



**MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**

DATE

AUGUST 3, 2021

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2021

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Commissioner Alvarez, are you ready?

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'm ready, sir.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Well, then let's get it. Good morning, everyone. This meeting is called to order. Mr. Trobman, has anyone signed up for public comment?

MR. TROBMAN: Morning, Commissioners. Les Trobman, general counsel, for the record. We do have one person here with us today to provide comment. Ms. Vargas? If you can come on up here, introduce yourself for the record, and go ahead and begin

MS. VARGAS: Good to meet you gentlemen, how are you? Good morning.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Morning.

MS. VARGAS: I am here to present my case. Oh--this is pretty intimidating, but I love it. Wow. I've generally felt really confident [sounds like] that my actions do not constitute what--it's not sufficient for the definition of misconduct. The employer failed to present important evidence, such as firsthand testimony, eyewitness, and there's not sufficient evidence to--for the accurate facts to--[sounds like] leading supporting the conclusion of this case. I've been denied unemployment benefits. I am hoping that after this meeting, in reviewing the documents, I'm able to persuade you, hopefully,

1 just to see if you can review this and grant me the benefits of
2 unemployment. I was obviously not prepared. I've called several
3 office staff. My claim has a lot of inaccuracies, a lot of data
4 that is just wrong, invalid dates of employment, wages. And I
5 wanted to ask also if--what documents were reviewed. I've been
6 denied benefits, and I don't know from where are you guys basing
7 your decision from. I know you [inaudible] talk to me. But thank
8 you so much. Thank you, I appreciate your time. And I just hope
9 to be one of those 7 percent of the claimants that my claim is
10 overturned, and approved to be receiving unemployment benefits.
11 Thank you.

12 MR. TROBMAN: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you for your
14 comments.

15 MR. TROBMAN: Commissioners, we're ready to
16 proceed with the docket.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. Good morning,
18 Ms. Miller.

19 MS. MILLER: Good morning, sir.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. That's it for
21 Agenda Items 3 through 7. Let's pause for a few moments to reset
22 for the rest of the meeting.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay, we're back. Is
24 Commissioner Alvarez back? Oh, there he is.

25 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: There he is.

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Sorry, Chairman, I'm
2 having some difficulties here--got it.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's okay. You ready?

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes, I'm ready, sir.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Perfect. This is Agenda
6 Item 8, approval of community rehabilitation programs to
7 participate in the PPP PPD program, DP--that's lots of P's and
8 D's.

9 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: A lotta P's.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I think I got them all
11 right.

12 MR. GARCIA: Good morning, commissioners.

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Morning.

14 MR. GARCIA: Mr. Serna. Juan Garcia, with
15 the voc rehab division. The Texas Human Resources Code section
16 122.013 requires the Texas Workforce Commission to establish
17 rules for the certification of community rehabilitation programs
18 to participate in the Purchasing from People with Disabilities
19 program--PPD program. Chapter 806 purchases products and
20 services from people with disabilities; section 806.41
21 establishes requirements for participation in the program and
22 subsequent adherence to those requirements when a CRP has been
23 certified. CRPs must reapply every three years before the
24 expiration date on the certificate. PPD staff reviews each
25 completed application and all required documentation, and once

1 the materials are deemed acceptable presents the applicants to
2 the TWC three-member commission for approval. The PPD program
3 has reviewed the application for the following 10 CRPs seeking
4 to continue participation in the program through
5 recertification. All CRPs pay minimum wage or higher. The CRPs
6 that are before you are as follows: Enterprise Professional
7 Services, Inc., in Lakeway; Goodwill Services, Inc. of El Paso;
8 [sounds like] Our Specialty Helping Others in Need, d/b/a ODJ,
9 Inc., in Huntsville; Southeast [inaudible] Corporation in
10 Houston; Southeast Vocational Alliance, Inc., in Houston; Center
11 for Recovery and Wellness Resources in Houston; Expanco, Inc.,
12 d/b/a Amplify in Ft. Worth; Lufkin state-supported living center
13 in Lufkin; Relief Enterprise of Texas, Inc., in Austin; and RGR
14 Industries, Inc., in Weslaco. Staff seeks direction on approving
15 the 10 CRPs seeking recertification to continue participating in
16 the PPD program. With that, I'll answer any questions you might
17 have.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Comments or questions?

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do we have a motion?

22 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
23 we approve the recertification of the community rehabilitation
24 programs to participate in the purchase [inaudible] from peoples
25 with a disability program as recommended by staff.

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COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and seconded. We're unanimous, thank you. This is item 9, PPD program Central Nonprofit Agency management fees and method of calculation DP.

MR. GARCIA: Again, commissioners, Juan Garcia, for the record, with the voc rehab program. The Texas Workforce Commission administers the Purchase from People with Disabilities program. The Texas Human Resources Code section 122.019 authorizes the TWC to contract with a central nonprofit agency to perform certain administrative functions for the PPD program. Subsections 122.19(e) and (f) allow the CNA to charge an annually reviewed management fee for services provided to CRPs. A percentage of the fee is paid to TWC to reimburse the general revenue fund for direct and reasonable costs incurred in administering the duties of the Texas comptroller, public accounts, and TWC, including any costs associated with providing support to the PPD program advisory committee. TWC chapter 806, purchases of products and services with people with disabilities rule 806.31(n), requires TWC to consider comments from the public and CRPs participating in the PPD program as part of the annual review process. For the state fiscal year '22 management fee approval cycle, staff proposes management fees of 6 percent of sales price for products, 6 percent of the contract price for services, and 5 percent of the contract price for temporary

1 services. These rates are consistent with rates applied in prior
2 years. The method of calculation for the proposed management fee
3 rates is as follows: CRP costs divided by 100 percent minus the
4 management fee equals the product or selling price. This method
5 of calculation is consistent with that applied in prior years.
6 Staff seeks direction on approval to solicit public comment on
7 the following proposed method of calculation and management fee
8 rates to be charged by the CNA: CRP costs divided by 100 percent
9 minus the management fee equals the product or selling price;
10 management fee rate of 6 percent for the sales price of
11 products; management fee rate of 6 percent for the contract
12 price for services; and management fee rate of 5 percent of the
13 contract price for temporary services. If approved, staff will
14 solicit public comment on the proposed rates and method of
15 calculation from the PPD CRPs before seeking TWC's three-member
16 commission's final approval of the rates and the method of
17 calculation for SFY '22. With that, I'll answer any questions
18 you might have.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Questions or comments?

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

21 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: One question, Juan.

22 The method of calculation, that's the same, correct? Nothing's
23 changed?

24 MR. GARCIA: Yes, sir, it is.

25 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay.

1 MR. GARCIA: As in prior years.

2 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Thank you, all
3 right.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do we have a motion?

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
6 we approve the public comment--we approve for public comment the
7 Central Nonprofit Agency's management fee for the PPD state use
8 program at 6 percent on product sales, 6 percent on services,
9 and 5 percent on temporary personnel services, and that the
10 product or service selling price equals to the CRP cost divided
11 by differences between 100 percent and the management fee rate,
12 as discussed by staff.

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
15 seconded. We're unanimous.

16 MR. GARCIA: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. This is item
18 10, TRS assessors and assessments.

19 MS. WILSON: [Inaudible] I need it closer?
20 Oh, sorry. We bring forward a discussion paper on the Texas
21 Rising Star and the new assessor training and certification
22 program. The commission has an opportunity to align assessor
23 certification requirements with the procurement of a new
24 centralized vendor for assessments and to incent qualified
25 assessors to obtain certification and remain on the job during

1 the transaction to a centralized entity. We seek your direction
2 on one, aligning the date for the Texas Rising Star assessors to
3 attain certification, with a projected date for the
4 centralization of the Texas Rising Star assessors. Effective
5 June 1, 2022, only certified assessors may conduct Texas Rising
6 Star assessments. Number two, instructing the boards to resume
7 Texas Rising Star program assessments no later than September 1,
8 2021, and to allow the assessors who have completed through
9 course six--only those who have completed through course six to
10 conduct assessments. Number three, directing the new assessment
11 vendor to make an offer of employment to qualified assessors and
12 employing those assessors for at least six months. And four,
13 directing the new assessment vendor to provide a \$5,000
14 incentive payment to assessors who obtain the ATCB certification
15 no later than December 31 of 2021, remain as an assessor until a
16 statewide assessment vendor is selected, and accept employment
17 with the new vendor, and that they remain employed with the new
18 vendor for at least three months. And that concludes my remarks,
19 and I'm happy to answer any questions you have.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Comments or questions?

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do we have a motion?
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1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
2 we align the date for TRS assessors to obtain certifications as
3 outlined by staff--

4 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: --resume TRS
6 assessments no later than September 1, 2021, allow only
7 assessors who have completed through courses six to conduct
8 assessors, direct a new centralized entity to employ and retain
9 qualified assessors for six months, and to implement a \$5,000
10 incentive payment for TRS assessors who meet stated criteria, as
11 soon as presented by staff.

12 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
14 seconded. We're unanimous.

15 MS. WILSON: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. This is item
17 11, fiscal year 2021 through 2026 AEL strategic plan.

18 MS. BALLAST: Good morning, Chair Daniel,
19 Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, and Mr. Serna. For
20 the record, Kerry Ballast, workforce development division. Rider
21 29 of the General Appropriations Act of the 87 Texas Legislature
22 requires the TWC, in consultation with the Texas Workforce
23 Investment Council, or what we know as TWIC, to develop a
24 statewide strategic plan for adult education, with goals and
25 objectives to address the needs, demands, gaps, and interagency

1 coordination work required to serve adult education students in
2 Texas. For the commission's consideration today is the second
3 statewide AEL strategic plan. This plan enhances the four goals
4 outlined in the first strategic plan, and updates the
5 corresponding objectives for each to support TWC's mission. In
6 developing this, staff worked closely with our advisory council,
7 with--and also looked closely at TWC's strategic plan and at
8 TWIC's strategic plan. We also watched the legislative session
9 closely and also took into consideration our recently published
10 tri-agency report. So, at this time, staff seeks direction in
11 approving the fiscal year 2021 through 2026 AEL statewide
12 strategic plan for submission to the governor, to TWIC, and to
13 the legislative budget board, as required by the legislation.
14 Thank you, and I'm available to answer any questions you may
15 have.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Questions or comments?

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None here. I'd just
19 like to thank the staff and [inaudible] and the TWIC team for
20 the work that they put into this document. So, thank you for
21 that.

22 MS. BALLAST: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do we have a motion?

24 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Thanks, Kerry. I move
25 that we approve the AEL strategic plan for fiscal years 2021

1 through 2026 for submission to TWIC, the governor's office, and
2 the legislative budget board.

3 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
5 seconded. We're unanimous.

6 MS. BALLAST: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. This is item
8 12, utilization of IKEA funds donated to TWC. This one's mine.
9 Commissioner Alvarez, either Mr. Trobman or someone from his
10 office is emailing you some talking points that I wanted to
11 share with you.

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Okay.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, I've been taking a
14 look at the IKEA funds, and just sort of in reference to what
15 we're seeing in the state's economy right now, the home program
16 that was part of those IKEA funds, there's about a 1.2 or so
17 million dollar balance left in that program. We haven't really
18 made an award from that since April. There are some awards that
19 are ongoing. There was originally additional funds in there.
20 Home was--that particular component of the IKEA funding was one
21 that I supported; in fact, I did quite a bit of work on that
22 with staff, developing that out. Something I think was useful.
23 But I think that we've probably moved past the need for that, so
24 in looking at that, understanding some needs that I'm seeing in
25 both the workforce and then workforce at large, meaning

1 employers, employment, the type of jobs that we'd like to see,
2 I--before we get too far into the fall and get too terribly busy
3 with all the different middle skills, closing the middle skills
4 gap initiatives that we had identified a few weeks ago, I wanted
5 to bring forward a proposal to move \$500,000 from the home
6 program--again, about a \$1.2 million budget left in that
7 particular component--and initiate a pilot program. This pilot
8 program would be designed to look at how local workforce boards
9 can better use data partnerships, regional collaborations, to
10 really become much more precise in how we place people with
11 jobs. If you look at just the state's economy over the last
12 let's say 10 years or so, prior to the pandemic we had hundreds
13 of months of consecutive job growth. Since the pandemic, we've
14 seen 13 months of job growth out of the last 14. We're still
15 seeing a lot of job growth in the state. New net jobs each
16 month. If you break down the state even further, you'll find
17 that about 25 percent of the employment growth in Texas, from
18 about 2015 through 2019--so, right before the start of the
19 pandemic--25 percent of the employment growth in Texas came from
20 three board areas: Alamo, capitol area, and rural capitol. What
21 I'm proposing today is to take an amount of money not to exceed
22 \$500,000 from the home program and the IKEA funds and move it to
23 a pilot program, one-time pilot program to establish a working
24 group to study five specific things, but I think other work that
25 they might take up as well. So, to explore ways that workforce

1 solutions entities can add value to the decision-making process
2 for employers to create jobs in Texas; to explore the data usage
3 by TWC and other state agencies that would unlock insights for
4 employers really looking to hire more in Texas; explore ways for
5 Texas to continue to differentiate itself from other states; to
6 establish new industries; to explore the value of our rural
7 workforce and examine ways it can be bolstered and highlighted,
8 particularly as it relates to urban and suburban job creation;
9 and then to share best practices with the workforce partners
10 across the state. My proposal lays out the working group. It
11 would include, if passed today as is written, the executive
12 director's workforce solutions, capitol area workforce
13 solutions, rural capitol area, and Workforce Solutions Alamo.
14 The director of the workforce division at TWC or their designee;
15 the director of the office of employer initiatives at TWC or
16 their designee; and the executive director of TWC or his
17 designee. And then the other three members of the nine-member
18 working group would be comprised of economic development
19 professionals, one each from each of the workgroup workforce
20 solutions areas that we designated for the workgroup. And those
21 would be designated by the working group once it comes together.
22 I'm prepared to make a motion today, but certainly we can
23 discuss, and I'm happy to answer any questions that you might
24 have.

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, so thank
2 you for laying this out. As you sent it, I'm reading it over. I
3 think it's a good idea. There are a couple of things that I'd
4 like to add to that, since I'm just getting it right now. Those
5 boards that you identified, to me, it seems like they're kinda
6 clustered in this area. Would you be willing to negotiate or
7 revisit and pick boards maybe from Borderplex, South Texas,
8 Panhandle, and Gulf Coast?

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's a valid comment,
10 and let me tell you why I selected those specific boards.
11 They're in a--they are indeed in a contiguous area, and that's
12 by design. Normally, I would be, as you know, more open to one
13 from west Texas, one from south Texas, north Texas, east Texas.
14 I generally strive for geographic diversity, as do you, and I
15 think we're right to do that. Here, I have a specific science in
16 mind, and that is these particular board areas have an
17 established track record of economic success. So do others.
18 There's no question in my mind. You would see the same thing in
19 Gulf Coast, you would see the same thing in the Metroplex area.
20 You'd see the same thing in Lubbock/Amarillo area, El Paso area,
21 and certainly Lower Rio Grande Valley. So, it's not as if these
22 are the only boards that have found success; they're three
23 contiguous boards that have success. Here's why I selected them
24 in general, and why I would ask that we might not, at this
25 particular moment, strive for a little more diversity in terms

1 of geography. I think we get a good chunk of central and
2 north/south Texas in this particular look, but capitol area and
3 Alamo area had both county and city dollars that they
4 administered from the CARES Act--

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Mm-hmm.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --to do some very specific
7 job placement, job training kind of programs. And rural capitol
8 kind of links between them, and is part of this pool that
9 created 25 percent of the jobs. I'm hoping to capitalize off of
10 lessons that they learned specifically with regard to the CARES
11 Act money that the city and county asked them to do the job
12 placement with. I understand your interest in perhaps spreading
13 it out. I actually don't disagree with you. I would ask for your
14 support in going with these three particular boards for the
15 pilot program. My motion would intend to wrap up this work by
16 June of next year, and then I think we would want to apply this
17 to more boards statewide, any board that might wanna
18 participate, and I think at that point we would have identified
19 more resources than a small amount of money from some one-time
20 IKEA funds to do that. So, a complicated answer, and I apologize
21 for that, because I don't disagree with your premise at all. In
22 fact, I very much agree with you. But I think in this specific
23 instance it serves the state well to capitalize on something
24 that happened outside of TWC and try to learn lessons from that
25 to bring that insight TWC and Workforce Solutions.

1 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Mr. Chairman--
2 Commissioner Alvarez, any other comments?

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Well, I have some
4 other things, but I wanted to see if you had anything to say. If
5 you had anything to say.

6 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: No, nothing to add
7 there. I hear what you're saying, Mr. Chairman, in regards to
8 the reasons and this is a pilot program, and I would look at, on
9 the first page, line item--line 25 or so. I think that's the
10 rationale you're going with in regards to why you're selecting
11 these particular workforce areas at this particular point. And
12 it reads "more than one quarter of the employment growth in
13 Texas, from 2015 through 2019, occurred in the Alamo capitol
14 area and rural capitol [inaudible] workforce boards," et cetera,
15 et cetera. Those are some of the rationales behind what you're
16 utilizing at this point. Is that correct?

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's correct.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay. And I think
19 for that reason, I [inaudible] geographical [inaudible] and I
20 always look at the geographical point. Commissioner Alvarez
21 brings a valid point, but if you're trying to do this from a
22 pilot standpoint, you're basing it on data that's here for a
23 particular reason, if I'm not mistaken.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: No, that's correct.

25

1 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay, all right. No
2 comments [inaudible].

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, so I do
4 know that capitol [inaudible] and Alamo have--if I'm not
5 mistaken, I think we've all spoken at these--at [inaudible].
6 Don't they have a workgroup that they work together? Couldn't we
7 designate one to represent the three? It's just a discussion.
8 I'm just curious. I just feel like, you know, with all the
9 activity that's going on in the Dallas area, Houston, and south
10 Texas, maybe identifying the economic development partners that
11 would represent those areas, that'd be--I'd be open to that.
12 Because I know they already have a collaboration between the
13 three--Alamo [inaudible] and the capitol have a workgroup
14 already.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So, I'm unaware of a
16 workgroup that they have. That's news to me. I'm not opposed to
17 making the economic development professionals from other areas
18 of the state. I do think that would enhance the discussion. I
19 would not have an issue with that. If--

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And I'd be willing to
21 work with that.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. So, I just wanna
23 make sure I understand you before I move forward, because I want
24 all questions answered. You're okay with the three workforce
25 development boards I've proposed, you're okay with the TWC staff

1 I've proposed, you just like to see the economic development
2 professionals to be from somewhere other than those particular
3 workforce development boards.

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I think that would be
5 fair.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I don't disagree with you.

7 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Agree.

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I'm having a little
9 difficult time with the boards that are identified. I mean,
10 without even talking to them. But, I mean, this is a great pilot
11 program. I certainly agree with you this is certainly something
12 that I would like to be a part of. And I agree with you, I agree
13 with you. I just--again, as--it's really hard for me to not be
14 able to identify other participants from other parts, just like
15 we do for our advisory committee for JET and some of the other
16 programs we have for AEL. It is good to kind of diversify, and I
17 think you're in agreement with that. But with--as far as the
18 three boards, you've put a lot of thought into it and I would be
19 willing to--I'd be okay with that.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Mr. Chairman, I
21 would also--

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I would also think
24 that this doesn't preclude this group from seeking input from
25 the other workforce solution boards and offices as well. It

1 doesn't preclude them from diving in in a big way, because
2 overall, it's gonna be something for Texas, from that
3 standpoint.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Unequivocally, that's
5 true. I mean, they would be free, the working group would be
6 free to bringing any commentary that they might like. The
7 working group may get together and say we've done this
8 particular data treatment, this gives us good data. Now let us
9 test this in Gulf Coast, or let us test this in North Central.
10 They would be free to do that too. At this point, I'm trying to
11 lay out a large policy matter, give it a budget, and then turn
12 it over to some capable professionals to let them work on it.
13 Commissioner Alvarez, it's an--I find myself in an interesting
14 position. I have the same uneasiness about my own proposal that
15 you do, but I think I see strength in letting these three
16 contiguous boards lead it, and I think there's some strategies
17 we can use to bring in other parts of the state like you're
18 suggesting. And I think you're right to suggest that.

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, with that
20 said, I do have a comment, and I agree with--again, I think this
21 idea that you have is a great pilot program, and I'm certainly
22 going to support it. I do have a comment, though, and maybe
23 something that maybe you could ease my decision on this by just
24 making this a little bit more available to other boards. Since
25 we're on this topic, do you--I have plans for the additional

1 money that's left over. And if it's appropriate, I'd like to
2 discuss it here. I don't have a handout, but we were given an
3 update on what we--on the remaining balance of the money that
4 you're talking about here. And it might ease my pain here a
5 little if I shared that with you all.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Sure.

7 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So, there is a
8 remaining balance of 700,000, and as you know, my pilot program
9 with the pre-apprenticeship, we had a number of applicants. I
10 was overwhelmed and happy to see that we had a great response.
11 Unfortunately, we were only able to fund, of the 24, six. With
12 The additional money, would you be open to funding some other
13 board areas, or other areas around the state that did not get
14 the funding?

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I'm not opposed to that. I
16 just--

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: It would take care
18 of--like what I'm looking at here, it would take care of my east
19 Texas area, my west Texas area, and maybe even a south Texas--
20 well, no, it would be east Texas, west Texas, far west Texas. It
21 would fund maybe a remaining three or four.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And to add them to the
23 working group?

24

25

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: No, no, no, no, I'm--
2 and I apologize, this would be to add to the pre-apprenticeship-
3 -

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, let--can I--can
5 I put words in your mouth, and then you tell me if I got it
6 right? So, you're proposing to take money from the--some other
7 part of the IKEA funds and expand the pre-apprenticeship
8 program? Is that--

9 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes, that's correct.
10 I just don't have the handout here, since we were gonna discuss
11 this--

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: That's okay. Let me tell
13 you if that--if you did have a handout today, I would not be
14 opposed to that concept. And what I would also tell you is given
15 that you have other obligations today, you have my commitment
16 that when you bring that motion back you'll get a full
17 discussion. And based on what you just told me, unless that
18 changes, I would support what you're wanting to do in terms of
19 pre-apprenticeship.

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: And it's just an
21 additional 1.3 million. It's what's left over of what we're
22 talking about there.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: We should discuss it--I
24 mean, we may differ on the dollar amount, but I don't think we
25 differ on the concept at all. And I don't know that we would

1 differ on the dollar amount, frankly, based on what I know. I
2 just think--

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Okay.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --we need to have a
5 discussion about that.

6 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That sounds good,
7 Chairman.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. That being the
9 case, I move we repurpose up to \$500,000 from the remaining
10 balance of the IKEA fund at home program to establish a regional
11 workforce strategy working group to cover data research,
12 analytics [inaudible] staff, marketing, and other functions
13 required to develop a scalable model for workforce boards to
14 meet the needs of employers on our workforce consistent with the
15 discussion paper I've just shared, with the exception of the
16 economic development professionals would be selected from other
17 areas of the state, not from the local workforce development
18 board designated to the working group.

19 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I second that.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
21 second. And is there any further discussion?

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Chairman, further
23 discussion, but not outside of this motion. Since Commissioner
24 Alvarez brought up the fact of other ideas, and I too have other
25 ideas as well. So, we'll bring that back at the appropriate

1 time. But I like his idea, but definitely want to discuss the
2 dollar amount, because I want to do some things--or I have some
3 ideas as well.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: A very fair point.

5 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Okay.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: And we will get this on
7 the--perhaps we should coordinate calendars. We have several
8 commission meetings coming up. I just--we'll get a date that
9 works for everybody. I think Commissioner Alvarez has
10 appropriately and rightly outlined his views. Your point's well
11 taken. We can get that on an agenda and get that discussion
12 going.

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: And I mentioned
14 mine--mine is dealing with agency succession, a mentor-type
15 program.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Ah, okay.

17 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: And also outreach
18 efforts with the governor's office and the Texas [inaudible]
19 development corporation, along those lines. And then Texas
20 Interns Unite--that's something that I'm very interested in
21 doing, collaborating again with the governor's office and the
22 higher education coordinating board on those efforts.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. It will definitely
24 be a good discussion. It's been moved and seconded for my
25

1 motion. If we're unanimous, I'll call it unanimous and we'll say
2 that it's passed.

3 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes, sir.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Hearing no dissent?

5 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Agreement.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Gentlemen,

7 thank you very, very much. Agenda Item 13, statewide
8 initiatives? No. Agenda Item 14, COVID-19 report? No? Agenda
9 Item 15, board nominations.

10 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning, Chairman,
11 commissioners, and Mr. Serna. For the record, Shunta Williams
12 with the workforce development division, and before you for
13 consideration are workforce board nominations for Workforce
14 Solutions Cameron County, South Texas, Tarrant County, Heart of
15 Texas, Golden Crescent, Greater Dallas, Gulf Coast, Northeast
16 Texas, Permian Basin, and Southeast Texas. Staff recommends that
17 all nominees be approved, and I'm here to answer any questions
18 you may have.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Comments or questions?

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

21 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?

23 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
24 we approve the board nominees for Cameron County, South Texas,
25

1 Tarrant County, Heart of Texas, Golden Crescent, Greater Dallas,
2 Gulf Coast, Northeast Texas, Permian Basin, and Southeast Texas.

3 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
5 seconded. We're unanimous.

6 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Nothing on 16. Legislative
8 report.

9 MR. BRITT: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and
10 commissioners, Mr. Serna. For the record, Michael Britt,
11 governmental relations. Last week the U.S. House of
12 Representatives passed H.R. 4502, which includes seven of the 12
13 appropriation titles, including funding for the departments of
14 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. The bill
15 provides a total of 14.7 billion in discretionary appropriations
16 for the Department of Labor, which is an increase of 2.2 billion
17 over the FY 2021 enacted level, and 400 million above the
18 president's budget request. A detailed breakdown of these
19 funding levels was provided to your offices last week. This bill
20 will now go before the U.S. Senate for their consideration. I
21 will note U.S. Senate leaders have not released their own
22 appropriations bill, so we will continue to monitor those
23 negotiations and move in as they occur. And just as a reminder,
24 federal government funding is currently set to expire on

25

1 September 30 of this year. This concludes my remarks. I'm happy
2 to answer any questions.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Are there any comments or
4 questions?

5 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

6 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None, thank you.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you, sir. Mr. Serna,
9 an executive director's report?

10 MR. SERNA: I don't have anything
11 specifically to report, but I believe that Heather Hall will
12 provide an update on our IT projects, as previously [inaudible].

13 DR. HALL: Good morning, Chairman Daniel,
14 Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, and Mr. Serna. For
15 the record, my name is Heather Hall. I'm the chief information
16 officer for TWC. Two weeks ago, you requested an update on the
17 key IT projects that are going on with TWC. In your handouts,
18 you'll have a dashboard summary that covers the top 15 projects
19 that we have underway. I'll touch on some of the highlights for
20 about half of those projects, as several of them are not slated
21 to start until September. The first one is the unemployment
22 insurance system replacement. TWC signed the contract with
23 [inaudible] solutions on January 25, 2021 to replace our old
24 mainframe and Web-based UI systems. This project will be
25 performed in two phases. UI tax will deploy on July 13 of 2022,

1 and UI benefits and appeals will deploy on March 4 of 2024. The
2 [inaudible] phase is underway, but is running slightly behind
3 schedule for the overall project. It's not implementing the
4 overall--impacting the overall schedule, though. The procurement
5 processes took longer than anticipated, so that planning
6 milestone has been extended. We're actively working with the
7 vendor now to finalize the detailed schedule for the entire
8 project, and we've already completed the requirements for the
9 tax phase. On project number three, the workforce case
10 management system, this project will replace our old workforce
11 case management system called TWIST, the Texas Workforce
12 Information System of Texas. The procurement and the DIR data
13 center exemption process for this project took longer than
14 anticipated. We are in the final stages now of the procurement
15 and anticipate awarding that contract this week. We will update
16 the overall project schedule once we have our vendor on board.
17 The anticipated date to deploy the system will still remain July
18 31 of 2023. The project number six, the childcare case
19 management system, the request for offer for this project was
20 posted on the electronic state business daily, the ESD, on June
21 21, 2021, and vendor responses on that project are expected back
22 to TWC on August 31 of 2021. The vocational rehabilitation case
23 management system--this is one of our new projects approved in
24 the LAR process, and it will start September 1, 2021. This will
25 be a large effort for the agency, and this project will replace

1 the rehab work system and some other systems, like Tex Rocks,
2 that vocational rehab use. Project number nine, Start My VR, I
3 believe you're aware of this one. On June 28, TWC launched a new
4 system called Start My VR. It's an online self-referral portal
5 for perspective vocational rehab customers. It provides a
6 convenient way for individuals with disabilities who are seeking
7 employment to enquire about VR services and to be contacted with
8 a VR staff member. Since launch, in the first month, VR has
9 received 522 tickets through this new system, resulting in 240
10 new VR cases opened via the new system. Project number 10,
11 enterprise data warehouse. The EDW has now grown to over 907
12 tables--very high-value data that we're bringing in from
13 programs across the agency, including UI, workforce, childcare,
14 vocational rehabilitation, RID, and finance. Because of the EDW
15 and great teamwork amongst DOI, UI, RID, and the IT teams, TWC
16 was able to leverage the EDW to detect and act to prevent
17 payment on nearly 11 billion in potential UI fraud. This project
18 is on target to close 8/31/2021, and we will move that into
19 operational efforts to continue utilizing the data warehouse.
20 And the last project I was gonna mention is the centralized
21 accounting and payroll personnel system. This is our HR system
22 that we just upgraded from CHAPS to CAPS that deployed on July
23 8, 2021. Many of the core HR system functions, such as time and
24 leave, look the same as the old system, but we did offer some
25 enhancements in the upgrade. There were some big improvements

1 around eliminating several of our paper forms, and we're now
2 using CAPS to administer performance reviews. And we integrated
3 a system called TELEO [SP] and that will be the agency's new
4 applicant tracking system. We did identify an issue this morning
5 that IT is working on now. For some reason, the system is
6 looking at accruals for vacation and only counting eight hours
7 for everybody, and not factoring in longevity. So, we're--as
8 expected, you're gonna have some challenges with a system
9 upgrade of this magnitude, so we are quickly looking to try to
10 resolve that issue. And then we will schedule to close this
11 project out at the end of August. In addition to all these
12 projects, the IT team continues to work on developing and
13 supporting tools to detect and prevent fraud, COVID-19 support,
14 implementation of legislative changes, and other
15 internal/external audits, and many other efforts to support the
16 technology needs for the various divisions across the agency.
17 That concludes my report, and I'm happy to answer any questions
18 you may have.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or questions?

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, Chairman.

21 Just wanted to thank Heather and your team for a great report.

22 DR. HALL: Thank you, sir.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Yeah, I too wanna

24 echo, Dr. Hall, you and the team and the briefings that you guys

25 have provided have been super. And thank you for the work that

1 you guys are doing. Data integrity is so, so important, and
2 appreciate you guys jumping in and taking care of business.

3 DR. HALL: Yes, sir, thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, no questions
5 from me.

6 DR. HALL: All right, thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you very much.

8 MR. SERNA: That's all I have, sir.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there any other item of
10 business to come before--

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I did have--

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: --the commission today?

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Yes, Chairman, I had
14 one more item that I'd like to bring to Ed's attention, if that
15 was okay?

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Please.

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Ed, regarding the
18 information technology registered apprenticeship expansion RFA,
19 32021-00164, I would like staff to bring forth a discussion
20 paper reissuing the remaining 1.5 million left over from the RFA
21 to expand IT registered apprenticeship incorporating COMP-TIA
22 credentials and certifications.

23 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir.

24 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That's all I have,
25 Chairman.

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CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, do we have a motion to adjourn?

COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that we adjourn.

COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

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