



Resilient Together

Local Workforce Development Board Plan Program Years 2021–2024

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Introduction

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) §108 (20 Code of Federal Regulations §679.500–580), each Local Workforce Development Board (Board) is required to develop and submit to the state a comprehensive four-year plan (Board Plan) that identifies and describes policies and procedures as well as local activities that are in line with the State Plan. This Board Plan must be developed openly and be available to the public for comment for at least 15 days, but no more than 30 days, particularly to business, labor, and education partners as well as members of the Board’s communities that focus on these issues. Along with submission of the Board Plan to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Board must submit all public comments of disagreement with the plan to TWC.

At the end of the first two-year period, the appropriate chief elected officials (CEOs) and the Board will review the local plan and prepare and submit modifications to reflect changes in the labor market and economic conditions, factors affecting the implementation of the plan, changes in financing, changes to the structure of the Board, and/or the need to revise strategies to meet local performance goals.

The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Board, dba Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas (The Board) serves as the local workforce development board for a three-county region, including Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange Counties. It is one of 28 local workforce development boards in Texas. The Board operates three American Job Centers (AJCs), serving approximately 12,500 job seekers and over 2,000 employers in 2019, when the area was experiencing low unemployment. Despite the challenges from the pandemic and hurricanes the American Job Center served approximately 16,030 job seekers and over 2,260 employers in 2020.

These centers are in Beaumont, Orange, and Port Arthur. The primary function of the LWDB is to ensure that workforce funds and operations are invested in workforce development activities that address the needs of employers and job seekers in Southeast Texas.

The Board consists of approximately 25-30 members. Of these members, the majority are employers from the private sector who consistently provide input regarding the needs of employers. The Board also includes representatives from other entities, such as education, economic development, and other community-based organizations, which ensure that other workforce needs are also addressed regarding jobseekers and other targeted populations. Members are appointed by the Chief Elected Officials of the region with final approval by the Governor. The region’s chief elected officials are the County Judges of Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange Counties, as well as the Mayor of Beaumont.

Board meetings are generally on the first Tuesday of each month. All meetings are open to the public to allow the public an opportunity to make comments.

The Board employs thirteen staff who are responsible for program planning, monitoring, and reporting. The Board has oversight over job training programs funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as well as other federal and state workforce programs.

Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

The strategic elements of the Local Workforce Development Board Planning Guidelines (Guidelines) are as follows:

A. Vision and Goals

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(E); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(5))

Boards must include a description of the Board’s strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. The description must include:

- goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including early education services, and services for youth and individuals with barriers to employment; and
- goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A).

BOARD RESPONSE:

The Board has established its vision of creating “*A world class, competitive workforce for Southeast Texas.*” In order to support this strong vision and prioritize strategic goals for success, the Board has worked diligently to seek out input and insight from employers, jobseekers, board members, economic developers, stakeholders, and other workforce partner organizations to help in the development of the goals and strategies associated with this plan. The Board has sought out the highest level of industry input during this process to find the next steps in fulfilling its vision of creating the most competitive workforce possible in Southeast Texas.

The Board’s mission is “to equip Southeast Texas with the skills and knowledge that meet the needs of employers to foster the region’s economic growth”. Emerging from a slight economic downturn due to the pandemic of 2020, the Board has established several goals and strategies in this plan that focus on continued economic growth to emerge from this downturn with revitalized energy, and to position itself primed to make the greatest impact possible.

A highly trained and skilled workforce is essential for economic success. The Board has engaged industry leaders to help identify skill deficiencies and gaps prevalent among jobseekers. As part of this process, the Board has actively engaged education and training leaders in the planning process to develop strategies to meet these skill gaps and increase direct linkages between industry needs and educational opportunities to meet those needs.

B. Board Strategies

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(F); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(6))

Boards must include a description of the Board’s strategy to work with the entities carrying out the core programs and with the required partners to align resources available to the local workforce development area (workforce area) to achieve the vision and goals.

BOARD RESPONSE:

The Board has developed goals that align with the Texas Workforce Commission’s (TWC) statewide goals for workforce development. These goals also align the Board’s strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. For each Board goal, the correlating TWC goal has been included, along with specific board-adopted strategies for meeting the goals.

The strategies were updated in Fall of 2022 to reflect actions taken to reach each goal.

<u><i>The Board’s Defined Goal</i></u>	Strategies and Tactics for Each Goal
BOARD GOAL: <u><i>Expand outreach and partnerships with employers through focused industry- and occupational-specific efforts to help identify the jobs of the future and bridge skills gaps among job-seekers.</i></u>	
TWC SYSTEM GOALS: Focus on Employers and Align System Elements	
Strategy	<p>Seek out industry-specific input from industry leaders through a series of information-gathering sessions to help identify job needs of the present and future</p> <p>Actions taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and Industry Listening Forums have been conducted in both 2021 and 2022 • A total of 11 sessions have been held, including Manufacturing, Transportation, Healthcare, Economic Development, Hospitality, Education, Construction, Petrochemical, and General Business sessions. <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will form a Targeted Occupation Committee to evaluate the targeted occupation list annually. This committee will meet twice a year and will be made up of secondary, post-secondary and business/industry representatives. • Business Forums will continue on biennial basis and will focus on the in-demand industries for our region.
Strategy	<p>Continued usage of social media to reach potential employers and job-seekers</p> <p>Actions taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media numbers continue to grow including 4,699 Facebook followers and 491 LinkedIn followers. • Our Facebook account had a Post Reach count of 67,463 for a four week period measured in September 2022.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Podcast was downloaded nearly 1,000 total times over the last 18 months. <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will collaborate with the contractor to evaluate the social media calendar on a regular basis. • The podcast package will expand from 12 to 18 events per year and will target important topics for employers and workforce development.
Strategy	<p>Work to have a visible presence in all three counties (Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange) by collaborating with more organizations and employers</p> <p>Actions taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Economic Development Initiative, Attendance at Chamber Meetings, Golden Triangle Business Roundtable, Golden Triangle Industrial Group, Regional Planning Commission, School Advisory Meetings and Region 5 Meetings. • We also opened a Silsbee workforce center location in 2021 to expand our presence in Hardin County. <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will collaborate with training partners in the Hardin and Jasper county region to increase participation and support training programs • Board will expand coordination activities with school districts in Hardin county to promote dual credit opportunities in CTE programs.
Strategy	<p>Utilize of the best available data to help identify growing, in-demand, and shrinking occupations</p>
Strategy	<p>Utilize of the best available data to help identify growing, in-demand, and shrinking occupations</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued increases in newsletter subscriber numbers • Labor Market Press Releases, Presentations at community events, Podcasts • Sharing Labor Market information at our local middle schools and high schools with students and teachers through our Education Outreach Program. • We are sharing the labor market release on our social media through scheduled posts from our digital calendar. We present the latest labor market information at our monthly REDI meeting. • Labor Market Press release, summary reports on LMI page of website and We are sharing the labor market release on our social media through scheduled posts from our digital calendar. <p>Short Term Goals</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will ensure a direct link to the labor market and targeted occupation information is placed on the home page of the setworks website. • Board will conduct technical assistance meetings with workforce center staff twice a year on labor market information, targeted occupations and services. • Board will increase participation with local stakeholders and offer to present labor market information.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Develop more resources for job-seekers and employers that focus on soft skills</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Soft Skills blog on our website • Creation of videos addressing soft skills • Workshops for teachers and students, • Podcasts episodes centered around the topic • We also offer free online soft skills courses through our Skill Up portal through Metrix learning. • Soft skills were emphasized by employers during our Teacher Externship Program. • Soft skills was a continuous theme brought up by employers during our business forums. The forums helped to develop strategies to address soft skills and feedback on existing efforts. • Education outreach program has offered soft skills workshops to high school teachers. These services can be offered to students as well. <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will collaborate with the contractor for social media to include a focus on soft skills awareness on the social media calendar. • Board will explore the reintegration of the work readiness academy with workforce center staff and Region 5 Education Service Center. • Board will collaborate with the workforce center staff and Region 5 Education Service Center on school counselor and administrator materials to increase communication for out of school youth. • Board will increase collaboration with Junior Achievement for career presentations at area schools.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Expand the use of technology to reach more employers and job-seekers</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Forums • Visiting and meeting with local colleges to learn more about programs and how we can better partner with them on internships and externships • Working with local unions to train and increase the number of apprentices through our apprenticeship grant

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are also on several advisory committees for the local colleges • Lamar University, our local four-year university, has participated in our Teacher Externship program and our Youth Career Expo • Planning Target Occupation Committee meeting with leaders from various institutions to best assess local occupational demands <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will conduct an evaluation of the current website and job seeker tools to improve outreach. • Board will reach out to other workforce boards for best practices with virtual services and job fairs.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Continue to take advantage of opportunities to promote programs through highlighting success stories in the media and other outreach mechanisms</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Forums • Visiting and meeting with local colleges to learn more about programs and how we can better partner with them on internships and externships • Working with local unions to train and increase the number of apprentices through our apprenticeship grant • We are also on several advisory committees for the local colleges • Lamar University, our local four-year university, has participated in our Teacher Externship program and our Youth Career Expo • Planning Target Occupation Committee meeting with leaders from various institutions to best assess local occupational demands <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will conduct an evaluation of the current website and job seeker tools to improve outreach. • Board will reach out to other workforce boards for best practices with virtual services and job fairs.
<p>BOARD GOAL: <u>Increase collaboration and enhance alignment between economic development, education, and other workforce system partners to effectively meet the needs of employers and the communities we serve.</u></p>	
<p>TWC SYSTEM GOALS: Engage in Partnerships and Improve and Integrate Programs</p>	
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Seek out employer and job-seeker input to address gaps in service delivery at the workforce centers and to enhance opportunities for customers for education, training, or career/job placement</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SkillUp Portal (free online tool used to identify and enhance skills)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs Connector (a alternative search engine for job searching on our website to stimulate interest) • Tech Assistance with Workforce Center Staff and Improved Communication with Workforce Center Staff • Student HireAbility Navigator Program continues to promote employment for job seekers with barriers. Hired Workforce Education and Career Specialist to share labor market and career information with local middle schools and high schools. <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will conduct customer service surveys for job seekers and employers. Results will be evaluated in a timely manner. • Upon completion of an evaluation, board staff will facilitate the redesign of the SETWORKS website to increase opportunities for service delivery.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Build coalitions with training providers to ensure they are ready to meet the training needs of the future</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve on advisory councils for pk-12 schools and post-secondary institutions and provide labor market and career information to these councils. • We are also assessing needs in these meetings, providing information to the board and committees, and coordinating with our workforce centers to address these needs and build programming to meet those needs. <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will report significant information from the advisory council meetings to the Planning, Evaluation and Oversight Committee, with regards to new and emerging occupations and initiatives.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Increase presence on advisory councils of training providers and keep the board informed of advisory council meeting results</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve on advisory councils for pk-12 schools and post-secondary institutions and provide labor market and career information to these councils. • We are also assessing needs in these meetings, providing information to the board and committees, and coordinating with our workforce centers to address these needs and build programming to meet those needs. <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will report significant information from the advisory council meetings to the Planning, Evaluation and Oversight Committee, with regards to new and emerging occupations and initiatives.

<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Build better partnerships with school administrators and counselors at the secondary level to promote the youth program and recruit new participants</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Externships • Workforce and Career Education • Youth Career Expo • Region 5 Workshops/Meetings/Mass communication • Advisory Councils • Attend education-related events and share those on our social media • Multiple podcast episodes centered on youth-specific topics • Internships for dual enrollment students <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will collaborate with the workforce center staff and Region 5 Education Service Center on school counselor and administrator materials to increase communication for out of school youth. • Board will continue to seek out opportunities to present youth services to school administrators, counselors and teachers.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Continue to expand the Youth Expo and job fairs targeted at youth</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchased event planning program called Planning Pod to help us better organize registration for employers • Expanding sponsorship opportunities and outreaching to increase the number of participating employers • Targeted outreach to businesses and industries not represented at the Expo • Promotion of the event through social media and direct contact with all exhibitors <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career and Education Outreach Specialist will continue to seek out opportunities to present youth services to school administrators, counselors and teachers.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Improving the coordination of services with vocational rehabilitation</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student HireAbility Navigator role strengthened to help improve coordination • Partner with Region 5 Special Education Department and the Texas Transition Network • Outreach coordination of VR programs at various events by Student Hireability Navigator and Workforce Education and Career Specialist • Promoting programming at events, education fairs, workshops, and other community events • Improve coordination with schools to increase student participation

	<p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will explore developing career pathways for the networks website. • Board will include vocational rehabilitation information in all presentations to schools and community. • Student Hirability Navigator will continue to build closer relationships with vocational rehabilitation counselors. • Student Hirability Navigator will assist with creating regional workshops for vocational rehabilitation. Ex. Vocational Rehabilitation 101
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Make the program elements for the youth program as “work-like” as possible to help build soft skills, industry knowledge, and financial literacy</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued Paid Work Experience program through the workforce centers engage hundreds of youth annually • Coordinate with Adult Education program to give participants opportunities to skill up • Launched Workforce and Career Education programs • Purchased VR headsets • Hands-on exhibits at Youth Expo giving participants a chance to explore careers • Launched the SkillUp portal through Metrix Learning <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will explore partnerships that can assist with career and education outreach program.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Provide pathways for reintegration</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving coordination with adult education to reach more out school youth • Expanded out-of-school youth staff and outreach (Boy’s Haven and Girl’s Haven) <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will continue to seek out opportunities to present youth services to and build relationships with school administrators, counselors and teachers.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Providing services to the youth that fall between the gaps. Out of school youth, foster youth that age out of the system</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving coordination with adult education to reach more out school youth • Expanded out-of-school youth staff and outreach (Boy’s Haven and Girl’s Haven)

	<p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will continue to seek out opportunities to present youth services to and build relationships with school administrators, counselors and teachers.
Strategy	<p>Continue to expand outreach to veterans and their spouses through increased participation in the annual Red, White & You Hiring Event</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We promote the event through our podcast in partnership with Texas Veterans Commission • Social media outreach related to the events • Business services presentations • Promote the event at various meetings such as Golden Triangle Industrial Group <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will make every effort to return to in-person events. • Board will continues to outreach to stakeholders for the Hiring Red, White and You event.
<p>BOARD GOAL: <u>Meet or exceed negotiated workforce performance goals for all programs to maximize community impact and identify areas of opportunity.</u></p>	
<p>TWC GOAL: Improve and Integrate Programs</p>	
Strategy	<p>Conduct internal and external monitoring of WIOA programs to identify continuous improvement opportunities</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are continuously monitoring our Workforce Center Operator to make sure they are meeting performance goals • Our FY22 has been a challenging year as we overcome the effects of COVID. We're hoping that the impact of COVID will dissipate by FY23, and we will be meeting all our measures • Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) policy was updated to improve transparency and efficiency in approvals <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board management staff will continue to hold meetings with workforce center staff leaders. • Board will provide technical assistance to workforce center staff on programs and services.
Strategy	<p>Have the Planning, Oversight, and Evaluation Committee regularly review WIOA performance during the Program Year</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee has been very active in reviewing the WIOA performance. • The committee meets 6-8 times a year. • We report the MPR at each board meeting, so the entire board is aware of where we stand on performance. We also update them on monitoring findings. <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will communicate efforts made to assist workforce center contractors to the Planning, Evaluation and Oversight Committee for feedback.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Review of existing committee structures of the board to improve efficiencies and increase participation</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has not been addressed yet but in FY22 have had good participation in the committees. <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will evaluate committee structures within the next 2 years.
<p>BOARD GOAL: <u>Ensure all existing financial resources are utilized effectively while actively pursuing additional funding and partnership opportunities that will improve the development, implementation, and delivery of workforce services.</u></p>	
<p>TWC SYSTEM GOAL: Align System Elements</p>	
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Continue to pursue federal discretionary grants and identify grant and funding opportunities at an accelerated rate to allow for the most time possible to develop proposals</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reapplied and received 2 years of funding for Texas Talent Connection Grant for externships and internships • Received the Texas Industry Partnership Grant to coordinate with Region 5 and received 2nd year of funding • Received an apprenticeship grant to expand pipefitter, plumbing, and electrician apprenticeships in area (through April of 2023) • CARES Act funding for child care to expand child care provider base • Received \$37,000 in sponsorships for the Youth Career Expo, which accounted for approximately 1/3 of the budget for the event. This included a grant from Entergy Texas which we were awarded. • Board shifted the career expo funding campaign calendar to begin earlier in the year. The goal was to ensure sponsors had adequate time to organize their donations. <p>Short Term Goals</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will continue to seek funding opportunities to assist with strategic plans and goals.
Strategy	<p>Build more relationships with foundations locally and nationally in pursuit of additional funding opportunities</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members participating in Podcasts to provide industry knowledge and discussing services and events • Expansion of externship sites • Expanding the number of Exhibitors at Career Expo • Board Members participated in industry-specific business forums providing input related to industry needs • Increasing the number of Board members volunteering for the Youth Expo, events, and participating in internships. This helps to understand Board member goals and provide local wisdom for the data needed for grant development <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will participate in local efforts for job seekers entering targeted occupations.
Strategy	<p>Board members share their occupational and industry knowledge to help develop and promote programs, including with potential funding opportunities</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members participating in Podcasts to provide industry knowledge and discussing services and events • Expansion of externship sites • Expanding the number of careers demonstrated at Youth Career Expo • Board Members participated in industry-specific business forums providing input related to industry needs • Increasing the number of Board members volunteering for the Youth Expo, events, and participating in internships. This helps to understand Board member goals and provide local wisdom for the data needed for grant development <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will participate in local efforts for job seekers entering targeted occupations.
Strategy	<p>Work closely with board members and other employers/partners to better identify their needs to create more realistic grant proposals</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members participating in Podcasts to provide industry knowledge and discussing services and events • Expansion of externship sites

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the number of Exhibitors at Career Expo • Board Members participated in industry-specific business forums providing input related to industry needs • Increasing the number of Board members volunteering for the Youth Expo, events, and participating in internships. This helps to understand Board member goals and provide local wisdom for the data needed for grant development <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board will participate in local efforts for job seekers entering targeted occupations. • Board will continue to pursue additional funding to align with identified needs of workforce partners.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Strengthen relationships and collaboration with key stakeholders and partners to leverage resources to benefit our customers</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded externships to include 60 teachers and 17 business host sites • Scheduled college partner meetings • We are members of several organizations including the Golden Triangle Industrial Group, Golden Triangle Business Roundtable, REDI, and several chambers of commerce.
<p>Strategy</p>	<p>Board members will be active in reviewing the usage of funding and providing input/suggestions for areas of improvement</p> <p>Actions Taken/Items Completed</p> <p>Short Term Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program updates are reported regularly to both appropriate committee's and full board. • Funding and expenditure information is reported regularly to the Finance committee and full board.

C. High-Performing Board

(WIOA §108(b)(18); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(17))

Boards must include a description of the actions the Board will take toward becoming or remaining, a high-performing Board, consistent with the factors developed by the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC).

BOARD RESPONSE:

The Board values high quality in its work and is committed to improving its processes and strategies for serving its customers and for providing high-quality customer service.

Through the procurement process for its contractors, the Board seeks management systems that are familiar with workforce service delivery and performance, excel in staff development and retention, committed to continuous quality improvement to ensure customer satisfaction, and committed to high performance in a cost-efficient manner.

Contractors are required to participate in monthly work sessions to discuss issues and/or concerns by either party.

Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted to provide feedback to determine satisfaction and identify areas needing improvement.

The Board staff develops monitoring plans and annual risk assessments to ensure contractors are monitored regularly.

Board performance measures are monitored by the Quality Assurance Director, on a monthly basis. Performance outcomes are reported to the Committees/Board at each meeting. In case of performance measures not being met by a particular program, the Board Executive Director and Quality Assurance Director will meet with the Managing staff of the Workforce Contractor to review the performance deficit and implement strategies to increase performance in the affected area. Repeated performance failure will require written corrective action plans and possible disciplinary action from the Board.

The Board strives to improve and expand the virtual service menu to enable greater flexibility and availability to our community and customers through our website and social media.

Also, the Board will consider additional funding opportunities that become available through the Texas Workforce Commission that would enhance our service to our community.

Our Board members are afforded opportunities to attend the Texas Workforce Commission Annual Conference, and the National Association of Workforce Board Annual Conference. In addition, Board members are encouraged to attend the local training such as Strategic Planning and Implementation training planned for later this year. Additionally, Board meetings include learning opportunities about Board responsibilities and community impact.

Through partnerships and innovative methods, the Board will provide access to services for all customer groups, including employers, veterans, youth, and individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, job seekers, foster youth, workers, and childcare needs that parents need to work.

The Board is moving forward to encourage Center staff in becoming certified, so they are keenly aware as to how their particular work function supports and contributes to the overall vision of the Board, as well as within the American Job Center network.

Succession and continuity planning to include 1) encourage training and certifications for all staff for continuous improvement and 2) Management development for leadership opportunities.

Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(A); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(1))

Boards must include a regional analysis of the following:

- The economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.
- The employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.

BOARD RESPONSE:

Based on the 2019 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, our three-county (3) area of Southeast Texas had an estimated population of 392,663 an increase of 3,814 over the 2010 data. The largest county in our area is Jefferson County with an estimated population of 251,665 followed by Orange County, 83,396 and finally Hardin County with a population of 57,602. Two of the three counties within the region had population growth estimates in 2019 as compared to the 2010 Census. Hardin County grew by an estimated 5.4%, while Orange County's estimated growth rate was 1.9%. The only county showing a negative growth rate during this period was Jefferson County with an estimated - 0.3% change.

Economic conditions for the WDA were adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters, hurricanes Delta and Laura, which caused evacuations and business closures throughout the area. Many of the significant industrial and marine expansions, which were estimated at \$10 billion dollars, have been postponed. The postponement has also negatively affected employment projections and contributed to the increase in unemployment in Southeast Texas. The unemployment rate, June 2020, rose to 12.8 percent, more than 7 percent higher than the same time period in 2019. Additionally, Southeast Texas is home to the largest oil and gas refinery in North American. The world-wide decline in fuel prices exacerbated the employment outlook as the chemical manufacturing refiners and affiliated industries laid off workers due to a decline in product demand.

Despite the recent downturn in the oil and gas prices in combination with the current pandemic, plant managers and operators remain committed to future recovery and implementation of the planned expansions and construction. As the Southeast Texas economy recovers, construction and manufacturing employment opportunities are also on the increase. The Education and Healthcare industry, which struggled with pandemic-related downturns due to local and federal restrictions, is still the second largest industry sector in Southeast Texas, with 22.9 percent of employment in the area. The Trade,

Transportation, and Utilities industry rounds out the top three employment by industry sectors with 21.0 percent.

Occupations in the following industry sectors in Southeast Texas are projected as emerging/in-demand and reflect expanded employment opportunities for job seekers:

- Individuals and family services
- Outpatient care centers
- Management and technical consulting services
- Residential building construction
- Ship and boat building
- Utility system construction
- Electronic and appliance stores
- Offices of health practitioners
- Commercial machinery repair and maintenance

The workforce board remains committed to providing opportunities for job seekers to gain and improve skills, secure industry-recognized credentials, through virtual and in-class hybrid courses, on-the-job-training and apprenticeships, to meet business manpower needs.

As of August 2022, the unemployment rate for Southeast Texas dropped to 7.0 percent. This is a significant decline from the rate reported in June of 2020 during the pandemic. Based on 1st quarter 2022 data, the Education and Healthcare industry is now the largest industry sector in Southeast Texas with 23.22 percent of employment in the area. The Trade, Transportation, and Utilities industry takes second place with 20.5 percent. Manufacturing rounds out the top three employment by industry sectors with 13.0 percent.

IN-DEMAND INDUSTRIES

(Revised as of Fall 2022)

NAICS Code	NAICS Description	Annual Average Employment 2020	Annual Average Employment 2030	Number Change 2020 - 2030	Percent Growth 2020-2030	Does Industry Relate to a Governor's Industry Cluster? (yes or no)
CONSTRUCTION						
2362	Nonresidential Building Construction	4,299	4,774	475	11.0%	no
2371	Utility System Construction	4,559	5,251	692	15.2%	yes
2389	Other Specialty Trade Contractors	1,316	1,424	108	8.2%	no
MANUFACTURING, INCLUDING PETROCHEMICAL						
3121	Beverage Manufacturing	71	79	8	11.3%	yes
3241	Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	4,810	5,206	396	8.2%	yes
3251	Basic Chemical Manufacturing	5,862	7,078	1,216	20.7%	yes
3252	Resin, Synthetic Rubber, and Artificial Synthetic Fibers and Filaments Manufacturing	5,862	7,078	1,216	20.7%	yes
3323	Architectural and Structural Metals Manufacturing	1,449	1,779	330	22.8%	yes
3335	Metalworking Machinery Manufacturing	317	407	90	28.4%	yes
TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING						
4855	Charter Bus Industry	87	108	21	24.1%	no
4869	Other Pipeline Transportation	70	73	3	4.3%	yes
4883	Support Activities for Water Transportation	601	637	36	6.0%	no
4884	Support Activities for Road Transportation	200	245	45	22.5%	no
4921	Couriers and Express Delivery Services	657	675	18	2.7%	no
INFORMATION, PROFESSIONAL, AND BUSINESS SERVICES						
5191	Other Information Services	173	196	23	13.3%	yes
5415	Computer Systems Design and Related Services	658	882	224	34.0%	yes
5416	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	759	1,009	250	32.9%	yes

NAICS Code	NAICS Description	Annual Average Employment 2020	Annual Average Employment 2030	Number Change 2020 - 2030	Percent Growth 2020-2030	Does Industry Relate to a Governor's Industry Cluster? (yes or no)
5419	Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	539	656	117	21.7%	yes
5611	Office Administrative Services	252	212	-40	-15.9%	yes
5622	Waste Treatment and Disposal	528	611	83	15.7%	no
5629	Remediation and Other Waste Management Services	330	343	13	3.9%	no
EDUCATION						
6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools	10,830	11,006	176	1.6%	no
6116	Other Schools and Instruction	247	305	58	23.5%	no
6117	Educational Support Services	67	72	5	7.5%	no
HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE						
6211	Offices of Physicians	2,832	2,884	52	1.8%	yes
6213	Offices of Other Health Practitioners	701	843	142	20.3%	yes
6214	Outpatient Care Centers	868	1,192	324	37.3%	yes
6219	Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	393	524	131	33.3%	yes
6221	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	4,156	4,096	-60	-1.4%	yes
6233	Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	317	340	23	7.3%	yes
6241	Individual and Family Services	551	722	171	31.0%	no
6242	Community Food and Housing, and Emergency and Other Relief Services	188	283	95	50.5%	no
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY						
7115	Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers	158	176	18	11.4%	yes
7224	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)	12,754	15,378	2,624	20.6%	no
7225	Restaurants and Other Eating Places	12,182	14,820	2,638	21.7%	no
OTHER SERVICES						
8133	Social Advocacy Organizations	81	89	8	9.9%	no

IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

(Revised as of Fall 2022)

SOC	Occupation	Annual Average Employment 2020	Annual Average Employment 2030	Number Change 2020–2030	Percent Change 2020–2030	Annual Change in Employment (Growth)
MANAGEMENT OCCUPATIONS						
11-3012	Administrative Services Managers	344	382	38	11.0%	4
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	135	165	30	22.2%	3
11-9032	Education Administrators, Kindergarten through Secondary	405	410	5	1.2%	0
11-9051	Food Service Managers	302	360	58	19.2%	6
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	363	474	111	30.6%	11
11-9151	Social and Community Service Managers	113	130	17	15.0%	2
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	2,765	3,236	471	17.0%	47
BUSINESS & FINANCIAL OCCUPATIONS						
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	405	456	51	12.6%	5
13-1081	Logisticians	208	301	93	44.7%	9
13-1151	Training and Development Specialists	298	343	45	15.1%	4
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	176	226	50	28.4%	5
COMPUTER & MATHEMATICAL OCCUPATIONS						
15-1252	Software Developers	314	423	109	34.7%	11
COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICE OCCUPATIONS						
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	166	187	21	12.7%	2
EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTION AND LIBRARY OCCUPATIONS						
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1,642	1,682	40	2.4%	4
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	1,017	1,039	22	2.2%	2

SOC	Occupation	Annual Average Employment 2020	Annual Average Employment 2030	Number Change 2020–2030	Percent Change 2020–2030	Annual Change in Employment (Growth)
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	1,203	1,233	30	2.5%	3
25-3031	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	928	999	71	7.7%	7
25-3041	Tutors	133	154	21	15.8%	22
25-3099	Teachers and Instructors, All Other	95	103	8	8.4%	7
HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS AND TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS						
29-1071	Physician Assistants	53	63	10	18.9%	1
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	177	241	64	36.2%	6
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	292	420	128	43.8%	13
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	128	162	34	26.6%	3
29-2099	Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	134	158	24	17.9%	24
HEALTHCARE SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS						
31-1122	Personal Care Aides	4,350	5,026	676	15.5%	68
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	99	128	29	29.3%	29
31-9011	Massage Therapists	106	131	25	23.6%	25
31-9092	Medical Assistants	692	787	95	13.7%	10
31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	68	82	14	20.6%	13
31-9097	Phlebotomists	239	299	60	25.1%	6
PROTECTIVE SERVICE OCCUPATIONS						
33-2011	Firefighters	403	436	33	8.2%	3
33-9091	Crossing Guards and Flaggers	101	100	-1	-1.0%	-1
33-9099	Protective Service Workers, All Other	60	64	4	6.7%	4
FOOD PREPARATION AND SERVING RELATED OCCUPATIONS						
35-1011	Chefs and Head Cooks	73	82	9	12.3%	1
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,222	1,458	236	19.3%	24
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	1,563	2,323	760	48.6%	76

SOC	Occupation	Annual Average Employment 2020	Annual Average Employment 2030	Number Change 2020–2030	Percent Change 2020–2030	Annual Change in Employment (Growth)
35-3011	Bartenders	450	631	181	40.2%	181
35-9031	Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	386	525	139	36.0%	139
35-9099	Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers, All Other	69	88	19	27.5%	19
BUILDING AND GROUNDS CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE OCCUPATIONS						
37-2021	Pest Control Workers	121	151	30	24.8%	3
PERSONAL CARE AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS						
39-1022	First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers	83	106	23	27.7%	23
39-5092	Manicurists and Pedicurists	110	141	31	28.2%	30
39-9031	Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	199	259	60	30.2%	60
OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS						
43-6013	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	769	825	56	7.3%	6
PRODUCTION OCCUPATIONS						
51-3011	Bakers	194	216	22	11.3%	22
TRANSPORTATION AND MATERIAL MOVING OCCUPATIONS						
53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	665	832	167	25.1%	17
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	1,361	1,705	344	25.3%	34
53-3051	Bus Drivers, School	359	397	38	10.6%	38
53-3053	Shuttle Drivers and Chauffeurs	109	134	25	22.9%	26
53-7081	Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors	106	113	7	6.6%	1

TARGET OCCUPATIONS

(Revised as of Fall 2022)

SOC	Occupation	Current Employment	Mean Annual Wages	Annual Percent Change (2022-2027)	Typical Entry Level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training
BUSINESS & FINANCIAL OCCUPATIONS							
13-1081	Logisticians	164	92,900	1.7%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
COMPUTER & MATHEMATICAL OCCUPATIONS							
15-1252	Software Developers	678	97,600	0.8%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
15-1253	Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	103	84,200	0.9%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
15-1255	Web and Digital Interface Designers	40	78,500	0.1%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
LIFE, PHYSICAL, & SOCIAL SCIENCE OCCUPATIONS							
19-5012	Occupational Health and Safety Technicians	56	52,700	-0.2%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTION & LIBRARY OCCUPATIONS							
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	499	34,300	1.2%	Associate's degree	None	None
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1,817	59,000	0.3%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	852	55,900	0.3%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	1,358	62,400	0.3%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
25-2052	Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School	225	57,400	0.3%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
25-2057	Special Education Teachers, Middle School	107	57,500	0.3%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
25-2058	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	168	57,600	0.3%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
ARTS, DESIGN, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS & MEDIA OCCUPATIONS (INCLUDING COMMUNICATIONS)							
27-3092	Court Reporters and Simultaneous Captioners	14	73,600	-0.8%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Short-term on-the-job training
HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS & TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS							
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	113	58,100	1.3%	Associate's degree	None	None

SOC	Occupation	Current Employment	Mean Annual Wages	Annual Percent Change (2022-2027)	Typical Entry Level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2,580	74,200	0.2%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
29-2011	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	119	51,900	0.1%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
29-2012	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	114	51,900	0.1%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
29-2031	Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	46	53,800	0.0%	Associate's degree	None	None
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	69	60,800	0.8%	Associate's degree	None	None
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	181	57,100	0.0%	Associate's degree	None	None
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technicians	191	31,700	0.4%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	521	35,700	-0.6%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	107	50,800	0.0%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	894	47,500	0.3%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None
29-2099	Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	155	39,700	0.3%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None
HEALTHCARE SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS							
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	101	71,000	2.7%	Associate's degree	None	None
31-9091	Dental Assistants	339	38,700	0.3%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None
31-9092	Medical Assistants	814	32,300	0.9%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None
31-9097	Phlebotomists	102	34,700	1.2%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None
PROTECTIVE SERVICE OCCUPATIONS							
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	1,028	48,000	-1.5%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
33-3051	Police and Sheriffs Patrol Officers	945	68,500	-0.1%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
OFFICE & ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS							

SOC	Occupation	Current Employment	Mean Annual Wages	Annual Percent Change (2022-2027)	Typical Entry Level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training
43-6013	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	699	33,000	0.2%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
CONSTRUCTION & EXTRACTION OCCUPATIONS							
47-2031	Carpenters	1,018	52,200	-0.8%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship
47-2111	Electricians	1,058	57,600	0.0%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	760	60,900	-0.3%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship
INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE & REPAIR OCCUPATIONS							
49-2094	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment	114	77,400	-0.3%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Long-term on-the-job training
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	321	47,900	0.0%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	347	53,400	0.3%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	457	48,400	-0.2%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Long-term on-the-job training
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	1,003	64,100	1.4%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training
49-9043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	89	52,100	0.3%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training
49-9044	Millwrights	87	60,500	0.0%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	132	67,500	-1.6%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training
PRODUCTION OCCUPATIONS							
51-2041	Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	167	43,300	-2.2%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
51-4041	Machinists	468	58,800	-0.1%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1,091	57,300	-0.2%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training

SOC	Occupation	Current Employment	Mean Annual Wages	Annual Percent Change (2022-2027)	Typical Entry Level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training
51-8091	Chemical Plant and System Operators	636	86,500	-1.0%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
51-8093	Petroleum Pump System Operators, Refinery Operators, and Gaugers	768	78,500	-0.4%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
51-9011	Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	953	71,000	-1.5%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
TRANSPORTATION & MATERIAL MOVING OCCUPATIONS							
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,223	47,300	-0.2%	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Short-term on-the-job training
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	913	38,900	0.0%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Short-term on-the-job training
53-3051	Bus Drivers, School	384	31,500	0.4%	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Short-term on-the-job training
53-5011	Sailors and Marine Oilers	65	50,400	-0.2%	No formal educational credential	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
53-7021	Crane and Tower Operators	128	67,000	-0.4%	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years	Moderate-term on-the-job training

B. Knowledge and Skills Analysis

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(B); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(2))

Boards must include an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs for in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.

BOARD RESPONSE:

As part of the strategic planning process for this local plan, the Board attempted to reenergize its sector partnership efforts by engaging in specialized focus groups among specific sectors. The Board brought in an outside facilitator to help with these meetings, and conducted meetings with Education, Petrochemical, and Healthcare employer groups. The Board has established a goal to continue to engage employers from targeted sectors throughout the duration of this plan to create better partnerships across industry, education, workforce, and economic development.

The Board, realizing the necessity to connect to businesses, job-seekers, training providers, and local communities throughout the pandemic, developed new, innovative service delivery methods, incorporating virtual access to all workforce offerings. Employers can post employment opportunities, 24/7, to WorkInTexas.com, at no-cost, participate in virtual job fairs and customized hiring events with workforce staff assistance. Job seekers can attend required orientations and workshops, participate in on-line education enrichment courses, and work with career specialists, in a virtual, one-to-one environment. Labor Market and Career Information is available on the Board's web-site in addition to specific, local employment data, including wages, employment trends, and job training and education requirements.

While historically the three largest industries in our area have consisted of the construction industry, the health services industry and the manufacturing industry, our area has seen the emergence of the food service, and the educational sectors. The growth of the accommodation and food services is primarily a result of industry strength and expansions, as well as the disasters such as hurricanes, that bring workers from outside our area.

Sector	2018 Average	2028 Projections	Number Change	Percent Change
Manufacturing	21,737	22,310	573	2.6

Health Care and Social Assistance	19,884	20,965	1,081	5.4
Construction	18,786	20,617	1,831	9.7
Accommodation and Food Services	15,286	16,448	1,162	7.6
Educational Services	13,765	13,946	181	1.3

The strong projected growth rates of Construction (9.7%), Accommodation and Food Service (7.6%), and Health Care and Social Assistance (5.4%) should lead to many opportunities to better connect job-seekers with employers hiring in these fields. However, these employment connections will come with challenges. As healthcare occupations continue to grow at an accelerated rate, so does the need to train high quality practitioners quickly and effectively. Educational providers are challenged to meet the demands of the major employers of healthcare practitioners who need specialized practitioners. There is a shortage of clinical locations which limits training opportunities. The 2020 pandemic has added to that challenge, but in the long run may prove to create more awareness of healthcare occupations and perhaps increase the number of students entering training programs in this sector.

The economic challenges posed by oil prices, disasters and the 2020 pandemic, has also left questions about the projected growth for jobs in the construction field, as many projects slowed down or came to a standstill. The long-term effects on the Accommodation and Food Services sector have yet to be fully realized, but economic development specialists in our area remain optimistic that we will continue to see the projected growth in due time.

During the strategic planning process, the Board held informational listening sessions with business leaders. Specific sessions were held that focused on the issues facing the petrochemical businesses, health care occupations, and in addressing the connections with education training providers. A more generalized listening business and economic development sessions were also held. As these business leaders came together to help orient the Board on the priorities for this plan, several things were noted:

- The petrochemical industry feeds into so many more industry sectors. When things are going well, it can foster immense and rapid growth in the construction, retail, hospitality, and retail, and hospitality industries. Similarly, when there is a downturn in petrochemical, these connected industries suffer.
- Sufficient workforce housing continues to be an issue in certain areas we serve, especially when the petrochemical industry is booming.

- The ports are playing a bigger role and offer great opportunities to connect individuals with high paying careers. These positions are becoming more openly available for the general public and there are great opportunities to create more awareness of these jobs.
- The demand for healthcare workers continues to skyrocket upward. Training providers are seeing a higher demand in students interested in these occupations, but hospitals and other employers of healthcare workers are struggling to find enough trained workers.
- The Board continues to connect well with education and training providers within the communities we serve. The leadership at public school districts is actively engaged in conversations about workforce development and has created many new programs to provide career learning opportunities for middle and high school students.
- The two- and four-year colleges in our service area are also actively engaged in the conversations about workforce development. The Board has drawn upon the expertise of leaders from higher education to best address the training needs of the individuals it serves.

Finding candidates that can pass background checks is another challenge facing many of our major sectors. Many employers in the construction, healthcare, and manufacturing sectors have very strict regulations relating to criminal offenses, and frequently drug test their employees. A concern consistently raised by many in the construction and manufacturing industries, especially among petrochemical companies, is that many potential employees are unable to pass mandatory drug tests, or other background screening to make it past the initial interview.

Close partnerships with educational institutions are a necessity for the Board to meet the high skill demands of many growing occupations. The Board has established goals related to being more active on educational advisory councils and seeking out better partnerships with all levels of education. As healthcare and education occupations continue to grow, the demand for highly skilled and highly educated workers grows as well.

Most jobs in identified in-demand industries are heavily skills based. Important skills in the construction and manufacturing industries include a high school diploma or equivalent (GED), ability to read, write and understand English, basic math comprehension, basic computer skills, ability to plan work independently, work 12-hour rotating shifts often in outside conditions. Refineries in our area often require two to three years of experience in addition to a certificate or degree (Associates) to be considered for employment.

Employers in industry and manufacturing also consider having a commercial drivers' license (CDL), National Center of Construction Education and Research (NCCER) or National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO) credentials, and being English/Spanish bilingual, an advantage when applying for in-demand occupations. Skills in the health services industry include strong soft skills,

such as providing effective and sympathetic customer service to patients, and job-specific medical licenses and certifications including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and basic life support (BLS). As mentioned, specialization among healthcare practitioners is becoming more and more important and valuable. This is adding to a difficult dynamic where individuals gaining an early specialization in their career can leverage that specialization for a better job offer elsewhere.

Employment by Industry -Updated for the 2020-2030 time frame

Sector	2020 Average	2030 Projections	Number Change	Percent Change
Education and Health Services	32,811	35,567	2,756	8.4
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	30,373	34,306	3,933	12.9
Manufacturing	20,036	22,980	2,944	14.7
Construction	16,039	18,812	2,773	17.3
Leisure and Hospitality	14,485	17,379	2,894	20.0

Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Labor Market Information, Employment By Industry

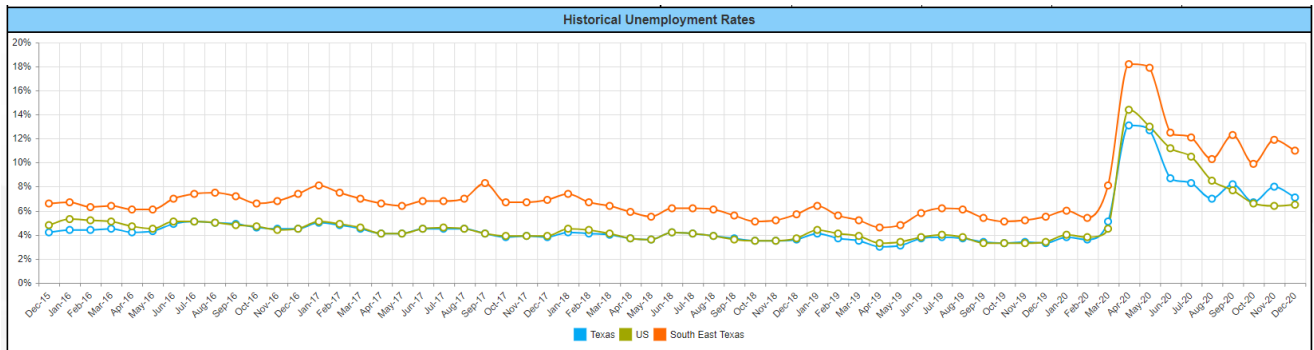
C. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(C); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(3))

Boards must include an analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

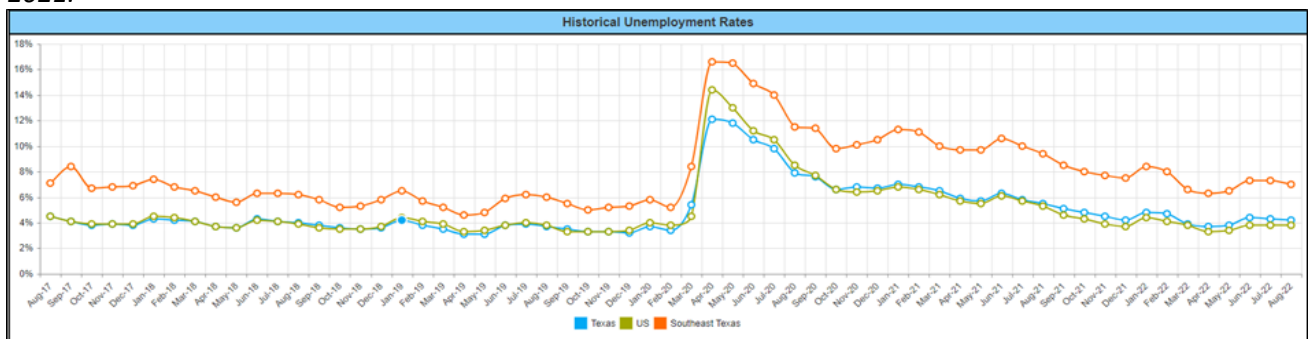
BOARD RESPONSE:

The unemployment rate in our three-county area has historically trended similarly with the fluctuation at the state and national levels. Based upon our Petrochemical industry makeup (downstream operations), our region was significantly impacted by the recent downturn in oil and gas prices. In 2019, unemployment was around five percent, however there are pockets of the WDA that experience structural unemployment issues, due to a mismatch supply and demand. Like many areas that experience structural unemployment issues, a mismatch between the skill set of the local workforce versus the skill set needed exists here in Southeast Texas.



Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market and Career Information

Historical Unemployment Rates as of August 2022 shows a decline from the data reported in December 2021.



Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market and Career Information

Utilizing data from TWC’s UI Claimant Dashboard (as of 2/11/2021), our workforce area has the 12th highest number of current Unemployment Insurance claims among the 28 workforce areas in Texas with 4,121 claimants. The top five industries for claimants from the area were:

1. Oil and gas pipeline construction
2. All other nonresidential trade contractors
3. Limited-service restaurants
4. Industrial building construction
5. Full-service restaurants

Finalized year-end data from 2019 shows county level unemployment rates of 4.6% in Harding, 5.8% in Jefferson, and 5.2% in Orange. However, looking at the month-to-month estimated unemployment rates indicates that between the end of 2019 through present, there has been a significant increase in unemployment rates due to the economic effects of the pandemic. The estimated unemployment rate for the entire workforce development area 11.0% for December 2020, compared to 7.1% in all of Texas, and 6.5% nationwide.

Labor Force in the Local Area				
	Dec-20	Nov-20	Dec-19	Yearly Change
Civilian Labor Force	167200	168384	168870	-1670
Employed	148729	148419	159649	-10920

Unemployed	18471	19965	9221	9250
Unemployment Rate	11	11.9	5.5	5.5

Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market and Career Information

Labor Force in the Local Area				
	Aug -22	Jul-22	Aug-21	Yearly Change
Civilian Labor Force	160801	161080	160401	400
Employed	194479	149250	145250	4229
Unemployed	11322	11830	15151	-3829
Unemployment Rate	7.0%	7.3%	9.4%	-2.4%

Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market and Career Information

Average Weekly Wage (2nd Quarter 2020) for the Local Area					
	Q2 2020	Q1 2020	Q2 2019	Quarterly Change	Yearly Change
WDA	\$1,076	\$1,115	\$1,039	\$-39	\$37
Texas	\$1,156	\$1,231	\$1,101	\$-75	\$55
U.S.	\$1,188	\$1,222	\$1,094	\$-34	\$94

Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market and Career Information

Average Weekly Wage (1st Quarter 2022) for the Local Area					
	Q1 2022	Q4 2021	Q1 2021	Quarterly Change	Yearly Change
WDA	\$1,188	\$1,193	\$1,100	\$-5	\$88
Texas	\$1,369	\$1,375	\$1,259	\$-6	\$110
U.S.	\$1,374	\$1,418	\$1,288	\$-44	\$86

Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market and Career Information

Average weekly wage data in the chart above compares our local workforce area to the rest of Texas and to the United States (as a whole). The chart represents average gross wages for a weekly period of individuals who are employed. This chart helps to provide an indicator of how wages overall compare in our local area to the rest of the state or country. As illustrated, wages are not too far below state or national averages. However, the data also indicates that wages are up slightly (\$37) for the local workforce area in the year-to-year comparison, but down (\$39) in the quarter-to-quarter comparison. In both comparisons, the trend up yearly and the trend down yearly less than those same trends at the state and

national levels. It's hard to make any conclusive statements about the state of our economy from this one-year lookback at average wages, but as we track these over a longer period of time, there may be more noticeable indicators of the economic direction of our local economy.

According to 2019 data from U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, an estimated 13.6% of individuals in Texas live in poverty, including 19.2% of children ages 0-17. For our local area those numbers are slightly higher in most counties with Hardin at 12.1% and 16.2%, Jefferson at 16.9% and 24.4%, and Orange at 12.5% and 18.7%.

According to 2014-2018 estimated data pulled from JobsEQ and based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, our workforce development area has a lower rate of highly educated individuals than compared to Texas as whole or to the nation. Individuals holding a bachelor's degree account for 13.0% of the population in the area compared to 20.0% statewide and 20.8% nationwide. Similarly, for education beyond a bachelor's degree that includes a postgraduate degree, the number for our are 5.0% compared to 10.0% statewide, and 12.1% nationwide. Our area is ahead of the rest of Texas in the area of associate degrees at 9.0% compared to 7.5% in Texas and 9.1% nationwide. The higher percentage of associate degree holders can be attributed to strong connections with community colleges in our three-county area and the historical requirement for an associate degree being a needed steppingstone requirement for entry into many petrochemical and healthcare jobs.

The same data sets indicate that our area has very high percentages of individuals completing some college, but with no degree, as well as individuals completing a high school diploma. For individuals completing some college, the numbers show 25.2% in this category for our area, compared to 22.1% statewide and 21.0% nationwide. Similarly, for individuals with only a high school diploma, our area shows 34.4% of the population in this category compared to 24.7% in Texas and 25.8% nationwide. Our area also has a lower percentage of individuals with no high school diploma (13.5%) as compared to Texas as a whole (15.7%).

Based on the education data captured for our area, the Board will have many opportunities to develop programs that connect with individuals who have completed high school or have taken some college courses, but who have not completed degrees. There is a real opportunity to capitalize on the existing skill sets and educational base of these individuals to develop accelerated educational pathways to success for many of our targeted occupations.

In Texas, 8.2 percent of people are living with a disability. The percentages are higher throughout our three-county region with 9.9 percent in Jefferson County, 13.4 percent in Orange County and 11.8 percent in Hardin County.

The Board, and its contractor as well as other service agencies continue to work together to address barriers thorough evaluation of needs and cross-referrals where appropriate.

Our Services and activities are designed to assist barriers to employment.

The Board uses many resources for serving individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities. Our partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services is critical toward increasing the pool of qualified skilled workers.

In our workforce centers assistive devices to help customers with disabilities access job search resource are available such as;

- Large monitors
- Accessible workstations
- Screen magnifier software
- Screen reader software
- Automatic door openers

The Board makes all reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and equal opportunities to participate in our services, activities, programs, and other benefits.

D. Workforce Development Analysis

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(D); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(4))

Boards must include an analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including education and training.

BOARD RESPONSE:

The Southeast Texas Workforce area has close partnerships with three two-year post-secondary institutions located in Orange and Jefferson Counties with a satellite campus in Hardin County. As indicated in the previous section our area boasts higher than average numbers of individuals completing associate degree program. This due to the successful programs and placement efforts of these two-year post-secondary institutions. Our two-year institutions are primary providers of workforce training and all have programs on the Eligible Training Provider list (ETPL), with many of our targeted and in-demand occupations requiring only a two-year degree or specialized training equivalent to this amount of time.

There are additional training providers that also help support programs from our targeted and in-demand occupational lists, as well as offering programs that have been approved and vetted for the ETPL. The Southeast Texas Workforce Board works collaboratively with Region 5 Education Service Center and local districts' Career and Technology Departments to advise on targeted occupations and seek alignment where possible. We believe that it is important to engage education providers in active dialogue related to the program needs of both businesses and job-seekers. Many of our private sector board members are active members of educational advisory committees of the local colleges, and many play an active role in helping to develop educational supports at the secondary educational level as well.

There are three Early College High School campuses located in our workforce area: Beaumont, Port Arthur and Silsbee. As part of our strategic planning process that was started the end of 2020, the board has engaged secondary and post-secondary educational institutions and organizations in

direct conversations related to improving our ability as a Board and local workforce area to collaborate even better with these organizations. Surveying, active polling questions, and facilitated dialogue were all part of this process to better engage educational institutions. These conversations were a two-way street where we also sought out input to find ways our workforce centers could improve our relationship with these organizations and better support them in their goals of supporting student success. Many of our goals from this strategic plan are education- and community-focused.

An analysis of the training concentration for Southeast Texas indicates when looking at occupations where 75% or more in the occupation have “some college or above”, our area exceeds degree production when compared to national averages in the areas of Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations, Management Occupations, Protective Services Occupations, Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations, and Personal Care and Service Occupations.

Additionally, our area continues to look for opportunities to better support earn-and-learn models, including on-the-job-training, work-based learning, and Registered Apprenticeship programs. Our team at the workforce centers continue to increase their own knowledge bases of these programs by attending conferences and educational opportunities related to these areas and offered by TWC or the U.S. Department of Labor. We educate both businesses and job-seekers on these programs and work diligently to continue to expand access to these models, understanding that many of the individuals we work with need to earn an active wage while completing their education or training requirements.

Part 3: Core Programs

A. Workforce Development System

(WIOA §108(b)(2); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(1))

Boards must include a description of the workforce development system in the workforce area that identifies:

- **the programs that are included in the system; and**
- **how the Board will work with the entities that facilitate core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, that support the strategy identified in the State Plan under WIOA §102(b)(1)(E).**

BOARD RESPONSE:

The Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act (WIOA) authorizes key employment and training programs in the workforce development system to help workers acquire the tools and skills they need to be successful and to connect employers to the skilled workers they need. WIOA further aligns “core” programs to provide coordinated, comprehensive workforce services. The core

programs that are to be provided either in-person or by virtual means at the Workforce Solutions Centers are:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker.
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/CHOICES.
- CHOICES Non-Custodial Program (NCP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP);
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA);
- Rehabilitation Act: that provide services to individuals with disabilities.
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Services: these services are integrated in accordance with the Texas Model.
- Veteran’s Employment Services.

Core programs under direct oversight of the Board include:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA);
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Service (ES);
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefits Information.
- Choices, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T);
- Subsidized child care; and
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA).

Required programs that are not under the direct oversight of the Board, the Board has established memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with:

- Adult Education and Literacy (WIOA, Title II);
- Apprenticeship programs.
- National and Community Services Act Program.
- Non-Certificate Postsecondary Career and Technology Training programs.
- Senior Community Service Employment Program; and,
- HHSC (jointly developed with TWC)
- HHSC Community Partnership Program

Other agencies and services the Board has and may establish additional cooperative relationships to strengthen the regional workforce system include:

- Vocational education.
- Community-based Organizations (CBOs);
- Faith-based Organizations (FBOs); and

- Other appropriate training and employment agencies and services.

In keeping with WIOA, a modified service delivery concept will be followed that continues to include Workforce Solutions Center staff working in functional teams to deliver quality services to workforce center customers. The service delivery concept, “Next Generation”, consists of 5 functional teams including: Employment Solutions, Regional Solutions, Skills Development, Self-Sufficiency, and Employer Solutions teams. These Workforce Solutions Center Teams will continue to share the goal of providing quality services to individuals, employers, and the Southeast Texas community with high performance, accountability, and results. Descriptions for each of the teams are outlined below:

Employment Solutions services are often provided in the resource room and career services area of the workforce center. Staff provides Basic Career Services and assists customers in completing and updating WorkInTexas registrations and providing quality job matches and referrals. Staff also conducts orientations for laid off workers and various job readiness workshops.

- **Regional Solutions** provides access to center services without entering a center. Staff providing regional services are usually working in our call center.
- **Employer Solutions** focuses on recruiting employers and responding to their expectations and requirements regarding filling job vacancies, screening of qualified applicants, and other services.
- **Skills Development** provides opportunities to develop customer skills through eligibility determination, formal assessments, counseling, occupational skills training referrals and scholarships. Customers served in training are usually WIOA eligible.
- **Self Sufficiency** staff assists customers in reducing dependency on public assistance through meaningful opportunities for employment. Customers are usually recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and/or Noncustodial Parents (NCP) of those customers receiving TANF or other parents paying child support.

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006:

The Board has ongoing relationships with the local community colleges throughout the Southeast Texas region. We will continue to collaborate to ensure the needs of our customers, both students and employers, are met. Currently we utilize the community colleges as a primary referral source for both academic and technical training, jointly develop and hosts job fairs and career awareness events, assist with outreach and recruitment efforts for special populations. Through meetings, serving on advisory boards, and other methods, we will continue to align our service delivery with community colleges ensuring the benefit of our customers. We will continue to support through MOUs and the eligible training provider system, academic, career, and technical skills of secondary education customers and postsecondary education customers who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs.

The service delivery strategies will continue to provide services for Employers, Job Seekers, and Youth, but we will transition to a greater focus on more extensive services for our youth customers, including more intensive case management and counseling as we begin to initiate career pathway activities.

B. Core Programs—Expand Access, Facilitate Development, and Improve Access

(WIOA §108(b)(3); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(2))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:

- **expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.**
- **facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, including specific career pathways occupations that the Board currently includes on its Target Occupations List, and career pathways occupations that the Board is planning to develop; and**
- **improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).**

Boards must include a description of the Board’s Plan for working with at least one of the Governor’s Industry clusters.

BOARD RESPONSE:

The challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic has afforded the Board opportunities to enhance service delivery system. Expanding access to our training services and incorporating alternative service delivery strategies to continue our quest of developing a skilled workforce are critical in meeting the demands both employers and job seekers.

Expanded access to services – the Board ensures every program customer’s ability to access our services in person, via internet, or phone. Virtual platforms are used to assist with program orientations, eligibility, job fairs, and access to training programs. On-going relationships with current partners/programs as well as new relationships with assist with meeting needs of our customers. These collaborative efforts include sharing costs for training, support services, and other provisions of services as deemed appropriate.

Improve access to activities leading credentials – during the orientations and one on one interviews, customers are provided opportunities to access training programs as well as access via chats, and online services. Outreach and recruitment for training occurs through partners, virtual and in person events, at one-on-one appointments and orientations. We will continue to develop and identify additional services to improve customer access for credentials.

The Board will continue work with core program entities by:

- Continue to partner with the local colleges, University, and training providers to improve certificates, certifications, and portable and stackable credentials.
- Continue to develop partnerships with employers and training providers to develop specific career pathways.
- Execution of Memorandums of Understanding with core program entities and other community partners to enhance the provision of employer and job seeker services.
- Leverage funds by co-enrolling individuals that are appropriate for both youth, and adult programs to support training and career pathways.
- Continue collaborating with Community/Partnering Agencies to provide supportive services to eligible individuals with barriers to employment.
- The Workforce Solutions Center providers regularly provide exposure for youth to the various training programs and career pathways working with partner agencies like the AEL, Community in School, ISD's etc. Postsecondary exposure is paired with work-based learning opportunities such as job shadowing, paid or unpaid work experience, workplace tours, and internships to help the youth determine their training interest. Supportive services such as transportation assistance to and from education, training, and employment activities for eligible individuals with barriers to employment are provided.

The Board established two (2) new American Welding Society certified testing centers in our workforce area. Previously candidates had to travel nearly 100 miles to the nearest certified testing facility in Baytown, Texas.

Trucking is a high-demand industry in our Board area and offers competitive wages. Lamar State College Port Arthur (LSCPA) is now the only Texas site between the Louisiana state line and Houston where student drivers can receive classroom and on-the-road instruction, plus both the "knowledge" and "skills" testing needed to become state and federally licensed truck drivers. Previously, once students completed the training, they had to wait for available testing opportunities from the Texas Department of Safety, which was the only test site in our area.

Through a partnership with Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT), SETX Hispanic Women's Network and the Workforce Board, a successful English and Spanish version Women's Entrepreneurship Boot Camp was created for new or existing businesses. We will utilize this partnership for future projects.

We will continue our efforts with our postsecondary partners to improve access to activities leading to recognized credentials.

The Southeast Texas workforce development board has identified Target Industries, several in-line with the Governor's industry clusters utility system construction, petroleum and coal products manufacturing, basic chemical manufacturing, resin, rubber, and artificial fibers manufacturing. To support the manpower demands of these industries, the Board has actively secured or renewed training providers that provide industry-recognized instruction and credentials to support these industries. The Board also utilized input and surveys from Focus Groups for industries within the Governor's industry clusters. Job seekers interested in occupations in the targeted industries are assessed by workforce center staff and provided

career pathway options. Virtual Job Fairs, some specific to identified industries, are offered each week through the workforce centers to engage job seekers and employers. The Board's virtual Youth Career Expo in 2021 offered students the opportunity to experience careers in the industry clusters, find out about educational requirements and expected wages. In spite of COVID-19 students could interact with employers, through chats, to gather more info on career and employment opportunities. Board staff also attends business and industry association meetings, volunteers for Advisory Committees and economic development groups to gauge industry employment needs.

We returned to our in person Youth career Expo in February 2022, but we have learned skills that allow us to be innovative when necessary .

During the strategic planning process, the Board has sought feedback from leadership across various industries related to Governor's targeted Industry Cluster. We identify many of these clusters as common across Texas as well as in our local area. The Board is highlighting our work in Biotechnology and Life Sciences for this plan. As we have received feedback from industry leaders, we are seeing more and more the impact that Healthcare occupations are having on our economy. In order for Southeast Texas to continue to grow, we need the healthcare infrastructure in place to support this growth.

Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery

A. One-Stop Service Delivery System

(WIOA §108(b)(6); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(5))

Boards must include a description of the one-stop delivery system in the workforce area, including explanations of the following:

- **How the Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers and how providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers**
- **How the Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including to remote areas, through the use of technology and other means**
- **How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including the one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA §188 (related to Non-Discrimination), if applicable, and with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals who have disabilities**
- **The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners**

BOARD RESPONSE:

Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas is committed to providing quality service to our employers, businesses, and individuals needing employment assistance.

Board staff meets with college workforce directors to review specific training needs, as well as ensure curriculum meets the skills needs and demands of area employers. Training providers are provided the most current Target/Demand Occupations list. Training providers must meet the Target/Demand Occupations needed for the Board area as well as the minimum wage at placement set by current Board policy. Additionally, the College President of two of our local 2-year colleges are members of the Workforce Board.

Board staff frequently communicates with training providers and contractor staff who enroll students into the training program. This communication usually leads to informal assessment and evaluation of the programs in terms of feedback from employers and/or students regarding the quality of the programs provide. The Board also ensures that the minimal performance is met or exceeded is considered in the addition or removal of a training provider from the list.

The Board will continue to engage in, and enhance, web-based social media applications to serve both employers and jobseekers. Below are some of the technological platforms used to provide virtual services. We will continue to explore as deemed appropriate and necessary.

- **Online WIOA registration and application** – customers will continue to use [networks.org](https://www.networks.org) as the initial application for WIOA services through our Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs
- **Electronic Signature tools** – we are using DocuSign to allow document signatures for both our customers and employers via remote locations.
- **Video-conferencing software** – We are and will continue to use video-conferencing platforms to ensure our customers are provided services in an efficient and effective manner. In the event, our customers are unable to receive services in this format, staff will make an appointment to provide services face to face while practicing social distancing. Video-conferencing platforms may include Zoom, gotomeeting, webex, facetime, google duo, googlemeets, etc. These platforms may be used for the following:
 - One on One Interviews for WIOA intake and eligibility, service plan development, supervised job search, WIT registration, resume updates, monitoring of worksites, UI eligibility assessment, case management, customized labor market, worksite orientations for both employer and job seeker, and other services as deemed appropriate.
 - Group services to include WOA and SNAP EPS and other orientations, group workshops, center services review, assessments, and other group events as deemed appropriate.
- **Email, text, and other messaging platforms** – are used as a marketing tool and to transfer needed information to our customers. Staff will continue to use email to send customers flyers, information about services, and forms needed for various programs. Furthermore, we continue to connect with our customers via direct messaging,

Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter. We will also use Engage by Cell as another means to share information with our customers about services, events, training opportunities, virtual job fairs, etc.

- **WorkInTexas (WIT)** for job seeker registration and employer job posting creating opportunities to connect job seekers to employers. WIT also will be used to update resumes and refer job seekers to jobs as well as uploading and retrieving documents used for employment and program eligibility.
- **Virtual Job Fairs** – we will continue to have virtual job fairs and hiring events to meet the employer needs. We will conduct these events regularly serving at least 3 employers per week. In most instances, we will use various virtual platform for virtual job fairs.
- A Regional Solutions Call Center (Virtual One-Stop) which provides an alternative service delivery to promote opportunities for continuous engagement of center customers. Our interactive website features a “chat room” that allows staff to address and respond to customers and provide appropriate referrals or services in WorkInTexas.com.
- The use of Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn allows staff to easily interact with customers, employers, or partners to communicate throughout the Workforce Network.
- “Job Brief”, the Board’s monthly newsletter, which contains information on current events as well as local labor market information, is sent out electronically to our employers. Marketing websites such as “Vertical Response” and “Constant Contact” are used for outreach and registration to events for both job seekers and employers. These media are also used to survey employers and job seekers on current issues, needs and local labor market intelligence.

Using the various types of available technology has allowed our workforce centers to provide services in a more efficient and effective manner, especially for job seekers living in rural communities. Workforce Solutions and its contractors will continue to explore new and innovative opportunities to use technology to provide services to employers and job seekers.

The Board also offers on-line orientations for Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) and program pre-applications.

As required, the Board ensures that all facilities and the administrative offices are all ADA compliant. There is special adaptive equipment available in each workforce center to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Examples of such equipment include adaptive monitors, phones, lower counter access for computer stations, etc. Testing supplies also include “large print” copy for those who are visually challenged. The Board also contracts with an agency which provides translation services as needed.

Additionally, the Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff members have a presence in the one-stop centers. The Workforce Center intends to continue collaborating with Vocational Rehabilitation in regard

to staff development training to enhance customer engagement. All Southeast Texas facilities undergo an annual assessment to ensure ADA compliance and accessibility.

The Board expects that all One-Stop Partners will comply with Section 121 (b) (1) (A) through Resource Sharing Agreements with the Board relating to the operation of the One Stop system and participate in the operation of the One-Stop system consistent with the terms of the MOU, the requirements of WIOA and the requirements of Federal laws authorizing the programs or activities.

Adult Education & Literacy	Provide assistance in establishing eligibility for programs for training and education programs provided under WIOA. Conducts diagnostic testing. Facilitate GED and Adult Basic Education (AB) classes in the Workforce Solutions Centers. Provide a half-time College and Career Transitions Counselor to assist with workshops for Workforce Solutions Customers
Veterans Services	Veteran staff are located at each of the One-Stops to provide services to veterans.
Vocational Rehabilitation	Currently, there is no official MOU in place. We continue Services to operate under the expired MOU. VR Counselors are assigned and coordinate with the Workforce Solutions Center staff by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing information about eligibility for VR programs for persons with disabilities• Providing assessments for referrals• Delivering Vocational Rehabilitation services to eligible persons• Providing information concerning VR programs and services to the One Stop Center in accessible formats.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefits Information

Workforce Solutions Center provides Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants with:

- access to space and telecommunications equipment necessary to participate in UI hearings.
- computers, telephones, and printed materials about claim filing and UI rights and responsibilities.
- assistance with filing claims; and
- assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA

Senior Community Service Employment Program

Provide information to SCSEP participants and non-eligible applicants relating to employment services available at SER-Jefferson County, as well as the One Stop Centers.

Share assessment results, placement information and Employment Plans when applicable, to avoid duplications of services.

Provide SCSEP participants with the opportunity to acquire work skills necessary to become employable.

Coordinate necessary supportive services that will assist SCSEP participants in work/training related activities and accept employment through One-Stop Centers.

Identify the One-Stop Centers' core services and refer eligible participants, as needed.

Provide brochures and other written information.

Cornerstone Solutions, Inc

Make their respective services available to the Universal (Job Corps) Population through dissemination of literature, information, and client referral.

Provide statistical information on respective participants who have completed referral forms.

Attend Center meeting and cross trainings with center staff.

B. Cooperative Agreements

(WIOA §108(b)(14); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(13))

Boards must provide copies of executed cooperative agreements that explain how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA §107(d)(11)) between the Board or other local entities described in §101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit that administers programs that are carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 720 et seq.) (other than §112 or part C of that title (29 USC 732, 741) and are subject to §121(f)) in accordance with §101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals who have disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts.

C. Employer Engagement, Economic Development, and Unemployment Insurance Program Coordination

(WIOA §108(b)(4); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(3))

Boards must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the workforce area to do the following:

- Facilitate engagement of employers in the workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.
- Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area.
- Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development
- Strengthen links between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

Note: This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, use of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers. These initiatives must support the strategy described above.

BOARD RESPONSE:

Our employers are the strength of our workforce system. As we meet their needs and demands, it allows us to fulfill the needs of our job seeking community here in Southeast Texas. Quality comprehensive

services to our business community is paramount toward our success. Both the Board and contractor staff work collectively in meeting the needs of our employer/business community in Southeast Texas.

Employer engagement in the Southeast Texas Board area is facilitated by the Business Solutions Representative who works diligently to educate business customers by providing information on financial incentives, cost savings and other advantages of using Workforce Center programs and services.

The Business Services Representative reaches out to newly registered businesses and *orient them* to the workforce solutions programs, resources, and services for businesses within our service area.

Also, through contact lists developed from participation at job fairs, business development events, regional cold canvassing, economic development activities, human resource associations, and local area chambers of commerce. face- to - face meetings are set up to identify the needs of the business. Based on the needs identified in these meetings, a plan is developed utilizing WIT services and other Workforce Center programs. These services may include recruitment, apprenticeships, on-the-job Training (OJT), work experience (WEX), and customized training provision for in-demand jobs or high growth industry sectors within the Southeast Texas Board area.

The Employer Solutions Team is responsible, at a minimum, for outreaching all Southeast Texas employers, WorkInTexas.com job posting maintenance and developing all work activity and OJT contracts. The Employer Solutions Team also works closely with the Skills Team and Self-Sufficiency Team to develop appropriate worksites for paid/unpaid work experience and OJT opportunities as needed.

In order to assist the public, the Employer Solutions Team also works closely with the Employment Team to ensure all staff members are fully aware of any job fair opportunities, special application procedures, assessment requirements, screening criteria or other specific requirements for an employer.

The Employer Solutions Team strives to increase the number of employers choosing Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas to recruit employees and provide more employment opportunities for our customers. At the Board level, the Business Solutions Representative continues to survey existing employers to identify gaps in training for specific job skills for high growth and demand industries, and to enhance current job skills of incumbent and unemployed workers. This information is used to work with education institutions and other training providers to identify short-term training, customized training, and OJT training opportunities to address the skills needed to ensure workforce skills training is in alignment and consistent with employer needs.

The Business Solutions Representative also provides customized labor market information as requested by employers and economic development corporations. Additionally, the Business Solutions Teams attends monthly meetings, such as the Golden Triangle Business Roundtable (GTBR), Chamber, Regional Economic Development Initiatives (REDI) and Economic Development (ED) meeting, to network and create/maintain relationships with local employers and businesses.

Board staff, as well as members of the Board, serve on many committees of the Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Corporations to address workforce issues.

Additionally, in the past the Board has co-managed a High Demand Job Training grant with a local EDC and plans to continue to seek similar opportunities.

To strengthen linkages between the workforce system and the unemployment insurance program the Board, through its Workforce Centers Contractor will: —

- Continue to conduct Re-employment Service and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) orientations and provide referrals to an array of educational and training services for UI claimants to WIOA and other partner agencies.
- Provides assistance to UI claimant customers with filing their UI claims by phone and online,
- Assistance to employers in the Board area for managing reductions in force in coordination with rapid response activities and with strategies for the aversion of layoffs and the delivery of employment and training activities.
- Provides One-stop workforce services for Unemployed Insurance (UI) claimants; and
- Offer testing for employers.

D. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

(WIOA §108(b)(12); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(11))

A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system.

BOARD RESPONSE

Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas provides an integrated service delivery approach when providing Wagner-Peyser Services to our job seekers and employers. These services are documented in one system, WorkInTexas.com, which is used by all staff. This allows staff to review services provided to customers and build upon those to facilitate their job matching and/or provide additional services.

Basic Career Services will be initiated by the **Employment Solutions Team** (as customer walk into the center), or the **Regional Solutions Team** (for those customers contacting us via phone, email, or chat). They are responsible for welcoming Workforce Solutions center customers, initiating service delivery through individualized and customized assistance, which includes assisting customers with the WorkInTexas (WIT) registration / update process.

Currently staff assists customers with WIT registration, job referrals, screening and referral to program services as needed and appropriate. Furthermore, staff ensures the best quality match for customers by updating work history, ensuring appropriate keywords are associated with each applicant and providing services to improve employment retention.

To improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services, the Workforce center developed a formal intake process to identify a career seeker's needs, skills and barriers. This initial intake meeting with the participant is a critical component in connecting them to career services and support that best fit their

needs and job goals. Referrals to core partner programs to provide support for identified needs are made, as appropriate, during the intake process.

Once the initial intake interview is completed, Career Center staff develop a basic services strategy that engages the universal career seeker in basic services, as appropriate, including orientation to all services available in the one-stop delivery system, WIT registration, skills assessments, job search and placement assistance, referrals to workshops, labor market information, reemployment benefits claim assistance, and referrals to community partners for supportive services. Individualized career services such as comprehensive and specialized assessments and diagnostic testing, development of an individual employment plan, group and/or individual counseling and mentoring, career planning, and training are also available. If staff identify that a career seeker will benefit from individualized career services, they will work with a WF specialist to develop a service strategy addressing the needs and barriers of the individual. If additional services are needed outside the scope of the Workforce center, an individual is referred to one of the core partners programs to provide specialized services.

Reemployment services which include orientation, assessment, and labor market information are provided to Priority Reemployment Planning Program (PREP) participants. Although PREP participants are selected and are mandated to receive these minimum services, they are often engaged in additional services and activities. As a best practice, all participants attending a scheduled PREP orientation meet one on one with a Workforce Specialist to discuss additional Workforce Center Services and determine if additional training is needed for them to secure self-sufficient employment.

E. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management

(WIOA §108(b)(21); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(20))

Boards must include a description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

BOARD RESPONSE:

Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas continues to use an integrated approach in serving our customers. In order to ensure all appropriate parties are aware and have access to our customers, we utilize a web-based system for application, program eligibility, and file certification. This allows for customers to apply for services at any time. Also, any information regarding the customer throughout the intake process is documented and accessible in TWIST.

Staff will continue to use laser fiche to schedule customers for potential program eligibility. Eligibility will be conducted for all WIOA programs. Furthermore, additional referrals and services will be provided and documented in TWIST. To ensure we continue to serve customers in the most efficient and effective means, the Board uses the following technology:

- Board initiated an electronic Eligibility Documentation and Filing system. The system allows and enables secure document storage and activities records storage.

- **Online WIOA registration and application** – customers will continue to use networks.org as the initial application for WIOA services through our Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs
- **Electronic Signature tools** – we are using DocuSign to allow document signatures for both our customers and employers via remote locations.
- **Video-conferencing software** – We are and will continue to use video-conferencing platforms to ensure our customers are provided services in an efficient and effective manner. In the event, our customers are unable to receive services in this format, staff will make an appointment to provide services face to face while practicing social distancing. Video-conferencing platforms may include Zoom, go to meeting, WebEx, facetime, google duo, google meets, etc. These platforms may be used for the following:
 - **One on One Interviews** for WIOA intake and eligibility, service plan development, supervised job search, WIT registration, resume updates, monitoring of worksites, UI eligibility assessment, case management, customized labor market, worksite orientations for both employer and job seeker, and other services as deemed appropriate.
 - **Virtual Orientation and Workshops**--In working with our Workforce Center, we have created several Virtual Orientations and Workshops and we continue to create and make available to our customers easy and convenient ways of accessing services.
 - **Email, text, and other messaging platforms** – are used as a marketing tool and to transfer needed information to our customers. Staff will continue to use email to send customers flyers, information about services, and forms needed for various programs. Furthermore, we continue to connect with our customers via direct messaging, Facebook, Instagram, and/or twitter. We will also use Engage by Cell as another means to share information with our customers about services, events, training opportunities, virtual job fairs, etc.
 - **Virtual Job Fairs/Hiring Events** – we will continue to have virtual job fairs and hiring events to meet the employer needs. We will conduct these events weekly, serving at least 3 employers per week. We will use the Brazen platform for virtual job fairs.

Our goal is to ensure staff goes the “extra mile” to serve our customers. During the impacted of the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have remained focused and willing to serve and assist all southeast Texans in the safest and most effective means possible. Our goal is to continue exploring avenues to improve service delivery focusing on the areas identified below.

Enhance Call Center Virtual Services

Our call center continues to focus on serving Southeast Texans by phone, internet or any of the virtual formats available. We have provided virtual services using our call center since 2008. This format provided foundation for us to integrate additional functions in our service delivery to accommodate our

customers during peak demands. While the staff has gone over and beyond during the increased demand for services, we have identified some opportunities to improve our service delivery and customer response including but not limited to:

- Expanded chat system – utilizing additional chat lines allowing staff to ensure enough time is given to respond to questions and concerns.
- Increased Training – We will continue to explore methods to improve our service delivery. We will use current responses to identify best practices and opportunities for improvement utilizing our chat system. Also, we will stay abreast of information available in the communities to ensure we are providing the most up to date and accurate information to our customers.
- Rotation of staff from call center to workforce center to ensure all are abreast of services throughout our service delivery system to ensure a seamless delivery model.
- Encourage customers to complete customer satisfaction surveys after receipt of services via chat, phone, or email. Use the data to improve service delivery.
- Ensure appropriate referrals for customers to access additional services.
- The Board will continue to use the following Texas Workforce Commission Systems:
- *The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST)*: An integrated intake, eligibility, case management, and reporting system for employment and training services. TWIST acts as the central repository for customer information. Includes interfaces with WorkInTexas.com, the UI benefits system, and the Health and Human Services information system.
- *WorkInTexas.com*: for job seekers registration and employers job posting creating opportunities to connect job seekers to employers. WIT also will be used to update resumes and refer job seekers to jobs as well as uploading and retrieving documents used for employment and program eligibility.
-

Also, the Child Care Workflow System:

- *Workflow2*: A Virtual Paperless Database system that manages documents and increases productivity. Scanned documents are organized for easy viewing and allows team access to important information 24/7. Improves Accountability with automatic, personalized notifications when new tasks are assigned, or deadlines are approaching. Customized application to match a unique process with no IT assistance required. Brings data to life and allows sharing instantly. Build reports with a few clicks. Instant customizable reports. Minimizes paperwork, ability to assign and re-assign work, universal view that allows all staff to lookup information.

In addition, we initiated an electronic Eligibility Documentation and Filing system. The system allows and enables secure document storage and activities records storage.

The next phase is to improve virtual options for employers with special chat and phone options. We will also work toward a more centralized approach for WIOA intake and case management. Additionally, there will be on-going improvements to our website – setworks.org.

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

A. Economic Development and Entrepreneurial/Microenterprise Activities

(WIOA §108(b)(5); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(4))

Boards must include an explanation of how the Board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the workforce area and how the Board will promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services.

BOARD RESPONSE:

At the Board level, the Business Solutions Representative will promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services through continued partnerships and referrals to our local Small Business Development Centers and the Jefferson County Extension office for Entrepreneurship and HUB training, as well as Lamar University's Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

The Board will continue to develop and refine strategies to engage and support regional economic development including but not limited to: (1) hosting job fairs, (2) supporting proposals that bring training funds to the region that provide training of job seekers to include a skilled workforce for the region, (3) participating in business retention, expansion, and new business attraction, and (4) participating in community development planning that demonstrates workforce development as an asset to the region.

Business Solutions Representatives work closely with the region's chambers of commerce and economic development corporations and serve on their workforce subcommittees in order to stay up to date on regional economic development activities, and to be able to align local workforce investment activities with the region's economic forecasts.

The Board is committed to supporting the entrepreneurs and small business leaders in the community with robust service opportunities tailored to their needs. The Board will continue to promote entrepreneurship as a career option in our Youth Career Expo workshops and by inviting entrepreneurs to participate as Expo exhibitors.

To meet this demand, and support WIOA's renewed focus on this customer group, the Board along with Lamar conducted an Entrepreneurial Boot Camp for new and existing businesses assists them to achieve their goals for economic self-sufficiency by providing information on starting and running their own business.

The Employer Solutions Team and Board staff will continue to promote the Skills for Small Business training grants while outreaching Southeast Texas employers.

B. Rapid Response Activity Coordination

(WIOA §108(b)(8); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(7))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the workforce area with statewide rapid response activities described in WIOA §134(a)(2)(A).

BOARD RESPONSE

The Board coordinates Rapid Response activities with the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) UI Field Response representatives. For lay-off or closures of less than 50 workers, the Board's Rapid Response coordinator works with the contractor's Business Services Unit Representatives. Board staff establishes contact with the employer(s) and/or representatives of affected workers to assess employer and employee early intervention needs within 48 hours of a layoff, a WARN notice, a public announcement of a layoff, or notification that a Trade petition has been filed. These early intervention services are customized and provided, at no cost to the employer, to enable affected workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible.

On-site contact with the employer includes development of a coordinated response to the dislocation event, and emergency assistance adapted to the particular closing, layoff, or disaster. In the event the employer or business does not file a WARN, the board's Rapid Response Coordinator makes initial contact with state unemployment insurance (UI) officials to inform them of the layoff and to arrange for a UI staff person to serve as the local contact and designee for on-site meetings to discuss UI benefits. Board staff then notifies the workforce center operator of the layoff incident and coordinates participation of the Business Service Unit for scheduled rapid response event. Board staff organizes and manages the rapid response events to ensure required services and activities are conducted in accordance with the requirements of Rapid Response. The Board has developed virtual Rapid Response Orientation sessions, which are presented to workers and employers through various on-line meeting platforms. Information previously provided in printed form is now provided to the dislocated workers via links and other on-line resources.

The Board's Rapid Response Coordinator works with the employer/business to identify special needs requirements and providing accommodations as necessary in language interpretation, written material, hearing-impaired services and/or services for people with disabilities.

Upon notification of a potential Rapid Response event or other closure/mass layoff, the Rapid Response Coordinator meets with the employer to:

- Assess their needs and inform them of their options and offer business services, and employment/training services to address risk factors.

- Discuss and pursue strategies that help the employer avert layoffs, while maintaining capacity to return workers to productive employment as soon as possible.
- Identify strategies to assist affected workers in becoming reemployed on or before the affected worker's last day of work through targeted transition activities that quickly engage dislocated workers in employment or training services.
- Proactively match affected workers skill and experience profiles with hiring requirements of companies actively hiring in the community.

Re-employment services are customized to meet the needs of the employer and affected workers, and include, but not limited to:

- Rapid Response Orientation (the Informational meeting/registration
- Workshops on Resume Techniques & Resume Writing, Interviewing, Financial Planning (money management / entrepreneurial opportunities) and Stress Management (crisis counseling
- Referrals for Emergency Crisis Counseling (based on need and agreed upon by all parties)
- Job Skills Analysis (the employee needs survey/abbreviated assessment
- Job Search (labor market information
- Initial WIOA Dislocated Worker and Adult Orientation (based on worker profile and funding availability), and referrals to employment and training opportunities.
- Referral to Workforce Centers for additional services including workshops, resource room (phone, computer, fax, etc.), hiring events, etc.

Through Zoom and other virtual platforms —we facilitate virtual appointments with customers. This is also used to conduct online group orientations, workshops etc.

C. Youth Activities and Services

(WIOA §108(b)(9); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(8))

Boards must include a description and assessment of the type and availability of workforce investment activities for youth in the workforce area, including activities for youth with disabilities. This description must include an identification of successful models of such activities.

BOARD RESPONSE:

The Board's Workforce Solutions Contractor activities are designed to facilitate connections for youth to the job market and employers, access to information and services, and any other activity designed to achieve the purposes of the youth program. Options available to youth customers include:

- Financial Literacy
- Tutoring.
- Alternative secondary school offerings.
- Summer employment.

- Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing.
- Occupational skills training.
- Leadership development.
- Supportive Services.
- Adult mentoring for a duration of at least twelve (12) months.
- Follow-up services.
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling; and
- Entrepreneurial Skills Training

The Workforce Solutions Center staff outreach agencies and businesses to secure work-based learning sites that align with career pathways. The purpose of all internships and work experiences is to provide youth exposure to jobs identified in their career pathways and the opportunity to learn both essential soft skills and disciplined work habits that will be beneficial to them. The youth program will continue to utilize up to date information explaining different techniques and programs that are effective when working with the youth population.

In addition, the youth program will utilize the youth tool kit accessible through DOL/Workforce One and the Youth National Forum as a resource to assist in identifying new and innovative ways to motivate youth as well as youth with disabilities.

The Workforce Solutions Center youth staff have developed community contacts through MOUs and utilize community resources that offer additional assistance for youth. The youth staff also outreach through strategically placed flyers (laundry mats, apartment complexes, ISD's etc.) and social media throughout the South East Texas area.

Youth are able to take advantage of an array of different activities designed to prepare them for the world of work. The youth program will continue to provide youth interested in postsecondary training and/or employment information about all available opportunities including apprenticeship programs. By providing referrals of appropriate candidates to industries that align with their intended career pathways, the youth program will expend program funds and ensure the success of work-based learning.

Opportunities are available for individuals at all skill levels and levels of experience, including those with disabilities. These opportunities include but are not limited to, labor market information, customer choice related to education and training, careers and service delivery options, work readiness workshops, skills-development, workshops, and job placement services. Education and training services include occupational skills training, paid and unpaid work experience, on-the-job training, and employed worker programs. We have found that one of the main components of the youth program is work experience, which allows youth, many of whom have never been exposed to employment, the opportunity to get practical hands-on work experience while gaining valuable skills.

The Board offers two) programs that is specifically for individual youth with disabilities.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Paid Work Experience – the Board partners with TWC VR to place eligible 504 students in work-based learning activities that are designed to help individuals gain soft and hard skills for work, learn about, and experience actual

work in possible fields of interest, and provide individuals with the opportunity to have hands-on exposure to jobs. Paid Work Experience (WEX) is a strategy for providing work-based learning opportunities to individuals with disabilities, and particularly for students with disabilities.

- the Board partners with TWC VR to place eligible 504 students in the Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) for students to gain work readiness and paid work experience through the summer months.

Additionally, the Workforce Board

- hosts an annual Youth Career Expo, which exposes local high school students to the different career opportunities in our area. Since the start of the Youth Expo 13,166 students from 33 different schools and 30 districts attended the Expo. Students had the opportunity to visit over 500 interactive and visually exciting booths at which they had a chance to talk to professionals representing Southeast Texas' diverse workforce.
- enroll youth from the ISD's Dual Credit Programs to assist with financial assistance for dual credit courses if the occupation is on the Target/Demand list and meets the Board's two-year requirements.

Assessments are important in determining the appropriate services for youth. Youth customers will complete basic skills assessment using the CASA. Staff will also complete an interest assessment using ONET or other interest and abilities assessment as deemed appropriate. Also, the youth will receive an assessment of work history, educational levels, financial and support service needs, as well as other employment barriers to ensure all needs are met. This information along with career exploration, the Board's targeted/demand occupation list, and talking with employers or partners that work in the field of interest will be used to assist the youth in determining their career paths and developing their service plan.

The Board's Youth Committee continues to research effective service delivery activities to enhance current programs and/or develop new innovative models to deliver services with a high degree of impact. The intent is to create a renewed interest in the youth program with the ability to demonstrate significant increases in positive outcomes.

D. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

(WIOA §108(b)(10); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(9))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate its workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

BOARD RESPONSE:

On the secondary level, the Board works closely with Region 5 Educational Service Center (ESC) to develop elective classes and degree plans with the Board's targeted occupation list in mind. Board

staff frequently does presentations for high school counselors and CTE teachers, showing them the various career exploration tools on the TWC website, as well as how to look up labor market information and workforce and education reports.

Similarly, to its relationship with Region 5 ESC and secondary education in our area, the Board works closely with the three Local two-year colleges to align their programs with the targeted occupations list, as well as keep the post secondary's workforce divisions up to date on labor market information, and how to access other relevant information on the TWC website.

The Board intends to coordinate sector strategies by convening with industry, educational providers, and other stakeholders. This assures that in-demand, industry recognized credentials are available to meet the needs of industry while promoting career pathways for jobseekers in growing/emerging industries in the Southeast Texas area. The Board's membership includes representation from education.

Other strategies to coordinate and enhance training services include the following:

- Career fairs targeting high school students.
- Representation from educational providers on the Board and committees.
- Coordination between training institutions, adult education programs, workforce contractors, and center case managers for customer referrals and.
- Coordination of services and support services between programs, partners, and community organizations to ensure non-duplication while maximizing training assistance.

E. Child Care and Early Learning

(40 TAC §809.12 Board Plan for Child Care Services)

Each Board must include a description of how the Board is strategically managing child care and early learning within its workforce system to enhance school readiness and strengthen and support the child care industry.

Note: This may include efforts to:

- **Coordinate with employers, economic development, and other industry leaders to increase the awareness and importance of early learning as a workforce and economic development tool.**
 - **Support improved school readiness through higher quality child care, including Texas Rising Star, and through partnership opportunities such as prekindergarten partnerships.**
 - **Support the needs of the child care industry, which could include assistance with business development or shared services, as well as opportunities to support professional growth and career pathways for early education.**

BOARD RESPONSE

In a collaborative effort our Child Care Contractor along with BISD and WOCISD are working on a Pre-K partnership with two (2) TRS Centers (World of Color & Circle K). A formal Pre-k partnership between World of Color a TRS ELP and Beaumont ISD (BISD) was established 2020-21 School Year. BISD provided World of Color one Licensed Pre-K teacher, Professional Development, and numerous educational materials. The partnership positively impacted 19-20 children's transition to kinder readiness by 25%. Out of the 19-20 children 30% went on to kindergarten and 20% of the children remained in the Pre-K Class due to age requirements. There was a substantial increase in Rapid Vocabulary, Phonological Awareness, Math, and Early Writing Skills with the classroom. As a result of the increase and need BISD is currently working on expanding childcare services in BISD. BISD plans to increase the number of seats within their BISD partnership program and expand BISD Pre-K partnership by approximately 5 additional classes within TRS sites. Additionally, BISD is looking to establish an educational pathway between the BISD Early Childhood Department Certified TRS Pre-K Programs, Department of Innovation, Lamar University Office of School and Community Partnerships.

The Circle K partnership did not go through due to their staffing shortages.

They are also working with LENA Grow—it is an innovative, research-based professional development program for infant, toddler, and pre-k teachers. Measuring the most predictive elements of child outcomes, LENA Grow supports stakeholders at every level, helping teachers gain the skills to measurably improve classroom quality by boosting interactions and helping leadership make more informed planning and policy decisions.

The program couples LENA's talk pedometer" technology with weekly coaching sessions. Teachers gain data insights that go far beyond typical feedback, leading to quality improvement without additional burden on their schedules. Child Care will have ten (10) classrooms participating in this program. We believe that teachers need to obtain their Child Care Development Associate (CDA) in order to move towards the career path outlined by the Early Learning Texas Council. That Child course\work provided by LIT and the support services that we provide (mentoring, additional professional development, curriculum) will provide the encouragement and skills needed to further their career. In addition to LIT, we will be utilizing CLI Engage for CDA.

Due to covid a total of 10 TRS classrooms participated in the LENA Grow program. The original benchmark was a 10% increase in classroom language engagement over the year. There was a total of 4 programs and 100 Infant and toddler children who enrolled in the program. According to the data provided by the Lena Grow Specialist, in the beginning of the program the language engagement of children was 17.7%. The language engagement elevated to 67% . There was 49.3% increase in language engagement within the infant toddler classrooms.

Our Child Care Contractor will utilize T.E.A.C.H. scholarships through the TWC grant with TAEYC to pay for the actual CDA certification and a portion of their education to work towards their degree. The Texas Association for Education of Young Children (TXAEYC) offers CDA Assessment scholarships to individuals who are needing assistance paying for the credential assessment and offer a \$200 Retention

Stipend if employed at the same place after 6 months. This is layered on top of our partnership with Lamar Institute of Technology to provide the CDA Coursework. During Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 we had 20 students who accessed the CDA Assessment Scholarship.

eWe continue assessing and mentoring our TRS Centers to meet higher quality standards of childcare in our area. Also, we plan to add additional TRS centers and increasing current TRS centers Star levels. As of October 2022, we have 32 TRS providers, with 22 of those being 4-star providers; 22 providers at the 3-star level and one at the 2-star level.

.F. Transportation and Other Support Services

(WIOA §108(b)(11); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(10))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will provide transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate support services in the workforce area in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities.

BOARD RESPONSE:

Supportive services are designed to remedy barriers that might impede a customer's ability to participate in workforce activities. Supportive services are provided to eligible customers to participate in training activities. Supports include but are not limited to gas cards, uniforms, books, and uniforms/tools necessary for employment.

Workforce Solutions Contractors are trained to identify and define the problem and develop a customized plan so that customers can get the assistance they need. This plan is then integrated into the customer's Individual Employment Plan (IEP).

To maximize resources and avoid duplication of services, the Board has developed successful partnerships with a wide range of agencies and community-based organizations through "Sharing Solutions" to link customers to supportive services such as clothing closets, substance abuse treatment, crisis intervention, domestic violence, health, temporary housing, and emergency food. Regular staff development activities include presentations from professionals knowledgeable in these areas. Workforce Solutions Contractors use the information obtained from the staff development activities to assist with the identification of potential abusers as well as to make referrals to available services for those in need.

The Board has an on-going MOU with the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission

Transportation Planning Division. The purpose of this agreement is to coordinate resources.

and referrals services to individuals facing serious barriers to employment, including transportation necessary for employment, job training, and other related services.

The Beaumont and Port Arthur Centers are conveniently located and accessible via public transportation.

The Board's current Supportive Service Policy clearly outlines the supportive services and amounts allowable in each workforce program.

G. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)

(WIOA §108(b)(13); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(12))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with AEL activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how WIOA §§107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA §232.

BOARD RESPONSE:

The Adult Education Agency is one of the most critical partnerships for the Board.

Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas has maintained strong collaboration with its Literacy partners— Region 5 Education Service Center and the Greater Orange Area Literacy Service. Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas currently operates under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with regional Adult Education service providers to make Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) college and career prep, English as Second Language (ESL), and High School Equivalency preparation services available to Workforce Solutions Center customers.

We are sensitive to the needs of our English language learners' customers. Forms and instructions are available in both English and Spanish and our website has a translation button. Signs are posted in Workforce Centers in both English and Spanish, asking customers if they require assistance due to limited English proficiency, and free interpreter services are offered if needed.

To effectively meet the needs of the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) customers, the Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas Board requires all contractors; 1) employ and maintain bilingual staff, 2) materials are provided in both English and Spanish, 3), maintain a sufficient referral base (to include training and education providers) to ensure all LEP customers of any primary language are not excluded from participating in or benefiting from Workforce Solutions Center Services. AEL also administered the CASAS, BEST Plus, BEST Literacy and TABE ClassE assessments. For ESL customers.

In the Specialized programs, when assessment indicates the need for additional literacy or English proficiency, the Workforce Solutions Workforce Specialist will include adult education services into the plan for service delivery. The AEL staff conducts on-site diagnostic testing, facilitates High School Equivalency GED, ESL, and ABE classes in the Workforce Solutions Centers. AEL provides a College and Career Navigator and a Workforce Integration, Student Success and Follow-up Specialist to assist Workforce Solutions customers. The AEL staff administers the SUPERA, the Spanish version of the TABE, to evaluate the non-English reading TANF customers.

The AEL program also coordinates services with the Board and local employers to provide a supplemental Opportunity Youth program (Jobs for America’s Graduates) for out-of-school youth, ages 16-24.

The Board and its contractors continuously pursue innovative initiatives, practices, and partnerships including alternate LEP network/literacy providers, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, etc. as means for providing comprehensive quality services to LEP customers.

The Board also coordinates with other entities, including Region 5 ESC to provide college and career preparation to assist customers to successfully enroll in and complete college, or to earn industry credentials in local technical programs. The AEL program provides remediation for students/ customers who are enrolled in college training programs, to help them successfully pass industry recognized certification exams. Customers participate in postsecondary education and training through concurrent or co-enrollment in Workforce Training programs, including through co-enrollment in IET programs.

The AEL program and the Board integrate services to offer Workforce Readiness Digital Literacy classes to customers throughout the Southeast Texas Workforce Area, integrating Educational Technology to support instruction and workforce preparation activities.

ESC 5’s AEL program and the Board integrate services with the local Higher Education institutions and local districts’ Career and Technology Departments to focus instruction on targeted occupations and to align needs and services.

Part 6: Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Services

A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training

(WIOA §108(b)(7); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(6))

Boards must include a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the workforce area. Boards must include a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult, dislocated worker and youth employment and training activities in the workforce area.

Boards must also include the list of assessment instruments (tools) used for adult, dislocated worker, and youth.

BOARD RESPONSE

The WIOA intake process has been streamlined by providing an on-line Pre-Application. This has expedited the process and enabled customers to quickly move to the next step for services.

The Workforce Solutions Contractor offers a program orientation that thoroughly discusses the Center’s services. There are three (3) types of career services: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. Career services provide the Workforce Solutions Center Contractor with flexibility to target services to the needs of the customer. Customers will receive career and training services as appropriate to their assessed needs. Activities include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs including The California Adult Education Accountability and Assessment (CASAS), OPAC, Typing Test and Kenexa: Prove It.
- Development of an individual employment plan/individual service plan to achieve employment goals by identifying appropriate objectives and appropriate services and information about eligible training providers and career paths.
- Individual career and on-going counseling/case management provided prior to enrollment and throughout the training experience by a WIOA Case Manager
- Employability, employment preparation and job retention workshops to prepare and retain individuals in unsubsidized employment include Interviewing Techniques, Microsoft PowerPoint, Creating an Effective Resume, Using WIT, Using Social Media in Your Job Search, Mock Interviewing, Effective Networking Skills and Soft Skills.
- Paid and unpaid work experience that are linked to interest/careers.
 - Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment.
 - On-the-job training
 - Adult education and literacy activities.
- Supportive services whenever necessary in order to enable an eligible customer to participate in WIOA activities and the customer is unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such service. Supports may include transportation, tuition, books and training supplies, employment uniforms & tools required but not purchased by the employer; and
- Follow-up Services for customers who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment.

The Board's Business Services Reps and Contractor worked together to acquire an employer skill assessment tools to use as part of our assessment process. The Prove-It assessment will verify that an individual has the essential skills to determine the fit between individuals' existing skills, interests and values to the targeted industries and occupations. The assessment will also identify whether an individual who is exploring new career options in the targeted occupations is suitable for the working conditions, environment or job demands of the targeted industries, targeted, and demand occupations.

The types of training available include occupational skills training, programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, skills upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, job readiness training, and adult education and literacy activities provided in combination with occupational skills training. Specific occupations are targeted annually within targeted industry clusters. The Targeted Occupations list is compiled and made available to training providers seeking to provide training services through the Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS).

Occupational and Vocational training services are also available to youth. Youth may choose the same trainings available to Adults and Dislocated Workers.

An on-going assessment of adult and dislocated worker employment and training programs is conducted by means of local monitoring and training vendor/provider outcome evaluations. Local performance accountability measures will determine the value and contribution of each vendor/provider towards the specific measures including placement, credential, wages, and retention. Additional training programs are currently being evaluated through the state's new Eligible Training Provider Policy approval process. Customer and staff surveys/comments provide valuable input concerning gaps in the provision of training services and resolution is readily implemented.

B. Priority to Recipients of Public Assistance and Low-Income Individuals

(20 CFR §679.560(b)(21))

Boards must include the Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, consistent with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the Final Regulations, as well as veterans and foster youth, according to the priority order outlined in the WIOA Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth. Boards must also include a list of any Board-established priority groups, if any.

BOARD RESPONSE

The Board approved the following priority of service policy for WIOA individualized career and training services:

Priority for individualized career services and training services must be provided in the following order:

1. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job-training programs, which include WIOA programs. The existing guidance on priority of service for veterans remains in effect. See 10-30, Change 1, issued on October 26, 2015, and entitled "Applying Priority of Service and Identifying and Documenting Eligible Veterans and Transitioning Service Members."

2. All other individuals who are recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.

As stated in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E), with respect to individualized career services and training services funded with WIOA adult funds, priority of service must be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.

3. All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA’s priority groups.

4. All other individuals.

Additionally, the Board has determined that WIOA funding for individualized career services and training services will be limited to customers who:

- are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay for individualized career services and training services; or
- require assistance beyond that available under grant assistance from other sources to pay for these services.

Priority of service status is established at the time of eligibility determination and does not change during the period of participation. Priority does not apply to the dislocated worker population.

Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts

BOARD RESPONSE

The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Board, dba Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas, is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds for the three (3)-county region.

A. Fiscal Agent

(WIOA §108(b)(15); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(14))

Boards must include identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the CEOs or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i).

BOARD RESPONSE

The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Board, dba Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas, is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds for the three (3)-county region.

B. Sub-Grants and Contracts

(WIOA §108(b)(16); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(15))

Boards must include a description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.

Board Response

The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Board competitively bids and selects a contractor in compliance with the federal law under Section 107 of WIOA. The Board prepares and issues a Request for Proposal (RFP) and/or Request for Bids to solicit providers of services. Once proposals are received,

independent evaluators are also procured to evaluate the proposals/bid provide information to the respective Committee(s) of the Board. The Committee will review the evaluations of independent evaluators and make a recommendation the full Board for funding.

Part 8: Performance

A. Board Performance Targets

(WIOA §108(b)(17); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(16))

Boards must include a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with TWC and the CEOs consistent with WIOA §116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the area and to be used by the Board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the area.

BOARD RESPONSE

As the Board, we constantly strive to meet or exceed the standards and indicators through training, policy development, and the addition or creation of new and innovative programs that will benefit our customers and region. The following are the established contract measure between the Board and TWC for the one stop deliver system:

The following performance measures were set in accordance with WIOA § 116(c):

- Adult Employed Q2 Post Exit
- Adult Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
- Adult Employed Q4 Post Exit
- Adult Credential Rate
- Adult Measurable Skill Gains
- Dislocated Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit
- Dislocated Worker Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
- Dislocated Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit
- Dislocated Worker Credential Rate
- Dislocated Worker Measurable Skill Gains
- Youth Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit
- Youth Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit
- Youth Credential Rate
- Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – All Participants
- Employed/Enrolled Q2-Q4 Post Exit – All Participants
- Credential Rate – All Participants
- Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – All Participants
- Youth Measurable Skill Gains

In addition to the WIOA measures, TWC has established the following performance measures:

Claimant Reemployment within ten (10) weeks

Employers Receiving Workforce Assistance

CHOICES Full Work Rate

Average Children Served Per Day

The performance measures for WIOA are negotiated with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). The performance of the Board as fiscal agent is reviewed during the annual audit and the TWC monitoring. The Board members and chief elected officials receive the annual audit and TWC monitoring report.

An initial and annual evaluation of eligible training providers (ETPs) is done following TWC requirements. Training providers are required to submit performance data to TWC to remain eligible and to be listed on the State Eligible Training Provider List. Any program that does not meet the state's performance criteria will be withdrawn from the statewide list and not eligible for WIOA enrollments.

The Board conducts an annual review of the contracted One-Stop workforce center operator in areas of performance, monitoring, fiscal accountability, customer/employer surveys and response to elements listed in the contract. The Board staff submits the results to the Board for review and approval of extending the contract or release of a Request for Proposal for a new One-Stop workforce contractor.

Part 9: Training and Services

A. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

(WIOA §108(b)(19); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(18))

Boards must include a description of how training services outlined in WIOA §134 will be provided through the use of ITAs, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs under that chapter, and how the Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

BOARD RESPONSE

An ITA is the primary method through which training is financed and provided for unemployed or underemployed participants. ITAs are established on behalf of the WIOA participant to purchase a program of training services from eligible providers selected in consultation with the case manager. Additionally, the cost of training, time commitment of the participant, fees and books, tuition, and other associated costs should be considered when conducting a cost benefit analysis for the ITA.

Individual Training Accounts is:

- used by participants for training services.
- WIOA funded; and

- established on behalf of a WIOA adult, dislocated worker, out-of-school youth, or in-school youth participant eligible for training services.

Workforce Solutions Center contractor must coordinate funding for ITAs with funding from other federal, state, and/or local sources, or private job training programs to assist the individual in obtaining training services, in accordance with the WIOA Guidelines.

Contractor must ensure that WIOA funds are not used to pay training costs:

- for any portion or term of training for which the participant has signed a loan as part of financial aid; or
- that were paid by the participant (or another source) before WIOA program registration.

With few exceptions (listed under Training Contracts below), Board and Workforce Solutions staff must be aware that WIOA requires that training provided to eligible adults and dislocated workers be paid for using ITAs.

WIOA funding for training is limited to participants who:

- are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay training costs; or
- require assistance beyond that available under grant assistance from other sources to pay training costs and related support services.

Eligibility for Training Services

Training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers and out-of-school youth who:

- Contractor determines, after a determination of need is made using an employment plan:
 - are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services.
 - need training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment; and
 - have the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services.
- have selected a program of training services that is directly linked to:
 - occupations that are on the Board's targeted occupations list, or are on the targeted occupations list for another workforce area to which an *eligible participant* willing to commute or relocate.
 - contractor determined early pathway occupations and stackable credentials that lead toward a Board target occupation; or
 - occupations that have been determined on a case-by-case basis to have a high potential for sustained demand and growth in the workforce area, based on sufficient and verifiable documentation, in accordance with the Board's procedures and TWC rule §841.34(b); and

- are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training and related support services, including such sources as state-funded training funds, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and federal Pell Grants or require WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance, including federal Pell Grants.

Participants who are employable with current skills are not eligible for training funds, unless they are making less than *the Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas Board's current Self-Sufficient* wage. For the purpose of this policy, employable with current skills is defined as possessing either a degree or certificate with current skills in a Targeted Occupation that is less than five years old/or more than four years old of current work experience in a Targeted Occupation.

WIOA Funding may be provided for college level instruction only if ALL of the following conditions have been met:

- The customer has been accepted into a certificate, license, diploma, or degree program, and the course of study is occupation specific.
- The customer must demonstrate that they have the financial resources to attend long term training.

No funds shall be provided for general academic programs, (i.e., General Studies, Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Arts, Graduate degrees, etc.)

Any customer, who has dropped out of a WIOA funded training program without the prior approval of his/her case manager, will not receive additional ITA funding. The case manager's prior approval must be documented in the customer's Individual Service Plan/Case notes before receiving additional ITA funding.

Maximum Funding for Training

ITAs will not exceed \$5,000 per person per program year (July 1 – June 30).

An ITA established for an eligible participant to receive training services shall expire two (2) years from the date of the account's establishment. Therefore, participants must attend classes on a full-time basis, or as determined by the training provider's catalog/policy to receive their Associate Degree, Licensing and or Certificate of Certification. The Workforce Solutions Board, on a case-by-case basis, may approve exceptions to this time/duration limitation. Requests for an exception must be in writing and must include evidence that training services were not met due to no-fault of the participant. Copies of approval must be maintained in the participant's file.

The Customers must first be considered eligible and appropriate for training. If the training program selected is greater than \$5,000, the student must indicate how the remaining costs of training will be funded.

Boards/Workforce Center Contractor must ensure that training contracts: —except contracts for OJT, customized training, and incumbent worker training—are linked to one of the following:

- Occupations that are on the Board's Target Occupations List or are on the Target Occupations List for another workforce area to which an eligible participant is willing to commute or relocate; or

- Occupations that have been determined on a case-by-case basis to have a high potential for sustained demand and growth in the workforce area, based on sufficient and verifiable documentation, in accordance with the Board’s procedures and §841.34(b).
- do not limit consumer choice.

Consumer Choice Requirements

Workforce Solutions Center contractor must ensure that staff provides customers with:

- the statewide Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL), including a description of approved programs.
- performance and cost information relating to the approved training programs offered by ETPs; and
- information on available local work-based training providers, on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, paid or unpaid work experience opportunities, internships, registered apprenticeships, or incumbent worker training that meets the performance standards (for example, entered employment and retention) for that occupation.

Links to Target Occupations

Boards must ensure that training services funded through ITAs, with the exception of registered apprenticeship programs, are directly linked to:

- occupations that are on the Board’s Target Occupations List or are on the Target Occupations List for another local workforce development area (workforce area) to which an eligible participant is willing to commute or relocate; or
- occupations that have been determined on a case-by-case basis to have a high potential for sustained demand and growth in the workforce area, based on sufficient and verifiable documentation, in accordance with the Board’s procedures and TWC rule §841.34(b).

B. ITA Limitations

(20 CFR §663.420)

Boards may impose limits on the duration and amount of ITAs. If the state or Board chooses to do so, the limitations must be described in the Board Plan, but must not be implemented in a manner that undermines WIOA’s requirement that training services are to be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice in the selection of an Eligible Training Provider. Exceptions to ITA limitations may be provided for individual cases and must be described in Board policies.

BOARD RESPONSE

The duration of an ITA is determined by a participant’s course of study. Realistic and attainable training plans must be considered. Generally, training is either short-term or long-term. Short-term training programs or prevocational services are limited to 6 months or less. However, the contractor must keep in mind the participant's career pathway and the training and services necessary to meet the participant's goal. Long-term training is training whose length does not exceed two (2) years. Four-year degree programs may be funded when the customer can document that he or she is in the last two years of the program (e.g., remaining hours are equal to or less than 50 percent of the total credit hours required for

the degree) and is in an in-demand occupation. And the participant must provide a transcript and a signed plan-of-study from the institution documenting, they can complete the degree requirements in the two (2) year time limit.

There may be instances where a participant is unable to complete the training program within the timeframe outlined in the ITA, and the ITA may be extended. Request for an exception must be in writing and must include evidence that training services were not met due to no-fault of the participant. Copies of approval must be maintained in participant's file.

Part 10: Apprenticeship

A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Boards must include a description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs in its workforce area to register with the Eligible Training Provider System in order to receive WIOA funding.

BOARD RESPONSE

The Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship Programs to register with the TWC Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS).

The Board currently has a working relationship with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 479 and the Plumber Local 68 and Sabine Area Labor Council, all of which are registered apprenticeship programs in the Southeast Texas region. We will continue to encourage these local unions to register as eligible training providers in order to receive WIOA funding.

The Board applied for the Apprenticeship Texas Expansion Pipefitters Local 211-Zone 195 Nederland Grant. We will serve 130 new apprentices through this joint effort the following way:

- Employing newly registered apprentices through their contractors
- Expanding our Apprenticeship program into the industrial and commercial construction and maintenance field in the e listed specialties:
 - Pipefitting Fabrication
 - HVAC Services
 - Welding
 - Instrumentation

B. Apprenticeship Texas

Boards must include a description of the Board's strategy and commitment to support Apprenticeship Texas efforts across the state, as applicable.

BOARD RESPONSE

The Southeast Texas Board will continue to promote registered apprenticeship and pre apprenticeships programs, providing technical assistance to employers and facilitate regional partnerships around demand-driven registered apprenticeship programs across the Southeast Texas region.

Additionally, there are union representatives on our Board that work with union-based apprenticeship programs.

Job Seekers are encouraged to utilize apprenticeship programs as a career pathway to high demand, high wage occupations that are needed in our local workforce area.

We will continue to support, develop, and expand pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth and other low skilled individuals which will provide them short-term classroom and employability skills training in preparation for a career pathway in a Registered Apprenticeship program.

Part 11: Public Comment

Boards must include a description of the process used by the Board, consistent with WIOA §108(d), 20 CFR §679.550(b) and §679.560(b) and (e), to:

- **make copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media.**
- **include an opportunity for comment by members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education.**
- **provide at least a 15-day, but no more than a 30-day period for comment on the plan before its submission to TWC, beginning on the date that the proposed plan is made available, before its submission to TWC; and**
- **submit any comments that express disagreement with the plan to TWC along with the plan.**

BOARD RESPONSE

In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Section 108(d), the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Board will make copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means no later than the end of the 15-day period beginning on the date the proposed plan is made available; and include with submission of the local plan any comments that represent disagreement with the plan.

The Board posted notice on February 12, 2021 that the plan was available for comment on the Board website www.setworks.org.

Appendix: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

Local Workforce Development Board Strategic Planning

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) is charged under Texas Government Code §2308.101(5), 2308.302(a), and 2308.304(a)(b)(4), and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Public Law 113–128) with recommending the plans of Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) to the governor for consideration for approval. TWIC reviews each Board Plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide goals and objectives in the system plan, The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023, which can be found at <https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/twic/System-Strategic-PlanUpdate.pdf>.

Additionally, state law charges TWIC with reporting annually to the governor and to the Texas legislature on the implementation of the system’s strategic plan and monitoring the operation of the state’s workforce system to assess the degree to which the system is effective in achieving state and local goals and objectives. Therefore, TWIC also reviews Board Plans and plan modifications to determine each Board’s progress in implementing strategies that align with the strategic plan for the Texas workforce system. Following consideration for approval at a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting, TWIC recommends the Board Plans to the governor for consideration for approval. Boards’ responses to the following planning elements are reviewed by TWIC for alignment and are the basis for recommending approval.

Demonstrating Alignment with Texas’ Strategic Plan for the Workforce System

The four sections below list and describe the four system goals from The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 (2020 Update) that identify critical, high-priority system issues for the state. **For each goal, briefly describe one significant Board strategy or initiative that fulfills the intent of the goal. Also, please include the corresponding page number(s) within your plan that further details the identified strategy or initiative.**

System Goal 1 and Rationale

Focus on Employers.

By accessing critical education and labor data sets, employers can better find and plan for skilled workers to meet their needs in both the immediate time frame and the future. Through greater engagement with employers, education and training providers can better design career and technical education content and delivery options that are more aligned with industry needs. Providers can make adjustments in program content to benefit employers and students, as well as address both state and regional economic needs.

System Goal 1—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

The Board has identified a specific goal and several strategies associated with meeting this system-wide goal. Page 5 describes this overarching Board goal, which is *“Expand outreach and partnerships with employers through focused industry- and occupational-specific efforts to help identify the jobs of the future and bridge skills gaps among job-seekers.”*

A key component of achieving this goal at the local level is actively engaging our employer partners in seeking out feedback to improve the workforce system and helping to create a better understanding of the jobs of the future to best train job seekers in the right career pathways. The Board has listed out the following strategies to address this area:

- Seek out industry-specific input from industry leaders through a series of information-gathering sessions to help identify job needs of the present and future;
- Continued usage of social media to reach potential employers and job-seekers;
- Work to have a visible presence in all three counties (Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange) by collaborating with more organizations and employers;
- Utilize of the best available data to help identify growing, in-demand, and shrinking occupations;
- Find ways to make the latest labor market information and other relevant workforce data more readily available to employers;
- Develop more resources for job-seekers and employers that focus on soft skills;
- Expand the use of technology to reach more employers and job-seekers; and
- Continue to take advantage of opportunities to promote programs through highlighting success stories in the media and other outreach mechanisms.

With the majority of the Board members being representatives of private employers, we will continue to find new ways to seek out feedback from these industry experts to better inform our local system structure.

System Goal 2 and Rationale

Engage in Partnerships.

Through collaborative and transparent processes, workforce system partners focus on outcomes that improve the employability of all program participants—from across a wide spectrum of capabilities and experiences—to meet employer needs. The leveraging of partnerships to enhance system alignment and outcomes depends on trust, a culture of collaboration both within and external to the workforce system, deep working relationships, and technical capacity to communicate to share needs, data, and information. Partnerships can provide for common planning, intake, and reporting on outcomes, as well as ensuring a “no wrong door” approach to the provision of workforce programs and services.

System Goal 2—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

The Board has identified a specific goal and several strategies associated with meeting this system-wide goal. Page 6 describes this overarching Board goal, which is *“Increase collaboration and enhance alignment between economic development, education, and other workforce system partners to effectively meet the needs of employers and the communities we serve.”*

The Board has listed out the following strategies to address this area:

- Seek out employer and job-seeker input to address gaps in service delivery at the workforce centers and to enhance opportunities for customers for education, training, or career/job placement;
- Build coalitions with training providers to ensure they are ready to meet the training needs of the future;
- Increase presence on advisory councils of training providers and keep the board informed of advisory council meeting results;
- Build better partnerships with school administrators and counselors at the secondary level to promote the youth program and recruit new participants;
- Continue to expand the Youth Expo and job fairs targeted at youth;
- Improving the coordination of services with vocational rehabilitation;
- Make the program elements for the youth program as “work-like” as possible to help build soft skills, industry knowledge, and financial literacy;
- Provide pathways for reintegration;
- Providing services to the youth that fall between the gaps. Out of school youth, foster youth that age out of the system; and
- Continue to expand outreach to veterans and their spouses through increased participation in the annual Red, White & You Hiring Event.

Our local Board is made up of representatives from various partner organizations that cross the spectrum of workforce, economic development, and education. We will continue to work with these Board members, as well as other leaders from partner organizations to find the best ways to build and strengthen partnerships across all programs.

System Goal 3 and Rationale

Align System Elements

By improving transitions, aligning programs, and ensuring portability and transferability, Texas improves access and the ability of all participants to complete programs of study, earn credentials, transition to further education, and gain critical employability skills. Texas employers are better positioned to find and hire the employees they need through an enhanced education and training pipeline.

System Goal 3—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

The Board has identified two specific goals and several strategies associated with meeting this system-wide goal. Pages 7-8 describe this overarching Board goal, *“Ensure all existing financial resources are utilized effectively while actively pursuing additional funding and partnership opportunities that will improve the development, implementation, and delivery of workforce services.”* Page 5 describes a second overarching local goal that relates to this goal, *“Expand outreach and partnerships with employers through focused industry- and occupational-specific efforts to help identify the jobs of the future and bridge skills gaps among job-seekers.”*

The Board has listed out the following strategies to address this area:

- Continue to pursue federal discretionary grants and identify grant and funding opportunities at an accelerated rate to allow for the most time possible to develop proposals;
- Build more relationships with foundations locally and nationally in pursuit of additional funding opportunities;
- Board members share their occupational and industry knowledge to help develop and promote programs, including with potential funding opportunities;
- Work closely with board members and other employers/partners to better identify their needs to create more realistic grant proposals;
- Strengthen relationships and collaboration with key stakeholders and partners to leverage resources to benefit our customers;
- Board members will be active in reviewing the usage of funding and providing input/suggestions for areas of improvement.
- Seek out industry-specific input from industry leaders through a series of information-gathering sessions to help identify job needs of the present and future;
- Continued usage of social media to reach potential employers and job-seekers;
- Work to have a visible presence in all three counties (Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange) by collaborating with more organizations and employers;
- Utilize of the best available data to help identify growing, in-demand, and shrinking occupations;

- Find ways to make the latest labor market information and other relevant workforce data more readily available to employers;
- Develop more resources for job-seekers and employers that focus on soft skills;
- Expand the use of technology to reach more employers and job-seekers; and
- Continue to take advantage of opportunities to promote programs through highlighting success stories in the media and other outreach mechanisms.

Our local Board is made up of representatives from various partner organizations, including from educational entities. Additionally, more than half of the board members are employers. We will continue to work with these Board members, as well as other leaders from partner organizations to identify the jobs of the future, bridge skills gaps among job-seekers, and find the best ways to build our programs to align the system elements to truly meet the demands of the ever changing economy.

System Goal 4 and Rationale

Improve and Integrate Programs

Accelerate employment and improve efficiencies through shared resources that can be leveraged to create new, relevant, and innovative opportunities that serve the needs of all stakeholders. By addressing high-priority programmatic needs through an integrated strategy, decision-making at the system, partner, and participant levels is improved and system service delivery is enhanced. The changing economic and educational landscapes provide opportunities to share relevant data through appropriate “push” mechanisms in an organized manner to key stakeholders who rely on information generated by system partners.

System Goal 4—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

The Board has identified a specific goal and several strategies associated with meeting this system-wide goal. Page 7 describes this overarching Board goal, *“Meet or exceed negotiated workforce performance goals for all programs to maximize community impact and identify areas of opportunity.”* Additionally, the board on Page 6 has the overarching goal to *“Increase collaboration and enhance alignment between economic development, education, and other workforce system partners to effectively meet the needs of employers and the communities we serve.”*

The Board has listed out the following strategies to address this area:

- Conduct internal and external monitoring of WIOA programs to identify continuous improvement opportunities;
- Have the Planning, Oversight, and Evaluation Committee regularly review WIOA performance during the Program Year;
- Review of existing committee structures of the board to improve efficiencies and increase participation;
- Seek out employer and job-seeker input to address gaps in service delivery at the workforce centers and to enhance opportunities for customers for education, training, or career/job placement;
- Build coalitions with training providers to ensure they are ready to meet the training needs of the future;
- Increase presence on advisory councils of training providers and keep the board informed of advisory council meeting results;
- Build better partnerships with school administrators and counselors at the secondary level to promote the youth program and recruit new participants;
- Continue to expand the Youth Expo and job fairs targeted at youth;
- Improving the coordination of services with vocational rehabilitation;
- Make the program elements for the youth program as “work-like” as possible to help build soft skills, industry knowledge, and financial literacy;
- Provide pathways for reintegration;
- Providing services to the youth that fall between the gaps. Out of school youth, foster youth that age out of the system; and
- Continue to expand outreach to veterans and their spouses through increased participation in the annual Red, White & You Hiring Event.

Our local Board is made up of representatives from various partner organizations and we intentionally reach out to stakeholders beyond the membership of our board to seek out innovative ways of improving and integrating programs. As the economy changes, both locally and regionally, we want to put ourselves in the best position possible to identify areas of opportunity in service delivery as well as ways to increase program participation metrics. We understand that by effectively delivering program services and meeting performance measures, we will be able to have greatest collect impact.