

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL

JANUARY 2025



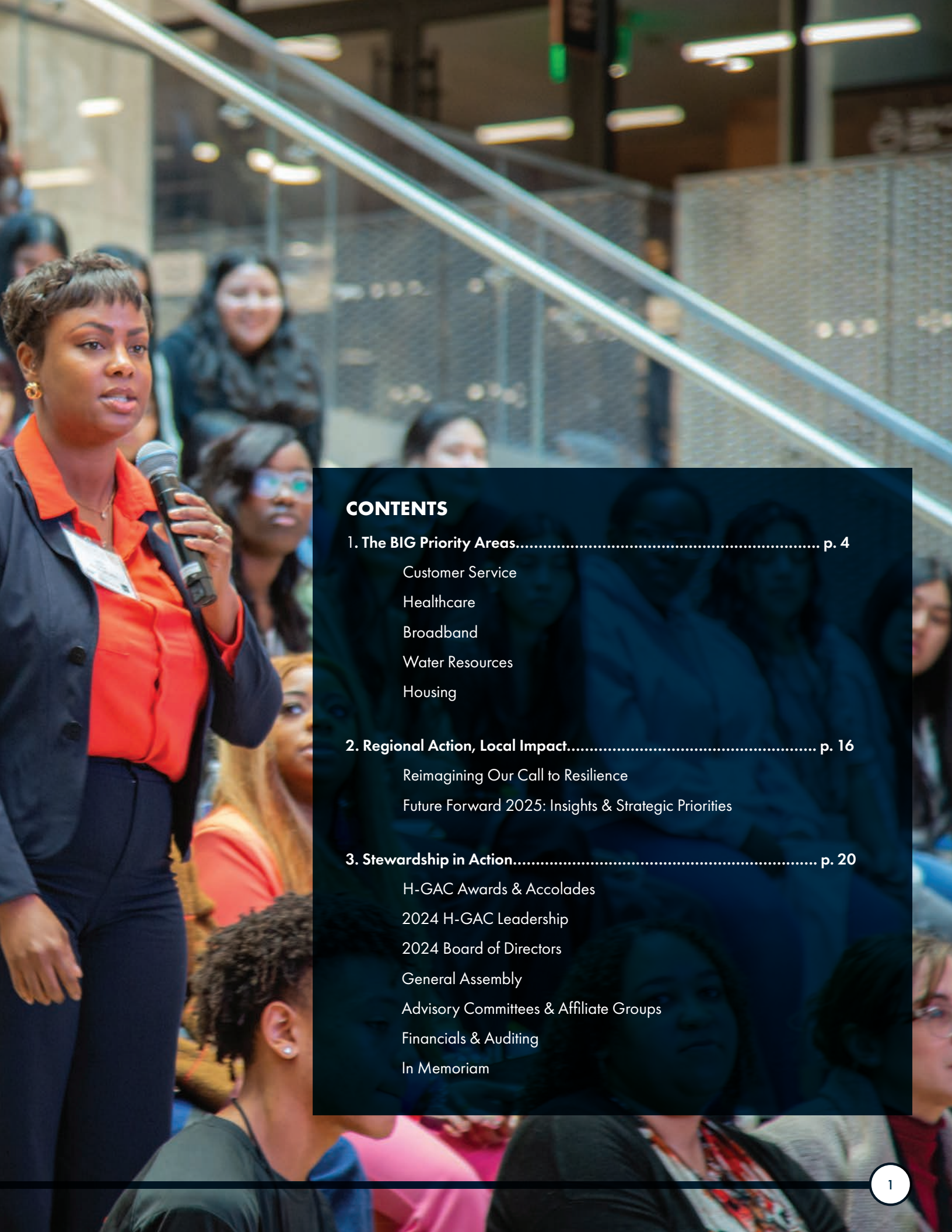
Houston-Galveston  
Area Council





More than 230 students and education and career professionals attended Workforce Solutions' Regional Convener Conference held January 31, 2024. As a program of the Houston-Galveston Area Council, Workforce Solutions is committed to ensuring that today's students are empowered with the necessary information to succeed in the careers of tomorrow. This conference marked a substantial advancement in bridging the education and workforce sectors within the Gulf Coast region.



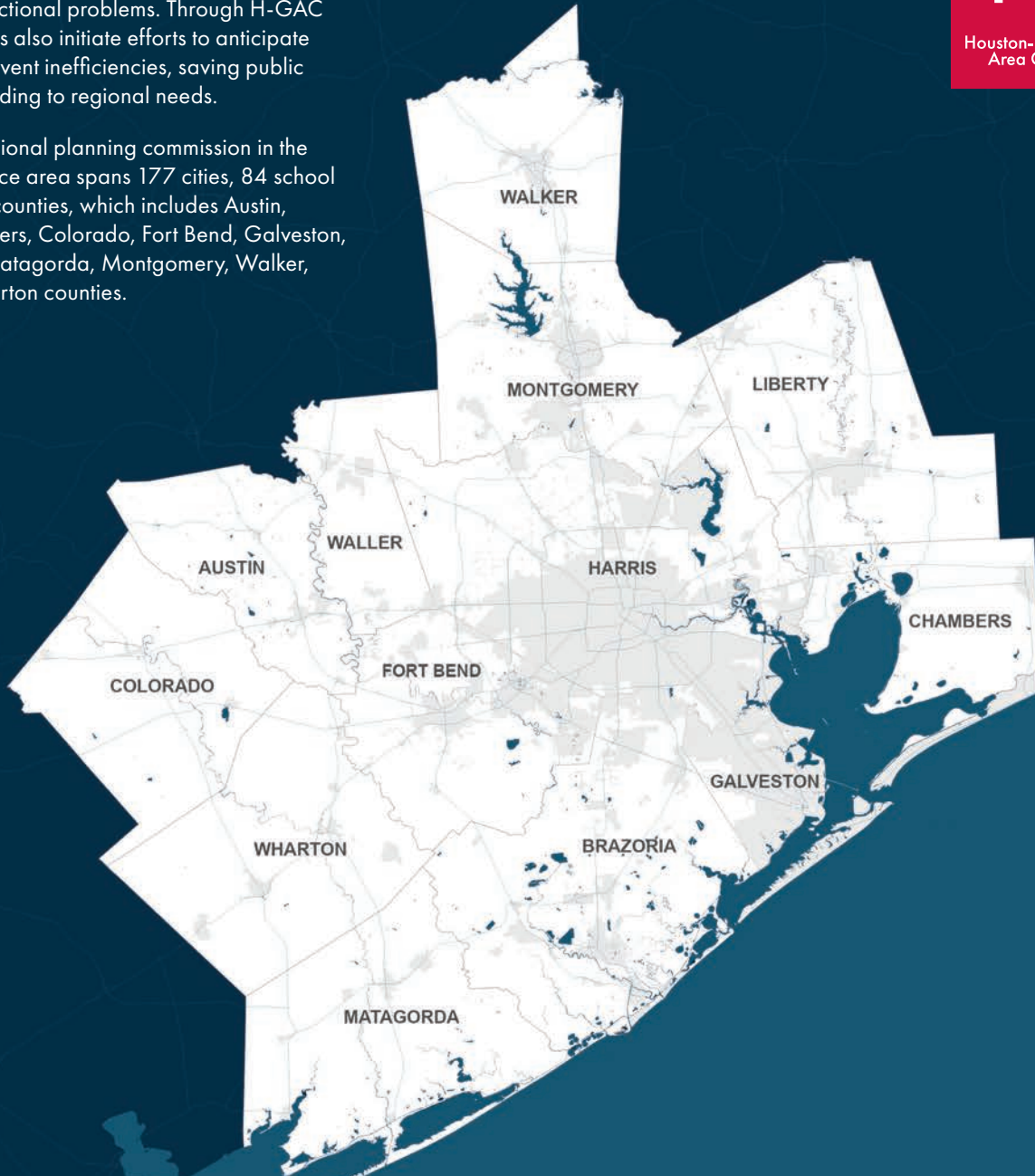


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The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is the regional organization through which local governments consider issues and cooperate to solve multi-jurisdictional problems. Through H-GAC local governments also initiate efforts to anticipate concerns and prevent inefficiencies, saving public funds and responding to regional needs.

As the largest regional planning commission in the country, our service area spans 177 cities, 84 school districts, and 13 counties, which includes Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, and Wharton counties.



The Houston-Galveston region is continuously growing and becoming more diverse. To address the needs of its residents and businesses, intergovernmental collaboration provides the leadership to guide regional development wisely and manage change constructively.

The more than 350-member staff and the 37-member H-GAC Board of Directors understand that a strong economy and rapid growth bring both opportunities and challenges. We meet these challenges in three key ways: 1) providing a forum for jurisdictions of all sizes to come together to solve regional issues, 2) identifying and prioritizing funding opportunities; and 3) providing direct services to the people and local governments within the region.



# A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



**SALLIE ALCORN**

2024 Chair  
H-GAC Board of Directors

As the chair of the 2024 H-GAC Board of Directors, I am proud to highlight our focused priorities this year. Together, we've concentrated on expanding broadband access, advancing affordable housing, and reinforcing critical infrastructure to enhance the quality of life in our region.

Addressing housing affordability is essential for our communities. In response, the board launched H-GAC's first housing committee, dedicated to connecting communities with resources and strategies to increase affordable housing options locally.

Broadband access, especially in rural areas, has increasingly become a priority as we see the disparities throughout the region's communities. By preparing communities to secure federal funding, we're working to bridge the digital divide and expand affordable high-speed internet access.

Our commitment extends to strengthening regional infrastructure, including protecting water resources and supporting workforce readiness. These goals are more than mere words—they represent actionable plans that reflect our responsibility to create resilient, forward-looking communities across the Houston-Galveston area.

Thank you for your support in helping us achieve these shared goals. I look forward to the progress we will continue to make together.

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reflecting on 2024, I want to express my gratitude for the trust our board and members have placed in us at H-GAC. Your support has been invaluable as we tackle some of our region's most pressing issues, including water supply, housing, transportation, and broadband access.

This year brought numerous challenges—from extreme weather events to internal transitions—and I'm immensely proud of our staff's resilience and flexibility. Their ability to adapt to evolving priorities while staying focused on the board's objectives highlights their commitment to serving our region with excellence.

To better understand the unique needs across our communities, in 2025, we will continue H-GAC pop-up events throughout our region focusing on different parts of each county. These events allow us to engage directly with residents, recognizing that even neighboring areas may face distinct challenges. By listening and gathering insights, we can better align our strategies to each community's specific needs.

As we look forward, collaboration among our counties and cities remains essential to ensure we stay connected to our shared vision of making living better and our communities stronger. Together, we can foster trust, innovation, and accountability throughout our work.

Thank you for your continued support as we work to make a lasting, positive impact throughout the Houston-Galveston region.



**CHUCK WEMPLE**

Executive Director  
H-GAC



# THE BIG PRIORITY AREAS







# Listening, Learning, Leading: H-GAC'S COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

At H-GAC, exceptional customer service means more than meeting immediate needs—it's about listening, learning, and leading with proactive solutions. Throughout the past year, H-GAC has strengthened stakeholder engagement and achieved meaningful regional progress.

## LISTENING AND LEARNING WITH INTENT

In 2024, H-GAC completed its initial pop-up meetings across all counties and began round two – returning to each county with a renewed focus on new areas. These pop-ups reinforce our commitment to addressing the region's most pressing challenges and our understanding of local concerns.

The Houston-Galveston Area Agency on Aging (AAA) further exemplified our commitment to listening and responding by launching its roadshow in 2024. Continuing into 2025, these discovery-type meetings hosted at local senior centers throughout the region have helped to identify the needs and service interests of older adults while promoting AAA programs. By tailoring services to enhance quality of life, we honor our aging residents and their contributions to our communities.

H-GAC's Workforce Solutions program also took decisive steps to meet evolving community needs. In October 2024, the Clear Lake career office hosted a public meeting to gather input on enhancing service delivery. Key actions under consideration included co-locating with other community service providers and expanding remote service options to improve accessibility and efficiency.

## LEADING WITH CUSTOMER-CENTERED SOLUTIONS

H-GAC fosters a customer service culture centered on listening, learning, and leading with empathy. This year, we focused on setting clear service expectations and equipping staff to meet diverse community needs. A standout achievement was the launch of the High-Performance Leadership Academy, which provides leadership training to H-GAC staff and member governments, strengthening their ability to lead with excellence and support organizational success.

At left: Since their launch in 2023, H-GAC's award-winning County Pop-Up Meetings have helped identify critical issues throughout our 13 Gulf Coast counties while advancing the board of directors' key focus areas. Learn more about our County Pop-Up Meetings and view our County Profile Sheets to learn what we heard in our round one meeting series.





# Critical Care: ADDRESSING THE REGION'S GROWING HEALTHCARE NEEDS

The Houston-Galveston area's healthcare needs are growing more complex as the region faces an increasing demand for accessible, comprehensive care. With a diverse population spread across urban and rural communities, addressing these needs requires innovative solutions and strategic collaboration.

Rural areas face challenges, such as limited access to medical professionals and specialists, mental health resources, and essential healthcare services. At the same time, mental health concerns are on the rise, particularly among young people, and the demand for telehealth services continues to expand.

In response to these pressing issues, H-GAC is committed to enhancing healthcare throughout the 13-county region with targeted initiatives, partnerships, and workforce development programs aimed at improving the overall well-being of residents.

## H-GAC'S FIRST HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE

H-GAC has taken a significant step to address critical issues in rural health, mental health, and telehealth access through the formation of its healthcare committee. This committee, which will fully mobilize its efforts in 2025, is poised to steer H-GAC's strategic initiatives and explore innovative strategies and funding opportunities to enhance healthcare services throughout the 13-county region.

These efforts are vital for connecting underserved areas to essential healthcare resources, ensuring that no community is left behind. One standout example of how one local community is enacting creative strategies to solve its healthcare challenges is the Christ Clinic in Katy, Texas, which supports volunteer doctors serving the community.

Christ Clinic (pictured at right) is a local non-profit, 501(c)(3) clinic that can provide the uninsured, underinsured, and their families with access to primary care and mental health counseling that they would not otherwise be able to access and/or afford. Established in 2000 as an outreach ministry of Memorial Lutheran Church in Katy, the clinic provided free healthcare services to more than 5,000 patients in 2022.

Additionally, H-GAC has established partnerships with other councils of governments to amplify the impact of shared healthcare solutions. These strategic alliances aim to bring specialized care directly to residents and optimize resource allocation for greater regional benefit.



Photo courtesy of Christ Clinic.





## **INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR BETTER ACCESS AND CARE FOR OLDER ADULTS**

H-GAC's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) has taken a proactive stance to address the health of older adults through innovative programs that eliminate common barriers to care. Recognizing that many face difficulties accessing traditional healthcare services, H-GAC has prioritized outreach that meets older adults where they are.

An important example is AAA's initiative to contract with healthcare professionals including a dental service provider to travel to and deliver services from local senior centers to older adults. This approach ensures that preventive, routine, and essential care is readily accessible and reduces the need for the older patient to navigate complex transportation logistics.

Additionally, providing these onsite dental visits encourages consistent health maintenance, enabling individuals to address potential issues early to maintain their quality of life. In 2025, AAA will look for similar opportunities to expand with other medical specialties. By facilitating these community-based health services, H-GAC supports a comprehensive approach to aging in place and promotes greater health equity among older residents.

## **PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS**

As the demand for skilled healthcare professionals continues to rise, H-GAC in partnership with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and its operating affiliate, Workforce Solutions, is taking decisive action to address workforce shortages in the Gulf Coast region by preparing the next generation of healthcare workers.

A key initiative in this effort is the Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant, which was awarded by the Texas Education Agency to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board in April 2023. This grant supports the creation of a regional education-workforce partnership system that fosters collaboration among educational institutions, workforce development boards, and industry partners.

By leveraging existing structures, such as higher education institutions and nonprofits, the program has been instrumental in providing students with immersive, work-based learning experiences in high-demand industries, including healthcare.

This summer, Workforce Solutions provided 12 students with paid, six-week work-based learning opportunities in healthcare, where they gained hands-on experiences in real-world settings. The program provided an "earn and learn" experience allowing students to apply their academic knowledge. The objectives of the program included gaining industry-specific skills, improving employability, and building professional networks.

Feedback from participants revealed an increased confidence in their career prospects, with some being hired full-time and offered scholarships for further training.







Workforce Solutions is also expanding its reach through partnerships with organizations including Dwyer Workforce Development and Houston Community College (HCC). The HCC-Dwyer Apprenticeship Program is dedicated to training and supporting up to 500 new healthcare professionals annually, focusing on certified nurse aides. As another earn-and-learn opportunity for students, H-GAC is making healthcare careers more accessible.

In addition, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's collaboration with HCA Healthcare, Harris Health, and MD Anderson is addressing workforce shortages in key areas such as inpatient services, clinical laboratories, and medical technology.

Through customized training programs designed by Workforce Solutions, employers are investing in their current workforce through upskilling to meet the demands of the current and future healthcare sector. By investing in their current employees, employers are reporting improved patient care and reduced vacancies, and are creating more opportunities for career advancement.

The impact of these initiatives extends beyond just job training. Workforce Solutions ensures that barriers, such as transportation, housing, and childcare, are addressed to help program participants overcome challenges to completing their training. This comprehensive approach has contributed to the success of the Upskills and Training to Address Skills Gaps initiative, which has already trained more than 65 participants in fields, such as Medical Assisting, Medical Coding and Billing, and Radiology Technology.

Through strategic partnerships, innovative training programs, and targeted workforce development initiatives, Workforce Solutions is helping bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that young people are well-equipped to meet the challenges of the rapidly evolving healthcare sector.



**448**

**Students received  
real-world work  
experience  
through Workforce  
Solutions' Summer  
Earn and Learn**



**65**

**People trained in  
Medical Assisting,  
Medical Coding  
and Billing,  
and Radiology  
Technology**

At left: The Gulf Coast Workforce Board, in partnership with Rice University's Tapia Center, hosted the "Unlock Your Summer" camp, introducing 75 underrepresented students to careers in healthcare, construction, and education through hands-on learning and expert insights.

# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR THE DIGITAL FUTURE

In 2024, H-GAC made strides to close the digital divide by prioritizing the expansion of broadband infrastructure and advancing digital equity across the region. As high-speed internet access becomes as vital as water and electricity utilities, H-GAC's commitment to increasing affordable and accessible broadband has set the groundwork for a more connected future.

## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

H-GAC's focus on high-speed internet access predates the pandemic, but the urgency became clearer as connectivity gaps throughout the region were exposed.

In April 2023, the Regional Broadband Summit brought together municipalities, internet service providers, state and federal agencies, funders, digital equity providers, and other key stakeholders to collectively assess high-speed internet gaps and challenges. A regional analysis provided valuable insights to guide H-GAC's future efforts to overcome these obstacles and seize opportunities for internet expansion.

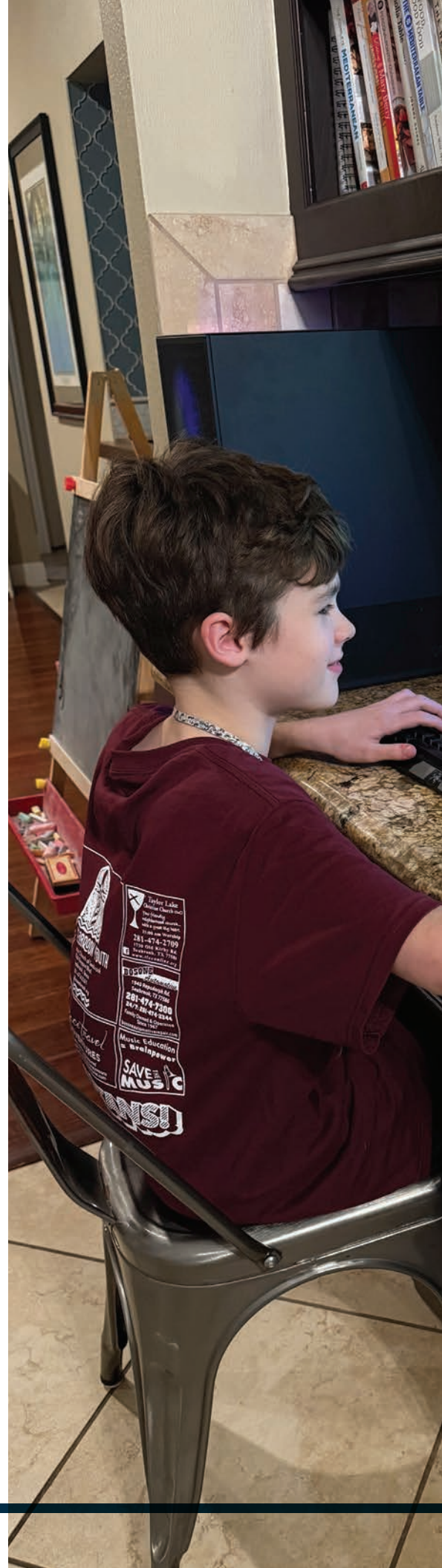
These efforts culminated in late 2023 when H-GAC secured a grant from the Economic Development Administration to fund a comprehensive regional broadband study.

This study became central to H-GAC's high-speed internet strategy and key to understanding the region's internet needs. Throughout the first quarter of 2024, H-GAC hosted more than 25 focus groups and community meetings to engage a diverse array of stakeholders, including internet service providers, education partners, libraries, and chambers of commerce.

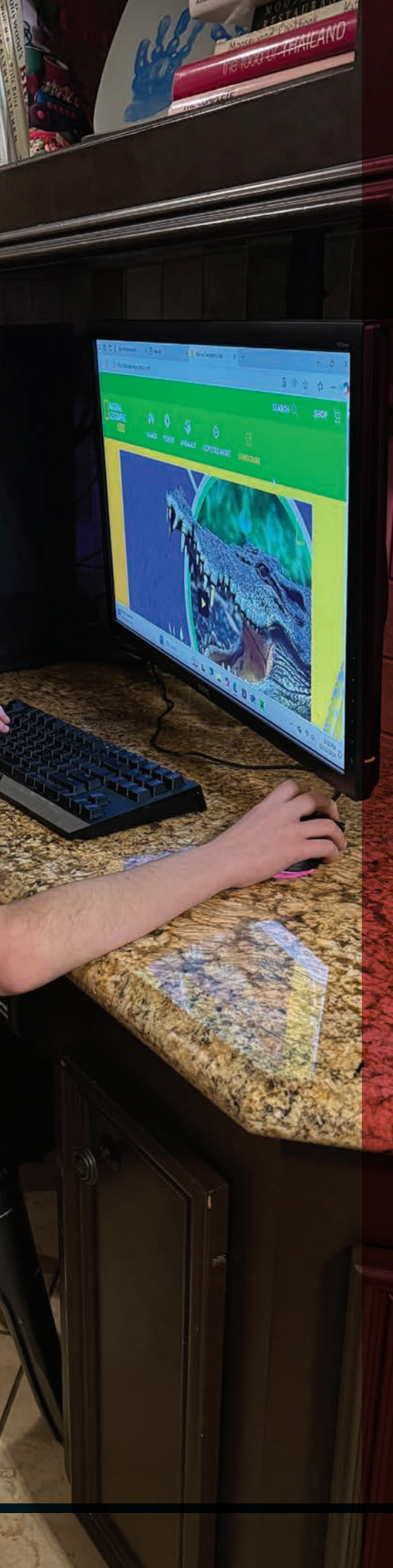
This study has provided the foundation for H-GAC's ongoing efforts to ensure that all residents—urban and rural—have access to reliable, high-speed internet. The study's results, released in late 2024, provide the foundation for H-GAC's ongoing efforts to ensure that all residents have access to reliable, high-speed internet.



Learn more about H-GAC's Regional Broadband Initiative and explore our Regional Broadband Study report.







## **PROMOTING DIGITAL EQUITY**

Infrastructure alone is not sufficient to close the digital divide. H-GAC has also been committed to digital equity—ensuring that high-speed internet is both affordable and accessible. In 2024, H-GAC partnered with the Dallas Federal Reserve to form a local consortium of digital equity providers focusing on affordability challenges and building programs to help residents in underserved areas gain access to digital resources.

Additionally, H-GAC applied for federal grants to support its digital equity work by securing significant matching funds. While the outcome of these applications were still pending at the close of 2024, the partnerships and progress made suggest that these efforts will continue to advance regardless of grant results.

## **CHALLENGING BROADBAND MAPS TO SECURE FUNDING**

Many underserved areas in the Houston-Galveston region are reported by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to have higher internet speeds than they experience in reality, which limits communities' access to federal funds for broadband infrastructure.

A key initiative in 2024 was preparing communities to dispute FCC inaccuracies in the broadband service maps.

While our Regional Broadband Study provides a snapshot of the broadband landscape based on data from 2023-2024, H-GAC has also developed a web tool with continuously refreshed data. This tool captures critical information on broadband challenges and inequities related to demographics, income, geography, and other key factors, supporting communities throughout the challenge process.

H-GAC has obtained a "Tier E" license from the FCC, enabling the organization to help local communities challenge inaccuracies in the FCC's National Broadband Map. As this effort begins in 2025, it will be instrumental in securing federal funding for underserved areas, ensuring that resources are directed where they are needed most.

## **FOSTERING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH**

In 2024, H-GAC introduced "Broadband Beyond," an initiative aimed at fostering cross-jurisdictional collaboration to address broadband and high-speed internet challenges collectively. By encouraging cities, counties, and internet service providers to work together transparently, this initiative seeks to extend high-speed internet coverage, reduce costs, and improve service quality throughout the region.

The goal of Broadband Beyond is to remove the traditional roadblocks that often impede broadband expansion efforts. By approaching internet service providers as a regional issue rather than a municipal one, H-GAC is helping communities share resources, align priorities, and hold service providers accountable for delivering reliable internet access.

# Water Works: A STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO REGIONAL WATER RESOURCE CHALLENGES

In the Houston-Galveston region, water is a precious and scarce resource. Rapid population growth has increased demand and intensified water quality challenges, straining the water supply. In fact, many communities, including Conroe, Spring, and Magnolia, and public water systems have placed restrictions on development and water usage due to water supply shortfalls. H-GAC and its water resources committee are addressing these urgent issues by supporting local communities with water quality programs and fostering collaborative discussions on water supply, shaping the future of water management in the region.

## A REGIONAL APPROACH TO WATER SUPPLY

The growing demand for water supply presents a shared challenge for our communities. In response to a record drought, H-GAC established the water resources committee in 2011 to tackle water supply, water quality, and flood mitigation issues. This committee guides H-GAC staff and shapes strategic priorities in line with regional needs.

By focusing on water supply, the committee enhances the planning processes of the Texas Water Development Board through collaboration among diverse communities. Recent discussions have connected regional leaders, including Wharton County Judge Phillip Spennath and Houston Councilmember Amy Peck, to highlight H-GAC's role as a convener bridging urban and rural areas.

As H-GAC prepares for its second regional water supply conference in spring 2025, discussions will focus on funding options that address water supply and infrastructure challenges.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIZATION OF REGIONAL WATER PROJECTS

In addition to facilitating collaboration among local communities, the water resources committee maintains a list of strategic regional priority projects including those focused on water supply. This process aims to identify and elevate critical projects that address shared water supply and infrastructure challenges.

The committee continually accepts new submissions for consideration. While inclusion on the list does not guarantee funding, past funding sources have used this priority list as a starting point for identifying projects.







## PROTECTING WATER QUALITY: THREE DECADES OF SUCCESS

For more than 30 years, H-GAC has led efforts to address water quality issues in our region’s waterways by focusing on protecting public health, supporting the economy, and preserving the environment. Through its Clean Rivers Program, H-GAC monitors water quality at more than 300 sites throughout the 13-county region. In partnership with local entities and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), H-GAC identifies water quality trends that inform local decision-makers and educates the public on the importance of clean water.

H-GAC’s Watershed Planning Program helps local communities by developing data-driven solutions including watershed protection plans and total maximum daily load implementation plans, to enhance local water quality efforts. The Water Resources team also seeks innovative solutions to address challenges at their source through the Homeowner Wastewater Assistance Program, which assists low-income residents in repairing or replacing malfunctioning or failing septic systems, promoting water quality and community equity.

As part of the program, H-GAC conducts bilingual workshops for homeowners receiving septic system maintenance. In 2025, H-GAC will build on the successes of these workshops and support more homeowners receiving H-GAC wastewater services by creating an on-demand video workshop library in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Funding for the homeowner wastewater assistance program comes from a TCEQ Supplemental Environmental Project, the Harris County District Attorney’s Office, local contributions, and private-sector partnerships including Olin Chemical’s community giving program in Brazoria County.



In 2024, the Homeowner Wastewater Assistance Program provided homeowners with 24 on-site sewage system pump-outs, three system repairs, and two complete system replacements in communities with limited resources. Learn more about how we work to help homeowners while improving our region’s water quality.

## ADDRESSING WORKFORCE CHALLENGES IN WATER MANAGEMENT

A looming retirement of water treatment operators has created a significant workforce challenge named, the “Silver Tsunami.” H-GAC collaborates with 35 regional stakeholders, including utility companies and educational institutions including the Houston Community College system to recruit and train the next generation of operators.

To attract young talent, H-GAC’s Workforce Solutions program promotes apprenticeships and career pathways, facilitating regional discussions to align recruitment efforts and develop training programs that meet local water utility needs.





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# BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGIES

As the 13-county Houston-Galveston region continues to grow, so does the need for a coordinated effort to address housing challenges. H-GAC has established a housing initiative to promote and support housing strategies that meet the diverse needs of our communities.

## A NEW APPROACH: H-GAC'S FIRST HOUSING COMMITTEE

The H-GAC Board of Directors formed its first housing committee to engage local leaders directly on this multifaceted issue. The committee will direct H-GAC's housing activities by establishing regional priorities and providing critical feedback on ongoing efforts. This crucial first step will ensure that H-GAC's efforts consider the breadth of the region's housing needs and opportunities.

## REPLACEMENT & RETROFIT PROGRAMS

H-GAC is actively building the foundation of its housing initiative by integrating housing considerations into existing programs and outreach efforts. To spark discussion on these regional challenges, H-GAC hosted workshops and roundtables focused on local housing needs in connection to its award-winning Livable Centers program. The 2024 Livable Centers studies, workshops, and roundtables explored housing impacts, community needs, and equitable design, generating input from a variety of local stakeholders.

In addition, H-GAC has a long-standing, successful, data-driven program to assist lower-income residents with failing septic and aerobic systems. The Homeowner Wastewater Assistance Program draws on public and private funds to repair or replace failing wastewater systems that might otherwise displace families. The program also offers educational courses to help residents maintain their systems and prevent them from becoming a health or environmental hazard.

H-GAC's housing retrofit program, led by its Area Agency on Aging, reflects a similar commitment to keeping older residents in their homes. These efforts include retrofitting homes to make them accessible, such as installing showers with grab bars or reconfiguring bathrooms for safety and accessibility. By making homes safer and more accommodating, H-GAC helps residents age in place rather than requiring assisted living or nursing care.

The agency also offers weatherization services, including caulking windows and replacing missing shingles, to improve energy efficiency and reduce utility costs. During the summer of 2024, AAA provided air conditioning units to vulnerable households, ensuring access to both cooling and heating for those in need.

Together, these efforts represent H-GAC's comprehensive approach to regional housing challenges, ensuring that residents can stay in their homes safely and comfortably, no matter their circumstances.

# REGIONAL ACTION, LOCAL IMPACT



According to the Public Utility Commission of Texas, nearly one million Texans lost power in May 2024 following a powerful derecho storm. In July, more than two million people were without power for several days following the impact of Hurricane Beryl on the region.

Explore the interactive Post-Hurricane Beryl Assessment tool to learn more about how Hurricane Beryl impacted the 13-county Gulf Coast region.



# REIMAGINING OUR CALL TO RESILIENCE

In 2024, the Gulf Coast region endured an unprecedented series of weather-related challenges. From widespread power outages caused by a powerful derecho storm to the fierce winds and flooding of Hurricane Beryl, these events underscored the region's urgent need for adaptable, resilient planning.

In May, a powerful derecho storm swept through Central Texas, leaving millions without electricity. As we entered early July, Hurricane Beryl made landfall in Matagorda County, unleashing sustained winds of up to 64 mph, gusts nearing 97 mph, and severe coastal flooding that uprooted trees and caused additional widespread power outages further straining critical infrastructure. These back-to-back events highlighted the urgent need for adaptable and resilient planning across the region.

H-GAC responded with a renewed commitment to protecting and supporting communities in the face of extreme weather and climate risks. H-GAC's rapid response and coordinated communication efforts proved to be a vital lifeline as the region navigated the immediate and long-term impacts of these disasters.

A centerpiece of H-GAC's resilience strategy was a series of Disaster Recovery Forums, where regional leaders convened to share resources and strategies to address the urgent needs of increasingly extreme weather patterns, wildfires, heatwaves, and drought. The forums brought to light critical gaps in communication during emergencies, particularly in the availability of handheld radios and interoperable communication systems across jurisdictions, and aging telecommunications infrastructure.

With the understanding that accurate, timely information can be lifesaving, the forums also emphasized refining emergency messaging to ensure clear, actionable guidance reaches every corner of the region, especially in times of crisis.

Following Hurricane Beryl, in collaboration with Matagorda County officials and to support the severely impacted community of Sargent, Texas, H-GAC developed and deployed a Workforce Solutions mobile unit to provide internet access and essential support services. From August 1 through 15, the unit operated from the Sargent Volunteer Fire Department, offering Disaster Unemployment Assistance and review for FEMA assistance.

To bolster future disaster response, H-GAC expanded its range of resources for both residents and local governments. This expansion included accessible disaster recovery funding, public information templates for local governments, and a specialized *Senior Supplement* for 2024 Hurricane Preparedness Guide. Each resource is designed to empower local governments to respond more effectively and ensure that vulnerable populations receive the targeted support they need.

Additionally, H-GAC introduced the Residential Resource Map, which allows local leaders to track events in real time, pinpoint storm shelter locations, and monitor food and water distribution centers. This tool will become indispensable for decision-makers and residents in the future, enabling data-driven choices during and after crises.

Sergeant, Texas, a small coastal community, faced the unthinkable during Hurricane Beryl: catastrophic damage, total communication loss, and the immense challenge of rebuilding. Go behind the scenes of the disaster response to learn how Next Generation 911 systems, wireless backup solutions, and the dedication of first responders ensured emergency calls got through when traditional networks failed. This story isn't just about survival; it's about innovation, resilience, and the unwavering spirit of a community determined to rise above the storm.



# Future-Forward 2025: INSIGHTS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

As H-GAC looks to the future, we are dedicated to prioritizing policies that address our region's most pressing needs, laying a foundation for resilience, growth, and opportunity. H-GAC supports educated, data-driven decision-making.

We highlighted the impact of our Elder Justice program, showcasing its effectiveness in safeguarding senior citizens and underscoring the need for continued support. Our delegation also connected with local representatives, demonstrating H-GAC's commitment to collaborating on solutions that benefit our aging residents and build stronger communities.

## TEXAS 89TH LEGISLATURE

With the upcoming 89th session of the Texas Legislature, H-GAC has identified several strategic priorities to enhance public services and secure essential resources. Notably, Texas is expected to see an influx of state funding in 2025 to support vital areas such as broadband expansion and water infrastructure. Expanding broadband access in rural and underserved areas remains a top priority, as it provides residents with essential connectivity for education, healthcare, and economic vitality.

Additionally, anticipated funding for water initiatives will help address critical regional needs in water supply, flood mitigation, and resource conservation.

At the core of H-GAC's agenda are programs that support older adults, expand eligibility and funding for childcare services, and foster economic resilience. We are also looking forward to legislation that strengthens regional criminal justice planning, cybersecurity measures, and local government capacities for disaster recovery and mitigation.

Housing and transportation remain urgent priorities for our region as well. H-GAC supports policies that promote affordable housing and address mobility challenges, ensuring that our infrastructure can keep pace with growth while improving quality of life.

Our strategic priorities reflect H-GAC's commitment to safeguarding the well-being of our residents and supporting initiatives that enable sustainable growth and economic resilience. By focusing efforts on increasing mental health funding, waste reduction, and workforce development, H-GAC aims to create a healthier and more robust region.

Additionally, we are actively monitoring legislation that impacts local authority and ensuring that state policies include necessary resources to help local governments serve effectively.

Through these legislative efforts and our ongoing advocacy, H-GAC remains a steadfast supporter of the Houston-Galveston region. Together, we are shaping a resilient, connected, and prosperous future for all.



H-GAC is committed to improving the quality of life for older adults through focused legislative priorities. In 2024, H-GAC's Area Agency on Aging hosted meetings at local senior centers to identify the needs and service interests of seniors while promoting its programs. These engagements will continue into 2025. They have and will continue to shape strategies to expand access to transportation, housing, and essential services, ensuring older adults can live independently and thrive while H-GAC honors their vital contributions to our communities.







**I am**

- Caregiving
- Supported
- Not Alone

**I am**

- Retired
- Active
- Thriving

**Area Agency on Aging**

Supports independence with free:

- Meal delivery
- Home modification
- In-home care
- Legal assistance
- and more!

800-437-7396  
www.aag.ny.gov





# STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION



# 2024 SERVICE SNAPSHOT



**11,148**

meals served to older adults



**835**

law enforcement officers received training



**659**

juveniles received mental health services



**48,700**

residents received job training and education



**29,955**

families received child care scholarships



**38,000**

employers served with workforce needs



**227,623**

people assisted with employment services



**\$35M**

in criminal justice grants to 149 recipients



**1,053**

residents placed in internship opportunities



**\$1.37M**

in emergency preparedness grants to 10 entities



**323**

water quality sites monitored



**\$16M**

in energy procurement to 50 entities



**1,024**

abused seniors & protectors received legal advocacy



**\$93M**

in regional HGACBuy purchases



**\$1.5M**

in loans to small businesses



**\$283M**

in regional transportation projects

# 2024 AWARDS & ACCOLADES

## Major Metro Award [1]

H-GAC Pop-Ups—Bringing the conversation to our communities  
Awarded by: National Association of Regional Councils

## 2024 Aliceann Wohlbruck IMPACT Award

H-GAC Pop-Ups—Bringing the conversation to our communities  
Awarded by: National Association of Development Organizations

## 2024 Silver Excalibur Award, Magazines [2]

High-Skill High-Growth Jobs  
Awarded by: Public Relations Society of America, Houston Chapter

## 2024 Bronze Excalibur Award, Special Publications [3]

Four Decades of Solid Waste Management  
Awarded by: Public Relations Society of America, Houston Chapter

## 2024 John Keller Award for Planning Initiative Merit

Bringing Back Main Street Initiative  
Awarded by: American Planning Association Small Town and Rural Division



## Silver Planning Achievement Award for Urban Design [5]

Clute Livable Centers Study  
Awarded by: Houston Chapter of the American Planning Association

## Silver Planning Achievement Award for Transportation

South Houston Livable Centers Study  
Awarded by: Houston Chapter of the American Planning Association







6

**Silver Planning Achievement Award for Public Outreach [4, 6]**

Prairie View Livable Centers Study  
Awarded by: Texas Chapter Houston Section of the American  
Planning Association

Left to Right:  
Emily Barker, Halff Associates  
Jose Cantu, H-GAC  
Kelly Porter, Texas Chapter of the  
American Planning Association  
David Allen, city of Prairie View  
Amanda Ashcroft, H-GAC, and  
Sarai Osorio, H-GAC

# 2024 H-GAC LEADERSHIP TEAM



**CHUCK WEMPLE**  
Executive Director



**ONINYE AKUJUO**  
Chief Operating  
Officer



**RICK GUERRERO**  
Chief Outreach and  
Government Affairs Officer



**CHRISTINA ORDÓÑEZ-  
CAMPOS, CPA**  
Chief Financial Officer



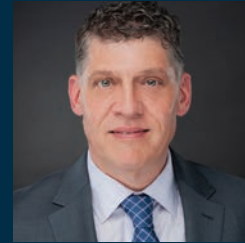
**RONNIE BARNES**  
Director of Enterprise  
Services



**JUSTIN BOWER**  
Director of Community  
& Environmental Planning



**VIET DANG**  
Director of  
Data Services



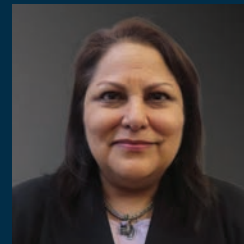
**JOCHEN FLOESSER**  
Director of Data Analytics  
& Research



**CHARLES HILL**  
Director of  
Internal Audit



**KRISTINA KOLLAJA**  
Director of Procurement  
and Contracts



**GILDA MENDOZA**  
Controller  
Accounting



**TERI RAMSEY**  
Director of  
Human Resources



**MIGUEL SEGURA**  
Director of  
Public Affairs



**JULIET STIPECHE**  
Director of  
Human Services



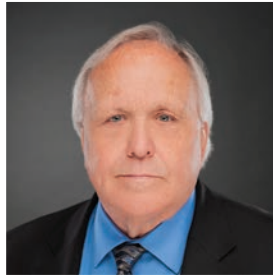
# 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Houston-Galveston Area Council Board of Directors is composed of 37 elected officials representing 13 counties, 111 cities, and 12 school districts. The board leads collaborative efforts with local governments that consider regional issues and fosters cooperation in solving area-wide challenges.

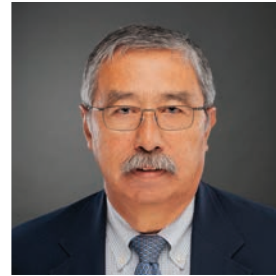
## BOARD OFFICERS



**CHAIR**  
THE HONORABLE  
SALLIE ALCORN



**CHAIR ELECT**  
THE HONORABLE  
JAY KNIGHT



**VICE CHAIR**  
THE HONORABLE  
JOE GARCIA

### AUSTIN COUNTY

The Honorable Tim Lapham  
County Judge

### BRAZORIA COUNTY

The Honorable Stacy Adams  
Commissioner

### CHAMBERS COUNTY

The Honorable Tommy Hammond  
Commissioner

### COLORADO COUNTY

The Honorable Ty Prause  
County Judge

### FORT BEND COUNTY

The Honorable K.P. George  
County Judge

### GALVESTON COUNTY

The Honorable Joseph Giusti  
Commissioner

### HARRIS COUNTY

The Honorable Adrian Garcia  
Commissioner  
The Honorable Lesley Briones  
Commissioner

### LIBERTY COUNTY

The Honorable Jay Knight  
County Judge

### MATAGORDA COUNTY

The Honorable Bobby Seiferman  
County Judge

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The Honorable Mark Keough  
County Judge

### WALKER COUNTY

The Honorable Brandon Decker  
Commissioner

### WALLER COUNTY

The Honorable Trey Duhon  
County Judge

### WHARTON COUNTY

The Honorable Phillip Spenrath  
County Judge

### ALVIN

The Honorable Martin Vela  
Councilmember

### BAYTOWN

The Honorable Laura Alvarado  
Councilmember

### CONROE

The Honorable Howard Wood  
Councilmember

### DEER PARK

The Honorable Tommy Ginn  
Councilmember

### FRIENDSWOOD

The Honorable Sally Branson  
Councilmember

### GALVESTON

The Honorable Marie Robb  
Mayor Pro-Tem

### HOUSTON

The Honorable Sallie Alcorn  
Councilmember

The Honorable Amy Peck  
Councilmember

### HUNTSVILLE

The Honorable Russell Humphrey  
Mayor

### LAKE JACKSON

The Honorable Gerald Roznovsky  
Mayor

### LA PORTE

The Honorable Chuck Engelken, Jr.  
Councilmember

### LEAGUE CITY

The Honorable Tommy Cones  
Councilmember

### MISSOURI CITY

The Honorable Jeffrey Boney  
Councilmember

### PASADENA

The Honorable Dolan Dow  
Councilmember

### PEARLAND

The Honorable Kevin Cole  
Mayor

### ROSENBERG

The Honorable William Benton  
Mayor

### SUGAR LAND

The Honorable Joe Zimmerman  
Mayor (through April 2024)  
The Honorable Stewart Jacobson  
Councilmember (from May 2024)

### TEXAS CITY

The Honorable Jami Clark  
Commissioner

### GENERAL LAW CITIES

The Honorable Joe Garcia  
Mayor Pro-Tem, Pattison

The Honorable Nancy Arnold  
Councilmember, Waller

### HOME RULE CITIES

The Honorable Johnnie Simpson Jr.  
Mayor Pro-Tem, Dickinson

The Honorable Ross Gordon,  
Councilmember, Bellaire

### INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The Honorable Rissie Owens  
Trustee, Huntsville I.S.D.

### EX-OFFICIO, NON-VOTING

Vacant

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## COUNTIES

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Austin	Chambers	Fort Bend	Harris	Matagorda	Walker	Wharton
Brazoria	Colorado	Galveston	Liberty	Montgomery	Waller	

## CITIES OVER 25,000

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Alvin	Deer Park	Houston	Lake Jackson	Pasadena	Sugar Land
Baytown	Friendswood	Huntsville	League City	Pearland	Texas City
Conroe	Galveston	La Porte	Missouri City	Rosenberg	

## HOME RULE CITIES

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Angleton	El Campo	Iowa Colony	Mont Belvieu	Seabrook	Wharton
Bay City	Freeport	Jacinto City	Nassau Bay	Sealy	Willis
Bellaire	Fulshear	Jersey Village	Palacios	Stafford	
Cleveland	Galena Park	Katy	Prairie View	Sweeny	
Clute	Hempstead	La Marque	Richmond	Tomball	
Dayton	Hitchcock	Liberty	Richwood	Webster	
Dickinson	Humble	Manvel	Santa Fe	West University	

## GENERAL LAW CITIES

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Ames	Clear Lake Shores	Hunters Creek Village	Needville	Roman Forest	Surfside Beach
Anahuac	Columbus	Jamaica Beach	New Waverly	San Felipe	Taylor Lake Village
Arcola	Daisetta	Jones Creek	Oak Ridge North	Shenandoah	Thompsons
Bayou Vista	Danbury	Kemah	Old River-Winfree	Shoreacres	Tiki Island
Beach City	Eagle Lake	Kendleton	Oyster Creek	South Houston	Waller
Bellville	East Bernard	Magnolia	Panorama Village	Southside Place	Wallis
Brazoria	El Lago	Meadows Place	Pattison	Splendora	Weimar
Brookshire	Hedwig Village	Montgomery	Piney Point Village	Spring Valley Village	West Columbia
Brookside Village	Hillcrest Village	Morgan's Point	Pleak	Stagecoach	Weston Lakes
Bunker Hill Village	Holiday Lakes		Riverside		

## INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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Alief	Deer Park	Hempstead	Huntsville	Needville	Pearland
Columbia-Brazoria	Fort Bend	Hitchcock	Magnolia	New Waverly	Waller



# ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Advisory committees and their affiliated groups are an essential part of H-GAC's work. The leadership and knowledge of the volunteers that serve on these committees is the key to their success. Many of H-GAC's advisory committees are appointed by the board, based upon nominations from individual board members and other groups.

## **Aging and Disability Advisory Committee**

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors on needs, services, and programs for older adults in the 12 counties surrounding Harris.

## **Clean Rivers Program Basin Steering Committee**

Serves as the primary forum for discussion of water quality issues and advises the H-GAC Board of Directors on all administrative matters related to the Clean Rivers Program.

## **Criminal Justice Advisory Committee**

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors on law enforcement and criminal justice issues.

## **Healthcare Committee**

Reviews and provides recommendations to the H-GAC Board of Directors on regional health challenges.

## **Housing Committee**

Reviews and provides recommendations to the H-GAC Board of Directors on regional housing challenges.

## **Natural Resources Advisory Committee**

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors and staff on environmental and natural resources issues.

## **Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee**

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors and, as appropriate, Transportation Policy Council on air quality issues.

## **Regional Flood Management Committee**

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors on all aspects of flood management issues.

## **Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Council**

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors on matters related to regional homeland security issues.

## **Solid Waste Management Committee**

Advises H-GAC Board of Directors on solid waste management issues.

# AFFILIATE GROUPS

## **Area Emission Reduction Credit Organization**

Promotes air quality improvement while helping to mitigate the adverse impacts on economic development in the eight-county metropolitan planning region.

## **Energy Purchasing Corporation**

Acts as an agent to negotiate the purchase of electricity on behalf of participating jurisdictions.

## **Geographic Data Workgroup**

Convenes regional geographic users to collectively share, distribute, and acquire digital geospatial data.

## **Gulf Coast Economic Development District**

Assists and advises elected officials and industry on issues related to economic development and provides oversight to H-GAC economic development planning programs.

## **Gulf Coast Regional 9-1-1 Emergency Communications District**

Promotes enhanced public safety and increased fiscal and service efficiencies in the administration of emergency communications for the municipalities and

counties of Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Matagorda, Walker, Waller, and Wharton.

## **Gulf Coast Workforce Board**

Provides policy guidance, planning, oversight, and evaluation for the Texas Gulf Coast region's public workforce system.

## **Houston-Galveston Area Local Development Corporation**

Implements Small Business Administration Section 504 loan program; provides long-term, moderate interest loans to eligible small businesses.

## **Transportation Policy Council**

Provides policy guidance and coordination of transportation planning activities and selects/approves federal funding for highway and transit projects in the eight-county metropolitan planning region.

Learn more about H-GAC's advisory committees.



# FINANCIALS & AUDITING

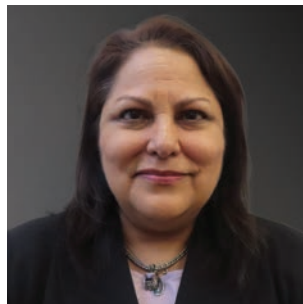
H-GAC’s unified budget for 2024 is presented below. This summary provides an overview of the funding streams and anticipated expenditures by program area. Budget documents and audit reports can be viewed at h-gac.com. In addition to the independent annual audit, H-GAC routinely undergoes monitoring and evaluation by funding partners and the internal auditing department. The internal auditing staff conducts pre-award assessments, contracts compliance inspections, and works with agency departments to identify process improvements.

## EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM



**CHRISTINA ORDÓÑEZ-CAMPOS, CPA**  
Chief Financial Officer

Aging	\$18,371,591
Community & Environmental	\$13,689,834
Data Services	\$4,038,299
Workforce	\$466,428,378
Public Services	\$9,771,674
Transportation	\$19,688,057
Shared Services	\$9,309,128
Local Activities	\$200,450
Capital Expenditures	\$267,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$541,744,411</b>



**GILDA MENDOZA**  
Controller Accounting

## FUNDING SOURCES

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	\$695,000
U.S. Department of Agriculture	\$14,578
Commission on State Emergency Communication	\$59,806
Texas Education Agency	\$600,00
Texas Department of Emergency Management	\$1,063,954
Texas Department of Transportation	\$24,965,274
Texas Criminal Justice Division	\$1,709,458
Texas Workforce Commission	\$467,499,232
Texas General Land Office	\$6,580,691
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	\$3,432,752
Texas Health and Human Services Commission	\$15,107,195
Other Public Agencies	\$11,924,419
Local Contracts	\$6,818,159
Fund Transfers	\$688,171
Houston-Galveston Area Council Funds	\$585,722
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$541,744,411</b>



**CHARLES HILL**  
Director of Internal Audit



# IN MEMORIAM

## JAVIER PALOS

Our Friend and Colleague



We honor the memory of our colleague and friend, Javier Palos, who passed away on September 24, 2024, at the age of 52. Born on July 15, 1972, in Chicago, Javier touched many lives with his warmth, humor, and generosity.

He was a dedicated 17-year member of H-GAC, contributing greatly to our Print Shop team for more than a decade. Known for his infectious smile and outgoing nature, Javier could brighten anyone's day. If you needed a laugh or a boost, he was always ready to share a word of encouragement.

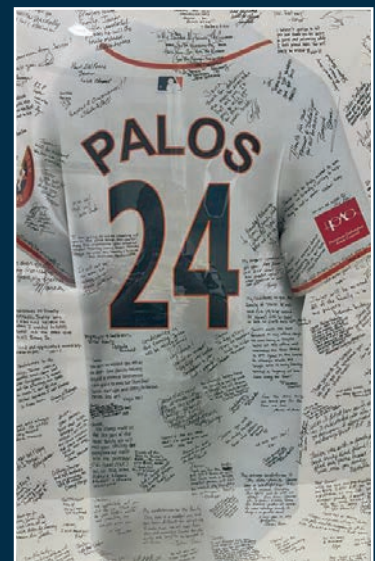
Javier's passion for family was central to his life, and he will be missed deeply by his loved ones. He leaves behind his cherished family: his parents, Salvador Palos, Jr., and Guadalupe Fuentes; his children, Xavier, Jordan, Nina, and Natalie; his siblings, Sal, Juan Daniel, and Guadalupe Martinez; and many other family members and friends who carry forward his memory.

A devoted fan of the Houston Astros and the Chicago Cubs, Javier was looking forward to Spirit Week 2024. In his honor, the staff of H-GAC proceeded with this celebration of community and invited everyone to wear Astros gear on Alma Mater/Sports Day as a tribute to Javier.

Let us celebrate Javier's spirit together, remembering his dedication, joy, and the lasting impact he made on us all. He will forever be a part of the H-GAC family.



Left to right: Javier Palos, Jim Rouse, Dominique Williams, and Israel Perez





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