




GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

2021-2024 LOCAL PLAN

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Houston-Galveston Area Council

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FOREWORD

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board and its operating affiliate, Workforce Solutions are the public workforce system for the 13-county Houston-Galveston area in southeast Texas. We meet employers where they are to address their unique workforce needs and help people, we serve daily, build careers so both can thrive in the global economy.

We are a public entity and operate in the most effective manner when we leverage relationships and partner with stakeholders in the regional economy. To accomplish this, we work jointly with schools, colleges, local city and county governments, non-profits, and social service providers, as well as the business community, to bring people together and focus on our shared goals and economic needs. The Gulf Coast Workforce Board, includes many of these groups, and is made up of dedicated individuals from both the public and private sectors who volunteer their time and expertise to help set the direction for how Workforce Solutions carries out its mission, vision, and purpose.

Our volunteer Board members along with the dedicated professional staff of Workforce Solutions, are tasked with implementing a local, data-driven plan for developing our region's pool of human talent to meet employment needs in our area. To guarantee that we are fulfilling our area's obligations to the Texas Workforce Commission under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, this Local Plan examines our estimated economic needs through 2024.

Through its 2021-2024 Local Plan, the Board:

- Projects labor market conditions and identifies the needs for skilled workers
- Sets the strategic direction for Workforce Solutions and the Board's investments to meet the region's needs for an educated and skilled workforce
- Describes how Workforce Solutions is organized to deliver high-quality, valued service for the region's employers and people
- Ensures the public workforce system is open and accessible to its customers and accountable to funders, local elected officials and stakeholders

The full report draws on a wide variety of data points, metrics and programming, and we encourage you to read it for a fuller understanding of our efforts.

But first, it's important to begin with a few basic facts about how our Board envisions the next 10 years for local employment and some of our plans for meeting the challenges and opportunities that we see developing for our 13-county area.

[What's on the Horizon?](#)

By 2030, total population in the region will reach 9,259,720. The Houston-Galveston area will continue to become

more and more diverse, with 31.9% Anglo, 38.1% Hispanic, and 16.6% Black, and 10.6% Asian. The percentage of the workforce over the age of 55 increased from 9.4 percent in 1995 to 22.2 percent in 2020. By 2030, the percentage of the population over the age of 55 is projected to increase to 24.7 percent with more staying active in the workforce every year.

By 2030, total employment in the region will grow to 3,738,007 – an increase of 17.6% from 2020. Key industries in the region will continue to include oil and gas exploration and production, construction, manufacturing, health care, education, and business and technical services.

We estimate that by 2030, 61.2% of all jobs in the region will require education or training beyond the high school level and that the majority of these will be “middle skill” jobs. In 2030, employers will need 1.2 million workers in middle-skill positions – those that require some post-secondary education and/or on-the-job training. But make no mistake, these are the crucial positions that will need to be filled in order to make our workforce competitive in a global environment. Wages for these jobs currently average \$25.91 per hour – significantly above the region’s median wage.

The region’s employers will continue to need almost 937,600 individuals for highly skilled work. These are the jobs that require education at or beyond a bachelor’s degree level and usually some level of work experience: physicians, nurses, pharmacists, engineers of all types, accountants and researchers for example. These are the highest paying jobs – with current average wages at \$48.66 per hour.

There will also be some 1.4 million lower-skilled jobs in 2030.

In its local plan, the Board targets the key regional industries and the high-skill and middle-skill jobs which will be most in need for those industries, while presenting information on the lower-skilled jobs as well.

How will the Board and Workforce Solutions respond to these challenges?

The Board’s mission is to help employers meet their human resource needs and individuals build careers, so both can compete in the global economy. To accomplish this goal, The Board will focus on providing services to both employers and members of the workforce to fill our region’s economic needs with highly trained individuals.

Our focus on employers is to help them find the right people for the right job and expand their share of the regional economy by growing their workforce, capacity and productivity. For our area’s workers, we help with training, education and professional development to help people find meaningful employment and make progress in their career. This commitment to service is how we intend to meet the needs of our dynamic economic future.

What does the report show?

The Local Plan lays out the broad workforce and human resources needs for the region’s future and helps us make decisions about how we use our system and resources to meet those needs. These forecasts show us where our workforce development efforts should be focused and inform us what kinds of jobs and industries our region’s key occupations and employers will be. This information is critical to educators, communities and businesses because it tells how we will need to grow and adapt our workforce to shifting economic demands.

What we see most clearly is the continued need for employees capable of filling skilled technical professions. These are the occupations that will come to dominate our employment needs and provide the talent that businesses need to grow and thrive. Technical skill jobs are found across the chief industries of the Texas Gulf Coast region, but what they have in common are requirements for additional training and education beyond high school.

This means that The Board will share pertinent information with educators, parents and students about career exploration and what steps young people need to be taking currently so they are prepared for the future workforce. Collectively, we need to focus our efforts on ensuring that tomorrow's job candidates are prepared with the skills and knowledge they will need.

Due to continued uncertainty caused by COVID-19, inflation, and other macroeconomic factors in the labor market, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board will continue to monitor trends and offer services where appropriate.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board and our Workforce Solutions team are dedicated to growing our region's economic footprint by helping businesses reach their full human resources potential. Even as economic challenges arise and are ultimately overcome, we pride ourselves on the work that we do, and we look forward to continuing to serve Gulf Coast businesses and their employees into the future.

PART 1: BOARD VISION AND STRATEGIES



The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is accountable for leading and governing the regional workforce system in the 13-county Gulf Coast region of Texas. It is the one and only workforce board in the region and one of its primary responsibilities is strategic planning. The greatest challenge for us is setting the direction and focus for all workforce activities in the region, regardless of how they are funded, and to use our limited resources to leverage the larger system and achieve Board-established results. Moving the bigger system would be impossible without a strategic plan that clearly describes and precisely quantifies what results the Board expects the regional workforce system to achieve. The Board has been engaged in a strategic planning process for several years. In 2003, we developed statements of our core values, mission and vision that explain what Board members value most, why it exists as a board, and where it wants to be at some point in the future. The Board developed results statements for the regional workforce system, both that which it directly controls and for the larger system. The Board's strategic plan is a tool for managing the regional workforce system. Board members and staff use it to drive the regional workforce system toward the four results statements.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board

Employer Driven and People Powered (Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023)

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>PURPOSE <i>(Why We Exist)</i></p> | <p>To keep our region a great place to do business, work, and live</p> |
| <p>MISSION <i>(What Makes Us Different)</i></p> | <p>We elevate the economic and human potential of the Gulf Coast region by fulfilling the diverse needs of the businesses and individuals we serve.</p> |
| <p>VISION <i>(The Future We Aspire To)</i></p> | <p>Our region attracts and retains the best employers, affords everyone the dignity of a job, remains vitally important to the global economy – and all within it are thriving.</p> |
| <p>VALUES & BEHAVIORS <i>(Our Strongly Held Beliefs)</i></p> | <p>We are employer-driven</p> <p>We care passionately</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for others • Inspire hope • Fuel progress <p>We take responsibilities seriously</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be accountable • Follow up and follow through • Drive results <p>We imagine possibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek multiple perspectives • Bring fresh thinking • Engage one another in making a difference |
| <p>RESULTS <i>(The Difference We Will Make)</i></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competitive Employers 2. An Educated Workforce 3. More and Better Jobs 4. Higher Incomes |

**MEASURES,
BASELINES,
AND TARGETS**
(How We Will
Measure
Progress
Toward
Achieving
Results)

For the Regional Workforce System:

Education Credentials

- 84 percent of the region’s population 25 years and older will hold an education credential
- 39 percent of the region’s population 25 years and older will hold a post-secondary degree
- 24 percent of those pursuing an education credential will earn one

Job Creation

- 3.23 million individuals will be employed in the region, reflecting the addition of 254,202 jobs created since 2018

For Workforce Solutions:

Market Share

- 31,500 region’s employers will use Workforce Solutions

Customer Loyalty

- 65 percent of employers using Workforce Solutions will be repeat customers

Education Credentials

- 76 percent of individual customers pursuing an education credential will earn one

Job Creation

- 3,500 new jobs will be created as a direct result of Workforce Solutions’ partnering with other business organizations

**MEASURES,
BASELINES,
AND TARGETS**
(continued)

Employment

- 78 percent of individual customers will be employed after leaving Workforce Solutions

Earnings

- 37 percent of individual customers leaving Workforce Solutions will have earnings gains of at least 20 percent

STRATEGIES
(How We Will
Achieve Results)

We help employers meet their human resource needs and people build careers, so both can compete in the global economy, by:

1. Building, maintaining, and continually improving a high-quality, value-add system that serves employers and people
2. Providing skilled workers for employers in critical industries
3. Contributing to high-quality, life-long learning for individuals
4. Delivering accurate and timely career and labor market data
5. Using our resources to leverage the larger system
6. Meeting the requirements of our funding sources

We developed a framework for quantifying progress toward Board-established results – measures, baselines, annual and long-range targets for both the Board controlled activities and the larger system. Together, this framework established a policy structure governing the regional workforce system and simultaneously defined the expectations for the system. The Workforce Board Strategic Planning Committee and staff annually review performance on strategic metrics. More importantly, the Board and staff analyze gaps between performance and targets. Do strategies align with the goals? Where are the opportunities to improve operational efficiency? What factors are affecting performance? Based on this analysis, we may adjust strategies, change procedures, revise (or eliminate) metrics and reset targets.

The tables below contain the metrics and long-term goals for both the Board-controlled and the larger workforce system through 2023. Primary measures are not shaded – these are the measures that we report on quarterly. Secondary measures – those that we use to test how the system is working – are shaded. We report on these measures annually. Some of the measures, noted with a P below, are from third-party sources and are not yet available. We will continue to track and update these figures as they become available.

for Regional Workforce System

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Percentage of the region’s population (25 and older) holding an education credential ^{1, 2} | 83% | 83% | 83% | 84% | 84% | Target |
| | 83% | 84% | 84% | P | | Actual |
| Percentage of the region’s population (25 and older) holding a post-secondary degree 2 | 38% | 38% | 38% | 39% | 39% | Target |
| | 39% | 40% | 38% | P | | Actual |
| Percentage of those pursuing an education credential who earn one 2 | 24% | 24% | 24% | 24% | 24% | Target |
| | 22% | 23% | 22% | 23% | | Actual |
| Percentage of students enrolled in the 9th through 12th grades earning a high school diploma 2 | 23% | 23% | 23% | 23% | 23% | Target |
| | 22% | 22% | 23% | 22% | | Actual |
| Percentage of those enrolled in adult basic education will earn a high school equivalency (HSE) | 79% | 79% | 79% | 79% | 79% | Target |
| | 50% | 49% | 42% | 44% | | Actual |
| Percentage of students enrolled in post-secondary institutions earning a certificate or degree 2 | 23% | 23% | 24% | 24% | 24% | Target |
| | 22% | 22% | 21% | 24% | | Actual |
| Percentage of students earning post-secondary certificates or degrees in fields preparing them for jobs in high- | 38% | 39% | 39% | 40% | 40% | Target |
| | 45% | 45% | 54% | 55% | | Actual |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| skill, high- growth occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board ² | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| The total number of students earning a post-secondary degree or certificate up to and including Associate’s degree. | 42,825 | 45,679 | 48,532 | 51,385 | 54,239 | Target |
| | 39,439 | 41,353 | 38,679 | 42,299 | | Actual |

1 Shaded performance measures are Board-level measures; others are staff-level measures.
 2 Baseline year is 2017

P - Pending: This data comes from a third-party source and is not yet available. The Board will update this information as it becomes available.

Education Credentials
for Workforce Solutions

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|--|-------|-------|------|------|------|--------|
| Percentage of Workforce Solutions individual customers pursuing an education credential who earn one | 74% | 75% | 75% | 76% | 76% | Target |
| | 77.4% | 69.0% | 76% | 70% | | Actual |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| Percentage of Workforce Solutions’ individual customers enrolled in post-secondary education who earn a certificate or degree | 85% | 85% | 85% | 86% | 86% | Target |
| | 80.0% | 79.3% | 76% | 71% | | Actual |

Job Creation
for Regional Workforce System

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Total number of jobs | 3,029,703 | 3,080,544 | 3,131,384 | 3,182,225 | 3,233,065 | Target |
| | 3,054,496 | 3,105,437 | 2,926,882 | 3,084,029 | | Actual |

P - Pending: This data comes from a third-party source and is not yet available. The Board will update this information as it becomes available.

for Workforce Solutions

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Number of new jobs created as a direct result of Workforce Solutions’ partnering with other business organizations | 3,300 | 3,300 | 3,400 | 3,400 | 3,500 | Target |
| | 1,534 | 1,367 | 458 | 2,536 | | Actual |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------|-----|-------|-----|--------|
| Percentage of new jobs created with employers in industries targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a direct result of Workforce Solutions' partnership efforts | 60% | 63% | 67% | 72% | 75% | Target |
| | 34.2% | 2.0% | 0% | 19.6% | | Actual |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------|-------|-----|------|-----|--------|
| Percentage of new jobs created with employer in high-skill, high-growth occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a result of Workforce Solutions' partnership efforts | 45% | 45% | 45% | 45% | 45% | Target |
| | 1.6% | 13.2% | 16% | 6.6% | | Actual |

Employment

for Regional Workforce System

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| Number of employed working for employers in industries targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board 3 | ≥ 1,304,205 | ≥ 1,304,205 | ≥ 1,304,205 | ≥ 1,304,205 | ≥ 1,304,205 | Target |
| | 1,354,745 | 1,326,187 | 1,256,452 | 1,280,779 | | Actual |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Number of employed working in high-skill, high-growth occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board 3 | ≥ 615,170 | ≥ 615,170 | ≥ 615,170 | ≥ 615,170 | ≥ 615,170 | Target |
| | 635,730 | 617,280 | 592,530 | P | | Actual |

P - Pending: This data comes from a third-party source and is not yet available. The Board will update this information as it becomes available.

Employment

for Workforce Solutions

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|--------|
| Percentage of individual customers employed after leaving Workforce Solutions | 76% | 77% | 77% | 78% | 78% | Target |
| | 77.7% | 88.4% | 69.8% | 66.9% | | Actual |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-----|-------|-----|--------|
| Percent of individuals Workforce Solutions customers employed in entrance quarter | 68% | 68% | 68% | 68% | 70% | Target |
| | 76.0% | 87.4% | 55% | 57.7% | | Actual |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|--------|
| Percentage of Workforce Solutions' individual customers, unemployed at entrance, employed after leaving Workforce Solutions | 75% | 75% | 75% | 76% | 76% | Target |
| | 80.8% | 87.4% | 67.6% | 64.8% | | Actual |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|--------|
| Percentage of Workforce Solutions' individual customers employed after leaving Workforce Solutions, also employed in both consecutive quarters | 83% | 83% | 83% | 83% | 83% | Target |
| | 74.8% | 76.7% | 71.7% | 79.7% | | Actual |

3 Baseline year is 2018

Market Share

for Workforce Solutions

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Region's employers using Workforce Solutions | 27,369 | 28,500 | 29,500 | 30,500 | 31,500 | Target |
| | 27,367 | 21,978 | 25,112 | 17,837 | | Actual |

Customer Loyalty

for Workforce Solutions

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|--|-------|-------|------|------|------|--------|
| Percentage of the region's employers using Workforce Solutions as repeat customers | 60% | 62% | 63% | 64% | 65% | Target |
| | 62.0% | 49.7% | 48% | 37% | | Actual |

Income

for Workforce Solutions

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|---|-------|-------|------|------|------|--------|
| Percentage of individual customers with earnings gains of at least 20 percent after leaving Workforce Solutions | 37% | 37% | 37% | 37% | 37% | Target |
| | 31.3% | 24.2% | 30% | 26% | | Actual |

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | |
|--|-------|-------|------|------|------|--------|
| Percentage of Workforce Solutions' individual customers employed with earnings gains after leaving Workforce Solutions | 46% | 46% | 46% | 46% | 46% | Target |
| | 41.0% | 26.9% | 36% | 34% | | Actual |

The Board adopted 132 measures and set performance targets for 2023:

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|--------|
| More Competitive Employers | Market Share - (Oct. 2022 - Sept. 2023) | 31,500 |
| | Customer Loyalty - (Oct. 2020 - Sept. 2021) | 65% |
| Higher Incomes | Exiters with Earnings Gains of at least 20% | 37% |
| | Exiters employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit with Earnings Gains | 46% |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|-------|
| More and Better Jobs | New jobs created as a direct result of partnering with other business organizations | 3,500 |
| | New jobs created with employers in industries targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a direct result of partnerships | 75% |
| | New jobs created in high-skill occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a direct result of partnerships | 45% |
| | Customers employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit | 78% |
| | Customers, unemployed at entrance, employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit | 76% |
| | Number of customers employed in 2nd and 3rd quarters after exit | 83% |
| | Customers employed in the entrance quarter | 70% |
| A Better Educated Workforce | Customers pursuing Education Credential that achieve one by quarter after exit | 76% |
| | Customers enrolled in post-secondary who earn certificate or degree by quarter after exit | 86% |

In addition, there will be 19 measures Contracted by the State.

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------|
| Contracted with the State | # of Employers Receiving Workforce Assistance | INA |
| | Employed Q2 Post Exit - Adult | 72% |
| | Employed Q2 Post Exit - DW | 79.1% |
| | Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - Youth | 70.4% |
| | Employed Q4 Post Exit - Adult | 70.6% |
| | Employed Q4 Post Exit - DW | 75.7% |
| | Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit - Youth | 67% |
| | Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - All Participants | INA |

| | |
|--|---------|
| Employed/Enrolled Q2-Q4 Post Exit - All Participants | INA |
| Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Adult | \$6,500 |
| Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - DW | \$9,400 |
| Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - All Participants | INA |
| Credential Rate - Adult | 65.6% |
| Credential Rate - DW | 79.6% |
| Credential Rate - Youth | 60.6% |
| Credential Rate - All Participants | INA |
| Claimant Reemployment w/in 10 Weeks | INA |
| Average Kids Served Per Day - Discretionary At-Risk | INA |
| Choices Full Work Rate (Oct. 2020 - Sept. 2021) | INA |

Board Strategies

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board proposes the following strategies to work with providers and local partners to carry out the core programs and how we will align resources to achieve the Board’s vision and goals. Our region is rich in workforce development partners to help carry out this work. We have ten community colleges systems, more than a dozen university campuses, numerous economic development and business organizations, a host of state and local agencies, and a wide variety of community and faith-based organizations. Together, these institutions represent a rich infrastructure for the Gulf Coast workforce system.

Through providers and our partners, we will work to align and provide a wide range of services to employers and individual customers. Individuals will be connected to community and faith-based organizations that provide mentoring, life skills training, adult basic education, English as a second language, childcare, transportation, and other work support service. Some of these organizations are paid contractors for our system while many others work in partnership with Workforce Solutions using a team approach to assist customers.

Workforce Solutions has an excellent relationship with our community college partners. The colleges provide educational programs leading to degrees and technical certificates, adult education and English as second language instruction, and other training. They work with the Board in developing customized training for employers and consult with us in developing proposals related to workforce training. The colleges in the area are valuable partners in developing industry-based initiatives to address workforce issues in the region.

The region's major universities have a role in the workforce system and are likely to have a greater one in the future as the Board's industry-based work continues and expands. The universities help to contribute to the diversification of our economy in the Gulf Coast Region. In addition to the current major universities located in Houston, there are plans for a new University of Texas Campus, which will focus on providing Healthcare and Healthcare Technology education and training.

The region's 76 school districts are key partners in addressing many of the long-term shortages of skilled workers in our region. The Board has an existing relationship with many districts; many career offices work directly with middle and high schools in their communities. The career offices are charged with providing service to young people in their schools. In addition to serving individual youth, many of whom are out of school, the Board continues to work with schools broadly to provide good labor market information to schools, parents and young people. We continue to expand and improve our labor market information and career planning products which include the High Skill, High Growth Guide, Focus on Industry and Occupation profiles, When I Grow Up and Choices Planner. Our goal is to support schools in their efforts to reduce drop-out rates, target resources to prepare youth for the good jobs of the future and provide both parents and students information they can use in selecting course work and career opportunities. The Board's Education Committee provides guidance, oversight, and is fully committed to assisting schools in producing more graduates with the skills employers want.

Economic development organizations are key partners in our region. In many cases, the Board is a member of these organizations. In other cases, such as our industry groups, the economic development organizations are key members of Board-sponsored projects. We work together in identifying opportunities for the region to grow good jobs, and to help develop solutions to barriers to growth, such as the need for improved schools. The Board's strategic plan includes a measure of the degree to which we are involved in economic development efforts leading to new or retained jobs. In general, each partner we work with pays for the service and staff the organization normally provides. For example, we may have a memorandum of understanding to work with a community-based organization to coordinate providing service to customers. We agree to make cross-referrals for customers with each partner paying for service they deliver to each customer.

There are exceptions to this general policy. Some of our partners are vendors or the Board has procured the organization to provide specialized service. In these cases, we pay for the partner organization to provide service, either by individual referral or through cost-reimbursement contracts.

The Board enjoys excellent working relationships with its partners, especially core partners such as the colleges, the adult education community, and economic development entities.

The Workforce Solutions' Navigator team and career offices work with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors with Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services to help connect those with disabilities with services offered through the local career office. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors also arrange to meet customers in the local career offices.

We believe in deepening relationships to help carry out our programs so customers have the best experience from us. How we work closely with partners to advance our vision and goals depends on the strength of those relationships.

Our employer service and career office staff have ongoing relationships with customers. On the employer service side, business consultants, industry liaisons, and administrative staff maintain relationships with employers, economic development organizations staff, and schools. Career office staff, particularly our greeters, resource room specialists, personal service representatives, financial aid specialist and employment counselors, work with individual customers to ensure they have access to all the services they want and need. Throughout the system, the Board has implemented strategies to enhance the experience of our customers including scheduling next appointments before the current appointment ends and confirming with the customer their preferred method of communication for different types of information (follow up appointments, events, training possibilities, etc.). This is important because in person traffic in our career offices has not yet recovered from the pandemic. For FY18, our total walk-in traffic was over 20 million. For FY21, the year most impacted by COVID and office closures, our traffic was slightly over 208,000. It is necessary now to meet our customers where they are to deliver our services.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has a Regional Team made up of Navigators and Facilitators that perform community outreach to populations that otherwise might not obtain services from a local career office. The Regional Team works with our partners to conduct community-based job search seminars and workshops. These presentations are conducted outside the career office in schools, libraries, and a wide range of community-based organizations.

Staff work with our vendor network to provide information about our service and system. Grants management staff work with many of partners to ensure our system is working to maximize resources in the region and provide coordinated service to employers and individuals. Board staff provide support to partners in developing new projects and grant proposals. Staff work with partners to develop meaningful memoranda of understanding (MOU) by providing high quality labor market information and guiding partners in the development of programs that are the best fit for the Region.

The Board's public outreach and marketing plan is designed to share information about workforce service throughout the region to carry out core programs. Our marketing plan includes the use of our website: www.wrksolutions.com, social media, mass email blasts, targeted mailings, and special events.

High Performing Board

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has long understood that to be an effective and high-performing Board, certain actions and responsibilities must be undertaken.

The Board's specific responsibilities (those things for which it alone is responsible) include:

- Developing itself as a well-educated, highly diversified, high-performing board
- Establishing ongoing relationships between the workforce system and its stakeholders
- Developing governing policies to guide itself as a board and the regional workforce system (i.e., long-term results statements)
- Developing an effective working relationship with its chief executive officer

- Ensuring board staff/system performance
- Providing annual reports on the state of workforce affairs in the region (progress toward achieving system results)

The carrying out of these responsibilities reinforces its value-add as an integral part of the regional workforce system.

In addition to the previously stated explicit responsibilities, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board frequently undertakes actions to remain a high-performing board by:

- Holding new board members to high standards
- Focusing on policy (and accordingly leaving the details of planning and program operation to Board staff) and being employer driven
- Watching national trends and adopting best practices based on the rapidly changing economic and workforce climate
- Keeping board members updated on current LMI and future trends
- Influencing other areas critical for workforce development, such as the PK-12 education system
- Continuing active participation in state and national associations of workforce boards and workforce associations

Additional strategies we will implement to remain a high-performing Board include:

- Continually improve the quality of customer service
- Provide high-quality labor market information
- Provide skilled workers for employers in critical industries
- Contribute to high-quality, life-long learning experiences
- Use our resources to move the larger system to achieve Board-established results
- Meet the requirements of our funding sources
- Find additional revenue to support Board results

The Board regularly reassesses its visions and goals to set continually higher standards for the workforce system performance. More than 13 years ago the Gulf Coast Workforce Board adopted a strategic plan that described

and quantified results the Board expected the regional workforce system to achieve. It includes values, mission and vision statements that explain what its members value most, why they exist as a board, and where they want the regional workforce system to be in the future. The plan continues to guide our efforts to help employers meet their human resource needs and individuals build careers. In keeping with its key values innovation, productivity, performance and results the Board identified four results statements that describe the difference it intends to make in the Gulf Coast region.

- More competitive employers
- A better educated workforce
- More and better jobs
- Higher incomes

For the Regional Workforce System, we focused on total employment - a gauge of how well we create and keep jobs in the region - and education credentials of working-age residents - a gauge of the skill level of the region's workforce. For the part of the system we directly control, Workforce Solutions, we focus on outcomes for individuals - employment, education and earnings. We also looked at our contribution to employers' job creation, market share and customer loyalty.

For the part of the system that we directly control under our operating affiliate Workforce Solutions, we focus on outcomes for individuals - employment, education and earnings. We also looked at our contribution to employers' job creation, market share and customer loyalty.

2019 Workforce Report Card

To communicate our region's performance to businesses, education institutions, and the general public, in February 2005, the Board produced the first Report Card as a tool to gauge the region's competitiveness in relation to similar metropolitan areas across the United States. Since then, the Board has produced five subsequent updates. The most recent Workforce Report Card released in 2019 continues this tradition against a backdrop of economic challenges a few years prior and in some cases, under-performance related to the region's key industry: oil and gas. To emphasize the continued importance of an educated and trained workforce, this Report Card featured a special focus on the future of work and the potential impacts of artificial intelligence and automation on jobs.

In order to engage key stakeholders in communities across the region, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board hosted a series of local roundtable discussions designed to:

- Deepen relationships in the communities we serve
- Facilitate meaningful interactions between Workforce Board members and local leaders
- Create opportunities for both stakeholders and the people we serve to better understand key findings in the Report Card

- Illustrate the vital role of Workforce Solutions in the regional economy

We will continue to work with our community partners to address the concerns raised in the Report Card Round Table events and work to fully realize the recommendations presented in the 2019 Report Card. With input from multiple stakeholders with diverse perspectives, we will ensure the Gulf Coast Workforce Board remains a high performer. The following section will provide an analysis of our economy and workforce.

PART 2: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS



The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA fell to an estimated 488.2 billion in 2020 due to effects of the pandemic. The Gross Domestic Product for the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land reached a record high of 509.3 billion in 2019. If it were a country it would be larger than Norway, Austria, Columbia, Malaysia, and Venezuela. The economy remains dominated by oil and gas exploration and production and it continues to become increasingly diversified in areas of manufacturing and health services.

The Gulf Coast Region is primarily driven by the U.S. economy but unlike many regions more than a fourth of the economy is driven by commodity prices, particularly oil. Drilling activity was already on the decline throughout the entire year of 2019 and the outlook for the region had softened somewhat even though employment growth outpaced the nation. An oil price war ensued in early 2020 around the same time the COVID-19 pandemic began,

which created a major economic crisis unlike anything seen since the Great Depression:

- Payrolls in the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA plummeted by 350,000 jobs in the two-month period of March and April
- Drilling activity plummeted by sixty-seven percent to its lowest level in more than 30 years by August 2020
- The rate of unemployment rose to 13.3 percent by April 2020, higher than its 8.8 percent peak during the great recession.
- In the second half of 2020, labor markets began their long road to recovery:
 - By the end of 2020, 51.1 percent of the jobs lost in March and April 2020 had been recovered, and by April 2022 recovery from the coronavirus was complete from the standpoint of total jobs recovered.
 - Recovery, however, was uneven across the various industries as those with ties to the energy sector still reflected employment levels below what they were before the pandemic. Payrolls in Mining and Logging and Manufacturing remained 17,400 below what they were just prior to the pandemic in February 2020.
 - New projections produced by the Texas Workforce Commission LMCI department indicate long-term growth was expected to be 17.6 percent from 2020-2030, up from an estimated 14.2 percent from 2018 to 2028. The faster job growth is in part due to declines due to COVID-19 in 2020. The projections do not demonstrate the fact that a sizeable portion of the projected growth was due to recovery in 2021 and 2022.

The Gulf Coast region's high concentration of energy jobs and its major petrochemical complex results in a critical need for skilled crafts and technical jobs that require more education and training than a high school diploma, but less than a college degree. In addition to energy, the region features other important industries. Its centrally southern location with easy access to the Port of Houston makes it an ideal distribution point for numerous maritime, railroad, airline, and motor freight companies. Other industries such as education, trade, and healthcare benefit from a population growth rate that more than doubles that of the nation. Furthermore, Houston is one of the top spots in the country for corporate relocation and investment due to its low cost of doing business.

Knowledge and Skills Analysis

In developing its strategic plan, the Board considers the regional economy, employers' current and projected human resource needs, and the current and future workforce. All this information plays a part in shaping how we target investments to meet the needs of the labor market and its industries, employers and individuals.

The resources the Board controls are small in contrast to those in the larger workforce system. Our efforts are underwritten by a short list of revenue streams – Child Care Development Block Grant, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training, Workforce Innovation and

Opportunity Act, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Act Assistance. Leveraging our role as an influencer becomes more critical as the pool of Board-controlled resources shrinks. For example, the public education system in the Gulf Coast region includes 76 school districts and 10 community college systems. The Board must leverage its relationship with the educational systems to ensure all young people receive an education that prepares them for the world of work, and adults have access to basic and job-specific educational programs that prepare them for the high-skill, high-wage jobs in our region.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has worked to identify the workforce needs of businesses, job candidates, and workers in the workforce region using a combination of labor market intelligence and active participation of various partners and stakeholders. These needs are identified in three lists: 1) Targeted Industries, 2) Where the Jobs Are, and 3) High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations.

The three lists are used to guide not only the Board's strategic investments, but also to help our residents build careers in industries and occupations with good prospects and higher wages. We use the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations list to decide which occupations we will support with our education scholarship dollars.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board, through its operating affiliate Workforce Solutions, is committed to providing basic labor market information and service to all employers and individuals across the 13-county region. The bulk of the resources available for employer service, however, are targeted to employers in those industries that are likely to contribute the most to the region's economic future. We call this short list of industries the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Targeted Industries List.

The Targeted Industries List, equivalent to the Commission's in-demand industry list, is simply those industries that are most important to the region's economy based on various criteria. To build the list of targeted lists, we switched from the Industry Employment Projections to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

While employers in the targeted industries are likely to have needs spanning the entire spectrum of occupations that make up their workforces, those with chronic labor shortages in high-skill occupations have top priority for service financed by Workforce Solutions or one of its partners in the regional workforce system. We believe helping these employers solve their workforce problems will benefit employers and residents of the region alike, and ultimately yield the best return on the taxpayer's investment.

The Where the Jobs Are List is the equivalent to the Commission's in-demand occupations list, and more of a Gulf Coast Workforce Board consumer tool used by people looking for work. It is primarily a list of occupations that are expected to provide at least 645 openings every year without regard to earnings potential and/or skill level. The list is rank ordered from most to least annual job openings.

Lastly, the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations List is equivalent to the Commission's targeted occupations list, which aims to identify the best all-around employment opportunities across the region. To build this list we analyzed a combination of factors such as wages, expected occupational employment in the future, , the need for postsecondary education and training beyond a high school diploma, and whether significant occupational employment is found within the list of Target Industries noted earlier. Occasionally, occupations are included irrespective of the aforementioned criteria due to expressed need communicated by employers directly to The

Board. Input of this type is highly desirable and even preferred as it enables precise investments in the workforce to meet employer need. In the absence of this type of intelligence, the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations List provides direction in order to focus the organization’s efforts.

Once developed, the list is then used by career office staff to identify customer-appropriate employment opportunities along with prerequisite education and training. Customers that meet eligibility criteria may receive limited tuition assistance from Workforce Solutions in order to complete relevant postsecondary programs. The list is also used in working with the public education system. For example, the Board is helping align academic and career/technology courses to the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations, and then to the 16 education career clusters. As part of these efforts, The Board has developed career planning tools for local school teachers, counselors, and administrators to help students choose courses that will prepare them for high-skill jobs.

Each of the lists is initially derived from the best statistical labor market information available. They are then tempered by the latest regional labor market intelligence (information not reflected in the statistical information) to produce final lists which are subsequently adopted by the Board. This “tempering” process serves as an important validation step. On the following pages are the Targeted Industries, Where-the-jobs-are, and High-Skill, High-Growth Occupation Lists based on the most recent Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages:

Targeted Industries List

| NAICS | Industry Title | Employment Growth | | | | 1st Qtr 2019 Avg. Weekly Wages ³ |
|--|--|----------------------|----------------------|------------|----------------|---|
| | | Annual Averages 2018 | Annual Averages 2028 | Net Change | Percent Change | |
| Mining | | | | | | |
| 2131 | Support Activities for Mining | 40,534 | 47,525 | 6,991 | 17.2 | \$3,255 |
| Construction | | | | | | |
| 2361 | Residential Building Construction | 13,939 | 16,989 | 3,050 | 21.9 | \$1,778 |
| 2371 | Utility System Construction | 36,286 | 43,317 | 7,031 | 19.4 | \$1,735 |
| 2381 | Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors | 22,108 | 28,458 | 6,350 | 28.7 | \$1,045 |
| 2382 | Building Equipment Contractors | 50,190 | 60,392 | 10,202 | 20.3 | \$1,254 |
| 2389 | Other Specialty Trade Contractors | 18,568 | 23,392 | 4,824 | 26.0 | \$1,247 |
| 2373 | Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction | 9,488 | 12,563 | 3,075 | 32.4 | \$1,103 |
| 2362 | Nonresidential Building Construction | 39,686 | 43,792 | 4,106 | 10.3 | \$2,020 |
| Manufacturing | | | | | | |
| 3324 | Boiler, Tank, and Shipping Container Manufacturing ⁵ | 4,860 | 7,613 | 2,753 | 56.6 | \$1,767 |
| 3327 | Machine Shops; Turned Product; and Screw, Nut, and Bolt Mfg. | 9,797 | 12,154 | 2,357 | 24.1 | \$1,216 |
| 3251 | Basic Chemical Manufacturing ^{4 6} | 22,839 | 23,283 | 444 | 1.9 | \$3,693 |
| 3331 | Agriculture, Construction, and Mining Machinery Manufacturing ^{4 6} | 28,701 | 29,619 | 918 | 3.2 | \$2,579 |
| Trade, Transportation & Utilities | | | | | | |
| 4238 | Machinery, Equipment, and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers | 33,079 | 41,804 | 8,725 | 26.4 | \$1,884 |
| NAICS | Industry Title | Annual Averages 2018 | Annual Averages 2028 | Net Change | Percent Change | 1st Qtr 2019 Avg. Weekly Wages ³ |
| 4251 | Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers | 10,230 | 13,260 | 3,030 | 29.6 | \$1,676 |
| 4411 | Automobile Dealers | 28,581 | 32,431 | 3,850 | 13.5 | \$1,259 |
| 4811 | Scheduled Air Transportation ⁶ | 17,935 | 20,005 | 2,070 | 11.5 | \$2,218 |
| 4831 | Deep Sea, Coastal, and Great Lakes Water Transportation | 1,666 | 2,045 | 379 | 22.7 | \$2,255 |
| 4832 | Inland Water Transportation | 2,240 | 2,655 | 415 | 18.5 | \$2,180 |
| 4841 | General Freight Trucking ⁵ | 14,981 | 17,029 | 2,048 | 13.7 | \$1,111 |
| 4842 | Specialized Freight Trucking ⁵ | 12,076 | 14,065 | 1,989 | 16.5 | \$2,326 |
| 4883 | Support Activities for Water Transportation | 9,510 | 11,225 | 1,715 | 18.0 | \$1,082 |
| 4884 | Support Activities for Road Transportation | 2,467 | 2,998 | 531 | 21.5 | \$1,182 |
| 4885 | Freight Transportation Arrangement | 10,277 | 13,243 | 2,966 | 28.9 | \$1,603 |
| 4889 | Other Support Activities for Transportation | 1,576 | 1,828 | 252 | 16.1 | \$3,860 |

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

2023 Targeted Industries^{1,2}

| NAICS | Industry Title | 4-Quarter Average Employment 2020 | 2020 4 Quarter Avg Weekly Wages |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 21 | Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | | |
| 2111 | Oil and Gas Extraction | 34,047 | \$4,890 |
| 2131 | Support Activities for Mining | 31,889 | \$2,656 |
| 22 | Utilities | | |
| 2211 | Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution | 12,619 | \$2,744 |
| 23 | Construction | | |
| 2361 | Residential Building Construction | 14,158 | \$1,751 |
| 2362 | Nonresidential Building Construction | 34,839 | \$1,890 |
| 2371 | Utility System Construction | 37,039 | \$1,727 |
| 2373 | Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction | 17,193 | \$1,199 |
| 2381 | Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors | 23,560 | \$1,162 |
| 2382 | Building Equipment Contractors | 47,219 | \$1,300 |
| 2389 | Other Specialty Trade Contractors | 17,804 | \$1,264 |
| 31-33 | Manufacturing | | |
| 3251 | Basic Chemical Manufacturing | 22,709 | \$2,788 |
| 3324 | Boiler, Tank, and Shipping Container Manufacturing | 4,818 | \$1,661 |
| 3329 | Other Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing | 11,528 | \$1,499 |
| 3331 | Agriculture, Construction, and Mining Machinery Manufacturing | 23,759 | \$2,260 |

| | | | |
|--------------|---|--------|---------|
| 42 | Wholesale Trade | | |
| 4234 | Professional and Commercial Equipment and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers | 14,928 | \$1,873 |
| 4235 | Metal and Mineral (except Petroleum) Merchant Wholesalers | 10,153 | \$1,711 |
| 4238 | Machinery, Equipment, and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers | 31,288 | \$1,759 |
| 4247 | Petroleum and Petroleum Products Merchant Wholesalers | 10,567 | \$3,538 |
| 4251 | Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers | 9,221 | \$1,804 |
| 44-45 | Retail Trade | | |
| 4411 | Automobile Dealers | 27,594 | \$1,402 |
| 48-49 | Transportation and Warehousing | | |
| 4811 | Scheduled Air Transportation | 17,103 | \$1,863 |
| 4831 | Deep Sea, Coastal, and Great Lakes Water Transportation | 1,512 | \$2,338 |
| 4832 | Inland Water Transportation | 2,048 | \$1,863 |
| 4841 | General Freight Trucking | 14,935 | \$1,149 |
| 4842 | Specialized Freight Trucking | 11,644 | \$1,919 |
| 4885 | Freight Transportation Arrangement | 10,550 | \$1,455 |
| 4889 | Other Support Activities for Transportation | 1,675 | \$2,427 |
| 4931 | Warehousing and Storage | 25,773 | \$899 |
| 51 | Information | | |
| 5173 | Wired and Wireless Telecommunications Carriers | 10,432 | \$1,534 |
| 52 | Finance and Insurance | | |
| 5221 | Depository Credit Intermediation | 29,320 | \$1,774 |
| 5222 | Nondepository Credit Intermediation | 10,233 | \$2,204 |
| 5239 | Other Financial Investment Activities | 11,404 | \$3,189 |
| 5241 | Insurance Carriers | 12,827 | \$1,968 |
| 5242 | Agencies, Brokerages, and Other Insurance Related Activities | 20,888 | \$1,677 |
| 53 | Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | | |
| 5313 | Activities Related to Real Estate | 16,942 | \$1,240 |

| | | | |
|-----------|---|---------|---------|
| 54 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | | |
| 5411 | Legal Services | 27,841 | \$2,332 |
| 5412 | Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, and Payroll Services | 24,094 | \$1,678 |
| 5413 | Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services | 68,146 | \$2,212 |
| 5415 | Computer Systems Design and Related Services | 30,224 | \$2,219 |
| 5416 | Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services | 40,196 | \$2,169 |
| 5419 | Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 18,018 | \$1,315 |
| 55 | Management of Companies and Enterprises | | |
| 5511 | Management of Companies and Enterprises | 44,029 | \$3,371 |
| 56 | Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | | |
| 5611 | Office Administrative Services | 24,422 | \$2,148 |
| 61 | Educational Services | | |
| 6111 | Elementary and Secondary Schools | 203,844 | \$961 |
| 6113 | Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools | 61,689 | \$1,567 |
| 62 | Health Care and Social Assistance | | |
| 6211 | Offices of Physicians | 53,697 | \$1,803 |
| 6212 | Offices of Dentists | 17,593 | \$973 |
| 6214 | Outpatient Care Centers | 16,087 | \$1,390 |
| 6221 | General Medical and Surgical Hospitals | 96,790 | \$1,434 |
| 6223 | Specialty (except Psychiatric and Substance Abuse) Hospitals | 27,956 | \$1,840 |
| 81 | Other Services (except Public Administration) | | |
| 8113 | Commercial and Industrial Machinery and Equipment (except Automotive) | 11,765 | \$1,654 |

Notes

1. Criteria used to identify the targeted industries:

Industries with year 2020 four quarter average employment of at least 10,102, the average four quarter employment across all 4-digit NAICS industries in 2020 per the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).

Industries with an average weekly wage of at least \$1,348 per week, the average four weekly wage across all 4-digit industries per the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).

Industries meeting at least one of two criteria above and present on the previous targeted industry list.

2. All data provided by Texas Workforce Commission - LMCI

Authorized by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board: **February 7, 2023**

In-Demand Occupations List

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD
 2023 Where-the-jobs-are Occupations^{1,2,3}

| SOC | Occupation Title | Employment Growth | | | | Annual Openings | | | | Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation | Median Hourly Wage 2021 |
|---------|--|----------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--|-------------------------|
| | | Annual Averages 2020 | 2020 | Net Change | Percent Change | Due to Exits from Workforce | Due to Transfers between Occupations | Due to New Job Growth | Total Openings | | |
| 00-0000 | Total, All Occupations | 3,178,071 | 3,738,007 | 559,936 | 17.6 | 146,695 | 229,600 | 55,994 | 432,289 | - | \$21.32 |
| 35-3023 | Fast Food and Counter Workers | 84,819 | 110,554 | 25,735 | 30.3 | 9,472 | 10,327 | 2,574 | 22,373 | No formal educational credential | \$10.59 |
| 41-2031 | Retail Salespersons | 79,082 | 88,418 | 9,336 | 11.8 | 4,682 | 6,918 | 934 | 12,534 | No formal educational credential | \$13.25 |
| 43-9061 | Office Clerks, General | 71,080 | 76,042 | 4,962 | 7.0 | 4,014 | 4,362 | 496 | 8,872 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$17.10 |
| 41-2011 | Cashiers | 64,879 | 69,392 | 4,513 | 7.0 | 5,711 | 6,428 | 451 | 12,590 | No formal educational credential | \$11.16 |
| 43-4051 | Customer Service Representatives | 59,685 | 63,668 | 3,983 | 6.7 | 2,899 | 4,850 | 398 | 8,147 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$17.48 |
| 29-1141 | Registered Nurses | 57,938 | 69,174 | 11,236 | 19.4 | 1,696 | 1,599 | 1,124 | 4,419 | Bachelor's degree | \$37.96 |
| 11-1021 | General and Operations Managers | 56,142 | 68,281 | 12,139 | 21.6 | 1,242 | 3,857 | 1,214 | 6,313 | Bachelor's degree | \$46.80 |
| 53-7065 | Stockers and Order Fillers | 49,225 | 59,721 | 10,496 | 21.3 | 3,101 | 5,313 | 1,050 | 9,464 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$14.67 |
| 53-3032 | Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 47,719 | 57,614 | 9,895 | 20.7 | 2,157 | 3,571 | 990 | 6,718 | Postsecondary nondegree award | \$22.85 |
| 53-7062 | Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand | 47,618 | 56,933 | 9,315 | 19.6 | 2,288 | 4,548 | 932 | 7,768 | No formal educational credential | \$14.39 |
| 37-2011 | Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners | 46,390 | 51,836 | 5,446 | 11.7 | 3,065 | 3,442 | 545 | 7,052 | No formal educational credential | \$12.45 |
| 35-3031 | Waiters and Waitresses | 44,059 | 59,906 | 15,847 | 36.0 | 3,817 | 6,207 | 1,585 | 11,609 | No formal educational credential | \$10.13 |
| 43-6014 | Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive | 39,814 | 39,224 | -590 | -1.5 | 2,011 | 2,207 | -59 | 4,159 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$17.91 |
| 47-2061 | Construction Laborers | 37,976 | 46,524 | 8,548 | 22.5 | 1,249 | 2,853 | 855 | 4,957 | No formal educational credential | \$17.54 |
| 13-1198 | Project Management Specialists and Business Operations Specialists, All Other | 37,433 | 43,210 | 5,777 | 15.4 | 935 | 1,977 | 578 | 3,490 | Bachelor's degree | \$43.09 |
| 43-3031 | Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks | 35,585 | 38,089 | 2,504 | 7.0 | 2,159 | 1,881 | 250 | 4,290 | Some college, no degree | \$22.17 |
| 25-2021 | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | 33,369 | 37,222 | 3,853 | 11.5 | 1,083 | 1,414 | 385 | 2,882 | Bachelor's degree | \$30.01 |
| 13-2011 | Accountants and Auditors | 32,551 | 38,223 | 5,672 | 17.4 | 986 | 2,096 | 567 | 3,649 | Bachelor's degree | \$38.24 |
| 41-4012 | Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products | 29,238 | 34,461 | 5,223 | 17.9 | 942 | 2,152 | 522 | 3,616 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$29.33 |
| 43-1011 | First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers | 28,899 | 30,928 | 2,029 | 7.0 | 1,110 | 1,828 | 203 | 3,141 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$28.92 |
| 41-1011 | First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers | 28,314 | 30,587 | 2,273 | 8.0 | 1,041 | 2,040 | 227 | 3,308 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$20.47 |
| 49-9071 | Maintenance and Repair Workers, General | 27,127 | 32,325 | 5,198 | 19.2 | 1,048 | 1,734 | 520 | 3,302 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$18.09 |
| 35-2014 | Cooks, Restaurant | 26,220 | 44,637 | 18,417 | 70.2 | 2,085 | 3,032 | 1,842 | 6,959 | No formal educational credential | \$13.73 |
| 33-9032 | Security Guards | 25,306 | 31,866 | 6,560 | 25.9 | 1,514 | 2,214 | 656 | 4,384 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$14.11 |
| 47-1011 | First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers | 23,279 | 28,037 | 4,758 | 20.4 | 726 | 1,661 | 476 | 2,863 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$31.97 |
| 25-2031 | Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | 23,050 | 25,817 | 2,767 | 12.0 | 648 | 991 | 277 | 1,916 | Bachelor's degree | \$30.01 |
| 15-1256 | Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers | 23,024 | 29,407 | 6,383 | 27.7 | 608 | 1,286 | 638 | 2,532 | Bachelor's degree | \$49.03 |
| 41-3091 | Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel | 22,966 | 27,267 | 4,301 | 18.7 | 631 | 2,208 | 430 | 3,269 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$28.90 |
| 11-9013 | Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers | 21,724 | 22,410 | 686 | 3.2 | 1,361 | 767 | 69 | 2,197 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$25.63 |
| 37-2012 | Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners | 21,379 | 25,254 | 3,875 | 18.1 | 1,584 | 1,500 | 388 | 3,472 | No formal educational credential | \$13.02 |
| 25-9045 | Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | 20,841 | 23,756 | 2,915 | 14.0 | 997 | 1,042 | 292 | 2,331 | Some college, no degree | \$11.17 |
| 35-1012 | First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers | 20,187 | 27,567 | 7,380 | 36.6 | 1,065 | 2,433 | 738 | 4,236 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$14.56 |
| 39-9011 | Childcare Workers | 19,436 | 22,807 | 3,371 | 17.3 | 1,421 | 1,476 | 337 | 3,234 | High school diploma or equivalent | \$10.94 |

| 47-0000 Construction and Extraction Occupations | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--------|--------|-------|------|-------|-------|-----|-------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| 47-1011 | First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers | 23,279 | 28,037 | 4,758 | 20.4 | 726 | 1,661 | 476 | 2,863 | High school diploma or equivalent | 5 years or more | None | \$31.97 |
| 47-2011 | Bolleymakers ² | 1,895 | 2,306 | 411 | 21.7 | 35 | 151 | 41 | 227 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Apprenticeship | \$30.94 |
| 47-2031 | Carpenters | 15,506 | 17,737 | 2,231 | 14.4 | 485 | 1,037 | 223 | 1,745 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Apprenticeship | \$22.89 |
| 47-2073 | Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators | 12,960 | 16,155 | 3,195 | 24.7 | 476 | 1,044 | 320 | 1,840 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$22.58 |
| 47-2111 | Electricians | 16,724 | 21,275 | 4,551 | 27.2 | 552 | 1,395 | 455 | 2,402 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Apprenticeship | \$25.10 |
| 47-2132 | Insulation Workers, Mechanical | 2,792 | 3,318 | 526 | 18.8 | 72 | 208 | 53 | 333 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Apprenticeship | \$22.92 |
| 47-2152 | Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters | 10,466 | 12,820 | 2,354 | 22.5 | 340 | 837 | 235 | 1,412 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Apprenticeship | \$27.01 |
| 47-2171 | Reinforcing Iron and Rebar Workers | 1,766 | 2,125 | 359 | 20.3 | 62 | 120 | 36 | 218 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Apprenticeship | \$22.75 |
| 47-2211 | Sheet Metal Workers | 2,779 | 3,359 | 580 | 20.9 | 83 | 199 | 58 | 340 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Apprenticeship | \$23.01 |
| 47-2221 | Structural Iron and Steel Workers | 3,021 | 3,420 | 399 | 13.2 | 83 | 246 | 40 | 369 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Apprenticeship | \$23.11 |
| 47-4011 | Construction and Building Inspectors | 4,799 | 5,414 | 615 | 12.8 | 278 | 308 | 62 | 648 | High school diploma or equivalent | 5 years or more | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$36.86 |
| 47-5012 | Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas ⁸ | 2,073 | 2,479 | 406 | 19.6 | 47 | 221 | 41 | 309 | No formal educational credential | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$29.50 |
| 47-5013 | Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas ⁸ | 4,496 | 5,405 | 909 | 20.2 | 101 | 480 | 91 | 672 | No formal educational credential | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$22.74 |
| 47-5022 | Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators, Surface Mining | 1,833 | 2,243 | 410 | 22.4 | 63 | 175 | 41 | 279 | High school diploma or equivalent | Less than 5 years | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$21.78 |
| 47-5071 | Roustabouts, Oil and Gas ⁸ | 5,578 | 7,116 | 1,538 | 27.6 | 130 | 615 | 154 | 899 | No formal educational credential | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$21.94 |
| 49-0000 Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 49-2098 | Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers ² | 1,793 | 2,322 | 529 | 29.5 | 49 | 158 | 53 | 260 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$22.89 |
| 49-3031 | Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists | 6,776 | 7,905 | 1,129 | 16.7 | 208 | 458 | 113 | 779 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Long-term on-the-job training | \$23.86 |
| 49-3042 | Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines | 5,299 | 7,125 | 1,826 | 34.5 | 185 | 420 | 183 | 788 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Long-term on-the-job training | \$27.77 |
| 49-9012 | Control and Valve Installers and Repairers, Except Mechanical Door ² | 3,196 | 3,807 | 611 | 19.1 | 80 | 199 | 61 | 340 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$23.62 |
| 49-9021 | Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers | 8,761 | 10,651 | 1,890 | 21.6 | 249 | 662 | 189 | 1,100 | Postsecondary nondegree award | None | Long-term on-the-job training | \$23.60 |
| 49-9041 | Industrial Machinery Mechanics | 13,762 | 18,157 | 4,395 | 31.9 | 491 | 862 | 440 | 1,793 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Long-term on-the-job training | \$29.20 |
| 49-9043 | Maintenance Workers, Machinery | 1,752 | 2,171 | 419 | 23.9 | 65 | 107 | 42 | 214 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Long-term on-the-job training | \$27.33 |
| 49-9051 | Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers ² | 2,504 | 3,067 | 563 | 22.5 | 52 | 188 | 56 | 296 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Long-term on-the-job training | \$36.68 |
| 51-0000 Production Occupations | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 51-4041 | Machinists | 9,418 | 11,999 | 2,581 | 27.4 | 358 | 728 | 258 | 1,344 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Long-term on-the-job training | \$23.05 |
| 51-4121 | Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers | 17,979 | 22,343 | 4,364 | 24.3 | 530 | 1,590 | 436 | 2,556 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$23.61 |
| 51-8091 | Chemical Plant and System Operators | 4,584 | 4,980 | 396 | 8.6 | 112 | 370 | 40 | 522 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$39.03 |
| 51-8093 | Petroleum Pump System Operators, Refinery Operators, and Gaugers | 4,885 | 5,534 | 649 | 13.3 | 122 | 403 | 65 | 590 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$38.49 |
| 51-9161 | Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators | 3,724 | 4,284 | 560 | 15.0 | 137 | 296 | 56 | 489 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$22.64 |
| 51-9162 | Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Programmers ¹ | 928 | 1,405 | 477 | 51.4 | 40 | 86 | 48 | 174 | Postsecondary nondegree award | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$29.58 |
| 53-0000 Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 53-3032 | Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 47,719 | 57,614 | 9,895 | 20.7 | 2,157 | 3,571 | 990 | 6,718 | Postsecondary nondegree award | None | Short-term on-the-job training | \$22.85 |
| 53-5021 | Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels | 1,481 | 1,505 | 24 | 1.6 | 41 | 107 | 2 | 150 | Postsecondary nondegree award | Less than 5 years | None | \$53.41 |
| 53-7021 | Crane and Tower Operators | 2,619 | 3,091 | 472 | 18.0 | 77 | 218 | 47 | 342 | High school diploma or equivalent | Less than 5 years | Moderate-term on-the-job training | \$30.85 |

2. 17-20XX Engineers are treated collectively and subsequently meet size and growth criteria specified above.

3. 29-10XX Physicians are treated collectively and subsequently meet size and growth criteria specified above.

4. Occupations on the previous High-Skill High-Growth List and meeting most or all other criteria with the exception of 50% industry employment due to the exclusion the occupation's predominant industry from the Targeted Industry list have been retained.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Labor market intelligence indicates that 29-1122 Occupational Therapists may in some cases require a doctoral degree at present or in the near-future while master's degrees continue to be the predominant type of education among completers of postsecondary programs in this field.

8. 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.

9. Some wage and projection data were provided by third-party data sources EMSI and Chmura Economics JobsEQ.

10. All other data provided by Texas Workforce Commission - LWCI

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Labor Force Analysis and Trends

As we near the end of 2022, a great deal of uncertainty remains when it comes to the direction of the economy. The economy is still reeling from the effects of a global pandemic. The ripple effects of a temporary shutdown, supply chain disruptions, and changes in consumer behavior that are likely to persist for years. By mid-2022, the nation has seen its highest inflation in four decades, prompting several interest rate hikes with the potential for more as we enter 2023. As for employment, Houston has added jobs at a rampant pace in 2022, a trend that cannot continue over the long term. Outlooks for construction and real estate are weakening as rising mortgage rates place buyers out of the market. Staffing firms are noting declines in customer activity amid recession concerns. Retail sales expectations are below what they were a year ago with retailers planning to hire fewer temporary employees for the 2022 holiday season. While industries outside of the energy industry are looking at uncertainty in the coming year, the overall outlook remains positive in the energy industry. Although there has been a recent decline in oil prices to the mid-\$80 range, the local oil outlook is more positive than a year ago because producers are implementing moderate increases in oil-field activity and production. Oil prices remain well above oil's \$65 typical cost of production and there is willingness to move forward in small increases in activity.

Based on the most currently 2021 1-year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, educational attainment among Houston area residents age 25 and over was as follows:

- 15.6 percent possess less than a high school diploma
- 22.9 percent possess a high school diploma or equivalent
- 18.7 percent completed some college but no degree
- 7 percent possess an associate degree
- 22.4 percent possess a bachelor's degree
- 13.5 percent possess a postgraduate degree

In the Houston area among 365,970 individuals ages 20 to 64 with a disability, 203,114 (55.5 percent) were in the labor force of which 2,701 (13.3 percent) were unemployed according to 2021 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey.

According to 2021 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey among the 7.1 million residents in the Houston area for whom poverty status could be determined, 14.1 percent, were classified as living below the poverty line.

- The Poverty rate among children under the age of 18 stood at 19.9 percent
- The poverty rate for seniors 65 and over stood at 11.5 percent
- The poverty rate of females stood at 15.4 percent compared to 12.7 percent among males

- Children under five years of age had the highest poverty rate of 22.1 percent among the age groups for which data were available
- Poverty rates by race and/or ethnicity ranged from a low of 7.7 percent to 20.8 percent
 - Poverty rate of those Not Hispanic or Latino White alone stood at 7.7 percent
 - Poverty rate of Asian alone stood at 8.5 percent
 - Poverty rate of two or more races stood at 16.6 percent
 - Poverty rate of American Indian and Alaska Native alone stood at 20.8 percent
 - Poverty rate for Black or African American Alone stood at 19.6 percent
 - Poverty rate of Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) stood at 18.2 percent

According to 2021 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey, an estimated 12.9 percent of households in the Houston area were receiving food stamps also known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). When considering household types, only 4.4 percent of married-couples families were SNAP recipients with the rate of male householders with no wife present at 8.6 percent and female householders with no husband present at 35.5 percent. Among households below the poverty line, 36.2 percent were SNAP recipients while the remaining 63.8 percent of households below the poverty line did not receive SNAP benefits.

As a reflection of Houston’s diversity, 2021 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey indicate that 39.5 percent of the population age five and over speak another language at home other than English. The most common languages spoken by individuals that speak English less than “very well” were as follows:

- Spanish (43.3 percent)
- Vietnamese (55.3 percent)
- Chinese (47.5 percent)
- Arabic 28.6 percent)

These were also the most common languages spoken besides English regardless of reported proficiency in English-speaking ability.

Of the 5.3 million Houston area residents belonging to the civilian population age 18 and over, roughly 265,605 or 5 percent were veterans according to the 2020 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey. The largest group of veterans by period of service were those that served during the Gulf War (32.8 percent) followed by the Vietnam War (29.0 percent) while the largest age group were those 35 to 54 years (33.1 percent). Educational attainment among veterans 25 and older provide relatively high with 71.9 percent in possession of some college or higher compared to 60.9 percent for non-veterans. The employment status of veterans age 18 to

64 as indicated by a slightly higher unemployment rate compared to non-veterans (7.4 percent vs. 7.3 percent) and a higher participation rate (81.9 percent vs 76.5 percent). Accordingly, poverty rates for veterans were also lower than for non-veterans age 18 and over with 7.5 percent of veterans falling below the poverty line compared to 12.2 percent of non-veterans. Lastly, rates of disability were higher among veterans than non-veterans with 24.8 percent reporting a disability compared to 12 percent for those who did not serve in the armed forces.

Workforce Development Analysis

The Gulf Coast region is large at roughly 12,000 square miles and 7 million residents. Accordingly, it hosts a robust educational system made up of 76 school districts, 10 community colleges, several four-year universities, and countless proprietary training entities. Our community colleges and community-based organizations provide a significant number of workforce training programs and continue to be awarded Skills Development Fund contracts.

The Board's strategy is to become better connected to stakeholders in the region. Stronger connections translate to our customers having more access to additional support to help them meet their needs and goals. For us, this means public dollars will go farther, and move the system closer to achieving its vision and goals.

The Board has the capacity to provide workforce development activities across our 13-county Houston Galveston area to meet our region's education and workforce needs. Through our partners, the Board coordinates activities, monitors, performance, provides expert workforce consulting to employers and schools, develops programs and initiatives to help target populations discover opportunities to increase their skills to find a job, or gain skills to remain employed and earn a promotion.

The effectiveness of our region's workforce activities depends on the relationships we have with employers, community partners, schools, and public agencies. The Board convenes each entity regularly to assess progress and find solutions to weaknesses and build on successes stemming from program strengths. Our customers suffered due to COVID-19, and the pandemic exposed weaknesses that precipitated many job losses, lack of hope and momentum for some customers to strive and be better. We learned many customers did not have the internet access, capability, or resources to compete in a job market where interviewing is now conducted virtually. Our commitment to find solutions is part of what makes our region the best place to do business, work, and live, is one of our strengths.

To learn and address weaknesses and advance strengths, the Board participates in and supports various workforce activities in the region. Providing support for key industries is critical to our region's success and one of our fundamental strategies. The Board does this by making significant investments to targeted industries. The Board's capacity to support is by employing full-time staff as Industry Liaisons. Their goal is to partner with specific employers in high-growth, high-skill Gulf Coast industry sectors. The Liaisons work to meet employers' current and future workforce needs by coordinating regional agency services, training, and education to fulfill skill needs. Industry Liaisons work to support changes in structures and policies to more closely align and integrate workforce, education, and economic development programs to better serve Gulf Coast employers. They provide Board representation and expertise to economic development and industry-led workforce initiatives.

We recognize that the Energy Industry Cluster is a key industry to our region as well as to the state; however, the weakness with the current oil and gas downturn exacerbated by the globally disruptive effects of COVID-19, most

of the Board's efforts helping workers in industries most severely impacted weather the current crisis.

Perhaps the most critical step in supporting the Board's High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations is through the targeting process itself. Occupations offering residents the high-quality career opportunities are the essence of the list. Before considering standard criteria such as growth and wages, it is important that the choice of occupations be driven by composition of our Targeted Industries. By ensuring that most of the occupational employment is found within said industries, alignment between employers, workers, and workforce development becomes possible increasing the effectiveness of our strategic investments our region's human capital.

The Board continues to build a robust network of approved vendors and educational programs. We have developed clear policies and procedures for Workforce Solutions staff to use when awarding scholarships to help customers pay for school that prepares them for a career in an occupation we support through scholarships. Through this vendor network, we can award scholarships to customers, who might not otherwise be able to go to school. These Scholarships prepare them for meaningful careers in occupations that are in high demand in the region's key industries.

Getting people back to work is an activity we continue to develop innovative initiatives to accomplish. The Board developed a Placement Team that consists of multiple employment counselors working out of a central location. Daily, the team pulls an Unemployment Insurance claimant list, and contacts new claimants. Working by phone and email, the team helps customers clean up WorkInTexas.com applications, develop good resumes and find solid job leads.

Staff contacts all customers in the Rapid Reemployment Service database (profiled pool) by sending letters of introduction asking them to contact Workforce Solutions by phone, email or in person. The Board on staff an outplacement specialist who is often a first responder working with employers to assess needs, and coordinate service for affected workers. Workforce Solutions usually provides virtual job search workshops with modules on resume preparation, interviewing and using WorkInTexas.com.

We maintain a Regional Team that provides Workforce Solutions seminars and workshops at community locations such as public libraries. The Regional Team made up of Navigators and Facilitators venture out into the community to reach populations that might not be served in a local career office. The Regional Team works with our partners to conduct community-based job search seminars and workshops. These presentations are conducted outside the career office in schools, libraries, and a wide range of community-based organizations.

Good employment counselors help customers identify knowledge and skills that can be applied to different jobs and similar jobs in different industries. Our training contractor, Learning Designs, Inc. (LDI), delivers training that teaches employment counselors to move beyond computer-generated matches from WorkInTexas.com to analyzing those matches to pick the best people possible for each job. Staff are taught how to help customers identify their transferable skills, develop resumes and complete job applications highlighting those skills, and look for jobs that demand those skills.

The analytical skills developed through this process can be applied to helping customers identify their unique, marketable, and transferable skills. We now provide at least one class a month of Working with Job Ready

Customers that trains staff in precisely this function - helping customers find good jobs that match their skills.

The Board also asked LDI to develop and deliver a series of industry-specific training courses for staff. The training talks about the industry, jobs, skill sets, and transferable skills. There is a basic labor market intelligence course that provides staff with a foundational knowledge of the labor market and resources to learn more about it. There are industry-specific courses for health services, educational services, and industrial crafts.

While our relationship with LDI will end in the coming months, we are planning to bring this training activity in house as a Board staff-led capacity building activity. The Board's philosophy is that workforce development is a component of economic development, and all our activities reflect this philosophy. We measure our ability to help create jobs and help employer customers become more competitive. Our work with economic development organizations includes partnering on industry-based work groups, engaging in wider-efforts to address particular needs, such as Upskill Houston, aimed at middle-skill workforce capacity, sharing planning and evaluation information, coordinating grant proposals, and assisting in bringing new businesses to the region and retraining and supporting existing businesses. The Board works closely with economic development partners to identify long-range issues such as the changing demographics of the region's workforce and a trend to lower educational achievement; and shorter-range issues such as finding transportation solutions across the region so employers can get the workers they need.

Education activities are important to address the employment needs of employers and individuals with barriers to employment. Projects the Board is involved with in the Education Industry Sector include sponsoring an Education Workgroup of 19 participating school districts, activities in Early Childhood Education with our partner Children's Learning Institute, promoting education and training opportunities with Adult Education and Literacy, investing in online learning platforms such as Metrix, LinkedInLearning, 180Skills, and Workforce Compass, and various K-12 projects with local ISDs and charter schools in the region. Groups meet regularly to discuss the needs of local school districts and community colleges to meet employer needs. An example of the strength and effectiveness of this innovative work are the results stemming from convening the Industrial Crafts and Construction Industry Sector with education providers to support education programs that lead to direct placement jobs for participants.

Training Activities for Individuals

Listed below are training activities individuals with barriers to employment can participate to secure employment:

Texas Industry Partnership

We partner with Lone Star Community College, Baker Hughes, and BJ Services to match the contribution in a Texas Industry Partnership that will provide skills training for non-traditional workers. Lone Star Community College will train a cohort of trainees for entry-level Oil and Gas technical personnel. Baker Hughes and BJ Services will hire from the cohort to fill open positions.

TRIO Electric trained 67 students from Alief and Fort Bend ISD in a pre-apprenticeship program for electrical workers that provided safety awareness and knowledge on being an electrician.

Second Chance Jobs Initiative

We continue to work with the City of Houston Re-entry program. Career and Recovery- Incarcerated Veterans Program, WorkFaith Connection Re-entry program and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice working primarily with adults and My Brother's Keeper will provide support. The mission of the Community Re-Entry Network is to work in partnership with the community to assess, plan, and implement effective strategies to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and successfully assist and support re-entry individuals in their transition in becoming productive, contributing members of the Houston community.

We work by securing work experience sites for up to ten weeks, wages up to \$12.00 hourly immediately upon return to the community. We will also make sure the individuals are aware of available training to support their efforts in finding employment. We offer financial aid and work-related support service to assist the individuals with needed clothing, transportation, training and certification/licenses to prepare for employment.

TWH – Jobs

The goal of this workforce activity is to work in partnership with Coalition for the Homeless and The Way Home – Rapid Rehousing to quickly re-house homeless individuals and families. Our goal is to mitigate the negative effects of individuals experiencing hunger and homelessness by offering services to help them secure career opportunities that will provide livable wages to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

We provide work-based learning opportunities and place participants in work experiences for ten weeks, working up to 30 hours weekly. Additionally, we ensure these individuals are aware of available training to support their efforts in finding unsubsidized employment. We provide financial aid and support services needed to assist homeless individuals with work-related support services to prepare them for lasting careers.

To support this work, the Board meets monthly with the Coalition to discuss referrals and to discuss initiatives with various employment partners.

Supported Employment – Job Coach Project

An individual with a disability may have the ability to perform a job but may lack the capacity to be successful due to other factors. A job coach is an individual with the training and certifications required to work alongside an individual with a disability for a prescribed number of hours to help them successfully navigate areas of the workforce where they may have difficulty participating because of a disability.

We assist individuals by providing a job coach in conjunction with work-based learning and/or on the job training. The goal of the workforce activity is to assist these individuals with valuable work experience, exposure to work and connecting them to other resources that can lead to long term sustainable employment. This effort will provide a basis for serving individuals with different types of abilities utilizing standard operating processes and allow us to build staff capacity in serving people with disabilities. We build a framework for continued support that leads to employment.

We will coordinate and collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation to ensure we are not duplicating service and to leverage funds to serve as many customers as possible.

This project concluded in Fall 2021 with the following results:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Total Participants | 29 |
| Hired | 15 |
| Connected to Ticket to Work | 5 |
| Utilizing WFS to Find Employment | 4 |
| Connected to VRS | 2 |
| Receiving Intensive Supports | 2 |
| Withdrawn | 1 |

Student HireAbility Navigators

The Student HireAbility Navigator grant is a three-year project that began in July 2018. This grant provides funding for two Student HireAbility Navigators who serve as resources in the Gulf Coast Region to support, expand, and enhance the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are in the early phases of preparing for transition to postsecondary education and employment.

Navigators hold weekly meetings with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to discuss pre-ETS for students with disabilities.

Paths for Texas

In November 2019, Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast was awarded a grant that runs through December 2022, provided by the Wal-Mart Foundation to initiate and expand retail up skilling opportunities for businesses and their current workforce, and develop career pathways to unemployed individuals seeking to transition into or out of the Retail Industry.

COVID-19 National Dislocated Worker Program

The goal of the 2020 COVID-19 NDW Program is to provide temporary employment to individuals who became unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or who are long-term unemployed.

Youth Job Skills Initiative

The Youth Job Skills Initiative focuses on supporting youth without or may be at risk of not attaining a secondary credential. The goal is to assist youth in their completion of a secondary credential and provide a seamless connection to work base learning opportunities in the following sectors: construction, healthcare, information technology.

Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative

Workforce Solutions supports in an advisory role and through our career office network The Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative. This workforce activity addresses the challenges identified in a Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research study that found a high percentage of Gulf Coast youth/young adults aged 16-24 do not have a high school diploma or have high school diplomas but lack access to training and higher education. We work with community-based organizations, community colleges, philanthropy and employers to engage this population to improve their opportunities to succeed and have better futures.

Career Education and Outreach Specialists

Workforce Solutions will work with 50 schools across five independent school districts providing labor market and career data-including information about access to and instruction on how to use multiple Texas Workforce Commission labor market/career information tools-to support job exploration, counseling and guidance for students.

Summer Earn and Learn

Summer Earn and Learn offers eligible students ages 14-22 with disabilities an opportunity to test their skills in the real world with paid internship opportunities at local employers. Summer Earn & Learn connects students with disabilities to successful work experiences, which helps them gain job skills and build confidence.

In 2022, Summer Earn and Learn served 521 young adults.

Education Opportunity Connector

Education Opportunity Connector brings our career offices and adult education providers together through shared Workforce Solutions services. Partnerships have been designed to foster and cultivate relationships to strengthen connections that will help career offices and adult education providers better understand what services are available to customers. The education opportunity connector provides opportunities to helping customers obtain the tools they need in order to thrive and compete in the Gulf Coast labor market.

In an increasingly digital world, the Board recognizes the need for hybrid solutions to training challenges. To assist those with barriers to employment, the Board offers online learning licenses to upskill and reskill.

Employment Needs of Employers

The region's economy hinges on the timeline of recovery of the coronavirus. The recovery of payroll employment stalled by August 2020 and by October only half of all jobs lost during the initial months of the pandemic had been recovered. With rollouts of vaccines that are beginning as early as December 2020, a solid economic recovery in the region will likely begin by mid-2021.

The Gulf Coast region's high concentration of energy jobs and its major petrochemical complex results in a critical need for skilled crafts and technical jobs that require more education and training than a high school diploma, but less than a college degree. In addition to energy, the region features other important industries. Its centrally southern location with easy access to the Port of Houston makes it an ideal distribution point for numerous maritime, railroad, airline, and motor freight companies. Other industries such as education, trade, and healthcare benefit from a population growth rate that more than doubles that of the nation. Furthermore, Houston is one of

the top spots in the country for corporate relocation and investment due to its low cost of doing business.

Workforce activities we identified in this section address the education and skills needs of the workforce in the Houston Galveston area and support the core programs described in the subsequent section.

PART 3: CORE PROGRAMS



The Gulf Coast Workforce Board and its operating affiliate, Workforce Solutions, together are the public workforce system in the 13-county Houston Galveston area. We keep our region the best place to do business, work, and live by fulfilling the diverse needs of over 31,000 businesses and 300,000 people we will serve each year.

As a public entity, Workforce Solutions is most effective when we can rely on the participation of all stakeholders in the regional economy. This means that we work closely with schools, colleges, local city and county governments, non-profits, and social service providers, as well as the business community, to bring people together and focus on our shared economic needs. To represent these many groups, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board is made up of dedicated individuals from both the public and private sectors who volunteer their time and expertise to help set the direction for how Workforce Solutions carries out its mission.

Our volunteer Board members along with the hard-working professional staff of Workforce Solutions, are tasked with implementing a local, data-driven plan for developing our region’s pool of human talent to meet local employment needs. To guarantee that we are fulfilling our area’s obligations to the Texas Workforce Commission under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, this Local Plan examines our estimated economic needs through 2024.

The Board’s strategy is to work with entities and required partners carrying out core programs to align resources available to the Houston-Galveston region to achieve shared visions and goals.

The core WIOA-funded activities discussed in this plan reflect only a portion of the activities managed by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB). Through the integrated workforce system in Texas, the Board also manages services with funds from several other resources administered by TWC:

- Choices [the employment program for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)]
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)
- Child Care and Development Block Grant Funds/Child Care Development Funds (CCDBG/CCDF)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

Gulf Coast Workforce Development Partners

The Gulf Coast region is abundant in workforce development partners and we must work with them to carry out our core programs. We have ten community colleges systems, more than a dozen university campuses, numerous economic development and business organizations, a host of state and local agencies, and a wide variety of community and faith-based organizations. Together, these institutions represent a rich infrastructure for the Gulf Coast workforce system.

With our partners, we provide a wide range of services to employers and individual customers. For individuals, community and faith-based organizations provide mentoring, life-skills training, adult basic education, English as a second language, childcare, transportation, and other work support service. Some of these organizations are paid vendors for our system while many others work informally with Workforce Solutions jointly assisting customers.

Workforce Solutions has an excellent relationship with our community college partners. The colleges provide educational programs leading to degrees and technical certificates, adult education, English as second language instruction, and other training. They work with the Board to develop customized training for employers and consult with us in developing proposals related to workforce training. The colleges in the area are valuable partners in developing industry-based initiatives to address workforce issues in the region.

The region’s major universities have a role in the workforce system and are likely to have a greater one in the future as the Board’s industry-based work continues and expands. The universities help to contribute to the

diversification of our economy in the Gulf Coast Region.

The region's 76 school districts are key partners in addressing many of the long-term shortages of skilled workers in our region. Many of our career offices work directly with middle and high schools in their communities. The career offices are charged with providing service to young people in their schools. In addition to serving individual youth, many of whom are out of school, the Board continues to work with schools broadly to provide good labor market information to assist the schools, students, and parents in making decisions about education and training. We continue to expand and improve our labor market information and career planning products which include the High-Skill, High-Growth List, Industry and Occupation profiles, and When I Grow Up. Our goal is to support schools in their efforts to reduce drop-out rates and target resources to prepare youth for the good jobs of the future. The Board's Education Committee provides guidance and oversight and is fully committed to assisting schools in producing more graduates with the skills employers want.

Economic development organizations are key partners in our region. In many cases, the Board is a member of these organizations. In other cases, such as our industry groups, the economic development organizations are key members of Board-sponsored projects. We work together in identifying opportunities for the region to grow good jobs and to help develop solutions to barriers to growth, such as the need for improved schools. The Board's strategic plan includes a measure of the degree to which we are involved in economic development efforts leading to new or retained jobs. In general, each partner we work with pays for the service and staff the organization normally provides. For example, we may have a memorandum of understanding to work with a community-based organization to coordinate providing service to customers. We agree to make cross-referrals for customers with each partner paying for service they deliver to each customer.

There are exceptions to this general policy. Some of our partners are either vendors for Workforce Solutions or the Board has procured the organization to provide specialized service. In these cases, we pay for the partner organization to provide service, either by individual referral or through cost-reimbursement contracts.

The Board enjoys excellent working relationships with its partners, especially core partners such as the colleges, the adult education community, and economic development entities.

Gulf Coast Workforce Board will work with various entities in carrying out core programs to:

- expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible
- individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment
- facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs
- WD Letter 18-20, Attachment 2, including specific career pathways occupations that the Board currently includes on its Target Occupations Lists, and career pathways occupations that the Board is planning to develop; and
- improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

Economic Development & Impact

The Board's philosophy is that workforce development is a component of economic development, and all our activities reflect this philosophy. We measure our ability to help create jobs and help employer customers become more competitive. Our work with economic development organizations includes partnering on industry-based work groups, sharing planning and evaluation information, coordinating grant proposals, and assisting in bringing new businesses to the region and retraining and supporting existing businesses.

The Board works closely with economic development partners to identify long-range issues such as the changing demographics of the region's workforce and a trend to lower educational achievement; and shorter-range issues such as funding transportation solutions in Colorado County so employers can get the workers they need and adjusting to the ever-changing governmental policies related to the pandemic.

These efforts describe how the Board will work with multiple entities to carry out core programs and next we will highlight how we will scale and improve access to core programs.

Core Programs – Expand Access, Facilitate Development, and Improve Access

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board will expand access to employment training, education, and support services to eligible individuals and eligible individuals with barriers in unique and effective ways.

For both eligible populations seeking employment, we expanded and improved access to job opportunities by using virtual platforms to host hiring and resource events. With virtual employment services, we continue to develop innovative strategies to help individuals find employment opportunities in high-growth, high-wage industries that align to the Board's vision and goals. Additionally, we adopted online appointment setting that provides eligible customers the capability to schedule their own appointments with career offices for services.

Workforce Solutions and its workforce partners offer services that lead to thousands of customers entering employment each year. Services include job-search assistance, labor market and career planning information, training and education opportunities, and unemployment benefits to those who lose their jobs through no fault of their own.

Adult Education Activities

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board administers the public adult education funds in our 13-county region, encompassing the City of Houston, Texas. Through a consortium of fifteen contractors, we have helped more than 100,000 customers.

Adult education providers offer English language, mathematics, reading, and writing instruction to help students acquire the skills needed to earn a high school equivalency, enter college or career training and/ or succeed in the workforce. While some classes may charge a small, nominal fee (less than \$20) most adult education services are free to adult learners. Service is also available to young people who have dropped out of high school and have not earned an equivalency diploma.

Service Categories

Adult Education providers typically offer a wide variety of adult education courses. Most of these courses are

components of four major service categories:

- High School Equivalency Preparation – Academic preparation toward readiness for the high school equivalency examination.
- Combined GED & Skills Training – Traditional GED preparation offered with concurrent skills training. You may also hear this referred to as “contextualized learning”.
- English as a Second Language – ESL courses teach English literacy to individuals with languages other than English as their primary language.
- EL/Civics – Civics courses inform individuals on United States history, culture, and practice in preparation for U.S. citizenship. EL/Civics courses are frequently offered in conjunction with ESL courses.
- The consortium includes a managing partner, Region 6 Education Service Center, and fourteen providers. Region 6 offers programming support for the system. The fourteen providers offer direct service through their own facilities as well as through sites at hundreds of community-based organizations, such as churches, libraries, non-profits, schools.

The Governor's plans for our State are important to the vitality of our Houston Galveston area. The Board plans to support the energy sector to address the needs of our customers and the meet requirement of working with one of the Governor’s industry clusters.

The energy industry employs as many as one-fifth of the 3.5 million workers in the Houston region. With more than 600 exploration and production firms, 1,100 oilfield service companies and more than 180 pipeline transportation establishments, this region is the largest hub for energy related employment in the United States.

Because of the pandemic’s adverse impacts on employment within the energy industry, the Board, through Employer Service, has committed to assisting customers and energy employers by:

- Providing employment research information and data to employers
- Partnering with employers in augmenting their human resources efforts, including;
- Supporting talent development projects and activities with employers through on-the-job training, customized training, current worker training, and basic education
- Offering outplacement services to employers for furloughs and strategic reduction in workforce plans.
- Assisting employers with strategic recruiting endeavors
- Counseling, training, or upskilling individuals by integrating and coordinating the services and resources of the career offices, financial aid support center, financial aid payment office, and adult education consortium to facilitate individuals transition to employment.

- Connecting with, supporting and assisting business associations, industry associations, chambers of commerce and economic development organizations throughout the region.
- Wherever possible, locating staff in communities throughout the region and strategically establishing operating career offices to provide visibility to and access for customers.

The Board has also invested funds to update our virtual technologies helping us to continue and improve communication and access to assist customers.

We strive to meet the changing demands and unique needs of our customers daily. The practices described in this section will improve customer experience and detail how we will work with partners to carry out core programs. This is a building block for the following section, as we describe our one-stop service delivery system and how the Board ensures continuous quality improvement.

PART 4: ONE-STOP SERVICE DELIVERY



The Board operates a one-stop service delivery system designed for customers to receive the help and resources needed from one of our multiple locations. Our one-stop delivery system ensures providers are helping local employers, workers, and unemployed individuals address their employment needs.

The Board continues to ensure continuous quality improvement of providers to help employers meet their human resource needs and individuals build careers, so both can compete in the global economy.

The Board monitors performance and production numbers of providers on a regular basis. Each week providers are given an update of their progress with core programs and any special initiatives. The Board collects data and monitors trends to assess where gaps in production are hidden and provide technical assistance to providers when needed. The Board will revise issuances and guidance where local flexibility is allowed to ensure local board guidance reflects to most effective and efficient policies and procedures.

The Board also will perform monitoring and audits to continue to collect real-time data to address any issues or potential issues providers may face. Providers are given verbal and written feedback on how to continually improve ways to meet the employment needs of customers.

The Board is advancing technological efforts by using multiple forms of virtual platforms to facilitate access to services to customers in rural and urban areas. The Board increased social media activity to host live online events to promote services and resources offered. The Board communicates to providers regularly to learn which platforms customers are using most, and where gaps or threats are, we need to address.

Within our one-stop system, the Board uses virtual platforms to convene providers to facilitate access and referrals to VR services and in rural areas. The Board provides ongoing direction and support to help providers integrate VR services. In addition to technology, the Board provides written issuances and guidance to set expectations for providers to ensure access to services and referrals are provided for VR services.

In addition, our one-stop system works to provide customers with up-to-date and useful information on the good jobs of the future to meet the employment needs of employers, workers and those unemployed. The Board's focus is on high-skill, high-growth jobs that lead to careers that provide opportunities for growth and good wages.

Listed below are the roles and resource contributions of partners within our one-stop system:

Employer Service markets and sells Workforce Solutions to the region's employers.

- It provides basic information and service for all employers and customized service to individual employers with special needs.
- Employer Service also targets key industries with critical skilled-labor shortages -- and gathers interested employers in those industries to organize and support intensive efforts to address their needs for talent.
- Through its efforts to support increasing quality for early education, Employer Service makes investments in the more than 2,000 vendors providing early education and care for Workforce Solutions customers' children.

Career offices help individuals get a job, keep a job or get a better job by providing job search, placement; career assessment, advice and planning; counseling; and financial aid. Priority in service is given to veterans, spouses of veterans, foster youth, and former foster youth.

Supporting the work of the offices are:

- The Financial Aid Support Center – determines customers eligible for the variety of financial assistance Workforce Solutions offers
- The Financial Aid Payment Office – makes payments on behalf of our customers for education scholarships, transportation assistance, and a variety of other financial aid support, including help with early education expenses
- Tracking Units – support the work done in career offices by tracking customer services and activities for all career offices in the Gulf Coast Region

In addition, connected to and integrated with the two main parts of the one-stop system are:

Community and youth projects – targeted investments in specific geographic areas of the region to assist a community and low-income youth.

Adult education – a regional network of adult basic education and literacy providers supporting employers and individuals with basic education and literacy instruction.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) – helps eligible individuals who have physical or mental disabilities prepare for, find, or keep employment.

Staff development – a systemwide on-going effort to train and upskill the Workforce Solutions staff.

Our providers meet the needs of local employers, workers, and those unemployed by using two key performance metrics. They are employer market share and employer customer loyalty which measures are intended on gauging our success at increasing employer use and satisfaction with our service. The Board sets annual and long-range targets, regularly reviews performance, and adjusts operating strategies as needed. The Board offers these metrics and performance as evidence of the effectiveness of strategies it has implemented to improve services to employers.

Employer Loyalty – Last year’s performance indicated 50.6% of our customers value our services and returned for additional services. Our current annual target is 62%.

Two key performance metrics are customers employed after exiting from services and higher earnings gains.

Customers Employed – This year’s performance indicated 88.4% of our customers were employed in the quarter after exiting from services. Our current annual target is 77%.

Higher Real Incomes – This year’s performance indicated 24.2% of customers who exited had earnings gains of at least 20%. Our current annual target is 37%.

Facilitating Services

Over the last few years, the Board’s revenue continues to shrink, and we must do more with less. The good news is that we are meeting this challenge, in part, by leveraging available technology and developing cost efficient outreach strategies.

Blogforce (<http://blogforce.wrksolutions.com/>) provides customers with timely, helpful, and usually humorous, advice on getting and keeping jobs, and career planning. Bloggers are Workforce Solutions office and Board staff.

In addition to the 28 full-service career offices, there are 10 additional affiliate sites managed by the Board in the region. Information on those sites is available at this link: (<http://www.wrksolutions.com/find-a-location?location=Part-Time>). These sites provide basic job search services to those customers unable to reach a full services career office, as well as allows them to make appointments with office staff members who maintain a part time presence at the sites.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has a regional team made up of navigators and facilitators that go out into the community to reach populations that might not be served in a local career office. The regional team works with our partners to conduct community-based job search seminars and workshops. These presentations are conducted outside the career office in schools, libraries, and a wide range of community-based organizations.

Our adult education customers can access adult education sites and classes located throughout the region, often near a customer's residence or place of employment. Many providers offer distance learning options for customers who experience transportation issues or merely prefer the convenience of taking classes remotely. A few of our offices have adult education sites in the career office.

The Gulf Coast Adult Education & Literacy Consortium is comprised of a robust team that includes Workforce Solutions and 15 regional organizations working together to meet the needs of the regional workforce. Within our consortium we have 6 community colleges, 8 community-based organizations and 1 education service center that services as the consortiums lead provider.

Education Opportunity Connector brings our career offices and adult education providers together through shared Workforce Solutions services. Partnerships have been designed to foster and cultivate relationships to strengthen connections that will help career offices and adult education providers better understand what services are available to customers. The education opportunity connector provides opportunities to helping customers obtain the tools they need in order to thrive and compete in the Gulf Coast Workforce.

Equal Opportunity and Access to Service

The Board ensures all partners comply with federal regulations to meet the needs of customers without discrimination and upholds the highest standard of equal opportunity and access to service for all customers. The Board provides opportunity for everyone to be actively involved in the potential labor pool by ensuring staff focus on abilities, not disabilities.

To meet the needs of individuals with disabilities looking for employment, The Board provides a variety of options to help customers access all services, programs and activities, resources and information offered at each of our Career Offices. The Board is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

The Board can provide:

- Reasonable Accommodations
- Accessible workstations at each Career Office
- Workshops for a Successful Job Search
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Accessible Technology

- Job Coaching
- Information & Referrals to partner with Texas Workforce Solutions-Rehabilitation Services

To make certain staff are focused on customer abilities, all career office staff participate in professional development trainings which include:

- Courses through the National Workforce Institute where staff learn to provide customer service from a strength-based approach; identifying customers' skills and abilities and then matching them to available jobs.
- Diversity Awareness training from Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- Computer based trainings from Texas Workforce Commission on Diversity, EEO, and Discrimination Prevention as well as the Discrimination Complaint Process.
- An overview of Equal Opportunity Standards and Guidelines including providing accommodations and the discrimination complaint process.
- Usage of assistive technology and auxiliary aids in the career offices.
- Various disability awareness topics.

To further ensure equal opportunity and access to service for all its customers, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board has a team of three system-wide Navigators whose primary role is to ensure that customers with disabilities are able to navigate the realm of finding employment on a level playing field with those who do not have disabilities. To do this Navigators:

- Provide staff training on various disability related topics including the use of auxiliary aids and assistive technologies.
- Work alongside career office staff to ensure needs of individuals with disabilities are being met.
- Coordinate with Texas Workforce Solutions - Vocational Rehabilitation Services and other community organizations to promote awareness of disability related topics, attend disability related events, and assist individuals with reaching their employment goals.
- Host employer education events to provide information on hiring and providing accommodations for customers with disabilities.
- Recruit and prepare individuals with disabilities for special hiring initiatives.
- Created Transition Networks to promote employment of students with disabilities
- Partnered with the region's ISDs to host expos and fairs for students with disabilities

Additionally, the Board EO Officer conducts annual equal opportunity and accessibility reviews on an annual basis for each career office location. Program and service accessibility, as well as physical accessibility is assessed during each annual review. In addition to ensuring sites are architecturally barrier free and customers have equal access and opportunity to services, each career office is equipped to have at least one or more of the following assistive technologies and auxiliary aids:

- Accessible workstation equipped with assistive technologies such as JAWS screen reader software, MAGic screen magnifying software, headphones or speakers, large print keyboard, and trackball mouse;
- TTY phone;
- Video Relay Service (VRS) phone;
- Hearing Aid Compatible phone with volume control;
- Pocket Talker sound amplifier; and
- Adjustable height tables and chairs

The Board EO Officer coordinates the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's obligations and compliance activities under the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), 29 CFR 38.31 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973, as amended, 29 CFR 32.7. Those responsibilities include:

- Serving as the liaison with the Texas Workforce Commission EO Officer and the U.S. Department of Labor Civil Rights Center
- Acting as the point of contact for customers and contractors regarding Equal Opportunity issues or concerns
- Monitoring and investigating Gulf Coast Workforce Board and contractor activities to ensure they are not violating nondiscrimination and EO provisions of Federal and State Laws and Regulations
- Reviewing Gulf Coast Workforce Board and Workforce Solutions written standards and guidelines to ensure they are not discriminatory
- Developing, implementing, and monitoring procedures for processing discrimination complaints and ensuring compliance with 29 CFR 38.69-38.76
- Reporting directly to the appropriate official (Board, TWC, Governor, or other appropriate authority) about equal opportunity matters
- Conducting outreach and education on equal opportunity matters including 38.40 and 38.69
- Undergoing training to keep competency

- Developing, coordinating, scheduling, keeping records of, and monitoring training for staff assigned responsibilities for nondiscrimination and equal opportunity

The Board is in accordance with WIOA Title I and all applicable non-discrimination laws and as a recipient of Federal financial assistance, prohibits discrimination on the following bases:

- against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief; and
- against any beneficiary of programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), on the basis of the beneficiary's citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or his or her participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.

The Board continually works to make a difference for our customers. The Board will ensure partners are in compliance with all federal regulations related to non-discrimination and accessibility of facilities, continuous quality improvement of eligible providers, technology is used to facilitate access to services in rural and urban areas, and employment needs are met for businesses, workers, and those unemployed. The following section includes copies of executed cooperative agreements that explains how providers will carry out integration and access to services in our one-stop delivery system.

Cooperative Agreements

On September 1, 2016, Vocational Rehabilitation Services were transferred from DARS to TWC, in accordance with Senate Bill (SB) 208, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2015). The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services into 19 career offices including the Gulf Coast Workforce Board administrative offices. During the next two years, we expect to integrate our final two offices, totaling 21 integrated career offices.

Employer Engagement, Economic Development, and Unemployment Insurance Program Coordination

The Workforce Board strives to make Workforce Solutions the first choice of employers when they need assistance with workforce challenges. Most employers use our core products such as sourcing, recruiting, prescreening, on-the-job training, incumbent working in training for upskilling and reskilling, and posting jobs in our Work in Texas system.. We would like to provide a deeper level of service to our employers, by becoming partners with them to solve workforce-related business problems. We have disbanded our in- house outreach unit and transitioned these staff to be in the field making face-to-face contact with employers. It is our belief we will provide a better-quality service to our employer customers and employer customers will have a higher level of satisfaction with our services.

As a system, we operate under the franchise model, which allows our employer customers to have a single point of contact no matter where they enter the workforce system. This process ensures the employer is provided with the best customer service while working with us, and expectations are managed for better results.

The Board is continuing to take steps to improve the quality of our screening and referral process for employers. We plan to continue these efforts by improving our system's ability to obtain and communicate accurate information on what employers need and want in employees. Employer Service staff review new job orders submitted electronically by employers or staff and edit them to provide better matches with job candidates.

Employment Counselors help individuals get jobs that best fit their skills, interests, and experience. We employ staffing specialists who work the job orders, looking for candidates in our system and outside. We continue to develop this function to include contacting college and university placement offices, community-based organizations, and other sources to find the best workers for the jobs we are trying to fill.

The Board will continue to track the results of its efforts to improve employer satisfaction through an annual survey. The current survey measures how well employers believe our business consultants follow through on promises, understand their needs, are responsive to those needs, offer solutions to problems, and are professional.

Meeting the Needs of Local Businesses

The Board's Employer Service team provides services to help businesses meet their employment needs. We believe that assisting employers in finding skilled workers results in the region's economic development and benefits individual workers. We will help more than 30,500 employers in the Gulf Coast region identify qualified candidates for job openings. Business Consultants visit employers to offer services, support, and learn firsthand a business' specific need. They offer the system's resources to help businesses by:

- Recruiting, screening, referring and testing applicants for jobs
- Providing information about state and federal labor laws
- Providing economic and labor market information including occupation-specific wage and salary data
- Outplacement services for employees who have been laid off due to a plant closure, downsizing or a reduction-in-force
- Subsidizing a portion of a qualified employee's wage for a short time while the employer provides on-the-job training.
- Upskilling or reskilling for new and current employees through pre-apprenticeship, registered apprenticeship, and incumbent worker
- Seminars on the latest topics HR related

Employers can use the Workforce Solutions website to list jobs with WorkInTexas.com, find labor market information, and access information about employment laws.

The Board's Employer Service Division provides staff to committees with members from high-growth, high-demand industries willing to work together to address the industry's immediate and long-term workforce needs.

- These industry committees help the Workforce Board by adding real-time advice to statistical data about the workforce needs of companies in the industry.
- These committee recommendations allow the Board to direct our resources to train people for the jobs in demand now and later.

Employer Service staff also work with the committees to identify outside resources to meet the needs identified by the industry committee.

Economic Development Partners are Important

The Board’s philosophy is that workforce development is a component of economic development, and all our activities reflect this philosophy. We measure our ability to help create jobs and help employer customers become more competitive. Our work with economic development organizations includes partnering on industry-based work groups, sharing planning and evaluation information, coordinating grant proposals, and assisting in bringing new businesses to the region and retraining and supporting existing businesses.

The Board works closely with economic development partners to identify long-range issues such as the changing demographics of the region’s workforce and a trend to lower educational achievement; and shorter-range challenges such as funding transportation solutions in Waller County so employers can get the workers they need. We work collaboratively with many economic development organizations to coordinate workforce programs in the region, our work with Greater Houston Partnership’s UpSkill Houston continues to provide promising outcomes to meet the needs of businesses in our workforce area.

With technology, and one-stops using virtual platforms for meetings, events, marketing and outreach, our relationships with economic development organizations will continue to grow and open opportunities to strengthen links between industry and individuals.

Meaningful Assistance to Help Unemployed

Individuals filing for unemployment insurance are customers our one-stop system works quickly to help return to work. Career office staff must promptly assist claimants and employers wishing to use career office resources to transmit materials to TWC for claims and appeals adjudication purposes. Customers are given access to space and telecommunications equipment necessary to participate in unemployment insurance hearings. Additionally, staff supports customers with dedicated resources – computers, telephones, and printed materials about claim filing and unemployment insurance rights and responsibilities.

Wagner-Peyser–funded employer service staff located in the career offices serves all customers. However, unemployment insurance claimants are an imperative get-back-to-work population and staff are charged with improving claimant reemployment by connecting claimants with an array of relevant services and programs.

Among them, the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program is a DOLETA-approved statistical model that uses claimant characteristics, as well as Board-level economic indicators, to assess the likelihood of a claimant exhausting unemployment insurance benefits.

On a weekly basis, claimants who received their first unemployment insurance payment and likely to exhaust their unemployment insurance benefits are profiled in WorkInTexas.com and assigned a profile score. WorkInTexas.com includes a feature that allows Workforce Solutions staff to schedule events with openings for RESEA customers to attend an orientation. We have developed a team of twenty staff dedicated to work with UI customers who have been called in. Our Reemployment Team provide service to UI customers in response to our call-in letters. The team is responsible for ensuring claimants receive:

- An unemployment insurance eligibility assessment,
- An employment plan,
- WorkInTexas.com registration,
- Customized Labor Market Information,
- Information about Workforce Solutions, and
- Additional service based on assessment of the customer's needs

To help unemployed individuals, within our Board strategy is a fundamental part to support high demand industries by making significant investments within our system to scale capacity to serve them. The Board employs full-time staff as Liaisons who will work with key sectors such as Construction/Crafts and Advanced Manufacturing/Supply Logistics, Healthcare, and energy.. Their goal is to partner with specific employers in high growth, high skill industry sectors within our Board area. The Liaisons work to meet employers' current and future workforce needs by coordinating regional agency services, training and education to fulfill skill needs. Industry Liaisons work to support changes in structures and policies to more closely align and integrate workforce, education and economic development programs to better serve Gulf Coast employers. They provide Board representation and expertise to economic development and industry-led workforce initiatives.

In addition, the Board supports customers who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs or growing micro businesses by developing customized trainings with local nonprofits and educational institutions. Small business development centers, for example, are a rich source of training, and the Board supports several successful grant proposals for funds such as the U.S. Health and Human Services' Job Opportunities for Low Income (JOLI) program.

The Board engages businesses to work with us to allow our employer services team to develop incumbent worker trainings with education opportunity partners in adult education to meet their employment needs. We also promote registered apprenticeships and on-the-job trainings to coordinate opportunities for businesses and those receiving unemployment insurance connect. We use virtual platforms to ensure individuals receiving unemployment insurance are aware of trainings and work opportunities to find a job, explore a new career, or start a business.

Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

The Board creates plans and develops strategies to maximize the coordination and avoid duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services, and other services provided through our one-stop delivery system. Wagner-Peyser funded employer service staff receives professional development training at new employee orientation and yearly continuing education classes and on an as needed basis, to ensure staff is prepared and able to provide quality one-stop services to both customers and employers. These trainings reinforce the policies and regulations needed to avoid duplication of services and ensure continuous quality improvement. Board performance is monitored closely; as needs arise, we may respond with staff development activities, such as classroom instruction, webinars, and one-on-one coaching.

The Board participates in the “Texas Model” for the service delivery of employment service assistance, which restructured the oversight and responsibility for employment service state merit staff. Under the Texas Model, the Board has full responsibility for day-to-day guidance of state employment service staff. TWC maintains administrative responsibility, but career office managers share responsibility for directing daily work assignments, assigning individual performance goals, coordinating hiring, initiating disciplinary action, and evaluating staff performance.

Employment service staff receive mandatory professional development training at new employee orientation and biannually and annually, and on an as needed basis, to ensure staff are prepared to provide high quality services to both customers and employers. Employment service staff receive training on how to conduct a job search, customer service, and how to use WorkInTexas.com.

This model places the responsibility of employment service staff with the career offices to support our integrated workforce system. Many of the services provided by employment service and WIOA are similar; the Texas Model allows Boards and providers the opportunity and flexibility to design integrated services, regardless if the program funding is different. All direction and guidance given to employment service employees must be consistent with the provisions of state and federal laws, rules, and regulations governing the administration and delivery of the Employment Service program. TWC provides technical support and quality assurance to Boards and contracted service providers through local Integrated Service Area Managers (ISAMs). ISAMs serve as the TWC supervisors for Texas Model staff. ISAMs coordinate all Texas Model staff-related actions with Boards and their contractors.

The Board’s use of Wagner-Peyser funds to support unemployment insurance claimants benefits from the joint-administration of the unemployment insurance program and workforce services offered by Texas Workforce Commission. This team approach allows efficient coordination between programs. Computer linkages coordinate and provide services between WorkInTexas.com and the unemployment insurance automation system. These links ensure that unemployment insurance claimants who are required to register have done so, and that unemployment insurance claimants comply with their work search requirements.

The Board strives to assist and place individuals in jobs before they reach long-term unemployment. The Board has a performance measure that tracks success in placing customers in employment within 10 weeks of their initial monetary eligibility. We achieve this measure by providing quality job posting and job development activities coupled with increased outreach to participants to ensure better applications and quality referrals. Gulf Coast uses the RESEA program to help claimants find new employment as quickly as possible.

Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management

The Board recognizes the importance of an integrated, technology-enabled system for our providers to carry out core programs. Additionally, the Board uses data to drive decision-making and has made availability and evaluation of data a key part of its strategic development and oversight processes. We continue discovering ways to use technology to improve our transition and implementation of our paperless case management system and offer online resources to customers.

The Board and one-stop career offices have access to a number of State provided labor market information and career exploration resources to help meet customer employment needs such as:

- TexasLMI.com website provides employment statistics to help customers and employers remain up to date on current trends and make informed decisions accordingly
- TexasWages.com allows users to examine wage data for an area – or within an industry in an area – and to compare that wage with other areas of the state.
- TexasRealityCheck.com is one of the more frequently used resources in the LMCI toolbox and features a widely used iPhone application. The website allows students to make lifestyle choices, create a budget, and then view the occupations and preferred education levels that support those choices.
- TXCREWS.org Texas Consumer Resource on Education and Workforce Statistics (Texas CREWS) is a dashboard tool that provides information about Texas’ public two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions; evaluates 30 programs/institutions on the basis of resulting wages and student loan levels; and enables parents and students to make informed decisions about college and thereby obtain the best return on their educational investment.
- WorkInTexas.com is Texas’ Labor Exchange System, as mandated by the Wagner-Peyser Act, and operated in cooperative effort with JobCentral, the National Labor Exchange system. WorkInTexas.com is a comprehensive online job search resource and job matching system developed and maintained by TWC, and provides:
 - extensive job matching options based on skills and experience;
 - links to labor market and career development information; and
 - free, 24-hour-a-day access.

Employers can post jobs, search résumés, recruit candidates, get labor market information, and receive a variety of other services available through a network of statewide career offices. Individuals seeking a new job, different job, or an additional job can post their résumé, search job listings (including Texas state agency jobs), obtain employer contact information to apply for jobs, get information about the job market, and receive a variety of other services also available through career offices.

The Board uses the following technology-enabled intake and case management information systems to carry out

programs under WIOA by one-stop partners:

- The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) – TWIST is the integrated intake, eligibility, case management, and reporting system for employment and training services. It was designed as a central repository for customer information. TWIST ultimately decreases duplication within and across the Texas workforce system while streamlining the provision of services to customers. It enables career office staff to enter intake information for customers only once for multiple employment and training programs and to retrieve it statewide. TWIST also includes interfaces with other automated systems – WorkInTexas.com, the unemployment insurance benefits system, and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission’s system.
- Child Care Attendance Automation – Child Care Attendance Automation (CCAA) allows parents to record attendance using a swipe card at a point-of-service device located at the authorized childcare facility. Parents also can use an interactive voice response system using the authorized childcare provider’s phone. Attendance recorded through CCAA is transferred to TWIST on a weekly basis, and TWIST is used to process payments to providers based on the CCAA attendance records.
- Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) – TEAMS is Texas’ state-of-the-art, web- enabled system that maintains student-level data, including demographic, assessment, and outcome data, as well as class, site, program, and provider information. TEAMS users can analyze class, site, or program information with standard reports generated at the user level. TEAMS provide a wide range of information about adult education, including snapshots of student and program performance, personnel qualifications, and staff development activities.
- Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting – TWC’s online Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) system is a web application used by Boards to draw funds from their program allocations. All financial transactions are handled through this online system, and Boards are no longer required to submit paper documents or Excel spreadsheets. CDER has significantly decreased manual processing and greatly improved the reporting of data to all parties.
- Quarterly Wage Records – TWC makes extensive use of quarterly wage records, both for required and ad hoc reporting. TWC uses Texas wage records and those obtained from other states through the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) for required WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) reporting. A fuller discussion of the use of quarterly wage records is contained in the Program Data section of this plan.
- DocuWare – DocuWare is a document storage system for our customer information. It serves as a repository for customer files that cannot be entered into TWIST and is used widely by career offices to streamline processes and document important information.
- Appointy – Appointy is an online appointment software used by career offices to streamline appointment setting. Currently used virtually, in-person in the future.

- PandaDoc – PandaDoc is an electronic signature software that increases efficiency by facilitating simultaneous document circulation. The software is currently in use by the board and may be implemented systemwide after an initial trial period end.
- GovDelivery – GovDelivery is a mass communications tool that allows for prompt and wide dissemination of text email messages to individuals and employers.
- Microsoft Teams/Zoom – Microsoft Teams and Zoom are online meeting platforms that are used system-wide and daily to maintain effective communication and workflow.
- Parking Lot Internet Access — Internet access was expanded to the parking lots of most career offices to allow customers to have uninterrupted access to job applications, email, classes and other online services amid the pandemic.
- No mobile units currently; however, providers work with community partners offering service delivery using mobile units to carry out core programs.

We take our responsibilities seriously regarding our role in our workforce area to make sure providers are compliant with local, state, and federal regulations regarding non-discrimination, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Board guides our one-stop service delivery system to ensure continuous improvement of providers to meet employment needs of local employers, workers, and those experiencing unemployment. The Board advances the use of technology and technology-enabled systems to carry out core programs and workforce activities. In the next section, you will learn how the Board coordinates local workforce activities and how we promote entrepreneurial trainings and microenterprise services.

PART 5: WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES



The Board’s philosophy is that workforce development is a component of economic development, and all our activities reflect this philosophy. Since its inception, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board has been committed to building a demand-driven workforce system. We have consistently demonstrated this commitment through policies, actions, and partnerships.

Economic development organizations are key partners in our region. In many cases, the Board is a member of these organizations. In other cases, such as our industry groups, the economic development organizations are key members of Board-sponsored projects. Our work with economic development organizations includes partnering on industry-based work groups, sharing planning and evaluation information, coordinating grant proposals, and assisting in bringing new businesses to the region and retraining and supporting existing businesses. The Board works closely with economic development partners to identify long-range and shorter-range challenges so employers can get the talent they need. We also work together to identify opportunities for the region to grow good jobs and help develop solutions to barriers to growth, such as the need for improved schools.

One of our key partnerships is The Greater Houston Workforce Development Workgroup, a regional collaborative led by Greater Houston Partnership – UpSkill Houston, Gulf Coast Workforce Board and United Way of Greater Houston. The Greater Houston Workforce Development Workgroup aligns and improves workforce services in

nonprofits by investing in meaningful partnerships with industry, education, and workforce organizations. They seek to meet the current and emerging needs of our businesses and local communities so all can thrive in our growing economy.

Other economic development organizations that we work with include, but not limited to: Central Fort Bend Chamber, Alliance Sealy Chamber of Commerce, Brazosport Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce, Asian Chamber of Commerce, Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce, Galveston Chamber of Commerce, Greater Houston Black Chamber of Commerce, The Woodlands Area Chamber of Commerce, Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Baytown Chamber of Commerce, Greater Conroe/Lake Conroe Area Chamber of Commerce, Houston East End Chamber of Commerce, Katy Area Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Alliance for Brazoria County, Bay City Chamber of Commerce, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, Houston Intercontinental Chamber of Commerce, Pearland Economic Development Corporation, Wharton Chamber of Commerce, Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce, Palacios Chamber of Commerce, The Woodlands Area Economic Development Council, Pearland Chamber of Commerce, Columbus Chamber of Commerce, Economic Alliance Houston Port Region, Galveston County, and the Greater Houston Area Disability Chamber of Commerce.

The Board also recognizes that small businesses, both entrepreneurship and microenterprises, are vital to the continued growth of the Texas economy. Entrepreneurial activities create jobs and income. Entrepreneurial businesses support the Texas economy and increase employment opportunities for Texans. To stimulate economic growth in this area, The Board will host bootcamp trainings for young adults and women who are Texas residents interested in creating, sustaining, or expanding a business in Texas. These target audiences were chosen because they tend to be underrepresented in the entrepreneur category.

This year we also partnered with the Houston-Galveston Area Local Development Corporation to outreach and offer The Board services to hundreds of small businesses impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

Outplacement Activity Coordination

Our Outplacement Service team, known as Rapid Response, works with employers that face challenges that can influence the workforce structure within a company. The Board will receive this information one of two ways; 1.) From the Texas Workforce Commission; or 2.) From the employer directly. Once the announcement is made from a business, our Rapid Response team begins to work by reaching out to the employer for additional details and provide solutions to the company.

Rapid Response or outplacement service aids employees once they have been notified there will be a layoff or downsizing. Services can include but are not limited to things such as resume reviews, job search advice, interview training, personalized coaching, career assessments, and how to register in our Work in the Texas system to find employment. It's a crucial step to receive resources that can help individuals through challenging times in their professional careers.

As a Board, we try to help transfer individuals going through a layoff quickly. We do this by working with other employers in the area who are willing to take individuals with the same skillset or upskill these individuals to fill their current needs. In addition, we can offer training for these individuals that can help offset the out-of-pocket

expense to employers and/or employees. It's critical to help people find employment quickly to avoid downtime between jobs. Our goal as a Board is to continue to find ways that we can improve our resources such as literature and education, so it will support a better experience for both employees and employers.

Youth Activities and Services

The Board shares pertinent information with educators, parents and students about career exploration and what steps young people need to be taking now so they are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow. Collectively, we focus our efforts on making sure that tomorrow's job candidates are equipped with the skills and knowledge they will need.

The Board offers young people, whether they are in school, have finished school, or have left school, a wealth of opportunities to get their future started on the right foot. We help with career planning, finding employment opportunities in the local area, completing a job application, marketing their skills and talents to employers, and instructions on how to excel at an interview.

Our goal is to support the region's 76 school districts in their efforts to reduce dropout rates, target resources to prepare youth for the good jobs of the future and provide both parents and students information they can use in selecting course work and career opportunities. The Board's Education Committee provides guidance and oversight and is fully committed to assisting schools in producing more graduates with the skills employers want.

The region's 76 school districts are key partners in addressing many of the long-term shortages of skilled workers in our region. The Board has an existing relationship with many school districts, many career offices work directly with middle and high schools in their communities. The career offices are charged with providing service to young people in their schools.

In addition to serving individual youth, many of whom are out of school, the Board continues to work with schools broadly to provide good labor market information to schools, parents, and young people. We continue to expand and improve our labor market information and career planning products which include the High Skill, High Growth Guide, Industry and Occupation profiles, and When I Grow Up.

The region's major universities have a role in the workforce system and are likely to have a greater one in the future as the Board's industry-based work continues and expands.

Additionally, the Board has an excellent relationship with our community college partners. The colleges provide educational programs leading to degrees and technical certificates, adult education and English as second language instruction, and other training. They work with the Board in developing customized training for employers and consult with us in developing proposals related to workforce training. The colleges in the area are valuable partners in developing industry-based initiatives to address workforce issues in the region.

A successful youth model we look to scale are the partnerships between our Career Education/Outreach Specialists, Regional Facilitators, Student HireAbility Navigators, Vocational Rehabilitation partners and career office staff to ensure youth in our region have options to receive guidance to make informed career decisions, access to training and employment using technology and social media live events.

Listed are the available workforce activities for youth and youth with disabilities:

NextGen Youth

We procured several youth contractors to provide innovative approaches to serve opportunity youth (young people between the ages of 16 to 24 years old who are disconnected from school and work). NextGen contractors provide comprehensive, integrated employment and education service for the next generation of workforce living in the Gulf Coast region. They:

- Contact and recruit young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who want and need help in finding pathways to good jobs
- Provide a comprehensive assessment of the young adult’s skills, abilities, and interests; offer them relevant career information and education; and help them build and carry out realistic employment career plans
- Help manage employment and career plans by providing financial assistance for education, skills instruction, and family wrap-around supports; and delivering consistent and continuing counseling and mentoring support to achieve success, and
- Connect customers with work-based learning opportunities – including apprenticeships and other earn-and-learn experiences

1. Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries (ACAM):

A collaborative of local organizations each unique to the communities they serve. The ACAM Network advances collaboration to create community-wide solutions to fight homelessness and hunger, and help young adults build independence and resiliency.

2. Career Team:

Using technology and innovative practices, Career Team is accelerating the NextGen youth condition with a “Build Your Community” model that implements virtual (remote) hubs in our priority service areas. They will truly bring the services into the communities for ease of access to WFS services through their HUBS and virtual Kiosks.

3. SERJobs:

A long-time youth contractor of Workforce Solutions, SERJobs connects NextGen youth with career pathways into industries such as Welding, Banking, Construction and Green Energy. They will provide work experience and apprenticeship opportunities to the youth as well. SERJobs will have a focus on the outlying counties to ensure that our rural young adults have access to Workforce Solutions’ services. Help young people get a job, keep a job, or get a better job and build their skills for future job and career transitions.

Entrepreneurial Boot Camps – Youth and Young Adults

Camp for youth and young adults - We will conduct youth and young adult entrepreneurial boot camps to connect young people wanting to start or expand their business to existing efforts and tech incubators in the region. The events will be scheduled for a minimum of seven hours and will include resources in the community and an ongoing opportunity for support. We have identified multiple community partners to solicit their help in developing the events. We will procure a vendor who will be responsible for a guest speaker for the event, virtual location, and the development of all digital curriculum. We will further ensure the information developed is available in both English and Spanish. The trainings will be totally virtual and will include business creation, business plans, ownership, support and expansion. The goal of the bootcamp is to help entrepreneurial young people create, sustain, or grow their small businesses which create jobs and income vital to the continued growth of the Texas economy.

Second Chance Jobs Initiative

We continue to work with the City of Houston Re-entry program. Career and Recovery- Incarcerated Veterans Program, WorkFaith Connection Re-entry program and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice working primarily with adults and My Brother's Keeper will provide support. The mission of the Community Re-Entry Network is to work in partnership with the community to assess, plan, and implement effective strategies to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and successfully assist and support re-entry individuals in their transition in becoming productive, contributing members of the Houston community.

We work by securing work experience sites for up to ten weeks, wages up to \$12.00 hourly immediately upon return to the community. We will also make sure the individuals are aware of available training to support their efforts in finding employment. We offer financial aid and work-related support service to assist the individuals with needed clothing, transportation, training and certification/licenses to prepare for employment.

Youth Diversion Opportunity

Gulf Coast Workforce Board provides a pre-plea opportunity during the pre-trial stage of the criminal justice process for young adult offenders to participate in a restorative program decreasing the jail population. These young adults are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and an increasing number of disengaged young people become adults suffering from a lifetime of low levels of education, chronic unemployment, recidivism and long-term incarceration. In response, this collaborative project seeks to address a major barrier to social and economic inclusion by diverting offenders from jail to opportunities for paid work experience, career education, and job training.

The workforce activity consists of defendants who have been in jail for over 3 days and have not been able to make a surety bond for a low-level felony offense. A District Judge, Sitting or Visiting, who is interested in assisting the youthful adult offender, will preside over the docket housed in the courtroom in the Joint Processing Center.

Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, and Pretrial Services will attend the docket where defendants will be considered for a Pre-plea Diversion program and a Personal Bond along with a connection to services. The program concentrates on restorative justice principals emphasizing school attendance, and/or employment and employment related services as the offender restores him/herself and becomes a productive member of the

community.

Additionally, in this space, the Board has:

- Discussed the possibility of participating on the Foster Youth docket
- Discussed collaboration with My Brother's Keeper to serve Harris County courts
- Presented overview of Workforce Solutions services to DFPS court network

TWH – Jobs

The goal of this workforce activity is to work in partnership with Coalition for the Homeless and The Way Home – Rapid Rehousing to quickly re-house homeless individuals and families. Our goal is to mitigate the negative effects of individuals experiencing hunger and homelessness by offering services to help them secure career opportunities that will provide livable wages to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

We provide work-based learning opportunities and place participants in work experiences for ten weeks, working up to 30 hours weekly. Additionally, we ensure these individuals are aware of available training to support their efforts in finding unsubsidized employment. We provide financial aid and support services needed to assist homeless individuals with work-related support services to prepare them for lasting careers.

Supported Employment - Job Coach Project

An individual with a disability may have the ability to perform a job but may lack the capacity to be successful due to other factors. A job coach is an individual with the training and certifications required to work alongside an individual with a disability for a prescribed number of hours to help them successfully navigate areas of the workforce where they may have difficulty participating because of a disability.

We assist individuals by providing a job coach in conjunction with work-based learning and/or on the job training. The goal of the workforce activity is to assist these individuals with valuable work experience, exposure to work and connecting them to other resources that can lead to long term sustainable employment. This effort will provide a basis for serving individuals with different types of abilities utilizing standard operating processes and allow us to build staff capacity in serving people with disabilities. We build a framework for continued support that leads to employment.

We will coordinate and collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation to ensure we are not duplicating service and to leverage funds to serve as many customers as possible.

Student HireAbility Navigators

The Student HireAbility Navigator grant is a three-year project that began in July 2018. This grant provides funding for two Student HireAbility Navigators who serve as resources in the Gulf Coast Region to support, expand, and enhance the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are in the early phases of preparing for transition to postsecondary education and employment.

Summer Earn and Learn

Summer Earn and Learn offers eligible students ages 14-22 with disabilities an opportunity to test their skills in the real world with paid internship opportunities at local employers. Summer Earn & Learn connects students with disabilities to successful work experiences, which helps them gain job skills and build confidence.

Paths for Texas

In November 2019, Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast was awarded a grant that runs through December 2022, provided by the Wal-Mart Foundation to initiate and expand retail up skilling opportunities for businesses and their current workforce, and develop career pathways to unemployed individuals seeking to transition into or out of the Retail Industry.

COVID-19 National Dislocated Worker Program

The goal of the 2020 COVID-19 NDW Program is to provide temporary employment to individuals who became unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or who are long-term unemployed.

Youth Job Skills Initiative

The Youth Job Skills Initiative focuses on supporting youth without or may be at risk of not attaining a secondary credential. The goal is to assist youth in their completion of a secondary credential and provide a seamless connection to work base learning opportunities in the following sectors: construction, healthcare, information technology.

Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative

Workforce Solutions supports in an advisory role and through our career office network The Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative. This workforce activity addresses the challenges identified in a Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research study that found a high percentage of Gulf Coast youth/young adults aged 16-24 do not have a high school diploma or have high school diplomas but lack access to training and higher education. We work with community-based organizations, community colleges, philanthropy and employers to engage this population to improve their opportunities to succeed and have better futures.

Career Education and Outreach Specialists

Workforce Solutions will work with 50 schools across five independent school districts providing labor market and career data-including information about access to and instruction on how to use multiple Texas Workforce Commission labor market/career information tools-to support job exploration, counseling and guidance for students.

Education Opportunity Connector

Education Opportunity Connector brings our career offices and adult education providers together through shared Workforce Solutions services. Partnerships have been designed to foster and cultivate relationships to strengthen connections that will help career offices and adult education providers better understand what services are available to customers. The education opportunity connector provides opportunities to helping customers obtain

the tools they need in order to thrive and compete in the Gulf Coast labor market.

Workforce Connector

Workforce Connector bridges our career offices and United Way THRIVE partners together to work collectively to help some of our most vulnerable customers find the help they need. These relationships offer opportunities to promote core services and share resources. Partnerships are continuously strengthening their relationships to establish stronger connections that will help customers better understand what services are available. Workforce Connector provides opportunities to help customers get the resources they need in order to compete and prosper in the Gulf Coast labor market.

Recruiting remains a challenge and weakness. To strengthen this weakness, Gulf Coast Workforce Board staff will focus on increasing relationships with the community and provide technical assistance to career offices to support them in advancing the vision and goals of the Board.

Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

The Gulf Coast region is rich in workforce development partners. We have ten community colleges systems, more than a dozen university campuses, numerous economic development and business organizations, a host of state and local agencies, and a wide variety of community and faith-based organizations. Together, these institutions represent a rich infrastructure for the Gulf Coast workforce system.

With our providers, we offer a wide range of services to employer and individual customers. We also partner with community-based organizations to integrate adult education services with their mentoring, life-skills training, financial education, English as a second language, childcare, transportation, and other work support service. Some of these organizations are paid vendors for our system while many others work informally with the Board jointly assisting customers.

The Board created Education Opportunity Connector, a strategic initiative to continue intentional efforts to coordinate and integrate secondary and post-secondary education programs. Education Opportunity Connector brings our career office and adult education networks together through shared Workforce Solutions services. Partnerships have been designed to foster and cultivate relationships to strengthen connections that will help career offices and adult education providers better understand what services are available to customers and create warm handoffs between partners to better serve customers. Outreach Specialists work with adult education providers to ensure students are aware of education and training opportunities in our workforce system. The education opportunity connector provides a blueprint regarding how to integrate our system to help customers obtain the resources and skills they need to compete and thrive in our region's labor market.

Child Care and Early Learning

The Board partners with our early childhood education quality provider to help parents in the Gulf Coast Region find quality childcare options. Through local match agreements, the Board coordinates with school districts and Head Start/Early Head Start providers to support and expand early education and care and to improve the quality and quantity of care available to working parents. The Board has allocated over \$4 million to support early education and care which provides support to nearly 23,000 low-income working families to help with their early

education expenses.

The Board recognizes that choosing a high-quality program can have a significant impact on a child's readiness for and success in kindergarten and later grades. Children who attend high quality programs can make significant gains in their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Therefore, the Board will continue to support unique projects to enhance after school and year-around care. The projects include efforts to improve the quality of learning in a variety of early education situations through scholarships for quality training, pilot projects to increase teacher pay, support for parents of young children, and support of Texas Rising Star.

In Texas, childcare programs can pursue higher quality through several avenues. Texas Rising Star is one of these options for childcare providers, and for parents looking for high quality childcare for their children. The Texas Rising Star program is a quality-based childcare rating system of childcare providers participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's subsidized childcare program. Beginning with FY23, all providers receiving payments through Workforce Solutions will need to participate in TRS. TRS Certification is available to Licensed Center and Licensed and Registered Child Care Home providers who meet the certification criteria. Additionally, childcare providers participating in the Texas School Ready! grant program provide quality childcare services focusing on preschool children.

The Board will ensure that financial aid for childcare, as a support to parents who are working or in-school, is accessible online and through local career offices, adult education providers, community and youth projects. The Board will seek to ensure safe and stable childcare/early education is available throughout the region to help families become independent from or avoid becoming dependent upon public assistance, leverage private and public funds to maximize the resources available for childcare financial aid, and ensure childcare financial aid is integrated into and fully a part of The Board' comprehensive service to help individuals get a job, keep a job or get a better job. To assist with these efforts, the Board hired a new Senior Manager to oversee early education and strategic partnerships.

Transportation and Other Support Services

The Board offers support services when we believe they will help a customer go to work quickly, keep an existing job, or advance in a career. Types of support service we provide includes:

- Work Support – assistance to help customers accept a job offer or keep a job.
- Work Search Support – assistance to help customers look for work.
- Education Support – assistance to help customers obtain education or training to meet the expectations of employers in our region.
- Our financial aid categories include:
 - Education related support
 - Early education or childcare support

- Transportation related support
- Health care or health related support
- Work-related support

These types of support may be offered based on a staff assessment of the customer needs while completing the employment plan, or because of a customer request. When a customer asks for financial aid, we evaluate the request based on our understanding of their need to get a job, keep a job, or get a better job and our guidelines for providing financial aid.

Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)

The Board works closely with adult education providers to ensure adult education and literacy activities are carried out in accordance to local guidance, state and federal regulations, and services are coordinated with other workforce activities.

The Board assists adult education and literacy providers with coordinating services offered within our one-stop delivery system to help students acquire the skills needed to earn a high school equivalency, enter college or career training so they can succeed in the workforce.

The Board oversees the Gulf Coast Adult Education Consortium that is currently comprised of 14 adult education providers and one lead agency. Adult education and literacy services are for adult learners and service is also available to young people who have stopped out of high school and have not earned an equivalency diploma.

The Gulf Coast Adult Education Consortium served over 50,000 customers in ESL, Adult Basic and Secondary Education, Career Pathways and Transitions courses. Career Pathways courses are uniquely designed to meet the workforce needs of employers and to enable customers to secure industry relevant certification and obtain or retain employment in in-demand occupations. These courses may involve integrated education and training (IET), which is concurrent enrollment of customers in Adult Education and workforce training, workplace literacy, or work-based training in collaboration with employers.

The Board created Education Opportunity Connector, an initiative intended to strengthen relationships and promote integration within our one-stop system. Education Opportunity Connector brings our career offices and adult education providers together through shared Workforce Solutions services. Partnerships have been designed to foster and cultivate relationships to strengthen connections that will help career offices and adult education providers better understand what services are available to customers. The education opportunity connector provides customers opportunities to gain the skills needed in order to thrive and compete in our region's labor market.

The Board uses the steps below to attract, identify, and enroll eligible individuals to be served by Adult Education providers:

- AEL providers conduct PowerPoint presentations for staff and community about services available through AEL

- Bilingual flyers and/or marketing materials for each site listing times, locations, and types or classes as well as registration requirements and contact information

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) local recruiting, assessment and review process described below:

- Needs assessment
- AEL staff meet with community organizations and collaborating agencies within our service areas to determine the needs of the areas.
- Primary sites are then selected with the types of services students need most addressed. Central sites and class types are determined via our collaboration with our community partners and demonstration of student needs.
- Scheduling of services
- AEL Director or other Program staff meet with specific sites once they have been determined.
- Times and specific spaces available are reviewed with site managers so that calendars for services can be developed.
- Flyers and marketing materials are usually developed in both electronic and paper formats in Spanish/English/Chinese/Vietnamese as needed for sites and classes.
- Information regarding classes is first disseminated internally to each provider student services and Marketing departments.
- Information is next disseminated externally via both electronic and paper formats to program sites, nearby schools, churches, community organizations and centers, school districts in service areas, career offices, and other public buildings.
- Adult education providers have assigned staff members conduct presentations at public events within targeted service areas such as health fairs, career and college fairs, and other community outreach programs.
- Program information may also be sent to media outlets via press releases or via social media through the colleges and/or collaborating agencies about upcoming classes, registrations, and opportunities.
- This process will repeat itself with completion of each class session with new information being gathered from staff and students about evolving needs, scheduling of new services to address needs, and disseminating information as program changes are made.

Rolling admission

Adult education orientations are offered every two weeks. Adult education providers collect contact information including names, phone numbers, and class information from interested students. Additionally, the Board will

implement the new AEL Enrollment form to meet the requirements of the TEAMS 5.4.1 Release, which is required for enrolling students into adult education and literacy programs.

Students who are unable to enter classes due to space limitations or failing to meet eligibility at initial contact are referred to other adult education programs within our one-stop system or connected with community partners by referral.

Assessment and Eligibility

The Board provides guidance and information regarding student placement in instructional services, identify potential support services that students may need, and determine eligibility for adult education services.

Adult education providers conduct assessments are scheduled according to site needs. Baseline testing is scheduled once student needs are determined. Students are referred to attend assessment and/or registration events according to the class they are interested in attending. Students wanting to enter an ESL class are scheduled to be assessed with a state approved assessment such as the BEST Plus Oral Assessment and the BEST Literacy exam. Students are given an estimate of the amount of time needed to complete assessments in advance. Progress assessments are also schedule with students and/or instructors and are completed once students have completed the minimum number of instructional hours for testing. Adult education programs refer to the minimum hours required to complete progress testing on students. They also review the state assessment policy to ensure approved assessment tools are being utilized. Each adult education provider has an internal process in place for assigning students to class rosters based on needs, desires and test results. This takes place after assessing student's needs - location, time, and type of class desired.

The Board works closely with providers and offers guidance and support working together to carry out workforce investment activities. The Board has coordinates and develops initiatives to integrate adult education and literacy activities with workforce investment activities to meet the unique and diverse needs of the individuals and businesses we serve. Looking ahead, the next section will describe how we help the employment needs of underemployed and unemployed adults and youth.

PART 6: ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKERS, AND YOUTH SERVICES



The Board promotes the availability of employment and training activities to meet the employment needs of youth, adult, and dislocated workers in the Gulf Coast region. Our workforce system provides tailored services to assist those customers in entering the workforce, going back to work, continuing to work, or advancing in a career. As a first step, staff have conversations with customers about their work history, employment goals, and education or training. Staff analyze the information a customer gives us to help build a plan for how they can get a job, keep a job or get a better job using our service. Sometimes a customer may request, or staff recommend, using testing or assessment instruments to assist the customer in making their plan.

Testing and assessment instruments may include:

- Personality assessments - used to assess personality characteristics that affect behaviors in personal and social relationships.
- Cognitive ability (intelligence) or achievement assessments - used to assess verbal, nonverbal, and psychomotor abilities or mastery of knowledge in a particular content area.
- Interest and aptitude (career development) assessments - used to assess likes, dislikes, and patterns of

interest that may apply to (or be representative of) specific occupations.

Career offices use the following testing and assessment instruments for youth, adult and dislocated workers:

- Assessments available in WIT:
 - Yeah, I Can Do That!
 - Sharpest Tool
 - Find Your Path
 - Choose Your Values
- Other Assessments used:
 - Kiersey Temperament Test
 - O*NET Interest Profiler
 - TABE

Eligible adult and dislocated workers may receive two levels of service:

Career Services

Career services are available to any customer who wants or needs these services. They may be provided electronically or by staff. Career services are designed to help customers get a job, keep a job, or get a better job. Career Services include the following:

- Job openings/listings
- Placement services
- Employment counseling and career planning
- Outreach, intake (including worker profiling), and orientation to information and other services available through Workforce Solutions;
- Assessment of skills levels, including English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and support service needs;
- Support services
- Computer access
 - Internet job search
 - Computerized job search software tutorials
 - E-mail

- Resume preparation
- Job search assistance (referral to job openings, FAX, Telephone)
- Labor Market Information
- Information on support services for working families including information on available and affordable childcare
- Job Search Seminars
 - Resume tips
 - Interviewing tips
 - Networking
 - Landing that First Job
 - Rebranding Your Skills
- Financial literacy
- Internships and work experience opportunities
- Online Learning
- Follow-up services

Training Services

Basic Skills include adult basic education classes, parenting classes, English as a Second Language instruction, job readiness and general computer literacy training (ex: Microsoft Office Products). If you need to brush up on your basic skills, learn English, or prepare for a GED, there are several programs in the community available at no charge. Our career office financial aid specialists can help you find one. Workforce Solutions can also pay for GED testing.

Career Training refers to all courses or programs that prepare you for a specific occupation. This includes courses of study leading to associate and bachelor’s degrees. In addition, there are many short-term, fast paced (Fast-Track) courses in basic construction skills such as dry-walling, plumbing, welding and HVAC installation.

Career Advancement Training consists of short-duration courses or seminars to help you gain additional skills and/or advance within your occupation. Examples of Career Advancement Training include SAP training, additional welding training (MIG, TIG, Fluxcore, etc.), and Network + training.

Talent Development Activities are new worker custom trainings and are class-sized or cohort-sized skills training for a group of new hires or potential new hires, for a specific employer or group of employers. Based on the employer’s need, a curriculum is developed, and training is provided. Workforce Solutions may help support the cost of training for individuals who are referred by employers or recruited by Workforce Solutions Talent

Development staff.

Current Worker Training is designed for employees who currently work for the employer requesting assistance. This can include skill training, skill upgrading, basic education or combinations using available partners. Workforce Solutions may help support the cost of training for employees currently working for employers in the Gulf Coast region's target industries.

On-the-job training is a formal plan of skill and knowledge education related to a specific occupation that occurs while trainees are employed as entry-level hires. Workforce Solutions can provide funds to defray the cost of on-the-job training for employees who have been screened and determined eligible for Workforce Solutions funding.

Pre-apprenticeships are programs or set of strategies that lead into the path of a Registered Apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs and employer(s). Pre-apprenticeship may include a training component that can be funded by Workforce Solutions, if it is listed on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

Registered Apprenticeships are business-driven, earn-and-learn career pathways in which employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain work experience, classroom instruction, and a nationally recognized credential. The education component can be funded by Workforce Solutions if the training provider and program are listed on the ETPL.

Youth Workforce Investment Activities

The Board provides year-round employment and training services for young people in our region. Youth customers receive an objective assessment, including a review of academic and occupational skill levels and service needs; an individualized employment plan with an age-appropriate career goal with steps to help the customer stay in school, return to school or go to work. Individuals may receive referrals to education and training to prepare them for postsecondary educational opportunities and/or to prepare them for jobs. The Board also provides schools with informational guides to show linkages between academic and occupational learning.

Providers hire staff that are experienced working with youth that go into the community and remote areas to reach youth and youth with disabilities that might not come into a local career office.

Providers partner with multiple school districts to conduct employability skills sessions that help youth with disabilities prepare for an annual Transition Fair that takes place in the Houston area each Spring.

Providers work with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to help connect youth with disabilities with services offered through the local career office and our adult education and literacy network. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and workforce staff arrange to meet with young adults in the local career offices or virtually using an online platform.

The Board is currently involved in several projects that support youth with finding a job or enrolling an education or training program. These opportunities are listed below:

Youth Entrepreneurial Boot Camp

We propose to host youth and young adult entrepreneurial boot camps to connect women wanting to start or expand their business to existing efforts and tech incubators in the region. The goal of the bootcamp is to help entrepreneurial young people create, sustain, or grow their small business which will create jobs and income vital to the continued growth of the Texas economy.

Diversion Opportunity for the Youth

Diversion Opportunity for Youth provides a pre-plea opportunity during pre-trial stage of the criminal justice process for young adult offenders to participate in a restorative program decreasing the jail population. This pilot project seeks to address a major barrier to social and economic inclusion by diverting offenders from jail to opportunities for paid work experience, career education, and job training.

Supported Employment - Job Coach Pilot Project

An individual with a disability may have the ability to perform a job but may lack the capacity to be successful due to other factors. A job coach is an individual with the training and certifications required to work alongside an individual with a disability for a prescribed number of hours to help them successfully navigate areas of the workforce where they may have difficulty participating because of a disability.

Hireability Navigators

Hireability Navigators provides awareness to over 75 schools districts and all eligible students of pre-employment transitions available within the Houston-Galveston area. Partnerships are created between districts, vocational rehabilitation centers and potential employers to match students with work-based experiences.

Summer Earn & Learn

Summer Earn and Learn offers eligible students ages 14-22 with disabilities an opportunity to test their skills in the real world with paid internship opportunities at local employers. Summer Earn & Learn connects students with disabilities to successful work experiences, which helps them gain job skills and build confidence.

Career Education and Outreach Pilot

Workforce Solutions will work with 50 schools across five independent school districts providing labor market and career data-including information about access to and instruction on how to use multiple Texas Workforce Commission labor market/career information tools-to support job exploration, counseling and guidance for students.

Youth Job Skills Initiative

Youth job skills initiative provides services to young people at-risk of losing, and those that have not attained their secondary credential. Additionally, the initiative is providing work-based learning opportunities in the high skill, high demand sectors of the following industries: Construction, Healthcare, and Information Technology.

Priority to Recipients of Public Assistance and Low-Income Individuals

The Board uses policy to ensure that priority is given to individuals that are veterans, recipients of public assistance or earn income that meets eligibility requirements, and foster youth. The Board uses multiple fund categories to provide financial aid for those customers. As indicated in our policy, in addition to meeting basic eligibility and suitability requirements, Child Care and Development Block Grant dollars and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds require the use of a priority list for awarding financial aid dollars.

Funds with Priority Criteria

Child Care and Development Block Grant (financial aid for early education/care)

1. The following customers can receive financial aid using Child Care and Development Block Grant funds at any time:
 - a. Applicants for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash payments;
 - b. TANF recipients who are participating with us in employment and training activities;
 - c. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (food stamp) recipients who are participating with us in employment and training activities
 - d. Parents with children who are directly referred from a recognized pre-K or Head Start/Early Head Start partnership to a childcare provider to receive services in a contracted partnership program, subject to the availability of funding and the availability of lots at the partnership site
2. The following customers can receive financial aid using Child Care and Development Block Grant funds subject to the funds being available and, if there is a waiting list, in the following order:
 - a. Children in protective services;
 - b. Children of veterans or their spouses;
 - c. Children of a foster youth;
 - d. Children experiencing homelessness;
 - e. Children of active duty military personnel who are unable to enroll their children in military-funded childcare assistance programs;
 - f. Children of teen parents;
 - g. Children with disabilities;
 - h. Siblings in families already receiving our financial aid for one or more children;
 - i. Parents/Families who are students at, or employees of, a match partner

- j. Families participating in Workforce Solutions career, employment or education activities that require the financial aid to successfully complete their service;
- k. Parents with children who have received childcare financial aid based on eligibility for time-limited special projects (e.g., Service Industry Recovery or essential worker projects);
- l. Families who have lost financial aid for a child exceeding 40 unexplained absence days and have reapplied for aid;
- m. All other eligible families

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

For customers who are eligible as adults for financial aid paid with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act dollars, priority states:

- a. First, to individuals who are (i) recipients of public assistance, (ii) other low-income individuals, or (iii) individuals who are basic skills deficient in the following order of priority:
 - 1) Eligible veterans and eligible spouses
 - 2) Foster youth and former foster youth
 - 3) All other individuals who are (i) recipients of public assistance, (ii) other low-income individuals, or (iii) individuals who are basic skills deficient
- b. Second, to individuals at or below the self-sufficiency income levels in the following order of priority:
 - 1) Eligible veterans and eligible spouses
 - 2) Foster youth and former foster youth
 - 3) All other individuals at or below the self-sufficiency income levels

For customers who are eligible as dislocated workers for financial aid paid with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act dollars, priority states:

- a. First to eligible veterans or eligible spouses
- b. Second to foster youth and former foster youth
- c. Third to all other individuals eligible as dislocated workers

For customers who are eligible as youth for financial aid paid with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act dollars, priority states:

- a. First to eligible veterans or eligible spouses
- b. Second to foster youth and former foster youth
- c. Third to all other individuals eligible as youth

Applying Priority Criteria

Child Care and Development Block Grant Funds

1. We fund assistance with childcare expenses upon request for customers who meet participation requirements as TANF Applicants, TANF Choices, and SNAP E&T.
2. For all other customers, when there is a wait list, we fund assistance using the priorities described above.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

1. We fund assistance from the substantial assistance registry for eligible adults, dislocated workers or youth using the priority list.
2. We fund short-term assistance for any eligible adult or dislocated worker.

The Board cares passionately about helping customers with priority designations and will continue to provide guidance to the workforce system on how to carry out these requirements. Additionally, the Board will continue to monitor and support employment and training activities that are successful to help adult, dislocated workers, and youth live better lives in the communities they reside in. The next section describes how the Board uses a competitive process to award sub-grants and contracts for workforce activities.

PART 7: FISCAL AGENT, GRANTS, AND CONTRACTS



The Houston Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) serves as the grant recipient and administrative entity for the Gulf Coast’s regional public workforce system. In this role, H-GAC receives public workforce funds, contracts with various organizations and oversees the workforce system’s operation and performance.

In 2021, H-GAC solicited contracts for the regional workforce system. Several components of the system were contracted for only one year: employer service, early education quality, the financial aid support center, the financial aid payment office, and the professional development entity. In 2022, these components were re-procured, and contracts and transition contracts have been approved by the Board. There are new contractors operating the financial aid support center and providing early education quality services, and professional development is now provided through the Board staff.

On October 1, 2022, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board entered into a new Agency Board Agreement with the Texas Workforce Commission which includes procurement requirements. The Board will adhere to the agreement’s requirements and looks forward to working with the TWC regarding training and implementation of the new agreement.

PART 8: PERFORMANCE



This section identifies the local levels of performance providers are expected to meet or exceed in our region. This information is used to measure the performance in the Gulf Coast area and used as measures of success for our one-stop delivery system.

For 2023, the Board adopted 13 measures and set performance targets for 2023:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|
| More Competitive Employers | Market Share - (Oct. 2020 - Sept. 2021) | 31,500 |
| | Customer Loyalty - (Oct. 2020 - Sept. 2021) | 65% |
| Higher Incomes | Exiters with Earnings Gains of at least 20% | 37% |
| | Exiters employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit with Earnings Gains | 46% |
| More and Better Jobs | New jobs created as a direct result of partnering with other business organizations | 3,500 |
| | New jobs created with employers in industries targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a direct result of partnerships | 67% |
| | New jobs created in high-skill occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a direct result of partnerships | 45% |
| | Customers employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit | 78% |
| | Customers, unemployed at entrance, employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit | 75% |
| | Number of customers employed in 2nd and 3rd quarters after exit | 83% |
| | Customers employed in the entrance quarter | 68% |
| A Better Educated Workforce | Customers pursuing Education Credential that achieve one by quarter after exit | 70.1% |
| | Customers enrolled in post-secondary who earn certificate or degree by quarter after exit | 85% |

The Board uses these measures to determine how effective our one-stop delivery system is regarding maintaining high performance. The subsequent section will describe how training and services will be coordinated to meet these goals.

PART 9: TRAINING AND SERVICES



The Board establishes policies to ensure our region has an educated workforce to meet the employment needs of customers. Training services are an important component of our strategy to meet this need. The Board offers scholarships to help an individual get the basic or occupational skills and credentials they need to get a job, keep a job, or get a better job.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA), known by customers as scholarships, are available upon customer request and trainings are selected by customer choice. Customers who express an interest and need for training and education services, will meet with career office staff to discuss their career aspirations and training needs. We evaluate a customer's request based on their related experience, initial assessment results, and updated service plan. Once career office staff and the customer agree together that training is the best option, we discuss the financial aid process regarding receiving a scholarship to help a customer meet their service plan goals. In addition to funding scholarships, the Board will support customers with resources and services to ensure they are successful in completing their training.

Once the career pathway has been identified and training needs assessed, the customer will choose from our network providers within the selected career pathway to obtain the training they want and need. While all trainings are customer choice, individuals who receive education and training scholarships must use an approved

training vendor and choose a program from our Education and Training Vendor Network. Vendors may be colleges and universities, career schools, or unregulated (exempt) training providers.

These networks of education and training vendors are authorized to use our scholarship dollars for basic skills or upgrade occupational skills trainings. The Board provides scholarship support to occupations on the high-skill, high-growth list, using vendors on the Eligible Training Provider List.

Vendors are organized into the different categories below:

- **Basic Skills:** skills that generally equip customers with the ability and understanding necessary to enter the workforce and be an active participant in work across a variety of occupations such as:
 - Computer skills training - programs that teach customers non-job specific computer skills from introductory courses on how to use a computer to specific software products as the Microsoft Office Suite;
 - Adult basic education - programs that teach individuals basic literacy, high school equivalency preparation, or teach them how to speak, read or write English; and
 - Job readiness skills training - programs that teach customers non-technical skills and how to function in different work environments. Employers request to have their programs added when the vendors already listed with Workforce Solutions cannot meet the need.
- **Career Training:** courses or programs that prepare individuals for specific occupations. Programs must award a competency-based credential such as a certificate or degree. Examples of career training education are:
 - Registered Nursing, Welding, and Petroleum Engineering.
 - We will only approve career training programs that prepare individuals for employment in occupations on the Workforce Solutions High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations List.
- **Career Advancement:** career advancement training consists of short-duration workshops, seminars, or courses which equip customers with industry-recognized certifications and/or build on existing skills related to one of the Board's High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations. Career advancement training may include testing/assessment to demonstrate competency and may also include training to allow an individual to transition existing skills from one occupation or industry to another. Examples of career advancement training include SAP training, additional welding training (MIG, TIG, Fluxcore, etc.), and Network + training.
- **Registered Apprenticeship:** although there are no funds explicitly dedicated to Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs, Workforce Solutions works with employers by leveraging local and federal workforce development funds to encourage more employers to invest in Registered Apprenticeships (RA), and to prepare and support workers in RA. We support Registered Apprenticeship sponsors by leveraging ITA's to offset costs related to the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) component

of apprenticeship programs.

Soliciting Vendors

We solicit education and training vendors in order to fill specific gaps in our current training offerings identified as a part of our work with the region's employers. We promote the addition of vendors to our network through the following methods:

- Publicizing education and training vendor opportunities on our website <http://wrksolutions.com>;
- Soliciting vendors for specific needs related to an industry, occupation, or geographic location;
- Career Office staff may make requests to the Financial Aid Payment Office for a vendor not listed in the Education and Training Vendor Network; and/or
- We accept open applications from vendors at any time for basic skills training, career training for occupations on the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations list, and career advancement training related to the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations list.

At least once every year, we look at the vendors on our list and assess the availability of training in our three categories to ensure we have enough choices for customers.

Vendor Application Process

There are two different applications for education and training vendors:

1. Basic Skills vendors apply using the Basic Skills Training Application.
 - Training providers interested in becoming a vendor with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board should visit the wrksolutions.com website under the Become a Vendor Page. They may also contact the Financial Aid Payment Office at fa.office@wrksolutions.com or call 713-975-7409 extension 2942, to request and submit their application.
 - Once the Basic Skills Application and supporting documentation are received, the Financial Aid Payment Office will review the application according to the application checklist, which is included in the Basic Skills Application.
 - If the application is approved, the Financial Aid Payment Office will contact the vendor to sign a vendor agreement and complete a W-9 Form. A site visit is also scheduled to review compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and to ensure there is proper training equipment at the facility, related to the programs/courses being taught.
 - Approved basic education programs are listed on our website:
<https://www.wrksolutions.com/for-individuals/financial-aid/workforce-solutions-scholarships>.

2. Career Training and Career Advancement Training

Vendors apply using the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) [Board Tool](#).

There is a two-step application process for career training and career advancement vendor applicants:

- The first step requires the vendor's main campus to be in our region. The vendor must also provide their regulation status and evidence of partnerships with local employers associated with the program(s) they are submitting for approval. They must then complete the Board Tool (application) and submit the state required documents to the Financial Aid Payment Office at fa.office@wrksolutions.com. These requirements must be met, or the application cannot be submitted to the Texas Workforce Commission Eligible Training Provider Helpdesk (ETP Helpdesk).
- Once the program is submitted to the ETP Helpdesk by the Financial Aid Payment Office, the training provider will receive a student data report request from the ETP Helpdesk and will need to follow the instructions provided to submit the student data report to the ETP Helpdesk. This information is needed for the application to be approved. The process typically takes between two and six weeks, depending on the amount of information provided and the accuracy of the information. If approved, TWC will add the training vendor to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
- Once the vendor is approved and placed on the ETPL, the Financial Aid Payment Office will review the application to ensure the program meets the Gulf Coast region's [High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations](#). We will then review the supporting documentation according to the [Education and Training Vendor Application Checklist](#).

ITA Limitations

The Board imposes limits on the duration and the amount of ITAs. However, on a case-by-case basis, career office managers may request an exception from Board staff to the ITA limits after conducting a comprehensive assessment. Career office staff discuss the customer's education needs, work experience, employment status, program fit, and proximity of completion. The assessment must be documented in TWIST counselor notes and the customer's service plan must reflect the need for training and support.

We explain to the customer how we can help them achieve their goals and provide relevant information about award limits and support services. We also help identify sources of assistance in addition to Workforce Solutions financial aid.

If a customer requests financial assistance for training, career office staff:

- Discuss the types of occupations and training programs in which they're interested.
- Review and discuss Labor Market Information to show demand for persons with skills and expected wages for related occupations.

- Schedule or arrange tests and assessments as necessary. We discuss their financial aid needs and how financial assistance will help meet their employment goals.
- Discuss and, if appropriate, provide FAFSA website for the customer to get information and to submit a free application for federal student aid. Note: there is no requirement to use federal grants before applying Workforce Solutions financial aid to support education or training.
- Help the customer identify other sources of timely assistance in the community, if available.
- Discuss the customer's ability to meet financial obligations during training.
- Determine suitability by checking for the customer's:
 - understanding their chosen occupation (may include awareness of hours, working conditions, wages, physical demand, character qualifications, etc.),
 - readiness to enter and complete the training,
 - ability to meet scholastic and financial obligations during training, and identification of barriers that may prevent them from being successful in that field.
- Begin developing the service plan with the customer which includes steps Workforce Solutions and the customer will take before the next meeting, such as career exploration, assessment appointments, wage/demand research, gathering documents, creating a budget, finding a part-time job, locating other resources, etc.
- Ask the customer about their employment goals and discuss specific steps along the customer's path to achieve those goals.
 - Can the customer obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment? If not, then we discuss how Workforce Solutions can help the customer meet their goals through classroom training and/or work-based training.

ITA award limits apply to a 12-month period. The costs of these services are included in the total available for a Workforce Solutions scholarship. ITA limits are as followed:

- Up to \$3,000 for basic skills training
- Up to \$6,000 for occupational skills training
- Up to \$6,000 for upgrade skills training

To ensure limits do not affect customer choice, career office staff explain to customers they are not limited to taking courses that cost \$6,000 or less from the scholarship limit. A customer can select any of the approved

training courses and pay the difference if the overall tuition cost exceeds the \$6,000 Workforce Solutions scholarship, through other grants and scholarships, or out of pocket payment.

The Board supports education and training to assist customers with meeting their career and education goals. Registered apprenticeships are a major part of how the Board supports customers with education and training. In the next section, we describe how we use registered apprenticeships to assist customers with gaining skills to have better career opportunities.

PART 10: APPRENTICESHIP



Registered Apprenticeships are an earn as you learn system that allows individuals the opportunity to build knowledge and skills while earning wages. Registered apprenticeships provide structured career pathways without debt and the chance to build a foundation that can offer growth, loyalty, and retention in the workforce.

Apprenticeship models have uniqueness and flexibility that can offer employers the option to customize the classroom curriculum with on-the-job training related instruction. Registered apprenticeships are both traditional and non-traditional. These types of programs help fill the skills gap many employers experience over time with their workforce.

As a Board, we consult with businesses about their hiring and training challenges and provide workforce development solutions that include encouraging registered apprenticeship programs. The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has a designated team of individuals trained who specialize in Registered Apprenticeship programs whom serve as consultants and schedule meetings and consultations between employers and department of labor representatives. During these consultations, we provide in-depth details to employers on how they can receive further support from us by being on the Eligibility Training Provider List. Some of the advantages for employers can be to gain exposure of their programs and receive additional support from the Board to help offset the cost of training.

This additional support can help the individual and employers through funds which include items such as:

- Scholarships for classroom learning.
- Wage reimbursement for on-the-job training related structure.
- Supportive services for the individual, so they will be successful on the first day of work and training.

Apprenticeship Texas

The Board will support Apprenticeship Texas using a two-prong approach. The first part of the two-prong approach is to have a team of consultants with knowledge of apprenticeship programs that will be the boots on the ground, so to speak. The consultants will develop strong employer relationships, build trust, and be the liaison for the employer. This team of subject matter experts will provide support throughout the process for employers and to help ensure the success of their program.

The second part of this process will be to help employers with additional resources, so they can sustain the program once it's in place. Boards can do this by providing incentives to help offset the cost of the classroom curriculum, on-the-job training, and any other barriers that might lead to an individual not being successful in an apprenticeship program or completing it.

These apprenticeship programs are essential to help fill the skills gap many industries will soon face. The Board will continue to support, encourage, and build on both new and existing traditional and non-traditional programs for Texas.

From 2021 through 2022, Workforce Solutions placed over 2,000 apprentices in multiple occupations driven by registered apprenticeship program.

Additionally, the Board is committed to supporting ApprenticeshipTexas. Our consultants, liaisons, and apprenticeship navigator developed strategies to reach out to ApprenticeshipTexas staff to identify the apprenticeship model that best suits businesses in our region. We will also share information about this program with our business partners so interested employers may receive one-on-one technical assistance and guidance to get an apprenticeship program up and running.

The Board will uphold the five core building blocks involved in creating and operating a Registered Apprenticeship program.

- **Explore** – get to know apprenticeship, its benefits, and how to access key areas of opportunity by occupation
- **Partner** – collaborate with apprenticeship representatives, workforce organizations, educators, and others to build your program
- **Build** – understand your options, decide on a program model, and create your training plan

- **Register** – full support through design and application process, register your program with U.S. Department of Labor
- **Launch** – recruit prospective apprentices, train your workforce, and promote your program

The Board understands the significance of promoting and working with employers to develop registered apprenticeship programs to create talent pipelines for in-demand occupations. We are committed to our mission to elevate the economic and human potential of the Gulf Coast region by fulfilling the diverse needs of the businesses and individuals we serve. The strategies and descriptions outlined in this plan reflect our dedication and passion to advance our purpose to keep the Gulf Coast region the best place to do business, work, and live.

PART 11: PUBLIC COMMENT On January 2, 2023 we posted the Local Plan and attachments to our website at www.wrksolutions.com/LocalPlan.

We reached out to a total of 6,800 individuals, representing regional stakeholder groups, to participate in the public comment process. We provided an e-mail address to receive comments from attendees of the public meeting noted below and stakeholders across the region.

On January 19, 2023, we hosted a public meeting at our Northline career office. The meeting had nearly 50 participants. Between the meeting and e-mail solicitations, we received 20 public comments.

The comment period closed on January 31. The public comments received are printed below. E-mails received are printed in their entirety while comments received at the public meeting are summarized:

- Via e-mail, a business representative said: “Can Workforce Solution get contact USCIS and request an expedited I-9 inquiry on behalf of the employer? For example, a very special skilled operator is applying for a job for a very important machine. When I do an e-government inquiry for this applicant the system reports to me "not to take any action regarding this applicant, the inquiry about this person continues". I can't hire that applicant because of this reason. However, the applicant says the state has automatically extended my work permit for about 540 days but has not sent me my work permit card yet. E-Inquiry responds to me after two days saying that "I can hire this person". After 2 days the system replied that the work permit renewal procedure continues and there is no problem with his work. Two days after, when I call that applicant to come and start working, this time the person says I found a job and I'm working. It also causes my production to decrease. Can Workforce Solutions give us a hand by contacting the relevant government institutions in order to speed up the process in this regard? Thank you.”
- Via e-mail, a business representative said: “Please provide funding for Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship training programs, and increase the allotted amount, as inflation has caused an increase in staffing, materials, location for training, etc. 7500.00 per student is requested per 12 months for a USDOL Registered Apprenticeship, and 2000 for a USDOL pre-apprenticeship. The amount per student has not increased in many years, and if you compare the year that the maximum was set to the costs of tuition and inflation in Texas, you will understand it is a small increase. I would like to request the State of Texas leftover COVID funds from the Federal Government to be used in USDOL Registered Apprenticeship & Pre-apprenticeship programs.
- Via e-mail, an education representative said: “The plan appears well thought out across many areas and thorough in its intent to assist companies, organizations and individuals in the Houston area. As it relates to the needs of our organization, if Texas Workforce was to host events for individuals seeking employment - we would greatly appreciate having the opportunity to come face to face with those persons. As it relates to our students, apprenticeships and opportunities to earn money while attaining training will remain crucial for improving the circumstances of our community. Thank you for the opportunity to participate.
- Via e-mail, a resident asked: “How do I join the board?”

- Via e-mail, a Workforce Solutions staff member said: “We need more job resources for youth-Work Based Learning/On the Job Training opportunities for Galveston County, child care wait list period is too long for employed customers or customers in school needing assistance. More resources for assistance with transportation and access to support services focused on Galveston County highly needed. There is extremely limited public transportation resources to assist Galveston County customers currently. Current Income Guidelines for financial aid exclude many individuals that would benefit from career advancement scholarship opportunities to go back to school or to make career changes. Some individuals do not qualify for financial aid scholarships even though income has drastically changed (we look at last 6 months instead of assessing current income situations- due to loss of income). They still may be over income as a result and not qualify for assistance although they would benefit greatly from our scholarship.”
- At our public meeting, a recruiter said: “No problems. I use Workforce Solutions all the time. Thanks.”
- At our public meeting, an education representative said: “We are interested in learning more about apprenticeship opportunities for our teacher aids, teachers, and other fields. We are consistently having job fairs to tackle our auxiliary needs as well as our needs in the classroom. I would like assistance in promoting these events.”
- At our public meeting, an employer said: “Employer training to understand + include those with disabilities. Having worked with young adults with disabilities, placement is difficult as sometimes a job coach liaison may be needed along with continued training + understanding the diverse needs.”
- At our public meeting, an education and disability representative explained the need for additional Registered Behavior Technicians to serve children with autism.
- At our public meeting, a childcare representative asked that the application process for childcare assistance be streamlined and simplified so parents do not have to go to multiple places for assistance.
- At our public meeting, a trade school representative explained that students struggle with childcare and transportation. Given that young adults will continue to grow as a percentage of the workforce, creative solutions to childcare and transportation issues is needed.
- At our public meeting, a representative from a workforce development organization explained that they will be focusing efforts on assisting individuals with starting a business. Additionally, they also mentioned the challenge for customers who have to go to multiple places to receive help.

- At our public meeting, a university representative explained that they will be focusing efforts on assisting entrepreneurship in the region. They expect to receive a significant amount of money from the state for these efforts and are looking for alliances with other schools.
- A representative from the City of Houston explained the importance of on-going training to assist individuals with disabilities gain and keep employment. Further, they explained the challenges of retaining talent due to childcare constraints.
- At our public meeting, a business representative also explained the issues with retaining talent due to transportation issues. They asked to work closely with the Board and other partners to better understand the bus services available. They further advised that the Board's website for apprenticeship efforts is hard to navigate.
- At our public meeting, a community center representative asked if there were any plans to change how the ESL programs are taught. Currently, it is more focused on basic greetings rather than language that will help individuals be successful at work.
- At our public meeting, a childcare representative explained the challenges of building a workforce that is large enough to keep up with the needs of their customers.
- At our public meeting, an individual asked what industries the Board focuses on as it relates to Summer Earn and Learn.

APPENDIX: TEXAS WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL REQUIREMENTS

Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements Local Workforce Development Board 2023 Plan Modifications

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) is charged under Texas Government Code §2308.101(5), 2308.302(a), and 2308.304(a)(b)(4), and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Public Law 113–128) with recommending the plans of Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) to the governor for consideration and approval. TWIC reviews each Board plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide goals and objectives in the system plan, [The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023](#).

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

Demonstrating Alignment with Texas’ Workforce System Strategic Plan

The four sections below list and describe the four system goals from The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 that identify critical, high-priority system issues for the state. Boards inform the development of strategic goals and objectives and are essential to the implementation of the workforce system plan. Board plan responses apprise TWIC of innovative practices and how key strategies in the system plan translate into local action to move the system forward. Examples of select Board responses will be presented to TWIC under each goal. All 28 Boards will be represented in the briefing for the approval of the plans.

For each goal:

- briefly describe how the Board is working to fulfill the intent of the goal as specified in the description; and
- include the corresponding page number(s) within your plan that further details the identified strategy or initiative

Focus on Employers

Effective engagement with employers informs many system strategies and functions that address the changing needs of industry as well as state and regional economies. Education and training are a primary system function that may require multiple state and local entities to work with similar employers to design instruction or adjust career and technical education program and delivery options. Coordination and partnerships with employers are essential to gain insight and implement initiatives while ensuring that industrial productivity continues.

Please describe how your local Board has improved employer engagement and efforts to collaborate with any other entities that require input, participation, and/or partnership with employers. Specifically, describe how you coordinate efforts to gain more comprehensive insight on employer needs while reducing the demand on the employers who would otherwise be responding to multiple requests. Identify the primary outcomes and, where relevant, list key entities involved and type of information requests for each entity.

Our Board operates under a franchise model, which allows employers to have a single point of contact no matter where the employer enters the system. Internally, as a team, we often communicate through multiple platforms such as Work in Texas, Teams, and monthly in-person meetings. This process ensures that we meet the needs or demands of the employer on time and eliminates multiple requests across the system.

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s): 65

Engage in Partnerships

Workforce system partners leverage local and regional partnerships to enhance system alignment and improve outcomes and reporting. Partnerships rely on a culture of collaboration and trust, deep working relationships, and communication to provide a solid foundation on which to coordinate planning, integrate processes, and develop the collective technical capacity to share needs, data, and information.

Please describe your primary (top) partnerships, how you use them to address key strategies in your plan, and the significant outcomes and progress related to the partnerships. In addition, specifically describe partnerships that foster innovation and improved participant engagement and outcomes in workforce development.

Coalition for the Homeless Partnership

- Monthly meetings to discuss referrals and status
- Monthly meetings to discuss initiatives with various employment partners
 - Harris County Community Services
 - Goodwill Houston
 - American GI Forum National Veterans Outreach Program
 - Shelters to Shutters
 - Combined Arms Veteran Transition Center
 - SEARCH
 - WorkFaith
 - Career and Recovery
- Mobile Career Advisors that visit shelter hubs on a weekly basis
- Income Now Navigators that assist with making sure referrals are served
- Point of Contact (POC) list that notes key contacts at each career office
- Internal bi-monthly POC meetings and semi-annual trainings across organizations

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- Weekly meetings with Student HireAbility Navigators to discuss Pre-ETS for students with disabilities
- Partnership that served 521 young adults through the Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) initiative
- Paving the Pathways initiative

Foster Youth Collaborative

- Monthly meetings
 - Spring ISD
 - Alief ISD
 - Galena Park ISD
 - Houston ISD
 - Pearland ISD
 - Klein ISD
 - Coalition for the Homeless
 - Covenant House
 - Isaiah House 117
 - Riverside Project
 - Family Roots for Life
 - Life Enhancements
 - Guiding Light
 - Alvin Community College
 - LoneStar College
 - Houston Community College
 - SHSU
 - UHD
 - ESC 3, 4, 5, 6
 - TNOYS
 - Acadian Ambulance Services
 - BridgeYear
 - SER
 - ACAM
 - Harris Center
 - AKA Sorority
- MOU and monthly meetings with The Hay Center (Foster Youth Transition Center- FYTC) and Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
- Monthly TWC meetings
- First Annual Foster Youth Conference that served 85 foster youth on 10/8/22; 2nd Annual Conference being planned for May 2023
- Point of Contact (POC) list that notes key contacts at each career office
- Internal bi-monthly POC meetings and semi-annual trainings across organizations

Partnerships to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities

- Employment Roundtable
- Arc of Galveston
- Houston Center for Independent Living
- CRCG's for Harris, Brazoria, and Walker Counties

- Jewish Family Services
- Gulf Coast Center
- Space Center Houston-Galveston Area Council
- Museum of Natural Science
- Whataburger
- My Kids Dentist
- CVS
- HG Consulting
- Golf Club of Houston-Galveston Area Council
- Clubs of Kingwood
- Pet Supplies Plus
- Amazon
- MOD Pizza
- HEB
- Main Event
- Parent Resource Network
- Wesley Community Center

Other Partnerships

- United Way
- Consolidated Planning Group

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s): 49-52, 76

Align System Elements

Aligning workforce programs and services ensures transparent processes and efficient “no wrong door” access that can improve transitions and help all participants complete programs of study, earn credentials of value, and gain critical employability skills. Primarily, seamless alignment supports greater portability and transferability for Texans in or preparing to enter the labor market.

Please describe alignment efforts and the status, outcomes, and plan for continuous improvement of system alignment in your region. In the description, include barriers, considerations, and proposed actions to overcome the barriers.

Online Learning Efforts - provide online learning licenses to assist customers upskill/reskill

- Metrix
- LinkedIn Learning

- 180Skills
- Workforce Compass

Created Transition Networks to promote employment of students with disabilities

- Transitions Network Facebook Page
- Galveston Region Employment and Transition (GREAT) Expo
 - Galveston ISD
 - Hitchcock ISD
 - Santa Fe ISD
 - Clear Creek ISD
 - Texas City ISD
- Deer Park/Pasadena Transition Expo
 - Pasadena ISD
 - Deer Park ISD
- Various Other Transition Fairs/School Districts
 - Humble ISD
 - Spring ISD
 - Spring Branch ISD
 - Alief ISD
 - Galena Park ISD
 - Houston ISD
 - Pearland ISD
 - ESC 3, 4, 5, 6

Implemented use of virtual reality headsets for career exploration

- BridgeYear
 - Garcia Middle School
 - Wheatley High School
 - Northside High School
 - Navarro Middle School

Conduct career planning and exploration lessons with middle and high school students and professional development/train the trainer sessions with partners

- Conroe ISD
- Katy ISD
- Huntsville ISD
- El Campo ISD
- Galveston ISD
- Fort Bend ISD
- Houston ISD
- Sheldon ISD
- Pearland ISD
- Palacios ISD
- Rice CISD
- Royal ISD
- Goose Creek Consolidated ISD
- Spring ISD

- Tarkington High School
- Forgotten 3rd
- Houston Area Urban League
- Houston Public Library
- United Way
- Teen Youth Summit

Participate in Advisory Boards for various ISD's.

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s): 47, 66, 78-80

Improve and Integrate Programs

Coordination and integration of system processes focused on high-priority programmatic needs support service delivery; increase participant access, learning, and transitions through education and training; and improve decision-making at the system, partner, and participant levels.

Please describe local efforts to integrate processes and share resources across programs in your region. Identify efficiencies realized and improved participant outcomes as a result. Describe how this work can be leveraged to create new, relevant opportunities that serve the needs of all stakeholders.

The Board uses intake technology, case management information systems, and data/labor market information in order to maximize efficiency and improve the outcomes for all customers. The Board's one stop career offices have access to a number of state provided Labor Market Information and Career Exploration Services such as:

- **Texas Rapid Access to Career and Economic Resources (TRACER)** website provides employment statistics to assist job seekers and employers in making informed decisions
- **Wage Information Network (WIN)** allows users to examine wage data for an area – or within an industry in an area – and to compare that wage with other areas of the state.
- **Standard Occupational Components for Research and Analysis of Trends in Employment System (SOCRATES)** at <http://socrates.cdr.state.tx.us> and other robust tools made available by LMCI were designed to assist local planners in gaining insight into their labor market structure, characteristics, and patterns
- **Reality Check** – TexasRealityCheck.com (<http://www.texasrealitycheck.com>) is one of the more frequently used resources in the LMCI tool box and also features a widely used iPhone application. The website allows students to make lifestyle choices, create a budget, and then view the occupations and preferred education levels that support those choices.

- **Texas Career Alternatives Resource Evaluation System (Texas CARES)** – Texas CARES at www.texascaresonline.com is a multimedia career information system designed for individuals to explore different careers and related educational opportunities in Texas and around the world.
- **Texas Consumer Resource on Education and Workforce Statistics (Texas CREWS)** – TexasCREWS at <http://www.txcrews.org> is a dashboard tool that provides information about Texas’ public two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions; evaluates 30 programs/institutions on the basis of resulting wages and student loan levels; and enables parents and students to make informed decisions about college and thereby obtain the best return on their educational investment.

The Board also has access to State provided Participant Eligibility, Service Tracking, and Case Management Systems:

- **WorkInTexas.com** – WorkInTexas.com is Texas’ Labor Exchange System, as mandated by the Wagner-Peyser Act, and operated in cooperative effort with JobCentral, the National Labor Exchange system. WorkInTexas.com is a comprehensive online job search resource and job matching system developed and maintained by TWC, and provides:
 - » extensive job matching options based on skills and experience;
 - » links to labor market and career development information; and
 - » free, 24-hour-a-day access.

Employers can post jobs, search résumés, recruit candidates, get labor market information, and receive a variety of other services available through a network of statewide Workforce Solutions Offices. Individuals seeking a new job, different job, or an additional job can post their résumé, search job listings (including Texas state agency jobs), obtain employer contact information to apply for jobs, get information about the job market, and receive a variety of other services also available through Workforce Solutions Offices.

- **The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST)** – TWIST is the integrated intake, eligibility, case management, and reporting system for employment and training services. It was designed as a central repository for customer information. TWIST ultimately decreases duplication within and across the Texas workforce system while streamlining the provision of services to customers. It enables Workforce Solutions Office staff to enter intake information for customers only once for multiple employment and training programs and to retrieve it statewide. TWIST also includes interfaces with other automated systems – WorkInTexas.com, the UI benefits system, and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission’s system
- **Child Care Attendance Automation** – Child Care Attendance Automation (CCAA) allows parents to record attendance using a swipe card at a point-of-service device located at the authorized child care facility. Parents also can use an interactive voice response system using the authorized child care provider’s phone. Attendance recorded through CCAA is transferred to TWIST on a weekly basis, and TWIST is used to process payments to providers based on the CCAA attendance records.
- **Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS)** – TEAMS is Texas’ state-of-the-art, web-enabled system that maintains student-level data, including demographic, assessment,

and outcome data, as well as class, site, program, and provider information. TEAMS users can analyze class, site, or program information through the use of standard reports generated at the user level. TEAMS provides a wide range of information about adult education, including snapshots of student and program performance, personnel qualifications, and staff development activities.

• **Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting** – TWC’s online Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) system is a web application used by Boards to draw funds from their program allocations. All financial transactions are handled through this online system, and Boards are no longer required to submit paper documents or Excel spreadsheets. CDER has significantly decreased manual processing and greatly improved the reporting of data to all parties.

• **Quarterly Wage Records** – TWC makes extensive use of quarterly wage records, both for required and ad hoc reporting. TWC uses Texas wage records and those obtained from other states through the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) for required WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) reporting. A fuller discussion of the use of quarterly wage records is contained in the Program Data section of this plan.

In addition to everything above, the Board began using Appointy software during the pandemic to make it easier on customers to schedule appointments with our career offices. We will continue to use it post-pandemic to provide services in a way that is convenient for customers.

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s): 70-72

Before TWIC began the process to develop the new system strategic plan, Board directors were invited to provide input on issues and opportunities for consideration in system planning.

Please consider the responses you provided (above) to local board area implementation of the four primary goals in the current system plan and identify how the new system strategic plan can help future implementation of your regional goals and strategies related to the following:

Increase engagement of target populations, including Opportunity Youth, Texans with disabilities, foster youth, and sex-trafficking victims.

Describe Board strategies that support engagement of sometimes underserved populations.

Evaluating ability to serve justice involved youth in various capacities

- Discussing possibility of participating on Foster Youth docket
- Discussing collaboration with My Brother’s Keeper to serve Harris County courts
- Presented overview of Workforce Solutions services to DFPS court network

Participate on Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative (GHOYC) Steering Committee

Participate in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP)

Contract with Next Gen service providers – Career Team, SER, and ACAM

Support Houston/Dallas area RoadTrip Nation event

Participate in the Texas Training and Employment Navigator Pilot that serves foster youth and youth survivors of sex trafficking

Offer Level Up workshops to help young adults hone their employability skills

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s): 76-79

Improve efficiency and outcomes through data-driven decision-making and investments.

Describe Board strategies that support data-driven decision-making and investments.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board modifies and releases publicly three important data-driven lists that underpin many of its workforce development activities:

- 1) Target Industries
- 2) High-Skill High-Growth Occupations (HSHG)
- 3) Where-the-jobs-are

This process, referred to as “Targeting,” results in these three lists functioning on two levels:

- 1) As signaling and informational tools for stakeholders in the region, including students, parents, jobseekers, independent school districts, Career and Technical Education programs, and postsecondary training providers
- 2) As operational tools guiding day-to-day workforce development activities. The Targeted Industries list aids the Employer Services team in prioritizing its outreach efforts to employers. The HSHG list provides Career Office staff with a platform to converse with individuals about their career interests and goals with the potential to provide financial support for those endeavors. Lastly, the Where-the-jobs-are list serves as a tool to inform stakeholders of the most numerous opportunities in the region irrespective of wages or future growth.

The process used by Texas’ Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) to revisit and update its targeted lists is one with a history spanning a decade or more and generally operating as follows.

Phase 1:

The first phase of the process involves the identification of industries exhibiting above-average net and percentage growth along with above-average wages. These are selected from a universe of approximately 300 industries at the four-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) level. Industries on the previous Targeted Industry list meeting two out of three requirements remain eligible for inclusion on the updated list thereby improving the stability of the list composition across targeting cycles. The

current Targeted Industry list approved in February 2021 contains 43 industries spanning numerous diverse sectors of the regional economy. Given finite resources of both finances and personnel, limiting the number of industries targeted is both prudent and necessary.

Phase 2:

Once targeted industries have been identified, phase two is to develop the HSHG list, which includes those occupations exhibiting above-average growth rates, future levels of employment, and wages as well as occupations requiring postsecondary education and/or training beyond a high school diploma. Before evaluating occupations on these measures, a key step is to identify occupations that are “important” to the previously identified targeted industries. “Important” in this context is defined as occupations in which the employment within the selected group of industries is equal to or more than 50 percent of total occupational employment. For example, if there 10,000 accountants in the region and 5,000 (50 percent) are found in at least one targeted industry, but in reality, will be found across nearly all targeted industries, then this occupation is deemed important to the industries chosen during phase one of the targeting process. This requirement ensures alignment of investments in occupational training with the needs of industry and among employers while at the same time guiding current and future workers towards fields and industries with above-average earnings and employment prospects. The current HSHG Occupation List, approved in February 2021, is comprised of 117 occupations out of a universe of 800 to 1,000 depending on the source.

Phase 3:

Lastly, the Where-the-jobs-are list is developed by filtering the universe of occupations for those with an above-average number of job openings across the 10-year projection window then sorting the list by base-year employment in descending order.

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s): 22-40

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