

Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

Local Workforce Development Board 2019 Plan Modifications

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) is charged under Texas Government Code §2308.101(5), 2308.302(a), and 2308.304(a)(b)(4), and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Public Law 113–128) with recommending the plans of local workforce development Boards to the governor for consideration for approval. TWIC reviews each Board plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide goals and objectives in the system plan, *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023*, which can be found at [https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/twic/Texas_Workforce_System_Strategic_Plan_\(FY2016-FY2023\).pdf](https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/twic/Texas_Workforce_System_Strategic_Plan_(FY2016-FY2023).pdf)

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

Demonstrating Alignment with Texas’ Workforce System Strategic Plan

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

System Goal 1 and Rationale

Focus on Employers:

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

System Goal 1 - Local Board Response

The Gulf Coast Region boasts an estimated 125,000 total employers representing hundreds of public and private industries. The overwhelming majority of Gulf Coast employers are small businesses employing 100 or fewer workers. However, the largest percentages of private-sector jobs are with those companies that employ more than 100 workers. The ability to fill the workforce needs of local employers in the Gulf Coast Region has always been a high priority, and collaboration with our local workforce partners, including our local education and training providers, is key to producing the amount of skilled workers needed to meet our employers' needs.

Through its operating affiliate Workforce Solutions, the Board has established a service delivery system to deliver skilled workers for employers and help individual people get a job, keep a job or get a better job. With a region-wide Employer Service; 24 local career offices; multiple adult education providers; and a network for training, support service, and early education providers, Workforce Solutions offers a full range of workforce and career service for its customers. During the most recent year, the Board and Workforce Solutions:

- Served 29,000 employers
- Helped almost 219,000 people go to work
- Provided adult education and literacy services to over 21,000 people
- Used \$165 million in financial aid to provide education/training scholarships, work-based learning opportunities, work-search and work-entry support services, and assistance with early education and care expenses.

Workforce Solutions has an excellent relationship with our local education partners, including our community college partners. The community colleges provide educational programs leading to degrees and technical certificates, adult education and English as a second language instruction, and other training. They work with the Board in developing customized training for employers, and consult with us in developing proposals related to workforce training. The colleges in the area are valuable partners in developing industry-based initiatives to address workforce issues in the region.

The region's 76 school districts are key partners in addressing many of the long-term shortages of skilled workers in our region. The Board has an existing relationship with many school districts, many career offices work directly with middle and high schools in their communities. The career offices are charged with providing service to young people in their schools. In addition to serving individual youth, many of whom are out of school, the Board continues to work with schools broadly to provide good labor market information to schools, parents and young people. We continue to expand and improve our labor market information and career planning products which include the High Skill, High Growth Guide, Industry and Occupation profiles, and When I Grow Up. Our goal is to support schools in their efforts to reduce drop-out rates, target resources to prepare youth for the good jobs of the future and provide both parents and students information they can use in selecting course work and career opportunities. The Board's Education Committee provides guidance and oversight, and is fully committed to assisting schools in producing more graduates with the skills employers want.

Moving forward, the Board remains committed to working closely with employers, Adult Education providers, and community partners to develop robust, customized training curriculum and courses that are aligned with high-demand industries and occupations, meet the specific needs of employers, and lead to nationally- and/or industry-recognized credentials. The Board considers it a best practice to engage in

these types of collaborations, and is currently involved in several projects that reflect our commitment to this strategy. An example of one of these collaborations is our work with local employer Trio Electric LLC.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board worked with Trio Electric LLC to develop a pre-apprenticeship program to introduce secondary school students and others to the possibilities of high-skill trades and promote them as viable career options. The program leveraged a variety of partners including the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and Spring Branch ISD. TRIO worked directly with Spring Branch ISD to offer students a two-week “boot camp” that familiarized them with the host of skilled-trades technical positions.

As a result of their participation in the program, TRIO Electric was able to offer 40 students a summer internship with the company at \$13/hour. Additionally, in the Fall of 2018, an additional 50 high school juniors enrolled in the program with Spring Branch ISD. The annual evaluation completed by the students overwhelmingly stated that the students felt prepared and felt as though they had a firm direction towards their careers. The program has been such a success that TRIO is planning to replicate the pre-apprenticeship model in Austin and Grand Prairie.

System Goal 2 and Rationale

Engage in Partnerships:

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

System Goal 2 - Local Board Response

The Gulf Coast region has a prolific number of workforce development partners. We have ten community college systems, more than a dozen university campuses, numerous economic development and business organizations, a host of state and local agencies, and a wide variety of community and faith-based organizations. Together, these institutions represent a rich infrastructure for the Gulf Coast workforce system.

The Board has engaged in multiple partnerships – with industry associations, economic development organizations such as the Greater Houston partnership, the United Way and its member agencies, the Homeless Coalition for Houston/Harris County, the Houston Food Bank, the Houston Housing Authority, and local government – to leverage the resources available through Workforce Solutions for as many employers and individuals as possible.

With our partners, we provide a wide range of service to employer and individual customers. On the resident side, community and faith-based organizations provide mentoring, life skills training, adult basic education, English as a second language, child care, transportation, and other work support service. Some

of these organizations are paid vendors for our system while many others work informally with Workforce Solutions jointly assisting customers.

In addition to working with our core partners, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board reaches out to local community partners to seek their input and collaboration on special projects in order to enhance our administration of the core programs. Over the past year the Board has seen success across a broad range of community based on projects. One example is Victor Adams, who aged out of the foster care system and eventually connected with Workforce Solutions at the Star of Hope Mission and is now a Registered Apprentice employed by Empire Steel as an iron worker. Victor's remarkable journey was featured on the local ABC-TV affiliate. You can see the video at <http://www.wrksolutions.com/InvestingInLocalTalent>.

System Goal 3 and Rationale

Align System Elements:

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

System Goal 3 - Local Board Response

The Board is dedicated to maximizing the region's resources by aligning core programs with additional funding opportunities to insure that all employers and job search and training customers receive the maximum amount of support available through our workforce system.

The Board has no difficulty in identifying organizations interested in providing education and training service to meet employer needs. The region's ten community colleges, universities, and numerous private career schools are valuable partners.

The Board uses the Workforce Commission's online application and review process to maintain its list of approved vendors and educational programs. We provide information to organizations interested in becoming vendors at <http://www.wrksolutions.com/about/vendorapplications.html>. Workforce Solutions financial aid payment offices assists organizations who want to become part of our network of providers. Staff answer provider questions and assist them in completing the process.

One example of the Board's practice of aligning system elements is of our management of the Adult Education and Literacy program in the region. The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is one of three boards in the state to serve as the grant recipient and administrator of the Adult Education and Literacy grant. Since being awarded the grant, the Board has worked to ensure that adult education and literacy services are wholly integrated into the other core services provided through the workforce system. Moving forward, the Board remains committed to working closely with employers, Adult Education providers, and community partners to develop robust, customized training curriculum and courses that are aligned with high-demand industries and occupations meet the specific needs of employers, and lead to nationally- and/or industry-recognized credentials.

The Board is also committed to connecting customers to wrap-around support services and resources, provided either directly through the workforce system or through strategic partnerships with community-based organizations, to eliminate as many barriers as possible that may keep customers from successfully completing their course and transitioning into employment and/or postsecondary education.

The Gulf Coast Adult Education Consortium served a total of 22,028 customers in ESL, Adult Basic and Secondary Education, Career Pathways and Transitions courses during the period beginning July 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2018. Notably, 1,544 customers were enrolled in a Career Pathways course. Career Pathways courses are uniquely designed to meet the workforce needs of employers and to enable customers to secure industry relevant certification and obtain or retain employment in in-demand occupations. These courses may involve integrated education and training (IET), which is concurrent enrollment of customers in Adult Education and workforce training, workplace literacy, or work-based training in collaboration with employers.

System Goal 4 and Rationale

Improve and Integrate Programs:

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

System Goal 4 - Local Board Response

Through the integrated workforce system in Texas, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board manages the WIOA core programs along with several additional programs administered by TWC. The Board will work with our partners carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs in the region to continue to support the strategy identified in the State Plan. In developing the local plan, the Board took into account the regional economy, employers’ current and projected human resource needs, and the current and future workforce. All of this information plays a part in shaping how we target investments to meet the needs of the labor market and its industries, employers and individuals.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board recognizes the importance of using data to drive decision-making and has made availability and evaluation of data a key part of its strategic development and oversight processes and consumer education efforts.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has access to a number of state provided Labor Market Information and Career Exploration Services such as:

- Texas Rapid Access to Career and Economic Resources (TRACER) website
- Wage Information Network (WIN)

- Standard Occupational Components for Research and Analysis of Trends in Employment System (SOCRATES)
- Reality Check – TexasRealityCheck.com (<http://www.texasrealitycheck.com>)
- Texas Career Alternatives Resource Evaluation System (Texas CARES)
- Texas Consumer Resource on Education and Workforce Statistics (Texas CREWS) – TexasCREWS at <http://www.txcrews.org>

The Board has worked to identify the workforce needs of businesses, job candidates, and workers in the workforce region using a combination of labor market intelligence (using the services listed above) and active participation of various partners and stakeholders. These needs are identified in three lists: 1) Targeted Industries, 2) Where the Jobs Are, and 3) High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations. The three lists are used to guide not only the Board’s strategic investments, but also to help our residents build career in industries and occupations with good prospects and higher wages. We use the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations list to decide which occupations we will support with our education scholarship dollars.

As our system becomes more complex and fully integrated, we have become creative with how we share our data to our stakeholders, system partners, and customers. Some examples:

- The career exploration section of our website www.wrksolutions.com/careerplanning is the central landing point for all our localized labor market data. In addition to our Target Industries and High-Skill, High-Growth Occupation lists, we provide the same information in a reader-friendly format to support career exploration.
- Our employer service and career office staff have ongoing relationships with both our partners and customers. On the employer service side, businesses consultants, industry liaisons, and administrative staff maintain relationships with employers, economic development organizations staff, and schools. On the people side, career office staff, particularly our greeters, resource room specialists, personal service representatives, financial aid specialists and employment counselors, work with residents to ensure they have access to all the services they want and need.
- The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has a Regional Team made up of Navigators and Facilitators that go out in to the community to reach populations that might not be served in a local career office. The Regional Team works with our partners to conduct community-based job search seminars and workshops. These presentations are conducted outside the career office in schools, libraries, and a wide range of community-based organizations.
- Staff work with our vendor network to provide information about our service and system. Grants management staff work with many partners to ensure our system is working to maximize resources in the region and provide coordinated service to employers and individuals. Board staff provide support to partners in developing new projects and grant proposals. Staff work with partners to develop meaningful memoranda of understanding (MOU) by providing high quality labor market information and guiding partners in the development of programs that are the best fit for the Region.