



# Local Workforce Development Board Plan Program Years 2025–2028

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# Board Plan Development Guidelines

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

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

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

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

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

Send inquiries regarding these guidelines to [Board.Plans@twc.texas.gov](mailto:Board.Plans@twc.texas.gov).

## Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

### A. Vision and Goals

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

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

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

### Minimum Plan Requirements:

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

## **Board Response:**

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:**

### **1. 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.

### **2. 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.

WFSCA believes that educating our community about occupations and industries in demand in our region begins in the schools before students graduate. It is important that students in the K-12 system learn about all opportunities that are available to them to begin a career. WFSCA supports Career and Education Outreach Specialists in the K-12 system, focusing primarily on high school students, but also work with middle schools to ensure the students know about options for middle skill careers that pay livable wages and don’t require a college degree. The specialists also share information about career pathways and further opportunities to build upon their careers. WFSCA also hosts a middle school event called Career Expo. Middle schoolers attend and experience hands-on learning for various careers prior to the requirement for them to pick a pathway.

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.

### **3. Job seekers have access to meaningful employment opportunities**

WFSCA recognizes that both job seekers and employers endeavor to find a “right fit” in workplaces 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.

It is becoming increasingly important to reach individuals and provide information about in demand jobs in the region, as well as services available through the workforce system. WFSCA’s Board of Directors’ vision is to continue our work in high schools and middle schools to share information about occupations and all post-secondary opportunities, such as apprenticeships and skills training. Our vision and goals are to increase awareness so that youth who aren’t ready for college may obtain the training and/or enter the workforce shortly after high school to help meet the growing needs of Travis County employers. This also serves as an

opportunity to reach parents in need of upskilling or training to further meet the increased local demand for a skilled workforce.

Travis County is growing and has multiple, large mobility and infrastructure projects that will continue to create the need for a skilled workforce, particularly in the skilled trades, as we are building upon and growing Austin's infrastructure. Project Connect will create a rail system and the airport is planning a significant expansion, both of which increases the need for skilled, trained workers. In coordination with local training providers, training entities including Austin Community College, and employers, WFSCA will launch an Infrastructure Academy in early 2025. The Academy will be a consortium of training providers and employers who will hire, coupled with WFSCA career coaches and advisors assisting job seekers with identifying the best option for training and/or employment, and providing the resources to assist them throughout their journey into employment.

## **B. Board Strategies**

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

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

- A description of the Board's strategies to work with the entities carrying out AEL and VR to align:
  - resources available to achieve vision and goals

### **Core programs:**

- Adult Education and Literacy activities
- Vocational Rehabilitation services

### **Board Response:**

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

#### **1. Employers have access to a skilled workforce, including early education services**

- Vocational Rehabilitation services (VR) and staff are housed within our North Career Center. Our Career Center staff work closely with VR staff for cross referrals, as well as educational opportunities for staff to learn about service offerings within each organization. In coordination, VR and Career Center staff developed an interagency referral tool that allows for ease of referral, as well as follow up.
- Adult Education and Literacy - prepares employees for the workforce and supports employers through efforts such as onsite workplace literacy, Labor Market Information (LMI), job placement services, the Internationally Trained Professionals Program, offering supported training programs for in-demand occupations, providing digital literacy, training in ESL, College Preparation, workforce readiness skills, case management, college advising and follow up. . All supported AEL training leads to in-demand and targeted occupations as determined by WFSCA. AEL services also assist with the strategies of the WFSCA Hire Local Plan: awareness & enrollment, training, placement, and advancement in career.

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

- Vocational Rehabilitation - VR staff are co-located in WFSCA's flagship career center and career center staff meet with VR staff regularly to discuss processes and procedures for referrals and co-enrollment between the agencies. This has allowed for increases in enrollment between the two programs for training, job search, and employment services. Additionally, VR staff are included in career center trainings that cover labor market information, career pathway development, and information about programs and services. WFSCA's K-12 team regularly make referrals to VR as they identify youth that might qualify for VR services to assist with employment upon graduation.
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) - AEL and WFSCA have years of coordination for referrals into each other's programs and have also coordinated in Integrated Basic Education Training (IBEST) in which students are able to participate in occupational training while receiving basic education services. WFSCA staff have made referrals for IBEST but also purchases cohorts to allow us to support occupational training for individuals that need extra assistance. AEL and WFSCA have developed a system for referrals into each program and meet regularly. AEL coordinates with WFSCA to provide labor market information in developing their earn and learn opportunities.

## **3. Job seekers have access to meaningful employment opportunities**

- Vocational Rehabilitation- VR is co-located within the Career Center and the two entities work closely together and developed a referral system to ensure VR customers receive job search assistance and services, as well as training and supports through WIOA or other locally funded programs. VR and WFSCA coordinate on summer earn and learn opportunities for youth in which VR refers youth to WFSCA's youth contractor to receive job readiness training and placement at an employer site with a job coach throughout the

summer. Employers have hired several youth for part time employment because of the summer opportunity.

- Adult Education and Literacy- WFSCA and AEL have developed a blueprint for referrals between the two agencies. The blue print contains “on and off” ramps that allow for referrals to meet the customers where they are. AEL regularly refers individuals that complete their education to WFSCA for assistance with training scholarships, as well as assistance with career coaching/navigation, job search assistance, and support services.

## C. High-Performing Board

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

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

### Minimum Plan Requirements:

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

### Board Response:

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

WFSCA places a high premium on performance measures such 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.

It is important to WFSCA to share impacts beyond performance measures that are easily understandable by the community and elected officials. Annually, WFSCA produces data that



details impact on wages after receiving services, such as training from WFSCA and the return on investment for providing scholarships, WFSCA feels that performance measures are the minimum standard and by sharing the impacts of our programs in different ways, we are further establishing ourselves as a high-performing agency.

WFSCA meets monthly with training providers to discuss completion/credential and employment outcomes of clients receiving scholarships funded through WFSCA. These monthly meetings have boosted performance outcomes but have also laid the foundation for holding training providers accountable for training outcomes and ensuring customers are referred to WFSCA to assist with employment upon graduation.

## **Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis**

### **A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis**

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

Boards must include a regional analysis of the following:

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

#### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

An analysis of the economic conditions that includes the following:

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

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

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

- Existing in-demand occupations
- Emerging in-demand occupations
- Target occupations

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

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

## **Board Response:**

### **Economic Conditions: Existing in-demand industry sectors**

In Capital Area’s 2021-2024 WIOA Board Plan, Healthcare, Skilled Trades, Advanced Manufacturing, and Information Technology were identified as in-demand industry sectors. The current analysis indicates that these sectors continue to experience high demand.

According to Texas LMI’s 10-year projections (2022–2032), overall industry growth in the Capital Area is estimated at 23.8%. Healthcare is projected to grow by 28.0%, and Information Technology by 28.1%. While individual sectors within Skilled Trades/Advanced Manufacturing (including Manufacturing, Utilities, and Construction) have below-average growth rates, their combined growth stands at 45.3%.

Based on Texas LMI’s Current Employment Survey (March 2025), the total nonfarm employment in the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA increased by 43.9% from 2015 to 2025. The Information sector experienced the most significant change since 2015, with a 78.1% increase. Skilled Trades/Advanced Manufacturing (encompassing Manufacturing, Trade, Transportation, and Utilities) showed a combined growth of 65.2%. Healthcare is difficult to pinpoint using CES as only private healthcare is included in the industry sector. However, despite that limitation, it demonstrated substantial growth, with a 50% increase, which exceeds the total nonfarm growth rate.

Based on Texas LMI’s QCEW data for Q3 2024, Skilled Trades/Advanced Manufacturing (including Manufacturing, Construction, Trade, Transportation, and Utilities) represented 33% of total employment statewide and 24.4% within Travis County. While Information Technology accounted for only 1.6% of statewide employment, it comprised 4.1% of employment in Travis County. Education and Health Services contributed 13.6% of total employment statewide and 12.5% within Travis County.

Over the past decade, the top four industries by employment have consistently been Healthcare and Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade.

### **Economic Conditions: Emerging in-demand industry sectors**

In a 2023 Industry Analysis, Workforce Solutions Capital Area (WFSCA) conducted a deep analysis<sup>1</sup> of the Austin area labor market to identify and understand our region’s target industries — the top industries experiencing substantial growth with opportunities for higher earning potential. We used data to help us find the industries with:

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<sup>1</sup> This analysis was based on JobsEQ 2022 Q3 data, except for wages, which are as of 2022.

1. **Immediate employment:** High-growth industry and large market share with faster pathways to enter and advance (low and middle skill jobs)
2. **Improve income and reduces poverty:** Offering living wages in Austin (\$20/hour)
3. **Stability:** Low turnover
4. **Locally targeted/focus industry:** Based on insights from local wisdom and input from stakeholders and existing sector partnerships

Based on this analysis, we continue to classify Healthcare, Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, and Skilled Trades/Construction as Austin's targeted industries, and have added a new industry category: Mobility/Infrastructure.

Capital Area is experiencing unprecedented growth in population and investment in infrastructure projects, and this trend is expected to continue. The recently launched Infrastructure Academy, in collaboration with the City of Austin and other partners, aims to train workers for current and upcoming large-scale regional construction and public utility infrastructure projects. The analysis highlights a high demand for skilled workers in construction, skilled trades, fleet maintenance and repair, frontline mobility, and operations and supervision. Consequently, Capital Area is adding a new priority industry sector: Mobility & Infrastructure. It is also worth noting that existing industries, such as skilled trades, include sub-sectors related to mobility, which show promising growth, wage levels, and employment opportunities.

2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code (4-digit)	In-Demand NAICS Industry Title
5415	Computer Systems Design and Related Services
5182	Computing Infrastructure Providers, Data Processing, Web Hosting, and Related Services
4931	Warehousing and Storage
6213	Offices of Other Health Practitioners
5416	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services
6242	Community Food and Housing, and Emergency and Other Relief Services
5511	Management of Companies and Enterprises
5417	Scientific Research and Development Services
6215	Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories
6241	Individual and Family Services
4881	Support Activities for Air Transportation
5414	Specialized Design Services
4921	Couriers and Express Delivery Services
6211	Offices of Physicians
5611	Office Administrative Services

### **Economic Conditions: Existing in-demand Occupations**

According to Texas LMI's Occupational Projections (2022 – 2032), many of the occupations identified in WFSCA's 2021 – 2024 WIOA Board Plan still are and are predicted to be in demand. As an example, while the total increase for all occupations is predicted to be 23.8%, Nurse Practitioners are predicted to see a 75.5% increase and Software Developers are predicted to see a 58.3% increase. The highest growth is seen in Healthcare

and IT related careers. Based on Texas LMI’s Occupational Projections, the occupations with the highest annual average employment and a 2023 median hourly wage equal to or greater than \$20/hr. are the same in 2022 & 2032. This shows a stable occupational outlook.

Office and Administrative Support, along with Management occupations, remain the top two sectors by workforce share in both the State and Capital Area from 2022 to 2032. Business and Financial Operations roles stay in the top five in the Capital Area, representing 8.2% (2.6 percentage points above the state) in 2022 and 8.5% (2.7 percentage points above the state) in 2032.

### **Economic Conditions: Emerging in-demand Occupations**

The top 10 occupations by percentage of the workforce in the Capital Area remained consistent, although there were some changes within that list. Computer and Mathematical Occupations advanced from #6 with 7.5% of the workforce in 2022 to #3 with a projected 8.8% in 2032. Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations moved from #10 to #8, though the percentage of the workforce increased by only 0.2 percentage points.

As the Mobility and Infrastructure sector continues to develop rapidly with the expansion of local infrastructure projects, the Capital Area anticipates that Transportation and Material Moving, Construction and Extraction, and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations will become increasingly significant to the local economy.

The following criteria are utilized to determine In-Demand Occupations.

#### **In-Demand Occupations**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Threshold</b>
Median Wage	TX LMI OEWS	= or > \$20
Focus Industry	WFSCA Hire Local Plan	Goal of 90% of occupations in IT, Healthcare, Skilled Trades, Mobility/Infrastructure, Advanced Manufacturing
Number of Recent Job Postings	Lightcast	= or > 15 in Q3 2024
Annual Projected Growth	TX LMI Occupation Projections	= or > 30
Local Wisdom		Employers and/or industry associations provide feedback based on the demand of the occupation in the region

*Data Sources: Lightcast and Texas Workforce Commission*

**Workforce Solutions Capital Area  
In-Demand Occupations List**

<b>Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) or Occupational Information Network (O*NET) Job Code</b>	<b>In-Demand Occupation Job Title</b>
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists
13-1082	Project Management Specialists
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts
15-1212	Information Security Analysts
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists
15-1241	Computer Network Architects
15-1243	Database Architects
15-1252	Software Developers
15-1254	Web Developers
15-1255	Web and Digital Interface Designers
15-2051	Data Scientists
17-1011	Architects, Except Landscape and Naval
17-2051	Civil Engineers
17-2071	Electrical Engineers
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers
17-3031	Surveying and Mapping Technicians
21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants
27-3031	Public Relations Specialists
29-1051	Pharmacists
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians
29-2072	Medical Records Specialists
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants
31-9092	Medical Assistants
31-9097	Phlebotomists
41-9031	Sales Engineers
43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers
47-2061	Construction Laborers

## **Targeted Occupations**

Workforce Solutions Capital Area (WFSCA) regularly assesses whether its [targeted occupations list](#) is aligned with high-demand occupations for the Austin/Travis County region. Only the occupations on the targeted occupations list are eligible for WFSCA funding for eligible customers. Additionally, WFSCA determines whether its targeted occupations represent the industries targeted within the Hire Local Plan. By aligning its targeted occupations with those in the Hire Local Plan 2.0, WFSCA is bringing awareness to occupations with higher earning potential for our customers. WFSCA will also provide training scholarships and wraparound services to clients that enroll and persist in career training within these occupations. In evaluating the in-demand occupations for inclusion in the Targeted Occupations list, WFSCA incorporated education as a criterion to assess the pace of entry and advancement.

The following criteria are utilized to evaluate the targeted occupations.

Targeted Occupations		
Criteria	Data Source	Threshold
Median Wage	TX LMI OEWS	= or > \$20
Education	TX LMI Occupation Projections	Less than Bachelor's degree
Focus Industry	WFSCA Hire Local Plan	Goal of 90% of occupations in IT, Healthcare, Skilled Trades, Mobility/Infrastructure, Advanced Manufacturing
Number of Recent Job Postings	Lightcast	= or > 15 in Q3 2024
Annual Projected Growth	TX LMI Occupation Projections	= or > 30
Local Wisdom		Employers and/or industry associations provide feedback based on the demand of the occupation in the region

*Data Sources: Lightcast and Texas Workforce Commission*

This year, WFSCA added childcare workers and preschool teachers to our TOL in recognition of the growing needs of this industry. COVID highlighted the importance of childcare to our economy and the importance of the industry to economic development. Individuals cannot go to work or training without childcare and given the importance childcare plays in our workforce system, WFSCA added the occupation to ensure we have ways to meet the needs of the childcare employers to build capacity.

**Workforce Solutions Capital Area**  
**Targeted Occupations List**  
*Updated: April 2025*

<b>Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Code (6-digit)</b>	<b>Target Occupation Job Title</b>
13-1111	Management Analysts
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts
15-1212	Information Security Analysts
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists
15-1242	Database Administrators
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators
15-1254	Web Developers
15-1252	Software Developers
17-3022	Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians
17-3023	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians
17-3031	Surveying and Mapping Technicians
21-1023	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers
21-1094	Community Health Workers
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists
29-1141	Registered Nurses
29-1292	Dental Hygienists
29-2010	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians
29-2031	Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technicians
29-2043	Paramedics
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians
29-2055	Surgical Technologists
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
29-2072	Medical Records Specialists
31-1131	Nursing Assistants

31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants
31-9091	Dental Assistants
31-9092	Medical Assistants
39-9011	Childcare Workers
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
43-6013	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive
47-2031	Carpenters
47-2111	Electricians
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters
47-2211	Sheet Metal Workers
49-2093	Electrical and Electronics Installers and Repairers, Transportation Equipment
49-2094	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment
49-2096	Electronic Equipment Installers and Repairers, Motor Vehicles
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
51-4041	Machinists
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
53-3052	Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity

### **Employment needs of employers: collecting industry feedback and local wisdom**

Workforce Solutions Capital Area launched a survey in 2024 to collect local wisdom from employers to better understand and validate local labor market needs in the region. Over **3,2000 individuals with local businesses** were targeted through a social media campaign and email blast. We received **83 responses from employers** and some of the anecdotal evidence to support the needs of employers, including the knowledge and skills needed to meet such employment needs, within in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.

According to Texas LMI 2022-2032 Occupational Projections Dashboard, roughly 75% of the WFS Capital Area Targeted Occupations List have a typical education need that is less than a Bachelor's Degree. We recognize and have heard from our Industry Sector Partnerships that employers hard-to-fill roles are primarily with in the middle skills level (more than a high school diploma and less than a 4-year degree). We align our priorities and strategies to this education and skills attainment need to meet the needs of our region's employers.





## **B. Labor Force Analysis and Trends**

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

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

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

## **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

An analysis of the regional workforce, including the following:

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

## **Board Response:**

JobsEQ reports the following information unless stated otherwise.

Over the past 5 years, jobs in the Austin Round Rock, Texas Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) grew by 223,514 and are projected to grow by 192,214 over the next 5 years (14% growth between 2023 – 2028). Our region has over 76,000 payrolled business locations in the MSA and the average earnings per job are at \$93,960, above the national average of \$84,753. Recent data as of November 2024, shows the MSA labor force at 1,510,131 with unemployment at 53,287.

The Travis County unemployment rate has historically remained at or below the state unemployment rate over the past 5 years. Over the past 5 years, the highest unemployment rate was 11.8% April 2020 and the lowest was 2.5% April 2022. WFSCA regularly monitors our unemployment and the recent claimants to outreach for services and connection to new employment.

In 2023 the industry characteristics for the Austin Round Rock, Texas Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) show highest jobs posted in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Government, Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing, Finance and Insurance, and Construction.

In Travis County, Texas, employment is projected to grow by 1.7% annually over the next decade. However, growth rates vary depending on the level of education and training required. Occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow by 2.0% annually, while those requiring a bachelor's degree are forecasted to increase by 2.1% per year. Jobs that typically need a 2-year degree or certificate are also projected to grow by 2.0% annually.

In 2023, Travis County had a 73.2% Labor Force Participation Rate and the following are some data elements used to evaluate individuals that might have barriers to employment:

- 3.3% Veteran population
- 1.7% commuting via public transportation
- 8.2% no high school diploma, age 25-64
- 5.9% households receiving food stamps/SNAP
- 1.9% disconnected youth

- 8% with a disability, age 18-64
- 9.9% limited English speakers

According to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2023), Travis County has one of the highest educational attainment rates in Texas, with 58.70% of the population holding a bachelor's degree or higher. By comparison, the statewide percentage is 34.20%, and the national average is 36.20%. Additionally, Travis County exhibits a high percentage of residents with graduate or professional degrees (21.80%), compared to national (14.30%) and statewide (12.60%) levels. This notably high level of educational attainment aligns with the area's significant concentration of professionals in the computer, healthcare, and business & professional service sectors.

According to Texas LMI 2022-2032 Occupational Projections Dashboard, roughly 75% of the WFS Capital Area Targeted Occupations List have a typical education need that is less than a Bachelor's Degree. We recognize and have heard from our Industry Sector Partnerships that employers hard-to-fill roles are primarily with in the middle skills level (more than a high school diploma and less than a 4-year degree). We align our priorities and strategies to this education and skills attainment need to meet the needs of our region's employers.

## C. Workforce Development Analysis

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

Boards must include an analysis of:

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

### Minimum Plan Requirements:

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

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

- Employment needs of employers

## **Board Response:**

### **1. General Workforce Development Activities:**

WFSCA oversees a range of programs aimed at enhancing the employability of the local workforce. These include services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth, focusing on career counseling, job placement assistance, and support services to facilitate employment transitions. The Board collaborates with various stakeholders to design and implement these initiatives, ensuring alignment with regional economic needs.

### **2. Education Activities, Including Early Childhood Education (ECE) and K-12:**

The Board emphasizes the importance of foundational education as a critical component of workforce readiness. Collaborations with local educational institutions aim to strengthen early childhood education and K–12 programs, ensuring that students acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the workforce. These efforts include supporting career and technical education programs that align with current labor market demands. WFSCA also has staff working in the middle and high schools to educate students on high demand jobs and career pathways within industries. To facilitate interest, staff host career days, such as Career Quest, that allows for students to learn directly from industry, as well as test equipment and utilize Virtual Reality to get a better understanding of occupations in demand in our region.

WFSCA has always been at the forefront of early childhood education creating quality programs to ensure children are kindergarten ready. We have many partnerships with local entities, such as the United Way, PBS, and our local government entities to collaborate on activities and programs to benefit early education. Additionally, WFSCA recognized child care/early education in our Hire Local Plan and have developed strategies to strengthen the industry for child care employers, as well as children.

### **3. Training Activities:**

WFSCA offers access to various training programs designed to equip individuals with in-demand skills. This includes partnerships with local community colleges and training providers to offer certifications in sectors such as healthcare, information technology, and skilled trades. The Board also supports apprenticeship programs and on-the-job training opportunities to facilitate hands-on learning experiences.

### **4. Strengths and Weaknesses of Activities:**

#### **Strengths:**

- **Employer Engagement:** Strong partnerships with local employers ensure that training programs are tailored to meet current industry needs, enhancing job placement rates for participants.
- **Comprehensive Service Delivery:** The integration of various programs under the WFSCA umbrella allows for a holistic approach to workforce development, addressing multiple barriers to employment.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- **Resource Limitations:** Despite robust programs, there are challenges related to funding constraints that may limit the expansion of services to meet growing demand.
- **Data Integration:** There is a need for improved data sharing and integration among partners to better track participant outcomes and program effectiveness.

## **5. Effectiveness of Programs and Services:**

The effectiveness of WFSCA's programs is evaluated through performance metrics such as employment rates, median earnings, and credential attainment. WFSCA also evaluates impact, such as earnings after training, particularly if entering a field related to training. Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms are in place to ensure continuous improvement. Success stories and positive outcomes from participants further demonstrate the impact of these services on the local community.

## **6. The Board's Capacity to Provide Workforce Development Activities:**

WFSCA has established a robust infrastructure to deliver workforce development services, including multiple Workforce Solutions Offices and satellite sites strategically located throughout the region. The Board's staff possesses expertise in program management, employer engagement, and participant support, enabling effective service delivery. Ongoing professional development ensures that staff remain knowledgeable about best practices and emerging trends in workforce development.

## **7. Individuals with Barriers to Employment:**

WFSCA is committed to serving individuals facing barriers to employment, including those with disabilities, limited English proficiency, opportunity youth, or a history of incarceration. Specialized programs and supportive services, such as vocational rehabilitation and language assistance, are available to address these challenges and promote inclusive workforce participation.

## **8. Employment Needs of Employers:**

Through continuous engagement with local employers, WFSCA identifies the evolving skill requirements of the regional labor market. This information guides the development of training programs and curricula to ensure that the workforce is equipped to meet the current and future needs of businesses, thereby supporting economic growth in the Austin area.

# **Part 3: Core Programs**

## **A. Workforce Development System**

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

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

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

### **Core programs:**

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

### **Required programs (if operated in the Board Area)**

- ☐ WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs
- ☐ Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program
- ☐ Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs
- ☐ Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program
- ☐ Choices, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program
- ☐ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP)
- ☐ Child Care Services
- ☐ Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs
- ☐ Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs
- ☐ Vocational Rehabilitation programs
- ☐ National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) program
- ☐ Apprenticeship programs
- ☐ Career and Technical Education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 USC §2301, et seq.)
- ☐ Veteran employment and training programs—Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER)
- ☐ Senior Community Service Employment Program



## **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.

The federal child care subsidy program is a required program and is operated through the Board by one of its contractors. The child care staff are located on site within the career center to allow for ease of referrals between child care and workforce programs. Additionally, a process has been established for WFSCA’s youth contractor, who is not located on site, to send referrals of WIOA Youth that are in need of child care services. The career center contractor refers parents participating in Choices and SNAP E & T to child care services, as they are a priority group under the federal guidelines.

TWC rules allow Boards to set a third priority group for child care. WFSCA has established individuals that are participating in a workforce program in the Priority Group 3 category to allow for those attending training or participating in a program operated through the career center to receive child care to complete their training and/or service plan. WFSCA realized that this critical support allowed us to expand whom we are able to provide workforce services to.

WFSCA maintains relationships with entities that provide child care within the community, such as Avance and Go Austin/Vamos Austin (GAVA), and our local child care advisory group committee of the Board includes members representing these organizations. We are also beginning coordination with Austin Community College’s child care program to facilitate options for enrollment into CCDF enrollment for those eligible that are no longer eligible to receive ACC funded care.

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 like WIOA and offered to customers that might not qualify for WIOA services or as a supplement to enhance WIOA services. These locally funded contracts have a priority provision to serve individuals that have been justice impacted, as well as low income, women, and minority groups.

To facilitate our work with individuals impacted by the justice system, WFSCA coordinates with organizations such as Jail to Jobs and OnPoint Re-entry to provide training, supports and earn and learn opportunities. Career Center staff coordinate with OnPoint to provide information about services and employment at job fairs held in Travis County facilities for those that will be coming back into the community.

Goodwill's mission is "Transforming lives through the power of education and work." Goodwill has served Opportunity Youth since its founding, with approximately 10,100 Opportunity Youth served in 2023. Opportunity Youth are defined as youth ages 16-24 that are not sufficiently connected to education or work. About 350 participated in WIOA Youth services in 2023, 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 unhoused or experiencing housing insecurity, and Opportunity Youth.

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:**

### **1. Employers have access to a skilled workforce**

Meet regularly with, and attend convenings hosted by, local Chambers of Commerce.

- Become members of areas Chamber of Commerce.
- Join existing, or create if none exist, industry sector partnerships.
- Leverage the knowledge, expertise, and networks of Board of Directors in order to deepen trust and commitment to the public workforce system.
- Engage and ensure customer satisfaction of the employers who utilize the public workforce system.

WFSCA and our neighboring Board work 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- To develop and launch the Mobility Partnership, Workforce Solutions will accomplish the following necessary goals.

- *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.
- *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.
- *Educate leaders* – Workforce Solutions will educate workforce development leaders regarding the mobility employment ecosystem in Austin.
- 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.

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

- Enter into an agreement with, and meet regularly with, the local Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) provider and its contractors.
- Meet regularly with executive and operational leadership of key secondary and postsecondary systems (area Independent School Districts and Austin Community College) to ensure understanding of and ability to contribute to effective and results driven career pathways.
- Enter into agreements with area CBOs who are essential participants in the provision of services in the workforce system.
- Collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation services through co-location

## **3. Job seekers have access to meaningful employment opportunities**

- 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
- Post and publicize WFSCA's Target Occupation List, with related information about access to training in those occupations.
- 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.

- 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.

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

- In collaboration with WFSCA's contractors, meet at least monthly to review budgets, expenditures, and procurements.
- In collaboration with WFSCA's contractors, review performance and provide technical assistance on a monthly basis.
- 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.
- Continually evaluate performance outcomes related to training, specifically training related employment outcomes.
- Establish and follow a regular risk-assessment monitoring schedule for publicly funded contracts.

WFSCA has Industry Sector Partnership Directors to work with employers in our key sectors of Healthcare, Manufacturing, Information Technology, and Mobility and Infrastructure/Skilled Trades. 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**

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

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

- expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;
- facilitate the development of career pathways and coenrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and

- improve access to activities that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential (such as an industry-recognized certificate or certification) that is portable and stackable.

## **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

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

## **Core programs:**

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

## **Board Response:**

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, and WIOA (Adult and Dislocated Worker). The contractor also provides guidance 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. WFSCA is currently in procurement for Career Center and Youth services and will bring WIOA Youth services under the Career Center umbrella beginning in Fiscal Year 2026. This will allow for strengthened coordination and co-enrollment.

WFSCA's subsidized child care program is co-located with our Career Center. If a parent receiving child care becomes unemployed, a direct referral is made to the Career Center staff to assist the parent in obtaining employment and/or entering into training. Additionally, Career Center and child care staff coordinate to share opportunities for employment and/or training with all parents receiving child care.

Having the City- and County-funded Workforce and Education Readiness Continuum (WERC) and Level Up programs 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 programs.

WFSCA has staff located with the Central Texas Food Bank. They receive referrals from individuals receiving services from the Food Bank to assist with employment and training opportunities. There are also staff located at two Austin Community College campuses.

Through a grant received from the City of Austin, two local community-based organizations are working closely with WFSCA to provide their services and also to promote referrals to Career Center services. The Austin Child Guidance Center provides counseling services to economically disadvantaged families. They have staff onsite once a week and take referrals from Career Center staff. El Buen Samaritano is an organization that provides a variety of services, from health literacy programming to English as a Second Language and digital literacy, to the Latino and Spanish-speaking community in Travis County. Through the City grant, El Buen maintains a mobile food pantry and house in the WFSCA parking lot twice a month. This is an opportunity for individuals to be referred to WFSCA for services, including SNAP E & T, that might not know of employment and training opportunities.

WFSCA partners with Equidad, a local community-based organization that provides mobile services to the eastern crescent of Travis County. This is considered an underserved area of the county and has a prosperity index below the city's median. WFSCA partnered with Equidad to provide mobile services in the area and also funded training programs through Austin Community College at a local school in the evenings, thereby enabling individuals to conveniently attend training for in-demand careers.

At the request of the Mayor of Austin and Travis County Judge, WFSCA created the Community Workforce Plan in 2017 that has become the Hire Local Plan. The goal of the plan is to grow our own and ensure we have the local skilled talent to meet employer need so they do not have to look for talent outside of Travis County. 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. The Hire Local Plan is built on four strategies: Awareness, Training, Placement (Employment), and Upskilling. These strategies help to meet employer needs,

but also ensure everyone in Travis County can train for not only jobs, but careers, so that all residents can enjoy the prosperity that Austin has to offer.

## **Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery**

### **A. One-Stop Service Delivery System**

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

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

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

#### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

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

#### **Board Response:**

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. WFSCA evaluates the outcomes of our second largest investment after child care, training scholarships, to ensure that individuals for whom we fund training are able to obtain employment in the field in which they were trained. WFSCA has expanded the analysis and reporting of outcomes to also evaluate income gains for those that obtain employment related to training compared to those that don't, as well as the local return on investment into the community from these increased wages. Because income gains are significant for those job seekers that obtain a credential and enter employment related to their training, WFSCA created a Quality Expectations Plan focusing 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 enter 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 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 Plan ensures that the Business Solutions Team is identifying jobs within industries in which customers are completing training and matching customers to those employers.

To ensure that the youth most in need in the Capital Area 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 four youth-serving agencies within the community. Goodwill is the lead agency and the partners are LifeWorks, American Youthworks, 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 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.

WFSCA maintains two (2), full service Career Centers within Travis County in order to provide access throughout the city. In 2024, WFSCA closed its south location and have staff located at the Central Texas Food Bank. Staff work with individuals coming in for services to share labor market information, assist with job search, provide information on workforce services, and refer interested job seekers to our full-service center for case managed services. WFSCA also has staff housed within two ACC campuses to help students enroll in training and/or provide support services to assist with successful completion of training and entry into employment.

Providing various ways for job seekers to access services is important to WFSCA. Our Career Center contractor has implemented virtual orientations and information sessions, as well as the ability to schedule meetings with job seekers and customers via Zoom. Virtual options, coupled with co-located sites throughout the community allows us to meet job seekers where they are. Additionally, staff frequently attend community events and work with local CBOs to provide information and enrollment at these locations.

The co-location of VR Staff in WFSCA North Career Center has provided for real time interactions among the staff. Co-location strengthens inter-agency collaboration, ensuring coordinated support for job seekers and employers across programs. VR and workforce can routinely share information and resources on an informal basis and work closely to provide services needed for customers. VR has access to our adaptive equipment and services with our Career Center. WFSCA and VR utilize an internal referral system to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to employment and training services opportunities. WFSCA and VR also hold monthly check-ins to continuously improve service integration.

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. Board and workforce center staff conduct annual training on WIOA 188, the Americans with Disabilities Act and proper use of accessibility software and hardware. The workforce center operator provides customers with equal opportunity to access all facilities, programs, and services without regard to race, color, religion, gender, marital status, age, national origin, disability, political affiliation or belief. We manage and operate the Capital Area Workforce in compliance with EO and ADA requirements.

To comply with minimum accessibility standard drafted in March 2016, the array of adaptive equipment and services provided for customer use has been expanded in order to assure full accessibility to all available programs and center services.

The following is a list of adaptive strategies used by contractor staff in each office to assist customers requiring accommodation:

- Screen Magnifier Software such as MAGic, ZoomText, CDesk
- Screen Reader Software such as JAWS and ZoomText
- Headphones, Speakers

- Qualified or Staff Readers
- MAGic Large Print Keyboard
- Microsoft Windows On-Screen Keyboard
- Speech Amplification Systems such as Chattervox
- Trackball Mouse(s)
- Telephones with Volume Control and/or Amplification Devices
- Video Text Display Phones, Video Relay Interpreting Services (VRIS), Video Relay Services (VRS)
- Written Materials for Orientations, Workshops etc.
- Adjustable Height Desks, Keyboard Tray, Worktables and Chairs
- 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 can "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 the 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.

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

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

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

- facilitate the engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations, in workforce development programs;
- support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area;
- coordinate workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local workforce area;
- promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services; and
- strengthen the linkage between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

A description of strategies and services to:

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

- Support a local workforce development system that meets needs of businesses
- Better coordinate workforce development and economic development activities
- Promote entrepreneurial-skills training
- Promote microenterprise services
- Strengthen the links between one-stop and unemployment insurance

## **Board Response:**

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.

WFSCA uses an industry sector approach to employer services. We seek real-time input from employers through our industry sector partnerships in each of our target industries to understand their needs and develop our services and training offerings to meet those needs. A current example is the work WFSCA is doing with mobility and infrastructure. There are five major mobility projects that are being implemented in our region; Project Connect, airport expansion, I-35 expansion, Samsung, and Tesla all of which require a trained workforce. Through industry feedback and research, WFSCA discovered that there is a need for 10,000 jobs between now and 2040, yet our training providers are only producing 6,000 graduates a year. Through a partnership with the City, County, Austin Community College, employers, and local training providers, WFSCA is launching an Infrastructure Academy that will serve as the hub for career navigation and assessment to ensure we are able to fill these jobs with local residents. The goal of the Academy is to inform and guide job seekers about the opportunities, connect them to employment opportunities and/or training to meet the current needs of employers and their immediate projects. The Academy's success will be the collaboration of training providers, including standardizing curriculum, as well as the collaboration of employers to ensure there is access to a trained workforce.

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.

Through its contractor, WFSCA actively supports individuals interested in entrepreneurship by connecting them to high-quality resources and specialized training opportunities. We maintain strong referral partnerships with Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), business incubators, and local colleges and universities—organizations that provide workshops, mentorship, and small business support services. Through these partnerships, customers can access guidance on business planning, financial literacy, marketing strategies, and regulatory compliance, helping them transform ideas into viable enterprises.

In addition, customers can enhance their entrepreneurial skillsets through a six-hour online Entrepreneurship Skills Bootcamp offered in partnership with BuildED (procured service partner). Participants who complete the training earn a Value-Added Certification from the National Association of Entrepreneurship and Business Leadership (NAEBL), validating their competencies in business development and leadership. Since 2021, more than 200 participants have completed this training, with 97% earning NAEBL certification. Over the past year, more than 10 customers have successfully completed the bootcamp, gaining foundational knowledge to pursue self-employment or entrepreneurial ventures.

### **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 LGBT Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Austin Young Chamber

WFSCA works closely with Pflugerville Economic Development Corporation on grants and programs to develop training in high school, as well as opportunities in manufacturing.

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

#### **Board Response:**

Wagner Peyser staff that work with unemployment insurance (UI) claimants are co-located within the Career Center, as are specialized programs, such as RESEA to work with individuals receiving UI to provide staff support and services to enable individuals to go back to work. Claimants are outreached through WIOA to engage in programs for upskilling, reskilling, and/or the provision of support services to enable them to re-enter the workforce.

## **C. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services**

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

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

## **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

A description of the strategies that are used to:

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

## **Board Response:**

Under the Texas Model, WFSCA provides day-to-day guidance of Employment Service (ES) staff (Wagner-Peyser funded staff). TWC maintains administrative responsibility for ES staff; Career Center management provides direction and guidance as needed. TWC provides support to Career Center management through Integrated Service Area Managers (ISAM). 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 ES staff are incorporated into daily operations and have been instrumental in providing orientations for job seekers, referring to other Career Center programs, and coordinating with the Business Service team on job fairs to ensure that any job seeker in attendance has access to a person to assist with navigation and next steps. The coordination of ES staff into the operations of the Career Center allows for seamless delivery of services to customers regardless of funding stream.

## **D. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management**

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

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

## **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

A description of the following:



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

### **Board Response:**

In 2024, TWC transitioned from TWIST to WorkinTexas (WIT) for most programs operated under the Onestop system. WFSCA ensured both Board and front line staff were trained prior to implementation and provide refresher training to staff to ensure WIOA and other one stop partners are using the system correctly. WFSCA intends to use the system to its fullest capacity by uploading eligibility documents so that anyone working with a customer and who has WIT access can review information without having to ask the customer to provide it again. WIT allows for seamless delivery of services across programs and co-enrollment without placing a time constraint or burden on staff and job seekers. WFSCA is looking forward to the next phase of WIT that might include AI as a further benefit to staff in working with their customers to ensure they have additional insights and information to share with job seekers to assist them in their career journey.

WFSCA views WIT as the virtual front door for services and works with local organizations to train their staff in how to assist customers in completing a WIT application. This provides an avenue outside of the Career Centers for job seekers to connect with jobs, as well as with our staff who regularly outreach new WIT registrants to offer services and job search assistance. This also allows for easier enrollment into WIOA or other programs because staff have much of the information needed for enrollment and to provide effective career coaching/advising services.

## **C. Third Party Partnership in SNAP Employment and Training Programs**

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

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

### **Board Response:**

WFSCA was the only Board in the state to implement the Third Party Reimbursement Program (now called TPP) and was able to use local funding from the City and County as match to draw down funds for individuals served that are receiving SNAP benefits. WFSCA expanded the program to incorporate local CBOs that were serving SNAP recipients.

WFSCA is one of three Board areas currently participating in the TPP expansion pilot, rolled out by TWC and HHSC in 2024. WFSCA has contracted with our career center contractor, C2 Global Services, for the provision of TPP match funding for applicable employment and training services provided by C2 Global Services to SNAP E&T customers. The funds leveraged as match are local; City of Austin and Travis County.

## **Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities**

### **A. Rapid Response Activity Coordination**

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

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

#### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

#### **Board Response**

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

## **B. Youth Activities and Services**

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

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

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

### **Board Response:**

Our youth program consists of four 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, and Skillpoint Alliance.

Goodwill's mission is "Transforming lives through the power of education and work". Goodwill has served opportunity youth since its founding, with approximately 10,100 opportunity youth served in 2023. Opportunity Youth are defined as youth ages 16-24 that are not sufficiently connected to education or work. About 350 participated in WIOA Youth services in 2023, 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 unhoused or experiencing housing insecurity, and Opportunity Youth.

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	<p>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 &amp; Technical Academy currently offers occupational training in all three targeted industries: healthcare, skilled trades and information technology. Goodwill also operates Goodwill Talent Solutions, a temporary and temp-to-hire staffing agency, which offers clients additional employment opportunities.</p>	Prime contractor and lead and fiscal agent
LifeWorks	<p>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.</p>	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 followup. 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 preapprenticeship program according to standards established by the U.S. Department of Labor.	Funded partner
Skillpoint Alliance	Referral of eligible youth, skills training, coenrollment 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. Offer transition services for high school students with disabilities (job coaching, work adjustment training, and supported employment). 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.	Non-funded collaborator/partner
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 WFSCA programs.	Funder/Contractor

	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.	
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 Protective Services (DFPS)	Foster Youth referral source through their Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Program, coenrollment in other programs, community resource.	Collaborator

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 subset 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.

WFSCA has always conducted a separate procurement for Youth and Adult services. This has been a successful strategy; however, it is becoming apparent that there is a need for youth to be able to seamlessly transition or co-enroll into Career Center programs and services. To offer a full range of services, WFSCA will be re-procuring the WIOA youth contract, per our required 5-year schedule, but will also include Career Center services so that we may offer a full suite of services to young adults in a seamless manner.

## **C. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs**

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

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

A description of how the Board will:

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

### **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 resource 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 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.

## **D. Child Care and Early Learning**

References: 40 TAC §809.12

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

Efforts include:

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

A description of how the Board will:

- incorporate and coordinate the design and management of the delivery of child care services with the delivery of other workforce employment, job training, and educational services;
- maximize the delivery and availability of safe and stable child care services that assist families seeking to become independent from, or who are at risk of becoming dependent on, public assistance while parents are either working or attending a job training or educational program;



- use strategies for contracted slot agreements, including any local priorities and how the contracted slot agreements help increase access to high-quality care for targeted communities;
- develop and implement strategic quality improvement goals to enhance school readiness; and
- strengthen and support the child care industry

## **Board Response:**

WFSCA has always been at the forefront of understanding the importance that child care plays in economic development. We saw with COVID-19 how critical early education services are for individuals to be able to work or attend school. Child care is economic development. WFSCA works with community partners to increase quality education and Texas Rising Star providers through our QC3 Strategic Plan. The QC3 Plan is in partnership with City and County organizations. 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.

For the last 20 years, the City and County have invested in WFSCA to create a safety net for parents that lose their CCDF care. The Continuity of Care model allows for WFSCA to continue to serve parents using local dollars until we can bring them back into the federal program. This ensures that parents can continue to work or school and that their children have consistency in quality care.

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 WFSCA 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 partners with United Way for Greater Austin to expand prekindergarten partnerships across Travis County. Through this partnership, quality child care providers that offer prekindergarten services can draw down public school dollars to expand their programs to serve more children and families.

WFSCA's Center-Based Compensation Support Grant provides salary stipends for child care staff at high quality centers while also ensuring center owners and directors receive and address feedback from staff to retain highly qualified teachers.

We promote professional growth and career pathways for early education through scholarships for Spanish language Child Development Associate (CDA) certifications and tests as well as Director credentials. Our Jeanette Watson Wage Supplement program incentivizes early childhood professionals to pursue a CDA credential, Associate's degree, or Bachelor's degree.

## **E. Transportation and Other Support Services**

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

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

A description of how the Board will provide:

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

### **Board Response:**

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)

## **F. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy**

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

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with AEL activities under WIOA Title II. Boards must also include the process

used to review the local applications submitted under Title II, as consistent with WIOA §§107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA §232.

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

A description of:

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

### **Board Response:**

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 contact 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 applications under WIOA Title II. When coordination with a local workforce board is required in an application, WFSCA works with community agencies to provide letters of support, review of applications, information, and assistance.

## Part 6: Adult and Dislocated Workers

### A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training

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

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

#### Minimum Plan Requirements:

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

#### Board Response:

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 o 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 consists 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 and charter schools, including the Goodwill Excel Center main campus and also colocated 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 . 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. Service Priority

References: 20 CFR §679.560(b)(21)

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

### Minimum Plan Requirements:

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

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

### Board Response:

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

**Priority Group 1.** Eligible veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.

**Priority Group 2.** Non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are recipients of public assistance, low income or basic skills deficient in the following order:

1. Foster youth and former foster youth (as defined in TWC WD Letter 43-11 change 2) as required by Texas Family Code §264.121.
2. Non-foster youth

**Priority Group 3.** All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses

**Priority Group 4.** Priority populations established by the governor and/or Board in the following order:

1. All other foster youth and former foster youth, as required by Texas Labor Code §264.121
2. Local Board priority groups.

Workforce Solutions Capital Area Board (Board) has established three local priority groups for the provision of individualized career services and/or training services under WIOA:

- **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 over
- **Local Group 2** shall consist of individuals with an annualized family income up to 85% of the State Median Income Level.
- **Local Group 3** is based upon education level rather than income. Eligibility is determined by education level and shall consist of individuals that have a high school diploma or GED, yet no post-secondary credential.

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**

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



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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

- The entity responsible for disbursement of grant funds

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. Subgrants and Contracts**

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

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

### **Board Response:**

Workforce Solutions Capital Area (WFSCA) utilizes a procurement process to ensure maximum full and open competition. These standards are intended to ensure that such purchases are obtained efficiently and economically. These standards are applicable to any procurements completed by subcontractors of the Board who purchase goods or services, all or in part, with WFSCA funds.

The WFSCA Procurement Policy is in compliance with the provisions of applicable State and Federal law and regulations and is consistent with the *Office of Management and Budget* sections, 2 CFR Part 200, § 200.318, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*. and the 34 Tex. Admin. Code § 20. WFSCA Procurement Policy Standards are also guided by the *Procurement and Contract Management Guide* of the Statewide Procurement Division.

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, as outlined in Section 20.281 – 20.298 of the *Texas Administrative Code*.

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

- The nature of the item or service needed precludes developing a precise specification or a purchase description.
- In addition to price, other factors will be considered in making an award.
- Two or more responsible suppliers are willing and able to compete effectively for the award.
- The price of the item(s) and / or service(s) to be purchased is over an aggregate of \$250,000.

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

1. Posting Requests for Quotes (RFQs) or Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to qualified sources and by publicly advertising on the ESBD. 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 documented and responded to, to ensure compliance with submission requirements. An initial screening of the proposals are done to ensure responsiveness of proposal. The proposals are sent to the evaluators with an evaluation/scoring document, once their NDA/Conflict of Interest form is signed.
4. Upon receipt of the evaluator's scores, the scores are counted and a recommendation is presented to a Board Committee for approval; then taken to the Board of Directors for action.
5. A pre-award survey/fiscal integrity evaluation is to be conducted by Fiscal Department.
6. Tentatively the contract to the selected proposer, whose offer will be most advantageous to WFSCA and begin Negotiations. Conduct negotiations with Proposer deemed to be in the competitive range, if appropriate. Negotiations
7. Contract with Selected Proposer is executed, and the Formal Procurement is complete.

All documents relating to formal procurements are recorded thoroughly and are tracked using a tool comparative to TWC's Procurement Checklist.

## Part 8: Performance

### A. Board Performance Targets

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

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

#### Minimum Plan Requirements:

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

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

#### Board Response:

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. FY25 TWC performance targets for WFSCA are:

Program Specific	
Measure	Current Target
Adult Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit	75.00%
Adult Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit	74.40%
Adult Worker Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit	\$9,030.00
Adult Worker Credential Rate	75.70%
Adult Measurable Skills Gains	72.6%
Dislocated Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit	80.4%
Dislocated Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit	82.40%
Dislocated Worker Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit	\$11,600.00
Dislocated Worker Credential Rate	80.5%

Dislocated Worker Measurable Skills Gains	76.00%
Active Job Seeker New Employment Connection Rate	58.31%
Maintaining Employment Connection Rate	42.62%
Credential Rate- All C&T participants	71.00%
Youth Employed/Enrolled (Education) Q2 Post Exit	78.50%
Youth Employed/Enrolled (Education) Q4 Post Exit	78.00%
Youth Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit	\$3,900
Youth Credential Rate	71.10%
Youth Measurable Skills Gains	64.30%
*Active Job Seeker New Employment Connection Rate	58.31%
*Maintaining Employment Connection Rate	42.62%
*Career and Training Participants Credential Rate	71.00%
*Successful Texas Talent Assistance Rate (STTAR)	45.46%

- *\* This is an “All” performance measure established by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and consists of all individuals or entities in the Capital Area Board area. Service providers must focus on performance, in its entirety. When considering the “All” measures, service providers should keep in mind that meeting the Youth targets contributes to meeting the targets set for the “All” measures.*
- *TWC Performance measures shall be tracked monthly using the TWC Final Monthly Performance Reports (MPR). The Board will utilize the Final MPR Year-to-Date (YTD) version to track all contracted measures listed above.*
- *Contracted performance measures are defined by the Texas Workforce Commission. Performance measures and targets are subject to change based on actions of the Texas Workforce Commission and/or the Board. The Board reserves the right to add local performance measures and targets.*

#### Reemployment and Employer Engagement

Measure	Current Target
Claimant Reemployment within 10 Weeks	60%
# of Employers Receiving Texas Talent Assistance	4,168
Successful Texas Talent Assistance Rate (STTAR)	45.46%

#### RESEA

Measure	Current Target
RESEA Outreach & Scheduling Rate	100% (weekly)
RESEA Initial Appointment Rate	77% (quarterly)
RESEA Failure to Report Rate	23% (quarterly)

**Program Participation**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Current Target</b>
Choices Full Engagement Rate	50.00%
RESEA Initial Appointment Rate	77% (quarterly)
RESEA Failure to Report Rate	23% (quarterly)

Other TWC Deliverables and Performance Measures:

- Non-Custodial Parent (NCP)
  - Meet or exceed Year to date (YTD) Entered Employment Rate: 65% by 8/31/25
  - Meet or exceed YTD Employment Retention Rate: 50% by 8/31/25
  - Meet or exceed expenditure benchmarks: 40% (2/28/25); 60% (5/31/25)

The following are the NCP Choices-specific performance measures for BCY 2025.

- NCP Population Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit
- NCP Choices Population Employed/Enrolled Q2 – Q4 Post Exit
- Active Job Seeker New Employment Connection Rate
- Maintaining Employment Connection Rate
- Career and Training participants Credential Rate

Workforce System: All Programs:

- All Job Seekers Employed Quarter 2 After Exit: TBD
- All Job Seekers Median Earnings: TBD
- All Job Seekers Employed Quarters 2-4 After Exit: TBD
- All Job Seekers Credential Rate: TBD

WFSCA also sets performance targets for the Business Services team to facilitate enhanced coordination with the job seeker side of the Career Center services. Metrics include number of key employer accounts, number of job fairs per quarter, industry training, earn and learn contracts, and percent of entered employment related to training.

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

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

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

#### Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of the following:

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

#### Board Response:

All 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 set a maximum ITA amount of \$7,500, although exceptions can be made with Board staff approval. Job seekers interested in training receive labor market information on our target industries and are provided the TWC statewide eligible training provider list and are encouraged to go to the providers and learn more about their programs and outcomes prior to selecting a training provider.

WFSCA staff review applications to ensure that all criteria are met, and if approved, submit to TWC for final review and inclusion on the statewide list of eligible training providers (ETPL). Once added to 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 research training on 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**

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

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

### **Board Response:**

WFSCA places a \$7,500 cap on ITAs, although Board approval can be received to provide an ITA up to \$10,000. The ITA cap was set by evaluating the numbers of customers that had attended training over a 3 year period at various price points, coupled with performance outcomes of trainees. Board staff have quarterly meetings with training providers and career center staff to ensure continuous communication and to ensure a seamless system of referrals and outcomes. This coordination and relationship building has facilitated a process where most training providers find a way to cover the difference in training at no cost to the customer should a customer select a training that is above the ITA cap.

Through our industry sector partnership work, WFSCA seeks feedback from industry to ensure the trainings we are funding meet the current need of employers. Industry needs can change quickly due to businesses moving into the region, as well as new technologies incorporated into

occupations. With this information, WFSCA staff map target occupations to ensure there is a training provider on the ETPL to train for the identified occupation.

WFSCA had a policy to only serve Travis County residents with ITAs; however, due to the rapid changes in the region and to ensure there is no wrong door, in June 2024, the WFSCA Board of Directors approved a policy allowing for individuals that live outside Travis County, but work or were laid off from an employer in Travis County, to receive an ITA for training, should they come through our Career Center. Our neighboring Board created a similar policy so that a job seeker doesn't have to be referred to another site when seeking services. Like other aspects of our service delivery model, WFSCA places an emphasis when we can on a "no wrong door" approach for our customers.

## **Part 10: Apprenticeship**

### **A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs**

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

#### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

#### **Board Response:**

Workforce Solutions Capital Area (WFSCA) regularly connects with our region's Registered Apprenticeship programs (RAP) and provide the information for RAPs to be listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to encourage opportunities for WIOA funding to support RAPs. WFSCA staff will provide technical assistance to navigate the spreadsheet requirements for a RAP to be added to the ETPL. One strategy that has been effective is cross-checking the submissions we receive to review for Chapter 133 funding with the ETPL and sharing information with the RAP contacts that are not currently listed.

### **B. Apprenticeship Texas**

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



### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

### **Board Response:**

Workforce Solutions Capital Area works closely with the Apprenticeship Texas department to enhance the strategies to expand and support RAPs in our region and has been a collaborative partner on developing TWC’s apprenticeship plan. WFSCA participates in the reoccurring apprenticeship navigator booster calls hosted by Apprenticeship Texas to share and learn best practices and lessons learned. WFSCA is dedicated to helping ensure the success of the RAPs in our region and support in the growth of this workforce strategy and will assist Apprenticeship Texas with the following strategic goals:

- Increase the number of quality pre-apprenticeships leading to entry into Registered Apprenticeship Programs.
- Increase the number of new and expanded Registered Apprenticeship Programs.
- Increase the number of underrepresented populations in both quality pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships.

## **Part 11: Public Comment**

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

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

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

### **Minimum Plan Requirements:**

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

**Board Response:**

WFSCA made the WIOA Plan available for public comment on its website April 3, 2025. The Plan was available for public comment through April 17, 2025. No public comments were received.

WFSCA also provided information and a link to the WIOA Plan on its social media sites, such as LinkedIn and Facebook.

The Plan was approved by the Operations Committee on February 20, 2025, and approved by the Board on February 27, 2025.

# Appendix: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

## Local Board Plan Requirements for Alignment to the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

### Requirement for Workforce Systemwide Alignment

State law requires local workforce development boards (local board) to adopt a plan that “sets broad goals and objectives for all workforce development programs in the local area consistent with statewide goals, objectives, and performance standards,”<sup>1</sup> as outlined in the workforce system strategic plan, [\*Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031\*](#).

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council) reviews each board plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the workforce system strategic plan. Under state law and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Council is charged with recommending the local board plans to the Governor for consideration and approval.

### Demonstrating Local Alignment with Texas’ Workforce System Strategic Plan

The local board planning process highlights the importance and interdependence of the constituents and partners of the Texas workforce system. Local boards oversee the delivery of workforce programs and services and are essential in both the development and implementation of system goals and objectives in the system strategic plan. The planning requirements help local boards inform the Council of innovative practices and articulate how local plans translate the workforce system strategic plan into local action that moves the system forward.

Local board responses apprise the Council—and, with the Council’s recommendation, the Governor—of system alignment, including program implementation, strategic initiatives, and innovative practices. All 28 boards will be represented in the briefing for the approval of the local plans and subsequent Council recommendation to the Governor for consideration for approval in the spring of 2025. Board responses may be included in the Council briefing materials verbatim.

Board response cover the three strategic opportunities and four system goals in *Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031* that focus system partners on the Council’s mission to produce an agile and resilient workforce. Building on a foundation of continuous innovation and increased collaboration, the system plan calls for accelerated engagement around three strategic opportunities: engagement of employers, improving outcomes for Texans with barriers, and use of data to support investment decisions. Each of these

envision a desirable future state for Texas and lays out essential actions to be implemented that support system goals and stronger outcomes across the Texas workforce system.

The system goals drive accelerated action by system partners in service to Texas employers, learners, partners, and those with policy and planning responsibilities, as follows:

- **Employers System Goal:** Accelerate the delivery of relevant education and training programs to meet the demand of employers.
- **Learners System Goal:** Accelerate the expansion of and access to work-based skill and knowledge acquisition to respond to the needs of learners.
- **Partners System Goal:** Accelerate the development and use of models to support and build system partners' capacity, responsiveness, continuous improvement, and decision-making.
- **Policy and Planning Goal:** Accelerate the availability of relevant workforce, education, and other data sets and the use of applied analytics to evaluate program outcomes to respond to the needs of policy makers and planners.

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*(Texas Government Code Sec. 2308.304, Local Plan.).*

## **Directions for Demonstrating Alignment with the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan**

Local board plan responses must demonstrate alignment with the workforce system plan and, therefore, require both summary information and citations to the strategies and initiatives that advance progress towards the workforce system goals in [\*Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031\*](#). Please refer to the workforce system plan for definitions of specific terms.

1. Provide a summary describing how the processes, activities, or initiatives in the local board plan align with the specific system goal and objective and each strategic opportunity. Response guidelines are provided.
2. Accurately cite the referenced information in the local board plan by providing the corresponding page number(s) in the plan.

## System Goals and Objectives

### **1. Employers Goal – Delivery of Relevant Education and Training Programs**

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes that accelerate the delivery of relevant education and training programs to meet employers' needs, specifically by increasing:

- upskilling and reskilling programs that address employers' needs for middle skill workers,
- adult learners transitioning to employment through integrated education and training programs, and
- attainment of short-term credentials in programs aligned with high-demand occupations.

Response should address the following:

- the institution and/or expansion of upskilling and reskilling programs to meet employers' needs for middle-skill workers,
- the identification and delivery of programs, including with adult education and literacy providers, that support attainment of short-term credentials, industry-based certifications, and licenses,
- populations that require supportive services to improve program completion, certification or attainment of short-term credentials, and employment, and
- data used to track reskilling and upskilling program enrollments and outcomes, including program completions, attainment of short-term credentials and industry-based certifications or licenses, and employment directly related to the credential, license, or certification.

### **Board Response:**

WFSCA utilizes insights gained from employers through our industry sector partnership work to identify the skills and certifications individuals needed for current and near term positions within the industry. WFSCA has been awarded several apprenticeship expansion grants in healthcare, skilled trades, and manufacturing to enable individuals to earn a salary while training/upskilling in a career. Many of the apprenticeships have been to upskill current healthcare workers into advanced positions, thereby opening entry level positions for new employees. The occupations were identified by local hospitals as a mechanism to retain staff through career progression while meeting the current need for skilled workers. (page 2, 31, 55, 56)

WFSCA continues to work with Austin Community College (ACC) Adult Basic Education and Literacy to offer IBEST courses to individuals, particularly those receiving TANF and SNAP, to support literacy goals while earning a certification in a high growth occupation. (pages 7, 43)

WFSCA provides support services to those in training or in job search and upon entry into employment to enable successful completion of services and to ensure job seekers are set up for success upon entering employment. (pages 42, 43)

## **2. Learners Goal – Expansion of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship**

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes that are expanding work-based experiences, including apprenticeship, to accelerate skills and knowledge acquisition that improves system outcomes for learners.

Response should address the following:

- work-based learning opportunities with system stakeholders as a pre-employment strategy for youth and adults, including those requiring supportive services and resources,
- the expansion of the employer network participating in and sponsoring work-based learning opportunities, including registered and industry-recognized apprenticeship programs, and
- partnerships that address regular engagement with employers and system stakeholders, including collaboration with a Regional Convener for the Tri-Agency Texas Regional Pathways Network and input on the quality of existing apprenticeship programs and development of new programs.

### **Board Response:**

Workforce Solutions Capital Area works to enhance the strategies to expand and support work-based learning including apprenticeships in our region.

WFSCA has found work-based learning and apprenticeships as an effective recruitment tool for new or upskilling workers. With employer collaboration through our industry sector partnerships, we have been able to develop apprenticeships as an onboarding and training tool that allows individuals with no prior experience enter a high-demand industry. The work-based learning provides the necessary work experience that traditional training programs cannot always provide. This is a strategy that is beneficial to both employers and individuals to gain the pre-employment and technical skills necessary to advance into high-demand roles.

WFSCA is leveraging our industry sector partnerships to expand employers utilizing work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeships. We have assisted in development of 4 healthcare apprenticeships, 2 manufacturing apprenticeships, and 2 pre-apprenticeships for skilled trades. We have started an Apprenticeship Employer Network aligned with National Apprenticeship Week to encourage peer learning and development of success stories for a proof of concept for other businesses.

Our partnerships with the Regional Convener (Region 13) has allowed us to provide and share insight on our existing work as well as collaborate on developing work-based learning strategies. In addition, WFSCA is dedicated to helping ensure the success of the RAPs in our region and support in the growth of this workforce strategy and will assist Apprenticeship Texas with the following strategic goals:

- Increase the number of quality pre-apprenticeships leading to entry into Registered Apprenticeship Programs.
- Increase the number of new and expanded Registered Apprenticeship Programs.
- Increase the number of underrepresented populations in both quality pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships.

### **3. Partners Goal – Alignment to Support Career Pathways**

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes to build the board’s capacity, responsiveness, continuous improvement, and decision-making to:

- support the identification of credentials of value, and
- streamline and clarify existing career pathways and models to increase alignment between secondary and postsecondary technical programs.

Response should address the following:

- system stakeholders’ input to assess the alignment and articulation of secondary and postsecondary technical programs supporting career pathways; and
- collaboration with secondary and postsecondary institutions to engage employers to identify credentials of value that respond to local labor market needs, including postsecondary technical sub-baccalaureate credit and non-credit credentials, industry-based certifications, apprenticeship certificates, and licenses; and
- processes to continuously improve career pathways.

### **Board Response:**

#### **Partners Goal – Alignment to Support Career Pathways**

WSCA is committed to building a resilient, data-informed workforce system that aligns education, training, and employment services to the evolving needs of Austin’s regional economy. The board’s activities to strengthen career pathways are focused on increasing system capacity, ensuring responsiveness to local labor market trends, and fostering continuous improvement through collaboration and innovation.

#### **Stakeholder Input to Align Secondary and Postsecondary Programs**

WSCA regularly convenes education and workforce stakeholders to assess alignment between secondary and postsecondary technical programs. This has been enhanced through our work on the Infrastructure Academy to ensure secondary and post-secondary technical programs are in line with employer needs and that the curriculum aligns with post-secondary education. WFSCA participates in the TWC Teacher Externship program in which teachers spend time in the summer learning directly from industry and then design lesson plans to reflect their learning.

In developing our Target Occupation list, WFSCA relies on labor market data, but also gains insights from industry and post-secondary training providers to ensure trainings are in line with current industry needs. Currently, Austin Community College is working to align its pre-apprenticeship program with those of the local unions to ensure consistency in training across the industry.

Stakeholder engagement is further strengthened through regular partner convenings, sector partnerships, and strategic planning sessions that review labor market data and educational offerings. This collaborative environment enables identification of misalignments, opportunities for articulation agreements, and pathways for dual credit and early college high school programs.

### **Employer Engagement to Identify Credentials of Value**

Workforce Solutions Capital Area partners closely with employers and industry leaders through initiatives like the **Hire Local Plan** and **sector-based partnerships** in healthcare, information technology, skilled trades, and advanced manufacturing. These partnerships allow the board to gather real-time feedback on skills needs and identify credentials that hold value in the local labor market.

WSCA works with ACC and other training providers to support the development and scaling of short-term, stackable credentials — including industry-recognized certifications, apprenticeship credentials, and licenses — that lead to high-demand, high-wage employment opportunities. The board also leverages labor market intelligence tools and collaborates with chambers of commerce and economic development organizations to validate and update the list of locally valued credentials.

### **Continuous Improvement of Career Pathways**

Continuous improvement is embedded in the board's approach through a combination of performance monitoring, data sharing, and partner feedback. WSCA supports the use of **career pathway frameworks**, including Guided Pathways and integrated education and training models (IET), to create clear, accessible routes from education to employment.



The board reviews key performance metrics such as credential attainment, wage progression, and equity in outcomes to guide adjustments in programming. Additionally, WSCA supports educator and workforce professional development, ensuring consistent application of career navigation strategies, labor market alignment, and access to supportive services that enable individuals to succeed along their chosen career paths.

By fostering collaboration across the workforce ecosystem and focusing on continuous improvement, Workforce Solutions Capital Area is advancing a career pathways system that meets the needs of Austin-area residents and employers alike.

#### **4. Policy and Planning Goal – Relevant Data Sets**

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes that support the availability and coordination of relevant workforce, education, and employment data to evaluate program outcomes to respond to the needs of policy makers and planners to:

- expand high-quality childcare availability,
- identify and quantify quality outcomes, including industry-based certification data, and
- enhance wage records.

Response should address the following:

- engagement with childcare providers and employers to establish on-site or near-site, high quality childcare facilities and expand Texas Rising Star certifications,
- collaboration with employers to identify enhanced employment and earnings data to gain deeper insight into program outcomes, and
- how the board and its system partners identify, evaluate, and implement ways to streamline and improve timeliness and completeness of data matching and sharing, specifically with industry- based certification attainment, to evaluate program effectiveness and outcomes.

#### **Board response:**

WFSCA area holds a contract with United Way for Greater Austin to supply and analyze a number of data sets related to early childhood educators and child care availability in Travis County. As part of our membership in the Austin/Travis County Success by 6 Early Childhood Coalition, we work with other local agencies and government to compile this relevant industry data and then implement strategies to address the needs presented in that data.

A sample list of the data we track as part of this collaboration can be found below:

- Total Children in Care

- Quality Rating Improvement System (Texas Rising Star) Information
- Classroom Information (Number and age groups)
- Teacher Information (Degree and/or Experience Information)
- Director Information (Degree and/or Experience Information)

Additionally, we partner with City of Austin and Travis County to provide the Jeanette Watson Wage Supplements to qualified child care workers. We collect data on early childhood staff members who apply and are awarded stipends in order to understand the local trends regarding early childhood wages, certification attainment, degree attainment, and retention rates.

And for the first time this year, WFSCA is pleased to also offer the Capital Area Retention and Elevation program, which awards extra compensation stipends to child care center staff to create more sustainability in the sector. Applicant centers submit information about their staffing and wages that we will use to track industry trends in our area.

## Strategic Opportunities

*Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031* envisions a collaborative workforce system capable of accelerating the delivery of workforce programs, services, and initiatives to meet the needs of a thriving economy. The strategic opportunities focus system partners on three critical success factors that will lead to broad achievement of the system plan goals and objectives. Review each strategic opportunity and provide the information requested.

### **Strategic Opportunity 1: Employer Engagement**

Describe how the local board coordinates with its stakeholders to gain insight into the needs of employers and minimize “asks” that burden employers.

Response should address the following:

- coordination efforts that gain more insight from employers, including participation in the Tri- Agency Texas Regional Pathways Network, if applicable, and
- reducing the number of regional system partners individually making requests of employers.

### **Board response:**

Workforce Solutions Capital Area leads industry sector partnerships to coordinate with stakeholders to gain insight into the needs of employers to provide a single table approach for our region to

engage with our employers and prioritize the ecosystems work based on employer interest. Industry Sector Partnerships are a proven and employer-led workforce development strategy that provides an efficient and effective way for business leaders to work with public partners. WFSCA has industry sector partnerships for Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Mobility and Infrastructure and they bring together businesses, from the same industry and in a shared labor market region, who work with education, workforce development, economic development and community organizations to address the workforce and other competitiveness needs of the targeted industry.

WFSCA's Director of Healthcare Partnerships had the opportunity to present our industry insights to the Governor's Task Force Addressing Healthcare Workforce Shortages and we welcome opportunities to provide additional support to Tri-Agency Texas Regional Pathways Network as applicable for any of our industry sector partnerships.

## **Strategic Opportunity 2: Improving Outcomes for Texans with Barriers to Employment**

Describe how the local board engages Texans with diverse needs — including those with disabilities, foster youth, sex-trafficking victims, incarcerated juveniles and adults, and opportunity youth — by designing programs that address their needs, maximize outcomes, and improve career opportunities.

Response should address the following:

- models, initiatives, programs, or processes that effectively engage these populations; and
- promising practices in supportive services models and outcomes that consistently demonstrate success.

### **Board Response:**

WFSCA is committed to advancing equity and opportunity by designing and delivering programs that are inclusive of Texans with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, foster youth, sex-trafficking survivors, justice-involved individuals, and opportunity youth. Through strategic partnerships, customized service delivery, and wraparound support models, the board ensures that these populations have access to meaningful education, training, and employment pathways. WFSCA believes there is no wrong door for services and we strive to meet customers where they are in their career path and coordinate with local agencies for referrals.

### **Effective Engagement Models and Initiatives**

The board employs a range of targeted programs and partnerships to engage individuals with diverse needs. These include:

- **Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations:** The board collaborates with local nonprofits and reentry coalitions and nonprofits to build trust, conduct outreach, and deliver services in community settings.
- **Youth and Young Adult Programs:** Specialized career services for foster youth and opportunity youth, such as mentorship, paid work experiences, and skills training, help them re-engage in education and transition into employment.
- **Disability Employment Services:** Career Center staff work closely with Vocational Rehabilitation on referrals for job placement assistance, training, and support services.

### **Promising Practices in Supportive Services**

Recognizing that support services are critical to success, the board has implemented several promising practices that consistently lead to improved outcomes:

- **Holistic Case Management:** Staff work closely with participants to identify barriers and provide tailored supports such as transportation, childcare, mental health counseling, and housing referrals.
- **Earn-and-Learn Models:** Paid internships, transitional jobs, and apprenticeships allow participants to build skills and income while receiving ongoing support.
- **Trauma-Informed Service Delivery:** Training staff and partners in trauma-informed care ensures that services are sensitive and responsive to the unique experiences of survivors and justice-involved individuals.
- **Outcome Tracking and Continuous Improvement:** The board tracks metrics such as credential attainment, employment placement, and retention rates across these populations and uses the data to improve service delivery.

By focusing on inclusion, partnership, and support, the board is improving career outcomes for Texans with barriers to employment and helping to build a more equitable and skilled workforce.

### **Strategic Opportunity 3: Use of Data to Support Investment Decisions**

Describe how the local board uses data and evidence to identify and target strategic investments to improve system performance.

Response should address the following:

- evidence-based practices and data to strategically implement and fund initiatives; and
- programs that have successfully demonstrated previous program participant credential attainment and employment.

### **Board Response:**

WFSCA leverages a data-driven, evidence-based approach to inform strategic investments that improve system performance and participant outcomes. This approach includes the use of labor market information (LMI), performance data, and evaluation results to guide funding decisions, program design, and continuous improvement.

### **Evidence-Based Practices and Strategic Implementation**

WFSCA utilizes state and regional labor market data, including job vacancy trends, industry and occupational projections, and employer feedback, to identify high-growth sectors and in-demand occupations. These insights, coupled with information gained through our industry sector partnerships, inform investment decisions and ensure alignment with local economic needs. Additionally, the board employs evidence-based practices such as sector strategies, career pathways, and work-based learning models—including apprenticeships and on-the-job training (OJT)—that have demonstrated effectiveness in advancing employment outcomes. Strategic initiatives are supported through ongoing data analysis, including performance metrics like credential attainment, employment rates, and wage progression. WFSCA has also partnered with research institutions, such as the Ray Marshall Center of UT Austin, and uses evaluation findings to assess program design and replicate successful models.

### **Programs with Demonstrated Success**

WFSCA prioritizes funding for programs that have a proven track record of success. For example, partnerships with local community colleges and training providers have resulted in high credential attainment rates in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, skilled trades, and information technology. Board and contractor staff meet regularly with training providers to ensure successful student progress and outcomes. It is through this coordination, as well as quarterly training provider meetings with WFSCA board and contractor staff, that programs regularly meet or exceed performance targets related to employment placement and retention. By continuously analyzing data and investing in what works, WFSCA ensures that resources are directed toward programs that drive measurable impact, support equitable access, and respond to both jobseeker and employer needs.