

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

**At GBIC:** Mario Lozoya  
956.561.4133 or mlozoya@greaterbrownsville.com

**At RGV LEAD:** Patricia Bubb, Eliza Groff, or Jill Williams  
956.364.4509 or rgvlead@gmail.com



## **“WE GROW OUR OWN!” INITIATIVE BEGINS**

### ***Brownsville Plans for Education and Workforce Pipeline to Support Economic Development***

**Brownsville, Texas, February 2019**—On February 22, over a hundred Brownsville community leaders gathered at the Brownsville Event Center for the inaugural kickoff of a Brownsville “We Grow Our Own!” collaborative. The Greater Brownsville Incentives Corporation (GBIC), in partnership with Rio Grande Valley Linking Economic and Academic Development (RGV LEAD), hosted the session to: (1) identify priority community issues related to education and workforce; (2) and build consensus on key community performance indicators with measurable outcomes.

Mario Lozoya, Executive Director, GBIC, conceptualized the initiative and chaired the meeting. Commissioner Julian Alvarez, Texas Workforce Commission, provided keynote remarks. Alvarez honored the GBIC-RGV LEAD collaboration and stressed the vital need for successful implementation of Brownsville’s “We Grow Our Own!” plan.

Pat Hobbs, Executive Director, Workforce Solutions Cameron; Dr. Juan Chavez, Jr., Director of Career and Technical Education, Brownsville ISD; and Jordana Barton, Senior Advisor, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas-San Antonio Branch, shared perspectives about the Digital Divide and other education and workforce critical issues.

RGV LEAD Student Ambassadors from Brownsville ISD Lopez Early College High School facilitated small-group discussions. Partners discussed barriers faced by Brownsville students and the ways in which individuals and organizations could work together to address those barriers successfully.

RGV LEAD will create a report outlining findings and commitments made during the meeting, and a second meeting will be convened sometime in April to begin developing the “We Grow Our Own!” plan.

Brownsville ISD Lopez Early College High School Student Ambassador said, “It is good to see the community come together to help provide pathways and opportunities for us to get the jobs here in our own town.”

Mario Lozoya said, “Brownsville’s economic success depends on attracting industry by providing a relevant workforce that is ready to meet the current and future industry demands. For the ‘We Grow Our Own!’ plan to succeed, partners must agree on, and commit to implement a plan that includes measurable outcomes. Implementation of the plan will result in the creation of a prepared workforce equipped to help move Brownsville’s economic needle forward.”

This kickoff meeting provided an opportunity for partners to become involved. There is still time for other Brownsville community leaders to join the “We Grow Our Own!” collaborative. For additional information, or to become involved, contact either GBIC or RGV LEAD.

###

GBIC is the Type A–Economic Development organization for Brownsville, Texas. RGV LEAD is a nonprofit, community-based organization that is business–education focused and has been working regionally and locally in the Rio Grande Valley for over 20 years.