

Texas Workforce Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Programs from the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services Transitioning to Texas Workforce Commission on September 1

AUSTIN – The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is preparing to welcome several programs operated by the [Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services \(DARS\)](#) to the Workforce Solutions system on Sept. 1, 2016.

Through legislative action and authorization by Governor Greg Abbott, programs from DARS will transfer to TWC and to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). TWC will welcome more than 1,860 DARS employees to its Workforce Solutions partner network.

“For over 20 years, TWC has been providing integrated workforce services that help Texans seeking employment and assist employers as they create jobs,” said TWC Chairman Andres Alcantar. “With the addition of the skills and expertise of vocational rehabilitation staff in serving individuals with disabilities, TWC will elevate the services we make available to all Texans and more effectively connect all job seekers to employers across the state.”

The four DARS programs transitioning to TWC provide support to people with disabilities so that they can live independent and productive lives. Transitioning programs include: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program (currently in separate divisions) , including the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center, the Business Enterprises of Texas (BET) program, and Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who are Blind program.

“We are grateful that our agency will be gaining the expertise and talents that each transitioning team member will provide,” said TWC Commissioner Representing Employers Ruth R. Hughs. “We look forward to strengthening the impact of our combined services as we strive to empower Texans with the skills and resources they need to prosper in our state.”

While vocational rehabilitation counselors and other program staff will become TWC employees on Sept. 1, most will continue to operate in their current locations until they can be fully integrated with Workforce Solutions offices. The full integration of VR services into Workforce Solutions offices will happen in phases over the next several years and services will be delivered through a program called Texas Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

“We are pleased that these employees will soon be joining us at TWC,” said TWC Commissioner Representing Labor Julian Alvarez. “We welcome them to a team of dedicated individuals who are committed to serving the people and the Texas labor force.”

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DARS Program Transition

Consumers of DARS programs working with current VR staff will continue to be served by those same individuals after Sept. 1, as their caseworkers and services are transferred to TWC. Consumer services will continue without interruption and DARS program participants will benefit from an expanded network of employment connections through Texas Workforce Solutions.

The co-location of VR staff and services with Workforce Solutions offices will be completed efficiently and effectively, to ensure the best possible outcomes for program participants. TWC will ensure that accommodations, resources and space allocations meet the needs of all program participants and counselors. Due to varying lease expirations of current DARS field offices, this transition is likely to extend over the next several years. Throughout this time, the team approach to service delivery will continue as the focus.

DARS online resources associated with the programs transitioning to TWC will be available on the [TWC website](#). Most direct phone numbers for current DARS staff will remain the same after Sept. 1. Individuals with questions about DARS programs moving to TWC should continue to use the existing inquiries phone number, 800-628-5115.

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The Texas Workforce Commission is a state agency dedicated to helping Texas employers, workers and communities prosper economically. For details on TWC and the services it offers in coordination with its network of local workforce development boards, call 512-463-8942 or visit www.texasworkforce.org. To receive notifications about TWC programs and services subscribe to our [email updates](#).