



WORKFORCE
SOLUTIONS Capital Area

Connecting People to Jobs

Workforce Solutions

Capital Area Healthcare Industry Analysis

REPORT 2: WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT STRATEGIES
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 2018



CAEL



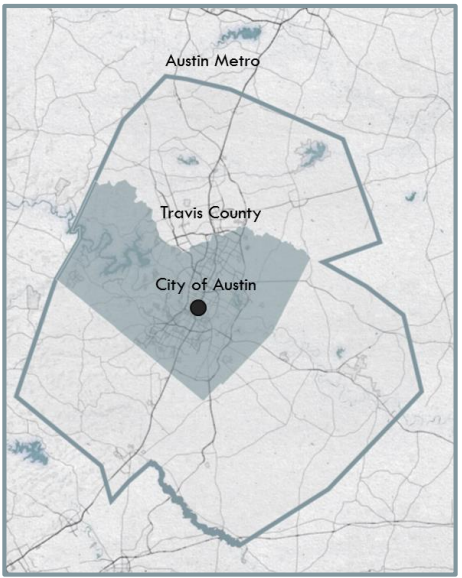
avalanche

Travis County lies at the heart of one of the country’s best performing economies. During the past five years, employment in Travis County and the broader Austin metro region has increased at twice the national rate of growth. Since 2012, employers in the Austin metro region have added nearly 170,000 jobs, more than 70% of which have been located within Travis County. During this period, the Healthcare industry grew by 16,000 workers and was one of the largest job creators in the region.

The Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board (the “Board”) serves as the leadership and governing body for the Austin/Travis County workforce system. The Board produced a Master Community Workforce Plan, the overarching vision of which is a more demand-driven workforce system that effectively engages employers, community-based organizations, and educational institutions, and successfully prepares economically disadvantaged residents for good jobs in high-demand, middle-skill occupations. Middle-skill jobs require more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor’s degree.

Given the expected strong demand for Healthcare workers, especially among middle-skill jobs, it is crucial that the region possess a pipeline capable of producing the talent necessary for growth. The Board has collaborated with several regional healthcare workforce development stakeholders to launch a new workforce initiative known as the Central Texas Healthcare Partnership (the “Partnership”). This nascent group of healthcare employers has committed to working together to advance two goals:

- 1. Identifying shared middle-skill workforce needs that are common among Central Texas healthcare businesses; and
- 2. Identifying and implementing joint solutions.



In support of these goals and with funding from the Texas Workforce Commission’s Texas Industry Partnership program, the Board commissioned a Healthcare Industry Analysis to better understand the labor market landscape and discover potential strategies to increase alignment between regional supply and demand for middle-skill healthcare careers.

Report 1 focused on better understanding the supply and demand dynamics related to high-demand, middle-skill healthcare careers. The Master Community Workforce Plan and early convenings of the Central Texas Healthcare Partnership found that middle-skill healthcare occupations are of particular concern in the Austin metro region. Report 1 provided quantitative validation of those findings by determining the makeup of the metro region’s labor force and identifying the occupations that are thriving and those that are undersupplied.

Report 2 provides a framework of strategic recommendations to address gaps and challenges identified in the first phase of this work and strengthen the region’s middle-skill healthcare workforce pipeline. The consulting team has identified two key alignment challenges:

- 1. Education and training programs report a range of barriers to capacity and scale
- 2. Career pathway advising and awareness challenges contribute to misalignment

Building on these themes, this report frames broad goals and more specific strategies for addressing collaboration, communication, capacity, and content misalignment in the region. Within each strategy, we outline potential tactics to achieve these goals and highlight best practices. Through the Partnership, regional stakeholders have already begun facilitated conversations around these issues and are well-primed to prioritize action over planning moving forward. Each strategy offers a different mix of Collaboration, Communication, Capacity, and Content tactics.



Collaboration within and between education, workforce and economic development, and industry leadership.



Communication to jobseekers and across regional systems, community leaders, and workforce stakeholders



by focusing on a collective impact approach to systems’ work across the region



Adjust, align, create new programs and opportunities for education and skill development

The range in employment and advancement opportunities, wage potential, working environments, and skills required for success in middle-skill healthcare careers is wide. Helping students, job seekers, and incumbent workers understand how their interests, experience, and abilities align with in-demand opportunities in the region is a key element of success in the region's healthcare education and employment pipeline. In conjunction with improving career awareness and job matching, it is imperative that stakeholders consider additional underlying reasons for misalignment between supply and demand in the region, such as low average wages, limited advancement potential, and barriers to education and training for incumbent workers.

Education and training providers, as well as employers, that partner with organizations providing support services may see improved outcomes for students and workers. Community-based organizations (CBOs) are critical to advising and navigation, helping students navigate funding (often braiding together funding from multiple sources to pay for training), and brokering supports that can address barriers. Partnering with organizations to provide comprehensive services throughout the education and career lifecycle supports a route not just to a job, but through advancement in a broader career pathway.

Goal 1: Create support for healthcare career pathways.

Why it's important: markets career pathways in the healthcare industry, expands access to advancement opportunities and sustainable careers, improves training program completion and persistence rates, reduces employee turnover

1.1: Develop and promote the use of consistent messaging and career pathway resources in collaboration with employers, training providers, and CBOs.

1.2: Promote healthcare career pathways for front-line staff and low wage middle-skill, healthcare occupations.

Goal 2: Improve processes for directing job seekers into healthcare careers.

Why it's important: promotes more efficient and effective services to job seekers, expands pool of job seekers benefiting from available programs and services, and develops a talent pipeline more aligned to regional needs

2.1: Formalize processes for identifying potential healthcare workers and referring them to resources in the Workforce system.

2.2: Expand partnerships with community based organizations.

Training providers characterized enrollment in many healthcare programs as strong due to an “infinite supply” of people wanting to work in healthcare. Some programs across providers are at capacity, particularly in nursing, creating fierce competition for the most popular programs at the larger training providers, while other programs at the same or different education and training institutions are under-utilized.

Barriers to program capacity and scale are driven by the following four issues:

- Issue 1: Limited local capacity for work-based, experiential learning
- Issue 2: Insufficient laboratory and facility space
- Issue 3: Limited availability and supply of qualified faculty
- Issue 4: Lack of student demand

Goal 3: Improve collaboration to address capacity challenges.

Why it's important: expands labor pool for qualified candidates, increases capacity to scale training programs, aligns workforce supply with industry demand, improves training program completion/persistence rates, creates efficiencies of scale, encourages shared risks and benefits

3.1: Explore collective solutions to experiential learning, facility, and faculty capacity challenges between training providers, local healthcare employers, and workforce stakeholders.

3.2: Increase awareness of training programs for which there is strong demand for workers and underutilized enrollment capacity.

Goal 4: Expand partnerships across regional stakeholders.

Why it's important: promotes early career planning and awareness, supports quicker credential attainment, increases capacity and ability to scale training programs

4.1: Grow programs and processes to strengthen the connection to K-12 institutions.

4.2: Provide a forum for training providers to find shared solutions to completion, enrollment, and capacity issues.

The following matrix plots each strategy onto one of four quadrants based on where it falls on the continuum of two metrics:

Investment: The level of resources that may be required for success on a continuum from **high** to **low** investment

Impact: The type of change that occurs ranging from immediate, **transactional** change to long-term, **systematic** change

Transactional change refers to activities that are more quickly implemented, with shorter-term payoffs within the current systems in place. Systems change refers to activities that fundamentally shift the way systems run and work together, with longer-term efforts that subsequently result in more significant outcomes. This graphic supports decision-making when prioritizing strategies for short- and long-term implementation. The Partnership can assign value to the metrics and use each strategy's relative positioning when determining where to focus their efforts moving forward.

