

September  
2023

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



**RURAL PROSPERITY  
PARTNERS**

Building Prosperity Together



**Texas  
Rural  
Funders**



**T.L.L. TEMPLE FOUNDATION**

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**BUILDING A THRIVING RURAL EAST TEXAS**

# PRESENTERS

## Jerry Kennedy



Since 2020, Jerry Kenney 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](mailto:jerrykenney@tlltemple.foundation)

## Kelty Garbee



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](mailto:kelty@texasruralfunders.org)

## Rachael Maddock-Hughes



Rachael Maddock-Hughes, Founder and CEO of Rural Prosperity Partners (formerly Sequoia Consulting), is a leader in rural development. Her expertise bridges the non-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](mailto: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

# SETTING THE CURRENT RURAL CONTEXT

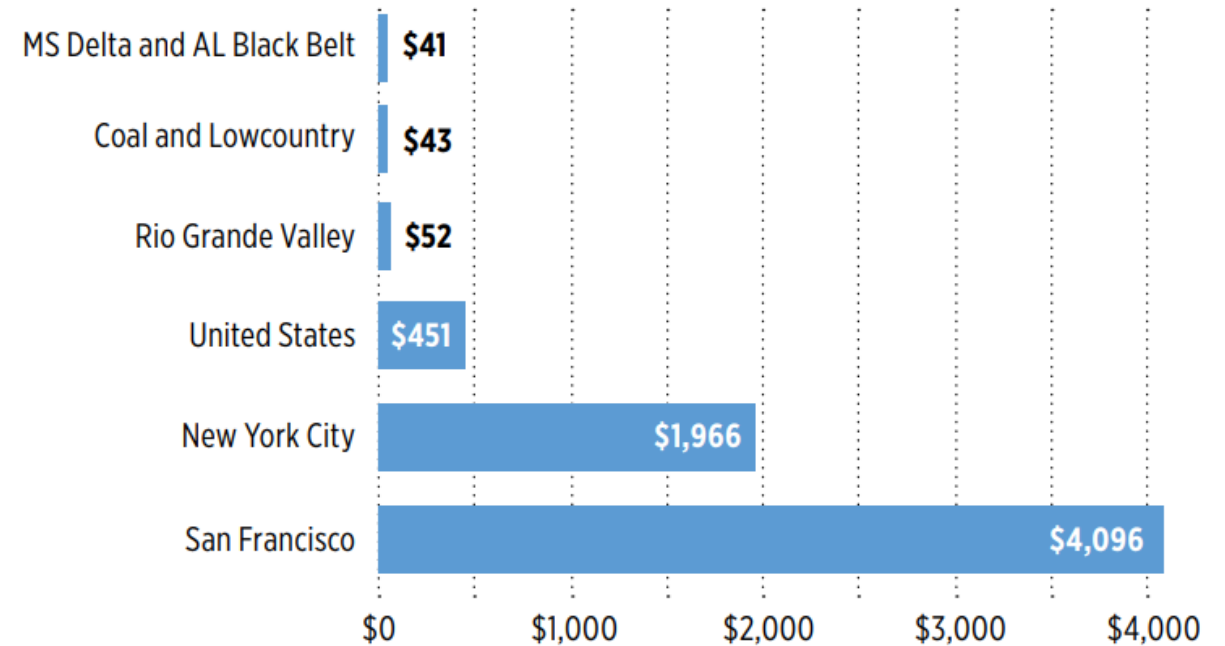
- With unprecedented federal infrastructure investments (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Inflation Reduction Act, CHIPS) across the U.S., there is hope for more inclusive geographic prosperity. Yet, funding allocations are necessary, but not sufficient, to make this happen.
- “While metro areas are organizing 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.” - <https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2022/10/6/how-can-philanthropy-help-connect-rural-communities-to-federal-infrastructure-funds>
- 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.” - <https://www.brookings.edu/research/making-local-economies-prosperous-and-resilient-the-case-for-a-modern-economic-development-administration/>

# RURAL PHILANTHROPY

- “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**.”
- “[I]t 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**.”

<https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2022/3/23/the-path-to-sustained-impactful-rural-philanthropy>

**Figure 1: Per Capita Grant-Making 2010-14**



SOURCES: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy and Grantmakers for Southern Progress: “As the South Grows” series, 2016-17.

<https://www.stlouisfed.org/-/media/project/frbstl/stlouisfed/files/pdfs/community-development/investing-rural/investinginruralprosperity-book.pdf>

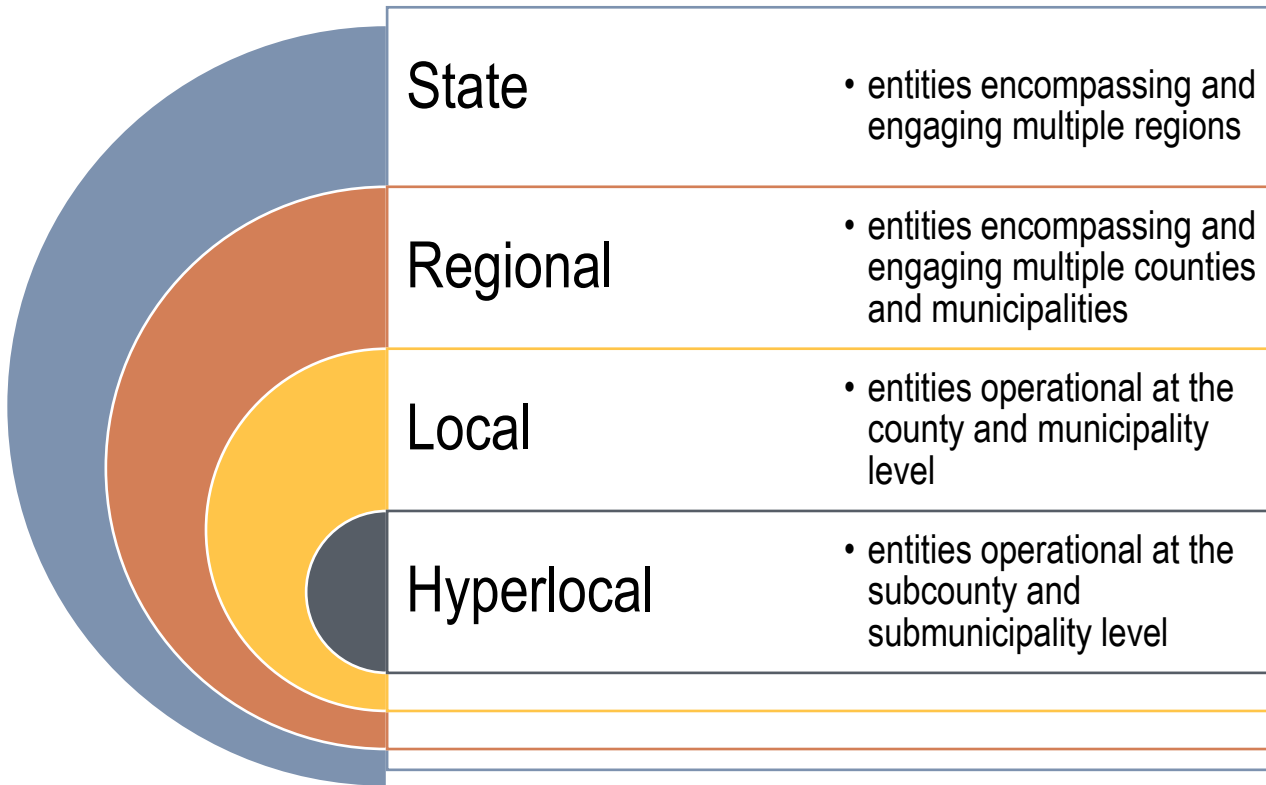
# SETTING THE CURRENT RURAL CONTEXT

- 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

# PLACE-BASED RURAL ECOSYSTEMS

- 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.

# UNIT/LEVEL OF CHANGE



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

# BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT TEXAS

- **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

# CONNECTRURAL AND ROC-ET INITIATIVE

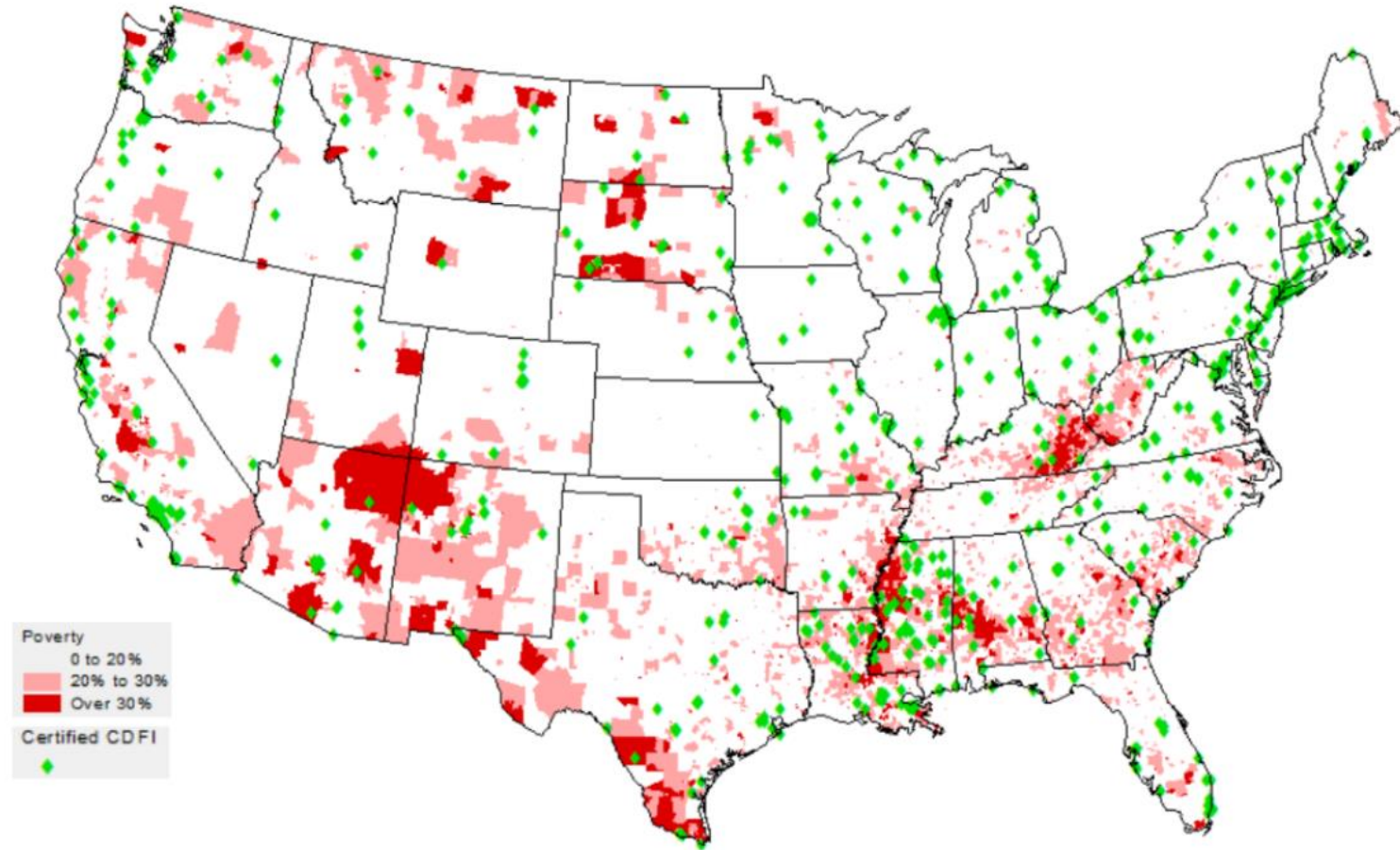
- **Challenge:** Rural communities across East Texas lack access to the services of community development financial institutions (CDFIs) as well as the staffing, expertise, and resources to secure federal funding and launch and sustain development efforts.
- **Opportunity:** Launch locally based CDFIs 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.”

## Gaps



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: [cdfifund.gov](http://cdfifund.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

TOTAL DOLLARS  
DEPLOYED

**886,531**  
THOUSAND

TOTAL NUMBER OF LOANS  
MADE

**28**  
LOANS

TOTAL NUMBER OF JOBS  
CREATED/RETAINED

**205**  
JOBS

### RECIPIENTS

The ROC-ET Initiative is intended to serve rural East Texas communities. This dashboard tracks results across the T.L.L. Temple Foundation's East Texas service area except for Harris County.



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

## Improving rural civic infrastructure of East Texas

From Staff Reports Feb 10, 2023



1 of 2



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 Resources Available Ineun) to strengthen the capacities of rural communities to plan

NITIESUnlimited

ABOUT PROGRAM AREAS STORIES TRAINING APPLY FOR A LOAN MEMSHOP AR MBDA



By Ben Smith

Communities Unlimited (CU) 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 Resources Available Ineun) to strengthen the capacities of rural communities to plan



# GRANT PROSPECTING LIST AND GRANT WRITER ROSTER

- **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/>.
- **Unit/Level of Change:** State
- **Intervention/Investment Type:** Catalytic Data and Technical Assistance

# GRANT PROSPECTING LIST

## Texas Rural Funders Federal Funding Opportunities Prospect List

Click on the down-arrow icon next to the grantor (or grantor). N/A indicates that the funder did not

Once an eligible prospect is identified, click

Programmatic Area	Status	Deadline	Grantor/Agency	Opportunity Name	Focus Area
					facilities such as public safety, fire and rescue, tele
business and commerce	forecasted	February 2024	Department of Labor - DOL-ETA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Indian and Native American	The purpose of this program is to support employment activities for Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian
business and commerce	forecasted	April 2023	Department of Agriculture	Rural Community Development Initiative	Technical assistance to develop the capacity and award awardees to carry out projects related to rural housing facilities, and community and economic development
education	forecasted	1/1/2024	Department of Agriculture	Distance Learning and Telemedicine	Develop and deploy advanced telecommunication services throughout rural America to improve education and
business and commerce	posted	rolling		Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program	Eligible applicants must provide training and technical make microloans, facilitate access to capital, or have plan or program to deliver such services
business and commerce	forecasted	6/6/2023	Department of Agriculture	Rural Cooperative Development Grant	The primary objective of the RCDG program is to improve economic condition of rural areas by assisting individuals in the startup, expansion or operational improvement cooperatives and other business entities. Grants are competitively on an annual basis to Rural Cooperative
arts	forecasted	8/1/2023	Department of Agriculture National Endowment for the ARTS	NEA Our Town	Our Town is the National Endowment for the Arts' community placemaking grants program. Through project-based support projects that integrate arts, culture, and design into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing
				Communities Pilot (RCP) Program grants. Funds for Year (FY) 2022 RCP Program are to be awarded to basic for projects that support communities by	

# CAPACITY BUILDING: WEBSITE RE-LAUNCH



WHO WE ARE ▾ WHAT WE DO **EVENTS & RESOURCES ▾** NEWS CONTACT

BROADBAND  
INFORMATION

GRANTS HUB

RURAL RESOURCES



Thriving rural communities contributing to a thriving Texas.

# GRANT WRITER ROSTER



## Roster of Qualified Grant Writers

Name	City	State	Email Address	Phone number	Experience working in rural communities?	Experience working in rural Texas communities?	What federal agencies do you have experience securing grants from?	Other agencies (not listed above) from which you have secured federal grants	What types of projects/programs do you have experience in applying for?
							Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services		
Timothy J Hansell	Goodyear	AZ	tj@hansellgroup.com	602-885-4454	Yes	No	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Development Administration, Department of Education, Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of the Interior	Numerous Foundations, State agencies, and local agencies	Planning grants, Infrastructure/Construction, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance
Erica McWhorter	Napa	CA	erica@excelebrate.org	707-241-4970	Yes	No	Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,		Planning grants, Infrastructure/Construction, Non-construction/program, Capacity building,
Deborah Ann Lielasus		IL	dlielasus@gmail.com	603-531-3823	Yes	No	U.S. Department of Labor, Environmental	State agencies	Planning grants,
Patrina Pelton-Smith	Houston	TX	patrina@businessofcharity.com	832-786-9958	Yes	Yes	U.S. Department of Health and Human	Office of the Governor-Criminal	Planning grants, Non-construction/program,
Cheryl Kester Thomas	Fayetteville	AR	cheryl@kestergroup.com	479-582-1053	Yes	No	U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S.	Federal Aviation Administration,	Planning grants,
Tamara Hudgins	Granger	TX	tamara.hudgins@gmail.com	512-536-0196	Yes	Yes	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic	National Endowment for the	Planning grants,
Ann Madsen	Murrieta	CA	ann@amgrantsconsulting.com	310-944-1374	No	No	U.S. Department of Labor, Housing and	USAID, U.S. Department of State	Planning grants, Non-construction/program,
Angela Johnson	Dallas	TX	ajohnson57@gmail.com	713-205-5674	Yes	Yes	Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Transportation, Small Business Administration	n/a	Planning grants, Infrastructure/Construction, Non-construction/program, Capacity building, Technical assistance
Maurice Consulting Group	Norfolk	VA	michael@mauriceconsulting.com	757-641-3021	Yes	No	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic	National Science Foundation, Institute	Planning grants, Non-construction/program,
Colton Strawser	Arlington	TX	colton@coltonstrawser.com	682-342-8542	Yes	Yes	Economic Development Administration,	Administration for Community Living	Non-construction/program, Capacity
Elizabeth Vela	Austin	TX	elizabethvela@gmail.com	512-461-8490	Yes	Yes	Housing and Urban Development, U.S.	n/a	Planning grants,
Vivian Bush	Cypress	TX	vivian.m.bush@gmail.com	832-541-7206	Yes	Yes	U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department	USAID	Planning grants, Non-construction/program,
Jacob B. Chase	Elkhorn	WI	jchase.ccs.llc@gmail.com	262-325-3812	Yes	No	U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S.	U.S. Department of State	Planning grants, Non-construction/program,
Dr. Ben Stafford	Beaumont	TX	staffordbk@lamarpa.edu	281-381-6753	Yes	Yes	Economic Development Administration, U.S.	n/a	Planning grants, Infrastructure/construction,

# RURAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

## NEED:

- Capacity
- Expertise
- Access to pre-development resources



# RURAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS



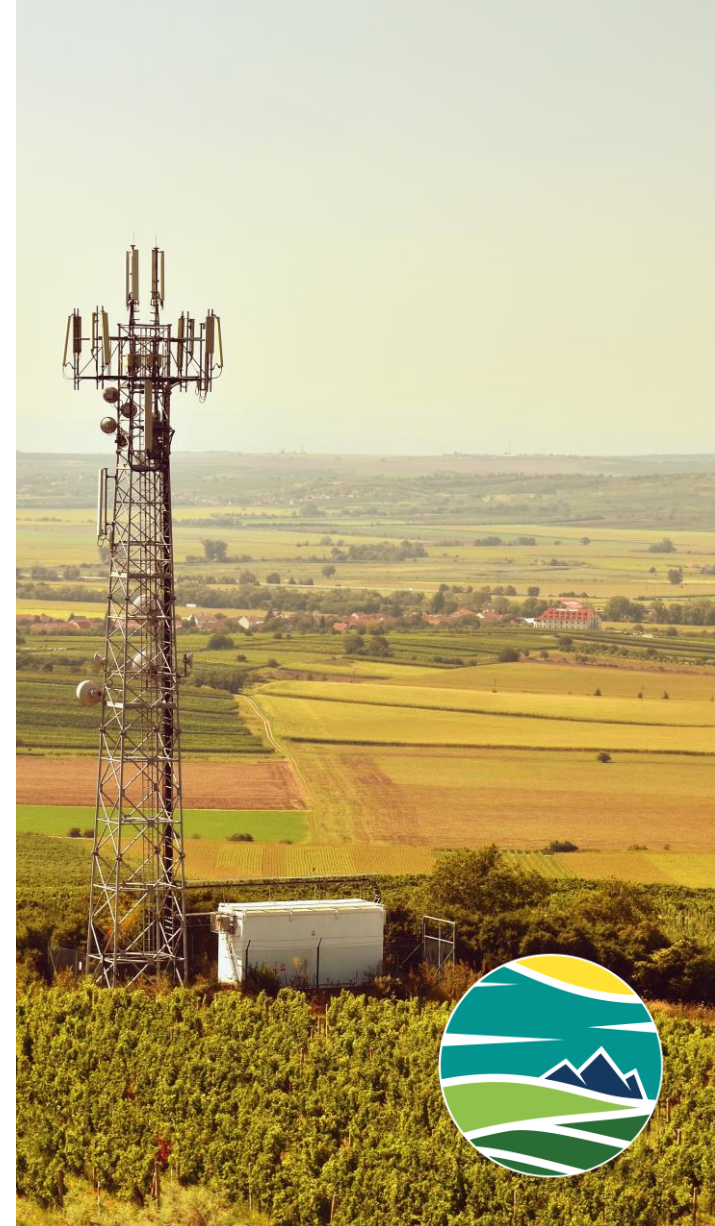
- **OREGON-The Ford Family Foundation**
- **OREGON-Broadband Technical Assistance Hub**
- **MICHIGAN-Michigan Municipal League and Michigan Department of Rural Development**
- **TEXAS-Texas Rural Funders**



# 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



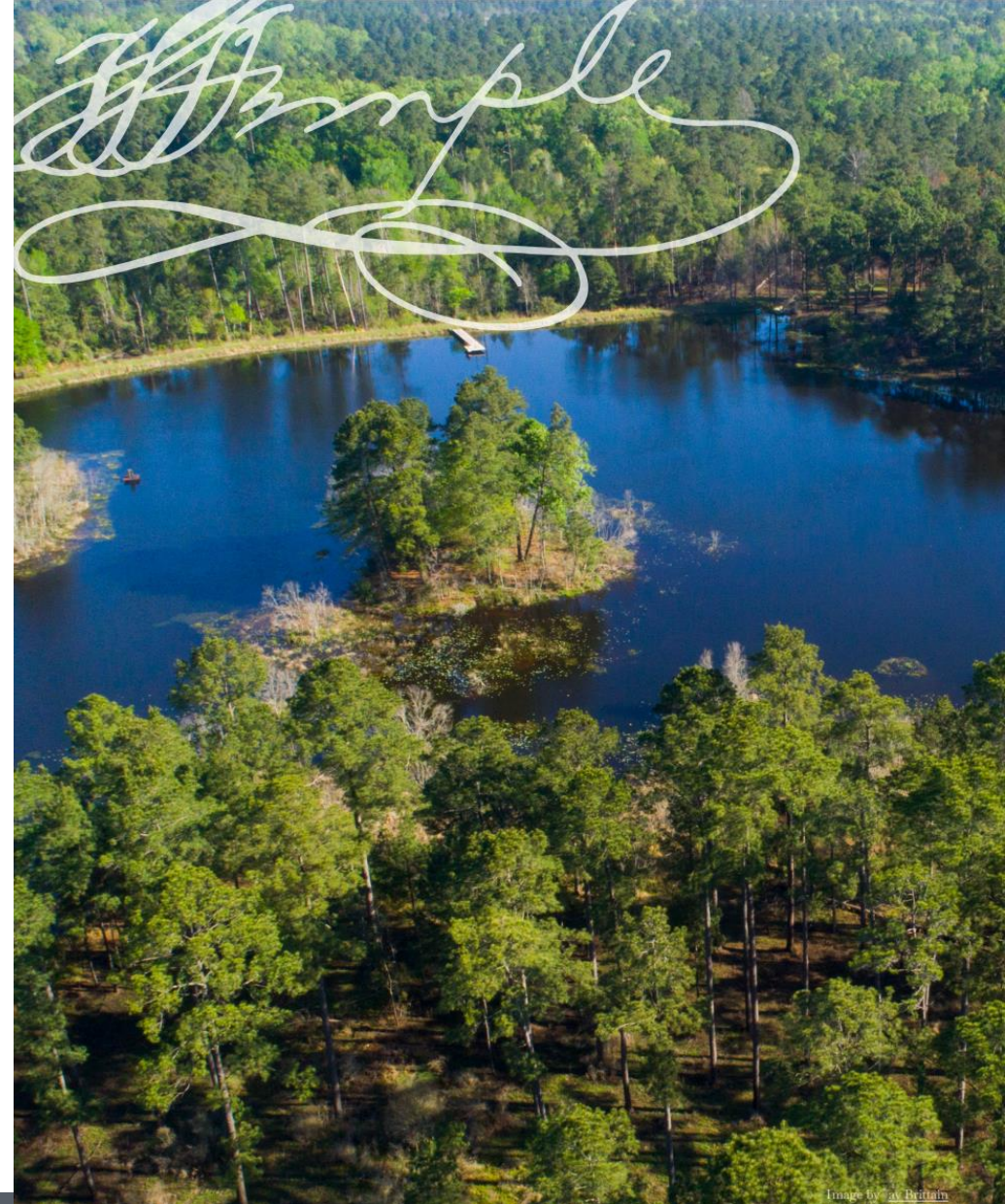
# GRANT PROSPECTING LIST AND GRANT WRITER ROSTER

## The Value of Collaborative Funding Networks

- National: Oregon to Texas
- Regional: Across Texas

## Takeaways

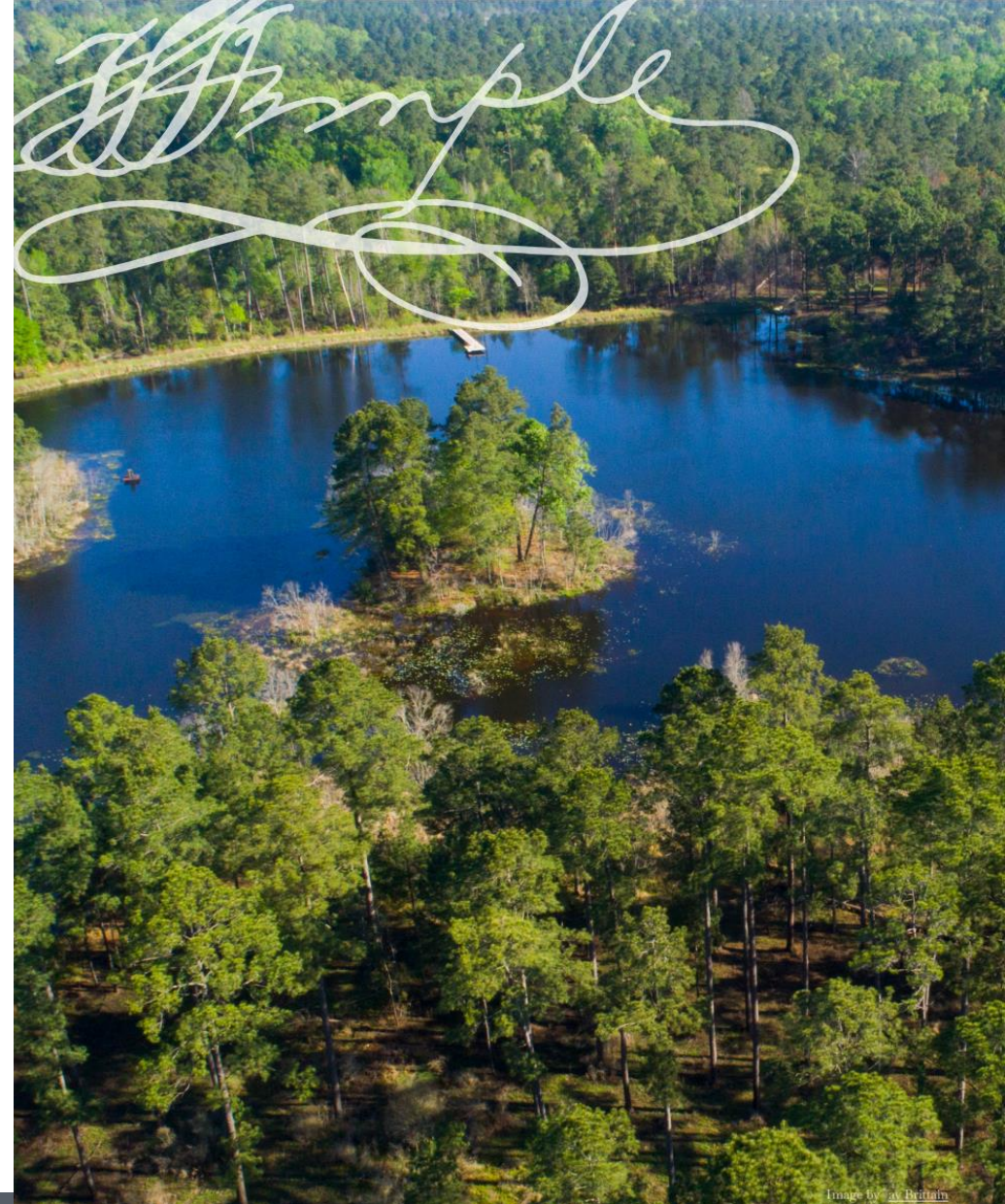
- Find Common Sector or Geographic Challenges and Pain Points
- Build Platforms for Action at the Right Units/Levels of Change
- Bias Toward Community-Led Action with a Long-Term Vision





# 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?





**T.L.L. TEMPLE FOUNDATION**

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**BUILDING A THRIVING RURAL EAST TEXAS**

**THANK YOU**

[www.tlltemple.foundation](http://www.tlltemple.foundation)

# RURAL EAST TEXAS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

- **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

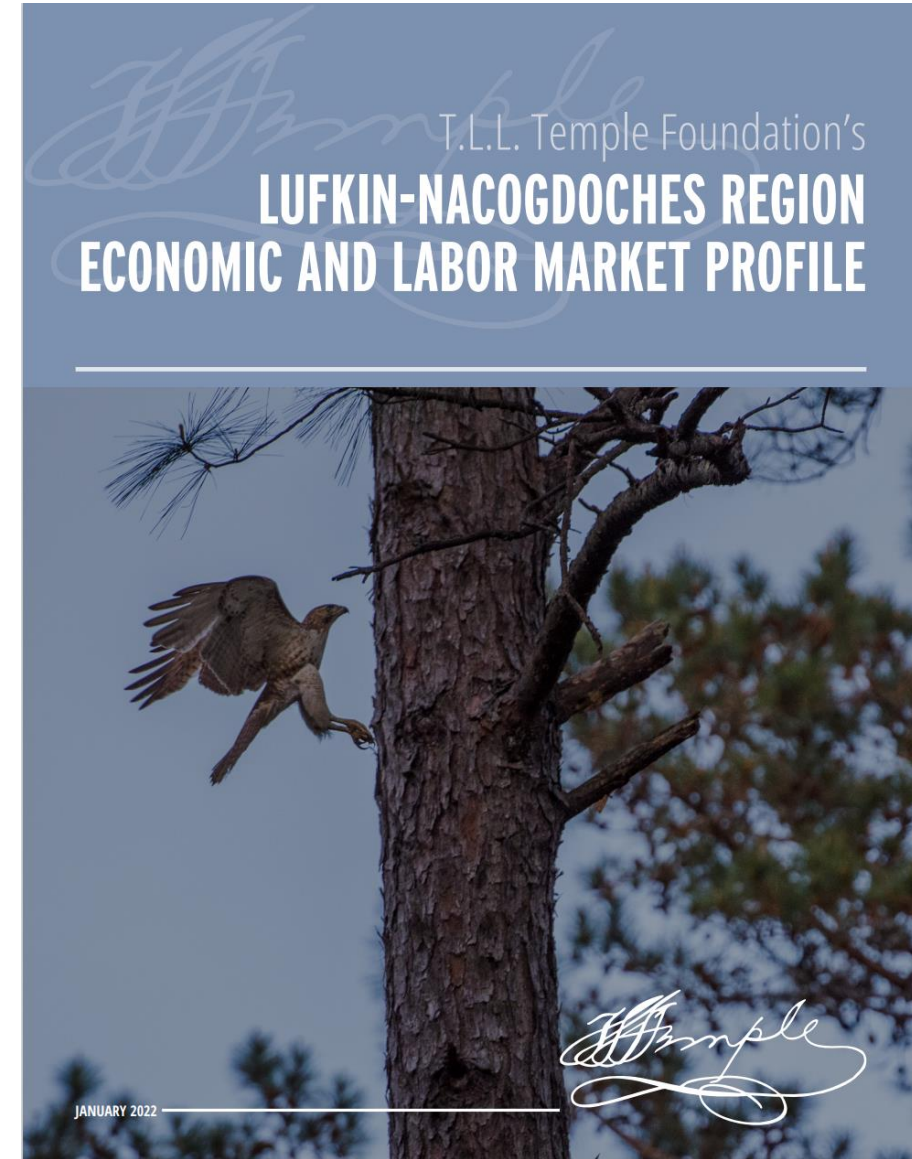
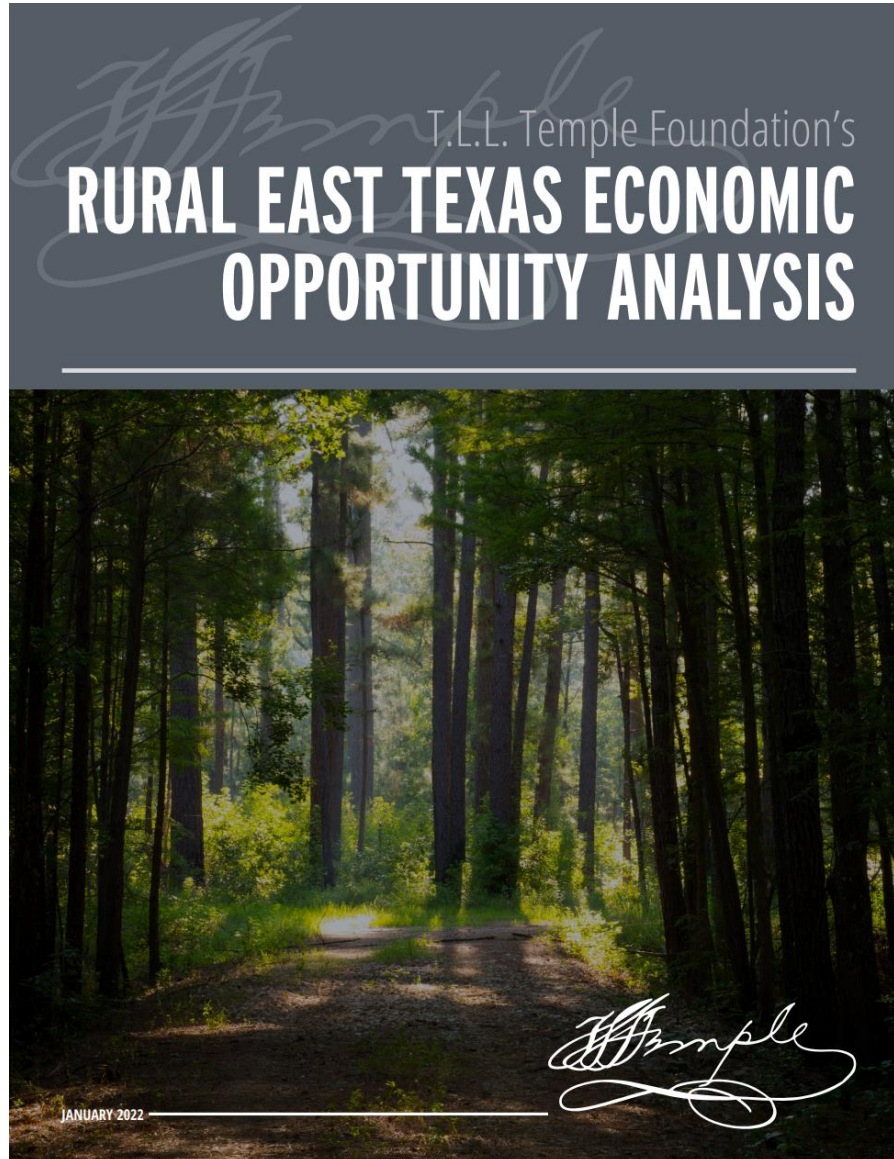
# RURAL EAST TEXAS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

**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/>

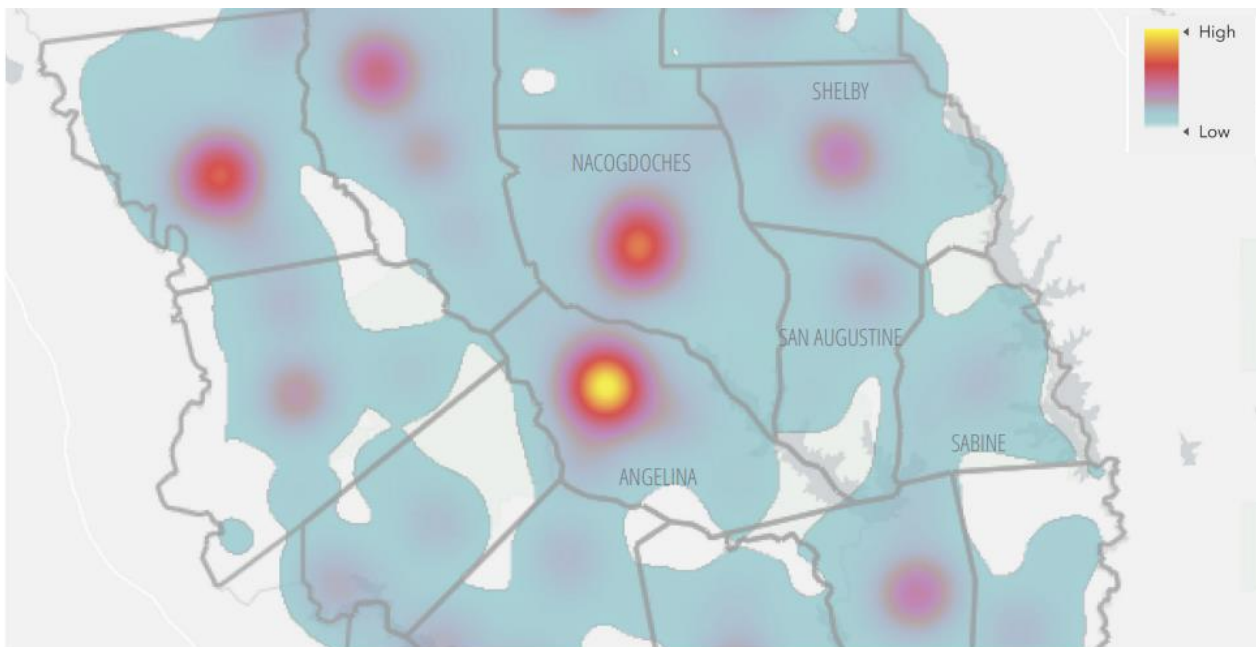


Sources: Alexander Research & Consulting & T.L.L. Temple Foundation.

# THE ECONOMIC SUB-REGIONS IN EAST TEXAS

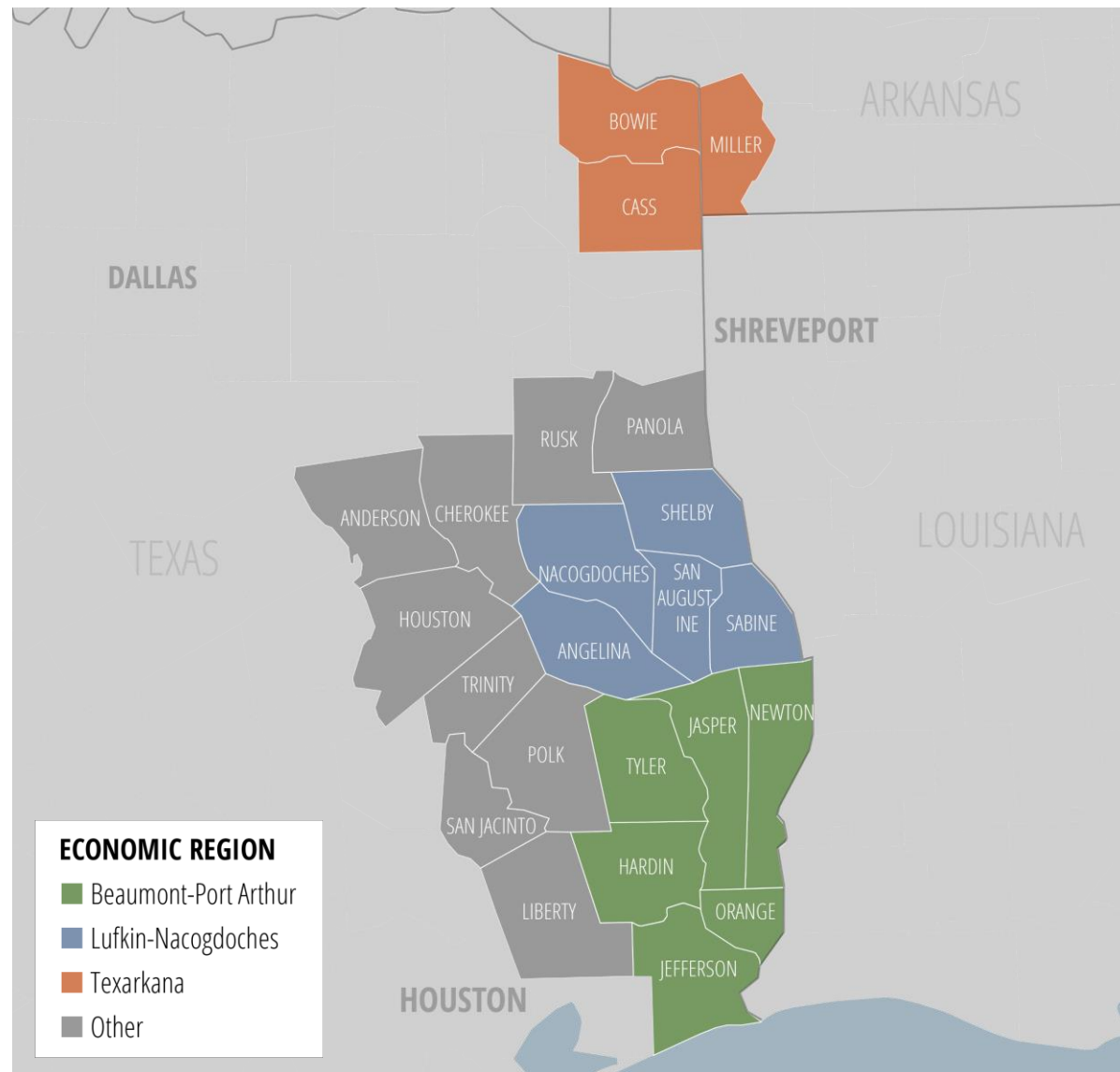
## Economic Sub-Regions

The foundation's service area includes three distinct economic sub-regions, defined by the job density and commuting patterns of workers in the region.



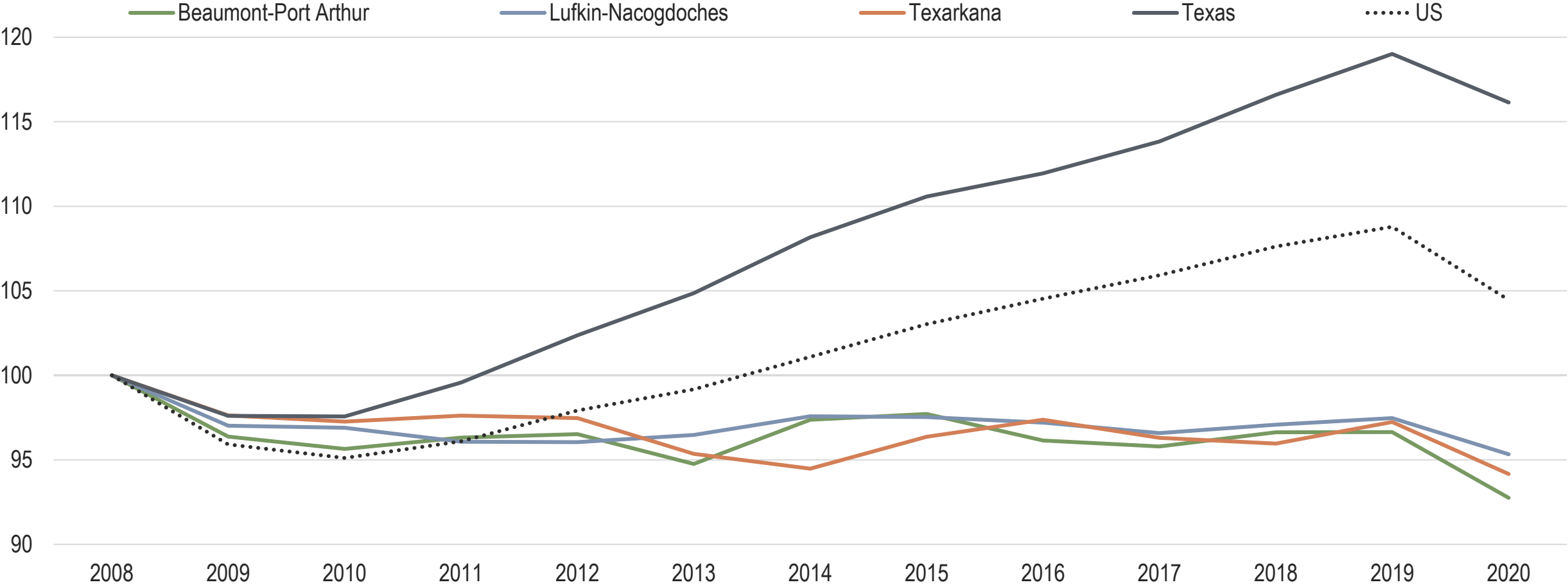
Source: US Census Bureau, LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics.

Sources: Alexander Research & Consulting & T.L.L. Temple Foundation.



# LAGGING COMPARATIVE EMPLOYMENT IN EAST TEXAS

## Comparative Employment Growth, 2008=100

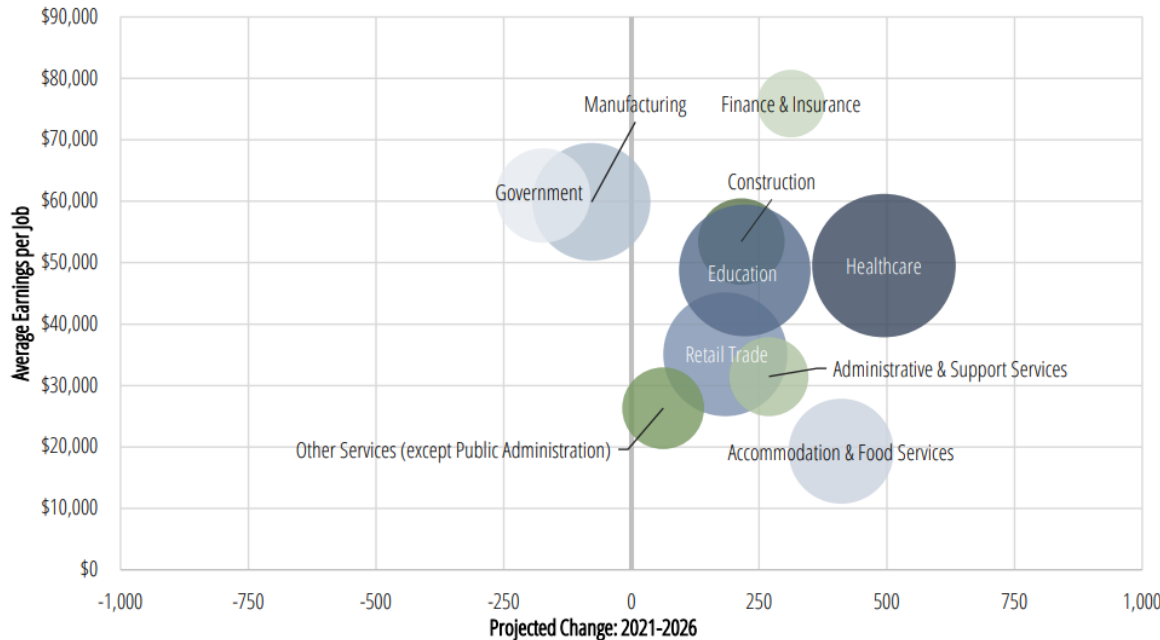


Source: Emsi 2021.2 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, & Self-Employed

# THE DEEP EAST TEXAS SUB-REGION

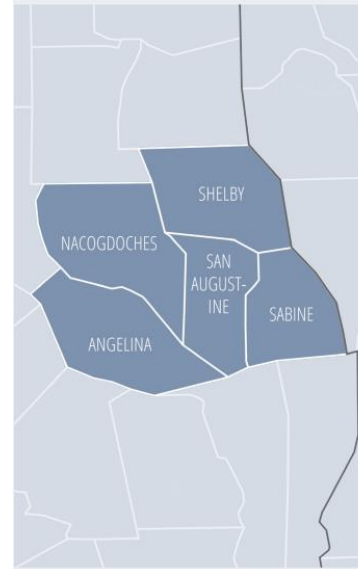
## Key Takeaways

- **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.



Source: Emsi 2021.2 – QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed

### COUNTIES



### KEY STATISTICS

195,972

Population (2019)

-0.7%

Population Change (2014-2019)

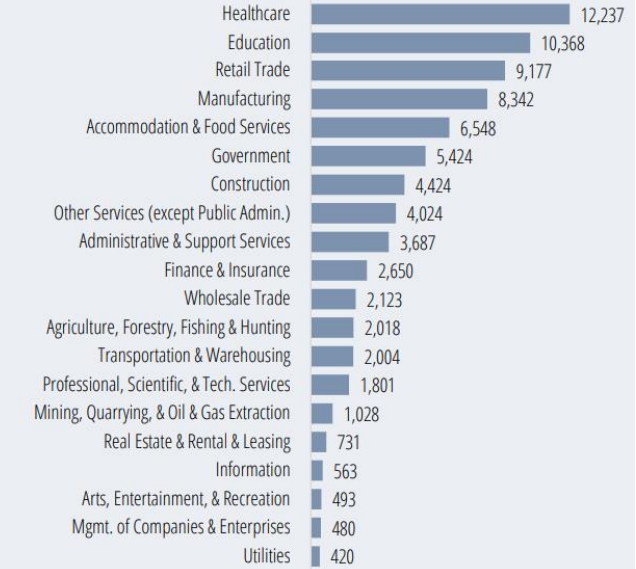
78,545

Jobs (2020)

46,930

Openings (2021-2026)

### EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



### TOP HIGH-DEMAND, HIGH-WAGE JOBS\*

OCCUPATION	OPENINGS (2021-2026)
1. Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	959
2. General & Operations Managers	594
3. First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	510
4. Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	431
5. First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation & Serving Workers	425
6. Registered Nurses	405
7. Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	390
8. First-Line Supervisors of Office & Administrative Support Workers	374
9. Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	348
10. Postsecondary Teachers	347
11. Correctional Officers & Jailers	336
12. Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	290
13. Logging Equipment Operators	260
14. First-Line Supervisors of Production & Operating Workers	234
15. Sales Reps., Wholesale & Mfg., Except Tech. & Scientific Products	233