

Local Workforce Development Board Plan Program Years 2021–2024

Plan Template

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Introduction

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) §108 (20 Code of Federal Regulations §679.500–580), each Local Workforce Development Board (Board) is required to develop and submit to the state a comprehensive four-year plan (Board Plan) that identifies and describes policies and procedures as well as local activities that are in line with the State Plan. This Board Plan must be developed openly and be available to the public for comment for at least 15 days, but no more than 30 days, particularly to members of the business and educational communities as well as various other labor organizations. Along with submission of the Board Plan to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Board must submit all public comments of disagreement with the plan to TWC.

At the end of the first two-year period, the appropriate chief elected officials (CEOs) and the Board will review the local plan and prepare and submit modifications to reflect changes in the labor market and economic conditions, factors affecting the implementation of the plan, changes in financing, changes to the structure of the Board, and/or the need to revise strategies to meet local performance goals.

Instructions for Completing the Board Plan Template

Answer each part and section separately and do not combine sections. If the same response is used for multiple sections, please repeat the response. For example, do not state “See Section 2.B.” as the response.

When developing the Board Plan, use the checklist and elements provided in Attachment 2 to ensure that the questions are thoroughly addressed.

Do not provide separate additional attachments.

For example: If it is important that additional data, map, or some other attachment, appendix, or additional content be submitted with your plan, please attach it to the plan and reference the attachment in the appropriate places in the plan.

Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

The strategic elements of the Local Workforce Development Board Planning Guidelines (Guidelines) are as follows:

A. Vision and Goals

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

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

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

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board (WFSCA) serves as the leadership and governing body for the Austin/Travis County workforce system. WFSCA is a public/private partnership, with its Directors representing business, education, labor, economic development, community-based organizations, and public entities. WFSCA's vision is that all people (our human capital) are productive and the region is prosperous. WFSCA believes that it is best positioned to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency by successfully implementing and holding itself accountable for the following responsibilities:

- Strategic and operational planning;
- Design of the local workforce development delivery system, including the establishment of one-stop career centers;
- Oversight and evaluation of workforce development activities in the local area;
- Connection and alignment of the components of the regional workforce system;
- Leverage and investment in workforce development resources;
- Policy guidance;
- Advocacy for workforce issues and needs;
- Building partnerships in support of local workforce initiatives; and
- Serving as the link between the workforce system and the taxpayers.

WFSCA has established the following goals related to its strategic vision:

- I. Employers have access to a skilled workforce, including early education services**
Employers are the public workforce system's primary customer, and working with employers in a meaningful, sustained, productive manner ensures that the workforce system is aligned to the needs of industry. Alignment includes assisting to fill immediate job openings, as well as long-term career pathway planning in order that

employers may find locally trained workers to keep their companies growing and competitive.

II. The workforce has the literacy, workforce readiness, education and occupational skills to obtain and maintain meaningful employment

WFSCA strives to serve as both the agency of choice and the “safety net” for job seekers and workers who face barriers to employment, including youth. By actively collaborating with the educational system, from secondary to post-secondary education, and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), WFSCA acts on its vision to design a well-connected and effective local workforce delivery service that is, at its core, a career pathway approach to services. This strategy ensures that Opportunity Youth and those otherwise disconnected from traditional education systems and those individuals who face barriers to employment find the most effective and resource-efficient services through the public workforce system.

One of WFSCA’s greatest strengths is its ability to serve as a neutral convener of entities and agencies that together form the partnerships that comprise the public workforce system.

III. Job seekers have access to meaningful employment opportunities

WFSCA recognizes that both job seekers and employers endeavor to find a “right fit” in workplaces in order to obtain maximum productivity and satisfaction. Job seekers, especially those from younger generations, report that they desire to have meaningful employment, jobs that they feel contribute to a greater good. WFSCA believes that area employers offer such opportunities, but that job seekers may not always be aware of these occupations or the value that they bring to the companies, community, and global economy. As such, WFSCA has a goal to better inform and raise awareness of the industries and occupations that are in demand and growing. By educating job seekers about the range of opportunities available in our community, we contribute both to meaningful employment for job seekers as well as better-equipped employees for local companies.

In 2016 WFSCA spearheaded a community Workforce Plan bringing together Chambers of Commerce, employers, training providers, institutions of higher education, and community-based organizations. This plan created a common agenda for the Austin community united in building or enhancing career pathways for economically disadvantaged individuals into middle skills jobs via career pathways. To be successful, the Community Workforce Plan required participation from not only the Board and its contractors, but also the broader community of employers, employer associations, chambers of commerce, educators, faith-based entities, civic groups, CBOs, and individuals who will add their voice to solutions.

In 2021 Hire Local, the second iteration of the Plan was developed building from the learnings from the Community Workforce Plan. Austin currently has one of the hottest job markets in the country, but our community continues to grapple with equity

concerns such as unaffordability. The *Hire Local Plan* broadens the aperture of the first Community Workforce Plan to achieve three big things for workforce development:

- 1) increase skilled local talent while better defining the region's capacity for training
- 2) improve income for local people by creating an affordability index; and
- 3) grow payrolls for local businesses

The Hire Local Plan is built around the following tenets:

Vision

A more **demand-driven** workforce system that:

- effectively **engages** employers, CBOs, and educational institutions;
- **empowers** residents to more efficiently match employers' skills needs; and
- successfully **prepares** economically disadvantaged residents for middle-skill jobs

Goal

To make living in Austin more affordable by improving economically disadvantaged residents' access to better economic opportunities

Strategies

1. Awareness & Enrollment
2. Training
3. Placement
4. Advancement

As with the Community Workforce Plan, many organizations within the community are participating in the Plan through data sharing agreements. WFSCA contracts with the University of Texas's Ray Marshall Center to collect and evaluate data annually to determine if as a community, we are moving people out of poverty into in-demand, good paying jobs.

B. Board Strategies

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

Boards must include a description of the Board's strategy to work with the entities carrying out the core programs and with the required partners to align resources available to the local workforce development area (workforce area) to achieve the vision and goals.

Board Response:

WFSCA has established the following partnership strategies related to its strategic vision and goals:

- I. Employers have access to a skilled workforce**
 - a. Meet regularly with, and attend convenings hosted by, local Chambers of Commerce.
 - b. Become members of areas Chamber of Commerce.
 - c. Join existing, or create if none exist, industry sector partnerships.
 - d. Leverage the knowledge, expertise, and networks of Board of Directors in order to deepen trust and commitment to the public workforce system.
 - e. Engage and ensure customer satisfaction of the employers who utilize the public workforce system.

- II. The workforce has the literacy, workforce readiness, education and occupational skills to obtain and maintain meaningful employment**
 - a. Enter into an agreement with, and meet regularly with, the local Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) provider and its contractors.
 - b. Co-locate AEL staff in One-Stop System to ensure staff collaboration.
 - c. Meet regularly with executive and operational leadership of key secondary and post-secondary systems (area Independent School Districts and Austin Community College) to ensure understanding of and ability to contribute to effective and results-driven career pathways.
 - d. Enter into agreements with area CBOs who are essential participants in the provision of services in the workforce system.
 - e. Collaborate with and continue One-Stop System co-location of staff from Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services to ensure access to services for all customers, particularly those with disabilities.
 - f. Through contracts with the City of Austin and Travis County, WFS can offer Adult Basic Education and literacy services through a program entitled, The Workforce Education and Readiness Continuum (WERC), in partnership with local community-based organizations that provides a pathway to employment and training opportunities.
 - g. WFSCA serves as the backbone agency for the Austin Opportunity Youth Collaborative (AOYC) which is a collaborative of CBOs, ACC and other youth serving entities to identify barriers to training and employment of Opportunity Youth. Our WIOA Youth contractor is an integral part of AOYC and can provide services, as are all of the CBOs at the table working to bring easier access to training and employment for Opportunity Youth. Through ARPA funding, WFS contracted with The Arc to provide job search and supported employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities. WFSCA also contracts with American Youth Works under the ARPA grant to provide training, support, case management and employment placement for Opportunity Youth. Our philosophy is no worker left behind and we want to ensure services are available to anyone that wishes to enter employment. Partner with TWC and local school districts to provide full-time Career

and Education Outreach Specialists to middle and high school campuses within Travis County. The Career and Education Outreach Team will provide career advising, labor market data and presentations on employability and workforce readiness skills.

III. Job seekers have access to meaningful employment opportunities

- a. Through area educators and with area CBOs, promote customer-focused, engaging collateral about in-demand industries and occupations via the Board's website and printed materials for educators, parents, youth, and job seekers
- b. Post and publicize WFSCA's Target Occupation List, with related information about access to training in those occupations.
- c. In collaboration with area employers, promote the multitude of earn-and-learn opportunities. Engage and enter into agreements with employers who will offer registered apprenticeship opportunities for job seekers. Increase work experience and On-the-Job training opportunities for youth and job seekers with barriers to employment, including those job seekers with disabilities.
- d. In collaboration with local government and area ISDs, support, promote, and participate in career fairs for young people, including Opportunity Youth to inform about and connect youth to career pathways which lead to meaningful employment.

IV. Workforce Solutions Capital Area meets or exceeds all performance targets set by its governing body

- a. In collaboration with WFSCA's contractors, meet at least monthly to review budgets, expenditures, and procurements.
- b. In collaboration with WFSCA's contractors, review performance and provide technical assistance on a monthly basis.
- c. With CBOs and other community stakeholder groups, identify trends that impact the workforce system's ability to prepare the workforce and meet employer demand, both current and future.
- d. Continue success of a localized goal, called 75x20, in order to measure WFSCA's overall effectiveness in placing job seeker trainees in training-related employment. The goal states that by the year 2020, at least 75% of all job seekers who engage in training services funded by WFSCA will find training-related employment upon completion of training services. WFS has met and continues to exceed this goal set by its Board of Directors expanding the analysis to include impact on the community via increased wages. The measure is now called the Training Effectiveness Matrix.
- e. Establish and follow a regular risk-assessment monitoring schedule for publicly funded contracts.

C. High-Performing Board

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

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

Board Response:

Workforce Solutions Capital Area meets or exceeds all performance targets set by its governing body

WFSCA places a high premium on performance measures as accountability for the public resources that it administers. While WFSCA has a strong history of meeting and exceeding mandated performance measures, it employs a system of continuous improvement by allocating staff resources to weekly oversight of performance indicators that may point to possible issues with performance. Additionally, WFSCA monitors its activities through rigorous risk-assessment and sampling to ensure that performance overall is solid and consistent. Understanding that the taxpayers expect transparency and effective use of resources, WFSCA also employs quality assurance activities that continuously seek to improve how information is shared with internal partners, and external stakeholders, often going above and beyond what is mandated by funders.

It is important to WFSCA that we stay ahead of performance while ensuring quality services. The Technical Assistance team developed a set of core indicators of our system and programs that identify any early warning signs so that we may work with our contractor(s) to course correct.

Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(A); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(1))

Boards must include a regional analysis of the following:

- The economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations
- The employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations

Board Response:

In 2016, WFSCA spearheaded an effort to create a Community Workforce Plan to address labor shortages by engaging employers and industry partnerships with chambers of commerce, institutions of higher education, and community-based organizations that provide occupational training. In 2021 Hire Local, the second iteration of the Community Workforce Plan, was developed building from the learnings from the Community Workforce Plan. Austin currently has one of the hottest job markets in the country, but our community continues to grapple with equity concerns such as unaffordability.

Since our initial analysis in 2016, WFSCA identified the Skilled Trades/Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare and Information Technology industries as those in which there is high local demand for talent but not enough local people graduating from postsecondary with the skills and certifications needed to enter open positions. In 2017, due to the supply shortage of local graduates, WFSCA began focusing its targeted occupations on these three critical industries. In 2021, WFSCA added mobility/skilled trades as a targeted industry based on research from BSG on the projected demand and need for skilled workers in Austin's growing transportation sector. Project Connect, Cap Metro's expanding transit system and Austin Bergstrom Airport expansion are just a few projects that broke ground since COVID.

Since the pandemic, Travis County has remained a popular region for new and expanding businesses. According to JobsEq, as of 2022Q2, total employment for Travis County, Texas was 893,008 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2022Q2, employment increased 6.3% in the region. The unemployment rate for Travis County, Texas was 2.8% as of October 2022. The regional unemployment rate was lower than the national rate of 3.4%. One year earlier, in October 2021, the unemployment rate in Travis County, Texas was 3.3%.

The average worker in Travis County, Texas earned annual wages of \$85,509 as of 2022Q2. Average annual wages per worker increased 8.8% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$67,777 in the nation as of 2022Q2.

Austin/Travis County's recovery from the pandemic had higher employment in almost all industries in the first quarter in 2022 compared to 2021. The largest sector in Travis County, Texas is Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, employing 130,469 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Health Care and Social Assistance (92,736 workers) and Accommodation and Food Services (78,413).

In addition to the high skill, high demand occupations, WFSCA has identified several high demand occupations that do not require postsecondary education or long-term on-the-job training. These occupations include Fast Food and Counter Workers, Retail Salespersons, Office Clerks, Customer Service Representatives, Cashiers, Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers, General and Operations Managers and Waiters and Waitresses. Many of these occupations support the Leisure/Hospitality sector, which, although it has faced COVID-related challenges, still expects annual growth of about two percent over the next five years.

To help address the critical needs of employers and industry, WFSCA created three (soon to be 4) Industry Directors, each overseeing a target industry for our area: Skilled Trades/Manufacturing, IT, Healthcare, and soon to include Mobility. Each Director oversees an industry sector partnership and hold regularly scheduled meetings to discuss and identify short-term critical needs, such as in healthcare, as well as longer term needs of the industry. The Directors can use this information to coordinate with Austin Community College or other CBOs to develop training and/or apprenticeships to help address employer needs collectively.

WFSCA has focused on apprenticeships over the past two years to meet employer needs, while ensuring job seekers have income to sustain themselves while in training. The apprenticeships are heavily focused in healthcare because of the severe shortage in the field that was magnified because of COVID. WFSCA has also developed an apprenticeship in IT to meet the needs identified by the sector partnership employers.

WFSCA and Rural Capital work closely together in the industry work because many of our employers serve both regions. We coordinate apprenticeship opportunities, as well as sector partnership meetings together, when possible, to provide seamless and consistent services to employers without duplicating efforts.

WFSCA's Fiscal Year 2021 target occupation list focused on these three industries that are vital to our community. These occupations are primarily middle skill, which WFSCA defines as requiring additional training/education beyond a high school diploma/GED but less than a bachelor's degree. In lieu of postsecondary education, these occupations may require long-term on-the-job training.

For FY2023 WFSCA has proposed add the mobility sector as an emerging and in-demand industry sector for our region. Based on a market scan produced by BCG, the CapMetro project within Austin/Travis County will require 1,200 new frontline operations and management mobility positions.

The targeted occupation list also includes some entry-level Healthcare and Construction/Trade/Transportation occupations that may not require formal education or a high school diploma/GED to obtain employment. WFSCA has identified these occupations as preferred for youth and lower skilled adults who are entering a career pathway that will eventually lead to higher wage, higher skill employment. Conversely, WFSCA also included several Information Technology occupations that require a bachelor's degree. WFSCA recognizes that some clients, such as dislocated workers, may have bachelor's degrees and may be eligible for training to enter employment in these fields.

Finally, WFSCA will continue to include as targeted occupations several office support careers that fall into the Professional and Business Services industry. WFSCA determined that these occupations support a variety of businesses in other industries, such as Information, Healthcare and Skilled Trades, and will continue to be in demand as other industries grow. In addition, these Professional and Business Services occupations have historically provided clients with strong employment prospects.

WFSCA made changes to the Target Occupation list effective Jan. 1, 2022, our board removed one occupation Civil Engineering Technologists and Technician (17-3022). We also added a broader manufacturing targeted occupation (51-0000 Production Occupations) limited to include: Machinists (51-4042) and Inspectors, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers (51-9061). We also added Insurance Sales Agents (41-3021) and Marketing Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists (13-1161).

Capital Area has created a market analysis criterion to determine in-demand occupations for our region. The criteria requires that an in-demand occupation meets the following criteria:

- a. Current job postings (Labor Insight) = or >45
- b. Projected Job Openings 2018-2028 (TWC) = or >50
- c. Self-sufficient wages = above FPIL (200%)
- d. Required education = more than a high school diploma but less than a 4-year degree (can include long-term on-the-job training, such as apprenticeships or postsecondary, some college, no degree, and/or associates degree)
- e. Focus industries – Goal of 90% of the targeted occupations are in tech, healthcare, skilled trades and manufacturing.
- f. Local training outcomes – Compare graduation outcomes
- g. Local wisdom – Employers and/or industry association provide feedback based on the demand of the occupation in the region.

Workforce Solutions Capital Area Targeted Occupations – Effective Jan. 1, 2022

SOC	Occupation Job Title	Industry
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	Professional & Business Services
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	Professional & Business Services
47-2031	Carpenters	Skilled Trades
15-1150	Computer Support Specialists includes: 15-1231 Computer Network Support Specialists 15-1232 Computer User Support Specialists	Information Technology
	Computer Systems Analysts	
	Database Administrators and Architects	
15-1245	Database Administrators and Architects	Information Technology
31-9091	Dental Assistants	Health Sciences
29-1292	Dental Hygienists	Health Sciences
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	Health Sciences
47-2111	Electricians	Skilled Trades
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technicians	Health Sciences
17-3020	Engineering Technicians, Except Drafters, limited to: 17-3023 Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians	Skilled Trades
	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	Skilled Trades
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Skilled Trades
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	Skilled Trades
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents	Finance/Insurance
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Health Sciences
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	Skilled Trades
13-1111	Management Analysts	Professional & Business Services
13-1161	Marketing Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	Professional & Business Services
29-2012	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	Health Sciences
31-9092	Medical Assistants (requires obtaining 31-9097 Phlebotomists certification)	Health Sciences
	Medical Dosimetrists, Medical Records Specialists, and Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	
29-2098	Medical Dosimetrists, Medical Records Specialists, and Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	Health Sciences
43-6013	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	Health Sciences
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	Information Technology
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	Health Sciences
29-2043	Paramedics	Health Sciences
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	Health Sciences
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	Health Sciences
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	Skilled Trades
51-0000	Production Occupations, Limited to: 51-4041 Machinists 51-9061 Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	Skilled Trades
	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	Health Sciences
29-1141	Registered Nurses	Health Sciences
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	Health Sciences
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	Professional & Business Services
47-2211	Sheet Metal Workers	Skilled Trades
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	Information Technology
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	Health Sciences
49-3000	Vehicle & Mobile Equipment Mechanics, Installers & Repairers, limited to: 49-3023 Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics 49-3031 Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	Skilled Trades
	Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	
	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	
15-1257	Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	Information Technology
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	Skilled Trades

B. Knowledge and Skills Analysis

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(B); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(2))

Boards must include an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs for in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.

Board Response:

According to Labor Insight, in 2022 employers in the Austin-Round Rock, Texas Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) posted 373,700 jobs. Many of the top jobs posted were in Healthcare and Social Assistance (51,785), Accommodation and Food Services (34,515), and Professional and Scientific, and Technical Services (27,378). Software Developer/Engineer topped the list with almost 17,467 job postings and there were 14,369 job postings for Registered Nurses. . The most sought-after credentials, excluding the driver's license, were those required for Registered Nurses, followed by First Aid/CPR and Project Management Certification. Many job postings required certifications in basic life saving, food handlers certification, project management professional, advanced cardiac life support, and certified public accountant. . About 4,200 job postings required a food handler's certification, and almost 4,100 required a project management certification.

Healthcare employers have posted about 51,000 jobs over the past year, more than any other sector. Healthcare employers have consistently posted the highest percentage of job postings for Registered Nurses (13,167), Medical and Health Service Managers (2,709), Licensed Vocational Nurses (2,246), Nursing Assistants (1,391) and Medical Assistants (1,430). Healthcare job postings increased from 18.3 percent to 18.5 percent in the last year. Manufacturing job postings have increased from 8.5 percent to 9.0 percent, but Professional and Scientific and Skilled Trades declined from 12.4 to 9.8 percent and 2.7 to 2.4 percent respectively.

Retail Trade and Accommodation and Food Services, which make up part of the Hospitality sector, both have experienced increased job postings since 2020. However, Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services still represent 11.8 and 12.3 percent, respectively, of the total job postings in the Austin MSA. Many of the job postings in this sector require a high school diploma or equivalent, plus on the job training.

C. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

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

Boards must include an analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Board Response:

In November 2022, the unemployment rate was 2.7 percent, a decrease from November 2021's 3.1 percent rate. However, Travis County's unemployment rate was below that of the state (4.0 percent) and the nation (3.7 percent). The Austin MSA's unemployment rate has historically been below that of the state and nation. Since May 2022, the MSA unemployment rate has been a steady 2.9 percent according to Texas Workforce Commission, LMCI.

According to the TWC UI Claimant Dashboard 5-week claims data, there have been about 2,100 unemployment claims each week from November and December, 2022. Most initial claims are from food service contractors, temporary help services, professional employer organizations, school and employee bus transportation and custom computer programming services.

According to Burning Glass, the median age of people in the Austin MSA workforce is 37, slightly younger than the national average of 39. Most workers, 17.5 percent, are between 25 and 34 years old, and 15.6 percent of workers are aged 35 to 44. Most impacted workers were those with some college or an associate's degree.

D. Workforce Development Analysis

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

Boards must include an analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including education and training.

Part 3: Core Programs

A. Workforce Development System

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

Boards must include a description of the workforce development system in the workforce area that identifies:

- the programs that are included in the system; and
- how the Board will work with the entities that facilitate core programs and other workforce development programs **to support alignment to provide services**, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, that support the strategy identified in the State Plan under WIOA §102(b)(1)(E).

Board Response:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) authorizes key employment and training programs in the service delivery system to help workers acquire the tools and skills they need to be successful and to connect employers to the skilled workers they need. WIOA further aligns “core” programs to provide coordinated, comprehensive workforce services.

The core programs provided within the Career Centers are:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult and Dislocated Worker;
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/CHOICES;
- CHOICES Non-Custodial Program (NCP);
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP);
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA);
- Rehabilitation Act: Provides services to individuals with disabilities;
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Services: staff located within centers and directly employed by TWC; the contractor integrates these services under the Texas Model;
- Veteran’s Employment Services/Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP): provided by staff located within the centers and employed by the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) or TWC. The contractor is responsible for the coordination of this program and staff with the TVC or TWC.

Additionally, WFSCA receives funding for the Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum (WERC), a City- and County-funded program designed to provide short-term job training, job search and employment services. These services are similar to WIOA and offered to customers that might not qualify for WIOA services or as a supplement to enhance WIOA services.

Goodwill Industries of Central Texas (Goodwill) is the contractor for our WIOA Youth program. The program is offered through a partnership of five community agencies: Goodwill, LifeWorks, American Youth Works, Communities in Schools, and Skillpoint Alliance. Although WIOA Youth staff are not co-located in the Career Centers, orientations for the program are held within

the Career Center, and the Career Center contractor has an MOU with Goodwill for coordinated services under WIOA.

As a result of COVID-19, the City of Austin and Travis County received funding under the Stimulus Act of which a portion was contracted to WFSCA to provide rapid training and employment to individuals affected by COVID -19. WFSCA implemented the RE:WorkNOW (RWN) program which provided for rapid training, stipends while attending training, support services, and employment assistance to individuals that were laid off or affected by the pandemic. To provide expedited training, WFSCA released an RFP for providers to respond and develop short-term, online where possible, training in our target occupations. The RFP allowed us to work with new training providers and ultimately, expand the providers on our Eligible Training Provider List.

In 2022, the City and County received additional funding under the American Rescue Plan Act and WFSCA was able to implement RWN 2.0 with expanded partners and entry points throughout the community. WFSCA contracted with Austin Area Urban League, American Youth Works (Opportunity Youth) and The Arc. Through our contract with The Arc, we can provide job coaching and support to individuals with disabilities. This funding also allowed us to have staff onsite at other locations, such as Austin Community College and Local 286 to provide many opportunities for individuals to participate in training and receive supports to enter employment or upskill to an in-demand occupation.

The funding also allowed us to build a case management system in which providers can refer job seekers to us electronically so that we can track where job seekers are in the pipeline for enrollment. We are also able to accept eligibility documentation online, thereby making the process easier for customers. In developing the system, we built in protocols where staff can enter information detailing why a job seeker didn't complete, whether it be the application, eligibility process or any stage of services. This allows us to evaluate where customers "drop off" to help us improve services

For required programs that are not under the direct oversight of the workforce board, WFSCA has established Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with:

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

WFSCA works to strengthen service integration for seamless delivery of services to our customers as well as our community. WFSCA has MOUs in place with several community agencies to provide co-case management and workforce services through co-enrollment when appropriate.

WFSCA has established the following partnership strategies related to its strategic vision and goals:

Employers have access to a skilled workforce

- a. Meet regularly with, and attend convenings hosted by, local Chambers of Commerce.
- b. Become members of areas Chamber of Commerce.
- c. Join existing, or create if none exist, industry sector partnerships.
- d. Leverage the knowledge, expertise, and networks of Board of Directors in order to deepen trust and commitment to the public workforce system.
- e. Engage and ensure customer satisfaction of the employers who utilize the public workforce system.

WFSCA and our neighboring Board are working closely to align industry sector work, as well as services provided to businesses. In 2022, both Boards participated in system alignment of business services between the Board Industry Directors and contractor Business Service staff. This partnership allows for seamless and consistent services to businesses in the region. Additionally, WFSCA has developed a mobility partnership with Capital Metro to get in front of the needs our area will have as Project Connect is implemented which will create thousands of jobs in the skilled trades and mobility industries.

WFSCA and Capital Metro entered into an interlocal agreement to establish the work done together to implement, expand and enhance the mobility sector utilizing the following strategies:

1. Leverage funding to create a clear understanding of talent access points in the area, notably the education institutions, and also the capacity to scale up proportionate to meeting more of the area's needs.
2. Connect local residents to open positions at Capital Metro, including no-cost trainings for motivated residents to acquire the skills necessary to do the work.
3. The Mobility Partnership will be a key strategy outlined in the Hire Local Plan to address Capital Metro's workforce needs as projected within Project Connect
4. To develop and launch the Mobility Partnership, Workforce Solutions will accomplish the following necessary goals.
 - a. *Serve as public workforce system counterpart to Capital Metro's Workforce Director* – Workforce Solutions will coordinate with Capital Metro's Workforce Director to connect local education entities, labor union trades people, school districts, and community-based organizations from around the region to build relationships and collect initial capacity data.
 - b. *Analyze the mobility workforce ecosystem* -analysis will also draw out unintended consequences of hiring demands, such as displacing CDL drivers from area school districts and hiring in competition with highly recognized employers like Tesla and Samsung Austin Semiconductors.

- c. *Educate leaders* – Workforce Solutions will educate workforce development leaders regarding the mobility employment ecosystem in Austin.
- d. *Identify and recommend available resources for workforce development*

Austin Regional Manufacturing Association (ARMA) serves as sector partnership for manufacturing. With Tesla entering our region, as well as the thousands of jobs that will be created with Samsung, our Industry Directors are working closely with employers, training providers, as well as Rural Capital Board to ensure we have or to develop training and upskilling programs.

The workforce has the literacy, workforce readiness, education and occupational skills to obtain and maintain meaningful employment

- a. Enter into an agreement with, and meet regularly with, the local Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) provider and its contractors.
- b. Co-locate AEL staff in One-Stop System to ensure staff collaboration.
- c. Meet regularly with executive and operational leadership of key secondary and post-secondary systems (area Independent School Districts and Austin Community College) to ensure understanding of and ability to contribute to effective and results-driven career pathways.
- d. Enter into agreements with area CBOs who are essential participants in the provision of services in the workforce system.
- e. Collaborate with and plan for future co-location of representatives from the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the Division of Blind Services (DBS), now under the governance of TWC. Ensure regular and planned presence of DARS and DBS staff on-site at One-Stop to ensure access to services for all customers, particularly those with disabilities.

Job seekers have access to meaningful employment opportunities

- a. Through area educators and with area CBOs, promote customer-focused, engaging collateral about in-demand industries and occupations via the Board’s website and printed materials for educators, parents, youth, and job seekers
- b. Post and publicize WFSCA’s Target Occupation List, with related information about access to training in those occupations.
- c. In collaboration with area employers, promote the multitude of earn-and-learn opportunities. Engage and enter into agreements with employers who will offer registered apprenticeship opportunities for job seekers. Increase work experience and On-the-Job training opportunities for youth and job seekers with barriers to employment, including those job seekers with disabilities.
- d. In collaboration with local government and area ISDs, support, promote, and participate in career fairs for young people, including Opportunity Youth to inform about and connect youth to career pathways which lead to meaningful employment.

Workforce Solutions Capital Area meets or exceeds all performance targets set by its governing body

- a. In collaboration with WFSCA’s contractors, meet at least monthly to review budgets, expenditures, and procurements.
- b. In collaboration with WFSCA’s contractors, review performance and provide technical assistance on a monthly basis.
- c. With CBOs and other community stakeholder groups, identify trends that impact the workforce system’s ability to prepare the workforce and meet employer demand, both current and future.
- d. Adopt a localized goal, called 75x20, in order to measure WFSCA’s overall effectiveness in placing job seeker trainees in training-related employment. The goal states that by the year 2020, at least 75% of all job seekers who engage in training services funded by WFSCA will find training-related employment upon completion of training services.
- e. Establish and follow a regular risk-assessment monitoring schedule for publicly funded contracts.

WFSCA has added an Industry Sector Director to work with the Information Technology (IT) sector, like our Industry Directors of manufacturing and Healthcare. The Directors work closely with industry to understand their hiring and training needs to identify ways in which we can support through job seeker referrals to open positions, training, and upskilling. The Directors work closely with our Career Center contractor to identify job candidates for open positions and provide training for job seekers seeking employment in these demand industries.

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

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

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

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

Boards must include a description of the Board’s plan for working with at least one of the Governor’s industry clusters.

Board Response:

WFSCA works with entities carrying out core programs, and with required partners to align resources available to the local area by continuing to implement and strengthen execution of the

Texas Model in the Capital Area. The contractor that manages the Career Centers in Travis County is responsible for the provision of core programs and services. These include TANF, SNAP, WIOA (Adult and Dislocated Worker). The contractor also provides guidance and oversight to TWC Employment Services staff. Although these staff work for the state, they are located within our career centers and provide services to customers. Similarly, Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation staff are co-located within our flagship career center location. The contractor is likewise responsible for providing direction to Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) staff, in coordination with TVC administration.

Although not co-located with the career centers, the WIOA Youth program works closely with the career centers to provide referrals, as appropriate. Orientations for the WIOA Youth program are also held monthly at the three career centers.

Having the City- and County-funded Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum (WERC) program within the career centers provides another avenue for individuals with barriers to employment to receive workforce services. Individuals that do not meet workforce program eligibility requirements or are not ready for training are able to receive services through the City- and County-funded WERC program.

WFSCA has developed a plan with Austin Community College's (ACC) Adult Education department that details pathways and entry points for individuals in need of workforce services and/or adult education. A blueprint has been developed that highlights points in which information can be shared and individuals can be referred for services. ACC has a staff member on site at the Career Center to help individuals navigate the ACC system and enroll in adult education and post-secondary education. WFSCA staff also refer individuals that are in need of adult education coupled with training to ACC Adult Education and provide wrap around services, as appropriate.

Training is the largest client service expense that WFSCA provides. As workforce funded individuals complete training, it is critical that they are able to obtain employment in the field or industry for which they were trained. In 2015, WFSCA developed the 75 X 20 Plan to work towards ensuring that by the year 2020, 75 percent of individuals trained will obtain employment in training related fields. WFSCA met this goal within two years achieving a 77% entered employment related to training rate in FY2017. WFSCA continues to track this metric and data from FY2019 shows the average yearly wage increase after training is \$30,487 coupled with a 78% entered employment related to training rate.

At the request of the Mayor of Austin and Travis County Judge, WFSCA is facilitating the development and ultimate implementation of the Community Workforce Plan. This plan creates a common agenda for the Austin community united in building or enhancing career pathways for economically disadvantaged individuals into middle skills jobs via career pathways. In order to be successful, the Community Plan requires participation from not only the Board and its contractors, but also the broader community of employers, employer associations, chambers of commerce, educators, faith-based entities, civic groups, CBOs, and individuals who will add their voice to solutions.

WFSCA received money from the City of Austin and Travis County under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to serve 1,000 economically disadvantaged individuals or those affected by COVID-19. WFSCA can braid ARPA and WIOA funding to provide training, supports, case management/career counseling and stipends while attending training. Additionally, WFSCA has co-located staff with Austin Community College and Local 286 Plumbers and Pipefitters to enroll job seekers into training onsite. The ARPA funding has allowed us to expand entry points within the community coupled with the ability to provide more training in demand occupations. WFSCA has received funding to expand registered apprenticeships and we have worked closely with employers to develop five apprenticeship pathways in healthcare, IT and manufacturing.

Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery

A. One-Stop Service Delivery System

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

Boards must include a description of the one-stop delivery system in the workforce area, including explanations of the following:

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

The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners

Board Response:

- a. WFSCA believes that TWC contracted performance is only one way in which to measure contractor/provider performance. Along with the required measures, WFSCA places quality measures into provider contracts that measure the effectiveness of the system and programs. For the Career Center, the 75x20 Plan is one such measure. As part of the 75 x 20 Plan, WFSCA developed a Quality Expectations Plan to ensure that the contractor was working toward the goal of 75 x 20, but also of providing quality services to individuals that utilize career center services. The plan focuses on six core elements of providing quality case management while ensuring customers are supported throughout training and as they enter employment. The six core elements are:
 - Create clear pathways to training and employment
 - Assist clients to get into a pathway
 - Keep clients on a pathway until completion
 - Ensure clients know how and where to look for a job
 - Assist clients in getting a job
 - Support clients after job placement

The contractor has developed a plan to ensure that each element is offered through quality case management and services. Each element and service delivery component is designed to help towards the achievement of the 75 x 20 goal and the plan has resulted in achievement of the goal.

The Quality Expectations Plan outlines a path to provide services that meet the needs of job seekers/participants, as well as employers. The strong case management and career pathway focus allows for job seekers/participants to enter into a pathway through training and/or case management and on to a career. With a strong focus on identifying employment opportunities for individuals exiting training, the 75 x 20 Plan ensures that the Business Solutions Team is identifying jobs within industries in which customers are completing training and matching customers to those employers.

With the development of the case management system for the ARPA funding, WFSCA wanted a way to evaluate the length of time from outreach to enrollment. This was to identify efficiencies in service delivery to provide timely and quality services. We can also identify where in the process job seekers tend to “drop off” and use this information to fine tune service delivery offerings that meet the needs of job seekers.

WFSCA also developed a referral tool for training providers and community organizations to electronically refer an individual for career center services. This allows us to track where referrals are coming from, as well as the time from referral to enrollment.

We organize our work with employers into three industry sectors: Healthcare, IT, and Skilled Trades/Manufacturing. We use data from labor market information, as well as employers to identify employer needs so that we can partner with training providers and/or develop apprenticeships to fill the critical need in healthcare and skilled trades. We have used data from the IT sector partnership to develop an IT apprenticeship to launch in 2023 to fill the entry level needs of the IT industry.

Austin is planning a major transportation project, Project Connect, that will bring thousands of jobs to Travis County. We are projecting jobs in skilled trades, but also a considerable number of jobs in mobility. We utilize labor market information, projections from the local mobility group, as well as information from other cities that have undergone such a project, to determine the types of jobs and training that will be needed to fill the needs of the project. Given this is a new industry for our region, WFSCA will utilize a matching grant to conduct a research study of the landscape and needs of the industry/project. This study and data will help us to identify where investments should be made to ensure we have the skilled workforce to implement and maintain Project Connect.

In an effort to ensure that the youth in the Capital Area most in need were able to receive services, WFSCA required the WIOA Youth contractor to maintain a 75% out-of-school expenditure rate 6 years prior to the WIOA legislation that required this expenditure rate.

The WIOA Youth contract is a consortium of five youth serving agencies within the community. Goodwill is the lead agency and the partners are LifeWorks, American YouthWorks Communities in Schools, and Skillpoint Alliance. Each agency specializes in

services to youth with specific challenges, such as homelessness or foster youth. This consortium ensures youth are able to be served throughout the community and not solely within one entity. This system allows for youth to “begin where they are,” often times transitioning from one partner to another and growing within the program.

The Youth contractor has developed a system for case management in which staff specialize in serving the youth at various points within their service plan. Staff specialize in case management, while other staff begin working with youth when they complete training and are ready to begin to look for work. There are also staff that provide GED preparation and tutoring. This team approach of working with youth helps to ensure the youth feel supported at every step of their service plan and know that a team is working together to ensure their success.

- b. Currently, WFSCA has three, full-service Career Centers. We evaluate traffic, whether in person or virtual, in each center to ensure we are in the right places to meet job seeker needs. With the rising cost of rent in Austin, WFSCA is evaluating our service delivery model to determine if there are various points within the community that we should be available for services. One thing the pandemic taught us is that we can provide many services virtually, which means we can take our services into the community and not require job seekers to come to our facilities. In 2023, we are piloting having staff onsite at two libraries and Austin Community College and will use data collected on customer traffic and services to assess if maintaining three, brick and mortar facilities is still the best way to provide services. By housing staff at various sites within the community, we can make services more accessible to the community.

WFSCA utilizes its website to offer information about basic eligibility for workforce programs and child care. Applications for programs are also available on WFSCA’s website. As a result of COVID, WFS created an online portal called the Access Hub, in which customers can research careers, available training, and self-screen for program eligibility. Upon registration and completion of assessments, an individual’s information is sent to a case manager for immediate scheduling and enrollment, if appropriate.

We are beginning to see an increase in layoffs; therefore, it is difficult to forecast employer hiring and needs. Since COVID-19, we have not seen the numbers of job seekers coming in for services and supports and we have increased outreach within the community. We are coordinating with CBOs, and the food bank, as well as faith-based organizations. WFSCA is also piloting have staff onsite at local libraries to go to the job seekers rather than have them come to us. We feel that we can reach a greater number of job seekers with increased strategic coordination with our community partners.

- c. Physical accessibility of each career office location is assessed by the EO Officer on an annual basis. WFSCA staff conduct accessibility reviews to remove or correct barriers for individuals with disabilities. Each Career Center houses assistive technology and auxiliary aids, which is evaluated and replaced as needed, including but not limited to: Reserved workstations,

CCTV/video magnifier system, screen magnifiers, screen narrators/text-to-speech, digital TTY/VCO system, JAWS, TypeAbility, Vtech-analog phone, Personal amplifier system, stand-up desks, and Zoom Text software. Interpreters are available upon request and coordinated and funded by the Board to ensure access and quality of service.

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

- Courses through a Learning Management System where staff learn to provide customer service from a strength-based approach; identifying customers' skills and abilities and then matching them to available jobs.
- Computer based trainings from Texas Workforce Commission on Diversity, EEO, and Discrimination Prevention as well as the Discrimination Complaint Process, required of all new hires and then to be renewed at least every 2 years.
- Diversity Awareness training from Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- Usage of assistive technology in the career offices and various disability awareness topics.
- An overview of Equal Opportunity Standards and Guidelines including providing accommodations and the discrimination complaint process, as described in TWC's Employment Services guide.

To ensure customers with disabilities are able to “navigate” the workforce system in finding employment, our Business Solutions Team and Management staff:

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

- d. WFSCA believes that service delivery should be seamless for customers. They should not have to worry about which funding stream or partner is serving them. Rather, they should simply receive quality services from the workforce system. All Career Center partners are considered to be staff and are included in trainings and staff meetings. This helps to encourage coordination for customers and staff. New customers are encouraged to attend an orientation detailing all services available within the Career Center and complete a universal application that is not categorized by funding or program. The application allows for staff to evaluate all programs for which a customer might qualify to braid services to ensure that the customer receives the highest quality of service.

B. Cooperative Agreements

(WIOA §108(b)(14); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(13))

Boards must provide copies of executed cooperative agreements that explain how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA §107(d)(11)) between the Board or other local entities described in §101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit that administers programs that are carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 720 et seq.) (other than §112 or part C of that title (29 USC 732, 741) and are subject to §121(f) in accordance with §101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals who have disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts.

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

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

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

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

Board response:

WFSCA will continue to convene industry partnerships in Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare. These partnerships allow WFSCA to understand the real-time talent needs of business and for employers to learn about the services provided by WFSCA. WFSCA will hire a dedicated staff member to convene an IT partnership.

Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area

Board response:

While our system serves all job seekers within our region, a special emphasis is placed on ensuring customers completing WFSCA-funded training programs are presented with employment opportunities that align with their course of study. In addition to being industry focused, Business Solutions Team members are charged with identifying target employers with current and future job openings that align with WFSCA's in-demand Targeted Occupations List.

Recognizing one of the greatest challenges local employers face is the ability to develop in-house programming to help incumbent workers gain or to find new hires already with the up-to-date skills needed to grow their business, WFSCA will engage and enter into agreements with (as appropriate) employers to establish various training programs including:

- On-the-Job Training opportunities
- Internship and Subsidized Employment opportunities for job seekers with limited work experience and/or other barriers to employment
- Registered Apprenticeships

In addition, WFSCA will engage and enter into agreements with (as appropriate) employers to participate in publicly- and privately-funded grant opportunities to support additional in-demand skills training, including but not limited to Texas Workforce Commission-supported customized Skills Development Fund and Skills for Small Business grants.

Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development

Board Response:

WFSCA is a member of the Austin Chamber as well as a number of smaller, more niche chambers that support many small businesses. WFSCA staff regularly present information at chamber meetings and meet one-on-one with employers who are introduced to WFSCA by chamber staff. These chambers include:

Austin Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce
Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce
Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Austin Young Chamber

Strengthen links between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs

Board Response:

WFSCA uses unemployment insurance data to provide one-stop services by outreaching individuals for orientations detailing job search and training services. When possible, our Business Service Team coordinates job fairs by industry, utilizing the data from unemployment insurance. COVID has changed the way in which we work with UI claimants through virtual services. We are able to offer services to larger groups of people and meet customers where they are due to the flexible nature of online services. Claimants are assessed for all one-stop services, including WIOA and our locally funded programs.

Note: This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector

strategies, career pathways initiatives, use of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers. These initiatives must support the strategy described above.

D. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

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

A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system.

Under the Texas Model, WFSCA provides day-to-day guidance and oversight of Employment Service (ES) staff (Wagner-Peyser funded staff). TWC maintains administrative responsibility for ES staff; however, Career Center management is responsible for directing day to day activities, assigning goals, and evaluation of performance. TWC provides support to Career Center management through Integrated Service Area Managers (ISAM). Although day to day oversight is provided by the Career Center management, staff maintain close coordination with the ISAM to ensure adherence to ES state and federal guidelines, as well as maintain open communication regarding services and performance.

The integration of ES staff into the workforce system eliminates the possibility of duplication of services. ES staff work closely with program staff to assist with job referrals, WIT enrollment, as well as with the Business Solutions Team to ensure job postings are entered into WIT. The coordination of ES staff into the operations of the Career Center allows for seamless delivery of services to customers regardless of funding stream.

E. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management

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

Boards must include a description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

Board Response:

WFSCA incorporates technology into the one-stop system that include integrated intake and case management systems WIOA programs, as well as all programs operated by the Career Center. WFSCA incorporates the following technology based programs that are administered by the Texas Workforce Commission:

- WorkInTexas.com (WIT)-online labor-exchange system that is mandated by the Wagner-Peyser Act. This system is available to individuals within the Career Centers, as well as anyone with access to a computer.

- The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST)-integrated intake, eligibility, case management, and reporting system. TWIST is utilized by employment and training programs, as well as the child care program. This central repository allows for case managers to identify additional services that a customer might be receiving or is eligible for. TWIST interfaces with WIT, Unemployment Insurance system, as well as Health and Human Services systems.
- Virtual One-Stop Greeter-provides a tool for Boards to record customer information during Career Center point-of-entry visits; the ability to quickly identify priority of service veterans who are registered in WIT; designate a selection of staff to be alerted via an office check-in log dependent on customer visit reasons; adds customers to a waiting list upon sign-in; and provides reports identifying how customers and/or staff are using the Greeter interface.
- Child Care Attendance and Automation (CCAA)-allows parents to record attendance through a swipe card system located within approved child care centers.
- Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER)- TWC's web application that allows Boards to report and draw down funds from their program allocations.

A child care pre-assessment application is available on WFSCA's website. The Access Hub developed by WFSCA through a partnership with the City and County because of COVID, has an eligibility assessment for specialized programs that enables WFSCA to reach out to customers that express interest in services.

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

A. Economic Development and Entrepreneurial/Microenterprise Activities

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

Boards must include an explanation of how the Board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the workforce area and how the Board will promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services.

WFSCA will review and align where appropriate the individual project/campaign, annual and multi-year goals of regional economic development organizations and economic development departments of local government. Our internal industry experts, training programs and industry sector partnerships may be natural support mechanisms for planned economic development activities.

Many of the occupations supported on WFSCA's Targeted Occupations list could prepare a trainee to become an independent contractor/entrepreneur or a direct hire for an established employer. While WFSCA does not provide training specifically for aspiring entrepreneurs, we do partner with the City of Austin Economic Development Department's Small Business Program to ensure customers interested in entrepreneurial activities have a direct resource. In addition, we connect interested clients with PeopleFund, a non-profit that provides small business loans as well as business assistance and education to people with otherwise limited access to such resources. Microenterprises have access to the same employer services available to much larger employers. However, we recognize many startups and small businesses are unaware of the services we provide. WFSCA will continue to engage new employers through and seek employer referrals from local economic development organizations.

B. Rapid Response Activity Coordination

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

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

WFSCA will partner with the State Rapid Response Unit to ensure local employers and workers receive timely and appropriate services. WFSCA services include the coordination of customized Rapid Response Orientation and the provision of packets of relevant Unemployment Insurance, job search and workforce development programming information for affected workers.

Time and employer interest permitting, the Board will also provide:

- Customized listings of current job openings similar to those of the affected workers
- Onsite online or paper registration for the statewide online talent database WorkInTexas.com
- Job posting referrals

- Organization of targeted job fairs
- Coordination of additional required supports, including multi-lingual staff

Resources, including information sessions and hiring events, will continue to be provided remotely when warranted by COVID-19 and work from home orders.

C. Youth Activities and Services

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

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

Board Response:

Our youth program consists of five agencies referred to as the Youth Employment Partnership (YEP). The agencies that make up the YEP are Goodwill Industries of Central Texas serving as the lead agency, and partners LifeWorks, American YouthWorks, Communities in Schools, and Skillpoint Alliance.

Goodwill’s mission is “transforming generations by empowering people through education, career training, and work”. Goodwill has served opportunity youth since its founding, with approximately 3,600 opportunity youth served in 2019. Opportunity Youth are defined as youth ages 16-24 that are not sufficiently connected to education or work. About 630 participated in WIOA Youth services in 2019, which continues to represent one of Goodwill’s most intensive, highest-impact programs. The organization has chosen to focus strategically on five target populations for maximum impact: people with disabilities, those lacking skills or education, people with criminal backgrounds, those who are homeless or experiencing housing instability, and opportunity youth.

The YEP has been identified as the “promising pathway” by the Austin Opportunity Youth Collaborative, a consortium of more than 20 youth-serving organizations and partners committed to empowering youth to be productive members in the community. In response to the need to address the challenges faced by the nearly 6.7 million youth nationwide who are not in school, college, or work, the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions has committed to working with a selection of 34 communities to build a multi-year cross-sector collaborative approach to changing the system in these regions to encourage connection to and success in school, work, and the community. Through a competitive application process, Austin was chosen in 2013, with WFSCA as the backbone agency, to be one of these cities—the only one in Texas at the time. As the backbone organization, Workforce Solutions convened the Austin Opportunity Youth Collaborative, a broad coalition of community organizations, public agencies, school districts, colleges and universities, and businesses dedicated to changing systems and working directly with youth to co-create pathways to success. The Austin Opportunity Youth Collaborative Strategic Plan directly correlates with the proposed WIOA Youth services, through supporting youth

transitions, developing industry partnerships, partnering with high schools to pair a diploma with an industry-recognized credential, and increasing youth knowledge of career pathways.

The YEP WIOA program model continues to be based on the “Back on Track” design developed by JFF that incorporates the three phases of Enriched Preparation, Postsecondary Bridging, and First-Year Support for opportunity youth. Without these pathways, opportunity youth are more likely to remain disengaged in academics and the workforce. With the services offered through the YEP, youth will be supported to make accelerated progress on their educational and career goals through evidence-based interventions.

The YEP offers services throughout the Austin community. All service locations and facilities are fully ADA compliant, with many going beyond ADA compliance by exceeding minimum access requirements, offering assistive technology, etc.

Below is a chart outlining the roles, responsibilities, and functions of each YEP agency and close collaborators.

Partner/Collaborator	Roles and Responsibilities	Function
Goodwill Central Texas	Programmatic and fiscal reporting, program oversight. Will hire, train, and manage Case Managers and other staff for the program, and comply with all relevant rules and regulations. Goodwill will recruit, orient, and refer eligible youth to the program, provide tutoring and basic education instruction, alternative/secondary education options, work experiences, occupational skills training, education, leadership development, supportive services, follow-up services, comprehensive guidance and counseling, financial literacy education, entrepreneurial skills training, labor market and employment information, and assistance to youth with transitioning to postsecondary education/training. In order to reduce barriers to opportunity youth and other target populations, WIOA Youth program participants can easily be connected to training and employment opportunities through the Goodwill Excel Center, which is the first free public charter high school in Texas with three locations in Austin. The Goodwill Career & Technical Academy currently offers occupational training in all three targeted industries: healthcare, skilled trades and information technology.	Prime contractor and lead and fiscal agent

	Goodwill also operates Goodwill Talent Solutions, a temporary and temp-to-hire staffing agency, which offers clients additional employment opportunities.	
LifeWorks:	Recruitment, orientation, and referral of eligible youth, particularly youth who are homeless or in/aging out of foster care. LifeWorks will provide GED preparation and training, individual and group counseling, supported employment and education services, assistance with college enrollment, and co-enrollment in other LifeWorks programs.	Funded partner
American YouthWorks	Recruitment, orientation, and referral of eligible youth, alternative secondary school services, GED training, occupational skills training, paid and unpaid work experiences, wraparound support services, life skills, employment readiness training, pre-apprenticeships, career counseling and exploration, financial literacy, comprehensive counseling, community service projects, leadership skills development, and follow-up. Youth will be co-enrolled in other AYW services as appropriate, such as YouthBuild, which provides pre-apprenticeship training in all facets of the building trades and is considered a quality pre-apprenticeship program according to standards established by the U.S. Department of Labor.	Funded partner
Skillpoint Alliance	Referral of eligible youth, skills training, co-enrollment in other Skillpoint Alliance programs.	Funded partner
Austin Community College	Occupational training, postsecondary education, participant referral.	Non-funded collaborator/partner
Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services	Referrals include young adults ages 18-24 who qualify for WIOA and where Goodwill can leverage additional resources as a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) provider. a. Offer transition services for high school students with disabilities (job coaching, work adjustment training, and supported employment).	Non-funded collaborator/partner

	b. Pipeline of referral for eligible students with disabilities, through more than 20 area high schools (upon graduation these students qualify for WIOA OSY and can complete career advancement training, occupational skills training, and paid work experiences). Through the Summer Earn and Learn program, Goodwill also offers paid summer work experiences.	
Career Center Contractor	Youth co-enrollment in WIOA Adult services, other career center services, and access to the full Eligible Training Provider System list for occupational skills training (required for WIOA funding approval). Career Center contractor allows youth access to career exploration/planning and other activities designed to help youth identify career interests and goals.	Non-funded collaborator/partner
Workforce Solutions Capital Area	Labor market expertise, program development guidance, Austin Opportunity Youth backbone agency, co-located One-Stop Career Center at the Goodwill Resource Center, mutual referrals for other programs, co-enrollment in WFS programs. TWC executes Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) through the Board and GCT as the subcontractor to provide students with disabilities with work-based learning and training services. Upon high school graduation, students are a referral pipeline for the WIOA OSY Program to access career counseling, career advancement training, occupational training, work experience, and employment opportunities.	Funder/Contractor
City of Austin Public Health	Youth referral source through Youth Development Program, co-enrollment in other programs, community resource.	Collaborator
Upbring	Foster youth referral source through their local agency programs, co-enrollment in other programs, community resource.	Collaborator
Settlement Home	Foster youth referral source through their local agency programs, co-enrollment in other programs, community resource.	Collaborator
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child	Foster Youth referral source through their Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Program,	Collaborator

Protective Services (DFPS)	co-enrollment in other programs, community resource.	
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For youth with disabilities, the YEP maintains relationships with local high schools to identify and recruit students who are in danger of dropping out of school or aging out of the public school system, including students with disabilities. YEP staff attend ISD Transition Fairs to connect with students with disabilities and parents. YEP staff also work closely with Vocational Adjustment Coordinators at schools, as well as through Transitioning Students to Achieve Independence Through Career Education (TAVAC) where YEP representatives attend meetings and conduct presentations. Other community organizations serving people with disabilities and their families are also a source of eligible youth. The YEP also works with Special Education departments at Travis County high schools to capture that sub-set of older youth with disabilities who continue in high school beyond age 18. Goodwill also provides job coaching and placement services for Travis County summer youth participants, who are high school students with disabilities, and Goodwill has a School-to-Work Program for youth with disabilities. Both programs are sources of potential referrals. Goodwill also operates the annual Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program to increase work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities through Texas' integrated workforce system, thereby providing participants with foundational employment skills and better preparing them for successful transition to postsecondary education and employment.

As a contracted Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services Community Rehabilitation Program (CPR) provider, Goodwill is also well-positioned to connect with this population through mutual Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services referrals and complementary services; these include job coaching, work adjustment training, and supported employment.

D. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

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

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

Board Response:

WFSCA provides in-person services, virtual services, and educational materials to secondary students, as well as their parents, teachers, counselors and college advisors. WFSCA gives labor market presentations about in-demand occupations and industries at middle and high schools in 5 local ISDs as well as the Region 13 Education Service Center. Additionally, WFSCA attends career fairs as a career resources and provides student career profile resources, which are informational profiles that give students a general understanding of in-demand occupations. These profiles contain local labor market information about the average wages and job openings in the Capital Area. During COVID-19, WFSCA has made a virtual career fair platform available to the ISDs so students can continue to connect with employers despite restrictions on in-person gatherings. WFSCA staff have created a library of over 100 videos to help secondary students

understand career pathways, how to secure a job, and how to be successful in a professional environment.

WFSCA and Austin Community College have had a long-standing relationship in the coordination of services for individuals in GED and post-secondary education. The Blueprint for coordination of Adult Education and Workforce designs a plan to enhance services for individuals between the two agencies WFSCA has monthly service integration meetings with ACC to ensure smooth coordination of our services and a seamless customer service experience for customers/students. The development of an online referral tool allows ACC staff to conduct a pre-assessment for WIOA eligibility and directly refer to Career Center staff for evaluation for programmatic intake.

E. Child Care and Early Learning

(40 TAC §809.12 Board Plan for Child Care Services)

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

Note: This may include efforts to:

- Coordinate with employers, economic development, and other industry leaders to increase the awareness and importance of early learning as a workforce and economic development tool
- Support improved school readiness through higher-quality child care, including Texas Rising Star, and through partnership opportunities such as prekindergarten partnerships
- Support the needs of the child care industry, which could include assistance with business development or shared services, as well as opportunities to support professional growth and career pathways for early education

Board Response:

WFSCA has always been at the forefront of understanding the importance that child care plays in economic development. The affects of COVID have amplified the importance of child care to our community and economic development. WFSCA works with community partners to increase quality education and Texas Rising Star providers through our QC3 Strategic Plan. Many of the strategies of the plan are to increase teacher education and pay to retain quality early education teachers in the classrooms, as well as increasing the number of quality providers in Travis County.

Continuity of child care is important for families and business in Travis County. WFSCA's child care and career center contractors developed a system in which parents that are out of work or completing an educational program can work with an Employment Specialist to obtain employment and maintain child care services. Additionally, the City of Austin and Travis County fund a Continuity of Care program through WFS to create a bridge for families that temporarily

lose child care or to pay for care while individuals are looking for employment. This funding provides a safety net for vulnerable families to maintain quality child care for their children.

WFSCA is partnering with the United Way to expand prekindergarten partnerships across the County. Through this partnership, quality child care providers that offer prekindergarten services can draw down matching federal dollars to expand their programs to serve more children and families.

Business development and shared services are promoted through Smart Care which is a platform used to create and implement a Quality Child Care Shared Services Alliance for functions such as payroll, staff recruitment and pre-service training, and bulk purchasing and benefits. Professional growth and career pathways for early education is reinforced through Teacher TRAC. Through college scholarships and stipends for materials, the program supports early childhood professionals as they pursue a CDA credential, or an Associate's or Bachelor's degree.

F. Transportation and Other Support Services

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

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

Board Response:

Customers enrolled in WFSCA-sponsored programs are able to receive support services in order to remove barriers to employment, education/training, and participation in workforce programs. Support services are provided as authorized by program rules and if determined to be necessary to enable the participant to enter into or continue with services. Support services include:

- Subsidized childcare assistance
- Transportation in the form of bus passes or gas cards depending upon the customer's circumstances
- Work/employment-related expenses (tools, uniforms)
- Crisis assistance in the form of housing and utility assistance, minor car repairs, vehicle inspection and/or registration fees)

G. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)

(WIOA §108(b)(13); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(12))

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

Board Response:

WFSCA has an Austin Community College Adult Education and Literacy representative on-site at one of our Career Centers. Having staff on-site allows for referral and coordination of services, both Adult Education and workforce. WFSCA and ACC have a long history of coordination. An area of coordination between Adult Ed and workforce was the development of Integrated Basic Education and Training (IBEST) courses. IBEST is a teaching model that incorporates adult basic education with occupational training so that an individual can gain the skills necessary to enter the workforce. Through coordination with ACC's Adult Education and Continuing Education departments, ACC developed IBEST courses specific to the needs of WFSCA. WFSCA was able to refer participants in need of basic education, as well as training. These trainings enabled participants to obtain the training and education needed to enter the workforce.

WFSCA utilized a grant from TWC to enhance coordination of services between Adult Education and workforce. Through a thorough evaluation of each agency's programs and eligibility requirements, a cross walk was developed detailing points where students/participants can be referred or served by both programs. Frontline staff were trained in the Blueprint for Coordinated Services and have a better understanding of each agency's services in order to ensure effective coordination and service provision for customers. Designated points of contacts within the community college and workforce programs, coupled with clear referral processes will ensure that customers receive needed services from both agencies. WFSCA and ACC Adult Education continue effective coordination through the Blueprint strategies.

WFSCA has reviewed local applications submitted by the community college or other agencies submitting application under WIOA Title II. Anytime coordination with a local workforce board is required in an application, WFSCA works with community agencies to provide letters of support, review of application, information, and assistance.

Part 6: Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Services

A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training

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

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

Boards must also include the list of assessment instruments (tools) used for adult, dislocated worker, and youth.

Board Response:

WFSCA offers services to individuals entering the workforce, going back to work, continuing work, or advancing in their careers. The Career Centers provide two levels of service: Career Services and Training Services.

Career Services are available to any customer who wants or needs services. Career Services are designed to assist individuals in obtaining or maintaining employment. Career Services include:

- Job openings/listings;
- Labor market information;
- Computer access
 - Resume preparation
 - Job search
 - Email for job search purposes
- Employment related seminars
 - Resume preparation
 - Job search tools
 - Interviewing tips
 - Overcoming barriers
 - Job clubs;
- Placement services;
- Career counseling and planning;
- Outreach, intake (including worker profiling), and orientation to the full array of services available through the Career Centers (including those not funded by TWC);
- Information on the availability of support services, and appropriate referrals to those services, including:
 - Child care;
 - Child support;
 - Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program;
 - Benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
 - Assistance through the earned income tax credit; and
 - Assistance for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF);

- Initial assessment of skills levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and support service needs; Assessment instruments used include TABE (11/12) and Wonderlic GAIN (Youth).
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services;
- Workforce preparation activities;
- Follow up services.

Training services are available to assist individuals in gaining the skills necessary to obtain employment in high demand occupations with the workforce area, subject to eligibility and funding availability. Training services include:

- Occupational skills training;
- On-the-job training (OJT);
- Registered apprenticeship;
- Incumbent worker training;
- Skills upgrading and retraining;
- Job readiness training provided in combination with other training described above;
- Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition; and
- Customized training.

The design framework of our youth program consist of five agencies referred to as the Youth Employment Partnership (YEP). The YEP partners are Goodwill Central Texas as the lead agency and partners LifeWorks, American YouthWorks, Communities in Schools, and Skillpoint Alliance. Below is a chart that outlines how the 14 program elements are made available within the framework.

14 Required Program Elements

Required Program Element	Provision/Availability
1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies	Directly by four partners in the YEP (Goodwill, Communities in Schools, American YouthWorks, and LifeWorks)
2. Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services	Directly by YEP (CIS), and charter schools, including the Goodwill Excel Center main campus and also co-located at American YouthWorks.
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education	Directly through the YEP and area employers, as well as through the Travis County Summer Employment Program.

4. Occupational skills training:	Skillpoint Alliance; Payment to Austin Community College or trade/technical schools on the WIOA-approved training provider list.
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster	Directly through YEP.
6. Leadership development	Directly through YEP, as well as utilization of existing community resources such as the Austin Opportunity Youth Collaborative.
7. Supportive services: Assistance with transportation, child care, housing, work attire/tools, linkages to community services, medical expenses, and food.	Directly through YEP, by voucher, or existing resources.
8. Adult Mentoring	Directly by YEP through American YouthWorks (Casa Verde Builders and YouthBuild participants) and Communities in Schools. Mentoring is offered for a minimum of 12 months.
9. Follow-up Services	Directly through YEP, offered for a period of not less than 12 months.
10. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling	Directly through YEP, as well as through community resources such as Austin Child Guidance Center.
11. Financial literacy education	Directly through YEP (EverFi curriculum)
12. Entrepreneurial skills training	Provided directly through the YEP, as well as community classes including through the City of Austin and Austin Public Library.
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area	Provided directly through YEP (CRT Boot Camp and other YEP activities)

14. Assistance transitioning to postsecondary education and training	Directly through YEP

B. Priority to Recipients of Public Assistance and Low-Income Individuals

(20 CFR §679.560(b)(21))

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

Board Response:

Based upon the TWC WIOA Guidelines, WFSCA gives priority of service for individualized career and training services in the following order:

- Eligible veterans and eligible spouses (as defined in TWC WD Letter 01-21) who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.
- Non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are also recipients of public assistance, low income or basic skills deficient in the following order:
 - i. Foster youth and former foster youth (as defined in TWC WD Letter 43-11, Chg 2) as required by Texas Family Code §264.121.
 - ii. Non-foster youth
- All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses.
- Priority populations established by the governor and/or Board in the following order:
 - i. All other foster youth and former foster youth, as required by Texas Labor Code §264.121
 - ii. Local Board priority groups
- WFSCA has established three local priority groups
 - i. Local Group 1 - shall consist of income eligible individuals who fall into one or more of the following categories:
 - Ex-offenders
 - School dropouts
 - Individuals age 55 and older
 - ii. Local Group 2 - shall consist of individuals with an annualized income up to 85% of the State Median Income Level.

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Family Income	\$39,242	\$51,317	\$63,391	\$75,466	\$87,540	\$99,615	\$101,878	\$104,142

Non-Covered individuals outside of the groups given priority under WIOA.

As part of the intake and enrollment process, customers complete an Adult Priority of Service form where they can select if they meet criteria that would qualify them for priority of service. This tool enables the career counselor to ensure that priority is being given to those that fall into the various categories.

Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts

A. Fiscal Agent

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

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

Board Response:

WorkSource – Greater Austin Area Workforce Board, DBA Workforce Solutions – Capital Area Workforce Board, is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds for the Austin/Travis County region as described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i). The area Partnership Agreement identifies Workforce Solutions – Capital Area Workforce Board as the grant recipient.

B. Sub-Grants and Contracts

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

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

Board Response:

WFSCA utilizes a procurement process for supplies; equipment; construction; and specific services, program activities or goods for Workforce programs to ensure maximum full and open competition. These standards are intended to ensure that such purchases are obtained efficiently and economically and in compliance with the provisions of applicable State and Federal law and regulations and consistent with OMB 2 CFR 200.318, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, Texas Workforce Commission Financial Management Manual for Grants and Contracts, and the Texas Administrative Code Title 34 Part 1 Chapter 20 Subchapter C. These standards are also applicable to any covered procurement by subcontractors of the Board who purchase goods or services all or in part with Workforce funds. Additionally, WFSCA strives to select service providers who are registered as Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBS) and have demonstrated effectiveness in delivering comparable or related services.

The competitive negotiation method of procurement is used if the following conditions are present:

1. The nature of the item or service needed precludes developing a precise specification or a purchase description.
2. In addition to price, other factors will be considered in making an award.

3. Two or more responsible suppliers are willing and able to compete effectively for the award.
4. The price of the item(s) and / or service(s) to be purchased is over an aggregate of \$250,000.

When using the competitive negotiation method, WFSCA adheres to the following:

1. Solicit offers by distributing Requests for Quotes (RFQs) or Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to qualified sources and by publicly advertising the intent to contract. RFQs and RFPs are made available on our website, as well.
2. Ensure that the RFQ or RFP states a formal objective and identifies all significant evaluation factors.
3. Evaluate proposals received, determine responsible offertory and select the contractor(s). A minimum of three (3) evaluators are selected from internal or external subject matter experts. If using external subject matter experts, a Request for Quotation process is utilized to contract with the evaluators. Proposals received are date stamped and documented to ensure compliance with submission requirements. An initial screen of the proposal is done to ensure responsiveness of proposal. The proposals are sent to the evaluators with an evaluation/scoring document.

Upon receipt of the evaluator's scores, a recommendation is presented to a Board Committee for approval and then taken to the Board of Directors for action.

4. Conduct negotiations with offertory deemed to be in the competitive range, if appropriate. A pre-award survey/fiscal integrity evaluation is conducted (Jerry-before or after Board decision?)
5. Award the contract to the responsible offertory(s) whose proposal will be most advantageous to Workforce.
6. Notify unsuccessful offertory of the award.

Part 8: Performance

A. Board Performance Targets

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

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

Board Response:

Performance targets are set by TWC and Boards are evaluated based on the “Percent of Target” met. A Board is considered “Not Meeting” if performance falls less than 90% of target, “Meeting” if performance falls within 90%-110% of target, or “Exceeding” if performance is greater than 110% of target.

TWC sets performance targets for the 28 Boards in Texas. FY23 TWC performance targets for WFSCA are:

Program Specific

• Adult Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit:	69.80%
• Adult Worker Median Earnings Q2:	\$6,500
• Adult Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit:	70.70%
• Adult Credential (C&T):	82.70%
• Adult Measurable Skill Gains (MSG):	66.20%
• Dislocated Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit:	74.10%
• Dislocated Worker Median Earnings Q2:	\$8,600
• Dislocated Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit:	77.20%
• Dislocated Worker Credential (C&T):	80.80%
• Dislocated Measurable Skill Gains (MSG):	56.00%
• Youth Employed/Enrolled (Education) Q2 Post Exit:	76.80%
• Youth Employed/Enrolled (Education) Q4 Post Exit:	68.60%
• Youth Credential Rate (C&T):	62.50%
• Youth Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit:	\$3,300
• Youth Measurable Skill Gains (MSG):	22.80%

Workforce System:

• Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – C&T:	63.30%
• Employed/Enrolled 2-4 Post Exit C&T:	80.25%
• Credential Rate – C&T Participants	70.10%

As part of fiscal oversight, information on budget and expenditures is presented to the Board of Directors. This ensures that WFSCA is in compliance with funding requirements and benchmarks that are set by TWC for programs.

Through contract management, WFSCA ensures contractors are in compliance with program rules, policies, and procedures. The Director of Contract Compliance and Director of Workforce Performance ensure that contracts are meeting benchmarks and performance, as outlined in the contracts.

Part 9: Training and Services

A. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

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

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

Board Response:

All WIOA funded training is provided through the use of ITAs. Additionally, WFSCA uses the ITA system and Eligible Training Provider List to fund training in programs funded by local sources as these programs have been vetted by WFSCA and TWC.

WFSCA has not set caps or limits on ITAs. Instead, we have developed a cost cap tool to ensure that the cost and length of a training programs is consistent with industry standards for the local area. The cost caps tool has three components:

1. Maximum Total Cost
2. Maximum Cost per Hour
3. Minimum and Maximum Contact Hours

These caps are calculated from an average based on each program's a) curriculum/occupational target, b) credential type/program length, and c) institution type (public/private). Once the average is calculated for a particular type of program, the caps for maximum total cost and cost per hour are set at 125% of the average. The minimum number of contact hours is set at 50% of the average and the maximum at 150%.

Where available, ETPL eligible programs in the board area are used to calculate the averages. Otherwise programs from the surrounding areas are used. If those aren't available, programs from around the state are used.

WFSCA staff review applications to ensure that all criteria are met, including the cost cap analysis, and if approved, submit to TWC for final review and inclusion on the statewide list of eligible training providers (ETPL). Once added to the ETPL, customers are able to select training approved in the workforce area. Career counselors work closely with customers to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that includes previous work and education experience, as well as future employment goals. It is through the career counseling process that staff determine if training is appropriate and refer the customer to the ETPL. Customers are encouraged to visit several providers in the training field they are interested in, before making a decision on which training to attend.

Career counselors continue to maintain regular contact with customers while in training. This helps to ensure that customers have the supports that they need to complete training. This also allows for an opportunity for customers to complete a satisfaction survey for the training that they attended. Results from these surveys are maintained at each Career Center and are available for customers to review as part of their training selection process.

B. ITA Limitations

(20 CFR §663.420)

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

Board Response:

WFSCA does not place limits on the duration and amount of ITAs, although the trainings available through the Eligible Training Provider System are no longer than 2 years. ITAs are issued for the cost of the training. As part of the Eligible Training Provider review process, Board staff evaluate cost and contact hours of similar programs in order to determine an appropriate range of costs for each program. The ITA must reflect the cost approved by the Board and reflected on the ETPL.

As discussed in response to the question in section 9A, we have developed a cost cap tool to ensure that the cost and length of a training programs is consistent with industry standards for the local area. The cost caps tool has three components:

1. Maximum Total Cost
2. Maximum Cost per Hour
3. Minimum and Maximum Contact Hours

These caps are calculated from an average based on each program's a) curriculum/occupational target, b) credential type/program length, and c) institution type (public/private). Once the average is calculated for a particular type of program, the caps for maximum total cost and cost per hour are set at 125% of the average. The minimum number of contact hours is set at 50% of the average and the maximum at 150%.

Part 10: Apprenticeship

A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs

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

Board Response:

WFSCA staff have coordinated with TWC to receive a full list of all Registered Apprenticeships in the region. Staff are outreaching them to make sure they understand the benefits of registering with the ETPS and are providing technical assistance as needed. WFSCA helped local providers successfully register MC3 pre-apprenticeship training and Lone Star Electric pre-apprenticeship training on the ETPS and will continue to explore similar opportunities.

B. Apprenticeship Texas

Boards must include a description of the Board's strategy and commitment to support Apprenticeship Texas efforts across the state, as applicable.

Board Response:

WFSCA has partnered with employers in the Skilled Trades and Healthcare to create new pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs and expand existing programs. WFSCA works closely with the local union apprenticeship programs to promote MC3 (Multi-Craft Core Curriculum) and provides staff support to the MC3 Advisory Council. WFSCA has also provided financial support to the Trio Electric high school pre-apprenticeship program. WFSCA has provided financial and technical assistance to the Baylor Scott & White Medical Assistant apprenticeship program and is currently working to expand MA apprenticeship options with additional hospitals and training providers in the region.

Part 11: Public Comment

Boards must include a description of the process used by the Board, consistent with WIOA §108(d), 20 CFR §679.550(b) and §679.560(b) and (e), to:

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

Board Response:

WFSCA made the WIOA Plan available for public comment on its website January 24, 2023. WFSCA also included information about the Plan and request for public comment in our January newsletter that was published January 30, 2023. The Plan was available for public comment through February 24, 2023.

The Plan was presented to the Board on February 23, 2023 and approved by the Executive Committee on March 31, 2023.

Appendix: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

Local Workforce Development Board Strategic Planning

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) is charged under Texas Government Code §2308.101(5), 2308.302(a), and 2308.304(a)(b)(4), and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Public Law 113–128) with recommending the plans of Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) to the governor for consideration for approval. TWIC reviews each Board Plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide goals and objectives in the system plan, The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023, which can be found at <https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/twic/System-Strategic-PlanUpdate.pdf>.

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

Demonstrating Alignment with Texas’ Strategic Plan for the Workforce System

The four sections below list and describe the four system goals from The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 (2020 Update) that identify critical, high-priority system issues for the state. **For each goal, briefly describe one significant Board strategy or initiative that fulfills the intent of the goal. Also, please include the corresponding page number(s) within your plan that further details the identified strategy or initiative.**

System Goal 1 and Rationale

Focus on Employers

By accessing critical education and labor data sets, employers can better find and plan for skilled workers to meet their needs in both the immediate time frame and the future. Through greater engagement with employers, education and training providers can better design career and technical education content and delivery options that are more aligned with industry needs. Providers can make adjustments in program content to benefit employers and students, as well as address both state and regional economic needs.

System Goal 1—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

WFSA has highly trained staff dedicated to the analysis of labor market information (p. 7-12). They leverage quantitative data on jobs posted, jobs filled, and wages paid. They also meet regularly with local industry associations, chambers, and other employer groups to understand HR trends and predict future labor market needs. Community-based organizations and school districts request our labor market analyses to inform their planning and curricula.

System Goal 2 and Rationale

Engage in Partnerships

Through collaborative and transparent processes, workforce system partners focus on outcomes that improve the employability of all program participants—from across a wide spectrum of capabilities and experiences—to meet employer needs. The leveraging of partnerships to enhance system alignment and outcomes depends on trust, a culture of collaboration both within and external to the workforce system, deep working relationships, and technical capacity to communicate to share needs, data, and information. Partnerships can provide for common planning, intake, and reporting on outcomes, as well as ensuring a “no wrong door” approach to the provision of workforce programs and services.

System Goal 2—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

WFSCA has taken a leadership role in the formation and management of industry sector partnerships (p.18). These partnerships, namely in Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing, have established meeting schedules and focused working groups, allowing WFSCA, the community college, school districts, and CBOs to collectively meet industry’s needs in a coordinated manner that keeps requests to employers at a minimum.

System Goal 3 and Rationale

Align System Elements

By improving transitions, aligning programs, and ensuring portability and transferability, Texas improves access and the ability of all participants to complete programs of study, earn credentials, transition to further education, and gain critical employability skills. Texas employers are better

positioned to find and hire the employees they need through an enhanced education and training pipeline.

System Goal 3—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

WFSCA is enhancing the talent pipeline through earn and learn opportunities (p. 6). Economic incentives, such as On the Job Training and Subsidized Employment, help bridge the transition from program of study to employment. These programs also create a feedback loop, helping WFSCA and the training providers understand how to better prepare customers for the workplace.

System Goal 4 and Rationale

Improve and Integrate Programs

Accelerate employment and improve efficiencies through shared resources that can be leveraged to create new, relevant, and innovative opportunities that serve the needs of all stakeholders. By addressing high-priority programmatic needs through an integrated strategy, decision-making at the system, partner, and participant levels is improved and system service delivery is enhanced. The changing economic and educational landscapes provide opportunities to share relevant data through appropriate “push” mechanisms in an organized manner to key stakeholders who rely on information generated by system partners.

System Goal 4—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

Industry sector partnerships have created new avenues to “push” opportunities to relevant audiences. Local chambers (p. 5), through an MOU with the City of Austin Economic Development Department, have committed to sharing information about WFSCA services and special projects through their newsletters. These partners are also helping distribute employer surveys for WFCA so the board can better understand and meet the real-time needs of local businesses.