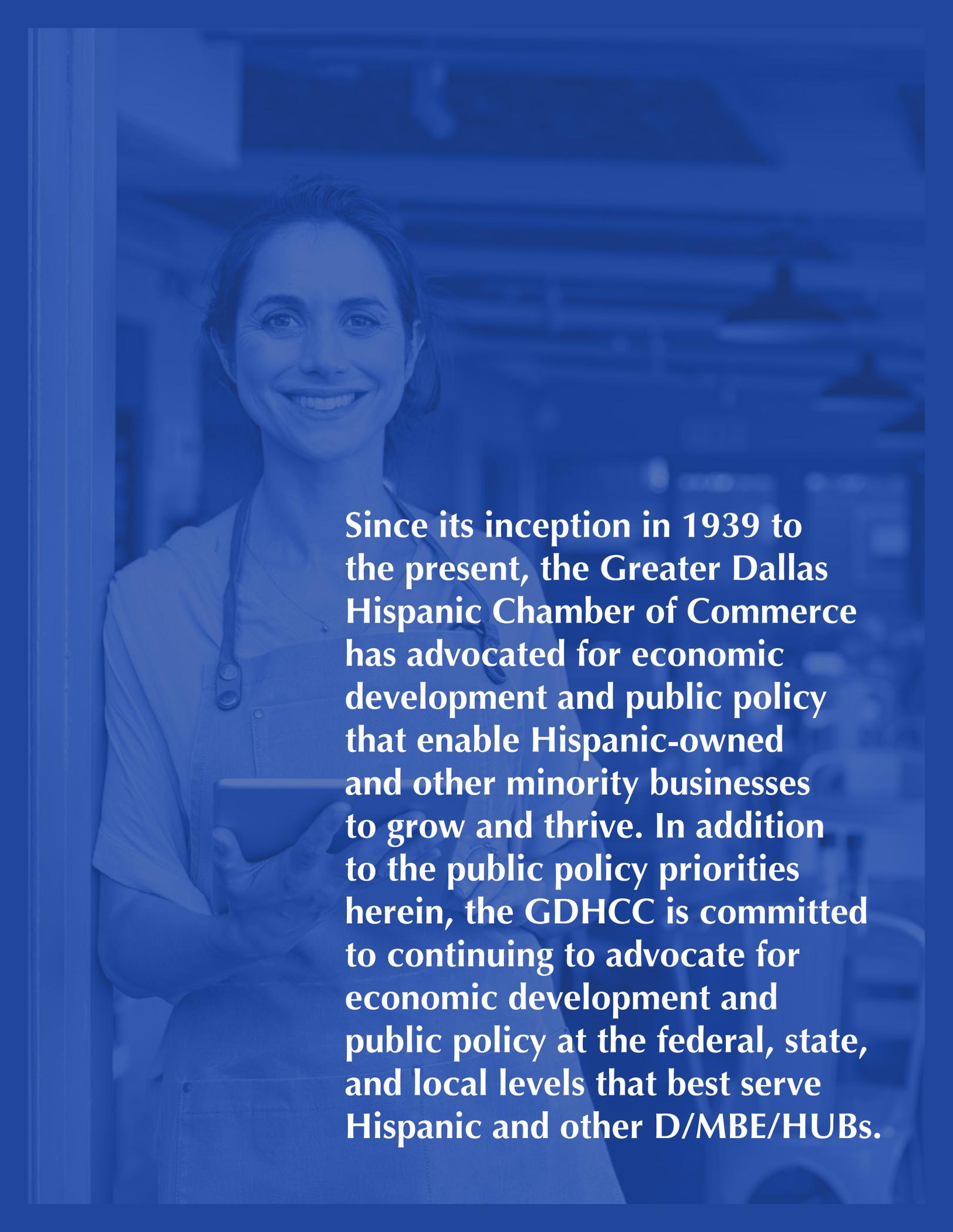


2021-2022 Public Policy Agenda

A smiling woman with dark hair, wearing a white lab coat and a dark apron, is holding a tablet computer. She is standing in what appears to be a clinical or office setting. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Since its inception in 1939 to the present, the Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has advocated for economic development and public policy that enable Hispanic-owned and other minority businesses to grow and thrive. In addition to the public policy priorities herein, the GDHCC is committed to continuing to advocate for economic development and public policy at the federal, state, and local levels that best serve Hispanic and other D/MBE/HUBs.

Budgets – Federal, State and Local

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, government entities at the federal, state, and local levels can expect to have significantly lowered revenue available for general purpose spending. Funding sources such as sales tax, transit rider fares, and gas tax have dropped dramatically as residents have implemented social distancing and unemployment has risen significantly. Public sectors across the board will be experiencing financial stress as the economic drop eventually levels out and begins what is expected to be a slow recovery.

The GDHCC supports legislation, policies and initiatives that provide:

- Equitable allocation of limited resources during the loss and recovery period during and after the pandemic. Policymakers should ensure that minority and disadvantaged groups in the community are not over proportionately impacted by budget cuts.
- Increased accountability for programs focused on addressing needs and challenges of D/MBE/HUBs.

Disadvantaged/Minority Business/HUB Enterprises (D/MBE/HUBs)

COVID-19 has been detrimental to small businesses with 51% across the U.S. having permanently closed. As of August 2020, 3,200 small business firms had closely permanently in the Dallas Fort Worth area. However, minority businesses and consultants continue to be underutilized in procurement of goods and services.

The GDHCC strongly supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Strengthen, increase, and improve equitable participation of D/MBE/HUBs in all government contracting for goods and services and other procurement activities
- Strengthen, increase, and improve the transparency of government procurement and contracting processes



Culture and Tourism

Culture and tourism are cornerstones for the greater Dallas economy, historically contributing \$14B annually to spending in the region by 49 million visitors each year. The pandemic has had an immediate devastating effect on the industry with hotel occupancies plummeting to less than 10%, as many as 25,000 local hotel workers losing their jobs, and mass cancellations of planned events and visits. The vitality of the region depends on a strong cultural ecosystem with world class tourist destinations to support investment in our community's future.

The GDHCC supports legislation, policies and initiatives that provide:

- Catalysts to promote the region and state as destinations in the post-COVID era that are open for business, embrace and promote diversity, inclusion and equality and that welcome, support and celebrate all who visit, live, learn and do business here.
- Equitable opportunities, support, and funding for cultural organizations that are focused on different cultural and minority groups.
- Tourism public improvement districts that allow communities to generate a revenue stream to market and promote themselves as convention and tourism destinations.



Economic and Small Business Development

Small business are the life blood of economic growth and stability. In 2019, small businesses represented 99.8% of Texas employers with 4.7 million employees of the private workforce. Minority-owned businesses comprised 42.3% of businesses in Texas. Small businesses bring innovation, are more adaptable to changing economic climate, stimulate local economies and government entities, and help grow the community. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a decline in traditional small businesses and a growth in the “gig economy,” e.g., temporary, flexible jobs with more companies hiring independent contractors and freelancers instead of full-time employees.

The GDHCC strongly supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Increase and enhance contracting opportunities for D/MBE/HUBs which will lead to growth in the tax base and to a sustainable, healthy state of the economy
- Support the funding of Small Business Development Centers and increase workforce training grants
- Enable Texas and local governmental entities in the North Texas region to remain competitive by increasing and improving initiatives designed to foster the establishment and growth of Hispanic enterprises and D/MBE/HUBs in general
- Facilitate investment in public infrastructure and workforce development in North Texas in order to support the anticipated growth in industry activity and related population, capture the full economic potential of the region and which include procurement/contract goals for D/MBE/HUBs
- Address the ongoing and long-term workforce needs of business and industry to ensure there is a readily available trained and educated workforce
- Include oversight and enforcement of achievement in meeting D/MBE/HUBs contracting goals
- Assure that there is equitable distribution of economic development initiatives across our local communities and across the state
- Bring innovation to current federal, state, and local governmental practices and procedures including, but not limited to, funding for capital projects, cluster initiatives and purchasing cooperatives
- Provide disclosure and reporting requirements which enhance transparency, accountability, and ethical business practices
- Support efforts in developing, growing, and enabling high growth, high-tech start-ups
- Support legislation that provides labor and workforce safety protections for gig workers to which they are rightfully entitled

Energy and Natural Resources

Texas must remain constantly aware of the required balance between the need for water and energy to maintain acceptable current levels of quality of life and economic development and sustainability considerations for mid-to-long term.

The GDHCC supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Provide for the inclusion of D/MBE/HUBs in efforts to best utilize and take advantage of new and emerging technologies that support the environment using sustainable materials and productions methods
- Increase opportunities for small- and mid-size businesses to obtain capital funding through small business loans to enter the market of clean water management, clean air technology, product materials, ingredients and packaging, and home energy efficiency
- Increase the supply of energy, including traditional sources, emerging renewable resource, and energy efficiency and, thus, ameliorate generation costs and reduce electric rates for residential and commercial customers

Governance and Transparency

Transparency in government is essential in upholding a democracy. Transparency in government enables citizens to have access to their government at all levels, thus allowing oversight and accountability. The need for oversight and accountability ensuring equity in access to functions/processes critical to constituents supersedes the issue of the speed for such functions/processes.

The GDHCC supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Support and increase transparency, accountability, and efficiency in government
- Support and increase citizens’ ability to determine whether government contracting and procurement practices are open, accessible, and equitable, especially as related to D/MBE/HUBs



Higher Education

The GDHCC supports the continuing need to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency in the state's institutions of higher education, leading to a globally competent workforce that positions Texas as an international leader in an increasingly complex world economy.

The GDHCC strongly supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Provide funding to support expansion of dual credit programs and Pathways to Technology High Schools (P-TECH) because these programs lead to reduction in time-to-degree, improve the affordability of higher education and enhance workforce development
- Provide financial incentives and loan forgiveness options for students who obtain bilingual education and ESL-certified degrees and who pledge to work in schools with acute shortages
- Facilitate the transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation of students in public higher education because of seamless processes between the public two-year and four-year institutions

Immigration

The positive impact of immigrants the economy is well documented. Additionally, the GDHCC knows that DACA students (Dreamers) play a critical role in the economic stability and sustainability of the North Texas region, of Texas and of the United States.

The GDHCC supports fiscally sound and humane comprehensive immigration reform that:

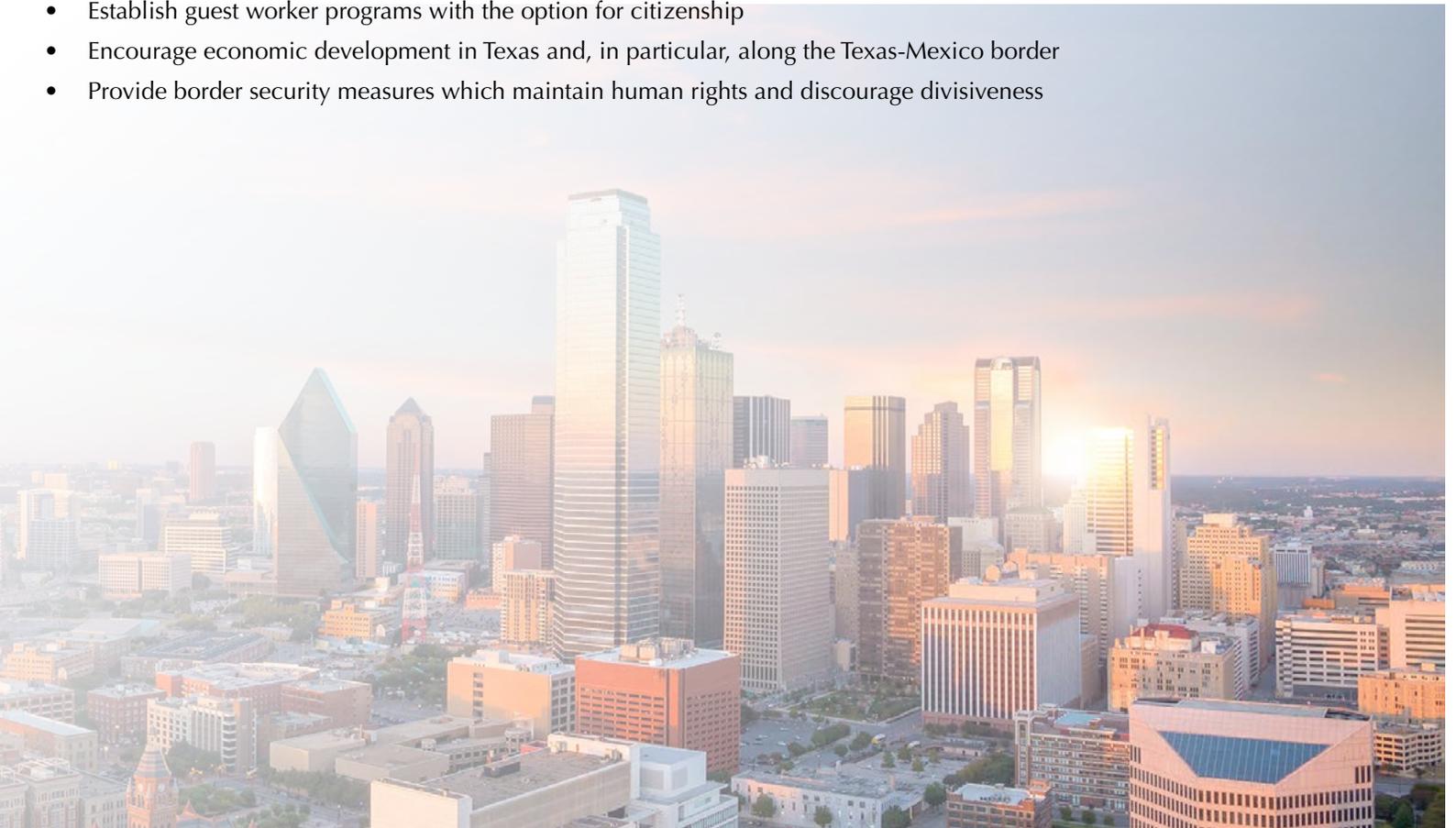
- Provides a permanent pathway to residency and citizenship for DACA students
- Promote and provide the ability of families to remain together through the immigration process
- Promote fair and equitable processes regarding employer hiring practices
- Establish guest worker programs with the option for citizenship
- Encourage economic development in Texas and, in particular, along the Texas-Mexico border
- Provide border security measures which maintain human rights and discourage divisiveness

International Trade

The United States is the world's largest economy and the largest exporter and importer of goods and services. Trade is critical to America's prosperity - fueling economic growth, supporting good jobs at home, raising living standards and helping Americans provide for their families with affordable goods and services. Texas leads the nation in trade.

GDHCC supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Promote free trade and travel
- Allows businesses the ability to import and export goods and services that create jobs and provide economic opportunities
- Facilitate trade agreements that open markets to Texas businesses
- Remove barriers and unnecessary tariffs and regulations that impede trade or harm relationships with our trading partners
- Examine infrastructure of Texas' airports, shipping ports and border points of entry to remove friction or delay in the transportation of goods



Public Education

Hispanic businesses and the economies of Texas and the North Texas region depend on a well-educated and highly skilled workforce to meet the growing demand for workers. In DFW, 30% of jobs are now considered middle-skill jobs, which require an associate degree or industry/technical certificate.

The GDHCC strongly supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Allocate separate funding for public education and for charter schools in a manner that does not decrease public education funding
- Provide a comprehensive state and regional strategy for preparing students for middle and high school success, and that will assist families and students access to higher education institutions
- Increase availability of academically rigorous dual credit high school collegiate programs which result in college readiness while lowering student debt
- Maintain funding for Early College High Schools, P-Tech and other college and workforce readiness programs for high school students
- Establish guidelines and policies that support the regular assessment of student success in charter schools that use public school dollars using the same metrics and expectations as those for public schools
- Fund full-day, universal Pre-K for all students
- Provide programs that inform, train, and equip parents to become actively involved in their children's education, especially in a remote learning environment and use of technology learning tools



Public Health

All Texans deserve access to high quality, affordable healthcare insurance coverage because this increases and enhances the availability of a healthy workforce.

The GDHCC strongly supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Provide access to affordable and available health insurance or other health care options, which include affordable prescription drugs
- Promote wellness for all Texas residents and integrated healthcare which addresses treatment for primary, behavioral, physically challenged, mental health and substance abuse needs
- Focus on prevention of chronic diseases that impact healthcare costs and workforce availability with the result of negatively impacting the Texas economy
- Provide stable, adequate, and predictable reimbursements for Texas health care providers so they can better serve Texas families and Texas workers
- Provide access to telemedicine for those needing primary care but who cannot go to their physician's office because of COVID-19 restrictions

Redistricting

Texas' population growth between 2010 and 2019 increased by approximately 4 million persons, of which 2 million are estimated to be Hispanic. Based on the population growth, Texas will receive additional US Congressional Districts.

GDHCC supports a Redistricting Plan that:

- Complies with federal constitutional requirements related to population and anti-discrimination
- Prohibits plans that intentionally or inadvertently discriminate based on race as described in Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965
- Equitably represents the population of the state at all levels of elected representative government offices, i.e., statewide, county, school boards, city council districts and other defined districts



Technology and Emerging Industries

Technology has increasingly become an integral part of how business is conducted and continues to change the landscape of existing markets while simultaneously providing the opportunity for new emerging industries to take root and flourish. The importance of technology has become even more evident in the COVID-19 environment. With increased use of technology to adequately function in all areas of society, the digital divide, including broadband access and digital literacy in underserved communities, must be addressed and equitably remediated.

The GDHCC supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Assure equity in broadband availability throughout Texas, both urban and rural
- Provide funds for digital literacy training to communities lacking such literacy
- Enhance both training and contracting opportunities for Hispanics and minority businesses in emerging technologies and industries
- Support efforts in developing, growing, and enabling high growth, high-tech start-ups
- Assure that rules and regulations established to provide adequate consumer protections do not impose unnecessary burdens on businesses and business owners, particularly for D/MBE/HUBs, and allow the continued economic success of business

Transportation and Mobility

Efficient, available, and affordable modes of transportation and mobility are critical to both the quality of life of Texans and the economic success of Texas businesses/organizations.

The GDHCC strongly supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Provide long-term sustainable funding (state and federal) to build new or sustain existing highway, rail, public transit, and air transportation to support economic growth
- Promote the efficient operation of these modes of transportation
- Provide equitable, improved first mile/last mile access and connectivity for transit-dependent populations and for the transportation of goods
- Provide for increased, equitable participation of D/MBE/HUBs in transportation projects



Voting Rights and Elections

The right to vote is fundamental to American democracy. It is important to protect the fundamental right to vote for all eligible voters. In addition to voting for candidates, elections are held regarding bond programs, constitutional amendments, and other policy issues that impact businesses and organizations.

The GDHCC strongly supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Work towards creating a more efficient and effective process that allows individuals to register to vote, including automatic and online voter registration
- Increase the voters' access to the polls without undue challenges
- Increase voters' ability to vote by mail
- Expand the early voting periods
- Eliminate voter suppression and voter disenfranchisement

Workforce and Business

Texas' business friendly environment has fostered the ability for businesses to thrive and outpace the nation in employment growth and opportunities during normal economic times. The challenges presented by COVID-19 have disproportionately impacted many small businesses, to the extent that thousands of workers have been displaced. During and after the pandemic, support is needed for businesses to begin to thrive again and to hire workers. Workforce training providing the skills needed by business and industry will be essential to support the recovery of small businesses in our community.

The GDHCC strongly supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Leverage resources – local, state, and federal – to provide training in skills shortage areas
- Provide funds for chambers of commerce and contractor associations to conduct outreach and engagement of displaced or underemployed workers and connect them to available training programs in areas with shortages of skilled workers
- Provide training and technical assistance for small business owners to rebuild their businesses or develop new business models adaptable to economic realities
- Provide funds for chambers of commerce and contractor associations to conduct business counseling and training to entrepreneurs for business development, redevelopment, and growth, especially D/MBE/HUBs
- Ensure equitable educational opportunity and access to the state's adult education programs, in particular for ESL and GED training
- Connect education to the needs of the workplace through apprenticeship and training programs
- Provide child care assistance that enables parents to enter and remain in the workforce