



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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To: Gulf Coast Workforce Board Members

From: Executive Director Juliet K. Stipeche

Date: August 2, 2025

Subject: August 5, 2025, Board Meeting

I look forward to seeing you soon at our upcoming Gulf Coast Workforce Board meeting on Tuesday, August 5, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in person at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Conference Room A/B/C, Houston, TX 77027 and conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and will be open to the public.

Agenda Highlights

The meeting will begin with opening remarks from Board Chair Mark Guthrie, followed by my Executive Director's Report and a regional update from H-GAC Executive Director Chuck Wemple. We will then hear committee updates from:

- Guy Jackson, Audit and Monitoring,
- Adrian Ozuna, Career Services,
- Alan Heskamp, Employer Engagement,
- Doug Karr, Communications, and
- Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Education Committee Special Workshop.

Key items for discussion and possible action include the approval of a Budget Committee Charter, our first committee charter, and the adoption of the FY2025 revised budget totaling \$492,436,736. Under the Procurement Committee, Dr. Henderson will share for discussion and possible action contract awards for Career Services, renewals for the Financial Aid Payment Office, the Financial Aid Support Center, Communications and Outreach, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Payrolling and Employer of Record. She will also present for consideration and possible action an extension for Family Engagement and Home-Based Provider Services and a proposed sublease for Early Childhood Education office space. We will also receive Board staff presentations from:



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- Philip Garcia – System Performance and Production,
- Brandi Brown – Financial Overview and Expenditures,
- Parker Harvey and Mohammad Ahmadizadeh – Labor Market Trends, and
- Russell Tomlin – Communications and Outreach Activities.

Advancing the Strategic Plan

We are almost one year into the implementation of our five-year Strategic Plan, *Innovate, Connect, Thrive*, and we are seeing deliberate momentum across all four goals. The work on this agenda, restructuring career service delivery, enhancing employer engagement, expanding communication infrastructure, and investing in regional access points, demonstrates alignment with the Board's mission to help employers meet workforce needs and individuals build careers, and our vision to create thriving, inclusive communities across the Gulf Coast region.

Most notably, we are preparing to launch our new regionally integrated career services model, moving away from a model that bifurcated employer and career services toward a more agile system that includes mobile, virtual, and subregional components. This shift will position us to meet employers and job seekers where they are with services that are more responsive to the demands of our regional economy.

Our Gratitude

Before closing, I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all Board Members who recently completed the Conflict of Interest and Convene Platform Training. Further, a very special thanks to the Board members who devoted their time and attention to our various committee meetings.

A Personal Reflection: In Memory of Dr. Bob Stein

This month also brings a moment of personal and civic reflection. Dr. Robert M. Stein, the renowned Rice University political science professor, public policy expert, and one of Houston's most respected civic minds, passed away at the age of 75. ([Rice mourns loss of Bob Stein, renowned political scientist and civic leader | Rice News | News and Media Relations | Rice University](#)).



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On a very personal note, Professor Stein was my mentor, my undergraduate advisor in political science and policy studies, and a guiding light in my early steps toward public service and a lifelong hero. In 1994, he helped me secure a paid internship at Houston City Hall, a first-of-its-kind opportunity for a PoliSci student, which ultimately inspired the creation of the Rice Center for Civic Engagement. I later used this experience to guide the design of Mayor Sylvester Turner's Hire Houston Youth and now the Board's Hire Gulf Coast Youth. Bob saw potential in his students and held a steadfast belief in the importance of shaping thoughtful future leaders with real world experience. His brilliance was only matched by his humor and humility. He worked for the public good, not because it was easy or celebrated but because he truly loved doing so.

At his memorial service, Professor John Alford shared a story that deeply moved me. In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was condemned to roll a boulder uphill for eternity after repeatedly outwitting the gods; acts that, in some versions, he undertook to challenge injustice and protect humanity. Bob once told Professor Alford: "If I were Sisyphus, I wouldn't think I was cursed at all. I'd be happy knowing what I had to do every day, and I'd do it very well."

Sometimes in workforce development, tasks seem overwhelmingly large with progress moving painfully slow, and there are times that I can relate to Sisyphus. But now, thanks to Bob, I choose to hold a different perspective. If we shift how we view the work, if we focus on the rhythm of showing up, the responsibility to serve, and the quiet power of perseverance, then the work has a sacred purpose. We are blessed with the opportunity to serve humanity and our community.

Perhaps, as Bob so insightfully showed, there is something redemptive in the certainty and rhythm of knowing your task and doing it well. What was meant as a curse becomes, in the right hands and heart, a testament to passion, persistence, and purpose. Knowing Bob, an exceedingly brilliant, principled, and caring soul, he embraced the curse of trying to solve some of the world's most difficult problems with resolve because it meant helping others and strengthening people, politics, and democracy.

We are so fortunate to know people who, like Professor Stein, remind us that work matters, and how we do the work with integrity, humility, and purpose matters just as much.



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I look forward to seeing you on August 5, as we continue this work together.

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD MEETING

AGENDA

Tuesday, August 5, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.
2nd Floor, A/B/C, 3555 Timmons Lane
Houston, Texas 77027

This meeting will be in person only and open to the public.

- 1. Call to Order (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 2. Roll Call (Desmond Taylor)**
- 3. Adopt Agenda (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 4. Public Comment (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 5. Review of the June 2025 Meeting Minutes (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 6. Declare Conflicts of Interest (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 7. Reports:**
 - a. Board Chair's Remarks: (Board Chair Mark Guthrie),
 - b. Executive Director's Report: (Juliet Stipeche),
 - c. H-GAC Executive Director's Report: (Chuck Wemple),
 - d. Audit and Monitoring Committee Report: (Committee Chair Guy Jackson),
 - e. Career Services Committee Report: (Committee Chair Adrian Ozuna,
 - f. Employer Engagement Committee Report: (Committee Chair Alan Heskamp),
 - g. Communication Committee Report: (Committee Chair Doug Karr), and
 - h. Education Committee Report on Special Workshop on the Financial Aid Support Center: (Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson).



8. Action Items:

- a. Budget Committee Report: Briefing of the Budget Committee meeting from Committee Chair Carl Bowles including discussion and possible action regarding the following:
 - i. Adoption of the Budget Committee Charter; and
 - ii. Approval and submission of the revised 2025 budget.
- b. Procurement Committee Report: Briefing of the Procurement Committee meeting from Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson including discussion and possible action regarding the following:
 - i. Contract Awards for Career Service Providers for the North, West, and East Regions;
 - ii. Contract Renewal of the Financial Aid Payment Office;
 - iii. Contract Renewal of the Financial Aid Support Center;
 - iv. Contract Renewal of Communication and Outreach;
 - v. Contract Renewal of Vocational Rehabilitation Payrolling and Employer of Record;
 - vi. Contract Extension of Family Engagement and Home-based Provider Services; and
 - vii. Office Sublease for Early Childhood Education Division.

9. Presentations and Information:

- a. Performance and Production: Report on the system's performance and production (Philip Garcia),
- b. Expenditures: Report on the Board's budget and expenditures (Brandi Brown),
- c. A Look at the Economy: Update on the Labor Market (Parker Harvey and Mohammad Ahmadizadeh), and
- d. Communications and Outreach Update: Report on relevant stories (Russell Tomlin).

10. Other Business

11. Adjourn



If you wish to make a public comment you may appear in person or do so by providing your comments in writing no later than 5:00 pm on **Monday, August 4, 2025**, to Dr. Maria Franco Cortes at maria.cortes@wrksolutions.net.

Meeting materials are available on our website at www.wrksolutions.com/about-us/meetings.

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**GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2025**

1. Call to Order: The Tuesday, June 3, 2025, meeting of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Board Chair Mark Guthrie. The meeting was held on the 2nd Floor, A-C, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027.

2. Roll Call: Desmond Taylor, Program Administrator of the GCWB called the roll. The following members of the GCWB were present:

Arcos, Marie	Heskamp, Alan	Ordonez, Sineria
Baker, Jennifer	Jackson, Guy R.	Oser, Margaret
Bowles, Carl	Johnson, Joyce	Puente, Paul
Cevallos, Rachel	Jones, Lavone	Riley, Monica
Cockrell, Dorian	Karr, Doug	Rodriguez, Melanie
Gonzalez, Melissa	LaBroski, Jeff	Sorola-Pohlman,
Guido, Cheryl	Lindsey, Susan	Lenora
Guthrie, Mark	Lowe, Jonathan	Vazquez, Lizandra
Harris, Allatia	Makany-Rivera, Tanya	Webster, Michael
Henderson Bobbie	Melton, Edward	Yu, Bin

Board Chair Guthrie determined a quorum was present.

3. Introduction of Newly Appointed Board Members

- Jennifer Baker

Ms. Baker introduced herself and was warmly welcomed by the Board.

4. Adopt Agenda: Board Chair Guthrie presented the proposed June 3, 2025, meeting agenda. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion passed.

5. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

6. Review of the June 2025 Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the June 3, 2025, GCWB meeting were distributed electronically to all members before the June 3, 2025, meeting. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

- 7. Declare Conflicts of Interest:** No conflicts were declared. Chair Guthrie reminded the members that they could declare conflicts with items as they were taken up.

8. Reports:

- a. **Board Chair's Report:** Chair Guthrie opened his remarks by announcing the inaugural GCWB's Community Champion Award and presenting a related Board Resolution. After the presentation of the Resolution and award, the Board voted to unanimously approve the Resolution as presented. This year's recipient of the Community Champion Award was Nick Natario of KTRK Channel 13, Houston. Mr. Natario provided remarks and thanked the GCWB for being such a dynamic and impactful partner over the past five years.

Chair Guthrie continued his remarks by reporting on federal funding. He noted that the GCWB's WIOA Title 1 allotment for FY 2025 had been reduced by about \$4 million from \$54 million to \$50 million. Additionally, the Trump Administration's Department of Labor released a FY 2026 budget proposal that shed light on his Executive Order that consolidated workforce programs and emphasized apprenticeships. Under the Make America Skilled Again (MASA) proposal, all current DOL workforce programs—including WIOA Title I (Adult, DW, and Youth), Youthbuild, Apprenticeships, Data Quality Initiatives, Re-entry Program, and Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Programs would be consolidated into a single MASA block grant to states. The new proposed iteration of the grant would require at least 10% to be allocated towards registered apprenticeships.

The proposed MASA grant total of \$2.9 billion matches the current funding levels allocated solely for WIOA Title I. Based on the figures provided, there is an approximate \$1.55 billion overall reduction compared to current enacted 2025 total funding levels for the consolidated programs, representing a 33% decrease.

Chair Guthrie reiterated to the Board that it needs to be prepared for some substantial funding cuts.

Chair Guthrie noted that he plans to attend the National Association of Workforce Boards' Board of Directors summer meeting in July in Austin, TX and will provide a report at the August meeting.

Locally, Chair Guthrie reported on the GCWB's series of meetings to introduce the Local Strategic Plan to chambers and economic development organizations, including:

- Matagorda and Wharton Counties Community Roundtable in Bay City on April 10, 2025; and
- Greater Houston Area Community Roundtable at H-GAC on April 24, 2025.

Additionally, he thanked Board staff for their leadership on hosting:

- New Board Member Orientation on May 14, 2025; and
- Texas City Workforce Solutions Open House on May 22, 2025.

Chair Guthrie concluded his report, and no further action was taken.

- b. **Executive Director's Report (Juliet Stipeche):** Executive Director Juliet Stipeche extended her deep appreciation to Board members for their continued engagement and visible presence at key events over the past month, each one reflecting the Board's commitment to building a more responsive, connected, and opportunity-rich workforce system for the Gulf Coast region.

She began by highlighting the Jobs Y'all Hiring Event on April 2, held in collaboration with the Pearland Economic Development Corporation, where employers, educators, and community leaders came together to connect local talent with real career pathways. On April 11, several members joined a tour of the International Union of Operating Engineers' International Training and Education Center, gaining firsthand insight into one of the most advanced training facilities for the skilled trades in the country.

On April 30, the Board's ongoing support for apprenticeships was reflected in its participation at the Houston Gulf Coast Building and Construction Trades Council's ARP/MC3 - National Apprenticeship Day Celebration, underscoring our shared commitment to expanding high-quality earn-and-learn models across the region. Then, on May 8, members engaged in a meaningful conversation with leaders of the Houston Asian Chamber of Commerce, opening the door to deeper collaboration with one of the region's most vibrant business communities.

Executive Director Stipeche also acknowledged the successful New Board Member Orientation held on May 14, which laid a strong foundation for new members to step into their roles with clarity and

purpose. Later that month, on May 30, members participated in a Port of Houston Boat Tour, offering a powerful perspective on the maritime industry and infrastructure that drive our regional economy.

Looking ahead, Board staff will host a follow-up orientation focused on ethics and conflict of interest. In addition, staff will soon launch Convene, a new online board management platform designed to enhance transparency, streamline communication, and strengthen the Board's governance processes.

In closing, Executive Director Stipeche thanked members for their unwavering dedication to the mission, and for their thoughtful participation in the events and discussions that continue to shape the future of our workforce system. She concluded her remarks with no formal action taken.

- c. **H-GAC Executive Director's Report (Chuck Wemple):** Mr. Chuck Wemple opened his remarks by reminding everyone that hurricane season has started, and the agency is monitoring any developments that may impact our region. Additionally, he mentioned the proposed funding changes at the federal level and assured the Board that H-GAC is monitoring any funding impacts, specifically to the Transportation Council and the GCWB.

Lastly, Mr. Wemple assured the Board that H-GAC is assessing all its departments to ensure the highest level of efficiencies and collaboration across the agency while also making sure the GCWB is receiving all the supportive services from the agency. He will provide a follow up report on this assessment later.

H-GAC Executive Director Chuck Wemple concluded her report and no action was taken.

- d. **Audit and Monitoring Committee (Committee Chair Guy R. Jackson):** Chair Jackson reported that the Audit and Monitoring Committee met in a hybrid meeting on May 15, at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027, Room 2D at 1:00 p.m. Committee and Board Members present included Chair Guy R. Jackson, Mark Guthrie, Cheryl Guido, Doug Karr, Joyce Johnson, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Lenora Sorola Pohlman, Mou Sarkar, and Lizandra Vasquez. Board staff present included Juliet Stipeche, Desmond Taylor, AJ Dean, Kristi Rangel, Russell Tomlin, Sabrina Uy, LaToya Casimere, Angelis Barnes, Willie Coleman, Abdul Kargbo, Romana Paniagua, Jenny Johnson, Shawwna Thompson, Vanessa

Salazar, Thomas Brown, Brandi Brown, Jessica Smith, Johnathan Benjamin, Althea Edwards, Philip Garcia, Crosby Brito, Jennifer Starling, Sable Harris-Buck, Kimberly Lindolph, Freyah Richard, Angela Williams, Negail Dixon, Rauf Baig, Jennifer Roberts, Cheryl Shepard, and Pamela Fanniel. Chair Jackson made the following report of the meeting:

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Framework Update: GCWB staff provided updates on the development and implementation of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across Early Education, Career Services, and Employer Engagement. These indicators are aligned with the Board's strategic goals, and staff presented progress on near-term Level 0 and Level 1 KPIs, along with noted challenges related to data access and reporting through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

Early Education – Key Performance Indicators: Since October 1, 2024, we have provided professional development support to 1,044 early education providers. Additionally, staff has added 93 early education providers this program year. As of April 2025, we have 33,474 children enrolled in early education assistance and 1,796 early education providers.

Career Services – Key Performance Indicators: We are currently utilizing 116 training partners in our network and have 1,439 customers enrolled training opportunities. Our website received 59,801 visits in April driven by search engine traffic demonstrating strong online engagement with career-related content.

Employer Engagement Program – Key Performance Indicators: We have assisted 7,172 employers of which 12.7% are returning employers who have reengaged with our services. And 34.7% of our staff entered job postings that are currently in targeted industries.

Career Office Monitoring Findings:

Financial Monitoring Updates: GCWB staff reported that they have finalized financial monitoring reviews for several partners, including Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Interfaith of the Woodlands, and SERJobs. GCWB staff also completed the FY24 systemwide Financial Aid Payment review. At present, financial monitoring reviews are in progress for BakerRipley, Children's Learning Institute, SERCO, and EQUUS, both at the career office and support center levels.

Performance Improvement Plans: Currently, two providers are under active Performance Improvement Plans. These include:

- The Adult Education Center, which was placed on a plan earlier this spring. GCWB staff received and accepted their response, and staff will continue to monitor progress closely.
- The BakerRipley Financial Aid Payment Office, which was placed on a plan due to continued concerns about project oversight, claim processing delays, and departmental coordination challenges.

TWC Monitoring and Corrective Actions: The GCWB has one outstanding finding from the TWC review —related to SNAP Work Activities—that is under a Corrective Action Plan. GCWB staff provided the first month of testing without any errors. QA staff will provide TWC with monthly desk reviews over the next four months to verify resolution.

The outstanding issue from the TWC Adult Education report has been addressed and documentation provided to TWC Audit Resolution. We expect to report the finding resolved at the next Board meeting.

Next Meeting: The Audit and Monitoring Committee is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, July 29, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. Chair Jackson concluded his report. No action was taken.

- e. **Budget Committee Report (Committee Chair Carl Bowles):** Chair Bowles reported that the Budget Committee met in a hybrid meeting on May 21, at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027, Room 2D at 2:00 p.m. Committee and Board Members present included Chair Carl Bowles, Mark Guthrie, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Guy R Jackson, Doug Karr, Rachel Cevallos, Adrian Ozuna, Paul Puente, Edward Melton, Jeff LaBroski, Lenora Sorola-Pohlman, Sineria Ordonez. Board staff present included Juliet Stipeche, AJ Dean, Desmond Taylor, Thomas Brown, Brandi Brown, Jessica Smith, Romana Paniagua, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Kristi Rangel, Shawanna Thompson, Vanessa Salazar, Abdul Kargo, and Jenny Johnson.

Chair Carl Bowles provided a report from the May 21 Budget Committee meeting. The main topics included the need for broader involvement from the Committee as well as expanding membership to all the committee chairs. He proposed a restructuring of the Budget Committee's responsibilities to include deeper engagement and oversight throughout the entire budget process. Chair Bowles emphasized the need for the Committee to take greater ownership of the

budget. Additionally, he added that the Committee is awaiting a breakdown of indirect and other subsequent charges by H-GAC to further understand the data and to make more informed financial decisions regarding the GCWB's mid-year budget amendment. Chair Bowles concluded his report. No action was taken.

f. **Communications Committee Report (Committee Chair Doug Karr):**

Chair Karr reported that the Communications Committee met in a hybrid meeting on May 21 at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027, at 3:30 p.m. Committee and Board Members present included Chair Doug Karr, Mark Guthrie, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Guy R Jackson, Paul Puente, Cheryl Guido, Lenora Sorola-Pohlman, and Sineria Ordonez. Board staff included Kristi Rangel, Juliet Stipeche, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Philip Garcia, AJ Dean, Sable Harris, Jenny Johnson, Benjamin Jonathan, Desmond Taylor, Romana Paniagua, Phillippe Anchondo, and Outreach Strategists team members Dr. Michelle Cantu and Leigh Ann Arnold.

Chair Karr began his report of the Committee meeting by sharing the social media updates reported in the meeting (as shown in the chart below):

PLATFORM	FOLLOWERS	PAGE VISITS	VIEWS	INTERACTIONS
Facebook	+36.7%	+39.4%	+0.4%	+42%
Instagram	-28.9%	-23.1%	-25%	-42%
LinkedIn	+4.5%	+886.3%	+29.2%	+11,933.3%
YouTube	1414	n/a	4,300	147.4 hours (watch time)

Chair Karr mentioned that Instagram experienced notable declines across all metrics, signaling the urgent need for revised content strategies. Board staff will collaborate with Outreach Strategists to design an immediate strategy that includes leveraging reels and interactive posts (polls, Q&A) to enhance engagement and reverse these trends.

Workforce Solutions News: WorkforceSolutionsNews.com experienced robust engagement with 3,204 page views from 826 unique visitors between April 1 and May 12, 2025. Visitors, on average, spent nearly 18 minutes per visit and viewed approximately 3.89 pages, underscoring significant engagement with digital content.

Media Highlights:

- On April 16, 2025, KTRK Channel 13 interviewed Deans for Impact, an Austin-based non-profit that supports educator-prep programs across the county, to discuss the importance of registered teacher apprenticeship programs in Texas. This served as a teaser for Workforce Solutions' teacher-focused job fair and "Look Who's Hiring Now" livestreamed show on April 17, 2025, at Bayland Community Center. The live show had Dr. Albert Talley from San Jacinto College's Education program and Danielle Knotts, Workforce Solutions' Manager of Career Pathways to discuss our registered apprenticeship program for teachers.
- Board staff also responded efficiently to organic media inquiries, exemplified by KXLN- Univision 45's coverage on April 23, 2025, spotlighting employment opportunities for recent college graduates and successfully promoting the Hire Gulf Coast Youth initiative through spokesperson Dr. Maria Franco Cortes. This Spanish language, dual-segment coverage broadened GCWB's reach to vital demographic groups. Our total AVE from this coverage was \$130,954.91 with a viewership of 195,732.
- An interview request from Houston Public Media was missed due to scheduling conflicts, highlighting an area for improvement in proactive planning and spokesperson availability.
- On April 10, 2025, Easter Sunday, the Houston Chronicle finally published its 935-word front page story about the [long wait for subsidized](#) childcare. The story focused on the significance of the child care scholarship waitlist, enhancing the GCWB's visibility and highlighted its proactive stance in addressing the systemic challenges parents experience in finding quality child care while seeking upskilling and employment opportunities. The story also quotes our Child Care Scholarship Manager, Jennifer Starling.
- On May 2, 2025, Nick Natario also covered a Workforce Solutions job fair co-sponsored by METRO at the Bayland Community Center. This was the second "on the bus line" job fair Workforce Solutions and METRO have jointly held, underscoring the GCWB's dedication to accessibility and transportation-aligned employment initiatives. This media coverage provided us with a total AVE of \$23,905 with a viewership of 260,681.

- Our May job fair with ABC13 focused on careers in transportation, production, and maritime. On May 14, 2025, Channel 13's Nick Natario visited with students enrolled in TSU's Maritime Transportation Management & Security program to promote our monthly job fair, which took place on May 15, 2025, at San Jacinto College North targeted key sectors such as logistics, maritime, and production. This story earned a total AVE of \$23,905.28 with a viewership of 292,858. Our livestream shows featured expert speakers, including Captain Amy Arrowood, Director of Maritime Credit Programs at SJC, and Houston Port Commissioner Roland Garcia.

Media Engagement:

- First Quarter 2025 earned media equivalent: \$325,224.16 | 1,247,681 impressions/viewers;
- Second Quarter 2025 earned media equivalent (through 5/15): \$469,787.39 | 1.24 m impression/viewers; and
- Year-to-date (through 5/3) earned media equivalent: \$795,011.55 | 2.49 million impressions/viewers.

Community Engagement:

- April 10, 2025 – Matagorda County Regional Roundtable Location: Bay City Convention Center
- April 24, 2025 – Second Regional Roundtable Location: H-GAC, Houston, Harris County, Texas
- May 8, 2025 – LinkedIn Webinar Presentation and Asian Chamber of Commerce Meeting, H-GAC, Houston, Texas
- May 15, 2025 – Production and Transportation Hiring Event Location: San Jacinto College North Campus

Economic Insights Video:

- A collaborative effort with Outreach Strategists produced a video featuring Director Stipeche and GCWB economist Parker Harvey, explaining the GCWB's labor market data-driven approach to workforce development. It serves as a valuable tool for presentations, community meetings, and digital platforms.

Launch of Monthly Workforce Solutions Newsletter – May 2025:

The Communications team launched the inaugural (Volume 1) monthly Workforce Solutions newsletter in May 2025. This digital publication is designed to highlight key programs, success stories, and updates from across the 13-county region and is being distributed to

stakeholders, partners, and community members throughout the Gulf Coast area. The inaugural issue includes:

- An introduction to the 2025–2029 Strategic Plan;
- A county spotlight series featuring Liberty, Montgomery, and Walker Counties;
- Updates on major initiatives, including Hire Gulf Coast Youth, Career Pathways, Veteran Services, Childcare Quality, and Financial Stability;
- Partner features like the San Jacinto College ESL training program and Region 6 ESC’s teacher certification and apprenticeship efforts;
- Highlights from recent events, including the Freedmen’s Town Conservancy Fellowship Project; and
- Labor market data, including the monthly jobs report, career exploration tools, and county-level employment trends.

Chair Karr called on Board staff Phillippe Anchondo to provide the following update on the development of the GCWB’s new website:

Website Update: The comprehensive redesign of WrkSolutions.com represents a strategic leap forward, positioning the Board to better serve our community with a modern, user-centered digital platform.

1. Phase 1: Discovery Phase- a foundational stage that involved rigorous research and thorough internal stakeholder consultations. By deeply understanding user behaviors, needs, and preferences, the Board’s website contractor and Board staff laid a solid groundwork for a successful transformation of the website.
2. Phase 2: The Information Architecture Phase created a cohesive and intuitive structure. This critical step ensures users will effortlessly navigate and interact with content tailored to their specific needs and interests, significantly enhancing their online experience.
3. Phase 3: Design Phase- already approximately 80% complete. Throughout this phase, extensive collaboration has been paramount. These collaborative sessions have allowed for multiple rounds of thoughtful design iterations. Notably, the homepage redesign has been finalized, highlighting a sophisticated, engaging gateway that sets a high standard for the rest of the site, with final touches now underway on the remaining pages.
4. Phase 4: Content Phase- with approximately 5% completion. Leveraging a strategic partnership with Outreach Strategists, Board

staff has implemented a process for crafting compelling, targeted content across all website pages.

5. Phase 5: Development Phase - This stage will focus on bringing the newly designed site to life, prioritizing functionality, accessibility, and seamless user interactions. Board staff eagerly anticipates launching the new WrkSolutions.com in Fall 2025.

Chair Karr concluded his report. No action was taken.

At the conclusion of the Communications Committee report, there was discussion by a few Board members regarding the report. Ms. Monica Riley inquired if we utilize sponsored ads. Executive Director Stipeche informed the Board that WFS is prohibited to pay for marketing and/or advertising per TWC. All marketing/advertising we have received has been in-kind. Additionally, Ms. Riley inquired if we are sharing our events and resources with local elected officials and local radio/TV programs to help promote in the respective communities. Executive Director Stipeche encouraged Board members with connections or access to local elected officials' newsletters as well as local media outlets to please share with Board staff so that we can form partnerships and better inform the community of our job fairs, resources, and other services.

Dr. Bobbie Henderson then requested that Chair Guthrie appoint Ms. Monica Riley to the vacant co-chair position on the Communications Committee. Chair Guthrie agreed and confirmed the appointment.

Ms. Lenora Sorola-Pohlman provided comments about how impressed she was with the direction of the new WFS website that was presented during the Communications Committee meeting, particularly the live updates that staff will be able to upload to the site in real-time. She continued by echoing Ms. Riley's sentiments about encouraging Board members to share the work and services WFS provides in the community, particularly to local newspapers and radio shows.

Mr. Paul Puente inquired if Board staff is utilizing podcasts? Ms. Stipeche informed the Board that Amber Jefferson has created several concepts to record about our services. An update will be provided soon.

Lastly, Monica Riley asked if Board staff uses surveys to determine if the trends we are seeing match our efforts. She also added that her daughter served as the UH Station Director and that she would love to

connect her with our organization to share about the many job opportunities and services we provide. There was no further discussion.

- g. **Executive Committee Report (Committee Chair Mark Guthrie):** Chair Guthrie reported that the Executive Committee met on May 29 at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX, 77027 at 1:00 p.m. Committee and Board members present included Chair Mark Guthrie, Dr. Michael Webster, Carl Bowles, Adrian Ozuna, Doug Karr, and Paul Puente. The Board staff present included Russell Tomlin, Sabrina Uy, Kristi Rangel, AJ Dean, Juliet Stipeche, Carl Salazar, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Charles Wemple, Christina Campos-Ordonez, and Shaun Downie.

Chair Guthrie continued by providing a report of the meeting. One of the major topics was the inability of the Board staff to access information about H-GAC's current and proposed charges to workforce funds, in connection with the mid-year budget revision of both the Board and H-GAC. Additionally, he reported that the Committee had requested H-GAC to provide financial reconciliation reports of budgeted versus actual expenditures related to its charges to workforce funds on a monthly or quarterly basis. H-GAC committed to providing the comprehensive budget revision documents by July 7, 2025.

Chair Guthrie also reported the Committee's discussion on potential by-laws revisions including going from a 2-year Board term to a 3-year Board term to lessen the burden on staff and better ensure continuity. Chair Guthrie concluded his report. No action was taken.

9. Action Items

- a. **Career Services Committee Report (Committee Vice Chair Cheryl Guido):** Vice Chair Guido reported that the Career Services Committee met on May 20 at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX, 77027 at 2:00 p.m. Committee and Board members present were Chair Adrian Ozuna, Cheryl Guido, Mark Guthrie, Paul Puente, Tanya Makany-Rivera, Rachel Cevallos, Dr. Melanie Rodriguez, Dr. Melissa Gonzalez, Doug Karr, Dorian Cockrell, and Bin Yu. Board staff present included Juliet Stipeche, AJ Dean, Desmond Taylor, Russell Tomlin, Crosby Brito, Sabrina Parras, Brittany Eaton, Kevin Rodney, Philip Garcia, Jennifer Graves, Parker Harvey, Janine Haynes, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Luisa Guerra-Martinez, Jenny Johnson, Shawanna Thompson, Jessica Smith, LaToya Casimere, Brandi Brown, Romana Paniagua, Johnathan Benjamin, Wen Zhen, Mohammed Ahmadizedeh, Vanessa Salazar, Abdul Kargbo, Virgil Elkins, Thomas Brown, Rebecca Valdez, Kimberly Lindolph, Sable Harris-Buck,

and Lacy Wolf. Vice Chair Guido provided the following report of the meeting:

Procurement: We are currently in an RFP process aimed at enhancing career services across the 13-county region. As of May 13, questions about the RFP have been answered. Submissions are scheduled to close on Friday, June 5 with proposal evaluations being conducted between June 9-16, with selected providers expected to begin operations on October 1.

Office Transition Plan: Following the procurement, the transition of career office operations to the selected career office service provider(s) is scheduled for October 1, 2025. To ensure an efficient and seamless transition, GCWB staff has developed a detailed transition plan that addresses all critical aspects of the transfer. The transition will take place over a 45-day window following provider selection in August 2025. Board staff is asking current and prospective service providers to support this transition by cooperating with the Board and one another to ensure continuity of services and facility access. Specifically, Board staff is requesting providers to:

- Gather and share critical lease and utility account information related to their currently managed offices.
- Assist with the coordination of lease transitions, including assignment, termination, or negotiation of new lease agreements where needed.
- Document and communicate all community partnerships and shared space agreements to ensure seamless continuation of local services.

Investing in our Staff Development Infrastructure: The Professional Development Team remains focused on strengthening the knowledge, skills, and service delivery capacity of Workforce Solutions (WFS) staff across the region. Over the past several weeks, this team have continued to drive forward high-impact training initiatives. Board Member Doug Karr had an opportunity to sit-in during one of the training sessions to observe.

Strengthening System Infrastructure: Procurement of a New Learning Management System: To support the evolving professional development needs of staff and streamline access to training resources, Board staff have made significant progress on the procurement of a new Learning Management System (LMS). This process represents a major infrastructure upgrade that will allow for enhanced tracking of staff

development, easier access to training modules, and improved data collection on engagement and outcomes.

Launching a Systemwide Industry Focus Series: Board staff is proud to report the successful launch of Empowering Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast, our new monthly industry highlights series. This initiative is designed to increase staff familiarity with key regional industries and deepen their understanding of in-demand occupations.

National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG): The GCWB was awarded the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) to address the impacts of natural disasters—specifically the Texas Storms and Hurricane Beryl—across a 13-county region. To date, the NDWG program has 8 work sites across local municipalities and nonprofits and has employed 64 participants for disaster recovery and cleanup roles with a 100% employment rate. Of the 64 enrolled, 8 participants are enrolled in electrician training and 1 has completed small crane training—preparing clients for immediate and future workforce needs.

Community Engagement Update: The Community Engagement team is committed to mobilizing within communities, increasing customer connection to services, determining where and how we engage to provide services and strategically foster partnership. The team is steadfast at reimagining the way we do business, building stronger relationships to create better connections and improve WFS's reach.

- Events and Activities included:
 - **March 20, 2025,** WFS presented the Business and Financial Professional Hiring Event in partnership with Fort Bend County Libraries. 429 jobseekers had the opportunity to be connected to 36 employers/community partners. From this event 174 job seekers were interviewed, and 3 individuals were hired.
 - **March 27, 2025,** WFS presented a Community Conversation in partnership with Blessed Hope Baptist Church as an initial mobilization activity within the Northshore and surrounding community. The event enabled 59 community members to participate in a panel discussion with employers, entrepreneurial and training programs which allowed for questions and information to facilitate knowledgeable career decisions. WFS Workforce on Wheels was also available to connect them to WFS services and other supports.

- **April 17, 2025**, WFS presented the Community, Education and Social Services Hiring Event in partnership with Precinct 4 -Commissioner Lesley Briones. 529 jobseekers had the opportunity to be connected to 30 employers/community partners. From this event 231 job seekers were interviewed. This event had a high utilization Workforce on Wheels, which allowed for the use of the community center's classroom and computer room, which were filled throughout the event.
- **May 15, 2025**, WFS presented Production and Transportation Hiring Event in Partnership with San Jac College North Campus. As WFS continues mobilization within the Northshore and surrounding community, 220 jobseekers had the opportunity to be connected to 23 employers/community partners. From this event 25 jobseekers participated in the Workforce on Wheels (WOW) services.

Tools: The first phase of the Events dashboard has been completed. This integration provides a central place for data that allows community engagement to track participation, measures effectiveness, allow Board staff to view a snapshot of activities and metrics. We are expecting to expand this tool to capture all coordinated by WFS.

Lastly, the Career Services Committee recommended Board approval of the Gulf Coast Provider Network—Local Eligible Training Providers (ETPL) Policy, WFS Policy Number 405. **A motion was made and seconded to approve WFS Policy 405—the Gulf Coast Provider Network—Local Eligible Training Providers (ETPL) Policy. The motion passed.**

Chair Guthrie and Executive Director Stipeche both mentioned the importance of passing this measure as it strengthens our local requirements for persons trying to join our Eligible Training Providers list, which is currently very easy to do at the State level, but with the provisions added to this new local policy 405, we are able to enforce additional quality benchmarks for providers who utilize our dollars to offer a service and/or training. Kudos were shared to all the staff who worked on strengthening this policy over the past nearly one year.

Vice Chair Guido concluded the report with no further action taken.

- b. **Procurement Committee Report (Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson):** Chair Henderson reported that the Procurement Committee met in a hybrid meeting on May 15 at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX, 77027, at 2:00 p.m. Board members present included Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Doug Karr, Cheryl Guido, Mark Guthrie, Adrian Ozuna, Guy Robert Jackson, Melissa Gonzalez, Mike Ferdinand, and Lenora Sorola Pohlman. Board staff present included Juliet Stipeche, Desmond Taylor, AJ Dean, Kristi Rangel, Russell Tomlin, Sabrina Uy, Angelis Barnes, Abdul Kargbo, Romana Paniagua, Jenny Johnson, Shawanna Thompson, Vanessa Salazar, Thomas Brown, Brandi Brown, Jessica Smith, Johnathan Benjamin, Althea Edwards, Rebecca Valdes, Danielle Knotts, Kevin Rodney, Angelis Barnes, Sharon Everett, Izine Harris, and Sable Harris-Buck. Chair Henderson provided the following report of this meeting:

Contract Award: Financial Monitoring: The Committee recommended that the Board approve Board staff's request to negotiate contracts with Weaver and Tidwell, L.L.P.; Christine H. Nguyen CPA; and LaPorte, A Professional Accounting Corporation, in a combined amount not to exceed \$900,000 for financial monitoring services.

A motion was made and seconded to authorize Board staff to negotiate contracts with Weaver and Tidwell, L.L.P.; Christine H. Nguyen CPA; and LaPorte, A Professional Accounting Corporation, in a combined amount not to exceed \$900,000. The motion passed with Ms. Lizandra Vasquez abstaining.

Contract Award: Adult Education and Literacy: The Committee recommended that the Board approve Board staff's request to negotiate contract renewals with Houston Community College, Lone Star College, San Jacinto College, and Region 6 and contract extensions with Adult Education Center and BakerRipley in the amounts shown in the table below for the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

Provider	Proposed Range	
Houston Community College	\$2,030,400	\$4,060,800
Lone Star College	\$1,146,469	\$2,292,938
San Jacinto College	\$648,000	\$1,296,000
Region 6 ESC	\$1,177,735	\$1,885,469
Adult Education Center	\$50,000	\$50,000
BakerRipley, Inc.	\$50,000	\$50,000
Total	\$5,102,604	\$9,635,207

This recommendation is contingent upon Texas Workforce Commission funding and approvals.

A motion was made and seconded to authorize Board staff to negotiate, contingent on receipt of TWC funding and approvals, contract renewals with Houston Community College, Lone Star College, San Jacinto College, and Region 6 and contract extensions with Adult Education Center and BakerRipley at the amounts listed above for the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. The motion passed with Dr. Michael Webster, Dr. Allatia Harris, and Dr. Melissa Gonzalez abstaining.

Chair Henderson concluded the report with no further action.

10. Presentations and Information:

- a. **Performance and Production Report (Philip Garcia):** GCWB staff Phillip Garcia presented the following report:

Measure		% of Target		
		State Performance	Gulf Coast Performance	State vs Gulf Coast Difference
WIOA Outcome Measures	Employed Q2 Post Exit - Adult	94.86%	94.73%	-0.13%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - Adult	89.14%	90.51%	1.37%
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Adult	87.26%	91.89%	4.63%
	Credential Rate - Adult	91.22%	78.20%	-13.02%
	Measurable Skills Gains - Adult	87.24%	93.26%	6.02%
	Employed Q2 Post Exit - DW	90.34%	95.63%	5.29%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - DW	87.29%	80.72%	-6.57%
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - DW	98.29%	99.53%	1.24%
	Credential Rate - DW	91.28%	72.06%	-19.22%
	Measurable Skills Gains - DW	79.92%	90.93%	11.01%
	Empl./Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----	-----
	Empl./Enrolled Q4 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----	-----
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----	-----
	Credential Rate - Youth	-----	-----	-----
	Measurable Skills Gains - Youth	-----	-----	-----
	Emplied/ Enrolled Q2 - C&T	88.82%	87.21%	-1.61%
	Emplied/ Enrolled Q2-Q4 - C&T	91.19%	91.67%	0.48%
	Credential Rate C&T	88.87%	74.51%	-14.36%
Reemployment and Employer	Claimants Reemployment within 10 weeks	103.90%	112.70%	8.80%
	Texas Talent Assistance Rate	-----	135.98%	-----
Program Participation	Choices Full Engagement Rate	-----	-----	-----
	Average Children Served Per Day	105.07%	101.91%	-3.16%
Adult Education (Feb 2025)	Adult Ed Total 12+ Hour Students	132.73%	84.03%	-48.70%
	Integrated Education/Training - IET (All)	95.44%	56.84%	-38.60%
	Intensives	133.71%	76.53%	-57.18%
	Popular	-----	67.38%	-----

Performance and Production: Performance and Regional Comparison

Summary (Q1FY2025: October–December 2024): The first quarter of FY2025 reflects a strong start for the Gulf Coast region, with performance exceeding statewide benchmarks in several key areas under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Notable highlights include superior results in Measurable Skills Gains for both Adult (+6.02%) and Dislocated Worker (+11.01%) participants, as well as gains in Median Earnings for both groups. These outcomes point to successful alignment between training investments and labor market needs and underscore the region’s ongoing commitment to upskilling and career development.

Additionally, the region led the state in Claimant Reemployment within 10 Weeks (112.70%), reinforcing the effectiveness of our reemployment strategies and employer engagement efforts.

While credential attainment for Adult (78.20%), Dislocated Worker (72.06%), and Career & Technical (C&T) (74.51%) participants continues to lag the state, these areas are already being addressed through targeted Performance Improvement Actions (PIAs). Initial results from these initiatives are promising, with reforms focusing on program alignment, expanded training pathways, and enhanced follow-up services. Employment outcomes for Dislocated Workers in Q4 Post-Exit and for C&T participants in Q2 Post-Exit were also modestly below state averages but remain within a manageable range. These indicators are being closely monitored as part of our broader quality assurance and improvement strategy.

Youth outcome data was not available for this reporting period. However, system upgrades are in progress to ensure improved data availability and reporting in future cycles.

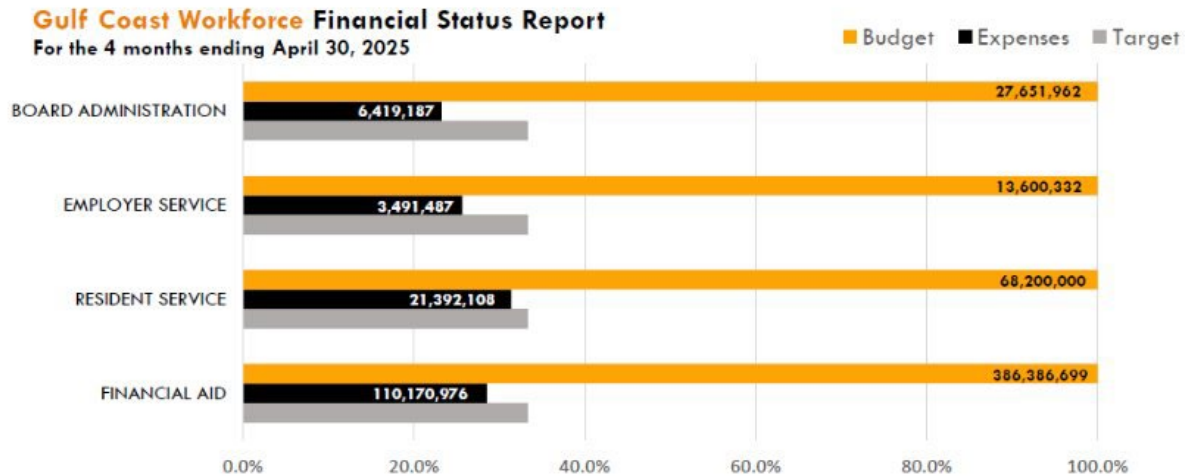
Overall, Q1 performance demonstrates the strength of our regional workforce system and validates the strategic improvements underway. The GCWB remains committed to building on this momentum through sustained provider engagement, enhanced data practices, and continued investment in participant success.

Following Mr. Garcia's report, several Board members provided questions and comments. A few included discussions by Mr. Paul Puente around how the newly approved ETPL policy will help improve performance outcomes moving forward? Response: The new ETPL policy will be able to better track performance while increasing transparency and accountability by providers which in turn will yield better performance outcomes for us and the persons we serve through this program. Mr. Dorian Cockrell asked about data on the challenges preventing people from successfully completing these training programs. Response: Many of the issues are contributed to inaccurate data submission on the new system by service providers; however, we are working closely with providers in a more collaborative manner to help them get acquainted with the new system, particularly around data entry. Lastly, Ms. Lizandra Vasquez inquired about credential rate and the challenges contacting the participants and/or the schools. She offered her office as a resource to help make office visits or contact participants to retrieve credentials.

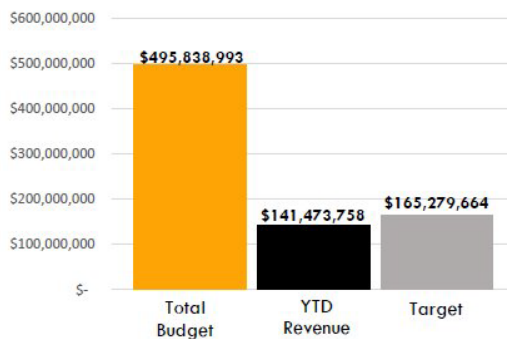
There was no further discussion and no action was taken.

b. Expenditures Report (Brandi Brown):

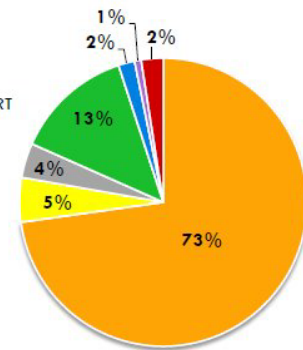
GCWB staff Brandi Brown presented the following report:



Workforce Revenue



System Expenses



c. Legislative Update (Desmond Taylor):

GCWB staff Desmond Taylor presented the following report:

- Last Day of the 89th Legislative Session: June 2, 2025 (Sine Die)
- Governor's Deadline for Signature: June 22.
- Laws Take Effect: September 1, 2025.

*Full list of workforce and child care bills tracked during the attached in board packet. *The list also includes enacted workforce and child care-related legislation.*

- d. **A Look at the Economy Update on the Labor Market (Mohammad Ahmadizadeh):** Slides to full presentation attached in board packet.
- e. **Communications and Media Update (Russell Tomlin):** No report was given due to time constraints.

11. Other Business: Mr. Alan Heskamp acknowledged Mr. Bin Yu for coordinating a successful roundtable discussion with leadership of the Houston Asian Chamber of Commerce and WFS-Gulf Coast to share insights on the services our organization provides as well as insight into our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. Members of the Asian Chamber also shared their desire to work collaboratively with the GCWB to address many of their community's business needs.

Executive Director Stipeche introduced new team members:

- Sabrina Uy, Senior Manager of Quality and Risk Management;
and
- Carl Salazar, Senior Manager of Strategy and Innovation

12. Adjourn: Board Chair Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

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County: Harris

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

BELOW, SHONDA

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

BOWLES, CARL

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

COCKRELL, DORIAN

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DOBERT, MICHAEL

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

FERDINAND, MICHAEL

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

GONZALEZ, MELISSA

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

GUIDO, CHERYL

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

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County: Wharton

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Term: January 1, 2024, thru December 31, 2025

GUTHRIE, MARK**Board Chair**

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County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

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County: Chambers

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

HENDERSON, BOBBIE ALLEN**Vice Chair**

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Term: January 1, 2024, thru December 31, 2025

JOHNSON, JOYCE

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Term: October 1, 2024, thru December 31, 2026

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

LARMOND, SHAREEN

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

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Term: January 1, 2024, thru December 31, 2025

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2025

OSER, MARGARET

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County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2024, thru December 31, 2025

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County: Harris

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

PUENTE, PAUL J.**Vice-Chair**

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

RODRIGUEZ, GRACE

Impact Hub Houston
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Category: Economic Development

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

RODRIGUEZ, MELANIE

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County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

RUPANI, NASRUDDIN

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County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2024, thru December 31, 2025

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Term: January 1, 2024, thru December 31, 2025

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Term: January 1, 2024, thru December 31, 2025

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

WEBSTER, MICHAEL

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Category: Education

County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

YU, BIN

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County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

WORKFORCE BOARD KEY STAFF:

Juliet Stipeche, Executive Director

Desmond Taylor, Program Administrator, Board Relations

Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Senior Planner, Board Relations

Kristi Rangel, Assistant Director of Workforce

AJ Dean, Senior Manager, Fiscal Administration and Contract Management

Russell Tomlin, Senior Manager, Career Services

Sabrina Uy, Senior Manager, Quality Assurance and Risk

Carl Salazar, Senior Manager, Strategy and Innovation

Parker Harvey, Manager for Regional Economic Analysis

Alexandra Mallet, Executive Assistant

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GULF COAST WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD COMMITTEES

Audit/Monitoring

- Guy Robert Jackson – Chair
- Carl Bowles – Vice Chair
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Doug Karr
- Paul Puente

Budget

- Carl Bowles – Chair
- Mark Guthrie – Vice Chair
- Bobbie Henderson
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Doug Karr
- Rachel Cevallos
- Paul Puente

By-Laws

- Michael Webster – Chair
- Adrian Ozuna – Vice Chair
- Mark Guthrie
- Alan Heskamp
- Guy Robert Jackson

Career Services

- Adrian Ozuna – Chair
- Cheryl Guido – Vice Chair
- Melissa Gonzalez
- Dorian Cockrell
- Michael Webster
- Bin Yu
- Edward Melton
- Rupani Nasruddin
- Michael Dobert
- Allatia Harris

- Paul Puente
- Lizandra Vasquez
- Joyce Johnson

Communications

- Doug Karr – Chair
- Monica Riley – Vice Chair
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Jonathan Lowe
- Michael Webster
- Melanie Rodriguez
- Marie Arcos
- Rachel Cevallos
- Cheryl Guido
- Paul Puente
- Lizandra Vasquez
- Tanya Makany-Rivera

Education

- Bobbie Henderson – Chair
- Doug Karr – Vice Chair
- Shonda Below
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Alan Heskamp
- Jeff LaBroski
- Edward Melton
- Margaret Oser
- Monica Riley
- Valerie Segovia
- Sandra Taylor
- Rupani Nasruddin
- Grace Rodriguez
- Jennifer Baker
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Allatia Harris

- Joyce Johnson

Employer Engagement

- Alan Heskamp – Chair
- Jeff LaBroski – Vice Chair
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Shareen Larmond
- Mou Sarkar
- Melanie Rodriguez
- Grace Rodriguez
- Marie Arcos
- Glenn Rex
- Michael Webster
- Allatia Harris
- Carl Bowles
- Paul Puente
- Lizandra Vasquez

Government Relations

- Guy Robert Jackson – Chair
- – Vice Chair
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson

Nominating

- Doug Karr – Chair
- Jeff LaBroski – Vice Chair
- Alan Heskamp

Procurement

- Bobbie Henderson – Chair
- Doug Karr – Vice Chair
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Alan Heskamp
- Jeff LaBroski
- Adrian Ozuna
- Paul Puente
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Rachel Cevallos

Report Card

Appointed by Board Chair as needed.

Strategic Planning

- Carl Bowles – Chair
- Paul Puente – Vice Chair
- Cheryl Guido
- Mark Guthrie
- Bobbie Henderson
- Doug Karr
- Adrian Ozuna
- Melanie Rodriguez
- Grace Rodriguez
- Michael Webster

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD ATTENDANCE

Board Member	02/04/25	3/4/25 (S/C)	04/08/25	06/03/25	08/05/25	10/07/25	12/02/25
Arcos, Marie	✓			✓			
Baker, Jennifer				✓			
Below, Shonda	✓		✓				
Bowles, Carl	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Cevallos, Rachel		✓	✓	✓			
Cockrell, Dorian	✓			✓			
Dobert, Michael							
Ferdinand, Mike							
Gonzalez, Melissa	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Guido, Cheryl	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Guthrie, Mark	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Harris, Allatia			✓	✓			
Henderson, Bobbie Allen	✓	✓		✓			
Heskamp, Alan	✓		✓	✓			
Jackson, Guy Robert	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Johnson, Joyce	✓		✓	✓			
Jones, Lavone				✓			
Karr, Doug	✓	✓	✓	✓			
LaBroski, Jeff	✓	✓		✓			
Larmond, Shareen	✓		✓				
Lindsey, Susan		✓	✓	✓			
Lowe, Jonathan	✓	✓		✓			
Makany-Rivera, Tanya			✓	✓			
Melton, Edward		✓	✓	✓			
Ordonez, Sineria		✓	✓	✓			
Oser, Margaret		✓	✓	✓			
Ozuna, Adrian	✓	✓	✓				
Puente, Paul	✓	✓		✓			
Rex, Glenn							
Riley, Monica			✓	✓			
Rodriguez, Grace	✓	✓	✓				
Rodriguez, Melanie		✓	✓	✓			
Rupani, Nasruddin	✓	✓					
Sarkar, Mou		✓	✓				
Segovia, Valerie		✓					

Audit and Monitoring Committee

Executive Summary

The Audit and Monitoring Committee, chaired by Mr. Guy R. Jackson, met on July 29, 2025, at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027, Room 2D at 1:00 p.m. Other board members present included Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Cheryl Guido, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Doug Karr, Paul Puente, Mou Sarkar and Jeff LaBroski. Staff members present included Kristi Rangel, Desmond Taylor, AJ Dean, Thomas Brown, Brandi Brown, Kristi Hayman, Vanessa Salazar, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Russell Tomlin, Romana Paniagua, Philip Garcia, Carl Salazar, Sabrina Uy, Kimberly Lindolph, Angela Williams, Negail Dixon, Rauf Baig, Jeanette De La Cruz, Janine Haynes, Sable Harris-Buck, Johnathan Benjamin, Alexandra Mallett, Parker Harvey, LaToya Casimere, Daysy Rojas, Cheryl Shepard, Kevin Rodney, Treebie Vazquez-Vilchez, Ginger Hunter, Brittany Eaton, Ashley Glenn, and Jennifer Starling.

The Committee received comprehensive updates from Board staff on the ongoing development of the Board's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). While the initiative remains a top priority, further build-out is temporarily paused to focus on the strategic transition of Career Services providers. Staff reported progress across three core service areas:

- Early Education: 34,137 children are enrolled in early education assistance, supported by a network of 1,704 providers.
- Career Services: 1,861 customers are participating in training programs offered by 129 approved training partners.
- Employer Engagement: Workforce Solutions assisted 11,326 employers, with 14.8% returning for additional services.

The Gulf Coast Region saw marked improvement across all major benchmarks in Q2 of FY2025, reflecting the positive impact of the Board's targeted performance strategies. Staff also noted that the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is preparing to implement a new performance framework, which will result in changes to Board-level metrics moving forward.

Quality Assurance (QA) staff provided updates on current and upcoming service provider reviews. QA is standardizing its approach by implementing a risk matrix aligned with the one used for financial monitoring. Six financial monitoring reports were finalized this quarter—all with low-risk findings. No financial reviews are currently underway. As part of the re-procurement of the Board's financial

monitoring services, a new firm, LaPorte CPAs & Business Advisors, will join the existing consultants under contract.

The Committee highlighted the SEAL program, which offers summer employment for students with disabilities. Through early coordination between Program and QA teams, potential safety concerns at worksites were proactively addressed. QA also deployed a new mobile and web-based application to streamline site visit documentation, reducing administrative errors and improving efficiency.

The Committee was also briefed on the TWC-issued Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for SNAP Work Activities. We have completed three consecutive months of desk reviews with error rates below 10%. A fourth successful month is required before TWC will consider lifting the CAP.

Internally, Performance Improvement Plans have been initiated for the Adult Education Center and the BakerRipley's Financial Aid Payment Office due to concerns related to internal controls, delayed financial claims, and communication lapses.

Staff also reported on TWC's recent monitoring of the Child Care grant, which concluded with an exit meeting on July 3, 2025. In response, Board staff has strengthened documentation practices in coordination with H-GAC. TWC recertified the Board's QA Monitoring Team and external CPA Christine Nguyen for continued reliance through 2028. However, Weaver was not recertified and will be reassessed next year.

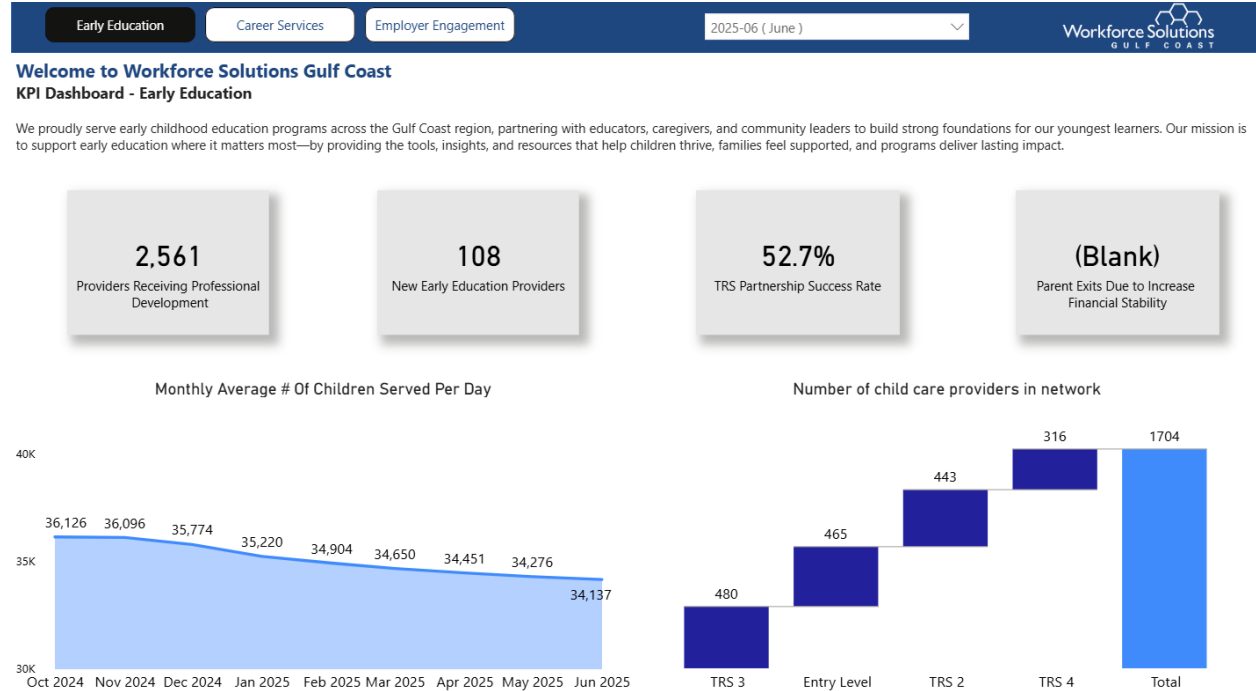
Finally, the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) conducted a review of ten SNAP cases from the Board as part of a broader evaluation of TWC. The final exit meeting is anticipated in August 2025.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Update

While we remain committed to advancing our Key Performance Indicator (KPI) framework, current efforts are temporarily paused as we prioritize the transition of our Career Services providers. Some challenges remain around data access, particularly due to dependencies on Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) systems. Additionally, several indicators will require technology enhancements, such as website upgrades, before full tracking can be implemented.

We look forward to resuming this work once the Career Services transition is complete, and we will continue to provide updates on our current defined metrics. Below are the performance updates as of June 2025.

Early Education



Early Education's Key Performance Indicators

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board continues to advance its strategic goals for early childhood education by deepening provider engagement, expanding access to quality care, and supporting families in their pursuit of long-term economic security. As of June 2025, 34,137 children are enrolled in early education assistance, supported by a growing network of 1,704 early education providers across the region.

Goal: Professional Development for Early Education Providers

To strengthen the quality of care across the provider landscape, the Board has prioritized accessible, high-quality professional development through both virtual and in-person formats. Since October 1, 2024, 2,561 early education providers have received professional development support—an increase of 782 providers since May. This growth reflects our intentional outreach efforts, responsive training formats, and provider commitment to continuous improvement.

Goal: Expanding Partnerships with High-Quality Providers

A key strategic priority is building and sustaining partnerships with high-quality early learning centers. So far this program year, the Board has successfully onboarded 108 new providers, expanding the region's capacity to offer consistent, high-quality early learning environments. This growth not only increases access to care but also strengthens the overall quality of our early education system.

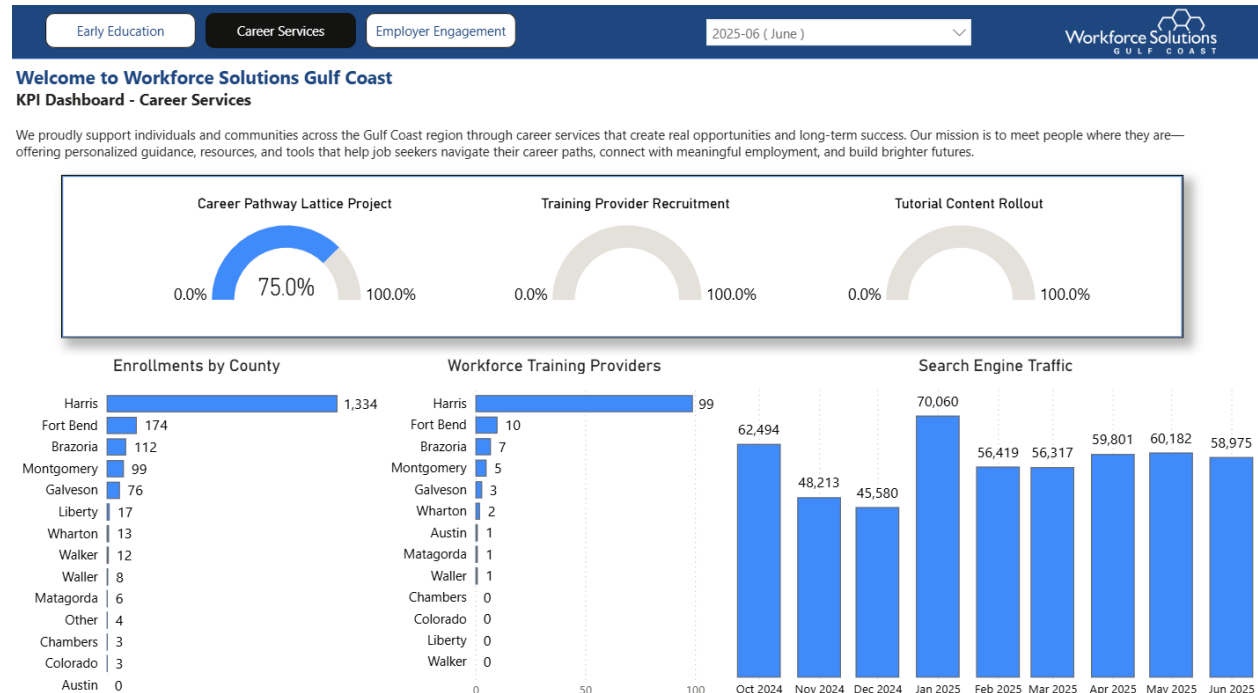
Goal: Outreach and Engagement with Licensed Providers

The Board's outreach and engagement efforts have resulted in partnerships with 52.7% of all licensed child care providers in the Gulf Coast region. This milestone underscores our ability to foster meaningful relationships and deliver value to a diverse range of providers. As we continue to refine our messaging and engagement strategies, we aim to increase participation among underrepresented providers to ensure regional equity.

Goal: Supporting Families and Advancing Socioeconomic Mobility

Equipping parents and guardians with the tools and resources to support their children's development and improve household well-being remains central to our mission. However, ongoing challenges with the TX3C system are limiting our ability to fully track and report progress in this area. The Board continues to work with the Texas Workforce Commission and system partners to address these barriers and restore the data functionality necessary to assess impact.

Career Services



Career Services' Key Performance Indicators

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board continues to evolve its career services to meet the dynamic needs of employers and job seekers across the region. Guided by data and informed by regional labor market demands, our efforts are focused on expanding access to high-quality training, improving user experience, and building a workforce system aligned with economic opportunity. As of June 2025,

the Board's training network includes 129 providers, with 1,861 customers currently enrolled in training programs that prepare them for in-demand careers.

Goal: Expanding Career Pathways Through Data-Driven Design

To ensure our efforts reflect the real-world progression of occupations in the regional economy, our Regional Economic Analysis team is leading a career lattice research project. This initiative maps out multiple, validated advancement pathways within key industries, identifying intersections between jobs, required credentials, and growth opportunities. Stage 1 of the project is approximately 75% complete, with detailed reports for each of the ten identified career lattices currently in development. A consolidated summary of findings and recommendations will be distributed to stakeholders to inform policy, funding, and program design.

Goal: Increasing Visibility Through Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

To reach more job seekers and increase accessibility to resources, the Board has implemented SEO strategies to improve the visibility of our career content online. In June 2025, the Workforce Solutions website recorded 58,975 visits, driven by search engine traffic, demonstrating the strength of our digital presence and the growing public demand for workforce services.

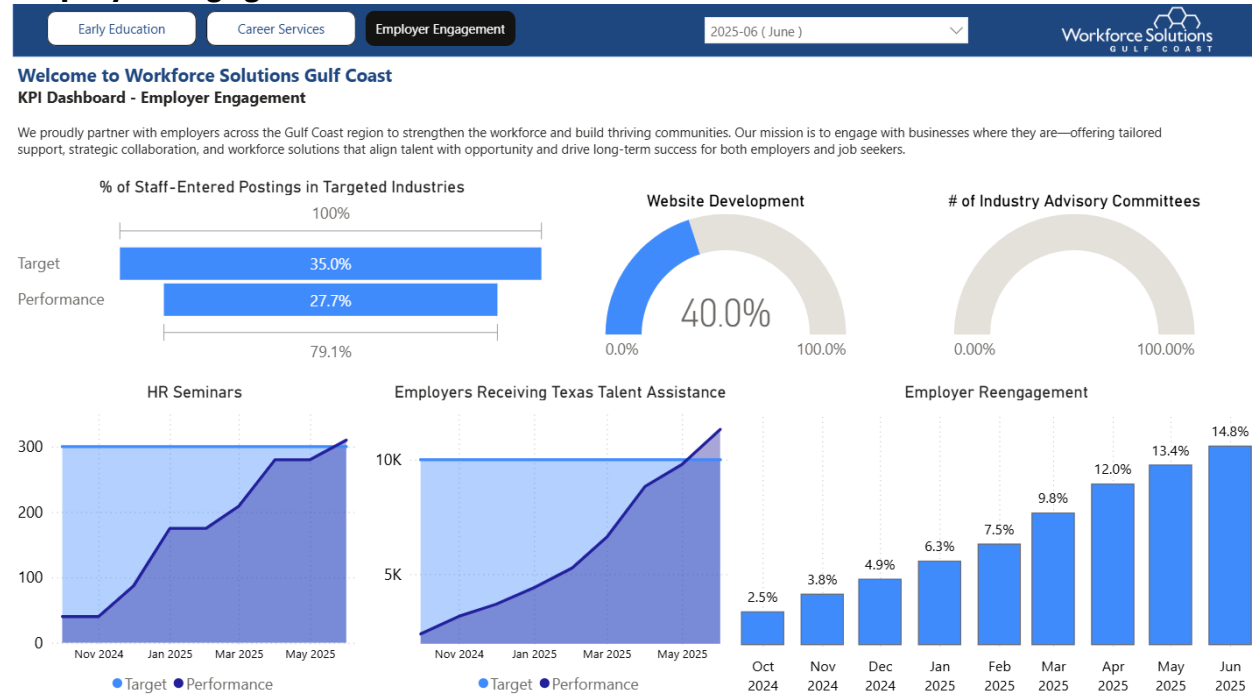
Goal: Building a More Responsive Training Provider Network

To better align training investments with regional employer needs, the Board is preparing to launch a new Financial Aid Management System (FAMS) between August and September. This system will enable more precise tracking and categorization of training providers by industry sector, enhancing our ability to respond to emerging demands, streamline provider oversight, and improve transparency across the training ecosystem.

Goal: Developing Self-Paced Learning Tools for Job Seekers

As part of our commitment to digital accessibility, we are in the process of procuring a Learning Management System (LMS) to host short, self-guided tutorials that will help users navigate Workforce Solutions' resources. The LMS will support job seekers by providing flexible, on-demand learning modules that complement our in-person and virtual services. The Request for Proposals (RFP) is currently active on OpenGov and is scheduled to close on July 24, 2025.

Employer Engagement



Employer Engagement's Key Performance Indicators

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is advancing a more coordinated, data-informed, and industry-driven employer engagement strategy to strengthen the region's workforce system. Through targeted outreach, enhanced technology, and strategic partnerships, the Board is creating more accessible, responsive, and impactful services for employers. As of June 2025, 11,326 employers have been assisted by Workforce Solutions, including 14.8% who are returning customers—a strong indicator of sustained employer trust and satisfaction.

Goal: Targeting High-Demand Industries to Drive Regional Growth

To support economic development and meet regional labor market demand, the Board is prioritizing employer outreach within targeted industries and occupations. As a result, 27.7% of all job postings entered by staff are currently in high-demand sectors, reflecting a growing alignment between employer engagement and the region's economic priorities.

Goal: Improving Access Through a Centralized Digital Hub

Recognizing the importance of seamless digital interaction, the Board is redesigning the Workforce Solutions website to create a centralized, user-friendly portal for employers. The redesign is 40% complete and will offer streamlined access to job posting tools, hiring support, labor market information, and other business services. Once launched, the new site is expected to significantly enhance digital engagement, efficiency, and satisfaction among employers.

Goal: Building Strategic Industry Partnerships Through Advisory Councils

The Board is actively cultivating collaborative partnerships with employers, industry leaders, and economic development stakeholders to ensure workforce strategies are employer-aligned. To support this effort, sixty-seven invitations have been issued to employers to join the newly formed Healthcare and Building & Construction Advisory Committees. Ten employers have confirmed participation, and additional outreach, featuring a call to action, will be included in the upcoming Employer Engagement Newsletter to further expand representation and input from priority sectors.

Goal: Enhancing Service Delivery Through Technology and Education

The Board continues to invest in educational programming and technology solutions to better serve employers. To date, 310 human resources-focused seminars have been conducted, offering employers guidance on workforce policies, hiring practices, compliance, and talent development. Additionally, the Board is in the process of procuring survey software to facilitate real-time feedback from employers, which will inform future improvements and tailor services to employer needs.

System Review

In our ongoing effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our system, this report offers a comprehensive review of performance, production, and expenditures at the contractor level for key service providers. This review encompasses assessments of technical program compliance, financial monitoring, and evaluations of customer experience. It prioritizes alignment with our strategic goals and tackles identified deficiencies through targeted interventions and technical assistance.

Performance and Production

Reporting Infrastructure Enhancements

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast continues to work closely with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as it undertakes significant enhancements to the statewide reporting infrastructure. While meaningful progress has been made and several reporting modules have been successfully updated, data completeness remains a challenge in certain areas. To address this, the Board has accelerated the implementation of standardized reporting tools across all service providers. These tools are designed to improve consistency, accuracy, and efficiency in both data collection and reporting—essential components for informed decision-making and delivery of high-quality services across the region.

TWC recently shared an updated performance snapshot covering the first seven months of FY2025, through April. As part of our internal strategy, we continue to

rely on predictive models built in alignment with TWC methodologies. These models enable proactive performance monitoring and facilitate continuous improvements to our reporting and operational processes.

Provider Collaboration & Support

Strengthening collaboration with our service providers remains a top priority. To sustain performance gains and address persistent reporting challenges, we have expanded our provider engagement strategies. Bi-monthly data coordination sessions with service provider teams have been established, providing a platform for updates, methodological alignment, and discussion of system-wide best practices. These sessions foster a culture of shared accountability and continuous improvement. In parallel, a robust training series has been deployed to both provider staff and Board personnel, featuring enhanced tools such as personalized interviewing techniques and improved career assessments. These resources are designed to better equip staff to guide job seekers toward quality employment pathways, improving both individual and system-level outcomes.

Performance and Regional Comparison Summary (October 2024 – April 2025)

The Gulf Coast region has demonstrated strong performance to start FY2025, exceeding statewide outcomes in several critical areas under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Notably, Measurable Skills Gains for both Adult and Dislocated Worker participants outpaced state performance by 7.68% and 13.47%, respectively. Similarly, median earnings for these groups surpassed state benchmarks by 7.50% for Adults and 15.23% for Dislocated Workers. These gains reflect effective alignment between training investments and regional labor market demands.

Employment outcomes also remained strong, with Gulf Coast outperforming the state in Q2 and Q4 post-exit employment rates for Adults (Q2: 103.66%, +1.46%; Q4: 102.02%, +1.67%) and Q2 post-exit employment for Dislocated Workers (106.22%, +4.41%). The region also led in Reemployment within 10 Weeks (102.87%), exceeding the statewide average of 98.82%—a testament to the Gulf Coast’s proactive reemployment strategies and strong employer partnerships. Child care participation outcomes continued this positive trend, with an average daily children served rate of 98.11%, compared to the state’s 94.08%.

Despite these successes, credential attainment remains an area for improvement. Gulf Coast trailed the state in Credential Rate for Adults (80.98% vs. 93.53%), Dislocated Workers (76.91% vs. 92.39%), and Career & Technical participants (79.42% vs. 91.69%). These gaps are being addressed through targeted efforts.

Youth outcomes were not available for this reporting period, but enhancements to data systems are underway to improve reporting accuracy and timeliness in future cycles.

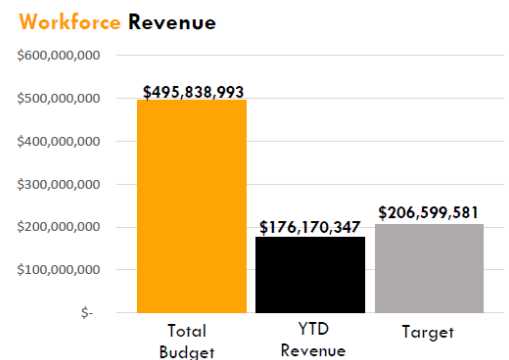
Overall, FY2025 Q1 and early Q2 performance underscore the strength of the Gulf Coast regional workforce system. Results reflect the impact of strategic investments in data infrastructure, frontline training, and provider collaboration. While certain areas require targeted improvement, the region remains well-positioned to build early momentum and continue driving measurable progress across workforce outcomes.

Expenditure Update

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board budget outlines how it intends to utilize its revenue to realize the objectives outlined in the Board's strategic plan. The budget details the allocation of resources to operate Workforce Solutions and generate positive outcomes in the region.

Revenue Overview

The 2025 budgeted revenue totals over \$495 million. The Year-to-Date revenue as of May 2025 is \$176 million, slightly behind the target of \$207 million.



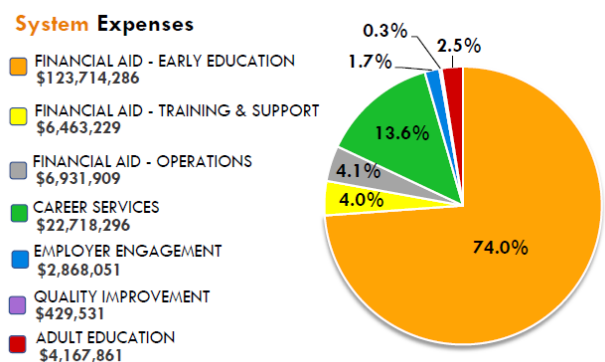
Expenditure Overview

Financial aid represents \$137.1 million in expenditures, with \$123.7 million allocated for Early Education, \$6.5 million for Training & Support, and \$6.9 million for Operations.

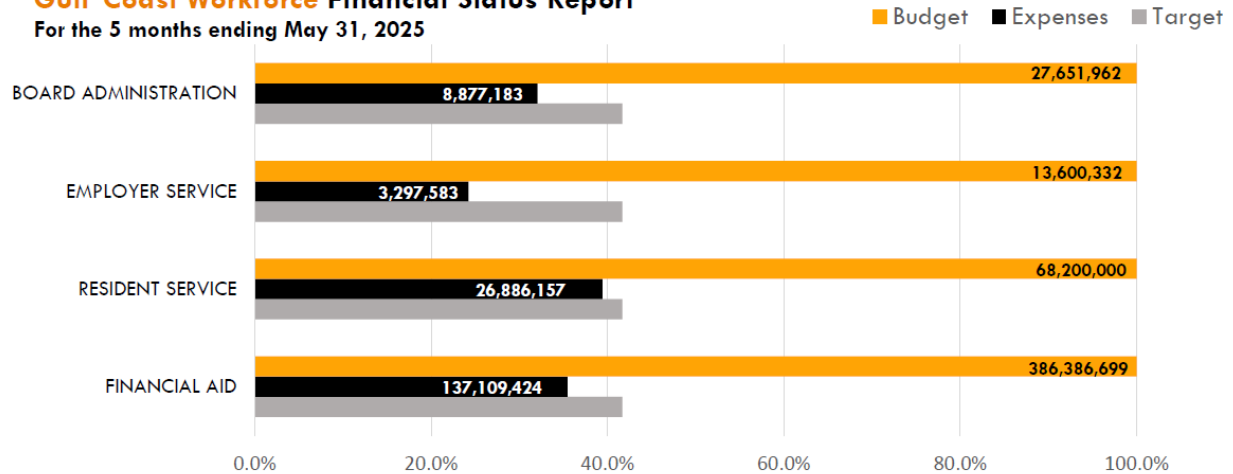
Career Services represents \$22.7 million, and Adult Education represents \$4.2 million of the Resident Service expenditures.

Employer Engagement and Quality Improvement represent \$2.9 million and \$0.4 million, respectively, for Employer Services.

Board Administration is \$8.9 million.



Gulf Coast Workforce Financial Status Report For the 5 months ending May 31, 2025



Technical Program Compliance

Technical Program Compliance reviews consist of compliance testing of contract and policy requirements, as well as customer experience testing, conducted by the Quality Assurance Team. The scope of each review is determined by the terms and conditions specified in the service provider's contract. Financial monitoring is conducted separately, which is discussed later in this report.

In addition to conducting program monitoring reviews, Quality Assurance (QA) facilitates the collection of documents for Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) monitoring visits and responses. Quality Assurance conducts additional desk reviews when requested by TWC Audit Resolution.

Current Reviews:

Quality Assurance has completed 15 of 18 reviews scheduled for Program Year 2025. We are currently reviewing the Financial Aid Payment office and SERCO. We will begin desk reviews for the Financial Aid Support Center by the end of August. We have also begun planning for the Program Year 2026 Adult Education reviews, which will start in August.

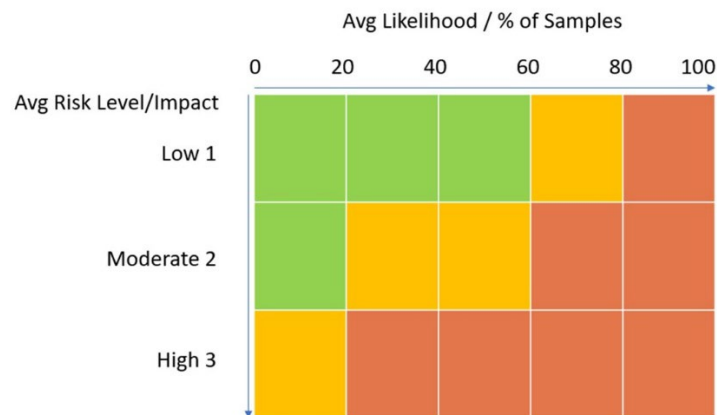
Monitoring Risk Matrix

In the May 2025 Audit and Monitoring report, Quality Assurance outlined its adoption of the risk assessment principles established by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO). Quality Assurance has adhered to these principles, utilizing consistent, evidence-based criteria to assess and report, and evaluating risk based on likelihood and impact.

Beginning with the 2026 Adult Education monitoring cycle, QA will implement a standardized high, moderate, and low risk rating scale to assess the severity of findings. This approach supports COSO's recommendation to prioritize risks and

will improve our ability to communicate and act on potential compliance issues.

Ratings will be reported to the Audit and Monitoring Committee using the same color-coded format already adopted by Financial Monitoring, enhancing consistency and clarity across oversight functions.



Financial Systems

The Board engages two CPA firms to conduct comprehensive financial monitoring of all workforce board service providers. Since the last update, we have received six (6) final reports. Currently, there are no reviews in progress. Financial Monitoring Services were reprocured earlier this year, and one new consultant will be brought on board in addition to the existing two (LaPorte CPAs & Business Advisors). The FY26 monitoring cycle is to begin in September following contract execution.

Final Reports Received Since the Last Update

- Baker Ripley (FAPO, Career Office, AEL) - Low Overall Risk;
- Children's Learning Institute - Moderate Overall Risk;
- Equus (Career Office) - Low Overall Risk;
- Equus (Support Center) - Low Overall Risk;
- SERCO - Low Overall Risk; and
- Systemwide Financial Aid Payment Review (Multiple Subrecipients) - Low Overall Risk, Baseline to be determined.

Reviews in Progress

- There are no reviews currently in progress.

Upcoming in 2025

- Monitoring schedule to be determined in August.

Spotlight: Quality Assurance - Summer Earn and Learn

Program Overview

The SEAL (Summer Earn and Learn) program is a five-week initiative that offers students with disabilities meaningful, short-term employment experiences. Although participation numbers were lower this year compared to previous cycles, our approach remained consistent. Each placement was treated with the same level of diligence, reinforcing our belief that every student's experience matters, regardless of scale.

This year stood out as one of the most successful since SEAL was introduced in our region. A key contributor to this success was the strong collaboration between the Quality Assurance (QA) team and the Programs team, particularly LaToya Casimere and Ariel Wallace. Open communication ensured that QA had the most current information, allowing us to proactively address issues and maintain high standards of safety and compliance.

Key QA Activities

QA worked closely with the Programs team to ensure all participant data was accurately entered into the portal ahead of the first day. Feedback was provided to LaToya Casimere to resolve any discrepancies with service providers.

QA conducted required on-site visits to assess the quality of placements. These visits included verifying that emergency contact information was available at each worksite and that staff understood the protocol for contacting Workforce Solutions in both urgent and routine situations.

During site visits, QA engaged with students and supervisors, observed work environments, and ensured accessibility and safety. No safety issues were reported this year. Additionally, there was a noticeable increase in individualized placements, allowing students to explore roles that align with their interests and strengths.

Looking Ahead

We are excited to build on this year's momentum by continuing to strengthen QA practices and deepen collaboration with program staff. Our goal remains to ensure that every student has a safe, supportive, and empowering experience.

Accountability and Improvement

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) address performance and production issues with progressive intervention strategies to support improvement. This includes Performance Improvement Actions, formalized Technical Assistance Plans (TAP), or Corrective

Action Plans (CAP). The current interventions from the TWC and GCWB include the following:

Texas Workforce Commission Interventions:

SNAP Work Activities: The Board staff and career office service providers continue to conduct monthly testing to ensure SNAP Work Activities documentation is submitted to Health and Human Services as required for the CAP TWC place the Board on in April 2025. The Board must demonstrate four consecutive months with an error rate lower than 10 percent. Testing has been submitted to TWC for April, May, and June. The testing submitted for April, May, and June demonstrated error rates of 0%, 8%, and 2%, respectively.

GCWB Interventions:

Adult Education Center: At the previous Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting, the Board reported that the Adult Education Center (AEC) was placed on a Performance Improvement Plan due to concerns related to internal controls, service quality, and responsiveness. Since then, Board staff have met with AEC leadership to review and evaluate their proposed corrective actions. Through this collaborative process, all major concerns have been successfully addressed. A few remaining issues are still under active discussion, and the Board is optimistic that full resolution will be achieved by the next Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting in September.

BakerRipley - Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO): The Board previously reported that FAPO would be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan due to concerns related to financial management, communication, and project oversight. On June 20, 2025, FAPO submitted its formal response to the Board's findings, and after a thorough review, the response was deemed acceptable. Board staff will work closely with FAPO to support the effective implementation of the proposed corrective actions.

Since the submission of FAPO's formal response, Board staff identified an additional operational issue. Due to a daily cash release limit imposed by FAPO's banking institution, a scheduled batch of payments to child care vendors was delayed before the 4th of July holiday. Although the payments were expected to be released by July 3, 2025, payments did not reach providers until July 7, 2025. As a result, several vendors contacted the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to complain and request a status update. Board staff was not adequately and timely informed of these challenges or notified of other earlier payment issues which transpired in June 2025.

In response, Board staff took immediate steps to strengthen oversight and coordination with FAPO. These measures included:

- Working with FAPO to increase its daily cash release limit to prevent future payment disruptions,
- Establishing a formal escalation protocol requiring FAPO to notify Board staff immediately of any issues that may delay payments,
- Rescheduling regular finance meetings with FAPO to align with key payment release dates for child care vendors, and
- Ensuring timely notification of child care vendor complaints.

These corrective actions are designed to provide earlier visibility into potential issues, enhance communication, and allow the Board to offer timely support to ensure uninterrupted payment processing for vendors.

Compliance and Review Updates

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Report Updates: The TWC Monitoring system review for Program Year 2025 exited on July 3, 2025. We expect to receive the report within three to six months.

The Health and Human Services (HHSC) Community Access Review: Gulf Coast was visited for a brief review as part of the HHSC's review of services administered by TWC. The entrance was conducted on Monday, July 7, and the review was conducted between HHSC and TWC on Monday, July 14. HHSC reviewed ten customer records. We expect TWC to receive a report in the next three months.

Next Meeting

We propose scheduling the next committee meeting for 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, Texas 77027.

Career Services Committee

Executive Summary

The Career Services and Employer Engagement Committee met on July 23, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. at the Houston-Galveston Area Council 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027, chaired by Adrian Ozuna and Alan Heskamp. Other Board members present included Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Joyce Johnson, Mike Dolbert, Susan Lindsey, Allatia Harris, Bin Yu, Cheryl Guido, Doug Karr, Edward Melton, Guy Robert Jackson, Shareen Larmond, Edward Melton, Sineria Ordonez, Paul Puente, Mou Sarkar, Lizandra Vazquez, and Bobbie Henderson.

This meeting marked a pivotal step toward the transformation of our regional workforce system and a return to a unified One-Stop service delivery model. This change will enable a deeper alignment between job seeker and employer services and will support the ongoing transformation to a more effective, efficient, and modern workforce delivery structure across the Board's 13-county region. Key highlights of this report include:

- The closure and evaluation of the Career Services RFP, with a recommendation forthcoming to the Board's Procurement Committee.
- A fiscal update highlighting expected reductions to available service delivery funding, including a revised budget projection.
- A detailed overview of the federal "Make America Skilled Again" (MASA) block grant proposal and its potential implications for the Board's funding, operations, and office footprint.
- Strategic updates on the October 1, 2025, transition to new career services providers and the build-out of the Regional Operation and Coordination Council (ROCC).

This report provides a high-level overview of our operational readiness assessment as we confront evolving federal funding realities and advance the transformation of our career services delivery system into a modern, integrated workforce system.

Career Services RFP Update

The Career Services Request for Proposals (RFP) officially closed on June 5, 2025, receiving a total of 12 proposals from organizations interested in providing workforce development services across our three designated regions. Evaluators assessed each proposal using a comprehensive set of criteria, including organizational qualifications, proposed service methodology, budget, and staffing structure, and demonstrated past performance.

Following this initial scoring, the top five highest-ranking organizations were invited to participate in interview sessions conducted on June 24. During these interviews, each

organization responded to a standardized set of 10 questions designed to assess their approach to service delivery, capacity for meeting performance goals, and alignment with our workforce development priorities. The interview responses were scored and factored into the overall evaluation.

Final rankings were determined by combining scores from both the written proposals and the interview process to ensure a comprehensive assessment of each candidate's suitability. Based on these results, a formal recommendation will be developed and presented to the Workforce Procurement Committee at their meeting scheduled for July 29, 2025.

Originally, the funding estimate to support career services across the three regions was approximately \$56 million. However, due to recent reductions in several key funding streams—including allocations under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Summer Earn and Learn program, and other related initiatives—the anticipated funding available for contract negotiations has been revised downward to approximately \$50.4 million.

Given these funding adjustments, we anticipate presenting the Workforce Procurement Committee with a proposed funding range, reflecting the updated budget realities, for their review and approval. This range will help guide contract negotiations with the selected providers and ensure that service delivery remains aligned with available resources while continuing to meet the workforce needs of our communities.

Overview of “Make America Skilled Again”

FY 2026 Presidential Budget Proposal

The President's FY 2026 budget proposes consolidating eleven federally funded workforce development programs—including WIOA Titles I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth), Title III (Employment Services), National Dislocated Worker Grants, YouthBuild, Reentry Employment Opportunities, and other workforce programs—into a single block grant titled Make America Skilled Again (MASA). This grant would be administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and distributed to states for implementation. The proposal includes a mandatory 10% set-aside of MASA funds specifically for registered apprenticeship programs.

The proposed MASA block grant is funded at \$2.966 billion for FY 2026. This represents a 28% reduction from the combined enacted funding for the eleven programs in FY 2025—approximately \$1.5 billion less in total federal workforce investment. In addition, the overall Department of Labor budget is reduced by roughly 35% compared to FY 2025 enacted levels. The proposal eliminates individual budget lines for each of the eleven programs and replaces them with a single funding stream. While apprenticeship investments are preserved through the set-aside, other previously distinct programmatic funding streams are proposed to no longer be separately designated. The Department of

Labor would retain 0.25% of MASA funds (approximately \$7.4 million) for technical assistance to states.

Increased State Control

Under MASA, the consolidation of multiple programs into one block grant shifts significant authority to the state level. States will have greater discretion in allocating MASA funds across regions and programs within their jurisdiction. They will be responsible for developing comprehensive MASA plans, setting strategic priorities, and ensuring compliance with federal requirements—including the mandated apprenticeship funding.

Role of Local Workforce Boards

Local workforce boards most likely will continue to play an important role but will operate within the framework established by the state's MASA plan. While boards may gain some flexibility in how they deploy funds to address local workforce needs, their discretion will largely depend on the state's allocation decisions and oversight. This dynamic emphasizes collaboration between state agencies and local boards to align resources and goals effectively.

Congressional Appropriations

The U.S. House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education is scheduled to mark up its FY 2026 appropriations bill on July 21, 2025. Through the appropriations process, Congress may adopt, modify, or reject the MASA proposal in its final funding legislation. While appropriations language can consolidate funding streams for a fiscal year, it cannot alter or repeal authorizing statutes such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). However, Congress can include directives in appropriations legislation to:

- Temporarily consolidate workforce program funding into a unified block grant; and
- Implement a MASA-style structure for FY 2026 without amending WIOA.

Final budget outcomes will depend on the appropriations negotiations between the House, Senate, and the Administration.

Potential Impacts and Responses

Funding Updates

For Program Year 2025, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board experienced an approximate 10% reduction in WIOA funding compared to the previous year—part of a broader trend of tightening federal and state workforce budgets. Looking ahead, the proposed Make America Skilled Again (MASA) block grant, currently under federal consideration, may result in additional reductions ranging from 20% to 30%, based on preliminary federal

budget projections and early state-level planning discussions. If realized, these cumulative cuts would represent a significant shift in the resource landscape for workforce development and service delivery in our region.

A 25% reduction, for example, would create a projected funding shortfall of approximately \$12.2 million, with direct implications across core operational areas. Under the current funding and organizational model, such a reduction would necessitate difficult trade-offs in staffing, service delivery, and administrative infrastructure. Both internal operations and the direct support provided to customers, particularly in the form of training scholarships, supportive services, and case management capacity, would be constrained.

A key area of financial vulnerability is the Board's physical office footprint. For 2026, the planned leasing structure includes nine service provider offices in the West region, eight in the North, and eight in the East, all of which serve as critical access points for career services, job matching, and training referrals. However, sustaining this level of real estate investment under a reduced budget may not be workable without compromising other high-impact services.

To navigate this changing environment while continuing to deliver impactful workforce services, we share the following recommendations for the Board's consideration:

1. Modernize the Service Footprint

- Consolidate and reconfigure office space through a hub-and-spoke model that retains regional coverage while reducing fixed costs.
- Expand co-location opportunities with libraries, colleges, ISDs, and public-sector partners.
- Enhance virtual service delivery for eligibility, assessment, coaching, and case management.
- Utilize community-based access points to maintain reach without duplicating infrastructure.

2. Maximize Return on Investment

- Prioritize funding for evidence-based programs with strong employment and wage outcomes.
- Focus training investments on in-demand sectors and occupations validated by labor market data.
- Implement tiered service models to align resource intensity with participant need.

3. Strengthen Partnerships and Resource Integration

- Braid and align funds with TANF, SNAP E&T, Adult Education, and other public sources to achieve efficiency and scale.

- Expand cost-sharing partnerships with employers, philanthropic organizations, and local governments.
- Deepen collaboration with community-based organizations to extend reach and wraparound support.

4. Invest in Technology and Capacity

- Leverage innovative technologies to streamline operations, expand access to services, and enhance the customer experience; concurrently, invest in robust cross-training of staff to ensure continuity, agility, and system-wide service excellence.
- Strengthen data infrastructure to support real-time performance management and resource allocation.

5. Explore the Creation of a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Affiliate

The Board has already discussed establishing a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. This structure—successfully used by workforce boards in Austin, Chicago, Philadelphia, and other leading regions—would allow the Board to:

- Pursue private philanthropic funding not accessible to governmental entities;
- Accept charitable donations and corporate sponsorships to support innovation and special initiatives;
- Apply for foundation grants, including those focused on economic mobility, digital inclusion, and workforce innovation;
- Pilot and scale programs outside the constraints of public procurement timelines; and
- Build community trust and visibility by engaging new stakeholders and funding partners.
- A 501(c)(3) affiliate would serve as a strategic tool for the Board's core WIOA functions. It would complement existing operations by expanding resource flexibility and enabling the launch of mission-aligned projects that enhance system impact.

As the Gulf Coast Workforce Board faces a rapidly evolving policy and funding landscape, including potential reductions through the proposed Make America Skilled Again (MASA) block grant, it is imperative that we respond with innovation and strategic alignment. Guided by our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, we are called to innovate boldly, connect intentionally, and build systems that help our communities thrive.

The Board's commitment to a customer-centered design and business-forward strategies positions us well to respond to fiscal constraints while enhancing service delivery. We are already taking key steps by consolidating resources, leveraging technology, realigning staffing models, and strengthening sector partnership to uphold the integrity and reach of our system. The formation of a 501(c)(3) affiliate represents an

additional best-practice opportunity to diversify funding and expand the Board's capacity to pilot high-impact initiatives and pursue philanthropic and private investment in workforce innovation. As stewards of the region's workforce ecosystem, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board stays unwavering in its mission to help employers meet their workforce needs and individuals build meaningful careers, ensuring that both can compete in the global economy. By staying nimble, collaborative, and grounded in our strategic plan, we will not only navigate these challenges; we will lead through them.

Transition Plan and Timeline

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast is transforming its system starting October 1, 2025. New service providers will operate career offices in North, East, and West regions, integrating employer engagement and career services under a unified One-Stop Model. This transition aims to boost efficiency, accelerate job placements, and provide a more cohesive experience for job seekers and businesses. Board staff has developed a detailed plan, with workgroups overseeing critical areas. This includes:

- **Career Services Workgroup:** This group is developing a Career Services Guidebook, manuals, and customer journey maps for service providers (due August 6-15, 2025). They will also recommend job descriptions, manage customer and caseload transitions, coordinate with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and hold weekly meetings with new providers (August 6 - September 30, 2025).
- **Professional Development Workgroup:** This team will provide onboarding and training for service provider leadership (September 1 - December 31, 2025) and staff. Training will cover the Strategic Plan, guidebooks, policies, performance requirements, and systems. Abbreviated versions of these trainings will be offered to GCWB staff beforehand (August 12 - September 15, 2025).
- **Virtual Services Workgroup:** This group is refining virtual services within the One-Stop Model and exploring partnership opportunities like "Workforce on Wheels" (July 23 - December 31, 2025).
- **Communications Workgroup:** This group will develop a communication plan for customers and partners, manage branding, and provide updates to the Board (starting August 5, 2025).
- **Building, Property and Related Contracts Workgroup:** This team will oversee the transition of office leases, account for property and equipment, and coordinate with TWC regarding shared spaces (July 23 - September 30, 2025).
- **IT and Systems Workgroup:** This group will manage the transition of system access for new and outgoing staff (September 1 - October 31, 2025), and oversee the transfer of data circuits, TWC private network access, and technology assets (October 1 - December 31, 2025).

Regional Operation and Coordination Council (ROCC)

We are establishing the Regional Operation and Coordination Council (ROCC) by mid-November 2025 to lead the strategic alignment and implementation of our transformed workforce system across all three regions. The ROCC will play a pivotal role in ensuring consistent, high-quality service delivery by standardizing policies, aligning regional operations with WIOA and other regulatory frameworks, resolving operational challenges, and closely monitoring performance outcomes. The Council will also serve as a central forum for reviewing regional data trends, examining best practices, and fostering shared learning across providers. It will coordinate employer and partner engagement efforts, oversee onboarding and training processes, and ensure services remain responsive to both community needs and labor market demands. The ROCC will convene bi-weekly, host quarterly strategic planning sessions, and provide regular updates to the Executive Director and the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Career Services Committee. Through this coordinated governance structure, we aim to drive operational excellence, strengthen system-wide cohesion, and elevate the quality and equity of workforce services across the region.

Virtual Career Services

Reimagining Service Delivery: Leading with Innovation in a Time of Constraint

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is entering a critical period of transformation. As federal workforce funding contracts, the challenge before us is clear: how do we serve the community with fewer resources, without compromising on quality or impact? The answer lies in a strategic investment in our staff and innovative technology. Our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan calls for a bold shift: to “improve service delivery using technology and innovative solutions,” to increase access, and to ensure our workforce system reflects the agility and efficiency of the private sector. Virtual and hybrid services are not peripheral tools. Rather, they are core infrastructure for a reimagined workforce system that is nimble, customer-centered, and regionally scalable.

Building on What We Already Do

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast has made meaningful strides in digital service delivery. Today, we provide a broad range of services through Microsoft Teams, RingCentral, and the WorkInTexas app, including:

- Job search assistance and resume support,
- Career assessments and TABE testing,
- Program eligibility screenings,
- Orientation for SNAP, TANF, RESEA, and paid work experience programs, and
- Referrals to AEL, 211, and wraparound community services.

Currently, customers can submit documents online via WorkInTexas, receive PEX cards virtually, and complete forms securely through PandaDocs. This ecosystem of tools ensures that location, transportation, or scheduling challenges no longer need to be

barriers to opportunity. However, now is the time to push further to modernize how we engage, scale, and sustain impact across our 13-county region.

WAVE: From Queue Management to Regional Service Orchestration

Our investment in WAVE (Qless) presents a powerful opportunity. This queue management tool can now serve as the operating system for virtual-first, region-wide coordination. With WAVE, customers can:

- Join virtual lines or schedule appointments by phone or online,
- Receive text updates, reminders, and wait-time estimates, and
- Engage remotely while staff across offices and locations manage demand in real time.

When fully leveraged, WAVE offers a powerful framework for improving virtual service delivery across our 13-county region. Its virtual queuing and appointment scheduling functions allow us to balance workload across locations, enabling staff in lower-demand areas, or those working remotely, to assist with high-volume queues in real time.

By segmenting appointments by service type, such as resume assistance, eligibility intake, or training, we can streamline triage, reduce mismatches, and route customers more effectively. WAVE's real-time data dashboards will support dynamic staffing decisions, helping us shorten wait times, reduce service delays, and deploy personnel where they're needed most.

As we continue the rollout of WAVE, we are committed to not only expanding its usage but also to evaluating its performance as a systemwide tool. To that end, Carl Salazar will soon lead a Kaizen assessment—a structured, continuous improvement process aimed at identifying inefficiencies, unlocking hidden capacity, and ensuring that we maximize every feature of WAVE in alignment with our service delivery goals.

This work reflects our strategic priority to do more with less: to use technology not only to maintain service during fiscal tightening, but to fundamentally redesign our systems for inclusion, speed, and impact. By pairing WAVE with thoughtful process evaluation and community-driven innovation, we are building a workforce system that is more agile and data-driven.

Automating the Front Door: Chatbots, Intake Tools, and AI Assistants

Across the country, workforce boards are embracing automation as a force multiplier. Workforce Solutions Central Texas now uses "Eager Eagle," a 24/7 chatbot that resolves 100% of basic customer inquiries—freeing up human staff for high-impact services. New York's Virtual Career Center uses AI to match jobseekers to opportunities and recommend training based on skills gaps. TWC's "Larry the Chatbot" eased pressure on call centers by automating frequently asked questions during the pandemic. WFS can

follow suit by implementing:

- A simple digital intake form to streamline onboarding,
- A virtual assistant or chatbot to answer FAQs, triage inquiries, and connect customers to programs, while staff focus on coaching and engagement, and
- An automated feedback loop, collecting user experience insights to drive improvement.

These are not future ideas. They are scalable, affordable solutions that reduce overhead and improve responsiveness now.

Hybrid by Design: Local Access, Virtual Expertise

A purely digital model will not reach everyone, but a smart hybrid strategy can. Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast can leverage its Workforce on Wheels units and virtual platforms to host community-based hybrid sessions in trusted spaces such as churches, schools, libraries, employer partners, and government facilities. In these sessions, expert-led workshops can be streamed in virtually, while WFS staff provide localized, in-person support. These flexible, high-impact pop-up hubs allow us to deliver high-quality programming across the region without investing in new brick-and-mortar locations; instead, we collaborate with regional partners to utilize existing community spaces. This hub-and-spoke model offers:

- Flexibility to respond to unique local needs,
- The ability to build trust through consistent, face-to-face engagement, and
- A dramatically lower cost-to-serve ratio compared to traditional office expansion.

Through this approach, we are not only a service provider but a visible, embedded partner in the daily life of the communities we serve.

Lessons from Other Industries

We are not alone in this transformation; other sectors offer tested models including:

- Telehealth has shown how remote appointments can reduce wait times and improve access to specialized services in rural areas—exactly the challenge we face.
- Banking has moved to video appointments, mobile apps, and virtual advisors, proving that high-trust, high-touch services can thrive in virtual formats.
- Education has embraced hybrid learning, combining asynchronous and synchronous instruction with on-demand resources and community-based access hubs.
- Retail and hospitality have redefined service expectations through mobile-first, self-service platforms, and proactive outreach.

These industries have one thing in common: they prioritized customer experience, personalization, and access by using technology to deliver more with less. We can and must do the same.

Not Just a Shift But A Strategic Advantage

Virtual and hybrid services are no longer just tools of convenience but rather infrastructure of scale and sustainability. By fully deploying WAVE, embracing virtual assistants, expanding hybrid learning models, and integrating both asynchronous and live digital learning, Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast can deliver faster, smarter, and more personalized services. Deepening our partnerships with schools, libraries, faith-based organizations, and community centers will extend our reach and embed our presence where it matters most: where our customers are. This is how we lead in a time of constraint: not by doing less but by embracing innovation and technology to transform our system of delivering career services.

TWC Employer Services Staff

Background

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board continues its partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to deliver Wagner-Peyser-funded Employment Services (ES) across the region. These services—delivered by state merit staff—support job seekers through job matching, labor market navigation, and reemployment assistance. The region is allocated 108 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions in FY25, decreasing slightly to 105 in FY26. A proposed federal rule may soon provide states with greater staffing flexibility, which could significantly impact the current service delivery model.

What We Are Doing

TWC Employment Services staff are embedded within more than 20 Workforce Solutions offices operated by partners including Equus, Interfaith, BakerRipley, and SERCO. Staff deliver direct services such as:

- Career Advisors – Job matching and career guidance;
- Service Coordinators – Resource room support and technology navigation; and
- Business Service Representatives – creating, reviewing, and maintaining job orders in WorkInTexas.com (WIT)

While TWC finalizes its staffing plans, Workforce Solutions office managers are temporarily overseeing ES operations to ensure service continuity and alignment.

Current Situation

TWC began developing a dedicated ES supervisory structure and initially posted two ES Manager positions, with plans for additional management and field-level supervisor roles. However, hiring has been temporarily paused due to a proposed federal policy shift.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to eliminate the federal requirement that ES services be delivered exclusively by state merit staff (20 CFR § 652.215). If finalized, this rule would restore flexibility previously granted under the 2020 Final Rule—reversed in 2023—and allow states to adopt staffing models that best meet operational and fiscal needs. The implications for States and Local Workforce Boards include:

- **Staffing Flexibility:** States could select the staffing model—state merit, local, or contractor—that best fits their operational and fiscal needs.
- **Program Requirements:** States must still meet all Wagner-Peyser service delivery obligations, including job matching, UI claimant services, and labor market information.
- **Strategic Alignment:** This change allows for greater integration of Wagner-Peyser with WIOA, TANF, and SNAP E&T services.

Next Steps include:

- Public comments are due 60 days from Federal Register publication (July 1, 2025).
- Final rule could align with the 2026 WIOA State Plan modification cycle, minimizing disruption.
- Conduct impact analysis for the Gulf Coast region, particularly related to staffing and service continuity.

Conclusion

The Career Services Committee took no formal action at its August 2025 meeting; however, the discussion marked a critical inflection point in the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's transformation efforts. As we prepare for the October 1 transition to a fully integrated One-Stop service model and anticipate the potential fiscal and operational shifts posed by the proposed Make America Skilled Again (MASA) block grant, the Board is advancing with clarity, urgency, and strategic intent.

We are not merely reacting to budgetary constraints; we are using them as a catalyst to redesign our workforce delivery system for the future. Through targeted investments in technology, the build-out of the Regional Operation and Coordination Council (ROCC), and enhanced virtual and hybrid services, we are positioning the Board to serve more effectively across our 13-county region. Our evolving model centers on efficiency, equity, and customer experience, ensuring that even in an era of reduced funding, we continue to deliver high-impact services.

This is a defining moment for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. Guided by our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan and grounded in innovation, resilience, and partnerships, we are committed to building a workforce system that is agile, inclusive, and aligned with the region's economic future. We will continue to lead through change and toward a stronger, more connected Gulf Coast workforce ecosystem.

Recognizing the significant time and effort required to support the career services provider transition, Chair Ozuna requested that Board staff submit a written update to the Career Services Committee in advance of the October 2025 Board meeting, unless a formal hybrid meeting is determined to be essential. The meeting concluded with no formal recommendations advanced for the Board's consideration and possible action.

Employer Engagement Committee

Executive Summary

The Career Services and Employer Engagement Committee met on July 23, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. at the Houston-Galveston Area Council 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027, chaired by Adrian Ozuna and Alan Heskamp. Additional Board members present included Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Joyce Johnson, Mike Dolbert, Susan Lindsey, Allatia Harris, Bin Yu, Cheryl Guido, Doug Karr, Edward Melton, Guy Robert Jackson, Shareen Larmond, Edward Melton, Sineria Ordonez, Paul Puente, Mou Sarkar, Lizandra Vazquez, and Bobbie Henderson.

The Employer Engagement Committee advanced its strategic mission to transform the regional workforce system into an agile, demand-driven, and employer-responsive model. Chaired by Alan Heskamp, the discussion centered on aligning workforce services with real-time labor market needs, integrating employer engagement into the One-Stop service model, and reinforcing sector-based strategies that respond to evolving industry demands.

Key highlights included the implementation of a unified staffing structure to streamline employer services, mitigate labor shortages, and leverage labor market intelligence for smarter job matching and training investments. Board staff also shared a regional economic analysis outlining persistent labor shortages, trade disruptions, and infrastructure vulnerabilities, while spotlighting growth trends in healthcare, logistics, and construction.

The Committee reviewed progress toward launching sector-specific Employer Advisory Committees, beginning with healthcare and construction, and explored initiatives in high-growth sectors such as technology, biotech, water/wastewater, and advanced manufacturing. Rapid response efforts to major layoffs further demonstrated the Board's commitment to supportive services. Additionally, staff provided updates on statewide engagement, including Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast's participation in the Texas Workforce Commission's Texas Conference for Employers, which successfully expanded outreach into underserved and rural communities. Together, these efforts reflect a comprehensive and strategic approach to employer engagement, one that integrates business intelligence and collaboration to build a resilient workforce ecosystem and position the Gulf Coast region for sustained economic competitiveness.

Return of Employer Engagement to "One Stop" Model

To improve service delivery and enhance responsiveness to regional employers, the Board has fully integrated employer engagement activities into the Career Services framework through a unified "One-Stop" model. At the core of this

transformation is a coordinated staffing approach that brings Business Consultants and Recruiters into closer alignment, reducing system fragmentation, strengthening employer relationships, and improving outcomes for both businesses and job seekers. Key elements of this model include:

- **Streamlined Access**
Employers now benefit from a single, coordinated point of contact for all recruitment, hiring, and training needs. This integrated approach simplifies navigation of the workforce system, reduces confusion, and delivers a seamless, customer-centered experience tailored to business demands.
- **Improved Talent Matching**
Business Consultants and Recruiters work collaboratively to align candidate referrals with real-time labor market needs. This strategic coordination elevates the quality of matches between job seekers and employer opportunities—resulting in more successful placements, better retention, and long-term value for both parties.
- **Faster Response Times**
With staff embedded at the local level and deeply engaged with employers, our teams are positioned to respond rapidly to urgent business needs—whether posting vacancies, coordinating customized hiring events, or facilitating connections to training and upskilling resources.
- **Smarter Use of Labor Market Intelligence**
Integrated teams share insights on industry trends, emerging skill gaps, and hiring patterns. This data-driven collaboration supports more effective outreach, sharper investment in training, and proactive strategies to anticipate and meet evolving employer needs.

This coordinated staffing model is more than an operational shift; it represents a deeper commitment to building a high-performing, demand-driven workforce system that is aligned, agile, and positioned to serve employers across all sectors with excellence.

Labor Market Update

Houston Economic Overview – Key Concerns and Looking Ahead

Houston remains one of the leading metropolitan economies in the United States, buoyed by its diverse industrial base, strong population growth, and continual evolution in key sectors. Looking ahead and beyond, several critical concerns and emerging trends are shaping the city's economic landscape. Houston's economy faces numerous pressing challenges. Among the most significant are labor shortages, tariffs and trade disruptions, flood control and infrastructure gaps, and severe weather risk.

Labor Shortages

One of the most immediate issues is the shortage of labor, which is affecting vital sectors such as construction, manufacturing, and professional services. Stricter immigration enforcement has particularly impacted the construction industry, where a significant percentage of the workforce consists of immigrants. Recent labor enforcement measures have led to notable shortages, project delays, and upward pressure on wages. In response, the industry is turning to increased subcontracting, and increased efforts supporting training and apprenticeship programs. Despite these efforts, the gap in available skilled labor remains a significant challenge.

Tariffs & Trade Disruptions

Tariffs and trade disruptions continue to pose threats to major across many industry sectors, especially export sectors, including petrochemicals and machinery. With increasing international trade tensions, these policies have the potential to drive up production costs, intensify recession risks, and dampen export competitiveness.

Flood Control & Infrastructure Gaps

Houston also faces significant challenges in flood control and maintaining robust infrastructure. With a reported shortfall of \$1.15 billion in flood mitigation, and with rising inflation inflating project costs, the city is under pressure to invest more in both protective measures and general infrastructure repair and improvement.

2025 Hurricane Season

The looming threats posed by a major hurricane or flooding event are a major concern. Aging infrastructure further exacerbates these challenges, demanding both immediate and long-term resilience planning. Hurricanes cause major disruptions in things like port activity, petrochemical manufacturing, public transportation, and flood control systems. Hurricane Harvey caused \$125 billion in damages, making it the second costliest hurricane in U.S. history after Katrina. Harvey temporarily shut down one-third of U.S. refining capacity with damages also affecting the world's supply chains of plastics and chemicals.

Economic Outlook – Job Market

In terms of the job market, Houston continues to add jobs with some caution signs ahead:

- **Job Growth:** Houston experienced steady job growth through the end of last year, but there was a notable decline throughout 2025 so far where annual payroll growth has fallen to +0.9%, down from 1.6% in January.

- **Unemployment:** The unemployment rate in Houston stands at approximately 4.3% as of June, which is slightly above the national and state average of 4.1% but lower than the national average of 4.4%.
- **Wage Growth:** Based on Texas Workforce Commission's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, total wages are up, but wage growth has slowed. Total wages paid in 2024 in Houston increased by 13.6 billion (+5.3%) from what they were in 2023. The increase has slowed from 2023's increase of 18.6 billion (+7.3%) from 2022.

Sector Highlights

A closer look at industry-specific performance reveals opposing trends:

- **Growing Sectors:** Industries such as education and healthcare, logistics (trade, transportation, and utilities), mining, and architectural and engineering services have seen notable growth.
- **Slowing Sectors:** Conversely, many of the areas that support overall business activity found in administrative and supportive services have seen a substantial decline. Durable goods manufacturing is also reporting slight losses.

Looking Ahead:

2025 and beyond: The outlook suggests a slow yet stable growth pattern withholding any escalating military conflict, with key risks stemming from tariffs, labor shortages, housing stress, and flood risks. Nonetheless, sectors like healthcare and other industries associated with population growth, industrial real estate, manufacturing (and associated relocations), provide some bright spots. Bottom line is that expectations are that continued population influx and business investments will further support economic momentum in the coming years.

Employer Engagement Advisory Council

As part of our ongoing work to strengthen employer engagement, we are taking a phased approach to advisory development. Before launching industry-specific Advisory Committees, we are forming a General Advisory Committee composed of cross-industry leaders. This group will help guide the structure, priorities, and strategy of each sector-based committee to ensure alignment with workforce needs and employer expectations.

Once established, the General Advisory Committee will serve as a foundational advisory body, informing the design and implementation of future sector councils and strengthening our overall engagement strategy. Contiguously, we finalized the bylaws for the Advisory Committees for Healthcare and Building & Construction. These advisory bodies are a key component of our sector strategy,

designed to ensure that industry input directly informs our workforce development efforts, training investments, and talent pipeline initiatives.

With the structure and purpose of the committees now formalized, we have taken a targeted approach to building employer participation. Strategic invitations have been sent to leading employers across various sectors who represent a wide range of clinical, research, and community health services. Some of the invited organizations for the General Advisory Committee include AccessHealth, LifeGift, Gulf Coast Blood Bank, UTMB, Performance Contracting, Inc., BrandSafway, Day & Zimmermann, South Texas Nuclear Project, Young Industries (3D Building Printing), Wrapmasters, HCA, Worley, HarrisHealth, and Quadvest (soon to be acquired by H2O America).

These organizations play a critical role in shaping the regional healthcare, construction, energy, technology, and wastewater workforce and bring valuable insight into hiring trends, skills gaps, and training needs. Their participation will help ensure that workforce programs remain responsive, inclusive, and aligned with real-time industry demands.

For Building and Construction, we have initiated targeted outreach to employers that represent a diverse cross-section of the construction ecosystem- including public sector agencies, private contractors, and specialty trade firms. Strategic invitations have been extended to key employers and partners with demonstrated commitment to workforce development, including: the City of Houston, the City of Dayton, Young Enterprises, Worley Construction, Wrapmasters Inc., and Brandt Energy.

These organizations were selected for their leadership in construction, infrastructure, and energy efficiency, as well as their capacity to offer insight into evolving workforce needs, skills training requirements, and hiring trends. Their input will help inform the development of sustainable, industry-informed solutions - particularly in relation to pre-apprenticeship programs, career pathway design, and high-demand occupational training.

We are continuing to identify and engage additional stakeholders in the sector, with the goal of hosting the inaugural Advisory Committee meetings in the fall 2025. These conversations will help ensure that our region's workforce efforts are guided by real-time employer input and built for long-term impact. We anticipate launching the initial committee meetings once we finalize the members and will continue to build momentum with similar outreach for other sectors.

Employer Engagement Initiatives

The Employer Engagement team has been actively involved in high-impact initiatives across the region, strengthening employer relationships, supporting business expansion, and responding to workforce disruptions.

Business Expansion - Tecnofil USA

Tecnofil USA is investing approximately \$22 million to construct a two-building, 155,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility. The company plans to lease the site for 10 years and create 160 new jobs locally. The project is projected to generate a \$11.5 million return on investment for the region. At the request of the Lake Houston Chamber, Workforce Solutions was engaged to serve as the primary staffing partner, supporting Tecnofil's hiring needs and connecting local talent to these opportunities.

Healthcare Industry Update

The healthcare sector continues to navigate significant national policy and funding changes while maintaining a strong focus on regional workforce development and job creation. Despite proposed federal budget cuts, employers across the Gulf Coast region remain committed to investing in talent pipelines, community partnerships, and workforce training initiatives.

At the national level, proposed Medicaid reductions and a 25% cut to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) budget may impact access to care and funding for key healthcare programs. Institutions like Baylor College of Medicine are already experiencing effects, including administrative downsizing due to reduced NIH funding. Additionally, new tariffs on life sciences manufacturing are expected to increase long-term operational costs, despite temporary relief through existing supplier contracts.

Locally, healthcare employers continue to take proactive steps to strengthen workforce pipelines. UTMB remains active in job fairs, youth outreach, and the Healthcare Advisory Council. AccessHealth is in conversation to host a Workforce Solutions site on its campus to improve talent access and service delivery. Baylor St. Luke's The Woodlands is launching a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) training program for graduating seniors, creating a direct pathway from high school into healthcare careers. CuBIO is collaborating with workforce leaders to expand biotech training opportunities, Harris Health will rely on Workforce Solutions to strengthen its clinical and non-clinical workforce shortages, and Eli Lilly is evaluating the development of a \$5.7 billion facility in Generation Park, which could bring 600 permanent jobs and 2,000 construction jobs to the region - pending approval of local tax incentives.

These activities reflect a strong and ongoing commitment from the healthcare industry to align with regional workforce goals, respond to emerging challenges, and create sustainable employment opportunities across the sector.

Information Technology Updates

In collaboration with Bridgeway International, we held the "First Job Survival Kit" workshop, which helped students strengthen key workplace skills such as communication, professionalism, and time management. These topics were selected based on feedback from employers and are important for students preparing to enter STEM fields.

The Industry Liaisons are also organizing a Digital Transformation Job Shadowing Day to give students a chance to see how technology is used in real work settings. Participants will gain a better understanding of career options, and the skills needed in today's digital workforce.

We also secured several new internship opportunities with local technology companies. These placements provide students with hands-on experience while supporting employer needs across areas like software development, IT support, and data analysis.

The team stays actively engaged in regional conversations addressing the growing demand for skilled, local broadband technicians and the importance of advancing digital equity. Although the number of Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship programs related to broadband remains limited in our area, this workforce need continues to be a strategic priority of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Continued participation in these discussions ensures alignment with federal priorities and positions the region to support future broadband workforce initiatives.

Building and Construction Trades Updates

We are partnering with Auto Parking Vault to align workforce development efforts with upcoming sports venue projects across Houston. This collaboration is designed to create opportunities in construction and related trades while supporting local economic development.

In addition, we are working with Harris County Human Resources to serve as a workforce partner for the Harris County Commissioners Court. This effort focuses on connecting job seekers to public sector careers and supporting county-wide hiring initiatives.

Cimarron, a leading provider of environmental and production technologies in the oil and gas sector, is expanding operations in the region. The company has

started conversations around developing strategic partnerships with Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to prepare students for emerging occupations that are currently under development. These efforts aim to proactively align workforce training with industry innovation and evolving talent needs.

Lacy Wolf and Board Staff leadership has met with Chris Canetti, President of the Houston 2026 World Cup Host Committee, to begin exploring opportunities to support the planning and staffing needs for the upcoming event. Early coordination ensures the workforce system is positioned to assist with talent pipelines, logistical support, and regional workforce alignment in preparation for this major global event.

Lastly, we have been appointed to the Board of St. Peter's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program. Through this role, we are helping guide the development of career pathways that reflect current industry standards and prepare students for high-demand roles in the building and construction trades.

Workforce Response - NASA Johnson Space Center Layoffs

The upcoming layoffs at NASA's Johnson Space Center, affecting up to 2,500 workers across thirty contractors, will have broad implications for missions such as ISS operations and Artemis lunar planning. The Employer Engagement team is coordinating with Space Center Houston and the Bay Area Economic Development Team to mitigate the impact on affected employees and provide support to regional employers. A three-phase response strategy has been developed:

- **Phase One:** Skill-building workshops focused on LinkedIn optimization, resume writing, and interview preparation.
- **Phase Two:** A large-scale job fair featuring employers from a wide range of industries.
- **Phase Three:** Ongoing employer consultations to place workers in non-aerospace sectors with urgent staffing needs.

The Texas Workforce Commission's Texas Conference for Employers

The two-day Texas Conference for Employers took place July 10–11, 2025, at the Woodlands Waterway Marriott & Convention Center. The event featured sessions on critical topics—from NLRA issues, wage-and-hour law, unemployment claims, and ADA accommodations to child labor, workplace privacy, background checks, workers' compensation, and policy handbook development. A highlight was the recognition of top "We Hire Vets" employers (businesses with a minimum 10% veteran workforce). Attendees also had the opportunity to network with exhibitors and legal experts such as Elsa Ramos, who led discussions on unemployment

appeals and claims, which was praised by attendees for being “informative” and engaging.

Juliet Stipeche offered welcoming words on behalf of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, and our Employer Engagement team hosted an informational booth at this year’s event to connect with employers across industries. We shared information including:

- Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast's services for businesses;
- Promoting partnership opportunities around hiring, training, and talent pipeline development;
- Building relationships with HR and legal decision-makers; and
- Offering guidance on how our board supports employers navigating workforce needs, layoffs, and compliance challenges.

Our presence at the conference resulted in direct outreach to employers across multiple rural communities. As a result, meetings have been scheduled with thirty-eight new employers—primarily small businesses located in Splendora (Montgomery County), Danbury (Brazoria), Kenefick (Liberty), East Bernard (Wharton), and Channelview (Harris). Notably, many of these employers had never previously heard of Workforce Solutions, highlighting a successful effort to expand awareness and connect underserved areas to workforce resources. This conference served as a valuable platform for engaging new employers, reinforcing existing partnerships, and raising visibility around the role of workforce boards in supporting business success across the state.

Sector Partnership - Water & Wastewater

The Texas Rural Water Association (TRWA) has invited Board staff to present at an upcoming conference, recognizing our successful role in launching a Registered Apprenticeship Program for the wastewater industry. This program has become a model for water associations across Texas and in other states.

The Employer Engagement Team is partnering with internal and external stakeholders to design Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship pathways aligned with the SETH Program—Science, Engineering, Technology & Health. This state-approved initiative, developed by the Texas Section of the American Water Works Association (Texas AWWA), offers high school students a fully online, 22-hour training course that prepares them for the Texas Class D Provisional Water Operator’s License. The program is fully funded by the Texas Department of Agriculture and recognized by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Workforce Solutions aims to expand this program into selected ISDs to create stronger pipelines into critical infrastructure careers.

Rapid Response Activity & Employer Downsizing

Several regional employers have recently announced workforce reductions due to budget constraints and operational restructuring. These layoffs span multiple industries, including energy, retail, manufacturing, and social services, and may affect both frontline workers and professional staff.

The following organizations have confirmed upcoming downsizing activity:

- Chevron USA Inc.,
- Randall's,
- Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston (Refugee Services),
- Church World Services, Inc.,
- Country Pure Foods,
- Pure Safety Group, Inc. (DBA Guardian Fall), and
- Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston – Cabrini Center.

The Employer Engagement team is actively monitoring these developments and preparing to provide rapid response support in coordination with affected employers and community partners. Our goal is to help displaced workers transition into new employment opportunities through job matching, skills assessments, and access to upskilling resources. We will continue to assess the scope of each layoff and coordinate with relevant stakeholders to ensure a prompt and effective workforce response.

Conclusion

No action was taken at the Employer Engagement Committee, but it is leading the drive toward a modern workforce strategy that is not only responsive to employer needs but also anticipates the demands of a changing economy. Through its work, the Board is forging a more agile, integrated, and results-oriented system—one that aligns talent development with business growth, economic resilience, and inclusive opportunity.

The Committee's recent progress, ranging from the formation of sector-specific Employer Advisory Committees to the integration of employer services within the One-Stop model and swift mobilization around regional layoffs, demonstrates a powerful shift from reactive to strategic engagement. This transformation is not merely administrative; it is foundational to building a workforce ecosystem that is data-driven, employer-informed, and future-ready.

As we look ahead, the Committee will continue to elevate employer voice, expand cross-sector collaboration, and scale initiatives that meet the moment, whether through pre-apprenticeships in critical infrastructure, partnerships in life sciences,

or talent pipelines for advanced manufacturing and healthcare. By investing in workforce intelligence, cultivating trusted relationships with employers, and embracing innovation, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board is positioning the region as a national exemplar of workforce excellence.

These efforts are not abstract but practical, necessary, and urgent. They are essential to keeping the Gulf Coast competitive, connecting our communities to meaningful opportunity and driving sustained, inclusive economic growth across the region. The meeting concluded with no formal recommendations advanced for the Board's consideration and possible action.

Communications Committee

Executive Summary

The Communications Committee, chaired by Doug Karr, convened on July 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027 (Room 2B/C). Board members in attendance included Doug Karr, Mark Guthrie, Monica Riley, Bin Yu, Lizandra Vazquez, Melissa Gonzalez, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Paul Puente, Mou Sarkar, Lenora Sorola-Pohlman, and Grace Rodriguez. Board staff in attendance included Juliet Stipeche, Kristi Rangel, Desmond Taylor, Philip Garcia, Romana Paniagua, Ashley Glenn, Janine Haynes, Freyah Richard, Kevin Rodney, Danielle Knotts, Parker Harvey, Shawanna Thompson, AJ Dean, and Russell Tomlin. Leigh Ann Arnold and Tim Lankford from Outreach Strategists also attended.

At the mid-year, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's communications and outreach efforts reflect a deliberate and forward-thinking strategy to enhance transparency, elevate public engagement, and advance the Board's mission across the region. In collaboration with Outreach Strategists, Board staff have driven the creation of impactful tools, meaningful narratives, and data-informed campaigns that reinforce the Board's role as a trusted workforce leader.

Key accomplishments during this period include:

- Significant digital growth, particularly on LinkedIn and Instagram, demonstrating the effectiveness of platform-specific storytelling and authentic engagement with employers, youth, and jobseekers.
- The continued success of WorkforceSolutionsNews.com as a credible and increasingly visible information hub, with strong average session durations and high-intent search visibility signaling its resonance with regional audiences.
- Strategic media partnerships with ABC13 and Univision that have expanded the reach and impact of the Board's job fairs, transforming them into powerful vehicles for public education and workforce activation.
- Development of essential outreach resources—such as the Career Services Guidebook, digital Staff Resource Guide, and county-specific Disaster Resource Guides—that support consistency, accessibility, and responsiveness across the workforce system.
- Growing national recognition, marked by the acceptance of the Board's proposal to present at the 2025 CAEL Conference and the advancement of apprenticeship branding and outreach through the Apprenticeships Work! initiative.
- A compelling and well-received Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) presentation, highlighting braided funding, community partnerships, and the

Board’s steadfast commitment to equity and regional service—despite ongoing shifts in funding and programmatic priorities.

Together, these achievements reflect a communications strategy that is intentional, collaborative, and aligned with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board’s vision of regional access, economic mobility, and transformational leadership.

Social Media

Strategic Social Media Performance Analysis (January–July 2025)

From January through July 2025, Workforce Solutions’ digital presence evolved substantially, reflecting both the strength of targeted platform strategies and the growing importance of human-centered, data-informed messaging. The period was marked by notable momentum on LinkedIn and Instagram, a strategic reframing of Facebook’s utility, and a recalibration of YouTube content. These outcomes confirm the value of our shift toward storytelling, intentional engagement design, and platform-specific communications.

LinkedIn: Professional Influence and Community Impact

LinkedIn emerged as Workforce Solutions’ strongest-performing platform, demonstrating exceptional engagement and reach across key metrics. Impressions more than doubled (+116.6%), and engagement rates soared to 8.6%, a 238% increase and significantly above industry benchmarks for public sector accounts. The platform saw an exponential rise in comments (+1,512%), reactions (+237.7%), and reposts (+123.1%), signaling that our thought leadership and workforce-focused storytelling are resonating deeply with employers, partners, and professionals.

Percent (%) change column, in this and all subsequent charts, represents growth or decline versus July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024.

LINKEDIN		
Metric	Results	% Change
Impressions	54,203	+116.6%
Reactions	1,219	+237.7%
Comments	129	+1,512%
Reposts	29	+123.1%
Engagement Rate	8.6%	+238%

Best Practice Alignment: High-performing public organizations use LinkedIn to drive employer engagement, policy communication, and workforce development storytelling. Our success here validates the use of rich media, timely event promotion, and authentic narratives to cultivate influence and credibility in the talent ecosystem.

Recommendations:

- Expand regular features such as “Employer Spotlights” and “Workforce Wins” to amplify our brand as a solutions-oriented, data-driven workforce leader.
- Pilot LinkedIn newsletters or livestream updates to deepen connections with key stakeholders.

Instagram: Rapid Engagement Growth and Youth Outreach Potential

Instagram performance surged, led by a 30,800% increase in content interactions and a 55.5% growth in followers. This reflects the success of visual-first storytelling centered on job opportunities, events, and community outcomes. While overall reach (-41.6%) and visits (-71.4%) declined, due to changes in the algorithm or post timing, engagement gains point to a compelling content mix that connects with younger and mobile-first users.

INSTAGRAM		
Metric	Results	% Change
Views	110,052	+397.2%
Reach	26,088	-41.6%
Content Interaction	2,472	+30.8K%
Visits	3,999	-71.4%
Follows	807	+55.5%

Best Practice Alignment: Nationally, workforce boards and community organizations are leveraging Instagram to reach Gen Z and younger millennials through authentic, visually engaging, and mobile-optimized content.

Recommendations:

- Invest in Reels and Stories to capitalize on high-engagement formats and broaden organic reach.
- Feature short videos from youth interns, program graduates, and frontline staff to humanize our mission and build trust among younger users.

Facebook: Declining Engagement, but Strategic Value as a Web Referral Tool

While Facebook experienced overall declines in reach (-57.8%), visits (-123.1%), and interactions (-59.4%), it delivered a 397% increase in link clicks, positioning it as a critical referral engine to WorkforceSolutionsNews.com and other web assets.

FACEBOOK		
Metric	Results	% Change
Link Clicks	546	+397.2%
Views	283,994	-
Reach	61,338	-57.8%
Content Interaction	2,034	-59.4%
Visits	16,977	-123.1%
Follows	572	-46.9%

Best Practice Alignment: As user behavior shifts on Facebook, forward-thinking organizations treat the platform as a traffic-driver rather than a pure engagement channel. Our current use reflects this evolution, leveraging outbound links to disseminate high-value information efficiently.

Recommendations:

- Prioritize link-forward content with strong headlines and clear calls-to-action.
- Use boosted posts selectively to amplify major announcements, job fairs, and registration deadlines.
- Establish content themes that align with platform strengths (e.g., success stories, parent-focused resources, and quick updates).

YouTube: Portfolio Cleanup and Targeted Engagement

YouTube performance declined due to the intentional removal of outdated content during a May–June audit. Despite lower total views (-21.2%) and subscribers (-22.5%), view duration increased by 21.4%, suggesting that the remaining content is more relevant, timely, and effective.

YOUTUBE		
Metric	Results	% Change
Views	11,879	-21.2%
Reach	105,332	-16.9%
View Duration	1m 53s	+21.4%
Subscribers	83	-22.5%

Note regarding YouTube: Outreach Strategists performed a comprehensive review of videos on the platform during May and June and hid some outdated videos, which affected overall performance versus the previous 6 months.

Best Practice Alignment: Successful public agencies use YouTube as a resource hub for tutorials, program walkthroughs, and evergreen content that serves a long tail of users.

Recommendations:

- Develop a curated video series aligned with user needs, such as “Workforce 101,” “How to Use WorkInTexas,” or “Success Stories in 90 Seconds.”
- Integrate video links into social media posts and email newsletters to drive multi-platform engagement.
- Track watch-time trends to guide future content production and identify high-value video formats.

Lessons Learned, Cross-Cutting Themes and Strategic Imperatives:

- **Storytelling Works:** Across platforms, content that featured jobseekers, interns, families, and real-world outcomes consistently outperformed generic updates. Our voice is strongest when it is personal, community-rooted, and mission-aligned.
- **Platform-Specific Strategies Are Essential:** Success was driven not by one-size-fits-all messaging, but by tailoring approach, tone, and content format to each platform’s audience and algorithms.
- **Data-Driven Iteration is Key:** The ability to adapt content strategies based on granular insights, like link clicks, view duration, or comment trends, must remain central to our communications planning.

Next Steps

To further strengthen our regional digital presence and align with national best practices in public workforce communication, we recommend the following:

1. **Implement a Quarterly Content and Engagement Strategy Review**
Track trends, update messaging tactics, and set performance goals by platform. Include both qualitative (story resonance) and quantitative (conversion, CTR) metrics.
2. **Establish a Cross-Platform Editorial Calendar**
Coordinate messaging cadence around strategic initiatives such as youth employment, employer engagement, child care access, and workforce equity.
3. **Invest in Short-Form Video and Human-Focused Visuals**
Elevate storytelling by consistently capturing photos, reels, and clips of Board members, partners, staff, and customers in action.
4. **Strengthen Media Strategy**
Consider geo-targeted and demographically optimized campaigns to expand reach in under-engaged counties or populations.
5. **Pilot Engagement Labs or User Feedback Panels**
Gather insights directly from employers, jobseekers, and parents to improve relevance, tone, and accessibility of content.

Workforce Solutions News

Since its mid-February 2025 launch, *WorkforceSolutionsNews.com* has quietly but powerfully positioned itself as a cornerstone in the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's strategy to cultivate trust, expand transparency, and enhance public awareness of workforce initiatives. In just over four months, the platform has published 105 original articles and drawn 7,759 organic views from 1,637 unique users, demonstrating both the appetite for credible workforce news and the growing resonance of our voice across the region.

What is particularly remarkable is the average session duration of 19 minutes, a figure that far surpasses industry standards and signals not only interest but sustained engagement. Visitors are not simply skimming headlines; they are immersing themselves in the content, reflecting a deep curiosity about the opportunities, people, and policies shaping our region's workforce future. Traffic patterns reinforce this. A commanding majority of pageviews (6,590) stemmed from direct access, underscoring the strength of brand recall and the integration of the site into physical and digital outreach efforts from QR codes at hiring events to organic references in community meetings. Social referrals, led by Facebook mobile traffic (289 views), hint at further untapped potential, suggesting that strategic amplification through social media can and should be expanded.

Even more promising is the site's early traction in search discoverability. Top-performing Google search queries, such as "outplacement services for laid off employees," "outplacement assistance," and "employee financial wellness programs," speak to the alignment between our content strategy and the real-world concerns of jobseekers, employers, and HR professionals. These high-intent queries indicate that *WorkforceSolutionsNews.com* is beginning to organically occupy critical space in the digital landscape.

Beyond metrics, the site serves as a dynamic platform for narrative-building. In line with the Board's commitment to transparency and community connection, Outreach Strategists has launched a series of board member video interviews designed to introduce the individuals guiding our strategic direction. These interviews, published on the site and cross-promoted through social media, are not performative; they are substantive, inviting the public into the governance process and highlighting the rich diversity of thought and lived experience that informs our work. They represent a modern approach to civic accountability, where storytelling becomes a tool for both education and trust-building.

Yet the opportunity before us is not simply to maintain performance; we must evolve. As the site matures, we must approach its stewardship with the same rigor and intentionality we apply to program delivery:

- **Curate content around strategic themes** such as economic mobility, youth employment, employer innovation, and equity in access to opportunity;
- **Leverage analytics to understand user behavior**, not just to report activity but to guide editorial decisions and refine messaging;
- **Expand social and newsletter distribution** to draw new audiences into the ecosystem; and
- **Convert readers into participants**—whether as jobseekers, employers, policymakers, or advocates.

WorkforceSolutionsNews.com is an example of what public agencies can do when they speak clearly and consistently. It is not merely a website. It is an invitation to engage with the mission of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, and thankfully, a growing public is beginning to accept that invitation.

ABC13–Workforce Solutions Job Fairs: Elevating Awareness and Opportunity Through Strategic Media Partnerships

In June and July 2025, Workforce Solutions continued its successful media partnership with ABC13 to spotlight critical career pathways and connect jobseekers with high-demand employers across the Gulf Coast region. These events, featured in ABC13’s live and preview segments, offered more than job connections; they served as platforms for public education, industry visibility, and community engagement around workforce priorities.

June 2025: Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

The June job fair, held at Alief ISD’s Marshall Center for Advanced Careers on June 25, focused on careers in the growing Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector. ABC13’s live broadcast featured:

Dr. Sarah David, Program Director for NPower Houston/Harris County, highlighting the impact of IT apprenticeships in advancing digital inclusion and workforce equity.

Dr. Michael Webster, Board Member and Chancellor of Houston Community College, spotlighting HCC’s AI & Robotics program, a forward-looking initiative to prepare students for the automation-driven economy.

The preview segment emphasized access to technology, featuring board member Marie Arcos and her work with Compudopt, an organization that helps bridge the digital divide by providing free refurbished computers to low-income families, a key barrier to opportunity and digital workforce readiness.

July 2025: Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Careers

The July fair took place on July 17 at the Richard & Meg Weekley Community Center in Precinct 4 (Northwest Harris County) and centered on careers in Installation, Maintenance, and Repair (IMR), a sector offering high-wage, high-demand opportunities with strong pathways to upward mobility.

Featured guests included:

Chris Romo, SMART Union Local 54, who discussed union-supported pathways in the sheet metal industry.

Board member Paul Puente and Principal Industry Liaison Lacy Wolf, who highlighted the MC3 Apprenticeship Readiness Program, which prepares individuals for successful entry into registered apprenticeship programs.

The preview story offered a compelling personal narrative: Martin Treviño, founder of All Team Services (ATS) in Pearland, shared how he participated in a registered apprenticeship program and launched his own business. His journey illustrates the power of apprenticeships in building generational wealth and entrepreneurial opportunity. Additional media support came from Univision 45, which helped expand the reach and visibility of the July job fair to Spanish-speaking communities.

Impact and Media Reach

The ABC13 partnership continues to yield substantial media value and audience engagement:

	Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE)	Viewership
JUNE	\$97,616.31	377,706
2 ND QUARTER	\$567,403.70 (+43% vs. Q1)	1,618,523 (+23% vs. Q1)
JULY	\$76,170.00	385,294

June Event Highlights:

Registered Employers	32	Attended	27
Job Seekers Registered	512	Attended	318
Job Seekers Interviewed	208	On-the-spot Hires	5
Job Seeker Referrals	52	Surveys Completed	176
Training & Scholarship Opportunities (WOW)			
Adult Visitors	30	Inquiries	30

July Event Highlights:

Registered Employers	37	Attended	37
Job Seekers Registered	700	Attended	289
Job Seekers Interviewed	206	On-the-spot Hires	21
Job Seeker Referrals	39	Surveys Completed	Pending
Training & Scholarship Opportunities (WOW)			
Adult Visitors	Pending	Inquiries	Pending

These job fairs reflect more than numbers; they demonstrate the power of intentional media engagement, community partnerships, and authentic storytelling to inform the public, inspire action, and connect residents to economic opportunity. The Gulf Coast Workforce Board’s ongoing collaboration with ABC13, amplified through partners like Univision and trusted community voices, is helping shape a more visible, accessible, and inclusive workforce system.

Community Outreach

Strategic Communications and Outreach Update

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast continues to strengthen its regional visibility, deepen community engagement, and align communications with strategic workforce priorities.

WFS Regional Newsletter

In close collaboration with Board staff, Outreach Strategists produced the second issue of the *Workforce Solutions* newsletter. This edition centers on how Workforce Solutions supports employers throughout the Gulf Coast region, with features on labor market intelligence (LMI), employer services, apprenticeships, and opportunities for business engagement.

A highlight of this issue is the Employer Spotlight on Tecnofil USA’s expansion in Humble, highlighting how Workforce Solutions is responding directly to employer needs by connecting them to qualified local talent. Distributed digitally through *WorkforceSolutionsNews.com*, the newsletter represents an ongoing effort to position the Board as a workforce partner of choice.

Career Services Guidebook

We also developed the first full draft of the Workforce Solutions Career Services Guidebook—a comprehensive and user-friendly resource that consolidates all programs, eligibility requirements, and service access points for job seekers, employers, and community partners. Designed to serve both internal teams and external audiences, the guidebook reflects our commitment to accessibility and clarity across the region’s complex workforce system. Final edits are currently underway to ensure alignment with current service models and policy guidance. The

Board was provided an opportunity to vote on the cover design for the new guidebook, and at last count, design 5 was the clear frontrunner.

Staff Resource Guide: Collateral & Communications Tools

To improve internal access to outreach materials, we create a streamlined digital Staff Guide organizing available communications collateral by audience: youth, employers, and job seekers. The guide includes:

- Employer push cards,
- Apprenticeship and career pathway videos,
- Service brochures and one-pagers, and
- Direct links to social media channels, the *Workforce Solutions News* platform, and internal communications hubs.

Designed as a living resource, the guide will be regularly updated as new collateral is developed, empowering staff to communicate more effectively with the communities they serve.

Disaster Resource Guides

Following flooding in Matagorda County, Outreach Strategists worked alongside Board staff to develop a localized Disaster Response Guide that provided real-time information on shelters, workforce services, and emergency contacts. Building on that effort, the team has since created customized preparedness and recovery guides for all thirteen counties in the region. These materials prioritize accessibility for vulnerable populations and are designed for rapid deployment via both *WorkforceSolutionsNews.com* and the main Workforce Solutions website.

SJC Apprenticeship Grant: Branding & Outreach

Under a grant from San Jacinto College, we developed the “Apprenticeships Work!” logo and brand suite to amplify registered apprenticeship programs across priority industries. Deliverables include:

- Branded merchandise (t-shirts, caps, polos, backpacks, tumblers, and banners);
- An employer-facing apprenticeship brochure: a concise, visually accessible bifold that introduces businesses to apprenticeship opportunities and the Board’s support services; and
- A three-part video series: The first 90-second video, produced for employer audiences, highlights the strategic value of apprenticeships in addressing workforce gaps.

These materials are now in use across employer outreach campaigns, career office events, and community activations.

CAEL Conference Presentation

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast’s proposal, *Reimagining Career Pathways in the Gulf Coast Region—for Adults, Youth, and Economic Mobility*, has been accepted for presentation at the 2025 CAEL Conference, hosted by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning in Memphis this November. This national stage will elevate our region’s innovative approaches to career pathway design, case management, and systems alignment—positioning the Board as a national model for connecting learning and work.

Website Redesign and Content Strategy

As part of the Workforce Solutions website redesign, Outreach Strategists is collaborating with internal subject matter experts (SMEs) to write, review, and refine content. Completed sections include:

- Regional Economic Data,
- About Us, and
- Partnerships.

In progress: Child Care Financial Aid, Education, Employers, and Job Seekers with target completion by July 29, 2025. This content refresh ensures language is accessible, mission-aligned, and strategically positioned for improved user experience and engagement.

WIOA Local Plan Approval

On June 30, 2025, Governor Greg Abbott approved the Gulf Coast Workforce Board’s WIOA Local Plan. The final plan has been published to wrksolutions.com, and the link was submitted to the Texas Workforce Commission on July 14. This milestone affirms our strategic alignment with state and federal workforce priorities and positions the Board for continued impact.

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Presentation

Board staff collaborated with Outreach Strategists to develop a compelling regional overview of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) services. The presentation highlighted the breadth and depth of AEL programming across the Gulf Coast region, emphasizing its reach, measurable impact, and critical role in advancing the Board’s vision for economic mobility and workforce inclusion.

Delivered by Kristi Hayman at the most recent H-GAC Board of Directors meeting, the report was well received, deservedly earning two spontaneous eruptions of cheers, and succeeded in demonstrating not only the value of AEL services, but also the strength of the region’s coordinated approach. The presentation highlighted how the Board strategically braids federal, state, and local funding streams, leverages deep partnerships with community-based organizations, and remains steadfast in its

commitment to serving diverse populations, even amid evolving programmatic and funding landscapes. By illustrating both the outcomes achieved and the collaborative infrastructure supporting AEL, the presentation affirmed the Board's leadership in building a resilient and inclusive workforce development system.

Conclusion

The strategy of effective storytelling requires a collective effort, and it has never been about simply increasing impressions or refining language. It has been about connection with purpose. It has been about bringing clarity to complexity, elevating the voices of those we serve, and making the invisible work of workforce development visible, accessible, and relevant. The Gulf Coast Workforce Board, working in close collaboration with Outreach Strategists, has built not just campaigns and collateral, but momentum, trust, and alignment. We have shown what is possible when a public system speaks with clarity and conviction, when its tools are designed for people in communities, and when communications are not an afterthought but a driving force for transformation.

Whether it's a 19-minute average session on WorkforceSolutionsNews.com, a viral LinkedIn post, a story of an apprentice-turned-business owner, or a guidebook that demystifies our services, every effort has moved us closer to the region we imagine: one where every resident understands their options, every employer feels supported, and every partner sees themselves in our shared mission.

As we look ahead, we carry forward a renewed responsibility, not just to continue communicating, but to continue inspiring, informing, and inviting. We wish to tell stories that reflect our values and to build tools that reflect our reach. We seek to lead as a workforce board that does not just serve the region but empowers it to thrive.

No action was taken at the committee meeting, but a request was made for all Board members to vote on the cover design for the guidebook as reported above, and the winning design will be announced at the Board meeting.

Budget Committee

Executive Summary

The Budget Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Carl Bowles at 10:00 a.m. on July 28, 2025, at the Houston-Galveston Area Council. Attendees included Board Chair Mark Guthrie and Board Members Adrian Ozuna, Bin Yu, Mou Sarkar, Paul Puente, Rachel Cevallos, Doug Karr, Melissa Gonzalez, Alan Heskamp, and Marie Arcos.

Chair Bowles led the discussion on the Budget Committee Charter. Two sections, Section 6: Conflicts of Interest and Section 7: Confidentiality, were added to the original draft. Following the discussion, the Committee voted to advance the Charter for full Board consideration and potential adoption. The updated Charter is provided as Attachment A.

Senior Manager AJ Dean presented an overview of the proposed Make America Skilled Again (MASA) block grant included in the President's FY 2026 Budget. Committee members raised multiple concerns regarding potential funding reductions and the implications for local authority under the MASA structure. Staff will provide additional data on career office space utilization and associated costs for future planning.

Fiscal Administration Manager Brandi Brown presented the Board's financial performance through May 31, 2025. Contract Administration Manager Thomas Brown followed with a report on Service Provider Expenses as of the same date.

Brandi Brown presented the Proposed 2025 Mid-Year Workforce Budget, and Yvette Gonzalez, H-GAC Budget & Special Projects Manager, presented the 2025 Mid-Year H-GAC Budget. The Committee requested further clarification from H-GAC Finance regarding Indirect Costs, Internal Services, and Shared Services. After discussion, the Committee voted to advance the revised 2025 Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget in the amount of \$492,436,736 for full Board approval.

The next Budget Committee meeting is projected for November 2025.

Budget Committee Charter

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Budget Committee is a standing committee charged with providing fiscal oversight, guidance, and strategic recommendations on financial planning, budgeting processes, and expenditures. Its purpose is to ensure that financial decisions align with the Board's mission, strategic goals, and compliance with federal, state, and local funding requirements.

The Committee's authority includes reviewing and recommending the annual budget, monitoring fiscal performance, proposing amendments and reallocations, ensuring financial compliance, and recommending policies for Board adoption. Committee members are appointed by the Board Chair and are expected to uphold the highest standards of impartiality, confidentiality, and integrity. The Committee plays a key role in the following manner:

- Collaborating with the Fiscal Agent and staff in the development of the annual budget;
- Reviewing financial reports and identifying necessary adjustments;
- Monitoring compliance with funding regulations, audits, and corrective actions; and
- Providing transparent financial reporting and recommendations to the full Board.

The Budget Committee reviewed and approved a Budget Committee Charter for advancement for the full Board's consideration.

Overview of Make America Skilled Again

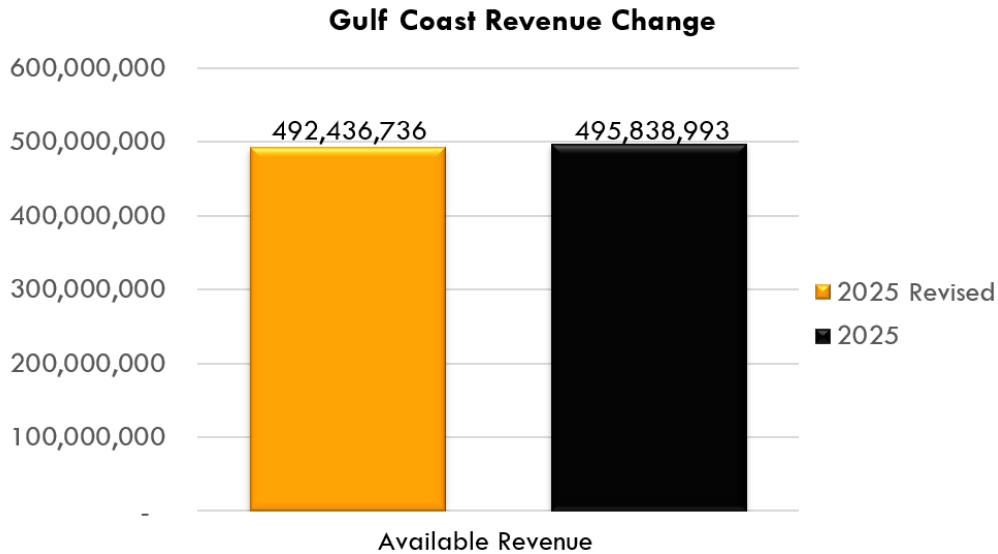
The President's FY 2026 budget proposes the creation of a new Make America Skilled Again (MASA) block grant, which would consolidate 11 federal workforce programs—including WIOA Titles I–III and Employment Services—under the U.S. Department of Labor. States would receive these funds with increased flexibility to manage and allocate resources, including a mandatory 10% set-aside for registered apprenticeship programs.

Under MASA, state governments would assume greater control, developing statewide workforce plans and setting strategic priorities. Local workforce boards are expected to continue playing a key role, though their authority to allocate and implement funds will depend on each state's MASA plan and oversight framework. This shift underscores the need for strong state-local collaboration to align workforce investments with regional needs.

While the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education initially scheduled a markup of its appropriations bill for July 21, 2025, the session has been postponed until after the August recess. Final funding levels and implementation details will depend on congressional negotiations later this year.

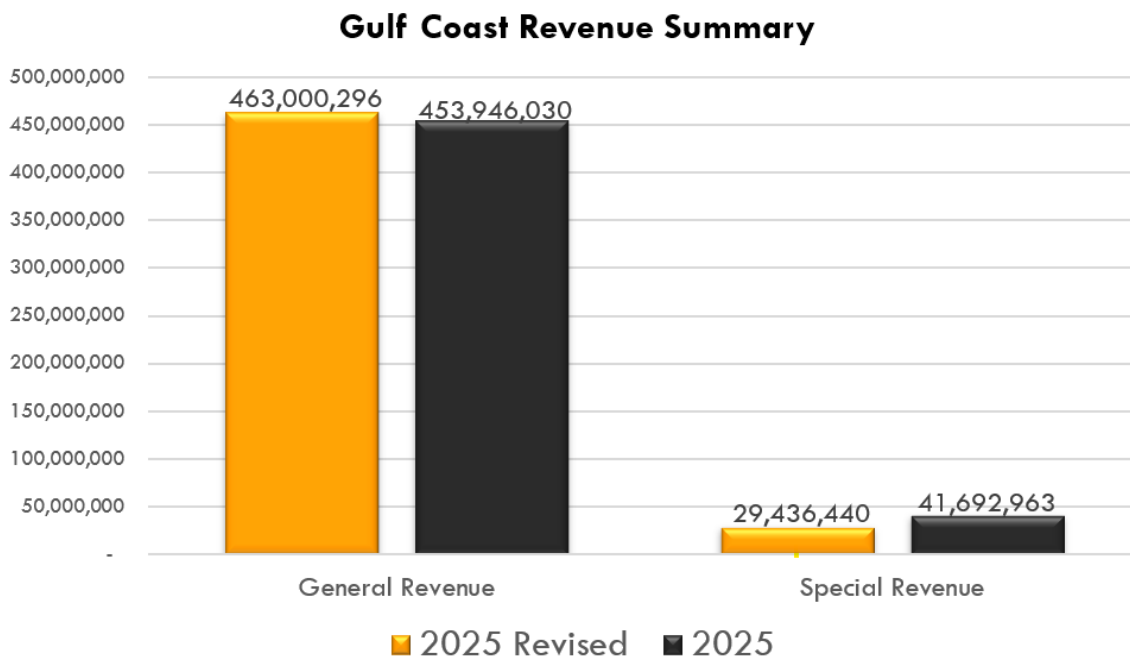
Proposed 2025 Board Budget Revision

Periodically the Workforce Board must adjust its annual budget to reflect significant revenue changes and incorporate modifications to planned activities. This year we had a reduction to special purpose dollars which necessitates a budget adjustment. While this revenue modification results in a decrease in total resources available, our revised budget is still greater than all previous years.



Current Situation

The revised 2025 budget is approximately 1% less than our original proposal. This decrease of just over \$3 million lowers our revised budget to \$492,436,736.

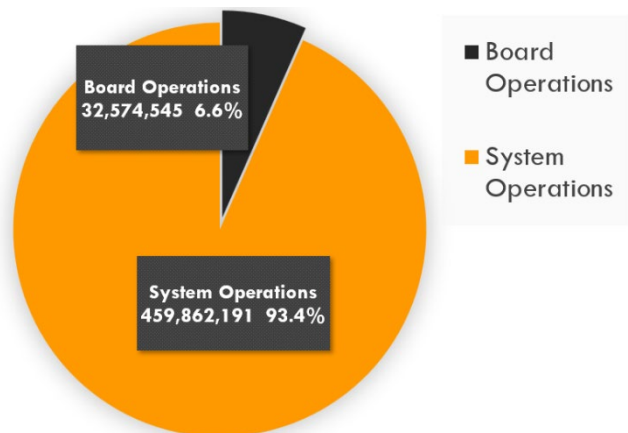


- General revenue funds contain the primary dollars which power Workforce Solutions. Formula allotments show a 2.0% increase mainly attributable to supplemental early education dollars received in May 2025. We estimate general revenue will be \$9 million greater than originally projected.
- Special revenue are funds we consider short-lived or with a limited guarantee of continuance. These funds have considerably decreased. The state withdrew approximately \$12 million of the \$15 million originally allocated to support National Dislocated Worker Disaster Relief. The funds remaining will be used to support customers currently enrolled.
- We have successfully operated Vocational Rehabilitation Summer Earn and Learn over the past several years. This year we received a significant decrease in funding of \$1.8 million to continue these efforts.

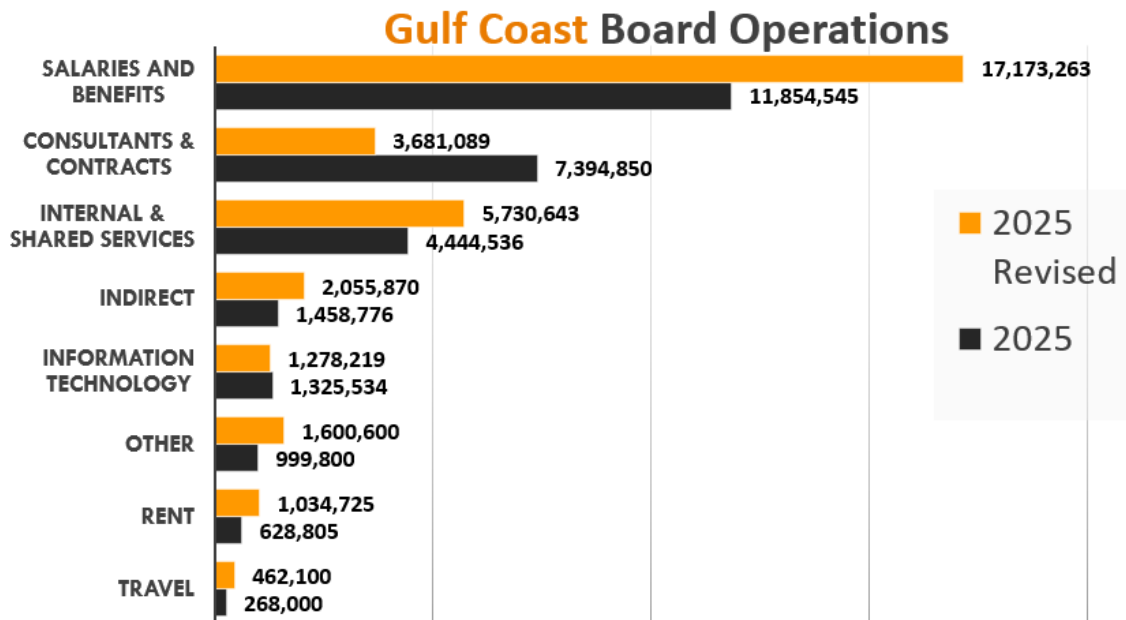
Proposed Distribution

The revised 2025 Board budget reserves 6.6% of total revenue for operations at the administrative level. The remaining 93.4% delivers direct service to customers.

Suggested Board operations total \$32,574,545 for 2025 which is a 17.8% increase from the original budget. The increase is due to the transition of child care quality temporary staff to Board employees which require additional costs such as Fringe Benefits, Rent, and other H-GAC allocations. Additional positions to support these staff were also required as this function was not transitioned to a new service provider. Recommended system operations have decreased to \$459,862,191 which is a 1.8% decrease from the original budget.



Board Operations Highlights:



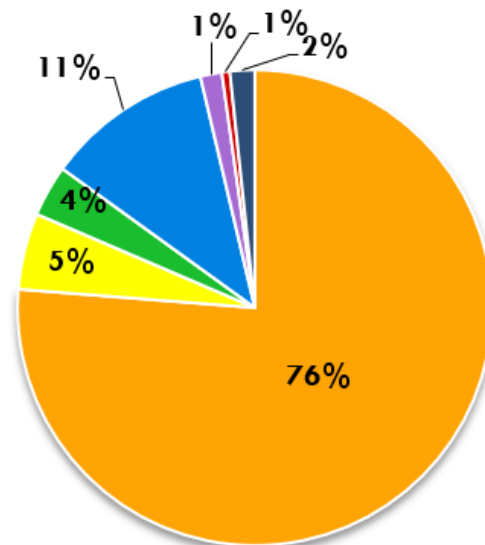
We propose adjusting the Board administrative operations budget to just over \$32 million.

- The Salaries and Benefits are increasing due to the onboarding of temporary staff to full time positions to support the transition of child care quality services to the Board level as well as additional positions to effectively support and manage these staff.
- The Consultants and Contracts budget decrease is due to the reduced need for temporary staffing and external consultants.
- Shared costs provided by H-GAC represent the increases identified under the Indirect and Internal and Shared Services line items. These costs support centralized agency functions such as procurement, contracts, finance, personnel, payroll, printing, network, communications, and administration.
- The Other budget category includes increases to Employee Development, Expendable Equipment, Communications, and Software to support the increase in number of staff and improved technologies to increase efficiencies.
- An increase in Rent is to accommodate additional staff being onboarded for child care quality services.
- We propose increasing our Travel budget to reflect average costs incurred and due to the increased number of staff.

System Operations Highlights:

System Operations

FINANCIAL AID - EARLY EDUCATION	\$350,608,772
FINANCIAL AID - TRAINING & SUPPORT	\$23,891,228
FINANCIAL AID - OPERATIONS	\$16,104,514
RESIDENT SERVICE - CAREER SERVICES	\$52,284,646
EMPLOYER SERVICE - EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT	\$6,750,000
EMPLOYER SERVICE - QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	\$2,500,000
RESIDENT SERVICE - ADULT EDUCATION	\$7,723,031



- Financial aid remains the highest and represents the large demand for early education, scholarships, work-based learning, and work support in our region. We propose increasing financial aid to just over \$390 million.
- We propose decreasing the budgeted amount for Resident Services to \$60 million due to a reduction in Special Revenue and the consolidation of Career Services from separate service providers for Career Office, Next Gen Youth, and Employer Engagement.
- Employer Service budget also has a proposed reduction to \$9 million due to the integration with Career Services and Next Gen Youth. Also, a recent Quality Services RFP did not result in the selection of an additional service provider, so activities are now being executed at the Board level.

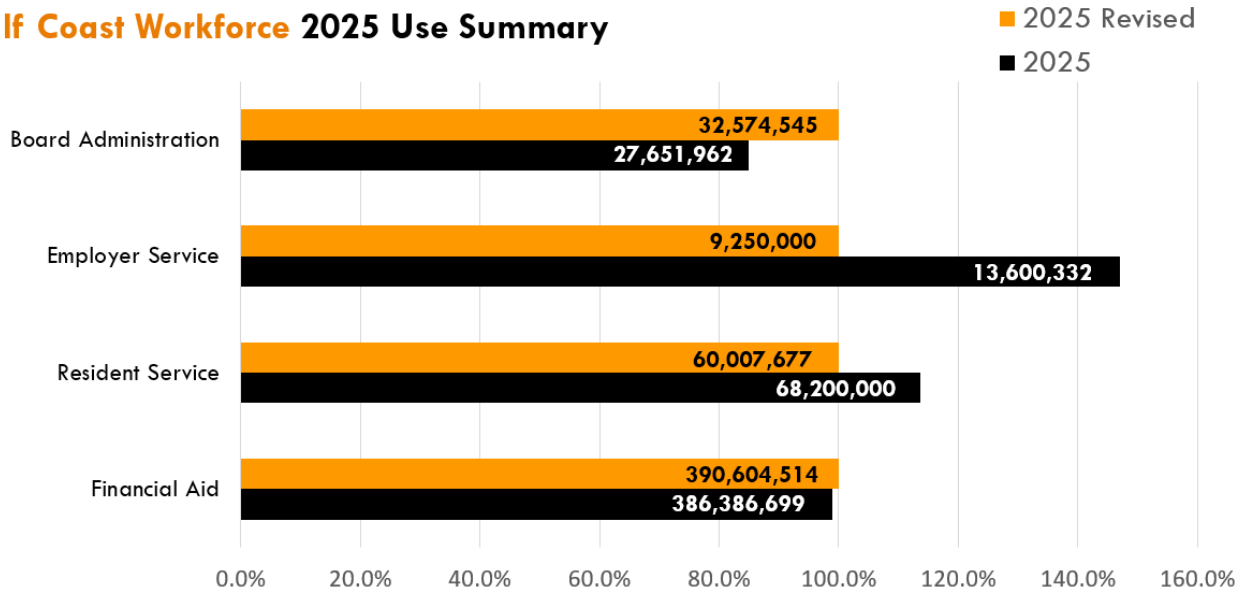
Results and Objectives

In addition to meeting state and federal performance standards, the 2025 budget aims to continue achieving various outcomes, including:

- Career Services: Assisting over 48,300 individuals in entering employment.
- Employer Engagement: Serving over 30,000 employers.
- Quality Early Education: Providing child care scholarships for about 55,000 children.
- Adult Education and Literacy: Providing adult education services to over 7,800 students.
- Youth Services: Providing workforce services to over 20,000 young people.

The Budget Committee discussed the revised budget and recommended that it be advanced for the full Board's consideration.

Gulf Coast Workforce 2025 Use Summary



**Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2025 Revised Budget
Source and Use**

Source		Use	
General Revenue	463,000,296	Board Operations	32,574,545
Special Revenue	29,436,440	Employer Service	9,250,000
		Resident Service	60,007,677
		Financial Aid	390,604,514
Total	\$492,436,736	Total	\$492,436,736

**Gulf Coast Workforce
2025 Revised Budget
Source Summary**

	2025 Revised	2025	Dollar Change	% Change
General Federal & State Revenue	463,000,296	453,946,030	9,054,266	2.0%
Child Care Services	374,756,015	362,763,396	11,992,619	3.3%
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity	54,629,934	55,779,934	- 1,150,000	-2.1%
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	16,843,880	16,843,059	821	0.0%
Vocational Rehabilitation	6,328,105	8,196,064	- 1,867,959	-22.8%
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance	3,755,645	3,755,645	-	0.0%
Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment	3,971,879	3,821,879	150,000	3.9%
Wagner-Peyser Employment Services	2,144,238	2,215,453	- 71,215	-3.2%
Veterans Employment and Training	565,600	565,600	-	0.0%
Trade Act	5,000	5,000	-	0.0%
Special Federal & State Revenue	29,236,440	41,692,963	- 12,456,523	-29.9%
Child Care Quality Enhancement	13,600,345	13,600,345	-	0.0%
Adult Education	11,682,258	12,250,372	- 568,114	-4.6%
NDW Disaster Relief Employment	2,910,762	15,423,420	- 12,512,658	100.0%
JOBS Plus	120,000	120,000	-	0.0%
Texas Education Agency - Regional Convener	337,000	100,000	237,000	237.0%
Texas Industry Partnership	100,000	100,000	-	100.0%
High Demand Job Training	98,826	98,826	-	100.0%
WIOA Statewide - Upskilling	-	-	-	-100.0%
Apprenticeship Grants	387,249	-	387,249	0.0%
Middle Skills Initiative	-	-	-	-100.0%
Other Sources	200,000	200,000	-	100.0%
Houston Endowment	200,000	200,000	-	100.0%
Total Revenue	492,436,736	495,838,993	- 3,402,257	-0.7%

**Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2025 Revised Budget
Use Summary**

	2025 Revised	2025	% of Total 2025 Revised Budget	Dollar Variance from 2025	% Variance from 2025
Board Operations	32,574,545	27,651,962	6.6%	4,922,583	17.8%
Salaries and Benefits	17,173,263	11,854,545	3.5%	5,318,718	44.9%
Consultants & Contracts	3,681,089	7,394,850	0.7%	(3,713,761)	-50.2%
Travel	462,100	268,000	0.1%	194,100	72.4%
Other	1,600,600	999,800	0.3%	600,800	60.1%
Information Technology	1,278,219	1,325,534	0.3%	(47,315)	-3.6%
Rent	1,034,725	628,805	0.2%	405,920	64.6%
Indirect	2,055,870	1,458,776	0.4%	597,094	40.9%
Internal & Shared Services	5,730,643	4,444,536	1.2%	1,286,106	28.9%
New & Vacant Personnel Costs ¹	(441,964)	(722,884)			
System Operations	459,862,191	468,187,031	93.4%	(8,324,840)	-1.8%
Employer Service					
Employer Engagement	6,750,000	9,000,000	1.4%	(2,250,000)	-25.0%
Quality Improvement	2,500,000	4,600,332	0.5%	(2,100,332)	-45.7%
Resident Service					
Career Services	52,284,646	55,200,000	10.6%	(2,915,354)	-5.3%
Adult Education	7,723,031	13,000,000	1.6%	(5,276,969)	-40.6%
Financial Aid					
Early Educational Care	350,608,772	341,386,699	71.2%	9,222,073	2.7%
Training & Support	23,891,228	29,000,000	4.9%	(5,108,772)	-17.6%
Operations	16,104,514	16,000,000	3.3%	104,514	0.7%
Total	492,436,736	495,838,993	100.0%	(3,402,257)	-0.7%

Gulf Coast Workforce Board

2025 Revised Budget

Budget Detail

	Board Operations			
	2025 Revision	2025	Dollar Variance	Percent Variance
Consultants & Contracts	3,681,089	7,394,850	- 3,713,761	-50%
Legal Services	315,000	315,000	-	0%
Audit	51,000	51,000	-	0%
Financial Monitoring	1,012,000	1,012,000	-	0%
Public Information & Outreach	948,500	948,500	-	0%
Temporary Staffing	1,254,589	4,268,350	- 3,013,761	-71%
External Consultants	-	550,000	- 550,000	-100%
Career Lattice	100,000	250,000	- 150,000	100%
Other	1,600,600	999,800	600,800	60%
Employee Development	298,500	196,000	102,500	52%
Expendable Equipment	273,000	140,000	133,000	95%
Software	491,700	156,700	335,000	214%
Communications	242,300	227,000	15,300	7%
Subscriptions & Dues	75,000	75,000	-	0%
Outside Printing	80,000	80,000	-	0%
Meeting Expenses	24,000	24,000	-	0%
Postage & Delivery	12,800	12,800	-	0%
Legal Notices	12,000	12,000	-	0%
Supplies	48,000	38,000	10,000	26%
Maintenance & Repair	6,000	6,000	-	0%
Employee Recruitment	20,000	20,000	-	0%
Books & Publications	1,500	1,500	-	0%
Licenses & Permits	800	800	-	0%
Food & Beverage	15,000	10,000	5,000	100%
H-GAC Internal & Shared Services	5,623,327	4,444,536	1,178,790	27%
Internal Services	1,997,117	1,327,567	669,550	50%
Network Services	2,095,327	1,268,974	826,353	65%
Data Services	831,115	734,808	96,307	13%
Internal Audit	349,820	445,389	- 95,569	-21%
Finance	246,479	379,375	- 132,896	-35%
Communications	103,470	288,424	- 184,954	-64%
Information Technology & Network Support	1,385,535	1,325,534	60,001	5%
Software	566,035	482,740	83,295	17%
Wide Area Network	250,000	250,000	-	0%
Website	80,000	80,000	-	0%
Technology Improvements	430,000	430,000	-	0%
Capital Equipment	50,000	50,000	-	0%
Operating Expenses	9,500	32,794	- 23,294	-71%

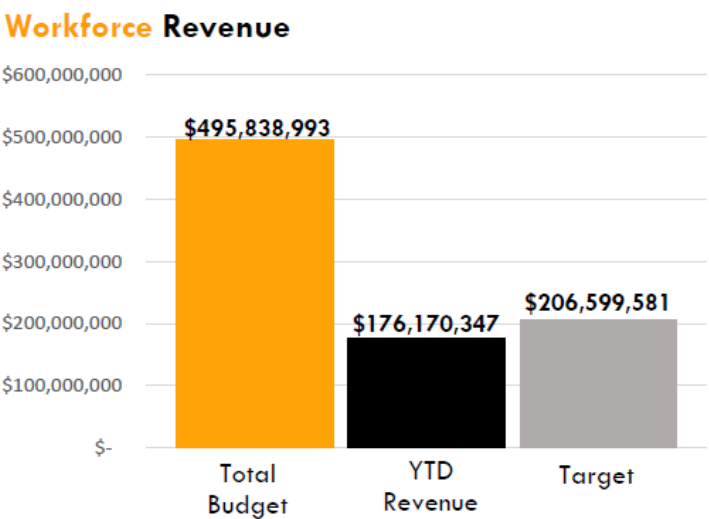
Financial Status Report

Background

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board budget outlines how it intends to utilize its revenue to realize the objectives outlined in the Board’s strategic plan. The budget details the allocation of resources to operate Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast and generate positive outcomes in the region.

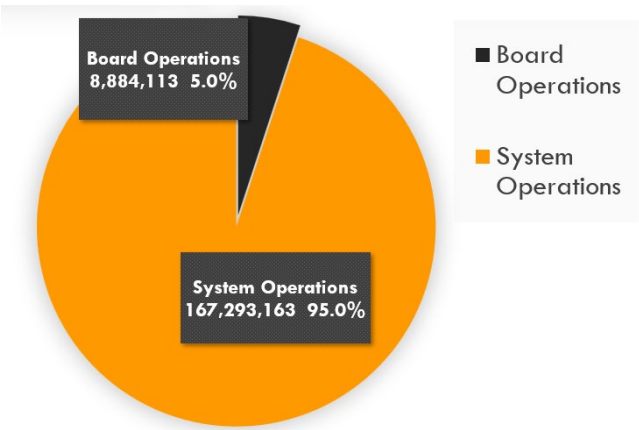
Revenue Overview

The 2025 budgeted revenue totals over \$495 million. The Year-to-Date revenue as of May 2025 is \$176 million behind target of \$206 million.



Expenditure Distribution

For the 5-month period ending May 31, 2025, Board Operations was 5.0% of expenditures. System operations for contracted service delivery was 95.0%. The budgeted amount for the year is 5.7% for Board Administration, and 94.3% for System Operations.



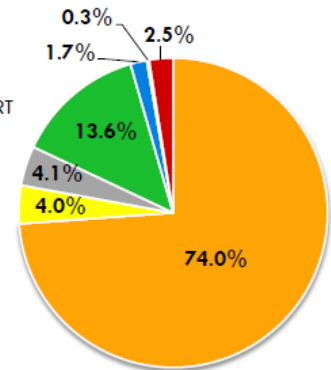
For System Operations, Financial Aid represents \$137.1 million with \$123.7 million for Early Education, \$6.5 million for Training & Support, and \$6.9 million for Operations.

Career Services represents \$22.7 million and Adult Education represents \$4.2 million of the Resident Service expenditures.

Employer Engagement and Quality Improvement represent \$2.9 million and \$0.4 million, respectively, for Employer Service.

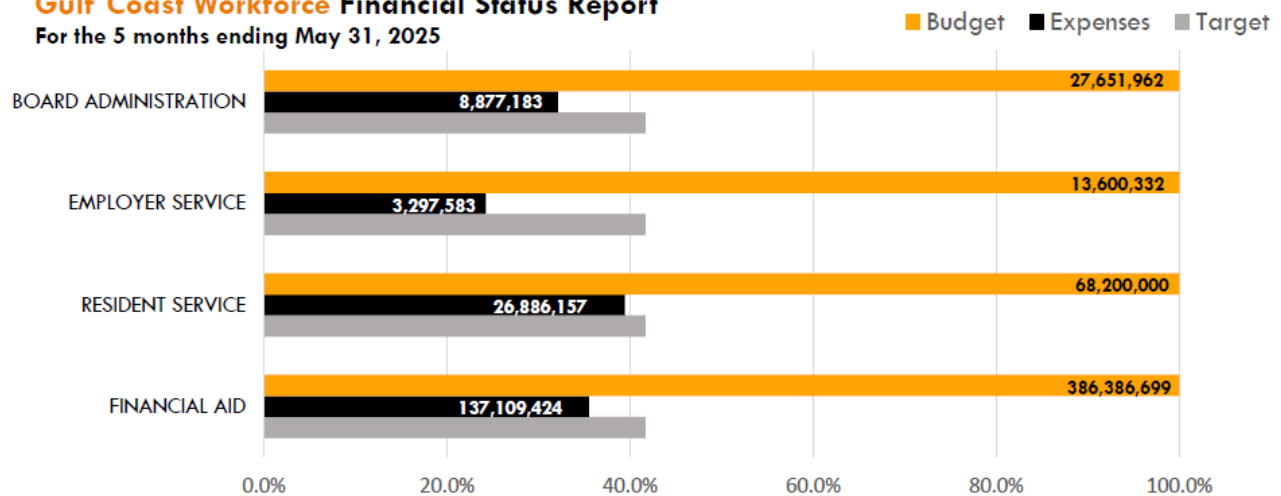
System Expenses

FINANCIAL AID - EARLY EDUCATION	\$123,714,286
FINANCIAL AID - TRAINING & SUPPORT	\$6,463,229
FINANCIAL AID - OPERATIONS	\$6,931,909
CAREER SERVICES	\$22,718,296
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT	\$2,868,051
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	\$429,531
ADULT EDUCATION	\$4,167,861



Gulf Coast Workforce Financial Status Report

For the 5 months ending May 31, 2025

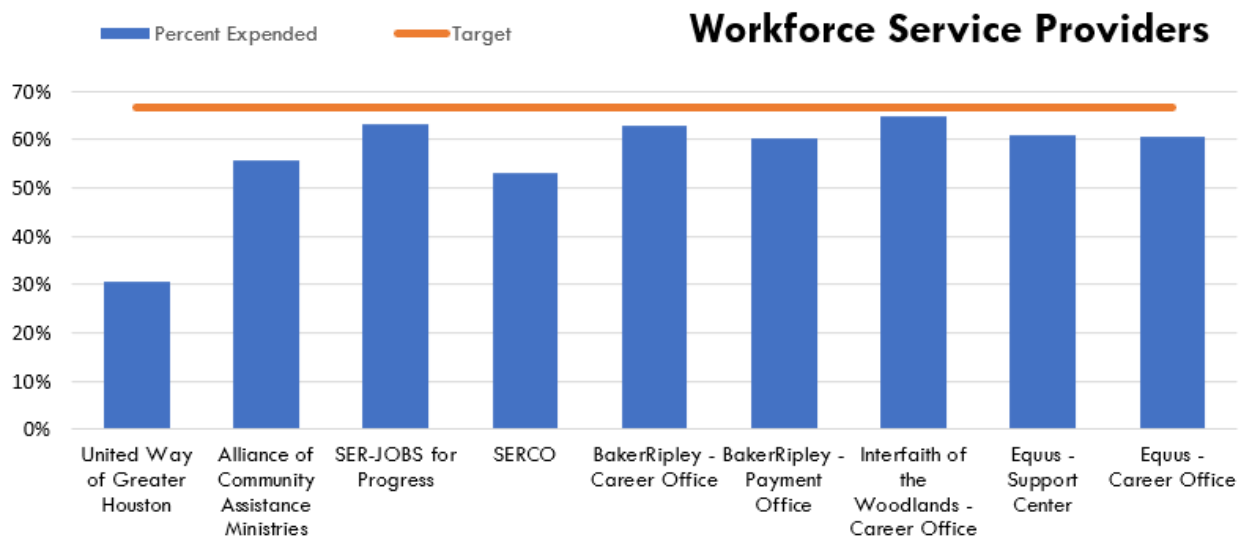


Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2025 Budget to Actual as of May 31, 2025
Use Summary

	Actual	Budget	% of Budget
Board Operations	8,884,113	27,651,962	32.1%
Salaries and Benefits	4,399,923	11,854,545	37.1%
Consultants & Contracts	1,704,491	7,394,850	23.0%
Travel	53,461	268,000	19.9%
Other	222,680	999,800	22.3%
Information Technology	237,390	1,325,534	17.9%
Rent	229,800	628,805	36.5%
Indirect	511,836	1,458,776	35.1%
Internal & Shared Services	1,524,532	4,444,536	34.3%
New & Vacant Personnel Costs ¹	-	(722,884)	-
System Operations	167,293,163	468,187,031	35.7%
Employer Service			
Employer Engagement	2,868,051	9,000,000	31.9%
Quality Improvement	429,531	4,600,332	9.3%
Resident Service			
Career Services	22,718,296	55,200,000	41.2%
Adult Education	4,167,861	13,000,000	32.1%
Financial Aid			
Early Educational Care	123,714,286	341,386,699	36.2%
Training & Support	6,463,229	29,000,000	22.3%
Operations	6,931,909	16,000,000	43.3%
Total	176,177,276	495,838,993	35.5%

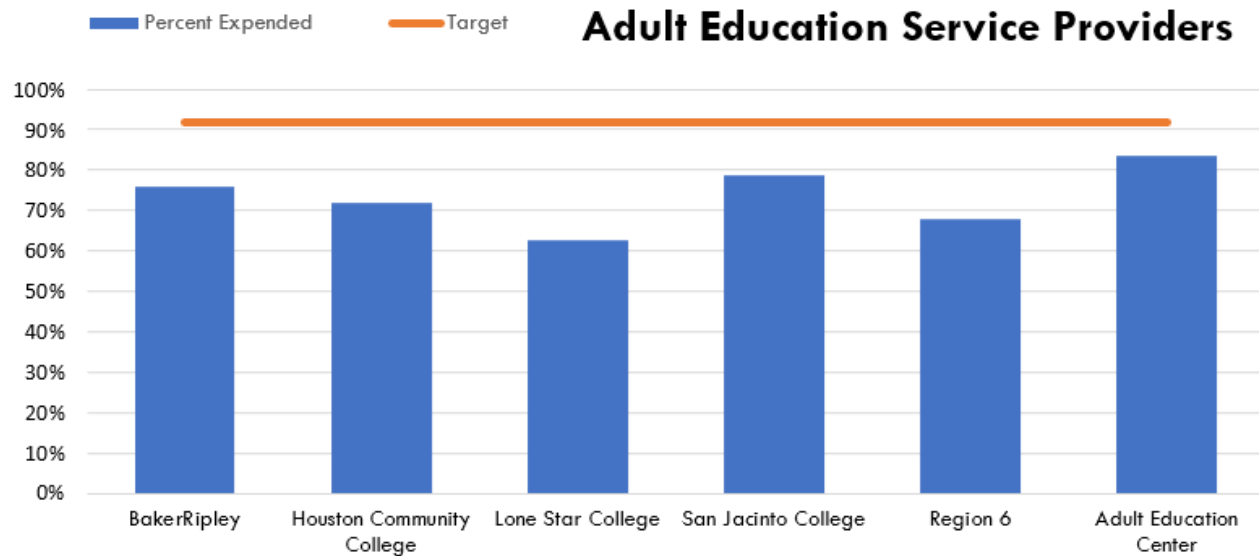
¹New and Vacant personnel costs allocated to Workforce total \$722,884. These positions are pending a review and approval by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Executive Director.

Service Provider Expenses



Financial status as of: May 31, 2025

<u>Workforce</u>	Budget	Expenses	Percent Expended
United Way of Greater Houston	1,761,754	541,324	31%
Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries	1,525,000	847,797	56%
SER-JOBS for Progress	1,675,000	1,055,749	63%
SERCO	9,000,000	4,766,922	53%
BakerRipley - Career Office	23,756,675	14,951,301	63%
BakerRipley - Payment Office	363,352,257	219,150,771	60%
Interfaith of the Woodlands - Career Office	18,753,325	12,148,127	65%
Equus - Support Center	10,558,514	6,434,382	61%
Equus - Career Office	6,884,646	4,160,889	60%
		Target	67%



Financial status as of: May 31, 2025

<u>Adult Education</u>	Budget	Expenses	Percent Expended
BakerRipley	356,584	270,211	76%
Houston Community College	4,060,800	2,916,216	72%
Lone Star College	2,292,938	1,436,402	63%
San Jacinto College	1,296,000	1,019,601	79%
Region 6	1,885,469	1,282,664	68%
Adult Education Center	356,584	298,360	84%
		Target	92%

H-GAC Budget Update

Executive Director Chuck Wemple and members of H-GAC Finance provided an update on efforts to improve transparency, clarity, and communication regarding the workforce budget and its relationship to the broader agency-wide financial structure. The following resources and tools were presented to the Budget Committee:

Questica Online Budget Resources

Committee members were directed to the Questica OpenBook portal ([Home | Questica OpenBook](#)) where the following resources are now publicly available:

- Workforce – 2025 Revised Budget: A focused view of workforce allocations and expenditures;
- H-GAC Budget Book – Revised 2025: Reflects updates based on feedback from the July 15 H-GAC Board meeting; and
- Voiceover Budget Overview Video: A narrated walkthrough of the FY 2025 budget structure, providing additional context for stakeholders.

These tools provide a centralized platform for Board members and the public to explore budget data in greater detail.

Draft Workforce Budget Supplement

A draft supplemental online board book was introduced to provide a streamlined, workforce-specific view of H-GAC's overall budget. This optional module is intended to spotlight workforce-related expenses, simplify navigation, and avoid confusion with unrelated cost centers.

Expenditure Tracking and Reporting

Christina and Yvette shared an example of the monthly expenditure report used internally to monitor workforce department spending. This Excel document was provided to addresses questions raised at the previous Budget Committee meeting regarding how expenditures are tracked against revenue by H-GAC. This report is attached hereto as Attachment B.

H-GAC staff requested Committee feedback on the draft supplemental board book. Once finalized, this tool will be maintained alongside the larger agency budget book.

Conclusion

This meeting focused on addressing urgent fiscal planning needs, improving transparency in budget communication, and preparing for major federal policy shifts. The Committee reviewed and advanced two critical items for the Board's consideration: the revised Budget Committee Charter and the Proposed 2025 Budget Revision totaling \$492,436,736.

The Committee expressed concern about the proposed federal consolidation under the Make America Skilled Again (MASA) block grant and its potential to reduce funding and diminish local authority. Board staff will continue to analyze and monitor these developments to assess their impact on the region.

The Committee reviewed the draft supplemental workforce budget book and the demonstration of Questica OpenBook tool provided by H-GAC's finance staff. While these resources represent steps toward greater transparency, Committee members emphasized the importance of developing tools that clearly and effectively present workforce-specific financial information. The Committee requested improvements in expenditure tracking, greater clarity around indirect and shared costs, and a more consistent approach to presenting financial data that supports informed decision-making and oversight, especially considering looming federal funding cuts.

Action Items:

- 1) The Committee recommends that the Gulf Coast Workforce Board discuss and potentially adopt the Budget Committee Charter, which is provided hereto as Attachment A; and
- 2) Board staff hereby asks for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board to approve the revised 2025 budget in amount of \$492,436,736.

Attachment A

Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget Committee Charter

I. Purpose

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget Committee is established to provide oversight, guidance, and strategic recommendations related to the financial planning, budgeting processes, and expenditures of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. The Committee works with the Board and financial staff to review funding decisions to support alignment with the Board's mission, strategic goals, and compliance with applicable laws and funding requirements. It provides recommendations to the Executive Committee or Gulf Coast Workforce Board accordingly.

II. Authority

The Budget Committee operates as a standing committee of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. The Committee has the authority to:

- Review and recommend the annual budget to the full Board for approval.
- Monitor financial performance and budget adherence.
- Review and recommend budget amendments and reallocations.
- Monitor fiscal compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.
- Recommend financial policies and procedures for adoption by the Board.

III. Membership

- Members shall be appointed by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Chair.
- The Committee shall consist of no fewer than three (3) members.
- The Chairs of all other standing Committees of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board shall serve as members of this Committee.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Budget Development & Review

- Work with the Fiscal Agent to ensure federal and state funding is expended in compliance with grant requirements and financial regulations.
- Collaborate with staff and executive leadership to prepare the annual budget.
- Ensure that the proposed budget aligns with Gulf Coast Workforce Board strategic priorities and funding requirements.

2. Financial Oversight

- Review monthly or quarterly financial statements.
- Identify and evaluate variances from the budget.
- Recommend adjustments or corrective actions as needed.

3. Policy & Compliance

- Review and recommend updates to financial management policies.
- Ensure compliance with WIOA and other funding regulations.

Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget Committee Charter

- Participate in audits and ensure implementation of corrective actions, if applicable.

4. Communication & Reporting

- Provide regular reports and recommendations to the full Board.
- Ensure transparency and accountability in financial decision-making.

V. Meetings

- The committee shall meet at least twice a year or more frequently as needed during budget development or times of fiscal review.
- A majority of members shall constitute a quorum.
- Minutes shall be maintained for all meetings and submitted to the full Board.

VI. Conflict of Interest

All members of the Budget Committee shall adhere to the Board's conflict of interest policy and disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest related to matters under the Committee's review or decision making. Committee members are expected to act in the best interest of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and avoid any personal or financial interest that could compromise their impartiality or the integrity of the Committee's work.

VII. Confidentiality

Committee members shall maintain confidentiality of all sensitive financial information, deliberations, and documents reviewed in the course of their duties. Members shall not disclose confidential information to unauthorized persons or use such information for personal gain. The obligation of confidentiality extends beyond the term of membership on the Budget Committee.

VI. Review and Amendments

This charter shall be reviewed annually by the Budget Committee and may be amended by a majority vote of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board.

This charter was approved by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board on (Month/Date/Year).

Board Chair
Gulf Coast Workforce Board

Date

Attachment B

TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES EXPENSES AS OF 6/30/2025		PROJECT CODE	SALARIES	BENEFITS	CONSULTANTS & CONT. SERV	LEASE	TRAVEL	EQUIPMENT	PASS-THRU	INTERNAL SERVICES	NETWORK/GIS	WORKFORCE ADMIN	DATA SVC POOL	OTHER	INDIRECT	Total	Original Project Budget	Carryover Budget	Balance	End Date
140 - LOCAL HUMAN SERVICES																				
		EXPENDITURES																		
	WORKFORCE LOCAL INITIATIVES	LOCL 19.0401	-	-	3,430	-	1,519	-	66,922	-	-	-	-	75,945	-	147,816	972,262	846,277	698,461	12/31/2025
	HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY JOBS PLUS	LOCL 22.0404	-	-	-	-	-	-	43,652	-	-	-	-	-	-	43,652	540,000	279,971	236,319	12/31/2025
	Houston Endowment-Teacher Apprenticeship Regional support	LOCL 24.0406	41,179	19,362	-	2,098	875	-	-	6,738	8,272	-	-	-	6,793	85,317	200,000	198,703	113,386	7/31/2025
	TEXAS INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP MATCH 2824TIP001	LOCL 24.1407	-	-	-	-	-	-	49,258	-	-	-	-	-	-	49,258	50,000	50,000	742	8/31/2025
	SAN JACINTO COLLEGE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM	LOCL 25.0403	24,822	11,671	-	1,014	-	-	-	3,612	4,588	-	-	-	4,095	49,801	50,000	50,000	199	3/31/2026
	Total EXPENDITURES		66,001	31,034	3,430	3,112	2,394	-	159,832	10,350	12,859	-	-	75,945	10,887	375,844	1,512,262	1,126,248	934,779	
420 - WORKFORCE																				
	TEA REGIONAL CONVENER	TXEA 24.3001	13,270	6,240	-	807	-	-	27,078	2,156	2,663	-	-	4,500	2,189	58,903	600,000	112,950	54,047	2/28/2025
	NDW DISASTER RECOVERY -TX STORMS - 2824NDW001	TXWC 24.0401	8,234	3,872	-	364	179	-	204,844	1,259	1,645	-	-	-	1,358	221,756	1,199,102	1,168,007	977,346	7/22/2026
	NDW DISASTER RECOVERY- HURRICANE BERYL 2824NDW002	TXWC 24.0402	9,520	4,476	-	427	-	-	688,319	1,465	1,921	-	-	-	1,570	707,699	1,711,660	1,543,854	1,003,961	8/20/2026
	WAGNER-PEYSER ADMIN/PRG-FY24 2824WPA001	TXWC 24.1102	3,692	1,736	-	3,379	-	-	345,873	464	572	6,206	1,876	39	609	364,446	2,506,765	376,942	12,496	2/28/2025
	RSEA FY24 2824REA001	TXWC 24.1103	-	-	-	-	-	-	47,431	-	-	-	-	-	-	47,431	3,447,480	47,431	(0)	2/28/2025
	WIOA ADULT FY24 2824WOA001	TXWC 24.1403	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,982,689	-	-	600,086	-	-	-	10,582,775	21,220,791	16,198,786	5,616,011	6/30/2026
	WIOA YOUTH FY22 2823WOY001	TXWC 24.1404	-	-	13,322	-	-	2,108	9,214,761	-	-	594,597	-	9,048	-	9,833,837	21,585,440	14,998,755	5,164,918	6/30/2026
	WIOA DISLOCATED WORKER FY21 2823WOD001	TXWC 24.1405	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,256,994	-	-	241,526	-	-	-	4,498,520	12,040,934	8,931,894	4,433,374	6/30/2026
	TEXAS INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP 2824TIP001	TXWC 24.1407	-	-	-	-	-	-	742	-	-	50,000	-	-	-	742	50,000	50,000	49,258	8/31/2025
	WIOA RAPID RESPONSE 2824WOR001	TXWC 24.1410	750	353	-	56	-	-	7,089	164	205	-	-	-	124	8,741	132,769	116,445	107,704	6/30/2025
	TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NAVIGATOR 2824WPB007	TXWC 24.1501	-	-	-	-	-	-	38,010	-	-	-	-	-	-	38,010	210,000	124,814	86,804	10/31/2025
	VR YEAR-ROUND WORK EXPERIENCE 3024VRS113	TXWC 24.1510	-	-	132,526	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	132,526	1,225,000	774,583	642,056	9/30/2025
	HIGH DEMAND HOB TRAINING- 2824HJT001	TXWC 24.1601	-	-	-	-	-	-	16,615	-	-	-	-	-	-	16,615	49,913	39,913	23,298	4/30/2025
	VR NAVIGATORS 3024VRS064	TXWC 24.1710	56,386	26,513	-	3,399	3,236	-	-	11,119	13,737	-	-	-	9,301	123,691	452,000	215,668	91,977	8/31/2025
	AEI/EL CIVICS FY24 2924ALA017	TXWC 24.2001	174,905	82,240	97,514	8,205	5,139	2,214	5,142,947	26,347	32,542	-	-	4,020	28,852	5,604,925	11,050,372	7,166,944	1,562,019	6/30/2025
	TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION 2025 2825TVC001	TXWC 25.0101	-	-	-	3,770	-	-	191,103	-	6,706	-	-	1,366	-	205,087	565,000	464,510	259,424	9/30/2025
	FY25 SUMMER EARN AND LEARN	TXWC 25.0301	2,203	1,036	-	116	-	-	156,784	413	525	-	-	-	363	-	-	-	-	12/31/2025
	VR FY25-2824COL001-1	TXWC 25.0501/09	15,973	7,511	-	76,590	-	-	1,220,853	2,384	2,968	-	-	879	2,635	1,329,792	2,955,620	2,194,618	864,826	8/31/2025
	TANF ADMIN/PT-FY25 2825TAF002	TXWC 25.0601/602	38,586	18,143	-	2,081	-	-	7,474,142	6,605	8,154	128,957	23,871	-	6,365	7,706,904	14,925,944	12,780,934	5,074,029	10/31/2025
	TANF NON CUSTODIAL PARENT ADMIN/PRG FY22 2825NCP001	TXWC 25.0608	2,663	1,252	-	150	-	-	388,161	433	517	8,179	1,514	-	439	403,308	982,115	741,056	337,748	9/30/2025
	SNAP E&T ADMIN/PRG FY24 2825SNE002	TXWC 25.0701	4,119	1,937	-	182	-	-	423,167	622	779	11,897	2,203	-	679	445,584	1,286,000	445,584	-	9/30/2025
	SNAP E&T ABAWD PRG FY24 2825SNE001	TXWC 25.0703	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,073,074	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,073,074	2,326,520	2,326,520	1,253,446	9/30/2025
	CCF CHILD CARE ADMIN/OPS/DIRECT CARE FY25 2825CCF001	TXWC 25.1001	711,100	334,359	-	35,781	2,601	3,567	166,917,298	113,098	139,347	2,209,817	409,036	7,929	117,301	171,001,234	311,954,526	249,445,293	78,444,060	12/31/2025
	FY25 DFPS CHILD CARE CCP ADMIN/PT 2825CCP001	TXWC 25.1006	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,302,897	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,302,897	8,739,248	4,304,231	(998,666)	9/1/2025
	OC LOCAL MATCH-FY25 2825CCM001	TXWC 25.1007	-	-	-	-	-	-	315,333	-	-	-	-	-	-	315,333	20,554,386	20,554,386	20,239,053	12/31/2025
	COO QUALITY IMPROVEMENT-FY25 2825CCO001	TXWC 25.1008/1010	430,907	202,612	1,027,187	24,303	8,887	14,360	294,583	80,945	101,874	-	-	8,414	71,081	2,265,152	12,847,270	12,377,186	10,112,035	10/31/2025
	CCDF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY 2825COF001	TXWC 25.1011	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,713,300	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,713,300	13,600,345	13,600,345	11,887,045	10/31/2025
	WAGNER-PEYSER ADMIN/PRG-FY25 2825WPA001	TXWC 25.1102	-	-	-	7,137	-	-	267,187	-	-	-	-	130	-	274,454	812,363	797,674	523,220	12/31/2025
	RSEA FY25 2825REA001	TXWC 25.1103	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,010,713	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,010,713	3,321,879	3,266,784	2,256,071	9/30/2025
	FY25 RESOURCE ADMIN GRANT 2825RAG001	TXWC 25.1104	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,937	-	-	2,032	-	17,968	23,524	15,537	(2,431)	9/30/2025
	WORKFORCE COMMISSION INITIATIVES 2825WCI001	TXWC 25.1105	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,078	-	-	-	-	190	-	5,268	66,933	44,523	39,255	9/30/2025
	Total EXPENDITURES		1,472,309	692,280	1,270,549	166,746	20,043	24,390	216,689,279	247,474	330,092	3,801,265	438,600	38,546	242,867	233,719,435	501,782,397	376,137,255	153,587,728	62.14%
499 - WORKFORCE ADM POOL																				
	Adm. POOL 2023/20234	TXWC 24.0900/25.0900	974,082	458,014	924,358	43,215	22,702	34,139	-	137,108	169,444	(3,087,928)	-	164,186	160,681	0	4,000,000	4,000,000	912,072	12/31/2025
	DATA SERVICES POOL 2023/20234	TXWC 24.0901/25.0901	161,320	75,853	37,037	7,613	-	-	-	24,205	30,095	-	(581,319)	218,587	26,611	0	-	-	-	-
	OG&A WORKFORCE ADMIN POOL FY25	TXWC 25.1900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	FY23 WORKFORCE SYSTEM MONITORING (708) (107)	TXWC 24 & 25.1413	246,637	115,969	-	12,935	4,972	2,777	(517,430)	41,010	50,722	-	-	1,723	40,684	0	-	-	-	-
	FY23 WIOA PROGRAM MONITORING/DIRECT SERVICE (708)	TXWC 24 & 25.1414	660,487	310,561	-	29,993	13,985	93	(1,341,286)	95,172	117,635	-	-	2,143	108,952	(2,266)	-	-	-	-
	FY23 WORKFORCE DIRECT SERVICES POOL (708)	TXWC 24 & 25.1415	232,757	109,442	-	12,402	8,046	-	(491,178)	38,974	48,296	-	-	2,865	38,395	(0)	-	-	-	-
	WIOA ADMIN-FY23	TXWC 24.1402	256,988	128,836	-	12,349	704	-	-	39,394	48,748	(664,679)	142,819	450	42,392	-	-	-	-	-
	Total EXPENDITURES		2,532,272	1,190,674	961,395	118,507	50,409	37,009	(2,349,894)	375,863	464,939	(3,752,607)	(438,600)	389,954	417,715	(2,266)	4,000,000	4,000,000	912,072	77.20%
TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES EXPENSES AS OF 6/30/25			4,070,581	1,913,987	2,235,374	288,365	72,845	61,399	214,499,216	633,687	807,890	48,659	(0)	504,445	671,469	234,093,013				
ORGANIZATION BUDGET			8,524,173	3,916,005	7,394,850	652,710	268,000	140,000	468,217,031	1,327,567	1,268,974	-	-	859,800	1,514,531	494,083,641				
BALANCE			4,453,592	2,002,018	5,159,476	364,345	195,155	78,601	253,717,815	693,880	461,084	(48,659)	0	355,355	843,062	259,990,628				
% of Budget Expended			50.00%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	-	1	0	0				

(1,939,077.72)

Procurement Committee

On July 29, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson convened a meeting of the Procurement Committee to review contracts and sublease recommendations. Other committee members in attendance included Chair Mark Guthrie, Doug Karr, Cheryl Guido, Jeff LaBroski, Adrian Ozuna, Paul Puente, and Guy Robert Jackson. All items were unanimously approved as presented and recommended for approval by the full board. **Requested Action: Authorize staff to negotiate and execute contracts in accordance with the funding amounts, providers, and program purposes outlined in the chart below.**

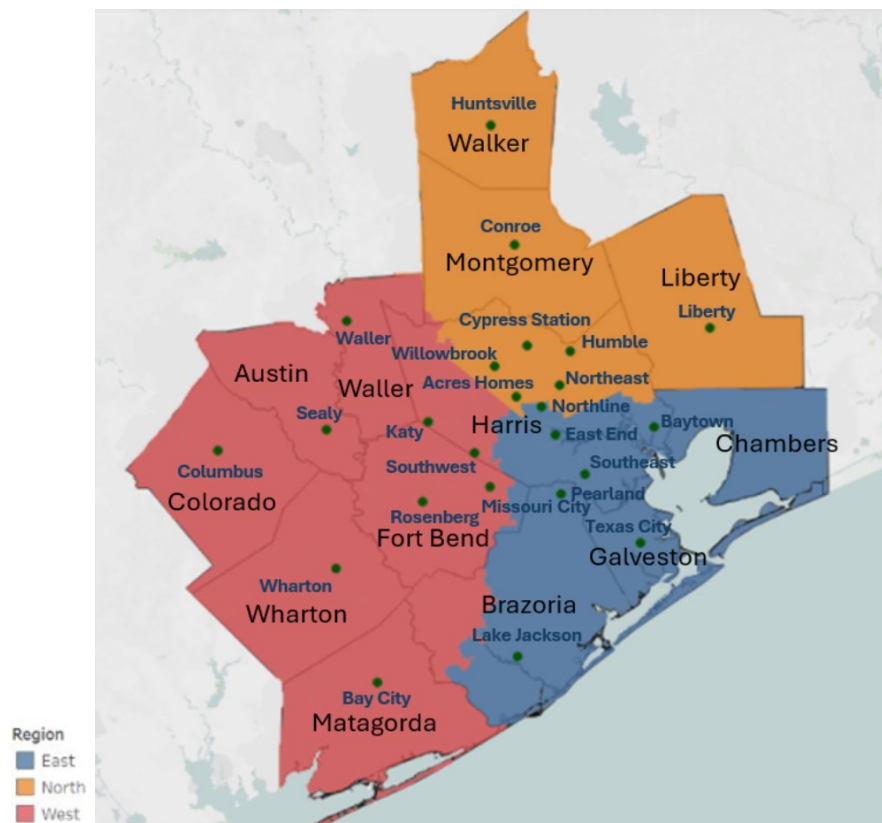
Service Provider	Contract Request Amount (Up to and Not to Exceed)
<i>I. Career Services</i>	
BakerRipley	\$23,000,000
EDSI	\$14,500,000
SERCO	\$18,500,000
	\$56,000,000
<i>II. Financial Aid Payment Office</i>	
BakerRipley	\$380,500,000
<i>III. Financial Aid Support Center</i>	
Equus	\$11,500,000
<i>IV. Communication and Outreach</i>	
Outreach Strategists	\$950,000
<i>V. Vocational Rehabilitation Payrolling and Employer of Record</i>	
ProSource Solutions	\$1,225,000
<i>VI. Family Engagement and Home-based Provider Services</i>	
United Way of Greater Houston	\$360,000
<i>VII. Early Childhood Education – Office Sublease</i>	
5599 San Felipe, Ste 20, Houston TX, 77056	\$600,000
TOTAL	\$451,135,000

I. Career Services:

Background

Historically, career services and employer engagement have operated as separate functions, leading to fragmented service delivery, duplicative processes, and missed opportunities for businesses and job seekers alike. In response, beginning in early 2025, Board staff embarked on a transformative shift in career services to create a dynamic, employer-integrated workforce system that meets the evolving demands of the regional economy. This initiative integrates workforce services and employer engagement into a single, responsive system that enhances job matching, strengthens employer partnerships, and maximizes the impact of workforce investments.

This initiative also shifts the Board away from the career offices model to a regional model that includes career offices, mobile services, virtual services, and more.



Current Situation

A Request for Proposal (RFP-HS-WKF-CAREERSVCS-04-2025) was released on April 23, 2025, to select subrecipients capable of providing career services to employers and people. Respondents were required to select which region(s) they proposed to serve with the option to serve one or multiple regions. Twelve (12) responses were received and evaluated:

Proposer	Rank
BakerRipley	1
Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI)	2
SERCO of Texas, Inc. (SERCO)	3
Arbor E&T LLC dba Equus Workforce Solutions	4
Interfaith of the Woodlands	5
In the Door, LLC	6
United Way of Greater Houston	7
SER-Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast, Inc.	8
Rupani Foundation	9
TD Scott Enterprise, LLC	10
Diversity Cyber Council	11
Avilo, Inc.	12

The top five scoring organization were moved forward to the interview stage where their responses were evaluated and added to their overall score:

Proposer	Final Score	West	North	East
BakerRipley	143.71	X		X
EDSI	134.42	X		
SERCO	133.88	X	X	X
Arbor E&T LLC dba Equus Workforce Solutions	121.17	X	X	X
Interfaith of the Woodlands	119.42		X	

BakerRipley, EDSI, and SERCO scored the highest among the proposers. BakerRipley submitted proposals for both the East and West regions. EDSI submitted a proposal for the West region. SERCO submitted proposals covering all three regions.

BakerRipley

BakerRipley is a private, nonprofit, human services organization founded in 1907 whose mission is bringing resources, education, and connection to underserved neighborhoods. BakerRipley operates in over 70 different locations throughout the Houston metropolitan area, and in 60 counties throughout Texas, providing services to the communities through child care management, free income tax preparation, adult education, Head Start, Early Head Start and charter schools, as well as programs for disaster recovery, early childhood development, youth, the elderly, and low-income families.

In 2023, BakerRipley reported \$560 million in annual operating revenue. These resources enable the organization to sustain broad services aimed at improving economic opportunity and community resilience. BakerRipley remains a key partner in regional recovery, workforce advancement, and equity-focused initiatives.

BakerRipley is a current contractor with the Board, operating career offices and the Financial Aid Payment Office. They have delivered job and career services in the Gulf Coast region since 2012, operating multiple Career Offices.

EDSI

Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI) is a national workforce development and consulting firm headquartered in Dearborn, Michigan. Established in 1979, EDSI has over 46 years of experience delivering services such as job search assistance, career coaching, training access, and employer engagement strategies. The company operates across 10 states and partners primarily with workforce development boards and municipalities to support jobseekers, employers, and government agencies.

EDSI manages and staffs American Job Centers, providing services that include skills training, workforce assessments, labor market analytics, and organizational development consulting. The firm uses data-informed approaches to address regional economic conditions and workforce gaps, tailoring its programs to meet the specific needs of communities. EDSI supports both individuals seeking sustainable careers and employers aiming to attract and retain talent.

In 2023, EDSI reported annual revenue of just under \$93 million. This financial performance reflects the company's national scope and continued demand for workforce and talent development services. The firm has received recognition for its workplace culture and remains engaged in both public and private sector workforce projects aimed at strengthening employment outcomes and economic resilience.

SERCO of Texas

SERCO of Texas, Inc. is a for-profit workforce services provider based in Corpus Christi, Texas, and a subsidiary of SER Metro Detroit, headquartered in Detroit. Since 2006, it has operated employment and training programs across Texas for Workforce Development Boards in regions. SERCO delivers WIOA services, along with TANF/Choices, SNAP E&T, and childcare coordination. It also partners with local colleges for employer-driven training initiatives and youth development programs.

In 2023, SER Metro Detroit, Jobs for Progress, Inc., and its subsidiaries—including SERCO of Texas—reported combined annual revenue of \$76 million. These funds support the organization’s mission to align with workforce goals, focusing on job placement, economic mobility, and labor market responsiveness. SERCO plays a key role in regional strategies that support underserved jobseekers and employer workforce needs.

SERCO is a current contractor with the Board currently operating the employer engagement contract.

Action:

Should the Board decide to award contracts to three separate organizations for the designated regions, we recommend authorizing staff to initiate contract negotiations with BakerRipley, EDSI, and SERCO. The initial contract term would be one year, with the option to renew for up to three additional one-year periods. We request Board approval to proceed with contract negotiations in the amounts listed below.

Regions	2026 Proposed Range	
East: Baker Ripley	\$20,700,000	\$23,000,000
North: SERCO	\$16,650,000	\$18,500,000
West: EDSI	\$13,050,000	\$14,500,000
Total	\$50,400,000	\$56,000,000

II. Financial Aid Payment Office

Background

Workforce Solutions operates a central Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO), which is responsible for managing vendor billing and payments for customer financial aid. This office initiates vendor agreements and coordinates billing and payments for childcare vendors, training providers, support service vendors, and employers involved in on-the-job training and custom training projects. A single service provider (BakerRipley) oversees the FAPO, collaborating closely with other service providers and Board staff to ensure accurate and up-to-date financial information about the availability of financial aid for area customers.

Current Situation

Over the last year, BakerRipley - FAPO has facilitated the transition to the TX3C system, maintaining communication with childcare providers and coordinating payments. In early 2024, FAPO engaged a payroll provider to streamline onboarding and payroll functions across the workforce system, supporting various work-based learning initiatives. The office plans to implement the new Financial Aid Management System by year-end. Moving forward, a key focus will be expanding our network with high-quality training providers to enhance training opportunities and employment outcomes.

While BakerRipley demonstrated satisfactory performance in select areas, their overall management of FAPO has faced persistent and significant challenges. As a result, BakerRipley was placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) in June, which has since required the addition of new corrective actions in response to ongoing concerns. These issues have necessitated strengthened oversight and increased staff intervention. Given the timing of this final contract year prior to the next competitive solicitation cycle, and in recognition of the active oversight structure now in place, staff recommends renewal with continued close monitoring.

Action:

We recommend the Board authorize staff to negotiate a one-year contract with BakerRipley not to exceed \$380,500,000. This is the third and final proposed renewal, with the next procurement process scheduled to begin next year.

Financial Aid Payment Office				
Financial Aid Range		Operations Cost Range		Total
\$365,000,000	\$375,000,000	\$4,500,000	\$5,500,000	\$380,500,000

III. Financial Aid Support Center

Background

In 2022, Equus was contracted to manage the Financial Aid Support Center (FASC). This centralized support center processes customers' financial aid applications, addresses inquiries, arranges childcare, reviews appeals, and handles ongoing eligibility exceptions. Equus serves a broad population, including customers, the Financial Aid Payment Office, and Board staff, operating as a comprehensive service provider for childcare scholarships.

Current Situation

Equus' management of the Support Center has been both effective and efficient. The Support Center has navigated the launch and challenges associated with the new state Childcare Management System – TX3C effectively. They have done so while achieving approximately 97% of the state-mandated performance measure for average children in care:

Month	Children in Care
October-24	37,097
November-24	36,538
December-24	35,984
January-25	34,849
February-25	34,710
March-25	34,541
April-25	34,481
May-25	34,269
June-25	34,184

Action:

We recommend the Board authorizes staff to negotiate a one-year contract with Equus not to exceed \$11,500,000. This is the third and final proposed renewal, with the next procurement process scheduled to begin in the coming months.

Financial Aid Support Center	
Proposed Range	
\$11,000,000	\$11,500,000

IV. Communication and Outreach

Background

Following a competitive procurement in 2024, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board contracts with Outreach Strategists who provides outreach strategy, branding strategy, and both print and virtual collateral to support our regional workforce system. This work is integral to our efforts to enhance stakeholder understanding of Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast and improve service delivery across the region through strategic planning.

Current Situation

For the last year, Outreach Strategists has provided effective and consistent outreach and communication services. Outreach Strategists has assisted by:

- Facilitating discussion of and drafting the Board's Strategic Plan.
- Facilitating discussion of and drafting of the Board's Local Plan.
- Facilitating community engagement roundtable discussions on behalf of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board to support strategic planning and stakeholder collaboration.
- Designing and development of outreach and marketing materials for the *Hire Gulf Coast Youth* initiative.
- Coordinating and edited all *Who's Hiring* event materials for the Gulf Coast Workforce region.
- Providing materials for Board staff meetings.
- Coordinating Board retreats and staff meetings.

Action:

We recommend the Board authorize staff to negotiate a one-year contract with Outreach Strategist not to exceed \$950,000. This is the first renewal with two (2) optional one-year renewals remaining subject to satisfactory performance and Board approval.

V. Vocational Rehabilitation Payrolling and Employer of Record

Background

In 2019, ProSource Solutions III, Inc. (ProSource) began serving as the payroll service provider for Texas Workforce Commission's Vocational Rehabilitation Services, supporting young customers in year-round part-time jobs. Vocational Rehabilitation staff identify job opportunities, while ProSource acts as the employer of record for the customer's work experience. In 2023, we reprocured this contract, and ProSource was once again selected to provide these services.

Current Situation

ProSource is currently meeting expectations as the employer of record for the Vocational Rehabilitation services program. From October 2024 through June 2025, ProSource received approximately 257 referrals from Vocational Rehabilitation.

ProSource charges a percentage markup rate on payroll wages, ranging from 16% to 21%, which decreases as customer enrollment increases. This rate includes payroll taxes. We recommend continuing our partnership with ProSource to deliver this essential service.

Action:

We recommend the Board authorizes staff to negotiate a one-year contract with ProSource Solutions III, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$1,225,000. Execution and continuation of this contract are contingent upon the ongoing availability of funding. This is the second proposed renewal, and we will have the option to renew this contract for one (1) additional year subject to satisfactory performance and approval from the Board.

VI. Family Engagement and Home-based Provider Services

Background

The Board is dedicated to enhancing the quality of early childhood education by offering a diverse array of supportive services. These services are twofold: first, providing consumer education and support to families in need of child care solutions, and second, bolstering the capabilities of home-based child care providers. These providers are often the primary source of child care for many families. Through these initiatives, the Board aspires to create a nurturing and supportive environment for early childhood education, benefitting both the providers and the families that rely on them. The Family Engagement and Home-Based Provider Initiative supports the following key elements:

- Facilitate training events and activities to support home-based providers and the children in their care;
- Create opportunities for home-based providers to enhance and develop sustainable business practices;
- Collaborate and partner with existing entities that provide various family engagement services to support families as their child's primary caregiver; and
- Connect families to community resources needed to strengthen the families' ability to support their children.

Current Situation

United Way of Greater Houston is performing effectively and meeting expectations. The first year of the contract served as a pilot phase, during which initial startup activities, including hiring and onboarding staff, required additional time to fully implement. Despite these early ramp-up challenges, United Way of Greater Houston has demonstrated their capability and commitment throughout the initial contract term. Based on their performance and continued alignment with our program goals, we recommend extending the contract into the next phase.

Action:

We request Board approval to amend the contract with United Way of Greater Houston to extend the term through September 30, 2026, and increase funding by \$360,000, for a revised total contract amount not to exceed \$2,121,754.

VII. Early Childhood Education – Office Sublease

Background

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board receives funding through the Texas Workforce Commission to support the Texas Rising Star (TRS) Mentors Program. This funding is designated for activities that improve the quality of child care, including professional development, mentoring, quality incentives, and scholarships. This program was previously operated by a subcontractor. However, administration of the program has since transitioned in-house to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. As a result, the Board has taken on direct responsibility for program operations, leading to increased staffing and space requirements.

Current Situation

Due to the need to house approximately 80 additional staff, Gulf Coast Workforce Board staff engaged with the Houston-Galveston Area Council facilities management to coordinate with the Houston-Galveston Area Council procurement department to procure a licensed commercial real estate broker to assist in seeking properties that meet the scope of the request made by the ECE staff for additional space. We conducted a lease analysis and received a market survey and ultimately found a space suitable to house 80 staff.

Action:

We request Board approval to negotiate a contract with Schlumberger Technology Corporation to sublease at 5599 San Felipe, Ste 20, Houston Texas 77056, in an amount not to exceed \$600,000. This space includes 22,382 rentable square feet and is a fully furnished office space. The proposed lease would be effective September 1, 2025, through July 31, 2027. The lease includes a construction delivery date of August 31, 2025, followed by a lease rate of \$16.00/RSF gross during the lease term.

Performance and Production

Reporting Infrastructure Enhancements

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast continues to work closely with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as it undertakes significant enhancements to the statewide reporting infrastructure. While meaningful progress has been made and several reporting modules have been successfully updated, data completeness remains a challenge in certain areas. To address this, the Board has accelerated the implementation of standardized reporting tools across all service providers. These tools are designed to improve consistency, accuracy, and efficiency in both data collection and reporting, essential components for informed decision-making and delivery of high-quality services across the region.

TWC recently shared an updated performance snapshot covering the first seven months of FY2025, through April. As part of our internal strategy, we continue to rely on predictive models built in alignment with TWC methodologies. These models allow for proactive performance monitoring and help drive continuous refinements to our reporting and operational processes.

Provider Collaboration & Support

Strengthening collaboration with our service providers remains a top priority. To sustain performance gains and address persistent reporting challenges, we have expanded our provider engagement strategies. Bi-monthly data coordination sessions with service provider teams have been established, offering a platform for updates, alignment on methodologies, and discussion of system-wide best practices. These sessions foster a culture of shared accountability and continuous improvement. In parallel, a robust training series has been deployed to both provider staff and Board personnel, featuring enhanced tools such as personalized interviewing techniques and improved career assessments. These resources are designed to better equip staff to guide job seekers toward quality employment pathways, improving both individual and system-level outcomes.

Performance and Regional Comparison Summary (October 2024 – April 2025)

The Gulf Coast region has demonstrated strong performance to start FY2025, exceeding statewide outcomes in several critical areas under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Notably, Measurable Skills Gains for both Adult and Dislocated Worker participants outpaced state performance by 7.68% and 13.47%, respectively. Similarly, median earnings for these groups surpassed state benchmarks by 7.50% for Adults and 15.23% for Dislocated Workers. These gains reflect effective alignment between training investments and regional labor market demands.

Employment outcomes also remained strong, with Gulf Coast outperforming the state in Q2 and Q4 post-exit employment rates for Adults (Q2: 103.66%, +1.46%; Q4: 102.02%, +1.67%) and Q2 post-exit employment for Dislocated Workers (106.22%, +4.41%). The region also led in Reemployment within 10 Weeks (102.87%), exceeding the statewide average of 98.82%, which is a testament to Gulf Coast's proactive reemployment strategies and strong employer partnerships. Child care participation outcomes continued this positive trend, with an average daily children served rate of 98.11%, compared to the state's 94.08%.

Despite these successes, credential attainment remains an area for improvement. Gulf Coast trailed the state in Credential Rate for Adults (80.98% vs. 93.53%), Dislocated Workers (76.91% vs. 92.39%), and Career & Technical participants (79.42% vs. 91.69%). These gaps are being addressed through targeted

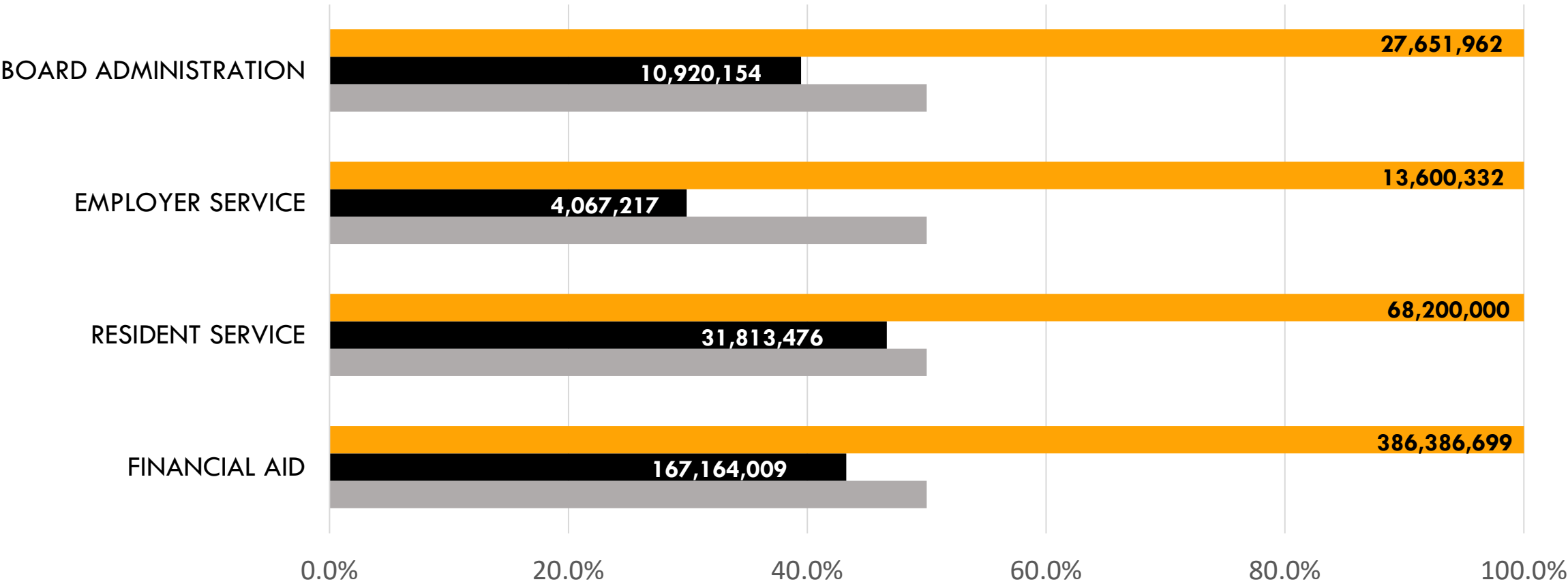
Youth outcomes were not available for this reporting period, but enhancements to data systems are underway to improve reporting accuracy and timeliness in future cycles.

Overall, FY2025 Q1 and early Q2 performance underscore the strength of the Gulf Coast regional workforce system. Results reflect the impact of strategic investments in data infrastructure, frontline training, and provider collaboration. While certain areas require targeted improvement, the region remains well-positioned to build on early momentum and continue driving measurable progress across workforce outcomes.

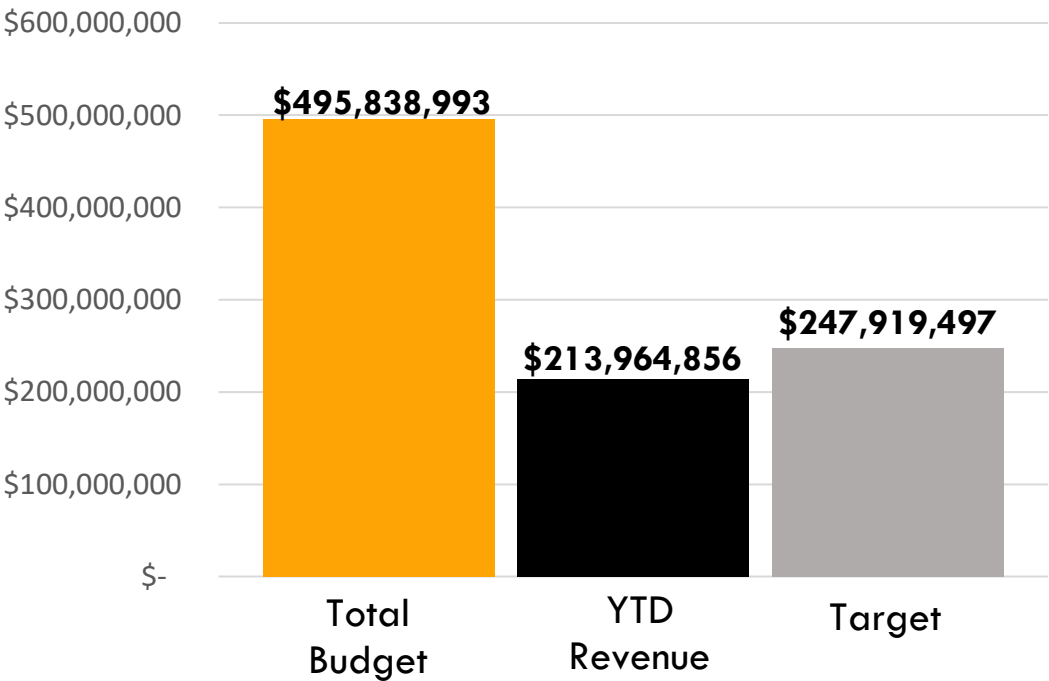
Gulf Coast Workforce Financial Status Report

For the 6 months ending June 30, 2025

■ Budget
 ■ Expenses
 ■ Target



Workforce Revenue



System Expenses

- FINANCIAL AID - EARLY EDUCATION
 \$148,535,714
- FINANCIAL AID - TRAINING & SUPPORT
 \$8,547,235
- FINANCIAL AID - OPERATIONS
 \$10,081,059
- CAREER SERVICES
 \$26,483,808
- EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT
 \$3,502,953
- QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
 \$564,264
- ADULT EDUCATION
 \$5,329,668

