



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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To: Gulf Coast Workforce Board Members
From: Executive Director Juliet K. Stipeche
Date: January 31, 2025
Subject: Upcoming February 4, 2025, Board Meeting

I hope this message finds you well after what has already been an eventful start to the year—including the rare and breathtaking blanket of snow that transformed Houston and the Gulf Coast into a winter wonderland. As we step into 2025, I am grateful for your continued leadership and dedication to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board.

Whether in rain or snow, we have already hit the ground running with three pivotal events. We had our first collaborative Job Fair with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and ABC - Channel 13 at NRG Park on January 16, 2025, followed by our High-Skills, High-Growth and Local WIOA Plan Workshop on January 22, 2025. We also hosted the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Second Annual Tri-Agency Regional Convener Conference at The ION on January 29, with almost three hundred attendees.

Please mark your calendars for our next board meeting on Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, Texas, 77027, in Conference Room A/B/C. This meeting will be conducted in full compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Our session will begin with a report from Board Chair Mr. Mark Guthrie, followed by my Executive Director's report. The agenda includes updates from several committees, presented by their respective chairs:

- Audit and Monitoring Committee – Mr. Guy Jackson,
- Communications Committee – Mr. Doug Karr, and
- Career Services Committee – Mr. Adrian Ozuna.



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Additionally, the following key discussions and action items are scheduled:

- **Budget Review & Adoption:** Mr. Mark Guthrie, Chair of the Budget Committee, will present the 2025-2026 proposed budget for possible adoption.
- **High Skills, High Growth Plan:** Mr. Alan Heskamp, Chair of the Employer Engagement Committee, will discuss the outcomes of the 2025 High Skills, High Growth Workshop and seek approval for the 2025 High Skills, High Growth Plan.
- **Procurement and Contract Awards:** Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Chair of the Procurement Committee, will present recommendations for contract awards, including Career Lattice, the Regional Teacher Apprenticeship Program, and Legal Services.
- **Board Leadership Nominations:** Mr. Doug Karr, Chair of the Nominations Committee, will provide recommendations for two Vice Chair positions.

The meeting will also feature:

- **System Performance & Financial Overview:** Reports on performance metrics and expenditures by Mr. Philip Garcia and Ms. Brandi Brown.
- **Legislative Update:** An overview of the 89th Texas Legislative Session by Mr. Desmond Taylor.
- **Labor Market Trends:** Economic insights from Mr. Parker Harvey and Mr. Mohammad Ahmadizadeh.
- **Communications & Media Update:** A briefing from Mr. Russell Tomlin.

Upcoming Public Local WIOA Plan Workshop – February 26, 2025

In addition to our board meeting, I encourage you to participate in our upcoming Local WIOA Plan Public Workshop on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), 3555 Timmons Lane, 2nd floor, Rooms A/B/C. Your input will be invaluable in strengthening our vision and approach for the coming years, and this will be our final workshop in designing and developing our Local WIOA Plan, which is due to the Texas Workforce Commission on March 21, 2025.



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I want to take a moment to extend my best wishes for a Happy Lunar New Year in the Year of the Snake. May this year bring you success, prosperity, and new opportunities. Thank you for your continued dedication and service. Your leadership makes a profound impact on our region's workforce and economic growth. I look forward to seeing you on February 4, 2025, and as always, please feel free to reach out to me, Maria, or Desmond, with any questions or thoughts.

Until then, be well and enjoy a lovely weekend.



GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

AGENDA

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 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. Adopt Agenda**
- 4. Public Comment**
- 5. Review of the December 2024 Meeting Minutes**
- 6. Declare Conflicts of Interest**
- 7. Reports:**
 - a. Board Chair's Remarks: (Board Chair Mark Guthrie),
 - b. Executive Director's Report: (Juliet Stipeche),
 - c. H-GAC Executive Director's Report: (Chuck Wemple)
 - d. Audit and Monitoring Committee Report: (Committee Chair Guy Jackson),
 - e. Communications Committee Report: (Committee Chair Doug Karr), and
 - f. Career Services Committee Report: (Committee Chair Adrian Ozuna).



8. Action Items:

- a. Budget Committee Report and Action Item: Briefing of the Budget Committee meeting from Board Chair Mark Guthrie including discussion and possible adoption of the following:
 - i. PY 2025-2026
- b. Employer Engagement Committee Report: Briefing of the 2025 High Skills, High Growth Workshop from Committee Chair Alan Heskamp including discussion and possible adoption of the following:
 - i. 2025 High Skills, High Growth Plan
- c. Procurement Committee Report: Briefing of the Procurement Committee meeting from Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson including discussion and possible adoption of the following:
 - i. Contract Award: Career Lattice,
 - ii. Contract Award: Regional Teacher Apprenticeship Program, and
 - iii. Contract Award: Legal Services.
- d. Nominations Committee Report: Briefing of the Nominations Committee meeting from Chair Doug Karr including discussion and recommendations for (2) Vice Chairs to the Board

9. Information:

- a. Performance and Production: Report on the system's performance and production (Philip Garcia),
- b. Expenditures Report: Report on the Board's budget and expenditures (Brandi Brown), and
- c. Legislative Update: Report on GCWB's legislative priorities during the 89th Texas Legislative Session (Desmond Taylor).

10. 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).

11. Other Business

12. 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, DECEMBER 10, 2024**

1. Call to Order: The Tuesday, December 10, 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:

Arcos, Marie	Heskamp, Alan	Ozuna, Adrian
Bartlett, Anne	Jackson, Guy R.	Puente, Paul
Beard, Peter	Johnson, Joyce	Riley, Monica
Below, Shonda	Jones, Lavone	Rupani, Nasruddin
Cavazos, Mary	Karr, Doug	Shaw, Richard
Helen	Larmond, Shareen	Taylor, Sandra
Guido, Cheryl	Lowe, Jonathan	Vazquez, Lizandra
Guthrie, Mark	Melton, Edward	Webster, Michael
Henderson, Bobbie	Oser, Margaret	Yu, Bin

Board Chair Guthrie determined a quorum was present.

3. Introduction of Newly Appointed Board Members: New member Joyce Johnson introduced herself and was warmly welcomed by the Board.

4. Adopt Agenda: Board Chair Guthrie presented the proposed December 10, 2024, meeting agenda. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion passed.

5. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

6. Review of the August 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the October 1, 2024, GCWB meeting were distributed electronically to all members before the December 10, 2024 meeting. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

7. Declare Conflicts of Interest: No conflicts were declared. Chair Guthrie reminded the members that they could declare conflicts with items as they were taken up.

8. Reports:

a. **Board Chair's Report:** Chair Guthrie opened his remarks by recalling his October Board report in which he mentioned the Senate HELP Committee had issued a discussion draft of its WIOA reauthorization bill following the House passage of its reauthorization bill known as ASWA, that the HELP Committee was attempting to resolve some disagreements among committee members over the language in the draft bill, and that the HELP Committee's draft bill was generally more favorable for workforce boards than the House ASWA bill. Unfortunately, those disagreements were never resolved, and the bills had gone to an informal conference process with the House Education and Workforce Committee. Due to some staffing issues on the Senate HELP Committee side, the House staff took charge in the conferencing process which resulted in a compromise that favored the House version of the bill with a few minor modifications to ASWA including:

- Retaining the ASWA requirement that boards spend 50% of their WIOA adult dislocated Title I dollars on training but providing for:
 - The ability for boards to get credit for up to 8% for supportive services that counts toward the 50%; and
 - The ability to use private funding to offset that 50 % amount or to get credit against that 50 % amount.
- Retaining the Increased state set aside in ASWA of an additional 10 % of WIOA Title I funds.
- Retaining the ability in ASWA of states to redesignate workforce areas.

Additionally, the reauthorization bill under consideration removes a provision that Peter Beard noted in the October meeting about labor law compliance as a condition for an employer to receive training assistance training funds. Chair Guthrie reported that the bill's current format, it has received support by the House and Senate leadership and has been

endorsed by many business groups. Unfortunately, none of these groups operate or serve on workforce boards.

Moreover, according to Senator Cornyn's office, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) apparently supports the bill notwithstanding the adverse impacts of the 50% training requirement on a local board's budget, including the reduction of the convening function, the reduction in the abilities to serve employers and residents, and the closing of career offices, and its reported adverse effects in states that have imposed similar training requirements of funneling unqualified participants into training and increased training provider charges.

However, Congressional deadlines and changes in composition may delay the bill's passage, potentially requiring reauthorization under new terms next year. The bill is currently set to be part of the Continuing Resolution package to continue to fund the government in the absence of an approved federal budget. It is anticipated that the CR will also include the Farm Bill, and disaster relief funding to be considered in several weeks. However, the WIOA reauthorization bill's future remains uncertain.

State Updates: The GCWB hosted the Texas Association of Workforce Boards meeting in October, receiving praise for the agenda and speakers. Additionally, several Board members and Board staff attended the TWC annual conference which included a strategic planning session by Juliet Stipeche and Leigh Ann Arnold at Outreach Strategists which was well attended and received high praise for the information presented.

Local Updates: Chair Guthrie and senior Board staff were hosted by Peter Beard and leadership of the Greater Houston Partnership to explore collaboration between our organizations and best practices to service the Greater-Houston region. Look forward to continued conversations and progress in that area. Additionally, Board staff have been working on next year's budget with increased staff involvement this year. Board Chair Guthrie mentioned he would report on that process and some of the findings later in the meeting.

Lastly, Board Chair Guthrie announced the appointment of Doug Karr to lead the Nominating Committee for the open vice chair positions. The committee will meet in the next month or so to discuss potential candidates.

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

- b. **Executive Director's Report (Juliet Stipeche):** Over the past two months, Executive Director Juliet Stipeche has led and participated in key workforce development initiatives at the local, state, and national levels, reinforcing the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's commitment to regional resilience, economic opportunity, and strategic collaboration.

A significant highlight was her invitation from Texas Workforce Commissioner Aaron Demerson to attend a meeting of the Texas Economic Development Corporation, where she learned about the Governor's Economic Development and Tourism Office and its role in driving workforce alignment and business growth across the state. Additionally, she participated in the JP Morgan Chase Resilient Workforce Collaborative, contributing to discussions on strengthening regional workforce systems to support economic resilience and served on a panel with Harris County Commissioner Lesley Briones, Aaron Demerson, and John Hall, which was moderated by Board Member Dr. Mike Webster of Houston Community College.

At the national level, Stipeche attended the Jobs for the Future (JFF) conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which focused on integrating workforce, economic development, and education initiatives to ensure career pathways without "dead ends." The conference provided valuable insights into best practices that can inform the Board's ongoing efforts to enhance workforce accessibility and career mobility.

Locally, Stipeche visited the Board's new Support Center, where she observed firsthand the progress of the child care scholarship program and the ongoing transformation of the child care system. She was also invited to St. Paul, Minnesota to present best practices on child care system reform, further positioning the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a leader in innovative workforce solutions in child care. In recognition of the vital role of the skilled trades, she participated in Apprenticeship Week events, including a plumbers' training program visit, which underscored the workforce contributions of skilled trades in building healthcare infrastructure such as hospitals and clinics. She was also a speaker at the Houston Community College's 2024 Apprenticeship Summit.

Further strengthening the Board's influence, Stipeche and members of the Outreach Strategists team took part in the 27th Annual Texas Workforce Commission Conference, where they presented on strategic workforce board planning. Ms. Stipeche also presented on a panel with three other

state executive directors discussing challenges and opportunities in workforce. Crosby Brito also led a session on registered apprenticeship programs, reinforcing the importance of scalable, data-driven workforce solutions and the role of apprenticeship models in addressing talent shortages across industries.

Looking ahead, Board staff is preparing for the Second Annual Regional Conveners Conference on January 29, 2026, at The Ion which will focus on career exploration, pathways, and professionalism. This event will offer an opportunity to strengthen partnerships with education stakeholders, including students and teachers, and expand talent pipeline strategies.

Stipeche expressed deep gratitude to Board members, staff, and partners for their exceptional dedication throughout the year. She also extended special recognition and thanks to Board intern Agha Mirza, a student from the University of Houston, for his significant contributions to Board composition analysis and other key initiatives.

As the Board enters the new year, Stipeche encouraged continued engagement in upcoming initiatives and reaffirmed the commitment to advancing workforce development, economic growth, and opportunity creation across the Gulf Coast region. No action was taken.

- c. **Audit and Monitoring Committee (Committee Chair Guy R. Jackson):** Chair Jackson reported that the Audit and Monitoring Committee met on November 21, 2024, at the Workforce Solutions Westheimer Office and virtually, with the following Committee members and Board staff present:

Board/Committee members: Committee Chair Guy Jackson, Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Carl Bowles, Cheryl Guido, Mary Helen Cavazos, Doug Karr, Lavone Jones, and Dr. Bobbie Henderson.

Workforce Board staff: Juliet Stipeche, Kevin Rodney, Phillip Garcia, Thomas Brown, Jenny Johnson, Rebecca Valdes, AJ Dean, Vanessa Salazar, Brandi Brown, Dr. Maria Franco, Brittany Eaton, Jennifer Graves, Shawanna Thompson, LaToya Casimere, Crosby Brito, Jennifer Starling, Kimberly Lindoph, Cheryl Sheppard, Desmond Taylor, Kristi Rangel, and Jessica Smith.

Chair Jackson began his report by thanking the Westheimer Office staff for hosting the Board and staff during the November Audit/Monitoring Committee. He continued by acknowledging we continue to work on all the key performance indicators coming up: career services, employer engagement, and adult education and literacy. There also is a draft for early childhood education.

Additionally, Board staff will monitor a report foundational metrics, including monthly average children served per day and the total number of childcare providers enrolled in the Workforce Solutions Network.

Moreover, Chair Jackson reported that the Committee received updates by Board staff on our performance, production expenditures, and technical program compliance. TWC continues to experience issues collecting and reporting accurate data. The measures most being affected are WIOA related, once again. And the State continues to work on fixing its problems.

Technical program compliance reviews—Baker Ripley developed a strong understanding of the policies for a third consecutive year and has effectively integrated them into operations. However, the review also identified opportunities for improvement with assessment and data validation summary. The same thing has occurred with Lone Star College three years in a row. Their areas of improvement include maintaining documentation, data, entry, and staff training.

We have four reviews pending in progress and six more that are scheduled for the coming month. In addition, all property managers of grant recipients were required to attend one of the four annual property management training sessions that took place in November. We had a record, breaking 63 attendees and 34 to 39 that were required to attend.

The Committee received updates on measurable skills gains and adult median earnings of quarter II post exit and SNAP and E-T corrective action plans provided by the TWC. We continue to monitor our progress towards improvement in these areas.

The Committee also received an update on the GCWB interventions. Equus continues on a performance improvement plan for property management choices, credential rate, and measurable skills gains.

It was previously reported that the University of Texas Children's Learning Institute (CLI) was giving up their child care quality contract to avoid a GCWB intervention/performance improvement plan; all services have been integrated and are now being performed by the Board staff.

Lastly, we received the TWC report for adult education that was conducted in October. Our response included an update to our conflict-of-interest policy and strengthened internal controls for training vendors.

Chair Jackson concluded his report by announcing the next Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting will be held on January 14, 2025, at 1:00 pm at 3555 Timmons Lane, 2nd floor. No action was taken.

- d. **Education Committee Report (Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson):** Chair Dr. Henderson reported that the Education Committee met on November 7, 2024, at 3555 Timmons Lane, 2nd floor, and virtually with the following Committee members and Board staff present:

Board/Committee members: Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Richard Shaw, Mary Helen Cavazos, Guy R. Jackson, Shonda Below, Mark Guthrie, Doug Karr, Bin Yu, Mou Sarkar, Edward Melton, and Joyce Johnson.

Workforce Board staff: Maria Franco Cortes, Brandi Brown, AJ Dean, Philip Garcia, Kristi Rangel, Erica Jefferson, Leni Quick, LaToya Casimere, Jacinth Chapman, Romana Paniagua, Russell Tomlin, Jennifer Starling, Vanessa Salazar, Roderick Peoples, Desmond Taylor, Juliet Stipeche, Jennifer Roberts

Chair Dr. Henderson continued by providing a Christmas-themed report on the happenings within the Education Committee. Updates included the Child Care Scholarships (CCS) and a recap of the October 8th Grand Opening of the Financial Aid Support Center, which was attended by over 60 community members. She also reviewed updates to child care policies, including those rescinded on October 3, 2022, and December 9, 2024, to align with the launch of the new TX3C system.

Dr. Henderson continued by recognizing the work of Board staff Jacinth Chapman who works on Child Care Quality (CCQ), focusing on the September 18, 2024, termination of the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) contract and the transition of 32 mentor staff to H-GAC. She highlighted the informational meetings held with providers during this period. Additionally, she discussed plans for a new Request for Proposal (RFP), tentatively set for release on November 20, 2024, to secure a contractor

for managing the TRS program and providing professional development and consumer education supports.

She highlighted the work of Board staff Latoya Casimere who works on Youth Services, emphasizing the success of the 2023-2024 program year, including the Universal Youth and WIOA programs. She noted the improvement plan submitted by NextGen Service Providers to enhance work-based learning placements. She also announced the upcoming release of a Youth Services RFP in January 2025 to establish a list of Eligible Youth Providers aligned with WIOA Youth Elements. Furthermore, the Hire Gulf Coast Youth Program is set to launch on January 25, 2025.

She acknowledged Board staff Jennifer Roberts' work on Adult Education Literacy (AEL), highlighting successes from Quarter 1 and the focus on expanding outreach and comprehensive programming. Lastly, she welcomed Board staff Roderick Peoples who is tasked with planning the Educational Convener for the TEA Grant and expanding work-based learning opportunities.

Chair Dr. Henderson concluded her report, and no action was taken.

Board member Helen Cavazos thanked Dr. Henderson for her leadership on the Education Committee as well as the entire Board as she (Helen) will be retiring from the Board at the conclusion of the 2024 calendar year. In response, she received a round of applause for her service to the Board.

- e. **Employer Engagement Committee Report (Committee Chair Alan Heskamp):** Chair Heskamp reported on the November 15, 2024, Employer Engagement Committee met at the North Side Education Center in El Campo, Texas, and virtually with the following Committee members and Board staff present:

Board/Committee members: Alan Heskamp, Mark Guthrie, Adrian Ozuna, Cheryl Guido, Dr. Melanie Rodriguez, Mou Sarkar, and Bin Yu.

Workforce Board Staff: Juliet Stipeche, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Desmond Taylor, Russell Tomlin, Ron Borski, Crosby Brito, Melissa Steinmetz, Amber Jefferson, Gabrielle Gonzales, Kristi Rangel, Parker Harvey, AJ Dean, Philip Garcia, Jalil Cantarero, Janine Haynes, Mohammed Ahmadizadeh, Roderick Peoples, Vanessa Salazar, Wen Zheng, and Alexandra Mallett.

Chair Heskamp continued by reporting the opportunities that were shared by Board staff on critical workforce initiatives, innovative advancements, and ways to foster collaboration among key stakeholders.

Executive Director Juliet Stipeche and Board staff Parker Harvey presented an update on the 2025 High-Skill, High-Growth Occupation List, noting an increase in the medium wage threshold to \$22.54 to prioritize funding for sustainable industries. Juliet raised concerns about the disproportionate allocation of training funds to truck driving and proposed using CAP limits to balance investments across sectors. A data workshop was scheduled for early January to analyze workforce trends and improve funding strategies.

Board staff Lacey Wolf shared updates on technological innovation in construction, highlighting the successful launch of a 3D concrete printing business in Pasadena. This advancement underscores the region's potential as a hub for advanced manufacturing and modern construction techniques.

Board staff Melissa Steinmetz discussed biotech and healthcare activities, emphasizing the region's global presence through participation in events like the Belgian Life Sciences trade delegation and a Japanese biotech conference. Collaborations with MD Anderson and international venture capital firms further bolster the region's reputation as a leader in healthcare research and development. However, concerns were raised about the impact of Walgreens and CVS closures on pharmacy access and vaccination availability, with efforts underway to support affected employees and communities.

Board staff Amber Jefferson presented on digital equity, noting her recent appointment to an AI advisory board in collaboration with Amazon and Hewlett Packard. She also highlighted her presentation on digital inclusion at the NAWDP Youth Convention in Phoenix, reflecting ongoing efforts to address digital equity challenges.

Board staff Roderick Peoples provided an update on the regional convener grant, which facilitates collaboration among educators, employers, and community leaders to address workforce demands and build a robust talent pipeline. Meanwhile, Board staff Ron Borski delivered a detailed analysis of labor market trends, projecting 69,400 new jobs in sectors like professional business services, education, health, trade, and utilities. He

emphasized the importance of adapting to broader political and economic factors, including restrictive immigration policies and increased funding for job training programs.

Board staff Crosby Britto discussed efforts to strengthen relationships with local chambers of commerce, economic development groups, and community organizations. His work has included regional visits to numerous counties and plans to establish advisory councils in healthcare, IT, and manufacturing to enhance collaboration and workforce development.

The meeting concluded with a discussion on best practices in workforce development, emphasizing the importance of leveraging data and collaborating with industry associations. Attendees agreed to reconvene in January for the High Skills High Growth workshop and no action was taken.

Chair Jackson concluded his report and no action was taken.

- f. **Communications Committee Report (Committee Chair Doug Karr):** Committee Chair Karr reported on the November 13, 2024, Communications Committee. The following Committee members and Board staff were present in person and virtually:

Board/Committee members: Doug Karr, Mark Guthrie, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Guy Robert Jackson, Melanie Rodriguez, Paul Puente, Doug Karr, Cheryl Guido, and Jonathan Lowe.

Workforce Board Staff: Juliet Stipeche, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Desmond Taylor, Raquel Meyer, AJ Dean, Tim Lankford, Russell Tomlin, Kristi Rangel, Jennifer Graves, Sabrina Parras, and Vanessa Salazar.

Chair Karr continued by sharing many successes through media outreach that helps showcase the Board's efforts to connect with the community. Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast was prominently featured on KPRC 2+ discussing strategies for navigating the holiday job market and on ABC 13 during a job fair preview coinciding with National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The Hiring Red, White, and You Veterans Job Fair at NRG Park, the first in-person event since 2019, drew nearly 3,000 attendees, including 1,300 veterans. This event gained extensive media coverage on platforms like CW 39, Univision 45, and ABC 13. Impressively, 100 hires were confirmed during the event, and another 1,000 interviews were scheduled, potentially leading to over 200 new job placements.

These outreach efforts reached over 814,000 viewers, with a combined advertising value exceeding \$240,000.

In addition to the Veterans Job Fair, the NDEAM hiring event on October 24 brought together 175 job seekers, 27 employers, and 23 community resources, reinforcing the commitment to connecting people with meaningful employment opportunities. These successes are attributed to valuable partnerships with organizations like NRG Park and the Texas Veterans Network, which have provided essential support.

The Board's digital presence also continues to grow, with nearly 30,000 followers across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter). In October alone, Facebook posts garnered 24,100 views and 64 shares, while LinkedIn posts achieved an impressive 9.9% engagement rate. Plans to expand the digital footprint include incorporating short-form videos, live Q&A sessions, and data-driven campaigns tailored to audience needs. Efforts to keep content engaging and aligned with audience interests remain a top priority to sustain momentum.

Technological advancements are enhancing operations and outreach. The Workforce Solutions Hub, currently in development, will centralize resources for staff and service providers, offering analytics dashboards and training materials. Tools like GOB Delivery and Eventbrite have streamlined communications and event planning, improved efficiency and expanding reach. Additionally, the website redevelopment, slated for a Spring 2025 launch, will prioritize accessibility by meeting WCAG 2.1 standards and ensuring mobile responsiveness. Features like Eventbrite and GOB Delivery integration will further enhance the user experience, making resources more accessible to all stakeholders.

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast continues to make significant strides in media outreach, digital engagement, and operational improvements. Attendees were encouraged to join the communications committee for deeper insights into ongoing initiatives. The meeting adjourned with plans to reconvene in January or February 2025.

Chair Karr concluded his report and no action was taken.

- g. **Budget Committee Report (Committee Chair Mark Guthrie):** Board Chair Guthrie reported on the November 7, 2024 Budget Committee meeting which was tasked with reviewing the draft 2025 Board budget. The

following Committee members and Board staff were present in person and virtually:

Board/Committee members: Mark Guthrie, Adrian Ozuna, Carl Bowles, Doug Karr, Guy R. Jackson, Mou Sarkar, Edward Melton, Mary Helen Cavazos, Shonda Below, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Jones Lavone, and Paul Puente.

Workforce/H-GAC Board Staff: Sable Harris-Buck, Brandi Brown, AJ Dean, Jessica Smith, Desmond Taylor, Romana Paniagua, Russell Tomlin, Chuck Wemple, Juliet Stipeche, Maria Franco Cortes, Thomas Brown, Roderick Peoples, Christina Ordonez, Vanessa Salazar, Rick Guerrero, Maisha Lyons, and Miguel Segura.

Chair Guthrie reported that projected Board revenues for 2025 are approximately \$496 million, representing a 5.3% increase from the previous year. The breakdown of revenues and their proposed uses can be found in Item 8G, on pages 1-2 of the meeting packet. Of the total revenue, 5.7% is allocated to board operations, with the remaining 94.3% supporting system operations, reflecting efficient use of funds for administrative purposes.

Board operations, totaling \$28.2 million, support approximately 100 staff members and H-GAC operations. The budget reflects the expansion of the childcare quality team, which is now managed in-house, adding complexity to the budget. This complexity is further heightened by the inclusion of workforce division staff and H-GAC staff, along with indirect costs and shared services charges from H-GAC.

During the meeting, concerns were raised about the lack of visibility into the proposed H-GAC direct and indirect charges, as well as shared services categories. To address these concerns, the Committee scheduled another meeting on December 16 at 10:00 a.m. to ensure clarity and provide more detailed information. As a result, no action was taken on the proposed budget, and the Committee aims to present a finalized version for approval during the first Board meeting in February 2025.

A summary of the draft budget begins on page 6 of the packet. It includes a revenue overview, proposed distribution, and a results and objectives page. Board members were encouraged to review these details, which outline the 2025 outcomes and objectives alongside the 2024 numbers for comparison.

Questions during the discussion centered on an \$8.7 million reduction in funding, attributed to changes in the TWC award for the adult education and literacy consortium, which occurred in July. This reallocation reduced the area of operation and distributed responsibilities to other entities. Although the reduction primarily affects educational providers, the complexity of managing the allocation across counties remains a challenge. The team is working to establish clear parameters and continues discussions with TWC regarding available grant funds for adult education and literacy.

One suggestion from Board members was to include objectives related to the number of individuals receiving scholarships and training, as this often gets overshadowed by other metrics such as employment numbers. Chair Guthrie agreed to consider incorporating this into future objectives.

The Committee will reconvene in February 2025 to present the finalized budget for approval. Board members were encouraged to attend the December 16 meeting for further insights into the budget's development.

Chair Guthrie concluded his report and no action was taken.

9. Action Items:

- a. **Career Services Committee Report and Action Item (Committee Chair Adrian Ozuna):** Chair Ozuna reported that the Career Services Committee met on November 19, 2024, with the following Committee members/Board staff present in person and virtually:

Board/Committee members: Mark Guthrie, Adrian Ozuna, Cheryl Guido, Dr. Melanie Rodriguez, Joyce Johnson, Michael Webster, Gil Staley, Jonathan Lowe, Gay Jackson, Alan Heskamp, Bin Yu, Mary Helen Cavazos, Melissa Gonzalez, Paul Puente, and Shonda Below.

Workforce Board Staff: Juliet Stipeche, Russell Tomlin, Sabrina Parras, Kevin Rodney, Janine Haynes, Shawanna Thompson, Philip Garcia, Jennifer Graves, AJ Dean, Sable Harris-Buck, Romana Paniagua, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Thomas Brown, Wen Zheng, Vanessa Salazar, Desmond Taylor, and Brittany Eaton.

Chair Ozuna continued the report by reminding the Board of the proposed Career Services Policy on Office Locations that has been circulated twice for Board action. The new policy framework focuses on optimizing office locations. Furthermore, it considers factors such as population density,

demographics, and language diversity. It includes regular lease evaluations and a comprehensive list of services to meet community needs while maintaining a focus on community input. The committee approved advancing this policy to the full Board for final review, as outlined in Appendix A of the packet.

Senior Manager Russell Tomlin provided updates on career office lease expirations and plans to optimize office locations to meet operational and community needs. The Board staff reviewed office leases set to expire within the next 12 months and provided insights into five locations:

1. North Shore Office: Lease expiration September 30, 2025. Recommendation: Non-renewal with a six-month extension.
2. Willowbrook Office: Lease expiration September 13, 2025. Recommendation: Lease renewal.
3. Humble Office: Lease expiration November 30, 2025. Recommendation: Non-renewal with plans to relocate to a nearby location to continue serving the community.
4. Pearland Office: Lease expiration November 30, 2025. Recommendation: Possible renewal under review. An action plan may include initiating a procurement process for a five-year lease with a five-year renewal option if renewal is deemed viable.
5. Baytown Office: Lease expiration December 31, 2025. Recommendation: Renewal of the lease with a reduced footprint.

Following a Clear Lake community meeting, new location options were explored, including offers from United Way and recommendations from Precinct Two and the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.

Data-Driven Tools and Professional Development:

A new real-time visualization tool was unveiled to enhance the analysis of job vacancies and trends. Additionally, new vendor standards are being implemented to ensure high-quality education and training services. Updates in professional development and community engagement include:

- A revamped onboarding program,
- Improvements to career advising tools, and

- Plans to strengthen partnerships with faith-based organizations.

The vocational rehabilitation referral pilot is set to launch next month in select offices.

Career Services Spotlight:

An inspiring success story from Jonathan Tries highlighted the transformative impact of Workforce Solutions. As an outreach participant, Jonathan transitioned into a stable career that now provides financial security for his family, showcasing the organization's mission in action.

Strategic Alignment:

The committee reiterated its commitment to aligning facilities and services with the strategic plan adopted at the last meeting. The focus remains on delivering impactful services that empower the Gulf Coast workforce. Appendix B in the packet includes a facts and figures template, providing a clear overview of the workforce board's impact. These updates reflect the organization's progress in optimizing operations, improving service delivery, and maintaining a community-centered approach.

Action Item: The Career Services Committee recommended that the Board approve the new Career Services Policy on Office Locations as amended in Appendix A of the Board packet.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the new Career Services Policy on Office Locations. The motion passed.

b. Ratification of Action Items from October 1, 2024, Board Meeting (Board Chair Mark Guthrie):

A motion was made and seconded to ratify the Board action items from the October 1, 2024, Board Meeting. The motion passed.

c. Discussion and Possible Action regarding Board Members with Attendance Challenges (Board Chair Mark Guthrie):

The GCWB bylaws mandate the removal of Board members who accumulate three consecutive unexcused absences from regularly scheduled meetings. Letters were sent to eight members who met this threshold, informing them and the respective elected official's office of

their potential removal and inviting them to provide explanations or mitigating circumstances for their absences. Three members did not respond and are subject for removal:

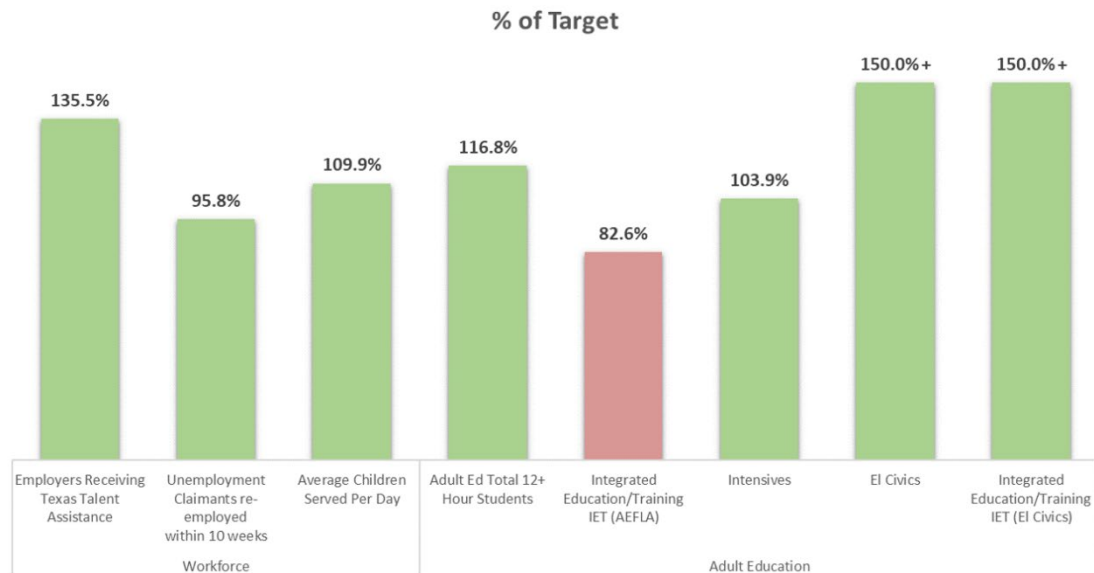
- Anthony Gay
- Rajen Mahagaokar
- Ekim Cem Muyan

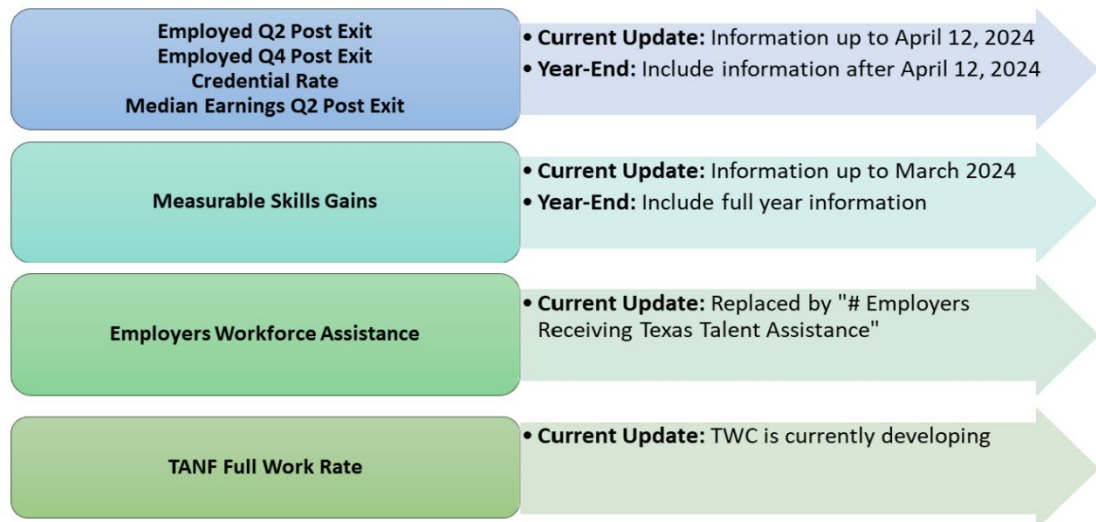
Several questions ensued by Board members. Peter Beard inquired if Board staff has a plan to replace members of the business community as several of the members listed for removal are from that sector. The response was yes; Board staff have been working on compliance measures over the past few months leading up to this vote. Alan Heskamp questioned if the chief elected official's office responsible for these persons' nominations have been notified. The response was yes; Board staff sent a copy of the letter to the chief elected officials' offices via electronic mail.

A motion was made and seconded to remove the three members who accumulated three consecutive unexcused absences from regularly scheduled meetings. The motion passed.

10. Information:

a. Performance and Production Report (Philip Garcia):

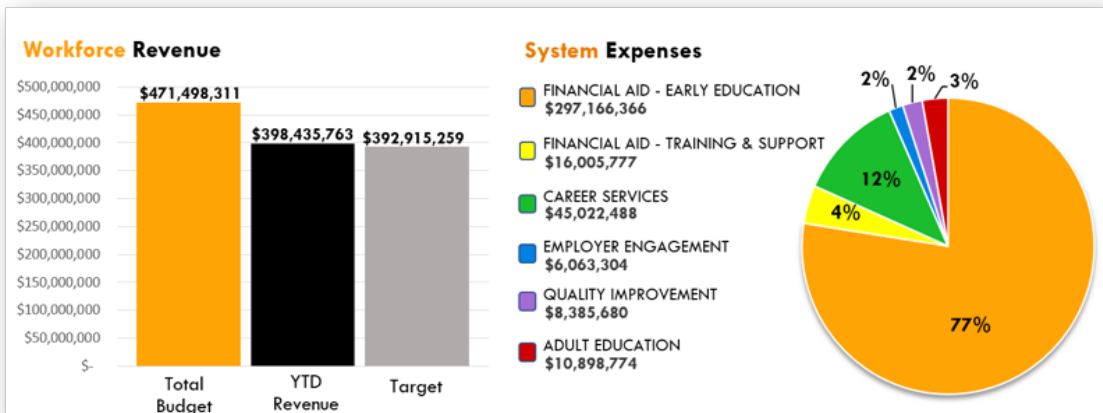
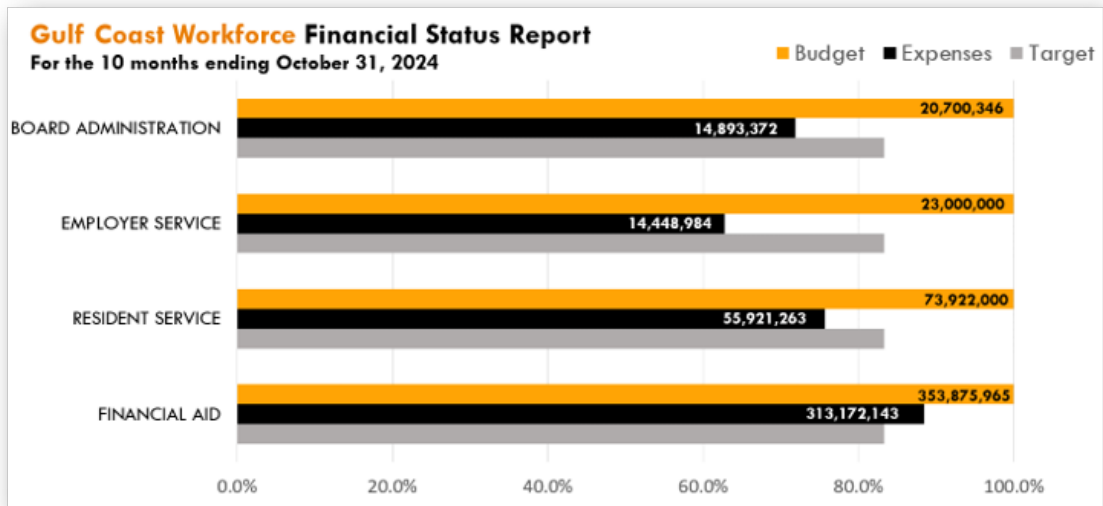




The TWC is still working on reporting capabilities, with updates stalled since March 2024, particularly those related to the CMS transition to Work in Texas. While the end-of-year report for fiscal 2024 is expected soon, the Continuous Reporting Database system will not be functional yet. Despite these challenges, we are meeting most performance measures we can currently track. Regular collaboration with providers and the data management work group ensures alignment, best practices, and continuous improvement. We remain committed to addressing all measures and will update reports as new information becomes available.

Paul Puente inquired if we are the only ones lagging in the Integrated Education/Training area or is this standard across the state of Texas? The response provided was this is a statewide trend and relates more to the workforce measures.

b. Expenditures Report (Brandi Brown):



Michael Webster inquired on the 4 % for training and support, what bucket of funding does that come out of it and why does it seem so small? The major source of those funds come from the WIOA allocation. The 4% Training & Support line item is 4% of the total budget but nearly 30% of the WIOA allocation which totals to roughly \$50 million.

11. Presentations:

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

Slides to full presentation attached in board packet.

b. Communications and Media Update (Russell Tomlin):

1. Thirteenth Annual Red White and You Hiring Fair recap video.
2. Workforce Solutions Success Story: Erica Ramirez

12. Other Business:

Board Chair Mark Guthrie closed the meeting out by thanking the Board, the Board staff, and contractors for their hard work and dedication throughout the entire year. A lot of major successes were achieved. Additionally, the GCWB has some long time Board members who were departing the Board at the conclusion of the December meeting, including: Richard Shaw, Peter Beard, Helen Cavazos, and Willie Alexander. Each member had an opportunity to share their gratitude to their fellow Board members and staff.

13. Adjourn: Board Chair Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 12:21 pm.

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

ARCOS, MARIE

Compudopt
1602 Airline Dr
Houston, TX 77009
(713) 557-6575
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County: Harris
marie.arcos@compudopt.org
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

BARTLETT, ANNE

Brazosport College
500 College Drive
Lake Jackson, TX 77566
(979) 480-7574
Category: Education
County: Brazoria
anne.bartlett@brazosport.edu
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

BELOW, SHONDA

Northeast Houston American
Federation of Teachers
5310 E Sam Houston Pkwy N, Ste M
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(713) 598-7144
Category: Labor
County: Harris
sbelow@nehouaft.org
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

BOWLES, CARL

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

COCKRELL, DORIAN

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Dorian.cockrell@jpmchase.com
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

GONZALEZ, MELISSA

Lone Star College
20000 Kingwood Drive
Kingwood, TX 77339
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County: Harris
melissa.gonzalez@lonestar.edu
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

GUIDO, CHERYL

Texas Workforce Solutions-VR Services
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cheryl.guido@twc.texas.gov
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

GUTHRIE, MARK

Board Chair
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County: City of Houston
mguthrie@winstead.com
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

HENDERSON, BOBBIE ALLEN**Vice Chair**

Texas Southern University
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County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

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311 Hoskins Broadway
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County: Wharton

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

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Chambers County Abstract Co. Inc.
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Anahuac, TX 77514
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County: Chambers

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

JOHNSON, JOYCE

Why Sales Network
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County: Harris

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

KARR, DOUG

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raiderkarr@aol.com

Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

LABROSKI, JEFFREY

Plumbers Local Union No. 68
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County: City of Houston

ski@plu68.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

LARMOND, SHAREEN

West Gulf Maritime Association
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County: Harris

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

LOVE, MICHAEL

Southwest Schools
3333 Bering Drive
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Category: Education

County: Harris

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

LOWE, JONATHAN

International Alliance of Theatrical
Stage Employees
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Category: Labor

County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

MELTON, EDWARD

Texas Library Association
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Houston, TX 77033
(713) 274-6600

Category: Literacy

County: Harris County

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

OSER, MARGARET

United Way of Greater Houston
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Houston, TX 77007
(713) 685-2788

Category: CBO

County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

OZUNA, ADRIAN

Prosperity Bank
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County: Harris

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

PUENTE, PAUL J.

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Construction Trades Council
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Category: Labor

County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

RILEY, MONICA

The Community Gatekeepers
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monicacriley7@gmail.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

SARKAR, MOU

Pearland Economic Development
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Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

SEGOVIA, VALERIE GARCIA

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Category: Education

County: Matagorda

vsegovia@tamu.edu

valeriegsegovia@gmail.com

Term: January 1, 2024 thru December 31, 2025

TAYLOR, SANDRA

Tiny Toes Academy
1743 Trammel Fresno
Fresno, TX 77545
(832) 630-6301

Category: Child Care

County: Fort Bend

tinytoesacademy@yahoo.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

VAZQUEZ, LIZANDRA

Texas Workforce Commission
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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

WATSON, CAROLYN

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Category: CBO

County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

WEBSTER, MICHAEL

Houston Community College
3100 Main Street
Houston, TX 77002
(713) 718-8030

Category: Education

County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

YU, BIN

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Category: Business

County: City of Houston

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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

Houston-Galveston Area Council

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Houston, TX 77227-2777

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GULF COAST WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD COMMITTEES

Audit/Monitoring

- Guy Robert Jackson – Chair
- Carl Bowles – Vice Chair
- 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
- 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
- Rupani Nasruddin

Communications

- Doug Karr – Chair
- – Vice Chair
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Jonathan Lowe
- Michael Webster
- Melanie Rodriguez

Education

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

Employer Engagement

- Alan Heskamp – Chair
- Jeff LaBroski – Vice Chair
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Shareen Larmond
- Mou Sarkar
- Keri Schmidt
- Melanie Rodriguez

Government Relations

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

Nominating

- Doug Karr – Chair
- Jeff LaBroski – Vice Chair
- Alan Heskamp

Procurement

- Bobbie Henderson – Chair
- Doug Karr – Vice Chair
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Alan Heskamp
- Jeff LaBroski
- Adrian Ozuna
- Paul Puente

Report Card

Appointed by Board Chair as needed.

Strategic Planning

- Carl Bowles – Chair
- Paul Puente – Vice Chair
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson
- Doug Karr
- Michael Love
- Adrian Ozuna
- Carolyn Watson
- Melanie Rodriguez

Audit and Monitoring Committee

Update for January 2025

Executive Summary

The Audit and Monitoring Committee, chaired by Mr. Guy R. Jackson, met on January 14, 2025, at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027, Room 2B/C at 1:00 p.m. Other board members present included Paul Puente, Guy Jackson, Doug Karr, Jonathan Lowe, Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Carl Bowles, Cheryl Guido, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, and Anne Bartlett. Staff members present included Romana Paniagua, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Vanessa Salazar, Thomas Brown, Philip Garcia, Brandi Brown, Kristi Rangel, Russell Tomlin, AJ Dean, Sable Harris-Buck, Juliet K Stipeche, Abdul Kargbo, Kevin Rodney, Janine Haynes, Kimberly Landolph, Jeanette De La Cruz, Jennifer Starling, Desmond Taylor, Rebecca Valdez, and Jenny Johnson.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board continues to enhance its Key Performance Indicators (KPI) framework to drive data-informed decision-making and program performance measurement. Progress has been made in expanding KPIs for the Career Services Division, aligning with the Board's strategic priorities. The Audit and Monitoring Committee will continue reviewing KPI development to refine measurement strategies and improve program effectiveness.

System-wide performance and financial monitoring remain a priority, with a comprehensive review of contractor performance, program compliance, and fiscal accountability. While transitioning from TWIST to the new Workforce Information Tracking (WIT) system has delayed some reporting updates, critical performance indicators such as Texas Talent Assistance, claimant reemployment, and early education enrollment continue to be tracked effectively. End-of-year data highlights strong performance, with 17 of 22 targets met or exceeded. However, identified challenges—including credential attainment and youth employment rates—are being addressed through targeted interventions. Financial monitoring reports indicate sound fiscal management, with year-to-date revenues slightly ahead of projections. Additionally, procurement training sessions and technical assistance efforts are strengthening compliance and operational efficiency across service providers.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Framework Update

We continue to move forward with our 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.

In November 2024, the Audit and Monitoring Committee received proposed measures for the Early Education program. Since that time, the team has worked on measures for our Career Service Division. We focused our efforts on level 0 and level 1 KPIs as they are opportunities we can measure immediately. All KPIs are designed to align with the Workforce Board's strategic priorities:

1. Support Business-Forward Strategies to Fuel the Regional Economy
2. Serve as a Convener & Forge Strategic Partnerships
3. Increase Awareness of Services & Opportunities
4. Improve Service Delivery with Technology and Innovation

Career Services Program – Key Performance Indicators

1. Support Business-Forward Strategies to Fuel the Regional Economy

- *Goal:* Create and expand opportunities for technical degrees and career pathways.
- *Metric:* Number of technical degree and career pathway opportunities established.

2. Serve as a Convener & Forge Strategic Partnerships

- *Goal:* Expand the training provider network to meet the demands of local employers, especially in underrepresented industries.
- *Metric:* Number of new training providers recruited in targeted, underserved industries.

3. Increase Awareness of Services & Opportunities

- *Goal:* Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to prioritize visibility of career opportunities.
- *Metric:* Improvement in search engine ranking for career opportunity keywords.

4. Improve Service Delivery with Technology and Innovation

- *Goal:* Develop online tutorials to guide users in utilizing Workforce Solutions resources.
- *Metric:* Number of tutorials created and deployed within the Workforce Solutions website or application.

Additionally, we will monitor and report on these foundational metrics:

- *Number of customers enrolled in targeted industries, and*
- *Number of training providers in Workforce Solutions Network.*

Progress on KPI development will be reviewed at upcoming Audit and Monitoring Committee meetings to provide Board members with opportunities for feedback.

System Review

In our continuous effort to enhance our system's efficiency and effectiveness, this report provides an in-depth contractor-level review of performance, production, and expenditures for key service providers. This review includes technical program compliance assessments, financial monitoring, and customer experience evaluations. It focuses on aligning with our strategic goals and addressing identified deficiencies through targeted interventions and technical assistance.

Performance and Production

Reporting Capabilities:

We have maintained consistent and productive communication with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), which is amid enhancing its reporting infrastructure. Consequently, several key performance measures, particularly those tied to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), have not been updated since March and April. This delay stems largely from the ongoing transition from the TWIST system to the new Workforce Information Tracking (WIT) system.

Current Performance Tracking:

Despite the temporary delay in certain data sets, we continue to effectively monitor and update most performance metrics. Notably, we are tracking critical indicators such as Texas Talent Assistance, claimant reemployment within 10 weeks, and the average number of children served per day. These metrics remain on track to meet their respective performance targets, reflecting our ongoing efforts to provide efficient and impactful services, even amidst reporting system transitions.

Provider Collaboration & Support:

In response to reporting gaps, we have prioritized close collaboration with our providers to ensure that performance outcomes remain robust. In addition to our regular meetings and one-on-one consultations, we have implemented bi-monthly sessions with the data management teams of all providers. These sessions facilitate the exchange of updates, identification of best practices, and the alignment of strategies aimed at improving performance. This proactive approach

fosters a culture of continuous improvement and strengthens our partnerships, ensuring that we collectively work towards achieving optimal results.

End-of-Year FY2024:

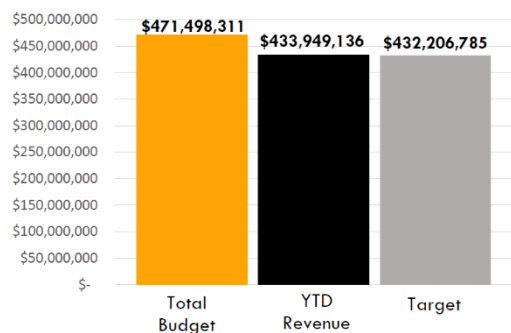
The end-of-year performance data has been shared with us, reflecting strong outcomes across several key performance metrics. We successfully achieved or exceeded 17 of the 22 performance targets, showcasing the overall success and impact of our programs. However, there were five targets that were not fully met, including credentials for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Career & Training participants, as well as the Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit for Youth. While these areas did not reach the established benchmarks, the overall performance highlights considerable progress within our region.

Expenditure Update

Revenue Overview

The 2024 budgeted revenue totals over \$471 million. The Year-to-Date revenue as of November 2024 is \$434 million slightly ahead of the target of \$432 million.

Workforce Revenue



Expenditure Overview

Financial aid represents \$341 million of expenditures with \$324 million for Early Education and \$17 million for Training & Support.

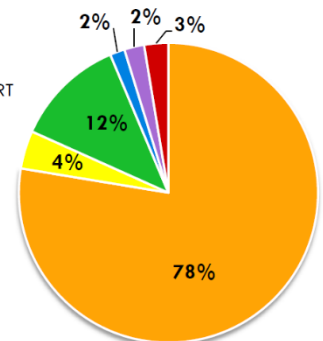
Career Services represents \$50 million and Adult Education represent \$11 million of the Resident Service expenditures.

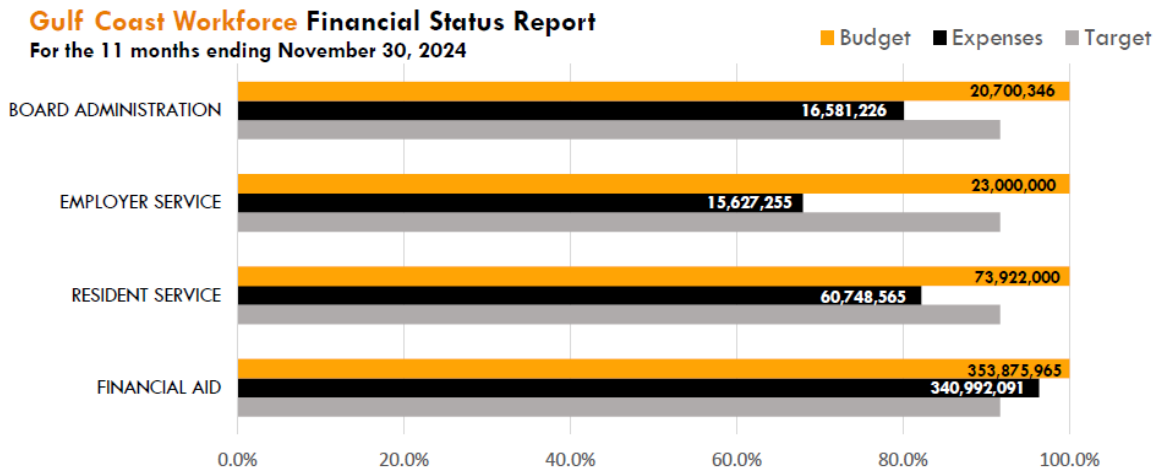
Employer Engagement and Quality Improvement represent \$7 million and \$9 million, respectively for Employer Services. Child care quality activities have transitioned to the Board level.

Board Administration is \$17 million which will see an increase with the onboarding of the child care quality activities.

System Expenses

- FINANCIAL AID - EARLY EDUCATION \$323,877,013
- FINANCIAL AID - TRAINING & SUPPORT \$17,115,078
- CAREER SERVICES \$49,849,790
- EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT \$6,684,667
- QUALITY IMPROVEMENT \$8,942,587
- ADULT EDUCATION \$10,898,774





Technical Program Compliance

Technical Program Compliance reviews consist of compliance testing of contract and policy requirements and customer experience testing conducted by the Quality Assurance Team. The scope of each review is determined by the terms and conditions specified in the service provider's contract. Financial monitoring is conducted separately, which is discussed later in this report.

San Jacinto College: We reviewed data and operations from July 2023 to October 2024 and assessed performance, compliance, information security, customer satisfaction, and class observations. The review resulted in a significant increase in findings from previous reviews. We noted that many staff changes had occurred during the beginning of PY2024 which might account for the increase in findings. The increase in findings indicates a need to strengthen internal controls and processes, including additional staff training to ensure accurate data entry. Areas that need improvement are:

- Assessments—An exception for a pre-test not administered in all domains was not in the participant's file and entered in TEAMS.
- Intake and Eligibility & Data Validation – Enrollment documentation did not match TEAMS data entry for all participant files reviewed.
- Information Security – Staff did not complete all trainings on time.
- Professional Development – PD documentation in the staff file did not support TEAMS data entry.
- New Hire Orientation – Staff did not complete orientation within 30 days of hire.

San Jacinto College is working to correct all findings and provide added training to staff regarding all requirements.

Adult Education Center (AEC): We reviewed data and operations from July 2023 to October 2024 and assessed performance, compliance, information security, customer satisfaction, and class observations. The review found recurring findings in data management and entry, document collection, and staff training. While earlier reviews noted minimal improvements, progress has been inconsistent.

An onsite visit to AEC revealed significant gaps in AEC's processes for obtaining and maintaining staff records. The review highlights ongoing programmatic challenges found in program monitoring since PY 2022, affecting AEC's ability to meet Adult Education program requirements. Areas that need improvement are:

- Assessments—An exception for a pre-test not administered in all domains was not in the participant's file and entered in TEAMS, accurate TEAMS data entry of contact hours, and complete development of goals on ITEC.
- Intake and Eligibility & Data Validation – Enrollment documentation did not match TEAMS data entry for all participant files reviewed. An out-of-date Orientation to Complaint was used.
- Measurable Skills Gained – Documentation does not match TEAMS data entry.
- Information Security— Staff did not complete all trainings on time.
- New Hire Orientation – Staff did not complete orientation within 30 days of hire.
- Staff Qualifications – All staff did not meet minimal educational qualifications.
- Professional Development – PD documentation in staff file did not support TEAMS data entry.
- Test Administrators – Refresher and remote training were not completed as required.
- Required Posters – All classrooms did not have required posters displayed.

Adult Education Center responded to the report and told us they are working to correct all findings, provide additional training to staff regarding all requirements and implement stronger processes and controls.

Current Reviews:

We will finish the Next Gen program monitoring reviews by the end of January. Desk reviews for all three career office service providers and onsite monitoring visits are in progress.

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) final report. Nine (9) reviews are currently in progress, and four (4) reviews are scheduled to begin within the next few months.

Monitoring Update:

We have resolved (1) PY report that resulted in questioned costs totaling \$668.54. The amounts have been received by H-GAC Finance.

Final Reports Received Since the Last Update:

- Houston Community College - Low Overall Risk

Reviews in Progress:

- Adult Education Center
- Baker Ripley (FAPO, Career Office, AEL)
- Children’s Learning Institute
- Equus (Career Office)
- Equus (Support Center)
- Interfaith of the Woodlands
- Lone Star College
- Systemwide Financial Aid Payment Review (Q1)
- Region 6

Upcoming in 2025:

- Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries
- SERCO
- SERJobs
- United Way

Procurement Training:

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing technical assistance and strengthening the capabilities of our area service providers, Board staff delivered a comprehensive Procurement Training session on November 19, 2024, for members of the Adult Education Consortium. Representatives from the Adult Reading Center, BakerRipley, Houston Community College, Lone Star College, Region 6, and San Jacinto College participated in this critical training.

The session was designed to ensure compliance with procurement regulations and to enhance the efficiency and accountability of procurement processes. Proper procurement practices are essential for maintaining the integrity of federally and state-funded programs, ensuring that public funds are used responsibly and effectively to serve our community.

Topics Covered:

1. **Federal, State, and Local Guidance on Procurements:**
 - OMB Circulars

- Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Financial Manual on Grants and Contracts
 - Contract Management Policies and Procedures
- 2. Procurement Methods, Thresholds, and Special Considerations:**
- Informal Procurements
 - Formal Procurements
 - Non-Competitive Procurements
- 3. Internal Controls and the Procurement Cycle:**
- Planning
 - Solicitation and Evaluation
 - Implementation and Oversight
 - Closeout

Effective procurement practices are critical to ensuring that service providers operate within regulatory frameworks, minimize risks, and maximize the impact of limited resources. By equipping consortium members with the knowledge and tools to navigate complex procurement requirements, we help foster transparency, compliance, and efficiency in delivering services to the communities we serve.

We are pleased to announce another training session tailored for our workforce service providers is scheduled for **January 14, 2025, at 3:00 PM.**

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 performance improvement actions for measurable skills gain. The end-of-year report shows that we met all the MSG targets for 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. However, the year-end report shows we met the adult median earnings target for 2024.

GCWB Interventions:

Equus – Career Office: On October 30, 2024, Board staff received a letter from Equus leadership requesting the removal of their Performance Improvement Plan. Board staff carefully reviewed the request, Equus-provided data, and made the decision to remove the Performance Improvement Plan.

This decision was made after reviewing the self-reported data from Equus showing improvement in Choices, Credential Rate, and Measurable Skills Gain. Additionally, Equus leadership actively participated in the Board-staff provided Property trainings.

Board staff communicated to Equus that while the Performance Improvement Plan was lifted, Equus is expected to sustain their focus on the impacted areas. Equus will continue to provide Board staff with regular updates in those areas moving forward.

Compliance and Review Updates

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) 2024 Adult Education Review: We submitted updated information in response to four outstanding findings from the 2024 TWC Adult Education Monitoring Report. This included providing an implementation date from Human Resources for a new conflict of interest process, as well as additional documents demonstrating how adult education participation hours are tested for compliance.

Additionally, we will request reimbursement from the Harris County Department of Education and the Adult Education Center for disallowed costs. We anticipate that TWC Audit Resolution will close all findings once the funds have been recovered.

Next Meeting

We propose scheduling the next committee meeting for 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 20, 2025, at Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, Texas 77027.

Communications Committee

January 2025 Update

Executive Summary

The Communications Committee, chaired by Mr. Doug Karr, convened on January 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027 (Room 2D). Attending Board members included Chair Mark Guthrie, Cheryl Guido, Dr. Melanie Rodriguez, Bin Yu, Jeff Labroski, Lizandra Vasquez, Melissa Gonzalez, Mou Sarkar, and Dr. Bobbie Henderson. Board staff in attendance included Juliet Stipeche, Jennifer Graves, Desmond Taylor, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Romana Paniagua, Philip Garcia, Danielle Knotts, Sabrina Parras, Jennifer Starling, Shawanna Thompson, LaToya Casimere, and Sable Harris. Also present were Tim Lankford, Dr. Michelle Cantú, and Leigh Ann Arnold from Outreach Strategists, the Board's public engagement contractor.

As Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast continues to expand its regional influence, communication and strategic outreach remain vital in strengthening partnerships, increasing service awareness, and advancing the Board's workforce development objectives. The Communications Committee continues to oversee initiatives that elevate public engagement, refine digital strategies, and amplify the Board's visibility across traditional and emerging media platforms.

This report outlines significant achievements, including high-impact media engagement, expanded digital outreach, and key technological advancements that enhance accessibility and service delivery. These efforts not only align with the Board's strategic priorities but also reinforce the organization's role as a regional leader in workforce innovation and economic empowerment.

Strengthening Public Engagement & Media Presence

Recognizing the power of effective storytelling and data-driven outreach, the Board has prioritized high-impact media placements and strategic public relations to enhance public awareness of its workforce programs. Since the last Board meeting, we engaged in the following:

- Fox26 Childcare Resources Feature (Aired January 6, 2025) – Provided critical insights into childcare assistance programs, reaching 118,593 viewers with an earned media value (AVE) of \$57,171.
- ABC13 Job Fair with Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo (January 16, 2025) – Served as the soft launch for Hire Gulf Coast Youth,

reaching 279,555 viewers with an AVE of \$70,800.

- Fox26 Pre-Apprenticeship Program Interview (Pending as of January 14, 2025) – Focused on emerging workforce pathways and the role of pre-apprenticeships in talent development.
- **Total Earned Media Value: \$127,971.00.**

Beyond media engagements, the Board also participated in the following conference:

- Texas Workforce Conference Presentation (December 4, 2024) – Director Juliet Stipeche, Leigh Ann Arnold, and Michelle Cantú-Wilson presented on the Gulf Coast Workforce Board’s strategic plan, highlighting innovative approaches to addressing regional workforce challenges.

Additionally, branding and outreach collateral have been refined to ensure a cohesive and impactful presence, including:

- An updated Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast logo, reinforcing the region’s workforce identity.
- 2025 Legislative Outreach materials and “Save the Date” notifications for upcoming policy discussions.
- Design work for Hire Gulf Coast Youth.

Expanding Community Engagement & Strategic Partnerships

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast continues to strengthen its role as a workforce convener, fostering partnerships that bridge gaps between industry, education, and workforce services.

We are proud of the 2025 Technical Industry Career Fair with Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo (HLSR). This is the Board’s first-ever collaborative job fair with HLSR at NRG Park successfully connected youth and job seekers with employers, showcasing a model for future regional workforce engagement efforts. Key outcomes from this event include:

- Total Registered Job Seekers: 940 (402 youth participants)
- Employers Registered: 45
- Employers Attended: 30
- Total Job Seekers Attended: 492 (216 youth participants)

Given the strong participation and employer engagement, this event lays the groundwork for expanded career exploration initiatives, job fairs, and immersive workforce opportunities in collaboration with HLSR.

In December 2024, we presented at the OST/South Union Community

Partnership in collaboration with the Houston Business Development, Inc. The Board presented a “One Voice” briefing to 18 prospective employers, highlighting key workforce services including:

- Employer Services
- Career Services
- Adult Education & Literacy
- Childcare Scholarships
- Strategic Partnerships

These engagements reinforce Workforce Solutions’ role in bridging employer needs with workforce development resources, expanding access to workforce programs across the region.

Launching Hire Gulf Coast Youth

The Hire Gulf Coast Youth (HGCY) initiative serves as a comprehensive, regional workforce campaign designed to connect young job seekers with career exploration opportunities and high-growth industries. With a multi-phase rollout, HGCY is structured around:

- Awareness & Outreach: Multi-platform engagement to inform youth and families;
- Employer & Partner Engagement: Securing hiring commitments from businesses; and
- Youth Digital Engagement: Leveraging social media to drive participation.

Key Milestones:

- January 16, 2025 – Soft launch at ABC13 “Who’s Hiring” Job Fair;
- January 29, 2025 – Official launch at the Tri-Agency Regional Convenor Conference at the Ion;
- March 24, 2025 – Employer matching process begins; and
- June 16 – August 8, 2025 – HGCY Summer Jobs Program.

The digital campaign supporting HGCY is designed to maximize engagement and visibility, ensuring that young job seekers connect with meaningful workforce opportunities.

Elevating Digital Presence & Technology Integration

To ensure Workforce Solutions remains at the forefront of digital engagement, the Board continues to optimize its social media strategy and modernize its digital platforms.

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engagement, the Board continues to optimize its social media strategy and modernize its digital platforms.

Social Media Performance (Nov–Dec 2024)

Platform	Followers	Reach	Profile Visits
Facebook	11,618	88,235	3,515
Instagram	5,645	10,362	2,200
LinkedIn	10,852	9,989	2,249
X (Twitter)	1,790	N/A	N/A

Strategic Enhancements:

- **Content Strategy:** Storytelling-driven posts featuring success stories, workforce trends, and hiring events.
- **SEO Optimization:** Enhancing discoverability for Workforce Solutions programs.
- **Platform Optimization:** Tailoring content to employer engagement (LinkedIn, Facebook) and youth outreach (Instagram, YouTube).

Technology & Digital Transformation Initiatives

Quell Board Management Software: The contract is being finalized, with implementation expected in Spring 2025, enhancing Board operations and administrative efficiency.

Website Redevelopment: In collaboration with H-GAC Communications, Planetarium, and Outreach Strategists, the Board is developing a modern, mobile-responsive website designed to enhance accessibility, user experience, and workforce resource integration. The project is currently in the wireframing phase, focusing on intuitive navigation, streamlined content delivery, and seamless access to workforce services.

Conclusion: Driving Workforce Innovation Through Strategic Communication

As the workforce landscape continues to evolve, Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast is committed to leveraging communication, technology, and strategic outreach to drive regional workforce success. By embracing merging digital trends, reinforcing regional branding, and expanding public engagement efforts, the Board is setting a new standard for workforce development. These efforts ensure that employers, job seekers, and partners remain engaged, informed, and connected to resources that drive economic growth and opportunity. Through innovation and strategic foresight, Workforce Solutions is poised to shape the future of workforce engagement across the region.

Career Services Committee

Serving the Regional Economy

Executive Summary

The Career Services Committee, chaired by Mr. Adrian Ozuna met on January 30, 2025, at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027, Room 2D at 1:00 p.m. Other board members present included Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Adrian Ozuna, Jonathan Lowe, Cheryl Guido, Guy Jackson, Alan Haskamp, Bin Yu, Dr. Melanie Rodriguez, Dr. Melissa Gonzalez, Mou Sarkar, Edward Melton, Doug Karr, Jeff Labroski, and Paul Puente, Board staff included Juliet Stipeche, Desmond Taylor, Russell Tomlin, Crosby Brito, Sabrina Parras, Brittany Eaton, Kevin Rodney, Philip Garcia, Jennifer Graves, Thomas Brown, Kristi Rangel, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Jeanette De La Cruz, Brandi Brown, Jenny Johnson, Shawanna Thompson, Sable Harris, Jennifer Starling, and Leigh Ann Arnold from Outreach Strategists.

The Career Services Committee convened to address a critical challenge: the fragmented structure of career services and employer engagement. The committee discussed the pressing need to fully integrate these services to create a seamless, data-driven, and employer-responsive workforce system. Despite past efforts to consolidate employer engagement under a single provider, career services and business outreach remain disconnected, limiting the effectiveness of workforce programs and creating unnecessary barriers for job seekers and businesses alike.

The 2024-2029 Strategic Plan calls for a bold transformation that streamlines operations, ensures career pathways are aligned with industry demand, and enhances collaboration across all workforce services. The committee explored best practices from other workforce boards, including Dallas, North Texas, and Coastal Bend, highlighting successful models that link career services directly to employer needs. A fully integrated system will reduce inefficiencies, accelerate job placements, and provide a more cohesive experience for both job seekers and businesses.

Key steps toward this transformation include aligning workforce services under a One-Stop Model, leveraging technology-driven job matching and workforce analytics, and expanding industry-informed career pathways. The transition will eliminate redundant processes, improve employer access to skilled talent, and ensure job seekers receive targeted training that leads to meaningful employment. Additionally, professional development initiatives such as “Mastering the Career Assessment Process” and Monthly Industry Highlights will strengthen staff capabilities in career counseling and labor market insights,

further enhancing service delivery. The Board’s commitment to integration was reinforced by discussions on operational improvements, including the successful closure of the Clear Lake office, upcoming Northshore community engagement efforts, and the significant progress of the RESEA program, which was recognized for its statewide improvement in service completions. Moving forward, the Board is dedicated to executing this transformation with precision—creating a modern, employer-driven workforce system that is responsive, efficient, and impactful in driving regional economic success.

2. Serving the Regional Economy:

a) Transforming Career Services for the GCWB

Introduction: A Necessary Evolution in Career Services

The GCWB stands at the threshold of a critical transformation—one that is both timely and necessary. In a rapidly shifting labor market, where businesses struggle to find qualified workers and job seekers encounter obstacles to meaningful employment, we must rethink and redefine how we connect talent with opportunity.

Recently, the Board decided to consolidate all Employer Engagement (Employer Services) activities to one service provider (SERCO of Texas). However, we failed to fully consolidate the activities of career services and employer engagement, which continue to function as parallel yet disconnected entities, each operating with its own objectives, teams, and processes. While well-intentioned, this fragmented approach has resulted in missed opportunities, inefficiencies, and avoidable barriers to workforce success. This is contrary to the GCWB’s strategic plan as employers struggle to find the skilled talent they need, while job seekers navigate a complex, disjointed system in search of clear pathways to employment.

The GCWB’s 2024-2029 Strategic Plan calls for a business-driven and customer-centered approach that removes silos and integrates career services with employer engagement. This transformation is not just about restructuring—it is about creating a workforce system that is responsive, agile, and aligned with the needs of today’s economy. Our success depends on a model that is cohesive, data-driven, and designed to maximize the impact of every dollar invested in workforce development.

Fully integrating employer engagement into career services will ensure that job seekers are not just trained for jobs in theory but actively connected to real hiring opportunities. At the same time, businesses will no longer have to navigate a maze of disconnected services to find the skilled workforce they need to thrive. This is how we modernize workforce development for the Gulf Coast region—by

building a seamless, employer-integrated career service system that delivers tangible results for businesses, job seekers, and the broader economy.

The Case for Transformation: Why Integration Matters

At the heart of this transition is the recognition that career services must be linked to the labor market. A workforce system that operates in silos—where training programs, job search assistance, and employer engagement are treated as distinct functions—inevitably leads to misalignment, inefficiencies, and suboptimal outcomes. A disconnected system creates unnecessary challenges:

- Job seekers often complete training programs without a clear pipeline to real employment.
- Employers seeking skilled workers encounter redundant processes and bureaucratic hurdles.
- The lack of coordination results in delays, confusion, and lost opportunities for both businesses and job seekers.

In contrast, a fully integrated model ensures that workforce services operate in tandem, where career readiness is directly tied to employer demand, and where job seekers are actively guided through structured pathways that lead not just to jobs, but to sustainable careers.

This transformation is about eliminating inefficiencies and enhancing service delivery by creating a single, streamlined system that seamlessly connects job seekers with employers.

The Benefits of a Unified Workforce System

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a "One-Stop Shop" refers to a comprehensive American Job Center (AJC) that provides a wide range of workforce development, education, and support services to job seekers and employers in one location or through a coordinated service delivery system.

These services include:

- Career Services
- Job Search Assistance
- Training Services
- Supportive Services
- Youth Services
- Employer Services (locally Employer Engagement)
- Recruitment Assistance
- Training and Development Programs
- Labor Market Information

- Support for individuals with disabilities
- Apprenticeship Programs
- Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways

These centers aim to streamline access to resources and ensure all customers receive high-quality assistance. A "True One-Stop" reflects the goal of WIOA to create a comprehensive, employer-focused service delivery system that helps individuals obtain sustainable employment and assists employers in finding skilled workers.

Seamless Alignment Between Job Seekers and Employers

The fundamental purpose of workforce development is to create a symbiotic relationship between those seeking employment and the businesses that drive our regional economy. Yet, when career services and employer engagement are managed separately, gaps emerge—gaps that often leave job seekers underprepared for available roles and employers frustrated by a lack of qualified candidates.

By integrating these functions, we ensure job seekers receive training and support that is directly informed by employer needs, equipping them with skills that are not just in demand but are actively sought after in the labor market. At the same time, employers gain access to a well-prepared, job-ready talent pipeline—not just a pool of applicants, but individuals whose training and qualifications align precisely with industry expectations.

A More Efficient, Streamlined Workforce System

In a fragmented system, duplication of effort or compromised engagement are inevitable. Separate contracts for career services and employer engagement often result in redundant processes, overlapping responsibilities, and increased administrative overhead. This inefficiency is not just a bureaucratic challenge—it is an obstacle to delivering the high-quality, responsive services that businesses and job seekers expect.

By consolidating operations into a single, well-coordinated model, we eliminate unnecessary duplication, optimize resource allocation, and ensure that every dollar invested in workforce development generates the maximum possible impact. Processes such as data collection, performance tracking, and employer outreach become more efficient, allowing us to move with speed and precision in responding to labor market needs.

A Better Experience for Both Job Seekers and Employers

For job seekers, the transition from unemployment to sustainable employment should be clear, navigable, and supported by a continuum of services that prepare them for success. Yet, in a fragmented system, many individuals find themselves referred from one agency to another, struggling to piece together a pathway to meaningful work. This can lead to frustration, discouragement, and disengagement—barriers we cannot afford in a time when labor force participation is more critical than ever.

Under an integrated system, career services are holistic, comprehensive, and fully coordinated. From the moment a job seeker engages with Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast, our customer receives personalized, industry-informed guidance that takes them from training to employment without unnecessary roadblocks.

For employers, the benefits are equally clear. Rather than working through multiple, disconnected agencies, businesses will have a single point of contact—a dedicated workforce partner that understands their hiring needs, connects them with the right talent, and provides strategic workforce solutions. This makes hiring easier, faster, and more effective, positioning Workforce Solutions as an indispensable resource for business success.

Stronger Collaboration, Greater Innovation

Workforce development must be agile and adaptable—able to anticipate and respond to shifts in the labor market. A system in which career services and employer engagement operate separately limits the ability to innovate. Without continuous collaboration, opportunities to design innovative programs, pilot emerging workforce strategies, and scale best practices are diminished.

An integrated model fosters cross-functional collaboration, where workforce professionals work collaboratively with businesses to craft solutions that are forward-thinking and responsive. When job seekers, businesses, and workforce professionals collaborate within a single, well-coordinated system, innovation flourishes, and the workforce system remains dynamic and future ready.

A More Accountable, High-Performance Workforce System

When workforce services are fragmented, so is accountability. With multiple entities responsible for distinct aspects of service delivery, measuring success, tracking performance, and holding providers accountable for outcomes becomes significantly more difficult. A unified system ensures that one entity is responsible for both job seeker outcomes and employer satisfaction. This strengthens accountability, transparency, and performance measurement, allowing Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast to continually refine and enhance its services.

The Path Forward: Implementing the Transformation

The transition to an integrated workforce system will require careful planning, strong leadership, and strategic execution. The implementation process will focus on:

- Aligning workforce services with industry-driven career pathways.
- Deploying technology-driven job matching and workforce analytics tools.
- Building stronger partnerships with employers, educators, and community organizations.
- Ensuring staff are trained to deliver seamless, high-quality services.
- Tracking performance through data-driven decision-making.

This transition represents a bold shift, but it is a necessary one. By modernizing career services, integrating business engagement, and leveraging data-driven strategies, we will create a resilient, future-ready workforce system that delivers meaningful results.

Looking to the Future: A Workforce System That Works for Everyone

This transformation is about more than efficiency—it is about building a workforce system that truly serves its purpose. By integrating employer engagement into career services, we create a future where businesses find the talent they need, job seekers access the opportunities they deserve, and our regional economy grows stronger as a result.

3. Updates

a) Professional Development:

- **Mastering the Career Assessment Process**

The Professional Development team is dedicated to enhancing the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of Workforce Solutions (WFS) staff, empowering them to deliver exceptional, family-centered services that create lasting positive change across the Gulf Coast region. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement, we aim to strengthen our workforce, build collaborative partnerships, and ensure that our staff are equipped to meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

- **Key Initiatives:**

- **Mastering the Career Assessment Process:** We have designed a comprehensive training series to standardize and improve the career assessment process for staff working with individuals interested in workforce training and funding. This two-day training will guide staff through an eight-step process to assist customers in making informed decisions regarding career opportunities and training. By implementing career assessment tools and focusing

on career exploration and expectation management, we seek to enhance our service delivery, maximize investments, and strengthen our partnerships with employers to address their hiring needs.



- **Monthly Industry Highlights:** Beginning in February 2025, this initiative will focus on providing staff with in-depth labor market information (LMI) and insights into key industries and employers. By increasing staff awareness of local labor market trends, we aim to improve the quality of job referrals, placements, and training support, leading to higher enrollment and completion rates in training programs and stronger connections to meaningful employment opportunities.
- **Completed Staff Training:**
 - **Training for WIT Technical Excellence:**
Conducted technical assistance sessions for NextGen Youth service providers on WIT and data entry practices, engaging approximately 65 staff, including management. Identified areas for improvement and scheduled follow-up meetings to review proposed solutions.
 - Facilitated the foundational course, *Building Connections*, for 41 new staff members. Post-training assessments revealed considerable progress, with scores improving from an average of 76 to 97. An additional session, accommodating 40 participants, is scheduled for next month.

- **Mental Health 101 Workshop:**
Partnered with Sabrina Parras to coordinate a workshop led by Mrs. Carroll Prasad, LPC-C, an expert in mental health education. The training focused on practical de-escalation strategies and best practices for managing diverse scenarios. This session responded to the growing need for mental health support tools and guidance in our workforce services.

Through collaboration, innovative training programs, and a commitment to strategic engagement, the Professional Development team continues to empower WFS staff with the tools and resources needed to succeed in their roles and drive positive, lasting outcomes in our communities.

b) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

The RESEA program is a federally funded initiative designed to help individuals who are receiving unemployment insurance (UI) benefits return to work as quickly as possible. It combines job search assistance with a review of the individual's ongoing eligibility for UI benefits, ensuring they meet program requirements while providing personalized support to secure employment. Key components of the RESEA program include:

- **Personalized Services:** Claimants meet one-on-one with workforce staff to create a tailored reemployment plan.
- **Job Search Assistance:** Services include resume reviews, interview preparation, labor market information, and referrals to job opportunities.
- **Eligibility Review:** Staff assess whether claimants continue to meet UI eligibility requirements, ensuring program integrity.
- **Workforce Resources:** Claimants are connected to training programs, workshops, and other resources to enhance their skills and improve employability.

RESEA focuses on early intervention for UI recipients who are most likely to exhaust their benefits without finding work, helping them transition back into the workforce more efficiently. This proactive approach benefits both claimants and the broader economy by reducing the duration of unemployment and strengthening the workforce.

Performance Expectations

Performance	Target
Meet or exceed completion of Initial RESEA Appointment for claimants in their profile pool	77%
Meet failure to report (no-show) Scheduled Appointment benchmark	23%

We developed a regional Reemployment Team consisting of three supervisors and twenty full-time staff from BakerRipley, Equus, and Interfaith to work with UI customers who have received a RESEA outreach notice. Our Reemployment Team provides service to UI customers in response to our RESEA outreach letters.

The Re-Employment Team works primarily as a regional call center, communicating with customers virtually and in-person. The team is responsible for:

- Efficiently organizing and overseeing RESEA appointments to ensure timely service delivery.
- Delivering informative and engaging sessions for all customers receiving the RESEA outreach notice.
- Offering personalized job search support assistance such as customized labor market information, employment planning, resume reviews, interview preparation, and job referrals to help customers secure employment.
- Identifying the need for additional services like training or talent development to enhance employability.
- Enrolling eligible RESEA customers into WIOA Dislocated Statewide Initiatives and/or Dislocated Worker funds to access additional resources and support services.

During the 2024 TWC Pre-Conference, Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast was recognized as the most improved board for RESEA completions with a year-over-year improvement of 26.3%.

4. Location Updates

a) Northshore Community Meeting: The lease for the Northshore office is set to expire on September 30, 2025, prompting Board staff to evaluate the viability of maintaining operations at this location. To ensure an informed decision, we are prioritizing community input and engagement. A community

meeting will be scheduled for the last week of February 2025, where we will gather feedback from local stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and partner organizations. This forum will provide an opportunity to discuss the office's impact, explore alternative solutions if needed, and ensure that the needs of the community continue to be met effectively.

b) Clear Lake: The Clear Lake office permanently closed on Thursday, January 16, 2025. To ensure a smooth transition:

- Board staff collaborated with BakerRipley to complete key actions, including submitting closure documentation to TWC, reassigning staff and caseloads to nearby offices, and communicating the closure to customers through flyers, signage, and social media.
- BakerRipley redirected phone calls and email inquiries to appropriate locations and continues customer outreach until TWC processes the closure.
- Additionally, all services have been removed from scheduling systems, and the Financial Aid Payment Office has ceased inventory shipments to the Clear Lake location.

5. Career Services Spotlight – Live. Work. Ride. Hiring Event

The inaugural “*Live. Work. Ride.*” hiring event, hosted in collaboration with the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) and Workforce Solutions, was a significant success in connecting job seekers with employment opportunities along the Route 82 Westheimer bus route. The event highlighted the power of integrating workforce development with accessible transit options, creating meaningful connections for the community. Key highlights include:

- **61 Candidates Hired:** Demonstrating the effectiveness of the event in fostering employment opportunities.
- **High Engagement:** Job seekers filled the training sessions to learn how to leverage transit for their work commutes.
- **Strong Community Support:** The event featured collaboration with METRO, hiring employers, housing organizations, apartment complexes, and other community resources.

This initiative highlights the importance of transit-accessible workforce solutions and the value of community partnerships in driving positive outcomes for job seekers and employers alike.



Budget Committee Report

Committee Report

The Budget Committee was called to order by the Board Chair Mark Guthrie at 2:59 p.m. on January 30, 2025 at Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Paul Puente, Douglas Karr, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Adrian Ozuna, Guy R. Jackson, Dorian Cockrell, and Mou Sarkar attended.

Overview

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Budget Committee convened on December 16, 2024, to review the proposed 2025 budget and address key concerns regarding staffing, budget transparency, and the alignment of resources with the Board's strategic objectives. During the meeting, 97 positions were identified as either directly or indirectly charged to the Workforce program from other H-GAC departments.

The committee focused on five critical areas to enhance accountability and improve processes in support of Workforce Board operations. Staff recommendations for improvements in these areas were discussed and endorsed. The five areas include:

- **Timesheet Access and Supporting Documentation**
- **Temporary Hold on New and Vacant Positions Charging to Workforce**
- **Review and Input on Indirect, Shared, or Allocated Charges**
- **Report on Government Affairs and Outreach Division Activities**
- **Process Enhancements for Compliance and Transparency**

The Board staff was directed to collaborate with H-GAC staff and provide an update to the Budget Committee prior to the final approval of the 2025 Workforce Board budget at the January committee meeting. A follow-up meeting was held on December 19, 2024, with the H-GAC Executive Director and Board staff to outline next steps. The H-GAC Executive Director's memo responding to these items is attached to this report. (Attachment 1)

Key Updates

Access to Budget Worksheets

On January 15, 2025, Board staff gained access to H-GAC budget worksheets, enabling a review of charges from other departments. This access enhances transparency and accountability. Following the review, the total number of

positions charged to the Workforce program—either directly or indirectly—has increased to 116. A detailed list of these positions is attached to this report. (Attachment 2)

Government Affairs and Outreach Division Report

A report detailing the activities of the Government Affairs and Outreach Division is included for the committee's review. This report provides a general overview of government relations activities and overview of communications activities. (Attachment 3)

Audit and Allocation Methodology Review

The Director of Internal Audit collaborated with the Chief Financial Officer and H-GAC's Independent Auditor to produce a memo (Attachment 4) confirming that H-GAC maintains time and effort in compliance with 2 CFR 200 to support the distribution of the employee's salary or wages among specific activities or cost objectives when the employee works on more than one Federal award; a Federal award and non-Federal award; an indirect cost activity and a direct cost activity; two or more indirect activities allocated using different allocation bases; or an unallowable activity and a direct or indirect cost activity. Additionally, a report prepared by Robert M. Lloyd regarding policy analysis on indirect cost recovery on federal grants and subgrants by H-GAC is included for the committee's review. (Attachment 5)

Conclusion

As the fiscal agent for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, H-GAC is responsible for managing financial resources with the utmost integrity, ensuring compliance with legal, ethical, and contractual obligations. We appreciate H-GAC's cooperation in providing access to the budget worksheets and their efforts to address the committee's concerns. These actions mark significant progress toward ensuring accountability, transparency, and alignment with the Board's goals. We look forward to continued collaboration and further advancements in 2025.


Action

The Gulf Coast Workforce Budget Committee made the motion to approve the 2025 Gulf Coast Workforce Budget as presented, excluding the new and vacant positions referenced in the H-GAC Support Schedule, based on representation from H-GAC that the budget is in compliance with all applicable state and federal requirements and laws pertaining to Workforce funds.

We have calculated the personnel costs associated with these positions at \$722,884 which results in decreasing the budget to \$495,838,993. Board staff respectfully request the Gulf Coast Workforce Board approve the budget in an amount not to exceed \$495,838,993.



HOUSTON- GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Mark Guthrie, Gulf Coast Workforce Board Chair
FROM: Chuck Wemple, Executive Director, Houston-Galveston Area Council 
SUBJECT: Budget Committee Follow-up
DATE: January 9, 2025

My goal in preparing this memo is to put down in writing my commitment to provide clarity and transparency regarding questions raised in recent Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget Committee meetings. My style and leadership approach are always customer service-based and collaborative, and focused on finding solutions that address identified needs within the parameters of compliance and fiscal accountability that the Houston-Galveston Area Council needs to work within. As you are aware, I am always open to improving what we do and streamlining processes where we are able.

This memo is intended to supplement the Budget Committee Update Summary developed by the Workforce team, and to help as a guide for supporting documentation included in the committee packet.

We've made great progress in addressing the questions and requests raised during the recent meetings. I've been directly involved in meeting with the teams and identifying workable solutions. We focused on the five key process areas identified on December 16, 2024.

Here is a summary of what we've done since we last met.

Increased Timesheet Visibility

We've increased visibility into labor charges made towards workforce projects by other departments. While our system has specific internal controls about direct access to the timesheet and payroll system, we've implemented the following solutions that are in effect now and start with the first payroll period of 2025.

A) Finance will produce labor reports at the end of each payroll period that provide timesheet information for any team members charging directly to workforce projects. If the Workforce team has questions or concerns, timesheet adjustments/corrections can be easily made by our Finance team if needed.

B) We have activated the note feature for project charge codes related to workforce. The note feature is required for some of our grants on other departments and is easily done. Team members who charge directly will be required to enter information into the note field to complete their timesheets. This information will also be included in the labor reports referenced above.

C) The Finance team will also provide copies of timesheets to the Workforce Team after each payroll period. These solutions will enable the Workforce team to have visibility into charges from outside their department and to manage those charges.

Paused Charges on New and Vacant Positions

The original request was to not move forward on filling new or vacant positions that are shared among departments that also charge directly to workforce grants. Rather than hold off on hiring these positions that have responsibilities outside of the Workforce program that need to be completed, I authorized a temporary hold on any direct charges to Workforce grants for these positions. Departments across the agency are instructed to not assign Workforce project codes to these positions until a review of the positions is completed by the Workforce team. The pause will remain in effect until each position is reviewed and approved.

Developing an Inclusive Approach to Indirect and Shared Charges

I have developed guidance for the Workforce team to have access to budget spreadsheets for other departments that charge to Workforce grants while maintaining internal controls around the integrity of our budget entries. The guidance memo is included in the committee packet, and in summary, provides read-only access to the budget spreadsheets and sets expectations regarding discretion and limited use of salary information for team members outside of Workforce. This solution provides visibility while maintaining internal controls for the agency as a whole.

We will also develop a supplemental document as part of our 2025 H-GAC mid-year budget revision that coalesces all components of the budget that intersect with Workforce into a simple summary. I'm also exploring new budget categories agency-wide that will add clarity to the overall agency budget as we prepare the 2026 budget. All departments will be involved in these changes that seek to improve clarity and understanding of our budget.

With regards to our indirect rate, I am initiating an inclusive process where all departments across H-GAC will be involved in the development of our indirect rate plan for 2025. I anticipate this will be complete prior to the middle of March. Any adjustments in the rate included in the H-GAC 2025 Budget and Service Plan will be clearly communicated to the H-GAC Board and Gulf Coast Workforce Board. We have also enlisted a national expert in federal funding requirements to assist in the review and development of our indirect rate plan and have also engaged our auditors, Whitley Penn. Our internal audit team has conducted a review of salary cap requirements for Department of Labor grants and made recommendations of adjustments that will also inform development of our indirect rate plan.

Report on Government Affairs and Outreach Division Activities

I have tasked our Director of Internal Audit to conduct the requested review and tasked the Director of that division to develop a summary of services. Both items are included in the committee packet. Our

primary goal here is to look at allowability, ensure no duplication of effort, and to understand which positions are charging to Workforce and Indirect and why. We will make any necessary adjustments based on the review.

Alignment with Federal Guidelines

As the Executive Director of H-GAC, I support a collaborative and inclusive budget process that will involve all directors and department leads from across the agency. Much of this is already in place and can be enhanced. This effort will include a consolidation of our various allocations and indirect rate, the inclusive approach to our indirect rate plan (as mentioned above). It is important that the team understand what is included in their budgets and charged against their grants and have the ability and authority to ask questions and raise any concerns.

We have finalized interdepartmental agreements for shared positions and will be using this same approach for other departments across the agency.

We are reviewing our cost policy as requested, with additional support from our national expert, and anticipate completing this during the first quarter of 2025.

In closing, this memo is intended to provide assurances that we are all working together to address questions and concerns raised by the committee and to create an inclusive and collaborative process for our internal teams. I look forward to presenting this information at our next Budget Committee meeting.

H-GAC Support Positions

Ref #	Staff Member	Title	Department / Division or Unit	Staff % Budgeted Directly to Workforce	Staff % Budgeted to Indirect	Staff % Budgeted to other Allocations	Staff % Budgeted Directly to Other Programs
1	CHINCHAY, RONALD	Accountant	Accounting / Finance Division	0%	7%	0%	93%
2	DEBOLT, DAWN	Senior Accountant/Finance Coordinator	Accounting / Finance Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
3	DOWNIE, SHAUN	Accounting Manager	Accounting / Finance Division	20%	50%	10%	20%
4	VASQUEZ, TREEBIE	Accountant	Accounting / Finance Division	100%	0%	0%	0%
5	HANDY, MATTHEW	Lead Travel Coordinator	Accounting / Finance Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
6	KEENAN, MARIVIC	Accounting Manager	Accounting / Finance Division	0%	50%	0%	50%
7	LUGO, SEBASTIAN	Accounting Intern	Accounting / Finance Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
8	MADRIGAL, ANTHONY	Senior Payroll Analyst	Accounting / Finance Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
9	MASON, MONICA	Payroll Specialist	Accounting / Finance Division	0%	10%	90%	0%
10	MENDOZA, MARY GILDA	Controller (Finance Director)	Accounting / Finance Division	15%	68%	0%	17%
11	NAYAK, ARATHI	Principal Accountant	Accounting / Finance Division	0%	85%	0%	15%
12	TAN, YOLANDA	Accountant	Accounting / Finance Division	0%	50%	0%	50%
13	Vacant	Senior Accountant	Accounting / Finance Division	100%	0%	0%	0%
14	VU, KIEU-VI	Accounting/Finance Coordinator	Accounting / Finance Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
15	PEREZ, ISRAEL	Print and Mail Associate	Facilities / Finance Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
16	Vacant	Print and Mail Associate	Facilities / Finance Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
17	WILLIAMS, DOMINIQUE	Facilities Coordinator	Facilities / Finance Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
18	YOUNG, SCOTT	Facilities Manager	Facilities / Finance Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
19	ORDONEZ-CAMPOS, CHRISTINA	Chief Financial Officer	Finance Division	0%	40%	60%	0%
20	PORTER, MARCIA	Executive Assistant-CFO	Finance Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
21	Vacant	Budget & Special Projects Manager	Finance Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
22	BONGO, GARCIA	GIS Analyst	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	70%	30%
23	CAMPOS, JUAN MARCEL	GIS Analyst	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	30%	70%
24	ESKELSON, MOLLY	GIS Analyst	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	50%	50%
25	FARID MARANDI, SAYENA	Senior GIS Analyst	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	10%	90%
26	FLOESSER, JOCHEN	Director	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	10%	90%
27	LEE, SUNGMIN	Manager	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	10%	90%
28	MARTINEZ, ISAAC	Data Analyst	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	20%	80%
29	MICHEL, PATRICIA	GIS Analyst	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	10%	90%
30	Neucere, Everett	Senior GIS Analyst	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	30%	70%
31	RANATUNGA, THUSHARA	Manager	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	30%	70%
32	SAMBIDI, PRAMOD	Asst. Director	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	5%	95%
33	SHRESTHA, MEGHA	Data Analyst	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	20%	80%
34	Remote Sensing (Thushara)	GIS Analyst - Remote Sensing	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	30%	70%
35	Vacant	Cartographer	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	25%	75%
36	Vacant	Intern	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	60%	40%
37	Proposed	GIS Analyst	GIS / Data Analytics Division	0%	0%	30%	70%
38	ANCHONDO, PHILLIPPE	Web Administrator	Data Services / Operations Division	20%	0%	80%	0%
39	BERNABE, JOHN	PC Support Help Desk Tech	Data Services / Operations Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
40	DANG, VIET	Director	Data Services / Operations Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
41	ECKHARDT, JACOB	Audio Visual Spec.	Data Services / Operations Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
42	LARSON, SARAH	Webmaster	Data Services / Operations Division	40%	0%	60%	0%
43	LE, CHAU	SharePoint Administrator	Data Services / Operations Division	20%	0%	80%	0%
44	LONG JR, ARTHUR	Systems Analyst	Data Services / Operations Division	50%	0%	50%	0%
45	MASCARRENHAS, ROWAN	Intern	Data Services / Operations Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
46	MCGHIE, CHRISTOPHER	Systems Specialist	Data Services / Operations Division	20%	0%	80%	0%
47	NUNN, BRIANCA	Administrative Assistant	Data Services / Operations Division	0%	0%	50%	50%
48	ORTIZ, JAMES	Info. Security Admin	Data Services / Operations Division	80%	0%	20%	0%
49	Proposed	PC Support	Data Services / Operations Division	20%	0%	80%	0%
50	Proposed	Web Developer	Data Services / Operations Division	40%	0%	60%	0%
51	ROTUNDO, EDGAR	Manager	Data Services / Operations Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
52	SHERIF, MALIK	Sr. Systems Analyst	Data Services / Operations Division	40%	0%	60%	0%
53	TRAN, JOHN	Senior Manager	Data Services / Operations Division	50%	0%	50%	0%
54	Vacant	Systems Specialist	Data Services / Operations Division	70%	0%	30%	0%
55	VICKNAIR, NOE	Sr. Systems Analyst	Data Services / Operations Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
56	YOO, DANIEL	Audio Visual Admin	Data Services / Operations Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
57	Vacant	Chief Operating Officer	Operations Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
58	HALL, VERGIE	Executive Assistant	Operations Division	0%	100%	0%	0%

H-GAC Support Positions

Ref #	Staff Member	Title	Department / Division or Unit	Staff % Budgeted Directly to Workforce	Staff % Budgeted to Indirect	Staff % Budgeted to Other Allocations	Staff % Budgeted Directly to Other Programs
59	ALANI, ALEXANDRA	Contract Administrator	Procurement & Contracts Department / Operations Division	0%	0%	70%	30%
60	CRUZ, ALLISON	Procurement Coordinator	Procurement & Contracts Department / Operations Division	0%	0%	70%	30%
61	GARCIA, JAVIER	Procurement Coordinator	Procurement & Contracts Department / Operations Division	0%	0%	70%	30%
62	KOLLAJA, KRISTINA	Director	Procurement & Contracts Department / Operations Division	0%	0%	70%	30%
63	Proposed	Procurement Coordinator	Procurement & Contracts Department / Operations Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
64	Proposed	Staff Paralegal	Procurement & Contracts Department / Operations Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
65	STALAROW, STACI ALLISON	Project Coordinator	Procurement & Contracts Department / Operations Division	0%	0%	85%	15%
66	TRONNES, MARY	Manager	Procurement & Contracts Department / Operations Division	0%	0%	70%	30%
67	VILLEGAS, GABRIELLA	Procurement Specialist	Procurement & Contracts Department / Operations Division	0%	0%	70%	30%
68	VIRGEN, VIRGINIA G	Lead Procurement Coord	Procurement & Contracts Department / Operations Division	0%	0%	70%	30%
69	ANDERSON, MICHELLE	Executive Assistant	Administration Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
70	WEMPLE, CHARLES	Executive Director	Administration Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
71	SIGUA, MARIA-THERESA	Prin. Legal Liaison	Administration Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
72	BARRON, ADRIAN ALEJANDRO	HR Specialist	Human Resources / Administration Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
73	BROOKS, DANIELA	HR Coordinator	Human Resources / Administration Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
74	DE LA CRUZ, ROSA	Receptionist	Human Resources / Administration Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
75	HANDY, MADISON	Manager	Human Resources / Administration Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
76	LOPEZ, KARLA	Recruiter	Human Resources / Administration Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
77	MCGOWAN, JARRED	Senior Recruiter	Human Resources / Administration Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
78	RAMSEY, TERESA M.	Director	Human Resources / Administration Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
79	TOMLINSON, LAURA	Manager	Human Resources / Administration Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
80	WOODY, MARY	Learning & Dev. Manager	Human Resources / Administration Division	0%	0%	100%	0%
81	CURRY-MCKNIGHT, DELASANDRA	Audit Specialist	Internal Audit / Administration Division	15%	40%	0%	45%
82	EDWARDS, ALTHEA	Auditor	Internal Audit / Administration Division	15%	10%	0%	75%
83	FANNIEL, PAMELA	Senior Auditor	Internal Audit / Administration Division	10%	20%	0%	70%
84	HILL, CHARLES	Internal Audit Director	Internal Audit / Administration Division	20%	40%	0%	40%
85	JOHNSON, DENISE	Senior Auditor	Internal Audit / Administration Division	20%	20%	0%	60%
86	MARSH, DILLON	Audit Supervisor	Internal Audit / Administration Division	15%	10%	0%	75%
87	Proposed	Senior Auditor 1	Internal Audit / Administration Division	50%	10%	0%	40%
88	Proposed	IT Auditor	Internal Audit / Administration Division	30%	10%	0%	60%
89	Proposed	Senior Auditor 2	Internal Audit / Administration Division	30%	10%	0%	60%
90	SULAIMON, AZEEZAT	Senior Auditor	Internal Audit / Administration Division	10%	15%	0%	75%
91	UY, SABRINA	Audit Supervisor	Internal Audit / Administration Division	55%	10%	0%	35%
92	BALLARD, SUSAN	Information & Records Specialist	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
93	BENTLEY, TRICIA	Senior Editor and Writer	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	17%	15%	0%	68%
94	BROCK, ALEXANDRIA	Communications Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	33%	50%	17%	0%
95	CORREA, GINETTE	Website Content Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	17%	22%	0%	61%
96	COVARRUBIAS, BENJAMINA	Lead Program Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
97	GARBER, KEITH	Principal Graphic Designer	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	11%	16%	0%	73%
98	GUERRERO, RICARDO	Chief Outreach & Government Affairs Officer	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	95%	0%	5%
99	HART, SARA	Outreach Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	6%	28%	0%	66%
100	JONES, CYNTHIA	Public Affairs Manager	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
101	LEIVA, SANDRA	Communications Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	11%	23%	0%	66%
102	MATTHEWS, WILLIAM	Program Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
103	MCKECHAN, VANESSA	Board Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
104	MENDOZA, WILFREDO	Senior Videographer/Photographer	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	17%	29%	0%	54%
105	MEYER, RAQUEL GONZALEZ	Public Affairs Manager	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	17%	20%	0%	63%
106	PARKER, LAURA	Senior Government Relations Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
107	PEREZ, ISAAC	Manager	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
108	Proposed	Intern	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	11%	89%	0%	0%
109	Proposed	Special Events Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
110	REYES, KRISSIA	Executive Assistant - COGAO	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	100%	0%	0%
111	SEALS, ASHLEY	Communications Manager	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	11%	31%	0%	58%
112	SEGURA, MIGUEL	Director of Public Affairs	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	6%	50%	0%	44%
113	SHANNON, KELLY R	Outreach Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	4%	10%	0%	86%
114	Vacant	Senior Communications Coordinator	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	17%	83%	0%	0%
115	VANDERVOORT, JESSICA	Graphic Designer	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	0%	21%	0%	79%
116	WILLIAMS, KERRIEL	Administrative Assistant	Government Affairs & Outreach Division	6%	94%	0%	0%

OUTREACH AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES REPORT

Prepared for the Workforce Board Budget Committee

Purpose

Promote intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration through Board member interactions, member government relations, membership development, and communications between H-GAC, the public, local government, state, and federal agencies and other entities.

General Overview of Government Relations Activities

Elected Officials/Leadership Coordination and Policy Development

- Provide representation of the H-GAC region, and H-GAC's programs and services at Texas Association of Regional Council meetings and events.
- Provide representation and foster collaboration with councils of governments throughout the nation by attending the National Association of Regional Council events including briefings in Washington D.C., and other organized meetings and conferences.

Intergovernmental Coordination and Collaboration

- Coordinate and conduct an annual meeting of appointed representatives of General Law and Home Rule Cities, and Independent School Districts to provide a state of the region report, to review challenges and future expectations for H-GAC programs and services.

Service Oriented Workshops and Educational Opportunities

- As a service to local governments, our team provides low-cost opportunities for engagement, education, training, and collaboration, including but not limited to an Election Law Workshop, Newly Elected Officials Workshop, county-wide popups, and a City Manager summit.
- Our team facilitates a Board of Directors retreat aimed at developing agency goals and strategies for the next three years.

Texas Municipal League - Region 14

- As a service to local governments throughout the H-GAC region and in collaboration with the Texas Municipal League, our staff provides support

OUTREACH AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES REPORT

Prepared for the Workforce Board Budget Committee

for the activities of Texas Municipal League Region 14, including but not limited to two meetings per year.

Board and Committee Relations

- Conduct monthly Board of Directors and committee meetings to authorize, agreements, programs and services under the policy direction of our local elected officials.
- Conduct Board member training and provide orientation information to increase newly appointed member's understanding and expectations as a member of the Board.
- Conduct Local, State, and Federal government visits to improve relationships and foster new ones with representatives and staff at all levels of government.
- Attend and participate in related organization meetings including but limited to chambers of commerce, municipal, state, and national associations.
- Maintain a current, reliable, online regional directory with contact information for all levels of government in our 13-county region.
- Coordinate and respond to public information requests in the spirit of transparency and in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act.
- Provide interpretation and counsel on items related to the Texas Open Meetings Act including training for staff to ensure compliance with posting requirements and to foster an environment that invites public participation and engagement.
- Prepare a mid-year and annual report to the Board that provides a comprehensive analysis of HGAC services to the region, results achieved, issues faced, and consistency with performance goals established in agency budget and service plan.
- Coordination, preparation, and delivery of annual report of services to local governments that promotes accountability and ensures continued membership by local governments.
- Coordination, preparation, and submission of statutorily required reporting as outlined in Chapter 391 of the Local Government Code.
- Coordinate trainings, and awareness campaigns for proper handling, disposition, and safe storage of records in accordance with agency

OUTREACH AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES REPORT

Prepared for the Workforce Board Budget Committee

records retention guidelines and ensure historical preservation of certain records and proper disposition of records with no administrative value.

Overview of Communications Activities

Promotional Materials

- Our team develops communications and outreach materials for the agency and its departments including brochures, reports, videos, presentations, and other relevant communication pieces.
- Prepare and distribute the agency's monthly newsletter, Regional Focus. Develop and distribute news releases. Actively pitch stories and announcements to local and national media.
- Copywrite and edit public messaging of program activities for consistency and branding.
- Increase agency efficiency and cost savings by negotiating favorable terms for print and digital media buys concerning program activities across the agency.

Strategic Planning

- Develop short and long-term goals with various programs on increasing public involvement and awareness of program activities.
- Outline communication plans for programs, projects, and initiatives.
- Lead internal agency initiatives on behalf of senior leadership related to employee announcements, events, and development.
- Prepare reports and maintain records on outreach activities and results.

Public Engagement

- We Seek opportunities to inform the general public and stakeholder groups of agency programs and services at designated meetings and events. Represent the organization at such events when necessary.
- Promote opportunities for the public to submit feedback on research, planning, and projects throughout the region.
- Coordinate with departments on speaking engagements and review content for message consistency.
- Plan work to enhance the understanding, perception, and image of the various programs and initiatives at H-GAC with community organizations.

OUTREACH AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES REPORT

Prepared for the Workforce Board Budget Committee

- Develop relationships with community leaders and serve as the organization's liaison with various constituents.

Social Networks

- Monitor social media messages on programs and coordinate positive and constructive response to comments or suggestions.
- Ensure a consistent image and branding across social media platforms.
- Develop content to promote and provide awareness of H-GAC programs and activities.

Media Relations

- Produce news releases about H-GAC programs and distribute news releases to media contacts.
- Coordinate media interviews with regional television, radio, and online outlets.
- Maintain an updated media contact list.
- Ensure news releases are posted on the H-GAC website to promote programs and projects.
- Receive and respond to media inquiries for interviews, quotes, and data requests.
- Monitor news coverage.
- Actively pitch stories and announcements to media reporters and editors.



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January 10, 2025

Christina Ordonez-Campos
Chief Financial Officer
Houston-Galveston Area Council

Subject: Indirect versus Direct Costs

Dear Mrs. Ordonez-Campos,

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 2 CFR 200 (the Uniform Guidance) requires that costs charged to federal awards be done so in a consistent manner. Specifically, section 2 CFR 200.403(d) states that a cost must not be assigned to a Federal award as a direct cost if any other cost incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances has been allocated to the Federal award as an indirect cost. Similarly, section 8.2 of the Texas Workforce Commission's *Financia Manual for Grants and Contracts* states "costs must be consistently treated as either a direct or indirect cost. A cost may not be allocated to a federal or state award as an indirect cost if any other cost incurred for the same purpose, in like circumstances, has been charged to a federal or state award as a direct cost.

The Council has various employees that perform various functions. One employee may have duties assigned that comprise both direct and indirect activities. However, where one activity is considered an indirect cost, it is also not considered a direct cost in any other scenario. Moreover, no more than 100% of employees' salaries are allocated to the appropriate activity. That is, the Council maintains time and effort in accordance with 2 CFR 200 430 (g)(1)(vi), which allows the Council is to support the distribution of the employee's salary or wages among specific activities or cost objectives when the employee works on more than one Federal award; a Federal award and non-Federal award; an indirect cost activity and a direct cost activity; two or more indirect activities allocated using different allocation bases; or an unallowable activity and a direct or indirect cost activity.

Should you have any questions, please free to contact me at 713-377-3667 or celina.cereceres@whitleypenn.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Celina Cereceres".

Celina Cereceres
Whitley Penn, LLP

ROBERT M. LLOYD**CONSULTANT ON PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

JANUARY 9, 2025

POLICY ANALYSIS ON INDIRECT COST RECOVERY ON FEDERAL GRANTS AND SUBGRANTS BY HGAC

This report responds to requests by senior staff of the Houston Gaveston Area Council for a policy analysis explaining federal government procedures applicable to recovery of organizational indirect costs on federal grant awards received by HGAC directly from the federal government and from pass-through agencies such as the Texas Workforce Board. The purpose of the memorandum is to provide authoritative regulatory support showing that HGAC'S practices fully align with the federal requirements.

CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

The consultant has comprehensive subject matter expertise on subjects related to federal grants management as demonstrated by 42 years of consultation practice during which he has served as a direct contractor to 17 federal grant making agencies and to recipient and subrecipient organizations and their professional legal and accounting advisors located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, several U.S. territories, and 18 foreign countries. Service to the clients named below has direct bearing on this engagement:

- Under contract to the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, conducted an extensive series of nation-wide training programs on award administration by workforce recipients, subrecipients, and service providers.
- Under contract to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget, Program Support Center, prepared and edited for final release, the governmentwide Guide for State and Local Governments, the official instructions mandated by the Office of Management and Budget for use in the development of indirect cost allocation plans and rate proposals by governmental units.
- Under contract with the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) prepared and presented multiple conference sessions on mandatory compliance requirements and suggested audit procedures intended meet the indirect cost audit objective contained in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) *Compliance Supplement for Single Audits*.
- On retainer to the American Bar Association's Fund for Justice and Education, prepared a successful response to an audit finding which recommended disallowance of \$11.5 million in direct and indirect costs charged to federal grants and subgrants.

Educational and academic background includes a Bachelor of Arts from Colby College, a Master of Public Administration from American University, and adjunct faculty service at the University of South Carolina and American University teaching Public Financial Administration and Advanced Federal Assistance Management, respectively. Professional credentials include charter life membership in the National Grants Management Association, associate membership in the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and membership recognition by Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honorary.

RELEVANT FEDERAL POLICY REGIME

The following publications form the basis for general federal policy on recovery of indirect costs by state and local general purpose and special purpose governmental units that receive and expend federal grants and subawards and specific steps applicable to HGAC because of its assignment to the Environmental Protection Agency as the cognizant agency for indirect.

- 2 CFR 200.414
- 2 CFR 200, Appendix V
- 2 CFR 200, Appendix VII
- Guide for State and Local Governments (HHS: OASMB C-10)
- Department of Interior Business Center Procedures

GENERAL INDIRECT COST RECOVERY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Since 1968, the federal government has relied on a standard practice for recovery of indirect costs by general purpose (cities and counties) and special purpose local governments (such as HGAC). Initially the applicable requirements were contained in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-87, *Cost Principles for State and Local Governments*. In 2014, Circular A-87's requirements were superseded and folded into 2 CFR 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*, which was fully adopted by all federal grantmaking agencies. The requirements have included the policy that, in order to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with the federal government, an entity is required to be the eligible recipient of an active federal grant or cooperative agreement received directly from the federal government. With respect to grant eligibility, with very few exceptions involving individuals and commercial businesses, eligible recipients must be corporate entities such as government units or private non-profit tax-exempt organizations.

EVOLUTION OF THE COGNIZANT AGENCY CONCEPT

In order to preclude the burdensome need for an individual grant recipient and its federal awarding agencies to separately negotiate the amount of indirect costs that would be recoverable under each separate federal assistance award, in 1969, the Office of Management and Budget

adopted a standard approach under which a “cognizant” (knowledgeable) agency would take the lead on behalf of all other federal awarding agencies for accepting and reviewing documentation that would permit the governmental unit to recover the proper amount of indirect costs on each of its awards. In general, the cognizant agency would be the Federal agency “with the largest dollar value of **direct** (emphasis added) with a governmental unit or component, as appropriate” (2 CFR 200, Appendix V). One assumption underlying this policy is that the cognizant agency would thus have the most dollars at stake in pursuing an accurate negotiation. In addition, by requiring that the cognizance assignment remain in place for a minimum of five years, the cognizant agency would be in a position to build up considerable institutional documentary knowledge about the non-federal entity to be able to streamline ongoing oversight procedures. OMB did introduce a consideration related to the latter by stating that certain types of organizations (such as economic development districts and water and sewer utilities) could be assigned to federal agencies whose roles were consistent with those functions such as the Department of Commerce and the Environmental Protection Agency.

A brief review of the evolution and operation of the cognizant agency concept informs the conclusion that the practices that HGAC has followed for a considerable period fully align with federal government policies and that no change is required or advisable.

During the 1970’s, most federal agencies maintained a staff component responsible for discharging the duties of a cognizant agency such as receiving and reviewing indirect cost allocation plans and rate proposals, resolving cost allowability issues, and issuing standard rate agreements. The staffing pattern reflected the extent of cognizance assignments that the federal agency had. For example, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), the agency with the largest number of assignees maintained a cost negotiation staff in each of the ten federal regions. In addition, OMB assigned HEW the role of developing and issuing a standard Guide for State and Local Governments (originally designated as OASC-10) for use by governmental units in preparing and submitting their documentation to cognizant agencies.

During the early years of the Reagan Administration and its New Federalism initiative, staffing of the indirect cost negotiation functions in cognizant agencies was reduced. For example, the Department of Health and Human Services, successor to HEW, reduced its indirect cost negotiation “footprint” to four offices from the original ten, where it remains today. As a result, conscious federal agency policy and practice efforts began to reduce the number of non-federal entities that would be expected to negotiate rates with the federal government and to permit rates that were negotiated to remain in place for longer than one year. On January 6, 1986, OMB published a listing in the Federal Register in which they assigned indirect cost cognizance agencies for state government agencies and certain “major” local governments and established that “non-major” local governments would not be required to submit indirect cost rate proposals to cognizant agencies but were to prepare and hold the applicable documentation for review during the annual independent audit mandated by the Single Audit Act of 1984. The combination of these developments has increasingly led to situations in which cognizant agencies regarded indirect cost oversight functions as something to be avoided or partially delegated to contractors engaged by the individual agency or to state agencies or handled under cross-servicing

agreements among federal agencies. The latter have been based on the concept of so-called Quality Management Services Organizations (QMSO) that possess sufficient staff expertise to handle certain functions, like indirect cost rate proposal review, on behalf of other agencies.

Based on a number of specific cases known to the consultant, it would not be inaccurate to state that some federal agencies will go to considerable lengths to avoid or significantly reduce their indirect cost negotiation function. For example, the Federal Highway Administration, an operating component of the U.S. Department of Transportation, has delegated all indirect cost negotiation functions to the respective state departments of transportation. In another known case, a client organization had to obtain the involvement by the office of one of its United States Senators in arranging the intervention of the Office of Management and Budget because the Department of Labor refused to accept cognizance for the organization when a shift in the predominant source of funds occurred. Over time, the most prominent of the QMSO's related to indirect cost rates has been the Department of Interior's Interior Business Office (IBC) in Sacramento, California. The IBC performs all of the indirect cost rate ministerial tasks on behalf of 13 federal agencies, including, among others, the Environmental Protection Agency. The thirteen agencies being serviced ultimately maintain the cognizance responsibility, but it is limited to approving the substance of the agreements prepared by the IBC and signing the actual agreement.

DEVELOPMENT OF COST ALLOCATION PLANS AND INDIRECT COST RATE PROPOSALS

The Guide for State and Local Governments, originally issued by HEW in 1976, was updated by HHS in 1997. Salient features of it continue to be used by the branch of IBC that deals with the indirect cost rates for governmental units. However, HHS was recently criticized in a report to Congress by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) for failing to regularly update the manual. A separate IBC branch handles the rate calculations for nonprofit organizations relying on guidance materials similar to those issued by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Agency for International Development. That stated, the concepts, practices, and methodologies contained in indirect cost rate Appendices of 2 CFR 200 and the cited federal agency guidance manuals are generally consistent with one another and the differences among them are not material.

For a governmental unit such as HGAC with a significant portfolio of federal awards received directly from federal agencies and passed through from Texas state agencies and some others, the templates for indirect cost recovery are developed on two levels. The first involves the preparation of an organization-wide "Central Service Cost Allocation Plan" under which the costs of functions that benefit **all** of the operational functions of the organization are identified and pooled. This calculation would include indirect costs incurred for facilities, and in supervisory units such as Executive Management, Finance, Human Resources, Legal, and, perhaps, Information Technology. Each operational unit is expected to bear its allocated fair share of the central service indirect costs. The second calculation level involves identification of

any indirect costs incurred within the individual operational units such as expenses for departmental management that do not benefit any activities that are external to the unit. These indirect costs are allocated to the subordinate units and added to the allocated central services costs attributable to that subordinate unit to create the numerator for a fraction. The denominator is a selected base of direct costs incurred within the unit (such as modified total direct costs: salaries, wages, and fringe benefits; or salaries and wages). The percentage resulting from the fraction is the indirect cost rate that is used for federal awards administered in that unit.

Once reviewed by the cognizant agency or its delegate using a negotiation program or checklist, the calculation is memorialized in a standard negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) which contains the specific rate percentage(s) and their programmatic and geographic applicability and any exceptions that are unique to the subject non-federal entity.

REQUIRED ACCEPTANCE OF FEDERALLY NEGOTIATED RATES

Longstanding federal policy on required recognition and acceptance of federally negotiated indirect cost rates by federal awarding agencies and pass-through entities was reinforced in the initial issuance of *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* on December 26, 2013. All federal agencies were required to adopt the full text of that policy and to give it regulatory effect one year later. However, continuing difficulties with enforcement of that policy led the Office of Management and Budget to issue additional (on point) clarifications that were made effective, on November 12, 2020, May 4, 2021, and October 1, 2024, respectively. The current mandatory policy (2 CFR 200.414 (c)(1) now states, “Negotiated indirect cost rates must be accepted by all Federal agencies.” The same requirement is extended to pass-through agencies in both 2 CFR 200.414(d) and 2 CFR 200.332(b)(4). Taken together, these policies demonstrate that consistent treatment of indirect cost recovery is expected to be exercised throughout the non-federal entity’s administration of its federal awards and by all parties involved in those awards, including those involved in HGAC’s internal operations.

AUDIT OF INDIRECT COST CHARGES

When a non-federal entity expends a threshold number of federal awards received from all sources during its fiscal year, the Single Audit Act of 1984 (as amended) requires the organization to arrange for an independent organization-wide audit. The objectives of the audit are to (1) determine that financial statements and a schedule of expenditures of federal awards are accurate in all material respects; (2) that internal controls over federal award expenditures are well designed and placed in operation; and (3) that the entity has complied with laws and regulations that could have a direct and material effect on financial amounts. To aid the auditor in meeting these objectives the Office of Management and Budget annually prepares a comprehensive audit guide known as the “Compliance Supplement.” Among other things, the

Compliance Supplement identifies, in its Part 3, such compliance laws and regulations and suggests audit procedures for determining whether compliance has occurred.

Among the compliance requirements involved are those contained in Subpart E of 2 CFR 200, the applicable federal cost principles. When those requirements are required to be audited, as they are for the so-called “WIOA Cluster” (covering Assistance Listing Numbers 17.258, 17.259, and 17.278), auditors of state and local government entities are instructed (on pages 3-B-12 through 3-B-21 of the Compliance Supplement) to determine whether indirect cost charges have been properly incurred. If an organization has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement applicable to the fiscal year under audit, the auditor is expected to rely on the validity and accuracy of that agreement but to test whether the rate(s) in the agreement has been properly applied to a sample of transactions tested and to question any costs where such application has not been accomplished. The consultant has not reviewed the work papers of HGAC’s independent auditors to ascertain the extent of such testing. However, the resulting annual audits have been accepted by the federal government and the subject auditors have been required by applicable government auditing standards to undergo and pass regular peer review of their audit practice by other certified public accountants. Based on this degree of oversight, it is highly likely that, if there had been a departure from standard indirect cost recovery practices by HGAC, it would have been determined and noted in such audit reports.

Sincerely,

Robert Lloyd

Budget Committee

Proposed 2025 Board Budget

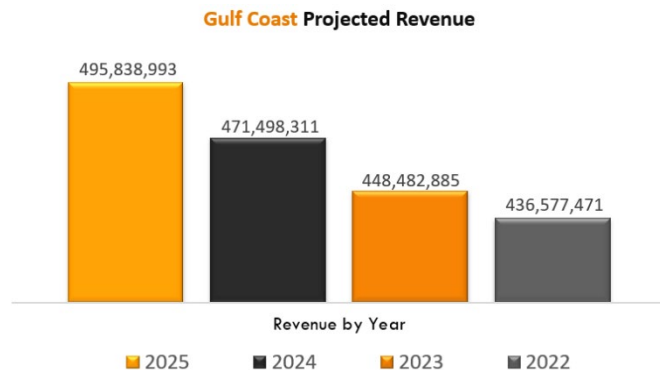
Background

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 drive positive impacts across the region, supporting the Workforce Board's mission and its strategic priorities.

Revenue Overview

The proposed 2025 budget, totaling over \$495 million, represents a 5.2% 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:

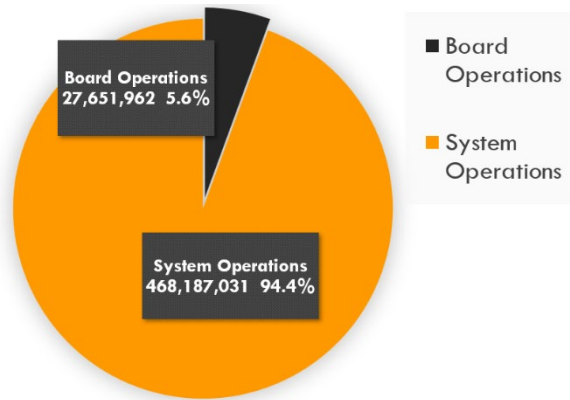
Slight increase in Child Care Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance funding have been observed, albeit offset by a decrease in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Trade Act funding.

Special Revenue Highlights:

Significant additions of Child Care Quality Enhancement and National Dislocated Worker funding results in a 74% 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 5.6% of total revenue for operations at H-GAC, while the remaining 94.4% is allocated to contracted service delivery. Board operations are suggested at \$27,651,962 for 2025, a 33.6% 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.



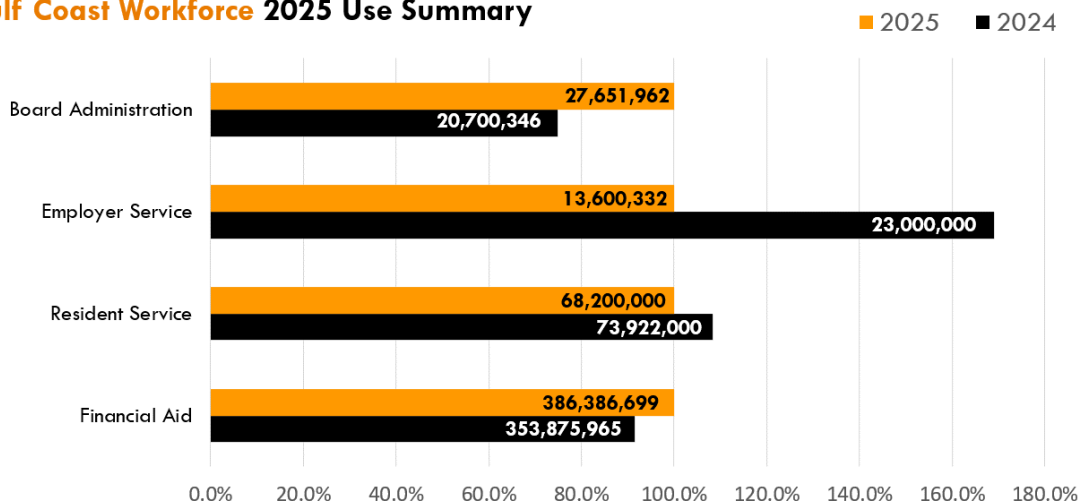
System Operations Highlights:

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. Board staff are currently directly managing Child Care Quality activities as we procure a new service provider. This corresponds to the large increase in contracted services (temporary staffing) as well as travel costs to support these individuals.

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 \$1,458,776, up 13.4% from 2024.
- Internal and Shared Services is proposed at \$4,444,536¹, a 18.2% increase from the previous year.
 - Internal Services is increasing to \$1,327,567
 - Network Services is increasing to \$1,268,974
 - Data Services is increasing to \$734,808
 - Internal Audit is increasing to \$445,389
 - Finance is decreasing to \$379,375
 - Communications is increasing to \$288,424

¹New and Vacant personnel costs allocated to Workforce total \$722,884.

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	453,946,030	Board Operations	27,651,962
Special Revenue	41,892,963	Employer Service	13,600,332
		Resident Service	68,200,000
		Financial Aid	386,386,699
Total	\$495,838,993	Total	\$495,838,993

**Gulf Coast Workforce
2025 Budget
Source Summary**

	2025	2024	Dollar Change	% Change
General Federal & State Revenue	453,946,030	447,575,009	6,371,021	1.4%
Child Care Services	362,763,396	356,733,421	6,029,975	1.7%
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	8,196,064	8,194,679	1,385	0.0%
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	495,838,993	471,498,311	24,340,682	5.2%

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

	2025	2024	% of Total 2025 Budget	Dollar Variance from 2024	% Variance from 2024
Board Operations	27,651,962	20,700,346	5.6%	6,951,616	33.6%
Salaries and Benefits	11,854,545	9,593,889	2.4%	2,260,655	23.6%
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	1,325,534	1,769,065	0.3%	(443,531)	-25.1%
Rent	628,805	554,726	0.1%	74,079	13.4%
Indirect	1,458,776	1,286,176	0.3%	172,600	13.4%
Internal & Shared Services	4,444,536	3,761,420	0.9%	683,116	18.2%
New & Vacant Personnel Costs ¹	(722,884)				
System Operations	468,187,031	450,797,965	94.4%	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	68.9%	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	495,838,993	471,498,311	100.0%	24,340,682	5.2%

¹New and Vacant personnel costs allocated to Workforce total \$722,884. These positions are pending a review and approval by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Executive Director.

**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	4,444,536	3,761,420	683,116	18%
Internal Services	1,327,567	1,027,081	300,486	29%
Network Services	1,268,974	975,958	293,016	30%
Data Services	734,808	691,549	43,259	6%
Internal Audit	445,389	363,685	81,704	22%
Finance	379,375	440,076	- 60,701	-14%
Communications	288,424	263,072	25,352	10%
Information Technology & Network Support	1,325,534	1,769,065	- 443,531	-25%
Software	482,740	502,071	- 19,331	-4%
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	32,794	34,994	- 2,200	-6%

Workforce Positions

Ref #	Staff Member	Title	Department / Division or Unit
1	AHMADIZADEH, MOHAMMAD	Principal Data Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
2	AUSTIN, LATOYA	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
3	BAIG, RAUF	Quality Assurance Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
4	BARNES, ANGELIS	Finance Specialist	Human Services-Workforce
5	BENJAMIN, JOHNATHAN	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
6	BORSKI, RON	Sr. Data Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
7	BRITO, CROSBY	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
8	BROUSSARD, CHRYSTAL	Account Liaison	Human Services-Workforce
9	BROWN, BRANDI	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
10	BROWN, CHERYL	Program Administrator	Human Services-Workforce
11	BROWN, THOMAS	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
12	CANTARERO, JALIL GALEL	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
13	CARTER, JACQUELINE	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
14	CASIMERE, LATOYA	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
15	CHAPMAN, JACINTH	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
16	DEAN, AARON K	Senior Manager	Human Services-Workforce
17	DIXON, NEGAIL	Quality Assurance Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
18	DRAKE, LAUREN	Planner	Human Services-Workforce
19	EATON, BRITTANY	Program Administrator	Human Services-Workforce
20	FRANCO CORTES, MARIA	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
21	GARCIA, AMANDA	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
22	GARCIA, PHILIP	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
23	GARCIA-VALADEZ, ALIA V	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
24	GLENN, ASHLEY	PROJECT MANAGER	Human Services-Workforce
25	GONZALES, GABRIELLE	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
26	GRAVES, JENNIFER M	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
27	HARRIS, IZINE L	Senior Financial Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
28	HARRIS-BUCK, SABLE	Account Liaison	Human Services-Workforce
29	HARVEY, PARKER A	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
30	HAYNES, JANINE R	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
31	HUNTER, GINGER	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
32	JEFFERSON, AMBER	Principal Industry Liaison	Human Services-Workforce
33	JEFFERSON, ERICA	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
34	JOHNSON, JENNIFER	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
35	KARGBO, ABDUL	Senior Project Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
36	KNOTTS, DANIELLE SHOKES	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
37	LAPLACE, MALIN	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
38	LEDAY, HELENA	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
39	LINDOLPH, KIMBERLY	Lead Qual. Assur. Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
40	LYONS, MAISHA D	Quality Assurance Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
41	MALLET, ALEXANDRA	Project Manager	Human Services-Workforce
42	MATA, ESMERALDA	Program Administrator	Human Services-Workforce
43	MILLER, BRITNEY	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
44	VACANT	Customer Service Specialist	Human Services-Workforce
45	NAJARRO, ROXANA	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
46	NGUYEN, DAT	Sr. Webmaster	Human Services-Workforce
47	PANIAGUA, ROMANA	Administrative Assistant	Human Services-Workforce
48	PARRAS, SABRINA	Sr. Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
49	PEOPLES, RODERICK	Principal Industry Liaison	Human Services-Workforce
50	Prather, Richard	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
51	QUICK, CHANEL M-C	Customer Service Specialist	Human Services-Workforce
52	RANGEL, KRISTI	Assistant Director	Human Services-Workforce
53	REEVES, IREINA	Planner	Human Services-Workforce
54	RICHARD, FREYAH	Quality Assurance Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
55	RICHARDSON, KIARA	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
56	ROBERTS, JENNIFER	Sr. Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
57	RODNEY, KEVIN	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
58	SALAZAR, VANESSA	PROJECT MANAGER	Human Services-Workforce

Workforce Positions

Ref #	Staff Member	Title	Department / Division or Unit
59	SHEPPARD, CHERYL	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
60	SMITH, JESSICA	Sr. Property Control Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
61	SPADONI, LISA	Operations Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
62	STARKS, KIMBERLY	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
63	STARLING, JENNIFER	Manager	Human Services-Workforce
64	STEINMETZ, MELISSA	Principal Industry Liaison	Human Services-Workforce
65	STIPECHE, JULIET	Director	Human Services-Workforce
66	TAPIA, ARLENY	Quality Assurance Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
67	TAYLOR, EDWARD DESMOND	Program Administrator	Human Services-Workforce
68	THOMPSON, SHAWANNA W	Customer Service Specialist	Human Services-Workforce
69	TOMLIN, CARL RUSSELL	Senior Manager	Human Services-Workforce
70	TRAN, QUOC	Sr. Operations Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
71	VALDES, REBECCA	Principal Quality Assurance Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
72	WALLACE, ARIEL	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
73	WILLIAMS, ANGELA	Quality Assurance Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
74	WILLSON, KY D	Project Manager	Human Services-Workforce
75	WOLF, LACY	Principal Industry Liaison	Human Services-Workforce
76	WONG, ELAINE LAU	Operations Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
77	WOODARD, ASHLEY	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
78	ZHENG, WEN	Data Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
79	Vacant	Manager - Gulf Coast Workforce Board	Human Services-Workforce
80	Vacant	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
81	Vacant	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
82	Vacant	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
83	Vacant	Principal Industry Liaison	Human Services-Workforce
84	Vacant	Principal Data Analyst	Human Services-Workforce
85	Vacant	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
86	Proposed	Program Administrator	Human Services-Workforce
87	Proposed	Project Manager	Human Services-Workforce
88	Proposed	Senior Planner	Human Services-Workforce
89	Proposed	Senior Manager	Human Services-Workforce
90	Proposed	Grant Administrator	Human Services-Workforce
91	Proposed	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
92	Proposed	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
93	Proposed	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
94	Proposed	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
95	Proposed	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
96	Proposed	Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
97	Proposed	Senior Program Coordinator	Human Services-Workforce
98	Proposed	Planner	Human Services-Workforce
99	Proposed	Planner	Human Services-Workforce
100	Proposed	Principal Program Administrator	Human Services-Workforce

Employer Engagement Committee

High-Skill, High-Growth (HSHG) List: 2023 Review and 2025 Proposed Updates

Introduction

The Employer Engagement Committee met virtually on January 22, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:18 p.m. with Chair Mark Guthrie presiding. Other Board members in attendance included Mou Sarkar, Alan Heskamp, Bin Yu, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Cheryl Guido, Dr. Melanie Rodriguez, Joyce Johnson, Lizandra Vasquez, Margaret Oser, Anne Bartlett, Dr. Michael Webster, Paul Puente, Marie Arcos, and Edward Melton.

This meeting focused on the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's High-Skills, High-Growth (HSHG) list including a 2023 review and the 2025 proposed updates. The Board plays a critical role in shaping the region's workforce by strategically investing in education, training, and skills development that align with industry demands. One of our primary mechanisms for achieving this alignment is the High-Skill, High-Growth (HSHG) Occupations List, which guides investments in talent development to support economic growth and individual prosperity.

Parker Harvey, manager of Regional Economic Analysis, provided a comprehensive review of the Board's existing HSHG framework, evaluated key changes from the 2023 list, and introduced proposed refinements for 2025. These updates are driven by labor market intelligence, employer needs, and an evolving economic landscape, ensuring that we continue to connect job seekers with viable career pathways and strengthen our regional economy. Juliet Stipeche and Leigh Ann Arnold discussed the Local WIOA Plan which needs to be submitted to the Texas Workforce Commission by March 21, 2025, and includes the updated HSHG list in addition to other required deliverables.

The meeting focused on refining industry selection criteria, balancing educational access, addressing workforce investment imbalances, and ensuring the HSHG list remains responsive to high-demand occupations. Board members were active and involved in providing critical feedback and recommendations.

Refinements to the High-Skill, High-Growth List

Updated Industry & Occupation Selection Criteria:

The 2025 Targeted Industry List will include 52 industries, adding Scientific Research & Development Services to support biotechnology, nanotechnology,

and engineering. It is also reduced from 147 to 138 occupations to focus on middle-skill and technical careers. The 2023 HSHG list was dominated by bachelor's degree occupations (65%), which limited accessibility to training for middle-skill jobs. The revised 2025 list lowers this percentage to 51%, ensuring more equitable access to two-year degree and vocational training programs.

Employer Engagement Challenges & Alternative Approaches

Ideally, workforce investments would be directly informed by employer input regarding skill demands, hiring challenges, and future workforce needs. However, as Parker Harvey emphasized, securing consistent and detailed employer feedback remains difficult. Given this, the Board relies on a three-step data-driven approach:

1. Identify Key Industries – Target sectors that are large, expanding, and offer competitive wages.
2. Pinpoint Critical Occupations – Focus on roles that are well-paying, high-growth, and require postsecondary education or training.
3. Guide Training & Workforce Development Investments – Allocate funds to education and training programs aligned with employer demand.

While this methodology ensures strategic investment in high-opportunity careers, Board member Bin Yu raised concerns about foreign companies moving into Houston, which could introduce new job demands and skill requirements not captured by existing projections. Parker Harvey acknowledged that current workforce data does not account for new companies entering the region, reinforcing the need for direct engagement with incoming businesses to assess evolving workforce needs.

A key concern raised by Board Member Anne Bartlett was the increasing number of bachelor's degree-requiring occupations, which limit access to training funds for middle-skill workers. The 2023 list included 65% bachelor's degree occupations, prompting a revision to lower this percentage to 51% for 2025. This adjustment ensures greater funding accessibility for two-year degree and vocational training programs while continuing to support high-demand professional careers.

Board Member Paul Puente also inquired whether the HSHG list prioritizes high-demand occupations, cautioning against oversaturating training in fields with limited job openings while underinvesting in critical areas. Parker Harvey clarified that expanding the list without strategic controls would dilute funding effectiveness.

Addressing Training Fund Allocation Issues

Disproportionate Investment in Certain Occupations:

CDL training was identified as receiving an over-concentration of funding (25-30%), limiting available resources for other in-demand occupations. The Board supported a “Resource Distribution Framework” to ensure equitable allocation of workforce training dollars.

New Funding Distribution Model:

Board staff also discussed how training fund allocation will be based on projected net job growth per industry. For example, IT occupations growing 12.1% will receive 12.1% of the training budget, while health professions growing 19.7% will receive 19.7% of available funds. Board members emphasized the importance of ensuring funding does not disproportionately benefit a few select programs at the expense of other high-growth, high-wage sectors. Further, Board members emphasized the importance of preventing disproportionate funding in select programs, reinforcing the need for balanced workforce investments.

Considerations for Retaining or Removing Occupations

Fifty-eight (58) occupations were proposed for removal, including management roles, specialty physicians, and sales positions, which were considered either too broad, too high-cost, or misaligned with workforce goals. A few Board members advocated for keeping Medical Assistant training, citing its role as a bridge occupation for career progression in healthcare, but Board staff explained that this area of study is already funded by the Adult Education and Literacy program and did not meet the HSHG requirements. The removal of lawyers was also recommended to increase support for paralegals and legal assistants, which require lower educational barriers and offer strong career prospects. A discussion ensued on the balance between employer demand and workforce accessibility, particularly in fields that require extensive postsecondary education.

Strategic Allocation of Training Funds

The Board acknowledged that training budget dilution results in less impactful workforce investments. The Resource Distribution Framework was endorsed to ensure funding supports a diverse range of high-demand occupations. A request was made to analyze historical training scholarship (formerly voucher) data to figure out which occupational fields have benefited most from workforce funding.

Training Impact & Employer Demand Analysis

A deeper review of historical training investments was recommended to assess actual hiring trends and ensure alignment with employer demand. Board

members expressed interest in examining historical training data to assess which occupational fields have benefited most from workforce funding. Additionally, concerns were raised about workforce readiness for remote and hybrid jobs, questioning whether current workforce projections adequately reflect evolving job trends. Parker Harvey noted that tracking remote work remains challenging, as current data sources primarily capture payroll location rather than worker residency. The Board recommended exploring new strategies to account for remote job growth in future workforce planning efforts.

Recommendations & Next Steps

Parker Harvey reviewed and adjusted the 2025 HSHG List to incorporate the Board's input. The Board agreed to adjust workforce training allocations to ensure more balanced investment strategies. Board members also expressed a desire to expand employer engagement efforts by collaborating with new and existing companies to better align training programs with workforce needs. They also asked Board staff to conduct a review of historical training investments and investigate how current training programs can be adapted for evolving workplace trends.

Board staff was granted more time to finalize the draft of the Local WIOA Plan for 2025-2029. A public workshop on the Local WIOA Plan is scheduled for Wednesday, February 26, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at H-GAC, 3555 Timmons Lane, 2nd floor, Rooms A/B/C.

The 2025 HSHG List updates and resource allocation strategies aim to create a more strategic, balanced, and employer-driven workforce development plan. By refining industry selection criteria, rebalancing training investments, and fostering employer engagement, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board is ensuring that regional workforce priorities align with economic growth and community needs.

Action

Staff requests Board approval for the 2025 High-Skills, High-Growth Plan for inclusion in the Local WIOA Plan for 2025-2029.

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

2025 High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations^{1, 2, 6}

Scholarship Eligible Occupations⁵

DRAFT SUBJECT TO GCWB APPROVAL

SOC	Occupation Title	Employment Growth				Annual Openings				Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Work Experience in a Related Occupation	Typical On-the-job Training	Median Hourly Wage 2023
		Annual Averages 2022	2032	Net Change	Percent Change	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings				
13-0000	Business & Financial Operations												
13-1041	Compliance Officers	7,000	8,167	1,167	16.7	262	313	117	692	Bachelor's degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$36.05
13-1051	Cost Estimators	5,359	5,757	398	7.4	180	275	40	495	Bachelor's degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$36.48
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	16,822	20,334	3,512	20.9	555	964	351	1,870	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$30.39
13-1081	Logisticians	4,405	5,896	1,491	33.8	139	268	149	556	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$34.69
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	26,663	30,929	4,266	16.0	659	1,326	427	2,412	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$46.71
13-1111	Management Analysts	7,039	8,485	1,446	20.5	267	357	145	769	Bachelor's degree	Less than 5 years	None	\$42.18
13-1141	Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists	2,006	2,392	386	19.2	65	87	39	191	Bachelor's degree	Less than 5 years	None	\$39.82
13-1151	Training and Development Specialists	7,798	9,395	1,597	20.5	261	451	160	872	Bachelor's degree	Less than 5 years	None	\$30.40
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	10,791	13,579	2,788	25.8	382	709	279	1,370	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$30.12
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	30,428	36,022	5,594	18.4	1,026	1,504	559	3,089	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$39.29
13-2051	Financial and Investment Analysts	6,912	8,323	1,411	20.4	164	312	141	617	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$44.79
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations												
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	11,846	15,417	3,571	30.1	341	453	357	1,151	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$54.10
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	2,448	3,587	1,139	46.5	66	111	114	291	Bachelor's degree	Less than 5 years	None	\$54.46
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	2,273	2,721	448	19.7	61	102	45	208	Associate's degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$27.21
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	13,377	16,212	2,835	21.2	363	607	284	1,254	Some college, no degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$26.45
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	2,040	2,369	329	16.1	40	75	33	148	Bachelor's degree	5 years or more	None	\$62.44
15-1242	Database Administrators	1,304	1,579	275	21.1	36	46	28	110	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$48.91
15-1243	Database Architects	811	995	184	22.7	23	29	18	70	Bachelor's degree	Less than 5 years	None	\$63.95
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	5,780	6,727	947	16.4	128	218	95	441	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$46.47
15-1252	Software Developers	19,802	28,367	8,565	43.3	413	862	856	2,131	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$60.44
15-1253	Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	3,222	4,394	1,172	36.4	96	136	117	349	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$48.53
15-1254	Web Developers	1,277	1,711	434	34.0	29	62	43	134	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$44.80
15-1255	Web and Digital Interface Designers	2,509	3,085	576	23.0	78	119	58	255	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$38.88
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	2,264	3,200	936	41.3	78	85	94	257	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$40.81
15-2051	Data Scientists	3,618	5,217	1,599	44.2	100	161	160	421	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$46.87
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations												
17-1011	Architects, Except Landscape and Naval	1,857	2,035	178	9.6	57	60	18	135	Bachelor's degree	None	Internship/residency	\$37.88
17-1022	Surveyors	1,847	2,026	179	9.7	59	62	18	139	Bachelor's degree	None	Internship/residency	\$29.67
17-2011	Aerospace Engineers	1,668	2,097	429	25.7	43	54	43	140	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$67.41
17-2041	Chemical Engineers	2,166	2,577	411	19.0	52	72	41	165	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$80.03
17-2051	Civil Engineers	9,415	10,376	961	10.2	213	366	96	675	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$41.99
17-2071	Electrical Engineers	3,921	4,399	478	12.2	96	124	48	268	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$51.55

17-2081	Environmental Engineers	967	1,150	183	18.9	32	35	18	85	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$60.12
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	7,206	8,725	1,519	21.1	194	242	152	588	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$52.19
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	6,975	8,255	1,280	18.4	169	244	128	541	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$57.10
17-2151	Mining and Geological Engineers, Including Mining Safety Engineers	192	226	34	17.7	4	8	3	15	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$48.73
17-2171	Petroleum Engineers	5,833	7,102	1,269	21.8	122	235	127	484	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$75.76
17-3011	Architectural and Civil Drafters	4,499	4,775	276	6.1	192	235	28	455	Associate's degree	None	None	\$28.15
17-3012	Electrical and Electronics Drafters	962	1,052	90	9.4	35	46	9	90	Associate's degree	None	None	\$30.92
17-3022	Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians	2,462	2,675	213	8.7	98	133	21	252	Associate's degree	None	None	\$30.33
17-3023	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians	1,622	1,758	136	8.4	86	76	14	176	Associate's degree	None	None	\$32.44
17-3026	Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians	1,288	1,418	130	10.1	52	70	13	135	Associate's degree	None	None	\$36.22
17-3027	Mechanical Engineering Technologists and Technicians	1,312	1,355	43	3.3	51	69	4	124	Associate's degree	None	None	\$31.49
17-3028	Calibration Technologists and Technicians	839	940	101	12.0	34	46	10	90	Associate's degree	None	None	\$36.96
17-3031	Surveying and Mapping Technicians	2,889	3,202	313	10.8	127	226	31	384	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$23.26
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations												
19-2042	Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists and Geographers	2,582	3,200	618	23.9	39	183	62	284	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$67.76
19-3034	School Psychologists ⁵	1,700	2,046	346	20.4	33	87	35	155	Master's degree	None	Internship/residency	\$38.55
19-4021	Biological Technicians	1,867	2,138	271	14.5	65	180	27	272	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$24.05
19-4031	Chemical Technicians	2,612	2,815	203	7.8	56	255	20	331	Associate's degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$43.26
19-4042	Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health	816	1,019	203	24.9	16	76	20	112	Associate's degree	None	None	\$22.90
19-4043	Geological Technicians, Except Hydrologic Technicians	1,032	1,130	98	9.5	19	90	10	119	Associate's degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$27.31
19-4044	Hydrologic Technicians	215	220	5	2.3	4	18	0	22	Associate's degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$24.53
19-5011	Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	5,589	7,224	1,635	29.3	180	491	164	835	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$38.46
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations												
21-1012	Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors ⁵	7,235	8,596	1,361	18.8	238	320	136	694	Master's degree	None	None	\$33.64
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	4,617	5,906	1,289	27.9	189	243	129	561	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$27.45
21-1022	Healthcare Social Workers ⁵	3,654	4,205	551	15.1	146	185	55	386	Master's degree	None	Internship/residency	\$30.73
23-0000	Legal Occupations												
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	6,393	7,940	1,547	24.2	270	454	155	879	Associate's degree	None	None	\$28.34
23-2093	Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers	2,143	2,575	432	20.2	96	126	43	265	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$29.38
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations³												
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	14,563	17,643	3,080	21.2	737	950	308	1,995	Associate's degree	None	None	\$16.46
25-2012	Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education	3,774	4,415	641	17.0	187	242	64	493	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$31.71
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	36,127	42,558	6,431	17.8	1,321	1,293	643	3,257	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$31.08
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	16,664	19,687	3,023	18.1	610	597	302	1,509	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$31.93
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	24,588	29,102	4,514	18.4	779	866	451	2,096	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$31.86
25-2032	Career/Technical Education Teachers, Secondary School	3,020	3,528	508	16.8	95	106	51	252	Bachelor's degree	Less than 5 years	None	\$32.30
25-2052	Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School	3,480	4,071	591	17.0	126	125	59	310	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$31.54
25-2057	Special Education Teachers, Middle School	1,771	2,072	301	17.0	64	64	30	158	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$31.91
25-2058	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	2,493	2,925	432	17.3	91	90	43	224	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$31.78
25-3011	Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors	644	655	11	1.7	40	37	1	78	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$25.44
25-4022	Librarians and Media Collections Specialists ⁵	1,927	2,250	323	16.8	114	79	32	225	Master's degree	None	None	\$33.59

25-9031	Instructional Coordinators ⁵	8,312	9,795	1,483	17.8	418	355	148	921	Master's degree	5 years or more	None	\$36.70
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations												
27-3091	Interpreters and Translators	3,125	3,598	473	15.1	170	160	47	377	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$26.66
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations												
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	3,089	3,878	789	25.5	107	64	79	250	Associate's degree	None	None	\$37.49
29-1141	Registered Nurses	60,722	70,730	10,008	16.5	2,182	1,352	1,001	4,535	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$44.68
29-1292	Dental Hygienists	2,066	2,467	401	19.4	97	50	40	187	Associate's degree	None	None	\$45.03
29-2010	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	6,511	7,744	1,233	18.9	242	211	123	576	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$25.04
29-2031	Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	1,043	1,211	168	16.1	37	31	17	85	Associate's degree	None	None	\$21.75
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1,752	2,290	538	30.7	55	47	54	156	Associate's degree	None	None	\$39.36
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	4,731	5,723	992	21.0	159	113	99	371	Associate's degree	None	None	\$36.82
29-2035	Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	816	991	175	21.4	27	20	18	65	Associate's degree	Less than 5 years	None	\$41.28
29-2036	Medical Dosimetrists	112	134	22	19.6	3	3	2	8	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$64.42
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	2,302	2,694	392	17.0	75	73	39	187	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	\$30.53
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	12,906	14,764	1,858	14.4	561	486	186	1,233	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	\$28.37
29-2072	Medical Records Specialists	4,464	5,381	917	20.5	185	140	92	417	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	\$22.00
29-9021	Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars	906	1,187	281	31.0	35	28	28	91	Associate's degree	None	None	\$36.89
29-9093	Surgical Assistants	508	594	86	16.9	18	15	9	42	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	\$30.24
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations												
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	1,002	1,387	385	38.4	59	104	38	201	Associate's degree	None	None	\$34.91
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	1,728	2,308	580	33.6	97	176	58	331	Associate's degree	None	None	\$36.86
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations												
41-9031	Sales Engineers	1,564	1,832	268	17.1	52	101	27	180	Bachelor's degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$56.84
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations												
43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	7,911	9,104	1,193	15.1	331	531	119	981	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$23.45
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations												
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	29,299	33,210	3,911	13.3	1,040	1,420	391	2,851	high school diploma or equivalent	5 years or more	None	\$34.43
47-2011	Boilermakers	1,002	1,105	103	10.3	38	50	10	98	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$32.41
47-2031	Carpenters	13,164	14,223	1,059	8.0	477	645	106	1,228	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$23.00
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	11,105	12,615	1,510	13.6	393	598	151	1,142	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$22.94
47-2111	Electricians	20,281	23,770	3,489	17.2	732	1,186	349	2,267	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$28.60
47-2132	Insulation Workers, Mechanical	1,625	1,750	125	7.7	49	79	12	140	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$24.07
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	11,144	12,593	1,449	13.0	374	636	145	1,155	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$28.98
47-2171	Reinforcing Iron and Rebar Workers	2,344	2,571	227	9.7	87	108	23	218	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$23.36
47-2211	Sheet Metal Workers	2,297	2,522	225	9.8	88	130	22	240	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$24.53
47-2221	Structural Iron and Steel Workers	2,166	2,278	112	5.2	56	132	11	199	high school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$23.38
47-4011	Construction and Building Inspectors	4,483	4,805	322	7.2	302	222	32	556	high school diploma or equivalent	5 years or more	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$31.49

47-5012	Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas ⁴	2,099	2,279	180	8.6	65	156	18	239	No formal educational credential	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$38.46
47-5013	Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas ⁴	4,169	4,562	393	9.4	130	311	39	480	No formal educational credential	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$25.99
47-5071	Roustabouts, Oil and Gas ⁴	4,817	5,394	577	12.0	152	364	58	574	No formal educational credential	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$22.53
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations												
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	17,059	19,509	2,450	14.4	704	794	245	1,743	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years	None	\$35.95
49-2098	Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers	2,482	2,988	506	20.4	104	179	51	334	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$23.45
49-3011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	3,465	3,922	457	13.2	109	157	46	312	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	\$37.85
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	17,572	19,947	2,375	13.5	652	928	238	1,818	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Short-term on-the-job training	\$22.78
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	6,779	7,630	851	12.6	257	335	85	677	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$28.29
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	6,106	7,597	1,491	24.4	222	340	149	711	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$29.75
49-9012	Control and Valve Installers and Repairers, Except Mechanical Door	3,506	4,084	578	16.5	128	148	58	334	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$23.34
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	7,414	8,836	1,422	19.2	255	419	142	816	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$26.06
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	13,728	17,253	3,525	25.7	550	641	352	1,543	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$29.90
49-9043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	2,608	3,089	481	18.4	137	126	48	311	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$27.17
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	3,059	3,554	495	16.2	90	158	50	298	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$36.03
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	2,916	3,296	380	13.0	96	178	38	312	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$23.79
49-9062	Medical Equipment Repairers	2,064	2,700	636	30.8	92	124	64	280	Associate's degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$24.30
49-9081	Wind Turbine Service Technicians	1,683	2,742	1,059	62.9	85	123	106	314	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$29.58
51-0000	Production Occupations												
51-4041	Machinists	6,264	7,016	752	12.0	265	378	75	718	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$24.11
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	16,666	18,737	2,071	12.4	536	1,173	207	1,916	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$24.94
51-8091	Chemical Plant and System Operators	4,762	4,785	23	0.5	121	311	2	2	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$51.20
51-9161	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators	4,991	5,067	76	1.5	157	297	8	8	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$23.89
51-9162	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Programmers	721	899	178	24.7	25	48	18	18	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$30.50
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations												
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	53,795	64,684	10,889	20.2	2,682	3,470	1,089	1,089	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Short-term on-the-job training	\$24.39
53-5021	Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	2,023	2,141	118	5.8	81	131	12	12	Postsecondary nondegree award	Less than 5 years	None	\$57.81
53-7021	Crane and Tower Operators	3,177	3,582	405	12.7	111	198	41	40	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$35.39
53-7072	Pump Operators, Except Wellhead Pumpers	1,379	1,688	309	22.4	53	100	31	31	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$26.60
53-7073	Wellhead Pumpers	3,310	4,181	871	26.3	130	245	87	87	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$37.24

Notes

High-skill jobs targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board are those that offer the best employment opportunities for the region's residents now and in the immediate future.

1. Criteria used to identify the above occupations are as follows:

The occupation must be found in one or more GCWB Targeted Industries.

50% or more of total occupational employment must be found in the GCWB list of Targeted Industries authorized on the date below

Projected employment in 2030 greater than or equal to the median for all occupations in the region (≥ 1,668)

Projected growth rate greater than or equal to the average of all occupations in the region (≥ 14.9%)

Minimum education requirements of a postsecondary degree or certificate, moderate on-the-job training with no less than a high school diploma, long-term on-the-job training, apprenticeship, internship/residency or work experience in a related occupation

Median hourly wages greater than or equal to the OES 2021 median wage for all occupations in the region (≥ \$22.54)

Occupations found on previous High-skill High-growth Occupation List and which meet four of the five criteria immediately above have been retained

2. Other occupations meeting some but not all of the above criteria have also been included based on the best regional labor market intelligence available. Employers can petition for the inclusion of additional as labor market conditions change.
3. Hourly wages were obtained by dividing the reported median annual wage by 2,080 hours. Note that actual per hour earnings are likely to differ as education-related occupations are typically compensated on a 9 or 10 month basis.
4. Occupations officially requiring no formal educational credential of any kind and moderate on-the-job training included due to their importance to the oil and gas industry.
5. Occupations that require a master's degree are not currently eligible for scholarships.
6. All data provided by Texas Workforce Commission - LMCI

Authorized for use by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board: XX/XX/XXXX

Procurement Committee

Executive Summary

On January 30, 2025, Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson convened the Procurement Committee at 2:07pm at H-GAC Office, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027 in Room 2D to review information and consider recommendations to award FY2025 contracts. Additional Board members present included Chair Mark Guthrie, Adrian Ozuna, Doug Karr, Guy Jackson, Alan Heskamp, Paul Puente, and Cheryl Guido.

Board staff in attendance included Juliet Stipeche, Desmond Taylor, AJ Dean, Thomas Brown, Russell Tomlin, Vanessa Salazar, Abdul Kargbo, Kristi Rangel, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Jessica Smith, Brandi Brown, Jennifer Roberts, Jenny Johnson, Parker Harvey, and Sabrina Uy.

The following contract recommendation and requested amounts were considered:

Service Provider	2025 Contract Request Amount
I. Career Lattice	
Chmura Economics & Analytics LLC	\$200,000
II. Regional Teacher Apprenticeship Program	
TNTP, Inc.	\$100,000
III. Legal Services	
DC Legal PLLC	\$300,000
TOTAL	\$600,000

I. Career Lattice

The Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) was established in 2019 to facilitate Governor Abbott’s Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative. This initiative represents a collaborative endeavor among the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), aiming to augment Texas’s economic prosperity by strategically integrating educational resources with industry demands.

Following the Board’s application for a TEA grant on January 13, 2023, we were appointed a Tri-Agency regional convener. This role entails the comprehensive oversight of designing, executing, and monitoring a regional strategy that develops high-quality career and educational pathways into targeted industries within the designated workforce development area. To successfully complete this work, an experienced contractor is needed to assist in the following areas:

- 1) Validation of theoretical career pathways using “real-world” data tracking individuals and their professional journeys from postsecondary education and training to late-career stages (Stage One);
- 2) Development of a web-based interactive tool based on a repository of theoretical pathways developed by H-GAC Workforce Solutions staff (Stage Two); and
- 3) Development of a training curriculum designed to instruct workforce career office staff on the use of the web-based tool to enhance career exploration with jobseekers and individuals seeking additional education and training (Stage Three).

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was released in October 2024 to select a contractor(s) capable of implementing this initiative. Stage One received four (4) responses, Stage Two received four (4) responses, and Stage Three received six (6) responses. The evaluation team reviewed and scored the proposals to determine the best candidate for implementing this work and ranked them as follows:

Stage One

Proposer	Rank
Chmura Economics & Analytics LLC	1
Resultant, LLC	2
Go2Work	3
Hypergrowth Solutions, Inc	4

Stage Two

Proposer	Rank
Chmura Economics & Analytics LLC	1
Resultant, LLC	2
HyperGrowth Solutions, Inc	3
Go2Work	4

Stage Three

Proposer	Rank
Chmura Economics & Analytics LLC	1
Resultant, LLC	2
Exceed Staffing, LLC	3
HyperGrowth Solutions, Inc	4
Go2Work	5
Nandi Charles	6

Chmura Economics & Analytics LLC scored the highest in each of the three stages. Chmura Economics & Analytics LLC is a current contractor with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, providing third-party labor market data and analysis. The firm is based in Richmond, Virginia, specializing in economic consulting and labor market research, with over 25 years of experience providing Ph.D.-level analysis and developing the JobsEQ software platform. Their expertise includes economic impact studies, workforce analysis, and labor market modeling, serving clients like Deloitte, Bloomberg, PwC, and Ernst & Young. Their long-standing market presence, trusted partnerships, and industry reputation indicate financial health and stability.

Action

We recommend the Board authorize staff to negotiate a contract with Chmura Economics & Analytics LLC for up to \$200,000 to develop and implement all three stages of the Career Lattice initiative.

II. Regional Teacher Apprenticeship Program

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board received a \$200,000 grant from the Houston Endowment to design a Regional Teacher Apprentice Program aimed at increasing teacher certifications in Education Service Center Region 4 and Montgomery County. To assist with this work, an experienced consultant is needed to:

- Conduct thorough research on funding opportunities from federal, state, and private sources.
- Facilitate stakeholder engagement sessions and advisory meetings to shape program policies and strategies.
- Assist in the development of program regulations, policies, and overall proposal narrative.
- Advise on best practices for data management systems and evaluation metrics to ensure program effectiveness.
- Develop a Regional Teacher Apprenticeship program proposal draft with stakeholder-approved program framework ready for submission to the Houston Endowment Board Meeting in June 2025.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was released on November 6, 2024, to select a consultant(s) capable of implementing this initiative. We received six (6) responses that were evaluated to determine the best candidate for implementing this work, and the ranking is shared below:

Proposer	Rank
TNTP, Inc.	1
Far Harbor, LLC	2
ThirdWay Solutions, LLC	3
Ja'Ontay Foster dba Prolific Success Events & Consulting	4
Partners for America's Classrooms, LLC	5
Derrick Allen dba Tigers Level Up, LLC	6

TNTP, Inc. (formerly The New Teacher Project) scored the highest among the proposers and is a nonprofit committed to improving public education by expanding access to high-quality teachers and developing innovative teacher training programs. Since 1997, TNTP has partnered with over 6,000 school systems across 39 states, including Baltimore City Public Schools, the Tennessee Department of Education, and state agencies in Nebraska, Kentucky, and Indiana, to support teacher recruitment, certification, and apprenticeship initiatives. Financially stable, TNTP reported \$74.6 million in total assets as of September 2023, with \$30.2 million in cash reserves and no outstanding debt. With a diversified revenue model from client fees, federal grants, and private donations, TNTP is a stable and strategic partner for advancing our teacher apprenticeship initiatives.

Action

We recommend the Board authorize staff to negotiate a contract with TNTP, Inc. not to exceed \$100,000, conditioned on the receipt of required certifications related to insurance and bonding requirements. The documentation provided by TNTP, Inc. will be reviewed to confirm compliance with our standards before the contract is finalized.

III. Legal Services

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board plays a pivotal role in orchestrating and guiding a multitude of workforce development initiatives and early education activities across a sprawling region encompassing 13 counties. This broad operational scope necessitates a complex network of contractual agreements with various partners, forming the backbone of a collaborative system that delivers a wide array of services.

In late 2023, to effectively navigate the complex legal landscape of workforce policies and regulations, the Board secured specialized legal expertise. Following a competitive RFP process, DC Legal PLLC was selected for its deep knowledge of Texas Workforce Commission regulations, state and federal labor laws, and funding intricacies. Further, Jeanette De La Cruz, a licensed attorney with over 35 years of experience in workforce, labor, and employment law—including unemployment insurance, payday law, civil rights, and fair housing—leads this effort. From 2016 to 2023, she served as Chief of Staff to the Labor Commissioner, providing strategic policy and legal counsel while managing external communications with state legislators, the public, and key workforce and education stakeholders. Ms. De La Cruz charges an hourly rate of \$360, and her services for the year remained within the Board’s allocated funding amount.

DC Legal PLLC provided outstanding legal guidance across a variety of challenging and critical issues with keen insight into workforce laws, rules, and regulations. Jeanette Dela Cruz assisted by:

- Drafting new General Provisions for use on Board contracts.
- Reviewing and drafting Memorandums of Understanding and other agreements required by the Texas Workforce Commission.
- Reviewing and providing feedback, including to required documentation, on the Eligible Training Provider List process.
- Providing feedback during contract negotiations.
- Provided legal memorandums on requested issues and topics.
- Provided support on the interpretation of Texas Workforce Commission guidance, policies, and the Agency Board Agreement.
- Reviewed proposed GCWB policies, standards, and guidelines.
- Reviewing and providing legal feedback on Board/H-GAC Request for Proposal documentation.
- Participating in meetings, both internal and external.

Action

We recommend the Board authorizes staff to negotiate a contract with a one-year term and two optional one-year extensions. Each year, this contract will be funded at \$300,000 with renewal contingent upon staff approval of performance. The total contract amount over three years will not exceed \$900,000. DC Legal PLLC will bill on an hourly basis at a rate of \$360 per hour for actual services rendered.

Nominations Committee

January 2025

The Nominations Committee, chaired by Mr. Doug Karr, convened on January 30, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. at 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027 (Room 2D). Additional Board members included Chair Mark Guthrie, Alan Heskamp, and Dr. Bobbie Henderson. Board staff in attendance included Juliet Stipeche, Desmond Taylor, and Dr. Maria Franco Cortes.

The Board's By-Laws require a Board Chair, from private industry, and three Vice Chairs. Last year, Sara Bouse and Willie Alexander stepped down from the Gulf Coast Workforce Board leaving two Vice Chair vacancies. Chair Mark Guthrie and Vice Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson continue to serve as Board officers. Nominations were opened to the Board, and the members discussed nominated individuals.

Action

Based on the open call for nominations to fill the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's two (2) vacant Vice Chair positions, the Nominations Committee recommends and request the Board's approval of the following Board members to fill the two vacant Vice Chair positions:

- Guy Robert Jackson, and
- Paul Puente.

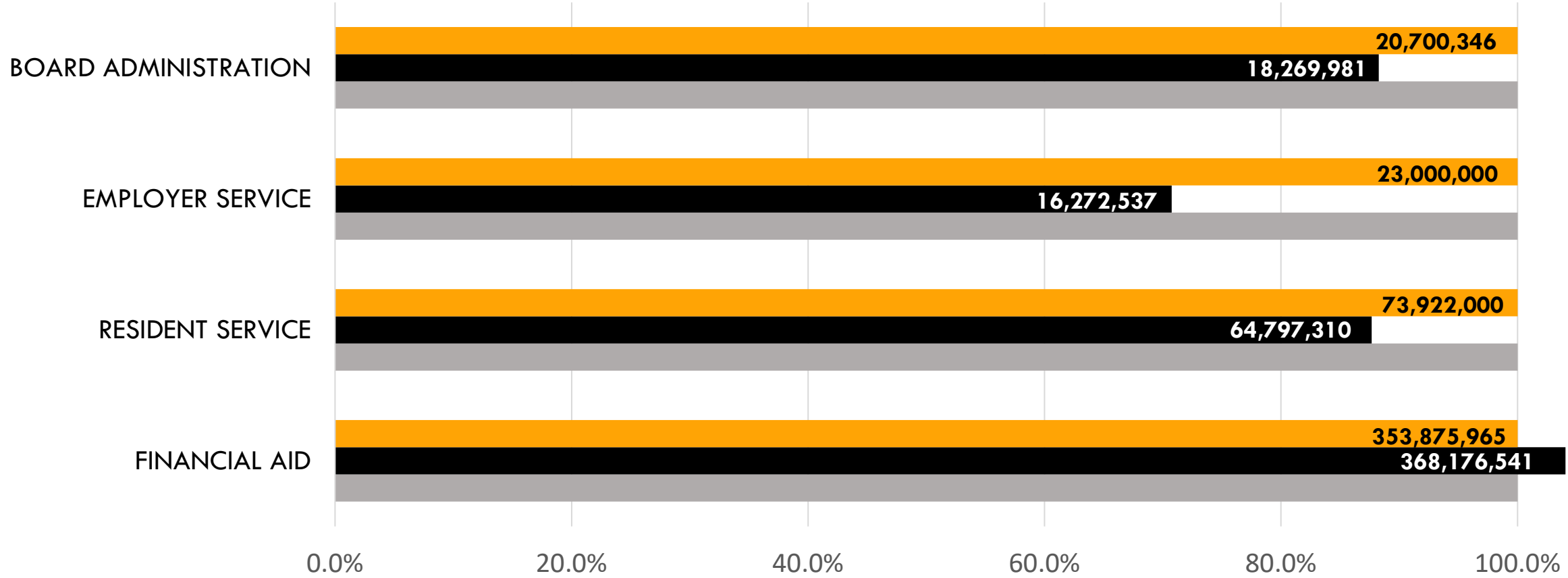
Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast Year 2024 Year End Report

TWC Contracted Measures	Target	Performance	% of Target
Employed Q2 Post Exit - Adult	75.60%	77.12%	102.02%
Employed Q4 Post Exit - Adult	72.60%	71.75%	98.82%
Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Adult	\$6,500.00	\$6,536.16	100.56%
Credential Rate - Adult	68.90%	56.44%	81.92%
Measurable Skills Gains - Adult	66.00%	73.03%	110.65%
Employed Q2 Post Exit - DW	83.10%	85.63%	103.04%
Employed Q4 Post Exit - DW	79.50%	74.93%	94.26%
Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - DW	\$9,400.00	\$12,134.81	129.09%
Credential Rate - DW	82.50%	68.12%	82.57%
Measurable Skills Gains - DW	75.10%	74.16%	98.75%
Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - Youth	73.90%	66.48%	89.96%
Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit - Youth	70.60%	66.95%	94.82%
Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Youth	\$3,780.00	\$4,956.78	131.13%
Credential Rate - Youth	55.70%	42.78%	76.80%
Measurable Skills Gains - Youth	53.40%	55.62%	104.15%
Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - C&T	66.00%	63.70%	96.51%
Employed/Enrolled Q2-Q4 Post Exit - C&T	84.00%	82.09%	97.73%
Credential Rate - C&T	71.00%	55.54%	78.22%
Claimant Reemployment within 10 Weeks	60.00%	57.47%	95.79%
Texas Talent Assistance	28,174	37,309	132.42%
Choices Full Engagement Rate - All Family	50.00%	57.27%	114.55%
Average Children Served Per Day	33,620	36,877	109.69%

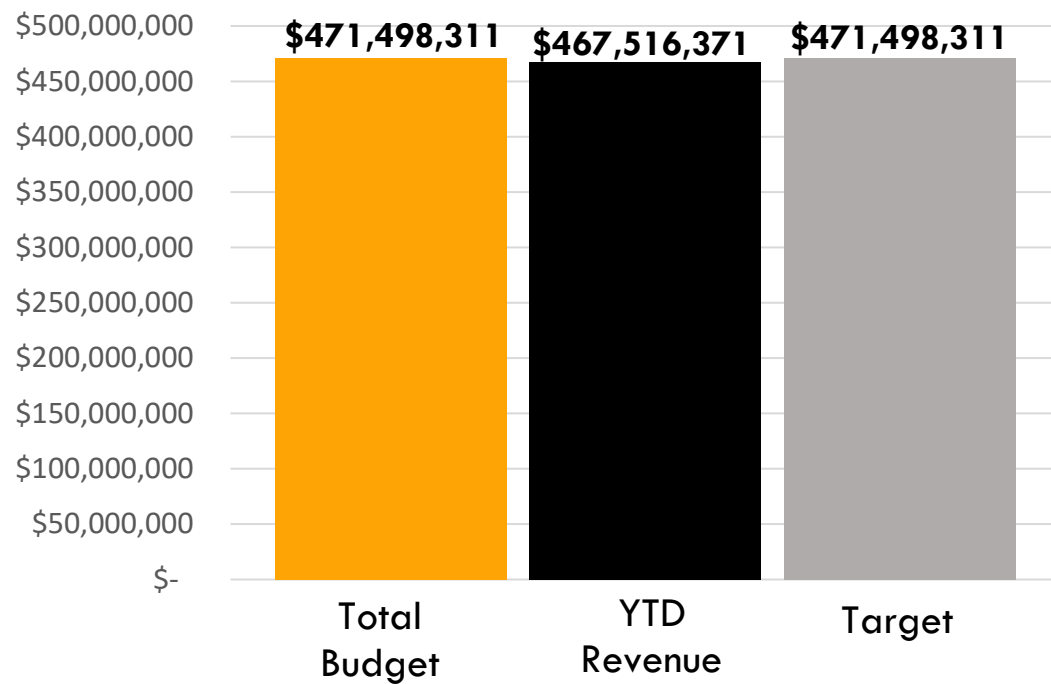
Gulf Coast Workforce Financial Status Report

For the 12 months ending December 31, 2024

■ Budget ■ Expenses ■ Target

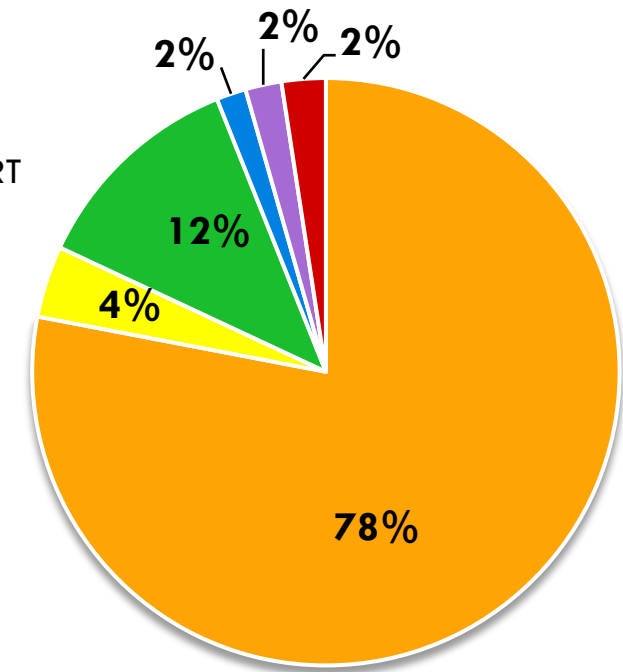


Workforce Revenue



System Expenses

- FINANCIAL AID - EARLY EDUCATION \$350,463,633
- FINANCIAL AID - TRAINING & SUPPORT \$17,712,909
- CAREER SERVICES \$53,898,536
- EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT \$7,329,950
- QUALITY IMPROVEMENT \$8,942,587
- ADULT EDUCATION \$10,898,774



Legislative Update

89th Texas Legislature

Executive Summary

The 89th Texas Legislature convened its regular session on January 14, 2025, at noon, with adjournment scheduled for June 2, 2025. As of this update, approximately 5,000 bills have been filed, with only 10 directly related to child care and workforce development. Additionally, a handful of Vocational Rehabilitation and general operations bills are being monitored by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) for any potential impact on current operations. With the bill filing period open until March 14, 2025, the total number of legislative proposals is expected to increase significantly in the coming weeks.

Legislative Engagement

In anticipation of the session, Board staff have remained highly engaged in monitoring legislative activity and providing testimony on workforce issues. On June 25, 2024, Executive Director Juliet Stipeche was invited to testify before the Governor's Healthcare Workforce Taskforce, where she addressed critical workforce shortages in the healthcare sector and advocated for targeted solutions to strengthen the pipeline of skilled professionals. Governor Abbott and THECB release the Healthcare Workforce Task Force Recommendations on October 1, 2024.¹

Our team also participated in the Texas Workforce Commission's budget hearing on September 26, 2024, ensuring representation in the State's discussions on workforce funding and resource allocation. Most recently, on November 14, 2024, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board provided public testimony before the Senate's Natural Resources & Economic Development Committee, offering insight into the ongoing transformation of the region's child care system and the persistent challenges in expanding access to high-quality care.² This engagement underscores the GCWB's commitment to serving as a trusted voice in workforce development for the region and state.

89th Texas Legislature

During the opening week of the 89th Texas Legislature, Executive Director Juliet Stipeche and Desmond Taylor conducted a series of introductory

¹[Governor Abbott, THECB Release Healthcare Workforce Task Force Recommendations | Office of the Texas Governor | Greg Abbott](#)

² https://senate.texas.gov/cmtes/88/c580/c580_InterimReport_2024.pdf

meetings with members of the House and Senate representing the 13-county Gulf Coast region. These meetings provided an opportunity to establish direct lines of communication with legislators and their staff, as well as to distribute the Board's newly published legislative priorities push-card.

Senate Committee on Economic Development (formerly Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development) During these visits, Stipeche and Taylor also met with staff from the office of Senator Brian Birdwell, outgoing Chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Economic Development, to discuss the Board's legislative priorities, with a particular focus on child care access and waitlists. The staff informed the Board that Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick has announced a restructuring of the committee, narrowing its scope to focus solely on economic development, which will now encompass workforce and child care issues.

Monitoring Developments

As the session progresses, the Board will continue to closely monitor legislative developments, advocate for workforce solutions, and engage with policymakers to advance strategic initiatives that strengthen the Gulf Coast region's workforce and economic landscape.

The TWC Office of Government Relations provides a weekly Austin and Washington legislative update. On January 17, 2025, the new Senate Economic Development Committee was announced. It includes:

- Sen. Phil King (R), Chair
- Sen. Kevin Sparks (R), Vice Chair
- Sen. Carol Alvarado (D)
- Sen. Nathan Johnson (D)
- Sen. Charles Schwertner (R)

We will continue to monitor the hearings of this committee throughout the legislative session.

House Committee on International Relations and Economic Development:

As of January 31, 2025, the Texas House of Representatives has not yet announced its committee assignments for the 89th Legislature. The House adopted its rules on January 28, 2025, and members are currently awaiting their committee assignments, which are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

2024 Senate Interim Legislative Charges

Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee

Enhancing Workforce Productivity: Study ways to increase the state's workforce productivity, including access to childcare. Make recommendations, within existing resources, to maintain childcare availability to support a growing workforce.

2024 House Interim Legislative Charges

Committee on International Relations & Economic Development

Monitoring: Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 88th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:

- HB 1755, relating to the creation of the Lone Star Workforce of the Future Fund; and
- HB 4451, relating to a report by the Texas Workforce Commission regarding apprenticeship opportunities in this state for emerging and high-demand industries.

Early Childhood Education Industry: Evaluate the current state of the early childhood education industry. Review current early childhood policies and evaluate their effectiveness, including barriers to entering the Child Care Services program.

Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC)

Board Member Paul Puente, appointed by the Governor to the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC), serves on its Executive Committee and extended an invitation for Stipeche and Taylor to attend its meeting on January 15, 2025. The TWIC, a Governor-appointed advisory body, plays a critical role in shaping Texas' workforce development strategies by coordinating workforce programs, advising the Governor and Texas Legislature, and fostering collaboration among business, labor, education, and workforce entities to align with the state's economic goals.³ The Executive Committee is responsible for overseeing the Council's agenda, guiding workforce policy implementation, and addressing emerging labor market challenges. During the meeting, attendees had the opportunity to hear from TWC Chair Bryan Daniel, who provided key updates on workforce initiatives and policy developments impacting Texas' labor market. We value this engagement and look

³ [Texas Workforce Investment Council | Office of the Texas Governor | Greg Abbott](#)

forward to continued collaboration with TWIC and its stakeholders to advance workforce solutions that strengthen our region's economic competitiveness.

Other Updates

Governor's Action: In accordance with President Trump's Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), on Friday, January 31, 2025, Governor Abbott issued an Executive Order directing all state agencies to eliminate any forms of DEI policies and to treat all people equally regardless of race.

As of February 1, 2025, the Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives is Dustin Burrows, a Republican from Lubbock. He was elected as the 77th Speaker on January 14, 2025, during the 89th Texas Legislature. Prior to his election as Speaker, Burrows served as the State Representative for House District 83 since 2014. He has held key leadership positions, including Chair of the House Calendars Committee in the 87th and 88th Legislatures and Chair of the Ways & Means Committee in the 86th Legislature.