

Local Workforce Development Board Plan Program Years 2025–2028

Board Plan Development Guidelines

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Board Plan Development Guidelines

The Board Plan development guidelines include the minimum plan requirements; however, Boards are encouraged to provide additional information about the following:

- Board initiatives, which may include local, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), or federal grants
- Collaborative efforts to achieve the Board vision and mission

Boards must ensure that each element is fully addressed. Boards may not use statements such as “See Section 1.B.”

Boards are encouraged to provide specific references to the state plans mentioned in WD Letter 11-24 to demonstrate how their efforts complement the larger context of workforce development in Texas and contribute to the achievement of shared goals.

Each Board must submit its plan as a continuous document without separate document attachments.

Send inquiries regarding these guidelines to Board.Plans@twc.texas.gov.

Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

A. Vision and Goals

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

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

- goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including the provision of early education services and services for youth and individuals with barriers to employment as defined by WIOA §3(24); and
- goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on the performance indicators described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A).

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- A description of the strategic vision to support regional economic growth and self-sufficiency
- Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including the provision of:
 - early education services;
 - services for youth; and
 - services for individuals with barriers to employment.
- Goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on the performance indicators described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A)

Board Response:

Mission

Preserve our integrated, employer-driven workforce system by actively involving employers in workforce decisions that allows them to: identify labor and economic trends, define skills and training standards and hire high skilled workers, while simultaneously providing job seekers with information, advice, job search assistance, supportive services, and training in the employer identified industries and occupations so they will attain cutting edge skills that will lead to self-sufficient employment.

Vision

Our employers will have a highly skilled and educated workforce, and our residents will have the competencies, skills, and education to become self-sufficient and live a quality life.

Values

Commitment

- We embrace our mission, vision, and values.

Professionalism

- We welcome diversity and treat everyone with respect, dignity, and courtesy.

Quality

- We have a passion for our customers and partners. We are self-critical, questioning and committed to providing accessible, accurate, complete, and timely services.

Integrity

- We are accountable, honest, and trustworthy.

Leadership

- We have the courage to lead change and shape the future.

Teamwork

- We work better together. We share our ideas and talents to find the best solutions. We support and rely on each other. We value clear and open communication.
- We make everyone better.

Strategic Vision to Support Regional Economic Growth and Economic Self-Sufficiency

The Board's strategic vision is to foster a region where employers have access to a highly skilled workforce, and residents possess the education, competencies, and skills to achieve self-sufficiency and a high quality of life. This vision emphasizes collaboration with program partners, economic development corporations, educational institutions, and employers to create a robust workforce system.

Goals for Preparing an Educated and Skilled Workforce

The Board is committed to preparing an educated and skilled workforce by implementing the following strategies:

1. Early Education Services:

- Collaborating with early education providers to establish a foundation for lifelong learning, aligning programs with regional workforce needs.

2. Services for Youth:

- Delivering work-based learning opportunities such as internships, work experience, and subsidized summer employment.
- Incorporating financial literacy and career development into youth programming to prepare them for middle-skill jobs that offer pathways to self-sufficiency.

3. Services for Individuals with Barriers to Employment:

- Utilizing the Integrated Education and Training (IET) model to deliver customized training within rural communities, reducing the need for job seekers to commute.
- Providing virtual and web-based training to increase access for individuals facing logistical challenges.
- Supporting individuals with work-based learning experiences tailored to local employer demands.

Goals Related to Performance Accountability Measures

The Board aims to meet or exceed all performance accountability measures outlined in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A). To achieve this:

- A robust oversight process evaluates each performance measure, identifying and addressing negative trends to ensure consistent improvement.
- Career lattices for target occupations are developed and shared with partners to support informed career development for youth and individuals with additional barriers to employment.
- Workforce data and local labor market insights are provided to customers, enhancing their understanding of employment trends and opportunities.

The Board's high-performance standards are reflected in its track record of exceeding nearly all measures and its commitment to maintaining and improving these results in the coming years.

B. Board Strategies

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

Boards must provide a description of their strategies to work with the partners that carry out Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) activities to align the resources available to the local workforce development area (workforce area) to achieve the Boards' vision and goals.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of the Board's strategies to work with the entities carrying out AEL and VR to align:

- resources available to achieve vision and goals

Core programs:

- Adult Education and Literacy activities
- Vocational Rehabilitation services

Board Response:

Strategies to Align Resources with AEL and VR to Achieve Vision and Goals

The Board has established strategies to collaborate with Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) partners, ensuring alignment of resources to achieve its vision of a skilled workforce and self-sufficient residents. These strategies include:

1. Integrated Service Delivery

- Since February 2016, AEL, VR, and workforce center staff have collaborated to integrate services for all customers. The workforce center operator manages workforce programs to ensure seamless delivery of services, including Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, TANF, SNAP, NCP, Employer Services, and TVC programs.

2. Co-Location of Staff

- AEL and VR staff are co-located in the three largest workforce centers (Bastrop, San Marcos, and Round Rock). This co-location strengthens inter-agency collaboration, ensuring coordinated support for job seekers and employers across

programs.

3. **Customized Resource Matching**

- Workforce center staff assess individual customer needs and match them with appropriate resources from AEL, VR, and other program offerings. This personalized approach ensures that resources are effectively utilized to address employment barriers and build skills.

4. **Shared Planning and Continuous Improvement**

- All partners leverage the Texas Workforce Commission’s administrative role to develop shared plans and continuously improve service integration. This collaborative framework maximizes the potential of shared goals and common performance measures across programs.

5. **Addressing Challenges in the Service Area**

- The Rural Capital Service Area's large geography and limited public transportation pose accessibility challenges. By integrating services and reducing dependence on siloed program locations, the Board ensures that customers can access services without unreasonable travel requirements.

6. **Focus on Mutual Success**

- Recognizing that many customers face significant barriers to employment, the Board emphasizes skills development and credential attainment to help them secure better jobs. The alignment of AEL and VR services with workforce programs supports both individual success and employer talent needs.

Through these strategies, the Board aligns AEL and VR resources to deliver integrated, customer-focused services that advance the region’s workforce goals and meet the needs of employers and job seekers alike.

C. High-Performing Board

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- Actions a Board will take to become or remain a high-performing Board

Board Response:

Actions to Become or Remain a High-Performing Board

Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area (RCA) implements a range of strategies to achieve and

sustain high performance, aligned with the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) factors. These strategies focus on performance excellence, innovative service delivery, and robust governance.

1. Performance-Based Contracts

- The workforce center operator's profit is tied directly to achieving or exceeding state and locally set performance measures.
- Local measures address priorities such as integrating AEL, VR, and childcare services into the workforce system, and advancing equity by focusing on underrepresented populations.
- These measures are reviewed and adjusted annually by the Board of Directors, leadership, and key stakeholders to align with evolving regional needs.

2. Monitoring and Accountability

- Monthly contract meetings and bi-monthly Board of Directors meetings ensure consistent oversight of performance measures and deliverables.
- External program and financial monitors, along with the workforce center operator's internal quality assurance processes, identify and address issues related to eligibility, data entry, and service delivery compliance.
- Regular reviews of policies and procedures ensure adherence to program guides and regulations.

3. Integration and Equity Initiatives

- RCA emphasizes integrating core services, including AEL and VR, into the broader workforce system. This integration ensures a seamless experience for customers and maximizes resource utilization.
- The Board prioritizes equitable service delivery, focusing on accessibility for underrepresented and underserved populations, particularly in rural areas.

4. Local Innovations and Workforce Development

- RCA develops and implements initiatives tailored to the region, such as creating customized training programs for middle-skill jobs and using Integrated Education and Training (IET) models to provide job-specific skills close to rural communities.
- Virtual and web-based training opportunities expand access to workforce development for individuals facing transportation or geographic barriers.

5. Governance and Strategic Planning

- The Board uses deliverables such as disaster recovery plans, affirmative action plans, and ADA compliance inspections to inform planning and ensure readiness to meet diverse community needs.

- Board-led strategic planning involves collaboration with key stakeholders, fostering alignment between workforce initiatives and regional economic goals.

6. Customer-Centric Services

- RCA actively gathers input from employers and job seekers to refine services. Efforts include career lattices, labor market data dissemination, and work-based learning opportunities such as internships and subsidized employment.
- Special attention is given to individuals with barriers to employment, aligning services to their unique challenges and needs.

By continuously adapting to regional priorities, fostering collaboration, and maintaining stringent performance oversight, Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area ensures it remains a high-performing Board, driving economic growth and self-sufficiency across the region.

Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis

References: WIOA §108(b)(1)(A); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(1); WIOA §108(b)(1)(B); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(2); WD Letter 24-20, Change 1

Boards must include a regional analysis of the following:

- Economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations
- Employment needs of employers, including the knowledge and skills needed to meet such employment needs, within in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations

Minimum Plan Requirements:

An analysis of the economic conditions that includes the following:

- Existing in-demand industry sectors
- Emerging in-demand industry sectors
- Existing in-demand occupations
- Emerging in-demand occupations
- Target occupations

A description of employer employment needs, including the knowledge and skills needed to meet such employer's needs, within the following:

- Existing in-demand industry sectors
- Emerging in-demand industry sectors
- Existing in-demand occupations
- Emerging in-demand occupations

Target occupations

The Board must include its In-Demand Industries List, In-Demand Occupations List, and Target Occupations List

Note: As appropriate, a workforce area may use an existing analysis, if it provides a current and accurate description of the regional economy.

Board Response:

The Rural Capital Area has continued to outpace most of the nation and state in population growth, directly affecting the growth of the industries within the area. This growth is more prevalent in counties along the I-35 corridor than in the more rural areas. This variation of growth has produced many opportunities for Rural Capital as well as many potential barriers to ensure all counties continue to see high economic growth.

Rural Capital area had an overall estimated population of 1,226,126 in 2022 and projections show growth of 41%% through 2032 with an estimated population of 1,725,590. With that noted, the growth for more rural counties is less. Growth in the different counties ranges from a low 9% in Fayette County to a high growth rate of 52% in Bastrop County.

	2022	2032	10 Year Change in Population	10 Year Percentage Growth
Region	Population	Population		
Rural Capital Area WDB	1,113,028	1,472,862	359,834	32%
Bastrop County, Texas	106,395	162,122	55,727	52%
Blanco County, Texas	12,411	16,216	3,805	31%
Burnet County, Texas	52,567	66,267	13,700	26%
Caldwell County, Texas	47,849	65,174	17,325	36%
Fayette County, Texas	24,934	27,143	2,209	9%
Hays County, Texas	269,103	393,340	124,237	46%
Lee County, Texas	17,971	20,853	2,882	16%
Llano County, Texas	22,623	25,500	2,877	13%
Williamson County, Texas	672,273	948,974	276,701	41%
Source: Lightcast				

The population consist of approximately 50.58% males and 49.42% females with no mentionable changes in 2030. The population breakdown is also very similar to each respective county.

The Rural Capital Area’s population is 46.28% White, 30.10% Hispanic, 6.45% Black, and 11.11% Asian. The Rural Capital Area has a relatively younger population with a high concentration of families.

According to Texas Workforce Commission’s Labor Market Information on Industry Projections, there are slightly over 100 different industries noted with a 4-digit NAICS code

in the Rural Capital Area. Noting the large number of industries in the area, Rural Capital Area grouped the industries into their 2-digit primary sector to determine which of the industry groups showed the highest growth by added jobs. The following chart shows 2-digit industries that are expected to add at least 1,000 additional employment opportunities in the Rural Capital Area within the next 10 years.

2 Digit NAICS	Industry Title	Employment Number Change 2022-2032
72	Accommodation and Food Services	12,840
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10,433
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	9,469
61	Educational Services	6,443
33	Manufacturing	5,165
42	Wholesale Trade	4,697
45	Retail Trade	4,419
23	Construction	4,195
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,180
44	Retail Trade	3,951
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,894
52	Finance and Insurance	2,581

From this analysis, we then looked at the industries within these primary NAICS codes at a 4-digit level industry to identify which industries are emerging as adding the most employment opportunities and, in addition, which industries are adding employment the fastest. Of the 86 4-digit NAICS industry codes from this analysis, it was found that nine (9) of the subsector industries were declining even though the primary industry was growing and approximately 17 of the 4-digit NAICS industries were only adding employment opportunities for the next 10 years in single- or double-digit numbers. During the analysis, it was noted that the industry, 2361 – Resident Building Construction, was actually declining more than any other 4-digit industry and local knowledge of growth in our area knew this must be an anomaly. Therefore, we decided to keep the industry in our purview of those to focus on. We then decided to look at the top 50% of these industries to get a more precise area to target. Of the Industries remaining, each one was expected to add a significant amount of new employment opportunities in the next 10 years.

The resulting 4-digit industries from this analysis are as follows:

Industry Code	Industry Title	Annual Average Employment 2022	Annual Average Employment 2032	Number Change 2022-2032	Percent Change 2022-2032
2211	<i>Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution</i>	1,721	2,296	575	33.4
2361	<i>Residential Building Construction</i>	3,065	2,800	-265	-8.6

2371	<i>Utility System Construction</i>	3,508	4,711	1,203	34.3
2381	<i>Building Foundation And Exterior Contractors</i>	4,570	6,205	1,635	35.8
2389	<i>Other Specialty Trade Contractors</i>	4,121	5,005	884	21.5
3344	<i>Semiconductor and Other Electronic Component Manufacturing</i>	907	5,649	4,742	522.8
4234	<i>Professional and Commercial Equipment and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers</i>	9,916	12,464	2,548	25.7
4441	<i>Building Material and Supplies Dealers</i>	4,572	5,851	1,279	28.0
4551	<i>Department Stores</i>	2,817	3,605	788	28.0
4552	<i>Warehouse Clubs, Supercenters, and Other General Merchandise Retailers</i>	6,578	7,391	813	12.4
4561	<i>Health and Personal Care Retailers</i>	2,540	3,403	863	34.0
5242	<i>Agencies, Brokerages, and Other Insurance Related Activities</i>	2,434	3,214	780	32.0
5411	<i>Legal Services</i>	1,948	2,808	860	44.1
5413	<i>Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services</i>	3,997	5,439	1,442	36.1
5415	<i>Computer Systems Design and Related Services</i>	6,995	12,079	5,084	72.7
5416	<i>Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services</i>	3,336	5,105	1,769	53.0
5419	<i>Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</i>	2,360	2825	465	19.7
5611	<i>Office Administrative Services</i>	2,902	3,833	931	32.1
5617	<i>Services to Buildings and Dwellings</i>	5,801	7,677	1,876	32.3
6211	<i>Offices of Physicians</i>	4,478	5,230	752	16.8
6212	<i>Offices of Dentists</i>	3,150	4,160	1,010	32.1
6213	<i>Offices of Other Health Practitioners</i>	3,194	4,218	1,024	32.1
6221	<i>General Medical and Surgical Hospitals</i>	6,162	8,268	2,106	34.2
6231	<i>Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)</i>	3,142	3,562	420	13.4
6241	<i>Individual and Family Services</i>	2,523	3,402	879	34.8
6244	<i>Child Care Services</i>	3,962	5,148	1,186	29.9
7225	<i>Restaurants and Other Eating Places</i>	35,132	46,392	11,260	32.1
8111	<i>Automotive Repair and Maintenance</i>	3,566	4,709	1,143	32.1
8121	<i>Personal Care Services</i>	2,323	3,075	752	32.4
4230A1	<i>Merchant wholesalers, durable goods (4232, 4233, 4235, 4236, 4237, and 4239 only)</i>	3,588	5,096	1,508	42.0
5220A1	<i>Credit intermediation and related activities (5221 and 5223 only)</i>	4,588	6,045	1,457	31.8

At this point, we then focused on growing occupations projections from 2023-2032 within the WSRCA board area to determine which occupations would support these industries and if there were any outliers that would influence an industry not listed above.

The Texas Workforce Labor Market Information Department shows 406 Occupations listed on the

Occupations Projections Report for Rural Capital WDA. That list is located here, <https://texaslmi.com/Home/PopularDownloads>.

With the vast area Rural Capital Area covers and the diverse attributes of those areas, we looked at occupational projections at each county level as opposed to the Board Area. This

analysis ensures that any of our smaller counties are not inadvertently overlooked to address the industries needs for employees in those areas, as our larger counties can overshadow the employment needs of the area due to the larger numbers of residents and industries. We looked at each county’s occupational growth by utilizing the occupational projections from LightCast, due to TWC LMI Department not having county information available. In addition, due to a workforce that is larger than employment opportunities in our area and the fact that many of customers commute into Travis County for employment, WSRCA assimilates the Capital Area WDA projected occupational growth to assist our job seekers in employment. This addition increases the viable occupations in the total area from 406 to 583.

Once the list of occupations is obtained, we begin by removing any occupations that do not have a median average hourly wage meeting that of the Rural Capital Area’s self-sufficiency wage of \$19.00 per hour or a career trajectory occupation that will obtain that wage. We then look at occupations that would require at least some type of education, occupational certification or credential, and/or on the job training. This requirement provides Rural Capital Area WDA the opportunity to assist job seekers with WIOA funding, braided with other funds, to obtain skills or certifications that will increase their opportunities to become self-sufficient. To further define the list of Target Occupations, we then look at the growth of the occupation for the next 10 years in addition to the number of counties that have industries in which that occupation could obtain employment. This is the Industry/Occupation mix. This ensures all our counties established and growing industries have the supply of job seekers with the knowledge and skill necessary for employment.

In conclusion, Workforce Solutions produced a list of occupations to include on the Target Occupations List as follows:

SOC	Name	Estimated Employment (2022)	Projected Employment (2032)	Change In Employment	Education	Experience	Training	Hourly 50th % Wage ¹
49-3021	Automotive Body and Related Repairers	566	736	170	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$23.78
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	2661	3431	770	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Short-term on-the-job training	\$23.15
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	4426	5081	655	Some college, no degree	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$21.75
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	608	755	147	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$27.12
53-3051	Bus Drivers, School	1321	1624	303	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Short-term on-the-job training	\$20.59
47-2031	Carpenters	1698	1908	210	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$22.15
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	1415	1934	519	Bachelor's degree	Information not available	Information not available	\$46.53
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	1004	1459	455	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$48.07
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	2174	2985	811	Some college, no degree	None	None	\$26.17
31-9091	Dental Assistants	1137	1520	383	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	\$21.10

29-1292	Dental Hygienists	552	739	187	Associate's degree	None	None	\$44.22
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	535	725	190	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$34.88
51-2028	Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	504	915	411	High school diploma or equivalent	Information not available	Information not available	\$18.33
47-2111	Electricians	2125	2430	305	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$26.74
33-2011	Firefighters	611	787	176	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$28.52
27-1024	Graphic Designers	516	641	125	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$27.22
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	1396	1562	166	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$24.34
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5426	7413	1987	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Short-term on-the-job training	\$24.43
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	549	735	186	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$29.33
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	1082	1348	266	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$20.83
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1224	1474	250	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	\$27.68
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	2275	2998	723	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Short-term on-the-job training	\$20.17
51-4041	Machinists	467	625	158	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$23.27
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	3995	5084	1089	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$20.16
29-2010	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists Technicians	352	461	109	Associate's degree	Information not available	Information not available	\$27.18
31-9092	Medical Assistants	1633	2078	445	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	\$19.77
29-2072	Medical Records Specialists	479	612	133	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	\$20.41
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	578	716	138	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$27.00
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	703	904	201	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$45.80
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	1808	2264	456	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$22.99
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	479	706	227	Associate's degree	None	None	\$27.86
29-2043	Paramedics	313	413	100	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	\$26.64
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	229	329	100	Associate's degree	None	None	\$35.96
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	1888	2043	155	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Apprenticeship	\$27.22
33-3051	Police and Sheriffs Patrol Officers	1614	2097	483	High school diploma or	None	Moderate-term on-the-job	\$36.59

					equivalent		training	
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	2797	3461	664	Bachelor's degree	Information not available	Information not available	\$43.47
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists	407	542	135	Associate's degree	None	None	\$35.61
29-1141	Registered Nurses	4084	5264	1180	Bachelor's degree	None	None	\$42.37
15-1252	Software Developers	3999	6016	2017	Bachelor's degree	Information not available	Information not available	\$60.55
25-0000	Teachers	32663	38818	6155	Information not available	Information not available	Information not available	\$29.84
49-2022	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	511	662	151	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$25.51
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	324	455	131	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term on-the-job training	\$25.90
15-1254	Web Developers	234	345	111	Associate's degree	None	None	\$44.44
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1228	1495	267	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$23.54

While WSRCA will focus on these occupations as Targeted for WIOA training, there are many occupations in the area that are in great demand to support our industries in being successful.

The list of in demand occupations within WSRCA are as follows:

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) or Occupational Information Network (O*NET) Job Code	In-Demand Occupation Job Title	* Annual Average Employment 2022	* Annual Average Employment 2032	* Number Change 2022–2032
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	11304	14850	3546
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	11576	14719	3143
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	8128	11235	3107
41-2011	Cashiers	11243	13615	2372
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	3903	6072	2169
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4985	6936	1951
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	8756	10386	1630
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	6610	8226	1616
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	4130	5580	1450
47-2061	Construction Laborers	5956	7243	1287
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	4812	6068	1256
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	4775	5975	1200
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	4051	5191	1140

41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	5020	6071	1051
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	2277	3323	1046
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	2762	3622	860
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	3043	3859	816
41-4011	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	2711	3463	752
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	6276	7013	737
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	4693	5433	740
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	1422	2156	734
39-9011	Childcare Workers	3486	4194	708
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	1547	2222	675
53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	1560	2177	617
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	1506	2115	609
39-2021	Animal Caretakers	1304	1904	600
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	3309	3897	588
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	2079	2666	587
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2257	2823	566
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	2053	2621	568
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	1681	2239	558
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	3508	4051	543
11-3031	Financial Managers	1340	1884	544
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	1978	2486	508
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	2069	2555	486
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	1165	1648	483
41-3031	Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	1164	1605	441
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	2095	2514	419
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	1771	2157	386
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	1707	2090	383
13-1151	Training and Development Specialists	975	1352	377
41-9099	Sales and Related Workers, All Other	992	1353	361
35-9031	Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	1147	1488	341
15-1243	Database Architects	617	961	344
11-9141	Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	1221	1548	327
11-9021	Construction Managers	2210	2533	323
11-2021	Marketing Managers	1042	1363	321
43-6013	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1082	1371	289
33-9032	Security Guards	1097	1381	284
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents	1518	1789	271

Conclusion

The Rural Capital Area’s economy is robust and diverse, with high-growth industries and occupations shaping the regional workforce. Targeted strategies, including skill development and alignment with industry needs, are essential to sustaining economic momentum. By addressing the outlined requirements, the RCA Board ensures comprehensive workforce planning that supports employers and job seekers.

B. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

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

Boards must include an analysis of the regional workforce, including:

- current labor force employment and unemployment data;
- information on labor market trends; and
- the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

An analysis of the regional workforce, including the following:

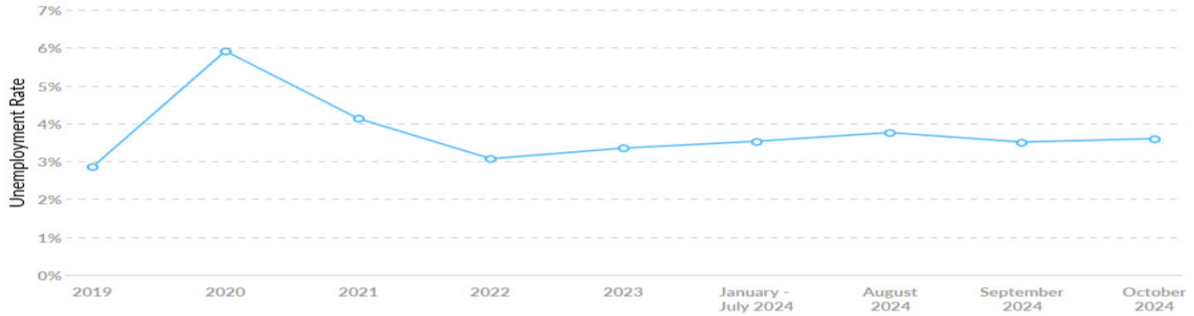
- Employment data
- Unemployment data
- Labor market trends
- Educational and skill levels
- Individuals with barriers to employment

Board Response

In October 2024, the Rural Capital Area unemployment rate has risen slightly since 2019 which reached a historic low of 2.8%, however it is still substantially lower than during the height of the 2020 COVID Pandemic where the annual average was 5.9%. As of October 2024, the unemployment rate in Rural Capital Area was at 3.6%.

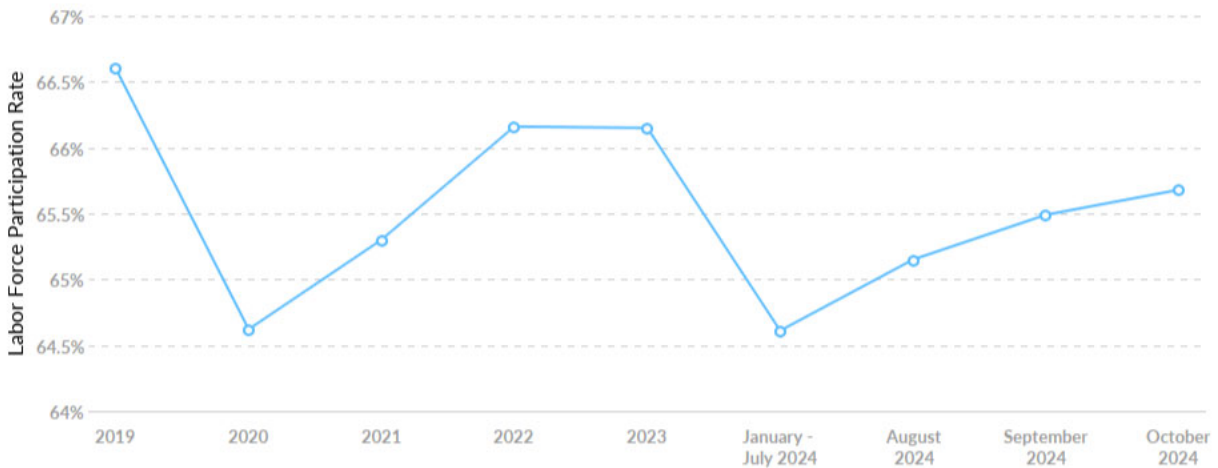
Unemployment Rate Trends

Your areas had an October 2024 unemployment rate of 3.60%, increasing from 2.85% 5 years before.



In addition, the population in the Rural Capital Area has been on a consistent rise. The region’s population increased by 21.9% since 2018, growing by 228,737. The population is expected to continue to increase by 19.8% between 2023 and 2028, adding another 252,237. The 16+ civilian non-institutionalized population in Rural Capital Area was 1,043,956. Of this, approximately 65.68% were estimated to be in the labor force. The labor force in 2019 was estimated to be at 66.60%. This data provides insight into a growing population in the area while the labor force is not growing.

Labor Force Participation Rate Trends



One indicator that could point to the decline in the labor force is the number of jobs in correlation to the labor force. According to analytics from LightCast, the number of jobs in the Rural Capital Area during 2023 was estimated to be 449,461 compared to a labor force participation estimate of 685,648. With this noted, according to LightCast place of work vs place of residence, approximately 224,000 residents in the Rural Capital Area commute into Travis County and a few counties for employment. Due to commuting to other areas for employment is a potential indicator of lower labor force participation.

2023 Jobs	2023 Resident Workers	2023 Net Commuters
449,461	674,313	(224,852)

According to information from Light Cast concerning educational attainment, 26.5% of the Rural Capital Area residents possess a bachelor's degree (5.4% above the national average), and 7.7% hold an associate's degree (1.2% below the national average).

Information from Chmura Economics shows that individuals with employment barriers in the Rural Capital Area are lower than in Texas. Nonetheless, Rural Capital Area WDA provides many specialized services to job seekers with barriers to employment and continues to outreach and assist those job seekers in overcoming any barriers.

C. Workforce Development Analysis

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

Boards must include an analysis of:

- workforce development activities in the region, including education and training;
- the strengths and weaknesses of the Board’s workforce development activities;
- the effectiveness of the Board’s programs and services;
- the Board’s capacity to provide workforce development activities to address;
 - the identified education and skills needs of the workforce; and
 - the employment needs of employers.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

An analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including the following:

- General workforce development activities
- Education activities, including Early Childhood Education (ECE) and K–12
- Training activities
- Strengths and weaknesses of activities
- Effectiveness of programs and services
- The Board’s capacity to provide workforce development activities
- Individuals with barriers to employment
- Employment needs of employers

Rural Capital Area has multiple Community College, Universities, and private secondary education institutes within our nine (9) county area. With that noted, some educational opportunities in our more rural counties are not provided on the level of our more populous counties. Rural Capital Area has worked over the last two years in order to obtain more “mobile trainings” from our community colleges that bring job seekers needs to industry demands, partnered with local ISD’s to assist with CTE opportunities and provide LMI, applied for a received the Teacher Externship Grant for multiple years to assist the educators in their skills of preparing students for occupations, collaborated with other Board Areas to seek out other funding streams to promote and provide training opportunities for areas with fewer opportunities and residents with barriers to employment. In order to ensure that all of our workforce development activities are informed by industry, Rural Capital Area has been helping to start and support industry-sector partnerships in our target industries across our 9 counties.

With the Tri-Agency Regional Convener grant, Rural Capital Area has been able to build stronger relationships with the ISDs in our rural counties and has even hosted multiple “Bridging the Gap” events to educate ISDs and employers about the opportunities they have to work more closely with one another and then help to forge those relationships between K-12 and industry in each region. With this grant, we have also developed a digital dashboard to capture all educational pathways into target industries across our 9 counties, as well as an ISD Engagement toolkit to support employers’ efforts to engage the K-12 space.

Rural Capital Area has been utilizing TWC’s Apprenticeship Grants over the past few years to start up new DOL registered apprenticeships in plumbing, teaching, healthcare, manufacturing, and more with employers in the rural counties.

With incumbent worker training funds, Rural Capital Area has been able to assist employers who want to upskill their workforce for greater productivity and retention.

The Rural Capital Area works very closely with local universities, community colleges and training schools to design training programs in response to industry demand. Most of these partnerships are very effective and forge pathways for future job seekers and students to enter the workforce. Some of the difficulties that Rural Capital Area has faced are when employers estimate significant labor market demand for a role and then the industry takes a surprising downturn, and the demand is not as great as expected. Another difficulty is when employers are eager to start new training programs, but they are not willing to pay market-value wages to graduates. Rural Capital Area is engaging in more thorough consultation with employers, which includes things like salary benchmarking, to try to mitigate risk of failure with new programming.

In partnership with regional chambers, city staff and EDCs, Rural Capital Area has been designing and co-sponsoring large-scale regional hiring events that also offer workshops leading up to the events to prepare job seekers with resumes, interviewing, job fair preparation, and industry knowledge. Furthermore, Rural Capital Area has also been offering Chamber Resourcing Events to engage chamber members and outline the business

services menu that Rural Capital Area offers to all employers in our 9 counties, followed-up with 30-min consultative sessions for employers with board-level staff regarding more customized workforce solutions.

In 2025, Rural Capital Area will work on an innovative workforce development solution, through TWC’s Workforce Innovation Fund Grant, to develop an online hub to better resource jobseekers, students, parents and schools with the various career pathways and training opportunities that lead to jobs in advanced manufacturing and skilled trades careers.

Rural Capital Area has developed individualized county plans that will provide insight to the needs of Rural Capital Area communities as a whole and each individual county.

Part 3: Core Programs

A. Workforce Development System

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

Boards must describe how the local workforce development system will work with entities carrying out core and required partner programs to support alignment to aid in the provision of services that support the strategies identified in TWC’s WIOA Combined State Plan.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of the local workforce development system will work with entities carrying out core and required partner programs to support alignment.

Note: The plan must describe how the Board’s system will work with the entities carrying out the core programs. **The following checklist is for reference only.**

Core programs:

- Youth workforce investment activities
- Adult employment and training activities
- Dislocated worker employment and training activities
- Adult education and literacy activities
- Employment services
- Vocational rehabilitation services

Required programs (if operated in the Board Area)

- WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program

- Choices, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP)
- Child Care Services
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation programs
- National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) program
- Apprenticeship programs
- Career and Technical Education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 USC §2301, et seq.)
- Veteran employment and training programs–Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER)
- Job Corp programs
- Native American programs
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development programs
- Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act
- Reintegration of Offenders programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs
- Senior Community Service Employment Program

Board Response

Our workforce development system is focused on developing human capital designed to meet the future needs of our local employers. The Board, Workforce Center, and partner staff collaboratively work to identify three critical components: future employer needs, employee competencies and skill levels. These three components guide us in identifying occupations where skill gaps can be met by using the program funds that are available from all the partners.

The workforce centers utilize the following strategies to screen and refer customers to enhanced services. Referrals to individual programs are made from those attending orientation and career planning sessions.

- **UI / Initial Claimants**

Unemployed customers are outreached and informed about additional services available in the Workforce Centers during orientation.

- **WIOA**

Customers receive orientation to the WIOA programs and other types of outreach. Trade affected customers, customers who are eligible for UI, those who have attended Rapid Response events, and those participating in Choices and SNAP E&T receive information about the WIOA program. Staff utilize these referral sources and follow up with customers

individually to complete the screening process for intake and enrollment.

- **Rapid Response**

Individuals who will lose their employment due to downsizing or closure will also receive orientations to Workforce Center services, including WIOA programs.

Orientations are conducted at the employer site, the Workforce Center or at a neutral location depending on the employer's request.

- **TAA / TRA**

Customers may learn about the TAA / TRA program during UI Profiling sessions, TAA orientations held weekly, Rapid Response events, directly from their employer or through outreach efforts at the state level. Interested customers attend individual or group orientations at the Workforce Centers.

- **Services to Veterans**

Veteran's Employment Representative staff identify appropriate veteran job seekers through the Work-In-Texas system. Customers are contacted individually, or may self-refer, for job search assistance, case management, and potential referral to the *Veterans Retraining Assistance Program* (VRAP). The VRAP offers up to 12 months of training assistance to unemployed Veterans, provides training towards an associate degree, Non-College, Degree, or Certificate that leads to a high demand occupation.

BSU and Veteran's Employment Representative staff also work to educate businesses concerning the availability of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). The WOTC provides a \$4,800 credit for firms that hire qualifying veterans within one year of discharge or release from active duty, and up to \$9,600 for those who have been unemployed for more than six months in the last year.

- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

Texans with low literacy or poor English language fluency are identified through self-reporting, assessment by Workforce Solutions staff, and/or via the results of a literacy assessment test, such as the TABE.

When a job seeker identifies that he/she does not read, write or understand English very well, several different options are available to aid the job seeker. First, with low English language fluency, the initial method of providing services involves using the language-interpreting service to communicate more fully with the job seeker. Once the formal method of communication has been established, staff identify the best course of assistance. Staff utilize partnerships with local Adult Education providers, such as the Literacy Council of Williamson County and Community Action Inc., our AEL provider, to provide low or no-cost ESL classes. As the budget allows, staff may also refer the job seeker to funded ESL courses at a local community college or proprietary schools.

- **Individuals with disabilities**

Customers that have been unable to find work will be served through the Workforce Centers. The resource rooms have several types of adaptive equipment available, and Workforce

Center staff work in conjunction with local advocacy groups.

Each orientation emphasizes the benefits of reentry to the labor force with the advantages of job retention and career advancement. Center staff provide an overview of available center services, conduct intake interviews to assist customers in determining the level and scope of services needed and identify any accommodations or supports needed to assist the customer in achieving employment success.

Center staff are cross trained in providing basic services to universal customers. Talent Engagement Specialists work with program staff to learn each program to refer job seekers to appropriate enhanced services. Integration and referrals with Adult Education and Literacy and Vocational Rehabilitation began in early 2016 and has advanced to the point where all partner staff are familiar with the services of each of the core partners. Adult Education and Literacy and Vocational Rehabilitation staff have been integrated into the workforce centers to ensure services are available to better meet the needs of customers. This model will continue as space and funding allow. There is great excitement among all the partners to have this opportunity to better serve our customers.

The Board is committed to supporting the strategies in the State Plan including strengthening and expanding all existing and developing partnerships to better serve our customers. The opportunities provided by the adoption of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Texas Workforce Commission, now serving as the administrative umbrella for all WIOA core program partners, allows us to plan, implement, and continuously improve services and performance for all program partnerships.

WIOA provides new opportunities for the Board and Career and Technology Education (CTE) to work together to prepare individuals for careers that meet employer skill needs—specifically targeting STEM and middle-skilled jobs. The Board supports the State Plan by:

- identifying career pathways (responding to industry talent needs) and offering customers the opportunity to obtain the skills and credentials necessary to find better jobs at better wages.
- enhancing employer engagement to build an occupational/skills demand-driven system, to improve business services, and provide more work-based learning opportunities.
- aligning individual program policies, procedures, and processes (when not constrained by program-specific law or regulation) to achieve greater partnership in service delivery—working side-by-side with ISD’s and seven community college partners.
- seeking practical opportunities to share resources, reduce redundancies and waste, and make integrated service delivery more streamlined for customers.
- providing access to headlight and career headlight to improve access to up-to-date labor market and career information aligned with career pathways and occupational

areas of study.

- assign board staff to serve on ISD education advisory committees and ACCTECH (guiding council for articulated credit) at ACC.
- assign business service and youth career staff to work with ISD, business and industry, EDC and COC staff on youth career fairs.
- provide teacher internships with industries—designed to improve teacher knowledge of industry skills needed in stem and middle-skilled careers; and,
- Supporting partner programs in achieving success with the performance indicators.

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

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

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

- expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;
- facilitate the development of career pathways and coenrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and
- improve access to activities that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential (such as an industry-recognized certificate or certification) that is portable and stackable.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of how the Board will work with entities that facilitate core programs to do the following:

- Expand access to employment training, education, and support services for the following:
 - Eligible individuals
 - Eligible individuals with barriers to employment
- Facilitate development of career pathways and coenrollment in core programs
- Improve access to activities that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential (such as an industry-recognized certificate or certification) that is portable and stackable

Core programs:

- Youth workforce investment activities
- Adult employment and training activities
- Dislocated worker employment and training activities
- Adult education and literacy activities
- Employment services
- Vocational rehabilitation services

Board Response

Every individual that seeks workforce assistance is provided with a comprehensive array of services. These include assessments, training and upskilling opportunities, case management and essential forms of support, such as housing, healthcare, transportation, legal assistance, clothing, and a wide range of counseling as appropriate. Detailed assessments are administered to determine immediate and long-term needs and set internal goals that act as mile markers on the individual's career pathway. Through established relationships with support service and training providers throughout the area, job seekers will have access to the services required to maximize the opportunities for participation in program services.

Low Income Adults/Choices (TANF) Recipients – Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) that include short-and long-term goals, and assistance in education and financial planning that will result in higher wages and increased productivity are developed for TANF Recipients. The service plan includes collaboration with local businesses who have entry- level jobs; identification of workers whose current skills are unsatisfactory to maintain self- sufficient employment; and provision of information to local low-income neighborhood associations and community centers. The workforce team ensures this population gains work-readiness skills through work experience, training provided through partners, online training, and job readiness facilitation.

SNAP Recipients –Workforce Center staff provide daily support for supervised and supported job searches during the required participation period for SNAP recipients.

Assistance with registration in WIT, resume development, initial and new job leads, assisted job search, and application as job search continues is also provided.

Development of job skills and completion of GED and AEL classes through local partners is made available to all SNAP Recipients.

Individuals with Disabilities – The Workforce Centers work with individuals with disabilities providing Workforce Services through collaboration with TWC Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Participants are assessed for placement with businesses, and we provide information about hiring job seekers with disabilities, ensuring individuals are placed in the right situation to succeed. We build this platform through strong partnerships working with agency and program partners and by providing equipment and resources in our Centers designed specifically to assist identified needs for our non-hearing, non- speaking, or blind job seekers and targeted hiring events for workers with disabilities.

Ex-Offenders – The workforce team works to ensure individuals with criminal records have every opportunity to succeed. We work with probation, parole, and detention centers such as the United States Probation Office and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to register these job seekers in WIT. We provide support during job search, determine programs of eligibility, and provide support throughout program participation.

NCP – Workforce Center staff in coordination with the Office of Attorney General (OAG) work with Individuals who do not meet their child support obligations. These individuals are identified by the OAG and ordered into the NCP program by the Child Support Judge. The goal of the program is to reduce jail time and increase the amount and timeliness of child-support payments through intensive job search and employment retention programming. A Career Advisor completes an assessment, develops an IEP, and discusses the services available in the Workforce Centers, like Choices and SNAP Center services orientation. NCP customers register in WIT and receive assistance in job placement and support services as needed.

Veterans – Our work with veterans to help translate military skills and experiences into civilian terms that businesses understand is in direct coordination with Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) and Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP) staff. Working with veterans, we can address multiple areas of diversity as this population also includes individuals from all target populations. Veterans are provided with priority services. In addition to our workforce veterans' partners TVC and TVLP, we work closely with veteran-serving agencies and organizations such as, the American Legion, Veteran of Foreign Wars (VFW) chapters, and National Guard units to ensure veterans are aware of available services. We provide talent development to veterans for intensive and support services through skill upgrades and/or work experience opportunities. Throughout the year the Board implements and supports hiring events and educational events aimed at making veterans aware of available services.

UI Claimants – Individuals on unemployment are connected quickly to businesses through close collaboration with the Business Services Unit (BSU). The workforce team provides a level of service to UI Claimants that assists them to move back to full employment as quickly as possible. Our standard procedures for service to UI claimants or potential claimants include:

- Any visitor to the Workforce Centers requesting information about filing for unemployment will not only receive this assistance but will also be registered on their first visit in WIT. Resume assistance through WIT, and if appropriate, a professional resume is offered. Information on other available training opportunities to assist claimants develop additional skills and/or refresh computer skills, customer service skills, and job search/interview skills are provided.

All these job seekers will be offered at least two job leads before leaving the Center.

- UI Claimants identified as high risk will be outreached by letter and invited into the Center for the Orientation to Workforce Services that their continued UI eligibility mandates.

- Same day registration into WorkInTexas.com, completion of a resume, development of a detailed, personalized IEP with our workforce professional’s guidance, and receipt of at least two appropriate job leads is a required part of the orientation appointment.
- UI claimants are encouraged to return regularly or to call for additional assistance throughout their job search and are asked to inform us when they get a job.
- UI claimants are informed of the mandate to contact us within three weeks are encouraged to stay in close contact and are asked to return to the Center for additional job leads and assistance in job search, interview preparation, and online application skills. They are also informed to expect contact every two weeks after this period until they are employed.
- At each contact their IEP is updated and activity documented.

Individuals with Literacy/Language Barriers – The Workforce Center, and AEL provider, work with local GED and English as a Second Language (ESL) providers and have tools available to GED students at no additional cost. Career introduction and planning services and programs are available for GED students who may want/need to complete additional career training through WIOA programs. All services at the Workforce Centers are available in Spanish, and the team can access Language Line services for those job seekers who need an interpreter for other languages.

General Job Seeker – All job seekers are provided the tools they need to successfully obtain employment that leads to self-sufficiency. Job seekers have access to, training through facilitated workshops and job matching, as well as through WorkInTexas.com.

Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery

A. One-Stop Service Delivery System

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

Each Board must include a description of its workforce area’s one-stop delivery system, including explanations of the following:

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

the needs of individuals who have disabilities.

- The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of the one-stop delivery system, including explanations of the following:

- How the Board will ensure continuous improvement of eligible providers
- How providers will meet the employment needs of employers, workers, and job seekers
- How the Board will use technology and other means to facilitate access to services, including referrals to VR and AEL services and access to remote areas
- Compliance with non-discrimination provisions consistent with WIOA §188 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners

- **Board Response**

The Board has monthly meetings with the workforce center operator to review the status of all aspects of the contract for the delivery of workforce services. To ensure continuous quality, the agenda includes a discussion on each of the areas from the monthly report:

- Performance
- Number of customers served in the previous month and year to date
- Budget vs. Actual for expenditures
- Obligations by program
- Status of progress to remediate monitoring and QA findings
- Program participant summary to see if the planned number to serve is being met
- Comments on customer satisfaction surveys that need addressing
- BSU report on employer interactions to ensure the Board remains employer driven
- Data on the number of workforce, VR and AEL documented referrals

In addition to the monthly meetings, key Board staff have weekly calls with the workforce center operator's leadership. This ensures that the Board is fully informed and aware of the health of the delivery service system.

Since March of 2020, the need to adapt service delivery using virtual resources has been a major focus. The Board has worked closely with required WIOA partners and community partners to deliver services using a variety of virtual platforms.

Access to Services

The Board’s certified Comprehensive Center is the Bastrop County Workforce Center in Bastrop, TX. The other workforce centers locations are in:

- Burnet, TX (Burnet TX)
- Lockhart, TX (Caldwell County)
- LaGrange, TX (Fayette County)
- San Marcos, TX (Hays County)
- Giddings, TX (Lee County)
- Llano, TX (Llano County)
- Round Rock, TX (Williamson County)

In partnership with Community Resource Centers, workforce center staff have office space, designated office hours, and the Board provides computers for customers to access workforce services in the following locations:

- Marble Falls (Burnet TX)
- Liberty Hill, TX (Williamson County)
- Johnson City, TX (Blanco County)

The Board also has workforce center staff co-located in other locations in our rural communities:

- Temple College in Taylor, TX and in the Teinert Memorial Library, both located in Williamson County;
- Partnerships through Memorandum of Agreements with several Subsidized Housing Communities facilitate workforce center staff in providing workforce services on an as needed basis.

In addition to our physical service delivery locations the Board provides web-based information on services available to customers—i.e., business services, job seeker services, childcare services, labor market information and a link to Work-In-Texas so both employers and job seekers can self-serve.

Adaptive Equipment and Services

Board and workforce center staff conduct annual training on WIOA 188, the Americans with Disabilities Act and proper use of accessibility software and hardware. Board monitoring and QA staff conduct annual accessibility reviews to improve or correct accessibility barriers for individuals with disabilities.

The workforce center operator provides customers with equal opportunity to access all facilities, programs, and services without regard to race, color, religion, gender, marital status, age, national origin, disability, political affiliation or belief. We manage and operate the Rural Capital Area Workforce in compliance with EO and ADA requirements.

Minimum Accessibility Standards

To comply with minimum accessibility standard drafted in March 2016, the array of adaptive equipment and services provided for customer use has been expanded in order to assure full accessibility to all available programs and center services. The following is list of adaptive strategies used by contractor staff in each office to assist customers requiring accommodation:

- Fusion Pro JAWS and ZoomText
- Mag/Reader Software
- Microsoft Windows Magnifier
- Microsoft Windows Narrator
- Microsoft Windows On-Screen Keyboard
- Purple Video Interpreting Service (VRI)
- Purple P3 Video Relay Service (VRS)
- MAGic Large Print Keyboards
- BigTrack Trackball Mouse(s)
- Chattervox Voice Amplifiers
- Large Button VOIP Hearing Aid Compatible Telephones
- TTY Telephones (Bastrop, Round Rock, & San Marcos Offices)
- Bi-Level Adjustable Height Workstations
- One-On-One Staff Assistance
- Staff “Notetakers”
- Staff “Readers”
- Bilingual Staff Available (*Spanish* – Bastrop, Cedar Park, Giddings, Lockhart, Round Rock, and San Marcos Offices)
- Language Identification Cards
- Telephonic Language Interpreting
- In-Person Sign-Language Interpreting

Roles and Resource contributions of Partners

The Board has supported the development of trust and a team spirit among center partners that promotes integration and cooperation from staff and partners. The helpful, accurate, and honest flow of information from management to and among staff is crucial to successful integration and alignment of goals amongst center partners. Supervisor and/or site meetings are held to disseminate performance and program information to staff and to promote dialog among staff members about changing service delivery and problem resolution.

Staff training opportunities continue to become more integrated. Topics such as FMLA, Sexual Harassment, ADA Compliance, Violence in the Workplace, Communication, Anger Management, Destructive Behavior and Problem Solving are a few of the module's staff are requested to review. The training program is an innovative computer-based system that guides and engages staff and customers in real workplace scenarios and situations.

Each new staff member receives an intensive New Employee Orientation that covers workforce center operations, customer service, information systems, and other topics. The orientation also introduces new staff to the Workforce Services management system, and the tools available to

each Workforce Center staff member, such as SharePoint, programmatic procedures, quality assurance, monitoring tools, etc.

The co-location of AEL and VR staff in three of Rural Capital’s workforce centers has provided for actual time interactions among all the staff. VR, AEL, and workforce staff can routinely share information and resources on an informal basis.

WSRCA maintains strong working relationships with WIOA required local partners and local service providers to streamline and enhance service delivery to job seekers and employers. A list of the executed cooperative agreements is here, and copies will be provided upon request.

- AARP Foundation – SCSEP Program
- Capital IDEA
- Experience Works SCSEP Program
- Literacy Council of Williamson County
- Community Action Inc. of Central Texas (Adult Education and Literacy)
- Attorney General’s Office
- Crescent Village LTD
- Community Resource Centers of Texas (Llano, Marble Falls,
- Opportunities for Williamson and Burnet Counties (OWBC)
- Capital Area Council of Governments
- Early Childhood Coalition of Hays County
- Creekside Townhomes
- First Call for Help - 211
- Georgetown Housing Authority
- Northwest Apartments
- San Marcos Housing Authority
- UT Health Science Center at Houston
- Austin Community College
- Gary Job Corp in San Marcos
- Hamilton Valley Management
- Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center
- Texas Veterans Commission

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

References: WIOA §108(b)(4); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(3); WIOA §108(b)(5); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(4)

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

- facilitate the engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations, in workforce

development programs;

- support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area;
- coordinate workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local workforce area;
- promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services; and
- strengthen the linkage between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of strategies and services to:

- Facilitate the engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers of in-demand industry sectors and occupations
- Support a local workforce development system that meets needs of businesses
- Better coordinate workforce development and economic development activities
- Promote entrepreneurial-skills training
- Promote microenterprise services
- Strengthen the links between one-stop and unemployment insurance

Board Response

Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area, through its Business Services Unit (BSU), brings businesses and job seekers together. We work with Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants and assist customers that need specific help. We outreach and foster business relationships with employers by educating them on the availability of skilled job seekers in their area, obtainable tax credits, and the opportunity to participate in activities such as on-the-job training. The BSU maintains an “inventory” of available job seekers we have in Work in Texas in each county and the Employers in each county that do the most hiring. BSU staff make personal contact with the Chamber of Commerce’s and Economic Development Cooperative’s to build strong and continuing relationships with them.

To further ensure employer engagement, the Board completed individual strategic plans for each of its nine counties. Each plan identifies the county’s workforce challenges using LMI data and input from employers, local elected officials, economic developers, chambers of commerce, independent school districts and community colleges, and community organizations gathered during community meetings regarding the workforce. There is also a summary plan of common

challenges shared by all counties and the common strategies to address them.

The following steps were taken in the development of the county plans:

- A. Identification of stakeholders in each county - elected officials, economic development corporations, chambers of commerce, employers, and education representatives to involve in the development of the county plans and implementation.
- B. Holding focus groups with the identified community stakeholder including WSRCA Board members and staff to understand how workforce services are currently provided, identify additional workforce services that are needed and opportunities to make significant improvements in delivery of workforce services.
- C. Facilitating additional discussions to include strategies for independent school districts, regional community colleges and training providers on ways they can work together to significantly improve access to education, training, and apprenticeship opportunities, especially in rural counties.
- D. Identification of ways to blend resources from a variety of federal, state, county, and city funding streams to enhance the delivery of local workforce training programs.
- E. Identification of organizations within each county that provide support services such as childcare, transportation, housing, and training to assist individuals in overcoming barriers to obtaining and retaining employment.
- F. Defining short- and long-range strategies to improve employer and workforce services in each county.
- G. Defining benchmarks and developing community dashboards for reporting to Chief Elected Officials and community partners that demonstrate progress and effectiveness in areas such as:
 - Accountability for employment results.
 - Transparency for job seekers to help them make better career choices.
 - Employer engagement and services to businesses.
 - Coordination and collaboration across workforce; and educational programs.
- H. Exploration of possibilities of unrestricted county and city funding for use in meeting the needs of employers and job seekers when they do not meet federal and state eligibility requirements to receive workforce services.

Internal Business Services

Internal Business Services are provided by the Talent Engagement Specialist (TES), whose primary assignment is to work with Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants, assist universal customers that need specific help, and assist employers within the center.

Within this context, the TES performs the following tasks:

UI Claimant Support

Each week all TES staff receive a list which shows new UI claimants. The database is a developed program that tracks the UI claimants' job search progress within the first ten weeks of

their UI period. The TES will:

- make initial contact with the claimant and provide WIT service(s) within 48 hours
- provide information on center services available to the claimant up to and including workshops
- provide job seeking tips along with job matches from WIT
- direct claimant to applicable orientations and workshops
- refer claimant to other program assistance where applicable
- review claimant Work-In-Texas.com application and suggests possible improvements to increase the potential for job match
- prepare center orientation material, including job search process and Employment Plan process
- look for a possible job development opportunity when there are no jobs matched in WIT; refer to BSU
- share information regarding virtual job training options that are available for skills upgrades
- recommend other job search sites to maximize the claimant’s exposure in the job market
- make contact every week to check on claimants’ job search progress, provide job search recommendations and encouragement, and document hires
- enter employment verification from UI claimants in WIT within 24 hours of notification

Re-Employment Services Eligibility Assessment

Re-Employment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) connects unemployment insurance claimants who are likely to exhaust their benefits with reemployment services to help them find new employment as quickly as possible. The activities include orientation, staff assistance with developing an individualized employment plan, conducting an unemployment benefits eligibility assessment, providing the claimant with customized labor market information, and other staff-assisted career services provider either at our offices or virtually.

Each week, the RESEA Career Advisors review the list of claimants to outreach from WorkInTexas.com. The list is provided by the TWC UI department, based on the profiling score assigned to the claimant that indicates the likelihood the claimant will exhaust UI prior to returning to work. All claimants above the cutoff score must be outreached for an orientation session each week.

Once the claimant is outreached, the RESEA staff work to provide the orientation and required services within the correct time frames and ensure appropriate data entry.

Universal Customer Support

Many customers need specific assistance in their job search efforts. The Board has invested in telework equipment and training for staff, as well as training options for job seekers and incumbent workers. In these instances, a TES talks with these customers, determines their needs, and provides appropriate assistance. Support includes similar activities as listed above in the UI

section above.

TES staff members also provide significant in-house services to the business community. One of these is job posting support and monitoring. TES staff members review daily all new postings submitted directly to WIT by the business. During this activity, the TES will:

- Perform a quality assurance review of each new business posting assigned to the office,
- Run veterans first day job matches and send the matched job seeker notification of the match for follow up, (first 48 hours is veterans only) then run third day matches for the general job seeker population, run weekly matches for follow up,
- Follow-up weekly with employers on open postings,
- Provide weekly follow-up on close-pending postings,
- Assist employers that contact WSRCA offices by telephone for issues such as:
 - Determine specific needs of customer,
 - Set- up accounts for business in WIT or update existing accounts as appropriate,
 - Talk business through the process of entering a posting themselves,
 - Enter job posting for the employer if they so desire,
 - Explain details of job matching such as matching process, veteran’s preference, etc.,
 - Discuss other services such as hiring events, etc.,
 - Provide information on services outside of office such as TWC Tax Dept info, etc.,
 - Assist employers with job fairs inside WSRCA offices.
- Assist employees that come into WSRCA offices in person – like those that call in above.
- Refer employers to the Rural Capital Headlight website (<http://www.ruralcapitalheadlight.com/>) to provide Labor Market Information (LMI)
- Assist other Workforce staff with questions about job postings
- Coordinate/communicate with other Workforce offices regarding business/job posting issues.

External Business Services

WSRCA staff work to deliver services and programs relevant and responsive to employers’ needs. Staff recognizes the importance of quality customer service beginning with the initial contact with a new employer. To “sell the system” and ensure continued usage, staff must provide quality, responsive services on a consistent basis. The primary goal of the Business Services Unit is to meet employer needs, so they return and promote Workforce Solutions services to other employers.

External Business Services are provided by the Business Services Unit (BSU). BSU staff engage employers, Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development Cooperatives and provide direct support to them as appropriate. The BSU meets with employers at their place of business and offers a summary explanation of the general services available to employers, while detailing specialized services such as WOTC, subsidized employment, temporary statewide initiatives, OJT opportunities, training programs, pipeline development, grant funding, and other board directed projects. As with all WSRCA staff, each BSU has specific state and local goals that

must be achieved through the performance of assigned responsibilities.

Support activities provided by the external BSU include:

- **Recruitment and Hiring Assistance**

BSU staff use WIT as a primary tool to search for qualified employees. By taking advantage of WIT job matching features and evaluating previous jobs, better candidates can be presented to the employer. Additionally, labor market research by the BSU gives the employer better insight into the local competition for employees and the pay scales that will increase hire chances for the employer. Monthly hiring events, industry-specific job fairs, and employer-specific hiring events serve to build strong relationships with employers and broaden our pool of job seekers.

- **Customized Job Postings**

Staff assists employers in the creation of higher yield job postings. This is done by using knowledge of the local business market, the expectations of current job seekers, in-depth knowledge of how WIT works, use of industry key words, detailed understanding of the employer expectations, etc. All of these contribute to finding the best employee match in WIT.

- **Labor Market Information**

LMI provides key economic data about occupations and in-demand industries along with information about labor market trends, local economic conditions, future economic developments, and overall labor supply in the local area. The BSU will refer employers to the Rural Capital Headlight website (<http://www.ruralcapitalheadlight.com/>) for Labor Market Information (LMI). This is one component of our Business Services Unit Plan.

- **Facilities for Interviewing**

Staff arrange space for employer job fairs/hiring events in local offices. Additionally, BSU coordinates space needs with employers if office space is either unavailable or inadequate.

- **Screening and Referring Qualified Applicants**

Staff can help employers screen, i.e., place jobs on level 2 or 3 to find an employee that closely matches the employer's need.

- **Liaison for TWC Information and Services**

BSU staff can provide specific information regarding TWC publications and data such as *Just for Employers*, etc.

- **Business Seminars**

The TWC Commissioner for Employers sponsors annual employer seminars around the state. Employers are encouraged to attend at least one of these seminars to learn the nuts-and-bolts information on state and federal employment laws and how to deal with the unemployment claims and appeals process. The BSU staff provides information to employers about these sources of business information.

- **Tax Credit Information**

Staff can inform Employers of Tax Credit incentives such as WOTC and similar programs.

- **Fidelity Bonding**

This program delivers a unique bonding service that is not duplicated by any other program in the U.S. to secure the job placement of ex-offenders and other high-risk job applicants, it provides employers with a financial incentive to hire the hardest-to- place jobseekers.

- **On-the-Job Training**

On-the-Job Training (OJT) provides unique opportunities for participants who already possess some job-related skills and the knowledge to "learn as they earn". By training as an employee, the participant acquires new skills and knowledge and receives the same wages and benefits as current employees.

- **Work Experience**

Staff will serve as Liaisons between Case Managers and Employers to place Eligible Job Seekers in an unpaid work site to benefit both the Employer and Job Seeker.

This service will also include subsidized work experience for the Choices program.

- **Rapid Response Service**

At the Board's direction, the Business Services Unit (BSU) and center staff coordinate with the employer where rapid response services are being provided to provide on-site workshops and job search. Beyond mere presentations of Workforce Center services, the BSU connect affected job seekers to the Texas Workforce Network to speed their transition to new employment or, when appropriate, training. By leveraging and localizing center activities to the employer site, the BSU acclimatizes job seekers to our job search systems and reduces their anxiety concerning unfamiliar processes and technical systems. With a sense of familiarity created, more job seekers would more effectively participate and utilize our offices, equipment, and systems at their option.

- **Employer Education:**

The BSU also educates employers about the various services that the board staff can deliver for them like apprenticeships, internships, obtaining state or federal funding for incumbent worker training, designing training programs for their communities, K-12 partnership, and much more.

WSRCA ensures our regional populations are educated, prepared and trained for the highly technical, knowledge-based careers that our EDC partners are recruiting to the area. To drive the economy forward, the region's workforce will require significantly different and higher levels of education and training than ever before. WSRCA coordinates with local Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Councils, industry representatives and small business owners to determine the issues that affect regional growth and create plans for improvement. Skills gaps continue to be widely regarded as a restraint to employment growth.

To meet some of these skills needs and expand the external impact of the BSU, WSRCA coordinates with educational institutions, chambers, EDCs, ISDs, and employers to customize training options for both the employers' incumbent and future employees. WSRCA uses resources such as High-Demand Job Training (HDJT) grants, Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) grants, Skills Development Fund (SDF) and other business grants to meet the skills needs, based on employer demand. Additionally, the Business Solutions Consultants hosts targeted job fairs, participate in business recruitment, retention and expansion efforts with local EDCs and Chambers to ensure training is targeted at the current and future needs of the employers.

C. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

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

Boards must include a description of the strategies that are used to maximize coordination, improve service delivery, and avoid the duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services that are provided through the one-stop delivery system.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of the strategies that are used to:

- Maximize coordination
- Improve service delivery
- Avoid duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services that are provided through the one-stop delivery system

Board Response

Staff Integration

The Onestop Operator has worked systematically to develop trust and a team spirit among Workforce Center staff to promote integration and cooperation for both staff and programs. All Workforce Center staff, including partner staff, have access to immediate supervisors and support staff whose leadership provides consistent information and direction.

The online customer feedback program is for all staff. The goal of the program is to develop positive behaviors and teamwork across the entire staff and is based on the common purpose "We create an environment of hope and success by empowering those we serve through respect and care." This model of staff enrichment allows independent feedback from each employee to improve the workforce center experience for the customer and the client.

Supervisor and site meetings are held monthly or more frequently to disseminate factual, performance and program information to staff and to promote dialog among staff members about changing service delivery and problem resolution. Information and orientation meetings are held to inform and connect staff facing transition into a more integrated service model and to apprise all staff of these changes.

Staff training opportunities continue to become more integrated. Topics such as FMLA, Sexual Harassment, ADA Compliance, Violence in the Workplace, Communication, Anger Management, Destructive Behavior and Problem Solving are a few of the module's staff are requested to review. The training program is an innovative computer-based system that guides and engages staff in real workplace scenarios and situations.

Each new staff member receives an intensive New Employee Orientation that covers workforce center operations, customer service, information systems, and other topics. The orientation also introduces new staff to the WSRCA; workforce management system; and the tools available to each Workforce Center staff member, such as SharePoint, programmatic procedures, quality assurance, monitoring tools, etc.

Staff Training

Our staff members are expected to deliver services in a way that implements the WSRCA's vision and mission and complies with all governing rules and policies. We provide them with the ongoing training needed to meet this expectation. All current staff received and continue to receive on-going training in documenting case files, utilizing State information, and the use of reporting systems such as WIT, and are proficient in these areas as applicable to their respective jobs. Monthly, Bi-Monthly or Quarterly meetings are held with program staff, by group, during which policy and procedure updates and skills-training is conducted.

Training plans have been developed with job description for all staff. Each new staff member participates in program specific training plans outlined to train staff in both universal topics and program specific topics. Training methods will include online self-training, along with group and one-on-one training provided by managers. This approach to training will ensure more consistent and comprehensive skills for everyone.

The online staff training includes use by workforce center staff to train in the following topics:

- FMLA, ADA, Sexual Harassment, and Preventing Violence in the Workplace
- Job Success Training on such topics as Anger Management, Problem Solving, Leadership and others
- Effective Supervision

The online training offers a tracking, recording, and reporting system for the management of staff training.

Each year, staff members receive:

- Cross-training across various programs to ensure integrated service delivery,
- Annual ethics and ADA/EO training,
- Policy and systems training,
- And other topics as needed to ensure contract compliance, attainment of

performance goals and continuous quality improvement.

All workforce center employees are required to complete annual ethics training, which covers confidentiality of information. Guidelines regarding proprietary information are provided to each new staff member during new employee orientation and at numerous times during the year. In addition, confidentiality of information is addressed on the P41 and Standards of Conduct forms, which each staff member is required to sign.

D. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management

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

Boards must include a description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to WorkinTexas.com for the programs that are carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of the following:

- How one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to WorkinTexas.com for programs carried out under WIOA and one-stop partners

Board Response

The one-stop centers use the State required systems.

- WorkInTexas is the online job search and job matching system developed and maintained by TWC. It provides job matching options based on skills, experience, LMI, and is available to both employers and job seekers.
- Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting is used to draw funds from program allocations.

The Board also uses Microsoft SharePoint, a browser-based collaboration and document management platform from Microsoft. It allows workforce center, adult education and literacy and vocational rehabilitation staff to use a centralized, password protected space for customer referral, tracking and document sharing.

E. Third Party Partnership in SNAP Employment and Training Programs

Reference: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Third-Party Partnership Guide

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission has directed TWC to expand the use of SNAP E&T Third Party Partnerships (TPP) throughout the state, with a goal of implementing TPP in all workforce areas by Federal Fiscal Year 2029. Boards must provide an assurance that they are planning for the expansion of TPP and must describe any planned or completed steps toward

implementation.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- An assurance statement that the Board is planning for TPP expansion, including a description of any planned or completed steps.

Board Response

The Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area (WSRCA) Board hereby provides assurance that we are actively planning for the expansion of Third-Party Partnerships (TPP) under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) initiative, as directed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. Our goal is to implement TPPs in all workforce areas by October 2026, if not sooner.

Planned and Completed Steps Toward Implementation

1. Identification and Assessment of Potential TPPs:

- We will begin to initiate a comprehensive search to identify potential third-party partners, including community-based organizations, educational institutions, and private training providers.
- An assessment process will be established to evaluate the capacity and readiness of these partners to deliver SNAP E&T services effectively.

2. Training for TPPs:

- We will develop a training program to ensure that potential TPPs are fully informed about the requirements and expectations of the SNAP E&T program.
- Training sessions will cover program policies, case management procedures, and performance metrics.

3. Budget Negotiations:

- We will ensure there is a process of negotiating budgets with identified TPPs to ensure that funding is allocated efficiently and effectively.
- These negotiations will consider the specific needs and resources of each partner to maximize the impact of the program.

4. Contract Establishment:

- We will work on establishing formal contracts with selected TPPs to formalize the partnership and ensure compliance with program requirements.

- These contracts will outline the roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations of both the Board and the TPPs.

5. **Communication with the Texas Workforce Commission:**

- We will share all contract details and progress reports with the Texas Workforce Commission to ensure transparency and alignment with state goals.
- Regular updates will be provided to the TWC to facilitate ongoing support and guidance, as needed.

By taking these steps, the WSRCA Board is committed to the successful expansion of SNAP E&T Third-Party Partnerships, ensuring that all workforce counties in WSRCA benefit from this initiative.

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

A. Rapid Response Activity Coordination

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- A description of how the Board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with statewide rapid response activities described in WIOA §134(a)(2)(A).

Board Response

WSRCA will partner with the State Rapid Response unit to ensure local employers and workers receive timely and appropriate services. The need for rapid response services may be identified in several ways:

- Reading / receiving an announcement or notification of a permanent closure of a business location regardless of the number of workers affected,
- Announcement or notification of a mass layoff affecting 50 or more workers, or receiving notice that a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notice (WARN) has been filed regardless of the number of workers affected by the announce layoff,
- A mass dislocation resulting from a natural disaster or other event, as defined by state or local emergency management sources,
- The filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition.

Once the need for rapid response services is identified, the rapid response coordinator works with the assigned business solutions consultant to reach out to the employer to begin discussions on layoff aversion and transition and re-employment services to affected workers. During this conversation, the business solutions consultant works in collaboration with the authorized representative at the business to determine the appropriate method for delivering the information

to the affected employees.

Once agreement has been reached regarding how to interact with the affected employees, the rapid response coordinator and the business solutions consultant will work with the local talent impact units within the workforce solutions offices to prepare the information to provide to affected employees. This information will include information on:

- Training on and registration in [WorkInTexas.com](https://www.workintexas.com)
- Providing information on basic eligibility for unemployment benefits and how to apply for UI.
- Job search assistance
- Accessing community resources
- Job application and résumé preparation
- Assessing accomplishments and skills
- Résumé development assistance
- Interviewing skills and effective interviewing techniques
- Coping with job loss
- Labor market information—Including information on target and demand occupations
- Customized lists of current job openings
- Customized and targeted job fairs
- Coordination of language interpreters and services for the visually and hearing impaired
- When appropriate, information on how to petition for TAA
- Group stress management seminars, and
- Group financial management seminars

The Business Solutions Consultants use this opportunity to foster ongoing relationships with the businesses affected. This creates opportunities to support businesses and share information about other services available to the employer. The consultative process in employer relationship development fosters the ability to support businesses in periods of growth and decline.

If the layoffs are the result of a natural disaster, TWC and the Board rapid response teams coordinate services with other Federal and State agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management System (FEMA), the Texas Division of Emergency Management, and the Office of the Governor, Disaster Preparedness. The coordinated natural disaster rapid response services provide early intervention assistance designed to transition workers to their next employment as soon as possible. If a disaster assistance period is declared, Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA), which provides unemployment benefits for individuals who lost their jobs or self-employment, or who are no longer working as a direct result of a major disaster, is coordinated between TWC and board staff.

B. Youth Activities and Services

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description and assessment of the type and availability of workforce investment activities for:

- youth;
- youth with disabilities; and the identification of:
- successful models of such activities.

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area (WSRCA) employs a comprehensive and innovative approach to youth workforce investment activities. The program is grounded in a structured system and guided by the Future Ready Youth initiative, which leverages the E3 Model (Empower, Educate, Employ) to address the unique needs of youth, including those with disabilities. This strategy ensures accessibility, inclusivity, and success in preparing young individuals for meaningful careers.

Description and Assessment of Workforce Investment Activities for Youth

The E3 Model

WSRCA's E3 Model organizes its services into three progressive phases: Empower, Educate, and Employ. This framework aligns with the 14 WIOA Youth Program elements, ensuring a holistic approach to career readiness and personal development.

1. **Empower Phase:** This foundational phase focuses on identifying and addressing significant barriers to success. Services include cooperative Individual Service Strategy (ISS) development, education and career planning, adult mentoring, leadership development, comprehensive guidance and counseling, and supportive services. These efforts stabilize participants' circumstances and create a strong foundation for further growth.
2. **Educate Phase:** In this phase, the emphasis is on contextualized learning and skill development. Activities include financial literacy education, entrepreneurial skills training, tutoring, study skills instruction, alternative secondary school services, postsecondary preparation, and occupational skills training. The Educate phase serves as an intervention stage that equips youth with the competencies required for career advancement.
3. **Employ Phase:** The final phase focuses on facilitating employment aligned with participants' career goals. Key services include providing labor market information, work-based learning opportunities (such as internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training), customized job development, and direct placement into sustainable employment. Employer engagement is

integrated into this phase, ensuring role models and mentorship opportunities.

Workforce Investment Activities for Youth with Disabilities

Youth with disabilities face additional challenges, and WSRCA provides targeted support to ensure inclusivity. The program works closely with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to deliver coordinated assessments, accommodations, and employment placements. Additionally, referral relationships are established with community organizations specializing in disability services to expand the scope of support.

Specific Accommodations and Accessibility Measures:

- Bilingual staff (primarily Spanish-speaking) are employed to improve accessibility for non-English-speaking youth.
- Online and app-based translation tools are used to support diverse linguistic needs.
- Digital platforms and virtual meeting options ensure service access for youth in remote areas.
- Assistive technologies and customized resources are provided for individuals with physical or mental disabilities.

Key Partnerships and Resources

Effective service delivery relies on collaboration with a network of community-based organizations. WSRCA prioritizes partnerships with groups offering the 14 required WIOA Youth Program elements. Notable partners include TWC Vocational Rehabilitation, Goodwill Central Texas, Communities in Schools, Jails to Jobs, and others. These partnerships enhance the accessibility and quality of youth services across the nine counties served by WSRCA.

The program conducts asset mapping to identify gaps in available resources and to establish new partnerships in underserved areas. This proactive approach ensures equitable access to comprehensive youth services, including tutoring, supportive services, and work-based learning opportunities.

Assessment Tools

Career Advisors at WSRCA employ a range of tools to assess participants' needs, including:

- ACT WorkKeys: Measures essential workplace skills.
- My Inner Genius: Evaluates interest, aptitude, and career values.
- Career Cruising: Facilitates career exploration.
- TABE and CASAS: Assess educational functional levels.

These assessments guide the development of Individual Service Strategies (ISS) that outline tailored short- and long-term goals. Regular updates to the ISS ensure that services evolve with participants' changing needs.

Innovative Service Solutions

WSRCA integrates technology to enhance service delivery and accessibility, particularly for rural

populations. Notable innovations include:

- **C2 Connects:** A referral management system that tracks customer progress and optimizes service flow.
- **BreezyHR:** An applicant tracking system for work-based learning opportunities.
- **TransfrVR:** Virtual reality tools for career exploration.
- **Remote Career Coaching:** Enables access to professional guidance from anywhere.

Successful Models of Workforce Investment Activities

1. E3 Model Implementation: The E3 Model’s structured phases (Empower, Educate, Employ) serve as a successful model, effectively transitioning youth from stabilization to long-term employment. The phased approach ensures personalized support, skill development, and employment alignment.

2. Work-Based Learning Opportunities: Work-based learning (WBL) placements, such as internships and apprenticeships, are critical components. Business Liaisons and Career Advisors collaborate to match youth with positions that align with their skills and interests. Tools like BreezyHR enhance this process, simulating real-world hiring experiences and tracking placement success.

3. Follow-Up Services: Post-program support ensures sustained success. Quarterly webinars, email distributions, and regular contact through phone or text enable ongoing engagement. Topics such as pay negotiation, networking, and lifelong learning empower alumni to navigate career progression.

4. Community Integration and Outreach: WSRCA’s multi-channel outreach strategy includes digital campaigns, in-person engagement, and activated partner referral networks. This inclusive approach has proven effective in reaching diverse youth populations, including at-risk and system-impacted individuals.

Addressing Challenges and Continuous Improvement

WSRCA’s programs are designed to address challenges such as geographical barriers, limited resources, and diverse participant needs. Continuous improvement is achieved through:

- Data-driven decision-making using tools like BreezyHR and C2 Connects.
- Regular staff training to improve service delivery.
- Integration of youth feedback through surveys and focus groups.

Conclusion

WSRCA’s workforce investment activities for youth, including those with disabilities, represent a robust and innovative approach to workforce development. By leveraging the E3 Model, fostering strategic partnerships, and integrating advanced technologies, WSRCA creates an inclusive and effective pathway for youth to achieve educational and career success. The program’s structured phases and continuous improvement mechanisms ensure that every participant receives the support needed to overcome barriers and thrive in the workforce.

C. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of how the Board will:

- coordinate its workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities; and
- coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

WSRCA will use career fairs to provide initial career path information to students beginning at the middle school level and continuing throughout their education. We will also use our Career Progression Lattices to provide skills information to school counselors, parents, students, and employers. Rural Capital Headlight provides access to useful knowledge about career education programs and activities by county, area, or region.

We work with local Chambers and ISDs to provide classroom teachers with professional development through teacher externship programs. Working with industry allows the teachers to increase their knowledge of the skills required within a specific industry and then share their knowledge and experiences with other classroom teachers and students.

We collaborate with ISDs and Chambers of Commerce to actively engage employers in connecting with students through work-based learning activities such as job shadowing, mentorships, worksite tours, guest speaking, internships, and more. These partnerships also support classroom teachers by providing professional development opportunities through teacher externship programs. By working directly with industry, teachers gain valuable insights into the skills and competencies required within specific sectors. This knowledge empowers them to enhance their instruction, share real-world insights with fellow educators, and better prepare students for career pathways that align with industry needs.

We also foster sector partnerships that bring together employers, educators, and community stakeholders to align the needs of industry with education. These partnerships focus on understanding the skills and competencies required in high-demand industries and ensuring that educational programs and training pathways are designed to meet those needs. By leveraging the collective expertise of sector representatives, these collaborations help create a pipeline of well-prepared students and job seekers while addressing workforce gaps. Sector partnerships also enhance opportunities for work-based learning by connecting employers with schools and providing structured activities like internships, mentorships, and industry-driven projects that benefit both students and businesses.

The Board coordinates access to training with our AEL partners to better integrate adult education job seekers into the workforce by expanding adult ESL (“English as a Second Language”) programs and bi-literacy efforts as well as jointly providing integrated education and training (IET)

opportunities in Demand Occupations.

D. Child Care and Early Learning

References: 40 TAC §809.12

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

Efforts include:

- coordinating with employers, economic development programs, and other industry leaders to increase the awareness and importance of early learning as a workforce and economic development tool;
- supporting improved school readiness through higher quality childcare, including through the Texas Rising Star program and partnership opportunities; and
- supporting the needs of the childcare industry, such as by providing assistance with business development or shared services, or by providing opportunities to support professional growth and career pathways for early education.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of how the Board will:

- incorporate and coordinate the design and management of the delivery of child care services with the delivery of other workforce employment, job training, and educational services;
- maximize the delivery and availability of safe and stable child care services that assist families seeking to become independent from, or who are at risk of becoming dependent on, public assistance while parents are either working or attending a job training or educational program;
- use strategies for contracted slot agreements, including any local priorities and how the contracted slot agreements help increase access to high-quality care for targeted communities;
- develop and implement strategic quality improvement goals to enhance school readiness; and
- strengthen and support the child care industry

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area (WSRCA) is committed to enhancing school readiness,

strengthening the childcare industry, and strategically managing early learning within the workforce system. By coordinating with employers, economic development programs, and other industry leaders, WSRCA underscores the critical role of early learning in workforce sustainability and economic growth. This comprehensive approach integrates childcare services with job training, employment, and education, ensuring that families receive the support they need to achieve self-sufficiency.

Raising Awareness of Early Learning as a Workforce and Economic Development Tool

WSRCA actively engages employers and industry leaders to emphasize the significance of early learning. This collaboration involves:

1. **Advocacy for Employer-Supported Child Care:** Encouraging businesses to invest in childcare solutions that meet the needs of working families. Strategies include developing on-site childcare facilities and providing subsidies to employees.
2. **Innovative Funding Models:** Exploring public-private partnerships and alternative funding streams to increase access to affordable, high-quality childcare.
3. **Community Outreach:** Hosting workshops and seminars to educate stakeholders on the economic benefits of investing in early childhood education.

By raising awareness, WSRCA fosters a culture that values early learning as foundational to economic and workforce development.

Improving School Readiness Through High-Quality Child Care

WSRCA focuses on elevating the quality of childcare services to enhance school readiness. Central to this effort is the Texas Rising Star (TRS) program, which provides a framework for achieving excellence in early education.

1. **Texas Rising Star certification:** WSRCA supports all contracted providers in achieving, elevating and maintaining Texas Rising Star certification, by offering incentives and hands on technical support and training to help them meet and maintain high standards.
2. **Fostering Partnerships:** Encouraging collaboration between childcare providers and school districts to ensure a smooth transition for children entering formal education. These partnerships align curricula and developmental milestones, improving outcomes for children.
3. **Tailored Initiatives for Underserved Areas:** Recognizing the unique challenges of rural and low-income communities, WSRCA implements targeted strategies to ensure equitable access to quality care. This includes mobile childcare units and community-based solutions.

Strengthening and Supporting the Child Care Industry

To address the needs of childcare providers and professionals, WSRCA invests in resources, technical assistance, and workforce development initiatives:

1. **Business Development Support:** Offering training in financial management, marketing, and operations to help providers build sustainable businesses. Shared services models are introduced to reduce overhead costs and improve efficiency.
2. **Professional Growth Opportunities:** Developing career pathways for early education professionals, including certifications and degree programs. WSRCA collaborates with local colleges to provide scholarships and training opportunities.
3. **Advocacy and Policy Engagement:** Working with policymakers to create favorable conditions for the childcare industry, such as tax incentives and grants for quality improvement projects.

Integrating Child Care with Workforce Services

WSRCA’s approach ensures that childcare services are seamlessly integrated with broader workforce initiatives:

1. **Coordinated Service Design:** Aligning childcare delivery with job training and employment services. This includes providing subsidized childcare to parents attending workforce programs.
2. **Targeted Support for Vulnerable Families:** Prioritizing services for families transitioning from public assistance or facing economic hardships. Safe and stable childcare enables parents to focus on education and career development.
3. **Holistic Case Management:** Career advisors collaborate with childcare providers to create comprehensive plans that address the needs of both parents and children.

Expanding Access to High-Quality Care

WSRCA employs innovative strategies to increase the availability of quality childcare, particularly in underserved communities:

1. **Contracted Slot Agreements:** Allocating slots in high-quality programs for at-risk populations. These agreements ensure that families in greatest need have access to premium care.
2. **Localized Priorities:** Conducting needs assessments to identify gaps in access and tailoring solutions to address specific community challenges.
3. **Flexible Service Models:** Offering extended hours, drop-in care, and virtual learning options to accommodate diverse family needs.

Advancing Strategic Quality Improvement Goals

To achieve excellence in childcare services, WSRCA implements evidence-based quality improvement initiatives:

1. **School Readiness Focus:** Aligning quality improvement efforts with best practices in early childhood education. This includes professional development for educators and curriculum

enhancements.

2. **Provider Support:** Delivering resources such as grants, coaching, and mentoring to help providers achieve and sustain Texas Rising Star certification.
3. **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Utilizing performance metrics to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement.

Commitment to Sustainability and Innovation

WSRCA’s long-term vision includes creating sustainable models for childcare delivery and fostering innovation:

1. **Employer and Community Partnerships:** Building coalitions that pool resources and share responsibilities for childcare provision.
2. **Technological Solutions:** Leveraging digital platforms for training, communication, and service delivery to enhance efficiency and accessibility.
3. **Continued Engagement with Stakeholders:** Hosting forums and feedback sessions to refine strategies and address emerging needs.

Conclusion

Through strategic management of childcare and early learning, WSRCA is transforming the landscape of workforce development. By integrating childcare services with employment and education initiatives, promoting quality improvement, and supporting the childcare industry, WSRCA ensures that families have the resources they need to thrive. These efforts not only enhance school readiness but also strengthen the economic fabric of the community, creating a brighter future for all.

E. Transportation and Other Support Services

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of how the Board will provide:

- transportation, including public transportation; and
- other support services

Board Response

The Board coordinates a mix of supportive services based on individual job seekers needs--like childcare, transportation, work related expenses and other financial assistance. These

collaborations are not only with our partners in the one-stop center but also with local human services agencies and educational institutions.

Customers enrolled in WSRCA sponsored programs can receive support services to remove barriers to employment, education, training, and participation in workforce programs. Support services are provided as authorized by program rules and if determined to be necessary and reasonable. Support services may include:

- Childcare
- Transportation
- Special assistance (pre-employment and post-employment)

F. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy

References: WIOA §108(b)(13); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(12); WD 18-23, Change 2

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with AEL activities under WIOA Title II. Boards must also include the process used to review the local applications submitted under Title II, as consistent with WIOA §§107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA §232.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of:

- how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with AEL activities under WIOA Title II, including the process used to review local applications submitted under WIOA Title II; and
- the local application review process.

Board Response

WSRCA has created the Rural Capital Area Integrated Services Initiative that brings together the WSRCA as the workforce development partner, the Adult Education and Training provider and the Texas Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services teams to create a leadership council. This partnership is designed to facilitate the seamless integration of the three agency’s services into the one-stop centers. The underlying goal of the partnership is to help job seekers access the education, training, and support services they need to find self-sufficient employment, with a complementary goal to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

The leadership council meets on a regular basis and includes three workgroups comprised of frontline staff from each organization:

- The Customer Welcome workgroup – this workgroup will develop plans and tools for the sharing of system services by program partners that focus on outreach, intake, orientation, and initial assessments.
- The Customer Connections workgroup – this workgroup will develop plans and tools

for the seamless sharing of customer information by program partners that focus on referrals between programs, services, and coordination of activities.

- The Business, Job Search and Job Attainment workgroup – this workgroup will develop plans and provide specific details for the delivery of integrated business services for all partners, establish tools for integrating current partner business services teams so they will connect more system customers to employment and support achievement of performance goals of all system partners.

Each workgroup meets regularly and will address the goals / tasks identified by the leadership council. An example of one goal is the partnership and development of Integrated and Educational Training (IET) for customers requiring occupational training paired with Adult Basic Ed training.

The leadership council provides oversight to ensure integrated, coordinated service delivery across programs, appropriate sharing of data and information related to referrals, and the outcomes associated with those referrals.

Board staff will review applications submitted under Title II to ensure service delivery and performance goals are consistent with those elements included in the Board’s cooperative agreement on integration and alignment of services and training--also included in the board plan.

Part 6: Adult and Dislocated Workers

A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult, dislocated worker employment and training activities
- A list of assessment instruments (tools) used for adults and dislocated workers

Board Response

Basic Career Services

Any customer entering the workforce center for the first time will receive basic career services. Basic career services include:

- Outreach (including worker profiling), intake and orientation to information and other services available in the workforce system

- Preliminary needs assessment
- Job search and job placement assistance, including the provision of information on nontraditional employment and in-demand industry sectors and occupations for job seekers
- Referral and coordination with other programs and services within and outside of the workforce system
- Provision of workforce and local, regional, state, and national labor market information (LMI) including:
 - Job vacancy listings
 - Job skills needed to obtain vacant positions
 - Information on demand occupation earnings, skill requirements and opportunities for advancement
 - Information and assistance for filing unemployment insurance (UI) claims
 - Work In Texas (WIT) registration
 - Job search, job referrals (self or staff assisted). Placement assistance and where appropriate career counseling.
 - Internet browsing related to career or training search
 - Use of self-directed career exploration and other online resources.
 - Referrals to other community resources
 - Resume critique
 - Use of resource room materials, equipment and information
 - Use of Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) for training provider information
 - Group Sessions and Workforce Center Workshops
 - Initial screening for referrals and information about activities leading to other Workforce Center programs.
 - Referral to other staff or workshops.
 - Other self-service and information services.

Individualized Career Services

If a customer is eligible for WIOA services and needs individualized career services to obtain or retain employment, Career Advisor staff develops an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) to include individual career services, a career pathway and occupational goals and steps to achieve these goals. Individualized career services may include:

- Comprehensive assessment using diagnostic testing for determination of skill level and in-depth interviewing
- Development of an individual employment plan (IEP) to identify employment goal, barriers and support service needs
- Short term prevocational services defined as training for:
- Communication, interviewing, punctuality, personal maintenance, and professional conduct skills (referred to as “soft skills”) to prepare customers for unsubsidized employment; or
- Non-occupationally specific skills in demand by employers such as but not limited to, Microsoft Office, and introductory classes to industry clusters.
- Workforce preparation activities

- Financial literacy
- Computer literacy
- Internships, paid and unpaid work experience linked to a career pathway
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs (IET)
- Soft skills for long term job seekers and professional development
- Out of area job search and relocation assistance

Training Services

Training services may be available to customers who:

- Are unlikely to obtain or retain employment leading to a self-sufficiency wage.
- Are unlikely to obtain or retain employment with wages comparable to, or higher than, wages from previous employment; and
- Have the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services.

Workforce center staff determines which customers meet the criteria through interviews, assessments, and career planning. If the customer is appropriate and WIOA eligible, Career Advisors develop or amends the Individual Employment Plan to include training services.

Training Services may include:

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment in Target Occupations as defined by the Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area board.
- Integrated Education and Learning that combines academics and occupational training
- On the job training (OJT) including registered apprenticeship
- Incumbent worker training
- Workplace training and cooperative education programs
- Private sector training programs
- Skills upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training
- Transitional jobs
- Job readiness training provided in combination with other training listed above
- Adult education and literacy including English language acquisition (ELA) and IET programs in combination with training
- Customized training with commitment by employer/s to hire customer upon successful program completion

Center staff primarily use the TABE for academic skill testing. Other informal web-based academic assessments are used too. The Board has expanded virtual options for soft skills training and occupational and non-occupational training. Virtually, customers have access to Metrix and the other online services, virtual entrepreneurial boot camps, and customized training for customers facing occupations.

The Board continues to provide all customers with access to “Headlight” for labor market and career information. Career lattices linked to the Board’s target occupations are now included in Headlight and offer additional information for customers in developing their employment plan or

for incumbent workers to plan their upskilling for a better job.

B. Service Priority

References: 20 CFR §679.560(b)(21)

Boards must include the Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as consistent with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and 20CFR §680.600, along with veterans and foster youth, according to the priority order outlined in the WIOA Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth. Boards must also include a list of any Board-established priority groups, if any.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of the Board policy to ensure priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to the following:

- Recipients of public assistance
- Other low-income individuals
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient
- Veterans
- Foster youth
- List of Board priority groups (if any)

Board Response

Service Priority for Individualized Career Services and Training Services

WSRCA gives priority for individualized career services and training services in the following order.

Priority #1

- Veterans and eligible spouses with one of the criteria in Priority #3

Priority #2

- Foster youth or former foster youth up to age 21 with one of the criteria in Priority #3

Priority #3

- Public assistance recipients or
- Individuals with basic skills deficiencies or
- Low-income individuals

Priority #4

- Veterans and eligible spouses who do not meet any of the criteria in Priority #3

Priority #5

- Individuals with disabilities
- Members of family with an income more than 70% and less than or equal to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines.

Note: Annually, WSRCA determines if funds are available for individuals in Priority #5 and notifies the contractor in a directive. When funds are available, individuals in Priority #5 may receive support services and training services. Only 25% of the number of WIOA Adult customers served in a program year may be deemed eligible using Priority #5.

Low Income Criteria for Adult Priority #3 Services

An individual meeting any one of the following satisfies the low-income requirement for Priority #3 WIOA adult services.

- Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months has received, assistance through SNAP, TANF, or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program
- State or local income based public assistance (WSRCA defines this as CHIPS, CCS, Medicaid, WIC, Public Housing including Section 8) in the past six months
- Member of family whose income is 70% or less of the federal poverty guidelines
- Homeless
- Foster youth
- Individual with a disability whose income (as a family of one) is 70% or less of the federal poverty guidelines
- Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program (for the WIOA adult program, this only applies to the individual receiving the free or reduced-price lunch.)

Basic Skills Deficient

WSRCA defines basic skills deficient (BSD) as an individual who computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below 8.9 grade level using a Board approved assessment instrument.

Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts**A. Fiscal Agent**

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- The entity responsible for disbursement of grant funds

Board Response

The Rural Capital Workforce Development Board, Inc. dba Workforce Solutions-Rural Capital Area is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

B. Subgrants and Contracts

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- A description of the competitive process used to award subgrants and contracts

Board Response

The Board is currently in the first year (October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025) of the contract for the Workforce Center Operator.

The steps used by the Board to ensure a free and open competition process are below.

- The decision to procure the Workforce Center Operator is initiated by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and formalized in an authorization memo.
- A procurement calendar identifying Board staff and their tasks in the development of the Request for Proposal (RFP) is prepared.
- Public notices of the intent to issue and issue date are posted on the Board's website, BONFIRE, the Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD), and sent to entities on the bidders list.
- The RFP is posted on the issue date on the Board's website, BONFIRE, and the ESBD.
- A Bidders Conference is being held.
- Responses to questions (Q&A) are posted on the Board's website, BONFIRE, and the ESBD.
- Proposers submit their proposals online using BONFIRE.
- Each proposal is reviewed for responsiveness.
- The evaluation process is conducted online through Bonfire.
 - The evaluation includes training with the evaluators and the completion of the following: Code of Conduct
 - Conflict of Interest
- Evaluator scores are compiled through BONFIRE.
- Oral Interviews may be held.
- Final recommendation for the Board of Directors approval is submitted.
- Once approved notification of intent to negotiate is sent to the selected proposer and other proposers informed.
- Contract Negotiations begin.

- Debriefings are scheduled with non-awardees as requested.

Part 8: Performance

A. Board Performance Targets

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of local levels of performance to be used to measure performance of:

- the workforce area; and
- local fiscal agent (when appropriate)

Board Response

The Board negotiates local performance measures with the State, providing documentation on specific extenuating circumstances that will justify a request for a lower performance measure. Examples of extenuating circumstances are economic downturns in the board service area, or changes in characteristics of the customer/population served, such as:

- Increased numbers of individuals receiving SNAP benefits,
- Increased numbers of individuals identifying a disability,
- limited English,
- high school dropouts, or
- ex-offenders.

Additionally, natural weather events or critical community incidents, such as natural disasters, fires, floods, or hurricanes may have a significant impact on performance which may initiate a request for a lower performance measure.

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

- All Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit
- All Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
- All Employed/Enrolled Q2 - Q4 Post Exit
- All Credential Rate
- All Measurable Skills Gain
- Adult Employed Q2 Post Exit
- Adult Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
- Adult Employed Q4 Post Exit

- Adult Credential Rate
- Adult Measurable Skills Gain
- Dislocated Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit
- Dislocated Worker Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
- Dislocated Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit
- Dislocated Worker Credential Rate
- Dislocated Worker Measurable Skills Gain
- Youth Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit
- Youth Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
- Youth Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit
- Youth Credential Rate
- Youth Measurable Skills Gain

Part 9: Training and Services

A. Individual Training Accounts

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of the following:

- How training services will be provided using ITAs in accordance with WD Letter 14-19, Change 2
- How contracts for training services will be coordinated (if contracts are used)
- How the Board will ensure informed customer choice

Board Response

All individuals entering a Workforce Center have multiple assessments available. The customer's assessment results, skills, interests, abilities, and experience are the basis for the individualized employment plan that includes a career pathway. Those who are interested in occupational training research the available training programs, discuss their findings with the case manager, and select a program to enter. The case manager sends an ITA request to a manager to review. The manager ensures:

- the training is directly linked to employment opportunities listed on the Target Occupation List
- conducted by approved providers listed in the state's Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) or appropriately procured
- the job seeker has applied for the Pell Grant, if appropriate

- the cost of the training is reasonable

B. ITA Limitations

References: 20 CFR §663.420; WD Letter 14-19, Change 2

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- Identify whether the Board imposed ITA limits
- Provide a description of the limitations, if applicable
- Provide a description detailing how customer training services selection is continuously maximized despite ITA limitations
- Provide a description of any exceptions to ITA limitations and the process for requesting an exception

Board Response

The Individual Training Account (ITA) maximum is \$8,000 per customer for a one-year period beginning October 1st and ending September 30th. WSRCA funds occupational training programs designed to be completed within two years. The maximum ITA amount may be used for each year the customer is in training. Multiple funding sources may be used for an individual customer's ITA. The \$8,000 maximum applies to the individual customer, not the funding source. The Board allows the workforce center operator to review and approve exceptions of the ITA maximum up to \$10,000, when necessary and reasonable, and when funding is available. To request an exception that exceeds the \$10,000 maximum, workforce center staff submit a Notification Form to the WSRCA with justification for the exception. The Board's Chief Operations Officer reviews and determines if the exception is approved.

WIOA requires other funding sources to pay first for tuition, training material and supplies and fees required by the provider. Other funding sources may be Pell grants, scholarships, grants, or financial assistance from federal and state programs. However, the Board allows customers to keep the portion from a funding source, such as a Pell Grant, designated for living expenses to be used to support living expenses.

The Board does not fund tuition, materials, supplies and fees:

- For any portion or term of training for which the customer signed a loan as part of financial aid; or
- For any portion or term of training paid by the customer or other source, prior to WIOA program registration.

Part 10: Apprenticeship

A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- A description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs to register with the Eligible Training Provider System to receive WIOA funding

Board Response

Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area (WSRCA) received two Apprenticeship grants to upskill approximately 400 apprentices in five key industries: Advanced Manufacturing, Construction (Skilled Trades), Information and Computer Technology, Educational Instruction, and Healthcare. The program sought funding to increase apprentice earnings by \$3.54 per hour, from an average of \$13.11 to \$16.65 per hour. This initiative involved the creation of two Apprenticeship Navigator positions, which worked to expand five existing Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) and create three new ones. The Navigators will collaborate with 22 employers, 6 training providers, and local community stakeholders to address the skills gap and meet critical hiring needs. The program also focused on outreach to underrepresented populations and coordinated with various community stakeholders to support the development and expansion of apprenticeships.

WSRCA encourages and supports employers throughout the region in developing and increasing access to Registered Apprenticeship programs. WSRCA educates companies and regional leaders on the value that apprenticeships add to the workforce/talent development system through events and seminars and provides guidance and technical assistance in how to develop registered apprenticeships.

Several companies throughout our region currently utilize Registered Apprenticeship to enhance their talent pool. Many companies opt to partner with a training provider that can support the administrative function and formal education of these programs and place these students at their companies. This strategy helps to reduce costs and make a Registered Apprenticeship more advantageous but does place the formal location of the apprenticeship in an alternate city/region.

As a fast-growing region that is a part of the Austin MSA, we support incoming companies with recognizing the value of establishing a Registered Apprenticeship early on as a part of its employee ramp up process. We guide them through the resources available to establish this type of program quickly and offer technical assistance and support to ensure that we are successful in this process.

As an organization that supports rural communities, we also look creatively at how we can utilize Registered Apprenticeships to improve opportunities locally. We work in conjunction with our local community partners and the State to amend policies that would incentivize more rural students to enter a skilled trades apprenticeship, become licensed, and increase the number of highly qualified

skilled tradesmen in the rural areas to address the shortage.

The Business Solutions Consultants provide information on the benefits of RA for the employer and trainee when they meet with local employers. Trades related employers and union staff in our service area are attending DOL sponsored information seminars on opportunities for the employers and unions to participate in the RA program.

Center staff encourages military veterans, retirees and their family members to apply for a license or apprenticeship and to obtain credit for verified military experience, service, training, or education.

B. ApprenticeshipTexas

Each Board must include a description of the Board’s strategy and commitment to support ApprenticeshipTexas efforts across the state, as applicable.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- A description of the Board’s strategy and commitment to support ApprenticeshipTexas.

Board Response

WSRCA actively promotes apprenticeship opportunities to job seekers within the centers, across the region through social media platforms, and to students in our regional ISDs.

We partner with community stakeholders to distribute information and hold community events to celebrate apprenticeship opportunities.

Partnerships are developed with local economic development corporations, community colleges, independent school districts, and trades related employers to increase the availability of integrated work-based learning—work experience, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing and on-the-job training.

Our apprenticeship options across industries are expanding to include opportunities in numerous occupations.

Part 11: Public Comment

References: WIOA §108(d); 20 CFR §679.550(b) and §679.560(b) and (e)

Boards must provide a description of the public comment process, including:

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- Describe the public comment period process
- Provide any comments received; or a statement that no public comments were received