

A STORY TO TELL: TELLING THE RICHNESS AND COMPLEXITIES OF A COMMUNITY USING DATA



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OUR PARTNER

CLHD is committed to proactive health care, preventing issues before they arise to increase the likelihood of healthier and longer lives for their community members. They continuously improve their community outreach, patient care efficiency, and the education and expertise of their public health workforce. With the goal to achieve advanced health equity levels in the Laredo community, ensuring that every person has access to their full health potential, regardless of social position or other circumstances. They amplify impact by sharing best practices and sharing stories of communities across the nation through data.

City of Laredo Health Department



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BACKGROUND



Texas Health Institute (THI) collaborated with the City of Laredo Health Department (CLHD) to produce the 2022-2023 Community Health Needs Assessment which explores five ZIP codes in Laredo and identifies priority health and social determinants of health needs.

This project used quantitative data, both publicly available data and a robust bilingual community survey, and centered it on qualitative data, leading to a rich and robust story of a community in South Texas. The data is anchored in the local context and uplifts the lived experiences of community residents.

METHODS



The needs assessment had a mixed-method approach that was carefully designed for the City of Laredo.

QUALITATIVE COMPONENT:

- Focus groups with community residents.
- Key Informant interviews with community leaders.

QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT:

- 80 key indicators from publicly available data selected by community leaders.
- Community survey, which was translated and tested to meet local needs, strategically monitored to represent demographics, geographic location, educational attainment, and insurance accessibility to align with census data.

Utilizing these two methodologies to collect and analyze data completed a full and rich picture of the strengths and complexities of the community.

STORY



Data can tell the story of a community. Take for example, ZIP code 78043 in east Laredo, which is the locality of several Colonias. Colonias are relatively undeveloped communities that may lack some foundational infrastructure like running water, electricity, or paved roads. With the data collected, we discovered the full story of the community residing in ZIP code 78043. There is a high poverty rate, higher older adult population, lower educational attainment, and a higher percentage of community residents that are likely to not have insurance in this community. Other ZIP codes painted different stories based on the data collected.

LESSONS LEARNED

Interdisciplinary collaboration: The collaboration between THI and CLHD exemplifies the potential of partnerships across different sectors to address complex health issues.

Tailored interventions: The analysis of specific ZIP codes demonstrates the need for tailored interventions that address unique challenges and capitalize on local resources. One-size-fits-all approaches may not be effective in addressing health disparities.

Data as advocacy: Sharing stories backed by data can serve as a powerful advocacy tool to highlight community needs and drive policy changes that promote health equity.

Cultural competency: The emphasis on cultural relevance in data collection and interpretation highlights the importance of cultural competency in public health research, ensuring that interventions resonate with the community.

IMPLICATIONS

Interventions will be tailored to the specific needs and opportunities of each ZIP code.