



Rehabilitation Council of Texas 2021 Annual Report

**In partnership with the
Texas Workforce Commission**

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Messages

Message from Council Chair Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.



It is with great Texas pride that I present to you the RCT Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2021 (FY'21).

While the pages to follow may resemble annual reports of pre-pandemic years past, on closer inspection you will see how operating amid and coming out of a global pandemic resulting in a nationwide lockdown has forced us to become much more innovative and electronically creative in our efforts to carry on business as usual. In that spirit, having made many modifications to enable us to continue our work and remain in full contact with the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation team (TWC-VRD), we have, working together, managed to keep the VR system of Texas operating to the best of our ability while coming out of a system-freezing global pandemic. To date, and I do expect the same moving forward, I can say with full confidence that our coordinator, Lisa Godwin, every volunteer member of the RCT, and associates at TWC, our official partner, have met the challenge with a grace and vigor that would make our VR customers, our distinguished Governor Greg Abbott, state rehabilitation councils (SRC) across the country, and the citizens of our great state of Texas very proud.

I have been an active member of the Council for some four years, having been appointed by our governor to serve, and little did I know that halfway through my first term of chairmanship I would be thrown such a dramatic curveball as the global COVID-19 pandemic. I'm sure anyone reading this is glad, as I am, that we seem to be coming out the other side, hopefully with the worst behind us. I won't go into details because if you are reading this right now, you too may have been forced to make many of the same logistical adjustments of working remotely that we as a Council have made, and dare I say with impressive results.

As I stated in last year's address, when reading please keep in mind that while some of the statistical numbers may not look correct or relate in any way to reports of years preceding, this may remain for the next year or two as society defines and adapts to what leaders are calling our "new normal."

What I can assure you is that I have witnessed and can report with confidence that TWC and all parties of the VR system in Texas are making every effort to think outside the box and develop new ways of serving the needs of our VR customers. In the report to follow, we look forward to giving a few, but not the only, success stories and possibly some surprising examples of how we have evolved and continue to settle into this new normal, which I believe just may prove to be more efficient and generally more productive than ever before.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Ebbeler, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.
Chairman, Rehabilitation Council of Texas

About the Council

Mission, Values, and Responsibilities

The Rehabilitation Council of Texas (Council) advises the state's designated Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program on policy, scope, and effectiveness of services. The Council is federally mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA.

The Council helps ensure that Texans with disabilities have access to effective VR services that result in competitive and integrated employment, greater independence, and community participation. Bylaws that are designed to support this goal govern the Council.

The Texas governor appoints Council members for three-year terms to represent a diverse range of individuals with disabilities and community perspectives. They are charged with being the voice of VR service recipients.

The Council participates in National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils to promote a nationally consistent vision for VR priorities, goals, and outcomes.

Learn more by visiting texasworkforce.org/agency/rehabilitation-council-texas.



Mission

The Council's mission is to partner with the state vocational rehabilitation program to advocate for Texans with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process.

Values

- The worth and dignity of each individual
- The right to choice, which is realized by access to full information
- Work opportunities, which open doors to individual independence and participation in community life
- Person-centered goals, service plans, and delivery systems leading to individual success
- Shared roles and responsibilities to improve customer satisfaction with the rehabilitation process and outcomes
- Collaboration and partnership with federal, state, and private agencies for system improvement

Responsibilities

- Review, analyze, and advise the state vocational rehabilitation programs on performance, effectiveness, customer satisfaction, responsibilities, functions, and eligibility, including the need for order of selection.
- Submit reports of progress of the vocational rehabilitation program to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) commissioner.
- Help prepare the State Plan for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and develop a description of the Council's input and recommendations as a part of the plan.
- Review and analyze the vocational rehabilitation program effectiveness, including an assessment of the customer satisfaction and the vocational rehabilitation needs of Texans with disabilities.
- Submit an annual report that highlights vocational rehabilitation services' goals, achievements, and statistics to the Texas governor and RSA commissioner.
- Coordinate working relationships between the state vocational rehabilitation program, State Independent Living Council (SILC), and Centers for Independent Living in Texas.
- Coordinate activities with other councils to avoid duplication of efforts and increase the number of individuals served.



Committees

The following committees are responsible for upholding the mission, values, and responsibilities of the Council in partnership with representatives from the state vocational rehabilitation programs.

Executive Committee

Committee Chair: Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.

Composed of chair, vice chair, and all committee chairs Coordinates with state vocational rehabilitation programs' leadership; develops quarterly meeting agendas; develops public outreach materials; and reviews the Council's budget, bylaws, and amendments.

Planning and Review Committee

Committee Chair: Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.

Helps set and evaluate progress toward goals and priorities for the Combined State Plan for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, recommends ways to improve vocational rehabilitation services, and receives public comment.

Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee

Committee Chair: Lisa Cowart

Reviews customer satisfaction survey results and other program data, addresses service concerns, and helps steer a statewide needs assessment every three years.

Membership and Education Committee

Committee Chair: Bobbie Hodges

Educates Council members about federal and state legislation and how to best represent the interests of Texans with disabilities, recruits new members, and plans and oversees new member orientation activities.

Policy, Procedure, and Personnel Development Committee

Committee Chair: Karen Stanfill

Comments on changes to vocational rehabilitation policy; reviews appeals decisions; and monitors procedural changes, staffing, training and impartial hearing officer selection.

Our Work in Fiscal Year 2021

Year in Review

Full Council, provided by Council Chairman Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.

RCT 2021 Year in Review

If 2020 was the year of “Stay healthy and try to keep moving forward,” 2021 was the year of “We got this, let’s get going!”

We spent most of 2020 learning about COVID-19 and how to keep from getting infected with the virus, discovering that, for most, it wasn’t going to be a death sentence or even a few months in ICU. Then that developed into a sense of safety in leaving the house, even gathering in numbers, and into designing new ways of moving forward with care and respect for those who may be more vulnerable to the virus. Then it seemed that collectively, without needing to actually say or write it, we decided that we were going to make 2021 a comeback year, to be bigger, better, and more productive than before. What I can say is that the Council as a body and as individual members have dealt with their hardships, made the necessary adjustments, and, as Texans around the state and Americans across this great country have done, grabbed both bootstraps with a firm grip and set out to continue to achieve great things despite the continued deadly threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As FY’20 was ending and FY’21 began, early in the fourth quarter of the calendar year, the virus had a firm grip on all Americans. At that point, I would say we were at our most threatened, with heavy spreading, high death rates, and no vaccine in sight. What we all hope was “the bottom” seemed to signal that a comeback had begun. By this time the State, our partners at TWC, and we at the RCT had settled into our limited operations under full pandemic protocol, and working remotely, using only electronic forms of meeting and communicating, was the norm. Everyone seemed to become more used to and proficient with the new normal, and it was time to “carry on,” so we did.

As organizations around the state, country, and world were all doing simultaneously, we were becoming more comfortable with this virtual format of conducting business, and in doing so, as perhaps many organizations did, we discovered that we may be more efficient operating in a hybrid type of format even when we are able to go back to the office or convene in the same room. In other words, while this pandemic was a worldwide tragedy that took lives and interrupted many aspects of life all around the world, it may have showed us that we have the tools and technology before us today that we can employ to redesign a more efficient system to do more with less, and we have done so.

For example (and to be honest, this motion and its design were introduced by a member and were well in process prior to the March 2020 lockdown), we voted and made a request to TWC-VRD that we not only offer our RCT quarterly meetings in person, open to attendance by any Texans willing to show up, but also broadcast them online in their entirety, so that interested parties all across our very large state can attend virtually and even participate in our 30-minute public comment period. This way, we can hear and take into consideration what those within or outside of the VR system have to say, on the record, which would likely inspire a conversation with the TWC-VRD director.

Having received my appointment in and been an active member of the RCT since 2016, I am serving my third term as Chair, and it has been brought to my attention that implementation of this concept of broadcasting our quarterly meetings, in the spirit of public sharing, transparency, and general understanding, has been attempted by previous Councils several times through the years. However, this is the first time the request has turned into action, and delivery was made by the middle of calendar year 2021. Needless to say, this is a grand achievement and something that we are very excited about and proud to have brought about with the full collaboration and support of our partners at TWC-VRD and Director Cheryl Fuller.

New Member Appointments and Reappointments

We are grateful to have gained a few new appointments this year as well as to welcome back some familiar faces as reappointments. Ms. Emily Robinson replaced the terming-out Susie May as Texas Education Agency (TEA) Representative, and Ms. April Pollreisz replaced Colton Read as SILC Representative. While we will miss Susie and Colton, we are very grateful to have Ms. Robinson and Ms. Pollreisz aboard. We welcome back as reappointments Ms. Amanda Bowdoin, Ms. Lindsey Geeslin, and Mr. Rodrick Robinson and look forward to seamlessly carrying on with these seasoned, hard-working members all now into their second of two terms.

Speakers

Quickly ramping up to speed, newly appointed TEA Representative Emily Robinson was very informative in helping the Council gain a better understanding of Texans with hearing challenges. Through a great presentation, she provided information on Texas School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs.

In the same vein, we were also fortunate enough to receive a great presentation given by Mr. Jonas Schwartz, TWC-VRD Program Manager for Target Populations, about VR services for customers who are deaf or hard of hearing. He provided information about postsecondary education opportunities, communication access services, and training initiatives for counselors who serve customers who are deaf and hard of hearing.

We also received a thorough presentation on TWC employer relations given by Melinda Paninski, TWC-VRD Specialist for Workforce Alliances, and Lisa Givens, TWC-VRD Communications Strategist, which included information on the partnership with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Project SEARCH, VR and Board partnership virtual job fairs, Texas HireAbility, and plans for the TWC web page to feature employer resources sections and Hiring Red, White and Blue events.

In closing, while it has been a challenging year, with the continued fight with COVID-19 and adapting to new ways of conducting business and continuing to serve the very capable VR customers of Texas, we pause for a brief moment to consider those who may have had a more difficult fight or even lost their battle to the relentless virus. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their loved ones. Nevertheless, the Earth will continue to rotate, the sun will come up and go down every day as it completes one 24-hour cycle after another, and all Texans within and outside the VR system alike will continue moving forward. We as a support system must as well, and I'm glad to report, we are.

Thank you for your time and support, and God bless you and yours, our country, the great state of Texas, and Governor Greg Abbott.

Membership and Education Committee, provided by Chair Bobbie Hodges

2021 has been an active and successful year for the Membership and Education Committee. Our meetings and new members orientation were held virtually due to the pandemic. To enhance our recruitment efforts, we worked with the entire Council and its networks to recruit potential members. Through collaboration with the Texas governor's appointments office, we were successful in reappointing several eligible members for a second term and securing four new appointments to the Council. I'm happy to report that this action brought the Council to full membership and into compliance with the federal mandate.

Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee, provided by Chair Lisa Cowart

The Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee reviewed the quarterly customer satisfaction needs assessment surveys conducted by Westat. The surveys are designed to address and monitor the VR program and issues within the VR process. Most of the responses to the survey questions were within acceptable ranges. However, the survey revealed a few areas of concern to the Council. As an example, one of the questions dealt with informed choice of the VR customers' service providers. A higher than acceptable number of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their input in choosing a provider for services. This resulted in the committee suggesting that this question be reworded for clarity and that VR staff receive additional guidance in communicating this information to the VR customers.

The committee also received the final report for the 2020 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). The CSNA takes place every three years and helps shape the future of VR services in Texas. The 2020 CSNA report provided the requisite assessment of VR service needs and associated needs of program staff and service providers.

The state's three overarching categories of VR service needs are:

- **Provider Network:** recovering and maintaining a robust network of providers to ensure access to equitable and diverse services;
- **Process Improvement:** streamlining procedures and approval processes to remove any unnecessary administrative processes for staff, providers, and customers; and
- **Staffing and Expertise:** recovering and maintaining sufficient staff and expertise to effectively serve job seekers with disabilities.

A copy of the final CSNA report can be viewed at: <https://twc.texas.gov/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-division-publications#vocationalRehabilitationServicesPublications> for anyone interested in learning more.





Policy, Procedures, and Personnel Development Committee, provided by Chair Karen Stanfill

The Policy, Procedures, and Personnel Committee works with TWC-VRD in a number of capacities, including reviewing proposed policy and procedure changes in the TWC-VRD policy manual and Standards for Providers manual; providing input on personnel training and staff retention; and reviewing impartial hearing officers' decisions. TWC-VRD provides staff liaisons who attend the Council committee meetings for these areas. In addition, the committee decided to focus our meetings on addressing the approval process and employee morale. Many services require multiple consultations or approvals, and our goal is to reduce that number where feasible and appropriate. The timely delivery of services in some areas is delayed as a result of lengthy approval processes. We are working together to strike the right balance between providing appropriate support and guidance and delivering timely services.

TWC-VRD's policy department provides the committee with proposed changes and conducts bimonthly telephone calls to review them. The committee provides written feedback and input, and the TWC-VRD liaisons share the department's responses to the committee's feedback. This year the committee provided feedback and helped with clarification on substance-use policies and vehicle modification policies. Feedback regarding proposed changes to comparable benefits and tax exemption for certain services was also provided, and the committee requested information on how rates for providers were established and supported policies that raised rates for providers.

There were several policies reviewed and discussions regarding financial participation in services. TWC-VRD agreed to some of the changes, and this is an area of continuing discussion. Additionally, we continue to discuss best practices on how to make clients aware of their financial responsibility in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The committee also began discussing the potential for TWC-VRD to pay the full state cost for tuition for clients instead of using an established rate. Discussions continue in this area.

The committee is also working with TWC-VRD to review best practices for how often a counselor should provide counseling and guidance (C&G) to a client. The committee would like to see the current required interval changed to allow for more frequent C&G.

In all policies reviewed, comments and suggestions were made regarding steps that require the use of consultants and approvals in an effort to revisit the necessity of those actions. We also went back and looked at some of the reports and audits that TWC-VRD has received guidance on and must utilize in setting policy. As a result of these discussions, TWC-VRD made some changes in the approval and consultation process.

The committee has reviewed the training available to counselors and rehabilitation assistants and noted that credits are available through Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

Each policy committee meeting includes discussion of the importance of staff, field staff, and supports to provide VR services. The number of new hires, retention of staff, and staff separations are discussed. The Council assists in recruiting staff by sharing the announcement of openings at the agency with others.

Lastly, the committee reviewed hearing officer decisions for trends or concerns in interpretation of policy.

Measures of Success

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The following survey results describe satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services provided by the Texas Workforce Commission in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021. Surveys were completed by customers with an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) whose cases were closed as either successful (employed) or unsuccessful (not employed) the month prior to the survey. Percentages indicate customers who responded “yes” or those who answered “satisfied” or “very satisfied” and do not include data for survey responders who chose not to answer the question.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Result: All Disabilities (including both General and Visual Disabilities)

General disabilities include behavioral and mental health conditions; hearing impairments, including deafness; alcohol or drug addiction; intellectual, learning and developmental disabilities; and physical disabilities, including traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, back injury, paralysis and impaired movement. Visual disabilities include blindness, significant visual impairments, and deaf blindness.

I was treated in a friendly, caring, and respectful manner when I dealt with VR staff	94.5%
TWC VR staff demonstrated a can-do attitude when working with me	90.9%
When contacting my local VR office, someone responded to me no later than the next business day.....	78.1%
TWC VR staff explained when and why appointments were scheduled with them.....	89.8%
My counselor and I maintained contact as often as agreed to in my IPE	83.9%
I was satisfied with the explanation of services to help me reach my goal	86.9%
I had input in setting my employment goals.....	90.1%
I had input in planning the services I received.....	87.2%
My counselor and I discussed when services would begin and end	85.4%
I was involved in choosing who provided services (such as Job Placement, Supported Employment, Training, Orientation & Mobility, Diabetes Education, or other services) included on my IPE	66.4%
VR staff provided me the guidance I needed.....	84.6%
My services were not interrupted because my counselor changed, or my counselor was absent	79.4%
My services were not interrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic	68.2%
I have the ability to receive services remotely.....	83.2%
The main reason I cannot receive services remotely is no internet, don't know how to participate, don't have the equipment (respectively)	15.9%,39.1%,44.9%
My preference for VR service delivery is in person, remotely over the internet or a mixed approach (respectively).....	30.2%, 30.9%, 38.9%
I was satisfied with the services I received from service providers that my counselor sent me to	87.8%
I was satisfied with my counselor	87.7%
I was satisfied with my overall experience with VR	86.5%
I am working now	67.0%
I lost my job due the Covid-19 pandemic (percent of those who reported not working)	20.2%

My job loss is: Permanent, Temporary, of Unknown Duration (respectively)	27.3%, 17.4%, 55.3%
I am satisfied with my wages	84.3%
I have employee benefits such as vacation, sick leave, and health insurance	58.7%
I am satisfied with not having employee benefits	48.3%
I am satisfied with the employee benefits I have	91.5%
I am satisfied with my chance for advancement	78.5%
I am satisfied with my Job overall	90.2%

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results: Visual Disabilities

Visual disabilities include blindness, significant visual impairments and deafblindness.

I was treated in a friendly, caring, and respectful manner when I dealt with VR staff	93.3%
TWC VR staff demonstrated a can-do attitude when working with me	88.7%
When contacting my local VR office, someone responded to me no later than the next business day.....	73.4%
TWC VR staff explained when and why appointments were scheduled with them.....	88.3%
My counselor and I maintained contact as often as agreed to in my IPE	79.4%
I was satisfied with the explanation of services to help me reach my goal	84.2%
I had input in setting my employment goals.....	86.4%
I had input in planning the services I received.....	86.9%
My counselor and I discussed when services would begin and end.....	83.3%
I was involved in choosing who provided services (such as Job Placement, Supported Employment, Training, Orientation & Mobility, Diabetes Education, or other services) included on my IPE.....	58.3%
VR staff provided me the guidance I needed.....	79.4%
My services were not interrupted because my counselor changed, or my counselor was absent	75.2%
My services were not interrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic	58.8%
I have the ability to receive services over the internet	76.2%
I am not able to receive services over the internet because I don't have internet (12%), I don't know how to participate remotely (24%), or I don't have the equipment to participate.....	(64%)
My preference for VR service delivery is in person, remotely, or a mixed approach (respectively) ...	30.4%, 23.2%, 46.4%
I was satisfied with the services I received from service providers that my counselor sent me to	85.3%
I was satisfied with my counselor	81.8%
I was satisfied with my overall experience with VR	82.6%
I am working now	57.3%
I lost my job due the Covid-19 pandemic (percent of those who reported not working)	83.7%
My job loss is: Permanent, Temporary, of Unknown Duration (respectively)	25%, 18.8%, 56.3%
I am satisfied with my wages.....	73.4%
I have employee benefits such as vacation, sick leave, and health insurance.....	52.2%
I am satisfied with not having employee benefits	44.2%
I am satisfied with the employee benefits I have	87.1%
I am satisfied with my chance for advancement.....	75.4%
I am satisfied with my Job overall	88.1%

Statistics: General Disabilities

The following statistics describe vocational rehabilitation services for persons with general disabilities (other than vision impairment) provided in SFY 2021 by the Texas Workforce Commission. For age-related data, age reported at the start of the fiscal year was used. General disabilities include behavioral and mental health conditions; hearing impairments, including deafness; alcohol or drug addiction; intellectual, learning and developmental disabilities; and neurological and physical disabilities, including traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, back injury, paralysis and impaired movement.

Total customers served, all ages*: 77,788

Total customers served under age 22:** 27,795

Total Pre-ETS Students Served*:** 26,915

**Customers Served” = from Initial Contact with Case Assignment forward

**Under the age of 22 as of 9/1/2020

***Pre-ETS count also includes potentially eligible students without a Case Assignment

Percent Served by Gender

All Ages: 44.7% Female 55.3% Male

Under Age 22: 38.5% Female 61.5% Male

Race/Ethnicity of General Disabilities Served

Race/Ethnicity	Total General VR Customer Responses	Percent General VR Customers Served
Non-Hispanic Pacific Islander	273	0.4%
Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaskan	534	0.7%
Non-Hispanic Asian	1,595	2.1%
Not Reported/Unavailable	2,321	3.0%
Non-Hispanic African American	18,811	24.2%
Hispanic	24,083	31.0%
Non-Hispanic White	31,402	40.4%
Total*	79,019	101.6%

*Customers self-report and may claim multiple categories. Thus, the total is greater than customer counts.

SSI/SSDI Information

SSI/SSDI Information	Total General VR Customers Served	Percent General VR Customers Served	Total General VR Successful Closures	Percent General VR Successful Closures
SSI/SSDI at Application	12,006	15.4%	966	10.0%
SSI/SSDI During Case (at app, current or close)	16,423	21.1%	1,372	14.2%
SSI/SSDI at Closure	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	1,273	13.1%

Percent Expenditure by Service Type

Expenditures by Service Category	All Ages	Under 22
Other Goods & Equipment	0.4%	0.1%
Maintenance & Transportation	0.8%	0.6%
Computers and Related Equipment	0.9%	0.9%
Other Services	0.9%	0.4%
Prosthetics & Orthotics	4.0%	0.2%
Assistive Technology	5.1%	0.8%
Job Placement Services	5.3%	5.3%
Room and Board (Academic/Vocational Training)	5.3%	12.1%
Supported Employment Services	6.2%	9.0%
Pre-Employment Transition Services	8.2%	25.9%
Medical Services	9.0%	0.5%
Diagnostic & Evaluation	12.9%	5.3%
Hearing Aids & Interpretive Services	19.2%	2.9%
Academic and Vocational Training	21.8%	35.9%
Total	100%	100%

This table contains General case expenditures (service authorization payments) included in ReHabWorks and is not inclusive of other client services expenditures routed through the purchase order process (such as Statewide Initiatives) in the agency's accounting system. The TWC Finance Division reports Combined VR expenditures, which includes both General and Blind cases. Total Combined case service expenditures across all categories and populations is \$97,674,262 (per TWC Finance).

Age is based on age at start of SFY. 'Other Services' includes: Miscellaneous, Other Services for Family Members, Child Care, State License Fees, Uniform Items for Employment, Employment Goods and Equipment - Non Consumable, Self-Employment Goods and Equipment - Non Consumable, Other Rehab Tech Services, Other Personal Attendant Services, Translator for Limited English Proficiency, Self-Employment Services, and Halfway House Services - CRP.

Disabilities Served

Primary Disability	% of Customers, All Ages	% of Customers, Under Age 22
Other Impairments	0.24%	0.33%
Substance Abuse	1.38%	0.05%
Cardiac/Respiratory/Circulatory	2.15%	0.43%
Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury	2.22%	0.73%
Other Physical Debilitation or Impairments	5.63%	1.28%
Mental/Emotional/Psychosocial	17.53%	10.07%
Deaf & Hard of Hearing	17.91%	6.14%
Neurological/Musculoskeletal/Orthopedic	19.47%	8.22%
Neurodevelopmental Disorders	33.74%	72.68%
Total	100%	100%

Successful Closures

Total successful closures: 9,689

Total successful closures under age 22: 1,475

Percent Successful Closures Served by Gender

All Ages: 46.5% Female 53.5% Male

Under Age 22: 34.9% Female, 65.1% Male

Percent of Successful Closures by Occupation

Successful Closures by Occupation	Successful General VR Closures, All Ages	% of General VR Successful Closures, All Ages	Successful General VR Closures, Under Age 22	% of General VR Successful Closures, Under Age 22
All Other Occupations	21	0.2%	5	0.3%
Computer, Engineering, and Science	265	2.7%	9	0.6%
Construction and Extraction	292	3.0%	31	2.1%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	399	4.1%	82	5.6%
Production Occupations	424	4.4%	82	5.6%
Sales & Related Occupations	586	6.0%	100	6.8%
Management, Business, and Financial	664	6.9%	10	0.7%
Healthcare Practitioners, Technical, & Healthcare Support	855	8.8%	54	3.7%
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media	1,032	10.7%	21	1.4%
Office & Administrative Support	1,534	15.8%	219	14.8%
Transportation & Material Moving	1,732	17.9%	413	28.0%
Service Occupations	1,885	19.5%	449	30.4%
Total	9,689	100%	1,475	100%

Customers who achieved an employment outcome as described in their Individualized Plan for Employment, have maintained employment for 90 days after substantial services are completed, and are employed at closure.

'All Other Occupations' includes Farming, Fishing, Forestry, Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Operators, and Military Specific Occupations.

Statistics: Visual Disabilities

The following statistics describe vocational rehabilitation services for persons with visual disabilities provided in state fiscal year 2021. For age-related data, age reported at the start of the fiscal year was used. Visual disabilities include blindness, significant visual impairments and deafblindness.

Total Customers Served, All Ages*: 9,141

Total Customers Served, Under Age 22:** 1,948

Total Pre-ETS Students Served*:** 1,914

*"Customers Served" = from Initial Contact with Case Assignment forward

**Under the age of 22 as of 9/1/2020

***Pre-ETS count also includes potentially eligible students without a Case Assignment

Percent Served by Gender

All Ages: 49.1% Female 50.9% Male

Under Age 22: 47.1% Female 52.9% Male

Race/Ethnicity of Blind VR Customers Served

Race/Ethnicity	Total Blind VR Customer Responses	Percent Blind VR Customers Served
Non Hispanic Pacific Islander	35	0.4%
Non Hispanic American Indian/Alaskan	41	0.4%
Non Hispanic Asian	211	2.3%
Not Reported/Unavailable	253	2.8%
Non Hispanic African American	2,126	23.3%
Non Hispanic White	3,008	32.9%
Hispanic	3,546	38.8%
Total*	9,220	101%

*Customers self-report and may claim multiple categories. Thus the total is greater than customer counts.

SSI/SSDI Information Blind

SSI/SSDI Information	Total Blind VR Customers Served	Percent Blind VR Customers Served	Total Blind VR Successful Closures	Percent Blind VR Successful Closures
SSI/SSDI at Application	2,152	23.5%	112	13.2%
SSI/SSDI During Case (at app, current or at close)	2,808	30.7%	167	19.7%
SSI/SSDI at Closure	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	145	17.1%

Percent Expenditure by Service Type

Expenditures by Service Category	All Ages	Under 22
Job Placement	0.7%	0.6%
Supported Employment	0.8%	0.4%
All Other Goods and Services	1.0%	1.0%
Maintenance & Transportation	1.3%	0.2%
Orientation & Mobility Training	1.6%	0.5%
Room and Board (Academic/Vocational Training)	3.7%	9.8%
Computers and Related Equipment	4.6%	6.9%
Eyeglasses, Lenses, Low Vision Devices, Orthotics/Prosthetics	5.9%	4.2%
Pre-Employment Transition Services	8.3%	36.4%
Academic and Vocational Training	9.2%	19.7%
Diagnostic & Evaluation	12.6%	2.7%
Restoration Services	24.9%	2.2%
Assistive Technology, includes related evaluation & training	25.3%	15.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

This table contains Blind case expenditures (service authorization payments) included in ReHabWorks and is not inclusive of other client services expenditures routed through the purchase order process (such as Statewide Initiatives) in the agency's accounting system. The TWC Finance Division reports Combined VR expenditures, which includes both General and Blind cases. Total Combined case service expenditures across all categories and populations is \$97,674,262 (per TWC Finance).

Age is based on age at start of SFY. 'All Other Goods & Services' includes Diabetes Education, Other Goods & Equipment, and Other Goods & Equipment-Youth.

Successful Closures

Total Successful Closures: 846

Total Successful Closures, Under Age 22: 48

Percent Successful Closures by Gender

All Ages: 53.4% Female, 46.6% Male

Under Age 22: 41.7% Female, 58.3% Male

Percent of Successful Closures by Occupation

Successful Closures by Occupation	Successful Blind VR Closures, All Ages	% of Blind VR Successful Closures, All Ages	Successful Blind VR Closures, Under Age 22	% of Blind VR Successful Closures, Under Age 22
All Other Occupations	7	0.8%	<5	<5
Production Occupations	32	3.8%	<5	<5
Computer, Engineering, and Science	21	2.5%	<5	<5
Construction and Extraction	29	3.4%	<5	<5
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	34	4.0%	<5	<5
Sales & Related Occupations	58	6.9%	11	22.9%
Transportation & Material Moving	66	7.8%	6	12.5%
Management, Business, and Financial	86	10.2%	<5	<5
Healthcare Practitioners, Technical & Healthcare Support	105	12.4%	<5	<5
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts and Media	126	14.9%	<5	<5
Office & Administrative Support	141	16.7%	7	14.6%
Service	141	16.7%	11	22.9%
Total	846	100%	48	100%

*Customer counts less than five are represented as <5



TWC FY 2021 VR Budget

Budget Group	Budget	Total Q1 Exp	Total Q2 Exp	Total Q3 Exp	Total Q4 Exp	Enc	Budget Remaining
Salaries & Wages (includes Employee Benefits)	\$116.3	\$27.3	\$27.6	\$27.5	\$28.1		\$ 5.7
Travel	\$ 2.2	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.1		\$ 2.1
Operating Expenses	\$ 8.4	\$ 0.9	\$ 0.6	\$ 0.8	\$ 1.5	\$ 0.9	\$ 3.7
Client Services	\$139.8	\$13.2	\$ 21.7	\$ 31.8	\$ 30.8	\$ 44.8	\$ (2.5)
Total	\$266.8	\$41.5	\$50.0	\$60.2	\$60.5	\$ 45.9	\$9.0

Amounts above are represented in millions, and any variances are due to rounding.

NOTES:

- FY 2021 total obligations (expended and encumbered) represent 97% of the total budget, and expenditures alone represent 80% of the budget.
- FY 2021 travel expenses remain low due to COVID-19. Expenditures in the first three quarters of FY 2021 total \$34.4K. As anticipated, travel expenditures increased during the 4th quarter of the fiscal year to \$102.9K. Total travel expenditures in FY 2021 were \$137.3K.
- FY 2021 Client Services obligations (expended and encumbered) represent 102% of the budgeted amount, and expenditures alone represent 70% of the budgeted amount. \$18.8M of the total Client Services budget is related to VR Statewide Initiatives, of which \$14.1M has been obligated. The shortfall in Client Services will be offset by the budget allocated in the other budget groups and those goods/services that do not fully liquidate in the ReHab Works (RHW) system.



FY 2021 VR Client Services Budget

VR Dept	Budget	QTR 1 Exp	QTR 2 Exp	QTR 3 Exp	QTR 4 Exp	Enc	Avail Bal
Region 1 Panhandle/West TX	\$ 18.5	\$ 1.9	\$ 2.5	\$ 3.7	\$ 3.0	\$4.3	\$ 3.0
Region 2 DFW/Texoma	\$ 27.0	\$ 3.1	\$ 5.1	\$ 6.9	\$ 7.3	\$ 8.4	\$ (3.8)
Region 3 Central TX	\$ 18.2	\$ 1.9	\$ 2.9	\$ 4.3	\$ 4.4	\$ 5.6	\$ (0.9)
Region 4 East TX	\$ 11.7	\$ 1.8	\$ 2.7	\$ 4.4	\$ 3.7	\$ 4.5	\$ (5.4)
Region 5 Gulf Coast	\$ 20.8	\$ 2.3	\$ 3.7	\$ 5.6	\$ 5.4	\$ 5.6	\$ (1.7)
Region 6 South TX	\$ 22.7	\$ 2.0	\$ 3.7	\$ 5.8	\$ 4.9	\$ 5.9	\$ 0.4
Criss Cole Rehab Center	\$ 1.1	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	\$ 1.0
VR Statewide Initiatives	\$ 18.8	-	\$ 0.7	\$ 1.0	\$ 1.9	\$ 10.4	\$ 4.7
VR State Office	\$ 1.1	\$ 0.1	\$ 0.3	\$ 0.1	\$ 0.1	\$ 0.1	\$ 0.3
Total	\$ 139.8	\$ 13.2	\$ 21.7	\$ 31.8	\$ 30.8	\$ 44.8	\$ (2.5)

Amounts above are represented in millions, and any variances are due to rounding.

NOTES:

- The obligations by Regions 2-5 will be offset by the budget allocated within the Regions and those goods/services that do not fully liquidate in the RHW system.
- Encumbrances of \$44.8M are expected to liquidate at approximately 80%, or \$35.8M. This will leave an estimated available balance of \$6.5M.



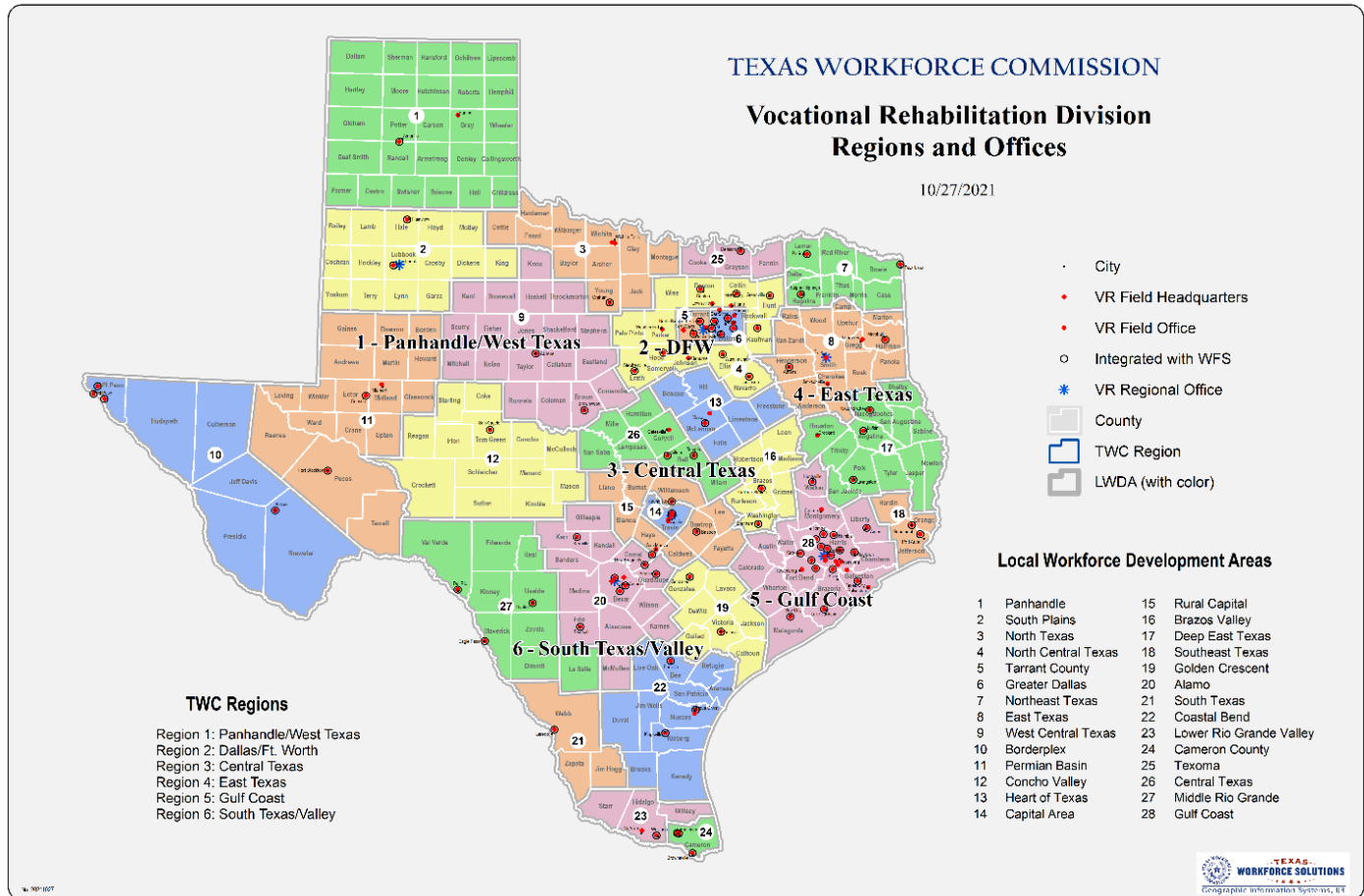
TWC-VR Division Regions and Offices Map

To locate your TWC VR office please contact:

(512) 936-6400

vr.office.locator@twc.texas.gov

www.twc.texas.gov/VRNearMe



Success Stories

Shane Mullen

Employed at Rosendin Electric, Pflugerville



As a relative newcomer to Texas, Shane Mullen has made the most of every opportunity to build skills and expand his career options. He received employment services from Workforce Solutions Capital Area and Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services to receive electrical training and VR services to arrange interpreting services to accommodate his communication needs as a deaf person.

With his prior experience as a material handler, forklift driver, auto air conditioning repair and other relevant experience, his skillset helped him to be referred by Lone Star Construction Trades school for their electrical training program.

Shane is now building his skills in the electrical trades at Rosendin Electric in Pflugerville where he is employed as a

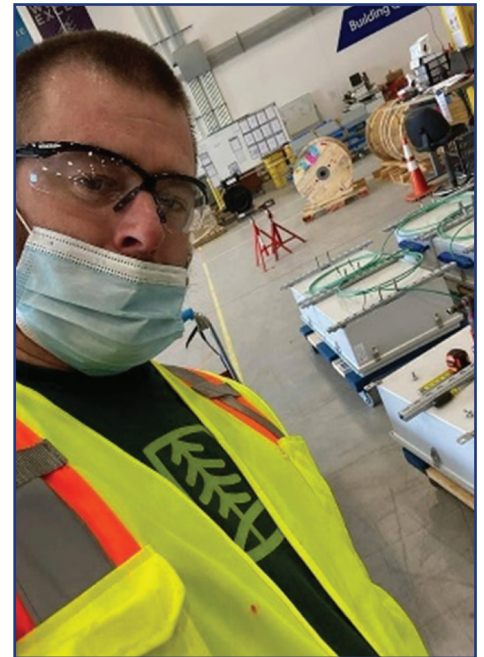
Construction Wireman/Construction Electrician (CW/CE) and sets his sights on starting an apprenticeship program in the future so he may continue moving up in his career.

Shane's employer, Rosendin, is a disability-inclusive employer and supports Shane at work to ensure clear communication, which also helps to ensure his safety on the job.

"Everyone at Rosendin makes sure that everyone is safe at work," Shane says. "Before the actual work begins, we communicate and plan the work." I use different methods to communicate on the job – I can read lips, or I write things down if the need is brief," says Shane. "If I need an interpreter, my VRC helps me arrange for one."

Shane aspires to teach in the electrician field one day. His advice for individuals with or without a disability who are seeking a new career.

"Have a goal and if there are other opportunities, then take them. They can open doors to other opportunities, and just keep at it. Anything you learn will always benefit you, any step you take for yourself is a step in the right direction."



Thomas McCullough

Employed at AppleCare iOS, Austin

Early in his Vocational Rehabilitation journey, Thomas McCullough, a college student from University of North Texas - Denton majoring in Computer Science, discovered a passion for teaching and helping others. His joy in helping others occurred as Thomas was also experiencing an unimaginable change to the trajectory of his life. He had lost his sight overnight due to a handgun accident.

His Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Romania Roberts remembers her first meeting with Thomas and his mother.

“On our first visit, Thomas could not fathom life living as an individual with blindness,” said Roberts. “However, upon my introduction of our agency and our blind and visually impaired services, I saw a glimmer from him and relief from his mother knowing that they had found the appropriate agency to make a difference in her son’s life,” she added.

Working together with VR customers, their support system, service providers, employers – VR counselors assemble a support team which is key to success in reaching an individual’s employment goal.

Thomas dove right in starting with Blind Skills Training, which meant he was away from his familiar living situation and adapted to new environments, while gaining independent living skills. From there, he was eager to move to Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center, a residential facility where he would continue building social and leadership skills, test out his independent living skills, and learn to use assistive technology.

Thomas’ knowledge in Computer Science made it easy for him to breeze the Adaptive Assistive Technology classes, so he turned to helping his CCRC classmates. He later volunteered at the computer lab in the community for underprivileged individuals to provide technology instruction and support.

“Living at Criss Cole was a great experience because it gave me the opportunity to apply all the daily living skills I had learned and transfer them to an apartment setting,” said Thomas “I also learned budgeting, meal planning, grocery shopping, and more which gave me the confidence that I would be able to go and live independently anywhere in a community.”

Through the CCRC Career Guidance Center, Thomas sharpened his interviewing skills, developed a resume, which now included assistive technology skills. He obtained part-time employment at a local electronics manufacturer as he continued to seek employment in his career field.

His hard work and preparation paid off. In February 2020, he was excited at the chance to interview with AppleCare. But when the COVID-19 pandemic halted many business activities, he thought he would have to wait for another chance at his dream job.

Little did Thomas know he made a great impression with Apple in his ability and skill set with assistive technology. Three months later, Thomas received a call from Apple. Thomas was offered and accepted a full-time position with AppleCare iOS Advisor. He began this career remotely and plans are to later transition to Austin when office conditions permit.

As Romania puts it, “Thomas is a picture of success and hard work. He accepted the opportunities offered in his Vocational Rehabilitation process. He is proof positive, if you put in the work, go through all stages, learn how to adjust, and overcome obstacles you can obtain realistic goals. Thomas taught me, “all things are possible to those who believe.”



Kathyna Hatla

2021 Texas NDEAM Poster Winner



Middle School Science Teacher, Bryan

Kathyna Hatla is a resident of Bryan and is a middle school science teacher, a mother, a grandmother, a painter and a customer of Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services. In 1999, Kathyna was diagnosed with Transverse Myelitis, which causes neurologic dysfunction in motor and sensory tracts on both sides of the spinal cord.

For Kathyna, this resulted in paralysis from the waist down, chronic pain and limited use of both hands. However, she never let this obstacle get in the way of fulfilling her personal and employment goals. “I have had to realize ‘Okay, this has happened to me, now what do I do? Do I just give in and give up, or do I get a grip and be the best I can be?’ Yes, I am a user of a wheelchair, but that does not diminish my worth as a person. I will not let that be a defining factor of who I am,” she said.

Kathyna received support for her disability from Vocational Rehabilitation Services with the purchase of a new power wheelchair, as well as vehicle modifications so that she could successfully remain employed in her chosen profession as a teacher and continue living independently.

Within six months Kathyna returned to the classroom. She is a role model for her students because she demonstrates that even in the face of extreme adversity and challenges, you can accomplish your goals and fulfill your dreams.

Kathyna has continued her passion to paint. As she explains, painting is therapeutic because it allows her to express herself through art, where her talent has no limitations.

“Painting is a type of therapy for me, and it is a blessing to be able to continue my artistic expression. I have been able to share my paintings and hope in doing so to give others inspiration.”

“My painting is titled, “**In Our Hands**” and represents this year's theme, “America’s Recovery: Powered by Inclusion.” Stemming from my former desire to be a marine biologist, my inspiration for this painting was the analogy of the dynamics involved in a beautiful healthy coral reef, such as the Flower Gardens we have in the Gulf, as to how we humans need to work together on land. Just like in our lives, it takes the interaction of many diverse living things that come in a multitude of colors ... all sizes, shapes, and functions to make the whole community successful and continue to thrive. It’s interesting to note that some of the tiniest organisms, the plankton - the producers - most of which lack a means of movement, are the foundation that supports the entire reef, the ocean, even the global ecosystem by producing food and oxygen,” Kathyna said.



We Hire Ability Employer Feature

We Hire Ability employer success story

Houston-based Adaptive Construction Solutions (ACS) is a veteran owned and staffed organization whose mission is focused on providing meaningful work and debt-free career pathways to veterans and underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities. ACS founder Nicholas Morgan is an Army veteran with a service-connected disability who transitioned to civilian life in 2006 and found it a challenge himself to find employment upon his return.



Nicholas decided that he wanted to help veterans and founded Adaptive Construction Solutions, which helps at-risk veterans, foster youth and individuals with disabilities attain competitive employment through apprenticeship programs, which provide lasting careers with livable wages.

Today, ACS's apprenticeship program is comprised of 26% disabled apprentices. For programs with 100 or more new apprentices in 2020, ACS is #1 in the nation.

ACS is among TWC's very first employers to be named with the We Hire Ability employer recognition, with 33% of their workforce composed of people with disabilities.

Our Vocational Rehabilitation Program and ACS together share an important mission – empowering individuals with disabilities to achieve employment success on their own terms and transforming their lives.

TWC is proud to collaborate with Adaptive Construction Solutions to help share how other employers may increase hiring of individuals with disabilities and learn best practices for inclusivity through We Hire Ability employers such as ACS.



Membership and Meetings

Members



Michael A. Ebbeler Jr.,
RCT Chairman
Disability Representative
Austin, TX



Lisa Maciejewski-West,
RCT Vice Chairman
Business, Industry and Labor
Representative
Horseshoe Bay, TX



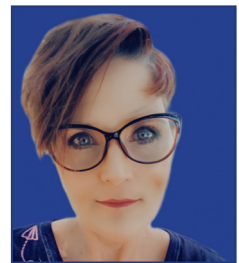
Matt Berend
State VR Counselor
Representative
Wichita Falls, TX



Amanda Bowdoin
Disability Representative
Forney, TX



Jennifer Clouse
Business, Industry and Labor
Representative
Temple, TX



Lisa Cowart
Parent Training &
Information Representative
Beaumont, TX



JoAnne Fluke
VR Services Recipient
Representative
Abilene, TX



Cheryl Fuller
State VR Director
Representative
Austin, TX



Lindsey R. Geeslin
Texas Workforce Investment
Council Representative
Lorena, TX



Gennadiy Goldenshteyn
Business, Industry and Labor
Representative
Dallas, TX



Bobbie Hodges
Community Rehabilitation
Program Representative
Fort Worth, TX



Paul Hunt
Disability Representative
Austin, TX



Elizabeth Kendell
Business, Industry and Labor
Representative
San Antonio, TX



April Pollreis
Statewide Independent Living
Council Representative
Amarillo, TX



Joe Powell
Disability Representative
Irving, TX



Emily Robinson
State Educational Agency
Representative
Pflugerville, TX



Rodrick Robinson
Business, Industry and Labor
Representative
McKinney, TX



Crystal Stark
State VR Counselor
Representative
College Station, TX



Karen Stanfill
Client Assistance Program
Representative
Houston, TX



Abdi Warsame
Business, Industry and Labor
Representative
Irving, TX



Lisa Godwin
RCT Coordinator
Surfside Beach, TX

Become a Member

If you are an individual with a disability or someone interested in providing input on vocational rehabilitation services for Texans with disabilities, the Council may be for you. Interested individuals must submit an application to the governor of Texas. Council members are appointed by the governor for three-year terms and represent a diverse range of disabilities and community perspectives. The Council must include representatives of the State Rehabilitation Program, State Independent Living Council, and the Community Rehabilitation Programs and other disability organizations and programs, as well as individuals with disabilities, and their families or authorized representatives. Business, industry, and labor representatives, as well as those from the State Workforce Investment Board and Texas Education Agency, are also required. [Learn more by visiting texasworkforce.org/agency/rehabilitation-council-texas](https://texasworkforce.org/agency/rehabilitation-council-texas)

2022 Rehabilitation Council of Texas Quarterly Meeting Schedule

Council members convene for quarterly meetings to participate in discussion panels, presentations, and committee meetings in support of the Council's mission, values, and responsibilities.

Meeting Times:

1st day 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

2nd day 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Meeting Location:

To be determined

Meeting Location:

To be determined

2022 Quarterly Meeting Schedule:

February 3-4, 2022

May 5-6, 2022

August 4-5, 2022

Additional meeting information and materials will be posted as they become finalized at <http://texasworkforce.org/agency/rehabilitation-council-texas#meetingScheduleAgendasMinutes>



TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

**101 East 15th Street
Austin, Texas 78778
512-463-2222**

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

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