



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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www.wrksolutions.com

To: Gulf Coast Workforce Board Members

From: Executive Director Juliet K. Stipeche

Date: December 6, 2024

Subject: Upcoming December 10, 2024, Board Meeting

As we commence the holiday season, I want to first thank each of you for your leadership and service to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. Over the past year, we have accomplished many achievements towards the success of our Board and the region we service, most notably the passage of our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan which was highlighted during a presentation at the recent 27th Annual Texas Workforce Commission Conference in Grapevine, Texas, December 4-6, 2024.

Please note that our board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, Texas, 77027, in conference room A/B/C. Please be reminded that the meeting will be conducted in full compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

The session will begin with a report from our Board Chair, Mr. Mark Guthrie, followed by my Executive Director's report. The meeting's agenda includes reports from several committees, presented by their respective Chairs: Audit and Monitoring (Mr. Guy Jackson), Education (Dr. Bobbie Henderson), Employer Engagement (Mr. Alan Heskamp), Communications (Mr. Doug Karr), and Budget (Board Chair Mark Guthrie). Of importance, the Budget report will include a discussion on the proposed 2025 Workforce Budget, revenue source breakdown, budget flexibility and adjustments, and direct and indirect charges from H-GAC.

Mr. Adrian Ozuna, Chair of the Career Services Committee, will brief us on the recent committee meeting and request possible adoption of the Career Services Policy on Office Locations. Also, we will need to ratify the actions from the October 1, 2024, Board meeting and discuss and take possible action regarding Board members with attendance challenges.



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The meeting will also feature presentations on our system's performance metrics and expenditure report, delivered by Mr. Philip Garcia and Ms. Brandi Brown. Additionally, Mr. Parker Harvey and Mohammad Ahmadizadeh will provide an update on the labor market, and Mr. Russell Tomlin will give a brief communication and media update.

As we gear up for 2025, I would like to invite you to the High Skills, High Growth Planning Workshop on Tuesday, January 7 at Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, Texas, 77027 at 1:00 pm-3:00 pm. This presentation and discussion will be led by Mr. Parkey Harvey. Your attendance and input will be invaluable to our continued service in developing a resilient workforce for our region. We look forward to seeing you there!

I also invite you to participate in the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Second Annual Tri-Agency Regional Convener Conference at the Houston ION on January 29, 2025. This event will feature career exploration activities for students in the morning, followed by an afternoon session for school leaders to discuss upcoming opportunities for Gulf Coast youth.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership, dedication, and contribution. Your commitment continues to make a profound difference in the lives of so many across our region. I look forward to seeing you on December 10 and encourage you to reach out to me with any questions or thoughts before then.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyous and peaceful holiday season!



GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

AGENDA

**Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.
2nd Floor, A/B/C, 3555 Timmons Lane
Houston, Texas 77027**

This meeting will be in person only and open to the public.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Introduction of Newly Appointed Board Members**
- 4. Adopt Agenda**
- 5. Public Comment**
- 6. Review of the October 2024 Meeting Minutes**
- 7. Declare Conflicts of Interest**
- 8. Reports:**
 - a. Board Chair's Remarks: (Board Chair Mark Guthrie),
 - b. Executive Director's Report: (Juliet Stipeche),
 - c. Audit and Monitoring Committee Report: (Committee Chair Guy Jackson),
 - d. Education Committee Report: (Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson),
 - e. Employer Engagement Committee Report: (Committee Chair Alan Heskamp),
 - f. Communications Committee Report: (Committee Chair Doug Karr),
and
 - g. Budget Committee Report: (Board Chair Mark Guthrie).

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9. Action Items:

- a. Career Services Committee Report and Action Item: Briefing of the Career Services Committee meeting from Chair Adrian Ozuna including discussion and possible adoption of the following:
 - i. Career Services Policy on Office Locations
- b. Ratification of Action Items from October 1, 2024, Board Meeting: (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)
- c. Discussion and Possible Action regarding Board Members with Attendance Challenges: (Board Chair Mark Guthrie).

10. Information:

- a. Performance and Production: Report on the system's performance and production (Philip Garcia) and
- b. Expenditures Report: Report on the Board's budget and expenditures (Brandi Brown).

11. Presentations:

- a. A Look at the Economy: Update on the Labor Market (Parker Harvey and Mohammad Ahmadizadeh) and
- b. Communications and Media Update: (Russell Tomlin).

12. Other Business

13. Adjourn

If you wish to make a public comment you may appear in person or do so by providing your comments in writing no later than 5:00 pm on **Monday, December 9, 2024**, to Dr. Maria Franco Cortes at maria.cortes@wrksolutions.net.

Meeting materials are available on our website at www.wrksolutions.com/about-us/meetings.

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**GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2024**

1. Call to Order: The Tuesday, October 1, 2024, meeting of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Board Chair Mark Guthrie. The meeting was held on the 2nd Floor, A-C, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027.

2. Roll Call: Desmond Taylor, Program Administrator of the GCWB called the roll. The following members of the GCWB were present:

Beard, Peter	Karr, Doug	Sarkar, Mou
Gonzalez, Melissa	Larmond, Shareen	Schmidt, Keri
Guido, Cheryl	Lowe, Jonathan	Segovia, Valerie
Guthrie, Mark	Oser, Margaret	Staley, Gil
Henderson, Bobbie	Ozuna, Adrian	Vazquez, Lizandra
Heskamp, Alan	Puente, Paul	Watson, Carolyn
Jackson, Guy R.	Riley, Monica	Webster, Michael
Jones, Lavone	Rodriguez, Melanie	Yu, Bin

Board Chair Guthrie determined a quorum was present.

3. Adopt Agenda: Board Chair Guthrie presented the October 1, 2024, agenda. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion passed.

4. Public Comment: Steve Sandweiss, Grandma’s House Childcare Center and member of the Childcare Advisory Council.

- Workforce Solutions’ efforts to work closely with industry operators to help address quality of care, the impacts of lower enrollment, and rising childcare costs.

5. Review of the August 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the August 6, 20024, GCWB meeting were distributed electronically to all members before the October 1, 2024, meeting. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

6. Declare Conflicts of Interest: None

7. Reports:

- a. **Paving the Pathway:** Chair Guthrie and Board Member Cheryl Guido recognized students, parents, business mentors, and program leaders of *Paving the Pathway* for brief testimonials and award presentations. Cheryl Guido also presented a video about the program. There were several employers recognized for their participation in the program, including CVS, Space Center Houston, Houston Museum of Natural Science, and Simply Converge.
- b. **Board Chair's Report:** Chair Guthrie opened his remarks by thanking the Board and Board staff for all the prayers, calls, texts, and words of encouragement he received regarding his wife's passing.

Chair Guthrie reported that on September 17, a group of bipartisan members of the House of Representatives introduced House Resolution 1453 which recognizes the vital role of workforce development in supporting job seekers, businesses, and local economies and designated September 2024 as National Workforce Development Month. Additionally, Chair Guthrie noted that the Senate HELP Committee issued a discussion draft of its WIOA Reauthorization bill. The bill has not been issued in its final form due to disagreements between committee members. The timetable for the final draft of the bill is still unknown but most likely won't be determined before the national election.

Chair Guthrie reported that he was elected to his third and final three-year term as a director of the National Association of Workforce Boards at NAWB's Annual Meeting. He will be attending the quarterly board meeting of NAWB in Alexandria, Virginia in late August and will provide a report on matters of interest to the GCWB during the December board meeting.

In other national news, Congress passed, and President Biden signed a Continuing Resolution (CR) that extended funding for the federal government to December 20, 2024, which avoided an August federal government shutdown.

In state news, Chair Guthrie reported that the GCWB will host the Texas Association of Workforce Boards (TAWB) quarterly meeting on October 14. Board members are invited to attend the meetings which will include a presentation on the upcoming Texas legislative session and impacts to public education. The meeting will be held at the East End Workforce Solutions Office on Harrisburg beginning at 9:00 am.

Next, Chair Guthrie reported on a meeting held between Ed Serna, TWC Executive Director, Juliet Stipeche, Chuck Wemple, Desmond Taylor and himself in Austin, Texas regarding challenges with the Adult Education Literacy grant award. A response from TWC is pending and will be reported back to the Board upon receipt.

Locally, Board Member Sofia Adroque resigned from the Board due to her recent appointment by Governor Abbott as a judge in the newly created Texas Business Courts. Board Chair Guthrie congratulated former Board member Adroque and thanked her for her contributions to the GCWB.

Additionally, he acknowledged October being National Disability Employment Awareness Month and highlighted some upcoming events that the GCWB will be hosting/co-hosting such as White Cane Day (10/15), National Disability Employment Awareness Month Job Fair (10/24), Clear Lake Community Meeting (10/28), and Red, White, and You Hiring Event for Veterans (11/1).

Chair Guthrie concluded his report, and no action was taken.

- c. **Executive Director's Report (Juliet Stipeche):** Executive Director Juliet Stipeche began her report by thanking Board Chair Guthrie for his leadership and being re-elected to the NAWB Board. She continued her report by detailing a series of key engagements and events that underscored the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's ongoing commitment to fostering strategic partnerships and advancing workforce development initiatives.

Ms. Stipeche began by highlighting her attendance at the Texas Economic Development Corporation's "The Future is Texas" Summit in Austin, Texas. The Summit featured panel discussions on several key topics including the future of artificial intelligence in Texas, the state's role in the

semiconductor industry, and a discussion of critical areas such as water, energy, education, space, and their influence on the state's future. Governor Greg Abbott and First Lady Cecilia Abbott were in attendance, and the Governor offered a keynote at the luncheon highlighting Texas's dynamic economy, his economic development successes and strategies, and the future economic landscape of Texas.

Ms. Stipeche highlighted the United States Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Task Force meeting held in Las Vegas, Nevada. This event served as a vital national platform for exchanging innovative ideas and best practices among city leaders and workforce development professionals. Hosted by Jaime Cruz, Executive Director of Workforce Connections in Southern Nevada, the conference featured engaging activities such as tours of co-located career offices, insightful panel discussions with local elected officials on the region's robust partnerships, and presentations on groundbreaking programs designed to support disengaged youth and persons facing re-entry from the justice system.

Ms. Stipeche also shared her experience attending the State of Missouri City, where the mayor outlined key initiatives and accomplishments in his community. Additionally, she participated in a Texas Vocational Rehabilitation business convening, which brought together stakeholders to discuss enhancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through inclusive hiring practices and support programs.

She also discussed the visit with President Brian Freeman and the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership (BAHEP) to explore critical economic development issues, including workforce alignment with the region's healthcare, aerospace and maritime industries. They also discussed the possibility of co-location. On September 27, 2024, BAHEP graciously co-hosted the Autonomous Aviation Mobility Symposium, in partnership with Wisk Aero and Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast. The symposium featured pivotal discussions on the future of urban air mobility in Houston, including WISK Aero's plans to deploy all-electric, self-driving air taxis in the region. The event underscored our role as a convener, bringing together stakeholders to explore the significant workforce and educational opportunities associated with this emerging industry. Panels highlighted the importance of partnerships with leaders from government, industry, and education, all essential to advancing the objectives outlined in our new strategic plan. A special thanks to Outreach Strategists for their invaluable support in making this event a success.

Executive Director Stipeche concluded her report, and no action was taken.

- d. **H-GAC Executive Director's Report (Chuck Wemple):** H-GAC Executive Director Chuck Wemple opened his remarks by announcing the kick-off of H-GAC budget season and that he will return during the December board meeting to provide full details about H-GAC fees and charges included in the budget. Additionally, the agency will be launching a customer service calling campaign, to internally monitor how agency personnel respond to calls and messages regarding the agency and its services. Metrics will be utilized to determine the agency's customer service. New initiatives at the H-GAC include regional broadband connections, particularly in rural communities, water supply challenges (drinking and wastewater), and housing supply.

Chair Guthrie and H-GAC Executive Director Wemple have explored opportunities for their respective national associations to collaborate in providing humanitarian assistance to victims of Hurricane Helene, with a focus on those impacted in Tennessee. Additionally, Executive Director Wemple announced that H-GAC is offering grief counseling services to employees following the passing of Javier Palos, a valued member of H-GAC's print shop team.

H-GAC Executive Director Wemple concluded his report, and no action was taken.

- e. **Audit and Monitoring Committee (Committee Chair Guy R. Jackson):** Chair Jackson reported that the Audit and Monitoring Committee met on September 24, 2024, at the Workforce Solutions Southwest Office, with the following Committee members and Board staff present:

Board/Committee members: Committee Chair Guy Jackson, Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Mary Helen Cavazos, Cheryl Guido, Douglas Karr, Shonda Below and Jon R. Lowe.

Workforce Board staff: Juliet Stipeche, Russell Tomlin, AJ Dean, Jenny Johnson, Philip Garcia, Brandi Brown, Kevin Rodney, Jennifer Starling, Thomas Brown, LaToya Casimere, Jacinth Chapman, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Jessica Smith, Desmond Taylor, Vanessa Salazar, Cheryl Sheppard, Sabrina Uy, Jonathan Benjamin, Kimberly Lindolph, Kristi Rangel, Maisha Lyons, Romana Paniagua, Sable Harris-Buck, and Angela Williams.

Weaver staff: Brandon Tanous, Hailey Kohlian, Kiley Hillbrook, Gina De Leon, and Todd Hoffman.

During the Committee meeting, participants heard a presentation from Weaver & Tidwell, L.L.P. (Weaver) on the development and application of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligning with the Board's strategic objectives. More information will be forthcoming.

System Accountability—The Committee received updates on performances production, expenditures, and technical assistance programs. Mr. Jackson mentioned the Technical Program Compliance assessment by Equus- Financial Aid Support Center (FASC), spanning from October 2023 to September 2024, assessed performance, compliance, information security, and customer satisfaction. The results of the review have led to second-year findings in multiple areas. These areas are (1) Eligibility Determination and (2) Financial Aid Fulfillment. We have commenced PY2025 reviews of Adult Education and Literacy service providers.

Financial Systems—The Board engages two CPA firms to conduct comprehensive financial monitoring of all workforce board service providers. Five reports (5) resulted in a combined total of \$15,706.04 for questionable costs. The amounts have been received by H-GAC Finance Department. Additionally, the financial systems are working on a "Risk Matrix". The Risk Matrix is intended to provide a clear framework for assessing various risks, identifying potential problem areas, and prioritizing actions based on the severity and likelihood of the identified risks.

Opportunities for Improvement—The Texas Workforce Commission is still monitoring the performance improvement actions for measurable skills gain, and we are meeting with the state monthly. No updates from TWC since May 2024.

The GCWB is currently facilitating interventions with Equus- Career Office to continue a performance improvement plans for Property Management, Choices, Credential Rate, and Measurable Skills Gains. The reporting system through TWC remains down. Once the reporting system is in operation again, we will review the data and take appropriate action based on the findings.

Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries (ACAM): ACAM was previously placed on a Performance Improvement Plan due to being

deficient in WIOA Youth Customers Served and WIOA Youth Work-Based Learning targets. ACAM requested its enrollment target be adjusted to align with capacity, which was connected to a reduction in funding. ACAM signed the amendment in July, and Board staff will be removing the Performance Improvement Plan.

The University of Texas Children’s Learning Institute (CLI): CLI has been the Board’s contracted Early Education Quality service provider since March of 2023. CLI has struggled to meet Board deadlines and implement Texas Rising Star program policies with accuracy and timeliness. CLI’s reports, both to the Board and to TWC, have contained errors despite numerous offers from Board staff to answer any outstanding questions from CLI staff. Board staff and Senior Management have met several times with CLI to discuss these issues, but performance continues to lag. Board staff attempted to place CLI on a Performance Improvement Plan. CLI responded by informing Board staff that they would not be renewing their contract set to begin October 1, 2024. Board staff have developed a plan to transition services and anticipate issuing a Request for Proposal to find a replacement service provider for this work.

State or Federal Program Reviews—The Office of Inspector General (OIG) as part of a larger Texas Workforce Commission and Department of Labor review has completed its fieldwork and held a Statement of Fact meeting in early September. We anticipate the final OIG report to be released in early 2025 which will be a part of larger report.

Chair Jackson concluded his report by announcing the next Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting will be held on November 21, 2024, at 1:00pm at Workforce Solutions Westheimer.

Chair Jackson concluded his report, and no action was taken.

- f. **Career Services Committee Report (Committee Chair Adrian Ozuna):** Chair Ozuna reported that the Career Services Committee met on September 17, 2024, at the Workforce Solutions Pearland Office, 5730 W. Broadway Ste. 122, Pearland, TX 77581, with the following Committee members and Board staff present:

Board/Committee members: Committee Chair Adrian Ozuna, Co-Chair Cheryl Guido, Helen Cavazos, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Bin-Yu, Dorian Cockrell, Guy Jackson, Mou Sarkar, Melanie Rodriguez, Edward Melton, Jeff LaBroski, Mohammad Ahmadizadeh, and Nasruddin Rupani.

Workforce Board staff: Juliet Stipeche, Kristi Rangel, Russell Tomlin, AJ Dean, Maria Franco, Desmond Taylor, Jennifer Graves, Janine Hayes, Johnathan Benjamin, Sable Harris-Buck, Wen Zheng and Leigh Ann Arnold (Outreach Strategists).

Clear Lake Townhall Meeting—The townhall meeting is scheduled on October 28, 2024, at the Clear Lake City Community Center. The townhall aims to reinforce Workforce Solutions’ presence in the community and the continuation of career services despite not occupying the current office space due to limited accessibility and other challenges.

Career Services Policy on Office Locations—Chair Ozuna mentioned the Committee’s work on the Career Services Policy on Office Locations. This document will allow the Board a full range of metrics to assess sunsetting, re-locating, co-locating, or opening new locations. Input/suggestions to the policy are strongly encouraged as the Committee looks to finalize in the November Committee meeting and send to the full Board for adoption in December.

Career Office Updates— Board staff provided in-depth updates on the impending lease expirations for the Northshore and Willowbrook offices, both of which are critical to the Board’s operational footprint. Leadership is considering a range of options, including reducing office space, transitioning to virtual services, and exploring partnerships with local community organizations to maintain service delivery. The Committee emphasized the importance of providing adequate notice to Vocational Rehabilitation services to ensure a smooth transition in office locations.

Technology Updates—The Committee discussed the status of the JRNI contract, which will not move forward due to an unresolved indemnification clause. As a result, negotiations will commence with QLESS Inc., the second bidder, for the appointment management software.

Career Office Program Spotlight:

- White Cane Safety Day on October 15, 10 AM to 2 PM at the University of Houston’s Student Services Center South
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month Job Fair on October 24, 10 AM to 1 PM at the Deputy Darren Almendarez Community Center.

Chair Ozuna concluded his report, and no action was taken.

- g. Employer Engagement Committee Report (Committee Chair Alan Heskamp):** Chair Heskamp reported on the September 19, 2024, Employer Engagement Committee meeting held at H-GAC, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX, 77027, with the following Committee members and Board staff present:

Board/Committee members: Committee Chair Alan Heskamp, Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Paul Puente, Doug Karr, Richard C. Shaw, and Dr. Bobbie Henderson.

Workforce Board staff: Juliet Stipeche, Desmond Taylor, Maria Franco Cortes, Romana Paniagua, Crosby Brito, Melissa Steinmetz, Ron Borski, Sable Harris, Parker Harvey, Gabrielle Gonzalez, Alexandra Matt, Lacy Wolf, AJ Dean, Russell Tomlin, and Jalil Canterero.

Industry Updates— Texas Children’s Hospital’s Layoffs: Texas Children’s Hospital (TCH) announced layoffs of 997 members of its staff, including those in patient facing roles in respiratory therapy, physical therapy, and the entire midwifery team in the Texas Medical Center and the incoming nursing class. TCH has a reputation for long tenured employees with some having 20-40 years of service with the organization.

TCH cited financial difficulties as the reason for the layoffs, following the recent loss of its Medicaid/CHIP contract with the State of Texas, a challenge faced by many other providers as well. Additionally, TCH expanded into the Austin market, constructing a new hospital that was scheduled to open in August. However, regulatory issues delayed the opening, resulting in an operating loss of \$200 million in 2024. The layoffs, which will occur in phases and continue through 2025, have prompted competitors HCA and Memorial Hermann to hold job fairs, with HCA reporting over one hundred hires.

San Jacinto Community College and NSF Engine Grant: San Jacinto Community College (SJC) is applying for an innovation grant with the National Science Foundation (NSF) to create a biomanufacturing hub for industrial biotechnology in the Houston area. The GCWB submitted a letter of support for Houston's initial round of interest in applying for this grant. SJC is expanding its biomanufacturing programs at existing campuses but will focus this program at its new Generation Park campus. Key industry players include chemical manufacturing companies entering the space like BASF, Goodyear, LyondellBasell, and others. Should Houston be invited to the next round of applications for

BioMS, SJC has asked the Gulf Workforce Board to submit a letter of support.

Lab Tech Certification: There is a regional push for the adoption of National Certification Standards for laboratory technicians in the State of Texas. We have been approached by training organizations and employers and have been notified that “we” are losing out on incoming biotech investment projects to other regions. Texas is also considering the adoption of its own lab tech certification standard and held a conference at Texas A&M to discuss it. Lab Tech is not presently on the High Skills/High Growth List/Targeted Industries list but given the growing need in the region based on current labor needs, projected company arrivals, and announced industry plans, we are considering its inclusion.

Construction and Building Trades—Energy and Infrastructure Initiatives: We are actively involved in energy innovation, serving on advisory councils for the HyVelocity Hydrogen Hub, which focuses on advancing hydrogen technology as a key energy resource. We have been invited by the University of Texas’s Energy Institute to participate in an upcoming conference in Austin, Texas on October 7, 2024.

Regional Workforce Development: Board staff Lacy Wolf met with Congressman Troy Nehls and the Wharton Chamber of Commerce to address the need for training, certifications, and workforce development, particularly in areas like construction and infrastructure, including a levy project near the Colorado River. He is also working with the City of Pasadena and the Bay City Chamber of Commerce to encourage contractors to hire locally.

Information Technology—Board staff Amber Jefferson has been working closely with the Houston East End Chamber of Commerce and the Tri-County Regional Black Chamber of Commerce to enhance employer engagement efforts. Ms. Jefferson’s outreach has included appearances on podcasts, YouTube, radio, and speaking at business luncheons to expand our impact across the 13 counties.

Education—Juliet Stipeche reported on the Tri-Agency Regional Convener grant, awarded to the GCWB, focused on the successful delivery of immersive and work-based learning experiences for students in key sectors, including healthcare, building and construction, and education. Students participated in paid work-based learning opportunities across three high-demand industries:

Healthcare:	12,
Building and Construction:	4, and
Education:	<u>22</u>
Total:	38 placements

earning a minimum of \$15 per hour. Those in the Education sector received a \$2,000 stipend.

Teacher Apprenticeship Program

The GCWB has been awarded a \$200,000 planning grant from the Houston Endowment to develop a Regional Teacher Apprenticeship Program aimed at addressing the teacher shortage in Education Service Center Region 4 and Montgomery County. This initiative will create a sustainable pipeline of certified educators by aligning with local district needs.

Economic Highlights— Board staff Ron Borski shared his most recent quarterly reports for all thirteen counties, and these reports highlight critical information on latest civilian labor force data, recently released employment data for first quarter 2024, historical charts for major industries, long-term annual growth charts, all-time highs and lows by major industry updated, and sample occupational wages updated with recently released 2023 data.

Employer Engagement Updates— Board staff Crosby Brito shared with the Committee that the Employer Engagement team has undertaken strategic efforts to reengage with chambers of commerce, economic development corporations (EDCs), and other organizations across the Houston Gulf Coast region in collaboration with SERCO of Texas. This initiative specifically targeted entities that, in the past, expressed frustration with Workforce Solutions, due to communication challenges or unmet service expectations. Through a deliberate and methodical approach, we have been able to rebuild relationships and forge new partnerships, laying the groundwork for sustained collaboration and mutual success.

SERCO Strategic Partnership—The Employer Engagement Team has worked closely with SERCO to align their tasks with the GCWB's Strategic Plan, which centers on four key goals:

- 1) Improving Service Delivery Using Technology and Innovative Solutions;
- 2) Serving as a Convener and Forging Strategic Partnerships;
- 3) Increasing Awareness of Services and Opportunities;
- 4) Supporting Business-Forward Strategies to Fuel the Regional Economy.

- Performance and Production: SERCO has achieved a significant milestone by surpassing their Texas Talent Rate (formerly known as EWA) target, reaching 119% of the goal.
- This marks the first time a contractor has exceeded this benchmark at such a significant level. However, there remain challenges in other metrics, specifically Measurable Skills Gains (MSGs), where they are currently at 75%, below the 94% target.

Success Story, A Winning Partnership—Chair Heskamp highlighted a success story about a winning partnership between Openwork LLC and the Workforce Solutions Career Center at Westheimer. Through this partnership, Workforce Solutions successfully placed workers in high-demand industries, directly addressing the employment needs of a regional employer who was initially doubtful of our services and abilities. In the end, we exceeded their expectations, and Openwork LLC is excited to continue the collaboration.

Chair Heskamp concluded the Employer Engagement Committee report by stating some goals he'd like the Employer Engagement Committee to focus on moving forward:

- Improve communication/advertisement with external groups on what is done by the Employer Engagement team, particularly its impact with employers across the 13-county region.
- Focus our efforts on regional trade associations and management.
- Look at other workforce development boards to garner "best practices."
- Establish an employer advisory board.

The next meeting of the Employer Engagement Committee will be on November 12, 2024, in El Campo, Texas.

Chair Heskamp concluded his report, and no action was taken.

h. Communications Committee Report (Committee Chair Doug Karr):

Chair Karr reported on the September 25, 2024, Communications Committee meeting held at H-GAC, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX, 77027, with the following Committee members and Board staff present:

Board/Committee members: Committee Chair Doug Karr, Richard Shaw, Cheryl Guido, Paul Puente, Board Chair Mark Guthrie, and Guy Jackson.

Workforce Board staff: Juliet Stipeche, Desmond Taylor, Harris Sable, Leighann Ann Arnold, Sabrina Parras, Michelle Cantu, Maria Franco Cortes, Romana Paniagua, Kristi Rangel, Russell Tomlin, AJ Dean, Jennifer Graves, Harvey Parker, Sabrina Parras, AJ Dean, and Lorena Campa.

A few takeaways included the Board’s social media strategy, with a focus on content optimization and targeted audience growth across the 13-county region. Other areas of discussion included key media engagement opportunities that occurred in the months of August and September:

KTRK "Look Who’s Hiring Now" Segments

“Avenues of Opportunity” Job Fair, Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church and KTRK’s “Look Who’s Hiring Now” with a special focus on Aviation and Aerospace on August 22, 2024:

Job Fair Statistics

- Attendees: 365
- Employers: 39
- Interviews: 172
- Onsite Hires: 6

Media Coverage

- Total AVE: \$85,063.80
- Viewership: 214,114

“Work in Pearland” Job Fair, Pearland Economic Development Council on September 18, 2024:

Job Fair Statistics

- Attendees: 523
- Employers: 81

Media Coverage

- Total AVE: \$57,625.80
- Viewership: 152,162

Upcoming Events:

Town Hall for Clear Lake Career Office: Scheduled for October 28, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at Clear Lake City Community Center, 16511 Diana Lane, Houston, TX 77062. This event aims to engage the local community and enhance public perception.

18th Annual White Cane Safety Day: October 15, 2024, at the University of Houston, Student Services Center South from 10AM to 2PM. This event celebrates the accomplishments of the blind and visually impaired individuals which begins with an awareness march, and transitions into an exciting program with mayoral proclamation and guest speakers;

National Disability Employment Awareness Month Job Fair: October 24, 2024, at the Darren Almendarez Community Center, 10918 ½ Bentley Street, Houston, TX 77093 and will feature a KTRK's "Who's Hiring Now" segment; and

Hiring Red, White, and You: November 1, 2024, at NRG Center, 8600 Kirby Drive, Houston, TX 77054. A significant event aimed at veterans and employers.

Digital Community Engagement: Chair Karr highlighted the great media coverage of customer journeys found on YouTube, specifically the Officer Erica Ramirez story which showcased the transformative impact of Workforce Solutions' services on individual career journeys. This narrative not only highlights personal success but also demonstrates the broader value of our programs to the community. Additionally, he spoke highly of the talent and quality of the employer engagement activities including most recent hiring events that are captured on our social media sites.

Social Media Strategy and Performance Overview: Our overarching goal is to enhance our online presence by increasing visibility and brand awareness, fostering a positive and inclusive brand image, and expanding our audience reach to ensure that the GCWB is recognized as a leading resource for workforce solutions. In doing so, we aim to showcase partnerships that are crucial in driving economic development and community well-being throughout the Gulf Coast region. By highlighting success stories, sharing job opportunities, and engaging directly with our audience, we ensure that our messaging remains relevant and impactful.

To assess the effectiveness of our social media efforts, we consistently track and evaluate key performance indicators (KPIs). Our KPIs include:

- **Follower Growth:** Tracking the growth of our audience across platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter). This helps us measure how well we are attracting new users and expanding our reach.

- **Reach and Impressions:** Monitoring the number of users who view our content allows us to understand the extent of our visibility in the digital space. Impressions give insight into how often our posts are being seen, whether through organic reach or paid promotion.
- **Website Visits:** Social media platforms act as gateways to our official website, where users can explore workforce services, job postings, and more. By tracking website traffic from social platforms, we can gauge the effectiveness of our content in driving users to take action and seek out our services.
- **Engagement Metrics:** Engagement is one of the most telling indicators of content success. By analyzing the number of interactions—such as likes, shares, comments, messages, and link clicks—we can determine which content resonates the most with our audience. This data helps us understand not just how many people are viewing our content, but how deeply they are interacting with it.

Data Summary: Growth in Followers and Year-Over-Year Comparison
As of this reporting period, the GCWB's primary social media platforms have accumulated 28,535 followers.

Platform	Followers 2024	Reach	Followers 2023	Year-Over-Year Change
Facebook	11,473	23,400	10,709	7.13%
Instagram	5,265	10,200	3,896	35.14%
LinkedIn	9,971	5,727	8,091	23.24%
X (Twitter)	1826	N/a	1,784	2.35%

Strategic Recommendations: Based on the analysis of social media performance and engagement metrics, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance our strategy moving forward:

- **Content Optimization**
- **Targeted Audience Growth**
- **Strengthen Local Engagement**

H-GAC Communications Update: Since our last meeting, H-GAC Communications has been advancing key initiatives essential to the workforce board's strategic objectives. We are currently working with Outreach Strategists to coordinate the upcoming Clear Lake Town Hall. Additionally, in support of the National Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant, the Communications team is conducting a targeted survey among H-GAC elected officials and member governments. This survey is designed to gather essential data on recovery and rebuilding efforts, and to identify potential worksites and job opportunities that can be filled using the grant funds.

Lastly, with our ongoing website development project with Planeteria, the team finalized a detailed questionnaire and outline, ensuring the project aligns with our Workforce Solutions 2024-2029 Strategic Vision. They are now scheduling kickoff meetings to move the project forward. Project remains on timeline.

The next Communications Committee meeting will be held on November 13, 2024, at 10:00 am.

Board Member Carolyn Watson inquired on how the Board is thinking about social media for persons under 25. Juliet Stipeche responded by informing the Board that Outreach Strategists will be conducting an assessment on how to best target youth via the Hire Gulf Coast Youth initiative. More details will be shared with the Board once the plan is devised. Board Member Mou Sarkar added to the conversation by acknowledging this is year three (3) of the partnership between the Pearland EDC and the GCWB. The partnership has been a huge success, and she looks forward to the continued work, particularly the show with Nick Natarrio at ABC13.

There was no more discussion on the Communications Committee report.

Chair Karr concluded his report and no action was taken.

8. Action Items:

a. Education Committee Report and Action Item (Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson):

Chair Dr. Henderson reported on the September 10, 2024, Education Committee meeting held at H-GAC, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX, 77027, with the following Committee members and Board staff present:

Board/Committee members: Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Paul Puente, Bin Yu, Douglas Karr, Mary Helen Cavazos, Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Cheryl Guido, Esmeralda Mata, Sandra, Taylor, and Edward Melton.

Workforce Board staff: Juliet Stipeche, Kristi Rangel, AJ Dean, Russell Tomlin, Jalil Cantarero, Jennifer Starling, Jacinth Chapman, Danielle Knotts, LaToya Casimere, Leni Quick, Desmond Taylor, Maria Franco Cortes, and Romana Paniagua.

Several accomplishments by Board staff were highlighted as referenced in the Board packet distributed during the October 1 meeting.

A few highlights include:

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)—Danielle Knox was recognized for her work on grant iterations and summary changes.

Youth Services—Latoya Casimere was recognized for her work under the 5 units outlined in the extensive Education Committee report referenced in the Board packet.

Early Education Quality—Jacinth Chapman’s work on all the early childhood education programs and initiatives was recognized by Chair Henderson.

Child Care Scholarships—Jennifer Starling was recognized for efforts under CCS as referenced in the report found in the Board packet.

Action Item: The Education Committee recommended that the Board approve an increase in the number of paid closure days from 9 days to 12 days, annually for all providers with an active Workforce Solutions agreement, effective January 2025.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the increase the number of paid closure days from 9 days to 12 days, annually for all providers with an active Workforce Solutions agreement, effective January 1, 2025. The motion passed.

Dr. Henderson continued by thanking the staff for all their efforts throughout the year, specifically during the month of September when the Committee met as it was National Workforce Development Professionals month. She continued her report by welcoming new team

member Jalil Cantarero as the new Hire Gulf Coast Youth Coordinator and congratulated Jennifer Starling for her recent promotion as the new Manager of Early Education Unit.

Lastly, she announced the Support Center Open House on October 8 from 9:00 am- 11:00 am.

There was no further discussion on the Education Committee report and no further actions were taken.

b. Strategic Planning Committee Report and Action Item (Board Chair Mark Guthrie):

In Committee Chair Bowles' absence, Board Chair Guthrie provided highlights of the new Strategic Plan for 2024-2029, including the workshops that were conducted before and after the August GCWB Meeting that allowed Board members a final opportunity to solicit comments to the plan. With no additional comments offered, the final draft was circulated by Board staff prior to the October Board meeting for approval.

The four key highlights of the 2024-2029 strategic plan include:

- Technology and Innovation in Service Delivery
 - Leveraging Technology to Enhance Service Delivery via a mobile application
- Serving as Convener and Strategic Partner
- Increasing Awareness of Services and Opportunities
- Supporting Business Forward Strategies

Board Member Mou Sarkar mentioned that some of the cities listed in the plan that reside in several counties, including Katy and Pearland were only listed under one county.

Board Member Peter Beard added that we need to design a clear communication strategy to roll out the strategic plan, internally and externally. Additionally, he mentioned it is imperative to inform stakeholders what we "do not" do as an organization through this plan as seek to enhance our regional footprint.

To conclude the Strategic Planning Committee report, Chair Carl Bowles provided a video recording to thank the Committee members, Board staff, and Board Members who actively participated in the strategic planning process and looks forward to its implementation.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2024-2029 GCWB Strategic Plan. The motion passed.

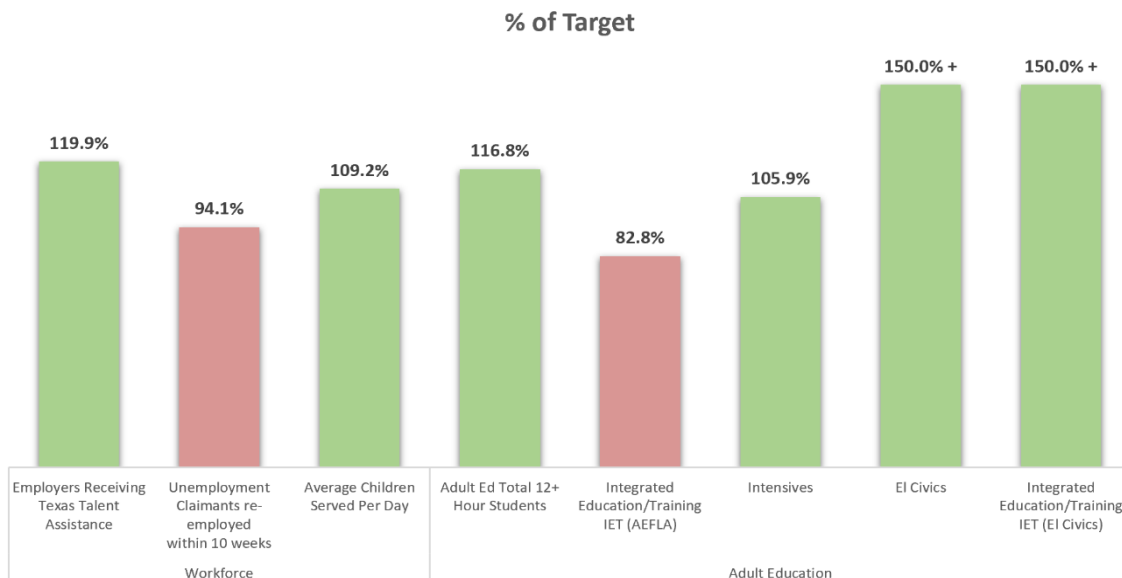
Board Chair Guthrie echoed Chair Bowles’ comments in thanking the Committee members, Board staff, Board members, and Outreach Strategists for their hard work on completing the 2024-2029 GVWB Strategic Plan and is excited for its full implementation in committees and overall Board operations. He added, he looks forward to its formal presentation at the upcoming TWC’s annual conference in December 2024.

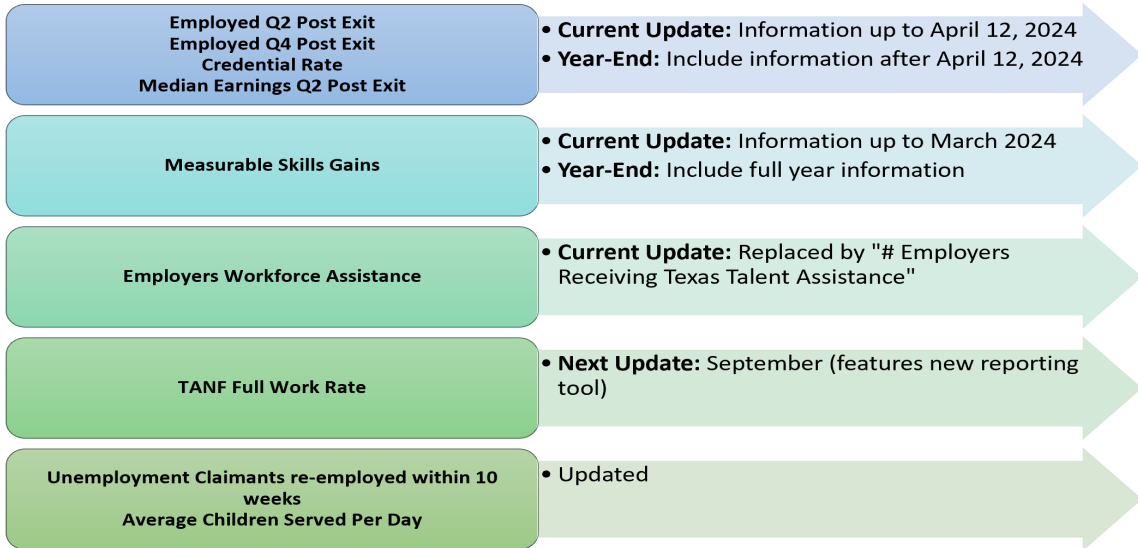
9. Information:

a. Performance and Production Report (Philip Garcia):

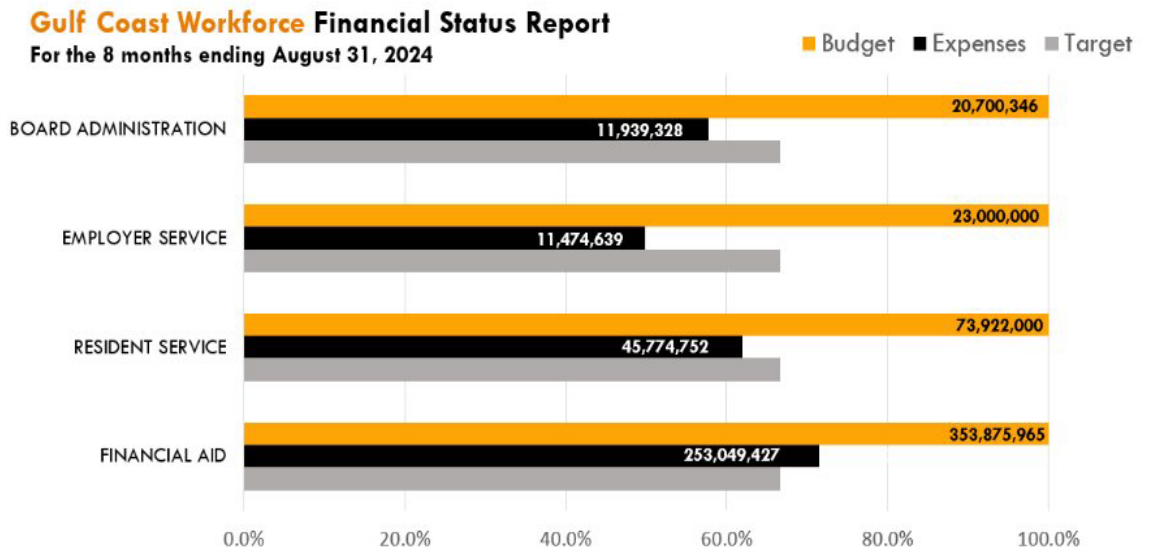
Philip Garcia provided an update on reporting capabilities as also mentioned by Audit and Monitoring Committee Chair Guy Jackson. TWC is still reviewing reporting tools and working towards effective solutions. Many of the measures have not been updated since April 2024. This is the same time as the transition from the TWIST CMS to the Work in Texas CMS. These delays impact TWC reporting on all of our WIOA measures and a few others. TWC indicated that the remaining information will be reported out at the end of the calendar year/early January.

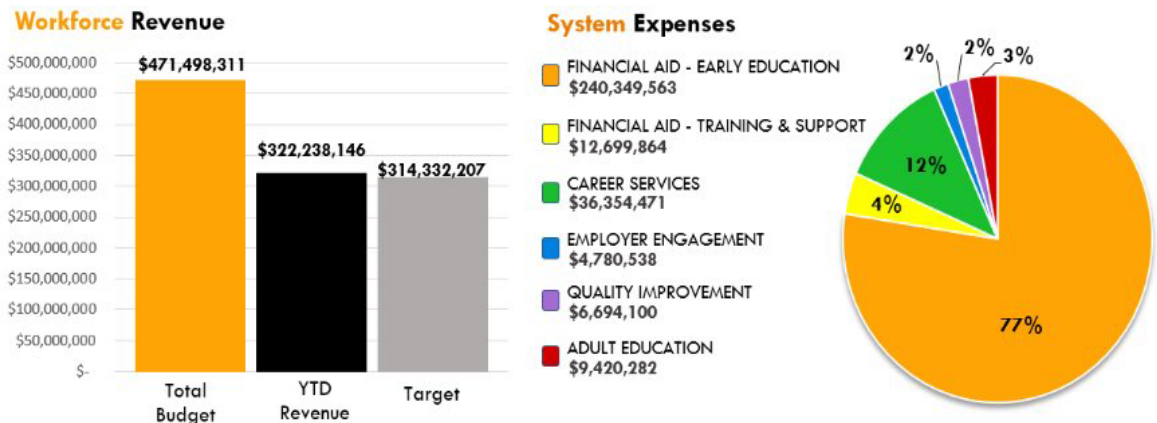
Production Measures
October 2023 to August 2024





b. Expenditures Report (Brandi Brown):





10. Presentations:

a. A Look at the Economy: Update on the Labor Market (Parker Harvey and Mohammad Ahmadizadeh)

- **Houston Labor Market Snapshot**

- Total Population: 7.66 million (25% of the state population)
- Total Employed People: 3,566,848
- Over the years, Harris County MSA population surpasses City of Houston MSA population and Houston MSA population continues to outpace both City of Houston and Harris County MSA populations.
- Houston median age is gradually increasing over the last decade. Today, it stands at 35.7, an increase over 2 years. While the overall population is aging, Houston remains on the younger side compared to the rest of the country.
 - The median age of the U.S. is 38.9.
 - Houston has 3rd youngest population among top 50 metropolitan areas in the U.S.
- Foreign Born Population in Houston MSA: Resident- 1,862,616 (24.8% v. Workforce 1,196,446 (30.6%))
 - The foreign-born share in the workforce is higher than the share in population, illustrating the critical role of foreign-born resident in our labor market.
 - Age of immigrants coming to work in the Houston MSA are coming at working age. People are coming to work versus receiving an education; hence, the high number of immigrants having less than a high school diploma.

b. Communications and Media Update (Russell Tomlin):

- Russell Tomlin requested to table his report to the December Board meeting due to the late hour. Board Chair Guthrie and Executive Director Juliet Stipeche concurred.

11. Other Business

Executive Director Juliet Stipeche added her thanks to the Paving the Pathway Program as well as the Summer Earn and Learn Program team, LaToya Casimere, Ashley Glenn, Amber Jefferson, and the Career Offices who worked diligently on the youth portal.

12. Adjourn: Board Chair Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 12:16 pm.

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

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211 Litchfield Lane
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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

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Vice Chair

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BELOW, SHONDA

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

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Board Chair

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

HENDERSON, BOBBIE ALLEN

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

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County: Fort Bend

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

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The Woodlands Area Economic
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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

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Tiny Toes Academy
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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

WORKFORCE BOARD KEY STAFF:

Juliet Stipeche, Director

Romana Paniagua, Director's Administrative Assistant

Desmond Taylor, Program Administrator, Board Relations

Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Senior Planner, Board Relations

Kristi Rangel, Assistant Director of Workforce

AJ Dean, Senior Manager, Fiscal Administration and Contract Management

Russell Tomlin, Senior Manager, Career Services

Jenny Johnson, Quality Assurance Manager

Parker Harvey, Manager for Regional Economic Analysis

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GULF COAST WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD COMMITTEES

Audit/Monitoring

- Guy Robert Jackson – Chair
- Carl Bowles – Vice Chair
- Helen Cavazos
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Doug Karr
- Paul Puente

Budget

- Mark Guthrie – Chair
- – Vice Chair
- Bobbie Henderson
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Doug Karr

By-Laws

- Michael Webster – Chair
- Adrian Ozuna – Vice Chair
- Peter Beard
- Mark Guthrie
- Alan Heskamp
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Carolyn Watson

Career Services

- Adrian Ozuna – Chair
- Cheryl Guido – Vice Chair
- Melissa Gonzalez
- Dorian Cockrell
- Michael Webster
- Bin Yu
- Edward Melton
- Carolyn Watson

Communications

- Doug Karr – Chair
- – Vice Chair
- Willie Alexander
- Anthony Gay
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Jonathan Lowe
- Richard Shaw
- Mike Webster
- Melanie Rodriguez

Education

- Bobbie Henderson – Chair
- Doug Karr – Vice Chair
- Willie Alexander
- Shonda Below
- Helen Cavazos
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Alan Heskamp
- Jeff LaBroski
- Michael Love
- Edward Melton
- Margaret Oser
- Paul Puente
- Monica Riley
- Valerie Segovia
- Richard Shaw
- Sandra Taylor
- Carolyn Watson

Employer Engagement

- Alan Heskamp – Chair
- Jeff LaBroski – Vice Chair
- Willie Alexander
- Helen Cavazos
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Shareen Larmond
- Mou Sarkar
- Keri Schmidt
- Richard Shaw
- Gil Staley
- Melanie Rodriguez

Government Relations

- Guy Robert Jackson – Chair
- – Vice Chair
- Willie Alexander
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson
- Richard Shaw

Nominating

- Guy Robert Jackson – Chair
- Jeff LaBroski – Vice Chair
- Alan Heskamp

Procurement

- Bobbie Henderson – Chair
- Doug Karr – Vice Chair
- Willie Alexander
- Helen Cavazos
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Alan Heskamp
- Jeff LaBroski
- Adrian Ozuna
- Richard Shaw
- Gil Staley
- Paul Puente

Report Card

Appointed by Board Chair as needed.

Strategic Planning

- Carl Bowles – Chair
- Paul Puente – Vice Chair
- Willie Alexander
- Peter Beard
- Anthony Gay
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson
- Doug Karr
- Michael Love
- Adrian Ozuna
- Richard Shaw
- Carolyn Watson
- Melanie Rodriguez

Audit and Monitoring Committee

Committee Report

Committee Chair Guy Jackson called the Audit and Monitoring Committee to order at 1:00 p.m. on November 21, 2024, at the Workforce Solutions Westheimer Office. Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Committee Vice Chair Carl Bowles, and Board members Mary Helen Cavazos, Cheryl Guido, Douglas Karr, Lavone Jones, and Dr. Bobbie Henderson were also in attendance.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Framework Update:

Board staff discussed the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) framework to guide future program performance measurement development. The framework defines KPIs across four levels:

- **Level 0:** Compliance-driven KPIs
- **Level 1:** KPIs based on currently available data.
- **Level 2:** KPIs requiring small investments such as development of new partnerships or information sharing arrangements.
- **Level 3:** KPIs that require significant technology or other resource investment.

All KPIs are designed to align with the Workforce Board's strategic goals which were approved in October 2024.

The Committee received the draft KPIs for the Board's Early Childhood Education Program including:

1. Support Business-Forward Strategies to Fuel the Regional Economy:
 - Goal: Equip parents and guardians with resources to enhance family socioeconomic well-being.
 - Metric: Monitor the number of parents who exit program eligibility due to income surpassing the qualifying threshold.
2. Serve as a Convener & Forge Strategic Partnerships:
 - Goal: Develop and sustain partnerships with high-quality early learning providers.
 - Metric: Track the number of new providers joining our network.
3. Increase Awareness of Services & Opportunities:
 - Goal: Strengthen outreach and engagement with quality early learning centers.
 - Metric: Measure the ratio of successfully partnered childcare centers to the total number of centers contacted.
4. Improve Service Delivery with Technology and Innovation:

- Goal: Provide professional development for early education providers through virtual and in-person options.
- Metric: Track the number of providers participating in professional development and training.

Additionally, Board staff will monitor and report foundational metrics including:

- Monthly average number of children served per day; and
- Total number of childcare providers enrolled in the Workforce Solutions network.

Board staff is developing KPIs for other focus areas, including Career Services, Employer Engagement, and Adult Education and Literacy. Progress on KPI development will be reviewed at upcoming Audit and Monitoring Committee meetings, where Board members will have the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations.

Performance and Production

The Committee received an update on performance and production, expenditures, and technical program compliance. TWC continues to experience issues collecting and reporting accurate data. The measures being affected the most are WIOA related. The state continues to work on fixing their reporting system.

Technical Program Compliance

Technical Program Compliance Reviews involve compliance testing of contract and policy requirements, as well as customer experience evaluations conducted by the Quality Assurance Team. The scope of each review is guided by the terms and conditions outlined in the service provider's contract. Financial monitoring is conducted separately and is addressed later in this report.

BakerRipley Adult Education

We conducted a comprehensive review of BakerRipley's data and operations spanning July 2023 to October 2024, focusing on performance, compliance, information security, customer satisfaction, and classroom observations. The review revealed that BakerRipley has developed a strong understanding of program policies for the third consecutive year and has effectively integrated them into its operations. The organization demonstrates a proactive approach to adapting to policy changes, promptly addressing and rectifying data entry errors when identified. However, the review also identified opportunities for improvement:

- Assessments: A pre-test exception was not administered in all required domains, and the associated documentation was missing from the

participant's file and TEAMS data entry. Upon notification, BakerRipley Adult Education immediately corrected this error.

- Data Validation: Enrollment documentation did not align with TEAMS data entry for all participant files reviewed. BakerRipley is actively working to address and resolve this issue.

Lone Star College

Similarly, we reviewed Lone Star College's data and operations from July 2023 to October 2024, evaluating key areas such as performance, compliance, information security, customer satisfaction, and classroom observations. For the third consecutive year, Lone Star College demonstrated measurable improvement in maintaining documentation, data entry, and staff training. These improvements highlight Lone Star's commitment to implementing required policies and enhancing processes. Nonetheless, areas requiring attention include:

- Assessments: A pre-test exception was not administered in all required domains, and the associated documentation was missing from the participant's file and TEAMS data entry. Lone Star College is working diligently to correct this issue.
- Professional Development: Some instructors who participated in professional development courses did not teach during the program year. Lone Star is reviewing this area and its policies to ensure compliance moving forward.
- Class Observations: Required posters and a clock were not consistently displayed in the classrooms visited, and visible security was absent at the entrances of some facilities. Lone Star is proactively addressing these concerns and implementing necessary adjustments.

Upcoming Reviews:

We completed all PY2025 program monitoring reviews of Adult Education and Literacy service providers. We are currently awaiting responses to draft reports. All final reports for Adult Education will be issued by mid-December 2024.

Financial Systems

The Board engages two CPA firms to conduct comprehensive financial monitoring of all workforce board service providers. Since the last update, we have received one (1) draft report. Four (4) reviews are currently in progress, and six (6) reviews are scheduled to begin within the next month.

Monitoring Update:

Draft Reports Received Since the Last Update:

- San Jacinto College – Low Overall Risk

Reviews in Progress:

- Adult Education Center
- Houston Community College
- Lone Star College
- Systemwide Financial Aid Payment Review

Upcoming in December 2024:

- BakerRipley (FAPO, Career Office, AEL)
- Children's Learning Institute
- Equus (Career Office)
- Equus (Support Center)
- Interfaith of the Woodlands
- Region 6

Property Management Training:

All Property Control Officers of grant recipients were required to attend one of four Annual Property Management Training sessions during the first week of November to guarantee they comprehended the essential requirements. The session aims to define a property control officer, define property, outline the necessary steps to purchase property, provide an overview of the property management database, review compliance steps for inventory, provide guidance for reporting, safeguarding, transferring, and disposing of assets, property leases, and closeout.

We had a record-breaking 63 attendees, and 34 of the 39 required attendees attended. We distributed the recording and all pertinent information to guarantee that all individuals had the chance to review it. Furthermore, we included a fact sheet that addresses frequently inquired questions for future reference. We identified a couple of areas to highlight because of the increased reporting of lost or stolen property during the final two quarters of fiscal year 2024 including:

1. **Internal Controls:** To enhance internal controls, we determined that we required additional safeguards in our remote work environment. We have implemented a quarterly internal auditing process for laptops, desktops, and tablets, necessitating that grant recipients submit reconciliations and discrepancies to the Board.
2. **Incident Reporting:** The Incident Reporting form for lost and stolen property was reviewed to guarantee that the procedures and timelines are clearly and succinctly understood. Particularly, the report must be submitted within 48 hours of the incident, or within 24 hours if law enforcement is involved.

Accountability and Improvement

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) address performance and production issues with progressive

intervention strategies to support improvement. This includes Performance Improvement Actions, formalized Technical Assistance Plans (TAP), or Corrective Action Plans (CAP). The current interventions from the TWC and GCWB include the following:

Texas Workforce Commission Interventions:

Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) (FY23): The Texas Workforce Commission continues to monitor the performance improvement actions for measurable skills gain, and we are meeting with the state monthly. No new updates from TWC since May 2024.

Adult Median Earnings Q2 Post-Exit (FY23): The Board staff continue to track enrollment efforts and work with the TWC to show our progress on the Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) for FY23 WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Adult Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit FY23. We continue to monitor our targeted enrollment efforts and policies to enhance our participants' median earnings.

SNAP E&T Corrective Action: In February 2024, the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) conducted a monitoring visit at the Workforce Solutions career office in Katy. The subsequent report identified two primary findings that we addressed in a corrective action plan. One was related to the multiple addresses listed for some SNAP customers in Work in Texas. We received an email on October 18, 2024, from TWC staff providing additional clarification that effective October 1, 2024, the outreach letter only needs to be sent to the HHSC mailing address. In our next report to the Committee, we expect the corrective action plan will be completed by HHSC.

GCWB Interventions:

Equus - Career Office: Equus continues a Performance Improvement Plan for Property Management, Choices, Credential Rate, and Measurable Skills Gains. The reporting system through TWC remains down. Once the reporting system is in operation again, we will review the data and take appropriate action based on the findings.

Regarding the Property Management issues, we continue to find issues with Equus' performance. During our last meeting, we reported that Equus would be issuing checks to cover the cost of stolen or lost laptops. Since then, all repayments from Equus have been received.

On October 30, 2024, Board staff received a letter from Equus leadership requesting that they be removed from the Performance Improvement Plan. Board staff are in the process of reviewing the request and will issue a response

to Equus as soon as possible. We will update the committee at the January meeting.

Children's Learning Institute (CLI): During our last meeting, we reported that the Board's contracted Early Education Quality service provider declined to renew their contract in response to the attempted implementation of a Performance Improvement Plan. Board staff spent the month of October working to transition services and staff from CLI to the Board to ensure there was no interruption in service to our customers. As of November 4, 2024, all Child Care Quality activities have been transitioned to the Board.

Compliance and Review Updates:

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) 2024 Adult Education Review: We received the report for the Adult Education review conducted in October 2024. Several updates to policy and training for adult education providers are in process as we compose our response to the report findings. Our response includes an update to our conflict-of-interest policy and strengthened internal controls for training vendors and procurement conducted by the adult education providers.

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Pending Reports: We have not yet received the report for the review of the Gulf Coast Workforce System conducted in June 2024.

Conclusion

The next Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 1:00 PM Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, Texas 77027.

Education Committee

Executive Summary

Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson called the Education Committee meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. on November 7, 2024, at the Houston-Galveston Area Council. Board members also in attendance included Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Richard Shaw, Mary Helen Cavazos, Guy R. Jackson, Shonda Below, Doug Karr, Bin Yu, Mou Sarkar, Edward Melton, and Joyce Johnson.

Child Care Scholarships

The past year marked notable milestones in child care scholarship operations including achieving our enrollment target goal of enrolling 38,000 children. Current efforts focus on maintaining enrollment and fulfilling operational deliverables. Staff continues to oversee production through monthly reviews, weekly site visits, and targeted meetings, particularly emphasizing KinderTrack system support.

Support Center Open House

On October 8, 2024, the Support Center welcomed over 60 visitors during its Open House event, showcasing the new facility. Attendees shared positive feedback and expressed strong support for the Center's mission and objectives.

Child Care Policy Updates

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) implemented key updates, including the elimination of certain local requirements and changes to the parent share of cost. Policies now mandate a sliding fee scale based on family size and income, capping fees at 7% for one child and 13% for additional children. Boards are focusing on reimbursement rates, priority groups, fraud prevention, and referral policies while adapting to the streamlined framework set by TWC.

Next Steps

Board staff is currently enhancing Quality Assurance and Training functions to address enrollment constraints and provide robust support for families, particularly those on the waitlist.

Early Education Quality

The Board supports early education quality through scholarships, professional development, and mentoring under the Texas Rising Star certification program. The contract with the University of Texas Health Science Center - Children's Learning Institute (CLI), established in March 2023, faced challenges that impacted

performance. CLI's issues included high staff turnover, delayed reporting, and inconsistent program execution, and following notification of a performance improvement plan, CLI opted not to renew its contract for Fiscal Year 2025.

In response, the Early Education Quality team created a transition plan to move activities to the Board. Communication with stakeholders began in October 2024, ensuring continuity in services. Thirty-two (32) mentor staff have transitioned to H-GAC to continue supporting Texas Rising Star and Entry Level providers. Nine provider meetings are scheduled from November 13 to December 12, 2024.

A new Request for proposal will be issued on November 20, 2024, seeking a contractor to manage early education programs, including Texas Rising Star, professional development for 6,000 educators, and consumer support for 25,000 families.

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)

Overview

The Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program, supported by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, empowers residents across nine counties by providing vital educational opportunities that improve literacy, workforce readiness, and employability. The program operates through the Gulf Coast AEL Consortium, comprising two community-based organizations, three community colleges, one workforce board, and Region 6 Education Service Center, which serves both as a direct provider and a lead agency offering technical assistance.

Services Provided

AEL delivers a robust suite of services tailored to meet diverse community needs, including:

- English as a Second Language (ESL): Building critical communication skills for individuals with limited English proficiency.
- Adult Basic Education (ABE): Providing foundational skills in mathematics, reading, writing, and science to prepare learners for high school equivalency exams.
- Integrated Education and Training (IET): Offering concurrent academic and occupational skills training to align education with in-demand career pathways.
- Digital Literacy: Introducing participants to essential technology and software skills for workplace success.
- Family Literacy: Promoting intergenerational learning to support families in building a culture of education.
- Financial Literacy: Equipping participants with personal financial

management skills, including budgeting and investing.

Current Performance

The AEL Consortium continues to make strides in addressing the unique needs of the Gulf Coast community:

- Enrollment and Engagement: Programs cater to transient populations, ensuring access to flexible learning formats, including face-to-face, remote, and hybrid options.
- Innovative Instruction: Tailored services, such as workplace literacy and support for internationally trained professionals, enhance participants' career trajectories and integration into the workforce.

2024-2025 Goals

This program year focuses on delivering transformative service offerings that build resilience, promote equity, and empower individuals with skills for success.

Key goals include:

- Standardizing orientation processes, curriculum scope, and instructional alignment to ensure consistency and reduce disparities.
- Expanding service tiers—Popular Foundations, Popular Bridge, and Popular Services—to provide clear pathways from basic literacy to advanced workforce preparation.
- Increasing performance measures such as successful high school equivalency completions, workforce training credentials earned, and postsecondary enrollments.

Strategic Alignment

In Quarter 1 of the current program year, the Consortium began implementing the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's strategic plan, adopted on October 1, 2024. This plan broadens AEL's scope to align more closely with workforce demands while maintaining a focus on equitable access and quality improvement.

Collaborative Efforts

The AEL team is engaging stakeholders across the workforce and education sectors to strengthen partnerships, develop cross-sector strategies, and integrate community resources. Regular cross-training sessions with workforce system partners ensure a seamless connection between education and employment pathways.

Upcoming Initiatives

AEL's upcoming initiatives include: 1) enhanced monitoring and data analysis to refine program delivery and improve participant outcomes; 2) expanded outreach and engagement to underserved communities, leveraging existing partnerships to amplify impact; and 3) continued focus on high-demand service areas such as integrated education and workplace literacy, which are critical for building a sustainable talent pipeline.

Community Impact

The Board's AEL programs empower participants to connect their educational achievements with career aspirations, fostering economic mobility and social inclusion. By addressing barriers to education and employment, AEL creates opportunities for individuals to thrive in a competitive labor market while contributing to regional economic development.

Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant

New Leadership

The appointment of Roderick Peoples as the Educational Convener marks a pivotal moment for the grant's progress. With extensive experience in educational strategy, workforce development, and community partnerships, Mr. Peoples brings fresh perspectives and a results-driven approach to this critical role.

Key Achievements

In October 2024, several Board staff members participated in the Pathway to Prosperity Institute hosted by Jobs for the Future in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This intensive series of sessions connected participants with expert coaches to refine strategies, strengthen educational pathways, and deepen the program's impact on student success.

We have been working on developing the final sets of deliverables for the grant's requirements including:

- **Data-Driven Insights:** A comprehensive asset map and gap analysis have been completed, identifying critical resources and areas of improvement. These tools provide a foundation for targeted interventions and the expansion of high-impact partnerships.
- **Tri-Agency Strategic Plan Progress:** Our plan is scheduled for submission in December 2024 and is in its final stages. This plan integrates insights from stakeholders across education, workforce, and industry sectors, emphasizing innovative approaches to align regional efforts with state and national priorities.

- **Cross-Sector Engagement:** Collaborative strategy meetings are actively bridging gaps between education providers, workforce systems, and industry leaders, ensuring alignment and synergy across initiatives.
- **Enhanced Metrics and Deliverables:** Incorporating new data and performance metrics into the plan ensures that strategies are both evidence-based and outcome-oriented.

Future Directions

The Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant is poised to deliver long-term impact through initiatives that connect education and workforce systems including:

- **Expanding Partnerships:** Efforts to engage additional community organizations, educational institutions, and employers are underway to create a robust support network for students and educators.
- **Scaling Work-Based Learning (WBL):** A primary focus is the development of new WBL opportunities that provide students with real-world experiences and align their skills with industry demands.
- **Innovative Solutions through Collaboration:** Ongoing partnerships with Jobs for the Future ensure the incorporation of best practices and cutting-edge solutions for program implementation and sustainability.

Upcoming Milestones

Final deliverables including the submission of the Strategic Plan and implementation updates on expanded partnerships and enhanced educational pathways are due in December 2024. We have scheduled our second Tri-Agency Regional Convener Conference for late January 2025. This event will again convene students, educators, and industry leaders to share insights, foster collaboration, and explore practical strategies for career readiness and work-based learning.

Youth Services

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board remains committed to empowering young individuals aged 14-24 through comprehensive programs that connect them to meaningful educational and career pathways. Youth Services focus on fostering skills, providing opportunities, and addressing barriers to success, creating a strong foundation for the next generation of workers.

2023-2024 Program Achievements

Youth Services achieved significant milestones:

- **Expanded Reach:** Career Services Providers (Baker Ripley, Equus, and Interfaith) exceeded targets for youth engagement in both Universal and

- WIOA programs, demonstrating the program's growing impact.
- **Work-Based Learning (WBL) Placements:** Despite challenges, the program successfully connected youth to valuable hands-on experiences in high-demand industries. Providers have implemented improvement plans to address gaps in meeting WBL placement targets.
 - **Data-Driven Support:** The Board's Data and Accountability team formed a dedicated workgroup to assist service providers in managing youth customers, emphasizing credentials and measurable skill gains as key outcomes.

Success Stories

Partnerships with leading organizations continue to yield transformative outcomes:

- **Harris Health System Internship Program:** A partnership established last year has seen exceptional results. Three interns recently completed their internships, with two transitioning into full-time positions aligned with their career aspirations. Workforce Solutions staff continue to provide individualized support to ensure these young professionals succeed in their roles.

Success stories like these highlight the program's ability to connect youth with tangible career opportunities while addressing regional workforce needs.

New Initiatives and Branding

"Hire Gulf Coast Youth" Program Launch

Slated for January 2025, the new Youth Program will centralize services under a cohesive brand and campaign. The program includes the launch of a Youth Portal, designed to simplify access to resources and streamline services for both youth and employers interested in hiring youth.

System Training:

Workforce Solutions Youth Staff will undergo comprehensive training in December 2024 to prepare for the rollout, with additional sessions planned for all staff in early January 2025.

Youth Services RFP

In January 2025, the Board will release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to establish an Eligible Youth Provider List (ETPL). This effort aims to enhance youth services by collaborating with organizations specializing in delivering high quality youth services that align with the WIOA youth elements including:

- Mental health and substance abuse counseling,
- Financial literacy education,
- Mentorship and career coaching,
- Entrepreneurship training,
- Immersive career exploration experiences,
- Academic support and tutoring.

Selected organizations will receive fee-for-service contracts, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness in service delivery. This will also allow Board staff to work with service providers to create unique programs aligned with the Board's strategic plan.

Future Focus

As Youth Services evolves, it is working on enhancing the following:

- Enhanced Employer Engagement: Building partnerships with industry leaders to create additional work-based learning and internship opportunities.
- Comprehensive Support: Addressing the holistic needs of youth, including mental health and personal development, to foster well-rounded success.
- Continuous Improvement: Leveraging feedback and data analytics to refine programs, ensuring they remain relevant and impactful in a rapidly changing economic environment.

Community Impact

Youth Services continues to be a cornerstone of the Board's commitment to building a skilled and resilient workforce. By equipping young people with the tools that they need to succeed, the Board strengthens the region's talent pipeline and lays the groundwork for sustained economic growth.

Employer Engagement Committee

Overview

The Employer Engagement Committee met at 11:03 a.m. at the Northside Education Center in El Campo, Texas, chaired by Alan Heskamp and attended by Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Adrian Ozuna, Cheryl Guido, Dr. Melanie Rodriguez, Mou Sarkar, and Bin Yu. The meeting reflected the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's commitment to strengthening employer services, aligning workforce initiatives with regional economic trends, and fostering partnerships that drive innovation and growth.

Strategic Adjustments to Workforce Investment

Parker Harvey presented a forward-thinking update on the 2025 high-skill, high-growth occupations list, reflecting the Board's agility in responding to an evolving economic landscape. Central to this update was an increase in the median wage threshold to \$22.54, ensuring that resources are directed toward industries with sustainable growth potential.

However, Mr. Harvey raised a critical issue: the disproportionate allocation of training funds to truck driving programs, which limits investments in other key industries. His proposed solution—to implement spending caps within overrepresented sectors—aims to promote a more equitable distribution of resources, aligning workforce development strategies with the diverse needs of regional employers.

Looking ahead, an early 2025 workshop, tentatively scheduled for January 7, 2024, will provide an opportunity for Board members to delve deeper into these changes, explore their implications, and develop strategies to optimize investment across high-growth occupations. This session underscores the Board's proactive approach to shaping workforce policies that resonate with industry demands.

Pioneering Innovation in Construction

In his report, Lacy Wolf highlighted how the construction sector continues to serve as a nexus of technological innovation and workforce expansion. The successful launch of a 3D concrete printing business in Pasadena, supported by local leadership, signals a transformative shift in construction practices, positioning the region as a hub for advanced manufacturing. This initiative exemplifies how strategic collaboration can catalyze regional growth while offering cutting-edge solutions to employers.

Mr. Wolf also shared progress on a groundbreaking apprenticeship program in partnership with Performance Contracting. By guaranteeing 40-hour workweeks,

the program blends rigorous training with real-world experience, ensuring participants gain valuable skills while meeting the demands of local employers. Efforts to localize workforce opportunities further extended to the South Texas Nuclear site, where targeted internship programs are creating sustainable career pathways for Bay City and Matagorda County residents, reducing commuting burdens and fostering community development.

Mr. Wolf's active engagement at events such as the Harris County Precinct 4 Buyers' Fair and an Immigration Symposium illustrated the Board's pivotal role in connecting businesses, contractors, and technical education providers. These efforts underscore the Board's commitment to addressing workforce needs through meaningful collaboration and innovative outreach.

Expanding Houston's Biotech and Healthcare Horizons

Melissa Steinmetz emphasized Houston's growing influence in healthcare and biotechnology, underscoring its potential as a global leader in these sectors. Her participation in international collaborations, including a Belgian Life Sciences trade delegation and the Japanese Industrial Biotech Conference, highlighted the region's strengths in research, innovation, and development. Partnerships with institutions such as MD Anderson and international venture capital firms reinforced Houston's reputation as a premier hub for biotech growth and investment.

Amid these successes, challenges in the retail healthcare sector emerged. Layoffs and store closures by Walgreens and CVS risk creating pharmacy deserts, prompting Ms. Steinmetz to outline plans for supporting displaced workers and ensuring regional access to essential healthcare services. Meanwhile, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's role in advancing Houston's bid for an NSF Engine Grant highlights its dedication to positioning the region as a leader in industrial biotechnology, with the potential to attract transformative investment and resources.

Driving Technology and Digital Equity

Amber Jefferson provided a compelling vision of how the Board is leveraging technology to build a resilient workforce. Her recent appointment to an AI advisory board, alongside industry leaders such as Amazon and HP, reflects the Board's leadership in shaping policies that align emerging technologies with workforce needs. This role has opened doors for partnerships that drive innovation while addressing critical gaps in workforce readiness.

Ms. Jefferson also celebrated the success of Tech Fest Live, an event that engaged 1,500 youth and 121 employers, bridging the gap between education and career opportunities in technology. Her efforts extend to promoting digital equity and inclusion, as highlighted during her presentation at the NAWDP Youth

Conference. These initiatives demonstrate the Board's commitment to ensuring that technological advancements benefit all members of the community, fostering a future-ready workforce equipped to navigate a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Connecting Education to Employment

Roderick Peoples provided an update on the TEA Regional Convener Grant, emphasizing its transformative potential in aligning education with workforce demands. The completion of comprehensive asset and gap analyses offers a clear blueprint for addressing educational disparities and preparing students for industry needs. Mr. Peoples highlighted ongoing efforts to expand work-based learning opportunities, equipping students with practical skills that directly align with employer expectations.

Upcoming leadership and convener meetings are set to bring educators, employers, and community leaders together, fostering collaboration and innovation. Mr. Peoples' efforts are a testament to the Board's strategic approach to building a talent pipeline that supports economic growth while meeting the demands of regional employers.

Labor Market Insights: Trends and Projections

Ron Borski provided a detailed analysis of labor market trends, offering valuable insights into the forces shaping the region's workforce. With projected job growth of up to 69,400 new positions through 2025, the Gulf Coast region is poised for expansion in key sectors such as Professional and Business Services, Education and Health Services, and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities.

Mr. Borski also addressed the potential impact of federal policies on immigration, tariffs, and vocational training. Restrictive immigration policies could exacerbate labor shortages in industries reliant on immigrant workers, while increased federal support for job training programs could strengthen talent pipelines in high-demand fields. These insights underscore the importance of aligning workforce strategies with broader economic and policy trends.

Forging Stronger Employer Connections

Crosby Brito detailed efforts to deepen relationships with local chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, and community organizations. Events such as Sealy Broker Day and Workforce Wednesdays in Galveston County have strengthened ties with employers, creating new opportunities for collaboration. Partnerships with organizations like the South Asian Chamber and the International Management District further expanded the Board's reach within diverse communities, fostering inclusivity and mutual growth. Looking ahead, the establishment of advisory councils in healthcare, IT, and manufacturing will

provide platforms for industry leaders to offer input on workforce strategies, ensuring alignment with employer needs and regional economic goals.

A Vision for the Future

As the meeting concluded, Chair Heskamp emphasized the importance of learning from best practices, engaging with industry associations, and leveraging data to refine workforce strategies. A data workshop planned for early 2025 will provide Board members with critical insights into high-skill, high-growth occupations, equipping them to make informed decisions that benefit employers and the broader community. Through strategic planning, innovation, and collaboration, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board serves to lead in shaping a workforce equipped to meet the demands of an evolving economy.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

Communications Committee

Introduction

Communications Chair Doug Karr called the committee to order at 10:02 a.m. on November 13, 2024, at the Houston-Galveston Area Council to evaluate ongoing outreach efforts to enhance visibility, engagement, and strategic communication across the Gulf Coast region. Other Board members in attendance included Dr. Bobi Henderson, Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Guy Jackson, Dr. Melanie Rodriguez, Paul Puente, Cheryl Guido, and Jonathan Lowe. Discussions centered on Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast’s recent accomplishments in media outreach, community engagement, digital innovation, and the integration of new technologies to improve services and operations.

Building Momentum in Media and Outreach

Tim Lankford of Outreach Strategists opened the meeting with an overview of Workforce Solutions’ recent media successes. He described how targeted campaigns had amplified public awareness of Workforce Solutions' services and events. One notable highlight was a KPRC 2+ morning segment on October 24, where viewers learned strategies to navigate the holiday job market. Workforce Solutions was also featured in an ABC13 job fair preview, which aligned with National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This coverage underscored the organization’s dedication to fostering inclusivity in the workforce.

Mr. Lankford’s presentation also touched on Workforce Solutions' efforts to spotlight growth in Texas' manufacturing sector. Another major media initiative was the Hiring Red, White & You! veterans job fair on November 1, 2024, at NRG Park, which marked the first in-person event of its kind since 2019. The event gained extensive coverage across multiple platforms, including CW39, Univision 45, and ABC13, bringing Workforce Solutions’ mission to the forefront.

These efforts resulted in a combined advertising value equivalent (AVE) of \$240,749, with over 814,000 viewers reached. These numbers reflect the growing influence of Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast as a trusted source for employment opportunities and economic insights.

Connecting Communities and Driving Engagement

Community Engagement Manager Jennifer Graves shared how Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast is reimagining its community engagement approach to better serve the Gulf Coast’s 13-county region. Central to this strategy was a

series of impactful events designed to connect job seekers with employers while fostering resilience in local communities.

The NDEAM Hiring Event on October 24 brought together 175 job seekers, 27 employers, and 23 community resources, showcasing the power of collaboration in promoting inclusivity in employment. Just a week later, the Hiring Red, White & You! veterans job fair drew nearly 3,000 attendees, including over 1,300 veterans, and led to 100 confirmed hires with nearly 1,000 interviews scheduled. Ms. Graves and Ms. Stipeche thanked NRG Park and the Texas Veterans Network powered by Combined Arms for their partnership and in-kind contributions to this year's event.

Ms. Graves also highlighted resource fairs as a critical element of Workforce Solutions' outreach. JP Morgan Chase hosted a Resiliency Resource Fair on October 18, 2024, at Houston Community College, and Ms. Stipeche participated in a panel discussion exploring recovery strategies for individuals and businesses. Similarly, Board staff hosted a community meeting in Clear Lake at the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership (BAHEP) on October 28, 2024, to engage the community on upcoming changes to the local career office. Ms. Graves emphasized that events like these strengthen Workforce Solutions' presence and trust within the region.

Looking ahead, Ms. Graves spoke with enthusiasm about partnerships with organizations like the BAHEP and the Texas A&M Space Institute. These collaborations promise to create new opportunities and expand the organization's footprint in innovative ways.

Transforming Digital Engagement

Dr. Maria Franco Cortes offered a detailed analysis of Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast's digital footprint and social media performance. Over a two-month period, Dr. Cortes explained, the organization had reached nearly 30,000 followers across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter). Facebook, with over 11,500 followers, proved to be the most robust platform, generating 24,100 views in October alone.

Dr. Cortes emphasized that posts celebrating inclusivity, such as those promoting persons with disabilities or veterans, resonated strongly with audiences. On LinkedIn, for example, posts achieved an impressive 9.98% engagement rate, while Facebook saw 64 shares on its top-performing posts.

Dr. Cortes shared insights into audience demographics, noting that the majority of followers are women aged 35-54—a key demographic Workforce Solutions actively serves. Looking ahead, she recommended increasing the use of short-form videos on Instagram and LinkedIn, introducing interactive posts like live Q&A sessions, and leveraging data analytics to tailor campaigns more effectively.

Digital engagement is not just about visibility; it is also about connection. By creating content that speaks directly to audiences' needs and aspirations, Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast can deepen trust and loyalty across the region.

Leveraging Technology for Growth

Senior Manager of Career Services Russell Tomlin shared updates on Workforce Solutions' technological innovations, designed to enhance both internal efficiency and external engagement. He introduced the Workforce Solutions Hub, a centralized platform under development to streamline access to essential resources for Board staff and service providers. The Hub, he explained, will house critical tools such as analytics dashboards, case management systems, and training resources, ensuring that employees can operate with greater efficiency and security.

Mr. Tomlin also highlighted Workforce Solutions' use of GovDelivery, a multi-channel communication tool that connects the organization with its diverse audiences through email, SMS, and social media. Feedback from staff has led to improvements in usability, including better guidance for scheduling messages and optimizing outreach frequency.

Additionally, Mr. Tomlin emphasized the value of Eventbrite as a tool for planning and promoting events. By integrating Eventbrite with social media platforms, Workforce Solutions has expanded the reach of events like job fairs and resource fairs, while its data collection features have streamlined post-event evaluations.

These technological advancements demonstrate Workforce Solutions' commitment to adapting to the evolving needs of the Gulf Coast workforce while maintaining operational excellence. Further, it aligns with the Board's strategic plan to use technology and innovation to enhance service delivery for our community.

Creating a User-Friendly Website

Assistant Director Kristi Rangel provided an update on the organization's ongoing website redevelopment, which is set to launch in Spring 2025. The new site is being designed with accessibility and user experience at its core. It will meet

WCAG 2.1 standards, ensuring that all users, including those with disabilities, can navigate the site with ease.

The redesigned website will prioritize clear navigation, enabling job seekers, employers, and community members to access resources efficiently. Integration with tools like Eventbrite and GovDelivery will further enhance the user experience by simplifying event registration and communication. Ms. Rangel also emphasized the importance of mobile responsiveness, given the increasing reliance on smartphones for accessing online services.

With robust security measures and a focus on data-driven design, the new website aims to reflect Workforce Solutions' mission to provide accessible, transparent, and impactful services to the Gulf Coast community.

Conclusion

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast is advancing impactful initiatives in media outreach, community engagement, digital innovation, and technological integration. From connecting thousands of job seekers with employment opportunities to creating an accessible and user-focused digital ecosystem, the organization is solidifying its position as a leader in workforce development and regional economic resilience.

However, to fully realize the potential of these efforts, Workforce Solutions must continue refining a system-wide communication and outreach strategy. Such a strategy should prioritize centralized, cohesive messaging that reflects the diverse needs and voices of the communities served across the Gulf Coast region. Achieving this balance will strengthen Workforce Solutions' ability to foster trust and engagement, ensuring that all stakeholders—job seekers, employers, and partners—feel represented and supported.

Additionally, optimizing the use of existing social media platforms and communication technologies is paramount. By leveraging data-driven insights, streamlining workflows, and enhancing internal collaboration, Workforce Solutions can create a stronger foundation for communication that resonates at both the local and regional levels. Strategic coordination of resources will further amplify the reach and impact of initiatives, and we must continue to develop strong relationships with media partners who can share information about our services and programs.

With no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Budget Committee

Overview of Budget Process:

Board Chair Mark Guthrie called the Budget Committee to order at 1:02 p.m. on November 7, 2024, at the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) to review the proposed 2025 budget and address key financial and operational matters. Other board members in attendance included Adrian Ozuna, Carl Bowles, Douglas Karr, Guy R. Jackson, Mou Sarkar, Edward Melton, Mary Helen Cavazos, Shonda Below, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Jones Lavone, and Paul Puente attended.

The meeting included discussions on the budget process, departmental charges, resource allocations, and systemic improvements. An overview of the budgeting process was also presented and included:

- Estimate Revenues - Project total funds available.
- Set Priorities - Identify key areas and initiatives.
- Allocate Resources - Apportion funds to program activities.
- Iterate and Adopt - Review and adjust the budget.

The budget timeline was discussed as it relates to Texas Workforce Commission's Funding Notices, H-GAC Department of Human Services Budget, H-GAC Budget, and Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget. Opportunities of improvement were noted for H-GAC Departments' Shared Budgets including:

- H-GAC will begin sharing the budget annually in July.
- Directors will meet to discuss direct charges in advance.

The H-GAC organization leadership chart was presented for information purposes.

Proposed 2025 Workforce Budget

The proposed 2025 Workforce Budget was presented, totaling over \$496 million, a 5.3% increase from 2024. Proposed general revenue is \$454 million, and special revenue is \$42 million.

Revenue Source Breakdown:

- Child Care 71%
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) 11%
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 3%
- National Dislocated Worker (NDW) Disaster Relief 3%
- Child Care Quality Enhancement 3%
- Other 9%

Proposed Use Breakdown:

- Board Operations 5.7%
- System Operations 94.3%

The increase supports 100 workforce staff at H-GAC, reflecting expansion in the Child Care Quality team. Planned information technology improvements include network upgrades, website enhancements, assistive technology refreshes, and development of a mobile app.

Board-Proposed Positions Rejected from the 2025 H-GAC Budget

Board staff proposed six new workforce positions to H-GAC leadership to manage responsibilities associated with new and added funding. While five of the positions were approved, one, a new child care position, was denied. A written rationale for the denial was requested but not provided.

Subsequently, when the University of Texas Health Science Center – CLI notified Board staff of its decision not to renew its contract, the Early Education Quality team developed a strategic plan to transition child care quality activities to the Board. This plan needed the addition of 10 new positions, which included the previously denied position. H-GAC Executive Director Chuck Wemple approved all 10 positions as part of the transition strategy.

During the Budget Committee meeting, Mr. Wemple clarified that budget adjustments, including the addition of positions, fall under his purview for approval. He also noted that there is an opportunity to implement further budget changes during the mid-year budget process in June.

Budget Committee Discussion on Flexibility and Contingency Planning

The Budget Committee underscored the critical need for greater flexibility in budget and staff management, citing recent examples of the Board's adaptability. These included the rapid response to Hurricane Beryl, which involved securing \$17 million in disaster recovery grants, and the seamless transition of responsibilities from UT Health Children's Learning Institute to Board staff, necessitating swift adjustments to budgeting and staffing.

While the mid-year budget review in June provides an opportunity for further refinements, the committee highlighted the importance of proactive contingency planning to better anticipate and address unforeseen disruptions. Emphasizing a forward-looking approach, the committee stressed that building flexibility into budgetary and operational strategies is essential to maintaining the Board's responsiveness to evolving challenges.

Discussion on Allocation of Direct and Indirect Charges

Budget Committee members raised concerns about the lack of clarity in H-GAC's allocation of direct and indirect charges. Both allocation systems were described as overly complex and difficult to interpret, raising questions about their efficiency and effectiveness in supporting organizational goals.

Direct charges, intended to reflect specific, measurable activities tied to workforce initiatives, were noted as being vaguely defined in the H-GAC budget. Committee members highlighted the insufficient documentation and lack of detail in substantiating how labor and resources were allocated to workforce-related activities. Board Chair Guthrie expressed concerns that the lack of granularity hinders transparency and makes it challenging to assess whether expenditures align with the workforce board's organizational priorities; direct charges should be well-documented, with clear metrics linking expenses to specific deliverables for the workforce board.

Indirect charges, which fund shared services such as finance, internal audit, and executive administration, are allocated as a percentage of salaries and benefits across departments. While this methodology complies with federal guidelines, committee members expressed concern about its complexity and the mixing of indirect and direct funding for certain H-GAC staff members. Without clear documentation of how percentages are derived and applied, it becomes difficult to evaluate the value and performance of services provided to individual H-GAC divisions. The budget committee discussed the importance of a review and justification of the indirect allocation formulas to ensure they reflect actual service usage and value for the workforce board.

The committee noted that these practices create challenges in accurately evaluating the productivity and performance of H-GAC staff outside the workforce division. Chair Guthrie recommended allocating both direct and indirect charges based on activity-based costing or other methodologies that link expenses to specific outputs or services. These approaches provide clearer insights into cost drivers, promote efficiency, and enable more informed decision-making.

Role Ambiguity and Organizational Alignment

H-GAC employs approximately 330 staff members across a range of departments, including Public Affairs, Internal Audit, Finance and Human Resources, Program Activities, and Human Services, which oversees critical Workforce and Aging programs. Despite this expansive structure, the meeting highlighted significant concerns regarding role ambiguity, particularly between Data Services and Data Analytics.

The overlapping responsibilities of these two divisions have created inefficiencies, resulting in confusion, delays, and a lack of streamlined processes to support organizational goals. Modern organizational best practices stress the importance of clearly delineated roles and responsibilities to minimize redundancies, optimize resource utilization, and enhance accountability. Without this clarity, organizations risk

operational inefficiencies that can cascade into broader challenges, such as missed deadlines, misallocated resources, and reduced program effectiveness.

The committee emphasized the importance of addressing these structural issues by defining and formalizing the specific functions of Data Services and Data Analytics, as well as other H-GAC divisions rendering services to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. This realignment is essential to ensure that divisions operate cohesively and effectively to contribute to workforce goals.

Underutilization of GIS and Data Tools

The committee identified Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as an underutilized resource with significant potential for workforce planning. Applications such as mapping regional certifications or identifying geographic gaps in job placements could provide critical insights. Members called for increased training and integration of GIS tools into Workforce operations to enhance data-driven decision-making.

Discussion on Shared Services and Workforce Alignment

Mr. Wemple and H-GAC Chief Financial Officer Christina Ordonez-Campos provided the Budget Committee with an overview of shared services, which include essential functions such as Communications, Procurement, Data Analytics, GIS, and Network Services. These services are charged to Workforce grants either directly, for specific projects, or indirectly, through general allocations, and the presentation brought to light several key concerns regarding the transparency, accountability, and alignment of these shared services with workforce priorities.

Committee members raised concerns about the lack of detailed information regarding Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs) charged to workforce grants, including the specific roles of these employees and how their time is allocated. This absence of clarity potentially hinders the committee's ability to assess whether resources are effectively supporting workforce initiatives and aligning with workforce grant requirements. Additionally, inconsistent and delayed budget submissions from various H-GAC departments further complicated the budget review process. The committee emphasized that thorough, timely, and standardized submissions are essential for accurate and efficient budgeting. Late or inconsistent data undermines the ability to make informed financial decisions and disrupts the strategic planning and implementation processes.

The committee also expressed concerns with the complexity of H-GAC's direct and indirect charge allocation models. These systems, described as overly complicated and poorly understood, obscure the true cost of services and make it difficult to evaluate their value. Simplified and transparent allocation methodologies, such as time-tracking systems or activity-based costing, were discussed to ensure that shared services reflect actual usage and support workforce's objectives.

Chair Guthrie raised a concern involved service gaps. The workforce division, despite being a major funding source, is not consistently treated as a priority customer by H-GAC internal service departments. This misalignment hinders the division's ability to effectively deliver on its objectives and serve the region's workforce needs. The committee noted that shared service departments must enhance their responsiveness and align their operations more closely with workforce priorities.

In response to these challenges, the committee strongly recommends the adoption of the following improvements:

- **Simplifying Allocation Models:** Streamline direct and indirect charge systems to enhance transparency and ensure stakeholders can easily understand financial allocations.
- **Providing Comprehensive Data:** Present detailed, line-item information on services provided, including clear documentation of FTE roles, time allocations, and associated costs.
- **Documenting Deliverables:** Collaborate across H-GAC divisions and the workforce division to create documentation that outlines FTEs, roles, responsibilities, and deliverables. This ensures alignment with the Board's strategic plan and Texas Workforce Commission requirements.
- **Strengthening Workforce Alignment:** Establish mechanisms to position workforce as a priority internal customer, ensuring shared services are fully aligned with and supportive of workforce initiatives.

Mr. Wemple also discussed new financial software that is being acquired to address some of these issues. These recommendations reflect a commitment to aligning H-GAC's shared service practices with industry standards, fostering greater accountability, and ensuring that workforce grants and initiatives receive the support necessary to drive impactful outcomes.

Next Steps

The committee will reconvene in mid-December to review H-GAC's responses to pending questions, address unresolved concerns, and finalize the 2025 budget. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

An overview of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's proposed 2025 budget is affixed hereto.

Budget Committee

Proposed 2025 Board Budget

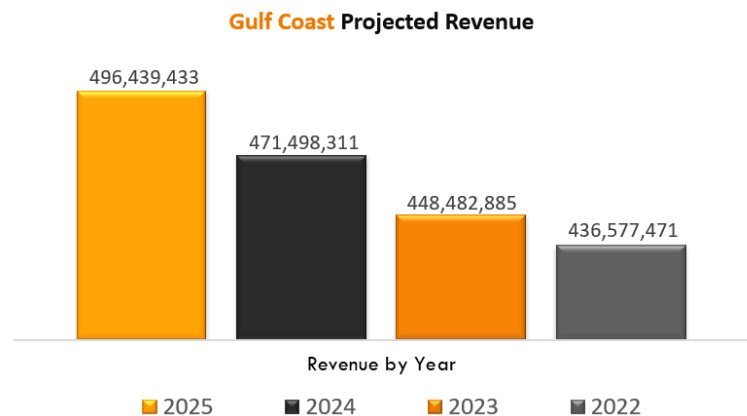
Background

Each year, the Workforce Board approves a budget that outlines how it will use its revenue to achieve the goals set forth in its strategic plan. On October 1, 2024, the Board approved its updated strategic plan, which introduces four key goals: Support Business-Forward Strategies to Fuel the Regional Economy, Enhance Service Delivery Utilizing Technology and Innovation, Serve as a Strategic Convener and Forge Key Partnerships and Increase Public Awareness of Services and Opportunities.

This budget allocates resources to operate Workforce Solutions and drives positive impacts across the region, supporting the Workforce Board's mission and its strategic priorities.

Revenue Overview

The proposed 2025 budget, totaling over \$496 million, represents a 5.3% increase from 2024. Funding is categorized as either general revenue, consisting mainly of formula-allocated dollars with expected continuity, or special revenue, encompassing competitive or one-time awards with limited assurances of continuation.



General Revenue Highlights:

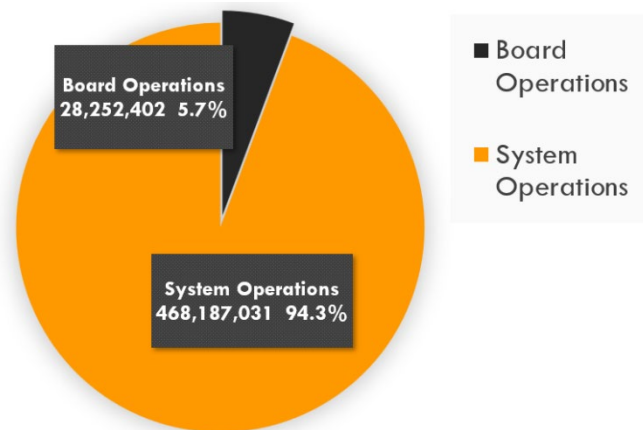
Slight increase in Child Care Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance funding have been observed, albeit offset by a decrease in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Trade Act funding.

Special Revenue Highlights:

Significant additions of Child Care Quality Enhancement and National Dislocated Worker funding results in a 42% increase in this category. These currently stand as the largest special revenue sources, followed by Adult Education.

Proposed Distribution

The proposed 2025 Board budget designates 5.7% of total revenue for operations at H-GAC, while the remaining 94.3% is allocated to contracted service delivery. Board operations are suggested at \$28,252,402 for 2025, a 36.5% increase from 2024 due to the transition of child care quality activities to the Board, with system operations increasing to \$468,187,031, reflecting a 3.9% rise from the previous year.



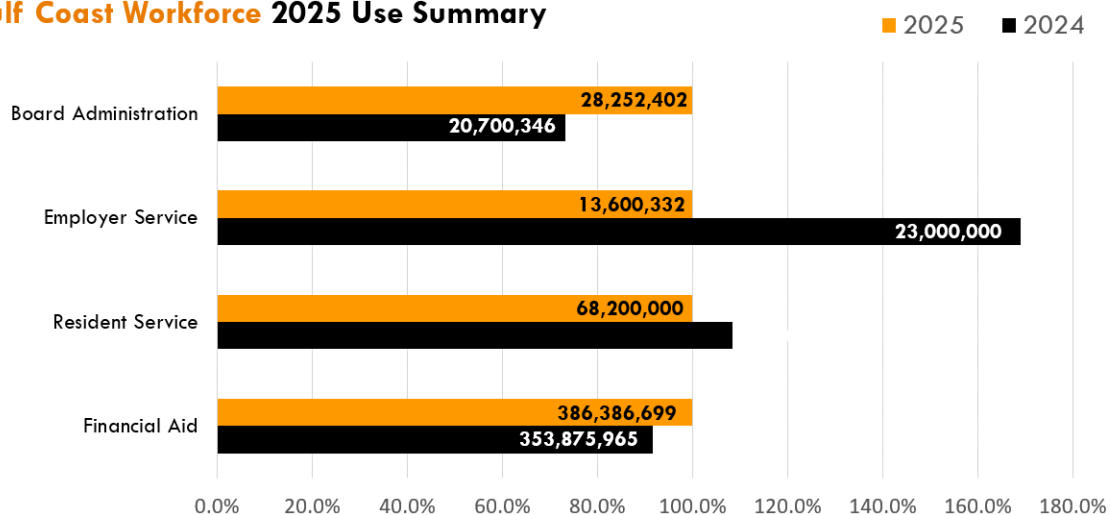
System Operations Highlights:

The proposed financial aid budget will increase to just over \$386 million to meet the growing demand for early education, scholarships, work-based learning, and work support.

The Employer Services budget has decreased overall, as funding previously allocated for child care quality initiatives for providers is now reflected within Financial Aid. Additionally, oversight of child care quality activities has transitioned to the Board.

A reduction is also proposed in the Resident Services budget, particularly affecting Career Services, due primarily to changes in our Adult Education consortium. In response to anticipated changes in WIOA reauthorization, we have strategically aligned our allocation of WIOA resources to ensure compliance with potential new requirements.

Gulf Coast Workforce 2025 Use Summary



Board Operations Highlights:

The proposed budget supports 100 Workforce staff, reflecting expansions in the Child Care Quality team.

Planned information technology improvements include network upgrades, website enhancements, assistive technology refreshes, and development of a mobile app.

Shared costs provided by H-GAC show increases under indirect, internal & shared services line items, supporting shared agency operations.

- Indirect is increasing to \$1,465,673, up 14% from 2024.
- Internal and Shared Services is proposed at \$4,444,413, a 22.3% increase from the previous year.
 - Internal Services is increasing to \$1,362,110
 - Network Services is increasing to \$1,176,566
 - Data Services is increasing to \$1,055,808
 - Internal Audit is increasing to \$371,312
 - Finance is decreasing to \$253,411
 - Communications is decreasing to \$225,176

Results and Objectives

In addition to meeting state and federal performance standards, the 2025 budget aims to achieve various outcomes, including:

- Career Services: Assisting over 48,300 individuals in entering employment.
- Employer Engagement: Serving over 30,000 employers.
- Quality Early Education: Providing child care scholarships for about 55,000 children.
- Adult Education and Literacy: Providing adult education services to over 7,800 students.
- Youth Services: Providing workforce services to over 20,000 young people.

2024 results are detailed below for comparison:

- Career Services: Assisted over 48,700 individuals in entering employment.
- Employer Engagement: Served over 38,000 employers.
- Quality Early Education: Provided child care scholarships for about 55,500 children.
- Adult Education and Literacy: Provided adult education services to over 16,000 students.
- Youth Services: Provided workforce services to over 24,800 young people.

**Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2025 Budget
Source and Use**

Source		Use	
General Revenue	454,546,470	Board Operations	28,252,402
Special Revenue	41,892,963	Employer Service	13,600,332
		Resident Service	68,200,000
		Financial Aid	386,386,699
Total	\$496,439,433	Total	\$496,439,433

**Gulf Coast Workforce
2025 Budget
Source Summary**

	2025	2024	Dollar Change	% Change
General Federal & State Revenue	454,546,470	447,575,009	6,971,461	1.6%
Child Care Services	363,486,280	356,733,421	6,752,859	1.9%
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity	55,779,934	57,954,890	- 2,174,956	-3.8%
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	16,843,059	15,171,087	1,671,972	11.0%
Vocational Rehabilitation	8,073,620	8,194,679	- 121,059	-1.5%
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance	3,755,645	3,214,520	541,125	16.8%
Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment	3,821,879	3,392,480	429,399	12.7%
Wagner-Peyser Employment Services	2,215,453	2,215,453	-	0.0%
Veterans Employment and Training	565,600	581,479	- 15,879	-2.7%
Trade Act	5,000	117,000	- 112,000	-95.7%
Special Federal & State Revenue	41,692,963	23,923,302	17,769,661	74.3%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	13,600,345	906,830	12,693,515	1399.8%
Adult Education	12,250,372	21,050,028	- 8,799,656	-41.8%
NDW Disaster Relief Employment	15,423,420	-	15,423,420	100.0%
JOBS Plus	120,000	120,000	-	0.0%
Texas Education Agency - Regional Convener	100,000	600,000	- 500,000	-83.3%
Texas Industry Partnership	100,000	-	100,000	100.0%
High Demand Job Training	98,826	-	98,826	100.0%
WIOA Statewide - Upskilling	-	503,502	- 503,502	-100.0%
Apprenticeship Grants	-	400,000	- 400,000	-100.0%
Middle Skills Initiative	-	342,942	- 342,942	-100.0%
Other Sources	200,000	-	200,000	100.0%
Houston Endowment	200,000	-	200,000	100.0%
Total Revenue	496,439,433	471,498,311	24,941,122	5.3%

**Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2025 Budget
Use Summary**

	2025	2024	% of Total 2025 Budget	Dollar Variance from 2024	% Variance from 2024
Board Operations	28,252,402	20,700,346	5.7%	7,552,056	36.5%
Salaries and Benefits	11,723,246	9,720,659	2.4%	2,002,586	20.6%
Consultants & Contracts	7,394,850	3,080,000	1.5%	4,314,850	140.1%
Travel	268,000	127,000	0.1%	141,000	111.0%
Other	999,800	528,070	0.2%	471,730	89.3%
Information Technology	1,330,529	1,769,065	0.3%	(438,536)	-24.8%
Rent	625,892	554,726	0.1%	71,166	12.8%
Indirect	1,465,673	1,286,176	0.3%	179,497	14.0%
Internal & Shared Services	4,444,413	3,634,650	0.9%	809,763	22.3%
System Operations	468,187,031	450,797,965	94.3%	17,389,066	3.9%
Employer Service					
Employer Engagement	9,000,000	9,000,000	1.8%	-	0.0%
Quality Improvement	4,600,332	14,000,000	0.9%	(9,399,668)	-67.1%
Resident Service					
Career Services	55,200,000	54,240,000	11.1%	960,000	1.8%
Adult Education	13,000,000	19,682,000	2.6%	(6,682,000)	-33.9%
Financial Aid					
Early Educational Care	341,386,699	313,775,965	68.8%	27,610,734	8.8%
Training & Support	29,000,000	24,000,000	5.8%	5,000,000	20.8%
Operations	16,000,000	16,100,000	3.2%	(100,000)	-0.6%
Total	496,439,433	471,498,311	100.0%	24,941,122	5.3%

**Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2025 Budget
Budget Detail**

	Board Operations			
	2025	2024	Dollar Variance	Percent Variance
Consultants & Contracts	7,394,850	3,080,000	4,314,850	140%
Legal Services	315,000	315,000	-	0%
Audit	51,000	54,000	- 3,000	-6%
Financial Monitoring	1,012,000	1,096,000	- 84,000	-8%
Public Information & Outreach	948,500	900,000	48,500	5%
Temporary Staffing	4,268,350	300,000	3,968,350	1323%
External Consultants	550,000	415,000	135,000	33%
Contracted Services	250,000	-	250,000	100%
Other	999,800	528,070	471,730	89%
Employee Development	196,000	125,000	71,000	57%
Expendable Equipment	140,000	107,500	32,500	30%
Software	156,700	106,700	50,000	47%
Communications	227,000	52,920	174,080	329%
Subscriptions & Dues	75,000	47,050	27,950	59%
Outside Printing	80,000	30,000	50,000	167%
Meeting Expenses	24,000	14,000	10,000	71%
Postage & Delivery	12,800	12,800	-	0%
Legal Notices	12,000	12,000	-	0%
Supplies	38,000	10,000	28,000	280%
Maintenance & Repair	6,000	6,000	-	0%
Employee Recruitment	20,000	1,800	18,200	1011%
Books & Publications	1,500	1,500	-	0%
Licenses & Permits	800	800	-	0%
Food & Beverage	10,000	-	10,000	100%
H-GAC Internal & Shared Services	4,444,413	3,634,650	809,763	22%
Internal Services	1,362,110	1,027,081	335,029	33%
Network Services	1,176,566	975,958	200,608	21%
Data Services	1,055,808	691,549	364,259	53%
Internal Audit	371,312	306,324	64,988	21%
Finance	253,441	370,666	- 117,225	-32%
Communications	225,176	263,072	- 37,896	-14%
Information Technology & Network Support	1,330,529	1,769,065	- 438,536	-25%
Software	486,035	502,071	- 16,036	-3%
Wide Area Network	250,000	215,000	35,000	16%
Website	80,000	200,000	- 120,000	-60%
Technology Improvements	430,000	777,000	- 347,000	-45%
Capital Equipment	50,000	40,000	10,000	100%
Operating Expenses	34,494	34,994	- 500	-1%

Career Services Committee

Overview

Committee Chair Adrian Ozuna called the Career Services Committee meeting to order on November 19, 2024, at 2:00pm at the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston TX 77027. Other Board members in attendance included Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Committee Vice Chair Cheryl Guido, Dr. Melanie Rodriguez, Joyce Johnson, Dr. Michael Webster, Gil Staley, Jonathan Lowe, Gay Jackson, Alan Heskamp, and Bin Yu.

The Career Services Committee convened to discuss updates and strategies aimed at advancing the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's workforce system. The meeting focused on enhancing strategic service delivery and creating meaningful community impact. Key updates included a review of office lease expirations, data-driven decisions to optimize service locations, and the integration of new policies aligned with the Board's strategic goals.

Career Services Policy on Locations

Desmond Taylor presented the Career Services Policy on Office Locations, which outlines the framework for optimizing office placement to meet community needs. Chairman Mark Guthrie and Board Member Mike Webster recommended revisions to strengthen the policy by incorporating additional factors, including:

- The inclusion of population density, demographics, and language diversity to better assess community needs;
- A comprehensive list of core services to be provided at each location; and
- A requirement for regular lease evaluations, to be conducted every six to twelve months.

The committee approved the policy's advancement for the full Board's consideration with these revisions, which were finalized and distributed for Board member's consideration on November 25, 2024. The updated policy is attached hereto as Exhibit "A" and is presented as an action item for further discussion and approval.

Facility Updates

Senior Manager Russell Tomlin provided an update on career office lease expirations, detailing plans to optimize office locations to meet operational and community needs. Board staff has undertaken a comprehensive review of office leases set to expire within the next 12 months. This analysis provides the Board with an update on five office locations, offering insight into decisions regarding lease renewals, relocations, or closures to ensure compliance and transparency in the decision-making process.

a) Office Status Reviews:

a. Northshore Office: Lease Expiration: September 30, 2025

- i. Recommendation: Non-renewal of the lease with a six-month extension.
- ii. Rationale: Following a viability analysis, it was determined that low walk-in traffic, observed consistently since February 2024, does not justify lease renewal.
- iii. Impact: Redistribution of 14 Workforce Solutions (WFS) and 6 Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) staff members to other locations. VRS will be given a year runway to identify and establish a standalone office to continue its services.

b) Humble Office

a. Lease Expiration: November 30, 2025

- i. Recommendation: Non-renewal of the lease with relocation.
- ii. Rationale: The current location no longer meets operational needs, necessitating a move to better serve staff and the community.
- iii. Impact: Relocation affects 25 WFS and 8 VRS staff members.

c) Pearland Office

a. Lease Expiration: November 30, 2025

- i. Recommendation: Possible renewal of the lease.
- ii. Rationale: We are still examining the viability of this location.

iii. Action Plan: Equus may initiate a Request for Procurement process for a five-year lease with a five-year renewal option if a renewal is determined to be reasonable.

iv. Current Staffing: 11 WFS and 5 VRS staff members.

d) Willowbrook Office

a. Lease Expiration: September 30, 2025

i. Recommendation: Renewal of the lease.

ii. Rationale: The location continues to meet operational and community needs.

iii. Action Plan: Interfaith of the Woodlands has been advised to exercise the 60-month renewal option.

iv. Current Staffing: 25 WFS and 8 VRS staff members.

e) Baytown Office

a. Lease Expiration: December 31, 2025

i. Recommendation: Renewal of the lease with a smaller footprint.

ii. Rationale: The current location remains effective and viable, but we do not need as much space.

iii. Action Plan: BakerRipley has been directed to proceed with the 60-month renewal option.

iv. Current Staffing: 9 WFS and 5 VRS staff members.

Following the Clear Lake Community Meeting, several new location options are being explored. These included an offer from the United Way to use some office space previously occupied by the Clear Lake career office, as well as site recommendations from Precinct 2 and the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.

Serving the Regional Economy

The discussion on serving the regional economy highlighted key initiatives and tools designed to strengthen the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's impact by

leveraging data, enhancing job alignment, and improving vendor standards. These included:

- **Facts and Figures:** Philip Garcia presented the Facts and Figures chart, offering a comprehensive analysis of demographics relevant to workforce, childcare, and adult education programs. This data-driven approach provided valuable insights into service utilization across the region. The alignment of these findings with social media metrics underscored the reliability of the data and its role in shaping strategic decisions. Geographic trends reaffirmed Harris County as the primary demographic hub, reflecting its significant reliance on workforce services. This focus on evidence-based planning reinforces the Board's commitment to addressing the diverse needs of the communities it serves. It is attached hereto for your file and review as Exhibit "B."
- **Job Opportunities:** Russell Tomlin unveiled an advanced data visualization tool designed to enhance the Board's ability to analyze job vacancies and job seeker activity in real time. By integrating sophisticated sorting and filtering capabilities, this tool empowers workforce teams to identify trends, pinpoint high-demand opportunities, and align workforce strategies more effectively with employer needs. Its utility as a decision-making asset ensures that workforce initiatives remain responsive to regional economic shifts.
- **Education and Training Provider List:** Janine Haynes outlined the progress of a dedicated workgroup tasked with refining Education and Training Vendor Standards. These efforts include streamlining processes, strengthening vendor agreements, and enhancing onboarding procedures for new vendors. Board Chair Guthrie emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards through a recurring evaluation process, ensuring that only quality vendors receive continued support. This commitment to accountability includes discontinuing funding for underperforming vendors, thereby safeguarding the integrity and impact of the Board's training and education investments.
- **Career Service Updates:** Kevin Rodney communicated the development of an organized and categorized Policy Library, which aims to align

organizational policies with service delivery standards. This process included converting all issuances into standards in one location, thereby effectively sharing them with staff.

- **Professional Development:** Brittany Eaton, the Board's new professional development lead, discussed efforts to revamp the "Building Connections" training program targeted at new staff members, with an aim to include new board members in the future. The team is also in the process of updating assessment tools to improve career advising processes, enhancing workforce case management system technical assistance, and fostering cross-departmental collaboration, including Equal Opportunity and the Policy Department. Information was shared about the Quality Assurance Network meeting which aims to foster statewide collaboration across different development board areas.
- **Technology and Communications:** Board staff has completed the procurement process for new Board Management software to support the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. While Passageways (OnBoard) initially scored highest, specific requirements from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) prompted a reassessment. We are now evaluating the second-highest bidder, Convene, to ensure alignment with both operational needs and TWC standards. Simultaneously, we are finalizing a contract with QLess to upgrade our appointment system, enhancing functionality and user experience for clients and staff. The contract is expected to be fully executed by early December. A cross-functional workgroup has been established to guide the implementation of these systems, ensuring alignment with our mission and fostering innovation in service delivery.
- **Community Engagement:** Led by Jennifer Graves, Community Engagement efforts are advancing toward a more strategic approach, emphasizing best practices for hosting events that effectively promote Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast's programs and services. A key initiative launching in December 2024 is the Vocational Rehabilitation referral pilot, which will be hosted at the Pearland, Lake Jackson, and Cypress Station offices, strengthening collaboration and expanding service reach. Community Engagement developments also include the Oxford Place Project, designed to enhance skills development and facilitate job opportunities for underserved

populations. Vice Chair Cheryl Guido proposed deepening outreach efforts by engaging churches and faith-based organizations as valuable community partners. Additionally, Chair Adrian Ozuna recommended incorporating housing and financial literacy into engagement strategies to help individuals build sustainable incomes and improve job prospects within their local communities. These initiatives reflect a commitment to fostering meaningful partnerships and addressing holistic community needs, ensuring Workforce Solutions remains a trusted resource for economic and workforce empowerment.

Career Services Spotlight

Jonathan Trice's journey with Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast began at an outreach event at Conroe High School, where he connected with Youth Career Advisor LaBraia Owens. At the time, Jonathan was seeking a better-paying job to support his growing family, as his wife, Ana, was expecting their first child. However, with limited experience in sales and uncertainty about how to transition into a stable career, Jonathan felt unsure of his next steps.

Workforce Solutions offered Jonathan a life-changing opportunity. He was placed as a Service Coordinator at the Conroe office, where he developed critical skills in customer engagement, problem-solving, and relationship management—skills that expanded far beyond his previous experience. Motivated to advance his career, Jonathan actively pursued new opportunities both within Workforce Solutions and at external organizations such as Conifer Revenue Cycle Solutions.

His determination paid off. On October 14, 2024, Jonathan began a new chapter as a full-time Patient Assessment Coordinator at Conifer Revenue Cycle Solutions, earning \$21.75 per hour. This role provided much-needed financial stability just in time to welcome his newborn into the world. Jonathan's story exemplifies the transformative impact of Workforce Solutions, showcasing how tailored support and opportunity can empower individuals to achieve meaningful, sustainable change and brighter futures.

Chairman's Remarks

Chair Adrian Ozuna praised the committee for its significant accomplishments and dedication to advancing the organization's goals. He expressed satisfaction with the committee's evolution from a narrow focus on leases and facilities to a broader emphasis on delivering impactful services and support to residents and

employers. Chair Ozuna underscored the importance of maintaining alignment with the organization's approved Strategic Plan, emphasizing its role as a guiding framework for initiatives that drive meaningful community impact. He encouraged committee members to remain mindful of the substantial difference their efforts make in supporting and empowering the regional workforce, reaffirming the core mission of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board.

Other Business

Ms. Stipeche announced an important upcoming development: the Career Services Request for Proposals (RFP) will be released in early 2025, marking a key milestone in advancing service delivery and operational improvements. The new RFP will be heavily focused on the delivery of career services as opposed to the maintenance and operation of career office buildings.

With no further business to discuss, the committee adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

Action Item:

We ask the Board to discuss and consider approving the Career Services Policy on Office Locations, which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A."

Attachments:

Exhibit "A," Career Services Policy on Office Locations

Exhibit "B," Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast Facts and Figures

EXHIBIT A

Gulf Coast Workforce Board Policy: Career Services Policy on Office Locations

Purpose:

This policy outlines the procedures for opening and closing career offices within the Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast, ensuring alignment with organizational goals, efficient resource utilization, and effective stakeholder engagement. The policy framework ensures that career offices are opened and closed in a manner that is thoughtful, transparent, and inclusive of stakeholder perspectives.

Objectives:

- Ensure career offices are strategically located and managed to meet the needs of the community and workforce.
- Provide clear guidelines for the opening and closing of career offices to maintain service continuity and operational efficiency.
- Engage relevant stakeholders effectively throughout the process to gather input and address concerns.

I. Opening Career Offices:

1.1. Needs Assessment:

Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify demand for career services in a specific community. This may include analyzing employment statistics, demographic trends, and community feedback.

1.2 Financial Feasibility

Conduct a cost analysis, including rent, utilities, staffing, equipment, technology, and ongoing operational expenses.

1.3. Location Selection:

Identify and evaluate potential locations based on factors such as accessibility, geographic coverage, community need, visibility, proximity to public transportation, colocation opportunities with community partners, libraries, government offices, and/or schools.

- Colocation may include cost sharing or no cost opportunities.

1.4 Proposal Development:

Develop a detailed proposal outlining the rationale for opening a new career office, including services provided, resource requirements, budget, and operational plan.

- **Core Services Provided by Career Offices:**
 - Intake and Assessment
 - Career Counseling
 - Job Search Support
 - Skills Training and Education Referrals
 - Recruiting and Job Matching
 - Support Service Coordination
 - Follow-up and Retention Services

1.5. Stakeholder Engagement:

Engage key stakeholders, including local government officials, community organizations, business leaders, and the public, through town halls (community meetings), surveys, and to gather input and support.

- The Career Services Committee is tasked with reviewing stakeholder feedback and incorporating it into the proposal as appropriate.

1.6. Approval Process:

The proposal will be submitted by the Career Services Committee to the Executive Committee for review with final approval by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board.

- Prior to the Board's approval, all legal and regulatory requirements shall be met.

1.7. Implementation:

Develop and execute an implementation plan that includes site selection, office setup, staffing, and training.

- Communicate the opening of the new office through appropriate channels, including press releases, social media, and community outreach.

II. Career Office Lease Sunset:

2.1. Evaluation and Decision-Making:

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board in collaboration with the Career Services Committee shall regularly evaluate the performance and impact of career offices through metrics such as service utilization (foot-traffic), client outcomes, and cost-effectiveness.

- Identify potential reasons for closure:
 - Low Foot Traffic/Demand.
 - High Operational Costs (lease agreement/utilities).
- Financial and Legal Considerations
 - Review and finalize all financial obligations, including lease termination and outstanding contracts with service providers.
 - Ensure compliance with any legal or regulatory requirements regarding the closure.

2.2. Biannual Lease Reports/Recommendations:

Based on a two (2) year outlook, Board staff will provide to the Career Services Committee a biannual periodic review of career offices' leases that are set to expire within 24 months. The report shall include lease end dates, lease renewal dates, and office challenges. The report shall also include recommendations for offices that are not performing at capacity or experiencing challenges that may prompt a referral to sunset. In this case, Board staff will provide the Career Services Committee rationale for closure, an impact assessment, and a transition plan for affected clients and staff.

- Alternative(s) to Office Closures
 - Co-Location: Opportunity with partner sites for the redistribution of staff may include situating multiple services or organizations within the same physical location (i.e. office building, multiservice/community center)
 - Considerations for Co-Locations may include:
 - Providing a centralized and accessible point for individuals seeking employment-related services.
 - Parking garages with ample customer parking, including accessible parking.
 - Lessor oversees facility related repairs outside of the office suite.
 - More turnkey solution opportunities.
 - Houses more backend staff.
 - Lessor provides building security.
 - Backend staff workspace – tracking unit, virtual office.
 - Less capital improvement challenges.
 - Consolidation of Offices: the practice of combining two or more office spaces to accommodate future changes in staff size to maintain foot traffic patterns, services offered, evolving needs of the clients and communities served.
 - Technology integration,
 - Cost efficiency,
 - Enhanced client experience, and
 - Stronger brand identity.
 - Interim Office Space: renting temporary office space that has a shorter lease term than a standard office lease due to transition. Benefits include:
 - Continuing operational services in a community,
 - Cost efficiency, and
 - Flexibility to adjust space based on changing business needs.
- Transition Plan for Customers and Staff
 - Develop a plan to transition current customers and staff to another career office or service provider, ensuring minimal disruption to workforce services.
- Asset Inventory and Reallocation
 - Create an inventory of all assets (e.g., furniture, computers, office supplies) and determine whether they will be transferred to other offices or donated.
 - Ensure that sensitive data and equipment are securely transferred, disposed of, or wiped in accordance with data retention and protection policies.

2.3. Community Engagement:

Board staff will notify and consult with key stakeholders, including system partners, employees, clients, local community groups and elected officials during a public meeting to discuss the potential impact and mitigation strategies.

- During this meeting, Board Staff will provide a clear rationale for the closure and offer support to affected individuals, such as alternative service locations or job placement assistance for staff as well as solicit opportunities for co-location.

2.4. Approval Process:

Upon completion of the community meeting, the Career Services Committee will submit the sunseting proposal to the Executive Committee to review the recommendation(s), public input, and make any final recommendations before presenting the recommendation(s) to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board for information-purposes only.

- Prior to the Board's approval, all legal and regulatory requirements shall be met.

2.5. Implementation:

Execute the closure plan, including the discontinuation of services, relocation or transfer of staff, and management of office assets.

- Communicate the closure decision and transition plan to all stakeholders through appropriate channels, including direct notifications and public announcements.
- Partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation Services should receive written notice at least 12 months prior to lease expiration.

III. Monitoring and Review:

3.1. Policy Updates:

The Career Services Committee shall regularly review and update this policy to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

3.2. Outcomes:

The Career Services Committee shall monitor and report to the Board, the outcomes of opening and closing career offices to assess the impact on service delivery and stakeholder satisfaction.

EXHIBIT B

Leadership

Mark Guthrie
Board Chair

Juliet Stipeche
Director

Kristi Rangel
Assistant Director

Russell Tomlin
Senior Manager of
Career Service

AJ Dean
Senior Manager of
Fiscal Administration
& Contracts

Fast Facts

28 Full-Time Offices

1,000+ full-time employees

239,097 Individuals Served

29,955 Families and 55,536 children served through child care

38,185 Employers Assisted through Workforce

117,020 Job Posting Entered and 200,231 Job Openings

2,788 Youth Customers Served through WIOA

1,053 individuals served through Work Based Learning (WBL)

Who We Served

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast is proud to serve over 239,097 individuals from October 2023 to September 2024 across 13 counties in the Gulf Coast Region. As the largest workforce board in Texas by population and one of the largest in the nation, we are guided by a dedicated team of 44 board members committed to driving growth and development in our area.

Our comprehensive range of services includes job search assistance, child care support, and ongoing education, all aimed at empowering individuals and fostering a thriving workforce in the region. Together, we are dedicated to building a brighter future for our community.

Service Type

Service Type	Individuals	% of All Individuals
Workforce Solutions Services	192,573	80.5%
Child Care Services	29,955	12.5%
Adult Education Services	16,569	6.9%
Total	239,097	100.0%

Individuals by Age

Age	Individuals	% of All Individuals
Under 19	5,619	2.4%
19-24	36,162	15.1%
25-32	59,261	24.8%
33-44	69,846	29.2%
45-54	36,634	15.3%
55-64	23,382	9.8%
65 and Older	8,185	3.4%
Information Not Provided	8	0.0%
Total	239,097	100.0%

Individuals by Gender

Gender	Individuals	% of All Individuals
Female	140,165	58.6%
Male	97,102	40.6%
Information not provided	1,830	0.8%
Total	239,097	100.0%

Individuals by County¹

County	Individuals	% of All Individuals
Austin	966	0.4%
Brazoria	11,376	4.7%
Chambers	1,009	0.4%
Colorado	609	0.2%
Fort Bend	20,774	8.5%
Galveston	10,293	4.2%
Harris	160,124	65.5%
Liberty	2,966	1.2%
Matagorda	1,955	0.8%
Montgomery	15,626	6.4%
Walker	2,347	1.0%
Waller	1,450	0.6%
Wharton	1,660	0.7%
Information Not Available	13,261	5.4%
Total	244,416	100.0%

Individuals by Race

Race	Individuals	% of All Individuals
African American/Black	105,016	43.9%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	5,502	2.3%
Asian	10,211	4.3%
Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	929	0.4%
White	88,550	37.0%
Multiple	1,516	0.6%
Information Not Available	27,373	11.4%
Total	239,097	100.0%

Individuals by Ethnicity

Hispanic	Individuals	% of All Individuals
Yes	67,459	28.2%
No	136,556	57.1%
I do not wish to answer	35,082	14.7%
Total	239,097	100.0%

Individuals by Education Level²

Education Level	Individuals	% of All Individuals
Less than a high school diploma	17,008	7.6%
Highschool diploma/ GED	81,624	36.7%
Some college, no degree	37,949	17.1%
Postsecondary Certificate	14,238	6.4%
Associate's Degree	18,026	8.1%
Bachelor's Degree	36,487	16.4%
Advanced Degree	15,432	6.9%
Information Not Available	1,765	0.8%
Total	222,528	100.0%

Individuals by Veteran Level²

Veteran	Individuals	% of All Individuals
Yes	6,576	3.0%
No	215,596	96.9%
Information Not Available	356	0.1%
Total	222,528	100.0%

Individuals by Disability²

Disability	Individuals	% of All Individuals
No	192,629	86.6%
Yes	14,831	6.7%
Information Not Available	15,068	6.8%
Total	222,528	100.0%

1. Demographic information for "Adult Education Services" are only available by service providers locations which may result in duplications.
2. Demographic information is available only for "Workforce Solutions Services" and "Child Care Services".

Workforce Solutions Services: Provides the unduplicated count of individuals served through qualify services.

Child Care Services: Individuals who received child care services

Adult Education Services: Individuals receiving services through Adult Education consortium.

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAIL

Total Served		Workforce		Child Care		Adult Education		Total	
Individuals		192,573		29,955		16,569		239,097	
Individuals Breakdown									
		WorkInTexas.com		Child Care		Adult Education		Total	
Age									
Under 19		4,584	2.4%	374	1.2%	661	4.0%	5,619	2.4%
19-24		30,275	15.7%	3,685	12.3%	2,202	13.3%	36,162	15.1%
25-32		41,743	21.7%	14,001	46.7%	3,517	21.2%	59,261	24.8%
33-44		53,874	28.0%	10,306	34.4%	5,666	34.2%	69,846	29.2%
45-54		32,592	16.9%	1,119	3.7%	2,923	17.6%	36,634	15.3%
55-64		21,827	11.3%	373	1.2%	1,182	7.1%	23,382	9.8%
65 and Older		7,670	4.0%	97	0.3%	418	2.5%	8,185	3.4%
Information Not Provided		8	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	0.0%
Total		192,573	100.0%	29,955	100.0%	16,569	100.0%	239,097	100.0%
Gender									
Female		99,048	51.4%	28,588	95.4%	12,529	75.6%	140,165	58.6%
Male		92,179	47.9%	920	3.1%	4,003	24.2%	97,102	40.6%
Information not provided		1,346	0.7%	447	1.5%	37	0.2%	1,830	0.8%
Total		192,573	100.0%	29,955	100.0%	16,569	100.0%	239,097	100.0%
Hispanic									
Yes		46,971	24.4%	8,215	27.4%	12,273	74.1%	67,459	28.2%
No		111,738	58.0%	20,522	68.5%	4,296	25.9%	136,556	57.1%
I do not wish to answer		33,864	17.6%	1,218	4.1%	-	0.0%	35,082	14.7%
Total		192,573	100.0%	29,955	100.0%	16,569	100.0%	239,097	100.0%
Race									
African American/Black		85,861	44.6%	16,901	56.4%	2,254	13.6%	105,016	43.9%
American Indian/Alaskan Native		3,768	2.0%	115	0.4%	1,619	9.8%	5,502	2.3%
Asian		8,870	4.6%	256	0.9%	1,085	6.5%	10,211	4.3%
Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		901	0.5%	28	0.1%	0	0.0%	929	0.4%
White		68,226	35.4%	9,408	31.4%	10,916	65.9%	88,550	37.0%
Multiple			0.0%	932	3.1%	584	3.5%	1,516	0.6%
Information Not Available		24,947	13.0%	2,315	7.7%	111	0.7%	27,373	11.4%
Total		192,573	100.0%	29,955	100.0%	16,569	100.0%	239,097	100.0%
Disability									
No		167,106	86.8%	25,523	85.2%			192,629	86.6%
Yes		14,312	7.4%	519	1.7%			14,831	6.7%
Information Not Available		11,155	5.8%	3,913	13.1%			15,068	6.8%
Total		192,573	100.0%	29,955	100.0%			222,528	100.0%
Education Level									
Less than a high school diploma		14,576	7.6%	2,432	8.1%			17,008	7.6%
Highschool diploma/ GED		67,389	35.0%	14,235	47.5%			81,624	36.7%
Some college, no degree		32,503	16.9%	5,446	18.2%			37,949	17.1%
Postsecondary Certificate		12,045	6.3%	2,193	7.3%			14,238	6.4%
Associate's Degree		15,317	8.0%	2,709	9.0%			18,026	8.1%
Bachelor's Degree		34,136	17.7%	2,351	7.8%			36,487	16.4%
Advanced Degree		14,847	7.7%	585	2.0%			15,432	6.9%
Information Not Available		1,761	0.9%	4	0.0%			1,765	0.8%
Total		192,573	100.0%	29,955	100.0%			222,528	100.0%
Veteran									
Yes		5,955	96.7%	621	2.1%			6,576	3.0%
No		186,262	3.1%	29,334	97.9%			215,596	96.9%
Information Not Available		356	0.2%	0	0.0%			356	0.1%
Total		192,573	100.0%	29,955	100.0%			222,528	100.0%
County									
Austin		773	0.4%	117	0.4%	76	0.3%	966	0.4%
Brazoria		8,677	4.5%	1,503	5.0%	1,196	5.5%	11,376	4.7%
Chambers		947	0.5%	32	0.1%	30	0.1%	1,009	0.4%
Colorado		510	0.3%	63	0.2%	36	0.2%	609	0.2%
Fort Bend		17,435	9.1%	2,561	8.5%	778	3.6%	20,774	8.5%
Galveston		7,443	3.9%	1,511	5.0%	1,339	6.1%	10,293	4.2%
Harris		123,115	63.9%	21,054	70.3%	15,955	72.9%	160,124	65.5%
Liberty		2,241	1.2%	220	0.7%	505	2.3%	2,966	1.2%
Matagorda		1,704	0.9%	145	0.5%	106	0.5%	1,955	0.8%
Montgomery		12,600	6.5%	1,799	6.0%	1,227	5.6%	15,626	6.4%
Walker		1,638	0.9%	264	0.9%	445	2.0%	2,347	1.0%
Waller		1,303	0.7%	138	0.5%	9	0.0%	1,450	0.6%
Wharton		1,263	0.7%	211	0.7%	186	0.8%	1,660	0.7%
Information Not Available		12,924	6.7%	337	1.1%	-	0.0%	13,261	5.4%
Total		192,573	100.0%	29,955	100.0%	21,888	100.0%	244,416	100.0%

For More Information About Workforce Solutions

Web Site
www.wrksolutions.com

Telephone

Workforce Solutions: 1 (888) 469-5627

Employer Services: (713) 688-6890

Financial Aid for Child Care Scholarship: 1 (888) 600-5936

Find us on

Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/workforce-solutionsgulfoast>

Instagram
<https://www.instagram.com/workforce-solutions/>

Twitter
<https://twitter.com/GulfCoastWFS>

LinkedIn
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/workforcesolutionsgulfoast>

YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/@WorkforceSolutionsgulfoast>

Data Source:

- The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST)
- WorkInTexas.com (WIT)
- Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS)

Ratification of Action Items from October 1, 2024, Board Meeting

Background

In September 2024, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) informed the Gulf Coast Workforce Board that our membership composition was out of compliance due to the requirement that at least 51% of board members be from the private sector. By November 2024, TWC confirmed that we had addressed the issue, and the Board is now back in compliance, with an official quorum to conduct business.

Current Situation

As a result, all action items approved at the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's October 1, 2024, meeting must be ratified. The minutes from this meeting are attached to the first section of this Board packet for your reference and review.

Action

We request that the Board ratify all actions taken during the October 1, 2024, meeting.

Board Member with Attendance Challenges

Background

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is comprised of members appointed by chief elected officials for two-year terms, subject to approval by the Texas Workforce Commission. Active participation by Board members is critical to the success of the Board's initiatives and strategic goals. Article V, Sections E-F of the by-laws state: "Three consecutive absences from regularly scheduled Board meetings constitute cause for removal."

Current Situation

As of the August 2024 Board meeting, several board members had accumulated three consecutive absences, meeting the threshold outlined in the Board's by-laws to prompt consideration for removal. In response, Board Chair Guthrie issued email and certified return receipt requested letter notifications to these members and their respective chief elected officials on November 19, 2024.

In the notice, Chair Guthrie expressed his appreciation for each member's service while underscoring the critical importance of regular attendance. He highlighted that consistent absences could indicate either a lack of engagement with Board activities or an inability to fulfill membership responsibilities. To ensure fairness, he encouraged members to share any extenuating circumstances that might explain their absences if they wished to continue serving on the Board. Alternatively, he offered the option of voluntary resignation to avoid initiating the formal removal process.

Member Responses

This process resulted in the following outcomes:

- Voluntary Resignations: Three members chose to resign from the Board.
- Renewed Commitments: Two members cited work-related scheduling conflicts as extenuating circumstances but expressed their intention to re-engage and actively participate in 2025.
- No Response: Three members failed to respond to Chair Guthrie's communications. These members are:
 - Anthony Gay,
 - Rajen Mahagoakar, and
 - Ekim Muyan.

Action

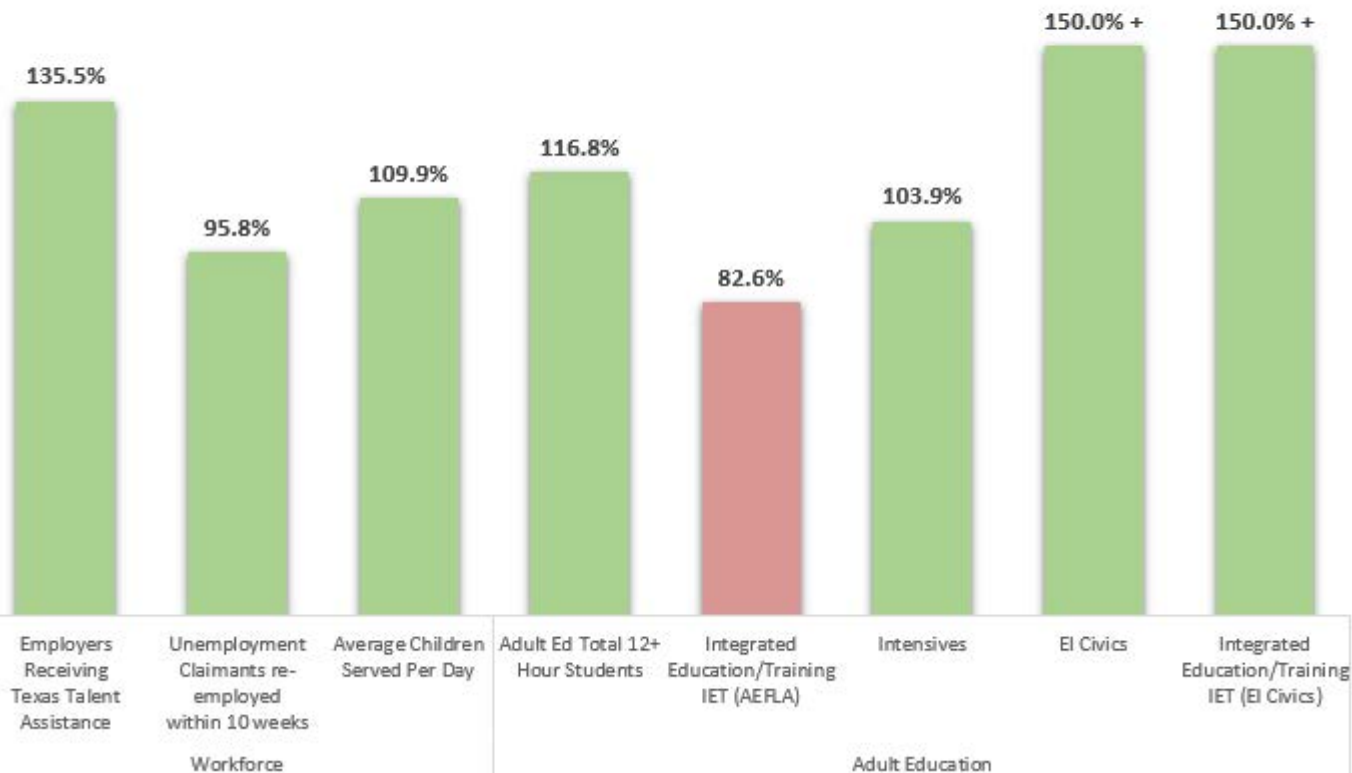
The Board shall deliberate and decide whether to proceed with the formal removal of the following members, in accordance with the by-laws, due to their excessive absences and failure to respond to the Board Chair's notification:

- Anthony Gay,
- Rajen Mahagoakar, and
- Ekim Muyan.

Production Measures

October 2023 to September 2024

% of Target



Employed Q2 Post Exit
Employed Q4 Post Exit
Credential Rate
Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit

- **Current Update:** Information up to April 12, 2024
- **Year-End:** Include information after April 12, 2024

Measurable Skills Gains

- **Current Update:** Information up to March 2024
- **Year-End:** Include full year information

Employers Workforce Assistance

- **Current Update:** Replaced by "# Employers Receiving Texas Talent Assistance"

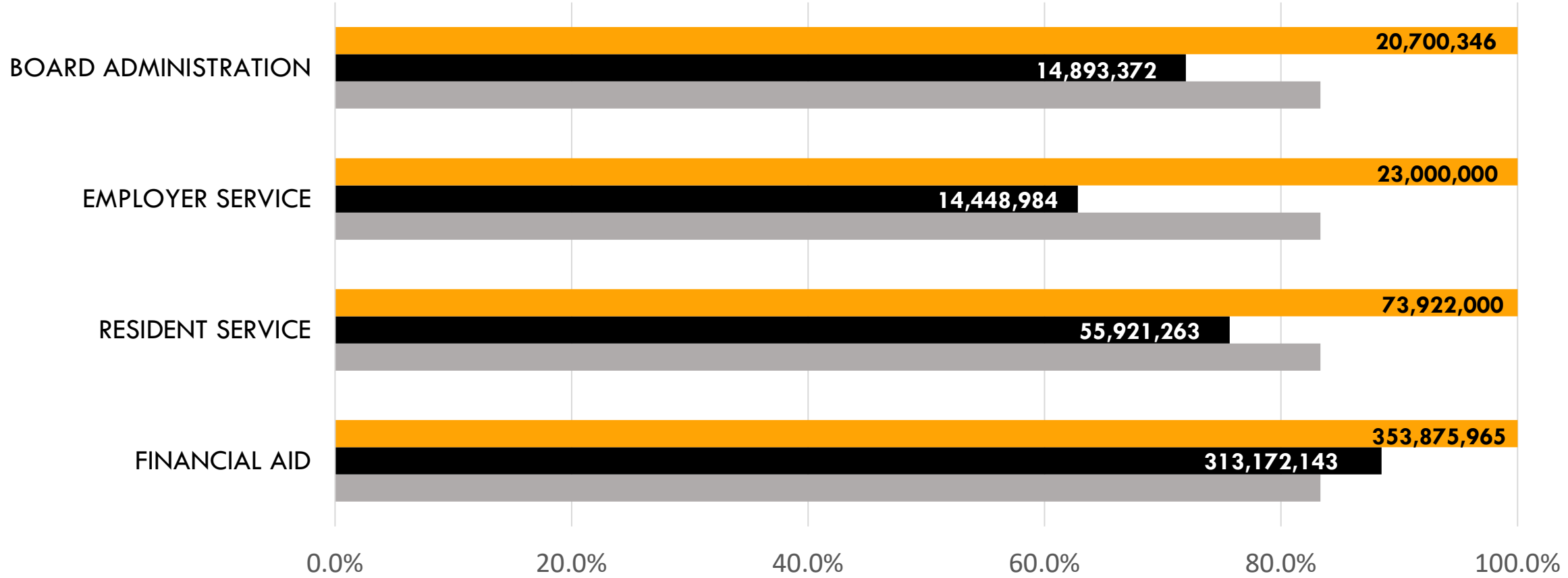
TANF Full Work Rate

- **Current Update:** TWC is currently developing

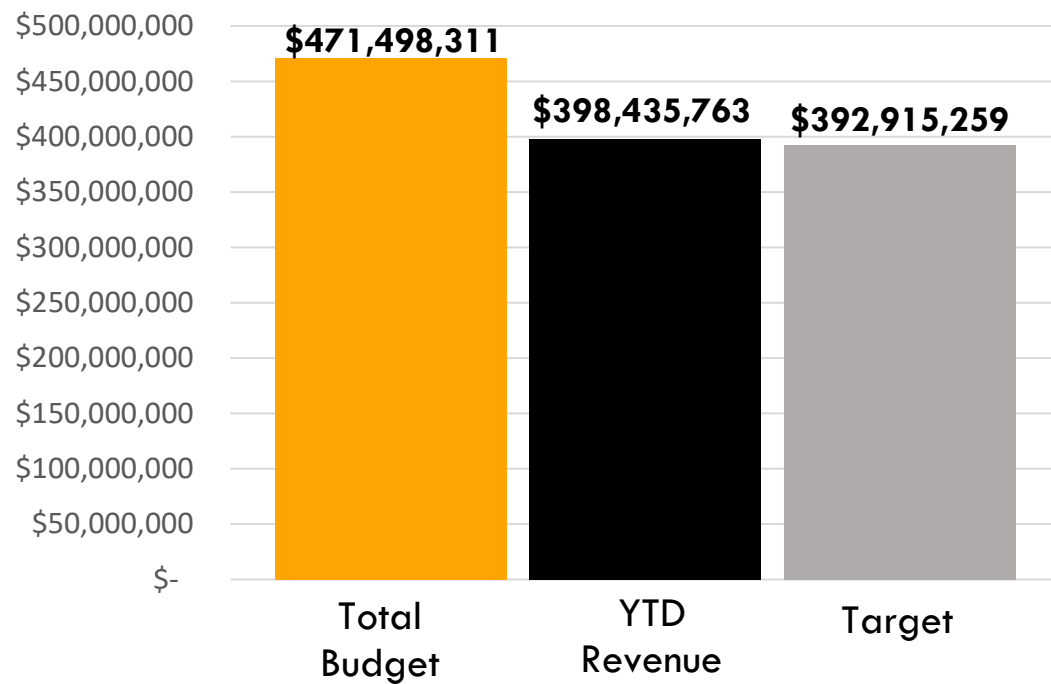
Gulf Coast Workforce Financial Status Report

For the 10 months ending October 31, 2024

■ Budget ■ Expenses ■ Target



Workforce Revenue



System Expenses

- FINANCIAL AID - EARLY EDUCATION \$297,166,366
- FINANCIAL AID - TRAINING & SUPPORT \$16,005,777
- CAREER SERVICES \$45,022,488
- EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT \$6,063,304
- QUALITY IMPROVEMENT \$8,385,680
- ADULT EDUCATION \$10,898,774

