THE BORDERPLEX ALLIANCE
BORDERPLEX
2025 ASCEND PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Executive Committee
- Co-Funder Workforce Solutions Borderplex
- Strategic Planning and Research
- Industry and Community Leaders
- Cross Border Working Group
- Peer Reviewers
- Consultants

Agenda: A brief introduction to the 2025 Ascend Plan

- Development process
- Target Industries for 2025
- Goals and actions (highlights)
  - Business resilience and sustainability
  - Target industries
  - Talent Pipeline Development
  - Research and development
  - Policy advocacy
  - Targeted marketing
- Implementation

QUICK FACTS

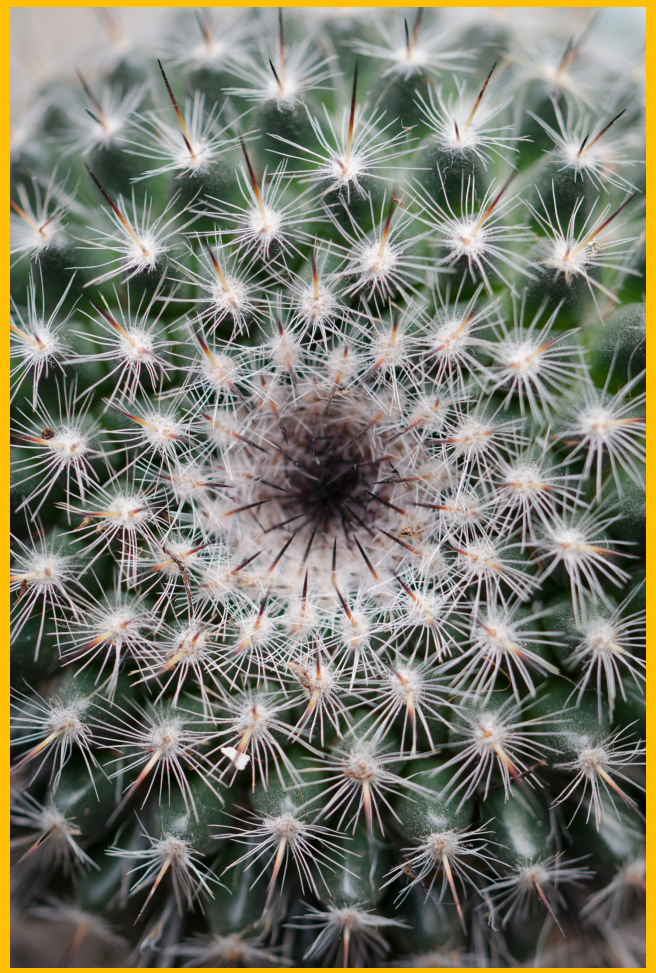
- 32 Goals, 139 Actions
- A Regional Focus – working across borders for collective prosperity
- Addresses shared regional priorities (developed via survey)
- Sets target industries and illuminates emerging opportunities
- Strategic recommendations include: **Goals** (aspirational statements based on industry leaders' priorities), **Objectives** (to be used to form metrics), **Strategies** (leveraging existing strengths, creating something new, or taking advantage of new opportunities), **Priority level** (high = within a year, medium = 2-3 years, low = by 2025), **Potential Project Leads and Partners** (a suggested list of involved entities), and **Actions** (specific initiatives for the purpose of accelerating the target industries and economy overall)

STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

In preparing the 2025 Ascend Plan, target industries developed under the Borderplex2020 were validated against a list of common economic indicators and other qualitative factors, and emerging clusters within the target industries were identified and included. Several research methods were used to collect a large amount of quantitative and qualitative data. The information was analyzed to unearth new opportunities and to coordinate and systematize existing initiatives and assets across the region to realize a more prosperous regional economy.

Methods of research:

- Surveys
- One-on-one interviews
- Industry leader roundtables with formalized facilitation process
- Quantitative economic data supplied largely by EMSI and some by internal researchers
- Review of the region's existing economic development plans
- Research on macro trends in the target industries
- A Borderplex Skills Cluster Analysis was conducted to identify oversupplies of talent
- A Cross Border Working Group was formed to develop more specific binational priorities and initiatives.



TOP REGIONAL PRIORITIES

In a binational survey conducted, respondents were asked to choose their top priorities that they think are most important for economic development. The 2025 Ascend Plan addresses each priority.

Top 5 Economic Development Priorities:

1) Business attraction, retention and expansion
2) New business creation
3) International trade promotion
4) Increasing wages
5) Improving the quality of life

Most Potential for Global Competitiveness:

- The majority chose the life sciences industry especially because of it being a top job creating industry and its technology innovation potential. This is why one third of all goals in the 2025 Ascend Plan are found in the life sciences section.

TARGET INDUSTRIES 2025

Target Industries for 2025 Ascend Plan:

- Life Sciences
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Business services
- Aerospace and Defense
- Advanced Logistics

TARGET INDUSTRIES DEFINITION

- Target industries are those industries that have high potential for growth
- Focusing limited resources on these industries can support and accelerate their success.

BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Strategic recommendations

GOAL #1	Help retain businesses and assist them in recovering from the shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Increase government and community response time and effectiveness by forming a one stop shop to connect businesses with all recovery resources.
PRIORITY LEVEL:	High
POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:	Economic development and workforce development organizations

ACTIONS:

1.1 Establish Business Recovery Centers in each jurisdiction to serve as a central location for business recovery information and support; include case management services and business recovery workshops to connect businesses with local, state and federal monetary and non-monetary resources.

1.2 Create a bridge loan program for disaster relief. This program could assist funding while companies wait for other disaster funding. Similar programs, such as the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program and The Birmingham Strong Fund, are interest-free, repaid within a brief period (e.g. 12 months), and may evolve into other types of loans.

1.3 Provide short-term and long-term financial literacy education and planning services; work with local financial institutions to provide workshops on financial products and services available locally.

BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL #2 Develop a community-wide, cooperative system for ongoing support of business retention and expansion.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Form a new business retention and expansion advisory group to increase information sharing and to increase community leaders' ability to make data-driven, high impact solutions for companies and industries.

PRIORITY LEVEL: High

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, regional economic development organizations, Chambers, workforce boards, U.S. Small Business Development organizations, U.S. Small Business Administration

ACTIONS:

2.1 Form a task force for business retention and expansion and invite professionals who are dedicated to working on BRE.

2.2 Collectively research and share data on business needs. Use economic impact analyses, one-on-one interviews with businesses, business focus groups, and other economic research.

2.3 Publish the group's data analysis and recommendations for the community to act upon in support of businesses. Publish this white paper quarterly, or on a monthly basis during more severe economic downturns (including for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic).

2.4 Build BRE professionals' capacity for effective business consulting through professional development training.

2.5 Build an online website or use existing resources such as InnovationFrontera.com or The Founder Institute's portal to advertise resources available to businesses.

LIFE SCIENCES INDUSTRY

LIFE SCIENCES – HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Strategic recommendations

GOAL #3	Develop a full talent continuum to support the healthcare industry.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Increase attraction and retention of healthcare professionals and providers by strengthening the system for developing, retaining and attracting top talent.
PRIORITY LEVEL:	High
POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:	The Borderplex Alliance, workforce boards, secondary and postecondary schools, alumni associations, Progress321, Chambers

ACTIONS:

3.1 Build a community-wide education and workforce development program for the Life Sciences Industry. Address issues such as skills gaps identified by the industry, lack of in-demand training programs, the need to form more articulation agreements between two- and four-year colleges, the need for clear education pathways to specific careers in emerging clusters, and the demand for high-quality internship programs.

3.2 Develop professional associations for medical personnel.

3.3 Create a marketing plan that promotes the region and targets medical talent living both inside and outside the region.

LIFE SCIENCES – HEALTHCARE SERVICES

GOAL #4	Develop a reputation for having a high-quality healthcare system.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Attract healthcare professionals, attract high calibur healthcare-focused students, and encourage companies and individuals to want to live in the region based on quality healthcare services.
PRIORITY LEVEL:	High
POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:	The Borderplex Alliance, The Medical Center of the Americas Foundation, hospital leadership, and regional health sciences academic leadership.

ACTIONS:

4.1 Work with the Medical Center of the Americas Foundation to complete an assessment of the quality of the regional healthcare system, including numbers and types of medical providers, medical services offered, medical supply chain, outcomes, etc.

4.2 Create a regional strategic plan that addresses the issues and gaps that emerge from the quality of healthcare assessment.

4.3 Leverage the positive findings from the healthcare assessment and regional strategy as a marketing tool to attract talent and medical tourists.

4.4 Become known for being a leader in health equity and inclusion and biomedical research for Hispanic populations by publishing articles and by holding largescale healthcare conferences.

LIFE SCIENCES – HEALTHCARE SERVICES

GOAL #5	Develop a policy advocacy agenda to address healthcare companies' urgent issues.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Increase government support of the healthcare industry by advocating for policies that are favorable to industry sustainability and growth.
PRIORITY LEVEL:	High
POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:	The Borderplex Alliance, local, state and federal public officials.

ACTIONS:

5.1 Identify waivers given to Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services during the pandemic that have helped the system work more effectively and ensure that they are made permanent. For example, waivers for telehealth services have become critical for many people's health, particularly those living in remote rural areas.

5.2 Ensure the State of Texas provides consistent funding for 1115 Medicaid demonstration waiver, which the Texas government has used to create a five-year agreement that allows hospitals to recoup losses from treating the uninsured. The funding under this waiver will partially expire in 2021, which will jeopardize the healthcare providers who help many uninsured people.

LIFE SCIENCES – HEALTHCARE SERVICES

GOAL #6	Grow a cluster of telehealth firms in the Borderplex region.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Focus business development efforts on small and medium sized healthcare firms as well as aspiring entrepreneurs in both healthcare and IT.
PRIORITY LEVEL:	Med.
POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:	The Borderplex Alliance, Binational Technology Council, healthcare-focused foundations, IT-focused life sciences firms, and business development organizations.

ACTIONS:

6.1 Attract startup telehealth companies that can offer complimentary services to large hospitals.

6.2 Facilitate partnerships between small and medium sized healthcare firms with IT companies to enable the firms to provide telehealth services.

6.3 Provide digital transformation workshops for healthcare firms that want to begin providing telehealth services.

6.4 Hold telehealth hackathons to tackle real business challenges through technology.

6.5 Build talent pipeline for telehealth by working with regional computer science departments to integrate knowledge of healthcare industry regulations into the curriculum.

6.6 Encourage the creation of startups in the telehealth field by advocating for policy changes that would allow greater adoption of advanced technologies.

LIFE SCIENCES – BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

GOAL #7	Create a biomedical research cluster based on research strengths.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Increase number of companies in biomedical research by leveraging the region's established research capacities.

PRIORITY LEVEL:	Med.	**POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:**	The Borderplex Alliance, regional schools with biomedical research and computer science departments, local research companies, healthcare focused foundations, professors and other researchers with patents in the field.

ACTIONS:

7.1 Using surveys, roundtables and one-on-one interviews, validate previously identified regional research expertise (e.g. cancer, infectious diseases, diabetes and obesity, and neuroscience) and form a consensus of what the region's research themes should be for economic development purposes.

LIFE SCIENCES – BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

GOAL #8	Create a thriving biomedical research cluster through attracting small, high technology companies.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Increase the number of biomedical research companies in the region by pursuing small and medium sized companies for business relocation or expansion.
PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.	**POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:** The Borderplex Alliance, regional economic development organizations

ACTIONS:

8.1 Attract bio storage facilities to grow a fundamental element of the research supply chain.

8.2 Methodically attract small and medium-sized research companies in the field, e.g. drug discovery and development, compound screening and development, infectious diseases, and clinical research, etc. Give special attention to contract research organizations, which are being used more frequently by major pharmaceutical companies.

8.3 Market established small and medium sized companies to large pharmaceutical companies to attract those companies or present the SMEs as merger and acquisition opportunities.

LIFE SCIENCES – BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

GOAL #9	Achieve a well-developed talent pipeline for automated biomedical drug discovery and development.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Increase number of graduates prepared to support an advanced and automated biomedical drug research and development cluster.
PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.	**POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:** The Borderplex Alliance, workforce boards, employers in the field, technical schools, community colleges and other certificate-granting institutions.

ACTIONS:

9.1 Conduct a skills gap analysis to determine specific skills and educational programs needed to grow this industry.

9.2 Identify opportunities for project-based internships to develop students' practical skills and industry knowledge.

9.3 Create a certificate program for artificial intelligence for drug discovery.

LIFE SCIENCES – BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

GOAL #10	Create a strong policy structure and steady capital flow for biomedical research.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Increase public and private funding to attract and grow new biomedical research companies.
PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.	**POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:** Local and state governments, workforce boards, regional foundations, U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S. National Institute of Health, The Borderplex Alliance, Sunset Resources Group.

ACTIONS:

10.1 Create public and private-funded drug discovery and development business expansion programs to fund a transition to automated labs, including money for software, equipment and employee training. The region can create automation transition programs by utilizing existing lab automation services such as Sunset Resources Group.

10.2 Cultivate broad network of investors interested in the pharmaceutical field.

10.3 Create policies and incentives at the state and local government levels that encourage small and medium sized enterprises in this field to relocate or be created in this region.

LIFE SCIENCES – MEDICAL DEVICE MANUFACTURING

Strategic recommendations

GOAL #11 Develop an enviable talent pipeline that easily attracts companies and supports the growth of the manufacturing industry.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Increase the number of students pursuing careers in this field by coordinating and fortifying existing educational programs and by creating new relevant programs.

PRIORITY LEVEL: High

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: Increase the number of students pursuing careers in this field by coordinating and fortifying existing educational programs and by creating new relevant programs.

ACTIONS:

11.1 Work with BioEPJ to identify skills gaps in this field and ensure that educational programs and curricula are adjusted to meet the demand.

11.2 Create a career crosswalk for students to follow to more easily chart a path to a career in the field. Should include a general educational path that notes the region's available programs.

11.3 Integrate industry jargon into educational curriculum and ensure course outcomes align with target industry skills needs.

LIFE SCIENCES – MEDICAL DEVICE MANUFACTURING

GOAL #12 Develop a strong support system to grow existing medical device companies.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Increase market opportunities for suppliers by marketing local suppliers, filling in the value chain, and by facilitating new product development.

PRIORITY LEVEL: High

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: BioEPJ, The Borderplex Alliance, regional economic development organizations.

ACTIONS:

12.1 Create a marketing plan to promote local suppliers by leveraging the supply chain inventory developed by BioEPJ. The marketing plan can also highlight gaps in the supply chain as business expansion opportunities, which can help attract companies to the region.

12.2 Clearly define existing and target competencies to be able to achieve excellence with limited resources.

12.3 Develop an online platform that connects local innovators, particularly the many PhDs in the region, with local companies who are looking for consultants to collaborate on research and development projects.

BUSINESS SERVICES INDUSTRY

BUSINESS SERVICES – FINANCE AND INSURANCE

Strategic Recommendations

GOAL #13	Build a workforce pipeline with high-demand industry skills and knowledge.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Increase alignment of regional programs to ensure the workforce is prepared with the skillsets that employers need to sustain and grow their businesses.
PRIORITY LEVEL:	High
POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:	The Borderplex Alliance, regional secondary and postsecondary schools, and industry leaders.

ACTIONS:

13.1 As a follow-up to the inventory of educational programs that was recently developed, work with industry leaders to evaluate the relevancy of current educational programs discovered and ensure high demand skills are integrated.

13.2 Work with employers to update the in-demand certification list and share with educational institutions.

13.3 Create or expand project-based internship programs to develop soft skills, form relationships with potential candidates, and solve real company problems. Encourage a diverse workforce pipeline by targeting underrepresented demographic groups for internships and mentoring programs.

13.4 Integrate bilingual education in schools, especially postsecondary, with an emphasis on professional jargon for the business services industry.

BUSINESS SERVICES – FINANCE AND INSURANCE

GOAL #14 Create an empowered business community with extensive knowledge of community resources to build their ideal industry.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Increase talent retention in the region and decrease talent attrition in the industry by developing and promoting high-value talent recruitment resources.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, municipal and state governments, workforce boards, community colleges, and four-year universities.

ACTIONS:

14.1 Develop an online portal with recruiting resources specific to this industry, e.g. available educational programs, best practices for talent recruiting and retention, and lists of public funds available for training.

14.2 Establish a publicly funded management training program, such as a toolbox for succession planning, along with business consulting services, to assist employers in building their leadership bench strength.

BUSINESS SERVICES – FINANCE AND INSURANCE

GOAL #15 Fully realize potential business relationships with local exporting companies and small and medium sized enterprises.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Increase number of banking and insurance business customers by expanding banks' trade financing capabilities and by building SMEs' financial literacy.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance Supplier Association, the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) task force, individual BRE organizations, community development financial institutions.

ACTIONS:

15.1 Form a committee dedicated to trade financing workshops for community development financial institutions and to financial literacy programming for SMEs. This committee may be used for additional goals such as identifying burdensome regulations and innovating new technology for business competitiveness.

15.2 Conduct workshops for SMEs to educate them on the financial products and services that are available from local companies as well as how to write a successful business loan application and how to become an exporting company.

15.3 Advocate for regulation changes that could alleviate community banks' risk associated with extending trade financing services to SMEs and provide incentives for larger banks to become more involved in SME trade financing.

BUSINESS SERVICES – FINANCE AND INSURANCE

GOAL #16 Cultivate an environment that enables regional financial companies to create technology solutions to business problems.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Build upon financial services expertise and leverage computer science talent to increase the number of fintech patents and number of customers of digital services.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, The Binational Technology Council, community development financial institutions (CDFIs), local insurance companies, current and aspiring fintech entrepreneurs

ACTIONS:

16.1 Attract fintech startup companies that can partner with financial institutions to expand their digital services.

16.2 Identify fintech companies that can partner with CDFIs to offer digital financial services.

16.3 Hold fintech hackathons to tackle real business challenges through technology.

16.4 Build talent pipeline for fintech by working with regional computer science departments to integrate knowledge of banking industry regulations into the curriculum.

16.5 Advocate for regulatory changes that allow the introduction of new technology in the industry.

BUSINESS SERVICES – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Strategic Recommendations

GOAL #17 Establish a robust IT talent pipeline to build niche opportunities.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Build upon success in talent development and in attracting startup companies by increasing the number of local college students and graduates in key IT careers. Increase number of high schools offering computer science courses and number of students taking computer science courses.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, regional universities, region 19, CONREDES, The Bridge of Southern New Mexico.

ACTIONS:

17.1 Complete and pilot a teacher survey with interested education partners.

17.2 Complete a “heat map” showing the presence of IT-related courses across education in the region.

17.3 Build a steady talent pipeline for cybersecurity by integrating skills training and certificates into the secondary and postsecondary educational programs.

17.4 Build talent pipeline for fintech and telehealth by working with regional computer science departments to integrate knowledge of pertinent banking industry and healthcare industry regulations into the curriculum.

BUSINESS SERVICES – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Strategic Recommendations

GOAL #18 Establish Borderplex region as the ideal location for small IT firms and data centers.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Increase presence of small IT firms in the area by capitalizing on strengths in cybersecurity talent, friendly business environment, and land availability.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, Binational Technology Council, West Texas INFOSEC Society, secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, workforce boards.

ACTIONS:

18.1 Attract cybersecurity companies through a marketing campaign that highlights the high demand for cybersecurity talent nationally and the region's oversupply of cybersecurity talent.

18.2 Attract fintech startup companies that can partner with financial institutions to expand their digital services.

18.3 Attract IT startup companies that can provide products and services for regional target industries to increase their business competitiveness.

18.4 Attract data centers to rural areas. Data centers can draw large investments to boost the economic development of an area.

18.5 Conduct business retention and expansion efforts targeted at small firms in potential niche IT clusters such as cybersecurity, automated biomedical research, fintech, ag tech, and telehealth.

BUSINESS SERVICES – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

GOAL #19 Make the region known for having an inclusive digital economy.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Increase number of households and businesses with connectivity by coordinating existing digital inclusion efforts and fill the gaps where needed.

PRIORITY LEVEL: High

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, CONREDES, Desarollo Economico, El Paso County, STTE Foundation, public libraries, regional schools.

ACTIONS:

19.1 Expand digital skills training programs to reach families or households.

19.2 Expand broadband infrastructure, especially in rural areas.

19.3 Develop or expand public-private partnerships to subsidize internet costs for low-income households.

19.4 Develop or expand programs to purchase or rent out computers and MiFi devices for low-income households.

19.5 Create a digital inclusion coalition to align all digital inclusion initiatives, providing support for the organizations through shared resources, policy advocacy, and funding.

BUSINESS SERVICES – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

GOAL #20 Make the Borderplex region a leader in technology-related workforce policy development and collaborative innovation.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Improve workforce system response time to business needs related to technology adoption and increase number of patents by creating forums for sharing ideas.

PRIORITY LEVEL: High

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: Binational Technology Council, The Borderplex Alliance, Microsoft TechSpark, workforce boards, governmental agencies, Arrowhead Center, Pioneers21, Technology HUB.

ACTIONS:

20.1 Create a Resilient Workforce System Policy Committee to collect data on businesses' future skills needs and develop policy recommendations that prepare for rapid changes due to advancing technology and other disruptions; include specific recommendations around AI.

20.2 Start a Collaborative Innovation Forum to highlight R&D in the region and foster collaboration. Include diverse stakeholders, e.g. academia, industry, and government.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Strategic Recommendations

GOAL #21	Establish a guaranteed workforce pipeline that is well-suited for advanced manufacturing and very attractive for expanding companies.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Improve workforce system response time to business needs related to technology adoption and increase number of patents by unifying efforts across borders.
PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.	**POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:** The Borderplex Alliance's manufacturing supplier association, The Bridge of Southern New Mexico, the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, CIITA and CONREDES.

ACTIONS:

21.1 Build a regional manufacturing talent pipeline program based on the Arizona Advanced Technology Network; offer Industrial Technology certificates from the National Institute of Metalworking Skills (or Mexican equivalent) and an Associates of Applied Sciences in Automated Industrial Technology (or equivalent). Use a common third-party vendor for equipment along with common course titles, descriptions and numbering systems.

21.2 Ensure industry leader participation in the Resilient Workforce System Policy Committee under the Binational Technology Council to assist educational and workforce development institutions in preparing, upskilling and reskilling the workforce for the adoption of advanced technology in manufacturing.

21.3 Create an industry-specific skills proficiency test for secondary and postsecondary school students; direct students toward specializations based on individual capacities.

21.4 Replicate the successful CONREDES model for internships throughout the region. Develop or expand an online platform to track students' internships experiences and skills progression, coordinate business facility tours, and host workshops to showcase careers in the industry.

21.5 Conduct an analysis to predict new skills needed by 2025.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

GOAL #22 Establish full supply chains for regional manufacturing clusters.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Leverage a variety of new tools to increase overall sales for regional suppliers and increase products and services sold locally.

PRIORITY LEVEL: High

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, Microsoft, Southwest Maquila Association, the City of El Paso, the State of Chihuahua, TMAC, and BioEPJ.

ACTIONS:

22.1 Create an online directory of suppliers to encourage more regional sales. This may include advanced features such as direct business-to-business sales and virtual showcasing.

22.2 Complete a supply chain analysis of high value manufacturing clusters, e.g. auto, electronics, medical device, aerospace, and value-added agriculture.

22.3 Create a marketing and sales plan to highlight the business opportunities found through the supply chain gap analysis; include all regional economic development organizations to ensure clear and united messaging.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

GOAL #23 Establish an outstanding support structure to help suppliers thrive.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Increase the percentage of products and services sold by regionally by creating business development programs and facilitating business-to-business introductions.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, Mesilla Valley Development Alliance, Desarollo Economico, municipal economic development departments, NMSU's Manufacturing and Engineering Technology Center, Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center, CIITA

ACTIONS:

23.1 Develop a general supplier development certification and work towards wide adoption of the certification; model after medical device supplier certification established by TMAC and BioEPJ.

23.2 Create a business-to-business matching program, leveraging the proposed online directory of suppliers. Develop a marketing and sales plan to highlight specific clusters and businesses with strong differentiating qualities, e.g. use of sustainable practices and the achievement of quality certifications.

23.3 Create an annual supplier showcase; consider a virtual showcase to reach companies both inside and outside the region.

23.4 Develop a Regional Export Plan to include an export council and foreign direct investment marketing plan.

23.5 Create a committee to build community banks' knowledge about export financing.

23.6 Create a Manufacturing Supplier Association to manage the previously mentioned projects and committees and equip it with a governance framework and staff to ensure project follow through.

AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE INDUSTRY

AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE

Strategic Recommendations

GOAL #24 Become a top destination for the aerospace and defense industry.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Create a well-developed value chain to improve sales of local suppliers and increase number of companies that move to the region.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, NM Spaceport Authority, NASA, City of El Paso

ACTIONS:

24.1 Conduct a supply chain gap analysis of aerospace manufacturing suppliers and MRO companies in the area to identify areas for effective business attraction and policymaking efforts.

24.2 Create a marketing plan to advertise gaps in the value chain as business opportunities.

24.3 Create a marketing plan to attract MRO companies and cybersecurity defense companies based on the availability of talent as well as many federal government customers.

24.4 Create an online platform with a directory of manufacturing suppliers and original equipment manufacturers (OEM) to allow regional companies to find each other.

24.5 Leverage money from the Defense Economic Readjustment Zone to build amenities on Fort Bliss.

24.6 Conduct a skills gap analysis by comparing skill availability in the Borderplex region with another region that has a well-established aerospace and defense industry.

AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE

GOAL #25 Create a support structure to enable local entrepreneurs to excel in the aerospace and defense industry.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Increase local knowledge and business opportunities by creating new institutional resources to support entrepreneurs.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: Cybersecurity, MRO, commercial space, and other aerospace and defense companies in southern New Mexico, west Texas, and Chihuahua, Mexico; TMAC, the Chihuahua Aerospace Cluster, the aerospace cluster in Queretaro, Mexico, the Mexican Aerospace Federation, and the Manufacturing Technology and Engineering Center (M-TEC) at NMSU.

ACTIONS:

25.1 Create a regional aerospace alliance to coordinate the gathering and publishing of A&D data, advise on viable business opportunities, and to run supplier development programs for the region.

25.2 Create or expand supplier development programs. These programs will connect companies with resources to obtain quality certifications, information on becoming a defense contractor, information on exporting, and financing available through grants and special loan programs.

25.3 Launch a dedicated news source that researches and highlights potential business opportunities in the region related to new developments in the aerospace industry.

ADVANCED LOGISTICS

ADVANCED LOGISTICS

Strategic Recommendations

GOAL #26 Make the region a renowned binational logistics hub.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Build a sustainable trade infrastructure transportation system by increasing public funding and project oversight and organization.

PRIORITY LEVEL: High

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, City of El Paso International Bridges Department, Texas-Mexico Border Trade Advisory Committee (Texas Department of Transportation), Border Industrial Association, Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority, New Mexico Border Authority, Chambers of Commerce, U.S. CBP Agency, Mexican and U.S. Consulates, and public officials.

ACTIONS:

26.1 Advocate for greater public investment in trade infrastructure.

26.2 Add FDA testing facilities (governmental) for agriculture and medical devices.

26.3 Add medical grade cold storage facilities within the Customs and Border Protection ports at Tornillo and Santa Teresa.

26.4 Build commercial real estate for warehousing and bonded space.

26.5 Expand the foreign trade zone.

26.6 Invest in autonomous vehicle stations.

26.7 Improve all rail service properties and expand current rail infrastructure.

26.8 Complete the highway loop from Chihuahua, Mexico to the Tornillo port.

26.9 Support advocacy efforts by the Chambers and others to secure funding for trade-related highway infrastructure projects.

26.10 Develop a list of cities with similar industries and economic drivers to target as sister cities for the purpose of negotiating direct flights; include medium-sized international destinations that cannot support direct service from cities (known as “hubbing”).

26.11 Rename the El Paso airport to Las Cruces-El Paso International airport or Las Cruces-El Paso-Juarez International airport to project hub status.

26.12 Coordinate the cities’ port authorities or similar entities to ensure infrastructure projects are realized.

ADVANCED LOGISTICS

GOAL #27 Become the destination of choice for advanced logistics companies.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Increase the number of advanced logistics companies by leveraging the strengths of the region's assets and momentum of recent expansions.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance and regional economic development organizations.

ACTIONS:

27.1 Focus business attraction efforts around logistics companies who apply automation technologies.

27.2 Develop a business attraction strategy aimed at distribution and fulfillment centers. Leverage larger trends and build local capacity by especially targeting companies in the e-commerce, medical device, biomedical research and agriculture space.

27.3 Target digital freight forwarding companies and other companies that use digital technology to improve logistics and trade activities.

27.4 Target autonomous and electric vehicle companies.

ADVANCED LOGISTICS

GOAL #28 Establish a pool of sophisticated logistics professionals that can help businesses achieve and exceed their goals.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Increase pool of higher-level customs brokering talent and increase number of local businesses engaging in exporting/importing by expanding existing programs for all levels of talent.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, UTEP, NMSU, UACJ, EPCC, DACC.

ACTIONS:

28.1 Create industry certifications for blocks of mid and higher-level skillsets that can be attached to existing programs at universities and colleges.

28.2 Coordinate an industry forum to educate professionals on developments in the field.

28.3 Advocate for any changes needed to the NAFTA/USMCA visa if there are provisions that limit talent from being able to work easily on either side of the border.

TALENT PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT

TALENT PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT

Strategic recommendations

GOAL #29 Create a peerless workforce in the Borderplex region.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Create an agile workforce system that easily adapts to new and shifting industry demands by increasing coordination between business and education and workforce entities.

PRIORITY LEVEL: High

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, workforce boards, secondary and postsecondary school representatives, trade associations, business retention and expansion teams, digital inclusion organizations.

ACTIONS:

29.1 Form a resilient workforce system policy committee to build a more resilient workforce system.

29.2 Create a Talent Committee to oversee industry-specific talent initiatives and a University President's Roundtable.

29.3 Include industry jargon into educational curriculum and ensure course outcomes align with target industry skills needs.

29.4 Create education and career crosswalks for target industry employers and job candidates.

TALENT PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT

GOAL #30 Make the Borderplex region a top choice for skilled workers.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Decrease net migration rates by fostering an inviting environment for skilled workers.

PRIORITY LEVEL: Med.

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: Progress 321, university alumni associations, Adult Education and Literacy Consortium, and young professional organizations.

ACTIONS:

30.1 Market fields with an oversupply of talent to attract suitable companies and develop talent-driven industry niches.

30.2 Ask companies to sign a letter of commitment indicating their willingness to work towards providing 100% pay equity for Hispanic women.

30.3 Create a marketing campaign geared towards workers living both inside and outside the region to promote the region's quality of life.

30.4 Increase university completion rates by offering flexible, paid work and recognized credentials for students.

30.5 Hire non-traditional workers for hard to fill positions, including veterans, military spouses, individuals with disabilities, and previously incarcerated individuals looking for a second chance.

30.6 Create a Skilled Immigrant Integration Program modeled after the program at the World Education Forum.

30.7 Advocate for comprehensive immigration reform to ensure that DREAMers and immigrants who provide a necessary talent pipeline for the region are protected.

30.8 Create an incentive program to encourage high-demand workers to relocate to the region.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Strategic recommendations

GOAL #31	Create a government policy framework that fortifies the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem.
OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY:	Increase the number of startups and commercialized innovations by strengthening the government's support for entrepreneurs and innovators.
PRIORITY LEVEL:	Med.
POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS:	The Borderplex Alliance, TechHub, Pioneers 21, Arrowhead Center for Innovation, the MCA Foundation, and local, state and federal officials.

ACTIONS:

31.1 Align government and private funding opportunities with entrepreneurs who are willing to fill gaps in the supply chain for the target industries. The medical device supplier development program, funded by the City of El Paso, is one such example.

31.2 Create a level playing field between new companies and established entrepreneurs when determining incentives.

31.3 Create a single list of all requirements to start any business and easy-to-read guides that walk entrepreneurs through the permitting process. These should be translated into multiple languages and posted in public offices and in an easy-to-find location online.

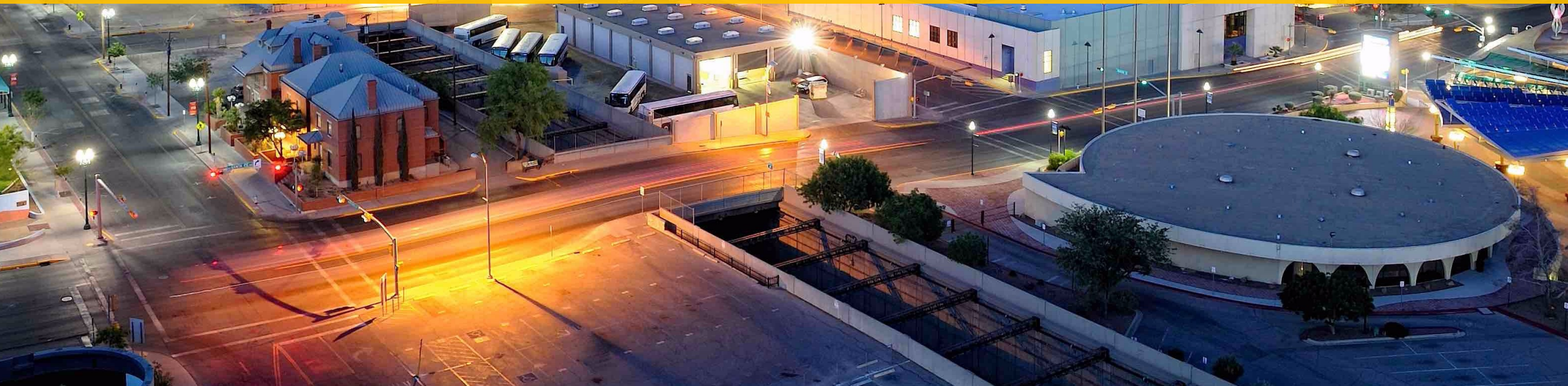
31.4 Ensure government processes are as streamlined as possible for small businesses. Require coordination across agencies to simplify all local procedures, forms, licenses, and permits required to start a business.

31.5 Establish a rapid prototyping center where businesses can connect with engineers to solve business problems with technology.

31.6 Advocate for a startup visa that authorizes foreign entrepreneurs to start businesses in the United States.

31.7 Create statewide funds dedicated to research and development within a target industry, such as advanced manufacturing or IT, similar to existing funds like the New Mexico Small Business Innovation Research Grant and the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.

POLICY ADVOCACY



POLICY ADVOCACY

- Several policy issues were highlighted in this Plan and each will need a dedicated strategy to successfully address. The Borderplex Alliance will engage with local, state and federal governments to address these issues.

- The Borderplex Alliance will form a legislative roundtable to provide a briefing to the El Paso County legislative delegation.

- The Borderplex Alliance will not engage in policy issues relating to the military, advocacy at the state level in New Mexico and Chihuahua, or money for highways.

POLICY ADVOCACY

The following is a brief summary of the policy issues under the umbrella of The Borderplex Alliance and its partners:

- Funding for international port infrastructure
- Comprehensive immigration reform and refugee care
- Trade agreements
- Tariffs
- Policy issues related to the life sciences industry
- Funding for water infrastructure
- Funding for research and development
- Funding for broadband infrastructure
- Redrawing of El Paso's opportunity zones
- General border issues that affect regional businesses
- Workforce and taxation issues that impact all three states
- Incentives for the creation, attraction, retention and expansion of local companies.

TARGETED MARKETING

TARGETED MARKETING

Strategic recommendations

GOAL #32 Become known as the best region to do business.

OBJECTIVE & STRATEGY: Leverage marketing resources to improve the reputation of the region.

PRIORITY LEVEL: High

POTENTIAL PROJECT LEADS AND PARTNERS: The Borderplex Alliance, Wingo Sanders, convention and visitors' bureaus, and regional economic development organizations.

ACTIONS:

32.1 Coordinate all regional economic development organizations to define clear and unified messages that promote the region and handle negative press. Integrate common location decision factors. Audience: executives from companies within target industries.

32.2 Promote supply chains to draw companies. Use established and soon-to-be established supplier inventory lists. Marketing materials should not only promote the existence of supply chains but the quality of goods and services as well. Audience: Executives within all targeted industries.

32.3 Promote supply chain gaps to draw suppliers from outside the region. Audience: suppliers from outside the region who can fill the gaps and local supplier/entrepreneurs who are willing to start producing new products. For FDI campaigns, the materials can be tailored for certain countries.

32.4 Promote talent oversupplies or "niche" target industries. Marketing materials will be used as evidence of a guaranteed talent pipeline for companies within these niches. Audience: executives from companies within the aerospace (MRO and defense contractors), medical device, life sciences (biomedical research), cybersecurity, and professional, scientific and IT services industries.

32.5 Promote successful technology entrepreneurs. The purpose of this is 1) to attract investors from outside the region, and 2) to encourage tech entrepreneurship as a viable career option within the Borderplex region. Audience: investors from outside the region and the local community.

TARGETED MARKETING

ACTIONS:

32.6 Promote region to cities with similar industries and attributes for direct flights. Having these materials along with a detailed targeted cities list can support attempts at negotiating more direct flights. Audience: government officials from targeted cities.

32.7 Create a marketing campaign directed at skilled workers. The campaign can be tailored for various audiences, including medical personnel, workers and graduates in the target industries; can be used to attract certain types of in-demand talent from outside the region as well. Audience: citizens from Juarez, El Paso and southern New Mexico and the surrounding region. School-aged children K-12, college, and adults; materials should be in both Spanish and English.

32.8 Promote strong community pride in the presence of military bases. This is to foster goodwill with soldiers transitioning out of the military to encourage them and their families to remain in the area. This can also be used when advocating for the attraction of more missions to the regional bases. Audience: military families, transitioning soldiers, high level military officials.

32.9 Build a data trust or shared economic development data platform to create uniform and publicly available economic data that can help keep marketing materials up to date. This data trust can also be used as a way to identify new business opportunities.

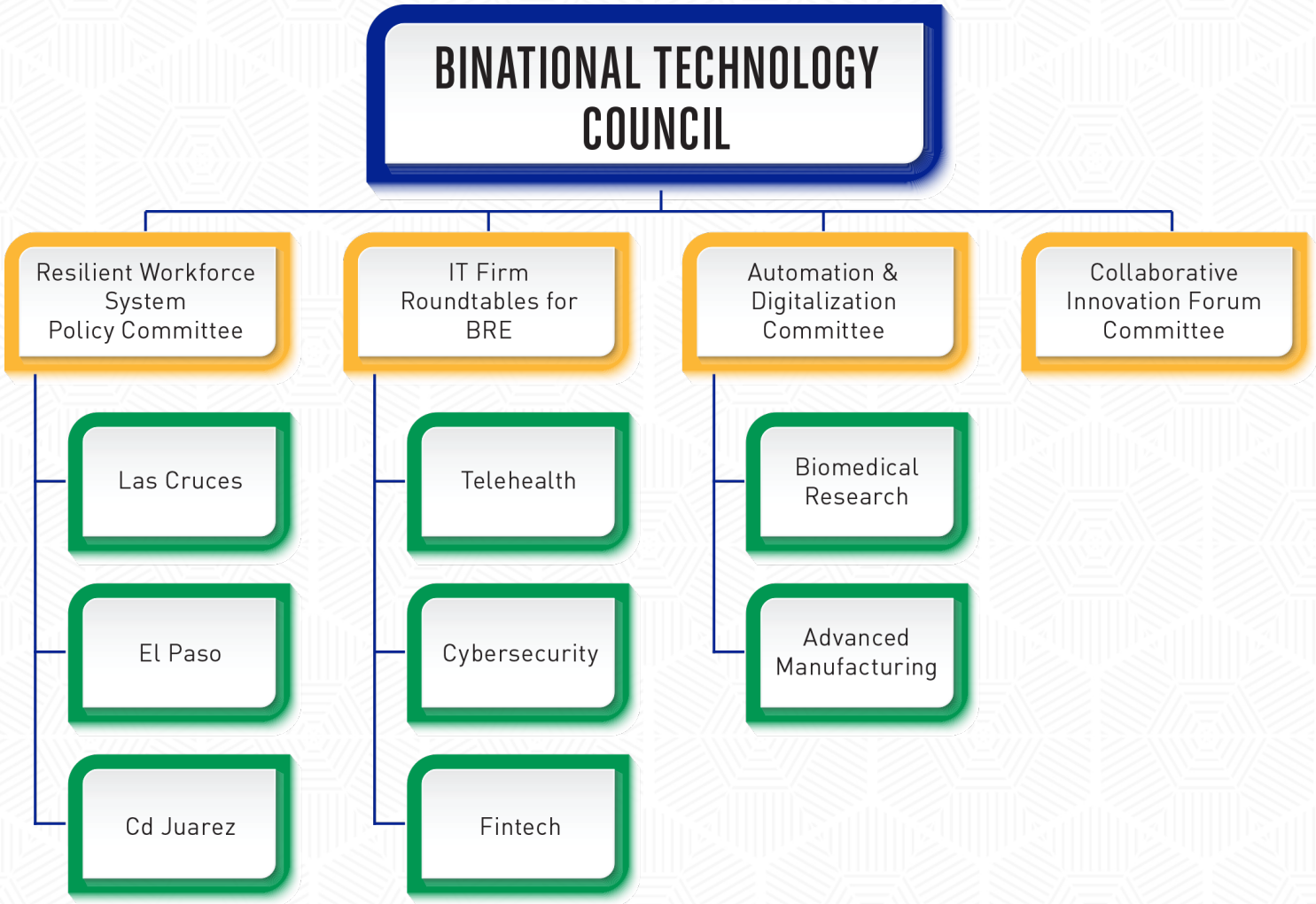
IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

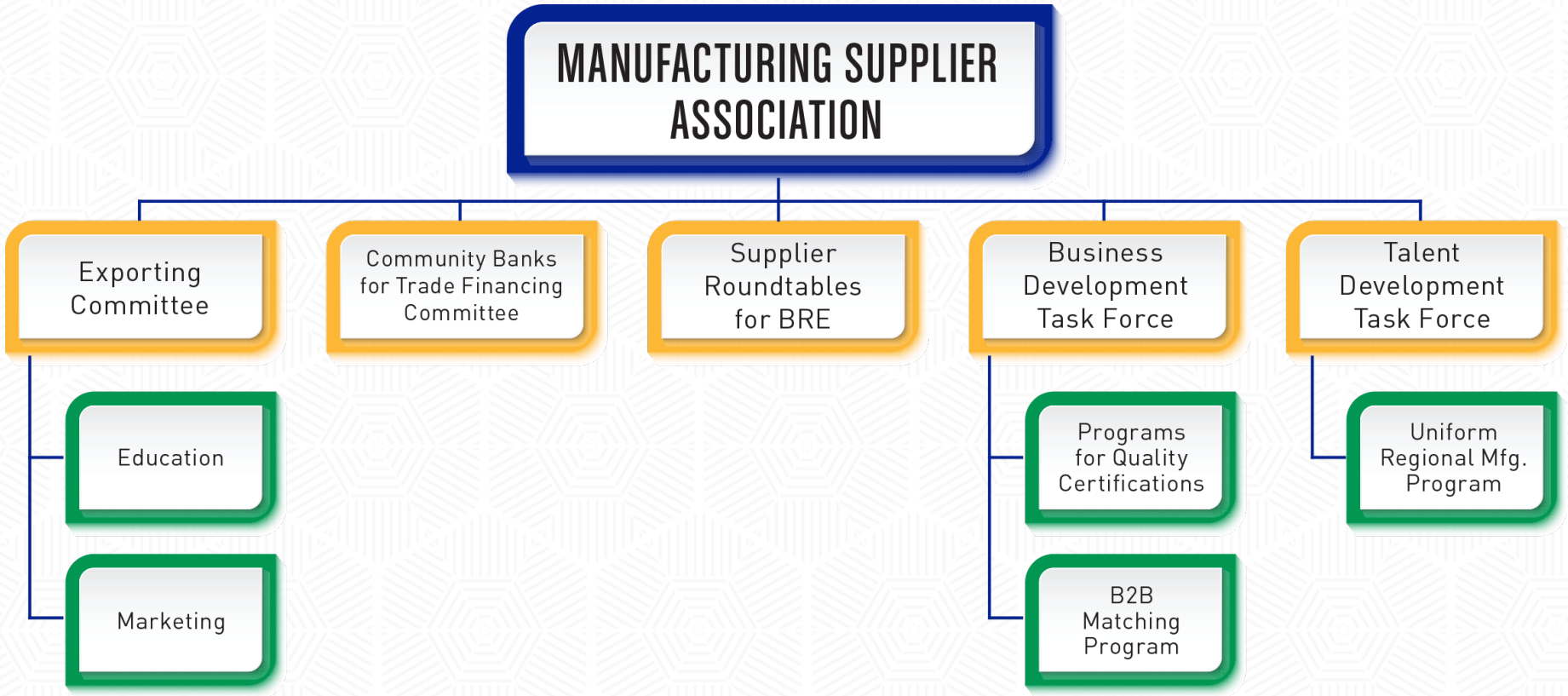
Initial steps for implementation:

- Form a governing body
- Identify relevant areas to be measured and conduct a trend analysis to form reasonable and achievable metrics
- Build a dashboard to keep track of the metrics. Include community development partners and their metrics
- Formalize the Binational Technology Council and the Manufacturing Supplier Association
- Set up the Business Retention and Expansion Committee, Talent Committee and Digital Inclusion Committee
- Form the Legislative Roundtable
- Solidify project leads and partners, firm project timelines and costs

IMPLEMENTATION

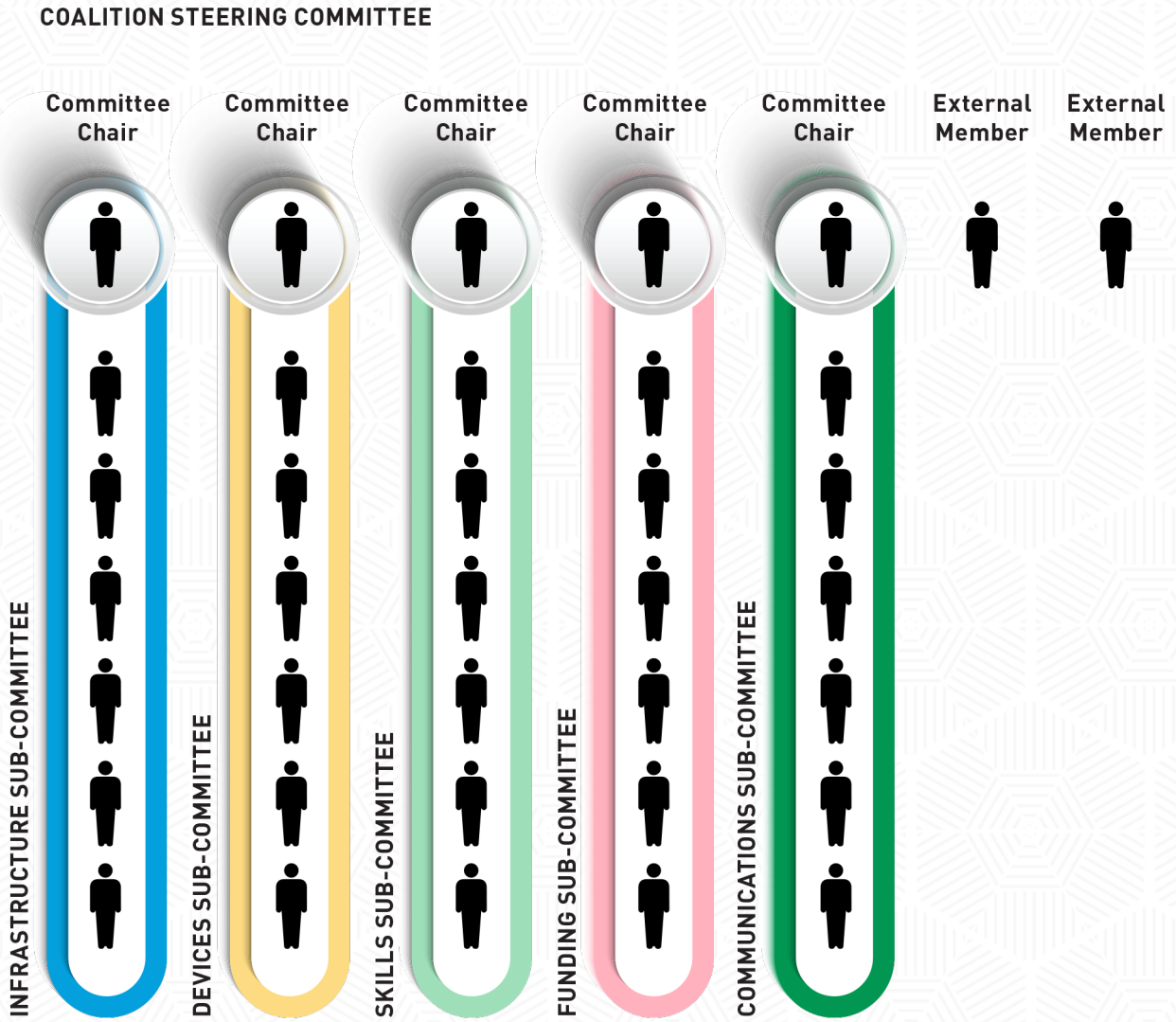


IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION

PROPOSED COALITION STRUCTURE



CONCLUSION

Final Thoughts

- The economy has been hurting but we still have many assets and opportunities to leverage to pull us through the economic crisis.

- If the region dedicates resources towards the target industries and diligently builds the systems that support its companies, then this investment will propel the region towards a quick recovery from the economic recession and enable it to capitalize on new and exciting opportunities.

- The Borderplex region is a place with a pioneer spirit and an intense devotion to family and community where people are full of authenticity, tenacity and grit. Along with many market opportunities, it is these qualities that will make the Borderplex region lead the nation through the recovery and emerge as a leader in inclusive prosperity.

A Guide to Reading the Plan

- Find ways to get involved in ongoing strategic planning efforts.
  - **Examples: project leader, partner, or advisor**
- A useful inventory of assets to identify new resources to support your work.

THANK YOU!

Download The Borderplex Alliance 2025 Ascend Plan at www.borderplexalliance.org

THE BORDERPLEX ALLIANCE

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