

2024 REPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS



"Together, we are building
an even brighter Texas of tomorrow."

— GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT



Governor Abbott rings the Nasdaq closing bell to celebrate the strength of the Texas economy, the eighth largest in the world, during a virtual ceremony at the Governor’s Mansion in November 2023. “Texas is the home of innovation, freedom, and opportunity.” [Read more.](#)

Front cover photos:

(Left) Governor Abbott [Honors Fentanyl Victims, Awareness Advocates](#) In San Antonio. (Right, top to bottom) Governor Abbott Pledges To [Expand Education Freedom](#) In Houston; Governor Abbott [Advocates For Expanded School Choice](#) In Giddings; [Celebrating Charro Days](#) In Brownsville; Governor Abbott Promotes Education Freedom At [Parent Empowerment](#) Night In Temple.

Contents

Letter from the Governor	3
Sessions Summary	4
Jobs and Economy	13
Border Security	26
Public Safety	30
Fentanyl Crisis	40
Across the State	42
Texans Serving Texans	44
The First Lady’s Report	50
Looking Ahead	56
Top Texas Touts	57

Letter from Governor Greg Abbott

We live in a state of infinite possibilities.

Freedom and opportunity are deeply rooted in the history of our great state. As a result, the Texas of today is where innovation flourishes, where hard work is rewarded, and where Texans prosper.

Our \$2.4 trillion economy is the eighth largest in the world. We lead the U.S. in energy production and in exports, semiconductor exports, high-tech exports, and more. We are the No. 1 state for Fortune 500 headquarters and home to 3.2 million small businesses, 1 in 5 of the nation's Hispanic business owners, and 1 in 10 of the nation's Black business owners. And thanks to the Best Business Climate in the nation and the productivity of our young, skilled, diverse, and growing workforce, our economy has expanded faster than the nation as a whole for five quarters in a row.

We also continue to lead the nation in population growth, again gaining more people last year than any other state and surpassing 30.5 million in total population. Since 2015, more than 40% of that growth is newly born Texans. And as the “stickiest state” in the nation, more than 8 in 10 of those born here stay here.

We are home to a record-high 11 Tier One research universities, plus top-ranked schools for business, engineering, graduate studies, and more. Our high school graduation rate is among the highest in the nation. And thanks to the best teachers in America, we are among the top states for Blue Ribbon schools.

Most importantly, more Texans are working than ever before—putting even more Texas families on the path to prosperity. Texas also led the nation for jobs added in 2023 and smashed all previous records month after month for total jobs, the number of Texans working, and the size of the Texas labor force.



Our mighty Texas economy produced another record: the largest budget surplus ever in Texas as we headed into the 88th Legislative Session in January 2023.

Knowing those dollars belong to you—the taxpayer—I signed a law to deliver the largest property tax cut ever in

the history of our great state.

We ended the year investing more in our students, in our teachers, and in our public schools while empowering parents to ensure our education system works for every child. We continue to invest more in workforce development, reward our community colleges for proven performance, and enhance research excellence in our universities. We are helping to build stronger families and care for the vulnerable. We are funding infrastructure improvements and attracting new business investments, especially in the industry sectors critical for growth tomorrow.

We are doing all that and more while preserving liberty and ensuring the safety and security of the people of Texas.

In the pages ahead, I invite you to look back at all we accomplished together in the past year to fulfill the promise of a state of infinite opportunities.

To serve the people of Texas is a privilege, and the First Lady joins me in thanking you. As always, we are grateful to the men and women who serve in uniform to protect our communities, our state, and our nation. We pray that God blesses you all and that God will forever bless the great state of Texas.

88th Legislative Sessions Summary: Initiatives

It has been a year of historic firsts for our great state.

At the close of the 88th Legislative Sessions, I am proud to have signed impactful legislation into law that ensures a brighter, safer, freer, and more prosperous Texas for years to come.

Brighter Texas

The students learning in our classrooms today are the leaders of tomorrow. We continue to invest in the future by:

Expanding Parental Rights and Supporting Public Education

- Expanding parental access to curriculum, school libraries, and what their children are taught in the classroom
- Allowing parents to decide if their child should repeat a grade level or course
- Protecting students from inappropriate or explicit material in Texas public school libraries and school lessons
- Expanding access to the Supplemental Special Education Services program for students with special needs
- Expanding penalties for school personnel who expose children to pornographic materials
- Improving the process for providing dyslexia services and increasing communications to parents of students with dyslexia

Related News:

Governor Abbott Signs Key Legislation
[Empowering Texas Parents](#)

Governor Abbott [Extends Virtual Education Options](#) For Texas Students

- Ensuring city and county regulatory ordinances treat charter school operators fairly
- Improving access to college and career opportunities for rural students by incentivizing local partnerships between school districts, higher education institutions, and nonprofits

Improving School Safety

- Increasing funding for school safety initiatives so every campus can make necessary safety improvements, including technology upgrades, hardening equipment, and expanded mental health resources
- Increasing awareness about the dangers of fentanyl and drug poisoning
- Codifying the new position of Chief of School Safety and Security to ensure compliance with all mandated safety standards
- Clarifying reporting procedures for potential threats and concerning student behavior
- Requiring all schools to install silent panic alarm technology to alert emergency services and law enforcement agencies
- Training Texas law enforcement officers on active shooter response protocol through the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) program
- Ensuring private schools are able to commission peace officers to protect students, teachers, and staff

Together, we are building a stronger Texas of tomorrow,
creating more jobs and economic opportunity,
educating the leaders of the next generation, protecting individual liberties,
restoring parental rights in education, and securing the southern border
in the face of federal inaction.

Governor Abbott presenting

the Milken Educator Award to 4th grade teacher Jenna Dean of Helena Park Elementary School in Nederland in February 2023. Talented and passionate educators like Jenna are helping Texas students reach new heights of success. [Read more.](#)



Strengthening Community Colleges

- Increasing the competitiveness of Texas community colleges through a performance-based funding system
- Expanding access to financial aid to help more low-income students participate in and complete programs
- Increasing enrollment in high-demand fields to meet regional and statewide workforce needs

Elevating Higher Education

- Delivering a historic and transformative investment in higher education
- Creating the Texas University Fund to expand research at public universities
- Establishing the Texas Semiconductor Innovation Consortium and the Texas Semiconductor Innovation Fund through the Texas CHIPS Act

- Establishing the Texas Space Commission, the Texas Aerospace Research and Space Economy Consortium, and the Texas Space Institute
- Expanding the Texas Leadership Scholars Program, the Texas First Scholarship, and the new Texas Opportunity High School Diploma
- Increasing funding for student financial aid and loan repayment programs
- Creating statutory protections for women athletes by prohibiting athletes from competing on a team or as an individual opposite to their biological sex
- Passing legislation to ensure universities focus on academic growth and achievement while ensuring an environment of intellectual rigor and diversity is maintained

Safer Texas

Texas has always been a law-and-order state, and we must keep it that way. We continue to bolster public safety by:

Securing the Border

- Securing increased funding of more than \$6.54 billion for the 2024–2025 biennium to enhance Texas’ border security mission, bringing the state’s total funding for Operation Lone Star to over \$11.2 billion
- Creating a criminal offense for illegal entry into this state and authorizing the return of persons who violate the offense
- Codifying the designation of Mexican drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations and establishing a terrorist offender registry
- Increasing criminal penalties for criminal conduct involving the smuggling of persons or the operation of a stash house
- Granting local law enforcement personnel and U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel access to border security training and expertise from the Texas Department of Public Safety
- Compensating Texas landowners for damage to their property caused by illegal border crossings, cartel activity, or human smuggling
- Authorizing specially trained members of U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel to enforce Texas law

Fighting the Fentanyl Crisis

- Classifying fentanyl deaths as poisonings
- Prosecuting an individual for murder if they distribute fentanyl or drugs laced with fentanyl that kill someone

Related News:

Governor Abbott Signs [Historic Border Security Measures](#) In Brownsville

- Enhancing the criminal penalty for the manufacturing or delivery of fentanyl
- Increasing the supply of lifesaving naloxone and allowing for its distribution on college campuses to increase availability for Texans exposed to fentanyl
- Designating October of each year as Fentanyl Awareness Month

Bolstering Public Safety

- Holding district attorneys accountable by clarifying that refusing to prosecute a class or type of offense constitutes official misconduct and can result in removal from office
- Requiring the appointment of a judge from outside a prosecutor’s district for removal proceedings resulting from official misconduct
- Creating a criminal offense for persons who tamper with or remove an ankle monitor as part of their condition of release on bail, parole, or probation
- Enacting harsher penalties for illegal street racing and catalytic converter theft
- Enhancing criminal penalties for aggravated assault crimes that result in irreversible, traumatic injuries for the victim

Safeguarding Children

- Protecting minor children from undergoing irreversible “gender transition” medical procedures and hormonal treatments that can lead to permanent physiological changes and unintended side effects
- Protecting minors from accessing harmful online content by requiring certain digital service providers verify the age of their users

Freer Texas

Texas has long stood for freedom, personal liberty, and self-reliance. We continue to preserve that promise of Texas by:

Protecting Free Speech and Liberties

- Preserving teachers' rights to display our national motto, "In God We Trust," in their classrooms
- Stopping local governments from restricting Texans' use of gas-powered lawnmowers and other vehicles
- Protecting Texans' personal data with the strongest consumer data privacy law in the country

Ending COVID-19 Restrictions

- Prohibiting government entities and private employers from requiring COVID-19 vaccines
- Prohibiting government COVID-19 mask mandates
- Prohibiting any government from closing schools or businesses because of COVID-19

Related News:

Governor Abbott Commemorates [National Day Of Prayer](#) At Governor's Prayer Breakfast In Round Rock

More Prosperous Texas

Texas offers unparalleled economic freedom and opportunity. We are broadening the pathway to prosperity for more Texans by:

Cutting Property Taxes

- Signing into law a historic \$18 billion in property tax cuts from Texas' budget surplus to put money back into the pockets of hardworking Texans

Encouraging Job Creation

- Enacting protections for businesses against burdensome, patchwork regulations by prohibiting cities, counties, and other political subdivisions from adopting or enforcing rules and ordinances that are inconsistent with statewide policy
- Establishing new specialized courts to address business issues
- Expanding economic development incentives to spur job creation and attract even more investments in Texas

Investing in Infrastructure

- Strengthening and securing the Texas power grid for generations to come, including the creation of a new \$5 billion fund to support construction, maintenance, and modernization of dispatchable electric generating facilities
- Extending critical highway funding to keep Texas moving at the speed of business
- Creating a new \$1 billion fund to expand access to water
- Providing a historic \$1.5 billion in funding to improve broadband access and close the digital divide across Texas

Sessions Summary: Governor's Budget Priorities

The State Budget for Fiscal Years 2024–2025 provides historic levels of property tax relief and does not allow government to grow in an amount greater than the increase in population and inflation. As highlighted below, the budget makes targeted investments in public education, higher education, mental healthcare, foster care, law enforcement, border security, broadband access, and more as we continue to build a bigger, better Texas.

PASSED: Property Tax Relief

I was proud to sign into law the largest property tax cut in Texas history: **\$18 billion** benefiting Texans, including more than 5.7 million Texas homeowners. As approved by Texas voters, the school district homestead exemption will more than double to \$100,000; senior homeowners will be protected from being priced out of their homes; the small business exemption for the franchise tax will double; and Texas small businesses will be protected from excessive appraisal increases.

PASSED: Public Education Funding

Overall funding for public education was increased by **\$6.3 billion**, including:

- \$1.64 billion for school safety enhancements, mental health program expansion, and law enforcement rapid response training
- \$500 million for curriculum reforms to enhance student performance, remove inappropriate and ideological content, improve the quality of classroom instructional materials, help ease teachers' workloads, and provide transparency for parents

In addition, \$5 billion was appropriated to provide two types of benefit enhancements to retired Texas teachers. Over 285,000 Teacher Retirement System of Texas annuitants have already received a one-time stipend, and nearly 400,000 eligible retired teachers have begun receiving a permanent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to their monthly retirement checks.

Governor Abbott celebrating the largest property tax cut in Texas history, approved overwhelmingly by Texas voters. At the bill signing in New Caney in August 2023, the Governor thanked the leadership and members of the Texas House and Senate for coming together to offer Texans the property tax relief they so desperately deserve. [Read more.](#)





Governor Abbott signing bills into law in June 2023 to crack down on human and child trafficking and support survivors of sexual assault, joined by many of the bill authors from the Texas Legislature and team members from the Governor's Public Safety Office.

PASSED: Investing in Higher Education

To ensure the Texas workforce is prepared to succeed in high-demand careers, the biennial budget includes \$650 million to implement new outcome-based funding to community colleges for awarding degrees, certificates, and other credentials of value; nearly \$305 million to bolster health care workforce programs, including Graduate Medical Education funding, nursing shortage reduction incentives, and physician and behavioral health loan repayment programs; and \$20 million for the MyTexasFuture.org website to help Texans identify a degree or credential with greater earning potential and low or no debt.

Additionally, the **Texas University Fund** was appropriated a \$3.9 billion endowment to help emerging research universities across the state enhance their research capabilities with the goal of joining the already top-ranked research institutions in Texas.

PASSED: Building Stronger Families

To address a growing behavioral health crisis in our state and nation, the budget includes \$9.4 billion to support mental health services

provided across state agencies, \$2.2 billion to increase inpatient mental health treatment at state hospitals, and \$20 million in continued funding for mental health services provided through the Texas Veterans + Family Alliance Grant Program.

To support and improve care for the most vulnerable in our communities, the state committed \$133 million in new funding for the Department of Family and Protective Services and community partners to further the transition to **Community-Based Care (CBC)**. This new funding contributes to more than \$700 million in all funds to sustain CBC operations across the state. Funding is also provided to expand kinship placements and enhance the state's one-stop [FamilyResources.texas.gov](https://familyresources.texas.gov) website.

To provide critical healthcare to new mothers, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) postpartum coverage is now extended to 12 months.

In addition, a \$40 million increase in funding for the **Thriving Texas Families** program (formerly known as the Alternatives to Abortion program) will provide even more families with access to education, mentoring, counseling, and

SESSIONS SUMMARY: BUDGET

material assistance like diapers, car seats, and clothes. Nearly \$2 billion was appropriated to increase wages for community attendants and nursing home attendants and to help protect elderly Texans from financial exploitation risks.

PASSED: Protecting Our Communities

Since President Joe Biden took office in January 2021, he has abdicated his constitutional responsibility to protect our nation's border, creating an ongoing crisis. Because of this federal inaction, I launched **Operation Lone Star** in March 2021 to protect our state from the dangers of an open border.

The 88th Legislature in the fourth called session added \$1.54 billion primarily for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a border barrier. The passage of this legislation adjusted the 2024–2025 total appropriations for border security upward to \$6.54 billion.

Opioid Abatement: The deadly threat from opioid overdoses in our nation is exacerbated by the border crisis. Texas law enforcement has seized over 458 million lethal doses of fentanyl since the launch of Operation Lone Star, enough to kill every man, woman, and child in America. Because the use of naloxone, often referred to as Narcan, can reduce or reverse the effects of opioid overdoses from drugs like fentanyl, the 88th Legislature increased funding by \$18 million to supply the lifesaving medication and continue opioid-abuse prevention and education.

Texas Anti-Gang (TAG) Grant Program: To combat threats through a network of TAG Centers that support regional, multidisciplinary approaches to gang violence through the coordination of prevention, intervention, and suppression activities, the budget continues biennial funding at \$15.8 million. This is in addition to \$100 million

remaining from supplemental appropriations passed during the 87th Legislature in the second called session specifically for TAG Centers serving municipalities with a population over 500,000.

Victims of Crime Act: To provide vital victim assistance services in Texas, including crisis intervention, emergency shelter, therapy, support groups, and forensic medical exams, \$115 million of state funds was appropriated to supplement decreased federal awards in order to maintain grant funding for Fiscal Years 2024–2025.

Rural Law Enforcement Grants: The budget includes \$330 million for rural communities to help them retain well-trained officers and more appropriately compensate those who serve and protect the public.

Absconder Task Force: \$3 million in funding will create a rapid response team comprised of state police officers who will have the capability to respond anywhere in the state when a high-risk parolee removes their ankle monitor. This team is capable of initiating an investigation within 24 hours of a monitor being removed to accelerate the apprehension of each offender.

Nonprofit Security Grant Program: \$30 million is provided for target hardening and other physical security enhancements and activities to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of terrorist attack. The majority of recipients are faith-based nonprofit organizations. For example, \$4.4 million was provided to synagogues across Texas in October 2023.

PASSED: Improving Critical Infrastructure

Expanding and improving critical infrastructure supports continuing job creation and economic expansion in Texas. The 2024–2025 budget includes strategic infrastructure investments,



Governor Abbott signing

the Texas CHIPS Act into law in June 2023, joined by members of the Texas Legislature and leaders from higher education and business. “This is a national competition to design and build the future of semiconductors, and it is a race that Texas must win.” [Watch video.](#)

including \$32 billion to improve highway and roadway capacity; \$5 billion in the **Texas Energy Fund** to support construction, maintenance, and modernization of dispatchable electric generating facilities; \$1.5 billion in voter-approved state funding for the **Broadband Infrastructure Fund**; \$1 billion in voter-approved funding for the **New Water Supply for Texas Fund** with the goal of creating 7 million acre-feet of water over the next 10 years, and the **Texas Water Fund** for financing of water infrastructure projects particularly in small and rural Texas communities; \$624 million for the **Flood Infrastructure Fund**; \$600 million for ship channel and port improvements; \$549.7 million for the Gulf Coast Protection District “**Ike Dike**” barrier; and \$123 million for revolving funds supporting safe and clean water projects.

PASSED: Economic Development Tools

Among the transformative economic development programs funded this session:

Texas Jobs, Energy, Technology, and Innovation (JETI) Act: A new competitive economic incentive tool to attract large, capital-intensive economic development projects that bring new investment and create new, good-paying jobs in Texas.

Eligible projects include manufacturing facilities; dispatchable electric generation facilities; natural resource development facilities; research, development, or manufacturing facilities for high-tech infrastructure equipment or technology; and the construction or expansion of critical infrastructure.

Texas Semiconductor Innovation Consortium and Texas Semiconductor Innovation Fund: \$1.36 billion through the Texas CHIPS Act to leverage Texas’ investments in the semiconductor industry, encourage semiconductor-related companies to expand in the state, further develop the expertise and capacity at Texas higher education institutions, and develop a strategic plan to maintain the state’s position as the nation’s leader in semiconductor manufacturing.

This funding includes \$440 million to The University of Texas at Austin and \$226.4 million to Texas A&M University for advanced packaging research and development and for quantum and artificial intelligence semiconductor fabrication.

Texas Space Commission and Texas Aerospace Research and Space Economy Consortium: \$350 million to support development of emerging technologies, research, workforce training, and

SESSIONS SUMMARY: BUDGET

infrastructure for space exploration and commercial aerospace; to promote innovation; and to attract capital investment and new jobs.

This funding includes \$200 million to Texas A&M for creation of the **Texas Space Institute**. The remaining \$150 million will be administered by the Texas Space Commission to further research and investment in Texas' space economy. The commission will be supported by a higher education consortium with a joint mission to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to strengthen the state's proven leadership in civil, commercial, and military aerospace activity.

Texas Moving Image Industry Incentive Program: \$200 million to provide qualifying moving image productions the opportunity to apply for a cash grant based on a percentage of a production's eligible in-state spending, including eligible wages paid to Texas residents.

Texas Enterprise Fund: \$150 million for "deal-closing" grants to companies considering a new project for which one Texas site is competing with out-of-state sites, serving as a performance-based financial incentive for projects that will contribute significant capital investment and create new jobs. Funds are dispersed once job, investment, and wage targets are met.

Texas Tourism: \$127 million to enhance and extend local economic development efforts by marketing Texas as a premier travel destination in out-of-state and international markets, which generates non-Texan travel to Texas and thereby creates revenue and jobs for local communities and the state.

Texas Music Incubator Rebate Program: \$20.2 million in biennium funding to provide qualifying Texas music venues and festival

promoters a full or partial rebate of certain taxes to help support the live music industry in communities across the state.

Moving at the speed of business, Texas is also creating **Specialty Business Courts** with judges who specialize in complex areas of commercial litigation to free the dockets of general jurisdiction courts in Texas and create more predictability in Texas law.

PASSED: Preserving the Promise of Texas

Compact for Seniors: New legislation provides for automatic enrollment for senior homeowners into the additional state homestead exemption of \$10,000 for Texans over 65 or who are disabled, as well as any additional local option exemptions.

Election Integrity: To ensure continued integrity of Texas elections, the Texas Legislature increased funding to the Secretary of State's Forensic Audit and Election Division in addition to increasing the number of personnel.

Centennial Park Fund: A voter-approved appropriation of \$1 billion will enable the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to buy land from willing sellers to develop more state parks to attract even more than the 10 million visitors welcomed each year.

Pension Stabilization: With a significant surplus in the state budget, the 88th Legislature took historic actions to both reduce long-term state liabilities and to ensure the actuarial soundness of all three retirement plans administered by the Employees Retirement System (ERS) of Texas.

Jobs and Economy

Recognized as the 2023 State of the Year for excellence in economic development and job creation, Texas stands as a model for the nation. Perhaps the greatest testament to the much-envied success of the Texas model can be summed up in four simple words: More Texans are working.

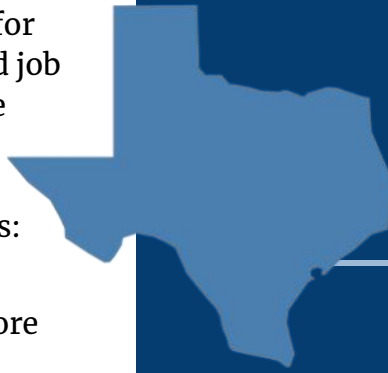
More Texans are working today than ever before as we led the nation for job creation in 2023, adding 369,600 jobs and breaking record after record for total jobs, total employment, and the size of our labor force. In fact, the number of Texans working is more than the population of 46 other states.

Thanks to the unmatched productivity of our young, skilled, diverse, and growing workforce, we now stand as the eighth-largest economy in the world. We lead the nation in exports and high-tech exports. And here in the state where the microchip was first born, the future of America's semiconductor industry is already building for tomorrow, as Texas is the top state for semiconductor manufacturing and exports.

When choosing where to relocate or expand their businesses, more innovative industry leaders find themselves at home in Texas. They recognize the competitive business advantages found only in Texas. And they are in good company.

Texas has earned the [Best State for Business](#) title for a record 19 years in a row. In 2023, Texas was recognized with three [Best Business Climate](#) rankings and was named 2023 [State of the Year](#).

The nation's leading CEOs cite our pro-growth economic policies—with no corporate income tax and no personal income tax—along with our strong and growing workforce, easy access to global markets, robust infrastructure, and predictable regulations.



**8TH-LARGEST
ECONOMY
in the world**

**AMERICA'S
JOBS LEADER**

**MORE
TEXANS WORKING
than ever before**

**BEST
STATE FOR BUSINESS
19 years in a row**

**BEST
BUSINESS CLIMATE
in the nation**

STATE OF THE YEAR

**MOST
FORTUNE 500 HQs**

Related News:

Governor Abbott Touts [Texas' Manufacturing Might](#) At Schneider Electric In El Paso

These business advantages found only in Texas grow more than the bottom line. When freed from the stranglehold of overtaxation and runaway regulation, new ideas flourish here.

As I talk to innovative entrepreneurs from around the world, they point to that freedom and to our best-in-the-nation business climate as the Texas advantages that allow their companies to grow and their employees to succeed, to afford a home, and to enjoy a high quality of life in communities across our great state.

Those unmatched advantages are why “Made in Texas” is such a powerful global brand and why Texas also leads the nation in attracting capital investments, including more than 290 [new corporate headquarters](#) since 2015.

And those advantages are the reasons why Texas is growing. People vote with their feet, and Texas is a

talent magnet across industries, with the lowest outmigration rate in the nation.

Now at 30.5 million Texans and counting, more than 40% of our population growth is newly born Texans. They represent a continuing strong and diverse workforce as we break record after record for the size of our growing labor force.

From our vibrant urban centers to our hometown rural communities, Texas offers room for businesses of all sizes to grow—and succeed. In fact, across every region of Texas, innovative startups are growing alongside the world’s biggest brands, [55 Fortune 500 headquarters](#), hundreds of publicly traded firms, and more than 3.2 million small businesses.

But we cannot be complacent. We now compete globally. We must spur even greater economic expansion to broaden the path to prosperity for all Texas families.

Governor Abbott celebrating Manufacturing Week in Texas at ITD Precision in Harlingen in October 2023.

“Made in Texas” is a powerful global brand as Texas has long been defined by innovation, ingenuity, and a relentless work ethic. We celebrate that spirit all across the state of Texas.



Related News:

Governor Abbott [Denounces ESG Standards](#)
Harmful To U.S. Energy Sector

To continue to attract and retain business capital and grow even more jobs, we will continue to invest in education, workforce development, infrastructure, and the tools needed to attract job creators for a bigger, better Texas.

Attracting Job-Creating Investments

The Texas Enterprise Fund (TEF) is a performance-based financial incentive to attract companies considering a new project for which one Texas site is competing with out-of-state sites. The project must represent a significant capital investment and create new jobs. Administered within my Economic Development and Tourism Office, TEF funds are dispersed once job, investment, and wage targets are met.

In Fiscal Years (FY) 2022–2023, TEF helped to attract:

- Nearly \$20.2 billion in new capital investments
- Nearly 9,500 new direct jobs, plus thousands more indirect jobs at existing local and small businesses in communities across the state

The \$83.7 million in TEF awards in FY 2022–2023 helped to close the deal on corporate headquarters relocations, major expansion projects, and other job-creating business investments.

With TEF fully funded for FY 2023–2024, we will continue helping Texas communities grow their local economies and attract even more good-paying jobs for hardworking Texans all across the Lone Star State.

Projected Return: FY 2022–2023 TEF Projects

Abilene: \$184.5 million investment by [Great Lakes Cheese](#) Co., Inc.; 510 new jobs

Allen: \$6.8 million investment by [MD7](#), LLC; 218 new jobs

Amarillo: \$88 million investment by [Cacique](#), LLC; 187 jobs

Amarillo: \$670 million investment by [Producer Owned Beef](#), LLC; 1,529 new jobs

College Station: \$300 million investment by [Fujifilm Diosynth](#) Biotechnologies Texas, LLC; 150 new jobs

Corrigan: \$211 million investment by [Corrigan OSB](#), LLC; 50 new jobs

Dallas: \$29.6 million investment by [CBRE](#), Inc.; 460 new jobs

Frisco: \$1.48 million investment by [Boingo Wireless](#); 199 new jobs

Frisco: \$57.98 million investment by [TIAA](#); 2,000 new jobs

Irving: \$455 million investment from [Wells Fargo](#), N.A.; 650 new jobs

Kerrville: \$10.4 million investment by [Killdeer Mountain Manufacturing](#); 100 new jobs

Lockhart: \$29.8 million investment by The [Ziegenfelder Company](#); 100 new jobs

Lubbock: \$870 million investment by [Leprino Foods](#); 600 new jobs

McGregor: \$210 million investment by [Knauf Insulation](#); 151 new jobs

Richardson: \$13 million investment by [CBRE](#), Inc.; 550 new jobs

Sulphur Springs: \$27 million investment by [D6](#), Inc.; 231 new jobs

Taylor: \$17 billion investment by [Samsung Austin Semiconductors](#), LLC; 1,800 new jobs

Related News:

Governor Abbott Announces [Texas Small Business Credit Initiative](#)

Supporting Small Business Growth

Small businesses are the very backbone of the Texas economy. There are more than 3.2 million small businesses in Texas, representing an astounding 99.8% of all businesses in our great state and employing nearly half of the growing Texas workforce.

Texas is a top state for small business job growth and leads the nation for jobs created by Black business owners, Black women business owners, Hispanic women business owners, and veteran business owners.

In May, I was proud to recognize Small Business Week in Texas and celebrate the essential role small businesses play in our state's innovative, thriving economy.

The [Office of Small Business Assistance](#) within my Economic Development and Tourism Office is the principal advocate for small business owners and entrepreneurs in Texas. In FY 2023, the Small Business Assistance team hosted 14 in-person

Governor's Small Business Summits in communities across the state, providing more than 2,800 Texas entrepreneurs, small business owners, and resource providers with timely, relevant, and actionable advice on starting, growing, and sustaining their businesses.

The Small Business team also produced six webinars providing information on accessing funding, marketing tools, export programs, expansion strategies, and overcoming common business challenges. Webinars are recorded and available to watch online through the [Governor's Small Business Webinar Resource Library](#).

The [Governor's Small Business Resource Portal](#) also recorded 11,740 engagements in FY 2023. This helpful online tool is the most convenient resource for aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners, providing a customizable list of contacts to help start or grow a business in Texas.

The team also publishes a Small Business Handbook, a Business Licenses & Permits Guide, and more, available at gov.texas.gov/smallbusiness.

Texas is the proud home

to more than 1.3 million women business owners.

The final Governor's Small Business Summit of the year, celebrating women in business, took place in **Houston**. The sold-out event connected more than 200 Texas women entrepreneurs with resources to start and grow their business.





Governor Abbott joining

in the groundbreaking for Tesla's new lithium refining facility, the first of its kind in North America, in Robstown in May 2023.

With a well-educated and highly skilled workforce, Texas will continue to be a hub of innovation, leading the way for the future of technology. [Read more.](#)

Connecting Texans to Opportunity

To connect more Texans to the opportunity to advance through in-demand skills training leading to higher-paying jobs, the Texas Workforce Investment Council within my Economic Development and Tourism Office assists with strategic planning and evaluation of the Texas workforce development system. The 19 members of the system represent business, organized labor, education, community-based service providers, and eight state agencies.

Through this collaboration in FY 2023:

- More than 4.2 million Texans took advantage of workforce development and education services through 23 programs
- Over 850,000 Texans who participated in a workforce program found a job, stayed in a job, and/or enrolled in further education or training
 - More than 675,000 completed a degree, certificate, or other educational credential

- Almost 532,000 gained employment or enrolled in additional education or training
- Nearly 338,000 stayed employed or enrolled in further education or training

In FY 2023, I was proud to award more than \$6.5 million to 21 workforce skills training and job placement programs across the state. The grants support innovative programs that lead to successful job placement, increased wages, and improved job retention, as well as serve workforce populations with special needs.

And in November 2023, I approved the [Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan](#) for Fiscal Years 2024–2031. Developed by the Texas Workforce Investment Council, the plan guides the state's workforce system partners in the administration of training and development programs that promote the continued development of a well-educated, highly skilled Texas workforce.

RELATED NEWS:

Governor Abbott, UT System Announce [New World-Class Cancer Center](#) In **Austin**

Governor Abbott Touts [Mighty Texas Economy](#) At U.S. India Chamber Of Commerce In **Dallas**

Governor Abbott Champions Texas' [Critical Aerospace, Defense Industry](#) In **Dallas**

Governor Abbott Celebrates [New National Healthcare Research Hub](#) In **Dallas**

Governor Abbott Celebrates [Leading Tourism Industry](#) At New Omni PGA Frisco Resort

Governor Abbott Celebrates Charter Communications' [\\$1.3 Billion Broadband Statewide Expansion](#) In **Harlingen**

Governor Abbott Lauds Texas As [Global Medical Research Leader](#) In **Houston**

Governor Abbott Celebrates [Wells Fargo Irving](#) Campus Groundbreaking

Governor Abbott Celebrates [Mid-Continent Steel And Wire's New Macro Hub](#) In **Laredo**

Governor Abbott Highlights [Talent-Strong Workforce](#) For 21st Century At **Odessa College**

Governor Abbott Celebrates Boeing – **Port San Antonio** [Educational Partnership](#)

Governor Abbott Applauds [South Texas' Ingenuity](#) At **Rio Grande Valley** Economic Summit

Governor Abbott Announces [ICB Manufacturing Facility Expansion](#) In **San Antonio**

Governor Abbott Touts [Economic Wins Of 88th Legislature](#) In **Sherman**

Governor Abbott Touts [Expanding Rural Healthcare](#) At **UT Tyler** Medical School

Governor Abbott Highlights Ongoing [Support For Texas Small Businesses](#)

Governor Abbott Signs [Critical Energy Laws](#) At **TIPRO** Summer Conference

Governor Abbott, TxDOT Announce Record [\\$142 Billion](#) Transportation Investment

Governor Abbott [Rings Closing Bell](#) At **NYSE**

Governor Abbott Meets With [French President Macron, Indian Prime Minister Modi](#)

Governor Abbott celebrating

another Governor's Cup win in March 2023—for the 11th year in a row and 19th overall, records unmatched by any other state in attracting job-creating business investments. The Governor was joined by members of the Texas Legislature, elected officials, and business and economic development leaders. [Read more.](#)



Promoting Tourism and Growing Local Jobs

Texas is one of the top travel destinations for visitors from across the nation and around the world. The travel and tourism industry is a key component of the state and local economies, supporting 1 in 11 jobs in Texas.

- Travelers to and within Texas generated more than \$187.5 billion in economic impact and supported 1.2 million jobs across the state with \$67.5 billion in earnings in 2022.

Every region offers endless opportunities to experience the natural beauty, rich history, and vibrant cultures of our great state.

The mission of [Travel Texas](#) in my Economic Development and Tourism Office is to enhance and extend local economic development efforts by marketing Texas as a premier travel destination in out-of-state and international markets, which generates non-Texan travel to Texas and thereby creates revenue and jobs for local communities and the state.

A strong public-private partnership is critical to the success of Travel Texas' highly effective and award-winning marketing campaign.

Travel Texas works in concert with its partners, including convention and visitors bureaus, destination marketing organizations, local



chambers of commerce, and private travel-related businesses and associations, to create economic opportunity and prosperity for the state and local communities.

Travel Texas milestones for FY 2023 include:

- The “[Get Your Own Trip To Texas](#)” campaign continued to grow with new storytelling that highlighted the unmatched diversity in cultures, regions, and things to do in the state. New social video, evolved print and digital, and a host of new storytelling content extended the campaign in new ways to keep the target market engaged and inspired. Partnerships with premium content providers like National Geographic, Atlas Obscura, Amazon, Hearst, Kayak, AARP, and others helped Travel Texas achieve high awareness goals and increase travel intent beyond traditional ad placements.
- The [Travel Texas Trip Builder](#) continued as the campaign’s centerpiece. This custom website feature was developed to be a visually focused inspiration board for users. Mimicking the interactivity of popular apps, where you can swipe left for no or right for yes, Travel Texas shows a mix of nearly 70 different Texas experiences that, based on selections, serve up a customized trip name and itinerary. The Trip Builder accounted for 79% of site-wide page views in FY 2023 and generated over 69,000 custom trips.
- In FY 2023, advertising influenced more than 1.6 million trips to Texas, and these out-of-state travelers spent \$3.3 billion. In total, advertising efforts netted over 4.8 billion paid impressions and generated 46% advertising awareness among out-of-state households.
- FY 2023 public relations efforts generated more than 1.6 billion impressions with an ad value greater than \$33 million.

Each year the travel industry comes together for IPW, the leading international inbound travel trade show. For the first time in 20 years, Texas had the privilege of hosting IPW. In May, **San Antonio** welcomed nearly 5,000 attendees from more than 60 countries. This impactful gathering brought together U.S. travel organizations to meet with tour operators and travel journalists from around the world.

Travel Texas partnered with the U.S. Travel Association, Visit San Antonio, and industry stakeholders from around the state for a closing night finale that showcased all the state has to offer visitors. Every element was designed to represent all seven tourism regions of Texas, and guests experienced a taste of what makes each region unique through activations from a variety of industry stakeholders.

The 3-year economic impact of IPW for the state of Texas is expected to be more than 600,000 new international visitors and \$1 billion in international spending.

Texas Travel Industry Recovery Program

In FY 2023, approximately \$56.5 million in Texas Travel Industry Recovery Program (TTIR) funds were awarded to 2,956 eligible applicants by my Economic Development and Tourism Office. Launched in July 2022 following the 87th Legislative Session to administer \$180 million of funds received from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, TTIR provides grants for the recovery of Texas businesses in the tourism, travel, and hospitality industry that had been negatively impacted due to COVID-19.

Growing Media Production and Local Jobs

For more than 50 years, the [Texas Film Commission](#) in my Economic Development and Tourism Office has helped grow local jobs and economies by promoting Texas as the premier destination for film, television, commercial, animation, visual effects, video game, and extended reality production.

Among recent job-creation successes:

- The [Texas Moving Image Industry Incentive Program](#) provides qualifying film, television, commercial, visual effects, and video game productions the opportunity to receive a cash grant based on a percentage of a project's eligible Texas expenditures, including qualified wages paid to Texas residents. For the life of the program through August 31, 2023, approved projects have **generated \$2.02 billion of in-state spending and created 183,000 jobs**, resulting in a return on investment of 520%.
- The [Film Friendly Texas Certified Community](#) program connects the media industry with skilled community liaisons to provide local expertise and production support. Through the Film Friendly Texas training and certification process, communities large and small are prepared to help match local businesses with production-related needs, creating jobs for Texas-based crew members and local residents, as well as spurring on-site spending at local businesses.
- During 2023, the Film Friendly Texas program certified 14 new communities to reach more than 175 Film Friendly Texas communities in total. Joining in 2023: **Atlanta, Beaumont, Borger, Cameron, Celina, Crockett, Dalhart, Grand Prairie, Jasper, Lake Jackson, New Braunfels, Rosenberg, Rowlett, and Sweeny.**
- The Texas Film Commission hosted two in-person Film Friendly Texas workshops in 2023: in **McAllen**, with 16 communities participating



Filmed exclusively

in Texas in communities including Stephenville, Weatherford, Fort Worth, and Marfa, the miniseries “Lawmen: Bass Reeves” features David Oyelowo as the legendary Deputy U.S. Marshal. The Texas Film Commission assisted the production with location guidance.

(Photo Credit: Lawmen: Bass Reeves 2023, Paramount+ Network)

Related News:

Governor Abbott Presents [Texas Medal Of Arts](#)

and in **Lubbock**, with 27 communities participating. In addition, 45 Texas communities attended a virtual workshop.

In 2023, the digital media and video game industries continued to expand in Texas as Microsoft acquired Texas-based video game developer Activision Blizzard. Two of the industry's largest games released in 2023 were also from Texas-based developers: Arkane's *Redfall* and Bethesda's *Starfield*.

- In FY 2023, the Texas Film Commission approved video game publisher Activision Publishing Inc. to receive a Media Production Development Zone (MPDZ) designation for its **Austin**-based video game studio Infinity Ward.

The MPDZ program encourages the development of media production facilities in Texas by granting a sales-and-use-tax exemption for construction, maintenance, or renovation of a facility, based on factors such as capital investment, job creation, and wages.

The MPDZ program continues to be an effective economic development tool, as evidenced by the 15 inquiries the Texas Film Commission received from potential applicants and community partners in FY 2023. And with legislation passed in the 88th Legislative Session, the program now permits smaller communities to be designated.

The Texas Moving Image Archive Program, also known as the [Texas Film Round-Up](#), is a collaboration with the nonprofit Texas Archive of the Moving Image (TAMI), celebrating Texas history and our state's film production heritage by preserving moving images and making them available to the public and educators around the world.

- In FY 2023, TAMI received 2,332 films, videotapes, and digital files from the Community Film Round-Up in **San Angelo**, an exhibition event in **San Antonio**, and mail-in contributions from across the state. These materials included home movies, television broadcasts, government films, tourism films, commercials, industrial films, and more.

The Texas Film Commission also administers the **Moving Image Workforce Training Program** to develop a workforce for the creative media industries in Texas. The program provides educational opportunities, training, and certification to attendees who complete workshops.

In 2023, the Texas Film Commission also partnered with Capital Area Workforce Solutions to participate in their educator externship program, hosting 30 capital-area teachers and educators and providing them with media production industry knowledge to help them better prepare their students to enter the future workforce.

Finally, to connect more Texans to jobs in the industry today, the Texas Film Commission's [Job Hotline](#) listed over 52 projects that supported 260 jobs, and the Texas Production Directory added 85 new crew, company, organization, and vendor listings as a resource for industry projects hiring in Texas.

Supporting Texas Music, Growing Local Jobs

Music is key to the Texas brand—drawing visitors from around the globe, attracting a talented and growing workforce across industries, and supporting continuing business recruitment and expansion efforts throughout our state. And for more than 30 years, the [Texas Music Office](#) has helped to foster the economic development of Texas music businesses, Texas musicians, and Texas communities.

- With support from the Texas Music Office in my Economic Development and Tourism Office and employers across the state, the Texas music industry **accounted for more than 192,000 direct and indirect permanent jobs and generated more than \$26 billion in economic activity statewide in 2022.**

This past year, the Texas Music Office continued expansion of the [Music Friendly Texas Certified Community Program](#) to foster best practices among music communities, to create a more interconnected music industry, and to grow local jobs in Texas.

- After months of collaboration and stakeholder workshops, 15 new cities were added to the program in 2023: **Amarillo, Clear Lake Shores, College Station, Corpus Christi, Corsicana, Dalhart, Frisco, Granbury, Kerrville, Linden, Lufkin, Marshall, South Padre Island, Sweetwater, and Weatherford.**

The Music Friendly Texas program now includes 55 communities and counting.

(The Music Friendly Texas presentation ceremony in College Station shown in the photo below.)



Related News:

Governor Abbott Releases [Texas Music Industry Economic Impact Report](#)

Among notable 2023 success:

- With collaboration between communities a key component of the Music Friendly Texas Community program, the Texas Music Office hosted the 5th Annual Texas Sounds & Cities Conference, bringing together Music Friendly Texas liaisons and potential Music Friendly Texas communities from across the state for a day of panels and roundtable discussions in **Houston**.
- The Texas Music Office was instrumental in getting multiyear contracts signed to bring the Academy of Country Music Awards to **Frisco** and the Country Music Television Awards to **Austin**.
- The Texas Music Office was also proud to welcome a new music label imprint to **Austin**, Big Loud Texas, a joint venture between Big Loud and Texas musicians Jon Randall and Miranda Lambert.
- Through the ongoing partnership with the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles and the custom Texas Music License Plate program, the Texas Music Office's Music Education & Community Grant Program **issued \$6,000 in grants in 2023 to underserved communities** and well-deserving nonprofits for music programming and music education throughout the state.

The Texas Music Office continued to partner with industry organizations to promote Texas music business opportunities nationwide.

Leadership attended and was invited to speak at multiple music industry conferences throughout the country. Staff also represented the Texas Music Office at music events around the state.

The estimated attendance or reach for all activations, events, and speaking engagements in 2023 was 20,000.

With the rising visibility and success of the Texas Music Office—the only standalone state music office in the country with the only Music Friendly Community Program—the team has been sharing the office's experience with other states, such as Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia as they seek to create their own state music offices.

Ongoing marketing and communications outreach, including monthly newsletters, website news posts, and social media engagements, reached an audience of more than 2 million.

Finally, at the end of 2023, the Texas Music Office had nearly 16,000 confirmed businesses in the online Texas Music Industry Directory.

Texas Music Incubator Rebate Program

On September 1, 2023, the Texas Music Office launched the Texas Music Incubator Rebate (TMIR) Program along with a standalone website and online application portal. TMIR was signed into law by Governor Abbott following the 87th Legislative Session, with \$20.2 million in FY 2024–2025 funding then approved in the 88th Legislative Session. The rebate program allows qualifying Texas music venues and festival promoters to receive up to \$100,000 in tax rebates on gross receipts and sales taxes on mixed beverages. The first round of applications closed on November 30, 2023.

Expanding International Partnerships

Texas is a hub for innovation and intellectual capital—and for investments from around the world. In fact, Texas is the top state for attracting job-creating foreign direct investments over the last 20 years.

To further promote business investments, job creation, and innovation, I signed a [Statement of Intent](#) with French Minister Olivier Becht while in Paris in July. I was pleased to join the First Lady and Secretary of State Jane Nelson for the final stop of the economic development mission to Germany, the United Kingdom, and France. (See page 54 of the First Lady's Report.)

In September, I met with Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Germany Annalena Baerbock and other German leaders at the Governor's Mansion to discuss the unique economic relationship and continued international partnership between Texas and Germany. (Top photo.)

Earlier in the year, I welcomed Toyota CEO Koji Sato to the Texas Capitol. Texas is home to Toyota's North American headquarters, and Toyota plays a vital role in the Texas economy, representing \$5 billion in direct investment and supporting over 28,000 Texas jobs. (Second photo.)

I met with Coahuila Governor-Elect Manolo Jiménez Salinas in October at the Governor's Mansion to strengthen the two states' continued cooperation on border security and commitment to fostering strong economic ties. (Third photo.)

And in November, I traveled to Israel and met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Isaac Herzog, and other Israeli officials to discuss ways Texas can continue to support their defense of freedom. (Fourth photo.)



Border Security

Texas continues to hold the line to defend our state and nation.

From day one, President Joe Biden's reckless open border policies have created an ongoing crisis at our southern border as record levels of illegal immigrants and deadly drugs like fentanyl pour into Texas communities.

Texas is taking historic action to respond to this border crisis.

In 2021, I launched [Operation Lone Star](#), deploying thousands of Texas National Guard soldiers and Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) troopers to the southern border.

Operation Lone Star personnel work around the clock to deter and repel illegal crossings, arrest human smugglers and cartel gang members, and stop the flow of deadly drugs like fentanyl into our nation.

While the federal government ignores this crisis, Texas is holding the line. Together with Texas National Guard soldiers and DPS troopers, Texas continues to:

- Apprehend illegal immigrants
- Seize millions of deadly fentanyl doses
- Build our own border wall
- Transport migrants to self-declared sanctuary cities



The State of Texas is also working collaboratively with communities impacted by the border crisis to arrest individuals coming into Texas illegally.

Our efforts will only be effective if we work together to secure the border, make criminal arrests, protect landowners, rid our communities of dangerous drugs, and provide Texans the support they need and deserve.

Since the launch of Operation Lone Star through the end of 2023, Texas' historic border mission has led to:

- **Over 494,400 illegal immigrant apprehensions**
- **More than 38,100 criminal arrests and more than 34,600 felony charges**

In the fight against the fentanyl crisis, **Texas law enforcement has seized more than 458 million lethal doses of fentanyl** during this border mission.

Texas has also **transported over 100,000 migrants to self-declared sanctuary cities** like New York and Chicago to help relieve the burden on our overwhelmed border communities.

Operation Lone Star continues to fill the dangerous gaps created by the Biden Administration's refusal to secure the border.

Every individual who is apprehended or arrested and every ounce of drugs seized would have otherwise made their way into communities across Texas and the nation due to President Biden's open border policies.



**\$11.2 BILLION
BORDER SECURITY
FUNDING**

**Over 458 MILLION
LETHAL DOSES
of fentanyl seized**

**Over 494,400
ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT
apprehensions**

**Over 100,000
BUSED TO
sanctuary cities**

**Over 38,100
CRIMINAL ARRESTS**

**FIRST STATE
in U.S. history
TO BUILD OUR
OWN BORDER WALL**

Related News:

Governor Abbott Signs [Sweeping Package Of Border Security Legislation](#)

TEXAS BORDER SECURITY OVERVIEW:

As Governor, I have taken significant action to secure the border due to federal inaction:

- Securing over \$11.2 billion in funding for Texas' border security efforts
- Launching Operation Lone Star and deploying thousands of Texas National Guard soldiers and DPS troopers
- Installing new floating marine barriers to deter illegal crossings in hotspots along the Rio Grande River in Texas
- Deploying the new Texas Tactical Border Force for targeted responses to intercept and repel illegal crossings at hotspots along the border
- Hiring Texas' first-ever Border Czar
- Taking aggressive action to aid border communities, including busing more than 100,000 migrants to Washington, D.C.; New York City; Chicago; Philadelphia; Los Angeles; and Denver
- Designating Mexican drug cartels as terrorist organizations to keep Texans safe amid the growing national fentanyl crisis
- Arresting and jailing criminals trespassing or committing other state crimes along the southern border
- Issuing an executive order authorizing the Texas National Guard and DPS to return illegal immigrants to the border at ports of entry
- Allocating resources to acquire 1,700 unused steel panels to [build the border wall](#) in Texas
- Signing new laws to:
 - Create a state criminal offense for illegal entry and illegal reentry
 - Authorize the return of illegal immigrants
 - Enhance penalties for criminal conduct involving human smuggling or the operation of a stash house
 - Expand the authority and training of border personnel
 - Crack down on human trafficking
 - Enhance penalties for the manufacturing and distribution of fentanyl
 - Compensate landowners for property damage related to border crimes
- Issuing a disaster declaration for the border crisis



- Activating the Joint Border Security Operations Center (JBSOC) and directing DPS, the Texas Military Department, and the Texas Division of Emergency Management to coordinate Texas' response to secure the border
- Working with governors from 14 other states supporting Texas' historic border security efforts with deployed personnel and resources

For updates, visit: OperationLoneStar.texas.gov

Related News:

Governor Abbott Issues Statement On Texas' [Constitutional Right](#) To Self-Defense

Operation Lone Star Bolsters [Historic Border Security Mission](#) In 2023

State Of Texas Thanks [Dedicated Operation Lone Star Service Members](#)

Operation Lone Star [Secures Fronton Island](#) From Ruthless Mexican Cartels (*Photo below.*)



Public Safety

In Texas, we believe in law and order, and we support our law enforcement officers—period.

I am proud of the work of my Public Safety Office (PSO) to support courageous first responders, emergency management personnel, victim service providers, and other criminal justice professionals.

In FY 2022–2023, PSO distributed \$1.035 billion to improve public safety in communities across this great state.

Preparing Texas

Preparing for emergencies: Responding to critical incidents, terrorism, and disasters involves proactive planning, ongoing training, and the efficient deployment of resources.

- PSO invested \$227 million to support personnel, training, and operational costs associated with law enforcement, first responders, and emergency management and planning.

Equipping first responders: Texas' first responders work tirelessly to serve their communities and put their lives on the line for their fellow Texans on a daily basis. In addition, the nature of threats facing Texas is constantly changing and requires first responders to have up-to-date technology and tools in order to maintain public safety.

In 2022–2023, more than \$216 million in federal and state funds were administered to promote public safety, reduce crime, enhance terrorism preparedness efforts, improve the criminal justice system, and equip officers with necessary equipment.

This funding from PSO included:

- \$55 million for personal protective equipment, including ballistic protection for first responders
- \$49 million for law enforcement patrol and other specialty vehicles

Governor Abbott congratulating one of 60

new troopers at a Texas Department of Public Safety graduation ceremony.

The May 2023 class included 26 military veterans, 10 women, 19 with prior law enforcement experience, and 25 who speak more than one language.

“You are now a part of the DPS legacy—a legacy built by heroes.”



- \$39 million for SWAT, EOD/Bomb, HAZMAT, and search and rescue teams
- \$28 million for surveillance systems, body cameras, and video systems
- \$25 million for interoperable emergency communications equipment
- \$4 million for information technology and cybersecurity systems and tools

First responder mental health: As part of PSO's commitment to supporting law enforcement, the First Responder Mental Health Grant Program provides critical crisis services, peer support groups, professional therapy and counseling, and legal advocacy to support first responders in addressing the direct and vicarious trauma they experience throughout their careers.

- PSO provided \$3.6 million that served over 5,000 first responders.

Law enforcement training: To become a licensed peace officer in Texas, a recruit must successfully complete over 800 hours of accredited topics and hands-on training to prepare them for the challenges of police work and to ensure Texans are served by highly trained, ethical law enforcement personnel.

- Since 2022, PSO has provided more than \$8.2 million to support quality, cost-effective training for law enforcement.
- These funds have led to over 7,200 certified courses provided to more than 41,700 peace officers across Texas.



**\$1 BILLION+
PUBLIC SAFETY
GRANTS**

**\$227 MILLION
emergency personnel
preparedness**

**\$216 MILLION
first responder
equipment**

**\$8.2 MILLION
law enforcement
training**

**\$3.6 MILLION
first responder
mental health
support**

and more

PSO FUNDING IN ACTION

“I am reaching out today with a deep sense of gratitude for the remarkable assistance [the Public Safety Office] has provided to the **Rio Grande City** Grulla ISD Police Department. It was back in February when our journey began.... At that time, our long-term goals seemed like distant dreams, and the path ahead appeared daunting. However, with your unwavering support, we’ve not only overcome those challenges but have achieved an incredible 15% of our objectives... All of these advancements, which have strengthened our department and community, would not have been possible without your support.”

Hugo Garcia
Acting Chief of Police
RGCGISD Police Department

PSO provided a \$460,000 Justice Assistance Grant, which helped fund the purchase of patrol vehicles along with radio system upgrades, surveillance cameras, and more to help safeguard 18 campuses in the school district, which is spread over a 156-mile radius.

Protecting Texas Communities

Border security: With the crisis at our southern border continuing to escalate due to federal inaction, maintaining security along the Texas–Mexico border continues to be a top priority for public safety funding.

- PSO provided over \$190 million to state and local jurisdictions in support of border security efforts over the last biennium.

Border Prosecution Unit: The Border Prosecution Unit (BPU) Program provides prosecution resources for district attorneys along the Texas–Mexico border and for counties that are significantly affected by border crime.

- During the 2022–2023 biennium, PSO awarded \$22.3 million across 23 BPU jurisdictions supporting specialized prosecutors, paralegals, and investigators, as well as providing training for unit members and law enforcement agencies.

BPU outcomes included:

- 28,366 border crime cases filed
- 23,560 border crime cases prosecuted
- 12,427 border cases resulted in convictions or community supervision

Enhanced Border Patrol: PSO leverages a combination of state and federal funding to support enhanced cooperation and coordination among Customs and Border Protection (USBP), United States Border Patrol, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), and other local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies.

- To supplement the federal Operation Stonegarden program, PSO receives an annual \$5.1 million state appropriation from the Texas Legislature.



From @TxDPS:

From the Panhandle to the border and from West Texas to the Piney Woods, DPS teams are working to fulfill their duties to ensure public safety across Texas. They do so while holding DPS' core values of integrity, excellence, accountability, and teamwork at the center of everything they do. PSO provides grants to DPS and other law enforcement agencies to help them protect Texans and Texas communities.

Together these initiatives sustain interagency law enforcement operations and enhance local law enforcement patrols by facilitating directed actions to deter and interdict criminal activity.

Funded border patrol outcomes included:

- 23,459 flight patrol hours by DPS air assets
- 10.1 million miles logged by officers
- 11,511 arrests made
- 878,402 hours of officer overtime
- \$7.4 million in value of forfeitures seized

Texas Anti-Gang Centers: Nine Texas Anti-Gang (TAG) Centers operate regionally and are focused on gang prevention, intervention, suppression, and establishing an interconnected network targeting local, statewide, and transnational criminal organizations. TAG locations include Dallas/Fort Worth, El Paso, Houston, Laredo, Lubbock, McAllen, San Antonio, Tyler, and Waco.

- PSO funds the TAGs through an annual \$7.1 million appropriation from the Texas Legislature.
- In the second called session, an additional \$180 million was appropriated to allow metro TAGs to expand operations to meet the demand for increased law enforcement activities due to the ongoing border crisis. This appropriation has already added additional specialized investigators and prosecutors to aid in the investigation and prosecution of border-related crimes.

TAG outcomes included:

- 1,720 gangs targeted
- 10,528 gang members arrested
- 223 participating agencies

Operation Lone Star: On March 6, 2021, I launched Operation Lone Star (OLS) to combat the smuggling of people and drugs into Texas illegally between the ports of entry.

OLS integrates local law enforcement and DPS with the Texas National Guard and deploys air, ground, marine, and tactical border security assets to high-threat areas to stop Mexican cartels and other criminals from smuggling drugs and people into Texas.

- In FY 2022–2023, PSO provided \$86.7 million to cities and counties to enhance interagency border security operations supporting OLS, including the facilitation of directed actions to deter and stop criminal activity and detain and arrest people for state crimes related to the border crisis. Activities include law enforcement, jail operations, court administration, and human remains processing.

PSO-funded outcomes (see page 27 for total OLS outcomes):

- 14,682 arrests made
- 46,553 apprehensions (transferred to U.S. Border Patrol custody)
- \$22,731,878 in valued forfeitures
- 7,459 convictions

Texas Crime Stoppers: Texas has 129 certified Crime Stoppers community and campus organizations formed by dedicated citizens, law enforcement, and media. Financial assistance was provided to 36 local Crime Stoppers organizations in 2022 and 38 in 2023.

At the state level, the Texas Crime Stoppers team partnered with DPS, which offers rewards for the capture of Texas' Top 10 Most Wanted fugitives and sex offenders, as well as for tips on stash houses or unique events.





Governor Abbott presenting a Star of Texas Award to Dallas Police Officer Senior Corporal Scott Jay and his canine partner, Figor. Senior Corporal Jay was one of 21 peace officers, firefighters, and emergency responders honored in September 2023 for heroism and sacrifice in the line of duty.

- In the 2022–2023 biennium, my office offered \$126,000 in rewards leading to the successful capture of 66 Top 10 Most Wanted fugitives and \$38,000 in rewards for 247 stash house tips.
- Texas Crime Stoppers offered a \$50,000 reward in 2022 for information leading to the apprehension of prison escapee Gonzalo Lopez, a convicted murderer serving two life sentences. Lopez attacked a corrections officer while being transported and then killed a man and his four grandsons in Centerville, Texas. On June 2, 2022, Texas Crime Stoppers received a valid tip successfully ending the 22-day manhunt.
- In 2023, Texas Crime Stoppers also offered a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the apprehension of Francisco Oropesa, a Texas man accused of killing five people: a 9-year-old, an 18-year-old, and three women. On May 3, 2023, Texas Crime Stoppers received a valid tip leading to his apprehension after being on the run for nearly four days.

PSO FUNDING IN ACTION

In August 2022, the City of Eagle Pass and the surrounding area was inundated with emergency calls for service related to migrant crossings onto harsh ranchland: “The Eagle Pass Fire Department is currently dealing with a significant increase in immigration-related emergency calls straining the EMS system to the community. The department has established an approximately 25% increase in runs [calls for service]. The City of Eagle Pass has seen a significant increase in calls to the outskirts of the Maverick County within the ranches without access by ambulance.”

PSO provided \$400,000 in emergency grant assistance for the purchase of a Utility Fire/Rescue Vehicle and EMS overtime for deep-brush rescues of individuals experiencing acute medical episodes.

SAFEGUARDING TEXAS CHILDREN

Youth
Prevention and
Intervention

Combating
Child Sex Trafficking

Support for
Victims of Crime

Children's
Advocacy Centers

Texas
Court Appointed
Special Advocates

Safeguarding Texas Children

Youth Prevention and Intervention: In continuing the state's efforts to prioritize the safety of all Texas students, \$16.1 million was awarded from my Public Safety Office to independent school districts, councils of government, nonprofits, and units of local government to support prevention and intervention programs for more than 215,000 at-risk youth:

- \$1.5 million for mental health services
- \$2 million for school programs
- \$1.46 million for community-based programs and services
- \$8.18 million for truancy prevention programs
- \$2.84 million for juvenile case managers

Combating Child Sex Trafficking: The Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) in my Public Safety Office supports Texas communities in protecting children and youth from sexual exploitation; helping the public recognize sexual exploitation in all its forms; recovering victims with protective and empowering collaborative responses; supporting healing of survivors through a variety of trauma-informed and responsive services and supports; and bringing justice for survivors by holding exploiters accountable.

- The CSTT received \$5,668,300 in state appropriations for the biennium to implement its strategies and make grants to government agencies and nonprofit groups to address commercial sexual exploitation.
- CSTT also leveraged other state and federal funds administered by PSO, including the Victims of Crime Act and Justice Assistance Grants, to fund more than \$40 million in projects addressing human trafficking.

Crimes Against Children: PSO provided:

- More than \$117 million in federal Victims of Crime Act and American Rescue Plan Act funds to two state-level organizations that support local programs across the state.

Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas bring together the civil and criminal justice systems in a multidisciplinary team approach to achieve safety, justice, healing, and ultimately restoration for child victims of crime. This includes multidisciplinary case coordination and forensic interviews performed with a child-centered approach to promote justice for child victims of crime and abuse.

Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and their local chapters collaborate with courts, Child Protective Services, law enforcement, schools, child advocacy centers, and mental health programs to provide evidence-based services to children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect. Services by local CASA programs focus on the child's physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being.

Restoring Texas

Victim Services: In FY 2022 and 2023, the Public Safety Office provided:

- \$324 million to programs that contribute to a comprehensive victim assistance network, providing crucial services to speed recovery, aid in the criminal justice process, and address violence against women
- Funding for these programs offered crisis services, professional counseling, emergency housing, and personal and legal advocacy to 858,961 victims of crime

Recognizing that maintaining adequate services for victims has been compromised with year-over-year losses to the federal Crime Victims Fund, the Texas Legislature appropriated \$160 million to my Public Safety Office in the third called session of the 87th Legislature from the federal Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds and an additional \$116 million in general revenue during the 88th Regular Legislative Session to shore up and maintain these vital services.

Support in the Aftermath of Mass Casualty

Events: Following a horrific tragedy, PSO offers support through a coordinated effort to restore communities and seek justice for victims affected by mass casualty events.

- **El Paso and Midland–Odessa:** PSO has provided support to the El Paso and Midland–Odessa communities through a number of programs since the mass casualty events occurred in 2019. We awarded over \$4.4 million in grants from both the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and Antiterrorism Emergency Assistance Program (AEAP) to those communities to support establishment of Family Resiliency Centers, which provide counseling and other services to victims and survivors of those events. Grants funded through AEAP have provided services to 8,325 victims. An additional \$2.4 million has been provided to El Paso County for costs related to the subsequent capital murder trial.
- **Santa Fe:** PSO supported those affected by the 2018 Santa Fe shooting with guaranteed funding for 4 years from the time of the incident. During the last biennium, PSO provided over \$900,000 to the community.

- **Uvalde:** PSO has provided over \$6 million in grant funding to both Uvalde County and the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School district in the aftermath of the shooting at Robb Elementary in 2022. Funds primarily covered counseling services and the establishment of a Resiliency Center. Negotiations are currently underway to provide additional support through AEAP.
- **Allen:** PSO is currently applying for an AEAP award through the Department of Justice to support a Family Resiliency Center for those affected by the shooting at the Allen Outlet Mall in 2023. Until that agreement is finalized, PSO is providing LifePath Systems, the local mental health authority in the region, with \$2.8 million in VOCA funds to establish operations.

SAFE-Ready Facilities: These programs include hospital facilities and community-based clinics that are specially trained and equipped to offer forensic medical examinations to sexual assault survivors, allowing more survivors to have access to trauma-informed medical care and a forensic medical examination by a trained sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE), especially in rural areas. During the 88th Regular Legislative Session, the Texas Legislature increased the maximum award amount to each grant recipient from \$50,000 to \$250,000, ensuring more meaningful funding for facilities to maintain or achieve SAFE-Ready designation.

- PSO provided \$2.7 million to SAFE-Ready facilities, resulting in 771 new SANE nurses being trained.

Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force: The Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force that I signed into law in 2019 includes members who are survivors of sexual violence as well as some of Texas' foremost experts in the field. This group is focused on establishing a survivor-centered, trauma-informed, collaborative, and coordinated response to sexual violence experienced by adults and children in Texas.

- The task force submitted 12 policy recommendations to the 88th Legislature focused on enhancing system response by increasing access to sexual assault exams and mandating law enforcement training; promoting survivor healing by mandating training for emergency room staff and expanding crime victim compensation reimbursement eligibility; and strengthening statewide efforts by making the SASTF permanent in Texas.
- I signed into law two bipartisan bills instituting a majority of these important policy recommendations from the task force.

Over the biennium, the task force also:

- Launched the Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors' Online Directory, a searchable database containing up-to-date information about resources and services for Texas' survivors.
- Developed a First Responders Guide for law enforcement officers, which includes best practices for initial interactions with adult sexual assault survivors, and a Sexual Assault Survivors' Rights Guide for adult survivors. Both guides were translated into additional languages, including Spanish, to ensure they can be widely utilized with and by individuals who may speak languages other than English.

- Initiated a Forensic Nursing Program Coaching Pilot Project to increase access to high-quality sexual assault forensic examinations at hospitals, free-standing emergency departments, and community-based programs.
- Conducted a research project that included interviewing 70 sexual assault survivors and family members of survivors to determine their experience seeking and utilizing sexual assault-specific services in Texas.
- Continued to work closely with DPS to ensure timely processing of sexual assault evidence kits. In support of that goal, PSO leveraged grant-funding eligibility in accordance with Government Code Section 420.046, Noncompliance, to ensure that certain law enforcement agencies were meeting statutory guidelines for submitting sexual assault evidence kits to crime laboratories for processing. This strategy improved the process timeline, as four law enforcement agencies with the largest number of unsubmitted kits in the state cleared their backlogs within 90 days.

Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group:

Prevention is a critical component of our fight to end sexual violence in Texas. In May 2023, PSO launched a first-of-its-kind statewide sexual violence prevention working group with members from 12 stakeholder agencies including DPS, the Department of Family and Protective Services, the Office of the Attorney General, the Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Military Department, the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, and the Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas, among others. This group is charged with creating a cohesive, actionable, statewide strategy and plan to prevent sexual violence in Texas.

RESTORING TEXAS

Victim Services

Support in the Aftermath of Mass Casualty Events

SAFE-Ready Facilities

Sexual Assault Survivors’ Task Force

Sexual Violence Prevention Working Group

Fighting the Fentanyl Crisis

Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, is the leading killer of Americans between the ages of 18 and 45. More than 2,000 lives were lost to fentanyl in Texas in 2022.

According to provisional data from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Texas has experienced a 500% increase in fentanyl-related deaths since 2019.

Under Operation Lone Star, Texas law enforcement has seized over 458 million lethal doses of fentanyl since 2021—enough to kill every man, woman, and child in America.

This past year, I announced two major statewide initiatives to combat the growing national fentanyl crisis and save innocent lives in Texas:

- At my [One Pill Kills Summit](#) in Austin in April, I unveiled a new \$10 million multimedia awareness initiative through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to educate Texans on how to prevent, recognize, and reverse fentanyl poisonings as part of the statewide **#OnePillKills** campaign.
- I also announced the plan to distribute the overdose-reversing medication naloxone, commonly referred to as Narcan, to all 254 Texas counties through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM).

Following my directive in September 2022 instructing state agencies to ramp up efforts to combat the deadly fentanyl crisis, HHSC partnered with The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio to create a [multimedia initiative](#) to educate the public about the dangers of fentanyl and how to use naloxone to save Texans exposed to the deadly drug.

In support of the ongoing, coordinated One Pill Kills campaign to combat the growing fentanyl crisis plaguing Texas and the United States, this operation is targeted toward youth, parents, adults, and educators throughout the state using billboards, website and social media ads, Spanish radio announcements, and more.

The announcement of statewide distribution of naloxone, a nasal medication that rapidly reverses opioid poisonings, came after several opioid manufacturers entered into a legal settlement with the State of Texas, thanks to the efforts by the Office of the Attorney General of Texas.

A portion of the settlement allocated this life-saving medication to the State of Texas to support communities in fighting the opioid crisis. TDEM distributed naloxone to law enforcement agencies across Texas.

My One Pill Kills Summit, co-hosted with Texas Against Fentanyl, brought together Texas families, law enforcement, state officials, education leaders, healthcare professionals, and other advocates for meaningful conversations to raise awareness about this deadly crisis, educate the public on the dangers of how one pill kills, and discuss solutions to save more lives. The summit included three one-hour panel discussions with various leaders in the fight against fentanyl, highlighting the work



Governor Abbott signing

new laws to combat the growing national fentanyl crisis, joined at the June bill signing by members of the Texas Legislature, Texas families who lost loved ones to fentanyl, and other fentanyl awareness advocates. [Read more.](#)

Texas has done to address the growing national fentanyl crisis and discussing strategies and legislation to strengthen Texas' response to the crisis.

The summit's first panel included a roundtable discussion covering how the fentanyl crisis is impacting families and communities across Texas and proposed solutions to increase public awareness and better address the issue.

The second One Pill Kills panel highlighted efforts currently underway by state agencies and law enforcement to address fentanyl's prevalence in Texas communities. State agency leaders also provided an update on their role in the state's fentanyl awareness campaign.

Members of the Texas Legislature joined the final panel to highlight then-proposed legislation to save more lives.

Following the 88th Legislative Session, I signed new laws:

- Classifying fentanyl deaths as poisonings
- Prosecuting an individual for murder if they distribute fentanyl or drugs laced with fentanyl that kill someone
- Enhancing the criminal penalty for the manufacturing or delivery of fentanyl
- Increasing the supply of lifesaving naloxone and allowing for its distribution on college campuses to increase availability for Texans exposed to fentanyl
- Designating October of each year as Fentanyl Awareness Month

And in July, I announced the launch of the Texas [fentanyl data dashboard](#) by DSHS.

Across the State



Texas is home to champions on the field, in the classroom, and in life. As I traveled across our great state this past year, I was proud to meet so many parents, students, teachers, job creators, and everyday Texans whose passion and perseverance—and ability to overcome challenges—leads to the greatest victory of all: a legacy of opportunity for others.

It was fitting to sign the [Save Women's Sports Act](#), passed during the 88th Regular Legislative Session, at the Texas Women's Hall of Fame in **Denton**, joined by inspiring female athletes like Riley Gaines and Paula Scanlan to celebrate this

momentous law to protect the integrity of fair competition and women's sports in Texas.

Throughout the year, I visited with families in communities large and small: **Amarillo, Austin, Bryan, Conroe, Corpus Christi, Corsicana, Cypress, Dallas, Denton, Fort Worth, Giddings, Houston, McAllen, Odessa, San Antonio, Temple, Tyler**, and everywhere in between. I was inspired by their dedication and commitment to our students and schools.

We are investing more than ever in our children's education as overall funding for public education is increased by \$6.3 billion in the state budget.

In June, I signed transformative [parent empowerment bills](#) that will give parents access to course curriculum, allow parents to determine if their child should repeat a grade level, remove inappropriate books from school libraries, and support students with special needs.

With a World Series win, a Big 12 Championship, historic property tax relief, a [State of the Year](#) award for job creation, and more, we've had much to celebrate this past year. I am proud to have signed impactful legislation into law to ensure a brighter, safer, freer, and more prosperous Texas for years to come. And I look forward to more victories for Texans on the road ahead.

(Click on each photo on this page for more to the story.)



Texans Serving Texans



Serving Those Who Serve

Texas has long been a home for military families and missions. Today, more than 1.7 million veterans and serving military, including active duty, reserve, and National Guard, live in Texas. The 15 major military installations located here, in addition to the headquarters of Army Futures Command, add over \$114 billion to the Texas economy and **support more than 622,000 direct and indirect jobs.**

The men and women serving on these installations are integral members of their communities, and their missions are critical for national defense.

Following the 88th Legislative Sessions, I signed into law several bills supporting Texas military installations, service members, and their families:

- Expanding [occupational licensing reciprocity](#) for military service members and families
- Creating a temporary certification for military service members and first responders to teach career and technology education
- Permitting the issuance of state parklands passports and a waiver of state park fees for veterans, active-duty armed forces members, and family members of a person who died while serving in uniform

Related News:

The Governor's [Committee To Support The Military](#) Releases 2022 Report

- Facilitating the transfer of students who are children of military service members to other public schools or districts
- Expediting the establishment of residency for purposes of public school admission for children of military service members
- Creating a criminal offense relating to the operation of an unmanned aircraft over an airport or military installation
- Authorizing the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to provide services on federal military property

Protecting the Mission, Securing Local Jobs

The [Texas Military Preparedness Commission](#) (TMPC) in my office advises on defense and military issues and on strategies to strengthen the position of military installations in Texas in preparation for any potential future Base Realignment and Closure round or other actions by the Department of Defense.

TMPC's goal is to preserve, protect, expand, and attract new military missions, assets, and installations in Texas. Additionally, the TMPC encourages defense-related businesses to expand or relocate in Texas.

The commission is composed of 13 appointed members who serve six-year staggered terms, typically representing an installation in their community.

In Fiscal Years 2022–2023, I announced \$30 million in grant funding for infrastructure projects in military communities from TMPC's Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant (DEAAG) program. The grant funds are invested in infrastructure projects and other

initiatives to support military installations in Texas and protect jobs in those communities.

Since 2015 through 2023, over \$113 million in grants have been awarded to military communities through the DEAAG program.

The 88th Texas Legislature has approved \$30 million in funding for Fiscal Years 2024–2025 to invest in infrastructure projects and other initiatives to ensure Texas installations continue to add unmatched military value.

Recognizing Our Heroes

Earlier this year, I was proud to once again proclaim February 5–11 **Texas Military Heroes Week** to honor all who have sacrificed and served on behalf of our state and nation. No matter the battle, no matter the branch—they deserve our gratitude and reverence.

In November, I was privileged to be joined by 106-year-old World War II veteran Al Blaschke on my very first skydive, to again honor the service and sacrifice of our military veterans. *(See photo on the previous page.)*

Historic Agreement

Also in 2023, I signed the largest Statewide Intergovernmental Support Agreement in the country between the State of Texas and the U.S. military to bolster infrastructure and transportation improvements on federal military property across the state.

This [historic 10-year agreement](#) authorizes TxDOT to complete roadway maintenance and repair projects, as well as purchase bulk materials, through a state–federal partnership.

Empowering Women Leaders

For nearly 60 years, the [Governor's Commission for Women](#) has served as a resource and champion for Texas women. The appointed commissioners—from across the state and representing diverse fields of expertise—provide leadership through outreach, education, research, and referral services in support of:

- Advancing Women-Owned Businesses
- Preventing Human Trafficking
- Supporting STEM Education
- Volunteerism
- Promoting Adoption and Fostering
- Women's and Children's Health
- Women Veterans and Service Members

Advancing Women in Business

Texas is home to more than 1.3 million women business owners—and growing. To help even more women entrepreneurs access the resources needed to invest in themselves and their businesses, the Commission for Women co-hosted two [Governor's Small Business Summits](#) with the Office of Small Business Assistance, in **Fredericksburg** and in **Houston**, celebrating women in business.

In partnership with the Beacon State Fund, a nonprofit that aids the commission in education and promoting community leadership, a pitch competition was held following the two summits, with the winner of each receiving a \$10,000 award to invest in her business.



First Lady Cecilia Abbott honoring Opal Lee, a 2023 inductee into the [Texas Women's Hall of Fame](#), recognized for her relentless advocacy in winning federal recognition of the historic Juneteenth holiday and for her perseverance in promoting a message of unity and understanding. Commission for Women Chairwoman Nathali Parker Weisman joined in the November induction ceremony.

Preventing Human Trafficking

The Governor’s Commission for Women joined with the First Lady, the Texas Department of Transportation, and the Texas Department of Public Safety for a [human trafficking awareness training](#) event at the Texas Capitol earlier in 2023 to help educate the public, support survivors, provide an **update on the state’s anti-human trafficking efforts**, and remind Texans of their important role in helping to eradicate this heinous crime.

Promoting Adoption and Fostering

Together with the First Lady, the Governor’s Commission for Women also proudly supports the **foster and adoption outreach programs of the Heart Galleries of Texas**.

Believing one photo can change a life, the [Heart Galleries](#) tell a child’s story through photographs capturing the spirit, individuality, interests, and unique needs of each child.

The portraits are displayed to connect families interested in adoption with children in the care of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.



At the core of the foster and adoption outreach is a simple but powerful portrait of each child that says, “I am here. I am special.”

(See more from the First Lady about the Heart Galleries of Texas on page 51.)

To further support Texas children in need, the commission also coordinates with state agencies to sponsor Christmas wish lists for those in the care of Child Protective Services.

Celebrating Achievement

Finally, the Governor’s Commission for Women **highlights the accomplishments of notable Texas women**. In November, the First Lady and I were proud to celebrate eight extraordinary women inducted into the [Texas Women’s Hall of Fame](#):

- Leta Andrews — Athletics
- Mary Horn — Public Service
- Val LaMantia — Business
- Opal Lee — Civic Leadership
- Lavinia Masters — Advocacy/Service
- Antonietta Quigg — Science/Technology
- Charlotte Sharp — Philanthropy
- Elizabeth Suarez — Public Service

Nominated by their fellow Texans, they have excelled in business, community service, philanthropy, public service, science, sports, and more.

What unites them is the difference they have made for others. Women of vision, tenacity, and generosity, they are an inspiration for the next generation of leaders who will follow them. And we congratulate them all.

Ensuring Equal Access to Opportunity

The mission of the [Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#) (GCPD) is to further opportunities for persons with disabilities so that they may enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity, and self-determination.

Composed of 12 appointed committee members, seven of whom are people with disabilities, and with seven state agencies as ex officio members, the committee makes recommendations on disability issues, advocates for compliance with disability-related laws, and promotes the work of local committees doing similar work.

Members and staff also provide technical assistance and referrals related to access, communications, criminal justice, education, emergency management, employment, health, housing, transportation, and veteran's affairs.

The GCPD's [Biennial Report to the 88th Texas Legislature](#) identifies the committee's policy priorities based on input from quarterly meetings held throughout the state to listen to Texans with disabilities.

Partnering with other state agencies and disability nonprofits is also key to GCPD's success. This enables the committee's membership, through a wide range of disability workgroups and taskforces, to advance the goals of other agencies serving Texans with disabilities.

Prior to the 88th Legislative Sessions, the GCPD led a guardianship reform subcommittee with input from experts on family and probate law, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and self-advocates. GCPD's efforts resulted in passage of legislation establishing important safeguards for individuals under [guardianship](#).

The GCPD also continued to grow the success of the [Texas Driving with Disability Program](#), a voluntary program that helps reduce the risk of miscommunication between law enforcement officers and drivers with autism, deafness, or other communication disabilities. Legislation passed this last session ensures information about the program is available to driver education and safety courses and to public high school students.

Promoting the Full Employment of Texans with Disabilities

The committee annually recognizes employers for hiring and retaining employees with disabilities through employment awards and recognition and promotion of employment best practices.

Throughout the year, the GCPD promotes the full employment of Texans with disabilities through the [Texas HireAbility](#) campaign with the Texas Workforce Commission.



Shown above, “A Unique Vision” by Victor Vera, the winning artwork entry from the GCPD’s [2023 Disability Employment Awareness Month poster contest](#), spotlights an individual story of resilience and success from a young Texas artist with autism.

Serving Fellow Texans

Making appointments to state boards and commissions provides me an opportunity to both promote our representative citizen government and to further the policy goals I have outlined as we work together to build a bigger, better Texas.

Through these appointments, thousands of Texans volunteer each year to serve on boards, commissions, and other local, regional, and statewide oversight groups.

My [Appointments Office](#) is constantly seeking the most talented and qualified Texans to serve our state and share their expertise in business, economic development, healthcare, human services, K-12 and higher education, law, natural resources, public safety, transportation, veterans affairs, and more.

I often hear directly from appointees about how rewarding their service is.

Most appointees are:

- Citizen members of state boards, commissions, and councils that govern agencies as they carry out the laws and direct the policies of state government activities, including setting budgets for state agencies
- Members of task forces that advise the Governor, executive agencies, or the Texas Legislature on specific issues and policies
- State positions and judicial offices filled by my appointees when vacancies occur by resignation or death of the officeholder

Throughout 2022 and 2023, I made more than 800 appointments. Those appointees are among the most accomplished Texans from communities all across our great state who have a desire to serve their fellow Texans. I am deeply grateful to these volunteer public servants for giving so generously of their time, energy, and talent.

I am proud to have appointed citizens from every corner of the state, representing the deep diversity we have in Texas. What they have in common is a devotion to service and to the people of Texas.

If you have a heart to serve with empathy, a passion to provide excellent customer service to your fellow Texans, and are one to strictly follow the law, I encourage you to visit gov.texas.gov/organization/appointments and apply for a gubernatorial appointment.

Staying Connected

Serving the people of Texas is a great honor, and hearing your ideas is critical for the future. Through 2022 and 2023, those conversations included more than 650,000 calls, emails, and letters to my office; many were offers of assistance or requests for information as the state responds to the crisis at our border.

To stay connected, I invite you to follow me on social media.

Facebook: @TexasGovernor; Instagram: @GovAbbott; X: @GovAbbott

And follow First Lady Abbott.

Facebook: @firstladyoftexas; Instagram: @texasflca; X: @TexasFLCA

The First Lady's Report

Texans truly are generous by nature. And when we come together to make a difference for our communities, there is no more powerful force for good on this earth.

As the First Lady of Texas, it is a sincere privilege to serve the people of this great state and to celebrate the spirit of volunteerism that is the very lifeblood that flows through our hearts and hands.

In the pages ahead, I'd like to shine a light on some of the many Texans I met last year who so willingly share of themselves in service to others.

Joining Hearts and Hands

This past year, I was pleased to host the 39th Annual Governor's Volunteer Awards at the Texas Governor's Mansion. Presented in partnership with OneStar Foundation, the annual awards recognize the exceptional service and volunteerism of individuals and organizations making a significant impact in their communities across Texas.

As honorary chair, I was proud to honor our [14 wonderful recipients](#) from across the state who have dedicated their time and talents to others in need. (See photo below.)



To encourage more Texans to help change the lives of others, I relaunched the statewide “Can You See Me?” human trafficking awareness campaign in January of last year. The [multimedia campaign](#) exposes the realities of human trafficking through a series of billboards displayed across more than 70 Texas cities throughout the year.

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery. And the victims of this cruelty are not invisible when we learn to look for the signs of suspected abuse, exploitation, and trafficking.

Celebrating Fostering and Adoption

Our lives were forever blessed the day Greg and I became adoptive parents. We know firsthand the immeasurable joy of being a forever family—that is why we believe so strongly in promoting fostering and adoption in Texas.

In November, I was thrilled to be in El Paso for the launch of the [Heart Gallery of El Paso](#) (see photo below), an evening hosted by the Paso del Norte Community Foundation.



“Providing the support that foster and adoptive families need is a bigger job than state government can do alone.

“This requires a **Network of Nurture** — a community of individuals, families, friends, local leaders, nonprofit organizations, businesses, faith community members, and anyone willing to open their hands, their hearts, or their homes to the children and families in our foster care system.”

Cecilia

Heart Galleries tell a child's story through photographs capturing the spirit, individuality, interests, and unique needs of each child awaiting adoption. This helps connect children to caring families and community networks.

With funding approved in the 88th Legislative Session, the [Heart Galleries of Texas](#) project is now expanding in 11 regions across Texas.

Caring for the Vulnerable

In April, I joined the 2nd Annual Care Coordinator Convening hosted by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Children's

Advocacy Centers of Texas, and the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team. These caring professionals are further uniting efforts to prevent human trafficking and child exploitation in Texas and to help survivors in their healing and restoration. (See photo below.)

Honoring Achievement

It was an honor to induct eight extraordinary Texas women into the [Texas Women's Hall of Fame](#) in November, in recognition of their outstanding achievements and for changing the course of Texas history.





Nominated by their fellow Texans, the 2023 honorees have excelled in business, community service, philanthropy, public service, science, sports, and more. (See honorees listed on page 47.)

The ceremony was attended by the honorees, their families, state and local officials, and invited guests from communities across Texas.

I join Greg in sharing our sincere thanks to each of the new inductees to the Texas Women's Hall of Fame for sharing their gifts with others.

Our thanks also to the Governor's Commission for Women for their leadership of the program and for co-hosting the lovely celebration in November. (See Commissioners in photo above.)

The Texas Women's Hall of Fame permanent exhibit is housed at [Texas Woman's University](#) in Denton.

Connecting with History

Because our past informs our present and inspires our future, I was delighted to join in two events celebrating different facets of our state's history.

- In March, I was honored to host a reception with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission showcasing the [Texas Governors and Their Times exhibit](#). The pieces featured in this exhibit, including First Lady Lucadia Niles Pease's wedding dress, and many more items in the Lorenzo de Zavala Texas State Archives and Library are crucial touchpoints with our past and connect us with our history.
- A key part of our past can also be found in the rich and diverse musical history of our state. In April, I joined the Texas Music Office to help dedicate the [Broken Spoke](#) dancehall in Austin with a Texas State Historical Marker.

Celebrating Our Future

The next generation of Texas leaders is learning in our classrooms today. In May of last year, I was truly honored to celebrate the accomplishments of the eighth grade class of [Robert C. Zamora Middle School](#) at their graduation ceremony in San Antonio.

As a former teacher, vice principal, and principal, I am always thrilled to spend time with such bright students. I congratulated the class of over 100 graduates on their academic achievements and encouraged them to cultivate meaningful connections by serving their communities.

With their families, teachers, and friends, there is no limit to what they can accomplish as they move on to high school and beyond.



Strengthening Relationships

On behalf of the people of Texas, I was honored to be joined in July by Secretary of State Jane Nelson in leading an [economic development mission](#) to Germany, the United Kingdom, and France. (See *photo to the left.*)

Thanks to the strength of our young, skilled, diverse, and growing workforce, Texas is a magnet for business investments from around the world.

I was proud to represent the people of this great state as we traveled with members of the delegation representing our Texas business and community partners on this mission.

During the week, we met with business leaders and officials to discuss deepening our already strong relationships and explore new opportunities to grow jobs and expand economic prosperity here in our great state.

Greg joined us on the last day of the trip in France, and we were honored to attend the magnificent Bastille Day military parade, where he met with French President Emmanuel Macron.

He later signed an economic development Statement of Intent with French Minister Olivier Becht to further [promote business investments](#), job creation, and innovation in Texas.

And in the evening, we were honored to attend a state dinner with President Macron and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the beautiful Louvre Museum in Paris.

The trip was organized by the Governor's Economic Development and Tourism Office and the Texas Economic Development Corporation.

[Read more](#) in a recap of the mission trip.



Sharing Gratitude

Greg and I are forever grateful for the privilege of serving you and this state we so deeply love.

We are also blessed to live in the historic Texas Governor's Mansion, which is open for [public tours](#). You are welcome to schedule a visit, and you may even be greeted by the First Dogs: Peaches, Pancake, and the newest member of the family, Honey Butter Chicken Biscuit, who joined our family last year.

As always, we thank you for your prayers. And may God bless you all.



Looking Ahead: A Bigger, Better Texas



We live in a state of infinite possibilities, where freedom and opportunity are deeply rooted.

As a result, Texas is America's undisputed leader in job creation and economic expansion. And better yet, more Texans are working than ever before.

Nourished by the bounty of the land and the boundless ideas that bloom only in Texas, families are growing here. Businesses are growing here. The future is growing here.

Because of the sacrifices made by many to preserve the promise of tomorrow, we are blessed to live in the greatest state in the greatest nation in the history of the world.

By the grace of God, and with unwavering optimism and a steadfast focus, we will continue to turn bold ideas into reality and further expand the pathways to prosperity for all Texans.

Together, we will build a bigger, better Texas for generations to come.

TOP TEXAS TOUTS: Because of you, Texas leads the nation!

ECONOMY

- Eighth largest among the nations of the world
- Expanding faster than the nation 5 quarters in a row
- No. 1 state for Fortune 500 HQs at 55
- State of the Year, Best Business Climate
- Texas produces 9% of U.S. GDP
- Top exporting state at 23% of U.S. exports
- Best State for Business: 19 years
- Top state for corporate relocations and expansions
- Top state for job-creating business investments
- Attracting 290+ corporate HQs since 2015
- Top state for job-creating foreign direct investments

JOBS

- More Texans are working than ever before
- Top state for jobs added in 2023
- Texas continues smashing total jobs records
- Home to 3.2 million small businesses and startups
- Home to 1 in 5 Hispanic business owners and 1 in 10 Black business owners in the U.S.
- Home to 1.3 million+ women business owners
- Top state for jobs created by Black business owners, Black women business owners, Hispanic women business owners, and veteran business owners
- No. 1 for financial services, chemical engineering jobs
- Top state for growth in tech jobs

INDUSTRY

- Made in Texas: A powerful global brand
- Top state for farms, cattle, corn, and more
- Top state for oil and gas production, wind-powered generation, and utility-scale solar
- Texas ranks No. 2 for liquefied natural gas exports
- The Gulf Coast is the heart of renewable-energy hydrogen infrastructure in the U.S.
- No. 1 for semiconductor and tech exports
- No. 1 for aerospace manufacturing attractiveness
- A leading state for cybersecurity, financial services, manufacturing, startups, tech, tourism, and more
- Home to the world's largest medical complex
- Home to 15 major military installations and the Army Futures Command HQ

PEOPLE

- Our young, skilled, diverse, and growing labor force is more than 15.2 million strong
- Top state for population growth for 18 years in a row; surpassing 30.5 million in total
- Texas is younger and growing faster than the nation
- Texas grows by almost 1,300 people every day
- More than 82% of those born here stay here
- Texas is the top state for attracting young adults
- Texas is home to more veterans than any other state
- Our greatest natural resource is the people of Texas, the No. 1 reason businesses locate and expand here

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Texas is the nation's gateway to global trade
- Home to 19 seaports, 11 deep-water ports
- Home to the top U.S. port for waterborne tonnage
- Home to No. 1 inland port along U.S. – Mexico border
- Texas is investing \$240 million in port infrastructure and connectivity projects
- Home to 34 free trade zones, most in the U.S.
- Most miles of public roadways, state highways, and freight railways
- Most airports, 2 international airline HQs, and a major hub for a third
- Texas is making a 10-year, \$142 billion commitment to new state roadway projects

EDUCATION

- Texas educates more than 1 in 10 of all U.S. public elementary and secondary students
- Home to 29 Blue Ribbon schools, 11 of the top 100 public high schools
- 330,000+ Texas students took AP exams in 2023
- Among highest high school graduation rates
- 7 public university systems; 37 public four-year universities; 80 public two-year colleges
- 4.2 million+ Texans participate in workforce training
- 11 Carnegie Tier One research universities
- Top-ranked universities for business, engineering, and more, and a leading state for biotech, engineering, and electrical engineering doctorates



Office of the Texas Governor
P.O. Box 12428 | Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 463-2000 (Voice) Dial 7-1-1 For Relay Services

gov.texas.gov