DEVELOPING AND STRENGTHENING RURAL CAPACITY:
OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO MEET IN THE MIDDLE

RURAL PROSPERITY
PARTNERS

Texas Rural Funders

T.L.L. TEMPLE FOUNDATION
BUILDING A THRIVING RURAL EAST TEXAS
Since 2020, Jerry Kennedy has served as a Program Officer at the T.L.L. Temple Foundation. During this time, he has supported the design and launch of multiple rural development initiatives for East Texas, including the ConnectRURAL regional capacity strengthening initiative, Rural Opportunity Catalyst for East Texas (ROC-ET) Initiative, Rural East Texas Economic Opportunity Analysis, a rural library network of digital navigation hubs, and ecosystem strategies for economic development.

In the United States and across the globe, Jerry has specialized in program design and development, particularly launching new organizational initiatives. Jerry started with classroom teaching and community development as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Armenia from 2007-2009. Based in the U.S., South Sudan, and South Africa, Jerry has worked for Save the Children, Collaborative for Children, World Vision, The Samaritan Inn, and Texas A&M University. He has a Master of International Affairs from the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University and a bachelor’s from Austin College.

CONTACT: jerrykenney@tlltemple.foundation

Dr. Kelty Garbee serves as Executive Director of Texas Rural Funders. Dr. Garbee has 20 years of experience with non-profits, state government, and philanthropy. She previously served as Director of Postsecondary Programs at Educate Texas and Director of Early College High Schools at the Texas Education Agency. In both roles she developed and led large-scale statewide networks with budgets of over $7 million and collaboration between K-12, higher education, and workforce partners. She also worked in the Development Office at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Garbee holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Virginia, a master’s degree from the LBJ School of Public Affairs, and a doctorate in higher education from the University of Texas-Austin. Her passion for ensuring equity and access in rural Texas is fueled by her upbringing in the Blue Ridge Mountains in Lynchburg, Virginia, and her work in communities across Texas.

CONTACT: kelty@texasruralfunders.org

Rachael Maddock-Hughes, Founder and CEO of Rural Prosperity Partners (formerly Sequoia Consulting), is a leader in rural development. Her expertise bridges the not-for-profit, private and public sectors to create the greatest impact for rural communities in the US and around the globe. Her focus on scalable, sustainable solutions has helped communities revitalize downtown business districts, connect communities to broadband, address emergency homeless housing, build future-responsive sectors (Blue Economy), provide communities with resources to secure more state and federal funding, and much more. She focuses on building local expertise and capacity, and supporting locally-driven solutions.

CONTACT: rachael@ruralprosperity.com
AGENDA & GOALS

• Understand the context of the rural philanthropy, and how it is working together with intermediaries (technical assistant providers), to help address rural capacity issues to secure more funding.

• What does each entity bring to the table?

• Practical examples of partnerships at the Regional, State and National Levels

• Discussion
• With unprecedented federal infrastructure investments (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Inflation Reduction Act, CHIPS) across the U.S., there is hope for more inclusive geographic prosperity. Yet, funding allocations are necessary, but not sufficient, to make this happen.

“While metro areas are organizing stimulus command centers, many rural communities are struggling to figure out how to tap into funds even when they are explicitly earmarked for rural areas.”


• The problem is that as, “[s]ome regions benefit from a robust civic infrastructure; others suffer from weakened civic capacity reflecting years of economic disinvestment, siloed mandates, and talent flight.”

“Rural philanthropy can feel like plugging holes in a sinking ship with no one left to steer. We’re trying so hard to hold onto what we have—hospitals, schools, industries, residents—that we have nothing left for charting a new trajectory.”

“It is precisely philanthropy—the sector most able, and ideally, most willing, to take risks, absorb losses, learn, adapt and empower—that is suited to be a catalyst for the current rural moment. Sustainable rural philanthropy must begin with an orientation toward a positive new vision for rural communities.”

Figure 1: Per Capita Grant-Making 2010-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Per Capita Grant-Making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS Delta and AL Black Belt</td>
<td>$41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal and Lowcountry</td>
<td>$43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rio Grande Valley</td>
<td>$52</td>
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<td>United States</td>
<td>$451</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>$1,966</td>
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<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>$4,096</td>
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SETTING THE CURRENT RURAL CONTEXT

• Avoid
  • Prescriptive, hyperspecialized, warmed-over, square peg in a round hole dilemma
  • Short-termism
  • Tired rural stereotypes

• Embrace
  • A new, aspirational rural vision
  • All in on place-based rural institution building
  • Clarity to funder roles and responsibilities to maximize leverage: top-down national and state philanthropies and public agencies with funds and programmatic expertise collaborating with place-based rural foundations, with local legitimacy, commitment, knowledge and connections
In rural communities and regions, **technical challenges cannot be separated from institutional capacity challenges**, and both must be **addressed simultaneously** to break the rural disinvestment cycle.

Seek to create and strengthen **minimum viable rural ecosystems**.

- Concept borrowed from the business startup field
- “What capacities and arrangement of place-based rural institutions are necessary to initiate and drive positive social change?”

  - Answers to that question would reveal realistic paths for progress within currently exhausted/overwhelmed rural ecosystems, which have evolved for decades to survive scarcity rather than structure themselves for growth.

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*https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2022/3/23/the-path-to-sustained-impactful-rural-philanthropy*
Where are we trying to make an impact?

- **State entities**: state education agencies; state economic development boards and councils; state health agencies; state higher education coordinating boards

- **Regional entities**: councils of government; regional economic and workforce development councils; hospitals; educational service center regions; community and technical colleges and universities

- **Local entities**: municipal and county government; school districts; health districts; economic development corporations; chambers of commerce

- **Hyperlocal entities**: food pantries; school campuses; health clinics; shelters
INTERVENTION TYPE

- How can we best address capacity gaps and strengthen existing capacity?

CATALYTIC IMPACT

- **Data**: research and analysis to better understand a challenge or opportunity and guide decision-making;
- **Technical Assistance**: training, coaching, mentoring, and other specialized assistance to address a targeted need;
- **Convening**: support to bring partners together to foster relationships, build networks, and make collaborative decisions;
- **Capital**: charitable grant investments to achieve program-restricted or general operating objectives.
REAL LIFE EXAMPLES

• Regional
• State-wide
• National Trends in Technical Assistance
• **Challenge**: For many rural East Texans, reliable broadband is either not available or not affordable. Billions of dollars have been allocated to address rural connectivity gaps, but civic leaders and institutions across East Texas lack trusted broadband technical expertise, raising the risks of poor planning, failure to secure funds, and implementation challenges.

• **Opportunity**: Improve decision-making by providing accurate broadband connectivity data for rural East Texas, embed broadband technical assistance within regional development institutions, and mobilize local partners to increase local adoption and usage for literacy, health, and economic development impacts.

• County-level mapping and planning

• A Broadband Project Manager within regional council of governments to mobilize local communities for federal and state mapping challenges and manage approximately $70 million in broadband infrastructure projects

• A network of rural libraries led by Rural LISC to establish digital navigation services for local residents and Rural Innovation Network led by Center on Rural Innovation for tech-led economic development
• **Challenge**: Rural communities across East Texas lack access to the services of community development financial institutions (CDFIs) as well as the staffing, expertise, and resources to secure federal funding and launch and sustain development efforts.

• **Opportunity**: Launch locally based CDFIs and regional development hubs that simultaneously address the primary barriers facing rural communities by embedding local coordination capacity, accessible best-in-class technical assistance, and pools of matching funds.

• **Unit/Level of Change**: Regional

• **Intervention/Investment Type**: Catalytic Technical Assistance, Convening, and Capital
THE IMPETUS BEHIND THE ROC-ET INITIATIVE

A Gap, A Map, and An Email

• **December 30, 2020**: Peak pandemic
  • Hospitals were full and small businesses, particularly in rural areas, were struggling to stay afloat

• **A Call to Action**:  
  • “We need a recognized CDFI [community development financial institution] in our region. The most recent stimulus is investing up to $12 billion through CDFIs and we don’t have one located in our entire service area.”

The map shows the location of community development financial institutions in green and counties with 20% or more of the population living in poverty in red. (Source: cdfi.gov)
THE LAUNCH OF THE ROC-ET INITIATIVE

The Journey and the Current Status

• Call for Proposals and Selection:
  • June 2021
    • “will establish staff and services in a physical office location”
  • October 2021

• Launch in Nacogdoches:
  • October 2022
    • Staff
    • Office
    • Lending Activity
    • Expansion
THE ROC-ET INITIATIVE DASHBOARD

Transparent Impact that is Changing the Narrative

- Track the Dashboard: https://tlltemple.foundation/roc-et/

OUR IMPACT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL DOLLARS DEPLOYED</th>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER OF LOANS MADE</th>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER OF JOBS CREATED/RETAINED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>886,531 THOUSAND</td>
<td>28 LOANS</td>
<td>205 JOBS</td>
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</table>
CONNECTRURAL

- Community Resource Managers
- Multi-state Network of Technical Assistance
- Designated Matching Funds
- Rural AmeriCorps

Improving rural civic infrastructure of East Texas

Communities Unlimited and the T.L.L. Temple Foundation are bolstering civic infrastructure across rural East Texas. Supported by a five-year $3.1 million grant from the T.L.L. Temple Foundation, the two entities developed an initiative called ConnectRURAL (Regions Underserved Rural Areas Unlimited) to strengthen the capacities of rural communities to attain...
• **Challenge:** Many rural nonprofit and civic organizations have limited expertise and resources to track, sort through, and find the right federal and state funding opportunities and lack the technical competencies to write competitive grant applications.

• **Opportunity:** Develop an open-access, multi-sector listing of federal grant prospects curated for rural communities and a vetted listing of qualified grant writers to assist in developing and managing federal grant proposals: [https://texasruralfunders.org/grant/](https://texasruralfunders.org/grant/).

• **Unit/Level of Change:** State

• **Intervention/Investment Type:** Catalytic Data and Technical Assistance
# Texas Rural Funders Federal Funding Opportunities

## Prospect List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programmatic Area</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Grantor/Agency</th>
<th>Opportunity Name</th>
<th>Focus Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>business and commerce</td>
<td>forecasted</td>
<td>February 2024</td>
<td>Department of Labor - DOL-ETA</td>
<td>Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Indirect and National America</td>
<td>Technical assistance to develop the capacity and a Rural Community Development Initiative</td>
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<td>business and commerce</td>
<td>forecasted</td>
<td>April 2023</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>Rural Community Development Initiative</td>
<td>The purpose of this program is to support employment activities for Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.</td>
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<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>forecasted</td>
<td>1/1/2024</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>Distance Learning and Telemedicine</td>
<td>Develop and deploy advanced telecommunication services throughout rural America to improve education and economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>business and commerce</td>
<td>posted</td>
<td>rolling</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program</td>
<td>Eligible applicants must provide training and technical assistance to address the needs of rural businesses and microloans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>business and commerce</td>
<td>forecasted</td>
<td>8/6/2023</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture</td>
<td>Rural Cooperative Development Grant</td>
<td>The primary objective of the RCDG program is to improve the economic condition of rural areas by assisting individuals and startups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>arts</td>
<td>forecasted</td>
<td>8/1/2023</td>
<td>National Endowment for the ARTS</td>
<td>NEA Our Town</td>
<td>Our Town is the National Endowment for the Arts' placemaking grants program. Through project-based support projects that integrate arts, culture, and economic development efforts that strengthen communities by advancing the arts.</td>
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**T.L.L. Temple Foundation**
CAPACITY BUILDING: WEBSITE RE-LAUNCH

Thriving rural communities contributing to a thriving Texas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
<th>Phone number</th>
<th>Experience working in rural communities?</th>
<th>Experience working in rural Texas communities?</th>
<th>What federal agencies do you have experience securing grants from?</th>
<th>Other agencies (not listed above) from which you have you secured federal grants</th>
<th>What types of projects/programs do you have experience in applying for?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timothy J Hansell</td>
<td>Goodyear</td>
<td>AZ</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tj@hanselgroup.com">tj@hanselgroup.com</a></td>
<td>602-885-4454</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services</td>
<td>Numerous Foundations, State agencies, and local agencies</td>
<td>Planning grants, Infrastructure/Construction, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erica McWhorter</td>
<td>Napa</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:erica@exceleve.org">erica@exceleve.org</a></td>
<td>707-241-4970</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services</td>
<td>National Endowment for the Arts, USAID, U.S. Department of State</td>
<td>Planning grants, Infrastructure/Construction, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Ann Liebasa</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:dliebasa@gmail.com">dliebasa@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>603-531-3823</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Labor, Environmental State agencies</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrina Peiton-Smith</td>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:patrina@businessofcharity.com">patrina@businessofcharity.com</a></td>
<td>832-788-9958</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Governor-Criminal</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Kester Thomas</td>
<td>Fayetteville</td>
<td>AR</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cheryl@kestergroup.com">cheryl@kestergroup.com</a></td>
<td>479-582-1053</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Federal Aviation Administration</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamara Huggins</td>
<td>Granger</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tamara.huggins@gmail.com">tamara.huggins@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>512-536-0196</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Development Administration, Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>National Endowment for the Arts, USAID, U.S. Department of State</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Madsen</td>
<td>Murrieta</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ann@amgrantsconsulting.com">ann@amgrantsconsulting.com</a></td>
<td>310-944-1374</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Labor, Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Transportation, Small Business Administration</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Johnson</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aphjohn57@gmail.com">aphjohn57@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>713-205-6974</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Transportation, Small Business Administration</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maurice Consulting Group</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:michael@mauriceconsulting.com">michael@mauriceconsulting.com</a></td>
<td>757-641-3021</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Development Administration, Administration for Community Living</td>
<td>National Science Foundation, Institute for Economic Development, Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colton Strawser</td>
<td>Arlington</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:colton@coltonstrawser.com">colton@coltonstrawser.com</a></td>
<td>782-342-8542</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Economic Development Administration, Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Vela</td>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elizabethvela@gmail.com">elizabethvela@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>512-461-8490</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Economic Development Administration, Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivian Bush</td>
<td>Cypress</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vivian.m.bush@gmail.com">vivian.m.bush@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>832-641-7206</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Education, USAID, Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob B. Chase</td>
<td>Elkhorn</td>
<td>WI</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jcbasse.ccs.illinois@gmail.com">jcbasse.ccs.illinois@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>262-325-3812</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of State, Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Ben Stafford</td>
<td>Beaumont</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>staffordbk@ Lamarpa.edu</td>
<td>281-381-6753</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Education, Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building</td>
<td>Planning grants, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance</td>
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RURAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

NEED:

• Capacity
• Expertise
• Access to pre-development resources
RURAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

• OREGON-The Ford Family Foundation
• OREGON-Broadband Technical Assistance Hub
• MICHIGAN-Michigan Municipal League and Michigan Department of Rural Development
• TEXAS-Texas Rural Funders
RURAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

TRENDS AND BEST PRACTICES

- Project development support
- Prospecting and eligibility navigation
- Training (grants.gov, prospecting, etc.)
- Grant writing support
- Grant hubs
- Vetted grant-writers
- Matching funds
- Learning cohorts
The Value of Collaborative Funding Networks

- National: Oregon to Texas
- Regional: Across Texas

Takeaways

- Find Common Sector or Geographic Challenges and Pain Points
- Build Platforms for Action at the Right Units/Levels of Change
- Bias Toward Community-Led Action with a Long-Term Vision
QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

• What is Rural Philanthropy doing around capacity in your region?

• Are you actively engaging TA providers?

• What solutions have you come up with to address rural capacity issues?
THANK YOU
• **Challenge**: Rural communities are often left out of economic analysis that disproportionately focuses on metro areas. What is needed in East Texas is actionable, up to date economic and labor market analysis that can be used to identify high-wage, high-demand credentials by sub-region, activate core industry networks, and guide the creation of rural education and economic opportunity models.

• **Opportunity**: Conduct and disseminate an analysis focused on the T.L.L. Temple Foundation’s rural service area, employing job density, commuting, and industry and occupational data to define economic and labor market sub-regions, so that education, business, and community leaders will have access to the information they need to build a thriving East Texas.

• **Unit/Level of Change**: Regional

• **Intervention/Investment Type**: Catalytic Data
What are the coherent economic sub-regions in our service area?

What are the economic structures of these sub-regions?

How aligned are the regional talent pipelines?

Access the analysis:
https://tlltemple.foundation/rural-east-texas-economic-opportunity-analysis/

Economic Sub-Regions

The foundation’s service area includes three distinct economic sub-regions, defined by the job density and commuting patterns of workers in the region.
LAGGING COMPARATIVE EMPLOYMENT IN EAST TEXAS

Comparative Employment Growth, 2008=100

Source: Emsi 2021.2 – OCEW Employees, Non-OCEW Employees, & Self-Employed

T.L.L. Temple Foundation
Key Takeaways

- **Five County Sub-Region**: Angelina, Nacogdoches, Sabine, San Augustine, and Shelby
- **Top Industry Clusters**: Healthcare, Education, Retail Trade, and Manufacturing as well as economic specializations in Forest & Forest Products and Livestock & Livestock Processing
- **Mild Population Loss**
- **Talent Alignment**: Potential shortage of talent, particularly in health science, education and training, and business.