protecting Texas Communities

Border security: With the crisis at our southern border continuing to escalate due to federal inaction, maintaining security along the Texas-Mexico border continues to be my primary focus area for public safety funding.

- PSO provided over \$108 million to state and local jurisdictions in support of border security efforts over the last biennium.



Governor Abbott holds a border security briefing in July and thanks border sheriffs for working tirelessly to keep their communities safe. Counties represented: **Culberson, Dimmit, Goliad, Kinney, Lubbock, McMullen, Presidio, Val Verde, Zapata, and Zavala.** [Read more.](#)

Border Prosecution Unit: The Border Prosecution Unit (BPU) Program provides prosecution resources for district attorneys along the Texas-Mexico border and for counties that are significantly affected by border crime.

During the 2020-2021 biennium, PSO awarded \$15.5 million across 23 BPU jurisdictions supporting prosecutors, paralegals, and investigators, as well as providing training for unit members and law enforcement agencies.

BPU outcomes:

15,846 border crime cases filed
11,879 border crime cases prosecuted
6,029 border cases resulted in convictions or community supervision

Enhanced Border Patrol: PSO leverages a combination of state and federal funding to support enhanced cooperation and coordination among Customs and Border Protection, United States Border Patrol, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), and other local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies.

- To supplement the federal Operation Stonegarden program, PSO receives an annual \$5.3 million state appropriation from the Texas Legislature.

Together these initiatives sustain interagency law enforcement operations and enhance local law enforcement patrols by facilitating directed actions to deter and interdict criminal activity.

Funded border patrol outcomes:

23,459 flight patrol hours by DPS air assets
10.1 million miles logged by officers
11,511 arrests made
878,402 hours of officer overtime
\$7.4 million in value of forfeitures seized

Texas Anti-Gang Centers: Eight Texas Anti-Gang (TAG) Centers operate regionally and are focused on gang prevention, intervention, suppression, and establishing an interconnected network targeting local, statewide, and transnational criminal organizations.

TAG locations include: **Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, El Paso, San Antonio, Lubbock, McAllen, Tyler, and Waco.**

- PSO funds the TAGs through an annual \$7.1 million appropriation from the Legislature.
- In the second session, an additional \$180 million was appropriated to allow the metro TAGs to expand operations to meet the demand for increased law enforcement activities due to the ongoing border crisis. This appropriation has already added additional specialized investigators and prosecutors to aid in the investigation and prosecution of border-related crimes.

TAG outcomes:

578 gangs targeted
2,372 gang members arrested
356 participating agencies

Texas Crime Stoppers: Texas has 135 certified Crime Stoppers community and campus organizations formed by dedicated citizens, law enforcement, and media.

- Financial assistance was provided to 37 local Crime Stoppers organizations in 2020 and 38 in 2021.

At the state level, the [Texas Crime Stoppers](#) team partnered with DPS, which offers rewards for the capture of Texas' Top 10 Most Wanted fugitives and sex offenders, as well as for tips on stash houses or unique events.

In 2021, DPS had the highest number of Most Wanted offenders captured in a single year since

the program's inception in 1993, capturing a record 34 fugitives and sex offenders.

- In the 2020-2021 biennium, my office paid \$40,500 in rewards leading to the successful capture of seven Top 10 Most Wanted and a \$1,000 reward for the capture of an unidentified suspect during the Texas Capitol protests.
- Texas Crime Stoppers also offered a \$1,000 reward in 2021 for a stash house located in Laredo. As a result of the tip, U.S. Border Patrol and other law enforcement partners recovered 63 undocumented migrants.



A husband and father, Texas DPS Highway Patrol Trooper Damon Allen was ambushed, shot, and killed on Thanksgiving Day in 2017 while doing his duty and protecting the citizens of Texas. His killer was out on a \$15,000 bond despite having previously been convicted for a charge arising from assaulting a public servant and having been arrested on charges of evading arrest and aggravated assault on a public servant.

In tribute to his dedication and 15 years of selfless service, I proudly signed into law the **Damon Allen Act** reforming our broken bail system. Texas will remain a law-and-order state and continue using every tool to preserve the safety that Texans deserve.

[Read more.](#)

COVID-19 Response: The onset of the pandemic prompted a public health crisis that placed a significant financial burden on cities and counties. To help alleviate this burden, PSO awarded more than \$41.2 million to cities, counties, and councils of government:

- \$5.5 million to fund overtime for first responders, medical personnel, and other essential staff who worked additional hours to monitor testing and vaccination clinics, cover shifts for other first responders who were quarantined or contracted the virus, and to perform other duties in relation to the crisis response;
- \$6.5 million for Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE);
- \$4.5 million for sanitization and decontamination services and supplies in efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- \$8.8 million for testing, screening, and medical care for inmates that tested positive for COVID-19; and
- \$4.2 million to assist agencies in their transition to a teleworking model.



Governor Abbott with the McAllen Police Department Honor Guard at the Peace Officers' Memorial Service in Austin in May. Among the fallen honored: McAllen officers Edelmiro Garza, Jr., and Ismael Chavez, Jr.

Safeguarding Texas Children

Youth Prevention and Intervention: In continuing the State's efforts to prioritize the safety of all Texas students, \$20 million was awarded to independent school districts, councils of government, nonprofits, and units of local government to support prevention and intervention programs for nearly 200,000 at-risk youth:

- \$1.85 million for mental health services;
- \$3.4 million for school programs;
- \$2.88 million for community-based programs and services;
- \$7.59 million for truancy prevention programs; and
- \$4.2 million for juvenile case managers.

Combatting Child Sex Trafficking: The [Child Sex Trafficking Team](#) (CSTT) in my Public Safety Office supports Texas communities in protecting children and youth from sexual exploitation; helping the public recognize sexual exploitation in all its forms; recovering victims with protective and empowering collaborative responses; supporting healing of survivors through a variety of trauma-informed and responsive services and supports; and bringing justice for survivors by holding exploiters accountable.

- The CSTT received \$5,668,300 in state appropriations for the biennium to implement its strategies and make grants to government agencies and nonprofit groups to address commercial sexual exploitation.

- CSTT also leveraged other state and federal funds administered by the PSO, including the Victims of Crime Act and Justice Assistance Grants, to fund more than \$36 million in projects addressing human trafficking.

The Texas model for combatting the commercial sexual exploitation of youth

has increasingly become a model for the nation. In fact, the First Lady of Texas partnered with the First Ladies of Georgia, Louisiana, and Maryland to highlight successes of our approach along with best practices across the country.

Part of that collaborative approach includes the [Governor's Response Against Child Exploitation](#) (GRACE), a partnership with diverse faith communities who work with the First Lady and CSTT to raise awareness and inspire action.

GRACE hosted its first Week of Prayer to End Human Trafficking in January 2021, engaging faith communities to unite in prayer, become better educated about human trafficking, discern opportunities to prevent exploitation, and support survivors.

Crimes Against Children: My PSO provided:

- More than \$93 million in federal Victims of Crime Act funds to two state-level organizations that support local programs across the state.

Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas bring together the civil and criminal justice systems in a multidisciplinary team approach to achieve safety, justice, healing, and ultimately restoration for child victims of crime. This includes multidisciplinary case coordination and forensic interviews performed with a child-centered approach to promote justice for child victims of crime and abuse.

Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and their local chapters collaborate with courts, Child Protective Services, law enforcement, schools, child advocacy centers, and mental health programs to provide evidence-based services to children who have been removed from their homes due to child abuse and neglect. Services by local CASA programs focus on the child victim's physical, mental, and emotional health, and well-being.

Restoring Texas

Victim Services: In FY 2020 and 2021, my Public Safety Office provided:

- \$262.7 million to programs that contribute to a comprehensive victim assistance network, providing crucial services to speed recovery, aid in the criminal justice process, and address violence against women; and
- Funding for these programs offered crisis services, professional counseling, emergency housing, and personal and legal advocacy to 994,150 victims of crime.

Recognizing that maintaining adequate services for victims has been compromised with year-over-year losses to the federal Crime Victims Fund, the Legislature appropriated \$160 million to PSO in the third session from the federal Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds to shore up and maintain these vital services.

SAFE-Ready Facilities: The Legislature also expanded the definition of SAFE-Ready Facilities to include SAFE Programs, which are community-based clinics not affiliated with a hospital but that provide forensic medical examinations to sexual assault survivors. This allows more survivors to have access to trauma-informed medical care and a forensic medical examination by a trained sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE), especially in rural areas.

- PSO provided \$2.3 million to SAFE-Ready facilities, resulting in 2,840 SANE nurses being trained.

Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force: The Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force that I signed into law in 2019 includes members who are survivors of sexual violence as well as some of Texas' foremost experts in the field. This group is focused on establishing a survivor-centered, trauma-informed, collaborative, and coordinated response to sexual violence experienced by adults and children in Texas.

- The Task Force submitted 11 policy recommendations to the 87th Legislature focused on improving access to sexual assault forensic exams for children and adults, clarifying sexual assault kit tracking processes, and increasing accountability for

compliance with sexual assault kit processing timeframes and participation in Track-Kit.

- I signed into law two unanimous, bipartisan bills containing all of the policy recommendations from the Task Force.

Over the biennium, the Task Force also:

- Submitted over 150 comments and recommendations for improvements to state agency policies, protocols, and procedures;
- Submitted over 900 comments and recommendations to improve sexual assault-related training for law enforcement officers;
- Initiated a pilot project related to sexual assault evidence kit tracking data with key stakeholders in Houston;
- Developed new trauma-informed and safety planning frameworks to guide Texas' trauma-informed, survivor-centered response to sexual violence; and
- Conducted a comprehensive, statewide inventory to identify resources available for sexual assault survivors across Texas, as well as unmet needs, with plans for a survivor resource portal launch in 2022.



Governor Abbott presents a Star of Texas Award to Dimmit County

Sheriff's Deputy Joshua Garcia and family. Deputy Garcia was one of 46 peace officers, firefighters, and emergency responders honored in September for heroism and sacrifice in the line of duty. [Read more.](#)



Governor Abbott serves Thanksgiving dinner to Operation Lone Star service members in **Edinburg**. Clockwise: *Music of Art* by Cade H., grade 4, **College Station ISD**, from the Youth Art Month (YAM) Capitol exhibit. Governor Abbott visits with Texas A&M Aggies. Governor and Mrs. Abbott visit with fellow Longhorns, guests at the annual Diwali celebration at the Governor's Mansion. *Little Miss Jackrabbit* by Peyton C., grade 2, **Katy ISD**, from the YAM exhibit.

Texans Serving Texans

The tradition of service to others is deeply rooted in the Lone Star State!

Serving Those Who Serve

As Americans, we owe our deepest respect and enduring gratitude to the men and women who have served in our U.S. Armed Forces and to those who today stand ever-ready, both here and abroad.

In Texas, that tradition of military service runs deep. In addition to active-duty service members, we are blessed to be home to 1.6 million veterans and their families.

Though we can never fully repay the debt, to honor all who have sacrificed and served on our behalf, I again proclaimed February 2 as Texas Military Heroes Day. And in partnership with service-providing state agencies, my office produced a video highlighting state resources available to military spouses and families.

This past session, I also signed into law several bills supporting military installations, service members, and their spouses.

Partnerships

- Authorizing local governments to enter into an intergovernmental support agreement with a branch of the armed forces of the U.S.
- Authorizing the Texas Department of Transportation to enter into an agreement with the Department of Defense (DOD) to provide road services on military installations.

Infrastructure

- Designating military installations and airports/airfields as critical infrastructure in relation to unlawful operation of unmanned aircraft systems.
- Prohibiting contracts or other agreements with certain foreign-owned companies in connection with critical infrastructure.

Supporting Military Families

- Establishing the State Advisory Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

Occupational Readiness

- Facilitating postsecondary course credits leading to workforce credentialing based on military experience, education, and training.
- Extending occupational licensing for military spouses and veterans, and expediting application processing for educators.
- Establishing a grant program through the Texas Workforce Commission to support apprenticeship training programs for veterans and active duty members transitioning into civilian employment.
- Expanding the Texas Innovative Adult Career Education Grant Program to include nonprofits providing job training to veterans.

Protecting the Mission, Securing Jobs

Critical for the defense of our nation, the 15 major military installations in Texas and the headquarters of the Army Futures Command:

- Add \$123.6 billion to the state's economy;
- Directly support more than 226,555 uniformed and civilian jobs; and
- Directly and indirectly support more than 630,000 jobs in communities across Texas.

The [Texas Military Preparedness Commission](#) (TMPC) in my office advises on defense and military issues and on strategies to strengthen the position of those military installations in preparation for any future Base Realignment and Closure round or other actions by the DOD.

The commission is composed of 13 appointed members who serve six-year staggered terms, typically representing an installation in their community.



Military installations in Texas are critical to our nation's defense. They are also the largest local employers, and military families are integral members of their communities. Above, a homecoming at Dyess Air Force Base in **Abilene** for Capt. Malcolm Skinner, 9th Bomb Squadron. (USAF photo by Senior Airman Mercedes Porter)

Under my administration, the TMPC has annually hosted Texas Military Summits bringing together military installations and defense communities to share best practices for supporting installations and those who serve.

TMPC also administers the [Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant Program](#) (DEAAG), an infrastructure grant program to assist defense communities.

Over the last five years of the DEAAG program:

- \$83 million in total funds were awarded to 30 infrastructure projects; and
- Those funds then leveraged more than \$204 million in funding from local communities and the DOD.

This past session, the Legislature approved \$30 million in funding for this biennium to invest in infrastructure projects and other initiatives to ensure that our military installations continue to add unmatched military value.

MILITARY INSTALLATIONS
support

630,000+
JOB



Empowering Women Leaders

As they have for more than 50 years, the [Governor's Commission for Women](#) serves as a resource and champion for Texas women. The appointed commissioners, from across the state and representing diverse fields of expertise, participate in a number of events throughout the year promoting women in business, STEM education, volunteerism, women and children's health, and women veterans and service members.

Since my first day in office in 2015, my goal has been for Texas to be No. 1 in the nation for women-owned businesses. Texas is now ranked as the top state for women entrepreneurs and is home to more than 1.2 million women business owners—and growing.

To help more Texas women entrepreneurs access the resources needed to invest in themselves and their businesses, my Commission for Women hosted a Women-Owned Business summer series. The series consisted of five webinars, each focusing on a different region of Texas and providing information from subject-matter experts on a variety of topics, including funding resources, financial management, social media marketing, e-commerce, and where to find business help and advice.

In addition to the actionable advice provided, the Commission then heard from women business owners across the state who participated in a pitch competition at the end of each webinar. Business owners were asked to explain what pivots and adjustments they made in response to

the pandemic. Each winner was awarded \$7,500 provided to them by the Beacon State Fund, a nonprofit that aids the Commission in education and promoting community leadership.

Other events throughout the year included:

- Cohosting the **Outstanding Women** in Texas Government Awards;
- Participating in panel discussions on Women and the **Future of Work**;
- Participating in panel discussions on Minority Female **Business Owners**;
- Participating in **human trafficking** education and awareness events;
- Cohosting an event benefiting recovery programs for victims of **child sexual assault**; and
- Coordinating with state agencies to sponsor Christmas wish lists for children in **Child Protective Services**' care.



Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott visits with Kendra Scott, a 2020–2021 Texas Women’s Hall of Fame honoree, at the induction ceremony in November at Texas Woman’s University in **Denton**.

Celebrating Achievement

The **Governor's Commission for Women** also highlights the accomplishments of notable Texas women. In November, the First Lady and I were proud to celebrate six extraordinary women inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame.

The [2020-2021 Texas Women's Hall of Fame](#) inductees were:

- **Lauren Anderson**, Arts
- **Charlye Ola Farris**, Legal Profession
- **Dawn Ferrell**, Major General (Ret.), USAF, Military Service
- **Kendra Scott**, Business
- **Elaine Stolte**, Community Service
- **Ofelia Vazquez Philo**, Civic Leadership

Each honoree has changed the course of history, and Texas is better because of their contributions.

**1.2 MILLION
WOMEN
BUSINESS OWNERS**



Ensuring Equal Access to Opportunity

Furthering opportunities for persons with disabilities to enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity, and self-determination is the focus of the [Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#) (GCPD).

Composed of 12 appointed committee members, seven of whom are people with disabilities, and with six state agencies as ex officio members, the committee makes recommendations on disability issues, advocates for compliance with disability-related laws, and promotes the work of local committees doing similar work.

The committee also [annually recognizes](#) employers for hiring and retaining employees with disabilities, and media professionals and students for positively depicting Texans with disabilities.

Throughout the year, the GCPD promotes the full employment of Texans with disabilities through the [Texas HireAbility](#) campaign with the Texas Workforce Commission.

Members and staff also provide technical assistance and referrals related to access, communications, education, emergency management, health, housing, recreation, transportation, veterans affairs, and workforce opportunities.

In response to the global pandemic:

- The GCPD was proactive in providing timely, critical information to Texans with disabilities through their website and by hosting COVID Q&A webinars with state agencies leading the response.

- The GCPD posted my COVID-related executive orders in video format using American Sign Language Interpretation (ASL), voice-over narration, and large-font text to accommodate a wide range of disabilities.
- And in partnership with the Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities and state agencies, the GCPD also produced communication tip sheets for pharmacies and major vaccination sites to help healthcare workers better communicate with Texans with disabilities.

Texas celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in July 2020. To view the virtual celebration and a library of accessibility and disability rights training videos, visit [ADA 30: Moving Forward](#).

The GCPD continues to promote transportation independence and public safety for Texans with disabilities through the [Texas Driving with Disability](#) campaign based on the Samuel Allen Law that I signed in 2019, allowing drivers to voluntarily and privately disclose their disability to law enforcement to avoid any potential misunderstanding during a traffic stop.

Finally, the 87th Legislature passed multiple bills relating to student instructional materials, access to school team sports, teacher training, supplemental special education services grants, certain employment initiatives, the emergency assistance registry, and more, in support of Texans with disabilities.



Texas annually celebrates Disability Employment Awareness Month in October. The winner of this year's poster contest for the Texas HireAbility public awareness campaign by GCPD and the Texas Workforce Commission was Kathyna Hatla of **Bryan**. Her *In Our Hands* artwork above illustrated the poster themed [America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion](#).

Forging a Brighter Future

Making appointments to state boards and commissions provides me an opportunity to both promote our representative citizen government and to further the policy goals I have outlined as my mission serving as your Governor. Through these appointments, thousands of Texans volunteer each year to serve on boards, commissions, and other local, regional, and statewide oversight groups.

My Appointments Office is constantly seeking the most talented and qualified Texans to serve our state and share their expertise in business, economic development, healthcare, human services, K-12 and higher education, law, natural resources, public safety, transportation, veterans affairs, and more.

I often hear directly from appointees about how rewarding their work is and also how much they appreciate the opportunity to serve.

Most appointees are:

- Citizen members of state boards, commissions, and councils that govern agencies as they carry out the laws and direct the policies of state government activities, including setting budgets for state agencies;
- Members of task forces that advise the Governor, executive agencies, or the Legislature on specific issues and policies; and
- State positions and judicial offices filled by my appointees when vacancies occur by resignation or death of the officeholder.

In 2020 and 2021, I made more than 1,130 appointments. Those appointees are among the busiest and most accomplished Texans from communities all across our great state who have a desire to help forge a brighter future for Texas. I am deeply grateful to these volunteer public servants for giving so generously of their time, energy, and talent.

I am proud to have appointed citizens from every corner of the state, representing the great diversity we have in Texas. What they have in common is a devotion to service and to the people of Texas.

If you have a heart to serve, a passion to provide good customer service to your fellow Texans, and are one to strictly follow the law, I encourage you to [apply for a gubernatorial appointment](#).

Staying Connected

Serving the people of Texas is a high honor, and hearing your ideas is critical for the future. Through 2020 and 2021, those conversations included nearly 800,000 calls, emails, and letters to my office; many were offers of assistance or requests for information as the state responded to the pandemic. And among countless social media interactions, the most popular posts seemed to always involve Pancake and Peaches, the First Dogs.

I invite you to follow me:

Facebook: @TexasGovernor; Instagram: @GovAbbott; Twitter: @GovAbbott

Follow the First Lady:

Facebook: @firstladyoftexas; Instagram: @texasflca; Twitter: @TexasFLCA

The First Lady's Report

Texans truly are generous by nature!

While my husband often says that he has the best job, I'm pretty sure that I do, as I get to meet so many incredible Texans who are making such a difference in their communities!



Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott: Her personal story reminds us that the American Dream is alive and well in Texas. [Read more.](#)

Texans helping Texans. It is this theme of serving others that runs throughout my work and drives everything I do. The blessings we have are many, and they are multiplied when shared with others.

Texanthropy

As the First Lady of Texas, my top priority is encouraging Texans to give back through volunteerism and service. I call it [Texanthropy](#), the combination of the two things that I am most passionate about—Texas and philanthropy.

I believe strongly in giving back to our communities, and I believe that each of us is called to service in some way, whether that means giving our time, talent, or treasure.

In April with the help of OneStar Foundation, I was thrilled to launch a digital hub of volunteerism called VolunteerTX. This amazing online portal compiles volunteer opportunities from across the state into a database where Texans can search for opportunities to serve their communities.

I encourage all Texans to volunteer in your neighborhoods, your communities, and your schools. Or visit [VolunteerTX.org](#) to find an opportunity or organization that inspires you!

“Adoption is so near and dear to our family. As adoptive parents, Greg and I have witnessed the life-changing power of bringing our beloved daughter, Audrey, into our lives through adoption—and we are so blessed.”

—First Lady Cecilia Abbott

Network of Nurture

Every child, no matter how young or old, deserves to be a part of a loving, caring family. Both Greg and I have been working to strengthen and support our state’s foster care system, but this is a bigger job than state government can do alone.

It requires a [Network of Nurture](#)—a community of individuals, families, friends, local leaders, nonprofit organizations, businesses, faith community members, and anyone willing to open their hands, their hearts, or their homes to the children and families in the state’s child welfare system.

This support can look different for different families and communities. Maybe you’re not ready to foster or adopt a child, but your neighbor is. Maybe you can help them out by providing after-school care or babysitting, and another neighbor can assist them by providing a meal once a week. Maybe the church you attend can start a support group for foster and adoptive families. This is the Network of Nurture in action.

This support is especially important for youth who are aging out of the foster care system. They are more likely to face homelessness or fall victim to human traffickers.

There are children in Texas in need of foster and adoptive families, and there are foster and adoptive families in need of our support. I invite and encourage you to get involved!



Mrs. Abbott is joined by state and community leaders in November for a [Heart Gallery of Texas](#) portrait viewing and discussion on expanding collaborative support for foster and adoptive families in Texas. (Photo: Tricia Dunlap, Partnerships for Children)

Preventing Human Trafficking

It is easy to think that human trafficking doesn't happen in your community. But, tragically, it affects all of our communities.

We must remember that the victims of trafficking are not invisible if we know how to look for the signs.

Our [GRACE initiative](#) (Governor's Response Against Child Exploitation) seeks to put an end to this heinous crime, protect those who are vulnerable, and help survivors heal and flourish by empowering diverse faith communities to collaborate in education, advocacy, prayer, and provision of resources.



On behalf of the people of Texas, the First Lady placed wreaths of remembrance at the Price of Liberty Memorial on the Texas Capitol grounds for the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

COVID-19 Response

So many aspects of our lives have been driven by our efforts to keep our families and communities safe during the global pandemic. But Texans never hesitate to ask what they can do to help their friends and neighbors, and we've found new ways to support each other during these challenging times.

I am especially proud of and thankful for our courageous and unwavering healthcare professionals and first responders. The losses have been deep, but your caring commitment has helped to save so many lives. Thank you all for your dedication!

Celebrating Our Communities

While COVID-19 has affected how we participate in and attend events, I have been thankful to still be involved in supporting various causes and groups. Here are some events I've attended, whether virtually or in-person:

- **Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness Summit** hosted by Louisiana First Lady Donna Edwards and the Louisiana First Foundation;
- **GRACE's Week of Prayer** to End Human Trafficking;
- **Texas Workforce Commission's annual Youth in Foster Care Conference;**

- **The Zonta Club of Parker County's Status of Women Luncheon**, where I had the pleasure of recognizing scholarship recipients;
- A tour of **Foster Love Belton** to view their facility and hear about their work to care for children and families in the foster care system;
- The rededication ceremony of the newly renovated **Falls County Courthouse**;
- A brunch hosted by **Unbound Houston** highlighting their work to combat human trafficking, and hearing a powerful story from a survivor of trafficking;
- The 38th annual **Governor's Volunteer Awards**, presented with the OneStar Foundation, [honoring the exemplary service](#) of individuals and organizations that have made a significant and measurable contribution to Texas communities through service and volunteering in the past year;
- The grand opening of the **Jane Nelson Institute for Women's Leadership** at Texas Woman's University; and
- The 2020–2021 **Texas Women's Hall of Fame** induction ceremony.

I remain, as always, truly inspired by the compassion and generosity of the people of this great state.

In closing, Greg, Audrey, and I remain forever grateful for your prayers and support—and for the privilege of serving you.

May God bless you and your families!



Cecilia Abbott helps launch the nationwide

R.E.A.L. Friends Don't campaign for children's online safety in July in San Antonio. [Read more.](#)



Mrs. Abbott with Pancake and Peaches, the sometimes official greeters at the [Governor's Mansion](#), open for tours by appointment.

Ahead: An even brighter Texas of tomorrow!



There are more than 29 million reasons why Texas is exceptional. And as the top state for population growth—with newly born Texans accounting for nearly half of that growth—those reasons are growing.

The story of Texas has long been written by men and women who look to the horizon and see the possible beyond all obstacles near and far.

Texas is still the new frontier, a place where opportunity is abundant, where free enterprise flourishes, and where dreams, and families, and jobs grow.

That is why Texas leads the nation as our mighty economy is resurging.

Though the global pandemic has tried our resilience as Texans, trials produce perseverance; perseverance produces character; and character, hope. But hopes and dreams alone are not enough. Success is not guaranteed without hard work. And I am grateful for all of your hard work in building an even brighter Texas of tomorrow.

Our past is but prologue; the greatest chapters have yet to be written. And the Lone Star State is brimming with promise!

Whether you're a newcomer
to our state or your family
has been here for generations,
we all unite around the **ideals**
of **freedom** and personal **liberty**.

But freedom is fragile.

**We have a duty
to keep Texas
the freedom capital
of America.**

— Governor Greg Abbott, State of the State Address, February 2021

TOP TEXAS TOUTS: Because of you, Texas leads the nation!

ECONOMY

- Ninth-largest economy among the nations of the world
- Expanding faster than the nation as a whole
- Texas produces 9% of U.S. GDP
- Texas accounts for 20% of all U.S. exports; top exporting state, 19 years; top tech exporting state, 8 years
- Best State for Business: 17 years
- Best Business Climate; Best State to Start a Business
- Texas leads with the lowest business operating costs
- Top state for corporate relocation and expansion projects, attracting 230+ corporate HQs since 2015
- Home to top U.S. cities for economic recovery, for starting a business, and for buying a home
- Top state for foreign and domestic investments

JOBS

- Texas surpassed a record 13 million + jobs in 2021
- Texas employers added more than 1.5 million jobs since April 2020, the peak pandemic jobs impact
- Top state for small business jobs growth
- Home to some of the top cities for high-tech and life sciences jobs growth
- Top state for jobs created by: Black business owners; Black women business owners; Hispanic women business owners; veteran women business owners
- A top state for women entrepreneurs and home to 1.2 million women business owners
- 99.8% of Texas businesses are small; they employ nearly half of all working Texans

PEOPLE

- Our greatest natural resource: our skilled, growing, young, diverse workforce—more than 14 million strong
- Top state for population growth, Texas is younger and faster-growing than the nation
- Almost half of that growth: newborn Texans; slightly more than one third is from state-to-state migration
- Texas is by far the “stickiest” state: more than 82% of those born here stay here
- Top state for attracting young adults ages 25–34
- Population: 29.1+ million; Texas added 4 million new Texans since 2010, more than CA and NY combined
- Veteran population: 1.58+ million and more women veterans than any state

INDUSTRY

- “Made in Texas” is a powerful global brand; Texans produce 10% of U.S. manufactured goods
- Top state for farms, cattle, corn, and more
- Top state for oil and gas production and for wind-powered generation
- No. 1 state for semiconductors and data center growth
- A leading state for aerospace, cybersecurity, finance, manufacturing, startups, high tech, tourism, and more
- Home to the world’s largest medical complex, 15 major military installations, and the Army Futures Command
- Home to 49 Fortune 500 HQs, hundreds of publicly traded firms, and 3 million small businesses

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Texas is the gateway to global trade for the nation
- Top state for infrastructure investment trends
- Home to 19 seaports, 11 deep-water ports
- Port Houston: top U.S. port for foreign waterborne tonnage; Port of Laredo: No. 1 inland port on the U.S.–Mexico border
- Home to 33 free trade zones, more than any other state
- Most miles of public roadways, state highways, and freight railways; most airports, 2 international airline HQs, and a major hub for a third
- Texas is making a 10-year, \$77 billion commitment to new state roadway projects
- Texas offers lower operating costs, lower energy costs, lower land costs, and fewer land-use restrictions

EDUCATION

- Texas educates more than 1 in 10 of all public elementary and secondary students in the U.S.
- Texas is home to 24 Blue Ribbon public schools in 2021; 4 of Top 50 STEM public high schools; and many of the best teachers in the nation
- High school graduation rate: 90%; 3rd highest for Hispanic students; 4th highest for Black students; 3rd highest for economically disadvantaged
- 37 public four-year universities; 7 public university systems; 50 community college districts; 11 Tier One research universities, plus top-ranked universities for business, engineering, affordability, value, and more
- A leading state for biotech, engineering, and electrical engineering doctorates

