

1 **Workforce Conference Awards**
2 **Discussion Paper**

3 **Background**

4 Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Integrity of the Texas Workforce System rules at [40 TAC](#)
5 [Chapter 802, Subchapter I](#), allow TWC’s three-member Commission (Commission) to establish
6 monetary and nonmonetary awards to incentivize the Commission’s goals to fulfill the workforce
7 needs of employers and to put Texans to work.

8 TWC presents the Workforce Awards annually at the Texas Workforce Conference. On January
9 29, 2019, and March 12, 2019, the Commission approved the following awards, along with
10 award criteria and monetary amounts for each, for TWC to present at future conferences:

- 11 • Local Workforce Development Board (Board) Awards (application based)
 - 12 ➤ Service to Business
 - 13 ➤ Service to Workers
 - 14 ➤ Service to Community
 - 15 ➤ Industry Sector Outreach
 - 16 ➤ Youth Inspiration & Career Awareness
 - 17 ➤ Texas HireAbility
 - 18 ➤ Texas Rising Star Child Care
 - 19 ➤ Registered Apprenticeship Expansion
- 20 • Board Performance Incentive Awards (data driven)
 - 21 ➤ Claimant Reemployment
 - 22 ➤ WIOA Title I Career Pathways
 - 23 ➤ Foster Youth
- 24 • Partnership Awards
 - 25 ➤ Community College Engagement (TWC staff nominated)
 - 26 ➤ Board/Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)/Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
27 Collaboration (application based)
- 28 • AEL Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) Awards
 - 29 ➤ Employer Partnership (application based)
 - 30 ➤ Best in Class (data driven)
- 31 • Employer Awards (nomination based)
 - 32 ➤ Large Employer of the Year
 - 33 ➤ Small Employer of the Year
 - 34 ➤ Veteran-Friendly Employer of the Year
 - 35 ➤ Local Employer of Excellence

36 **Issue 1: Awards Modifications**

37 Staff has reviewed all current Workforce Awards to determine whether changes are warranted.
38 Staff has identified potential changes that would better align the awards with TWC’s mission to
39 promote and support a workforce system that offers employers, individuals, and communities the
40 opportunity to achieve economic prosperity; recognize workforce, VR, and AEL efforts and
41 partnerships; and emphasize successful efforts at the local level that benefit specific core
42 customer populations, such as veterans, individuals with barriers to employment, at-risk
43 populations, and individuals with disabilities.

1 Upon reviewing current awards, staff has identified modifications to the two awards in the
2 Partnership Awards category:

- 3 • The Board/AEL/VR Collaboration Award
- 4 • The Community College Engagement Award

5 The Board/AEL/VR Collaboration Award was created in 2017 and is awarded to three
6 partners—a Board, its AEL partner, and VR services—for their collaboration and integration to
7 better serve workforce customers. This nonmonetary award was created to incentivize integration
8 efforts. Staff now proposes sunseting this award, because integration of service delivery is
9 required across all WIOA programs.

10 The Community College Engagement Award is issued based on TWC staff nomination. Staff
11 proposes enhancing this award by establishing an application process through which colleges
12 may submit an application highlighting their partnerships with employers. Through
13 modifications to this nonmonetary award, TWC will recognize higher-education partners whose
14 efforts and partnerships within their community contribute to the state’s future workforce, thus
15 incentivizing colleges to apply for workforce grants for which they are eligible. Staff propose
16 enhancing the current Community College Engagement Award to an application-based,
17 nonmonetary award called the All-Star College Award for colleges that have had or currently
18 have a Skills Development Fund grant.

19 Staff also proposes modifying the criteria for the AEL Best in Class data-driven award to align
20 the credential measure more to the WIOA credential measures as outlined in the Workforce
21 Awards—Overview attachment.

22 Additionally, staff proposes modifying the Veteran-Friendly Employer of the Year Award to
23 include criteria that at least 10 percent of the employer’s workforce must be veterans. This
24 would align the award with the requirements of the We Hire Vets program.

25 **Decision Point**

26 Staff seeks direction on presenting awards to Boards, AEL grantees, community colleges, and
27 employers as set forth in the Workforce Awards—Overview attachment. Any future
28 modifications to award categories and/or monetary amounts will be made by the Commission as
29 needed.

30 **Issue 2: Eligibility for Awards**

31 TWC rules in §802.162 allow TWC to modify eligibility for and assignment of awards based on
32 factors that the Commission identifies as extraordinary circumstances. The rules do not explicitly
33 state what those factors are, but define “extraordinary circumstances” as conditions “which may
34 include, but are not limited to, matters such as serious unforeseen events, unresolved audit or
35 monitoring findings, sanctions, unanticipated changes in economic conditions, the occurrence of
36 a disaster, or legislative changes having a direct impact on the Commission, Boards, or AEL
37 grant recipients.”

38 TWC considers the following factors when determining an entity’s eligibility to receive
39 Workforce Awards:

- 40 • Voluntary deobligation of funds related to an award or program

- 1 • A Board’s or AEL grantee’s poor programmatic, fiscal, and/or administrative oversight not
- 2 currently addressed through corrective action
- 3 • Quality of a Board’s or grantee’s performance, the quality of the award applications
- 4 submitted, and/or the number of award applications or nominations received
- 5 • Corrective action related to any of the following:
- 6 ➤ Failure to meet relevant performance targets
- 7 ➤ Repeat monitoring findings
- 8 ➤ Failure to provide cost-effective services, as evidenced by unusually high average costs
- 9 ➤ Failure to oversee the delivery of services

10 TWC provides guidance for how different types of corrective action would impact a Board’s
 11 eligibility to receive awards. To simplify and clarify how corrective action impacts a Board’s or
 12 AEL grantee’s eligibility to receive an award, staff proposes the following parameters when
 13 considering corrective action as extraordinary circumstances:

- 14 • A Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) does not disqualify a Board or AEL grantee from award
- 15 eligibility. If a Board is on a TAP, it is still eligible for all awards, even for a program-
- 16 specific award.
- 17 • If a Board is under Intent to Sanction (ITS) or Sanction related to administrative processes or
- 18 Board oversight at any time between September 1 and the date the awards are presented, then
- 19 the Board is not eligible for any awards that year.
- 20 • If a Board is under ITS or Sanction related to a specific program at any time between
- 21 September 1 and the date the awards are presented, then the Board is not eligible for any
- 22 awards that year that are directly related to that program.
- 23 • If an AEL grantee is under ITS or Sanction for any reason related to the AEL program at any
- 24 time between September 1 and the date the awards are presented, then the AEL grantee will
- 25 be ineligible for AEL awards presented that year. However, the AEL grantee may be eligible
- 26 for other Workforce Awards.

Corrective Action Type	TAP	ITS or Sanction
Program-Specific	Eligible for all awards	Not eligible for awards related to that program. Eligible for all other awards.
Administrative Process and/or Board Oversight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement issues • Cost allocation issues • Data security issues • IT security issues • Open records issues • Board membership issues • Inaccurate financial reporting in the CDER reporting system • Poor expenditure management, which 	Eligible for all awards	Not eligible for awards.

jeopardizes service delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor fiscal oversight • Overarching concerns regarding poor program management 		
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1 **Decision Point**

2 Staff seeks direction on considering extraordinary circumstances, as outlined in this discussion
 3 paper, when identifying a Board’s or AEL grantee’s eligibility to receive awards.

4 **Issue 3: Combined Performance**

5 Staff proposes clarifying that data for AEL grantees that have grants in more than one local
 6 workforce development area (workforce area) will be combined for determining performance for
 7 data-driven awards, such as the Best in Class Award. Staff may take into consideration a
 8 grantee’s performance due to changes in the grantee’s service delivery area or other factors as
 9 determined by TWC.

10 **Decision Point**

11 Staff seeks direction on combining the performance data for AEL grantees which have grants in
 12 more than one workforce area for the purpose of data-driven awards.

13 **Issue 4: Employers Eligible for Employer Awards**

14 Staff proposes clarifying which types of employers are eligible to receive an award in the
 15 Employer Awards category. These awards historically have been presented to private-sector
 16 employers, which excludes public employers, which do not provide contracted services for the
 17 Board that submitted the award nomination.

18 **Decision Point**

19 Staff seeks direction on defining “private-sector employers” eligible to receive Employer
 20 Awards as outlined in this discussion paper.