



Texas Economic Development Council

Resiliency Hub Case Studies

KerrEDC's Industry, Inclusion, and Education Quarterly Roundtables

About TEDC Resiliency Hub case studies

The Texas Economic Development Council (TEDC) has a grant under the CARES Act from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to provide education and resources related to resilience, recovery, and sustainability for economic development. TEDC created the Resiliency Hub to celebrate and share inspiring stories of Texas communities that have displayed exemplary work in establishing, implementing, and maintaining programs that support their economies after facing economic distress and to:

- Highlight the importance of economic resiliency planning and implementation
- Broadcast and share innovative solutions to common economic problems
- Highlight potential future challenges and opportunities within the regions
- Reinvigorate professionals involved with the programs and initiatives with the meaningful outcomes and potential of their work

TEDC defines economic resilience as the ability of a community's businesses and economic development efforts to better withstand, and recover more quickly from, adverse incidents of any kind. Four regions were selected, showcasing their initiatives and programs which exemplify resilience and recovery in Texas.

About Kerrville, TX

Kerrville, TX is a small city located two hours west of Austin. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the region, the Kerr Economic Development Corporation (KerrEDC) knew that without action, their small businesses and residents would be hit the hardest.

What they needed to learn was how best to serve their community. To do so, they brought together partners from local industries, workforce organizations, and educators to talk through the challenges they were facing and how best to address them. The initial success of these conversations developed into a long-standing quarterly roundtable, where KerrEDC facilitates conversations on how best to proactively address new challenges that arise in their community.



The true value of an economic development organization is the power of convening.

KerrEDC leadership



About KerrEDC's Industry, Inclusion, and Education Quarterly Roundtables

KerrEDC established a four-way partnership between economic development, workforce, industry, and education organizations to form their quarterly roundtables. While this program was originally created in response to the challenges COVID-19 presented in 2020, they have since evolved into proactive and action-oriented discussions that address a wide range of regional challenges.

The industry, inclusion, and education roundtables are led by KerrEDC and engages key partners, such as:

- Texas Workforce Commission – Provides funding for workforce training specific to the requests and needs of the Industry Roundtable group
- Alamo Area Workforce Solutions and Kerrville Career Center - Provide the support and expertise of training, education, and facility for training
- Industry leaders – Offer internships, apprenticeships, jobs, and competitive wages for the students in the workforce and community college pipeline
- Educational Institutions - Provide the support and expertise of training, education:
 - Schreiner University
 - Kerrville ISD
 - Alamo Colleges
 - Ingram ISD
 - Center Point ISD
 - Hallmark University

Every three months, these community and industry partners meet to discuss current workforce and talent pipeline issues. Tightly managed into efficient 90-minute sessions, each partner has time to explain the challenges they may be facing, respond to others, and offer innovative solutions. At the end of the roundtable, partners state what they will complete before the next quarterly roundtable.

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We've also become much more attentive to the needs of the moment that so many of our industry and business leaders have shared with us.

Schreiner University
leadership



These roundtables have been fundamental in KerrEDC's business retention and expansion efforts and have provided a catalyst for many additional programs and funding opportunities, such as:

Funding

- \$700,000 in funding has been committed to Alamo Colleges for Skills Development
- \$118,000 in Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant to Ingram ISD

Job creation and retention

- Created more than 1,100 manufacturing jobs over a 4-year period
- Brought in \$24 million in new capital investment and \$1.5 million
- During the pandemic, managed to retain 90 percent of manufacturing and primary jobs in the area

Community improvements

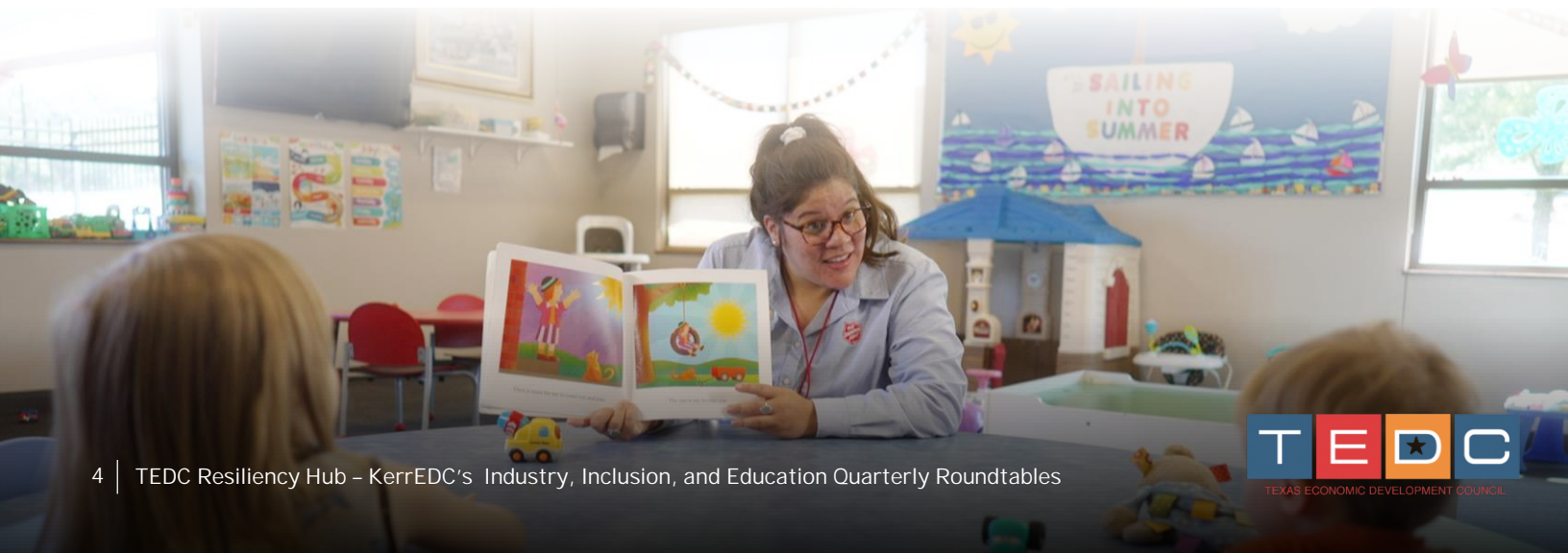
- Improved quality of life by supporting the city and county in installing such features as the hike-and-bike River Trail, which connects the city along the Guadalupe River

Programs, events, and policies

- Hosted the first Annual Career Day Signing events at three regional high schools in cooperation with Texas Workforce Commission
- Experienced a 7-11 percent increase in sales tax revenue throughout 2020 and into 2021
- Passed the Precinct 2 Initiative to legalize alcohol sales for local business, generating more private and tax revenues
- Created the Business & Innovation Forum hosted by downtown businesses to connect local business owners and facilitate conversation
- Implemented the childcare task force in partnership with the Kroc Center and Salvation Army to help address short-term and long-term childcare challenges

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KerrEDC
understands
how to combine
differing
interests and find
the mutual value.
Be it in the way
of workforce
training, in the
way of
infrastructure or
community
enhancements.

Killdeer Manufacturing
leadership



What other regions can learn from Kerrville

Identify who needs to be in the room.

For Kerrville, education, workforce, industry, and economic development organizations were necessary to tackle the issues that stemmed both from COVID-19 and macroeconomic pressures. Industry and workforce gave insights into what kind of training is needed for young talent to enter the workforce. Educators gave perspective on what their kids were experiencing, including the fact they were losing a lot of students to larger metros because of the lack of jobs. KerrEDC acts as the convener and facilitator. If there is a missing organization that may be able to help innovate a solution to a problem, they bring them in. If there is a difficult conversation to be had, they help organizations navigate the nuances.

For other regions, this make-up may look different, and it may change over time. Being adaptive to regional needs and opportunities can help identify who to include in each roundtable.

Regional partner collaboration is a marathon, not a sprint.

Getting diverse partners in the same room takes a lot of coordination and time. Even when they are in the room, it takes effort to build trust between community and industry partners. Many of the participants stated that it has been worth the effort, though. One education leader explained that there was a general mistrust from some community leaders of industry representatives. But once in the room, they realized that what was good for business could also be good for the kids they care for as more high-wage careers were made more attainable.



The first time we came out, we weren't sure what we were getting into. But after that first roundtable, we realized we had been missing out on a critical piece of communication. We were finally at the table to help make decisions and actively work together to solve challenges not only related to education, but to the entire community.

Ingram ISD Educator

Set realistic goals, action items, and timelines.

Part of what makes these roundtables so successful is how they are structured. Each one is only 90 minutes, which reduces the potential fatigue partners may feel and provides a level of consistency that encourages them to come back.

There is also an expectation of accountability. At the end of each meeting, partners commit to their next actions and when they will be completed. If something seems too ambitious, partners do not hesitate to push back to make a timeline or goal more realistic. This culture allows for the roundtables and the partnerships created from them to be more sustainable, and thus more likely for their goals to be achieved.

