




**Greater Dallas
Hispanic Chamber
of Commerce**

2023-2024 Public Policy Agenda



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 continue to advocate for economic development and public policy at the federal, state, and local levels that best serve Hispanic and other HUB/MWDBES s.

The GDHCC's public policy priorities for 2023-24

Business and Industry

The transition to a digital, virtual business operating model continues to accelerate in both speed and scope of functions at a time when both the frequency and sophistication of cyberattacks on public, private and nonprofit information management systems increase.

There is a concurrent emerging requirement for suppliers to meet their customers' investor driven requirements in the area of ESG (Environmental Social Governance) reporting.

Either of these operating realities create additional challenges/risks for incumbent businesses to maintain and/or aspiring businesses to grow their businesses. These challenges include increased operating costs for cyber risk insurance and ESG tracking and reporting requirements which inhibit HUB/MWDBEs', as a whole, ability to compete equitably for contracting and other procurement opportunities.

The GDHCC supports legislation, policies and initiatives that:

- Recognize the increased challenges/risks and are focused on mitigating them in both the public and private sectors
- Mitigate onerous Cybersecurity insurance coverage requirements for non-prime suppliers downstream in the supply chain



Culture and Tourism

Culture and tourism are cornerstones for the greater Dallas economy, historically contributing \$14B annually to spending in the region by approximately 49 million visitors each year. 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 that are open for business, embrace and promote diversity, inclusion and equity 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



Business and Workforce

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 disruptions such as inflation/monetary policy, supply chain and COVID-19 have disproportionately impacted many small businesses. Support is needed for businesses to begin to thrive again and to hire workers. Workforce training focused on workforce "upskilling" needed by business and industry is essential to continued growth of the Texas economy as a whole and of small businesses in particular.

The GDHCC supports legislation, policies, and initiatives that:

- Leverage resources – local, state, and federal – to provide training in skills shortage areas
- Address the ongoing and long-term workforce needs of business and industry to ensure there is a readily available trained and educated workforce
- 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 HUB/MWDBES
- Enable affordable housing developments for low- to mid-income families and individuals to attract and retain the workers needed for the economic viability of the state
- 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

Minority and Disadvantaged (D/MWBE)/HUB Enterprises

During the first half of fiscal 2021, 15,380 firms were registered as Texas-certified HUBs with the overall awards to HUBs declining by 4.9 percent (approximately \$69.6 million) from 2020. The total spend includes \$8,841,657 with Disabled Veterans which continues to experience accelerated percentage spend growth compared to the ethnic HUB classifications.

Fiscal 2020 Semi-annual Statewide HUB Subcontracting Expenditures declined by \$52,884,804 (2020 spend of \$481,209,687 – 2021 spend of \$428,324,883.) during this same period, state expenditures increased by \$4,536,357,506 (2021 spend of 116,209,583,662 – 2020 spend of \$11,673,226,116). For Fiscal years 2020 and 2021, the only spend category meeting or exceeding the HUB Spend goal was Professional Services.

Finally, in fiscal year 2020, \$15,285,319,957 or 94.30% of the state's total spend was with non-HUBs compared to 3,032/6.04% \$1,352,588,548/8.34%

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

- The historical failure to achieve the HUB Spend Goals requires focused, intentional and specific remedies at the board/commission level, and the departmental executive leadership
- Inclusion of HUB Spend Goal achievement in the performance and compensation criteria for board/commission and executive leadership levels will incentivize the required focused, intentional, and specific remedies
- Strengthen, increase, and improve equitable participation of HUB/MWDBEs in all government contracting for goods and services and other procurement activities
- Strengthen, increase, and improve the transparency of government procurement and contracting processes



Economic and Small Business Development

Small business are the life blood of economic growth and stability. Small businesses represent 99.8% of Texas business employing 4.9 million employees or 45.1% of the private workforce. Hispanic-owned businesses make up 29.4% of businesses in Texas. As demonstrated during the pandemic, supply and delivery chain disruptions, small businesses bring innovation, are more adaptable to changing economic climate, stimulate local economies and government entities, and help grow both the sales and property tax bases.

The accelerating transition to a virtual business model in which the core operations of supply chain management, talent recruitment, and financial transactions coupled with the use of the web by public and private entities for the distribution of and access critical business communications is a recognized fact. The historic and current inequities of the telecommunications infrastructure in Communities of Color (Communities) create barriers to access for both minority businesses based in and their employees living in these Communities. Job seekers and students are likewise disproportionately negatively impacted.

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

- Intentionally remediate the historic and current inequities in access to high-speed broadband and other digital telecommunications services in underserved Communities
- Mitigate onerous Cybersecurity insurance coverage requirements for non-prime suppliers downstream in the supply chain
- Increase and enhance contracting opportunities for HUB/MWDBEs which will lead to growth in the tax base and to a sustainable, healthy state of the economy
- 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 HUB/MWDBEs in general
- Include achievement of HUB/MWDBE procurement goals in the performance and compensation metrics for public sector entities' executives
- Assure that there is equitable distribution of economic development initiatives across our local communities and across the state
- Provide disclosure and reporting requirements which enhance transparency, accountability, and ethical business practices, including HUB/MWDBE procurement results vs goals



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:

- Increase the supply of energy, including traditional sources, emerging renewable resources, and energy efficiency and, thus, ameliorate generation costs and reduce electric rates for residential and commercial customers
- Balances environmental impacts with commercial and residential energy and water needs with the energy and natural resource needs of business and industry
- Enable equitable contracting and other procurements opportunities for HUB/MWDBEs in the Public Utilities sector through PUC oversight
- 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
- Provide for the inclusion of HUB/MWDBEs in efforts to best utilize and take advantage of new and emerging technologies that support the environment through the use of sustainable materials and production methods and home energy efficiency

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:

- Have clear, easy-to-understand ballot language for amendments, propositions, petitions and other measures that may be put before the voters
- 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 HUB/MWDBEs

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 and human rights and discourage divisiveness



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, 65% of jobs are now considered middle-skill jobs, which require an associate degree or industry/technical certificate. Exacerbating the need for an educated workforce is the shortage of teachers and the lack of sufficient partnerships and collaborations between public education, higher education, and the public and private sectors to make meaningful impact on the availability of a skilled workforce.

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

- Improve the recruitment, preparation and retention of high-quality educators
- Enhance existing or development of additional models that support collaborations of public education, higher education and public and private employers, using Dallas County as a model
- Create and sustain internships and apprenticeships in the public and private sectors in the skilled shortage areas
- Create a future-focused agency that tracks emerging job trends to maintain policy makers and practitioners informed of what is coming so that career readiness programs are created to prepare skilled workers for emerging jobs
- Allocate separate funding for public education and for charter schools in a manner that does not divert or decrease funding for public education
- 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
- Provide programs that inform, train, and equip parents to become actively involved in their children's education in-person and remote learning environments and the 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
- Allocate sufficient funding for indigent individuals and families to meet mental and behavioral health needs
- Promote wellness for all Texas residents and integrated healthcare which addresses treatment for primary, behavioral, physically challenged, mental health and substance use 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 due to disruptions in the ability to access in-person care

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 HUB/MWDBE 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 HUB/MWDBES, 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 (county, state and federal) that enables counties and regions to build new or sustain existing highway, rail, public transit, and air transportation to support economic growth
- Support county financing of the development or redevelopment of transportation or infrastructure in unproductive, underdeveloped or blighted areas in counties
- Provide options in public transportation to those who are mobility dependent, and mobility challenged
- 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 HUB/MWDBES in transportation projects

Voting Rights and Elections

The strength of a democracy is the engagement of its eligible voters in the electoral process. Therefore, the GDHCC does not support policies and procedures that inhibit or restrict voters' access to the ballot whether in person or by mail, including early voting period and adequate number of polling locations for easy voter access.





The Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber of Commerce acknowledges the diligence and dedication of the members of its Public Policy Work Group (PPWG) in developing the 2023-24 Public Policy Agenda:

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