



**RGV FOCUS**

a COLLABORATION *with* EDUCATE TEXAS

**SENIOR DIRECTOR  
SEARCH PROFILE**

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY, TEXAS**

**January 2019**

## **The Organization**

The Rio Grande Valley “RGV” FOCUS is a large-scale regional collective impact coalition led by Educate Texas, a public-private initiative of the Communities Foundation of Texas. The coalition consists of multi-sector partners using common goals, aligned efforts and common measures to improve student outcomes across the four counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy. The overarching and shared vision of RGV FOCUS and Educate Texas is to ensure that every Texas student, through quality education from cradle-to-career, can achieve a degree or credential that leads to a meaningful career and workforce success.

### ***RGV FOCUS Mission***

*To transform college readiness, access and success in the four counties of the Rio Grande Valley: Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy.*

RGV FOCUS launched in 2012 and to date has made significant inroads to improve long-term career outlooks and projections across this region; however, much more remains to be done. A critical element of work includes successful collaboration with key stakeholders and partners from school districts, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, the philanthropic community, and local industries. Also, the collection and analysis of aligned data from Pre-K to higher education and into the workforce are imperative to ensuring intentional progress within this collaboration. Significant support and aligned resources by action networks and advisory bodies provide the tools for implementation of this shared vision and strategy, a key component to its success.

## **The Challenge**

Rio Grande Valley students and families face a multitude of challenges that prevent them from pursuing post-secondary education. The most prominent factor is that eighty-six percent are economically disadvantaged. Although interest in continuing through post-secondary schooling is evident from an early age, students often fall off-track in their pursuit. Ensuring a strong post-secondary educational pathway, leading to upward mobility, and increased quality of life for Rio Grande Valley residents, is critical for local communities and the region's economy.

The Rio Grande Valley region's population continues to attract investments in health and professional services, education, advanced manufacturing, and retail. With post-secondary degrees and credentials required for many of these jobs, educational attainment is more important now than ever.

Data from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shows that despite the regional increase in public four-year institutions completion from 42 to 46 percent, the region remains below statewide performance. Given the high level of economic disparity, RGV FOCUS must continue efforts to raise awareness and align efforts around these challenges within the region, across the state and nationally.

## **RGV FOCUS Solution: Cradle-to-Career Educational Pathway and Collective Impact Strategies**

At the center of the RGV FOCUS Strategic Plan is the Cradle-to-Career Educational Pathway. The graphic below highlights the critical phases of the student's educational journey. For more detailed information on annual progress, the full 2017 report can be found [here](#).



RGV FOCUS is committed to working collaboratively across sectors to address key levers in the cradle-to-career pipeline. The collective impact model, which serves as the framework for effective collaboration, is based on five conditions: Common Agenda, Common Progress Measures, Mutually Reinforcing Activities, Communications and Backbone Organizations. The strategic direction of the work is defined by a multi-sector leadership team, which includes leaders from preK-12, public higher education, community based organizations and the business community. The following graphic describes this model in more detail.

## A COLLECTIVE IMPACT

RGV FOCUS utilizes collective impact, a framework that brings cross-sector community members together to drive social change by aligning regional assets around a common vision and objectives that strengthen the cradle-to-career educational pathway. For the framework to be effective, the partnership must have five conditions: a common agenda, common progress measures, mutually reinforcing activities, communications and a backbone organization.



### **The Opportunity**

The Rio Grande Valley is home to 1.3 million people, and is uniquely positioned on the Texas – Mexico border. The talent pool is robust, diverse and vibrant, with a young (median age thirty), Latino (ninety-one percent), bilingual and bicultural population. Regional strategies implemented over the last decade to increase educational attainment for the region’s 18-24-year-old population are encouraging. Recent data from the US Census Bureau shows the completion gap is narrowing between the Rio Grande Valley and peers across the state. RGV Focus seeks a highly accomplished and dynamic leader from the business, government or non-profit sectors to continue to ensure outcomes continue to trend positively. S/he will need to operate with a sense of urgency to move this critical work into action at an accelerated pace in order to continue to build upon the excellent foundation that has been laid.

### **Responsibilities**

The Senior Director will report to Educate Texas’ Managing Director of Programs and work closely with its leadership team, as well as stakeholders and partners in philanthropy, the business sector, economic development, state government, community-based organizations and nonprofits across the Rio Grande Valley. S/he must be a strategic leader who possesses the belief that increasing postsecondary readiness and access for all students is critical to the success of the region. S/he must be able to cultivate and build significant relationships, and recruit potential funders to propel the work of the partnership forward thoughtfully and systematically. S/he will be responsible for building upon the foundation that exists alongside the community and strives to identify successful practices, policies, and programs, and continue

to align regional efforts. The Senior Director will also drive internal and external functions, including the management and oversight of strategy, resources, communications, community engagement, data, and metrics. In summary, the Senior Director works effectively to meet the ambitious impact goals of RGV FOCUS. Specifically, s/he will:

### **Key Responsibilities**

#### **Entrepreneurial Leadership**

- Provide visionary, adaptive leadership
- Model and cultivate a culture reflective of RGV FOCUS guiding values
- Maintain strategic oversight to ensure continual progress of RGV FOCUS
- Work alongside Educate Texas leadership and support teams to ensure strategic coherence
- Hire and manage staff, support their professional growth with integrity, rigor, and empathy
- Ensure that the work environment embraces and appreciates strategic diversity coherence

#### **Fund Development**

- Work alongside Development team to create and implement a fundraising plan, including setting and meeting development targets, cultivating funder relationships, managing grants, and developing existing funds
- Provide support and guidance to partner organizations and align resources to RGV FOCUS

#### **Public Outreach and Advocacy**

- Communicate publicly about the work of the organization and clearly articulate the urgency for engagement among community members, policymakers, funders, and potential partners
- Serve as a liaison to other partnerships in the RGV to ensure alignment and efficiency of mutual work
- Serve as an RGV FOCUS Ambassador at select local, state, and national events

#### **Facilitation and Stakeholder Management**

- Maintain RGV FOCUS's identity as a respected, neutral convener among a broad spectrum of RGV stakeholders
- Cultivate and manage excellent working relationships with senior education and community leaders involved in the RGV FOCUS initiative in a way that can inspire collective action without formal authority
- Facilitate advisory board meetings, and provide regular reports on group progress against goals and indicators
- Identify and recruit additional cross-sector stakeholders to participate in the RGV FOCUS work

### **Shared Strategy and Measurement**

- Oversee the development of a regional set of strategies aligned to the existing strategic plan
- Oversee the development and implementation of a shared measurement system that will track common outcomes indicators across the initiative and leverage results to inform, educate and promote goals

### **Organizational Excellence**

- Co-define the organizational structure and business plan, including necessary facilities, office infrastructure, and staffing
- Determine the roles and responsibilities of the organization as the initiative evolves

### **Required Qualifications**

- Advanced degree in business, education, policy or related field preferred
- Spanish language abilities strongly preferred
- 10+ years of relevant work experience, including experience managing teams in a fast-paced and high-growth nonprofit, social enterprise, or business start-up environment
- 5+ years of fundraising experience, including demonstrated success in cultivating funder relationships
- Leadership presence to inspire confidence and passion in both internal and external audiences
- A dynamic visionary who sees the “big picture” and can identify future needs, develop strategies, establish priorities, and proactively and innovatively address complex issues.
- Advanced strategy and planning skills, including an ability to think strategically on both organizational and systemic levels over multi-year horizons
- Ability to oversee complex shared-data measurement systems
- Strong facilitation and presentation skills before multiple types of audiences
- A track record of leading, inspiring, and developing high-performance teams
- Outstanding communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build, manage and maintain authentic relationships with a diverse set of high-profile stakeholders
- Comfort with ambiguity and ability to thrive in a fluid, entrepreneurial environment; willingness to “roll up one’s sleeves” and extend beyond formal responsibilities based on the needs of the work
- Good working knowledge of K12 and higher education systems preferred
- Dedication to improving educational outcomes for all students of the Rio Grande Valley

### **Other Considerations**

Compensation Competitive with comparable organizations, and commensurate with capability, experience, and prevailing market trends

Location Within Rio Grande Valley region

Travel Moderate throughout the Rio Grande Valley and the state of Texas and select national events

Website <https://www.edtx.org/our-impact-areas/collective-impact/rgv-focus>

**4**  
COUNTIES  
**1**  
COMMUNITY

37 School Districts  
356,964 pre-K-12 Students | 97% Latino  
4 Public Institutions of Higher Education  
70,373 Higher Education Students\* | 92% Latino  
\*Includes dual enrollment  
Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board,  
Higher Education Accountability System 2017

Starr Willacy  
Hidalgo Cameron  
MEXICO

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