

ABSTRACT

The U.S.-Mexico Border AIDS Education & Training Centers Steering Team (UMBAST) is a 10-year collaborative effort of local, regional, and national training centers from the AIDS Education and Training Center (AETC) network and other Federal and local stakeholders.

The UMBAST website (AETCBorderHealth.org) has been the public face of this collaborative team since 2006. This poster outlines the process involved in updating our online border HIV/AIDS services directory.

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THE BORDER REGION

The United States-Mexico border region (including the areas between the border and 62 miles north of the border) has some of the poorest health and economic outcomes in the nation. If the region were a state it would rank:

- last in per capita income and access to healthcare,
- second in death rates due to hepatitis,
- first in number of school children living in poverty.

The U.S.-Mexico border is 2000+ miles long, and spans 4 U.S. states, 6 Mexican states and dozens of counties and local jurisdictions, including tribal lands. Most border residents, by population, live in the urban areas around San Diego-Tijuana and El Paso-Ciudad Juarez, but those regions comprise a small proportion of the physical border, which is predominantly rural. Distribution of services is similarly uneven, for example, of the 46 clinical sites listed for California, 38 are in San Diego county, and 8 in Imperial County. On a practical level, this means that patients in San Diego might be able to walk or take the bus to receive services, but if you are in Imperial, you likely need a car or transportation program to access care.

In 2012, as part of an overall reorganization of the UMBAST website, the group tried a different technical approach to presenting these listings, using the free Google Maps tools to create and maintain the directory. The rationale for making this change included:

- The ability to give local and regional coordinators the tools to maintain their region's online information directly.
- The value-added of the Google Maps application for our group, including the ability to look up and add agencies with a few clicks, to customize the look and feel to some extent, and to embed the maps on our websites.
- The value-added for users, including the ability to get directions to locations, zoom in and out in a region, and to view the map on a mobile phone or tablet computer.

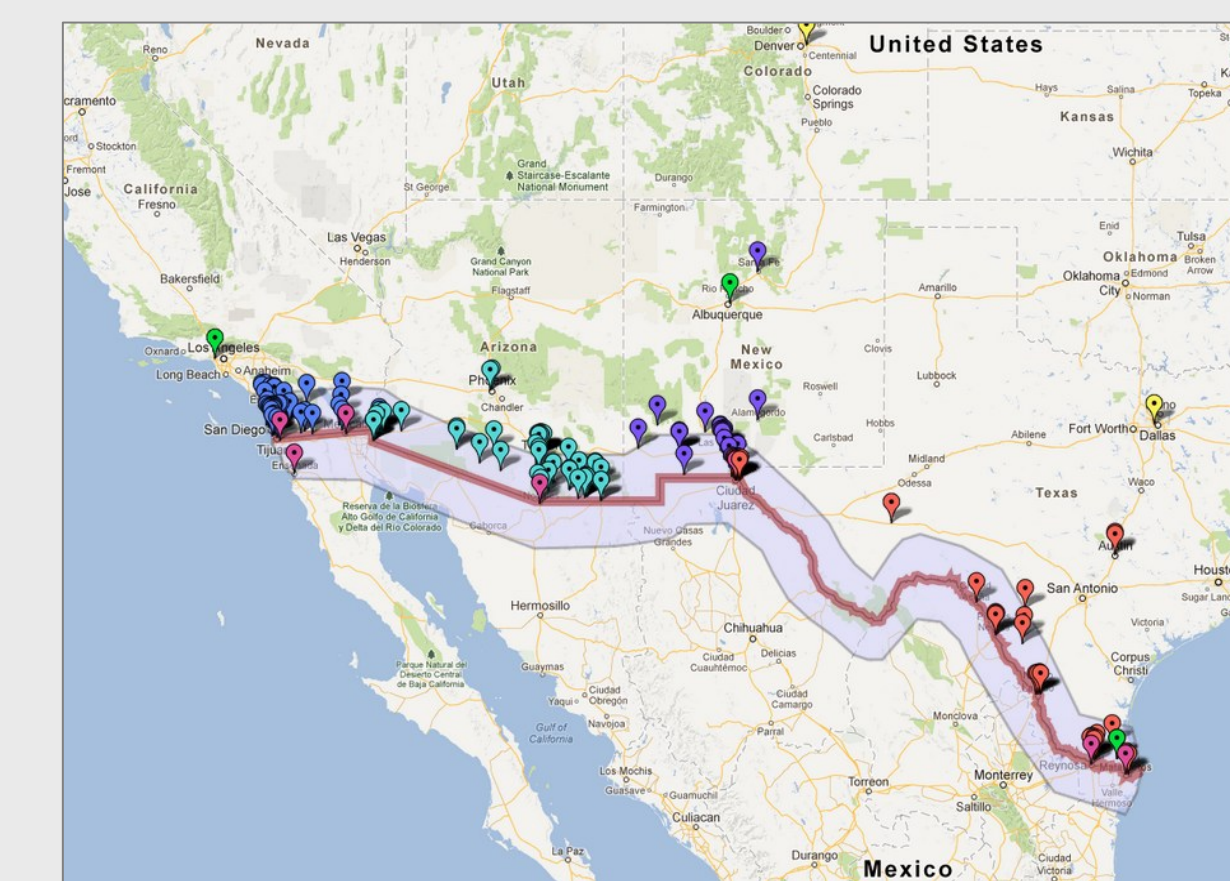
BORDER MAP BEFORE



Maintaining the directory has been a labor-intensive process, and only 3 editions were released in the first 6 years of the project. Each participating AETC region collected information for the border states, and submitted documents to the AETC National Resource Center (NRC). The NRC edited the entries for consistency (each state inevitably used a different template), and then technical staff would code each entry to post on the website. Because the process was so cumbersome, it was only completed every 2-3 years. If a regional training coordinator learned of a change in her region, she would need to notify the NRC to update the entry.

Overall the border directory received approximately 1,200 page views a month for the past six years. Searches for Texas resources were the most common, which is not surprising considering that around half of the border is in the state of Texas.

BORDER MAP AFTER



STEPS TAKEN

- Key NRC staff learned how to use Google Maps via online tutorials and trial-and-error, and created a custom map in the online Google Map application.
- The NRC added all previous Resource Directory entries to the Google Map, which provided an opportunity to practice using the interface.
- Regional border coordinators were given editor privileges and invited to log in and review and edit their region's information.
- The NRC created a training guide and convened a webinar training for regional coordinators to review the process for updating entries.
- NRC periodically reviews the updates made by regions and flags any errors or inconsistencies.
- The NRC remains accessible to the AETC UMBAST coordinators for technical assistance and to help with the editing process.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Online collaborative software can be used effectively to enhance regional networks.
- Non-technical staff can learn how to use these tools.
- A project coordinator (coach and cheerleader) is a key role for ensuring that timelines and standards are met.
- Border coordinators who are physically located on the border are at an advantage in knowing which services are available in their region.
- Using free tools means accepting the limits of these tools. For Google maps, there is limited ability to customize the display look and feel and the directory entries.
- Google search users find the Border map independently of our website, and account for a large number of page views.

NEXT STEPS AND PLANS

- Review overall site usage patterns, including locations of users, search terms used, type of computer used (mobile or desktop) and other factors.
- Step up outreach and promotional efforts using our training center network as well as social media venues.
- Make adjustments as indicated by metrics review and user feedback.
- Continue to maintain the accuracy, completeness, and consistency of the entries.
- Continue to test the interface in mobile environments.

