



*The Center for Rural Resilience was formed by Tarleton State in 2024 and brings together the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and College of Health Sciences to collaboratively explore the intersection of agriculture, rural, and health. The center's primary focus is addressing well-being in rural and agricultural communities, with an emphasis on mental health as a driver for positive change at the individual and community levels.*

With more than 3,000,000 citizens living in areas classified as rural, Texas is first in the nation in rural population and has more rural citizens than the entire population of 18 states. Understanding and addressing the needs of rural communities and the people who live there is crucial to ensuring the Lone Star State does not leave any of its citizens behind.

The *Center for Rural Resilience* will provide communities with tools, resources, and support to understand and bolster a community's ability to resist and recover from challenging situations. The center will bring a community-wide approach to improving the vitality of rural communities in Texas, serving as a nexus for resources and support spanning rural healthcare, agricultural production, finance, and community development networks.

Part of the uniqueness of the *Center for Rural Resilience* is the alignment between the Tarleton State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the College of Health Sciences. The center intends to understand and address issues holistically and take research, teaching, and knowledge to action.

Given this partnership between health sciences and agriculture, an early focus of the center will be addressing mental health in rural and agricultural communities. There is an urgent need to develop more comprehensive mental health supports, programming, and research that is rooted in rural and agricultural communities – and to ensure these are created and implemented by professionals with backgrounds in this space.

The center will provide rural leadership, professional pipeline development, and community-based partnerships, combining academic research and local knowledge to co-create initiatives focusing on the resilience and prosperity of rural communities and their citizens.

Breaking down academic disciplines to develop holistic, engaging, and whole community tools and resources, this effort to look at resilience through a broader lens can drive positive change locally and across the nation.