

1 **Staff Responses to Commission Work Session Discussion Paper**
2 **Texas Conference for Foster Youth**

3 **Commission Recommendations:**

4 Seeking approval for a pilot conference, specifically for foster youth with possible future
5 expansion to include former foster youth attendees. The first Conference for Foster Youth would
6 focus on bringing together at least 200 youth participants from a singular Workforce Board Area,
7 who are still currently in foster care. Participants would be invited through local Independent
8 School Districts and Workforce Solutions Offices. It would encompass a full day (9:30 a.m. to
9 4:00 p.m.). The morning will include a keynote address, workshop sessions, student panels. The
10 afternoon will consist in a service expo to showcase a variety of service providers and
11 information from the area.

12 During the conference, a separate session can be offered for teachers and chaperones with special
13 topics that can earn 3 hours of CEU credit.

14 The anticipated cost of the Conference for Foster Youth will include, but is not limited to:

- 15 • Venue
- 16 • Transportation reimbursement for schools
- 17 • Speakers: keynote, panelists, session presenters
- 18 • Service Expo
- 19 • Conference materials for participants

20 We are requesting at least \$65,000 WIOA Statewide Initiative funding to be used to fund a pilot
21 Conference for Foster Youth during the upcoming school year 2023-2024.

22 **Staff Responses**

23 TWC staff recommends that a combination of TANF and WIOA funds be made available to host
24 the Texas Conference for Foster Youth focusing on a target audience of a least 200 foster youth
25 attendees from a Workforce Board Area. For a stand-alone conference, staff recommends
26 increasing the initial budget of \$65,000 to \$125,000. This budget amount is based on expenditure
27 data from similarly sized TWC conference events.

28 **Additional Recommendations**

- 29 1. Staff recommends a dual-focus approach to the service expo component:
 - 30 i. service and resource providers; and
 - 31 ii. employers.
- 32 2. Staff recommends creating an interactive service expo experience to encourage foster youth
33 attendees to actively engage with exhibitors to get the full benefit of conference attendance.