

Workforce Solutions East Texas Board

Local Workforce Development Board Plan Program Years 2021–2024

Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

A. Vision and Goals

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

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

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

Board Response:

Strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency

Mission

The Mission of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is to improve the quality of life through economic development by providing a first-class workforce for present and future businesses.

Vision

Workforce Solutions East Texas has active economic development with a premier Workforce attracting and supporting growth of business and industry.

Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment

Workforce Solutions East Texas Board Committee Goals and Action Items adopted by the Workforce Solutions East Texas are summarized below:

Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and Executive Committee

Continue to work toward first or second place in their Performance Measure Quartile
Continue to shape the brick and mortar and affiliate partnerships
Continue to grow Texas Rising Star Participation from 83 centers to 110 centers
Continue to earn additional awards and increase participation and excellence at the TWC Conference

Economic Development Committee

1. Completion of an economical and universal broadband system in rural areas providing more access to technology
2. Strong partnerships exist between education and business/industry resulting in more opportunities for youth including internships and apprenticeships
3. Business and industry consider workforce centers the hub for connecting all job seekers with employment opportunities
4. Lower unemployment rates through training, knowledge, and abilities (Goal for all Committees)
5. Strengthen relationships with Economic Development entities to coordinate planning and service delivery strategies
6. East Texas has excellent access to transportation including highways, trains, and airports

Welfare-to-Work Committee

1. Provide Texas Rising Star certified centers (Goal: 60% or more) and providing quality child-care to customers seeking employment and/or education (Priority)
2. A training program is in place to assist single parents including housing assistance, study programs, and child-care assistance
3. Lower unemployment rates through training, knowledge, and abilities
4. Programs exist increasing knowledge of careers for parents, youth, and educators
5. Increasing number of inspiring stories for people who have successfully moved from welfare to work
6. All workforce earns at least a living wage

7. Collaboration with local resources will maximize workforce program funding
8. Because of our success in economic development individuals in need of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits are significantly below the national average in our region

Youth Committee

1. Increased graduation rates as well as the GED and literacy skills
2. High School students graduate with industry recognized credentials in a demand entry-level position through internships and apprenticeships
3. Lower unemployment rates through training, knowledge, and abilities (Goal for all Committees)
4. Programs that exist increase knowledge of careers for parents, youth, and educators
5. Educational opportunities have resulted in an increase in degreed, certified, or credentialed young adults
6. Exposure to career options begins at lower elementary in coordination with business and industry
7. There are different pathways to graduation with career readiness as the focus
8. The youth make education and career choices earlier
9. Collaboration with local resources will maximize workforce program funding

Workforce Centers

1. Lower unemployment rates through training, knowledge, and abilities (Goal for all Committees)
2. All job seekers will find barrier free workforce services
3. Programs and job placement services are improved for veterans returning from military service
4. Geographical accessibility to all workforce centers
5. Our programs and projects are recognized by industry peers and seen as breakthrough, innovative, and highly successful
6. Business and industry consider workforce centers the hub for connecting all job seekers with employment opportunities
7. Customers are served in ways promoting personal growth and development

Top Strategies identified by the Board are summarized below:

1. Outreach Plan – To businesses as well as participants

2. Expand training opportunities/increase the amount of investments made in training – Help create a workforce for the employers in the area
3. Enhance services overall – measure return on investment
4. Partnering with recovery support services to address the Methamphetamines and Opioid crisis in East Texas

All of the Committee Goals identified are intended to support directly or indirectly the attainment of Texas Workforce Commission performance accountability measures for which are summarized below:

Note: No data is currently available for some of the some the measures due to the impacts of COVID-19.

Reemployment and Employer Engagement Measures (REEMS) Measures for Program Year 2020

Claimant Reemployment within 10 Weeks

Employers receiving Workforce Assistance

Program Participation Measures

Choices Full Work Rate – All Family Total

Average # of Children Served per Day – Combined

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Outcome Measures

Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2 Post Exit – C&T Participants

Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2 -Quarter 4 Post Exit – C&T Participants

Median Earnings Quarter 2 Post Exit – C&T Participants

Credential Rate - C&T Participants

Employed Quarter 2 Post Exit – Adult

Employed Quarter 4 Post Exit – Adult

Median Earnings Quarter 2 Post Exit – Adult

Credential Rate - Adult

Measurable Skills Gain - Adult

Employed Quarter 2 Post Exit – Dislocated Worker

Employed Quarter 4 Post Exit – Dislocated Worker

Median Earnings Quarter 2 Post Exit – Dislocated Worker

Measurable Skills Gain – Dislocated Worker

Credential Rate -Dislocated Worker

Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2 Post Exit – Youth

Employed/Enrolled Quarter 4 Post Exit – Youth

Credential Rate - Youth

Measurable Skills Gain – Youth

B. Board Strategies

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

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

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs are implemented by the Workforce Centers Services Provider – Career Team LLC (CT). In addition, a small portion of WIOA Youth funding is used for “Stand Alone” Youth projects which operate independently of the Workforce Centers, although services are coordinated. The Stand Alone Projects are intended to offer alternative service venues for area youth and currently include a project operated by East Texas Literacy Council.

The contract between the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board (Board) and Career Team outlines the Board’s priorities for operating WIOA programs in compliance with federal and state requirements. Contract requirements are further clarified through Texas Workforce Commission guidance letters, Board directives and technical assistance. Operating under the auspices of the East Texas Chief Elected Officials (CEO) Board, the East Texas Council of

Governments (ETCOG) serves as grant recipient and fiscal agent for the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board.

The Board maintains a Workforce Systems Improvement Team (WSIT) which monitors performance and compliance by the Workforce Centers Services Provider. The WSIT works hand in hand with the Workforce Centers Services Provider staff to assure best practices are implemented and the needs of employers and job seekers are met. The WSIT works in conjunction with the Operations Division of the East Texas Council of Governments in areas of contracting, financial management and oversight.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Programs are operated by the Literacy Council of Tyler, which serves as the Texas Workforce Commission AEL grant recipient for the East Texas Workforce Development Area. Located on the Tyler Junior College West Campus, Literacy Council of Tyler provides services for Smith, Cherokee and Wood Counties. They in turn contract with Angelina College, Kilgore College, Northeast Texas Community College, Panola College, Trinity Valley Community College and New Summerfield ISD to serve the remainder of the East Texas Workforce Development Area.

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board collaborates with the local AEL program for referrals to and from the Workforce Centers. As opportunities arise, the AEL Providers and Workforce Centers participate jointly in career pathways and other training opportunities.

Required Partners include:

1. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, Workforce Investment Act, formerly or WIA)

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board contracts with Career Team LLC to implement WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workforce and Youth Programs. In addition, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board utilizes a portion of WIOA Youth funding for a Stand-Alone Youth project through a contract with East Texas Literacy Council.

2. Wagner-Peyser Service (ES)

Employment Services (ES) for employer and jobseeker customers are funded through the Wagner Wagner-Peyser Act. Employment Services staff are employees of the State of Texas and the Texas Workforce Commission and are supervised by the TWC Area Manager stationed in the Tyler Workforce Center. Employment Services staff work under the direction of Career Team LLC, the Workforce Center Service Provider, in carrying out tasks which support performance

measures and center activities. ES staff assist with the achievement of the Claimant Reemployment with (10) Weeks and the Number (#) of Receiving Workforce Assistance Performance Measures. ES staff will also assist with the on-going efforts of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA).

3. Unemployment Insurance Benefits Information Program (UI)

Workforce Center's staff including Career Team and ES staff provide workforce customers with relevant information about requirements for Unemployment Insurance Program benefits, which are administered by the Texas Workforce Commission.

4. Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA)

Trade Adjustment Act services are provided by Workforce Center's staff in cooperation with Employment Services staff. Trade Adjustment Act services may also be provided jointly by TAA staff and Workforce Center's staff when, at the direction of the Texas Workforce Commission, Trade Adjustment Act staff who are employees of TWC are assigned to work under the direction of the Workforce Centers Services Provider (Career Team).

5. Choices, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program

Career Team operates the Choices Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program. In addition, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board uses a portion of the TANF funds to provide Basic Education and Literacy Programs through a network of providers, including East Texas Literacy Council, Kilgore College, Literacy Council of Tyler and Panola College.

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

Career Team LLC operates the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP (E&T)).

7. Subsidized Child Care Services

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board contracts with BakerRipley to provide subsidized Child Care Services. Some of the Child Care Services staff are assigned to the Tyler and Longview Workforce Centers.

8. Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Programs are operated by the Literacy Council of Tyler, which serves as the Texas Workforce Commission grant recipient for the East Texas Workforce Development Area.

9. Apprenticeship programs (Chapter 133 of the Texas Education Code)

Area Apprenticeship programs operate outside of the Workforce Centers, however, Center staff make referrals to the Apprenticeship programs, when appropriate.

10. National and Community Services Act program

The National and Community Services Act program operates outside of the Workforce Centers.

11. Senior Community Service Employment Program

A memorandum of understanding is being negotiated with the AARP Foundation Senior Community Services Employment Program to coordinate services in the region.

12. Non-Certificate Postsecondary Career and Technology Training programs

Non-Certificate Postsecondary Career and Technology Training programs operate outside of the Workforce Centers, which make referrals to the programs, when appropriate.

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13. VR (WIOA, Title IV) programs

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) programs are operated by the Texas Workforce Commission and their services are coordinated with the Workforce Centers Services Provider, Career Team. Currently, other than in Athens, VRS staff are housed separately, due to lease considerations. However, VRS staff may provide services at the Workforce Centers. Texas

Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Workforce Centers Services Provider work collaboratively on programs such as Summer Earn and Learn and the Student Hireability Navigator initiative. The Navigator initiative will promote collaboration on educating, engaging, employers on the benefits of disability inclusion to promote awareness, buy-in as work experience, apprenticeship partners.

14. Veteran employment and training programs

Veteran employment and training programs are operated by Texas Veterans Commission staff at the Longview and Tyler Workforce Centers. Career Team actively refers eligible veterans to the Veteran employment and training programs and coordinates services with Veterans staff, assuring veterans priority of service requirements are followed.

C. High Performing Board

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

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

Board Response:

The Board Strategic Plan is aligned with the Goal Areas for the Texas Workforce investment Council:

Goal 1- Focus on Employers

Goal Area 2 - Engage in Partnerships

Goal Area 3 - Align System Elements

Goal Area 4 - Improve and Integrate Programs

All the Committee Goals and Texas Workforce Commission performance accountability measures identified in Part 1.A are intended to support directly or indirectly the Texas Workforce Investment Council Plan Implementation and System Outcomes Measures summarized below:

- Educational achievement, GED, high school graduation, credentials, Associate and Bachelor degrees, Measurable Skills Gains
- Entered employment
- Employment retention, Median earnings
- Customers served

Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis

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

A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis

Boards must include an analysis of the following:

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

Board Response:

Note: COVID-19 represents an unprecedented challenge for our nation and our region. Under the leadership of the Texas Workforce Commission, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is fully engaged in addressing employer and job seekers needs, made more urgent by the pandemic. For the purpose of this Strategic Plan, we are focusing on the long-term, after this disaster has been defeated. As with other disasters, after a painful, possibly slower than hoped for period, we are anticipating a full economic recovery. This Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis, and the identification of targeted and demand industries and occupations, is based upon the assumption long-term economic trends, based upon rich historic data, will prevail. Having said this, it is recognized the pandemic may accelerate many trends which were play before the outbreak, such as remote work and learning and automation of the workplace. For now, it is too early to tell. The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board will monitor these trends closely and these will likely be topics for the Plan Modification two years from now.

The East Texas Workforce Development Area includes the Longview and Tyler Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) and consists of 14 counties: Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg,

Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt and Wood. As of 2019, the region has an estimated population of 855,736 within 10,019 square miles.



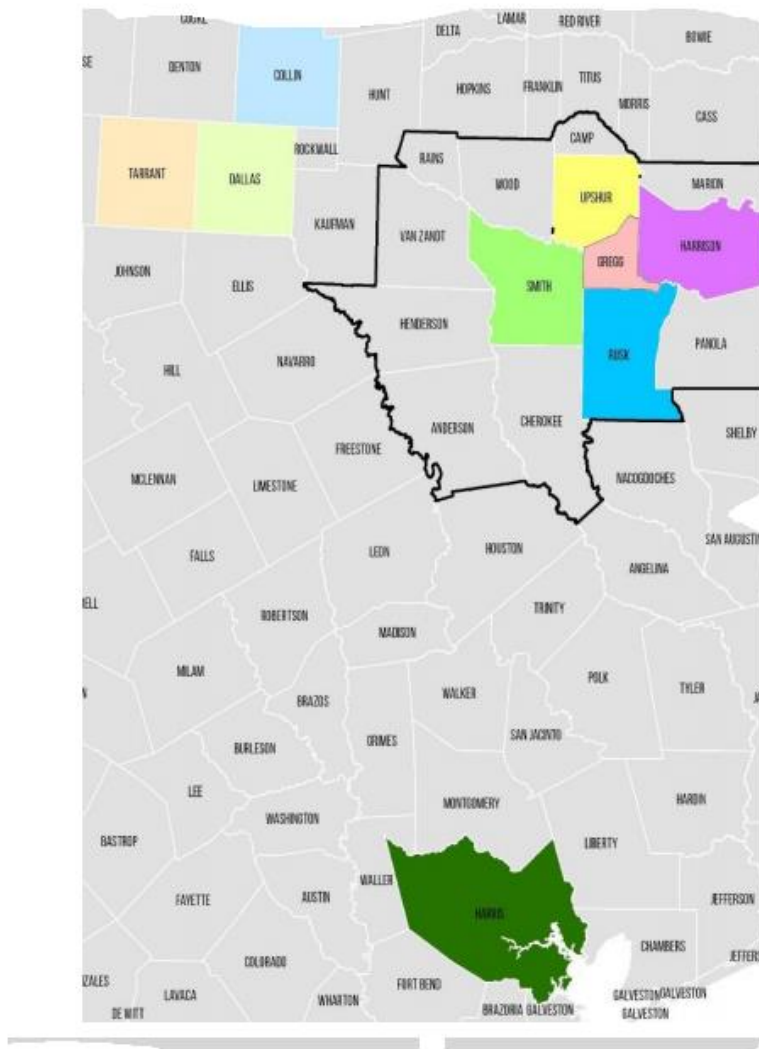
Geographically, East Texas is where the “South ends and Texas begins”. Traveling the stream traversed rolling hills of East Texas from east to west, one can see the transition from the “Piney Woods” of the South to a post oak woodlands/savannah to the blackland prairies of the Dallas area. The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project, a joint venture of the Economic Development Administration and Harvard University, places East Texas within the Dallas Texas Economic Area which adjoins the Shreveport Louisiana Economic Area. U.S. Interstate 20 serves as a vital connection between these Economic Areas, crossing from east to west through the cities of Marshall, Longview, Lindale (within the Tyler MSA) and Canton (three of these cities are County seats). U.S Highways 59 (and 259) and 69 bisect Interstate 20 through Marshall, Longview, Tyler respectively and serve as major north/south routes. Along with extensive rail lines and the Tyler and Gregg County airports, our network of highways serves as a major catalyst for economic growth.

The 14 counties which make up the East Texas Workforce Development Area are interconnected and diverse. As reflected in work commuting patterns, the counties are roughly configured into two labor primary labor markets anchored in Longview (Gregg County) and Tyler (Smith County).

A county's laborshed is the geographic area from which it draws employees. In 2015, 59.8% of individuals working in Gregg County commute from another county in Texas for work. Harrison County, Upshur County, Smith County, Rusk County and Harris County, are the biggest sources of outside labor for Gregg County.

In 2015 forty percent (40.2 %) of Gregg County's working residents were employed in the County itself. However, 9.7 percent of Gregg County's working residents are employed in Dallas and Smith counties. Another 3.0 percent commute to Harris County, while an additional 8.5 percent travel to jobs between Tarrant, Upshur, Collin counties in TX and Caddo Parrish, LA. Collectively, these six counties and Caddo Parish in LA represent 27.1 percent of the

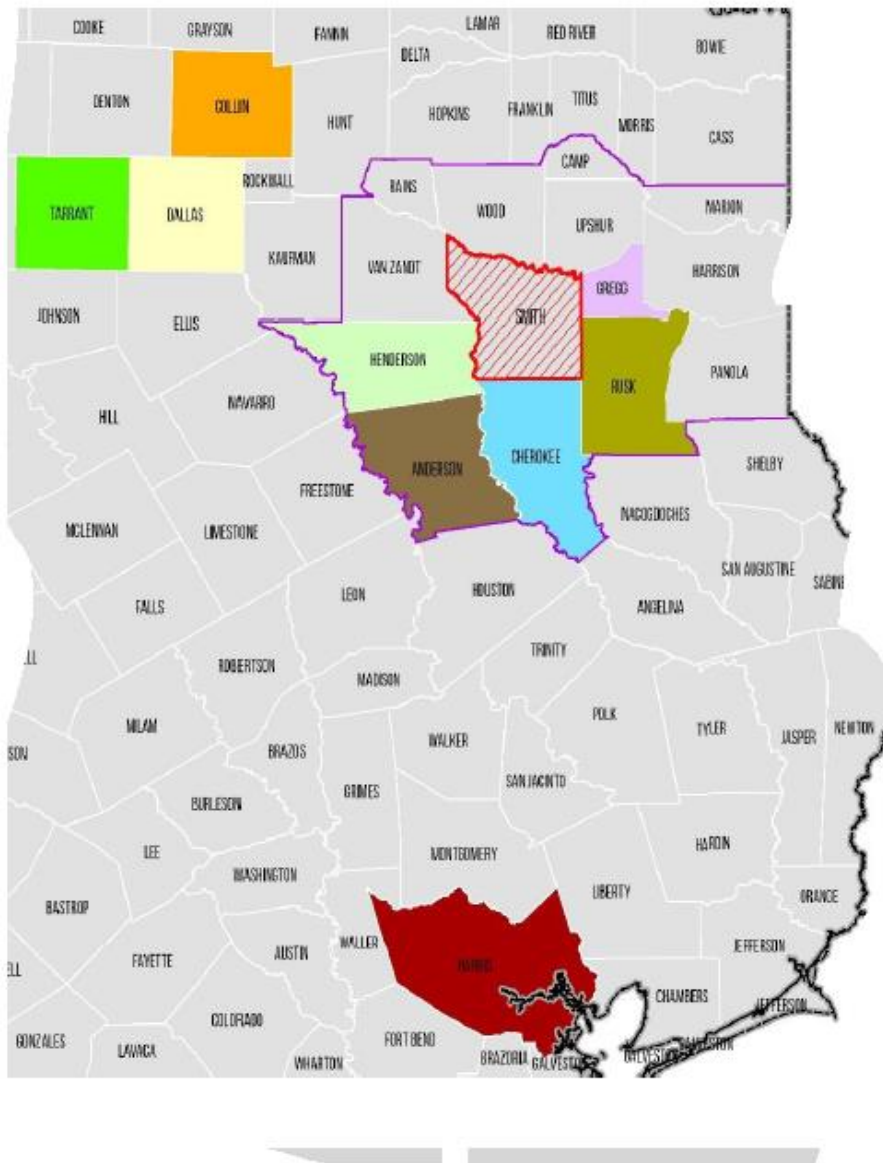
commuted for Gregg County.



In 2015, 43.2 of individuals working in Smith County commuted from another county in Texas for work. Henderson County, Cherokee County, Van Zandt County, Dallas County and Gregg County, are the largest areas where workers in Smith County live. In this case, most of the in-commuters resided in counties adjacent to Smith County. Individuals that worked in Smith that resided in Harris County (2.2%), Dallas County (2.6%), Tarrant County (1.9%) are the exception in the general pattern in terms of labor shed.

In 2015, sixty-four percent (64.2%) of Smith County's working residents were employed in Smith County itself. However, around 5.8 percent of Smith County's working residents were employed in Gregg County. Another 5.3 percent commuted to Dallas County, while an additional 7 percent traveled to jobs between Harris, Tarrant and Cherokee counties.

Collectively, these five counties represent 18 percent of the commute shed for Smith County.



Patchwork Nation is a reporting project of the Jefferson Institute that aims to explore what is happening in the United States by examining different kinds of communities over time. The effort uses demographic, voting and cultural data to cluster and organize communities into “types of place.” Patchwork divides America's 3,141 counties into 12 community types based on characteristics such as income level, racial composition, employment and religion. The Patchwork Nation primary and secondary community type classification for each county within East Texas is identified below.

County	Patchwork Nation	Patchwork Nation2
	Primary Classification	Secondary Classification
Anderson	Higher Minority Population	Military/Veteran Center
Camp	Higher Evangelical Population	Higher Minority Population
Cherokee	Higher Evangelical Population	Higher Minority Population
Gregg	Growth Community	Higher Minority Population
Harrison	Higher Evangelical Population	Higher Minority Population
Henderson	Suburban Center	Higher Retiree Population
Marion	Higher Minority Population	Higher Retiree Population
Panola	Higher Evangelical Population	Higher Minority Population
Rains	Suburban Center	Higher Retiree Population
Rusk	Higher Evangelical Population	Military/Veteran Center
Smith	Suburban Center	Metropolitan Area
Upshur	Higher Evangelical Population	Higher Retiree Population
Van Zandt	Higher Evangelical Population	Higher Retiree Population
Wood	Suburban Center	Higher Retiree Population

Growth Community - "Boom Towns" - Fast growing communities with rapidly diversifying populations

Higher Retiree Population - "Emptying Nests" - Home to many retirees and aging baby boomer populations; less diverse than the nation at large

Higher Evangelical Population - "Evangelical Epicenters" - Communities with a high proportion of evangelical Christians, found mostly in small towns and suburbs; slightly older than the U.S. average

Metropolitan Area - "Industrial Metropolis" - Densely populated, highly diverse urban centers; incomes trend higher than the national average

Military/Veteran Center - "Military Bastions" - Areas with high employment in the military or related to the presence of the military and large veteran populations

Higher Minority Population - "Minority Centers" - Home to large pockets of black residents but a below average percentage of Hispanics and Asians

Suburban Center - "Monied Burbs" - Wealthier, highly educated communities with a median household income of \$15,000 above the national county average.

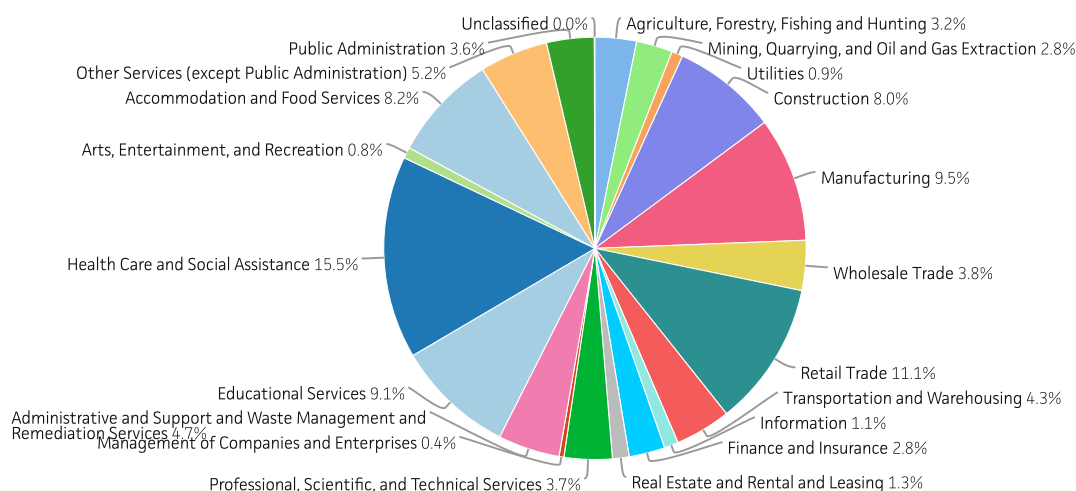
In a report prepared in 1987, Dr. M. Ray Perryman stated "East Texas is a vibrant and dynamic economic region. It boasts an incredible array of natural resources, including oil, natural gas, timber, lignite, clay, fertile agricultural land and water. It has a skilled and abundant labor force, good infrastructure, outstanding recreational facilities and an excellent climate. The area also has a strong educational complex, cultural opportunities and a great quality of life." This report was prepared in the aftermath of a catastrophic collapse in oil prices resulting in a region-wide unemployment rate of 10.5% in July of 1986. In his study, Dr. Perryman went on to state "The

overall outlook for the region is solid, but it can be significantly enhanced through a comprehensive program designed to achieve greater diversification and development.”

Discounting imprecision which comes with any type of classification system, the Patchwork Nation categories emphasize the social and economic diversity of the region. And while Oil and Gas is still a major East Texas industry, in the 30 years since the East Texas “Perryman Study” was published, much diversification in the economy has occurred as reflected in this most recent industry snapshot.

Today, the largest sector in the East Texas Workforce Development Area is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 53,389 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Retail Trade (38,144 workers) and Manufacturing (32,847). High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (LQ = 6.98), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (2.32), and Utilities (1.63).

Total Workers for East Texas Workforce Development Area by Industry



Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2020Q3

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2020Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q3.

Sectors in the East Texas Workforce Development Area with the highest average wages per worker are Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$96,585), Utilities (\$85,991), and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$85,747). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 5 years are Accommodation and Food Services (+918 jobs), Manufacturing (+782), and Administrative and Support and Waste

Another way of looking at the industrial make-up and diversity of a region is through cluster mapping.

A **cluster** is a regional concentration of related industries in a particular location. Clusters are a striking feature of economies, making regions uniquely competitive for jobs and private investment. They consist of companies, suppliers, and service providers, as well as government agencies and other institutions that provide specialized training and education, information, research, and technical support.

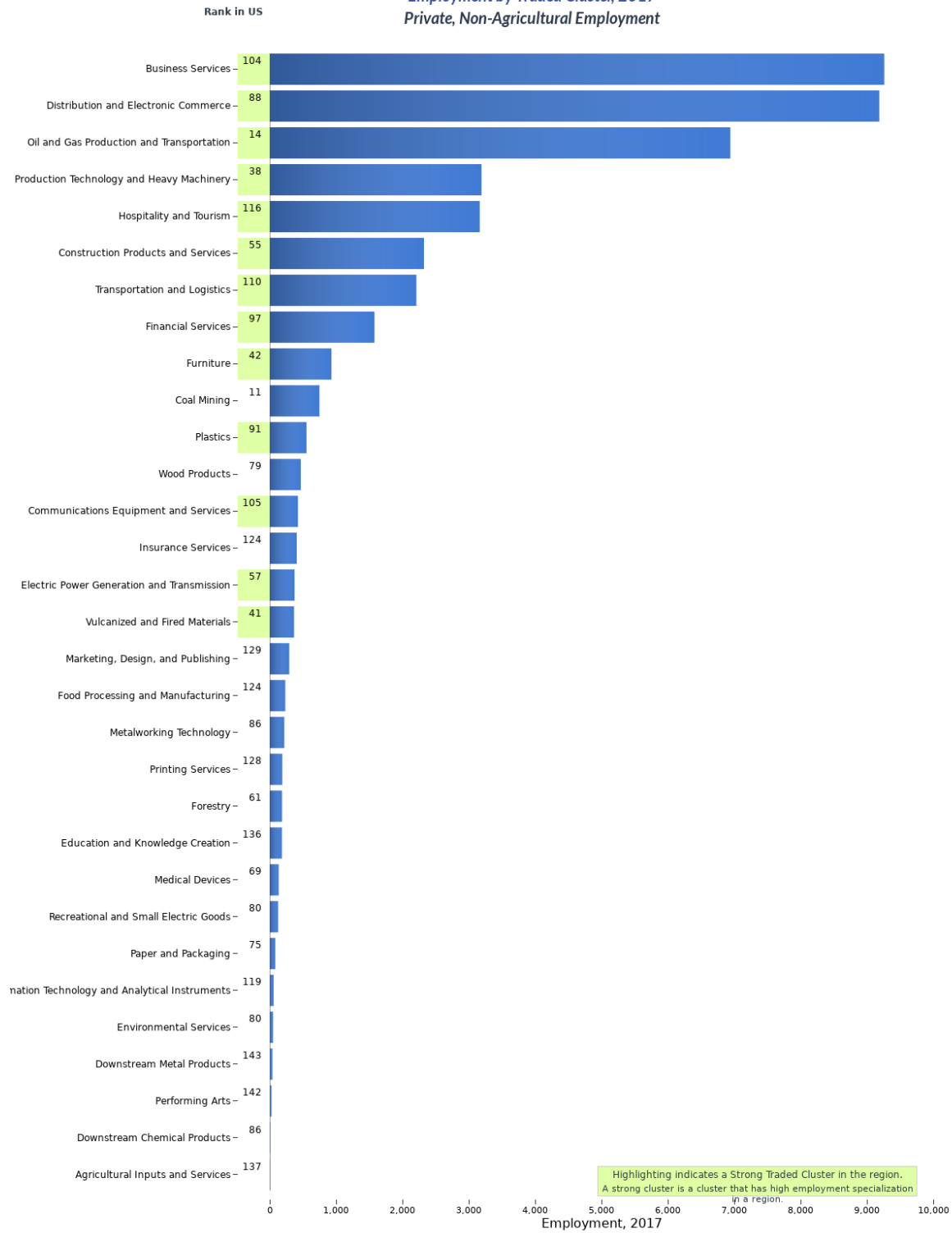
- **Traded clusters** are groups of related industries that serve markets beyond the region in which they are located. They are free to choose their location of operation (unless the location of natural resources drives where they can be) and are highly concentrated in a few regions, tending to only appear in regions that afford specific competitive advantages.
- **Local clusters**, in contrast, consist of industries that serve the local market. They are prevalent in every region of the country, regardless of the competitive advantages of a particular location. As a result, a region's employment in local clusters is usually proportional to the population of that region. Moreover, the majority of a region's employment comes from jobs in local clusters. Since local clusters are tied to the regions in which they are located, they are not directly exposed to competition from other regions.

Included for this analysis are charts from the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project summarizing Traded and Local Clusters for the East Texas Workforce Development Area. Based upon 2017 data, 78% of the workers in East Texas were employed in Local Clusters and 22% were employed in Traded Clusters.

East Texas Workforce Development Area by crazygary1

Employment by Traded Cluster, 2017

Private, Non-Agricultural Employment

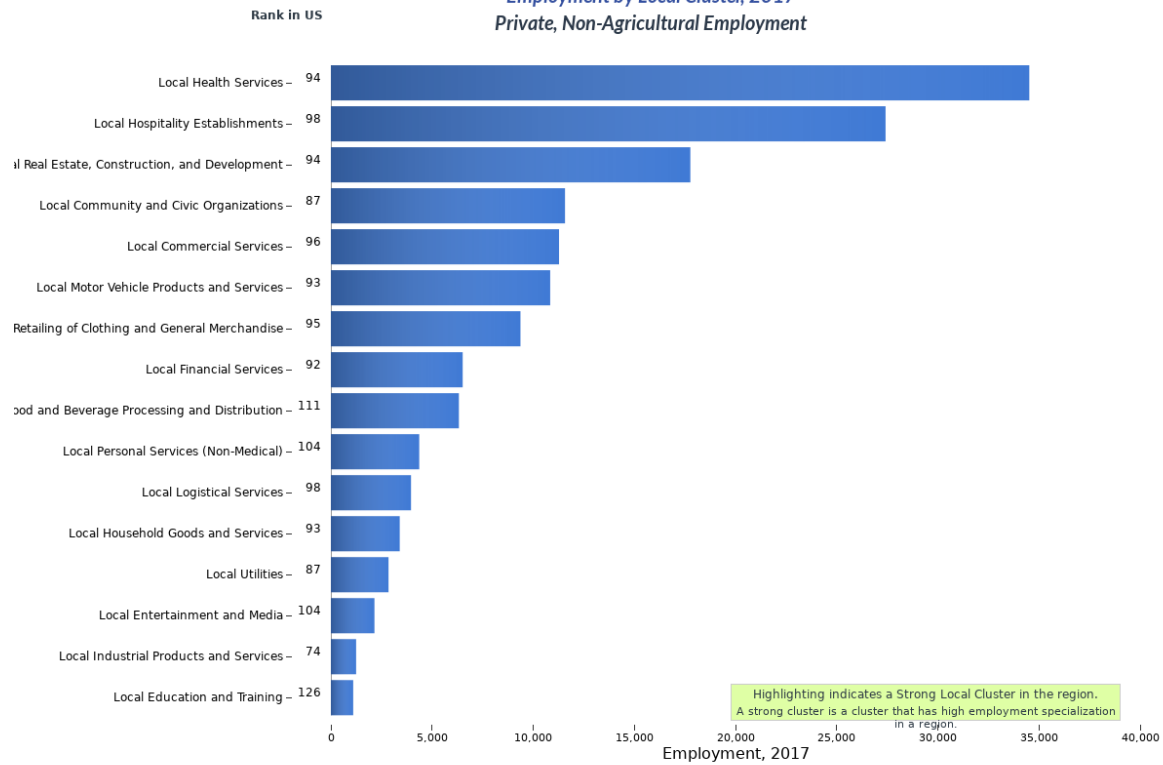


Source: [U.S. Cluster Mapping Project](#), Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, Harvard Business School. [Data Sources](#)

East Texas Workforce Development Area by crazygary1

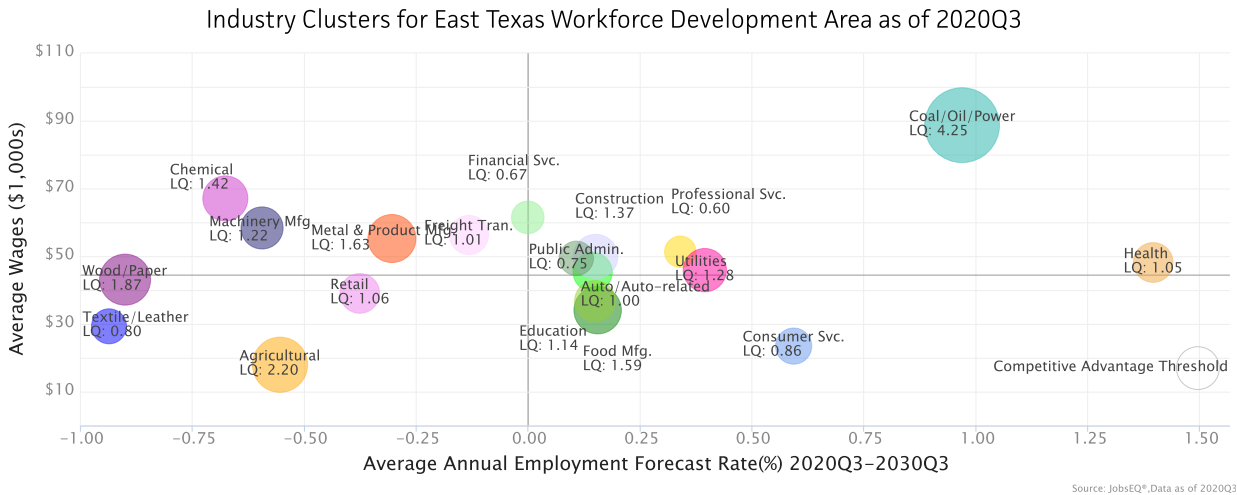
Employment by Local Cluster, 2017

Private, Non-Agricultural Employment



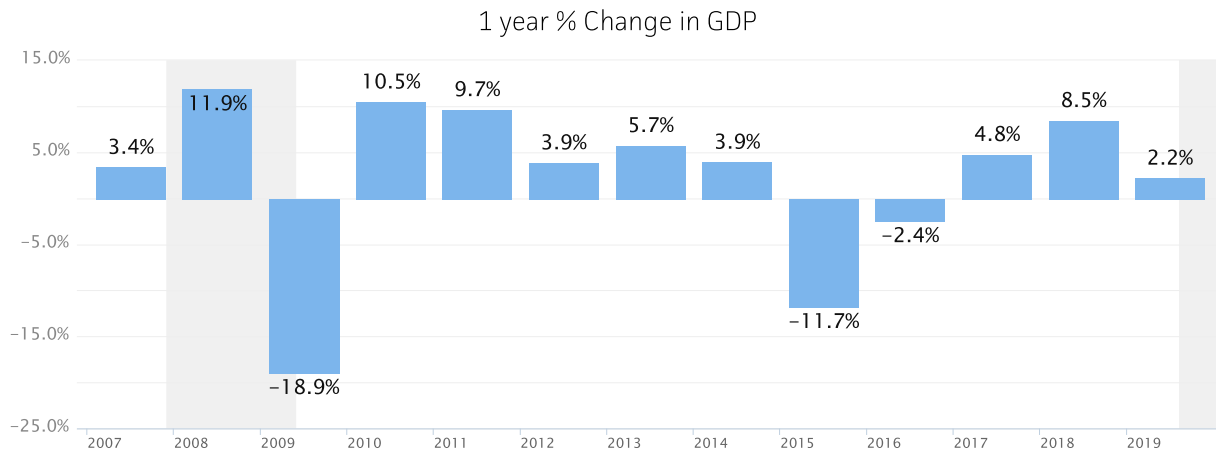
Source: [U.S. Cluster Mapping Project](#), Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, Harvard Business School. [Data Sources](#)

Another way to look at East Texas Clusters is the through a Bubble Chart,



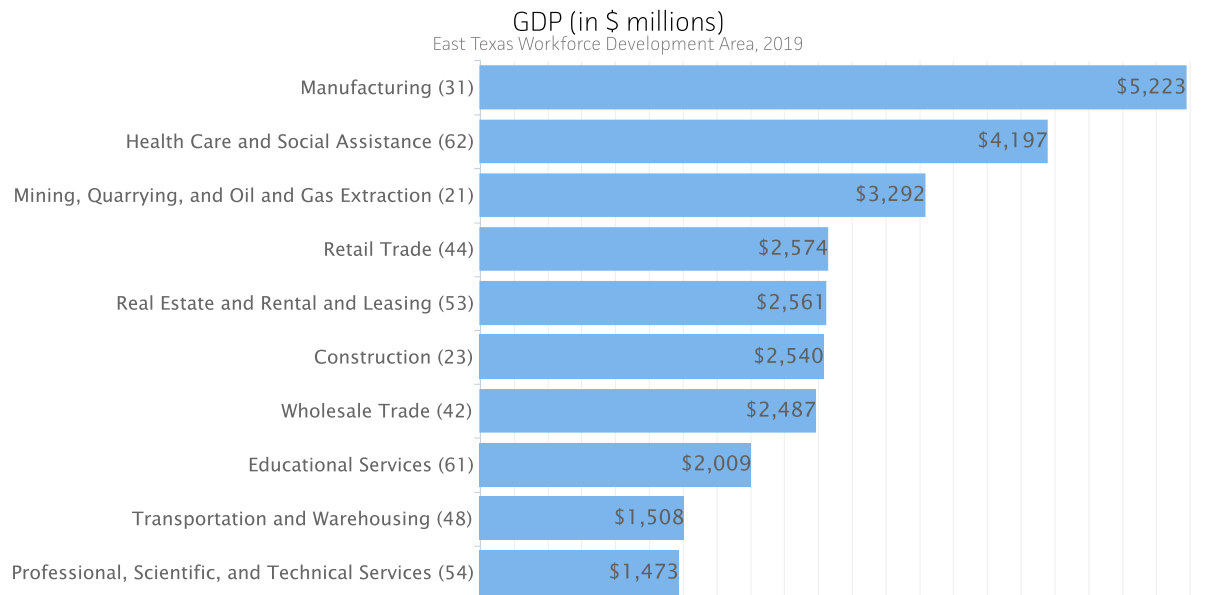
This chart represents annual wages, annual employment growth, total employment and concentration of employment compared with other regions (Location Quotient). Industry Clusters in the upon right hand quadrant reflects a high level of competitive advantage compared with other regions.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. In 2019, nominal GDP in the East Texas Workforce Development Area expanded 2.2%. This follows growth of 8.5% in 2018. As of 2019, total GDP in the East Texas Workforce Development Area was \$35,740,068,000.



Of the sectors in the East Texas Workforce Development Area, Manufacturing contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2019, \$5,223,391,000 The next-largest contributions came from Health

Care and Social Assistance (\$4,196,703,000); Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$3,291,993,000); and Retail Trade (\$2,573,860,000).



A survey of Economic Development entities in East Texas will be conducted in conjunction with preparation of the Plan. The survey results, along with labor market and industry information in this plan are being considered by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board in developing the proposed list of Targeted Industries.

Area Economic Development entities and area training providers are also being surveyed regarding targeted occupation needs. The survey results, along with labor market and industry information in this plan are being considered by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board in developing the proposed list of Targeted Occupations

Lists of the in-demand industry sectors and In-demand and Targeted Occupations are attached.

B. Knowledge and Skills Analysis

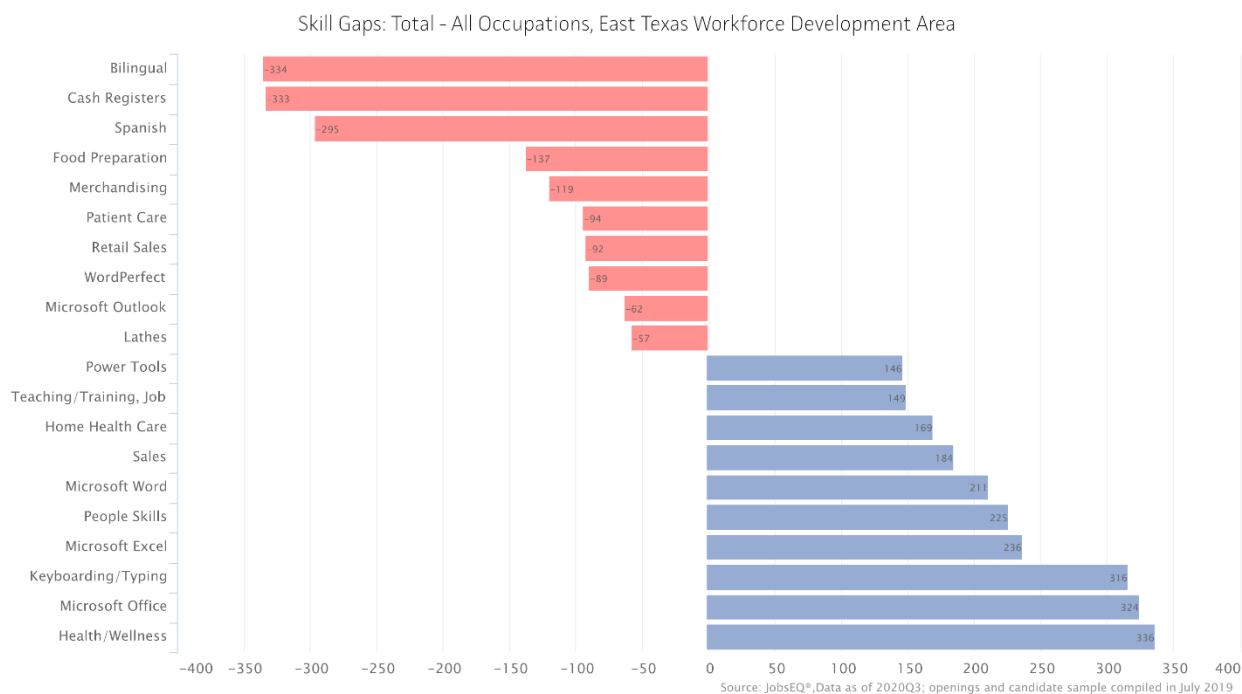
(WIOA §108(b)(1)(B); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(2))

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

Board Response:

A skill gap is defined as the difference between the supply and demand for a skill. This can be measured by percentage or a job count (where the job count is relative to occupation demand). Positive gaps are surpluses of a skill and negative gaps represent a shortage of a skill. Skill supply (candidates) is collected from resume data; demand (openings) is collected from job ads.

A Skill gap analysis for the East Texas Workforce Development Area provided by Jobs EQ is included below. It is based upon regional occupation demand (growth plus separations) and the percent of skill demand and supply. Skill demand mix data are per a one-year sample of data; skill supply data are estimated using a four-year sample of resumes data; both data sets compiled as of July 2019.



In 2015, the Tri-Agency Partnership of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission adopted 60x30TX higher

education strategic plan which establishes the overarching goal by 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.

The Texas 60X30 Initiative Website states:

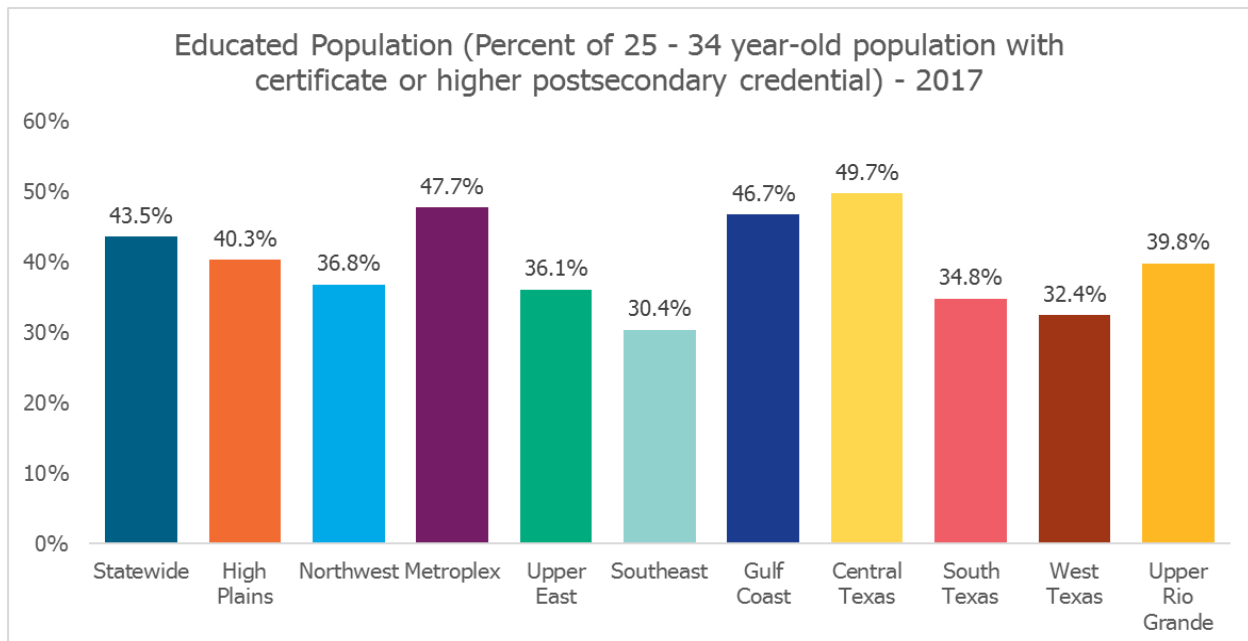
“The U.S. job market changed during the recession in 2008. Research shows the U.S. created 11.6 million new jobs in the years that followed. **Ninety-nine** percent of the new jobs went to workers who had some form of higher education.

Many jobs that disappeared during the recession are not coming back. Especially for workers with a high school diploma or less. And get this – two thirds of the jobs that will be in high demand a generation from now do not exist today! Already, businesses across Texas are unable find the skilled workers they need to fill vacant jobs in some industries.

This matters because the Texas economy, when ranked as a country, places ahead of Australia, Korea and Spain. In fact, it ranks as the 15th largest economy in the world. (Note: Texas is now actually ranked 9th.) With changes in technology and in the nature of how we work, Texas can only keep this level of economic prosperity by having [a more educated workforce](#).

By 2030, 60 percent or more of all new jobs will require some level of higher education. Today, only 42 percent of young Texans between the ages of 25 and 34 have an associate degree or higher.”

It is intended for the programs and activities of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board to fully support the Texas 60X30 Initiative. The initiative is organized by regions. The East and Northeast Texas Workforce Development Areas are combined to form the Upper East Texas Region. Comparative post-secondary credential attainments rates for the regions of Texas is included below:



Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau and THECB.

<https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2017/>

Inceasing the attainment rate will be a major emphasis during the Statagic Plan period.

C. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

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

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

Board Response:

Demographic Profile – Including Education Levels and Individuals with Barriers to Employment

The population in the East Texas Workforce Development Area was 855,736 per American Community Survey data for 2014-2018.

The region has a civilian labor force of 374,642 with a participation rate of 55.5%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in the East Texas Workforce Development Area, 18.7% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 32.9% in the nation.

The median household income in the East Texas Workforce Development Area is \$49,823 and the median house value is \$124,552.

Summary ¹						
	Percent			Value		
	East Texas Workforce Development Area	Texas	USA	East Texas Workforce Development Area	Texas	USA
Demographics						
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	855,736	27,885,195	322,903,030
Male	50.0%	49.7%	49.2%	428,140	13,849,775	158,984,190
Female	50.0%	50.3%	50.8%	427,596	14,035,420	163,918,840
Median Age ²	—	—	—	39.2	34.4	37.9
Under 18 Years	23.7%	26.2%	22.8%	203,063	7,292,686	73,553,240
18 to 24 Years	8.9%	10.0%	9.6%	76,518	2,777,150	30,903,719
25 to 34 Years	12.4%	14.7%	13.8%	105,831	4,094,297	44,567,976
35 to 44 Years	12.0%	13.5%	12.6%	102,708	3,767,582	40,763,210
45 to 54 Years	12.5%	12.6%	13.2%	106,698	3,511,040	42,589,573
55 to 64 Years	13.1%	11.1%	12.8%	111,680	3,104,626	41,286,731
65 to 74 Years	10.0%	7.2%	8.8%	85,623	2,000,715	28,535,419
75 Years, and Over	7.4%	4.8%	6.4%	63,615	1,337,099	20,703,162
Race: White	79.9%	74.3%	72.7%	683,626	20,720,689	234,904,818
Race: Black or African American	15.0%	12.1%	12.7%	128,126	3,365,783	40,916,113
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.5%	0.5%	0.8%	4,005	136,061	2,699,073
Race: Asian	0.9%	4.7%	5.4%	8,109	1,308,257	17,574,550
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	660	23,672	582,718
Race: Some Other Race	1.9%	5.7%	4.9%	15,843	1,600,234	15,789,961
Race: Two or More Races	1.8%	2.6%	3.2%	15,367	730,499	10,435,797
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	15.9%	39.2%	17.8%	135,918	10,921,556	57,517,935
Population Growth						
Population (Pop Estimates) ⁴	—	—	—	873,311	28,995,881	328,239,523
Population Annual Average Growth ⁴	0.6%	1.6%	0.7%	4,891	419,412	2,146,799
People per Square Mile	—	—	—	90.2	111.0	92.9
Economic						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over) ⁵	55.5%	64.4%	63.2%	374,642	13,728,630	162,248,196
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54) ⁵	73.9%	80.4%	81.8%	232,802	9,095,705	104,136,254
Armed Forces Labor Force ⁵	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	421	89,701	1,028,133
Veterans, Age 18-64 ⁵	5.2%	5.0%	4.7%	26,153	862,771	9,398,789
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64 ⁵	68.5%	77.8%	76.3%	17,902	671,366	7,168,168
Median Household Income ^{2,5}	—	—	—	\$49,823	\$59,570	\$60,293
Per Capita Income ⁵	—	—	—	\$25,182	\$30,143	\$32,621
Mean Commute Time (minutes) ⁵	—	—	—	25.3	26.4	26.6
Commute via Public Transportation ⁵	0.2%	1.4%	5.0%	627	184,848	7,602,145
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64						
No High School Diploma	16.4%	15.7%	11.2%	70,031	2,274,547	18,885,967
High School Graduate	30.6%	24.7%	25.8%	130,663	3,571,759	43,699,272
Some College, No Degree	25.9%	22.1%	21.0%	110,409	3,193,349	35,525,113

Summary¹

	Percent			Value		
	East Texas Workforce Development Area	Texas	USA	East Texas Workforce Development Area	Texas	USA
Associate's Degree	8.5%	7.5%	9.1%	36,186	1,088,717	15,389,737
Bachelor's Degree	13.4%	20.0%	20.8%	57,040	2,894,532	35,261,652
Postgraduate Degree	5.3%	10.0%	12.1%	22,588	1,454,641	20,445,749
Housing						
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	364,021	10,769,900	136,384,292
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) ²	—	—	—	\$124,552	\$161,700	\$204,900
Homeowner Vacancy	2.2%	1.6%	1.7%	4,909	95,712	1,304,850
Rental Vacancy	8.6%	7.7%	6.0%	8,499	308,747	2,822,053
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	29.4%	38.1%	36.2%	88,635	3,635,275	43,285,318
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units) ⁵	4.9%	5.4%	8.7%	14,705	512,772	10,424,934
Social						
Poverty Level (of all people) ⁵	16.1%	15.5%	14.1%	131,595	4,213,938	44,257,979
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	13.0%	12.2%	12.2%	39,133	1,167,725	14,635,287
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.3%	1.5%	1.4%	11,432	405,822	4,442,295
Disconnected Youth ^{3,5}	3.6%	2.9%	2.6%	1,649	46,016	438,452
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children) ⁵	34.3%	34.6%	34.3%	65,136	2,402,953	23,973,249
Uninsured	17.3%	17.4%	9.4%	142,520	4,764,897	29,752,767
With a Disability, Age 18-64 ⁵	12.6%	9.6%	10.3%	60,188	1,618,704	20,240,504
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size ⁵	35.8%	44.3%	41.6%	21,538	717,826	8,421,018
Foreign Born	6.9%	17.0%	13.5%	59,402	4,736,692	43,539,499
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	5.8%	14.0%	8.5%	46,089	3,617,887	25,647,781

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

1. American Community Survey 2014-2018, unless noted otherwise

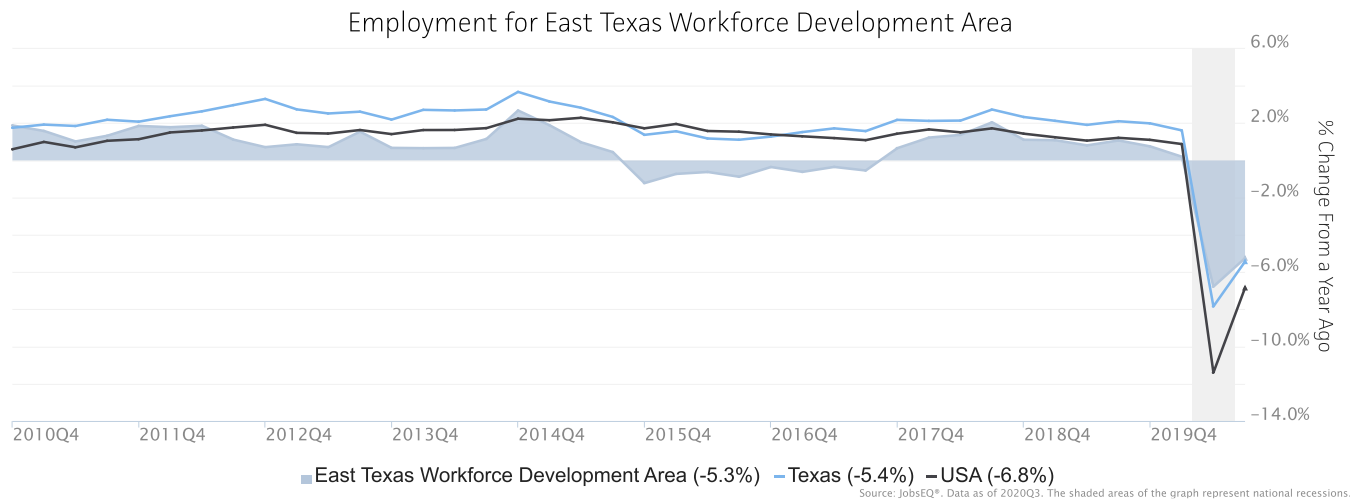
2. Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.

3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.

4. Census 2019, annual average growth rate since 2009

5. See Rio Arriba errata note in the Data Dictionary.

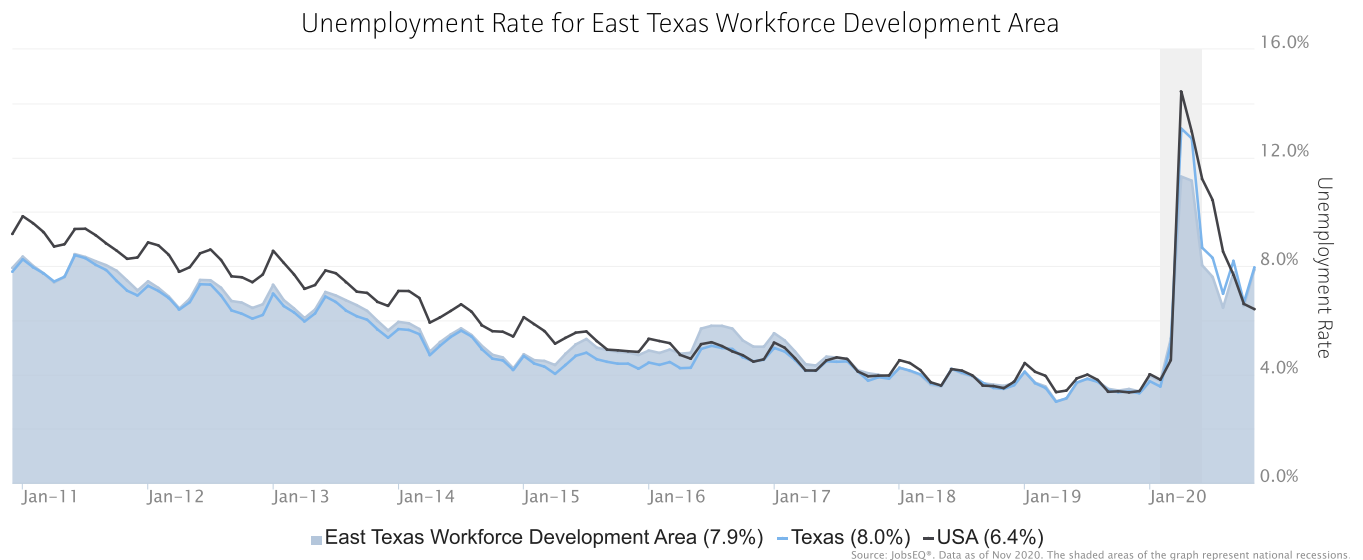
Employment Data - As of 2020Q3, total employment for the East Texas Workforce Development Area was 344,039 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2020Q3, employment declined 5.3% in the region.



Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2020Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q3.

Unemployment Data –

The unemployment rate for the East Texas Workforce Development Area was 7.9% as of November 2020. The regional unemployment rate was higher than the national rate of 6.4%. One year earlier, in November 2019, the unemployment rate in the East Texas Workforce Development Area was 3.5%.



Unemployment rate data are from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and updated through November 2020.

Labor Market Trends

The largest major occupation group in the East Texas Workforce Development Area is Office and Administrative Support Occupations, employing 41,219 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Sales and Related Occupations (33,337 workers) and Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (28,785). High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Construction and Extraction Occupations (LQ = 1.49), Production Occupations (1.18), and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations (1.16).

Occupation groups in the East Texas Workforce Development Area with the highest average wages per worker are Legal Occupations (\$93,000), Management Occupations (\$85,600), and Architecture and Engineering Occupations (\$84,700). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 2.0% among Legal Occupations to 12.8% among Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations.

Over the next 1 year, the fastest growing occupation group in the East Texas Workforce Development Area is expected to be Healthcare Support Occupations with a +2.1% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Healthcare Support Occupations (+357 jobs) and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (+192). Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (4,901 jobs) and Office and Administrative Support Occupations (4,688).

East Texas Workforce Development Area, 2020Q3¹

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Mean Ann Wages ²	Current		5-Year History				1-Year Forecast				
				LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ³	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	41,219	\$35,800	0.93	2,263	4.9%	1,098	-2,486	-1.2%	4,487	1,978	2,710	-201	-0.5%
41-0000	Sales and Related	33,337	\$36,600	1.00	2,381	6.6%	2,322	-1,621	-0.9%	4,533	1,817	2,817	-101	-0.3%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	28,785	\$34,900	1.00	2,765	8.1%	2,194	-84	-0.1%	3,696	1,295	2,333	68	0.2%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	27,773	\$22,600	1.04	4,264	12.8%	2,463	675	0.5%	5,094	2,013	2,888	192	0.7%
11-0000	Management	24,649	\$85,600	1.09	584	2.4%	631	-523	-0.4%	2,138	839	1,292	8	0.0%
51-0000	Production	23,927	\$36,700	1.18	2,009	7.1%	444	-533	-0.4%	2,596	901	1,819	-125	-0.5%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	23,910	\$42,400	1.49	2,804	9.7%	240	-2,996	-2.3%	2,924	773	2,008	143	0.6%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	21,258	\$42,300	1.09	1,138	5.3%	188	351	0.3%	1,923	856	1,028	39	0.2%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	20,556	\$74,500	1.03	432	2.1%	2,903	-211	-0.2%	1,408	559	660	189	0.9%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	16,629	\$26,300	1.09	849	4.5%	863	433	0.5%	2,568	1,067	1,144	357	2.1%

East Texas Workforce Development Area, 2020Q3¹

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Current				5-Year History			1-Year Forecast				
			Mean Ann Wages ²	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ³	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	15,289	\$45,800	1.16	933	4.9%	598	-78	-0.1%	1,541	482	1,023	36	0.2%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	12,396	\$68,600	0.64	329	2.9%	353	347	0.6%	1,235	345	845	45	0.4%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	12,185	\$25,700	1.07	993	7.2%	454	796	1.4%	1,707	692	934	81	0.7%
33-0000	Protective Service	7,467	\$42,700	1.00	207	2.5%	155	-287	-0.8%	733	309	424	1	0.0%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	7,409	\$26,500	0.82	1,061	12.0%	245	21	0.1%	1,193	509	627	57	0.8%
21-0000	Community and Social Service	5,756	\$45,700	0.95	113	2.2%	263	332	1.2%	717	223	422	72	1.2%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	4,974	\$84,700	0.83	144	3.0%	118	-227	-0.9%	402	119	278	5	0.1%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	4,819	\$74,300	0.46	119	2.7%	190	88	0.4%	386	83	279	24	0.5%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	4,418	\$44,000	0.72	317	7.6%	128	-54	-0.2%	490	178	308	4	0.1%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	2,606	\$28,300	1.14	258	9.3%	17	-93	-0.7%	414	103	316	-4	-0.2%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	2,495	\$64,900	0.81	69	3.1%	78	-59	-0.5%	239	49	178	12	0.5%
23-0000	Legal	2,183	\$93,000	0.75	41	2.0%	17	-107	-1.0%	153	56	89	8	0.4%
	Total - All Occupations	344,039	\$44,300	1.00	24,071	6.3%	15,962	-6,317	-0.4%	40,641	15,245	24,422	974	0.3%

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2020Q3 unless noted otherwise

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

1. Data based on a four-quarter moving average unless noted otherwise.

2. Wage data are as of 2019 and represent the average for all Covered Employment

3. Data represent found online ads active within the last thirty days in the selected region; data represents a sampling rather than the complete universe of postings. Ads lacking zip code information but designating a place (city, town, etc.) may be assigned to the zip code with greatest employment in that place for queries in this analytic. Due to alternative county-assignment algorithms, ad counts in this analytic may not match that shown in RTI (nor in the popup window ad list).

Occupation employment data are estimated via industry employment data and the estimated industry/occupation mix. Industry employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and currently updated through 2020Q2, imputed where necessary with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q3. Wages by occupation are as of 2019 provided by the BLS and imputed where necessary. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

C. Workforce Development Analysis

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

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

Note: This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and an evaluation of the effectiveness of programs and services. It must evaluate the Board's capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the identified education and skills needs of the workforce. The analysis must include individuals with barriers to employment. The analysis also must address the employment needs of employers.

Board Response:

Along with regular programmatic activities offered through the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board, partners in the East Texas Workforce System are involved in numerous collaborative efforts - Several of which are highlighted below:

Rural, Set, Go Initiative - Focuses on rural employers, job seekers, and the public, and provides information on county demographics, workforce services, and resources available to assist employers in their search of ideal job candidates. Rural, Set, Go is offered in combined virtual and on-site forums in nine rural counties of the East Texas Workforce Development Area. The purpose of this project is to create stronger employer engagement strategies and determine workforce development concerns from the counties. Rural, Set Go is offered through the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and Career Team LLC and is funded in part through Texas Workforce Commission Workforce Commission Initiative Funds.

Texas Rising Star (TRS) - Four years ago, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board established the goal of achieving a 60% TRS Provider participation from area child-care providers. This increases the early childhood quality level for children in CCS, as well as those children in facilities participating in the program and increase the area's overall expected level of quality for daily child-care through the competitive process. The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board now over two-thirds the way towards achieving the 60% goal.

Camp V - Camp V (Community Assisting Military Personnel and Veterans) serves as regional resource and respite center for East Texas veterans. Camp V Tyler is a 20-acre campus in Tyler, Texas which provides benefits, services, transitioning, employment assistance, housing, mental health, equine therapy, and referrals. As Workforce Center Services Provider, Career Team, LLC is establishing a presence at the Career V facility for Workforce Center staff to offer services for veterans.

Entrepreneurship Initiative - Utilizing Statewide Alternative funds, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is currently involved in an ambitious initiative for the development of a comprehensive train-the-trainer curriculum training package (online modules, e-book, interactive workbook, certificates, online assessment, training videos) which will be utilized for staff instruction culminating in certification as a workforce specialist with an entrepreneurial training designation. A workbook for customers (current and future entrepreneurs) is also being developed to use in support of learning in small group workshops or one-on-one coaching sessions.

High Demand Job Training Program – The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board has implemented Texas Workforce Commission funded High Demand Job Training Projects with Henderson Economic Development Corporation and Tatum Economic Development Corporation funding equipment and supplies for the Career and Technology Programs in the school districts in their communities. A project was also recently completed for Jacksonville Economic Development Corporation, which partnered with Tyler Junior College to offer front line supervisor training for area manufacturers.

The initiatives described in this analysis represent diverse, innovative, approaches to address the workforce needs of employers in specific communities in the region. Approaches include community engagement and goal setting, skills benchmarking, conventional skills training for targeted groups and specialized training models for hard to serve populations. Further, each of the initiatives has unique funding sources and performance measures. This diversity is a major strength for East Texas Workforce System.

Workforce Boards have a valuable role to play in tracking the accomplishments and needs in various communities and helping to correlate these into a regional approach. This is not to imply control, but instead the promotion of collaboration, information sharing, outcome reporting, and replication. With an annual budget of approximately \$36 **Million**, which is for the most part, dedicated to specific programs and provision of child-care, overall impact in a \$35.7 **Billion** regional economy by the Workforce Solutions East Texas will always be challenging. In the long-term, along with benefits for the employers and job seekers served, perhaps the greatest contribution Workforce Boards can make will be in the realm of leadership in promoting, coordinating, expanding and replicating community and regional solutions. The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is well positioned for this role, address the critical factors of capacity, barriers to employment and strengths and weaknesses in the workforce system.

Part 3: Core Programs

A. Workforce Development System

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

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

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

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board operates full-service Workforce Centers in Longview (Gregg County), Tyler (Smith County) and Athens (Henderson County) along with centers in Marshall (Harrison County) and Palestine (Anderson County). Services are available in the other nine counties of the region (Camp, Cherokee, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Upshur, Van Zandt and Wood) online, through a call center and by use of Mobile Units. Universal jobseeker and employer services form the foundation for specialized services offered through the core programs identified earlier - WIOA, Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, TANF Choices, SNAP E&T Employment Services, TAA and Veterans. In addition, the Workforce Center Service Provider offers a number of service access sites throughout the region, including sites in Tyler, Kilgore, and Jacksonville.

Core Programs will be operated by the Workforce Centers Services Provider, Career Team LLC through a contract with the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board.

In addition, TWC Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) Programs (administered by the Texas Workforce Commission) and Child Care Services (through a contract with BakerRipley) are offered in conjunction with the workforce centers. Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Program services are also offered through the Literacy Council of Tyler (serving a grant recipient) which contracts with Angelina College, Kilgore College, Northeast Texas Community College and Trinity Valley Community College for instruction within their service area within the 14-county region.

The network of Workforce Centers and programs administered by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and the Texas Workforce Commission is part of a much larger "Workforce Development System" comprised of numerous partners and contributors:

Community and Technical Colleges - Kilgore College, Northeast Texas Community College, Panola College, Trinity Valley Community College, Tyler Junior College and Texas State Technical College.

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board has long-term relationship with these institutions of higher education. Each of the colleges has occupations on the TWC Statewide Eligible Training Provider List and offer training, associates degrees and credentials for participants in WIOA or other workforce programs. Workforce Solutions East Texas participates in various initiatives of the colleges, including specially funded grant programs. Workforce Solutions staff also participate in creation of Skills Development Fund projects and other TWC sponsored programs. Several of the colleges are providers of Basic Education and Literacy Services through the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board. In addition, a service access point is located on the Kilgore College campus.

Career Schools – include DFE Tech, Vista College and others

Area proprietary (Career) schools also offer occupational training for participants in WIOA or other workforce programs and are listed on the TWC Statewide Eligible Training Provider List, and offer training, associates degrees and credentials for participants in WIOA or other workforce programs.

Universities and four-year Colleges - University of Texas at Tyler, Letourneau University, East Texas Baptist University, Jacksonville College, Jarvis Christian College, Texas College and Wiley College

The universities in East Texas provide baccalaureate and graduate programs enhancing the education and skill level for our workforce. The WIOA occupational skills training protocol in East Texas allows for completion of bachelor's degrees when the workforce participants have the prior credentials to complete their degree within two years. This allows area four-year colleges and universities to participate in the Statewide Eligible Training Provider System.

Public and Private Education system - 82 Public Independent Schools Districts and Charter Schools plus numerous private schools, Region 7 Education Service Center.

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board cooperates with the Region 7 Education Service Center and area secondary and postsecondary schools and for activities associated with Career Technology and Education (CTE) Programs funded by the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

The Texas Workforce Commission funds Youth Career Fairs which support career planning in the schools. Workforce Solutions East Texas Board staff work with area schools to host one or two career fairs each year. (Note: Due to COVID-19 limitations, in 2020, Careers Oriented video was produced for Panola and Rusk County schools in lieu of a Career Fair.) Workforce Solutions East Texas is a partner with TWC in sharing TWC Labor Market and Career Information with the schools. Schools (often in partnership with local community and technical colleges) applying for special training equipment grants such as the TWC JET grant and the TWC Dual Credit Program collaborate with Workforce Solutions East Texas to complete required demand occupation certifications and to obtain labor market information.

Economic Development Corporations - includes Longview, Tyler, Athens Carthage, Canton, Emory, Gilmer, Henderson, Kilgore, Pittsburg, Jacksonville, Lindale, Marshall, Mineola, Palestine, Tatum, Quitman, Van, and Wills Point and many others.

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board collaborates on with Economic Development Corporations on numerous initiatives including job fairs, hiring events, High Demand Job Training Program projects and special initiatives such as Rural, Set, Go!

Community and Non Profit Organizations (including organizations serving individuals with disabilities) - Examples include Camp V Tyler, Afterschool Programs (Boys and Girls Clubs), Junior Achievement, Churches, Christian Men and Women's Job Corps, Communities in Schools (CIS), D.O.R.S. Community Services, Goodwill Industries of East Texas, East Texas Center for Independent Living, East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind and many more.

Examples of cooperation include:

Collaboration on services to participants and referrals to the Workforce Centers

The United Way of Smith County and the Greater Longview United Way offer generous support for area non-profits agencies which support the Workforce System of East Texas. In addition, they provide vital referral services through their 211 networks.

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

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

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

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

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

- expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;

As the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board expands access to training and services, the following groups will be emphasized:

Veterans - Veterans' Employment Service (ES) provide; quality assistance and priority service to veterans seeking employment; veterans with necessary tools to re-enter the workplace after exiting from military service; and, identification of employment opportunities available to veterans through outreach, education and training. The program addresses the unemployment and underemployment among veterans by implementing policies and programs for veterans to obtain employment, job training, counseling and job placement services.

Once eligible veterans are identified through a point of entry triage tool, they are directed to

the appropriate Career Center staff or Texas Veteran Commission Staff. Priority of services includes personalized service delivery. To ensure priority of services for transitioning veterans, Workforce Solutions East Texas will continue to coordinate with Veteran service providers, federal and state veterans' programs, and reintegration programs. The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP)/Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) grants are administered by the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC). DVOP and LVER staffs are housed in Workforce Solutions Offices with our service provider staff and ES staff. TWC, TVC, and Workforce Center Services Provider staff work closely to ensure veterans are given priority and the services they have earned. Workforce Solutions East Texas is an active participant in the Red, White and You Job Fair initiative headed by the Texas Workforce Commission. Each Veterans Day, Jobs Fairs are hosted in Longview and Tyler to assure Veterans and employee throughout the region can participate. Also, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is establishing a presence at Camp V Tyler (which has been described earlier.)

Individuals with Disabilities - Workforce Solutions East Texas is dedicated to be welcoming and accommodating for individuals with disabilities. There is an emphasis on continuous improvement of services and assistive technologies. The transition of Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) will enhance the capacity of the Workforce Centers to serve the population of individuals with disabilities.

Funded through the Texas Workforce Commission, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and the East Texas Council of Governments employs a Student Hireability Navigator who serves as a resource to support, expand, and enhance pre-employment transition services that are provided by Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Workforce Solutions of East Texas Centers, as well as other partners and programs in the workforce development area.

Individuals with Limited English Proficiency: Job seekers with limited English proficiency (LEP) will be referred to the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Consortium operated by the Literacy Council of Tyler and their contractors - Kilgore College, Panola College, Northeast Texas Community College, Trinity Valley Community College and New Summerfield Independent School District. Further, the AEL Consortium will also refer individuals to the Workforce Centers for services.

Homeless Individuals: Workforce Solutions East Texas will collaborate with groups involved in the planning and provision of services to the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. Staff from the Workforce Solutions East Texas Centers participates in the East Texas Human Needs Network, which addresses poverty issues and homelessness in the Tyler/East Texas area. The homeless will be offered the full array of Workforce Center services.

Ex-Offenders: Workforce Solutions East Texas provide ex-offenders with access to workforce services. Additionally, fidelity bonding for employment will be offered and marketed for individuals in the ex-offender population.

- facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, including specific career pathways occupations that the Board currently includes on its Target Occupations Lists, and career pathways occupations that the Board is planning to develop; and improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

Funding will be allocated for occupational skills training to be offered through the Workforce Centers Services Provider. The proposed Targeted and Demand Occupations list include a number of entry level occupations offering career pathways and career ladders. Customers qualifying for occupational skills training will be apprised of these opportunities.

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

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board will work to partner with area community and technical colleges, economic development corporations and employers to put forward Skills Development Fund applications and Texas Industry Partnership Program applications which involve collaborations with businesses comprising the Governors Industry Clusters. It is anticipated Advanced Manufacturing will be an area of emphasis.

Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery

A. One-Stop Service Delivery System

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

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

How the Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers and how providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers

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

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

Continuous improvement of eligible providers - Recognizing the diversity of employer needs and job opportunities in the economy, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board plan includes a wide variety of Targeted occupations for which training can be purchased on behalf of participants. In selecting the occupations for which training can be provided, care was taken to assure the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers will be met. The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board encourages qualified potential eligible training providers to apply for their programs to be included on the Texas Workforce Commission Statewide Eligible Training Provider List. As applicable, training providers must meet performance measures and other requirements. Outcomes for occupational skills training participants are monitored and corrective actions will be taken to address any Eligible Training Provider issues.

Access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system – Along with the Workforce Center Offices in Longview, Tyler, Palestine, Marshall and Athens, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board has three mobile units available to be deployed to at rapid response events, job fairs, employer hiring events and various community functions where a presence by Workforce Solutions is appropriate. For the nine counties of the region which do not have a Workforce Solutions office (Camp, Cherokee, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Upshur, Van Zandt and Wood), a weekly presence in each county will be maintained through the mobile units. In addition, Workforce Solutions East Texas has instated a centralized call center to serve participants, supplemented by a robust online “virtual” footprint. In addition, as referenced earlier, Workforce Solutions East Texas is establishing an expanding network of access points throughout the region as an adjunct to the offices.

Compliance with physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities - All Workforce Center facilities are fully compliant with all accessibility requirements.

The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners – All One-Stop Partners pay their appropriate share of costs as outlined in corresponding memoranda of understanding. Core programs are offered through the Workforce Center Services provider, with the contribution to One Stop Centers paid for through the TWC Contract funding streams along with costs for Employment Services staff. The Child Care Services Provider is also housed in the Workforce Centers and their share of Centers costs are paid through TWC Child Care Services Contract funds. Texas Veterans Commission is housed in the Workforce Centers and associated costs are paid through the Veterans Commission.

B. Cooperative Agreements

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

Boards must provide copies of executed cooperative agreements that explain how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This

includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA §107(d)(11)) between the Board or other local entities described in §101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit that administers programs that are carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 720 et seq.) (other than §112 or part C of that title (29 USC 732, 741) and are subject to §121(f) in accordance with §101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals who have disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts.

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and the Regional Office of Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services have an agreement in place for the coordination of the Work Experience Services. This agreement is available for review upon request.

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

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

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

- Facilitate engagement of employers in the workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations
- Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area
- Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development
- Strengthen links 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, use of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers. These initiatives must support the strategy described above.

Employers can select from a variety of service options based upon their self-determined needs:

Find an Employee – WorkInTexas.com serves as a Human Resource partner offering no-cost services including job posting and matching.

Connection with candidates through video, Audio and Text Chat. Monthly Virtual Job Fairs are hosted to connect employers with qualified job seekers.

In-person Job Fairs will also be offered after COVID-19 restrictions are eased.

Employers may request tailored TWC Labor Market Information directly through the Employer Services Team.

Workforce Solutions East Texas partners with various industries and locations throughout the 14-county region and offers a team of specialized recruiters to help match positions and skills sets.

Rapid response and transition services for employers facing layoffs and company closures.

Employers whose needs align with the identified skill sets of Unemployment Insurance recipients will be targeted to provide enhanced services to UI job seekers. Unemployment insurance recipients will be connected to Workforce Services through outreach activities which will include regular orientation sessions for recipients who are likely to exhaust their benefits. Unemployment insurance recipients will be registered in Work-In-Texas (WIT). Workforce Center staff will identify active WIT job seekers and develop jobs with quality matches. Additionally, UI recipients or “customers, job seekers” will be assisted with their job search.

Unemployment insurance recipients who need additional/new skills to achieve self-sufficiency will be encouraged to apply for assistance through WIOA and other programs which offer occupational skills training and other enhanced services. As referenced separately in the Plan, TWC is providing for East Texas a special National Dislocated Worker Grant through the U.S. Department of Labor, which is targeted for workers due to COVID. The National Dislocated Worker grant will be an additional resource for unemployment insurance claimants impacted by COVID.

D. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

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

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

In accordance with the Wagner Peyser Act regulations, Wagner-Peyser Act labor exchange services are coordinated with other activities provided by other partners in a One-Stop setting. Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES) are integrated at the Workforce Centers and delivered under the guidance and direction of Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and the Workforce Centers Services Provider.

Personnel matters, including compensation, personnel actions, terms and conditions of employment, performance appraisals, and accountability of merit-staff employees funded under the Wagner-Peyser Act, remain under the authority of TWC (including such matters that are delegated to any other public agency). Such guidance given to employees must be consistent with the provisions of the Wagner-Peyser Act and in compliance with all applicable federal and state law.

Wagner-Peyser funded ES TWC staff will provide the following common core and intensive services in delivering ES:

Core Services:

1. Outreach and initial customer intake;
2. Initial assessment of customer needs;
3. Eligibility determination for TWC program services;
4. Provision of labor market information;
5. Provision of information regarding job vacancy listings including job skill requirements and earnings;
6. Provision of information regarding the availability of supportive services;
7. Provision of information regarding performance and costs for eligible training providers;
8. Unassisted access to job placement resources;
9. Referral to other appropriate workforce services, including other Workforce Solutions East Texas administered training programs; and
10. Other core services determined by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and allowable as an eligible activity under TWC programs.

Intensive Services:

1. Comprehensive and specialized assessments of customer's needs;
2. Development of an appropriate intervention and service strategy to meet identified customer needs;
3. Group and specialized customer counseling;
4. Career planning;
5. Short-term pre-vocational services;
6. Staff assisted job placement;
7. Referral to other appropriate workforce services; and
8. Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
9. Financial Literacy services; and
10. Other intensive services determined by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and allowable as an eligible activity under TWC programs.

Wagner-Peyser funded ES TWC staff may provide the following services to employers in delivering ES:

1. Create staff-assisted job openings and refer job seekers to job openings;
2. Provide assistance with special recruitment needs;
3. Conduct analyses of hard-to-fill job orders;
4. Provide job restructuring assistance; and
5. Provide other related services as determined by the Board and allowable under TWC programs.

E. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management

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

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

A Workforce Solutions East Texas Board approved service delivery plan has been implemented which includes a data management system, allowing participants to complete intake functions only once for multiple programs which may then share common information. Mobile units also make regular weekly appearances in counties without a brick and mortar facility. These units travel to participants' locations for case management activities and are equipped with office-in-a-box technologies, allowing real-time interconnectivity between the van and Texas Workforce programs and services. Additionally, an extended hours call center has been implemented where participants may interact in real-time with a human counselor, regardless of where they are in the region and an interactive website, where participants may virtually complete most, if not all, of the necessary data collection from the comfort of their own homes or other locations.

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

A. Economic Development and Entrepreneurial/Microenterprise Activities

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

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

Economic Development

As the administrative unit for the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board, the East Texas Council of Governments has aligned its resource priorities to create a Workforce and Economic Development Division which emphasizes "Workforce Development for Economic Development". Workforce Solutions East Texas partners with area Economic Development agencies and collaborate on a number of initiatives –

Rural, Set, Go Initiative - Focuses on rural employers, job seekers, and the public, and provides information on county demographics, workforce services, and resources available to assist employers in their search of ideal job candidates. Rural, Set, Go is offered in combined virtual and on-site forums in nine rural counties of the East Texas Workforce Development Area. The purpose of this project is to create stronger employer engagement strategies and determine workforce development concerns from the counties. Rural, Set Go is offered through the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and Career Team LLC and is funded in part through Texas Workforce Commission Initiatives Funds.

Outreach by the Workforce Centers to local employers including outreach and planning for local job fairs

TWC High Demand Job Training Program - training programs funded through combination of economic development corporation funds and TWC funding.

Collaboration with Community and Technical Colleges for TWC Skills Development Fund grant applications.

Outreach for TWC Youth Career Fairs

Provision of localized labor market information and economic data from the Texas Workforce Commission and other sources.

Consultation on identification of targeted industries and occupations

Entrepreneurial training

Utilizing Statewide Alternative funds, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is currently involved in an ambitious initiative for the development of a comprehensive train-the-trainer curriculum training package (online modules, e-book, interactive workbook, certificates, online assessment, training videos) which will be utilized for staff instruction culminating in certification as a workforce specialist with an entrepreneurial training designation. A workbook for customers (current and future entrepreneurs) is also being developed to use in support of learning in small group workshops or one-on-one coaching. This initiative will support small businesses and micro-enterprises.

B. Rapid Response Activity Coordination

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

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

Board Response:

Workforce Centers Services provider staff responsible for Dislocated Worker Services and Rapid Response work closely with the Rapid Response Coordinator at the Board level to assure services are provided to laid-off workers in a timely manner.

The Board will provide Rapid Response services to employers that can include:

- Immediate and on-site contact with the employer-to the extent practical or allowed by the employer-as well as representatives of the affected workers, and the local community;
- Guidance and/or financial assistance to establish a labor-management committee voluntarily agreed to by labor and management, or a workforce transition committee comprising representatives of the employer, the affected workers, and the local community that devises and oversees an implementation strategy to respond to the reemployment needs of affected workers;
- Development of a coordinated response to the dislocation event; and
- State economic development assistance, as needed.

In coordination with the Workforce Centers Services provider staff, the Rapid Response Coordinator ensures rapid response services to affected workers are provided either on-site or at a Texas Workforce Center or other appropriate location and include:

- An orientation on available workforce program services;
- Information on and assistance with filing for unemployment insurance benefits;
- Information on Trade services available through Texas Workforce Centers;
- A survey of affected workers' employment, knowledge, skills, and abilities; and
- Other services, such as workshops and seminars on tools that will assist with a rapid transition to new employment.

Note: These services are currently being offered pursuant to COVID-19 guidelines.

C. Youth Activities and Services

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

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

Career Team, the Workforce Centers Services Provider, implements WIOA Youth Programs. In addition, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board utilizes a portion of WIOA Youth funding for a Stand-Alone Youth project through a contract with East Texas Literacy Council.

All of the 14 program elements required in §681.460 of the Final Regulations shall be made available:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.
2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:
 - Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;

- Pre-apprenticeship programs—a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, registered apprenticeship programs;
 - Internships and job shadowing;
 - On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunities, as defined in WIOA §3(44)
4. Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs leading to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the workforce area involved
 5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster
 6. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors
 7. Support services, as defined in WIOA §3(59), which enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities. These services include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Linkages to community services;
 - Assistance with transportation;
 - Assistance with child-care and dependent care;
 - Assistance with housing;
 - Needs-related payments;
 - Assistance with educational testing;
 - Reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities;
 - Referrals to health care; and
 - Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear.
 8. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation
 9. Follow-up services for not fewer than 12 months after the completion of participation
 10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth
 11. Financial literacy education
 12. Entrepreneurial skills training
 13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the workforce area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
 14. Activities assisting youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

D. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

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

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

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board will work with Tri-Agency Partnership of the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency to support the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board 60 x 30 initiative with the overarching goal is to make sure “at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree” by 2030. Summary of coordination activities is included below.

- Secondary Education

- * The Workforce Centers Services Provider will maintain relationships with area school districts to enhance outreach for students graduating and for dropout

- * Implementation of TWC sponsored youth career fairs and initiatives.

- * Enhancement of connections between the schools and TWC Labor Market Information resources.

- * Assistance in the development of grant proposals.

- Post-secondary Education

- * Access of training for participants through the Eligible Training Provider System and through other purchases of training.

- * Cooperation in initiation of Skills Development Fund projects.

- * Assistance in the development of grant proposals.

- * Development of workforce services access points

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board will work with area educational agencies to assure there is no duplication of services.

E. Child Care Services and Early Learning

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

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

The Board's involvement with child-care businesses concentrated on the six common practices below to increase child-care business success in a manner to support the employed and businesses in East Texas.

1) Creating exceptional customer service

By providing quality and intense mentoring, child-care businesses earn TRS certifications indicating they exceed minimum licensing standards. Child-care businesses are known in their community for providing above average education and care to children; therefore, exceptional customer service equates to more children in their centers which in turn creates a more solid business. Board staff mentors/teachers, staff and directors with a focus toward helping the Provider achieve a 3- or 4-Star status, which will make their child-care business more marketable. Providers and parents recognize the value in exceeding minimum state licensing standards. A TRS Provider, is in most instances, parents' choice for their children. The Board presents child-care businesses' staff with opportunities to earn their Child-Care Development Credential certification, starting them on career paths as educators rather than "babysitters".

The benefits received are more parents wish to enroll their children at the childcare business.

2) Promoting the quality of the business

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board promotes the quality of the TRS Providers businesses in at least two ways. First, the Board awards banners indicating the star level TRS Providers earn. The banners are displayed outside for the community and parents to recognize the advanced level the child-care provider achieved in quality child-care. The banners depict the number of stars the Provider holds; 2-, 3- or 4-Star ratings. Secondly, BakerRipley, the CCS Provider, educates parents, explaining what a TRS Provider brings to the table and provides lists of which Child Care Service (CCS) Providers are TRS and their individual Star ratings. The Board's website also presents a list of CCS Providers but highlights the TRS Providers in an area focusing on their TRS quality status.

Parents searching for child-care businesses who provide childcare exceeding the state licensing standards equating to enrollments increases are the benefits received by the child-care business. Enrollments are most likely more stable, too.

3) Being creative

Creativity is the "gem" in child development and early childhood education. Young children will be the first to explain yesterday's novelty suddenly became B-O-R-I-N-G today. Likewise, research indicates creativity is critical to successful small businesses. The Board provides Child Development Associate (CDA) credential training to entry-level teachers, building creative possibilities and sharing "best practices" of early childhood education from beyond our immediate region. The Board also provides curricula, materials, learning guides, staff trainings and one-on-one interactions. Board staff works with child-care's small business owners and leadership to constantly introduce creative approaches to even routine tasks in the classroom, leading to strong engagement by the children. Creative teachers are always favorites for children and parents alike. When shared with other parents, grandparents, family and the community, this word-of-mouth marketing sets the Provider apart as THE choice with exceptional learning experiences.

This marketing fosters a strong parent demand for inclusion, both from those in and beyond the CCS system, which is a benefit. Constant demand for services equals "business security", a definite benefit for the child-care business. Creativity forms the path for East Texas child-care Providers to develop brand appeal as they establish and grow their productive small businesses.

4) Staying focused

Small businesses who maintain situational awareness position themselves to be successful. To help our Providers remain focused on child-care quality, Board staff build on the strong working foundations established with child-care businesses as they seek to improve their quality. Beyond the annual monitoring and three-year re-certifications required by TWC, Board staff, via trainings, continue mentoring and one-on-one interactions to ensure the provider staff keeps their focus with an infusion of fresh approaches. The Board provides tuition and registrations so quality child-care continues to be Providers' Number One focus area.

5) Providing a great service

Great service sets a business above the pack. In the childcare business world, child-care quality through the TRS program distinguishes TRS Providers from other child-care services and indicates they are providing a great service. Currently, over 40% of the CCS providers in East Texas have earned their TRS rating. Quality early childhood education unites parents, grandparents and the community. Parents choose child-care providers with the highest standards to establish a strong foundation for future educational growth. In the East Texas region, TRS Providers offering quality early childhood education continually have a wait list for parents interested in placing their children at these centers. East Texas TRS' great service is in demand. The Board is striving to make our high quality the region's norm. How is a great service in the child-care world defined? It's accomplishing TRS certification, trained and creative staff, exceptional service and a stable quality enhanced business, all of which are the Board's goal for a child-care business.

As indicated above, “Great service sets a business above the pack”, a definite benefit to child-care businesses.

6) Attracting and maintaining employees

Successful small businesses share the common thread of attracting and maintaining employees. East Texas TRS Provider staff who received Board-sponsored CDA training continue with the employing Provider at a higher rate than staff who did not receive CDA training. In 2019, of the 40 TRS staff receiving CDA training or obtaining their CDA credential, 36 remained employed at their respective CCS Provider. This indicates a 90% retainment for CDA credentialed employees or employees in CDA training. Providers indicate non-CDA staff have an average turnover rate of 10 to 15%. CDA credentialed staff have a 5% or less turnover rate.

One of the attributes of a successful small business is maintaining employees. Board provided CDA training benefits child-care business in this manner. Turnover and providing additional training to new employees is costly.

F. Transportation and Other Support Services

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

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

Supportive Services

Supportive Services for WIOA eligible Adults, Dislocated Workers, or Youth participants include services necessary to enable the individual to participate in certain activities authorized under WIOA. Examples of Support Services under WIOA include transportation assistance, child-care, dependent care, one-time work-related expenses, and housing assistance. For WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers, Supportive Services may only be provided when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate.

Supportive Services funded by WIOA are only allowable if they are not otherwise available from other coordinated community services or sources. In order to be eligible to receive Transportation Assistance and/or other Supportive Services, a need for services must be documented in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

Transportation Assistance

Participants enrolled in classroom training (CRT) shall be eligible for Transportation Assistance payments to defray the cost of traveling to their classroom training site, provided a need is documented.

- Workforce Solutions staff should assess and address the need for Transportation Assistance in the most efficient, reliable and economical manner available as allowed by policy.
- WIOA funds may be used to pay transportation costs for participants in non-classroom WIOA activities. Transportation Assistance may be provided to participants to allow them to engage in allowable activities such as (but not limited to):
 - Job Search;
 - Career counseling;
 - Job club;
 - Short-term prevocational services; or
 - In the course of obtaining other Supportive Services funded by WIOA or by an outside agency.
- The evaluation of the participant's need for Transportation Assistance will be part of the initial and ongoing assessment process. Case files shall fully document why a certain mode of transportation was deemed to be the most economical.
- WIOA funds may be used to pay transportation costs for participants attending WIOA funded classroom training. Specialized assessment of need documentation requirements shall apply for transportation assistance for Classroom Training attendees.
- If eligible, Workforce Solutions staff must use WIOA funds to provide transportation assistance if alternative transportation resources are not available to participants.
- General Transportation Assistance may entail:
 - Gasoline;
 - Vouchers or fuel cards (vouchers should be treated just like cash and the method of calculation and recoupment outlined in this directive are applicable to vouchers); or,
 - Purchase of additional needed services from transportation providers (Examples include; contracts for shuttles, buses, car-pools, "slots" of "passes" for public or other transportation services).

E. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)

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

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

The Board will identify a review team and implement the review of proposals for the local adult education competition based on Agency guidance.

Workforce Solutions East Texas has ongoing collaborative efforts with the Literacy Council of Tyler and its partner Adult Education and Literacy Providers. The following priorities for enhanced coordination have been identified -

1. Support of career pathway funding opportunities.
2. Regular visits by Workforce Solutions East staff to the AEL sites to recruit participants along with visits by AEL staff to the Workforce Centers to recruit for AEL.
3. Creation of better coordination with TABE testing, sharing results and following TABE time limits between tests.
4. Promotion of continuity in staff Workforce Centers and AEL relationships.
5. Continued improvement in communication between AEL providers and Workforce Solutions East Texas.

Along with infrastructure cost sharing, these priorities are outlined in a memorandum of understanding with the Literacy Council of Tyler.

Workforce Solutions East Texas (WSET) has one Workforce Contractor, one WIOA Out-of-School Youth contractor and four TANF Literacy contractors. All the TANF Literacy contractors are also AEL contractors through the Literacy Council of Tyler. All Contracts for the AEL Providers have the following: "Section 7.1.1 - "Subrecipient (TANF Contractor) has established coordination with the career coaches at WSET (Workforce Solutions East Texas Contractor) and/or HHSC. These entities will fax referrals to Subrecipient; Subrecipient will assist with initial appointments made for WSET participants, and Subrecipient's staff will assist participants in reporting hours to their career coaches.

The coordination of WIOA Title I and AEL Title II are a foundational element and a critical partnership to support the training investments made by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board.

Service Coordination, between the Board's Workforce Contractor and the AEL providers begins with competent case management and the ability to identify needs and eliminate basic literacy barriers to success for job center customers and make appropriate assessments and referrals.

The Board's Workforce Contractor's case management philosophy is built on the basic fundamentals of; 1) Intake and establishing a relationship with the customer; 2) Assessing Need by using industry recognized tools such as the TABE or CASAS assessment, and through personal interview; 3) Creating a plan of service which involves the development of the Individual Employment Plan or Individual Service Strategy; and, 4) monitoring and evaluation to insure effective and appropriate supports are guiding the individual to their individual goals and to insure compliance with program rules and regulations.

Workforce Solutions East Texas has a referral system in place whereby the case managers complete a universal referral form to initiate AEL services and to start tracking the progress of the customer.

East Texas also provides job placement and job development services to assist the participant with adequate and appropriate job referrals for unsubsidized employment or other interventions such as career counseling to build confidence and provide for basic skills to insure they are job ready. WEST relies on its partnership with the Literacy Council to provide GED training and tutoring to the Board's customers. AEL contractors also provide reverse referrals to the Board's Workforce Centers. This reciprocal partnership allows a more holistic approach to serving the literacy deficiencies of the workforce.

For the Texas Workforce Commission Adult Education and Literacy local application review process, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board will be prepared to identify a review team and implement the review of proposals for the Adult Education and Literacy competition based on Agency guidance

Part 6: Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Services

A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training

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

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

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

The following Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services will be available based upon the participant's needs and available resources -

Career Services

Basic Career Services

Basic career services must be made available and, at a minimum, must include the following services, as consistent with allowable program activities and federal cost principles:

- Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs;
- Outreach, intake (including worker profiling), and orientation to information and other services available through the Texas workforce system;
- Initial assessment of skills levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and support service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including:
 - ☐ job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including the provision of information on nontraditional employment and in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and
 - ☐ appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services not traditionally offered through the Texas workforce system;
- Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the Texas workforce system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs;
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:
 - ☐ job vacancy listings in labor market areas;
 - ☐ information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and
 - ☐ information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skills requirements, and opportunities for advancement in those jobs;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and provider type;
- Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, about how the Board is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the Texas workforce system;
- Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, relating to the availability of support services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including:
 - ☐ child-care;
 - ☐ child support;
 - ☐ medical or child health assistance available through the state's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program;
 - ☐ benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
 - ☐ assistance through the earned income tax credit; and
 - ☐ assistance under a state program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other support services and transportation provided through that program;

- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation, by which the Board must provide assistance to individuals seeking such assistance.
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA.

Individualized Career Services

Individualized career services must be made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. These include the following services, as consistent with WIOA requirements and federal cost principles:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skills levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:
 - ☐ diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
 - ☐ in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information regarding eligible training providers;
- Group counseling;
- Individual counseling;
- Career planning;
- Short-term prevocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
- Internships and work experience that are linked to careers;

Internships and work experience are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate. An internship or work experience may be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the nonprofit sector, or the public sector. Labor standards apply in any work experience setting where an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), exists.

- Workforce preparation activities;
- Financial literacy services as described in WIOA §129(b)(2)(D);

- Out-of-area job search and relocation assistance; and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

Follow-Up Services

Follow-up services must be made available, as appropriate—including counseling regarding the workplace—for participants in adult or dislocated worker activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment for a minimum of 12 months after the first day of employment.

Training Services

WIOA is designed to increase participant access to training services. Training services are provided to equip individuals to enter the workforce and retain employment.

Examples of training services include:

- occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- on-the-job training (OJT), including registered apprenticeship;
- incumbent worker training in accordance with WIOA §134(d)(4);
- workplace training and cooperative education programs;
- private sector training programs;
- skills upgrading and retraining;
- entrepreneurial training;
- transitional jobs in accordance with WIOA §134(d)(5);
- job readiness training provided in combination with other training described above;
- adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, in combination with training; and
- customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

Assessment instruments used in conjunction with occupational skills training include, but are not limited to the COPS, CAPS, COPEs and the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).

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

(20 CFR §679.560(b)(21))

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

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board designates parenting youth as an additional priority group. (See Below Local Priority Group)

Workforce Solutions East Texas (WSET) has one Workforce Contractor, one WIOA Out-of-School Youth contractor and four TANF Literacy contractors. All the TANF Literacy contractors are also AEL contractors through the Literacy Council of Tyler. All Contracts for the AEL Providers have the following: “Section 7.1.1 - “Subrecipient (TANF Contractor) has established coordination with the career coaches at WSET (Workforce Solutions East Texas Contractor) and/or HHSC. These entities will fax referrals to Subrecipient; Subrecipient will assist with initial appointments made for WSET participants, and Subrecipient’s staff will assist participants in reporting hours to their career coaches.

The coordination of WIOA Title I and AEL Title II are a foundational element and a critical partnership to support the training investments made by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board.

Service Coordination, between the Board’s Workforce Contractor and the AEL providers begins with competent case management and the ability to identify needs and eliminate basic literacy barriers to success for job center customers and make appropriate assessments and referrals.

The Board’s Workforce Contractor’s case management philosophy is built on the basic fundamentals of; 1) Intake and establishing a relationship with the customer; 2) Assessing Need by using industry recognized tools such as the TABE or CASAS assessment, and through personal interview; 3) Creating a plan of service which involves the development of the Individual Employment Plan or Individual Service Strategy; and, 4) monitoring and evaluation to insure effective and appropriate supports are guiding the individual to their individual goals and to insure compliance with program rules and regulations.

Workforce Solutions East Texas has a referral system in place whereby the case managers complete a universal referral form to initiate AEL services and to start tracking the progress of the customer.

East Texas also provides job placement and job development services to assist the participant with adequate and appropriate job referrals for unsubsidized employment or other interventions such as career counseling to build confidence and provide for basic skills to insure they are job ready. WEST relies on its partnership with the Literacy Council to provide GED training and tutoring to the Board’s customers. AEL contractors also provide reverse referrals to the Board’s Workforce Centers. This reciprocal partnership allows a more holistic approach to serving the literacy deficiencies of the workforce.

For the Texas Workforce Commission Adult Education and Literacy local application review process, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board will be prepared to identify a review team

and implement the review of proposals for the Adult Education and Literacy competition based on Agency guidance

The WSETB local Directive 20-20-14 entitled the WIOA Implementation Guide ensures priority is given to recipients of public assistance other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

All WIOA Contractors of the WSETB follow this Directive as they implement the WIOA programs. WIOA Contractors agree in their respective Contract with the Board to implement all local/Board Directives, including this Directive. Contractors are reviewed/monitored to assure Contractors implement all local Directives, including this specific Directive.

The quote below is from the Board's WIOA Implementation Guide.

Directive 20-08-14 WIOA Implementation Guide

“Section 2.03 Service Priority for Individualized Career and Training Services

If an individual is a:

- public assistance recipient;
- other low-income adult; or,
- an individual who are basic skills deficient;

the individual will be eligible to receive Individualized Career Services and Training Services. However, services to individuals must be provided in the following order:

1. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses (as defined in WD Letter 25-15) who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.
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:
 - i. Foster youth and former foster youth (as defined in WD Letter 43-11, Change 2) as required by Texas Family Code §264.121.
 - ii. Non-foster youth
3. All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses.
4. Priority populations established by the governor and/or Board in the following order:

- i. All other foster youth and former foster youth as required by Texas Labor Code §264.121.

- ii. **Local Board Priority Group – For WIOA Adult Dislocated Worker and Youth**

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board shall give priority to parenting youth, including pregnant youth if the priority for the individuals occurs after the groups described above. (i.e. there is sufficient funding for public assistance recipients, other low-income adults, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

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

Low-Income Individuals

An individual who meets any one of the following criteria satisfies the low-income requirement for WIOA Adult services:

- An individual receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family receiving or in the past six months has received assistance through SNAP, TANF, or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, or state or local income-based public assistance.
- An individual receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that, in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current combined US Department of Labor (DOL) 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Level and US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines shown on the WIOA Income Guidelines web page at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/workforce-innovation-opportunity-act-eligibility-income-guidelines>;
- An individual receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) (for the WIOA adult program, this only applies to the individual receiving the free or reduced-price lunch).
- An individual is a foster youth, as defined in Texas Family Code §264.101(a-1) and §264.101(d), on behalf of whom state or local government payments are made.

- An individual with a disability whose own income meets:
- WIOA's income requirements, even if the individual's family income does not meet the income requirements; or
- the income eligibility criteria for payments under any federal, state, or local public assistance program.

Basic Skills Deficient

An individual who is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society satisfies the basic skills deficient requirement for WIOA adult services.

Regardless of how basic skills deficiency is determined, documentation must be maintained in the participant's file and in TWIST Counselor Notes.

Initial assessment of skill levels and determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from adult program are Basic Career Services, which are allowable services and allowable costs for any individual who meets basic eligibility criteria (age, authorization to work in the United States, and Selective Service)."

Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts

A. Fiscal Agent

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

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

The East Texas Council of Governments is the entity responsible for disbursement of grant funds as determined by the Chief Elected Officials. The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts and special districts within the fourteen-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating sound regional development.

B. Sub-Grants and Contracts

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

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

It is intended all procurement transactions of the East Texas Workforce Development Area will be conducted in a manner, which provides, to the maximum extent possible, for open and free competition. Policies and procedures governing procurement shall ensure all services are obtained in an effective and efficient manner, which is consistent with the Texas Workforce Commission Financial Manual on Grants and Contracts and statutes and applicable program rules, regulations and federal management circulars. While such policies and procedures will be developed to provide for maximum local flexibility, said policies and procedures shall not act to restrict or eliminate competition.

Part 8: Performance

A. Board Performance Targets

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

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

The Texas Workforce Commission performance measures listed below are utilized. Note: No data is currently available for some of the measures due to the impacts of COVID-19.

Remployment and Employer Engagement Measures (REEMS) Measures for Program Year 2020

Claimant Reemployment within 10 Weeks

Employers receiving Workforce Assistance

Program Participation Measures

Choices Full Work Rate – All Family Total

Average # of Children Served per Day – Combined

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Outcome Measures

Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2 Post Exit – C&T Participants

Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2 -Quarter 4 Post Exit – C&T Participants

Median Earnings Quarter 2 Post Exit – C&T Participants

Credential Rate - C&T Participants

Employed Quarter 2 Post Exit – Adult

Employed Quarter 4 Post Exit – Adult

Median Earnings Quarter 2 Post Exit – Adult

Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) - Adult

Credential Rate -Adult

Employed Quarter 2 Post Exit – Dislocated Worker

Employed Quarter 4 Post Exit – Dislocated Worker

Median Earnings Quarter 2 Post Exit – Dislocated Worker

Credential Rate -Dislocated Worker

Measurable Skills Gain (MSG – Dislocated Worker

Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2 Post Exit – Youth

Employed/Enrolled Quarter 4 Post Exit – Youth

Credential Rate - Youth

Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) – Youth

Part 9: Training and Services

A. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

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

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

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds shall be used to assist eligible individuals in attending occupational skills classroom training (OST) offered through training providers that are included on the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) statewide list of approved providers. Training shall be made available through the issuance of Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) to Adult and Dislocated Worker participants who qualify for training under WIOA.

Workforce Center Services Provider staff will utilize the Statewide Eligible Training Provider List and the accompanying performance information to ensure customers have the tools for selecting a training program.

The ITA is an account established behalf of an eligible participant. by the East Texas Council of Governments, acting as fiscal agent for the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board, upon authorization by the Workforce Center Service Provider. Through ITA's, WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds will be used to make payment for purchasing training from eligible providers selected by the participant in consultation with the Workforce Center Service Provider staff. Training shall only be provided in occupations on the Targeted Occupations List for the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board. Training in an occupation not on the Targeted Occupations list for the East Texas Workforce Development Area, but is on the Targeted list for another workforce area, will be allowed only if the participant agrees to relocate to that workforce area.

B. ITA Limitations

(20 CFR §663.420)

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

Individual Training Accounts may not exceed \$9,000 in total unless an exception is granted by the Director of the ETCOG Workforce and Economic Development Division. Individuals Training Accounts cannot be for a duration of no more than two years or 80 semester hours unless approved by the Director of the ETCOG Workforce and Economic Development

Division. (This Director is authorized as the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board Executive Director.)

Part 10: Apprenticeship

A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs

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

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board actively pursues Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with area registered apprenticeship programs. Along with referral strategies, through these MOUs, Apprenticeship Programs are encouraged to register with the Statewide Eligible Training Provider System.

B. ApprenticeshipTexas

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

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board will support the Texas Workforce Commission Apprenticeship Texas initiative. As authorized in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 133, TWC offers grants funds to local public educational institutions to support the costs of related classroom instruction in registered apprenticeship training programs. Local education agencies act as fiscal agents for registered apprenticeship training programs. Workforce Solutions East Texas will refer Registered Apprenticeship Programs and potential Apprenticeship programs to TWC for funding.

The Workforce Centers Services Provider actively works with area partners in the development of pre apprenticeship programs. Whenever possible, efforts will be supported for the pre apprenticeship programs to obtain Registered Apprenticeship program status and to participate in ApprenticeshipTexas.

11: Public Comment

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

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

A draft of the Strategic Plan was posted on the Workforce Solutions East Texas website beginning February 12, 2021 with the public comment period lasting through the Close of Business on March 1, 2021e. The availability of the plan for public comment was advertised in the Longview News Journal and the Tyler Morning Telegraph newspapers. No public comments were received.

The basic policy decisions for the plan were considered by the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board in a public meeting.

APPENDIX – Texas Workforce Investment System Requirements

Demonstrating Alignment with Texas’ Strategic Plan for the Workforce System

The four sections below list and describe the four system goals from The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 (2020 Update) that identify critical, high-priority system issues for the state. **For each goal, briefly describe one significant Board strategy or initiative that fulfills the intent of the goal. Also, please include the corresponding page number(s) within your plan that further details the identified strategy or initiative. System Goal 1 and Rationale**

System Goal 1 and Rationale

Focus on Employers

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

Response:

Entrepreneurship Initiative - Utilizing Statewide Alternative funds, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is currently involved in an ambitious initiative for the development of a comprehensive train-the-trainer curriculum training package (online modules, e-book, interactive workbook, certificates, online assessment, training videos) which will be utilized for staff instruction culminating in certification as a workforce specialist with an entrepreneurial training designation. A workbook for customers (current and future entrepreneurs) is also being developed to use in support of learning in small group workshops or one-on-one coaching sessions. (Page 30)

System Goal 2 and Rationale

Engage in Partnerships

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

Response:

Camp V - Camp V (Community Assisting Military Personnel and Veterans) serves as regional resource and respite center for East Texas veterans. Camp V Tyler is a 20-acre campus in Tyler, Texas which provides benefits, services, transitioning, employment assistance, housing, mental health, equine therapy, and referrals. As Workforce Center Services Provider, Career Team, LLC is establishing a presence at the Career V facility for Workforce Center staff to offer services for veterans. (Page 30)

System Goal 3 and Rationale

Align System Elements

By improving transitions, aligning programs, and ensuring portability and transferability, Texas improves access and the ability of all participants to complete programs of study, earn credentials, transition to further education, and gain critical employability skills. Texas employers are better positioned to find and hire the employees they need through an enhanced education and training pipeline.

Response:

Texas Rising Star (TRS) - Four years ago, the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board established the goal of achieving a 60% TRS Provider participation from area child-care providers. This increases the early childhood quality level for children in Child Care Services (CCS), as well as those children in facilities participating in the program and increase the area's overall expected level of quality for daily child-care through the competitive process. The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board now over two thirds the way towards achieving the 60% goal. (Page 30)

System Goal 4 and Rationale

Improve and Integrate Programs

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

Response:

Rural, Set, Go Initiative - Focuses on rural employers, job seekers, and the public, and provides information on county demographics, workforce services, and resources available to assist employers in their search of ideal job candidates. Rural, Set, Go is offered in combined virtual and on-site forums in nine rural counties of the East Texas Workforce Development Area. The purpose of this project is to create stronger employer engagement strategies and determine workforce development concerns from the counties. Rural, Set Go is offered through the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board and Career Team LLC and is funded in part through Texas Workforce Commission Workforce Commission Initiative Funds. (Page 30)

Camp V - Camp V (Community Assisting Military Personnel and Veterans) serves as regional resource and respite center for East Texas veterans. Camp V Tyler is a 20-acre campus in Tyler, Texas which provides benefits, services, transitioning, employment assistance, housing, mental health, equine therapy, and referrals. As Workforce Center Services Provider, Career Team, LLC is establishing a presence at the Career V facility for Workforce Center staff to offer services for veterans. (Page 30)