



**MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION**

DATE

MAY 3, 2022

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Tuesday, May 3, 2022

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Good morning, everyone.

This meeting is called to order. Mr. Trobman, is anyone signed up for public comment?

MR. TROBMAN: Good morning, commissioners.

Les Trobman, general counsel. We have one registrant this morning. Ms. Melissa Laurel. Ms. Laurel, if you're here, go ahead and unmute yourself and proceed. That's what we've got. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you, Mr. Trobman.

Good morning, Ms. Gonzales.

MS. GONZALES: Good morning, sir.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: The motion passes with the exceptions noted. This brings us to the end of Agenda Items 3 through 7. Let's pause for a few moments to reset for the rest of the meeting.

CHAIRMAN DANIEL: This Agenda Item 8, short-term training for parents in the child care services program.

JOEL MULLINS: Good morning, Chair Daniel, Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, Mr. Serna. For the record, I'm Joel Mullins with the Workforce Development Division. On June 30, 2021, as part of a comprehensive statewide strategy to end the middle skills gap in Texas, the commission earmarked \$2,000,000 for an initiative to provide short-term training to parents in the child care services program. On

1 September 21st of last year the commission approved the funding
2 type and distribution amounts to local Workforce Development
3 Boards for this initiative. Staff recommends the extension of
4 this grant to May 31, 2023, and the expansion of the definition
5 of short-term training to less than three months as noted in
6 your meeting materials. I'll be happy to answer any questions.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or questions?

8 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

9 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None here.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?

11 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move that in the
12 short-term training for parents in the child care service
13 program initiative we expand the definition of short-term
14 training to include any training that is less than three months
15 and extends the grant to May 31, 2023, as recommended by staff,
16 and described in the discussion paper.

17 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
19 seconded. We're unanimous. Thank you. This is Agenda Item 9,
20 WIOA combined state plan program year 2022-2023.

21 JOEL MULLINS: Once again for the record,
22 I'm Joel Mullins with the Workforce Development Division. On
23 February 15, 2022, the commission approved TWC's required two-
24 year modification to the WIOA combined state plan for program
25 years 2020 to 2023. The plan was posted for a public comment

1 period from February 15th through March 17th. No public comments
2 were received during that time. This morning staff recommends
3 approval of the WIOA state plan modification as included in your
4 meeting materials for submission to the Texas Workforce
5 Investment Council, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or questions?

7 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None here.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?

10 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
11 we approve the WIOA combined state plan two-year plan
12 modifications for submission to the Texas Workforce Investment
13 Council.

14 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
16 seconded. We're unanimous. Thank you.

17 JOEL MULLINS: Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: This is Agenda Item 10, VR
19 rate changes for benefits counseling services.

20 CHERYL FULLER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
21 Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, and Mr. Serna. For
22 the record, Cheryl Fuller, Vocational Rehabilitation Division.
23 Commissioners, before you today for consideration is a proposal
24 to increase rates paid by the VR program for benefits counseling
25 services for VR participants, and to establish a rate for a new

1 benefits counseling service for veterans. The Workforce
2 Innovation and Opportunity Act requires VR programs to provide
3 information about and assistance with benefits counseling for
4 all VR customers receiving a disability cash benefit from the
5 Social Security Administration. Benefits counseling gives the
6 customers the information they need to understand what will
7 happen to their monthly cash benefits and associated health
8 insurance when they go to work, and to make informed choices
9 about how to proceed. The loss of benefits due to work has long
10 been a concern for VR customers and their family members so
11 access to benefits counseling information can be very important
12 in helping allay those concerns so that they can focus on
13 achieving their employment goal. Currently we pay for 10
14 benefits counseling services from two of the six SSA-recognized,
15 work incentive planning and assistance programs called WIPA.
16 There are six that cover the state of Texas. The demand for
17 benefits counseling by VR customers is increasing and will soon
18 exceed the capacity of these two programs. VR needs to initiate
19 a procurement to expand the available providers of benefits
20 counseling services to include additional WIPAs and other
21 certified benefits planners. However, first we must consider
22 increases to the rates we pay for these services. These rates
23 were first established in our legacy agency and have not been
24 updated since. Staff have conducted research to identify the
25 rates paid by other state VR agencies, and we are proposing rate

1 increases for seven of the 10 benefits counseling services based
2 on that information. The seven services and the proposed rates
3 are included in the discussion paper before you. These include
4 three types of benefits analyses and four types of work
5 incentives. Staff further recommends that the commission
6 establish a rate for a new benefits counseling analysis for
7 veterans. This new service will provide valuable assistance to
8 VR customers who are veterans who must navigate multiple complex
9 systems when considering the impact of work on their VA and SSA
10 benefits. This concludes my presentation, and I'd be glad to
11 answer any questions.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or questions?

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

14 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I just love the fact
15 that you guys included the veterans in this particular proposal.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
18 we approve the increase in rates for vocational rehabilitation
19 benefits counseling services as recommended by staff.

20 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
22 seconded. We're unanimous. Thank you. This is Agenda Item 11,
23 Texas veterans network.

24 DAWN CRONIN: Good morning, Chair Daniel,
25 Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, Mr. Serna. For the

1 record, my name is Dawn Cronin with the Workforce Division.
2 Before you today is a discussion paper on the Texas veterans
3 network. It is included in your notebook materials. Staff is
4 recommending reprocurring through a competitive process, a
5 multiyear grant awarded to a single vendor for the creation of a
6 statewide veterans referral network and is recommending up to
7 \$2,000,000 in WIOA statewide funds, and I'm happy to answer any
8 questions you might have.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or questions?

10 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

11 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: This is going from
12 two grantees to a multiyear one-grant program? Got it. Thank
13 you.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
16 we approve the \$2,000,000 of WIOA statewide funding to establish
17 a statewide veterans referral network using the parameters
18 outlined in the discussion paper.

19 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I second.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
21 seconded. We're unanimous. Thank you. This is Agenda Item—
22 nothing under Agenda Item 12. Agenda Item 13 is the one I'm
23 looking for, AEL employer engagement request for applications
24 approval.

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1 BEN HOLQUIST: Good morning, Chairman
2 Daniel, Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, and Mr.
3 Serna. For the record, I'm Ben Holquist with the Workforce
4 Development Division. Commissioners, before you today for your
5 consideration for approval is a discussion paper regarding
6 awards for RFA 32022-00118 AEL employer engagement as required
7 by Texas Labor Code Section 315.007(d). This RFA [inaudible]
8 will collaborate with Texas employers to develop curricula for
9 workplace programs and to deliver AEL services to eligible
10 employees for workplace literacy activities, and at least one of
11 the employer-provided training programs were integrated
12 education training programs. Staff recommends awarded \$1,190,243
13 across three awards as laid out in the discussion paper. This
14 concludes my presentation. I'm available to answer any questions
15 that you may have.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any comments or questions?

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

18 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None here.

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
21 we approve the three awards totaling \$1,190,243 as discussed by
22 staff.

23 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

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1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
2 seconded. We're unanimous. Thank you. This is Agenda Item 15,
3 board nominations.

4 SHUNTA WILLIAMS: Good morning, chairman,
5 commissioners, and Mr. Serna. For the record, Shunta Williams
6 with the Workforce Development Division. For your consideration
7 this morning we have Workforce Board nominations for Cameron
8 County, Capital Area, Middle Rio Grande, and Southeast Texas.
9 Staff seeks guidance on the presented nominees, and I'm here to
10 answer any questions you have.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. Any comments or
12 questions?

13 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

14 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I just have one
15 comment. I wanted to recognize Joel Mullins who was at the
16 Workforce Solutions West Central Texas meeting. It was good to
17 see staff there on board, and they were well engaged. Had an
18 opportunity to visit with Mary Ross and that team so it was good
19 seeing our guys on board there. No other questions.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion?

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
22 we approve the board nominees for Cameron County, Capital Area,
23 Middle Rio Grande, and Southeast Texas.

24 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

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1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
2 seconded. We're unanimous. I see that Mr. Britt has a tie on,
3 therefore, there must be a legislative report today.

4 MICHAEL BRITT: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
5 Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, and Mr. Serna. For
6 the record, Michael Britt, Governmental Relations. This
7 afternoon, Bob Gear will be testifying before the Senate
8 Committee on Veteran Affairs. He'll be providing the committee
9 with an overview of TWC's veterans programs, and also in
10 addition to the hearings I updated you all on last week, TWC has
11 been requested to testify before the Senate Committee on
12 Business and Commerce on Wednesday, May 18th, on the committee's
13 interim charge related to remote working for state workers. Mr.
14 Serna will be testifying at that hearing on behalf of the
15 agency. This concludes my remarks. I'm happy to answer any
16 questions.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Are there any questions?

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

19 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: None here.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I have no questions
21 either. Thank you so much.

22 MICHAEL BRITT: Thank you, gentlemen.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there an executive
24 director's report today? [inaudible] Thank you very much. Is
25 there any other order of business to come before the commission?

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I have
2 something I'd like to—I'd like to introduce everyone to a new
3 addition to our office. Brady Aker [SP], whose mother works here
4 as well, is now handling communications and our public
5 information stuff that's coming out of the office so we
6 congratulate Brady and we are very glad to have him added to our
7 team so welcome, Brady. That concludes my remarks.

8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I have nothing to
9 report.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. I have nothing.
11 Is there a motion to adjourn?

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Chairman, I move that
13 we adjourn.

14 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Second.

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

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