

Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialist Program for 2020
Discussion Paper

Background

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) approved the “Workforce Career & Technical Education Outreach Specialist Pilot Program” in July 2018, an RFA was issued in November 2018 and awards for \$5,169,220 to 7 Workforce Boards were made in June 2019. The initiative is designed to ensure Texas students get the exposure and awareness to career resources today that empower them to gain degree certifications, and graduate with marketable skills in the future. Currently, there are 30 local Workforce Career Specialists working in 170 area middle and high schools (grades 6-12) to provide career guidance and workforce information to approximately 300,000 students through workshops regarding 1) high growth, high demand occupations; 2) opportunities and training in middle-skills jobs; 3) Registered Apprenticeship training programs; 4) internships; and 5) community and technical colleges.

In addition to the training TWC provided to workforce specialists during the summer, TWC staff are working closely with the grantees and hosting monthly technical assistance calls to learn more about how the program is working in each local area and to share resources from Tri-Agency partners and initiatives, including TEA.

Issue

On October 29, 2019, staff came before the Commission seeking direction and approval to publish a 2nd Workforce Career and Education Specialist RFA using \$600,000 in TANF statewide funds for 2 additional grants to Boards in 2020. As part of that discussion, staff presented grantee data through September 2019; however, the Commission asked that staff return with additional data from the 7 Boards early in the year. Current data reflects actual totals exceeding the preliminary projections provided by Boards, and a summary of cumulative data for all 7 Boards through January 15, 2020 is below:

Workforce Specialist Cumulative Outcome Measures	Q1 & Q2 (through September 2019)	Q3 (through January 2020)	% Increase
Total Student Presentations Provided	1,204	3,084	256%
Total One on One Sessions	484	3,049	629%
Total Partner/Teacher Presentations	264	595	225%
Total Students Exposed to Career Education	56,126	120,003	213%
Total Students Engaged in Career Education	30,015	74,784	249%

28 In addition to the data, the Commission also requested that we bring this issue back after we had
29 considered the successful elements of the program and found a way to make it benefit more Boards
30 including finding additional resources. After researching the allowable uses of TANF formula funds that
31 are already in grant award with Boards, staff will encourage Boards to explore using these funds for
32 Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists in local areas.

33 Because these funds will be used to hire and retain Workforce Specialists staff, TWC is proposing that
34 those Boards meeting TANF performance measures may utilize TANF Formula funds to hire and retain
35 Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialist(s). Using BCY19 End of Year (EOY) performance
36 figures, 17 Boards are meeting or exceeding TANF's 50% required participation rate, and the remaining
37 Boards would have this option once performance measures are met. Using this benchmark, 26 Boards
38 would have been eligible to pursue this opportunity in BCY 20. Staff will amend the program parameters
39 and outcome measures for this program (above) into the current TANF grant documents, and progress
40 will be tracked throughout the grant period.

41 Finally, all Boards will be invited to attend the planned training for Workforce Specialists in Summer
42 2020, and they continue to be welcome at the monthly calls.

43
44 **Recommendation**

45 Staff seeks Commission direction and approval, pending Federal TANF State plan approval, to engage
46 Boards in discussions about how they might leverage their existing local TANF grant awards and provide
47 Workforce Specialist services if the TANF EOY performance is met and a local demand for these services
48 exist.