

1 **Workforce Conference Awards**  
2 **Discussion Paper**  
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5 **Background**

6 Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Chapter 802 Integrity of the Texas Workforce System  
7 rules, [Subchapter I](#), allows TWC’s three-member Commission (Commission) to establish  
8 monetary and nonmonetary awards to incentivize the Commission’s goals to fulfill the workforce  
9 needs of employers and to put Texans to work.

10 TWC presents the Workforce Awards annually at the Texas Workforce Conference. On January  
11 29 and March 12, 2019, the Commission approved the following awards, along with award  
12 criteria and monetary amounts for each, for TWC to present at future conferences:

- 13 • Local Workforce Development Board (Board) Awards (application-based)
  - 14 ➤ Service to Business
  - 15 ➤ Service to Workers
  - 16 ➤ Service to Community
  - 17 ➤ Industry Sector Outreach
  - 18 ➤ Youth Inspiration & Career Awareness
  - 19 ➤ Texas HireAbility
  - 20 ➤ Texas Rising Star Child Care
  - 21 ➤ Registered Apprenticeship Expansion
- 22 • Board Performance Incentive Awards (data-driven)
  - 23 ➤ Claimant Reemployment
  - 24 ➤ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Career Pathways
  - 25 ➤ Foster Youth
- 26 • Partnership Awards
  - 27 ➤ Community College Engagement (TWC staff–nominated)
  - 28 ➤ Board/Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)/Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
  - 29 Collaboration (application-based)
- 30 • AEL Performance Quality Improvement Awards
  - 31 ➤ Employer Partnership (application-based)
  - 32 ➤ Best in Class (data-driven)
- 33 • Employer Awards (nomination-based)
  - 34 ➤ Large Employer of the Year
  - 35 ➤ Small Employer of the Year
  - 36 ➤ Veteran-Friendly Employer of the Year
  - 37 ➤ Local Employer of Excellence

38 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic response, TWC presented a streamlined set of the  
39 following nonmonetary awards in 2020:

- 40 • Local Workforce Development Board Awards (application based)
  - 41 ➤ Texas HireAbility
  - 42 ➤ Registered Apprenticeship Expansion
- 43 • Board Performance Incentive Awards (data driven)
  - 44 ➤ WIOA Title I Career Pathways

- 1       ➤ Foster Youth
- 2     • AEL Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) Awards
- 3       ➤ Best in Class (data driven)
- 4     • Employer Awards (nomination based)
- 5       ➤ Large Employer of the Year
- 6       ➤ Small Employer of the Year
- 7       ➤ Veteran-Friendly Employer of the Year
- 8       ➤ Local Employer of Excellence

9     **Issue 1: Awards Modifications**

10    Staff has reviewed all current Workforce Awards and identified potential changes, including  
 11    retiring several of the older awards and replacing them with new awards that better align with  
 12    TWC’s objectives:

- 13    • to promote and support a workforce system that offers employers, individuals, and  
 14    communities the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity;
- 15    • to recognize truly innovative workforce, VR, and AEL efforts and partnerships; and
- 16    • to emphasize highly successful efforts at the local level that benefit core customer  
 17    populations, such as veterans, individuals with barriers to employment, at-risk populations,  
 18    and individuals with disabilities.

19    The following Board awards have been identified for retirement:

- 20    • Service to Business (replaced by the Workforce Innovation for Employers Award)
- 21    • Service to Workers (replaced by the Workforce Innovation for Workers Award)
- 22    • Service to Community
- 23    • Industry Sector Outreach
- 24    • Youth Inspiration & Career Awareness
- 25    • AEL Employer Partnership
- 26    • Board/AEL/VR Collaboration Award
- 27    • Texas Rising Star Child Care

28    *Continued Awards*

- 29
- 30    • Board HireAbility Award (3 awards: 1<sup>st</sup> place \$50,000; 2<sup>nd</sup> place \$30,000; and, 3<sup>rd</sup> place  
 31    \$20,000)
- 32    • Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Award (up to 3 awards at \$100,000 each)
- 33    • AEL Best in Class (up to 6 awards at \$40,000 each)
- 34    • Large Employer of the Year (Non-monetary award)
- 35    • Small Employer of the Year (Non-monetary award)
- 36    • Veteran-Friendly Employer of the Year (Non-monetary award)
- 37    • Local Employer of Excellence (1 Non-monetary award for each Board, 28 total)
- 38

39    *New Awards*

- 40
- 41    Staff has developed the following new awards:
- 42    • Workforce Innovation for Employers Award (1 award at \$100,000)

- 1 • Workforce Innovation for Workers Award (1 award at \$100,000)
- 2 • Outstanding Workforce Initiative Award (1 award at \$60,000)
- 3 • TWC AEL Scholar Award (Non-monetary award)

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5 The Workforce Innovation for Employers Award would recognize a Board’s innovative efforts  
6 and coordination to improve the local workforce system for Texas businesses. The award criteria  
7 emphasize:

- 8 • collaboration with community and partner programs;
- 9 • creative approaches to service delivery, such as pivoting to virtual platforms to prevent  
10 interruptions in service and conducting large-scale hiring events during natural disasters; and
- 11 • efforts to prepare the workforce preparation efforts, such as retraining and early rapid  
12 response intervention.

13 The Workforce Innovation for Workers Award would recognize a Board’s commitment to  
14 innovative service delivery. The award criteria emphasize:

- 15 • innovations in service delivery to meet the needs of workers and job seekers;
- 16 • coenrollment of individuals in multiple programs to provide access to a wide range of  
17 services; and
- 18 • program integration efforts targeting core populations that historically have barriers to  
19 employment.

20 The Outstanding Workforce Initiative Award would recognize a Board that successfully  
21 implemented an innovative statewide initiative to create a viable and strong workforce. Award  
22 criteria include but is not limited to the actions taken to ensure that the initiative was successful,  
23 employer testimonials and individual success stories, and statistical data such as the number of  
24 individuals and employers served.

25  
26 The TWC AEL Scholar Award is a nomination-based, nonmonetary award that would recognize  
27 adult learners for their dedication, persistence, and leadership.

28  
29 *Revised Awards*

30  
31 Staff proposes changing the Foster Youth Award—currently based on data alone—into a new  
32 application- and data-based Transitioning Foster Youth to Success Award. This award would  
33 recognize a Board that meets specific performance standards and is using new and innovative  
34 initiatives to target foster youth. The updated award provides for a single award of \$100,000.

35  
36 Staff proposes changing the current Community College Engagement Award to an application-  
37 based, nonmonetary award called the All-Star College Award for colleges that have had or  
38 currently have a Skills Development Fund grant. The Community College Engagement Award is  
39 currently issued based on TWC staff nominations. Staff proposes establishing an application  
40 process through which colleges may submit an application that highlights their partnerships with  
41 employers. Through modifications to this nonmonetary award, TWC would recognize higher  
42 education partners whose efforts in their communities contribute to the state’s future workforce,  
43 thus incentivizing colleges to apply for workforce grants for which they are eligible. Staff  
44 propose enhancing the current Community College Engagement Award to an application-based,

1 nonmonetary award called the All-Star College Award for colleges that have had or currently  
2 have a Skills Development Fund grant.

3 Staff proposes modifying the Veteran-Friendly Employer of the Year Award to include the  
4 criterion that at least 10 percent of the employer’s workforce must be veterans. This would align  
5 the award with the requirements of the We Hire Vets program.

6 Finally, staff propose temporarily removing the following two Board performance incentive  
7 awards for 2021 because these awards are based on performance measures that have been  
8 heavily impacted by the pandemic response:

- 9 • Claimant Reemployment
- 10 • WIOA Career Pathways

### 11 **Decision Point**

12 Staff seeks direction on presenting awards to Boards, AEL grantees, community colleges, and  
13 employers as set forth in the Workforce Awards—Overview attachment. Any future  
14 modifications to award categories and/or monetary amounts will be made by the Commission as  
15 needed.

### 16 **Issue 2: Eligibility for Awards**

17 Section 802.167 allows TWC to modify eligibility for and assignment of awards based on factors  
18 that the Commission identifies as extraordinary circumstances. The rules do not explicitly state  
19 what those factors are; rather, they define “extraordinary circumstances” as conditions “which  
20 may include, but are not limited to, matters such as serious unforeseen events, unresolved audit  
21 or monitoring findings, sanctions, unanticipated changes in economic conditions, the occurrence  
22 of a disaster, or legislative changes having a direct impact on the Commission, Boards, or AEL  
23 grant recipients.”

24 TWC considers the following factors when determining an entity’s eligibility to receive  
25 Workforce Awards:

- 26 • The quality of a Board’s or grantee’s performance and of the award applications
- 27 • The number of award applications or nominations received
- 28 • Voluntary deobligation of funds related to an award or program
- 29 • Corrective actions related to:
  - 30 ➤ failure to meet relevant performance targets;
  - 31 ➤ repeat monitoring findings;
  - 32 ➤ failure to provide cost-effective services, as evidenced by unusually high average costs;
  - 33 or
  - 34 ➤ failure to oversee the delivery of services
- 35 • A Board’s or AEL grantee’s poor programmatic, fiscal, and/or administrative oversight not  
36 currently addressed through corrective action

37 TWC provides guidance for how different types of corrective actions impact a Board’s eligibility  
38 to receive awards. To simplify and clarify how a corrective action affects a Board’s or AEL  
39 grantee’s eligibility to receive an award, staff proposes the following parameters when  
40 considering a corrective action as an extraordinary circumstance:

- 1 • A Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) does not disqualify a Board or AEL grantee from award  
2 eligibility. If a Board is on a TAP, it is still eligible for all awards, even for a program-  
3 specific award.
- 4 • If a Board is under Intent to Sanction (ITS) or Sanction related to administrative processes or  
5 Board oversight at any time between September 1 and the date the awards are presented, then  
6 the Board is not eligible for any awards that year.
- 7 • If a Board is under ITS or Sanction related to a specific program at any time between  
8 September 1 and the date the awards are presented, then the Board is not eligible for any  
9 awards that are directly related to that program that year.
- 10 • If an AEL grantee is under ITS or Sanction for any reason related to the AEL program at any  
11 time between September 1 and the date the awards are presented, then the AEL grantee will  
12 be ineligible for AEL awards presented that year. However, the AEL grantee may be eligible  
13 for other Workforce Awards.

Corrective Action Type	TAP	ITS or Sanction
Program-Specific	Eligible for all awards	Not eligible for awards related to that program but eligible for all other awards
Administrative Process and/or Board Oversight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement issues</li> <li>• Cost allocation issues</li> <li>• Data security issues</li> <li>• IT security issues</li> <li>• Open records issues</li> <li>• Board membership issues</li> <li>• Inaccurate financial reporting in the CDER system</li> <li>• Poor expenditure management that jeopardizes service delivery</li> <li>• Poor fiscal oversight</li> <li>• Overarching concerns regarding poor program management</li> </ul>	Eligible for all awards	Not eligible for awards

14 **Decision Point**

15 Staff seeks direction on considering extraordinary circumstances when identifying a Board’s or  
16 AEL grantee’s eligibility to receive awards.

17 **Issue 3: Employers Eligible for Employer Awards**

18 Staff proposes clarifying which types of employers are eligible to receive an award in the  
19 Employer Awards category. Historically, these awards have been presented to private-sector  
20 employers to the exclusion of public employers that do not provide contracted services for the  
21 Board that submitted the award nomination.

1 **Decision Point**

2 Staff seeks direction on defining “private-sector employers” eligible to receive Employer  
3 Awards.

4 **Issue 4: Funding Streams for Awards**

5 Staff proposes the monetary awards identified above be paid from available balances of  
6 statewide funds for WIOA, TANF, Employment Service, and AEL Commission Reserve not to  
7 exceed the following:

- 8 • WIOA Statewide — \$880,000
- 9 • ES Statewide — \$60,000
- 10 • TANF Statewide — \$60,000
- 11 • AEL Commission Reserve — \$240,000

12 **Decision Point**

13 Staff seeks direction on the use of proposed funding streams for awards as described above, and  
14 the flexibility to fund awards with a combination of funding streams as appropriate for each  
15 individual award.

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