



GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

AGENDA

Tuesday, December 5, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.
2nd Floor, 3555 Timmons Lane
Houston, Texas 77027

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

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Adopt Agenda**
- 4. Public Comment**
- 5. Review October 2023 Meeting Minutes**
- 6. Declare Conflicts of Interest**
- 7. Consider Reports:**
 - a. Board Chair's Remarks: (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)
 - b. Executive Director's Report: (Staff Contact Juliet Stipeche)
 - c. H-GAC Executive Director's Report: (Staff Contact Chuck Wemple)
 - d. Strategic Planning Committee: Briefing on the committee's retreat and meetings (Chair Carl Bowles)

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8. Action Items:

- a. Audit and Monitoring Committee Report: Briefing on the November meeting including discussion, consideration, and possible action authorizing staff to act, up to and including contract termination, of Adult Education and Literacy provider, Harris County Department of Education, given non-compliance of its Corrective Action Plan and performance deficits. (Audit and Monitoring Chair Guy Jackson)
- b. Procurement Committee Report: Briefing on the November meeting including discussion, consideration, and possible action on the following:
 - i. Enhancing Child Care Provider Rates (Procurement Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson)
 - ii. Financial Aid Support Center Contract Amendment (Procurement Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson)

9. Information:

- a. Performance and Production: Report on the system's performance and production (Staff Contact Philip Garcia)
- b. Expenditures: Report on the Board's budget and expenditures (Staff Contact AJ Dean)
- c. Information on the Board's Upcoming Officer Elections (Chair Guthrie)

10. Look at the Economy

- a. Update on the Labor Market (Staff Contact Ron Borski)
- b. 2024 Employment Outlook (Staff Contact Parker Harvey)

11. Communications Update: A review of our media outreach activities (Staff Contact Michelle Castrow)

12. Other Business

13. 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, December 4, 2023**, to Deborah Duke at deborah.duke@wrksolutions.net.

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

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**MINUTES OF MEETING OF
THE GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD
TUESDAY, October 3, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Marie Arcos	Bobbie Henderson	Monica Riley
Anne Bartlett	Guy Robert Jackson	Mou Sarkar
Peter Beard	Jeff LaBroski	Danielle Scheiner
Shonda Below	Michael Love	Valerie Segovia
Sara Bouse	Jonathan Lowe	Richard Shaw
Carl Bowles	Edward Melton	Carolyn Watson
Helen Cavazos	Margaret Oser	Bin Yu
Cheryl Guido	Adrian Ozuna	
Mark Guthrie	Paul Puente	

H-GAC STAFF PRESENT

Ron Borski	Deborah Duke	Juliet Stipeche
Michelle Castrow	Philip Garcia	Aaron Sturgeon
AJ Dean	Rebecca Neudecker	Chuck Wemple

Chair Mark Guthrie called the in-person meeting of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board to order at approximately 10:20 a.m. on Tuesday, October 3, 2023. Deborah Duke called roll to determine a list of members present. Chair Guthrie determined a quorum was present.

Chair Guthrie welcomed new member Bin Yu and invited him to provide a brief introduction. Mr. Yu was warmly welcomed by the Board.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Guthrie presented the agenda and requested a motion to approve the agenda as presented. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried, and the agenda was adopted as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one was present for public comments.

MINUTES FROM AUGUST 8, 2023, MEETING

Chair Guthrie asked for approval of the minutes of the last Board meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2023 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

DECLARE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Chair Guthrie invited Board members to disclose any conflicts of interest related to today's action items on the agenda. No conflicts were reported. Chair Guthrie reminded members that they could also declare any conflicts with items as they were taken up, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the decision-making process.

CONSIDER REPORTS

a. Paving the Pathway Recognition.

Chair Mark Guthrie and Board member Cheryl Guido recognized the contribution of local employers to youth with disabilities and their preparation for work through the Paving the Pathway to Success program.

Background

The intensive Paving the Pathway to Success program helps students with disabilities who are transitioning from high school or post-secondary education into work. Paving the Pathway to Success activities bridge the gap between school and work through professional workshops, mentoring, and work experience – helping students with disabilities obtain the skills necessary to compete in today's workforce. This program provides the intensive long-term support needed for students to gain confidence, broaden their view of the business world, and gain real-world experience with a local employer.

Current Situation

The Paving the Pathway to Success program served 33 young people this year in a seven-month project that included three phases:

- In March through May 2023, participants learned employability, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills through a series of workshops.
- At the beginning of May, participants worked with a business mentor for up to six weeks on projects to develop products, services, marketing, or other ways to enhance the partner's business.

- At the end of the mentorship, there was a 2-day symposium, and each team presented their final projects to a panel of judges composed of Board members. The team from the Houston Museum of Natural Science, was chosen as the winner, followed by the Space Center Houston team in second place, and the DLZP Group team in third place.
- Following the business projects, Pathway participants worked in paid summer (Summer Earn and Learn) jobs for up to 5 weeks, 20 hours per week.

Ms. Guido, joined by Chair Guthrie, offered the participating businesses the Board's and the Vocational Rehabilitation Services' sincere gratitude and thanks for making this year's Paving the Pathway to Success program possible for our local students:

- Houston Museum of Natural Science
- Space Center Houston
- DLZP Group
- Whataburger
- The Harris Center
- Aviation
- Moody Gardens and Resort

Ms. Guido presented awards to the participating businesses and both a student participant, Tommy Hughes, and his mother, Mary Ann Hughes, spoke of their perspectives on this year's program and how it contributes to young peoples' skills development.

Ms. Guido concluded this report, and no further action was taken.

b. Chair's Report.

Chair Guthrie provided a report on recent national, state and local developments, activities and conferences pertinent to workforce development.

As for national developments, Chair Guthrie reported that Congress passed, and the president signed a continuing resolution to continue funding the federal government until November 17. The continuing resolution did not contain substantial funding reductions- from current levels. Either a funding bill or another continuing resolution will need to be passed by Congress and signed the President before the current expiration of the continuing resolution on November 17 to avoid a government shutdown. The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) advocated, and continues to advocate, against a federal government shutdown and against the proposed WIOA funding reductions he referenced in August board meeting.

Chair Guthrie also reported that he plans to attend a meeting of the NAWB Board of Directors in two weeks in Alexandria VA and will bring a report from that meeting to the board in December.

Also on the national level, Chair Guthrie noted that the Department of Labor recently issued technical guidance on permissible local board outreach spending and activities. This has been a gray area for some time. Hopefully, this guidance will expand our ability to do outreach activities in the future.

Moving to Texas matters, Chair Guthrie updated the board regarding Texas Association of Workforce Board (TAWB) activities. The conflicts among some TAWB members that could have resulted in the dissolution of the association were avoided by a series of special TAWB directors and members meetings and a bylaws amendment that will allow TAWB to continue to be the voice of Texas Workforce Boards.

Locally, Chair Guthrie reported that this year's White Cane Safety Day will take place on October 10 from 9:30am to 1:00pm at the University of Houston main campus. Each year the event celebrates the independent travel and accomplishments of those with visual disabilities. He encouraged members to attend if they are available to do so.

Chair Guthrie also reported that, when his schedule permits, he has been attending the Greater Houston Partnership's Upskill Works series of presentations. He encouraged members to consider attending some of these sessions if they have the availability. He also encouraged members to reach out to Board member Peter Beard of the Greater Houston Partnership with questions and praised Peter's presentations at these events. Peter Beard confirmed to Board members that they were welcome to attend

Lastly, Chair Guthrie encouraged members to attend the Board's Strategic Planning Committee working retreat scheduled for Friday, October 6 from 9:00am to 2:00pm. Members will have an opportunity to lend their voice in envisioning the Board's future and charting our course.

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

c. Executive Director's Report.

During the recent board meeting, Executive Director Juliet Stipeche provided a series of updates.

Ms. Stipeche opened her address by celebrating the participants of the 'Paving the Pathway to Success' program, aligning this recognition with the observance of National Disabilities Awareness Month. She extended her gratitude to the board's

leadership, service partners, and the community for their integral involvement. Additionally, she highlighted the success of the Summer Earn and Learn program (SEAL), proudly announcing the surpassing of this year's placement goal by 86 participants, totaling 611 placements. This achievement, marking a six-year collaboration with Texas Vocational Rehabilitation Services, was commemorated in a recent "SEAL-a-bration" event hosted by The Center for Pursuit. Special commendations were given to the Youth Services team, led by Manager LaToya Casimere, and the participating employers for their exceptional contributions.

Ms. Stipeche reported the allocation of \$5.1 million in Job and Education Training (JET) grants, the largest award from the Texas Workforce Commission to the Houston-Galveston region. These grants, earmarked for local school districts and community colleges, are intended to enhance equipment and resources for career and technical education programs. Workforce Solutions will continue to disseminate information about these grant opportunities to local educational entities.

The Burlington English Conference, hosted at San Jacinto College and led by Danielle Knotts, Manager of Adult Education and Literacy, was spotlighted as a key collaborative event with the Texas Workforce Commission. Ms. Knotts, overseeing contracts totaling approximately \$22 million with 15 service providers, facilitates a broad spectrum of adult education and literacy services, including civic education and English language acquisition. Ms. Stipeche reported the issuance of a Request for Proposals for Adult Education and Literacy service providers by the Texas Workforce Commission, with Board staff set to invite prospective service providers to join the Gulf Coast Adult Education and Literacy Consortium.

Ms. Stipeche provided an update on the Market Share Task Force, noting our progress in reaching the Texas Workforce Commission's target of 32,270 employers for workforce assistance, closely aligned with the Board's market share goal of 31,500. Preliminary records indicate that 96% of this target has been achieved, surpassing the State's requirement of 95%. Ms. Stipeche acknowledged the assistance of our contributing partners, including Employment Training Centers, Adaptive Construction Solutions, BakerRipley, and new employer services provider SERCO of Texas, to assist the Board with its progress on this measure. Board staff members, including Crosby Brito, Sable Harris-Buck, Michelle Castrow, Philip Garcia, and others, were recognized for their efforts in this significant achievement.

Ms. Stipeche reported on the formation and progress of the Employer Engagement group, now managed by Crosby Brito. New Principal Industry Liaisons, including Lacy Wolf (Building and Construction), Melissa Steinmetz (Healthcare and Life Sciences), Luis Moreno (Education and Regional Convener), Amber Jefferson (Information and Technology), as well as supporting team members Sable Harris-Buck, Alexander Mallet, and Monica Vagholkar, were introduced.

Special thanks were extended to board members for their support in employer referrals, with a notable mention of Mou Sarkar's coordination of the Pearland community job fair.

Ms. Stipeche concluded her report with an affirmation of Workforce Solutions' commitment to collaborative success.

Chair Guthrie added his appreciation for the Market Share Task Force effort and thanked Ms. Stipeche and all who participated in the effort.

d. H-GAC Executive Director's Report.

H-GAC Executive Director Chuck Wemple began his report by congratulating the Market Share Task Force on the substantial progress made towards achieving its target and complimenting the teamwork and strategies that went into this result.

Mr. Wemple reported that, as a part of the support provided to Workforce, H-GAC has been visiting counties for pop-up sessions working with local elected officials, economic development groups, community groups, chambers of commerce, and others to share what H-GAC does and how H-GAC can provide assistance. The sessions also allow H-GAC to hear from the communities regarding their needs and how we can help improve their communities. Topics that have come up in the 8 events so far are workforce issues, traffic, senior citizen assistance and drinking water quality. Mr. Wemple reported that Ms. Stipeche and her team are kept informed of the issues raised in these sessions.

Mr. Wemple reported that H-GAC and the H-GAC board have also provided assistance with strategic planning and the area plan efforts, noting the good work that has come out of these efforts.

Next, Mr. Wemple provided an update on the H-GAC annual budget process. A final budget is expected to be presented to the H-GAC Board at its December meeting. Mr. Wemple welcomed an opportunity for meetings with the Workforce Board if there are any questions regarding the budget.

Lastly, Mr. Wemple assured members that H-GAC is paying close attention to the potential federal shutdown and related concerns. He stated that H-GAC places high emphasis on continuity of operations and continuity of service when planning and preparing for a potential federal shutdown.

Board members requested that, at the December meeting, Mr. Wemple provide an update regarding various federal grants being monitored and applied for within the region. Mr. Wemple readily agreed to have this information available.

Mr. Wemple concluded his report, and no action was taken.

e. Audit and Monitoring Committee

Committee Chair Guy Robert Jackson provided the following Audit and Monitoring Committee report.

The Audit and Monitoring Committee met in a hybrid meeting on September 26, 2023, at 1:00 PM Members - Guy Robert Jackson (Chair), Carl Bowles (Vice Chair), Willie Alexander, Cheryl Guido, Bobbie Henderson, and Doug Karr attended. Also attending was Mark Guthrie (Board Chair).

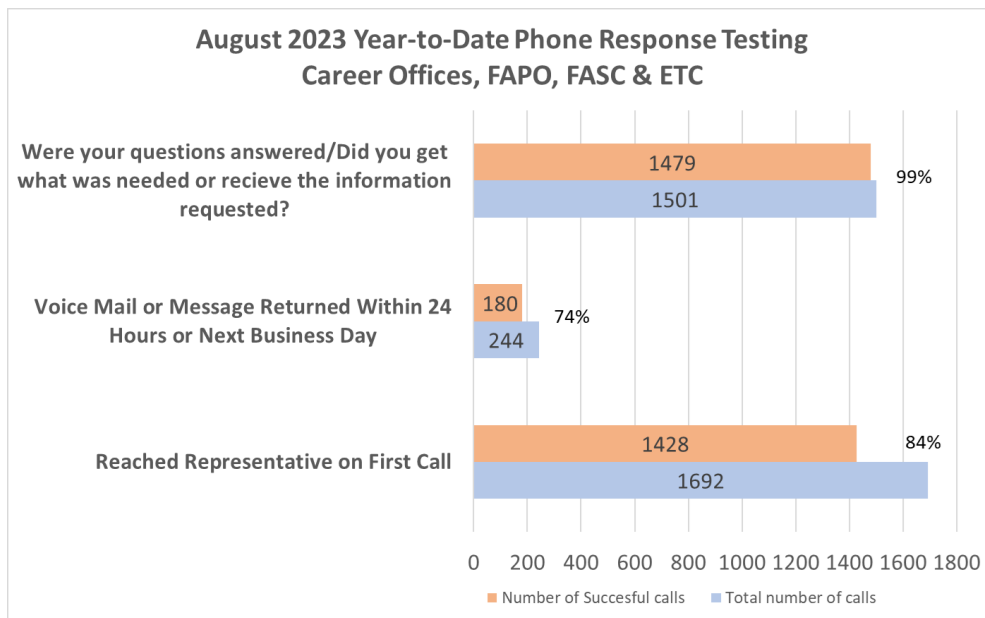
System Review

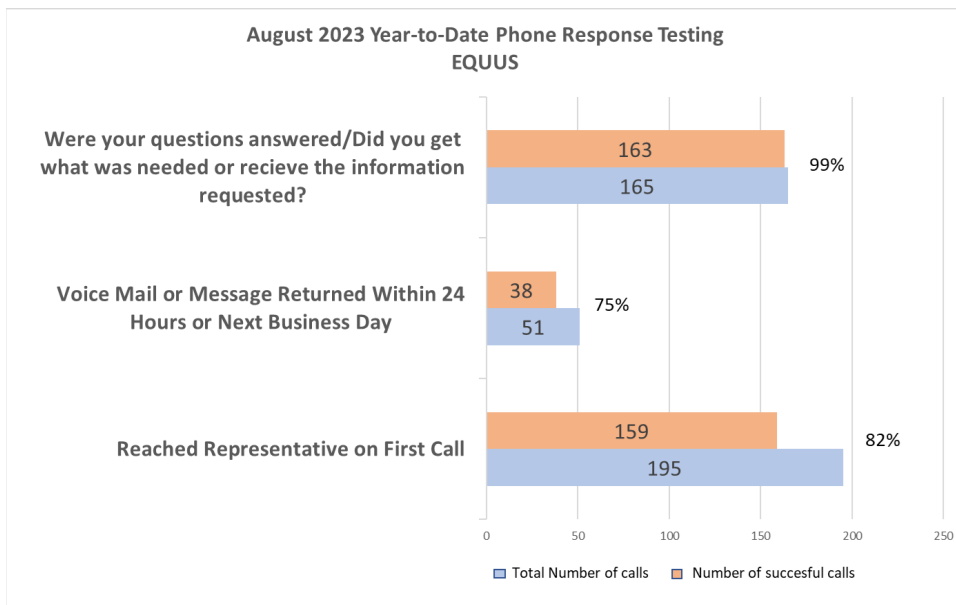
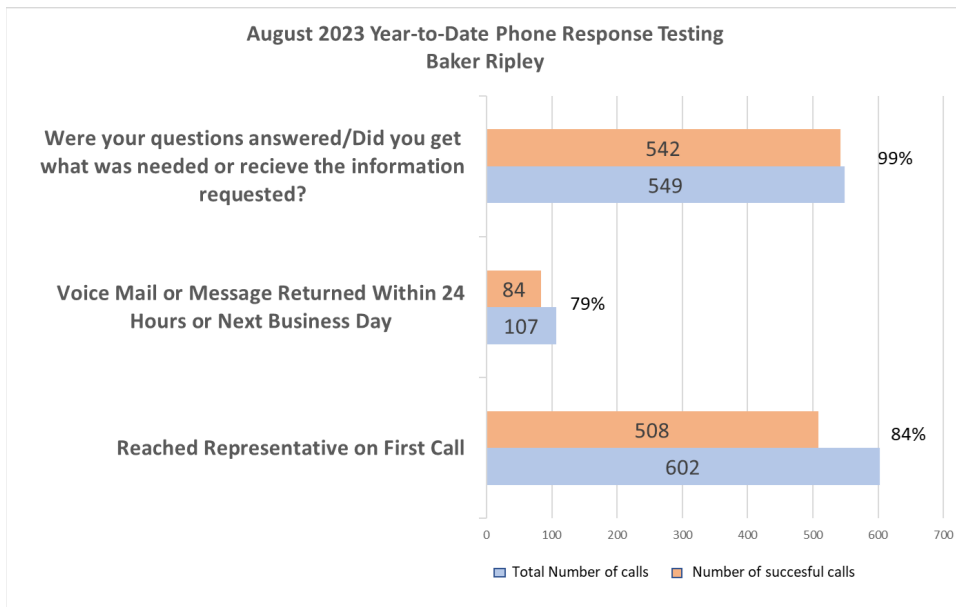
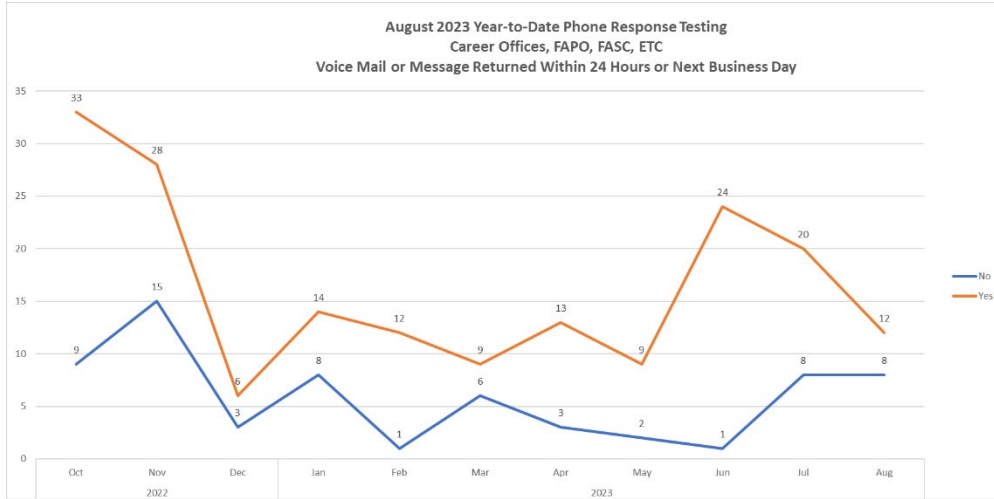
This report includes a contractor-level review of performance/production and expenditures.

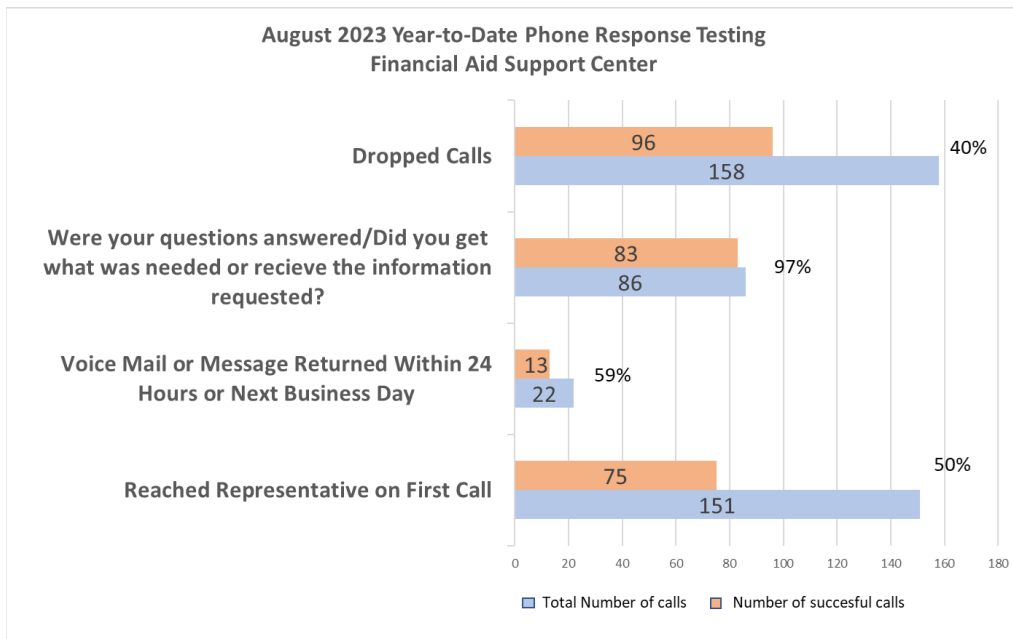
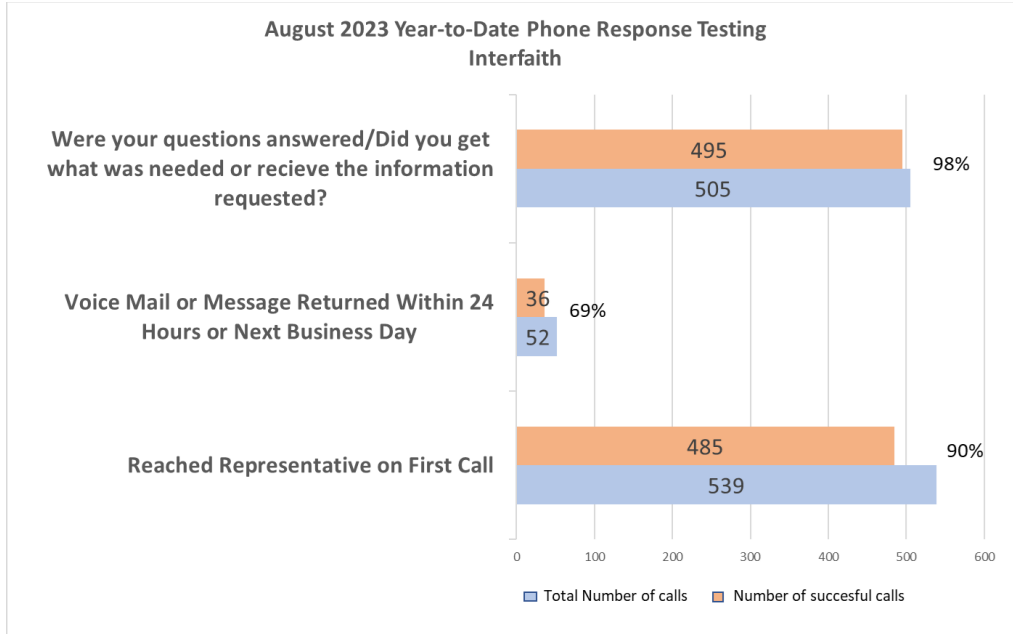
Customer Experience

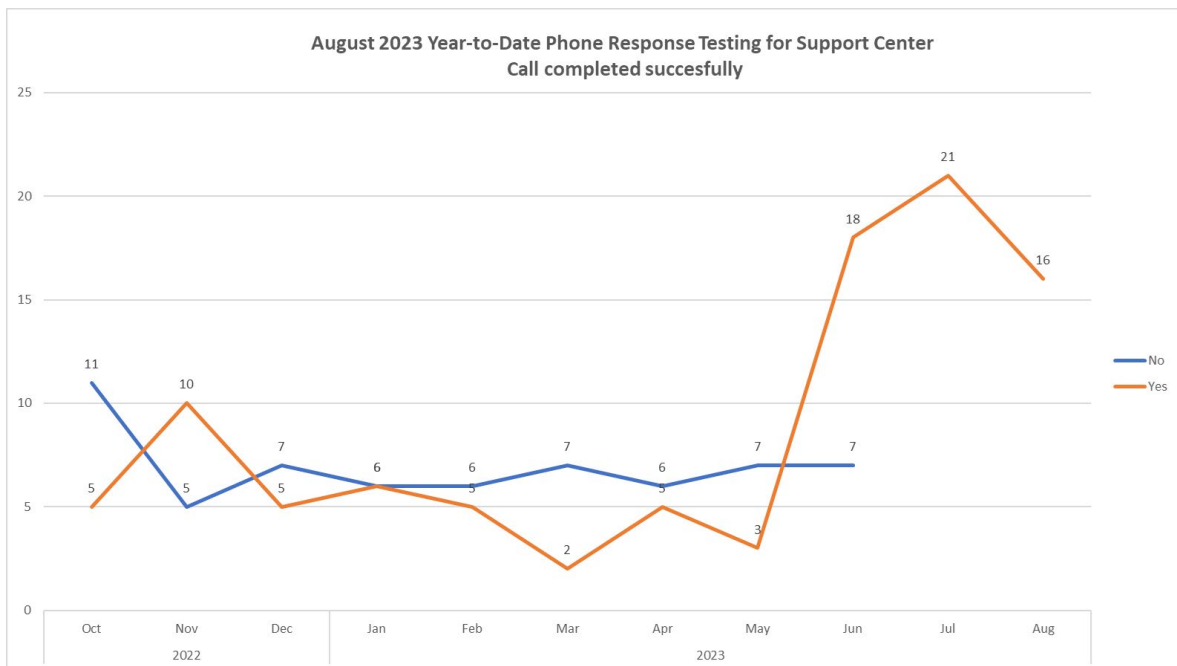
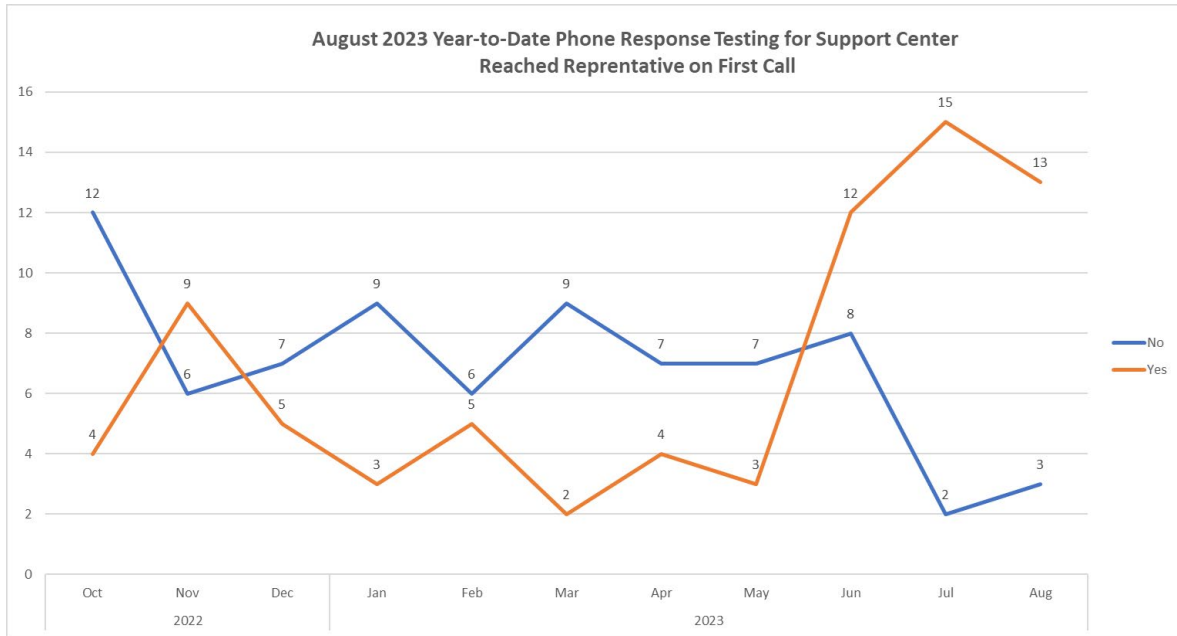
Phone Responsiveness

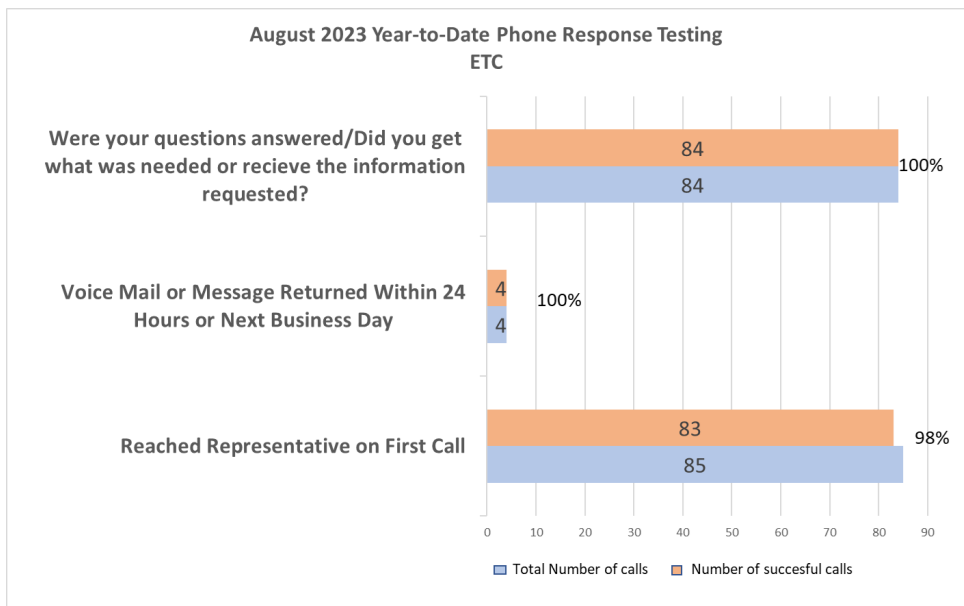
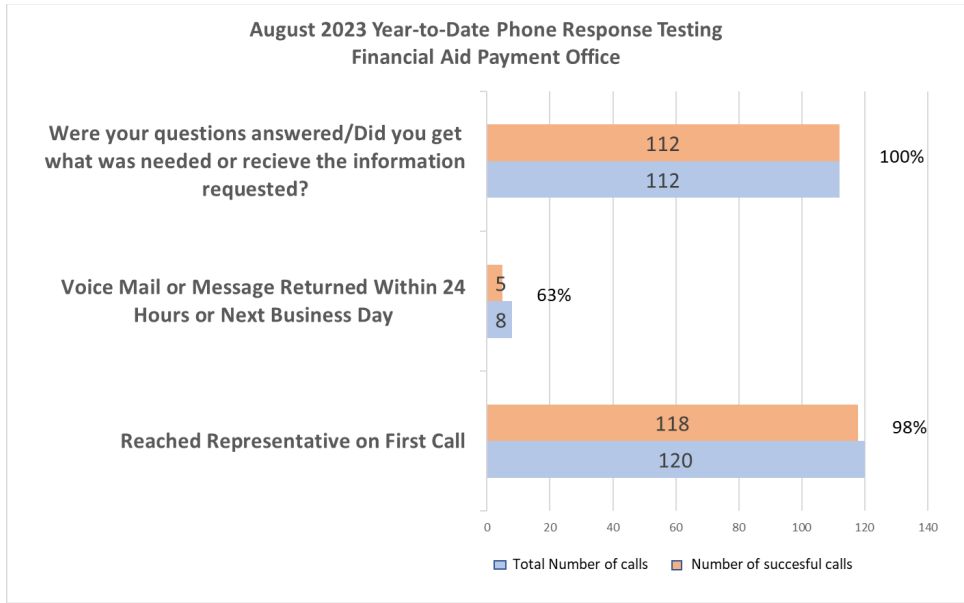
Voice mail responses within 24 hours in August 2023 decreased slightly to 74% from 75% in July and 76% in June.





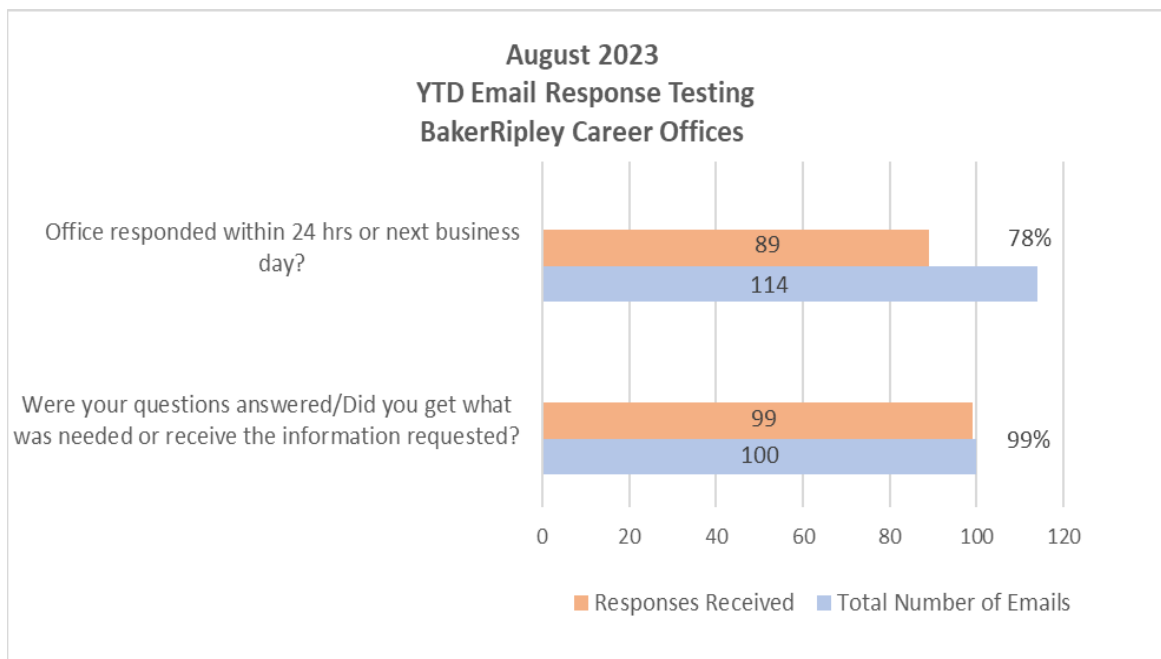
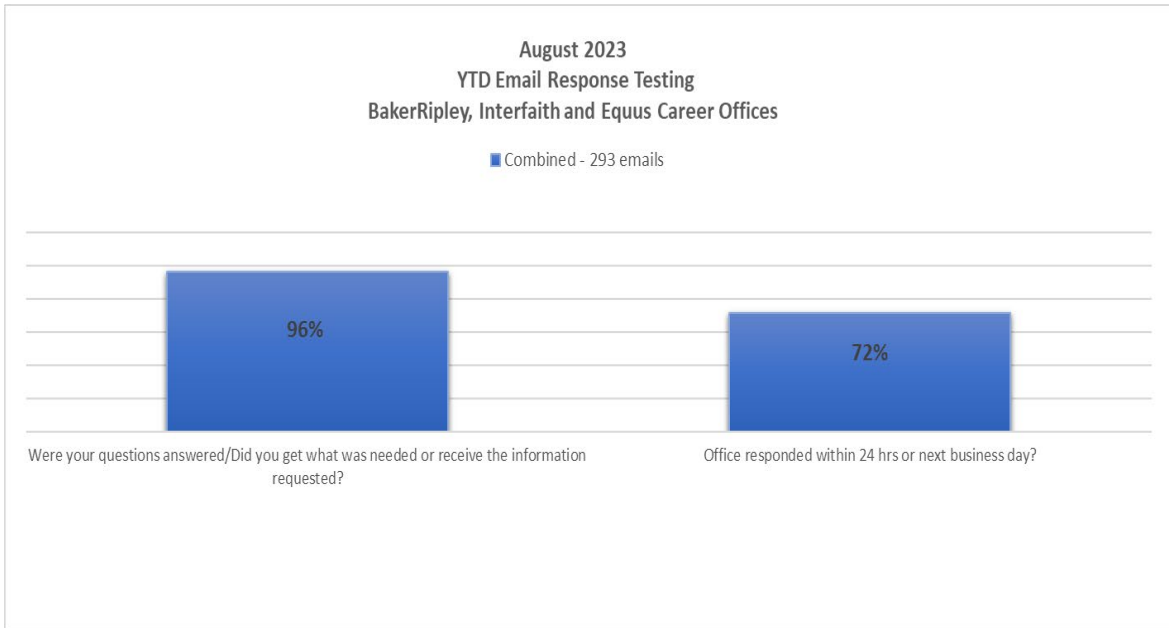


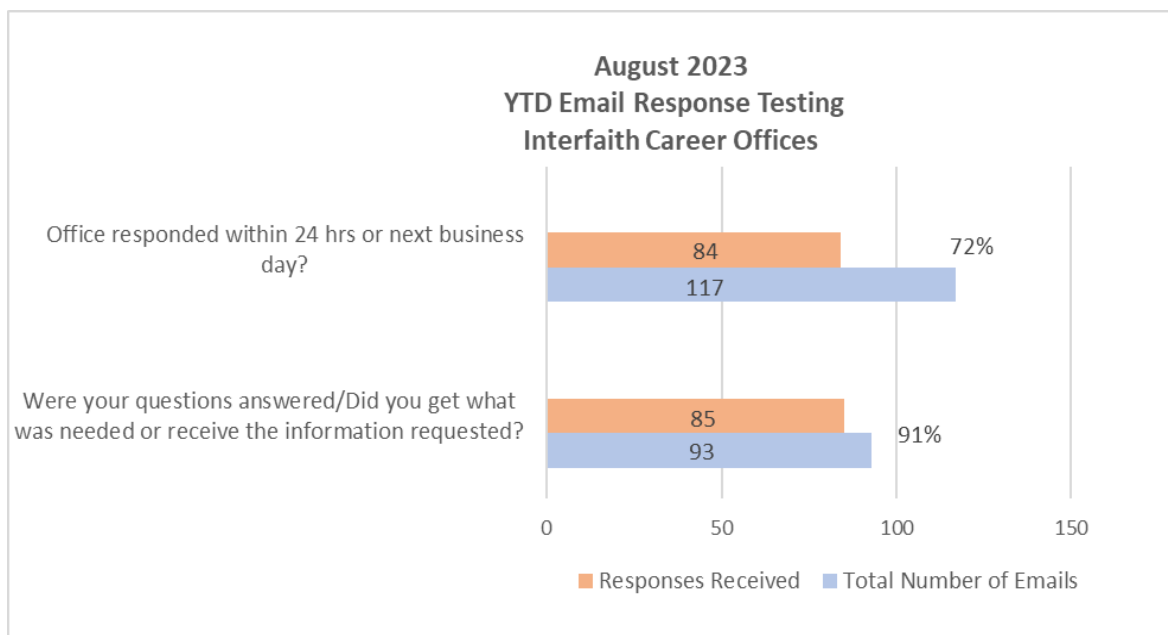
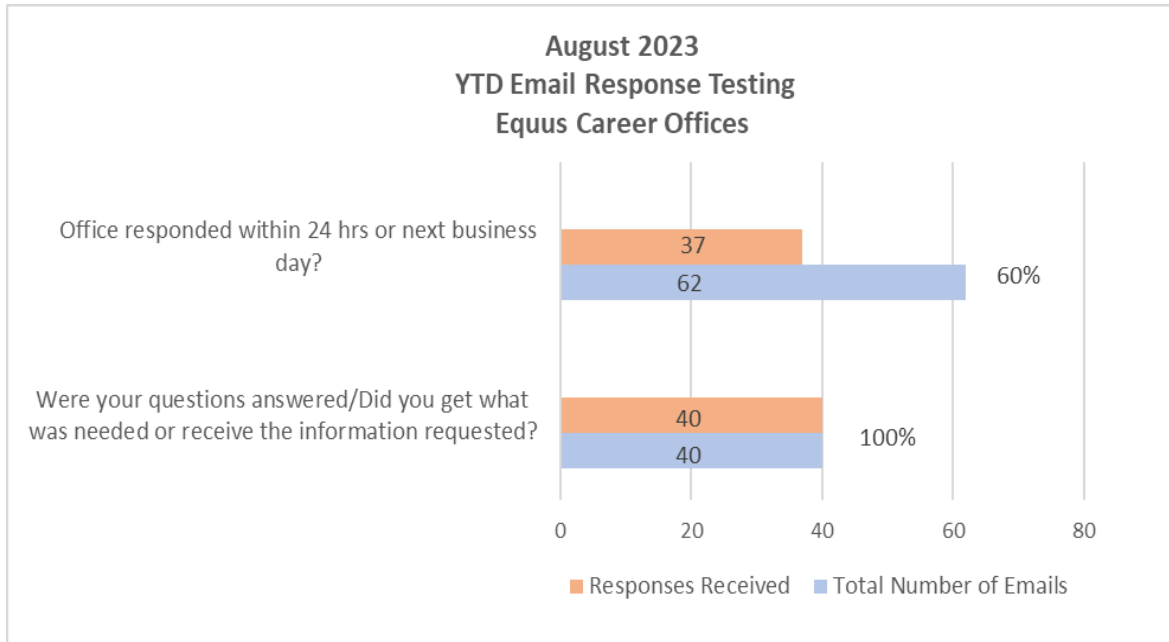




Email Responsiveness

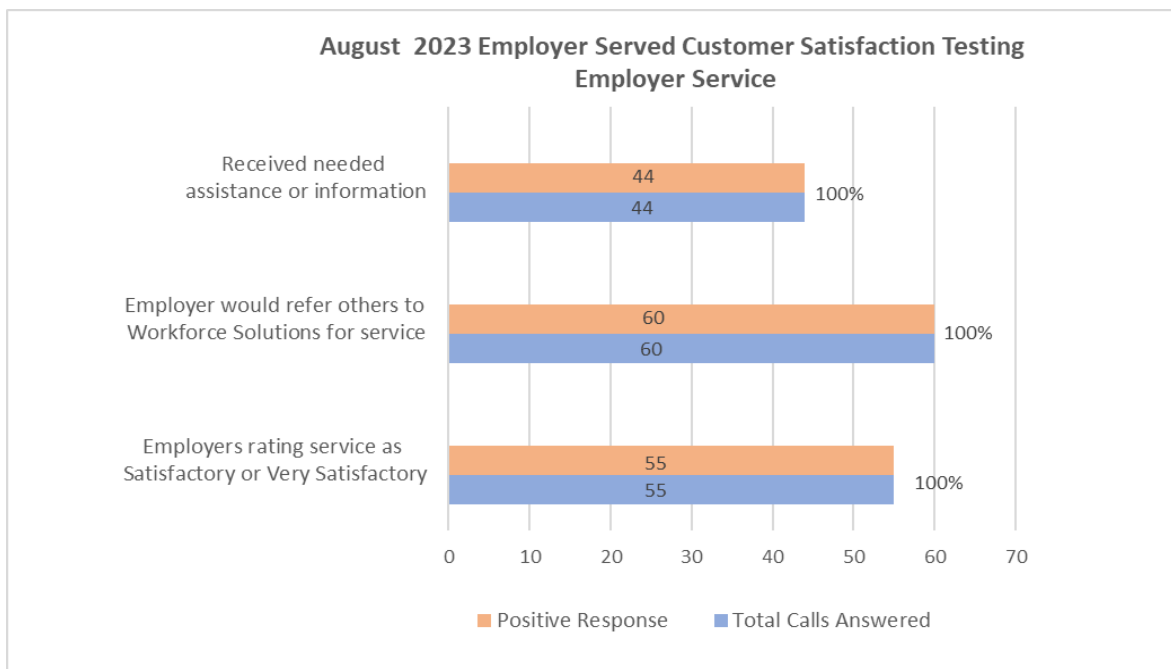
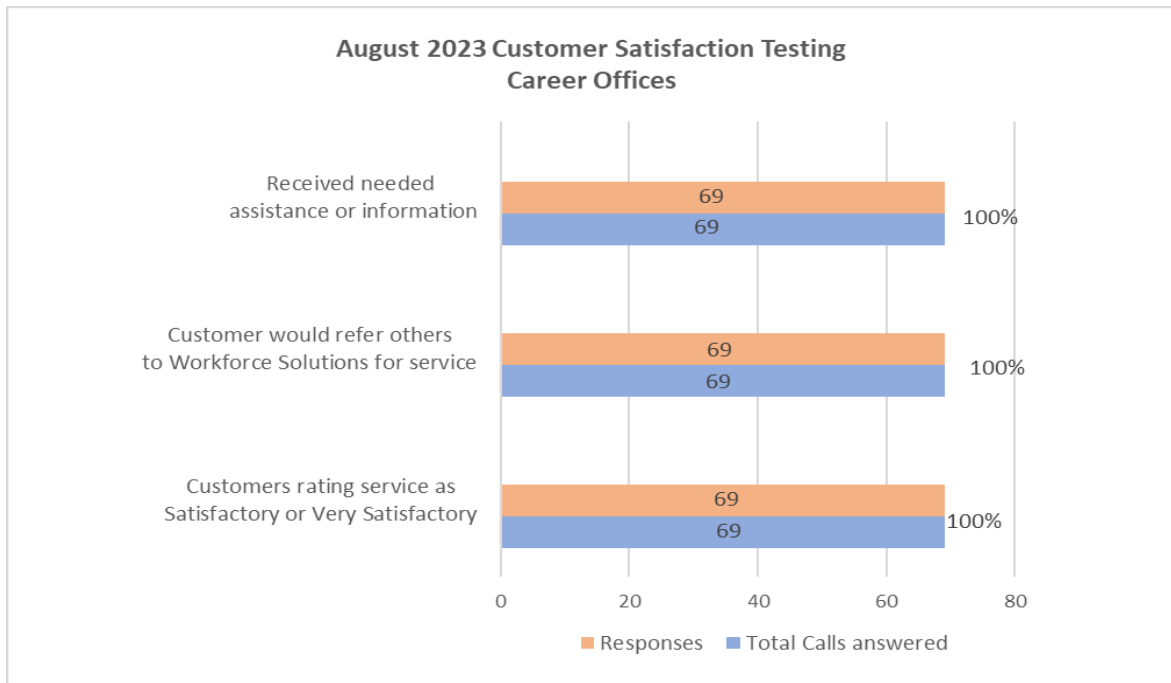
We tested the responsiveness of the career offices to emails sent to the career office email address found on Wrksolutions.com. Responsiveness within 24 hours dropped from 78% in June to 72% in July and August.





Customer Satisfaction

From a list of 143 customers receiving a service through a career office in August 2023, Board staff spoke with 67 customers. Board staff called 158 employers who interacted with Employer Service in the last three months and were able to talk with 55 employers. The charts below reflect what Board staff heard.



Technical Program Compliance

Technical Program Compliance reviews consist of compliance testing of contract and policy requirements and 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 will be described later in this report.

Board staff issued the final reports for **Adaptive Construction Solution (ACS), Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries (ACAM), Career Team, and SERJobs**. All findings were addressed in the service provider responses.

Board staff also issued the status report for the **Children's Learning Institute**. The report showed some errors in completing information security training and submitting required information security correspondence within the required timeframe. These deficiencies are often noted in the first-year service provider reviews.

Board staff submitted documentation to TWC for completed worksite visits for 530 Summer Earn and Learn participants.

Currently, Board staff is conducting childcare vendor testing for the Financial Aid Payment Office, completing testing for the career office service providers, and wrapping up fourth-quarter testing for the annual Financial Aid Support Center report. The Employment & Training Center draft report will go out this week, and Board staff has started the 2024 monitoring reviews for adult education providers.

Financial Systems and Issues

The Board contracts with its procured CPA firms to conduct comprehensive financial monitoring of all Workforce Board service providers. The most recent finalized financial monitoring reviews include the following:

- The 2023 – 2024 financial monitoring schedule is finalized, and Board staff has received one draft report for the Chinese Community Center. The November committee meeting will have an update on the final report.

Status update 2022-2023 cycle:

- Four final reports completed.
- Eight monitoring complete with pending responses.
- Nine monitoring completed with final report pending.

Board staff changed its practice to ensure new contracts are monitored at the first available date within the first six months of the contract year. Our new contracts with Children's Learning Institute and SERCO will have a financial monitoring review completed and reported within the first year.

Accountability and Improvement Plans

The Texas Workforce Commission and the Gulf Coast Workforce Board address performance and production issues with progressive intervention strategies to support improvement. This includes Performance Improvement Actions, formalized Technical Assistance, or Corrective Action Plans. The current interventions from the TWC and GCWB include the following:

TWC Interventions:

- **Employer Workforce Assistance (EWA)** – The TWC requires the GCWB to reach 95% of an EWA target of 32,270. We have been keeping the TWC updated on the six strategies that the Board implemented to meet performance measures as described in our TAP. While there have been challenges, the Market Share Taskforce has been working hard to keep us on track to achieve the TWC's annual goal. SERCO of Texas has also onboarded with us early to support the effort. Board staff's reports show that we are at 30,692 as of September 25, 2023, reaching 95.1% of the TWC's EWA goal, but we will work diligently until the deadline of 9/30/23. TWC may lift the TAP when the Board meets its contracted performance target for four months and demonstrates the timely and effective implementation of all other elements of the TAP.
- **Measurable Skills Gain (MSG)** – In June 2023, the TWC requested a list of actions the Board is taking to improve performance documenting academic and occupational progress for customers enrolled in a WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Education or Training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment. Board staff submitted our response with the steps taken to improve Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) and have since participated in formal monthly calls and bi-weekly informal calls with the TWC to discuss progress and strategies. The Board is currently projected to meet these measures.

GCWB Interventions:

- **Adult Education and Literacy** – At the end of the 2021-2022 program year, Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) was placed on a Corrective Action Plan to address data integrity, accuracy, and programmatic and operational anomalies. Since March of 2023, HCDE has received intense technical assistance from Region 6 ESC and the Workforce AEL team.

HCDE has increased their data entry team to assist in improving the timeliness of data entry. Within the Corrective Action Plan, it was recommended to HCDE to assess students in more than one content area other than Math. HCDE continues to struggle with getting students assessed in multiple content areas. As a result, Board staff continues to provide technical assistance and guidance on the benefits of multiple content assessments.

HCDE has undergone a program responsibility restructure that divides the region into sectors. The goal of this structural shift is to strengthen HCDE's process with identifying students' needs and connecting to appropriate

resources. Within our efforts to better align HCDE workforce literacy training courses to the consortium, the Workforce AEL manager participated in a workforce training planning session to build career pathways in education, construction, and medical occupations.

HCDE has been making improvements with timeliness of data entry, validation, and accuracy, but they have more work to do before their program is sustainable.

- **Equus Support Center Corrective Action Plan** – The Corrective Action Plan given to the Support Center in April 2023 is approaching the six-month mark. Although the Support Center has made progress, we will not end the CAP at the six-month mark. We will amend the CAP to remove areas Board staff identified as making sufficient progress. Board staff will continue bi-weekly meetings for a minimum of an additional three (3) months.

Board staff continues to meet with TWC for Technical Assistance related to the Support Center. TWC informed Board staff during the August meeting they continue to receive a decrease in complaints. The monthly meetings will now change from monthly to quarterly. The first quarterly meeting is scheduled for November 2023.

- **Equus Career Office Corrective Action Plan** – Equus has made significant strides in meeting its performance targets since being placed on a Corrective Action Plan. They have surpassed Universal Youth, WIOA Youth, and Work-based Learning targets. Youth Services Board staff emphasizes the importance of accountability and uniformity of practices across all three career offices. Equus's national and regional leadership have been actively involved throughout the process, providing much-needed support to the local team. The staff and leaders have participated in relevant training and self-development, resulting in an improved knowledge base and awareness.

Youth Services Board staff will continue to meet with Equus to monitor progress and improvements while addressing areas for further enhancement. Equus has been informed of the expectations to meet targets and deliver quality outcomes for young adults, including upskilling through training and work-based learning, leading to long-term employment with sustainable wages. Youth Services Board staff is currently reviewing performance outcomes to ensure the rapid growth did not adversely affect the quality of services. A thoughtful strategic plan for employee retention and scaling of processes is needed for EQUUS to maintain and meet all board and TWC deliverables and performance outcomes going forward.

Next Meeting

We propose to schedule the next committee meeting for 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 16, 2023.

Chair Jackson concluded his report and no action was taken.

f. Education Committee.

Committee Dr. Bobbie Henderson provided the following Audit and Monitoring Committee report.

The Education Committee met in a hybrid meeting on September 27, at 2:30 p.m. to receive updates on several key education initiatives.

Members present included Bobbie Henderson (committee chair), Doug Karr (committee vice chair), Helen Cavazos, Cheryl Guido, Mark Guthrie, Margaret Oser, and Valerie Segovia.

Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant

By way of background, the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative was created in March 2016 by Governor Greg Abbott. It tasks the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Workforce Commission to work collaboratively to develop strong links between education and industry with the goal of helping Texas grow in economic prosperity. The Texas Regional Pathways Network supports the mission, vision, and work of the Tri-Agency Initiative to build regional talent pipelines through high-quality career and educational pathways into high-wage, in-demand industries. Earlier this year, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board was awarded a \$600,000 Tri-Agency Regional Convener grant, which is now well underway.

The Tri-Agency Regional Convener Pathways Leadership Team has been assembled and has already engaged in two meetings. The initiative's timeline and deliverables include:

1) Phase 1: By September 30, 2023, it shall create:

- Pathways Map,
- Sustainability Plan, and
- Leadership Roster.

2) Phase 2: By January 31, 2024, it shall create:

- Gap Analysis,
- Partner Intake/Interviews, and
- Data Analysis.

3) Phase 3: By Spring 2024/Fall 2024, it shall create:

- Regional Strategic Plan,
- 2-Year Implementation Plan, and
- Regional Dashboard.

4) Phase 4: By Summer 2024, it shall create:

- “Learn About Work” (immersive learning experiences in healthcare, education and building and construction) and “Learn at Work” (work-based learning opportunities in the targeted industries).

By February 2024, the Board will also host a collaborative conference at the Ion to begin aligning regional resources to better prepare youth for the opportunities of their future. Stakeholders from the region will convene to discuss the alignment of key partners in our region from workforce, higher education, public education, and employers.

Work is also underway on a gap analysis, and Board staff will soon be conducting key participant interviews throughout the region. Plans are also underway for two summer experiences for youth that will target students in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in the region. Older students will participate in a six-week summer earn and learn opportunity in the targeted industries of health care, education, and building and construction. Plans are to include 11 students in each industry. Students who complete the program will be eligible for a \$3,600 stipend.

Younger students who are 14-16 will be the primary audience for a one-week immersive program at Rice University focused on the same industries. Seventy-five (75) students from the region will be selected to have the opportunity to explore the targeted occupations both at Rice University and on field trips related to the targeted industries. They will have the opportunity to learn job readiness skills, meet and interact with academic and industry leaders, and engage in a project-based learning opportunity. Participants will be able to reside on campus for a week and will receive a stipend upon successful completion of the program.

Financial Aid Support Center

Over the last four (4) months, the Support Center has been undergoing a restructuring. The restructuring includes implementing a new tiered pay system for existing staff, hiring needed permanent staff, and purchasing furniture, equipment, and software licenses.

Since the August Board meeting Equus Support Center has:

- Created two specialized units - one dedicated to production and the second dedicated to the call center.
- Hired a production manager.
- Increased staffing to 110.
- Restructured the onboarding and training.
- Transitioned voucher and training cases to career offices.

The Support Center will continue to fill all positions, purchase needed furniture, technology, and equipment.

The Corrective Action Plan given to the Support Center in April 2023 is approaching the six-month mark. Although the Support Center has made progress during this time, Board staff will continue the CAP, amending it to remove the areas in which the Board staff has identified sufficient progress. Board staff will continue bi-weekly meetings for an additional three (3) month minimum.

TWC has postponed the launch of the new state child care system, Texas Child Care Connection (TX3C), originally scheduled to launch on October 1, 2023, until February 2024.

Early Childhood Quality

The Board provides a variety of services to improve quality in early childhood education throughout the region. To continuously address the needs of providers and families, Board staff have identified two areas for targeted support: a) early education teacher recruitment and preparation; and b) families and home-based child care support.

Child care providers in our region and across the state continue to struggle to fill essential early education teacher positions to support children, families, and the child care industry. The shortage of child care teachers significantly impacts the workforce, child care program stability, children's learning and development, and working families. With fewer teachers available to care for and educate our children, many parents struggle to find quality child care options that meet their needs. For families, this often leads to missed workdays, decreased productivity, and even lost job opportunities. We have the unique opportunity to support our child care industry by investing in teacher preparation activities to increase the pool of qualified entry-level teachers through training, in-class mentoring, and paid work experience.

Many families with young children depend on home-based child care, which includes family child care (FCC) and relatives to care for their children while they work. These forms of home-based care and learning are essential to meet the needs of families who need flexible child care options to meet the needs of their families,

including infant and toddler care and families who work non-traditional hours. In addition, there is strong evidence that families play an essential role in their children's development and learning. Board staff realize that all families want the best for their children. Still, not all families have the tools, resources, and support they need to help their children reach their full potential successfully.

To address these issues, Board staff plans to issue two separate requests for proposals (RFPs) to solicit qualified contractors to work with us to

- 1) Train and upskill individuals willing to become entry-level early childhood teachers.
 - a) recruit eligible young adults, adult education, and literacy participants.
 - b) provide professional development resulting in Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
 - c) provide in-classroom paid skills development and mentoring.
 - d) develop career roadmap to upskill individuals to higher paying jobs in early education or other related fields.
 - e) connect individuals with child care programs for employment post training.

- 2) Provide supportive resources to engage families and home-based child care providers.
 - a) facilitate training events and activities to support home-based providers and the children in their care.
 - b) create opportunities for home-based providers to enhance and develop sustainable business practices.
 - c) collaborate and partner with existing entities that provide a variety of family engagement services.
 - d) connect families to community resources needed to strengthen the families' ability to support their children.

Board staff anticipates launching these two early education quality initiatives in January 2024.

Child Care Expansion Grant

In late August, the Board contracted with the University of Houston to develop the Child Care Provider Bootcamp to expand early child care by examining barriers, internal operations, and services that will lead to an effective ecosystem, innovative partnerships, and better outcomes. The University of Houston staff is currently going through required onboarding orientation, logistical activities, and trainings required prior to launching work activities.

Board staff, along with H-GAC's Communications team, has launched Phase I of the Early Child Care Expansion website.

Board staff has identified opportunities for following up on customers' needs based on the results of a survey of customers by PMF, a Harris County contractor. The results will provide Board staff with perspective and insight to use in its ongoing work with the University of Houston and recommendations and enhancements to the workforce system's operations. Customers with critical needs identified through the survey were connected to community resources.

PFM Survey Follow-Up

Impact without Childcare	Ideas for Potential Expansion Strategy to Support Barriers
Missed work/lost hours	Creation of supportive services and resource portal, Front end navigation to handle potential issues early, Develop strategic partners for assistance to families Develop flexible funding/safety net resources
Dependent on family for care and financial support	Potential opportunity to outreach with families to: Consider being a register home provider, Connect educational resources (i.e. Children's Museum).
Distanced traveled for family support	Development of flexible funding/safety net resources
Unsure of application status	Application assistance, Education about the process, Connection to other services – CHW/Navigator
Missed calls/emails regarding application status	New systems should address some of this; however, creation of a job task that focuses on follow-ups
Cannot attend classes w/o childcare	Work with U of H to explore the idea of mobile and other non traditional childcare opportunity, Align flexible funding/safety net resources for those with critical situations
Upskilling and increased income created financial barriers	Career Center guidance and counseling Connection opportunities for financial counseling -
Credit Repair – using credit card to pay for care	Connection opportunities to AEL – Financial Literacy

Next steps in grant activities include:

- Establishing an overall workplan and Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) chart that will facilitate project monitoring and tracking of project tasks to ensure a successful outcome;
- Interviewing and hiring additional Board staff to work with the University of Houston, including a Senior Planner for curriculum development and research, a planner for marketing and community outreach, and a planner for data analysis;
- Building alliances with internal programs, strategic partners, and stakeholders to enhance resources;
- Engaging Employer Services to identify their partners and how they can be advocates for this work;

- Observing internal program and workflow development to determine gaps and then creating a process for effective customer reciprocity from other programs to child care programs;
- Continuing the buildout of the Early Child Care Expansion webpage in collaboration with University of Houston; and
- Providing community engagement and outreach to garner information and perspectives and provide resources as needed.

Youth Services

Youth Services continues to work towards more strategic collaboration, communication, and coordination of services for young adults aged 16-24 to improve relevancy and impact in our 13-county region. As part of our service delivery, we connect young adults to WIOA Title I Youth program services where they gain meaningful knowledge of and access to critical labor market information, including high-growth, high-demand career paths. Additionally, we connect young adults to WorkInTexas.com to connect with employers with immediate job opportunities.

In efforts to improve the quality of services offered to young adults, Youth Services implemented a monthly youth meeting dedicated to discussing best practices, performance, opportunities, and successes. Through this meeting we have identified the need for youth focused trainings including:

- How to conduct a motivational interview
- Working with youth with lived experiences
- Implicit Bias
- Youth engagement

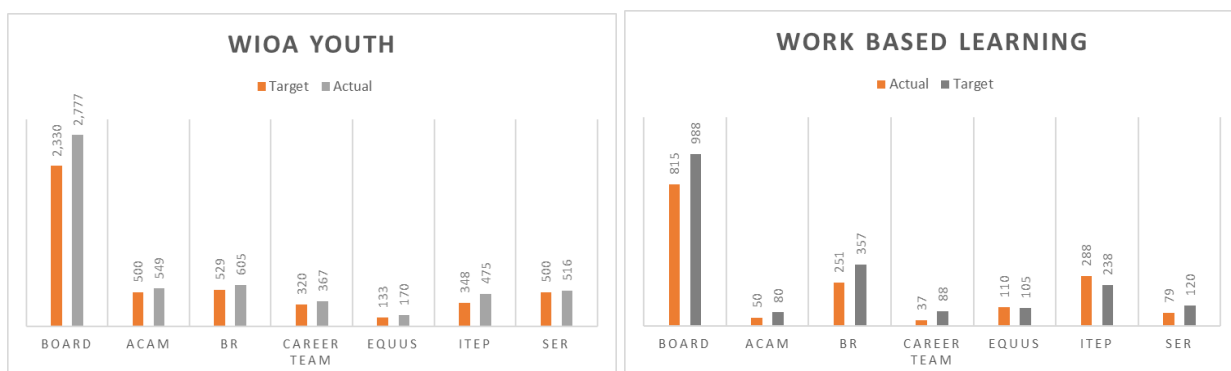
Through exploration of these training offerings, Youth Services staff met with Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS), which provides such trainings and offers technical assistance to its member organizations. Board staff is reviewing organizational membership offerings for our system to supplement our current trainings with those critical and specific to working with youth.

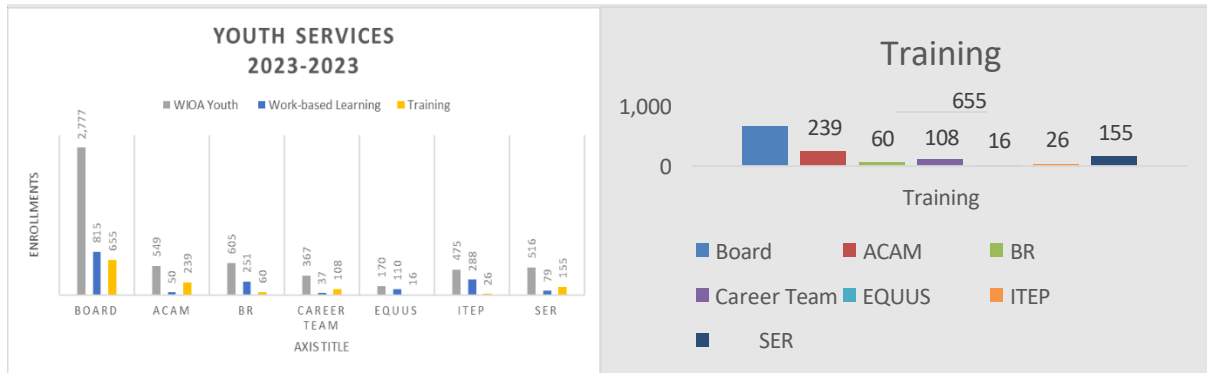
Youth Services has also revamped our youth landing page on the Workforce Solutions website. The page now includes services available to youth (14 Youth Elements), career exploration tools and resources, and a connection to WorkInTexas.com to connect to employment opportunities. The contract for a dedicated youth portal is being executed. Youth Services staff anticipates the launch of the portal in late winter/early spring. Young adults will be able to access the portal from the youth landing page following its launch.

As a result of a Department of Labor (DOL) visit earlier this year, Board staff have addressed the following areas of opportunity:

- 14 Youth Program Elements – Youth customers were not made aware of the fourteen youth program elements available through Workforce Solutions. To address this concern, these youth elements have been added to our website. A one-pager with these service offerings has been created and will be provided to all youth customers. As required by DOL, youth will attest to receipt of this information. This will be recorded in the data management system. The Youth Guidebook is being revised to include this new requirement. The revised version will be disseminated to the system upon completion.
- Youth Self-Attestation Policy and Procedures – Our system policies and procedures on youth eligibility were updated to allow additional flexibilities and remove barriers to service. The policy was updated and Youth Services met with service provider leadership and staff to stress the use of self-attestation where applicable. This issue is also being addressed in the current revisions to the Youth Guidebook.
- Youth Entrepreneurship Training Reporting – Staff had improperly documented youth entrepreneurship training in TWIST. The current revisions to the Youth Guidebook include a matrix with TWIST service codes and definitions for clarity on proper use of service codes.

Youth Services has exceeded targets for Universal Youth and WIOA Youth Customers, and Work-based learning enrollments. For Work-based learning, ACAM, Baker Ripley, Career Team, and SER Jobs have not yet met their target but continue to show progress daily. As we move into the next program year, Board staff is focusing on outcomes for customers placed into services. The goal would be that training and work-based learning are stacked to increase the chance for the customer obtaining employment in the field of study.





Summer Earn and Learn

This was the sixth year of our Summer Earn and Learn Program (SEAL). This program is a partnership with Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) to place young adults into paid work experience opportunities. VRS set a goal of 525 placements, and we exceeded this goal by 86 placements. This was the first year we have met our SEAL placement goal. Youth Services worked with VRS leadership to launch this project earlier this year than in past years. Workflows and processes were also improved in response to addressing opportunities for improvement from last year. The improved workflows allowed for better and more timely communication which was a great contributor to this year’s success.

**Overview
Count**

Total number of VR customers who registered for SEAL program	897
Total number of VR participants who completed the Work Readiness Training	163
Total number of VR participants who were placed in Paid Work Experience	611
Total number of VR participants that completed at least five weeks of the Paid Work Experience	550
Total number of worksites that participated in the SEAL program	256

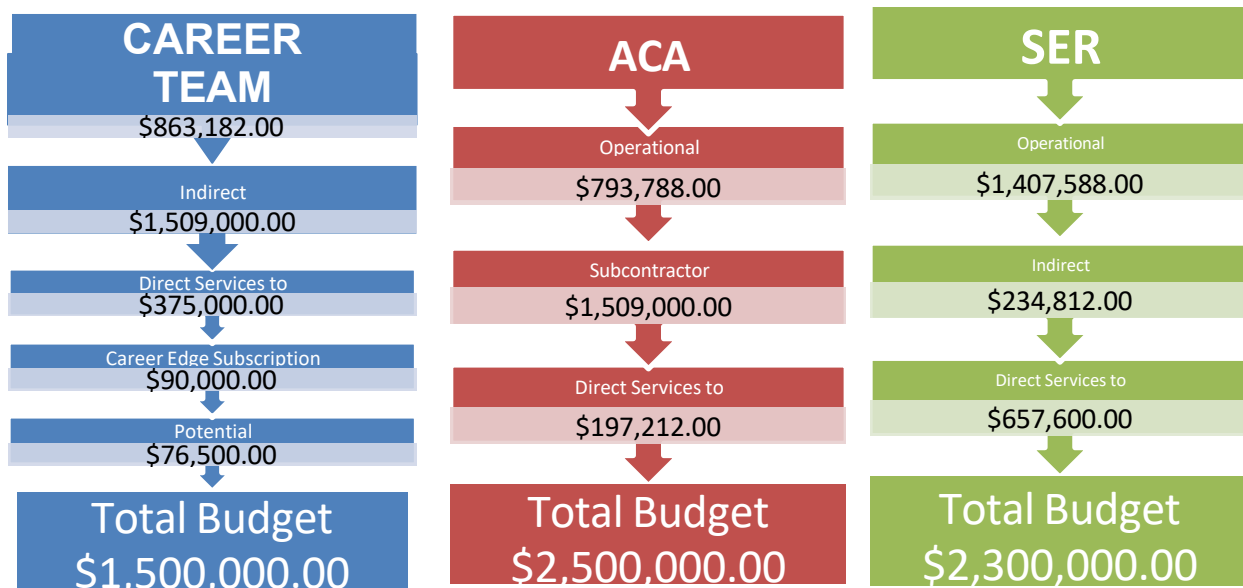
Next Gen Contract Updates

Next Gen launched in 2021 as GCWB innovative response to address a previous gap of connecting with out-of-school and opportunity/at risk youth. Our Next Gen staff are out in the community with an intentional focus of connecting with this population. Next Gen staff work with customers to create a comprehensive plan to meet the young adult’s employment goals by connecting them to WIOA 14 Youth Elements. Eligible customers are placed in work-based learning and/or training programs to gain the necessary skills and certifications needed to successfully obtain employment with a sustainable wage in high-growth, high-demand occupations. One unique feature of Next Gen is their flexibility in selecting high-demand, short-term training providers which allow young adults to quickly upskill and enter sustainable career pathways.

Youth Services conducted a comprehensive review of the NextGen service providers, ACAM, Career Team, and SER Jobs to better understand their work and in response to concerns raised by customers, training providers, and community-based organizations. Youth Services and contract management staff reviewed budgets, system outcome data, reports compiled by service providers, and TWIST cases.

This review revealed egregious practices by one of the service providers, Career Team, including reverse referrals, violation of WIOA Youth participant requirements for participation, excessive costs for training services, poor representation of Workforce Solutions branding, low/no expectations for opportunity youth, proprietary software that was required by the contractor and more expensive than similar programs creating barriers to services for young adults, and for all of the service providers to varying degrees, the exhaustion of funds with poor employment outcomes.

In the last contract cycle, Career Team was awarded \$1,500,000.00, ACAM awarded \$2,500,000.00, and SER \$2,300,000.00. The following is an overview of each service provider's budget allocation and outcomes.



WORK BASED LEARNING, TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT								
Service Provider	Youth Targets	Youth Actuals	WBL Targets	WBL Actuals	Enrolled in Training	Obtained Credential/ Certification of Completion	Employed Outside Industry	Employed in Industry
ACAM	500	549	80	50	138	110	50	24
SER	500	516	120	79	167	122	105	60
Career Team	320	367	88	37	117	98	33	14

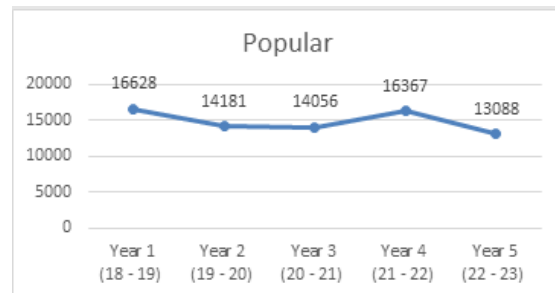
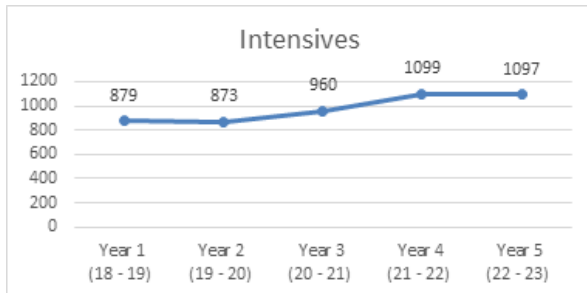
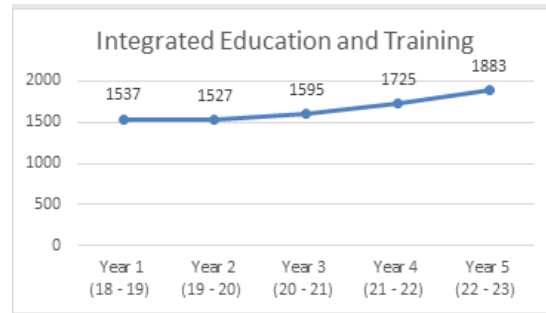
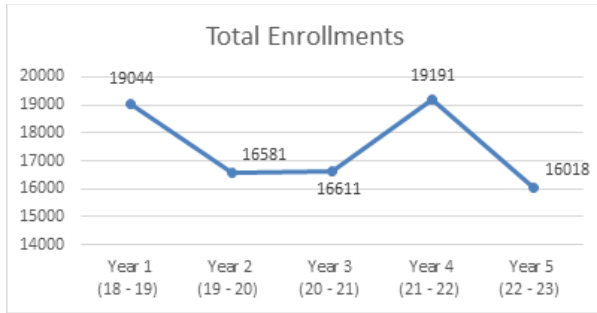
As a result of the poor outcomes and findings for the NextGen service providers, the renewal contract language is being amended to clearly outline expectations and to mandate use of our Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO) for all funding tied to customers. Additionally, Next Gen will be required to utilize G&A Partners as the employer of record for work-based learning experiences. These changes will align all service providers within the system and allow for more consistent reporting, yielding better oversight and management of contracts. Several changes will also be incorporated in the roles, responsibilities, and deliverables to clarify service delivery and outcomes. Youth Services will create a uniform reporting template which aligns with the contracts. Service providers will be held accountable for all deliverables, with corrective action warranted after three months of not meeting requirements and with the ability to terminate contracts at any time during the contract period as deemed appropriate. These contract renewals will be discussed in the very near future.

Adult Education & Literacy (AEL)

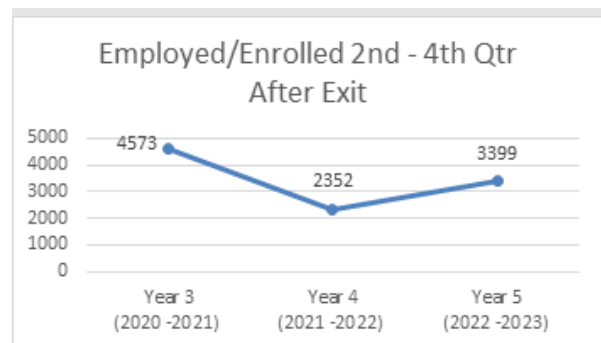
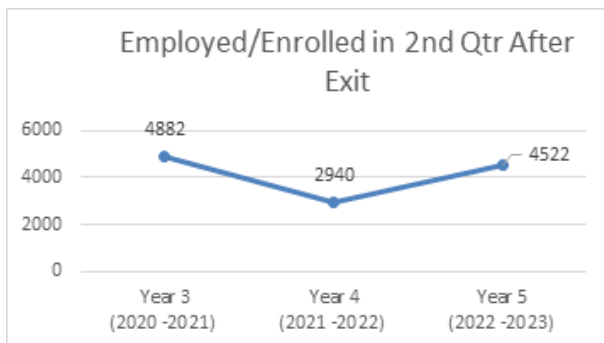
The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act – which authorizes the activities for publicly funded adult education – is part of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (Title II of the Act). The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is the grantee and fiscal agent for the Gulf Coast Adult Education Consortium. This consortium comprises eight community-based organizations, six community colleges, and one education service center that operates as the lead agency providing technical assistance and support to our fourteen subrecipient contractors.

We provide adult education and literacy instruction at more than 300 sites throughout the 13-county region. Adult education and literacy services are offered face-to-face, remotely, or through hybrid instruction. Service includes English language instruction, literacy classes, adult basic education, adult secondary education, integrated education, GED preparation and joint basic education-skills training classes, college and career readiness, employability skills, services for internationally trained professionals, job search assistance, training, workplace literacy, and digital literacy.

Over the past five years, enrollment has not been stable. Year 1 remains our strongest total enrollment year. In Years 2 and 3 we experienced a decrease in enrollment due to the pandemic. Within Year 4, we saw the impact of government financial relief; this support provided financial stability for individuals to pursue upskilling opportunities. Upon completion of the program the individuals exited AEL and rejoined the workforce. Over the course of Year 5 we saw the results of the impact that we made in Year 4 - we were successful in upskilling individuals, but then we had to face the challenge of building trust and gaining the interest of new individuals to want to enroll in our adult education and literacy services.

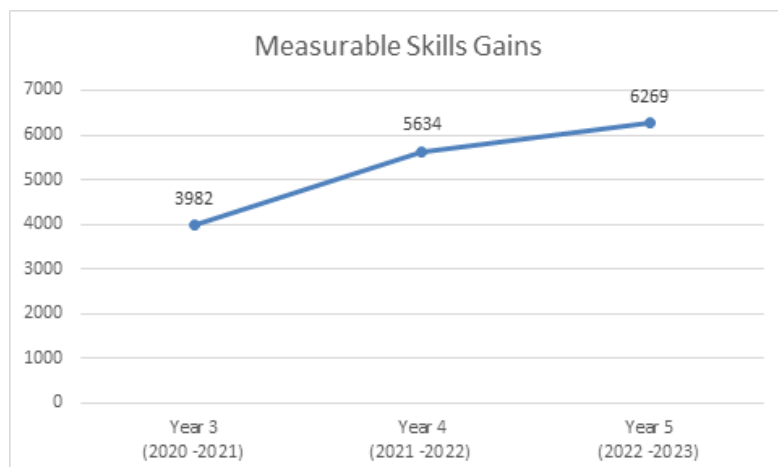


Similar to data in our production numbers, within Year 4, with the increase in enrollment in adult education, we show a decrease in employment and enrollment in post-secondary, and then upon completion and exit the employment and post-secondary enrollment shows an instant increase in Year 5.



Through federal guidance, Board staff tracks participants' progress in AEL activities, performance criteria are selected based on the most appropriate program plan to measure activities related to participants' goals and programs.

Measurable outcomes for AEL recently expanded to two broad Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) categories, measuring basic education activities and those designed primarily to measure workforce training in IET. The expanded MSG options now provides opportunities to focus efforts on measuring progress of IET and workplace literacy participants with the most appropriate and suitable MSG option.



The expanded measures aided in our increase of MSG obtainment.

MSG Type	Name	Criteria
Type 1a	Achievement on an NRS-approved pretest or posttest	Any AEL participant who achieves at least one education function level on an approved NRS test.
Type 1b	Postsecondary enrollment	Any AEL participant with documented enrollment in postsecondary education or training during the same program year.
Type 2	HSE achievement	Any AEL participant with attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
Type 3	Transcript or report card	Participants with documented secondary transcript or report card with at least 12 hours per semester or a total of at least 12 hours over 2 completed consecutive semesters.
Type 4	Progress toward milestones	Participants in workplace literacy or IET who show satisfactory or better progress report toward established milestones from an employer or training vendor.
Type 5	Passing an occupational exam or progress toward attaining occupational skills identified by trade-related benchmarks for specific occupations	Participants enrolled in IET Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams.

The Adult Education and Literacy program year runs from June 1st – July 30th and we are currently in the first quarter of program Year 6.

Our AEL focused Board staff has increased from one to a team of three. We have added a Senior Planner and Program Administrator. The new additions to the team

come to us with specialized backgrounds that will help develop and advance our Gulf Coast AEL Consortium to greater heights. This year some of our key focus areas are program service quality, distance learning and career pathway development.

Our Senior Planner comes to us with a background in quality assurance and monitoring. The Senior Planner role and responsibilities will be focused on researching and analyzing historical quality assurance ratings of our individual programs. The role will also be charged with identifying and managing existing and emerging risk that stem from programmatic activities and subrecipients' job roles and responsibilities.

Our Program Administrator comes to the team with experience in data analytics, professional development coordination, and oversight of workforce integrated education and training programs. The program administrator is charged with overseeing the distance learning curriculum implementation across the consortium, including oversight of the progress of our Burlington English initiative. Another key focus area for the program administrator is career pathways and lattices development, encompassing multiple components. Adult education has always offered workforce training courses, with little alignment to the occupational offerings with the workforce system. The Program Administrator will work on aligning the current approved trainings offered through the career offices to the trainings that are offered through adult education and literacy programs. This work will be completed in cohorts that will start with the medical, construction and education industries. Groupings will be developed to closely align with the work that will take place within the workforce tri-agency convener grant.

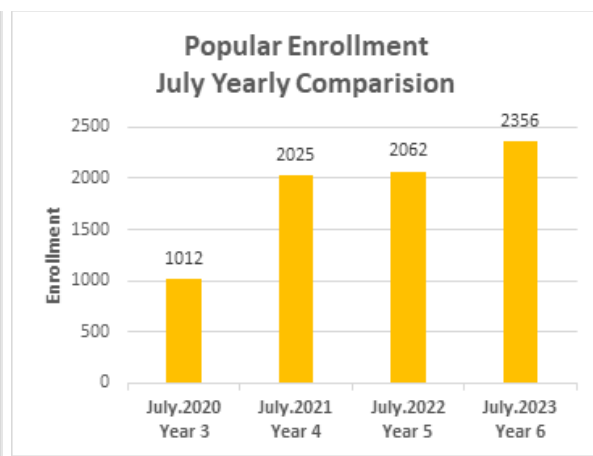
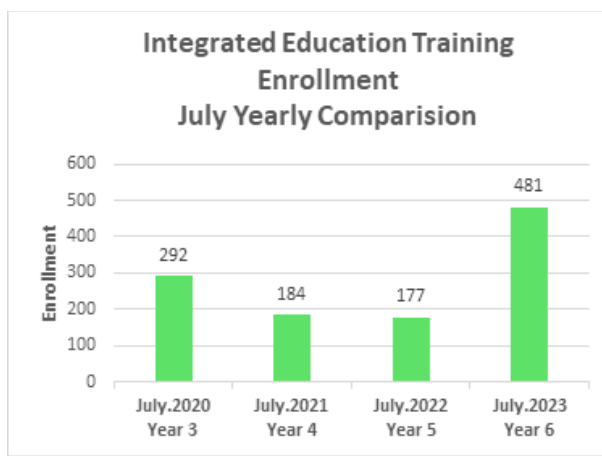
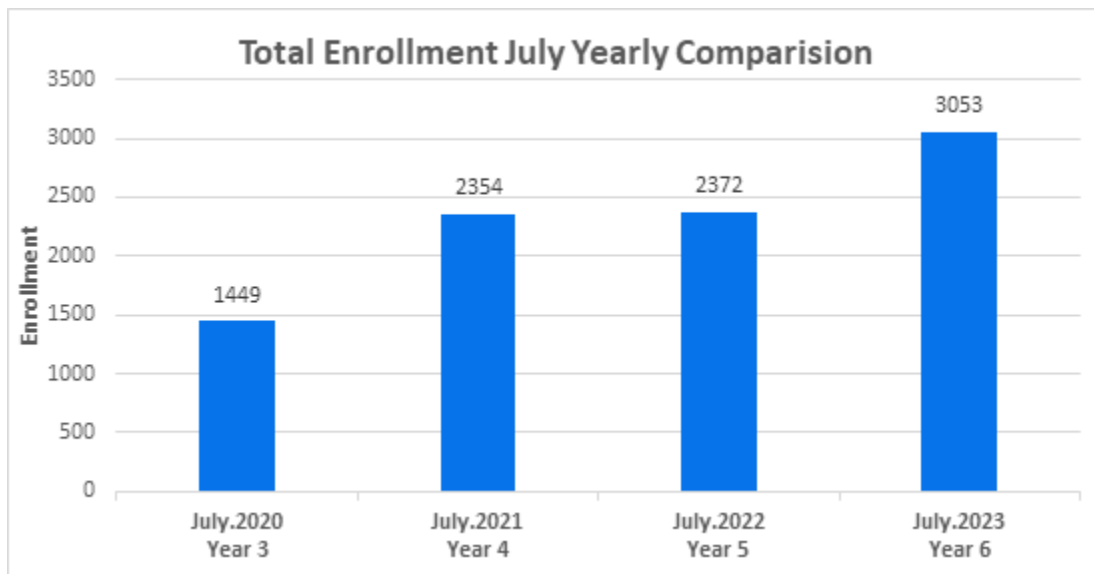
Board staff reviews performance for our AEL service providers in four different areas:

12+ Hour Students: Includes individuals in adult education classes with 12 or more clock hours completed.

Integrated Education and Training (IET): Includes individuals enrolled in Adult Education and Literacy classes concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for specific in-demand or targeted occupations for educational and career advancement.

Intensive Services: Includes individuals who receive various college and career-focused adult education options, including workplace Adult Education and Literacy activities, services for internationally trained English language learner professionals and transition assistance to offenders for re-entry and post-release services.

EL Civics (English Literacy and Civics): Includes individuals who are English Language Learners and, professionals with degrees or credentials in their native countries to enable them to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. This also includes those who are co-enrolled in civics classes which were formally classified as integrated English language/ civics/training.



With month one completed, and data entered and validated we are on track with meeting our goals for this program year. Board staff is continuing to see an increase in interest for service from community partners and employers. Compared to previous years' data we have exceeded the historic enrollment trend for total enrollment, integrated education and training and popular service enrollment.

This year Board staff has incorporated the Burlington English (BE) Curriculum across the fourteen subrecipients ESL programs of study. Burlington English Core curriculum is a comprehensive, web-based, fully blended series of courses

developed especially for adults learning English. In the past years only select students had access to this resource. Over the past three years an average of 3000 students have had an active BE account for a program year. Since implementation of July 1, we have upskilled and trained over 350 members of our consortium staff and have successfully enrolled and trained over 2500 students in Burlington English with the month of August. With the new curriculum scope, Board staff expects to see an increase in level gains from students receiving English language instruction.

Board staff is currently in the process of publishing an RFQ for a third-party consultant to review the current adult education and literacy consortium. Key focus areas are training expansion and outreach, upskilling and career pathways, system wide sustainability, business development and stabilization, and accountability and monitoring. Board staff expects to have the RFQ published in the coming weeks

Next Meeting

The Education Committee Chair, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, proposed scheduling future committee meetings as needed.

Chair Henderson concluded her report and no action was taken at this time.

g. Strategic Planning Committee.

Committee Chair, Carl Bowles, provided the following Strategic Planning Committee report.

The Strategic Planning Committee continues to work through the planning process and has gathered for three meetings in the last two months.

- August 4, 2023 – Attendance at this hybrid meeting included: Committee Chair Carl Bowles, Willie Alexander, Peter Beard, Bobbie Henderson, Adrian Ozuna, Paul Puente, and Workforce Board Chair Mark Guthrie.
- September 1, 2023 – Participants at this hybrid meeting included: Committee Chair Carl Bowles (Committee Chair), Peter Beard, Sara Bouse, Melissa Gonzalez, Cheryl Guido, Bobbie Henderson, Adrian Ozuna, Paul Puente, Carolyn Watson and Workforce Board Chair Mark Guthrie.
- September 22, 2023 – Participants at this hybrid meeting included: Committee Chair Carl Bowles (Committee Chair), Peter Beard, Cheryl Guido, Bobbie Henderson, Adrian Ozuna, Carolyn Watson and Workforce Board Chair Mark Guthrie.

Over the course of the last three meetings, the Committee Members have reviewed and discussed:

- Board Survey results
- Stakeholder engagement
- Landscape analysis
- Plan measures
- Project timeline

Through these discussions, the Committee has emphasized its desire to focus on big-picture, future-focused issues of the local labor market over program tactics.

To continue refining the strategic priority areas, the committee engaged two speakers at its September 22 meeting – Jason Saving from the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas provided insight into the state and regional economy, and Josh Copus from Jobs for the Future provided insights on board best practices. Slides for both presentations are attached.

The participants and Workforce Board officers will meet for a full-day retreat on Friday, October 6, 2023, and a collection of reading materials to prepare for the retreat have been made available. Additionally, Executive Director Juliet Stipeche recommended an online data tool that explores social capital and how it connects to children's chances of rising out of poverty: www.SocialCapital.org.

Below are upcoming scheduled meetings. Committee Members are open to adding additional meetings as needed to provide the Workforce Board with a thoughtful Strategic Plan that can move the organization forward productively.

- Friday, October 6, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
Retreat – Strategic Planning Committee and Workforce Board Officers
Workforce Solutions – Northline, 4424 North Freeway, Houston, TX 77022
- Friday, October 27 at 1:00pm
Hybrid at 3555 Timmons, room 2-D and on Zoom
- Friday, November 17 at 1:00pm
Hybrid at 3555 Timmons, room 2-D and on Zoom
- Friday, December 15 at 1:00pm
Hybrid at 3555 Timmons, room 2-D and on Zoom
- Friday, January 12 at 1:00pm
Hybrid at 3555 Timmons, room 2-D and on Zoom

No formal actions requiring votes were taken during these three meetings.

Chair Bowles concluded his report and no action was taken.

RECEIVE INFORMATION

a. Performance and Production.

Philip Garcia presented Performance and Production measures October 2022 through June 2023. Mr. Garcia stated that Board staff is identifying areas in need of improvement and working with service providers to increase productivity. Mr. Garcia presented a view of all twenty-six contracted measures with Workforce and Adult Education. At the time of our last Board meeting, we met twenty of the contracted measures with twelve of those measures exceeding 100% of the goal. Currently we are meeting twenty-three of the contracted measures with fifteen of those exceeding 100%. We do have three measures that are not being met. Board staff is reviewing these measures and identifying strategies for improvement. Board staff is working with service providers to identify areas of weakness and additional data that needs to be entered. Mr. Garcia also presented an overview of our current market share as of July 31, 2023. Board staff created a Market Share Task Force in July to assist with efforts to meet our target. As a result, we already see an increase in the monthly total compared to previous months. Also included in Mr. Garcia's report was a breakdown of measures by service provider in the meeting handout.

Mr. Garcia concluded his report and no action was taken.

b. Expenditures.

AJ Dean, Manager of Finance, reviewed the Financial Status Report representing expenses for the six months ending in June 2023. He reported that we are 41% expended overall and 50% through the year. We are lagging in some categories. Regarding our System IT category, Mr. Dean reported that we have paused rolling out our own childcare portal due to the State's implementation of Texas Childcare Connections System. As Board staff monitors that progress, Board staff will assess next year whether we would like to pursue anything on our own. Overall, our revenue for the first six months is \$185.6 million. Total Financial Aid is just over three quarters of our overall expenses for the system with 70% going towards Early Education and 6% going to Financial Aid Training.

Mr. Dean concluded his report and no action was taken.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Michelle Castrow, Senior Manager of Employer and Community Engagement, presented an update on increased social media activity as well as continuing increases in earned media coverage. Our social media channels currently have almost 24,500 followers collectively. As of September 1, 2023, our cumulative earned-media value since the onset of the pandemic now exceeds \$50 million.

LOOK AT THE ECONOMY

Board staff Ron Borski presented a look at rate of unemployment through August 2023 which shows which shows our region up slightly to 4.9%. Rates at the State level are unchanged at 4.5% and the National level is up slightly at 3.9%. Total job growth is up slightly for the month of August at a rate of 0.1% with year over year growth up at a rate of 2.7%.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to be brought before the Board.

ADJOURN

Chair Guthrie adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:10 p.m.

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

ABEDI, SUZANE

HCA Healthcare
211 Litchfield Lane
Houston, TX 77024
(202) 517-3824

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

suzane.abedi@hcahealthcare.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

BARTLETT, ANNE

Brazosport College
69 S Calla Lily Court
Lake Jackson, TX 77566
(979) 480-7574

Category: Education

County: Brazoria

anne.g.bartlett@gmail.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

ADROGUE, SOFIA

Diamond McCarthy, LLP
909 Fannin Street, 37th Floor
Houston, TX 77010
(713) 333-5122

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

sadrogue@diamondmccarthy.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

BEARD, PETER

Greater Houston Partnership
701 Avenida de las Americas, Suite 900
Houston, TX 77010
(713) 844-3602 – office

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

pbeard@houston.org

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

ALEXANDER, WILLIE

W J Alexander Associates P.C.
1770 St. James Place, Suite 407
Houston, TX 77056
(713) 802-0900, ext. 12

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

walex@wjalexander.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

BELOW, SHONDA

Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation
5310 E Sam Houston Pkwy N, Ste M
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Category: Labor

County: Harris

sbelow@nehouaft.org

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

ARCOS, MARIE

YMCA of Greater Houston
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Category: CBO

County: Harris

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

BOUSE, SARA

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3110 Mustang Road
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(281) 732-8389 – cell

Category: Education

County: Brazoria

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

BOWLES, CARL

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24 Greenway Plaza, Suite 970
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(713) 621-0050

Category: Business

County: Waller

carl@bowleswomack.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

CAVAZOS, MARY HELEN

M.H. Cavazos & Associates
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Category: Business

County: Harris

mhcavazos@aol.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

COCKRELL, DORIAN

JPMorgan Chase
712 Main St.
Houston, TX 77002
(817) 707--5957

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

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Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

GAY, ANTHONY

FET
12735 Dairy Ashford
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County: Harris

anthonymg@gmail.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

GONZALEZ, MELISSA

Lone Star College
20000 Kingwood Drive
Kingwood, TX 77339
(281) 312-1644

Category: Education

County: Harris

melissa.gonzalez@lonestar.edu

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

GUIDO, CHERYL

Texas Workforce Solutions-VR Services
4424 North Freeway, Suite A
Houston, TX 77022
(713) 458-8593

Category: State Agency

cheryl.guido@twc.texas.gov

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

GUTHRIE, MARK

Winstead PC
600 Travis Street, Suite 5200
Houston, TX 77002
(713) 650-2730

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

mguthrie@winstead.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

HALL, DARRIN

United Airlines
3759 Handel Drive
Arcola, TX 77583
(713) 516-1033

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

darrinmhall@outlook.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

HENDERSON, BOBBIE ALLEN

Texas Southern University
4203 Charleston Street
Houston, TX 77021-1415
(713) 748-6508

Category: ABE

County: City of Houston

bobbie.henderson@att.net

Term: January 1, 2022 thru December 31, 2023

KARR, DOUG

Pro Staff/Atterro
27 Canoe Birch Place
The Woodlands, TX 77382
832-967-7684

Category: Business

County: Montgomery

raiderkarr@aol.com

Term: January 1, 2022 thru December 31, 2023

HESKAMP, ALAN

Heskamp & Associates LLC
311 Hoskins Broadway
El Campo, TX 77437
(979) 758-4521

Category: Business

County: Wharton

aheskamp@sbcglobal.net

Term: January 1, 2022 thru December 31, 2023

KERR, BRETT

Calpine
23915 Travis Trail
Katy, TX 77494
(713) 858-1036

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

bkerr@calpine.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

JACKSON, GUY ROBERT

Chambers County Abstract Co. Inc.
P.O. Box 640
Anahuac, TX 77514
(409) 267-6262, ext. 35

Category: Business

County: Chambers

grj@ccac.net

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

LaBROSKI, JEFFREY

Plumbers Local Union No. 68
502 Link Road
P.O. Box 8746
Houston, TX 77249
(713) 869-3592

Category: Labor

County: City of Houston

ski@plu68.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

JONES, LAVONE

Comcast
8590 Tidwell Road
Houston, TX 77040
(346) 306-4770

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

Lavone_jones@comcast.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

LARMOND, SHAREEN

West Gulf Maritime Association
1717 Turning Basin Drive, Suite 200
Houston, TX 77029

Category: Business

County: Harris

shareen@wgma.org

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

LOVE, MICHAEL

Houston Independent School District
4400 West 18th Street
Houston, TX 77092
(713) 556-6715

Category: Education

County: Harris

mlove@houstonisd.org

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

LOWE, JONATHAN

International Alliance of Theatrical
Stage Employees
3030 North Freeway
Houston, TX 77009
(713) 697-3999

Category: Labor

County: City of Houston

jonlowe@yahoo.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

MAHAGAOKAR, RAJEN

Grid United
Chief Financial Officer
(281) 300-3926

Category: Business

County: Harris

rajenmahagaokar@gmail.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

MELTON, EDWARD

Texas Library Association
5749 South Loop East
Houston, TX 77033
(713) 274-6600

Category: Literacy

County: Harris County

edward.melton@hcpl.net

Term: January 1, 2022 thru December 31, 2023

MUYAN, EKIM CEM

Amazon.com Services LLC
6911 Fairbanks N Houston Rd
Houston, TX 77040
713-849-1981

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

ekimcmuyan@gmail.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

OSER, MARGARET

United Way of Greater Houston
50 Waugh Drive
Houston, TX 77007
(713) 685-2788

Category: CBO

County: City of Houston

moser@unitedwayhouston.org

Term: January 1, 2022 thru December 31, 2023

OZUNA, ADRIAN

Prosperity Bank
80 Sugar Creek Center Blvd
Sugar Land, TX 77478
(832) 259-7692

Category: Business

County: Harris

adrian.ozuna@prosperitybankusa.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

PUENTE, PAUL J.

Houston Gulf Coast Building and
Construction Trades Council
1301 West 13th St, Suite D
Deer Park, TX 77536
(713) 926-4433

Category: Labor

County: City of Houston

paul@hgcbctc.org

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

RILEY, MONICA

The Community Gatekeepers
P.O. Box 2082
Missouri City, TX 77459
(281) 235-3933

Category: CBO

County: Fort Bend

monicacriley7@gmail.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

RODRIGUEZ, MELANIE

Elevate Latinas, LLC
444 N Everton St
Houston, TX 77033
(713) 899-6559

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

melanie@elevatelatinas.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

RUPANI, NASRUDDIN

Worlds Gold & Diamonds, Inc.
7500 Bellaire Blvd #900
Houston, TX 77036
(713) 995-7033

Category: Business

County: City of Houston

rupani@locostleader.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

SARKAR, MOU

Pearland Economic Development
Corporation
3519 Liberty Drive, Suite 350
Pearland, TX 77581
(281) 997-3007

Category: Economic Development

County: Brazoria

msarkar@pearlandedc.com

Term: January 1, 2022 thru December 31, 2023

SCHEINER, DANIELLE

Conroe Economic Development Council
300 W Davis Street
Conroe, TX 77301
(936) 522-3529

Category: Economic Development

County: Montgomery

scheiner@conroeedc.org

Term: January 1, 2022 thru December 31, 2023

SCHMIDT, KERI

Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce
445 Commerce Green Boulevard
Sugar Land, TX 77478
(281) 491-0216

Fax: (281) 491-0112

Category: Business

County: Fort Bend

keri@fortbendcc.org

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

SEGOVIA, VALERIE GARCIA

Director, Outreach & Education, TEES
Nuclear Engineering & Science Center
1095 Nuclear Science Road
College Station, TX 77843
(979) 240-5005

Category: Education

County: Matagorda

vsegovia@tamu.edu

valeriegsegovia@gmail.com

Term: January 1, 2022 thru December 31, 2023

SHAW, RICHARD

Harris County Labor Assembly,
AFL-CIO Council
1707 Prism Lane
Houston, TX 77043-3344
(713) 240-2472

Category: Labor

County: City of Houston

shawtrek@aol.com

Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

STALEY, GIL

The Woodlands Area Economic
Development Partnership
2107 Research Forest Drive, Suite 150
The Woodlands, TX 77380
(281) 363-8130
Category: Business
County: Montgomery
gil.staley@edpartnership.net
Term: January 1, 2022 thru December 31, 2023

TAYLOR, KATHERINE

Genesys Works - Houston
3100 Main Street, Suite 702
Houston, TX 77002
(713) 341-5777
Category: Public Assistance
County: City of Houston
ktaylor@genesysworks.org
Term: January 1, 2022 thru December 31, 2023

TAYLOR, SANDRA

Tiny Toes Academy
1743 Trammel Fresno
Fresno, TX 77545
(832) 630-6301
Category: Child Care
County: Fort Bend
tinytoesacademy@yahoo.com
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

VAZQUEZ, LIZANDRA

Texas Workforce Commission
3555 Timmons Lane, Suite 120
Houston, TX 77027
(713) 688-6890
Category: State Agency
lizandra.vazquez@wrksolutions.com
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

WATSON, CAROLYN

William Stamps Farish Fund
1100 Louisiana, Suite 2200
Houston, TX 77002
(713) 757-7313
Category: CBO
County: City of Houston
carolyn17968@gmail.com
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

WEBSTER, MICHAEL

Houston Community College
3100 Main Street
Houston, TX 77002
(713) 718-8030
Category: Education
County: City of Houston
michael.webster@hccs.edu
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

YU, BIN

MedxSunshine LLC
6501 Wesline
Houston, TX 77036
(713) 818-9687
Category: Business
County: City of Houston
bin.yu@medxsunshine.com
Term: January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2024

WORKFORCE BOARD KEY STAFF:

Juliet Stipeche, Director

Romana Paniagua, Director's Administrative Assistant

Kristi Rangel, Assistant Director of Workforce

AJ Dean, Senior Manager, Fiscal Administration and Contract Management

Russell Tomlin, Senior Manager, Career Services

Michelle Castrow, Senior Advisor of Strategic Planning and Communications

Rebecca Neudecker, Senior Advisor of Governance

Jenny Johnson, Quality Assurance Manager

Deborah Duke, Administrative Coordinator

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Houston, TX 77227-2777

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Strategic Planning Committee

Update for December 2023

Executive Summary

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Strategic Planning Committee held a series of critical meetings in late 2023 to develop a strategic plan for the Houston Gulf Coast region's workforce. The Committee is methodically laying the foundation for a strategy that addresses the rapidly evolving market dynamics and technological advancements impacting middle-skilled job sectors. A significant focus of the deliberations is on enhancing the functionality and reach of Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast, with the aim of creating a more effective conduit between job seekers and the changing labor market demands. Integral to this approach is the incorporation of insights from seminal studies which underscores the increasing importance of postsecondary education in a tech-driven economy. The Committee's ongoing efforts represent a strategic approach towards developing an actionable and evidence-based plan, crucial for stimulating economic growth and preparing the workforce for the challenges and opportunities of a globally competitive marketplace.

Introduction

Under the leadership of Committee Chair Carl Bowles, the Committee has been working hard to develop a strategic plan where the Gulf Coast Workforce Board actively responds to evolving market needs and technological advancements to ensure the local workforce remains competitive and prosperous. Since the last Board meeting, the Committee convened for a retreat and two additional meetings, including:

October 6, 2023 - Retreat: Key participants included Committee Chair Carl Bowles, Workforce Board Chair Mark Guthrie, and members Sara Bouse, Cheryl Guido, Bobbie Henderson, Adrian Ozuna, Paul Puente, Mou Sakar, Richard Shaw, and Carolyn Watson. This retreat was pivotal in shaping the Committee's strategic approach.

October 27, 2023 - Meeting: Attended by Committee Chair Carl Bowles, Workforce Board Chair Mark Guthrie, and members Peter Beard, Bobbie Henderson, Doug Karr, Adrian Ozuna, Paul Puente, Richard Shaw, and Carolyn Watson. This meeting furthered discussions on the strategic direction post-retreat.

November 17, 2023 - Meeting: The Committee, including Carl Bowles (Chair), Peter Beard, Sara Bouse, Cheryl Guido, Bobbie Henderson, Doug Karr, Adrian Ozuna, Paul Puente, Richard Shaw, Carolyn Watson, and Workforce Board Chair

Mark Guthrie, reviewed the year's work, delved further into studies and data relevant to workforce development, and ranked strategic planning priorities recommended by Jobs For the Future.

These gatherings were instrumental in advancing the strategic planning process, with a particular emphasis on the Board's role as a connector among diverse stakeholders in labor market issues.

Landscape Analysis

The Houston-Gulf Coast region confronts a substantial workforce development challenge, primarily lagging in degree attainment compared to other major metropolitan areas, a factor intimately linked to regional prosperity. This educational shortfall indicates a misalignment between traditional educational systems and the region's demands. Strategic partnerships among workforce boards, educational institutions, employers, and other entities are essential to align educational and training programs with industry requirements. The region's open positions predominantly demand middle-skilled workers in sectors such as healthcare, manufacturing, IT, and trades, yet there is an evident lack of awareness and preparedness for these career paths among students.

Meeting Insights and Strategies

The October 6 Board Retreat was kicked off by an insightful presentation by Texas Economist, Dr. Ray Perryman, who forecasted robust growth for the Texas economy, with the greater Houston area poised for significant expansion. He predicted the creation of approximately 1,000 jobs weekly, driven by new roles in economic growth and the need to replace retiring or relocating workers. Highlighting the energy sector's pivotal role, he emphasized growth in both traditional and emerging energy fields, including renewable sources and technologies like hydrogen and carbon capture. The life sciences sector was identified as another key growth driver, further boosted by Texas securing an ARPA-H site, which is expected to catalyze research and development in Houston's extensive medical complex.

Dr. Perryman also underlined the strategic importance of regional ports like Port Houston in the state's economy, linked to about 18.6% of Texas's gross product through import-export activities. The burgeoning space industry, involving collaborations between NASA and private firms, was noted as a significant yet smaller component of future economic activity. Addressing workforce challenges, he emphasized the need for enhanced literacy and skills training programs, particularly in light of Texas's younger but less literate population compared to national averages. Perryman advocated for accessible and affordable higher education to prepare the workforce for these emerging economic opportunities.

The Board Retreat revealed key challenges such as disparate funding sources and bureaucratic hindrances, leading to a reactionary system. The Board members advocated for Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast to be a prominent facilitator in connecting job seekers to in-demand training and credentials efficiently. Emphasis was placed on adopting a collaborative 'Yes We Can' approach to identify skill gaps and develop expedited training programs to enhance local talent for the benefit of both employers and the regional economy.

The October 27 meeting underscored the necessity for a more comprehensive understanding of Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast's current roles and functions. The committee stressed the importance of focusing activities on engagement and tangible results, moving away from a compliance-driven approach. Discussions also revolved around the implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies on the workforce, highlighting the need for human-centric skills like creativity and problem-solving, and the modification of educational curricula to support workers transitioning to new skill sets.

Simon Sinek's "Start with Why" video was shared which the Committee found insightful. [\(3\) Start with why -- how great leaders inspire action | Simon Sinek | TEDxPugetSound - YouTube](#). Sinek introduces the concept of "starting with why," a principle integral to the success of influential leaders and organizations. He emphasizes that while many know what they do (their products or services) and how they do it (their processes or unique selling propositions), very few genuinely understand why they do it. This "why" is not about profit, which is a result, but about the purpose, cause, or belief that drives them. Successful entities communicate differently by starting with why they do things - their belief in challenging the status quo and thinking differently, rather than what they do or how they do it. This approach resonates deeply with people, as it aligns with their beliefs and values.

Expanding further, Sinek explains his "Golden Circle" model, consisting of three layers: "Why," "How," and "What." The "Why" is the core belief or purpose, the "How" details the process or actions taken to manifest the "Why," and the "What" refers to the tangible products or services offered. He links this model to the human brain's functioning, with the neocortex handling rational thought (the "what") and the limbic brain managing feelings and decision-making (the "why"). By communicating from the inside out, starting with the "why," leaders and organizations connect with the part of the brain that influences behavior, making their message more effective and inspiring than merely providing facts or figures. This method fosters a stronger emotional connection, driving loyalty and inspiring action among those who share similar beliefs and values.

Key Study Presented by Peter Beard

Prior to the November 17th Strategic Planning Committee, Peter Beard shared the 2023 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce report, which projects a transformative shift in the U.S. labor market by 2031, highlighting the escalating importance of postsecondary education. It is estimated that 72% of jobs will require some level of postsecondary education, including 42% necessitating at least a bachelor's degree. This trend reflects the transition from an industrial to a service economy, amplified by the integration of technology such as AI and robotics, which demands continuous upskilling.

As a result, the labor market is increasingly divided into two distinct sectors: a rapidly growing managerial and professional economy that primarily employs workers with higher education, and a larger, more stagnant blue-collar and skilled-trades economy. This division is leading to a widening economic divide, making postsecondary education increasingly the only viable route to middle-class jobs and lifestyle.

The Texas labor market aligns with this national trend, expecting 1,683,000 annual job openings from 2021 to 2031, predominantly for those with postsecondary credentials. Texas is projected to rank 34th nationally for jobs requiring a bachelor's degree by 2031 and 10th for jobs requiring only a high school diploma or less, highlighting the state's growing demand for a workforce with advanced educational qualifications.

Strategic Considerations and Prioritization

The Jobs for the Future Foundation Board Survey provided insights into strategic considerations like awareness, positioning, partnership development, technological efficiency, data utilization, and inclusivity. These focus areas were ranked in terms of priority, guiding the strategic plan development.

Strategic Plan Development Timeline

The committee is committed to naming the organization's "Why" and articulating it in an inspirational fashion that speaks to the workforce of the future. The committee expects another working retreat after the winter holidays.

The timeline for developing the strategic plan includes extensive stakeholder engagement from December to January, strategy development from March to April, and finalizing and presenting the plan for approval and implementation from April to June of 2024.

Conclusion

The Strategic Planning Committee's late 2023 efforts have established a solid foundation for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's strategic plan. The Committee's dedication to articulating a vision for the workforce aligns with fostering economic growth and addressing the evolving needs of the Houston region.

The next meeting of the Strategic Planning committee is scheduled for Friday, January 12, at 1:00pm. This is a hybrid meeting that will be held at 3555 Timmons, room 2-D and on Zoom.

No formal actions requiring votes were taken during the above-mentioned meetings.

Audit and Monitoring Committee Update for November 2023

The Audit and Monitoring Committee met on November 15, 2023, at 1:00 PM
Members - Guy Robert Jackson (Chair), Carl Bowles (Vice Chair), Willie Alexander,
Helen Cavazos, Cheryl Guido, Bobbie Henderson, and Board Chair Mark Guthrie.

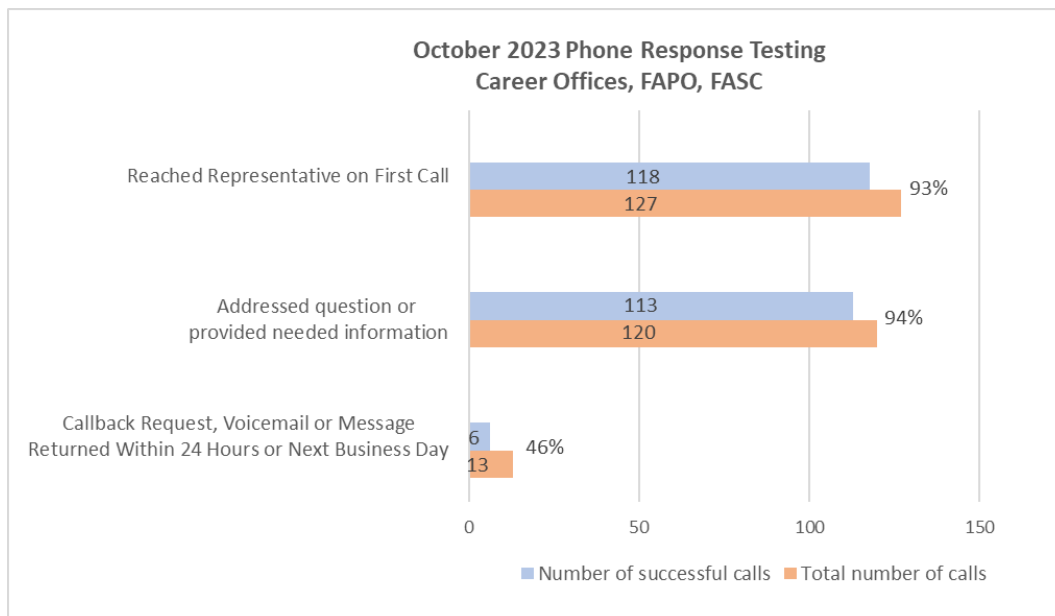
System Review

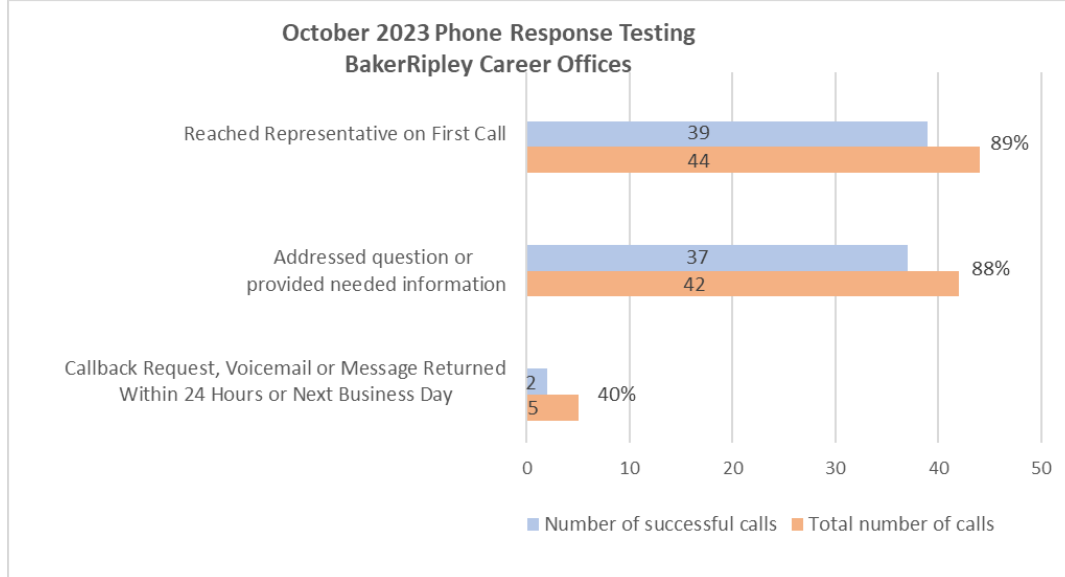
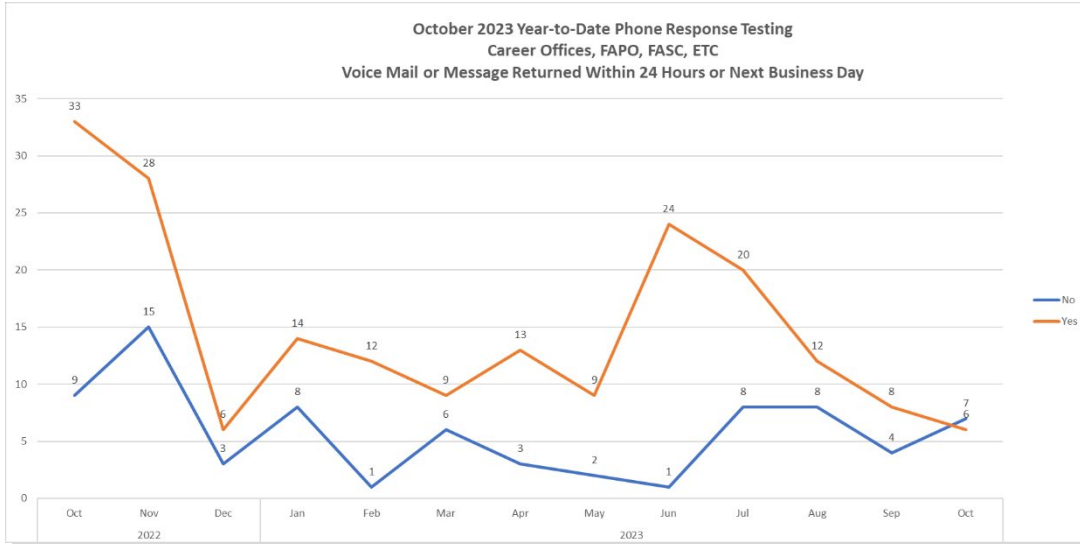
This report includes a contractor-level review of performance, production, and expenditures.

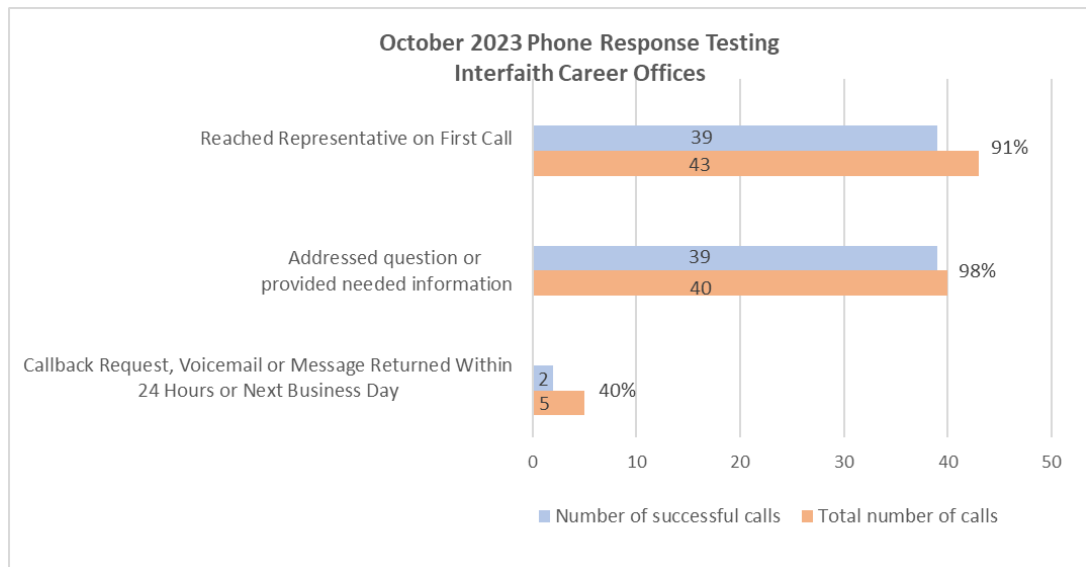
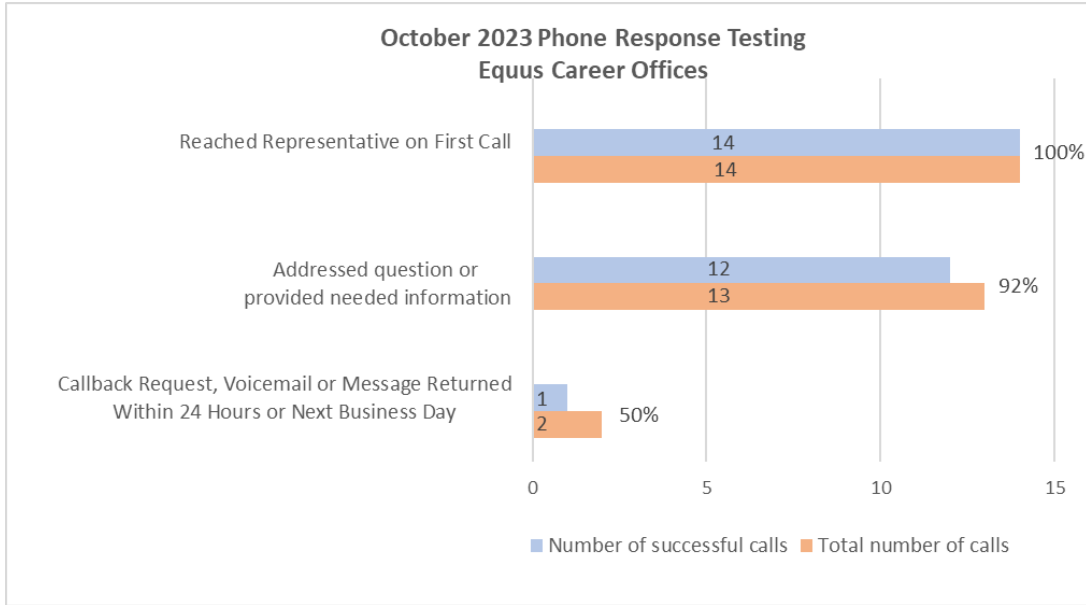
Customer Experience

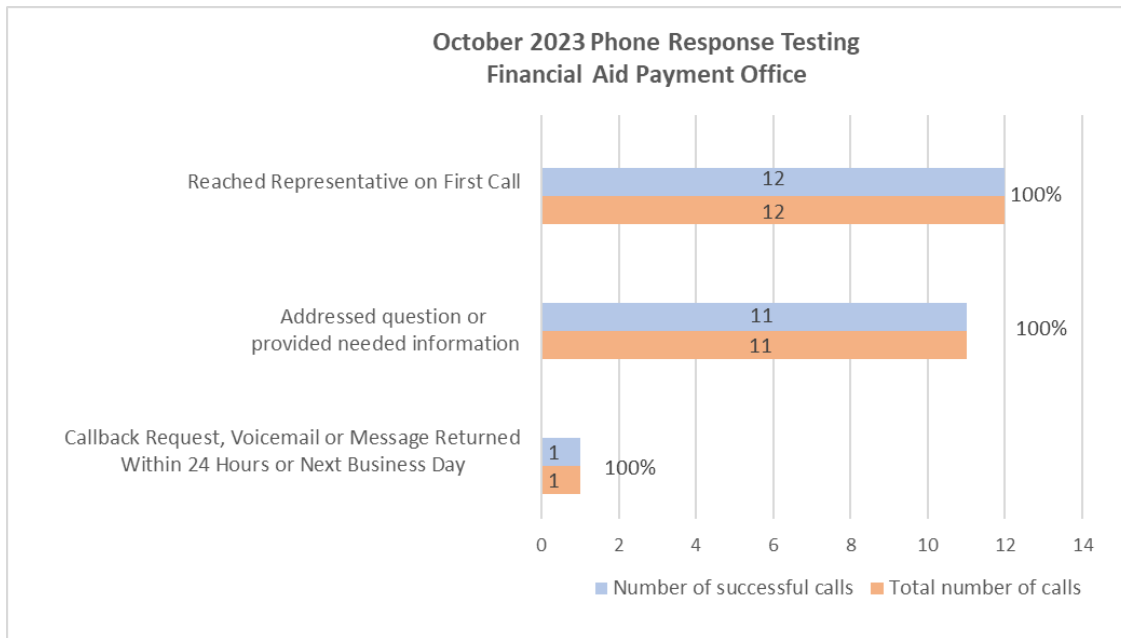
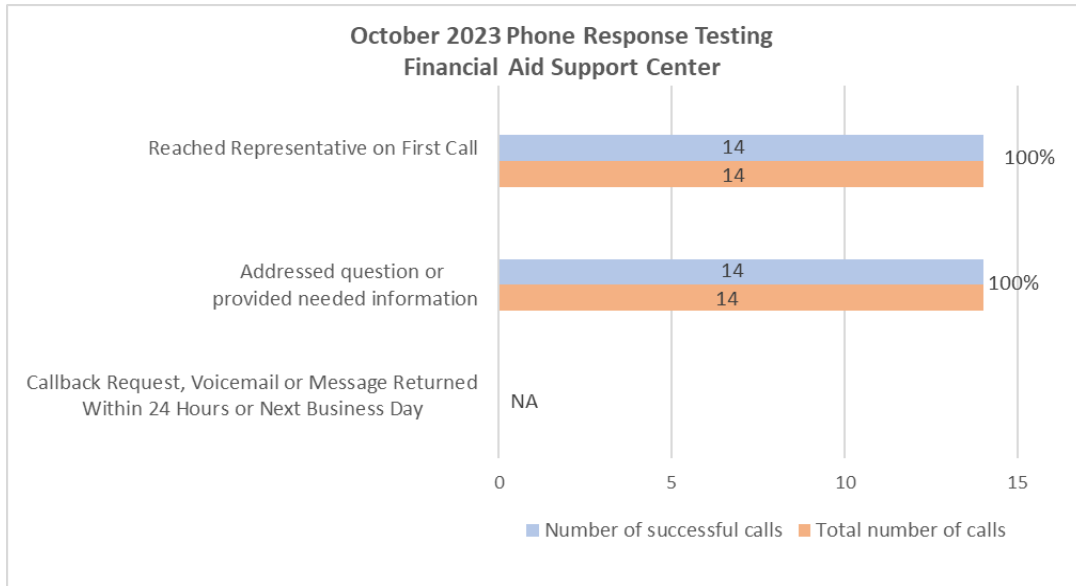
Phone Responsiveness

We placed 127 calls in October 2023 and reached a staff representative on the first try on 93% of the calls. As a result, only 13 voicemails were left for staff, and 46% of those messages received a response within 24 hours.



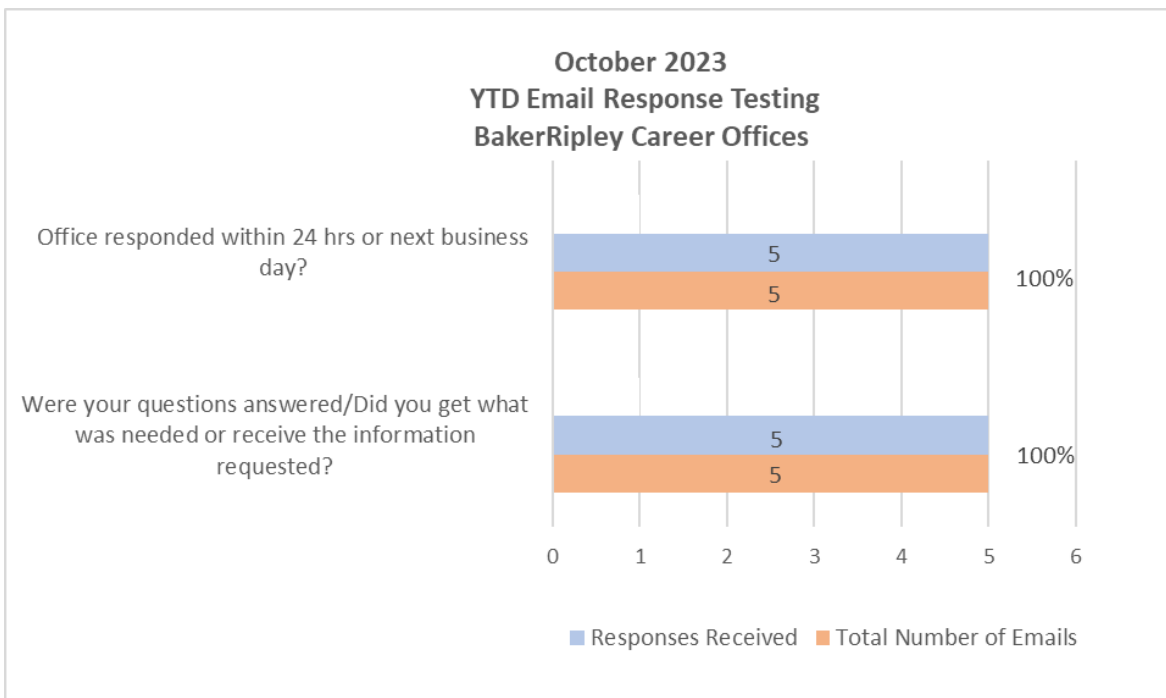
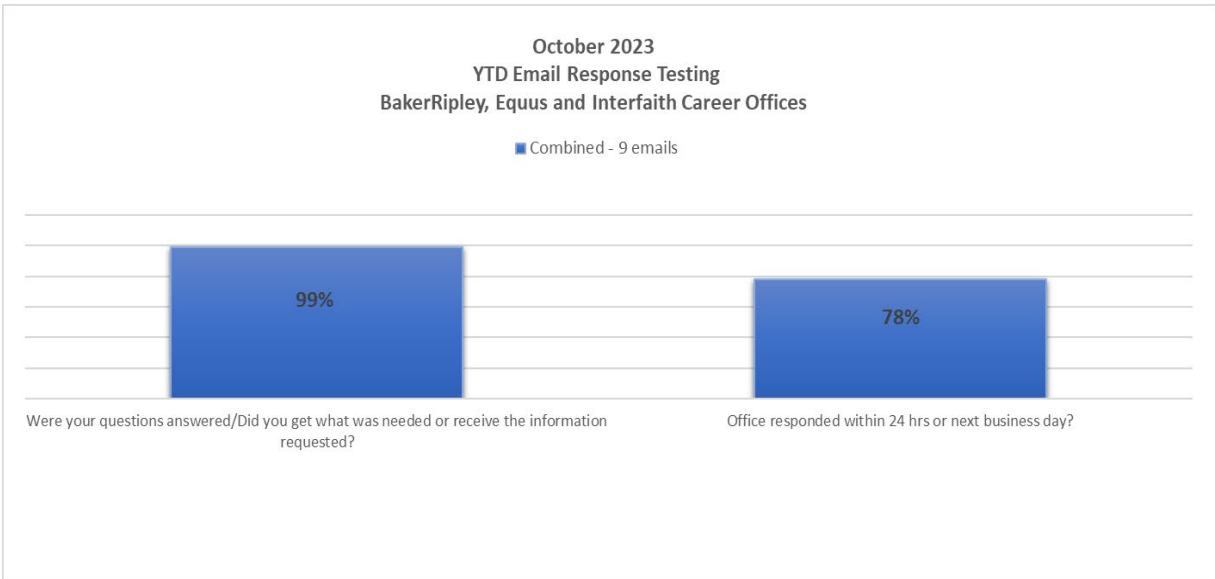


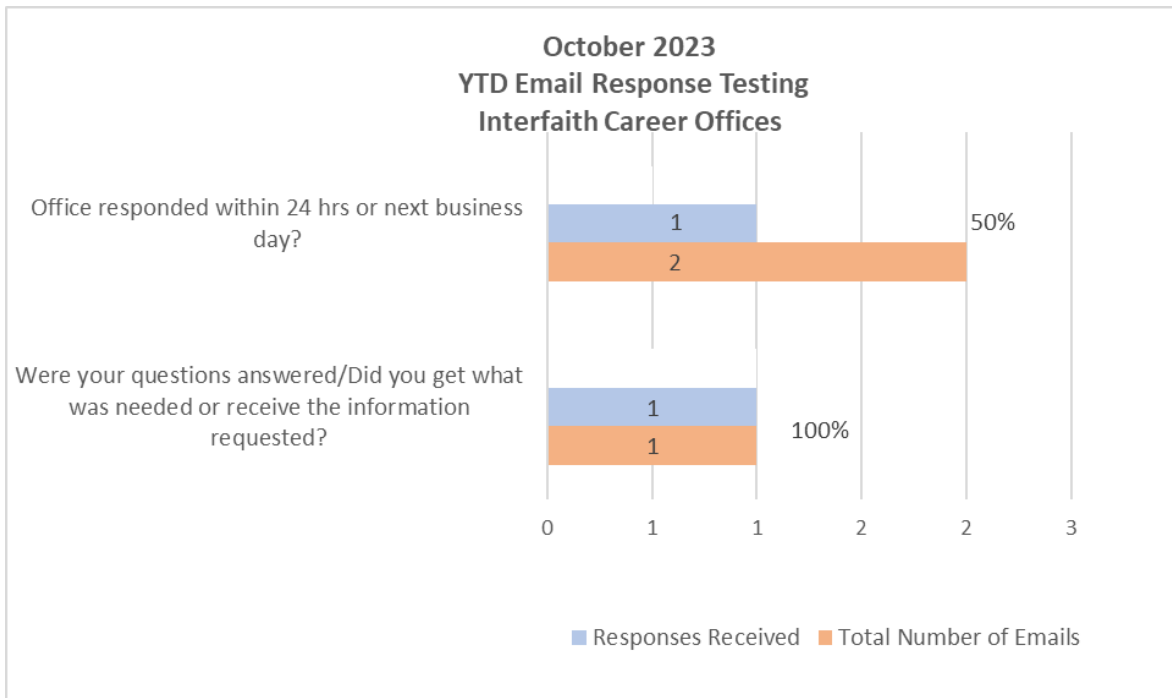
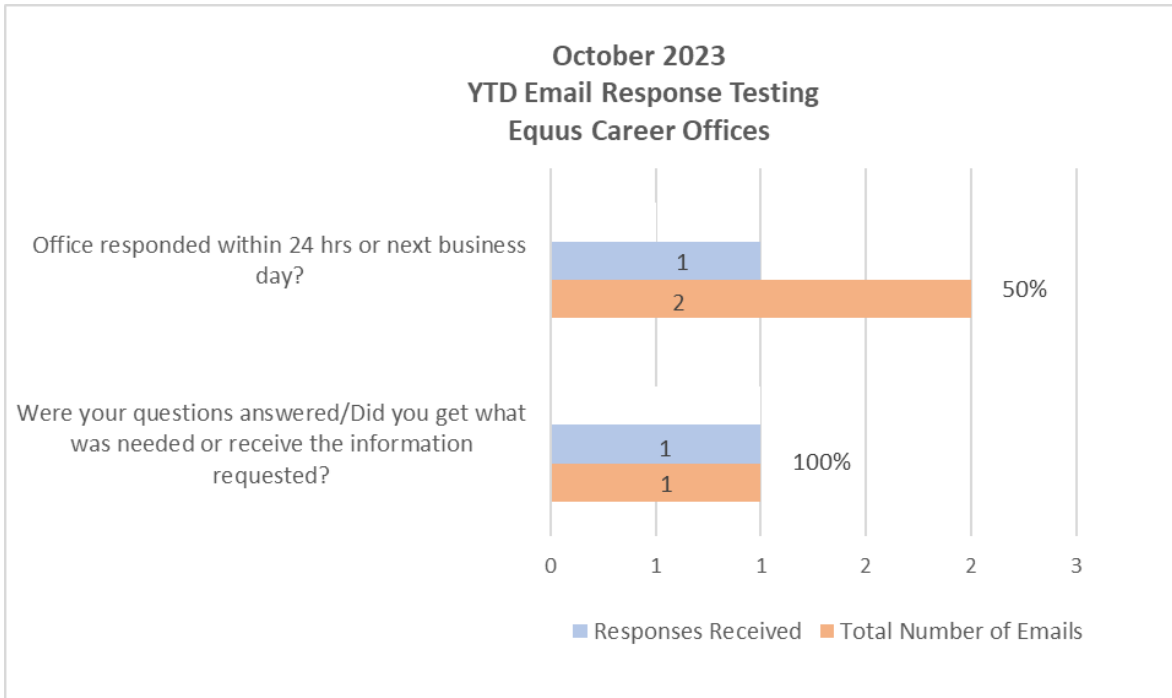




Email Responsiveness

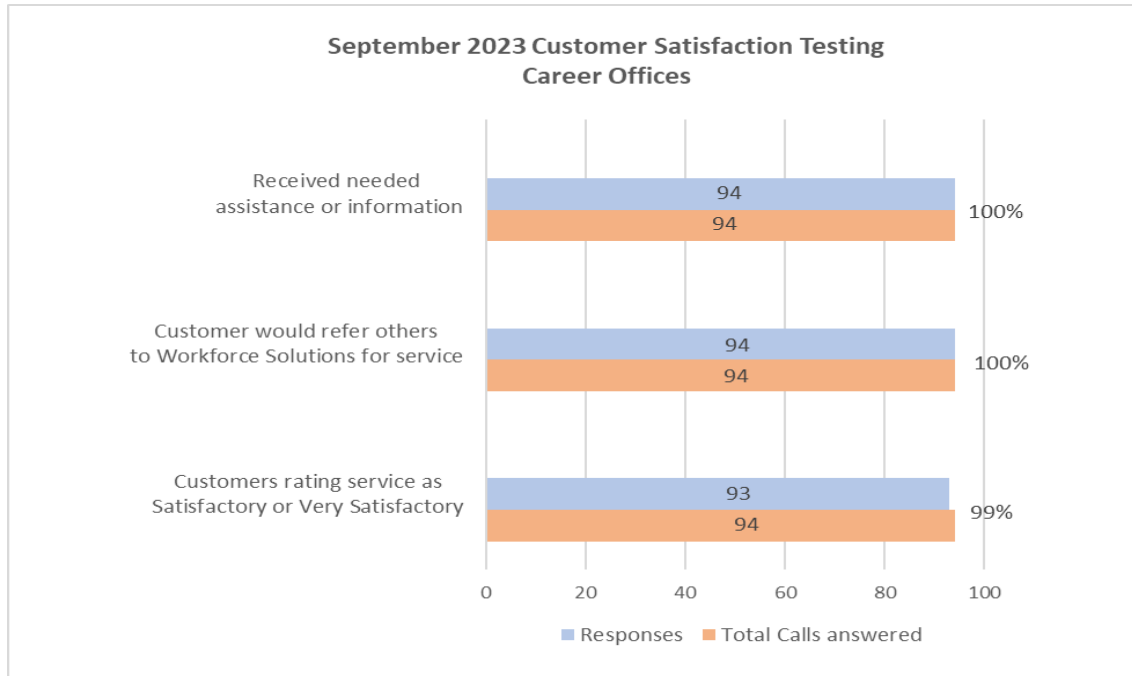
We tested the responsiveness of the career offices to emails sent to the career office email address found on Wrksolutions.com. Responsiveness within 24 hours increased slightly in October to 78% from 72% in September and August.





Customer Satisfaction

From a list of 163 customers receiving a service through a career office in September 2023, we spoke with 94 customers. The chart below reflects what we heard.



We have conducted customer experience testing of phone and email responsiveness and customer satisfaction testing, using the same format since June 2020. As this strategy was designed during the pandemic, we propose adjusting the frequency of this reporting and identifying new areas to test and analyze to enhance services and support for our customers and employees.

Technical Program Compliance

Technical Program Compliance reviews consist of compliance testing of contract and policy requirements and customer experience testing conducted by the Board's 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 will be described later in this report.

We issued the final reports for **BakerRipley, Equus, Interfaith Career Offices, Financial Aid Support Center, and Employment and Training Center**. All findings were addressed in the service provider responses. We are currently wrapping up testing for the Financial Aid Payment Office and working on PY2024 Adult Education and Literacy service provider reviews. We have completed testing for half of the providers and are working with holiday schedules to complete testing and issue reports by the end of the year.

Financial Systems

The Board contracts with its procured CPA firms to conduct comprehensive financial monitoring of all Workforce Board service providers. FY23 financial monitoring reports were transmitted to the following entities:

- Alliance for Community Assistance Ministries (ACAM),
- SER-Jobs,
- BakerRipley - Career Offices and Financial Aid Payment Office,
- Brazosport College,
- Community Family Centers,
- Equus - Career Office,
- Interfaith of the Woodlands – Career Office and Financial Aid Support Center, and
- Career Team.

We received responses from ACAM, Equus, and Interfaith of the Woodlands, but not from SER-Jobs, Brazosport College, Community Family Centers, and Career Team as of the time of the meeting. No findings or observations were noted for BakerRipley.

Accountability and Improvement Plans

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Gulf Coast Workforce Board 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:

FY2023 TWC Interventions:

Employer Workforce Assistance (EWA): Gulf Coast satisfactorily met the requirement of the Technical Assistance Plan for Employer Workforce Assistance, and the Technical Assistance Plan was rescinded on October 20, 2023. No additional follow-up is required.

Measurable Skills Gain (MSG): The TWC is still monitoring the Performance Improvement Actions for measurable skills gain, and we are meeting with the TWC on a monthly basis.

Gulf Coast Workforce Board Interventions:

Adult Education and Literacy, Harris County Department of Education: On October 17, 2023, a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) removal recommendation meeting was held with the Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) Senior Director and the H-GAC Adult Education and Literacy team. This technical assistance meeting was a result of the Superintendent's request for information and action steps for the Correction Action Plan's removal. The parameters, status, and progress were reviewed during this face-to-face technical assistance meeting. The Harris County Department of Education's Corrective Action Plan is based on six target areas: Retention, Integrated Education and Training, Agreement with Lee College, Staff Professional Development, Student Assessment, and Deliverables. To date, HCDE has met three of the six targets: Agreement with Lee College, Staff Professional Development, and Student Assessment.

However, HCDE has not improved student retention; historically, HCDE's participation rate has averaged around 33%. It was recommended for HCDE to extend the class schedule to 12 weeks. Training courses are still following a 6-week schedule, resulting in little to no improvement in student retention. It is also not following the recommended education requirements for integration education and training enrollment (IET). The Harris County Department of Education continues to enroll low-level education fluency level students in training courses. Because it is not following integrated education and training service guidance, all students are not attending required service training, and there has not been any positive shift in success, completion, or credential obtainment for IETS.

Harris County Department of Education continues to demonstrate challenges with the timely submission of deliverables. It did not meet data validation during all four quarters of the 2022-2023 program year and has failed to meet one of three data validations during the first quarter of the 2023-2024 program year. As it is our largest adult education and literacy provider, its failure to meet data validation adds a strain to confirm the validity of the data.

Equus Support Center Corrective Action Plan: No updates at this time.

Equus Career Office Corrective Action Plan: Board staff continue to meet with Equus monthly to ensure they continue to keep momentum in serving youth customers and upskilling their staff through professional development. Equus has created a dedicated Youth Team responsible for outreach, case management, and work-based learning. Equus has begun to curate relevant partnerships within the communities they serve. In September, WFS Pearland partnered with the Pearland Chamber of Commerce to host a large job fair with over 600 participants and engaged with 55 youth customers aged 16-24. For October 2023, Equus enrolled 20 WIOA Youth and placed 10 in work-based learning. The strategic plan for PY24 has been received and is being reviewed by board staff and will be discussed at their monthly contract meeting.

Committee Recommendation to the Board

Given the recent evaluation of the Harris County Department of Education's (HCDE) adherence to the stipulated Corrective Action Plan, the Audit and Monitoring Committee engaged in a thorough and critical deliberation regarding HCDE's inability to demonstrate satisfactory progress in improving performance and failure to comply with the terms of the Corrective Action Plan. The Committee unanimously resolved to advise the Gulf Coast Workforce Board to deliberate on a decisive course of action, including a recommendation for staff to consider contract termination with HCDE pursuant to ongoing non-compliance with its Corrective Action Plan and performance deficits.

Action

Authorize staff to take necessary action concerning Adult Education and Literacy provider, Harris County Department of Education for non-compliance of its Corrective Action Plan and performance deficits based on H-GAC's contractual rights, including termination of the agreement, in accordance with the stipulated conditions set forth in the existing contract with the provider.

Next Meeting

The Committee will schedule its next meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at Workforce Solutions - Astrodome, 9315 Stella Link Rd, Houston, Texas 77025.

Procurement Committee

On November 15th, Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson convened the Procurement Committee to discuss two key items: enhancing reimbursement rates for non-traditional child care providers and amending the Financial Aid Support Center contract to secure additional operational funding.

Non-Traditional Child Care Provider Rates

Background

In accordance with Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Chapter 809, Child Care Services rule §809.20(a), the Board is required to establish maximum payment rates in line with the Commission’s guidelines. Following the Commission's decision on August 22, 2023, to set the minimum threshold at the 75th percentile of the 2023 Texas Child Care Market Rate Survey, rate adjustments took effect from October 1, 2023.

While the state has increased the maximum reimbursement rates for licensed centers and registered providers through annual adjustments for our 13-county region, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board has not raised its rates for relative care providers in 10 years. These rates are highlighted below.

Provider Type	Provider Rating	Infant FT	Infant PT	Toddler FT	Toddler PT	Preschool FT	Preschool PT	School-age FT	School-age PT	School-age BT
LCCC	Reg	\$46.60	\$42.16	\$42.30	\$38.30	\$39.80	\$32.47	\$38.20	\$30.60	\$31.71
LCCC	TRS2	\$48.94	\$44.28	\$44.42	\$40.22	\$41.80	\$34.10	\$40.12	\$32.14	\$33.31
LCCC	TRS3	\$49.93	\$45.18	\$45.32	\$41.03	\$42.65	\$34.79	\$40.93	\$32.79	\$33.98
LCCC	TRS4	\$51.40	\$46.09	\$46.24	\$41.86	\$43.51	\$35.49	\$41.76	\$33.45	\$34.67
LCCC	TSR	\$48.94	\$44.28	\$44.42	\$40.22	\$41.80	\$34.10	\$40.12	\$32.14	\$33.31
LCCH	Reg	\$39.20	\$36.10	\$38.10	\$35.50	\$37.20	\$32.40	\$35.60	\$30.60	\$31.33
LCCH	TRS2	\$41.17	\$37.91	\$40.01	\$37.28	\$39.07	\$34.03	\$37.39	\$32.14	\$32.91
LCCH	TRS3	\$42.00	\$38.68	\$40.82	\$38.03	\$39.86	\$34.72	\$38.15	\$32.79	\$33.57
LCCH	TRS4	\$45.40	\$41.00	\$41.65	\$38.80	\$40.67	\$35.42	\$38.92	\$33.45	\$34.25
LCCH	TSR	\$41.17	\$37.91	\$40.01	\$37.28	\$39.07	\$34.03	\$37.39	\$32.14	\$32.91
RCCH	Reg	\$37.80	\$33.90	\$37.10	\$32.40	\$35.20	\$28.53	\$32.00	\$26.20	\$27.05
RCCH	TRS2	\$39.70	\$35.60	\$38.96	\$34.03	\$36.97	\$29.96	\$33.61	\$27.52	\$28.41
RCCH	TRS3	\$40.50	\$36.32	\$39.75	\$34.72	\$37.72	\$30.57	\$34.29	\$28.08	\$28.99
RCCH	TRS4	\$43.40	\$38.20	\$40.55	\$35.42	\$38.48	\$31.19	\$34.98	\$28.65	\$29.58
RCCH	TSR	\$39.70	\$35.60	\$38.96	\$34.03	\$36.97	\$29.96	\$33.61	\$27.52	\$28.41
Relative	None	\$15.17	\$15.17	\$13.19	\$11.48	\$11.30	\$8.48	\$9.42	\$6.59	\$7.00

Current Situation

Due to the considerable amount of time that has passed since our last adjustment, coupled with the recent surge in inflation, staff proposes increasing the reimbursement rates for relative care providers by 50%. As of September 2023, we identified 109 relative care providers serving 143 children.

Another opportunity to enhance payments for providers is for those providing overnight or weekend care, referred to as nontraditional hours. Boards may establish a higher enhanced reimbursement rate for nontraditional hours, as defined by the Board. Additionally, Boards may consider enhancing the rates for nontraditional hours by adding a percentage offset.

As of September 2023, staff identified 173 providers offering some variation of nontraditional hours. Staff proposes a 25% increase to the applicable rate when providing care during nontraditional hours.

Additional Considerations:

Network child care providers have agreements in place that set their individual reimbursement rates. The actual reimbursement that the Board pays to the provider must be the Board's maximum daily rate or the provider's published daily rate, whichever is lower.

Boards intending to increase maximum reimbursement rates must ensure that the rate increases will allow the Board to:

- meet its contracted target for the average number of children served per day performance measure; and
- keep expenditures within its child care allocation.

Staff will continue meeting these requirements with the proposed changes. At its November meeting, the Procurement Committee voted to authorize staff to develop a policy to increase relative care provider rates and enhance payments for nontraditional hours as proposed.

Action:

Authorize staff to develop a policy to increase relative care provider rates and enhance payments for nontraditional hours. The policy will:

- Increase the reimbursement rates for relative care providers by 50%; and
- Provide a 25% increase to the applicable rate when providing care during nontraditional hours.

Support Center Contract Amendment

Background

Our partnership with Equus in managing the Financial Aid Support Center has yielded remarkable improvements in service delivery and operational efficiency. The introduction of Ring Central and the expansion of our team have dramatically enhanced customer satisfaction, accelerated the provision of child care financial aid, and reduced wait times significantly. As of November 27, 2023, we are proudly providing child care scholarships to 35,841 children in our region, which is almost enough to fill the 40,000 seat capacity of the Houston Astros' Minute Maid Park. We will continue to serve more children and families and will continue to reduce the wait list. These achievements underscore our commitment to continuous improvement and set the stage for the next phase of our strategic development: 1) relocating the Financial Aid Support Center to a more suitable facility and 2) preparing for the integration of the new Texas Child Care Connection (TX3C) system for processing child care assistance applications.

Current Situation

The current facility housing the Financial Aid Support Center is nearing the end of its lease and is plagued with operational inefficiencies such as cramped spaces, unreliable elevator service, and ongoing landlord issues. These challenges are not just inconveniences; they impede our ability to serve our community effectively.

To address these limitations, we propose relocating to a new, more suitable facility at 7600 W. Tidwell, Houston, Texas 77040. This move is not merely a change in location; it represents a strategic upgrade, offering expanded space for our growing team, reducing operational costs per square foot with improved parking and a better work environment to enhance overall staff morale and productivity. The \$1,080,000 investment includes:

- Lease for New Building: \$165,000.00,
- Furniture and Equipment: \$450,000.00,
- Moving and Setup Costs: \$230,000.00, and
- Office Supplies, Ring Central, etc.: \$235,000.00.

In response to the critical transition to the Texas Child Care Connection (TX3C) system, a contemporary and user-centric child care management platform, we propose the strategic hiring of ten (10) TX3C proficient temporary staff at a cost of \$520,600. This investment is pivotal in navigating the complexities of the new system, which includes a comprehensive shift from traditional swipe card

attendance tracking to a mobile device-based approach, and the integration of a state-of-the-art availability portal. These staff members will be instrumental in guiding and training child care providers through this sophisticated new system, ensuring a smooth and effective transition for child care providers and families.

Their expertise in TX3C will enable providers to quickly adapt to the new requirements, thereby maintaining uninterrupted service delivery and compliance with the standards set forth by the program. This proactive measure is not merely a response to operational demands; it is a commitment to uphold the highest standards of service quality during this period of significant change.

Furthermore, the presence of these specialized staff will substantially enhance our customer service and responsiveness, a critical component of our organizational ethos. By providing immediate, expert assistance to child care providers, we anticipate a marked improvement in the efficiency and accuracy of service delivery. This heightened support system will effectively address any challenges that arise during the transition, mitigating potential frustrations for both providers and parents. Moreover, as providers become more proficient with the TX3C system, their enhanced administrative capabilities will allow them to focus more on the core aspect of their roles - delivering quality child care. Consequently, this investment transcends mere compliance; it is an investment in fostering a nurturing and responsive child care environment, benefiting the community we serve.

At its November meeting, the Procurement Committee voted to authorize staff to increase the total amount of the support center contract to an amount not to exceed \$11,600,000.00, an increase of up to \$1,600,000.00. This increase will provide funds to address the costs associated with moving into an improved facility and also the costs of hiring temporary employees to ensure a smooth transition for the new state-wide child care management system.

Action: Support Center Contract

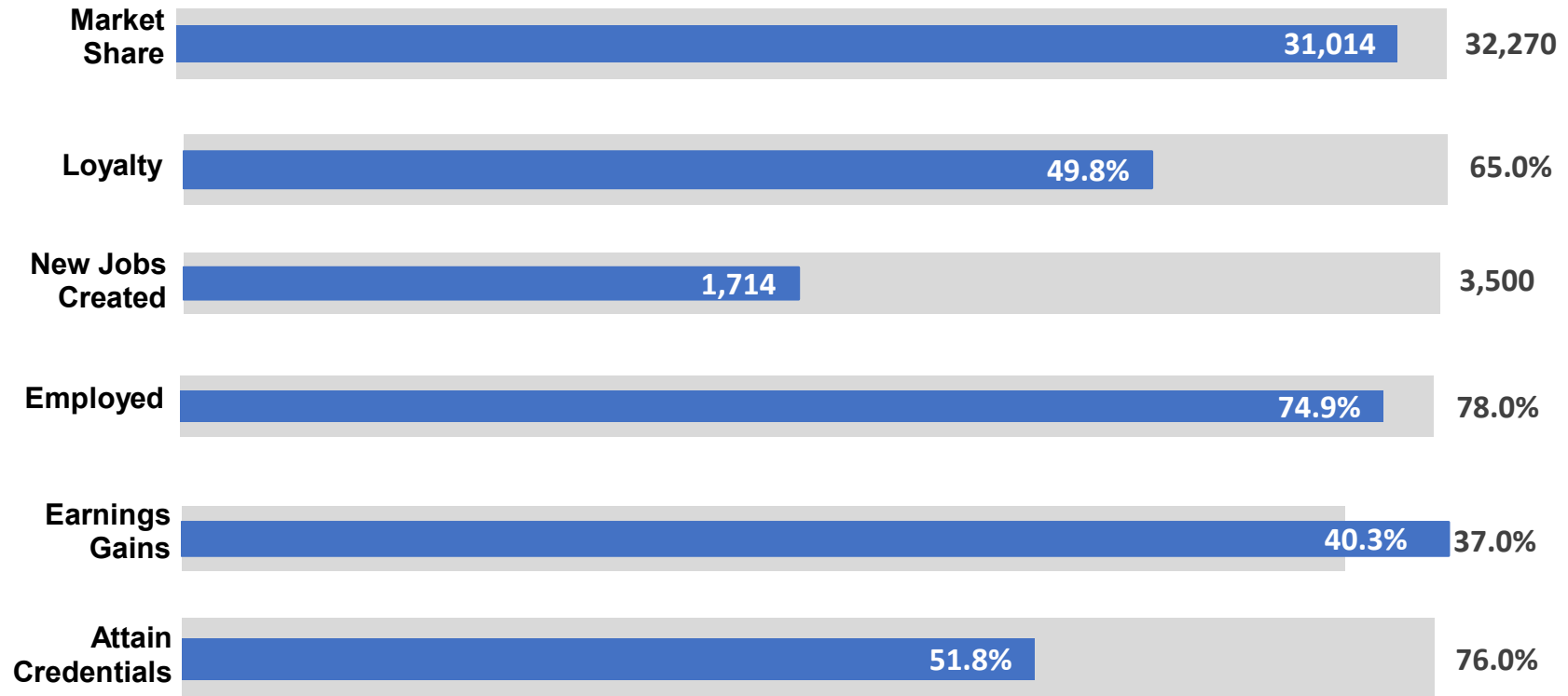
Authorize staff to negotiate an amendment with Equus to increase its contract to an amount not to exceed \$11,600,000.00 to provide funding for relocating the support center and hiring temporary staff to ensure a smooth transition as the support center moves to the Texas Workforce Commission's new state-wide child care management system.

Gulf Coast Workforce Board

System Performance

Performance Measures

October 2022 to September 2023

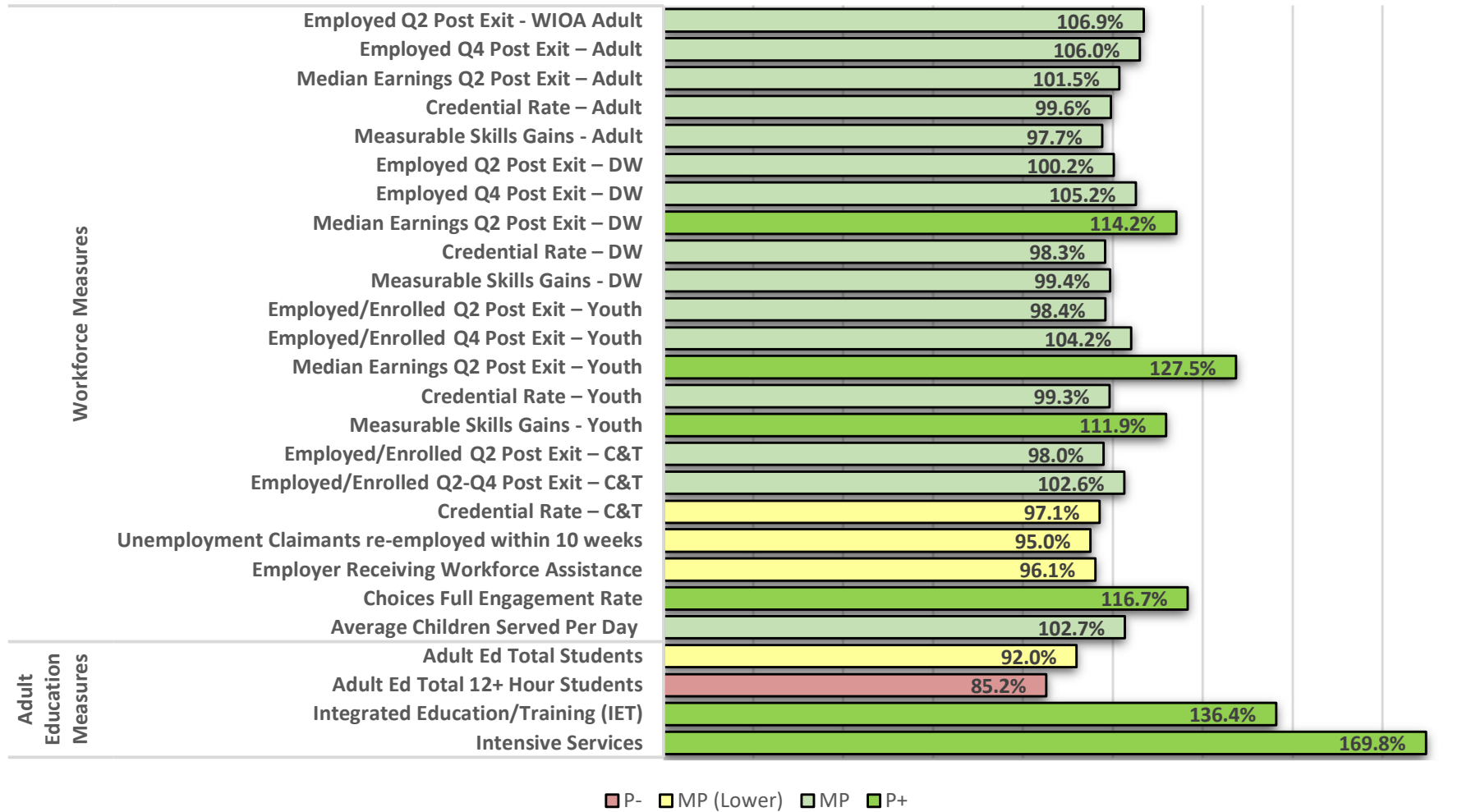


Gulf Coast Workforce Board

System Performance

Production Measures

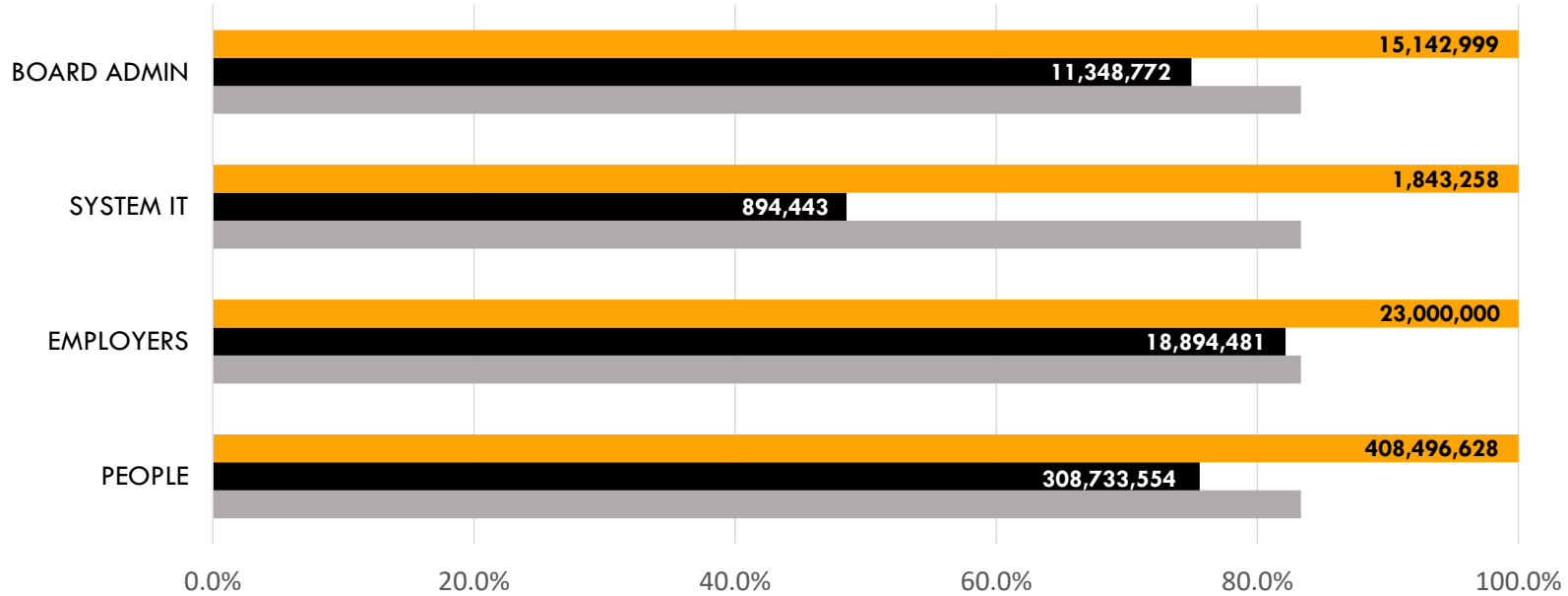
October 2022 to September 2023



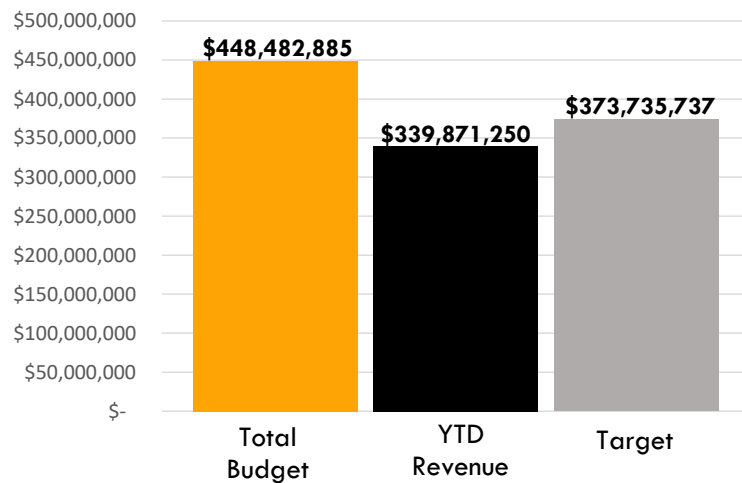
Gulf Coast Workforce Financial Status Report

For the 10 months ending October 31, 2023

■ Budget ■ Expenses ■ Target

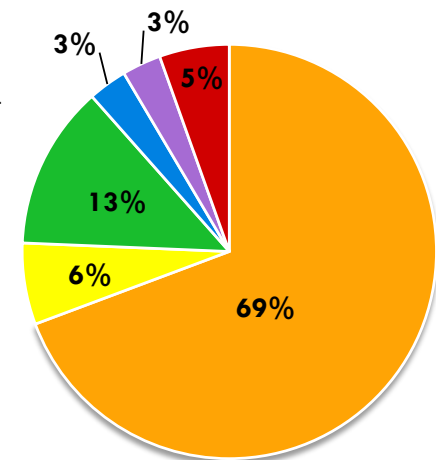


Workforce Revenue



System Expenses

- FINANCIAL AID - EARLY EDUCATION
\$215,304,668
- FINANCIAL AID - TRAINING & SUPPORT
\$19,754,709
- CAREER OFFICE NETWORK
\$39,773,126
- EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT
\$9,444,150
- QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
\$9,450,330
- ADULT EDUCATION
\$16,950,525



2024 Elections

Board Officers

Background

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is governed by a structure comprising four officers: the Chair and three Vice Chairs. Under the previous by-laws, amended in 2005, these officers were elected to serve one-year terms during the first meeting of each calendar year.

The current Gulf Coast Workforce Board by-laws, approved on June 6, 2023, specify that the Board will have a Chair and three Vice Chairs, with Vice Chairs potentially assigned specific functions by the Chair. Officers are now elected for two-year terms through a majority vote at a designated regular meeting, with terms ending if an officer resigns, cannot serve, or is not re-nominated or re-nominated but not approved by the Texas Workforce Commission.

The election process involves a Nominations Committee, appointed by the Chair, which solicits nominations from Board members. Candidates submit their names and resumes to the Committee, and elections occur at the first Board meeting of each year.

Current Situation

In line with these revised by-laws, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board is scheduled to conduct its officer elections for the forthcoming two-year term at the upcoming meeting in February 2024. The Board's Nominations Committee, under the leadership of Chair Guy Jackson, will convene to propose a slate of candidates.

Individuals who have an interest in assuming an officer role are encouraged to express their candidacy by reaching out to Chair Jackson and submitting their name, resume, and the offices which they wish to hold.

During the February 2024 meeting, Board members will cast their votes to elect officers. This process will involve considering the candidates recommended by the Nominations Committee, as well as additional nominations that may arise from the floor during the meeting.

HOUSTON-THE WOODLANDS-SUGAR LAND METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA Visit our website at www.wrksolutions.com.

Labor Market Information

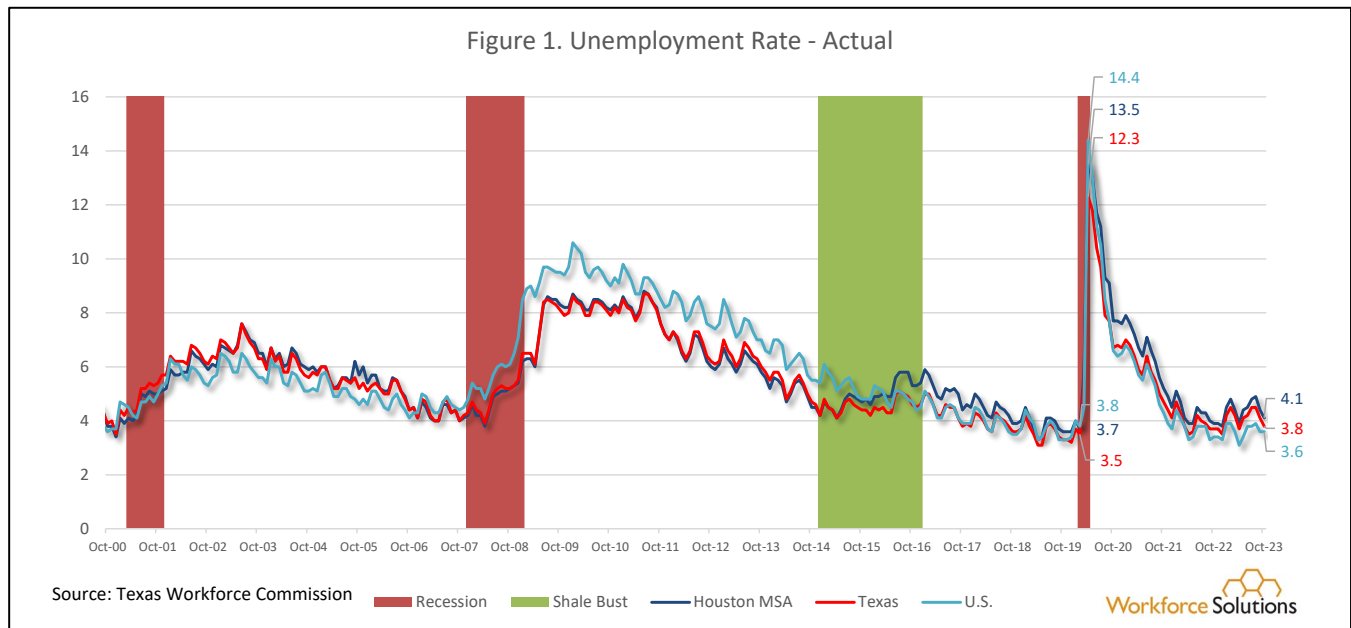
October 2023 data was released November 17, 2023.

Unemployment Rates

The rate of unemployment in The Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA declined three-tenths of a percentage point to 4.1 percent in October, see figure 1. The rate of unemployment typically falls during the month of October as many educational workers return for the school year. The number of individuals employed was up by 4,087 over the month and the number unemployed was down 11,605. The rate of unemployment slightly higher than 3.9 percent a year earlier. In comparison, the rate of unemployment at the state level also fell three-tenths of a percentage point to 3.8 percent while the national rate was unchanged at 3.6 percent.

Unemployment Rate (Actual)

	OCT 2023	SEP 2023	OCT 2022
Civilian Labor Force	3,625,171	3,632,689	3,530,268
Total Employed	3,476,934	3,472,847	3,391,117
Unemployed	148,237	159,842	139,151
Unemployment Rate	4.1%	4.4%	3.9%
Texas	3.8%	4.1%	3.7%
U.S.	3.6%	3.6%	3.4%

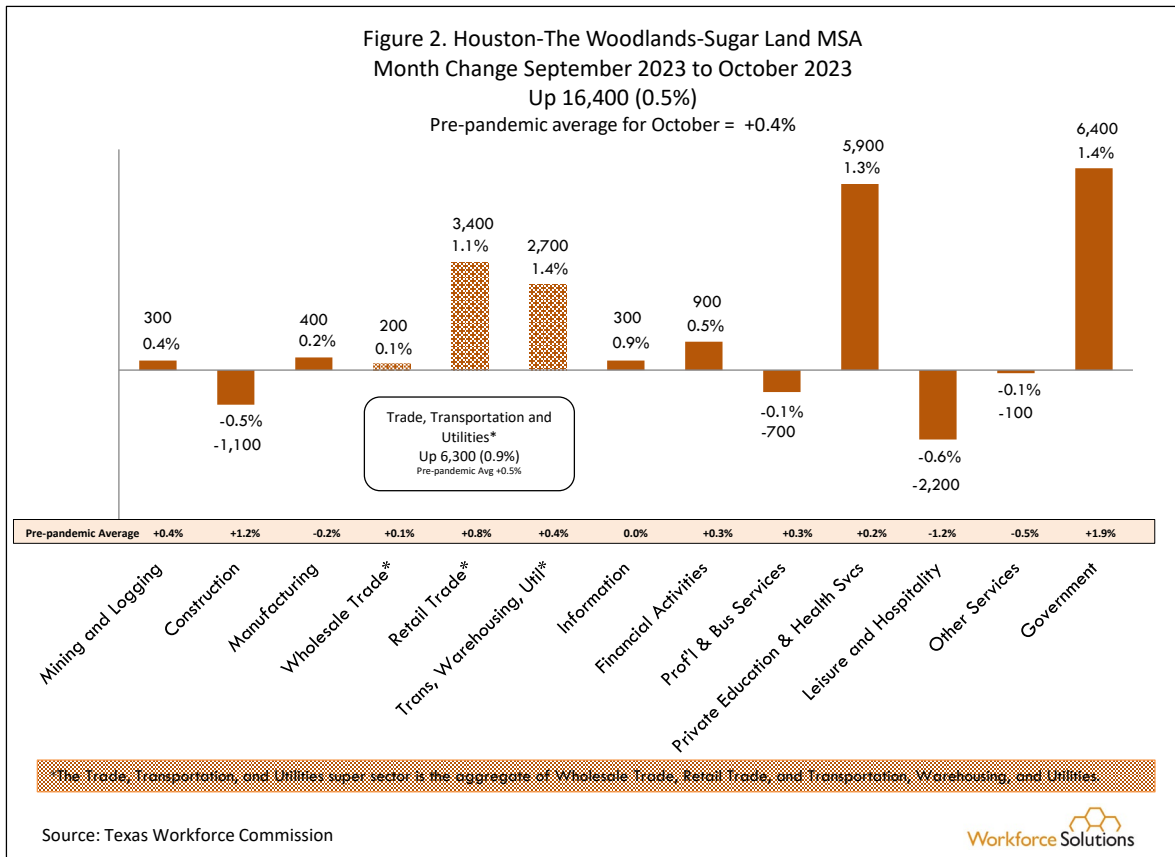


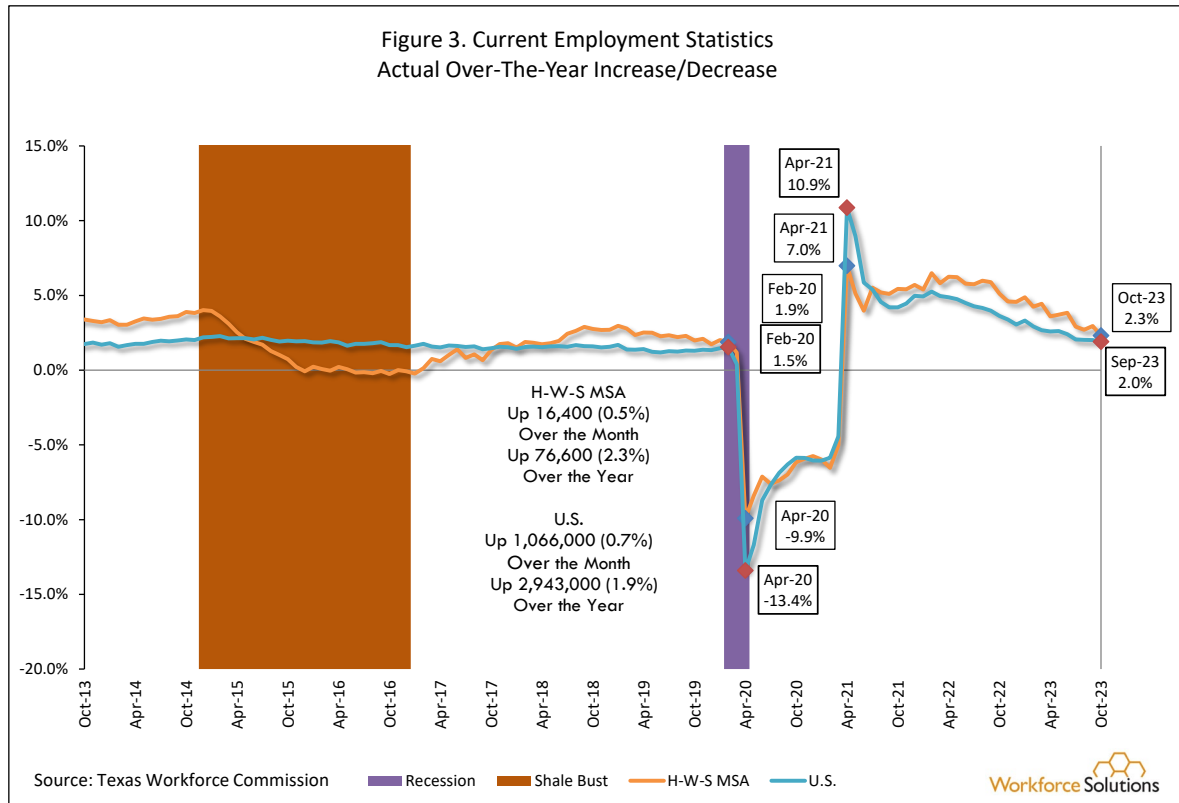
September data is scheduled to be released December 22, 2023.

Nonagricultural Employment

Over the Month

Total Nonfarm Employment in the H-W-S MSA was up 16,400 jobs over the month. The 0.5 percent increase was about the same as the historical average of 0.4 percent for the month of October but the weakest since 2016. The three primary contributors to the increase were: Government, up 6,400 jobs, Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, up 6,300 jobs, and Private Education and Health Services, up 5,900 jobs. As for declines, the largest was a seasonal loss of 2,200 jobs in Leisure and Hospitality. Construction, which adds job in most years, also suffered a loss of 1,100 jobs. Lastly, Professional and Business Services suffered a loss of 700 jobs.





Over the Year

Total Nonfarm Employment in the H-W-S MSA was up 76,600 jobs over the year in October. The pace of job growth declined more than one-half of a percentage point to 2.3 percent, down from 4.9 percent back in January and the slowest it has been since April 2021. The pace of growth in the Houston MSA continues to be stronger than the nations but the gap has narrowed from 1.6 percentage points in January to only three-tenths of a percentage point, see figure 3 above.

Nine of the eleven industry super sectors were reporting over-the-year increases, see figure 4. The top contributors to the increase were Private Education and Health Services, up 24,600 jobs or 5.6 percent, and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, up 21,100 or 3.1 percent. Substantial gains were also found in Government, up 9,400 jobs or 2.1 percent, Professional and Business Services, up 9,300 jobs or 1.7 percent, and Manufacturing, up 7,900 jobs or 3.5 percent. Construction experienced the largest, down 11,500 jobs or 5.0 percent over the year. Payrolls in Construction have fallen 11,500 over the last twelve months and are 19,900 jobs or 8.4 percent lower than the pre-pandemic level back in February 2020, see figure 5.

The Federal Reserve has tried to slow down the economy and drive down inflation by increasing interest rates. While higher interest rates are starting to show its effect on the job market and slowing inflation, it is also slowing down capital investments, large ticket purchases, home improvements, and home buying. Construction has been the clear industry sector feeling the strongest effects making it harder and less affordable to obtain capital thus discouraging projects. As for other areas being affected by higher lending rates, the Federal Reserve Bank noted that credit card and car loan defaults that have hit a 10-year high recently.

For a complete list of current, month-ago, and year-ago employment estimates see pages 7 & 8.

Figure 4. Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA
Annual Change October 2022 to October 2023
Up 76,600 (2.3%)

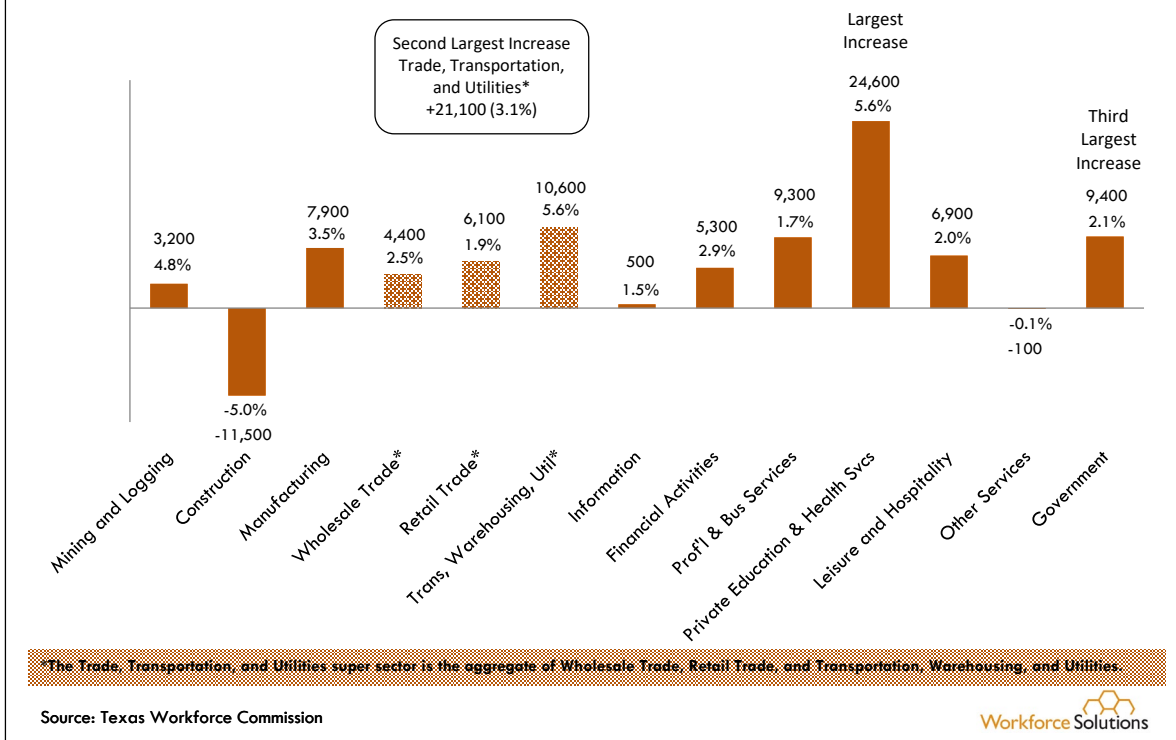
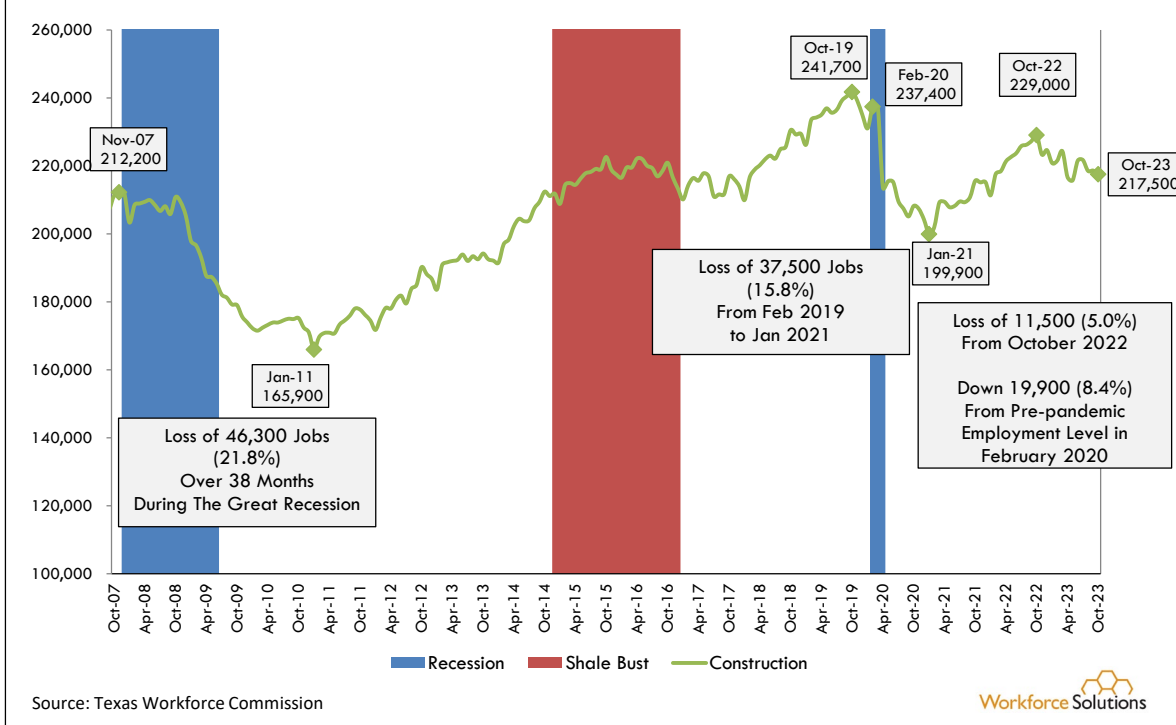


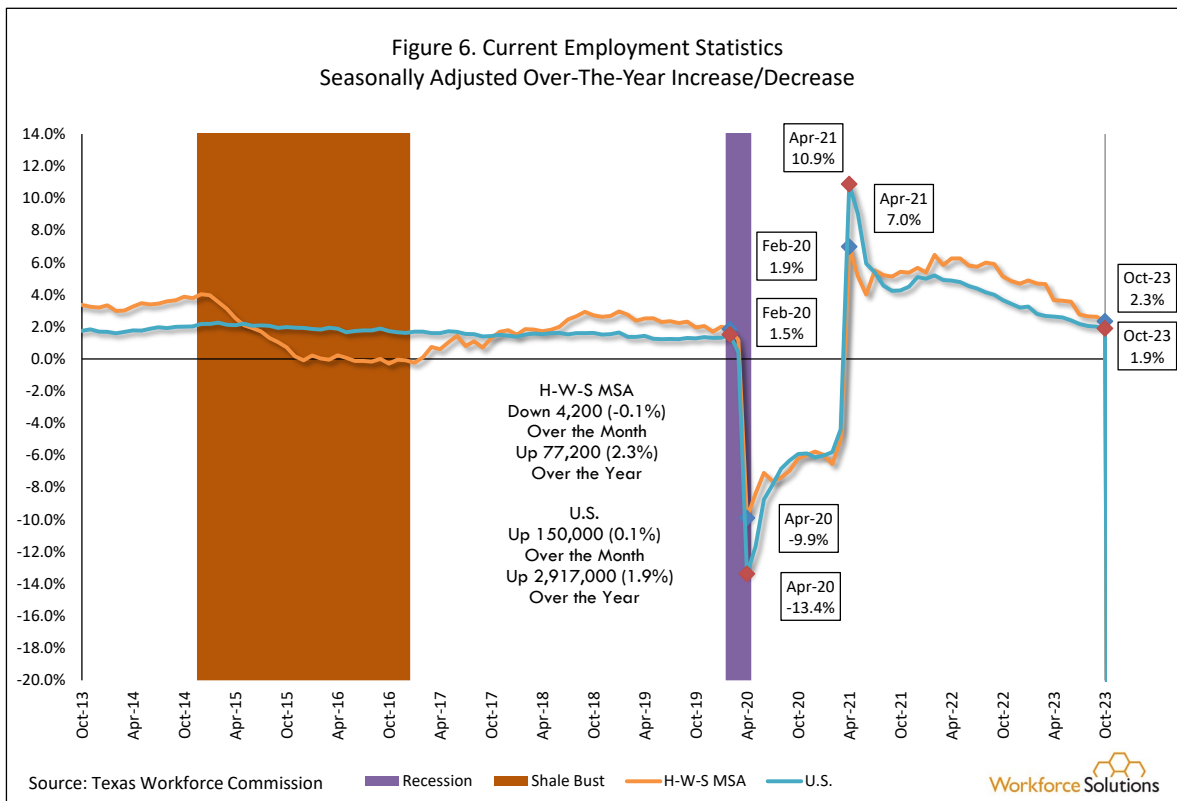
Figure 5. Construction
Current Employment Statistics
Houston MSA

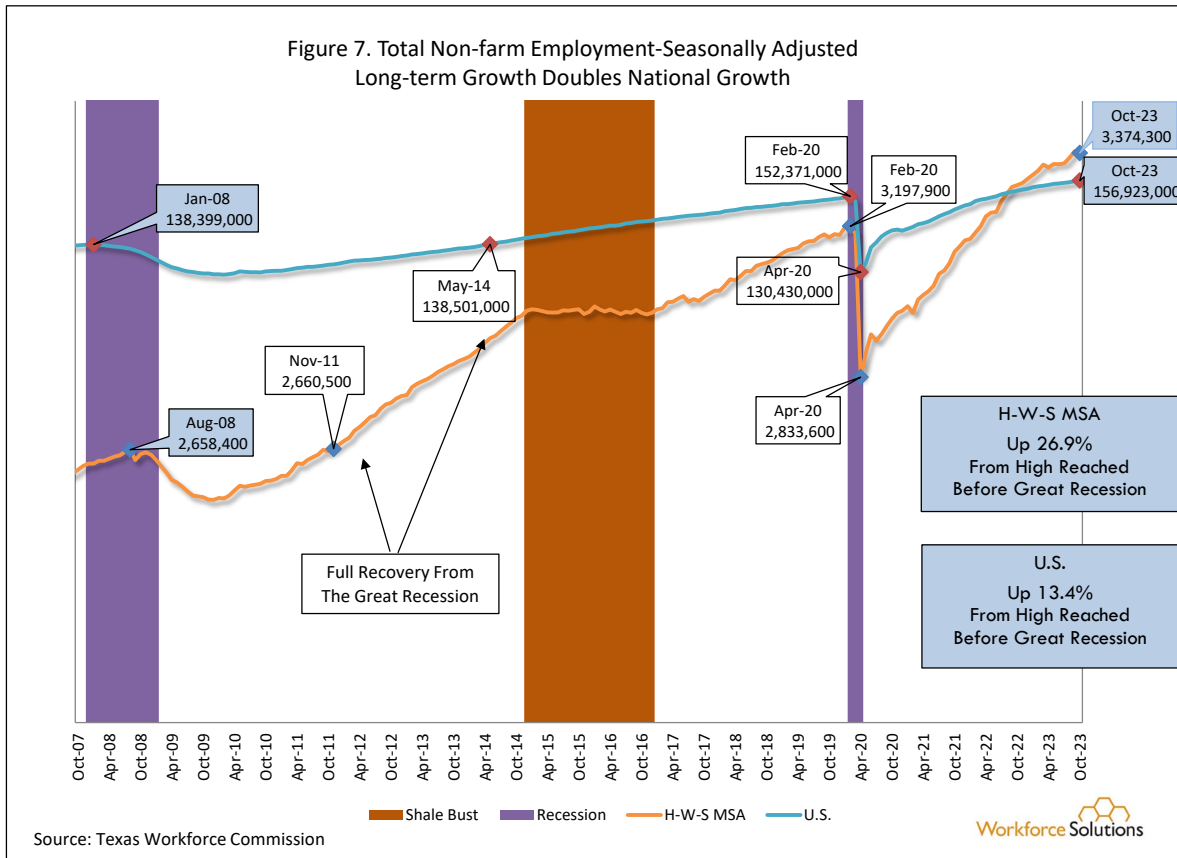


Total Nonfarm Employment – Seasonally Adjusted

Seasonally adjusted estimates for the H-W-S MSA and U.S. seen in figures 6 and 7 provide an additional view of growth trends removing the erratic month-to-month seasonal patterns. On a seasonally adjusted basis, Total Nonfarm Employment had its weakest October since 2016, reporting a loss of 4,200 jobs in, down 0.1 percent. The pace of job growth fell another 0.3 percent to 2.3 percent, down considerably from 4.9 percent at the beginning of the year. Total Nonfarm Employment at the national level added 150,000 jobs over the month, up 0.1 percent, with the pace of growth falling two-tenths of a percentage point to 1.9 percent.

Looking at growth over a more long-term basis, Houston has been among the fastest-growing cities in the U.S. and as a result long-term job growth has historically outpaced that of the nation. Payrolls in the H-W-S MSA are currently up 26.9 percent above their peak prior to The Great Recession while payrolls at the national level are only up 13.4 percent.





NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT				Month Change		Year Change	
	OCT 2023	SEP 2023	OCT 2022	Net	Percent	Net	Percent
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA	3,389,500	3,373,100	3,312,900	16,400	0.5%	76,600	2.3%
Total Nonfarm	3,389,500	3,373,100	3,312,900	16,400	0.5%	76,600	2.3%
.Total Private	2,935,700	2,925,700	2,868,500	10,000	0.3%	67,200	2.3%
.Goods Producing	522,900	523,300	523,300	-400	-0.1%	-400	-0.1%
..Mining, Logging and Construction	287,900	288,700	296,200	-800	-0.3%	-8,300	-2.8%
...Mining and Logging	70,400	70,100	67,200	300	0.4%	3,200	4.8%
....Oil and Gas Extraction	29,800	29,700	29,100	100	0.3%	700	2.4%
....Support Activities for Mining	38,900	38,700	36,500	200	0.5%	2,400	6.6%
...Construction	217,500	218,600	229,000	-1,100	-0.5%	-11,500	-5.0%
....Construction of Buildings	55,900	56,000	56,400	-100	-0.2%	-500	-0.9%
....Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	54,300	53,900	55,400	400	0.7%	-1,100	-2.0%
....Specialty Trade Contractors	107,300	108,700	117,200	-1,400	-1.3%	-9,900	-8.4%
..Manufacturing	235,000	234,600	227,100	400	0.2%	7,900	3.5%
...Durable Goods	146,100	145,400	138,900	700	0.5%	7,200	5.2%
....Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	50,200	50,100	48,200	100	0.2%	2,000	4.1%
....Machinery Manufacturing	42,400	42,300	41,300	100	0.2%	1,100	2.7%
....Agriculture, Construction, and Mining Machinery Manufacturing	22,400	22,300	21,500	100	0.4%	900	4.2%
....Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	14,500	14,500	14,200	0	0.0%	300	2.1%
...Non-Durable Goods	88,900	89,200	88,200	-300	-0.3%	700	0.8%
....Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	8,000	8,000	7,800	0	0.0%	200	2.6%
....Chemical Manufacturing	42,600	42,600	41,400	0	0.0%	1,200	2.9%
.Service-Providing	2,866,600	2,849,800	2,789,600	16,800	0.6%	77,000	2.8%
.Private Service Providing	2,412,800	2,402,400	2,345,200	10,400	0.4%	67,600	2.9%
..Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	702,100	695,800	681,000	6,300	0.9%	21,100	3.1%
...Wholesale Trade	179,400	179,200	175,000	200	0.1%	4,400	2.5%
....Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	111,200	110,700	108,900	500	0.5%	2,300	2.1%
....Professional and Commercial Equipment and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	17,600	17,600	17,400	0	0.0%	200	1.1%
....Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	54,700	54,800	53,800	-100	-0.2%	900	1.7%
...Retail Trade	322,900	319,500	316,800	3,400	1.1%	6,100	1.9%
....Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	44,700	44,700	43,300	0	0.0%	1,400	3.2%
....Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	23,400	23,700	23,700	-300	-1.3%	-300	-1.3%
....Food and Beverage Retailers	74,300	73,700	72,800	600	0.8%	1,500	2.1%
....General Merchandise Retailers	62,600	61,700	61,700	900	1.5%	900	1.5%
....Department Stores	20,600	20,000	20,000	600	3.0%	600	3.0%
....Warehouse Clubs, Supercenters, and Other General Merchandise Retailers	42,000	41,700	41,700	300	0.7%	300	0.7%
....Health and Personal Care Retailers	21,000	20,600	20,900	400	1.9%	100	0.5%
....Clothing, Clothing Accessories, Shoe, and Jewelry Retailers	25,700	25,100	25,500	600	2.4%	200	0.8%
...Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	199,800	197,100	189,200	2,700	1.4%	10,600	5.6%
....Utilities	20,800	20,500	20,000	300	1.5%	800	4.0%
....Air Transportation	20,800	20,700	19,600	100	0.5%	1,200	6.1%
....Truck Transportation	31,600	31,300	31,000	300	1.0%	600	1.9%
....Pipeline Transportation	13,200	13,100	12,600	100	0.8%	600	4.8%
..Information	33,400	33,100	32,900	300	0.9%	500	1.5%
....Telecommunications	11,900	11,800	11,900	100	0.8%	0	0.0%
..Financial Activities	189,000	188,100	183,700	900	0.5%	5,300	2.9%
...Finance and Insurance	117,100	116,500	115,300	600	0.5%	1,800	1.6%
....Credit Intermediation and Related Activities including Monetary Authorities - Central Bank	46,600	46,300	46,200	300	0.6%	400	0.9%
....Depository Credit Intermediation including Monetary Authorities - Central Bank	30,200	30,000	29,700	200	0.7%	500	1.7%
....Financial Investments and Related Activities including Financial Vehicles	23,500	23,300	23,100	200	0.9%	400	1.7%
....Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	47,000	46,900	46,000	100	0.2%	1,000	2.2%
...Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	71,900	71,600	68,400	300	0.4%	3,500	5.1%

NONAGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT				Month Change		Year Change	
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA	OCT 2023	SEP 2023	OCT 2022	Net	Percent	Net	Percent
..Professional and Business Services	561,000	561,700	551,700	-700	-0.1%	9,300	1.7%
...Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	277,000	275,600	266,100	1,400	0.5%	10,900	4.1%
.....Legal Services	33,200	32,800	31,500	400	1.2%	1,700	5.4%
.....Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, and Payroll Services	28,600	28,600	27,600	0	0.0%	1,000	3.6%
.....Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services	78,700	77,500	71,400	1,200	1.5%	7,300	10.2%
.....Computer Systems Design and Related Services	44,100	44,000	42,300	100	0.2%	1,800	4.3%
...Management of Companies and Enterprises	46,500	46,900	45,500	-400	-0.9%	1,000	2.2%
...Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	237,500	239,200	240,100	-1,700	-0.7%	-2,600	-1.1%
.....Administrative and Support Services	223,300	225,100	227,100	-1,800	-0.8%	-3,800	-1.7%
.....Employment Services	85,400	85,500	90,000	-100	-0.1%	-4,600	-5.1%
.....Services to Buildings and Dwellings	55,700	56,200	55,200	-500	-0.9%	500	0.9%
..Private Education and Health Services	460,000	454,100	435,400	5,900	1.3%	24,600	5.6%
...Private Educational Services	73,900	73,500	72,600	400	0.5%	1,300	1.8%
...Health Care and Social Assistance	386,100	380,600	362,800	5,500	1.4%	23,300	6.4%
....Ambulatory Health Care Services	194,200	192,000	183,900	2,200	1.1%	10,300	5.6%
....Hospitals	96,900	96,300	91,300	600	0.6%	5,600	6.1%
..Leisure and Hospitality	347,900	350,100	341,000	-2,200	-0.6%	6,900	2.0%
...Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	40,900	40,800	36,300	100	0.2%	4,600	12.7%
...Accommodation and Food Services	307,000	309,300	304,700	-2,300	-0.7%	2,300	0.8%
....Accommodation	26,600	26,800	25,800	-200	-0.7%	800	3.1%
....Food Services and Drinking Places	280,400	282,500	278,900	-2,100	-0.7%	1,500	0.5%
..Other Services	119,400	119,500	119,500	-100	-0.1%	-100	-0.1%
..Government	453,800	447,400	444,400	6,400	1.4%	9,400	2.1%
...Federal Government	33,600	33,600	32,700	0	0.0%	900	2.8%
...State Government	96,300	95,200	94,500	1,100	1.2%	1,800	1.9%
....State Government Educational Services	54,700	53,600	53,900	1,100	2.1%	800	1.5%
...Local Government	323,900	318,600	317,200	5,300	1.7%	6,700	2.1%
....Local Government Educational Services	225,500	220,500	220,800	5,000	2.3%	4,700	2.1%
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE				OCT 2023	SEP 2023	OCT 2022	
H-W-S MSA	4.1	4.4	3.9				
Texas (Actual)	3.8	4.1	3.7				
U.S.	3.6	3.6	3.4				

Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA: Includes Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Ft. Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller Counties. All Data is Subject to Revision.

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, BLS, Texas Workforce Commission, Institute for Supply Management, Baker Hughes, and The Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

Communications: Media Outreach

December 2023 Update

This report provides an update on Workforce Solutions' media outreach efforts for October and November 2023. Topics for this period included National Disability Employment Awareness Month; construction, manufacturing, and cybersecurity career awareness; Hiring Red, White & You; and National Apprenticeship Week.

Social Media

As of November 1, 2023, our social media channels currently have 24,941 followers collectively. The table below shows the year-over-year changes.

Followers	October 2023	October 2022	October 2021	One Year Change	Two Year Change
Facebook	10,789	10,384	9,301	3.9%	16.2%
Instagram	4,001	2,842	2,539	41.1%	57.5%
X (Twitter)	1,792	1,772	1,673	1.1%	7.1%
LinkedIn	8,359	5,195	4,282	61.6%	95.4%

You can find us on social media at:

- <https://www.facebook.com/advancemycareer/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/workforcesolutions/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/advancemycareer>
- <https://twitter.com/GulfCoastWFS>
- <https://www.youtube.com/c/WorkforceSolutionsgulfcoast>

Earned Media Value

As of November 1, 2023, our cumulative earned-media value since the onset of the pandemic now exceeds \$55 million. Below is year-over-year comparison of October monthly values from 2020 to 2023.

Media Month	Items	Views	Value
October 2023	16	1,386,412	\$1,280,720
October 2022	49	3,510,898	\$ 1,018,851
October 2021	21	2,139,952	\$ 547,577
October 2020	47	3,708,349	\$ 734,797

Media Partnerships

As a reminder, our partnerships include:

- KXLN Univision 45 – The bi-weekly interview is on hold while we identify and train a new Spanish-language representatives.
- KTRK ABC 13 – Weekly Who’s Hiring program each Thursday’s at 10 a.m., live stream as well as broadcast news features.
- KRIV Fox 26 – Interview semi-monthly Friday at 6:15 a.m. on morning TV news.

The following table contains highlights of Workforce Solutions in the media since October 1, 2023.

Date	Outlet	Story	Link
10/05/2023	KTRK ABC 13	Who’s Hiring – Disability Employment Awareness	https://abc13.co/48E8DI5
10/12/2023	KTRK ABC 13	Who’s Hiring – Manufacturing Career Awareness	https://abc13.co/3M0smYN
10/13/2023	KRIV Fox 26	Disability Employment Awareness	https://youtu.be/zBDPmZTEB5Q
10/19/2023	KTRK ABC 13	Who’s Hiring – Construction Career Awareness	https://abc13.co/3s4E6Te
10/22/2023	Covering Katy	September Jobs Report	https://bit.ly/40Do0Nj
10/22/2023	Houston Business Journal	September Jobs Report	https://bit.ly/47mRVvs
10/25/2023	KTRK ABC 13	Preview Story – Port Houston	https://youtu.be/Be8rAsQZ7uk
10/26/2023	KTRK ABC 13	Who’s Hiring – East End Job Fair	https://abc13.co/3swgSFQ
10/27/2023	KRIV Fox 26	Cybersecurity/IT Careers	https://youtu.be/c0B5w0Sk1XY
11/02/2023	KTRK ABC 13	Who’s Hiring – Seasonal Jobs	https://abc13.co/462ILD3
11/09/2023	KTRK ABC 13	Who’s Hiring – Red, White & You	https://abc13.co/466Nio8
11/09/2023	KTRK ABC 13	HRWY – ABC 13 Partnership	https://youtu.be/jombiKNIMfs
11/09/2023	KTRK ABC 13	HRWY – Combined Arms, Texas Veterans Commission	https://youtu.be/nEDCDwHOMec
11/10/2023	KRIV Fox 26	Veterans Employment	https://youtu.be/P73DQAC_GFQ
11/15/2023	KTRK ABC 13	Job Fair Preview: Interfaith of the Woodlands	https://youtu.be/l4N7vBWzDPY

Date	Outlet	Story	Link
11/16/2023	KTRK ABC 13	Who's Hiring – National Apprenticeship Week with Pipefitters Local 211	https://abc13.co/3G39vcb
11/18/2023	Katy News	October Jobs Report	https://thekatynews.com/2023/11/18/retail-sales-logistics-kick-off-holiday-hiring-season/
11/30/2023	KTRK ABC 13	Who's Hiring (ep 145)	https://abc13.com/tag/job-fair/