

ALAMO REGION

TEXAS STRONG




AACOG
Alamo Area Council
of Governments

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A N N U A L

R E P O R T



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AACOG Members and Alamo Area residents,

This year I was blessed with the opportunity to serve as AACOG's Chairman for a second term, which made me grow even more attached to this organization, its mission, and its dedicated team. Beyond the challenges and changes this year presented, 2023 was remarkable for AACOG and its programs. Our Resident Services have expanded and reached new milestones, while our Government Services programs have continued to find different ways to assist our communities, elected officials, and municipal staff.



Our programs doubled down on the efforts to meet residents where they are, instead of relying on residents to come to us. Our outreach initiatives and engagement in area communities was bountiful, and it was reflected in the number of services we were able to deliver. Our older residents and those receiving Medicare were faced with the end of continuous Medicare reenrollment; our Benefits Counselors were steadfast in their proactive communication and assistance. Our Veterans Directed Care program, which takes Veterans Administration referrals and connects them with case managers to coordinate at-home care, became the largest in the country and is now managing over 700 veteran cases.

AACOG member governments were not left short of attention, as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and other federal programs kept rolling out a multitude of opportunities for numerous focus areas. Whether it is related to disaster mitigation, broadband infrastructure, emergency interoperable communications, air quality and energy management, or even military mission resilience, AACOG's helping hands give far and wide. Our program experts provided exemplary service and attention to the Alamo Area, and the level of regional collaboration has never been more prominent.

AACOG's regional impact surprised me yet again this year, and it's been a true honor to work with this organization and its group of professionals. Our country, our state, and our region are quickly changing. There is an unprecedented influx of opportunity, but with opportunity comes obstacles we'll have to soon face. I am confident that with an organization like AACOG and the true spirit of regionalism instilled in the region, the Alamo Area is ready to overcome anything that comes its way. It has been a pleasure to serve as your Chair, and I look forward to what's to come.

Yours in service,

James E. Teal

County Judge, McMullen County | AACOG Chair



San Ant

MANAGEMENT TEAM



CLIFFORD HERBERG

Executive Director



JACOB ULCZYNSKI

Senior Director, IDD Services
and Agency Coordination



JULIO ELIZONDO

Chief Financial Officer



DEEDRA JOHNSON

Senior Director of Administration
and Program Services



LUCINDA ELIZONDO

Director of Human Resources



MIGUEL SEGURA

Director of Public Affairs
and Regional Development



SEAN SCOTT

Director of Transportation



WILL MCKNIGHT

Director of Aging and
Military Affairs



VIRGINIA CHARLES

Director of IDD Services



ALICIA AVILA PEÑALVER

Weatherization Program Director



JHOAN TORRES

Controller

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James E. Teal • Chairman
County Judge, McMullen County, Representing McMullen County

Rob Kelly • Vice Chairman
County Judge, Kerr County, Representing Kerr County

Tommy Calvert • Commissioner
Bexar County Precinct 4, Representing Bexar County

Rochelle Camacho • County Judge
Frio County, Representing Frio County

Kyle Kutscher • County Judge
Guadalupe County, Representing Guadalupe County

Victor Contreras • Mayor
City of Marion, Representing Area Cities, Group B

Weldon Cude • County Judge
Atascosa County, Representing Atascosa County

Mary Dennis • Mayor
City of Live Oak, Representing Suburban Cities (GBCCC)

Richard A. Evans • County Judge
Bandera County, Representing Bandera County

Judy Eychner • Mayor
City of Kerrville, Representing Area Cities – Group C

Rebeca Clay-Flores • Commissioner
Bexar County Precinct 1, Representing Bexar County

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia • Councilwoman
City of San Antonio, District 4, Representing City of San Antonio

Marina Alderete Gavito • Councilwoman
City of San Antonio, District 7, Representing City of San Antonio

James C. Hasslocher • Board Member
University Health System, Representing Hospital/Health Districts

Wade Hedtke • County Judge
Karnes County, Representing Karnes County

Daniel Jones • County Judge
Gillespie County, Representing Gillespie County

Sherman Krause • County Judge
Comal County, Representing Comal County

Suzanne de Leon • Mayor
City of Balcones Heights, Representing Suburban Cities (GBCCC)

Lisa Lewis • Chief Administrative Officer
CPS Energy, Representing Public Utilities

Keith Lutz • County Judge
Medina County, Representing Medina County

José Menéndez • Senator
Texas Senate, District 26, Representing Urban and Rural State Senators

Grant Moody • Commissioner
Bexar County Precinct 3, Representing Bexar County

Andrew Murr • Representative
Texas House of Representatives, Representing Urban and Rural State Representatives

Manny Pelaez • Councilman
City of San Antonio, District 8, Representing City of San Antonio

Darrin Schroeder • Mayor
City of Castroville, Representing Area Cities, Group A

Lawrence Spradley • Councilman
City of New Braunfels, Representing Urbanized Cities

Shane Stolarczyk • County Judge
Kendall County, Representing Kendall County

Enrique Valdivia • Chair
Edwards Aquifer Authority Board of Directors, Representing Special Districts

Sylvester Vasquez Jr. • President
Southwest ISD, Representing School Districts

Hank Whitman • County Judge
Wilson County, Representing Wilson County

John Williams • Mayor
City of Universal City, Representing Suburban Cities (GBCCC)

Ryan Guillen • Representative
State of Texas, District 31, Representing Ex Officio Member

Brian Hoffman • Vice Director
502d Air Base Wing, Joint Base San Antonio, Representing Ex Officio Member JBASA

John Kuempel • Representative
State of Texas, District 44, Representing Ex Officio Member

Judith Zaffirini • Senator
State of Texas, District 21, Representing Ex Officio Member

THE TITAN BUILDING



THIS HAS BEEN AN EXCITING YEAR OF IMPROVEMENTS AT AACOG'S RECENTLY ACQUIRED HOME, THE TITAN BUILDING.

A fresh coat of paint and other renovations were made throughout the common areas on the third and sixth floors, offering a modernized experience for tenants. Significant landscaping improvements were also made throughout the premises to create a more inviting campus and improve curb appeal. Both elevators at Titan underwent complete restoration, with all new operating equipment and the latest code compliant safety features. The installation of the long delayed emergency generator was completed, ensuring the AACOG 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and computer networks can remain operational during significant power outages like what was experienced in February 2021. With a low interest, longterm loan from the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO), AACOG is replacing one of the building's Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) chillers, installing a state of the art energy management system, and installing energy efficient lighting throughout the building. These SECO improvements will increase efficiency, save money, and enhance the quality of life for both AACOG's employees and tenants.

AACOG is also pleased that even during a challenging commercial office space rental market, AACOG secured three new, long term tenants who are leasing a collective 6,577 square feet. Furthermore, AACOG is in the process of finalizing a five year lease with Bexar County for approximately 7,000 square feet in the Titan Plaza building. With the Bexar County lease, the Titan Plaza building will attain a 95% occupancy rate.



ALAMO AREA HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION



The Alamo Area Housing Finance Corporation (AAHFC) was formed in June of 1984 to assist in providing affordable housing during the ultra-high interest rate period of the mid-1980s. The Board of Directors for AAHFC is comprised of representatives from each of the 12 rural counties in the Alamo Area. Bexar County is not a part of the AAHFC as it has its own housing finance entity.

ALTHOUGH HISTORICALLY THE TERM "AFFORDABLE HOUSING" HAS A NEGATIVE CONNOTATION, THE TRUE MEANING OF THE TERM THESE DAYS IS ONE AND THE SAME WITH WORKFORCE HOUSING...

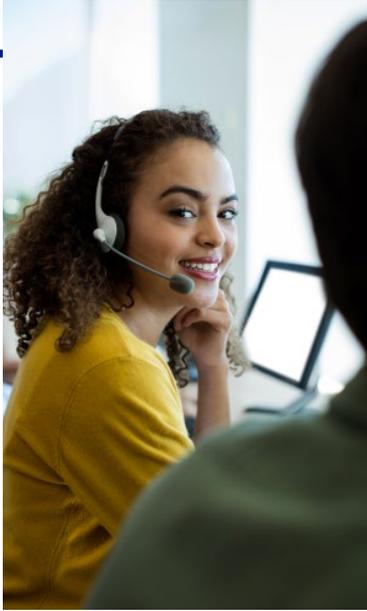


Once interest rate pressures eased the AAHFC became dormant for decades until new affordable housing opportunities presented themselves. In late 2019, the AAHFC was approached by LDG Development, one of the leading developers of affordable housing projects in the country, to partner in the development of a 198 unit apartment complex in the City of Seguin now known as the Pecan Grove Apartments. This first project was approved by the AAHFC Board of Directors in early 2020 and the project was completed in March 2023. Workforce housing today is where teachers, nurses, first responders, and gainfully employed residents from all walks of life can afford clean, safe, and conveniently located housing. Pecan Grove is a premier complex with aesthetic features and amenities comparable to other luxury apartment complexes in the region. Typically, rental rates for qualifying individuals are set at 80% of the market rate. Since the start of the Pecan Grove apartment complex, the AAHFC has approved an additional three projects which are in various stages of construction in the City of Bandera, the City of Boerne, and the City of New Braunfels. The AAHFC is also in the process of financing its fifth project, which is the development of another apartment complex in Seguin set to begin construction soon.

While helping with the much needed housing demand in the Alamo Area, the AAHFC projects help both residents and local businesses from retailers who benefit from increased foot traffic to the contractors who supply goods and labor for the development of these projects. Additionally, fees paid by the developers to the AAHFC are reinvested to support worthy projects that benefit the residents of the region.



AGING SERVICES



AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

ALAMO SERVICE CONNECTION

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) are highly visible and trusted resources where individuals of any age, income, or disability can call to learn about a full range of long-term services. The Alamo Service Connection (ASC) is AACOG’s specific ADRC that serves older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans – to include veterans’ families – residing in the Alamo Area.

Throughout the year, the ASC maintained its commitment to offer reliable community support and engagement. As the primary resource center for individuals seeking guidance and support in navigating long-term services, the ASC continues to play a vital role in the region.



THE ASC HANDLED

42,351

**CALLS
IN 2023**

5,373 calls in the Alamo Area
(AACOG’s twelve rural counties)

36,978 calls
in Bexar County

BENEFITS COUNSELING

Also known as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Benefits Counseling program provides information, counseling, direct enrollment assistance, and advocacy to Medicare beneficiaries of any age.

In a targeted approach, benefits counselors traveled to key community sites such as food distribution centers and assisted living facilities to meet beneficiaries where they are, and did not simply rely on individuals coming to us. In addition to direct community engagement, the team joined forces with other governmental agencies to coordinate specialized benefits counseling events.

Through free one-on-one counseling, the team assisted over 2,800 Medicare beneficiaries in 2023, and participated in over 200 community events.



TOTAL UNDUPLICATED CLIENTS:

2,800+

200
Outreach Events

BENEFITS ENROLLMENT CENTER (BEC)

The Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC), one of only four in the State of Texas, allows ACOG benefits counselors to work side by side with Medicare beneficiaries on the completion of their benefits applications. The BEC team offers personalized, private consultations for older adults and individuals with disabilities to apply for: Medicare Part D, Extra Help or Low-Income Subsidy, Medicare Savings Program, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

THE BEC WORKED
ON OVER **1,000**
APPLICATIONS AND
REDETERMINATION
CASES IN 2023





2023 TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED:

2,771

BEXAR: 2,348

ALAMO: 423

CARE COORDINATION SUPPORT SERVICES

The National Family Caregiver Support Program, otherwise known as Care Coordination, offers an array of services, support, and training to unpaid family caregivers. Services include homemaker assistance, basic personal assistance, income support, residential repair, health maintenance, emergency response services, chore maintenance, mental health services, and social reassurance support.

Last year, through a collaboration with Upward Care and ConnectAbility, the Care Coordination program helped produce an instructional video series. These videos were made available for free and offer family caregivers the resources and training to care for their loved ones safely and properly. Since caregivers typically spend the majority, if not all, of their days with their loved ones, making this available online and self-paced was vital to ensure accessibility. Thus far, these videos have been watched 3,100 times.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

In 2023, the Evidence-Based Intervention class curriculum designed to enhance independence, increase mobility, grow socialization, promote healthy living, and improve the overall quality of life of older adults continued to be offered both in person and virtually. The program worked with 623 participants on a variety of essential needs areas such as fall prevention techniques, nutrition planning, and enhanced mobility skills.

THE PROGRAM WORKED WITH 623 PARTICIPANTS ON A VARIETY OF ESSENTIAL NEEDS AREAS SUCH AS FALL PREVENTION TECHNIQUES, NUTRITION PLANNING, AND ENHANCED MOBILITY SKILLS.

Recognizing the significant impact falls have on the aging population, the Health & Wellness program also established a strategic partnership with the South Texas Region Advisory Council, a network of fire, Emergency Medical Services and trauma agencies to offer additional training classes around physical balance, otherwise known as "A Matter of Balance." These courses were prioritized by identifying facilities with frequent 9-1-1 calls related to falls. During the National Council on Aging National Falls Prevention Week, the Health & Wellness program distributed over 2,000 packets full of educational materials including AACOG services and other community resources.

NUTRITION

Across the region, AACOG and partnering nutrition providers adapted to another shift in daily operations. The conclusion of pandemic related regulations, along with the reopening of larger public dining facilities, played key factors in the decrease of home delivered meals. Therefore, an increased demand for congregate meals at distribution centers was felt across the region.

Particularly in the rural communities, there was a moderate reduction in total units distributed, which highlights the adaptive response in nutrition services for residents in a post-pandemic environment.



ALAMO NUTRITION
TOTAL UNITS — 303,702

\$1,894,154

BEXAR NUTRITION
TOTAL UNITS — 860,381

\$4,826,097

OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

The Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman program focuses on developing new and current Ombudsmen to assure long-term care residents receive the quality of care they deserve. The recruitment and retention of volunteers remains paramount for the continued success of the program. The program staff, along with 60 dedicated Ombudsman volunteers, visited 1,450 nursing homes and 1,600 assisted living communities in 2023, safeguarding the quality of care for individuals residing in nursing and assisted living communities in the region. The program ensures residents have direct access to their LTC Ombudsman, ensures they understand their rights as tenants of a community, and works as a mediator to resolve any concerns residents may have with the community.



STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS
VISITED **1,450** NURSING
HOMES AND **1,600**
ASSISTED LIVING
COMMUNITIES IN 2023....



SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

The Senior Companion program works to serve socially isolated veterans and older adults through the facilitation of camaraderie development and general assistance delivery. By pairing clients with a Senior Corps companion, who are also 55 years of age or older, they are assisted with small tasks such as checking the mail, providing snacks, light housekeeping, running errands, and even accompaniment to doctor appointments. The companion may also provide respite services to a family caregiver that may need personal time, helping avoid burnout.



BY PAIRING CLIENTS WITH A SENIOR CORPS COMPANION, WHO ARE ALSO 55 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER, THEY ARE ASSISTED WITH SMALL TASKS SUCH AS CHECKING THE MAIL, PROVIDING SNACKS, LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING, RUNNING ERRANDS, AND EVEN ACCOMPANIMENT TO DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS.



ALAMO
REGIONAL TRANSIT



DEMAND RESPONSE

The Alamo Regional Transit (ART) program provides “curb-to-curb” transportation Monday through Friday, from 7:00am to 6:00pm, across the 12 rural counties in the Alamo Area. With a fixed fare structure, ART’s demand response service offers an affordable option for individuals who may need to travel to work, school, medical appointments, and leisure activities. In 2023, 137,890 trips were scheduled and completed.



137,890

DEMAND RESPONSE TRIPS IN 2023

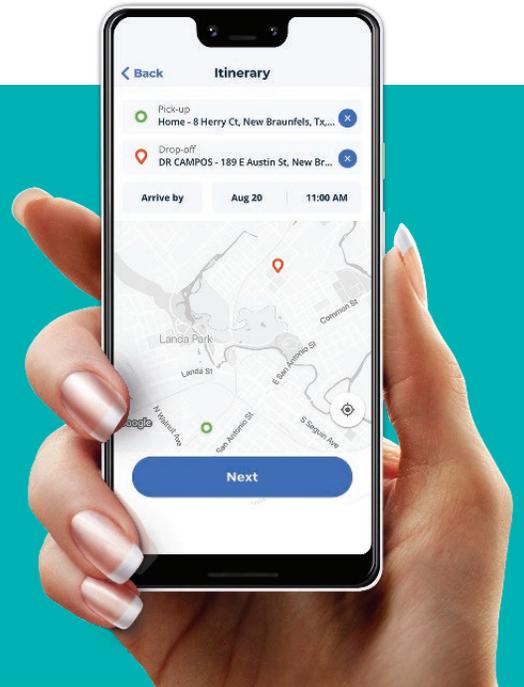
ECOLANE MOBILE APP

The Ecolane mobile app offers users an opportunity to schedule, edit, and check the status of their ride from the convenience of their smartphone or computer. This platform, like popular rideshare services, enhances the user experience while helping reduce wait time, travel time, and scheduling inefficiencies. The app launched in 2021 and currently has 12,373 active users. In 2023, 18,000 trips were scheduled through the Ecolane app, with a large adoption by our veteran population that uses transit services at the San Antonio Military Medical Center Soldier Recovery Unit.

IN 2023

18,000

TRIPS WERE SCHEDULED THROUGH THE ECOLANE APP



CONNECT SEGUIN

The Connect Seguin fixed route offers City of Seguin residents regular stops at major destinations throughout the city, to include the public library, the Texas Workforce Commission office, the local H-E-B grocery store, and multiple apartment complexes. In 2023, over 20,000 riders took advantage of the local transportation route. ART continues to work closely with the cities of New Braunfels and Seguin to further develop this route, in hopes of bridging the gap between the two cities.





ATASCOSA COWBOY CONNECT

Atascosa Cowboy Connect is a fixed route operating in conjunction with Atascosa County and the Cities of Poteet, Jourdanton, and Pleasanton. This multi-jurisdictional transit system provides an essential service for residents who commute to different cities, either for work or leisure. In 2023, over 12,000 trips on cowboy branded buses were recorded. Fixed routes like this help reduce traffic, reduce pollution, boost local economies, and increase quality of life for area residents.

IN 2023, OVER

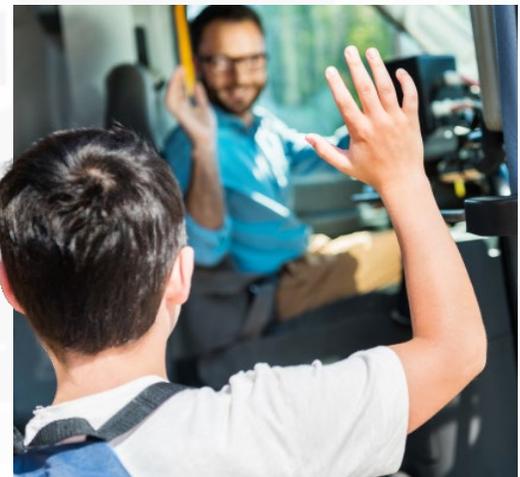
12,000

TRIPS ON COWBOY BRANDED BUSES WERE RECORDED.

YOUTH TRIPS PROGRAM

ART's Youth Trips program offers transportation to school aged children whose home is not serviced by the local school district's bus system. This typically impacts students in after school care or those who live within two miles of their campus. In 2023, 115 schoolchildren took over 7,500 trips to get to and from school in our rural communities.

IN 2023, 115 SCHOOLCHILDREN TOOK OVER 7,500 TRIPS TO GET TO AND FROM SCHOOL IN OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES.



VETERANS TRANSPORTATION

Through a partnership with AACOG's very own Alamo Veterans Network, ART prioritizes transportation for veterans, their dependent family members, and surviving spouses. In 2023, nearly 300 veterans and family members scheduled over 3,000 trips to work, medical appointments, and for other essential needs.

...OVER 3,000 TRIPS TO WORK, MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS, AND FOR OTHER ESSENTIAL NEEDS.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

REGIONAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Environmental Conservation program successfully updated the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) by creating 5, 10, 15, and 20 year priorities for the Alamo Area and its estimated 2.7 million residents. The 2022 – 2042 SWMP was approved by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in July 2023.

CLOSED LANDFILL INVENTORY

AACOG maintains the Closed Landfill Inventory (CLI) for the 13-county service area. This CLI is an archive used by developers, realtors, engineers, environmental scientists, planners, and residents seeking information on past uses of land parcels. In 2023, AACOG was awarded a \$20,000 grant to build an online CLI. This new digital map offers Geographic Information System mapping to provide a more refined and efficient user-experience for stakeholders, while also offering more robust data for users to analyze their needs.



AACOG WAS AWARDED

\$20,000

TO BUILD AN ONLINE
CLOSED LANDFILL
INVENTORY.

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

The Environmental Conservation program, through a TCEQ funded grant for FY 2023 & FY 2024, released a Request for Applications (RFA) to administer 'Implementation' grants for Alamo Area entities seeking to execute solid waste related projects. Applications were reviewed and scored by the program's Resource Recovery Committee, an advisory group comprised of representatives throughout the region. 2023 was the second year of the biennium, and five projects were awarded to area jurisdictions:

CITY OF CASTROVILLE

– **\$33,200** was awarded for the purchase of a brush incinerator to provide residents with additional solid waste programs and to keep streets and sidewalks clean.

KENDALL COUNTY –

\$20,000 was awarded for the purpose of hosting a Household Hazardous Waste event for residents to properly dispose of hazardous materials commonly stored inside homes.

CITY OF KERRVILLE –

\$20,000 was awarded for the purpose of educational and outreach materials to promote solid waste services available for residents of the county.

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

– **\$81,800** was awarded for improvements on their Create & Reuse Warehouse facilities, allowing the city to increase its recapture of construction and demolition debris that would otherwise go to a local landfill.



ALAMO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (AACOG) – \$20,000 was awarded to build an online Closed Landfill Inventory on the AACOG website, as required under Section 363.064(a)(10) of the Texas Health and Safety Code and amended in Senate Bill 1447, 76th Texas Legislature for the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan.



INTELLECTUAL &
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES



\$2.3 MILLION

AMOUNT OF DIRECT SERVICES PROVIDED IN 2023

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

Anybody on the State Intellectual & Developmental Disability (IDD) interest list receives eligibility determination, which includes an assessment to determine if a person has an intellectual disability or is a member of the Health and Human Services Commission priority population for IDD. The assessment uses standardized tests to determine a person's IQ and Adaptive Behavior Level and typically includes a diagnostic interview with the individual and their legally authorized representative. Currently, there are over 11,400 individuals on the IDD Medicaid waiver interest list in Bexar County alone.

SERVICE COORDINATION

Service coordinators help individuals access medical, social, educational, and other appropriate services in hopes of reaching an acceptable quality of life and improved community participation. Service coordinators also assist with explaining the array of community living options for individuals with IDD and their families. There were over 123,000 service coordination services delivered in 2023.

DIRECT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

The IDD Services program provides direct service and support to eligible individuals residing in nursing facilities or enrolled in community-based services. Direct services are also intended to help individuals achieve an acceptable quality of life and improve community participation. The amount of direct services provided in 2023 reached \$2.3 Million, and included attendant & habilitation services, day habilitation, respite, employment services, and specialized therapies.

THE IDD SERVICES PROGRAM PROVIDED **500** TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN CRISIS PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION AND ASSISTED IN NEARLY **6,200** CRISIS INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES IN 2023.

CRISIS SERVICES

One of the greatest obstacles individuals with IDD and their supportive family members face is access to adequate respite support and training opportunities, specifically for instances of behavioral crises. The IDD crisis services program may provide up to 72 hours of in home crisis respite or up to 14 days of out of home crisis respite to provide therapeutic support and stabilize the situation. Therapeutic support includes a flexible array of services to holistically address the stressors resulting in challenging behaviors.

TRANSITION SUPPORT TEAM

The goal of the Transition Support Team is successful inclusion in the community by providing medical, psychiatric, and behavioral services to target at-risk factors and avoid institutionalization. The program provides support to Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authorities, Home and Community-Based Services providers, and Texas Home Living providers who serve people at risk of admission or readmission to institutional settings. The designated service area where support is provided includes the Alamo Area, Camino Real, Gulf Bend, and the Hill Country regions. In 2023, the program coordinated 74 educational events, provided 59 technical assistance activities, and offered 45 case reviews. Additionally, 402 law enforcement officers were trained in the IDD Recognition and Response program, which educates officers to recognize the characteristics, prominent signs, and self-disclosures made by community members with IDD. This training promotes positive interactions and generates compassion for the community members and their families during encounters.



IN 2023, THE PROGRAM COORDINATED 74 EDUCATIONAL EVENTS, PROVIDED 59 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES, AND OFFERED 45 CASE REVIEWS. ADDITIONALLY, 402 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WERE TRAINED IN THE IDD RECOGNITION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM

SUPPORT & EMPOWERMENT

The Support & Empowerment program aims to educate older adults with IDD and their caregivers in health and wellness. In person and virtual classes are offered to individuals across the state on various topics including health, finance, spirituality, caregiver care, nutrition, and physical fitness. Participants are empowered to identify gaps in the community support system and create a plan for how to become a healthier, more efficient, self-manager and caregiver.



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Employment Services program provides pre-vocational and vocational support for individuals seeking to obtain or maintain employment, to include internships and apprenticeships. To date, the program has assisted over 165 individuals with IDD in finding employment in several different industries.

TO DATE, THE PROGRAM HAS ASSISTED OVER 165 INDIVIDUALS WITH IDD IN FINDING EMPLOYMENT IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES.

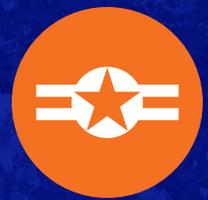


INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

In coordination with University Health System (UHS), IDD Services has developed a hospital liaison program. IDD Services locates a member of the IDD Crisis team at UHS to aid in the identification, care coordination, behavior intervention, and care transitions of individuals with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and related conditions.

In coordination with Bexar County, IDD Services has developed programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities who have encounters with the criminal justice system. IDD Services receives daily alerts when a person suspected of having an intellectual disability is booked in an adult detention center. This collaboration with the state and county allows IDD Services to support the individual and jail staff while developing a plan to divert that individual to the community, when possible. IDD Services continues to work diligently toward increasing the level of inter-agency coordination surrounding and expanding the availability of crucial IDD services through staff liaisons located at University Health System, Bexar County Adult Detention Center, and Morgan's Wonderland Multi-Assistance Center.

IDD SERVICES CONTINUES TO WORK DILIGENTLY TOWARD INCREASING THE LEVEL OF INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION SURROUNDING AND EXPANDING THE AVAILABILITY OF CRUCIAL IDD SERVICES THROUGH STAFF LIAISONS...



MILITARY & VETERAN AFFAIRS



SENTINEL LANDSCAPE

In 2021, the Military & Veterans Affairs program, in partnership with the Hill Country Alliance, created a consortium of 45 organizations supporting a Sentinel Landscape proposal designed to protect the training mission at JBSA-Camp Bullis. The project was designated as the Camp Bullis Sentinel Landscape (CBSL) by the Federal Coordinating Committee (DOD, DOI, & USDA) in February 2022. This year, the consortium has now grown to include 57 partner organizations. AACOG continues to play a key role in the coordination, outreach, and messaging of CBSL initiatives.

ALAMO VETERANS NETWORK

On April 1, 2023, the Military & Veterans Affairs program concluded a three year grant from the Texas Workforce Commission that funded The Texas Veterans Network, which served a 27 county service area. Without a grant, but with a firm understanding of the value in the existing veterans network, AACOG decided to fully fund the continuation of the program for the 13 county Alamo Area through its general fund. This also came with a change in name: Alamo Veterans Network (AVN). AVN continues to manage calls from military service members, veterans, and their dependents. The program has cultivated fruitful partnerships with over 230 veteran serving organizations that cater to 70 different needs areas veterans may have.



THE PROGRAM HAS CULTIVATED FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITH OVER 230 VETERAN SERVING ORGANIZATIONS THAT CATER TO 70 DIFFERENT NEEDS AREAS VETERANS MAY HAVE.



RIDES 4 TEXAS HEROES

AACOG was awarded a \$300,000 transportation grant from the Texas Veterans Commission to offer veterans and their families no cost transit services across the 13 county service area. This program offers clients safe and reliable transportation to medical appointments, senior centers, job interviews, school, grocery shopping, and other essential needs. Rides 4 TX Heroes enrolled 2,377 veterans, surviving spouses, and family members in 2023 – a 15% increase from the previous year



AACOG WAS AWARDED A
\$ 300,000
TRANSPORTATION GRANT
FROM THE TEXAS VETERANS
COMMISSION

VETERAN DIRECTED CARE SERVICES

The Veteran Directed Care (VDC) program, in partnership with the Veterans Administration (VA), empowers veterans to choose and manage services from the comfort of their own home, an appealing alternative to living in a long-term care facility. The AACOG VDC program serves VA referred veterans within a 120 mile radius of the City of San Antonio and, in 2023, became the largest program of its kind in the United States. The program continues to experience continual growth and now provides critical case management and coordination services to over 700 veterans, including residents from Uvalde, Val Verde, and Kinney counties.



MILITARY INSTALLATION RESILIENCE REVIEW

AACOG secured a \$1,200,000 Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR) grant from the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation. The study, which requires analyzing energy and wastewater infrastructure resiliency in communities around JBSA – Lackland, JBSA – Fort Sam Houston, and Port San Antonio, began September 2023 and will conclude April 2024. In collaboration with Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA), Port San Antonio, CPS Energy, and San Antonio Water System this study will identify essential infrastructure resiliency prerequisites, offer recommendations to uphold the missions of JBSA beyond its perimeter, and will serve as a tool for local utilities and government entities as they continue to partner with JBSA. This project will help identify and determine feasible enhancements, priorities, and future investments to safeguard infrastructure resilience. At the same time, the MIRR study will establish a strong foundation for the pursuit of future funding opportunities related to addressing those resiliency concerns highlighted by the study.



AACOG SECURED A

\$1.2 MILLION

MILITARY INSTALLATION RESILIENCE REVIEW (MIRR)
GRANT FROM THE OFFICE OF LOCAL DEFENSE COMMUNITY
COOPERATION

DEFENSE ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE GRANT

AACOG secured a \$750,000 Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant from the Texas Military Preparedness Commission to enhance the communication infrastructure supporting the 149th Fighter Wing stationed at JBSA – Lackland. These enhancements include the complete replacement of an aging communications tower. This will extend data link and voice communications from the Mission Operation Center while expanding airspace command and control capabilities. Moreover, the new tower and overall improvements to infrastructure will accommodate the eventual transition into more advanced aircraft. Under this grant, a fiber optic cable will also be installed at the McMullen Training Complex, connecting the training complex with the Live Mission Operations Center on JBSA – Lackland. This will enhance pilots' ability to access real time information during operations within the training airspace. The communications enhancements will serve twofold as they will also provide information to the Federal Aviation Administration, elevating training effectiveness and improving overall safety for both military and civilian aircraft.

AACOG SECURED A
\$750,000 GRANT FROM
THE TEXAS MILITARY
PREPAREDNESS
COMMISSION TO ENHANCE
THE COMMUNICATION
INFRASTRUCTURE
SUPPORTING THE 149TH
FIGHTER WING STATIONED
AT JBSA – LACKLAND.



NATURAL RESOURCES



ALAMO AREA CLEAN CITIES COALITION

The Alamo Area Clean Cities Coalition promotes American energy independence, environmental sustainability, and economic development by promoting regional adoption of alternative fuels in the transportation sector. Supported by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the Clean Cities program works to advance affordable domestic transportation fuels, encourages energy efficient mobility systems, and promotes adoption of other fuel-saving technologies and practices. Clean Cities was officially redesignated by the DOE in 2023, enabling it to continue driving towards alternative fuel adoption in the Alamo Area for the next five years. As part of a massive federal investment, the Coalition has lent support to two projects – one local and one statewide – that propose advancing community and corridor alternative fuel vehicle infrastructure development.

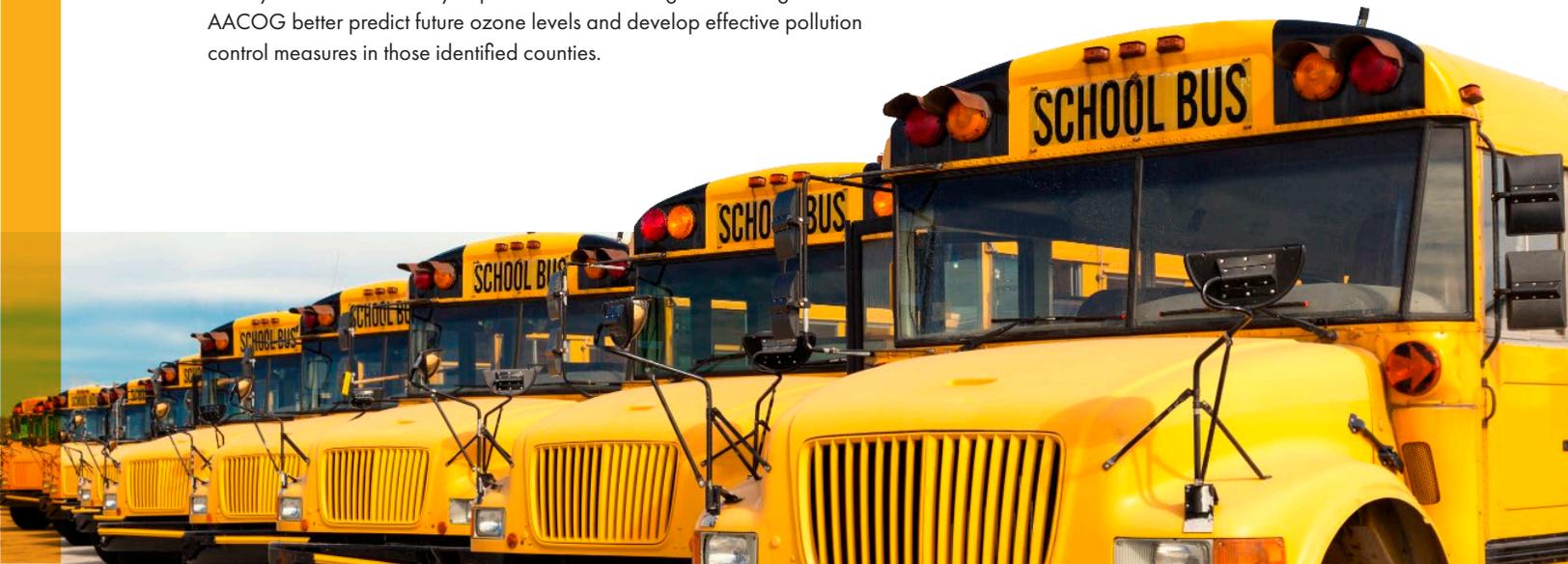
TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

Under the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Rider 7 Air Quality Planning Program, AACOG continued monitoring ozone, meteorology, and Nitrogen Oxides (NOX) during the 2023 ozone season at Bulverde Elementary, City of Garden Ridge, and the New Braunfels Airport. NOX monitoring at the Seguin Outdoor Learning Center began in August 2023. The Auto-GC in Garden Ridge has also been in operation since August 2023, and is providing Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) data. Because Garden Ridge measures ozone and both of its precursors, NOX and VOC, it is extremely valuable in helping us understand the behavior of ozone.

OVER 380 VISITS TO COUNT THE NUMBER OF TRUCKS IDLING TO ESTIMATE EMISSIONS

A Truck Idling Emission Inventory was also completed this year. This project involved visiting rest areas, truck stops, and other identified locations within Comal, Guadalupe, and Wilson Counties where heavy duty truck idling occurs. Staff made over 380 visits to count the number of parking spaces, trucks present, and trucks idling, and used the information to estimate emissions from heavy duty truck idling.

The Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization funded a School Bus Inventory, which improved school bus population and activity estimates necessary to predict ozone. Having this on the ground data allows AACOG better predict future ozone levels and develop effective pollution control measures in those identified counties.





AIR QUALITY

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for certain pollutants to protect human health. Because ozone levels in Bexar County have exceeded the 2015 ozone NAAQS for over 6 years, it is now classified as being Moderate Nonattainment. This new classification will result in added costs to Bexar County residents, businesses, and industries with the intent to reduce our ozone levels and attain the NAAQS. Under moderate nonattainment, the TCEQ must implement emissions testing in Bexar County by November 2026. The TCEQ is working with AACOG to prepare Bexar County and the City of San Antonio to meet this requirement.

Bexar County residents who own a gasoline vehicle 1996 or newer will have to undergo an annual emissions inspection to be able to renew vehicle registration. The elimination of safety inspections does not affect the implementation of emissions inspections by November 2026. AACOG has also been preparing local stakeholders for the EPA's proposed revision to the NAAQS for fine particulate matter (PM2.5).

REGIONAL ENERGY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In 2023, AACOG began working with local governments to better understand energy management and implement practices to reduce energy consumption. Through a grant from the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO), AACOG is engaging local governments to educate them about energy efficiency, energy resiliency, and incentives to implement those programs. AACOG hosted six events in support of this program in 2023 and looks forward to providing more opportunities in the future. Local governments in Bexar, Comal, Guadalupe, and Wilson Counties are required to report their energy use annually and commit to a 5% annual reduction. AACOG was able to secure six new entities to report energy usage, when they hadn't previously.

ASSESSED AT \$28 MILLION, THE FUTURE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL (FORMERLY WYNDHAM) IS UNDERGOING IMPROVED HEATING, VENTILATION, AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC) EFFICIENCY, ELECTRICAL AND LIGHTING IMPROVEMENTS, ENVELOPE IMPROVEMENTS, AND PLUMBING AND WATER CONSERVATION.

PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY

Since 2019 AACOG has administered the regional Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program. PACE is a private low-cost, long-term financing tool for commercial, industrial, and large multi-family property owners to fund eligible energy efficiency and water conservation retrofit projects.



TEXAS ★ **PACE**
AUTHORITY

In 2023, the AACOG PACE program closed on four new projects, including the largest in the Alamo Area at the time. Assessed at \$28 million, the future Intercontinental Hotel (formerly Wyndham) in San Antonio is undergoing improved Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) efficiency, electrical and lighting improvements, envelope improvements, and plumbing and water conservation. Shortly after that in September, the program closed on the highly anticipated Curio Collection by Hilton Hotel, the first building in San Antonio's Hemisfair mixed-use development. Slated for late 2025, the 17 story, 200 room full service hotel will open with optimized Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) efficiency, plumbing and water conservation measures, energy efficient electrical and lighting, and envelope improvements.

The different projects that closed in 2023, one for \$140,000 and the other for \$48 million, demonstrate the variety of projects that can implement PACE financing.



PUBLIC SAFETY

ALAMO AREA REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY

The Alamo Area Regional Law Enforcement Academy (AARLEA) trains individuals for peace officer and corrections officer licensure in the State of Texas. With the ongoing need for law enforcement personnel, the Academy saw cadet sponsorships per class increase to an average of 70-80%. Sponsored cadets are recruited, interviewed, and hired by jurisdictions contingent on the cadet graduating from the AARLEA and passing the State licensure exam. The candidate begins to earn a paycheck on the first day of their AARLEA training and is guaranteed a job when they become licensed. This creates an appealing recruitment incentive for local law enforcement agencies and makes it much easier for individuals to attend the Academy and focus on their training. In addition to the Basic Peace Officers Course, AARLEA provides continuing education courses for all eligible Texas peace officers through multiple in-person, and over 4,100 online classes ranging from legislative updates to de-escalation techniques. In 2023, AARLEA received funding to continue implementation of the School Marshal program, which helps prepare civilian school personnel for initial response in the case of an active shooter event. AACOG is one of three entities in the State designated to offer this training. Additionally, the program works with Independent School District Police Departments and School Resource Officers for active shooter training.



IN 2023, A TOTAL OF **111** CADETS GRADUATED FROM THE AARLEA. ADDITIONALLY, LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALS ACROSS **149** TEXAS COUNTIES COMPLETED OVER **120,500** TRAINING HOURS.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING

The Criminal Justice program conducts grant workshops related to local, state, and federal funding opportunities and offers technical grant application assistance to area law enforcement agencies. This year, the Criminal Justice program continued to offer grant writing and grant management courses, and ultimately received 86 applications for funding from Alamo Area agencies. The Criminal Justice Advisory Committee scored the applications and submitted a recommendation to the Office of the Governor to fund projects for a total of \$12,783,950.

 CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM	\$1,064,124
 JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAM	\$250,459
 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN JUSTICE AND TRAINING PROGRAM	\$355,974
 GENERAL VICTIM ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM	\$9,861,274
 TRUANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM	\$1,252,116



HOMELAND SECURITY

The Homeland Security (HLS) program offers emergency preparedness planning on concerns relating to terrorist activities and administers both state and federal Homeland Security grants to law enforcement agencies in the Alamo Area. The HLS program also works with jurisdictions to identify regional gaps in security and creates risk analyses of terroristic and other hazardous threats. In partnership with Congressman Tony Gonzales, HLS submitted a Community Project Funding Request through

appropriations, totaling \$14.2 million (pending award). The project will continue to support the Regional Communication Infrastructure Enhancement efforts utilizing the Texas Department of Transportation and the Greater Austin-Travis County Regional Radio System. This project will continue to leverage existing communications towers, coverage areas, and partnerships to expand interoperable communications capabilities throughout the Alamo Area.

The HLS program also implemented the Domestic Violent Extremism (DVE) Project with funding through the Office of the Governor – Homeland Security Grants Division. This project ranked number one in the State and funds a team of consultants to focus on combating local terroristic threats in rural counties within the Alamo Area by teaching them how and when to report incidents to the Southwest Texas Fusion Center. In addition, the DVE project evolved to meet the needs of the region and partnered with the Department of Homeland Security to provide both the Basic Threat Evaluation and Reporting - Pathway to Violence course and the National Threat and Evaluation Reporting Course to school personnel, School Resource Officers, and law enforcement. In 2023, it is estimated that the program will have resulted in 100 meetings conducted, 250 participating agencies, 300 individuals trained, and over 600 intelligence curriculum/information distributed. The program runs through August 31, 2024.



\$1.1 MILLION

IN ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES AND COMBATING TERRORISTIC THREATS



9-1-1

The 9-1-1 program maintains emergency call center databases and essential dispatch equipment at each of the emergency call centers inside Atascosa, Bandera, Frio, Gillespie, Karnes, Kendall, McMullen, and Wilson counties. The program works to provide a regionalized 9-1-1 database and Public Safety Answering Point, and ensures that all 9-1-1 calls are routed, answered, and located on Geographic Information System maps for proper handling of the emergency at hand. Last year, the program worked to ensure all school districts and their respective campuses within the 9-1-1 service area were following Kari's Law. Enacted in 2015, Kari's Law requires schools and businesses with multiple phones to have a Multi-Line Telephone System, providing outbound dialing and direct access to 9-1-1 without the user having to first dial an initial number, digit, or prefix. In 2023, the 9-1-1 program initiated site visits to over 80 schools to test Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phones and location verification. This will ensure law enforcement can locate a 9-1-1 caller in a timely and efficient manner.



REGIONAL
SERVICES



Designated by the U.S. Economic Development Agency (EDA) as the Economic Development District (EDD) for the region, the Regional Services program focuses on developing industry professionals, elected officials, and local economies within the Alamo Area. The program's annual series of workshops has become a staple across the region, and something member governments look forward to year after year. The standard programming includes:

- **Planning & Zoning:** A workshop on fundamentals of municipal zoning, zoning issues, master plans, group homes, cell towers, and signage.
- **Economic Development:** Presentations from state and federal agencies on available programs and services, and one-on-one discussions with regional representatives.
- **Elected Officials:** A workshop covering the essential responsibilities of a public servant, to include municipal finance, ethical issues, public information, Open Meetings Act, and other essential topics.
- **Brownfields:** A presentation from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on identifying Brownfields projects.



125 PEOPLE ATTENDED WORKSHOPS AND PARTICIPATED IN ONE ON ONE WORK SESSIONS IN 2023.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The EDD, as part of its EDA grant deliverables, is responsible for developing the Alamo Area Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS is a 5 year roadmap for economic progress and prosperity in the region. The CEDS brings together a range of partners, including community leaders and residents, Economic Development Organizations (EDOs), the private sector, educational institutions, and other stakeholders in planning for the region's future.

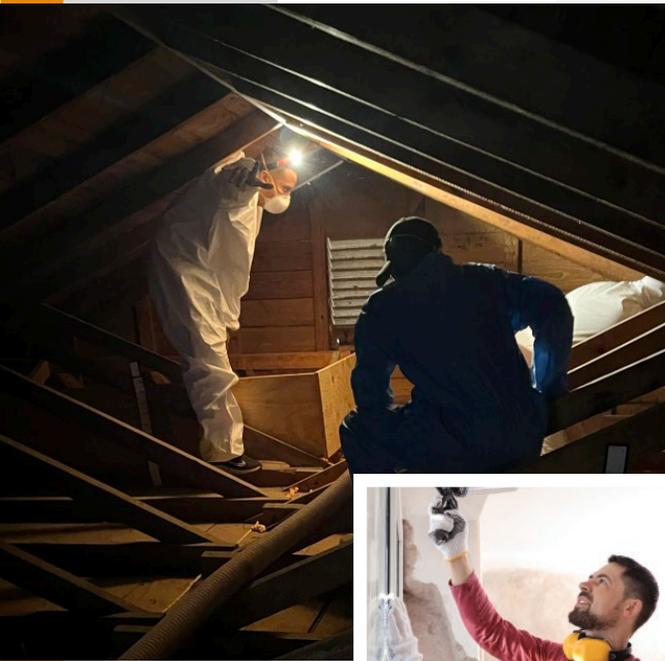
2023 was the last year of the current CEDS (2018-2023). The EDD worked to collect data and results from the current CEDS and took the year to develop the 2024-2029 CEDS. In this process, the program created four groups separated by geographical and economic similarities to identify socioeconomic trends across the region:

- **Group 1: Comal, Gillespie, Guadalupe, and Kendall counties**
- **Group 2: Atascosa, Frio, Karnes, and Wilson counties**
- **Group 3: Bandera, Frio, Kerr, and Medina counties**
- **Group 4: Bexar County**

Stakeholders in each group participated in multiple meetings to analyze individualized research, develop individual Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities analyses, then come together to create objectives and strategies for the next five years. The collective research data, analyses, goals, and strategies culminated into the 2024-2029 AACOG CEDS and will begin implementation in 2024.



WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE



The Weatherization Assistance (WX) program helps low-income families reduce monthly energy expenses by installing systems such as weather stripping, caulking, and insulation to increase energy efficiency and decrease overall energy costs. WX also assists individuals with disabilities with minor home modifications that create a more accessible living space, such as ramps and handlebars.

The WX program receives funding through three federal grant programs: Low-Income Home Energy Program (LIHEAP), Department of Energy (DOE), and Department of Energy Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (DOE BIL). All three offer low-income households the opportunity to receive energy efficiency modifications that enhance the structure's thermal boundary, helping a home stay warm in the colder months and cold in the warmer months. Ultimately, this provides families with increased disposable income and an enhanced quality of life.

In 2023, the program spent over \$1,337,000 in LIHEAP funding to weatherize 83 homes and \$275,000 in DOE funds to weatherize 36 homes.

IN 2023, THE PROGRAM SPENT OVER



\$1,337,000

IN LIHEAP FUNDING TO WEATHERIZE
83 HOMES

\$275,000

IN DOE FUNDS TO WEATHERIZE
36 HOMES



HOMES FOR TEXAS HEROES

In addition to assisting the veteran, the Homes for Texas Heroes (H4TXH) program is also available to homes of surviving spouses and eligible children. The \$215,000 budget in 2023 provided 11 veterans and their families minor home repairs, weatherization assistance, and accessibility needs. The program is excited to receive an increased budget for 2024, to assist a total of 20 veterans and their families with similar needs.

THIS YEAR WX RECEIVED
\$2,253,259 IN DOE-BIL FUNDING
TO WEATHERIZE **179** HOMES BY
JUNE 2025.



AACOG



2023-2024
BUDGETS

ALAMO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS 2023 AND 2024 ANNUAL BUDGET

	Program	Admin. Indirect	General Fund	Titan Complex	2024 Budget*	2023 Budget**
Revenues						
Federal	\$24,977,301		687,516		25,664,817	\$44,686,472
State	13,044,074				13,044,074	11,625,712
Local / Other / Medicaid	35,502,731		57,000		35,559,731	19,044,124
Delegate Agency Match	4,164,931				4,164,931	3,279,079
Program Income / Interest	694,273		62,400		756,673	900,397
Member Dues	351,272		355,000		706,272	942,248
Real Estate Revenues				1,830,559	1,830,559	1,523,808
Total Revenues	78,734,582		1,161,916	1,830,559	81,727,057	82,001,840
Expenditures						
Alamo Area Agency on Aging	6,192,292				6,192,292	6,268,391
Alamo Regional Transit	6,704,387				6,704,387	8,334,122
Bexar Area Agency on Aging	11,614,688				11,614,688	12,249,810
Environmental Conservation	416,466				416,466	528,567
IDD Services	16,389,401				16,389,401	16,315,110
Military & Veterans Affairs	26,901,627				26,389,401	25,707,696
Natural Resources	704,566				704,566	625,495
Public Safety	4,260,785				4,260,785	5,061,095
Regional Services	100,743				100,743	103,624
Weatherization	4,034,442				4,034,441	2,233,225
General Fund & Unrestricted			1,182,237		1,182,237	1,135,709
Admin Budgets		5,396,161			5,396,161	5,272,112
Real Estate Expenditures				2,208,321	2,208,321	2,310,600
Total Expenditures and Indirect	\$77,319,397	5,396,161	1,182,237	2,208,321	86,106,116	\$86,145,556

* 2024 Budget as approved at the October 2023 Board of Directors meeting

** 2023 Modified Budget as approved at the July 2023 Board of Directors meeting

Note: The Administrative Budget excludes program cost recoveries