



**My** BROTHER'S KEEPER

# City of Brownsville

*a My Brother's Keeper Community*

## Action Plan

Version 1.0



# City of Brownsville

*a My Brother's Keeper Community*

**Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed**

Leader:

Lynette Benavidez

*United Way of Southern Cameron County*



**Goal #2: Get All Children Reading at Grade Level by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

Leader:

Carla Mancha

*Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville*



**Goal #3: Graduate All Students from High School – Prepared for College & Career**

Leader:

Raquel Lainez

*Housing Authority  
of the City of Brownsville*



Leader:

Hilario de Leon

*Keep Brownsville Beautiful*



**Goal #4: Ensure Post-Secondary Education or Training Options for All**

Leader:

Henry Castillo

*Workforce Solutions Cameron*



**Goal #5: Improve Access to Jobs and Valuable Work Experience**

Leader:

Eva Garcia

*City of Brownsville*



# City of Brownsville

*a My Brother's Keeper Community*

My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge

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# City of Brownsville

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## My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge

### *Executive Summary*

On January 6, 2015, Mayor Antonio Martinez accepted the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community Challenge on behalf of the entire community of Brownsville. As part of the Challenge, Brownsville confirmed its pledge to implement a coherent "cradle-to-college-and-career strategy" and improve the life outcomes of all young people, including boys and young men of color.

A White House report issued in May 2014 identified six areas of focus that are critical to ensuring youth can succeed from pre-K through college and their careers – regardless of who they are, where they come from, or the circumstances into which they are born. Of those six areas of focus, the community of Brownsville has committed to the following:

- Goal #1. Entering school ready to learn;
- Goal #2. Reading at grade level by third grade;
- Goal #3. Graduating from high school ready for college and career;
- Goal #4. Completing post-secondary education or training; and
- Goal #5. Successfully entering the workforce;

In accordance with the MBK Community Challenge, the city hosted its Local Action Summit on February 6, 2015. Following the Summit, April 8, 2015 marked the creation of Brownsville's My Brother's Keeper Taskforce, composed of community leaders, parents, educators, and youth. The MBK Taskforce was led by twelve key individuals representing United Way of Southern Cameron County, the Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville, Keep Brownsville Beautiful, Workforce Solutions Cameron, and the City of Brownsville. The MBK Taskforce conducted community outreach at various community events, soliciting input from youth and parents and garnering awareness for the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge.

On July 8, 2015, the MBK Taskforce publicly launched its Local Action Plan to include the following recommendations for the aforementioned goals:

**Goal #1 Recommendations** include: creating Ready Families, Ready Educators, Ready Systems, and Ready Communities in order to ensure Children Ready for Sustained School Success;

**Goal #2 Recommendations** include: a three-way partnership to ensure youth have access to library cards; new partnerships for mentorship and tutoring programs; and community awareness and outreach for the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge;

**Goal #3 Recommendations** include: increasing college resource awareness for parents and youth; informing youth about career options through internship program and job shadowing; and utilizing social media platforms for information sharing;

**Goal #4 Recommendations** include: establishing a My Brother's Keeper Website to serve as a portal for all community resources, including career opportunities and post-secondary education and training offerings; working collaboratively to increase high-school graduation rates; and increasing collaboration between the local industry and education/training providers; and

**Goal #5 Recommendations** include: expansion of existing soft skills training and etiquette workshops within high school campuses and post-secondary training facilities; increased mentorship and job shadowing programs for youth; and additional internship opportunities with the City of Brownsville.

# City of Brownsville

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## *Key Dates*

**Step #1:**

Accept the President's Challenge: January 9, 2015

**Step #2:**

Convene a "Local Action Summit" to Build an MBK Community: February 6, 2015

**Step #3:**

Conduct a Policy Review & Form Recommendations for Action: May 9, 2015

**Step #4:**

Launch a Plan of Action, Next Steps & a Timetable for Review: July 8, 2015

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My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge

## ***MBK Taskforce Members***

Goal #1	Goal #2	Goal #3	Goal #4	Goal #5
<b>Lynette Benavidez</b> <i>Goal Leader</i>	<b>Carla Mancha</b> <i>Goal Leader</i>	<b>Raquel Lainez</b> <i>Goal Leader</i>	<b>Henry Castillo</b> <i>Goal Leader</i>	<b>Eva Garcia</b> <i>Goal Leader</i>
<b>Michael Vargas</b> <i>IDEA Public Schools</i>	<b>Stephanie Reyes</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Hilario de Leon</b> <i>Keep Brownsville Beautiful</i>	<b>Dr. Emilia Guerra</b> <i>Brownsville Public Utilities Board</i>	<b>Marisela Cortez</b> <i>Congressman Filemon Vela, Texas District 34</i>
<b>Lee Anderson</b> <i>Strong Minds Rise Together (SMRT)</i>	<b>James McCoy</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Roxanna G. Rosas</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Jose Paredes</b> <i>Brownsville Public Utilities Board</i>	<b>Ramiro Gonzalez</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>
<b>Marina M. Zolezzi</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Ana Trejo</b> <i>Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Roberto Baez</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Hugo Zurita</b> <i>CDCB YouthBuild</i>	<b>Mike Gonzalez</b> <i>United Brownsville</i>
<b>Michael Motyl</b> <i>Guadalupe Regional Middle School</i>	<b>Drue Brown</b> <i>Brownsville Independent School District</i>	<b>Jose Figueroa</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Viviana Gomez</b> <i>CDCB YouthBuild</i>	<b>Nurith Galonsky</b> <i>Brownsville Public Utilities Board</i>
<b>Lt. Oscar Maldonado</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Jackie Gomez</b> <i>Student/Keep Brownsville Beautiful</i>	<b>Sister Phylis Peters</b> <i>Proyecto Juan Diego</i>	<b>Mike Shannon</b> <i>Texas Southmost College</i>	<b>Maribel Baca</b> <i>Select Staff</i>
<b>Grace Bermudez</b> <i>Student/Keep Brownsville Beautiful</i>	<b>Bridget Himes</b> <i>Student/Keep Brownsville Beautiful</i>	<b>Damaris McGlone</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Janeth Rico</b> <i>CDCB YouthBuild</i>	<b>Brianna Cisneros</b> <i>Community Representative</i>
<b>Edgar Garcia</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Arnoldo Perez</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Greg Flores</b> <i>Communities in Schools of Cameron County</i>	<b>Charim Guadarrama</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Juan Rogelio Chapa</b> <i>SSP Design</i>
<b>Mary J. Trevino</b> <i>Brownsville Independent School District</i>	<b>Ana Hernandez</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>	<b>Arturo Rodriguez</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>		<b>Jesse Miller</b> <i>bcWORKSHOP</i>
		<b>Lidiana Ramirez</b> <i>Proyecto Juan Diego</i>		<b>Sarah Dierlam</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>
		<b>Julia Denisse Lash</b> <i>City of Brownsville</i>		

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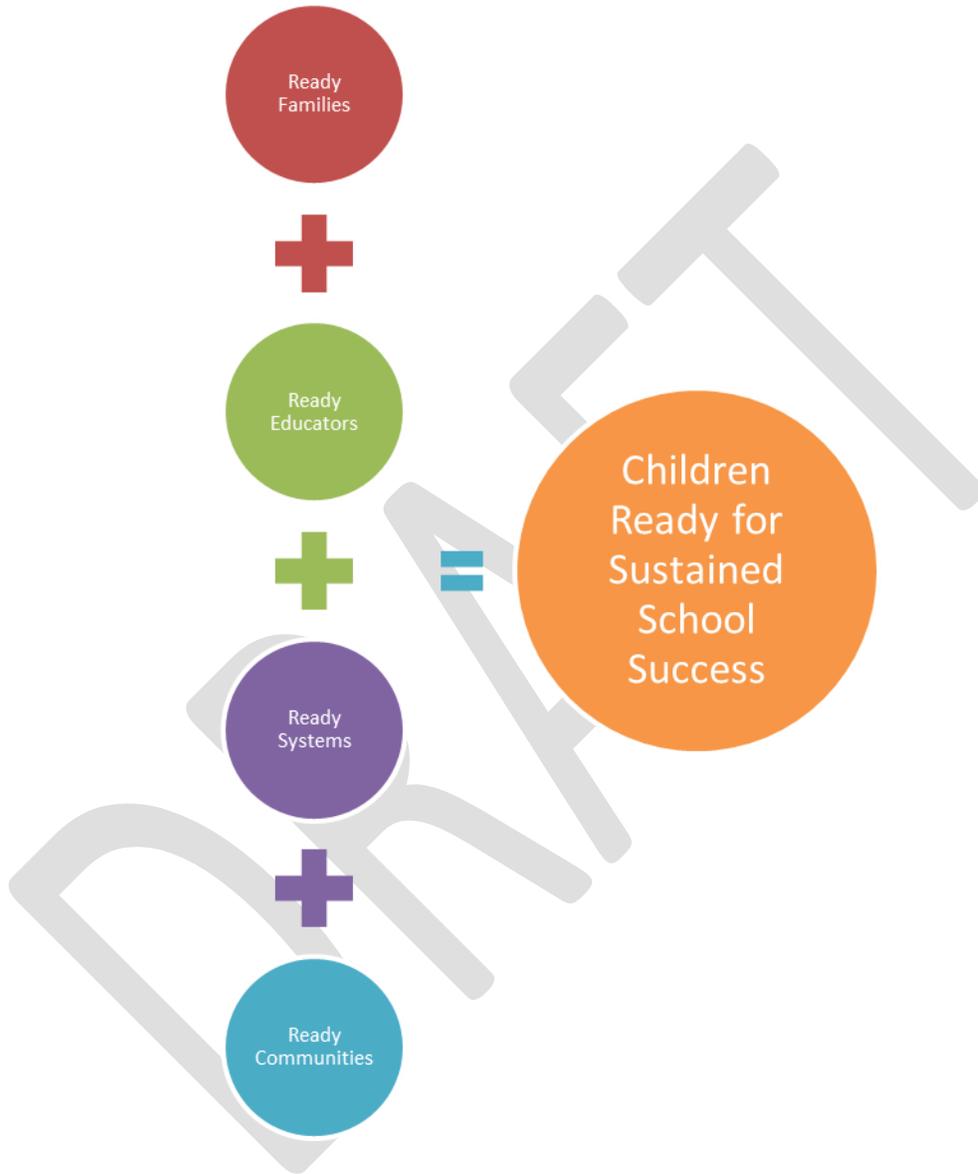
**Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed**

# City of Brownsville

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Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed

## *Recommendations for Action*



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Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed

## ***Recommendations for Action (Cont.)***

### **Ready Families**

GOAL: Parents will be able to obtain the most current multi-lingual and culturally appropriate information they seek on child development, parenting, and school readiness as well as community resources that help and support strengthening families.

### **Ready Educators**

GOAL: United Way of Southern Cameron County will provide the community with a high quality early education and care system for all young children – 0 to school entry – in all settings: family childcare, private/community based centers, Head Start, etc., and through all school based early education (staff, educators, and caregivers).

### **Ready Systems**

GOAL: Healthcare, early intervention, and other systems that serve young children will succeed in earlier detection and targeted responses to barriers of child development and school readiness, including earlier detection of family and environmental conditions to prevent damaging, lifelong impairments in young children.

### **Ready Communities**

GOAL: The many sectors in our community will work together in partnership to ensure children's school readiness becomes and remains a top priority.

### **Children Ready for Sustained School Success**

GOAL: The Early Childhood Leadership Team and SB6 will track and report on the community's progress and success in ensuring that all children enter school with the necessary skills to succeed.

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Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed

## ***Recommendations for Action (Cont.)***

These strategies include strengthening, expanding and coordinating existing work in the community. While all strategies may not be currently funded, the Leadership Team has chosen to include them as a road map for future success.

### **Ready Families**

*Parents will be able to obtain the most current multi-lingual and culturally appropriate information they seek on child development, parenting, and school readiness as well as community resources that help and support strengthening families.*

Strategy 1: Coordinate and integrate a new and existing public engagement campaign that provide parents, caregivers, and others who work with children the most up to date information about early childhood development, school readiness and parenting.

Strategy 2: Ensure affordable access to the community's multiple cultural institutions for families and children with age-appropriate, family friendly programming that supports child development and strong families.

Strategy 3: Use Community Meriendas and existing parent groups to build early childhood development and school readiness information into their daily lives to ensure they receive the most useful, culturally appropriate information accessible in all public and educational settings.

Strategy 4: Use public and private organizations to ensure parents have information on basic needs: housing, health care, child care, workforce development, food security and other essential services.

### **Ready Educators**

*United Way of Southern Cameron County will provide the community with a high quality early education and care system for all young children – 0 to school entry – in all settings: family childcare, private/community based centers, Head Start, etc., and through all school based early education (staff, educators, and caregivers).*

Strategy 1: Across all early child care settings, pursue higher quality accreditation.

Strategy 2: Create a stronger collaboration between the types of early education and care settings to promote joint planning, sharing, and alignment of curriculum, standards, partnerships and assessments as children move from infant and toddler care to preschool to kindergarten.

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Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed

## ***Recommendations for Action (Cont.)***

Strategy 3: Enhance professional development for all early care providers and educators to ensure high quality teaching across all settings focusing primarily on implementing the new Infant and Toddler Guidelines and best practices to improve fluency and comprehension to promote early learning and healthy child development.

Strategy 4: Improve retention and compensation for early care providers and directors and opportunities for them to receive a postsecondary credential that provides them with a living wage.

Strategy 5: Continue to improve access to early child care and education for all children by decreasing financial barriers and allowing and ensuring an adequate supply of services to meet children and families at every stage of their development primarily in the neighborhoods considered “most vulnerable” in United Way of Southern Cameron County. (EDI Data 2012)

Strategy 6: Create uniform progress checkpoints and assessments between all types of early education and care settings.

## **Ready Systems**

*Healthcare, early intervention, and other systems that serve young children will succeed in earlier detection and targeted responses to barriers of child development and school readiness, including earlier detection of family and environmental conditions to prevent damaging, lifelong impairments in young children.*

Strategy 1: Use pediatric settings to:

- Conduct universal screenings for physical, behavioral, developmental and family risk factors including pre-parental developmental screenings of their own child
- Provide parents with information about child development and parenting
- Offer coordination services to ensure families have access to help support a child's growth and development
- Coordinate efforts to distribute “Newborn Packets” to all new parents

Strategy 2: Enhance the various systems of early intervention to expand and align eligibility for services and smooth transitions from infant and toddler settings into the next stages.

Strategy 3: Focus on identifying and responding to social, emotional and behavioral issues.

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Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed

## ***Recommendations for Action (Cont.)***

### **Ready Communities**

*The many sectors in our community will work together in partnership to ensure children's school readiness becomes and remains a top priority.*

Strategy 1: Create a system through the Early Childhood Leadership Team that tracks and analyzes all existing public and private funding streams for early childhood and use the comprehensive strategic plan to collectively approach funders to ensure long-term sustainability.

Strategy 2: Continue to use the coalition created, the Early Childhood Leadership Team and United Way of United Way of Southern Cameron County serving as the backbone organization, to ensure Success By 6 in the community through implementation and oversight of the community plan.

Strategy 3: Continue to host Community Meriendas within targeted "vulnerable neighborhoods" and parent advisory groups. Coordinate planning with existing neighborhood work and build capacity to empower them to make an impact in their own community.

Strategy 4: Align the work of various City of Brownsville and Cameron County departments that serve young children to collaborate with one another to support the goals of the strategic plan.

Strategy 5: Link efforts to address broader community needs that impact the stability of families including abuse and neglect as well as economic security.

### **Children Ready for Sustained School Success**

*The Early Childhood Leadership Team and SB6 will track and report on the community's progress and success in ensuring that all children enter school with the necessary skills to succeed.*

Strategy 1: In 5 years reassess the neighborhood level data using the Early Development Instrument on Kindergarten age children in the community moving the current percentage of "very ready" children from 23% to 38% by Year 5, a 3 % increase yearly. By 2021 we will have 46% of children entering school "very ready" with the necessary skills to succeed.

Strategy 2: Increase comprehension and fluency in pre-kindergarten kindergarten age children so that by Year 5 of the strategic plan 90% of children are successful as measured on all Early Reading Instruments. (ELAP/CPALLS at End-of-Year (EOY) TPRI/Tejas LEE) Track and monitor yearly progression.

Strategy 3: Continue to track and monitor results received from individual child and quality facility assessments used by Head Start, Texas School Ready Program (TSR), and the Texas Rising Stars program (TRS) and share information and data at least three times a year.

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Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed

## ***Recommendations for Action (Cont.)***

Strategy 4: Yearly, see a minimum 3% increase on meeting the standards on the state's current 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading assessment to ensure children are reading on grade level while focusing on attendance and summer learning loss yearly by continuing to participate in the national Campaign for Grade Level Reading.

Strategy 5: In Year 3, 5, and 7 of the plan, hold an Early Childhood Summit, "Workforce 2021," to ensure accountability of the plan and report on progress.

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Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed

## ***Assessment: Policies, Programs, and Practices***

**Discussion Question:** How can we ensure our youth are entering school ready to learn?

<b>Needs</b>	<b>Assets</b>	<b>Goals</b>
<p>Start with Parents: Informative tools that give parents the resources to help their children (aged 0-3) to succeed.</p>	<p>H-E-B Reads Program: Read 3 program (Help grow young minds) book drives, store events, and special offers for patrons.</p>	<p>Parental Education: Target parents first.</p>
<p>Improve Early Childhood Education Standards in Texas (Last Updated in 2008)</p>	<p>City of Brownsville Resources: such as business owners, politicians, policy makers, commissioners Texas Literacy Initiative: Ensure that every Texas child is strategically prepared for college and career literacy demands by high school graduation.</p>	<p>Acquire Political Support: Leverage private and public resources to create ordinances  Strategize to Maximize Resources / Community-wide Effort</p>
<p>Early Literacy Development: Develop oral language and pre-literacy skills of preschool children</p>	<p>Educational Institutions BISD, Charter schools, and private schools</p>	<p>Develop a District-wide Summer Kindergarten Packet that will help prepare the parent and thus the child for the upcoming school year Utilize Current Resources to monitor conditions and focus on improving these areas (strategize areas)</p>
<p>Preschool Certifications: Mandate that all preschool administration and instructors are certified to educate and care for young learners (Preschool businesses must offer professional development that runs in conjunction with the Independent School district)</p>	<p>Data Collection: United Way of United Way of Southern Cameron County</p>	<p>Utilize Current Resources to monitor conditions and focus on improving these areas (strategize areas)</p>
	<p>Doctors &amp; Physicians</p>	<p>Making Resources Readily Available at doctors and physicians' offices to reach more parents</p>
	<p>Title I Federal Program: Ensures that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.</p>	<p>Book Stations at major city facility and participating partners</p>

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Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed

## ***S.W.O.T. Analysis***

### **Strengths**

#### *Quality Pre-K Programs and Child Care*

- Texas School Ready!
- Texas Rising Stars
- Head Start – NINOS and Teaching and Mentoring Communities TMC
- Public School District
- TSC NAEYC Classroom
- 2015 School Year IDEA Public Schools Pre-k

#### *Parental Involvement*

- Workforce Solutions Cameron Parental Involvement Workshops
- HEB Read 3
- School District Parental Involvement
- School District Family Crisis Center

#### *Access to Books*

- Workforce Solutions Cameron
- South Texas Literacy Coalition
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- United Way Children's Book Club – Success By 6
- Brownsville Public Library

#### *Developmental Screenings*

#### *Professional Development/ Specialist*

- Southmost Association for the Education of Young Children SMAEYC
- Texas Southmost College (Associate in Childcare and Childcare Development Certificate)
- Workforce Solutions Cameron Yearly Childcare training sessions

#### *Young Moms*

- Teen Pregnancy Coalition
- Department of State Health Services programs
- Lincoln Park High School

#### *Community Organizations*

- Moody Clinic – developmental delays
- Early Childhood Intervention ECI – Region 1
- Brownsville Literacy Center – Pre-K classroom

Goal #1: Ensure All Children Enter Kindergarten Prepared to Succeed

# City of Brownsville

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## ***S.W.O.T. Analysis (Cont.)***

### **Weaknesses**

- Developmental screenings for children (0-5) / Doctors who can evaluate them
- Speech therapists, ABA therapists, Physical therapists, Occupational therapists
- Additional Pre-K slots
- Additional education on parental engagement (cognitive, social and emotional engagement with their children during early years)
- More safe places for children
- Support groups for young moms
- More books / Access to books
- Affordable weekend and summer learning activities
- Professional development opportunities and incentives for child care workers

### **Opportunities**

- Act Early Texas! (Developmental screenings)
- HB 731 (Pre-K slots)
- Professional development opportunities for scholarships
- Grants for child care workers; TEACH

### **Threats**

- Lack of funding
- Not a data driven community
- Early childhood data
- Young community
- High teen pregnancy rate
- Only 23% of children are ready to enter school

# City of Brownsville

a My Brother's Keeper Community



Goal #2: Get All Children Reading  
at Grade Level by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

# City of Brownsville

*a My Brother's Keeper Community*

Goal #2: Get All Children Reading at Grade Level by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

## ***Recommendations for Action***

MBK Taskforce members representing Goal #2 of the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge have developed the following recommendations for getting all children reading at grade level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade:

### **I. Brownsville Public Library System Partnership**

MBK Taskforce members propose a three-way partnership between the Brownsville Independent School District (BISD), the Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville (HACB), and the Brownsville Public Library System, to ensure that all BISD students and HACB residents have access to library cards. Moreover, through actively collaborating with the Brownsville Public Library System, recorded readings and promotional videos may be shared with HACB to be aired within its facilities. In addition, MBK Taskforce members propose that the Brownsville Public Library System implement color-coordinated accelerated reading program books in order to allow children to know which books they may check out based on reading level.

### **II. New Partnerships for Mentorship & Tutoring Programs**

MBK Taskforce members propose the integration of future University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UT-RGV) and Texas Southmost College (TSC) students into mentorship and tutoring programs offered throughout various community organizations. Identified organizations for potential partnerships include the Rio Grande Council Boy Scouts of America, Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Texas, and HOSTS (Help One Student to Succeed).

### **III. Community Awareness & Outreach**

MBK Taskforce members have identified community outreach as a top priority. Prior to the development of proposed programs, they have stressed the importance of soliciting community input, specifically from parents and youth, regarding the most effective ways to ensure that all children in Brownsville are reading at grade level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. By working in partnership with community residents, the MBK Taskforce may develop programming that will yield the best results.

# City of Brownsville

*a My Brother's Keeper Community*

Goal #2: Get All Children Reading at Grade Level by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

## ***Assessment: Policies, Programs, and Practices***

**Discussion Question:** How can we ensure our youth are entering school ready to learn?

Needs	Assets	Goals
<p>Making Resources Readily Available: Brownsville schools need to make resources readily available for parents and students alike, including information regarding graduation, post-secondary education, and free resources such as WiFi and textbooks.</p> <p>Educate Students on Post-Secondary Education</p>	<p>College Preparatory Program TSC- Division of College Preparatory Studies BISD- STAMP programs (Science, Technology, Architecture, and Medical Professions) that allow HS students to earn up to 60 credits while completing high school</p> <p>“Success By 6” The mission of this program is to ensure that all children are prepared for school and a life of learning by way of five goals that address the importance of access to information and advocating for early education in our community.</p>	<p>College Preparatory Program Create and provide a modified College Preparatory Program for bottom 25% of high school students</p> <p>Ensure Students Pass Entrance Exams &amp; Two-Year College</p>
<p>Parental Education and Involvement</p>	<p>H-E-B Reads Program: Read 3 program (Help grow young minds) book drives, store events, and special offers for patrons.</p>	<p>Additional Instruction Time: Ensure that students do not repeat the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade as a result of lack of readiness by providing additional instructional time along with at-home support</p>
<p>Reading to a Child: Three times a week to develop reading skills to succeed in school</p> <p>Parent Teacher Association (Head Start and the Parent Teacher Association) Transition from preschool to kindergarten</p> <p>Voucher Programs: Allowing high school students to waive costs of college applications</p>	<p>Brownsville Public Library System: Story Times</p> <p>Brownville Public Library System: Summer Reading Programs</p> <p>The Esperanza Program: Multi-sensory structured Spanish language approach that teaches the Spanish language so that the student can read, write, and spell</p> <p>WELLS Program: Working with English Language Learners</p>	

# City of Brownsville

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Goal #2: Get All Children Reading at Grade Level by 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

## *S.W.O.T. Analysis*

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
College Preparatory Program	Lack of readily available resources	<i>Best Practices:</i> Brownsville Public Library System: Summer Reading Programs	Enrollment of Quality Pre-K
“Success By 6”	Lack of post-secondary education for students	“Success by 6”	Children Entering Kindergarten ready to learn
H-E-B Reads Program	Lack of parental education and involvement	Weekly Story Time	Child maltreatment
Brownsville Public Library System: Story Times	Lack of reading to children	H-E-B Reading Program	Youth Developmental Screening
Brownsville Public Library System: Summer Reading Programs	Lack of a parent teacher association for preschool to kindergarten transition	Apasionados Por La Lectura	Reading and Math Achievements
The Esperanza Program		Brownsville Museum of Fine Art	School Attendance
WELLS Program		Summer Safari	
		<i>Target Demographic:</i> Sunrise Mall visitors	
		Children’s Museum of Brownsville visitors	
		Ranger Day participants	
		Gladys Porter Zoo visitors	
		CycloBia & CycloBia2U participants	

# City of Brownsville

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**Goal #3: Graduate All Students from High School – Prepared for College & Career**

# City of Brownsville

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Goal #3: Graduate All Students from High School – Prepared for College & Career

## ***Recommendations for Action***

MBK Taskforce members representing Goal #3 of the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge have developed the following recommendations for graduating all students from high school – prepared for college and career:

### **I. Increase College Resource Awareness**

MBK Taskforce members propose increasing college resource awareness to youth by: increasing college fairs in high schools, greater promotion of financial aid resources, and increasing education regarding AP/Dual Enrollment and its effect on prospective post-secondary education attainment; and parents: by providing bilingual workshops and support groups for parents, including education on how to empower and support their children.

### **II. Inform Youth about Career Options**

MBK Taskforce members recommend the creation of internship programs within local employer establishments to include active recruitment of at-risk students in high schools. In addition, they recommend that partnerships be established between high schools and employers to provide visits to local businesses for students, offering them a “behind-the-scenes” look at various career options and information regarding necessary, marketable skills required for the careers they are interested in pursuing.

### **III. Utilize Social Media Platforms for Information Sharing**

MBK Taskforce members recommend the utilization of social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, to keep youth abreast of internship and job shadowing opportunities offered throughout the community. They also propose the development of an interactive app as a modern and innovative way to promote aforementioned opportunities and additional insight on careers.

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Goal #3 Graduate All Students from High School – Prepared for College & Career

## ***Assessment: Policies, Programs, and Practices***

### **Discussion Question:**

How do you think data could be used to enhance and help parents, teachers, and students?

<b>Needs</b>	<b>Assets</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Top Priorities</b>
Unique ID System: Student ID & Social Security Numbers: Transform into a Unique ID to track data (Such as: Did they graduate or not?)	Career Fairs at Individual Schools	City Youth Center (Leadership skills, college bound, parental involvement, field trips to universities)	City Youth Center 1. Resources for learning experience; 2. College awareness among parents and students 3. Understanding workforce/skills to meet community needs
Chronic Absenteeism	FAFSA/TAFSA Support Workshops	City-Wide Career Fair: By age category. Currently they are only at individual schools	Expand on Family Engagement Program at Los Fresnos ISD
Discipline Referrals (3 Strikes => Referral)	College Night Fair		Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Revamp it into community-based, rather than at individual schools
Shortage of Counselors	Youth Club Program at Brownsville Public Library System		
Lack of Parental Understanding of Graduation/College Requirements	Brownsville Chamber of Commerce Program		
Career Guidance: Teachers and children must understand careers in order for them to take appropriate steps (develop skills) to achieve certain professions	Family Engagement Program at 1 High School: Involves parental involvement, tutorials, mentorship, resources, etc.		

# City of Brownsville

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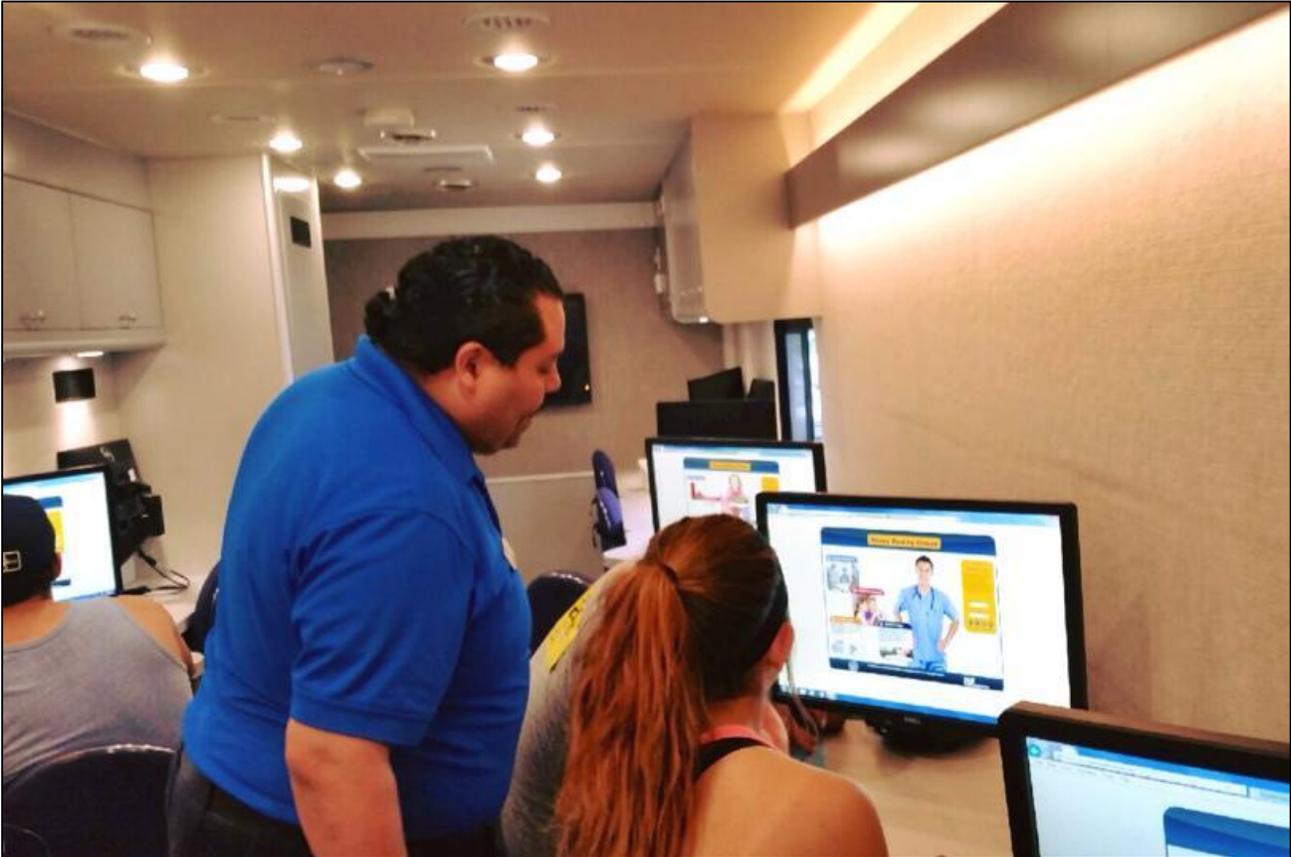
Goal #3 Graduate All Students from High School – Prepared for College & Career

## ***S.W.O.T. Analysis***

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<p>Career Fairs at Individual Schools</p> <p>FAFSA/TAFSA Workshops</p> <p>College Night Fairs</p> <p>Youth Club Program, Brownsville Public Library System</p> <p>Brownsville Chamber of Commerce Program</p> <p>Family Engagement Program</p>	<p>Parents feel overwhelmed by English language.</p> <p>Parents feel overwhelmed due to lack of knowledge/post-secondary education.</p> <p>Parents don't know how to express motivational / supporting attitudes of something that will take their child away from them, even if it is for ultimate betterment.</p> <p>Students feel overwhelmed and under-informed as to all the options available.</p> <p>Counselors are sometimes more interested in their college acceptance statistics than helping students with the goals or questions they may have.</p>	<p><i>Best Practices</i></p> <p>Internships through Electives</p> <p>Career &amp; Technology options in HS</p> <p>Mentor Programs</p> <p>Leadership Programs</p> <p><i>Target Demographic</i></p> <p>Students &amp; Educators: BISD, charter schools, private schools, daycares, Head Start Programs</p> <p>Additional locations for at-risk youth: CASA, Southwest Key, Foster System, Juvenile Court</p> <p>Parents: PTA's, Community Centers, Events for their children</p>	<p>Child Maltreatment</p> <p>High School Attendance &amp; Texas Truancy Laws</p> <p>Grad and Drop-Out Rates</p> <p>Reading &amp; Math Achievement</p> <p>AP/IB/Dual Enrollment</p> <p>Advanced Degree Enrollment/Completion</p>

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**Goal #4: Ensure Post-Secondary  
Education or Training Options for All**

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Goal #4: Ensure Post-Secondary Education or Training Options for All

## ***Recommendations for Action***

MBK Taskforce members representing Goal #4 of the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge have developed the following recommendations for ensuring post-secondary education or training options for all:

**I. Establish a My Brother's Keeper Website**

MBK Taskforce members recommend the establishment of a community-wide My Brother's Keeper Website. This website will serve as a clearinghouse or portal for all community resources, including: career opportunities, post-secondary education and training offerings, work readiness and soft skills training, and internship and mentorship opportunities.

**II. Increase High-School Graduation Rates**

MBK Taskforce members recommend a collaboration and partnership effort between all MBK Taskforce member organizations to work hand-in-hand to increase high school graduation rates and dual enrollment participation rates. An increase in these rates will allow more individuals to access post-secondary education and training opportunities that may result in gainful employment.

**III. Increase Collaboration between Local Industry & Education/Training Providers**

MBK Taskforce members strongly encourage collaboration between education/training providers and local employers in order to form an efficient education-to-career pipeline. This active collaboration will ensure that quality local education and training opportunities are available to meet the growing demands of employers.

# City of Brownsville

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Goal #4: Ensure Post-Secondary Education or Training Options for All

## ***Assessment: Policies, Programs, and Practices***

### **Discussion Question:**

How can we develop a workforce that meets the demands of Brownsville's employers?

Needs	Assets	Goals
Increased high school graduation rates to allow more individuals to access to post-secondary education and training opportunities that can result in gainful employment.	Dual Enrollment programs with Texas Southmost College (TSC) and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV).	Increase High School graduation rates by 10%.  10% increase in Dual Enrollment participation.
Soft Skills training for individuals preparing to enter the workforce.	Post-secondary education/training at UTRGV, TSC and career training schools offering career-focused degree programs.	Wide-spread offering of Soft Skills training at all BISD secondary and alternative schools, TSC, UTRGV and career training schools.
Better collaboration between education/training providers and local industry to identify demand occupations and education/training requirements to meet demand occupation needs.	Alternative education and training programs at TSC, career training schools and YouthBuild offering GED and career certificates.	Increased industry participation in development of curriculum, facilities, and equipment relevant to community and technical programs.
Reducing barriers to post-secondary education and training for individuals with minor records.	Soft skills training offered through various community entities - Workforce Solutions Cameron, BISD, YouthBuild, and TSC and career training schools.	Increased industry/business internship and mentorship opportunities for students to expand career awareness and gain real-world work experience.
	Workforce Solutions Cameron database that offers career awareness, labor market information, and employment services to job seekers and employers.	Expansion of craft/technical training programs and increased alignment between BISD and post-secondary training programs.  Increased career awareness and work-based training opportunities for local youth.  Increased parental involvement in career pathway selection of middle school students

# City of Brownsville

*a My Brother's Keeper Community*

Goal #4: Ensure Post-Secondary Education or Training Options for All

## *S.W.O.T. Analysis*

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<p>University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UT-RGV)</p> <p>Texas Southmost College (TSC)</p> <p>Multiple Career Training Schools</p> <p>Partners for Post-Secondary Success (United Way of United Way of Southern Cameron County)</p> <p>Internship and Mentorship Opportunities</p> <p>-All In Brownsville</p> <p>-UT-RGV</p> <p>-TSC, in partnership with numerous community employers</p> <p>Workforce Solutions Cameron</p> <p>-Financial assistance for post-secondary education/training in demand occupations</p> <p>-On-the-Job Training opportunities</p> <p>-Soft Skills Training</p> <p>-Workshops</p> <p>-Supportive services, including Childcare and Transportation assistance</p>	<p>Insufficient post-secondary education/training resources</p> <p>Available post-secondary education/training resources not effectively communicated to target population resulting in underutilization</p> <p>Missed partnership opportunities by 'strength' entities</p> <p>Literacy rates/Limited English Proficiency LEP</p> <p>Lack of Soft Skills</p> <p>In some cases, lack of family support structure</p> <p>Insufficient number of community mentors</p>	<p>More and better collaboration between community resource partners</p> <p>More and better collaboration between post-secondary education/training providers and employers to ensure that education and training is available for in-demand occupations and is teaching newest and most relevant techniques/technologies</p> <p>Targeted outreach/promotion of post-secondary education/training resources to at-risk neighborhoods</p> <p>Recruiting more community members to serve as mentors/support structure</p> <p>Expansion of Soft Skills workshops</p>	<p>Low number of individuals with post-secondary education/training will result in potential employers seeking educated/skilled workforce to forgo establishing operations in our community.</p> <p>Area median hourly wage (\$10.95) is 33% less than state average. Lack of educated and skilled labor force will continue to result in stagnant wages.</p> <p>Lack of collaboration between 'strength' entities will result in resources be underutilized which could jeopardize future funding opportunities.</p> <p>Low literacy rates/LEP will result in more students enrolled in developmental courses in college/university, which could cause students to drop out due to frustration and/or lack of financial resources.</p> <p>Lack of Soft Skills will make it harder for employers to find qualified job candidates.</p>

# City of Brownsville

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**Goal #5: Improve Access to Jobs  
and Valuable Work Experience**

# City of Brownsville

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Goal #5: Improve Access to Jobs and Valuable Work Experience

## ***Recommendations for Action***

MBK Taskforce members representing Goal #5 of the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge have developed the following recommendations for improving access to jobs and valuable work experience. Their best recommendation for action, in order to ensure all individuals have access to jobs, is to successfully accomplish Goals #1 through #4. Furthermore, they have identified Goal #4 as the most critical goal to ensure its success. In addition to Goals #1 through #4, they have recommended the following:

**I. Communication & Etiquette Workshops**

MBK Taskforce members recommend expanding existing soft skills training workshops offered by Workforce Solutions Cameron to be offered in all high school campuses and post-secondary education and training facilities. In addition, the members propose the development of etiquette workshops for high school and college students alike.

**II. Mentorship Programs**

MBK Taskforce members recommend creating additional mentorship and job shadowing programs for youth. The members have stressed the importance of youth having mentors that have successfully gone through the cradle-to-college-and-career pipeline and may provide guidance and advice on job qualifications and fundamentals. Specifically, MBK Taskforce members recommend UT-RGV alumni to initiate a mentorship program that will assist youth served by the various MBK Taskforce member organizations.

**III. Internship & Summer Job Opportunities**

MBK Taskforce members propose the expansion of internship and summer job opportunities for youth. They recommend for the City of Brownsville to offer a minimum of two internship opportunities per department for youth between the ages of 16 and 21 years. In addition, they propose that the Chamber of Commerce collaborate with local employers to connect internship and summer job opportunities with MBK Taskforce member organizations.

# City of Brownsville

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Goal #5: Improve Access to Jobs and Valuable Work Experience

## ***Assessment: Policies, Programs, and Practices***

### **Discussion Question:**

How can the business community help bridge the gap between upper and lower income students?

<b>Needs</b>	<b>Assets</b>	<b>Goals</b>
<i>Primary Education (Elementary through High School)</i>		
Business Daycares or Single-Parent Family Assistance Businesses may support their employees through a daycare within the facility and/or counseling services	Utilizing Trained Personnel: Businesses may use trained personnel (Ex. Electric Engineers, GIS Specialists, Administrative Assistants) to provide workshops to students	Assistance for Single-Parent Households Business may provide support, including daycare and tuition assistance
“Engaged” Career Days: Inviting business owners and employees of business to explain their jobs to elementary/middle school/high school students for AP, Pre-AP, Remedial, and Regular Students in instruction/classroom setting	Make Brownsville’s Major Business Hubs Readily Available <i>Ex: Brownsville’s Airport:</i> Hangar personnel, Engineers, Contractors, Businesses conducting international business located at Airport <i>Ex: Port of Brownsville:</i> Divers, Marine Biologists, Drillers <i>Ex: Brownsville Public Utilities Board:</i> Administrative positions, information specialists, accounting, Data specialists <i>Ex: Chamber of Commerce:</i> Primary and post-secondary students may learn about local businesses and how to start their own business	“Changing the Corporate Culture” Brownsville community may partner with local businesses to change the corporate culture (i.e. promote and/or make volunteer hours mandatory)
Focus on Communication & Etiquette Workshops: Businesses may provide communication and etiquette workshops to middle school and high school students (Introductory course to etiquette and communication in the workplace)		
Big Brother, Big Sister Mentorship Program Businesses owners or business employees mentor students about job qualifications, job fundamentals, resources, etc.		Career Insight and Guidance: Engaged Career Days; Mentorship Programs; Internships; Career Field Days; and Communication & Etiquette Workshops
Educational Career Field Days: AP, Pre-AP, Remedial and Regular students visit businesses “on the job.”		Engage and Prove to Local Businesses the Long-Term Profits of Investing in Students

# City of Brownsville

*a My Brother's Keeper Community*

Goal #5: Improve Access to Jobs and Valuable Work Experience

## ***S.W.O.T. Analysis***

### **Strengths**

- United Way of United Way of Southern Cameron County (UWSCC) – All In Partners for Postsecondary Success
  - PPS is “responsible for strategically aligning partners’ institutional policies and practices to PPS goals, including curriculum alignment, a focus on career pathways, programs to increase first-year retention, and increased internship, mentorship and job shadowing opportunities.” These practices assist with the goal of ensuring all youth out of school are employed.
- Texas Southmost College (TSC) – Department of Workforce Training and Continuing Education
  - Provides training opportunities for private businesses. “Since 1996, skills grants have helped 3,263 employers create 76,191 jobs and upgrade the skills of 208,630 workers.” With customizing training, the local workforce increases their skill levels and wages to remain competitive and receive training that is industry specific.
- Brownsville Chamber of Commerce – Resources & Job Postings
  - The Chamber could be a great resource as they know what businesses are growing and can become a hub to locate opportunities for postsecondary youth.
- Brownsville Public Utilities Board – Internship Opportunities
  - BPUB has opportunities for non-paid interns/volunteers and paid summer college interns, providing this experience helps youth get full-time employment. “In the last five years, we have placed interns into full-time positions.”
- Brownsville Independent School District – Career Days
  - Existing career days expose youth to start thinking about different types of employment at an early age.
- University of Texas Rio Grande Valley – Career Services & Job Fairs
  - Career Services could be a hub to connect youth to these other programs/resources.

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of awareness about programs
- Minimal mentorship opportunities
- Lack of communication between youth, career services, and employment opportunities
- Lack of commitment from businesses/organizations
- Lack of communication between entities
- Increased awareness and expansions of existing programs or assistance services

# City of Brownsville

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Goal #5: Improve Access to Jobs and Valuable Work Experience

## ***S.W.O.T. Analysis (Cont.)***

### **Opportunities**

- Bring light to United Way of United Way of Southern Cameron County's work and use their work as a model to follow. Expand their opportunities and include more programs, businesses, and information that arise as a result of increased awareness.
- Texas Southmost College's opportunities can also be brought to light, especially industry-specific training. They have a list of companies and know what skills are needed to secure the jobs within these industries. Their information should be tapped into and expanded.
- Currently The Chamber's 'Business Center' includes useful resources on how to start and manage a business. These resources should be introduced to those youth interested in entrepreneurship. Their resource section also includes job postings, but there are currently none available. Chamber Members should be encouraged to open non-paid and paid internships, summer jobs, and full-time opportunities to this site. The Chamber has multiple connections that should be leveraged so that we can ensure all youth out of school are employed.
- BPUB's opportunities could be promoted more and they should be used as an example of how a business can offer opportunities. If possible, they can provide workshops to other businesses on how the process works, what the issues are, and how/when the interns become ready to be full-time employees.
- Career days should be more engaging. If possible, schools should have field trips to different work sites where they can see what the world of that job looks like.
- Job fairs should be expanded to include internship or summer job opportunities. Providing opportunities to gain experience before graduation will help ensure employment after school.
- Awareness of opportunities; creating a hub/center for information/opportunities.
- Need to improve communication between youth, career services, and employment opportunities.
- Using courses or internships/job shadowing/etc. as opportunities to assist youth gain soft skills.

### **Threats**

- Lack of cooperation to participate and engage in these opportunities.
- Students being discouraged when they are looking for jobs/internships and the person on the other end of the line is not helpful or passes them on to someone else.
- 'At-risk' youth being unable to get to workshops, interviews, and work.