

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

TWIC was created by the 73rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session (1993). TWIC's purpose is to promote the development of a highly skilled and well-educated workforce for Texas and to assist the governor and the legislature with strategic planning for and evaluation of the Texas workforce system.

The scope of TWIC's work is "workforce development," which is defined in state statutes that pertain to TWIC as "workforce education and workforce training and services." Workforce education includes articulated career path programs and the constituent courses of those programs that lead to a sub-baccalaureate license, credential, certificate, or degree.

Texas statute assigns TWIC five primary functions in the Texas workforce system, as follows: "1) strategic planning, 2) evaluation and performance measurement, 3) research and continuous improvement, and 4) review of state and local workforce plans and reports to ensure alignment with statewide goals and objectives; and 5) maintain the Texas Skills Standards system."^[1]

TWIC also serves as the state workforce investment board (state board) as required under federal workforce law. As the state board, TWIC operated under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) (Public Law 105-220) since Texas' implementation of the Act in 1999. On July 22, 2014, President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Public Law 113-128) into law, thereby establishing new federal workforce law and repealing WIA. TWIC continues to serve as the state board under WIOA.

In some states, prior consistent state law has determined that the state board will be largely responsible for system strategic planning and evaluation and that the state workforce agency will be responsible for program administration.

Because of the significant workforce system reform initiated by the Texas legislature in 1993 and 1995, WIOA contains provisions that allow Texas to retain—or grandfather—major elements of its workforce system that are consistent with WIOA, including TWIC's composition and roles. As a result, the duties assigned to the state board under WIOA are implemented in a manner that is consistent with TWIC's role under state legislation enacted before WIOA. Accordingly, TWIC does not operate programs, nor does it directly manage the flow of state and federal funding to the system's state agencies. Rather, TWIC's focus is strategic; its functions are guided by the duties and responsibilities established for TWIC by the Texas legislature.

Because TWIC is the state board, federal agencies periodically engage it in the federal system oversight role to participate in program reviews. For example, in the past, TWIC has participated in program reviews and site visits conducted by the DOL Region IV Office, the DOL

Office of Inspector General, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the ED Office of Adult and Vocational Education, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

One of TWIC's key responsibilities is the development of an overarching strategic plan for the Texas workforce system. The state's workforce system is composed of various programs, services, and initiatives administered by agencies and Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards), as well as independent school districts, community and technical colleges, and local adult education providers. System partners are responsible for the delivery of more than 23 workforce education and training programs and related services, as well as educational programs that support career preparation and advancement.

TWIC member agencies^[1], which are specified in state statute, include the:

- Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism
- Texas Education Agency
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Texas Workforce Commission

TWIC is required to meet quarterly and at other times deemed necessary by the Chair. All meetings of TWIC and its committees are posted in the *Texas Register* in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The chair is authorized to appoint subcommittees and technical advisory committees to inform the work of the Council and to assist TWIC in fulfilling its legislative mandates. Current TWIC committees include the Executive Committee and the Apprenticeship and Training Advisory Committee. A recommendation from any committee must be considered by TWIC and is not considered an approved action until TWIC conducts a vote. A recommendation or action must be approved by a majority of the quorum present at the meeting.

TWIC appoints an executive director, who is responsible for the daily operations of TWIC. The executive director establishes administrative and personnel policies and procedures on behalf of TWIC, hires staff to address TWIC's duties and responsibilities, and provides periodic and annual reports to TWIC, the governor, and the legislature. TWIC is responsible for developing and implementing policies that clearly separate its policy-making responsibilities from the management responsibilities of the executive director and staff.

[1] Governor's website/TWIC. Accessed June 13, 2019, at <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/twic/purpose>.

[2] Ex officio members; Texas Government Code, Chapter 208. Workforce Investment Act.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as

appropriate.

TWC is the state agency in Texas responsible for the administration of all WIOA core and partner programs. TWC and a statewide network of 28 Boards for regional planning and service delivery, their contracted service providers and community partners, and the TWC unemployment benefits tele-centers comprise Texas Workforce Solutions.

Texas Workforce Solutions provides workforce development services that help workers find and keep good jobs, and help employers hire the skilled workers they need to grow their businesses. Our workforce partners include community colleges, adult basic education providers, local independent school districts, economic development groups, businesses, and other state agencies. Collaboration and coordination among all partners play a critical role in the success of the Texas workforce system.

Boards are responsible for strategic planning of workforce services for employers and job seekers. The integrated workforce delivery system maximizes funding and productivity while eliminating duplicate efforts. Through performance-based contracts, TWC monitors and holds the Boards accountable for program performance and provides technical assistance.

TWC continues to cultivate emerging industries, support existing businesses, and enhance the skills development of the Texas workforce, taking advantage of strategic opportunities provided by [swift](#) economic change. TWC is dedicated to leading a market-driven workforce system that meets the needs of employers and workers and helps Texans prosper.

Texas has enjoyed efficiencies in providing services to employers, job seekers, and special population groups, including low-income and basic skills deficient individuals, as well as veterans, by collocating core programs. These efficiencies include [the following](#):

- Providing comprehensive and seamless workforce and support services
- Elimination of duplicative effort and effective management of program funds
- Systemic approach for providing guidance and technical assistance consistently across programs
- Collocating and integrating Texas Workforce Solutions and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) business relations staff to help employers fill open positions with qualified job seekers with disabilities, thus enhancing the one-stop service delivery model
- Using labor market information to inform targeted business development, explore industry and economic trends, and research and track emerging and evolving occupations in Texas

Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

The following activities support WIOA core programs and align with the state's strategies, as previously described.

TWC administers the development and integration of workforce services in cooperation with the Board's oversight and planning efforts. Service delivery is provided through Texas Workforce Solutions, which may contract with one-stop providers to operate a variety of program components. This network gives customers local access to workforce solutions and statewide services at approximately 180 Workforce Solutions Offices, four UI tele-centers, and numerous partner locations.

WIOA continues to support Texas' progress toward integrating services for customers. WIOA §193(a)(3) provides that Boards' contracted workforce service providers and community partners are defined under prior consistent state law.

Texas Labor Code §302.21 sets forth the job training, employment, and employment-related educational programs and functions consolidated under the authority of TWC. In Texas, prior consistent state law defines the Boards' responsibility to develop, implement, and modify a plan for convening all relevant programs, identified as one-stop required-partner programs, including [the following](#):

- WIOA, formerly WIA
- ES
- UI benefits information
- Choices, the TANF employment and training program
- SNAP E&T
- [Child Care Services](#) ~~Subsidized child care~~
- TAA
- AEL programs

The 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2015), amended the Texas Labor Code by adding Title 4, Subtitle 4, which transferred the following programs to TWC:

- VR (WIOA, Title IV) programs
- Business Enterprises of Texas
- Grant for Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind
- The Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center

Prior consistent state law further defines the following as required one-stop partner programs. Other than UI compensation, which is administered by TWC, the programs are not under the direct oversight of the Boards; therefore, Boards are required to establish memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with:

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

TWC also recommends that Boards establish MOUs with the following optional partner activities:

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006
- Job counseling, training, and placement services for veterans, 38 USC 41
- Education and vocational training program through Job Corps administered by DOL

- Native American programs authorized under Title I of WIOA
- HUB-administered employment and training programs
- Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act
- Reintegration of offenders programs authorized under the Second Chance Act, 2007
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs authorized under Title I of WIOA

Additionally, Boards are encouraged to continually expand and enhance their network by forming partnerships outside of the Workforce Solutions Offices. Some agencies and services with which Boards have established additional cooperative relationships include [the following](#):

- Local boards of education
- Local-level vocational education agencies
- Community-based Organizations (CBOs)
- Faith-based Organizations (FBOs)
- Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)
- Other appropriate training and employment agencies and services to expand local presence

Texas state law requires TWC and HHSC to jointly develop a MOU establishing guidelines for a coordinated interagency case management plan. Additionally, TWC requires in the contracts between TWC and the Boards that the Boards, in cooperation with HHSC local offices, develop and implement a coordinated interagency case management plan.

Pay-for-Performance Contract Strategy

WIOA provides TWC and Boards the ability to implement a pay-for-performance contracting strategy in addition to established performance-based contracts for service providers. Pay-for-performance contracts require established performance benchmarks tied to the six primary indicators of performance in WIOA. Contractors must achieve these benchmarks to receive payment. TWC will further refine pay-for-performance contracting as additional guidance regarding WIOA performance requirements becomes available.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship training is designed to prepare and train individuals for careers in the skilled trades and crafts. Apprenticeship combines on-the-job training supervised by experienced journey workers with job-related classroom instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation.

The purpose of TWC's apprenticeship training program is to stimulate and assist industry in developing and improving apprenticeship and other training programs designed to provide skilled workers needed to compete in a global economy. As authorized in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 133, TWC provides funding to local education agencies (LEAs) and apprenticeship committees to support [a portion of](#) the costs of job-related classroom instruction in registered apprenticeship training programs. The LEA and the apprenticeship committee serve as the funding link between the registered apprenticeship training program and TWC. To qualify for funding, apprenticeship training programs and apprentices must be registered with the DOL's Office of Apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship training programs have demonstrated that employers that invest in training have lower employee turnover, increased employee productivity, better employee problem-solving skills, and improved employee relations. As a result, both the employer and employee are equally committed to the program's success.

For the biennium beginning September 1, ~~2019~~2021, TWC was appropriated a ~~41-100~~ percent increase over current biennium funding to support the Apprenticeship training program. Combined with WIOA statewide-discretionary funding TWC is projecting a ~~21-44~~ percent increase in participation during the ~~FY'20FY'22--'21-'23~~ biennium. With these additional funds, TWC can help address demand for apprenticeship jobs across Texas and can continue to prioritize the enrollment of women and other populations at risk of dropping out of the workforce into apprenticeship training.

Job Corps

Job Corps program is a no-cost education and vocational training program administered by the DOL. Authorized under Title I of WIOA as a required partner in the one-stop systems, Job Corps programs assist eligible youth, age 16 to 24 to connect to the labor force by providing them with intensive social, academic, career and technical education, and service-learning opportunities. Located in primarily residential centers, Job Corps programs facilitate participants obtaining secondary school diplomas or recognized postsecondary credentials leading to successful careers, in in-demand industry sectors or occupations or the Armed Forces. Program goals include: economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement; or enrollment in postsecondary education, including an apprenticeship program; and support responsible citizenship. There are 131 Job Corps centers located throughout the United States, each offering educational training and a variety of vocational training programs. In Texas, Job Corps programs are coordinated out of Region 4, Dallas office with programs operating in El Paso, San Marcos, Laredo, and McKinney, Texas.

Other required partners administer the Indian and Native American Programs, which support employment and training activities for Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian individuals; Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker program, which provides funding to help migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families achieve economic self-sufficiency by offering supportive services to them while they work in agriculture or by helping them to acquire new skills for jobs offering better pay; and, the YouthBuild program, which provides low-income youth the opportunity to learn construction skills through building affordable housing for homeless and low-income individuals in their neighborhoods and other community assets such as schools, playgrounds, and community centers.

Child Care and Early Learning

~~In August 2019, TWC's Child Care Services department was promoted to division status within the Agency. The Child Care and Early Learning Division provides child care subsidy assistance to eligible low-income families with children under age 13, allowing parents to work, attend~~

school, or participate in training. In addition to assisting families, Child Care and Early Learning helps child care providers improve the quality of services for all children in Texas through resources and assistance.

The Texas Rising Star quality rating and improvement system strengthened its certification standards and professional development requirements in FY'19 to better help families identify quality early learning programs based on a 2-star, 3-star, or 4-star recognition levels. Texas Rising Star encourages providers to exceed minimum licensing requirements and improve quality services in order to achieve a higher star level recognition and receive higher rates for serving children participating in the child care subsidy assistance program. In 2019, a workgroup with members representing state agencies, Boards, child care providers, and other stakeholders assembled to review the Texas Rising Star guidelines and assessments. The group will offer recommendations for enhancements to the program in early 2020.

High-quality child care promotes healthy child development and school readiness while enabling parents to work or attend training or education. The mission of the Child Care & Early Learning Division is to enhance the quality of and increase access to high-quality child care through program supports and provide financial aid for low-income families.

Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) administer child care financial assistance to support eligible low-income families and families that participate in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Choices employment program. TWC and the Boards provide education, guidance, and information to participating families about the characteristics and availability of high-quality child care and its importance to healthy child development.

In order to address the impacts of COVID-19 on the service industry and to support Texas' continued economic recovery, in June 2021 the Commission approved the use of \$500 million to support the new COVID-19 Service Industry Recovery (SIR) Child Care Program, which helps low-wage workers who are in the 1) Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, 2) Accommodation and Food Services, and 3) Retail Trade industries obtain high-quality child care. Children of eligible SIR workers may receive child care services for 12- months.

In November 2021, the Commission approved \$293.2 million in funding for low-income child care to allow for an increase in the number of children served by Boards. These funds will be made available to Boards in Board Contract Years 2022-2024.

The pandemic also highlighted an opportunity for the Commission to consider a policy change that allows unemployed parents to be determined eligible to receive child care financial assistance. Previously, only parents who were already working or in education and/or training programs met the child care initial eligibility criteria. In June 2021, the Commission approved a waiver of the existing child care rule, and now unemployed parents may receive up to three months of child care in order to search for work. The child care services continue if the parent finds a job that meets the hourly work requirement.

In June 2021, the Commission approved \$2 million of statewide WIOA funds for short-term training for parents of children enrolled in the Child Care Services program, specifically parents in the initial job search period. Additionally, TWC continues to support initiatives that address the middle skills gap by offering child care services to parents enrolled in qualifying training and education programs.

The Texas Rising Star program is a quality rating and improvement system for early learning programs participating in the Child Care Services program. Texas Rising Star requires providers to exceed minimum licensing requirements and encourages them to attain progressively higher levels of quality. Texas Rising Star certification is available to all child care providers that participate in the Child Care Services program. Boards employ both Texas Rising Star assessors

and mentors. In Board Contract Year 2023, a state-procured entity will assume responsibility for Texas Rising Star assessments and will employ all Texas Rising Star assessors. All assessors must complete and be certified through the Texas Rising Star Assessment Training and Certification Program (ATCP). All mentors must participate in the new Texas Rising Star Mentor Micro-Credentials program. Both the ATCP and the Mentor Micro-Credentials program are administered by the Children's Learning Institute at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston.

Boards also receive funding to improve the quality of child care services. Boards must determine their community's needs and annually develop Child Care Quality Expenditure Plans that outline their strategic investment of these quality improvement funds. Many Boards use these funds to support ongoing education and training for child care professionals. Additionally, TWC recently approved the use of \$3 million in CCDF quality improvement funds to support the development of newly registered child care apprenticeship programs. A request for applications was issued in November 2021.

In FY'19, TWC awarded TEA \$10 million in child care funds to support planning grants to build partnerships between school districts and early learning programs to expand pre-K service capacity. Through this grant, early learning programs achieving a 4-star certification level under TWC's Texas Rising Star program have an opportunity to partner with local independent school districts and charter schools to expand quality prekindergarten services to children three to four years old.

TWC also partners with TEA and the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) on the Texas School-Ready! (TSR!) project to provide training and mentoring to teachers in child care, Head Start, and prekindergarten settings serving preschool children. Additionally, CLI helped to create and administer the Texas Rising Star Assessment Training and Certification Program which is intended to demonstrate Texas Rising Star Assessor inter-rater reliability.

TWC provides funds to TEA for the Professional Development Partnerships for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program, which is designed to determine a pathway for articulation between two- and four-year colleges and universities for preservice early childhood teachers. TWC also partnered with the Office of the Governor and TEA to sponsor the Texas Early Childhood Learning Summit in Houston to support professional development for early learning educators in public schools and child care early learning programs.

TWC provides funds to the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System to support the Texas Workforce Registry (TWR)—a web-based application for early childhood education (ECE) professionals who work with children birth to age 8. The funding is used to house the education, employment history, and training hours of ECE professionals. The funds are also used to support the use of the TWR by TRS-certified providers or child care providers applying for and working with a TRS mentor to achieve TRS certification. In 2019, TWC committed funds to expand this system statewide.

Through a competitive procurement process, TWC awarded funds to Texas Association for the Education of Young Children to provide financial assistance to child care providers and caregivers to complete a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or enroll in college-credit courses in early childhood development. Since 2011, the Texas T.E.A.C.H. program has awarded 1,634 CDA scholarships and 1,154 associate degree scholarships to ECE professionals employed with Texas child care programs.

Texas received an increase of approximately \$230 million—\$240 million per year in CCDF funding in FY'18 and '19. With this increase, TWC was able to increase the number of children served, increase provider reimbursement rates, and invest in child care quality improvement

initiatives. In 2019, Texas served over 50 percent more children than in 2017 (138,461 and 91,989, respectively). Provider rates were increased by 2 percent in base reimbursement rates for all providers in FY'19 and additional rate increases were implemented in FY'20 to improve access to quality child care for low-income families. Additional TWC investments in quality implemented in FY'19 include enhancements for quality and school readiness; professional development opportunities that focus on building up a well-qualified workforce of early learning teachers; and research to expand our understanding of the child care industry in Texas, as well as opportunities to share that information with providers, parents, and other stakeholders. Child care initiatives provided with the increased CCFD funding include a Cost of Quality study, Child Care Business Training, and the following collaborative matching grants: Infant Toddler Specialist Network, Family Child Care Networks, Child Care Staff Retention, and Addressing Challenging Behaviors.

Foster Youth

TWC recognizes that helping foster youth and those aging out of foster care transition to independent living requires more than addressing the need for shelter, food, and safety. Intensive and coordinated efforts are required from public agencies and community organizations, professionals, community leaders, and concerned volunteers to support youth in becoming engaged, responsible, and economically self-sufficient adults.

TWC along with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) regional offices and local Boards have jointly developed and entered into agreements addressing the unique challenges facing current and former foster youth transitioning to a successful adulthood, including improving employment outcomes for these youths. Through an MOU, DFPS and the Boards collaborate to: further the objectives of the DFPS Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program; ensure services are prioritized and targeted to meet the needs of current and former foster youth; and refer, as appropriate, foster youth who need housing to short-term housing.

DFPS staff, caregivers, and PAL contractors refer youth age 16 and older to local Texas Workforce Solutions Offices for job search and readiness assistance, career exploration, and employment and training services. Each Board has a designated point of contact for staff and youth to access assistance and services. Youth are encouraged to use the TWC online job matching system, WorkInTexas.com, to search for jobs, create a resume, and submit applications for employment.

The Labor Market Information (LMI) Division of TWC supports a website, "Texas Career Check," to facilitate career and education exploration available to youth in and formerly in Foster Care. The website provides information on occupation trends, occupational information, military occupations, school information, programs of study and a high school graduation plan, as well as an online interest profiler to help youth determine what they like and do not like. (<https://texascareercheck.com/>)

Texas Family Code §264.121 directs that workforce services be prioritized and targeted to meet the unique needs of foster youth and former foster youth.

Boards must ensure that:

- Eligible foster youth receive priority over all other equally qualified individuals, except veterans and eligible spouses, in the receipt of federal and state-funded services; and
- Workforce services are prioritized and targeted for youth transitioning out of the foster care system and for former foster youth.

Priority of Service for Support Services

To ensure that eligible foster youth receive priority over all other equally qualified individuals, except veterans and eligible spouses, in the receipt of workforce services, they also must have access to needed support services (for example, child care and transportation).

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Both state and federal welfare reform legislation emphasize personal responsibility, time-limited cash assistance benefits, and the goal of work instead of public assistance. To support these mandates, TWC and the Boards developed a service delivery model with the goal of employment at the earliest opportunity for applicants and recipients of cash assistance. TWC, through a collaborative partnership with HHSC has implemented interagency initiatives to address welfare reform.

The Choices program is Texas' Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program, which assists applicants, recipients, nonrecipient parents, and former recipients of TANF cash assistance to transition from welfare to work through participation in work-related activities, including job search and job readiness classes, basic skills training, education, vocational training, and support services. Workforce Solutions Offices provide these services that are designed to lead to employment. Choices services are an important part of this process because they serve both employers and job seekers and provide job-matching tools that all Workforce Solutions Office staff can use.

Choices staff meets with TANF recipients to introduce them to Choices services, conduct an in-depth assessment, and develop a Family Employment Plan. Participation for most recipients includes job readiness activities and job search activities as a means of testing the labor market and locating employment at the earliest opportunity. Job readiness activities include the following:

- Self-esteem building
- Job search skills
- Labor Market Information
- Employment goal setting
- Resume writing
- Interviewing techniques
- General Workplace expectations
- Job retention skills

Noncustodial Parent Choices

The Non-Custodial Parent Choices (NCP Choices) program is a collaborative effort of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) of Texas, Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards), Workforce Solutions Office staff, and family court judges. The program targets low income unemployed, or underemployed Non-Custodial Parents (NCPs) who are behind on their child support payments, or who have had a child support obligation established.

Mirrored after TWC's Choices employment and training program for TANF recipients, the goal of the NCP Choices program is to help NCPs overcome substantial barriers to employment and

career advancement while becoming economically self-sufficient and making consistent child support payments.

The success of the NCP Choices program is largely attributable to four core elements:

1. Court-ordered program participation. Failure to participate leads to “swift and certain consequences,” up to, and including, jail time;
2. Presence of Workforce Solutions Office staff at the court to meet with NCPs immediately after being ordered into the program;
3. Intensive case management by Workforce Solutions Office staff, including weekly in- person contact until NCPs enter employment, and monthly verification of continued employment; and
4. Close communication with program partners regarding NCPs’ participation and progress in the program.

Even though this is one of the hardest-to-serve populations, the NCP Choices program has seen positive employment, job retention, and child support results. [The following program information was collected between September 2020 and August 2021:](#)

- [1,787 non-custodial parents were ordered into the program.](#)
- [\\$1,192,991 was collected in child support payments.](#)

~~The following program information was collected between August 2005 and April 2019:~~

~~over 40,000 NCPs served~~

~~46.33 percent of participating NCPs entered employment during state FY '18~~

~~72.47 percent of participating NCPs entering employment retained employment for at least six months during state FY '18~~

~~Additionally:~~

~~custodial parents are 21 percent less likely to receive TANF benefits; and~~

- ~~more than \$6 million in child support was collected during state FY '18, some of which was used to repay TANF, Medicaid, foster care, and child support collections programs.~~

TWC also encourages collaboration and coenrollment with other programs when appropriate to ensure the NCP receives a range of services.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Education and Training (E&T) program helps [SNAP recipients who have been referred to the SNAP E&T program](#) participants to gain skills, training, or work experience [in order](#) to increase their ability to obtain regular employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. Administrative authority of the SNAP E&T [Program](#) program in Texas transferred from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) effective April 1, 2018. HHSC and TWC have partnered through an Interagency Cooperation Agreement to provide SNAP E&T services.

TWC coordinates and collaborates with 28 Local Workforce Development Boards ([Boards](#)) and their contracted workforce service providers and community partners to provide SNAP E&T services. Collectively known as Texas Workforce Solutions, this network offers local access to integrated and statewide services to all employers, workers, job seekers, and youth, including individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

HHSC local-level staff:

- ~~determines eligibility for SNAP benefits statewide;~~
- ~~determines work registration or exemption status for SNAP E&T services;~~
- ~~refers SNAP recipients to Workforce Solutions Office for SNAP E&T services~~

TWC rules (40 TAC §813.2(1)(D), §813.12, and §813.32(b)) and federal regulations (7 CFR §273.7(a) and 7 CFR §273.24(a)(1)) require SNAP recipients to meet work requirements unless they are exempt ~~because of age or disability or another specific reason~~. Federal regulations at 7 CFR §273.7(c)(5) require each component of the state's SNAP E&T program to be delivered through its statewide Workforce Solutions Offices. The ~~components of the~~ SNAP E&T program components offered in Texas include supervised job search, job search training, workfare, work experience, basic education, vocational training, occupational training, and ~~or training, educational programs, self-employment programs, and~~ job retention.

On December 20, 2018, Congress reauthorized SNAP as part of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-334). The law contains various provisions that affect SNAP eligibility, benefits, and program administration, including changes mandated by the law and those that provide additional flexibility for state agencies. All provisions of the Act related to SNAP were ~~are~~ effective as of the date of enactment, unless otherwise stated.

On January 4, 2021, FNS issued a final rule, Employment and Training Opportunities in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, most provisions of which were effective March 8, 2021, to implement changes made by §4005 of the Agriculture Improvement Act to the SNAP E&T program.

Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

Individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English, are a large and growing population of job seekers in Texas. TWC continues to develop policy guidance, technical assistance, and language assistance to ensure meaningful access to workforce services for all customers. TWC integrates English literacy with civics education, workforce preparation activities, secondary education, and occupational skills training. This approach stresses contextualized learning to transition participants to postsecondary education, further skills training, or lead to employment.

Texas employers must continue to compete in the global marketplace and maintaining a skilled workforce is one of their prime concerns. Supporting the employment and training goals of the LEP workforce is clearly a core mission for Boards, training providers, and adult education programs. TWC working with multiple partners developed the LEP Guide for Workforce Professionals. Boards, Workforce Solutions Office staff, and education and training professionals can use this tool to enhance service delivery to LEP customers. The guide is available online at <https://twc.texas.gov/files/partners/lep-guide-workforce-professionals-twc.pdf>.

Homeless Individuals

TWC strives to make services available to individuals with barriers to employment, including homeless populations, as identified by WIOA §171(b)(4). As part of this effort, TWC serves on the Interagency Council for the Homeless, a group charged with collaborating and planning the provision of services to the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. TWC also partners with grantees of ~~DOLETA's~~ DOLVET's Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) to offer job search and placement services, occupational training and counseling, and other vital assistance.

Additionally, Boards are charged with establishing collaborative partnerships with housing authorities and sponsors of local housing programs to address unmet housing needs of Choices recipients. Workforce Solutions Office staff performs initial and ongoing assessments to determine the employability needs of individuals; assessments must report unmet housing needs and whether those needs are a barrier to full participation in the workforce and progression to self-sufficiency.

Ex-Offenders

TWC is a member of the State Reentry Task Force, led by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). The task force consists of 29 individuals representing a cross-section of Texas agencies, organizations, and communities. The Reentry Task Force maintains working groups to address specific barriers to successful reentry. The Employment Working Group identifies strategies to eliminate barriers to employment in a post release environment as well as coordination of resources, job training, and assistance.

TDCJ has implemented a new program called Website for Work that helps connect individuals on parole supervision with employers looking for skilled applicants. Website for Work is a web-based application managed by a dedicated employment specialist to connect unemployed or underemployed ex-offenders who have specific skills and certifications that meet the employer's needs. The Website for Work program serves the entire state of Texas and employers that hire an ex-offender within a year of his or her release from prison qualify for the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). Additionally, TWC offers fidelity bonding through the local Workforce Solutions Offices. Fidelity bonding for employment is offered and marketed for certain at-risk job seekers, including individuals in the ex-offender population.

In July 2019, TWC received a \$1.225 million discretionary grant from DOL to conduct a demonstration project using evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions, new interventions that theory or research suggests are promising, or a combination of both to improve employment outcomes of adults. The grant targets adults ages 25 or older who were formerly incarcerated in the adult criminal justice system and released within two years of the date of enrollment or are currently under supervision. [Known as Texas Pathways to Reentry](#), the project must provide services in high-crime, high-poverty communities. The primary goal of the [Texas Pathways to Reentry](#) program is helping the target population to secure and retain suitable self-supporting employment. Participants will be assessed to determine criminogenic risks, needs, and barriers to employment. Workforce Solutions case managers will use the assessment information to develop an overall career path and service delivery strategy. Services will be structured to address the specific barriers identified during the assessment process.

Reemployment Service and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

[The Reemployment Service and Eligibility Assessment \(RESEA\) program is a federal grant program designed to allow states to provide personalized reemployment assistance to individuals who are receiving unemployment benefits and are determined likely to exhaust their benefits before becoming reemployed. The program uses statistical modeling to rank unemployment benefit claimants based on their likelihood to exhaust all unemployment benefits. This process includes a statistical evaluation of several work-related and economic factors, including length of workforce attachment, occupational field, wage, and location.](#)

[The RESEA program focuses on the following strategies:](#)

- [Conducting one-on-one reemployment and eligibility assessments to determine continued eligibility for UI benefits.](#)

- Providing customized reemployment services that are tailored to each claimant's needs.

The goals of RESEA include providing claimants with a wide array of resources that support reemployment as quickly as possible and connecting claimants to reemployment services, including co-enrollment in the WIOA dislocated worker program or other program services, as appropriate. By focusing on UI claimants who are likely to exhaust benefits, TWC's RESEA program also satisfies the federal Worker Profiling Reemployment Services statutory requirements.

Required RESEA activities include:

- registering in Wagner-Peyser employment services;
- developing an individual reemployment plan;
- providing labor market information customized to individual claimants needs;
- providing information and access to services available through Workforce Solutions Offices; and
- assessing continued unemployment benefit eligibility.

Texas' RESEA program further promotes the integration of workforce services as envisioned by WIOA.

~~The Reemployment Service and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program is a federal grant program designed to allow states to provide personalized intensive reemployment assistance to individuals who are receiving unemployment benefits and are determined likely to exhaust their benefits that will improve their employment outcomes before becoming employed.~~

~~The RESEA program focuses on the following strategies:~~

- ~~Conducting in-person or /virtual reemployment orientations where claimants are introduced to TWC and their workforce solutions office reemployment resources, and eligibility assessments~~
- ~~Conducting eligibility assessments to ensure claimants are able and actively seeking employment~~

~~Providing 1:1 customized reemployment appointments services that are tailored to each claimant's needs~~

- ~~During the The goal of RESEA 1:1 appointment claimants are provided the following re-employment services~~
 - ~~Enrollment into Wagner Peyser~~
 - ~~UI Eligibility Assessment~~
 - ~~Customized labor market information~~
 - ~~Individual reemployment plan~~
 - ~~Referrals to additional training and employment services~~

~~In addition to the services listed above eligible claimants my be is to provide claimants with a wide array of resources that support reemployment as quickly as possible and to connect~~

~~claimants to reemployment services, including co-enrollment, in the WIOA dislocated worker program or other program services, as appropriate. Required RESEA activities include developing an individual reemployment plan, providing labor market information customized to individual claimants needs, providing information and access to services available through Workforce Solutions Offices, and assessing continued unemployment benefit eligibility. The goal of RESEA is to provide claimants with a wide array of resources that support reemployment as quickly as possible and to connect claimants to reemployment services, including co-enrollment in WIOA dislocated worker program or other program services, as appropriate. Required RESEA activities include registering in Wagner Peysers employment services, developing an individual reemployment plan, providing labor market information customized to individual claimants needs, providing information and access to services available through Workforce Solutions Offices, and assessing continued unemployment benefit eligibility.~~

~~The program uses statistical modeling to rank unemployment benefit claimants based on their likelihood to exhaust all unemployment benefits. This process includes a statistical evaluation of numerous work and related factors, including, but not limited to, length of workforce attachment, occupational field, wage, and location.~~

~~TWC's RESEA program is Texas' version of the federal Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) initiative. Given the alignment of these two programs and the plan development and reporting requirements, it could be more efficient to align the planning requirements for this initiative with the WIOA plan, eliminating the administrative burden of developing and maintaining multiple plans.~~

~~Starting in FY20, DOL allowed states to use 10% of the RESEA grant funding to conduct a mandatory program evaluation. TWC has received roughly \$2.3 million to conduct federally mandated evaluations of the RESEA program. DOL requires states to evaluate the efficacy of RESEA activities improving employment outcomes. A portion of future RESEA funds can only be used for activities that are proven to increase employment outcomes. States can choose from several evaluation designs. The FY20 and 21 State RESEA Plans contains three means by which TWC plans to meet the requirement: 1. Conduct an in-house Quasi-Experimental Trial Impact, 2. Conduct an in-house Random Control Trial Impact Evaluation and 3. Hire a Texas public research university to conduct an Implementation and Process Evaluation.~~

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The Texas workforce system is a complex structure comprised of numerous programs, services, and initiatives administered by state agencies and Boards, TWIC, independent school districts, community and technical colleges, and local adult education providers. System partners are responsible for the delivery of a wide range of workforce education and training programs and related services, as well as education programs that support career preparation and advancement.

The workforce system is interconnected by the programs and agencies that either serve common customers or are charged with achieving similar employment and educational outcomes for their targeted customer groups. Crucial to the system planning process and

alignment with federal and state statutes, the Texas workforce system builds upon the system's core elements, goals, and objectives to meet the vision and mission of the system, including the core programs under WIOA:

- The Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula grant programs administered by the DOL under Title I of WIOA;
- The Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFLA) program administered by the ED under Title II of WIOA;
- The Wagner Peysner Act ES program administered by DOL under Title III WIOA; and
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program administered by ED under Title IV of WIOA

Improved access and efficiency, along with value-added support services, are a few of the many benefits customers receive from the state workforce system. System partners are responsible for the delivery of various workforce education and training programs and related services, as well as education programs that support career preparation and advancement, including:

- Providing services that facilitate the match between employers and employees
- Providing employment, training, and retention services for eligible WIOA participants and prioritizing services to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are disabled and/or basic skills deficient to spur financial self-sufficiency
- Developing adult education and family literacy programs that ensure all adults have the basic education skills they need to contribute to their families and communities
- Providing employment, training, and retention services to individuals with barriers to employment, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, trade-affected individuals, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, long-term unemployed individuals, and youth
- Encouraging the use of training services that provide portable, transferable credit and credentials
- Providing support services, such as child care, UI benefits, and transportation to enable eligible individuals to work or participate in education and training activities;
- Monitoring and evaluating compliance of local area service delivery for fiscal accountability and program protection
- Providing technical assistance to local Boards and training providers to ensure the most effective delivery of workforce services

TWC, the 28 Boards, their contracted service providers, and community partners continue to work toward full integration of core programs. The strategy of alignment, coordination, and integration of education, employment, and training programs is close to being fully realized.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Texas businesses receive value-added assistance through an integrated workforce system.

Businesses have access to pools of job seekers at all levels of education and experience, allowing potential employers to tailor new hires to the requirements of the job and build a better workforce. Close ties to the local labor market enable Boards to conduct outreach by working with businesses to provide opportunities for work experience and on-the-job training (OJT) and allow low-skilled workers to build skill sets relevant to the current market. Additionally, Boards are well positioned to work with other community partners, such as economic development organizations, to expand opportunities to all customers.

Dedicated Business Services Units (BSUs) along with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) provide businesses access to customized service options that address their specific business needs. BSUs and VRS offer a range of services designed to help employers with hiring and training needs to maximize their competitiveness, including:

- applicant recruitment, screening and referral;
- listing and maintaining job orders through WorkinTexas.com
- assistance with and participating in job fairs;
- information resources (e.g., labor market and business statistics, employment and laborlaw, UI benefits);
- testing and prescreening job candidates;
- basic employment skills training and referral to education and training providers;
- customized training -- including training through the state-funded Skills DevelopmentFund -- and OJT skills training;
- assist with and information on the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC); and
- rapid response and downsizing assistance in the event of closings or mass layoffs.

Continued efforts to ~~affect effect~~ system-wide improvement includes the expansion of employers' access to grants through the Skills Development Fund. ~~Programs Participants~~ receiving grants through this program build skill competencies to meet current and future demand in high-growth industry sectors. In crafting solutions for Texas employers, community-based organizations (CBOs) and technical colleges partner with TWC and local employers to provide job training when a specific need is identified. Training enables incumbent employees to advance their skills and/or creates new jobs with the partnering business. TWC works with the employer and training provider to ensure that the program meets specific performance measures and benefits both the employer and ~~the~~ trainee.

During state fiscal year ~~2021~~2019, TWC:

- awarded ~~43~~ ~~38~~ Skills Development Fund grants totaling \$~~16,999,080~~~~518,131~~;
- served ~~4472~~ Texas businesses;
- supported the creation of ~~4,9253,568~~ new jobs;
- ~~upgraded the skills of 8,3799,115~~ workers in existing jobs;
- ~~awarded 22 Skills for Small Business grants totaling \$824,250; and~~
- 5. ~~awarded six Skills for Transition grants totaling \$775,000 -- these grants serve transitioning military personnel who are within one year of service separation; and~~
- awarded ~~six five~~ Dual Credit grants totaling \$~~936,228~~~~\$859,253~~.

TWC closely measures performance to evaluate the Boards' effectiveness in meeting the needs of employers. These measures include:

- assisting employers in filling vacancies; and
- expediting the return of UI claimants to work, thereby protecting the state's unemployment trust fund as well as containing the UI tax rates of employers.

TWC's Office of the Commissioner Representing Employers also reaches out to businesses by sponsoring Texas Business Conferences, an annual series of 12 to 15 employer seminars around the state. The seminars present practical, up-to-date information for operating a successful business and managing employees. Topics include: Texas employment law and the basics of hiring, employee policy handbooks, handling unemployment claims, independent contractors, and federal and Texas wage and hour laws.

TWC's Skills for Small Business ~~and Skills for Veterans~~ initiatives provide further training opportunities for both employers and employees. Other activities include TWC's partnership with the Office of the Governor's Economic and Tourism division to host the Governor's Small Business Forums, and with the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) to provide geographic mapping technology, SitesOnTexas.com. This website assists employers in planning for business expansion, job retention, and workforce training.

Through the Texas Industry Partnership, TWC has dedicated WIOA funds to address skill gaps and ensure a talent pipeline to address regional industry needs, through collaborations between Boards and private employers or corporate foundations (partners). Collaborations must engage in allowable WIOA activities that support workforce development for six designated industry clusters: advanced technologies and manufacturing, aerospace and defense; biotechnology and life sciences; information technology; petroleum refining and chemical products; and energy.

The intent of the Texas Industry Partnership program (TIP) is to support Boards in strengthening partnerships with communities, leverage available state and local resources, and foster collaboration with partners to promote occupational job training in Texas.

TWC promotes partnerships with employers to overcome barriers in meeting workforce needs with the creative use of technology and innovation. TWC takes steps to ensure that the staff of public schools, vocational service programs, and CBOs are trained and supported to assist all individuals with disabilities in achieving integrated, competitive employment. TWC also promotes the availability and accessibility of individualized training designed to prepare an individual with a disability for the individual's preferred employment. To this end, individuals with disabilities are given the opportunity to understand and explore options for education and training, including postsecondary, graduate and postgraduate education, vocational or technical training, or other training, as pathways to employment.

TWC's VR services collaborates with Boards to develop and implement a coordinated, team-based approach to serving employers. This strategy includes other state and federal partners, such as the DOL's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and the Veterans Administration, which conduct ongoing outreach with federal contractors to increase awareness, recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities, including veterans.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

In March 2016, Governor Abbott established the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative and tasked the commissioners of TEA, THECB, and TWC to work together on charges centered on developing strong links between education and industry, with the goal of helping Texans grow in economic prosperity. The commissioners built a proactive, ongoing partnership along with other stakeholders to align the educational goals of Texas with the state's higher education plan of 60x30TX, which aims for 60 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds to hold either a certificate or degree by 2030, with the goal of growing the state's workforce, industry, and the economy.

TWC will incorporate the State's 60x30TX strategy as one of the building blocks for engaging the state's community colleges and area career and technical education schools as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. The goal of this system is to have at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 possess a certificate or degree by 2030 through initiatives that include increasing postsecondary educational success over the next five years.

[House Bill \(HB\) 1247 and HB 3767, passed during the 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session \(2021\), codified the Tri-Agency Initiative and require TEA, THECB, and TWC to develop unified workforce education goals and strategies and align work-based learning programs across the state.](#)

TWC promotes and recognizes community college engagement through our annual Partnership Awards. Each year, the Community College Engagement Award is issued to two community college partners (one large, one small) for their level of engagement in TWC programs that include Skills Development Fund and Self Sufficiency Fund grants, apprenticeship, WIOA grants, Summer Merit (STEM) projects, Skills for Small Business contract, Wagner-Peyser 7(b) grants, dual credit projects, AEL projects, veteran-focused Skills for Transition, employment services, Jobs and Education for Texas (JET) grants, and curriculum development or sharing (Fast Start). This nonmonetary award is presented annually at the Texas Workforce Conference. It highlights the important work of community colleges and other entities integral to preparing a skilled workforce. The colleges and organizations selected for recognition will have demonstrated innovation in meeting the needs of local employers.

Since the acquisition of the state's AEL program, TWC has encouraged the examination of new approaches to engage the state's education and training providers, thereby encouraging adults in areas of literacy and numeracy while also preparing them for sustainable employment and financial self-sufficiency.

As part of its partner engagement with educational institutions, TWC is involved in a unique collaboration with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) that assesses the curriculum requirements for public schools as well as legislation promoting early college high schools. TWC shares relevant labor market and career information to assist with decisions on directing resources toward a curriculum that will meet the occupational needs of the state. Support of early childhood education and professional development, along with English as a Second Language (ESL) and other AEL programs, are critical collaborations. The partnership between THECB, TWC, and participating public universities through the College Credit for Heroes (CCH) program has enabled veterans to receive college credit for the experience and training received while serving in the armed forces. Additionally, THECB and TWC are working together to implement the Texas Fast Start program to promote rapid delivery of workforce education and development. This program focuses resources on meeting the needs identified by employers and other interested parties for additional fast-track, affordable certification programs in high-growth target industries.

Other significant engagements with educational institutions include Texas State Technical

College (TSTC), the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), and community colleges. TWC administers the state's Skills Development Fund (SDF), Texas' premier job-training program providing local customized training opportunities for Texas businesses and workers to increase skill levels and wages of the Texas workforce. Collaborations with Texas community and technical colleges and TEEX support job training programs among training and education providers. Through this collaboration, employers that need to find skilled workers or upgrade the skills of their current workforce are provided customized training solutions.

In FY'19, TWC awarded SDF grants to community colleges in partnership with more than 72 businesses that supported the creation of some 3,568 new jobs and the elevation of skills of more than 9,115 incumbent workers through skills training. The SDF has continued to expand and now supports certain dual-credit programs offered by school districts in partnership with public junior colleges, public state colleges, and/or public technical institutions, which accelerates a student's ability to obtain a degree. Grants awarded support the purchase of training equipment used in dual-credit programs.

Boards annually publish invitations to community colleges, area career and technical education schools, and other training providers, encouraging submission of applications for consideration as an eligible training provider.

Business partners contribute to the success of the SDF grant program through in-kind support which includes, providing trainees' wages during training, the use of training space and equipment, funding a portion of course costs as necessary, the provision of complementary courses that are not part of the SDF grant, and salaries for staff who are assisting with the grant. These in-kind contributions totaled over \$19.2 million in FY'18.

TWC strongly supports partnerships that increase opportunities for adult learners to transition to postsecondary credentials, including registered apprenticeship certification and industry-recognized certificates and licenses and certifications that are portable and stackable. Current initiatives strategically position the statewide system for innovation in new directions related to full system integration and postsecondary education outcomes, as measured by high school equivalency, college and career readiness, enrollment in nonremedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions, and occupational and industry skill standards and certification widely used and recognized by business and industry. These initiatives include:

- Integration of services to support alignment of AEL activities with other core programs in the workforce system and linkages to employers and CBOs through workforce events, ongoing technical assistance efforts, and sharing of best practices developed across the state
- Continued development of content and models for integrated education and training career pathways, and other postsecondary transition models and workplace projects, including Registered Apprenticeships with employers; and TWC Accelerate Texas' is designed to build capacity and expand deployment of career pathway programs, which support robust employment, higher education transition, skills gains, and secondary completion through demonstrated approaches that integrate system services and leverage community partnerships

F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

Eligible Training Providers (ETP) and Career Schools and Colleges (CSC) are part of the TWC

education and training system. Because of this, TWC works closely with these programs to create a job-driven education and training system that is performance and results driven.

ETPs are job training programs certified by TWC to provide WIOA-funded training services [through vouchers known as Individual Training Accounts](#). WIOA requires Boards to target high-growth, high-demand, and emerging occupations within their workforce areas. To be approved for the statewide ETP List, [a training program](#) must align with an occupation included on the state's target occupations list. ETPs are also required to submit [initial and ongoing](#) annual student performance data.

CSC's are privately owned institutions that offer classroom or online training in which students are taught the skills needed to perform a particular job. TWC regulates career schools in Texas and provide information and technical assistance to schools, students, and the public. Regulatory functions include licensing schools, approval of programs of instruction, approval of key school staff, site inspections, investigation of student complaints and unlicensed schools, administration of the Tuition Trust Account to assist students of closed schools and coordinating with other approval and regulatory agencies.

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E). Federal Perkins funding, administered by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), offers opportunities for AEL programs to leverage these federal resources for programs providing workforce training. AEL grant recipients can use Perkins-funded career and technical training program resources, such as technical instructors, equipment, and classrooms, to help support elements of workforce training programs for adult learners in the AEL program. The technical trainers teaching high school students skills in HVAC, computer repair, and more, also served as the workforce instructors for the AEL's integrated education and training program. TWC has promoted this model at various statewide meetings, most recently at the first statewide Ability to Benefit/Perkins Funding meeting for adult education programs held early summer of 2019.

Additionally, many community colleges in Texas are working to provide, or have provided, Ability to Benefit (ATB) alternatives under federal law and ED guidance. Establishing clear, and often enhanced coalitions within college departments (registration, financial aid, assessment, advising, academic disciplines, and continuing education), workforce training and integration with AEL, Boards and other partner providers, are necessary to implement the model. TWC has funded ATB expansion initiatives to help community colleges build capacity to implement this model.

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

TWC continues to encourage the state's education and training providers to identify and leverage deliverable services beyond those provided solely through the workforce system's funding. Among these practices, local adult education programs form partnerships joining educational, workforce development, and other human services agencies to collaboratively develop AEL services.

TWC strongly supports partnerships that increase opportunities for adult learners to transition

to postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certification and industry-recognized certificates and licenses that are portable and stackable. Current initiatives strategically position the statewide system for innovation in new directions related to full system integration and postsecondary education outcomes. These outcomes can be measured by high school equivalency, college and career readiness, enrollment in nonremedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions, and occupational and industry skill standards and certifications widely used and recognized by business and industry. These initiatives include:

- Integration of services to support alignment of AEL activities with other core programs in the workforce system, bringing employers and CBOs together through workforce events, ongoing technical assistance efforts, and sharing of best practices developed across the state
- Continued development of content and models for integrated education and training career pathways, and other postsecondary transition models and workplace projects, including apprenticeships with employers
- Continued capacity-building for the Accelerate Texas Model. Accelerate Texas is designed to expand deployment of successful career pathway programs that lead to increased employment, higher education transition, skill gains, and secondary education completion through demonstrated approaches that integrate system services and leverage community partnerships
- Continued support for college integration models that decrease the burden of student debt, such as with Ability to Benefit models that enable adult students who lack a high school diploma to enroll in a career pathways program and become eligible for a Pell grant. In 2019, TWC's initiative, the Texas Peer Network, hosted the first Ability to Benefit program in Texas, inviting AEL providers to share best practice and learn more about this model which has been partially restored by the ED

TWC recently received a DOL grant award of \$~~5.4~~¹⁰ million to support statewide apprenticeship expansion efforts from July 20~~19~~²¹ to June 20~~25~~. Funds will increase, expand, and integrate registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) with new industries and diversify apprentices.

This new opportunity will continue Texas' efforts to expand the number of apprentices in registered programs, support and encourage RAP diversification, and integrate RAPs into state workforce development strategies. Part of TWC's plan is to encourage community and technical colleges, as eligible grantees, to use allotment funding to address workforce development needs in the communities they serve. This approach will support RAPs ~~and build staffing by building~~ ~~and staff~~ knowledge ~~and~~ increasing capacity to imbed RAPs in more areas of the state.

~~In~~ Since 2016, DOL has awarded ~~an~~ Apprenticeship Expansion grants to TWC to develop new RAPs and conduct ~~an~~ outreach campaigns to expand Registered Apprenticeships in traditional and nontraditional industries and occupations. These expansion grants' goals aligned with the Tri-Agency (TWC, TEA, and THECB) recommendations to expand apprenticeship opportunities for all Texans. New RAPs have been developed in Texas, increasing the number of career pathways for Texas citizens and transitioning many into high-paying, high-skilled jobs resulting in nationally recognized ~~certificates~~certifications.

All Integrated Education and Training (IET) efforts require students to attain a recognized postsecondary credential, and the workforce training must be aligned with in-demand occupations. To support local workforce needs of employers and the area, TWC AEL is working

~~with a Fortune 500 company on the development of an industry-recognized credential customized for adult education within the advanced manufacturing cluster.~~

I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

TWC's market-driven approach engages all potential customers, including economic development entities. TWC's Office of Employer Initiatives (OEI) and its network of regional Texas Workforce Solutions partners hold listening events throughout Texas to hear about the achievements and challenges each region had identified. Through these meetings, new initiatives are launched, and new industry-aligned strategies are formed. OEI also partners with the TEA and THECB in regional meetings with employers, higher education and public education leaders, economic development and local workforce professionals, and other key community leaders to discuss regional economic priorities, employer workforce needs, and the career planning and preparation needed for Texas students to be ready for success in college or a career.

OEI manages several services that support business-focused workforce needs, including: Skills Development Fund – a grant program that partners Texas public community and technical colleges, or the TEEEX with businesses, business consortiums and trade unions to provide customized industry focused training.

Recruit Texas – provides intensive, rapid response and support services to employers expanding in or relocating operations in Texas. The program focuses on:

- Developing customized workforce training programs
- Fast-track curriculum development
- Workforce training related support services for employers
- Instructor certification necessary to provide workforce training
- Acquiring training equipment necessary for instructor certification and employment

Skills for Small Business – provides grants for small businesses (fewer than 100 employees) for tuition and fees associated with training for new employees and incumbent employees.

Self-Sufficiency Fund – provides grants for non-profit COBs, public community colleges, technical colleges, or state extension services to train adult TANF and/or SNAP recipients in industry-recognized certification programs that lead to permanent full-time employment opportunities.

High-Demand Job Training (HDJT) Program – TWC supports collaborations between Boards and economic development corporations (EDCs) to provide high-demand occupational job training in local workforce areas. This program encourages Boards to partner with local EDCs that use their local economic development sales taxes for high-demand job training. Boards collaborate with local EDCs and match their local economic development sales tax funds to jointly support the provision of such training. In FY'19 and FY'20, TWC awarded \$2,773,125 in HDJT program grants, with an average award of \$94,246, to assist 14 communities that support colleges, ISDs, and private training companies with their training needs and support the training needs of 1,692 trainees. High-Demand Job Training (HDJT) – provides grants to Boards that collaborate with Economic Development Corporations to leverage sales tax dollars to provide high-demand occupational job training in their local workforce areas. In FY'18, TWC awarded \$1,267,288.52

~~in HDJT program grants with an average award of \$74,542.48 to assist 17 communities supporting colleges, ISDs, and private training companies with their training needs and support the training needs of 1,632 trainees. TWC has dedicated \$1 million available for grants to Boards collaborating with their EDCs to provide high-demand job-occupational job training in local workforce areas.~~

Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) Program – TWC supports collaborations between Boards and private employers, corporations, or foundations (also known as Industry Partners) to address skills gaps and ensure a talent pipeline to address industry needs. Collaborations must engage in allowable WIOA activities, focusing on six designated industry clusters, and leverage funds. The projects for each Board may vary from equipment only purchases, tuition reimbursement, and workforce studies of the local board regions. In FY’19 and FY’20, TWC awarded \$1,511,074 in TIP grants with an average award of \$62,961. These grants assisted 10 communities that support colleges, ISDs, and private training companies with their training needs and support the training needs of 325 trainees.

~~In FY’21 the Commission provided \$908,099 to support HDJT grants and \$740,806 to support TIP grants to train a projected 1,944 individuals. Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) Program – enables Boards working with local industry partners that use their private funds for high-demand job training within the six industry clusters, (Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing, Aerospace and Defense, Biotechnology and Life Sciences, Information Technology, Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products, and Energy), to collaborate and match their private contributions to jointly support the provision of such training. Projects for each Board may vary from equipment only purchases to tuition reimbursement and also include workforce studies of the local board regions. In FY’18, TWC awarded \$565.835 in TIP grants with an average award of \$62,870.56. These grants assisted 9 communities supporting colleges, ISDs, and private training companies with their training needs and support the training needs of 2,085 trainees.~~

~~TWC dedicated \$1 million to support collaborations between Boards and industry partners to provide high-demand occupational job training through August 2019.~~

Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program – allocates \$10 million each biennium to defray start-up costs associated with the development of career and technical education programs to public community, state and technical colleges, and ISDs. Applicants can apply for JET grants to purchase and install equipment necessary for the development of career and technical education courses or programs that lead to a license, certificate or postsecondary degree in a high-demand occupation.

In FY’19, TWC awarded 27 JET grants (12 to colleges and 15 to ISDs) with an average award of \$211,708. The equipment provided through these funds will be used to train students for jobs in high-demand occupations.

Additionally, TWC helps coordinate presentations and resources that support the Texas Economic Development Corporation (TxEDC) and the Governor’s Office of Economic Development and Tourism (EDT). These two highly focused organizations serve as the gateway for bringing jobs to Texas. TxEDC and EDT offer many services to facilitate corporate relocation and expansion, including valuable incentives, financing options, and resources to streamline business site search.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section

II Strategic Elements. This includes—

See III.b.1-9.

1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF—

A. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.)

WIOA emphasizes the importance of labor market and system performance information in driving strategic and operational decision-making in the workforce system. TWC has long recognized the importance of using data to drive decision-making and has made availability and evaluation of data a key part of its strategic development and oversight processes and consumer education efforts.

State Operating Systems

State operating systems are primarily divided into three categories:

- LMCI Exploration
- Participant Eligibility, Service Tracking, and Case Management
- System Oversight

Labor Market Information and Career Exploration Systems

TWC's LMCI department provides information about general and specific trends within the labor market in Texas regarding different industries, occupations, employment levels, and wages. This information is critical to the strategic planning processes of TWC and the local Boards to improving the way Texans make career and educational decisions by providing useful and reliable information about careers, educational training options, and jobs. The department's products range from online career information to a variety of specialized economic development and regional planning tools.

Texas LMI (TexasLMI.com) is an interactive website hosted by TWC that disseminates Texas labor-market statistics. On TexasLMI.com, users will find a suite of easy-to-use labor-market research tools that provide time-series labor-market data, inquiry capabilities for labor force, employment/unemployment estimates, industry and occupational projections, and occupational wage data.

TexasWages.com is an online application that lets users explore occupational wages by workforce area and by metropolitan statistical area. Long-term employment projections data was also added to the tool to provide an enhanced user experience. By using TexasWages.com, a customer can find hourly or annual wages for the mean, median, entry, and experience levels for over 800 detailed occupations. Users can view and compare the different wages across all the sub-state areas in Texas to make informed decisions or carry out research.

To gain insight into a region's labor supply and demand, the LMCI department designed the Texas Labor Analysis (TLA) tool. This application is an online suite of labor analysis tools that lets users create in-depth statewide or regional reports for aggregated or single regions. Users can choose any of five separate applications in Labor Analysis, including Gap Analysis, Demand, Supply, Regional Occupational Profile, or Top Statistics.

Gap Analysis enables users to compare the various sources of potential labor market supply

(such as graduates from educational programs and registered job seekers) and labor market demand (such as job openings and projected employment). Users can customize the report by region or by occupations and can view the statistics on a map that indicates the spread of the supply-demand relationship by workforce regions in Texas.

The Demand module in TLA allows users to discover real-time demand for occupations based on current Help Wanted Online postings. With it, customers can perform a regional demand analysis using projected and latest employment numbers and salaries. Reports can be generated on Industry, Occupation, and the relationship between the two.

On the supply side, users can estimate the formal supply of skilled workforce by viewing an area's education and workforce training programs. The Supply application can display the number of enrollments and graduates for different programs of study offered by various schools across Texas.

Regional Occupational Profiles compares different workforce regions of Texas on some key employment indicators like wages, employment projections, and trend of online job postings. This tool gives users more insight into occupational wage and employment numbers by offering metrics such as wage differentials and location quotient data.

Top Statistics is a quick way to find the top 25 occupations by region. The data can be viewed by highest employment, job openings, highest wage, or highest projected employment.

Changes in the education system brought about by legislation provide TWC the opportunity to help students transition from the classroom to career readiness. TWC supports school counselors, school districts, students, and parents by providing LMCI to assist them with student career-planning and preparation. Additionally, the agency provides information and supports efforts to prepare students for occupational training at the presecondary, secondary, postsecondary, and college and university levels.

A few of the nationally recognized consumer education and career pathway exploration tools offered by TWC include the following:

- Reality Check (<http://www.texasrealitycheck.com>) TexasRealityCheck.com is one of the more frequently used resources in the LMCI tool box and features a widely used iPhone application. The website allows students to make lifestyle choices, create a budget, and then view the occupations and preferred education levels that support those choices.
- Texas Career Check (<https://texascareercheck.com>) Texas Career Check offers information on hundreds of job tiles, pay information, and future projected jobs. Users can explore the career side or education side to assist with career planning.
- Texas Consumer Resource on Education and Workforce Statistics (Texas CREWS) Texas CREWS (<http://www.txcrews.org>) Texas CREWS is a dashboard tool that provides information about Texas' public two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions; evaluates programs/institutions on the basis of resulting wages and student loan levels; and enables parents and students to make informed decisions about college and thereby obtain the best return on their educational investment.

The Texas CREWS platform is like what TWC uses to capture and provide access to eligible training provider data, which is needed to deepen consumer education, as required by WIOA.

Participant Eligibility, Service Tracking, and Case Management Systems

TWC provides the main automated systems used by the local Boards and other grantees for job matching, data collection, and case management, including adult education and vocational

rehabilitation, as well as child care assistance. Additionally, the Boards and other grantees use a financial reporting system developed by TWC.

WorkInTexas.com Replacement—WorkInTexas.com is the free job-matching website TWC administers for Texas' workforce system. It provides:

- extensive job matching options based on skills and experience;
- links to labor market and career development information; and
- free, 24-hour-a-day access.

WorkInTexas.com went into production in May 2004. At that time, it was cutting-edge and one of only a handful of online job connection systems. To determine the effectiveness of the current system, TWC formed a task force comprised of Local Workforce Development Board (Board) Private Sector Members, Board Executive Directors, and a representative from the State Agency Coordinating Council for Human Resources (HR) Directors. After extensive evaluation, the task force determined the system was now outdated and needed to be replaced.

In the summer of 2019, TWC launched the new WorkInTexas.com. The new system improved job matching to better meet the hiring and job searching needs of employers and job seekers. Job-seeker functions include résumé upload, résumé versioning, résumé builder, and Career Pathways. All customers of the system have access to labor analytics and supply and demand tools to enhance job searches. Other improvements include a user-friendly mobile design, modern communications capabilities, and increased access to jobs and workforce talent. The improved site also enables Texas Workforce Solutions to significantly enhance service delivery, offering employers and job seekers another reason to connect with their local ~~workforce development boards~~[Boards](#).

The two-year-long project included the opportunity for job seekers and employers to provide valuable input to help craft requirements for the new website. This helped to create a system that will increase employer access to talent, improve candidate matches to job descriptions, and incorporate local and regional labor market information to support informed business decisions.

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

The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST)—TWIST is the integrated intake, eligibility, case management, and reporting system for employment and training services. It was designed as a central repository for customer information. TWIST ultimately decreases duplication within and across the Texas workforce system while streamlining the provision of services to customers. It enables Workforce Solutions Office staff to enter intake information for customers only once for multiple employment and training programs and to retrieve it statewide. TWIST also includes interfaces with other automated systems—WorkInTexas.com, the UI benefits system, and HHSC's system.

~~Child Care Attendance Automation – Child Care Attendance Automation (CCAA) allows parents to record attendance using a swipe card at a point-of-service device located at the authorized child care facility. Parents also can use an interactive voice response system using the authorized child care provider's phone. Attendance recorded through CCAA is transferred to~~

~~TWIST on a weekly basis, and TWIST is used to process payments to providers based on the CCAA attendance records.~~

Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS)—TEAMS is Texas’ state-of-the-art, web-enabled system that maintains student-level data, including demographic, assessment, and outcome data, as well as class, site, program, and provider information. TEAMS users can analyze class, site, or program information using standard reports generated at the user level. TEAMS provides a wide range of information about adult education, including snapshots of student and program performance, personnel qualifications, and staff development activities.

TABLEAU—In 2021, TWC has been finalizing data visualization dashboards created using an enterprise data warehouse combined with a data visualization tool, Tableau. Statewide and AEL grantee-level enrollments data reports were the first reports to be launched, and in the future, TWC will finalize measurable skill gains and monthly performance reports. The early enrollment reports will identify key activities being performed at the local provider level such as reentry services, workplace literacy, and integrated education and training activities for both ABE/ASE and ELA students.

ReHabWorks—ReHabWorks is a web-based case management system. It is the portal through which field staff enters information from and about the consumer-customer to manage the VR process. Functionalities include collecting required information for preparing state/federal reports, guiding processes and forms, and reporting requirements.

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

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

System Oversight Systems

TWC provides access to performance and management information reports to Boards and grantees. Currently, TWC does not have a single consolidated data warehouse and reporting system. Instead, TWC has a variety of systems that provide summary and customer-specific data to support management and oversight functions. Some of these systems are part of the underlying case management systems (TEAMS and WorkInTexas.com, for example, each have a set of reports that can be run). TWC also has several systems created exclusively for reporting purposes that allow standard reports and ad hoc queries to be run. Because Boards and other grantees are generally able to access these systems, TWC can ensure a high degree of transparency in the Texas workforce system.

The systems can produce data on hundreds of subpopulations for most performance measures, which allows for a deeply granular evaluation of performance and management information. This level of detail also allows TWC to perform highly complex evaluations of performance data for forecasting, target setting, and general determinations of effectiveness.

ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THOSE PRESENT IN ONE-STOP CENTERS

Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers.¹⁰

[10] For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

TWC provides Boards, other grantees, and state staff with guidance regarding data collection and reporting. This includes both common and program-specific guides that outline data entry deadlines and requirements for recording data on Eligibility Determination, Service Dates and Details, Outcome Tracking (for those elements not tied to wage records), and Case Management. TWC's Workforce Development Division provides technical assistance to Boards and grantees to help ensure they timely and accurately enter data as required into the appropriate systems. TWC's Subrecipient Monitoring Department conducts data validation and other Board and grantee reviews to support system and data integrity.

TWC's Division of [Information Innovation & Insight \(I|3\)](#) ~~Operational Insight (DOI)~~ is responsible for producing, analyzing, and reporting performance data. [DOI|3](#) provides timely, accurate, and understandable information and analyses relevant to the performance, accountability, and integrity of the Texas workforcesystem. [DOI|3](#)'s reporting ensures that TWC, Board and grantee management have the information necessary to make policy decisions that will help the system meet or exceed performance expectations, thus offering the opportunity for Texas businesses, residents, and communities to achieve and sustain economic prosperity.

Most WIOA performance measures, are based on quarterly Exiter cohorts and quarterly wage record filing. Despite this, TWC's quarterly performance data may change on a monthly basis. To compensate for this, [DOI|3](#) produces performance data on a monthly basis for the governor's office, Texas Legislature, agency management, Boards, and other grantees. Texas employers report quarterly wage data electronically. Therefore, performance for a given quarter of Exiters can be meaningfully run much earlier than the federal deadlines provide for, and TWC does so in order to improve TWC's ability to identify and respond to potential performance issues more quickly.

In addition to producing performance data each month, [DOI|3](#) coordinates with TWC's operational divisions to develop "Explanations of Variance" when performance is not between 95 percent and 105 percent of target (whether high or low). TWC also holds open, posted meetings each quarter with the Commission to discuss system performance. These meetings are broadcast on the Internet to allow Boards, grantees, other stakeholders, and the public to listen to the discussions and understand the system's current areas of strength and weakness, as well as proposals to support continuous improvement.

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

State Policies

TWC is governed by a three-member Commission appointed by the governor. The three full-time Commissioners represent employers, labor, and the public. Together they serve as the rulemaking authority for TWC, oversee agency functions, and develop agency policy.

Twenty days after adoption by the Commissioners, TWC rules, which guide agency operations and its programs, are codified in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Part 20. Policies that support the implementation of TWC strategies and programs related to WIOA are available on the agency's website, including:

- ~~—Texas Workforce Commission Rules, available at <https://twc.texas.gov/agency/texas-workforce-commission-rules> <https://twc.texas.gov/agency/texas-workforce-commission-rules>~~
- ~~—~~
- The *WIOA Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth*, available at <https://twc.texas.gov/files/partners/wioa-guidelines-twc.pdf>, provides Boards with the criteria and documentation sources for establishing WIOA Title I program eligibility for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. This policy guide is based on WIOA final rules for Titles I–IV, publicly available in late June 2016. The WIOA final rules pertaining to Titles I and III, published in the *Federal Register* on August 19, 2016, ~~effective~~ went into effect October 18, 2016. As future updates become available, the policy guide will be updated. Available at <https://twc.texas.gov/files/partners/wioa-guidelines-twc.pdf>
- The *WIOA Guide to Texas Workforce System Operations*, available at <https://twc.texas.gov/files/partners/wioa-operations-guide-twc.pdf>, provides information on the methods by which WIOA reinforces the partnerships and strategies necessary for Workforce Solutions Offices to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career, training, and support services they need to find and keep good jobs. These strategies also help businesses find skilled workers and access other human resources assistance, including education and training, to meet their workforce needs. This guide describes the roles of TWC, Boards, chief elected officials, and local workforce partner programs. Boards are required to ensure that all state policies provided in this document are adhered to and followed according to established timelines. Available at <https://twc.texas.gov/files/partners/wioa-operations-guide-twc.pdf>
- Operational guidance and active workforce policy provided to local Boards in the form of Workforce Development (WD) Letters, Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Letters, Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletins, and comprehensive guides. ~~These guidance documents~~ are based on Commission-approved policies and are Available available at <https://twc.texas.gov/agency/workforce-policy-guidance>.
- TWC maintains a repository of major publications including the agency's strategic plans and annual reports, publications for employers and job seekers, and program information. ~~Available available~~ at <https://twc.texas.gov/agency/reports-plans-publications>.
- ~~—~~ Various reports, policy guides, and customer information related to VR services are maintained by TWC. ~~and Available available~~ at <https://twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-rehabilitation-program-overview> and <https://twc.texas.gov/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-division-publications>.
~~[https://twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-](https://twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-rehabilitation-program-overview)~~
- ~~rehabilitation-program-overview and~~ <https://twc.texas.gov/partners/vocational-rehabilitation-division-publications>

Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

Partnership with Texas Workforce Solutions and Designated Providers

The following activities support WIOA core programs and align with the state's strategies, as previously described.

TWC administers the development and integration of workforce services in coordination with the Board's oversight and planning efforts. Service delivery is executed through Texas Workforce Solutions, which may contract with Workforce Solutions Offices (our one-stop providers) to operate a variety of program components. This network gives customers local access to workforce solutions and statewide services at approximately 180 Workforce Solutions Offices, four UI tele-centers, and numerous partner locations.

WIOA has strengthened Texas' progress toward integrating services for customers. WIOA §193(a)(3) provides that Boards' contracted workforce service providers and community partners are defined under prior consistent state law.

Section 302.021 of the Texas Labor Code set forth the job training, employment, and employment-related educational programs and functions consolidated under the authority of TWC. In Texas, prior consistent state law defines the Boards' responsibility to develop, implement, and modify a plan for convening all relevant programs, identified as one-stop required-partner programs, including:

- WIOA, formerly WIA
- ES
- UI benefits information
- Choices, the TANF employment and training program
- SNAP E&T
- ~~Subsidized~~ Child care services
- TAA
- AEL programs
- VR programs
- Business Enterprises of Texas
- Grant for Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind
- The Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center

Prior consistent state law further defines the following as required one-stop partner programs. Other than UI compensation, which is administered by TWC, the programs are not under the direct oversight of the Boards; therefore, Boards are required to establish memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with:

- AEL (WIOA, Title II);
- Apprenticeship programs;
- National and Community Services Act Program;
- Non-Certificate Postsecondary Career and Technology Training programs; and
- SCSEP

TWC also recommends that Boards enter into MOUs with the following optional partner

activities:

- 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.)
- Job counseling, training, and placement services for veterans, 38 USC 41
- Education and vocational training programs through Job Corps, administered by DOL
- Native American programs authorized under Title I of WIOA
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development-administered employment and training programs
- Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act
- Reintegration of Offenders programs authorized under the Second Chance Act, 2007
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs authorized under WIOA §167

Additionally, Boards may partner with other entities that are not considered required workforce partners or optional workforce partners. These entities are state or local organizations that do not carry out a workforce development program and may include local social service agencies, housing authorities, and others.

TWC also requires Boards to jointly develop and adopt an MOU with HHS. Although HHS is a federal optional one-stop partner, the MOU fulfills state law regarding the coordinated interagency case management of recipients of financial assistance in employment and training activities and support services, Texas Human Resources, Code §31.0128.

Pay-for-Performance Contracts

TWC and Boards will maintain, where applicable, performance-based contracts. However, TWC and Boards will consider developing, with stakeholder input, a WIOA pay-for-performance contracting strategy applicable to Title I programs, as defined in WIOA §3(47).

The development of a performance-based contract is contingent on the pay-for-performance contract strategy, which establishes specific benchmarks that must be achieved for the contractor to receive payment. WIOA calls for the benchmarks to be tied to the prime indicators of performance and adjustments thereof related to economic conditions and the population demographics.

TWC will maintain the latitude provided for in WIOA to consider the development of a pay-for-performance contract strategy as guidance is issued.

Determination of Funds Provided for Infrastructure Costs

TWC provides policy and procedural guidance to boards regarding the requirements for funding infrastructure costs in the Guide to Texas Workforce System Operations, Section D Infrastructure Funding. This Guide, updated in February 2020, states that Boards, with the agreement of CEOs, develop and enter into MOUs with statutorily required one-stop partners for operation and funding of a one-stop delivery system in the local area. Boards may also enter MOUs with other optional partners, as described by WIOA. Among several required provisions, the MOU must include a final plan, or an interim plan if needed, on how the infrastructure costs of the one-stop centers will be funded.

Within each MOU, each Board and its workforce partners must establish an IFA that describes how the Board and partner programs will fund the infrastructure costs of the Workforce Solutions Offices that are part of the local workforce development area (workforce area) (WIOA §121(c)(1) and 20 CFR §678.500(b)(2)(i)). If a Board and its required workforce partners are unable to reach consensus on the terms of the IFAs for the program year, then the Board must notify the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) of an impasse no later than March 15 (20 CFR §678.510(c)) of the program year immediately preceding the program year for which the IFA must be negotiated. TWC will, in turn, notify the state agency responsible for administering the partner's program. If TWC cannot help the Board resolve the issue, TWC will notify the governor, the Texas Workforce Investment Council, the Secretary of Labor, and the head of any other federal agency with responsibility for overseeing a workforce partner's program.

Boards and workforce partners must fund infrastructure costs through either the Local Funding Mechanism (LFM) or the State Funding Mechanism (SFM). The LFM provides Boards, CEOs, and workforce partners with the flexibility to design and agree locally on the methods to fund infrastructure costs. However, if a Board fails to reach consensus with all of the required workforce partners operating in its workforce area with regard to the amount each partner will contribute to the local workforce system's infrastructure costs, the statute replaces local flexibility for determining how to fund infrastructure costs with the SFM. Under the SFM, TWC (on behalf of the governor) is charged with allocating infrastructure costs and determining each partner's proportionate share of costs for Boards that did not reach consensus on the LFM. The LFM and SFM apply only to the funding of infrastructure costs.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

TWC is governed by a three-member Commission appointed by the Governor. The agency executive director is accountable to the Commission and is responsible for the daily operations of the agency. The executive director is assisted by a deputy executive director who has oversight responsibility for agency's administrative support divisions. The agency is organized into 15 distinct program and administrative support divisions. The program areas facilitate workforce services delivery through twenty-eight local Boards. A description of the agency divisions is provided below.

~~External Relations~~**Customer Care Division**

~~TWC's External Relations~~**Customer Care** Division includes ~~Communications, Governmental Relations and Customer Relations, LMCI, and Conference Planning and Media Services.~~ **External Customer Care Relations** serves as the primary point of contact with legislative offices as well as ~~handling the Customer Relations hotline and helping external customers at the TWC main building, the media. Additionally, the division provides planning logistics and implementation support to TWC for conferences, seminars, events and multimedia services statewide.~~

~~LMCI improves the way Texans make career and educational decisions by providing useful and reliable information about careers, educational training options, and jobs. LMCI's products range from TexasRealityCheck.com, a website that allows students to make lifestyle choices, create a budget, and view the occupations and preferred education levels that support those choices, to a variety of specialized economic development and regional planning tools.~~

~~Regulatory Integrity~~**Division of Fraud Deterrence and Compliance Monitoring Division**

The [Division of Fraud Deterrence and Compliance Monitoring \(FDCM\)](#) [Regulatory Integrity Division](#) supports TWC operations in its administration and enforcement of all regulatory statutes within its jurisdiction, including ~~assisting~~ ~~helping~~ other divisions ~~in resolving~~ ~~resolve~~ regulatory issues; recommending legal actions, as necessary; enforcing provisions of the Texas Labor Code, Texas Education Code, and other applicable statutes through the appropriate statutory remedies; preventing, detecting, and eliminating program fraud, waste, and abuse; and assisting all TWC employees with ethics questions. A division priority is the prevention, detection, and elimination of fraud and abuse in the UI program.

Information Technology Division

The Information Technology ([IT](#)) Division is responsible for applications and information systems that support TWC's critical business operations. Staff works closely with TWC business areas and other stakeholders to create and maintain automated applications that best serve evolving business needs. The division also supports ~~either directly or through contract~~, [either directly or through contract](#), required for TWC systems, including data center operations, networks, personal computers, email, desktop software tools, database administration, scanner operation, telephony, help desk services, system access/provisioning, and print/mail services. IT is also responsible for IT project management, information security, IT accessibility compliance, and the planning, maintenance, and testing of an ongoing disaster recovery program.

Unemployment Insurance ~~and Regulation~~ Division

The Unemployment Insurance ([UI](#)) ~~and Regulation~~ Division includes UI support services, call center operations, and appellate services. The TWC Tax department and Unemployment Benefits Services are managed by this division. The division assists employers and claimants with eligibility requirements, benefit extensions and deadlines, and appeal procedures. Unemployment Benefits Services, funded through employer taxes, provides temporary income to workers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. TWC collects unemployment taxes from liable employers and pays unemployment benefits to qualified claimants. TWC has a formal appeal procedure to address claim issues and employers' tax liability, contribution, or reimbursement disputes.

Workforce Development Division

The Workforce Development Division provides oversight, coordination, guidance, planning, technical assistance, and implementation of employment and training activities, with a focus on meeting the needs of employers throughout Texas. The division currently administers programs such as WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth; Adult Education and Literacy; Wagner-Peyser Employment Service; Choices (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Employment and Training); Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T); Apprenticeship; Skills Development Fund; Texas Veterans Leadership Program; and Career Schools and Colleges.

Civil Rights Division

The Civil Rights Division (CRD) enforces the state's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Fair Housing laws through education, conciliation, mediation, and investigation. The division investigates complaints of employment and housing discrimination; conducts personnel policy reviews and EEO compliance monitoring for state agencies and institutions of higher education; and provides training and technical assistance to public and private entities to reduce employment and housing discrimination throughout the state. The CRD enters into annual work-sharing agreements with the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), its federal partners, that review

CRD's cases to ensure compliance with applicable federal EEO and Fair Housing statutes.

CRD was formerly the Texas Commission on Human Rights (TCHR) and was governed by its own set of commissioners, who established policies for the division and supervised the director in administering the division's activities. TCHR served as the state's established authority on EEO and Fair Housing, also known as a fair employment practice agency and [the Fair Housing initiative program](#). The 2015 Texas Legislature streamlined oversight of the division by eliminating its separate seven-member board and placing it under TWC. Currently, the division answers to TWC's Executive Director and its three Commissioners.

Business Operations Division

The Business Operations Division comprises Procurement and Contract Services, Infrastructure Services, Human Resources, Training and Development, Risk and Security Management, ~~and Document Services~~, [and Conference Planning and Media Services](#). Business Operations provides day-to-day leadership, management, and vision by planning, directing, and coordinating administrative functions and operations to support the business needs of TWC.

Vocational Rehabilitation Division

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Division of TWC provides services to individuals with disabilities to assist them with obtaining, maintaining, or advancing in employment. The VR program serves adults, youth, and students with disabilities. Services may include evaluations, counseling and guidance, training and education assistance, assistive technology, and employment services, as well as referrals to the Business Enterprises of Texas Program and Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center. Students with disabilities may receive pre-employment transition services that will assist them with the transition to postsecondary education or employment.

In addition, the VR program assists businesses seeking to recruit, hire, and accommodate employees with disabilities. Services include assistance accommodating employees with disabilities, disability awareness training, recruitment and job-matching assistance, and coordination of employer job fairs.

Finance Division

The Finance Division provides financial services that promote highly effective financial management controls, helps agency management achieve the efficient use of financial resources, and ensures accurate financial information is available in a timely manner. Functions include:

- Budget management
- Revenue and trust management
- Encumbrances
- Financial reporting
- Financial systems support
- Financial technical assistance
- General ledger accounting
- Payables
- Payroll

- Reconciliation
- Travel

Office of Internal Audit

The Office of Internal Audit (OIA) aims to enhance and protect organizational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice, and insight to the Commission and agency management. The office assists TWC in accomplishing its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. TWC's Internal Audit function is mandated by the Internal Auditing Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 2102.

Office of General Counsel

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) provides the Commission and agency staff with the highest quality of customer service and sound legal counsel to minimize legal risk and costs, reduce litigation exposure, and ensure legal compliance, and to do so efficiently, expeditiously, reliably, and professionally.

The office supports the Commission and agency staff by providing legal services to foster sound decision-making in all areas of operation. These services include advice and client support for legal issues relating to litigation, contracts, policymaking, governance, programs, performance, administrative functions, and services provided by or through the Commission, the Boards, and contractors, as well as agency operations. The Open Records Section coordinates compliance with the Public Information Act and requests for access to TWC information under subpoenas and governmental requests for information.

Office of Outreach & Employer Initiatives

The Office of Outreach & Employer Initiatives is responsible for providing leadership and direction within the Texas workforce system to engage employers, business organizations, educational institutions, and economic developers in the ongoing development of a customer-focused, market-driven workforce system. The office develops cluster-based strategies and industry partnerships and implements innovative industry-led programs for business recruitment, retention, and growth. This office receives no funding under WIOA.

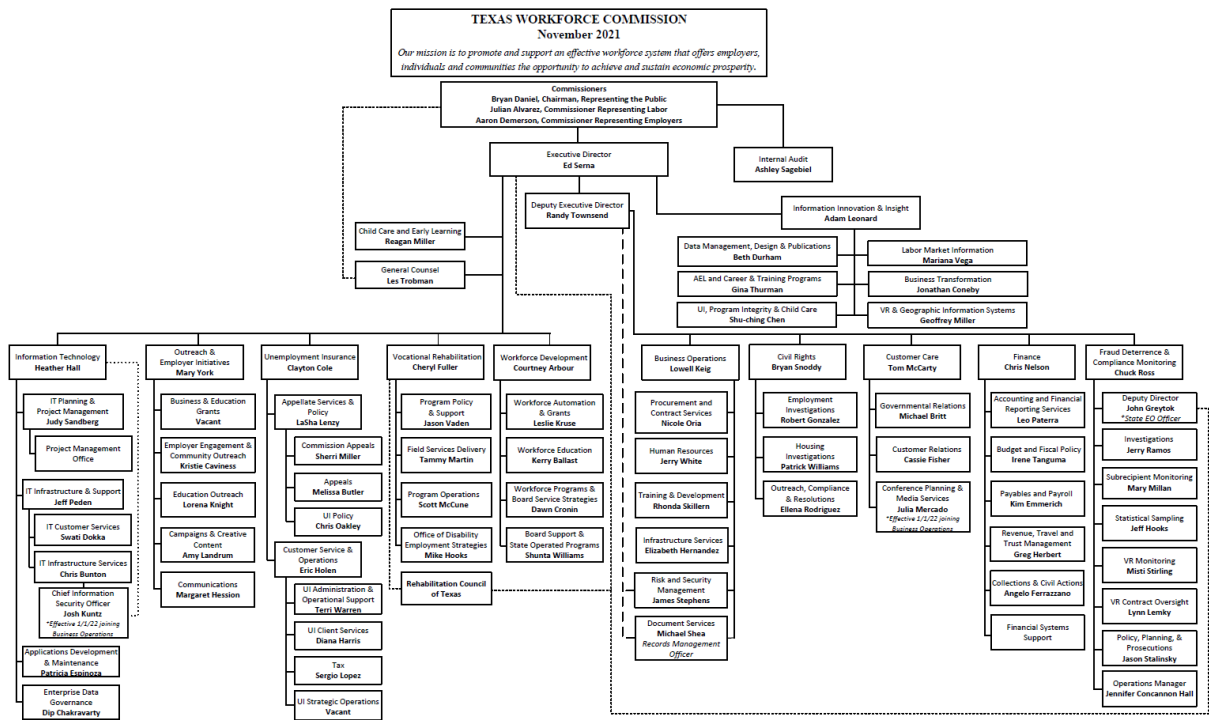
Division of Information Innovation & Insight~~Operational Insight~~

The Division of Information Innovation & Insight (I|3), ~~formerly known as the Division of Operational Insight~~, works with its partners to produce and analyze data and business processes to better serve the employers, individuals, families, and communities of Texas. I|3 consists of two groups responsible for different aspects of its mission. The first, Operational Insight, (DOI) is responsible for evaluating ~~operational, programmatic, and outcome data to generate actionable operational insights that TWC and its partners can use to improve the outcomes, efficiency, and impact that the Texas workforce system has on employers, individuals, families, and communities and ultimately~~ quality throughput and efficiency to better meet the needs of employers and workers in Texas. The office aims to deliver timely, relevant, consistent, and actionable information to allow early and informed decision-making and to help transform TWC into an evidenced-based learning organization. I|3's other department, Labor Market Information (LMI), improves the way Texans make career and educational decisions by providing useful and reliable information about careers, educational training options, and jobs. LMI's products range from TexasRealityCheck.com, a website that allows students to make lifestyle choices, create a budget, and view the occupations and preferred education levels that support those choices, to a variety of specialized economic

development and regional planning tools.

Child Care and Early Learning

The Child Care and Early Learning Division oversees the **subsidized** child care services program for eligible, low-income families, which promotes long-term self-sufficiency by enabling parents to work or attend workforce training or education activities. It also educates parents about the availability of quality child care, which enhances children’s early learning. In addition to assisting families, it also helps child care providers improve the quality of services for all children in Texas by providing resources and assistance.



TWC Organizational Chart January 2020 November 2021

B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

Membership

TWIC is composed of 19 members. The governor appoints 14 members representing business, organized labor, education, and CBOs. The remaining members are ex officio representatives from TWIC’s five-member state agencies. Appointed members serve six-year staggered terms, of which one-third of the members’ terms expire each odd-numbered year. Ex officio members serve as long as they are the presiding officer of the member agency they represent. Texas Government Code, §2308.052 specifies that TWIC’s membership composition must have:

- five governor-appointed members who represent business and industry, including business members serving on Boards;
- five governor-appointed members who represent organized labor, with input from recognized labor organizations;

- three governor-appointed members who represent education, including local public education, public postsecondary education, and vocational education;
- one governor-appointed member who represents CBOs, and who is not a provider of services; and
- five ex officio members who represent statutory agency members, as follows:
 - Director of the Economic Development and Tourism Division in the Office of the Governor
 - Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency
 - Executive Commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission
 - Commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
 - Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission

I. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

Current TWIC members, by member category, include:

Business and Industry

- Mark Dunn, Chair (Lufkin)
- Thomas Halbouty (Southlake)
- ~~Gina Aguirre Adams~~ Paloma Ahmadi (~~Jones Creek~~ Shavano Park)
- Wayne Oswald (Houston)
- ~~Jerry Romero~~ Lauren Gore (~~El Paso~~ Houston)

Organized Labor

- Jesse Gatewood (Corpus Christi)
- Lindsey Geeslin (Waco)
- John Martin (San Antonio)
- Paul Puente (Houston)
- Brandon Willis (Beaumont)

Education

- Joe Arnold (Muldoon)
- Michael Hinojosa (Dallas)
- Richard Rhodes (Austin)

Community-Based Organization

- Richard Rhodes, Vice Chair (Austin)

State Agency Ex-Officio

- Adriana Cruz (Economic Development and Tourism, Office of the Governor)
- Harrison Keller (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)
- Ed Serna (Texas Workforce Commission)
- ~~Courtney Phillips~~Cecile Young (Texas Health and Human Services Commission)
- Mike Morath (Texas Education Agency)

A current membership roster is available on TWIC's website at:
<https://gov.texas.gov/organization/twic/members>

II. BOARD ACTIVITIES

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

Strategic Planning

Section 2308.104 of the Texas Government Code mandates TWIC to develop a “single strategic plan that establishes the framework for budgeting and operation of the workforce development system.” The plan must include goals, objectives, and performance measures for the workforce system that involve programs of all state agencies that administer workforce programs. As such, the plan acts out the mission and vision for the Texas workforce system.

State statute also directs TWIC to “develop and implement immediate and long-range strategies to address problems identified within the workforce system.”

The system strategic plan is intended to guide system partners in implementing workforce programs, services, and initiatives while avoiding the duplication of partner agencies’ strategic plans. The system plan is strategic in that it is designed to focus on the outcomes that will make the most significant progress in achieving the mission and vision of the system. The strategic plan is supported by research conducted by TWIC and an annual evaluation of how well the plan and programs are working. These activities—strategic planning and implementation, system and performance evaluation, and research to support system and program improvement—constitute most of the work that TWIC does.

During the planning and development process, three strategic imperatives emerged as the key foundational elements that represent a best-in-class workforce system. These three imperatives serve as cornerstones upon which the capacity of the Texas workforce system is built on to identify and respond to changing market conditions and needs of workforce system customers. These imperatives are core competencies that must be embedded in all system elements to achieve the plan’s mission and vision. Therefore, a key tenet of this plan is that all workforce system partners have core competencies in and a commitment to customer service and satisfaction, data-driven program improvement, and continuous improvement and innovation, as discussed below.

Customer Service and Satisfaction

Accurately assessing customer satisfaction with the workforce system and transforming customer feedback into productive policies are essential to best meet the needs of workforce system customers. While the system strategic plan focuses on a demand-driven system and emphasizes the needs of employers, customer service and satisfaction must be factored into

system-level planning. Employers, current and future workers, and system program and service providers are key customers of the Texas workforce system.

To be truly effective, the Texas workforce system must identify and anticipate employers' needs to require employee skills that will fit the dynamic, global economic framework in which Texas employers operate. Ensuring a work-ready and competent workforce that meets the needs of Texas' employers is a core competency of the Texas workforce system.

The Texas workforce system must be able to meet the needs of both current and future Texas workers—wherever they are in their careers. Customers must be assured that wherever they enter the workforce system, there will be a pathway *through* the system by instituting a “no closed door” culture that ensures success for customers of the Texas workforce system programs and services. All points of entry provide access to all the programs and services.

The Texas workforce system must promote and enable successful collaboration across system partners for the overarching mission of improving outcomes for Texas employers and the current and future workforce. It is the responsibility of all system partners to serve Texans collaboratively, and facilitating this collaboration is an integral part of this plan.

Data-Driven Program Improvement

Data from programs and other areas of the workforce system are critical in evaluating the extent to which workforce system programs, services, and products are meeting the needs of customers and stakeholders. The collection of key data, as well as the reporting and analysis of that data—in a consistent and useful manner—are essential in demonstrating outcomes, determining whether changes are required or desired, and establishing benchmarks for future performance. To achieve these data-related organizational competencies relative to the performance measures in this plan, partner agencies may need to build or modify their existing data systems. By receiving information from updated data systems, the Texas workforce system will be able to measure what matters most and build the collection and analysis capabilities that are missing.

Information and statistical data serve a vital communication purpose, not only within the Texas workforce system but also for key stakeholders and others that participate in this process. Systems that improve the flow of data, information, and analysis that support effective decision-making are essential to achieve effective and efficient programs, services, and outcomes. Although this is a challenging task, it is essential to the performance of the Texas workforce system.

Continuous Improvement and Innovation

The Texas workforce system engages with a dynamic, competitive, and global marketplace. To achieve the mission and vision for the workforce system that is articulated in this plan, a commitment to continuous improvement and innovation is essential to ensure an adaptive and best practice-oriented workforce system. Actions that are essential to continuous improvement and innovation include the following:

- Research and assess best-in-class practices throughout industry and workforce systems nationally and internationally
- Incorporate promising practices from outside the Texas workforce system
- Analyze program and system performance and move quickly to correct the course, when appropriate, as indicated by empirical data and information
- Streamline data, information, communications, and decision-making capabilities to

ensure that improvement and innovation become embedded into all system elements by ensuring that core competencies are developed and nurtured throughout the system

Crucial to the strategic planning process and to align with federal and state statute, the Texas workforce system strategic plan builds upon the system’s core elements and contains system goals that TWIC and its planning partners use to create actionable objectives to meet the mission and vision of the system. Four goals and their system objectives and partner strategies have been identified through the processes discussed above.

Table 1 Texas Workforce System Goals and System Objectives

Goal	System Objective
Focus on employers	Increase business and industry involvement and expand licensure and industry certification.
Engage in partnerships	Expand partnerships with system partners and stakeholders to promote collaboration and enhanced participant outcomes.
Align system elements	Improve and enhance services, programs, and policies to facilitate effective and efficient transitions. Develop and implement policies and processes to ensure portable and transferrable credit and credentials.
Improve and integrate programs	Use enhanced or alternative program and service delivery methods.

The Texas workforce system strategic plan calls attention to issues and opportunities that have cross-partner implications and holds significant strategic value to the overall success of the system’s ability to meet its mission and vision. During the plan’s development, planners included ways for system partners, stakeholders, and TWIC to identify and assess high-priority, high-impact issues to improve outcomes for the workforce system and its customers.

TWIC and other stakeholders identified the following issues that cross the programs or services administered by multiple agencies (cross-partner issues) to be considered as part of the strategic planning process. The 12 cross-partner issues and opportunities were derived from the 39 planning issues and opportunities previously identified by TWIC and its system partners during preplanning listening sessions and consultations:

- Facilitate effective and efficient transitions and enhance transition services
- Increase employment outcomes
- Expand partnerships with system stakeholders and promote collaboration
- Incorporate and/or expand options for dual credit and/or licensure and certification
- Increase business and industry involvement
- Align programs and services
- Share the most recent data and information
- Implement beneficial practices and reduce duplication
- Recruit and/or provide professional development
- Ensure portable and transferrable options

- Address skills shortages
- Institutionalize alternative service delivery methods

Evaluation

Each year TWIC reports on the progress in achieving the objectives of the strategic plan and on the performance of workforce programs related to key metrics. The Texas Government Code specifies that TWIC will prepare an annual report for submission to the governor and the legislature on the extent to which the system is achieving workforce goals and objectives. The report also evaluates partner-agency alignment under the strategic plan for the Texas workforce system. Approved by the governor in 2015, the Texas workforce system strategic plan focuses on high-level system objectives that require multi-partner collaboration for programs, initiatives, and outcomes. Reporting elements are designed to provide a system-wide view of achievements for partner agencies and other system stakeholders, and to meet statutory requirements for reporting to the governor and legislature.

As part of the evaluation framework for the FY'16-'23 strategic plan, five balanced scorecards were developed to complement the strategic plan's structure. The scorecards incorporate narrative and graphics to illustrate the achievements of the Texas workforce system. The components of the balanced scorecards display the actions of partner agencies and their delivery agents, including Boards, independent school districts, community and technical colleges, and local adult education providers. These system partners are responsible for programs and services focused on education, workforce education, and workforce training services. Four of the five scorecards focus on the four goals laid out in the strategic plan and partner agencies' implementation of strategies to achieve the following related metrics: focus on employers; engage in partnerships; align system elements; and improve and integrate programs. The fifth scorecard focuses on the following system performance metrics (formal measures): educational achievement, entered employment, retained employment, and customers served. Data from the eight partner agencies are collected and aggregated to determine system performance for a short period as well as for longer periods. Aggregating data from an extended period is possible because TWIC has worked with its system partners since 2004 to standardize definitions and methods across all workforce programs.

To achieve a high degree of consistency when aggregating data across programs, TWIC requested that federal definitions be adopted for the formal measures where relevant and that program periods similar to federal periods be used. After renegotiation in 2009, definitions and program periods continued to differ slightly from those used during the previous strategic plan period.

TWIC worked with partner agencies to review and update the formal measure definitions and methods and to further align them with WIOA requirements. Both entered employment and employment retention are essentially consistent across partner agencies and, where required, the program periods for reporting were adjusted based on federal guidance.

Research

TWIC supports system planning, implementation of the system strategic plan, and evaluation through research products and news updates that are distributed to members, system partners, and workforce stakeholders. Available on TWIC's website, research products include the strategic plan for the workforce system, evaluation reports, resource publications, reports on critical and emerging issues, and recommendations to the governor.

Examples of recent research include the publications listed below.

Industry-Based Certifications for Middle-Skill STEM Occupations in Texas

This report presents the results of TWIC's system initiative to identify third-party, industry-based certifications that are of value to Texas employers and that can positively affect employment outcomes in middle-skill STEM occupations. The list of certifications contained in this report can be used as a resource to help workforce system partners achieve objectives related to increasing certification outcomes for education and training participants.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services: A Texas Primer

This report provides information about the VR program in Texas, focusing on VR services authorized under WIOA. The report presents information about the VR program structure in Texas, funding, program delivery, relevant legislation, and program participants.

Work-Based Learning in Career and Technical Education Programs in Texas

This report provides a foundation for understanding work-based learning in secondary and postsecondary education in Texas. Programs from the secondary and postsecondary sectors are profiled and presented as best practices to illustrate potential options for and benefits of work-based learning. Lessons learned from these practices may provide valuable information, not only for educational institutions, but also for other workforce system programs.

Understanding the Need for Adult Education in Texas

This report is an update to *Identifying the Current and Future Population in Need of Adult Education* published in March 2010. Between April 2018 and September 2018, TWIC worked with the Office of the State Demographer to conduct analyses of the current population in need of adult education services, a detailed estimate of the future need for services based on growth projections for the Texas population, and the geographic dispersion of need in Texas by workforce areas.

People with Disabilities: A Texas Profile

This report details the demographic characteristics of the population of individuals with disabilities in Texas. Detailed demographic analyses may be used in program planning and improvement efforts by Boards, state agencies, community and technical colleges, policy analysts, and other workforce system stakeholders.

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

TWC has a strong commitment to the use of performance data to evaluate programs and partners. TWC was an early implementer of the Common Measures and in 2005 extended them beyond Wagner-Peyser and WIA to cover other federal and even state-funded workforce system programs. TWC realized that using the same measures and definitions across programs helped improve program evaluations and removed potential barriers to integration of services by creating common definitions of success.

TWC actively monitors the system through monthly, and in some cases, weekly performance

reports. Program staff reviews these reports and communicates with system partners as appropriate to provide technical assistance and obtain information on best practices to share with other partners. ~~TWC's Commissioners hold open, posted, performance and financial briefings on a quarterly basis. TWC has continued these effective practices under WIOA.~~

One of the key ways that TWC evaluates programs and partners is by comparing performance to targets. TWC has adopted a system by which performance is compared against performance targets to establish a "Percent of Target" for each measure, and depending on where the Percent of Target falls within a given range, performance is rated as "Meeting" the target (MP) or as being either "Positive Performance" (+P) or "Negative Performance" (-P), as follows:

	Where "High is Good" (e.g., Number Served, % Reemployed within 10 Weeks etc.)	Where "Low is Good" (e.g., Avg Cost, Weeks to Reemploy, etc.)
Positive Performance (+P)	more than 105% of Target	less than 95% of Target
Meeting Performance (MP)	95-105% of Target	95-105% of Target
Negative Performance (-P)	less than 95% of Target	more than 105% of Target

For WIOA measures, however, we have modified this system to align more closely with federal standards:

	WIOA Statutory Measures
Positive Performance (+P)	more than 110% of Target
Meeting Performance (MP)	90-110% of Target
Negative Performance (-P)	less than 90% of Target

This makes target-setting a key part of the evaluation and accountability system. TWC's ~~DOI~~ uses a variety of different models to help set performance targets based upon assumed case mixes and economic conditions. These methods continuously evolve based on input from partners through the negotiation process and additional research. ~~There is no question that~~ ~~€~~This dialog between TWC and its partners represents an important component of continuous improvement.

WIOA, like WIA before it, requires working towards continuous improvement. However, continuous improvement does not simply mean that the system needs to do better on all things every year. Continuous improvement is not as simple as always setting targets a little bit higher than the prior year's results. The system is better served by setting targets in the areas of great strength at a "maintenance" level to concentrate on improving in areas of lesser strength. In an environment of fewer resources or greater demand for similar resources, simply maintaining performance can represent improvement—improvement in efficiency.

The fact that we operate in a dynamic system makes the development of effective statistical models to guide target setting so important. WIOA provides that the Secretaries of Labor and Education will develop a set of statistical models to help set performance targets for the WIOA measures. As presented at DOL's Spring 2019 WIOA Performance Meetings in Chicago and Dallas, TWC has embraced use of the federal Statistical Models and modified them to help

ensure accountability among local workforce Boards and hope to do something similar when the Department of Education releases their Statistical Models – using them to help evaluate performance achieved by grantees and our VR regions.

The statute provides a set of performance measures to evaluate the six core programs and system partners. The workforce system in 2021⁹ is very different than it was when the WIOA measures were initially developed. WIOA places great emphasis on the importance of the career pathways that a person might follow over a period of many years, while the performance measures and the joint performance reporting constructs are based on the notion of a person losing employment and coming to the one-stop system for a relatively short, finite period, after which they find a job and leave so that his or her outcomes can be measured. The statutory measures do not recognize that post-exit enrollment in education is sometimes an appropriate outcome for non-Youth such as those who are transitioning out of the military and using their GI Bill benefits to attend school. Additionally, the statutory measures do not address the question of whether exiters are able to retain employment even though that is a key concern for TWC customers.

Therefore, while TWC applies the statutorily prescribed performance measures to assess performance across the six core programs, TWC also applies state-prescribed performance measures and—with input from local Boards, grantees, and other partners—will continually develop and test other measures that may provide a more meaningful way of communicating strengths and identifying areas of improvement. For example, TWC developed a set of WIOA-based measures that focus on either employment or enrollment in education post-exit, regardless of the program, and a retention-like measure that focuses on those employed or enrolled in quarter 2 post-exit, and to see whether they remain employed or enrolled in quarters 3 and 4, post-exit. TWC also plans to return to working on a set of performance measures that focus more on the employment connection made between a worker and employer.

While TWC's current reports provide some historic trend data to identify improvements over time, they are limited. As part of the [Enterprise Data Warehouse \(EDW\) Business Insight Generator \(BIG\)](#) system, TWC ~~will be~~ developing new ways to view, interact with, and evaluate data to identify the quality, effectiveness, and improvement in programs operated by the state, our Boards, and other grantees. [The EDW has been instrumental in supporting fraud detection and prevention as well as helping Boards serve those impacted by the pandemic. An early example of this was the development of a Tableau-based claimant supply dashboard, which allowed local Boards to further examine their customer populations and better understand their needs and current status.](#) ~~One of the ways we'll do this is by coding the federal Statistical Adjustment Models into the BIG to allow users to not only see absolute levels of performance over time but whether those levels were "reasonable" given the models' prediction of the levels of performance that should have been achieved for each cohort, based on the characteristics of those served and the local economic conditions during which they were served.~~

ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

TWC's experience with integrated Common Measures has demonstrated its value in promoting one-stop partner responsibility for the success of its services while boosting participant accessibility and transparency within the Texas Workforce System. Therefore, TWC applies the same measures and methodologies to other one-stop partner-programs that it does the core

programs, in addition to any program-specific measures that are required by either federal or state regulations or identified by TWC as appropriate for a given program. For example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' regulations (45 C.F.R §264.30, *et seq.*) allow recipients of assistance to engage in a variety of activities that count toward the TANF Work Participation measure. TWC, as permitted, established an alternate measure that focused on recipients meeting work participation requirements exclusively through paid employment (other than for in-school teens working toward a diploma). [The state has since worked to modify the measure to better align with and promote career pathways.](#)

Regardless of whether a program is a core program or a partner program, or whether a measure is required by WIOA or state law or was created in partnership with Boards or other grantees, TWC applies performance measures and performs evaluations at the customer-level first and then aggregate results by program or population or partner. As discussed further in the Program Data section of this plan, TWC needs to be able to freely apply data from all sources to customer records to ensure that program results are not artificially boosted or limited because one program has access to critical data that others do not. This is particularly important in those instances where a customer is enrolled in both a core and non-core (perhaps state-funded) program; that customer's results should be reflected the same way at both the system-level and in the results for each program that helped the customer achieve those results.

We have previously described how we develop and apply performance measures as well as set targets and evaluate performance levels achieved to ensure the Texas Workforce System is meeting the needs of employers, job seekers, and communities in Texas. Those efforts are informed by continuous evaluation of system data and engagement with our Boards, grantees, and stakeholders to account for their goals.

B. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

[The US Departments of Labor and Education have issued guidance that explicitly notes that WIOA's performance accountability provisions will be applied to Titles I and III at the individual measure level for PY'20. This means that any state achieving at least 50 percent of their adjusted target will be considered to have met performance expectations. While the Departments, as of the time of this writing, have not yet released their end-of-year final targets for WIOA, as required in WIOA §116, TWC has compared negotiated levels of performance against the performance achieved. In doing so, TWC finds that the state met all initial Title I and Title III expectations. TWC met or exceeded its Program Year 2018 \(PY 2018\) performance targets negotiated with DOL for WIOA Title I and Title III Wagner-Peyser programs with one exception. This suggests that TWC's strong working relationship with Boards continues to promote a high-quality system. The missed performance target, WIOA Dislocated Worker-Employed Q2 Post-Exit, TWC achieved 72.1 percent vs a target of 81.1 percent \(88.9 percent of target\). In evaluating the reason for not meeting this performance target, TWC determined that the cause was likely related to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board significantly increasing enrollment in the Dislocated Worker Program Hurricane Harvey rather than through a National Dislocated Worker Grant and those served being largely dissimilar to the typical WIOA Dislocated Worker Participant.](#)

[While the Department of Education recently waived PY'20 and PY'21 performance](#)

accountability provisions for Titles II and IV, TWC participated in the initial target-setting negotiation for these programs. TWC achieved 96 to 105 percent% of the initially negotiated Title II targets and more than doubled the expected level of achievement in the negotiated measure in Title IV. TWC's performance outcomes in Title II were not as strong as TWC had hoped. For PY 2018, the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) implemented only the Measurable Skill Gains performance measure, and TWC did not achieve 90 percent of the negotiated target. Even if we adjust the negotiated target to account for differences in the case mix (i.e., the proportion of the students in each ABE and ESL level), TWC's performance is still well below the 90 percent of target threshold. In analyzing the data more closely, TWC determined that performance levels for those who remained engaged in the program was high. Over 80 percent of PY 2018 students who received a post-test, showed a gain.

Poor performance appears to have been due to lower performance in the ABE program than the ESL program. ABE performance came in at an average of 80.16 percent of target while ESL performance was an average of 98.88 percent of target. This is not surprising given that TABE-11/12 was fully introduced in PY 2018. TABE 11/12 has proven to be more challenging in a variety of areas. The test is considerably more difficult to administer given it often takes over 6 hours to complete. This creates logistical challenges for grantees and students, and it can be hard to motivate students to sit through such an arduous test (or to take the test over two or three evenings) which doesn't result in a credential or other tangible benefit. Due to the challenges of administering the TABE 11/12 test, TWC approved the CASAS test battery for both AEL providers and Local Workforce Development Boards. Implementation began July 1, 2019. TWC has been providing substantial local training and technical assistance and hopes the test will support increased MSG gains in exchange for administrative efficiency and shorter testing times. If anything, the new TABE serves as a motivator to want to focus on HSE testing. While only appropriate for students who have been studying at the higher levels of literacy/numeracy, the HSE test has the benefit of paying off with a recognized credential (when achieved).

While OCTAE has not yet implemented exit-based outcome measures, Texas still had state accountability measures to meet for last year and met the measures related to employment and credential achievement. One area of achievement particularly gratifying is that AEL exiters retain employment at levels almost identical to those achieved in TWC's other workforce programs.

The US Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) placed all WIOA measures in "baseline status" for PY'16 through PY'19. TWC again applied a set of WIOA-based outcome measures for the VR program in Texas and met the targets set by the Legislature and Governor. In addition, TWC continues to use the "Successful Closure Rate" as a valuable leading indicator which provides an early view of how Employment in Q2 Post-Exit is likely going to look when the data matures.

C. EVALUATION

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

TWC has historically used a blend of Six Sigma, Lean, and Theory of Constraints methodologies for a continuous improvement model called Rapid Process Improvement (RPI). RPI has been used to evaluate dozens of system processes, identify opportunities for improvement, and test the results of implemented changes. Over the last two years, TWC has further expanded its

continuous improvement model to move beyond RPI by designing a new methodology called Business Transformation (BT). The primary distinction between RPI and BT is the nature of the problem that is being targeted for improvement. RPI seeks to improve quality and efficiency in business processes, while BT is designed to uncover and address root causes of system-level issues and limitations. BT tends to be used on broader problems that have multiple processes associated with them. BT's goal is not just efficiency and quality improvements but a strategic rethinking of entire business approaches, priorities, and value systems associated with core business functions.

One recent and ongoing BT effort came out of TWC's triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) for Title IV vocational rehabilitation (VR). The CSNA is a critical resource to understanding how the Texas VR program is viewed by individuals who participate in Title IV programs and their VR service providers, employers, families, and disability support communities. CSNA findings are only valuable insofar as they are analyzed and used to guide action. Analysis of economic and related VR data substantially corroborated CSNA findings.

VR service providers voiced their concerns about low reimbursement rates, the inconsistency and declining number of referrals from TWC, and the burdensome paperwork and requirements to do business with the Texas VR program. IJ3 examined the data and was able to validate and see the cumulative impact of these provider concerns. For example, over the past five years TWC saw a 51.5 percent reduction in the number of service provider locations (from 11,723 to 5,688) doing business with the Texas VR program. As of FFY'20, only 24 percent of available provider locations were doing business with the VR program, which coincided with a significant reduction in referrals to many of those providers.

The issue of declining availability and use of VR service providers resulted in secondary impacts, such as further reducing options for VR participants and making it more difficult for staff to find providers to refer them to. There was not a single process that needed to be improved to reverse the declining provider and referral trends. The existing RPI methodology was not going to solve the issue, which became TWC's initial BT project. TWC took the following actions:

- After examining reimbursement rates and history, TWC concluded that rates were too low and recommended rate adjustments, which TWC's Commissioners approved.
- As a result of several conversations with VR counselors, TWC found that the reduction in referrals to service providers was driven in part by staff turnover. Newer staff members did not have relationships with local providers and were not able to easily search for available providers in their area. In response, IJ3 built a new Tableau-based provider locator that staff may use to quickly find providers by location and types of services offered.
- In an attempt to reduce provider burdens, TWC began reassessing established service provider requirements by comparing them to less burdensome policies in other states. This ongoing work is being performed in a targeted way to maximize the program's early impact.
- TWC began building solutions to quickly answer providers' questions and offer them the guidance necessary to assure the provision of quality services to our customers.
- TWC began building a data-driven approach to provider recruitment that targets the providers that are most in need based on customer and provider density in geographical areas.

TWC's Division of Operational Insight (DOI) was created to improve and leverage that data to advance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the system. DOI has primary responsibility for conducting and coordinating evaluations of the Texas workforce system.

~~Although TWC uses a variety of statistical techniques to conduct evaluations, it uses primarily quasi-experimental evaluation techniques rather than random assignment trials. While less academic in approach than random assignment trials, quasi-experimental evaluation balances evaluation rigor with the ability to implement process changes or new initiatives quickly.~~

~~Additionally, TWC uses a blend of Six Sigma, Lean, and Theory of Constraints to develop “Rapid Process Improvement” (RPI) to evaluate system processes, identify opportunities for improvement, and test the results of implemented changes. RPI is part of the core of TWC’s approach for continuous improvement.~~

TWC works with local Boards, other partners, and academic researchers on system evaluations and ~~has participated in numerous federal studies such as the Workforce Investment Act Gold Standard Study. TWC will look~~ for opportunities to cooperate ~~and partner~~ with the Secretaries of Labor and Education on studies that complement and enhance the research priorities of TWC and its Boards and partners. In addition, TWC believes that the webinars and regional calls that DOL and ED hold provide an excellent avenue for coordinating such work and sharing results between the states and the departments. ~~TWC anticipates being particularly active within the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) community and sharing results and best practices with other community members.~~

Recently, TWC participated in a new adult education evaluation learning community project. This 15-month project brought together research and evaluation experts from many states to develop and conduct high-value evaluations for Adult Education and Literacy (AEL). TWC evaluated the impact that different forms of intake and onboarding mechanisms used by AEL grantees had on certain measures, such as length of participation. The final report was issued during PY’20 and used to develop the curriculum for a session at TWC’s AEL summer institute in August 2021.

TWC has also been performing evaluation work related to the VR program. One project involves a quasi-experimental evaluation of the impact of TWC’s Project SEARCH for individuals with developmental disabilities. Project SEARCH allows participants to compare three 10- to 12-week paid internships in competitive integrated employment settings, thus giving them the opportunity to focus on gaining proficiency in their preferred occupation with the goal of obtaining and retaining permanent employment. Common local employers involved in Project SEARCH include hospitals, law firms, and supply chain industries, which offer diverse internships in areas such as office administration, data entry, assembly/packaging, housekeeping, and food preparation.

Another project in the early stages of development involves a machine-learning model developed to identify VR participants who are six months into their cases and appear to be headed for an unsuccessful closure. The key to this project is not to identify the cases but to develop an intervention that may transform an unsuccessful trajectory into a successful one. The VR division is developing the intervention, which will be tested through a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to identify cases on the path to failure and randomly assign them to receive the new intervention. This RCT will enable staff to determine whether the intervention has a causal impact on program outcomes. Although this work is being conducted within the VR program, it should be applicable to many other programs, including WIOA core partner programs.

I[3] is working with TWC’s Workforce Development Division on several evaluations for DOL-funded programs. The first is an RCT for a new service that would be funded by WIOA dislocated worker (DW) statewide funding and involves special job-coaching and related resources. The evaluation will involve the random selection of Reemployment Services and Eligibility

Assessment (RESEA) claimants for access to such services and will serve as both a WIOA DW and RESEA evaluation, as it is expected to meet CLEAR's "high causality" standard. Another study encompasses a broader quasi-experimental design that addresses the impact of the RESEA program on benefits usage and employees returning to work. It is anticipated that this second study will meet CLEAR's "moderate causality" standard.

Finally, I13 is using its analytical resources to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse within the UI system by developing predictive analytics models used by UI's benefit payment control and investigative staff. TWC supports other states' efforts to promote integrity in their systems by sharing best practices and contributing to the UI Integrity Center's Suspicious Actor Repository.

Most recently, TWC applied and was accepted to participate in a new National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) Evaluation Learning Community. This 15-month project will bring together research and evaluation experts from many states to develop and conduct high-value evaluation projects for adult education and literacy (AEL). Because TWC has integrated all operational evaluation resources inside DOI, TWC will be able to leverage what it learns through the project to areas beyond AEL.

Foundational to TWC's ambitions to fully leverage its data is TWC's EDW system, BIG data-warehousing system will which supports advanced reporting, analytics, and high-quality evaluations that will meet moderate and high causal evidence as described on the CLEAR website. The system will streamline standard reporting to improve efficiency and will provide more resources for analysis and evaluation work. The system also will allow TWC to better connect data relating to participants, services, and outcomes across programs, which will facilitate monitoring at the highest level (systemwide) as well as the program level (WIOA Titles I-IV and beyond), the characteristic level (that is, subpopulations across all programs), or a combination thereof (individuals in a program who meet specific conditions).

A key portion of this work is the development of a common data model for customers in all programs. This system, which will be called Rosetta, will allow customer data to be transformed, standardized, and more easily combined. This will allow us to build Tableau dashboards that can work for any program.

The EDW buildout is being supported by a TWC's recently approved Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant application that will accelerate system development and bring additional the system's capabilities online much sooner than would have been possible without the funding.

Over the past several years, many of TWC's analytic resources have been heavily focused on WIOA implementation activities, such as conducting an updated and developing Participant-Individual Record Layout (PIRL) and RSA-911 logic and testing as well as supporting the implementation and rollout of TWC's new WorkInTexas.com labor exchange system. Over the next two four to five years, TWC plans to replace or significantly modify nearly all enterprise-level information technology (IT) systems supporting our core programs and services. These systems must provide high-quality data that can support the levels of evaluation that WIOA requires. TWC will expend significant effort on ensuring that its IT modernization pays off both in the short run by serving customers and in the long run by yielding information about which efforts work under which conditions.

Continuous improvement and "doing more with less" are constant refrains in government, and now, statistical technique, computing power, and high-quality data can deliver on these goals. TWC is already using machine learning and artificial intelligence to detect and prevent fraud in its systems and looks forward to applying these techniques to service delivery.

Once the Rosetta data system ~~the BIG data system~~ is fully implemented, TWC will apply market basket analysis to identify common customer groups much the way business marketing does

when analyzing consumer purchasing patterns. However, our approach will reach farther than the identification of common customer groups—we intend to evaluate each group to determine whether service-based differences exist between high- and low-achieving customers in each group and then evaluate those services for effectiveness. Our assumption is that although most services have value, the value varies by individual and to the degree to which that services are provided in conjunction with other services or ~~are provided through other means.~~

Through this approach, TWC hopes to implement a system that better uses data to determine appropriate service delivery strategies unique to each individual customer. This approach is not intended to remove local flexibility or to disregard staff experience, but rather to support staff by providing better evidence-based options, based on the more precise data obtained through market basket analysis, to help plan an approach likely to lead to customer success. This approach will also help bring new staff up to speed more quickly.

TWC's evidence-based data analysis and evaluation provide a more efficient way to serve employers. We are working to identify employers that might benefit from outreach and education regarding short-term unemployment insurance (UI) compensation as a way to help the employer retain its skilled labor force during a period of temporary financial difficulty.

~~With the help of our Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative partners, TEA and THECB, TWC also has invested heavily in providing professional development [for 13 staff through the Coleridge Initiative's data science class. The class was conducted with real workforce and education data that were deidentified in Coleridge's data environment. Preparation for the training allowed for greater coordination and partnership between the Tri-Agencies, which resulted in the development of a modern data-sharing agreement and the design of the research questions and agenda for the class to teachers in the AEL program. DOI will be working with TWC's AEL program staff to determine whether TWC can measure the effectiveness of professional development by looking at student engagement and outcomes before and after teachers participate in professional development.](#)~~

~~TWC will conduct several evaluation projects for the VR program. The VR program operates several specialized programs that serve specific groups of customers. DOI is working with the VR Division to evaluate some of the specialized programs, including the following:~~

- ~~• Project Search—a program that uses a rotation of internships to improve competitive employment in an integrated setting for youth who have intellectual disabilities~~
- ~~• Project Hire—a program that helps individuals with severe developmental disabilities to complete postsecondary education~~
- ~~• Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center—a residential VR training facility that serves adults who are legally blind by helping them learn alternative techniques to prepare for, find, and retain employment and/or attend postsecondary education, and/or live independently in the community~~

TWC recognizes the value of collaborating with evaluators outside the agency and even outside the state's workforce system. The agency works with academic researchers, such as the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas and the Texas Policy Lab at Rice University, to evaluate the intersection between workforce preparation through education and labor market outcomes through Texas' Education Research Centers (ERCs), which combine and make available K-12, postsecondary education (at public colleges and the university), and workforce wage and employment data. The Texas Legislature established the ERCs through legislation, which required development of the ERC system, and the system to focus its research to assist Texas' elected officials, policymakers, and other stakeholders improve education in Texas.

Additionally, recent legislation called for the creation of a more open and current workforce and education data repository in order to support identification of effective programs, measure the impact of changes on outcomes, and provide more robust data to stakeholders and partners.

~~Most recently, a Texas delegation, which included TWC staff, engaged with Results for America to identify and incorporate strategies for improving outcomes for job seekers and employers by using evidence-based, results-driven solutions. This initiative explored strategies for incorporating evidence-based approaches into how the state awards grant funds.~~

~~DOI is exploring ways to leverage the national WIOA regression models to help with program evaluation. The regression models can show the effect of numerous factors on program performance. TWC envisions building on the models to test the effect of various services.~~

~~Finally, DOI uses its analytic resources to help prevent waste, fraud, and abuse in the UI system by developing the predictive analytics models used by UI's benefit payment control and investigative staff. TWC is active within the national UI integrity sphere and supports other states' efforts to promote integrity in their systems by sharing best practices and contributing to the UI Integrity Center's Suspicious Actor Repository.~~

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

TWC's three-member Commission adopted Fiscal Year 2020 WIOA Block Grant Allocations on April 30, 2019, pursuant to Texas Labor Code §§301.001, 302.002, and 302.065. These sections establish TWC to operate an integrated workforce development system in the state, in particular through the consolidation of job training, employment, and employment-support services (including subsidized child care), to achieve an efficient and effective delivery of services and to allocate funds to workforce areas for the purpose of meeting or exceeding statewide performance targets, as set forth in the General Appropriations Act and as consistent with federal and state program requirements.

Specifically, Texas Labor Code §302.062(a) prescribes that TWC shall provide funding to the workforce areas, in which Boards have been certified and local plans approved by the governor, through a block grant process.

The funds appropriated to TWC under House Bill (HB) 1, the General Appropriations Act, 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2019), for the FY'20-'21 biennium, are included in the block grant allocations to all workforce areas throughout the state (including those allocations adopted for WIOA Title I and Title II programs). These block grant allocations, which consist of state and federal program funds for workforce training and employment and support services, are awarded in concert with the requirements of associated state and federal statutes, program regulations and rules, and TWC contract provisions and requirements.

Pertinent informational references to TWC rules provisions are made throughout the block grant allocations package, clarifying:

- how allocations were computed;
- what allocation factors were used;
- the sources of the allocation factor data;
- why these allocations are largely based on estimated federal amounts, and may need to be subsequently amended (because federal FY '20 appropriations have not yet been enacted); and
- various other details regarding relevant assumptions, explanations, and associated information.

The TWC executive director is ordered to administer these block grant allocations in the most efficient and economical manner and within all guidelines prescribed by HB 1, General Appropriations Act, 86th Legislature, Regular Session (2019), the Texas Labor Code, and TWC rules.

For Title I Programs

Within-State allocations of formula-funded WIOA Title I will be made pursuant to statutory provisions for Youth Activities under §128(b), and Adult Employment and Training Activities and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities under §133(b) and pursuant to conforming to TWC General Administration rule §800.63. Youth Activities funds not reserved for statewide workforce investment activities (as authorized under WIOA §128(a)(1)) will be made available as Within-State Allocations for Youth Activities to workforce areas based on:

- one-third of the funds allocated on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment (as defined in WIOA §127(b)(2)(B) and §132(b)(1)(B)(v)(III)) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals within all areas of substantial unemployment in the state[1];
- one-third of the funds allocated on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals (as defined in WIOA §127(b)(2)(D) and §132(b)(1)(B)(v)(VI)) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals within the state[2]; and
- one-third of the funds allocated based on the relative number of disadvantaged youth (as defined in WIOA §127(b)(2)(C)) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth within the state.[3]

Within-State Allocations to workforce areas (as provided in WIOA §128(b)(2)(A)(ii), §133(b)(2)(A)(ii), and §133(b)(B)(iii)) shall meet minimum percentages for Youth Activities, Adult Employment and Training Activities, and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities (for FY'06 or a subsequent year) that are no less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage among the workforce areas in the state for the two preceding fiscal years.

In accordance with the requirements of Texas Labor Code §302.062(d), block grant–allocated funds for workforce training and employment services and associated support services shall be allocated by the Commission among the workforce areas in the state that are no less than 90 percent or more than 125 percent of the proportion during the two preceding fiscal years.

Of the amount allocated from the Within-State Allocation for a fiscal year, not more than 10 percent of the amount may be used by the Board involved for the administrative costs of carrying out local workforce investment activities (as provided in WIOA §128(b)(4) and §133(b)).

[1] Period and Source of the Data: the higher of the 12-month period ending June of the prior year or the prior calendar year, TWC LMGI Department

[2] Period and Source of the Data: 12-month period ending June of the prior year, TWC LMGI Department

[3] Period and Source of the Data: US DOLETA, Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. ~~21-1214-17, April 4, 2018~~ ~~March 26, 2013~~, Table 6

II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Adult Employment and Training Activities funds not reserved for statewide activities (as provided in WIOA §128(a)(1) and §133(a)(1)) will be made available as Within-State Allocations for Adult Employment and Training Activities to workforce areas based on:

- one-third of the funds allocated on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment (as defined in WIOA §127(b)(2)(B) and §132(b)(1)(B)(v)(III)) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals within all such areas of substantial unemployment in the state; [1]
- one-third of the funds allocated on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals (as defined in WIOA §127(b)(2)(D) and §132(b)(1)(B)(v)(VI)) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals within the state [2]; and (Period and Source of the Data: the higher of 12-month period ending June of the prior fiscal year or the prior calendar year, TWC LMGI department); and
- one-third of the funds allocated on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged adults (as defined in WIOA §132(b)(1)(B)(v)(IV)) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults within the state. [3]

Within-State Allocations to workforce areas (as provided in WIOA §128(b)(2)(A)(ii), §133(b)(2)(A)(ii), and §133(b)(B)(iii)) shall meet minimum percentages for Youth Activities, Adult Employment and Training Activities, and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities (for FY'06 or a subsequent year) that are no less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage among the workforce areas in the state for the two preceding fiscal years.

In accordance with the requirements of Texas Labor Code §302.062(d), block grant–allocated funds for workforce training and employment services and associated support services shall be allocated by the Commission among the workforce areas in the state that are no less than 90 percent or more than 125 percent of the proportion during the two preceding fiscal years.

Of the amount allocated from the Within-State Allocation for a fiscal year, not more than 10 percent of the amount may be used by the Board involved for the administrative costs of carrying out local workforce investment activities (as provided in WIOA §128(b)(4) and §133(b)).

[1] Period and Source of the Data: 12-month period ending June of the prior year, TWC LMGI department

[2] Period and Source of the Data: the higher of 12-month period ending June of the prior fiscal year or the prior calendar year, TWC LMGI department

[3] Period and Source of the Data: DOLETA, TEGL No. ~~14-1721-12, April 4, 2018~~ ~~March 26, 2013~~, Table 6

III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH

WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

Dislocated Worker Employment and Training funds not reserved for statewide activities (as provided in WIOA §128(a)(1) and §133(a)(1)) or statewide rapid response activities (as described in WIOA §132 (b)(2)(B)) will be made available as Within-State Allocations for Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities to workforce areas on the basis of:

- 20.00 percent (Program Year 2015 (PY'15) factor weight) of the funds on the basis of the relative number of insured unemployed individuals (~~i.e.that is~~, average monthly total number of unemployed individuals who are covered by state and federal unemployment insurance program) residing within each workforce area, compared to the total number of insured unemployed individuals within the state (Period and Source of the Data: prior calendar year, TWC's Claimant Characteristics Report);
- 19.67 percent (PY'15 factor weight) of the funds based on the relative average number of unemployed individuals residing within each workforce area, compared to the average number of unemployed individuals within the state (Period and Source of the Data: prior calendar year, Monthly Local Area Unemployment Statistics, LAUS Estimates Report, TWC LMEI department);
- 10.33 percent (PY'15 factor weight) of the funds on the basis of the relative number of workers residing within each workforce area who are included on Texas plant closure and layoff notices issued under authority of the Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification Act (WARN), compared to the number of such workers within the state (Period and Source of the Data: prior calendar year, TWC Workforce Development Division);
- 20.00 percent (PY'15 factor weight) of the funds on the basis of the relative proportion of the state's declining industries (for the four calendar quarters ending the prior September, compared to the four quarters ending September of two years earlier), for any industry group reflecting statewide decline, for any workforce area, and also showing a decline in those respective industry groups (six-digit NAICS industry classification), aggregated by workforce area (Period and Source of the Data: period of data as described, TWC LMEI department);
- 19.67 percent (PY'15 factor weight) of the funds on the basis of the relative proportion of individuals in Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship (~~i.e.that is~~, total population of farm and ranch employees who are not covered by UI) residing within the workforce area, compared to the total number of individuals within the state in Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship (Period and Source of the Data: prior calendar year, Texas State Data Center); and
- 10.33 percent (PY'15 factor weight) of the funds on the basis of the relative proportion of individuals in Long-Term Unemployment (~~i.e.that is~~, the average monthly number of individuals, residing within each workforce area who have been unemployed for 14 weeks or longer) residing within the workforce area, compared to the total number of individuals within the state in Long-Term Unemployment (Period and Source of the Data: prior calendar year, TWC's Claimant Characteristics Report).

Within-State Allocations to workforce areas (as provided in WIOA §128(b)(2)(A)(ii), §133(b)(2)(A)(ii), and §133(b)(B)(iii)) shall meet minimum percentages for Youth Activities, Adult Employment and Training Activities, and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities (for FY'16 or a subsequent year) that are no less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage among the workforce areas in the state for the two preceding fiscal years.

In accordance with the requirements of Texas Labor Code §302.062(d), block grant-allocated funds for workforce training and employment services and associated support services shall be allocated by the Commission among the workforce areas in the state that are no less than 90 percent or more than 125 percent of the proportion during the two preceding fiscal years.

Of the amount allocated from the Within-State Allocation for a fiscal year, not more than 10 percent of the amount may be used by the Board involved for the administrative costs of carrying out local workforce investment activities (as provided in WIOA §128(b)(4) and §133(b)).

B. FOR TITLE II

I. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL AWARD MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS ON A COMPETITIVE BASIS TO ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS IN THE STATE, INCLUDING HOW ELIGIBLE AGENCIES WILL ESTABLISH THAT ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS ARE ORGANIZATIONS OF DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS

AEL under WIOA Title II §211 provides the basis and methodology for the awarding of state grants for AEL activities, in §243 the basis and methodology for the allotment of funds for integrated English literacy and civics education (IEL/CE), and in §225 for the use of funds for corrections. In accordance with this basis and methodology, and pursuant to TWC General Administration rule §800.68 as outlined below, AEL allocations are made available to each workforce area. [TWC is currently reviewing AEL allocation methodology to workforce areas and may amend rule language related to deobligation and reallocation of funds.](#)

- ED allocates AEL State Grant funds based on their relative proportion of the nation's total number of individuals at least 18 years of age without a secondary school diploma and who are not enrolled in school. TWC allocates these funds (together with associated state general revenue matching funds) on the same basis to workforce areas across the state. TWC obtains from the Texas State Data Center the most recent data available for this allocation factor each year, as directed by the Texas Labor Code and TWC rules. Allocation factors for TWC block grants must be aggregated to the 28 workforce areas throughout the state, the most effective approach is to obtain allocation factor data values/estimates by county and then to aggregate to workforce areas.
- Pursuant to TWC rule §800.68(b) and (c), federal funds constituting the state award of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) grants (excluding amounts received for IEL/CE) and associated state general revenue matching funds shall be allocated to workforce areas based on the relative proportion of individuals residing within each workforce area who are at least 18 years of age, do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and are not enrolled in secondary school, during the most recent period for which statistics are available.
- Federal funds encompassing the state award of AEFLA State Grants (excluding amounts received for IEL/CE) and associated state General Revenue matching funds for the pertinent program year/fiscal year are allocated using statistics provided by the Texas State Data Center. The allocation factor data consists of the most recent estimates available by the US Bureau of the Census' American Community Survey (ACS) three-year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), applied to Texas State Data Center county population estimates (aggregated to workforce area populations). This data set is consistent with that used by ED in determining AEFLA state grants.
- At least 82.5 percent of the federal funds encompassing the state award of AEFLA state grants (excluding amounts received for IEL/CE) and associated state General Revenue

matching funds for the pertinent program year/fiscal year are allocated based on the relative proportion of individuals residing within each workforce area who are at least 18 years of age, do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and are not enrolled in secondary school, during the most recent period for which statistics are available; an equal base amount; and the application of a hold-harmless procedure.

- Pursuant to TWC rule §800.68(d), AEFLA federal funds received for IEL/CE are allocated to workforce areas based on the same methodology and data factors provided in WIOA §243(b). The federal funds constituting the state allotment of amounts for EL/Civics for the pertinent program year/fiscal year are allocated based on: (A) the relative proportion of: (1) 65 percent of the average number of legal permanent residents during the most recent 10-year period, available from US Citizenship and Immigration Services data, and (2) 35 percent of the average number of legal permanent residents during the most recent three-year period, available from US Citizenship and Immigration Services data. (B) an equal base amount; and (C) application of a hold-harmless procedure.
- Pursuant to TWC rule §800.68(e), TANF federal funds associated with the AEL program will be allocated by the Commission to workforce areas according to a need-based formula. 100 percent of the TANF funds will be based on: (A) the relative proportion of the unduplicated number of TANF adult recipients residing within the workforce area with educational attainment of less than a secondary diploma during the most recently completed calendar year; (B) an equal base amount; and (C) the application of a hold-harmless procedure.

Title II Adult Education and Literacy Statewide Competition and Awards

In fall 2017, Texas conducted a statewide competition of services, under RFP 320-18-01, to fund contracts through June 30, 2020, with options for up to three one-year renewals. Thirty-six AEL grant recipients were awarded grants. The grant period is for two years (that is, 24 months) with an option for TWC to renew the grant for an additional one-year period, as many as three times. The start date for the original two-year period (24-month period) was July 1, 2018. If TWC determines at the end of the initial two-year term that the grantee is not performing or that the outcomes are not being achieved, TWC can allow the grant to expire. If the grantee is struggling, and TWC has an enhanced technical assistance plan in place to support the grantee, TWC can authorize the grant for another year to reassess at the end of that year whether to continue to fund the grant.

In its Request for Proposals (RFP), Texas incorporated and specifically indicated the considerations specified in WIOA §231(e) as grant award requirements required of eligible providers. These considerations were scored as narrative questions in the RFP, and offerors were required to provide narrative detail to demonstrate how they will meet each consideration.

In October 2019, Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) conducted a review of this statewide competition to ensure that processes for the award of Title II funds to eligible providers adhered to WIOA requirements. In its final report, OCTAE noted that the next statewide competition shall be held no later than Program Year 2023. [State staff are working to ensure applications for AEFLA funds meet the 13 considerations outlined in AEFLA §231.](#)

[For the next statewide RFA, state staff will revise application items that were addressed during OCTAE's 2019 virtual monitoring review of Texas' grant application process, including separating the past effectiveness criteria \(one of the 13 considerations\) from demonstrated effectiveness.](#)

A competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process will be used by TWC. All eligible providers follow the same competitive procedures. The RFP will provide instructions for preparation of proposals, a deadline for submitting a notice of intent to apply and a deadline for receipt of the proposals, review criteria, assurances, and other legal, fiscal, and program requirements; and plans for cooperative arrangements the eligible provider will develop with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of AEL services.

Grantees will respond to questions in the proposal that include requirements as outlined in WIOA §232(1)-(7). The review of proposals will include rating responses to questions aligned to the 13 considerations in WIOA §231(e)(1)-(13).

Title II Adult Education and Literacy Determining Demonstrated Effectiveness

Through the AEL competition, eligible providers will be required to demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data on documented factors of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the application for funds. Prior TWC AEL grant recipients will be required to provide performance data required under section 116 of WIOA to demonstrate past effectiveness as evidenced by data from the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) student data management system to demonstrate the extent to which they met state-negotiated performance measures for all state and federal performance measures.

Eligible providers that have not been previously funded under Title II of WIOA must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient-eligible individuals including those with low levels of literacy in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the application for funds and demonstrate the extent to which they objectively evaluate performance criteria in achieving outcomes listed under section 116 of WIOA.

Eligible providers must also provide information regarding outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

~~Proposal review criteria for all proposals will include evaluation and scoring based on a standard of demonstrated effectiveness.~~ TWC shall determine each applicant's eligibility to apply for AEFLA funds, based on whether it has demonstrated effectiveness in providing AEL services, as required under 34 CFR §463.24 and in guidance outlined in OCTAE's Technical Assistance Guide, "Determining Applicant Eligibility When Conducting a State Competition for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Fund."

In the next statewide competition for AEFLA funds, TWC will ensure any applications reviewed are first screened for eligibility, including eligibility based on the provider's demonstrated effectiveness in serving eligible individuals and the outcomes of participants.

II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO APPLY AND COMPETE FOR FUNDS AND HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS USING THE SAME GRANT OR CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

Texas aligned AEL and workforce development systems in 2013. The alignment required statewide deployment of models to develop the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education programs and obtain and advance in employment. Successful models have included IET, career pathways, distance learning, and college and workforce preparation

activities. Texas also aligned service-delivery options for individuals with disabilities and other special needs. AEL statewide service-delivery contracts are compliant with WIOA requirements under performance, workforce system, and rehabilitative services alignment and programmatic integration.

In fall 2017, Texas conducted the second statewide competition of services to fund contracts from July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2020, with options for up to three one-year renewals. Thirty-six AEL grant recipients were awarded grants.

In its Request for Proposals (RFP), Texas incorporated and specifically indicated the considerations specified in WIOA §231(e) as grant award requirements of eligible providers. These considerations were scored as narrative questions in the RFP, and offerors were required to provide narrative detail to demonstrate how they will meet each consideration.

AEFLA §232 requires that eligible providers desiring a grant or contract submit an application containing required information and assurances, including a description of:

- how funds awarded will be spent; and
- any cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of AEL services.

Contracts awarded to AEL grant recipients were limited to two years, with the option of three one-year renewals at the discretion of TWC's Commission, taking into account performance and other factors. Renewals for years three, four, and five are not automatic, and are based on meeting or exceeding performance and expenditure benchmarks, or other factors as determined by the Commission. At the completion of the five-year maximum contract term, TWC will conduct a new competitive statewide procurement. All contracts, including those that have been in effect for less than the maximum five-year contract term, must be competitively procured during subsequent statewide procurements.

Of the funding Texas receives to administer AEL services, 82.5 percent must be used to provide AEL services as stipulated in AEFLA §231. Of the 82.5 percent, up to 10 percent is allowed for corrections education and education for other institutionalized adults.

Federal AEL funds may be used for programs for out-of-school individuals who are at least 16 years of age and:

- function at less than a secondary school completion level;
- lack a secondary school credential; or
- are unable to speak, read, or write in English.

State AEL funds are for programs for out-of-school individuals who are beyond compulsory school-attendance age and:

- function at less than a secondary school completion level;
- lack a secondary school credential; or
- are unable to speak, read, or write in English.

Eligible providers for a grant or contract under TWC include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Local education agency;

- Community-based organization or faith-based organization;
- Volunteer literacy organization;
- Institution of higher education;
- Public or private nonprofit agency;
- Library;
- Public housing authority;
- Nonprofit institution that can provide literacy services to eligible individuals;
- Consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- A partnership between an employer and any of the entities described above.

TWC uses an RFP competitive process under which all proposals for funding are treated in the same manner in terms of review and evaluation during the RFP process including the same announcements, proposal materials, and review and award process for each RFP the state issues. TWC ensures all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to AEL funding opportunities. All offerors eligible under Section 231 of WIOA submit proposals directly to TWC. They are not required to apply through another agency or agencies in a multi-tiered process. Notice of availability of awards are distributed via email distribution lists of current providers, Literacy Texas, the state's nonprofit literacy council network, Texas community and technical college systems, Boards, as well as public posting on the AEL website, the Texas Electronic State Business Daily, and the Texas Comptroller's website, which houses announcements and details of all open procurement in Texas. The RFP processes are designed so that direct application to TWC is clear, customary, and nonnegotiable.

C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

TWC's VR Division serves as the Designated State Unit (DSU) for the VR program as required under § 721(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. (Title IV). As such, the VR Division is responsible for the distribution and expenditure of VR funds for the delivery of services to eligible students and adults with disabilities, and to potentially eligible students with disabilities.

Funds are distributed to local VR offices in each of the six TWC VR regions based on projected expenditures to serve customers in the region for the fiscal year. Projections are based on several factors, including expenditures and customers served in the prior year and anticipated for the subsequent year, as well as the implementation of statewide initiatives and new or revised service delivery strategies.

Services to VR customers may be provided, arranged or purchased by VR staff. Services must be necessary to assist the customer with achieving his or her employment goal and based upon the Individualized Plan for Employment developed jointly by the VR counselor and the customer.

Pursuant to 34 CFR §76.50(b), VR funds may not be sub-granted because neither the

Rehabilitation Act nor its implementing program regulations specifically permit sub-granting under the VR program. As a result, community rehabilitation programs and other providers with whom TWC VR contracts for the provision of VR services are considered vendors or contractors not subgrantees.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

I. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

TWC operates a collection of different IT systems to capture participant information, services, and outcomes. Many of these systems were legacy systems that were transferred to TWC as programs were moved to the agency. However, these systems were all built on now outdated technology and were designed to support the predecessors to the WIOA core programs. Modifying those systems to meet WIOA's requirements has proven excessively challenging; therefore, TWC ~~is~~ has begun a system modernization project that includes the following four main components:

- 1) Implementation of a recently procured unemployment insurance system replacement
- 2) Rebuilding TWC's VR case management system
- 3) Procurement of a new case management system to support TWC's subsidized child care and early learning programs
- 1)4) Configuration of a recently procured case management system that will support all DOL programs operated by TWC, aspects of the TANF and SNAP E&T program, and other miscellaneous programs. This system will be highly adaptable to new programs and initiatives as they are developed by TWC. ~~preparing to procure replacement systems to support all WIOA core and partner programs that the agency is responsible for, except for Wagner-Peyser and JVSG, which are supported through TWC's recently replaced WorkInTexas.com system.~~

The Texas workforce system has been on the leading edge of performance measurement, evaluation, and accountability within the national workforce structure for nearly two decades. TWC implemented a set of system-wide performance measures that successfully improved employer engagement and effectiveness serving employers. TWC embraced the Common Measures and applied them to all state and federally funded employment and training programs using common Periods of Participation and integrated reporting. TWC also obtained a performance measure waiver that gave TWC flexibility in selecting performance measures to contract with Boards so that the system could break down program siloes and focus on integrated services. TWC participated in the redeveloped the Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting System (WISPR) for DOL to simplify the system and add additional functionality. Texas became the first state to file a WISPR. TWC mentored other states interested in integrated reporting with or without the WISPR.

As noted, TWC has undertaken a new enterprise data warehousing project to support data integration, reporting, consumer education, ~~and~~ evaluation work, and decision-making at all

levels of the workforce system. As the source systems listed above are replaced, parallel projects will integrate data from the new systems into the warehouse in such a way as to allow the combining of data from different TWC eras spanning as much as two decades. These parallel projects will be critical to ensuring a smooth analytics transition from one set of systems to their replacements without disrupting the flow of data needed to effectively manage and innovate these programs. This project was recently given additional support in the form of a Workforce Development Quality Initiative grant. Customer data from TWC's case management systems, as well as other data such as UI wage records, will be extracted and combined to produce customer-centric, rather than program-centric, records to be used in reporting. The envisioned platform will allow integration of customer records across all six core programs as well as a variety of other partner programs to provide a holistic view of each customer, their services, and their outcomes. The system will also support longitudinal tracking past the post-exit performance accountability period to help us get evaluate longer term impacts of services.

The enterprise data warehouse project, called the "Business Insight Generator" (BIG), will support oversight, consumer education, and decision-making at all levels of the workforce system. This model will allow TWC to develop advanced statistical models that can help identify who most needs services and help prescribe the types of services that may be most effective for a given customer based on what we learn from having served similarly situated customers in the past.

In addition to reporting requirements under WIOA §116(d), TWC will be actively monitoring and evaluating the Texas workforce system under WIOA §116(e). Evaluation efforts will include applying both federal- and state-prescribed performance measures, in addition to continually developing and testing other measures. Consistent with WIOA §116(i), TWC will be using data obtained from other states to implement this part of TWC's Combined State Plan.

II. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN

TWC was appropriated over \$64 million during the FY '20-'21 biennium to replace legacy workforce systems.

UI Systems Replacement Project

TWC, through a competitive procurement process, is seeking to acquire a turnkey modifiable off-the-shelf (MOTS) technology solution to replace its existing UI legacy systems including benefits, tax, and appeals applications. The procurement will include services to implement the MOTS, make essential modifications required for Texas, migrate relevant data, and provide a shared maintain and operations solution after the MOTS is put into production. TWC has engaged a third-party vendor to perform independent verification and validation (IV&V) activities for the duration of the project.

The new system will support the entire UI program and its customers by:

- Focusing on re-employment first with the objective of getting Texans back to work quickly and efficiently;
- Enhancing self-service options;
- Automating manual, paper-based processes to increase workflow efficiencies & reduce operational costs;
- Providing integrated workflow for resource assignments and managing/monitoring of

assigned work;

- Providing automated data population, cascading of data between input screens, and drop-down menus to improve productivity and reduce data entry errors;
- Facilitate electronic communication within TWC as well as among TWC, its customers and employers;
- Providing TWC staff with timely access to information necessary for performance measurement and quality management;
- Providing immediate access to data and customizable dashboards to support decision-making;
- Implementing a unified case management system with workflow that interfaces with UI data to store claims, determinations, claimant and employer data, and appeals information; and
- Providing a scalable platform with a flexible architecture to support process improvements and system integration requirements.

Workforce Case Management Replacement

TWC needs an integrated system, based on a common platform, to streamline case management activities for staff and Workforce Boards to provide case management processes. This project will replace The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) excluding child care, Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS), Texas Review, Oversight, and Coaching System (TxROCS), and ReHabWorks. It will provide TWC and partners with innovative technology and tools. TWC engaged a third-party vendor to perform IV&V activities for the duration of this project.

The new Workforce Case Management system will advance Commission goals by:

- Increasing staff access to systems services;
- Integrating and aligning TWC systems and services, and;
- Equipping TWC staff, Boards and their partners, and AEL providers with innovative technology and tools.

This adds value to our customers by:

- Delivering excellent customer service and customer experiences with TWC;
 - Delivering excellent customer outcomes.

TWC anticipates this project will:

- Reduce TWC staff turnover;
- Reduce improper payments;
- Assure that TWC meets or exceeds the agency's EIR Accessibility requirements; and
- Streamline mission critical case management services and activities for staff and Workforce Boards, that will address complicated integration and/or lack of integration between TWC's multiple stand-alone systems and platforms of varying ages.

(INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE, DATA COLLECTION, ETC.)
AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS,
INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

In 2019, TWC implemented a new labor exchange system, is preparing to procure a next generation case management system to support WIOA core and partner programs and continues to work to refine the enterprise data warehouse. The project is being developed and managed as a Workforce Solutions project. TWC is actively working to upgrade legacy solution systems to provide state leadership with accurate data and a proven method for analyzing business needs to support and improve data driven decision-making.

The project requirements will include interfaces between systems to ensure data integration and to facilitate the coordination of services as well as communications across the programs.

IV. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2))

As noted, TWC's ~~EDW new BIG data warehouse project~~ is being developed to produce reports required under WIOA section 116(d)(2).

Enterprise Data Warehouse, Phase 2

~~This project continues work on the Enterprise Data Warehousing initiative. This phase of the project will work towards simplifying and organizing large amounts of data into a useful format for TWC staff, partners and customers, thus improving decision making using meaningful and timely data.~~

The ~~EDW enterprise data warehousing project~~ advances Commission goals by:

- allowing TWC to provide statistical information regarding outcomes and effectiveness of workforce services provided to job seekers and employers; and
- meeting the data utility mandates listed in the ~~2018-2022~~ State Strategic Plan for Information Resources Management including data management and governance, open data, and data analytics.

This ~~adds yields~~ value ~~to for~~ our customers ~~and partners~~ by ~~doing the following~~:

- Improving reporting accuracy and speed of report generation
- Enabling more sophisticated and comprehensive data analysis
- Increasing the scope and availability of relationally connected data that will enable reporting capabilities and outcome inferences that are not currently possible
- Enabling cross-functional dashboards that identify program relationships and impacts that cannot easily be identified or monitored with today's system
- Creating a single historical reporting system of record
- Reducing the risk of statutory noncompliance regarding required data reporting
- Eliminating manual processes to run ~~and/or~~ store reports
- Reducing data preparation time, allowing staff to focus on better coding and analysis

Enterprise Data Warehouse, Phase 3

~~Building on the efforts of Phase 2, this project addresses the business need to evaluate, report~~

~~on and provide statistical information on the outcomes and effectiveness of services provided to job seekers and employers. Phase 3 provides complex reporting and analysis of large and diverse data sets and includes importing new data sets and adding analytical functionality for internal and external consumption.~~

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

TWC continues to work with local partners in developing performance reporting measures that provide information about how services impact customer outcomes. As TWC improves its suite of automated systems, partners gain the ability to capture a more complete set of customer data that supports categorical workforce programs and stores the associated data in a central repository.

TWC's vision for its next generation integrated performance reporting system involves incorporating customer data from all federal and state-funded employment and training programs coupled with a customer-focused data model that will support aggregating data into any combination of programs and characteristics. This will allow the system to meet program reporting requirements as well as permit other views of the data. Key to its effectiveness and ability to support transparency and accountability, the system will need to be able to report a customer's outcomes the same way for every program or aggregation of data, while ensuring the security and confidentiality of customer data. For example, if a customer who received services from WIOA Adult and SNAP E&T and was identified as employed in the second quarter after Exit through data obtained from another state, TWC will report that success in both WIOA Adult and SNAP E&T performance measures to ensure that stakeholders and elected officials have a complete and accurate view of each program's contribution to successful employment outcomes.

Evaluating participants' outcomes is important in helping to ensure accountability. Additionally, TWC evaluates current and historic data to understand what factors influence performance in order to be able to determine whether results achieved were reasonable, to predict what levels of performance is likely to be achieved in the future, and to identify what actions the system should take when serving specific customers to achieve effective outcomes. These efforts will support continuous improvement and set the foundation for developing means to measure the return on investment.

Lastly, during the course of this plan, TWC will be redeveloping its existing longitudinal outcome system with a broader system incorporating more programs and providing a more complete picture of what happens to those we serve over the medium and longer terms.

C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Wage records remain the best, most objective source of information for determining employment-related outcomes. Measures that use wage records are also far more efficient and less costly than those that depend on administrative data. For example, TWC can match to UI wage records to verify program-specific, customer-level data furnished by providers of

training services. Additionally, TWC encourages the Secretary of Labor to consider—in consultation with the Workforce Information Advisory Council, federal agencies, and states—developing standardized definitions for the data elements composing wage records as well as improved processes and systems for the collection and reporting of such records. TWC currently makes extensive use of quarterly UI wage records as part of its common data systems both for required and ad hoc reporting and makes the data available to the Boards, other state agencies, and various researchers either directly or by performing matches to seed records provided by external entities.

The 87th Texas Legislature passed legislation that directs TWC to work with employers to explore enhancing wage records with occupational information and other data that would increase the value of the labor market information that TWC is able to provide. As part of this exploration, TWC is meeting with a group of other states and national employers brought together by the US Chamber of Commerce to pursue its Jobs and Employment Data Exchange (JEDx) initiative, which calls for many of the same actions that the new Texas legislation requires. While TWC may not ultimately implement JEDx as proposed, participation in the work group will bring TWC into contact with others attempting to accomplish the same goals and is expected to yield important perspectives to supplement those we will obtain through our own coordination and consensus-building with Texas employers.

While TWC and the local Boards generally operate Texas Workforce Solutions as an integrated system that focuses on customer outcomes rather than program outcomes, there is often interest in program-specific outcomes. TWC is committed to providing consistent, reliable, and comparable performance data to partners, stakeholders, and the public. Therefore, TWC calculates performance at the customer-level across programs and then aggregates the results by sublevel, such as by program or for customers with given characteristics.

However, WIOA §116(i)(2) provides that the Secretary of Labor shall provide access to wage data from other states to the extent that this data is necessary to carry out the state plan or the annual report prescribed by WIOA §116(d), and WIOA §116(e) requires the state in coordination with the Boards to conduct ongoing evaluations of activities carried out by the state. Therefore, as noted, TWC intends to use data obtained through the new State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) to evaluate system and program performance through a variety of federal and state-developed performance measures, as well as to evaluate system and program impact and return on investment.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

TWC administers and enforces many state and federal laws covering various workforce-related privacy issues. These laws are intended to set high standards for performance and customer satisfaction. TWC's compliance includes legislation that addresses §444 of the General Education Provisions Act: ~~family educational and privacy rights~~, and other applicable federal laws. TWC is a state educational agency under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) because it administers two US Department of Education programs: WIOA Titles II and IV.

TWC maintains an internal control structure and written policies that provide safeguards to protect personally identifiable information (PII) from an education record, and other information that is readily or easily exchanged in the open market or considered to be sensitive. Confidentiality is specifically maintained for student-identifying information received by TWC

from career schools or colleges, or any other school, business entity, or educational institution that TWC reviews. Violating the confidentiality of this information is a Class-A misdemeanor offense.

TWC's compliance is facilitated by such resources as the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS), the data management system for federally funded [Adult Education and Literacy AEL](#) programs in Texas. TEAMS access is limited to people who work for an [adult education and literacy AEL](#) grant recipient or subrecipient and have satisfactorily completed [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) training provided by TWC. [Similarly, TWC's ReHabWorks system, supporting the Title IV VR program, has strict access controls to safeguard privacy. TWC has also recently completed cybersecurity maturity assessments for each of the 28 local workforce Boards and updated security language in the agency board agreements.](#)

In addition, TWC electronically publishes its guidelines to protect the security and confidentiality of customers' PII to which Boards and other TWC grantees must adhere. These guidelines and other guidance include the following:

- TWC Information Security Standards and Guidelines
- TWC Privacy Manual for Safeguarding Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information
- Employment Service Guide
- WD Letter 02-18, issued March 23, 2018, and entitled "Handling and Protection of Personally Identifiable Information and Other Sensitive Information," and subsequent updates
- WD Letter 11-16, issued June 15, 2016, and entitled "Access and Data Security for Workplace Applications," and subsequent updates
- WD Letter 14-08, issued March 19, 2008, and entitled "Modifications to Unemployment Insurance Benefits System Access," and subsequent updates

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

Texas is home to [1.75](#) million veterans, the second largest veteran population in the nation. TWC is using the newest workforce development strategies and initiatives to expand services for veterans and spouses of veterans.

Priority of Service for Veterans

Texas Workforce Solutions has always provided priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses in all DOL-funded programs. Additionally, the Texas legislature mandated priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses in all state-funded workforce services.

TWC's Subrecipient Monitoring department maintains a risk assessment methodology for monitoring local Board activities, and priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is included in the items that are applied to this methodology. Monitoring activities generally include on-site visits, interviews with staff, and regular reviews of local Board policies related

specifically to priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses.

The Jobs for Veterans Act ensures the priority of service of covered veterans and eligible spouses for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under WIOA. A veteran must still meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training program.

Texas Workforce Solutions staff ensures the requirements for priority of service apply to all workforce service programs funded in whole or in part by the DOLETA or state funds. Specifically, Texas Workforce Solutions staff apply priority of service to the following two categories of qualified job training programs: Universal access programs (e.g., Wagner-Peyser-funded services) that deliver services as a whole and that do not target specific groups, and programs with eligibility criteria (e.g., Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act-funded services).

Veterans and eligible spouses are:

- identified at the point of entry;
- informed of their entitlement to priority of service;
- informed of the full array of employment, training, and placement services available; and
- informed of any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and services.

Priority of service for WIOA and other programs with statutory priorities is then applied in the following order:

- Veterans and eligible spouses who meet the mandatory priorities or spending requirement or limitation must receive the highest priority for the program or service;
- Non-veterans within the program's mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation must receive priority for the program or service over veterans and eligible spouses outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation; and
- Veterans and eligible spouses outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation must receive priority for the program or service over non-veterans outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation.

In Texas, the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program is administered by the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC). Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, ~~and~~ Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs), [and Consolidated Positions \(CPs\)](#) are integrated with each Board's service provider staff and Wagner-Peyser Employment Service staff in each of [the Board's](#) Workforce Solutions Offices. TWC, TVC, and the 28 Boards work collaboratively to coordinate and deliver employment and other supportive services to all veteran job seekers and their families.

Texas' automated labor exchange, WorkInTexas.com, has several features specifically tailored to serve veterans and eligible spouses, including the following:

- A two-day hold on all newly created job orders—these jobs are available only to veterans and eligible spouses for the first two days they are open to ensure veterans get the first opportunity to review and apply.
- Employers may designate job orders for Veteran Applicants Only.

- WorkInTexas.com provides information to the veteran and eligible spouses when he or she registers online that explains every veteran's entitlement to priority of service and also provides additional information related to available workforce services and programs.
- WorkInTexas.com sends email or mail notifications to veterans and eligible spouses who have completed online registration that reiterates their entitlement to priority of service for all workforce programs and services.
- WorkInTexas.com provides certain features that are tailored to veterans and eligible spouses, such as:
 - icons that identify veteran job seekers to employers;
 - job search options for veterans and eligible spouses, including search options that provide listings for Veteran Only job orders and federal contractor job orders;
 - [a veteran icon with the following Significant Barriers to Employment \(SBE\) indicators:](#)
 - [Homeless](#)
 - [Disability](#)
 - [Veteran Disability](#)
 - [Recently Separated Veteran](#)
 - [Transitioning Service Member](#)
 - [Veteran Age Priority](#)
 - [Low Income](#)
 - [Career Readiness Standards](#)
 - [Reduction in Force](#)
 - [Spouse or Family Care Giver](#)
 - [Wounded or Ill or Injured Service Member](#)
 - [Released from Incarceration](#)
 - [Drawn Unemployment for 27 or more Weeks](#)
 - [Meet Vietnam-Era Veteran Designation](#)
 - [Veteran Between age 18 and 24](#)
 - [We Hire Vets icon;](#)
 - [We Hire Ability icon; and](#)
 - [working with the WorkInTexas.com team to include the Hire Vets Medallion Program icon.](#)

WorkInTexas.com uses a hands-off software-based process to gather job orders from the National Labor Exchange (USNLX.com) and other large job boards, such as Monster and Career Builder, and adds them to Texas' automated labor exchange. This imported job data provides veterans and eligible spouses with as many quality job opportunities as possible through the state labor exchange.

In addition, Senate Bill 389, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2015), requires state agencies to include relevant Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) codes on all job orders added to WorkInTexas.com. The State Auditor's Office (SAO), in conjunction with TVC, developed a State Classification-to-MOS crosswalk that is maintained and accessed by state agencies from the SAO website. The Military Crosswalk, is attached to each occupational category on the SAO's website so that state agencies can easily look up state classification titles, identify related MOS codes, and include those MOS codes on job orders.

Significant Barriers to Employment

A veteran or eligible spouse is determined to have a significant barrier to employment if he or she meets at least one of the following:

1. Special disabled or disabled veteran, as defined in 38 USC §4211(1) and (3); are individuals who:

- are entitled to compensation (or who, but for the receipt of military retired pay, would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs;
- have a disability claim pending with the US Department of Veterans Affairs; or
- were discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability;

2. Homeless, as defined in 42 USC §11302(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended

3. Recently separated service member, as defined in 38 USC §4211(6), who in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 weeks or more

4. Offender, as defined by WIOA §3(38), who is currently incarcerated or who has been released from incarceration

5. Veteran lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate

6. Low income, as defined in WIOA §3(36)

A veteran or eligible spouse identified as having significant barriers to employment is immediately referred to DVOP staff. When DVOP staff is not available, Workforce Solutions Office staff provide or arrange for services to be provided.

Wagner Peyser Employment Services staff, WIOA staff, or other Workforce Solutions Office staff provide services to veterans and eligible spouses who have been determined:

- to have significant barriers to employment, but for whom no DVOP staff is available to provide services; or
- to not have significant barriers to employment.

Boards screen individuals seeking services with the Significant Barriers to Employment Triage Tool, whether in person, ~~or~~ via telephone, or by any other electronic means (such as email and/or text) to determine ~~if whether~~ they are veterans or eligible spouses and ~~determine if whether~~ they are eligible for services from DVOP staff.

The following active duty service members or Transitioning Service Personnel are eligible for DVOP services:

- Transitioning members of the US Armed Forces who have been identified as being in need of individualized career services
- Members of the US Armed Forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units
- Service members who have not met Career Readiness Standards and who can provide a Form DD-2958 signed by their commander
- Transitioning service members ages 18-24
- Active duty service members being involuntarily separated through a service reduction-

in-force

When screening individuals to determine their veteran status, Workforce Solutions Office staff:

- determines the purpose of the visit, ~~or~~ telephone call, or electronic correspondence;
- explains that the purpose of the triage tool is to determine which staff are best suited to assist them;
- ensures that the individual identifies whether he or she is a veteran, eligible spouse transitioning service member, or spouse or other family caregiver; and
- ensures that veterans and eligible spouses confirm whether any of the significant barriers to employment criteria apply.

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

Achieving excellence in accessibility is based on three core principles:

- ensuring that all customers can effectively use workforce products and services;
- creating a workspace accessible for individuals with disabilities; and
- complying with all federal and state legal requirements.

Electronic and Information and Resources

TWC puts these core principles into practice by making its websites and other electronic and information resources (EIR) accessible and its content user friendly for individuals with disabilities, including members of the public and TWC employees, pursuant to Title 1, Texas Administrative Code, Chapters 206 and 213. WorkInTexas.com, TWC's public online job matching system, is tested for compliance upon all updates to the system using the most updated Job Access With Speech (JAWS) software.

Additionally, TWC employs an EIR accessibility coordinator to serve as a contact for EIR accessibility concerns. The coordinator both monitors agency-wide compliance with accessibility policy and facilitates correction of noncompliant EIR. To these ends, the coordinator partners with accessibility-designated liaisons in each business area. An accessibility liaison functions as the primary contact for the business area's compliance with EIR accessibility requirements. The liaison also assists in staff development, addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities, as well as in sharing TWC's accessibility goals and requirements.

Other agency efforts to achieve excellence in accessibility include:

- providing staff regular classroom training sessions on a range of accessibility topics;

- developing and maintaining an inventory of all agency EIR;
- consulting on accessibility purchases and facilitating the exception request process;
- working with business areas to develop and implement remediation plans for noncompliant websites, applications, and products, and consulting as needed during remediation;
- developing intranet pages with accessibility resources for employees; and
- meeting regularly with accessibility liaisons.

Accessibility at Workforce Solutions Offices and TWC-Owned Buildings

The TWC Equal Opportunity (EO) Compliance Department functions within the [Division of Fraud Deterrence and Compliance Monitoring \(FDCM\)](#) ~~Regulatory Integrity Division~~. The EO Compliance Department monitors recipients of WIOA Title I financial assistance to determine compliance with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA §188. Both programmatic and physical accessibility are addressed during an EO compliance review.

As recipients of WIOA funding, Boards are required to conduct local EO monitoring of all programs and facilities within their Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). Boards are then monitored for compliance annually by TWC through either a desk or on-site review, as referenced in the Nondiscrimination Plan (NDP) maintained on file with DOL's Civil Rights Center (DOL-CRC). All 28 Boards are scheduled for an EO review annually. Dates for EO monitoring reviews generally align with those of TWC's annual Board monitoring review.

In determining which sites are selected for on-site physical accessibility reviews, the EO Coordinator will conduct a risk assessment based on the following criteria:

- the location was not previously reviewed by TWC staff based on historical review data;
- the location was not reviewed by TWC staff during the tenure of the current Board EO Officer; and/or
- the location reflected numerous deficiencies in the previous EO review, thus warranting a follow-up review by TWC.

An EO accessibility checklist that aligns with the Texas Accessibility Standards is used by both the local EO Officer staff and TWC staff when conducting physical accessibility reviews. The checklist outlines all compliance requirements within the following four priorities:

- Accessible approach and entrance
- Access to goods and services
- Access to public toilet rooms
- Access to other items such as water fountains and public telephones

TWC's Equal Opportunity Coordinator provides training during the Quality Assurance Network's quarterly meetings and through other Equal Opportunity training as requested by the local EO Officers that addresses all facets of WIOA Section 188 compliance, including physical accessibility compliance and accessibility best practices.

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

TWC puts principles into practice by making its websites and other electronic and information resources (EIR) accessible and its content user-friendly for individuals with Limited-English Proficiency (LEP). WorkInTexas.com, TWC's public online job matching system, is available in English and Spanish. TWC's website also has information in Spanish regarding [unemployment insurance](#), unemployment benefits, labor law, employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and TWC press releases.

TWC requires that Boards ensure that all individuals with LEP have equal opportunity and access to all federally funded workforce services, including those funded under WIOA, TANF, Choices, and SNAP E&T, [as well as the three One Stop partner programs \(Vocational Rehabilitation, Unemployment Insurance, and Child Care\)](#).

Boards must review WIOA's nondiscrimination and equal opportunity regulations that prohibit discrimination, and specifically the requirements to:

- provide information in languages other than English, and ensure access to persons with LEP to WIOA services on an equal basis with those proficient in English; and
- ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with individuals without disabilities.

Boards must comply with the following four requirements to ensure meaningful language access:

- A thorough assessment of language needs, including:
 - an analysis of the language needs of each Board's local workforce development area;
 - the identification of the language needs of each LEP individual;
 - the identification of situations in which the individual will need language services;
 - a statement of resource needs; and
 - recommendations for how to make these resources available
- A comprehensive written policy to ensure meaningful communication with LEP individuals. This includes notices to LEP individuals of their rights to free language assistance; staff training; monitoring; and translation of written materials. The guidance warns that the use of family, friends, and/or minor children as interpreters can raise Title VI liability issues.
- Training staff to implement the language access policy. Boards must ensure that service providers and those entities to which a referral is made have the requisite training and knowledge.
- Vigilant monitoring to ensure that LEP individuals can access services.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

Planning and Coordination

WIOA places a strong emphasis on planning across multiple workforce partner programs to ensure alignment in service delivery. One important goal is to develop effective partnerships across programs and community-based providers to provide individuals with the employment, education, and training services they need. Effective partnering is pivotal to maximize resources and to align services with career pathways and sector strategies. It is vital that WIOA required and optional workforce partners and programs work together to ensure a customer-centered approach to service delivery.

The Texas workforce system brings together workforce development, employment and training, and educational services in a seamless customer-focused service-delivery network that enhances access to all program services and improved long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance. Workforce partners administer separately funded programs as a set of integrated streamlined services to customers.

The vision for the Texas workforce system is to align a wide range of publicly and privately funded education, employment, and training programs, while also providing high-quality customer service to all job seekers, workers and businesses.

Texas workforce system's six core programs include:

- Title I Adult program;
- Title I Dislocated Worker program;
- Title I Youth program;
- Title II AEFLA program;
- Employment Services program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of WIOA; and
- The VR program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA.

The Texas workforce system includes other required partners and optional workforce partners identified in prior consistent state law. Through Workforce Solutions Offices, these workforce partner programs and their direct service providers ensure that businesses and job seekers – a shared client base across multiple programs – have access to information and services that lead to positive educational and employment outcomes.

As required in WIOA §121(e)(1), each local workforce delivery system must provide the following:

- Career services, as defined in WIOA §134(c)(2) and in Appendix A of the TWC Guide to Texas Workforce System Operations
- Access to training services, as described in WIOA §134(c)(3)
- Access to local employment and training activities, as described in WIOA §134(d)
- Access to all programs and activities provided by required workforce partners and any optional workforce partners

- Access to the data, information, and analysis described in the Wagner-Peyser Act §15(a), to include all job search, job placement, recruitment, and other labor-exchange services authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act

WIOA §193(a)(3) allows states to define their required partners under prior consistent state law. Texas Labor Code §302.021 and §302.062 establish the job training, employment and employment-related educational programs and functions consolidated under the authority of the TWC. In Texas, prior consistent state law under Texas Government Code §2308.304 and §2308.312 defines the responsibility of each Board to develop, implement and modify a plan for convening all relevant programs, identified as Workforce Solutions Office-required partner programs.

The required workforce partners in Texas include:

- WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs
- Wagner-Peyser ES program
- AEL program
- VR program
- UI program
- TAA program
- Choices, the TANF employment and training program
- SNAP E&T program
- ~~Subsidized Child Care programs~~ care services
- Apprenticeship programs (Texas Education Code Chapter 133), if they have been certified by DOL's Office of Apprenticeship Training and meet the state criteria established in Chapter 133 to receive state funding for the support of the apprenticeship training programs
- Veteran Employment and Training programs – Local Veterans Employment Representatives Program and the Disabled Veterans Outreach program
- SCSEP Program

Other entities that carry out a workforce development program may serve as optional workforce partners. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 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.)
- Job Counseling, Training and Placement Service for Veterans, as authorized under Title 38 USC Chapter 41
- Education and Vocational Training program through Job Corps and administered by the DOL
- Native American programs authorized under WIOA Title I
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development-administered employment and training programs

- Employment and Training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act
- Reintegration of Offenders program authorized under the Second Chance Act of 2007
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs under the National Farmworkers Jobs Program authorized under WIOA §167

Additionally, Boards may partner with other entities that are not considered required workforce partners or optional workforce partners. These entities are state or local organizations that do not carry out a workforce development program and may include local social service agencies, housing authorities, and others.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE

A map identifying each Board area is available at

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/workforce-development-boards-websites#texasWorkforceDevelopmentBoardWebsites>. ~~development boards websites~~. The ~~28~~^{twenty-eight} Boards ~~include~~^{are} the following:

1. Panhandle
2. South Plains
3. North Texas

4. North Central Texas
5. Tarrant County
6. Greater Dallas
7. Northeast Texas
8. East Texas
9. West Central Texas
10. Borderplex
11. Permian Basin
12. Concho Valley
13. Heart of Texas
14. Capital Area
15. Rural Capital Area
16. Brazos Valley
17. Deep East Texas
18. Southeast Texas
19. Golden Crescent
20. Alamo
21. South Texas
22. Coastal Bend
23. Lower Rio Grande Valley
24. Cameron
25. Texoma
26. Central Texas
27. Middle Rio Grande
28. Gulf Coast

The Commission recognizes Texas' current workforce areas as their own independent regions.

B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR "PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY" AND "SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY" IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS

Background

In 1993, the Texas legislature passed Senate Bill 642, the Workforce and Economic

Competitiveness Act (Act), transforming the state's fragmented workforce development system into an integrated service delivery network and improving the quality and effectiveness of services. At the time of the Act, Texas had 35 Service Delivery Areas set forth under the federal Job Training Partnership Act of 1982.

The 1993 Act required TWIC to recommend designation of workforce areas in the state, the first step in establishing a system for delivering a slate of integrated services, from workforce training to the TANF and SNAP E&T programs, community services, and the basic labor exchange system.

In 1998, Congress passed WIA. Recognizing that Texas previously established the framework of an integrated workforce system, WIA provided for several grandfather provisions, which allowed Texas to continue certain provisions under prior consistent state law. One of these provisions was specific to the designation of workforce areas. This provision allowed Texas' Boards to continue if they performed successfully and maintained sustained fiscal integrity.

The Act also required that the local elected officials reach agreement on the designation for a workforce area. After much analysis and deliberation, including significant public input, and the recognition that even contiguous areas often have very diverse needs, 28 workforce areas—governed by Boards—were identified and designated by the governor. The realignment from 35 to 28 workforce areas supported Texas' vision of an integrated and streamlined workforce system, a precursor to the purposes of WIOA.

Local Area Designation

WIOA §189(i)(1) allows states that have enacted, not later than December 31, 1997, a state law providing for the designation of service delivery areas for the delivery of workforce investment activities, to use such areas as local areas under Title I of WIOA. Prior consistent state law at Texas Government Code §2308.252 provides for the designation of local workforce areas in Texas. Therefore, the provisions of WIOA §106 related to local area designation do not apply in Texas.

Compliant with WIOA §108, each Board develops and submits to the governor a comprehensive four-year local plan in partnership with the chief elected official (CEO). Texas Government Code §2308.304(b) also requires each Board to develop a local plan with goals and objectives that are consistent with statewide goals, objectives, and performance standards. State and federal law require TWIC to review local plans and modifications and make recommendations to the governor for approval.

Regions

WIOA requires states to identify regions in the state. WIOA's intent regarding regional identification is for locals to engage in regional efforts that result in the analysis of the regional labor market, establishment of regional service strategies, development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region, and the coordination of services with regional economic development needs. TWC continues to comply with these WIOA requirements.

Long before a federal requirement existed, Boards across Texas had a demonstrated history of collaboration beyond the designated workforce areas. These regional collaborative efforts have resulted in workforce system leaders partnering to align workforce policies and services with regional economies and supporting service delivery strategies tailored to these needs. A few examples of regional collaboration include:

- The Cameron County, Coastal Bend, and South Texas Boards collaborate regionally on

the Future of the Region South Texas group, the efforts of which extend beyond the workforce and include the region's local governments, infrastructure, health care system, education, and economic development.

- Five Boards—Alamo, Coastal Bend, Golden Crescent, Middle Rio Grande, and South Texas—work collaboratively to support the needs of the oil and gas industry in the Eagle Ford Shale area.
- The Capital Area Board has participated in the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) National Evaluation study, funded by DOL's Workforce Innovation Fund. ACE is driven by a consortium of nine workforce investment boards, ten community colleges, and employer partners across four states, tasked with reducing poverty by linking education, training, and workforce services to create skill-building opportunities and career pathways for low-skilled, low-income individuals.
- The Capital Area, Alamo, Central Texas, Greater Dallas, Heart of Texas, North Central Texas, Rural Capital Area, and Tarrant County Boards are members of the I 35 Initiatives Consortium. The consortium was founded in 2010 to establish a multiregional coordinated strategy for meeting the recruitment and skill training needs of businesses in the life sciences cluster, with an emphasis on health care and bioscience. The consortium represents 46 percent of the Texas' residents located in the 51 counties that span from San Antonio to Dallas-Fort Worth.
- Additionally, the Greater Dallas, North Central Texas, and Tarrant County Boards have created the Dallas/Fort Worth Regional Workforce Leadership Council (RWLC), the driving force for a cooperative approach to promoting the region's strongest industries and supporting the region's key clusters. RWLC works to meet industries' needs through the collaboration of the Boards with chambers of commerce and business leaders.
- The Rural Workforce Network (RWN) Consortium Biotechnology/Life Sciences-Medical Targeted Industries Project was designed to further build capacity to meet the skills readiness and skills training needs of employers and job seekers in the RWN region, through an understanding of employers' needs, assessments of job seekers' skills, and the creation and credentialing of a work-ready workforce. Five Boards—Concho Valley, West Central Texas, Permian Basin, North Texas, and South Plains—four employers, and nine public colleges participated in this project.
- As many Texas Boards share labor sheds with adjacent states, these Boards find it beneficial to establish partnerships with out-of-state partners to create a regional response to workforce and economic challenges. The Texoma Board partners with the Southern Oklahoma Workforce Board, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, and several other key organizations in Oklahoma to form the Texoma Regional Consortium, which covers a 13-county region along the Texas and Oklahoma borders. The Texoma Regional Consortium addresses needs of local business and industry in both Texas and Oklahoma through participating in strategic planning to identify key regional strategic themes, develop regional labor market analysis, sponsor regional job fairs, and participate in other joint ventures to address workforce and economic challenges.
- Multiple Boards across the state have partnered with each other to respond to disasters, such as Hurricane Harvey, leveraging resources to help support those most in need.

Development and implementation of the above regional collaborations were based on analysis of labor markets, industry needs, and the needs of economic development entities. These efforts have enhanced and continue to enhance both the capacity and performance of the Texas

workforce system. The Boards continue to meet WIOA expectations.

In Texas, local leadership—CEOs, Boards, and Board staff—have long championed regional planning, particularly in developing opportunities in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. The benefits from regionalism include collaborative planning, pooling and leveraging of resources, capacity building, and ensuring that services can be delivered in the best possible way—regionalism is essential to the Boards’ mission.

To ensure Boards are meeting the WIOA criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” TWC requires Boards to submit data on designated performance measures. Performance measure data is reported monthly and maintained on TWC’s website maintained by [Information Innovation & Insight \(I|3\)](#), formerly known as the Division of Operational Insight (available at <https://intra.twc.texas.gov/intranet/plan/html/index.html>). Additionally, to ensure sound fiscal management, TWC conducts routine monitoring visits that verify fiscal integrity and assist Boards in addressing any identified issues. Board grant and financial monitoring information is available at <https://twc.texas.gov/agency/texas-workforce-commission-financial-grant-information>.

C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS

Units of local government or grant recipients that request but are not granted designation or re-designation (in accordance with TWIC rules §901.1) as a local workforce development area, may appeal in accordance with the state’s written policy and procedure described in TWIC rule §901.2 (40 TAC Part 22).

Appeals must be delivered to the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) no later than 30 days after the date the designation or redesignation was made. The appeal must include the specific reasons for the appeal. The appeal must also include any new information the requestor/Board would like to have considered as part of the appeal process. When the appeal is received, the notice of the appeal will be published in the Texas Register, including a statement inviting input and the deadline to submit input. At TWIC’s discretion, they may also schedule a public meeting to allow for oral comments to be heard. TWIC may consider the appeal or may designate a committee to do so and make a report to TWIC. All relevant information may be reviewed in addition to the information submitted with the appeal and the information obtained during the public comment period. Finally, TWIC will make a recommendation to the Governor within 120 days of the date of receipt of the appeal request.

D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

TWC is required to establish a process for a required workforce partner to appeal a determination:

- regarding the portion of funds to be provided under the state funding mechanism or SFM, and
- on the basis that the determination is inconsistent with the requirements of the SFM.

The appeal process established by TWC must provide prompt resolution of the appeal in order to ensure the funds are distributed in a timely manner, consistent with WIOA §182(e) – Prompt allocation of funds.

The appeals process established by the Texas governor specifies that a one-stop partner may appeal a governor’s determination regarding the one-stop partner’s portion of funds for one-stop infrastructure costs.

40 TAC §901.2 – Appeal of Decision on Designation or Redesignation.

- The appeal of a designation or redesignation of a workforce area must be delivered to TWIC no later than 30 days after the date the designation or redesignation was made.
- The appeal must be submitted to TWIC in writing or electronically on the TWIC website (or TWC website). The appeal must be signed and submitted by the chief executive officer of the one-stop partner submitting the appeal. The appeal must specify the circumstances and details of the appeal.
- The notice of appeal, once received, shall be published in the *Texas Register* with a statement inviting input, specifying the deadline for submitting written input. The council, at its discretion, may also schedule a public meeting at which oral comments on the appeal will be accepted.
- The appeal may be considered by TWIC or may designate a committee to do so and make a report to TWIC. In considering an appeal, all relevant information may be reviewed in addition to the information submitted with the appeal and the information obtained during the public comment process.
- After considering an appeal, TWIC will make a recommendation to the governor within 120 days of the date of receipt of the appeal request.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

State Policies

The state makes information on state-imposed requirements—such as guidance for the statewide workforce development system, including policy for the use of state funds for workforce investment activities—available to the public.

The following materials are readily accessible through the TWC website:

- WIOA Guidelines - overview, implementation, guidance, service, and stakeholder input <https://twc.texas.gov/files/jobseekers/wioa-guidelines-twc.pdf>
- Current TWC rules, as codified in 40 TAC, Part 20, as well as information on past rule amendments <https://twc.texas.gov/agency/texas-workforce-commission-rules>
- All active workforce policy issued through guides,
- Workforce Development (WD) Letters, Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Letters, and Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletins <https://twc.texas.gov/agency/laws-rules-policy/workforce-policy-and-guidance>
- Reports, plans, and publications: Agency strategic plans and annual reports, publications for employers and job seekers, and program plans and reports <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/reports-plans-publications>

The following VR materials are readily accessible through the Texas Workforce Commission website:

- New or modified manuals, guides, and publications <https://twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-rehabilitation-program-overview>

- Current TWC rules, as codified in 40 TAC, Part 20 <https://twc.texas.gov/agency/texas-workforce-commission-rules>

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR'S SET ASIDE FUNDING. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS

In August 2019, the Commission approved a portion of the governor's reserve and state leadership funds for several statewide initiatives to address WIOA's focus on workforce integration, quality improvement, capacity building, professional development, internships, externships, and more. The initiatives apply across the following programs and services.

Veterans Initiatives

Hiring Red, White & You! (HRWY)—TWC hosts an annual statewide job fair in November to connect Texas veterans and their spouses with Texas employers that value the experience, discipline, and other exceptional qualities inherent in a military background. The [2018-2020](#) HRWY event drew more than [12,3009,688](#) job seekers and more than [2,1001,618](#) employers. Since its 2012 inception, HRWY has connected more than [84,153108,288](#) job seekers, including [40,57542,275](#) active-duty military and transitioning service members, veterans, and spouses, to [14,42018,268](#) employers, with more than [2,0002,800](#) same-day hires.

College Credit for Heroes—The program maximizes college credits awarded to veterans and service members for their military experience by developing streamlined degree paths and workforce certifications to expedite transition into the Texas workforce. The College Credit for Heroes (CCH) online portal allows veterans and active-duty service members to request evaluations of credit to be used at colleges and universities throughout Texas. From its launch in 2012 through PY'18, the portal received approximately 43,000 requests for evaluation. (On August 31, 2019, the portal was closed in recognition that a majority of colleges and universities have developed local evaluation and credit-award programs. TWC now maintains a web-based list of participating CCH institutions and assists in connecting veterans and transitioning service members to the schools of their choice.)

The Evaluation of Credit

[The 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session \(2017\) passed HB 493, which requires TWC, in consultation with THECB, to report the number of academic credit hours that were awarded under the program and were applied toward a degree or certification program at an IHE during the most recent academic year. The reporting elements listed in HB 493, which went into effect January 1, 2018, are included in this report.](#)

[As of 2020, CCH is a growing network of schools with a majority relying on localized evaluation and credit programs. All of the 14 institutions providing HB 493 survey data follow localized evaluation processes. These institutions recognize the value of military experience and remain committed to supporting veterans as they enter and complete postsecondary education. Some IHEs have partnered with the American Council on Education \(ACE\) and are using the ACE online guide to evaluate military courses for academic credit. The guide lists recommended credit units in academic disciplines as well as required learning outcomes, topics of instruction, and related competencies. Exhibits within the ACE guide support credit recommendations for different subject areas and give specific guidance to registrars, deans, and other school officials looking to apply military courses to their institutions' degree requirements.](#)

In addition to the use of the ACE guide, CCH-participating institutions continue to rely on local policies and processes for the evaluation and awarding of credit. It is during these evaluations that IHEs use innovative methods to measure depth of knowledge and skills and award credit accordingly. IHEs report that they use methods such as prior learning assessments (PLAs), credit by exam, and interviews.

Average Credit Hours per Veteran: CCH Grantees and CCH Partner Schools

The data gathered from the 2020 House Bill (HB) 493 study showed an increase in the average credit hours per veteran awarded and transferred by both CCH grantees and CCH partner schools from the previous academic year. The average credit hours awarded per veteran doubled in 2020 to 10.4 credit hours. In comparison, an average of 5.2 credit hours was reported in 2019. While the 2020 increase indicates a greater uptake of the CCH program in general, it is also highly likely that IHEs have improved and solidified their reporting processes.

Average Credit Hours per Veteran: CCH Grantees vs. Non-CCH Grantees

The data is much more promising when looking only at IHEs that operated as CCH grantees throughout 2020 and that met the reporting requirements established in their CCH grants. When analyzing the credit hour data by tracking CCH grantees versus non-CCH grantees separately, the benefits to veterans at CCH grantee institutions becomes easier to discern.

For example, in 2020 a veteran who attended an IHE that participated in a CCH grant program was awarded an average of 10.4 credit hours. In comparison, to 2019 a veteran who attended an IHE that did not participate in a CCH grant program was awarded an average of four credit hours. There was also a significant difference between the number of credits transferred in by CCH grantee schools compared to non-CCH grantee schools.

CCH Phase 8 Capacity-Building Program

On February 20, 2020, TWC issued a Request for Applications (RFAs) from eligible applicants to participate in the CCH Phase 8 Capacity Building Program, which allows IHEs to develop or improve upon their military evaluation processes through the use of a fully integrated system to identify and track student veterans participating in the CCH program. TWC awarded \$757,271 to four IHEs for the CCH Phase 8 Capacity Building Grant.

The CCH Phase 8 Capacity Building Program is a two-year grant. The first 12-month period is dedicated to planning, while the second 12-month period is dedicated to the implementation of a pilot period. The four primary goals for the program are the following:

1. to develop and document a pilot military transcript evaluation process that ensures that academic credit will be awarded consistently to all veterans and service members
2. to develop a sustainable tracking system for students participating in the program that accurately gauges the benefits that students receive and confirms that processes and policies are being implemented consistently across the institution
3. to recruit program champions from the current students, alumni, and faculty members who are or have participated in the CCH program to act as advocates and resources regarding the program
4. to integrate CCH program information into veteran or active-duty service member resources

Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative

TWC conducted a competitive procurement to solicit RFAs for the provision of services to hard-to-serve veterans who have one or more barriers to employment, such as homelessness; a history of substance abuse; physical, mental, or learning disabilities; post-traumatic stress disorder; ex-

offender status; or recent discharge from military duty. American GI Forum was awarded, and the program was implemented in San Antonio, Houston, the Dallas/Fort Worth metro area, and El Paso.

The Veterans Workforce Outreach initiative is designed to outreach hard-to-serve veterans who are not currently being served through Workforce Solutions Offices, to address employment barriers faced by hard-to-serve veterans, and to reintegrate hard-to-serve veterans into meaningful employment.

Employment barriers are addressed and resources are accessed to overcome barriers under the guidance of a case manager. Veterans benefit from a range of services that may include assessments; job development and job placement; case management and support services, such as transportation; rent and utility assistance; mental health assistance, including clinical counseling; wheelchairs, crutches, and medical beds; food assistance; and financial assistance.

From March 2019 to February 2020, the project provided 371 assessments and enrolled 224 veterans and provided 338 veterans the Basic Skills Upgrade Training (BSUT). One hundred ninety five (195) veterans were placed into enrollment averaged \$16.91 an hour. From March 2020 through November 2021, 359 veterans were assessed and have enrolled 328 and provided the veterans 329 BSUT with 189 entering employment.

Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative—TWC conducted a competitive procurement to solicit applications for the provision of services to hard-to-serve veterans who have one or more barriers to employment, such as homelessness; a history of substance abuse; physical, mental, or learning disabilities; post-traumatic stress disorder; ex-offender/justice involved status; or recent discharge from military duty. One grantee, American GI Forum, was awarded WIOA-statewide funds and then implemented the program in San Antonio, Houston, the Dallas/Fort Worth metro area, and El Paso, Texas.

The Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative is designed to:

- outreach hard-to-serve veterans who are not currently being served through Workforce Solutions Offices;
- address employment barriers faced by hard-to-serve veterans; and
- reintegrate hard-to-serve veterans into meaningful employment.

Under the guidance of a case manager, employment challenges are addressed, and resources accessed to help veterans overcome challenges to employment. Veterans benefit from a range of services, which may include:

- assessments;
- job development and job placement;
- individual case management services, including guidance, encouragement, and resources; and
- support services such as:
 - transportation;
 - rent and utility assistance;
 - mental health assistance, including clinical counseling;

- wheelchairs, crutches, and medical beds;
- food assistance; and
- financial assistance.

The Texas Veterans Network

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) issued an RFA to community-based organizations (CBOs) to develop regional networks composed of organizations whose missions include providing services and support to veterans (for example, Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), other CBOs, Local Workforce Development Boards, Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), and other entities) as well as to create opportunities to share referral and service information that will allow for coordination of services in 92 counties across the state.

The RFA requires the grantee or grantees to create an automated veteran service coordination referral system that captures services received, referrals made, and services available through an integrated network that can increase a veteran’s opportunity to receive all services needed to transition successfully into civilian life. Additionally, a shared veteran service coordination referral system among veteran service providers reduces the impediments to comprehensive and coordinated service provision, thereby reducing barriers to employment.

The RFA required the grantee or grantees to provide a 25 percent match to the grant. The total grant amount is \$4 million, with each grantee receiving \$2 million. The grant is active from April 13, 2020, through March 31, 2023.

In April 2020, the following grantees were selected to establish the Texas Veterans Network:

- Alamo Area Development Corporation
- Combined Arms

Performance to date is shown in the following table.

First Year Program Results

<u>Outcome Measures From April 2020 through March 31, 2021</u>	<u>Combined Arms Results</u>	<u>Combined Arms Yearly Target</u>	<u>AADC Results</u>	<u>AADC Yearly Target</u>
<u>Number of Organizations in Network</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>145</u>	<u>90</u>
<u>Number of Network Building Events</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Number of Network Training/Workshops Held</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Number of Network Organizations with Referral System Installed</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>145</u>	<u>90</u>
<u>Number of Referrals Made in the Veteran Referral System</u>	<u>19,446</u>	<u>35,000</u>	<u>4,281</u>	<u>1,500</u>
<u>Number of Unduplicated Veterans Served Using the Veterans Referral System</u>	<u>11,421</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>2,376</u>	<u>1,400</u>

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Military Family Support Program

The Military Family Support Program provides military spouses with enhanced job search assistance, assessment of skills, labor market information, résumé writing, and interview skills. If funding is available, military spouses may receive certification or licensure training in target occupations.

The Military Family Support Program has been funded for three years, with a \$1 million allocation per fiscal year. Currently, there are several military installations throughout the state that have signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with their respective Board to participate in the program. The Military Family Support Program has connected more than 423 military spouses to local business leaders, peers, and career development support programs.

Military Family Support Program Highlights

<u>Completed Program Year</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Number of Military Spouses Outreached</u>	<u>394</u>	<u>350</u>	<u>397</u>	<u>1,141</u>
<u>Number of Military Spouses Assisted in the MFSP/- Registered in WIT</u>	<u>186</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>337</u>	<u>753</u>
<u>Number of Military Spouses Receiving Credentials</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>81</u>
<u>Number of Employers Targeted to Hire Military Spouses</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>156</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>423</u>
<u>Number of Military Spouses Hired</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>163</u>

COVID-19 had a large impact on the Military Family Support Program. In March 2020, the US Department of Defense issued a stop-movement order, effectively halting the moving of military families for months and restricting access to all military installations. The order was lifted in late June 2020; however, military installations around the world posted restrictions based on the local COVID-19 threat. As of January 2021, only 37 percent of US military installations were open for unrestricted travel or access. From April 2020 through March 2021, most family and Transition Assistance Programs were conducted virtually.

We Hire Vets Campaign

We Hire Vets is an employer recognition program that recognizes Texas employers for their commitment to hiring veterans. Employers whose workforces are composed of at least 10 percent military veterans are eligible to receive a We Hire Vets employer recognition decal to display on their storefronts and an electronic decal to display on their websites. Employers that qualify for the We Hire Vets program also receive a letter signed by the Chair of TWC's three-member Commission and the Chair of TVC.

We Hire Vets, sponsored by TWC and TVC, has issued 732 We Hire Vets decals and letters to Texas employers. At the statewide Texas Conference for Employers, TWC Commissioner Aaron Demerson recognizes employers that have submitted a nomination and qualify for the program. Several We Hire Vets ceremonies have been conducted in cities across the state, including El Paso, Killeen, and Houston.

The following is a list of employers that are participating in the We Hire Vets program:

- Airbus Helicopters, Inc.
- Azbell Electronics, Inc.
- City of Jarrell Police Department
- Fort Hood Area Habitat for Humanity
- DynCorp International
- United States Gypsum Sweetwater Plant

- [Recruit Veterans](#)
- [SENTRYSIX Defense Group, Inc.](#)
- [Social Security Administration](#)
- [Tatitlek Training Services](#)
- [XETX Business Solutions](#)
- [Travis County Veterans Service Office](#)
- [Virtual Service Operations](#)
- [Workforce Solutions Middle Rio Grande](#)
- [Dynamic Workforce Solutions dba Workforce Solutions East Texas](#)

Program Results

<u>Completed Program Year</u>	<u>Number of We Hire Vets Decals Issued</u>
<u>2017</u>	<u>129</u>
<u>2018</u>	<u>235</u>
<u>2019</u>	<u>161</u>
<u>2020</u>	<u>163</u>
<u>2021</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>721</u>

For the grant period March 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, the project provided 816 veterans with assessment and case management services, with 258 of those being placed into employment. The current grant runs from March 1, 2019, through February 28, 2020.

We Hire Vets—Texas is home to more than 555,000 employers, many of whom have experienced firsthand that veterans are hardworking, motivated, and disciplined team members who will bolster an employer’s business. The We Hire Vets employer recognition program recognizes Texas employers for their commitment to hiring veterans.

Through this program, employers whose workforce is composed of at least 10 percent military veterans are eligible to receive a We Hire Vets employer recognition decal to display on the employer’s storefront as well as an electronic decal to display on the employer’s website.

Employing veterans creates a dedicated workforce with employees who know how to lead, build teams, and accept and meet challenges. Recognition of employers with veteran-friendly hiring practices is an important aspect of the Texas Operation Welcome Home initiative that assists recently separated veterans with employment and training opportunities.

Through We Hire Vets, Texas is ensuring that it remains a veteran-friendly state. The program allows employers to apply for the recognition or be nominated by a local workforce development board or Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) partner.

We Hire Vets is a component of TWC’s Texas Operation Welcome Home initiative, which was created under Governor Abbott’s charge to identify gaps in services to Texas service members who are transitioning into civilian life. Texas Operation Welcome Home also includes a Skills for Transition program that helps separating service members who plan to remain in Texas, a Texas Transition Alliance to recommend and help employ best practices in providing workforce opportunities for veterans, and a Military Family Support program.

Veterans Network—Veterans face many barriers to employment when returning to their communities after military service. Texas veterans have access to a wide array of services in different communities to help them overcome or address barriers; however, veterans may not be aware of all the services for which they are eligible or where to go for those services.

Additionally, service providers may not be aware of other services a veteran may have already received or what referrals have been made.

TWC is developing regional networks composed of organizations whose missions include providing services and support to veterans (for example, Veterans Service Organizations, other CBOs, Boards, TVC, and other entities) and create opportunities to share referral and service information that will allow for coordination of services over large areas of the state, regardless of the community in which a veteran seeks services.

A shared automated veteran service coordination referral system that captures services received, referrals made, and services available through a single network, regardless of the veteran's location, can increase a veteran's opportunity to receive all services needed to transition successfully into civilian life. In addition, a shared veteran service coordination referral system among veteran service providers reduces the impediments to comprehensive and coordinated service provision, thereby reducing barriers to employment.

Texas Legislature House Bill 33: Measures to Facilitate Award of Course Credit for Military Service

The 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2021), passed HB 33, which relates to measures to facilitate the award of post-secondary course credit leading to workforce credentialing based on military experience, education, and training to prepare veterans for employment in certain industries.

TWC is currently undergoing the rule-making process to implement this legislation.

Jobs Y'all

In November 2018, TWC launched the "Jobs Y'all: Your Career. Your Story." campaign designed to inspire young Texans to discover and explore the state's in-demand industries and learn about skills needed to enter the workforce. This online program educates and inspires young Texans to create self-directed career paths, features in-demand industries, and connects participants to career resources. The website introduces users to eight industries, a career explorer app, and other online resources, as follows:

- Featured industries:
 - Aerospace and Defense
 - Advanced Technology and Manufacturing
 - Biotechnology
 - Life Sciences and Healthcare
 - Construction
 - Energy
 - Information and Computer Technology
 - Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products
 - Transportation and Logistics
- Career Explorer, search by industry, occupation, and/or geography to learn about job projections and average wages
- Web-based resources include the following:

- Texas Career Check
- Texas Reality Check
- Texas Internship Challenge

Youth Initiatives

Youth Career Fairs—Local Texas Workforce Solutions Offices host youth career exploration and job fairs to provide youth area specific opportunities and resources. Youth are encouraged to contact their local Workforce Solutions Office for youth specific events and opportunities.

Teacher Externships—TWC supports externships for middle school and high school teachers to allow them to learn firsthand about the skills required for in-demand occupations. These externships allow teachers to better understand in-demand careers in their local community and convey to students the array of opportunities available to them. More than 2,500 teachers have participated since 2015. Due to COVID-19, this program was canceled in FY'20 and FY'21. The program was reinstated for FY'22. New grants are scheduled to begin in March 2023.

Camp Code for Girls—This camp offers hands-on coding experience for middle school girls. Participants learn innovative concepts and engage in challenging experiences in learning, problem solving, and analytical skills. Those activities simultaneously foster an interest in STEM-related careers, with a focus on computer science. In 2018, more than 1,000 girls received scholarships for camp attendance across the state.

Foster Youth—TWC provides grants to 18 Foster Youth Transition Centers that provide a comprehensive array of services and referrals to help transitioning foster youth overcome barriers. TWC hosted its first annual Foster Youth conference to support local delivery of integrated services for foster youth, to share perspectives and information from state and local partners on their critical work and resources for foster youth, and to provide opportunities to build the network of partnerships among state and local organizations that serve foster youth.

Governor's Challenge Camp—The Governor's Science and Technology Champions' Academy provides a STEM-related one-week residential summer camp for students in grades 9–12.

Governor's Summer Merit Program—The goal of the Governor's Summer Merit Program is to inspire Texas youth to pursue STEM-related careers. The program provides grants to Texas universities and community colleges to host summer youth camps that help prepare students ages 14 to 21 for future high-skill, high-demand jobs. The camps introduce students to careers available in advanced technologies and manufacturing, aerospace and defense, biotechnology and life sciences, information and computer technology, and energy.

Several camps specifically target and encourage young women and minorities to pursue education and careers in STEM fields.

For summer 2018~~21~~, TWC awarded 130 grants totaling \$992,526, which provided scholarships for over 1,200 students to attend ~~the~~35 camps across the state.

Some students had opportunities to take field trips that gave them access to high-tech equipment, such as 3-D printers and electron telescopes, while others visited science and engineering facilities and had the opportunity to meet and speak with industry professionals.

Texas Science Careers Consortium (Texas Science and Engineering Fair)—This science and engineering fair is a competition for state middle school and high school science fair winners to showcase their research projects in STEM fields.

Other Selected Initiatives

Small Business Initiatives—TWC provides training and information to all Texans interested in entrepreneurship and starting or expanding a business or small business, including those run by veterans, minorities, and women.

High Demand Job Training Program—TWC supports collaborations between Boards and economic development corporations (EDCs) to provide high-demand occupational job training in local workforce areas. This program supports Boards partnering with local EDCs that use their local economic development sales taxes for high-demand job training. Boards collaborate with local EDCs and match their local economic development sales tax funds to jointly support the provision of such training.

Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) Program—TWC supports collaborations between Boards and private employers, corporations, or foundations (Industry Partner(s)) to address skills gaps and ensure a talent pipeline that meets industry needs. Collaborations must engage in allowable WIOA activities, focusing on six designated industry clusters, and leverage funds.

Building and Construction Trades—Texas companies are creating significant opportunities for workers in high-demand construction and building trade occupations, including carpenters, plumbers, pipefitters, welders, masons, and electricians. Grants support workforce development training for Texas adults by preparing them for employment in high-demand occupations in the building and construction trades.

Innovative Academies—Funds support innovative partnerships between schools, employers, and colleges that provide new opportunities for students to acquire skills, certifications, and credentials in high-demand occupations in key industry clusters while allowing the students to earn college credit that results in an associate degree or an articulated agreement toward a bachelor's degree.

Rapid Response Services

TWC and Workforce Solutions Office staff provide rapid response assistance to help workers who lose their jobs because of mass layoffs, plant closures, or natural disasters. These services include immediate on-site and/or virtual assistance with reemployment services and UI information as well as group stress and financial management seminars. In some cases, mobile units are dispatched to offer these services.

Texas' layoff aversion strategies focus on a proactive—rather than reactive—approach to assisting at-risk companies before they reach the actual layoff stage. Identifying at-risk companies and developing a customized plan to address each company's unique set of circumstances requires a coordinated effort among all community partners, including state agencies, Boards, economic development agencies, public and private entities, and so forth.

Effective layoff aversion strategies and activities help employers develop the skilled workforce necessary to adapt to the changing economy, stay in business, and retain employees.

Successful layoff aversion strategies and activities engage the full range of programs and resources of the Boards and Board partnerships. Rapid response partnerships can directly provide or facilitate the provision of an array of benefits to address the challenges presented by specific circumstances. An effective layoff aversion strategy:

- retains jobs;
- retains critical industries in the region;

- improves coordination among state agencies, Boards, and economic development and other public- and private-sector partnerships; and
- creates new labor-management partnerships.

Through their connections with local businesses and rapid response activities, Boards are in a unique position to assist companies in averting layoffs by implementing effective strategies.

Examples of layoff aversion strategies implemented to address at-risk companies and workers may include, but are not limited to:

- helping employers manage reductions in force, including identification of companies at risk of layoffs, assessments of needs and options for at-risk companies, and providing services to address and support their needs;
- developing, funding, and managing incumbent worker training programs or other worker upskilling approaches as part of a layoff aversion strategy or activity;
- connecting companies with state programs designed to prevent layoffs or to quickly re-employ dislocated workers; employer loan programs for employee skill upgrading; and other federal, state, and local resources necessary to address their business needs;
- connecting businesses and workers to short-term, on-the-job, or customized training programs and apprenticeships before or after layoff to help facilitate rapid reemployment;
- activating the rapid response team and services after receiving a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) or other notification; and
- responding to information received from other sources about possible closures.

While WIOA allows for broad flexibility for using rapid response funds for layoff aversion activities intended to minimize the negative impacts of dislocation on workers, employers, and communities, Boards are encouraged to conduct rapid response activities to support creative approaches and strategies.

~~Additionally, Rapid Response funds may be used to provide guidance and/or financial assistance in order to establish community transition teams to help affected communities support dislocated workers and meet the basic needs of their families. Such assistance may include, but is not limited to, providing heat, shelter, food, clothing, and other necessities and services that are beyond the resources and ability of the Boards to provide.~~

The Shared Work Unemployment Benefit Program provides an alternative to layoffs by affording employers an opportunity to manage business cycles and seasonal adjustments without losing trained employees. The program allows for the payment of UI benefits to employees to supplement wages lost because of reduced hours. TWC is identifying early warning indicators within its BIG data warehouse system that will identify employers that might benefit from rapid response activities and specific short-time compensation services.

Child Care

Early Childhood Education Partnerships—TWC's Child Care Services program provides child care subsidy assistance to eligible low-income families with children under age 13, allowing parents to work, attend school, or participate in training. Child Care Services is tightly integrated within the workforce. When a parent who is receiving child care subsidies loses his

or her job, he or she has up to three months to find work and retain child care assistance. During their three-month job search period, the family continues to receive child care assistance at the same level. Additionally, Child Care Services staff refers parents who have lost employment to workforce services to assist them with becoming reemployed quickly. The integration of Child Care services and workforce services helps smooth employment transitions for low-income parents, supporting greater economic stability for families.

Employment Services

Small Business Initiative (Office of the Governor)—The purpose of the Interagency Cooperation Contract is to provide training, information conveyance, and recognition to small businesses, including, but not limited to, those run by veterans, minorities, and women. The intent is to provide businesses with information (based on local and state level input) regarding available workforce-related services, workforce training programs, contracting opportunities, best practices and methodologies, exporting products and services, available governmental services, and any other areas relevant to small business inception and growth.

Veterans Apprenticeship (Registered Apprenticeship Training Program for Veterans and/or Service members)

The Registered Apprenticeship Training Program for Veterans and/or Service members is a program that:

- accelerates participants into or through a DOL Registered Apprenticeship training program in Texas; or
- accelerates participants into or through a DOL Pre-Apprenticeship training program that leads to enrollment of participants into an Apprenticeship Training Program during the grant period.

Registered Apprenticeship Program

The purpose of the Apprenticeship Training [Program](#) funds is to supplement [a portion of](#) the costs of ~~the~~ job-related classroom instruction for eligible ~~DOL Office of Apprenticeship-~~ [registered](#) apprenticeship training programs [that are registered by DOL's Office of Apprenticeship](#). TWC currently provides funding for the Apprenticeship Training Program through an application process. Funding is generally state general revenue (GR) funds, however, other funding has been leveraged to supplement the program to include WIOA, ~~SNAP E&T~~, and TANF NCP funds.

TWC recently received a DOL grant award of \$~~5.410~~ million to [further](#) support statewide apprenticeship expansion efforts from July ~~2019~~[2021 through](#) June ~~2022~~[2025](#). Funds will increase and expand [Registered Apprenticeship Programs \(RAPs\)](#), integrate ~~registered-~~ [apprenticeship programs \(RAPs\) with into](#) new industries, and diversify apprenticeship opportunities. This [new-additional](#) funding opportunity will continue Texas' efforts to expand the number of apprentices in ~~registered programs~~[RAPs](#), support and encourage RAP diversification, and integrate RAPs into state workforce development strategies. Part of TWC's plan is to encourage community and technical colleges, as eligible grantees, to use allotment funding to address workforce development needs in the communities they serve. This will support RAPs and build staffing and knowledge capacity to imbed RAPs in more areas of the state.

C. IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES

When businesses close plants or lay off workers due to natural disasters, Workforce Solutions Offices can provide immediate on-site services to assist workers facing job loss, contingent on the gravity of the conditions. Activities are coordinated with various agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management System (FEMA), the Texas Division of Emergency Management, Office of the Governor, Disaster Preparedness, and others. Managed rapid response services provide early intervention assistance designed to transition workers to their next employment opportunity as appropriately and as soon as possible.

TWC seeks out opportunities to assist those who have been laid off due to closures or other large dislocation events. By leveraging available resources, such as Dislocated Worker Grants from the United States Department of Labor (DOL), TWC continues to provide assistance to both job seekers and employers.

Hurricane Harvey

In August 2017, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) received thirty-six million dollars (\$36,000,000) in Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant (DDWG) funds from the United States Department of Labor (DOL) to assist with recovery efforts in forty-two (42) counties directly affected by Hurricane Harvey. DOL's unprecedented rapid response to this catastrophic event resulted in the immediate delivery of workforce services. A total of three thousand five hundred thirty-seven (3,537) Texans participated in the activities supported by these funds.

At the close of this grant, December 2020, eight hundred thirty-four (834) temporary jobs had been created to provide disaster clean up services and humanitarian aid. One thousand twenty-eight (1,028) individuals were enrolled in training services and three thousand eighty-one (3,081) individuals received intensive career services.

COVID-19 Pandemic

In May 2020, TWC received \$39 million in DDWG funds from DOL to combat the public health emergency and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds provide temporary disaster relief employment to assist local health departments, nutrition programs, and other humanitarian organizations in responding to the disaster. The funds also support the delivery of career services, training, and supportive services, which include transportation assistance and supplies. These services enable businesses to successfully reopen and allow individuals to return to work safely. As of October 2021, this grant has served 2,824 Texans, placing 883 participants in temporary disaster relief employment, enrolling 1,000 participants in training, and providing career services to 941 participants.

Hurricane Laura

In October 2020, TWC received \$2.5 million in DDWG funds from DOL to assist with recovery efforts in 15 counties directly affected by Hurricane Laura. The funds provide temporary disaster relief employment for cleanup services and humanitarian aid. As of October 2021, 136 individuals have been enrolled to participate in these recovery efforts.

Texas Winter Storms

In May 2021, TWC received \$3.12 million in DDWG funds from DOL to assist with recovery efforts in 52 counties directly affected by the Texas Winter Storms. The funds provide temporary disaster relief employment for cleanup services and humanitarian aid. The funds also support the delivery of career services, training, and supportive services, which include transportation assistance and supplies. As of October 2021, 105 individuals have been enrolled to participate in recovery efforts and receive career and training services.

Hurricane Harvey struck the Texas Gulf Coast on August 25, 2017. Storm surge, widespread catastrophic flooding, and destructive winds devastated coastal communities, the city of Houston, and surrounding areas in southeastern Texas.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through Disaster Declaration 4332 and associated amendments, declared 50 Texas counties federal disaster areas. FEMA approved eight local workforce development areas to receive federal public and individual assistance. FEMA approved nine additional counties in seven workforce areas that sustained little or no storm damage to receive federal public assistance to help manage the influx of hurricane evacuees.

Federal, state, and local governments moved quickly to implement programs and policies that address the workforce system needs of the affected communities.

DOL granted the State of Texas \$35 million in National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) funds to assist in the cleanup and rebuilding in 42 of the counties directly affected by Hurricane Harvey. DOL's quick response to the state's needs has allowed an unprecedented speed in the delivery of workforce services. Since the grant began, more than 3,300 Texans have been supported through jobs, training, career services and supportive services including childcare, transportation, and other needs.

As of August 2019, 822 temporary jobs had been created providing continuing disaster clean up services and humanitarian aid, exceeding the temporary job goal of 550 by 160.4 percent. The number of individuals participating in occupational, vocational or work based training is also exceeding the goal of 3,069 by 110 percent or 3,365 participants.

TWC received two additional grants from DOL to assist with the needs of individuals impacted by Hurricane Harvey with an emphasis on assisting specific underserved populations. The first award for \$300,000 was designed to serve women, with an emphasis on low-income women and women with dependent children. Two Boards, Coastal Bend and Gulf Coast, are providing 30 women with construction training and other supportive services to ensure they can return to employment successfully.

The second grant award for \$1.25 million will fund work readiness services and assistance for individuals with disabilities. Gulf Coast Workforce board is providing workforce education and paid work experience to 80 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been affected by Hurricane Harvey through a partnership with the University of Houston Downtown and the Housing, Entrepreneurship and Readiness Training (HEART) Program. HEART promotes structured independence for individuals with developmental disabilities by providing innovative education, training, housing and employment programs.

Additional program and policy guidance for these grants has been captured in the Hurricane Harvey: Program Operations and Technical Assistance Guide. Included in the operational guidance are specific questions and responses related to the implementation of these grants to support Boards' rapid implementation.

TWC also requested that the DOL Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) waive certain WIOA requirements to allow the flexibility needed to provide workforce areas with

resources to help workers, job seekers, employers, and youth recover from one of the costliest natural disasters in US history. A summary of the approved waivers is included in this plan under part 1 of Section C, State Strategy.

Additionally, TWC administers 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. A disaster assistance period must be declared, and individuals who apply must be ineligible for regular unemployment benefits. Assistance may also include offering unemployed individuals new, temporary public service jobs.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A).) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TRADE-AFFECTED WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE TRADE-AFFECTED DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT).

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION.

Rapid Response

Rapid response services focus on assistance to area employers, workers, and the community in managing reductions in force. To ensure that Texas is poised to meet the needs of local employers, rapid response services are funded through the Boards' WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula programs. The funding stream allows for a prompt rebound from layoffs, as funds are readily and locally available. Texas has also reserved rapid response funds at the state level for Boards that demonstrate a need for additional assistance.

The rapid response system first pursues strategies to avert layoffs, while maintaining capacity to return workers to productive employment as quickly as possible—if the layoff is unavoidable. TWC and Boards use multiple employment and training resources to craft layoff aversion solutions. Past solutions have supported development of incumbent worker programs, which help address employer training needs and avert or mitigate a layoff. Training usually focuses on skills attainment activities.

The second objective of rapid response is reemployment on or before the affected worker's last day of work. Upon notification of layoff, transition efforts are implemented to help dislocated workers engage in employment or training services that facilitate a quick return to work. Layoff notices, including those submitted in compliance with the WARN Act and Trade Act petitions, are received at the state level and forwarded to Boards by the next business day.

Boards and providers are also responsible for outreach to employers. Board or Workforce Solutions Office staff ~~members may~~ use ~~feasibility studies~~ [current labor market information](#) to assess the needs of and options for at-risk companies as well as ~~offering~~ employment and training activities to address risk factors. Following the initial contact with the employer and worker representatives, an employee information orientation may be conducted on-site and on company time. The orientation typically offers an overview of available services and additional activities that may be conducted on-site. Additional activities include workshops or seminars on the psychology of job loss/stress management, debt/financial management and, ~~specifically,~~ negotiations for debt-payment arrangements, job search skills, and labor market information. The orientation ~~may~~ also provide [s](#) information on UI and, if appropriate, the Trade Adjustment

Assistance (TAA) program.

~~Workforce Solutions Office staff may establish an on-site career transition center when a layoff involves large numbers of employees from a single employer, and the center is acceptable to company management and labor representatives. Staff will consider such factors as convenience, distance from the employer to the closest Workforce Solutions Office, work-schedules of the employees, and time off permitted by the employer to attend the activities.~~

Workforce areas are also encouraged to engage rapid response staff in the BSUs. Rapid response staff members attached to the BSU have access to team resources that are helpful in matching worker skill sets with company hiring requirements. TWC and the Boards set the stage to assist businesses with future staffing needs by maintaining a positive relationship throughout the layoff process. To this end, the outreach effort highlights both the services available to at-risk employers and those services available once business improves and staff needs rebound.

Trade Adjustment Assistance

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) assists individuals who have lost their employment to increased imports or shifts in production to a foreign country. Integrated services and benefits for dislocated workers, including those affected by trade changes, are available at local Workforce Solutions Offices. Individuals who have lost their jobs due to increased imports or shifts in productions to foreign markets may be eligible for federally funded TAA. Workforce Solutions Offices provide all workforce services, including TAA services, in an integrated environment using common data systems.

As part of an integrated delivery system, TAA early intervention services (that is, rapid response) are carried out under WIOA. When the Workforce Solutions Office becomes aware of a layoff, staff will determine whether the dislocation may have trade implications; if it does, assistance is provided to the company, workers, or affected unions submitting a TAA petition. Furthermore, when a petition is submitted with prior staff notification by one of these groups, the TAA state coordinator notifies the responsible Board and ensures rapid response efforts are made to assist the company with transitional services. TAA is likewise integrated into early intervention services (i.e., rapid response) carried out under WIOA. When Workforce Solutions Office staff becomes aware of potential dislocations, consideration is always given to whether the dislocation has potential trade implications; if so, assistance is provided to the company, workers, or affected unions to promote TAA petition submission. Additionally, when a petition is independently submitted by one of these groups, the TAA state coordinator conveys the petition to the responsible Board partner to ensure that a rapid response effort is activated to assist the company and workforce with transition services.

To comply with 20 CFR Part 618, the State of Texas uses both state merit staff and partner staff to conduct TAA case management services. Merit staff are housed in areas with large TAA activity to ensure workers receive adequate service provisions. Where TAA merit staff is not present, WIOA or ES staff provides TAA case management to assist the workers. **Additionally, the state must co-enroll all trade-affected workers in the WIOA dislocated worker program. Staffing flexibilities and co-enrollment between the programs** allow Texas to help adversely impacted workers return to suitable employment as quickly as possible.

~~In compliance with Title 20, CFR Part 618, the State of Texas houses merit staff in Workforce Solutions Offices across the state to offer TAA case management. Merit staff is positioned in locations where TAA certification and service provision activity indicates the greatest need. Where TAA merit staff is not present, WIOA or ES staff provides TAA case management to assist the customer in preparing for and obtaining suitable reemployment as quickly as possible.~~

Texas Workforce Solutions provides employment and job search assistance services to help the

TAA worker find long-term employment. All adversely affected workers are initially assessed to determine transferable skills, knowledge, and abilities and to assist in researching the labor market information for previous and future occupational goals.

Additional TAA benefits and services are available if the worker is unable to secure suitable employment. Using a multitude of national, state, and local labor market information, staff members assist the worker in considering available employment opportunities in the worker's area or the area of relocation. TAA workers are required to identify an occupational goal that is specific to the required training.

In addition to considering LMI and the occupational goal in developing a training plan, staff must provide in-depth objective and comprehensive assessments to determine the worker's abilities. These instruments include but are not limited to Accuplacer, Compass, Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and other tools specific to training providers. Local staff members develop a plan, with merit staff approval, to ensure the training meets the TAA approval criteria in 20 CFR §618.610.

Suitable employment is defined as work of an equal skill level or higher and paying at least 80 percent of the worker's average weekly wage. Staff may initiate an assessment of the worker's transferable skills, knowledge, and abilities and assist in researching both the labor markets within the commuting area and, if the worker is willing to relocate, other labor markets where relocation might be acceptable. Additionally, Texas Workforce Solutions will provide employment and job search assistance services designed to properly equip the TAA customer to conduct and conclude a successful job search campaign.

In the absence of suitable and available employment, Texas Workforce Solutions and the TAA customer may undertake additional assessment activity to determine if TAA training is appropriate. Using vocational exploration resources such as mySkills myFuture, CareerOneStop.org, and TWC labor market information, the TAA customer can identify specific occupational goals. Assessment instruments such as Accuplacer, Compass, Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and other training provider-specific assessment tools allow the customer and Workforce Solutions office staff to determine the viability of proposed training. All training activity supported under TAA must meet the approval criteria set forth in 20 CFR §617.22(a).

During State Fiscal Year ~~2019-20210~~ (~~SFY'19FY'210~~), the Texas workforce system provided the following TAA services and outcomes:

- ~~2,293~~4,296~~1,621~~ workers were determined potentially TAA eligible and outreached for service provision.
- ~~349~~183~~223~~ workers applied for TAA services or benefits.
- ~~1,006~~1,214~~545~~ workers participated in TAA-supported training services.
- ~~65~~104~~11~~ workers participated in vocational and remedial training programs, either integrated or conducted concurrently at the same school.

The following TAA performance results were attained in ~~SFY'19FY'210~~:

- ~~870~~584~~417~~ workers (~~724~~390 percent) entered employment.
- ~~92~~93~~89~~ percent of workers entering employment retained employment over the following three quarters.
- Workers securing employment regained ~~98~~93~~90~~ percent of pre-layoff wage levels, based on a six-month follow-up.
- ~~149~~75~~52~~ workers participated in basic skills enhancement during TAA-supported training.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

Allotments under WIOA enable the state to assist Boards in providing workforce investment activities for adults and dislocated workers.

Workforce development and adult education and training are key services available to prepare job seekers for success in jobs that employers need filled. By improving the skills, education, and literacy levels of individual adults and dislocated workers, these services improve their subsequent employment, job retention, and earnings.

Alternative Training Models

Texas uses several alternative training programs as part of its workforce development strategy. These programs involve TWC collaborating with Boards, companies, and education training providers to improve training, as well as awarding a competitive grant program for training programs. These are discussed in other sections of the plan; however, a few deserve highlighting because of their success in advancing high-quality on-the-job training and incumbent worker training for both the participant and the employer.

The Skills Development Fund is Texas' premier job-training program providing training opportunities for Texas businesses and workers. Funding for the program is administered by TWC. Success is achieved through collaboration among businesses, public community and technical colleges, Boards, and economic development partners.

The Skills Development Fund program assists businesses and trade unions by financing the design and implementation of customized job-training projects. This fund merges business needs and local customized training opportunities into a winning formula to increase the skills levels and wages of the Texas workforce.

The Skills for Small Business program receives financing out of the Skills Development Fund. The Skills for Small Business program is dedicated to supporting the backbone of Texas' economy—small employers. Businesses with fewer than 100 employees can apply to TWC for training offered by their local community or technical college, or the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX). The program trains newly hired employees, with the intent of helping to fill positions for work that employers currently cannot fill and that often pay better than most jobs. TWC works with the college to fund the specific courses selected by businesses for their employees.

The Skills for Veterans initiative also receives financing out the Skills Development Fund, in order to specifically address the training needs of post-9/11 veterans returning home and entering the Texas workforce. Skills for Veterans train veterans for jobs in high demand by Texas employers. Employers that hire post-9/11 era veterans, including those who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn or Operation Enduring Freedom, may be eligible to participate in this training opportunity, offered by their local community or technical college, or TEEX.

The Self-Sufficiency Fund program assists businesses and trade unions by financing the development and implementation of customized job-training projects for new and current workers. Self-Sufficiency Fund grants offer businesses customized training solutions that support workforce hiring efforts and skills upgrading for current workers. The purpose of the

Self-Sufficiency Fund is to provide training for targeted employment opportunities, primarily for adult TANF recipients as well as those individuals at risk of becoming dependent on public assistance.

2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

Apprenticeships are industry-driven, high-quality career pathways during which employers ~~may can~~ develop and prepare their future workforce. Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) are automatically ~~approved~~ eligible for the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). RAP sponsors make a request through the state's ETP Unit or [TWC's](#) Office of Apprenticeship and provide minimal information to TWC for inclusion on the ETPL.

Once included on the statewide ETPL, RAPs are available for any WIOA participant in Texas. Boards ~~may~~ use their WIOA formula funds to ~~fund~~ issue Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for the instructional portion of these programs. Additionally, Boards are encouraged to consider funding the work component of RAPs through on-the-job training. Promoting informed consumer choice, Boards provide access to the full statewide ETPL, ensuring that program participants approved for training ~~may can~~ choose the best program for their needs.

~~Since 2016~~, TWC ~~has~~ received \$27.9 million in expansion grant funding and is using the funding to increase, expand, and integrate the RAP model into new occupations and new populations, further increasing RAP opportunities for which Boards ~~can may~~ use their local formula funds.

TWC's Commissioners and Office of Apprenticeship promote the apprenticeship model to Boards, employers, and industry groups throughout the year, including at TWC's annual *Apprenticeship Texas* conference.

Boards use allocated WIOA formula funds to train individuals based on training eligibility, need, skills, and interest. Work-based training is a priority for the state and Boards. The "earn while you learn" model helps participants gain a hands-on education while earning a salary. ~~Many~~ Boards promote pre-apprenticeship programs—~~examples~~, such as Austin's MC3 building trades program or Houston's Trio Electric training program—to their younger community not only as a step toward apprenticeship programs but as a step toward financial security.

The apprenticeship program serves employers and job seekers by training workers for well-paying jobs with promising futures. Texas law and rule support only DOL-registered apprenticeship training programs, which pay part of the cost of job-related classroom instruction. TWC coordinates the state's apprenticeship training program, applying approximately \$1.6 million in WIOA statewide-discretionary funds to supplement state general revenue appropriations. The Texas legislature has authorized approximately ~~\$2.85.3~~ million in general revenue each year of the current biennium. ~~Of the total Apprenticeship Texas Grant, 49 percent was awarded to seven Boards. In FY'19FY'20, 6,4496,810~~ apprentices participated in the apprenticeship training program, ~~exceeding trending towards~~ the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) performance measure of ~~6,1117,685~~.

~~In April 2018, TWC adopted program rule changes to align with changes enacted by House Bill (HB) 2790, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2017), relating to funding for certain apprenticeship training programs. HB 2790 expanded the list of eligible applicants to include sponsors that apply through an apprenticeship committee. Before the enactment of HB 2790, grant funds were appropriated to local education agencies, which acted as fiscal agents for~~

~~registered apprenticeship training programs. With the passage of HB 2790, a registered apprenticeship training program's apprenticeship committee may now apply for grant funding directly, without partnering with a public school district or a state postsecondary institution. Beginning in FY'20-FY'22 TWC's new apprenticeship training performance measure will be increased from 6,117,685 to 6,650,135 individuals served/trained per year as established with the approval passage of the General Appropriations Act for FY'22-'23 (Senate Bill 1, 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2021)). The bill grants of the TWC's Legislative Appropriation Request an additional \$1.36 million to the program for in FY'20-FY'22 and FY'21-FY'23, w- With which these additional funds, TWC may can help address demand for apprenticeship opportunities across Texas.~~

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including registered apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

The application process for training providers largely remains the same as that of WIA; however, WIOA established additional requirements, specifically to provide more information and criteria for initial and continued eligibility to receive funds. These requirements ensure both the quality of the training programs and the opportunity for customer-informed choice regarding the available programs.

The Boards will continue to solicit training and education providers to submit applications for eligibility to receive WIOA funds for educational programs. Programs must support statewide targeted occupations and lead to a recognized credential, measurable skill gain, or employment. TWC will solicit Registered Apprenticeship sponsors at least annually for inclusion on the statewide ETPL. This solicitation serves to ensure the continuation of a robust list of training providers throughout the state and in rural areas, including distance-learning options.

Starting January 1, 2016, all training providers must submit information and criteria as established under WIOA §122(d) through (g). Training providers use TWC's Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) to provide all required information for initial eligibility for each program of study directly to local Boards. ETPS doubles as TWC's program certification system and the Statewide Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL), as required by WIOA §122 (a)(3). Boards then review and certify the provider and program if minimum requirements are met, as established by the governor or higher standards as determined by Board policy. Following local approval, Boards submit training provider and program information to TWC for final review before addition to the statewide ETPL. The Statewide ETPL is published on the agency's website. Eligible Training Providers are required to submit student-level data directly to TWC annually, in July. Continued eligibility determinations take place on a biennial basis.

Initial Eligibility Criteria

Prior to inclusion on the statewide ETPL, except for RAPs, a training provider must submit general information through the ETPS to its local Board, determined by the primary campus location. The required general information includes:

- data required by ETA-9171;
- contact information; and
- other information useful for the statewide ETPL, such as
 - a description of each training program offered by the provider;
 - presence of onsite child care for campus(es);

- alternate hours for trainings; and
- campus accessibility.

In addition to general information, a provider must submit to the Board evidence of each program's partnership with a business. The Board must ensure that each program aligns with an in-demand or targeted occupation in the state and is appropriately licensed or exempt in accordance with the Texas Education Code.

Following Board review, providers must submit student-level information, including Social Security numbers (SSNs) and credential outcomes where applicable, for all students connected to the trainings during the most recently reported ETP Performance Year (PY). TWC uses SSN data to gather WIOA performance indicator-related data for programs beyond the credential rate information provided by the training providers. During initial eligibility determination, TWC may review existing programs for a provider, or exempt from student reporting for new programs, those which have not been delivered to any students at the time of application.

Continued Eligibility Criteria

Continued eligibility is determined by using the provider-submitted information from the most recent annual reporting period. The annual reporting information provided by ETPs includes information on alternate hours of trainings (for employed individuals) and accessibility-related features of campuses and programs. TWC is enhancing the ETP system to further align with WIOA requirements. ~~When these enhancements are rolled out (Summer 2021), providers will have open-text fields to enter detailed information on these features of the programs and campuses.~~ This information is included on the statewide ETPL. Texas maintains a robust system of training providers and programs, including hundreds of online training programs available to students anywhere in the state, including in rural areas. TWC will revise its ETP guidance for Local Workforce Development Boards to include information on accessibility for individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities. This guidance will be available at <https://twc.texas.gov/agency/laws-rules-policy/workforce-policy-and-guidance>.

Continued eligibility for the statewide ETPL requires that programs, except RAPs:

- submit evidence of a partnership with a business;
- are aligned with an in-demand or targeted occupation in the state;
- are appropriately licensed, or exempt from licensure, in accordance with the Texas Education Code; and
- on or before the required reporting deadline, submit annual reports that:
 - provide TWC with data needed to determine performance outcomes related to WIOA employment and credential performance indicators;
 - identify whether a program leads to a recognized postsecondary credential; and
 - indicate the overall quality of provider programs.

Annual Reporting

All providers, except RAPs, shall be required to report information, including performance outcomes, on each program included on the statewide ETPL.

Annual reports require providers to submit, or verify, the following information:

- General provider, location, and program information (including contacts)

- Compliance with WIOA provisions and regulations
- Acknowledgment of TWC's Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) authority
- Student-level data for all students participating in programs during the previous PY
- Other information that TWC may determine to be necessary or useful for the statewide ETPL

Such information is required to be submitted no later than TWC's deadline each year, usually the end of July. Providers requiring assistance with completing these reports are encouraged to reach out to TWC for direct assistance before the reporting deadline. Reporting extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis to providers/programs when requested before the reporting deadline. TWC will consider requests related to circumstances beyond the provider's control, such as:

- natural disasters;
- national emergencies; and
- unexpected personnel or technology issues (provided these occurred within 30 days or fewer from reporting deadline).

Providers failing to report information on a timely basis (that is, on or before the deadline or extended deadline), will have affected programs removed from the ETPL as described in the *Removal from ETPL* section.

TWC accepts schools in compliance with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) as eligible for the ETPL once they submit information required by WIOA. Additionally, proprietary schools in Texas must be licensed (or exempted from such licensure) by TWC's Career Schools and Colleges (CSC) Department. This licensure includes annual student performance reporting. TWC collaborates with TEA and THECB in a Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative known as 60X30TX. As part of this project, integrated reporting on all Texas schools and student outcomes is made available publicly at the following address: <http://www.txhigheredaccountability.org/acctpublic/>.

Performance Targets

Beginning November 26, 2018, TWC removed minimum performance standards for programs from eligibility standards but continues to collect this information during required annual reporting. Once sufficient baseline data are gathered, the data will be analyzed and evaluated for purposes of proposing new state performance standards. TWC continues to require providers, except RAPs, to submit performance outcomes annually. Program outcomes are included on the statewide ETPL for all programs, in aggregate form. (Any program with five or fewer student records to report in a single year, will not have data published in order to protect the individual's information.)

Removal from ETPL

Training providers may request voluntary removal of training programs from the ETPL^S at any time they no longer offer or wish to maintain training programs on the ETPL^S. Providers, including RAP sponsors, that violate WIOA Title I provisions or WIOA regulations (including 29 CFR part 38), or are found to have intentionally supplied inaccurate or false information, shall be removed from the statewide ETPL at such time as the violation is discovered. For such substantial violations, removal will result in ineligibility for the ETPL for a minimum of two

years. Providers that fail to provide required annual performance and other information for programs, shall have such programs, except RAPs, removed from the statewide ETPL.

Providers may appeal involuntary removal decisions to the Board or TWC, as appropriate, in accordance with TWC's existing appeals process as set forth in the Chapter 823 Integrity of the Texas Workforce Commission rules (20 Texas Administrative Code). Providers may appeal Board decisions to TWC. TWC decisions are final.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Apprenticeship programs that are registered with the DOL Office of Apprenticeship are automatically eligible for inclusion on the ETPL. RAPs are given an opportunity to request inclusion on the ETPL directly to TWC. RAP sponsors must provide basic program information, which includes general descriptions of the sponsor and training sites, contact information, program details, and general cost information. These data are used by Boards to inform participants of training expectations prior to referral. RAPs are not required to provide performance or outcome data to TWC. To ensure a robust system of consumer choice, RAP sponsors may choose to provide such data. Data submission will not delay, nor otherwise affect, RAP inclusion on the statewide ETPL.

Except where WIOA violations occur, RAPs will remain on the ETPL for as long as the program is registered with DOL or until they request to be removed.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDED BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM

Priority for individualized career services and training services are provided on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to:

- public assistance recipients;
- other low-income adults; and
- individuals who are basic skills deficient.

The individuals who receive these services are prioritized accordingly:

1. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses (as defined in WD Letter [25-15\[1\]01-21](#)) who also are recipients of public assistance, low-income, and/or basic-skills deficient
2. Foster youth and former foster youth, up to age 23, who also are recipients of public assistance, low-income, and/or basic skills deficient
3. All other individuals who are recipients of public assistance, low-income, and/or basic skills deficient
4. All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses
5. All other foster youth and former foster youth, up to age 23
6. All other individuals, including Boards' local priority groups

TWC ensures that local Board policies are in place to ensure priority for the populations described above. In addition, TWC allows Boards the flexibility to create a policy that includes a process that also gives priority to other individuals, as long as priority for those individuals

come after the first five groups described above.

For example, Boards may establish local priority groups for older workers (age 40 or older) or employed individuals whose income is below the Board's self-sufficiency level, but these local priority groups do not replace the statutory priority given to individuals who are recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient. The Board's local priority groups must fall within Group 6, "All other individuals, including local Boards' local priority groups" as listed above.

[1] WD Letter ~~25-1501-21~~ issued ~~October 26, 2015~~ January 22, 2021, titled "Applying Priority of Service and Identifying and Documenting Eligible Veterans and Transitioning Service Members."

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

TWC established a policy that allows Boards the flexibility to transfer up to 100 percent of funds between WIOA adult and dislocated worker allocations consistent with WIOA provisions. The policy states Boards that are under a Technical Assistance Plan or Corrective Action Plan for an adult or dislocated worker program may be subject to limitations on the amounts they can transfer.

C. WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED IN SECTION 129 OF WIOA—

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS OR CONTRACTS.[11]

[11] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

State-Developed Criteria in Award of Grants or Contracts for Youth Workforce Investment Activities

TWC allocates youth formula funds to Boards, that in turn contract with service providers to deliver services to youth in their respective workforce areas. Boards are required to meet all federal and state programmatic requirements.

Boards will ensure that:

- contracts include clearly defined goals, outputs, and measurable outcomes which directly relate to program objectives;
- contracts include clearly defined sanctions or penalties for noncompliance with contract terms and conditions; and
- the contractor has implemented a formal program using a risk assessment methodology to monitor compliance with financial and performance requirements under the contract, including a determination of whether performance objectives have been achieved.

Board Assessment of Providers' Performance Accountability Measures

TWC maintains a rigorous performance and accountability system, holding Boards accountable for their performance as it pertains to the youth program as it does with other workforce programs, and Boards have rigorous standards in place for their contracted service providers. Boards ensure that all 14 program elements—to include financial literacy and services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in workforce areas—are available to youth participants.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

A segment of out-of-school youth are unemployed and may also be enrolled in public assistance programs or detained by the juvenile or criminal justice systems. In addition, many out-of-school youths are dropouts, which may present a significant employment barrier.

Youth who are no longer in the public school system and are seeking to enter the labor market for the first time are inexperienced. ~~As such~~ With this in mind, Boards design services that:

- acknowledge the problems and characteristics of inexperienced job-career seekers;
- outreach and engage with the growing out-of-school youth population;
- obtain and use information concerning the conditions of employment affecting youth and labor laws restricting their employment;
- develop and maintain effective relationships with schools, colleges, and other training providers; and
- develop employment opportunities with career potential for youth.

Texas operates an integrated workforce system that relies on collaboration and coordination amongst partners. This collaboration and coordination is necessary when developing strategies to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth, as this population will often seek assistive services from public or private CBOs. As such, partner programs build on existing partnerships—and develop new partnerships as needed—with community-based providers such as child welfare agencies, social service organizations, group homes, probation or parole officers, and local schools to find and engage at-risk youth before they become disconnected.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS UNDER THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ELEMENT. [12]

[12] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

Texas shares the purposes of WIOA, including fostering integrated systems, coordinated services, career pathways, and multiple forms of engagement with businesses to benefit all customers, particularly youth. TWC recognizes that career and personal success is a result of lifelong learning and continued growth in skills and abilities.

Each Boards develops a strategic and operational plan for implementing WIOA youth programs

that is consistent with the governor's vision of strengthening the academic and future workplace outcomes for youth facing challenges and barriers to success. Boards design activities consistent with the specific eligibility criteria for two groups described in the WIOA Title I youth formula-funded program: in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY).

Boards are encouraged to conduct thorough analysis of local gaps in youth-serving programs, and then identify the most appropriate education or training, or employment activities, to undertake. Certain services of WIOA youth programs are required, as proposed by regulation §681.460 of WIOA §129(c)(2), including the following:

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent or postsecondary credential
- Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services
- Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component, such as summer and non-seasonal employment, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training, in the private for-profit or nonprofit sectors
- Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials in in-demand industries or occupations in the local area
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation
- Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors
- Support services, such as linkages to community services, assistance with transportation, child and dependent care, assistance with housing, needs-related payments, assistance with educational testing, reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities, referrals to health care, and assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and tools
- Adult mentoring for at least 12 months
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after completing participation
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, such as drug and alcohol abuse, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate
- Financial literacy education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Services providing labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

Boards ensure that all 14 program elements—including financial literacy and services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or

occupations available in workforce areas—are available to youth participants.

Every individual that meets the designated criteria for ISY or OSY eligibility may participate in the above services if they are he or she is formally enrolled in the program and participation is appropriate for under the participant’s assessment and individual service strategy.

Continuous performance assessment, technical assistance, and monitoring are fundamental to the Boards’ compliance with the design framework service of local youth programs, as proposed in regulation §681.420.

Outreach specialists dedicated to the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) community collaborate with Boards to inform youth in this targeted population of educational, training, and employment services. Concurrently, local youth-serving agencies facilitate counseling of MSFW youth on programs to complete their secondary education and prepare for economically sustaining employment.

Boards recognize that the successful implementation of WIOA’s purposes rests on youth programs that reconnect OSY to education and jobs. The OSY population consists in large part of high school dropouts who are likely to face significant barriers to employment. WIOA increased the minimum OSY expenditure rate for youth formula-funded programs to 75 percent. ~~However, DOL approved TWC’s waiver request to reduce the minimum OSY expenditure rate to 60 percent.~~

Youths who are no longer in the public school system and are seeking to enter the labor market may face extraordinary barriers. Boards design services that:

- acknowledge the challenges and characteristics of inexperienced job-career seekers;
- obtain and use information concerning the conditions of employment affecting youth and labor laws restricting their employment;
- develop and maintain effective relationships with schools, colleges, and other training providers; and
- develop career-potential employment opportunities for youth ~~with career potential~~.

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

TWC provides Boards the flexibility to define the “additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to obtain or retain employment” criterion, as set forth in WIOA. The state policy is as follows:

“The Board must establish definitions and eligibility documentation requirements for the ‘requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to obtain or retain employment’ criterion of ISY and OSY eligibility.”

5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE “NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL” OR

“ATTENDING SCHOOL,” INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE AND PROVIDE THE STATE POLICY FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A YOUTH IS ATTENDING OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.

Texas law does not explicitly define the terms “attending school” and “not attending school.”

For the purpose of determining in-school youth and out-of-school youth eligibility under WIOA, TWC has established that a youth is “attending school” if the youth is:

- enrolled in a school that leads to the attainment of a state-recognized high school diploma, including a public school, charter school, or private school; disciplinary alternative education program; or
- homeschooled;
- attending high school equivalency programs;
- a high school graduate who has registered for postsecondary classes, even if not yet attending postsecondary classes;
- attending postsecondary classes; or
- in between postsecondary school semesters and has registered for classes for a future semester or has paid all or part of the tuition for a future semester.

TWC has established that a youth is “not attending school” if the youth:

- has at least 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences and on the date of eligibility determination has not returned to school;
- is not attending postsecondary school on the date of eligibility determination;
- has not registered for postsecondary school classes on the date of the eligibility determination; or
- is enrolled only in non-credit-bearing postsecondary classes

The following programs are not considered “in school” under WIOA:

- Adult education provided under Title II of WIOA
- YouthBuild programs
- Job Corps programs
- High School Equivalency programs not funded by the public K-12 system
- Dropout reengagement programs not funded by the public K-12 system

Alternative Education—A disciplinary alternative education program is established in conformance with Texas Education Code §37.008. Alternative education is an educational and self-discipline alternative instructional program, adopted by local policy, for students in elementary through high school grades who are removed from their regular classes for mandatory or discretionary disciplinary reasons. Juvenile justice alternative education programs were created to serve the educational needs of juvenile offenders and at-risk youth who are expelled from the regular classroom or the school district disciplinary alternative education program. (Texas Education Code, Chapter 37)

6. IF USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B),

INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION WHICH MUST FURTHER DEFINE HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS UNABLE TO COMPUTE OR SOLVE PROBLEMS, OR READ, WRITE, OR SPEAK ENGLISH, AT A LEVEL NECESSARY TO FUNCTION ON THE JOB, IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S FAMILY, OR IN SOCIETY. IF NOT USING THE PORTION OF THE DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

Texas uses the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), as follows:

An individual who meets either of the following criteria satisfies the basic skills deficient requirement for WIOA youth services is a youth who:

- has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th-grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
- is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)
2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)
3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

N/A -- this section does not apply to Texas.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the

Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 202 0 <u>Proposed/Expe</u> <u>cted Level</u>	PY 202 0 <u>Negotiated/Adju</u> <u>sted Level</u>	PY 202 31 <u>Proposed/Expe</u> <u>cted Level</u>	PY 202 31 <u>Negotiated/Adju</u> <u>sted Level</u>
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	7 0 6.0%	76.0%	7 1 6.0%	76.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	6 4 75.0%	75.0%	6 7 5.0%	75.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5,400	\$ 5,400	\$5, 5 400	\$5,400

Credential Attainment Rate	73.69.0%	69.0%	74.69.0%	69.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	67.553.6%	58.0%	68.054.6%	58.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

¹ "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 202 0 <u>Proposed/Expected Level</u>	PY 202 0 <u>Negotiated/Adjusted Level</u>	PY 202 0 <u>Proposed/Expected Level</u>	PY 202 0 <u>Negotiated/Adjusted Level</u>
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	7 13.0 <u>3.0</u> %	74.0 <u>75.0</u> %	7 25.0 <u>5.0</u> %	74.0 <u>75.0</u> %
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	7 3.0 <u>2.5</u> %	75.0 <u>75.0</u> %	7 3.5 <u>5.0</u> %	75.0 <u>75.0</u> %
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$8, 7200 <u>7200</u>	\$8,200 <u>\$8,200</u>	\$8, 75200 <u>75200</u>	\$8,200 <u>\$8,200</u>

Credential Attainment Rate	75.4.0%	74.0%	76.4.0%	74.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	70.056.2%	58.0%	70.057.2%	58.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

¹“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and

- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 ² <u>Proposed/Expected Level</u>	PY 2020 ⁰ <u>Negotiated/Adjusted Level</u>	PY 2023 ¹ <u>Proposed/Expected Level</u>	PY 2023 ¹ <u>Negotiated/Adjusted Level</u>
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	69.0% 70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	70.0% 74.0%	74.0%	71.0% 74.0%	74.0%

Performance Indicators	PY 202 02 <u>Proposed/Expected Level</u>	PY 202 20 <u>Negotiated/Adjusted Level</u>	PY 202 31 <u>Proposed/Expected Level</u>	PY 202 31 <u>Negotiated/Adjusted Level</u>
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,200 \$3,147	\$3,147	\$3,250 \$3,147	\$3,147
Credential Attainment Rate	60.0% 63.0%	63.0%	61.0% 63.0%	63.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	57.5% 47.3%	50.0%	58.0% 48.3%	50.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

¹"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted, and this data will not be entered for 202~~20~~State Plans.

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Additional Indicators of Performance <u>(planned and under development with working names)</u>
<u>Employer Hiring Partner Rate</u>
<u>New Employment Connection Rate (two versions: one employer-focused, one individual-focused)</u>
<u>Child Care Parent Reemployment</u>
<u>Maintaining Employment Connection Rate</u>
<u>Earnings Increase and Earnings Replacement</u>