

## **Aerospace, Advanced Air Mobility, & Aviation Innovation**

San Antonio is a major hub for aerospace maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO), military aviation support, and aerospace research, generating billions of dollars in economic impact and supporting thousands of jobs across the region. The region's aerospace base also includes growing participation in commercial space and advanced aviation supply chain. In alignment with the Advanced Air Mobility National Strategy, the Greater San Antonio Chamber supports accelerating the development, testing, and deployment of advanced air mobility (AAM) technologies and urges federal recognition of Port San Antonio and Kelly Field as premier national test sites and research and development environments for next-generation aviation systems. To ensure San Antonio's continued contribution to national security, innovation, and competitiveness, we request federal action in the following areas:

- **Boost Federal Investment in Aerospace Readiness & Infrastructure**
  - Increase DoD aviation readiness funding to reduce maintenance backlogs and support bases like Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA).
  - Secure sustained funding for air traffic infrastructure modernization (FAA systems, airports, radar, etc.), improving regional connectivity and safety.
  - Support federal grants for runway and airport upgrades at San Antonio International Airport and Port San Antonio to attract more aviation business.
- **Expand Workforce Development and Education Support**
  - Increase funding for aviation & aerospace workforce grants (particularly for pre-K–12 STEM, community college training, apprenticeships).
  - Expand federal incentives for aerospace training tied to industry needs, including transitioning military personnel.
  - Extend and enhance SBIR/STTR programs to support aerospace small business innovation beyond current sunset dates.
  - Update occupational classifications and training standards for emerging AAM roles.
- **Advance Innovation & Regulatory Reform**
  - Modernize FAA certification processes to accelerate entry of technologies like AAM, autonomy, and sustainable aviation.
  - Promote consensus-based regulatory development through industry engagement.
  - Balance environmental review requirements for launches with efficient permitting timelines.
  - Expand R&D tax credits aerospace AI, automation, and advanced manufacturing.
- **Encourage Federal-Local Coordination**
  - Create federal partnership hubs between DoD, NASA, FAA, and San Antonio research institutions (e.g., Southwest Research Institute, UTSA).



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- Coordinate federal workforce and economic development zones that favor aerospace manufacturing and logistics in the region.
- Secure funding from FAA and DOT to support the development of parallel runways for SAT, eliminating the significant civilian-military airspace conflict with Randolph AFB, one of the busiest airfields in Air Force
- Bolster US Leadership in Space Commerce & Safety
  - Expand authority and funding for the Office of Space Commerce (OSC) so it can procure critical commercial space situational awareness (SSA) data and services that are essential for space safety and industry growth.
  - Streamline FAA commercial space launch licensing, reducing delays while maintaining safety oversight.
  - Support space domain awareness/national lab partnerships with Texas universities and industry.
- Modernize U.S. Airspace for Low-Altitude AAM Operations
  - Implement cooperative low-altitude traffic management systems with modern surveillance, communications, and data exchange
  - Fund research, trials, and operational pilots to validate new airspace concepts
  - Accelerate National AAM Infrastructure Development Across Federal Agencies
  - Finalize and fund vertiport and vertical lift infrastructure standards
  - Demonstrate aviation-grade electric charging and hydrogen fueling with grid resilience
  - Coordinate spectrum policy to ensure secure, reliable AAM communications
- Expand Federal RDT&E, Testbeds, and Demonstration Programs
  - Advance pre-competitive R&D in autonomy, detect-and-avoid, propulsion, energy storage, low-altitude weather sensing, and digital engineering
  - Coordinate national flight testbeds and demonstration programs
  - Reduce certification timelines and accelerate operational readiness
  - We specifically support selection of TxDOT's Project Nexus under the FAA Integrated AAM Pilot Program, positioning Texas—and Port San Antonio/Kelly Field—as a federally supported national test environment for integrated operations, vertiport deployment, community integration, and multimodal modeling.
- Strengthen Security, Cybersecurity, and Supply-Chain Resilience
  - Adapt federal aviation security programs for early AAM operations
  - Establish interagency cybersecurity frameworks covering aircraft, infrastructure, and data systems
  - Invest in domestic manufacturing and critical materials supply chains for AAM components and avionics
- Promote Responsible Community Integration, Environmental Review, and Accessibility

- Provide validated tools for noise, privacy, microscale weather, and environmental analysis
- Establish national guidance for equitable and accessible AAM services
- Support community engagement and public acceptance strategies

## **Broadband**

Access to high-speed broadband/internet enhances and protects every aspect of our daily lives and contributes to the economic success of our community. Public policy initiatives that support access to and the security of high-speed broadband/internet networks will improve public safety, education, telemedicine, and quality of life for everyone. The Greater San Antonio Chamber requests the consideration of issues impacting broadband connectivity including:

- Improve Federal Broadband Deployment Funding Effectiveness
  - Ensure BEAD (Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment) and related funding programs remain focused on future-proof technologies (like fiber) and not overly weighted toward less scalable alternatives, preserving long-term value for communities.
  - Make the most of historic federal broadband funding by developing tax solutions and program rules that incentivize continued private investment.
  - Support for flexible, affordable broadband solutions where full fiber isn't immediately practical to avoid leaving unserved areas behind.
  - Provide NTIA program guidance to avoid delays or uncertainty that slow deployment.
- Streamline Permitting and Reduce Deployment Barriers
  - Reform federal permitting to cut red tape, unify standards, avoid price-setting policies, and reduce delays in broadband infrastructure projects.
  - Support interagency coordination between agencies that oversee broadband, transportation, environmental, and spectrum policy.
- Protect and Modernize Public Safety Communications
  - Reauthorize FirstNet (public safety broadband) and advanced emergency services like Next-Gen 9-1-1.
  - Encourage federal standards and funding for interoperable, resilient public safety communications across jurisdictions.
- Expand Spectrum and Regulatory Clarity for Next-Gen Connectivity
  - Expand allocation of commercially licensed spectrum to accommodate growing wireless broadband needs and facilitate fixed wireless deployments where appropriate.
  - Push for regulatory clarity on emerging technologies like 5G/6G and next-gen fixed wireless to help providers plan and invest confidently, while still protecting national security use.

- Support Sustainable Affordability Programs
  - Adequately fund the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) or a similar program to keep monthly broadband costs manageable.
  - Create longer-term, sustainable solutions to broadband affordability, like targeted subsidies or tax credits for low-income households.
  - Reform the Federal Universal Service Fund to help remove affordability barriers to connectivity in San Antonio and communities across the country.

## Cybersecurity

San Antonio's cybersecurity ecosystem plays a vital role in protecting America's security, prosperity, and technological superiority. With our concentration of cyber, intelligence, and defense missions, San Antonio is leading from the frontlines. To continue to strengthen our nation's cybersecurity defense, secure supply chains, and expand cyber workforce pipelines the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce asks for consideration of the following issues:

- Reduce Security Background Check Backlogs
  - Fund and accelerate deployment of modern vetting systems like the National Background Investigation Services (NBIS) with clear timelines and accountability metrics.
  - Expand use of continuous vetting to replace periodic re-investigations with ongoing evaluation leading to faster recertification, earlier hires, and real-time security risk monitoring.
  - Codify interagency reciprocity of security clearances and investigation results and set uniform standards and timelines.
  - Establish performance standards and track progress publicly to hold agencies accountable, improve the process, and give industry predictability for workforce planning.
  - Expand investigator workforce because staffing shortages are a major cause of bottlenecks.
  - Encourage the adoption of automation and artificial intelligence to speed up routine checks and highlight concerns earlier reducing human workload and delays.
  - Prioritize clearance for positions that directly support critical national security missions, especially in aerospace, defense, and cybersecurity sectors.
- Bolster Small Business Cybersecurity & Supply-Chain Integrity
  - Expand small business cybersecurity grants and assistance programs to provide support for small and mid-sized enterprises with risk assessments, compliance, and certification leading to more robust protections.

- Support compliance requirements on Software Bills of Materials (SBOM) that are practical and scalable for small and emerging firms.
- Promote resilience in vendor risk management policies against cyber vulnerabilities in supplier networks without excluding small businesses.
- Encourage interagency coordination to limit fragmented requirements and coordinate standards and timelines
- Cyber Mission Infrastructure & Facility Modernization
  - Encourage federal investment in modern, secure, and resilient facilities for Sixteenth Air Force (Air Forces Cyber) and related units at Joint Base San Antonio.
  - Support federal collaboration with regional partners and public-private partnerships, including Port San Antonio, to explore innovative, cost-effective infrastructure solutions that enhance mission effectiveness and security.
  - Sustain and expand San Antonio's role as a premier center for cyber operations, intelligence, and information warfare.

## **Education**

### ***Early Childhood Education***

High quality early childhood education improves school readiness and long-term educational outcomes while addressing childcare needs for working parents. The Greater Chamber encourages support for enhanced access to quality, affordable childcare for military families and all working parents across our community and requests consideration of the following recommendations:

- Increase federal investments in universal and high-quality pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds as part of a mixed delivery system including Head Start, centers, and family programs.
- Enhance federal quality standards with funding support to ensure programs have appropriate staff-to-child ratios, qualified teachers, developmentally appropriate curricula, and enough funding to meet those standards.
- Develop federal tax incentives that support employer-provided childcare assistance and dependent care flexible spending accounts

### ***Public Education***

Employers across the San Antonio region need a strong and future-ready talent pipeline to fill roles in a variety of industries. Our community's public education system helps build that pipeline and provides the foundational skills and specialized training necessary for jobs in fields like technology, healthcare, manufacturing, and other critical

sectors. A strong public education system strengthens regional competitiveness, supports military families, accelerates innovation, and drives long-term economic growth. The Greater San Antonio Chamber support the following efforts to:

- Fully Fund Impact Aid to offset the costs borne by local school districts that educate large numbers of military-connected students.
- Increase Special Education Funding Under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) to ensure students with disabilities receive high-quality services without diverting resources from general education.
- Protect and Strengthen Title I Funding to address barriers to academic success in high-poverty schools and improve graduation rates, workforce readiness, and economic mobility.
- Restore and Modernize the Troops to Teachers Program to help veterans transition into education careers by strengthening teacher pipelines, supporting military families, and directing leadership and technical expertise into classrooms.
- Expand Career-Connected and Work-Based Learning, including career and technical education (CTE); apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships; dual-credit and early college programs; and industry-recognized credential pathways that create stronger alignment between education and employer needs for better job placement and less skill gaps.
- Integrate Digital Skills and AI Readiness to prepare students for technology-enabled workplaces is essential to regional and national competitiveness.

## ***Higher Education***

Higher education is essential to preparing a skilled workforce, advancing research, and driving regional innovation. Colleges and universities in the San Antonio region serve as anchors for talent development, healthcare delivery, cybersecurity readiness, and economic growth. Sustained federal investment in higher education strengthens workforce competitiveness, expands access to opportunity, and supports national priorities in health, defense, and technology. The Greater San Antonio Chamber supports the following federal actions:

- Preservation and enhancement of the Federal Pell Grant Program by:
  - Appropriating sufficient funding to meet growing student demand;
  - Increasing the annual maximum award to \$13,000;
  - Expanding eligibility to better serve underserved and vulnerable student populations, including those historically excluded from federal aid; and
  - Extending eligibility to up to 14 semesters to support degree completion.
- Strengthen under-resourced institutions and expand student success pathways by increasing federal investment in:

- Title III-A Strengthening Institution Programs (HEA) to build institutional capacity, improved academic quality, modernize infrastructure, and increase retention and completion rates at colleges serving high proportions of low-income students.
- Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) to ensure institutions educating large numbers of Hispanic and first-generation students have the resources necessary to drive degree attainment and workforce readiness.
- TRIO Programs – including Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, Talent Search, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Centers, Veterans Upward Bound, McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement, and Training Programs – which provide comprehensive academic advising, financial aid counseling, mentoring, and work-study support for low-income, first generation, disabled, and veteran students.
- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) to strengthen local K-12 to higher education pipelines through tutoring, mentoring, financial literacy education, parental engagement, and scholarship support.
- Federal Work Study (FWS) to expand meaningful, career-aligned employment opportunities that reduce student debt while building workforce skills through on-campus and community-based positions.
- Full and timely appropriations to academic health centers and biomedical research for workforce development, patient care, and medical innovation through the National Institutes of Health, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Department of Defense, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and related federal research and health agencies.
- Leverage federal grants and community project funding to target investments for critical health and education resources in our rapidly growing region including upgrades to research and teaching facilities, expanding clinical training capacity, supporting workforce-aligned degree programs strengthening community health partnership, and advancing cybersecurity and health technology initiatives.

## Energy

Texas and the nation face unprecedented growth in electricity demand with an urgent need for innovative solutions. Meeting this demand will require a diverse, reliable, and resilient energy portfolio that strengthens national security, economic competitiveness, and community affordability. To protect San Antonio's long-term growth and mission readiness, the Greater San Antonio Chamber supports a federal energy strategy that expands access to Texas-produced oil, natural gas, energy storage, and renewable energy resources, including solar, wind, nuclear, geothermal, hydrogen, and carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS) technologies. The Greater San Antonio



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Chamber supports the following items to help deliver the energy our community needs and wants including:

- Accelerate Deployment of Advanced Nuclear and Small Modular Reactors While Maintaining Safety
  - Streamline licensing and permitting for advanced nuclear reactors through the Nuclear Regulatory Commission
  - Expand state-federal coordination and delegation authority for early site permitting
  - Fund demonstration and pilot projects for SMRs and microreactors
  - Support domestic nuclear fuel supply chains and workforce development
- Support Evaluation of Advanced Nuclear Siting at Joint Base San Antonio
  - Pilot microreactor or SMR projects at military installations to enhance base readiness and operational continuity
  - Strengthen energy resilience for critical defense missions
  - Demonstrate secure, scalable energy solutions for national security facilities
- Reform Permitting and Infrastructure Approval Processes
  - Reduce regulatory delays
  - Coordinate federal and state review processes
  - Provide transparent timelines for infrastructure approvals
  - Accelerate transmission, generation, and storage projects
- Expand Funding for Energy Affordability Programs such as Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and related programs to support our most-vulnerable community members.
- Continue federal financial support and tax policy to incentivize research, demonstration, and deployment of evolving technologies to promote innovation and infrastructure growth in the electric and natural gas industries in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- Support efforts to enhance natural gas pipeline safety and damage prevention, including continuation of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Program.

## Healthcare

The healthcare and bioscience industries generate more than \$44 billion in economic impact and remain among the largest employers in the San Antonio region. A strong, accessible, and innovative healthcare system is essential to workforce productivity, regional competitiveness, and long-term economic growth. The Greater San Antonio Chamber supports the following efforts at the federal level:



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- ***Strengthen the Healthcare Workforce*** - Workforce shortages remain the most pressing challenge facing healthcare providers and employers. Rapid population growth, expanded veteran enrollment under the PACT Act, and rising demand for specialty and behavioral health services have intensified pressure on regional systems. A stable, well-trained healthcare workforce reduces care delays, lowers costs, and supports a resilient regional economy. We support increased federal investment in:
  - Graduate medical education and residency slots
  - Nursing and allied health training programs
  - Faculty development and clinical training infrastructure
  - Workforce pipelines for underserved and rural communities
- ***Expand and Modernize Telehealth and Digital Care*** - Uneven availability of providers makes telehealth and digital health solutions critical to improving access and efficiency. Modernized virtual care strengthens access for workers, veterans, seniors, and rural populations while improving system capacity. We support permanent federal policies that:
  - Preserve and expand telehealth reimbursement
  - Support cross-state licensure flexibility
  - Encourage responsible use of artificial intelligence in care delivery
  - Invest in broadband and digital infrastructure
- ***Protect and Expand Access to Affordable Coverage*** - A healthy workforce drives productivity, innovation, and talent retention. Stable coverage improves health outcomes, lowers uncompensated care, and strengthens regional economic stability. We support federal policies that:
  - Preserve enhanced premium tax credits to maintain marketplace affordability
  - Expand Medicaid access and coverage continuity
  - Simplify enrollment and eligibility transitions for working families
  - Reduce administrative burdens for providers and employers
- ***Increase Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Services*** - Mental health and substance use disorders remain major drivers of workforce disruption, healthcare costs, and community instability. Accessible behavioral healthcare is essential to community resilience and business competitiveness. We support federal efforts to:
  - Expand behavioral health workforce capacity
  - Enforce full mental health parity
  - Sustain tele-mental health flexibility
  - Improve integration of mental and physical healthcare
  - Increase funding for evidence-based treatment and recovery programs
- ***Support Regional Behavioral Health Infrastructure*** - We advocate for sustained federal funding to develop and operate a regional psychiatric center in Bexar County and expand crisis stabilization capacity. Strategic federal investment will:
  - Reduce emergency room overcrowding

- Improve continuity of care
- Strengthen public safety and community health
- Support employers through improved workforce stability
- *Advance Healthcare Innovation and System Resilience* - Innovation and resilience are essential to protecting patients, employers, and national health security. To ensure long-term competitiveness and preparedness, we support federal investments that:
  - Promote healthcare cybersecurity and data protection
  - Strengthen public health preparedness and supply chains
  - Accelerate biomedical research and commercialization
  - Support value-based and outcomes-driven care models
- *Medical Code Update for Dyslexia* – the reclassification of dyslexia in ICD-10 as a recognized neurobiological condition (G code) would streamline diagnosis, improve tracking of prevalence, and ensure insurance coverage for screening, diagnosis, and evidence-based treatment. Federal recognition of medical coding would enhance access to care, support better educational and health outcomes, and reduce long-term societal and economic costs.

## **Homelessness & Behavioral Health Stabilization**

Addressing homelessness is essential to San Antonio’s workforce participation, public safety, healthcare system sustainability, and regional economic growth. Rising housing costs and untreated behavioral health needs have intensified homelessness across urban and military-connected communities. San Antonio has developed one of the nation’s most recognized models for business-led, results-oriented coordinated homelessness response. We are respectfully requesting federal partnership to expand service capacity, strengthen accountability, and scale public-private collaboration to meet growing demand. A critical gap in the current federal framework is the absence of dedicated housing support for individuals discharged from emergency psychiatric care who are experiencing homelessness. Discharging individuals back to the streets following crisis stabilization or inpatient psychiatric treatment undermines recovery, increases recidivism into emergency rooms and jails, and drives avoidable federal healthcare expenditures. The Greater San Antonio Chamber supports a coordinated federal strategy that balances housing supply, treatment access, prevention, public safety, and rapid reentry into the workforce with targeted federal investment in hospital-to-housing stabilization pathways.

- *Strengthen Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment Infrastructure* – Long-term homelessness is often driven by untreated severe mental illness and substance abuse disorder. Increased federal investment in treatment capacity is essential.
  - Expand inpatient and outpatient treatment capacity



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- Increase crisis stabilization and detox services
  - Support mobile crisis response teams
  - Integrate discharge planning with guaranteed housing placement pathways
- Establish a Federal Behavioral Health Discharge to Housing Initiative – We respectfully request consideration of a federal partnership to create dedicated funding to provide short-term stabilization and long-term housing options for individuals exiting emergency psychiatric care who are experiencing homelessness. Support could include:
  - Housing stabilization funding authorized through HUD and Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
  - Flexibility in Medicaid waivers to reimburse housing navigation and post-discharge stabilization services
  - Housing prioritized for high utilizers of emergency behavioral health systems
  - Incentives for hospital systems and local mental health authorities to coordinate discharge planning with housing providers
- Support Balanced Public Order & Encampment Response – Chronic street encampments and untreated behavioral health crises are neither humane nor sustainable. Federal policy should support a compassionate but accountable approach that pairs encampment resolution and treatment interventions with robust investment in services.
  - Expand federal funding for inpatient psychiatric and long-term stabilization beds
  - Fund court-connected treatment alternatives and diversion programs
  - Provide resources for coordinated encampment resolution paired with shelter, treatment, and housing placements.
- Support Veteran Housing and Homelessness Prevention
  - Increase HUD-VASH voucher programs
  - Expand transitional and supportive veteran housing
  - Improve access to behavioral health and employment services for veterans
- Invest in Workforce Reentry and Employment Pathways – Homelessness solutions must include economic reintegration.
  - Expand job training for individuals experiencing homelessness
  - Support transitional employment models
  - Provide employer incentives for hiring individuals exiting homelessness
  - Fund wraparound services (transportation, childcare, tools)
  - Align housing programs with workforce initiatives
- Increase Funding for Prevention and Transitional Housing
  - Emergency rental assistance programs
  - Eviction prevention initiatives
  - Utility assistance programs

- Transitional housing funding
- Legal aid for housing stability
- Support Regional Shelter and Navigation Infrastructure
  - Modernize shelter facilities
  - Expand low to no barrier shelter capacity
  - Develop coordinated entry systems
  - Improve case management and shelter utilization technology
- Promote Data Integration and Performance Accountability
  - Modernize Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)
  - Cross-agency data sharing
  - Outcome-based performance metrics
  - Evidence-based program evaluation

## **Hospitality & Tourism**

Hospitality and tourism are major drivers of job creation, small business growth, and regional visibility in San Antonio. The visitor economy supports hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues, cultural institutions, neighborhood commercial corridors, and transportation providers while generating significant tax revenue and community investment. San Antonio's visitor economy generates \$23.4 billion in annual economic impact and welcomes over 39 million visitors while generating \$284 million in tax revenue and more than 150,000 jobs across hospitality, cultural, and small business sectors. Sustained federal partnership is essential to maintain competitiveness in an increasingly global, technology-driven, and experience-focused travel market. To remain competitive, the Greater San Antonio Chamber supports federal policies that strengthen travel infrastructure, workforce pipelines, destination marketing, global connectivity, and international access.:

- *Support Cultural, Historic, and Outdoor Tourism Assets* - San Antonio's cultural and environmental assets, including the San Antonio Missions and River Walk, are central to its tourism brand and national identity. Cultural investment strengthens destination identity and community pride. We support federal investment through agencies such as the National Park Service to:
  - Preserve historic sites, missions, and heritage corridors
  - Enhance river, park, and trail systems
  - Support heritage and cultural tourism programming
  - Expand interpretive, visitor, and educational facilities
- *Expand Support for Meetings, Conventions, Sports, and Major Events* - Business travel, conventions, sporting events, and military-related tourism are critical-year round revenue drivers that sustain employment and small business activity. We support federal policies that:
  - Promote international business and convention travel

- Support visa access for convention attendees and global event participants
- Invest in convention district and event-hosting infrastructure
- Encourage federal agency use of regional convention facilities
- Enhance federal security coordination and support for large-scale events
- Support tourism connected to JBSA and military graduations
- ***Improve Airport, Air Service, and Transportation Infrastructure*** - Reliable and accessible transportation is essential to visitor growth and international competitiveness. We support increased federal investment to:
  - Expand Airport Improvement Program grants
  - Support air service development, including new international routes to mid-sized markets
  - Modernize terminals and passenger facilities
  - Improve ground transportation and transit connectivity
  - Strengthen Global Entry and trusted traveler program access
- ***Strengthen Destination Marketing and Global Promotion Programs*** - Federal promotion efforts play an important role in attracting domestic and international travelers. Marketing investment generates high economic returns and job growth. We support sustained funding for national and regional tourism promotion initiatives in coordination with the U.S. Travel Association and full funding to Brand USA to:
  - Expand international marketing campaigns
  - Promote major events, conventions, and sporting competitions
  - Support cultural and heritage tourism
  - Grow off-peak and mid-week travel demand
  - Strengthen public-private partnerships for digital marketing and destination analytics
  - Improve federal data-sharing and market intelligence resources
- ***Expand Workforce Development for Hospitality and Tourism*** - Workforce shortages remain a major constraint on industry growth. A skilled workforce improves service quality and business sustainability. We support federal investment through the U.S. Department of Labor to:
  - Expand hospitality and culinary apprenticeships
  - Support English-language and customer service training
  - Fund management and leadership development programs
  - Develop military spouse and veteran hospitality pathways
  - Support career-connected learning aligned with convention, culinary, aviation, and event management sectors
- ***Modernize and Streamline Travel and Visa Processing*** - International visitation is critical to tourism growth. Efficient visa processing increases international tourism, convention business, and regional spending. We support reforms led by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Department of State to:
  - Reduce visa interview and processing backlogs



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- Expand consular staffing in key tourism markets
- Modernize visa and Electronic Systems for Travel Authorization (ESTA) systems
- Improve visitor entry experiences

## Housing

A stable and affordable housing supply is essential to workforce participation, economic growth, and regional competitiveness. Employers cannot attract and retain talent without access to attainable housing near job centers. Expanding housing supply strengthens the local tax base, supports small businesses, and drives private-sector investment. To support housing production in our rapidly growing region, the Greater San Antonio Chamber urges federal policies that prioritize market-driven solutions, regulatory reform, and public-private investment:

- Preserve and strengthen the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) as proven, market-based tools that leverage private capital to finance large-scale housing production and community revitalization.
- Expand Opportunity Zone incentives and similar investment vehicles to attract long-term private capital to housing development in economically distressed areas.
- Support adaptive reuse downtown revitalization incentives, including office-to-residential conversions, to increase housing supply, reduce vacancy in commercial corridors, and strengthen urban cores.
- Reduce regulatory barriers and streamline permitting requirements to accelerate multifamily and workforce housing production, shorten development timelines, and lower project costs.
- Encourage state and local flexibility in housing policy implementation, ensuring communities can tailor solutions to their specific growth and workforce needs.
- Promote domestic building materials production and supply chain resiliency to reduce construction costs and strengthen American manufacturing.

## International Trade & Competitiveness

International trade is essential to the San Antonio region's economic growth, job creation, and global competitiveness. Regional manufacturers, aerospace firms, energy companies, logistics providers, agricultural distributors, and small businesses rely on stable trade policy, predictable tariff frameworks, efficient border operations, and expanded market access to compete globally. The United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) is foundational to Texas' manufacturing, logistics, and agricultural economy. San Antonio's position is that USMCA should be renewed and strengthened to reinforce North American competitiveness, protect regional jobs, support continued nearshoring and reshoring, and provide long-term certainty for investors and employers.



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Further, trade policy discussions should fully reflect consumer impact and downstream economic effects, not just upstream producer interests. The Greater San Antonio Chamber supports federal policies that strengthen exports, protect domestic industries, and enhance North American and global supply-chain resilience.

- Support USMCA Continuation, Certainty, and Modernization
  - Renew and reaffirm the United States' commitment to remain part of the trilateral USMCA agreement, avoiding withdrawal or destabilizing uncertainty
  - Ensure that any modifications to USMCA are implemented through a phased-in approach, allowing manufacturers, agricultural producers, and logistics firms adequate time to adjust operations and capital planning.
  - Preserve USMCA as the core framework for North American trade.
  - Provide long-term certainty for manufacturers, agricultural producers, and investors
  - Enhance enforcement of labor, environmental, and rules-of-origin provisions
  - Modernize digital trade, services, and customs processes
  - Expand cross-border infrastructure capacity
  - Reduce customs and regulatory friction
  - Avoid policy disruptions that would destabilize regional supply chains
- Promote Tariff Stability and Predictability
  - Promote stability and transparency in tariff implementation and review processes.
  - Provide timely decisions in ongoing Section 232 investigations, including the current polysilicon review, to allow local solar cell and solar panel manufacturers to plan production, supply contracts, and workforce growth.
  - Ensure that tariff actions consider downstream manufacturing impacts and domestic job creation.
- Address Fresh Tomato Import Duties and Broader Agricultural Trade Impacts
- Encourage Innovation in Agriculture and Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA)
  - Provide tax incentives for CEA equipment and facilities
  - Lower capital costs for specialty-crop infrastructure
  - Improve year-round supply stability
- Modernize and Expand Market Access Through Trade Agreements
  - Enforce and modernize existing trade agreements
  - Pursue new market access opportunities in high-growth regions
  - Strengthen digital trade and services provisions
  - Reduce non-tariff barriers affecting U.S. exporters
- Improve Customs, Border, and Port Efficiency
  - Modernize inspection and clearance systems
  - Expand staffing and technology at ports of entry

- Enhance trusted trader programs
- Reduce cargo and passenger wait times
- Invest in border infrastructure to support agricultural, manufacturing, and energy exports
- Protect Intellectual Property and Combat Unfair Trade Practices
  - Enforce anti-dumping and countervailing duty laws
  - Bolster IP protection abroad
  - Combat forced technology transfer
  - Address subsidies and market distortions
- Align Trade Policy with National Security Through Interagency Coordination
  - Secure critical supply chains
  - Protect sensitive technologies
  - Support trusted supplier networks
  - Improve export control clarity to reduce compliance ambiguity for manufacturers
- Support Small Business Participation in Global Trade
  - Expand trade readiness programs
  - Simplify export compliance
  - Reduce documentation burdens
  - Provide multilingual and regional support
  - Strengthen access to export financing tools
- Improve Trade Infrastructure and Logistics Networks
  - Freight rail and highway corridors
  - Intermodal facilities
  - Air cargo infrastructure
  - Port and border modernization
  - Cold-chain logistics for agricultural exports

## Manufacturing

San Antonio's advanced manufacturing sector is a major driver of regional economic growth, supporting more than 60,000 jobs and generating approximately \$13.5 billion in regional GDP. From small innovators to global enterprises, manufacturers in our region play a critical role in national security, supply-chain resilience, and technological leadership. To sustain growth and global competitiveness, the Greater San Antonio Chamber supports federal policies that strengthen domestic manufacturing capacity, accelerate innovation, and expand workforce readiness.

- Expand Federal Incentives for Advanced Manufacturing Investment
  - Enhancement of the R&D tax credit
  - Incentives for automation, robotics, and digital manufacturing
  - Support for reshoring and nearshoring production

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- Targeted incentives for defense, aerospace, medical, and energy manufacturing
- Advance AI, Quantum, and Industrial Technology Readiness
  - Expand AI research, testing, and deployment in manufacturing
  - Advance quantum information science and industrial applications
  - Develop national standards for smart factories
  - Modernize research and testing facilities
  - Reduce maintenance backlogs at federal technology centers
  - Technology leadership is essential to maintaining U.S. industrial competitiveness.
- Strengthen Cybersecurity and Supply-Chain Resilience
  - Expand cybersecurity grants and technical assistance
  - Secure industrial control systems and factory automation
  - Bolster vendor and supplier risk management
  - Integrate cybersecurity into workforce training
- Build and Modernize the Manufacturing Workforce Pipeline
  - Career and technical education (CTE)
  - Apprenticeships and work-based learning
  - Industry-recognized credential programs
  - Veteran and transitioning-military pathways
- Expand and Update Section 179 and Capital Equipment Incentives
  - Raising the maximum deduction beyond current thresholds
  - Indexing limits to inflation
  - Incentivizing the purchase of American-made equipment
  - Encouraging deployment in U.S.-based facilities

## **Military Readiness, Resilience, & Community Integration**

Joint Base San Antonio is the largest joint base within the Department of Defense and represents a cornerstone of national security, workforce development, and regional economic vitality. With comprehensive mission diversity and premier training across all military services, JBSA plays a central role in preparing and sustaining America's fighting force.

JBSA directly supports more than 80,000 active-duty personnel, reservists, civilians, and contractors and generates billions of dollars annually in economic activity through salaries, contracts, and related spending. San Antonio's proud identity as "Military City, USA" reflects a deep, long-standing partnership between the community and the armed forces.

Strategically located in Texas, JBSA serves as a vital logistical, operational, and cyber hub for missions across the United States and around the world. The region's robust network of veteran services, military family support programs, and defense innovation



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partnerships strengthens mission readiness, talent retention, and successful transitions to civilian life.

The Greater San Antonio Chamber supports federal policies that protect and enhance JBSA's strategic value as a national model for military readiness, infrastructure resilience, and community integration.

- *Harden Installation Resilience and Infrastructure* – continue federal investment in programs that enhance mission assurance and community compatibility, including:
  - The Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC)
  - Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR) grants
  - Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP)
  - Defense Manufacturing Community Support Program (DMCSP)
- *Modernize Facilities and Critical Systems* – modern infrastructure is essential to maintaining operational superiority and workforce readiness. We support sustained federal investment to:
  - Upgrade aging facilities and training infrastructure
  - Improve cybersecurity and communications systems
  - Strengthen energy resilience through microgrids and backup generation
  - Expand secure facilities for cyber and intelligence missions
- *Enhance Support for Military Families and Workforce Stability* - strong family support systems are essential to retention and readiness and directly impact mission effectiveness. We support federal policies that expand:
  - Access to quality healthcare and mental health services
  - Childcare and education resources
  - Spouse employment and workforce programs
  - Housing affordability initiatives
- *Reduce Military and Veteran Suicide and Expand Behavioral Health Services* - Comprehensive mental health support is critical to force readiness and community stability. We support coordinated actions by Congress, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Defense to:
  - Expand behavioral health capacity on and off installations
  - Improve crisis intervention and peer-support programs
  - Strengthen transition assistance services
  - Enhance data sharing and care coordination
  - Reduce barriers to accessing treatment
- *Advance Defense Innovation and Public-Private Partnerships* - These partnerships reinforce San Antonio's role as a national defense innovation hub. We support federal initiatives that strengthen collaboration between JBSA, industry, and research institutions to:
  - Accelerate cybersecurity and defense technology development
  - Support dual-use and mission-driven innovation

- Expand testing, prototyping, and workforce training partnerships
- Improve technology transition to operational use

## Nonprofit

Charitable nonprofit organizations are essential employers, economic contributors, and frontline service providers in San Antonio and across the nation. They strengthen workforce participation, improve public health, support housing stability, and reduce long-term government costs. Nonprofits are facing unprecedented challenges, including workforce shortages, rising operating costs, declining charitable giving, and increasing demand for services. At the same time, they are delivering critical programs in homelessness prevention, behavioral health, veteran services, and workforce development. To ensure nonprofits can continue serving communities effectively, the Greater San Antonio Chamber supports federal policies that strengthen nonprofit sustainability, modernize tax incentives, and improve government contracting systems.

- *Expand and update Charitable Giving Incentives* - Expanded giving incentives increase private investment in community solutions and reduce long-term public costs. We support federal tax policies that encourage broad-based charitable giving including:
  - Reinstating and expanding a universal (non-itemizer) charitable deduction
  - Preserving and strengthening the 60 percent adjusted gross income (AGI) cap on charitable deductions
  - Exploring enhanced incentives for local and disaster-response giving
  - Simplifying compliance requirements administered by the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Department of the Treasury
- *Reform Government Contracting and Grant Systems* - Nonprofits delivering government-funded services often operate under outdated, inefficient, and underfunded contracting models. Modernized systems improve accountability, service quality, and fiscal sustainability.
  - Streamline and standardize grant and contracting processes
  - Reduce duplicative reporting and administrative burdens
  - Harmonize definitions and requirements across agencies
  - Ensure timely reimbursement of direct and indirect costs
  - Eliminate arbitrary caps on administrative and overhead expenses
  - Establish multi-year funding and renewal cycles
- *Expand Public-Private Partnerships and Innovation* - Public-private partnerships maximize impact and taxpayer value.
  - Pilot innovative service models
  - Scale evidence-based programs
  - Improve data sharing and outcome measurement
  - Support cross-sector problem solving

## Small Business

Small businesses are the backbone of the San Antonio regional economy, driving job creation, innovation, and community wealth. With more than 38,000 small businesses employing hundreds of thousands of residents, local entrepreneurs play a central role in economic mobility, neighborhood vitality, and long-term regional competitiveness. Small business ownership remains one of the most effective pathways to family wealth creation and community reinvestment. To ensure continued growth and opportunity, federal policy must promote access to capital, innovation funding, affordable healthcare, and regulatory certainty. To support our small businesses and expand opportunities to other entrepreneurs, the Greater San Antonio Chamber supports policies including:

- **Protect and Reform SBIR/STTR Innovation Programs** - The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs are critical sources of early-stage, non-dilutive capital for technology-driven small businesses. These programs enable small businesses to develop and commercialize advanced technologies that support federal missions, create high-wage jobs, and strengthen regional competitiveness.
  - Long-term reauthorization of SBIR/STTR
  - Increased agency participation and funding levels
  - Stronger commercialization and Phase III transition support
  - Increased agency set asides to reflect rising R&D demands
  - Protection against diversion of SBIR funds to non-innovation purposes
  - Continued administration through the Small Business Administration
  - Stable funding enables small firms to plan, scale, and compete globally.
  - Expand Phase II and Phase II+ matching programs
  - Increase non-dilutive capital for pilot deployments
  - Incentivize federal procurement of SBIR-developed technologies
  - Improve access to private capital and venture partnerships
  - Accelerated commercialization maximizes taxpayer return and job creation.
- **Align SBIR with Defense, Space, and National Security Missions** - Given San Antonio's strong defense, cybersecurity, and aerospace footprint, SBIR plays a critical role in strengthening mission-ready innovation.
  - Faster transition from prototypes to operational use
  - Expanded "Open Topic" and rapid acquisition pathways
  - Greater engagement between innovators and program offices
  - Mission-driven SBIR investments strengthen national security and supply-chain resilience.
- **Make the Small Business Deduction Permanent** - We support permanent extension of the 20 percent qualified business income (QBI) deduction for pass-through entities. Tax certainty enables small businesses to:

- Reinvest in equipment and technology
- Expand payroll and benefits
- Support succession planning
- Improve long-term financial stability
- Maintain Affordable Health Coverage for Entrepreneurs and Employees - Access to affordable healthcare is essential for business sustainability and workforce retention. Affordable coverage supports productivity and long-term growth. We support preservation of enhanced Affordable Care Act premium tax credits to:
  - Reduce costs for self-employed entrepreneurs
  - Improve benefit affordability for small employers
  - Increase workforce stability
  - Enable reinvestment in business expansion
- Sustain and Expand Small Business Administration Loan Programs - Access to capital remains one of the primary barriers to small business growth. Reliable capital access promotes business formation, resilience, and job creation. We support continued and expanded funding for loan and technical assistance programs administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration, including:
  - 7(a) Loan Program for working capital and refinancing
  - CDC/504 Loan Program for fixed-asset financing
  - Microloan Program for startups and underserved entrepreneurs
- Reform SBIR Administration and Review Processes - Efficient program administration is critical to small business success. Streamlined processes lower costs and accelerate innovation. We support reforms that:
  - Reduce award processing timelines
  - Standardize requirements across agencies
  - Improve transparency in evaluation criteria
  - Expand digital platforms and applicant support tools

## Transportation

Reliable transportation infrastructure boosts economic activity by facilitating efficient movement of goods and services, allowing businesses to access a wider workforce and customer base, and promote economic development to a wider region. To help maintain and improve our transportation infrastructure to expand economic prosperity and opportunity, the Greater Chamber requests consideration of the following items:

- Support an inflationary-adjusted five-year reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Act (expires 9/30/26), including:
  - Funding that grows substantially from current levels to adjust for increasing construction costs (70%) over the past five years.
  - Full funding of VIA Metropolitan Transit's Silver Line.
  - Expansion of transit funding and Capital Investment Grants including New Starts, Small Starts, Bus Facilities, State of Good Repair, etc.



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- Continuation of Federal Transit Administration and a federal role in funding transit projects with a priority for urban areas.
- More funding stability to keep the pipeline of planned transportation investments moving forward.
- An update of funding formulas still based on the 2000 census – 26 years ago - at the expense of faster growing states.
- Inclusion of new funding sources to bridge the gap between gas/diesel taxes and actual program needs.
- Assurance that all vehicle types pay their fair share to sustain the Highway Trust Fund.
- Elimination of Texas' status as a donor state, providing more gas & diesel tax revenue than returned to the state through surface transportation programs.
- Improved project delivery and program administration by increasing flexibility, simplifying environmental regulations, and reducing program burdens.
- Support for efforts by states to assume more responsibility and accountability for environmental oversight.
- Support for public-private partnerships to expedite transportation infrastructure development.
- Support annual appropriations and local grant applications for the Alamo Region consistent with surface transportation goals.
- Increased funding of Texas ports of entry to enhance trade capacity and reduce congestion.
- Promote policies supporting Advanced Air Mobility to ensure Texas remains a leader in transportation innovation.
- Pass the Build HUB Act with an expansion of infrastructure loans such as the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA)

## Water

Balanced water management and reliable access to clean, affordable water are essential to San Antonio's economic growth, workforce stability, and quality of life. As population growth and aging infrastructure place increasing pressure on water systems, sustained federal investment and policy coordination are critical. The Greater Chamber requests consideration of the following items:

- Increased Federal investment in water and wastewater infrastructure to help utilities address pressing needs
- Efforts to ensure a stable and equitable framework for managing water utilities
- Improvements to water use efficiency and other conservation efforts
- Secure federal approval and full support for San Antonio River Authority's application to lead construction of the Westside Creeks Ecosystem Restoration Project through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pilot 1043(b) program,

ensuring timely delivery of critical flood mitigation, environmental restoration, and community revitalization benefits.

- Amend Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2026 to add at the end of Section 1329 of WRDA 2024: “The Federal share of the cost of carrying out Alternative 7 shall be 65 percent for aquatic ecosystem restoration and 50 percent for recreation.”
- Continued federal funding through U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Westside Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project.
- Increase federal funding and regulatory flexibility for expansion of water supply diversification and reuse programs to strengthen our community’s long-term water security and reduce vulnerability to drought.
- Enhance water infrastructure and physical security as water systems are increasingly targeted and their security is essential to public safety, military readiness, and economic potential.

## Workforce Development

The continued prosperity and global competitiveness of Texas and the United States depend on aligning workforce skills with the evolving needs of industry. Employers across the critical sectors of healthcare, cybersecurity, manufacturing, defense, and technology require high-quality talent. The Greater San Antonio Chamber supports federal policies that strengthen education-to-employment pipelines, expand workforce participation, prioritize employer leadership, and ensure access to global talent.

- *Expand Access to Affordable and Reliable Childcare* - Access to quality, affordable childcare is essential to increasing labor force participation, especially for working parents and frontline employees. Affordable childcare is a workforce strategy that strengthens economic competitiveness and supply chain stability.
  - Expand childcare subsidies and tax credits to increase workforce participation
  - Increase funding for childcare workforce development and facility capacity
  - Support employer-sponsored childcare partnerships and co-investment models
  - Improve access to childcare in high-demand employment corridors
- *Expand Employer-Led Training Partnerships* - Employers know best what skills they need. Federal funding should prioritize business-driven training solutions and measurable employment outcomes.
  - Expand industry-led sector partnerships and regional workforce collaboratives
  - Increase funding for customized and consortium-based employer training grants
  - Support competency-based training models aligned with industry needs

- Incentivize community college and employer co-design of curriculum tied to job placement outcomes
  - Encourage performance-based funding models tied to employment and wage outcomes
- ***Modernize & Scale Registered Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs*** – Registered Apprenticeships are proven workforce infrastructure that connect education directly to employment. Texas needs scalable, flexible apprenticeship models that meet the needs of both traditional and emerging industries.
  - Simplify federal apprenticeship registration and reporting requirements
  - Expand employer-sponsored Registered Apprenticeships across critical sectors
  - Increase participation of community colleges in Registered Apprenticeship programs
  - Increase funding for non-traditional apprenticeships in cybersecurity, healthcare, IT, energy, and advanced manufacturing
  - Support youth, adult, incumbent worker, and defense industrial base apprenticeships
  - Fund paid internships, co-ops, and work-based learning models tied to credential attainment
- ***Expand High-Quality Short-Term Credentials & Workforce Pell Implementation*** - Not all high-demand careers require four-year degrees. High-quality, industry-recognized credentials provide fast, cost-effective pathways to economic mobility.
  - Fully implement and fund Workforce Pell for high-quality short-term programs
  - Support stackable credential models aligned with national skill standards
  - Expand fast-track certification programs tied to verified employer demand
  - Strengthen data transparency and accountability systems to measure credential-to-employment outcomes
- ***Align Workforce Programs with Defense and Critical Infrastructure Needs*** - National security depends on a civilian workforce prepared to support the defense industrial base and critical infrastructure sectors.
  - Improve security-cleared workforce pipelines and explore expedited clearance pathways tied to workforce programs
  - Expand apprenticeship pathways within the defense industrial base
  - Support dual-use training programs for both commercial and defense industries
  - Incentivize cybersecurity, energy, and advanced manufacturing workforce partnerships
  - Strengthen military-to-industry transition programs for service members and veterans

The logo for SA to DC features the letters 'SA' in blue, 'to' in small black text, and 'DC' in red. A red star is positioned between 'SA' and 'to', and another red star is between 'to' and 'DC'.

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- *Global Talent Recruitment* - Access to global talent is essential to sustaining innovation, economic growth, and critical industry competitiveness. A modern immigration system is an economic competitiveness tool.
  - Streamline visa processing for high-skilled workers and investors
  - Expand and modernize STEM-related visa pathways
  - Improve employment authorization for international graduates of US institutions
  - Support workforce integration and credential recognition for globally trained professionals