TEXAS PROGRAM YEARS 2024–2027

TWO-YEAR MODIFICATION

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OVERVIEW

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan— a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan

partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are:

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) [1]

[1] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These

analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.

- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
    - State Strategy Implementation,
    - State Operating Systems and Policies,
    - Assurances,
    - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
    - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.[2] States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations. Use of links to external websites and documents is permitted within the State Plan narrative submission, if such links remain active and adhere to Section 508 accessibility requirements.

Paperwork Reduction Act: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state; including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522. Note: Please do not return the completed plan to this address.

[2] Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below.

This is a combined plan

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

No

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

No

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))

No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

No

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

No

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

No

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

Yes

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

No

Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

No

B. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Unified or Combined State Plan may include an introduction or executive summary. This element is optional.

Introduction

The Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) Combined State Plan (CSP) for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for Program Years (PY) 2024–2027 was submitted to the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED) on March 4, 2024, and was approved on May 30, 2024. WIOA §676.145(a)(1) requires states to submit modifications to the CSP at the end of the first two-year period of the four-year CSP. The modifications are to largely "reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions or other factors affecting the implementation of the Combined State Plan."

This CSP modification submission covers the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2028.

An Integrated System for a Unified Texas

Texas is a land of opportunity—a global economic leader built on the strength, skill, and ambition of its people. As our state moves toward a projected population of over 37 million by 2040, our talented workforce stands as an essential part of this unprecedented growth.

TWC is dedicated to building a future where businesses grow, communities thrive, and every Texan has access to a rewarding, in-demand career. This CSP outlines a unified strategy to develop, align, and strengthen the state's workforce system by leveraging the combined efforts of education, employment, and economic development partners to ensure that Texas remains one of the best states to live, work, and do business.

At the heart of this effort is a broad, integrated workforce ecosystem. TWC works in close partnership with the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC), other state agencies, 28 Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards), community and technical colleges, and local education providers. Together, these partners deliver a seamless network of services that empower individuals and respond to the evolving needs of Texas employers.

This CSP strategically aligns other critical state and federal initiatives with the following core and optional programs authorized by WIOA programs:

- The Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW), and Youth programs
- The Wagner-Peyser (W-P) Employment Service (ES) program
- The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) programs

- The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs
- The Senior Community Service Employment (SCSEP) program

The programs listed above reflect only a portion of the programs administered by TWC. Through the Texas Workforce Solutions system, TWC also administers the following federal programs:

- Choices (the employment program for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF])
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)
- Child Care and Development Block Grant Funds/Child Care Development Funds (CCDBG/CCDF)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)
- Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP)

Additionally, TWC administers the following state-funded workforce development programs:

- ApprenticeshipTexas
- Skills Development Fund (SDF) training (customized training for businesses)
- Self-Sufficiency Fund training
- Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) (grants for community colleges, nonprofit organizations, and school districts that provide opportunities for students to pursue new career and technical education programs in high-growth industries)

Through the integration of these programs within a system of 23 total combined federal and state programs, Texas is able to create a true one-stop environment known as the Texas Workforce Solutions system. This model ensures that all Texans, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, and former foster youth, have coordinated access to the resources that they need to succeed, including access to skills training, career guidance, child care, and other vital support services.

Our strategy is designed to encourage skill and credential attainment, secure high-quality employment, and increase earnings. By eliminating barriers and connecting Texans to in-demand careers, we can build a more resilient workforce, reduce dependency on public assistance, and sharpen our state's competitive edge on the global stage.

Enhancing Service Delivery Through Technology

The modern workplace demands modern solutions. Across Texas, our Boards are revolutionizing service delivery by harnessing technology to meet Texans where they are. From virtual job fairs and AI-powered chatbots that provide real-time assistance to mobile career units equipped with computer stations and internet access, we are extending our reach into every corner of the state. These innovations ensure job seekers in both urban and rural communities can access career exploration tools, résumé assistance, and training opportunities.

This technological push is paired with a commitment to closing the digital divide. In partnership with the Texas Broadband Development Office (BDO), we are championing initiatives to expand reliable, high-speed internet access for all Texans. Universal broadband

is not just about connectivity; it is about unlocking potential, connecting talent to opportunity, and equipping our workforce with the digital literacy that is essential for in-demand jobs.

Project No Wrong Door

TWC is committed to leveraging cutting-edge technology to revolutionize the way we engage with customers throughout the state. In July 2025, TWC launched Project No Wrong Door, an initiative that was designed to create an intelligent entry point for all customer interactions and reenvision customer service delivery throughout the Texas Workforce Solutions system. This modern customer relationship management (CRM) model will ensure every Texan receives seamless, personalized, and timely support. The CRM will include an intuitive knowledge base that is capable of providing answers to Texans regarding programs, services, and other agency functions, 24 hours a day, year-round. Our strategy is to build a system that is not only efficient and integrated but also intuitive, responsive, and centered entirely on the needs of the job seekers and employers we serve.

Fueling Rural Growth and Opportunity

The vibrant communities of rural Texas are the backbone of our state's economy, driving critical industries such as energy, agriculture, manufacturing, and logistics. TWC is committed to ensuring that geography is never a barrier to opportunity. Through a multifaceted and deliberate strategy, we are investing in innovative solutions to bridge distances, deliver targeted training, and unleash the full economic potential of our rural workforce and employers.

Our approach is built on a clear understanding that a one-size-fits-all model does not work. Instead, we are deploying resources and creating flexible pathways that are tailored to the unique strengths and challenges of rural Texas. TWC is making strategic investments to ensure that rural Texans are able to access training for in-demand, middle-skills careers that are available in their own communities.

Rural Training Labs

With an investment of $1 million in WIOA statewide funds, TWC has launched the Rural Training Labs initiative to establish innovative training solutions across Texas' 229 rural counties. In partnership with community colleges and local entities, these labs will deliver short-term, customized training programs to directly address the critical skills gaps that have been identified by local employers, thus empowering residents with the in-demand credentials needed for regional jobs.

Flexible Funding for Rural Youth

Beginning with high-school students, Boards fund training for students in high-demand fields like welding, health care, and skilled trades, creating a strong local talent pipeline and providing young Texans with a clear pathway to a successful career without having to leave their hometown.

Statewide Programs, Local Impact

The SDF, ApprenticeshipTexas, and JET grant programs are designed to be accessible to employers of all sizes, statewide. These programs empower rural businesses to upskill their

incumbent workforce, build RAPs, and partner with local school districts to create the next generation of skilled talent.

By combining technological innovation with targeted, flexible investments, TWC is ensuring that the workforce of rural Texas is supported and positioned to lead. A strong rural Texas is vital to the continued economic leadership of the state, and we are committed to providing the tools and opportunities needed for these essential communities to thrive.

Expanding Apprenticeship Opportunities

Through our ApprenticeshipTexas program, TWC has invested $6 million to help employers develop and expand RAPs in middle-skills careers. These funds have helped employers operating in more than one location in the state to secure DOL registration and defray the costs of curricula development, instruction or training for apprentices, training supplies for apprentices, instructor costs, and mentor activities.

Enhancing Access to Industry-Recognized Certifications

We are building direct pipelines from training to employment by focusing on the industry-recognized certifications that Texas employers value most. In collaboration with our 28 Boards, we have identified the top credentials needed for high-demand jobs in manufacturing, health care, construction, information technology (IT), and transportation, which will allow for the streamlining of hiring processes and ensure that our training programs meet real-world business needs.

This strategy is particularly powerful in creating second chances and transforming lives. The Windham School District (WSD), for example, works closely with industry partners to equip individuals nearing release from correctional facilities with credentials in high-demand fields like telecommunications and energy management. By providing a pathway to meaningful employment, we are building a well-trained workforce, strengthening families, and making Texas communities more prosperous.

Through the strategic integration of programs and the deployment of innovative technology, TWC's comprehensive approach ensures the Texas Workforce Solutions system is not only responsive to economic demands but also proactively building a resilient talent pipeline, with a particular focus on expanding high-value apprenticeship opportunities and delivering tailored training to our vital rural communities. By creating these direct pathways to in-demand careers and empowering every Texan to succeed, TWC is a key partner in fueling sustainable economic prosperity and solidifying our state's position as a global leader in business and innovation.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State

Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. Where requirements identify the term “populations”, these must include individuals with barriers to employment as defined at WIOA Section 3. This includes displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. Additional populations include veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State’s workforce system and programs will operate.

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include—

I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

Introduction

Texas remains the best state in the nation to work, live, and own a business. The state has continued to see growth across almost all major private industries and outpaces the national job growth rate by fostering an environment that enables Texas employers—large and small—to thrive, grow, and succeed.

In May 2025, Texas’ labor market achieved new record highs in terms of the job count, number of people employed, and number of people in the civilian labor force. Over the month, Total Nonfarm employment increased by 28,100 positions to reach a sixth-consecutive-series-high level of 14,340,800 jobs and a 50th consecutive month of annual job growth (since May 2024, Texas’ employment has grown by 213,300 positions, and its annual growth rate of 1.5 percent outpaced the nation by 0.4 percentage points).

The seasonally adjusted number of employed people increased by 20,800, raising Texas’ new record high to 15,192,300. Texas’ seasonally adjusted civilian labor force also reached a new record high of 15,839,400 after increasing by 24,900 people, and its seasonally adjusted unemployment rate held at 4.1 percent.

Employment in nine of the 11 major industries expanded over the month. The industries of Trade, Transportation, and Utilities saw the largest growth with 8,400 jobs added, while the Leisure and Hospitality industry gained 8,200 jobs. Another 4,300 positions were added in Private Education and Health Services, and 2,200 jobs were tallied for Construction.

The Construction industry recorded an over-the-year gain of 28,600 positions, leading all industries with an annual growth rate of 3.4 percent. Mining and Logging achieved 2.2 percent annual growth rate, while Private Education and Health Services and the Financial Activities industry each expanded by 2.1 percent over the year.

The Midland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has the lowest unemployment rate among Texas metro areas with an unadjusted rate of 3 percent, followed by Amarillo at 3.1 percent, San Angelo at 3.1 percent, and Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos at 3.3 percent. Behind those areas, Abilene, College Station-Bryan, and Lubbock all posted unemployment rates of 3.4 percent. These metro areas were well under the U.S. unemployment rate of 4 percent for the month.

Additionally, the unadjusted civilian labor force in the Fort Worth-Arlington-Grapevine metropolitan division decreased by nearly 4,800 people, while Total Nonfarm employment increased by 8,500 jobs, not-seasonally adjusted. Employment in the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos area grew by 6,700 jobs over the month, while the MSA's unadjusted unemployment rate climbed to 3.3 percent.

Existing Demand by Job Advertisements

Demand for labor is measured using job posting analytics, as online job postings are one of the leading indicators of the labor market. In 2019, monthly job postings in Texas averaged at 556,100 with an average job growth rate of 2.3 percent. Five years later, in 2024, Texas monthly job postings averaged at 525,100 with an average annual job growth rate of 1.5 percent. In May 2025, there were 524,000 job postings in Texas with an annual job growth rate of 1.4 percent.

Source: Lightcast™, The Conference Board. TWC, Current Employment Statistics

The Healthcare Practitioners and Technical occupation family had the most job postings in May 2025. This was followed by the Sales and Related occupation family and the Management occupation family.

Table 1: Jobs With the Most Demand by Job Posting, June 2024–May 2025:

Occupation	Job Postings	Change from 2024	Annual Percent Change
Registered Nurses	135,531	-801	-0.6%
Retail Salespersons	92,895	-367	-0.4%
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	59,590	-1,704	-2.8%

Occupation	Job Postings	Change from 2024	Annual Percent Change
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	52,947	9,121	20.8%
Customer Service Representatives	51,247	-1,787	-3.4%
Software Developers	49,684	-463	-0.9%
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	44,547	6,007	15.6%
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	38,452	-271	-0.7%
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	34,453	2,748	8.7%
Computer Occupations, All Other	32,914	426	1.3%

Source: Lightcast™ Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) universe postings, June 2024–May 2025

Job demand in Texas continues to vary by occupation. Nursing remains the most in-demand occupation, followed closely by roles in the Sales and Related occupational family and the Computer and Mathematical occupational family. Compared to the previous year, demand increased for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers; Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products; Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Computer Occupations, All Other. Demand decreased for the six other occupations. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers saw the largest growth, with over 9,000 additional job postings, while Customer Service Representatives experienced the sharpest decline, with fewer job postings.

II. EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

The following describes existing employment paired with projections by industry, occupation, and leading occupations within a top industry. Highest demand is categorized by either growth rate or largest growth as noted in the introduction of each section. Employers' highest overall needs are identified by job advertisements filtered by top occupations.

Table 2: Texas' Emerging Demand Industry Sectors by Growth Rate 2022–2032

Industry Title	Annual Average Employment 2022	Annual Average Employment 2032	Number Change 2022–2032	Percent Change 2022–2032
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	895,284	1,183,578	288,294	32.2
Management of Companies and Enterprises	164,487	215,492	51,005	31.0
Transportation and Warehousing	665,962	833,562	167,600	25.1
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	237,334	284,247	46,913	19.7
Accommodation and Food Services	1,250,565	1,476,467	225,902	18.0
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,654,799	1,948,957	294,158	17.7
Finance and Insurance	575,617	670,758	95,141	16.5
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	845,007	981,773	136,766	16.1
Wholesale Trade	579,682	662,501	82,819	14.2
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	146,765	166,481	19,716	13.4
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	191,413	214,686	23,273	12.1
Retail Trade	1,356,337	1,520,518	164,181	12.1
Educational Services	1,322,730	1,472,962	150,232	11.3
Construction	765,463	847,439	81,976	10.7
Other Services (except Public Administration)	581,043	640,924	59,881	10.3
Information	203,732	220,377	16,645	8.2
Utilities	54,950	59,271	4,321	7.9
Government, Except Postal Services, State and Local Education & Hospitals	705,376	751,881	46,505	6.6
Manufacturing	904,498	962,142	57,644	6.4
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	57,727	54,765	-2,962	-5.1

Data Source: Texas Industry Projections, Long-Term 2022–2032

Of the 20 industries provided above, 15 represent a large cross section of the Texas economy and are expected to increase in employment by double-digit percentages. As of May 2025, not-seasonally adjusted Current Employment Statistics (CES) data indicate that the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry is currently more than three percentage points above the long-term annual growth trend dating back to 1990.

Despite its size and ranking in Table 1 as 16th in employment, the Texas Comptroller's Office indicated that Texas accounted for more than half of the national gross domestic product (GDP) in the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction industry in 2022. Correspondingly, Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction has a higher concentration

of employment in Texas than the rest of the nation. Although demand for employment in this industry has declined from previous years, it remains vital to the state's economy and is projected to grow over 12.1 percent by 2032.

Many companies have automated the most-dangerous aspects of the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction industry, which has increased safety and productivity in the labor market. According to data collected by the Texas Department of Insurance, workers' compensation claims in mining (including oil and gas and support activities) have declined from 3,621 in 2014 to 1,465 in 2024, a reduction of 59.5 percent. Similarly, the rate of nonfatal injuries for North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code 21 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction, as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Texas Department of Insurance Division of Workers' Compensation, declined from 1.6 per hundred workers in 2014 to 0.7 in 2023. Meanwhile, according to the Energy Information Administration, Texas field production of crude oil production rose from 1.16 billion to 2.07 billion barrels from 2014–2024.

As of May 2025, Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction, which is an industry that requires a high degree of expertise and training, has not fully recovered to its May 2019 employment levels. According to CES estimates, this industry reached a series-high, not-seasonally adjusted employment level of 320,700 jobs in December 2014. More than 80 occupations within the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction industry pay above the 2024 statewide median annual wage of $47,499 across all industries. Of these, the top-10 occupations that will have added the most jobs within the industry by 2032 are listed in Table 2.

Table 3: Top-10 Projected Occupations in Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction Paying Above 2024 Statewide Median Annual Wage Across All Industries by Largest Employment Change 2022–2032

Occupation Code	Occupation Title	2022 Estimated Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Change in Employment	Percent Change	Typical Education for Entry
53-7073	Wellhead Pumpers	8,306	10,022	1,716	20.7	High school diploma or equivalent
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	8,747	10,103	1,356	15.5	Bachelor's degree
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	10,587	11,844	1,257	11.9	High school diploma or equivalent
17-2171	Petroleum Engineers	5,433	6,549	1,116	20.5	Bachelor's degree

Occupation Code	Occupation Title	2022 Estimated Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Change in Employment	Percent Change	Typical Education for Entry
47-5013	Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas	13,008	13,849	841	6.5	No formal educational credential
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	3,275	4,046	771	23.5	Bachelor's degree
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	8,636	9,340	704	8.2	Postsecondary nondegree award
47-5011	Derrick Operators, Oil and Gas	6,517	7,080	563	8.6	No formal educational credential
47-5012	Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas	6,200	6,634	434	7.0	No formal educational credential
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	3,761	4,148	387	10.3	High school diploma or equivalent

Data Source: Texas Industry Projections, Long-Term 2022–2032

Each occupation is assigned an entry-level education by BLS, which is representative of the general level of education most workers must possess to enter the occupation. Knowing the entry-level education requirement for an occupation can help in planning skills development and training.

Three of the 10 occupations provided above generally require a bachelor's degree for entry. The remaining seven occupations generally require less than a four-year degree yet still earn at least $2,000 more than the 2024 statewide median annual salary. Wellhead Pumpers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, and Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators are middle skill occupations, which generally require more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree.

Long-term projections data also highlights industries that are likely to have the largest absolute employment growth over the projected period. These industries can be ordered to show which industries are projected to add the most jobs from 2022–2032.

Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations Ranked by Largest Growth

Table 4: NAICS Two-Digit Projected Employment Growth in Order by Industry, 2022–2032

Industry Title	Annual Average Employment 2022	Annual Average Employment 2032	Number Change 2022–2032	Percent Change 2022–2032
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,654,799	1,948,957	294,158	17.8
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	895,284	1,183,578	288,294	32.2
Accommodation and Food Services	1,250,565	1,476,467	225,902	18.1
Transportation and Warehousing	665,962	833,562	167,600	25.2
Retail Trade	1,356,337	1,520,518	164,181	12.1
Educational Services	1,322,730	1,472,962	150,232	11.4
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	845,007	981,773	136,766	16.2
Finance and Insurance	575,617	670,758	95,141	16.5
Wholesale Trade	579,682	662,501	82,819	14.3
Construction	765,463	847,439	81,976	10.7
Other Services (except Public Administration)	581,043	640,924	59,881	10.3
Manufacturing	904,498	962,142	57,644	6.4
Management of Companies and Enterprises	164,487	215,492	51,005	31.0
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	237,334	284,247	46,913	19.8
Government, Except Postal Services, State and Local Education & Hospitals	705,376	751,881	46,505	6.6
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	191,413	214,686	23,273	12.2
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	146,765	166,481	19,716	13.4
Information	203,732	220,377	16,645	8.2
Utilities	54,950	59,271	4,321	7.9
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	57,727	54,765	-2,962	-5.1

Data Source: Texas Industry Projections, Long-Term 2022–2032

The state's senior citizen and child populations—key consumers of health care and social assistance—continue to grow, driving the increased demand for healthcare workers in Texas. As employers are increasingly requiring potential hires to have education beyond a high school diploma to meet market and industry expectations, the health care industry has training challenges. Among the 10 health care occupations projected to add the most jobs, three generally require less than a bachelor's degree, two require a bachelor's degree, and five require education beyond a bachelor's degree. The following occupations require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree for entry:

- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
- Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians

- Radiologic Technologists and Technicians

Table 5: Top-10 Projected Occupations in Health Care and Social Assistance Paying Above 2024 Statewide Median Annual Wage Across All Industries by Largest Employment Change 2022–2032

Occupation Code	Occupation Title	2022 Estimated Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Change in Employment	Percent Change	Typical Education for Entry
29-1141	Registered Nurses	197,925	227,261	29,336	14.8	Bachelor's degree
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	38,076	53,505	15,429	40.5	Bachelor's degree
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	16,620	27,689	11,069	66.6	Master's degree
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	52,545	59,367	6,822	13.0	Postsecondary nondegree award
29-2010	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	20,471	24,222	3,751	18.3	Associate's degree
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	12,624	16,352	3,728	29.5	Master's degree
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	9,303	12,719	3,416	36.7	Master's degree
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	17,107	20,494	3,387	19.8	Associate's degree
29-1123	Physical Therapists	15,562	18,878	3,316	21.3	Doctoral or professional degree
29-1071	Physician Assistants	7,593	10,784	3,191	42.0	Master's degree

Data Source: Texas Occupational Projections, Long-Term 2022–2032

Long-term projections data allows for the ranking of occupations, without reference to industry, in terms of both percentage growth and absolute growth between 2022 and 2032. The following are emerging demand occupations regardless of industry.

Emerging Demand Occupations by Overall Industry and Fastest Growing

Between 2022 and 2032, Texas employment is projected to grow 14.7 percent among all occupations, increasing employment by 2.1 million. Wind Turbine Service Technicians, the fastest-growing occupation, is expected to increase by 63.4 percent during this time, and Texas is projected to add more than 78,000 General and Operations Managers.

Table 6: Projected Fastest Growing Occupations Among All Industries 2022–2032 (Percent)

Occupation Code	Occupation Title	Annual Average Employment 2022	Annual Average Employment 2032	Number Change 2022–2032	Percent Change 2022–2032
49-9081	Wind Turbine Service Technicians	4,861	7,946	3,085	63.4
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	19,063	30,490	11,427	59.9
15-2051	Data Scientists	13,218	20,246	7,028	53.1
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	14,621	21,622	7,001	47.8
15-1252	Software Developers	110,280	161,784	51,504	46.7
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	12,057	17,288	5,231	43.3
15-1253	Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	17,352	24,435	7,083	40.8
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	49,425	69,184	19,759	39.9
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	113,681	158,834	45,153	39.7
29-1071	Physician Assistants	9,220	12,704	3,484	37.7
31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	7,356	10,079	2,723	37.0
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	12,645	17,307	4,662	36.8
13-1081	Logisticians	16,651	22,683	6,032	36.2
29-1131	Veterinarians	5,888	7,980	2,092	35.5
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	52,723	71,045	18,322	34.7

Data Source: Texas Occupational Projections, Long-Term 2022–2032

Note: Occupations in this table must have had employed 2,500 individuals or more in 2022.

Emerging Demand Occupations Overall Industry and Largest Growth

Table 7: Top-25 Occupations Projected to Add the Most Employment 2022–2032

Occupation Code	Occupation Title	Annual Average Employment 2022	Annual Average Employment 2032	Number Change 2022–2032	Percent Change 2022–2032
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	425,557	504,275	78,718	18.5
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	333,872	394,288	60,416	18.1
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	264,814	321,598	56,784	21.4
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	313,672	367,496	53,824	17.2

Occupation Code	Occupation Title	Annual Average Employment 2022	Annual Average Employment 2032	Number Change 2022–2032	Percent Change 2022–2032
15-1252	Software Developers	110,280	161,784	51,504	46.7
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	113,681	158,834	45,153	39.7
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	225,093	269,120	44,027	19.6
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	226,454	270,322	43,868	19.4
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	319,401	357,632	38,231	12.0
29-1141	Registered Nurses	233,854	267,981	34,127	14.6
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	185,966	213,472	27,506	14.8
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	310,203	334,330	24,127	7.8
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	112,047	136,014	23,967	21.4
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	203,129	226,595	23,466	11.6
47-2061	Construction Laborers	158,020	181,289	23,269	14.7
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	115,697	137,595	21,898	18.9
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	129,587	151,222	21,635	16.7
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	86,565	107,841	21,276	24.6
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	85,261	105,970	20,709	24.3
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	49,425	69,184	19,759	40.0
11-3031	Financial Managers	58,032	76,748	18,716	32.3
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	94,505	113,026	18,521	19.6
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	52,723	71,045	18,322	34.8
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	98,708	116,825	18,117	18.4
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	146,215	164,298	18,083	12.4

Source: Texas Occupational Projections, Long-Term 2022–2032

III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

Employers' Employment Needs for Fastest Growing Occupations

The Conference Board HWOL, an internet-based data series, provides timely, monthly measures of labor demand using advertised job postings at the national, regional, state, and metropolitan-area levels.

The following table shows the specialized and baseline skills and certifications employers most-commonly require for the occupations in Table 6.

Table 8: Common Required Skills for Fastest-Growing Occupations

Specialized Skills	Common Skills	Qualifications
• Computer Science • Structured Query Language (SQL) (Programming Language) • Agile Methodology • Python (Programming Language) • Software Development	• Communications • Management • Leadership • Operations • Problem Solving	• Advanced Practice Registered Nurse-Certified Nurse Practitioner (APRN-CNP) • Basic Life Support Certification • Registered Nurse (RN) • Valid Driver's License • Board Certified/Board Eligible

Source: Lightcast™

Note: Due to a source change for this information, Baseline Skills are now referred to as Common Skills and Certifications are now referred to as Qualifications.

Specialized Skills:

- Computer Science refers to the study of computers and computational systems, encompassing both theoretical foundations and practical applications. This skill involves understanding algorithms, data structures, programming languages, and software development, which enable the design and implementation of efficient solutions to complex problems. Computer Science skills are used to create software applications, analyze data, and develop systems that enhance functionality across various domains, including technology, health care, and finance.
- SQL is a programming language used to manage and interact with relational databases. It allows users to insert, update, delete, and retrieve data efficiently, making it essential for handling large volumes of information while maintaining data integrity. SQL is widely used in the finance, health care, and e-commerce industries. SQL proficiency is particularly important for database administrators, data analysts, and developers, as it forms the foundation for data management and analysis.
- Agile methodology is a project management approach that emphasizes flexibility, collaboration, and iterative progress through small, incremental changes. This skill involves understanding principles and practices that facilitate adaptive planning,

evolutionary development, and early delivery of valuable software. Agile is used to enhance team communication, respond to changing requirements, and improve product quality by promoting continuous feedback and iterative cycles.

- Python is a high-level, interpreted programming language known for its simplicity, readability, and ease of use. It is widely used in web development, scientific computing, data analysis and visualization, and artificial intelligence and machine learning. Python's extensive ecosystem of libraries and frameworks contributes to its popularity among developers. It's clear and straightforward syntax also makes it an ideal first language for new programmers.

- Software development is the process of designing, creating, testing, and maintaining computer programs or software applications. It involves a specialized skill set, including knowledge of programming languages, algorithms, databases, and user interface design. Software developers use their skills to solve complex problems and create efficient, user-friendly software solutions that meet specific business and user needs. Software development includes coding, testing, debugging, documentation, and collaboration with other members of the project team.

Common Skills:

- Communication is the ability to interact, convey information, collaborate with others in a clear and understandable manner, and translate complex data and information into a comprehensible format for diverse audiences. This skill is crucial in professional, personal, and academic settings, enabling individuals to exchange ideas, solve problems, and work together. Effective communication fosters understanding and cooperation, making it an essential component of successful relationships and organizations.

- Management is a skill set involving planning, organizing, leading, and controlling resources to achieve specific goals. It is a commonly required skill, applicable in business, government, and nonprofit organizations. A good manager must have strong communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership skills while being able to adapt to different situations and work effectively with a team.

- Leadership is a key skill shared by successful individuals across many fields. It involves the ability to inspire, guide, and support a team toward shared objectives. Strong leadership qualities include effective communication, empathy, sound decision-making skills, adaptability, and having a clear vision. While some may have a natural inclination toward leadership, it is also a cultivatable skill through training, practical experience, and learning from mentors and peers.

- Operations is a fundamental skill that involves managing and overseeing a business' or organization's day-to-day activities, including managing resources, processes, people, and technology to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Strong operations skills are critical for businesses to achieve their objectives, meet customers' needs, and remain competitive in the marketplace.

- Problem solving is the process of identifying, analyzing, and resolving problems that arise in a variety of settings. It is a critical skill valued across industries and roles,

involving the ability to identify the root causes of a problem, generate potential solutions, evaluate options, and implement the most effective course of action. Effective problem solving requires a combination of critical thinking, creativity, and strong communication skills. Developing this skill enhances an individual's ability to navigate challenges and supports organizations to achieve their goals.

Qualifications:

- APRN-CNP is a certification for registered nurses who have completed advanced education and clinical training in their field. This certification allows the nurse practitioner to provide primary care services, diagnose and treat illnesses, and prescribe medications in certain states. Awarded by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), the certification demonstrates a nurse practitioner's knowledge and competency in their specialty.
- The Basic Life Support certification verifies an individual's ability to perform life-saving techniques in emergency situations, including cardiac arrest, respiratory distress, and choking. In general, healthcare professionals and first responders require this certification, but it may also benefit those seeking to be prepared for emergencies. To obtain this certification, an individual must complete training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), and other basic life support techniques.
- The RN certification is a professional certification obtained by individuals who have completed a nursing program and have passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN). RNs are educated and trained to provide healthcare services and support to individuals, families, and communities in various healthcare settings, including hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes. The certification ensures that RNs possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and expertise to provide quality care to patients.
- A valid driver's license is an official document certifying that an individual has the ability to operate a motor vehicle on public roads. It is issued by a government agency after an individual has passed a driving test and meets certain requirements such as age, vision, and knowledge of traffic laws.
- Board Certified/Board Eligible signifies that an individual has met the requirements set by a professional medical board or association for specialization in a particular field of medicine. This designation indicates that the individual has either completed the certification process (Board Certified) or is eligible to undergo the certification process (Board Eligible). Medical professionals use this designation to demonstrate their expertise and qualifications in their specialized area of practice, thus enhancing their credibility and trustworthiness among patients, colleagues, and healthcare organizations.

Employers' Employment Needs for Largest Growth Occupations

The following table shows the most commonly required skills by employers for the occupations in the Table 6.

Table 9: Common Required Skills for Occupations Adding the Most Employment

Specialized Skills	Common Skills	Qualifications
• Nursing • Merchandising • Selling Techniques • Warehousing • Nursing Care	• Communications • Customer Service • Sales • Management • Leadership	• RN • Valid Driver's License • Basic Life Support Certification • Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) • Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification

Source: Lightcast™

Specialized Skills:

- Nursing refers to comprehensive care provided to individuals to promote health, prevent illness, and manage patient recovery. This skill encompasses the assessment of patient needs, the administration of medications, and the implementation of treatment plans while ensuring the well-being of patients in various healthcare settings. Nurses use their knowledge to support patients physically, emotionally, and psychologically while also collaborating with other healthcare professionals to deliver effective care.
- Merchandising refers to the process of promoting and selling products through effective presentation and strategic placement within a retail environment. This skill requires knowledge of consumer behavior, product selection, and visual display techniques that enhance the shopping experience. Retailers use merchandising to optimize product visibility, manage inventory, and create appealing layouts that encourage customer engagement and drive sales.
- Selling techniques are a set of specialized skills used by sales professionals to persuade and convince customers to purchase their products or services. These techniques may include, but are not limited to, building rapport, demonstrating product knowledge, identifying and addressing customer needs and objections, creating urgency, and closing the sale. Effective selling techniques require a deep understanding of customers' needs and motivations, as well as the ability to articulate how the product or service will meet those needs.
- Nursing Care refers to the comprehensive support and assistance provided to individuals in managing their health and well-being. This skill encompasses the assessment of patient needs, development of care plans, and implementation of interventions to promote recovery and comfort. Knowledge of Nursing Care is used to

monitor patient conditions, administer medications, and educate patients and families about health management, ensuring a holistic approach to healthcare delivery.

- Warehousing refers to the process of storing goods and materials in a designated facility to ensure their safe and efficient management. This skill encompasses the organization, inventory control, and distribution of products, thus enabling the effective tracking and retrieval of items as needed. Knowledge of Warehousing is used to optimize storage space, streamline operations, and maintain accurate inventory records, thereby supporting supply chain efficiency and logistics management.

Common Skills:

- Communication is the ability to interact, convey information, collaborate with others in a clear and understandable manner, and translate complex data and information into a comprehensible format for diverse audiences. This skill is crucial in professional, personal, and academic settings, enabling individuals to exchange ideas, solve problems, and work together. Effective communication fosters understanding and cooperation, making it an essential component of successful relationships and organizations.

- Customer service is a necessary and common skill most fields and industries. It involves effectively communicating with customers to understand their needs, answering their questions or concerns, and providing them with excellent support and service. A successful customer service representative must be patient, empathetic, and knowledgeable about their products or services. Strong customer service skills can lead to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and business success.

- Management is a set of skills that involve a variety of tasks, such as planning, organizing, leading, and controlling resources to achieve specific goals. It is a commonly required skill, applicable in various areas, including business, government, and non-profit organizations. A good manager must possess strong communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership skills, and be able to adapt to different situations and work effectively with a team.

- Sales is the art of convincing people to buy products or services. It is a common skill that involves understanding the customer's needs, identifying pain points, and presenting a solution that addresses such issues. Salespeople must know how to communicate effectively, build trust with clients, negotiate deals, and close the sale. Success in sales requires persistence, creativity, and a willingness to learn and adapt to new situations.

- Leadership is a key skill that is shared by successful individuals across many fields. It involves the ability to inspire, guide, and support a team toward shared objectives. Strong leadership qualities include effective communication, empathy, sound decision-making skills, adaptability, and having a clear vision. While some may have a natural inclination toward leadership, it is a skill that can be cultivated through training, practical experience, and learning from mentors and peers.

Qualifications:

- The RN certification is a professional certification obtained by individuals who have completed a nursing program and have passed the NCLEX-RN. RNs are educated and trained to provide healthcare services and support to individuals, families, and communities in various healthcare settings, including hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes. The certification ensures that RNs possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and expertise to provide quality care to patients.
- A valid driver's license is an official documentation that certifies that an individual has the ability to operate a motor vehicle on public roads. It is issued by a government agency after an individual has passed a driving test and meets certain requirements such as age, vision, and knowledge of traffic laws.
- The Basic Life Support certification is a credential that verifies an individual's ability to perform life-saving techniques in emergency situations involving cardiac arrest, respiratory distress, and choking. In general, this certification is required for healthcare professionals and first responders, but it may also be beneficial for those seeking to be prepared in case of an emergency. To obtain this certification, an individual must complete training in CPR, use of an AED, and other basic life support techniques.
- A LVN is a healthcare professional who provides basic nursing care such as monitoring vital signs, administering medication, and providing comfort and support for patients. They typically work in settings such as hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities under the supervision of a registered nurse or physician. To become an LVN, an individual must complete a certification program and pass a board exam.
- An ACLS Certification is a certification that healthcare professionals can obtain to demonstrate proficiency in advanced cardiac life support skills including recognizing and managing cardiac arrest, stroke, and other cardiac emergencies.

B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce in the State and within various state regions. Provide key analytical conclusions in aggregate as well as disaggregated among populations to identify potential disparities in employment and educational attainment and understand labor force conditions for items (i)-(iii) below. Populations analyzed must include individuals with barriers to employment described in the first paragraph of Section II. Analysis must include—

I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

Table 10: Texas Total Nonfarm Employment by Industry, February 2020–May 2025

Industry	February 2020	May 2025	Change	Percentage Change
Total Nonfarm	12,963,000	14,340,800	1,377,800	110.6
Total Private	10,960,000	12,191,500	1,231,500	111.2
Goods Producing	1,924,400	2,083,800	159,400	108.3

Industry	February 2020	May 2025	Change	Percentage Change
Service-Providing	11,038,600	12,257,000	1,218,400	111.0
Mining and Logging	234,100	225,500	-8,600	96.3
Construction	779,400	880,500	101,100	113.0
Manufacturing	910,900	977,800	66,900	107.3
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,522,400	2,812,600	290,200	111.5
Information	212,300	225,700	13,400	106.3
Financial Activities	818,600	943,400	124,800	115.2
Professional and Business Services	1,837,100	2,138,400	301,300	116.4
Private Education and Health Services	1,777,300	1,969,600	192,300	110.8
Leisure and Hospitality	1,417,200	1,529,200	112,000	107.9
Other Services	450,700	488,800	38,100	108.5
Government	2,003,000	2,149,300	146,300	107.3

Source: Current Employment Statistics, Seasonally Adjusted

Industries recovered employment at varying rates, which led to shifts in employment concentration in some industries. In Texas, the Mining and Logging industry makes up a substantially larger percentage of employment compared to national levels. The industry accounted for 1.6 percent of Texas employment, while accounting for 0.4 percent of jobs nationally. Texas has a lower share of Private Education and Health Services jobs compared to national levels (13.7 percent versus 17.1 percent). Of the 11 major industries in Texas, 10 recovered when compared against the February 2020 employment peaks, with 10 industries expanding more quickly in Texas than at the national level. The same 10 industries have fully recovered to pre-pandemic employment levels, both in Texas and at the national level, with Mining and Logging being the one exception. As of May 2025, Mining and Logging was recovering faster in Texas (96.3 percent) than at the national level (91.4 percent).

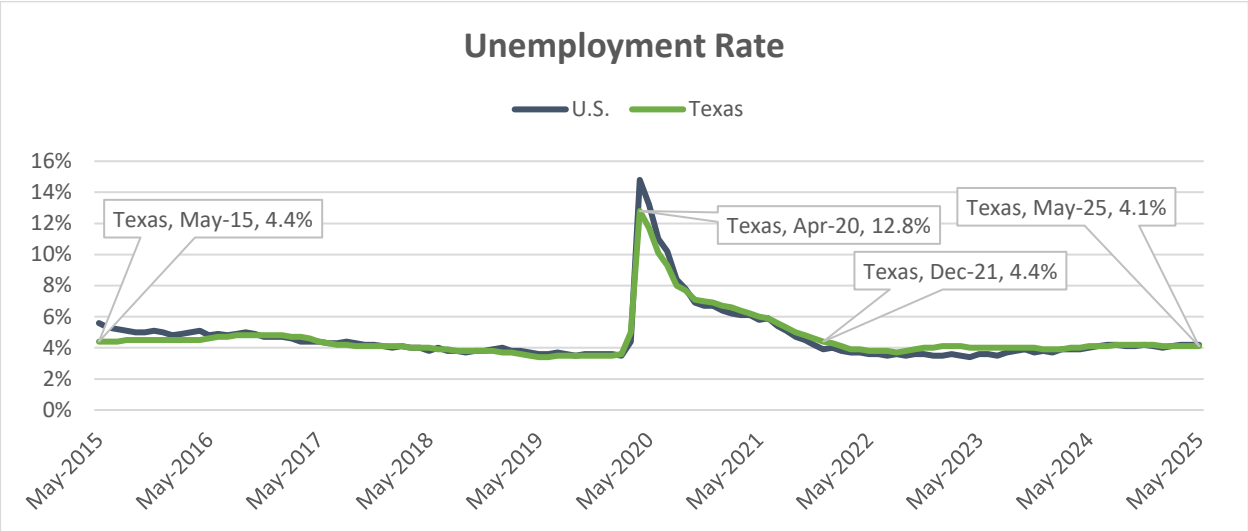
Table 11: Comparing Texas to U.S. Industry Percent Share and Recovery, February 2020–May 2025

Industry	Texas Share	U.S. Share	Texas Recovery	U.S. Recovery
Total Nonfarm	100.0%	100.0%	110.6%	104.8%
Total Private	85.0%	85.2%	111.2%	105.0%
Goods Producing	14.5%	13.6%	108.3%	103.2%
Service-Providing	85.5%	86.4%	111.0%	105.0%
Mining and Logging	1.6%	0.4%	96.3%	91.4%
Construction	6.1%	5.2%	113.0%	109.3%
Manufacturing	6.8%	8.0%	107.3%	100.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	19.6%	18.2%	111.5%	104.9%
Information	1.6%	1.8%	106.3%	101.0%
Financial Activities	6.6%	5.8%	115.2%	104.3%
Professional and Business Services	14.9%	14.1%	116.4%	105.1%
Private Education and Health Services	13.7%	17.1%	110.8%	111.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	10.7%	10.7%	107.9%	101.0%
Other Services	3.4%	3.8%	108.5%	101.8%
Government	15.0%	14.8%	107.3%	103.2%

Data Source: Current Employment Statistics, Seasonally Adjusted

Since September 2022, the unemployment rate in Texas has held steady between 3.8 to 4.2 percent. In May 2025, the unemployment rate for Texas stood at 4.1 percent, which was slightly lower than the nationwide rate of 4.2 percent. The Texas and nationwide rates have differed by 0.1 percentage points or less for 16 consecutive months starting February 2024.

Texas and United States Labor Unemployment Rates (Seasonally Adjusted)



Because the unemployment rate is a relatively simple measure of labor surplus that represents the portion of the total labor force that is not employed but is looking for work, many experts consider the labor force participation rate (LFPR) to be the most effective determiner of labor market conditions. The LFPR is the percentage of the total civilian population that is either employed or unemployed—that is, either working or actively seeking work.

In August 2024, the LFPR was at 65.1 percent, the highest Texas rate in over 10 years. In contrast, as of May 2025, the nationwide participation rate had not yet reached pre-pandemic levels. During that month, the Texas LFPR was at 64.9 percent, which was 2.5 percentage points higher than the nationwide rate. Reasons for the relatively higher Texas rate include a younger working-age population as well as a higher percentage of Texans over the age of 55 years participating in the labor force when compared to the nation.

Texas and United States Labor Force Participation Rates (Seasonally Adjusted)

According to 2023 Census Bureau data, 10.6 percent of Texans between the ages of 18 and 64 were classified as having a disability, a figure that was slightly lower than the nationwide rate of 11.1 percent. There were an estimated 986,100 working Texans with disabilities, totaling 7.1 percent of employed Texans. The estimated number of unemployed Texans with disabilities over this period was 98,411, which represented 15.5 percent of the total number of unemployed Texans.

Additionally, in 2023, the Census Bureau estimated that 22.7 percent of Texans 18 to 64 years old who were not in the labor force (871,500 individuals) had a disability.

Table 12: Texas Employment Status by Disability Status and Type

Employment and Disability Status	**Estimate**
Total number of Texans 18–64 years old	18,383,955
In the labor force:	14,543,217
Employed:	13,909,767
With a disability	986,100
With a hearing difficulty	251,291
With a vision difficulty	252,780
With a cognitive difficulty	377,464
With an ambulatory difficulty	256,661
With a self-care difficulty	59,629
With an independent living difficulty	164,727
No disability	12,923,667
Unemployed:	633,450
With a disability	98,411
With a hearing difficulty	13,939
With a vision difficulty	24,339
With a cognitive difficulty	55,606
With an ambulatory difficulty	23,606
With a self-care difficulty	7,719
With an independent living difficulty	29,209
No disability	535,039
Not in labor force:	3,840,738
With a disability	871,500
With a hearing difficulty	135,204
With a vision difficulty	188,084
With a cognitive difficulty	429,624
With an ambulatory difficulty	452,635
With a self-care difficulty	219,205
With an independent living difficulty	436,598

Employment and Disability Status	Estimate
No disability	2,969,238

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B18120

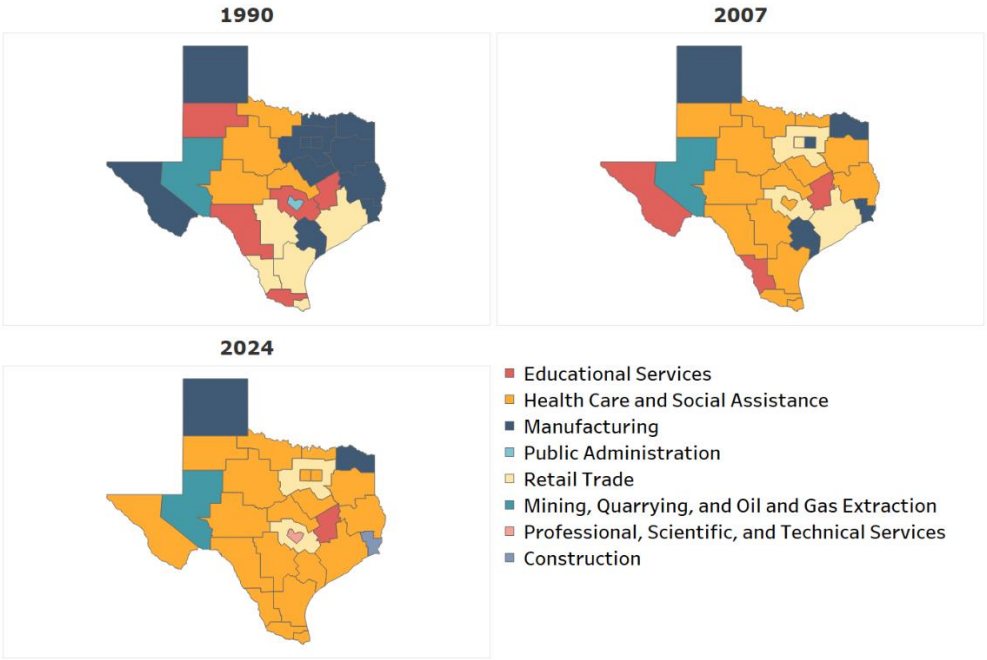
II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest industry in 21 of 28 of the local workforce development areas (workforce areas) in Texas. The industry increased by more than 195,000 jobs from the fourth quarter of 2019 to the fourth quarter of 2024. Generally, this industry has shown itself to be resilient in Texas during slower economic times due to the population of aging residents, including retirees. As the population of Texas continues to increase, Health Care and Social Assistance is projected to show long-term employment growth through 2032.

Manufacturing continues to dominate the Panhandle and Northeast Texas workforce areas. Often very closely connected with the Oil and Gas industry, Manufacturing gained more than 69,000 jobs from the fourth quarter of 2019 to the fourth quarter of 2024. The Retail Trade industry dominates the North Central Texas and Rural Capital workforce areas, each of which surround large metro urban counties. The industry changed considerably from 2019 to 2021 as Retail shifted from brick-and-mortar stores to online retail, yet the industry expanded by almost 71,000 jobs between fourth quarter 2019 to fourth quarter 2024. Due to the location of Texas A&M University in College Station, Educational Services continues to dominate in the Brazos Valley workforce area. Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction leads industries in the Permian Basin. Additionally, Professional and Technical Services continues to dominate Capital Area, which is driven by Computer Systems Design and Related Services as more tech companies have relocated to the region.

Top Industry by Employment, 1990 to 2024



Data Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

When analyzing employers by employment levels, TWC finds that all 12-month average private unemployment insurance (UI) accounts have grown for all size classes since 2017, except in 2020. In 2020, employment losses occurred among all class sizes greater than 10 employees, while gains occurred for size classes ranging from one to nine employees. Additionally, in 2020, UI accounts with one to four employees grew by 1.6 percent, while accounts with five to nine employees increased by 0.4 percent. In 2024, employment grew an average of 1.2 percent across all size classes, each class surpassing its respective 2019 12-month average, indicating a full recovery from the 2020 dip. Similarly, wages across all size classes have increased since 2017, except for in 2020. During 2020, wages for employers with fewer than 100 employees increased, while wages for class sizes greater than 100 employees decreased or stayed the same.

QCEW provides insight into wages paid by an industry as well as by ownership type (public or private). In 2019, 13.7 percent of all wages were attributable to local, state, and federal employment. In 2020, 14.3 percent of all wages in Texas were paid to government employees, which was an increase of 0.6 percentage point from the previous equivalent time frame. By 2024, the share of wages to government employees dropped to 13 percent of all wages. Private sector employees were paid 85.7 percent of wages in 2020 and increased to 87 percent of wages in 2024, a change of 1.3 percent, which superseded the 2019 percentage by 0.7 percent. In comparison, in 2020, the nation paid a slightly larger share of wages to government employees, with 14.9 percent, and a lower share of wages to private employers, 85.1 percent. In 2024, these values were 14.2 percent and 85.8 percent. In the private sector, the highest percentage of Texas wages in 2024 were paid to Professional and Business Services (23.74 percent), followed by Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (20.6 percent), Education and Health Services (7 percent), Financial Activities (10.8 percent), and Manufacturing (10.1 percent). Furthermore, the two private industries of Trade, Transportation, and Utilities and Natural Resources and Mining paid a significantly higher

percentage of wages in Texas than nationwide (20.6 percent and 4.2 percent in Texas, respectively, versus 17.8 percent and 1.3 percent at the national level).

III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

Educational and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Through data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey, the following information has been procured about educational attainment in Texas:

- 86.3 percent of Texans aged 25 years and older had attained an educational level of high school graduate or higher, compared to 89.8 percent nationwide. The percentage of Texans who had attained a bachelor's degree or higher was 34.2 percent, compared to 36.2 percent for the nation.
- 13.7 percent of the Texas population aged 25 years and older have less than a high school degree.
- 4.5 percent of Texas veterans aged 25 and older attained less than a high school degree, compared to 14.4 percent of the same age cohort of Texas nonveterans. Similarly, 73.5 percent of Texas veterans aged 25 and older attained at least some college education, as compared to 61.2 percent of Texan nonveterans of that age group.

See the following tables for additional information on key Texas population characteristics, including educational attainment for the general population and for veterans.

Key Texas Population Characteristics

According to the 2020 decennial Census, the Texas population is 29,145,505, and as of May 2025, BLS estimated the Texas seasonally adjusted civilian labor force at 15,839,406 individuals.

In May 2025, Texas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 4.1 percent was 0.1 percentage points lower than the national unemployment rate, 4.2 percent.

Table 13: Educational Attainment for the Population

Texas Population 18 to 24 Years	Percentage for Highest Level Achieved	Percentage for This Level or Higher
Less than high school diploma	13.1%	N/A
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	37.5%	86.8%
Some college or associate's degree	38%	49.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	11.3%	11.3%

Texas Population 25 Years and Older	Percentage for Highest Level Achieved	Percentage for This Level or Higher
Less than 9th grade	7.1%	N/A
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	6.6%	N/A
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	24.2%	86.3%
Some college, no degree	19.8%	62.1%
Associate's degree	8.1%	42.3%
Bachelor's degree	21.6%	34.2%
Graduate or professional degree	12.6%	12.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table S1501

Table 14: Veteran Status by Highest Level of Educational Attainment

Texas Veterans 25 Years and Older	Percentage
Less than high school diploma	4.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	22%
Some college or associate's degree	39.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	34%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B21003

IV. COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYTICAL CONCLUSION. DESCRIBE AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MEETING HIRING, EDUCATION, AND SKILLS NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ECONOMY COMPARED TO THE ASSETS AVAILABLE IN THE LABOR FORCE IN THE STATE.

Texas is a diverse state with a vibrant and growing labor market. Businesses require a qualified workforce to thrive in the modern economy and reap its benefits. To ensure that businesses succeed, TWC and its agency partners work to help and encourage all Texans to engage in meaningful employment and achieve career success. TWC uses occupational and skills data derived from 2030 employment projections to better understand how it may assist businesses and job seekers.

Identifying the Needs

One way in which TWC measures skill gaps is through recently released BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) state data, which showed the gaps between job openings and job hires. Because there are different forces that affect labor force participation,

the difference between the two data sets does not exclusively identify a shortage caused by skill gaps. However, it may be used as a gauge over time to identify whether the skill gaps have widened or are closing.

According to seasonally adjusted JOLTS data for Texas, job hires stood at 499,000 in April 2025, which was up 22,000 from April 2024. In February 2020, there were 586,000 job hires, which declined to 310,000 in April 2020. This was immediately followed by a series high of 739,000 in May. Hires averaged 568,000 between June 2020 and April 2025.

Job openings, on the other hand, stood at a series high of 1.074 million in March 2022. In April 2025, job openings were at 596,000 which was down from 754,000 in April 2024. This was a reduction of 158,000 from the April 2024 level, but it was still above the February 2020 level of 532,000. In April 2025, there were 97,000 more job openings than hires, although the amount of this gap has narrowed recently.

To help employers get the workers they need and fulfill TWC's mission, the agency identifies ways to address the growing demand for workers who have more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree, with a few occupational exceptions. TWC took on a middle-skills initiative categorizing these occupations that are expected to be in demand. This list includes just over 400 occupations and, according to long-term occupational projections data, will represent over 42 percent of total employment by 2032. These occupations consist of a broad range of work and are led by Production occupations at 22.2 percent of all middle-skills occupations, followed by Construction & Maintenance Occupations at 20.0 percent. Due to typical education requirements, Health Care Occupations represent 10.3 percent of all middle-skills occupations but 18.2 percent of employment in 2032, while Computer, Engineering & Science occupations represent 6.4 percent of occupations and 2.9 percent of employment. Office & Administrative Support workers led in terms of projected employment with 23.2 percent of all middle-skills jobs.

Table 15: Middle Skills Projections by Occupational Family 2022–2032

Occupational Family	Number of Occupations	Occupational Family Percentage	2032 Projected Employment	2032 Projected Employment Percentage
Management, Business & Financial	7	1.9	124,374	15.1
Computer, Engineering & Science	24	6.5	199,813	18.1
Education, Legal, Community Service & Arts	21	5.7	319,379	14.7
Health Care	40	10.8	1,264,753	17.8
Service	39	10.5	615,801	14.6
Sales	6	1.6	379,131	16
Office & Administrative Support	45	12.1	1,612,905	5.7
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	3	0.8	2,093	0.9

Occupational Family	Number of Occupations	Occupational Family Percentage	2032 Projected Employment	2032 Projected Employment Percentage
Construction & Maintenance	78	21.0	1,004,422	15.5
Production	82	22.1	556,826	10.3
Transportation & Material Moving	26	7.0	870,471	20.4
Grand Total*	371	100.0	6,949,968	13.1

Data Source: Texas Occupational Projections, Long Term 2022–2032

Note: Actual count of occupations does not equal the sum of values in the table due to suppression.

Table 16: Top-25 Middle-Skills Occupations Projected to Add the Most Jobs 2022–2032

Occupational Code	Occupational Title	2022 Employment	2032 Employment	Number Change	Percent Change
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	264,814	321,598	56,784	21.4
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	313,672	367,496	53,824	17.2
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	226,454	270,322	43,868	19.4
29-1141	Registered Nurses	233,854	267,981	34,127	14.6
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	310,203	334,330	24,127	7.8
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	129,587	151,222	21,635	16.7
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	85,261	105,970	20,709	24.3
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	98,708	116,825	18,117	18.4
33-9032	Security Guards	92,618	110,280	17,662	19.1
31-9092	Medical Assistants	66,739	83,567	16,828	25.2
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	66,048	81,508	15,460	23.4
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	90,175	103,262	13,087	14.5
47-2111	Electricians	68,932	81,435	12,503	18.1
25-9045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	101,545	113,779	12,234	12
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	43,078	54,577	11,499	26.7
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	106,544	117,843	11,299	10.6
53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	47,029	57,938	10,909	23.2
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	82,398	93,150	10,752	13.0

Occupational Code	Occupational Title	2022 Employment	2032 Employment	Number Change	Percent Change
39-9011	Childcare Workers	90,751	101,401	10,650	11.7
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents	63,511	74,131	10,620	16.7
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents	65,178	75,755	10,577	16.2
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	72,060	82,092	10,032	13.9
43-6013	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	56,850	66,109	9,259	16.3
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	47,191	56,217	9,026	19.1
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	51,065	60,057	8,992	17.6

Data Source: Texas Occupational Projections, Long Term 2022–2032

Table 17: Common Required Skills for Middle Skill Occupations Projected to Add the Most Jobs 2022–2032

Specialized Skills	Common Skills	Qualifications
• Nursing • Nursing Care • Medical Records • Marketing • Selling Techniques	• Communications • Customer Service • Sales • Management • Leadership	• RN • Valid Driver's License • Basic Life Support Certification • CPR Certification • LVN

Source: Lightcast™

Note: Due to a source change, Baseline Skills are now referred to as Common Skills, and Certifications are now referred to as Qualifications.

Specialized Skills:

- Nursing refers to comprehensive care provided to individuals to promote health, prevent illness, and manage patient recovery. This skill encompasses the assessment of patient needs, the administration of medications, and the implementation of treatment plans while ensuring the well-being of patients in various healthcare settings. Nurses use their knowledge to support patients physically, emotionally, and psychologically while also collaborating with other healthcare professionals to deliver effective care.
- Nursing Care refers to the comprehensive support and assistance provided to individuals in managing their health and well-being. This skill encompasses the assessment of patient needs, development of care plans, and implementation of interventions to promote recovery and comfort. Knowledge of Nursing Care is used to

monitor patient conditions, administer medications, and educate patients and families about health management, ensuring a holistic approach to healthcare delivery.

- Medical Records refer to the systematic documentation of a patient's medical history, treatment, and care provided by healthcare professionals. This skill encompasses the organization, management, and retrieval of patient information to ensure accurate and efficient healthcare delivery. Knowledge of Medical Records is used to maintain confidentiality, support clinical decision-making, and facilitate communication among healthcare providers, thereby enhancing patient care and safety.

- Marketing refers to the process of promoting and selling products or services, which involves understanding consumer needs and preferences. This skill encompasses various strategies and techniques, including market research, branding, advertising, and public relations, to effectively communicate value to target audiences. Knowledge of Marketing is used to develop campaigns that enhance brand awareness, drive customer engagement, and ultimately influence purchasing decisions.

- Selling techniques are a set of specialized skills used by sales professionals to persuade and convince customers to purchase their products or services. These techniques may include, but are not limited to, building rapport, demonstrating product knowledge, identifying and addressing customer needs and objections, creating urgency, and closing the sale. Effective selling techniques require a deep understanding of customers' needs and motivations, as well as the ability to articulate how the product or service will meet those needs.

Common Skills:

- Communication is the ability to effectively interact, convey information, and collaborate with others in a clear and understandable manner. It involves being able to translate complex data and information into a format that is comprehensible to diverse audiences. This skill is crucial in the professional, personal, and academic settings, as it enables individuals to exchange ideas, solve problems, and work together harmoniously. Effective communication fosters understanding and cooperation, making it an essential component of successful relationships and organizations.

- Customer service is a necessary and common skill most fields and industries. It involves effectively communicating with customers to understand their needs, answering their questions or concerns, and providing them with excellent support and service. A successful customer service representative must be patient, empathetic, and knowledgeable about their products or services. Strong customer service skills can lead to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and business success.

- Sales is the art of convincing people to buy products or services. It is a common skill that involves understanding the customer's needs, identifying pain points, and presenting a solution that addresses such issues. Salespeople must know how to communicate effectively, build trust with clients, negotiate deals, and close the sale. Success in sales requires persistence, creativity, and a willingness to learn and adapt to new situations.

- Management is a set of skills that involve a variety of tasks, such as planning, organizing, leading, and controlling resources to achieve specific goals. It is a commonly required skill, applicable in various areas, including business, government, and non-profit organizations. A good manager must possess strong communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership skills, and be able to adapt to different situations and work effectively with a team.
- Leadership is a key skill that is shared by successful individuals across many fields. It involves the ability to inspire, guide, and support a team toward shared objectives. Strong leadership qualities include effective communication, empathy, sound decision-making skills, adaptability, and having a clear vision. While some may have a natural inclination toward leadership, it is a skill that can be cultivated through training, practical experience, and learning from mentors and peers.

Qualifications:

- The RN certification is a professional certification obtained by individuals who have completed a nursing program and have passed the NCLEX-RN. RNs are educated and trained to provide healthcare services and support to individuals, families, and communities in various healthcare settings, including hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes. The certification ensures that RNs possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and expertise to provide quality care to patients.
- A valid driver's license is an official documentation that certifies that an individual has the ability to operate a motor vehicle on public roads. It is issued by a government agency after an individual has passed a driving test and meets certain requirements such as age, vision, and knowledge of traffic laws.
- The Basic Life Support Certification is a credential that verifies an individual's ability to perform life-saving techniques in emergency situations involving cardiac arrest, respiratory distress, and choking. In general, this certification is required for healthcare professionals and first responders, but it may also be beneficial for those seeking to be prepared in case of an emergency. To obtain this certification, an individual must complete training in CPR, use of an AED, and other basic life support techniques.
- A CPR Certification validates an individual's ability to perform life-saving techniques in emergencies. It involves learning how to administer chest compressions and rescue breaths to sustain blood circulation and oxygenation in individuals experiencing cardiac arrest or respiratory failure. CPR certification equips individuals across various professions and community settings with the skills necessary to respond effectively to sudden medical emergencies, potentially saving lives until professional medical help arrives.
- An LVN is a healthcare professional who provides basic nursing care such as monitoring vital signs, administering medication, and providing comfort and support for patients. They typically work in settings such as hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities under the supervision of a registered nurse or physician. To become an LVN, an individual must complete a certification program and pass a board exam.

Table 18: Top 25 Middle Skills Occupations Projected to Add Jobs at Highest Rate 2022–2032

Occupational Code	Occupational Title	2022 Employment	2032 Employment	Number Change	Percent Change
49-9081	Wind Turbine Service Technicians	4,861	7,946	3,085	63.5
31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	7,356	10,079	2,723	37
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	12,645	17,307	4,662	36.9
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	8,482	11,181	2,699	31.8
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	4,281	5,623	1,342	31.3
39-2021	Animal Caretakers	24,805	32,516	7,711	31.1
29-9021	Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars	3,624	4,746	1,122	31
39-2011	Animal Trainers	2,701	3,530	829	30.7
49-9062	Medical Equipment Repairers	7,782	10,130	2,348	30.2
31-9011	Massage Therapists	10,503	13,547	3,044	29
51-9141	Semiconductor Processing Technicians	3,925	5,048	1,123	28.6
19-5012	Occupational Health and Safety Technicians	3,275	4,210	935	28.5
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	6,690	8,576	1,886	28.2
43-5011	Cargo and Freight Agents	9,923	12,688	2,765	27.9
47-4071	Septic Tank Servicers and Sewer Pipe Cleaners	2,723	3,468	745	27.4
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	43,078	54,577	11,499	26.7
31-9097	Phlebotomists	12,898	16,292	3,394	26.3
39-9031	Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	29,188	36,583	7,395	25.3
31-9092	Medical Assistants	66,739	83,567	16,828	25.2
29-2057	Ophthalmic Medical Technicians	6,819	8,532	1,713	25.1
19-4042	Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health	2,582	3,221	639	24.7
33-9021	Private Detectives and Investigators	2,721	3,386	665	24.4
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technicians	11,555	14,369	2,814	24.4
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	85,261	105,970	20,709	24.3
49-2098	Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers	10,480	13,005	2,525	24.1

Data Source: Texas Occupational Projections, Long Term 2022–2032

Table 19: Common Required Skills for Middle-Skill Occupations Projected to Add Jobs at the Highest Rate 2022–2032

Specialized Skills	Common Skills	Qualifications
• Medical Assistance • Vital Signs • Medical Records • Phlebotomy • Patient Preparation	• Communication • Customer Service • Management • Detail Oriented • Operations	• Basic Life Support Certification • Valid Driver's License • CPR Certification • Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) • Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

Source: Lightcast™

Note: Due to a source change, Baseline Skills are now referred to as Common Skills, and Certifications are now referred to as Qualifications.

Specialized Skills:

- Medical Assistance refers to the support provided to individuals in need of healthcare services, encompassing a range of tasks aimed at improving patient care and outcomes. This skill involves understanding medical procedures, patient assessment, and the administration of basic treatments and medications. Knowledge of Medical Assistance is used to facilitate effective communication between patients and healthcare providers, ensure proper documentation, and assist in the delivery of care in various medical settings.
- Vital Signs refer to the clinical measurements that indicate the state of a patient's essential bodily functions, including heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate, and temperature. This skill involves the ability to accurately assess and interpret these measurements to monitor health status and detect potential medical issues. Knowledge of Vital Signs is used in various healthcare settings to inform treatment decisions, track patient progress, and ensure timely interventions when abnormalities are identified.
- Medical Records refer to the systematic documentation of a patient's medical history, treatment, and care provided by healthcare professionals. This skill encompasses the organization, management, and retrieval of patient information to ensure accurate and efficient healthcare delivery. Knowledge of Medical Records is used to maintain confidentiality, support clinical decision-making, and facilitate communication among healthcare providers, thereby enhancing patient care and safety.
- Phlebotomy refers to the practice of drawing blood from patients for medical testing, transfusions, or donations. This skill involves knowledge of anatomy, proper techniques for venipuncture, and the use of various equipment to ensure safe and

effective blood collection. Proficiency in Phlebotomy is used to obtain blood samples for laboratory analysis, monitor health conditions, and support diagnostic procedures.

- Patient Preparation refers to the process of ensuring that individuals are ready for medical examinations, procedures, or treatments. This skill encompasses the assessment of patient needs, provision of necessary information, and the facilitation of comfort and safety prior to the medical intervention. Knowledge of Patient Preparation is used to enhance patient understanding, reduce anxiety, and improve overall outcomes by effectively communicating instructions and addressing concerns.

Common Skills:

- Communication is the ability to effectively interact, convey information, and collaborate with others in a clear and understandable manner. It involves being able to translate complex data and information into a format that is comprehensible to diverse audiences. This skill is crucial in the professional, personal, and academic settings, as it enables individuals to exchange ideas, solve problems, and work together harmoniously. Effective communication fosters understanding and cooperation, making it an essential component of successful relationships and organizations.

- Customer service is a necessary and common skill most fields and industries. It involves effectively communicating with customers to understand their needs, answering their questions or concerns, and providing them with excellent support and service. A successful customer service representative must be patient, empathetic, and knowledgeable about their products or services. Strong customer service skills can lead to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and business success.

- Management is a set of skills that involve a variety of tasks, such as planning, organizing, leading, and controlling resources to achieve specific goals. It is a commonly required skill, applicable in various areas, including business, government, and non-profit organizations. A good manager must possess strong communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership skills, and be able to adapt to different situations and work effectively with a team.

- Detail Oriented is a skill that involves a strong focus on precision and thoroughness when performing tasks or handling information. This skill is used to spot errors, maintain accuracy, and ensure quality work. Detail-oriented individuals excel in tasks such as proofreading documents, conducting thorough research, performing quality control checks, and meticulously reviewing data to prevent mistakes and produce high-quality results.

- Operations is a fundamental skill that involves managing and overseeing the day-to-day activities of a business or organization. This includes managing resources, processes, people, and technology to ensure efficient and effective operations. Strong operations skills are critical for businesses to achieve their objectives, meet customer needs, and remain competitive in the marketplace.

Qualifications:

- The Basic Life Support Certification is a credential that verifies an individual's ability to perform life-saving techniques in emergency situations involving cardiac arrest, respiratory distress, and choking. In general, this certification is required for healthcare professionals and first responders, but it may also be beneficial for those seeking to be prepared in case of an emergency. To obtain this certification, an individual must complete training in CPR, use of an AED, and other basic life support techniques.
- A valid driver's license is an official documentation that certifies that an individual has the ability to operate a motor vehicle on public roads. It is issued by a government agency after an individual has passed a driving test and meets certain requirements such as age, vision, and knowledge of traffic laws.
- A CPR Certification validates an individual's ability to perform life-saving techniques in emergencies. It involves learning how to administer chest compressions and rescue breaths to sustain blood circulation and oxygenation in individuals experiencing cardiac arrest or respiratory failure. CPR certification equips individuals across various professions and community settings with the skills necessary to respond effectively to sudden medical emergencies, potentially saving lives until professional medical help arrives.
- A CMA is a nationally recognized certification awarded to individuals who have completed accredited training programs and passed a certification exam. CMAs are qualified healthcare professionals who assist physicians and other healthcare providers in clinical and administrative tasks. They perform a variety of duties, which may include taking patient histories, preparing patients for exams, administering medications, and performing basic laboratory tests. They play a vital role in ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of healthcare facilities.
- EMTs provide initial medical care and transportation to individuals experiencing medical emergencies or traumatic injuries. This skill encompasses the ability to assess patients' conditions, administer basic medical treatments, stabilize injuries, and transport patients safely to medical facilities for further care.

Meeting the Needs

TWC prioritizes programs and initiatives that assist specific populations, including veterans and youth. TWC supports projects that encourage and improve growth industries, the earning capabilities of job seekers facing barriers to employment, and the effectiveness of the Texas workforce system. Additionally, TWC approves the use of statewide funds to conduct statewide initiatives addressing WIOA's focus on workforce integration, quality improvement, capacity building, professional development, internships, externships, and more. TWC and its agency partners implement and support initiatives to address hiring, education, and skills needs in Texas, including the following:

- Initiatives that provide youth with education, training, career exploration, and work experience are essential to the state's future growth and success. To ensure that young people have the skills necessary to meet future workforce needs, Texas supports youth programs that promote in-demand careers beginning at an early age and identifies

educational and career pathways for students, including vocational and technical training, as well as those that require two-year, four-year, and higher education levels. These initiatives—such as Texas Externships, programming to address the needs and challenges of current and former foster youth, and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)-related summer programs—are intended to support the governor's vision of strengthening academic and future workplace outcomes for youth who are facing challenges and barriers to success.

- As part of the commitment to serve veterans, TWC supports the provision of employment and training services to assist them in transitioning to civilian life and joining the Texas workforce. Such initiatives and programs designed to assist veterans and their families include Hiring Red, White and You! (HRWY!) (statewide job fairs dedicated to veteran job seekers), College Credit for Heroes (CCH), military family support programs, and the We Hire Vets campaign (supporting employers that hire veterans).

- Building a Talent Strong Texas—The goal of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) strategic plan is to have 60 percent of Texans aged 25–64 achieve a college degree, certificate, or credential of value by 2030.

- Adult Education and Literacy—TWC's Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs help individuals acquire the skills needed to succeed in the workforce, earn a high school equivalency certificate, or enter college or career training. Texas AEL and Texas Workforce Solutions partners are implementing a system with the goal of increasing employment, postsecondary transitions, skills gains, and secondary completions by using demonstrated approaches that fully integrate system services and leverage community partnerships. The program supports opportunities for individuals who are at least 16 years of age, lack a high school credential, function below a high school level, or are unable to speak, read, or write, and are seeking a career training, high school equivalency preparation, or postsecondary education.

- Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative—In March 2016, Governor Abbott established the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative and tasked the commissioners of the Texas Education Agency (TEA), THECB, and TWC to collaboratively develop strong links between education and industry and help Texas grow in economic prosperity. These objectives are met by setting statewide workforce development goals, aligning Texas' career training programs to meet workforce demands, and ensuring the efficient and effective use of state and federal education and workforce funds.

- Careers in Texas Industries—TWC's Careers in Texas Industries helps school counselors, parents, and students make informed choices about their future education and career paths. The Texas Reality Check online tool helps students, teachers, parents, and counselors determine the relationship between educational achievement and income.

- JET—This TWC program provides grants to community, state, and technical colleges and independent school districts so they may purchase and install the equipment necessary for the development of career and technical education courses or programs

that lead to a license, certificate, or postsecondary degree in a high-demand occupation.

- Dual Credit Programs—Through the use of SDF and other resources, TWC partners with junior, state, and technical colleges and school districts to expand access to dual credit and career and technical education programs. TWC funds dual credit and technical education programs in order to respond to industry demands for skilled workers in technical fields. Additionally, by allowing high school students to enroll in postsecondary classes and work toward a degree or professional credential while simultaneously completing high school coursework, dual credit programs give students the opportunity to get a jump start on their educational and career goals.
- Child Care Services (CCS)—TWC's CCS program provides child care subsidies to families who meet income requirements. The services promote long-term self-sufficiency by enabling parents to work or participate in educational activities. Additionally, the program educates parents about the availability of quality child care, enhances children's early learning, and supports early learning programs while improving the quality of child care services.
- Skills for Small Business—Through TWC's SDF, the program helps small businesses by providing training for new workers and upgrading the skills of incumbent workers. Small business employees participate in trainings offered by their local community, technical college, or the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX). Additionally, TWC works with the college to fund the courses that businesses want their employees to participate in.

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of—

A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required [6] and optional one-stop delivery system partners.[7]

[6] Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

[7] Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

For the Texas economy to grow and prosper, employers must convey the skills their businesses need to job seekers. Conversely, job seekers must recognize and promote the skills that they possess, or obtain new or upgraded skills, to meet businesses' needs. The State's market-driven workforce development system plays a vital role in this process, acting as a hub for sharing information relating to jobs and skills, facilitating connections between businesses and job seekers, and aiding with job search and training needs. Boards and their contractors work collaboratively to ensure that these services and assistance are made available to all employers and job seekers, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, and older adults.

TWC and its workforce development partners continue to collaborate with community and industry partners to expand these opportunities and find new ways to achieve positive results. The development of innovative workforce services to meet the needs of employers and workers is vital to the success of the workforce system.

As businesses expand their operations and new employers emerge during this period of rapid technology advances, there is a growing opportunity to assist with workforce skills development and training. The gap between in-demand skills and available labor force skills must be addressed at all levels. This includes the availability of technical training opportunities as well as efforts to increase the number of skilled craft specialists. The increased development of regional collaborations among employers, Boards, community colleges, and other training providers is engaged to address this opportunity.

TWC uses long-term projections data to identify industries that are likely to grow the fastest. Growth assumes, in part, an adequate supply of workers with relevant skills. BLS, however, foresees that a combination of slower growth of the civilian noninstitutional population and falling participation rates of youths and prime-age workers will lower national labor force growth to nearly 0.4 percent annually. In Texas, growth is sustained by improving programs for individuals with barriers to employment, identifying transferable skills that are valued by employers and providing education and training to upscale their skills in high-growth sectors.

WIOA Title II Adult Education & Literacy (AEL) grantees offer a variety of education and training activities that support the one-stop system. Activities include, but are not limited to, high school equivalency, English-language acquisition, workplace literacy, and digital literacy. A comprehensive assessment that includes development of an individualized employment plan connects the student's goals with AEL and core partner activities. To ensure that adult education students are prepared for the workforce, Texas revised its AEL content standards to align to four key industries: Advanced Manufacturing, Construction and Extraction, Healthcare Sciences, and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics. The alignment of the standards aims to illustrate how the standards are relevant to work while maintaining the competencies that are needed to prepare students for educational progress and transition to postsecondary education or training. Employers also have an increased need for a digitally literate workforce. In 2023, Texas revised the AEL content standards by incorporating four new modules on digital literacy. These new standards were incorporated into Texas classrooms through locally developed curriculum.

AEL is exploring options on how to incorporate artificial intelligence (AI) into classrooms. This includes offering professional development opportunities to instructors regarding how to effectively use AI tools for instruction and how to teach adult education students the methods in which AI may be used in future occupations. This four-week program brought together a cohort of 18 AEL instructors to explore generative AI tools and strategies for creating reusable, standards-aligned resources tailored to learners facing digital access barriers. Through a partnership between TWC, Texas A&M University's Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL), and World Ed, participants received training in AI prompt development, tool selection, and resource design.

Through TWC-Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, eligible individuals with disabilities may pursue a wide array of education and training opportunities to help them prepare for, obtain, retain, or advance in competitive integrated employment. Education and training activities supported by the VR program must be consistent with each individual's interests, abilities, employment goal, and informed choice. Activities include postsecondary academic education, career and technical education, training to obtain an industry-specific certificate or credential, disability-specific training, work readiness training, paid work experience, on-the-job training, internships, and apprenticeships.

These education and training activities are provided by accredited public and private colleges and universities, vocational and technical schools, public or private businesses, registered apprenticeship programs, and specialized training providers that are approved by TWC-VR. Education and training activities available to VR customers may result in a secondary school diploma, secondary school equivalency, postsecondary degree, occupation or industry-specific certificate or credential, or licensure.

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program's (JVSG) Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) are integrated into BSUs. LVERs are a critical component in the planning and execution of job fairs, including the annual Hiring Red, White and You! statewide job fair. They coordinate directly with BSUs and Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP) staff to ensure that veteran-friendly employers attend job fairs. LVERs provide information to BSU and TVLP staff about the DOL's Veterans' Employment and Training Service's (DOLVET) HIRE Vets Medallion Program and how to promote the award to employers. LVERs, BSUs, and TVLP staff work jointly to outreach and inform employers on how to participate in the HIRE Vets Medallion Program and the We Hire Vets Employer Recognition program which was established by the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) and TWC.

LVERs not only train workforce partner staff on the roles and responsibilities of LVERs and Veteran Priority of Service, but they also inform such staff about job postings for veteran-friendly employers which provides an avenue to fill job openings with veterans who are not being case managed by Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) staff. DVOP staff, in coordination with the LVER and business service teams, may contact an employer on behalf of a specific veteran to facilitate employment and avoid duplicative contacts to employers. However, DVOP staff are not allowed to contact employers to advocate for the hiring of veterans in general or advocate on behalf of other populations.

Workforce Solution Office Intake staff perform veteran DVOP eligibility screenings of veterans, potential eligible persons, and customers who are identified as part of the additional

population. Intake staff ensure that these customers are asked if they are interested in receiving Individualized Career Services. If they are, intake staff perform further screening to identify eligible veterans and eligible persons who have Qualifying Employment Barriers, or customers who are part of the additional population. If a customer screens through, they are referred to a DVOP Specialist. ES and TVLP staff coordinate daily with the DVOPs to ensure transparent service delivery and, if a DVOP is unavailable, that the veteran receives services/assistance from ES or TVLP staff. The additional population, eligible veteran, or eligible person will receive the services they are seeking. The DVOP will make an appointment with them at a later time.

DVOPs coordinate with TVLP, WIOA Title I and III, TANF, SNAP E&T, and child care staff regarding veterans that they have in case management. This leads to the co-enrollment of veterans in different programs with the goal of assisting the veteran in achieving success in overcoming barriers to employment. DVOPs inform ES and TVLP staff when a veteran is not placed in case management to ensure that there is not a delay in the provision of services and to assist the veteran in obtaining gainful employment.

B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

Strengths

Texas' workforce development system is built on a strong foundation of collaboration among the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core programs that are seamlessly integrated with required partner programs and optional one-stop delivery partners. Together, these partners operate through a coordinated one-stop delivery system that prioritizes efficiency, accessibility, and customer-centered service delivery. Their collective efforts ensure that employers and job seekers—including those with barriers to employment—have access to a wide array of education, training, employment, and supportive services tailored to regional labor market needs.

One of the key strengths of Texas' workforce system is its market-driven, demand-responsive approach. Employers are actively engaged in shaping workforce priorities by identifying skill gaps and future hiring needs. Therefore, job seekers are supported in identifying and developing relevant skills that align with these demands. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the local workforce development boards (Boards) serve as vital connectors facilitating communication between businesses and the talent pipeline, providing job matching and training services, and fostering relationships with community colleges, industry groups, and other training providers. Regional partnerships are especially effective in promoting innovative solutions to meet workforce demands in sectors experiencing rapid technological change or growth.

Texas' workforce development system is strengthened by the active collaboration among core and required partner programs, working together to ensure that all Texans—including those facing significant barriers to employment—have the tools and support needed to

succeed. These programs deliver high-impact services that are both individualized and aligned with the demands of a dynamic labor market.

The WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW), and Youth programs exemplify this strength by offering tailored career and training services. These services are responsive to individual needs while supporting broader workforce goals.

AEL grantees equip learners with essential academic and employability skills. AEL's impact is further enhanced by its alignment with high-demand industries such as health care, construction, manufacturing, and transportation. Ongoing enhancements to AEL standards—including the integration of digital literacy modules and exploration of AI-enhanced instruction—demonstrate a forward-thinking approach that prepares learners for success in today's technology-driven economy.

The VR program contributes another key strength to the system by providing customized pathways to employment for individuals with disabilities. Through services such as postsecondary education, work-based learning, job readiness training, and apprenticeships, VR ensures that customers have access to meaningful opportunities. The customer-centered, informed-choice planning process is essential to the system's commitment to ensuring long-term success for all job seekers with disabilities.

Texas' veteran employment services are distinguished by their strong coordination, employer engagement, and targeted service delivery. A major strength lies in the integration of LVERs into BSUs, where they serve as a bridge between veteran job seekers and employers that are actively seeking to hire veterans. Boards partner with LVERs to support the organization of events such as Hiring Red, White and You! and to promote state and federal employer recognition programs which help to enhance visibility and participation among veteran-friendly businesses. This proactive outreach not only strengthens employer partnerships but also opens doors to quality employment opportunities for veterans.

Opportunities

Texas' projected population growth to over 33 million by 2031, coupled with surging employer demand, presents a unique opportunity for the Texas Workforce Solutions system to redefine workforce development. Available resources are leveraged to take the following actions:

- Expand capacity and adapt services. This surge in demand provides the opportunity to proactively build a more robust and agile workforce system. By embracing innovative strategies and technologies, TWC can tailor its services to meet the evolving needs of both employers and job seekers.
- Strengthen infrastructure and workforce pipelines. The pressure on existing infrastructure and pipelines is a catalyst to invest in building a more resilient and future-proof workforce system. This includes developing innovative training programs and forging stronger partnerships with educational institutions and employers.
- Enhance support for rural and underserved communities. Addressing the needs of these communities provides the opportunity to ensure equitable access to workforce development resources and promote inclusive economic growth. This involves

strategically deploying resources and tailoring services to meet the specific needs of these regions.

The increasing demand for technology modernization and system integration within TWC presents a powerful opportunity to transform the way workforce services are delivered. While the need for capital resources to support the continued modernization is apparent, it fuels the potential to take the following actions:

- Revolutionize information technology (IT) infrastructure. This demand provides an opportunity to strategically invest in and build a cutting-edge IT infrastructure that not only supports existing programs but also anticipates future needs. A modernized system allows for greater flexibility, efficiency, and security, thus enabling TWC to adapt quickly to evolving demands.
- Simplify and enhance customer experience. The complexity of navigating workforce services provides an opportunity to create user-centered platforms, such as the Project No Wrong Door initiative, that streamline access and empower customers to find the resources that they need easily. By prioritizing simplification and accessibility, TWC is working to improve the user experience and expand the reach of its services.

By approaching technological challenges as opportunities, TWC can meet growing customer expectations while positioning itself as a leader in innovative and user-friendly workforce service delivery. Strategic investments in this area will strengthen efficiency, security, and accessibility, ensuring a more effective workforce system for all Texans. This proactive approach not only mitigates risks but also reinforces TWC's commitment to equitable, high-quality service delivery and long-term success.

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

TWC has emerged as a national leader in workforce development activities by developing a comprehensive workforce system that is fundamental to putting Texans back to work and spurring the state's economic competitiveness. Texas is experiencing growth in new jobs and the labor market overall, and the efforts to strategically strengthen the workforce development system championed by TWC remain clear.

TWC works to align workforce development activities by establishing rigorous strategic planning requirements coupled with common performance accountability measures and requirements that govern Texas' one-stop delivery system. TWC coordinates and collaborates with the 28 Boards along with their contracted workforce service providers and community partners. Collectively known as Texas Workforce Solutions, this network offers local access to integrated and statewide services to all employers, workers, job seekers and youth, including individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

Through WIOA, Boards continue to apply and improve upon the provision of integrated strategies that are designed to serve Texans. Such strategies include providing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants with training and placement services by Wagner-Peyser (W-P) ES staff and using common performance measures across core programs for both adults and youth.

Recognizing that innovative, progressive services promote a stronger Texas, the Texas Workforce Solutions network has continued its strategy of providing value-added services, which improve customers' opportunities for growth.

Meeting the Needs

TWC is aware of the State's changing demographics and skills gaps and continues to design programs to meet the increasingly complex workforce needs. Through the Texas Workforce System, TWC connects job seekers to numerous career and training resources to prepare them to enter or reenter the workforce with the skills required for middle-skills occupations of Texas' high-growth industry sectors. Although services are targeted, their delivery is uniformly applied.

Leveraging an integrated workforce system enables TWC to create a seamless approach that attracts and retains in-demand employers. It is understood that an employer is not concerned as to which funding source is being used to fund their services. By maintaining specific BSUs at each Board, the workforce system rallies a group of dedicated individuals to meet employer needs and present employers with services in ways that are beneficial and easy to understand. BSUs are Boards' frontline business advocates, often having strong ties to the local business communities. Furthermore, because Boards are predominantly composed of local business leaders, TWC taps into a continuous flow of current and relevant information from employers. Board members can shape local policies and procedures to best fit the local marketplace.

Additionally, Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) Business Relations staff help employers fill open positions with qualified job seekers with disabilities, provide training and accommodation assistance, and assess the workplace, job descriptions, and recruitment and application processes to remove barriers. Business Relations staff can also provide disability awareness training to businesses and their employees and assist with business symposia, expos, and job and career fairs.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

1. VISION

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

Mission

TWC's mission is to promote and support a workforce system that creates value and offers employers, individuals, and communities the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity.

Vision

TWC and its Texas Workforce Solutions partners will maximize the power of innovation and partnerships to boost superior business outcomes and realize a competitive advantage for all Texans in the global economy.

2. GOALS

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment[8] and other populations.[9]

(B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

[8] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[9] Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

TWC's vision includes three strategic goals that consider the state's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. TWC aids in Texas' workforce growth and development for the state's economic future by focusing on rapid technological advancements and business innovation. The following goals address critical populations, including UI claimants, youth, individuals with barriers to employment, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. Each goal provides specific actions to achieve the goal.

Goal One

One of TWC's priorities is to build a strong, responsive workforce system that supports employers and allows business and industry to thrive. By creating practical, employer-driven solutions and expanding access to workforce resources, TWC helps businesses find, hire, and retain the qualified workers they need to compete and grow. The goal is not only to meet current hiring needs but also to prepare for future workforce demands through strong industry partnerships and targeted training strategies.

To achieve this goal, TWC will:

- provide timely, relevant workforce solutions to help employers find and retain the qualified workers needed to be successful and globally competitive, including:
  - deploying rapid, creative, and flexible, employer-driven, practical solutions to connect employers with workers of all skill and education levels;
  - expanding recruiting and hiring services provided by TWC and the Boards to help employers build and maintain a robust workforce; and
  - assisting employers to hire and retain workers who are able to work but need child care or other critical workforce support services; and

- engage with industry to meet current and future workforce development needs, including:
  - assessing and expanding workforce training services for employers to prepare skilled workers to meet employer needs;
  - ensuring apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship opportunities, and other work-based learning strategies, such as internships and mentorships, are readily available and aligned with employer needs; and
  - assisting employers in easily understanding and navigating workforce programs and resources that can benefit them.

Goal Two

TWC commits to ensuring that Texas has a highly skilled, adaptable workforce ready to meet the demands of critical, in-demand occupations, both now and in the future. The goal is to upskill current workers, prepare future talent, and connect qualified individuals to employers across the state. By aligning workforce development programs with industry needs and removing barriers to employment, TWC supports a strong talent pipeline that fuels Texas' economic growth.

To achieve this goal, TWC will:

- assist workers in obtaining the skills necessary to fill critical, in-demand jobs both now and in the future, including:
  - upskilling the current workforce to fill in-demand jobs through work-based learning strategies and workforce and education services;
  - developing and deploying programs to end the middle-skills gap; and
  - ensuring alignment between training programs and associated credentials with in-demand, high-wage occupations.
- connect a qualified workforce with employers, including:
  - expanding the development of high-quality, work-based learning opportunities that provide workers with the skills and experience needed to fill in-demand jobs and ensure qualified workers are matched with hiring employers;
  - supporting all individuals, including people with disabilities, veterans, foster youth, adult learners, and second-chance populations, to prepare them to achieve career success and close gaps in labor force participation;
  - providing child care to eligible families to facilitate their participation in the workforce; and
  - closing the geographic and socioeconomic gap in talent distribution through programs, policy, and technology solutions; and
- prepare a skilled workforce to fill critical jobs in the future, including:
  - ensuring child care providers have the support necessary to provide quality early childhood learning programs;
  - providing access to the labor market and career information for better-informed decision-making;
  - supporting educational programs for students in Texas that inform and prepare them for high-skill, in-demand jobs and career success; and
  - aligning the talent development pipeline with employer demand for qualified workers.

Goal Three

TWC commits to providing outstanding customer service to every individual, employer, and stakeholder who interacts with the Texas workforce system. By ensuring seamless access to

services, improving navigation, and upholding high standards of integrity and accountability, TWC aims to create a workforce system that is accessible, efficient, and responsive to the diverse needs of all Texans.

To achieve this goal, TWC will:

- deliver quality customer service to every customer who interacts with the workforce system, including:
  - ensuring that every workforce system customer receives timely, efficient, and beneficial services to address their needs; and
  - enhancing the overall customer experience within the workforce system, providing multiple integrated pathways for customers to choose how they interact with the system;
- integrate programs seamlessly and coordinate services to make them easy for all workforce system stakeholders to access and navigate, including:
  - ensuring customers can easily navigate and are comprehensively served across all workforce programs; and
  - aligning and leveraging resources available to support workforce development efforts through interagency partnerships and collaboration; and
- maintain integrity, accountability, and operational excellence, including:
  - strengthening current systems to reduce and eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse within TWC and all programs it administers;
  - assisting employers and workers with their UI program needs by providing quality services in a timely manner; and
  - reducing discrimination in employment and housing through education and fair administration of employment and housing laws.

By focusing on these goals, TWC ensures a workforce system that delivers exceptional value, builds public trust, and supports the economic success of all Texans.

The Texas workforce development system's market-driven approach incorporates all potential customers, including employers and job seekers, as well as workforce service providers, economic development entities, universities, community colleges, and training providers. This approach ensures that all workforce system customers are valued, informed contributors to and drivers of the system, thus allowing state and local policymakers to strategically plan for the current and future needs of the state.

Texas Workforce System continuously monitors and analyzes the needs of the state's workforce and businesses to ensure a solid approach that enables job growth, promotes a well-trained workforce, and ensures Texas' ability to compete on a global level.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

Using the tables provided within each Core Program section, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

NOTE: Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Not all measures are relevant to all programs (NA is used to mark when a measure does not apply). Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, "With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving

Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs."

Table 1. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Adults	78.9%	TBD	79.0%	TBD
Dislocated Workers	78.6%	TBD	78.6%	TBD
Youth	70.6%	TBD	70.6%	TBD
Adult Education	43.8%	TBD	44.6%	TBD
Wagner-Peyser	65.8%	TBD	65.8%	TBD
Vocational Rehabilitation	56.9%	TBD	57.0%	TBD

Table 2. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Adults	78.4%	TBD	78.4%	TBD
Dislocated Workers	77.0%	TBD	77.0%	TBD
Youth	71.5%	TBD	71.5%	TBD
Adult Education	44.9%	TBD	45.8%	TBD
Wagner-Peyser	66.3%	TBD	66.3%	TBD
Vocational Rehabilitation	55.3%	TBD	55.5%	TBD

Table 3. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Adults	$8,594	TBD	$8,838	TBD
Dislocated Workers	$10,997	TBD	$11,188	TBD
Youth	$5,515	TBD	$5,687	TBD
Adult Education	$6,640	TBD	$6,789	TBD

Program	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Wagner-Peyser	$8,116	TBD	$8,338	TBD
Vocational Rehabilitation	$ 7,290	TBD	$ 7,290	TBD

Table 4. Credential Attainment Rate

Program	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Adults	66.8%	TBD	66.8%	TBD
Dislocated Workers	74.3%	TBD	74.3%	TBD
Youth	53.4%	TBD	53.4%	TBD
Adult Education	43.9%	TBD	44.7%	TBD
Wagner-Peyser	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vocational Rehabilitation	50.5%	TBD	50.5%	TBD

Table 5. Measurable Skill Gains

Program	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Adults	69.9%	TBD	74.2%	TBD
Dislocated Workers	60.5%	TBD	64.8%	TBD
Youth	69.0%	TBD	71.7%	TBD
Adult Education	42.4%	TBD	42.4%	TBD
Wagner-Peyser	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vocational Rehabilitation	58.8%	TBD	58.8%	TBD

Table 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Program	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV	51.1%	TBD	51.1%	TBD

4. ASSESSMENT

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment, which may include evaluation findings, and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

Title 10, Texas Government Code §2308.101 requires the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC)—the state board—to monitor the state's workforce investment system. As part of that responsibility, TWIC annually reports to the governor and the legislature on the degree to which the system is achieving state and local workforce goals and objectives. Such reports not only provide accountability but also guide long-term planning efforts. In October 2023, TWIC released Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024–2031.

Texas statute requires TWIC to evaluate six elements in the workforce system, as follows:

- Workforce agency program performance and alignment
- Formal and less formal performance measures
- Implementation of the system strategic plan
- Adult education actions and achievements
- Board activities and alignment
- Workforce development programs that focus on welfare-to-work initiatives

A primary responsibility of TWIC is the implementation of the workforce system strategic plan. As with the previous strategic plan, the workforce system evaluation continues to use elements of the balanced scorecard approach to track performance and drive system improvements. TWIC will continue conducting studies and producing reports that support the implementation of the strategic plan, along with designing and launching system projects that strengthen the four workforce system goals relating to employers, learners, partners, and policy and planning.

TWIC will also continue to evaluate programs to identify gaps and duplications that adversely affect the seamless delivery of workforce services and programs. Issues, and the results of measures taken by TWIC to address them, will be included in the annual evaluation report on strategic plan implementation.

Program data and other data from across the workforce system are critical in evaluating the extent to which workforce system programs, services, and products are meeting the needs of customers and stakeholders. The collection of key data, as well as the reporting and analysis of that data—in a consistent and useful manner—is essential in demonstrating outcomes,

determining if changes are required or desired, and establishing benchmarks for future performance.

Under the workforce system strategic plan, TWIC will continue to work with system partners to build upon process improvements to implement workforce programs, services, and initiatives designed to achieve system objectives and goals.

C. STATE STRATEGY

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7) AND INCLUDES REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP. "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23)

TWC and its partners serve as key connectors around the state to support Texas' growing economy. TWC's role in the state's economic development strategies is critical as it works to ensure that every employer, individual, family, and community has a clear path toward sustained economic prosperity.

Targeted Economic and Workforce Development Opportunities

TWC's workforce development efforts align with the governor's economic strategies by allocating resources to support opportunities in vital industry clusters.

Through the Governor's Tri-Agency Partnership, engagement with TEA and THECB, and collaboration with key stakeholders, TWC has been able to use the state's workforce and educational systems to align with current and future industry needs. Such engagement enables TWC to equip Texans with the skills, education, and training needed to be competitive for the jobs of today and in the future.

Texas Industry Partnership Program

TWC developed the Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) program to address skills gaps and ensure that a talent pipeline is available to address regional industry needs. The program provides an outlet for collaboration between Boards and industry partners by leveraging matching monetary contributions and qualifying expenditures for workforce-related activities. Matching funds may be used to support WIOA activities and emphasize in-demand or target occupations as determined by Boards or the occupations in industries that are targeted by the Office of the Governor.

Serving Youth, Aiding Economic Development

Workforce Readiness Outreach Career Coaches

Workforce Readiness Outreach Career Coaches from TWC and the Boards work in partnership with independent school districts across the state to provide career exploration, readiness, and development resources and services. The primary goal of these teams—comprised of career coaches, Board representatives, and district representatives—is to help students make informed decisions about what they choose to do beyond a high school diploma. These teams help expose students to a variety of postsecondary pathways as well as explore different industries and occupations. Additionally, these teams help students, families, teachers, and counselors understand how labor market data, occupation options, and different postsecondary pathways could align with a student's interests, competencies, knowledge, and skills.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2)

Texas Workforce Solutions System

Since its inception, TWC has emerged as a national leader in workforce development activities by fostering a locally driven workforce system. Texas operates an integrated workforce system comprising numerous programs, services, and initiatives administered by various state agencies, Boards, TWIC, independent school districts, community and technical colleges, and local adult education providers. System partners are responsible for delivering a wide range of workforce education and training programs, as well as education programs that support career preparation and advancement. Such a system has become fundamental to the State's ability to put Texans back to work and spur economic competitiveness. Today, this system has enabled Texas to experience record-low unemployment and exceptional growth in new jobs and the labor market.

TWC and the Texas workforce system is successful because it aligns workforce development activities through the establishment of rigorous strategic planning requirements, common performance accountability measures, and guidelines that govern Texas' one-stop delivery system. To address these requirements, measures, and guidelines, TWC coordinates and collaborates with the State's 28 Boards, along with their contracted workforce service providers and community partners. This network, known as Texas Workforce Solutions, offers employers and job seekers local access to integrated and statewide services.

TWC aims to expand the Texas workforce into one that is diverse and trained in skills that are responsive to the local economies in which employers and industry engage in innovation and technology to advance their competitiveness. Texas employers, workers, and job seekers benefit from the resiliency of the Texas economy and the diversity of its industries. The Texas workforce is now at over 15.8 million individuals with world-class skills who are ready to meet the needs of over 656,750 Texas employers.

The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

Through designated workforce development programs, partners serve a common customer and are charged with achieving similar employment and educational outcomes for their targeted customer groups. Therefore, the strategic planning process is designed to identify and focus on systemic issues that affect multiple parts of the system and address broad, big-picture workforce issues. TWIC and its system partners completed a year-long planning process, culminating with the development of a strategic plan for fiscal years 2024–2031. Because the strategic plan focuses on issues that span across agencies and programs, it fulfills a unique and complementary role in the workforce system.

The system strategic plan identifies several priority issues that system partners have addressed, are addressing, and will address during the strategic plan period. In identifying these issues, TWIC examined:

- program and participant outcomes that are critical to Texas' workforce and economic competitiveness; and
- issues and interdependencies that cross agencies.

The most recent system strategic plan is available through the TWIC website.

Elements of the Local Service Delivery Structure

Local Board members are primarily private-sector employers, as well as individuals who represent local education agencies, labor organizations, community-based organizations, economic development councils, and one-stop partners, such as AEL, VR, and W-P ES programs. Boards designate one-stop partners, identify providers of training services, and monitor system performance against performance accountability measures.

Board staff conducts the Board's day-to-day administrative operations and operates with a high degree of local flexibility for service delivery design and partners with local training and educational institutions to ensure employment and training opportunities meet area employment needs.

Workforce Solutions Offices provide a variety of online, in-house, and on-site services, including employer services, job search resources, labor market information, and referrals for training. In addition to traditional brick-and-mortar offices, mobile workforce units act as a moving extension of the Workforce Solutions Office and offer on-site, rapid response assistance to area employers and communities.

Boards use a variety of strategies to fully use their financial resources and meet the needs of their customers, including:

- leveraging additional funding sources;
- developing, analyzing, and sharing labor market information and regional economic studies;
- engaging in planning and service delivery across workforce areas and with other workforce and community partners;
- incorporating new strategies and adapting current delivery strategies to respond to local economic changes, such as the use of mobile units and modern technologies that make service more accessible; and

- sharing, modifying, and replicating effective training models and processes.

Funding

TWC leverages multiple funding sources to provide needed services. Federal funds make up approximately 86 percent of TWC's budget with the remaining 14 percent coming from state sources. TWC receives federal funds from the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

Through prior consistent state law set forth in Title 4, Texas Labor Code §302.061 and §302.062, TWC sources block grants from multiple funding streams to workforce areas to administer programs such as WIOA, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program/Choices employment services, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education & Training (SNAP E&T), and subsidized child care under the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). Block grants allow Boards to provide integrated services and case management across programs. Boards are given autonomy to use the block grants to hire staff at Workforce Solutions Offices and make other necessary decisions to best serve their workforce areas.

Continued Flexibility through Waivers

The Texas workforce system and its customers have benefited from DOLETA's authority to waive certain WIOA provisions. Texas has requested federal waiver opportunities to allow for increased flexibility and innovation and provide for a more efficient use of staffing resources. With input from Boards and other stakeholders, Texas has developed waiver requests covering several workforce issues, including the ability to:

- use individual training accounts (ITAs) to serve in-school youth ages 16–21;
- modify performance measures to negotiate local program performance; and
- redistribute funds that have been voluntarily deobiligated.

State Leadership in Workforce Initiatives

In Texas, the development of workforce initiatives enables TWC and the Boards to effectively serve the needs of Texas job seekers, employers, and communities. Boards are familiar with local needs and opportunities through firsthand knowledge of local partners and baseline community assessments that ensure extensive local one-stops and that the system's initiatives deliver the maximum possible value to customers. Texas believes that federal rules, grants, and base funding should emphasize state roles and maximize a state's flexibility to design effective and comprehensive initiatives.

<u>Focus on the Semiconductor Industry</u>

With the growing interest in the semiconductor industry, TWC participates in the governor's National Semiconductor Centers Texas Task Force, which is led by the Texas A&M University System. The task force brings together semiconductor industry stakeholders from the private sector, community partners, and institutions of higher education to collaborate on addressing the workforce needs of the industry. Additionally, TWC and the Boards have collaborated for years with industry partners and the education community to develop

meaningful workforce services and programs that address the needs of both the manufacturing and construction industries. Many short- and long-term training programs and job placement tools are in place to meet the current demand and provide support to address the ongoing workforce challenges related to industry expansion.

More than 150 training programs are currently included on the Statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to support the growing demand for semiconductor-related jobs in both manufacturing and construction areas. Providers include community and technical colleges, private career schools, and apprenticeship programs. Many of these training programs offer short-term credentialing and credit programs.

Focus on Texas' Nuclear Industry

On June 20, 2025, Governor Abbott signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 1535 to create the Advanced Nuclear Energy Workforce Development Program. The bill directed TWC to consult with THECB and the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to develop a strategic plan for Texas' nuclear industry that would focus on addressing labor gaps, improving talent retention, and promoting workforce education in nuclear energy. Additionally, the bill instructed TWC to design curriculum standards for certificate and degree programs for Texas' nuclear energy industry.

On June 23, 2025, TWC's three-member Commission (Commission) approved the allocation of $1.5 million in WIOA statewide funds to establish a pilot program designed to support Texans pursuing careers in the advanced nuclear energy sector. This initiative aims to address the growing demand for a skilled workforce capable of meeting the technical and safety requirements of the evolving energy industry. Through the pilot, eligible participants will receive assistance with training expenses, certification fees, and other related costs, thus reducing barriers to entry into high-demand nuclear energy occupations. By investing in this emerging field, the Commission seeks to strengthen Texas's position as a leader in innovative energy solutions, provide workers with access to high-quality, sustainable jobs, and create a model that can be scaled to meet future workforce needs across the state.

Critical Skills Apprenticeships Initiative

The Critical Skills Apprenticeship Initiative, which the Commission approved in February 2022, received continued governor's reserve statewide funding to address workforce shortages in middle skills occupations and develop the critical skills needed within those occupations. The initiative has focused on creating and expanding apprenticeship training programs in middle-skills occupations, such as:

- automotive service technicians and mechanics;
- nursing assistants;
- patient care technicians;
- production machinists, assemblers, and fabricators; and
- logistics management and supply chain analysts.

Texas Credential Library Project

TWC, TEA, and THECB maintain the Texas Credential Library as an extension of the preexisting National Credential Registry. The Texas Credential Library expands the foundational work of the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative to align workforce development

with high-demand jobs in Texas and allow users to compare credentials and programs and seek out pathways for educational or professional advancement. The data that is available within the library adheres to statutory mandates and includes information on diplomas, certificates, certifications, digital badges, apprenticeships, licenses, and degrees that are offered by public and private universities, colleges, career schools, or career-focused high-school courses. The Texas Credential Library currently includes 16,587 credentials organized into specific collections, which include the following 7,720 credentials of particular interest to TWC:

- Texas Healthcare Workforce Credentials (1,135 credentials)
- Texas Early Childhood Credentials (91 credentials)
- Credentials offered through the WIOA Eligible Training Providers List, including those offering apprenticeship programs (6,068 credentials)
- Texas Registered Apprenticeship Collection (116 credentials)
- TEA 2022–2025 Industry-Based Certifications (IBC) List for Public School Accountability (310 credentials)

Targeted Service Populations

Employers

Texas' strong economic foundation is largely a credit to the diversity and stability of its private-sector businesses. The state boasts an estimated 656,750 total employers representing hundreds of industries. The overwhelming majority (97.7 percent) of Texas employers are small businesses that employ fewer than 100 workers. However, the largest percentages of jobs (64.3 percent) are with companies that employ 100 or more workers. TWC and its workforce partners are committed to collaborating with local economic development entities to equip Texas employers of all sizes with a highly skilled workforce that will keep jobs in Texas and help companies remain competitive in the global marketplace.

TWC strives to ensure that the state's integrated workforce system attracts and retains in-demand employers. Each Board area has dedicated teams of W-P ES staff, known as BSUs. They work to develop strong relationships with local business communities, which allows them to effectively meet an employer's specific needs. BSUs act as business associates as they offer specific services such as recruitment services, skills training, and other workforce development services that are designed to connect employers to qualified job seekers.

As one of the state's premier economic development tools, the SDF serves as an incentive to attract new firms to locate in Texas or to help existing companies expand. The SDF successfully merges employer needs and local job training opportunities into a winning formula that benefits employers and provides needed skills to workers. Skills grants help incumbent workers upgrade their skills or help create high-skill, high-wage jobs. The use of these grants for skills development is particularly significant because, unlike formula funding, these funds are not required to serve categorical populations; thus, the funds can be used to target the workers who employers identify as needing enhanced skills.

Workers

With a workforce of over 15.8 million workers, TWC aims to help all Texans succeed in a quality work environment. The agency provides workforce development and training, apprenticeship programs, and employment support services for members of its labor force.

Long-term self-sufficiency is promoted by enabling parents to work or attend school and training to launch a career pathway while their children receive quality child care. TWC investigates wage claims, child labor law violations, and employment discrimination claims to ensure that workers receive fair treatment and proper compensation for their work.

Job Seekers

TWC strives to provide employment services and develop innovative strategies to help individuals find employment opportunities in high-growth, high-wage industries. Additionally, TWC works to engage underserved populations, such as second-chance individuals and foster youth, to eliminate barriers to employment and extend services to everyone. As a result, the Texas workforce system is able to offer services that lead to hundreds of thousands of job seekers entering employment each year. Services include job search assistance, labor market and career planning information, training and education opportunities, and unemployment benefits to those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program for Unemployment Insurance Claimants

Reemployment Service and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) is both a workforce and an UI program, providing UI claimants with resources that support reemployment and connecting them to career services. Each Board partner receives funding to hire RESEA staff and provide RESEA services.

The purpose of the RESEA program is the following:

- Improve employment outcomes of UI recipients and reduce the average duration of UI receipt through employment.
- Strengthen program integrity and reduce improper UI payments through the detection and prevention of such payments to ineligible individuals.
- Promote alignment with the broader WIOA vision of increased program integration and service delivery for job seekers, including UI claimants.
- Establish reemployment services and eligibility assessments as an entry point for UI claimants into other workforce system partner programs.

RESEA customers must watch a mandatory reemployment video, which provides information about the programs and resources offered by local Workforce Solutions Offices. Additionally, RESEA customers must partake in an initial RESEA appointment and any subsequent RESEA appointments as necessary. The program design dictates a minimum service level, which includes specific services and activities that must be completed by or on behalf of the UI claimant.

Veterans

TWC promotes hiring veterans through several initiatives, including the We Hire Vets program. This program recognizes Texas employers whose workforce is comprised of 10 percent or more of U.S. military veterans. In 2008, TWC created TVLP. This program was designed as a resource and referral network for veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2014, TVLP began providing services to all veterans in response to the U.S.

Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service's (DOLVETS) refocusing efforts. TVLP staff works closely with the Texas Veterans Commission's (TVC) JVSG employment program to serve veterans who are not eligible to be served by the JVSG program. Additionally, TWC staff works with DOLVETS Off-Base Transition Training contractor staff, the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program, and Employment Navigator & Partnership Program staff on military installations.

Services provided through TVLP include job search and employment assistance, the identification of education and training resources, and the referral to community-based organizations for supportive services such as housing assistance, substance abuse counseling, mental health services and referrals to address other identified needs. Veterans receive preference for jobs posted on TWC's online job matching website, WorkInTexas.com, and priority for all state agency openings in Texas. Veterans can search for jobs, receive priority of service at Texas Workforce Solutions Offices, and access information on transition assistance and benefits. TWC maintains the Just for Veterans resource on the TWC website that provides information on services specifically for veterans. Additionally, TWC's CCH initiative assists veterans by awarding college credit for experience gained and training completed during military service.

Statewide Program to Transition from the Military to Civilian Employment

The Military Family Support Program, created in 2017, became the Statewide Program to Transition Military to Civilian Employment program and, in 2024, the Commission approved $3 million in WIOA statewide funds for the program. The program's purpose is to assist transitioning service members (TSMs), recently separated veterans (RSVs), and military spouses as they transition from military service to civilian employment. The purpose of the program is to assist individuals in translating their military experience into skills that the civilian labor market recognizes. Services include employment services, training, wraparound support services, and help connecting with apprenticeship opportunities.

On June 23, 2025, Commission approved the allocation of $500,000 in WIOA statewide funds for the creation of a pilot program at Joint Base San Antonio. Through this grant, operated by TVLP, eligible senior military leaders will take part in executive internships with Texas employers. If successful, this program may expand to Texas' other military bases, providing opportunities for effective military-to-civilian leadership transition for more service members throughout Texas.

Individuals with Disabilities

TWC's VR program empowers Texans with disabilities to achieve their employment goals.

VR provides services to eligible individuals with disabilities, including young adults and students transitioning from high school. The program is committed to promoting competitive, integrated employment opportunities with equitable pay, benefits, and career advancement opportunities that are comparable to opportunities available to individuals without disabilities.

To promote this mission, VR provides a range of customized services that help individuals with disabilities prepare for, find, keep, and advance in employment. These services include

counseling, medical treatment, training, assistive technology, job placement assistance, the provision of accessible local labor market information, and benefits counseling.

VR places a strong emphasis on informed choice, ensuring that individuals have access to diverse educational and training options, including postsecondary, vocational, and technical programs that are tailored to their goals.

TWC builds and maintains strong partnerships with employers, schools, vocational programs, and community-based organizations. These collaborations expand the talent pool and increase access to meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Through innovative strategies and the use of technology, VR enhances the availability and accessibility of services and individualized training programs, helping individuals with disabilities prepare for and achieve competitive, integrated employment in their chosen career fields.

Foster Youth

Foster youth receive priority over other equally qualified individuals except eligible veterans. In addition to workforce services, foster youth are provided access to support services, such as child care and transportation. Upon the completion of an individual's eligibility determination, Boards determine which specific program services the foster youth participant is eligible to receive. These services may include, but are not limited to:

- job search assistance;
- résumé preparation;
- access to workforce education and training;
- access to information, tools, and room resources; and
- access to WorkInTexas.com.

The transition from the foster care system to independent adult life can be difficult. Many foster youths are unprepared for living on their own. TWC contributes funding for Foster Youth Transition Centers that provide services to youth from ages 16 through 25. Transition Centers provide a central clearing house of one-stop services to serve the diverse needs of older foster youth. Working with Boards through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreement, Transition Centers provide services such as job readiness and job search assistance, career exploration, higher education enrollment assistance, food and housing assistance, and mentoring. Additionally, other community partners provide services such as counseling for substance abuse and mental health issues, mentoring services, and leadership training.

Second-Chance Individuals

TWC is dedicated to serving second-chance individuals by offering skills training and employment opportunities in high-demand occupations. TWC understands the importance of helping second-chance individuals find employment quickly after being released to prevent recidivism. One of the ways that TWC fulfills this goal is by hosting an annual Growth through Reentry to Advance Careers & Employment (GRACE) conference to provide Texas

employers with an opportunity to learn how to increase their workforce while helping formerly incarcerated individuals gain meaningful employment and the chance for a fresh start. To promote the event, TWC outreaches businesses around the state that are interested in developing a new talent pipeline with second-chance individuals. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) partners with TWC to support the event and help improve the integration of services for these individuals.

Boards maintain partnerships with local judges, community supervision and correctional institutions, and other community-based organizations that provide support services to second-chance individuals, thus enabling Boards to provide the most robust service options available. Boards also assist employers in applying for fidelity bonds and other work incentives to ensure that employers are comfortable with hiring second-chance individuals. TWC's fidelity bonding program offers employers an insurance policy through the Union Insurance Group that protects the employer against employee acts of dishonesty such as larceny, embezzlement, and theft. Employers that hire second-chance individuals are also eligible for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), a federal income tax benefit administered by DOL for private, for-profit employers who hire individuals from specified target populations, including second-chance individuals. Offering these opportunities in high-crime, high-poverty communities has proved to be impactful in reducing recidivism and helping second-chance individuals move toward self-sufficiency.

TWC's AEL program provides opportunities for second-chance individuals through its Integrated Education and Training in Corrections pilot project with the Windham School District (WSD). AEL started a three-year pilot program with WSD to develop and implement integrated education and training (IET) programs in correctional facilities across the state. The objective of the pilot was to build a model in which basic skills–deficient residents are provided contextualized reading, writing, and math supports while participating in technical training programs in high-demand occupations and/or industries. The pilot was modeled from the state's participation in the nationwide technical assistance campaign constructed by ED in which TWC, AEL, and WSD were partners. The lessons learned from the technical assistance campaign have been applied and implemented through an interagency contract. The pilot not only focused on services during incarceration but also building community support through reentry services performed by AEL providers upon release. This allowed participants to connect with additional resources to ensure that they could obtain the required credentials or licensing for the occupation in which they were trained and receive support for job placement. Over the past three years, TWC has disseminated best practices relating to the development of such models for AEL and workforce system stakeholders at statewide conferences for workforce, AEL, and corrections stakeholders. TWC will extend this pilot for an additional year due to its wide success.

Youth

Providing today's youth with education, training, career exploration, and workplace opportunities is essential to the state's future growth and success. To ensure that young people have the skills necessary to meet future workforce needs, Texas supports youth programs that promote in-demand careers beginning at an early age and identifies educational and career pathways for students, including vocational and technical training, as well as those that require two-year, four-year, and higher education levels.

Workforce Readiness Outreach and Career Coach Pilot Program

In July 2018, TWC's Commission approved a two-year initiative, called the Workforce Readiness Outreach Career Coach Pilot Program, to educate students and their parents on the availability of career resources and empower students to gain industry-recognized certifications, graduate with marketable skills, and minimize future student debt. The program places local Workforce Career Coaches in area school districts to provide career guidance and workforce information to students and their parents regarding:

- high-growth, high-demand occupations;
- opportunities and training in middle skills jobs;
- apprenticeship training programs;
- internships; and
- community and technical colleges.

In September 2022, the two-year pilot program became permanent. The program has since expanded to include 23 Board teams and one state-level team. Each new Board area and hired specialists are trained by the state-level Education Outreach team to ensure the successful duplication of state-level practices. However, local programs have the flexibility to implement programs and services that meet the specific needs of their local schools and employers.

Since the start of the statewide program, career coaches have reached 1,059,500 students through 39,312 sessions, and coaches have engaged in more than 51,448 one-on-one sessions.

Boards use a mix of available program funding, as allowable, to fund career coach activities. Programs under which all or some of the activities may be allowable include, but are not limited to, the TANF Choices program and the WIOA Title I Youth program.

Adult Education and Literacy Program

The AEL Program delivers the basic foundational skills, workforce preparation, workforce training, and other career advancement services that are necessary to prepare Texans to support their families, careers, and communities. AEL supports growth in the state by offering programs for individuals with barriers to employment, by identifying transferable skills valued by employers and by delivering education and training to individuals who want to complete postsecondary education and training and find employment in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

In January 2021, the Commission adopted the Adult Education and Literacy Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2021–2026. During the development of the Strategic Plan, the state's AEL advisory committee, which consists of representatives from the business communities and Board partners, identified and outlined the following four key goals in the plan:

- Increase workforce, secondary, and postsecondary education and training outcomes to support increases in education and work-related outcomes through enhanced delivery and service integration

- Address demand for AEL in Texas by implementing strategies that increase and streamline access for current and future students
- Enhance the workforce customer's experience through increased coordination and integration among state and local system stakeholders
- Improve AEL program effectiveness, which includes program accountability and fiscal integrity, and provide tools to communicate the AEL program impact to AEL stakeholders

To meet these goals, AEL grantees have implemented a diverse service delivery system that delivers both the foundational skills and career pathway transitions needed to support and prepare Texans to support their families, careers, and communities. With the Adult Education and Literacy Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021–2026 nearing its final year, the state's AEL Advisory Committee has begun developing a new Strategic Plan. The new plan will align with TWIC's Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for FY 2024–2031, prioritizing cross-agency collaboration to enhance services for shared customers and achieve targeted plan outcomes.

Under WIOA, Boards engage and support AEL grant recipients in various activities that promote students' success in meeting their career and educational goals. Finding ways to innovate AEL and leverage education, training, support, and career development resources continues to be key to fostering student and system success. AEL and its Texas workforce partners share the goal of building a wider, more valuable array of services that better assist their mutual customers in attaining educational goals that support career development and the transition to higher education while helping strengthen families and communities. Workplace literacy programs focus on developing workplace competencies that are tailored to specific employer needs. Additionally, programs for internationally trained professionals support individuals who are highly skilled but need English-language acquisition to be competitive job seekers. These programs are supported by both Boards and AEL grant recipients as they work together to identify employers and job seekers who could benefit from services.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

TWC's VR program is an integral part of the state's comprehensive workforce development system. VR services are delivered to eligible customers by VR staff, in collaboration with Boards, independent school districts, colleges, service providers, and numerous other partners. The VR program provides an array of goods and services to support eligible individuals with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining, retaining, or advancing in competitive integrated employment. Services are based on the individual's needs to achieve their employment goal, including vocational counseling and guidance, academic and vocational training, diagnosis and treatment of impairments, assessment of medical and vocational needs, assistive technology and equipment, disability-related skills training, transportation, job exploration and work-based learning, and supported employment. Guided by the principle of informed choice, staff provides services that align with the individual's strengths, resources, interests, and capabilities. Some services are also available to potentially eligible students with a disability.

The VR program aims to enhance collaboration and coordination with Boards, employers, community organizations, and other stakeholders to increase competitive integrated

employment outcomes and work-based learning experiences, such as internships, volunteer positions, and summer and year-round work experience programs. VR collaborates with its Texas workforce system partners to participate in joint strategies that address employers' workforce needs. VR partners with TWC's We Hire Ability Employer Recognition Program to recognize employers whose workforce composition consists of 10 percent or more of individuals with disabilities. VR's Business Relations team works with local employers to learn about open positions, host virtual employer spotlight events, and cultivate understanding regarding the value of hiring individuals with disabilities. The team also collaborates with local Workforce Solutions BSU staff and numerous community organizations regarding employment of individuals with disabilities.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

TWC is committed to providing services and support to students with disabilities. WIOA requires states to reserve and expend 15 percent of the federal VR grant for the provision of pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for the VR program. A student with a disability is defined as an individual with a disability, aged 14–22, who is in school. Pre-ETS supports students with disabilities through a variety of services, including career exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on postsecondary opportunities, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy.

Through the Pathways to Careers Initiative (PCI), TWC has cultivated statewide programs that provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities. PCI's purpose is to expand Pre-ETS to Texas students with disabilities through a series of statewide strategies that feature partnerships with Boards and secondary and postsecondary education entities. These initiatives focus on career exploration, higher-education counseling, self-advocacy, workplace readiness training, and paid work experiences.

Concluding Comments

Texas' implementation of WIOA's six core programs supports a service delivery system that meets the needs of employers and works to ensure that relevant training and employment assistance is available for job seekers, including those with disabilities, regardless of the funding source. Boards work individually, together, and with other stakeholders to achieve a cost efficient and seamless service delivery system. Such a system enhances participant access to a range of workforce and associated support services. Collaborative efforts aid in providing an adequate supply of workers that meet the skills requirements of available jobs, thus assisting the state's employers with retaining and enhancing a competitive economic advantage.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include–

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) was created by the 73rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session (1993). TWIC's purpose is to promote the development of a highly skilled and well-educated workforce for Texas and to assist the governor and the legislature with strategic planning for and evaluation of the Texas workforce system.

The scope of TWIC's work is "workforce development," which is defined in state statutes that pertain to TWIC as "workforce education and workforce training and services." Workforce education includes articulated career path programs and the constituent courses of those programs that lead to a sub-baccalaureate license, credential, certificate, or degree.

Texas statute assigns TWIC five primary functions within the Texas workforce system, as follows:

- Strategic planning
- Evaluation and performance measurement
- Research and continuous improvement
- Review of state and local workforce plans and reports to ensure alignment with statewide goals and objectives
- Maintaining the Texas skill standards system

TWIC also serves as the state workforce investment board (state board) as required under federal workforce law. As the state board, TWIC operated under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) (Public Law 105-220) since Texas' implementation of the Act in 1999. On July 22, 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Public Law 113-128) was signed into law, thereby establishing new federal workforce law and repealing WIA. TWIC continues to serve as the state board under WIOA.

In some states, prior consistent state law has determined that the state board will be largely responsible for system strategic planning and evaluation and that the state workforce agency will be responsible for program administration.

Because of the significant workforce system reform initiated by the Texas legislature in 1993 and 1995, WIOA contains provisions that allow Texas to retain—or grandfather—major elements of its workforce system that are consistent with WIOA, including TWIC's composition and roles. As a result, the duties assigned to the state board under WIOA are implemented in a manner that is consistent with TWIC's role under state legislation enacted before WIOA. Accordingly, TWIC does not operate programs or directly manage the flow of state and federal funding to the system's state agencies. Rather, TWIC's focus is strategic, as its functions are guided by the duties and responsibilities established under Title 10, Texas Government Code, Chapter 2308.

Because TWIC is the state board, federal agencies periodically engage it in the federal system oversight role to participate in program reviews. For example, in the past, TWIC has participated in program reviews and site visits conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Region 4 Office; the DOL Office of Inspector General; the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA); the Department of Education's (ED) Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE); and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

One of TWIC's key functions is the development of an overarching strategic plan for the Texas workforce system. The Texas workforce system is composed of a number of programs, services, and initiatives administered by eight state agencies, the Texas Association of Workforce Boards (TAWB), local workforce development boards (Boards), community and technical colleges, local adult education providers, and independent school districts. Texas workforce system partners include the following:

- Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office (EDT)
- TAWB
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and the Windham School District (WSD)
- Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)
- Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD)
- Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)
- Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

The TWIC chair is authorized to appoint subcommittees and technical advisory committees to inform the work of the Council and to assist TWIC in fulfilling its legislative mandates. TWIC is required to meet quarterly and at other times as deemed necessary by the chair. All meetings of TWIC and its committees are posted in the *Texas Register* in accordance with the

Texas Open Meetings Act. Current TWIC committees include the Executive Committee and the Apprenticeship and Training Advisory Committee. A recommendation from any committee must be considered by TWIC and is not considered an approved action until TWIC conducts a vote. A recommendation or action must be approved by a majority of the quorum present at the meeting.

The chair appoints an executive director, who is responsible for TWIC's daily operations. The executive director establishes administrative and personnel policies and procedures on behalf of TWIC, hires staff to address TWIC's duties and responsibilities, and provides periodic and annual reports to TWIC, the governor, and the legislature. TWIC is responsible for developing and implementing policies that clearly separate its policymaking responsibilities from the management responsibilities of the executive director and staff.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

TWC is Texas' agency responsible for the administration of all WIOA core and partner programs.

TWC and the 28 Boards provide workforce development services that help workers find and keep good jobs and help employers hire the skilled workers they need to grow their businesses. Our workforce partners include community colleges, adult basic education providers, local independent school districts, economic development groups, businesses, and other state agencies. Collaboration and coordination among these partners play a critical role in the success of the Texas workforce system.

Boards are responsible for implementing the strategic planning of workforce services for employers and job seekers. The integrated workforce delivery system maximizes funding and productivity while eliminating duplicate efforts. Through performance-based contracts, TWC monitors and holds the Boards accountable for program performance and provides technical assistance.

TWC continues to cultivate emerging industries, support existing businesses, and enhance the skills development of the Texas workforce, taking advantage of strategic opportunities provided by economic change. TWC is dedicated to leading a market-driven workforce system that meets the needs of employers and workers to help all Texans prosper.

Texas has enjoyed efficiencies in providing services to employers, job seekers, and special population groups, including low-income and basic skills–deficient individuals and veterans, by colocating core programs. These efficiencies include the following:

- Provisioning comprehensive and seamless workforce and support services
- Eliminating duplicative efforts and managing program funds effectively
- Providing guidance and technical assistance systemically and consistently across programs
- Colocating and integrating Texas Workforce Solutions and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) business relations staff to help employers fill open positions with qualified job seekers with disabilities, thus enhancing the one-stop service delivery model
- Using labor market information to inform targeted business development, explore industry and economic trends, and research and track emerging and evolving occupations in Texas

Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

The following activities support WIOA core programs and align with the State's strategies, as previously described.

TWC administers the development and integration of workforce services in cooperation with the Board's oversight and planning efforts. The Boards provide service delivery, which they contract with one-stop providers to operate a variety of program components. This network gives customers local access to workforce solutions and statewide services at 174 Workforce Solutions Offices, four unemployment insurance (UI) telecenters, and numerous partner locations.

WIOA continues to support Texas' progress toward integrating services for customers. In Texas, many one stop–required partners are Board administered or are under direct agency control and do not require the development of memoranda of understanding (MOUs), including:

- WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW), and Youth programs
- Wagner-Peyser (W-P) Employment Service (ES) program
- UI program, including the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program
- Choices, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program
- Child Care Services (CCS)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs (when Board is the grantee)
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs (memoranda of understanding [MOUs] are required between TWC and Board.)
- National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) program

Additionally, the following required programs are not under the direct oversight of the Boards. Therefore, TWC requires the Boards to establish MOUs with the following:

- AEL (when Board is not the grantee)

- Apprenticeship programs under the Title 3, Texas Education Code, Chapter 133
- Career and technical education (CTE) programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 United States Code (USC) §2301 et seq.)
- Job counseling, training, and placement services for veterans (38 USC §41, et seq.)
- Education and vocational training programs through Job Corps, administered by DOL
- Native American programs authorized under Title I of WIOA
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)–administered employment and training programs
- Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act
- Reintegration of Offenders programs authorized under the Second Chance Act, 2007
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) programs authorized under WIOA §167
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

TWC recommends that Boards enter into MOUs with the following optional workforce partners:

- Employment and training programs administered by the Social Security Administration, including the Ticket-to-Work and the Self-Sufficiency Program, established under the Social Security Act §1148 (42 USC §1320b-19, et seq.)
- Employment and training programs carried out by the Small Business Administration
- Programs administered by OneStar Foundation, authorized under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 USC §12401, et seq.)
- Other appropriate federal, state, or local programs, which may include employment, education, and training programs provided by public libraries or in the private sector

Additionally, TWC encourages Boards to continually expand and enhance their network by forming partnerships outside of the Workforce Solutions Offices. Some agencies and services with which Boards have established additional cooperative relationships include the following:

- Local boards of education
- Local-level vocational education agencies
- Economic Development Organizations (EDOs)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Faith-based organizations (FBOs)

Texas state law requires TWC and the Texas Health and HHSC to jointly develop an MOU establishing guidelines for a coordinated interagency case management plan. Additionally, in the contracts between TWC and the Boards, TWC requires the Boards to develop and implement a coordinated interagency case management plan in cooperation with HHSC local offices.

The Operational Planning Element b2 section includes more information about TWC's use of coenrollment and other state strategies.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship training is designed to prepare and train individuals for careers in skilled trades and crafts by combining supervised on-the-job training with job-related classroom instruction that teaches both the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation. These programs have demonstrated that employers who invest in training benefit from lower employee turnover, increased productivity, improved employee problem-solving skills, and stronger employee relations. As a result, both employers and employees are able to share a stronger commitment to the program's success.

ApprenticeshipTexas

The purpose of TWC's ApprenticeshipTexas program is to stimulate and assist industries in developing and improving apprenticeship opportunities and other training programs that are designed to provide employers with the skilled workers who are needed to compete in a global economy. As authorized in the Title 3, Texas Education Code, Chapter 133, TWC provides funding to local education agencies (LEAs) and apprenticeship committees to support a portion of the costs of job-related classroom instruction in registered apprenticeship training programs. LEAs and the apprenticeship committees serve as the funding link between Registered Apprenticeship training programs and TWC. To qualify for this funding, apprenticeship training programs and apprentices must register with DOL's Office of Apprenticeship.

Pre-apprenticeship programs, which provide individuals with a clear pathway to a Registered Apprenticeship, have been approved for funding for the 2026–2027 biennium in the amount of $2,753,027 for a total of $5,506,054. TWC projects that pre-apprenticeship programs will serve over 1,300 individuals throughout the program period.

Texas Industry-Recognized Apprenticeships

TWC was appropriated $29.7 million for the 2026–2027 biennium to support Texas Industry-Recognized Apprenticeships (TIRAs), including a targeted $10 million investment to support the broadband industry. TIRAs combine full-time, paid on-the-job training that is supervised by experienced workers with job-related classroom instruction. The goal of such training mirrors DOL's desired outcome to produce skilled workers who can compete in a global economy. Additionally, through these funds, employers are able to address urgent workforce demands stemming from natural disasters and persistent labor shortages, particularly in high-growth sectors such as broadband infrastructure.

Implementation of TIRA during the 2024–2025 biennium encountered significant obstacles due to restrictive reimbursement policies. Under the original legislation, funding was limited to one-time payments that were issued upon completion of all of the training phases and verification of full-time employment, which often took up to 18 months to achieve. Barriers to program success were thus experienced due to the lack of flexibility in the program's structure, narrow employment verification criteria, and delayed financial support for participants.

On June 20, 2025, the Governor signed HB 3260 which amended TIRA provisions to allow for milestone-based reimbursements, thus providing for the more flexible and timely provision of financial support for participants as they advance through key stages of training and employment.

To further promote consistency, accountability, and quality across the TIRA system, TWC will establish a formal certification process for industry-recognized apprenticeship programs. Such a process will help to ensure that the programs meet set standards and deliver meaningful workforce outcomes.

Job Corps

The Job Corps program is a no-cost education and vocational training program that is administered by DOL. Authorized under Title I of WIOA as a required partner within the one-stop system, Job Corps programs assist eligible youth, ages 16 to 24, with obtaining the skills and knowledge that are necessary to succeed in high-demand industries through a combination of academic coursework, vocational training, and hands-on work experience.

Located primarily in residential centers, Job Corps programs provide opportunities for participants to obtain secondary school diplomas or recognized postsecondary credentials that lead to successful careers in in-demand industry sectors such as health care, construction, information technology, and hospitality or the Armed Forces. Program goals include economic self-sufficiency; educational and career advancement; enrollment in postsecondary education, including apprenticeship programs; and supporting responsible citizenship. There are 131 Job Corps centers located throughout the United States, each offering educational training and a variety of vocational training programs.

On May 29, 2025, DOL announced a "phased pause in operations at contractor-operated Job Corps centers nationwide," with a completion date of June 30, 2025.

Following the announcement, TWC issued a formal communication notice to Boards in anticipation of increases in referrals and walk-ins from former Job Corps participants, including both students and graduates. TWC's communication notice outlined several considerations that may impact Board operations, including:

- registering former Job Corps participants in WorkInTexas.com and referring them to local Workforce Solutions Offices based on their home of record;
- ensuring that former Job Corps participants are aware of the student resource page on JobCorps.gov; and
- accepting existing Job Corps documentation to expedite program enrollment.

TWC is aware of judicial actions relating to the planned closure of Job Corps centers, including those in Texas. TWC will be responsive to developments that may require further actions be taken.

YouthBuild

YouthBuild is a community-based pre-apprenticeship program administered by DOL's Office of Workforce Investment's Division of Youth Services. YouthBuild grantees in Texas offer programs in Austin, Houston, San Antonio, Irving, and New Caney that empower young individuals to reach their full potential by providing education, job training, and leadership-development opportunities. Designed for young people who have faced barriers to success, such as those who have experienced a lack of education, have limited job prospects, or are involved in the justice system, the YouthBuild program offers a transformative pathway toward self-sufficiency and community engagement. Through a comprehensive curriculum that combines academic instruction with hands-on construction training, participants gain valuable skills while earning a high school diploma or equivalent credential. Additionally, the program fosters personal growth and civic responsibility by encouraging youth to actively participate in community service projects, thus fostering a sense of belonging and giving back.

YouthBuild also continues to strengthen connections to career pathways through apprenticeships. Traditionally, the YouthBuild model has provided connections to apprenticeship opportunities in the building trades.

Child Care and Early Learning

High-quality child care promotes healthy child development and school readiness while enabling parents to work, search for work, or attend a training or education program. The mission of the Child Care & Early Learning Division is to enhance the quality of and increase access to high-quality child care through program supports while providing financial aid to low-income families.

TWC's CCS program provides child care subsidy assistance to eligible low-income families with children under the age of thirteen, which allows parents to work or search for work, attend school, or participate in training. Boards administer child care financial assistance to support eligible low-income families and families that participate in the TANF/Choices employment program. CCS staff members use a monthly report to identify child care parents who may benefit from reemployment services, education, and training.

When a parent who is receiving child care subsidies loses their job, they have up to three months to find employment and retain child care assistance. During the three-month job search period, the family continues to receive child care assistance. Additionally, parents who are engaged in job search can qualify for child care while they search for employment. If the parent becomes employed within three months, they retain their child care benefits for a full 12-month eligibility period (nine additional months).

<u>Improving the Quality of Child Care</u>

The Texas Rising Star Program is a quality rating and improvement system for child care providers participating in the CCS program. The program requires providers to exceed

minimum licensing requirements and encourages the attainment of progressively higher levels of quality. TWC requires all child care providers in the CCS program to participate in the Texas Rising Star Program at least at the entry level, and must attain star-level certification within two years. Boards employ Texas Rising Star mentors who provide coaching and technical assistance to CCS providers that are working toward initial and higher levels of certification.

The Texas Rising Star Program assesses providers for quality through the use of on-site observations, evaluations, and standardized criteria. TWC contracts with the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston to conduct Texas Rising Star assessments.

Assessors must complete the Texas Rising Star Assessment Training and Certification Program (ATCP) and maintain reliability by undergoing quarterly checks. All mentors must participate in the Texas Rising Star Mentor Micro-Credentials program. TWC funds both the ATCP and the Mentor Micro-Credentials program, and CLI administers them.

Additionally, 6 percent of the Boards' Child Care funding is allocated to fund local activities that improve the quality of child care services in Texas. Boards must determine the community's needs and develop annual Child Care Quality Expenditure Plans that outline their strategic investment of these quality improvement funds. These funds are often used to fund professional development and financial bonuses for child care professionals.

Early Care and Education Workforce Initiatives

In January 2023, TWC published its first Child Care Workforce Strategic Plan to improve the quality of the child care workforce in Texas. The plan, which TWC will update every three years, includes demographic and workforce data along with goals and strategies to support the current child care workforce and provide a pipeline of qualified early educators. Strategies for the 2023–2025 plan include the following:

- Making improvements to the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) as well as updating its core competencies and career pathways tool
- Supporting a pipeline of qualified child care workers
- Expanding Child Care Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs)
- Revising TWC's Child Care Quality Improvement Strategic Planning and Expenditures Guide to include additional workforce support strategies

RAPs help child care providers recruit and retain high-quality teachers. TWC awarded planning and implementation grants to six applicants through two rounds of funding. Together, these RAPs worked with 84 child care providers to employ 198 apprentices and created nine new early childhood RAP tracks.

TWC also used time-limited Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) funding to expand existing Child Care RAPs. TWC funded one applicant. After their first quarter, they enrolled 19 new apprentices with seven new child care employer partners.

TWC has significantly increased investments in the Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Scholarship (ECEPDS) program. Scholarship recipients, who must work at a

regulated child care provider, may also be eligible to receive retention bonuses after completing their education and attaining their certification or degree. ECEPDS awards scholarships to cover the cost of Child Development Associate training and exams, associate degrees, bachelor degrees, and participation in early childhood education, registered apprenticeship programs.

Additionally, TWC used PDG B-5 funding to assist institutions of higher education (IHEs) in developing credit pathway models through the Early Educators Credit Pathways Support program. Launched in December 2024 with an application period that ended on May 31, 2025, this program provides funding to IHEs to create and define clear credit pathways for new and current early childhood educators who want to provide high-quality care for children.

Foster Youth

TWC recognizes that helping foster youth transition to independent living requires more than simply addressing the need for shelter, food, and safety. Public agencies, community organizations, professionals, community leaders, and concerned volunteers must make intensive and coordinated efforts to support youth in becoming engaged, responsible, and economically self-sufficient adults. TWC, along with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) regional offices and local Boards, have jointly developed and entered into agreements that address the unique challenges current and former foster youth face as they transition into successful adults, including the need to improve employment outcomes for such individuals. Through a MOU, DFPS and the Boards collaborate to further the objectives of DFPS' Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program. PAL aims to prioritize and target services to meet the needs of current and former foster youth and to refer, as appropriate, foster youth to short-term housing.

DFPS staff, caregivers, and PAL contractors refer youth ages 16 and older to local Workforce Solutions Offices for job-search and readiness assistance, career exploration, and employment and training services. Each Board has a designated point of contact for staff and youth to access assistance and services. Youth are encouraged to use the TWC online job matching system, WorkInTexas.com, to search for jobs, create a résumé, and submit applications for employment.

To ensure the effective provision of workforce-funded services for education and training programs, and to avoid the duplication of services to foster youth, Boards are familiar with other non-workforce programs and state tuition and fee waivers that are available to foster youth. WIOA Youth formula funds for Individual Training Accounts may provide tuition for foster youth to complete training. In Texas, tuition and fees are waived for foster youth enrolled in these training programs (Title 5, Texas Family Code §264.121 and Title 3, Texas Education Code §61.003). Foster youth enrolled in training are also eligible to receive vouchers that expand and supplement the tuition waiver for youth to meet their educational or vocational goals.

The transition from the foster care system to independent adult life can be difficult. Many former foster youths struggle with fear and loneliness, and some even suffer from untreated health problems, financial insecurity, and homelessness. Through partnerships between DFPS, DFPS providers, community partners, and TWC, Foster Youth Transition Centers

(transition centers) act as a central clearinghouse to serve the diverse needs of older foster youth, youth experiencing homelessness, and other at-risk youth. TWC provides funding to transition centers to provide services to youth from ages 16 to 25. Transition centers provide services such as job readiness and job search assistance, career exploration, higher education enrollment assistance, food and housing assistance, and mentoring. Additionally, other community partners provide services such as counseling for substance abuse and mental health issues, mentoring services, and leadership training. Transition centers provide colocation opportunities for local partners, such as Workforce Solutions Office staff, TWC-funded workforce advocates, and colleges and universities, to jointly serve the diverse needs of youth in one location. Currently, TWC contributes funds to 18 transition centers across the state. Transition center services are considered a supplement to Board services and are not meant to replace Board services.

The TWC's Labor Market Information (LMI) department supports Texas Career Check, a website that can facilitate career and education exploration for youth in and formerly in foster care. The website serves as a valuable resource, offering a range of information and tools that enable users to gather career-related information. Users can access data on occupation trends and information, military occupations, school information, programs of study, and even develop a high school graduation plan. One of the notable features of the website is an online interest profiler that helps young individuals determine their preferences and interests. To further engage and assist users, the website incorporates an interactive game for career exploration that allows youth to explore different career options and make informed decisions about their futures.

Priority of Service

Title 5, Texas Family Code §264.121 directs that workforce services be prioritized and targeted to meet the unique needs of foster youth and former foster youth.

Boards must ensure that:

- eligible foster youth receive priority over all other equally qualified individuals, except veterans and eligible spouses, in the receipt of federal and state-funded services; and
- workforce services are prioritized and targeted for youth transitioning out of the foster care system and for former foster youth.

To ensure that eligible foster youth receive priority over all other equally qualified individuals, except veterans and eligible spouses, in the receipt of workforce services, they also must have access to needed support services.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Both state and federal welfare reform legislation emphasize personal responsibility, time-limited cash assistance benefits, and the goal of work instead of public assistance. To support these mandates, TWC and the Boards have developed a service delivery model with the goal of employment at the earliest opportunity for applicants and recipients of cash assistance. TWC maintains a collaborative partnership with HHSC to address public assistance reform

through the Choices Program, which provides training and employment services to those receiving cash benefits from TANF.

The Choices program assists applicants, recipients, nonrecipient parents, and former recipients of TANF cash assistance in transitioning from receiving public assistance to obtaining and maintaining work through participation in work-related activities, including job search, job readiness classes, basic skills training, education, vocational training, and support services. Workforce Solutions Offices offer these services designed to lead to self-sustaining employment. Choices services help both employers and job seekers by providing training opportunities for job seekers along with job-matching tools that enable employers to find qualified, trained employees.

Choices staff meets with TANF recipients, who are referred by HHSC, to provide an overview of Choices services and requirements, conduct an in-depth assessment and develop a Family Employment Plan. Participation for most recipients includes job readiness activities and job search activities as a means of testing the labor market and locating employment at the earliest opportunity. Job readiness activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Self-esteem building
- Job search skills
- Labor market information
- Employment goal setting
- Résumé writing
- Interviewing techniques
- General workplace expectations
- Job-retention skills

Noncustodial Parent Choices

The Noncustodial Parent Choices (NCP Choices) program is a collaborative effort between TWC, the Office of the Attorney General of Texas, Boards, local Workforce Solutions Office staff, and family court judges. The program targets unemployed or underemployed Noncustodial Parents (NCPs) who are behind on their child support payments or who have had a child support obligation established.

Mirrored after TWC's Choices employment and training program for TANF recipients, the goal of the NCP Choices program is to help NCPs overcome substantial barriers to employment and career advancement while becoming economically self-sufficient and making consistent child support payments.

The success of the NCP Choices program is largely attributable to four core elements:

1. court-ordered program participation. Failure to participate leads to "swift and certain consequences," up to and including jail time;

2. the presence of Workforce Solutions Office staff at the court to meet with NCPs immediately after being ordered into the program;
3. intensive case management by Workforce Solutions Office staff, including weekly in-person contact until NCPs enter employment and monthly verification of continued employment; and
4. close communication with program partners regarding NCPs' participation and progress in the program.

TWC also encourages collaboration and coenrollment with other programs when appropriate to ensure the NCP receives a range of services.

Even though this is one of the hardest-to-serve populations, the NCP Choices program has seen positive employment, job retention, and child support results. Researchers collected the following Texas program information between September 2009 and January 2025:

- Providers served more than 44,000 NCPs.
- The program collected more than $1 billion and applied it toward child support obligations.
- 90 percent of participating NCPs entered employment, and 68 percent of participating NCPs retained employment for at least six months.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training

The SNAP E&T program helps SNAP recipients gain skills, training, or work experience to obtain regular employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. HHSC has administrative authority over the SNAP E&T program in Texas. HHSC and TWC operate under a Grant Agreement for SNAP E&T that provides agency-specific responsibilities for the administration of the program and provision of services. TWC coordinates and collaborates with 28 Boards and their contracted workforce service providers and community partners to provide SNAP E&T services.

TWC rules (Title 40, Texas Administrative Code (TAC), §813.2 [1][D], §813.12, and §813.32[b]) and federal regulations (7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §273.7[a] and 7 CFR §273.24[a][1]) require SNAP recipients to meet work requirements unless they are exempt. SNAP recipients who have been exempted from the work requirements may volunteer to participate in SNAP E&T services. Federal regulations at 7 CFR §273.7(c)(5) require each component of the state's SNAP E&T program to be developed in consultation with the State workforce development board.

The SNAP E&T program components offered in Texas include:

- supervised job search;
- job-search training;
- workfare;
- work experience;

- basic education;
- vocational training; and
- job-retention services.

SNAP E&T participants receive support services for expenses, including child care and transportation, that are reasonable, necessary, and directly related to participation in the program.

While some SNAP recipients participate only in SNAP E&T, others are also coenrolled in WIOA. Coenrollment in WIOA provides SNAP E&T participants additional opportunities, including work-based learning activities, to gain the skills necessary to meet the emerging demands of local businesses. SNAP E&T participants may enroll in the following WIOA services:

- Career services, including:
    - Assessments (basic and specialized)
    - Job search
    - Provision of referrals
    - Development of employment plan
    - Work experience
- Training services, including:
    - AEL services
    - Job-readiness training
    - Occupational skills training
    - Registered apprenticeship
    - On-the-job training
    - Internship

SNAP E&T participants, when appropriate, may also be coenrolled in TAA to receive additional employment services and training.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, TWC, in consultation with HHSC, began the Third-Party Partnership Initiative (TPPI) to expand SNAP E&T participation in Texas by using the third-party reimbursement (TPR) funding model. TPPI first began in FY 2025 in a few Boards with additional Boards participating for FY 2026. TPPI can reimburse providers of allowable SNAP E&T activities up to 50 percent of their expenditures on services they may already be providing to SNAP recipients. TPPI also offers providers and Boards with an opportunity to collaborate to create in-demand services for their local areas.

The "One Big Beautiful Bill" Act (OBBB), which was signed into law on July 4, 2025, made changes that will impact SNAP E&T operations in Texas. The changes are described below.

Expansion of Work Requirements are as follows:

- ABAWD (Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependent) work requirements would now apply to individuals ages 18–64.
- Parents are only excepted from the ABAWD time limit if they are caring for a child under the age of 14.
- Veterans, Homeless Individuals, and former Foster Youth will no longer qualify for ABAWD time-limit exceptions.
- Certain Native Americans are now exempt from the ABAWD time limit.

Eligibility

- SNAP eligibility is now limited to individuals who:
    - are a citizen or U.S. national;
    - are an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence as an immigrant;
    - are an alien who has been granted the status of Cuban and Haitian entrant; or
    - lawfully reside in the United States in accordance with a Compact of Free Association.

English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELL)—individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, write, speak, and/or understand English—continue to be a growing population of job seekers in Texas. Based on the TWIC report, Adult Education in Texas: A Demographic Study, over 36 percent of the total AEL-eligible population was not English fluent. Of this population, over 7 percent are internationally trained professionals (ITPs) with credentials or degrees from other countries. However, over 19 percent of these ITPs are not in the workforce due to their language barrier.

TWC continues to develop policies, guidance, technical assistance, and language assistance to ensure meaningful access to workforce services for all customers. TWC integrates English literacy with civics education, workforce preparation activities, secondary education, and occupational skills training. This approach stresses contextualized learning to help transition participants to postsecondary education, further skills training, or lead to wage-sustaining employment.

As Texas employers continue to compete in the global marketplace and with many new and established large corporations choosing to make Texas their headquarters, growing a skilled workforce remains a primary objective. Supporting the employment and training goals of ELLs has become a core mission for Boards, training providers, and adult education programs. Boards help AEL grant recipients by making connections with employers who wish to support diverse English language–acquisition services through workplace literacy programs. These partnerships allow AEL grant recipients to customize workplace literacy programs to meet individual employer needs, which enables employers to retain incumbent workers and prepare them for advancement within key industries across Texas. As provided in Adult Education in Texas: A Demographic Study, one in five Texans in the civilian workforce are foreign born, making workplace literacy programs a state priority. To support

this, AEL grant recipients across the state have implemented specific enrollment targets to expand these service models.

Homeless Individuals

TWC strives to make services available to individuals with barriers to employment, including homeless populations, as identified by WIOA §171(b)(4). As part of this effort, TWC serves on the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless (TICH), a group that consists of representatives from the following agencies:

- Office of the Governor
- Office of the Lieutenant Governor
- Office of the Speaker of the House
- HHSC
- DFPS
- Department of State Health Services (DHS)
- TEA
- TDCJ
- TJJD
- TVC
- Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)

The duties of the group are to:

- survey current resources and services for the homeless in the state;
- assist in coordinating and providing statewide services for homeless individuals in the state;
- increase the flow of information among providers and appropriate authorities;
- provide technical assistance to TDHCA in assessing the need for housing for individuals with special needs in different localities; and
- maintain a central resource and information center for homeless services.

TWC partners with grantees of the U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Services (DOLVETS) Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) to offer job-search and placement services, occupational training and counseling, and other vital assistance to homeless Texas veterans.

Additionally, Boards must establish collaborative partnerships with housing authorities and sponsors of local housing programs to address unmet housing needs of Choices recipients. Workforce Solutions Office staff performs initial and ongoing assessments to determine the employability needs of individuals. These assessments must report on unmet housing needs

and whether those needs are a barrier to full participation in the workforce and progression to self-sufficiency.

TWC also prioritizes CCS for families experiencing homelessness. Such parents can qualify for three months of child care subsidies, regardless of their employment status. If a parent finds work or starts an education or training program within the initial three months, they can retain their child care eligibility for a full 12-month eligibility period (nine additional months). Families experiencing homelessness also do not have to contribute a copay for CCS.

Second-Chance Individuals

TWC is a member of the State Reentry Task Force, which is led by TDCJ. The task force consists of individuals representing a cross-section of Texas agencies, organizations, and communities. The Reentry Task Force maintains working groups to address specific barriers to successful reentry. The Employment Working Group identifies strategies to eliminate barriers to employment in a post-release environment as well as coordination of resources, job training, and assistance.

TDCJ maintains the Website for Work program that helps connect individuals on parole supervision with second chance employers looking for skilled applicants. A dedicated employment specialist manages the web-based application to connect qualified unemployed or underemployed second-chance individuals across the state with second-chance employers in need of a skilled worker based on education, vocational training, certifications, and work experience.

Employers that hire a second-chance individual within a year of their release from prison qualify for the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). Additionally, TWC offers fidelity bonding through local Workforce Solutions Offices and markets it to certain at-risk job seekers, including individuals in the second-chance population.

The AEL program assists individuals who are currently incarcerated and those who have been released to overcome barriers to employment by providing educational and training services. AEL providers offer post-release services to those who have been released from facilities. These services intentionally aim to reduce recidivism and support community integration through education and workforce system services. Texas AEL programs provide transition and post-release services to those who are still incarcerated, prioritizing those who will be released within five years.

Reemployment Service and Eligibility Assessment

The RESEA program provides personalized reemployment assistance to individuals who are receiving unemployment benefits and who the program determines are likely to exhaust their benefits before becoming reemployed. The program uses statistical modeling to generate a risk score for UI claimants based on the likelihood of exhausting their benefits. The model considers a variety of work-related and economic variables, including the length of workforce attachment, occupational field, wage, and location. By focusing reemployment services on UI claimants who are likely to exhaust benefits, Boards are able to provide effective reemployment interventions. Boards also provide and assist claimants with federal- and state-required reemployment services. The most vital services that Boards provide in each initial and subsequent meeting are:

- Résumé Review—During the résumé review process, service providers cross-reference the customer's skills and experience with job and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Customized Labor Market Information—Customized Labor Market Information (CLMI) services involve identifying salary requirements, industries, and locations of interest, which are used to set up weekly job-matching emails. During the CLMI process, service providers gather information relating to reemployment barriers, inform the customers of the services offered under WIOA, and either enroll customers or set up appointments with WIOA counselors. Providers also assess skills and offer AEL service enrollment as needed.
- Individual Reemployment Plans—Individual Reemployment Plan (IRP) development involves including tailored, voluntary, and mandatory referrals as the IRP's objectives. This sets the claimant up for weeks of future reemployment actions they can complete on their own, if services end with the initial appointment, or in preparation for their next RESEA meeting or enrollment into another workforce program. Employment plan (EP) objectives may include appointments with WIOA, VR, service providers for veterans, or AEL providers.

TWC RESEA coordinators may contact pilot program customers who complete the initial RESEA appointment and both subsequent meetings to participate in mandatory TWC touchpoints. Touchpoints occur between week 13 and 15 of the customer's benefit period and provide TWC an opportunity to check in to see if the customer needs additional services, ensure that the Board is providing the necessary services, and that the claimant has completed the required services. Information relating to WIOA services are provided, and customers may be redirected to employment services or WIOA enrollment.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The Texas workforce system is a complex structure comprised of numerous programs, services, and initiatives administered by state agencies, Boards, TWIC, independent school districts, community and technical colleges, and local adult education providers. System partners are responsible for the delivery of a wide range of workforce education and training programs and related services, as well as education programs that support career preparation and advancement.

The workforce system is interconnected by the programs and agencies that either serve common customers or are charged with achieving similar employment and educational outcomes for their targeted customer groups. Crucial to the system planning process and alignment with federal and state statutes, the Texas workforce system builds upon the system's core elements, goals, and objectives to meet the vision and mission of the system,

including the core programs under WIOA. Improved access and efficiency, along with value-added support services, are a few of the many benefits customers receive from the state workforce system. System partners are responsible for the delivery of various workforce education and training programs and related services, as well as education programs that support career preparation and advancement, including:

- providing services that facilitate the match between employers and employees;
- providing employment, training, and retention services for eligible WIOA participants and prioritizing services to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals with disabilities and/or basic skills deficient to facilitate financial self-sufficiency;
- developing adult education and family literacy programs that ensure all adults have the basic education skills they need to contribute to their families and communities;
- providing employment, training, and retention services to individuals with barriers to employment, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, trade-affected individuals, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, long-term unemployed individuals, and youth;
- encouraging the use of training services that provide transferable credit and credentials;
- providing support services, such as child care, UI benefits, and transportation to enable eligible individuals to work or participate in education and training activities;
- monitoring and evaluating compliance of local area service delivery for fiscal accountability and program protection; and
- providing technical assistance to local Boards and training providers to ensure the most effective delivery of workforce services.

TWC, the 28 Boards, their contracted service providers, and community partners are continuously working toward full integration of WIOA's core programs. The strategy of alignment, coordination, and integration of education, employment, and training programs is close to being fully realized.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Texas businesses receive value-added assistance through an integrated workforce system. Businesses have access to job seekers at all levels of education and experience, which allows potential employers to tailor their recruitment efforts to the requirements of the job and build a better-skilled workforce. Close ties to the local labor market enable Boards to work with

businesses to provide work experiences and on-the-job trainings (OJT) while allowing low-skilled workers to build skill sets that are relevant to current labor market needs. Additionally, Boards are well positioned to work with community partners, such as economic development organizations, to expand opportunities to all customers.

Dedicated Business Services Units (BSUs), along with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), provide businesses with access to customized service options that address their specific business needs. BSUs and VRS offer a range of services that are designed to help employers with their recruitment and training needs to maximize their competitiveness, including:

- applicant recruitment, screening, and referral;
- listing and maintaining job orders through WorkInTexas.com;
- assistance with and participation in job fairs;
- information resources (for example, labor market and business statistics, employment and labor law, and UI benefits);
- testing and prescreening job candidates;
- basic employment skills training and referral to education and training providers;
- customized training—including training through the state-funded Skills Development Fund (SDF)—and OJT;
- assistance with and information on WOTC and fidelity bonding programs; and
- rapid response and layoff aversion assistance in the event of closings or mass layoffs.

Continued efforts for system-wide improvement include the expansion of employers' access to grants through SDF. Participants in this program can build skill competencies to meet current and future demand in high-growth industry sectors. When a specific need is identified, community-based organizations (CBOs) and technical colleges partner with TWC and local employers to provide necessary job training. Such training enables incumbent employees to advance their skills while enabling new job growth with partnering businesses. TWC works with employers and training providers to ensure that programs meet specific performance measures and provide benefits to both the employer and the trainee.

TWC closely measures performance to evaluate the Boards' effectiveness in meeting the needs of employers. Measures include the Boards' ability to:

- assist employers in filling vacancies; and
- expedite UI claimants' return to work, thereby protecting the state's unemployment trust fund as well as containing the UI tax rates of employers.

TWC's Office of the Commissioner Representing Employers outreaches businesses by sponsoring the Texas Business Conferences, an annual series of 12–15 employer seminars held around the state. The seminars present practical, up-to-date information for operating a successful business and managing employees. Topics include Texas employment law, the

basics of hiring, employee policy handbooks, handling unemployment claims, independent contractors, and federal and Texas wage and hour laws.

TWC's Skills for Small Business initiative provides further training opportunities for both employers and employees. TWC also partners with EDT to host the Governor's Small Business events, along with the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) to provide geographic mapping access through SitesOnTexas.teex.tamus.edu. This website assists employers in planning for business expansion, job retention, and workforce training.

Through the Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) and collaborations among Boards, private employers, and corporate foundations (partners), TWC has dedicated WIOA funds to address skills gaps and ensure a talent pipeline to meet regional industry needs. The partners engage in allowable WIOA activities that support workforce development in one of the governor's designated industry clusters. Similarly, the High Demand Job Training (HDJT) program is intended to support collaboration between Boards and economic development corporations (EDCs). The program focuses on training for high-demand/target occupations (as determined by the Board) and/or occupations in industries that are targeted by the Office of the Governor.

The intent of TIP and the HDJT program is to support Boards in strengthening their partnerships with local communities, leveraging available state and local resources, and fostering collaboration with partners to promote occupational job training in Texas.

Through the creative use of technology and innovation, TWC promotes partnerships with employers to overcome barriers in meeting workforce needs. TWC takes steps to ensure that the staff members of public schools, vocational service programs, and CBOs are trained and supported in their efforts to assist all individuals with disabilities in achieving the goal of obtaining integrated competitive employment. TWC also promotes the availability and accessibility of individualized training that is designed to prepare an individual with a disability for their preferred employment. To this end, individuals with disabilities are given the opportunity to understand and explore options for education and training, including postsecondary, graduate, and postgraduate education, vocational or technical training, or other training, as pathways to employment.

TWC collaborates with Boards to develop and implement a coordinated, team-based approach to serving employers. Strategies include partnering with other state and federal entities, such as DOL's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), to conduct ongoing outreach with federal contractors to increase awareness, recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities, including veterans.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS.

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges, adult education providers, area career and technical education schools, providers on the State's eligible training provider list, and other education and training providers, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv). Include how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage

other Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs at these institutions.

Governor Abbott established the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative and tasked the commissioners of the TEA, THECB, and TWC to work together in developing strong links between education and industry and to help Texans grow in economic prosperity. The Tri-Agency Initiative was codified in state law and requires TEA, THECB, and TWC to develop unified workforce education goals and strategies and align work-based learning programs across the state. To learn more about the initiative and its programs and partners, visit the Tri-Agency website.

Higher Education Partnerships

As part of its partner engagement with educational institutions, TWC is involved in a unique collaboration with TEA and THECB that assesses the curriculum requirements for public schools as well as legislation that promotes early college high schools. TWC shares relevant labor market and career information to assist with decision making that directs resources toward a curriculum that meets the occupational needs of the state. Support of early childhood education and professional development, along with English as a Second Language (ESL) and other AEL programs, are critical collaborations. The partnership between THECB, TWC, and participating public universities through the College Credit for Heroes (CCH) program has enabled veterans to receive college credit for the experience and training they received while serving in the armed forces. Additionally, THECB and TWC promote the Texas Fast Start program which aims to provide the rapid delivery of workforce education and development. This program focuses resources on meeting the needs of employers and other interested parties for affordable certification programs that can be quickly obtained in high-growth, target industries.

Additionally, Boards annually publish invitations to community colleges, area career and technical education schools, and other training providers, encouraging the submission of applications for consideration as an eligible training provider.

All-Star College Award

TWC promotes and recognizes higher-education partner engagement through the All-Star College Award. Each year, this award is presented to a community college, technical college, or TEEX whose efforts and partnership have improved the Texas workforce system and local community by contributing to skills enhancement and training in order to best support business needs.

Skills Development Programs

TWC administers the state's SDF providing local, customized training opportunities for Texas businesses and workers to increase Texas workforce skill levels and wages. Collaborations with Texas community, technical colleges, and the TEEX support job training programs among training and education providers. Through this collaboration, employers that need skilled workers or wish to upgrade the skills of their current workforce are provided customized training solutions.

In FY 2022, the SDF awarded grants for 47 projects that served 73 businesses and supported the creation of 2,369 jobs along with assisting 6,059 existing jobs. The SDF continues to

expand and support dual-credit programs offered by school districts in partnership with public junior colleges, public state colleges, and public technical institutions, which help accelerate a student's ability to obtain a degree. The awarded grants help support the purchase of training equipment used in dual-credit programs. Business partners contribute to the success of the SDF grant program through in-kind support, which includes providing trainees' wages during training, the use of training space and equipment, funding a portion of course costs as necessary, the provision of complementary courses that are not part of the SDF grant, and salaries for staff members who are assisting with the grant. In FY 2022, these in-kind contributions totaled over $10.8 million.

Supporting Adult Learners

TWC strongly supports partnerships that increase opportunities for adult learners to transition to postsecondary credentials, including registered apprenticeships, industry-recognized certificates, licenses, and certifications that are stackable. Current initiatives strategically position the statewide system for innovation in new directions related to full system integration and postsecondary education outcomes, as measured by high school equivalency, college and career readiness, enrollment in nonremedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions, occupational and industry skill standards, and certifications that are widely used and recognized by businesses and industries. Initiatives include:

- integrating services to support the alignment of AEL activities with other core programs in the workforce system along with developing bridges between employers and CBOs through workforce events, ongoing technical assistance efforts, and the sharing of best practices developed across the state; and
- continuing to develop content and models for integrated education and training career pathways, along with other postsecondary transition models and workplace projects including:
    - RAPs with employers;
    - AEL's Employer Engagement project, which is designed to build capacity and expand the deployment of workplace literacy programs that support job advancements, skills gains, and demonstrated approaches serving employers while improving the transferrable skills of Texans; and
    - AEL's Pre-Apprenticeship Bridge program, which is designed to build capacity and expand the use of AEL funds to support eligible individuals as they transition to Registered Apprenticeships.

Eligible Training Providers and Career Schools and Colleges

Eligible Training Providers (ETP) and Career Schools and Colleges (CSC) are part of the TWC education and training system. TWC works closely with these programs to create a job-driven education and training system that is performance and results driven.

TWC maintains a robust and growing list of over 5,500 quality ETPs that are made available to students throughout Texas through the statewide Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). ETPs are job training programs that are certified by TWC to provide WIOA-funded training services through vouchers known as Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). WIOA requires

Boards to target high-growth, high-demand, and emerging occupations within their workforce areas. To be approved for the statewide ETPL, a training program must align with an occupation included on the state's target occupations list. ETPs are also required to submit initial and ongoing annual student performance data. DOL RAPs are approved upon request regardless of connection to target occupations and are not required to submit data on student outcomes.

CSCs are privately owned institutions that offer classroom or online training in which students are taught the skills needed to perform a particular job. TWC regulates career schools in Texas and provides information and technical assistance to schools, students, and the public.

Regulatory functions include licensing schools, training program approval, key school staff approval, site inspections, student complaints and unlicensed school investigations, Tuition Trust Account administration to assist students at closed schools and coordinating with other approval and regulatory agencies.

Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access

Federal Perkins funding that is administered by the TEA offers opportunities for AEL programs to leverage federal resources for programs providing workforce training. AEL grant recipients can use Perkins-funded career and technical training program resources, such as technical instructors, equipment, and classrooms, to help support elements of workforce training programs for adult learners in the AEL program. The technical trainers that teach high school students in areas such as heating, ventilation, and air conditioning **(**HVAC), electrical, automotive, computer repair, and more, also serve as workforce instructors for the AEL's integrated education and training program. This model has traditionally increased student success in training programs.

Additionally, some community colleges in Texas work to provide, or have provided, Ability to Benefit (ATB) alternatives under federal law and ED guidance. To implement the model, coalitions must be established among college departments (registration, financial aid assessment, advising, academic disciplines, and continuing education), workforce training programs, AEL, Boards, and other partner providers. TWC funded ATB expansion initiatives to help community colleges implement this model.

F. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

TWC continues to encourage state education and training providers to deliver services beyond those provided solely through workforce system funding. By doing so, local adult education programs form partnerships that join educational, workforce development, and other human services agencies to collaboratively develop AEL services.

TWC strongly supports partnerships that increase opportunities for adult learners to transition to postsecondary credentials, including RAP certifications and industry-recognized certificates and licenses that are stackable. Current initiatives strategically position the

statewide system for innovation in new directions that are related to full system integration and postsecondary education outcomes. These outcomes are measured by high school equivalency, college and career readiness, enrollment in nonremedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions, and occupational and industry skill standards and certifications that are widely used and recognized by businesses and industries. Initiatives include:

- integrating services to support aligning AEL activities with other core programs in the workforce system, thus bringing employers and CBOs together through workforce events, ongoing technical assistance efforts, and sharing best practices developed across the state;
- developing content and models for integrated education and training career pathways, and other postsecondary transition models and workplace projects, including apprenticeships and the transference of a DOL Certificate of Completion into college credit for degrees related to occupations in registered nursing, mechatronics, early childhood development, vocational nursing, electrical trades, and so on; and
- capacity-building that is designed to expand the deployment of successful career pathway programs that lead to increased employment, transitions to higher education, skill gains, and secondary education completion through demonstrated approaches that integrate system services and leverage community partnerships.

AEL's strong partnerships and aligned initiatives provide pathways for attaining the skills needed for career advancement and higher wages to support families.

Apprenticeship Texas

Since 2016, DOL has awarded Apprenticeship Expansion grants to TWC to develop new RAPs and conduct outreach campaigns to expand RAPs in traditional and nontraditional industries and occupations. The goal of these grants is to align with the Tri-Agency (TWC, TEA, and THECB) recommendations to expand apprenticeship opportunities for all Texans. New RAPs have been developed in Texas, thus increasing the number of career pathways for Texas citizens and transitioning many into high-paying, high-skilled jobs and resulting in nationally recognized certifications. From 2016 through 2025, TWC has received a total of $45.4 million dollars to provide continual support for the expansion of registered apprenticeship throughout Texas. Additionally, the Texas Legislature authorized $20 million for the FY 2024 and FY 2025 biennium to promote apprenticeships as a viable option for employers and workers.

The funds discussed above allow Texas to continue its efforts to expand the number of apprentices in registered programs, support and encourage RAP diversification, and integrate RAPs into state workforce development strategies. Part of TWC's plan for these funds is to encourage community and technical colleges, as eligible grantees, to use allotment funding to address workforce development needs in the communities they serve. This approach supports RAPs by building staff knowledge and increasing the capacity to imbed RAPs in more areas of the state.

G. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

TWC works continuously to cultivate emerging industries, support existing businesses, and enhance the skills development of the Texas workforce, while taking advantage of the strategic opportunities provided through economic change. TWC is dedicated to leading a market-driven workforce system that meets the needs of employers and workers and helps Texans prosper.

Through TWC's market-driven approach, the agency is able to engage all potential customers, including economic development entities. TWC's Employer Engagement & Community Outreach (EECO) Department and its network of regional Texas Workforce Solutions partners hold events throughout Texas to learn about the achievements and challenges experienced within each region. Through these meetings, new initiatives are launched, and new industry-aligned strategies are formed. EECO also partners with the TEA THECB to host regional meetings with employers, higher education and public education leaders, economic development and local workforce professionals, and other key community leaders to discuss regional economic priorities, employer workforce needs, and the career planning and preparation needed for Texas students to be ready for success in college or a career.

These efforts highlight the importance of coordinating employer engagement across the workforce system and programs. TWC and Boards use regular and effective partnerships to communicate directly with employers in order to align education and training outcomes with required skills needs. By increasing understanding through communication and data analysis, TWC and Boards are also able to provide employers and job seekers with targeted support. Additionally, TWC and Boards use employer consultations to inform instructional design and agency initiatives and provide partnership to offer work-based training and employment opportunities. In order to ensure that a targeted and effective service delivery model connects employers with job seekers, TWC must evaluate existing Board outreach and job referral strategies as well as outreach staff training programs.

TWC will use the following strategies to support economic development within the state:

- Facilitate a data user's group to provide peer-to-peer mentoring and technical assistance in using data
- Develop engagement strategies to connect Boards with their community economic development partners
- Use the governor's reserve statewide funding to develop a training program for assessing employer needs, conducting employer outreach, and job referral/job matching strategies
- Create a statewide working group to gather best practices and innovative strategies from each Board and discuss regional opportunities and challenges
- Use the information collected by the statewide working group to help TWC staff develop a comprehensive service delivery tool kit and business engagement standards and policies for Boards

In addition to collaborating with employers and economic entities, TWC helps coordinate presentations and resources that support the Texas Economic Development Corporation (TxEDC) and EDT, both of which serve as a gateway for bringing jobs to Texas. TxEDC and EDT offer many services to facilitate corporate relocation and expansion, including valuable incentives, financing options, and resources to streamline business site searches.

Programs and Initiatives

EECO manages several programs and initiatives that support business-focused workforce needs, including the SDF, Skills for Small Business, HDJT, the TIP program, and Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant.

Skills Development Fund

SDF provides site-specific, customized training opportunities for Texas businesses and their employees to increase Texas workforce skill levels and wages. Success comes through collaboration among economic development partners, business partners, and eligible grant applicants, which include public community or technical colleges, the TEEX, community-based organizations in partnership with one of these entities, or a Board.

Skills for Small Business

As an extension of the SDF, small businesses may apply to TWC for the Skills for Small Business training that is offered by local community or technical colleges or the TEEX. TWC processes the applications and works with the college to fund the specific courses selected by businesses for their employees.

This opportunity supports businesses with fewer than 100 employees and emphasizes training for new workers although it also may help upgrade the skills of incumbent workers. The program emphasizes training newly hired employees.

High Demand Job Training

The HDJT program was established by TWC to support collaborations between Boards and EDCs to provide job training in their communities using WIOA funds.

The HDJT program is intended to support Boards in partnering with local EDCs to use local economic development sales taxes for high-demand job training and workforce-related activities. TWC supports these partnerships by providing funds to Boards as a match to local economic development sales tax funds and jointly supports the provision of such projects.

Training must focus on high-demand, target occupations (as determined by the Board) and/or occupations in industries targeted by the Office of the Governor.

Texas Industry Partnership

The TIP program was established by TWC to address skills gaps and ensure the availability of a talent pipeline to address regional industry needs. Private employers, corporate foundations, and 501(c)6 organizations collaborate with Boards to apply for funding for WIOA activities to support workforce development projects.

Jobs and Education for Texans

The JET program provides funding to public community, state, and technical colleges, independent school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, WSD, and certain Texas Juvenile Justice entities to help defray the costs associated with starting a career and participating in a technical education program. Through the program, applicants are able to apply for JET grants to purchase and install equipment that is necessary for the development of career and technical education courses or programs that lead to a license, certificate, or postsecondary degree in a high-demand occupation.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section II Strategic Elements. This includes—

1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.).

WIOA emphasizes the importance of labor market and system performance information in driving strategic and operational decision-making in the workforce system. In adherence to this doctrine, TWC recognizes the importance of using data to drive decision-making and has made the availability and evaluation of data a key part of its strategic development and oversight processes and consumer education efforts.

State Operating Systems

State operating systems are primarily divided into three categories:

- LMI and Career Exploration
- Participant Eligibility, Service Tracking, Job Matching, and Case Management
- System Oversight

Labor Market Information and Career Exploration Systems

TWC's LMI Department provides information relating to trends within the Texas labor market regarding different industries, occupations, employment levels, and wages. This useful and reliable information regarding careers, educational training options, and jobs is critical to the strategic planning processes of TWC and the Boards as it improves the way Texans make career and educational decisions. The department's products promoted by TWC and the Boards for use by students, employers, local service providers, and CBOs, range from online career information to a variety of specialized economic development and regional planning tools.

TexasLMI.com is an interactive website hosted by TWC that disseminates Texas labor-market statistics. On TexasLMI.com, users can access a suite of easy-to-use labor-market research tools that provide time-series labor-market data, inquiry capabilities for labor force, employment/unemployment estimates, industry and occupational projections, and occupational wage data.

TexasWages.com is an online application that lets users explore occupational wages by local workforce development area (workforce area) and by metropolitan statistical area. Long-term employment-projections data was also added to the tool to provide an enhanced user experience. Through TexasWages.com, a customer can find hourly or annual wages for the mean, median, entry and experience levels for over 800 detailed occupations. Users can view and compare the different wages across all the substate areas in Texas to make informed decisions or carry out research.

To gain insight into a region's labor supply and demand, the LMI Department designed the Texas Labor Analysis (TLA) tool. This application is an online suite of labor analysis tools that lets users create in-depth statewide or regional reports for aggregated or single regions. Users can choose any of five separate applications in Labor Analysis including Gap Analysis, Demand, Supply, Regional Occupational Profile, or Top Statistics.

Gap Analysis enables users to compare the various sources of potential labor market supply (such as graduates from educational programs and registered job seekers) and labor market demand (such as job openings and projected employment). Users can customize the report by region or by occupations and can view the statistics on a map which shows the spread of the supply-demand relationship by workforce regions in Texas.

The Demand module in TLA allows users to discover real-time demand for occupations based on current Help Wanted Online postings. Customers can perform a regional demand analysis using projected and current employment numbers and salaries. Reports can be generated on Industry, Occupation, and the relationship between the two.

On the Supply module, users can estimate the formal supply of skilled workforce by viewing an area's education and workforce training programs. It displays the number of enrollments and graduates for different programs of study offered by various schools across Texas.

Regional Occupational Profiles compares different workforce regions of Texas on employment indicators like wages, employment projections, and the trend of online job postings. This tool gives users more insight into occupational wage and employment numbers by offering metrics such as wage differentials and location quotient data.

Top Statistics is a quick way to find the top 25 occupations by region. The data can be viewed by highest employment, job openings, highest wage, or highest projected employment.

Changes in the education system that were brought about by legislation provide TWC the opportunity to help students transition from the classroom to career readiness. TWC supports school counselors, school districts, students, and parents by providing LMI to assist them with student career-planning and preparation. Additionally, the agency provides information and supports efforts to prepare students for occupational training at the presecondary, secondary, postsecondary, and college and university levels.

Texas Consumer Resource on Education and Workforce Statistics (Texas CREWS) is a dashboard tool that provides information about Texas' public two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions; evaluates programs/institutions based on resulting wages and student loan levels; and enables parents and students to make informed decisions about college and thereby obtain the best return on their educational investment.

Participant Eligibility, Service Tracking, and Case Management Systems

TWC provides the main automated systems used by the Boards and other grantees for job matching, data collection, and case management, including adult education and vocational rehabilitation as well as child care assistance. Additionally, the Boards and other grantees use a financial reporting system developed by TWC.

WorkInTexas.com

WorkInTexas.com is the free job-matching website TWC administers for Texas' workforce system. It provides the following:

- Extensive job-matching options based on skills and experience
- Links to labor market and career development information
- No-cost, 24-hour access

The new WorkInTexas.com was launched in summer 2019 with improved job matching to better meet the hiring and job-search needs of employers and job seekers, respectively. Job-seeker functions include résumé builder, versioning, and upload, and Career Pathways. System customers have access to labor analytics and supply-and-demand tools to enhance job searches. Other improvements include a user-friendly mobile design, modern communications capabilities and increased access to jobs and workforce talent. The improved site also enables Texas Workforce Solutions to enhance service delivery by offering employers and job seekers a way to connect with their Boards.

During the development of the new WorkInTexas.com, job seekers and employers provided valuable input to help craft the requirements for the new website. This helped to create a system that would increase employer access to talent, improve candidate matches to job descriptions, and incorporate local and regional LMI to support informed business decisions.

WorkInTexas.com enables employers to post jobs, search résumés, recruit candidates, get LMI, and receive a variety of other services available through a network of statewide Workforce Solutions Offices. Individuals seeking a new job, different job, or an additional job can post their résumé, search job listings (including Texas state agency jobs), obtain employer contact information to apply for jobs, get information about the job market, and receive a variety of other services available through Workforce Solutions Offices.

The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) was the integrated intake, eligibility, case management, and reporting system for employment and training services, designed as a central repository for customer information. To continue ensuring seamless customer service and the integration of information systems, TWC launched a modernization initiative to replace the TWIST case management system in 2020. The new case management system, Virtual One Stop (VOS), launched in April 2024. VOS was designed to replicate the functionality of TWIST. Remediation of internal reporting and data systems is ongoing to align with the new VOS system, and it is expected to enter its final phase by December 2025 and conclude by June 2026.

Texas Child Care Connection

In January 2025, TWC launched the Texas Child Care Connection (TX3C), a new statewide child care case management system designed to simplify and standardize child care services across Texas. This streamlined system replaces individual Board-level application processes with a single, mobile-friendly that uses plain language and allows parents to upload eligibility documents with ease. Completed applications are automatically queued for casework assignments, while parents and child care providers are able to access CCS information online at any time.

The system also integrates directly with WorkInTexas.com, enabling the seamless referral of individuals from programs such as TANF/Choices and SNAP E&T. Through an application programming interface (API), Boards are able to send CCS referrals directly to TX3C, allowing parents to bypass the application process.

Alongside these features, the new TX3C Attendance system modernizes how child care attendance is tracked. Child care providers received tablets that would enable parents to check their children in and out electronically (parents also have the option to use a smart phone app to for the same process). Because TX3C Attendance is compatible with many existing center management systems, families are able to benefit from a consistent and familiar experience across providers.

The Texas Educating Adults Management System

Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) is Texas' state-of-the-art, web-enabled system that maintains student-level data, including demographic, assessment, and outcome data, as well as class, site, program, and provider information. TEAMS users can analyze class, site, or program information using standard reports that are generated at the user level. TEAMS provides a wide range of information about adult education, including snapshots of student and program performance, personnel qualifications, and staff development activities. The Texas 88th Legislature (2023) approved $3,400,000 in appropriations for a TEAMS enhancement project to ensure that Texas can exceed federal system requirements and enhance program management and data security for all users. The two-year project began in September 2023.

The Reporting for Industry Skills and Education System

The development of the Reporting for Industry Skills and Education (RISE) system is guided by the strategic need for a modern, user-centered platform that will improve data collection, streamline business processes, and enhance reporting capabilities—all of which empower data-driven decision-making and continuous program improvement. Underpinned by a new data architecture that is designed to enforce exemplary standards of data quality, integrity, and security, RISE will strengthen performance monitoring and data validation through advanced analytics and key integrations with state partners, such as THECB. This critical modernization will ensure greater accountability and drive improved outcomes for adult learners across Texas. RISE is scheduled to launch in November 2025.

ReHabWorks

ReHabWorks is a web-based case management system and the portal through which field staff enter information from and about the customer to manage the VR process.

Functionalities include collecting required information for state/federal reports, guiding processes and forms, and reporting requirements.

TWC's online Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) system is a web application used by Boards to draw funds from their program allocations. All financial transactions are handled through this online system, and Boards are no longer required to submit paper documents or Excel spreadsheets. CDER has significantly decreased manual processing and has greatly improved the reporting of data to all parties.

TWC makes extensive use of quarterly wage records, both for required and ad hoc reporting. TWC uses Texas wage records and those obtained from other states through the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) for required WIOA, W-P, and TAA reporting. A fuller discussion of the use of quarterly wage records is contained in the Program Data section of this plan.

System Oversight

TWC provides Boards and grantees with access to performance and management information reports and has recently deployed and continues work to build out an Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) system that uses a set of highly interactive Tableau dashboards. This system houses data for DOL, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and OCTAE programs and is fully operational for all WIOA programs except Youth. Additionally, TWC uses a variety of systems that provide summary and customer-specific data to support management and oversight functions that are part of the underlying case management systems (for example, TEAMS and WorkInTexas.com each have a set of reports that can be run). Because Boards and other grantees are generally able to access these systems, TWC can ensure a high degree of transparency in the Texas workforce system.

The systems produce data on hundreds of subpopulations for most performance measures, which allows for a thorough evaluation of performance and management information. This level of detail allows TWC to perform complex evaluations of performance data that can be used for forecasting, target setting, and determining general effectiveness.

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (FOR EXAMPLE. CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ANY ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR ONE-STOP PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS.

State Policies

TWC is governed by a three-member Commission (Commission) appointed by the governor. The three full-time Commissioners represent employers, labor, and the public. Together they serve as the rule making authority for TWC, oversee agency functions, and develop agency policy.

Twenty days after adoption by the Commissioners, TWC rules, which guide agency operations and its programs, are codified in the Title 40, TAC, Part 20. Policies that support the implementation of TWC strategies and programs related to WIOA are available on TWC's website and include the following:

- Texas Workforce Commission Rules
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth and WIOA Eligibility Documentation Log for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs provide Boards with the criteria and documentation sources for establishing WIOA Title I program eligibility for adults, DWs, and youth. The policy guides are based on WIOA statute, final rules for Titles I–IV, and applicable Training and Employment Guidance Letters and Training and Employment Notices issued by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA). As updates become available, the policy guides are updated.
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Guide to Texas Workforce System Operations describes the roles of TWC, Boards, chief elected officials, and local workforce partner programs. Boards are required to ensure that all state policies provided in this document are adhered to and followed according to established timelines.
- Operational guidance and active workforce policy provided to local Boards in the form of Workforce Development (WD) Letters, AEL Letters, Technical Assistance Bulletins (TAB), and comprehensive guides are based on Commission-approved policies and are available at TWC's Workforce Policy and Guidance web page.
- TWC maintains a repository of major publications, including the agency's strategic plans, annual reports, publications for employers and job seekers, and program information, available at TWC's Reports, Plans, & Publications web page.
- Reports, policy guides, and customer information relating to VR services are available at Vocational Rehabilitation - Program Overview and Vocational Rehabilitation Division Publications.

Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

Pay-for-Performance Contracts

TWC and Boards maintain, where applicable, performance-based contracts. However, TWC and Boards also consider developing, with stakeholder input, a WIOA pay-for-performance contracting strategy for Title I programs, as defined in WIOA §3(47).

The development of a performance-based contract is contingent on the pay-for-performance contract strategy, which establishes specific benchmarks that must be achieved for the contractor to receive payment. WIOA calls for the benchmarks to be tied to the prime indicators of performance and adjustments thereof related to economic conditions and the population demographics.

TWC aims to maintain the latitude provided for in WIOA to consider the development of a pay-for- performance contract strategy as guidance is issued.

Determination of Funds Provided for Infrastructure Costs

TWC provides policy and procedural guidance to Boards regarding the requirements for funding infrastructure costs in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Guide to Texas

Workforce System Operations, Section D. Infrastructure Funding. The guide states that Boards, with the agreement of chief executive officers (CEOs), must develop and enter into MOUs with statutorily required one-stop partners for the operation and funding of a one-stop delivery system in the local workforce development area (workforce area). Boards may also enter into memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with other optional partners, as described by WIOA. Among several required provisions, the MOU must include a final plan, or an interim plan if needed, on how the infrastructure costs of the one-stop centers will be funded.

As described in WIOA §121(c)(1) and 20 CFR §678.500(b)(2)(i), each Board and its workforce partners must establish within each MOU an infrastructure funding agreement (IFA) that describes how the Board and partner programs will fund the infrastructure costs of the Workforce Solutions Offices that are part of the workforce area. If a Board and its required workforce partners are unable to reach consensus on the terms of the IFAs for the program year, then the Board must notify TWC of an impasse no later than March 15 of the program year immediately preceding the program year for which the IFA must be negotiated (20 CFR §678.510(c)). TWC, in turn, notifies the state agency responsible for administering the partner's program. If TWC cannot help the Board resolve the issue, TWC notifies the governor, TWIC, the U.S. Secretary of Labor, and the head of any other federal agency responsible for overseeing a workforce partner's program.

Boards and workforce partners must fund infrastructure costs through either the Local Funding Mechanism (LFM) or the State Funding Mechanism (SFM). The LFM provides Boards, CEOs, and workforce partners with the flexibility to design and locally agree on the methods to fund infrastructure costs. However, if a Board fails to reach consensus with all the required workforce partners operating within its workforce area regarding the amount each partner will contribute to the local workforce system's infrastructure costs, the statute replaces local flexibility for determining how to fund infrastructure costs with the SFM. Under the SFM, TWC (on behalf of the governor) is charged with allocating infrastructure costs and determining each partner's proportionate share of costs for Boards that did not reach consensus on the LFM. The LFM and SFM apply only to the funding of infrastructure costs.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Coenrollment

TWC requires Boards to coenroll trade-affected workers in WIOA DW services whenever eligible. Further information about TWC's coenrollment efforts for trade-affected workers can be found in Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs Elements b6 and b7.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program Coenrollment

UI claimants determined eligible for the RESEA program are informed of and encouraged to coenroll in the WIOA program at initial program intake. This allows Boards to leverage support services in a way that increases positive employment outcomes. TWC has developed an expedited eligibility process for RESEA claimants to enroll in the WIOA DW program.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

TWC is governed by a three-member Commission (Commission) appointed by the governor. The agency's executive director is accountable to the Commission and is responsible for the daily operations of the agency. The executive director is assisted by a deputy executive director who is responsible for the oversight of the agency's administrative support divisions. The agency is organized into 12 distinct program and administrative support divisions. The program areas facilitate workforce services delivery through 28 Boards. A description of the agency divisions is provided below.

Division of Fraud Deterrence and Compliance Monitoring

The Division of Fraud Deterrence and Compliance Monitoring (FDCM) supports TWC in administering and enforcing all regulatory statutes within its jurisdiction, including the Texas Labor Code, the Texas Education Code, WIOA, and other applicable state and federal statutes. FDCM's mission is to detect and deter fraud, waste, theft, and abuse within TWC's programs and operations; and monitor the effectiveness, efficiency, economy, and integrity of TWC's programs and operations, including those performed by its contractors and grantees. FDCM ensures that TWC's customers have equal opportunity (EO) and equity of access to all services by monitoring and enforcing TWC's compliance with federal EO laws and regulations. The division prioritizes the prevention, detection, and elimination of fraud and abuse in the UI Division.

Information Technology Division

The Information Technology (IT) Division is responsible for the applications and information systems that support TWC's critical business operations. Staff members work closely with TWC business areas and other stakeholders to create and maintain automated applications that best serve evolving business needs. The division also supports, whether directly or through a contract, the infrastructure required for TWC systems, including data center operations, networks, personal computers, email, desktop software tools, database administration, scanner operation, telephony, help desk services, system access/provisioning, and print/mail services. IT is also responsible for IT project management, IT accessibility compliance, and the planning, maintenance, and testing of an ongoing disaster recovery program.

Unemployment Insurance Division

The UI Division includes UI benefits support services, call center operations, and appellate services. The TWC Tax department and Unemployment Benefits Services are managed by this division. The division assists employers and claimants with eligibility requirements, benefit extensions and deadlines, and appeal procedures.

Unemployment Benefits Services, which is funded through employer taxes, provides temporary income to workers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. TWC collects unemployment taxes from liable employers and pays unemployment benefits to qualified claimants. TWC has a formal appeals process to address claim issues and employers' tax liability, contribution, and reimbursement disputes.

Workforce Development Division

The Workforce Development Division provides oversight, coordination, guidance, planning, technical assistance, and implementation of employment and training activities, with a focus

on meeting the needs of employers throughout Texas. The division currently administers programs such as WIOA Adult, DW, and Youth; AEL; W-P ES; Choices (TANF Employment and Training); SNAP E&T; Apprenticeship; the Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP); the MSFW program; RESEA; and the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative.

Civil Rights Division

The Civil Rights Division (CRD) enforces the state's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Fair Housing laws through education, conciliation, mediation, and investigation. The division investigates complaints of employment and housing discrimination, conducts personnel policy reviews and EEO compliance monitoring for state agencies and institutions of higher education, and provides training and technical assistance to public and private entities to reduce employment and housing discrimination throughout the state. The CRD enters into annual work-sharing agreements with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and HUD) and its federal partners, which review CRD's cases and ensure compliance with applicable federal EEO and Fair Housing statutes.

CRD was formerly the Texas Commission on Human Rights (TCHR) and was governed by its own set of commissioners, who established policies for the division and supervised the director in administering the division's activities. TCHR served as the state's established authority on EEO and Fair Housing, also known as a fair employment practice agency and the Fair Housing initiative program. In 2015, the Texas Legislature streamlined oversight of the division by eliminating its separate seven-member board and placing it under the oversight of TWC's Executive Director and three Commissioners.

Business Operations Division

The Business Operations Division consists of Procurement and Contract Services, Infrastructure Services, Human Resources, Training and Development, Risk and Security Management, Document Services, Cybersecurity, and Conference Planning and Media Services. The division provides day-to-day leadership, management, and vision by planning, directing, and coordinating administrative functions and operations to support TWC's business needs.

On September 1, 2025, TWC's Customer Care Division became a department within the Business Operations Division. Customer Care is responsible for planning and implementing a customer-first approach that provides high-quality customer service and for implementing the Customer Relationship management system, "Project Main Door." To further ensure a customer-first approach, the department includes a Customer Relations unit to assist TWC customers by serving as the agency's ombudsman. The Customer Experience unit analyzes customer data and feedback to ensure that 90 percent of the content that customers are accessing is within two clicks from the TWC website home page. The customer data is also used to improve the customer's experience in accessing services through the workforce system.

Vocational Rehabilitation Division

The VR Division serves adults, youth, and students with disabilities. Program services include, but are not limited to, evaluations, counseling and guidance, training and education assistance, assistive technology, and employment services, as well as referrals to the Business

Enterprises of Texas program and the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center. Students with disabilities may receive preemployment transition services that help with the transition to postsecondary education or employment.

Additionally, the VR program assists businesses in recruiting, hiring, and supporting employees with disabilities. It provides services such as disability awareness training, recruitment and job-matching assistance, accommodation support, and employer job fair coordination.

Finance Division

The Finance Division provides financial services that promote highly effective financial management controls, helps agency management use financial resources efficiently, and ensures the availability of accurate financial information in a timely manner. Division responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Managing TWC's budget, revenue, and trust
- Managing encumbrances
- Developing financial reports
- Providing financial systems support
- Providing financial technical assistance
- Conducting general ledger accounting
- Managing accounts payable
- Managing TWC's payroll system
- Conducting financial reconciliation
- Managing travel requests

Office of Internal Audit

The Office of Internal Audit (OIA) aims to enhance and protect organizational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice, and insight to the Commission and agency management. OIA helps TWC in accomplishing its objectives by establishing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. TWC's Internal Audit function is mandated by the Internal Auditing Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 2102.

Office of General Counsel

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) provides the Commission and TWC staff with the highest quality of customer service and sound legal counsel to minimize legal risk and costs, reduce litigation exposure, and ensure legal compliance and to do so efficiently, expeditiously, reliably, and professionally.

OGC supports the Commission and TWC staff by providing legal services to foster sound decision-making in all areas of operation. Services include advice and client support for legal

issues relating to litigation, contracts, policymaking, governance, programs, performance, rulemaking, administrative functions, and services provided by or through the Commission, the Boards, and contractors, as well as agency operations. The Open Records Section coordinates compliance with the Public Information Act and requests for access to TWC information under subpoenas and governmental requests for information.

Division of Information Innovation & Insight

The Division of Information Innovation & Insight (I|3) works with its partners to produce and analyze data and business processes to better serve Texas employers, individuals, families, and communities. I|3 consists of two units that are responsible for different aspects of the division's mission. The first, Operational Insight, evaluates operational, programmatic, and outcome data to generate actionable operational insights that may be used to improve the Texas workforce system's impact on employers, individuals, families, and communities and help transform TWC into an evidenced-based learning organization. I|3's other department, LMI, aims to improve the way in which Texans make career and educational decisions by providing useful and reliable information about careers, educational training options, and jobs. LMI's products range from career exploration tools for students and parents to a variety of specialized economic development and regional planning tools.

Child Care & Early Learning Division

The Child Care & Early Learning Division (CC&EL) oversees services that are funded by the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). TWC and the state's 28 Boards administer child care subsidy assistance to support eligible families and promote long-term self-sufficiency by enabling parents to work or attend workforce training or education activities. The division also educates parents on the availability of quality child care, which enhances children's early learning. Additionally, CC&EL oversees Texas Rising Star, the state's quality rating improvement system for subsidy child care providers. This mandatory system recognizes child care programs that achieve higher-quality standards.

For more information, refer to the TWC Organizational Chart.

B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively. Also, provide a membership roster for the State Board consistent with 20 CFR 679.110-120, including members' organizational affiliations and position titles.

Strategic Planning

Section 2308.104 of the Texas Government Code mandates TWIC to develop a "single strategic plan that establishes the framework for budgeting and operation of the workforce development system." The plan must include goals, objectives, and performance measures for the workforce system that involve programs of all state agencies that administer workforce programs. As such, the plan lays out the mission and vision for the Texas workforce system.

State statute also directs TWIC to "develop and implement immediate and long-range strategies to address problems identified within the workforce system."

The system strategic plan is intended to guide system partners in implementing workforce programs, services, and initiatives while avoiding the duplication of partner agencies' strategic plans. The system plan is strategic in that it is designed to focus on the outcomes that will make the most significant progress in achieving the mission and vision of the system. The strategic plan is supported by research conducted by TWIC and an annual evaluation of how well the plan and programs are working. The activities—strategic planning and implementation, system and performance evaluation, and research to support system and program improvement—constitute most of the work that TWIC performs.

Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2024–2031

In March 2021, TWIC, in collaboration with its workforce system partner agencies, began the development of the FY 2024–2031 workforce system strategic plan. Using the framework of the previous plan, Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–2023, TWIC developed a planning process involving several activities to gather information on issues and opportunities that will be of strategic significance over the five- to eight-year plan period. During the plan's development, TWIC identified and assessed high-priority, high-impact issues to improve outcomes for the workforce system and its customers.

TWIC and its workforce system partner agencies identified 21 key issues based on 37 challenges and opportunities identified during preplanning listening sessions and consultations. After refining, consolidating, and prioritizing the issues, the Strategic Planning Committee recommended that TWIC approve a strategic plan architecture that encompasses four system goal areas, 12 system strategies, and related system objectives. Goal areas include employers, learners, partners, and policy and planning. System strategies include 35 action plans by partner agencies.

Additionally, the strategic plan denotes three opportunities intended to effectuate a better future state and suggests actions that TWIC's partner agencies may take to accelerate achievement of the four system goals. The opportunities include:

- engaging employers through cross-agency coordination to gain insight into employers' needs and minimize undue burdens on employers;
- engaging Texans with diverse needs, including individuals with disabilities, foster youth, sex-trafficking victims, incarcerated juveniles and adults, and opportunity youth and young adults, by designing programs and supports that address their needs, maximize outcomes, and improve career opportunities; and
- using data to support investment decisions—identifying and targeting strategic investments to improve system performance.

Table 1 outlines the architecture of the strategic plan, which is composed of the system goals, strategies, and related objectives. Each system goal area is presented with its related system objectives and strategies and the agency or agencies responsible for implementing each strategy. In action plans, each partner agency outlines how the agency will implement the strategy. Acronyms for partner agencies, as reflected in Table 1, are as follows:

- TDCJ and WSD

- TEA
- THECB
- TJJD
- TVC
- TWC

Table 1: Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2024–FY 2031 Architecture

System Goal	System Objective	System Strategy	Partner Agency
Employers Accelerate the delivery of relevant education and training programs to meet the demand of employers.	Increase upskilling and reskilling programs.	Institute and expand upskilling and reskilling programs as part of core education and training inventory, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of employers for middle-skill-level workers.	TWC THECB TDCJ WSD
	Increase adult education student transition to employment.	Expand integrated education and training programs for middle-skill occupations, and increase learner persistence to completion, certification, and employment.	TWC
	Increase short-term credentials in high-demand occupations.	Respond flexibly to employment changes through the identification and delivery of programs that support the attainment of short-term credentials, including industry-based certifications and licenses.	TWC THECB TEA TDCJ WSD TJJD

System Goal	System Objective	System Strategy	Partner Agency
Learners Accelerate the expansion of and access to work-based skills and knowledge acquisition to better respond to learners' needs.	Increase work-based learning.	Expand work-based learning as a core education and training program preemployment strategy for youth and adults.	TWC THECB TEA
	Increase apprenticeship.	Expand registered and industry-recognized apprenticeship programs in both traditional and nontraditional areas to ease workforce shortages by engaging and assisting employers to begin new programs.	TWC WSD
Partners Accelerate the development and use of models to support and build system partners' capacity, responsiveness, continuous improvement, and decision-making.	Identify credentials of value.	Develop and execute a model to identify credentials of value, including postsecondary technical sub-baccalaureate credit and noncredit credentials, industry-based certifications, apprenticeship certificates, and licenses.	TWC THECB TEA
	Clarify and connect Pathways.	Streamline and clarify existing career pathways and models to increase alignment between secondary and postsecondary technical programs to maximize credit for credentials of value.	THECB TEA
Policy and Planning Accelerate the availability of relevant	Increase Texas Rising Star certification levels.	Promote and support the attainment of high-tier Texas Rising Star	TWC

System Goal	System Objective	System Strategy	Partner Agency
workforce, education, and other data sets and the use of applied analytics to evaluate program outcomes to respond to the needs of policymakers and planners.		certification by all child care providers.	
	Identify and quantify quality outcomes.	Execute a secure, shared data infrastructure and governance model that will facilitate data import, storage, access, integration, analysis, and reporting to understand and quantify quality program outcomes.	TWC THECB TEA
	Enhance wage records.	Pilot and expand enhanced wage records for use in determining program outcomes and employment in occupational areas of study.	TWC THECB TEA
	Identify and collect industry-based certification data.	Develop and implement strategies and procedures to collect and report certification data, including certifications attained by name of certification and by name of the third-party, national certifying entity.	TWC THECB TEA TDCJ WSD TJJD TVC

Partner Agency Action Plans

Partner agency action plans detail high-level actions that agency partners intend to take to address system strategies and system objectives. For the purposes of the Texas workforce system strategic plan, the action planning process ensures that agency partner plans for

implementation meet the workforce system planning goals. The action plans include activities, a timeline, and performance measures specifically tied to the system objectives identified in the Texas workforce system strategic plan.

Organized by goal area, each partner agency action plan follows a standard template that defines the following elements for each system strategy that the agency partner intends to address:

- System goal area
- System objective
- System strategy
- Partner agency actions
- Timeline
- Less formal performance measures

Measuring System Strategic Plan Performance: Formal and Less Formal Measures

The Texas Government Code requires that the workforce system strategic plan include two types of measures: formal and less formal measures.

The purpose of such performance measures is to determine whether the system strategies were successfully executed and to establish that the measures contributed to the achievement of system goals and objectives. TWIC, in collaboration with its partner agencies, formulated a set of measures based on the federal and state mandates associated with this strategic plan.

Formal measures are tied to system outcomes and are central to demonstrating the success of system programs and services administered by partner agencies. The measures are relatively consistent across workforce programs and are ultimately tied to the state's performance budget and accounting system. Performance measures are also linked to each state agency that administers a workforce program through the measures contained in each agency's biennial state strategic plan.

The four formal measures approved by the governor in 2003, 2009, and 2015 are incorporated into the strategic plan for FY 2024–2031. The measures include:

- educational achievement;
- entered employment;
- employment retention; and
- customers served.

Less formal measures are essential to the implementation of the strategic plan. The measures align with the strategies and provide information and feedback during the development and implementation of the system strategic plan. The less formal measures determine which performance measures will be documented in each of the partner agency action plans and evaluate progress on each strategy (see Table 1).

Partner Agency Alignment with System Strategic Plan

Each partner agency that administers a workforce program uses the system strategic plan when developing its operational plan. Agency operational plans align with the long-term objectives outlined in the current system strategic plan as well as the performance measures negotiated with TWIC and approved by both TWIC and the governor. Agency strategic plans, which are submitted in even-numbered years to the Legislative Budget Board and the Office of the Governor, Budget and Policy Division, are evaluated for alignment with the system goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan and for incorporation of action plan accountability. Of the eight partner agencies included as part of the Texas workforce system, six are required to submit an agency strategic plan. Agencies that do not operate workforce programs or services—the EDT and HHSC—are not subject to this requirement.

System Evaluation and Performance Measurement

Each year TWIC reports on the progress in achieving the objectives of the strategic plan and on the performance of workforce programs related to key metrics. The Texas Government Code requires TWIC to prepare an annual report for submission to the governor and the legislature on the extent to which the system is achieving workforce goals and objectives. The report also evaluates partner-agency alignment under the strategic plan for the Texas workforce system. Approved by the governor in 2023, the Texas workforce system strategic plan focuses on high-level system objectives that require multi-partner collaboration for programs, initiatives, and outcomes. Reporting elements are designed to provide a system-wide view of achievements for partner agencies and other system stakeholders and to meet statutory requirements for reporting to the governor and legislature. Statutory requirements addressed in the evaluation report include the following:

- System strategic plan implementation
- Formal and less formal measures
- Welfare-to-work initiatives
- Adult education and literacy
- Skills standards system

System Strategic Plan Implementation and Performance

The evaluation framework for the FY 2024–2031 strategic plan uses five key components to complement the strategic plan's structure. The framework incorporates narrative and graphics to illustrate the achievements of the Texas workforce system. The components of the workforce system evaluation framework display the actions of partner agencies and their delivery agents, including Boards, independent school districts, community and technical colleges, and local adult education providers. These system partners are responsible for programs and services focused on education, workforce education, and workforce training services. Four of the five components focus on the system goals laid out in the strategic plan: employers, learners, partners, and policy and planning. The fifth component focuses on the following system performance metrics, or formal measures: educational achievement, entered employment, retained employment, and customers served. Data from the eight partner agencies are collected and aggregated to determine system performance for a short period as

well as for longer periods. Aggregating data from an extended period is possible because TWIC has worked with its system partners since 2004 to standardize definitions and methods across all workforce programs.

To achieve a high degree of consistency when aggregating data across programs, TWIC requested that federal definitions be adopted for the formal measures where relevant and that program periods similar to federal periods be used. After renegotiation in 2009, definitions and program periods continued to differ slightly from those used during the previous strategic plan period.

TWIC worked with partner agencies to review and update the formal measure definitions and methods and to further align them with WIOA requirements. Both entered employment and employment retention are essentially consistent across partner agencies and, where required, the program periods for reporting were adjusted based on federal guidance.

System Review

Another primary function of TWIC is to review state agency and Board plans and reports to ensure alignment with statewide workforce goals and objectives. TWIC reviews and comments on state plans required by applicable federal law for Texas to receive federal funds, and on certain reports required under WIOA.

Additionally, TWIC reviews state agency strategic plans for alignment with the system strategic plan, as specified in state law. TWIC last reviewed state agency strategic plans in 2024 and is scheduled to review the plans in 2026, as state agencies submit the plans on a biennial basis to the governor and legislature.

TWIC also reviews all comprehensive, four-year plans and modifications to the plans every two years to ensure alignment with system strategic plan goals. TWIC last reviewed four-year Board plans in 2025 to ensure alignment with the FY 2024–2031 Texas workforce system strategic plan goals. TWIC is scheduled to review the two-year Board plan modifications in 2027 for continued alignment with the workforce system strategic plan goals.

Additionally, TWIC is charged with recommending that the governor approve Board plans as required under federal and state law.

As part of this function, TWIC also considers and reviews requests for the designation or redesignation of workforce areas and recommends to the governor the requests for action, as needed.

Research and System Initiatives

TWIC supports system planning, implementation of the system strategic plan, and evaluation through research products and news updates that are distributed to members, system partners, and workforce stakeholders. Available on TWIC's website, research products include the strategic plan for the workforce system, evaluation reports, resource publications, reports on critical and emerging issues, and recommendations to the governor.

Examples of research and system initiatives that support the workforce system strategic plan include the following:

Research to Support Workforce System Strategic Planning

As part of the strategic planning process, TWIC staff reviewed research findings relating to emerging issues identified by members and partner agencies. To inform the development of the next workforce system strategic plan, the compendium includes summaries of research on current workforce issues and research relevant to TWIC. Each summary includes the source, date, and a link to the original source document.

Apprenticeship in Texas: A Work-Based Learning Profile

Apprenticeships provide opportunities for Texans to gain experience in high-demand occupations while getting paid. This work-based learning profile provides an overview of the current state of apprenticeship in Texas, including the demographics of Texas' apprentices, industry and occupational composition, recent growth, diversification, and shifting trends. The report also includes state and federal funding models and initiatives that were developed in response to the growing demand for apprenticeships, specifically in Texas.

Demographic Studies for Adult Education, Veterans, Mature Workers, Individuals with Disabilities, Youth, and Institutionalized Populations

To help TWIC members, system partners, and stakeholders better understand the diverse pipelines of talent that may be eligible and benefit from workforce programs and services, these reports provide information about various demographic populations in Texas. The research may be used as a primer to understand the significant issues relating to labor force participants and as a reference for data about a specific segment of the population.

Membership

TWIC is composed of 19 members. The governor appoints 14 members who represent business, organized labor, education, and CBOs. The remaining members are ex officio representatives from TWIC's five-member state agencies. Appointed members serve six-year staggered terms, of which one-third of the members' terms expire each odd-numbered year. Ex officio members serve while they are the presiding officer of the member agency they represent. Title 10, Texas Government Code, §2308.052 specifies that TWIC's membership composition must have:

- five governor-appointed members who represent business and industry, including business members serving on Boards or private-industry councils;
- five governor-appointed members who represent organized labor, with input from recognized labor organizations;
- three governor-appointed members who represent education, including local public education, public postsecondary education, and vocational education;
- one governor-appointed member who represents CBOs; and
- five ex officio members who represent statutory agency members, as follows:
    - The Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism
    - The Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency

- The Executive Commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- The Commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- The Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission.

Membership Roster

As a result of state legislation, the Texas workforce system underwent a period of reform between 1993 and 1995. The effects of the reform are seen today, as WIOA contains provisions that allow Texas to retain—or grandfather—major elements of its workforce system that are consistent with WIOA, including TWIC's composition and the roles established under Title 10, Texas Government Code, Chapter 2308.

Current TWIC members, by member category, include:

Business and Industry

- Rick Rhodes, Chair (Austin)—Rural Engagement Coordinator, Texas Rural Funders
- Thomas Halbouty (Southlake)—Industry Advisor, Formation 8; Vice President, Chief Information Officer and Chief Technology Officer, Pioneer Natural Resources (retired)
- Paloma Ahmadi (Shavano Park)—Associate General Counsel for Employment, Brex Inc.
- Wayne Oswald (Houston)—Executive Director, Houston Business Roundtable (retired)
- Aida Coronado (Brownsville)—Executive Vice President/Chief Operations Officer, DHR Health Brownsville

Organized Labor

- Jesse Gatewood (Corpus Christi)—Business Manager, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union 278
- Lindsey Geeslin (Lorena)—Manager, Lhoist North America
- John Martin (San Antonio)—Training Director, South Texas Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee
- Paul Puente (Houston)—Executive Secretary, Houston Gulf Coast Building and Construction Trades Council
- Bobby Smith (Buda)—Business Representative, United Association Local 286

Education

- Joe Arnold (Muldoon)—Deputy Vice Chancellor and Executive External Relations Officer, Texas State Technical College
- Richard Rhodes (Austin)—Interim President, Texas A&M University-Central Texas

- Johnny Vahalik (San Antonio)—Assistant Superintendent, San Antonio Independent School District

Community-Based Organization

- Michelle Harper (San Marcos)—President/Chief Executive Officer, United Way of Hays and Caldwell Counties

State Agency Ex Officio

- Adriana Cruz (Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism)
- Wynn Rosser (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)
- Randy Townsend (Texas Workforce Commission)
- Cecile Young (Texas Health and Human Services Commission)
- Mike Morath (Texas Education Agency)

A current membership roster is available on TWIC's website.

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNER PROGRAMS.

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

TWC regularly uses performance data to evaluate programs and partners. Additionally, TWC was an early implementer of the Common Measures and, in 2005, extended their use beyond that of W-P and WIA to cover other federal and state-funded workforce system programs. TWC realized that using the same measures and definitions across programs would help improve program evaluations and remove potential barriers to the integration of services by creating a common understanding of success.

TWC actively monitors the system through monthly, and in some cases, weekly, performance reports. Program staff reviews the reports and communicates with system partners, as appropriate, to provide technical assistance and obtain information on best practices to share with other partners.

To evaluate its programs and partners, TWC uses a system that compares performance to targets. The comparison establishes a "Percent of Target" for each measure, and, depending on where the Percent of Target falls within a given range, performance is rated as "Meeting" the target (MG) or as either "Exceeding Performance" (EX) or "Not Meeting Performance" (NM), as follows:

Performance	Where "High is Good" (for example, Number Served, % Reemployed within 10 Weeks, etc.)	Where "Low is Good" (for example, Aver. Cost, Weeks to Remploy, etc.)
Exceeding Performance (EX)	more than 105% of Target	less than 95% of Target
Meeting Performance (MG)	95–105% of Target	95–105% of Target
Not Meeting Performance (NM)	less than 95% of Target	more than 105% of Target

Regarding WIOA measures, however, the system has been modified to align more closely with federal standards as follows:

Performance Ratings	WIOA Statutory Measures
Exceeding Performance (EX)	more than 110% of Target
Meeting Performance (MG)	90–110% of Target
Not Meeting Performance (NM)	less than 90% of Target

Target setting is a key part of TWC's evaluation and accountability system. TWC's I|3division uses a variety of models to help set performance targets based on assumed case mixes and economic conditions. The evaluation methods are continuously evolving based on input from partners through the negotiation process and additional research. The ongoing dialogue between TWC and its partners represents the agency's commitment to continuous improvement.

WIOA requires continuous improvement, which TWC adheres to by setting targets in the areas of strength at a "maintenance" level to concentrate on improving in areas of lesser strength. In an environment of fewer resources or greater demand for similar resources, solely maintaining performance may represent an improvement in efficiency.

Developing effective statistical models to guide target setting helps improve program performance. WIOA requires that the U.S. Secretaries of Labor and Education create statistical models to help set targets for WIOA performance indicators for Title I and Title III programs. Since 2019, TWC has embraced the use of Statistical Adjustment Models (SAMs) and has modified them to help ensure accountability among Boards for the common WIOA measures. Starting in 2022, I|3 began creating Performance Assessment Models (PAMs) that use internally produced state data structures to develop models to evaluate WIOA performance measures in Program Years 2024 and 2025.

WIOA provides performance measures to evaluate the six core programs and system partners. Additionally, WIOA emphasizes the importance of career pathways that a person might follow over a period of many years. The performance measures and the joint performance reporting constructs are based on the notion that if an individual loses employment, they may use a one-stop system for a relatively short, finite period to find a job. The statutory measures do not recognize that post-exit enrollment in an education program is sometimes an appropriate outcome for non-youth, such as those who are transitioning out of

the military and using their GI Bill benefits to attend school. Additionally, the statutory measures do not address whether participants who exit are able to retain employment, which is a key concern for TWC customers.

Although TWC applies the statutorily prescribed performance measures to assess performance across the six core programs, TWC also applies state-prescribed performance measures and—with input from Boards, grantees, and other partners—works to continuously develop and test other measures that may provide a more meaningful way of communicating strengths and identifying areas of improvement. For example, TWC developed a set of WIOA-based measures that focused on employment and enrollment in education post-exit. The measures addressed individuals who were employed or enrolled in the second quarter post-exit and individuals who remained employed or enrolled in the third and fourth quarters post-exit. TWC is also working to implement a set of new meaningful measures that focus on the connection between a worker and their employer and ensure that workers have the skills that employers need.

Although TWC's current reports provide historic trend data that may help identify improvements over time, the findings are limited. As part of the EDW system, TWC is developing new ways to view, interact with, and evaluate data to identify the quality, effectiveness, and improvement made within programs operated by the state, Boards, and other grantees. The EDW has been instrumental in supporting fraud detection and prevention as well as helping Boards serve those impacted by the pandemic. An early example of this was the development of a Tableau-based claimant supply dashboard, which allowed Boards to further examine their customer populations and better understand their needs and current status. In 2023, as part of its Career & Training Rosetta Initiative, I|3 spearheaded the development of modern Tableau-based tools for Board-operated programs. As of PY 2025, the tools are under remediation to align with the new VOS case management system for DOL programs.

B. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

For each four-year state plan and state plan modification, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle), in accordance with methods described in 4(A). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

Per Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 04-24, DOL and ED determined that it is appropriate and reasonable to assess performance for the WIOA Title I, III, and IV core programs for Program Year 2024 (PY 2024) for the following performance indicators, as applicable:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit;
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit;
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit; and
- Credential Attainment Rate.

In accordance with WIOA §503(a), the departments must delay the assessment of the remaining performance indicators, as the available baseline data is not sufficient to produce reliable estimates using the required statistical adjustment model.

TWC achieved or exceeded all negotiated target levels for PY 2024, however, adjusted target levels will not be known until sometime after the conclusion of the current federal government shutdown. These adjusted target levels will be the final criteria to assess performance. Similar performance outcomes are anticipated in PY 2025, and an increase in the youth credential rates is also anticipated due to enhanced data integrity and entry measures and staff education initiatives about the importance of recording education and training data.

Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	Performance % of Negotiated Level	Performance Rating
Adults	78.4%	75.9%	103.3%	MG
Dislocated Workers	78.1%	75.6%	103.3%	MG
Youth	72.1%	74.3%	97.0%MG	
Adult Education	38.86%	42.9%	90.58%	MG
Wagner-Peyser	66.7%	66.8%	99.9%	MG
Vocational Rehabilitation	59.6%	60.0%	99.3%	MG

Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	Performance % of Negotiated Level	Performance Rating
Adults	76.8%	76.4%	100.5%	MG
Dislocated Workers	79.9%	77.9%	102.6%	MG

Program	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	Performance % of Negotiated Level	Performance Rating
Youth	72.0%	75.2%	95.7%	MG
Adult Education	39.80%	41.0%	97.1%	MG
Wagner-Peyser	67.1%	67.5%	99.41%	MG
Vocational Rehabilitation	57.9%	58.8%	98.47%	MG

Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	Performance % of Negotiated Level	Performance Rating
Adults	$8,061	$8,468	95.2%	MG
Dislocated Workers	$10,803	$10,886	99.3%	MG
Youth	$5,365	$4,900	109.5%	MG
Adult Education	$7,095.96	$6,350	111.7	X
Wagner-Peyser	$7,570	$7,773	97.4	G
Vocational Rehabilitation	$7,290	$6,478	116.86	
%	EX			

Credential Attainment Rate

Program	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	Performance % of Negotiated Level	Performance Rating
Adults	66.4%	72.9%	91.1%	MG

Program	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	Performance % of Negotiated Level	Performance Rating
Dislocated Workers	74.3%	80.3%	92.5%	MG
Youth	54.8%	53.6%	102.2%	MG
Adult Education	44.48%	35.0%	127.1%	EX
Wagner-Peyser	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vocational Rehabilitation	50.5%	40.7%	124.08%	EX

Measurable Skill Gains

Program	PY 2024 Performance	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	Performance % of Negotiated Level	Performance Rating
Adults	65.5%	72.1%	90.85%	MG
Dislocated Workers	56.2%	79.5%	70.7%	NM
Youth	64.8%	63.5%	102.0%	MG
Adult Education	54.73%	39.0%	140.3%	EX
Wagner-Peyser	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vocational Rehabilitation	58.8%	51.7%	113.73%	EX

TWC does not believe that performance is likely to slip below the current levels in any meaningful way. However, if federal statistical models predict lower levels of performance when published, TWC's proposals will be lowered accordingly.

C. EVALUATION

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects of activities carried out in the State under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)).

TWC relies on a variety of analytical and statistical techniques to conduct evaluations, including quasi-experimental techniques and randomized controlled trials (RCTs). Although not as conclusive as RCTs, TWC frequently uses quasi-experimental study designs because they balance rigor with the ability to implement process changes and new initiatives quickly. Additionally, TWC is exploring how machine learning can identify strengths and weaknesses in its programs and suggest improvements to customer service.

Collaborative Approach to Actionable Operations Research

To translate evaluation results into systemic improvements and measure success, TWC has used a blend of Six Sigma, Lean, and Theory of Constraints methodologies for a continuous improvement model called Rapid Process Improvement (RPI). RPI has been used to evaluate several system processes, identify opportunities for improvement, and test the results of implemented changes. TWC has expanded its continuous improvement model beyond RPI with the introduction of Business Transformation (BT). While RPI focuses on process efficiency and quality, BT addresses systemic issues and limitations by strategically rethinking entire business approaches and value systems to achieve broader, transformational improvements. Beginning in PY 2023, and continuing into PY 2024, TWC began applying BT methodologies to automate, coordinate, and simplify internal processes. Agency evaluations are dependent on analytics infrastructure such as databases, customer-facing visualizations to help spark research questions, and the development of self-service reports to reduce time spent on nonevaluative ad hoc requests.

To conduct program evaluations, TWC collaborates with Boards, partners, and academic researchers on evaluations and participates in federal studies, such as the Workforce Investment Act Gold Standard Study. TWC proactively engages with the Secretaries of Labor and Education on studies that further the research priorities of TWC, Boards, and partners. Additionally, TWC believes that the webinars and regional calls held by DOL and ED provide a valuable avenue to coordinate work and share results between the states and the departments. TWC also plays an active role in the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) community and shares results and best practices with other community members.

Performance Accountability System

TWC supplements WIOA statutory measures to address inconsistencies between the statutory measures and what it considers the statutory vision. For example, although WIOA emphasizes the importance of career pathways, its measures only recognize steps along a career pathway as success for former youth participants. From TWC’s perspective, helping a veteran who recently transitioned out of the military or a worker looking for a mid-career change constitutes a significant success, even if the workforce system is not funding the

individual's education or training. Therefore, TWC's supplemental WIOA-based measures also identify employment or educational enrollment in post-exit quarters.

Texas also supplemented the statutory employment/enrollment Q4 measures with a Q2–Q4 employment or enrollment retention measure. The measures build as follows:

1. **Employed or Enrolled Q2 Post Exit:** What percent of exiters were employed or enrolled in Q2?
2. **Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit:** How much were those who were employed in Q2 earning?
3. **Employed or Enrolled Q2–Q4 Post Exit:** Of those employed or enrolled in Q2, what percent were also employed or enrolled in both Q3 and Q4?

Data Validation

TWC takes the following four-pronged approach to validating data:

1. TWC's case management system uses data validation codes to ensure consistent data collection. In this system, field values must meet the required Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL).
2. TWC's Subrecipient Monitoring (SRM) department conducts data validation testing for all Boards and AEL grant recipients. Beginning in September 2022, in coordination with the Business Support Section of FDCM, SRM developed a dedicated database to capture testing results while allowing TWC to generate testing outcomes by workforce area.
3. TWC performs error-checking audits designed to conform with DOL reporting requirements.
4. TWC's case management system uses internal data integrity (DINT) functions that allow local system partners to make corrections to data entries while enabling TWC to validate and approve the corrections or invalidate them based on standardized procedures. The DINT process is engaged when edits or corrections are submitted for system entries that were made in the previous quarter plus 28 days, effectively giving Workforce Solutions Office staff 28 days after the previous quarter to make edits or corrections without the need to submit a DINT request. After that time, any changes to previous quarter entries require validation and approval by designated Board staff. TWC's Board Service Strategies (BSS) department reviews DINT requests to ensure that they are being approved correctly.

Internally, TWC Analytics & Evaluation follows strict quality control procedures for reporting. The validation process is referred to as quality assurance (QA) and varies depending on the project and business needs, but it always includes:

1. an independent run and verification by at least one other staff member of final code and/or results;
2. comparison with other relevant published data to check the reasonableness of the numerators, denominators, rates, and other pertinent numbers, especially for high profile reports; and
3. saving and reviewing the run log and other related documentation to rule out errors and for the purposes of future forensics and auditing.

Beyond these universal requirements, the manager or director determines appropriate additional QA processes. It is acceptable for a statistic to be reported (call it A) that deviates by up to 1 percent from the same statistic that was calculated from a transactional or base data source (call it B) due to lag between TWC's information systems. To calculate percent

deviation, we take |A – B| / B. For confirming statistics with other divisions, up to 1 percent deviation is acceptable. However, for federal, state, or external reporting, only 0.5 percent deviation is acceptable. When calculating deviation, B always denotes the data system that sets the standard and will change depending on the context. When deviation is too great, staff investigate and rectify.

Improving Service Delivery

In PY 2023, TWC launched an evaluation project to refine service delivery; however, the project is currently on hold due to computational constraints. The project's core hypothesis is that service effectiveness varies across different customer groups. Analyzing all customers together masks these variations. To address this, the project will develop statistically similar customer groups based on factors such as education, demographics, and work experience, thus allowing for a more precise analysis of each group's response to individual services. A customer analysis model will then classify customers into these groups, enabling targeted service recommendations. These recommendations will ideally include a prediction of the likelihood for success. Importantly, this project will enhance, not replace, the expertise of caseworkers and maintain participant autonomy, with recommendations entirely optional. Research indicates that such recommendation engines significantly improve staff efficiency, especially for newer staff, and could potentially offset the impact of staff turnover and associated training costs. TWC plans to resume exploring this project in PY 2025.

Another project, which has been in place since PY 2023, investigates the impact of the use of private networking in job searches. This quasi-experimental study uses the presence of a private networking profile in the Texas labor exchange system, WorkInTexas.com, as a proxy for private networking usage. Positive results could lead to a joint research project with private networking companies to identify effective private networking strategies.

Vocational Rehabilitation

<u>Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment</u>

TWC initiated a BT project in response to findings from the triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) for Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The CSNA provides insights into the perception of the Texas VR program from participants, service providers, employers, families, and disability support communities. The 2020 CSNA highlighted critical challenges to the provision of purchased services, including VR vendor shortages, low reimbursement rates, service inefficiencies, inconsistent referrals from TWC, and burdensome paperwork. In response, TWC initiated a BT project.

The 2023 CSNA indicates that the VR program made improvements, including reducing paperwork, streamlining administrative processes, and increasing the number of active contracted service providers (vendors who received payment for a service authorization [SA]). During the fourth quarter of calendar year 2024 (CY 2024), VR actively used 540 contracted providers to provide services, a 14 percent increase from the baseline of 469 that was set in the fourth quarter of CY 2020. Additionally, the percent of active contracted providers compared to all available contracted providers (provider activity rate) increased from 46 to 55 percent during the period. Improvements produced a 25 percent increase in the number of VR customers served with services purchased from the providers (both contracted

and non-contracted) to over 41,000 in State Fiscal Year 2024 (SFY 2024) from approximately 33,000 in SFY 2019.

Strengthening the VR Program

TWC is implementing several key strategies to strengthen the VR program. In September 2022, TWC Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) Division contracted with Public Consulting Group (PCG) to analyze the program's ability to be attractive to and its retention of vendors. The review provided an analysis of the activities and services that are currently provided, industry standards, provider costs, comparable rates and processes of peer states, and interviews with selected TWC-VR staff. Based on the data, PCG recommended rate increases, which TWC-VR implemented using a phased approach.

To reduce provider burdens, TWC is reassessing established service provider requirements by comparing them to less-burdensome policies in other states. This ongoing work is being performed in a targeted way to maximize the program's impact. TWC also developed solutions to quickly answer providers' questions and provide guidance to ensure the provision of quality services to customers.

TWC continues to run a Tableau-based provider locator that enables staff to quickly find providers by location and types of services offered. In the first six months of use, the Provider Locator Tool received over 7,000 hits. TWC also developed the Trend Analyzer dashboard to track provider payments, showing strong performance in Program Year 2024 (PY 2024) for timely SAs. While some providers will not get an SA in the first month after onboarding due to seasonality, such as summer programs providers that are onboarded in the spring, an increase is indicated from PY 2023 to PY 2024. In PY 2024, sixty-four percent of onboarded providers were issued a SA within 28 days, with over one-third receiving a SA within seven days. Moreover, the average time from completion of a SA to issuing a warrant for the provider decreased from six days in PY 2023 to five days in PY 2024. This continued improvement demonstrates increased efficiency in service delivery and payment processing.

Project SEARCH

TWC is engaged in several ongoing evaluations of its VR program. One project nearing completion involves a quasi-experimental evaluation of the impact of TWC's Project SEARCH on individuals with developmental disabilities. Project SEARCH provides participants with on-the-job experience via three 10- to 12-week paid internships in competitive integrated employment (CIE) settings, with the goal of obtaining and retaining permanent employment. Local employers involved in Project SEARCH include hospitals, law firms, and supply chain industries, which offer diverse internships in areas such as office administration, data entry, assembly/packaging, housekeeping, and food preparation.

The ongoing study, covering PY 2020–2022, compares 500 Project SEARCH participants with 500 VR participants. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Project SEARCH participants achieved a success rate 17.6 percentage points higher than the comparison group. Overall, Project SEARCH participants were 1.4 times more likely to achieve successful closure (defined as maintaining CIE for at least 90 days before exiting the VR program) than nonparticipants. While the analysis of retention rates (employment retention during the second through fourth quarters following VR program exit) using unemployment insurance wage records is still ongoing, preliminary findings reinforce the

program's positive impact. A previous study covering Federal Fiscal Years 2015–2019 also showed Project SEARCH success and retention rates of 87.4 percent and 70.35 percent, respectively, compared to 60.4 percent and 63.27 percent for a comparison group.

Both studies are expected to meet CLEAR's standard for moderate evidence of causality and will help determine the feasibility of increasing the number of SEARCH sites and host employers across the state. In 2025, 223 VR customers completed the program within the 34 sites currently operating in Texas.

VR Services Guide

A new project is underway to create a Vocational Rehabilitation Services Guide (VRSG), a VR reference for counselors based on de-identified case data. The VRSG will help counselors, both new and experienced, to more efficiently identify potentially beneficial services for customers with similar circumstances and vocational objectives, based on past successful cases. By inputting limited customer data, the guide will generate a list of goods and services that were previously provided to similar customers that contributed to positive outcomes. The aim is to provide counselors with valuable insights, facilitate informed discussions with customers, and improve collaborative plan development. The VRSG leverages a cloud-based machine learning solution to generate personalized service recommendations. The system analyzes customer demographics, functional limitations, employment goals, and service history to generate tailored suggestions. Data are stored and processed in the cloud, training a recommendation model within a dedicated engine. Real-time recommendations are retrieved via an API. Key technical requirements include cloud service access, a robust data pipeline, and ongoing model monitoring and retraining.

Five-Year Return on Investment

A five-year return on investment (ROI) analysis demonstrated significant returns for VR program participants. The study examined the calendar year 2018 cohort of 21,023 program exiters by comparing their five-year post-exit earnings growth to total case expenditures. Findings showed that the average total amount expended over the life of the case was $5,645, compared to an additional return of about $31,951 in individual earnings over five years. Overall, for every dollar spent on a case, exiting participants made an additional $5.66 in income over the following five years. When broken down by age group, adults (aged 25 and over at time of exit) made an additional $3.57, while youth (aged 16–24 at time of exit) earned an additional $11.94. The following study results highlight the strong ROI and lasting positive impact of VR services on participant earnings:

- Total earnings for the 20 quarters (five years) before and after program exit were analyzed. "Additional five-year earnings after VR" represents the difference between post- and pre-exit earnings, calculated as [Total earnings five years after exit] – [Total earnings five years prior to exit]. This figure is then compared to total case expenditures to calculate ROI, calculated as [Additional five-year earnings after VR] / [Total case expenditures].

- Earnings in this study are not adjusted for inflation and are reported as nominal (actual) dollars.

Earnings Outcomes for VR Participants completing Postsecondary Education and Training

Additionally, TWC staff compared wage outcomes for participants who completed Postsecondary Education and Training during their VR case. Postsecondary education and training include community college, four-year college or university, graduate school, and occupational/vocational training programs. In PY 2023, VR participants who were employed in the second quarter following successful employment had a median wage gain of $2,007, comparing wages at the time an individualized plan for employment (IPE) was developed to earnings at Q2 post-exit. Participants who completed postsecondary education and training during participation had a significantly higher median wage gain of $6,861. Furthermore, postsecondary credential attainment significantly impacted employment outcomes. While the overall Texas VR employment rate was 51.4 percent, participants who earned a postsecondary credential achieved a notably higher employment rate of 67.3 percent, a 16-percentage point difference.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program

RESEA program evaluations started in 2022 with the launch of the IPE conducted by the Texas A&M University (TAMU) Public Policy Research Institute. Over the last two years, TAMU has visited several Workforce Solutions Offices in each Board area to conduct surveys and host focus groups to develop a baseline of qualitative data on program services. TAMU will use the data to support several impact studies as follows:

- Quasi Experimental Design I is currently underway to evaluate the impact of the initial RESEA appointment on employment outcomes and UI duration.
- Quasi Experimental Design II is currently underway to evaluate the impact of subsequent meetings on employment outcomes and UI duration.
- A random control trial is currently underway to evaluate the impact of different levels of service on program outcomes.

Texas is also participating in a DOL multi-state evaluation on the RESEA selection model.

Unemployment Insurance

TWC dedicates substantial analytical and evaluation resources to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse within Texas' UI benefits and tax systems. Eligibility fraud, identification (ID) fraud, and fictitious employer detection is conducted through the development of predictive models used by investigative staff. TWC is active within the national UI integrity sphere and supports other states' efforts by sharing best practices and contributing to the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), NASWA's Integrity Data Hub (IDH), and associated workgroups.

Adult Education and Literacy

TWC originally proposed developing a machine-learning model to predict the likelihood that an AEL student would receive a measurable skill gain (MSG) within a particular program year. However, House Bill (HB) 1602, 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2023), requires TWC to establish performance criteria and prioritize funding to the providers that consistently meet them. As a result, this legislation changed TWC's focus from predicting MSGs to building an education model on high school equivalency (HSE) completion and credential attainment.

The concept of a fast-track HSE program was reviewed by analyzing reported AEL program data from PY 2021 (July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022) and comparing it to data from PY 2018. An interactive report was developed to give providers detailed data. The findings and interactive report were presented to providers at the annual TWC AEL Fall Institute in 2023.

TWC contracts with two entities, including Texas A&M University's Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) that operates two of the three professional development (PD) centers for the state (the Distance Education PD Center and the Statewide PD Center, which is the umbrella for the other PD centers for AEL). TCALL also conducts an annual statewide needs assessment to help ensure PD activities more closely align with the state's goals. In PY 2023, TCALL conducted a statewide PD needs assessment that resulted in several recommendations across four key partners. TWC will work to ensure that state leadership projects (dependent on continued federal funding) support a responsive approach to recommendations, which will be further outlined in program specific plan elements. Educational Service Center in Region 6 operated the Career Pathways Professional Development Center (CPPDC), which is focused on PD activities for creating and implementing career pathways, in FY 2024, and a new grantee was procured for FY 2026. The contract will start on October 1, 2025.

As recommended by the Texas AEL's Advisory Committee in March of 2025, TWC has partnered with the Texas A&M Public Policy & Research Institute (PPRI) to conduct a year-long evaluation of AEL programming and data that will use focus groups and surveys to generate specific ideas for program improvement.

The Enterprise Data Warehouse and Rosetta Initiative

Foundational to TWC's ambitions to fully leverage its data is TWC's EDW system, which supports advanced reporting, analytics, and high-quality evaluations that meet moderate and high causal evidence ratings. The system aims to streamline standard reporting to improve efficiency and provide more resources for analysis and evaluation work. The system also allows TWC to better connect data relating to participants, services, and outcomes across programs. This facilitates monitoring at the highest level (systemwide), the program level (WIOA Titles I–IV), the characteristic level (that is, subpopulations across all programs), or a combination thereof (individuals in a program who meet specific conditions).

A key part of the work is the development of a common data model for customers in all programs. The system, called Rosetta, is designed to allow customer data to be transformed, standardized, and more easily combined. Rosetta also enables development of Tableau dashboards that can work for any program.

The EDW buildout was supported by a Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant application that accelerated system development and brought additional capabilities online much sooner than would have been possible without the funding.

Over the next few years, TWC plans to replace or significantly modify several key enterprise-level IT systems that support core programs and services. The systems are designed to provide high-quality data that can support the levels of evaluation WIOA requires. TWC will ensure its efforts to modernize its IT systems pay off both in the short term, by serving

customers, and in the long term, by yielding information about which efforts work under which conditions.

Once the Rosetta data system is fully implemented, TWC will apply market basket analysis to identify common customer groups, similar to the way business marketing does when analyzing consumer purchasing patterns. However, this approach will reach further than the identification of common customer groups. TWC intends to evaluate each group to determine whether service-based differences exist between high- and low-achieving customers in each group and then evaluate those services for effectiveness. Although most services have value, that value varies by individual and the degree to which services are provided (in conjunction with other services or through other means).

Through this approach, TWC hopes to implement a system that better uses data to determine appropriate service-delivery strategies that are unique to each individual customer. This approach is not intended to remove local flexibility or disregard staff experience but rather to support staff by providing better evidence-based options from precise data, obtained through market basket analysis, to help plan an approach likely to lead to customer success. This approach will also help bring new staff up to speed more quickly.

TWC's evidence-based data analysis and evaluation provide a more efficient way to serve employers. TWC works to identify employers that might benefit from outreach and education regarding short-term UI compensation to ultimately help them retain their skilled labor force during a period of temporary financial difficulty.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

The Commission adopted FY 2026 WIOA Block Grant Allocations on May 20, 2025, pursuant to Title 4, Texas Labor Code §§301.001, 302.002, and 302.065. These sections direct TWC to operate an integrated workforce development system in the state, specifically, through the consolidation of job training, employment, and employment-support services (including subsidized child care), to achieve an efficient and effective delivery of services and to allocate funds to workforce areas for the purpose of meeting or exceeding statewide performance targets, as set forth in the General Appropriations Act and consistent with federal and state program requirements.

Title 4, Texas Labor Code §302.062(a) prescribes that TWC must provide funding through a block grant process to the workforce areas in which Boards have been certified and local plans have been approved by the governor.

The funds appropriated to TWC under SB 1, the General Appropriations Act, 89th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2025), for the FY 2026–2027 biennium, are included in the block grant allocations to all workforce areas throughout the state (including those allocations

adopted for WIOA Title I and Title II programs). The block grant allocations, which consist of state and federal program funds for workforce training, employment, and support services, are awarded in concert with the requirements of associated state and federal statutes, program regulations and rules, and TWC contract provisions and requirements.

Pertinent informational references to TWC rules are made throughout the block grant allocations package. The references clarify:

- how allocations were computed;
- what allocation factors were used;
- the sources of the allocation factor data;
- why the allocations were largely based on estimated federal amounts and may need to be subsequently amended (because federal FY 2025 appropriations have not yet been enacted); and
- various other details regarding relevant assumptions, explanations, and associated information.

The TWC executive director is ordered to administer the block grant allocations in the most efficient and economical manner and within all guidelines prescribed by SB 1, General Appropriations Act, 89th Legislature, Regular Session (2025); the Texas Labor Code; and Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Part 20.

For Title I Programs

Within-State Allocations of formula-funded WIOA Title I will be made pursuant to statutory provisions for Youth Activities under §128(b), and Adult Employment and Training Activities and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities under §133(b), and pursuant to 40 TAC §800.63. Youth Activities funds that are not reserved for statewide workforce investment activities (as authorized under WIOA §128[a][1]) are made available as Within-State Allocations for Youth Activities to workforce areas based on the following formula:

- one-third of the funds allocated based on the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment (as defined in WIOA §127[b][2][B] and §132[b][1][B][v][III]) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals within all areas of substantial unemployment in the state[1];
- one-third of the funds allocated based on the relative excess number of unemployed individuals (as defined in WIOA §127[b][2][D] and §132[b)][1][B][v][VI]) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals within the state[2]; and
- one-third of the funds allocated based on the relative number of disadvantaged youth (as defined in WIOA §127[b][2][C]) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth within the state[3].

Within-State Allocations to workforce areas (as provided in WIOA §128[b][2][A][ii], §133[b][2][A][ii], and §133[b][B][iii]) must meet minimum percentages for Youth Activities, Adult Employment and Training Activities, and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities (for the current or subsequent year) that are no less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage among the workforce areas in the state for the two preceding fiscal years.

In accordance with the requirements of Title 4, Texas Labor Code §302.062(d), block grant–allocated funds for workforce training, employment services, and associated support services will be allocated by the Commission among the workforce areas in the state that are no less than 90 percent or no more than 125 percent of the proportion during the two preceding fiscal years.

Of the amount allocated from the Within-State Allocation for a fiscal year, not more than 10 percent of the amount may be used by the Board for the administrative costs of carrying out local workforce investment activities (as provided in WIOA §128[b][4] and §133[b]).

1. Period and Source of the Data: 12-month period ending June of the prior year, TWC LMI
2. Period and Source of the Data: 12-month period ending June of the prior year, TWC LMI
3. Period and Source of the Data: U.S. DOLETA, Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 01-23, July 31, 2023, Table 6

II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Adult Employment and Training Activities funds that are not reserved for statewide activities (as provided in WIOA §128[a][1] and §133[a][1]) are made available as Within-State Allocations for Adult Employment and Training Activities to workforce areas based on the following formula:

- One-third of the funds allocated based on the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment (as defined in WIOA §127[b][2][B] and §132[b][1][B][v][III]) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals within all areas of substantial unemployment in the state [1]
- One-third of the funds allocated based on the relative excess number of unemployed individuals (as defined in WIOA §127[b][2][D] and §132[b][1][B][v][VI]) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals within the state [2]
- One-third of the funds allocated based on the relative number of disadvantaged adults (as defined in WIOA §132[b][1][B][v][IV]) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults within the state [3]

Within-State Allocations to workforce areas (as provided in WIOA §§128[b][2][A][ii], 133[b][2][A][ii], and 133[b][B][iii]) must meet minimum percentages for Youth Activities,

Adult Employment and Training Activities, and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities (for FY 2006 or a subsequent year) that are no less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage among the workforce areas in the state for the two preceding fiscal years.

In accordance with the requirements of Title 4, Texas Labor Code §302.062(d), block grant–allocated funds for workforce training, employment services, and associated support services will be allocated by the Commission among the workforce areas in the state that are no less than 90 percent or no more than 125 percent of the proportion during the two preceding fiscal years.

Of the amount allocated from the Within-State Allocation for a fiscal year, not more than 10 percent of the amount may be used by the Board for the administrative costs of carrying out local workforce investment activities (as provided in WIOA §128[b][4] and §133[b]).

1. Period and Source of the Data: 12-month period ending June of the prior year, TWC LMI
2. Period and Source of the Data: 12-month period ending June of the prior fiscal year, TWC LMI
3. Period and Source of the Data: U.S. DOLETA, TEGL No. 01-23, July 31, 2023, Table 6

III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

DW Employment and Training funds that are not reserved for statewide activities (as provided in WIOA §128[a][1] and §133[a][1]) or statewide rapid response activities (as described in WIOA §132 [b][2][B]) are made available as Within-State Allocations for DW Employment and Training Activities to workforce areas based on the following formula:

- 20 percent (PY 2025 factor weight) of the funds based on the relative number of insured unemployed individuals (that is, average monthly total number of unemployed individuals who are covered by state and federal unemployment insurance program) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total number of insured unemployed individuals within the state (Period and Source of the Data: prior calendar year, TWC's Claimant Characteristics Report)
- 19.67 percent (PY 2025 factor weight) of the funds based on the relative average number of unemployed individuals residing within each workforce area, compared to the average number of unemployed individuals within the state (Period and Source of the Data: prior calendar year, Monthly Local Area Unemployment Statistics [LAUS] Estimates Report, TWC LMI)
- 10.33 percent (PY 2025 factor weight) of the funds based on the relative number of workers residing within each workforce area who are included on Texas plant closure and layoff notices issued under authority of the Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification Act (WARN), compared to the number of such workers within the state

(Period and Source of the Data: prior calendar year, TWC Workforce Development Division)

- 20 percent (PY 2025 factor weight) of the funds on the basis of the relative proportion of the state's declining industries (for the four calendar quarters ending the prior September, compared to the four quarters ending September of two years earlier), for any industry group reflecting statewide decline, for any workforce area, and also showing a decline in those respective industry groups (six-digit North American Industry Classification System [NAICS] industry classification), aggregated by workforce area (Period and Source of the Data: period of data as described, TWC LMI)
- 19.67 percent (PY 2025 factor weight) of the funds on the basis of the relative proportion of individuals in Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship (that is, total population of farm and ranch employees who are not covered by UI) residing within the workforce area, compared to the total number of individuals within the state in Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship (Period and Source of the Data: prior calendar year, Texas State Data Center)
- 10.33 percent (PY 2025 factor weight) of the funds on the basis of the relative proportion of individuals in Long-Term Unemployment residing within the workforce area, compared to the total number of individuals within the state in Long-Term Unemployment (Period and Source of the Data: prior calendar year, TWC's Claimant Characteristics Report)

Within-State Allocations to workforce areas (as provided in WIOA §128[b][2][A][ii], §133[b][2][A][ii], and §133[b][B][iii]) must meet minimum percentages for Youth Activities, Adult Employment and Training Activities, and DW Employment and Training Activities (for FY 2006 or a subsequent year) that are no less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage among the workforce areas in the state for the two preceding fiscal years.

In accordance with the requirements of Title 4, Texas Labor Code §302.062(d), block grant-allocated funds for workforce training, employment services, and associated support services will be allocated by the Commission among the workforce areas in the state that are no less than 90 percent or no more than 125 percent of the proportion during the two preceding fiscal years.

Of the amount allocated from the Within-State Allocation for a fiscal year, not more than 10 percent of the amount may be used by the Board for the administrative costs of carrying out local workforce investment activities (as provided in WIOA §128[b][4] and §133[b]).

B. FOR TITLE II

I. DESCRIBE THE METHODS AND FACTORS THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL USE TO DISTRIBUTE TITLE II FUNDS.

WIOA Title II §§211, 225, and 231, provide the methodology for awarding state grants for AEL activities and state how funds are to be used for corrections. In accordance with the methodology and pursuant to Title 40, TAC §800.68, as outlined below, AEL allocations are made available to each workforce area through a county-level allocation methodology. In

November 2022, TWC revised the language on the deobligation and reallocation of funds to provide greater flexibility to recapture unused funds and redistribute funds to providers that are meeting or exceeding expenditure and performance benchmarks.

ED allocates AEL State Grant funds based on the state's relative proportion of the nation's total number of individuals who are older than 18 years of age, who are without a secondary school diploma, and who are not enrolled in school. TWC allocates these funds (with associated state General Revenue matching funds) on the same basis to workforce areas across the state. As directed by the Texas Labor Code and TWC rules, each year TWC uses data collected by the Texas State Data Center for this allocation factor. Allocation factors for TWC block grants are aggregated to the state's 28 workforce areas. The most effective approach is to obtain allocation factor data values/estimates by county and then to aggregate the grants to the workforce areas.

Pursuant to Title 40, TAC §800.68(b) and (c), federal funds constituting the state award of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) grants (excluding amounts received for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education [IEL/CE]), and the associated state General Revenue matching funds, will be allocated to workforce areas based on the relative proportion of individuals residing within each workforce area who are at least 18 years of age, do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and are not enrolled in secondary school during the most recent period for which statistics are available.

Federal funds encompassing the state award of AEFLA State Grants (excluding amounts received for IEL/CE), and associated state General Revenue matching funds for the pertinent program year/fiscal year, are allocated using statistics provided by the Texas State Data Center. The allocation factor data consists of the most recent estimates available by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) three-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) applied to county population estimates (aggregated to workforce area populations), as provided by the Texas State Data Center. This data set is consistent with the data set ED uses to determine AEFLA state grants.

At least 82.5 percent of the federal funds encompassing the state award of AEFLA state grants (excluding amounts received for IEL/CE), and associated state General Revenue matching funds for the pertinent program year/fiscal year, are allocated based on the relative proportion of individuals residing within each workforce area who are at least 18 years of age, do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and are not enrolled in secondary school during the most recent period for which statistics are available; an equal base amount; and the application of a hold-harmless procedure.

Under §800.68(d), AEFLA federal funds received for IEL/CE are allocated to workforce areas based on the same methodology and data factors provided in WIOA §243(b). The federal funds constituting the state allotment of amounts for IEL/CE for the pertinent program year/fiscal year are allocated based on:

- the relative proportion of:
  - 65 percent of the average number of legal permanent residents during the most recent 10-year period, as determined from data compiled by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; and

    - 35 percent of the average number of legal permanent residents during the most recent three-year period, as determined from data compiled by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services;
- an equal base amount; and
- the application of a hold-harmless procedure.

In February 2024, TWC amended Title 40, TAC §800.68 in response to updated guidance provided by OCTAE that requires competitive grant applications to allow for the selection of individual funding streams. TWC believed that a revised approach to the allocation methodology would provide the greatest capability to use WIOA §243 funds to implement robust IEL/CE programs in the state. The rule was effective as of February 26, 2024.

Pursuant to Title 40, TAC §800.68(e), TANF federal funds associated with the AEL program will be allocated by the Commission to workforce areas according to a need-based formula. One hundred percent of the TANF funds will be based on:

- the relative proportion of the unduplicated number of TANF adult recipients residing within the workforce area who attained an education level of less than a secondary diploma during the most recently completed calendar year;
- an equal base amount; and
- the application of a hold-harmless procedure.

Title II Adult Education and Literacy Statewide Competition and Awards

In October 2019, OCTAE conducted a review of the statewide competition to ensure that processes for the award of WIOA Title II funds to eligible providers adhered to WIOA requirements. In its final report, OCTAE noted that the next statewide competition was to be held no later than Program Year 2023. However, in March 2023, Texas was provided an extension in order to implement rule changes for how WIOA §243 funds are allocated in the state's competitive grant process. The rule amendments were necessary to ensure that items noted in OCTAE's 2019 review of the state's unpublished Request for Applications (RFA) had been corrected.

For the statewide RFA that was conducted fall 2023, state staff members revised the application items that were addressed during OCTAE's 2019 review of Texas' grant application process, including separating past effectiveness criteria (one of the 13 considerations) from demonstrated effectiveness as well as other items that resulted from the unpublished RFA review conducted by OCTAE in August 2022.

The RFA provided:

- instructions for preparing proposals;
- a deadline for submitting a notice of intent to apply;
- a deadline for receipt of the proposals;
- review criteria;
- assurances and other legal, fiscal, and program requirements; and
- plans for cooperative arrangements that the eligible provider will develop with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of AEL services.

Grantees responded to questions in the proposal, including questions regarding the requirements outlined in WIOA §232 1–7. The review of proposals included rating responses to questions aligned with the 13 considerations in WIOA §231(e)1–13.

In its RFA, Texas incorporated and specifically indicated the considerations specified in WIOA §231(e) as grant award requirements that eligible providers must meet. The considerations were scored as narrative questions in the RFA, and offerors were required to provide a detailed narrative to demonstrate how they will meet each consideration.

Texas continued to allow a grant period of two years (24 months), with an option for TWC to renew the grant for an additional one-year period up to three times. The start date for the original two-year (24-month) period was July 1, 2024. If at the end of the initial two-year term TWC determine that the grantee is not performing or that the outcomes are not being achieved, TWC may allow the grant to expire. If the grantee is struggling and TWC has an enhanced technical assistance plan in place to support the grantee, TWC may authorize the grant for another year and reassess at the end of that year whether to continue to fund the grant.

Title II Adult Education and Literacy Determining Demonstrated Effectiveness

As part of the AEL competition, applicants must demonstrate effectiveness by providing three years of performance data. Prior AEL grant recipients must provide performance data required under WIOA §116 to demonstrate past effectiveness, as evidenced by data from TEAMS and the extent to which the grant recipients met state-negotiated performance measures.

Applicants that have not been previously funded under WIOA Title II must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills–deficient eligible individuals, including individuals with low levels of literacy in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the application for funds, and demonstrate the extent to which they objectively evaluate performance criteria in achieving outcomes listed under WIOA §116.

Applicants must also provide information regarding outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

TWC will determine each applicant's eligibility to apply for AEFLA funds based on whether it has demonstrated effectiveness in providing AEL services, as required under 34 CFR §463.24 and in guidance outlined in OCTAE's technical assistance guide, "Determining Applicant Eligibility When Conducting a State Competition for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Fund."

II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO APPLY AND COMPETE FOR FUNDS AND HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS USING THE SAME GRANT OR CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS.

TWC's AEL department will hold a full and open competition consistent with the standards of 2 CFR §200.319. All eligible applicants will be granted direct and equitable access to

apply and compete for grants and contracts. The following steps will be initiated to ensure direct and equitable access:

- An announcement of the availability of federal funds, under the auspices of WIOA Title II, will be posted on the Texas Smart Buy Electronic State Business Daily website and disseminated through other methods such as social media. The announcement will contain the following information:
    - Type of grants available
    - Contact person
    - Timeline with grant application due date
- The same announcement, grant, and application process will be used for all eligible providers in the state in correlation with WIOA §§221, 225, and 243 if funding is released. Standard criteria for the evaluation of proposals will be used for all applicants. Application processes will be designed so that direct application to the State is evident, customary, and nonnegotiable.
- An RFA bidder's conference webinar will be conducted to provide information to those interested in applying. The specific date, time, and directions for accessing the webinar are included in the RFA package. The webinar will be recorded and posted on the website, along with the RFA guidelines, information, resources, application, and Frequently Asked Questions.

C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

TWC's VR Division serves as the Designated State Unit (DSU) for the VR program as required under §721(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Title IV). As such, the VR Division is responsible for distributing and expending VR funds for the efficient provision of services to eligible students and adults with disabilities and potentially to eligible students with disabilities.

Funds are distributed to local VR offices in each of the six TWC VR regions based on projected expenditures to serve customers in the region for the fiscal year. Projections are based on several factors, including expenditures and customers served in the prior year and anticipated for the subsequent year, as well as the implementation of statewide initiatives and new or revised service delivery strategies.

Services to VR customers may be provided, arranged, or purchased by VR staff. Services must be determined necessary to assist the customer with achieving their employment goals and be based upon the customer's Individualized Plan for Employment that was developed jointly by the VR counselor and the customer.

Pursuant to 34 CFR §76.50(b), VR funds may not be subgranted because neither the Rehabilitation Act nor its implementing program regulations specifically permit subgranting under the VR program. As a result, community rehabilitation programs and other providers with whom TWC VR contracts for the provision of VR services are considered vendors or contractors, not subgrantees.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

Describe data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including the State's process to collect and report data on co-enrollment, and for those present in the one-stop centers.

I. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

TWC operates a collection of different IT systems to capture information regarding participants, services, and outcomes. Over the years, as programs were transferred from other state agencies to TWC, TWC obtained many legacy IT systems. TWC has been modernizing its case management platforms and has launched the Title I and Title III systems and updated the Title IV system. Work to modernize the Title II system will be completed in January 2026.

Modifying the systems to meet WIOA's requirements has proven to be challenging. TWC has engaged in a system modernization project that includes:

1. replacing our unemployment insurance system (this project has been delayed to assess the potential impact of legal proceedings with which the vendor is involved);
2. replacing our UI tax system, scheduled for completion early 2026;
3. implementing a new child care case management system that launched on January 13, 2025; and
4. completing a project to modernize our Title II case management system.

WIOA §116 requires states to update their case management systems to be interoperable. However, TWC has not found a fully integrated solution that could be adopted. As such, TWC modernized its systems to support each program separately. In doing so, TWC modernized its case management infrastructure by:

- using a commercial, off-the-shelf product for Titles I and III;

- choosing a fairly customized solution for the subsidized child care and early learning programs; and
- using in-house and staff augmentation resources to modernize the Title IV system; we will use this same approach to redevelop our Title II system.

However, with this many system-update projects occurring over a several-year period, TWC has been unable to update its systems for the interoperability that WIOA envisions. Additionally, regulation at 20 CFR §677.150 forbids states from operating common periods of participation across DOL and ED programs. This stands as a barrier to the full integration of services and data that WIOA §116 envisions.

TWC will address the interoperability in two stages. The first is to create a "Main Door" solution, allowing customers to reach us in one place for any number of WIOA-funded services. This system will eventually be used to feed the individual case management systems. However, in the interim, TWC has used the EDW to help bridge the gap and achieve many of the benefits that interoperability is intended to accomplish. The Rosetta Initiative is designed to transform and standardize program data into a common format or set of tools. With Rosetta and the EDW, TWC regularly connects data across the four WIOA titles to provide system-level information and to understand the degree to which customers are being coenrolled in services to allow reporting on the Annual Report (ETA-9169) as required.

The Texas workforce system has been on the leading edge of performance measurement, evaluation, and accountability within the national workforce structure for nearly two decades. TWC implemented a set of system-wide performance measures that successfully improved employer engagement and TWC's ability to effectively serve employers. TWC has embraced the Common Measures and has applied them to all state- and federally funded employment and training programs using common Periods of Participation and integrated reporting. TWC also obtained and currently uses a performance measure waiver that provides TWC with the flexibility to select performance measures to contract with Boards so that the system can break down program siloes and focus on the provision of integrated services. TWC participated in the redevelopment of DOL's Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting (WISPR) to simplify the system and add additional functionality. Texas was the first state to file a WISPR. TWC has since mentored other states that are interested in using integrated reporting with or without the WISPR.

As noted, TWC has undertaken an EDW project to support data integration, reporting, consumer education, evaluation work, and decision-making at all levels of the workforce system. As the source systems listed above are replaced, TWC plans to conduct parallel projects that will integrate data from the new systems into the warehouse. This will allow TWC to combine data from different TWC eras spanning up to two decades in duration. These parallel projects are critical to ensuring a smooth analytics transition from one set of systems to their replacements without disrupting the flow of the data needed to effectively manage and innovate these programs.

In addition to reporting requirements under WIOA §116(d), TWC actively monitors and evaluates the Texas workforce system under WIOA §116(e). Evaluation efforts include applying both federal- and state-prescribed performance measures while continuously developing and testing other measures. As consistent with WIOA §116(i), TWC uses data obtained from other states to implement this part of TWC's Combined State Plan.

Regarding coenrollment, TWC currently compares data from program and one-stop source systems to identify common customers using personally identifiable information such as Social Security numbers. Automated systems are not yet in place to notify most programs and one-stops if a customer is being served by multiple components of the workforce system at intake. However, TWC has been working to improve the ability to connect data through the Enterprise Data Warehouse Initiative and has plans to develop ways to connect the core infrastructure systems to allow for greater integration and cross-system/program data usage.

II. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN

TWC was appropriated more than $64 million during the FY 2020–2021 biennium to replace legacy workforce systems.

UI Systems Replacement Project

Using a competitive procurement process, TWC sought to acquire a turnkey modifiable off-the-shelf (MOTS) technology solution to replace its existing UI legacy systems, including benefits, tax, and appeals applications. The procurement included services to implement the MOTS technology solution, make the essential modifications required for Texas, migrate relevant data, and provide a shared maintenance and operations solution after the MOTS technology solution is put into production. TWC engaged a third-party vendor to perform independent verification and validation (IV&V) activities for the duration of the project. The project was placed on hold in March 2023. The project was restarted on January 6, 2025, with the goal of implementing a new tax solution in calendar year 2026. The benefits and appeals portion of the project remains on hold.

Workforce Case Management Replacement Project

To streamline case management activities and processes, TWC requires an integrated system that is based on a common platform. The Workforce Case Management Replacement project replaces workforce programs previously managed through TWIST, excluding the child care component. Other projects being replaced separately include TEAMS; Texas Review, Oversight, and Coaching System (TxROCS); and ReHabWorks. The new system provides TWC and its partners with innovative technology and tools. TWC engaged a third-party vendor to perform IV&V activities for the duration of the project. Phase I of the Workforce Case Management Replacement occurred in April 2024 and Phase 2 occurred in April 2025. TWC is working to integrate the Apprenticeship Module (APR), currently managed through a separate VOS application, into WorkInTexas.com by the end of 2026.

The new system will advance Commission goals by:

- increasing staff access to systems services;
- integrating and aligning TWC systems with TWC services; and
- equipping TWC staff, Boards and their partners, and grantees with innovative technology and tools.

The new system will add value to our customers by delivering high-quality:

- customer service;
- customer experiences; and
- customer outcomes.

The system will help to:

- ensure that TWC meets or exceeds its electronic and information resources (EIR) accessibility requirements; and
- streamline case management services and activities for staff members and Boards, which will address issues related to complicated integration and/or lack of integration between TWC's multiple stand-alone systems and platforms of varying ages.

III. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE, DATA COLLECTION, ETC.) AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

TWC's case management system, TWIST, was developed in the mid-1990s. In August 2021, TWC contracted with a vendor to develop a new case management system to replace TWIST. The new system, launched in April 2024, provides case management functionality for TANF/Choices, SNAP, WIOA, TAA, veterans, other agency programs, and special grants. The vendor that was contracted to develop this system also developed TWC's labor exchange system in 2019. With both labor exchange and case management functionalities in a single system, it is anticipated that staff efficiency will improve. The remediation of internal reporting and data systems is ongoing to align with the new VOS system. Remediation is expected to enter its final phase by December 2025 and conclude by June 2026.

TWC continues to work to refine the EDW and is actively working to upgrade legacy solution systems to provide state leadership with accurate data and a proven method for analyzing business needs to support and improve data driven decision-making. The project aims to improve interfaces between systems to ensure efficient data integration and facilitate the coordination of services and communications across programs.

The state board, TWIC, developed the workforce system strategic plan, Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024–2031. The system plan, which is designed to complement, not duplicate, partner agency strategic plans, guides the Texas Workforce System partners in implementing workforce programs, services, and initiatives. The Policy and Planning workforce system goal supports the alignment of technology and data through the following system strategy and objective:

System Goal	**System Strategy**	**System Objective**
Policy and Planning: Accelerate the availability of relevant workforce, education, and other data sets and the use	Identify and quantify quality outcomes.	Execute a secure, shared data infrastructure and governance model that will facilitate data import, storage, access,

System Goal	System Strategy	System Objective
of applied analytics to evaluate program outcomes to respond to the needs of policymakers and planners.		integration, analysis, and reporting to understand and quantify quality program outcomes.

Partner agency action plans detail high-level actions that agency partners will implement to address system strategies and system objectives.

Additionally, TWIC reviews all comprehensive, four-year local Board plans and two-year modifications to ensure alignment with the system strategic plan. TWIC will review the comprehensive, four-year local Board Plans in 2025 for alignment with the FY 2024–2031 Texas workforce system strategic plan.

IV. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S DATA SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES TO PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2)).

As noted, TWC's EDW is being developed to produce reports that are required under WIOA §116(d)(2).

The EDW advances Commission goals by:

- allowing TWC to provide statistical information regarding the outcomes and effectiveness of the workforce services provided to job seekers and employers; and
- meeting the data utility requirements for areas listed in the State Strategic Plan for Information Resources Management including data management and governance, open data, and data analytics.

The EDW will:

- improve reporting accuracy and the speed of report generation;
- allow for more sophisticated and comprehensive data analysis;
- increase the scope and availability of relationally connected data that provides reporting capabilities and outcome inferences that may not currently be possible;
- enable the development of cross-functional dashboards that identify program relationships and impacts that are harder to identify and monitor with the current system;
- create a single historical reporting system of record;
- reduce the risk of statutory noncompliance regarding required data reporting;
- eliminate manual processes to run and/or store reports; and
- reduce data preparation time, which allows staff to focus on developing better coding and analyses.

Additionally, TWC has begun migrating to a cloud computing model using virtual workspaces. This allows for increased automation and accelerates efficient data extraction and analysis from the EDW, which exists on the same remote server.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

TWC continues to work with local partners to develop performance reporting measures that provide information about how services impact customer outcomes. TWC's improved suite of automated systems enables partners to capture a more complete set of customer data that supports categorical workforce programs and store the associated data in a central repository.

TWC's vision for the next generation of integrated performance reporting system involves the incorporation of customer data from all state- and federally funded employment and training programs and a customer-focused data model that supports the aggregation of data into any combination of programs and characteristics. This incorporation of data would allow the system to meet program reporting requirements while enabling the user to customize how they view the data. To ensure its effectiveness and ability to support transparency and accountability, the system must be able to report customer outcomes the same way for each program or aggregation of data while ensuring the security and confidentiality of such data. For example, if a customer received services from WIOA Adult and SNAP E&T and was identified as employed in the second quarter post-exit through data obtained from another state, the success must be reported in both WIOA Adult and SNAP E&T performance measures to ensure that stakeholders and elected officials have a complete and accurate view of each program's contribution to successful employment outcomes.

Evaluating participant outcomes is important to ensuring accountability. Additionally, TWC evaluates current and historic data to understand what factors influence performance in order to determine whether the results achieved were reasonable, predict what levels of performance are likely to be achieved in the future, and identify what actions the system should take when serving specific customers to achieve effective outcomes. These efforts support continuous improvement and set the foundation for developing the means to measure the return on investment.

Finally, TWC is in the process of redeveloping its existing longitudinal outcome system into a broader system, to be called Rosetta, that will incorporate more programs and provide a more complete picture of how TWC customers progress over time.

C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Wage records remain the best, most objective source of information for determining employment-related outcomes. Measures that use wage records are also far more efficient

and less costly than those that depend on administrative data. For example, TWC can match to UI wage records to verify program-specific, customer-level data furnished by training services providers. Additionally, TWC encourages the Secretary of Labor to consider—in consultation with the Workforce Information Advisory Council, federal agencies, and states—developing standardized definitions for the data elements composing wage records as well as improved processes and systems for the collection and reporting of such records. TWC currently makes extensive use of quarterly UI wage records as part of its common data systems both for required and ad hoc reporting and makes the data available to the Boards, other state agencies, and various researchers, either directly or by performing matches to seed records provided by external entities.

While TWC and the Boards generally operate Texas Workforce Solutions as an integrated system that focuses on customer outcomes rather than program outcomes, there is often interest in program-specific outcomes. TWC is committed to providing consistent, reliable, and comparable performance data to partners, stakeholders, and the public. Therefore, TWC calculates performance at the customer level across programs and then aggregates the results by sublevel, such as by program or for customers with given characteristics.

However, WIOA §116(i)(2) states that the Secretary of Labor shall provide access to wage data from other states to the extent that the data is necessary to carry out the state plan or the annual report as prescribed by WIOA §116(d). WIOA §116(e) requires that the state, in coordination with the Boards, conduct ongoing evaluations of activities carried out by the state. Therefore, as noted, TWC intends to use data obtained through SWIS to evaluate system and program performance through a variety of federal- and state-developed performance measures, as well as to evaluate system and program impact and return on investment.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

TWC administers, enforces, and complies with state and federal laws that govern workforce-related privacy issues, including the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) §444, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and other applicable federal laws and regulations. These laws are intended to set high standards for performance and customer satisfaction. TWC is considered a state educational authority under FERPA, as it administers one ED program under WIOA Title II that is subject to FERPA.

TWC also administers the VR program, which is within the jurisdiction of ED and amended by WIOA Title IV. The VR program is not directly subject to FERPA; however, it is subject to ED program-specific confidentiality requirements, per 34 CFR §361.38. These requirements govern the use and disclosure of VR program information and apply strict confidentiality standards to ensure the VR program information is used to benefit VR customers. However, since the VR program receives student information from FERPA-covered educational institutions and agencies, the program applies the FERPA redisclosure restrictions in 34 CFR §99.33 to this FERPA-covered information held by the program.

TWC is committed to protecting the information of Texans and our partners. TWC maintains internal control structures and written policies using the information security standards promulgated under Title 1, TAC, Part 10, Chapter 202 Information Security Standards, and further explained in the Texas Department of Information Resources' Security Controls Standards Catalog as our minimum-security baseline. Supplemental security controls are implemented to safeguard agency programs, customer data, and other program information, ensuring compliance with applicable data requirements. These measures protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of program information, including sensitive personal information (SPI).

TWC has a comprehensive cybersecurity program to assess risks and manage vulnerabilities within the systems the agency uses to provide services. These systems are developed using cybersecurity best practices, and access is restricted to individuals based on need. The systems assessed under this cybersecurity program include, but are not limited to, the following:

- LMI systems, including Texas LMI, Texas Wages, Texas Labor Analysis, and Texas CREWS, which collect, analyze, and distribute labor market and career information to support data-driven decision-making by internal and external stakeholders
- the state labor exchange system, WorkInTexas.com, which allows individuals to search for and apply to jobs in Texas
- Workforce case management systems, which handle participant eligibility, service tracking, and case management, including:
    - WFCMS;
    - RISE;
    - TX3C;
    - ReHabWorks;
- EDvera – TWC's WIOA ETP system; and Cash Draw & Expenditure Reporting (CDER) System, which allows grantees to process cash draws, expenditure reporting, and financial closeouts
- Tableau, SharePoint, and other TWC systems that Boards and grantees use to access performance and management data

Access to TWC systems is granted only to authorized personnel and is reviewed to ensure alignment with current job functions. Adhering to the principle of least privilege, users are granted only the minimum level of access required to perform their duties, minimizing the potential impact of unauthorized access. Recognizing that Boards have access to designated TWC systems, TWC conducts cybersecurity maturity assessments for each of the 28 Boards to identify opportunities for improvement. Agency-Board agreements are regularly updated based on the evolving threat landscape.

Within each department, TWC's Privacy Office maintains local privacy liaisons (LPLs), who are responsible for communicating privacy policy requirements and best practices to department staff. Additionally, privacy protection strategies, such as Privacy Threshold

Analyses (PTAs) and Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs), are applied to reduce privacy risk across the agency. PTAs and PIAs are tracked and reported to the Privacy Office within the Office of General Counsel. These measures focus on protecting privacy through workflow processes and enhance TWC's compliance with program-specific privacy requirements.

Additionally, TWC publishes guidelines online, which Boards and other TWC grantees must adhere to, that govern the use of program information, require security safeguards, and maintain the confidentiality of customers' PII. These guidelines, along with other relevant guidance, include the following:

- TWC Information Security Manual
- TWC Privacy Manual
- Employment Service Guide
- Privacy Incident Response Plan
- Privacy Program Governance
- WD Letter 02-18, Change 1, issued March 18, 2024, and titled "Handling Sensitive Personal Information and Other Confidential Information—Update," and subsequent updates
- WD Letter 11-16, Change 1, issued August 21, 2024, and titled "Access and Data Security for Workplace Applications—Update," and subsequent updates
- WD Letter 14-08, issued March 19, 2008, and titled "Modifications to Unemployment Insurance Benefits System Access," and subsequent updates

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS.

A. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT THE PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR COVERED PERSONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT, CODIFIED AT SECTION 4215 OF 38 U.S.C., WHICH APPLIES TO ALL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS FUNDED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.

Texas is home to 1.5 million veterans, the second-largest veteran population in the nation. TWC uses the newest workforce development strategies and initiatives to expand services for veterans and their spouses.

Priority of Service for Veterans

Texas Workforce Solutions provides priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses in all DOL-funded programs. Additionally, the Texas legislature mandated that priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses be applicable to all state-funded workforce services.

The Jobs for Veterans Act ensures that priority of service of covered veterans and eligible spouses occurs during the provision of employment, training, and placement services provided under WIOA. However, a veteran must still meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training program.

Texas Workforce Solutions staff ensure that the requirements for priority of service apply to all workforce service programs that are funded in whole or in part by DOLETA or state funds. Specifically, Texas Workforce Solutions Office staff members apply priority of service to the following two categories of qualified job-training programs:

- Universal access programs (such as W-P–funded services) that deliver services as a whole and do not target specific groups
- Programs with eligibility criteria (such as WIOA–funded services)

Veterans and eligible spouses are:

- identified at the point of entry;
- informed of their entitlement to priority of service;
- informed of the full array of employment, training, and placement services available; and
- informed of any programs or services' applicable eligibility requirements.

Priority of service for WIOA and other programs with statutory priorities is then applied in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who meet the mandatory priorities or spending requirement or limitation must receive the highest priority for the program or service
2. Nonveterans within the program's mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation must receive priority for the program or service over veterans and eligible spouses outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation
3. Veterans and eligible spouses outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation must receive priority for the program or service over nonveterans outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation

Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program

In Texas, TVC administers the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program. Each Board integrates Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs), and Consolidated DVOP/LVER staff members within the Board's service provider staff and W-P ES staff in each of the Board's Workforce Areas. TWC, TVC, and the 28 Boards work collaboratively to coordinate and deliver employment and other support services to all veteran job seekers and their families.

WorkInTexas.com Veteran Features

Texas' automated labor exchange, WorkInTexas.com, has several features that are specifically tailored to serve veterans and eligible spouses, including the following:

- A two-day hold on all newly created job orders—these jobs are available only to veterans and eligible spouses for the first two days in which they are open to order to ensure that veterans get the first opportunity to review and apply.
- Employers may designate job orders for Veteran Applicants Only.
- WorkInTexas.com provides information to veterans and eligible spouses when they register online that explains the veteran's entitlement to priority of service and information relating to the availability of workforce services and programs.
- WorkInTexas.com sends email or mail notifications to veterans and eligible spouses who have completed online registration that reiterate their entitlement to priority of service for all workforce programs and services.
- WorkInTexas.com provides indicators in the system that are specific to veterans and eligible spouses, such as:
    - icons that identify veteran job seekers to employers;
    - job search options for veterans and eligible persons, including search options that provide listings for Veteran Only job orders and federal contractor job orders;
    - a veteran icon identifying eligibility and any applicable Qualifying Employment Barriers;
    - We Hire Vets icon; or
    - We Hire Ability icon.

WorkInTexas.com uses a software-based process to gather job orders from the National Labor Exchange (USNLX.com) and other large job boards, such as Monster and Career Builder, and adds them to Texas' automated labor exchange. This imported job data provides veterans and eligible spouses with quality job opportunities through the state labor exchange.

To better support our state's military service members' transition into civilian careers, all Texas state agencies include relevant Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) codes on all job orders they add to WorkInTexas.com. The State Auditor's Office (SAO), in conjunction with TVC, developed a State Classification-to-MOS crosswalk, which state agencies maintain and access from the SAO website. SAO has attached the military crosswalk to each occupational category on its website to help state agencies easily find state classification titles, identify related MOS codes, and include those MOS codes on job orders.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MONITOR PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR VETERANS.

TWC's Subrecipient Monitoring department applies a risk assessment methodology to monitor local Board activities, which includes priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses in the items considered in this methodology. Monitoring activities generally include on-site visits, interviews with staff, and regular reviews of local Board policies that relate specifically to priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses.

Before a review, SRM will request that the Board submit documents for SRM to conduct a review and analysis to determine each area that will be tested on-site. At the end of the on-site review, SRM conducts an exit conference with the Board, in which staff identifies any potential findings or areas of concern that will be identified later in an official report.

C. DESCRIBE THE TRIAGE AND REFERRAL PROCESS FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND OTHER POPULATIONS DETERMINED ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS (JVSG) PROGRAM'S DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) SPECIALIST/CONSOLIDATED POSITION.

DVOP Eligibility Screening Tool

All Workforce Solutions Office staff members who have the potential to screen veterans, whether it be in person, over the phone, or electronically, must complete the National Veterans' Training Institute's (NVTI) Serving Veterans training on an annual basis.

When screening individuals to determine their veteran status, Workforce Solutions Office staff:

- determines the interest and service needs of the visit, telephone call, or electronic correspondence;
- explains that the purpose of the screening tool is to determine interest, eligibility, and which staff are best suited to assist them;
- ensures that the individual identifies whether they are a veteran, eligible transitioning service member, or a spouse or other family caregiver;
- ensures that eligible veterans and eligible persons confirm whether any of the qualifying barriers to employment criteria apply;
- provides referrals to meet the needs of the individual and satisfy priority of service requirements;
- informs the eligible veteran and eligible persons of the opportunity to make an appointment if a DVOP is unavailable to accept referrals; and
- refers veterans and covered persons who are not eligible for or who do not want or need DVOP services to other workforce programs, as appropriate.

Additionally, Workforce Solutions Office staff members also use the DVOP Eligibility Screening Form, which NASWA developed to triage individuals at the point of entry.

TWC's policy regarding serving veterans and eligible spouses with significant barriers to employment through the JVSG program is provided in WD Letter 06-25, issued August 25, 2025 , and titled "Integrating the Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program in Workforce Solutions Offices."

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

Achieving excellence in accessibility is based on three core principles:

- Ensuring that all customers have equal access to and can effectively use workforce products and services
- Creating an accessible workspace for individuals with disabilities
- Complying with all federal and state legal requirements

Electronic and Information and Resources

TWC adheres to the core principles by making its websites and other electronic and information resources (EIR) accessible and its content user friendly for individuals with disabilities, pursuant to Title 1, TAC, Part 10, Chapters 206 and 213. TWC's public online job matching system, WorkInTexas.com, is tested for compliance after all system updates by using the most current Job Access With Speech (JAWS) software.

Additionally, TWC employs an EIR accessibility coordinator to serve as a contact for EIR accessibility concerns. The coordinator both monitors agency-wide compliance with accessibility policy and facilitates correction of noncompliant EIR. To these ends, the coordinator partners with accessibility-designated liaisons in each business area. An accessibility liaison functions as the primary contact for the business area's compliance with EIR accessibility requirements. The liaison also assists in staff development, addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities, as well as in sharing TWC's accessibility goals and requirements.

Other agency efforts to achieve excellence in accessibility include:

- providing staff with regular classroom training sessions on multiple accessibility topics;
- developing and maintaining an inventory of all agency EIR;
- consulting on accessibility purchases and facilitating the exception request process;
- working with business areas to develop and implement remediation plans for noncompliant websites, applications, and products, and consulting as needed during remediation;
- developing intranet pages with accessibility resources for employees; and
- meeting regularly with accessibility liaisons.

Accessibility at Workforce Solutions Offices and TWC-Owned Buildings

TWC monitors recipients of WIOA Title I financial assistance to determine compliance with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA §188. Both programmatic and physical accessibility are addressed during an EO compliance monitoring review.

Boards are monitored annually by TWC, which involves a review of the Board's programmatic and physical accessibility through a combination of desk audits and on-site reviews. These monitoring procedures are referenced in Texas' Combined Nondiscrimination Plan (NDP) on file with DOL's Civil Rights Center (DOL-CRC).

Additionally, as recipients of WIOA funding, Boards and their EO Officers are responsible for conducting local EO monitoring of all programs and facilities within their local workforce development area (workforce area).

Both local Board EO Officers and TWC use a TWC accessibility checklist that aligns with Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) when conducting physical accessibility reviews. The TAS checklist outlines all compliance requirements within the following four priorities:

- Priority 1–Accessible approach and entrance
- Priority 2–Access to goods and services
- Priority 3–Access to public toilet rooms
- Priority 4–Access to other items such as water fountains and public telephones

TWC's EO Coordinator provides training during the Quality Assurance Network's biannual meetings, new Board EO Officer orientations, and through other EO trainings as requested by the local EO Officers. Trainings and technical assistance address all facets of WIOA §188 compliance, including physical accessibility compliance and accessibility best practices.

One-Stop Certification

WIOA regulations at 20 CFR §678.800 require Workforce Solutions Offices in each respective workforce area to be certified by TWC once every three years.

TWC uses the following objective criteria and procedures to evaluate one-stop certifications and the effectiveness of the workforce area and the Workforce Solutions Offices:

- Customer satisfaction
- Physical and programmatic accessibility
- Continuous improvement

Effectiveness evaluations address how well the Workforce Solutions Office:

- integrates available services for participants and businesses;
- meets the workforce development needs of participants and the needs of local employers;
- operates in a cost-efficient manner, which includes, at a minimum, a quarterly review of Board's financial status and its service provider and for all funding sources the Board administers;

- coordinates services among the workforce partner programs;
- includes the common identifier tagline on all:
  - products;
  - programs;
  - activities;
  - online and in-person services;
  - primary electronic resources;
  - websites;
  - printed, purchased, or created materials;
  - facilities and related property; and
  - new materials;
- provides access to workforce partner program services outside of regular business hours when there is a workforce need identified by the Board; and
- takes feedback from customers into account.

TWC also conducts evaluations for effectiveness related to accessibility per the following considerations:

- How well the Workforce Solutions Office ensures equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities to participate in or benefit from Workforce Solutions Office services
- How well the Workforce Solutions Office and local workforce systems comply with the disability-related regulations implementing WIOA §188, including, but not limited to:
  - providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities;
  - making reasonable and necessary modifications to policies, practices, and procedures to avoid discrimination against persons with disabilities;
  - administering programs in an appropriately integrated setting;
  - communicating with individuals with disabilities as effectively as with other individuals without disabilities;
  - providing appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including assistive technology devices and services, to give individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in and enjoy the benefits of the program or activity; and
  - ensuring that individuals with disabilities have physical access to the one-stop center.

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials. Describe how English language learners will be made aware of the opportunity to enroll and/or co-enroll in all the core programs for which they are eligible.

TWC adheres to its accessibility core principles by making its websites and other EIR accessible and its content user-friendly for individuals with Limited-English Proficiency (LEP). TWC's public online job matching system, WorkInTexas.com, is available in English and Spanish. TWC's website also provides information in Spanish regarding unemployment benefits, labor law, employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and TWC press releases.

TWC requires Boards to ensure that all individuals with LEP have equal opportunity to access and participate in all federally funded workforce services, including those funded under WIOA,, and SNAP E&T, as well as the three One-Stop partner programs (VR, UI, and Child Care).

Boards are required to review WIOA's nondiscrimination and equal opportunity regulations to ensure:

- the provision of information in languages other than English to ensure meaningful access for persons with LEP so that such individuals are effectively informed about and/or are able to participate in WIOA programs and activities; and
- that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with individuals without disabilities.

Boards must comply with the following requirements to ensure meaningful language access:

- A thorough assessment of language needs, including:
  - an analysis of the language needs of each Board's workforce area;
  - the identification of the language needs of each LEP individual;
  - the identification of situations in which the individual will need language services;
  - a statement of resource needs; and
  - recommendations for how to make these resources available.
- A comprehensive written policy to ensure meaningful communication with LEP individuals. This includes notices to LEP individuals of their rights to free language assistance, staff training, monitoring, and translation of written materials containing vital information. The guidance warns that the use of family, friends, and/or minor children as interpreters may raise Title VI liability issues.
- Training staff to implement the language access policy. Boards must ensure that service providers and those entities to which a referral is made have the requisite training and knowledge.

- Vigilant monitoring to ensure that LEP individuals have equal access to services.

Babel Notices

Boards are required to use Babel notices to inform customers that the information contained in a document or communication is available in other languages. Additionally, Boards must ensure that vital information available in written documents or communications is translated into languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the population eligible to be served by Workforce Solutions Offices in their respective workforce areas. Such translations must be made readily available in hard copy, upon request, or electronically, such as on a website.

When conducting outreach, Boards must convey information in languages spoken by a significant number or portion of the workforce areas' general population. Methods of outreach in which information may be provided in languages other than English include:

- hard copy distribution;
- electronically on web pages or social media; or
- through other broadcast means such as newspapers or radio programs.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

Planning and Coordination

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) places a strong emphasis on planning across multiple workforce partner programs to ensure alignment in service delivery. One important goal is to develop effective partnerships across programs and community-based providers to provide individuals with the employment, education, and training services they need. Effective partnering is essential to leverage resources and align services with career pathways and sector strategies. It is vital that WIOA-required and optional workforce partners and programs work together to ensure a customer-centered approach to service delivery.

The Texas workforce system brings together workforce development, employment and training, and educational services in a seamless customer-focused service-delivery network to enhance access to program services and improve long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance. Workforce partners administer separately funded programs that contribute to a host of integrated streamlined services to customers.

The vision for the Texas workforce system is to align a wide range of publicly and privately funded education, employment, and training programs while also providing high-quality customer service to all job seekers, workers, and businesses.

WIOA's six core programs are:

- Title I Adult program;
- Title I Dislocated Worker (DW) program;
- Title I Youth program;
- Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program;
- Employment Services (ES) program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of WIOA; and
- The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA.

The Texas workforce system includes other required partners and optional workforce partners consistent with WIOA statute. Through Workforce Solutions Offices, these workforce partner programs and their direct service providers ensure that businesses and job seekers—a shared client base across multiple programs—have access to information and services that lead to positive educational and employment outcomes.

As required in WIOA §121(e)(1), each local workforce delivery system must provide the following:

- Career services, as defined in WIOA §134(c)(2) and in Appendix A of the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) WIOA Guide to Texas Workforce System Operations
- Access to training services, as described in WIOA §134(c)(3)
- Access to local employment and training activities, as described in WIOA §134(d)
- Access to all programs and activities provided by required workforce partners and any optional workforce partners
- Access to the data, information, and analysis described in the Wagner-Peyser Act §15(a), including all job search, job placement, recruitment, and other labor-exchange services authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act

The required Board workforce partners in Texas include the following:

- WIOA Adult, DW, and Youth programs
- W-P ES program
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs, including the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program
- Choices, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T)
- Child Care Services (CCS)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs
- VR programs
- National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) program
- Apprenticeship programs
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S. Code [USC] §2301, et seq.)
- Job counseling, training, and placement services for veterans (38 USC §41, et seq.)
- Education and vocational training programs through Job Corps, administered by DOL
- Native American programs authorized under Title I of WIOA
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)–administered employment and training programs

- Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act
- Reintegration of Offenders programs authorized under the Second Chance Act of 2007
- YouthBuild programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) programs authorized under WIOA §167
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

Title 2, Texas Human Resources Code §31.0128 requires TWC and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to jointly develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that establishes guidelines for a coordinated interagency case management plan to identify recipients of financial assistance who have, in comparison to other recipients, higher levels of barriers to employment and provide coordinated services that address such barriers to assist the recipients in finding and retaining employment. TWC requires in its contracts with each Board, that the Board, in cooperation with local HHSC offices, develop and implement a coordinated interagency case management plan in accordance with the Coordinated Interagency Case Management MOU between TWC and HHSC. TWC also recommends that Boards enter into MOUs with the following optional partner programs:

- Employment and training programs administered by the Social Security Administration, including the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program, established under §1148 of the Social Security Act (42 USC §1320b-19, et seq.)
- Employment and training programs administered by the Small Business Administration
- Programs administered by OneStar Foundation, authorized under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 USC §12401, et seq.)
- Other appropriate federal, state, or local programs, which may include employment, education, and training programs provided by public libraries or in the private sector

Public Comment Placeholder

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board,	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE

A map identifying each Board area is available at the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) About the Board web page. The 28 local workforce development boards (Boards) are as follows:

1. Panhandle
2. South Plains
3. North Texas
4. North Central Texas
5. Tarrant County
6. Greater Dallas
7. Northeast Texas
8. East Texas
9. West Central Texas
10. Borderplex
11. Permian Basin
12. Concho Valley
13. Heart of Texas
14. Capital Area
15. Rural Capital Area
16. Brazos Valley

17. Deep East Texas
18. Southeast Texas
19. Golden Crescent
20. Alamo
21. South Texas
22. Coastal Bend
23. Lower Rio Grande Valley
24. Cameron County
25. Texoma
26. Central Texas
27. Middle Rio Grande
28. Gulf Coast

TWC recognizes Texas' current workforce areas as their own independent regions.

B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS AND POLICY USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR "PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY" AND "SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY" IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS

Background

In 1993, the Texas legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 642, the Workforce and Economic Competitiveness Act (Act), which transformed the state's fragmented workforce development system into an integrated service delivery network to improve the quality and effectiveness of services. At the time of the Act, Texas had 35 service delivery areas, which were developed under the federal Job Training Partnership Act of 1982.

The 1993 Act required TWIC to recommend the designation of workforce areas within the state. This was the first step in establishing a system for delivering integrated services, including workforce training, TANF and SNAP E&T programs, community services, and the basic labor exchange system.

In 1998, Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Recognizing that Texas had previously established the framework of an integrated workforce system, WIA provided several grandfather provisions, which allowed Texas to continue certain provisions under prior consistent state law. One such provision was specific to the designation of workforce areas. This provision allowed Texas' Boards to continue if they performed successfully and maintained sustained fiscal integrity.

The Act also required that the local elected officials reach agreement on the designation for a workforce area. After much analysis and deliberation, including significant public input and the recognition that even contiguous areas often have very diverse needs, 28 workforce areas—governed by Boards—were identified and designated by the governor. The realignment from 35 to 28 workforce areas supported Texas' vision of an integrated and streamlined workforce system, a precursor to the purposes of WIOA.

Local Area Designation

WIOA §189(i)(1) allows states that have enacted, not later than December 31, 1997, a state law providing for the designation of service delivery areas for the delivery of workforce investment activities, to use such areas as local areas under Title I of WIOA. Prior consistent state law found at Title 10, Texas Government Code §2308.252 provides for the designation of workforce areas in Texas. Therefore, the provisions of WIOA §106 related to local area designation do not apply in Texas.

Compliant with WIOA §108, each Board develops and submits to the governor a comprehensive four-year local plan in partnership with the chief elected official (CEO). Title 10, Texas Government Code §2308.304(b) also requires each Board to develop a local plan with goals and objectives that are consistent with statewide goals, objectives, and performance standards. State and federal law require TWIC to review the Board's local plans and modifications and make recommendations to the governor for approval.

Regional Collaboration

WIOA requires states to identify regions in the state. WIOA's intent regarding regional identification is to engage locals in regional efforts that result in the analysis of the regional labor market, establishment of regional service strategies, development, and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region, and the coordination of services with regional economic development needs. TWC continues to comply with these WIOA requirements.

Long before a federal requirement existed, Boards across Texas had a demonstrated history of collaboration beyond the designated workforce areas. These regional collaborative efforts have resulted in workforce system leaders partnering to align workforce policies and services with regional economies and supporting service delivery strategies tailored to these needs. The following are a few examples of regional collaboration:

- Many Texas Boards share labor sheds with adjacent states. Such Boards have found it beneficial to establish partnerships with out-of-state partners to create a regional response to workforce and economic challenges. Workforce Solutions Texoma has partnered with the Southern Oklahoma Workforce Board, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and several other key organizations in Oklahoma to form the Texoma Regional Consortium, which covers a 13-county region along the Texas and Oklahoma borders. The Texoma Regional Consortium addresses needs of local business and industry in both Texas and Oklahoma through participating in strategic planning to identify key regional strategic themes, develop regional labor market analysis, sponsor regional job fairs, and participate in other joint ventures to address workforce and economic challenges.

- Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley and Workforce Solutions Cameron County continue to collaborate on special initiatives such as the Texas Internship Program for High School Youth. Through this initiative, youth are enrolled in Dual Credit CTE programs throughout Cameron County and are provided the opportunity to participate in an internship that supports their classroom training instruction.

  The Boards collaborate on the provision of the Pathways for Reentry program, in which the Boards are charged with enrolling and serving second chance individuals through the workforce system to facilitate their successful transition back into the labor force. This program is on its final year whereby only follow-up services will be able to be provided.

  Additionally, the Boards collaborate to administer a teacher externship program. The program allows school districts within the region to place teachers in externships that provide them with professional development opportunities to enrich their classroom curricula and make career connections for their students.

- Multiple Boards across the state have partnered with each other to respond to disasters and leverage resources to help support those most in need.

The development and implementation of the above regional collaborations were based on the analysis of labor markets, industry needs, and the needs of economic development entities. These efforts have enhanced, and continue to enhance, both the capacity and performance of the Texas workforce system. The Boards continue to meet WIOA expectations.

In Texas, local leadership—CEOs, Boards, and Board staff—have long championed regional planning, particularly in developing opportunities in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. The benefits of regionalism include collaborative planning, pooling and leveraging of resources, capacity building, and ensuring that services are delivered in the best way possible. Regionalism is essential to the Boards' mission.

To ensure that Boards are meeting the WIOA criteria for "performed successfully" and "sustained fiscal integrity" TWC requires Boards to submit data on designated performance measures. Performance measure data is reported monthly and maintained by the Information Innovation & Insight (I|3) Division on TWC's website. As consistent with Title 40, Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §802.62 and §802.64, TWC's Fraud Deterrence and Compliance Monitoring (FDCM) Division conducts routine monitoring visits that verify fiscal integrity and assist Boards in addressing any identified issues. Fiscal monitoring activities help to ensure sound fiscal management. Board grant and financial monitoring information is available on the TWC website.

C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS AND POLICY REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS

Units of local government or grant recipients that request but are not granted designation or re-designation (in accordance with TWIC rules §901.1) as a local workforce development area, may appeal in accordance with the state's written policy and procedure described in TWIC rule §901.2 (40 TAC Part 22).

Appeals must be delivered to the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) no later than 30 days after the date in which the designation or redesignation was made. The appeal must include the specific reasons for the appeal and any new information that the requestor/Board would like to have considered as part of the appeal process. When the appeal is received, the notice of the appeal will be published in the *Texas Register*, along with a statement inviting public input and the deadline to submit public input. At TWIC's discretion, they may also schedule a public meeting to allow for oral comments. TWIC may consider the appeal or designate a committee to do so and make a recommendation to TWIC. All relevant information is reviewed, including that submitted with the appeal and obtained during the public comment period. Finally, TWIC will make a recommendation to the governor within 120 days of the date of receipt of the appeal request.

D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS AND POLICY REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

TWC is required to establish a process for a required workforce partner to appeal a determination:

- regarding the portion of funds to be provided under the state funding mechanism (SFM); and
- on the basis that the determination is inconsistent with the requirements of the SFM.

The appeal process established by TWC must provide prompt resolution of the appeal to ensure that the funds are distributed in a timely manner, as consistent with WIOA §182(e)—Prompt Allocation of Funds.

The appeals process established by the Texas governor specifies that a one-stop partner may appeal a governor's determination regarding the one-stop partner's portion of funds for one-stop infrastructure costs.

40 TAC Part 22 §901.2—Appeal of Decision on Designation or Redesignation.

- The appeal of a designation or redesignation of a workforce area must be delivered to TWIC no later than 30 days after the date in which the designation or redesignation was made.
- The appeal must be submitted to TWIC in writing or electronically on the TWIC website (or TWC website). The appeal must be signed and submitted by the chief executive officer of the one-stop partner submitting the appeal. The appeal must specify the circumstances and details of the appeal.
- The notice of appeal, once received, must be published in the *Texas Register* with a statement inviting input, specifying the deadline for submitting written input. The council, at its discretion, may also schedule a public meeting at which oral comments on the appeal will be accepted.
- The appeal may be considered by TWIC, or TWIC may designate a committee to do so and make a recommendation to TWIC. In considering an appeal, all relevant

information is reviewed in addition to the information submitted with the appeal and the information obtained during the public comment process.

- After considering an appeal, TWIC will make a recommendation to the governor within 120 days of the date of receipt of the appeal request.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

State Policies

Texas makes information on state-imposed requirements—such as guidance for the statewide workforce development system, including policy for the use of state funds for workforce investment activities—available to the public.

The following materials are readily accessible through the TWC website:

- WIOA Guidelines—overview, implementation, guidance, service, and stakeholder input
- Current TWC rules, as codified in Title 40, Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Part 20, as well as information on past rule amendments
- All active workforce policy issued through guides
- Workforce Development (WD) Letters, AEL Letters, and Technical Assistance Bulletins (TAB), available at TWC's Workforce Policy and Guidance web page
- Reports, plans, and publications—agency strategic plans and annual reports, publications for employers and job seekers, and program plans and reports—all available at TWC's Reports, Plans, & Publications web page

VR materials, such as new or modified manuals, guides, and publications, are available on the TWC Vocational Rehabilitation Program Overview and Vocational Rehabilitation Division Publications web pages.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR'S SET ASIDE FUNDING FOR MANDATORY AND DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING HOW THE STATE WILL CONDUCT EVALUATIONS OF TITLE I ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES.

TWC uses governor's reserve statewide funding, and other funding where feasible and appropriate, to encourage innovation at the local level through grants to Boards, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations (CBOs), and other suitable entities. TWC prioritizes programs and initiatives that assist specific populations, including veterans and youth. TWC supports projects that encourage and improve growth industries, the earning capabilities of job seekers facing barriers to employment, and the effectiveness of the Texas Workforce System. Additionally, TWC's three-member Commission (Commission) approves the use of such funds to conduct statewide initiatives to address WIOA's focus on workforce integration, quality improvement, capacity building, professional development, internships, externships, and more. The initiatives apply across the following programs and services.

Military to Civilian Transition Initiatives

TWC champions several initiatives aimed at supporting transitioning military service members, veterans, and their families in their transition to civilian life and employment. These comprehensive programs focus on recognizing the inherent value of military training and connecting such experiences to college or workforce education to enable the effective translation of existing military skills into tangible credentials and in-demand workforce abilities. By establishing statewide networks for coordinated referral services and targeted outreach efforts for hard-to-serve veterans, TWC strives to eliminate common obstacles to attaining civilian licenses, certifications, and degrees, while also providing essential employment services, training, and wraparound support. These efforts are crucial in ensuring that veterans receive consistent, streamlined assistance in achieving successful reemployment and retaining their jobs, ultimately improving their employment outcomes and overall civilian integration.

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, TWC budgeted $4,600,000 for statewide veteran initiatives, including the following:

- Hiring Red, White & You! (HRWY!)
- College Credit for Heroes (CCH)
- Career Schools and Colleges Credit for Veterans Program
- Veterans Workforce Outreach
- Texas Veterans Network (TVN)
- Statewide Program to Transition from the Military to Civilian Employment
- We Hire Vets Campaign
- Texas Senior Military Leader Internship Program

Hiring Red, White & You!

Each November, TWC, in conjunction with the 28 Boards, the Texas Medical Center, and Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), hosts an annual statewide job fair to connect Texas veterans and their spouses to Texas employers that value the experience, discipline, and other exceptional qualities that are often inherent in a military background. Since its inception in 2012, HRWY! has connected more than 153,407 job seekers, including 52,532 active-duty military, transitioning service members (TSMs), veterans, and spouses, to 26,569 employers, with more than 3,860 same-day hires.

College Credit for Heroes

CCH seeks to maximize the number of college credits awarded to veterans and service members for their military experience to expedite their transition into the Texas workforce. The program's goal is to eliminate obstacles to attaining licensing, certification, accreditation, and degrees that are awarded at state and national levels. To achieve this goal, CCH grants help Texas institutions develop or improve an integrated system for evaluating military transcripts.

Through CCH, 46 grants have been awarded to 22 Texas colleges and universities, which have resulted in the creation of 91 acceleration curricula courses in fields such as emergency

medical services, surgical technology, respiratory therapy, health information technology, nursing, cybersecurity, information technology, advanced manufacturing, and logistics.

In 2025, TWC developed the Credential for Heroes Program as part of CCH to establish a comprehensive process to evaluate veterans' and service members' prior learning, through the use of tools such as the ACE Military Guide. The program aims to implement policies that award academic credit through Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) and create a leadership/business operations management course that is aligned with the skills of Combat Arms veterans. Additionally, the program seeks to align with the performance funding measures established in House Bill (HB) 8, 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2023).

Career Schools and Colleges Credit for Veterans Program

TWC evaluates the programs of study and courses provided by Career Schools and Colleges (CSC) that lead to industry-based certifications and other workforce credentials to identify programs and courses in which the skills obtained through military experience, education, and training align. TWC publishes the list of the programs of study and courses that were identified on its website.

Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative

The Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative is designed to outreach veterans who have one or more barriers to employment and are not currently receiving services through Workforce Solutions Offices. The goal is to address the employment barriers faced by such individuals and help them regain meaningful employment. Through this initiative, veterans benefit from a range of services, including skills and aptitude assessments; job development and job placement; case management and support services, such as transportation; rent and utility assistance; mental health assistance, including clinical counseling; wheelchairs, crutches, and medical beds; food assistance; and financial assistance.

As of 2025, the Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative has enrolled 476 participants, of which 301 were successfully placed in employment. As such, TWC is considering future opportunities to solicit applications for a new 18-month long project.

Texas Veterans Network

TWC awarded a $2 million grant to Combined Arms to maintain the TVN, a statewide automated veteran service coordination referral system. The system captures services received, referrals made, and services available through an integrated network designed to increase opportunities for TSMs, veterans, and their families to receive the services necessary for a successful transition into civilian life.

Since its inception in 2023, TVN has exceeded key targets by engaging 105 organizations, hosting 272 network-building events, conducting 91 training/workshop sessions, and closing 62,784 referrals. Given TVN's strong performance, TWC will continue to explore opportunities to collaborate with TVN to expand and enhance veteran services across Texas.

Statewide Program to Transition from the Military to Civilian Employment

The Military Family Support Program (MFSP), originally created in 2017, became the Statewide Program to Transition Military to Civilian Employment program, for which the Commission approved $3 million in WIOA statewide funds in 2024. The program is

designed to assist TSMs, recently separated veterans (RSVs), and military spouses as they transition from military service to civilian employment. The purpose of the program is to assist individuals in translating their military experience into skills that are recognized by the civilian labor market. Services include employment services, training, wraparound support services, and help connecting with apprenticeship opportunities.

We Hire Vets Campaign

We Hire Vets is an employer recognition program sponsored by TWC and TVC that recognizes Texas employers for their commitment to hiring veterans. Employers whose workforces are composed of at least 10 percent military veterans are eligible to receive a We Hire Vets employer recognition decal to display on their storefronts and an electronic decal to display on their websites. Employers that qualify for the We Hire Vets program also receive a letter signed by the Commission chair and the TVC chair. Since 2017, TWC has issued 1,441 decals and recognition letters to Texas employers.

Texas Senior Military Leader Internship Program

A $500,000 allocation of WIOA statewide funds supports the Texas Senior Military Leader Internship Program, a two-year pilot designed to aid in the transition of senior military leaders into the Texas workforce. The program offers 45- to 60-day C-Suite level internships that provide mentorship and coaching from Texas corporate executives to adapt senior military leader skillsets to C-Suite business methods. Participants also receive services such as executive résumé writing, LinkedIn account management, and interview training. The pilot program is expected to be implemented at one Texas military installation, with the goal to replicate the program across all Texas military installations.

Youth Initiatives

TWC supports various youth initiatives focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). These programs are designed to engage and develop middle school and high school students by fostering their interests and building their skills through competitions and residential summer camps. By offering hands-on experiences and sparking curiosity, these initiatives play a key role in encouraging students to pursue education and careers in STEM fields, which are essential for driving future innovation and sustaining economic growth.

During FY 2025, TWC budgeted $250,000 for statewide STEM initiatives, including:

- Texas Science Careers Consortium (Texas Science and Engineering Fair); and
- Governor's Challenge Camp.

Jobs Y'all

The "Jobs Y'all: Your Career. Your Story" campaign is designed to inspire young Texans to discover and explore the state's in-demand industries and learn about skills needed to enter the workforce. The website provides career resources for young adults, teachers, and counselors. It also connects users to other agency resources like Texas Career Check, Texas Reality Check, the Texas Internship Challenge, and MyTXCareer. The website is undergoing a refresh to offer additional resources for students with disabilities and foster youth. It will

also offer more information to support middle-skills careers, apprenticeships, and internships, including Summer Earn and Learn and TXWorks.

Other Selected Initiatives

TWC supports a wide range of initiatives designed to strengthen the state's workforce, address critical skill gaps, and prepare Texans for high-demand careers. These comprehensive programs foster collaborations between educational institutions, economic development corporations, and private employers to provide targeted training, work-based learning experiences, and essential resources. Services include offering guidance and information to entrepreneurs for starting or expanding businesses, facilitating high-demand occupational job training through local partnerships, and supporting direct collaborations with industries to ensure a robust talent pipeline.

Additionally, TWC has worked to establish grants for the building and construction trades, professional externships for teachers to increase their understanding of industry needs, and innovative educational models like Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH), which enable students to earn their high school diploma along with industry certifications or associate degrees.

TWC supports paid internships in critical sectors like health care and broader work-based learning opportunities for high school and college students, as such internships help students gain valuable on-the-job experience and progress toward industry-based certifications.

During FY 2025, TWC budgeted $11,202,207 for the following additional statewide initiatives:

- Small Business Initiatives
- High Demand Job Training (HDJT) Program
- Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) Program
- Building and Construction Trades
- Teacher Externships
- P-Tech
- Healthcare Internship Initiative

Texas Talent Connection

TWC partners with the state workforce development board, TWIC, to administer Texas Talent Connection (TTC) grants. This program, funded by Wagner-Peyser 7(b) federal funds reserved by the Texas governor, supports innovative workforce skills training and job-placement programs across the state. Its primary goals are to fund exemplary projects that lead to job placement, increase wages and job retention; deliver workforce services more efficiently and innovatively; and provide services to workforce populations with special needs. While TWIC, located within the Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office (EDT), administers these competitive grant awards, TWC is responsible for the associated processes of the grant's award negotiation, development, funding, management, monitoring,

and closeout. In FY 2025, TWC managed 20 TTC initiatives, totaling to $6,367,447 in awards.

Evaluations of Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities

TWC conducts program and service evaluations for all WIOA programs and other TWC-administered programs. This is done primarily through a combination of performance monitoring, quasi-experimental designs, longitudinal research, case studies, qualitative and mixed-method investigations, and measure development when existing measures cannot address the questions being asked. The use of these strategies is informed by TWC's desire to develop a practice that relies on machine learning to work with bigger datasets and quickly test models. Because these evaluations often involve cross-program cooperation, such activities are funded using a blended work-activity approach.

TWC actively monitors core programs through monthly, and in some cases, weekly, performance reports. These reports are reviewed and subsequently communicated with system partners, as appropriate, to provide technical assistance and obtain information on best practices to share with other partners.

TWC compares performance to targets when evaluating programs and partners. Target setting is a key part of TWC's evaluation and accountability system, and TWC uses a variety of different models to help set performance targets based on assumed case mixes and economic conditions. Methods are continuously evolving based on input from partners through the negotiation process and additional research.

Since 2019, TWC has embraced the use of the federal Statistical Adjustment Models (SAMs) and has modified them to ensure accountability among Boards for the common WIOA measures. In 2022, TWC began working on Performance Assessment Models (PAMs) that use internally produced state data structures to develop models for WIOA measures in Program Years (PY) 2024 and 2025.

WIOA provides performance measures to evaluate the six core programs and system partners. Additionally, TWC applies state-prescribed performance measures and—with input from local Boards, grantees, and other partners—works to continuously develop and test other measures that lead to the identification of strengths and areas of improvement.

For example, TWC developed a set of WIOA-based measures that focused on employment and enrollment in education post-exit, regardless of the program, a retention-like measure that focused on individuals who were employed or enrolled in the second quarter post-exit, and a measure to identify whether individuals remained employed or enrolled in the third and fourth quarters post-exit. TWC has also developed a set of five new "meaningful measures" that primarily focus on the connection made between a worker and employer while also ensuring that workers have the skills required by employers. These measures were approved for use by the Commission at a public meeting on April 16, 2024. TWC formally contracted one measure in PY 2023 and the remaining four in PY 2024 and is developing implementation strategies to integrate these measures as a core part of its Monthly Performance Reports.

C. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO

QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS.

TWC and Workforce Solutions Office staff provide rapid response assistance to help workers who have lost their jobs due to layoffs, plant closures, or natural disasters. Rapid response services include immediate on-site and/or virtual assistance with reemployment services and UI information. In some cases, mobile units are dispatched to offer these services.

Rapid response services focus on providing early interventions to area employers, workers, and the community in managing reductions in the labor force. To ensure that Texas is poised to meet the needs of local employers, rapid response services are funded through the Boards' WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW), and Youth formula programs. The funding stream allows for a prompt response to layoffs, as funds are readily and locally available. Texas has also reserved rapid response funds at the state level for Boards that demonstrate a need for additional assistance.

The rapid response system first pursues strategies to avert layoffs, while maintaining the capacity to quickly return workers to productive employment if the layoff is unavoidable. TWC and Boards use multiple employment and training resources to craft layoff aversion solutions. Past solutions have supported the development of incumbent worker programs that help address employer training needs and avert or mitigate a layoff. Training usually focuses on skills-attainment activities.

The second objective of rapid response is reemployment on or before the affected worker's last day of work. Upon notification of layoff, transition efforts are implemented to help dislocated workers engage in employment or training services that facilitate a quick return to work. Layoff notices, including those that are submitted in compliance with Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act and Trade Act petitions, are received at the state level and are forwarded to Boards by the following business day.

Boards and providers are also responsible for outreaching employers. Board and Workforce Solutions Office staff members use current labor market information (LMI) to assess the needs of and options for at-risk companies as well as offering employment and training activities to address risk factors. Following the initial contact with the employer and worker representatives, an employee information orientation may be conducted on-site and on company time. The orientation offers an overview of available services and additional activities. Additional activities include workshops or seminars on the psychology of job loss/stress management, debt/financial management and negotiations for debt-payment arrangements, job search skills, and labor market information. The orientation also provides information on UI benefits and, if appropriate, the TAA program.

Workforce areas are also encouraged to engage rapid response staff in the business service units (BSUs). Rapid response staff members that are attached to a BSU have access to team resources that help match worker skill sets to company-hiring requirements. TWC and the Boards assist businesses with future staffing needs by maintaining a positive relationship throughout the layoff process. To this end, outreach efforts highlight both the services available to at-risk employers and those services available once business improves and staff needs rebound.

Texas' layoff aversion strategies provide a proactive approach to assisting at-risk companies before they reach the layoff stage. Effective layoff aversion strategies and activities help employers develop the skilled workforce that is necessary to adapt to the changing economy, stay in business, and retain employees. TWC has identified and encourages the use of layoff aversion strategies that:

- retain jobs;
- retain critical industries in individual regions;
- improves coordination among state agencies, Boards, and economic development and other public- and private-sector partnerships; and
- creates new labor-management partnerships.

Identifying at-risk companies and developing a customized plan to address each company's unique set of circumstances requires a coordinated effort among all community partners, including state agencies, Boards, economic development agencies, and public and private entities. Boards and their partners use a full range of programs and resources to directly provide and facilitate the provision of an array of benefits to address the challenges presented by specific circumstances.

Through their connections with local businesses and the use of rapid response activities, Boards are in a unique position to assist companies in averting layoffs by implementing effective strategies.

Examples of effective layoff aversion strategies that may be implemented to address at-risk companies and workers include, but are not limited to:

- helping employers manage reductions in their workforce, including the identification of companies at risk of layoffs, the assessment of needs and options for at-risk companies, and the provision of services to address and support their needs;
- developing, funding, and managing incumbent worker training programs or other worker upskilling approaches as part of a layoff aversion strategy or activity;
- connecting companies with state programs that are designed to prevent layoffs or re-employ DWs; employer loan programs for employee skill upgrading; and other federal, state, and local resources that are necessary to address their business needs;
- connecting businesses and workers to short-term, on-the-job, or customized training programs and apprenticeships before or after layoff to help facilitate rapid reemployment;
- activating a rapid response team and services after receiving a WARN or other notification; and
- responding to information received from other sources about possible closures.

While WIOA provides broad flexibility when using rapid response funds for layoff-aversion activities that are intended to minimize the negative impacts of dislocation on workers,

employers, and communities, Boards are encouraged to conduct rapid response activities to support creative approaches and strategies.

The Shared Work Unemployment Benefit Program provides an alternative to layoffs by affording employers an opportunity to manage business cycles and seasonal adjustments without losing trained employees. The program allows for the payment of UI benefits to employees to supplement lost wages due to reduced hours. TWC identifies early warning indicators within its EDW system that identifies employers that might benefit from rapid response activities and short-time compensation services.

D. DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES.

As TWC becomes aware of a natural disaster that may warrant agency assistance, Boards in the affected areas are proactively contacted to coordinate with relevant city and county officials, determine the nature and scope of the need, and assess whether disaster services may be warranted and to what degree. In the event that the governor issues a disaster proclamation, coordination with the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) is immediately activated, and the use of state-level resources may be triggered.

If TWC receives a formal notice that an emergency has been declared by the president, and public assistance is approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Boards and local employers who are impacted by employee displacement, or are in need of additional employees, will be notified. TWC's Trade Adjustment Assistance Guide, issued May 2020, requires Boards to ensure that rapid response services are provided when a mass job dislocation occurs due to a natural disaster. Workforce Solutions Offices and mobile units provide on-site and/or virtual services to assist workers who are facing job loss or layoffs. Rapid Response activities begin with employee orientations that are scheduled, when possible, through the employer. Special or customized approaches may be arranged based on the expressed needs of the employer and employees. Activities are coordinated with various entities, including FEMA, the Office of the Governor, and TDEM.

E. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) AND ENSURES THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICES TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A) AND TAA SECTION 221(A)(2)(A) .) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION AND HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICE TO WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE PETITION (TAA SEC. 221(A)(2)(A)).NOTE: UNTIL THE TAA PROGRAM IS REAUTHORIZED, THE

REQUIREMENTS TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSE AND APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICES TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A PETITION HAS BEEN FILED IS NOT APPLICABLE.

Rapid Response

Rapid Response is an on-site, early-intervention program that provides transition and reemployment services to workers facing major layoffs within their company. The goal of Rapid Response services is to help affected workers find new employment before they become eligible to receive UI benefits. The best employment transition results in unemployment lasting no more than a few days.

Rapid Response is administered at the state level but is operated at the Board level. Each Board has a Rapid Response coordinator who provides information about Rapid Response services. While Boards are encouraged to make Rapid Response services available to all potential Trade-affected employers, they are required to provide the services when the following circumstances occur:

- An announcement of a permanent closure of a facility or plant, including WARN notices, regardless of the number of workers affected
- A layoff involving 50 or more workers is announced
- A mass job dislocation results from a natural disaster
- A TAA petition is filed

Rapid Response services include the following:

- Job-search assistance
- LMI
- Group stress-management seminars
- Group financial-management seminars
- Information about mass filing of UI claims
- Group orientation to Workforce Solutions Office services
- Seminars on change management

<u>Trade-Rapid Response Participants</u>

All Trade-certified workers are eligible for WIOA DW services. The Trade Act requires Boards to provide Rapid Response services and career services, as available under WIOA and other federal programs, to DWs who file a Trade petition. Staff members work to ensure that the delivery of these services flows seamlessly from the time of the initiation of Rapid Response services to reemployment while using an array of services that provide eligible customers with the benefit of activities most suited to their needs.

Potential Trade-certified workers undergo an employee orientation, which includes the following:

- Completion of Rapid Response registration and survey
- Orientation to the TAA program, including an explanation of the TAA benefits notification process
- Registration with WorkInTexas.com, TWC's job-matching and service-tracking system
- Distribution of the TAA Handbook and related materials

Rapid Response services that are provided at a work site, including workshops and seminars for employees, must include information about the following topics:

- Financial management and budgeting, including financial literacy
- LMI, including a list of area high-demand occupations with wage information
- Stress management
- Résumé writing
- Interviewing skills
- Job search procedures and strategies

Trade Adjustment Assistance

TAA helps individuals who have lost their employment due to increased imports or shifts in production to a foreign country. Integrated services and benefits for DWs, including those affected by trade changes, are available at local Workforce Solutions Offices.

As part of an integrated delivery system, TAA early intervention services (rapid response) are carried out under WIOA. When state staff becomes aware of a layoff or closure, staff determines whether the dislocation has trade implications; if it does, assistance is provided to the company, workers, or affected unions that are submitting the TAA petition. Furthermore, when a petition is submitted with prior staff notification by one of these groups, the TAA state coordinator notifies the responsible Board and ensures that rapid response efforts are conducted to assist the company with transitional services.

To comply with 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 618, the State of Texas uses both state Merit staff and partner staff to conduct TAA case management services. Merit staff are located in areas with large TAA activity to ensure that workers receive adequate service provisions. Where TAA Merit staff is not present, WIOA or ES staff provides TAA case management to help the workers. Additionally, the state coenrolls all trade-affected workers in the WIOA DW program. Staffing flexibilities and coenrollment between the programs allow Texas to help workers who have been adversely impacted return to suitable employment quickly.

The Texas Workforce Solutions system provides employment and job search assistance services to help TAA workers find long-term employment. Adversely affected workers are assessed to determine their transferable skills, knowledge, and abilities and to help in researching the LMI for previous and future occupational goals.

Additional TAA benefits and services are available if the worker is unable to secure suitable employment. Using national, state, and local LMI, staff members can help workers consider available employment opportunities in their area or the area of relocation. TAA workers are required to identify an occupational goal that is specific to the required training.

In addition to considering LMI and the occupational goal in developing a training plan, staff conducts in-depth, objective, and comprehensive assessments to determine the workers' abilities. These instruments include, but are not limited to, Accuplacer, Compass, Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and other tools that are specific to training providers. Local staff members develop a plan, with Merit staff approval, to ensure that training meets the TAA approval criteria in 20 CFR §618.610.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

Workforce development and adult education and training are key services that are made available to job seekers to help prepare them for success in jobs that employers need filled. The services aim to improve the skills, education, and literacy levels of adults and DWs, which can effectively improve their subsequent employment, job retention, and earnings.

Work-Based Training Model

The Tri-Agency partnership developed a strategic framework to encourage work-based learning (WBL) in Texas. Through framework development, Tri-Agency partners recognized the shared work of expanding and improving WBL programs, such as apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job trainings (OJT), to address current and future market demands for a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. The partners identified WBL as a continuum that consists of learning about work (career exploration), learning through work (career preparation), and learning at work (career training).

Preparing learners of all ages to enter the workforce or progress along a career pathway with the knowledge and skills employers need requires collaboration among stakeholders, including public and private schools, public institutions of higher education, employers, Boards, and TWC. Together they ensure that WBL programs are consistently implemented and are of high quality.

Successful WBL programs lead to recognized, verifiable credentials and provide the means for participants to find and compare education and training programs, pursue stackable credentials, and demonstrate specific skills and competencies. In the effort to promote successful WBL programs, TWC, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) developed the Texas Credential Library using Credential Transparency Description Language (CTDL), as a repository of standardized terms and definitions, comparisons, and evaluation of programs in the credential marketplace.

CTDL will be publicly available to all stakeholders, including students, parents, job seekers, employers, and credentialing entities.

Alternative Training Models

Texas uses several alternative training programs as part of its workforce development strategy. TWC collaborates with Boards, companies, and education and training providers to improve the training programs, as well as awards competitive grants for the programs. These are discussed in other sections of the plan; however, three notable programs are described below due to their success in advancing high-quality OJT and incumbent worker training for participants and employers.

The Skills Development Fund (SDF) is Texas' program that provides training opportunities for Texas businesses and workers. TWC administers the funding for the program and achieves success through collaboration among businesses, public community and technical colleges, Boards, and economic development partners.

SDF assists businesses and trade unions by financing the design and implementation of customized job-training projects. This fund merges business needs and local customized training opportunities into a winning formula to increase the skills levels and wages of the Texas workforce.

The Skills for Small Business program receives financing from the Skills Development Fund. This program supports small employers, which are the backbone of Texas' economy. Businesses with fewer than 100 employees can apply to TWC for training offered by their local community or technical college, or the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX). The program trains newly hired employees, with the intent of helping to fill positions for work that employers currently cannot fill and that often pay better than most jobs. TWC works with the college to fund the specific courses selected by businesses for their employees.

The Self-Sufficiency Fund program assists businesses and trade unions by financing the development and implementation of customized job-training projects for new and current workers. Self-Sufficiency Fund grants offer businesses customized training solutions that support workforce hiring efforts and skills upgrading for current workers. The purpose of the Self-Sufficiency Fund is to provide training for targeted employment opportunities, primarily for adult TANF recipients and individuals who are at risk of becoming dependent on public assistance.

2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., outreach to sponsors and prospective sponsors, identifying potential participants and connecting them to apprenticeship opportunities).

ApprenticeshipTexas offers industry-driven, high-quality career pathways during which employers develop and prepare their future workforce. Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) are automatically eligible for the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). RAP sponsors make a request through the state's Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Unit or TWC's Office of Apprenticeship and provide their information to TWC for inclusion on the ETPL.

Once included on the statewide ETPL, a RAP is available for WIOA participants in Texas. Boards may use their WIOA formula funds to issue Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for the instructional portion of the programs. Additionally, Boards are encouraged to consider funding the work component of RAPs through on-the-job training contracts. To promote informed consumer choice, Boards provide access to the full statewide ETPL, ensuring that program participants that are approved for training can choose the program that best meets their needs.

Since 2016, TWC has received $45.4 million in apprenticeship expansion grant funding to increase and integrate the RAP model into new occupations and new populations, while further increasing RAP opportunities in which Boards may use their local formula funds. In 2024, TWC was awarded two grants from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL): a $6 million competitive grant to continue the expansion of RAPs and a $2,812,636 planning grant to support statewide planning and capacity building, for a total of $8,812,636. TWC's use of apprenticeship expansion grant funding and its outreach efforts has aided in the development of over 165 new RAPs, the expansion of over 318 existing RAPs, and there have been 14,700 new apprentices in RAPs.

TWC' promotes ApprenticeshipTexas and its benefits to Boards, employers, and industry groups throughout the year, including at TWC's annual Statewide Conference, the ApprenticeshipTexas conference, the Texas Conference for Employers, as well as at Board and Community College events and ApprenticeshipTexas webinars.

Boards use allocated WIOA formula funds to train individuals based on training eligibility, need, skills, and interests. Work-based training is a priority for the state and Boards. The "earn while you learn" model helps participants gain a hands-on education while earning a salary. Boards promote pre-apprenticeship programs—such as Austin's MC3 building trades program or Houston's Trio Electric training program—to their younger community not only as a step toward apprenticeship programs but also toward financial security.

The apprenticeship program benefits both employers and job seekers by providing training opportunities for workers to gain well-paying jobs with promising futures. TWC coordinates the state's apprenticeship training program, applying approximately $1 million in WIOA statewide-discretionary funds to supplement state general revenue appropriations. In FY 2024, 9,863 apprentices participated in the apprenticeship training program found in Title 3, Texas Education Code Chapter 133, positively trending toward the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) performance measure of 10,524.

Healthcare Apprenticeship Programs

TWC has allocated $15 million for the development of a statewide Registered Apprenticeship initiative for the healthcare industry to increase the number of career pathway opportunities for registered nurses (RNs) and healthcare professionals in the state. The Statewide Health Care Registered Apprenticeship Initiative was designed to offer employers an innovative approach to hiring and training future nurses and healthcare staff by expanding opportunities for students who wish to pursue career pathways to RN certification and other healthcare fields.

According to TWC's LMI department, nursing has been a top-demand job posting for the past 10 years in Texas. Texas continues to address the nursing shortage through

apprenticeship opportunities and focused training. By 2032, it is anticipated Texas will need 57,012 additional RNs in the Texas labor market. The initiative establishes short-term pathways for entry into healthcare professions by expediting application processes and coordinating across multiple workforce areas.

The initiative aims to address industry needs, help solve the RN shortage, and build on the foundations of:

- providing paid RN clinicals;
- convening workshops that include subject matter experts representing healthcare providers, higher education, and workforce that have developed ways to support pathway credentialing for Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs), Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs), Associate Degree in Nursing to Registered Nurse, and Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing;
- identifying mapped and incorporated credentials that are relevant and of value to the healthcare industry and are also stackable and portable; and
- developing articulated crosswalks, thereby enabling students who have completed RAPs to earn college credit.

Apprenticeships in Middle Skills Careers

TWC has allocated $4 million to support apprenticeships in middle skills careers, which are defined as occupations that require some education beyond high school but less than a four-year degree. Currently, 464 new apprentices have been funded. As the Texas economy continues to grow, employment demand has dramatically increased for individuals in middle skills occupations. Through this initiative, TWC supports the creation and expansion of RAPs in key industry areas that are identified as in especially high demand, including automotive service technicians and mechanics; production machinists, assemblers, and fabricators; and logistics management and supply chain analysts. To support employers through this initiative, TWC's Office of Apprenticeship has awarded funds to help employers secure DOL registration and defray costs related to curricula development, related instruction, apprentice training (in-person, online, or hybrid), training supplies for apprentices, and instructor costs or mentor activities. This initiative is designed to specifically benefit those employers with locations in multiple areas of the state.

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

WIOA establishes requirements regarding the provision of information and criteria for initial and continued eligibility for inclusion on the Statewide ETPL. The requirements ensure both the quality of the training programs and the opportunity for customer-informed choice regarding the available programs.

The Boards continue to solicit training and education providers to submit applications for eligibility to receive WIOA funds for training and educational programs through ITAs, which

are available only to ETPL programs. ETPs must support statewide targeted occupations and lead to a recognized secondary or postsecondary credential, measurable skill gain, or employment. TWC solicits RAP sponsors at least annually for inclusion on the Statewide ETPL. This solicitation serves to ensure the continuation of a robust list of training providers throughout the state and in rural areas, including distance-learning options.

All training providers are required to submit information and criteria, as established under WIOA §122(d) through (g). Providers of training programs, including RAPs, must provide all required information for initial eligibility for each program of study directly to local Boards or TWC, respectively. Except for RAPs, which are provided automatic inclusion on the Statewide ETPL, Boards review and certify training providers and programs to determine whether the minimum requirements established by the Commission are met. Following local review, Boards submit training provider and program information to TWC for final review before the information is added to the Statewide ETPL, published on TWC's website. ETPs are required to submit student-level data directly to TWC annually, in July. Continued eligibility determinations take place on a biennial basis, using the annually provided student-level data.

TWC is engaged in ongoing enhancements to the ETP system to further align with WIOA requirements and improve the application and eligibility determination processes for providers of training programs. TWC actively revises its ETP guidance for Boards to include information on accessibility for individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities.

Initial Eligibility Criteria

Prior to inclusion on the Statewide ETPL, except for RAPs, a training provider must submit general information through the ETPS to its local Board, as determined by the primary campus location. The required general information includes:

- data required by ETA-9171;
- contact information; and
- other information useful for the Statewide ETPL, such as:
  - a description of each training program offered by the provider;
  - the presence of onsite child care for campuses;
  - alternate hours for trainings; and
  - campus accessibility.

In addition to the general information listed above, a provider must submit to the Board evidence of each program's partnership with a business. The Board must ensure that each program aligns with an in-demand or targeted occupation in the state and is appropriately licensed or exempt in accordance with the Texas Education Code.

Following Board review, providers must submit student-level information, including Social Security numbers (SSNs) and credential outcomes where applicable, for all students connected to the trainings during the most recently reported ETP Performance Year. TWC

uses SSN data to gather WIOA performance indicator–related data for programs beyond the credential rate information provided by the training providers. During initial eligibility determination, TWC may review existing programs for a provider, or exempt from student reporting for new programs, those which have not been delivered to any students at the time of application.

Continued Eligibility Criteria

Continued eligibility is determined by using the provider's information from the most recent annual reporting period. The annual reporting information provided by ETPs includes information on alternate hours of trainings (for employed individuals) and accessibility-related features of campuses and programs. This information is included on the Statewide ETPL. Texas maintains a robust system of training providers and programs that includes hundreds of online training programs available to students anywhere in the state, including in rural areas. This guidance is available at TWC's Policy and Guidance web page.

Continued eligibility for the Statewide ETPL requires that programs, except RAPs:

- submit evidence of a partnership with a business;
- are aligned with an in-demand or targeted occupation in the state;
- are appropriately licensed, or exempt from licensure, in accordance with the Texas Education Code; and
- on or before the required reporting deadline, submit annual reports that:
  - provide TWC with data needed to determine performance outcomes related to WIOA employment and credential performance indicators;
  - identify whether a program leads to a recognized postsecondary credential; and
  - indicate the overall quality of provider programs.

Annual Reporting

All providers, except RAPs, are required to report information, including performance outcomes, on each program included on the Statewide ETPL.

Annual reports require providers to submit, or verify, the following information:

- General provider, location, and program information (including contacts)
- Compliance with WIOA provisions and regulations
- Acknowledgment of TWC's Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) authority
- Student-level data for all students participating in programs during the previous PY
- Other information that TWC determines necessary or useful for the Statewide ETPL

Such information is required to be submitted no later than TWC's deadline each year, usually the end of July. Providers requiring assistance with completing these reports are encouraged to reach out to TWC for direct assistance before the reporting deadline. Reporting extensions

may be granted on a case-by-case basis to providers/programs when requested before the reporting deadline. TWC consider requests related to circumstances beyond the provider's control, such as:

- natural disasters;
- national emergencies; and
- unexpected personnel or technology issues (provided these occurred within 30 days or fewer from the reporting deadline).

Providers failing to report information on or before the deadline or extended deadline will have affected programs removed from the Statewide ETPL as described in the Removal from the Statewide ETPL section.

TWC accepts schools in compliance with TEA and THECB as eligible for the Statewide ETPL once they submit information required by WIOA. Additionally, proprietary schools in Texas must be licensed (or exempted from such licensure) by TWC's CSC Department. This licensure includes annual student performance reporting. TWC collaborates with TEA and THECB in a Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative known as 60X30TX. As part of this project, integrated reporting on all Texas schools and student outcomes is made available publicly on THECB's website.

Performance Targets

On August 13, 2024, the Commission approved minimum performance standards for determining the initial and continued eligibility for training programs for inclusion on the ETPL. These standards were applied to ETP data beginning during the summer 2025 submission of ETP program performance.

Performance Standards for All Former Students	**2025 ETP Reporting Period**	**2026 ETP Reporting Period**	**2027 ETP Reporting Period**
Employed Quarter 2 Post Exit	70%	70%	70%
Employed Quarter 4 Post Exit	70%	70%	70%
Median Earnings Quarter 2 Post Exit	$7,800	$7,800	$7,800
Credential Rate	50%	55%	60%
Completion Rate	60%	60%	60%

TWC requires providers, except RAPs, to submit performance outcomes annually. Program outcomes are included on the Statewide ETPL for all programs in aggregate form (any program with five or fewer student records to report in a single year will not have data published to protect the individual's information).

Removal from the Statewide ETPL

Training providers may request voluntary removal of training programs from the Statewide ETPL at any time for programs they no longer offer or wish to maintain training programs on the Statewide ETPL. Providers, including RAP sponsors, that violate WIOA Title I provisions or WIOA regulations (including 29 CFR Part 38), or are found to have intentionally supplied inaccurate or false information, will be removed from the Statewide ETPL at such time as the violation is discovered. For such substantial violations, removal will result in ineligibility for the Statewide ETPL for a minimum of two years. Providers that fail to provide required annual performance and other information for programs, will have such programs, except RAPs, removed from the Statewide ETPL.

Providers may appeal involuntary removal decisions to the Board or TWC, as appropriate, in accordance with TWC's existing appeals process as set forth in TWC rules, Integrated Complaints, Hearings, and Appeals (Title 40, Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Part 20 Chapter 823). Providers may appeal Board decisions to TWC. TWC decisions are final.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Apprenticeship programs that are registered with the DOL Office of Apprenticeship are automatically eligible for inclusion on the Statewide ETPL. RAPs are given an opportunity to request inclusion on the Statewide ETPL directly to TWC. RAP sponsors must provide basic program information, which includes general descriptions of the sponsor and training sites, contact information, program details, and general cost information. This data is used by Boards to inform participants of training expectations prior to referral. RAPs are not required to provide performance or outcome data to TWC. To ensure a robust system of consumer choice, RAP sponsors may choose to provide such data. Data submission will not delay, or otherwise affect, a RAP's inclusion on the Statewide ETPL.

Except where WIOA violations occur, RAPs will remain on the Statewide ETPL for as long as the program is registered with DOL or until they request to be removed.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR FOR THE ADULT PRIORITY OF SERVICE REQUIREMENT IN WIOA SECTION 134 (C)(3)(E) THAT REQUIRES AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF, WHEN USING WIOA ADULT PROGRAM FUNDS TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES, TO GIVE PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT (INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS).

Individualized career services and training services are provided on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to:

- public assistance recipients;
- other low-income adults; and
- individuals who are basic skills deficient.

The individuals who receive these services are prioritized accordingly:

1. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses (as defined in WD Letter 01-21, Change 1) who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income, and/or basic-skills deficient

2. Foster youth and former foster youth, up to age 23, who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income, and/or basic-skills deficient
3. All other individuals who are recipients of public assistance, low-income, and/or basic-skills deficient
4. All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses
5. All other foster youth and former foster youth, up to age 23
6. All other individuals, including Boards' local priority groups

TWC ensures that local Board policies are in place to guarantee that priority is provided for the populations described above. Additionally, TWC allows Boards the flexibility to create policies to give priority to other individuals, if priority for those individuals comes after the first five groups described above.

For example, Boards may establish local priority groups for older workers (age 40 or older) or employed individuals whose income is below the Board's self-sufficiency level. These local priority groups do not replace the statutory priority given to individuals who are recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient. The Board's local priority groups must fall within Group 6, "All other individuals, including local Boards' local priority groups" as listed above.

Relevant state guidance includes:

- WD Letter 01-21, Change 1, issued March 18, 2024, titled "Applying Priority of Service and Identifying and Documenting Veterans and Transitioning Service Members—Update."
- WD Letter 43-11, Change 2, issued February 19, 2020, titled "Priority of Service for Eligible Foster Youth—Update."

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

Consistent with WIOA, TWC provides Boards with the flexibility to transfer up to 100 percent of funds between WIOA adult and DW allocations. This policy can be found in TWC's WIOA Guidelines for Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth (published August 2025). TWC allows for the transfer of funds under the full flexibility of the law.

TWC operates under the following process to approve transfer requests. To initiate a request, Boards must submit the desired transfer percentage and dollar amount, along with a justification for the request. Once received, the request is reviewed by multiple departments within TWC. Prior to approval, TWC considers factors such as the Board's caseload and program fund expenditures.

6. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S POLICY ON WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLMENT AND WHETHER AND HOW OFTEN THIS POLICY IS DISSEMINATED TO THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS. TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(A)(3)(I).

To ensure a seamless delivery of services that is most suited to the needs of trade-affected workers, TWC requires Boards to coenroll such individuals in WIOA DW services whenever eligible. WD Letter 18-21, Change 1, which took effect April 15, 2024, and titled "Coenrollment in the Trade Adjustment Assistance and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Dislocated Worker Programs—Update" details the requirements that Boards must determine the eligibility of potential trade-affected workers for WIOA DW program services and provide career and training services, as applicable. Local Workforce Solutions Office staff must enroll trade-affected workers in the WIOA DW program and provide appropriate services throughout the duration of TAA program participation. TWC has developed an expedited WIOA eligibility determination process for such trade-affected workers.

The TWC policy on coenrollment is made available to Boards and required one-stop partners on the TWC Workforce Policy Letters & Guidance web page.

7. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S FORMAL STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE NECESSARY FUNDED BENEFITS AND SERVICES. TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(C)

To promote the integration of employment and training services as envisioned by WIOA, TWC encourages trade-affected workers to access all appropriate services to help them reenter the workforce through their local Workforce Solutions Office. Services include LMI, training referrals, career planning, and follow-up services.

40 TAC Chapter 849 - Employment and Training Services for Dislocated Workers provides detail as to Texas' formal strategy to ensure statewide availability of services to TAA participants. Boards have established policies that outline their trade service strategies to assist trade-affected workers in obtaining suitable employment as an alternative to training referrals, promote the use of WIOA career services to support successful reemployment, and help them in employment retention and career advancement.

WD Letter 12-22, Change 1, issued September 3, 2024, and titled "Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program Sunset—Update," ensures that Boards continue to administer the TAA program and serve trade-affected workers according to statutory requirements and guidance provided by DOL during the program's phased termination.

Boards operate their TAA programs in accordance with the termination provisions and existing requirements.

8. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR FAMILIARIZING ONE-STOP STAFF WITH THE TAA PROGRAM. 20 CFR 618.804(J), 20 CFR 618.305

TWC staff uses a variety of methods to ensure that Workforce Solutions Office staff are familiar with the TAA program. TWC staff provides programmatic and skill-building information through Board calls, webinars, training events, TWC conferences, and customized technical assistance. TWC staff published an online webinar to provide on-demand access to an overview of the program.

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA, States should describe their strategies that will support the implementation of youth activities under WIOA. State's must-

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA.[11] FURTHER, INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL AREAS IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO CONTRACT FOR SERVICES OR TO PROVIDE SOME OR ALL OF THE PROGRAM ELEMENTS DIRECTLY.

[11] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

State-Developed Criteria in Award of Grants or Contracts for Youth Workforce Investment Activities

TWC allocates youth formula funds to Boards, which, in turn, contract with service providers to deliver services to youth in their respective workforce areas. Boards are required to meet all federal and state programmatic requirements.

Boards must ensure that:

- contracts include clearly defined goals, outputs, and measurable outcomes that directly relate to program objectives;
- contracts include clearly defined sanctions or penalties for noncompliance with the contract's terms and conditions; and
- the contractor has implemented a formal program using a risk assessment methodology to monitor compliance with financial and performance requirements under the contract, including a determination of whether performance objectives have been achieved.

Board Performance Accountability

TWC maintains a rigorous performance and accountability system that holds Boards accountable for their performance as it pertains to the youth program and other workforce programs.

Contracting for Services

Title 10, Texas Government Code § 2308.264 prohibits Boards from directly providing workforce training and services within the local workforce development area. This restriction is further codified in Title 40, TAC, Part 20, Chapter §801.29 Waivers.

2. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN ACHIEVING EQUITABLE RESULTS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND IN-SCHOOL YOUTH. DESCRIBE PROMISING PRACTICES OR PARTNERSHIP MODELS THAT

LOCAL AREAS ARE IMPLEMENTING AND THE STATE'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING AND SCALING THOSE MODELS WITHIN THE STATE FOR BOTH IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH.

The wide range of barriers faced by individuals within the out-of-school youth (OSY) population poses a challenge to workforce and youth service providers seeking to establish a comprehensive framework that positions the workforce system as an on-ramp for training, education, and supportive services needed to enter a career pathway. Helping OSY successfully transition into school and work requires TWC to collaborate and coordinate with Boards, TEA, adult education providers, institutions of higher education (IHEs), CBOs, businesses, and industry leaders. Because this population often seeks assistive services from public or private CBOs, relationships are developed with child welfare agencies, social service organizations, group homes, probation and parole officers, and local schools to find and engage at-risk youth before they become disconnected. While their functions may vary based on each community's needs, every entity has a role to play, and no single entity can effectively identify and serve OSY on its own. Therefore, it is essential that programs serving OSY cultivate strong partnerships and a sense of shared responsibility.

TWC aims to position Boards and local workforce systems as entry points to career pathways for OSY, while subsequently providing the education, training, and support services needed for Texans facing barriers to employment to achieve career success. To achieve such goals, TWC provides Boards with the resources and guidance they need to construct efficient service delivery systems that enable participants to access a comprehensive menu of services from dedicated service providers. Improved alignment among providers presents a dual benefit to both providers and participants, making services more accessible and service delivery more efficient by braiding resources of local programs that serve OSY and reducing duplicative services among organizations. Boards are thus uniquely positioned to address the challenge of establishing an integrated service delivery infrastructure by developing and strengthening partnerships with organizations that currently serve the OSY population.

To achieve their educational and career goals, OSY need services that help them tackle substantial barriers. Youth who have dropped out of school often face significant challenges to educational success, including homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and teen pregnancy and parenting. These barriers often cause youth to disconnect from school, feel inadequate, and struggle to return, even after overcoming adversity. To be successful, OSY-specific programs must not only address academic and skills development needs but also offer solutions to the socio-emotional, economic, health, and other barriers that these young people continue to face. As a result, Boards must target services based on individual needs, create supportive learning experiences and environments, and enable the development of positive relationships with caring adults who can act as mentors. To better serve these youth, Boards have designed services that:

- acknowledge the problems and characteristics of participants;
- outreach and engage with the growing OSY population;
- obtain and use information concerning the conditions of employment affecting youth and labor laws restricting their employment;

- develop and maintain effective relationships with schools, colleges, and other training providers; and
- develop employment opportunities with career potential for youth.

To meet the individual needs of OSY, specialized programs offer customized pathways to education and employment that provide multiple entry and exit points. This includes a variety of options for recovering credits, earning a high school diploma, gaining job skills, and transitioning into postsecondary education and training. In many cases, Boards and their partners work together to develop pathways that go beyond traditional high school. Individualized plans increase a youth's chances of skill mastery and overall chances of success. Such plans consider a youth's unique academic, career, social, and emotional needs as well as their interests to guide them toward reengaging in educational and career opportunities.

Local Area Best Practices

Engagement with Advisory Boards

At Workforce Solutions South Plains, designated staff serve on a variety of advisory boards throughout the local community such as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), local Chambers, Goodwill, and the Adult Education Coalition. These memberships help South Plains develop and maintain community relationships with agency partners. Additionally, Youth Program staff maintain ongoing collaborations with the following entities:

- Adult Education Coalition
- Migrant Programs
- Training Providers
- Juvenile Probation
- Catholic Charities
- Buckner Children and Family Services
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- School District's At-Risk/Drop-Out Coordinators/independent school district (ISD) Officers

Youth staff maintain partnerships with agencies such as Buckner Children and Family Services and refer youth to these agencies to address specific barriers for special populations and to access services included as part of the 14 essential service elements. Buckner's serves youth aging out of foster care. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program provides services to youth with disabilities. The partner agencies collaborate with the Board to ensure that all 14 youth program elements are available to participating youth.

Out-of-School Youth Academy

Workforce Solutions Cameron County collaborates with core partners to support program integration through various initiatives. One key effort was the establishment of an out-of-

school youth academy, built from the Board's longstanding partnership with their AEL provider and their joint experience with YouthBuild in serving this population. Youth that were selected for this initiative were enrolled in the Workforce Ready Koncepts Mobile Learning Platform, which offers prevocational training and emphasizes meaningful career readiness. For several years, the Board has maintained a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the AEL provider to coordinate referrals and enrollment, share outreach material, identify participants, assist with job placement, and hold joint planning meetings.

College & Career Day

The Middle Rio Grande Development Council has strengthened existing youth fairs by collaborating with Southwest Texas College to host a College & Career Day. This event invites area high school seniors and juniors to the college campus for a day filled with engaging activities and valuable information. The most recent event, themed "Developing Futures Together," highlighted the ongoing collaboration between the college and Workforce Solutions. Attendees heard from motivational keynote speakers and participated in breakout sessions on topics such as college admission, testing, financial aid, and student support services. TWC hosted a session on labor market and career information. Additionally, area employers were invited to share insights on occupations and their hiring processes. Thirty academic and technical departments from Southwest Texas College participated, showcasing the wide range of educational opportunities available to students.

Career Club

Workforce Solutions North Central Texas (WSNCT) maintains a Career Club in partnership with Stephenville Independent School District and the Stephenville Economic Development Authority. The Career Club offers undecided high school seniors with the opportunity to explore local career opportunities through hands-on training, career preparation workshops, networking with local businesses, and field trips to local businesses. The goal of the program is to prepare and excite students about entering the workforce after graduation. Following participation in Career Club, employers pledged to hire more than 30 students who had successfully completed the program. WSNCT is developing a "How to Guide" to share across the region so that the Career Club concept can be replicated in other ISDs.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR DELIVERING YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING EFFECTIVE WAYS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS CAN MAKE AVAILABLE THE 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2); AND EXPLAIN HOW LOCAL AREAS CAN ENSURE WORK EXPERIENCE, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP AND REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP, IS PRIORITIZED AS A KEY ELEMENT WITHIN A BROADER CAREER PATHWAYS STRATEGY.

[12] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

Texas has adopted the purposes of WIOA, including fostering integrated systems, coordinating services, implementing career pathways, and engaging with businesses to benefit all customers, particularly youth. TWC recognizes that career and personal success is a result of lifelong learning and continued growth in skills and abilities.

Each Board develops a strategic and operational plan for implementing WIOA youth programs that are consistent with the governor's vision of strengthening academic and future workplace outcomes for youth who are facing challenges and barriers to success. Boards design activities that are consistent with the specific eligibility criteria for the two groups as described in the WIOA Title I youth formula–funded program: in-school youth (ISY) and OSY.

TWC provides guidance to the Boards as to how the 14 program elements are made available to youth participants. To ensure such availability, TWC requires Boards to develop policies that identify:

- who will be providing each of the youth program elements;
- how referrals to youth service providers will be made and documented; and
- the documentation process for the provision of youth services.

The goal of such a policy is to ensure that Boards conduct a thorough analysis of local gaps in youth-serving programs and can identify the most appropriate education, training, and/or employment activities, for each youth participant.

Additionally, Boards ensure that Workforce Solutions Office staff:

- provides youth participants with written information regarding the full array of services that may help them transition into the workforce, as provided through the Board, providers, and partners;
- saves a copy of the document, as signed by the youth participant and case manager, within the youth participant's case file;
- provides the youth participant with a copy of the signed document; and
- refers the youth participant to appropriate training and educational programs that have the capacity to serve them either on a sequential or concurrent basis.

Boards are required to provide the following services, in accordance with 20 CFR §681.460 and WIOA §129(c)(2):

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent or postsecondary credential
- Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services
- Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component, such as summer and non-seasonal employment, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training, in the private for-profit or nonprofit sectors
- Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials in in-demand industries or occupations in the local area

- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation
- Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors
- Support services, such as linkages to community services, assistance with transportation, child and dependent care, assistance with housing, needs-related payments, assistance with educational testing, reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities, referrals to health care, and assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and tools
- Adult mentoring for at least 12 months
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after completing participation
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, such as drug and alcohol abuse, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate
- Financial literacy education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Services providing labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

Every individual that meets the designated eligibility criteria for ISY or OSY may participate in the above services if the youth is formally enrolled in the program and participation is appropriate for the participant per their assessment and individual service strategy.

Continuous performance assessment, technical assistance, and monitoring are fundamental to the Boards' compliance with the design framework service of local youth programs, as proposed in 20 CFR §681.420.

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

TWC provides Boards the flexibility to define the "additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to obtain or retain employment" criterion, as set forth in WIOA. The state policy is as follows:

"The Board must establish definitions and eligibility documentation requirements for the 'requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to obtain or retain employment' criterion of ISY and OSY eligibility."

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;

3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;

4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:

A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;

B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;

C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;

D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND

E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESSES USED TO:

A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;

B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;

C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;

D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.

E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT.

7. THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE REGARDING THE RESULTS AND OUTCOMES OBSERVED THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXISTING WAIVER, IN CASES WHERE THE STATE SEEKS RENEWAL OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WAIVER.

WAIVER REQUEST 1

Youth Individual Training Accounts

1. The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the State would like to waive

TWC is seeking a waiver of the requirement under WIOA rule, 20 CFR §681.550, which limits the use of ITAs for youth participants to OSY ages 16 to 24. TWC is seeking a waiver of this rule to extend the use of ITAs to ISY.

2. Actions the State has taken to remove state or local barriers

There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers that would impede implementation of the requested waiver.

3. State strategic goal(s) and Department of Labor priorities (e.g. expansion of apprenticeship, improved employer engagement, etc.) supported by the waiver

This request is for a statewide waiver to grant ISY ages 16–21 the same participant choice options that OSY have by allowing workforce area staff to use ITAs when appropriate to provide ISY with education and training.

On May 30, 2024, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) conditionally approved this waiver request for PY 2024 and 2025 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2026). Of the ISY receiving training services, 10 percent in PY 2023 and 11 percent in PY 2024 were funded through ITAs.

Boards have used ITAs to fund training for ISYs enrolled in the following programs:

- Nursing, including CNA, LVN, and RN
- Welding and welding technology
- TTDR 500 Tractor Trailer
- Pre-apprenticeship programs, including plumbing and electrical
- Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC)
- Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers
- Dental assistants

Boards view this waiver as an opportunity to promote apprenticeship programs and the use of pre-apprenticeship standards, with a focus on nontraditional industries and occupations. This waiver will also help ISY living in rural workforce areas to overcome the unique economic and employment challenges facing rural and often remote Texas communities.

Once a youth enrolls in a WIOA program as an ISY, the youth maintains the ISY status until they exit the program. Excluding ISY from receiving ITAs undermines WIOA's goals to expand program options, increase program flexibility, and enhance customer choice. DOL states in the preamble to the WIOA Final Rule that ISY age 18 or older may access ITAs through the Adult program. This is problematic in that it excludes ISY from entering ITA-funded educational and training programs that may be critical to ISY who drop out or are at risk of dropping out of school. Youth caught in this gap are susceptible to leaving the

workforce program and not achieving the education, training, and certifications that develop the skills employers require and lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Successful program participation most often results in individuals who exit and no longer require TWC's services. However, some participants continue to need services. These individuals are best served not by exit and re-enrollment in the Adult program but by continued service through the current program and with help from staff who know the individual and their needs.

This waiver would permit Boards to provide certain ISY with ITAs. Such flexibility would provide workforce area staff with the necessary flexibility to use youth formula funds, when appropriate, to meet the individual training and employment needs of certain at-risk ISY participants without delays. Such delays may be caused by untimely procurement processes to contract with training providers through standard youth channels. Without access to ITAs for these youth, Boards may need to contract with a school for delivery of one program to a single individual. Boards would be required to track performance for ISYs using ITAs.

14 of Texas' 28 Boards used this flexibility to fund ISY in training during PY 2024. 75 ISY participants benefitted from ITA-funded (dual-credit, apprenticeship, or stand-alone) training programs that focused on skilled trades such as nursing and other healthcare careers.

Approval of this waiver request would allow TWC to meet the following state goals:

- **Increase ISY access to educational and training programs:** Providing Boards with the flexibility to use ITAs to provide education and training for ISY would increase the number of available workforce opportunities that are provided to youth and help at-risk ISY pursue education and training that would lead to meaningful work and economic self-sufficiency.
- **Decrease delays in service delivery:** By providing the flexibility to use the programs that are made available through the statewide ETPL for all youth, Boards will be able to connect students to necessary trainings. Delays caused by procurement may result in participants missing enrollment deadlines and being required to wait a full semester to begin training programs.

This waiver request aligns with DOL's policy priorities in that it:

- increases access to and opportunities for the education, training, employment, and support services that youth need;
- ensures that at-risk ISY do not fall into a regulatory gap that could prevent them from receiving the education and training necessary to secure meaningful work and economic self-sufficiency; and
- supports WIOA's goals to expand program options, increase program flexibility, and enhance customer choice.

4. Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver

Disrupting a youth participant's access to education and training services increases the probability that they will not complete the program. The approval of this waiver would enable Boards to provide seamless service continuity to ISY who drop out of school or who

are at risk of dropping out of school. Through this waiver, ISY who drop out of school would not be required to exit the youth program and then wait 90 days to re-enroll as an OSY.

By eliminating the 90-day period between ISY exit and OSY or adult enrollment, TWC expects that the waiver will be able to increase the number of at-risk ISY who will be able to enroll in and complete education and training programs.

TWC projects more than 25 percent of Texas' ISY enrolled in postsecondary training programs will use ITAs to fund training from PY 2026 through PY 2027.

5. Individuals, groups, or populations benefiting from the waiver

ISY who drop out of school or who are at risk of dropping out of school

6. How the State plans to monitor waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information

Upon DOL's approval of this waiver request, TWC will communicate the waiver allowance to Boards and workforce system partner programs. TWC will monitor progress under this waiver by reviewing monthly performance reports that are submitted by the Boards through regularly scheduled conference calls with Board executive directors and through TWC's monitoring and performance accountability system. TWC will report waiver outcomes in the state's WIOA Annual Report. If the state requests renewal of this waiver, then TWC will provide the most recent outcomes data available.

7. Assurance of State's posting of the request for public comment and notification to affected Local Workforce Development Boards

TWC included this waiver request as part of the agency's PY 2024–2027 WIOA Combined State Plan 2-Year Modification when the plan was presented for public comment from November 12 – December 12, 2025.

Before posting the plan for public comment, TWC notified all Boards and sought their input regarding this waiver request.

WAIVER REQUEST 2

Local Performance Accountability Flexibility

1. The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the State would like to waive

TWC is seeking a waiver from WIOA §116(c) pertaining to local performance accountability measures for Subtitle B.

2. Actions the State has taken to remove state or local barriers

There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers that would impede implementation of the requested waiver.

3. State strategic goal(s) and Department of Labor priorities (e.g. expansion of apprenticeship, improved employer engagement, etc.) supported by the waiver

TWC requests a waiver from WIOA §116(c) to allow greater flexibility when contracting performance measures with the Boards to allow TWC to promote the further integration of services within Workforce Solutions Offices.

Specifically, TWC is requesting the flexibility to modify Board performance measures. Under this proposed waiver, TWC will continue to track and report the core indicators of performance at both state and Board levels as required by WIOA §116. However, the waiver will give TWC the continued flexibility to select among the statutory Title I measures and develop other measures to be used in Board contracts. TWC is interested in developing Board-contracted measures that support the integration and minimization of local administrative burden while making the statutorily prescribed measures more useful to the Boards.

On May 30, 2024, DOLETA approved this waiver request for PY 2024–2028 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2029). Prior to WIOA, under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), TWC had a similar waiver that provided flexibility in selecting and developing local performance accountability measures. This waiver was in place for more than 10 years and allowed TWC to use a set of integrated outcome measures that were aligned with the old WIA common measures but were applicable to all participants, regardless of program. Through the Local Accountability Flexibility Waiver, TWC was able to improve program integration and streamline the agency's performance accountability model.

However, the implementation of WIOA resulted in the loss of the waiver as it reintroduced a focus on "siloed" program outcomes rather than purely customer-focused considerations into the Texas workforce system. WIOA's requirement to contract separate indicators of performance by program unnecessarily siloes service delivery and may lead to the development of a barrier to integration that TWC was able to largely remove under the prior waiver.

While this proposed waiver would provide TWC with the flexibility to select Board performance measures, WIOA §116(g) will continue to provide sanctions for a Board's failure to meet any of the WIOA performance measures. Although the approval of this waiver would provide TWC with additional flexibility in determining which measures to formally contract to the Boards, accountability will not be impacted, as TWC would still apply the sanction provisions of WIOA §116(g) to those measures that are formally contracted.

Approval of this waiver request would allow TWC to meet the following state goals:

- **Increase the integration of services to customers:** Boards are responsible for implementing many federal and state workforce development programs, which enables them to integrate service delivery; however, programs are partially driven by how performance is measured. Programs with different measures of success require different means of management. Rather than focusing on employers' needs and finding job seekers to fill those needs, staff must focus on the specific outcome expectations of the program that funds the services that the customer receives.
- **Better alignment in performance accountability at the state, local, and service provider levels:** Because Boards are responsible for numerous workforce development programs, the coenrollment of customers in multiple programs is becoming increasingly commonplace. Therefore, TWC believes that the most

effective way to evaluate Boards and to promote accountability is to use integrated performance measures.

- **Providing greater flexibility to Boards in designing and implementing one-stop services:** By eliminating program-specific measures and applying integrated performance measures across all programs, TWC will promote service-delivery designs that are based on the needs of its customers, including employers, rather than siloed program requirements.

This waiver request aligns with DOL's policy priorities in that it:

- supports employer engagement by promoting service-delivery designs that are based on employer needs;
- improves job and career results by identifying employers' needs and connecting employers with job seekers to meet those needs;
- promotes integrated case management across multiple programs, as WIOA envisions; and
- maintains and enhances state and local performance accountability.

4. Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver

The approval of this waiver would result in the continued administrative relief that would remove barriers to coenrollment and promote more integrated case management across multiple programs, as WIOA envisions. TWC strongly supports the concept that programs with similar outcome objectives should be measured in a similar fashion.

Approval of this waiver would continue to allow the streamlining of administrative processes, resulting in maximized resources focused on employment outcomes.

5. Individuals, groups, or populations benefiting from the waiver

Waiver beneficiaries include the following:

- Employers
- Job seekers
- Incumbent workers
- Local Workforce Solutions Office staff

6. How the State plans to monitor waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information

Upon DOL's approval of this waiver request, TWC will communicate the waiver allowance to Boards and workforce system partner programs. TWC will monitor progress under this waiver by reviewing monthly performance reports submitted by the Boards through regularly scheduled conference calls with Board executive directors and through the agency's monitoring and performance accountability system. TWC will report waiver outcomes in the state's WIOA Annual Report. If the state requests renewal of this waiver, TWC will provide the most-recent-outcomes data available.

7. Assurance of State's posting of the request for public comment and notification to affected Local Workforce Development Boards

While this waiver was originally included in the PY 2024–2027 WIOA CSP and was approved on May 30, 2024, the waiver was presented for public comment from November 12 to December 12, 2025 with the PY 2024–2027 2-Year Modification.

Before posting the plan for public comment, TWC notified all Boards and sought their input regarding this waiver request.

WAIVER REQUEST 3

Reallocation Waiver

1. The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the State would like to waive

TWC is seeking a waiver from the provisions of WIOA §128(c)(3) and §133(c), regarding reallocation among local areas. This waiver would provide flexibility to TWC in redistributing funds among workforce areas.

2. Actions the State has taken to remove state or local barriers

There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver.

This waiver request was first approved on November 17, 2010, under WIA and then in 2016 under WIOA. On May 30, 2024, DOLETA approved this waiver request for PY 2024–2028 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2029), which has provided TWC with the flexibility to redistribute recaptured funds to workforce areas where the greatest potential may be realized, thus ensuring a more effective and more efficient use of federal funds. TWC will continue to apply this strategy and monitor outcome success.

In June 2006, TWC adopted rules to integrate the agency's deobligation and reallocation policies for all Board-administered funds, thus establishing consistent procedures to apply to all workforce funds administered by the Boards, in support of a fully integrated system.

The deobligation of funds involves the following multilevel review process:

- Expenditures and performance are reviewed on a monthly basis.
- If expenditures are trending low, TWC staff provide technical assistance to the Boards.
- Boards are given an opportunity to get expenditures back on track.
- If it becomes clear that Boards will not be able to meet the expenditure benchmark, discussions regarding the possible deobligation of funds occurs, and TWC receives concurrence from the Board executive directors that they will not be able to use the funds.
- The Commission takes final action in a public meeting.

The reallocation of funds involves the following multilevel review process:

- Expenditures and performance are reviewed on a monthly basis.
- If expenditures are trending high, TWC staff provides the following technical assistance to the Boards:
  - Boards are given an opportunity to explain why expenditures appear to be high.
  - Boards may identify that the numbers of participants to be served is higher than anticipated and additional funds are needed.
  - Using performance reports, TWC staff verify that the number of participants is consistent with the Board's explanation of need.
- The Commission takes final action in a public meeting.

This process has worked well for several years with all Board-administered funds. The same process for reallocation would be used for WIOA funds upon approval of the waiver.

3. State strategic goal(s) and Department of Labor priorities (e.g. expansion of apprenticeship, improved employer engagement, etc.) supported by the waiver

TWC requests to continue this waiver of the WIOA statutes relating to the redistribution of recaptured local funds and proposes to base the redistribution of WIOA funds on TWC's allocation rules (40, TAC §§800.51–800.75). TWC ensures that financial reporting will be consistent with current DOLETA requirements and that federal funds will be effectively managed for maximum service provision and program performance.

Approval of this waiver request would allow TWC to continue meeting the following state goals:

- **Redistribution of recaptured funds to workforce areas based on factors established by TWC to ensure that funds are redistributed to workforce areas with the greatest need:** TWC will determine the amounts to be redistributed to workforce areas based on factors such as:
  - requested amount;
  - demonstrated need for and ability to use additional funds to serve low-income individuals, public assistance recipients, DWs, and unemployment insurance claimants;
  - demonstrated capacity to expend the formula funds;
  - a Board's established plan for working with at least one of the governor's industry clusters, as specified in the Board's plan; and
  - performance in the current and prior program years.
- **Facilitation of maximum expenditure of recaptured federal funds:** TWC seeks to redistribute workforce funds to workforce areas that have achieved not only targeted expenditure levels but have also established performance targets. The redistribution of funds based solely on whether a workforce area achieves its expenditure target does not address performance issues, such as whether the workforce area has met employers' needs for a highly skilled and job-ready workforce.

- **Improvement of administrative efficiencies:** Approval of this waiver will serve to minimize administrative processes and the costs of contracting by using similar redistribution procedures that support workforce system integration.

4. Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver

The statutory reallocation requirements can be fulfilled; however, the amount of funds available for reallocation may be so small that it is cost prohibitive. By using TWC's allocation rules for the redistribution of funds, the agency can ensure that federal funds will be more effectively and efficiently managed for maximum service provision and program performance. Approval of this waiver may not result in significantly higher performance outcomes, but it will provide the opportunity for recaptured funds to be redistributed to workforce areas where the greatest potential impact may be realized. This waiver will streamline administrative practices, allowing for greater efficiency in meeting the workforce development needs of employers and job seekers. Furthermore, it will enhance the quality of services in those workforce areas that have demonstrated consistent performance outcomes. Approval of this waiver will result in a reduction of unnecessary administrative processes.

5. Individuals, groups, or populations benefiting from the waiver

Workforce areas that provide quality services will have access to additional resources to meet the needs of employers, job seekers, and incumbent workers. Additionally, the waiver will allow TWC to continue to promote the cost benefits of improved administrative efficiencies, encouraging Boards to further leverage resources within the workforce areas. As a result, TWC will increase services provision for disadvantaged populations and individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

6. How the State plans to monitor waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information

Upon DOL's approval of this waiver request, TWC will communicate the waiver allowance to Boards and workforce system partner programs. TWC will monitor progress under this waiver by reviewing monthly performance reports submitted by the Boards through regularly scheduled conference calls with Board executive directors and through the agency's monitoring and performance accountability system. TWC will report waiver outcomes in the state's WIOA Annual Report. If the state requests renewal of this waiver, then TWC will provide the most-recent-outcomes data available.

7. Assurance of State's posting of the request for public comment and notification to affected Local Workforce Development Boards

While this waiver was originally included in the PY 2024–2027 WIOA CSP and was approved on May 30, 2024, the waiver was presented for public comment from November 12 to December 12, 2025 with the PY 2024–2027 2-Year Modification.

Before posting the plan for public comment, TWC notified all Boards and sought their input regarding this waiver request.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

In accordance with TEGL 11-19, Change 2, issued January 6, 2025, , the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED) (Departments) determined it is appropriate and reasonable to assess performance for the PY 2026-27 WIOA Title I, III, and IV core programs, as applicable, for the following performance indicators and scores:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit

- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit
- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains
- The Overall State Program Scores
- The Overall State Indicator Scores for Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit and Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers primary indicator of performance (ESE), as required by section 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as Retention with the Same Employer. The ESE final rule requires states to report the indicator as a shared indicator across the six WIOA core programs.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	78.9%	TBD	79.0%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	78.4%	TBD	78.4%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$8,594	TBD	$8,838	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	66.8%	TBD	66.8%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	69.9%	TBD	74.2%	TBD

[1]The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Not all measures are relevant to all programs (NA is used to mark when a measure does not apply). Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, “With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs.”

DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

In accordance with TEGL 11-19, Change 2, issued January 6, 2025, , the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED) (Departments) determined it is appropriate and reasonable to assess performance for the PY 2026-27 WIOA Title I, III, and IV core programs, as applicable, for the following performance indicators and scores:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit
- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains
- The Overall State Program Scores
- The Overall State Indicator Scores for Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit and Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers primary indicator of performance (ESE), as required by section 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as Retention with the Same Employer. The ESE final rule requires states to report the indicator as a shared indicator across the six WIOA core programs.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	78.6%	TBD	78.6%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	77.0%	TBD	77.0%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$10,997	TBD	$11,188	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	74.3%	TBD	74.3%	TBD

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]
Measurable Skill Gains	60.5%	TBD	64.8%	TBD

[1]The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Not all measures are relevant to all programs (NA is used to mark when a measure does not apply). Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, "With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs."

YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

In accordance with TEGL 11-19, Change 2, issued January 6, 2025, , the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED) (Departments) determined it is appropriate and reasonable to assess performance for the PY 2026-27 WIOA Title I, III, and IV core programs, as applicable, for the following performance indicators and scores:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit
- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains
- The Overall State Program Scores
- The Overall State Indicator Scores for Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit and Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers primary indicator of performance (ESE), as required by section 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as Retention with the Same Employer. The ESE final rule requires states to report the indicator as a shared indicator across the six WIOA core programs.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]
Employment (Second	70.6%	TBD	70.6%	TBD

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]
Quarter After Exit)				
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	71.5%	TBD	71.5%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$5,515	TBD	$5,687	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	53.4%	TBD	53.4%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	69.0%	TBD	71.7%	TBD

[1]The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Not all measures are relevant to all programs (NA is used to mark when a measure does not apply). Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, “With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs.”

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

All Program-Specific Requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) appreciates the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) recognition of the importance of state flexibility in administering Employment Service (ES) activities funded under the Wagner-Peyser Act. The flexibility proposed in the June 2025 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), which would rescind the Merit staffing requirement at 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §652.215, reflects a significant shift toward empowering states to determine the most efficient and effective staffing models for delivering ES services. TWC agrees that flexibility at the state level— whether the staffing model consists of state staff members, local area staff, contracted service providers, or a combination of these—ensures a more responsive and customer-focused approach across the Texas Workforce System.

In preparation for possible changes under the NPRM, and in alignment with the approved Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan (CSP) Program Year (PY) 2024–2027, TWC continues to evaluate staffing strategies and operational models that preserve high-quality service delivery and system integration. Since the publication of Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 10-23 in November 2023, "Announcing the Release of the Wagner-Peyser Act Staffing Final Rule" and related Wagner-Peyser Staffing Final Rule guidance, TWC has been assessing the impact of current and proposed federal rules to inform long-term policy decisions. Cross-divisional teams are actively engaged in reviewing operational guidance, funding strategies, and performance-accountability measures. Policy updates are being made to reflect federal guidance and final rule changes. This includes continued revisions to Title 40, Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 800 – Subchapter B, updates to the ES Program Guide, and the development of new guides directing activities under the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) program and the ES Complaint System.

If the proposed rules are adopted, TWC will use the flexibility to refine and implement a staffing model that aligns with the unique operational needs of Texas and will remain committed to delivering high-quality, accessible services to job seekers and employers across the state.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

TWC is committed to ensuring that ES staff is equipped to deliver high-quality, customer-focused services to job seekers and employers across the state. Professional development activities are provided through a coordinated approach that includes state-led training, Board-

developed content, and ongoing technical assistance aligned with current federal requirements and proposed policy changes.

TWC provides onboarding and continuing education to ES staff through new employee orientation, structured training modules, and periodic refresher training. Staff members are trained in labor exchange operations, including job-matching techniques, customer service, and effective use of the state's automated labor exchange system, WorkInTexas.com. As needed, additional training is delivered through webinars, workshops, one-on-one coaching, and targeted modules that cover policy updates, compliance, and specialized populations, such as MSFWs.

TWC also supports local Boards in developing and implementing regionally tailored staff development opportunities. This partnership allows for customized training that reflects local labor market dynamics while ensuring statewide consistency as it pertains to service quality and compliance with federal program requirements.

3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION

TWC ensures that ES staff is trained and equipped to deliver labor exchange services through comprehensive guidance, statewide training efforts, and operational tools. The ES Program Guide serves as the primary resource for all staff that engage in ES activities, as it provides consistent direction on policies, procedures, and service expectations across the state.

ES staff receive structured onboarding, regular continuing education, and targeted training related to labor exchange functions, including the use of WorkInTexas.com, customer engagement strategies, and specialized programs, such as those serving MSFWs.

TWC will continue to update the ES Program Guide to reflect any federal rule changes and support consistent service delivery across all 28 Board areas. Ongoing technical assistance, policy memos, webinars, and collaboration with local Boards will further support the alignment of training and service delivery across the Texas Workforce System.

Staff members promptly assist claimants and employers who wish to use Workforce Solutions Office resources to transmit materials to TWC for claims and appeals adjudication purposes. Customers are given access to the space and telecommunications equipment necessary to participate in unemployment compensation hearings. Additionally, staff members support customers with dedicated resources—computers, phones, and printed materials about claim filing and claimants' rights and responsibilities. Occasionally, staff members encounter situations in which they must speak with a claims specialist on behalf of a claimant. Each Board has a dedicated phone number that staff members may use in these situations. These dedicated phone numbers are available only to Workforce Solutions Office staff to assist unemployment benefits claimants in special circumstances.

TWC's ES Program Guide:

- provides information on recognizing potential unemployment benefits eligibility issues;

- provides procedures for referring issues to unemployment insurance (UI) staff for adjudication;
- outlines claimants' responsibility to be able and available to accept suitable work;
- establishes work search requirements that claimants must meet;
- provides guidance to staff regarding the services they must enter in the WorkInTexas.com job matching system so that the job contact outcomes can be transmitted to the Unemployment Benefits System; and
- lists the specific participation and work search activity outcomes that are automatically reviewed by the Unemployment Benefits System and specifies other potential issues that require communication with UI staff.

TWC uses the Potential Unemployment Benefits Eligibility Issue reporting form, which provides examples of issues that could affect a claim and serves as a vehicle for reporting potential issues. The ES Guide and the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program Guide also outline the activities that staff must complete when assisting unemployment benefits customers.

In addition to the ES Guide, TWC provides training on unemployment claim investigations and eligibility issues as part of the UI Starter Kit. This tool kit provides information on the Workforce and UI partnership, including the services that ES staff must provide to unemployment claimants, claimant responsibilities, and the process for identifying and reporting potential issues.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE

UI claimants are priority customers at Workforce Solutions Offices. Staff members promptly assist claimants who need access to Workforce Solutions Office resources to transmit materials to TWC for claims and appeals adjudication purposes. Claimants are provided access to resources, such as workspace, computers, phones, and printed materials, so that they can participate in unemployment benefits hearings, file unemployment claims, and learn about claimants' rights and responsibilities.

Occasionally, staff members encounter situations that require them to speak with a claim specialist on behalf of a claimant with urgent and/or time-sensitive, claim-related issues. Each Board has a dedicated phone number for staff to use in these situations, which is available only to Workforce Solutions Office staff to assist unemployment benefits claimants in special circumstances.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

Wagner-Peyser (W-P)-funded ES staff members within the Workforce Solutions Offices serve all customers. However, TWC has made UI claimants a priority population, and has

charged staff members with providing claimants an array of resources and employment services that support reemployment as quickly as possible.

Among those services is the RESEA program, which incorporates the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA)-approved statistical model based on the nationally recognized Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) system. TWC uses this statistical model to analyze claimant characteristics and Board-level economic indicators as well as assess the likelihood of a claimant exhausting their unemployment benefits before returning to work. Each week, TWC identifies claimants who are most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits and who have received their first payment of unemployment benefits. Staff outreaches claimants who have likely-to-exhaust scores at or above the Board's cutoff score and provides them with appropriate reemployment services. At a minimum, claimants outreached under RESEA must receive the following core services:

- Virtual Reemployment Service Orientation video
- W-P registration
- One-on-one, face-to-face RESEA initial appointment
- UI eligibility assessment
- Résumé review
- Customized labor market information (CLMI)
- Individual reemployment plan (IRP)
- Job referral
- Weekly virtual recruiter
- Referrals to subsequent meetings (Pilot Program Phase I and II Boards)
- Big interview assignment (Pilot Program Phase II Boards)

To expand access to services, TWC has developed a Subsequent Meetings Pilot Program within the RESEA program. In addition to the required services, RESEA subsequent meetings will provide participants with services such as personalized career coaching, résumé review and development, job matching services, job application reviews and submissions, prescribed work-search activities, and referral to additional subsequent meetings or other reemployment services based on the participant's needs.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

Texas benefits from the joint administration of the unemployment compensation program and workforce services by TWC, which allows efficient coordination between programs. Network linkages coordinate and provide services between WorkInTexas.com and the Unemployment Benefits System. These linkages ensure that UI claimants who are required to register have done so and that claimants comply with their work-search requirements.

TWC also administers the work test requirement through the linkage between WorkInTexas.com and the Unemployment Benefits System. This linkage provides proper notification when UI claimants fail to register for work or comply with their work-search

requirements, including negative referral results or failure to report for an orientation or employment. UI claimants who fail the work test may be ineligible for unemployment benefits until they meet the requirement. TWC sets a weekly minimum for UI claimants' work-search activities, although each Board may raise or lower the number depending upon the local labor market.

DOLETA defines "long-term unemployed" as an individual who has been jobless for 27 weeks or longer. It is TWC's goal to assist and place individuals in jobs before they reach that point. TWC has developed a performance measure that tracks a Board's success in placing job seekers in employment within 15 weeks of their initial monetary eligibility. Boards achieve this measure by providing quality job postings and job-development activities along with increased outreach to participants to ensure better job applications and quality job referrals.

TWC employs the RESEA program to help claimants attain new employment as quickly as possible. As mentioned above, all outreached claimants are required to view the Virtual Reemployement Service Orientation video and receive staff assistance in developing an individualized employment plan (IEP) and reviewing their résumé. Claimants are offered other staff-assisted services, including job referrals and job-development activities to help in the work search. By contacting their Workforce Solutions Offices or searching TWC's Training and Education web page, claimants have access to educational opportunities, occupational or vocational training, and other resources to help develop their skills.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

TWC's joint administration of the UI program and workforce services allows for efficient communication and coordination between programs. The linked WorkInTexas.com and Unemployment Benefits System interfaces improve program coordination and service provision between programs and ensure that unemployment claimants who are required to register have done so and are complying with their work-search requirements.

TWC also administers the UI work test requirement through the network between WorkInTexas.com and the Unemployment Benefits System. The linkage confirms that proper notification is provided when unemployment claimants fail to register for work or comply with the work-search requirements, including failure to respond to an outreach request or failure to report for employment. Unemployment claimants who fail the UI work test may be ineligible for benefits until they meet that requirement. TWC's work-search requirements set a minimum number of weekly search efforts for claimants while allowing each Board to raise or lower the number according to the local labor market.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

TWC strives to assist and place individuals in jobs quickly. Boards achieve this by providing high-quality job-posting and job-development activities along with increased outreach that leads to quality referrals and helps participants develop better applications. Additionally, Texas promotes the effective and efficient coordination of the UI program and workforce

services through collaborative program administration and computer system linkages allow staff to share information, coordinate activities, and provide services to unemployment claimants. These linkages ensure that claimants who are required to register in WorkInTexas.com have done so and that claimants comply with work-search requirements.

The link between WorkInTexas.com and the Unemployment Benefits System also provides a seamless method for administering the UI work test requirement. This linkage confirms that proper notification is provided when UI claimants fail to register for work or comply with the work-search requirements, including negative referral results, failure to respond to outreach requests, or failure to report to employment. UI claimants who fail the UI work test may be ineligible for benefits until they meet that requirement.

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

TWC promotes the full integration of its workforce system across all programs, which benefits unemployment claimants by making a wide range of publicly- and privately-funded education, employment, and training programs readily available and easily accessible. By working with staff in their Workforce Solutions Offices or searching TWC's web page to explore career and training opportunities, claimants can find educational opportunities, occupational or vocational training, and other resources to help develop their skills.

TWC also assists claimants by helping them, when appropriate, develop a reemployment plan—with education and training goals when appropriate—that includes referrals to appropriate programs and resources as well as application assistance for entry into these programs. Boards also prioritize services for claimants, ensuring prompt assistance through outreach, orientations, and staff-assisted services that include developing individualized reemployment plans and evaluating labor market information to ensure that the claimant is seeking employment or training in a career field that offers potential for economic growth and financial prosperity.

E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT NEED DESCRIBES THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

Texas has one of the most robust agricultural economies in the United States, and the needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) are best understood within this context. Agriculture remains a critical employment sector in the state, and Texas continues to rank among the top states in agricultural production and exports. As of the most recent U.S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA) data, Texas farms generated approximately $32.2 billion in agricultural cash receipts, accounting for a significant share of national production. The state remains the nation's leading producer of cotton and ranks near the top in cattle, dairy, broilers, and greenhouse products.

Texas is home to approximately 231,000 farm operations, encompassing over 125 million acres of farmland, with ranches comprising nearly 70 percent of the land. Approximately 98.5 percent of farms are family-owned, operated as sole proprietorships, partnerships, or family-held corporations. Rural lands, including privately owned forests, account for roughly 86 percent of the state's total land area. Although only 12 percent of Texans live in rural areas, agriculture continues to play a vital role in local economies and employment.

In 2023, Texas exported approximately $6.6 billion in agricultural products to international markets. Cotton and beef remain top exports, along with dairy, hides and skins, and other livestock and crop-based commodities.

Given the scale and complexity of Texas agriculture, MSFWs face a range of employment, training, and housing challenges. Many live and work in rural areas with limited access to resources, transportation, and support services. As such, continued outreach, job training, and coordination with community-based organizations are essential to meeting the evolving needs of this population. These efforts ensure that MSFWs have equitable access to employment opportunities, workforce programs, as required under federal and state law.

Texas Agriculture National Rankings, 2024

National Rank	**Commodity**	**Value (Millions of Dollars)**
6	Total Agriculture Exports	7,718.6
1	Cotton	2,022.5
2	Beef and Veal	1,510.2
3	Other Cattle and Livestock Products	310.8
4	Dairy Products	550.7
4	Hides and Skins	126.3
5	Other Oilseeds and Products	113.2
5	Broiled Meat	307.4
5	Rice	119.5
6	Tree Nuts	81.6
7	Wheat	299.8
7	Other Plant Products	702.1
8	Grain Products, Processed	145.6

National Rank	Commodity	Value (Millions of Dollars)
10	Feeds and Other Feed Grains	401.7
10	Other Poultry Products	109.2
12	Corn	372.9
13	Fruits, Fresh	26.7
13	Fruits, Processed	23.4
13	Vegetables, Processed	92.1
13	Vegetables, Fresh	46.2
14	Pork	107.5

Source: Economic Research Services, USDA/ERS

Assessment of the Farmworker

Much of the planting, harvesting, packing, and transporting of Texas agricultural products is accomplished through MSFWs. Based on the most recent National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS), Fiscal Years 2021–2022 (FY 2021–2022), approximately 75 percent of U.S. crop workers identified as Hispanic, and 61 percent were born in Mexico.

Family characteristics nationally indicate that 60 percent of MSFWs are married, with many supporting children. The average income is about $23,730, with over 40 percent living below the poverty level. Education and language barriers remain significant. 74 percent of MSFWs do not have a high school diploma, and only 34 percent report speaking English "well" or "very well." Despite their vital role in securing the nation's food supply, MSFWs continue to be recognized as one of the most vulnerable workforce populations in the United States. Their essential contributions are acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), which designated them as part of the essential critical infrastructure workforce.

Several factors contribute to the vulnerability of MSFWs, including the seasonal nature of their work, exposure to extreme weather, and a rapidly changing agricultural industry influences by both regional and global markets. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), in collaboration with workforce system partners, continues to address the unique barriers faced by this population. These include the following:

- **Education and Training**—Many MSFWs have limited literacy and English proficiency. Data shows that only 34 percent speak English well, and many read below grade level.
- **Employment Opportunities**—According to NAWS data, 72 percent of crop workers remain in agriculture long term, often lacking access to career mobility or diversification.
- **Wages and Benefits**—With average annual earnings below $24,000, farmworker wages frequently fall below the federal poverty line.

- **Support Services**—TWC and its partners work to expand access to healthcare, safe housing, and sanitary working and living conditions for MSFWs.

Despite the challenges, TWC remains committed to improving conditions for MSFWs by providing equitable access to employment, training, and supportive services that help improve economic stability and quality of life.

2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE

Texas Agricultural Regions and Labor-Intensive Crop Activity

Texas remains a national leader in agricultural production, with a wide range of labor-intensive crops cultivated across multiple regions. Based on the most recent data from the USDA and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), the top five labor-intensive crops in Texas include onions, watermelons, cabbage, spinach, and cantaloupes. These crops require significant hand labor for planting, weeding, harvesting, and packing.

Peak agricultural activity for these crops typically begins in January in the southern regions of the state, such as the Lower Rio Grande Valley and Winter Garden areas. As the growing season progresses, labor demand shifts northward through the South Texas Plains and into the High Plains and Panhandle by mid- to late-summer. The Lower Rio Grande Valley and Middle Rio Grande areas experience early planting and harvesting seasons, with peak months ranging from January through June. In contrast, northern areas such as the South Plains and West Central Texas observe peak activity from June through October. This seasonal progression supports a mobile workforce that follows crop cycles across the state.

Agricultural Employer Needs

Texas agricultural employers continue to report significant labor shortages across multiple crop types. Employers rely on a combination of local labor and foreign workers, particularly through the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Worker Program. Although employers use local workers when available, many cite a lack of sufficient local labor willing to perform physically demanding seasonal work, especially in extreme weather conditions.

The demand for H-2A workers in Texas has grown steadily over the past several years, reflecting increased difficulty in filling positions locally. Employers also report growing interest in solutions that offer more consistent access to labor, including partnerships with community-based organizations and workforce development programs that provide training, housing, and transportation support. Despite these efforts, many employers continue to express concern over recruitment challenges and the need for enhanced coordination across the agricultural workforce pipeline.

Factors Affecting Agricultural Activity

Several economic, environmental, and policy-related factors influence agricultural production in Texas. Drought remains a persistent challenge across much of the state, particularly in West Texas and the High Plains, reducing yields and limiting planting decisions. Water access and irrigation capacity are also ongoing concerns in regions dependent on aquifers and limited rainfall.

In addition, input costs—including fuel, fertilizers, and equipment—have continued to rise, increasing the overall cost of production. Labor shortages and increased competition for workers in other sectors further compound workforce challenges. Additionally, ongoing changes to federal immigration and labor laws, including updates to the H-2A program, impact how agricultural employers plan their seasonal hiring.

Texas agriculture remains a critical part of the state's economy. TWC continues to coordinate with industry stakeholders, community partners, and federal agencies to monitor trends and implement responsive workforce strategies that support both employers and farmworkers across the state.

Commodity	Area Planted (in acres) 2021	Area Planted (in acres) 2022	Area Planted (in acres) 2023	Area Harvested (in acres) 2021	Area Harvested (in acres) 2022	Area Harvested (in acres) 2023
Cotton	66,367,000	7,883,000	5,579,000	5,630,520	2,018,470	2,123,000
Corn	2,150,000	2,150,000	2,500,000	1,850,000	1,610,000	2,100,000
Sorghum	2,150,000	1,450,000	2,000,000	1,870,000	1,450,000	1,550,000
Wheat	5,500,000	5,300,000	6,400,000	2,000,000	1,300,000	2,100,000
Rice	190,000	195,000	149,000	181,000	186,000	143,000
Peanuts	180,000	160,000	225,000	162,000	120,000	180,000
Soybeans	110,000	155,000	125,000	100,000	85,000	85,000
Oats	460,000	450,000	390,000	35,000	35,000	70,000

Commodity	Area Planted (in acres) 2021	Area Planted (in acres) 2022	Area Planted (in acres) 2023	Area Harvested (in acres) 2021	Area Harvested (in acres) 2022	Area Harvested (in acres) 2023
Total	**17,107,000**	**17,743,000**	**17,368,000**	**11,828,520**	**6,804,470**	**8,351,000**

Source: QuickStats Lite, NASS/USDA and Center for North American Studies, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Review of the Previous Year's Agricultural Worker Activity in Texas

The Lower Rio Grande Valley continues to lead in labor-intensive production in Texas, with a concentration of citrus, onions, watermelons, and other vegetable crops. This region, followed by the Winter Garden and South/Central regions, accounts for the majority of horticultural crop activity in the state. Based on updated USDA and TDA estimates, approximately 78,000–82,000 acres were planted and harvested for horticultural crops in 2023. Among the most labor-intensive crops were citrus (7,100 acres), chili peppers (2,400 acres), onions (12,200 acres), watermelons (22,500 acres), potatoes (15,800 acres). Smaller acreages of labor-intensive crops included pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, cabbage, strawberries, cantaloupes, peaches, pecans, and carrots. Other areas of the state, including East Texas and parts of the High Plains, have also shown recent increases in specialty crop production, contributing to a more geographically diverse pattern of labor demand. These crops often require hand labor for planting, harvesting, and post-harvest handling.

Projected Level of Agricultural Activity in Texas for the Coming Year

As seen across the country, some Texas regions that have been historically dependent on agricultural labor have experienced a shift toward nonagricultural industries, such as oil and gas, construction, and retail. While some MSFWs and their families have transitioned into these industries, others face barriers due to a lack of transferable skills. For example, in regions such as the Winter Garden and West Texas, employers in the Eagle Ford and Cline Shale formations continue to report difficulties finding workers despite there being a high demand, in part because the local MSFW population lacks the relevant transferable skills and training. This industrial shift continues to impact the agricultural labor supply. While Texas remains an agricultural supply state, workforce shortages persist across many crop sectors. Stakeholder feedback, including from major citrus grower associations, confirms that labor shortages remain a top concern.

Forecasted Crop Production for 2025

The following is the 2025 forecasted crop production according to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) August 2023 Crop Production Report:

- **Upland Cotton** was forecasted at 5.2 million bales, a 24 percent increase from 2023. Yield averaged 693 pounds per acre across 3.6 million harvested acres—an 8 percent decrease in acreage.

- **Corn** was forecasted at 250.1 million bushels, down 15 percent from 2023. Yields averaged 122 bushels per acre across 2.4 million acres (down 8 percent).
- **Sorghum** was forecasted at 103.8 million bushels, up 11 percent. Yields improved to 60 bushels per acre, with 1.7 million harvested acres (no change).
- **Soybeans** were forecasted at 2.3 million bushels, down 27 percent from 2023. Yields decreased to 27 bushels per acre across 85,000 acres.
- **Peanuts** were forecasted at 822 million pounds, up 80 percent, with yields of 3,200 pounds per acre across 257,000 acres (up 83 percent).
- **Rice** was forecasted at 10.6 million central weights (CWT), no change from 2023. However, yield improved to 7,600 pounds per acre. Harvested acreage increased to 140,000 acres (up 1 percent).

Agricultural Workers in Texas

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in May 2023 (latest)[1], Texas employed 15,210 agricultural workers in the Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupation sector. In 2021, there were approximately 9,876 active agricultural employers in Texas, based on the North American Industry Classification System codes reported for each employer's UI tax accounts. The Texas farmworker workforce is diverse and includes permanent based, migrant, seasonal, and H2-A visa workers.

[1]Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (bls.gov)

Agricultural Employers

(H-2A Job Orders Only)	PY 2021	PY 2022	PY 2023	PY 2024
H-2A Job Orders Received	1,163	1,048	1,296	1,498
H-2A Job Orders Certified	1,088	1,019	1,196	1,387

PY 2021data measures October 1, 2020–September 30, 2021; PY 2022 measures October 1, 2021–September 30, 2022; and PY 2023 measures October 1, 2022–September 30, 2023. PY 2024 measures October 1, 2023–June 30, 2024, which indicates that the number of certified H-2As will likely continue to increase at the same rate each year. Data is from the USDOL/OFLC Disclosure Data page. Based on data for PY 2024, Texas certified 13,709 agricultural workers to work in the state under an H2-A work order.

According to PY 2024 program statistics, Texas is listed, for the fourth consecutive year, in the top 10 states for H-2A filings (ninth place). This statistic reflects the growing need of Texas employers in the agricultural sector to source their workforce with H-2A workers.

The following economic, natural, and other factors affect agricultural production in Texas. The following list does not assign these factors an order of importance, as more than one issue may exist at any time:

- Increasing reliance on H-2A labor due to MSFW shortages (More MSFWs are choosing local employment opportunities due to health concerns, family obligations, and economic shifts.)
- A lack of affordable worker housing and other risk factors related to shared housing
- The cost of fuel and the associated impacts on farm operations
- Competing income opportunities in the oil, gas, and construction sectors
- Varied weather patterns, which affect agricultural production (Because of the size of Texas—268,820 square miles or 171,891,725 acres—weather varies dramatically by geography.)
- Environmental policies enforced by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Immigration law and enforcement, particularly as it affects the availability of labor for fruit and vegetable production, but also in other agricultural sectors
- Invasive species coming from other parts of the United States or from other countries, which can harm agricultural production
- The conversion of agricultural land to developed land for housing and commercial use
- Water availability affected by weather, the increased need for urban water, and issues related to the 1944 U.S.-Mexico Water Treaty ("Treaty Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande")
- Uncertainty of trade agreements with Mexico and the global economic impact of tariffs that affect agricultural imports and exports

Economic Impact of Import-Export Activities with Mexico

Mexico and Texas have a long agricultural history matched by the long border that we share. The Mexican farmworker has been working on both sides of the border for centuries as a key contributor to the United States recovery during and after World War II. Their knowledge of similar farmlands and agricultural practices, as well as their work ethics, are praised by Texas' farm owners to this day, more so than other nationalities of MSFWs. The United States and Mexico have negotiated several international treaties and conventions designed to improve the economy and wealth distribution, including commercial trade[1]. Throughout the past 50 years, Mexico has become the United States' main source of produce imports.

Refer to "Economic Impacts of U.S. Imports of Fresh Produce from Mexico by 2030" for more information.

Imports from Mexico

Produce imports from Mexico have become a major source of economic activity in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Imports of produce and products from Mexico to the United States during 2022, including fresh, frozen, and processed fruits, vegetables, and nuts, totaled $18.7 billion. More than 98 percent of these imports entered the United States by land ports between Mexico and Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Fresh fruits and

vegetables, which are nearly 89 percent of the total imports, totaled $16.6 billion. These imports were shipped in 590,906 forty-thousand-pound truckloads. Approximately 55 percent of the United States' fresh fruit and vegetable imports from Mexico entered through Texas land ports, arriving in 325,467 truckloads valued at $11.6 billion. The report projects that, "Over the next 7 years, produce imports from Mexico are expected to grow, much of this growth coming into the United States via Texas. In an effort to quantify how much United States produce imports from Mexico are expected to grow by 2030, a linear trend forecasting approach was used to estimate the volume and flow of imports based upon trends that were present from 2007 to 2022. Linear trend analysis was conducted to develop a baseline estimate. This is a conservative approach because no significant changes are considered; therefore, it represents a baseline for growth in imports from Mexico and assumes that the future will be reflective of the past. Further it is assumed that the mix of imports will remain relatively stable over the same time period.

Based upon the assumptions above, it is estimated the United States fresh produce imports from Mexico via truck will increase to 763,416 truckloads by 2030, a 29.2 percent increase above 2022 levels (Figure 1 below). Most of this growth will occur through Texas ports with imports expected to grow by 32.4 percent to 430,772 truckloads. By 2030, Texas is estimated to account for 56.4 percent of all United States produce imports from Mexico as compared to 55 percent in 2022. Arizona, the second leading state for these shipments, is forecast to have 201,427 truckloads of fresh produce in 2030, a 28.4 percent increase from 156,878 trucks in 2022. New Mexico is also anticipated to have a notable increase of 67.1 percent to a total of 16,295 trucks from the 9,754 trucks in 2022. The projected growth in imports will contribute to the border economy in general and to the Texas economy in particular."

Estimated Economic Impact

The economic impact of produce imports from Mexico through Texas demands important considerations. Direct economic activity attributed to the produce import industry was $9.27 billion during 2022, requiring an additional $16.21 billion in economic activity from supporting industries for a total economic impact of $25.48 billion. By 2030, this is expected to grow to $12.27 billion in direct activity and $21.86 billion in supporting activity for a total of $34.13 billion in economic activity throughout the Texas and United States economy. The report concludes, "For produce imports going through Texas alone, the total economic activity to support the additional imports will be $34.13 billion, along with 204,519 jobs."

Summary of Economic Activity from United States Produce Imports from Mexico over Texas Land Borders, 2022 and 2030 Forecast

Economic Activity Indicators	**2022 (in millions)**	**2030 Forecast (in millions)**
Retail	$4,822	$6,377
Wholesale	$3,322	$4,397
Truck Transportation	$902	$1,194
Other	$223	$301

Economic Activity Indicators	2022 (in millions)	2030 Forecast (in millions)
Retail	$4,822	$6,377
Total Truck Loads	325,467	430,772
Total Direct Economic Output	$9,269	$12,269
Total Supporting Economic Output	$16,208	$21,861
Total Economic Output	$25,478	$34,130
Total Jobs Supporting Produce Imports	168,196	204,519

Source: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA and Center for North American Studies, Department of Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University/Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service/Texas A&M AgriLife Research

Exports from Texas to Mexico

In 2022, Texas agricultural exports to Mexico totaled approximately $5.55 billion, accounting for roughly 19% of all U.S. agricultural exports to Mexico, which equates to $28.5 billion. This reflects a more than sixfold increase compared to 2018, when Texas imports to Mexico were valued at $863.3 million.

While publicly available data does not provide a detailed breakdown of Texas' 2022 exports by animal versus plant products, nor a commodity-level split (such as cotton or beef), the overall trend highlights Mexico's importance as a key market for Texas agriculture. More recent data indicates that U.S. agricultural imports to Mexico overall grew to roughly $30.2 billion in 2024. [1] United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) signed on July 1, 2020, replaced the North America Free Trade Act (NAFTA).

[2] See Agrilife's report "The Food and Fiber System and Production, Agriculture's Contributions to the Texas Economy," January 2023.

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWS IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

MSFW Characteristics

Characteristics of MSFWs include the following:

- Education: The educational level among MSFWs tends to be low, many do not have a high school education or HSE.
- Language: MSFWs generally lack the ability to speak and read English and sometimes lack the ability to read Spanish.
- Economic Status: The income level of MSFWs frequently falls well below the poverty level.
- Certain parts of Texas tend to have a larger number of undocumented farmworkers.
- Citizenship: Large percentages of MSFWs are citizens of Mexico or of a Central American country or are of Mexican or Central American ancestry.
- Communication: In addition to Spanish speaking MSFWs, other workers may include H-2A workers from Eastern Europe and South Africa. These workers often use a variety of spoken dialects.

Challenges to providing employment services and addressing barriers to employment for MSFWs include:

- The migrative nature of their work, which often means that they do not remain in one location long enough to receive social services, education, or skills development training.
- The majority of farmworkers do not have medical insurance or ready access to medical services, making them extremely vulnerable to serious illnesses.
- Because of the unpredictability of inclement weather and natural disasters affecting crop production, workers are sometimes displaced and lose income. Most MSFWs have limited English proficiency and are unable to communicate effectively with social services counselors and other individuals involved in delivering much-needed services.
- Public transportation is not available in most rural communities.

TWC, Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards), and Workforce Solutions Office staff are developing and sharing strategies to meet the following needs:

- Low skills in education/literacy/computers—Workforce Solutions Office staff is trained to identify signs and behaviors that indicate a job seeker with education, literacy, and language barriers. Staff provides one-on-one assistance to those needing individual service.
- Providing resources and workforce solutions training programs and services.
- Workers may lack transportation to the work sites—Board and Workforce Solutions Office staffs work with local community- and faith-based organizations and other entities to provide temporary transportation services during peak production seasons.

- Childcare for field workers—Workforce Solutions Office staff works with local community- and faith-based organizations and other entities to provide temporary childcare during peak production seasons.

- Limited knowledge of social and workforce services available—Workforce Solutions Office staff shares information with MSFWs regarding the workforce services available and support services available from community-based organizations.

- Access to services provided by social service agencies and changes in local service delivery systems—Social service organizations sponsor fairs and events where Workforce Solutions Office staff provides information regarding local services available to MSFWs and their families. Fairs include attractions such as entertainment, door prizes, and refreshments donated by participating and sponsoring entities. Other sponsored events include employer job fairs, all of which encourage trust and relationship building between MSFWs and outreach staff.

Other resources for overcoming employment barriers include:

- Spanish-language brochures—Workforce Solutions Offices designated as MSFW significant and bilingual offices provide Spanish-language brochures regarding available services. Such services include adult education and literacy programs, which provide English language, math, reading, and writing instruction that is designed to help individuals succeed in the workplace, earn a high school equivalency diploma, and/or enter postsecondary education or career training.

- Workforce Border AllianceBoards along the Texas-Mexico border collaborate to overcome MSFW literacy and language barriers. This collaboration has contributed to resulted in creative and effective progress toward meeting the employment and public assistance needs of MSFWs.

- Regional Community Partnership Network Groups—MSFW significant Workforce Solutions Offices are working to establish community network groups to strengthen community resources that are made available to MSFWs, including working with the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee, Motivation, Education, and Training (MET, Inc.).

- Community partnerships—Board and Workforce Solutions Office staff simultaneously engage in the development of partnerships with educational, housing, and support services, and other community- and faith-based assistance providers.

- Access to technology—Boards provide computers in public locations (usually county courthouses or libraries) and encourage community- and faith-based organizations to refer MSFWs to the resources. MSFWs can also call Workforce Solutions Offices toll-free to inquire about or access services.

- Electronic service delivery—Boards promote up-to-date information to agribusinesses, rural areas, and colonias through online systems such their local website, TWC's website and WorkInTexas.com. These systems ensure easy access to information, user-friendly data, and allow communication through public access automation points.

4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

See e.4.A

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES

Outreach Activities

The MSFW outreach program takes the full range of employment services directly to MSFWs where they live, work, and gather. The MSFW outreach program provides the framework necessary for Workforce Solutions Office staff to locate, contact, and enhance the employability of MSFWs in Texas. Outreach specialists may provide other assistance at the point of contact or at the Workforce Solutions Office. If needed services are not available through the Workforce Solutions Office, outreach specialists then make referrals to other agencies and community- and faith-based organizations that provide appropriate assistance.

TWC and Workforce Solutions Offices' goals are to offer MSFWs employment and training referral services, benefits, and protections, including counseling, testing, and job training referral services that are qualitatively equivalent and proportionate to services provided to non-MSFWs.

To accomplish this goal, TWC has identified the need for 37 outreach workers to sufficiently contact the majority of MSFW in each service areas in the state. Outreach specialists help with work registration and job leads, information about the complaint system, and the submission of complaints and referrals for support services. Outreach specialists in certain Workforce Solutions Offices are equipped with iPads and laptops to provide live job searches and job posting referrals on site.

Staff will conduct year-round outreach activities in all service areas, and MSFW outreach staff members will maintain familiarity with the labor market and needs of local MSFWs. To be most effective, outreach specialists must understand the issues that are unique to MSFWs and be able to speak the language spoken by a significant portion of the state's MSFW population.

TWC will target outreach activities to MSFWs who are not being served through regular workforce center intake activities. To accomplish this, outreach staff will:

- conduct field visits to agricultural worksites and informal gathering areas where MSFWs live or work;
- maintain a planned outreach schedule with weekly field visits conducted during peak agricultural seasons for each service area with a MSFW population; and
- include in the outreach schedules covered counties and ZIP codes, number of visits, estimated number of contacts, and the record of.

TWC will ensure that each service area is staffed with qualified staff trained in serving MSFW populations. Specifically, TWC will:

- ensure that each significant Workforce Solutions Office has access to at least one full-time outreach staff member trained in MSFW rights, complaint system procedures, and farmworker program coordination;
- ensure that these staff members offer MSFWs the full range of employment services available to all job seekers; and
- maintain documentation to demonstrate that staff in all service areas meet the MSFW staffing and training standards in 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §653.111 and participate in related professional development annually.

All MSFW outreach activities conducted by TWC will support and align with the operational framework outlined in the State's Agricultural Outreach Plan. TWC will ensure that:

- each service area submits a quarterly field schedule that includes geographic areas to be covered, the number of out-in-the-field days per week, and key target area work locations;
- the majority of field outreach activity will occur in the fields, homes, and gathering places of MSFW workers during peak harvest seasons;
- distribution of materials outlining ES services and worker protections;
- follow-up contacts, as needed, to support service referrals and complaint assistance; and
- outreach logs include the date, location, number of MSFWs contacted, services offered, referrals made, and any follow-up actions required.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has proposed rescinding the requirement that states use state Merit staff to deliver Wagner-Peyser (W-P) Employment Services (ES) (20 CFR §652.215). If this rule is finalized, TWC may revise this plan to reflect a more flexible staffing model that aligns with the needs of Texas.

Outreach specialists are responsible for preliminary referrals to employment and training, state and federal agency information, community resources, and job-placement functions by completing the following actions:

- Contact MSFWs to explain the services available at Workforce Solutions Offices.
- Solicit jobs, training opportunities, and employment-related services for MSFWs.
- Notify MSFWs of job openings and of their rights and benefits under state and federal employment-related laws. Provide information on the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System, including sexual harassment and human trafficking.
- Assist MSFWs who cannot or do not wish to visit a Workforce Solutions office in completing their registration in the WorkInTexas.com system, filing work registrations, completing employment applications, facilitating access to skills

development and training, preparing worker complaints, scheduling appointments, and arranging for transportation.

- Provide information about services available through electronic means and how to access this information.
- Identify MSFWs seeking employment according to guidelines of the federal regulations and make the initial and follow-up outreach contacts to assist MSFWs in becoming employed or improving their employability.

Outreach specialists also perform the following partnership activities:

- Coordinate efforts with agricultural and nonagricultural employers, program operators, community- and faith-based organizations, and education and training providers
- Attend staff trainings, either virtually or in person, that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) Wage and Hour Division conduct, focusing on agricultural employment and other similar topics.
- Present information, virtually or in person, to school students.
- Connect, virtually or in person, to local public and private community agencies and MSFW organizations to establish and enhance community referral networks.
- Provide advocacy group presentations in person or virtually.
- Coordinate with other office partners in serving MSFWs.
- Distribute MSFW-assistance brochures, including the farmworker rights brochure.
- Perform joint outreach and recruitment in cooperation with Texas' NFJP grantee, MET, Inc.

Outreach specialists refer MSFWs to their nearest Workforce Solutions Office and to ES staff that perform the following job placement activities:

- Provide agricultural and nonagricultural employers with information, services, and assistance related to labor issues and needs.
- Help employers with entering job postings in the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) and in WorkInTexas.com.
- Refer qualified MSFWs from the MSFW Outreach Log and from previous contacts through follow-up activities when there is a job or jobs available for referral or any other follow-up activity needed.

B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH STAFF. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND

CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED LAW COMPLAINT SYSTEM ("COMPLAINT SYSTEM" DESCRIBED AT 20 CFR 658 SUBPART E), INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWS IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

To ensure that outreach staff and Workforce Solutions Office staff members receive technical assistance and professional development to improve services to MSFWs, TWC is developing training and technical assistance in the following areas:

- MSFW equity ratio and minimum service-level performance indicators—proper identification and coding of MSFW customers
- MSFW regulations, participants enrolled under the Wagner-Peyser Act, MSFW accountability performance measures, and recommendations for related enhancements to services, including outreach, engagement, and career pathways
- Strategies for strengthening collaboration with Workforce Solutions partners
- Workforce Solutions Office coordination and intake procedures
- Data collection requirements for reportable ES services, Equity Ratio Indicators, and accountability measures
- MSFW carryover applicants (WorkInTexas.com active file) and the impact on Equity performance measures
- Annual staff training conducted by the following:
    - EECO
    - Texas Attorney General, Human Trafficking section
    - Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Inc., which provides legal services to MSFWs
    - DOL Wage and Hour Division
    - U.S. Department of Justice, Immigrant/Employee Rights section
- Statewide in-person or virtual WorkInTexas.com web-based training on MSFW enrollments.
- Virtual migrant coalition and service-provider meetings throughout the state
- Services for agricultural employers as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) with emphasis on the supply and demand areas of the state
- Annual training on the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System
- Agricultural employer seminars throughout the local workforce development areas

- Yearly staff training
- Employment Service Guide, which includes provisions pertinent to MSFW in general, ES and Employment Related Law Complaint system, and the National Job Registry for H-2A Temporary Agricultural Job Posting requirements
- Service delivery, outreach, and reporting for the MSFW program
- Complaint procedures related to MSFWs, including informal resolution, apparent violations, and the submission of a complaint on the appropriate forms and timely reporting
- Program integration strategies for MSFWs
- ARS procedures and consequences
- Establishing local community partnerships (for example, bringing community groups together, formalizing the traditional migrant subcommittee groups, and forming coalition meeting groups)
- Identifying opportunities to co-enroll and integrate program services with MET, Inc., Texas' NFJP grantee, and other career services programs
- TWC efforts to develop local, regional, and state planning strategies in the agricultural industry with emphasis on supply and demand areas of the state for workers
- Coordinating agricultural business forums focusing on pertinent issues that affect both agricultural employers and workers, including laws that affect the agricultural industry sector
- Coordinating a pre-harvest forum for MSFWs, including migrant education, workforce services, community-based organizations, and farmworker organizations
- Facilitating and coordinating agricultural industry engagement with the workforce system
- Developing strategies to increase opportunities for the MSFW summer youth programs to implement goals and objectives that include a tracking system, coenrollment, and coordination with YouthBuild programs

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES

Outreach Activities

The Texas workforce system supports the delivery of core services within local communities to assist individuals who need education and training to obtain the basic skills that will enable them to find sustained employment and become self-sufficient. Workforce Solutions Office staff receives professional development to ensure that each staff member knows about core programs whose purpose is to provide high-quality services to both job seekers and employers.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

To ensure that Board and Workforce Solutions Office outreach staff members receive technical assistance and professional development, as outlined in 20 CFR 653.107(b)(7), to improve services to MSFWs and employers, TWC plans to provide training and technical assistance virtually and in person in the following areas:

- MSFW equity ratio and service-level performance indicators—proper identification and coding of MSFW customers under the Wagner-Peyser Act program
- Strategies for strengthening collaboration with Texas Workforce Solutions partners and other organizations serving MSFWs in their workforce areas
- Summary of farmworker rights; Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Water, Rest, and Shade initiatives; migrant education programs; and other support service programs throughout Texas and the nation
- Workforce Solutions Office coordination and intake procedures
- MSFW carryover applicants (active Wagner-Peyser application in WorkInTexas.com) and the impact on Equity performance measures
- MSFW program service delivery, outreach, and reporting
- Complaint procedures related to MSFWs, including informal resolution, apparent violations, and the submission of complaints on proper forms timely reporting
- Program integration strategies for MSFWs
- ARS procedures and consequences
- Establishing community partnerships (for example, bringing community groups together to formalize the traditional migrant subcommittee groups and coalition meeting groups)
- Identifying opportunities to coenroll and integrate program services with MET, Inc., Texas' NFJP grantee, and other career services programs
- Initiatives to develop local, regional, and state planning strategies for workers in the agricultural industry, with emphasis on supply and demand areas of the state
- Coordinating agricultural business forums and compliance seminars focusing on pertinent issues that affect agricultural employers and workers, including laws that affect the agricultural industry sector
- Texas Workforce Solutions system and MET, Inc. participation in joint outreach and recruitment efforts designed to identify additional MSFWs and immediately expand the range of available services
- Coordinating a pre-harvest forum for MSFWs through community-based migrant education, workforce support, and farmworker organizations

- Facilitating and coordinating agricultural industry engagement with the workforce system
- Developing strategies to increase opportunities for the MSFW summer youth programs to implement goals and objectives that include a tracking system, coenrollment, and coordination with YouthBuild programs

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS

The State's Strategy

TWC will continue to coordinate efforts with DOL's NFJP grantees and other agencies and groups.

TWC entered a statewide memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the NFJP grantee in Texas, METs, Inc., effective January 31, 2014. This MOU was updated in February 2023 and will expire on February 29, 2028. As the DOLETA designated grantee, MET, Inc. operates the NFJP program in Texas. This MOU helps to establish and demonstrate effective outreach coordination coupled with increasing registration activities by MET, Inc. staff and ES staff. The MOU was revised to reflect WIOA language, support and improve coordination and joint outreach responsibilities, expand on core programs, and describe performance accountability measures.

TWC and the NFJP grantee in Texas maintain an effective working relationship by coordinating outreach efforts with Boards and community service providers through quarterly meetings.

The referral and placement of MSFW customers remain a challenge for state workforce systems. The capacity to share responsibility for this constituency and efficiently coordinate available resources to leverage workforce areas' effectiveness and improve the customer service experience is crucial. Texas encourages the coenrollment of MSFW customers in services administered by TWC, Boards, and the NFJP grantee in Texas. The State Monitoring Advocate (SMA) examines coenrollment activity during the annual review of each MSFW-significant Workforce Solutions Office.

The advantages of TWC's statewide MOU with the NFJP grantee in Texas include the following:

- Develop a streamlined information exchange process that improves the currency and accuracy of shared information
- Coordinated activity among organizations, including immediate access to services
- Planned participation in joint outreach and recruitment efforts designed to increase customer identification and expand services for MSFWs
- Increased staff awareness of emerging issues within the MSFW community
- A vehicle for periodic review and assessment of the quality of services provided to MSFWs

TWC's SMA meets quarterly, virtually or in person, with the NFJP grantee in Texas to discuss improving the coordination and administration of the employment and training services offered to MSFWs. Additionally, the SMA meets regularly with the local MET regional coordinators and staff during the MSFW monitoring reviews at the local level to identify opportunities to improve shared responsibility.

This streamlined approach allows new and improved client programs to receive immediate intervention and fully integrate all programs with the Boards and contract managers. It also allows TWC to:

- provide Board oversight to fully implement WIOA-required changes with our NFJP partner; and
- provide technical assistance and training on the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System to local Workforce Solutions Office staff.

Outreach Plan for MSFW in Texas

TWC outreach staff and the state's NFJP grantee staff conduct outreach efforts to the MSFW population. Coordination efforts include, but are not limited to:

- providing required information regarding partner programs and/or services during outreach;
- conducting joint outreach; and
- reporting outreach activities and contacts to the other party.

Outreach plans are shared and compared to identify efforts that can be combined to identify areas where outreach and/or service delivery is inadequate.

Strategies are developed to ensure that service delivery collaboration exists for MSFWs in areas where no TWC MSFW outreach staff members are present. This may include the use of technology and other outreach protocols, as well as collaborative partnerships with other state, regional, or local social service agencies.

The state's NFJP grantee responsibilities are as follows:

- Encourage direct service providers throughout the state to enter into MOUs with the local Workforce Solutions Offices. These MOUs should describe the specific types and levels of shared responsibilities, participant processes, and joint outreach and case management strategies.
- Ensure that all NFJP participants are registered in WorkInTexas.com and, when appropriate, recorded in the TWC's case management system for reporting purposes as needed for their career development.
- Work with the TWC MSFW outreach staff in the development of joint outreach strategies, coordination of participant data files, and coenrollment processes; professional development opportunities for NFJP partner and TWC outreach staff; and the exploration of ways to better serve out-of-school MSFW youth.

- Ensure that data for federal reporting is shared in a timely manner.

5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS

II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES

Services for MSFWs and Agricultural Employers

To meet agricultural employers' needs, Texas Workforce Solutions staff will continue to promote the Agricultural Recruitment System to improve the agricultural referral process by performing the tasks in person or virtually, that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Integrating services for MSFWs, agricultural employers and workers
- Identifying workers who are job-ready when arriving at the work site
- Providing employers with industry information, farmworkers' rights, and support services.
- Engaging agricultural employers to determine short- and long-term employment and training needs.
- Serving agricultural employers by creating local and regional economic employment opportunities for MSFWs
- Developing strategies to:
    - facilitate and coordinate the engagement of the agricultural industry into the workforce system;
    - assist in the creation of permanent year-round jobs within the agricultural industry; and
    - determine the need for a skilled and sustained agricultural workforce.
- Helping employers analyze state and local data on peak production seasons and recruiting an adequate labor supply through ARS
- Promoting the usage of the ARS with Boards' demand and supply areas, as well as encouraging state-to-state coordination
- Collaborating and coordinating with the Texas Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, to increase viability and sustainability in agricultural areas of Texas

TWC has created communication resources to support Texas Workforce Solutions partners in providing meaningful services to agricultural employers and MSFWs. These resources are intended to help find solutions to their employment and training needs. TWC provides these resources by means of the following:

- Electronic service
- Media and printed information
- Organizational coordination and outreach

Additionally, TWC's MSFW manager , in coordination with the SMA, and the Boards partner with agricultural associations to provide educational seminars for employers and to distribute information on various employment topics and services.

Additionally, the MSFW manager updates and publishes the Texas Directory of Farm and Ranch Associations. This publication lists contact information for state organizations with agricultural business interests. This directory and other resources are included on TWC's Agricultural Services web page, which provides links to numerous agriculture-related reports.

Boards base the provision of agricultural employer and MSFW services on the strategies outlined in their local service delivery plan. Each plan details the programs that the Board provides through the Workforce Solutions Offices under its direction. Additionally, Boards have established business solutions units (BSUs) to reach out to employers. The goal of BSUs is to understand the needs of their business communities, including agricultural employers, by collaborating with MSFW outreach workers, community partners, chambers of commerce, and industry associations.

BSUs help businesses recruit qualified MSFWs while also helping job seekers find employment suited to their skills. The Board's BSU staff address the following issues:

- Lack of transportation to work sites—Board and Workforce Solutions Office staffs work with community- and faith-based organizations and other entities to provide temporary transportation services during peak agricultural seasons.
- Limited knowledge of state and federal employment laws and regulations—Workforce Solutions Office staff hosts forums to educate employers and agricultural crew leaders on state and federal laws and regulations.
- Lack of communication between growers and support organizations—Workforce Solutions Office staff facilitates communication between growers (such as cooperatives) about MSFWs' specific needs and community-based organizations that provide support services.
- Lack of skilled workers—Workforce Solutions Office staff coordinates short-term training to support local crops and farming (for example, forklift certification, food safety, and how to obtain a commercial driver's license [CDL]).
- Lack of facilities and/or staff to screen and interview potential MSFWs—Workforce Solutions Office staff provides space in the Workforce Solutions Office for agricultural employers to interview workers. Workforce Solutions Office staff also provides intake and referral activities at the employers' locations.

- Limited administration of farm labor contractors—Workforce Solutions Office staff provides forms and instructions for completing crew leader registration, ensures that farm labor contractors' registration cards are current, and maintains crew leader logs in the offices.

Limited or inadequate housing—ARS requires employers to provide no-cost housing to workers who cannot reasonably return to their place of residence after work each day. This is one of the challenges employers face when using ARS, especially in providing suitable housing to families.

B. MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS

TWC partners with agricultural associations to provide educational seminars for employers and distributes information on various employment topics, such as the ES and Employment-Related Law Complaint System. Through these seminars and other interactions with agricultural employers, TWC strives to expand and improve services.

In collaboration with other TWC areas, these special units are a resource to help Boards implement strategies that increase coordination among federal and state agencies and private organizations. The MSFW manager and SMA continue their efforts to encourage the use of ARS to link employers that need agricultural labor in Texas with the areas of the state that can potentially supply MSFWs. TWC continues to encourage Boards to think of new and innovative ways to serve agricultural employers and engage communities in rural development.

Workforce Solutions Offices, MSFW management, and the SMA continue to provide information on the ES and Employment-Related Law Complaint System at community-agency partnership meetings in areas of Texas that have significant MSFW populations, at training sessions and conferences conducted by the Human Trafficking Task Force, and at meetings and training sessions held by legal advocacy, state, and federal agencies, and community- and faith-based organizations.

Outreach specialists assist with work registration and job leads. They also ensure that information about the ES and Employment-Related Law Complaint System, such as farmworker rights brochures, is available in both English and Spanish, assist MSFWs in submitting complaints, and make referrals for necessary support services. Certain Workforce Solutions Offices equip outreach specialists with iPads and laptops to provide live job searches and job posting referrals on site.

Workforce Solutions Offices will conduct year-round outreach activities in all service areas. Workforce Solutions Office staff members who are responsible for outreach maintain familiarity with the labor market information and the needs of local MSFWs. To serve this population effectively, outreach specialists must understand the issues that are unique to MSFWs and be able to speak the language spoken by a significant portion of the state's MSFW population.

Outreach specialists are responsible for taking the following actions:

- Contacting MSFWs to provide information and explain the services available through local Workforce Solutions Offices
- Notifying MSFWs of job openings and of their rights and benefits under state and federal employment-related laws
- Identifying MSFWs seeking employment, according to guidelines of the federal regulations at 20 CFR Parts 651 and 653 (The initial and follow-up outreach contacts are made to assist MSFWs in becoming employed or improving their employability.)
- Providing information on the ES and Employment-Related Law Complaint System, including sexual harassment and human trafficking
- Helping MSFWs who are unable or unwilling to go to a Workforce Solutions Office, completing work registrations and applications, preparing worker complaints, and arranging appointments and transportation
- Providing information about services available through electronic means and how to access this information
- Presenting information to schools about migrant education and other relevant programs in the state
- Outreaching with local public and private community agencies and MSFW organizations to establish community referral networks
- Providing advocacy group presentations
- Coordinating with other office partners in serving MSFWs
- Distributing MSFW-assistance brochures
- Performing joint outreach and recruitment activities in partnership with Texas' NFJP grantee, MET Inc.
- Attending staff training conducted by EEOC, DOL's Wage and Hour Division, and TWC
- Providing agricultural and nonagricultural employers with information, services, and assistance related to labor issues and needs
- Referring MSFWs to the nearest Workforce Solutions Office to receive services
- Referring MSFWs from the MSFW Outreach Log and from previous contacts through follow-up activities when there is a job or jobs available for referral

To meet agricultural employers' needs, Texas Workforce Solutions will continue to improve the agricultural referral process, including but not limited to the following:

- Integrating services for farmworkers and agricultural employers and workers
- Identifying workers who are job-ready when arriving at the work site.

- Providing employers with industry information, farmworkers' rights, and support services
- Engaging agricultural employers to determine short- and long-term employment and training needs
- Helping employers analyze state and local peak production seasons and recruit an adequate labor supply
- Collaborating and coordinating with the Texas Department of Agriculture Office of Rural Affairs and Development to increase viability and sustainability in agricultural areas of the state
- Using the job-matching process for temporary agricultural work on an intrastate and/or interstate basis through ARS*

*Texas is primarily a labor supply state for ARS.

TWC has created a variety of communication resources to support Texas Workforce Solutions partners in providing meaningful services to agricultural employers and farmworkers. These resources aim to help find solutions to their employment and training needs. TWC provides these resources by means of the following:

- Electronic service
- Media and printed information
- Social media
- Organizational coordination

Additionally, TWC, in partnership with agricultural associations, provides educational seminars for employers. MSFW manager and/or the SMA distributes information on various employment topics such as the Employment Services and Employment-Related Law Complaint System. Through these seminars and other interactions with agricultural employers, TWC is able to expand and improve workforce services and supports.

MSFW manager also updates and publishes the *Texas Directory of Farm and Ranch Associations*. This publication lists contact information for state organizations with agricultural business interests. This and other resources are available on TWC's Agricultural Services web page, which links to numerous agriculture-related reports.

TWC bases agricultural employer and farmworker services on the Boards' local service delivery plan and TWC's approved Program Year (PY) 2024–2027 Combined State Plan (CSP). As Boards continue to adapt to the Wagner-Peyser Final Rule, local implementation of ES activities and staffing models may vary. BSUs, in coordination with MSFW outreach workers, engage agricultural employers and community partners to address workforce needs and align with evolving TWC policy and federal guidance.

BSUs help businesses recruit qualified MSFWs and help job seekers find employment suited to their skills. Local BSU staff address the following issues:

- Lack of transportation to work sites—Board and Workforce Solutions Office staff work with community- and faith-based organizations and other entities to provide temporary transportation services during peak agricultural seasons.
- Limited knowledge of state and federal employment laws and regulations—Workforce Solutions Office staff hosts forums to educate employers and agricultural crew leaders on state and federal laws and regulations.
- Workforce Solutions Office staff facilitates communication between growers, such as cooperatives, regarding MSFWs' specific needs and community-based organizations that provide support services.
- Lack of skilled workers—Workforce Solutions Office staff coordinate the provision of short-term trainings (including forklift certifications, food safety, and CDL) to support local crops and farming operations.
- Lack of facilities and/or staff to screen and interview potential MSFWs—Workforce Solutions Office staff provides space in the Workforce Solutions Office for agricultural employers to interview workers. Workforce Solutions Office staff also provides intake and referral activities at the employers' locations.
- Limited administration of farm labor contractors—Workforce Solutions Office staff provides forms and instructions for completing crew leader registration, ensures that farm labor contractors' registration cards are current, and maintains crew leader logs in the offices.
- Limited or inadequate housing—ARS requires employers to provide no-cost housing to workers who cannot reasonably return to their place of residence after work each day. This is one of the challenges employers face when using ARS, especially in providing suitable housing to families.

MSFWs in Texas often face poverty, low academic achievement, limited English proficiency, and inadequate job training and readiness, as well as various social problems. The Texas workforce system's approach focuses on assisting MSFWs to overcome these barriers to acquire and retain productive employment. To this end, Workforce Solutions Offices reaffirm existing community partnerships and continuously establish new community partnerships to meet the needs of local businesses and MSFWs, while providing job seekers with job search workshops, job placement services, referrals, and support services.

C. MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. WORKERS (ARS) TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

To meet agricultural employers' needs, Texas Workforce Solutions outreach staff coordinates with the Business Services staff to ensure that the agricultural referral process is successful by performing activities in person or virtually that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Integrating services for farmworkers and agricultural employers and workers
- Identifying workers who are job-ready when they arrive at the worksite

- Providing employers with industry information, guidance on farmworkers' rights, and support services
- Engaging agricultural employers to determine short- and long-term employment and training needs
- Helping employers analyze state and local peak production seasons and recruit an adequate labor supply
- Using the job-matching process for temporary agricultural work on an intrastate and/or interstate basis through ARS*

*Texas is primarily a labor supply state for ARS.

TWC has created a variety of communication resources to support Texas Workforce Solutions partners in providing meaningful service to agricultural employers and farmworkers. These communication resources are intended to help find solutions to their employment and training needs. TWC provides these resources by means of the following:

- Electronic service
- Media and printed information
- Social media
- Organizational coordination

Additionally, TWC, in partnership with agricultural associations, provides educational seminars for employers. MSFW manager and/or the SMA distributes information on various employment topics such as the ES and Employment-Related Law Complaint System. Through these seminars and other interactions with agricultural employers, TWC strives to expand and improve workforce services and supports.

MSFW manager also updates and publishes the "Texas Directory of Farm and Ranch Associations." This publication lists contact information for state organizations with agricultural business interests. This and other resources are available on TWC's Agricultural Services web page, which links to numerous agriculture-related reports.

TWC bases agricultural employer and farmworker services on the Boards' local service delivery plan and TWC's approved CSP. As Boards continue to adapt to the Wagner-Peyser Final Rule, local implementation of ES activities and staffing models may vary. Local BSUs, in coordination with MSFW outreach workers, engage agricultural employers and community partners to address workforce needs and align with evolving TWC policy and federal guidance.

Boards receive assistance from TWC in implementing strategies that address these issues through coordination among federal and state agencies and private organizations. TWC's efforts encourage the use of ARS to link employers needing agricultural labor in Texas. Using ARS enables employers to recruit workers without the use of foreign labor.

TWC also collaborates with Boards to develop innovative ways to serve agricultural employers and engage communities in economic and rural development. To these ends, TWC

coordinates and facilitates Agricultural Employer Forums in conjunction with multiple partners in agriculturally significant areas of the state, including the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Middle Rio Grande, Upper Rio Grande, and South Plains Board areas. The Forums are a cooperative effort between federal and state governments, community-based organizations, and the private sector to keep the public informed about issues that impact agricultural employers and workers. The Forums cover laws that affect the agricultural sector. They also provide education, outreach, and information on regulations. The results from these forums include improved compliance by employers, better coordination of services, and better working conditions for agricultural workers. Depending on the needs of agricultural associations and employers, the following agencies may participate:

- Texas Department of Agriculture
- Internal Revenue Service
- U.S. Social Security Administration
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- U.S. Department of Justice/Office of Special Counsel
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)
- TWC's Tax Department
- DOL, Wage and Hour Division
- DOLETA
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- MET, Inc.
- Agricultural institutions of higher education
- Local and regional water allotment and irrigation districts

6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. COLLABORATION

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

Organizational Coordination

TWC, along with the 28 Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards), work collaboratively to provide services to agricultural employers and employees. TWC has grant

agreements with each Board that provide funding and establish minimum service delivery expectations.

Boards enter MOUs with their required workforce partners to improve service delivery and service referrals for employers and workers. Additionally, TWC maintains an MOU with MET Inc., Texas' NFJP grantee, to provide coordinated services that help both agricultural employers and MSFWs. The SMA meets regularly with MET, Inc. staff, monitors significant MSFW offices, and holds sessions with the local MSFW outreach staff to improve participant coenrollment and service delivery to MSFWs. Over the next four years, the SMA will hold joint sessions with MET, Inc. to identify areas of improvement and enhance service delivery through joint outreach and other activities such as local fairs and agricultural events.

TWC is a long-standing partner of the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council, and the SMA recently became an active member of the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force. The Office of the Attorney General of Texas scheduled training sessions during calendar year 2024 for MSFW outreach staff. These training sessions will focused on increasing awareness of labor trafficking in the agricultural sector and providing information on how to refer MSFW complaints to the local task force.

Additionally, TWC has had a long-standing partnership with Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Inc. (TRLA). The SMA holds monthly virtual meetings with TRLA to coordinate outreach and assistance to MSFWs across significant MSFW offices. TRLA staff conducts training sessions for MSFW outreach staff. These training sessions will focus on workers' rights and the legal assistance that is available to MSFWs through TRLA. Over the next four years, the SMA plans to strengthen the relationship with TRLA and improve the quality of the training sessions.

The SMA serves on the Regional Farm Labor Enforcement Coordination Committee, which holds quarterly virtual meetings focused on enforcing protections for MSFWs according to federal law. The plan intends local DOL Wage & Hour and OSHA task forces, which serve MSFWs at the local level, to establish MOUs with the committee. The SMA has initiated conversations with the DOL office located in McAllen. Over the next four years, TWC intends to help establish similar MOUs with all DOL regional offices across the state.

The SMA has been engaging in the efforts of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) by participating in several webinars and training sessions sponsored by the Identification and Recruitment Consortium (IDRC), which focuses on enhancing the Migrant Education Program. The SMA has been working with TEA to establish an MOU that focuses on sharing data to locate MSFWs across the state and coordinate efforts to assist MSFWs and their families. This MOU will enhance the partnership and provide webinars and other means to disseminate information to the MSFW population in the state.

TWC's Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program and Employer Engagement & Community Outreach (EECO) department share MSFW data and coordinate efforts to provide MSFWs and their families with updated labor market information and available services through the W-P ES program. TWC held a webinar informing Boards of the connection points between all programs that benefit the MSFW population. Over the next four years, the SMA plans to coordinate several webinars relating to these topics.

TWC has initiated conversations with the Texas Farm Bureau to enhance the partnership and provide trainings and seminars to employers within the Agricultural Industry regarding the Agricultural Recruitment System and such topics as the H-2A visa program.

The SMA partners with the Texas Farmworker Coalition, the National Center for Farmworker Health, the Texas Department of Agriculture, Su Clinica, the University of Texas, Family Support Services of Amarillo, TRLA, TEA, and others. The SMA holds monthly virtual meetings with these organizations to discuss trending topics affecting MSFWs and to disseminate information regarding upcoming events and local assistance programs that benefit MSFWs. The SMA plans to enhance these partnerships and sponsor local events focusing on MSFWs and MSFW safety.

B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons; therefore, and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

Transmission of the Combined State Plan (Plan) includes assurances that interested parties were given an opportunity to review and provide public comment on the Plan; such parties include, but are not limited to, WIOA §167 National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees, other appropriate farmworker groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested employer organizations.

This agricultural outreach plan was posted for public comment from____ through____.

C. DATA ASSESSMENT

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Performance Indicators

TWC continues working with Boards to maintain and improve performance for the equity-ratio indicators and minimum service-level indicators. For the past several years, to ensure

that optimal performance is being adequately measured, Texas has worked to meet established equity-ratio and minimal service-level indicators. Staff anticipates the enhancements to WorkInTexas.com (web-based data entry and reporting), paired with staff training, are anticipated to improve reporting efforts

Meeting minimum service level indicators for PY 2023 continues to present challenges for TWC. The following conditions contribute to outreach and engagement challenges:

- Many workers move to take jobs in other states—the measurable outcome, assuming UI wage data matches with TWC's data, is that out-of-state farmworkers augment performance accountability measures.
- MSFWs often reside in areas that experience high rates of unemployment.
- Many states do not require UI claimants who file interstate claims to register in the local job-matching system or to participate in the UI availability-for-work requirement.
- Wages are often lower in areas with high unemployment, which contributes to the increase in migration of local workers to other parts of the state and to other states.
- Employers may pay for MSFWs' labor on a piece-rate basis.

Texas supplies other states with MSFW labor. TWC bases performance accountability standard on rolling quarter UI data, which contributes to the accuracy of measuring accountability measures. Historically, the state measured placements at an hourly rate, thus excluding placements paid by piece rate. Therefore, reported performance does not accurately reflect all activity in the wages at placement category. Workforce Solutions Office staff may increase placements and meet the minimum service level indicators by developing strategies to serve MSFWs by:

- emphasizing services that will place more MSFWs in agricultural and nonagricultural jobs;
- providing local agricultural peak-season plans to help agricultural employers and engage in the agricultural sector while creating job placement initiatives for MSFWs;
- referring MSFWs to Workforce Solutions Office services;
- promoting the use of electronic, self-service systems to encourage MSFWs to take an active role in their job search;
- coordinating with Workforce Solutions Office partners to foster an effective outreach program—including maintenance of the MOU with MET and other farmworker organizations and community partners; and
- promoting economically self-sustaining, year-round jobs through skills development under NFJP, MET Inc., and curriculum development with local community colleges.

D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

The updated AOP refocuses and strengthens the methods of outreach and service delivery rather than a fundamental change in goals. Texas has been able to meet most of the measures for the MSFWs in significant regions of the state. With the new final rule, Texas is looking at the following to improve service throughout the state:

- Currently, there are only nine dedicated outreach staff across Texas. To improve coverage for MSFWs in all service areas, the state intends to add 28 additional outreach staff members.
- For the MSFW Equity Ratio and Minimum Service-Level Performance Indicators, Texas will establish procedures to ensure proper identification and coding of MSFW customers in data collection. Improvement efforts will include training on equity ratio and service-level performance indicators, the addition of an outreach coordinator, and regular meetings with stakeholders.
- In the area of data collection and reporting, past limitations in procedures restricted performance measurement. The State plans to strengthen this by providing WorkInTexas.com training, offering training on the collection of service and outreach data, and continuing to monitor data reporting practices.
- Finally, to address inadequate coordination and service delivery by regional partners, Texas will provide training for workforce partners, implement joint outreach and training activities, identify opportunities for coenrollment with MET, and expand training on the Wagner-Peyser Act program.

E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The Texas SMA has had the opportunity to review and comment on the agricultural outreach plan and has approved the plan as submitted.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	Yes
4. SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.	Yes
5. The SWA has established and maintains a self-appraisal system for ES operations to determine success in reaching goals and to correct deficiencies in performance (20 CFR 658.601).	Yes

WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

In accordance with TEGL 11-19, Change 2, issued January 6, 2025, , the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED) (Departments) determined it is appropriate and reasonable to assess performance for the PY 2026-27 WIOA Title I, III, and IV core programs, as applicable, for the following performance indicators and scores:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit
- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains
- The Overall State Program Scores
- The Overall State Indicator Scores for Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit and Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers primary indicator of performance (ESE), as required by section 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as Retention with the Same Employer. The ESE final rule requires states to report the indicator as a shared indicator across the six WIOA core programs.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	65.8%	TBD	65.8%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	66.3%	TBD	66.3%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$8,116	TBD	$8,338	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	NA	NA	NA	NA
Measurable Skill Gains	NA	NA	NA	NA

[1]The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Not all measures are relevant to all programs (NA is used to mark when a measure does not apply).

Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, “With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs.”

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

A standards-based approach helps students learn the most relevant skills, rather than allowing textbooks to dictate classroom practice. Multiple standards and expectations are integrated in instructional activities to promote college and career readiness and the development of a skilled workforce. The use of technology in the classroom prepares adult education students for the demands of a digital work environment. State efforts support an ongoing commitment to ensure that content standards are relevant and meet the needs of today's students.

All Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)–funded providers' curriculum must align with TWC AEL Content Standards. Developed in 2016, the Content Standards increase the rigor and relevance of adult education through alignment with the following established assessments and standards:

- Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (TCCRS)
- State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)
- Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
- Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE)
- Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA)

The Content Standards are reviewed and revised approximately every two years to ensure that Texas has been responsive to the changing educational needs of adult learners seeking employment and postsecondary education opportunities. Revisions are as follows:

- 2016: Texas AEL Content Standards (new academic standards)
- 2019: Texas AEL Content Standards 2.0 (Standards 2.0), Alignment with Industry Clusters: Advanced Manufacturing; Construction and Extraction; Healthcare Sciences; and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- 2021: Texas AEL Content Standards v. 3, Standards for Parent/Family and Citizen/Community Member
- 2023: Texas AEL Content Standards v. 4, Standards for Digital Literacy

Each iteration of the Content Standards undergoes rigorous professional development and training rollout to AEL providers to ensure proper implementation.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

Activities are as follows:

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace AEL activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that:
  - provides AEL activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
  - is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Special Rule: Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for AEL activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for AEL activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

Texas state law establishes adult education as a department within TWC, and TWC serves as the administrative entity for AEL programs (Title 4, Texas Labor Code, §315). Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), TWC is the eligible agency with sole responsibility for administering and supervising policy for AEL activities in the state.

Texas' vision for AEL is to deliver education, workforce, and postsecondary education and training outcomes for students through innovative service delivery and partnerships that result in statewide alignment, efficiency, and accountability. The AEL program aligns its strategy with the state's workforce goals to support increases in employment, postsecondary education and training transition, skills, and secondary school credential attainment through

demonstrated approaches that integrate workforce system services and leverage local and state partnerships.

TWC AEL solicits request for applications (RFAs) from eligible providers with demonstrated effectiveness, as defined in WIOA, to serve eligible individuals in the adult education population who:

- have attained 16 years of age;
- are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; and
- meet one of the following criteria:
    - Are basic skills deficient
    - Do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education
    - Meet the definition of an English language learner (ELL)

The eligible entities that are selected will provide academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level, with the goal of increasing an individual's ability to:

- read, write, and speak the English language and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- transition to postsecondary education and training; and
- obtain sustainable employment.

Eligible entities may include, but are not limited to, the following, provided that the entity has demonstrated effectiveness in providing AEL services:

1. Local education agencies
2. Community- or faith-based organizations
3. Volunteer literacy organizations
4. Institutions of higher education/learning
5. Public or private nonprofit agencies
6. Libraries
7. Public housing authorities
8. Nonprofit institutions that are not described in (1) through (7) and are able to provide literacy services to adults
9. Consortiums of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in (1) through (8)

TWC's commitment to innovative and cost-effective programming is apparent in its RFA. In the 2018 RFA, Texas incorporated and specifically indicated the considerations specified in

WIOA §231(e) as grant award requirements that eligible providers must meet. The considerations were scored as narrative questions in the RFA, and offerors were required to provide a detailed narrative to demonstrate how they planned to meet each consideration. The same process was continued in the 2023 RFA.

TWC is committed to making long-term investments that enhance the capacity of providers to implement research-based models—including programs that support accelerated options, such as integrated education and training, Workplace AEL, and distance learning—and service models that support the career advancement of ELLs, including Integrated English Learning and Civics Education (IEL/CE). However, these services may be impacted if program funding does not continue. TWC promotes innovative career pathways programs and opportunities for students to gain incremental marketable skills and reach their goals. The use of innovative strategies, which often leverage interagency collaborations, allows programs to generate positive employment and workforce training outcomes while simultaneously serving more students at a full range of functional levels. Each program year, TWC negotiates enrollment targets with grantees for Basic, Integrated Education and Training (IET), and Intensive Services (as defined below), requiring that a portion of funds be dedicated to the creation and implementation of career pathway models.

TWC encourages activities that uphold the following priorities, including those that leverage workforce development opportunities and efficiencies that are offered through concurrent enrollment:

- Expand integration with the local workforce development boards (Boards) and Workforce Solutions Offices (one-stop centers), including concurrent enrollment in workforce system programs including WIOA, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, the state child care program, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, vocational rehabilitation (VR), and other services provided at Workforce Solutions Offices

- Establish or expand partnerships with community colleges and other training organizations that create greater opportunities for adult learners to transition to postsecondary education and workforce training programs, including concurrent enrollment in IET services

- Develop innovative strategies to meet the needs of adult learners based on local resources, including strategies that:

    - enhance, support, and use educational delivery mechanisms that facilitate the immediate delivery of services to students; and

    - facilitate student progress from standard AEL programs toward a service-delivery activity that results in employment, a training certificate or certification, or a college degree

All grant recipients are required to implement the following AEL activities.

Adult Education activities, including activities based on the state's AEL Content Standards and the statutory definition in WIOA, include academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

- read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- transition to postsecondary education and training; and
- obtain employment.

Literacy activities, including services for individuals with low levels of literacy, are aligned with the statutory definition in WIOA. Literacy activities support an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and to compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

English Language Acquisition (ELA) activities, as defined in WIOA, include programs of instruction that are designed to help eligible individuals who are ELLs achieve competency in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language. ELA activities address transition requirements outlined in 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §463.31 and appropriately lead to:

- the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and
- transition to postsecondary education and training; or
- employment.

ELA activities include proven or evidence-based instructional techniques and learning strategies that support oral skills development for ELLs. AEL grant recipients meet the requirements of 34 CFR §463.31 through a variety of strategies, including, but not limited to:

- offering educational and career counseling services through the Career Pathways Navigator that is offered by each grant recipient and enables ELLs to transition to postsecondary education and training or employment;
- alignment of curricula with the state Content Standards and alignment with the reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension needs of ELLs; and
- enrollment in Career Pathways programs, including IET and IEL/CE.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education activities, as defined in WIOA, are aligned with education services that are provided to ELLs who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials obtained in their native countries, and enable such adults to be successful in the English language and acquire basic as well as advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and may include workforce training.

AEL Letter 04-16, Change 2, issued July 21, 2021, and titled "Implementing Integrated Education and Training English Literacy and Civics Education—Update," provides revised policy guidance on this issue and states that AEL grantees must use funds allocated under WIOA §243 to provide IEL/CE services in combination with IET. IEL/CE funds must be used to support the IET service approach, including the provision of Workforce Training and

Workforce Preparation Activities, as outlined in AEL Letter 02-16, Change 1, issued October 13, 2016, and titled "Implementing the Integrated Education and Training Service Approach—Update." IEL/CE must:

- include instruction in literacy and English as a second language (ESL);
- include instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation;
- be provided in combination with IET, including AEL activities, Workforce Preparation Activities, and Workforce Training outlined in AEL Letter 02-16, Change 1;
- be designed to prepare adult ELLs for and place them in unsubsidized employment in high-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and
- be integrated with Boards and Workforce Solutions Office functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Integrated Education and Training (IET), as defined in WIOA, provides AEL activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for educational and career advancement. AEL grant recipients have been implementing and expanding IET programs as an option under the required Career Pathways components and will continue these services. Projects are being implemented with the required elements of contextualized and concurrent AEL, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training.

Workforce Preparation Activities, as defined in WIOA, are activities, programs, and services that are designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in using resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining the skills necessary for a successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, training, or employment.

AEL grant recipients implement workforce preparation activities as part of contracted WIOA §243, IEL/CE Services, and through IET.

Family Literacy Activities, as defined in WIOA, are activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs and that integrate each of the following activities:

- Parent or family AEL activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency
- Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children
- Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and how to be full partners in the education of their children
- An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences

Family literacy activities are required under Texas law and are integrated into AEL grants across the state.

Note: TWC AEL does not use funds made available under Title II for AEL activities to support or provide programs, services, or activities to individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law. However, TWC AEL may use such funds if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under Title II, AEL aims to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under Title II prior to using funds for AEL activities under Title II for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

Grant recipients are required to implement one of the following three services models, referred to as Intensive Services models.

Workplace Adult Education and Literacy (Workplace AEL), as defined in WIOA, are AEL activities that are offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

Services for Internationally Trained Professionals (ITPs) include, but are not limited to:

- basic skills preparation for professional credentialing exams;
- specialized career advising;
- ESL services contextualized for targeted occupations; and/or
- professional opportunities.

ESL services contextualized for targeted populations provide enough intensity to allow for rapid progress and use the appropriate English language assessment to determine whether a participant's academic or professional English skills are sufficient for academic coursework.

Transition to Reentry and Post-Release Services, as defined in WIOA, are educational programs for transition to reentry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Grantees may provide services under this category that include educational counseling or casework to support individuals' transitions to reentry and other post-release services.

Funding for initial grants and continued grant renewals is outlined in 40 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §800.68, General Administration, which refers to a needs-based formula for all Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds. Due to a review of the pending (at that time) RFA by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) as well as legislation that was passed by the 88th Texas Legislature (2023), TWC amended 40 TAC §800.68 prior to the new grants that began on July 1, 2024.

The state feels the rule changes were needed in order to comply with OCTAE's interpretation of WIOA §231(c). The rule amendments will permit the state to allow applicants to apply for unique federal funding streams separately in future statewide competitions, essentially creating a new section of rule specific to IEL/CE programs. The current RFA is the first since

this new rule was implemented. The proposed rules allow the state greater flexibility to determine how IEL/CE funds will be made available in the state's RFA.

The state is also proposing rule changes to implement passed bills from the 88th Texas Legislative Session (Regular), such as House Bill (HB) 1602, which require the state to establish a performance-based funding model focused on credential attainment. Performance measures and methodologies are being formulated to be implemented during PY 2025–2026.

The competitive RFA process ensures that the following components are incorporated:

- **Direct and Equitable Access**: TWC is committed to conducting a competitive RFA process that ensures direct and equitable access to eligible providers competing for Title II grants. Information regarding the process and application is made available via a public website and partner networks. Applicants are allowed an adequate amount of time to complete the application, based on best practices as determined by TWC's Grants Administration (GA) department, and applications are submitted in a manner that allows equitable access to all individuals, including individuals with disabilities.
- **Fair and Equitable Evaluation**: Applications are evaluated based on a scoring rubric as described in the application and based on the required WIOA evaluation considerations and other factors as determined by TWC. The evaluation team members include diverse professionals, including TWC staff members who are not affiliated with TWC AEL. Award amounts are determined by evaluation results and area demographic and needs analyses, to ensure that addressing the purpose of WIOA is the basis for funding decisions.
- **Coordination with Local Board**: The RFA process includes a procedure to ensure that the applicable Board reviews the applications and provides comments and/or recommendations regarding the application's alignment with the strategies and goals of the local plan under WIOA §108.
- **General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Statement**: Each applicant requesting funds must include a description of the steps that the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. Section 427 of the GEPA highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, and age. Based on local circumstances, applicants must determine whether these or other barriers may prevent participation in the program or activities, and the steps to be taken to overcome identified barriers must be included in the application.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following correctional educational programs identified in section 225 of WIOA:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;

- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

TWC's AEL grant recipients use funds, as allowable, to provide educational programs for individuals in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals. Academic programs include the following:

- Basic education
- Special education programs as determined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- English literacy programs
- Secondary school credit programs
- IET
- Concurrent enrollment
- Peer tutoring
- Transition to reentry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism

As required under WIOA §225, TWC AEL provides corrections education services and services for other institutionalized individuals. To provide these services and administer related activities, TWC AEL will not use more than 20 percent of the overall 82.5 percent or greater, as described in WIOA §231. Corrections is an optional activity for grantees, and the solicitation of WIOA §225 funds is combined with the overall grant application for activities described in WIOA §231, with grantees proposing corrections activities and associated funding.

TWC continuously works to implement IET in correctional facilities (where permitted) to support the successful transition of individuals from incarceration to employment. In the spring 2021, OCTAE selected TWC AEL to participate in a national technical assistance initiative to develop and incorporate IET into corrections models that support the expansion of such models in Texas. In July 2022, through a contract with Windham School District (WSD) (the statewide school district serving incarcerated individuals), TWC began a state

leadership-funded initiative to support the expansion of IET models in correctional facilities. The implementation of the initiative has led to the expansion of IET models for individuals who are within two years of release. These models have allowed for the provision of reentry and post-release services to those who are being released. Additionally, over the past three years, TWC has disseminated best practices relating to the development of such models for AEL and workforce system stakeholders at its statewide conferences.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs under section 243 of WIOA. Describe how adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, are served in IELCE programs.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Note: Due to OCTAE's July 2022 review of TWC unpublished RFA, Texas made changes to the statewide AEL competition that was published fall 2023. Until 2023, TWC required the implementation of IEL/CE programs into all of its statewide grants. TWC AEL believes that by requiring applicants to be prepared and responsive to how they will leverage resources and coenroll ELLs across funding streams, programs will be better able to support the vast number of internationally trained professionals in Texas. OCTAE's interpretation of WIOA federal statutory language on fair and equitable access requires applicants to be able to apply for funds separately. As such, TWC AEL revised rule language to support a more robust and targeted approach to serving ELLs, especially internationally trained professionals, based on applicants that demonstrated a need for funding instead of a county-level allocation methodology, as applied to WIOA §231 funds and outlined in this combined state plan.

TWC AEL established and operates IEL/CE programs through a competitive, multi-year RFA process for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education funds per OCTAE guidance. Funding is competed for and distributed according to the process described in the RFA that was published fall 2023. In Texas, IEL/CE programs must include the IEL/CE educational services (described above in Allowable Activities and in WIOA §463.33) and

must be delivered in combination with IET activities (described above in Allowable Activities and in WIOA §463.36).

In fall 2023, TWC awarded WIOA §243 grant funds using the same RFA competitive process and timeline described above in B. Local Activities. TWC released one solicitation with two separate applications to ensure that each funding stream is distinguished to applicants. By releasing one solicitation with two applications, TWC strived to reduce the burden on applicants who historically have only had to submit one application while making it clear to new and previous applicants that options exist with separate funding opportunities. The same criteria used to determine eligibility of an applicant for WIOA §231 was used for WIOA §243, and successful applicants are subject to the same funding cycle. Applicants who applied to provide services under WIOA §243 also answered narrative questions and provided information that was specific to the provision of IEL/CE program requirements. All applications were evaluated based on the same rubric and scoring criteria for each application based on outlined federal and state considerations. All applicants had to provide narrative details and information to demonstrate how they will meet the requirements.

The new grants that started on July 1, 2024, deliver IEL/CE programs for the purpose of preparing adult ELLs for, and placing those ELLs in, unsubsidized employment in high-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency. Program design and implementation must include:

- the integration of civics engagement skills into career pathways and workforce preparation activities that are targeted to ELLs, especially professionals who hold degrees and credentials in their native countries;
- the integration of educational technology and hybrid learning models that consist of both synchronous and asynchronous learning options;
- the use of technology to support digital literacy that is appropriate for preparation in a digital workforce and responsible online civic engagement; and
- collaborative alignment with local area workforce system entities, including Boards, libraries, postsecondary institutions, and employers.

IEL/CE program services must include:

- English Language Acquisition instruction;
- Civics education instruction that emphasizes the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, and American history and government to help students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to become active and informed parents, workers, and community members;
- IET in specific occupations or occupational clusters that provide workforce training opportunities in order to prepare and place eligible participants in unsubsidized employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency; and
- collaboration with Boards to carry out the activities of the program.

Grantees are required to enter participants who receive IEL/CE services, including those receiving IEL/CE services in combination with IET, into the statewide data system using a specific code to track these participants.

Since 2014, Texas has worked to create career pathways for internationally trained professionals, using and leveraging both WIOA §§231 and 243 funding under one program design to expedite the population into the workforce. Texas has served thousands of ELLs in IET programs that have led to recognized post-secondary credentials. As the first year of this RFA concludes, and with reductions or the discontinuation of federal program funding a possibility, the impact of the required changes to the RFA and service delivery processes are currently difficult to predict. However, AEL anticipates that fewer individuals will have benefitted from IET services funded by WIOA §243.

If only WIOA §231 funds are to be awarded to the state, TWC anticipates that there will be a significant reduction in the number of individuals who will be served due to limited funding restricting the overall capacity of AEL programs.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

TWC continues to use State Leadership funds to support activities that put the statewide system in a strategic position for continuous improvement across program outcomes and for innovation in new directions related to full system integration with core programs and postsecondary education and training.

TWC will continue to focus the allowable grant funds that are made available under WIOA §222(a)(2) to carry out state leadership activities that enhance the quality and compliance of the AEL system and support the development of innovative service delivery models. Updates provided in this Combined State Plan include initiatives that have been approved by TWC's three-member Commission (Commission).

Required projects under WIOA §223 for which TWC has designated State Leadership funds and projects that will be continued or designated for development and implementation are described below.

Sec. 223(a)(1)(A) for the alignment of AEL activities with other core programs

Both the Career Pathways Professional Development Center (CPPDC), previously known as the Career Pathways Expansion grant, and the Accelerate Texas initiatives aid in the continued development of content and delivery models that support career pathways, as required under Section 223(a)(1)(A), while supporting alignment with other core programs. The CPPDC, originally approved by the Commission in June 2021 with funding being renewed annually, supports professional development (PD) through the cross training of stakeholder groups such as AEL grantees, Boards, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), and Career and Technical educational providers to improve AEL integration across WIOA programs and better serve priority populations. The CPPDC provides evidence-based professional development to stakeholders on:

- quality career pathways models;

- coenrollment across WIOA Titles; and
- strategies that support student success, system alignment, and improved performance outcomes.

The CPPDC has served AEL providers for the last three years with services ending in June 2024. Over this period, the CPPDC's objectives were reenvisioned to expand support for integration across WIOA titles. A new RFA was published in spring 2025 to solicit specific expertise in career pathways for programs and participants, and a contract is being developed with a start date of October 1, 2025.

Similarly, the Accelerate Texas initiative supports the expansion of IET models and other postsecondary transition models.

In fall 2021, as part of TWC's response to closing the middle skills gap in Texas, the Commission approved funds for a pre-apprenticeship bridge training program and other initiatives that would further expand career pathways foundations in the state. The initiative provides remediated instruction in reading and math to applicants who are transitioning into their first year of a building trades–related Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). In addition to providing support in reading and math, grant activities include workforce preparation activities and digital literacy services to ensure that participants are prepared for the rigor of the RAP.

These initiatives increase the capacity to expand, develop, and implement IET models that focus on career pathways service approaches that include workforce training, development, and integration efforts with Texas Workforce Solutions, Texas community colleges, employers, and other system stakeholders.

The pre-apprenticeship bridge training program ended December 31, 2024. Throughout the grant, 121 individuals were enrolled in the program with a 92.56 percent completion rate. Of those who completed the program, 98.21 percent achieved a measurable skills gain (MSG).

Sec. 223(a)(1)(B) for the establishment or operation of high-quality professional development programs

Due to Texas' extensive provider system and the nuanced differences in Title II services, TWC created a three-pronged approach to the delivery of PD and Technical Assistance (TA) statewide. The approach creates a triangulation of instructional, distance education/digital literacy, and career pathway content that supports Texas' collective approach to AEL services.

The Statewide Professional Development Center (SWPDC) supports the provision of high-quality PD to AEL providers and other system stakeholders by providing:

- data-driven professional planning services and implementation that is delivered through a structure of professional development institutes of routine and concentrated support to AEL providers;
- maintenance of the Texas AEL contract trainer database;
- event planning for statewide, regional, and local conference or business events;

- research activities to evaluate professional development effectiveness; and
- informational resources (including an AEL professional development web page, toll-free AEL hotline, and a resource library collection of curricula and other materials).

The SWPDC supports providers with administrative and instructional leadership content through the Leadership Excellence Academy (LEA), along with ongoing approved enhancements to the Texas Content Standards to help facilitate the publication of, and training on, any content standards revisions. The SWPDC provides quality PD and technical assistance to all AEL providers and serves as an umbrella for the other PD Centers. During 2023, the SWPDC trained AEL administrators and instructors on the Standards 4.0 updates, which include the addition of Digital Literacy Standards.

The Distance Education Professional Development Center (DEPDC) provides comprehensive, statewide PD and TA support to students and instructors through a call center for technical support, which provides:

- live chat and video services with screen sharing for one-on-one AEL instructor counseling on Remote Learning and Distance Learning instruction; and
- live chat and video service with screen sharing for one-on-one counseling for eligible student participation in Remote Learning and Distance Learning in AEL programs.

The DEPDC continues the state's legacy of providing nationally recognized PD in the areas of distance education, educational technology, and digital literacy.

The Distance Learning and Technology Integration (DLTI) Symposium, which is hosted by the DEPDC, showcases local and national presenters who are recognized as leading technology trainers. Through the Symposium, participants are exposed to technical training tools and may immediately apply what they learn. The Symposium is held each year in late spring and has expanded to reach more than 200 AEL instructors and staff in both an in-person and virtual setting.

The CPPDC supports PD to improve AEL integration across WIOA programs and better serve priority populations through the cross training of stakeholder groups such as AEL grantees, Boards, IHEs, and Career and Technical educational providers. The CPPDC provides evidence-based PD to stakeholders on:

- quality career pathways models;
- coenrollment across WIOA Titles; and
- strategies that support student success, system alignment, and improved performance outcomes.

The CPPDC will develop PD modules for instructors and stakeholders, host yearly statewide institutes and academies, expand the statewide trainer database of on-call subject matter experts, host train-the-trainer events, and develop a research-based project each year.

Professional Development for Nonprofit Adult Literacy Organizations provide PD services for tutors, instructors, program administrative staff, and trainers of nonprofit adult literacy

organizations that are collaborating partners within Texas' network of TWC-funded and non-TWC-funded literacy organizations. Services provided by these organizations include:

- training on literacy volunteer management, which includes topics such as volunteer recruitment, training, placement, monitoring, and retention;
- literacy instruction and tutoring for native English or nonnative English speakers;
- development of collaborative partnerships and data sharing relationships with AEL grant recipients, libraries, Boards, and VR;
- data sharing relationships with collaborating entities; and
- other services based on the results of a statewide needs assessment that is conducted in collaboration with TWC.

Sec. 223(a)(1)(C) for the provision of technical assistance to eligible AEL providers

All three of TWC's professional development centers also provide technical assistance as part of their scope of work. Each entity works closely with state staff to ensure that information being disseminated aligns to the state's interpretation of policy. The statewide PD system supports the following:

- The development and dissemination of instructional programmatic practices and related technical assistance, as required under §223(a)(1)(C)(i), that is based on the most rigorous and/or scientifically valid research available and supports eligible providers in implementing reading, writing, mathematics, career pathways, ELA, and distance learning practices
- The provision of training to providers relating to content standards
- The development of Leadership Excellence Academies for instructors and administrators
- The coordination of CPPDC and DEPDC activities
- Distance learning and technology development, deployment, and support, as required under §223(a)(1)(C)(iii), including increased distance learning PD and a statewide learning management system to provide online PD for staff training
- Data-driven PD planning, services, and implementation
- Routine and concentrated support to AEL grantees and providers
- The management and development of TWC's Learning Management System (LMS) called the Texas AEL PD Portal, which includes information on vetted contract trainers who are trained by the PD center
- Event planning for statewide, regional, and local conference or business events
- activities to evaluate PD effectiveness among other topics that have been approved by TWC
- The provision of information resources to the public, educators, and students

- The development of virtual learning resources relating to basic education, digital literacy, workforce preparation, and job search assistance

Sec. 223(a)(1)(D) to support the monitoring and evaluation of the quality and improvement of services and innovation expansion

The evaluation of local provider services is a priority for the AEL program. TWC staff has worked to develop a strategic evaluation and monitoring process that draws from best practices. Each of the PD center grants has a research and evaluation criteria built into the scope and grant requirements.

In July 2022, the Commission approved a $500,000 evaluation project. However, it was decided that the project's scope would be determined following the development of the statewide competition for AEL providers RFA. This decision was made in large part due to the August 2022 review of the state's RFA by OCTAE and the significant changes that were requested by OCTAE that would potentially impact the original evaluation scope preferences. TWC AEL staff have regrouped to consider the state's adult education advisory committee's recommendation to conduct a needs assessment before moving forward on the evaluation study.

Career Pathways Evaluation Study

As we continue to monitor and evaluate the current status of workforce integration across WIOA Titles I, II, and IV programs, TWC AEL seeks to gain insight into local service delivery by facilitating regional discussions with workforce system partners. The CPPDC procurement process was initiated in late 2024 to allow for a yearly convening of workforce system stakeholders across Texas to identify ways to improve local, regional, and state service integration through:

- building an approach called No Wrong Door with program partners for referrals;
- providing state-level and evidence-based recommendations to further support a "One Workforce" system (as promoted by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) in Training and Employment Notice [TEN] 13-20) in Texas; and
- developing resources related to regional career pathways ladders, cross referrals of WIOA participants to expedite services, and sector approaches for highly skilled immigrants to reenter careers.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE

The Commission may designate other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of WIOA, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Providing assistance to local providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve WIOA's objectives, and in measuring the progress of those programs in achieving objectives and meeting state performance
- The promotion of workplace AEL activities

- The continued development and dissemination of curriculum frameworks
- The continued rollout and professional development of content standards updates
- Outreaching, developing, and piloting strategies for improving teacher quality and retention
- The development and implementation of programs and services that meet the needs of adults with learning disabilities or limited English-language proficiency
- Providing performance enhancement mentor initiatives to support performance accountability
- Providing performance follow-up and case management activities
- Supporting and promoting integration efforts between workforce system partners
- Supporting the provision of AEL services to special populations
- The expansion of family literacy activities
- The provision of other activities of statewide significance that promote or support AEL activities

The following descriptions provide more detail on allowable state leadership activities for which the Commission has approved and designated Section 223 funds and may continue to provide funds and develop new initiatives. As with all AEFLA-funded grant activities, staff present initiatives for Commission consideration and approval.

AEL Performance Quality Improvement Awards

Performance Quality Improvement Awards support AEL grant recipients' project performance and innovation through the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices in the state. These awards recognize AEL grant recipients' overall program performance and coenrollment efforts with WIOA Title I programs.

Pell Grant Ability to Benefit Capacity Expansion (potential initiative)

The Ability-to-Benefit initiative provides funding to support colleges in developing services for students who lack a high school diploma or high school equivalency and qualify for Pell Grants under federal Ability-to-Benefit provisions in federal financial aid regulations. The Commission has previously approved funds for Ability-to-Benefit program models and the most recent grants ended in fall 2021.

The Math Assistance Call Center

The Math Assistance Call Center (MACC) provides just-in-time math assistance to students enrolled in AEL programs who are preparing for the mathematics portion of the TxCHSE exam or who otherwise lack sufficient skills in mathematics to participate effectively in employment, community, and/or home settings. The MACC provides 20- to 30-minute sessions of one-on-one math support to AEL participants via phone calls, screen sharing, and virtual whiteboards.

Learning Management System

LMS is a cloud-based, full-featured, off-the-shelf secure system with course registration and management for in-person, hybrid, and online training events. Funds support access to a cloud-based course library and interactive resources, a web conferencing integrated add-in, and training fees to sufficiently accommodate instructors, administrators, and software content to provide a full array of professional development services across Texas. The LMS:

- enables the statewide professional development center to deliver training through a variety of methods, including online, face-to-face, and hybrid;
- allows for content authoring, training materials storage, and content import/export;
- centralizes and automates the registration, management, and tracking of both external and internal professional development trainings and certifications at individual, subrecipient, grant recipient, and statewide levels;
- provides transcripts for staff trained through the AEL system; and
- provides a 24/7 option for PD which enables AEL staff and stakeholders to increase their skills, knowledge, and abilities.

Texas AEL Content Standards Update

Texas regularly reviews and updates AEL Content Standards, as needed, to ensure that students are being held to standards that align with the state's mission to create career pathways for all students. The Commission may approve enhancements to the AEL Content Standards to include additional competencies in the future.

Performance Enhancement Mentor Initiative

The Performance Enhancement Mentor Initiative supports poor-performing providers through intensive program support and mentoring that is delivered in coordination with high-performing peer providers. This RFA received no applicants, however, the Commission may consider future funding opportunities to address this initiative's purpose based on the availability of federal program funds.

Potential Initiatives for Special Populations

The Commission may consider creating special initiatives, depending on the availability of federal funds, that support efforts to reach special populations in receiving AEL services, such as, but not limited to, serving opportunity youth and skilled immigrants, expanding reentry and post-release service models, and providing capacity-building activities for workplace AEL models.

Employer Engagement Initiatives

As part of TWC's response to closing the middle skills gap in Texas, the Commission approved funds for an employer engagement initiative to further workplace literacy models in the state. This grant enabled grantees to offer workplace literacy activities, workplace literacy activities with employer-provided training, and workplace literacy activities with integrated education and training, leading to industry-recognized credentials. Grantees developed curricula for workplace programs, which were disseminated to workforce system

stakeholders as educational resources for job readiness and progression within the industry sector.

Through this grant, 397 participants were served. Of the participants who completed the program, 98.10 percent received MSGs. This initiative ended during the first quarter of 2025.

We will use lessons learned from the initiative to develop technical assistance and professional development content with our state professional center. We may conduct a new procurement and grant cycle if funding permits.

Statewide Virtual High School Equivalency Pilot

The Statewide Virtual High School Equivalency (HSE) Pilot program supports TWC AEL's goal of increasing the number of adults in Texas with a high school diploma or its equivalent. The initiative enables participants to connect to educational services virtually to attain such credentials. The current contracted pilot ended on August 31, 2025. However, TWC plans to reprocure this initiative if federal funding continues.

The pilot resulted in 322 individuals participating across the two providers. At the University of Texas, 51 participants engaged in the program, resulting in 19 high school diplomas and 7 Texas Certificates of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE), with two individuals entering postsecondary education. At Texas Tech University, 26 participants enrolled, yielding 3 high school diplomas, 9 TxCHSE completions, and two postsecondary transitions.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II. Describe how the eligible agency will take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA. Describe how the eligible agency will use evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State.

Ongoing Program Monitoring and Oversight

Texas is in the process of implementing a program quality model to support student success that links the evaluation of monthly program performance, information, and findings from the agency's monitoring department to just-in-time technical assistance and the deployment of targeted PD to support continuous program improvement.

The AEL department provides a Monthly Performance Report (MPR), also known as the report card, to local programs. The MPR includes a snapshot of both fiscal and programmatic performance of the grant. This is only one of nine non-NRS reports generated by the state's Division of Information, Innovation, and Insight (I|3). The reports provide data sets for all state and federal imposed performance indicators, also referred to as contracted measures in the Texas RFA. The current contracted measures are as follows:

- Enrollment Targets, including the following:
    - Total enrollment
    - Integrated Education and Training

    - Intensive Services (Workplace Literacy, Services for Internationally Trained Professionals, and Transition to Post-Release Services)
    - English Literacy and Civics—Total
    - English Literacy and Civics—Integrated Education and Training
- MSGs
- Credentials
- Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2 After Exit
- Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2–4 After Exit

The MPR shows a monthly snapshot of the above indicators and their corresponding targets by individual grantee. The MPR uses timely data gathered from the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) to measure program performance against contract deliverables as well as state and federal performance targets. TEAMS has been Texas' state-of-the-art, web-enabled system that maintains student-level data, including demographic, assessment, and outcome data, as well as class, site, program, and provider information. Aside from the state-generated reports, TEAMS users may analyze class, site, or program information by using the system-generated standard reports, often referred to as canned reports. TEAMS provides a wide range of information about adult education, including snapshots of student and program performance, personnel qualifications, and staff development activities. These capabilities, as well as other enhancements, are being integrated into the updated TWC data management system.

Additionally, AEL program staff members meet to evaluate the overall effectiveness of each program, which is measured against contract deliverables, progress toward measures, state performance measures, and expenditures. Program staff members discuss trends in data and issues of concern and develop support plans to address such issues. This provides a structure under which staff may engage TWC's Statewide Professional Development Center and other Section 223–funded PD and technical assistance support projects to address concerns.

Responsive PD efforts that are funded under WIOA § 223(a)(1)(B) is a central component of the quality model. AEL assesses the quality and responsiveness of PD through multiple approaches, including the review of local program improvement and the remediation of deficiencies that may occur due to PD and technical assistance efforts.

For example, through the quality model, a provider that consistently shows poor performance in reading or oral language scores will be advised by their AEL program support specialist or an assigned PD specialist to schedule PD in these areas. Once the program receives PD services, the AEL department monitors program improvement, which is reported in the MPR. PD is only one remedy to address program improvement and is used along with other forms of technical assistance.

Adverse Actions

If a program misses required performance levels in any one area for four consecutive months, the program is placed on a Technical Assistance Plan (TAP). TAPs use a timeline of deliverables to improve and support program function. TAP actions may include additional

targeted professional development support, one-on-one training in specific areas of weakness or concern, and technical assistance visits by TWC staff to meet and address issues. Members must meet specific benchmarks to have a TAP lifted. Programs that consistently fail to meet contract deliverables once placed on a TAP are elevated to a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Programs that fail to meet objectives beyond this point are subject to sanctions and the deobligation of program funds. TWC Chapter 800 General Administration rules on the deobligation and reallocation of AEL funds outline the deobligation criteria and the time frame in which TWC may deobligate funds from an AEL grantee that is not expending their funds or meeting performance requirements, as well as the criteria grantees must meet in order to receive reallocated funds.

Subrecipient Monitoring

TWC's Subrecipient Monitoring (SRM) department works with AEL staff to ensure that all 51 grantees are compliant and serve as good stewards of federal funds.

TWC monitors for compliance with federal and state requirements related to fiscal and programmatic accountability through the following methods:

- Desk Monitoring—Regular review and analysis of data that is submitted and validated monthly through the state's data system, TEAMS
- On-Site Monitoring—Field based fiscal and programmatic audits that are based on agency risk assessment results
- Data Validation—Virtual reviews of source documents that are used to support performance accountability, per Program Memorandum (PM) OCTAE Memo 19-1

On-Site Reviews

SRM hosts a preplanning meeting with TWC AEL staff to discuss any potential issues before the on-site visit, which gives SRM the opportunity to ask questions about specific items of interest identified during the desk review. It also provides SRM with any technical assistance items that AEL staff have reviewed and discussed with the grantee, including performance issues. The process ensures that SRM obtains an accurate review of program and financial activity and any ongoing issues. Before a review, SRM requests that the grantee submit documents for review and analysis to determine each area will be tested during on-site reviews.

Several grantees are selected annually for on-site reviews based on a risk analysis that includes both objective criteria and input from AEL. All grantees are monitored either in person or through a desk review, with all programs receiving on-site monitoring once every three or four years. Data validation is conducted with each grantee at least once during the grant cycle.

While on-site, SRM reviews expenditures that include, but are not limited to disbursements, cash management, financial reporting, and records management (including eligibility and assessment documentation). To ensure that the grantee has adequate internal controls, staff conducts interviews with key staff to confirm that internal processes for participant intake, screening, and placement comply with TWC's AEL policies. Testing samples are identified

using TEAMS and are compared to on-site records. Testing includes the review of student test scores, credentials, and MSGs.

At the end of each on-site review, SRM conducts an exit conference with the grantee, in which staff identifies any findings or areas of concern that will be identified later in an official report. The results of the SRM reviews improve the technical assistance targeted at local projects.

Data Validation

Additionally, SRM conducts an annual data validation of select grantees, as coordinated with AEL staff and required by PM OCTAE Memo 19-1. Such data validation enables the joint reporting requirements, as established in PM OCTAE Memo 17-2, to be addressed. SRM also monitors other WIOA titles, which allows for consistent processes and implementation of requirements across WIOA partner programs. This coordinated effort ensures that reported performance maintains TWC's integrity standards.

Deobligation of Funds

TWC focuses on performance to ensure that funds are used effectively when serving customers to produce positive results. Contracted performance benchmarks and performance standards highlight TWC's expectation that grantees maintain or exceed performance standards through effective service delivery and innovation. Title 40, Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §800.78 allows funds to be deobiligated if they are not being used effectively and at expected levels during specified time frames to serve individuals in need of AEL services. However, TWC staff works diligently with grantees to provide technical support and assistance in developing strategies to ensure that funds are used to serve customers efficiently and effectively, thereby mitigating risks. TWC reviews these rules and considers amendments that may provide the agency with greater flexibility to ensure that AEFLA funds are being used efficiently during the statewide grant cycle.

Self-Evaluation and Monitoring of Local Programs

As part of their deliverables, all TWC grant recipients (sole providers and lead grant recipients for consortia of providers) are required to:

- submit a detailed project plan and expenditure projections for AEL-funded activities;
- submit a detailed local professional development plan;
- develop and maintain a procedure that outlines a process for continuous monitoring of subrecipients; and
- if applicable, use TEAMS to regularly monitor program performance across all providers.

Programs use the detailed project plan as an opportunity to analyze their performance, determine the cause of areas of weakness or concern, and develop strategies for improvement in the coming year. Programs are required to tie their professional development activities to this plan to ensure adequate training and support for program improvements.

TWC AEL staff members also hold regular conference calls and biannual meetings for program members to share challenges and best practices. These forums build on what is working in the field and provide peer-mentoring opportunities.

Additionally, programs are required to regularly solicit student evaluations to assess satisfaction with curricula, instructors, and institutions.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
(regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a

Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to wioa@ed.gov at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)
2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)
3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	**Enter information in this column**
Applicant's Organization	Texas Workforce Commission
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	**Enter information in this column**
First Name	Randy
Last Name	Townsend

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	Enter information in this column
Title	Interim Executive Director
Email	randy.townsend@twc.texas.gov

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 2/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

• As required by section 427 of GEPA, applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, and age.

• Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

• Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.

• Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

• Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

GEPA Section 427 Instructions to State Applicants for their Subrecipient Applicants

The State grantee provides a subrecipient applicant seeking Federal assistance instructions and guidance for how it must comply with the GEPA Section 427 requirement. The State grantee determines the form and content of the information a subrecipient applicant must include in its application regarding the steps it proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, its local-level project or activity. For example:

• The State grantee may require its subrecipient applicant to use and submit the GEPA Section 427 form that it is required to submit to the Department; or

• The State grantee may use a State-developed form that is sufficient to meet the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

• The State grantee maintains the subrecipient applicants' responses in the State office.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

TWC grants for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)-funded activities, including those that were active from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2024, and those beginning July 1, 2024, and continuing at least through June 30, 2026 (with potential annual renewals for up to three additional years based on continued federal WIOA Title II funding), will adhere to

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) §231(c) by ensuring equitable access for eligible providers to apply and compete for grants and contracts. All of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) AEFLA-funded grants and contract opportunities are published on TWC's Procurement Portal, developed by Bonfire, and Texas.gov Grants Application to ensure equal access to application information.

TWC provides notifications to public parties that wish to be notified of these grant and procurement opportunities via GovDelivery, which they may register for on the TWC website.

TWC's most recent Request for Applications (RFA) was published on these two sites and notification was sent via GovDelivery in October 2023, with grant awards beginning July 1, 2024.

Additionally, general contract terms for all Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) contractors, including those funded under AEFLA §223 (state leadership activities) and §231, are required to comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. General contract terms for all AEFLA-funded grants require recipients not to discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, or beneficiary because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, temporary medical condition, political affiliation or belief, or citizenship, and to ensure that the treatment of employees and applicants are free of discrimination.

Regarding AEFLA administrative funds, which fund TWC staff administering the AEFLA program in Texas, TWC's equal opportunity policy conforms to all applicable federal and state laws to provide equal opportunity in employment and maintains processes to ensure nondiscriminatory practices are enforced within the agency's hiring practices. AEFLA-funded staff and TWC staff are required to take training on equal opportunity employment and discrimination prevention.

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

TWC ensures equitable access to and participation in all projects and activities conducted with federal adult education funds. The statewide AEFLA grant required offerors to describe how they effectively meet the 13 considerations under WIOA, which includes how responsive the offeror is to serving individuals with barriers who need AEL services and the ability to serve individuals with disabilities.

Programs must address the special challenges that students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries face in overcoming barriers to participation and are required to describe how individuals will benefit from equitable access to services, including access in the areas of facilities, assessment, orientation, and overall service delivery.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

TWC ensures equal opportunities for all eligible students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to participate in any project or activity carried out under the applicable programs, including AEL, and promotes the ability of such students, teachers, and beneficiaries to meet high standards. TWC ensures that local providers give equal access to, and afford equitable participation in, all such projects and activities through the monitoring and technical assistance process, and that they follow the applicable laws.

The state's RFA requires applicants to describe how they will:

- comply with the American Disabilities Act of 1990;
- identify and provide services to students with physical, emotional, mental, and learning disabilities;

- ensure that individuals with disabilities have equitable access to programs, activities, and related services; and,
- ensure that individuals have equitable access to services regardless of gender, race, national origin, color, or age.

The RFA also includes requirements that applicants demonstrate that they will be able to comprehensively assess participants to identify any barriers and disabilities, provide accessible, safe, and convenient instructional facilities, and generally ensure individuals especially those with barriers or disabilities have equitable access.

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

All grants awarded under the state's RFA are monitored to ensure they are providing equitable access as outlined in the RFA requirements and the grant recipient's application. If inconsistencies or inadequate policies or procedures exist at the local level, TWC has an adverse action procedure outlined in TWC Rule Chapter 802, Integrity of the Workforce System.

The new grants under the 2023 RFA began on July 1, 2024, and the monitoring activities began Spring 2025. These monitoring activities will assist TWC to identify early on if grant recipients are implementing assessment and service delivery options considerate of individuals with barriers to employment, including those with disabilities in accordance with TWC Rule and policies.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of

Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

In accordance with TEGL 11-19, Change 2, issued January 6, 2025, , the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED) (Departments) determined it is appropriate and reasonable to assess performance for the PY 2026-27 WIOA Title I, III, and IV core programs, as applicable, for the following performance indicators and scores:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit
- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains
- The Overall State Program Scores
- The Overall State Indicator Scores for Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit and Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers primary indicator of performance (ESE), as required by section 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as Retention with the Same Employer. The ESE final rule requires states to report the indicator as a shared indicator across the six WIOA core programs.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	43.8%	TBD	44.6%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	44.9%	TBD	45.8%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,640	TBD	$6,789	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	43.9%	TBD	44.7%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	42.4%	TBD	42.4%	TBD

[1]The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Not all measures are relevant to all programs (NA is used to mark when a measure does not apply). Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, “With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs.”

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

A. STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL.

1. ALL VR AGENCIES, EXCEPT FOR THOSE THAT HAVE AN INDEPENDENT CONSUMER-CONTROLLED COMMISSION, MUST HAVE A STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (COUNCIL OR SRC) THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA IN SECTION 105 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPLICABLE, HAS:

Select A or B:

(A) is an independent State commission

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH ASSURANCE (A)(1)(B), IF SELECTED, PLEASE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL BY REPRESENTATIVE TYPE, INCLUDING THE TERM NUMBER OF THE REPRESENTATIVE, AS APPLICABLE, AND ANY VACANCIES, AS WELL AS THE BEGINNING DATES OF EACH REPRESENTATIVE'S TERM.

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	1/0	10/2024
Parent Training and Information Center	1/0	10/2024
Client Assistance Program	1/0	10/2022
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1/0	10/2024

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	1/0	10/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1/0	10/2023
Business, Industry, and Labor	1/0	10/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1/0	10/2022
Business, Industry, and Labor	1/0	10/2022
Disability Advocacy Groups	1/0	10/2024
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	1/0	10/2024
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	NA	NA
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	1/0	10/2023
State Workforce Development Board	1/0	10/2023
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	1/0	10/2024
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1/0	10/2024
Disability Advocacy Groups	1/0	10/2024
Disability Advocacy Groups	1/0	10/2023

3. IF THE SRC IS NOT MEETING THE COMPOSITION REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 105(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND/OR IS NOT MEETING QUARTERLY AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 105(F) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, PROVIDE THE STEPS THAT THE VR AGENCY IS TAKING TO ENSURE IT MEETS THOSE REQUIREMENTS.

Not applicable. The council meets quarterly.

4. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 101(A)(21)(A)(II)(III) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT (INCLUDING HOW IT WAS OBTAINED) INTO THE STATE PLAN AND ANY STATE PLAN REVISIONS, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORTS, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS.

The Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT) meets quarterly with TWC-VR leadership as part of the RCT's quarterly meetings. During RCT quarterly meetings, TWC-VR provided updates to the RCT, including measured progress in achieving State Plan goals; the RCT provided input and recommendations regarding VR services and program matters.

RCT uses a committee structure to review and provide comments to TWC-VR. These committees are:

- the executive committee;
- the program planning and review committee, which is composed of all RCT members;
- the policy, procedures, and personnel development committee;
- the customer satisfaction and needs assessment committee; and
- the membership and education committee.

TWC-VR ACTIVELY SOLICITED INPUT FROM THE RCT ON THE STATE PLAN THROUGH TWO FEEDBACK SESSIONS HELD IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2025. THESE SESSIONS ALLOWED FOR DETAILED REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE VR SECTION, FOSTERING A COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT TO DEFINE GOALS AND PRIORITIES. THE RCT'S RESULTING WRITTEN RECOMMENDATIONS, SUBMITTED IN SEPTEMBER 2025, AND TWC-VR'S RESPONSES ARE OUTLINED BELOW.5. PROVIDE THE VR AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION FOR THE REJECTION OF ANY INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

List each recommendation/input followed by the VR agency response

Recommendation 1:

The RCT recommends TWC-VR continues to request full state funds to match all federal funds available to the State of Texas for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program as well as the Supported Employment program each fiscal year.

Response:

In the 89th Texas Regular Legislative Session, TWC-VR requested full state funds to match all federal funds.

Recommendation 2:

The RCT understands that TWC-VR had requested feedback on new counselor training and was informed the training for new counselors may be updated. The RCT Policy committee will look forward to reviewing the proposed training changes and providing additional

feedback and input to make the training as effective and useful as possible.

Response:

TWC-VR has several initiatives to enhance VR counselor training. For the Training ReDesign Project, TWC-VR will use existing internal training sources to enhance and create new training curriculum for VR counselors. TWC-VR will pilot the curriculum and solicit staff feedback to ensure the curriculum meets counselors' needs. TWC-VR will share the feedback results with RCT.

Recommendation 3:

The State Plan lists the positions for TWC-VR staff utilizing terminology known in the computer system as opposed to the titles known and referenced by staff and the council. The RCT recommends TWC-VR list the job titles as they are known and referred to, Counselor, Rehabilitation Assistants, etc. Also, the RCT requests that the counselors and program specialists are separated to get an accurate picture of the number of counselors and program specialists on staff. Lastly, we request that Transitional counselors are also separated from the list of counselors.

Response:

TWC-VR is creating a personnel table, organized by working titles, for the Combined State Plan.

Recommendation 4:

The RCT Council recommends TWC-VR review salaries of counselors, but especially new counselors without master's degrees. It is reported that many people turn down job offers due to the salary. Data shared with the council indicated the starting salary for a counselor with a bachelors in 2011 and 2025 was a difference less than $2,000. RCT is available to collaborate with TWC-VR to conduct counselor salary research and contribute information for strategic review and consideration.

Response:

TWC-VR is assessing starting salaries for VR counselors and rehabilitation assistants to meet or exceed market compensation. TWC-VR is also adjusting guidelines for starting salaries and will share the guidelines with RCT.

Recommendation 5:

The RCT recommends TWC-VR implement a Customized Employment program as a service for customers consistent with the unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities to participate and obtain competitive integrated employment. And for individuals, who, because of the nature and severity of their disabilities, need intensive supported employment services and extended services after the transition from support provided by TWC-VR, in order to perform this work. RCT is available to assist TWC-VR with highlighting the value of inclusive hiring practice to open doors to meaningful employment opportunities for individuals who otherwise might not be hired.

Response:

TWC-VR is developing a customized employment (CE) policy to enhance employment outcomes. These efforts will improve the support offered to individuals seeking CE

opportunities.

Recommendation 6:

The RCT applauds TWC-VR with the quarterly provider calls and feels this has benefited the relationship between the agency and providers. Because not all providers can participate on the call at the time scheduled, the RCT recommends TWC-VR record these calls and make them available to the providers allowing those who could not attend to also benefit from the information and training shared during the call.

Response:

TWC-VR will not record the entirety of provider meetings. To encourage open collaboration and dialogue, only the training sessions provided during provider calls will be recorded. Discussion segments will not be recorded. However, TWC-VR will post PowerPoint presentations from the meetings on the TWC webpage titled Vocational Rehabilitation Provider Resources: https://www.twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-rehabilitation/provider-resources.

Recommendation 7:

The RCT has received feedback from providers that the contract process is very lengthy and can be discouraging resulting in a loss of providers. The RCT would like to request TWC-VR review the contract process with TWC Procurement and Contract Services and evaluate how the process can become more efficient and timely allowing more providers to work with the agency. The RCT Council would be willing to work with TWC-VR on this goal.

Response:

TWC-VR has ongoing efforts to improve procurement practices. TWC-VR will pilot a new procurement system called Bonfire and evaluate its potential to streamline processes and enhance efficiency.

Recommendation 8:

TWC-VR reports in the state plan that the number of participants for the VR program will go down in the next fiscal year. The expected number of participants in the next five years is 78,784. However, the numbers reported for Pre ETS, and the agency have gone up in the last two years. Pre ETS customers alone increased by 30% and TWC-VR indicated that the number of customers served increased 3.5% in 2023-2024. Additionally, census reports indicate that Texas is a state that is increasing in population. As a result, the RCT recommends TWC-VR re-evaluate the number of participants they anticipate serving considering factors such as increase in population.

Response:

TWC-VR re-evaluated the projected participant number and will adjust it in the Combined State Plan from 78,784 to 80,324.

Recommendation 9:

The RCT is aware that TWC-VR conducts an annual review of the approval process and appreciates the opportunity to be included in providing feedback as a part of that process. The RCT recommends working with TWC-VR in identifying bottlenecks that result in repeating steps and evaluations or assessments. The RCT would like to discuss with TWC-VR the potential of providing training and guidance to field offices and staff allowing managers and

supervisors and field level staff decision making authority to shorten turn-around time and encourage flexibility to provide services.

Response:

TWC-VR appreciates RCT's feedback on the TWC-VR approval process. TWC-VR also appreciates RCT's offer to collaborate and explore potential training and guidance for staff, aiming to empower decision-making at managerial and field levels.

Though TWC-VR cannot currently commit to specific training initiatives, the division looks forward to discussions with RCT.

Recommendation 10:

Goal #4: Create/ update and reactive user-friendly resources to maximize customer choice.

RCT understands that TWC-VR conferred with TWC's Division of Information, Innovation, and Insight to determine enhancements using available data. RCT recommends that the provider tool be reactivated on the TWC website, and that ReHabWorks be updated include current information about providers when lists are given to customers for informed choice. Collaborate with field office staff about developing questions customers may ask providers when researching their informed choice.

Response:

TWC-VR will restore the provider tool functionality and explore options for an informed list. TWC-VR also will explore developing insightful questions for customers to use when evaluating providers.

Recommendation 11:

Goal 6: Increase/ improve collaboration between field staff, business relations VR Staff, Workforce Boards, and customers to broaden areas of employment in Summer Earn and Learn, Work Experience and Customized Employment.

The RCT recommends including VR Business Relations Staff in meetings with counselors and customers. Schedule and report on regular cross-team meetings to align goals and address challenges. Create and report on joint goals that reflect field operations staff and business engagement. Report on the visibility and progress with employer engagement. Document information on customer's case file to show how the business relations activities attempt to connect the customers to employers.

Response:

TWC-VR find the recommendations to be valuable and supportive of our commitment to enhancing employment opportunities for our customers. We agree that increased collaboration is crucial for understanding the scope of available employment options and creating more effective connections between our customers and employers.

TWC-VR will explore strategies in response to the RCT's recommendation.

Recommendation 12:

Goal 2: Improve provider recruitment, retention and support.

The RCT appreciates the work in the past to streamline processes and would like to

recommend that this process continues to reduce administrative burden on providers. The RCT recommends proceeding with the implementation of the provider rate increases as outlined in the Public Consulting Group (PCG) Rate Study from 2023, now that budgetary constraints are reduced. Additionally, the RCT recommends establishing a structured and recurring process for reviewing rates to ensure they remain competitive to assist with retaining providers.

Response:

TWC-VR will submit the initial phase of rate increases to the TWC Commission in fall 2025. TWC-VR will implement subsequent rate adjustments in a phased approach.

TWC-VR acknowledges that a routine, formal process for rate reviews is needed. TWC-VR is exploring a process that considers budgetary fluctuations.

Recommendation 13:

Purchasing for customers remains a challenge due to limited providers and lack of flexibility in being able to work with businesses to obtain services for customers. RCT requests that TWC-VRS continues to look at alternative purchasing methods other than requiring the business to become a vendor with TWC-VR, which will improve informed choice and timeliness of service delivery to customers.

Response: TWC-VR appreciates RCT's concern of purchasing for customers due to limited providers and flexibility. However, all entities or businesses providing services to TWC-VR customers must be TWC registered vendors. This ensures compliance with state and federal regulations.

Recommendation 14:

Consider amending the strategy 4.2 to a more attainable activity. For example, support customers who are SSA beneficiaries to make informed financial decisions by ensuring access to SSA credentialed benefit planning resources and utilizing work incentives. Benefits counseling must be included in the Individual Plan for Employment for SSA beneficiaries who earn wages or self-employed.

Response:

TWC-VR appreciates RCT's recommendation for serving customers who are Social Security Administration (SSA) beneficiaries. RCT's recommendation aligns with current TWC-VR practices of providing resources and benefits counseling to support SSA customers.

Recommendation 15:

The RCT suggests that TWC-VR use the common definition of SSA's Partnership Plus to clarify their relationship with Employment Networks (EN) in Texas. Currently, TWC-VR internal operations refer to 'extended supports' as the part of the referral process between TWC-VR and EN's, which causes confusion with other uses of 'extended supports'. The RCT also suggests that this data is tracked and shared with RCT on the number of referrals of VR Customers who are SSA beneficiaries that successfully closed from VR and are referred to EN for Partnership Plus services.

Response:

Currently, TWC-VR does not utilize Partnership Plus, which is a specific formal agreement between a VR agency and an EN. The lack of a formal agreement does not preclude TWC-VR from making referrals to ENs for supports that customers need after their VR cases are closed.

Though TWC-VR's case management system does not automatically track EN referrals, TWC-VR may explore an automated tracking option if deemed necessary.

Recommendation 16:
The RCT recommends that TWC-VR remove the requirements for 17.5.1.1 Purchasing Job Skills Training for Extended Services for Youth with Disabilities; "all other available resources for Extended Services, such as Medicaid Waiver Programs, natural supports, other public agencies, and/or private nonprofit organizations are not available for a customer." This is not required by Federal mandate and creates further barriers to a smooth transition to community integrated employment. Further, amend the requirement that extended services "must be approved by the VR division director" be amended to a supervisor level closer in line with the VRC seeking the services.

Response:
TWC-VR appreciates RCT's recommendation for TWC-VR policy 17.5.1.1 Purchasing Job Skills Training for Extended Services for Youth with Disabilities. TWC-VR will consider the recommendation for policy adjustments.

B. COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA).

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, INCLUDING:

A. INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT;

Per §101 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, every three years, the designated state unit (DSU) for the VR program uses the CSNA to identify goals and priorities for program administration aligned with a Combined State Plan (CSP) that addresses the state's workforce system needs. The current 2023 CSNA was published in June 2024.

The CSNA describes the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Texas, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, which include access to providers, access to both staff and providers with specialized training, and additional information about the availability of VR services as further described below. Having a most significant disability means that the VR customer must have serious limitations in three or more functional areas (for example, mobility, communication, self- care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) and require multiple VR services over an extended period. Additionally, if an individual is an SSI or SSDI recipient, then he or she is presumed eligible and considered to have at least one significant disability.

The 2023 CSNA covers the timeframe from PY 2020 – PY 2022. As shown in Table 1, Employment Rate for program year (PY) 2020–2022 by Severity of Disability, individuals with significant and most significant disabilities have less success in achieving employment with VR services. Formulating strategies aimed at mitigating the impact of disability significance will prove helpful for the next triennium. For the purposes of the below table, to

be considered as having a significant disability, a VR customer must have serious limitations in one or more functional areas and require multiple VR services over an extended period.

Table 1. Employment Rate for PY2020–2022 by Severity of Disability Source: I|3, ReHabWorks Closure Aggregates

Disability Significance	Closures	Successful	Employment Rate
No Significant Disability	6,398	5,112	79.90%
Significant Disability	39,186	19,378	49.45%
Most Significant Disability	19,507	7,196	36.89%

Individuals with the most significant disabilities often require Supported Employment (SE) services to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment. SE services may be used for customers with any type of disability, but a customer must:

- have a most significant disability (three or more functional limitations);
- require individualized assistance in finding an appropriate job match;
- require ongoing supports to learn the job and establish accommodations; and
- require extended services (long-term supports) to maintain the employment after VR closes the case.

In Texas, SE services are based on a “Place, Then Train” model, designed to provide customers with the most significant disabilities the supports they need to achieve competitive integrated employment. SE is an all-inclusive service. SE services include individualized job development and placement services, ongoing supports such as intensive job skills training, and arrangement of extended services (funded, paid, and/or natural supports) to help customers sustain meaningful long-term employment.

TWC-VR can provide extended services to VR customers who are “youth with a disability.” Services can be provided for a period not to exceed four years or until the youth reaches the age of 25 and no longer meets the definition of a "youth with a disability," whichever occurs first.

B. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

When data collection for the 2023 CSNA began in April 2023, there were about 3,247,000 Texans with disabilities [1], representing approximately 11 percent of the state’s population. Of that number, 49 percent were male, 51 percent were female, 33 percent identified as Hispanic or Latino, and 33 percent identified as belonging to a minority racial group. While 32 percent of the approximately 195,000 VR participants [2] served during PY’20–’22 were Hispanic and/or Latino, 31 percent belonged to a minority racial group and only 45 percent identified as female.

1. Source: Texas American Community Survey Table S1810 (2021, 5-Year Estimates),
2. Rounded sum of annual PY participant counts (65,102 in PY'20, 65,025 in PY'21, and 64,857 in PY'22)

Table 2: Racial Distribution, Texas Disability Population and VR Participants by Disability Significance

Racial Group	Texas Disability Population	VR Participants with Significant Disability	VR Participants with Most Significant Disability
White	67.3%	69.3%	67.3%
Black or African American	13.7%	23.7%	23.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
Asian	2.6%	1.4%	2.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Some other race	5.9%	3.3%	3.6%
Two or more races	9.7%	1.6%	2.1%

Source: Texas American Community Survey Table S1810 (2021, 5-Year Estimates), ReHabWorks Tables (aggregate counts for PY'20-22)

Based on preliminary data in the 2023 CSNA, likely underserved populations and unmet needs include:

- individuals who are eligible for VR services and who have been clinically diagnosed with a substance use disorder;
- individuals with most significant disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or an intellectual developmental disorder (IDD) and need access to specially trained staff, providers, and employers;
- individuals who are stroke survivors or who have traumatic brain injuries and need access to specialized service providers;
- students who live in rural or disadvantaged school districts and need preemployment and other transition services;
- foster youth, who may not be aware of the Texas VR program;
- veterans who have disabilities, need information about TWC services, and may not be aware of the Texas VR program; and

- individuals with blindness or visual impairments (BVI) who need expanded access to providers of BVI and independent living services to support vocational goals.

Because individuals with the most significant disabilities have almost one-half less success in employment, more strategic attention dedicated to this population should deliver specific strategies to improve employment rates.

During PY'23–'24, the number of VR participants increased by 3.5%, from 69,248 to 71,655. The employment rate for PY'23 was 49.3 percent, slightly lower than 50.9 percent in PY'22, but still indicating a recovery from 47.6 percent in PY'20 and 47.2 percent in PY'21. It is important to note that PY'20-'21 coincides with the pandemic, which explains the relatively lower employment numbers during those program years. The positive trend in the employment rate during PY'22 and PY'23 indicates signs of recovery from the challenging pandemic period.

Table 3: Racial and Ethnic Distribution

Population	Hispanic Ethnicity	Racial Minorities
TWC-VR Staff	29%	35%
VR Participants	33%	31%
Texas Disability Population	33%	33%

Source: Texas American Community Survey Table S1810 (2021, 5-Year Estimates), ReHabWorks Tables (aggregate counts for PY'22), TWC HR data as of June 30, 2023

Below is a breakdown of race and ethnicity of TWC-VR Staff as of June 30, 2023:

Ethnicity Code	Description	Total	Percent
1	White	539	34.91%
2	Black	421	27.27%
3	Hispanic	444	28.76%
4	Asian	25	1.62%
5	American Indian/Alaska Native	9	0.58%
6	Not Specified	25	1.62%
7	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	0.26%
8	Two or More Races	77	4.99%
Grand Total		1,544	100.00%

During the 2023 CSNA key informant interviews, there were mentions of the need to expand outreach and services to more customers of the Hispanic population. Key informants highlighted those individuals in this demographic group encounter challenges related to

disability and impediment to employment, compounded by additional obstacles due to language barriers and limited resources for learning English as a second language.

C. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

TWC-VR has worked to increase collaboration and coordination with Boards, employers, state and local education leaders, and other stakeholders to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes and work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after-school opportunities such as internships, volunteer positions, and summer and year-round work experience programs.

VRD actively participated in the TWC System Partnership and Service Coordination initiative. Its goal was to enhance customer referrals and streamline service coordination among Texas Workforce Solutions partners, including Boards and their contractors.

Through the initiative, VR launched a pilot program for a referral process in December 2024. VRD collaborated with TWC's Workforce Development Division, two Boards (Texoma and Gulf Coast) and four VR management units (Cypress, Denison, Lake Jackson, and Pearland). The pilot leveraged existing business systems to optimize the referral process between VR and other Workforce Solutions programs

The pilot's primary objective was to ensure individuals seeking assistance from multiple programs could access the full spectrum of Workforce Solutions services. Since each Workforce Solutions center operates under local leadership with various infrastructures, the pilot identified a need for follow-up to the various system referrals.

The pilot ended July 2025. VRD is assessing data from the pilot to develop a memorandum of understanding with the Boards. The memorandum will be jointly developed and implemented by late 2025. It will promote access to services, referral and service collaborations, and service delivery to employers.

TWC has data agreements with other federal and state agencies, including the Department of Veterans Affairs, Texas Health and Human Services, and the State Wage Interchange System. These agreements facilitate collaboration and coordination of services and resources, and assist the VRD to access post exit wage data for the RSA-911.

The Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program is a Pre-ETS activity and is offered statewide in all six VR regions and in each of the twenty-eight Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) as designated by WIOA. Each VR region is composed of one or more LWDAs. The 28 LWDAs cover all 254 counties in Texas, both urban and rural, and each LWDA has a local workforce development board (Board). Alignment of VR regions with LWDAs supports collaboration between VRD and other WIOA core partners. TWC-VR contracts with each Board to contract out employability skills training, work site identification, placement, and monitoring and to pay student wages and associated costs for SEAL participants. Local TWC-VR staff works in partnership with each Board to identify students who might benefit from the program, to conduct outreach and recruitment activities, to identify work sites, and to provide any additional services needed for students to complete the program.

TWC-VR is also an active partner in Project SEARCH, a school-to-work program that

offers classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through work site rotations. Project SEARCH is a one-year business-led pre-employment training program that serves transition-age students (up to age 22 in Texas), and youth with disabilities including those with significant intellectual and developmental impairments, with the aim of offering short-term activities focused on career exploration, work readiness training and internships, followed by employment services leading to competitive integrated employment. Project SEARCH sites represent partnerships between TWC-VR, host businesses, independent school districts (ISDs), employment service providers, local IDD Authorities, and Boards and their Workforce Solutions contractors. Contracted service providers for both employment services and pre-employment transition services may serve multiple areas of the state and several Project SEARCH sites. Local ISDs and IDD authorities participate by providing their designated services to Project SEARCH participants and do not provide VR services to contribute non-federal funds for VR match. For the 2024-2025 school year, Texas has 34 Project SEARCH sites within various industries across the state. Each site typically serves eight to twelve participants per school year.

Project SEARCH is an example of how VRD provides work readiness training, work-based learning, including internships and paid work experience activities, as well as employment services, statewide. Project SEARCH is not the only activity available for students, youth and adults in the VR program interested in participating in these activities. It is offered in this section as an example of a model – a configuration of services – that includes active collaboration across multiple partners within the Texas workforce development system. VRD offers work-based learning through a variety of activities that are offered throughout the state. In addition, VRD has a standing policy in the VRSM and in the Standards for Providers manual that enables the VRD to support participants at any Project SEARCH site that is licensed by the National Project Search office. VRD supports all areas of the state where the partners mentioned above are committed to operating a Project SEARCH site and leads the state's efforts to expand Project SEARCH. A VRD staff person serves as the Project Coordinator for Project SEARCH activities in Texas, and as such is Texas' primary liaison to the national Project SEARCH organization. VRD has built the infrastructure and has the policy in place that supports Project SEARCH activities statewide.

The results of two evaluations conducted by TWC's Analytics and Evaluation department illustrate the positive impact of participation in Project SEARCH on VR program outcomes. The first study included 452 Project SEARCH participants and a standard comparison group of 452 VR participants, all of whom exited the VR program during FFY'15-'19. The Project SEARCH analysis is being updated in a second study conducted as part of the 2023 CSNA, which reports performance from PY'20-'22, analyzing the success rates of 500 Project SEARCH participants and 500 comparison VR participants.

Project SEARCH participants had a higher success rate compared to nonparticipants in the first study and preliminary results from the second study appear to support this same conclusion. In the first study, the success rate for Project SEARCH participants was of 87.4 percent, versus 60.4 percent for nonparticipants. Additionally, Project Search exiters had a retention rate of 70.4 percent, versus 63.3 percent for the comparison group. The differences in both success and employment retention rates were significant at over the 95 percent level

of confidence. Project SEARCH participants were 45 percent more likely to have a successful case closure and 11 percent more likely to be employed calendar year second quarter (Q2) through fourth quarter (Q4) after exiting the VR program compared to other VR participants with similar demographic characteristics. TWC's Analytics and Evaluation team also examined median earning difference between the SEARCH participants and comparison group in the second quarter after exit. While there was not a statistically significant difference in Q2 post-exit earnings between the groups, more people in the SEARCH group appeared to be earning more after exit. Over the course of 16 quarters, including eight quarters before and after exit, the median wage for the Project SEARCH participants grew by about $2,600, versus around $2,100 for the comparison group.

The updated study, covering PY'20-'22, compared 500 Project SEARCH participants with 500 comparison VR participants. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Project SEARCH participants achieved a success rate 17.6 percentage points higher than the comparison group. Overall, Project SEARCH participants were 1.4 times more likely to achieve successful closure (defined as maintaining competitive integrated employment for at least 90 days before exiting the VR program) than non-participants. While analysis of retention rates using unemployment insurance wage records is still ongoing, preliminary findings reinforce the program's positive impact.

TWC-VR aims to leverage new and existing business partnerships to identify additional opportunities to better prepare students and adults for the workplace and help them obtain jobs. In addition to the State office team, each of TWC-VR's six regions has a Business Relations team consisting of two Business Relations Coordinators, two Employment Assistance Specialists who specialize in BVI (except for the East Texas region, which only has one), and other staff at the management unit level identified as part of the Outreach and Service Coordination regional teams. Together, these staff members and their board/contractor partners work with local employers to learn about their open positions as well as to help employers understand and see the value in hiring individuals with disabilities. With many of these partnerships, special hiring and/or training programs have been developed with the intent of helping ensure that VR customers have not only the skills for the open positions but also access to positions within the companies.

The Skills Training to Employment Project (STEP) is a collaborative initiative that prepares adult Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) customers for competitive, integrated employment by combining job readiness training with hands-on work experience. Designed for individuals with limited work history or those who may not excel in traditional interviews, STEP allows customers to build essential workplace skills while demonstrating their capabilities directly to participating employers. Through partnerships with a host employer and an Employment Service Provider (ESP), customers receive Vocational Adjustment Training (VAT) and up to 12 weeks of paid work experience tailored to the employer's entry-level requirements. Employers benefit from a reliable pipeline of pre-trained candidates, while customers gain valuable experience, confidence, and a clear path to employment. As of July 2025, 121 VR customers have successfully completed a STEP cohort, resulting in increased job placements and long-term workforce connections. STEP is a replicable model that addresses both employer needs and the career goals of VR customers.

Other collaboration with local education agencies (LEAs), higher education entities, and

Boards aims to expand customer access to postsecondary opportunities that provide training and employment in meaningful higher-paying jobs. TWC-VR will continue to focus on developing and enhancing partnerships and broad collaboration, not only because they are emphasized in WIOA, but also cultivate a more responsive and effective service delivery system that will benefit customers.

The full 2023 CSNA report was published in June of 2024. The previous CSNA report was published in June of 2021.The VR service needs identified by the report are guiding TWC-VR in programmatic improvements and enhancements for meaningful employment outcomes for customers as well as strategies to better leverage relationships with employers and collaboration with partners.

D. YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER IDEA.

The VR program aims to expand and improve vocational rehabilitation services, including pre- employment transition services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities who are transitioning from high school to postsecondary education and/or employment, and to improve coordination with state and local secondary and postsecondary educational entities.

The need for Pre-ETS in the state continues to expand. According to data provided to TWC by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the number of transition aged students (14-21) receiving Special Education and 504 Plan services under IDEA in school year (SY) 2024-2025 was over 402,000, compared to 309,400 in SY 2020-2021 – an increase of nearly 30% for the four-year period.

TWC-VR provides each of the five required Pre-ETS services statewide directly through VR staff and through contracted providers of services that include a variety of programs and projects.

While some projects and activities are offered in particular parts of the state, that does not exclude students from receiving each of the five required services throughout the state of Texas. Students with disabilities are provided those services regardless of where they live. Contracted providers of Pre-ETS may include non-profit and for-profit organizations, as well as state or local public entities. Contracted providers of Pre-ETS are providing services through fee-for-service contracts. It is less common for Pre-ETS to be provided by a comparable benefit in the community, but occasionally there are community organizations, schools, parent organizations, and Education Service Centers that offer trainings for families in the Pre-ETS topics. These are most common in the more urban parts of the state. TWC-VR is pursuing several strategies to increase provision of Pre-ETS to students, including those in rural areas. Strategies include increasing contracted providers, expanding service delivery strategies designed for or best adapted to rural areas, increasing collaboration with colleges and universities in more rural regions, and increasing collaboration with the foster youth, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems. Foster youth and individuals who have disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder, intellectual developmental disorder, and

substance abuse disorders, were identified in the 2023 CSNA as underserved. Many justice-involved youth fall within these disability categories.

Unlike the urban areas of Dallas and Houston where there is a higher concentration of contracted providers, TWC-VR needs more providers in rural areas. TWC-VR currently has an open enrollment solicitation for contracted Pre-ETS providers and is accepting applications through August 2025. Regional TWC-VR staff who are most aware of community resources and potential providers are encouraged to make them aware of the opportunity to become a TWC- VR provider. Quarterly calls with VRD providers, co-facilitated by the SRC representative for CRPs provide opportunities for TWC-VR to encourage providers to expand services in rural areas and to raise awareness of the opportunity to become a contracted provider in their networks. TWC-VR is also launching a project to increase provider recruitment, including targeting types of services and areas of the state where more providers are needed.

Rural independent school districts (ISDs) are essential partners in expanding services to students in rural areas. TWC-VR continues to collaborate with rural ISDs to identify service delivery strategies that will be most effective for rural students and schools. Activities such as SEAL reach both urban and rural parts of the state and are well-suited to rural communities. Some activities are being designed specifically for rural students, such as I Generate Rural Opportunities for Work (iGrow). Activities and strategies that are successful in meeting the needs of rural students are then replicated in additional rural areas as ISD and employer partnerships are developed to support replication.

TWC-VR also continues to pursue expansion of Pre-ETS activities through contracts with colleges and universities, who are service providers for activities in both urban areas and rural regions. Successful service provider contracts with colleges and universities include Explore STEM! camps, Explore Apprenticeship, and other week-long or multi-week summer Pre-ETS activities for students across the state. Finally, TWC-VR is increasing collaboration with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, and other state and local agencies to increase Pre-ETS activities provided to underserved student populations, including foster youth and students incarcerated in the juvenile justice or criminal justice systems. The VR program has expanded total students served to meet this growing need. The annual number of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in PY'24 was about 28,800, an increase of nearly 30 percent from 22,200 in PY'20. VR provided over 69,000 of the required five Pre-ETS services in PY'24. Almost a quarter of the services provided were Workplace Readiness Training (24.5%), followed by Job Exploration Counseling (21.6%), Instruction in Self-Advocacy (18.6%), Work-Based Learning Experiences (18.4%), and Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities (16.9%).

To address the expanding need for Pre-ETS, VR has taken steps to increase the accessibility of Pre-ETS activities, including the strategies described above. Prior expansion efforts have been achieved by increasing the number of Pre-ETS contracted providers and expanding the Pre-ETS offered through initiatives such as Embedded Pre-ETS, Explore STEM, Explore Apprenticeship, Group Skills Trainings, Summer Earn and Learn, and Year-Round Work Experience.

In addition, VR has partnered with the Texas A&M Center on Disability and Development on

the Capacity Building Statewide Initiative, a strategy that ended in October 2024. The primary objective of this initiative was to provide more effective and comprehensive services to students with disabilities, ensuring a smoother transition from school to postsecondary education and employment opportunities. This collaboration has resulted in the provision of comprehensive training to both VR and ISD staff, significantly improving their ability to deliver transition services under IDEA. Teams across the state continue to meet and collaborate with their school partners for this initiative.

As part of this partnership, six regional conferences were held in FY 2023 which promoted collaboration to support students with disabilities of all ages. Important information has been disseminated at these conferences about both the VR and ISD school systems. These conferences have not only facilitated the successful strategies for effectively working with younger students aged 14 to 16 but have also been important in the development of shared strategies and enhancing collaboration among all the stakeholders. A Statewide Capacity Building Conference occurred in October 2023 and twelve additional regional meetings occurred in the spring and summer of 2024, followed by another statewide conference in October 2024.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Division of the Texas Workforce Commission operates as the designated State unit in Texas. Due to circumstances within the State which include needs identified in the CSNA to provide more specialized training for the provider base, making capital improvements for infrastructure support, providing greater access to services in rural areas and to underserved population groups, and consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361.29(a)(1)(ii), the VR Division has determined it necessary to engage in activities to establish, develop, or improve facilities for community rehabilitation programs (CRPs). Establishing, developing or improving CRPS within the State will allow VRD to better f provide vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to applicants and eligible individuals, as well as pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for the VR program. In assessing the need for establishing, developing or improving a CRP, the VR Division has determined it may be necessary to incur capital expenditures to acquire equipment or improve the field offices of the VR Division, which satisfy the definition of a CRP at 34 CFR 361.5(c)(7), to ensure the continuity of quality service delivery to individuals with disabilities seeking to receive services under the VR program. The State assures it will submit requests for prior written approval to RSA for those costs that exceed the capital expenditure threshold applicable to the State, or for any capital expenditures, including capital improvements necessary to ready the space for its intended use under the VR program, consistent with requirements set forth in 2 CFR part 200. Based on factors affecting allowability of costs at 2 C.F.R. § 200.403, VRD will prioritize working with the property owner of the facility in need of alterations to ready the space to VR's specifications before requesting prior approval from RSA to make capital improvements to privately owned facilities.

Based on the results of the 2023 CSNA, the VR Division will exercise the establishment authority provisions outlined in Section 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as

amended and 34 CFR 361.49(a)(1). The Texas VR establishment authority policy will allow for the establishment, development, or improvement of community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) as described above. Improving services to groups of VR customers identified in the CSNA as underserved will also be permitted through the purchase of equipment, supplies, certifications and the provision of technical assistance and training, including training costs to improve the skills of the CRP provider base. Construction or acquisition of a facility for a public or non-profit CRP outside of the Designated State Unit and the payment of staffing costs, including salaries and benefits will not be permissible. While the "IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE" section of this state plan identifies VRD's intention to exercise the establishment authority provisions outlined in Section 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, VRD further clarifies that it will not obligate any Federal award funds for the purpose of making capital improvement to any facility without receiving prior written approval to do so from RSA, on a per project basis.

C. GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE SRC AND THE VR AGENCY JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES AND ANY REVISIONS; AND

TWC-VR and RCT partnered to improve VR service quality for customers, establishing goals and priorities informed by data from TWC's Analytics and Evaluation Team. The resulting state goals and priorities are detailed in section (c)(2).Information obtained from the following sources was used to establish TWC-VR's goals and priorities:

- WIOA Joint Rule for Unified and Combined State Plans, Performance Accountability, and the One-Stop System Joint Provisions Final Rule published August 19, 2016;
- data from the PY 2023 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA);
- RCT Annual Report;
- State Legislative Budget Board measures;
- reports to RCT on the DSU's progress in implementing strategies and priorities in the VR state plan, etc.; and
- input from customers and advocacy organizations, such as Disability Rights Texas.

The CSNA's results highlighted opportunities that directly influenced the continuing goals of the PY 24-27 state plan. Progress towards current goals and strategies was evident in

the RCT Annual Report and TWC-VR's quarterly reports to RCT, which also reaffirmed areas needing ongoing effort. Furthermore, insights from customers, advocacy groups, and the rehabilitation council contributed valuable feedback, leading to the creation or refinement of goals and strategies.

2. IDENTIFY MEASURABLE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND THE BASIS FOR SELECTING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES (E.G., CSNA, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, SRC RECOMMENDATIONS, MONITORING, OTHER INFORMATION). AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 101(A)(15)(D), (18), AND (23), DESCRIBE UNDER EACH GOAL OR PRIORITY, THE STRATEGIES OR METHODS USED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OR PRIORITY, INCLUDING AS APPLICABLE, DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES OR METHODS THAT—

A. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES;

B. OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ACCESSING VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

C. IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES); AND

D. IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES.

List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority

Goal 1: Recruit and retain VR staff.

The basis for Goal 1 is to create team capacity to serve Texans with disabilities by recruiting, retaining, and engaging VR staff. A career with TWC-VR offers meaningful work that helps change lives for the better. TWC-VR will continue to provide career growth, advancement, and opportunities for staff to specialize in areas of interest. TWC-VR is committed to making team engagement a priority. TWC-VR will work diligently to provide the necessary training and resources for continuous improvement.

Strategies:

1.1 Redesign training and resources for new rehabilitation assistants as well as continue to increase the knowledge of current counselors and rehabilitation assistants in the areas of disability training, working with employers, and training they will need in the future.

1.2 Assess and improve strategies to recruit and hire candidates for VR positions.

1.3 Continue and expand use of communities of practice and peer support to increase informal learning, promote information sharing, and facilitate collaborative problem solving.

Success will be measured by:

- a decrease in annual (SFY) turnover rate; and
- an annual (SFY) increase in the proportion of Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (QVRCs).

Goal 2: Improve provider recruitment, retention, and support.

The basis for Goal 2 is to recruit and retain a robust network of providers, including providers of supported employment services, to ensure that customers have access to the full array of services they need no matter where they reside in the state.

Strategies:

1.1 Strengthen provider recruiting efforts.

1.2 Ensure that payment rates are competitive and equitable.

1.3 Ensure that a process is established for regular rate review and updates.

Success will be measured by:

- an increase (accounting for seasonality) in the percentage of active VR service providers and total number of available providers:
- statewide;
- by integrated service area (VR region);
- by RSA service type category; and
- an increase in customers served by providers with the specialized skills associated with premium payment policy (increased qualifications and training to serve customers).

Goal 3: Streamline VR policy, processes, and procedure to improve workflow processes and provide tools to facilitate timely service delivery.

The basis for Goal 3 is to help more Texans with disabilities achieve better employment outcomes through an efficient and easily accessible service delivery system that maximizes the use of available resources. To achieve this priority, TWC-VR will focus on streamlining procedures and approval processes to remove unnecessary administrative tasks for staff, providers, and customers. TWC-VR is also redesigning the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual to improve ease of use by including policy, procedures, and tools in one manual.

Strategies:

3.1 Streamline or redesign policy, procedure, forms, and approval processes to improve ease of navigation and application for VR staff.

3.2 Improve workflow processes and business systems to improve timeliness, efficiency, and consistency of VR service provision.

Success will be measured by:

- a decrease (accounting for seasonality) in median time from initial contact to participant status in the VR program; and
- an increase (accounting for seasonality) in the percentage of those determined eligible who move into an individualized plan for employment (IPE).

Goal 4: Improve and develop additional user-friendly resources to maximize customer choice.

The basis for Goal 4 is to create simple, accessible information to help customers make informed decisions about how to explore their local labor market, how employment may affect their benefits, and the availability of service providers.

Strategies:

4.1 Provide training and resources for VR staff on labor market information and tools.

4.2 Update training, tools, and policies related to work incentive programs and benefits counseling and provide user-friendly resources and/or fact sheets to help customers make decisions.

4.3 Continue workforce collaboration and service coordination, including necessary infrastructure support, that leads to more customer choice, a better customer experience, and improved employment outcomes.

Success will be measured by:

- an increase in the proportion of SSI or SSDI customers who receive benefits counseling or counseling on work incentives; and
- an increase in the percentage of customers indicating they agree (that is, respond "yes") that they have input in choosing service providers in the quarterly customer satisfaction survey (Westat).

Goal 5: Improve VR staff with knowledge and system capacity to enhance service delivery to customers.

The basis for Goal 5 is to increase opportunities for staff to specialize in areas of interest, such as neurodevelopmental disorders, blindness and visual impairments, deaf and hard of hearing, brain injury, transition students, veterans, behavioral health, and others. TWC-VR will also continue to enhance and expand training serving individuals with multiple disabilities. Providing tools, such as desk aids, and increasing staff capacity through process improvement and innovative service delivery approaches will also assist counselors to serve customers effectively and efficiently.

Strategies:

5.1 Provide additional training and resources for VR staff to strengthen and increase expertise and specialization in serving customers with specific disabilities and those with multiple disabilities, as well as those with additional barriers to employment, such as foster youth and Second Chance youth and adults.

5.2 Enhance and increase training for Transition VR Counselors (TVRC) and other VR Counselors with school assignments regarding services to students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services.

5.3 Review TVRC and VRC capacity and structure and adjust as necessary to strengthen

capacity to serve students with disabilities.

Success will be measured by:

- an increase in the percentage of customer's indicating they are satisfied (that is, responding "satisfied", or "very satisfied") with the information they receive about VR services that may help them achieve their career goals (Westat);
- an increase in the percentage of customer's indicating they are satisfied (that is, responding "satisfied", or "very satisfied") with the amount of time it takes for VR staff to respond to their emails, calls or other contacts (Westat); and
- an increase (accounting for seasonality) in VR engagement rate (that is, arranged, provided, or purchased VR/Pre-ETS/Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center services; counseling and guidance; started or amended plan; employment (90-day clock); successful closure; or enrollment in education/training.

Goal 6: Increase and enhance partnerships with employers to 1) better understand employer needs when hiring people with disabilities and working with VR collaboratively, and 2) build awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities to increase employment opportunities for VR customers.

The basis for Goal 6 is to partner with employers and continue to build system capacity to promote and support hiring, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities across industries. Additionally, TWC-VR will collaborate with its Texas workforce system partners to participate in joint strategies that address employers' workforce needs.

Strategies:

6.1 Continue and expand efforts to raise awareness among employers of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and the services available through TWC-VR to support them.

6.2 Increase collaboration between VR Business Relations Coordinators and Board Business Services Units.

6.3 Provide professional development training opportunities to the VR Business Relations team to expand and enhance their skills and ability to work with employers.

6.4 Implement and expand employer partnerships that increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through training and work-based learning opportunities for students and adults with disabilities.

6.5 Increase the number of employers who hire and retain individuals with disabilities exiting the VR program, in alignment with labor market needs.

Success will be measured by:

- obtaining reports regarding the number of unique employers hiring VR participants second quarter after exit as well as the number of employers who have retained VR participants during the second through fourth quarter after exit.

D. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

1. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS;

List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies

Goal 1: Recruit and retain VR staff.

TWC-VR is committed to recruiting, retaining, and engaging VR staff to serve Texans with disabilities. A career with TWC-VR must offer meaningful work that helps change lives for the better. TWC-VR will continue to provide career growth, advancement, and opportunities for staff to specialize in areas of interest.

Strategies:

1.1 Identify and implement strategies to improve staff recruitment and retention, including continued options for hybrid work, opportunities for professional development and advancement, staff recognition, and other activities that promote a positive, engaging work environment.

1.2 Redesign training and resources for new rehabilitation assistants as well as continue to increase the knowledge of current counselors and rehabilitation assistants in the areas of disability training, working with employers, and training they will need in the future.

1.3 Continue management development training, specific to VR program management, for new, current, and aspiring VR managers.

1.4 Implement a workforce planning strategy that enhances use of career ladders and career pathways to promote opportunities for professional development and career advancement within the VR program.

1.5 Assess and improve strategies to recruit and hire candidates for VR positions.

1.6 Continue and expand use of communities of practice and peer support to increase informal learning, promote information sharing, and facilitate collaborative problem solving.

TWC-VR provides ongoing opportunities for advancement of salary grades and pay to staff members in designated career ladder positions. Career ladder promotions recognize employees whose knowledge, skills and abilities increase and who warrant being advanced to the next level of their position classification scale. Staff members in designated positions can advance within the established career ladder structure if they meet specific qualifications and competencies.

TWC-VR has a merit recognition plan to reward staff for performance that exceeds the requirements of their position. Merit funding is budgeted annually if funds are available and approved.

VRD also has an employee recognition and engagement strategy. It provides formal and informal ways for VRD staff members to recognize individual and team contributions to

VRD's mission and values. Committee members on VRD's Employee Engagement and Recognition Committee serve as engagement ambassadors. They provide information and seek input from VRD staff members to support and cultivate a positive and innovative work environment.

New Counselors are required to complete a four-course training series. This training enhances their comprehension of VR history, key disability laws, counselor roles, VR processes, documentation, capturing customer stories and decisions, and available services. Following the training, counselors report a better understanding of these key areas.

TWC-VR contracts with the University of Arkansas CURRENTS to conduct two leadership academies. The Supervisor Leadership Academy (LEAD) is for TWC-VR staff members who hold a supervisory position. The Pathways Leadership Academy (Pathways) is for nonsupervisory TWC-VR staff members who would like to pursue leadership opportunities.

TWC-VR initiated a Recruitment and Candidate Selection project in 2022 to improve hiring effectiveness. Using data gathering through surveys and process mapping, VRD is partnering with TWC Human Resources to attract top talent and streamline selection. In May 2025, TWC-VR implemented new strategies focusing on reducing documentation for hiring managers, expanding questionnaire use for better screening, and incorporating role-play scenarios during interviews to assess problem-solving skills. These changes aim to enhance efficiency and ensure better candidate selection.

Success for Goal 1 was measured by a decrease in the annual (SFY) turnover rate and an annual (SFY increase in the proportion of Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (QVRCs).

TWC-VR achieved a decrease in the annual turnover rate for the most recently completed State Fiscal Year (SFY). The year-to-date turnover rate for SFY 2024 was 14.2%, around three percentage points lower than SFY 2023, which was 17.3%.

SFY 2024 ended with 59% of VR counselors meeting Category B requirements, as set forth in the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) section of the VR portion for TWC's WIOA Combined State Plan 2024-2027. As of SFY 2025 Q3, of the 662 counselor positions, excluding unit support coordinator positions, 629 were filled with 355 or 56.4% meeting CSPD Category B requirements.

TWC-VR has successfully implemented several strategies to recruit and retain VR staff and will continue with ongoing activities for this goal.

Goal 2: Improve provider recruitment, retention, and support.

One of TWC-VR's priorities is to recruit and retain a robust network of providers, including providers of supported employment services, to ensure that our customers have access to a full array of VR services.

Strategies:

2.1 Enhance provider support and training.

2.2 Strengthen provider recruiting efforts.

2.3 Ensure that payment rates are competitive and equitable.

2.4 Ensure that a process is established for regular rate review and updates.

VRD state office partners with the RCT member representing community rehabilitation providers to conduct statewide provider calls each quarter. The calls facilitate communication, exchange of ideas, and opportunities to identify service delivery improvements. In addition, VRD regional directors conduct provider calls and meetings throughout the year with providers serving their regions. This helps each region maintain communications and collaborations with providers.

TWC-VR uses heat maps of provider-to-customer ratios to identify service gaps and guide provider recruitment efforts.

TWC-VR engaged PCG to conduct a comprehensive analysis of provider fees and payment rates in our contracts. The resulting November 2023 report from PCG provided valuable insights and recommendations. In PY 24, TWC-VR leveraged PCG's findings to evaluate the optimal strategy for achieving competitive and equitable payment rates. This evaluation has led TWC-VR to determine that a phased approach to rate adjustments is the most effective path forward. TWC-VR's initial focus will be on services that offer the greatest benefit to our customers, while also addressing the most significant rate discrepancies first.

Success for Goal 2 was measured by an increase (accounting for seasonality) in the percentage of active VR service providers and total number of available providers statewide, by integrated service area (VR region), by RSA service type category, and an increase in customers served by providers with specialized skills associated with premium payment policy (increased qualifications and training to service customers).

In calendar year (CY) 2024 Q4, the number of active providers increased year-on-year to 2,955 from 2,921 in CY 2023 Q4. Active services providers are those who received a payment from TWC for a purchased service during the reporting quarter. Likewise, the number of available providers increased significantly to 7,793 in CY 2024 Q4 from 7,326 in CY 2023 Q4. Available providers are those who are listed in ReHabWorks, which is TWC-VR's case management system. The statewide provider activity rate in CY 2024 Q4 was 38%, and slight decrease from 40% in CY 2023 Q4, although significantly higher than the baseline of 22% in CY 2020 Q4. By VR region, quarterly provider activity rates varied from around 50% in VR Region 2-DFW/Texoma to 73% in VR Region 4-East Texas.

Regarding RSA service types, TWC-VR has focused recruitment and retention efforts on contracted providers, which provide job placement, post-secondary education and training, supported employment, pre-employment transition services, assistive technology, and medical/hospital services, in addition to others. In CY 2024 Q4, both the number of active and available contracted providers increased, reaching 541 and 1,046, respectively, compared to 519 active and 981 available in CY 2023 Q4. This strong year-on-year increase reflects ongoing recruitment and retention efforts. The contracted provider activity rate in CY 2024 Q4 was 52%, significantly higher than the baseline of 43.9% in CY 2020 Q4.

Providers trained by the University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNT WISE) program offer services with payment premiums. Currently, premiums are offered for the following populations: Autism; Blind; Brain Injury; and Justice Involved and Deaf. Also included were Professional Placement and Wage premiums. The

statewide number of participants receiving services with premium payments was 1,797 in SFY 2024, a 5% increase compared to 1,703 in SFY 2023, although less than the baseline of 1,823 in SFY 2020.

TWC-VR has enhanced provider support and training and will continue with ongoing activities for this goal.

Goal 3: Streamline VR policy, processes, and procedure to improve workflow processes and provide tools to facilitate timely service delivery.

TWC-VR is committed to improving employment outcomes for Texans with disabilities through an efficient and accessible service delivery system that maximizes the use of available resources. To achieve this, TWC-VR has streamlined procedures and approval processes to reduce administrative burden for staff, providers, and customers.

Strategies:

3.1 Streamline or redesign policy, procedure, forms, and approval processes to improve ease of navigation and application for VR staff.

3.2 Improve workflow processes and business systems to improve timeliness, efficiency, and consistency of VR service provision.

On September 3, 2024, TWC-VR launched the redesigned Vocational Rehabilitation Services manual (VRSM). The internal VRSM SharePoint contains a full-kit solution that includes policy, procedures, and resource documents available to TWC-VR staff. The external public facing version includes the VRSM policy and procedures only.

TWC-VR continues to draft new self-employment policy and procedures. A self-employment workgroup met to conduct weekly meetings for six weeks, concluding in June 2025. The workgroup is reviewing recommendations from the meetings to enhance the draft self-employment policy.

In the Fall of 2024, TWC-VRC conducted the annual review of approvals with a workgroup of VR staff. The work group included field staff engaged in approval processes, including VR Managers, VR Supervisors, and VR Counselors. Their recommendations were published in September 2024, along with the VRSM redesign project.

TWC-VR has expanded the availability of forms using the Semi-Autonomous Research Assistant (SARA). SARA is a virtual assistant designed to boost efficiency for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff. This improvement provides staff with increased flexibility and a wider range of options to better serve customers.

Success for Goal 3 was measured by a decrease (accounting for seasonality) in median time from initial contact to participant status in the VR program and an increase (accounting for seasonality) in the percentage of those determined eligible who move into an individualized plan for employment (IPE).

In CY 2024 Q4, the median time from initial contact to participant status was 111 days, a decrease from 113 in CY 2023 Q4, but higher than the baseline of 91 days in 2020. It is important to note, however, that the number of new participants on a quarterly (Q4) basis has significantly increased, reaching 5,190 new participants in CY 2024 Q4, a 35% increase

compared to the baseline of 3,845 in CY 2020 Q4. The percentage of those determined eligible who sign an IPE dipped slightly in CY 2024 Q4 to 86% compared to the baseline of 89% in CY 2020 Q4; however, the number of new signed IPEs for Q4 increased from around 3,800 to 5,230.

TWC-VR has streamlined its VR policy, processes, and procedures and will continue with ongoing activities for this goal.

Goal 4: Improve and develop additional user-friendly resources to maximize customer choice.

To support informed customer decision-making, TWC-VR staff require easily accessible information regarding local labor market trends, the impact of employment on benefits, and available service providers.

Strategies:

4.1 Provide training and resources for VR staff on labor market information and tools.

4.2 Update training, tools, and policies related to work incentive programs and benefits counseling and provide user-friendly resources and/or fact sheets to help customers make decisions.

4.3 Continue workforce collaboration and service coordination, including necessary infrastructure support, that leads to more customer choice, a better customer experience, and improved employment outcomes.

TWC-VR staff members receive ongoing training on how to use TWC's Texas Labor market Information website. New Counselors receive "VR Process Fundamentals" training, which addresses labor market information. TWC-VR staff have access to over 130 free training courses, developed specifically for TWC-VR by the contractor YesLMS including Labor Market Information and the VR Process. Recorded trainings are also available on the use of labor market information.

VR staff members receive targeted population information from Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) to help make informed decisions, particularly when considering high-demand careers for VR customers who cannot relocate. Additionally, VR staff members have access to the National Employment Team, which shares job leads from across the country.

TWC-VR holds monthly webinars for TWC-VR staff members trained in SSA benefits and distributes the "Work Incentive of the Month" alert which provides information about Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits to all TWS-VRS staff members.

TWC-VR regional benefits specialists provide one-on-one benefits information/counseling to customers, staff cases with SSA management, staff individual cases with VR counselors, obtain Benefits Planning Queries for customers, and verify receipt of benefits for customers.

TWC-VR launched a pilot program in December 2024 with two Boards (Texoma and Gulf Coast) and four VR management units (Cypress, Denison, Lake Jackson, and Pearland). The pilot leveraged existing business systems to optimize the referral process between VR and other Workforce Solutions programs. The pilot ended July 2025. VRD is assessing data from

the pilot to help shape a memorandum of understanding between VRD and the Boards. The memorandum will be jointly developed and implemented in late 2025. It will promote access to services, referral and service collaboration, and collaborative service delivery to employers.

Success for Goal 4 was measured by an increase in the proportion of SSI or SSDI customers who receive benefits counseling or counseling on work incentives and an increase in the percentage of customer's indicating they are satisfied (that is, responding "satisfied", or "very satisfied") with the information they receive about VR services that may help them achieve career goals (Westat).

TWC's Analytics and Evaluation team sends a comprehensive quarterly report on benefits counseling to all VRD offices every three months. In January 2022, there were 10,527 cases that were open that quarter involving SSI/SSDI recipients. Of these, 5,946, or 56.5% listed benefits counseling on their IPE. During the first quarter of CY 2025, 10,977 customers were flagged as SSI/SSDI recipients. Of these, 9,908 (90.3%) listed benefits counseling on the IPE. This benefits counseling rate of 90.3% represents a significant improvement from 56.5% three years earlier.

Success for Goal 4 was also measured by modifications to the Westat Customer Satisfaction report. Since Q1 SFY 2024, between 82 and 86 percent of surveyed customers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the information they have received about VR services to help them achieve their career goals.

TWC-VR has improved and developed additional user-friendly resources for customer choice and will continue with ongoing activities for this goal.

Goal 5: Improve VR staff with knowledge and system capacity to enhance service delivery to customers.

TWC-VR is committed to increasing opportunities for staff to specialize in areas of interest, such as neurodevelopmental disorders, blindness and visual impairments, deaf and hard of hearing, brain injury, transition students, veterans, behavioral health, and others. TWC-VR is continually enhancing and expanding the division's training on how to use labor market information and partner with employers.

Strategies:

5.1 Provide additional training and resources for VR staff to strengthen and increase expertise and specialization in serving customers with specific disabilities and those with multiple disabilities, as well as those with additional barriers to employment, such as foster youth and Second Chance youth and adults.

5.2 Develop, pilot, and replicate innovative approaches to implementing the VR process, including standardized workflow and new methods for deploying staff and resources that maximize staff capacity and expertise.

5.3 Enhance and increase training for Transition VR Counselors (TVRC) and other VR Counselors with school assignments regarding services to students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services.

5.4 Review TVRC and VRC capacity and structure and adjust as necessary to strengthen capacity to serve students with disabilities.

TWC-VR Region 2 Dallas/Ft. Worth partners with the Successful Treatment of Addiction through Collaboration specialty court (STAC court) in Dallas County to serve customers with substance use disorders. Probationers are referred to VRD through its partnership with the STAC court. Probationers seek services that include post-secondary training, vocational adjustment training, and employment services.

In May 2025, VRD piloted the Peer Support Services training for VR staff members in San Antonio. Eight VR staff members and four peer specialists from Form Communities participated and provided feedback, some of which VRD is incorporating into the training. In May 2026, VRD will roll out Peer Support services to one region at a time.

Subject matter experts in the TWC-VR state office lead the Deaf and Hard of Hearing training workgroup. The workgroup oversees teams of VRD field staff members who effectively serve customers who are deaf and hard of hearing. In May 2025, VRD conducted a pilot of four training modules to 20 VR counselors who serve customers that are deaf and or hard of hearing in VR Region 5 Gulf Coast. The training is now available for all VR staff members.

TWC-VR continued with two pilot projects: one to improve staff capacity, coverage for vacant caseloads and customer retention, and another to improve the timeliness, efficiency, and accuracy of VR's purchasing and payment processes. The pilot project for purchasing and payment processes concluded in May 2025 and the project to improve staff capacity, coverage for vacant caseloads and customer retention concludes August 2025.

Launched in 2022, "Fostering Transition" is an ongoing statewide initiative that connects students in foster care with VR services. The goal is to increase VR engagement and successful outcomes for the students.

Success for Goal 5 was measured by an increase in the percentage of customer's indicating they are satisfied (that is, responding "satisfied", or "very satisfied") with the amount of time it takes for VR staff to respond to their emails, calls or other contacts and an increase (accounting for seasonality) in VR engagement rate (that is, arranged, provided, or purchased VR/Pre-ETS/Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center services; counseling and guidance; started or amended plan; employment (90-day clock); successful closure; or enrollment in education/training.

Since Q1 SFY 2024, between 80 and 86 percent of surveyed customers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the support they receive from TWC-VR staff. TWC-VR achieved progress on satisfaction rates regarding timeliness in responding to customer communication. In the first quarter, 77% of all open cases, and 72% of cases in a separate BVI survey, reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of time it takes for TWC-VR staff to respond to their emails, calls or other contacts. By Q3 SFY 2025, these rates improved to 82% of all open cases, and 80% for BVI.

The engagement rate is the number of active participants over all participants for the quarter. TWC-VR achieved a quarterly participant engagement rate of around 72% in CY 2024 Q4, an improvement from 70% in CY 2023 Q4, and several percentage points higher

than the baseline rate of 65% in CY 2020 Q4. In addition, the number of active participants for CY 2024 Q4 of 38,624 was 16% higher than the baseline of 33, 181 in CY 2020 Q4.

TWC-VR has provided training to help staff increase their VR knowledge and will continue with ongoing activities for this goal.

Goal 6: Increase and enhance partnerships with employers to 1) better understand employer needs when hiring people with disabilities and working with VR collaboratively, and 2) build awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities to increase employment opportunities for VR customers.

TWC-VR is committed to strengthening and expanding partnerships with employers to better understand their hiring needs and showcase the value of employing individuals with disabilities. This involves raising employer awareness, fostering collaboration between VR and Board Business Services, enhancing the skills of the VR Business Relations team, and creating more employment opportunities through training and work-based learning. This is a priority goal for TWC-VR because increased employer engagement directly translates to more job opportunities for individuals with disabilities, leading to greater economic independence and improved quality of life. By actively engaging employers, TWC-VR ensures that its services are aligned with industry needs, making VR customers more competitive in the job market.

Strategies:

6.1 Continue and expand efforts to raise awareness among employers of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and the services available through TWC-VR to support them.

6.2 Increase collaboration between VR Business Relations Coordinators and Board Business Services Units.

6.3 Provide professional development training opportunities to the TWC-VR Business Relations team to expand and enhance their skills and ability to work with employers.

6.4 Implement and expand employer partnerships that increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through training and work-based learning opportunities for students and adults with disabilities.

6.5 Diversify and increase the number of employers who hire and retain individuals with disabilities who have exited the VR program.

Texas HireAbility is an ongoing campaign to raise awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and highlight their contributions in the workplace. Each October, VRD holds events to commemorate National Disability Employment Awareness Month and White Cane Day, which celebrates the independence of people who are blind or visually impaired.

The VRD Business Relations team members participate in monthly meetings hosted by TWC's Employer Engagement and Community Outreach team. The meetings foster collaboration between multiple business teams that include VRD, TWC’s Texas Veterans Leadership Program, and business service units at Boards.

The Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program is the largest employer partnership administered by VRD and its Board partners. Students participating in the program complete work readiness training and are partnered with a local employer for a five-week minimum-paid internship. As of June 2025, 965 students started their SEAL worksite placement.

Project SEARCH is a long-standing and successful VRD partnership with employers. The project promotes the successful long-term employment of students with disabilities in jobs that are stable, meaningful, integrated, and competitively compensated.

Success for Goal 6 was measured by obtaining reports regarding the number of unique employers hiring VR participants second quarter after exit as well as the number of employers who have retained VR participants during the second through fourth quarter after exit.

In CY2024 Q4, of the approximately 5,400 VR participants who had exited two quarters earlier (in Q2), 3208 were employed and receiving wages from 2,567 unique employers (based on FEIN). The comparable numbers for CY 2023 Q4 were lower for exits and employed (5,020 exiters in Q2 and 3,071 employed in Q4), although the number of unique employers was slightly higher at 2,576.

Regarding job retention, of the 11,930 VR participants who exited in CY 2023 and were employed during the second quarter after exit, 9,474 or 79.4% were employed with the same employer (based on Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) during Q2 and Q4 post-exit, compared to 9,464 or 77.5% in CY 2022. The number of distinct employers decreased minimally from 5,397 in CY 2022 to 5,369 in CY 2023.

TWC-VR has increased and enhanced its employer partnerships and will continue with ongoing activities for this goal.

2. PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR, REFLECTING ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE. EXPLAIN ANY DISCREPANCIES IN THE ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS; AND

Performance Goals – Primary WIOA Indicators, PY 2024

Indicator*	PY2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2024 Actual Level**
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	60.0%	59.6%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	58.8%	57.9%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,478	$7,290
Credential Attainment Rate	40.7%	50.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	51.7%	58.8%

*Reporting Periods as follows: for Employment Rate Q2 and Median Earning Q2, 7/1/2023

to 6/30/2024; for Employment Rate Q4 and Credential Attainment Rate, 1/1/2023 to 12/31/2023; for Measurable Skill Gains, 7/1/2024 to 6/30/2025.

**Based on federal ETA-9169 for Texas

3. THE USE OF FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES (SECTIONS 101(A)(18) AND 101(A)(23) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT) (E.G., SRC, SILC).

For TWC-VR, a portion of federal funds allocated were used for Innovation and Expansion (I&E) activities, including, but not limited to, the following strategic initiatives consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act.

TWC-VR contracted with the San Diego State University Foundation to provide customized employment services including technical assistance, training, mentoring, credential management system and quality assurance.

TWC-VR contracted with the Texas A&M University to develop a work based learning program to support thirty high schools in securing community partners and external consultants to support VR's initiative. Texas A&M University was also contracted to develop a best practices model for Capacity Building, another statewide initiative, to showcase exemplary local teams and sites.

TWC-VR extended its contract with a temporary employment agency to hire former experienced counselors and rehabilitation assistants to provide support functions for local VR offices experiencing vacancies. This caseload support allowed TWC-VR to continuously provide more timely goods and services to VR customers, as well as to receive and process documentation necessary for payments to vendors.

TWC-VR purchased the Ticket Tracker license from Morrow Consulting for continued access to the Ticket Tracker which is used to identify and track cost reimbursement claims. The Ticket Tracker aggregates SSA's Vocational Rehabilitation Client Earnings Report (VRCER) and Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage data to identify and quantify allowable cost-reimbursement claims each quarter, monitor their timely processing, and track Ticket to Work program tickets. In Program Year 2024, Texas VR used the Ticket Tracker to analyze claim eligibility trends, manage processing workloads, and ensure alignment with SSA's reimbursement criteria and timelines.

TWC engaged Public Consulting Group LLC (PCG) to analyze VR provider fee structures and their impact on service delivery. PCG's review included industry standards, provider costs, and staff/provider feedback. The PCG August 2023 report provided key insights and recommendations to improve provider partnerships and customer outcomes, followed by designing an implementation process based on those recommendations. The work in PY24 involved preparation, internal communications, and participation in meetings to review updates on the rate implementation.

TWC-VR has also purchased technology for staff and customers to enhance communication. The technology allows for conducting hybrid meetings (in-person and online) and producing high- quality recordings. Equipment purchases included:

- Meeting Owl 3 (Next Gen) with expansion mic;
- Focusrite Scarlett 18i8 3rd Gen USB audio interface including all parts.

VR also provided many training opportunities to its staff to better serve VR customers including VR Peer Specialist Endorsement and training services.

E. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS, AND ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF TITLE VI FUNDS:

(A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

2. IF THE VR AGENCY HAS ELECTED TO RECEIVE TITLE VI FUNDS, SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRES VR AGENCIES TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. DESCRIBE THE USE OF TITLE VI FUNDS AND HOW THEY WILL BE USED IN MEETING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

TWC-VR provides Supported Employment (SE) services for customers with the most significant disabilities, including youth between ages 14–24 for a period of time not to exceed 24 months, after job placement unless under special circumstances the eligible individual and the rehabilitation counselor jointly agree to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment.

TWC-VR has identified primary goals and priorities to carry out with title VI funds to help more Texans with disabilities achieve better employment outcomes. The primary focus will be to continue to evaluate and improve the new SE Model and to initiate the introduction of Customized Employment (CE) services as an option in the SE service array. Below are five goals that address TWC-VR priorities:

Goal 1: Evaluate the effectiveness of the new Texas SE Model implemented February 2022 and improve or create policy, procedures, fees, and forms, as necessary, to facilitate quality SE services.

TWC-VR's priority is to help more Texans with Disabilities achieve better employment outcomes through an efficient SE service delivery system that maximizes the use of available resources and achieves long-term employment success for customers with most significant disabilities. Evaluating the effectiveness of the new SE model will allow for future improvements in policy, procedures, fees and forms to better meet the needs of employment service providers, VR staff, and most importantly, VR customers.

Goal 2: Implement training and resources for both employment service providers, potential extended service providers, and VR staff related to SE, ongoing supports, and extended services.

TWC-VR has worked with UNTWISE to update the SE credential training. Training is

available for TWC-VR staff. A tri-agency (TWC, HHS, TEA) Steering Committee and Work Group creates resources and hosts an annual conference on employment service which is available for agency staff, providers and paid extended service providers to assist in the delivery of quality SE services.

Goal 3: Provide high-quality Customized Employment (CE) services to improve competitive integrated employment outcomes for Texans with the most significant disabilities by:

- Implementing a comprehensive Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) Customized Employment (CE) Service Model based on fidelity measures and CE best practices;
- Delivering targeted, high-quality training and ongoing mentoring for TWC-VR staff and contracted CE providers, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to effectively deliver CE services.
- Establishing a Customized Employment community of practice for CE contractors and TWC-VR field staff and
- Creating and implementing a comprehensive quality assurance framework to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the CE service model

TWC-VR is in the process of launching Customized Employment (CE) services and expanding its network of service providers to support the CE initiative. TWC-VR is introducing CE as a service for customers and plans to roll out the service statewide after demonstrating an effective CE model by evaluating policy, procedures, and training for VR staff and Employment Services Providers in a pilot.

Goal 4: Create new specialty endorsements for disability groups often served by SE and CE to compensate providers with premium payments to cover increased costs for staff training and service delivery when addressing complex employment barriers.

TWC-VR currently has endorsements and premium payments for disabilities such as autism, visual impairment/blindness, and deafness. The use of endorsements has proven to be effective in maintaining providers that expansion to other disability groups should assist in addressing employment barriers for customers participating in SE services.

3. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED WITH TITLE 1 OR TITLE VI FUNDS FOLLOWING PLACEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(22) AND SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, DESCRIBE THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES; AND THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

TWC-VR is committed to providing quality services to customers with the most significant disabilities, for whom traditional VR approaches have not been effective. Although customers in SE can compete in the open job market, they require ongoing supports to learn how to interact with potential employers and perform job tasks and responsibilities. Extended services are necessary to provide long term support to the customer when faced with

challenges and barriers related to their disability. Customers receiving TWC-VR SE services often have no or very limited work history in competitive integrated employment, have been excluded from community services through institutionalization, or have only participated in segregated work programs, such as enclaves, and day habilitation programs funded by Texas Health and Human Services (HHS).

TWC-VR SE services offer the best possible match between customer skills, interests, abilities, support needs, and an employer's unmet needs. TWC-VR uses the "place, then train" concept, a two-part process to describe SE services. The first step is to place customers with the most significant disabilities into a competitive integrated job based on their preferences, interests, assets, and abilities, as identified during a community-based assessment and a SE planning meeting. The second step is to provide training and support to the customer directly related to the job and then coordinate and train the designated extended service providers, or natural supports, to ensure a smooth transition with no interruption in service delivery prior to TWC-VR case closure.

TWC-VR has partnered with the University of North Texas to develop training and maintain a credentialing system for employment services, including SE. TWC-VR has also partnered with the Center for Social Capital to develop the Certified Business Technical Assistance Consultant (CBTAC) credential and training, which must be obtained and maintained by vendors from whom VR purchases supported self-employment services.

TWC-VR ensures all employment opportunities for customers engaged in supported employment (SE) and supported self-employment services (SSE) meets the criteria of competitive integrated employment. Prior to a customer being referred for SE services, a Career Planning Assessment must be completed to identify the customer strengths, interests, potential extended service needs and resources. SE services are provided through an outcome-based service delivery model after the customer has secured an individualized placement that achieves all necessary employment conditions outlined in the customer's SE plan or for SSE once the customer has launched their business as described in their supported self-employment business plan.

Customers in SE require ongoing supports to learn their job and to meet the employer's expectations after the customer's employment has been secured. The ongoing supports and extended services can occur within the work, community, and/or home environment; and are necessary for the customer to maintain employment. A customer receives job retention services (ongoing supports) in twenty-eight-day benchmarks. A customer can receive multiple job retention service benchmarks until the customer reaches job stability.

Job stability is defined as the customer:

- is satisfied with the employment;
- has competitive integrated employment;
- is meeting the preferences, interests, at least two potential job tasks, and all nonnegotiable employment conditions listed on SE Plan (VR1632);
- has reliable transportation to and from the jobsite with a backup plan;
- is meeting the employer's expectations regarding job performance;

- is meeting the physical and environmental demands of the job;
- has all necessary accommodations in place and working;
- has extended services in place to ensure continued employment with support; and
- has achieved all goals on SE training plan (VR1634) are achieved or will be addressed by an extended service provider.

Extended services, known in Texas as long-term support and services, can be publicly funded, "natural" or "in-kind," or paid by the customer through Social Security Insurance (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or another Social Security Administration Title II work incentive program. VR is the payor of last resort for providing extended services for youth with disabilities. The vocational rehabilitation counselor works with the customer and the job skills trainer to research and seek other resources that the extended supports could be provided by. If the customer has a waiver or other public funding, this would be used prior to extended services from VR. Examples of other resources that could be utilized to provide extended services include:

- Medicaid HCBS Waivers;
- Medicaid State Plan Benefits and Block Grants;
- Other Community Resources (non-profits, neighborhood centers, local authorities);
- Natural Supports (coworkers, family, religious organizations);
- Ticket to Work Employment Networks;
- Private Job Coaching; and
- Technology (phone applications, software).

Examples of extended services include, but are not limited to:

- consulting with a customer's job supervisor regarding areas of concern or training needs;
- creating supports and strategies to improve work performance through job coaching;
- providing assistance with medication management or hygiene; and
- identifying and training on transportation options.

All Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) waivers include employment services. TWC-VR and HHS have a partnership focusing on training community providers and 1915(c) local authorities in employment services.

A customer must maintain employment 90 days after ongoing supports have ended and transferred to the extended service provider. Common resources that provide extended services for TWC-VR customers include family, friends, nonprofits, as well as other county, state, and federal programs. If the TWC-VR provider has to reestablish the delivery of ongoing supports during the 90 days of extended services, the case becomes unstable until the customer can demonstrate job stability and will be transferred back to the extended service

provider. A new 90-day count of successful extended services must be completed prior to TWC-VR closing the VR case. In SSE, for a case to reach closure, a customer's business must operate for an additional 90-day period with no support from the SSE provider.

4. SECTIONS 101(A)(22) AND 606(B)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRE THE VR AGENCY TO DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND ARRANGE, INCLUDING ENTERING INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ENTITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. THE DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE EXTENDED SERVICES, AS APPLICABLE, TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(A) AND 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(C)(19)(V).

A customer's extended services are identified and documented in the customer's Individualized Plan for Employment. As customers progress through the supported employment process, TWC-VR may use naturally occurring work supports as extended services. As appropriate, paid support is administered through other state agencies or community resources not funded by TWC-VR. When extended services are not available for youth with disabilities, TWC-VR provides extended supports, such as job skills training, for up to four years or until the individual turns 25 years of age. TWC-VR continually evaluates the customer's need for extended services and seeks other resources to provide the necessary extended services.

To provide seamless service delivery to customers and ensure effective use of resources, TWC-VR maintains the following collaborations with community partners and other state agencies:

TWC-VR collaborates with the Texas Health and Human Services Medical and Social Service Divisions' Behavioral Health and IDD Service Department Special Projects Unit by:

- providing information and technical assistance when changes to VR employment services occur;
- ensuring the service definitions in the 1915(c) home-and community-based waivers accurately reflect Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Rehabilitation Services Administration regulations. This partnership allows services that result in competitive integrated employment to be delivered efficiently and timely through the payer of first resort;
- providing cross training on the VR Long-Term Supports and Services System;
- providing information to mutually served customers in Supported Employment to assist in understanding how to navigate the long-term support and services system when the customers are receiving home and community-based services under a Medicaid waiver, Medicaid state plan amendment, or other authority related to a state Medicaid program; and
- recruiting Supported Employment (SE) providers already established with HHS to ensure a seamless transition from one program to another, when applicable.

TWC-VR works with HHS Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to resolve individual and system issues involving mutually served customers, particularly those transferring from Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to Title II Childhood Disability Beneficiaries to ensure continuation of Medicaid 1915(c) waiver services.

TWC-VR coordinates with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to encourage Employment Services Providers (ESPs) to become employment networks (ENs) under SSA's Ticket to Work Program.

TWC-VR partners with school districts that provide transition services to youth and considers all aspects of the cooperative agreements in place to ensure continuity and timeliness of services for those school districts that initiate supported employment services before or after a student graduates.

TWC-VR has representation in the following:

- The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities;
- Texas Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council;
- Mental Health Coordination and Substance Use Disorder Party Workgroup, which is a subcommittee of the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee;
- Behavioral Health Advisory Committee;
- Texas Coordinating Council for Veteran Services;
- State Independent Living Council;
- Texas Council on Consumer Direction;
- The Promoting Independence Advisory Committee;
- HHS Cross Agency Liaison Initiatives;
- Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities; and
- Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)

F. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

1. ESTIMATES FOR NEXT FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR—FFY 2026

A. VR PROGRAM; AND

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
N/A	78,209	71,068	$226,645,356	N/A

B. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
N/A	2,029	1,934	$8,894,519	N/A

G. ORDER OF SELECTION

1. PURSUANT TO SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, THIS DESCRIPTION MUST BE AMENDED WHEN THE VR AGENCY DETERMINES, BASED ON THE ANNUAL ESTIMATES DESCRIBED IN DESCRIPTION (F), THAT VR SERVICES CANNOT BE PROVIDED TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR AND ARE DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES.

* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

2. FOR VR AGENCIES THAT HAVE DEFINED PRIORITY CATEGORIES DESCRIBE—

A. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

N/A

B. THE ORDER (PRIORITY CATEGORIES) TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES ENSURING THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

C. THE VR AGENCY'S GOALS FOR SERVING INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, INCLUDING HOW THE AGENCY WILL ASSIST ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS ASSIGNED TO CLOSED PRIORITY CATEGORIES WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRAL, THE METHOD IN WHICH THE VR AGENCY WILL MANAGE WAITING LISTS, AND THE PROJECTED TIMELINES FOR OPENING PRIORITY CATEGORIES. NOTE: PRIORITY CATEGORIES ARE CONSIDERED OPEN WHEN ALL INDIVIDUALS IN THE PRIORITY CATEGORY MAY BE SERVED.

3. HAS THE VR AGENCY ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE OF THE ORDER OF SELECTION WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT?

No, N/A

H. WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS.

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."

Not Applicable.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the State VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PERSONNEL AND PROJECTED PERSONNEL NEEDS INCLUDING—

A. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

B. THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF PERSONNEL THAT ARE EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING RATIOS OF QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS;

C. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

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Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee	50	0	0
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	410	54	514
Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee	11	0	0
Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	123	8	142
Rehabilitation Assistant	329	20	349
Caseload Covering Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	7	11	18

Caseload Covering Rehabilitation Assistant (temp)	5	7	12
Unit Support Coordinators	32	3	35
Assistive Technology Specialist	27	4	31
Unit Process Improvement Specialist	30	1	31
Unit Purchasing Specialist	27	3	30
Unit Support Assistant	22	5	27
Unit Management Assistant	7	1	8
R3 Customer Service Rep	1	0	1
In House Services Support Specialist	1	0	1
Regional QA Specialist	7	0	7

Regional Program Improvement Specialist	5	1	6
Regional Blind Services Specialist	6	0	6
Regional Program Specialist	5	1	6
Regional Program Support Specialist	7	0	7
Regional Transition Specialist	6	0	6
Community Outreach Awareness Specialist	6	0	6
College and University Coordinator	1	1	2
Customer Case Coordinator	2	1	3
Medical Services Coordinator	24	2	26
Medical Services Technician	1	0	1

Business Relations Coordinator	12	0	12
Caseload Management Specialist	7	0	7
Employment Assistance Specialist	11	0	11
Orientation & Mobility Instructor	5	3	8
Vocational Diagnostic Evaluator	1	0	1
Psychological Associate III	3	0	3
Assistive Technology Unit Evaluator	3	0	3
Blind Services Employment Assistance and Assistive Technology	2	0	2
DeafBlind Program Specialist	3	0	3
Blind Services Program Specialist	5	0	5

Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher	34	1	35
Technology Instructor	9	0	9
Blind Training Specialists	3	0	3
Low Vision Coordinator	1	0	1
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Admissions Coordinator	1	0	1
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Blindness Training Coordinator	1	0	1
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Dual Customer Coordinator	1	0	1
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Quality Assurance and Statistics	1	0	1
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Residential Program Specialist	1	0	1
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Resident Specialist	8	1	9

Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Residential Instructor	1	1	2
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Adaptive Skills Instructor	5	3	8
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Deafblind Instructor	2	0	2
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Industrial Arts Instructor	3	0	3
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Career Guidance Instructor	6	2	8
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Orientation & Mobility Instructor	9	2	11
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Outreach Instructor	4	1	5
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center Recreation Instructor	3	0	3
Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Specialist	1	0	1
Vocational Rehabilitation Benefits Planner	3	1	4

Lead Benefits Planner & Cost Reimbursement	1	0	1
Cost Reimbursement Specialist	1	0	1
Ticket to Work Specialist	1	0	1
Long-Term Services and Supports	0	1	1
Rapid Engagement Team	2	1	3
Total *Information in table is current as of end of SFY 2025.	1,306	140	1,446

D. RATIO OF QUALIFIED VR COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS:

The ratio is one QVRC for every 126 customers (1:126) based on 71,649 participants and 567 VRCs.

E. PROJECTED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED IN 5 YEARS:

Projected PY 2030 Annual Total Participants Served in Five Years = 80,324*
*Total Served = All Participants served during the PY, with a signed Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and who are receiving VR services.

2. DATA AND INFORMATION ON PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

A. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL

CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

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Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Texas Tech University	Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling	67	12
University of North Texas	Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling	166	14
University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley	Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling	143	29
University of Texas at El Paso	Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling	48	17

B. THE VR AGENCY'S PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL, WHICH ADDRESSES THE CURRENT AND PROJECTED NEEDS FOR QUALIFIED PERSONNEL; AND THE COORDINATION AND FACILITATION OF EFFORTS BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TO RECRUIT, PREPARE, AND RETAIN PERSONNEL WHO ARE QUALIFIED, INCLUDING PERSONNEL FROM MINORITY BACKGROUNDS AND PERSONNEL WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

TWC-VR has developed productive, proactive working relationships with Texas universities that train rehabilitation professionals. Involvement with Texas universities results in student requests for practicum and internship placements within TWC-VR. Internships have been offered since 1999 for students completing master's degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling, Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling or Rehabilitation. In PY'24, TWC-VR hosted thirteen internships. Evaluations of student interns come directly from certified, licensed, or Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (QVRC) internship supervisors and department advisors from the intern's university. TWC-VR counselors also discuss career opportunities in TWC-VR with VR participants who have been prepared to meet personnel qualifications. Former VR customers have been hired and continue to retain employment with TWC-VR. Because of TWC-VR's coordination with Texas universities who train rehabilitation professionals, the agency can leverage the recruiting efforts of universities who outreach and enroll students with various minority backgrounds and students with disabilities when promoting careers in the VR program.

Job vacancy notices are routinely posted on WorkInTexas.com, TWC's statewide online job search website that also serves and the state labor exchange system. Hiring supervisors can

also request a broader distribution of vacancy notices by having them posted to additional websites such as Indeed.com, Monster.com, and others. TWC-VR encourages the hiring of qualified individuals with disabilities and veterans.

A TWC recruiter was assigned to TWC-VR to help increase recruitment efforts. The main social media platform used is LinkedIn and VR positions are posted there. Other platforms include WorkInTexas.com and Handshake to post and source from as well. In addition, various universities job boards outside of Handshake and organizations such as The American Council of the Blind, Deaf Network, the Sowell Center website (through Texas Tech University), and the National Association of Special Education Teachers are also used. VR positions have also been posted on both the Rehabilitative Services Administration and the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification platforms.

Several projects were completed for Goal 3 of the VR Program - Recruit and Retain VR Staff. TWC-VR implemented a merit recognition plan to reward staff members who exceed the requirements of their positions. New salary guidelines were introduced to determine competitive starting salaries for VR counselors and rehabilitation assistants based on their previous experience and education. These guidelines also established a career ladder promotion standard and included a salary adjustment for advancing education levels.

VRD provides opportunities for advancement of salary grades and pay to staff members in designated career ladder positions. Career ladder promotions are intended to recognize employees whose knowledge, skills, and abilities have increased to advance to the next level of their position classification scale. Staff in designated positions can advance within the established career ladder structure if they meet specific qualifications and competencies. VRD will continue to explore opportunities to expand career ladders for staff. VRD also has a merit recognition plan to reward staff for performance that exceeds the requirements of their position. Merit funding is budgeted annually if funds are available and approved for this purpose.

VRD has an ongoing employee recognition and engagement strategy, which provides formal and informal ways for VRD staff members to recognize their individual and team contributions to VRD's mission and values. In January 2024, VRD launched its Employee Engagement and Recognition Committee. Committee members serve as engagement ambassadors and provide information and seek input from VRD staff members to support and cultivate a positive, mission-driven, collaborative, and innovative work environment. Examples of ongoing recognition and appreciation include video messages to staff during specific appreciation days (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Appreciation Days, Administrative Professional's Day, and In-House Service Provider's Day). The video content includes customer success testimonies, peer-to-peer appreciation messages, and messages from VRD state and regional leaders. The videos are announced in the VRD News Brief, a weekly informational bulletin sent to all VRD staff members.

In May 2024, VRD launched a comprehensive review and redesign of the initial training period and program for new VR counselors, new rehabilitation assistants, and new VR supervisors. Teams met to develop a suggested curriculum that allows new staff to establish a learning community through a cohort that works together through their probationary period. Post probationary coaching and mentoring were designed to support new and existing staff throughout a training year. Specific supports were also built for staff who need

CSPD resources and a community of practice for their master's degree learning period. The curriculum makes use of TWC-VR YesLMS courses, materials developed in the field, other state curriculum, tools and aids, and resources from the Technical Assistance Centers. These are integrated with TWC Training and Development courses. The project will continue when the final reorganization infrastructure is approved and within which the new curriculum can be administered.

VRD will apply lessons learned from the redesign of new counselor training completed in 2022 and consider feedback provided in recent meetings with counselors, rehabilitation assistants, supervisors, and regional leadership. It will encompass the onboarding process, training content, training methods, redefinition of the training period and stages, consistency and content of on-the-job training, and ongoing mentoring.

C. DESCRIPTION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ACTIVITIES THAT ENSURE ALL PERSONNEL EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY RECEIVE APPROPRIATE AND ADEQUATE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS:

I. PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

II. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO VR AGENCY PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS AND FOR PROVIDING TRAINING REGARDING THE AMENDMENTS TO THE REHABILITATION ACT MADE BY THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.

Growth and development for all levels of staff is essential. TWC-VR staff attend external trainings provided by such agencies as the American Association of Diabetes Educators, the Texas Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Assistive Technology Industry Association, the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation, and the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind. Staff are encouraged to attend national, state, and local conferences related to VR, including the Association of People Supporting Employment First National Conference, Texas Association of Vocational Adjustment Coordinators, Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness training, Assistive Technology Industry Association International Conference, and the Capacity Building Institute regarding building capacity for postsecondary transition of students with disabilities. In so doing, they can receive training and network with other professionals.

Additionally, trainings are conducted within the regions by designated training staff, and within the field offices by senior counselors, unit program specialists, supervisors, managers, and others.

TWC-VR has a MOU with the Texas Technology Access Program (TTAP), at the University of Texas – Austin, the implementing entity designated by the governor under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 3003) §4. TWC-VR works cooperatively with

TTAP to coordinate activities, including the referral of individuals with disabilities. Currently, TWC-VR refers customers to TTAP demonstration centers located throughout the state to ensure that they have an informed choice of assistive technology and that equipment purchased by TWC-VR meets each customers' needs.

TWC-VR is represented on the TTAP Advisory Council, participates in annual joint presentations with TTAP at Ability Expo in Houston, Ability Expo in Dallas/Ft. Worth, and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) statewide conference, which provide opportunities for customers and counselors to learn about new adaptive equipment and assistive technology that can assist in maintaining competitive, integrated employment. On a monthly basis, TTAP and TWC-VR meet for a statewide educational Teams webinar. During these sessions, TTAP delivers comprehensive guidance, showcases products, and disseminates valuable information concerning assistive technology applications and resources. TWC-VR and TTAP jointly administer practical training sessions tailored for individuals overseeing Assistive Technology (A.T.) Kits. These kits, distributed across various regions, contain essential equipment, and serve as educational tools to enlighten staff and stakeholders on the transformative capabilities of assistive technology. TTAP allows those seeking assistive technology to borrow from their loan closet for 30 days.

TWC-VR contracted with YesLMS for computer-based training courses. TWC-VR staff now have access to over 100 online courses that are pre-approved for CRC CEUs (certified rehabilitation counselors continuing education units). Course content is developed by the VR Development Group, who contracts with national VR subject matter experts to develop training in a variety of areas relevant to vocational rehabilitation.

TWC-VR plans to develop a training program that will enable increased staff attendance every other year. Staff members also participate in training modules, such as vocational rehabilitation job- specific training, developed by the TWC Training and Development department's VR counselors. Training needs and priorities are identified on an ongoing basis. Past training has been in the areas of diabetes, substance abuse, caseload management, employment assistance, worker's compensation, criminal background checks, mental health first aid, counseling and adjustment to blindness, career choice counseling, autism, and self-employment. During their first year of employment, counselors attend internal training conducted by TWC Training and Development to enhance skills and develop a basic understanding of policy and how to implement caseload management processes.

3. DESCRIPTION OF VR AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONNEL STANDARDS CONSISTENT WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B) TO ENSURE THAT VR AGENCY PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE ADEQUATELY TRAINED AND PREPARED, INCLUDING—

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B), TWC-VR develops and maintains a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). This system includes procedures to ensure TWC- VR maintains an adequate supply of qualified personnel, referred to as Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (QVRCs). TWC-VR has established personnel requirements for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) position that provides vocational rehabilitation services. To classify as a QVRC, staff must meet specific state requirements related to education and experience. Standards for QVRCs serve as an internal control to ensure staff are sufficiently trained and prepared to effectively serve Texans with disabilities. TWC-VR monitors the number of counselors who meet qualified personnel standards.

TWC-VR considers VR counselors qualified to perform non-delegable duties based on minimum initial standards for hire and based on successful completion of required training and an initial six-month probationary period that allows demonstration of performance. The minimum initial standards for hire are aligned with 34 CFR 361.18(c)(1)(ii)(A) and the State of Texas VR Counselor Classification Schedule. The Texas State Auditor's Office (SAO) establishes and maintains the classification plan for State of Texas employees. The SAO classification plan includes a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I to IV series. TWC-VR applies a career ladder structure to the SAO VR Counselor series, thereby providing promotion opportunities for VR counselors who meet the career ladder requirements for education, experience, and performance requirements associated with each level.

Applicants that possess the required education and experience are recruited for VR counselor positions. Prior to making a salary offer, the hiring manager must obtain educational documentation to submit for review and verification. For counselor candidates with a bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctoral degree, or a current CRC or LPC, the hiring manager must provide the transcript, certificate, or license to the CSPD coordinator for review and verification. The verification must be completed before the hiring manager makes a salary offer.

After hire, VR counselors complete required education and training, as applicable, to achieve and maintain QVRC standards. TWC-VR helps counselors advance as a QVRC and sets aside funding to financially assist counselors in fulfilling expert level standards. To support QVRC staff development, maintenance of education, and advance in personnel standard categories, TWC- VR may provide funding for a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling except when unforeseen circumstances occur that may restrict or prohibit the funding or when management discontinues a VR counselor's participation in the program in the best interest of the VR program. To receive TWC-VR support for a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, the VR counselor applying for assistance must have completed the initial training year, be meeting or exceeding job performance expectations, obtain the appropriate approvals to pursue a graduate degree or prescribed coursework, apply for

Rehabilitation Services administration scholarship and university stipend funding, if applicable, and be accepted by the appropriate institution of higher education. TWC-VR may also assist counselors with maintaining their CRC certification or LPC license. Additionally, counselors receive ongoing training and information on Labor Market Information, current research and evidence-based practices, caseload management training, and disability-related training to ensure a current understanding of the evolving labor force in Texas and the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. VRCs are trained on researching and using labor market information (LMI) and providing their customers with accessible information to help them explore their local labor market when making informed decisions about their employment and educational goals. The Texas Workforce Commission Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) Department develops and disseminates LMCI through interactive tools, such as Reality Check, and other informational resources. These resources provide both state and local information on careers and occupations in Texas, along with educational requirements necessary to access them. In addition, local workforce development boards publish LMI specific to their regions, which is available to VR staff and especially Business Relations Coordinators. VR staff are also accustomed to using DOL resources such as O-NET to provide useful information on occupations and careers. Along with state and federal resources, VRD staff also use the National Employment Team (NET) job leads team in MS Teams to learn about jobs throughout the country. There is also guidance listed in VRSM policy on customers who have work history, customers returning to work with the same or a different employer, customers with no work history, and other factors that may impact the choice of an employment goal such as life circumstances, personal history, and criminal history that can impact the choice of employment goal.

Every newly hired counselor is classified as a QVRC Candidate and must complete a probationary period and new counselor training to demonstrate satisfactory performance. It takes a minimum of six months to complete probation during which time a QVRC supervisor or a QVRC designated by a supervisor approves the counselor's eligibility determinations and IPEs to ensure appropriate decision-making, documentation, and application of knowledge.

Once counselors successfully complete their probationary period and new counselor training, they become a regular status employee in the state's VRC classification and are considered a QVRC, identified as either a Category A QVRC or a Category B QVRC, depending on their education. A Category A QVRC has completed the probationary period and new counselor training and possesses the following: a bachelor's degree in a field of study reasonably related to vocational rehabilitation, such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, supported employment, customized employment, economics, or another field that reasonably prepares individuals to work with customers and employers; and has demonstrated paid or unpaid experience, for not less than one year, consisting of direct work with individuals with disabilities in a setting such as an independent living center, direct service or advocacy activities that provide such individual with experience and skills in working with individuals with disabilities, or direct experience in competitive integrated employment environments as an employer, as a small business owner or operator, or in self-employment, or other experience in human resources or recruitment, or experience in supervising employees, training, or other activities. A Category B QVRC has

completed the probationary period and new counselor training and possesses the following: a master's or doctoral degree in a field of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, law, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, management, public administration, or another field that reasonably provides competence in the employment sector, in a disability field, or in both business-related and rehabilitation-related fields.

Applicants who meet the Category B QVRC CSPD standard are preferred for counselor positions. If a candidate is hired who does not meet the Category B QVRC CSPD standard, they must participate in the QVRC program and complete required coursework within seven years after completing the initial training year. Counselors are required to sign the QVRC Acknowledgment form within 30 days of hire. By signing this required form, the counselor agrees that to hold a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position, they must meet the Category B QVRC CSPD standard at the time of employment or by completing the educational requirements within the established Category B QVRC CSPD standard. Counselors not achieving the Category B QVRC standard within the prescribed time are not allowed to continue functioning in this capacity.

4. METHOD(S) THE VR AGENCY USES TO ENSURE THAT PERSONNEL ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN APPROPRIATE MODES OF COMMUNICATION WITH OR IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF APPLICANTS OR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY.

Many customers and staff members who are blind or visually impaired need alternative formats for printed communications. Staff in the Assistive Technology Unit prepare-documents in braille, large print, or electronic format. Dedicated computers with braille translation software and braille embossers are available in each field office.

Additionally, TWC-VR employs Assistive Technology Specialists to support staff using assistive programs with standard agency software to complete their job duties.

The TWC Accessibility Team assists with making technology accessible to everyone, including people with visual, hearing, mobility, cognitive, and other disabilities. Their team is dedicated to helping the agency achieve this goal. The DeafBlind Unit serves customers who have a dual sensory loss affecting both hearing and vision. Specialists with knowledge related to both hearing loss and vision impairment consult with caseload-carrying staff, customers, and community resources to develop and implement plans and services. TWC-VR also purchases state-certified interpreter services as needed.

TWC-VR meets adaptive communication needs. For example, with the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Language Line, staff members can establish communication with customers in numerous languages, including those commonly found in Texas.

5. AS APPROPRIATE, DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES TO COORDINATE THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT WITH PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT.

TWC-VR is committed to ensuring that its diverse workforce is highly skilled, professionally

trained, and thoroughly prepared to provide the highest quality service to Texans who are blind or visually impaired and/or have other disabilities. Our training curriculum is designed to help staff gain a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities, and all procedures and activities related to personnel development described are responsive to WIOA and the amendments made to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. TWC-VR develops partnerships with high schools, education service centers, and TEA to assist with professional development for personnel who work with students with disabilities.

TWC-VR has specialty transition VR counselors and general VR counselors who act as liaisons for high schools and partner with the educational system to serve transition-age students seeking assistance to access adult vocational services. Partnering with ISDs allows counselors to use office space on campus to ensure that student customers have access to resources available through the workforce investment system, community, businesses, and other partners necessary to build a network of support. The increase in the number of students with autism, physical and neurodevelopment disabilities, and psychiatric or dual diagnoses reinforces the need to continue best practices components of IDEA. Staff works closely with TEA, centers for independent living, communities, and businesses to achieve collaboration, effective programming, and customer satisfaction. As a result, these efforts improve the effectiveness of VR services for transition customers. Such collaborations take on many different forms in training TWC-VR and educational staff, as well as in impacting families.

TWC-VR staff will continue to collaborate with ISDs in the provision of Pre-ETS as specified in WIOA. Additionally, counselors are often invited to education service centers to participate in educator training and to present training, particularly for more effective transition planning for students. TWC-VR staff works with schools in creating job fairs that allow students to meet with employers and gather information about the labor market. Family nights are hosted in some areas to invite interested members of the public to TWC-VR offices to share resource information, discuss service delivery issues, and give input regarding best practices that would better support students and their families.

TWC-VR continues to enhance partnerships with TEA, high schools, community colleges, stakeholders, and businesses to leverage relations that better prepare students to transition to postsecondary education and the workforce. Through TWC-VR's Employment First Expansion project and the interagency work group with TEA and HHSC, TWC-VR has been able to increase and improve collaboration among the agencies with the goal of:

- improving referral systems and processes between agencies;
- establishing structured systems for meaningful collaboration and coordination of service delivery; and
- implementing data exchange systems for ongoing collaboration and reporting.

J. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

1. DESCRIBE PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THAT ARE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM THE RECEIPT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES.

The provision of quality VR services for Texas students with disabilities is a strategic priority for TWC-VR. TWC-VR policies and procedures have been updated to align with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) §413(B)(F), which sets forth that the individualized plan for employment (IPE) must be developed as soon as possible, but not later than a deadline of 90 days after the date of the determination of eligibility, unless the counselor and the eligible individual agree to an extension to a specific date.

Transition planning by VR counselors and school personnel facilitates the development and implementation of a student's individualized education program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act §614(d). The goals developed in the IEP are considered in the development of the IPE. The development and approval of an IPE is initiated by a VR counselor. Planning includes conversations about informed choice and program information so that students understand the available options for additional education, training, service providers, and employment.

TWC-VR policy outlines the members of the student's transition services team, including the VR counselor and Local or State Education Agency staff, and outlines their roles in coordinating services.

Transition services are student-centered. Success relies on collaboration between the members of the transition team and other support systems. Students and youth with disabilities will soon be adults who need jobs, homes, friends and family, and community involvement. Transition services that are facilitated by VR staff coordinate resources so that an independent life and vocational goals can be achieved. The earlier the planning begins, the sooner supports and services can be coordinated to help the student achieve his or her employment goals.

The transition team plans and develops long-term vocational and independent living goals that are consistent with the interests, needs, and preferences of the student. The key members of the transition team should include professionals and nonprofessionals who are interested in the success of the student. The VR policy also includes information on coordination with IEP meetings and services (C:1303), records exchange in the interest of timely planning (C: 1303- 1), and limitation on in-school services, such as not duplicating services already provided by the school (C: 1303-1).

TWC-VR maintains collaborative working relationships with public education entities in Texas. TWC-VR services emphasize and provide a coordinated set of age-appropriate activities that enable transition students, parents, education personnel, and others to actively plan for and assist the student to prepare for life after leaving high school, including proactively developing partnerships with communities, service providers, and businesses to create opportunities for students to obtain postsecondary education, training,

and competitive integrated employment.

TWC-VR employs dedicated Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (TVRCs) with caseloads that are made up entirely of students. They are assigned to multiple high schools and actively coordinate referrals and information sharing with their schools. In addition, there are some general caseload counselors who also have school assignments. They, too, are tasked with coordination of referrals and information sharing, generally in fewer or smaller schools than TVRCs.

2. DESCRIBE THE CURRENT STATUS AND SCOPE OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY. CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(B), PROVIDE, AT A MINIMUM, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGREEMENT:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, WHICH MAY BE PROVIDED USING ALTERNATIVE MEANS FOR MEETING PARTICIPATION (SUCH AS VIDEO CONFERENCES AND CONFERENCE CALLS), TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES AND OTHER VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES;

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PERSONNEL FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPS) UNDER SECTION 614(D) OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT;

C. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES;

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. OUTREACH TO THESE STUDENTS SHOULD OCCUR AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE DURING THE TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS AND MUST INCLUDE, AT A MINIMUM, A DESCRIPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM, ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, APPLICATION PROCEDURES, AND SCOPE OF SERVICES THAT MAY BE PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS;

E. COORDINATION NECESSARY TO SATISFY DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN 34 C.F.R. PART 397 REGARDING STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE SEEKING SUBMINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYMENT; AND

F. ASSURANCE THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, NEITHER THE SEA NOR THE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WILL ENTER INTO A CONTRACT OR OTHER ARRANGEMENT WITH AN ENTITY, AS DEFINED IN 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(D), FOR THE PURPOSE OF OPERATING A PROGRAM UNDER WHICH YOUTH WITH A DISABILITY IS ENGAGED IN WORK COMPENSATED AT A SUBMINIMUM WAGE.

TWC-VR works closely with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to coordinate transition planning services for students between ages 14 to 22 who receive special education services in Texas. As required in 34 CFR §361.22(b), TWC-VR has collaborated with TEA to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU), initially from August 31, 2017, to August 31, 2022, and renewed in 2022 to go through 2027. The MOU outlines the responsibilities of TWC-VR for the provision of transition planning services as well as the fiscal responsibility of TEA for the provision of services as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The MOU represents each agency's commitment to collaborate and cooperatively facilitate the successful transition of students with disabilities from high school to competitive integrated employment using VR services. The MOU includes the addition of pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) as defined in CFR §361.48, and other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements, operationalizing a referral process for students with disabilities, and a process for inviting counselors to Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings.

Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services.

The MOU provides for consultation and technical assistance in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services; transition planning for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of the IEP; clarification of the agencies' respective roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities for providing transition planning services to students with disabilities; and a description of procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services.

Transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs.

TWC-VR develops partnerships with schools and community organizations to help students with disabilities make a smooth transition to adulthood and work. TWC-VR's counselors throughout the state who are assigned to high schools have a role in preparing students with disabilities for entry into the workplace. VR counselors coordinate closely with high schools to ensure that appropriate students are referred to the VR program. They serve as information resources for teachers and other educational staff and provide resources and information about blindness and other disabilities to parents and transitioning students. They work closely with parents, education staff and community service providers to promote development of skills needed for students to become as independent as possible, as well as

competitive in terms of integrated employment. Counselors work with schools to identify students receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) as early as possible in the process to address concerns regarding impact of employment on benefits and to provide resources for benefits counseling.

Pre-ETS are provided to students with disabilities. Required Pre-ETS activities are job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy.

TWC launched the Pathways to Careers Initiative (PCI), an initiative to expand Pre-ETS to Texas students with disabilities. The first strategy launched under PCI in summer 2017 was Summer Earn and Learn. TWC-VR partnered with each of the twenty-eight Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) and their employer partners to provide employability skills training and work experience for students with disabilities. The 28 Local Workforce Development Boards serve every county in the state of Texas, including rural areas that partner with diverse employers in these areas. Summer Earn and Learn has continued in subsequent summers with the number of participants increasing each year. In 2021 there were 2,147 participants, in 2022 there were 2,516 participants, in 2023 there were 2,959 participants and in 2024 there were 2690 participants. Explore STEM! is a PCI strategy that was implemented in summer 2018 and has been held in subsequent summers. Explore STEM! provides students the opportunity to explore STEM fields, hear from professionals working in those fields, and experience hands-on activities in various STEM fields. The objective is to encourage more students with disabilities to consider careers in STEM fields. In FY23, 118 students participated with 5 colleges hosting 17 camps total. From 2018-2024 14 colleges hosted camps for a total of 1,384 students participating. FY25 data is pending. In addition, VRD has developed partnerships with other state agencies to develop additional work-based learning opportunities to students with disabilities, including Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, which has work-based learning sites across the State.

Other PCI strategies include a Pre-ETS curriculum, Fostering Transition, and Embedded Pre-ETS. TWC-VR has also partnered with Texas A&M University to develop a Pre-ETS curriculum that schools can adopt and use as a classroom resource.

The State office Transition and Career Pathways team and a group of educators reviewed the curriculum and provided feedback that has been incorporated into the curriculum. As of Spring 2025, Texas A&M is crafting a proposal to encompass piloting the curriculum in specific areas with the support of the Education Service Centers.

Fostering Transition is an initiative designed to increase VR staff knowledge of the foster care system and develop strategies for connecting students in foster care with VR services. It began in 2022 with a series of outreach activities and has continued with training for VR staff and the implementation of strategies in each region to receive referrals and ensure they are followed through the VR system. To date, approximately 388 new referrals have been received statewide.

In 2021, TWC-VR implemented a Pre-ETS activity called Embedded Pre-ETS. Through partnerships with the schools and contracted providers, providers can become embedded in the schools, which allows them to provide Pre-ETS activities that build on and enhance what students are already receiving in school. Students participating in this activity gain a more

in-depth understanding of work-related concepts and have greater opportunities to practice these concepts in a protected environment. This model of Pre-ETS activity is unique because it is provided during the school day, however, the same activities are available at other times across all six regions statewide and are provided by many other contracted providers. Embedded Pre-ETS as an activity is beginning its sixth school year. TWC VR will evaluate the success of the activity prior to deciding about issuing a new RFP to expand the number of providers and the reach of this service to additional areas of the state.

As a result of a contract with Texas A&M, the Work-Based Learning initiative is supporting schools in developing work-based learning opportunities for students as one of many Pre-ETS activities available to students. The schools develop and implement work-based learning activities that range from school-based enterprises, for example, coffee carts and greenhouses, to more traditional employer partnerships for work- based learning. For each funding year, TWC-VR is funding up to thirty projects. One hundred thirteen schools have been awarded a project over the last three years. The participating schools are in both metro/urban areas and rural areas across the state. On average, twenty-three students participate in each school's work- based learning project. Pre-ETS services are provided statewide. This specific activity is one type of work-based learning activity offered to students.

I Generate Rural Opportunities for Work (iGrow) is a partnership with Texas A&M to develop opportunities for Pre-ETS instruction and work-based learning activities for students in rural areas of Texas. The program started in the Fall of 2022 in Lee County (Giddings and Lexington) with 30 students participating. Of those, 25 participated in paid work experience in the first summer and 9 participated in the Youth Adventure Program (YAP), a summer leadership experience for high school students at Texas A&M. All students completed 21 Pre-ETS units of instruction. Additionally, the iGrow team recruited 37 employers to participate in current and future work-based learning for iGrow students. The iGrow model is one structure and approach to delivery of Pre-ETS activities that is aimed at meeting the needs of rural students. Through the contract with Texas A&M, VRD has continued to expand the iGrow model of Pre-ETS, to East and West Texas. All five required Pre-ETS activities are available to students across the state, including those in rural areas. VRD will continue to develop and deploy models like iGrow that configure Pre-ETS activities in ways that best meet the needs of rural students.

Explore Apprenticeship 2.0 is the second generation of an initiative that was implemented in 2019. Partnerships with San Jacinto College (Houston) and Dallas College (Dallas) enable students to participate in on-campus activities to learn more about apprenticeship as a path to employment. To date, TWC-VR continues to partner with San Jacinto College and Dallas College on this project.

TWC-VR has partnered for many years with the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) and the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI). In addition to collaboration to connect students with VR services, TWC-VR currently sponsors TSD students for multiple summer activities focused on different aspects of Pre-ETS that are provided, primarily during the summer, by TSD staff. With TSBVI, TWC-VR partners to provide the Summer Work Experience in Austin, Texas (SWEAT) and Working and Living in the Community (WALIC), both residential work-based learning programs. TWC-VR also provides training

opportunities for deaf and hard- of-hearing customers at the Texas School for the Deaf.

Additionally, TWC-VR collaborates with the Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living and Texas A&M Center on Disability and Development to hold the WACO (Work and College Opportunities) at Texas A&M summer work program. Participants receive development and instruction in professionalism, self-determination, and teamwork. They typically experience and learn about college opportunities and work in the community 16 to 20 hours a week while living on campus.

TWC-VR also contracts with providers to deliver Pre-ETS to students with disabilities. There are currently over 100 fee-for-service contracts with employment services providers for Pre-ETS. Contracted Pre-ETS service providers may serve multiple counties and multiple VR regions. In addition, TWC-VR makes all five required pre-employment transition services available to all students with disabilities in all areas of the state through both services purchased from contracted providers and through Pre_ETS services provide by VR staff. TWC-VR employs 160 dedicated transition vocational rehabilitation counselors and has general vocational rehabilitation counselors who have school assignments, especially in rural areas. TWC-VR has a counselor assigned to every public high school throughout the state to ensure that Pre-ETS services are available statewide. To increase the number of contracted providers for Pre-ETS, VR currently had an open enrollment solicitation for new contracted Pre-ETS service providers. The solicitation was posted in the Fall of 2023 and ended March 31, 2025.

TWC-VR counselors work with the high schools to provide consultation and technical assistance regarding the VR process and appropriate services that may be available to customers, such as engaging in apprenticeships. Consultation and technical assistance are provided at ARDs, and attendance may be in person or through alternative means, including videoconferencing or conference calls (based on 34 CFR §361.22(b)(1)).

TWC has regional and state office transition specialists who provide support to VR counselors and TWC-VR field office managers in developing collaborative partnerships with and increasing cooperation between TWC-VR, local school districts, and other community organizations as resources for students with disabilities. These transition specialists assist with the development of policy, training, and strategies that lead to effective provision of transition services. There is also a state office team dedicated to Transition and Career Pathways for VR customers.

The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services.

Local education agencies maintain fiscal responsibility for transition services that are also considered special education or related services, and that are necessary for ensuring a free, appropriate public education to children with disabilities within Texas, including those outlined in the IEP (34 CFR §361.22(c)).

Additionally, House Bill 617, 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2013), requires that each ISD have an individual identified as the Transition and Employment Designee (TED). The TED is responsible for providing information and resources about effective transition planning and services. TWC-VR has counselors throughout the state assigned to high

schools to assist students with disabilities in preparing for entry into the workplace. Nothing related to TWC-VR's responsibilities and requirements under WIOA should be construed as a reduction in local education agencies' responsibility under IDEA to provide and pay for special education and related services as a part of a free and appropriate education to students with disabilities (WIOA §101(c)).

VR counselors (VRCs) coordinate closely with high schools to ensure appropriate students are referred to the VR program. Transition program specialists support the work of VR counselors and TWC-VR field office managers in developing collaborative partnerships with and increasing cooperation between TWC-VR, local school districts, and other community organizations as resources for students with disabilities. TWC-VR has transition VR counselors and general VR counselors who act as liaisons for high schools and partner with the educational system to more appropriately serve transition-age students seeking assistance to access adult vocational services.

TWC-VR partnered with other health and human services agencies to assist TEA in developing the Texas Transition and Employment Guide for parents and their children who are enrolled in special education programs. The guide provides information on statewide services and programs that help facilitate the transition to life outside of the public-school system.

Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

Texas Workforce Commission's current MOU with TEA includes the addition of Pre-ETS, as defined in 34 CFR §361.48, and other WIOA requirements, operationalizing a consistent referral process for students with disabilities, and a process for inviting counselors to attend ARD meetings.

TWC-VR has specialty transition VR counselors and general VR counselors who act as liaisons for high schools and partner with the educational system to more appropriately serve transition-age students seeking assistance to access adult VR services. Partnering with ISDs allows counselors to be available to students and school staff to discuss VR services, resources available through the Texas workforce system, community, businesses, and other partners necessary to build a network of support. Additionally, it allows counselors to arrange or provide relevant seminars, workshops, camps, and summer work experiences throughout the state.

Additionally, TWC-VR has established procedures to serve students with disabilities who are designated as "potentially eligible" for services. To receive Pre-ETS and be considered potentially eligible for VR services, an individual must meet only the definition of a student with a disability. The individual is not required to apply for VR services but has the option to do so. Designating individuals as potentially eligible gives more students with disabilities the opportunity to participate in Pre-ETS.

Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR Part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

When necessary, TWC-VR counselors and school personnel coordinate to satisfy

documentation requirements for students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment, as set forth in 34 CFR §397.4(c). TWC-VR does not pursue subminimum wage employment for customers. When a customer chooses to pursue subminimum wage employment, counseling on other employment options is provided. When, after counseling, subminimum wage employment is still the customer's choice, the VR case is closed. Those customers who choose subminimum wage employment receive counseling, guidance, and referral services within the first six months of employment and annually thereafter.

Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 394.31, neither the state education agency nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 391.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at subminimum wage.

In section 6.3 of the MOU, it states:

"Neither TEA nor LEAs will, in accordance with 34 CFR § 397.31 and 361.22(b)(6) enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR § 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage."

K. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

Through partnerships with the twenty-eight Workforce Development Boards in Texas, TWC-VR established the Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program in 2017. Students participate in paid work experiences throughout the summer with a targeted minimum length of five weeks. Currently in its eighth year, SEAL has served over 2,000 students per summer; note that 2020 program year was cancelled due to the pandemic. For 2024, 2,690 students were placed to participate in SEAL. 2025 data is not yet complete.

SEAL is available across the entire state and made available to all students in the 28-Board areas and all six VR regions. TWC-VR contracts with each Board to provide employability skills training, work site identification, placement, and monitoring and to pay student wages and associated costs for SEAL participants. Local TWC-VR staff work in partnership with each Board to identify students who might benefit from the program, to conduct outreach and recruitment activities, to identify work sites, and to provide any additional services needed for students to complete the program. SEAL has two main Pre-ETS components including Work Based Learning and Workplace Readiness.

Throughout the year, students also have the option to participation in year-round paid work experience. This service, also in partnership with the Workforce Development Boards and a TWC-VR provider, allows for students to participate in paid work experiences throughout the year.

TWC-VR also has thirty-four Project SEARCH sites across the state, with sites located in all 6 VR regions. Project SEARCH is a one-year business-led pre-employment training program that serves transition-age students (up to age 22 in Texas), and youth with disabilities including those with significant intellectual and developmental impairments, with the aim of offering short-term activities focused on career exploration, work readiness training and internships, followed by employment services leading to competitive integrated employment. Project SEARCH sites represent partnerships between TWC-VR, host businesses, independent school districts (ISDs), employment service providers, local IDD Authorities, and Boards and their Workforce Solutions contractors. Contracted service providers for both employment services and pre-employment transition services may serve multiple areas of the state and several Project SEARCH sites. Through this partnership with a host business and LEAs, students get valuable work- based learning opportunities that lead to many successful placements in professional environments with competitive wages and benefits.

TWC-VR is also committed to supporting VR customers in connecting with employers and providing a diverse range of employment services tailored to their individual needs. These services can be accessed either through our contracted providers or through our dedicated business relations team. Examples of these services include:

- Business consultation and workplace assessments
- Job placement services
- Apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities
- Disability awareness training and workplace accommodation supports
- Employer education on tax incentives

L. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

1. STATE PROGRAMS (DESIGNATE LEAD AGENCY(IES) AND IMPLEMENTING ENTITY(IES)) CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

TWC-VR works with organizations across the state to ensure that it meets customers' assistive technology needs, including transition services for students and youth with disabilities and pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities. The organizations include contracted assistive technology evaluation sites across the state and TWC-VR's own Assistive Technology Unit.

Contract providers are required to participate in a thorough testing program to ensure that they meet minimal standards of proficiency to become approved assistive technology

providers. TWC-VR uses programs such as the Computer/Electronics Accommodations Program when a customer is interested in employment with the federal government.

Every Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services management unit has trained assistive technology staff that are responsible for sharing knowledge and resources so that updated technology purchases can address the needs of customers with various disabilities, including those who are blind or visually impaired.

TWC-VR has a MOU with the Texas Technology Access Program (TTAP), the implementing entity designated by the governor under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 3003) §4 whom TWC-VR works cooperatively to coordinate activities, including the referral of individuals with disabilities. Currently, TWC-VR refers customers to TTAP demonstration centers located throughout the state to ensure that they have an informed choice of assistive technology and that equipment purchased by TWC-VR meets each customers' needs.

TWC-VR is represented on the TTAP Advisory Council, participates in annual joint presentations with TTAP at Ability Expo in Houston, Ability Expo in Dallas/Ft. Worth, and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) statewide conference, which provide opportunities for customers and counselors to learn about new adaptive equipment and assistive technology that can assist in maintaining competitive, integrated employment.

2. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

TWC-VR coordinates with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas AgrAbility to assist customers with modifications of agricultural equipment and tools, allowing for agricultural producers with disabilities to continue with farming and ranching. TWC-VR refers customers to Texas AgrAbility for evaluation of a variety of topics related to agricultural work including farm or ranch assessment, technical assistance, agribusiness assessment or agricultural self-employment such as lawn care or maintenance.

3. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH;

TWC-VR works with the following:

- Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCGs), which are local interagency groups composed of public and private providers that come together to develop individualized service plans for children, youth, and adults whose needs can be met only through interagency coordination and cooperation. CRCGs originated with Texas legislation passed in 1987 directing state agencies serving children to develop a community-based approach to provide better coordination of services for children and youth with complex multi-agency needs. The State CRCG Office at the Texas Health and Human Services (HHS). Under a MOU, mandated state agency partners, including TWC, support CRCGs by having representatives participate in local CRCGs, along with community-based organizations and family and peer representatives. Local CRCGs are county-based groups of local partners and community members who work with parents, caregivers, children, youth, and adults with complex needs to identify and coordinate services and supports. Specifically, they assist people whose needs can't be met by only one agency and who would benefit from interagency coordination. VRD staff have long participated in local

CRCGs, including under legacy Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services and now as part of TWC. A VR staff member serves as the representative of TWC on the State CRCG Workgroup, and VR staff across the state participate in local CRCGs as needed to coordinate services and supports for youth with disabilities.

- Local Workforce Development Boards that provide services to out-of-school youth TWC- VR refers customers to WIOA Youth programs operated by Board contractors, when appropriate for the individual.

4. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS;

TWC-VR contracts with WorkQuest, and the Texas State Use Program, known as the Purchasing from People with Disabilities (PPD) program, to provide services in support of agency and divisional operations. WorkQuest connects State agencies to providers of various services as negotiated prices. The program is dedicated to furthering the state's policy of encouraging and assisting persons with disabilities to achieve maximum personal independence by engaging in useful, productive employment activities. Under the program, individuals with varying levels of disabilities produce products or perform services through a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP). TWC-VR purchases goods and services through CRPs participating in the PPD program, including temporary personnel services. This program helps individuals with disabilities during their transition toward independence and provides them with direct benefits by offering stable, vocational rehabilitation in their own communities. TWC-VR administers the program and pays a contracted rate to WorkQuest, the Central Non-Profit Agency, who manages the administrative processes to hire and pay the provider of the needed services. Additionally, TWC-VR contracts with WorkQuest for paid work experience services through PPD CRPs providing temporary personnel services.

5. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT (42 U.S.C. 1396 ET SEQ.);

TWC-VR collaborates with the Texas Health and Human Services (HHS), the state agency responsible for administering the state Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

Collaboration occurs in the delivery of VR services, including extended services, for individuals with the most significant disabilities who have been determined to be eligible for home and community-based services under a Medicaid State Plan amendment. VR counselors provide information to mutually served customers to assist them in understanding how to navigate the long-term support and services system and TWC-VR program specialists work HHS policy specialists to develop accurate tools and resource to assist providers and customers in this process. TWC-VR continues to collaborate with HHS's Office of Disability Services Coordination to recruit Supported Employment (SE) providers already established with HHS to ensure a seamless transition from one program to another, when applicable.

Additionally, TWC-VR works with HHS Medicaid/CHIP to resolve individual and system issues involving mutually served customers, particularly those transferring from Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to Title II Childhood Disability Beneficiaries to ensure continuation of Medicaid services.

TWC-VR coordinates with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to encourage Employment Services Providers (ESPs) to become employment networks (ENs) under SSA's Ticket to Work Program. TWC-VR works with Employment Networks to coordinate extended services for those customers that need them following successful case closure.

Another area of interagency coordination is the training TWC-VR program specialists provide on the following topics to staff working with mutually served customers eligible or receiving Medicaid State Plan programs;

- Annual training on TWC-VR programs to service coordinators and case managers, as well as provider organizations, community centers staff, including customer benefits officers, and other statewide groups and committees;
- Training on TWC-VR services and benefits and work incentives to HHS Managed Care Organization service coordinators and management, other service providers including Medicaid State Plan case managers and service coordinators;
- Training on benefits and work incentives every six months for HHS providers and program staff; and
- Overview of TWC-VR services and best practices for mutually served customers for HHS service coordinators, case managers, private providers, and other staff members.

6. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES;

TWC-VR collaborates with HHS, the state agency responsible for providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Collaboration occurs in the delivery of VR services, including extended services, for individuals with the most significant disabilities who have been determined to be eligible for home and community-based services under a Medicaid waiver, Medicaid state plan amendment, or other authorities related to a state Medicaid program. VR counselors provide information to mutually served customers to assist them in understanding how to navigate the long-term support and services system and TWC-VR program specialists work HHS policy specialists to develop accurate tools and resource to assist providers and customers in this process.

SSA and HHS have a data exchange agreement that allows HHS to access SSA data. Through a third-party agreement (State Verification and Exchange System), TWC-VR can obtain SSA data regarding cost reimbursement from HHS.

TWC-VR is working in collaboration with HHS on the implementation of Senate Bill 50, 2021 87th Legislative Session and the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule issued by Centers for Medicaid and Medicare services in 2014.

Texas Senate Bill 50 (SB50) directed HHS to establish rules and processes that comply with Texas' Employment First Policy, which states that employment is the first and preferred option for individuals with disabilities who receive public benefits. The law's goal is to ensure that Medicaid waiver participants who want competitive and integrated employment

can achieve that goal. The law requires HHS to develop strategies to increase the number of individuals who receive employment services from TWC or through the waiver program in which they are enrolled.

The HCBS settings rule established standards for community integration, choice and rights regarding services funded by Medicaid to individuals in HCBS programs, including Medicaid waiver programs and state plan services. Requirements around supporting an individual to pursue competitive integrated employment were included in this rule.

As part of the implementation of SB50 and in response to the effective date of the HCBS settings requirements, TWC-VR has initiated a project titled the Employment First Expansion which employs several strategies to increase services to individuals with the most significant disabilities and to improve partnerships with HHS and TEA to provide a seamless service delivery system. Together a strategic framework to carry out the requirements of the HCBS Settings Rule and the implementation of SB50 has been developed. The strategic framework involves cross-agency collaborations to improve referral and data exchange systems, development of ongoing training for agency staff, and evaluation of system progress on joint service provision to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

In addition to improvements in collaboration, TWC-VR will provide data addressing the components of SB50 including aggregate numbers of individuals served who obtained employment and are also receiving services through one of the HHS programs listed in the law. TWC-VR worked with HHS to develop a framework for the data collection. TWC-VR and HHS executed a Memorandum of Agreement/Data Sharing on January 31, 2023.

Representatives from TWC-VR and HHS have outlined the finder file specifications needed to exchange the requested data through a secure HHS portal. The data exchange will occur quarterly, with the first exchange occurring in August of 2023.

Another area of interagency coordination is the training provided by TWC-VR program specialists to other state agency staff and external providers who mutually serve customers with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Trainings include:

- Annual training on TWC-VR programs to Home and Community-Based Services waiver providers, service coordinators and case managers, as well as provider organizations, community centers staff, including customer benefits officers, and other statewide groups and committees;
- TWC-VR services and benefits and work incentives, which is presented to HHS Managed Care Organization service coordinators and management, other service providers and Medicaid waiver case managers;
- Benefits and work incentives every six months for HHS providers, and IDD program staff; and
- Overview of TWC-VR services and best practices for mutually served customers, which is presented to HHS service coordinators, case managers, private providers, and other staff members.

7. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND

TWC-VR collaborates with HHS, the state agency responsible for providing mental health services, to support customers with mental health needs. TWC-VR promotes mental health evidence-based practices and other evidence-informed models of service that will improve competitive integrated employment outcome strategies for customers. As part of this, TWC-VR purchases the psychological services psychotherapy and outpatient psychiatric treatment. TWC-VR refers customers who need inpatient treatment to local mental health authorities, who contract with HHS to provide these services.

Other examples of collaboration include:

- increasing coordination and developing new partnerships with other state and community organizations including mental health organizations, local mental health authorities, and universities serving individuals with mental health disorders to develop resources, increase knowledge, and implement best practices;
- working with the HHS Office of Mental Health Coordination to identify and implement best practices, engage potential community partners, and facilitate service coordination;
- participating in the Mental Health First Aid training conducted by local mental health authorities, which teaches VR counselors and other professionals how to assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis;
- training of HHS staff and other providers of mental health services conducted by TWC-VR policy specialists on the following:
    - Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) for community partners. WRAP is an evidence-based system that is used worldwide by individuals who are experiencing mental health and other kinds of wellness challenges. It is a unique form of mental health support that is peer-led and self-directed;
    - TWC-VR employment services, benefits, and work incentives to members of the seven-statewide mental health peer-operated support groups; and
    - Benefits and work incentives every six months for TWC-VR staff, ESPs, HHS providers, and IDD and mental health staff.

8. OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

To ensure that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate services, TWC-VR has the following cooperative arrangements with various federal, state, and local agencies and programs to use their services and facilities:

- collaboration with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHS) to provide VR services to individuals eligible for home and community-based services under a Medicaid waiver or Medicaid State Plan Amendment. HHS is the state agency that provides services to individuals with developmental disabilities;
- coordination with HHS in referral processes between VR and the Blind Children's Program, the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services Program, and the Independent Living Services Program;

- coordination with HHS in implementation of legislation passed by the 86th Texas Legislature;
- MOUs with TEA and independent school districts (ISDs) to enhance coordination of services provided through programs like Project SEARCH and other community programs and support available to improve and expand services for transition-age students with disabilities;
- coordination with the Texas School for the Blind or Visually Impaired to provide specialized programs that prepare students for the transition to postsecondary life and the workplace;
- coordination with the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) to provide specialized programs that prepare students on the transition to postsecondary life and the workplace;
- Interagency Contracts (IAC's) with public colleges and universities to provide effective communication access services for VR students to share the cost for provision of these services;
- IAC with HHS Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (ODHHS) to purchase communication access services;
- MOU with the Texas Department of Insurance's Division of Workers' Compensation to enhance referrals for return-to-work efforts;
- coordination with the Social Security Administration (SSA) on employment incentives and support to maximize Social Security Administration/Vocational Rehabilitation (SSA/VR) reimbursement activity through the Ticket to Work Program;
- MOU with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to maximize case service funds through better access to comparable benefits, and to enhance the case management process while avoiding duplication of services;
- coordination with the Texas Veterans Commission to help identify veterans who need additional support in securing benefits, gaining employment, and accessing advocacy services;
- coordination with the Texas Coordinating Council for Veteran Services to help identify trends that have an adverse effect on the veteran population and create strategies to address and resolve those issues at the state level;
- coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs to create statewide symposiums and job fairs to meet the federal regulation that requires federal contractors to ensure that no less than 7 percent of their workforce includes individuals with disabilities;
- coordination with the Purchasing for People with Disabilities program in providing training to CRPs;

- coordination with the Texas Center for Justice and Equity for juveniles and adults to assist and strengthen supports and employment goals by exploring career opportunities; and
- coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation on addressing the issue of inadequate transportation, often a major factor in a customer's ability to maintain employment.

Additionally, TWC-VR uses TWC's internal structure to:

- verify for Texas businesses that job applicants under the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program are receiving, or have received, VR services under an individualized plan for employment;
- access electronic wage data to verify employment history and income for customers for closure data and SSA/VR reimbursement submission; and
- collaborate with Workforce Solutions Offices regarding customer training and support for employment goals, including participation in symposiums, job fairs, and providing disability awareness training.

9. OTHER PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

Private nonprofit providers of rehabilitation services are an important part of the VR service delivery process for many customers. TWC-VR routinely works with national organizations, in addition to local private nonprofits to purchase and arrange services that help customers prepare for, obtain, maintain, or advance in employment. For the provision of extended services in Supported Employment, TWC-VR establishes contractual relationships with public and nonprofit agencies or organizations within the state, employers, natural supports, and other entities who provider VR services.

Examples of services include:

- orientation and mobility;
- assistive technology training;
- diabetes education;
- communication access;
- durable medical equipment (DME);
- employment supports for brain injury;
- environmental work assessment;
- hearing aids and related accessories;
- independent living services for older individuals who are blind;
- job placement;
- job skills training;

- personal social adjustment training;
- Pre-Employment Transition Services;
- Project SEARCH;
- supervised residential services for individuals in recovery;
- self-employment, including supported self-employment;
- supported employment services;
- vehicle modifications;
- vocational adjustment training;
- vocational evaluation and assessment;
- wellness recovery action plans (WRAP);
- work adjustment training; and
- work experience.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The VR agency must select the "Edit" button to review and agree to the VR State plan Assurances.

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

The State Plan must include
3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
3.e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).
3.m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

The State Plan must include
4.a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act
4.g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,
4.j.i. has developed and will implement,
4.j.i.A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
4.j.i.B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
4.j.ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113).

The State Plan must include
4.j.iii. shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:
7.a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and

The State Plan must include
updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Do you attest that these assurances will be met?
Yes

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY TITLE IV OF WIOA[1], AND ITS STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT;

[1] Public Law 113-128.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

2. IN THE EVENT THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY IS NOT PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH VOCATIONAL AND OTHER REHABILITATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY MUST INCLUDE A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT FOR THE VR PROGRAM (SECTION 101(A)(2)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT). AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT)[2]AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[3], THE REHABILITATION ACT, 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C), AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[4], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE TO STATES UNDER SECTION 111(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

TWC Vocational Rehabilitation Division

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY, OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[5], THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[6], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT OR, IF NOT APPLICABLE, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C);

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

The Vocational Rehabilitation Division Director, Tammy Ames,

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Vocational Rehabilitation Division Director

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Public Law 113-128.

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

To review and complete the Certification section of the VR portion of the State plan, please select the “Edit” button.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Cheryl Fuller
Title of Signatory	Vocational Rehabilitation Division Director
Date Signed	03/04/2024

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	56.9%	TBD	57.0%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	55.3%	TBD	55.5%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$ 7,290	TBD	$ 7,290	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	50.5%	TBD	50.5%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	58.8%	TBD	58. 8%	TBD

[1] Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Not all measures are relevant to all programs (NA is used to mark when a measure does not apply). Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, "With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure

that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs."

GEPA 427 FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PACKAGE - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

• As required by section 427 of GEPA, applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, and age.

• Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

• Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.

• Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

• Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

The Vocational Rehabilitation program at Texas Workforce Commission exists to help eligible people with disabilities prepare for, obtain, maintain, and advance in meaningful employment.

TWC-VR is committed to equitable access to and equitable participation in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services. This includes a commitment to ensuring people with disabilities have quality jobs and careers, to strong collaborative partnerships that advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including the recruitment and retention of staff who have a passion for serving people with disabilities.

Work at TWC-VR is conducted according to a set of values. These values serve as a cornerstone for high-quality service delivery and help to ensure equitable access to and equitable participation in VR services.

TWC-VR Values

- We value keeping our customers first in our priorities and decisions, and we measure our success by the success of our customers.
- We encourage and include diverse perspectives, backgrounds, cultures, and ideas because they enrich our lives and our work.
- Our behavior is honest, responsible, ethical, and accountable.
- We build strong, collaborative relationships with partner programs, schools, employers, and community organizations.

- We create a positive, productive work environment, enabled by supervision that empowers and trusts staff.
- We develop and cultivate specialized knowledge and services that provide targeted, quality, and timely service for customers.
- We are committed to continuous improvement to achieve our shared values and goals.

It is TWC-VR policy that no individual is excluded, denied benefits, limited participation, or otherwise discriminated against based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or religion.

It is TWC-VR policy that VR customers are afforded basic customer rights, including the right to informed choice, to services that are nondiscriminatory, to protection of personal information, and to appeal decisions regarding planned services or eligibility for such services.

It is TWC-VR policy that accommodations, including auxiliary aids and services, must be provided, as needed, during the VR process to enable customers the ability to access and fully participate in their VR program (e.g., application, assessments, development, and implementation of the Individualized Plan for Employment).

It is TWC-VR policy that all individuals be provided access to buildings, offices, and events, as well as information provided in the preferred mode of communication to enhance understanding.

Accommodations can vary depending on the specific needs of the individual and the context of the situation. The goal is to create an inclusive environment that allows individuals with disabilities to participate fully in various aspects of society.

The VR Standards for Providers Manual lists standards for physical locations and accessibility to ensure contractors meet each customer's individual needs. These standards ensure that the customer can fully access and participate in services to achieve an employment goal.

Texas Workforce Commission maintains an Employment First policy and acknowledges that Employment First is the policy of the state, as set forth in Texas Government Code §531.02447, "that earning a living wage through competitive employment in the general workforce is the priority and preferred outcome for working-age individuals with disabilities who receive public benefits."

TWC-VR is leading an Employment First Expansion project which employs several strategies to increase services to individuals with the most significant disabilities and to improve partnerships with Texas Health and Human Services and Texas Education Agency to provide a seamless service delivery system.

TWC-VR engages in numerous initiatives, programs, partnerships, and activities to inform, advocate for, and make available VR services statewide to customers. For more information, refer to the following descriptions in the VR Portion of the WIOA Combined State Plan for Texas (PYs 2024-2027):

- Description (b) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

- Description (d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress
- Description (h) Waiver of Statewideness
- Description (i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
- Description (j) Coordination with Education Officials
- Description (k) Coordination with Employers
- Description (l) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Potential barriers that may impede equitable access to and participation in the VR program are outlined in description (b) of the VR Portion of the WIOA Combined State Plan for Texas (PYs 2024-2027). Description (b), Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), outlines the VR service needs of individuals with disabilities in Texas, including barriers related to the significance of an individual's disability, underserved populations and unmet needs, minority group needs, and an expanding need for services such as pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities who are transitioning from high school to postsecondary education and/or employment.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

TWC-VR identified measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR program in description (c) of the VR Portion of the WIOA Combined State Plan for Texas (PYs 2024-2027). Description (c), Goals, Priorities, and Strategies, includes TWC-VR's plan for addressing barriers to equitable access and participation in the VR program. These are consistent with the CSNA and jointly developed with the Rehabilitation Council of Texas.

In addition, the WIOA Combined State Plan for Texas outlines TWC-VR's actions to address previous goals, to be available to individuals with disabilities in all political subdivisions of the state, to ensure qualified personnel, to serve Texas students with disabilities, to work with employers, and to coordinate with other agencies on behalf of its customers.

For more information, refer to:

- Description (d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress
- Description (h) Waiver of Statewideness
- Description (i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
- Description (j) Coordination with Education Officials
- Description (k) Coordination with Employers
- Description (l) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

TWC-VR engages in ongoing monitoring of targeted milestones for the achievement, access, and participation of individuals with disabilities. TWC-VR closely monitors progress in addressing identified VR program barriers and in meeting the goals, priorities, and strategies listed in the VR Portion of the WIOA Combined State Plan for Texas. Progress in addressing

barriers is measured, reported, and discussed with the Rehabilitation Council of Texas every quarter.

GEPA 427 FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PACKAGE - SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

• As required by section 427 of GEPA, applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, and age.

• Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

• Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.

• Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

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Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Texas Workforce Commission, Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) exists to help eligible people with disabilities prepare for, obtain, maintain, and advance in meaningful employment.

TWC-VR offers supported employment services to help customers with the most significant disabilities achieve competitive integrated employment. Providers, known as supported employment specialists, provide supported employment services that include helping customers explore job options, assisting with job searches and training, and arranging extended services to help customers sustain meaningful long-term employment.

TWC-VR is committed to equitable access to and equitable participation in supported employment services. This includes a commitment to ensuring people with disabilities have quality jobs and careers, to strong collaborative partnerships that advance employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including the recruitment and retention of staff who have a passion for serving people with disabilities.

Work at TWC-VR is conducted according to a set of values. These values serve as a cornerstone for high-quality service delivery and help to ensure equitable access to and equitable participation in supported employment services.

TWC-VR Values

- We value keeping our customers first in our priorities and decisions, and we measure our success by the success of our customers.
- We encourage and include diverse perspectives, backgrounds, cultures, and ideas because they enrich our lives and our work.

- Our behavior is honest, responsible, ethical, and accountable.
- We build strong, collaborative relationships with partner programs, schools, employers, and community organizations.
- We create a positive, productive work environment, enabled by supervision that empowers and trusts staff.
- We develop and cultivate specialized knowledge and services that provide targeted, quality, and timely service for customers.
- We are committed to continuous improvement to achieve our shared values and goals.

It is TWC-VR policy that no individual is excluded, denied benefits, limited participation, or otherwise discriminated against based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or religion.

It is TWC-VR policy that VR customers are afforded basic customer rights, including the right to informed choice, to services that are nondiscriminatory, to protection of personal information, and to appeal decisions regarding planned services or eligibility for such services.

It is TWC-VR policy that accommodations, including auxiliary aids and services, must be provided, as needed, during VR service delivery to enable customers the ability to access and fully participate.

It is TWC-VR policy that all individuals be provided access to buildings, offices, and events, as well as information provided in the preferred mode of communication to enhance understanding.

Accommodations can vary depending on the specific needs of the individual and the context of the situation. The goal is to create an inclusive environment that allows individuals with disabilities to participate fully in various aspects of society.

The VR Standards for Providers Manual lists standards for physical locations and accessibility to ensure contractors meet each customer's individual needs. These standards ensure that the customer can fully access and participate in services to achieve an employment goal.

Texas Workforce Commission maintains an Employment First policy and acknowledges that Employment First is the policy of the state, as set forth in Texas Government Code §531.02447, "that earning a living wage through competitive employment in the general workforce is the priority and preferred outcome for working-age individuals with disabilities who receive public benefits."

TWC-VR is leading an Employment First Expansion project which employs several strategies to increase services to individuals with the most significant disabilities and to improve partnerships with Texas Health and Human Services and Texas Education Agency to provide a seamless service delivery system.

TWC-VR engages in numerous initiatives, programs, partnerships, and activities to inform, advocate for, and make available supported employment services statewide to customers. For

more information, refer to the following descriptions in the VR Portion of the WIOA Combined State Plan for Texas (PYs 2024-2027):

- Description (b) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
- Description (d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress
- Description (e) Supported Employment Services
- Description (h) Waiver of Statewideness
- Description (i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
- Description (j) Coordination with Education Officials
- Description (k) Coordination with Employers
- Description (l) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Potential barriers that may impede equitable access and participation of individuals with disabilities in supported employment services are outlined in description (b) of the VR Portion of the WIOA Combined State Plan for Texas (PYs 2024-2027). Description (b), Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), outlines the VR service needs of individuals with disabilities in Texas, including barriers related to the significance of an individual's disability, underserved populations and unmet needs, minority group needs, and an expanding need for services for students with disabilities.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form*

that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

TWC-VR identified measurable goals and priorities related to supported employment in description (c) and (e) of the VR Portion of the WIOA Combined State Plan for Texas (PYs 2024-2027). Description (c), Goals, Priorities, and Strategies, and description (e), Supported Employment Services, include TWC-VR's plan for addressing barriers to equitable access and participation in supported employment services. These are consistent with the CSNA and jointly developed with the Rehabilitation Council of Texas.

In addition, the WIOA Combined State Plan for Texas outlines TWC-VR's actions to address previous goals, to be available to individuals with disabilities in all political subdivisions of the state, to ensure qualified personnel, to serve Texas students with disabilities, to work with employers, and to coordinate with other agencies on behalf of its customers.

For more information, refer to:

- Description (d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress
- Description (e) Supported Employment Services
- Description (h) Waiver of Statewideness
- Description (i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
- Description (j) Coordination with Education Officials
- Description (k) Coordination with Employers
- Description (l) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

TWC-VR engages in ongoing monitoring of targeted milestones for the achievement, access, and participation of individuals with disabilities. TWC-VR closely monitors progress in addressing identified barriers and in meeting the goals listed in descriptions (c) and (e) of the VR Portion of the WIOA Combined State Plan for Texas. Progress in addressing barriers is measured, reported, and discussed with the Rehabilitation Council of Texas every quarter.

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult program, Dislocated Worker program, Youth program, Wagner-Peyser Act program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program— and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it elects to include in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" in Sections II-IV of this document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program.

[24] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

(OMB Control No. 1205-0040)

A. ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS AND IMPACT

1. DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 641.302(D)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

Employment Opportunities for Older Workers

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the working population, aged 16 to 24, is projected to decrease by 9 percent between 2023 and 2033. This anticipated decline in younger workers presents potential recruitment challenges for employers. However, the labor force participation of individuals aged 75 and older is expected to grow by 79.1 percent over the same period. This growth is attributed to several factors, including longer life expectancy, higher educational attainment, better overall health among older adults, a decline in physically demanding occupations, and changes to the Social Security retirement age. These trends have made it more feasible and appealing for older individuals to remain in or reenter the workforce.

As the percentage of workers over age 55 is projected to increase, older workers will subsequently make up a larger percentage of the workforce in the future. By 2033, it is projected that one in four American workers will be 55 or older. Given these shifts, it is increasingly important for employers to consider the implications of the decreasing younger workforce and to recognize the value that experienced, mature workers bring to the labor market.

Employment opportunities for older workers (individuals aged 55 and older) in Texas are closely tied to the long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations that have been previously discussed in the Plan’s section on economic, workforce, and workforce development activities. Based on 10-year projections determined by Texas labor market information (LMI) for 2022–2032, participant placement efforts will focus on the Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and Administrative and Support Services industries, as they have shown to have increased employment in at least one standard occupational classification (SOC) and the educational attainment, skills, and physical demands for these industries align with the characteristics of the typical Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) participant. Between 2022 and 2032, Health Care and Social Assistance employment is expected to grow by 23.4 percent.

While the number of jobs to be added for the entire “Education industry” is not explicitly detailed in readily available reports, the projections indicate that together the Education and Health Services sectors in Texas are expected to grow by 23.2 percent between 2022 and 2032. The Educational Services sector continues to be identified as a field with high-wage

and high-demand occupations. According to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), over the last five years, the demand for Educational Services workers in Texas grew at a steady pace. In the first quarter of 2024, employment in Educational Services in Texas was at about 1.3 million, representing nearly 10 percent of the state's total workforce. This is an 8 percent increase since the first quarter of 2019 when there were over 99,000 jobs added to the sector. Compared to the first quarter of 2014, employment in this sector has risen by 17.3 percent, adding 196,631 jobs. For the Retail Trade industry, national projections for 2022–2032 from BLS anticipate job losses, though regional trends in Texas may vary.

2. DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN RELATE TO THE TYPES OF UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS FOR WHICH SCSEP PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAINED AND THE TYPES OF SKILL TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED. (20 CFR 641.302(D))

Long-term projections derived from LMI data indicate a continued increased demand for service-sector jobs in Texas. Specifically, the Accommodation and Food Services, Education, Retail Trade, and Health Care and Social Assistance industries are anticipated to experience significant growth. The latest projections, covering the period between 2022 and 2032, show that these four industries are projected to add 1,029,910 jobs combined. SCSEP participant placements are determined based on which industries are growing, as determined through LMI projection, and the specific characteristics of the participant, including age and poverty level. Additionally, educational attainment and physical limitations are considered when placing a participant in training to ensure that the participant is receiving training in an area that has attainable, unsubsidized employment opportunities.

SCSEP provides older workers with opportunities to learn the technological skills required for targeted industries in which they are often lacking. The rapid pace of technological change may contribute to employers' discriminatory behavior against older workers by reinforcing perceptions that older adults lack digital skills and have more difficulty acquiring them than younger individuals. Along with profession-specific hard skills learned through on-the-job experiences, technological skills allow mature workers a chance for long-term employment in industries that will continue to grow.

SCSEP participants may be trained in Microsoft Office, accounting, cash management, general administrative skills, customer service, time management, custodial responsibilities, and safety. Training assignments are tailored to specific employment opportunities, thus providing SCSEP participants with the skills required to fill unsubsidized positions in high-demand industries, such as customer service representatives, general office clerks, accounting clerks, personal care attendants, medical assistants, home health aides, food preparation workers, and custodians.

3. DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29 U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

According to BLS data provided through the 2023 Current Population Survey workers aged 55 and older comprised approximately 18 percent of the Texas workforce. The proportion of the Texas population aged 55 and older is projected to continue to increase, with the 65 and

older population expected to grow by more than 88 percent between 2023 and 2050 (Texas 2036, Texas Demographic Center). The trend reflects workers' decisions to postpone retirement due to employment in fulfilling careers, longer lives, changing retirement plans and resources, and shrinking retiree health benefits. Additionally, this trend has the potential to affect the workforce and the overall economy in numerous ways.

The following industries, among others, are being targeted for SCSEP participant placements: Health Care and Social Assistance, Educational Services, Accommodation and Food Services, Retail Trade, and Administrative and Support Services. These industries include many occupations that are projected to grow and be of interest to SCSEP participants, including Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations, Healthcare Support Occupations, Personal Care and Service Occupations, Community and Social Service Occupations, Sales and Related Occupations, and Office and Administrative Support Occupations. These occupations are targeted based on projected growth and alignment with general educational attainment trends of older workers.

SCSEP-eligible individuals often possess skills such as verbal communication, time management, social perceptiveness, service orientation, writing, critical thinking and decision making, and collaboration. Training programs aligned with target occupations ensure that SCSEP participants in Texas have the necessary technology skill sets for available positions, such as proficiency in Office suite software, database user interface software, presentation software, computer-based training software, video conferencing software, and electronic mail software.

Based on recent U.S. Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Survey, educational attainment levels among the population aged 25 and older continue to vary nationwide. In 2022, 28 percent of the population had a high school diploma as their highest level of education, 15 percent had some college experience but no degree, 10 percent held an associate's degree, and 37 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. To support the diverse educational backgrounds of older individuals, training programs aligned with high-growth occupations play a critical role. These programs help ensure that participants in Texas' SCSEP acquire the skills needed to succeed in the current labor market and qualify for available job opportunities.

B. SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS. THIS MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, BUT REGARDLESS OF PLACEMENT IN DOCUMENT, MUST INCLUDE:

A. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH WIOA TITLE I PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PLANS FOR USING THE WIOA ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ITS PARTNERS TO SERVE INDIVIDUALS AGED 55 AND OLDER. (20 CFR 641.302(G), 641.325(E))

Coordination with Other Programs, Initiatives, and Entities

Grantees pursue both state- and local-level strategies to strengthen partnerships and working relationships in each of the categories below. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC):

- Seeks local workforce development boards' (Boards) cooperation in generating Older Worker Reports from WorkInTexas.com to facilitate participant recruitment by grantees' field coordinators;
- encourages grantees and Boards to refine memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to specify roles and responsibilities for:
    - outreach to employers;
    - workforce services to seniors;
    - case management services for coenrolled participants; and
    - other joint efforts as appropriate;
- encourages Boards to:
    - coenroll seniors seeking full-time work under Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and/or other workforce programs, as appropriate;
    - provide for the location of participant assistants at Workforce Solutions Offices when feasible, and train participant assistants as job developers to assist older job seekers; and
    - propose sessions on older worker issues and best practices at TWC's Annual Workforce Forum.

Grantees and Boards:

- provide information on and referrals to the services available at Workforce Solutions Offices;
- negotiate community service assignments for senior participants at Workforce Solutions Offices, when feasible; and
- negotiate for colocation of grantee staff at Workforce Solutions Offices when funding and office space is available.

Grantees:

- list participant openings and staff openings in WorkInTexas.com;
- assist job-ready participants in registering online in WorkInTexas.com;
- promote job seeker workshops and job clubs at Workforce Solutions Offices and prepare Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) for participants; and
- provide updates to Boards on SCSEP activities and successes in the local workforce development area (workforce area).

Boards provide:

- core workforce services to SCSEP participants and other older job seekers; and

- current and future LMI on industries, occupations, and required skill sets to older job seekers.

B. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH THE ACTIVITIES BEING CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(H))

Activities Carried Out under Other Titles of the Older Americans Act

Grantees employ the following strategies to promote an ongoing dialogue and coordination with other providers serving seniors:

- Share information and resources relevant to senior health, support services, and older job seekers at Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee meetings
- Explore opportunities for improving the quality of training and access to training for community-based direct service workers caring for individuals with disabilities
- Attend the quarterly Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) training meeting when feasible
- Contact regional specialists to schedule interpreters and other communication access services if assistance is needed for training and employment services with the deaf and hard of hearing

C. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY AND FAITH- BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. (20 CFR 641.302(I))

Public and Private Entities and Programs Serving Older Americans

TWC shares with grantees items of interest that relate to the employment of individuals with disabilities and the provision of accessible technology. Grantees:

- use 2-1-1 Texas Referral and Information Network (TIRN) and other directories of service and support organizations to identify entities and programs in the community that can support seniors;
- coordinate with local service providers, AAAs, and community stakeholders to assess needs and develop solutions for local transportation services;
- participate in meetings, as appropriate, with senior service providers, both public and private; and
- communicate and coordinate with members of the local disability community on activities, resources, and services for seniors with disabilities in the workforce area.

Grantees:

- continue to use computer, adult basic education (ABE), high school equivalency, continuing education, and other targeted training courses at community colleges,

while taking advantage of course discounts for individuals aged 55 to 64 and no-cost classes for individuals 65 years of age and older;

- work with Boards to encourage community colleges to create short-term education and training programs that are relevant for local targeted industries and high-priority occupations;
- encourage community colleges to develop education and training programs that adhere to older individuals' learning styles and paces;
- continue two-way referrals to local vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs;
- develop partnerships with nonprofits and government agencies through community events, job fairs, and partner meetings;
- partner with local senior community centers to provide vital trainings and support services to SCSEP participants; and
- connect with community action agencies, community colleges, food pantries, local social services offices, and/or organizations that provide housing assistance to refer participants to relevant organizations for supportive services.

D. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

SCSEP grantees in Texas routinely use Workforce Solution Offices, labor market publications, and analytics software to stay informed on current market trends and conditions. Such information ensures that training programs for SCSEP participants are relevant to available opportunities. SCSEP field coordinators network with for-profit employers at job fairs and other employment-related events and work closely with nonprofit organizations to provide appropriate training to participants based on current LMI. Additionally, participants are provided financial, employment, and entrepreneurial coaching services.

SCSEP grantees in Texas also network with local industry leaders to identify job training and job placement opportunities for older job seekers throughout Texas. The Center for Workforce Inclusion (CWI) started a multiyear effort to change how LMI data is used to support SCSEP. CWI is training its staff on the collection and use of LMI data to justify which host agencies are recruited and how the data is used to create community service assignments that match LMI data to the greatest extent possible.

E. ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. (20 CFR 641.335)

Coordination with Workforce Solutions Offices

SCSEP providers pursue and maintain memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with Workforce Solutions Offices in their service areas to allow for referrals and the use of Workforce Solutions Office resources for SCSEP participants. SCSEP field staff uses WorkinTexas.com to identify current open positions for participants and also attend United Way and Workforce

Solutions meetings to present SCSEP information and connect with partners for interagency referrals.

Improve and Expand Grantee Communications

To encourage communication among SCSEP providers in Texas, TWC continues to facilitate quarterly grantee conference calls in order to gather information and share best practices. Grantee field staff members connect with their counterparts in the same workforce area and coordinate efforts that strengthen partnerships with Boards and other local entities.

Other Education and Training Providers

SCSEP providers promote the American Association of Community Colleges' Plus 50 Initiative through the CWI SCSEP subgrantee network. The initiative is designed to help low-income, older job seekers with workforce training and making career changes into high-demand fields through programs offered at community colleges. TWC seeks to enhance these efforts by:

- sharing information with grantees on literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL), and high school equivalency resources developed by TWC's Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program; and
- attending relevant meetings and conferences to identify training and VR resources for seniors.

F. EFFORTS TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

Rural Local Economic Development Offices

The governor has designated TWC as the administrator of the state's portion of SCSEP in rural communities. Along with providing oversight and technical assistance, TWC manages statewide planning and coordination of the state's grant application and performance reporting. TWC also supports SCSEP outreach efforts, including those that engage local economic development offices. The State works to help rural communities and small businesses create and retain jobs through business development and community strategic planning. The following organizations are also committed to promoting rural development initiatives in Texas:

- The Texas Rural Funders, a nonprofit corporation established to raise money to finance health, community development, and economic development programs in rural Texas
- The Association of Rural Communities in Texas (ARCIT), a resource that promotes best practices in the delivery of public services to enhance the quality of life for all rural Texans

2. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

Grantee Staffing

Texas' SCSEP grantees network with employers, businesses, and community organizations through local project directors. Grantees staff their projects with state and regional-level directors and field staff to lead large-scale projects that advance community-level workforce development efforts. By employing these program staffing methods, grantees are able to provide for more successful participant placements, as they are based on the needs of employers. AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons) fosters job matching and senior-friendly work environments for its members through employment specialists at 10 project offices located across Texas. AARP manages internal systems to ensure that staff has adequate time to devote to participant and community development. Service, Employment, and Redevelopment (SER) National appoints a national workforce development coordinator and regional coordinators to encourage the employment of older workers. The Institute of Indian Development provides staff that operates out of Workforce Solutions Offices and is actively involved in partner agency meetings.

Employers as Customers

Grantees commit to assisting both job seekers and employers by helping to determine an individual's aptitude and fitness for specific job responsibilities. As part of this process, grantees identify the following qualities that employers seek:

- Commitment to doing quality work
- Strong customer service orientation
- Getting along with other employees
- Dependability in times of crisis
- Ability to pass a drug test
- Consistent, reliable performance

Once employers' needs are defined, staff promotes the skills and competence of participants as trained workers who will add value to the business.

Grantees:

- pursue partnerships with employers that:
    - are developing job openings that require the same or similar skill requirements that older participants have;
    - have successfully employed SCSEP participants previously;
    - are listed on AARP's National Employer Team, which is committed to hiring seniors;
    - are seeking older participants, based on the local wisdom of Boards, business organizations, and others in the community; and/or
    - are identified in online LMI as major employers in local industries with the greatest employment potential for participants;

- publicize the success stories of former participants and their employers, thereby attracting other employers to consider hiring older job seekers; and
- attend chamber of commerce and Board meetings and other economic development organizations to:
    - expand employer networks;
    - learn about job opportunities from employers; and
    - contact employers to determine the skills and qualities needed to be successful in these jobs.

3. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITY OLDER INDIVIDUALS UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

In Texas, service to minority older workers at the local levels is based on a long-term strategy. Grantees:

- monitor and share statewide and grantee-specific minority enrollment data and factors/barriers impacting minority recruitment;
- use Texas grantees' conference calls to share statewide and grantee-specific factors impacting minority recruitment, share best practices, and brainstorm solutions to address recruitment/enrollment challenges;
- ensure that field staff members are aware of the increasing proportion of Hispanic and Asian seniors in Texas;
- analyze enrollment targets and geographic areas where performance is strong and where improvement is needed;
- identify factors contributing to minority enrollment strengths and factors impeding minority enrollments;
- share best practices for minority recruitment and provide technical assistance to grantee's Texas field staff;
- target outreach to specific underserved minority groups in counties where there is a larger proportion of SCSEP-eligible individuals in the grantee's service area;
- collaborate with local African American community leaders, churches, and organizations to tailor messaging and services to ensure that outreach is respectful, relevant, and resonates with the community's values and needs;
- where Hispanic enrollments are low, ensure that recruitment materials are in Spanish and consider hiring bilingual, Spanish-speaking participant staff; and
- partner with companies that can provide in-language (Chinese/Vietnamese) vocational training for in-demand occupations, such as certified nursing assistants (CNA), phlebotomy, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC).

4. A LIST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT ARE NEEDED AND THE PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST

ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)

Of Texas' 28 Boards, at least 19 cover counties that are struggling with persistent unemployment. High unemployment rates increase the need for support services among the most vulnerable SCSEP participants in those regions.

Areas experiencing persistent unemployment and a high need for support services are primarily located along the Texas-Louisiana border, the Gulf Coast, South Texas, and the Rio Grande Valley. The eastern portion of the state fares better in terms of poverty levels, averaging 15.1 percent among the Northeast, East, Deep East, Southeast, and Gulf Coast Board areas, while the Coastal Bend, Cameron County, Middle Rio Grande, and Lower Rio Grande Board areas experience a much higher poverty rate of 23.9 percent. Lower Rio Grande has been especially hard hit, as 80 percent of its geographic area is experiencing persistent unemployment, along with a poverty rate of 29.9 percent. Pockets of persistent unemployment and poverty exist throughout the state, including Presidio County in West Texas, with a poverty level of 20.2 percent. Mitchell County, located in the South Plains region of the state, experiences poverty levels of 17.1 percent, while Hall and Floyd Counties in the Panhandle average poverty levels of 22.9 percent and 17.2 percent, respectively. Jones County, an outlier in the West Central Board area, has a poverty rate of 18.2 percent.

Texas develops statewide data on priority community needs from data collected by the following two state agencies:

- The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)—Needs requested by callers to the TIRN system for each of the 25 Area Information Centers
- The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)—Priority needs identified by 38 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) entities as part of their annual plans.

Based on the "Top Service Requests" data for the period of July 9, 2024, to July 8, 2025, the most pressing needs among individuals seeking assistance are basic living essentials. Housing & Shelter stands out as the highest demand category with 356,744 requests, followed closely by Utilities at 275,268 requests. Food assistance is also a significant need, accounting for 114,432 requests. Other substantial categories include Healthcare & COVID-19 support and Government & Legal assistance, which indicate broad challenges that span beyond immediate survival needs. The total volume of these requests represents over a million calls for help within the past year.

Below is the complete list of request categories and the number of requests made between July 9, 2024, and July 8, 2025:

- Housing & Shelter: 356,744
- Food: 114,432
- Utilities: 275,268
- Healthcare & COVID-19: 90,201

- Mental Health & Addictions: 36,650
- Employment & Income: 40,750
- Clothing & Household: 20,942
- Child Care & Parenting: 22,505
- Government & Legal: 41,267
- Transportation Assistance: 28,940
- Education: 5,601
- Disaster: 40,058
- Other: 47,355
- Total for top requests: 1,120,713

CSBG priorities are listed in the following table. These include housing, employment assistance, health care, utility bill assistance, adult education and training, transportation, and food assistance. Housing authorities, Workforce Solutions Offices, public and nonprofit clinics, high school equivalency and job training programs, food pantries and food voucher programs, and organizations providing assistance with paying utility bills and providing low- or no-cost transportation help provide needed community services. Each entity provides additional priority needs that vary from area to area.

Priority Needs Identified by CSBG Entities

Community Priority Need 2023 Survey Rank

Need	Rank
Lack of Affordable Housing	1
Lack of Affordable Health Care and Dental Care	2
Assistance with Food	2
Lack of Employment	3
Lack of Affordable Mental Health Care, Including Substance Abuse Treatment	4
Lack of Living Wages	5
Assistance for Persons on Fixed Income	6
Utility Assistance	7
Transportation Assistance	8
Barriers to Earning Living Wage/Lack of Job Skills/Employment Supports	9

Need	Rank
Lack of Affordable Child Care	9
Education Support	9
Advocacy/Infrastructure/Community Engagement	10
Rental Assistance	11
Emergency Assistance	12
Financial Literacy/Debt Negotiation	13

AAAs have identified a list of priority needs for seniors (see below). Additional host agencies are recruited from public and nonprofit entities that provide these services or are seeking human resources to provide these services.

TWC shares with each grantee the needs identified by the 2-1-1 TIRN entities, CSBGs, and AAAs in the grantee's service area. Grantees will continue to gather input from local government officials and informal networks with colleagues in local organizations and agencies.

Priority Needs of Seniors Identified by AAA

Type of Need 2023 Texas CSBG Survey Ranking

Need	Ranking
Transportation	1
Computer Classes	2
Medical and Dental and Vision Care	3
Food	4
Basic Literacy Classes	5
Equipment for Work	6
Clothing	7
English as a Second Language Classes	8
GED Classes	9

Identifying Organizations and Entities Addressing Priority Needs

Community resource guides and the 2-1-1 TIRN website are a starting point for grantees to identify agencies and organizations that address priority needs. One promising online resource, Texas Connector, is a statewide online database developed by the OneStar Foundation. The database includes 2-1-1 TIRN resources and GuideStar, USA, Inc.,

information on nonprofit organizations in Texas. Texas Connector is unique because its mapping tool allows users to:

- outline an area on an online map—a neighborhood, a county, or cluster of counties;
- map all the entities and organizations providing services in the outlined area;
- access basic demographic information about the area;
- map where specific resources such as food banks or health clinics are located; and
- print a report with the selected information.

Texas Connector locates support resources and identifies potential host agencies that address the community's priority needs and may assist with recruiting participants.

5. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

In Texas, the goal of SCSEP is to serve eligible participants through training opportunities that improve or build skill levels for available jobs in local communities. The program also strives to ensure that job matching is appropriate for both the employer and the older worker so that the relationship will be retained and benefit the employer, the older worker, and the state's economy. Partnerships for integrating services are crucial to these strategies. A SCSEP service provider's success is measured by its attainment of negotiated goals for serving the older worker population, increases in services within the network of nonprofits and public agencies within communities, and the cultivation of skilled workers for employers. TWC reviews performance results and offers assistance and training in areas needing improvement.

The state is committed to serving all eligible participants, including minorities. SCSEP will strive to improve outreach efforts and services for this population. Recommendations include the following:

- Help SCSEP participants attain the skills to better fill employment needs
- Work with and expand nonprofit agencies' efforts to provide meaningful community service
- Promote collaboration among Texas grantees to:
    - problem-solve and evaluate alternative solutions to issues;
    - share best practices and performance progress;
    - plan and coordinate collaborative activities; and
    - explore areas for collaboration that is likely to improve or enhance SCSEP services in the state.

- Work with businesses and nonprofit agencies to develop training assignments in which today's skills are learned on-the-job, resulting in unsubsidized employment
- Assist the business community in attracting, employing, and retaining older workers
- Continue to actively partner with Boards
- Expand referrals to HHSC
- Emphasize creative partnerships with groups that advocate and provide services to veterans and individuals with disabilities
- Expand relationships with chambers of commerce
- Before placement in training, have participants meet and "interview" with potential host agencies to ensure that they will both benefit from the training placement

6. THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

The state's strategy for continuous improvement into unsubsidized employment focuses on developing and maintaining host agency and employer partnerships, identifying local workforce needs, and aligning participant skill sets with available opportunities.

SCSEP service providers seek input from business communities, community leaders, host agency supervisors, program participants, and local government officials regarding the job skill required by local organizations and communities. This effort includes networking at chamber of commerce events and other business organizations' functions. The information gathered assists in the development of meaningful training opportunities for older workers and the placement of program participants in suitable unsubsidized work.

To ensure continuous improvements and outcomes, grantees must implement the following strategies:

1. Support a Workforce System that allows employers and workers to achieve and sustain economic prosperity. Strengthening Texas's workforce requires a multi-faceted approach, including:
    a. Expanding workforce training, recruiting, and hiring services for employers to ensure that a skilled and ready workforce is available to meet the diverse needs of Texas businesses.
    b. Enhancing workforce services and resources to help job seekers access information about in-demand occupations, gain the skills needed by Texas employers, and find and retain employment.
2. Promote employers' access to the talents and abilities of individuals with disabilities. Accommodate such workers in the workplace and assist with maintaining and advancing their careers successfully. To ensure successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, TWC will prioritize:

a. Continuing to integrate the state's vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities within Texas Workforce Solutions so that local service delivery is able to work in concert with other workforce services, and so resources can be shared to better serve the needs of job seekers and workers with disabilities.

b. Expanding the network of employers that recruit, train, and employ the talents and skills of individuals with disabilities through Texas Workforce Solutions business service representatives, Vocational Rehabilitation Services business relations staff, and Board partnerships with economic development and industry groups.

3. Prepare individuals for employment by supporting education and training that equips individuals with in-demand skills as identified by employers. Preparing Texans for successful employment requires a strong emphasis on education and training, and therefore TWC will:

   a. Continue to support education programs for students in Texas that inform them of and prepare them for high-skill, high-demand jobs through the identification and allocation of available state and federal programs and resources.

   b. Address the workforce training needs of employers by leveraging Skills Development Fund grants and other available resources to support in-demand job training. Continue to support work-based learning opportunities through internships, mentorships, apprenticeships and job shadowing.

   c. Continue to coordinate and collaborate with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to support and develop objectives for increasing the percentage of Texans with postsecondary degrees or certifications.

4. Accelerate employment pathways for veterans, service members, and their spouses as they transition to civilian occupations in Texas. Recognizing the unique skills and experience of veterans, service members, and their spouses, TWC is dedicated to:

   a. Providing an accelerated pathway and demonstrate new approaches for transitioning military service members to gain acknowledgement of their military training and quickly transition to employment in Texas through ongoing expansion of programs such as Texas Operation Welcome Home, College Credit for Heroes (CCH), veterans training, and the Texas Veterans Leadership peer mentorship.

   b. Identifying gaps in service to Texas veterans and advance strategies to enhance their education and employment opportunities to ensure seamless transition into the Texas workforce for veterans and their spouses.

5. Maintain the highest levels of integrity, accountability, and efficiency in all workforce systems and TWC programs. Through continuous improvements, develop a system that minimizes fraud, waste, and abuse within TWC and all the programs it administers. Through a culture of continuous improvement, TWC will strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of TWC programs by

a. Monitoring and evaluating compliance of local area service delivery for fiscal accountability and program effectiveness.

b. Making technology and system improvements to leverage current resources and improve the oversight and monitoring of programs.

c. Investigate and resolve findings or questioned costs and track each resolution and recovery of disallowed costs.

Additional strategies that must be implemented by grantees include:

- Continue to remind participants and host agencies during initial orientations and throughout participants' SCSEP tenure that SCSEP is a temporary training program, not an employment program.
- Encourage participants to take advantage of online advice to older job seekers, such as AARP.org and online job boards such as Indeed.com and Monster.com.
- Provide support services to help participants retain unsubsidized employment
- Connect SCSEP participants, especially those reaching their final year of training, with dedicated job developers to work with participants on developing preemployment skills and conducting an effective job search
- Build national employer partnerships that lead to career pathways for SCSEP job seekers to receive both soft and hard skills training that coincides with the employment needs of the national employer partners

Recommendations include the following:

- Place SCSEP "graduates" in industries and occupations with high growth or substantial employment need
- Research LMI and consult with Boards and their contractors, economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, and local business partners to identify targeted industries and high-growth occupations appropriate for seniors, local employers that are hiring, and skills and qualities needed to be successful in these jobs
- Strengthen initial assessments of participant skills, knowledge, interests, aptitudes, and qualities, and define career objectives that are relevant for the participant's interests and abilities and local business needs
- Assess the participant's barriers and skills gaps to create IEPs with timelines for On-the-Job Education (OJE), specialized training, and support services
- Ensure that host agency assignments provide skills training that is relevant for participant career objectives and employer needs
- Develop effective relationships with participants and monitor their training progress so grantees can gauge when participants are ready to begin looking for employment and when it is necessary to intervene or revise an IEP
- Promote a motivated attitude by counseling and monitoring participants

- Coordinate with Workforce Solutions Offices to provide effective job search preparation and support
- Require participants to register with a Workforce Solutions Office and with WorkInTexas.com
- Follow up frequently with participants engaging in an on-the-job experience to ensure that they are obtaining the skills, confidence, and qualities required for success in the job
- Intervene early, as needed, to resolve any obstacles to successful employment
- Respect participants' right of refusal of a job when they feel unprepared or unsuited for the job

Specialized Training Plans

The implementation of a Specialized Training Plan involves a multi-faceted approach that encompasses the following elements:

- low- or no-cost computer training for participants before they report to their community service assignments or early in their assignments. No- or low-cost training is often available at libraries, Workforce Solutions Offices, school districts' community education programs, Goodwill, and community colleges. AARP uses Northstar Digital Literacy to conduct assessments and provide skills and knowledge training for a variety of occupations, software training that applies to most industries, and testing and certification for skills learned.
- agreements with local employers for on-the-job experiences.
- specialized training opportunities in which a job opening is not required by employers. Participants attend training for potential placement.
- certificate training opportunities for high-growth occupations and industries. For example, a teacher assistant classroom training followed by a six-week internship that leads to a certificate and employment offer from a local school district.
- the identification of relevant curricula for short-term training that are low-cost or no-cost and that encourage local training providers, such as community colleges, to offer training in these areas.
- transferable workplace skills training. For example, SER National provides 30 hours of training for participants who are close to being job ready but who need more self-assurance and motivation. Community colleges and Workforce Solutions Offices will be encouraged to offer more transferable workplace skills courses.

C. LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

An estimated 16.2 percent of the state's SCSEP-eligible population reside in rural areas. SCSEP uses Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes, defined at the census-track level to determine which areas are considered rural. Eight local workforce development areas (workforce areas) (Northeast Texas, Deep East Texas, Golden Crescent, Brazos Valley, East Texas, Heart of Texas, North Texas, and Texoma) are more than 50 percent rural.

A total of 77 counties, or almost one-third of the state's counties, have a rural population of 75 percent or more, and 58 counties have a rural population of 100 percent. At the opposite end of the spectrum, two one-county workforce areas (Tarrant County and Greater Dallas) are more than 95 percent urban.

Strategies to Address Rural Service Delivery Challenges

Due to the state's large size (268,581 square miles), serving customers in rural communities presents a significant challenge to service providers. The state's widest east-west expanse is 801 miles, and the longest north-south distance is 773 miles. The extent of the state's rural areas is also underscored by the fact that 95.7 percent of the state's land area is rural.

In rural areas, grantees' face obstacles, such as shortages in resources, services, and available jobs, to providing SCSEP services and assisting participants in finding unsubsidized employment.

Urban/Rural Distribution of SCSEP-Eligible Population in Workforce Areas

Workforce Area	Urban	Rural	Total	% Rural
Alamo	112,982	34,729	147,711	23.51%
Borderplex	58,771	5,126	63,897	8.0%
Brazos Valley	10,935	11,777	22,712	51.9%
Cameron County	24,413	5,276	29,689	17.8%
Capital Area	62,678	14,608	77,286	18.9%
Central Texas	27,493	20,044	47,537	42.2%
Coastal Bend	35,555	11,002	46,557	23.6%
Concho Valley	8,980	5,704	14,684	38.8%
Greater Dallas	108,789	2,032	110,821	1.8%
Deep East Texas	10,083	24,806	34,889	71.1%
East Texas	25,481	37,716	63,197	59.7%
Golden Crescent	6,676	9,835	16,511	59.6%
Gulf Coast	276,067	38,534	314,601	12.2%
Heart of Texas	11,929	12,442	24,371	51.1%
Lower Rio Grande Valley	65,090	12,017	77,107	15.6%
Middle Rio Grande	9,993	2,966	12,959	22.9%
North Central Texas	94,447	43,186	137,633	31.4%
Northeast Texas	11,211	9,521	20,732	45.9%
North Texas	8,418	14,557	22,975	63.4%
Panhandle	16,255	7,148	23,403	30.5%
Permian Basin	20,952	10,195	31,147	32.7%
Rural Capital Area	50,572	34,182	84,754	40.3%
South Plains	17,021	5,771	22,792	25.3%
South Texas	20,160	5,152	25,312	20.4%
Southeast Texas	19,185	5,148	24,333	21.2%

Tarrant County	85,662	4,696	90,358	5.2%
Texoma	6,352	7,834	14,186	55.2%
West Central Texas	9,676	9,437	19,113	49.4%

Lack of Adequate Transportation

The lack of adequate transportation significantly hinders service delivery to older adults in rural areas where older adults are more likely to live. This presents unique challenges for service delivery, transportation, and social engagement in such areas.

As a core supportive service required by the Older Americans Act (OAA), AAAs recognize transportation as a critical need for seniors. In fact, transportation is the most common reason that older adults and caregivers contact the Eldercare Locator, an Administration on Aging (AoA)-funded national call center.

Many regions of the country provide limited transportation alternatives, leaving older adults without a way to access services and fully participate in their communities once they cease driving. For older adults who do not have cars or are no longer able to drive, this represents a significant barrier, as nearly half of older adults reported that giving up driving would lead to social isolation and loss of enjoyment, and 28 percent said that it would mean a loss of independence.

To address these transportation needs, AAAs provide a range of transportation services, with 89 percent of AAAs offering such services directly or through contracts with providers. They also leverage partnerships, with 88 percent of AAAs collaborating with transportation agencies to expand their program reach.

Strategies to meet the transportation needs of participants often include:

- seeking to place participants and rotating participants in community service assignments as close as possible to their residences;
- seeking host agency assignments that have transportation resources (faith-based organizations providing community services may be able to serve as host agencies and provide transportation);
- contacting school districts and child care networks/facilities to determine in which rural areas the school bus is a feasible transportation alternative for SCSEP participants;
- becoming more knowledgeable about state and local transportation planning processes and how to quantify and accurately characterize transportation needs of older individuals, including older job seekers and older workers; and
- working with Boards to identify existing collaborations with rural community transportation providers and planners to address local transportation needs.

Limited Access to Computers

Many rural SCSEP participants also lack access to computers and the internet. Improving access to computers in rural areas will increase the amount of computer and online trainings that would be available to SCSEP participants. To address rural technological needs, grantees use the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program. The program ensures that households are able to afford the broadband needed for work, school, and health care by providing discounts on internet services, laptops, desktops, and tablets.

Due in part to the lack of access to computers, low-income older job seekers often have limited or no computer skills. Such skills are not only required by employers but are also important for participants to access the internet, register in WorkInTexas.com and other online job search databases, and develop internet search skills. Digital literacy training for older workers became an even higher priority during the pandemic, when lockdown measures required grantees to provide training through digital platforms. Digital literacy training for older workers was and continues to be a high priority for seniors, as employers have maintained digital services and remote positions. AARP Foundation uses Northstar Digital Literacy curricula and assessments to enable participants to learn important digital literacy skills. Grantees' field staff members, including participant staff, use computers for collecting data, transmitting communications, and supporting participants who live in rural areas.

Limited Host Agencies

Many rural areas have few nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies to serve as host agencies for participants. Limited rural transportation options compound the challenges of identifying a sufficient number of host agencies and organizations with diverse skills training opportunities. More host agencies are needed that can provide general office skills training, computer skills training, and job-specific skills training.

To increase the number of available rural host agencies and skills training opportunities for participants, grantees:

- contact chambers of commerce and faith- and community-based organizations (CBOs) to identify more potential host agencies;
- use Texas Connector to identify nonprofit organizations and agencies that are actively addressing priority community needs and might be able to serve as host agencies; and
- work with local agencies and seek community partners to address local transportation solutions to increase the mobility of participants and their access to host agencies.

Lack of Specialized Skills Training

Rural communities often lack opportunities for skills training to supplement participants' on-the-job-experience service assignments. Increasing access to laptops, desktop computers, and tablets, along with online training, is a priority for most SCSEP grantees in rural areas of Texas.

SER National has used several contractors to provide participants with specialized skills training and certificates of completion on a variety of topics and skill areas, including financial literacy in English and Spanish, entrepreneurship, food service, clerical skills, customer service, vocational English, intensive job search, assessing career options, and job-readiness training.

Additionally, a SER National contractor has provided rural participants with mobile computer training.

To expand participants' access to specialized training, grantees:

- explore the availability of different technologies to provide additional low-cost training in important skills areas as identified by local employers;
- work with local community colleges and Workforce Solutions Offices to expand low- or no-cost skills training that is tailored to local employers' skill needs when appropriate; and
- seek opportunities with local employers to access low- or no-cost, short-term skills training that is appropriate for seniors and the local job market.

When an employer does not have an immediate job opening, participants can attend specialized training for high-growth occupations so that when the opportunity arises, participants will have the requisite skills. For example, AARP Foundation has trained participants in maintaining health records and currently provides a dual-occupation certification program with MedCerts for participant placement as a Certified Medical Administrative Assistant and Pharmacy Technician. AARP Foundation's Edinburg office has established a specialized skills training partnership with Holiday Inn Express that includes customer hospitality and front desk clerk experience. The goal is to identify and employ participants at the Edinburg and McAllen Holiday Inn Express locations.

Lack of Basic Skills Training

An additional resource that is lacking in most rural areas is basic skills training. Many rural seniors have less than a ninth-grade education and need to improve their language and mathematics skills.

To develop more opportunities for basic skills training, grantees:

- contact AEL providers to identify existing basic skills training opportunities in their workforce areas; and
- use software and online sources to access basic skills training.

Lack of Employment Opportunities

The lack of employment opportunities in rural areas makes it difficult for grantees to help participants—even those who are "job ready"—obtain unsubsidized jobs.

To expand rural participants' access to job opportunities, grantees:

- explore the feasibility of self-employment with participants and consult with Workforce Solutions Offices, the Small Business Administration, the Senior Corps of Retired Executives, and other organizations regarding the most promising types of microenterprise businesses in the workforce area, assessment of an individual's suitability for self-employment, available local and online resources—including mentoring support—and other feasibility considerations; and
- share results, challenges, ideas, and opportunities during grantee conference calls.

Special Populations

Grantees work with local agencies to target recruitment activities in underserved areas and in areas of higher concentrations of minorities and most-in-need populations. Targeted recruitment efforts are based on census data, local and state demographic data, and Texas population and aging statistics.

Grantees monitor enrollment levels of the most-in-need populations on a quarterly basis. Field staff members are trained to profile and manage their territories so that they can track and plan for exits, plan for adequate recruitment activity to fill vacancies quickly, and seek to ensure that special populations are adequately served.

Recruitment Methods for Special Population Groups

Grantees often need to go beyond traditional recruitment methods to connect with and enroll individuals from special population groups. The special population groups receive priority of service as defined in the OAA §518(b)(1)–(2) and in the Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011.

Individuals with priority:

- are individuals covered under the Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011;
- are age 65 or older;
- have a disability;
- have limited English proficiency;
- have low literacy skills;
- reside in a rural area;
- have low employment prospects;
- have failed to find employment after using services provided under Title I of WIOA;
- are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of experiencing homelessness; or
- are formerly incarcerated or on supervised release from prison or jail within five years of the date of initial eligibility determination.

General outreach strategies for special populations include:

- networking with and providing recruitment brochures to community- and faith-based organizations that serve and advocate for these special population groups; and
- visiting locations and displaying recruitment brochures and flyers where priority populations may congregate, such as laundries, senior centers, nutrition centers, health clinics, and other healthcare providers.

In addition to general outreach methods for special populations, grantees use the following recruitment methods to reach specific populations:

- Veterans and qualified spouses

    - Networking with local veteran representatives at Workforce Solutions Offices, county judges, senior centers, AAAs, and HHSC
    - Contacting and presenting to local veterans' organizations, veteran medical clinics, and other veteran-related organizations in the community
- Individuals with disabilities
    - Networking with TWC, HHSC, Social Security Administration (SSA), and AAAs
    - Contacting current and former disability navigators at Workforce Solutions Offices to identify local disability advocates and relevant community organizations serving or supporting individuals with disabilities
    - Contacting TWC VR Centers for Independent Living (located in 27 Texas cities)
- Individuals who are age-eligible but not receiving benefits under SSA Title II—Contacting SSA, HHSC, and Workforce Solutions Offices to identify such individuals
- Individuals in areas with persistent unemployment and limited employment prospects—Conducting outreach in counties classified as having persistent unemployment: Willacy, Hidalgo, Starr, Maverick, Zavala, and Presidio, along the Rio Grande; Jasper, Newton, and Sabine in southeast Texas; Matagorda on the Gulf Coast; and Morris in northeast Texas
- Individuals who are English-language learners (ELLs)
    - Advertising through local media, including Spanish-language newspapers and radio stations
    - Networking with local churches, Hispanic/Latino chambers of commerce, restaurants and other businesses that cater to the Hispanic/Latino community, and other Hispanic/Latino or ethnic community organizations
    - Hiring staff members who speak Spanish or Asian languages to conduct outreach directly
    - Translating recruitment materials into Spanish or Asian languages
- Individuals with low literacy skills—Networking with adult literacy providers, community leaders, churches, and other community organizations
- Individuals who live in rural areas—Using word of mouth through community leaders and community networks, including current and former participants and host agencies
- Individuals with low employment prospects
    - Contacting Workforce Solutions Offices, veterans' organizations, and other community organizations
    - Visiting community centers

    - Networking with safety net organizations such as food banks
- Individuals who have used WIOA services but failed to find jobs—Contacting Workforce Solutions Offices to identify and reach out to these individuals
- Individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness—Networking with local homeless shelters, homeless coalitions, housing authorities, food banks, churches, and Workforce Solutions Offices
- Individuals with incomes at or below poverty
    - Networking with SSA, HHSC, Workforce Solutions Offices, and AAAs
    - Contacting churches, food banks, thrift shops, and local housing authorities
- Individuals who are socially, geographically, linguistically, or culturally isolated and at risk of not being able to live
    - Seeking referrals through HHSC, TWC, SSA, and Workforce Solutions Offices
    - Networking with Meals on Wheels programs, churches, and local community organizations to identify and connect with these individuals
    - Talking with roadside business owners in geographically isolated areas to identify where potentially eligible seniors live
- Individuals who are minorities
    - Using recruitment methods listed for individuals who are ELLs
    - Networking with ministers and leaders at churches with predominantly minority congregations
    - Making presentations at minority agencies, community centers, and chambers of commerce serving minority communities
    - Visiting food banks, restaurants, senior centers, and other organizations in minority neighborhoods
    - Networking with HHSC, SSA, AAAs, and Workforce Solutions Offices

2. LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE PROJECT WILL BE CONDUCTED. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

The chart below identifies the counties in which SCSEP is administered by TWC and includes the number of SCSEP authorized positions and changes from the prior year.

Texas SCSEP Program Year (PY) 2024 List of Counties and Authorized Positions

FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standards) County Codes	County	Final PY 2024 State Authorized Positions	Current Enrollments	Authorized Positions +/- Change from Previous Year (PY 2023)
48005	Angelina County	8	17	-1
48007	Aransas County	3	7	-1
48013	Atascosa County	5	3	0
48015	Austin County	3	0	0
48019	Bandera County	3	4	0
48025	Bee County	2	0	-1
48027	Bell County	23	45	1
48035	Bosque County	2	0	0
48037	Bowie County	11	16	2
48039	Brazoria County	18	6	-2
48041	Brazos County	11	14	0
48047	Brooks County	2	3	0
48049	Brown County	5	13	1
48057	Calhoun County	2	1	0
48073	Cherokee County	4	16	-1
48077	Clay County	1	0	-1
48089	Colorado County	2	0	0
48091	Comal County	10	3	1
48123	DeWitt County	2	1	-1
48131	Duval County	2	9	0
48135	Ector County	11	8	1
48157	Fort Bend County	37	29	6
48163	Frio County	3	1	1
48171	Gillespie County	3	0	0
48177	Gonzales County	2	0	0
48183	Gregg County	11	18	-1
48185	Grimes County	3	0	0
48187	Guadalupe County	10	3	-1
48203	Harrison County	6	4	-2
48221	Hood County	5	1	0
48239	Jackson County	2	2	0
48249	Jim Wells County	4	5	-2
48255	Karnes County	1	0	-1
48259	Kendall County	3	0	0
48265	Kerr County	6	0	0
48273	Kleberg County	3	4	0
48283	La Salle County	2	0	1
48285	Lavaca County	2	1	0

FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standards) County Codes	County	Final PY 2024 State Authorized Positions	Current Enrollments	Authorized Positions +/- Change from Previous Year (PY 2023)
48289	Leon County	2	0	0
48293	Limestone County	3	2	0
48297	Live Oak County	2	1	0
48309	Madison County	2	5	-1
48313	Marion County	2	1	0
48315	Matagorda County	5	2	0
48321	Maverick County	9	7	-1
48323	McLennan County	19	34	-1
48325	Medina County	5	2	-1
48329	Midland County	9	7	0
48347	Nacogdoches County	6	6	1
48365	Panola County	3	0	1
48371	Pecos County	2	0	0
48377	Presidio County	2	3	0
48379	Rains County	2	0	0
48389	Reeves County	1	0	-1
48391	Refugio County	1	1	0
48395	Robertson County	2	1	0
48401	Rusk County	6	0	1
48409	San Patricio County	7	3	1
48419	Shelby County	3	5	0
48423	Smith County	21	24	-1
48427	Starr County	12	7	1
48457	Tyler County	3	2	0
48459	Upshur County	6	1	1
48463	Uvalde County	3	12	-1
48467	Van Zandt County	7	4	0
48469	Victoria County	10	32	1
48473	Waller County	3	0	-1
48475	Ward County	1	0	-1
48477	Washington County	4	0	1
48481	Wharton County	4	2	-1
48485	Wichita County	11	8	-2
48487	Wilbarger County	2	5	0
48489	Willacy County	3	8	-1

FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standards) County Codes	County	Final PY 2024 State Authorized Positions	Current Enrollments	Authorized Positions +/- Change from Previous Year (PY 2023)
48491	Williamson County	23	12	4
48493	Wilson County	4	1	1
48495	Winkler County	1	0	0
48499	Wood County	7	2	1
48505	Zapata County	2	7	0
48507	Zavala County	2	10	0
	Total:	**455**	**451**	**-2**

Equitable Distribution

The number of U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)-authorized SCSEP positions by county is based on the ratio of eligible individuals in each county to the total eligible population in the state. This information is based on the PY 2023 Equitable Distribution Report and will be amended by the PY 2024 report.

Current Distribution

The following table provides the number of counties that are underserved and overserved, both statewide and for each county. Texas defines significant variance as both over +/– 10 percent variance and more than +/– three positions variance.

Summary of Counties with Variances in PY 2024 Quarter 3

Grantee	Number of Counties	Percent of All Counties with Authorized Positions (205)	Average Percentage of Variance
Underserved Statewide	200	97.6%	89.9%
AARP Foundation	16	66.7%	30.5%
Institute for Indian Development	4	100%	7.4%
SER–Jobs for Progress National, Inc.	7	100%	2.1%
Center for Workforce Inclusion	89	97.8%	23.1%
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging	1	100%	1.8%

Grantee	Number of Counties	Percent of All Counties with Authorized Positions (205)	Average Percentage of Variance
State Grantee	52	65.8%	57.5%
Overserved Statewide	2	1%	66.7%
AARP Foundation	8	33.3%	20.6%
Institute for Indian Development	0	0%	0%
SER–Jobs for Progress National, Inc.	0	0%	0%
Center for Workforce Inclusion	1	1.1%	0%
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging	0	0%	0%
State Grantee	25	31.6%	103.7%

Combined Total Underserved and Overserved Counties in PY 2024 Quarter 3

Grantee	Number of Counties	Percent of All Counties with Authorized Positions (232)	Average Percentage of Variance
Underserved and Overserved Statewide	202	98.5%	89.8%
AARP Foundation	24	100%	51.1%
Institute for Indian Development	4	100%	100%
SER–Jobs for Progress National, Inc.	7	100%	94.9%
Center for Workforce Inclusion	90	98.9%	94.1%
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging	1	100%	81.8%
State Grantee	77	97.4%	161.2%

3. DESCRIBE CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

Statewide SCSEP grantees have identified the following issues when carrying out the SCSEP program.

TWC has been working to implement new recruitment strategies to reach full enrollment in SCSEP. Analysis of equitable distribution variance has revealed three main causes for the persistent lack of enrollment in certain areas:

- a lack of available host agencies in the community;
- insufficient program awareness; and
- a fear that program participation will lead to a loss of public benefits.

In many counties with no program enrollment, limited staff capacity to travel and conduct outreach has hindered effort to effectively market the program and connect with potential participants. To address these challenges, an enhanced physical and virtual marketing campaign was launched in 2024 to increase program visibility and reach individuals in harder-to-serve areas.

The distribution of enrollments across the state continues to be analyzed to identify persistent barriers to equity and inform ongoing recruiting strategies. Notably, many of the underserved counties are small and have zero participants enrolled in the program, which is one of the primary factors contributing to the overall variance that has been observed by TWC.

Current Slot Imbalances

The following SCSEP grantees are experiencing slot imbalances, defined as both over +/- 10 percent variance and more than +/- three positions variance:

- AARP Foundation—This grantee covers 16 underserved counties with an average variance of 30.5 percent and eight overserved counties with an average variance of 20.6 percent.
- Institute for Indian Development (IID)—This grantee has four underserved counties with an average variance of 7.4 percent and zero overserved counties.
- SER–Jobs for Progress, Inc.—This grantee covers seven underserved counties with an average variance of 2.1 percent and zero overserved counties.
- CWI—This grantee has a significant imbalance as it covers 89 underserved counties with an average variance of 23.1 percent and one overserved county with an average variance of zero.

Proposed Steps to Correct Inequities and Achieve Equitable Distribution

To address these imbalances listed above and achieve an equitable distribution, the grantees are implementing various strategies:

- AARP Foundation—To counter underenrollment, AARP is working to develop awareness campaigns that are tailored to each county’s needs, along with increasing the variety of marketing campaigns and boosting “boots-on-the-ground” efforts in underenrolled areas.

- SER–Jobs for Progress, Inc.—SER is informing residents about program availability, offering virtual trainings, and providing remote community-service assignments. They are also working to increase marketing techniques, including advertising at Workforce Solutions Offices, partnering with food banks for flyer distribution, and using cable television and radio advertisements.
- CWI—To reduce variance in underenrolled counties, CWI is looking for opportunities to partner with new host agencies and focus on improving connections with TWC and other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partner programs to increase referrals.
- IID—IID will enroll participants from waiting lists in overserved areas and gradually redistribute slots through attrition to Indian/Native American eligible participants. Additionally, IID plans to strategically place its field offices and schedule regular outreach times and community networking in each underserved county.

4. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

Grantees review the Equitable Distribution reports on a quarterly basis to stay informed of the distribution of SCSEP participants in their service areas. By staying up-to-date on enrollment distributions, grantees can be responsive to the need to gradually shift enrollments to underserved counties without causing disruptions in the provision of services. Each year when the Authorized Positions are provided by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), grantees note any shifts in positions between counties. When shifts in positions occur, or counties are overenrolled, grantees implement the strategies below to move positions from overserved to underserved locations within the state.

To address underenrollment, grantees:

- focus on and schedule time for community networking and recruitment in underserved counties;
- locate participant staff in rural areas where recruitment is more challenging;
- use the online SCSEP application process, when possible, to ensure that the enrollment process is user friendly and that applicants complete the eligibility process;
- post training positions with Boards to increase visibility;
- increase program awareness through virtual awareness campaigns;
- use U.S. Census and LMI to better target potential SCSEP applicants;
- ensure that host agency sites are aligned with and are supporting job seekers in gaining skills that are required for the most in-demand industries and occupations;
- strive to enroll new participants more promptly after participants exit; and

- work more closely with Workforce Solutions Offices to recruit and enroll participants.

To address overenrollment, grantees:

- train subgrantee staff on the importance of achieving a “zero balance” in the number of authorized positions;
- develop, distribute, and implement strategic recruitment plans to engage local employers and maximize the number of appropriate unsubsidized employment opportunities for SCSEP participants;
- coordinate with Workforce Solutions Offices to participate in job fairs and business expos;
- focus on placing participants in overserved counties in unsubsidized jobs; and
- freeze enrollments in significantly overserved counties.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

Texas SCSEP grantees regularly monitor the distribution of enrollments in their allotted counties and implement strategies to ensure that both rural and urban areas are serving equitably. Often, rural areas are persistently underenrolled due to a lack of program awareness and a lack of available host agencies in the community. With so few host agencies accessible to participants, often host agency opportunities and interested applicants do not match. If participants cannot be matched with their host agency of interest, they will not stay engaged in the program. To enroll participants in rural areas, it is necessary to have robust outreach efforts and a physical presence in rural counties. Urban counties generally have higher enrollments than rural counties due to strong responses to outreach efforts, numerous host agencies with various training opportunities, desirable and accessible employment opportunities, and better transportation options to help participants attend their host agency assignments. Strategies to equitably enroll in both urban and rural areas include:

- the use of targeted marketing materials and varied outreach approaches (such as flyers, virtual marketing campaigns, and radio/TV advertisements);
- building strong partnerships with community partners to serve as referral sources; and
- the identification of new local nonprofit and public sector partners that can offer in-demand training opportunities, such as digital skills training.

On a quarterly basis, Texas SCSEP grantees review the latest equitable distributions, reinforce the strategies used, and share ideas to support achieving a zero balance in particularly challenging counties.

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

One of SCSEP’s primary goals is to provide services to eligible individuals who need additional training and employment support services in an effort to help them overcome significant barriers and obtain unsubsidized jobs.

In accordance with 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §641.520(c), grant recipients apply priority of service for enrollment in the following order:

- Veterans or qualified spouses who have at least one of the other priority characteristics
- Veterans or qualified spouses who do not have one of the other priority characteristics
- Individuals who do not qualify as veterans or qualified spouses and who have at least one of the other priority characteristics

As specified in 20 CFR §641.520(c), the other priority characteristics include the following:

- Being 65 years of age or older
- Having a disability
- Having limited English proficiency
- Having low literacy skills
- Residing in a rural area
- Being a veteran or a spouse of a veteran
- Having low employment prospects
- Having failed to find employment after using services provided under WIOA Title I
- Experiencing homelessness or being at risk of experiencing homelessness
- Being formerly incarcerated or on supervised release from prison or jail within five years of the date of initial eligibility determination

5. THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

Workforce Area	Urban SCSEP-Eligible Population	Rural SCSEP-Eligible Population	Total SCSEP-Eligible Population	% Rural Population
Statewide	1,215,826	405,441	1,621,267	25.0%
Alamo	112,982	34,729	147,711	23.5%
Borderplex	58,771	5,126	63,897	8.0%
Brazos Valley	10,935	11,777	22,712	51.9%
Cameron County	24,413	5,276	29,689	17.8%
Capital Area	62,678	14,608	77,286	18.9%
Central Texas	27,493	20,044	47,537	42.2%
Coastal Bend	35,555	11,002	46,557	23.6%
Concho Valley	8,980	5,704	14,684	38.8%
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North Texas	11,211	14,557	25,768	56.5%
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Tarrant County	85,662	4,696	90,358	5.2%
Texoma	6,352	7,834	14,186	55.2%
West Central Texas	9,676	9,437	19,113	49.4%

Sources: Ratios created for each workforce area using zip code populations from 2010 SF1 100% Census File through American Fact Finder.

6. THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

According to current census data, 1,346,100 individuals in Texas are eligible for SCSEP. Of this number, 84 percent of the statewide SCSEP-eligible population reside in urban areas, whereas 16.2 percent reside in rural areas.

Urban and rural distribution data is identified by county in the Strategies to Address Rural Service Delivery Challenges of this report.

B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

Of the total SCSEP-eligible Texans, 79 percent have been identified as having the greatest economic need, with incomes at or below the federal poverty level.

C. ARE MINORITIES

Based on current census data, the statewide SCSEP-eligible population consists of the following minority groups:

Minority Group Percent of Eligible Population

Minority Group	Eligible Population
Hispanic/Latino	34.32%
Black/African American	15.15%
Asian	3.45%
Pacific Islander	10.0%

Minority Group	Eligible Population
American Indian	2.24%

D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

A total of 22 percent of the statewide SCSEP-eligible population is identified as having limited English proficiency.

E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

A special population, as identified in the OAA Amendments of 2006, are SCSEP-eligible individuals who have the "greatest social need" caused by noneconomic factors, including physical and mental disabilities; language barriers; and cultural, social, or geographic isolation. Although there are no statistics available for those with the greatest social need, the estimates for the proportion of subset categories include SCSEP-eligible individuals:

- with disabilities—44.7 percent;
- with limited English proficiency—22 percent; and
- experiencing geographic isolation—2.4 percent residing in 64 frontier counties averaging fewer than seven individuals per square mile.

F. FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS, AS DEFINED IN TEGL 17-20

The 2020 reauthorization of the OAA added a new category to the SCSEP priority of service requirements. Eligible individuals who have been incarcerated within the last five years or are under supervision following release from prison or jail within the last five years are now a priority population for enrollment and an additional category for the most-in-need characteristics. The Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020 made changes to SCSEP that took effect on March 25, 2021.

SCSEP grantees in Texas have updated policies to include formerly incarcerated individuals as a priority population and to accurately track this most-in-need characteristic for enrolled participants. As of Quarter 3, data for PY 2022 shows the following distribution of formerly incarcerated individuals among Texas SCSEP grantees:

- CWI has served 16 formerly incarcerated participants (2.86% of total enrollments)
- IID and the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA) have served zero formerly incarcerated participants (0% of total enrollments)
- AARP Foundation has served 32 formerly incarcerated participants (2.79% of total enrollments)
- TWC has served 22 formerly incarcerated participants (4.08% of total enrollments)

8. A DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOME AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER-ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))

Strategies to Avoid Participant Disruption

When there is a change in grantee and/or grantee service area, TWC hosts a meeting or conference call to develop a transition plan and timetable for:

- informing participants and host agencies in advance;
- transferring records;
- holding orientations for participants and host agencies; and
- supporting continuity in administrative and programmatic functions.

When positions need to be shifted from overserved to underserved counties, grantees:

- use a gradual approach to redistribute the slots through attrition; and
- encourage and work intensively to assist job-ready participants in overserved counties find unsubsidized employment.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR APPENDIX

ALL WIOA CORE PROGRAMS

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

In accordance with TEGL 11-19, Change 2, issued January 6, 2025, the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED) (Departments) determined it is appropriate and reasonable to assess performance for the PY 2026-27 WIOA Title I, III, and IV core programs, as applicable, for the following performance indicators and scores:

- Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit
- Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit
- Credential Attainment Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains
- The Overall State Program Scores
- The Overall State Indicator Scores for Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit and Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers primary indicator of performance (ESE), as required by section 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as Retention with the Same Employer. The ESE final rule requires states to report the indicator as a shared indicator across the six WIOA core programs.

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES—ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	**PY 2026 Expected Level**	**PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]**	**PY 2027 Expected Level**	**PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]**
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	78.9%	TBD	79.0%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	78.4%	TBD	78.4%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$8,594	TBD	$8,838	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	66.8%	TBD	66.8%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	69.9%	TBD	74.2%	TBD

[1]The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, “With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs.”

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES—DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	**PY 2026 Expected Level**	**PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]**	**PY 2027 Expected Level**	**PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]**
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	78.6%	TBD	78.6%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	77.0%	TBD	77.0%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$10,997	TBD	$11,188	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	74.3%	TBD	74.3%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	60.5%	TBD	64.8%	TBD

[1]The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, “With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs.”

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES—YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	**PY 2026 Expected Level**	**PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]**	**PY 2027 Expected Level**	**PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]**
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	70.6%	TBD	70.6%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	71.5%	TBD	71.5%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$5,515	TBD	$5,687	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	53.4%	TBD	53.4%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	69.0%	TBD	71.7%	TBD

[1]The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, “With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs.”

WAGNER-PEYSER ACT—WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	**PY 2026 Expected Level**	**PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]**	**PY 2027 Expected Level**	**PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]**
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	65.8%	TBD	65.8%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	66.3%	TBD	66.3%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$8,116	TBD	$8,338	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	NA	NA	NA	NA
Measurable Skill Gains	NA	NA	NA	NA

[1]The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Not all measures are relevant to all programs (NA is used to mark when a measure does not apply). Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, “With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs.”

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM—ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	**PY 2026 Expected Level**	**PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]**	**PY 2027 Expected Level**	**PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]**
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	43.8%	TBD	44.6%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	44.9%	TBD	45.8%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,640	TBD	$6,789	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	43.9%	TBD	44.7%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	42.4%	TBD	42.4%	TBD

[1]The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, "With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs."

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (COMBINED OR GENERAL)—
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

Performance Indicators	**PY 2026 Expected Level**	**PY 2026 Negotiated Level[1]**	**PY 2027 Expected Level**	**PY 2027 Negotiated Level[1]**
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	56.9%	TBD	57.0%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	55.3%	TBD	55.5%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$ 7,290	TBD	$ 7,290	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	50.5%	TBD	50.5%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	58.8%	TBD	58. 8%	TBD

[1] The Performance targets for PY 2026 and 2027 will not be available before the conclusion of scheduled federal negotiations (TBD), which are anticipated to begin in April 2026. Per TEGL 11-19, Change 2, "With respect to the Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) indicator, since it is a statewide measure that reflects a combined result across WIOA titles I, II, III, and IV programs, the Departments will jointly engage in negotiations with state representatives from all core programs."

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Additional Indicators of Performance
Active Job Seeker New Employment Connection Rate
Child Care Initial Job Search Success Rate
Maintaining Employment Connection Rate
Earnings Increase and Earnings Replacement
Claimant Reemployment within 10 Weeks
Texas Talent Assistance Rate
Successful Texas Talent Assistance
RESEA Assessment Outreach & Scheduling Rate
RESEA Initial Appointment Rate
RESEA Failure to Report Rate

OTHER APPENDICES