



**MEETING OF THE  
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**

**DATE**

**NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

1 TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2020

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Good morning, everyone.  
3 Let's call this meeting to order. Mr. Serna, has anyone signed  
4 up for public comment?

5 MR. SERNA: We do have one person who will  
6 address the commission on item number 9 policy when we get  
7 there. With that, we are good to go. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. Good morning,  
9 Ms. Miller.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. This bring us  
11 to the end of Agenda items 3-7. Let's pause for a few moments  
12 to reset for the rest of the meeting.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: We're back. Here we go  
14 with Agenda Item 8 discussion and consideration of possible  
15 action regarding the acceptance of pledges report, contract year  
16 2020 and 2021, Childcare and Matching Funds.

17 TRAVIS WEAVER: Good Morning, Chairman  
18 Daniel, Commissioners, Mr. Serna, for the record, Travis Weaver,  
19 Workforce Development Division. Annually, local workforce  
20 development boards submit local match pledges to secure federal  
21 childcare funds pursuant to commission rule 809.17. This will  
22 be a standing agenda item as boards may continue to submit match  
23 agreements through January 31st, 2021. Commissioners, a couple  
24 of comments prior to our requests: although our overall total  
25 is low at this time, it is not uncommon; based on our submittal

1 history, the majority of our pledges are submitted during  
2 November and December which extend our prebudget commission  
3 December and January. Boards have not notified the TWC of any  
4 issues of securing BCY 21 match at this point. On today's  
5 agenda, is Coastal Bend, Lower Rio, Texoma and Central Texas.  
6 Of these boards, three have secured at least 50 percent of their  
7 target and one board, Coast Bend, has secured their local match  
8 target for BCY 21. Due to the increase in Coastal Bend's local  
9 match target for BCY 20 and other partners decreasing their  
10 pledge, the City of Corpus Christi and Texas A&M Kingsville  
11 increased their pledge from last year by \$40,300 and \$20,000  
12 respectively. We appreciate these organizations supporting our  
13 local boards with their local match effort. Today, staff  
14 requests Commission acceptance of Childcare pledges for  
15 donations, transfers and certifications of expense for BCY 21 in  
16 the amount of \$1,194,182. Commissioners, this concludes my  
17 comments. I'm happy to answer any questions.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Are there any comments or  
19 questions?

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here Chairman,  
21 just like the word Texas A&M, Kingsville.

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Chairman, I would  
23 like to commend Ken and his team for really getting after it. I  
24 think they're first board at 100 percent, that's pretty cool. I  
25 think they take bragging rights with some of the other boards as

1 I understand it and I, too, like Commissioner Alvarez, excited  
2 with Texas A&M and Kingsville stepping up to the plate there.  
3 Thank you, [unintelligible].

4 - TRAVIS WEAVER: You're welcome, sir.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Texas A&I keeps coming up  
6 in conversation on every...

7 - COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yes, Chairman, way  
8 to say, A & I, Chairman, love it.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: You'll never get that  
10 alumni.

11 - COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: A & I all the way,  
12 Chairman.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Are there any other  
14 comments or questions?

15 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None here,  
16 Chairman.

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do we have a motion on  
19 this issue?

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move that we  
21 accept childcare match in the amount of \$1,194,182 for board  
22 contract year 2021.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second that  
24 motion.

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and  
2 seconded. We're unanimous on this issue.

3 TRAVIS WEAVER: Thank you, sir.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. This is  
5 Agenda item 9, discussion, and consideration of possible action  
6 regarding the establishment of information technology.  
7 Registered apprenticeship expansion program.

8 KERRY BALLAST: Good morning, Chairman  
9 Daniel. How's my volume?

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's good for me.

11 KERRY BALLAST: Okay, thank you. So, good  
12 morning. Chairman Daniel, Commissioners and Mr. Serna. For the  
13 record, Kerry Ballast, Workforce Development Division.

14 Registered apprenticeship is a training model that can support  
15 employers in finding new employees or upscaling existing  
16 employees. Employers who need to build or enhance their current  
17 workforce can choose to develop a new registered apprenticeship  
18 program or expand a current program. Current information from  
19 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates continued job  
20 growth in the field of information technology. Texas continues  
21 to focus on building a highly skilled and well-paid workforce.

22 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Kerry, I'm sorry to  
23 interrupt, but I can barely hear you. I'm sorry.

24 KERRY BALLAST: Okay, how's that?  
25

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: A little higher if  
2 you can go all the way.

3 KERRY BALLAST: A little bit more? How's  
4 that?

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes.

6 KERRY BALLAST: Okay, perfect. Texas  
7 continues to focus on building a highly skilled and well-paid  
8 workforce. With IT occupations in demand and projections  
9 indicating that the demand will continue, making funds available  
10 to the IT industry to cover a portion of training costs will  
11 support and continued growth of Texas businesses. So, with  
12 these demands and projections in mind, staff proposed that  
13 Workforce, Innovation and Opportunity Act Funds; also known as  
14 WIOA, be used for an information technology registered  
15 apprenticeship expansion program. So, for the decision point  
16 today, staff seeks direction on publishing a request for  
17 application for the information technology registered  
18 apprenticeship expansion program to award up to four million  
19 dollars in WIOA funding. Eligible applicants will be workforce  
20 boards, institutions of higher education and non-profit  
21 organizations. Through this funding, the program will be  
22 positioned to train a minimum of one-thousand eligible  
23 participants in the IT field. That concludes my remarks. And I  
24 am happy to answer any questions.

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Before we move to  
2 comments and questions, Mr. Serna, would this be an appropriate  
3 time for public commenter?

4 MR. SERNA: It would. We have Aurora  
5 Geist. Ms. Geist if you will, unmute yourself and introduce  
6 your name and your affiliation for the record and go ahead and  
7 proceed. You may need to unmute your microphone.

8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Is she on a cell  
9 phone or a call?

10 AURORA GEIST: Good morning. Yes, good  
11 morning, I'm on a cell phone. Thank you, Director Ed Serna and  
12 Commissioners Alvarez and Demerson as well as Commissioner  
13 Daniel. My name is Aurora Geist and I'm currently the National  
14 Director of Strategic Relationships for Digital Creative  
15 Institute now new apprenticeship and we are an organization that  
16 is advancing tech apprenticeships in Texas, great state of  
17 Texas. Thank you for your time and service to advance workforce  
18 in Texas and I also am very grateful for your service during  
19 these unprecedented times. I know your first priority is  
20 evident and that's to position our Texas workforce to be strong,  
21 skilled and well know that strengthens our economy. Your  
22 collaboration and your leadership and your responsiveness to  
23 discuss the launching of a pilot, to expand apprenticeship into  
24 the IT sector is an innovative talent solution that will support  
25 the IT industry to grow stronger in Texas. My comments today

1 are to generate awareness on the impact of apprenticeship and to  
2 encourage your support, to adopt work-based learning, to build  
3 competencies in our workforce talent by expanding tech  
4 apprenticeships in the state of Texas. We face many challenges  
5 with the workforce ecosystem and an evergreen challenge is our  
6 talent ready pipeline. The talent supply has seen unprecedented  
7 challenges due to the pandemic and the core issue is to be  
8 career ready with relevant competencies and essential leadership  
9 skills. And, on the talent demand side, employers ideal hire is  
10 productive talent that is retained after a year or longer. So,  
11 industries, I don't have to tell you, but I will mention that  
12 industries like the IT industry are in expansion mode  
13 particularly in North Texas. Over 21 Fortune 500 companies and  
14 90 additional major corporations headquartered in North Texas  
15 with over 26,000 jobs that have been added. The impact of this  
16 is a company has to adopt a technological disruption to be  
17 relevant and competitive. These new technologies require new  
18 skills and key areas of growth in the past three years include  
19 all occupations in IT to include cyber-security, data  
20 management, data sciences, product development and project  
21 management. As to how we need to address the current challenges  
22 of supply and demand of ready talent, we seek to build the  
23 skills gap. We do this with our pre-apprenticeship and  
24 apprenticeship programs for the IT industry. So, Digital  
25 Creative Institute now new apprenticeship is a federal



1 recognized national apprenticeship program through the  
2 Department of Labor serving the IT industry and we train entry  
3 level talent whose careers are in transition and our military  
4 veterans in transition, We support work based learning to build  
5 skill competency leadership in digital marketing, cyber security  
6 and data analytics and we've recently added our programs to  
7 serve high school graduates to obtain up to 24 college credits  
8 toward their degree while apprenticing as an IT generalist.  
9 This is our most recent occupation that we've added to our  
10 programming. We're committed to building leaders in the  
11 marketplace and we've integrated performance coaching to our  
12 apprenticeship programs. Each apprentice works with their  
13 coach, with their manager, every quarter to help them navigate  
14 their role in their work while developing KPI's to ensure the  
15 quality and engagement. They also receive weekly coaching to  
16 help them navigate challenges and their learning and monthly  
17 coaching on leadership topics from managing conflict to managing  
18 relationships with your boss, your peers, and stakeholders. Why  
19 am I telling you this? Because these communication and  
20 leadership strategies have supported the success of 97 percent  
21 of our apprentices to be rated as high performers by their  
22 managers and we believe in cultivating leaders in competencies.  
23 When an apprentice builds their skill, their craft, they build  
24 confidence, and that confidence develops courage to take risks  
25 and grow. Since 2016, we have over 167 apprentices that have

1 graduated from our program and our employer network, partner  
2 network, continues to climb with over 90 employers that have  
3 hired our apprentices. Therefore, we represent a voice of  
4 people and I'm here to encourage your intention to advance tech  
5 apprenticeships to support our apprentices like Jessica who  
6 could not land a job after college graduation, because employers  
7 rejected her application due to no skills or competencies. She  
8 joined the apprenticeship, worked with a small business that  
9 laid off workers, but then she launched her career as an email  
10 marketing specialist with Black Rifle Coffee, a veteran-owned  
11 organization. There her salary, because of her work-based  
12 learning competencies and industry recognized certification,  
13 gave her the confidence and courage to be tenacious, not to  
14 mention, she doubled her income. I'm here for John who sent  
15 over 1,000 resumes for over 6 months with no responses, no  
16 return phone calls or emails and stood in front of one too many  
17 closed doors to land a job. John joined the apprenticeship,  
18 launched his career as a digital marketing specialist, he added  
19 value within his first three months to increase the awareness of  
20 his organization driving traffic for developers, to build on a  
21 public/private development in San Antonio south side with his  
22 employer, Brooks, San Antonio. And I'm also here to ask for  
23 your support for Davon, Coco, Annette who landed their careers  
24 with fintech employer Argo Insurance as email marketer, video  
25 content creator and email project manager. Annette, a single

1 mother needed the flexibility to learn while she earned while  
2 taking care of her family and the apprenticeship classes happen  
3 in the evenings. I'm also here to ask for you to support Mark,  
4 Alex, Henry and Joey after they graduated college, they found  
5 that they weren't sure if they wanted to pursue a career, but  
6 what they found was to be an entrepreneur. Our coaching helped  
7 them build their courage and confidence to launch their business  
8 using their digital marketing competencies and skills. I'm also  
9 here to ask for your support for the next generation of Texas  
10 apprentices to lead the state and the country to demonstrate our  
11 tenacity as Texans to have a significant impact on our talent,  
12 our career and employers who seek lifelong learners to  
13 strengthen the Texas workforce. Okay, so now I leave you with a  
14 famous word of Sam Houston; "A leader is someone who helps  
15 improve the lives of other people or improves the system they  
16 live under." Thank you for your listening and for your  
17 consideration.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. All right,  
19 let's move to comments from Commissioners, your questions for  
20 staff. Are there any questions or comments?

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I have  
22 some comments regarding Agenda item number 9.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Great.

24 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, first of all,  
25 I'd like to thank the public speaker or Geist for providing

1 comments for today's agenda item. I would also like to thank  
2 the Commissioners for allowing me to bring forth this very  
3 important initiative. As I stated back on October 6th at our  
4 commission meeting, the Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates  
5 continued job growth for individuals in the IT field.  
6 Employment in computer and information technology occupations is  
7 projected to grow 11 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than  
8 the average for all occupations. These occupations are  
9 projected to add about 531,200 new jobs or what I like to say,  
10 careers. Demand for these workers will stem from greater  
11 emphasis on cloud computing, the collection and storage of big  
12 data and information security. LMCI's help wanted online web  
13 tool which tracks employer demand for labor by occupations,  
14 industry and geographical areas indicates that between 2013 and  
15 2020, software developers and computer occupations will remain  
16 in one of the top ten demanding occupations in all of workforce  
17 areas. IT skills touch all occupations as we know. A 2019  
18 report from the Markel Initiative found that 8 in 10 middle  
19 skill jobs now require basic technology skills and an estimated  
20 77 percent of jobs now require the use of technology. Most  
21 experts agree that the pandemic has not slowed the demand for IT  
22 skills, but has accelerated the demand. This initiative  
23 supports not only upscaling workers, but supports employers by  
24 proving the needs, needed IT skills to workforce. My hope,  
25 Commissioners, is that you'll join me today in supporting this

1 initiative by providing the use of four million dollars of WIOA  
2 statewide funding to expand and develop IT registered  
3 apprenticeships. In just recently in our TWC newsclip, we had a  
4 Texas A&M University employed cyber security student as  
5 registered apprentices to monitor their computer systems for any  
6 types of fraud. So, again, those are my comments for this  
7 particular initiative, and I would appreciate some consideration  
8 on this initiative.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any questions or  
10 comments?

11 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: First of all,  
12 Commissioner Alvarez, thank you for your continued work in this  
13 area, your leadership in this area, we've watched it over the  
14 years and appreciated what you're doing there. Ms. Geist, thank  
15 you for what you do as well. This, I believe will be an  
16 additional too for employers down the line, so it gives them an  
17 alternate route to the source for their future workforce. I may  
18 have some other concerns related around, centered around a  
19 motion, but I'm in full support of what's been presented and  
20 appreciate the work that's been done and again, too, for our  
21 Texas employers.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Great. I have questions  
23 for staff. First questions is, what are the largest  
24 apprenticeship programs currently operating in the state?

25

1                   KERRY BALLAST: That, sir, I would have to  
2 go back to our experts in the apprenticeship, on that team and  
3 be back with you soon with that.

4                   CHAIRMAN DANIEL: When you were working on  
5 this particular proposal, did you find any other fields that  
6 also had a need for internships?

7                   KERRY BALLAST: We are aware of that  
8 possibly there is some room in the advanced manufacturing world  
9 also for apprenticeships there.

10                  CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Did any specific  
11 companies express a need for this IT apprenticeship program?

12                  KERRY BALLAST: Not to our knowledge, sir.

13                  CHAIRMAN DANIEL: What kind of analysis did  
14 you do compare the need for this apprenticeship carve out for  
15 the IT sector to some of the other fields that we've also been  
16 looking at?

17                  KERRY BALLAST: We in response to  
18 Commissioner Alvarez's to focus solely on the IT.

19                  CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do we know of other IT  
20 sector apprenticeship programs that are operating currently?

21                  KERRY BALLAST: That, sir, too, I would  
22 have to do some research on that and circle back with you.

23                  CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Did you, as you were  
24 researching, did you uncover, like, what, so IT is a big field,

25

1 what specific jobs would this apprenticeship really aid people  
2 in getting into their career faster on?

3 KERRY BALLAST: We are aware, sir, that  
4 this would greatly impact those interested in the programming,  
5 in cyber security and in especially in learning other computer  
6 programming languages.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I noticed that the money  
8 would also be available to buy tools for IT apprentices. What  
9 kinds of tools would that include?

10 KERRY BALLAST: That, too, I would just  
11 have to venture a guess on that so I would like to follow back  
12 up with you on that, sir.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. What, when would  
14 this money be available for these apprenticeships?

15 KERRY BALLAST: If we were to go through  
16 the RFA process which we have proposed that we would do, we  
17 typically would begin drafting the RFA and hope to have that  
18 available within the next six months, awards hopefully within  
19 the next nine months.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I missed the last part of  
21 that, I'm sorry.

22 KERRY BALLAST: We would hope to be making  
23 awards within the next 9 months.

24

25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: When was the last time we  
2 issued an RFA for an apprenticeship programs and what were the  
3 results of that RFA?

4 KERRY BALLAST: We recently issued an RFA  
5 using our DOL expansion sense that we received. We published an  
6 RFA valued at roughly four million dollars received responses  
7 and funded six of those applications that are now in operation.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do you recall if any of  
9 those were IT firms?

10 KERRY BALLAST: I do not.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I don't either, so I read  
12 it as well.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: How would this money that  
14 you're proposing today be different from the \$10,000,000 that we  
15 have available for this purpose and haven't yet spent?

16 KERRY BALLAST: The primary difference here  
17 would be that using these WIOA funds would allow a higher cost  
18 per than we normally allow on our expansion grant applications.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It would appear that  
20 these \$4,000,000 will exhaust all of our remaining WIOA funds  
21 for the year. How will this impact our ability to provide the  
22 services related to pandemic response and recovery that we're  
23 working on and might not know what we're going to need yet?

24 KERRY BALLAST: That I would have to defer  
25 to other staff, sir, but we will follow up with you.



1                   CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Did you explore any other  
2 alternative sources of funding besides WIOA? I think there's  
3 about five and a half million in the alternative funding program  
4 that's unspent. I don't think, I haven't seen a report on the  
5 WIOA funds we obligated in April relative to pandemic response  
6 effort and whether or not any unspent funds remain in other WIOA  
7 projects that we might be able to use for this.

8                   KERRY BALLAST: That, as of working with  
9 Chris Nelson and confirming existing balance of the WIOA  
10 Leadership funds as of the end of October, we were a little over  
11 four million dollars available on that. As far as other WIOA  
12 funds available, I'll defer to Courtney who has just turned her  
13 camera on and can speak to those.

14                   COURTNEY ARBOUR: Chairman, if you can hear  
15 me, I was just going to mentioned that we have.

16                   MR. SERNA: Courtney, can you identify  
17 yourself for the record?

18                   COURTNEY ARBOUR: Excuse me, yes, Courtney  
19 Arbour, Workforce Director, Workforce Division. Thank you, Ed.  
20 Chairman, as you know, we have many grants, to multiple  
21 organizations that are WIOA funded or other funding streams and  
22 when there isn't, well our, the grant language requires  
23 expenditures and deliverable expectations so if there is  
24 interest in staff taking a look at those grants to see what  
25 money can be recaptured, we are able to do that. I don't have a

1 number for you immediately, but we do have a number of  
2 discretionary or state-wide grants that are in place right now  
3 that we could take a look at for possible recapture if you'd  
4 like.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is it also accurate, I'm  
6 showing we have about \$4.0 or \$4,000,000 available in WIOA funds  
7 right now. So, this would essentially exhaust all but that last  
8 \$85,000 thousand dollars. Is that am I looking at the right  
9 number?

10 COURTNEY ARBOUR: Yes, the available  
11 statewide balance for WIOA is just at \$4.2 or 3 and this would  
12 put the majority of that into play in an RFA.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, well thank you  
14 both very much for indulging me on my questions. The  
15 apprenticeship programs, I think they're doing a lot of good in  
16 a lot of different fields. I have a couple of particular  
17 concerns about this proposal. First and foremost and perhaps of  
18 more concern to me to anything else that I might talk about is  
19 the timing of this and using our, all of our WIOA funds when I  
20 have some uneasiness about what we may call upon to help with  
21 relative to pandemic, particularly recovery efforts and how WIOA  
22 funds have played prominently in our response to the pandemic  
23 issues that we've encountered with regard to workforce. Knowing  
24 that the funds aren't going to be spent for 6-9 months, I'm a  
25 little uncomfortable today committing the last of the money to

1 something that is not going to happen for some time. Great  
2 program, unfortunately, for me, since it's the last \$4,000,000,  
3 it becomes a bit of a resource allocation concern for me still a  
4 great idea, still something that we need to do. I'm having a  
5 hard time, you know, finding my way to commit the last  
6 \$4,000,000 when I'm uncertain about what the next couple of  
7 months bring in terms of other types of responses that we might  
8 need to fund from WIOA funds. Perhaps a cellular concern and it  
9 would be not second on the list, I think my timing issue on the  
10 money is 1-10 on the list so put this one at 11. It's  
11 committing to just the IT sector when we have \$10,000,000  
12 available for apprenticeship programs that we could put sort of  
13 broadly committing some sum of money to IT at the expense of  
14 other fields, perhaps advanced manufacturing, is a little bit of  
15 concern to me, because I think there are a number of fields of  
16 which apprenticeships could be particularly useful. From your  
17 proposal, it doesn't seem clear to me that \$4,000,000 is pegged  
18 to anything other than that's about what we wanted to spend.  
19 It's a fair amount of money, I'm not particularly opposed to the  
20 dollar amount, it takes me back to my timing issue. I do harbor  
21 a bit of concern for just ear-marking it specifically for the IT  
22 industry in the absence in having heard from some specific group  
23 of companies or a single company and understanding what they're  
24 particular needs are. I can overcome that concern, I think,  
25 pretty quickly, it's much more difficult for me to overcome the

1 timing concern. So, that's sort of where I'm at on this, it's a  
2 great idea, unfortunately, at least for me, it just may be at  
3 the wrong time and so I'll put that out there for consideration  
4 and hope we can continue the discussion on this.

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, if I may  
6 add, first of all, I asked if Desi Holmes would be available for  
7 remarks. So, I agree with you on the amount when you talk about  
8 October 6th we had met with staff and back when we had that  
9 first discussion there were \$7,000,000 in WIOA funding and so,  
10 that was the reasoning for me requesting four. I would be  
11 willing to shorten or compromise on the \$4,000,000 and go down  
12 to at least \$2,000,000 if that would be of consideration for  
13 you. But I will tell you that the \$10,000,000 that we have is  
14 already going to be committed to or is going to be used in other  
15 sectors. Just yesterday we met with the, and I'm not sure if  
16 Kerry knows this, but I've had multiple meetings with Desi and  
17 I'm sure Desi keeps her informed but we had a meeting yesterday  
18 with the Dept Chamber of Commerce, the only one in the country  
19 that's going to put together a solar panel and another type of  
20 apprenticeship program that they're working on. They've been  
21 working on this since 2016. We all had an opportunity to meet  
22 with Amazon web services at the state conference where they were  
23 talking about these IT apprentice that they wanted to move  
24 forward. We all had that discussion with them. We've talked to  
25 Fanuc, the people that are going to be putting the robotics at

1 Tesla. We've talked to Tesla, we've talked to IBM, we've talked  
2 to many of these companies that are very interested in this  
3 apprenticeship program. As a matter of fact, we just talked to  
4 some legislators yesterday that are going to put that as an  
5 agenda item as a priority for next session. I'd be willing to  
6 compromise, instead of the \$4,000,000 since I hear that we only  
7 have 4. Two weeks ago, when we had this discussion, I was  
8 informed by staff that we had 7 and so I'd be willing to  
9 compromise on that, but please keep in mind that other states in  
10 the country do use the WIOA funding to train IT apprentices in  
11 cybersecurity and as I just references, Texas A&M is working  
12 with students and have an IT apprenticeship cybersecurity  
13 program within college station. I'd be willing to work with  
14 \$2,000,000 on this. I think it's a great initiative. As you  
15 heard in my remarks, it's a huge demand for it. We've been  
16 talking about this for some time now. I think it's appropriate  
17 for us to move forward on this especially when we're  
18 transitioning individuals that have been laid off of work or  
19 have been furloughed. People that were in the restaurant  
20 business, in hospitality, in the music business, these people  
21 are all now looking at the certifications that's in the tri-  
22 agency to pick up a skill that's going to get them fully engaged  
23 in employment with benefits. Again, ARGO Insurance Company,  
24 we've talked to many folks, we did the BOO Tour and, you know,  
25 some of the companies that we visited with indicated to us that

1 IT is in every field or every occupation. It's even in the IBC  
2 list for TEA so, we're helping build those stackable  
3 credentials, we're listening to industry and like I said, we had  
4 numerous talks yesterday on, even with the University of Texas  
5 RGV where they're looking at putting together a campus very  
6 similar to Rellis that A&M has. So, again, I'd be willing to  
7 negotiate on this, it gives us more flexibility if we use any  
8 type of other funding. We've not only met our measures, we've  
9 also exceeded them and so, we have a pretty good reputation  
10 around the country, I think this elevates what we're doing in  
11 Texas. I would consider your free to work with the other  
12 commissioners or work with me on the amount awarded, \$2,000,000  
13 and I'd be willing to work with that.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Commissioner, I think if,  
15 and sort of the interest of getting this right, I would be more  
16 comfortable letting staff explore these alternative sources of  
17 WIOA money, getting a better handle on that. Certainly, we can  
18 use a lower amount, but I'd like to give staff a few days here  
19 to try to find some additional WIOA money from some other areas  
20 that that might be reprogrammed within the agency. If we can  
21 bring this back next week, that would be my preference. If we  
22 need to do something today, I understand that as well. My  
23 preference would be to bring this back next week and get some  
24 answers to the money questions because, honestly, that's  
25 primarily my concern right now at this moment.



1 it, I'm okay with it. Next week is National Apprenticeship  
2 Week, this would have been a great time to roll this out, but I  
3 understand the concerns of the other two commissioners.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I sincerely appreciate  
5 that. Let's bring this back, it's been moved and seconded.  
6 It's pretty much a live item. Let's bring this back at the next  
7 available Commission Meeting and I would ask staff to answer the  
8 questions I've asked that you needed to do additional  
9 consultation, I understand that. I appreciate that. Other  
10 questions the other commissioners may have asked, with the  
11 intent that when we bring this back up at the next available  
12 commission meeting that we will be render some kind of final  
13 decision on this at that time. I don't want to stretch it out  
14 any longer than we have to.

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I know the speaker  
16 is still on if she wants to add anything to it, I don't know if  
17 it's appropriate for us to do it at this time, but I leave that  
18 up to the Chairman.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Typically, we would not  
20 do that, I suppose if there are additional questions or comments  
21 from Commissioners, we can definitely do that at this time.

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I think it's been  
23 laid out, the questions that you've raised. My situation around  
24 the money and I don't want to wipe out the entire \$4,000,000 and  
25 Commissioner Alvarez has talked about lowering that. The thing



1 with staff is that get on those questions then we're in a  
2 position to move forward pretty quick and I think next week will  
3 allow us to do that. Questions have been laid out, we need to  
4 get answers to those questions, show what we're doing with the  
5 \$10,000,000 and all lines are clear from that standpoint and  
6 we're in a position to move forward quickly I think.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you.

8 Commissioners, the hard work is often is getting this just right  
9 and how it aligns with the other programs and I appreciate  
10 everyone's willingness to spend some due diligence on making  
11 sure that we're doing just that. If there's nothing else on  
12 that item, we should move on to the next item and bring this one  
13 back at the next available commission meeting.

14 KERRY BALLAST: We're happy to do that,  
15 sir, thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. Let's move to  
17 Item 10, discussion and consideration of possible action  
18 regarding potential strategic priorities for Texas' federal  
19 fiscal years 2022 and 2024 Childcare and Development Fund state  
20 plan.

21 ALLISON WILSON: Good morning, Chairman,  
22 Commissioners and Mr. Serna. For the record, Allison Wilson  
23 with the Childcare and Early Learning Division, the Childcare  
24 and Development block grant requires states to submit a  
25 Childcare and Development fund state plan every three years.

1 While much of the CCDF state plan reflects the state's existing  
2 structure and policies for the administration of CCDF, states  
3 also use the state plan to outline over-arching goals for the  
4 upcoming 3 years. As staff develops a state plan, we want to  
5 provide some possible strategic priorities that the Commission  
6 may consider and solicit feedback to determine if there are  
7 common priorities and needs that stakeholders identify. This  
8 discussion paper outline the potential priorities, many of which  
9 align with the tri-agencies strategies to increase kindergarten  
10 readiness, and with the 2020-2025 Texas Early Learning Strategic  
11 Plan. Staff seeks direction on including these potential  
12 strategic priorities that are outlined in the paper and  
13 discussions with stakeholders as the draft plan is developed.  
14 I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or  
16 questions?

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do we have a motion on  
20 this?

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move that we  
22 include the strategic priorities as discussed by staff in the  
23 development of the CCDF state plan for fiscal years 20, 22 and  
24 24.

25 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

1                   CHAIRMAN DANIEL:  It's been moved and  
2 seconded.  We're unanimous on this item.  Move to Item 11,  
3 discussion and consideration possible action regarding  
4 individual's request to waive the childcare services rules under  
5 40 Texas Administrative Code 809.3A regarding Texas Rising Star  
6 minimum education requirements and 40 Texas Administrative Code  
7 809.134.

8                   ALLISON WILSON:  Again, Allison Wilson with  
9 Childcare and Early Learning.  TW seeks childcare rule Section  
10 809.3 allow any person directly impacted by the rules to request  
11 the commission waive its rules.  The Texas Rising Star Assessor  
12 has submitted a request to waive the childcare rules under this  
13 provision.  Specifically, this individual has requested that the  
14 commission waive 809.134, which establishes the minimum  
15 education requirements for Texas Rising Star staff.  In the  
16 individual's letter to the commission, she notes that she is  
17 submitting this request so that she may maintain as a Texas  
18 Rising Star Assessor, while continuing to work toward her  
19 completion of her bachelor's degree in early childhood  
20 education.  When this individual was hired, she did not meet the  
21 minimum education requirements.  Our rules allow for a limited  
22 extension period to allow a mentor or assessor to reach the  
23 required educational levels.  In 2018, this individual was  
24 provided the maximum 2-year extension.  The requestor notes that  
25 during this 2-year period, she has completed one college course.

1 The requestor also notes extenuating personal circumstances that  
2 have affected her ability to complete her degree. However, in  
3 light of the very minimal hours the individual has earned over  
4 here 2-year extension, and the significant number of hours that  
5 are still needed, in order for her to attain her degree and meet  
6 the Texas Rising Star staff qualifications, staff recommends  
7 that the Commission deny this individual's request to waive rule  
8 809.134. That concludes my remarks and I'm happy to answer any  
9 questions.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any questions or  
11 comments?

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: We have a motion on this  
15 item?

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move that we deny  
17 the individual's request under 40 TAC 809.3 to waive the  
18 education requirements required under 40 TAC 809.134.

19 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It has been moved and  
21 seconded. We're unanimous on this issue. Agenda Item 12, Staff  
22 does not have anything to present for Item Statewide  
23 initiatives. Item 13 discussion and serious possible action  
24 regarding guidance on resource utilization and implementation of  
25 services and strategies to target disaster relief efforts and

1 public health emergencies, including those funded with the  
2 Department of Labor's Dislocated Worker Grant. I'm not showing  
3 anything under Item 13, Mr. Serna do we have anything under this  
4 item?

5 MR. SERNA: We should have 1 item, 1 update  
6 from Clay Cole on UI.

7 CLAY COLE: Good morning, Chairman Daniel,  
8 Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, Mr. Serna. For the  
9 record, Clay Cole, Unemployment Insurance Division, just wanted  
10 to give you an update on the latest UI statistics high-level  
11 update and also a couple other things going on I wanted to  
12 share. To date, during Covid-19 period we've processed over 5.3  
13 million claims and paid over 33.8 billion in unemployment  
14 benefits while closing over 7.4 million assignments and handling  
15 over 7.3 million calls. Teams continue improvements with  
16 overall call handling through training and increased resources  
17 which is allowing us to handle more calls daily compared to  
18 unique callers. We've made great progress with working through  
19 our assignment inventory, we continue to lower our overall  
20 assignment inventory as we prepare for the increases, we are  
21 expecting by reinstating work search. As you know, work search  
22 reinstatement happened over the weekend. Sunday, we reinstated  
23 work search for the majority of the counties in Texas. In  
24 addition to all the messaging over the past 3-4 weeks, we also  
25 began directly notifying customers yesterday of changes for

1 those individuals that requested payment or filed new claims on  
2 Sunday. Individuals are notified of their work search  
3 requirement at the time they file a new claim or request payment  
4 bi-weekly depending on when that occurs will determine when the  
5 customers are required to begin reporting work searches. For  
6 example, a customer who requested payment Sunday, November 1st  
7 will be required to start searching for work the week beginning  
8 November 15th, 2020 which then they'll report those work  
9 searches when they request payment on November 29th, 2020. Just  
10 want to thank the UI IT works external relations teams for all  
11 the great contributions in reinstating work search requirements  
12 and I want to thank them as they continue to work on messaging  
13 and updates to finalize things as we go forward. We're just  
14 starting that process as you know and finally with the increases  
15 in identity theft and fraud schemes, the Texas Workforce  
16 Commission is partnering with ID Me Online Identity Network to  
17 further verify claimant's personal information and help further  
18 protect them from unemployment benefits fraud. ID Me is a  
19 federally certified identity network that allows claimants to  
20 protect and authenticate their identity when they interact with  
21 TWC. ID Me's identity verification solution is certified at the  
22 federal government's highest level of standards for online  
23 identity proof and authentication without compromising the  
24 personal identifiable information. TWC is executed a contract  
25 with ID Me and issued a purchase order today. Teams are working

1 on the IT development and communication strategies for  
2 implementing the new ID verification solution in the coming  
3 weeks which we are really excited about and will be providing  
4 you more information on and this concludes my updates and I'll  
5 be happy to answer any questions you might have.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you very much. Any  
7 questions or comments?

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: No, sir.

9 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Clay, you guys keep  
10 up the good work.

11 CLAY COLE: Thanks, Commissioner.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Absolutely.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Anything else under Item  
14 13?

15 MR. SERNA: No, sir, that's all we have.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you very much.

17 Let's move to Agenda Item 14, discussion and consideration of  
18 possible action regarding approval of a local Work Force  
19 Development and four nominees.

20 SHUNTA WILLIAMS: Good morning, Chairman  
21 Daniel, Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson and Mr.  
22 Serna. For the record, Shunta Williams with the Workforce  
23 Records Division and for your consideration we have four  
24 nominees for workforce solution Northeast Texas and Rural  
25

1 Capital area and Texoma. This concludes my request and I'm here  
2 to answer any questions you may have.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or  
4 questions?

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

6 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do you have a motion on  
8 this issue?

9 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move to approve  
10 the board nominees for border plex Northeast Texas, Rural  
11 Capital area and Texoma.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and  
14 seconded. We are unanimous on this issue. Nothing on agenda  
15 item 15 legislative proposals. Do we have a legislative report  
16 today?

17 MR. SERNA: No, Sir, we do not.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, how about an  
19 executive director's report?

20 MR. SERNA: No, sir, again, no report

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Efficiency. All right,  
22 thank you very much. Is there any other order of business to  
23 come before the Commission?

24 MR. SERNA: No Sir.

25



1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'd like to say  
2 something before we end today's commission meeting.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Please.

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I just want to  
5 acknowledge we lost two great people this last week. We lost  
6 John Patrick, he was the AFL-CIO past president of the Texas  
7 chapter and we're very sorry to hear of his loss. This past  
8 week I got a call from Carl Sherman that we lost Mayor McCowan  
9 from DeSoto. I'm sorry to hear about the loss of the Mayor of  
10 DeSoto, who did so many great things for that city, that  
11 community and that college. So, thank you for giving me the  
12 opportunity to share those remarks.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you for bringing  
14 that forward. Any other items of business? We have a motion to  
15 adjourn.

16 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move  
17 that we adjourn.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and  
20 seconded to adjourn. We're adjourned.

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