



# GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

## 2021-2024 LOCAL PLAN

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## FOREWORD

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board and its operating affiliate, Workforce Solutions are the public workforce system for the 13-county Houston-Galveston area in southeast Texas. We meet employers where they are to address their unique workforce needs and help people, we serve daily, build careers so both can thrive in the global economy.

We are a public entity and operate in the most effective manner when we leverage relationships and partner with stakeholders in the regional economy. To accomplish this, we work jointly with schools, colleges, local city and county governments, non-profits, and social service providers, as well as the business community, to bring people together and focus on our shared goals and economic needs. The Gulf Coast Workforce Board, includes many of these groups, and is made up of dedicated individuals from both the public and private sectors who volunteer their time and expertise to help set the direction for how Workforce Solutions carries out its mission, vision, and purpose.

Our volunteer Board members along with the dedicated professional staff of Workforce Solutions, are tasked with implementing a local, data-driven plan for developing our region's pool of human talent to meet employment needs in our area. To guarantee that we are fulfilling our area's obligations to the Texas Workforce Commission under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, this Local Plan examines our estimated economic needs through 2024.

Through its 2021-2024 Local Plan, the Board:

- Projects labor market conditions and identifies the needs for skilled workers
- Sets the strategic direction for Workforce Solutions and the Board's investments to meet the region's needs for an educated and skilled workforce
- Describes how Workforce Solutions is organized to deliver high-quality, valued service for the region's employers and people
- Ensures the public workforce system is open and accessible to its customers and accountable to funders, local elected officials and stakeholders

The full report draws on a wide variety of data points, metrics and programming, and we encourage you to read it for a fuller understanding of our efforts.

But first, it's important to begin with a few basic facts about how our Board envisions the next 10 years for local employment and some of our plans for meeting the challenges and opportunities that we see developing for our 13-county area.

### What's on the Horizon?

By 2030, total population in the region will reach 9,259,720. The Houston-Galveston area will continue to become more and more diverse, with 31.9% Anglo, 38.1% Hispanic, and 16.6% Black, and 10.6% Asian. The percentage of the workforce over the age of 55 increased from 9.4 percent in 1995 to 22.2 percent in 2020. By 2030, the percentage of the population over the age of 55 is projected to increase to 24.7 percent with more staying active in the workforce every year.

By 2028, total employment in the region will grow to 3,729,008 - an increase of 14.2% from 2018. Key industries in the region will continue to include oil and gas exploration and production, construction, manufacturing, health care, education, and business and technical services.

We estimate that by 2028, 58.4% of all jobs in the region will require education or training beyond the high school level and that the majority of these will be “middle skill” jobs. In 2028, employers will need 1.2 million workers in middle skill positions – those that require some post-secondary education and/or on-the-job training. But make no mistake, these are the crucial positions that will need to be filled in order to make our workforce competitive in a global environment. Wages for these jobs currently average \$25.33 per hour – significantly above the region's median wage.

The region's employers will continue to need almost 882,004 individuals for highly skilled work. These are the jobs that require education at or beyond a bachelor's degree level and usually some level of work experience: physicians, nurses, pharmacists, engineers of all types, accountants and researchers for example. These are the highest paying jobs – with current average wages at \$50.76 per hour.

There will also be some 1.4 million lower-skilled jobs in 2028.

In its local plan, the Board targets the key regional industries and the high-skill and middle-skill jobs which will be most in need for those industries, while presenting information on the lower-skilled jobs as well.

### How will the Board and Workforce Solutions respond to these challenges?

The Board's mission is to help employers meet their human resource needs and individuals build careers, so both can compete in the global economy. To accomplish this goal, The Board will focus on providing services to both employers and members of the workforce to fill our region's economic needs with highly trained individuals.

Our focus on employers is to help them find the right people for the right job and expand their share of the regional economy by growing their workforce, capacity and productivity. For our area's workers, we help with training, education and professional development to help people find meaningful employment and make progress in their career. This commitment to service is how we intend to meet the needs of our dynamic economic future.

### What does the report show?

The Local Plan lays out the broad workforce and human resources needs for the region's future and helps us make decisions about how we use our system and resources to meet those needs. These forecasts show us where our workforce development efforts should be focused and inform us what kinds of jobs and industries our region's key occupations and employers will be. This information is critical to educators, communities and businesses because it tells how we will need to grow and adapt our workforce to shifting economic demands.

What we see most clearly is the continued need for employees capable of filling skilled technical professions. These are the occupations that will come to dominate our employment needs and provide the talent that businesses need to grow and thrive. Technical skill jobs are found across the chief industries of the Texas Gulf Coast region, but what they have in common are requirements for additional training and education beyond high school.

This means that The Board will share pertinent information with educators, parents and students about career exploration and what steps young people need to be taking currently so they are prepared for the future workforce. Collectively, we need to focus our efforts on ensuring that tomorrow's job candidates are prepared with the skills and knowledge they will need.

Due to the uncertainty caused by COVID-19 in the labor market, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board will continue to monitor trends and offer services where appropriate.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board and our Workforce Solutions team are dedicated to growing our region's economic footprint by helping businesses reach their full human resources potential. Even as economic challenges arise and are ultimately overcome, we pride ourselves on the work that we do, and we look forward to continuing to serve Gulf Coast businesses and their employees into the future.



## PART 1: BOARD VISION AND STRATEGIES



The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is accountable for leading and governing the regional workforce system in the 13-county Gulf Coast region of Texas. It is the one and only workforce board in the region and one of its primary responsibilities is strategic planning. The greatest challenge for us is setting the direction and focus for all workforce activities in the region, regardless of how they are funded, and to use our limited resources to leverage the larger system and achieve Board-established results. Moving the bigger system would be impossible without a strategic plan that clearly describes and precisely quantifies what results the Board expects the regional workforce system to achieve. The Board has been engaged in a strategic planning process for several years. In 2003, we developed statements of our core values, mission and vision that explain what Board members value most, why it exists as a board, and where it wants to be at some point in the future. The Board developed results statements for the regional workforce system, both that which it directly controls and for the larger system. The Board's strategic plan is a tool for managing the regional workforce system. Board members and staff use it to drive the regional workforce system toward the four results statements.

## The Gulf Coast Workforce Board

*Employer Driven and People Powered (Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023)*

<b>PURPOSE</b> <i>(Why We Exist)</i>	To keep our region a great place to do business, work, and live
<b>MISSION</b> <i>(What Makes Us Different)</i>	We elevate the economic and human potential of the Gulf Coast region by fulfilling the diverse needs of the businesses and individuals we serve.
<b>VISION</b> <i>(The Future We Aspire To)</i>	Our region attracts and retains the best employers, affords everyone the dignity of a job, remains vitally important to the global economy – and all within it are thriving.
<b>VALUES &amp; BEHAVIORS</b> <i>(Our Strongly Held Beliefs)</i>	<p>We are employer-driven</p> <p>We care passionately</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for others</li> <li>• Inspire hope</li> <li>• Fuel progress</li> </ul> <p>We take responsibilities seriously</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be accountable</li> <li>• Follow up and follow through</li> <li>• Drive results</li> </ul> <p>We imagine possibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek multiple perspectives</li> <li>• Bring fresh thinking</li> <li>• Engage one another in making a difference</li> </ul>
<b>RESULTS</b> <i>(The Difference We Will Make)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competitive Employers</li> <li>2. An Educated Workforce</li> <li>3. More and Better Jobs</li> <li>4. Higher Incomes</li> </ol>



<p><b>MEASURES, BASELINES, AND TARGETS</b> (How We Will Measure Progress Toward Achieving Results)</p>	<p>For the Regional Workforce System:</p> <p><b>Education Credentials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 84 percent of the region’s population 25 years and older will hold an education credential</li> <li>— 39 percent of the region’s population 25 years and older will hold a post-secondary degree</li> <li>— 24 percent of those pursuing an education credential will earn one</li> </ul> <p><b>Job Creation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 3.23 million individuals will be employed in the region, reflecting the addition of 254,202 jobs created since 2018</li> </ul> <p>For Workforce Solutions:</p> <p><b>Market Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 31,500 region’s employers will use Workforce Solutions</li> </ul> <p><b>Customer Loyalty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 65 percent of employers using Workforce Solutions will be repeat customers</li> </ul> <p><b>Education Credentials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 76 percent of individual customers pursuing an education credential will earn one</li> </ul> <p><b>Job Creation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 3,500 new jobs will be created as a direct result of Workforce Solutions’ partnering with other business organizations</li> </ul>
<p><b>MEASURES, BASELINES, AND TARGETS</b> (continued)</p>	<p><b>Employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 78 percent of individual customers will be employed after leaving Workforce Solutions</li> </ul> <p><b>Earnings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— 37 percent of individual customers leaving Workforce Solutions will have earnings gains of at least 20 percent</li> </ul>
<p><b>STRATEGIES</b> (How We Will Achieve Results)</p>	<p>We help employers meet their human resource needs and people build careers, so both can compete in the global economy, by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building, maintaining, and continually improving a high-quality, value-add system that serves employers and people</li> <li>2. Providing skilled workers for employers in critical industries</li> <li>3. Contributing to high-quality, life-long learning for individuals</li> <li>4. Delivering accurate and timely career and labor market data</li> <li>5. Using our resources to leverage the larger system</li> <li>6. Meeting the requirements of our funding sources</li> </ol>

We developed a framework for quantifying progress toward Board-established results – measures, baselines, annual and long-range targets for both the Board controlled activities and the larger system. Together, this framework established a policy structure governing the regional workforce system and simultaneously defined the expectations for the system. The Workforce Board Strategic Planning Committee and staff annually review performance on strategic metrics. More importantly, the Board and staff analyze gaps between performance and targets. Do strategies align with the goals? Where are the opportunities to improve operational efficiency? What factors are affecting performance? Based on this analysis, we may adjust strategies, change procedures, revise (or eliminate) metrics and reset targets.

The tables below contain the metrics and long-term goals for both the Board-controlled and the larger workforce system through 2023. Primary measures are not shaded – these are the measures that we report on quarterly. Secondary measures – those that we use to test how the system is working – are shaded. We report on these measures annually. Some of the measures, noted with a P below, are from third-party sources and are not yet available. We will continue to track and update these figures as they become available.

*for Regional Workforce System*

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Percentage of the region's population (25 and older) holding an education credential <sup>1, 2</sup>	83%	83%	83%	84%	84%	Target
	P	P				Actual
Percentage of the region's population (25 and older) holding a post-secondary degree 2	38%	38%	38%	39%	39%	Target
	P	P				Actual
Percentage of those pursuing an education credential who earn one 2	24%	24%	24%	24%	24%	Target
	P	P				Actual
Percentage of students enrolled in the 9th through 12th grades earning a high school diploma 2	23%	23%	23%	23%	23%	Target
	P	P				Actual
Percentage of those enrolled in adult basic education will earn a high school equivalency (HSE)	79%	79%	79%	79%	79%	Target
	P	P				Actual
Percentage of students enrolled in post-secondary institutions earning a certificate or degree 2	23%	23%	24%	24%	24%	Target
	P	P				Actual
Percentage of students earning post-secondary certificates or degrees in fields preparing them for jobs in high-	38%	39%	39%	40%	40%	Target
	P	P				Actual

skill, high- growth occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board2					
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The total number of students earning a post-secondary degree or certificate up to and including Associate's degree.	42,825	45,679	48,532	51,385	54,239	Target
	P	P				Actual

1 Shaded performance measures are Board-level measures; others are staff-level measures.

2 Baseline year is 2017

P - Pending: This data comes from a third-party source and is not yet available. The Board will update this information as it becomes available.

### Education Credentials

#### for Workforce Solutions

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Percentage of Workforce Solutions individual customers pursuing an education credential who earn one	74%	75%	75%	76%	76%	Target
	77.4%	69.0%				Actual

Percentage of Workforce Solutions' individual customers enrolled in post-secondary education who earn a certificate or degree	85%	85%	85%	86%	86%	Target
	80.0%	79.3%				Actual

### Job Creation

#### for Regional Workforce System

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Total number of jobs	3,029,703	3,080,544	3,131,384	3,182,225	3,233,065	Target
	3,054,496	3,105,437				Actual

P - Pending: This data comes from a third-party source and is not yet available. The Board will update this information as it becomes available.

#### for Workforce Solutions

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Number of new jobs created as a direct result of Workforce Solutions' partnering with other business organizations	3,300	3,300	3,400	3,400	3,500	Target
	1,534	1,367				Actual

Percentage of new jobs created with employers in industries targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a direct result of Workforce Solutions' partnership efforts	60%	63%	67%	72%	75%	Target
	34.2%	2.0%				Actual

Percentage of new jobs created with employer in high-skill, high-growth occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a result of Workforce Solutions' partnership efforts	45%	45%	45%	45%	45%	Target
	1.6%	13.2%				Actual

## Employment

### for Regional Workforce System

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Number of employed working for employers in industries targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board 3	≥ 1,304,205	≥ 1,304,205	≥ 1,304,205	≥ 1,304,205	≥ 1,304,205	Target
	1,354,745	1,326,187				Actual
Number of employed working in high-skill, high- growth occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board 3	≥ 615,170	≥ 615,170	≥ 615,170	≥ 615,170	≥ 615,170	Target
	635,730	P				Actual

P - Pending: This data comes from a third-party source and is not yet available. The Board will update this information as it becomes available.

## Employment

### for Workforce Solutions

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Percentage of individual customers employed after leaving Workforce Solutions	76%	77%	77%	78%	78%	Target
	77.7%	88.4%				Actual
Percent of individuals Workforce Solutions customers employed in entrance quarter	68%	68%	68%	68%	70%	Target
	76.0%	87.4%				Actual
Percentage of Workforce Solutions' individual customers, unemployed at entrance, employed after leaving Workforce Solutions	75%	75%	75%	76%	76%	Target
	80.8%	87.4%				Actual

Percentage of Workforce Solutions' individual customers employed after leaving Workforce Solutions, also employed in both consecutive quarters	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	Target
	74.8%	76.7%				Actual

3 Baseline year is 2017

### Market Share

*for Workforce Solutions*

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Region's employers using Workforce Solutions	27,369	28,500	29,500	30,500	31,500	Target
	27,367	21,978				Actual

### Customer Loyalty

*for Workforce Solutions*

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Percentage of the region's employers using Workforce Solutions as repeat customers	60%	62%	63%	64%	65%	Target
	62.0%	49.7%				Actual

### Income

*for Workforce Solutions*

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Percentage of individual customers with earnings gains of at least 20 percent after leaving Workforce Solutions	37%	37%	37%	37%	37%	Target
	31.3%	24.2%				Actual
Percentage of Workforce Solutions' individual customers employed with earnings gains after leaving Workforce Solutions	46%	46%	46%	46%	46%	Target
	41.0%	26.9%				Actual

The Board adopted 132 measures and set performance targets for 2021:

More Competitive Employers	Market Share - (Oct. 2020 - Sept. 2021)	29,500
	Customer Loyalty - (Oct. 2020 - Sept. 2021)	63%
Higher Incomes	Exiters with Earnings Gains of at least 20%	37%
	Exiters employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit with Earnings Gains	46%

More and Better Jobs	New jobs created as a direct result of partnering with other business organizations	3,400
	New jobs created with employers in industries targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a direct result of partnerships	67%
	New jobs created in high-skill occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a direct result of partnerships	45%
	Customers employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit	77%
	Customers, unemployed at entrance, employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit	75%
	Number of customers employed in 2nd and 3rd quarters after exit	83%
	Customers employed in the entrance quarter	68%
A Better Educated Workforce	Customers pursuing Education Credential that achieve one by quarter after exit	75%
	Customers enrolled in post-secondary who earn certificate or degree by quarter after exit	85%

In addition, there will be 19 measures Contracted by the State.

Contracted with the State	# of Employers Receiving Workforce Assistance	NIA
	Employed Q2 Post Exit - Adult	72%
	Employed Q2 Post Exit - DW	75%
	Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - Youth	68%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - Adult	71%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - DW	75%
	Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit - Youth	66%
	Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - All Participants	NIA



	Employed/Enrolled Q2-Q4 Post Exit - All Participants	NIA
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Adult	\$5,300
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - DW	\$8,400
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - All Participants	NIA
	Credential Rate - Adult	68%
	Credential Rate - DW	70%
	Credential Rate - Youth	37%
	Credential Rate - All Participants	NIA
	Claimant Reemployment w/in 10 Weeks	NIA
	Average Kids Served Per Day - Discretionary At-Risk	27,716
	Choices Full Work Rate (Oct. 2020 - Sept. 2021)	53%

### Board Strategies

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board proposes the following strategies to work with providers and local partners to carry out the core programs and how we will align resources to achieve the Board's vision and goals. Our region is rich in workforce development partners to help carry out this work. We have ten community colleges 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.

Through providers and our partners, we will work to align and provide a wide range of services to employers and individual customers. Individuals will be connected to community and faith-based organizations that provide mentoring, life skills training, adult basic education, English as a second language, childcare, transportation, and other work support service. Some of these organizations are paid contractors for our system while many others work in partnership with Workforce Solutions using a team approach to assist customers.

Workforce Solutions has an excellent relationship with our community college partners. The colleges provide educational programs leading to degrees and technical certificates, adult education and English as 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 major universities have a role in the workforce system and are likely to have a greater one in the future as the Board's industry-based work continues and expands. The universities help to contribute to the diversification of our economy in the Gulf Coast Region. In addition to the current major universities located in Houston, there are plans for a new University of Texas Campus, which will focus on providing Healthcare and Healthcare Technology education and training.

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 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, Focus on Industry and Occupation profiles, When I Grow Up and Choices Planner. 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, oversight, and is fully committed to assisting schools in producing more graduates with the skills employers want.

Economic development organizations are key partners in our region. In many cases, the Board is a member of these organizations. In other cases, such as our industry groups, the economic development organizations are key members of Board-sponsored projects. We work together in identifying opportunities for the region to grow good jobs, and to help develop solutions to barriers to growth, such as the need for improved schools. The Board's strategic plan includes a measure of the degree to which we are involved in economic development efforts leading to new or retained jobs. In general, each partner we work with pays for the service and staff the organization normally provides. For example, we may have a memorandum of understanding to work with a community-based organization to coordinate providing service to customers. We agree to make cross-referrals for customers with each partner paying for service they deliver to each customer.

There are exceptions to this general policy. Some of our partners are vendors or the Board has procured the organization to provide specialized service. In these cases, we pay for the partner organization to provide service, either by individual referral or through cost-reimbursement contracts.

The Board enjoys excellent working relationships with its partners, especially core partners such as the colleges, the adult education community, and economic development entities.

The Workforce Solutions' Navigator team and career offices work with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors with Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services to help connect those with disabilities with services offered through the local career office. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors also arrange to meet customers in the local career offices.

We believe in deepening relationships to help carry out our programs so customers have the best experience from us. How we work closely with partners to advance our vision and goals depends on the strength of those relationships.

Our employer service and career office staff have ongoing relationships with customers. On the employer service side, business consultants, industry liaisons, and administrative staff maintain relationships with employers, economic development organizations staff, and schools. Career office staff, particularly our greeters, resource room specialists, personal service representatives, financial aid specialist and employment counselors, work with individual customers 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 perform community outreach to populations that otherwise might not obtain services from 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 of 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.

The Board's public outreach and marketing plan is designed to share information about workforce service throughout the region to carry out core programs. Our marketing plan includes the use of our website: [www.wrksolutions.com](http://www.wrksolutions.com), social media, mass email blasts, targeted mailings, and special events.

### High Performing Board

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has long understood that to be an effective and high-performing Board, certain actions and responsibilities must be undertaken.

The Board's specific responsibilities (those things for which it alone is responsible) include:

- Developing itself as a well-educated, highly diversified, high-performing board
- Establishing ongoing relationships between the workforce system and its stakeholders
- Developing governing policies to guide itself as a board and the regional workforce system (i.e., long-term results statements)
- Developing an effective working relationship with its chief executive officer
- Ensuring board staff/system performance
- Providing annual reports on the state of workforce affairs in the region (progress toward achieving system results)

The carrying out of these responsibilities reinforces its value-add as an integral part of the regional workforce system.

In addition to the previously stated explicit responsibilities, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board frequently undertakes actions to remain a high-performing board by:

- Holding new board members to high standards
- Focusing on policy (and accordingly leaving the details of planning and program operation to Board staff) and being employer driven
- Watching national trends and adopting best practices based on the rapidly changing economic and workforce climate
- Keeping board members updated on current LMI and future trends
- Influencing other areas critical for workforce development, such as the PK-12 education system
- Continuing active participation in state and national associations of workforce boards and workforce associations

Additional strategies we will implement to remain a high-performing Board include:

- Continually improve the quality of customer service
- Provide high-quality labor market information
- Provide skilled workers for employers in critical industries
- Contribute to high-quality, life-long learning experiences
- Use our resources to move the larger system to achieve Board-established results
- Meet the requirements of our funding sources
- Find additional revenue to support Board results

The Board regularly reassesses its visions and goals to set continually higher standards for the workforce system performance. More than 13 years ago the Gulf Coast Workforce Board adopted a strategic plan that described and quantified results the Board expected the regional workforce system to achieve. It includes values, mission and vision statements that explain what its members value most, why they exist as a board, and where they want the regional workforce system to be in the future. The plan continues to guide our efforts to help employers meet their human resource needs and individuals build careers. In keeping with its key values innovation, productivity, performance and results the Board identified four results statements that describe the difference it intends to make in the Gulf Coast region.

- More competitive employers
- A better educated workforce
- More and better jobs
- Higher incomes

For the Regional Workforce System, we focused on total employment - a gauge of how well we create and keep jobs in the region - and education credentials of working-age residents - a gauge of the skill level of the region's workforce. For the part of the system we directly control, Workforce Solutions, we focus on outcomes for individuals - employment, education and earnings. We also looked at our contribution to employers' job creation, market share and customer loyalty.

For the part of the system that we directly control under our operating affiliate Workforce Solutions, we focus on outcomes for individuals - employment, education and earnings. We also looked at our contribution to employers' job creation, market share and customer loyalty.

### 2019 Workforce Report Card

To communicate our region's performance to businesses, education institutions, and the general public, in February 2005, the Board produced the first Report Card as a tool to gauge the region's competitiveness in relation to similar metropolitan areas across the United States. Since then, the Board has produced five subsequent updates. The most recent Workforce Report Card released in 2019 continues this tradition against a backdrop of economic challenges a few years prior and in some cases, under-performance related to the region's key industry: oil and gas. To emphasize the continued importance of an educated and trained workforce, this Report Card featured a special focus on the future of work and the potential impacts of artificial intelligence and automation on jobs.

In order to engage key stakeholders in communities across the region, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board hosted a series of local roundtable discussions designed to:

- Deepen relationships in the communities we serve
- Facilitate meaningful interactions between Workforce Board members and local leaders
- Create opportunities for both stakeholders and the people we serve to better understand key findings in the Report Card
- Illustrate the vital role of Workforce Solutions in the regional economy

We will continue to work with our community partners to address the concerns raised in the Report Card Round Table events and work to fully realize the recommendations presented in the 2019 Report Card. With input from multiple stakeholders with diverse perspectives, we will ensure the Gulf Coast Workforce Board remains a high performer. The following section will provide an analysis of our economy and workforce.



## PART 2: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS



The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown MSA rose to an estimated 478 billion in 2018 making it the seventh largest economy in the United States. If it were a country it would be the 26th largest economy by Gross Domestic Product, larger than Norway, Austria, Columbia, Malaysia, and Venezuela. The economy remains dominated by oil and gas exploration and production and it continues to become increasingly diversified in areas of manufacturing and health services.

The Gulf Coast Region is primarily driven by the U.S. economy but unlike many regions more than a fourth of the economy is driven by commodity prices, particularly oil. Drilling activity was already on the decline throughout the entire year of 2019 and the outlook for the region had softened somewhat even though employment growth outpaced the nation. An oil price war ensued in early 2020 around the same time the COVID-19 pandemic began, which created a major economic crisis unlike anything seen since the Great Depression:

- Payrolls in the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA plummeted by 350,000 jobs in the two-month period of March and April.
- Drilling activity plummeted by sixty-seven percent to its lowest level in more than 30 years.



- The rate of unemployment rose to 14.3 percent, higher than its peak during the great recession
- New projections produced by the Texas Workforce Commission LMCI department indicate long-term growth fell from an estimated 17.4 percent from 2016 to 2026 to an estimated 14.2 percent from 2018 to 2026, an 18.4 percent decline in the pace of projected job growth.

The region's economy hinges on the timeline of recovery of the coronavirus. The recovery of payroll employment stalled by August 2020 and by October only half of all jobs lost during the initial months of the pandemic had been recovered. With rollouts of vaccines that are beginning as early as December 2020, a solid economic recovery in the region will likely begin by mid-2021.

The Gulf Coast region's high concentration of energy jobs and its major petrochemical complex results in a critical need for skilled crafts and technical jobs that require more education and training than a high school diploma, but less than a college degree. In addition to energy, the region features other important industries. Its centrally southern location with easy access to the Port of Houston makes it an ideal distribution point for numerous maritime, railroad, airline, and motor freight companies. Other industries such as education, trade, and healthcare benefit from a population growth rate that more than doubles that of the nation. Furthermore, Houston is one of the top spots in the country for corporate relocation and investment due to its low cost of doing business.

### Knowledge and Skills Analysis

In developing its strategic plan, the Board considers the regional economy, employers' current and projected human resource needs, and the current and future workforce. All 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 resources the Board controls are small in contrast to those in the larger workforce system. Our efforts are underwritten by a short list of revenue streams – Child Care Development Block Grant, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Act Assistance. Leveraging our role as an influencer becomes more critical as the pool of Board-controlled resources shrinks. For example, the public education system in the Gulf Coast region includes 76 school districts and 10 community college systems. The Board must leverage its relationship with the educational systems to ensure all young people receive an education that prepares them for the world of work, and adults have access to basic and job-specific educational programs that prepare them for the high-skill, high-wage jobs in our region.

The Gulf Coast Workforce 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 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 careers 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.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board, through its operating affiliate Workforce Solutions, is committed to providing basic labor market information and service to all employers and individuals across the 13-county region. The bulk of the resources available for employer service, however, are targeted to employers in those industries that are likely to contribute the most to the region's economic future. We call this short list of industries the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Targeted Industries List.

The Targeted Industries List, equivalent to the Commission's in-demand industry list, is simply those industries that are most important to the region's economy based on various criteria. To build the list of targeted industries, we analyzed data from the 2018 through 2028 employment projections and retained those industries that met specific criteria for total employment, growth and average earnings for workers. Several industries found on the previous Targeted Industry list were removed due to below-average projected growth over the ten-year period. Others projected to show positive, yet below-average growth were retained in order to ensure key sectors of the economy remain represented within the list. Simply put, these industries are too important to the region's economic well-being to not focus on their needs.

While employers in the targeted industries are likely to have needs spanning the entire spectrum of occupations that make up their workforces, those with chronic labor shortages in high-skill occupations have top priority for service financed by Workforce Solutions or one of its partners in the regional workforce system. We believe helping these employers solve their workforce problems will benefit employers and residents of the region alike, and ultimately yield the best return on the taxpayer's investment.

The Where the Jobs Are List is the equivalent to the Commission's in-demand occupations list, and more of a Gulf Coast Workforce Board consumer tool used by people looking for work. It is primarily a list of occupations that are expected to provide at least 645 openings every year without regard to earnings potential and/or skill level. The list is rank ordered from most to least annual job openings.

Lastly, the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations List is equivalent to the Commission's targeted occupations list, which aims to identify the best all-around employment opportunities across the region. To build this list we analyzed a combination of factors such as wages, expected occupational employment in the future, growth rates, the need for postsecondary education and training beyond a high school diploma, and whether significant occupational employment is found within the list of Target Industries noted earlier. Occasionally, occupations are included irrespective of the aforementioned criteria due to expressed need communicated by employers directly to The Board. Input of this type is highly desirable and even preferred as it enables precise investments in the workforce to meet employer need. In the absence of this type of intelligence, the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations List provides direction in order to focus the organization's efforts.

Once developed, the list is then used by career office staff to identify customer-appropriate employment opportunities along with prerequisite education and training. Customers that meet eligibility criteria may receive limited tuition assistance from Workforce Solutions in order to complete relevant postsecondary programs. The list is also used in working with the public education system. For example, the Board is helping align academic and career/technology courses to the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations, and then to the 16 education career clusters. As part of these efforts, The Board has developed career planning tools for local school teachers, counselors, and administrators to help students choose courses that will prepare them for high-skill jobs.

Each of the lists is initially derived from the best statistical labor market information available. They are then tempered by the latest regional labor market intelligence (information not reflected in the statistical information) to produce final lists which are subsequently adopted by the Board. This “tempering” process serves as an important validation step. On the following pages are the Targeted Industries, Where-the-jobs-are, and High-Skill, High-Growth Occupation Lists based on recently released 2018-2028 employment projections:

### Targeted Industries List

NAICS	Industry Title	Employment Growth				1st Qtr 2019 Avg. Weekly Wages <sup>3</sup>
		Annual Averages 2018	2028	Net Change	Percent Change	
	<b>Mining</b>					
2131	Support Activities for Mining	40,534	47,525	6,991	17.2	\$3,255
	<b>Construction</b>					
2361	Residential Building Construction	13,939	16,989	3,050	21.9	\$1,778
2371	Utility System Construction	36,286	43,317	7,031	19.4	\$1,735
2381	Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors	22,108	28,458	6,350	28.7	\$1,045
2382	Building Equipment Contractors	50,190	60,392	10,202	20.3	\$1,254
2389	Other Specialty Trade Contractors	18,568	23,392	4,824	26.0	\$1,247
2373	Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction	9,488	12,563	3,075	32.4	\$1,103
2362	Nonresidential Building Construction	39,686	43,792	4,106	10.3	\$2,020
	<b>Manufacturing</b>					
3324	Boiler, Tank, and Shipping Container Manufacturing <sup>5</sup>	4,860	7,613	2,753	56.6	\$1,767
3327	Machine Shops; Turned Product; and Screw, Nut, and Bolt Mfg.	9,797	12,154	2,357	24.1	\$1,216
3251	Basic Chemical Manufacturing <sup>4 6</sup>	22,839	23,283	444	1.9	\$3,693
3331	Agriculture, Construction, and Mining Machinery Manufacturing <sup>4 6</sup>	28,701	29,619	918	3.2	\$2,579
	<b>Trade, Transportation &amp; Utilities</b>					
4238	Machinery, Equipment, and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	33,079	41,804	8,725	26.4	\$1,884
NAICS	Industry Title	Employment Growth				1st Qtr 2019 Avg. Weekly Wages <sup>3</sup>
		Annual Averages 2018	2028	Net Change	Percent Change	
4251	Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers	10,230	13,260	3,030	29.6	\$1,676
4411	Automobile Dealers	28,581	32,431	3,850	13.5	\$1,259
4811	Scheduled Air Transportation <sup>6</sup>	17,935	20,005	2,070	11.5	\$2,218
4831	Deep Sea, Coastal, and Great Lakes Water Transportation	1,666	2,045	379	22.7	\$2,255
4832	Inland Water Transportation	2,240	2,655	415	18.5	\$2,180
4841	General Freight Trucking <sup>5</sup>	14,981	17,029	2,048	13.7	\$1,111
4842	Specialized Freight Trucking <sup>5</sup>	12,076	14,065	1,989	16.5	\$2,326
4883	Support Activities for Water Transportation	9,510	11,225	1,715	18.0	\$1,082
4884	Support Activities for Road Transportation	2,467	2,998	531	21.5	\$1,182
4885	Freight Transportation Arrangement	10,277	13,243	2,966	28.9	\$1,603
4889	Other Support Activities for Transportation	1,576	1,829	253	16.1	\$3,860
4931	Warehousing and Storage	17,835	21,178	3,343	18.7	\$940
	<b>Finance &amp; Insurance</b>					
5222	Nondepository Credit Intermediation	11,062	13,386	2,324	21.0	\$2,261
5242	Agencies, Brokerages, and Other Insurance Related Activities	20,937	23,117	2,180	10.4	\$1,825
5313	Activities Related to Real Estate <sup>6</sup>	19,607	22,623	3,016	15.4	\$1,236
	<b>Professional &amp; Business Services</b>					
5412	Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, and Payroll Services	24,732	28,871	4,139	16.7	\$1,528
5413	Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services	67,870	82,409	14,539	21.4	\$2,186

NAICS	Industry Title	Employment Growth				1st Qtr 2019 Avg. Weekly Wages <sup>3</sup>
		Annual Averages 2018	2028	Net Change	Percent Change	
5415	Computer Systems Design and Related Services	29,050	31,075	2,025	7.0	\$2,235
5416	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	37,668	60,611	22,943	60.9	\$2,323
5419	Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	18,089	21,037	2,948	16.3	\$1,319
5511	Management of Companies and Enterprises	45,593	54,414	8,821	19.3	\$4,910
5611	Office Administrative Services	23,639	31,892	8,253	34.9	\$2,720
<b>Education &amp; Health Services</b>						
6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools <sup>4</sup>	205,003	228,146	23,143	11.3	\$861
6113	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools <sup>4</sup>	59,689	60,654	965	1.6	\$1,462
6211	Offices of Physicians	51,539	63,936	12,397	24.1	\$1,681
6212	Offices of Dentists	18,254	23,243	4,989	27.3	\$913
6214	Outpatient Care Centers	14,822	24,089	9,267	62.5	\$1,352
6215	Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories	6,517	8,354	1,837	28.2	\$1,095
6221	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	89,049	103,187	14,138	15.9	\$1,329
6223	Specialty (except Psychiatric and Substance Abuse) Hospitals	23,974	28,109	4,135	17.2	\$1,822

#### Notes

1. Criteria used to identify the targeted industries:

Industries with a projected employment growth of at least 1,801 new jobs, the average net change across all 4-digit NAICS industries for the period 2018-2028

Industries with projected employment growth rate greater than or equal to the average rate for all industries of 14.2% for the period 2018-2028

Industries with an average weekly wage of at least \$1,044 per week derived the OES 2019 average hourly wage for all occupations converted to a weekly rate

Industries meeting at two of three criteria above and present on the previous targeted industry list

2. Absolute changes do not represent total demand for labor because they do not reflect demand due to replacements, attrition, turnover, etc.

3. Employment and average weekly wage information is from the first quarter 2019 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

4. Industry not fully meeting primary or secondary criteria but projected to grow and retained due to need for representation of the 2-digit parent sector

5. Projection data provided by third-party source EMSI

6. Projection data provided by third-party source Chmura Economics JobsEQ

7. All other projection data provided by Texas Workforce Commission - LMCI

Authorized by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board: **February 2, 2021**

Industries on Previous List and Not Currently Targeted due to Below-average Growth or Projected Decline over 2018-2028 <sup>7</sup>						
NAICS	Industry Title	Employment Growth				1st Qtr 2019 Avg. Weekly Wages <sup>3</sup>
		Annual Averages 2018	2028	Net Change	Percent Change	
2383	Building Finishing Contractors	21,045	23,039	1,994	9.5	\$1,029
3329	Other Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	13,397	13,765	368	2.7	\$1,518
4881	Support Activities for Air Transportation	4,662	5,214	552	11.8	\$1,235
5239	Other Financial Investment Activities	11,613	13,087	1,474	12.7	\$4,238
2111	Oil and Gas Extraction	36,285	31,129	-5,156	-14.2	\$6,888
3241	Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	9,995	9,491	-504	-5.0	\$4,176
3323	Architectural and Structural Metals Manufacturing	14,394	13,509	-885	-6.2	\$1,207
4882	Support Activities for Rail Transportation	2,169	2,081	-88	-4.1	\$1,160
8113	Commercial & Industrial Mach. & Equip. Repair (ex. Auto & Electronics)	11,443	10,697	-746	-6.5	\$1,694

#### Notes

7. Industries shown for informational purposes only in recognition of their historical and continued importance to the regional economy

## In-Demand Occupations List

SOC	Occupation Title	Employment Growth				Annual Openings				Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Median Hourly Wage 2019
		Annual Averages		Net Change	Percent Change	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings		
		2018	2028								
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	3,266,717	3,729,008	462,291	14.2	149,827	248,630	46,229	444,686	-	\$19.44
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	92,527	104,664	12,137	13.1	5,666	8,736	1,214	15,616	No formal credential	\$11.23
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Incl. Fast Food	91,077	114,115	23,038	25.3	8,180	10,089	2,304	20,573	No formal credential	\$9.70
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	79,587	83,282	3,695	4.6	4,552	5,195	370	10,117	High school diploma	\$18.16
41-2011	Cashiers	65,677	68,067	2,390	3.6	5,968	6,646	239	12,853	No formal credential	\$10.87
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	58,354	66,665	8,311	14.2	4,338	7,660	831	12,829	No formal credential	\$9.26
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	58,344	61,248	2,904	5.0	2,871	5,098	290	8,259	High school diploma	\$16.02
29-1141	Registered Nurses	54,969	67,597	12,628	23.0	1,701	1,572	1,263	4,536	Bachelor's	\$38.67
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	52,842	62,359	9,517	18.0	1,208	3,794	952	5,954	Bachelor's	\$50.84
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	50,990	58,113	7,123	14.0	2,464	5,113	712	8,289	No formal credential	\$13.35
43-6014	Secretaries and Admin. Assistants, Ex. Legal, Medical, and Exec.	46,255	44,930	-1,325	-2.9	2,337	2,767	-132	4,972	High school diploma	\$17.98
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Ex. Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	44,783	50,877	6,094	13.6	2,925	3,374	609	6,908	No formal credential	\$11.31
47-2061	Construction Laborers	44,283	52,830	8,547	19.3	1,624	3,777	855	6,256	No formal credential	\$16.52
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	41,797	47,924	6,127	14.7	1,847	3,254	613	5,714	Postsecondary nondegree	\$21.41
43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	41,485	46,348	4,863	11.7	2,223	3,623	486	6,332	High school diploma	\$13.10
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	39,296	61,660	22,364	56.9	3,730	3,306	2,236	9,272	High school diploma	\$9.42
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	36,417	42,291	5,874	16.1	1,110	2,558	587	4,255	Bachelor's	\$36.49
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	35,869	38,298	2,429	6.8	2,256	2,064	243	4,563	Some college, no degree	\$21.03
41-4012	Sales Reps., Wholesale and Mfg., Ex. Tech. and Scientific Products	31,781	37,553	5,772	18.2	1,055	2,582	577	4,214	High school diploma	\$32.95
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	31,235	34,311	3,076	9.8	1,133	2,470	308	3,911	High school diploma	\$21.36
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Ex. Special Education	31,123	35,012	3,889	12.5	1,029	1,410	389	2,828	Bachelor's	\$28.01
41-3099	Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	30,481	36,191	5,710	18.7	984	3,237	571	4,792	High school diploma	\$25.56
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Ex. Special and CTE	29,479	33,230	3,751	12.7	871	1,325	375	2,571	Bachelor's	\$28.86
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	29,387	31,498	2,111	7.2	1,142	2,048	211	3,401	High school diploma	\$27.19
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	28,402	32,113	3,711	13.1	1,061	1,872	371	3,304	High school diploma	\$18.62
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	27,964	36,578	8,614	30.8	1,713	2,852	861	5,426	No formal credential	\$12.45
33-9032	Security Guards	26,925	30,620	3,695	13.7	1,468	2,236	370	4,074	High school diploma	\$13.24
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	26,704	29,487	2,783	10.4	1,988	1,795	278	4,061	No formal credential	\$10.61
47-1011	Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers	24,727	29,013	4,286	17.3	800	1,992	429	3,221	High school diploma	\$30.68
SOC	Occupation Title	Employment Growth				Annual Openings				Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Median Hourly Wage 2019
		Annual Averages 2018	2028	Net Change	Percent Change	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings		
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	23,741	30,099	6,358	26.8	1,380	1,634	636	3,650	High school diploma	\$16.76
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	22,458	26,074	3,616	16.1	659	1,670	362	2,691	Bachelor's	\$37.62
25-9041	Teacher Assistants	21,229	24,162	2,933	13.8	1,204	1,187	293	2,684	Some college, no degree	\$10.51
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	21,061	24,251	3,190	15.1	928	2,006	319	3,253	No formal credential	\$13.68
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	21,031	21,824	793	3.8	1,332	796	79	2,207	High school diploma	\$32.28
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	20,543	24,438	3,895	19.0	980	2,454	390	3,824	High school diploma	\$16.65
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	19,773	22,955	3,182	16.1	547	1,794	318	2,659	High school diploma	\$23.02
39-9011	Childcare Workers	19,554	21,896	2,342	12.0	1,532	1,560	234	3,326	High school diploma	\$10.69
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	19,210	22,310	3,100	16.1	1,116	1,210	310	2,636	Postsecondary nondegree	\$13.11
47-2111	Electricians	19,193	22,696	3,503	18.3	643	1,784	350	2,777	High school diploma	\$27.48
47-2031	Carpenters	18,890	22,127	3,237	17.1	641	1,481	324	2,446	High school diploma	\$21.10
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	18,453	21,358	2,905	15.7	596	1,643	290	2,529	No formal credential	\$17.26
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	18,327	20,106	1,779	9.7	1,119	1,463	178	2,760	High school diploma	\$13.31
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	17,916	17,054	-862	-4.8	694	1,460	-86	2,068	High school diploma	\$20.34
25-3098	Substitute Teachers	17,399	19,648	2,249	12.9	1,070	1,042	225	2,337	Info not available	-
31-1011	Home Health Aides	16,598	23,650	7,052	42.5	1,082	1,173	705	2,960	High school diploma	\$9.42
53-3033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	16,410	18,870	2,460	15.0	726	1,279	246	2,251	High school diploma	\$17.52
11-9021	Construction Managers	16,393	19,110	2,717	16.6	373	904	272	1,549	Bachelor's	\$43.73
23-1011	Lawyers	16,135	18,089	1,954	12.1	367	453	195	1,015	Doctoral or professional	\$64.94
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	15,726	17,512	1,786	11.4	399	767	179	1,345	High school diploma	\$30.86
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	15,564	17,328	1,764	11.3	550	1,083	176	1,809	High school diploma	\$17.04
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	14,986	18,642	3,656	24.4	571	710	366	1,647	Postsecondary nondegree	\$23.06
51-2098	Assemblers and fabricators, all other, Incl. team assemblers	14,778	14,810	32	0.2	606	1,117	3	1,726	Info not available	\$14.76
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	14,694	16,483	1,789	12.2	495	1,098	179	1,772	High school diploma	\$31.96
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	14,603	17,258	2,655	18.2	1,168	1,588	266	3,022	No formal credential	\$11.78
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Ex. Special and CTE	14,403	16,242	1,839	12.8	477	654	184	1,315	Bachelor's	\$28.04
15-1121	Computer Systems Analysts	14,401	15,635	1,234	8.6	286	799	123	1,208	Bachelor's	\$51.17
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	14,158	16,572	2,414	17.1	213	869	241	1,323	Bachelor's	\$50.70
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	14,149	16,414	2,265	16.0	281	972	226	1,479	Some college, no degree	\$25.62
31-9092	Medical Assistants	13,569	17,465	3,896	28.7	606	1,103	390	2,099	Postsecondary nondegree	\$16.27

SOC	Occupation Title	Employment Growth				Annual Openings				Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Median Hourly Wage 2019
		Annual Averages		Net	Percent	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings		
		2018	2028	Change	Change						
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents	13,565	15,498	1,933	14.2	657	724	193	1,574	High school diploma	\$32.66
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	13,360	15,940	2,580	19.3	428	1,197	258	1,883	High school diploma	\$26.81
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	13,275	14,303	1,028	7.7	374	968	103	1,445	Postsecondary nondegree	\$20.43
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	12,643	14,178	1,535	12.1	421	808	154	1,383	High school diploma	\$29.74
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	12,596	14,424	1,828	14.5	361	994	183	1,538	Bachelor's	\$30.78
47-2141	Painters, Construction and Maintenance	12,570	14,130	1,560	12.4	462	890	156	1,508	No formal credential	\$17.11
35-3011	Bartenders	12,269	14,256	1,987	16.2	620	1,713	199	2,532	No formal credential	\$10.99
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	12,167	14,193	2,026	16.7	800	842	203	1,845	Postsecondary nondegree	\$10.64
51-9198	Helpers—Production Workers	11,931	14,880	2,949	24.7	713	1,263	295	2,271	High school diploma	\$14.25
41-2021	Counter and Rental Clerks	11,801	13,132	1,331	11.3	631	968	133	1,732	No formal credential	\$14.66
13-1111	Management Analysts	11,755	14,660	2,905	24.7	410	834	290	1,534	Bachelor's	\$47.15
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Ex. Special Education	11,747	13,248	1,501	12.8	495	760	150	1,405	Associate's degree	\$14.78
41-3031	Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	11,696	13,265	1,569	13.4	322	860	157	1,339	Bachelor's	\$24.62
53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	11,562	12,048	486	4.2	486	856	49	1,391	High school diploma	\$11.79
11-3031	Financial Managers	11,513	14,708	3,195	27.8	284	727	320	1,331	Bachelor's	\$65.42
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	11,355	12,817	1,462	12.9	378	730	146	1,254	High school diploma	\$32.66
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	11,260	13,324	2,064	18.3	417	1,000	206	1,623	High school diploma	\$22.18
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	11,150	11,221	71	0.6	426	561	7	994	High school diploma	\$20.57
17-2171	Petroleum Engineers	11,123	12,297	1,174	10.6	194	654	117	965	Bachelor's	\$79.92
51-4041	Machinists	11,033	13,232	2,199	19.9	403	829	220	1,452	High school diploma	\$22.38
11-9199	Managers, All Other	10,478	12,095	1,617	15.4	286	570	162	1,018	Bachelor's	\$59.79
35-3022	Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	10,228	11,299	1,071	10.5	1,212	1,124	107	2,443	No formal credential	\$9.70
17-2051	Civil Engineers	9,842	11,817	1,975	20.1	221	622	198	1,041	Bachelor's	\$46.51
53-7061	Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	9,808	11,158	1,350	13.8	522	1,004	135	1,661	No formal credential	\$11.84
43-3021	Billing and Posting Clerks	9,761	11,708	1,947	19.9	442	724	195	1,361	High school diploma	\$19.56
41-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers	9,748	10,697	949	9.7	331	646	95	1,072	High school diploma	\$36.89
35-9011	Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers	9,743	11,373	1,630	16.7	870	934	163	1,967	No formal credential	\$9.60
43-3071	Tellers	9,737	9,814	77	0.8	479	699	8	1,186	High school diploma	\$14.43
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	9,631	8,205	-1,426	-14.8	457	541	-143	855	High school diploma	\$29.76
13-2051	Financial Analysts	9,440	10,732	1,292	13.7	194	662	129	985	Bachelor's	\$41.86

SOC	Occupation Title	Employment Growth				Annual Openings				Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Median Hourly Wage 2019
		Annual Averages		Net	Percent	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings		
		2018	2028	Change	Change						
43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	9,345	10,822	1,477	15.8	334	716	148	1,198	High school diploma	\$23.61
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	9,289	10,987	1,698	18.3	293	524	170	987	High school diploma	\$17.11
53-1048	First-line sprs. Transport. and Material Moving Workers, Ex. Aircraft	9,193	10,780	1,587	17.3	317	749	159	1,225	Info not available	\$25.90
35-9021	Dishwashers	8,853	9,664	811	9.2	689	780	81	1,550	No formal credential	\$10.72
35-9031	Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	8,847	10,496	1,649	18.6	1,080	1,135	165	2,380	No formal credential	\$10.01
53-3022	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	8,701	9,484	783	9.0	706	442	78	1,226	High school diploma	\$12.54
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	8,603	7,496	-1,107	-12.9	320	995	-111	1,204	No formal credential	\$11.32
47-5071	Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	8,367	9,641	1,274	15.2	256	932	127	1,315	No formal credential	\$18.09
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	8,250	9,674	1,424	17.3	167	439	142	748	Bachelor's	\$47.79
53-7064	Packers and Packers, Hand	8,012	8,593	581	7.3	497	700	58	1,255	No formal credential	\$10.74
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	7,908	10,114	2,206	27.9	221	493	221	935	Bachelor's	\$51.01
45-2093	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	7,871	6,854	-1,017	-12.9	292	910	-102	1,100	No formal credential	\$13.17
11-2022	Sales Managers	7,767	9,073	1,306	16.8	171	576	131	878	Bachelor's	\$63.56
21-2011	Clergy	7,664	8,083	419	5.5	344	508	42	894	Bachelor's	\$22.48
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	7,590	8,652	1,062	14.0	226	525	106	857	High school diploma	\$24.31
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents	7,587	8,493	906	11.9	296	485	91	872	High school diploma	\$23.01
49-9021	HVAC Mechanics and Installers	7,491	8,958	1,467	19.6	224	579	147	950	Postsecondary nondegree	\$23.00
31-9091	Dental Assistants	7,360	9,297	1,937	26.3	386	547	194	1,127	Postsecondary nondegree	\$17.31
51-9011	Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	7,111	7,138	27	0.4	181	637	3	821	High school diploma	\$30.97
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	7,021	8,938	1,917	27.3	188	628	192	1,008	Bachelor's	\$31.99
41-4011	Sales Repts., Wholesale and Mfg., Technical and Scientific Products	6,981	8,202	1,221	17.5	231	565	122	918	Bachelor's	\$37.71
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	6,782	6,698	-84	-1.2	358	596	-8	946	No formal credential	\$10.19
53-3041	Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs	6,649	9,388	2,739	41.2	431	438	274	1,143	No formal credential	\$12.54
27-3031	Public Relations Specialists	6,634	7,529	895	13.5	209	526	90	825	Bachelor's	\$28.80
11-3011	Administrative Services Managers	6,538	7,691	1,153	17.6	196	397	115	708	Bachelor's	\$44.38
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	6,499	7,599	1,100	16.9	235	510	110	855	Associate's degree	\$22.85
13-1041	Compliance Officers	6,452	7,459	1,007	15.6	194	416	101	711	Bachelor's	\$40.82
47-5013	Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, and Mining	6,429	7,295	866	13.5	191	776	87	1,054	No formal credential	\$20.79
21-1012	Educational, Guidance, School, and Vocational Counselors	6,230	7,149	919	14.8	217	468	92	777	Master's	\$31.87
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Ex. Engines	6,151	7,383	1,232	20.0	212	462	123	797	High school diploma	\$23.71

SOC	Occupation Title	Employment Growth				Annual Openings				Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Median Hourly Wage 2019
		Annual Averages		Net	Percent	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings		
		2018	2028	Change	Change						
43-3011	Bill and Account Collectors	6,137	6,421	284	4.6	244	506	28	778	High school diploma	\$16.87
13-1151	Training and Development Specialists	6,002	7,220	1,218	20.3	197	512	122	831	Bachelor's	\$30.87
39-2021	Nonfarm Animal Caretakers	5,719	7,419	1,700	29.7	456	607	170	1,233	High school diploma	\$9.80
39-9032	Recreation Workers	5,550	6,736	1,186	21.4	366	654	119	1,139	High school diploma	\$11.85
39-9031	Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	5,541	6,812	1,271	22.9	368	658	127	1,153	High school diploma	\$18.29
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	5,484	5,937	453	8.3	303	505	45	853	No formal credential	\$11.56
47-2051	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	5,364	6,543	1,179	22.0	174	451	118	743	No formal credential	\$17.71
25-3021	Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	5,328	6,730	1,402	26.3	348	339	140	827	High school diploma	\$27.17
25-3097	Teachers and Instructors, All Other, Ex. Substitute Teachers	5,059	6,347	1,288	25.5	329	321	129	779	Info not available	\$13.78
43-4081	Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	5,059	5,154	95	1.9	280	585	10	875	High school diploma	\$10.93
53-2031	Flight Attendants	4,755	5,570	815	17.1	2,664	3,074	82	6,552	High school diploma	\$25.87
33-9092	Lifeguards, Ski Patrol, and Other Recreational Protective Service	3,900	4,552	652	16.7	556	464	65	1,085	No formal credential	\$9.78
39-3091	Amusement and Recreation Attendants	3,698	4,137	439	11.9	417	486	44	947	No formal credential	\$9.53
29-2011	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technologists	3,459	4,142	683	19.7	1,055	1,318	68	3,056	Bachelor's	\$25.53
29-2012	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians	3,330	3,983	653	19.6	1,015	1,269	65	2,936	Bachelor's	\$25.53
27-3091	Interpreters & Translators	2,007	2,565	558	27.8	991	1,261	56	2,810	Bachelor's	\$24.00

# Notes

- Where-the-jobs-are included occupations with the largest number of employment opportunities for Gulf Coast residents based on total employment in 2018 irrespective of wages, educational requirements, or projected growth.
- Occupations shown are limited to those with projected total annual job openings of 708 or more per year (the average number of openings across all occupations in the region over period of 2018-2028). Note that the majority of openings are likely to be the result of workers switching to new careers (transfers) thereby creating vacancies rather than openings due to retirements (exits) or new jobs created.
- Some wage and projection data were provided by third-party data sources EMSI and JobSEQ.
- All other data provided by Texas Workforce Commission - LWCI

Authorized for use by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board: February 2, 2021



## High-Skill, High-Growth List

SOC	Occupation Title	Employment Growth				Annual Openings				Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Work Experience in a Related Occupation	Typical On-the-job Training	Median Hourly Wage 2019
		Annual Averages 2018	2028	Net Change	Percent Change	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings				
<b>13-0000</b>	<b>Business &amp; Financial Operations</b>												
13-1051	Cost Estimators	5,145	6,102	957	18.6	142	412	96	650	Bachelor's	None	Moderate	\$35.74
13-1081	Logisticians	4,172	4,969	797	19.1	107	328	80	515	Bachelor's	None	None	\$37.96
13-1111	Management Analysts	11,755	14,660	2,905	24.7	410	834	290	1,534	Bachelor's	Less than 5 years	None	\$47.15
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	7,021	8,938	1,917	27.3	188	628	192	1,008	Bachelor's	None	None	\$31.99
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	36,417	42,291	5,874	16.1	1,110	2,558	587	4,255	Bachelor's	None	None	\$36.49
13-2082	Tax Preparers	1,554	1,841	287	18.5	84	110	29	223	High school diploma	None	Moderate	\$23.84
<b>15-0000</b>	<b>Computer and Mathematical</b>												
15-1121	Computer Systems Analysts	14,401	15,635	1,234	8.6	286	799	123	1,208	Bachelor's	None	None	\$51.17
15-1122	Information Security Analysts	1,761	2,308	547	31.1	29	116	55	200	Bachelor's	Less than 5 years	None	\$50.31
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	14,158	16,572	2,414	17.1	213	869	241	1,323	Bachelor's	None	None	\$50.70
15-1133	Software Developers, Systems Software	5,540	6,154	614	11.1	81	331	61	473	Bachelor's	None	None	\$50.70
15-1141	Database Administrators	2,316	2,627	311	13.4	48	128	31	207	Bachelor's	None	None	\$46.87
15-1142	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	8,030	8,786	756	9.4	141	446	76	663	Bachelor's	None	None	\$44.59
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	14,149	16,414	2,265	16.0	281	972	226	1,479	Some college, no degree	None	None	\$25.62
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	2,246	3,102	856	38.1	62	112	86	260	Bachelor's	None	None	\$37.29
<b>17-0000</b>	<b>Architecture and Engineering<sup>2</sup></b>												
17-1011	Architects, Ex. Landscape and Naval	2,633	3,272	639	24.3	70	156	64	290	Bachelor's	None	Intern/Residency	\$39.68
17-1022	Surveyors	1,529	1,838	309	20.2	43	80	31	154	Bachelor's	None	Intern/Residency	\$32.32
17-2011	Aerospace Engineers	2,400	2,653	253	10.5	54	109	25	188	Bachelor's	None	None	\$64.15
17-2031	Biomedical Engineers	222	227	5	2.3	5	11	0	16	Bachelor's	None	None	\$45.64
17-2041	Chemical Engineers	4,534	5,341	807	17.8	103	207	81	391	Bachelor's	None	None	\$68.66
17-2051	Civil Engineers	9,842	11,817	1,975	20.1	221	622	198	1,041	Bachelor's	None	None	\$46.51
17-2071	Electrical Engineers	4,058	4,848	790	19.5	90	204	79	373	Bachelor's	None	None	\$50.12
17-2072	Electronics Engineers, Ex. Computer	2,685	2,958	273	10.2	57	129	27	213	Bachelor's	None	None	\$52.49
17-2081	Environmental Engineers	1,212	1,479	267	22.0	36	65	27	128	Bachelor's	None	None	\$50.06
17-2111	Health and Safety Engineers, Ex. Mining Safety	1,351	1,503	152	11.3	29	69	15	113	Bachelor's	None	None	\$46.84
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	4,966	5,970	1,004	20.2	110	263	100	473	Bachelor's	None	None	\$58.03
17-2121	Marine Engineers and Naval Architects	531	681	150	28.2	10	26	15	51	Bachelor's	None	None	\$46.41

SOC	Occupation Title	Employment Growth				Annual Openings				Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Work Experience in a Related Occupation	Typical On-the-job Training	Median Hourly Wage 2019
		Annual Averages 2018	2028	Net Change	Percent Change	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings				
17-2131	Materials Engineers	937	1,090	153	16.3	21	42	15	78	Bachelor's	None	None	\$49.12
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	8,250	9,674	1,424	17.3	167	439	142	748	Bachelor's	None	None	\$47.79
17-2151	Mining and Geological Engs., Incl. Mining Safety Engs.	170	214	44	25.9	4	11	4	19	Bachelor's	None	None	\$28.55
17-2171	Petroleum Engineers <sup>4</sup>	11,123	12,297	1,174	10.6	194	654	117	965	Bachelor's	None	None	\$79.92
17-3011	Architectural and Civil Drafters	3,305	3,867	562	17.0	119	250	56	425	Associate's	None	None	\$28.09
17-3013	Mechanical Drafters	2,032	2,167	135	6.6	70	146	14	230	Associate's	None	None	\$29.49
17-3022	Civil Engineering Technicians	2,509	2,999	490	19.5	91	177	49	317	Associate's	None	None	\$23.81
17-3023	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technicians	3,069	3,527	458	14.9	109	212	46	367	Associate's	None	None	\$33.84
17-3027	Mechanical Engineering Technicians	1,443	1,688	245	17.0	52	101	24	177	Associate's	None	None	\$32.60
17-3031	Surveying and Mapping Technicians	2,727	3,265	538	19.7	84	268	54	406	High school diploma	None	Moderate	\$20.61
<b>19-0000</b>	<b>Life, Physical, and Social Science</b>												
19-2031	Chemists	2,014	2,302	288	14.3	35	159	29	223	Bachelor's	None	None	\$41.60
19-2042	Geoscientists, Ex. Hydrologists and Geographers <sup>4</sup>	5,025	5,431	406	8.1	96	468	41	605	Bachelor's	None	None	\$74.24
19-3031	Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists	2,236	2,611	375	16.8	54	116	38	208	Doctoral or professional	None	Intern/Residency	\$34.22
19-4041	Geological and Petroleum Technicians	2,755	3,042	287	10.4	36	253	29	318	Associate's	None	Moderate	\$25.64
<b>21-0000</b>	<b>Community and Social Service</b>												
21-1012	Ed., Guidance, School, and Vocational Counselors	6,230	7,149	919	14.8	217	468	92	777	Master's	None	None	\$31.87
21-1022	Healthcare Social Workers	2,299	2,897	598	26.0	77	177	60	314	Master's	None	Intern/Residency	\$30.83
<b>23-0000</b>	<b>Legal</b>												
23-1011	Lawyers <sup>5</sup>	16,135	18,089	1,954	12.1	367	453	195	1,015	Doctoral or professional	None	None	\$64.94
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	6,499	7,599	1,100	16.9	235	510	110	855	Associate's	None	None	\$22.85
<b>25-0000</b>	<b>Education, Training, and Library<sup>6</sup></b>												
25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	5,979	7,008	1,029	17.2	239	298	103	640	Doctoral or professional	Less than 5 years	None	\$81.61
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Ex. Special Education <sup>5</sup>	11,747	13,248	1,501	12.8	495	760	150	1,405	Associate's	None	None	\$14.78
25-2012	Kindergarten Teachers, Ex. Special Education	3,732	4,212	480	12.9	157	241	48	446	Bachelor's	None	None	\$27.88
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Ex. Special Education	31,123	35,012	3,889	12.5	1,029	1,410	389	2,828	Bachelor's	None	None	\$28.01

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		Annual Averages 2018	2028	Net Change	Percent Change	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings				
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Ex. Special and CTE	14,403	16,242	1,839	12.8	477	654	184	1,315	Bachelor's	None	None	\$28.04
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Ex. Special and CTE	29,479	33,230	3,751	12.7	871	1,325	375	2,571	Bachelor's	None	None	\$28.86
25-2032	Career/Technical Education Teachers, Secondary School	2,161	2,408	247	11.4	64	97	25	186	Bachelor's	Less than 5 years	None	\$29.07
25-2051	Special Education Teachers, Preschool	256	300	44	17.2	91	116	4	251	Bachelor's	None	None	\$22.15
25-2052	Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elem.	3,101	3,471	370	11.9	109	138	37	284	Bachelor's	None	None	\$28.36
25-2053	Special Education Teachers, Middle School	1,693	1,895	202	11.9	59	76	20	155	Bachelor's	None	None	\$28.23
25-2054	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	3,525	3,951	426	12.1	124	157	43	324	Bachelor's	None	None	\$28.79
25-4021	Librarians	2,030	2,235	205	10.1	115	98	20	233	Master's	None	None	\$29.66
25-9031	Instructional Coordinators	3,795	4,364	569	15.0	170	209	57	436	Master's	5 years or more	None	\$32.71
27-0000	<b>Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media</b>												
27-3091	Interpreters & Translators	2,007	2,565	558	27.8	991	1,261	56	2,810	Bachelor's	None	None	\$24.00
29-0000	<b>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical<sup>3</sup></b>												
29-1011	Chiropractors	644	681	37	5.7	12	6	4	22	Doctoral or professional	None	None	\$45.14
29-1021	Dentists, General	2,675	3,211	536	20.0	64	25	54	143	Doctoral or professional	None	None	\$71.77
29-1041	Optometrists	920	1,010	90	9.8	18	11	9	38	Doctoral or professional	None	None	\$53.96
29-1061	Anesthesiologists	1,491	1,695	204	13.7	26	20	20	66	Doctoral or professional	None	Intern/Residency	\$132.26
29-1063	Internists, General	1,450	1,575	125	8.6	25	19	12	56	Doctoral or professional	None	Intern/Residency	\$79.57
29-1064	Obstetricians and Gynecologists	339	359	20	5.9	6	4	2	12	Doctoral or professional	None	Intern/Residency	\$86.78
29-1065	Pediatricians, General	819	916	97	11.8	14	11	10	35	Doctoral or professional	None	Intern/Residency	\$74.01
29-1066	Psychiatrists	439	550	111	25.3	78	63	11	252	Doctoral or professional	None	Intern/Residency	\$61.73
29-1067	Surgeons	1,213	1,269	56	4.6	20	16	6	42	Doctoral or professional	None	Intern/Residency	\$124.62
29-1071	Physician Assistants	2,045	2,809	764	37.4	37	101	76	214	Master's	None	None	\$56.44
29-1081	Podiatrists	133	134	1	0.8	3	4	0	7	Doctoral or professional	None	Intern/Residency	\$75.38
29-1122	Occupational Therapists <sup>7</sup>	1,950	2,329	379	19.4	48	72	38	158	Master's	None	None	\$41.38
29-1123	Physical Therapists	3,252	4,054	802	24.7	67	86	80	233	Doctoral or professional	None	None	\$42.70
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	2,606	3,427	821	31.5	83	76	82	241	Associate's	None	None	\$28.94
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	2,876	3,820	944	32.8	66	113	94	273	Master's	None	Intern/Residency	\$33.55
29-1141	Registered Nurses	54,969	67,597	12,628	23.0	1,701	1,572	1,263	4,536	Bachelor's	None	None	\$38.67
29-1151	Nurse Anesthetists	2,067	2,656	589	28.5	37	80	59	176	Master's	None	None	\$80.86
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	3,108	4,204	1,096	35.3	72	123	110	305	Master's	None	None	\$57.30

SOC	Occupation Title	Employment Growth				Annual Openings				Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Work Experience in a Related Occupation	Typical On-the-job Training	Median Hourly Wage 2019
		Annual Averages 2018	2028	Net Change	Percent Change	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings				
29-1215	Family and General Practitioners	2,472	2,972	500	20.2	45	35	50	130	Doctoral or professional	None	Intern/Residency	\$101.06
29-2011	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technologists	3,459	4,142	683	19.7	1,055	1,318	68	3,056	Bachelor's	None	None	\$25.53
29-2012	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians	3,330	3,983	653	19.6	1,015	1,269	65	2,936	Bachelor's	None	None	\$25.53
29-2021	Dental Hygienists	2,898	3,665	767	26.5	137	83	77	297	Associate's	None	None	\$36.04
29-2031	Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	1,655	1,927	272	16.4	44	54	27	125	Associate's	None	None	\$25.14
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1,573	2,049	476	30.3	45	55	48	148	Associate's	None	None	\$34.83
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists	4,446	5,552	1,106	24.9	123	151	111	385	Associate's	None	None	\$31.43
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	3,009	3,689	680	22.6	97	173	68	338	Postsecondary nondegree	None	None	\$25.98
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	14,986	18,642	3,656	24.4	571	710	366	1,647	Postsecondary nondegree	None	None	\$23.06
29-2071	Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	4,099	4,994	895	21.8	134	155	90	379	Postsecondary nondegree	None	None	\$20.49
29-9011	Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	4,672	5,514	842	18.0	117	169	84	370	Bachelor's	None	None	\$36.84
41-0000	<b>Sales and Related</b>												
41-3021	Insurance Sales Agents	7,587	8,493	906	11.9	296	485	91	872	High school diploma	None	Moderate	\$23.01
41-9031	Sales Engineers	3,181	3,926	745	23.4	84	309	74	467	Bachelor's	None	Moderate	\$54.73
43-0000	<b>Office and Administrative Support</b>												
43-3021	Billing and Posting Clerks	9,761	11,708	1,947	19.9	442	724	195	1,361	High school diploma	None	Moderate	\$19.56
43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	9,345	10,822	1,477	15.8	334	716	148	1,198	High school diploma	None	Moderate	\$23.61
47-0000	<b>Construction and Extraction</b>												
47-1011	Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers	24,727	29,013	4,286	17.3	800	1,992	429	3,221	High school diploma	5 years or more	None	\$30.68
47-2031	Carpenters	18,890	22,127	3,237	17.1	641	1,481	324	2,446	High school diploma	None	Apprenticeship	\$21.10
47-2073	Other Construction Equipment Operators	11,260	13,324	2,064	18.3	417	1,000	206	1,623	High school diploma	None	Moderate	\$22.18
47-2111	Electricians	19,193	22,696	3,503	18.3	643	1,784	350	2,777	High school diploma	None	Apprenticeship	\$27.48
47-2132	Insulation Workers, Mechanical <sup>5</sup>	1,430	1,607	177	12.4	36	138	18	192	High school diploma	None	Apprenticeship	\$24.51
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	13,360	15,940	2,580	19.3	428	1,197	258	1,883	High school diploma	None	Apprenticeship	\$26.81
47-2171	Reinforcing Iron and Rebar Workers	1,726	2,192	466	27.0	44	186	47	277	High school diploma	None	Apprenticeship	\$25.25
47-2211	Sheet Metal Workers	2,834	3,391	557	19.7	92	245	56	393	High school diploma	None	Apprenticeship	\$21.63
47-2221	Structural Iron and Steel Workers	3,169	3,858	689	21.7	98	317	69	484	High school diploma	None	Apprenticeship	\$22.11
47-4011	Construction and Building Inspectors	3,851	4,650	799	20.7	234	293	80	607	High school diploma	5 years or more	Moderate	\$31.97

SOC	Occupation Title	Employment Growth				Annual Openings				Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Work Experience in a Related Occupation	Typical On-the-job Training	Median Hourly Wage 2019
		Annual Averages 2018	2028	Net Change	Percent Change	Due to Exits from Workforce	Due to Transfers between Occupations	Due to New Job Growth	Total Openings				
47-5012	Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas <sup>8</sup>	2,841	3,253	412	14.5	85	345	41	471	No formal credential	None	Moderate	\$27.91
47-5013	Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, and Mining <sup>8</sup>	6,429	7,295	866	13.5	191	776	87	1,054	No formal credential	None	Moderate	\$20.79
<b>49-0000</b>	<b>Installation, Maintenance, and Repair</b>												
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists <sup>4</sup>	7,590	8,652	1,062	14.0	226	525	106	857	High school diploma	None	Long-term	\$24.31
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Ex. Engines	6,151	7,383	1,232	20.0	212	462	123	797	High school diploma	None	Long-term	\$23.71
49-9021	HVAC Mechanics and Installers	7,491	8,958	1,467	19.6	224	579	147	950	Postsecondary nondegree	None	Long-term	\$23.00
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics <sup>4</sup>	12,643	14,178	1,535	12.1	421	808	154	1,383	High school diploma	None	Long-term	\$29.74
49-9043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	2,296	2,670	374	16.3	93	131	37	261	High school diploma	None	Long-term	\$20.98
<b>51-0000</b>	<b>Production</b>												
51-4011	CNC Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic <sup>4</sup>	4,052	4,393	341	8.4	121	312	34	467	High school diploma	None	Moderate	\$19.69
51-4041	Machinists	11,033	13,232	2,199	19.9	403	829	220	1,452	High school diploma	None	Long-term	\$22.38
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	19,773	22,955	3,182	16.1	547	1,794	318	2,659	High school diploma	None	Moderate	\$23.02
51-8091	Chemical Plant and System Operators	3,485	3,568	83	2.4	84	308	8	400	High school diploma	None	Moderate	\$35.17
51-8093	Petrol. Pump System Oprs., Refinery Oprs., & Gaugers <sup>4</sup>	4,684	4,847	163	3.5	113	416	16	545	High school diploma	None	Moderate	\$37.98
<b>53-0000</b>	<b>Transportation and Material Moving</b>												
53-2031	Flight Attendants	4,755	5,570	815	17.1	2,664	3,074	82	6,552	High school diploma	Less than 5 years	Moderate	\$25.87
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	41,797	47,924	6,127	14.7	1,847	3,254	613	5,714	Postsecondary nondegree	None	Short-term	\$21.41
53-5021	Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	2,051	2,418	367	17.9	59	153	37	249	Postsecondary nondegree	Less than 5 years	None	\$35.38
53-7021	Crane and Tower Operators	1,880	2,223	343	18.2	64	175	34	273	High school diploma	Less than 5 years	Moderate	\$26.68

#### Notes

High-skill jobs targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board are those that offer the best employment opportunities for the region's residents now and in the immediate future.

1. Criteria used to identify the above occupations are as follows:

- The occupation must be found in one or more GCWB Targeted Industries.
- 50% or more of total occupational employment must be found in the GCWB list of Targeted Industries authorized on the date below
- Projected employment in 2028 greater than or equal to the median for all occupations in the region (≥ 1,797)
- Projected growth rate greater than or equal to the average of all occupations in the region (≥ 14.2%)
- Minimum education requirements of a postsecondary degree or certificate, moderate on-the-job training, long-term on-the-job training, apprenticeship, internship/residency or work experience in a related occupation
- Median hourly wages greater than or equal to the OES 2019 median wage for all occupations in the region (≥ \$19.44)
- Occupations found on previous High-skill High-growth Occupation List and which meet four of the five criteria immediately above have been retained

- 2. 17-20XX Engineers are treated collectively and subsequently meet size and growth criteria specified above.
- 3. 29-10XX Physicians are treated collectively and subsequently meet size and growth criteria specified above.
- 4. Occupations on the previous High-Skill High-Growth List and meeting most or all other criteria with the exception of 50% industry employment due to the exclusion the occupation's predominant industry from the Targeted Industry list have been retained.
- 5. Other occupations meeting some but not all of the above criteria have also been included based on the best regional labor market intelligence available. Employers can petition for the inclusion of additional as labor market conditions change.
- 6. Hourly wages were obtained by dividing the reported median annual wage by 2,080 hours. Note that actual per hour earnings are likely to differ as education-related occupations are typically compensated on a 9 or 10 month basis.
- 7. Labor market intelligence indicates that 29-1122 Occupational Therapists may in some cases require a doctoral degree at present or in the near-future while master's degrees continue to be the predominant type of education among completers of postsecondary programs in this field.
- 8. Occupations officially requiring no formal educationa credential of any kind and moderate on-the-job training included due to their importance to the oil and gas industry.
- 9. Some wage and projection data were provided by third-party data sources EMSI and Chmura Economics JobSEQ.
- 10. All other data provided by Texas Workforce Commission - LWC

Authorized for use by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board: **February 2, 2021**

### Labor Force Analysis and Trends

As of October 2020, the economic situation of the Houston metropolitan statistical area, which comprises the majority of the Gulf Coast WDA, had changed dramatically since our last compliance plan as the world deals with the coronavirus pandemic. As businesses implement necessary social distancing practices to contain the pandemic, the economy has suffered its worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. According to the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey of non-farm payroll counts, the Houston MSA shed 350,200 jobs in March and April representing a 10.9 percent decline. By October 2020 some 176,600 jobs, 50.3 percent, were recovered with payrolls still reflecting a loss of 151,600 jobs over the year, down 4.8 percent. The largest losses have been in the Leisure and Hospitality industry sector, down 45,800 jobs representing a 13.7 percent decline. Mining and Logging has been the hardest hit sector as the industry sector deals with low oil prices due to a collapse in demand, down 15,600 jobs or 19.6 percent over the year. Nonetheless, many industry sectors are experiencing job recovery with strongest improvements found in Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities, Professional and Business Services, and Retail Trade. Wholesale Trade and Educational and Health Services are two major industry sectors that continue to see losses worsen over recent months.

The Houston MSA (not-seasonally-adjusted) unemployment rate spiked to its highest ever at 14.3 percent in April 2020 due to the pandemic. Since then, it has been on a gradual decline standing at 7.7 percent in October 2020, up from 3.6 percent a year earlier. The number of individuals unemployed in Houston reached a peak of 463,790 in May but by October the number had fallen to 265,523, still more than doubling the number unemployed a year earlier. The Houston area unemployment rate exceed that of the state by only three-tenths of one percent entering the initial phases of the pandemic but by October it exceeded the state by a full percentage point as it deals with the additional repercussions of weak energy prices.

Based on the most current 2019 1-year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, educational attainment among Houston area residents age 25 and over was as follows:

- 15.4 percent possess less than a high school diploma
- 23.5 percent possess a high school diploma or equivalent
- 20.3 percent completed some college but no degree
- 7.5 percent possess an associate degree
- 21.3 percent possess a bachelor's degree
- 12.1 percent possess a postgraduate degree

In the Houston area among 70,347 individuals ages 20 to 64 with a disability, 19,139 (27.2 percent) were in the labor force of which 4,138 (21.6 percent) were unemployed according to 2019 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey.

According to 2019 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey among the 6.98 million residents in the Houston area for whom poverty status could be determined, 12.9 percent, were classified as living below the poverty line.

- The poverty rate among children under the age of 18 stood at 18.1 percent
- The poverty rate for seniors 65 and over stood at 9.8 percent
- The poverty rate of females stood at 14.4 percent compared to 11.4 percent among males
- Children under five years of age had the highest poverty rate of 19.7 percent among the age groups for which data were available
- Poverty rates by race and/or ethnicity ranged from a low of 5.9 percent to 18.3 percent
  - Poverty rate of those Not Hispanic or Latino White alone stood at 5.9 percent
  - Poverty rate of Asian alone stood at 8.4 percent
  - Poverty rate of two or more races stood at 11.3 percent
  - Poverty rate of American Indian and Alaska Native alone stood at 12.2 percent
  - Poverty rate for Black or African American Alone stood at 17.7 percent
  - Poverty rate of Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) stood at 18.3 percent

According to 2019 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey, an estimated 9.9 percent of households in the Houston area were receiving food stamps also known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). When considering household types, only 6.2 percent married-couple families were SNAP recipients while the rate increased to 15.4 percent among male householders with no wife present and 27.5 percent among female householders with no husband present. Among households below the poverty line, 34.8 percent were SNAP recipients while the remaining 65 percent of households below the poverty line did not receive SNAP benefits.

As a reflection of Houston's diversity, the 2019 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey indicate that 40.1 percent of the population age five and over speak another language at home other than English. The most common languages spoken by individuals that speak English less than "very well" were as follows:

- Spanish (43.3 percent)
- Vietnamese (60.0 percent)
- Chinese (47.5 percent)
- Arabic (37.6 percent)

These were also the most common languages spoken besides English regardless of reported proficiency in English-speaking ability.

Of the 5.2 million Houston area residents belonging to the civilian population age 18 and over, roughly 261,000 or 5 percent were veterans according to the 2019 1-year estimates from the American Community Survey. The largest group of veterans by period of service were those that served during the Vietnam War (30.4 percent) while the largest age group were those 35 to 54 years (32.4 percent). Educational attainment among veterans 25 and older proved relatively high with 72 percent in possession of some college or higher compared to 61 percent for non-veterans. These statistics were mirrored in the employment status of veterans age 18 to 64 as indicated by a slightly lower unemployment rate compared to non-veterans (4.6 percent vs. 3.4 percent) and a higher participation rate (77 percent vs. 81 percent). Accordingly, poverty rates for veterans were also lower than for non-veterans age 18 and over with 6 percent of veterans falling below the poverty line compared to 11 percent of non-veterans. Lastly, rates of disability were higher among veterans than non-veterans with 26 percent reporting a disability compared 11 percent for those who did not serve in the armed forces.

### Workforce Development Analysis

The Gulf Coast region is large at roughly 12,000 square miles and 7 million residents. Accordingly, the it hosts a robust educational system made up of 76 school districts, 10 community colleges, several four-year universities, and countless proprietary training entities. Our community colleges and community-based organizations provide a significant number of workforce training programs and continue to be awarded Skills Development Fund contracts.

The Board's strategy is to become better connected to stakeholders in the region. Stronger connections translate to our customers having more access to additional support to help them meet their needs and goals. For us, this means public dollars will go farther, and move the system closer to achieving its vision and goals.

The Board has the capacity to provide workforce development activities across our 13-county Houston Galveston area to meet our region's education and workforce needs. Through our partners, the Board coordinates activities, monitors, performance, provides expert workforce consulting to employers and schools, develops programs and initiatives to help target populations discover opportunities to increase their skills to find a job, or gain skills to remain employed and earn a promotion.

The effectiveness of our region's workforce activities depends on the relationships we have with employers, community partners, schools, and public agencies. The Board convenes each entity regularly to assess progress and find solutions to weaknesses and build on successes stemming from program strengths. Our customers suffered due to COVID-19, and the pandemic exposed weaknesses that precipitated many job losses, lack of hope and momentum for some customers to strive and be better. We learned many customers did not have the internet access, capability, or resources to compete in a job market where interviewing is now conducted virtually. Our commitment to find solutions is part of what makes our region the best place to do business, work, and live, is one of our strengths.

To learn and address weaknesses and advance strengths, the Board participates in and supports various workforce activities in the region. Providing support for key industries is critical to our region's success and one of our

fundamental strategies. The Board does this by making significant investments to targeted industries. The Board's capacity to support is by employing full time staff as Education, Construction/Crafts and Advanced Manufacturing /Supply Logistics Industry Liaisons. Their goal is to partner with specific employers in high growth, high skill Gulf Coast industry sectors. The Liaisons work to meet employers' current and future workforce needs by coordinating regional agency services, training, and education to fulfill skill needs. Industry Liaisons work to support changes in structures and policies to more closely align and integrate workforce, education, and economic development programs to better serve Gulf Coast employers. They provide Board representation and expertise to economic development and industry-led workforce initiatives.

We recognize that the Energy Industry Cluster is a key industry to our region as well as to the state; however, the weakness with the current oil and gas downturn exacerbated by the globally disruptive effects of COVID-19, most of the Board's efforts helping workers in industries most severely impacted weather the current crisis.

Perhaps the most critical step in supporting the Board's High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations is through the targeting process itself. Occupations offering residents the high-quality career opportunities are the essence of the list. Before considering standard criteria such as growth and wages, it is important that the choice of occupations be driven by composition of our Targeted Industries. By ensuring that most of the occupational employment is found within said industries, alignment between employers, workers, and workforce development becomes possible increasing the effectiveness of our strategic investments our region's human capital.

The Board continues to build a robust network of approved vendors and educational programs. We have developed clear policies and procedures for Workforce Solutions staff to use when awarding scholarships to help customers pay for school that prepares them for a career in an occupation we support through scholarships. Through this vendor network, we can award scholarships to customers, who might not otherwise be able to go to school. These Scholarships prepare them for meaningful careers in occupations that are in high demand in the region's key industries.

Getting people back to work is an activity we continue to develop innovative initiatives to accomplish. The Board developed a Placement Team that consists of multiple employment counselors working out of a central location. Daily, the team pulls an Unemployment Insurance claimant list, and contacts new claimants. Working by phone and email, the team helps customers clean up WorkInTexas.com applications, develop good resumes and find solid job leads.

Staff contacts all customers in the Rapid Reemployment Service database (profiled pool) by sending letters of introduction asking them to contact Workforce Solutions by phone, email or in person. The Board on staff an outplacement specialist who is often a first responder working with employers to assess needs, and coordinate service for affected workers. Workforce Solutions usually provides virtual job search workshops with modules on resume preparation, interviewing and using WorkInTexas.com.

We maintain a Regional Team that provides Workforce Solutions seminars and workshops at community locations such as public libraries. The Regional Team made up of Navigators and Facilitators venture out into 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.

Good employment counselors help customers identify knowledge and skills that can be applied to different jobs and similar jobs in different industries. Our training contractor, Learning Designs, Inc. (LDI), delivers training that teaches employment counselors to move beyond computer-generated matches from WorkInTexas.com to analyzing those matches to pick the best people possible for each job. Staff are taught how to help customers identify their transferable skills, develop resumes and complete job applications highlighting those skills, and look for jobs that demand those skills.

The analytical skills developed through this process can be applied to helping customers identify their unique, marketable, and transferable skills. We now provide at least one class a month of Working with Job Ready Customers that trains staff in precisely this function - helping customers find good jobs that match their skills.

The Board also asked LDI to develop and deliver a series of industry-specific training courses for staff. The training talks about the industry, jobs, skill sets, and transferable skills. There is a basic labor market intelligence course that provides staff with a foundational knowledge of the labor market and resources to learn more about it. There are industry-specific courses for health services, educational services, and industrial crafts.

The Board's philosophy is that workforce development is a component of economic development, and all our activities reflect this philosophy. We measure our ability to help create jobs and help employer customers become more competitive. Our work with economic development organizations includes partnering on industry-based work groups, sharing planning and evaluation information, coordinating grant proposals, and assisting in bringing new businesses to the region and retraining and supporting existing businesses. The Board works closely with economic development partners to identify long-range issues such as the changing demographics of the region's workforce and a trend to lower educational achievement; and shorter-range issues such as finding transportation solutions across the region so employers can get the workers they need.

Education activities are important to address the employment needs of employers and individuals with barriers to employment. Projects the Board is involved with in the Education Industry Sector include sponsoring an Education Workgroup of 19 participating school districts, activities in Early Childhood Education with our partner Collaborative for Children, promoting education and training opportunities with Adult Education and Literacy, investing in online learning platforms such as Metrix, and various K-12 projects with local ISDs and charter schools in the region. Groups meet regularly to discuss the needs of local school districts and community colleges to meet employer needs. An example of the strength and effectiveness of this innovative work are the results stemming from convening the Industrial Crafts and Construction Industry Sector with education providers to support education programs that lead to direct placement jobs for participants.

### Training Activities for Individuals

Listed below are training activities individuals with barriers to employment can participate to secure employment:

#### Texas Industry Partnership

We partner with Lone Star Community College, Baker Hughes, and BJ Services to match the contribution in a Texas Industry Partnership that will provide skills training for non-traditional workers. Lone Star Community College will train a cohort of trainees for entry-level Oil and Gas technical personnel. Baker Hughes and BJ Services will hire from the cohort to fill open positions.

#### Entrepreneurial Boot Camps – Women and Youth and Young Adults

Camp for Women - We will conduct women entrepreneurial boot camps to connect women wanting to start or expand their business to existing efforts and tech incubators in the region. The events will be scheduled for a minimum of seven hours and will include resources in the community and an ongoing opportunity for support. We have identified multiple community partners to solicit their help in developing the events. We will procure a vendor who will be responsible for a guest speaker for the event, virtual location, and the development of all digital curriculum. We will further ensure the information developed is available in both English and Spanish. The trainings will be totally virtual and will include business creation, business plans, ownership, support and expansion. The goal of the bootcamp is to help entrepreneurial women create, sustain, or grow their small businesses which create jobs and income vital to the continued growth of the Texas economy.

Camp for youth and young adults - We will conduct youth and young adult entrepreneurial boot camps to connect young people wanting to start or expand their business to existing efforts and tech incubators in the region. The events will be scheduled for a minimum of seven hours and will include resources in the community and an ongoing opportunity for support. We have identified multiple community partners to solicit their help in developing the events. We will procure a vendor who will be responsible for a guest speaker for the event, virtual location, and the development of all digital curriculum. We will further ensure the information developed is available in both English and Spanish. The trainings will be totally virtual and will include business creation, business plans, ownership, support and expansion. The goal of the bootcamp is to help entrepreneurial young people create, sustain, or grow their small businesses which create jobs and income vital to the continued growth of the Texas economy.

#### Second Chance Jobs Initiative

We continue to work with the City of Houston Re-entry program. Career and Recovery- Incarcerated Veterans Program, WorkFaith Connection Re-entry program and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice working primarily with adults and My Brother's Keeper will provide support. The mission of the Community Re-Entry Network is to work in partnership with the community to assess, plan, and implement effective strategies to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and successfully assist and support re-entry individuals in their transition in becoming productive, contributing members of the Houston community.

We work by securing work experience sites for up to ten weeks, wages up to \$12.00 hourly immediately upon return to the community. We will also make sure the individuals are aware of available training to support their efforts in finding employment. We offer financial aid and work-related support service to assist the individuals

with needed clothing, transportation, training and certification/licenses to prepare for employment.

### Youth Diversion Opportunity

Gulf Coast Workforce Board provides a pre-plea opportunity during the pre-trial stage of the criminal justice process for young adult offenders to participate in a restorative program decreasing the jail population. These young adults are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and an increasing number of disengaged young people become adults suffering from a lifetime of low levels of education, chronic unemployment, recidivism and long-term incarceration. In response, this collaborative project seeks to address a major barrier to social and economic inclusion by diverting offenders from jail to opportunities for paid work experience, career education, and job training.

The workforce activity consists of defendants who have been in jail for over 3 days and have not been able to make a surety bond for a low-level felony offense. A District Judge, Sitting or Visiting, who is interested in assisting the youthful adult offender, will preside over the docket housed in the courtroom in the Joint Processing Center.

Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, and Pretrial Services will attend the docket where defendants will be considered for a Pre-plea Diversion program and a Personal Bond along with a connection to services. The program concentrates on restorative justice principals emphasizing school attendance, and/or employment and employment related services as the offender restores him/herself and becomes a productive member of the community.

### THW – Jobs

The goal of this workforce activity is to work in partnership with Coalition for the Homeless and The Way Home – Rapid Rehousing to quickly re-house homeless individuals and families. Our goal is to mitigate the negative effects of individuals experiencing hunger and homelessness by offering services to help them secure career opportunities that will provide livable wages to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

We provide work-based learning opportunities and place participants in work experiences for ten weeks, working up to 30 hours weekly. Additionally, we ensure these individuals are aware of available training to support their efforts in finding unsubsidized employment. We provide financial aid and support services needed to assist homeless individuals with work-related support services to prepare them for lasting careers.

### Supported Employment – Job Coach Project

An individual with a disability may have the ability to perform a job but may lack the capacity to be successful due to other factors. A job coach is an individual with the training and certifications required to work alongside an individual with a disability for a prescribed number of hours to help them successfully navigate areas of the workforce where they may have difficulty participating because of a disability.

We assist individuals by providing a job coach in conjunction with work-based learning and/or on the job training. The goal of the workforce activity is to assist these individuals with valuable work experience, exposure to work and connecting them to other resources that can lead to long term sustainable employment. This effort will provide a basis for serving individuals with different types of abilities utilizing standard operating processes and allow us to build staff capacity in serving people with disabilities. We build a framework for continued support

that leads to employment.

We will coordinate and collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation to ensure we are not duplicating service and to leverage funds to serve as many customers as possible.

#### Student HireAbility Navigators

The Student HireAbility Navigator grant is a three-year project that began in July 2018. This grant provides funding for two Student HireAbility Navigators who serve as resources in the Gulf Coast Region to support, expand, and enhance the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are in the early phases of preparing for transition to postsecondary education and employment.

#### Paths for Texas

In November 2019, Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast was awarded a grant that runs through December 2022, provided by the Wal-Mart Foundation to initiate and expand retail up skilling opportunities for businesses and their current workforce, and develop career pathways to unemployed individuals seeking to transition into or out of the Retail Industry.

#### COVID-19 National Dislocated Worker Program

The goal of the 2020 COVID-19 NDW Program is to provide temporary employment to individuals who became unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or who are long-term unemployed.

#### Youth Job Skills Initiative

The Youth Job Skills Initiative focuses on supporting youth without or may be at risk of not attaining a secondary credential. The goal is to assist youth in their completion of a secondary credential and provide a seamless connection to work base learning opportunities in the following sectors: construction, healthcare, information technology.

#### Bridges to College and Careers

Workforce Solutions supports in an advisory role and through our career office network Bridge to College and Career Success. This workforce activity addresses the challenges identified in a Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research study that found a high percentage of Gulf Coast disconnected youth do not have a high school diploma or have high school diplomas but lack access to training and higher education. We work with community-based organizations, community colleges, and employers to engage this population to improve their opportunities to succeed and have better futures.

#### Career Education and Outreach Specialists

Workforce Solutions will work with 50 schools across five independent school districts providing labor market and career data-including information about access to and instruction on how to use multiple Texas Workforce Commission labor market/career information tools-to support job exploration, counseling and guidance for students.

### Summer Earn and Learn

Summer Earn and Learn offers eligible students ages 14-22 with disabilities an opportunity to test their skills in the real world with paid internship opportunities at local employers. Summer Earn & Learn connects students with disabilities to successful work experiences, which helps them gain job skills and build confidence.

### Education Opportunity Connector

Education Opportunity Connector brings our career offices and adult education providers together through shared Workforce Solutions services. Partnerships have been designed to foster and cultivate relationships to strengthen connections that will help career offices and adult education providers better understand what services are available to customers. The education opportunity connector provides opportunities to helping customers obtain the tools they need in order to thrive and compete in the Gulf Coast labor market.

### Workforce Connector

Workforce Connector bridges our career offices and United Way THRIVE partners together to work collectively to help some of our most vulnerable customers find the help they need. These relationships offer opportunities to promote core services and share resources. Partnerships are continuously strengthening their relationships to establish stronger connections that will help customers better understand what services are available. Workforce Connector provides opportunities to help customers get the resources they need in order to compete and prosper in the Gulf Coast labor market.

Recruiting remains a challenge and weakness. To strengthen this weakness, Gulf Coast Workforce Board staff will focus on increasing relationships with the community and provide technical assistance to career offices to support them in advancing the vision and goals of the Board.

### Employment Needs of Employers

The region's economy hinges on the timeline of recovery of the coronavirus. The recovery of payroll employment stalled by August 2020 and by October only half of all jobs lost during the initial months of the pandemic had been recovered. With rollouts of vaccines that are beginning as early as December 2020, a solid economic recovery in the region will likely begin by mid-2021.

The Gulf Coast region's high concentration of energy jobs and its major petrochemical complex results in a critical need for skilled crafts and technical jobs that require more education and training than a high school diploma, but less than a college degree. In addition to energy, the region features other important industries. Its centrally southern location with easy access to the Port of Houston makes it an ideal distribution point for numerous maritime, railroad, airline, and motor freight companies. Other industries such as education, trade, and healthcare benefit from a population growth rate that more than doubles that of the nation. Furthermore, Houston is one of the top spots in the country for corporate relocation and investment due to its low cost of doing business.

Workforce activities we identified in this section address the education and skills needs of the workforce in the Houston Galveston area and support the core programs described in the subsequent section.



## PART 3: CORE PROGRAMS



The Gulf Coast Workforce Board and its operating affiliate, Workforce Solutions, together are the public workforce system in the 13-county Houston Galveston area. We keep our region the best place to do business, work, and live by fulfilling the diverse needs of the almost 30,000 businesses and 500,000 people we will serve each year.

As a public entity, Workforce Solutions is most effective when we can rely on the participation of all stakeholders in the regional economy. This means that we work closely with schools, colleges, local city and county governments, non-profits, and social service providers, as well as the business community, to bring people together and focus on our shared economic needs. To represent these many groups, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board is made up of dedicated individuals from both the public and private sectors who volunteer their time and expertise to help set the direction for how Workforce Solutions carries out its mission.

Our volunteer Board members along with the hard-working professional staff of Workforce Solutions, are tasked with implementing a local, data-driven plan for developing our region's pool of human talent to meet local employment needs. To guarantee that we are fulfilling our area's obligations to the Texas Workforce Commission under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, this Local Plan examines our estimated economic needs through 2024.

The Board's strategy is to work with entities and required partners carrying out core programs to align resources available to the Houston-Galveston region to achieve shared visions and goals.

The core programs discussed in this plan reflect only a portion of the programs managed by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB). Through the integrated workforce system in Texas, the Board also manages several other programs administered by TWC:

- Choices [the employment program for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)]
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)
- Child Care and Development Block Grant Funds/Child Care Development Funds (CCDBG/CCDF)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

#### Gulf Coast Workforce Development Partners

The Gulf Coast region is abundant in workforce development partners and we must work with them to carry out our core programs. We have ten community colleges 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.

With our partners, we provide a wide range of services to employers and individual customers. For individuals, community and faith-based organizations provide mentoring, life-skills training, adult basic education, English as a second language, childcare, 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.

Workforce Solutions has an excellent relationship with our community college partners. The colleges provide educational programs leading to degrees and technical certificates, adult education, English as second language instruction, and other training. They work with the Board to develop 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 major universities have a role in the workforce system and are likely to have a greater one in the future as the Board's industry-based work continues and expands. The universities help to contribute to the diversification of our economy in the Gulf Coast Region.

The region's 76 school districts are key partners in addressing many of the long-term shortages of skilled workers in our region. Many of our 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 assist the schools, students, and parents in making decisions about education and training. We continue to expand and improve our labor market information and career planning products which include the High-Skill, High-Growth List, Focus on Industry and Occupation profiles, and When I Grow Up. Our goal is to support schools in their efforts to reduce drop-out rates and target resources to prepare youth for the good jobs of the future. 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.

Economic development organizations are key partners in our region. In many cases, the Board is a member of these organizations. In other cases, such as our industry groups, the economic development organizations are key members of Board-sponsored projects. We work together in identifying opportunities for the region to grow good jobs and to help develop solutions to barriers to growth, such as the need for improved schools. The Board's strategic plan includes a measure of the degree to which we are involved in economic development efforts leading to new or retained jobs. In general, each partner we work with pays for the service and staff the organization normally provides. For example, we may have a memorandum of understanding to work with a community-based organization to coordinate providing service to customers. We agree to make cross-referrals for customers with each partner paying for service they deliver to each customer.

There are exceptions to this general policy. Some of our partners are either vendors for Workforce Solutions or the Board has procured the organization to provide specialized service. In these cases, we pay for the partner organization to provide service, either by individual referral or through cost-reimbursement contracts.

The Board enjoys excellent working relationships with its partners, especially core partners such as the colleges, the adult education community, and economic development entities.

Gulf Coast Workforce Board will work with various entities in 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
- WD Letter 18-20, Attachment 2, 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).

### Economic Development & Impact

The Board's philosophy is that workforce development is a component of economic development, and all our activities reflect this philosophy. We measure our ability to help create jobs and help employer customers become more competitive. Our work with economic development organizations includes partnering on industry-based work groups, sharing planning and evaluation information, coordinating grant proposals, and assisting in bringing

new businesses to the region and retraining and supporting existing businesses.

The Board works closely with economic development partners to identify long-range issues such as the changing demographics of the region's workforce and a trend to lower educational achievement; and shorter-range issues such as funding transportation solutions in Colorado County so employers can get the workers they need and adjusting to the ever-changing governmental policies related to the pandemic.

These efforts describe how the Board will work with multiple entities to carry out core programs and next we will highlight how we will scale and improve access to core programs.

#### Core Programs – Expand Access, Facilitate Development, and Improve Access

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board will expand access to employment training, education, and support services to eligible individuals and eligible individuals with barriers in unique and effective ways.

For both eligible populations seeking employment, we expanded and improved access to job opportunities by using virtual platforms to host hiring and resource events. With virtual employment services, we continue to develop innovative strategies to help individuals find employment opportunities in high-growth, high-wage industries that align to the Board's vision and goals. Additionally, we adopted online appointment setting that provides eligible customers the capability to schedule their own appointments with career offices for services.

Workforce Solutions and its workforce partners offer services that lead to thousands of customers entering employment each year. Services include job-search assistance, labor market and career planning information, training and education opportunities, and unemployment benefits to those who lose their jobs through no fault of their own.

#### Adult Education Activities

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board administers the public adult education funds in our 13-county region, encompassing the City of Houston, Texas. Through a consortium of fifteen contractors, we have helped more than 100,000 customers.

Adult education providers offer English language, mathematics, reading, and writing instruction to help students acquire the skills needed to earn a high school equivalency, enter college or career training and/ or succeed in the workforce. While some classes may charge a small, nominal fee (less than \$20) most adult education services are free to adult learners. Service is also available to young people who have dropped out of high school and have not earned an equivalency diploma.

#### Service Categories

Adult Education providers typically offer a wide variety of adult education courses. Most of these courses are components of four major service categories:

- High School Equivalency Preparation – Academic preparation toward readiness for the high school equivalency examination.

- Combined GED & Skills Training – Traditional GED preparation offered with concurrent skills training. You may also hear this referred to as “contextualized learning”.
- English as a Second Language – ESL courses teach English literacy to individuals with languages other than English as their primary language.
- EL/Civics – Civics courses inform individuals on United States history, culture, and practice in preparation for U.S. citizenship. EL/Civics courses are frequently offered in conjunction with ESL courses.
- The consortium includes a managing partner, Region 6 Education Service Center, and fourteen providers. Region 6 offers programming support for the system. The fourteen providers offer direct service through their own facilities as well as through sites at hundreds of community-based organizations, such as churches, libraries, non-profits, schools.

The Governor's plans for our State are important to the vitality of our Houston Galveston area. The Board plans to support the energy sector to address the needs of our customers and the meet requirement of working with one of the Governor’s industry clusters.

The energy industry employs as many as one-fifth of the 3.5 million workers in the Houston region. With more than 600 exploration and production firms, 1,100 oilfield service companies and more than 180 pipeline transportation establishments, this region is the largest hub for energy related employment in the United States.

Because of the pandemic’s adverse impacts on employment within the energy industry, the Board, through Employer Service, has committed to assisting customers and energy employers by:

- Providing employment research information and data to employers
- Partnering with employers in augmenting their human resources efforts, including;
- Supporting talent development projects and activities with employers through on-the-job training, customized training, current worker training, and basic education
- Offering outplacement services to employers for furloughs and strategic reduction in workforce plans.
- Assisting employers with strategic recruiting endeavors
- Counseling, training, or upskilling individuals by integrating and coordinating the services and resources of the career offices, financial aid support center, financial aid payment office, and adult education consortium to facilitate individuals transition to employment.
- Connecting with, supporting and assisting business associations, industry associations, chambers of commerce and economic development organizations throughout the region.
- Wherever possible, locating staff in communities throughout the region and strategically establishing operating career offices to provide visibility to and access for customers.

The Board has also invested funds to update our virtual technologies helping us to continue and improve communication and access to assist customers.

We strive to meet the changing demands and unique needs of our customers daily. The practices described in this section will improve customer experience and detail how we will work with partners to carry out core programs. This is a building block for the following section, as we describe our one-stop service delivery system and how the Board ensures continuous quality improvement.

## PART 4: ONE-STOP SERVICE DELIVERY



The Board operates a one-stop service delivery system designed for customers to receive the help and resources needed from one of our multiple locations. Our one-stop delivery system ensures providers are helping local employers, workers, and unemployed individuals address their employment needs.

The Board continues to ensure continuous quality improvement of providers to help employers meet their human resource needs and individuals build careers, so both can compete in the global economy.

The Board monitors performance and production numbers of providers on a regular basis. Each week providers are given an update of their progress with core programs and any special initiatives. The Board collects data and monitors trends to assess where gaps in production are hidden and provide technical assistance to providers when needed. The Board will revise issuances and guidance where local flexibility is allowed to ensure local board guidance reflects to most effective and efficient policies and procedures.

The Board also will perform monitoring and audits to continue to collect real-time data to address any issues or potential issues providers may face. Providers are given verbal and written feedback on how to continually improve ways to meet the employment needs of customers.

The Board is advancing technological efforts by using multiple forms of virtual platforms to facilitate access to services to customers in rural and urban areas. The Board increased social media activity to host live online events to promote services and resources offered. The Board communicates to providers regularly to learn which platforms customers are using most, and where gaps or threats are, we need to address.

Within our one-stop system, the Board uses virtual platforms to convene providers to facilitate access and referrals to VR services and in rural areas. The Board provides ongoing direction and support to help providers integrate VR services. In addition to technology, the Board provides written issuances and guidance to set expectations for providers to ensure access to services and referrals are provided for VR services.

In addition, our one-stop system works to provide customers with up-to-date and useful information on the good jobs of the future to meet the employment needs of employers, workers and those unemployed. The Board's focus is on high-skill, high-growth jobs that lead to careers that provide opportunities for growth and good wages.

Listed below are the roles and resource contributions of partners within our one-stop system:

**Employer Service** markets and sells Workforce Solutions to the region's employers.

- It provides basic information and service for all employers and customized service to individual employers with special needs.
- Employer Service also targets key industries with critical skilled-labor shortages -- and gathers interested employers in those industries to organize and support intensive efforts to address their needs for talent.
- Through its efforts to support increasing quality for early education, Employer Service makes investments in the more than 2,000 vendors providing early education and care for Workforce Solutions customers' children.

**Career offices** help individuals get a job, keep a job or get a better job by providing job search, placement; career assessment, advice and planning; counseling; and financial aid. Priority in service is given to veterans, spouses of veterans, foster youth, and former foster youth.

Supporting the work of the offices are:

- The Financial Aid Support Center – determines customers eligible for the variety of financial assistance Workforce Solutions offers
- The Financial Aid Payment Office – makes payments on behalf of our customers for education scholarships, transportation assistance, and a variety of other financial aid support, including help with early education expenses
- Tracking Units – support the work done in career offices by tracking customer services and activities for all career offices in the Gulf Coast Region



In addition, connected to and integrated with the two main parts of the one-stop system are:

**Community and youth projects** – targeted investments in specific geographic areas of the region to assist a community and low-income youth.

**Adult education** – a regional network of adult basic education and literacy providers supporting employers and individuals with basic education and literacy instruction.

**Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** – helps eligible individuals who have physical or mental disabilities prepare for, find, or keep employment.

**Staff development** – a systemwide on-going effort to train and upskill the Workforce Solutions staff.

Our providers meet the needs of local employers, workers, and those unemployed by using two key performance metrics. They are employer market share and employer customer loyalty which measures are intended on gauging our success at increasing employer use and satisfaction with our service. The Board sets annual and long-range targets, regularly reviews performance, and adjusts operating strategies as needed. The Board offers these metrics and performance as evidence of the effectiveness of strategies it has implemented to improve services to employers.

**Employer Loyalty** – Last year's performance indicated 50.6% of our customers value our services and returned for additional services. Our current annual target is 62%.

Two key performance metrics are customers employed after exiting from services and higher earnings gains.

**Customers Employed** – This year's performance indicated 88.4% of our customers were employed in the quarter after exiting from services. Our current annual target is 77%.

**Higher Real Incomes** – This year's performance indicated 24.2% of customers who exited had earnings gains of at least 20%. Our current annual target is 37%.

### Facilitating Services

Over the last few years, the Board's revenue continues to shrink, and we must do more with less. The good news is that we are meeting this challenge, in part, by leveraging available technology and developing cost efficient outreach strategies.

Blogforce (<http://blogforce.wrksolutions.com/>) provides customers with timely, helpful, and usually humorous, advice on getting and keeping jobs, and career planning. Bloggers are Workforce Solutions office and Board staff.

In addition to the 28 full-service career offices, there are 10 additional affiliate sites managed by the Board in the region. Information on those sites is available at this link: (<http://www.wrksolutions.com/find-a-location?location=Part-Time>). These sites provide basic job search services to those customers unable to reach a full services career office, as well as allows them to make appointments with office staff members who maintain a part time presence at the sites.



The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has a regional team made up of navigators and facilitators that go out into 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.

Our adult education customers can access adult education sites and classes located throughout the region, often near a customer's residence or place of employment. Many providers offer distance learning options for customers who experience transportation issues or merely prefer the convenience of taking classes remotely. A few of our offices have adult education sites in the career office.

The Gulf Coast Adult Education & Literacy Consortium is comprised of a robust team that includes Workforce Solutions and 15 regional organizations working together to meet the needs of the regional workforce. Within our consortium we have 6 community colleges, 8 community-based organizations and 1 education service center that services as the consortiums lead provider.

Education Opportunity Connector brings our career offices and adult education providers together through shared Workforce Solutions services. Partnerships have been designed to foster and cultivate relationships to strengthen connections that will help career offices and adult education providers better understand what services are available to customers. The education opportunity connector provides opportunities to helping customers obtain the tools they need in order to thrive and compete in the Gulf Coast Workforce.

#### Equal Opportunity and Access to Service

The Board ensures all partners comply with federal regulations to meet the needs of customers without discrimination and upholds the highest standard of equal opportunity and access to service for all customers. The Board provides opportunity for everyone to be actively involved in the potential labor pool by ensuring staff focus on abilities, not disabilities.

To meet the needs of individuals with disabilities looking for employment, The Board provides a variety of options to help customers access all services, programs and activities, resources and information offered at each of our Career Offices. The Board is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

The Board can provide:

- Reasonable Accommodations
- Accessible workstations at each Career Office
- Workshops for a Successful Job Search
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Accessible Technology

- Job Coaching
- Information & Referrals to partner with Texas Workforce Solutions-Rehabilitation Services

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

- Courses through the National Workforce Institute where staff learn to provide customer service from a strength-based approach; identifying customers' skills and abilities and then matching them to available jobs.
- Diversity Awareness training from Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- Computer based trainings from Texas Workforce Commission on Diversity, EEO, and Discrimination Prevention as well as the Discrimination Complaint Process.
- An overview of Equal Opportunity Standards and Guidelines including providing accommodations and the discrimination complaint process.
- Usage of assistive technology and auxiliary aids in the career offices.
- Various disability awareness topics.

To further ensure equal opportunity and access to service for all its customers, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board has a team of three system-wide Navigators whose primary role is to ensure that customers with disabilities are able to navigate the realm of finding employment on a level playing field with those who do not have disabilities. To do this Navigators:

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

Additionally, the Board EO Officer conducts annual equal opportunity and accessibility reviews on an annual basis for each career office location. Program and service accessibility, as well as physical accessibility is assessed during each annual review. In addition to ensuring sites are architecturally barrier free and customers have equal access

and opportunity to services, each career office is equipped to have at least one or more of the following assistive technologies and auxiliary aids:

- Accessible workstation equipped with assistive technologies such as JAWS screen reader software, MAGic screen magnifying software, headphones or speakers, large print keyboard, and trackball mouse;
- TTY phone;
- Video Relay Service (VRS) phone;
- Hearing Aid Compatible phone with volume control;
- Pocket Talker sound amplifier; and
- Adjustable height tables and chairs

The Board EO Officer coordinates the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's obligations and compliance activities under the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), 29 CFR 38.31 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973, as amended, 29 CFR 32.7. Those responsibilities include:

- Serving as the liaison with the Texas Workforce Commission EO Officer and the U.S. Department of Labor Civil Rights Center
- Acting as the point of contact for customers and contractors regarding Equal Opportunity issues or concerns
- Monitoring and investigating Gulf Coast Workforce Board and contractor activities to ensure they are not violating nondiscrimination and EO provisions of Federal and State Laws and Regulations
- Reviewing Gulf Coast Workforce Board and Workforce Solutions written standards and guidelines to ensure they are not discriminatory
- Developing, implementing, and monitoring procedures for processing discrimination complaints and ensuring compliance with 29 CFR 38.69-38.76
- Reporting directly to the appropriate official (Board, TWC, Governor, or other appropriate authority) about equal opportunity matters
- Conducting outreach and education on equal opportunity matters including 38.40 and 38.69
- Undergoing training to keep competency
- Developing, coordinating, scheduling, keeping records of, and monitoring training for staff assigned responsibilities for nondiscrimination and equal opportunity

The Board is in accordance with WIOA Title I and all applicable non-discrimination laws and as a recipient of Federal financial assistance, prohibits discrimination on the following bases:

- against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief; and
- against any beneficiary of programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), on the basis of the beneficiary's citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or his or her participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.

The Board continually works to make a difference for our customers. The Board will ensure partners are in compliance with all federal regulations related to non-discrimination and accessibility of facilities, continuous quality improvement of eligible providers, technology is used to facilitate access to services in rural and urban areas, and employment needs are met for businesses, workers, and those unemployed. The following section includes copies of executed cooperative agreements that explains how providers will carry out integration and access to services in our one-stop delivery system.

#### Cooperative Agreements

On September 1, 2016, Vocational Rehabilitation Services were transferred from DARS to TWC, in accordance with Senate Bill (SB) 208, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2015). The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services into 15 career offices including the Gulf Coast Workforce Board administrative offices. By the end of 2021, we expect to integrate an additional 6 offices, totaling 21 career offices integrated.

#### Employer Engagement, Economic Development, and Unemployment Insurance Program Coordination

The Workforce Board strives to make Workforce Solutions the first choice of employers when they need assistance with workforce issues. Most employers use our core products - help with recruiting and screening for job openings. We would like to provide a deeper level of service to our employer customers, becoming partners with them to solve workforce-related business problems. To this end, we have disbanded our in-house outreach unit and transitioned these staff to be in the field making face to face contact with employers. It is our belief we will provide a better-quality service to our employer customers and employer customers will have a higher level of satisfaction with our services.

The Board is continuing to take steps to improve the quality of our screening and referral process for employers. We plan to continue these efforts by improving our system's ability to obtain and communicate accurate information on what employers need and want in employees. Employer Service staff review new job orders submitted electronically by employers and edit them to provide better matches with job candidates.

Employment Counselors help individuals get jobs that best fit their skills, interests, and experience. We employ staffing specialists who work the job orders, looking for candidates in our system and outside. We continue to develop this function to include contacting college and university placement offices, community-based organizations, and other sources to find the best workers for the jobs we are trying to fill.

The Board will continue to track the results of its efforts to improve employer satisfaction through an annual survey. The current survey measures how well employers believe our business consultants follow through on promises, understand their needs, are responsive to those needs, offer solutions to problems, and are professional.

### Meeting the Needs of Local Businesses

The Board's Employer Services providers administers service to help businesses meet their employment needs. We believe that helping employers find skilled workers results in the region's economic development and benefits individual workers. We will help more than 26,000 employers in the Gulf Coast region identify qualified candidates for job openings. Business Service Representatives visit employers to offer services, support, and learn firsthand a business' specific need. They offer the system's resources to help businesses by:

- Recruiting, screening, referring and testing applicants for jobs
- Providing information about state and federal labor laws
- Providing economic and labor market information including occupation-specific wage and salary data
- Outplacement services for employees who have been laid off due to a plant closure, downsizing or a reduction-in-force
- Subsidizing a portion of a qualified employee's wage for a short time while the employer provides on the job training.

Employers can use the Workforce Solutions website to list jobs with WorkInTexas.com, find labor market information, and access information about employment laws.

The Board's Employer Service Division provides staff to committees with members from high-growth, high-demand industries willing to work together to address the industry's immediate and long-term workforce needs.

- These industry committees help the Workforce Board by adding real time advice to statistical data about the workforce needs of companies in the industry.
- These committee recommendations allow the Board to direct our resources to train people for the jobs in demand now and later.

Employer Service Division staff also work with the committees to identify outside resources to meet the needs identified by the industry committee.

### Economic Development Partners are Important

The Board's philosophy is that workforce development is a component of economic development, and all our activities reflect this philosophy. We measure our ability to help create jobs and help employer customers become more competitive. Our work with economic development organizations includes partnering on industry-based work groups, sharing planning and evaluation information, coordinating grant proposals, and assisting in bringing new businesses to the region and retraining and supporting existing businesses.

The Board works closely with economic development partners to identify long-range issues such as the changing demographics of the region's workforce and a trend to lower educational achievement; and shorter-range issues such as funding transportation solutions in Colorado County so employers can get the workers they need. We work collaboratively with many economic development organizations to coordinate workforce programs in the region, our work with Greater Houston Partnership's UpSkill Houston continues to provide promising outcomes to meet the needs of businesses in our workforce area.

With technology, one-stops using virtual platforms for meetings, events, marketing and outreach, our relationships with economic development organizations will continue to grow and open opportunities to strengthen links between their member's job openings and individuals receiving unemployment insurance.

### Meaningful Assistance to Help Unemployed

Individuals filing for unemployment insurance are customers our one-stop system works quickly to help return to work. Career office staff must promptly assist claimants and employers wishing to use career office resources to transmit materials to TWC for claims and appeals adjudication purposes. Customers are given access to space and telecommunications equipment necessary to participate in unemployment insurance hearings. Additionally, staff supports customers with dedicated resources – computers, telephones, and printed materials about claim filing and unemployment insurance rights and responsibilities.

Wagner-Peyser-funded employer service staff located in the career offices serves all customers. However, unemployment insurance claimants are an imperative get-back-to-work population and staff are charged with improving claimant reemployment by connecting claimants with an array of relevant services and programs.

Among them, the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program is a DOLETA-approved statistical model that uses claimant characteristics, as well as Board-level economic indicators, to assess the likelihood of a claimant exhausting unemployment insurance benefits.

On a weekly basis, claimants who received their first unemployment insurance payment and likely to exhaust their unemployment insurance benefits are profiled in WorkInTexas.com and assigned a profile score. WorkInTexas.com includes a feature that allows Workforce Solutions staff to schedule events with openings for RESEA customers to attend an orientation. At a minimum, claimants called in under the RESEA program must receive a face-to-face orientation which includes:

- An unemployment insurance eligibility assessment,
- An employment plan,
- WorkInTexas.com registration,
- Customized Labor Market Information,
- Information about Workforce Solutions, and
- Additional service based on assessment of the customer's needs

To help unemployed individuals, within our Board strategy is a fundamental part to support high demand industries by making significant investments within our system to scale capacity to serve them. The Board employs full time staff as Education, Construction/Crafts and Advanced Manufacturing /Supply Logistics Industry Liaisons. Their goal is to partner with specific employers in high growth, high skill industry sectors within our Board area. The Liaisons work to meet employers' current and future workforce needs by coordinating regional agency services, training and education to fulfill skill needs. Industry Liaisons work to support changes in structures and policies to more closely align and integrate workforce, education and economic development programs to better serve Gulf Coast employers. They provide Board representation and expertise to economic development and industry-led workforce initiatives.

In addition, the Board supports customers who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs or growing micro businesses by developing customized trainings with local nonprofits and educational institutions. Small business development centers, for example, are a rich source of training, and the Board supports several successful grant proposals for funds such as the U.S. Health and Human Services' Job Opportunities for Low Income (JOLI) program.

The Board engages businesses to work with us to allow our employer services team to develop incumbent worker trainings with education opportunity partners in adult education to meet their employment needs. We also promote registered apprenticeships and on-the-job trainings to coordinate opportunities for businesses and those receiving unemployment insurance connect. We use virtual platforms to ensure individuals receiving unemployment insurance are aware of trainings and work opportunities to find a job, explore a new career, or start a business.

#### Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

The Board creates plans and develops strategies to maximize the coordination and avoid duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services, and other services provided through our one-stop delivery system. Wagner-Peyser funded employer service staff receives professional development training at new employee orientation and yearly continuing education classes and on an as needed basis, to ensure staff is prepared and able to provide quality one-stop services to both customers and employers. These trainings reinforce the policies and regulations needed to avoid duplication of services and ensure continuous quality improvement. Board performance is monitored closely; as needs arise, we may respond with staff development activities, such as classroom instruction, webinars, and one-on-one coaching.

The Board participates in the "Texas Model" for the service delivery of employment service assistance, which restructured the oversight and responsibility for employment service state merit staff. Under the Texas Model, the Board has full responsibility for day-to-day guidance of state employment service staff. TWC maintains administrative responsibility, but career office managers share responsibility for directing daily work assignments, assigning individual performance goals, coordinating hiring, initiating disciplinary action, and evaluating staff performance.

Employment service staff receive mandatory professional development training at new employee orientation and biannually and annually, and on an as needed basis, to ensure staff are prepared to provide high quality services to both customers and employers. Employment service staff receive training on how to conduct a job search, customer service, and how to use WorkInTexas.com.



This model places the responsibility of employment service staff with the career offices to support our integrated workforce system. Many of the services provided by employment service and WIOA are similar; the Texas Model allows Boards and providers the opportunity and flexibility to design integrated services, regardless if the program funding is different. All direction and guidance given to employment service employees must be consistent with the provisions of state and federal laws, rules, and regulations governing the administration and delivery of the Employment Service program. TWC provides technical support and quality assurance to Boards and contracted service providers through local Integrated Service Area Managers (ISAMs). ISAMs serve as the TWC supervisors for Texas Model staff. ISAMs coordinate all Texas Model staff-related actions with Boards and their contractors.

The Board's use of Wagner-Peyser funds to support unemployment insurance claimants benefits from the joint-administration of the unemployment insurance program and workforce services offered by Texas Workforce Commission. This team approach allows efficient coordination between programs. Computer linkages coordinate and provide services between WorkInTexas.com and the unemployment insurance automation system. These links ensure that unemployment insurance claimants who are required to register have done so, and that unemployment insurance claimants comply with their work search requirements.

The Board strives to assist and place individuals in jobs before they reach long-term unemployment. The Board has a performance measure that tracks success in placing customers in employment within 10 weeks of their initial monetary eligibility. We achieve this measure by providing quality job posting and job development activities coupled with increased outreach to participants to ensure better applications and quality referrals. Gulf Coast uses the RESEA program to help claimants find new employment as quickly as possible.

#### [Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management](#)

The Board recognizes the importance of an integrated, technology-enabled system for our providers to carry out core programs. Additionally, the Board uses data to drive decision-making and has made availability and evaluation of data a key part of its strategic development and oversight processes. We continue discovering ways to use technology to improve our transition and implementation of our paperless case management system and offer online resources to customers.

The Board and one-stop career offices have access to a number of State provided labor market information and career exploration resources to help meet customer employment needs such as:

- TexasLMI.com website provides employment statistics to help customers and employers remain up to date on current trends and make informed decisions accordingly
- TexasWages.com allows users to examine wage data for an area – or within an industry in an area – and to compare that wage with other areas of the state.
- TexasRealityCheck.com is one of the more frequently used resources in the LMCI toolbox and features a widely used iPhone application. The website allows students to make lifestyle choices, create a budget, and then view the occupations and preferred education levels that support those choices.
- TXCREWS.org Texas Consumer Resource on Education and Workforce Statistics (Texas CREWS) is a

dashboard tool that provides information about Texas' public two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions; evaluates 30 programs/institutions on the basis of resulting wages and student loan levels; and enables parents and students to make informed decisions about college and thereby obtain the best return on their educational investment.

- WorkInTexas.com is Texas' Labor Exchange System, as mandated by the Wagner-Peyser Act, and operated in cooperative effort with JobCentral, the National Labor Exchange system. WorkInTexas.com is a comprehensive online job search resource and job matching system developed and maintained by TWC, and provides:
  - extensive job matching options based on skills and experience;
  - links to labor market and career development information; and
  - free, 24-hour-a-day access.

Employers can post jobs, search résumés, recruit candidates, get labor market information, and receive a variety of other services available through a network of statewide career offices. Individuals seeking a new job, different job, or an additional job can post their résumé, search job listings (including Texas state agency jobs), obtain employer contact information to apply for jobs, get information about the job market, and receive a variety of other services also available through career offices.

The Board uses the following technology-enabled intake and case management information systems to carry out programs under WIOA by one-stop partners:

- The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) – TWIST is the integrated intake, eligibility, case management, and reporting system for employment and training services. It was designed as a central repository for customer information. TWIST ultimately decreases duplication within and across the Texas workforce system while streamlining the provision of services to customers. It enables career office staff to enter intake information for customers only once for multiple employment and training programs and to retrieve it statewide. TWIST also includes interfaces with other automated systems – WorkInTexas.com, the unemployment insurance benefits system, and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's system
- Child Care Attendance Automation – Child Care Attendance Automation (CCAA) allows parents to record attendance using a swipe card at a point-of-service device located at the authorized childcare facility. Parents also can use an interactive voice response system using the authorized childcare provider's phone. Attendance recorded through CCAA is transferred to TWIST on a weekly basis, and TWIST is used to process payments to providers based on the CCAA attendance records.
- Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) – TEAMS is Texas' state-of-the-art, web-enabled system that maintains student-level data, including demographic, assessment, and outcome data, as well as class, site, program, and provider information. TEAMS users can analyze class, site, or program information with standard reports generated at the user level. TEAMS provide a wide range of information

about adult education, including snapshots of student and program performance, personnel qualifications, and staff development activities.

- Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting – TWC’s online Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) system is a web application used by Boards to draw funds from their program allocations. All financial transactions are handled through this online system, and Boards are no longer required to submit paper documents or Excel spreadsheets. CDER has significantly decreased manual processing and greatly improved the reporting of data to all parties.
- Quarterly Wage Records – TWC makes extensive use of quarterly wage records, both for required and ad hoc reporting. TWC uses Texas wage records and those obtained from other states through the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) for required WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) reporting. A fuller discussion of the use of quarterly wage records is contained in the Program Data section of this plan.
- DocuWare – DocuWare is a document storage system for our customer information. It serves as a repository for customer files that cannot be entered into TWIST and is used widely by career offices to streamline processes and document important information.
- Appointy – Appointy is an online appointment software used by career offices to streamline appointment setting. Currently used virtually, in-person in the future.
- PandaDoc – PandaDoc is an electronic signature software that increases efficiency by facilitating simultaneous document circulation. The software is currently in use by the board and may be implemented systemwide after an initial trial period end.
- GovDelivery – GovDelivery is a mass communications tool that allows for prompt and wide dissemination of text email messages to individuals and employers.
- Microsoft Teams/Zoom – Microsoft Teams and Zoom are online meeting platforms that are used system-wide and daily to maintain effective communication and workflow.
- Parking Lot Internet Access — Internet access was expanded to the parking lots of most career offices to allow customers to have uninterrupted access to job applications, email, classes and other online services amid the pandemic.
- No mobile units currently; however, providers work with community partners offering service delivery using mobile units to carry out core programs.

We take our responsibilities seriously regarding our role in our workforce area to make sure providers are compliant with local, state, and federal regulations regarding non-discrimination, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Board guides our one-stop service delivery system to ensure continuous improvement of providers to meet employment needs of local employers, workers, and those experiencing unemployment. The Board advances the use of technology and technology-enabled systems to carry out core

programs and workforce activities. In the next section, you will learn how the Board coordinates local workforce activities and how we promote entrepreneurial trainings and microenterprise services.

## PART 5: WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES



The Board’s philosophy is that workforce development is a component of economic development, and all our activities reflect this philosophy. Since its inception, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board has been committed to building a demand-driven workforce system. We have consistently demonstrated this commitment through policies, actions, and partnerships.

Economic development organizations are key partners in our region. In many cases, the Board is a member of these organizations. In other cases, such as our industry groups, the economic development organizations are key members of Board-sponsored projects. Our work with economic development organizations includes partnering on industry-based work groups, sharing planning and evaluation information, coordinating grant proposals, and assisting in bringing new businesses to the region and retraining and supporting existing businesses. The Board works closely with economic development partners to identify long-range and shorter-range issues so employers can get the workers they need. We also work together in identifying opportunities for the region to grow good jobs, and to help develop solutions to barriers to growth, such as the need for improved schools.

One of our key partnerships is The Greater Houston Workforce Development Workgroup, a regional collaborative led by Greater Houston Partnership – UpSkill Houston, Gulf Coast Workforce Board and United Way of Greater Houston. The Greater Houston Workforce Development Workgroup aligns and improves workforce services in

nonprofits by investing in meaningful partnerships with industry, education, and workforce organizations. They seek to meet the current and emerging needs of our businesses and local communities so all can thrive in our growing economy.

Other economic development organizations that we work with include, but not limited to: Central Fort Bend Chamber, Alliance Sealy Chamber of Commerce, Brazosport Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce, Asian Chamber of Commerce, Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce, Galveston Chamber of Commerce, Greater Houston Black Chamber of Commerce, The Woodlands Area Chamber of Commerce, Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Baytown Chamber of Commerce, Greater Conroe/Lake Conroe Area Chamber of Commerce, Houston East End Chamber of Commerce, Katy Area Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Alliance for Brazoria County, Bay City Chamber of Commerce, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, Houston Intercontinental Chamber of Commerce, Pearland Economic Development Corporation, Wharton Chamber of Commerce, Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce, Palacios Chamber of Commerce, The Woodlands Area Economic Development Council, Pearland Chamber of Commerce, Columbus Chamber of Commerce, Economic Alliance Houston Port Region, Galveston County, and the Greater Houston Area Disability Chamber of Commerce.

The Board also recognizes that small businesses, both entrepreneurship and microenterprises, are vital to the continued growth of the Texas economy. Entrepreneurial activities create jobs and income. Entrepreneurial businesses support the Texas economy and increase employment opportunities for Texans. To stimulate economic growth in this area, The Board will host bootcamp trainings for young adults and women who are Texas residents interested in creating, sustaining, or expanding a business in Texas. These target audiences were chosen because they tend to be underrepresented in the entrepreneur category.

This year we also partnered with the Houston-Galveston Area Local Development Corporation to outreach and offer The Board services to hundreds of small businesses impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

### Outplacement Activity Coordination

Our Outplacement Service team, known as Rapid Response, works with employers that face challenges that can influence the workforce structure within a company. The Board will receive this information one of two ways; 1.) From the Texas Workforce Commission; or 2.) From the employer directly. Once the announcement is made from a business, our Rapid Response team begins to work by reaching out to the employer for additional details and provide solutions to the company.

Rapid Response or outplacement service aids employees once they have been notified there will be a layoff or downsizing. Services can include but are not limited to things such as resume reviews, job search advice, interview training, personalized coaching, career assessments, and how to register in our Work in the Texas system to find employment. It's a crucial step to receive resources that can help individuals through challenging times in their professional careers.

As a Board, we try to help transfer individuals going through a layoff quickly. We do this by working with other employers in the area who are willing to take individuals with the same skillset or upskill these individuals to fill their current needs. In addition, we can offer training for these individuals that can help offset the out of pocket



expense to employers and/or employees. It's important to help people find employment quickly to avoid downtime between jobs. Our goal as a Board is to continue to find ways that we can improve our resources such as literature and education, so it will support a better experience for both employees and employers.

### Youth Activities and Services

The Board shares pertinent information with educators, parents and students about career exploration and what steps young people need to be taking now so they are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow. Collectively, we focus our efforts on making sure that tomorrow's job candidates are equipped with the skills and knowledge they will need.

The Board offers young people, whether they are in school, have finished school, or have left school, a wealth of opportunities to get their future started on the right foot. We help with career planning, finding employment opportunities in the local area, completing a job application, marketing their skills and talents to employers, and instructions on how to excel at an interview.

Our goal is to support the region's 76 school districts in their efforts to reduce dropout 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.

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, Focus on Industry and Occupation profiles, and When I Grow Up.

The region's major universities have a role in the workforce system and are likely to have a greater one in the future as the Board's industry-based work continues and expands.

Additionally, the Board has an excellent relationship with our community college partners. The colleges provide educational programs leading to degrees and technical certificates, adult education and English as 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.

A successful youth model we look to scale are the partnerships between our Career Education/Outreach Specialists, Regional Facilitators, Student HireAbility Navigators, Vocational Rehabilitation partners and career office staff to ensure youth in our region have options to receive guidance to make informed career decisions, access to training and employment using technology and social media live events.



Listed are the available workforce activities for youth and youth with disabilities:

### Entrepreneurial Boot Camps – Youth and Young Adults

Camp for youth and young adults - We will conduct youth and young adult entrepreneurial boot camps to connect young people wanting to start or expand their business to existing efforts and tech incubators in the region. The events will be scheduled for a minimum of seven hours and will include resources in the community and an ongoing opportunity for support. We have identified multiple community partners to solicit their help in developing the events. We will procure a vendor who will be responsible for a guest speaker for the event, virtual location, and the development of all digital curriculum. We will further ensure the information developed is available in both English and Spanish. The trainings will be totally virtual and will include business creation, business plans, ownership, support and expansion. The goal of the bootcamp is to help entrepreneurial young people create, sustain, or grow their small businesses which create jobs and income vital to the continued growth of the Texas economy.

### Second Change Jobs Initiative

We continue to work with the City of Houston Re-entry program. Career and Recovery- Incarcerated Veterans Program, WorkFaith Connection Re-entry program and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice working primarily with adults and My Brother's Keeper will provide support. The mission of the Community Re-Entry Network is to work in partnership with the community to assess, plan, and implement effective strategies to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and successfully assist and support re-entry individuals in their transition in becoming productive, contributing members of the Houston community.

We work by securing work experience sites for up to ten weeks, wages up to \$12.00 hourly immediately upon return to the community. We will also make sure the individuals are aware of available training to support their efforts in finding employment. We offer financial aid and work-related support service to assist the individuals with needed clothing, transportation, training and certification/licenses to prepare for employment.

### Youth Diversion Opportunity

Gulf Coast Workforce Board provides a pre-plea opportunity during the pre-trial stage of the criminal justice process for young adult offenders to participate in a restorative program decreasing the jail population. These young adults are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and an increasing number of disengaged young people become adults suffering from a lifetime of low levels of education, chronic unemployment, recidivism and long-term incarceration. In response, this collaborative project seeks to address a major barrier to social and economic inclusion by diverting offenders from jail to opportunities for paid work experience, career education, and job training.

The workforce activity consists of defendants who have been in jail for over 3 days and have not been able to make a surety bond for a low-level felony offense. A District Judge, Sitting or Visiting, who is interested in assisting the youthful adult offender, will preside over the docket housed in the courtroom in the Joint Processing Center.

Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, and Pretrial Services will attend the docket where defendants will be considered for a Pre-plea Diversion program and a Personal Bond along with a connection to services. The

program concentrates on restorative justice principals emphasizing school attendance, and/or employment and employment related services as the offender restores him/herself and becomes a productive member of the community.

#### THW – Jobs

The goal of this workforce activity is to work in partnership with Coalition for the Homeless and The Way Home – Rapid Rehousing to quickly re-house homeless individuals and families. Our goal is to mitigate the negative effects of individuals experiencing hunger and homelessness by offering services to help them secure career opportunities that will provide livable wages to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

We provide work-based learning opportunities and place participants in work experiences for ten weeks, working up to 30 hours weekly. Additionally, we ensure these individuals are aware of available training to support their efforts in finding unsubsidized employment. We provide financial aid and support services needed to assist homeless individuals with work-related support services to prepare them for lasting careers.

#### Supported Employment - Job Coach Project

An individual with a disability may have the ability to perform a job but may lack the capacity to be successful due to other factors. A job coach is an individual with the training and certifications required to work alongside an individual with a disability for a prescribed number of hours to help them successfully navigate areas of the workforce where they may have difficulty participating because of a disability.

We assist individuals by providing a job coach in conjunction with work-based learning and/or on the job training. The goal of the workforce activity is to assist these individuals with valuable work experience, exposure to work and connecting them to other resources that can lead to long term sustainable employment. This effort will provide a basis for serving individuals with different types of abilities utilizing standard operating processes and allow us to build staff capacity in serving people with disabilities. We build a framework for continued support that leads to employment.

We will coordinate and collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation to ensure we are not duplicating service and to leverage funds to serve as many customers as possible.

#### Student HireAbility Navigators

The Student HireAbility Navigator grant is a three-year project that began in July 2018. This grant provides funding for two Student HireAbility Navigators who serve as resources in the Gulf Coast Region to support, expand, and enhance the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are in the early phases of preparing for transition to postsecondary education and employment.

#### Summer Earn and Learn

Summer Earn and Learn offers eligible students ages 14-22 with disabilities an opportunity to test their skills in the real world with paid internship opportunities at local employers. Summer Earn & Learn connects students with disabilities to successful work experiences, which helps them gain job skills and build confidence.

#### Paths for Texas

In November 2019, Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast was awarded a grant that runs through December 2022, provided by the Wal-Mart Foundation to initiate and expand retail up skilling opportunities for businesses and their current workforce, and develop career pathways to unemployed individuals seeking to transition into or out of the Retail Industry.

#### COVID-19 National Dislocated Worker Program

The goal of the 2020 COVID-19 NDW Program is to provide temporary employment to individuals who became unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or who are long-term unemployed.

#### Youth Job Skills Initiative

The Youth Job Skills Initiative focuses on supporting youth without or may be at risk of not attaining a secondary credential. The goal is to assist youth in their completion of a secondary credential and provide a seamless connection to work base learning opportunities in the following sectors: construction, healthcare, information technology.

#### Bridges to College and Careers

Workforce Solutions supports in an advisory role and through our career office network Bridge to College and Career Success. This workforce activity addresses the challenges identified in a Rice University's Kinder Institute for Urban Research study that found a high percentage of Gulf Coast disconnected youth do not have a high school diploma or have high school diplomas but lack access to training and higher education. We work with community-based organizations, community colleges, and employers to engage this population to improve their opportunities to succeed and have better futures.

#### Career Education and Outreach Specialists

Workforce Solutions will work with 50 schools across five independent school districts providing labor market and career data-including information about access to and instruction on how to use multiple Texas Workforce Commission labor market/career information tools-to support job exploration, counseling and guidance for students.

#### Education Opportunity Connector

Education Opportunity Connector brings our career offices and adult education providers together through shared Workforce Solutions services. Partnerships have been designed to foster and cultivate relationships to strengthen connections that will help career offices and adult education providers better understand what services are available to customers. The education opportunity connector provides opportunities to helping customers obtain the tools they need in order to thrive and compete in the Gulf Coast labor market.

#### Workforce Connector

Workforce Connector bridges our career offices and United Way THRIVE partners together to work collectively to help some of our most vulnerable customers find the help they need. These relationships offer opportunities to promote core services and share resources. Partnerships are continuously strengthening their relationships to establish stronger connections that will help customers better understand what services are available. Workforce

Connector provides opportunities to help customers get the resources they need in order to compete and prosper in the Gulf Coast labor market.

Recruiting remains a challenge and weakness. To strengthen this weakness, Gulf Coast Workforce Board staff will focus on increasing relationships with the community and provide technical assistance to career offices to support them in advancing the vision and goals of the Board.

#### Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

The Gulf Coast region is rich in workforce development partners. We have ten community colleges 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.

With our providers, we offer a wide range of services to employer and individual customers. We also partner with community-based organizations to integrate adult education services with their mentoring, life-skills training, financial education, English as a second language, childcare, transportation, and other work support service. Some of these organizations are paid vendors for our system while many others work informally with the Board jointly assisting customers.

The Board created Education Opportunity Connector, a strategic initiative to continue intentional efforts to coordinate and integrate secondary and post-secondary education programs. Education Opportunity Connector brings our career office and adult education networks together through shared Workforce Solutions services. Partnerships have been designed to foster and cultivate relationships to strengthen connections that will help career offices and adult education providers better understand what services are available to customers and create warm handoffs between partners to better serve customers. Outreach Specialists work with adult education providers to ensure students are aware of education and training opportunities in our workforce system. The education opportunity connector provides a blueprint regarding how to integrate our system to help customers obtain the resources and skills they need to compete and thrive in our region's labor market.

#### Child Care and Early Learning

The Board partners with Collaborative for Children to help parents in the Gulf Coast Region find quality childcare options. Through local match agreements, the Board coordinates with school districts and Head Start/Early Head Start providers to support and expand early education and care and to improve the quality and quantity of care available to working parents. The Board has allocated over \$4 million to support early education and care which provides support to nearly 23,000 low-income working families to help with their early education expenses.

The Board recognizes that choosing a high-quality program can have a significant impact on a child's readiness for and success in kindergarten and later grades. Children who attend high quality programs can make significant gains in their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Therefore, the Board will continue to support unique projects to enhance after school and year-around care. The projects include efforts to improve the quality of learning in a variety of early education situations through scholarships for quality training, pilot projects to increase teacher pay, and support of Texas Rising Star.

In Texas, childcare programs can pursue higher quality through several avenues. Texas Rising Star is one of these options for childcare providers, and for parents looking for high quality childcare for their children. The Texas Rising Star program is a voluntary, quality-based childcare rating system of childcare providers participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's subsidized childcare program. TRS Certification is available to Licensed Center and Licensed and Registered Child Care Home providers who meet the certification criteria. Additionally, childcare providers participating in the Texas School Ready! grant program provide quality childcare services focusing on preschool children.

The Board will ensure that financial aid for childcare, as a support to parents who are working or in-school, is accessible online and through local career offices, adult education providers, community and youth projects. The Board will seek to ensure safe and stable childcare/early education is available throughout the region to help families become independent from or avoid becoming dependent upon public assistance, leverage private and public funds to maximize the resources available for childcare financial aid, and ensure childcare financial aid is integrated into and fully a part of The Board's comprehensive service to help individuals get a job, keep a job or get a better job.

#### Transportation and Other Support Services

The Board offers support services when we believe they will help a customer go to work quickly, keep an existing job, or advance in a career. Types of support service we provide includes:

- Work Support – assistance to help customers accept a job offer or keep a job.
- Work Search Support – assistance to help customers look for work.
- Education Support – assistance to help customers obtain education or training to meet the expectations of employers in our region.
- Our financial aid categories include:
  - Education related support
  - Early education or childcare support
  - Transportation related support
  - Health care or health related support
  - Work-related support

These types of support may be offered based on a staff assessment of the customer needs while completing the employment plan, or because of a customer request. When a customer asks for financial aid, we evaluate the request based on our understanding of their need to get a job, keep a job, or get a better job and our guidelines for providing financial aid.

### Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)

The Board works closely with adult education providers to ensure adult education and literacy activities are carried out in accordance to local guidance, state and federal regulations, and services are coordinated with other workforce activities.

The Board assists adult education and literacy providers with coordinating services offered within our one-stop delivery system to help students acquire the skills needed to earn a high school equivalency, enter college or career training so they can succeed in the workforce.

The Board oversees the Gulf Coast Adult Education Consortium that is currently comprised of 14 adult education providers and one lead agency. Adult education and literacy services are for adult learners and service is also available to young people who have stopped out of high school and have not earned an equivalency diploma.

The Gulf Coast Adult Education Consortium served over 50,000 customers in ESL, Adult Basic and Secondary Education, Career Pathways and Transitions courses. 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.

The Board created Education Opportunity Connector, an initiative intended to strengthen relationships and promote integration within our one-stop system. Education Opportunity Connector brings our career offices and adult education providers together through shared Workforce Solutions services. Partnerships have been designed to foster and cultivate relationships to strengthen connections that will help career offices and adult education providers better understand what services are available to customers. The education opportunity connector provides customers opportunities to gain the skills needed in order to thrive and compete in our region's labor market.

The Board uses the steps below to attract, identify, and enroll eligible individuals to be served by Adult Education providers:

- AEL providers conduct PowerPoint presentations for staff and community about services available through AEL
- Bilingual flyers and/or marketing materials for each site listing times, locations, and types of classes as well as registration requirements and contact information

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) local recruiting, assessment and review process described below:

- Needs assessment
- AEL staff meet with community organizations and collaborating agencies within our service areas to determine the needs of the areas.



- Primary sites are then selected with the types of services students need most addressed. Central sites and class types are determined via our collaboration with our community partners and demonstration of student needs.
- Scheduling of services
- AEL Director or other Program staff meet with specific sites once they have been determined.
- Times and specific spaces available are reviewed with site managers so that calendars for services can be developed.
- Flyers and marketing materials are usually developed in both electronic and paper formats in Spanish/English/Chinese/Vietnamese as needed for sites and classes.
- Information regarding classes is first disseminated internally to each provider student services and Marketing departments.
- Information is next disseminated externally via both electronic and paper formats to program sites, nearby schools, churches, community organizations and centers, school districts in service areas, career offices, and other public buildings.
- Adult education providers have assigned staff members conduct presentations at public events within targeted service areas such as health fairs, career and college fairs, and other community outreach programs.
- Program information may also be sent to media outlets via press releases or via social media through the colleges and/or collaborating agencies about upcoming classes, registrations, and opportunities.
- This process will repeat itself with completion of each class session with new information being gathered from staff and students about evolving needs, scheduling of new services to address needs, and disseminating information as program changes are made.

### Rolling admission

Adult education orientations are offered every two weeks. Adult education providers collect contact information including names, phone numbers, and class information from interested students. Additionally, the Board will implement the new AEL Enrollment form to meet the requirements of the TEAMS 5.4.1 Release, which is required for enrolling students into adult education and literacy programs.

Students who are unable to enter classes due to space limitations or failing to meet eligibility at initial contact are referred to other adult education programs within our one-stop system or connected with community partners by referral.

### Assessment and Eligibility

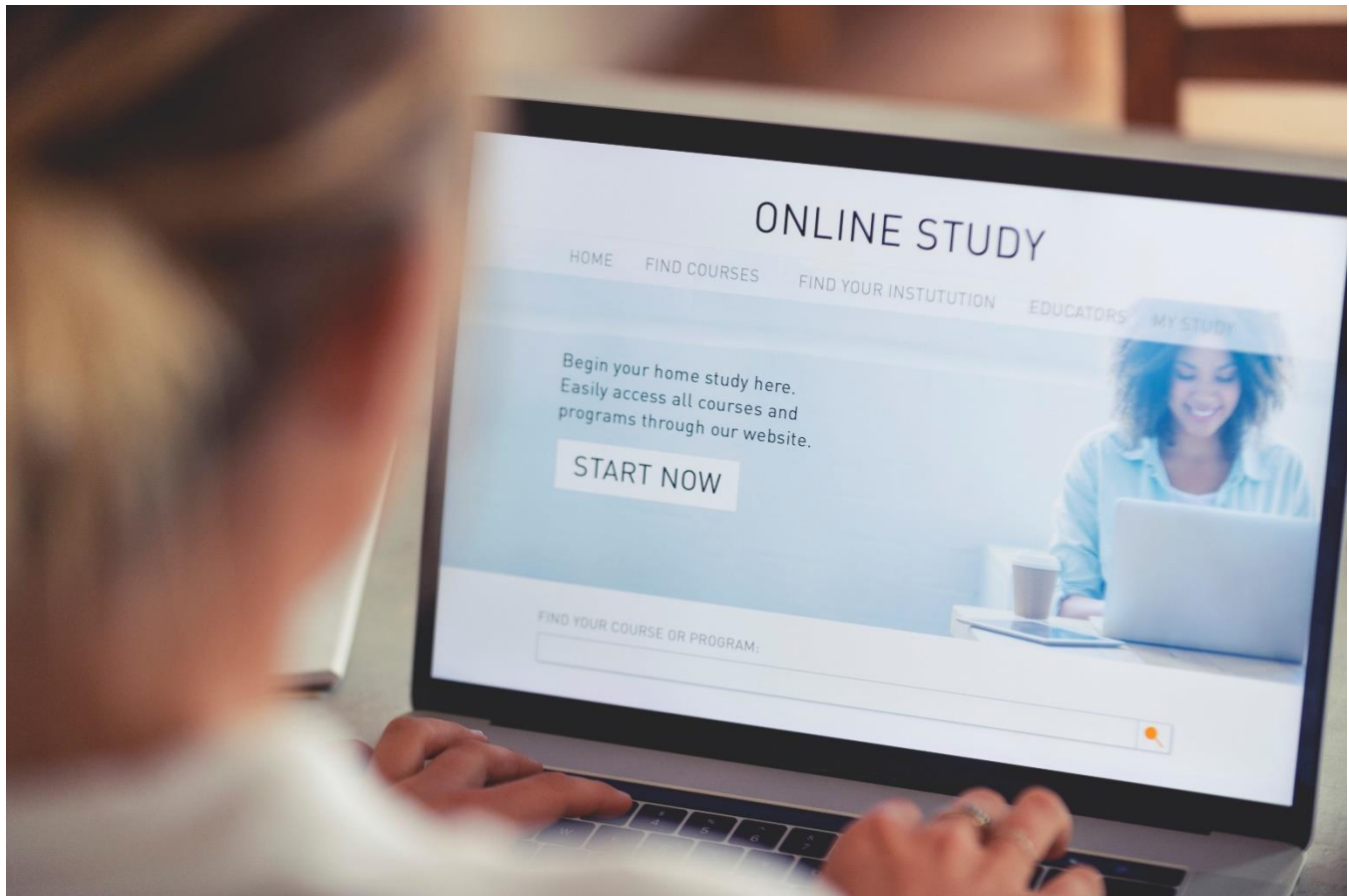
The Board provides guidance and information regarding student placement in instructional services, identify

potential support services that students may need, and determine eligibility for adult education services.

Adult education providers conduct assessments are scheduled according to site needs. Baseline testing is scheduled once student needs are determined. Students are referred to attend assessment and/or registration events according to the class they are interested in attending. Students wanting to enter an ESL class are scheduled to be assessed with a state approved assessment such as the BEST Plus Oral Assessment and the BEST Literacy exam. Students are given an estimate of the amount of time needed to complete assessments in advance. Progress assessments are also schedule with students and/or instructors and are completed once students have completed the minimum number of instructional hours for testing. Adult education programs refer to the minimum hours required to complete progress testing on students. They also review the state assessment policy to ensure approved assessment tools are being utilized. Each adult education provider has an internal process in place for assigning students to class rosters based on needs, desires and test results. This takes place after assessing student's needs - location, time, and type of class desired.

The Board works closely with providers and offers guidance and support working together to carry out workforce investment activities. The Board has coordinates and develops initiatives to integrate adult education and literacy activities with workforce investment activities to meet the unique and diverse needs of the individuals and businesses we serve. Looking ahead, the next section will describe how we help the employment needs of underemployed and unemployed adults and youth.

## PART 6: ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKERS, AND YOUTH SERVICES



The Board promotes the availability of employment and training activities to meet the employment needs of youth, adult, and dislocated workers in the Gulf Coast region. Our workforce system provides tailored services to assist those customers in entering the workforce, going back to work, continuing to work, or advancing in a career. As a first step, staff have conversations with customers about their work history, employment goals, and education or training. Staff analyze the information a customer gives us to help build a plan for how they can get a job, keep a job or get a better job using our service. Sometimes a customer may request, or staff recommend, using testing or assessment instruments to assist the customer in making their plan.

Testing and assessment instruments may include:

- Personality assessments - used to assess personality characteristics that affect behaviors in personal and social relationships.
- Cognitive ability (intelligence) or achievement assessments - used to assess verbal, nonverbal, and psychomotor abilities or mastery of knowledge in a particular content area.
- Interest and aptitude (career development) assessments - used to assess likes, dislikes, and patterns of

interest that may apply to (or be representative of) specific occupations.

Career offices use the following testing and assessment instruments for youth, adult and dislocated workers:

- Assessments available in WIT:
  - Yeah, I Can Do That!
  - Sharpest Tool
  - Find Your Path
  - Choose Your Values
  - Other Assessments used:
  - Kiersey Temperament Test
  - O\*NET Interest Profiler
  - TABE

Eligible adult and dislocated workers may receive two levels of service:

### **Career Services**

Career services are available to any customer who wants or needs these services. They may be provided electronically or by staff. Career services are designed to help customers get a job, keep a job, or get a better job. Career Services include the following:

- Job openings/listings
- Placement services
- Employment counseling and career planning
- Outreach, intake (including worker profiling), and orientation to information and other services available through Workforce Solutions;
- Assessment of skills levels, including English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and support service needs;
- Support services
- Computer access
  - Internet job search
  - Computerized job search software tutorials
  - E-mail

- Resume preparation
- Job search assistance (referral to job openings, FAX, Telephone)
- Labor Market Information
- Information on support services for working families including information on available and affordable childcare
- Job Search Seminars
  - Resume tips
  - Interviewing tips
  - Networking
  - Landing that First Job
  - Rebranding Your Skills
- Financial literacy
- Internships and work experience opportunities
- Online Learning
- Follow-up services

## Training Services

**Basic Skills** include adult basic education classes, parenting classes, English as a Second Language instruction, job readiness and general computer literacy training (ex: Microsoft Office Products). If you need to brush up on your basic skills, learn English, or prepare for a GED, there are several programs in the community available at no charge. Our career office financial aid specialists can help you find one. Workforce Solutions can also pay for GED testing.

**Career Training** refers to all courses or programs that prepare you for a specific occupation. This includes courses of study leading to associate and bachelor's degrees. In addition, there are many short-term, fast paced (Fast-Track) courses in basic construction skills such as dry-walling, plumbing, welding and HVAC installation.

**Career Advancement Training** consists of short-duration courses or seminars to help you gain additional skills and/or advance within your occupation. Examples of Career Advancement Training include SAP training, additional welding training (MIG, TIG, Fluxcore, etc.), and Network + training.

**Talent Development Activities** are new worker custom trainings and are class-sized or cohort-sized skills training for a group of new hires or potential new hires, for a specific employer or group of employers. Based on the employer's need, a curriculum is developed, and training is provided. Workforce Solutions may help support the cost of training for individuals who are referred by employers or recruited by Workforce Solutions Talent

Development staff.

**Current Worker Training** is designed for employees who currently work for the employer requesting assistance. This can include skill training, skill upgrading, basic education or combinations using available partners. Workforce Solutions may help support the cost of training for employees currently working for employers in the Gulf Coast region's target industries.

**On-the-job training** is a formal plan of skill and knowledge education related to a specific occupation that occurs while trainees are employed as entry-level hires. Workforce Solutions can provide funds to defray the cost of on-the-job training for employees who have been screened and determined eligible for Workforce Solutions funding.

**Pre-apprenticeships** are programs or set of strategies that lead into the path of a Registered Apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs and employer(s). Pre-apprenticeship may include a training component that can be funded by Workforce Solutions, if it is listed on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

**Registered Apprenticeships** are business-driven, earn-and-learn career pathways in which employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain work experience, classroom instruction, and a nationally recognized credential. The education component can be funded by Workforce Solutions if the training provider and program are listed on the ETPL.

### **Youth Workforce Investment Activities**

The Board provides year-round employment and training services for young people in our region. Youth customers receive an objective assessment, including a review of academic and occupational skill levels and service needs; an individualized employment plan with an age-appropriate career goal with steps to help the customer stay in school, return to school or go to work. Individuals may receive referrals to education and training to prepare them for postsecondary educational opportunities and/or to prepare them for jobs. The Board also provides schools with informational guides to show linkages between academic and occupational learning.

Providers hire staff that are experienced working with youth that go into the community and remote areas to reach youth and youth with disabilities that might not come into a local career office.

Providers partner with multiple school districts to conduct employability skills sessions that help youth with disabilities prepare for an annual Transition Fair that takes place in the Houston area each Spring.

Providers work with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to help connect youth with disabilities with services offered through the local career office and our adult education and literacy network. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and workforce staff arrange to meet with young adults in the local career offices or virtually using an online platform.

The Board is currently involved in several projects that support youth with finding a job or enrolling an education or training program. These opportunities are listed below:



### Youth Entrepreneurial Boot Camp

We propose to host youth and young adult entrepreneurial boot camps to connect women wanting to start or expand their business to existing efforts and tech incubators in the region. The goal of the bootcamp is to help entrepreneurial young people create, sustain, or grow their small business which will create jobs and income vital to the continued growth of the Texas economy.

### Diversion Opportunity for the Youth

Diversion Opportunity for Youth provides a pre-plea opportunity during pre-trial stage of the criminal justice process for young adult offenders to participate in a restorative program decreasing the jail population. This pilot project seeks to address a major barrier to social and economic inclusion by diverting offenders from jail to opportunities for paid work experience, career education, and job training.

### Supported Employment - Job Coach Pilot Project

An individual with a disability may have the ability to perform a job but may lack the capacity to be successful due to other factors. A job coach is an individual with the training and certifications required to work alongside an individual with a disability for a prescribed number of hours to help them successfully navigate areas of the workforce where they may have difficulty participating because of a disability.

### Hireability Navigators

Hireability Navigators provides awareness to over 75 schools districts and all eligible students of pre-employment transitions available within the Houston-Galveston area. Partnerships are created between districts, vocational rehabilitation centers and potential employers to match students with work-based experiences.

### Summer Earn & Learn

Summer Earn and Learn offers eligible students ages 14-22 with disabilities an opportunity to test their skills in the real world with paid internship opportunities at local employers. Summer Earn & Learn connects students with disabilities to successful work experiences, which helps them gain job skills and build confidence.

### Career Education and Outreach Pilot

Workforce Solutions will work with 50 schools across five independent school districts providing labor market and career data-including information about access to and instruction on how to use multiple Texas Workforce Commission labor market/career information tools-to support job exploration, counseling and guidance for students.

### Youth Job Skills Initiative

Youth job skills initiative provides services to young people at-risk of losing, and those that have not attained their secondary credential. Additionally, the initiative is providing work-based learning opportunities in the high skill, high demand sectors of the following industries: Construction, Healthcare, and Information Technology.

### Priority to Recipients of Public Assistance and Low-Income Individuals

The Board uses policy to ensure that priority is given to individuals that are veterans, recipients of public assistance or earn income that meets eligibility requirements, and foster youth. The Board uses multiple fund categories to provide financial aid for those customers. As indicated in our policy, in addition to meeting basic eligibility and suitability requirements, Child Care and Development Block Grant dollars and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds require the use of a priority list for awarding financial aid dollars.

### Funds with Priority Criteria

#### Child Care and Development Block Grant (financial aid for early education/care)

1. The following customers can receive financial aid using Child Care and Development Block Grant funds at any time:
  - a. Applicants for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash payments;
  - b. TANF recipients who are participating with us in employment and training activities;
  - c. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (food stamp) recipients who are participating with us in employment and training activities
2. The following customers can receive financial aid using Child Care and Development Block Grant funds subject to the funds being available and, if there is a waiting list, in the following order:
  - a. Children in protective services;
  - b. Children of veterans or their spouses;
  - c. Children of a foster youth;
  - d. Children experiencing homelessness;
  - e. Children of active duty military personnel who are unable to enroll their children in military-funded childcare assistance programs;
  - f. Children of teen parents;
  - g. Children with disabilities;
  - h. Siblings in families already receiving our financial aid for one or more children;
  - i. Families participating in Workforce Solutions career, employment or education activities that require the financial aid to successfully complete their service;
  - j. Families who have lost financial aid for a child exceeding 40 unexplained absence days and have reapplied for aid;

- k. All other eligible families

#### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

For customers who are eligible as adults for financial aid paid with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act dollars, priority states:

- a. First, to individuals who are (i) recipients of public assistance, (ii) other low-income individuals, or (iii) individuals who are basic skills deficient in the following order of priority:
  - 1) Eligible veterans and eligible spouses
  - 2) Foster youth and former foster youth
  - 3) All other individuals who are (i) recipients of public assistance, (ii) other low-income individuals, or (iii) individuals who are basic skills deficient
- b. Second, to individuals at or below the self-sufficiency income levels in the following order of priority:
  - 1) Eligible veterans and eligible spouses
  - 2) Foster youth and former foster youth
  - 3) All other individuals at or below the self-sufficiency income levels

For customers who are eligible as dislocated workers for financial aid paid with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act dollars, priority states:

- a. First to eligible veterans or eligible spouses
- b. Second to foster youth and former foster youth
- c. Third to all other individuals eligible as dislocated workers

For customers who are eligible as youth for financial aid paid with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act dollars, priority states:

- a. First to eligible veterans or eligible spouses
- b. Second to foster youth and former foster youth
- c. Third to all other individuals eligible as youth

#### Applying Priority Criteria

#### Child Care and Development Block Grant Funds

1. We fund assistance with childcare expenses upon request for customers who meet participation requirements as TANF Applicants, TANF Choices, and SNAP E&T.
2. For all other customers, when there is a wait list, we fund assistance using the priorities described above.

#### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

1. We fund assistance from the substantial assistance registry for eligible adults, dislocated workers or youth using the priority list.
2. We fund short-term assistance for any eligible adult or dislocated worker.

The Board cares passionately about helping customers with priority designations and will continue to provide guidance to the workforce system on how to carry out these requirements. Additionally, the Board will continue to monitor and support employment and training activities that are successful to help adult, dislocated workers, and youth live better lives in the communities they reside in. The next section describes how the Board uses a competitive process to award sub-grants and contracts for workforce activities.

## PART 7: FISCAL AGENT, GRANTS, AND CONTRACTS



The Houston Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) serves as the grant recipient and administrative entity for the Gulf Coast's regional public workforce system. In this role, H-GAC receives public workforce funds, contracts with various organizations and oversees the workforce system's operation and performance.

In 2017, H-GAC solicited contracts for the regional workforce system. We are in the fourth and final year of the procurement cycle for regional workforce contracts. H-GAC will release a Request for Proposal to solicit contracts for its regional workforce system in 2021.

When H-GAC issues a Request for Proposal, it will be posted for prospective bidders to view.

All proposal packages will be available for download from this site: <http://www.wrksolutions.com/about-us/business-opportunities/rfps/current-rfps>

After the deadline for proposal submission has closed, all proposals will be evaluated using the criteria specified in the RFP and an evaluation matrix will be developed to score the individual proposals by each member of the evaluation team.

Members of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Procurement Committee will meet in a public forum to review and discuss results of the evaluation. Each bidder will have an opportunity to make a brief oral presentation to the Procurement Committee. Committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the bidders.

After all proposals are scored and selected proposers are interviewed, the Procurement Committee will make their recommendations to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. The Board will then vote on the Procurement Committee's recommendation. When the Board reaches their decision, they will submit their recommendation to the Budget and Finance Committee of the H-GAC Board of Directors for approval to negotiate, and execute, a contract with the ranked proposers in descending order. However, the Final approval and selection of award lies with the Board of Directors. H-GAC reserves the right to delay that date as needed and to reject all proposals as deemed in its interest. The description of how the Board measures success for our region is in the following section.



## PART 8: PERFORMANCE



This section identifies the local levels of performance providers are expected to meet or exceed in our region. This information is used to measure the performance in the Gulf Coast area and used as measures of success for our one-stop delivery system.

For 2021, the Board adopted 13 measures and set performance targets for 2021:

More Competitive Employers	Market Share - (Oct. 2020 - Sept. 2021)	29,500
	Customer Loyalty - (Oct. 2020 - Sept. 2021)	63%
Higher Incomes	Exiters with Earnings Gains of at least 20%	37%
	Exiters employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit with Earnings Gains	46%
More and Better Jobs	New jobs created as a direct result of partnering with other business organizations	3,400
	New jobs created with employers in industries targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a direct result of partnerships	67%
	New jobs created in high-skill occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a direct result of partnerships	45%
	Customers employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit	77%
	Customers, unemployed at entrance, employed in the 1st Qtr. After Exit	75%
	Number of customers employed in 2nd and 3rd quarters after exit	83%
	Customers employed in the entrance quarter	68%
A Better Educated Workforce	Customers pursuing Education Credential that achieve one by quarter after exit	75%
	Customers enrolled in post-secondary who earn certificate or degree by quarter after exit	85%

The Board uses these measures to determine how effective our one-stop delivery system is regarding maintaining high performance. The subsequent section will describe how training and services will be coordinated to meet these goals.

## PART 9: TRAINING AND SERVICES



The Board establishes policies to ensure our region has an educated workforce to meet the employment needs of customers. Training services are an important component of our strategy to meet this need. The Board offers scholarships to help an individual get the basic or occupational skills and credentials they need to get a job, keep a job, or get a better job.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA), known by customers as scholarships, are available upon customer request and trainings are selected by customer choice. Customers who express an interest and need for training and education services, will meet with career office staff to discuss their career aspirations and training needs. We evaluate a customer's request based on their related experience, initial assessment results, and updated service plan. Once career office staff and the customer agree together that training is the best option, we discuss the financial aid process regarding receiving a scholarship to help a customer meet their service plan goals. In addition to funding scholarships, the Board will support customers with resources and services to ensure they are successful in completing their training.

Once the career pathway has been identified and training needs assessed, the customer will choose from our network providers within the selected career pathway to obtain the training they want and need. While all trainings are customer choice, individuals who receive education and training scholarships must use an approved

training vendor and choose a program from our Education and Training Vendor Network. Vendors may be colleges and universities, career schools, or unregulated (exempt) training providers.

These networks of education and training vendors are authorized to use our scholarship dollars for basic skills or upgrade occupational skills trainings. The Board provides scholarship support to occupations on the high-skill, high-growth list, using vendors on the Eligible Training Provider List.

Vendors are organized into the different categories below:

- **Basic Skills:** skills that generally equip customers with the ability and understanding necessary to enter the workforce and be an active participant in work across a variety of occupations such as:
  - Computer skills training - programs that teach customers non-job specific computer skills from introductory courses on how to use a computer to specific software products as the Microsoft Office Suite;
  - Adult basic education - programs that teach individuals basic literacy, high school equivalency preparation, or teach them how to speak, read or write English; and
  - Job readiness skills training - programs that teach customers non-technical skills and how to function in different work environments. Employers request to have their programs added when the vendors already listed with Workforce Solutions cannot meet the need.
- **Career Training:** courses or programs that prepare individuals for specific occupations. Programs must award a competency-based credential such as a certificate or degree. Examples of career training education are:
  - Registered Nursing, Welding, and Petroleum Engineering.
  - We will only approve career training programs that prepare individuals for employment in occupations on the Workforce Solutions High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations List.
- **Career Advancement:** career advancement training consists of short-duration workshops, seminars, or courses which equip customers with industry-recognized certifications and/or build on existing skills related to one of the Board's High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations. Career advancement training may include testing/assessment to demonstrate competency and may also include training to allow an individual to transition existing skills from one occupation or industry to another. Examples of career advancement training include SAP training, additional welding training (MIG, TIG, Fluxcore, etc.), and Network + training.
- **Registered Apprenticeship:** although there are no funds explicitly dedicated to Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs, Workforce Solutions works with employers by leveraging local and federal workforce development funds to encourage more employers to invest in Registered Apprenticeships (RA), and to prepare and support workers in RA. We support Registered Apprenticeship sponsors by leveraging ITA's to offset costs related to the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) component

of apprenticeship programs.

### Soliciting Vendors

We solicit education and training vendors in order to fill specific gaps in our current training offerings identified as a part of our work with the region's employers. We promote the addition of vendors to our network through the following methods:

- Publicizing education and training vendor opportunities on our website <http://wrksolutions.com>;
- Soliciting vendors for specific needs related to a industry, occupation, or geographic location;
- Career Office staff may make requests to the Financial Aid Payment Office for a vendor not listed in the Education and Training Vendor Network; and/or
- We accept open applications from vendors at any time for basic skills training, career training for occupations on the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations list, and career advancement training related to the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations list.

At least once every year, we look at the vendors on our list and assess the availability of training in our three categories to ensure we have enough choices for customers.

### Vendor Application Process

There are two different applications for education and training vendors:

#### 1. Basic Skills vendors apply using the Basic Skills Training Application.

- Training providers interested in becoming a vendor with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board should visit the [wrksolutions.com](http://wrksolutions.com) website under the Become a Vendor Page. They may also contact the Financial Aid Payment Office at [fa.office@wrksolutions.com](mailto:fa.office@wrksolutions.com) or call 713-975-7409 extension 2942, to request and submit their application.
- Once the Basic Skills Application and supporting documentation are received, the Financial Aid Payment Office will review the application according to the application checklist, which is included in the Basic Skills Application.
- If the application is approved, the Financial Aid Payment Office will contact the vendor to sign a vendor agreement and complete a W-9 Form. A site visit is also scheduled to review compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and to ensure there is proper training equipment at the facility, related to the programs/courses being taught.
- Approved basic education programs are listed on our website:

<https://www.wrksolutions.com/for-individuals/financial-aid/workforce-solutions-scholarships>.



## 2. Career Training and Career Advancement Training

Vendors apply using the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) [Board Tool](#).

There is a two-step application process for career training and career advancement vendor applicants:

- The first step requires the vendor's main campus to be in our region. The vendor must also provide their regulation status and evidence of partnerships with local employers associated with the program(s) they are submitting for approval. They must then complete the Board Tool (application) and submit the state required documents to the Financial Aid Payment Office at [fa.office@wrksolutions.com](mailto:fa.office@wrksolutions.com). These requirements must be met, or the application cannot be submitted to the Texas Workforce Commission Eligible Training Provider Helpdesk (ETP Helpdesk).
- Once the program is submitted to the ETP Helpdesk by the Financial Aid Payment Office, the training provider will receive a student data report request from the ETP Helpdesk and will need to follow the instructions provided to submit the student data report to the ETP Helpdesk. This information is needed for the application to be approved. The process typically takes between two and six weeks, depending on the amount of information provided and the accuracy of the information. If approved, TWC will add the training vendor to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
- Once the vendor is approved and placed on the ETPL, the Financial Aid Payment Office will review the application to ensure the program meets the Gulf Coast region's [High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations](#). We will then review the supporting documentation according to the [Education and Training Vendor Application Checklist](#).

### ITA Limitations

The Board imposes limits on the duration and the amount of ITAs. However, on a case-by-case basis, career office managers may request an exception from Board staff to the ITA limits after conducting a comprehensive assessment. Career office staff discuss the customer's education needs, work experience, employment status, program fit, and proximity of completion. The assessment must be documented in TWIST counselor notes and the customers service plan must reflect the need for training and support.

We explain to the customer how we can help them achieve their goals and provide relevant information about award limits and support services. We also help identify sources of assistance in addition to Workforce Solutions financial aid.

If a customer requests financial assistance for training, career office staff:

- Discuss the types of occupations and training programs in which they're interested.
- Review and discuss Labor Market Information to show demand for persons with skills and expected wages for related occupations.

- Schedule or arrange tests and assessments as necessary. We discuss their financial aid needs and how financial assistance will help meet their employment goals.
- Discuss and, if appropriate, provide FAFSA website for the customer to get information and to submit a free application for federal student aid. Note: there is no requirement to use federal grants before applying Workforce Solutions financial aid to support education or training.
- Help the customer identify other sources of timely assistance in the community, if available.
- Discuss the customer's ability to meet financial obligations during training.
- Determine suitability by checking for the customer's:
  - understanding their chosen occupation (may include awareness of hours, working conditions, wages, physical demand, character qualifications, etc.),
  - readiness to enter and complete the training,
  - ability to meet scholastic and financial obligations during training, and identification of barriers that may prevent them from being successful in that field.
- Begin developing the service plan with the customer which includes steps Workforce Solutions and the customer will take before the next meeting, such as career exploration, assessment appointments, wage/demand research, gathering documents, creating a budget, finding a part-time job, locating other resources, etc.
- Ask the customer about their employment goals and discuss specific steps along the customer's path to achieve those goals.
  - Can the customer obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment? If not, then we discuss how Workforce Solutions can help the customer meet their goals through classroom training and/or work-based training.

ITA award limits apply to a 12-month period. The costs of these services are included in the total available for a Workforce Solutions scholarship. ITA limits are as followed:

- Up to \$3,000 for basic skills training
- Up to \$6,000 for occupational skills training
- Up to \$6,000 for upgrade skills training

To ensure limits do not affect customer choice, career office staff explain to customers they are not limited to taking courses that cost \$6,000 or less from the scholarship limit. A customer can select any of the approved



training courses and pay the difference if the overall tuition cost exceeds the \$6,000 Workforce Solutions scholarship, through other grants and scholarships, or out of pocket payment.

The Board supports education and training to assist customers with meeting their career and education goals. Registered apprenticeships are a major part of how the Board supports customers with education and training. In the next section, we describe how we use registered apprenticeships to assist customers with gaining skills to have better career opportunities.

## PART 10: APPRENTICESHIP



Registered Apprenticeships are an earn as you learn system that allows individuals the opportunity to build knowledge and skills while earning wages. Registered apprenticeships provide structured career pathways without debt and the chance to build a foundation that can offer growth, loyalty, and retention in the workforce.

Apprenticeship models have uniqueness and flexibility that can offer employers the option to customize the classroom curriculum with on-the-job training related instruction. Registered apprenticeships are both traditional and non-traditional. These types of programs help fill the skills gap many employers experience over time with their workforce.

As a Board, we consult with businesses about their hiring and training challenges and provide workforce development solutions that include encouraging registered apprenticeship programs. The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has a designated team of individuals trained who specialize in Registered Apprenticeship programs whom serve as consultants and schedule meetings and consultations between employers and department of labor representatives. During these consultations, we provide in-depth details to employers on how they can receive further support from us by being on the Eligibility Training Provider List. Some of the advantages for employers can be to gain exposure of their programs and receive additional support from the Board to help offset the cost of training.

This additional support can help the individual and employers through funds which include items such as:

- Scholarships for classroom learning.
- Wage reimbursement for on-the-job training related structure.
- Supportive services for the individual, so they will be successful on the first day of work and training.

## **Apprenticeship Texas**

The Board will support Apprenticeship Texas using a two-prong approach. The first part of the two-prong approach is to have a team of consultants with knowledge of apprenticeship programs that will be the boots on the ground, so to speak. The consultants will develop strong employer relationships, build trust, and be the liaison for the employer. This team of subject matter experts will provide support throughout the process for employers and to help ensure the success of their program.

The second part of this process will be to help employers with additional resources, so they can sustain the program once it's in place. Boards can do this by providing incentives to help offset the cost of the classroom curriculum, on-the-job training, and any other barriers that might lead to an individual not being successful in an apprenticeship program or completing it.

These apprenticeship programs are important to help fill the skills gap that many industries will soon face. The Board will continue to support, encourage, and build on both new and existing traditional and non-traditional programs for Texas.

Additionally, the Board is committed to supporting ApprenticeshipTexas. Our consultants developed strategies to reach out to ApprenticeshipTexas staff to identify the apprenticeship model that best suits businesses in our region. We will also share information about this program with our business partners so interested employers may receive one-on-one technical assistance and guidance to get an apprenticeship program up and running.

The Board will uphold the five core building blocks involved in creating and operating a Registered Apprenticeship program.

- **Explore** – get to know apprenticeship, its benefits, and how to access key areas of opportunity by occupation
- **Partner** – collaborate with apprenticeship representatives, workforce organizations, educators, and others to build your program
- **Build** – understand your options, decide on a program model, and create your training plan
- **Register** – full support through design and application process, register your program with U.S. Department of Labor
- **Launch** – recruit prospective apprentices, train your workforce, and promote your program

The Board understands the significance of promoting and working with employers to develop registered apprenticeship programs to create talent pipelines for in-demand occupations. We are committed to our mission to elevate the economic and human potential of the Gulf Coast region by fulfilling the diverse needs of the businesses and individuals we serve. The strategies and descriptions outlined in this plan reflect our dedication and passion to advance our purpose to keep the Gulf Coast region the best place to do business, work, and live.

## PART 11: PUBLIC COMMENT

Following the announcement at the Gulf Coast Workforce Board meeting on January 6, 2021, we posted the Local Plan and attachments to our website at [www.wrksolutions.com/LocalPlan](http://www.wrksolutions.com/LocalPlan). We hosted a public meeting and provided an email address to receive comments from stakeholders across the region. The public meeting had 87 participants: 49 stakeholders, 31 system staff, and 7 unidentified participants by phone.

Additionally, we sent an email announcement to 5,367 business, community, education, and labor representatives requesting comments. Each recipient received an email solicitation on January 7, 14, and 21.

The comment period closed on January 21. We received a total of three comments that are summarized below:

- A workforce development manager said: Industrial Construction offers strong, stable jobs for people in Southeast Texas and also across the State of Texas. Grant Funding for craft training programs (Carpentry, Electrical, Pipefitting, Millwright, Instrumentation, Welding, Crane Operations, Rigging) is needed to help us fill the skill gap in this industry. Funding to community college and training partners like the Associated Builders and Contractors Construction Maintenance Education Foundation (CMEF) is needed to support the growth in our region. Being able to take entry-level employees through NCCER training, offer programs to the underemployed, and upgrade employees to journey level craftsmen is necessary to fill industrial construction needs. We would also like more information on how to give more input on Industrial Construction to the Workforce Board.
- A community college executive director said: We are hearing a lot of need for carpenters from residential home builders who hire our students from LSC. Very glad this made it onto the list. Was there any discussion about EMT/Paramedics or other front line healthcare workers to be added in light of the pandemic.
- A community researcher said: This is great information. I see the majority of occupations on the high-skill high-growth occupation list require some kind of post-secondary degree. Besides the vendors, service providers, educational providers, I hope this document can be shared with parents via the Workforce Solutions Parent Chat series.

## APPENDIX: TEXAS WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL 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

##### Focus on Employers

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

#### System Goal 1—Local Board Response

##### **Board response and corresponding plan page number(s): 22, 30, 49, 55, 62, and 92**

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board uses data to drive decisions throughout the system. The Board uses employment projection data and performance measures in our strategic plan to guide the development of our region's pool of human talent to meet the needs of employers.

The Gulf Coast Region boasts an estimated 147,000 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; 28 full-time local career offices; 14 adult education providers; and a network of 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:

- Helped more than 21,500 employers;
- Helped more than 193,000 people go to work;
- Provided basic education for more than 18,490; and

- Used \$247 million in financial aid to provide training scholarships, work-based learning, work search and work entry support services, and assistance with early education/childcare 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 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 public 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, Focus on Industry and Occupation profiles, When I Grow Up and Choices Planner. 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.

In November 2019, Workforce Solutions was awarded a grant that runs through December 2022, provided by the Wal-Mart Foundation, to initiate and expand retail up-skilling opportunities for businesses and their current workforce, and develop career pathways to unemployed individuals seeking to transition into or out of the retail industry.

#### System Goal 1 - Rationale

#### 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. **1 - Local Board Strategy/Initiative and Quantitative Outcomes**

#### System Goal 2—Local Board Response

**Board response and corresponding plan page number(s): 24, 51, 53, 55, 68, 70, 82, 85, 87, and 101**

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.

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, childcare, 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.

Our system-wide Navigators work to ensure that customers with disabilities are able to navigate the realm of finding employment on a level playing field by coordinating with Texas Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services and other community organizations to promote awareness of disability related topics and much more.

In addition to working with our core partners, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board outreaches 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 projects. One example is our collaboration with the City of Houston’s Re-entry program. The mission of the Community Re-Entry Network is to work in partnership with the community to assess, plan, and implement effective strategies to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and successfully assist and support re-entry individuals in their transition in becoming productive, contributing members of the Houston community.

We work by securing work experience sites for up to ten weeks, wages up to \$12.00 hourly immediately upon return to the community. We also make sure the individuals are aware of available training to support their efforts in finding employment. We offer financial aid and work-related support service to assist the individuals with needed clothing, transportation, training and certification/licenses to prepare for employment.

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 governments – to leverage the resources available through Workforce Solutions for as many employers and individuals as possible.

#### System Goal 3 and Rationale

## Align System Elements

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

### System Goal 3—Local Board Response

**Board response and corresponding plan page number(s): 50, 55, 56, 62, 87, 109-112,**

The Board is dedicated to aligning core programs in education and workforce to benefit employers and workforce development generally in the region. The Board has no difficulty 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 <https://www.wrksolutions.com/about-us/business-opportunities/become-a-vendor>. Workforce Solutions financial aid payment office 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. Serving as the grant recipient allows the Board to have stronger alignment of the education services to the needs of employers. 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. To assist, the Board created the Education Opportunity Connector, an initiative intended to strengthen relationships and promote integration within our one-stop system. The Connector brings our career offices and adult education providers together through shared Workforce Solutions services.

The Gulf Coast Education Consortium served over 50,000 customers in ESL, Adult Basic and Secondary Education, Career Pathways and Transitions courses. Career Pathways course 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.

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. For example, the Board has two Student HireAbility Navigators who serve as resources in the region to support, expand, and enhance the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are in the early phases of preparing for

transition to postsecondary education and employment.

## System Goal 4 and Rationale

### Improve and Integrate Programs

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

## System Goal 4—Local Board Response

**Board response and corresponding plan page number(s): 17-18, 24, 32, 34-45, 49-51, 68-70, 76, and 101**

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 accounted for 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:

- Reality Check – TexasRealityCheck.com (<http://www.texasrealitycheck.com>)
- Texas Career Check (<https://texascareercheck.com/>)
- Jobs Ya’ll (<https://jobsyall.com/>)
- Texas Consumer Resource on Education and Workforce Statistics (Texas CREWS) – TexasCREWS at <http://www.txcrews.org>
- Texas Labor Analysis – Regional occupational Analysis Tool (<https://texaslaboranalysis.com/>)
- Emerging and Evolving Occupations (<https://lmci.state.tx.us/researchers/emerging.asp>)

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 careers 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.

Using these tools, we set the below goals for Workforce Solutions:

By 2021,

- 3,400 new jobs will be created as a direct result of Workforce Solutions partnering with other business organizations
- 67 percent of the new jobs created with employers in industries targeted by the Gulf Workforce Board as a direct result of Workforce Solutions' partnership efforts
- 45 percent of new jobs created with employers in high-skill, high-growth occupations targeted by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as a result of Workforce Solutions' partnership efforts

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:

- Our employer and resident service staff have ongoing relationships with both our partners and customers. On the employer service side, business consultants, industry liaisons, and administrative staff maintain relationships with employers, economic development organizations staff, and schools. On the resident side, career office staff, particularly our greeters, resource room specialists, personal service representatives, financial aid specialist 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 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 of our partners to ensure the 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 and information and guiding partners in the development of programs that are the best fit for the region.
- Marketing – The Board's marketing plan is designed to share information about workforce service

throughout the region. Our marketing plan includes the use of our website, [www.wrksolutions.com](http://www.wrksolutions.com), email blasts, targeted mailings, and special events.

- The Board has invested funds to update our virtual technologies to help continue and improve communication and access to assist customers
- Workforce Solutions offers free online learning tools to provide individuals looking for work and employers in need of staff with creative solutions for navigating the job market: [www.wrksolutions.com/onlinelearning](http://www.wrksolutions.com/onlinelearning)
- Workforce Solutions partners with local television network ABC 13 for a weekly Facebook Live hiring/job search event that has reached over 700,000 viewers in more than 20 sessions.