



THE BORDERPLEX ALLIANCE

2025 ASCEND PLAN AMENDMENT

(NOVEMBER 2023)

PART I

AMENDMENT TO THE SECTION ON TALENT PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT

The Borderplex Future of Work Committee was formed to address the dire need to create a more resilient and agile education and workforce system. A group of regional leaders agreed to commit their valuable time and expertise into solving this monumental issue. After one year, 27 meetings, and 3 surveys, the Future of Work Committee produced this set of strategic recommendations.

The Future of Work Committee report was a project identified in the Borderplex 2025 Ascend Plan, which focuses on developing agile and resilient institutions that can meet the needs of rapidly changing conditions. Foreseeable disruptions such as the emergence of Industry 4.0 technology and the automation of jobs have created an urgent need to build stronger, more cohesive systems that truly work for stakeholders.

This amendment to the 2025 Ascend Plan, section on Talent Pipeline Development – Goal #29, incorporates 10 recommendations from the Borderplex Future of Work Report. The following list of action items represents the recommendations identified by the Future of Work Committee that most align with the priorities in the 2025 Ascend Plan.

29.5 Integrate basic knowledge of Industry 4.0 technology (beyond robotics) in high school curricula to share the responsibility of educating students on advanced technology.

29.6 Leverage business engagement mechanisms to foster potential funding opportunities for educational programs.

29.7 Dedicate private and public funding to quick upskilling and reskilling, such as through a general obligation bond and US Department of Labor training funds for Industry 4.0 training and job automation response.

29.8 Form education-corporate partnerships with companies from both outside and inside the region to identify needed skillsets in emerging industries.

29.9 Create programs around both teacher development and curriculum development.

29.10 Prioritize integration of emerging technology and skillsets into teacher education programs to create sustainable talent pipelines.

29.11 Identify experts in technology who can teach the region's teachers and businesses. May look outside region for expertise. Create a list of education-friendly corporate partners.

29.12 Team up across schools to develop micro-credentials that incorporate Industry 4.0 into the target industries.

29.13 Conduct a regional marketing campaign to control message about quality of life (e.g., search engine optimization campaign). It must target expats and current residents and demonstrate that it is a wonderful place to live.

29.14 Create employer-led education curriculum development and teacher development around design and development.

The full Borderplex Future of Work Committee Report can be found here: https://www.borderplexalliance.org/files/ugd/aece6d_fb2792f1c6484aa9918dcfec32064c9f.pdf

PART II

AMENDMENT CLARIFYING IMPLEMENTATION

To create clarity for the successful implementation of the 2025 Ascend Plan, the following list of action items from the 2025 Ascend Plan will be carried out by The Borderplex Alliance. The action items were selected based on the Borderplex Alliance's core competencies and scope of control. The remainder of the action items should be a reference for outside organizations to incorporate, where appropriate, as part of their own action plans.

Counting the action items adopted from the Borderplex Future of Work Report, the Borderplex Alliance's total number of action items to be completed by 2025 are 82.

Action 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.

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

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

Action 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).

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

Action 3.1 Build a community-wide education and workforce development program for the Life Sciences Industry. Address issues 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.

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

Action 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.

Action 5.2 Ensure 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.

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

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

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

Action 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.

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

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

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

Action 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.

Action 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.

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

Action 15.1 Form a committee dedicated to creating trade financing workshops for community development financial institutions and 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.

Action 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Action 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.

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

Action 19.2 Expand broadband infrastructure, especially in rural areas.

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

Action 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.

Action 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.

Action 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.

Action 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.

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

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

Action 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.

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

Action 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.

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

Action 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.

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

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

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

Action 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.

Action 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.

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

Action 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.

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

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

Action 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.

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

Action 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.

Action 26.1 Advocate for greater public investment in trade infrastructure.

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

Action 26.10 Develop a list of cities with similar industries and economic development 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").

Action 27.4 Target autonomous and electric vehicle companies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Action 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

Action 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.

Action 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 the supply chain but the quality of goods and services as well. Audience: Executives within all targeted industries.

Action 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.

Action 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.