



**Gulf Coast Workforce Board**  
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**To:** Gulf Coast Workforce Board Members

**From:** Executive Director Juliet K. Stipeche

**Date:** October 1, 2025

**Subject:** October 7, 2025 Board Meeting

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I look forward to seeing you soon at our upcoming Gulf Coast Workforce Board meeting on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in person at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Conference Rooms A/B/C, Houston, TX 77027 and conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and will be open to the public.

### **Agenda Highlights**

The meeting will begin with a special presentation highlighting the 10-year anniversary of the Paving the Pathways program and the significant contributions of local employers who participated in this program which empowers disabled youth. You will also hear opening remarks from Board Chair Mark Guthrie, followed by my Executive Director's Report. We will then hear committee updates from:

- Adrian Ozuna, Career Services,
- Alan Heskamp, Employer Engagement,
- Doug Karr, Communications, and
- Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Education.

Key items for discussion and possible action include the adoption of the Audit and Monitoring Committee Charter by Committee Chair Guy Jackson. Since our last Board Meeting and through the end of this calendar year, the committees have been working diligently to establish charters aimed at defining their scope and objectives, structure and membership, and operating procedures. Additionally, the Budget Committee, chaired by Mr. Carl Bowles will request possible action on the adoption of the 2025 Gulf Coast Workforce Board Mid-Year Budget Revision.

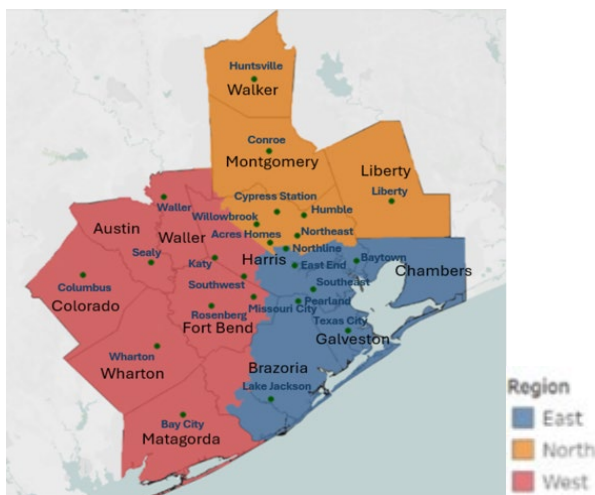
We will also receive Board staff presentations from:

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

### **Newly Launched Regionally Integrated Career Services Model**

On October 1, 2025, we launched our new regionally integrated career services model, moving away from a model that bifurcated employer and career services toward a more agile system that includes mobile, virtual, and subregional components. This shift will position us to meet employers and job seekers where they are with a unified one-stop framework, designed to accelerate job placements, improve efficiency, and deliver a seamless experience that is responsive to the demands of our regional economy.

We are excited to work with our returning service providers: Baker Ripley (East segment) and SERCO (North segment) as well as welcome on-board our newest service provider, EDSI (West segment). All three organizations have been working tirelessly over the past couple of months alongside Board staff in working groups to ensure a seamless transition.



There are a lot of moving parts and major changes occurring throughout our system, but we remain dedicated to ensuring that our region's employers are equipped with relevant tools to meet their workforce needs and job seekers receive the necessary resources to build careers, so both can compete in the global economy.

### **Regional Operation and Coordination Council (ROCC)**

We are establishing the Regional Operation and Coordination Council (ROCC) by mid-November 2025 to lead the strategic alignment and implementation of our transformed workforce system across all three regions. The ROCC will play a pivotal role in ensuring consistent, high-quality service delivery by standardizing policies, aligning regional operations with WIOA and other regulatory frameworks, resolving operational challenges, and closely monitoring performance outcomes. The Council will also serve as a central forum for reviewing regional data trends, examining best practices, and fostering shared learning across providers. It will coordinate employer and partner engagement efforts, oversee onboarding and training processes, and ensure services remain responsive to both community needs and labor market demands.

The ROCC will convene at least monthly, host quarterly strategic planning sessions, and provide regular updates to the Executive Director and the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Committees. Through this coordinated governance structure, we aim to drive operational excellence, strengthen system-wide cohesion, and elevate the quality and equity of workforce services across the region.

### **National & Federal Context – Government Shutdown**

As of today, the nation enters day 3 of the federal government shutdown, but operational continuity for local workforce boards has thus far been preserved. Since the shutdown, we have learned and wish to share:

- **Funding Continuity:** On October 1, 2025, Mary York of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) confirmed that obligated draws were executed without disruption.
- **Program Balances:** TWC Chief Financial Officer Chris Nelson has confirmed that TANF balances are sufficient for at least one month, while SNAP expenditures remain covered by state general revenue match. Boards should proceed with CDER draws as customary.

- Risk Posture: Although the short-term outlook appears stable, federal and state leaders counsel fiscal prudence until appropriations are reinstated.
- Communication: Internal and external staff have been advised that operations will continue without interruption for at least one month. We will closely monitor developments and provide regular updates to ensure transparency and continuity.

### **Celebrating a Decade of *Paving the Pathways***

On October 2, 2025, the Children's Museum of Houston hosted a celebration of the 10-Year Anniversary of *Paving the Pathway to Success* alongside this year's Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program. Together, these initiatives have reshaped how youth with disabilities engage in education, training, and employment. The event was a powerful demonstration of resilience, innovation, and achievement. My sincere thanks to TWC's Vocational Rehabilitation, participating employers, students, parents, and Board staff whose dedication made this year's programs resounding successes.

### **Advancing Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement**

Immediately following our October 7 Board meeting, Crosby Brito, Manager of Employer Engagement, will host an Information Session on Registered Apprenticeships, and we welcome your attendance. Please note the logistics:

- Date & Time: Tuesday, October 7, 2025 | 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
- Location: H-GAC | 3555 Timmons Ln, Suite 2D, Houston, TX 77027

This session will examine pre-apprenticeships, Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs), Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (iRAPs), and Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees (JATCs). Beyond providing definitional clarity, the session will underscore how these pathways serve as durable talent pipelines, affording employers sustained access to skilled workers while equipping individuals with structured routes to economic mobility.

### **Closing Reflection**

As we gather for this October meeting, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your unwavering dedication and thoughtful leadership. The initiatives we are advancing, from launching new service models to strengthening governance and



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deepening employer partnerships, are the direct result of your commitment to excellence.

We have encountered a few transitional hurdles, from power interruptions to staffing shifts, but we are moving forward with focus and determination. Our region is increasingly well positioned to connect employers with the talent they need, support jobseekers in building strong careers, and sustain communities that thrive. I am proud of the progress we have made together and confident about the opportunities ahead.

I look forward to seeing you on October 7. Until then, be well and take care.

# GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

## AGENDA

**Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, A/B/C, 3555 Timmons Lane  
Houston, Texas 77027**

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

- 1. Call to Order (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 2. Roll Call (Desmond Taylor)**
- 3. Introduction of Newly Appointed Board Members (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 4. Adopt Agenda (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 5. Public Comment (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 6. Review of the August 2025 Meeting Minutes (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 7. Declare Conflicts of Interest (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 8. Reports:**
  - a. Paving the Pathway: Celebrating the ten-year anniversary of this program and recognizing the contributions of local employers to this program that empowers the region's disabled youth (Contact: Board Chair Mark Guthrie),
  - b. Board Chair's Remarks: (Board Chair Mark Guthrie),
  - c. Executive Director's Report: (Juliet Stipeche),
  - d. Career Services Committee Report: (Committee Chair Adrian Ozuna),
  - e. Employer Engagement Committee Report: (Committee Chair Alan Heskamp),
  - f. Communications Committee Report: (Committee Chair Doug Karr), and
  - g. Education Committee Report: (Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson).

## 9. Action Items:

- a. Audit and Monitoring Committee Report: Briefing of the Audit and Monitoring Committee from Chair Guy Jackson including discussion and possible action regarding the following:
  - i. Adoption of the Audit and Monitoring Committee Charter.
- b. Budget Committee Report: Briefing of the Budget Committee meeting from Chair Carl Bowles including discussion and possible action regarding the following:
  - i. Adoption of the 2025 Gulf Coast Workforce Board Mid-Year Budget Revision.

## 10. Presentations and Information:

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

## 11. Other Business

## 12. 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, October 6, 2025**, to Dr. Maria Franco Cortes at [maria.cortes@wrksolutions.net](mailto:maria.cortes@wrksolutions.net).

Meeting materials are available on our website at [www.wrksolutions.com/about-us/meetings](http://www.wrksolutions.com/about-us/meetings).

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**GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2025**

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1. **Call to Order:** The Tuesday, August 5, 2025, meeting of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Board Chair Mark Guthrie. The meeting was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, A-C, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027.
2. **Roll Call:** Desmond Taylor, Program Administrator of the GCWB called the roll. The following members of the GCWB were present:

Arcos, Marie	Jones, Lavone	Riley, Monica
Bowles, Carl	Karr, Doug	Rodriguez, Grace
Cockrell, Dorian	LaBroski, Jeff	Rodriguez, Melanie
Ferdinand, Mike	Larmond, Shareen	Sarkar, Mou
Guido, Cheryl	Lowe, Jonathan	Segovia, Valerie
Guthrie, Mark	Makany-Rivera, Tanya	Sorola-Pohlman, Lenora
Henderson Bobbie	Oser, Margaret	Taylor, Sandra Vazquez,
Heskamp, Alan	Ozuna, Adrian	Lizandra
Jackson, Guy R.	Puente, Paul	Webster, Michael
Johnson, Joyce	Rex, Glenn	Yu, Bin

Board Chair Guthrie determined a quorum was present. Additionally, Chair Guthrie acknowledged newly appointed Board Member Glenn Rex. Mr. Rex introduced himself and was warmly welcomed by the Board.

3. **Adopt Agenda:** Board Chair Guthrie presented the proposed August 5, 2025, meeting agenda with an amendment to remove item 8a (ii) *Approval and submission of the revised 2025 budget* due to a pending request for budgetary information from the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). A motion was made and seconded to adopt the amended agenda. The motion passed.
4. **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
5. **Review of the June 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes:** The minutes of the June 3, 2025, GCWB meeting were distributed electronically to all members before the August 5, 2025, meeting. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the minutes as presented. The motion passed.
6. **Declare Conflicts of Interest:** Lizandra Vazquez abstained from agenda items 8b (i.-vii) and Sandra Taylor abstained from items 8b (i. and vi.). Board Chair Guthrie reminded the members that they also could declare conflicts with items as they were taken up.

## 7. Reports:

- a. **Board Chair's Report:** Chair Guthrie opened his remarks on national activities, specifically regarding WIOA Reauthorization. Since the June meeting, the so called Big Beautiful Bill for FY2025 federal spending was passed by Congress and signed into law. While the bill essentially did not do much to alter to the Board's FY 2025 funding, there was a roughly 10% WIOA reduction for FY 2025 which translates to approximately a \$5 million reduction for the GCWB's WIOA budget. Other funding streams increased slightly; therefore, netting only an approximate \$2 million reduction in our total annual budget.

Chair Guthrie also reported that up until the week prior to the GCWB meeting, the Federal OMB was holding up on releasing authorized and appropriated FY2025 WIOA Title 2 funding. However, that hold was lifted with restrictions to apply citizenship status criteria for this funding.

As for FY2026 funding, Chair Guthrie noted that, the president's FY 2026 budget included the Make America Skilled Again proposal (MASA) which would consolidate 11 federal workforce programs, including WIOA Titles 1-3 and Employment Services into 1 block grant program that would go to directly to states. At this time, with the exception of a requirement to spend at least 10% on apprenticeships, no guidance has been provided on how this distribution to the states would work—including whether states would continue to use local workforce boards to spend the money. If the MASA proposal is included in the final approved FY2026 appropriation package, it will result in:

- No funding for WIOA Adult Ed, WIOA Youth or WIOA Dislocated workers, and
- About a 30% reduction in total funding when compared to the total of the 11 consolidated programs.

Chair Guthrie also reported that the president's FY2026 budget also includes a reduction in total VR funding from 4.3B to 3.7B.

At the end of last month, the Senate Appropriation Committee had a markup of the Senate's FY2026 Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations bill. The markup maintains WIOA formula funding and continues funding for Adult Ed., registered apprenticeships, and employer services grants on an approximate level (to FY2025) basis. We have yet to see a similar mark up from the House Appropriations Committee and will not see one until September as the House has recessed for summer break.

Chair Guthrie noted that he attended the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) board of directors meeting in May. Much of the discussion was about budgets and funding. He reported that NAWB staff in Washington DC had been hearing about possible government shutdowns as we get closer to

the October 1 deadline for the FY2026 budget agreement. Additionally, the status of MASA and status of WIOA Reauthorization are both uncertain.

Locally, Chair Guthrie noted that he and a few other Board members (Dr. Edward Melton, Doug Karr, and former Board member Carolyn Watson) had the opportunity and privilege to judge the business problem competition at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Paving the Pathways Program, and as always it was a wonderful event.

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

- b. **Executive Director's Report (Juliet Stipeche):** Executive Director Juliet Stipeche began her report by honoring the memory of the late Professor Bob Stein, a distinguished political science scholar at Rice University and a nationally recognized expert on voting and elections, urban politics, emergency preparedness, and disaster recovery. She noted his lasting contributions to the region and his impact on public service and civic engagement.

She continued by highlighting several successful job fairs held since the April Board meeting, including events in Alief and Cypress, which provided vital opportunities for job seekers and employers to connect. Executive Director Stipeche also announced the launch of the Heat Wave Heroes series in partnership with Fox 26 and the Houston Gulf Coast Building and Trades Council. Over the course of a week, they provided free air conditioning units and generators to deserving seniors and veterans. They were also able to focus on the opportunities in the building and construction trades and recognizing the essential workers who keep the region safe and strong during extreme heat conditions.

Executive Director Stipeche further highlighted the upcoming celebration of the 10th Anniversary of Paving the Pathways to Success, scheduled for Thursday, October 2, at the Children's Museum of Houston. This milestone marks a decade of progress in supporting students with disabilities through training, mentorship, and employer engagement.

She also proudly announced that the Gulf Coast Workforce Board received the Pinnacle Award in the subcategory of Legacy System Modernization for the Workforce Solutions News App. This honor reflects the Board's commitment to innovation, technology-driven service delivery, and transparent communication with stakeholders.

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

- c. **H-GAC Executive Director's Report (Chuck Wemple):** Mr. Chuck Wemple opened his remarks by informing the Board that H-GAC is currently looking at the procurement process as part of efforts to deliver efficient services throughout the agency. Additionally, he announced H-GAC's Regional Transportation Plan and encouraged Board members to participate in the survey process between now and August 15 to allow for the agency to hear from stakeholders that utilize public roads and transportation services throughout the 13-county region.

Lastly, he concluded his report by announcing Juliet Stipeche has been promoted to Chief of Workforce Development at H-GAC. Mr. Wemple concluded his remarks with no formal action taken.

- d. **Audit and Monitoring Committee (Committee Chair Guy R. Jackson):** Chair Jackson reported that the Audit and Monitoring Committee met in a hybrid meeting on July 29, 2025, at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027, Room 2D at 1:00 p.m. Committee and Board Members present included Chair Guy R. Jackson, Mark Guthrie, Cheryl Guido, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Doug Karr, Paul Puente, Mou Sarkar, and Jeff LaBroski. Board staff present included Kristi Rangel, Desmond Taylor, AJ Dean, Thomas Brown, Brandi Brown, Kristi Hayman, Vanessa Salazar, Dr. Maria Franco, Russell Tomlin, Romana Paniagua, Philip Garcia, Carl Salazar, Sabrina Uy, Kimberly Lindolph, Angela Williams, Negail Dixon, Rauf Baig, Jeanette De La Cruz, Janine Haynes, Sable Harris-Buck, Jonathan Benjamin, Alexander Mallett, Parker Harvey, LaToya Casimere, Daysy Rojas, Cheryl Sheppard, Kevin Rodney, Treebie Vazquez-Vilchez, Ginger Hunter, Brittany Eaton, Ashley Glenn, and Jennifer Starling. Chair Jackson made the following report of the meeting:

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Update:** GCWB staff provided updates across three core service areas: Early Education, Career Services, and Employer Engagement. These indicators are aligned with the Board's strategic goals.

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

Board staff also provided a regional performance update for Q2 FY2025, which showed that the Gulf Coast Region's performance improved across all major benchmarks.

**Provider Program and Financial Monitoring for Compliance:** The Quality Assurance team completed 15 of their 18 scheduled reviews. They are currently monitoring Financial Aid Payment Office and SERCO. QA

will be implementing a standardized High/Moderate/Low risk rating scale to assess findings, in line with COSO's Enterprise Risk Management framework.

The Board has received 6 financial reports since the last Committee meeting. There are currently no financial reviews in progress. Financial Monitoring Services was reprocured earlier this year. One new consultant, LaPorte CPAs & Business Advisors, will be brought on board in addition to the existing two.

**Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL):** QA staff spotlighted the Hire Gulf Coast Youth's Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program, a short-term summer employment initiative for students with disabilities. QA developed a mobile and web-based app to efficiently log their work-site visits, which reduced errors and saved time. Collaboration between employers, Program Staff and QA allowed for proactive mitigation of safety issues at worksites, ensuring that students have a supported and empowering experience, and no safety incidents.

**Performance Improvement Plans:** The Adult Education Center was placed on a performance improvement plan earlier this spring. Board staff have met with AEC to review their proposed corrective actions. Staff was able to resolve nearly all identified concerns, and a few outstanding issues remain under active discussion. Staff is optimistic that these will be resolved by the September Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting.

BakerRipley Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO) was placed on a performance improvement plan due to financial management, communication, and project management concerns. FAPO's response on June 20 was accepted by Board staff. One new issue arose in July, as follows. Due to a daily cash release limit with BakerRipley's bank, FAPO was unable to process July 3<sup>rd</sup>'s payments to child-care vendors. The payments reached providers on July 7<sup>th</sup> instead. This resulted in vendors contacting TWC requesting a status update on their payments. Board staff reported that they have taken immediate steps to improve oversight and coordination with FAPO. FAPO has increased the daily cash release limit and developed a formal escalation process that includes immediate notification to Board staff on vendor payment issues. Board staff continues to collaborate with FAPO to facilitate resolution of payment issues and items on the performance improvement plan. Board staff will provide status updates at the September meeting.

**TWC Monitoring and Interventions:** Staff provided updates on TWC's monitoring of the Child-care grant. The exit meeting was held on July 3, 2025. TWC recertified the GCWB's QA Monitoring Team and the external CPA monitor Christine Nguyen, meaning that TWC can place reliance on these monitors for another three years. TWC was unable to recertify Weaver but will monitor their work again next year for recertification.

In July, Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) conducted a review of TWC that included ten SNAP case from the Board. The anticipated exit interview is in August.

For TWC's review of SNAP Work Activities that is under a Corrective Action Plan (CAP), Board staff provided three months of testing with error rates below 10%. The Board must have one more month of testing with an error rate below 10% for TWC to consider lifting the CAP for SNAP Work Activities.

**Next Meeting:** Our next Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 18, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Chair Jackson concluded his report. No action was taken.

- e. **Career Services Committee Report (Committee Chair Adrian Ozuna):** Chair Ozuna reported that the Career Services Committee met in a joint, hybrid meeting on July 23 with the Employer Engagement Committee, at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027, Room 2D at 3:00 p.m. Committee and Board members present included Chair Adrian Ozuna, Chair Alan Heskamp, Mark Guthrie, Joyce Johnson, Mike Dobert, Susan Lindsey, Allatia Harris, Bin Yu, Cheryl Guido, Doug Karr, Edward Melton, Guy Robert Jackson, Shareen Larmond, Edward Melton, Sineria Ordonez, Paul Puente, Mou Sarkar, Lizandra Vazquez, and Bobbie Henderson. Board staff present included Juliet Stipeche, Desmond Taylor, AJ Dean, Russell Tomlin, Carl Salazar, Jennifer Graves, Luisa Guerra-Martinez, Sabrina Parras, Parker Harvey, Melissa Steinmetz, Shawanna Thompson, Janine Haynes, Brittany Eaton, Crosby Brito, Mohammad Ahmadizadeh, Kevin Rodney, Ashley Glenn, Wen Zheng, Jennifer Starling, Jessica Smith, Jenny Johnson, Jeanette Dela Cruz, Phillip Garcia, Freyah Richard, Ron Borski, Alexandra Mallett, Lacy Wolf, and Sable Harris-Buck.

Chair Ozuna noted that the joint meeting between the Career Services and Employer Engagement Committees marked a pivotal step toward the transformation of our regional workforce system to foster a deeper alignment between career services and employer services and provided the following report of the meeting:

#### **Overview of "Make America Skilled Again"**

FY 2026 Presidential Budget Proposal: The President's FY 2026 budget proposes consolidating eleven federally funded workforce development programs—including WIOA Titles I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth), Title III (Employment Services), National Dislocated Worker Grants, YouthBuild, Reentry Employment Opportunities, and other workforce programs—into a single block grant titled Make America Skilled Again (MASA). This grant would be administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and distributed to

states for implementation. The proposal includes a mandatory 10% set-aside of MASA funds specifically for registered apprenticeship programs.

The proposed MASA block grant would be funded at \$2.966 billion for FY 2026. This represents a 28% reduction from the combined enacted funding for the eleven programs in FY 2025—approximately \$1.5 billion less in total federal workforce investment. In addition, the overall DOL budget is reduced by roughly 35% compared to FY 2025 enacted levels. The proposal eliminates individual budget lines for each of the eleven programs and replaces them with a single funding stream. While apprenticeship investments are preserved through the required 10% set-aside, other previously distinct programmatic funding streams are proposed to no longer be separately designated. The Department of Labor would retain 0.25% of MASA funds (approximately \$7.4 million) for technical assistance to states.

**Increased State Control:** Under MASA, the consolidation of multiple programs into one block grant shifts significant authority to the state level. States will have greater discretion in allocating MASA funds across regions and programs within their jurisdiction.

**Role of Local Workforce Boards:** While the MASA proposal does not include any details about workforce board involvement, local workforce boards most likely will continue to play an important role but would operate within the framework established by the state's MASA plan. While boards may gain some flexibility in how they deploy funds to address local workforce needs, their discretion will largely depend on the state's allocation decisions and oversight. This dynamic emphasizes the need for collaboration between state agencies and local boards to align resources and goals effectively.

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

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

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

Potential Impacts and Responses: To navigate this changing environment while continuing to deliver impactful workforce services, we are leveraging mobile solutions and access points to expand our reach for service. This includes utilizing Workforce on Wheels, creating access points for Virtual Services. Additionally, staff presented the following recommendations for the Committee's and the Board's consideration:

1. Modernize the Service Footprint

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

2. Maximize Return on Investment

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

3. Strengthen Partnerships and Resource Integration

- Braid and align funds with TANF, SNAP E&T, Adult Education, and other public sources to achieve efficiency and scale.
- Expand cost-sharing partnerships with employers, philanthropic organizations, and local governments.
- Deepen collaboration with community-based organizations to extend reach and wraparound support.

4. Invest in Technology and Capacity

- Leverage innovative technologies to streamline operations, expand access to services, and enhance the customer experience; concurrently, invest in robust cross-training of staff to ensure continuity, agility, and system-wide service excellence.



- Strengthen data infrastructure to support real-time performance management and resource allocation.
- Create a Non-Profit for philanthropic Support.

Regional Operation and Coordination Council (ROCC): Career

services are strengthened by the various workgroups that are being formed to ensure a smooth transition of services. One of main efforts highlighted today is the establishment of the Regional Operation and Coordination Council (ROCC) by mid-November 2025 to lead the strategic alignment and implementation of our transformed workforce system across all three regions. Members of ROCC include the Executive Director, GCWB Senior leadership, Regional Directors and Career Services Managers, Employer Services Managers, Youth Leads, Quality Assurance Manager, and Performance & Data Managers. The ROCC will play a pivotal role in ensuring consistent, high-quality service delivery by standardizing policies, aligning regional operations with WIOA and other regulatory frameworks, resolving operational challenges, and closely monitoring performance outcomes. The Council will also serve as a central forum for reviewing regional data trends, examining best practices, and fostering shared learning across providers. It will coordinate employer and partner engagement efforts, oversee onboarding and training processes, and ensure services remain responsive to both community needs and labor market demands.

The ROCC will convene bi-weekly, host quarterly strategic planning sessions, and provide regular updates to the Executive Director and the GCWB's Career Services Committee. Through this coordinated governance structure, we aim to drive operational excellence, strengthen system-wide cohesion, and elevate the quality and equity of workforce services across the region.

**Virtual Career Services**

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

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

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

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

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

#### Hybrid by Design: Local Access, Virtual Expertise

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

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

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

#### Not Just a Shift But A Strategic Advantage

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

Chair Ozuna concluded his report. No action was taken.

Mr. Dorian Cockrell inquired if Board staff has received direction from the State about the role workforce boards will play if MASA is implemented? Juliet Stipeche responded by informing Board members that we are still awaiting guidance from the State on how MASA will be implemented if passed and signed into law. However, she mentioned, we can defer to AEL as a model to predict future impact to other programs overseen by local workforce boards. Ms. Mou Sarkar commended Board staff on its proactiveness in the face of all the changes at the federal level. Additionally, she inquired if there is a timeline for the new career services model roll out? Yes, the timeline was provided in the May 20, 2025, Career Services committee handouts. An electronic copy of the report may be redistributed to Board members upon request.

**f. Employer Engagement Committee Report (Committee Chair Alan Heskamp):**

Chair Heskamp reported that the Employer Engagement Committee met on July 23 in conjunction with the Career Services Committee, at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027, Room 2D at 3:00 p.m.

Committee and Board members present included Chair Adrian Ozuna, Chair Alan Heskamp, Mark Guthrie, Joyce Johnson, Mike Dobert, Susan Lindsey, Allatia Harris, Bin Yu, Cheryl Guido, Doug Karr, Edward Melton, Guy Robert Jackson, Shareen Larmond, Edward Melton, Sineria Ordonez, Paul Puente, Mou Sarkar, Lizandra Vazquez, and Bobbie Henderson. Board staff present included Juliet Stipeche, Desmond Taylor, AJ Dean, Russell Tomlin, Carl Salazar, Jennifer Graves, Luisa Guerra-Martinez, Sabrina Parras, Parker Harvey, Melissa Steinmetz, Shawanna Thompson, Janine Haynes, Brittany Eaton, Crosby Brito, Mohammad Ahmadizadeh, Kevin Rodney, Ashley Glenn, Wen Zheng, Jennifer Starling, Jessica Smith, Jenny Johnson, Jeanette Dela Cruz, Phillip Garcia, Freyah Richard, Ron Borski, Alexandra Mallett, Lacy Wolf, and Sable Harris-Buck. Chair Heskamp provided the following report of the joint meeting:

The meeting covered key updates related to labor market challenges, employer engagement activity, rapid response efforts, and the formation of new advisory councils. As part of the One-Stop transformation, Business Consultants and Recruiters are now aligned under one structure. This reduces fragmentation, improves responsiveness, and gives employers a single point of access for recruitment, hiring, and training services. Employer services staff are now embedded on-site and equipped to quickly respond to employer needs with targeted job matching and labor market insights.

Ron Borski provided a labor market update, noting slower job growth—down to 0.9% as of June—and an unemployment rate of 4.3%. Key sectors showing growth include healthcare, logistics, and mining, while construction and manufacturing continue to face persistent labor shortages.

The Rapid Response team is actively supporting layoffs across multiple industries, including major reductions at Chevron, and several non-profit organizations. A key concern is the anticipated contractor layoffs at NASA's Johnson Space Center, potentially impacting 2,500 workers. A three-phase response plan is underway to assist affected staff with reemployment services and training.

Board staff also shared progress on the development of employer advisory councils. A general advisory committee is being formed, with bylaws completed for healthcare and construction sectors. Confirmed employer participants include UTMB, HCA, BrandSafway, and others, with meetings planned for Fall 2025.

Staff also highlighted several employer-led initiatives, including:

- Tecnofil USA's \$22 million investment and 160 new jobs
- New LVN training programs with AccessHealth and Baylor St. Luke's
- IT career workshops and internships for STEM students
- Workforce planning tied to construction, sports venue development, and the 2026 World Cup
- The water sector continues to lead innovation with our apprenticeship model and the SETH pre-apprenticeship program, now expanding to ISDs through state funding.

Finally, the Employer Engagement team represented the Board at the Texas Workforce Commission's Texas Conference for Employers, connecting with 38 new businesses—many in rural communities—broadening our reach across the region. Looking ahead, the committee will focus on strengthening advisory groups, increasing industry outreach, and exploring best practices from other workforce boards to inform our One-Stop strategy.

Chair Heskamp concluded his report. No action was taken.

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

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

Key accomplishments during this period include:

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

## **Social Media**

### **Strategic Social Media Performance Analysis (January–July 2025)**

From January through July 2025, Workforce Solutions' digital presence evolved substantially, reflecting both the strength of targeted platform strategies and the growing importance of human-centered, data-informed messaging.

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

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

**Recommendations:**

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

**Instagram: Rapid Engagement Growth and Youth Outreach Potential**

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

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

**Recommendations:**

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

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

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

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

**Recommendations:**

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

**YouTube: Portfolio Cleanup and Targeted Engagement**

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

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

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

**Recommendations:**

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

**Next Steps**

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

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

### **Workforce Solutions News**

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

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

#### **June 2025: Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services**

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

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

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

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



### **July 2025: Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Careers**

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

Featured guests included:

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

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

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

### **Impact and Media Reach**

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

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

### **June Event Highlights:**

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

**July Event Highlights:**

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

These job fairs reflect more than numbers; they demonstrate the power of intentional media engagement, community partnerships, and authentic storytelling to inform the public, inspire action, and connect residents to economic opportunity.

**Community Outreach**

**Strategic Communications and Outreach Update**

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

**WFS Regional Newsletter**

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

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

**Career Services Guidebook**

We also developed the first full draft of the Workforce Solutions Career Services Guidebook—a comprehensive and user-friendly resource that consolidates all programs, eligibility requirements, and service access points for job seekers, employers, and community partners. Designed to serve both internal teams and external audiences, the guidebook reflects our commitment to accessibility and clarity across the region's complex workforce system. Final edits are currently underway to ensure alignment with current service models and policy guidance. The Board was provided an opportunity to vote on the cover design for the new guidebook, and at last count, design 5 was the clear frontrunner.

**Staff Resource Guide: Collateral & Communications Tools**

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

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

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

### **Disaster Resource Guides**

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

### **SJC Apprenticeship Grant: Branding & Outreach**

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

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

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

### **CAEL Conference Presentation**

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

### **Website Redesign and Content Strategy**

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

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

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

### **WIOA Local Plan Approval**

On June 30, 2025, Governor Greg Abbott approved the GCWB's WIOA Local Plan. The final plan has been published to [wrksolutions.com](https://wrksolutions.com), and the link was submitted to the TWC on July 14. This milestone affirms our strategic alignment with state and federal workforce priorities and positions the Board for continued impact.

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

Chair Karr concluded his report. No action was taken.

- h. **Education Committee Report on Special Workshop on the Financial Aid Support Center (Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson):** Dr. Henderson reported that a special called hybrid meeting of the Education Committee occurred on June 17 at 7600 W Tidwell Rd. Houston, TX, 77040, for the purpose of a special workshop on the Financial Aid Support Center. Board members present included Mark Guthrie, Mike Ferdinand, Paul Puente, Joyce Johnson, Edward Melton, Margaret Oser, Lenora Sorola-Pohlman, Dr. Allatia Harris, Lizandra Vasquez, Bin Yu, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Doug Karr, Cheryl Guido, Mou Sarkar, Rachel Cevallos, Shonda Below, and Carl Bowles.

Board staff present included Brittany Eaton, Jennifer Graves, Jacinth Chapman, Kevin Rodney, Cheryl Sheppard, LaToya Casimere, Desmond Taylor, Gabi Gonzalez, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Helena Leday, Philip Garcia, Ron Borski, Sabrina Uy, Ginger Hunter, Carl Salazar, Melissa Steinmetz, Jennifer Starling, Kristi Hayman, Esmeralda Mata, and Austin LaToya.

Chair Henderson provided the following report of the meeting: The workshop was deemed essential based on TWC's launching of the Texas Child Care Connection last January, a new statewide application system designed to streamline the process for families applying for or recertifying their childcare scholarships. In March, we discussed how the system operated on a case management model,

while the Support Center had traditionally used a task-driven department approach. This structure often led to delays in providing timely assistance to families.

In partnership with EQUUS, Board staff began working on improvements simply to make things better. The workshop provided details on the current structure and the specific changes underway at the Support Center to improve our services. All changes are scheduled to be implemented and operational by October. Following the session, a tour of the Center was provided. Board members had an opportunity to speak personally with many of the staff while also taking a step-by-step walk of transformation, allowing us to learn the meaning of how our Workforce Solutions will transform lives.

Chair Dr. Henderson concluded her report. No action was taken.

## 8. Action Items

- a. **Budget Committee Report and Action Item (Committee Chair Carl Bowles):** Chair Bowles reported that the Budget Committee met in a hybrid meeting on July 28, 2025, at 10:00 am. In Room 2D at the HGAC offices at 3555 Timmons Ln. Houston, TX, 77027. Board members present included Mark Guthrie, Adrian Ozuna, Bin Yu, Mou Sarkar, Paul Puente, Rachel Cevallos, Doug Karr, Melissa Gonzalez, Alan Heskamp, and Marie Arcos. Chair Bowles provided the following report of the meeting:

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

Another item discussed during the Committee meeting was the proposed MASA block grant included in the President's FY2026 Budget. Committee members raised multiple concerns regarding potential funding reductions and the implications for local authority under the MASA structure. Staff will provide additional data on career office space utilization and associated costs for future planning.

In closing, Chair Bowles informed the Board that item 8a(ii) Approval and submission of the revised 2025 budget was being pulled due to pending submission of budgetary information by the H-GAC.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the Budget Committee Charter in the form attached to the Board package. The motion passed.

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

- b. **Procurement Committee Report and Action Items (Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson):** Chair Dr. Henderson reported that the Procurement Committee met in a hybrid meeting on July 29, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., at 3555 Timmons Ln. Houston, TX, 77027 in Room 2D. Board members present included Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Mark Guthrie, Doug Karr, Cheryl Guido, Jeff LaBroski, Adrian Ozuna, Paul Puente, and Guy Robert Jackson.

Dr. Henderson inquired of Board Chair Guthrie and Board members if there were any objections to consolidating all the award contracts presented by the Procurement Committee in the total amount of \$451,135,000 (see entire list below).

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

There were no objections; therefore, A motion was made and second to authorize staff to negotiate and execute contracts in accordance with the funding amounts, providers, and program purposes outlined in the chart above, not to exceed

\$451,135,000. Ms. Grace Rodriguez inquired about Baker Ripley's performance improvement plan status. Executive Director Stipeche responded that Board staff is working closely with Baker Ripley on some of the challenges with child care payments that occurred last year, particularly on closeouts. Moreover, we are continuing conversation with them to better understand how they are handling the reconciliation of invoices. Additionally, there were some challenges this year, prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with child care payments that were issued. So, we continue to work with them to ensure they have the proper paperwork with the bank to increase the cap for the allocations of funds received during the summer months to ensure payments may continue without interruption. Our team is going to be working closely with them to ensure all these issues are adequately addressed in coordination with the Financial Aid Payment Office, and we look forward to providing you a status update. Board members Margaret Oser and Lizandra Vazquez abstained from the vote. The motion passed.

Chair Henderson concluded her report, and no further action was taken.

## **9. Presentations and Information:**

### **a. Performance and Production: Report on the system's performance and production (Philip Garcia)**

#### **Reporting Infrastructure Enhancements**

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

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

#### **Provider Collaboration & Support**

Strengthening collaboration with our service providers remains a top priority. To sustain performance gains and address persistent reporting challenges, we have expanded our provider engagement strategies. Bi-monthly data coordination sessions with service provider teams have been established, offering a platform for updates, alignment on methodologies, and discussion of system-wide best practices. These sessions foster a culture of shared

accountability and continuous improvement. In parallel, a robust training series has been deployed to both provider staff and Board personnel, featuring enhanced tools such as personalized interviewing techniques and improved career assessments. These resources are designed to better equip staff to guide job seekers toward quality employment pathways, improving both individual and system-level outcomes.

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

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

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

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

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

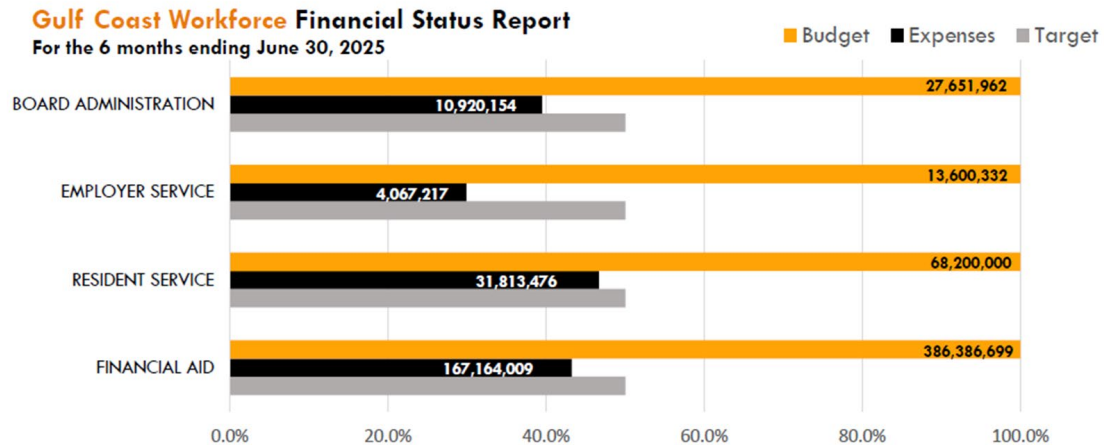
Overall, FY2025 Q1 and early Q2 performance underscore the strength of the Gulf Coast regional workforce system. Results reflect the impact of strategic investments in data infrastructure, frontline training, and provider collaboration. While certain areas require targeted improvement, the region remains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

Several questions ensued at the conclusion of the Performance and Production report. Mr. Adrian Ozuna inquired if the credential rating looks into the past?

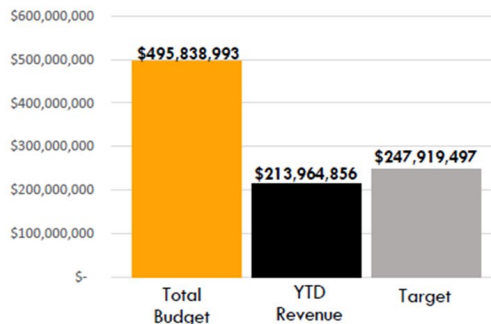


Mr. Garcia responded that people who exited as far back as 2023 are still visible on current reporting; therefore, causing a lag in data compared to state targets. Ms. Sandra Taylor asked if the State is essentially walking away from youth reporting? Mr. Garcia responded that the State is having extreme challenges with reporting, particularly among youth programs. We are working diligently with the State to help determine a solution.

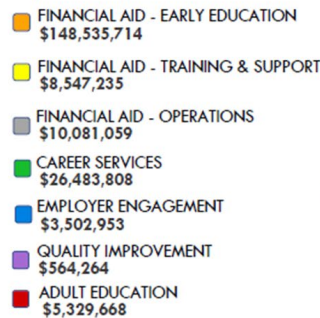
**b. Expenditures: Report on the Board's budget and expenditures (Brandi Brown)**



**Workforce Revenue**



**System Expenses**



**c. A Look at the Economy: Update on the Labor Market (Parker Harvey and Mohammad Ahmadizadeh):** Slides to full presentation attached in Board packet.

**d. Communications and Media Update (Russell Tomlin):** A video presentation of the Texas City Open House on May 22, 2025.

**10. Other Business:** Board Chair Guthrie congratulated the Board, Board staff, and all those who participated in the procurement process to help us see through our vision.

He also shared his thanks to outgoing career office contractors Interfaith of the Woodlands and Equus for their support to the Board over the years.

11. **Adjourn:** Board Chair Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 12:08 pm.

## GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

### **ARCOS, MARIE**

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County: Harris

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

### **BAKER, JENNIFER**

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

### **BELOW, SHONDA**

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

### **BOWLES, CARL**

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

### **DOBERT, MICHAEL**

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

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County: Matagorda

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County: City of Houston

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**GUIDO, CHERYL**

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

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

**GUTHRIE, MARK****Board Chair**

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County: City of Houston

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

**JACKSON, GUY ROBERT****Vice Chair**

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County: Chambers

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

**HENDERSON, BOBBIE ALLEN****Vice Chair**

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

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County: City of Houston

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

**KARR, DOUG**

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County: Montgomery

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

**LABROSKI, JEFFREY**

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

**LINDSEY, SUSAN**

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

**LOWE, JONATHAN**

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

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County: Harris

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**MELTON, EDWARD**

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**MONTELONGO-OYERVIDEZ, SARA**

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Term: August 12, 2025, thru December 3, 2026

**ORDONEZ, SINERIA**

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

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

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

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

**WORKFORCE BOARD KEY STAFF:**

Juliet Stipeche, Executive Director

Desmond Taylor, Program Administrator, Board Relations

Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Senior Planner, Board Relations

Kristi Rangel, Assistant Director of Workforce

AJ Dean, Senior Manager, Fiscal Administration and Contract Management

Russell Tomlin, Senior Manager, Career Services

Sabrina Uy, Senior Manager, Quality Assurance and Risk

Carl Salazar, Senior Manager, Strategy and Innovation

Parker Harvey, Manager for Regional Economic Analysis

Alexandra Mallet, Executive Assistant

Houston-Galveston Area Council

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# **GULF COAST WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD COMMITTEES**

## **Audit/Monitoring**

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

## **Budget**

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

## **By-Laws**

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

## **Career Services**

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

- Paul Puente
- Lizandra Vasquez
- Joyce Johnson

## **Communications**

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

## **Education**

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

- Joyce Johnson

### **Employer Engagement**

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

### **Government Relations**

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

### **Nominating**

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

### **Procurement**

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

### **Report Card**

Appointed by Board Chair as needed.

### **Strategic Planning**

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

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



# Career Services Committee Transition Plan Update

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## Executive Summary

The Career Services Committee presently oversees the most significant system transition in over a decade, as three career services providers, SERCO, EDSI, and BakerRipley, assume operations on October 1, 2025. Two of these service providers are new to this role, making coordinated planning essential to sustain quality, ensure compliance, and minimize disruption for job seekers and employers.

This transition is a cornerstone of the Board's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, directly advancing our four pillars:

- “Business-Forward Strategies” by aligning contracts and staffing to better meet employer demand.
- “Convening Partnerships” by strengthening collaboration across the region with providers, community partners, and Board staff.
- “Increasing Awareness” through stakeholder engagement, communications, and outreach during facility changes.
- “Technology-Driven Innovation” via IT integration, enhanced security protocols, and a new learning management system (LMS).

Key highlights of this report include:

- **Contracts Management:** Negotiation of scopes, budgets, and provisions; facilitation of weekly transition meetings; and streamlined documentation to ensure accountability and provider readiness.
- **Facilities and Property:** Completion of site tours, lease negotiations, and vendor transfers across 20 career offices, impacting more than 250 staff and thousands of customers.
- **Technology:** Transition of IT assets and staff system access; development of a wide-area network; and revised Information Security Standards to safeguard data integrity.
- **Program Operations:** Implementation of the Client Transition Plan through caseload mapping, quality reviews, and targeted outreach to maintain service continuity.
- **Customer Support:** Reinforcement of call center capacity, integration with training efforts, and prioritization of customer-facing positions.
- **Professional Development:** Onboarding of new provider staff, delivery of technical training, LMS vendor evaluation, and strengthened readiness for long-term capacity building.

- **Community Engagement:** Stakeholder meetings and partnerships to expand access points and design future service delivery models that reflect community input.

Together, these actions demonstrate a disciplined and collaborative approach that positions the Board to enter the next phase of service delivery in the Gulf Coast region with stability, innovation, and impact.

### **1. Contracts Team**

The Contracts Team has been the anchor of this transition, carrying the dual responsibility of negotiating complex scopes of work and budgets while also serving as the central hub for coordination across departments, providers, and leadership. Their disciplined approach has reduced delays, increased transparency, and provided incoming providers with the clarity needed to prepare for a strong launch on October 1, 2025. By instituting recurring meetings and shared action logs, the team has transformed what could have been a fragmented process into one marked by accountability, visibility, and steady progress.

Key responsibilities have included facilitating weekly transition meetings, coordinating activities across departments and providers, managing the flow of transition-related documentation, and continuing the Board's core function of negotiating contract terms, scopes, and budgets. Each of these tasks has required balancing immediate contractual obligations with the extraordinary demands of a large-scale system transition.

The team's active collaboration with program staff, Board leadership, and external providers has allowed them to quickly identify documentation gaps, track progress, and adapt to emerging needs. While differences in provider feedback on scopes and budgets have necessitated ongoing clarification, the Contracts Team has leaned into these challenges with structure and consistency. The discipline of recurring check-ins and shared accountability tools has helped sustain momentum and mitigate the natural difficulties of aligning multiple stakeholders on accelerated timelines.

Looking ahead, the team will continue weekly check-in meetings and move toward finalizing all contract documents for signature. Support from the Career Services Committee and other stakeholders will be essential in reinforcing expectations with providers and prioritizing policy and procedural decisions that directly shape contract terms. This alignment will ensure that the transition remains on schedule and that new providers are positioned for success from the outset.

### **3. Facility and Property Team**

The Board's Facility and Property Team has been instrumental in guiding the physical and operational aspects of the Board's transition plan. Their efforts have ensured business continuity, compliance, and operational efficiency across a large and complex network of

career offices, directly supporting the stability of services for both customers and staff. Since the last Board meeting, the team conducted extensive site tours with incoming and outgoing providers, offering valuable historical context, and facilitating warm handoffs across twenty (20) offices. These tours, combined with the provision of detailed asset lists, staffing distributions, and priority office designations, enabled new providers to begin planning well ahead of October 1. In total, these transitions affect more than 250 staff members, a scale that underscores the significance of this work.

To track and manage progress, Board staff established a weekly transition tracker, centralized vendor management, and supported the closeout of outgoing providers, including Interfaith, Equus, SerJobs and ACAM. They also coordinated the transfer of essential accounts such as Monday.com and PandaDocs, ensuring continuity in administrative and operational tools. Sharing updated vendor lists and staff information early in the process further improved oversight and created consistency across providers, preventing potential disruptions to service delivery.

Collaboration has been extensive between Board staff and incoming and outgoing service providers. Notably, we have navigated complex lease assumption negotiations involving multiple parties and have been proactive in addressing offices requiring renewals. Where roadblocks arose, particularly with technology infrastructure such as Comcast, Board Member LaVone Jones and Comcast's Lakisha Gilbert provided invaluable support to move agreements forward, for which we are deeply grateful.

Looking ahead, this team is focused on executing leases for eighteen (18) offices, securing certificates of occupancy and fire permits, and completing the transition of key technology and telecommunications systems, including Comcast and RingCentral. They will also oversee vendor transfers, conclude the closure of the Northshore, Westheimer, and Astrodome offices in compliance with the Board's policy, and continue to update property standards in alignment with IT and Information Security requirements.

Please note that additional IT support will be critical in addressing provider inquiries and ensuring the productivity of transition meetings. Guidance on occupancy certifications, often varying by county or municipality, will also be essential to maintaining timelines. Through this comprehensive and coordinated effort, this team has not only sustained operations during a period of intense change but has also reinforced the foundation upon which new providers can succeed.

#### **4. Technology**

The H-GAC Data Services has been integral in ensuring that the Board's transition plan is supported by a secure, functional, and modern technology environment. Their efforts focus on three core areas: the migration of technology assets and data, the reassignment of system access for all staff, and the development of a wide-area network

architecture that will enable consistent, reliable connectivity across multiple providers and offices.

To meet the elevated demands of this transition, two temporary staff were onboarded to manage the surge of Local Information Security Officer (LISO) requests and the high volume of administrative tasks related to user account provisioning. This includes system access mapping, Active Directory account creations and terminations, and multifactor authentication assignments for staff moving between Workforce Solutions and contractor roles. Weekly coordination meetings with Workforce Solutions' IT stakeholders have improved alignment and reduced duplication of effort, while joint planning sessions have advanced the design of the new wide-area network, which will integrate bandwidth allocation, redundancy planning, and endpoint security requirements for the incoming providers.

A significant milestone was the completion of the first draft of the revised Information Security Standards and Guidelines. This updated framework strengthens encryption protocols, establishes new standards for password management and access controls, and aligns with state and federal cybersecurity requirements. These revisions are especially critical as new providers inherit sensitive data systems, including customer case management tools (WIT), financial aid platforms, and vendor communication portals.

The team's work has already produced measurable results: account transitions are being processed on time, network configurations are being tested in advance of provider onboarding, and interim solutions are in place to prevent service interruptions. Collaboration with both external providers (Interfaith, BakerRipley, Equus, EDSI, SERCO) and internal Board staff has created consistent communication channels to identify and resolve issues quickly.

Challenges remain in the migration of Comcast-provided services, particularly the transfer of business-class network accounts. These roadblocks have required exploring alternative service configurations and interim routing solutions. The active engagement of Board Member LaVone Jones and Comcast Business Field Sales Manager Lakisha Gilbert has been critical in troubleshooting and accelerating these processes, as described above.

Looking forward, the team will finalize provider integration into the wide-area network, circulate the completed Information Security Standards and Guidelines for review and approval, and continue to manage user credentialing and secure access transitions. Ongoing alignment with IT stakeholders will ensure that firewall configurations, VPN tunnels, and endpoint protections are in place before October 1, safeguarding continuity of service delivery while raising the region's overall cybersecurity posture.



## **5. Program Operations**

The Program Operations Team has taken the lead on the Client Transition Plan, which is at the heart of ensuring service continuity for job seekers during this provider transition. This plan integrates caseload mapping, quality reviews, and timely client notifications to protect customers from experiencing service gaps and to maintain compliance across federal and state programs.

In recent weeks, the team developed and implemented a Case Reassignment Plan to manage the smooth transfer of customer cases, ensuring accuracy in caseload distribution and consistency in client communication. They also launched the Direct Funded Customer Outreach Plan (effective September 2, 2025), which includes tailored outreach strategies for TANF/Choices, SNAP, and RESEA customers. Recognizing the importance of staffing readiness, the team created a Hiring Priority Framework that prioritizes compliance-critical and customer-facing positions. This ensures that the most essential services are staffed first, reducing the risk of disruption as new providers come on board.

These efforts strengthen both compliance and customer confidence. By standardizing reassignment processes, verifying outreach efforts, and aligning staffing strategies with transition milestones, the Client Transition Plan has enhanced system readiness. At the same time, the team is managing the inherent challenge of coordinating caseload transfers while keeping day-to-day services uninterrupted. Careful alignment of resources and communication across providers and staff remains central to meeting these goals.

Looking ahead, Program Operations will continue to monitor the reassignment tracker and outreach logs on a weekly basis, providing technical assistance where needed. They will also oversee provider hiring progress and conduct post-transition evaluations to identify lessons learned and embed continuous improvement into future operations.

## **6. Customer Support**

Customer Support has played a vital role in sustaining service quality and responsiveness throughout this period of change. As the “front door” for many customers, their efforts have ensured that communication lines remain open, inquiries are addressed quickly, and client concerns are escalated appropriately during the transition.

To prepare for the expected surge in demand, the team added additional staff to handle increased call and email volumes. They worked closely with Professional Development and FAPO Training to coordinate provider onboarding and training, while collaborating with Program Operations to ensure that critical customer-facing positions were staffed first. These measures have allowed the team to efficiently triage customer inquiries and route them to the right staff or providers, minimizing delays in service.

The team is also addressing structural challenges, such as establishing prime and sub-LISO roles within each provider organization and ensuring that Office Managers and Supervisors are in place to create clear lines of responsibility. Clarifying roles and building consistent organizational structures across providers is improving customer and vendor confidence in the transition process.

Next steps include continued support for onboarding and staff reassignment within the Financial Aid Communication System, which serves as the central tool for tracking customer concerns, inquiries, and complaints. By embedding this tool into transition activities, the Customer Support Team is strengthening accountability and ensuring that customer needs remain at the center of service delivery.

## **7. Professional Development**

Preparing staff and providers to meet new expectations has been a cornerstone of the transition, and the Professional Development Team has advanced multiple initiatives to build readiness and capacity. They facilitated technical assistance and case review training with EDSI and SERCO staff, covering critical systems such as WIT, DocuWare, and Gazelle. They completed evaluations of leading Learning Management System (LMS) vendors and advanced the top-scoring option for procurement review by the Contracts Team. In parallel, they coordinated provider onboarding activities in partnership with Youth Services, Program Operations, and H-GAC Communications. To support long-term sustainability, the Board also posted the position of Program Administrator – Learning Systems, strengthening our ability to manage training infrastructure in-house.

The impact of this work is measurable. Training evaluations demonstrate significant gains in staff knowledge, with change management scores increasing from 79 to 96 between pre- and post-tests. Onboarding and policy sessions have heightened provider awareness of compliance expectations and service standards. Procurement planning positions the region to transition to a modern LMS in early 2026, which will modernize training delivery and improve consistency across providers.

The inability to extend the current LMS contract with Latitude Learning posed a challenge, but contingency plans were put in place. Providers have been authorized to track training internally while Board staff work with Data Services to export, store, and monitor training data during the interim. This ensures accountability without delaying the transition.

Moving forward, the team will continue to evaluate training needs under the revised job description framework, finalize onboarding plans, and provide targeted technical assistance for case reviews. They will also coordinate system integration training for new providers and launch quarterly continuing education sessions to sustain skill

development across the network. Ongoing Committee engagement in reviewing LMS procurement outcomes will be vital to ensuring that the region transitions successfully to a modernized training infrastructure.

## **8. Community Engagement**

The Community Engagement Team has ensured that stakeholders remain informed, engaged, and confident during this period of significant change. Their efforts have focused on building trust, expanding access, and gathering input that will shape the Board's long-term service delivery strategies.

In August and September 2025, the team hosted community meetings tied to facility changes at the Westheimer, Northshore, and Astrodome offices. These meetings provided critical updates, addressed community concerns, and reinforced the Board's commitment to delivering services directly within neighborhoods. Engagement also extended beyond updates: the team launched an internal Virtual Services Survey, gathering staff input to inform strategies for expanding remote and technology-enabled services.

The impact has been immediate and positive. Community meetings strengthened relationships with stakeholders, facilitated new access point partnerships with organizations such as San Jacinto College–North, East Harris County Empowerment Council, and Gulf Coast Community Services Association, and generated valuable insights into how the Board can expand accessibility. Collaboration with Board managers and program teams has ensured that this feedback is integrated into planning for future service delivery models.

Looking ahead, the team will continue to identify new community partners who can serve as access points and strategic collaborators. While no immediate challenges have been identified, the ongoing task will be to expand and formalize partnerships that enhance service delivery, particularly in underserved areas. Stakeholders who wish to connect with Community Engagement on partnership opportunities are being directed to the centralized contact at [CommunityEngagement@wrksolutions.net](mailto:CommunityEngagement@wrksolutions.net), reinforcing transparency and accessibility.

## **Conclusion**

The scope and complexity of this transition cannot be overstated. In less than a year, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board has coordinated the handoff of contracts, facilities, technology, operations, customer support, professional development, and community engagement across a regional network that serves thousands of employers and job seekers each day. What might have been a moment of disruption has instead become an opportunity to modernize our systems, deepen our partnerships, and strengthen our long-term capacity to serve the Gulf Coast region.

Each team has demonstrated remarkable discipline and collaboration, whether through the Contracts Team negotiating and aligning scopes and budgets, Facilities and Property securing continuity across 20 offices and 250 staff, Technology reinforcing cybersecurity and connectivity, Program Operations managing client caseloads, Customer Support sustaining responsiveness, Professional Development preparing staff for new systems, or Community Engagement fostering trust and expanding access points. Together, these efforts embody the pillars of the Board's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan: Business-Forward Strategies, Convening Partnerships, Increasing Awareness, and Technology-Driven Innovation.

As October 1, 2025, approaches, the Board is not simply onboarding new providers; it is positioning the region for the future. The systems, standards, and relationships strengthened through this transition will carry forward into the next phase of our work, ensuring that Workforce Solutions - Gulf Coast remains a trusted, resilient, and innovative partner to employers, job seekers, and communities across our thirteen counties. This transition reflects the hard work, foresight, and collective commitment of Board members, staff, and partners. It is a moment of both continuity and renewal: continuity of our mission to connect people with careers and businesses with talent, and renewal of the systems and structures that will allow us to deliver on that mission with even greater impact in the years ahead.

## **Draft Career Services Committee Charter**

### **I. Purpose**

The Career Services Committee of Workforce Solutions is established to provide oversight, guidance, and strategic recommendations related to the design, delivery, and continuous improvement of career services offered across the region. The Committee works in collaboration with the Board and Workforce Solutions staff to review service strategies, program outcomes, and resource allocations to ensure alignment with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's mission, strategic priorities, and compliance with applicable laws and performance standards. Based on its review, the Committee makes recommendations to the Executive Committee or the full Gulf Coast Workforce Board to support effective service delivery and workforce development outcomes.

### **II. Authority**

The Career Services Committee operates as a standing committee of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and is responsible for providing strategic oversight and guidance on the delivery and effectiveness of career services across the region.

The Committee is authorized to:

- Review and recommend strategies for the design and delivery of career services to ensure alignment with Board goals.
- Monitor performance outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of career services programs.
- Review and recommend adjustments to service delivery models, resource allocation, and program priorities.
- Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local workforce development regulations related to career services.
- Recommend policies and procedures that promote continuous improvement and innovation in career services for adoption by the Board.

### **III. Membership**

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

## **IV. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **1. Program Oversight & Evaluation**

- Monitor the design, implementation, and effectiveness of career services across the region.
- Review performance data and outcome metrics to assess program success and identify areas for improvement.
- Support continuous improvement efforts to enhance the quality and accessibility of career services.

### **2. Policy Development & Compliance**

- Ensure career services programs comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations.
- Recommend policies and procedures that promote best practices and innovative approaches in career services delivery.
- Provide guidance on adapting programs to evolving workforce needs and funding requirements.

### **3. Strategic Alignment & Collaboration**

- Ensure career services initiatives align with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's mission, vision, and strategic goals.
- Foster collaboration among Board committees, Workforce Solutions staff, and community partners to maximize the impact of career services.

## **V. Meetings**

- The committee shall meet at least twice a year or more frequently as needed to review career services program performance, address emerging workforce needs, or support strategic planning efforts.
- A majority of members shall constitute a quorum.
- Minutes shall be maintained for all meetings and submitted to the full Board.

## **VI. Conflict of Interest**

All members of the Career Services Committee shall adhere to the Board's conflict of interest policy and disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest related to matters under the Committee's review or decision making. Committee members are expected to act in the best interest of the Gulf Coast

Workforce Board and avoid any personal or financial interest that could compromise their impartiality or the integrity of the Committee's work.

### **VII. Confidentiality**

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

### **VI. Review and Amendments**

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

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

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Board Chair  
Gulf Coast Workforce Board

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Date

# Employer Engagement Committee

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## Update for September 2025

### Executive Summary

This quarter has marked a decisive turning point for our system as we return employer engagement services to a unified one-stop model. This transition is not simply administrative; it is a strategic repositioning that underscores the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's role as a regional leader in advancing "business-forward strategies" pursuant to its current strategic plan. By aligning providers, staff, and partners under a common framework, we are shaping a workforce system that employers experience as coherent, responsive, and results-oriented. We are also anchoring our efforts in rigorous economic analysis to ensure that our strategies are aligned with the realities of the Houston labor market.

Employers now encounter a single intake, a single standard, and a single promise: to meet their workforce needs with speed, quality, and accountability. Internally, our teams are operating with stronger policies, clearer expectations, and enhanced collaboration. These are not procedural changes; they are instruments for competitiveness, designed to ensure that Gulf Coast businesses remain resilient and that workers can access sustainable, high-quality career pathways.

### Current Labor Market Situation

#### July and August 2025

The summer labor market in Houston reflected both the region's cyclical rhythms and the broader national cooling that has defined much of 2025. July brought a sharp seasonal contraction as schools recessed, while August saw only marginal job growth, underscoring a slower pace of expansion. Together, the two months present a mixed picture: continued strength in sectors like health care and construction, but softness in professional services, manufacturing, and leisure industries.

In July, employment fell by 30,500 jobs, nearly one percent, as the government shed 26,600 positions tied to the close of the school year. This marked the largest July decline in government employment in three decades, though consistent with the long-term pattern of temporary layoffs before the fall semester. Outside the public sector, professional and business services contracted by 1,800 jobs, while smaller gains in financial activities, private education and health services, and information partly offset the decline. The region's unemployment rate edged up to 4.5 percent, though the seasonally adjusted rate held steady at 4.3 percent. Year-over-year, Houston still recorded a net gain of 62,600 jobs (+1.8%), with private



education and health services, trade and transportation, and leisure and hospitality as leading contributors.

August offered limited recovery. Total employment increased by just 100 positions, a performance well below the historical August average of more than 7,000. Gains in government (+4,200), private education and health services (+2,800), and construction (+1,900) were balanced by declines in leisure and hospitality (−2,600), professional and business services (−2,400), and manufacturing (−2,100). Financial activities, information, and mining and logging also slipped modestly. The result was an unemployment rate of 5.0 percent, above both state and national averages, with all thirteen Gulf Coast counties experiencing increases. Rates ranged from 6.6 percent in Matagorda County to 4.4 percent in Colorado County; among major municipalities, Baytown posted the highest unemployment at 7.7 percent, while League City remained lowest at 4.2 percent.

Despite subtle overall growth, Houston's labor market continues to show resilience in several key areas. Health care employment has expanded by nearly 12,000 jobs so far in 2025, reflecting long-term demographic demand and the region's concentration of medical institutions. Construction has remained steady, supported by infrastructure investment and industrial development, while logistics and warehousing continue to advance within the broader trade and transportation sector. At the same time, professional services, and manufacturing—two sectors with outsized influence on Houston's economy—are under pressure from energy market caution, weaker national industrial demand, and restrained business investment.

The Workforce Solutions Index (WSI) registered 3.59 in August, its twenty-third consecutive month below the equilibrium level of 4.0. This indicates that jobseekers still outnumber postings, though the gap has narrowed modestly with more openings posted in recent months. The persistence of this imbalance underscores the importance of accelerating job matching and reskilling efforts to reduce friction in the labor market.

Taken together, the July and August data depict a labor market that is steady but slowing. For the Board, the evidence affirms current strategic priorities: deepening pipelines in health care, expanding training in construction and logistics, and targeting reskilling and rapid reemployment in industries facing headwinds. While the region is not immune to the broader national slowdown, its diversification across education, health care, energy, and trade positions Houston to navigate this period with a measure of stability and to respond quickly as conditions improve.

## Sector and Industry Updates

### Building & Construction

Board staff is coordinating with stakeholders on some of the region's most consequential projects. The Buffalo Bayou Reclamation Project, a ten-year initiative spanning Memorial Park to the Turning Basin, is being supported with aligned workforce and training resources. For the George R. Brown Convention Center expansion and the new hotel at Houston First, we are ensuring registered apprenticeship programs are embedded into contracts. We continue to collaborate with the Astros organization and Sports Authority on the stadium garage project, emphasizing construction methods and long-term workforce operations.

Through partnerships with Burns & McDonnell and Houston ISD, we are designing post-graduation pathways in pipefitting and electrical, while ongoing engagements with LBJ and Ben Taub Hospital projects (valued at over \$2.1 billion) underscore our ability to influence large-scale construction workforce planning. We are also participating in disaster relief workforce strategy discussions with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and local commissioners, ensuring skilled trades are positioned to support recovery and resilience. Looking ahead, we are actively engaged in World Cup 2026 workforce planning in collaboration with the Harris County Sports Authority, FIFA, and the AFL-CIO.

### Life Sciences & Healthcare

Our healthcare partnerships continue to expand. At UTMB, we supported CNA Apprenticeship Application Grant submissions and multiple apprenticeship proposals. Harris Health is advancing the design of registered apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities for youth and adults, while Baylor/St. Luke's is piloting an upskilling pathway from PCA to LVN. We have also been collaborating with Dwyer and Launchpoint CDC to graduate at least 500 CNAs since the program's inception approximately two years ago. We strengthened rural outreach through the OakBend Healthcare Roundtable in Wharton County and by attending the AccessHealth Annual Breakfast. In the innovation space, we delivered a presentation to Portal Innovations and its member companies, and collaborated with the Greater Houston Partnership's Life Sciences Committee as new biotech and pharma firms enter the region.

Finally, another big story involves Eli Lilly's commitment to a landmark \$6.5 billion investment in a new biopharmaceutical manufacturing campus in Houston: one of the largest single life sciences investments in Texas in recent years. The facility, planned on 236 acres in Generation Park, will focus primarily on producing active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) for Lilly's new oral GLP-1

obesity drug, as well as small molecule therapies in oncology, immunology, and neuroscience.

Construction of the facility is expected to generate approximately 4,000 jobs, while once operational it will employ around 615 scientists, engineers, technical staff, and support personnel with average salaries well above regional norms. The company aims to have the campus functional within five years.

Lilly selected Houston after evaluating over 300 potential sites across 40 states, citing Texas's robust technical labor pool, chemical engineering capacity, infrastructure, and favorable business environment as key differentiators. In support of the project, the State of Texas has awarded \$5.5 million under Texas's incentives programs, and the facility qualifies for tax benefits under the Jobs, Energy, Technology, and Innovation Act.

In short, Lilly's investment signifies a deepening of Houston's role in advanced pharmaceutical manufacturing and creates credible demand for technical talent: skills in chemical synthesis, lab operations, biotech production, regulatory compliance, and digital manufacturing systems. We can anticipate meaningful employment growth, a catalyst for innovation partnerships, and opportunity for our workforce development system to supply the talent necessary for success.

### Information Technology & Innovation

Our commitment to technology and innovation remains strong. We are preparing for Tech Fest Live (November 12–13, 2025), ensuring the Board's presence at this premier STEM and workforce showcase. We are promoting Mark Cuban's AI Academy, a national initiative to expand access to AI and machine learning for underserved youth. This aligns with our mission to ensure future workforce readiness. We also participated in the inaugural Board Meeting of St. Michael's Academy's Career and Technical Education (CTE) school, reviewing evaluation results, financial dashboards, and long-term strategic plans. Finally, our leadership role in the Bridges to Science organization, where our very own Amber Jefferson was elected, Vice President, positions us to expand STEM access through the upcoming Houston Science Festival.

### Community Engagement

Strong community partnerships remain central to employer engagement. We convened the Wharton Career Taskforce Meeting with federal and local partners to strengthen workforce planning across Wharton, Matagorda, and Fort Bend Counties. We also continued our support for the Institute for Homeland Security at Sam Houston State University, integrating wastewater management and other essential industries into ISD career pathways. These efforts highlight how we

leverage community and industry collaborations to expand pipelines across both traditional and emerging fields.

### Policy Development and Continuous Improvement

Policy alignment remains central to our credibility with employers. We are currently working on an “On-the-Job Training” policy that sets a \$15 per hour wage threshold and prioritizes high-skill, high-growth occupations and targeted industries. Structured exceptions are permitted for healthcare and rural contexts, provided a wage progression plan is in place. Our emerging Registered Apprenticeship policy emphasizes employer-led sponsorship, ETPL alignment, and robust data-sharing to strengthen credential attainment reporting. A dedicated ETPL liaison is addressing educational and training gaps, such as Surgical Technician training, while our Rapid Response protocols are being enhanced to guarantee timely contact with displaced workers and accelerated reemployment.

### Risk Management and Accountability

As we transition our employer engagement services back into a one-stop model, we recognize that transitions of this scale inevitably bring challenges. Some of our contractors are onboarding more smoothly than others, credential reporting continues to lag state benchmarks, and our process for writing and managing job orders has at times been inconsistent. To address these issues, we are taking concrete steps. Executive oversight and performance logs are in place to ensure that contractors meet expectations quickly and consistently.

We are strengthening agreements with apprenticeship sponsors and expanding the use of shorter, stackable credentials so that more workers’ achievements are captured and recognized. And we are centralizing the order writing process, supported by a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system (a tool that tracks employer contacts, job orders, and services) to make the process faster, more accurate, and more transparent. Taken together, these measures demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement, accountability, and the kind of disciplined management practices that build lasting confidence with employers and the community.

### Next Steps and Recognition

At this stage, we are drafting new policies including the proposed OJT policy, the Registered Apprenticeship framework, and the transition to a centralized Order Writing Team. We continue to expand Chamber and EDC partnerships across all 13 counties and are working to deployment a unified CRM with formal data-sharing agreements. We are also proud to announce that we received an award for our collaborative workforce efforts recently by the Filipino American

Chamber of Commerce. The award noted our “unwavering commitment to uplifting communities through inclusive economic opportunities, skills training, and career empowerment.”

### Join Us: Invitation: Information Session on Registered Apprenticeships – October 7, 2025

Following our upcoming October Board Meeting, we invite you to join us for an Information Session on Registered Apprenticeships, hosted by Crosby Brito.

Location: 3555 Timmons Ln, Suite 2D, Houston, TX 77027  
Date & Time: Tuesday, October 7 | 1:00 – 3:00 PM

This session will provide an overview of pre-apprenticeships, Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP), Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (iRAP), and Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees (JATC). The discussion will highlight how each pathway supports workforce development and provides opportunities for skill-building and career advancement. We hope you will join us for this important conversation and contribute your insights as we continue to strengthen employer engagement and talent development across the Gulf Coast region.

### Conclusion

By integrating economic analysis, sector-specific strategies, and strengthened policies, the Board is positioning this region to compete more effectively while advancing accessible opportunities. Our ability to unify employer engagement under a single framework, while remaining responsive to industry-specific needs, demonstrates both agility and foresight. Most importantly, we are ensuring that all stakeholders from employers, providers, educators, and Board members share ownership of a system that is designed to deliver lasting results. Together, we are demonstrating that workforce development is not ancillary to economic growth; it is central to the Gulf Coast’s long-term prosperity.

## Communications Committee

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### Program Area/Strategic Plan Priority

#### Executive Summary

The Communications Committee, chaired by Doug Karr, convened on September 24, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027 (Room 2D). Board members in attendance included Doug Karr, Mike Ferdinand, Lenora Sorola, Cheryl Guido, Lizandra Vasquez, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Dr. Melissa Gonzalez, Mou Sarkar, and Mark Guthrie. Board staff in attendance included AJ Dean, Carl Salazar, Juliet Stipeche, Amber Jefferson, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Jennifer Graves, Philippe Achondo, Abdul Kargo, Jalil Cantero, and Janine Haynes. Leigh Ann Arnold and Tim Lankford from Outreach Strategists also attended and participated.

From July through September 2025, Workforce Solutions–Gulf Coast strengthened its role as the region’s workforce leader through consistent, well-targeted communications. Social media engagement continued to grow, with LinkedIn reinforcing professional credibility, Facebook driving significant traffic to WorkforceSolutionsNews.com, and Instagram reaching younger, more diverse audiences through visual storytelling. Media partnerships extended our impact to more than 2.2 million viewers with nearly \$300,000 in earned media value, led by coverage of the “Who’s Hiring” job fairs and the “Heatwave Heroes” initiative, which showcased both opportunity and community service.

This quarter also advanced several key initiatives tied to the Board’s five-year strategic plan. The *Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast News* newsletter and new Board Member video series deepened transparency and built stronger connections with stakeholders. Communications around the Astrodome and Westheimer office closures framed the transition as a shift toward modern, accessible service delivery, while the upcoming Complete Guide to Services will provide the first comprehensive reference for job seekers, employers, and partners. Looking ahead, the Hiring Red, White & You! job fair during Houston Fleet Week offers another opportunity to demonstrate the Board’s commitment to connecting talent with opportunity across the region.

#### Report

##### **Social Media Performance**

From July through September, Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast’s social media channels continued to demonstrate strong engagement and growth, with performance shaped by both platform-specific strengths and evolving audience behaviors. Across the board, content that leaned into storytelling, visuals, and

community connection outperformed static updates, underscoring the importance of showing our impact through people and opportunities.

## LinkedIn

LINKEDIN		LINKEDIN NEWSLETTER	
Metric	Results	Metric	Result
Impressions	23,056	Total Subscribers	3,180
Reactions	447	Impressions	1,093
Comments	38	Engagement	20
Reposts	8	Article Views	1,550
Engagement Rate	64.3%		

LinkedIn remained our most reliable channel for professional engagement, generating 23,056 impressions with an impressive 64.3% engagement rate. Posts featuring hiring events, success stories, and employer partnerships drew the most reactions (447), comments (38), and reposts (8). The channel is clearly reinforcing Workforce Solutions' credibility among business and professional audiences. Our LinkedIn newsletter continues to build a solid foundation with 3,180 subscribers, a strong number for our region. While subscriber growth is steady, content engagement has been modest, averaging 1,093 impressions and 1,550 article views. This suggests an opportunity to sharpen the newsletter's positioning, ensuring it delivers the same storytelling and practical value that resonates on the main feed.

## Facebook

Metric	Result
Link Clicks	1,112
Views	133,856
Reach	46,717
Content Interaction	1,027
Visits	10,526
Follows	423

On Facebook, reach and visibility remained significant, with 133,856 views and a 46,717 reach. More importantly, the platform continued to play a critical role in driving traffic, producing 10,526 visits to WorkforceSolutionsNews.com. Content tied to job fairs and training opportunities attracted the most clicks, generating 1,112 link clicks and 1,027 content interactions.

That said, growth in new followers was slower, with only 423 new follows during the quarter. This indicates that while our current audience is still engaging, Facebook seems to have reached a plateau. Its strategic value now lies less in expanding audience size and more in reinforcing Workforce Solutions as a trusted hub for resources and opportunities.

## Instagram

Metric	Result
Views	67,692
Reach	6,421
Content Interaction	628
Visits	1,577
Follows	422

Instagram continues to build momentum as a visually driven channel. With 67,692 views, 6,421 reach, and 628 interactions, it is proving especially effective for storytelling around events and community highlights. Engagement levels per impression are notably higher here than on Facebook, showing the platform's growing potential. Like Facebook, Instagram also added 422 new followers, but the qualitative impact is greater: the audience is younger, more diverse, and more responsive to real-time, visual content.

## Key Takeaways

- Video is dominant. Short-form videos and motion graphics consistently outperform static graphics or text-based updates.
- Storytelling is essential. Posts tied to real people. Job seekers, employers, and success stories drive the highest engagement.
- Platform roles are diverging. LinkedIn positions us as a professional thought leader, Facebook serves as a traffic driver, and Instagram is emerging as a channel for visual storytelling with new audiences.
- Newsletter potential is underdeveloped. With a strong subscriber base but modest engagement, it is a tool waiting to be maximized.

## Recommendations

1. Expand Short-Form Video: Increase production of reels and quick testimonials to sustain engagement across LinkedIn and Instagram.
2. Reposition the Newsletter: Sharpen its focus on actionable insights, workforce opportunities, and human stories to boost open rates and article engagement.



3. Double Down on Facebook as a Resource Hub: Prioritize link-rich posts that drive traffic to WorkforceSolutionsNews.com, while recognizing slower growth in new followers.
4. Leverage Instagram for Younger Audiences: Use event-driven stories, behind-the-scenes content, and day-in-the-life features to deepen engagement with emerging demographics.
5. Track Conversions, Not Just Engagement: Build metrics that connect social engagement to tangible outcomes such as job fair attendance, training enrollment, and employer partnerships.

## YouTube

Metric	Result
Views	3,800
Impressions	23,500
View Duration	2m 35s
Subscribers	1,465

This quarter's results confirm that our audiences are not just looking for information. Rather, they want to see themselves in the stories we tell. By leaning into people-first storytelling, short-form video, and platform-specific strategies, Workforce Solutions can strengthen its role as both a trusted resource and a community connector across the Gulf Coast region.

## Workforce Solutions News

OVERALL PERFORMANCE		TOP TRAFFIC SOURCES		TOP GOOGLE SEARCH QUERIES	
Metric	Result	Metric	Result	Metric	Result
Organic Views	5,766	Direct	4,157	Workforce Solutions	672
Total Users	1,903	Google	707	Avoid Employee Layoffs	467
Page Views per User	3.06	SharePoint Hub	456	Texas June Job Losses	426
Average Session Duration	2m 13s				

We have developed and launched a new video series featuring short interviews with Board members. Each segment highlights the professional background,

expertise, and personal motivations of individual members, offering the public a clearer understanding of the diverse perspectives shaping workforce policy and investment decisions across the Gulf Coast region.

This initiative does more than introduce Board members; it humanizes governance by showcasing the lived experiences, industry insights, and civic values that guide Workforce Solutions' strategies. The series also reinforces the Board's role as a convener of leaders from business, education, and community sectors, underscoring the depth of expertise behind our regional workforce system.

The interviews are being published on WorkforceSolutionsNews.com and distributed across Workforce Solutions' social media channels, ensuring wide reach and multi-platform visibility. Several videos have already been released, with additional interviews scheduled for publication in the coming weeks. This phased rollout strategy sustains audience interest over time, creates multiple touchpoints for engagement, and ensures that the full spectrum of voices represented on the Board is eventually shared with the public.

### **Analysis**

- **Community Trust and Transparency:** By putting faces and stories to the Board's leadership, the series builds trust and strengthens the connection between Workforce Solutions and the community.
- **Content Value:** These videos serve as evergreen assets that can be repurposed for newsletters, presentations, and outreach campaigns, extending their value well beyond initial release.
- **Engagement Opportunity:** Early social media data shows that video content, particularly content featuring real people, is among our most engaging. This series leverages that trend effectively.

### **Recommendations**

1. **Integrate Into Campaigns:** Use interview clips in broader campaigns (e.g., job fairs, training initiatives) to link Board leadership directly to system impact.
2. **Cross-Promotion:** Encourage partner organizations, chambers, and employers to share the videos, amplifying reach and reinforcing the Board's community presence.
3. **Measure Impact:** Track not only views and clicks but also secondary outcomes, such as increased newsletter sign-ups, higher traffic to governance pages, or invitations for Board participation in external events.

4. **Highlight Diversity:** Ensure the rollout continues to reflect the Board's diverse representation across industries, geographies, and lived experiences, emphasizing inclusivity as a strategic strength.

This series is more than a communications product; it is a relationship-building tool that positions the Gulf Coast Workforce Board as both accountable and approachable, while deepening public understanding of how workforce policy decisions are made.

### **Media Highlights**

#### **"Who's Hiring" Job Fairs**

Workforce Solutions continued its monthly "Look Who's Hiring" job fair series in partnership with ABC13, reinforcing its visibility as the region's go-to source for employment opportunities.

- **August:** The job fair was hosted at the Acres Homes Multi-Service Center on August 21, 2025. While the planned live segment with reporter Nick Natario was cancelled due to his reassignment to cover the legislative session in Austin, ABC13 did air a preview story spotlighting apprenticeship programming with Harris Health, ensuring that apprenticeship opportunities remained a focus in the broadcast.
- **September:** On September 17, 2025, the job fair was held at the Pearland Recreation Center, in conjunction with the Pearland Economic Development Council's 4th annual "Work in Pearland" event. The preview story highlighted the Burns & McDonnell Construction Academy, emphasizing employer-driven strategies to recruit and train skilled craft and construction workers. The live segment provided valuable context, with Pearland Chamber President Jim Johnson discussing the city's strong business climate, and Russell Tomlin addressing upcoming service changes across the 13-county region.

### **Analysis**

Even with occasional disruptions, the "Look Who's Hiring" series continues to deliver high-value exposure for Workforce Solutions. Preview stories not only keep workforce issues in the public eye but also demonstrate our ability to connect employer needs with community opportunities. The September coverage in Pearland was particularly effective in tying workforce development to local economic growth.

#### **"Heatwave Heroes"**

In August and September, Workforce Solutions partnered with KRIV Fox 26 and labor partners to spotlight community support initiatives during extreme heat conditions. The Houston Gulf Coast Building and Construction Trades Council and

Pipefitters Local 211 donated portable air conditioners and small backup generators to seniors and low-income veterans. Coverage aired both on “Houston’s Morning Show” at 9 a.m. and the station’s streaming program “HTX @10”, ensuring strong broadcast and digital reach. A total of 10 units were distributed during the two-week coverage window, underscoring the community impact of this partnership while aligning Workforce Solutions with a high-profile act of service and compassion during a time of need. This campaign positioned Workforce Solutions as a responsive, community-centered organization aligned with regional partners. The dual broadcast/streaming coverage helped extend visibility across traditional and digital audiences.

### **“Heather Sullivan’s Smart Sense” & CityCast Houston podcasts**

Director Stipeche appeared on two podcasts during September to discuss the state of the local job market and provide job search tips to viewers and listeners. Heather Sullivan’s Smart Sense is streamed on Fox26Houston.com and their FoxLocal app and is hosted by the station’s consumer reporter.

<https://www.fox26houston.com/video/1704885>

CityCast Houston is a daily Houston-focused podcast launched in 2022 and led by former Houston Public Media reporter Laura Isensee. It is part of a larger for-profit network of locally focused journalism podcasts in 13 cities around the country.

<https://houston.citycast.fm/podcasts/how-hard-is-it-to-get-a-job-in-houston-right-now>

### **Other Media Mentions**

ABC13 also included Workforce Solutions in a broader story about a recently retired City of Houston employee having trouble accessing pension payments. Though a brief mention, the story featured one of our career offices as the setting, further reinforcing our presence as a trusted public-facing institution.

### **Media Value and Reach**

Workforce Solutions secured strong earned media value and audience reach throughout the quarter:

	<b>Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE)</b>	<b>Viewership</b>
<b>July</b>	\$76,170.00	385,294
<b>August</b>	\$121,035.00	1,012,319
<b>September</b>	\$93,262.50	706,733
<b>3rd Quarter</b>	\$290,467.50	2,259,822

Analysis: The third quarter generated nearly \$300,000 in media value and reached an audience of more than 2.2 million viewers, validating the effectiveness of our strategic partnerships with ABC13 and KRIV Fox 26. August's apprenticeship coverage and the "Heatwave Heroes" campaign were particularly impactful, driving the highest single month reach of over 1 million viewers.

### **Measurement Notes**

It is important to note that streaming newscasts cannot currently be quantified in terms of viewership or Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE). While these segments extend our reach and visibility, especially among younger and digital-first audiences, their impact is not captured in the traditional broadcast metrics presented in this report.

Additionally, in July 2025 Outreach Strategists transitioned to a new media monitoring vendor. This change was made to better track streaming events and live digital segments, such as the "Look Who's Hiring" broadcasts that were not fully captured under the previous system. However, because the new vendor relies on a different dataset and calculation methodology, the reported AVE figures appear significantly lower than those in prior reports. While the numbers shown here may understate total media value, they more accurately reflect today's media landscape by including both traditional and streaming coverage.

### **Community Outreach**

#### **Workforce Solutions - Gulf Coast News**

The third issue of Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast News was released in September 2025, continuing to establish the newsletter as a vital channel for informing stakeholders, employers, and the broader community about the Board's leadership in workforce development.

The issue opened with a message from Executive Director Stipeche, underscoring the Board's commitment to aligning training, employment, and economic opportunity. This introduction also celebrated two milestones: the Pinnacle Award recognition and the Board's continued progress in advancing youth-focused initiatives, reinforcing Workforce Solutions' role as a driver of innovation and opportunity.

Throughout the edition, readers were provided with a mix of strategic highlights and practical resources:

- Key Events: Coverage of the upcoming Hiring Red, White & You veterans hiring event and promotion of the 19th Annual Houston White Cane Safety

Day, showcasing Workforce Solutions' support for veterans and individuals with disabilities.

- Innovation Recognition: Announcement of the Diamond Pinnacle Technology Award, demonstrating the Board's leadership in workforce modernization and technology-driven solutions.
- Forthcoming Resources: A preview of the Complete Guide to Services, which will serve as a comprehensive tool for job seekers, employers, and community partners.

The newsletter also included:

- A Board Member Spotlight featuring Chair Mark Guthrie, giving stakeholders a closer look at the leadership shaping the region's workforce priorities.
- Regional updates from Matagorda, Fort Bend, and Walker Counties, providing localized insights into economic development initiatives.
- Labor market analysis with a focus on job trends, rising wages, and workforce dynamics in Austin County, connecting data directly to community needs.

The issue concluded by promoting the Workforce Solutions News app, furthering accessibility by ensuring that stakeholders can receive timely updates and resources on demand.

### **Analysis**

This edition of the newsletter reflects a balanced communications approach, celebrating achievements, promoting upcoming events, and providing valuable regional data. By weaving together recognition, resources, and leadership voices, Workforce Solutions is strengthening both its visibility and credibility.

### **Recommendations**

1. Expand Distribution Channels: Encourage partners (e.g., chambers, colleges, civic organizations) to share the newsletter to broaden reach.
2. Leverage Multimedia: Pair key stories with short video or infographic highlights for social media promotion, driving traffic back to the newsletter.
3. Measure Engagement: Track open rates, click-throughs, and downloads of linked resources to refine future editions around the most valued content.

### **The Complete Guide to Services**

Workforce Solutions–Gulf Coast is preparing to release the Complete Guide to Services, a groundbreaking resource that pulls together everything our system offers across the 13-county region into one place. Until now, information about services has been scattered; accessible, but not always easy for job seekers, employers, or even community partners to navigate. This guide changes that.

Designed to be both practical and approachable, the guide organizes programs and resources with clear instructions and links that make it simple for anyone to find what they need. A job seeker can discover training options and support services. An employer can quickly learn about recruitment and hiring assistance. A career office staff member can use it to ensure consistent information is shared across the region. In short, it is a tool that connects people to opportunity with less frustration and more confidence.

One of the most powerful features is the career pathways appendix, which maps out more than 120 high-demand occupations in our region and shows the steps needed to reach them. For young people starting out, mid-career workers looking to retrain, or employers seeking to understand how talent moves through the pipeline, this visual roadmap provides clarity on where opportunity lies and how to get there.

The guide also advances one of the Board's four strategic priorities, increasing awareness of services. Too often, residents and employers don't realize just how much support Workforce Solutions can provide. By making the system transparent and accessible in this way, the guide positions Workforce Solutions not just as a service provider, but as the region's trusted workforce navigator.

More than a reference document, the Complete Guide to Services is an invitation to explore, to participate, and to take advantage of the opportunities our workforce system offers. It's a practical tool with a larger purpose: helping the Gulf Coast community connect talent to jobs, and jobs to a stronger economy.

### **Career Services Guidebook**

The Workforce Solutions–Gulf Coast Career Services Guidebook is a comprehensive how-to guide for service providers. It will bring essential policies, procedures, and standards into one practical reference for daily operations, and promote consistency in service delivery, accountability in operations, and alignment with the Board's strategic goal to improve service delivery. It equips staff with the guidance and tools they need to deliver services effectively and confidently across the system. The guidebook will contain everything from program design and employer engagement to technology use, customer service, compliance, and training. It will be regularly updated as programs evolve and policies and procedures change, making it a living resource that reflects the Board's commitment to clarity, quality, and excellence in serving the region.

### **Career Office Closings**

As part of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's five-year strategic plan, Workforce Solutions prepared for the planned closure of the Astrodome and Westheimer career offices on September 30, 2025. These lease expirations created an

opportunity to transition toward a modernized service delivery model designed to expand access and flexibility across the 13-county region. The central message emphasized a clear commitment: no loss of services for customers. Instead, communications highlighted new and expanded options, including enhanced virtual appointments, improved online tools, and the launch of a mobile application. Messaging also underscored Workforce Solutions' partnerships with libraries, community centers, and local organizations to ensure continued in-person support closer to where people live and work.

To reinforce transparency and trust, community meetings were held on September 10, 2025, providing residents, employers, and partners with details about the transition. We prepared collateral and supported messaging that assured stakeholders that core services (job matching, career counseling, training access, and employer services) would remain fully available, simply delivered in more flexible and accessible ways. By framing the closures not as a loss but as a strategic evolution, Workforce Solutions demonstrated how modernization can strengthen community connections, improve service delivery, and position the organization to better meet the region's workforce needs now and into the future.

### **Hiring Red, White & You!**

Planning is well underway for the 14th annual Hiring Red, White & You! (HRWY) job fair for veterans, scheduled for Monday, November 10, 2025, at NRG Arena Hall C. This year's event carries added visibility and prestige as it will be held during Houston Fleet Week and is officially recognized on the Fleet Week website, thanks to support from the Texas Veterans Network.

Promotional efforts are already moving forward. Flyers for the event have been submitted to, and approved by, the Texas Workforce Commission, ensuring coordinated statewide branding. The venue is prepared to accommodate up to 150 employers, Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs), and community partners, with dedicated space for both the VA and Workforce on Wheels to provide direct, on-site assistance to attendees.

More than just a job fair, HRWY has become a flagship event for connecting veterans with meaningful employment opportunities, while also showcasing the Gulf Coast region's commitment to those who have served. This year's alignment with Fleet Week is expected to broaden reach, attract new employer participation, and strengthen community engagement.

### **Other Activities**

#### **Website Redesign**

**Current Status:** The website redesign project is moving into its final stages, with content development and technical build-out advancing in parallel. From a



communications perspective, this initiative is critical: the new site will serve as the primary digital front door for Workforce Solutions, shaping how job seekers, employers, and community partners experience our brand and access our services.

**Content Phase:** Content creation is nearly complete. Only two pages remain in need of final edits, and a small number of pages require images and media assets before being sent to Planeteria. These tasks are on track to be finished within the coming week. To streamline migration, Planeteria has been granted administrative access to WorkforceSolutionsNews.com to explore options for automating content transfer into the new site. At the same time, initial conversations are being scheduled with the developer of the Workforce Solutions News App to determine whether app content can be sourced directly from the new platform, ensuring consistency and efficiency across channels once the site is live.

**Development Phase:** On the development side, progress has been slower than anticipated, delaying the creation of beta webpages. That said, Planeteria has now begun the build-out process, with page creation expected to start in the final week of September. The new target delivery date for the beta website is December 2, 2025. Following beta delivery, approximately four weeks of additional refinement and testing will be required before the site is ready to launch. Importantly, Planeteria has committed to delivering a fully functional version of the homepage for presentation at the October Board meeting, giving members an early view of the project's design and functionality.

**Target Launch:** Considering the revised development timeline and the December holiday period, the anticipated launch of the new website is now projected for early January 2026. While this remains tentative, current progress and resourcing suggest the goal is achievable. The updated timeline also ensures sufficient time for testing, training, and troubleshooting, which will ultimately support a stronger launch and a better experience for the community.

### **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Workforce Development Month Resolution**

On September 18, Harris County Commissioner, Precinct 4 Lesley Briones presented a resolution to Workforce Solutions-Gulf Coast in recognition of September as Workforce Development Month. Desmond Taylor attended Harris County Commissioners Court to receive the resolution and provided remarks on behalf of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. In those remarks, Desmond shared the GCWB's commitment to strengthening businesses and industries, driving the economic growth of our region, and creating thriving, inclusive communities where everyone has opportunities to earn, learn, and prosper through

apprenticeships, on-the-job training, scholarship opportunities, youth programs, and disaster recovery resources.

## **Conclusion**

This quarter demonstrated how strategic communications can both strengthen Workforce Solutions' visibility and deepen its connection to the communities we serve. From expanding engagement on social media to building trust through earned media partnerships, our efforts are increasingly focused on telling the stories of people and opportunities that define the Gulf Coast region. These efforts are not just about sharing information—they are about positioning the Board as a trusted authority, a transparent convener, and a responsive partner in workforce development.

At the same time, we are laying the groundwork for long-term impact. Initiatives like the Board Member video series, the forthcoming Complete Guide to Services, and the website redesign will modernize how our stakeholders interact with Workforce Solutions and ensure that our services remain visible, accessible, and relevant. By aligning communications with the Board's strategic priorities, whether through awareness, transparency, or modernization, we are building a stronger platform for the future. Looking ahead, high-profile events such as Hiring Red, White & You! and the launch of the new website in early 2026 will offer additional opportunities to demonstrate the Board's leadership and commitment to connecting people, employers, and communities across the Gulf Coast region.

# **Draft Communications Committee Charter**

## **I. Purpose**

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board Communications Committee is established to provide oversight, guidance, and strategic recommendations related to information-sharing with internal and external audiences of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. The Committee works with the Board and staff to review communications strategies to support alignment with the Board's mission, strategic goals, and compliance with applicable laws and requirements. It provides recommendations to the Executive Committee or Gulf Coast Workforce Board accordingly.

## **II. Authority**

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

- Review and recommend social media, website, and applications strategies.
- Monitor performance measurements and recommend changes.
- Review and recommend expenditures related to communications efforts.
- Monitor compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.
- Recommend communications policies and procedures for adoption by the Board.

## **III. Membership**

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

## **IV. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **1. Strategy Development**

- Work to ensure all funding is expended in compliance with grant requirements and financial regulations.
- Collaborate with staff and executive leadership to create communications strategies.
- Create and oversee a comprehensive communications plan. This includes defining key messages, identifying target audiences (e.g., employees, customers, investors, the media, the public), and determining the best channels and tactics to reach them.

### **2. Oversight**

- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of communication efforts. This can be done by tracking key metrics like website traffic, social media

engagement, media mentions, and employee survey results. The findings are then used to make recommendations for improvement.

- Identify and evaluate variances from the budget.
- Recommend adjustments or corrective actions as needed.

### **3. Branding, Messaging, and Planning**

- Ensure consistency in the brand voice and messaging across all communication platforms. The committee helps establish and maintain editorial style guides and corporate identity standards to ensure all content is aligned with the company's values and goals.
- Work with the Board Staff to set annual objectives and a long-term work plan that supports strategic initiatives. This includes budgeting for communication activities and evaluating the effectiveness of their efforts.

### **4. Communication & Reporting**

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

## **V. Meetings**

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

## **VI. Conflict of Interest**

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

## **VII. Confidentiality**

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

## **VI. Review and Amendments**

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

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

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Board Chair  
Gulf Coast Workforce Board

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Date

DRAFT

## Education Committee

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### Update for September 2025

#### Executive Summary

On March 13, 2025, in Room 2D at HGAC, the Education Committee Meeting Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM. In attendance were Vice Chair Doug Karr, Marie Arcos, Rachel Cevallos, Dr. Melissa Gonzalez, and Guy Jackson. The Gulf Coast Workforce Board staff present were Brandi, Brown, Thomas Brown, Jacinth Chapman, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Johnnie Flores, Ashley Glenn, Erica Jefferson, Danielle Knotts, Roderick Peoples, Leni Quick, Kristi Rangel, Cheryl Sheppard, Jennifer Starling, Juliet Stipeche and Russell Tomlin. The meeting concluded at 12:06 PM.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthening early childhood education, workforce development, and financial aid administration amidst significant transitions. The launch of Texas Child Care Connection (TX3C) has introduced systemic challenges, including payment discrepancies and waitlist inefficiencies, which we are actively addressing through strategic engagement with the Texas Workforce Commission. Simultaneously, Early Child Care Quality board staff has nearly completed the process of moving the early education quality work in-house by hiring sixty-six (66) full-time mentors to provide in-person and virtual mentoring support to 1,877 child care programs across the 13-county region.

The Career Pathways division is advancing structured education and training programs, including adult education, teacher apprenticeships, and the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative, ensuring alignment with regional labor market demands. The Teacher Apprenticeship Program continues to stamp its role in strengthening the educator workforce across the region through strategic planning, stakeholder convening, and systems-level insight.

The inaugural program year for Hire Gulf Coast Youth (HGCY) has been one of progress, learning, and strategic change. Our Board has seen stronger outcomes for those we are serving—a sign that our new approaches are helping youth move beyond short-term opportunities and toward long-term stability. Programs like Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) and Jobs Y'all continue to provide critical workforce entry points for young job seekers.

By leveraging data-driven strategies, strengthening stakeholder collaboration, and implementing operational improvements, we are ensuring the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of our workforce and early education initiatives.

## **Early Child Care Financial Aid**

### **Overview**

On January 13, 2025, the Texas Workforce Commission launched Texas Child Care Connection (TX3C), a new statewide application system designed to streamline the process for families applying for or recertifying their child care scholarships. Since the launch, several issues have caused delays and the inability to complete daily operational tasks. Families and providers are feeling the impact of these challenges. Collectively, these problems slow down service delivery and create challenges for families, providers, and administrators.

### **TX3C Updates**

- Waitlist Status-Our waitlist is now 21 months for non-priority cases and 11 months for priority. We have around 50,000 children on the waitlist.
- Extending Recertifications-The recertification link in TX3C is not functioning properly. This makes it difficult to outreach families to recertify. We have extended care for 10 months causing some families to have care for 23 months. TWC is unable to provide a date when the recert link will function. Board staff is working with IT to create a work-around until the link is fixed.

### **Reports & Data Accuracy**

Several reports in TX3C continues to reflect inaccurate data. This creates a barrier as we try to navigate daily tasks.

- Provider payments are still a concern. The Support Center and Payment Office is working together to make corrections prior to payments being released. It is taking several days to process payments.
- Inaccurate recertification and waitlist information: Families are appearing on reports labeled one way, and after review, it is determined that the information is not correct. This potentially leads to each case requiring a manual review prior to notices being sent.
- TX3C does not allow customized reports and is often missing vital information.
- We receive weekly email from TWC with errors that require corrections. While some errors are attributable to user errors, most are due to a glitch in TX3C. The Support Center is currently responsible for making these corrections within the TX3C system which requires a considerable amount of time.

Board staff met with TWC on September 16, 2025; to discuss these concerns and the impact they have on our region.

## **Support Center Hours of Operation**

Effective October 1, 2025, the Support Center will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

## **Next Steps**

We will continue to collaborate with TWC, the Support Center and the Payment Office to correct issues as they arise. We are trying to create temporary fixes until the system is working as expected.

## **Early Childhood Education Quality**

### **Overview**

In March 2025, Board staff started the process of moving the early education quality work in-house by hiring sixty-six (66) full-time mentors to provide in-person and virtual mentoring support to 1,877 child care programs across the 13-county region. This includes:

- Fifty-six (56) Texas Rising Star mentors,
- Four (4) Children with Disabilities mentors, and
- Six (6) Texas Rising Star lead mentors (supervisors).

### **Texas Rising Star and Children with Disabilities Mentors**

- Texas Rising Star mentors provide mentoring and coaching to child care program directors and teachers working towards Texas Rising Star certification and those working towards higher star levels or maintaining their current star levels.
- Children with disabilities mentors provide technical assistance and support teachers serving the growing number of children with disabilities who need additional classroom support, professional development, and implementation of inclusion plans.

### **What we are doing**

- 59 mentors hired – 55 are Texas Rising Star, 4 are Children with Disabilities
- 5 mentors scheduled to start
- 2 mentor positions to be filled
- Provide mentoring services to teachers and administrators in 1,877 Texas Rising Star early learning programs
- Develop inclusion plans and teacher support for 121 children with disabilities across 64 early learning programs
- Provide classroom resources, incentives and professional development early learning programs



- Development of FY26 quality expenditure plan with input from stakeholders – early learning providers, mentors, and early education advisory council members.

### **Revised Organization Chart**

With the addition of sixty-six team members, we re-evaluated the structure of the quality team and made an organizational change to better support and oversee the work and the staff. This includes:

- 2 promotions
- 3 new positions added

## **Early Child Care Local Match Update**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of Local Match is to leverage federal funds by securing local contributions that expand access to child care. Contributions can come from private donors and through the certification of expenditures by public entities. For-profit entities are not eligible to participate.

### **How It Works**

A Local Match agreement with a public entity does not involve the transfer of funds. Instead, the entity certifies specific state and local expenditures that qualify. Examples include:

- Local public entities may certify funds for child care consumer education, referral services, and professional development through childcare center-based lab schools.
- Universities may certify local, non-federal tax revenues expended directly on child care in lab schools, early childhood education, and child development instruction.

### **Why It Matters**

By securing additional contributions, we not only expand access to child care but also position ourselves to potentially receive additional federal funds if they become available. This creates more opportunities to serve children and families in our community.

### **Where We Stand**

- We currently have 28 contributors, though some are struggling to sustain their current level of participation.
- The Gulf Coast Workforce Board's total contribution goal is \$10,332,429.

- Current commitments total \$8,352,193, leaving a gap to be filled.

## **Your Role as Board Members**

Your leadership and connections are vital. You have a unique opportunity to inspire Independent School Districts and Universities to join Local Match, help us exceed our goal, and expand access to quality child care.

## **Career Pathways**

### **Workforce Education and Literacy Update**

The Career Pathways team successfully concluded Program Year 1 of the Workforce Education and Literacy initiative on June 30, 2025. All program data was entered into the state system by July 15, and the final Monthly Performance Report was released on August 13.

While performance data indicates areas for continued improvement, it also reflects significant progress, most notably, surpassing the benchmark for Measurable Skills Gains at 121.97%, demonstrating the effectiveness of our learner-centered, outcomes-driven approach.

### **Strategic Transformation: From Education to Empowerment**

In July 2025, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and the Houston-Galveston Area Council rebranded Adult Education and Literacy to Workforce Education and Literacy Services, marking a bold shift toward a workforce-integrated model. This transformation is not just a rebranding, it's a strategic repositioning that reflects our commitment to:

- Upskilling and reskilling individuals for high-demand careers
- Embedding career pathways into every learning experience
- Aligning instruction with employer needs and regional labor market data
- Supporting transitions to postsecondary education, apprenticeships, and sustainable employment

This new framework ensures that every learner is equipped not only with foundational skills but also with the tools to thrive in today's dynamic economy.

### **Program Year 2: Strategic Focus and Investment**

With a \$6.43 million allocation for Program Year 2025–2026, representing 58% of the previous year's funding, the Consortium has made a mission-aligned decision to prioritize services that directly support:

- Registered Apprenticeships
- Apprenticeship Bridge Programs

- High School Equivalency (HSE) Pathways
- Training Services Leading to Credentials of Value

This strategic focus ensures that resources are directed toward high-impact, high-return initiatives that build a skilled, adaptable workforce.

### Optimized Service Delivery Model

To maximize reach and effectiveness, the Consortium will operate through a refined structure of Direct and Non-Direct Service Providers:

#### Direct Providers & Focus Areas

- Houston Community College (HCC): Digital Literacy IET for ESL learners
- Lone Star College (LSC): HSE, Math Bridge, Microsoft Office Suite for ESL learners
- Region 6 ESC: Workforce orientation, CDL IET, HSE voucher management
- San Jacinto College (SJC): IETs and Pre-Apprenticeship pathways

#### Non-Direct Providers

- Adult Education Center and BakerRipley: Learner follow-up and mobility tracking, enhancing outcomes through community-based engagement

This model ensures that services are aligned with each provider's strengths and regional workforce needs.

### Leadership Transition: Expanding Statewide Impact

As of July 1, 2025, Mahalia Baldini, former AEL State Director, has transitioned into a broader leadership role within the Workforce Development Division. Her expanded portfolio includes oversight of key programs such as Apprenticeships, Skills Development, JET Grants, and Tri-Agency Initiatives. The Consortium remains committed to aligning with state priorities and leveraging this transition to elevate regional impact.

### Tri Agency Convener Grant

#### GCWB Career Pathways Virtual Webinar Curriculum

The launch of our innovative webinar-based curriculum marks the beginning of a transformative approach to content delivery and workforce engagement. This initiative signifies a shift from a compliance-driven framework to one focused on collaboration, creativity, and measurable impact. As our board enhances its role as a recognized Tri-Agency Regional Convener, we are embracing technology not just as a tool, but as a catalyst for fostering engagement, increasing visibility, and building meaningful connections across our region.

We are excited to announce that recordings of these dynamic, interactive webinars are currently taking place. By partnering with Outreach Strategies, we aim to equip employers, educators, community-based organizations, and job seekers with accessible, high-quality resources that strengthen partnerships and align efforts. These webinars will serve as ongoing platforms for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation, expanding our collective capacity to design effective career pathways for young people. Through this initiative, we are laying the groundwork for a resilient workforce ecosystem, driven by shared responsibility, trust, and innovation, to ensure long-term regional success. The GCWB has partnered with Region Six Education Service Center to uplift and provide support for this endeavor.

### **Gulf Coast Pathways Leadership Team**

In the Gulf Coast Workforce Board region, the Pathway Leadership Team (PLT) connects education, training, and employment. This collaborative team includes leaders from education, industry, workforce agencies, and community organizations, focused on building career pathways that meet the needs of local employers and job seekers.

Managed by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, the PLT aligns training programs with labor market demands and coordinates resources among partners. Members include community colleges, school districts, employers, and service providers, working together to design programs that lead to careers in high-demand fields like healthcare, manufacturing, education, and IT.

### **Pathway Leadership Team Members**

Our current Pathway Leadership Team consists of seven 2-year college programs, four members from regional Education Service Centers, one four-year college, five business leaders and two philanthropy leaders. These leaders provide support and strategic alignment to the Gulf Coast Region.

### **Changes on TEA Convener Grant**

The TEA Convener grant has changed its approach to technical assistance. Jobs for the Future (JFF) is no longer the contractor for this service, with their contract ending on August 31, 2025. TEA will now take full responsibility for technical assistance related to the Convener Grant, with one designated TEA representative overseeing assistance for all grantees.

### **Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program**

The Teacher Apprenticeship Program continues to stamp its role in strengthening the educator workforce across the region through strategic planning, stakeholder

convening, and systems-level insight. As we enter Phase 2 of our teacher workforce initiatives, our focus remains on building sustainable pathways into the teaching profession while supporting school districts and education partners with the tools and data they need to succeed. This narrative will provide an update of priorities within the Teacher Apprenticeship department, provide an overview of RTAPs in the Gulf Coast region, and identify funding opportunities related to teacher pathways.

## Funding & Grant Updates

### Driving Innovation Through Strategic Investment

1. HEI Collaboration Fund – Strengthening Organizational Leadership & Resiliency

We have applied for \$100,000 through the HEI Collaboration Fund to support cross-functional efforts between our Youth Services and Career Pathways teams. This funding will enable us to convene multi-generational stakeholders, provide technical assistance to system leaders, and develop a comprehensive Career Pathways Resource Guide that enhances regional alignment and impact.

**UPDATE: On October 1, 2025, the Board received notice of award!**

2. Houston Endowment – Teacher Apprenticeship Expansion

We previously applied for a \$1.3 million grant from the Houston Endowment to sustain and expand our teacher apprenticeship initiatives over the next two years. If awarded, this grant will cover administrative and operational costs, while also providing tiered incentives to teacher apprentices as they progress through their preparation programs. These incentives will be distributed to educators participating in apprenticeship programs across the Gulf Coast region.

3. Award Notifications

Notifications for both Houston Endowment grant applications are expected by October 31, 2025.

4. Texas Workforce Commission – Teacher Externship Grant

We are preparing to submit a \$200,000 grant application to the Texas Workforce Commission to launch a Teacher Externship Program. This initiative will offer current educators hands-on industry experience during the summer of 2026, allowing them to return to the classroom with enhanced, workforce-aligned lesson plans.

The application focuses on four priority industries for our region:

- Construction
- Technology

- Healthcare
- Education

On September 2, 2025, we hosted a stakeholder meeting with CTE directors and superintendents to share details and gather support. Seventeen stakeholders from four school districts participated, and letters of support are expected by September 4, 2025. The Career Pathways team is also collaborating with the Employer Services team to identify host employers for externship placements.

The grant application deadline is September 16, 2025, with award notifications anticipated in February 2026.

## Current Landscape of Registered Teacher Apprenticeships in the Gulf Coast Region

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board continues to lead efforts to gather high-quality data, support program development, and convene stakeholders to strengthen the regional teacher apprenticeship ecosystem. The following chart provides a high-level overview of RTAPs currently operating in the region, including sponsor engagement and program status.

### Current Landscape of Registered Teacher Apprenticeships in the Gulf Coast Region at a Glance

School District Name	Sponsor	Tech Assistance Provider	# of Years in Operation	Total # of Apprentices
Brazosport ISD	Edwell	Edwell	3-4	89
Brazosport College	Edwell	Edwell	3-4	N/A
Columbia-Brazoria ISD	Edwell	Edwell	2	24
Deer Park ISD	Edwell	Edwell	2	14
Hitchcock ISD	Edwell	Edwell	1	TBD
Hutto ISD	Edwell	Edwell	1	67
Sheldon ISD	Edwell	Edwell	1	25
Alief	Edwell	Edwell	0	TBD
Spring Branch	Edwell	Edwell	0	TBD
Ft Bend	Ft. Bend	Region 4	N/A	0
Odyssey Academy	Odyssey Academy	Region 4	1-2	0
Aldine	Aldine ISD	NCGYO	2	0
Tomball ISD	Tomball ISD	NCGYO	2	0

Houston ISD	Houston ISD	NCGYO	2	0
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## Hire Gulf Coast Youth

In November 2024, Board staff proposed issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to create an Eligible Youth Provider List to support delivery of the 14 WIOA Youth Elements—particularly mental health and substance abuse counseling, financial literacy, mentorship, entrepreneurship training, career exploration, immersive experiences, and tutoring. However, with a ~\$2.5 million reduction in WIOA Youth funding earlier this year, the Board determined not to proceed with the RFP release.

## Addressing Service Gaps

To ensure youth still have access to critical supports, staff have taken a more focused approach to building strategic partnerships that fill identified gaps. This includes leveraging community access points and co-location opportunities to maximize resources and create mutually beneficial collaborations.

## Metrix Learning Expansion

One of the most significant solutions is the continuation of Metrix Learning, an eLearning platform offering more than 7,000 courses and hundreds of certifications. For Program Year 2025, Metrix has extended a competitive \$30,000 flat cost for unlimited regional licenses. This investment directly addresses gaps in financial literacy, entrepreneurship training, soft skills, career exploration, and skill gap analysis while also supporting upskilling efforts across the region.

Metrix Learning is already in use by over 100 workforce boards nationwide and provides detailed usage data. This allows staff to:

- Track individual progress and completion rates.
- Monitor effectiveness by age, program, industry, or course.
- Develop customized training plans and curated course bundles tailored to program and employer needs.

Through targeted partnerships and the expansion of Metrix Learning, the Board is addressing service delivery challenges while ensuring regional youth continue to access high-quality skill development opportunities.

## **Summer Initiatives**

### **Summer Earn and Learn**

SEAL is a partnership between Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and Workforce Solutions that provides students with disabilities paid summer work experiences and job readiness training. In March 2025, TWC reduced board targets from 525 to a maximum of 263 placements after referrals had already exceeded 500. Working with VRS, board staff prioritized first-time participants, resulting in 213 youth placed at worksites and 207 completing at least five weeks of experience.

Enhanced workflows, communication protocols, and early planning—along with close engagement from the Board’s Quality Assurance team—strengthened program delivery and contributed to high levels of youth and employer satisfaction. These outcomes reflect the program’s impact in preparing young adults with disabilities for postsecondary education and long-term employment.

We will be hosting a celebration of Paving the Pathway to Success and Summer Earn and Learn at the Children’s Museum of Houston on October 2, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. We invite you to participate and look forward to seeing you there.

### **Summer Jobs**

#### **Hire Gulf Coast Youth (HGCY) Summer Jobs Program 2025**

The HGCY Summer Jobs Program connects young adults ages 16–24 with paid work opportunities that build skills, confidence, and professional networks. In 2025, the program engaged 1,418 youth across the region and hosted six in-person career fairs, where 778 students connected with 79 employers. These efforts led to 125 confirmed hires.

### **Challenges Identified**

- Limited employer follow-through, making it difficult to fully capture hires.
- Outreach to both youth and employers began later than ideal, impacting recruitment and placement outcomes.
- Weaknesses in the Youth Portal created reporting and workflow issues, ultimately requiring the system to be taken offline for reassessment.

### **Solutions Implemented and Planned**

- Stronger, earlier engagement of employers and youth to ensure better alignment and readiness for placements.
- Clearer expectations and guidance for employers and youth on reporting employment outcomes.
- System realignment of the Youth Portal to enhance functionality, streamline workflows, and improve data reliability.



With these adjustments, the program is positioned for a stronger, more coordinated rollout in the upcoming season, with improved employer commitment and a technology platform that better supports program goals.

### Student HireAbility Navigators

The Gulf Coast region has two Student HireAbility Navigators (SHNs) working in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) to expand access to Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Through outreach and collaboration with employers, schools, and community partners, SHNs create opportunities for career exploration, skill development, and transition support.

### Impact

Across these events, SHNs expanded Pre-ETS access by engaging more than 450 students and their families with targeted training, career pathways, employer connections, and adaptive resources. These partnerships demonstrate the power of coordinated outreach to equip students with disabilities for successful postsecondary education, employment, and independence.

### Year-Round Programming

This inaugural program year for Hire Gulf Coast Youth (HGCY) has been one of progress, learning, and strategic change. While the number of youth served is slightly lower than in past years, we are encouraged to see stronger outcomes for those we are serving—a sign that our new approaches are helping youth move beyond short-term opportunities and toward long-term stability.

To date, HGCY has served 1,896 youth through WIOA Youth funds, with 563 participating in work-based learning activities and 604 enrolled in training. Notably, the number of youth in training has nearly tripled compared to prior years, demonstrating that staff are equipping youth with skills that increase employability and earning potential rather than relying solely on temporary work placements. In addition, HGCY supported 23,074 youth through universal job search assistance services, underscoring the broad reach of our efforts.

Performance outcomes reflect this progress. Based on predictive tools, HGCY's Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) is 73.6%, which exceeds the state target of 64.3%. Credential attainment is also showing strong momentum at 54.6%—92.6% of the state target—placing us remarkably close to full achievement. These outcomes highlight the positive impact of the system changes and staff's dedication to guiding youth toward sustainable career pathways.

This year also marked a period of transformation: developing a dedicated youth-focused team, improving the assessment process, introducing a new appointment system, and preparing for the transition from NextGen. These shifts have strengthened accountability, with Board staff meeting monthly with service providers for technical assistance and systemwide sessions to share best practices and align on strategies.

As with any major change, we have identified some challenges. The new appointment system has created delays of two weeks or more for some youth. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, we are actively analyzing data, engaging directly with staff to understand the root causes, and working collaboratively to design improvements. This proactive approach will allow us to preserve the efficiencies gained while ensuring timely access to services for youth across the region.

Overall, while we are serving fewer youth than in prior years, the deeper impact of our services, coupled with our strong performance outcomes and commitment to continuous improvement, positions us to deliver stronger long-term results and a more effective system for youth in the Gulf Coast region.

### System Transition

A lot of focus and intention has been given to the upcoming transition. For HGCY the NextGen program is sunseting. As we realign our system to bring career services and employer services into the One-Stop model, we felt it important to also ensure that we did not any other system silos with one function or service providers. Aligning the systems allows us to provide comprehensive services to youth participants.

In preparation for the transition, board staff has created HGCY Standards and Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures to create uniformity in service delivery and comprehensive guidance for staff.

For NextGen, enrollment of new customers was paused effective July 1, 2025. This was done to allow the teams to have a strong closeout in supporting the current customers enrolled, many of which who were not actively engaged in services. New customers were routed to the career offices for support.

We have done a landscape analysis to ensure we have a list of all community partners, employers, schools, and commitments across all youth system providers. This information is being organized for smooth transition to the receiving teams. Additionally, this review has led to development of workflows to ensure that board staff keep a pulse on these things in real time and can better

monitor outcomes and identify gaps on a regular and consistent basis. These relationships and engagements are critical to our work, impact, and reputation so we want to have awareness and be able to report on them.

Letters have been drafted to share with customers, partners, and employers making them aware of the transition. In the upcoming program year board staff will convene our partners and employers to share updates on our system transition, enhanced service delivery, the board's strategic plan and the HGCY goals and services.

## Conclusion

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Education Committee continues to navigate a period of profound transition and opportunity. Despite systemic challenges such as the rollout of TX3C and the complexities of sustaining Local Match commitments, the progress achieved across early childhood education, teacher apprenticeships, workforce literacy, and youth services underscores our region's resilience and innovation.

By investing in mentors, modernizing career pathways, and expanding initiatives like Hire Gulf Coast Youth, we are building a more equitable and integrated system that not only supports children and families today but also prepares the next generation of learners and workers for long-term success. These efforts reflect a deliberate shift from temporary fixes toward durable, systemic solutions that prioritize collaboration, accountability, and measurable outcomes.

As we move into the next program year, our charge is clear: strengthen alignment between education and workforce, deepen partnerships that expand access to opportunity, develop strong career pathways, and ensure that every investment translates into tangible results for students, families, and employers. Together, with the Board's leadership and the community's partnership, we are charting a course toward a resilient, sustainable, and thriving workforce ecosystem for the Gulf Coast region.

# **Draft Education Committee Charter**

## **I. Purpose**

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board Education Committee is established to provide oversight, guidance, and strategic recommendations related to the educational programs and initiatives of all the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's programs. The Committee works with the Board and its programmatic and educational workforce-centered staff to review the programs' performance and ensure alignment with the Board's mission, strategic goals, and compliance with applicable laws and funding requirements. It provides recommendations to the Executive Committee or the Gulf Coast Workforce Board accordingly.

## **II. Authority**

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

- Provide oversight over the programmatic and educational workforce-centered initiatives of subrecipients.
- Review decisions over program, grants, or contracts based on performance or monitoring outcomes.
- Oversee and guide Board staff in Early Education, Youth, AEL and Career Pathway initiatives.
- Overseeing and monitoring of the Board's compliance with policies and regulations.

## **III. Membership**

- Members shall be appointed by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Chair.
- The Committee shall consist of no fewer than three (3) members.

## **IV. Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Oversight over monitoring**
    - Provide oversight over the Board's educational programs and initiatives for subrecipients.
    - Review Board staffs' recommendations on corrective actions, technical assistance, and recommendations for improvement over the performance of subrecipients and contractors.
    - Review overall performance of grants and contracts approved by the Board.
-

- Review decisions on continuing, modifying, or terminating program, grants, or contracts based on the financial, programmatic, or regulatory monitoring outcomes and quality of performance.
- **Early Child Care Quality, Early Child Care Financial Aid Administration and Workforce Development strategies**
  - Provide oversight and guidance on the Board staff's Early Child Care Quality, Early Child Care Financial Aid Administration and Workforce Development strategies, ensuring alignment with strategic goals.
  - Review key performance indicators for effectiveness of programmatic strategies.
- **Compliance Policies**
  - Ensure Board staff's participation in audits by grantor agencies and implementation of corrective actions, if applicable.
  - Review and recommend updates to compliance policies and procedures to align with regulations and grantors' guidelines.
- **Communication & Reporting**
  - Provide regular reports and recommendations to the full Board.
  - Ensure transparency and accountability in programmatic decision-making.

## **V. Meetings**

- The committee shall meet six times a year or more frequently as needed.
- A majority of members shall constitute a quorum.
- Minutes shall be maintained for all meetings and submitted to the full Board.

## **VI. Conflict of Interest**

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

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## **VII. Confidentiality**

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

## **VI. Review and Amendments**

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

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

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Board Chair  
Gulf Coast Workforce Board

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Date



## Audit and Monitoring Committee

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### Update for September 2025

#### Executive Summary

The Audit and Monitoring Committee, chaired by Mr. Guy R. Jackson, met on September 18, 2025, at 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX 77027, Room 2D, at 1:00 PM. Board members present included Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Carol Bowles, Cheryl Guido, Dr. Bobi Henderson, Doug Karr, Sara Oyervidez, Dr. Melissa Gonzalez, Shonda Below, Lenora Sorola, Marie Arcos, and Sineria Ordóñez. Staff members present included Kristi Rangel, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Cheryl Shepard, AJ Dean, Romana Paniagua, Brandi Brown, Sabrina Uy, Vanessa Salazar, Jenny Johnson, Philip Garcia, Thomas Brown, Danielle Knotts, Kristi Hayman, Jennifer Starling, Russell Tomlin, Freyah Richard, Carl Salazar, Desmond Taylor, Kimberly Lindolph, Negail Dixon, Angela Williams, and Rauf Baig.

The Committee received updates and reports across several key areas. Staff reported progress on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in early education, career pathways, and employer engagement. Early Education served approximately 34,000 children through 4,261 providers, with 151 new providers added. Career Services enrollments totaled 2,158, with 135 active training partners, as Phase 2 of the Career Pathway Lattice is underway. Employer engagement reached 13,172 employers, with a re-engagement rate trending toward 20%. Work also continues tutorial content procurement and website development.

Staff presented performance data showing marked improvement across major measures, with Gulf Coast outperforming the state in several areas. The Board achieved 99.4% of its re-employment targets, surpassing the state average of 96%, and exceeded targets in measurable skill gains by 7–18%. Expenditure reports reflected \$268 million in revenue, with 54% of the funds expended, aligning with year-to-date benchmarks. Quality Assurance completed 17 of 18 scheduled reviews, with findings noted for FAPO and SERCO.

Updates were provided on financial monitoring activities. Training sessions were held with subrecipients on compliance, controls, and reporting. Since the last meeting, three reports have been resolved, resulting in \$2,465 in questioned costs. Reviews of major education providers are scheduled for FY26.



The Committee reviewed and unanimously advanced a draft Audit and Monitoring Committee Charter, modeled on the Budget Committee's Charter, for Board approval. A new Conflict of Interest disclosure form was introduced, with implementation anticipated in January 2026, pending bylaws review.

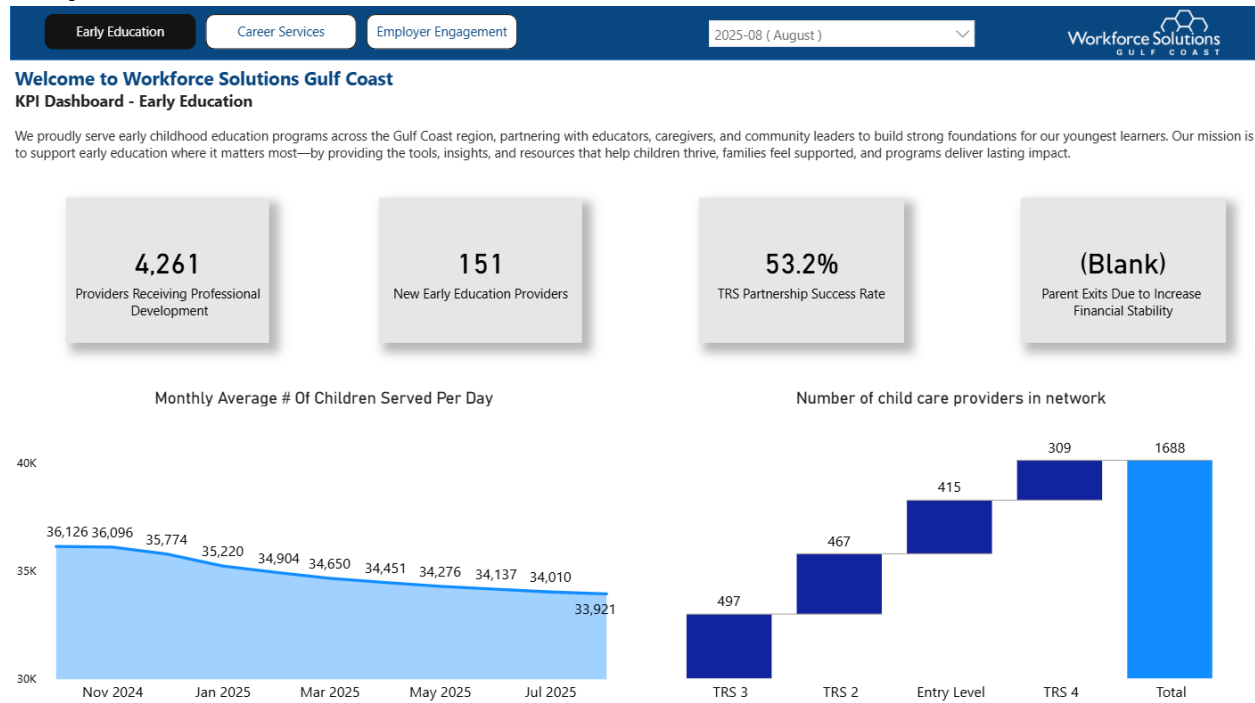
Staff reported successful completion of the SNAP Corrective Action Plan after four months of error rates below 10%. Updates were provided on the Adult Education Center and BakerRipley performance improvement plans, with BakerRipley implementing stronger financial controls and restructuring its leadership. Significant operational challenges related to the state's TX3C system were presented, including recurring monthly system errors, recertification delays, and billing recoupments affecting providers. Additional staffing costs of \$1 million are anticipated. The Committee discussed elevating concerns to TWC and the Childcare Advisory Committee through a formal letter.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Update

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

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

## Early Education



### Early Education – Key Performance Indicators

**Goal:** Provide professional development for early education providers through virtual and in-person options. Since October 1, 2024, we have provided professional development support to 4,261 early education providers, up 940 from June.

**Goal:** Develop and sustain partnerships with high-quality early learning providers. We added 151 early education providers this program year.

**Goal:** Strengthen outreach and engagement with quality early learning centers. We are successfully partnering with 53.2% of licensed child care providers in our region.

**Goal:** Equip parents and guardians with resources to enhance family socioeconomic well-being. TX3C system challenges are limiting our ability to report in this area.

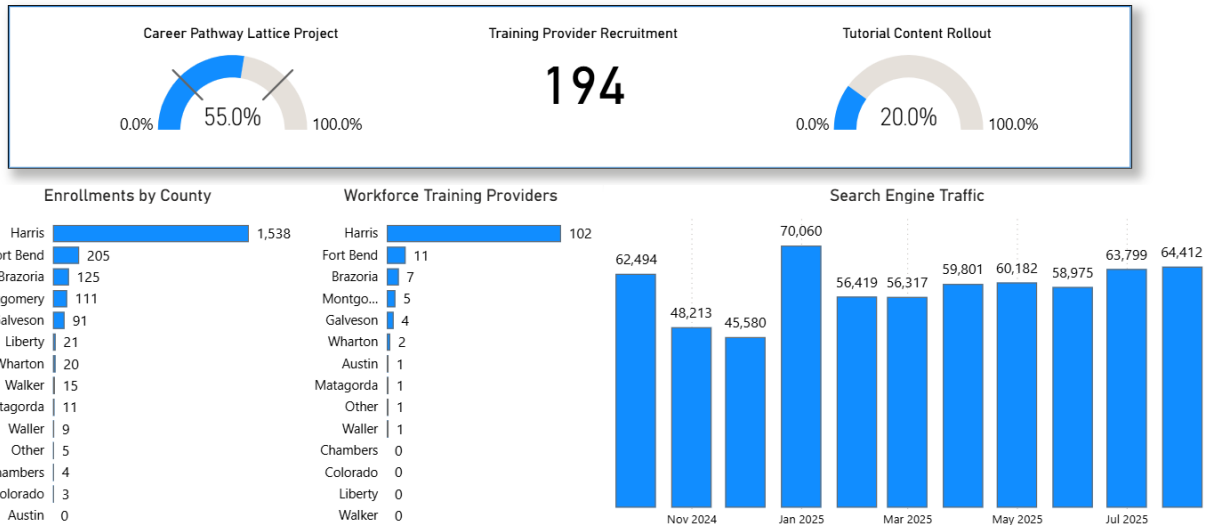
**Foundational Metrics:** As of August 2025, we have 33,921 children enrolled in early education assistance and 1,688 early education providers.

## Career Services



### Welcome to Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast KPI Dashboard - Career Services

We proudly support individuals and communities across the Gulf Coast region through career services that create real opportunities and long-term success. Our mission is to meet people where they are—offering personalized guidance, resources, and tools that help job seekers navigate their career paths, connect with meaningful employment, and build brighter futures.



### Career Services – Key Performance Indicators

Goal: Create and expand opportunities for technical degrees and career pathways. Our Regional Economic Analysis team is currently conducting a career lattice research project. Stage 1, Validation of Theoretical Career Pathways is 100% complete.

Stage 2, the development of a web-based interactive tool using Tableau, has been underway since late July and is 55% complete. Completion of phase 2 is projected for mid-October, with Stage 3 scheduled to begin immediately thereafter.

Goal: Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to prioritize visibility of career opportunities. Our website received 64,412 visits in August, driven by search engine traffic, demonstrating strong online engagement with career-related content.

Goal: Expand the training provider network to better align with the needs of local employers. To support this effort, we plan to launch our new Financial Aid Management System soon. This system will strengthen our ability to manage and track training providers by industry, ensuring a more responsive and targeted approach to workforce development. Also, we have discussed gaps based on geography and plan to expand recruitment into the new regions.

Goal: Develop online tutorials to guide users in utilizing Workforce Solutions resources.

We are currently procuring a Learning Management System (LMS) that will offer external users access to short, self-paced training modules. Interviews and demonstrations with the top four (4) vendors were completed on August 25, 2025. Evaluation scores were submitted on September 2, 2025.

Based on these results, the selection will be narrowed to two (2) finalists offering the strongest learning solutions for our needs.

Foundational Metrics: We are currently utilizing 135 training partners in our network and have 2,158 customers enrolled in training opportunities.

## Employer Engagement



### Employer Engagement Program – Key Performance Indicators

**Goal:** Prioritizing employer outreach to demand industries and occupations that drive regional economic development. 41.2% of our staff entered job posting are currently in targeted industries.

Performance method has been updated to exclude OJT/Youth Postings.

**Goal:** Expand employer access to Workforce Solutions through a centralized, user-friendly digital hub and targeted outreach efforts.

The redesign of the Workforce Solutions website is currently 60% complete and is expected to significantly enhance the overall digital experience for employers.

**Goal:** Strengthen collaboration among industry leaders, workforce partners, and economic development stakeholders to align workforce strategies with employer needs.

The Employer Engagement Team hosted one (1) industry advisory committee, a Life Sciences Workforce Collaborative with startups and new employers at the TMC<sup>3</sup> (Texas Medical Center Hub), strengthening connections within the growing life sciences sector. In addition, the team actively participated in three key committees: the Workforce Development Committee, the Space City Workforce Committee, and the Upskill Houston Steering Committee, ensuring alignment with regional workforce priorities.

Goal: Enhance employer service efficiency by leveraging technology to provide real-time support, training, and feedback mechanisms.

We have conducted ten (10) HR-focused seminars, providing 318 unique employers with valuable education on a wide range of workforce-related topics. Our Employer Service team hosted one HR Seminar in the month of August. The seminar focused on attrition and retention strategies. This session provided employers with actionable tools to address workforce stability and improve employee engagement.

Foundational Metrics: We have assisted 13,172 employers of which 17.1% are returning employers who have reengaged with our services.

## System Review

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

## Performance and Production

### **Reporting Infrastructure Enhancements**

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast continues to work closely with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as the state enhances its reporting infrastructure. While progress has been made with several modules successfully updated, challenges remain around data completeness. To address this, the Board has accelerated the rollout of standardized reporting tools across service providers. These tools are designed to strengthen consistency, accuracy, and efficiency in data collection and reporting, ensuring leadership has access to timely and reliable insights. In parallel, Gulf Coast continues to use predictive models aligned with TWC methodologies, giving the region the ability to monitor performance proactively and refine operations in real time.

### **Provider Collaboration & Support**

Partnership with service providers remains a top priority. Bi-monthly coordination sessions with providers have created a strong platform for alignment, shared best practices, and system-wide accountability. At the same time, a comprehensive training series has been deployed to both provider staff and Board personnel, equipping frontline teams with advanced interviewing techniques and career assessment tools. These efforts are helping staff connect job seekers to higher-

quality employment pathways and ensuring that regional strategies translate into measurable results.

**Performance and Regional Comparison Summary (October 2024 – June 2025)**

Midway through FY2025, the Gulf Coast region is demonstrating strong performance compared to statewide outcomes. Adults and Dislocated Workers continue to excel in employment and earnings measures, with Gulf Coast participants more likely to secure jobs quickly and achieve higher wages than the statewide average. Measurable Skills Gains are also a standout strength, reflecting strong alignment between training investments and employer needs.

Reemployment outcomes remain a regional highlight, with Gulf Coast participants returning to work faster than those in other parts of the state. Employer engagement efforts also continue to deliver results, as shown by high participation rates in talent assistance programs. Child care services further reinforce the system's success, with more families supported daily than the statewide benchmark.

Credential attainment remains an area of opportunity, particularly among Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Career & Technical participants. While Gulf Coast continues to trail statewide levels, the region has already launched targeted strategies aimed at strengthening credential outcomes, including closer alignment with training providers and enhanced support for participants pursuing certifications. These efforts are designed to build on existing performance strengths and ensure credentials more directly translate into quality employment.

Youth outcomes were not available for this cycle; however, ongoing improvements to data systems are expected to enhance accuracy and provide a clearer picture of youth performance in upcoming reporting periods.

Measure		% of Target		
		Gulf Coast Performance	State Performance	State vs Gulf Coast Difference
WIOA Outcome Measures	Employed Q2 Post Exit - Adult	103.68%	103.24%	0.44%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - Adult	102.28%	100.46%	1.82%
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Adult	100.94%	95.20%	5.74%
	Retention Rate - Adult	86.20%	95.56%	-9.36%
	Measurable Skills Gains - Adult	114.82%	106.85%	7.97%
	Employed Q2 Post Exit - DW	105.48%	103.28%	2.20%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - DW	99.58%	102.52%	-2.94%
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - DW	118.02%	99.23%	18.79%
	Retention Rate - DW	85.74%	95.72%	-9.98%
	Measurable Skills Gains - DW	105.53%	96.35%	9.18%
	Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----	-----
	Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----	-----
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----	-----
	Retention Rate - Youth	-----	-----	-----
	Measurable Skills Gains - Youth	-----	-----	-----
	Employed/ Enrolled Q2 - C&T			
	Employed/ Enrolled Q2-Q4 - C&T			
	Retention Rate C&T	86.94%	97.24%	-10.30%
Reemployment and Employer	Claimants Reemployment within 10 weeks	99.43%	96.05%	3.38%
	Texas Talent Assistance Rate	313.01%	-----	-----
Program Participation Measures	Average Children Served Per Day	99.99%	95.38%	4.61%
	Childcare Initial Job Search Success Rate	77.85%	-----	-----
	Choices Full Engagement Rate	-----	-----	-----
Adult Education (Mar 2025)	Adult Ed Total 12+ Hour Students	83.65%	119.20%	-35.55%
	Integrated Education/Training - IET (AEFLA)	68.64%	96.13%	-27.49%
	Intensives	85.24%	126.09%	-40.85%
	Popular	79.75%	-----	-----
	Measurable Skills Gain	121.97%	123.83%	-1.86%

## Expenditure Update

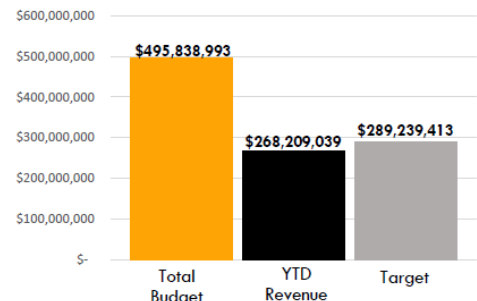
The Gulf Coast Workforce Board budget outlines how it intends to utilize its revenue to realize the objectives outlined in the Board's strategic plan. The budget details the allocation of resources to operate Workforce Solutions and generate positive outcomes in the region.



## Revenue Overview

The 2025 budgeted revenue totals over \$495 million. The Year-to-Date revenue as of July 2025 is \$268 million slightly behind target of \$289 million.

**Workforce Revenue**



## Expenditure Overview

For the seven months ending July, expenditures are 54% which is on target for being 58% through the year. The low expenditures are due to Board Administration and Employer Service being behind target. Low expenditures in Board Administration can be attributed due to Personnel, Consultant & Contractors, and Travel. The source of the delay in expenditures in Employer Services is due to the transition of Quality Improvement to the Board level.

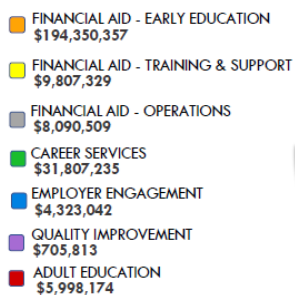
Financial aid represents \$212.2 million of expenditures with \$194.3 million for Early Education, \$9.8 million for Training & Support, and \$8.1 million for Operations.

Career Services represents \$31.8 million and Adult Education represent \$6.0 million of the Resident Service expenditures.

Employer Engagement and Quality Improvement represent \$4.3 million and \$0.7 million, respectively for Employer Services.

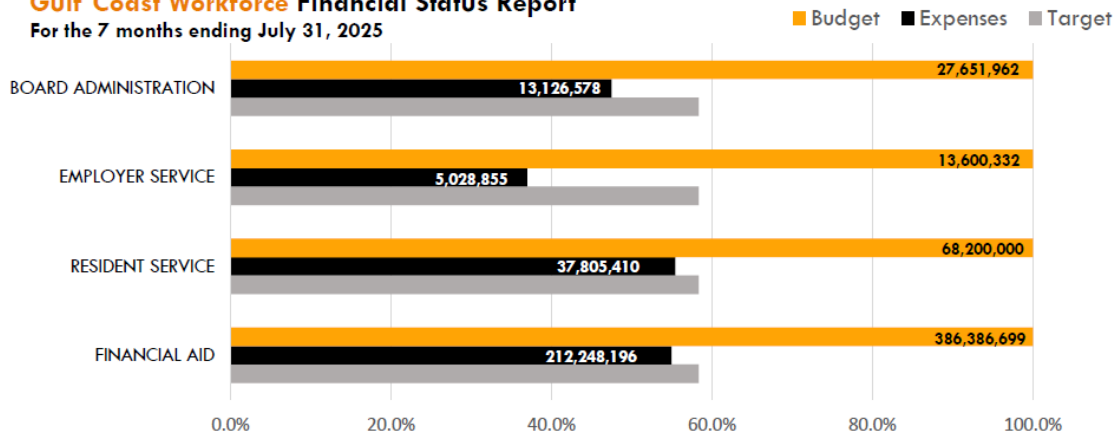
Board Administration is \$13.1 million.

**System Expenses**



**Gulf Coast Workforce Financial Status Report**

For the 7 months ending July 31, 2025



## Technical Program Compliance

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

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

### **Current Reviews:**

Quality Assurance has completed 17 of 18 reviews planned for the 2025 program year. We have issued the draft reports and work papers for the Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO) and SERCO. We are awaiting their responses to issue the final reports.

We had one area of significant concern identified during the FAPO review. The first recoupment notice was sent, but it was not documented in the Work in Texas case notes as required by policy. Even though this is a significant data entry finding, FAPO management was able to tie the issue back to one staff member. FAPO was aware at exit and was following up with the staff.

SERCO also had an area of significant concern found in the case management. The concern was that staff were not documenting regular monthly contact or attempted contact with participants.

Testing for the fourth quarter Financial Aid Support Center desk review has started, and we will issue a final annual report before the November committee meeting. QA has begun testing for the 2026 Adult Education reviews, and we are preparing to provide additional support during the transition and implementation of the new career service operations.

## Financial Systems

The Board now engages three CPA firms to conduct comprehensive financial monitoring of all workforce board service providers. They are Christine Nguyen, Weaver & Tidwell, and our newest Financial Monitor, LaPorte. All three consultants have been successfully onboarded and were provided with the Texas Workforce Commission testing tools and attributes, as well as presentation materials from the TWC financial conference held in July.

A monitoring refresher training was held for subrecipients in early September.

The three consultants will rotate responsibility for hosting the remaining quarterly monitoring trainings moving forward. This approach ensures consistent coverage, shared expertise, and dedicated opportunities for technical assistance to subrecipients.

**Monitoring Update**

We have resolved three (3) reports, which resulted in questioned costs totaling \$2,465.20

**Reviews in Progress**

There are no reviews currently in progress.

**Upcoming in 2025**

- Adult Education Center
- BakerRipley
- Houston Community College
- Lone Star College
- Region VI
- San Jacinto College

**Action Item:** Adoption of the Audit and Monitoring Committee Charter.

## Audit and Monitoring Committee Charter

The Charter is provided in Attachment A.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Audit and Monitoring Committee is established to provide oversight, guidance, and strategic recommendations related to the monitoring and evaluation of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's programs.

The Committee operates as a standing committee of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. The Committee provides oversight over the programmatic and financial monitoring of subrecipients, reviews decisions over program, grants and contracts, oversees Board staff in risk assessments and mitigation strategies, reviews grantor agencies' monitoring of the Board's compliance with policies and regulations.

Committee members are appointed by the Board Chair, shall consist of no fewer than three members and are expected to uphold the highest standards of impartiality, confidentiality, and integrity.

The Audit and Monitoring Committee reviewed and voted to advance the Charter for the full Board's consideration and potential adoption.

### **Action Item:**

Board staff hereby asks for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board to approve the Audit and Monitoring Charter.

## New Conflict-of-Interest Form for Board Members

The new Conflict-of-Interest Form is provided in Attachment B.

The Audit and Monitoring Committee received a walkthrough of the new Conflict-of-Interest Form for Board members. The sections of the new form mirror the language in the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's Bylaws.

The different sections provide opportunities to disclose at key points. Section 1 are for substantial business interest or relationship disclosures, while Section 2 is for representational interest disclosures. Section 3 allows for disclosures prior to a discussion, consideration or action on *matters* pending before the Board, while Section 4 are for *proposals or funding requests* pending before the Board. Section 5 is the certification and signature portion.

The Audit and Monitoring Committee discussed the contents of the form and agreed to advance the adoption of the new form to the full Board. The Committee

also discussed that a tentative timeline for adoption of the new form by Board and Committee members could begin on January 1, 2026.

**Action Item:**

Board staff hereby asks for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board to consider adopting the new Conflict-of-Interest form for use from January 1, 2026.

## Accountability and Improvement

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

**Texas Workforce Commission Interventions:**

**SNAP Work Activities:** Quality Assurance submitted the fourth month of SNAP testing, showing an error rate of less than 10 percent as required by the TWC corrective action plan. The testing submitted for April and July demonstrated 0% error rates, while May and June demonstrated 8% and 2% error rates, respectively.

**GCWB Interventions:**

**Adult Education Center:** At the previous Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting, we reported that the Adult Education Center had been placed on a performance improvement plan. Since that time, Board staff have continued reviewing documentation related to program charges and expenses. Additional supporting documentation has been requested, and this matter remains under active review. We will provide a further update at the next Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting.

**BakerRipley – Financial Aid Payment Office:** At the previous Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting, we reported that the Financial Aid Payment Office was placed on a performance improvement plan in response to concerns with financial management, communication, and project management. Since that time, BakerRipley has:

- Maintained strong communication with Board staff,
- Actively participated in workgroups around operations and TX3C challenges,
- Engaged additional support from other board areas to process payments more efficiently,
- Reorganized the leadership structure at the payment office to enhance

- operations, and
- Continue to make progress on the development and implementation of their new financial aid management system.

Board staff will continue to work closely with BakerRipley and will provide an additional update at the next Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting.

**TX3C Challenges:**

We continue to experience an immense number of challenges with the TX3C system that was implemented since January 13, 2025, which is used for direct childcare provider payments. The following are the challenges GCWB's service providers, the Support Center, and the Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO) experience.

At the Support Center, the challenges include inaccurate waitlist (incorrect marking of parents as teen parents), inability to edit incorrect reports to identify priority families correctly, inaccurate recertification reports, inability to confirm dates for future care, inability to run customized reports to outreach groups of customers such as teen parents, inaccurate attendance recording, need for manual attendance document requests from customers, automatic notices sent to family not showing in the family's profile, confusion on which versions of daycare's calendars to use to drive correct payments, and the inability to appeal discontinuation of one child. Customer's appeals must be done by the family and not by the child; but it causes issues if the family has more than one child.

Overpayment from the July 4<sup>th</sup> payment batch due to a TX3C system fix rollout resulted in 467 required recoupments with a total outstanding balance of \$3,609,924.47. Daycare providers are unable to view details for the payments they received or for the recoupments that are taken out of their bank accounts. Daycare providers are stating that they need to obtain loans to make payments and may be at risk of going bankrupt.

Starting July 14<sup>th</sup>, the Support Center is collaborating with the FAPO to resolve billing inquiries received from childcare providers. This has become a full-time assignment for 10 Support Center staff. In over 6 weeks, they have corrected over 2,500 billing issues. While some issues are due to a learning curve, many are system related.

At FAPO, for the August 25 – September 7 bi-weekly pay cycle, the issues experienced included 9,760 errors where the payment was \$0, 3,072 error cases of net negative payments where TX3C took money back for certain children's care, 96 cases of net negative payments to providers, 1,167 cases of incorrect units of care where the days-in-care count is wrong, 3,969 incorrect eligibility descriptions

or contract year, 36 cases of duplicate household ID, 82 cases of blank household ID. The total number of cases that FAPO had for this payment cycle was 92,249 cases/rows in the payment spreadsheet, of which 18,182 had known errors (19.7% error rate). A case/row represents a child, schedule, or service month.

Other routine errors from various pay cycles include double recoupment (due to random deletion of recoupments already collected, and hence TX3C recoups from the daycare providers again thinking it was not recouped), T level payments which are lack of payment calculations for unknown reasons, and consequential errors when new TX3C version updates are rolled out, which sometimes caused the system to take money back for particular children from January; the time TX3C started being used.

Errors can only be fixed manually by staff at the Support Center and the FAPO, child by child. There is no way to fix the error at the daycare provider level or the family level to speed up the corrections; the errors vary by child. Additionally, error cases manually pulled out of the payment process are later included back for payment by TX3C in the middle of the cycle, causing a repetitive cycle of AP staff having to manually pull cases out again during the next pay cycle if errors cannot be fixed on time.

The number of reported inquiries due to TX3C payment or billing issues increased by 14-fold since January. There were 131 inquiries in 2024, while for 2025, there are 1,896 inquiries from January to August.

As TX3C was initially going to implement a Provider Portal that would allow childcare providers to view and report information, not only did GCWB's provider put a hold on upgrading an existing aging vendor portal, but they also had to create a separate reporting process to support the additional inquiries.

The Support Center has assigned 10 temporary staff since July 14<sup>th</sup> to collaborate with the FAPO on billing and payment issues. The GCWB is considering authorizing FAPO to hire 7 additional temporary staff, bringing the total number of AP staff to 15, a conservative number that increases grant expenses by \$500,000 per year. Each staff will have 2,285 cases during each bi-weekly pay cycle. FAPO would ideally need 24.4 AP staff, if each staff has 1,402 AP cases during a pay cycle, which is the average caseload for an AP staff at a Texas Board's payment office. The maximum days available to fix errors is 7 business days per cycle to meet TWC's payment timeline requirement. Error cases not fixed are withheld from payments, leading to childcare provider filing inquiries and complaints.

This additional staffing commitment is needed as long as the TX3C system errors remain. This is a lost opportunity for the use of grant funds to deliver direct care to serve the children in our county.

## Compliance and Review Updates

**The Health and Human Services (HHSC) Community Access Review:** The HHSC review of services administered by TWC exited on August 21, 2025, with no issues noted. One error was noted, but it was determined to be an automation issue, not an error on the part of the staff. TWC will finalize the monitoring report and send it after their internal process is completed.

## Next Meeting

We propose scheduling the next committee meeting for 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, Texas 77027.



# **Attachment A**

## **Audit and Monitoring Committee Charter**

### **I. Purpose**

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board Audit and Monitoring Committee is established to provide oversight, guidance, and strategic recommendations related to the monitoring and evaluation of all the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's programs. The Committee works with the Board and its programmatic and monitoring staff to review the programs' performance and ensure alignment with the Board's mission, strategic goals, and compliance with applicable laws and funding requirements. It provides recommendations to the Executive Committee or the Gulf Coast Workforce Board accordingly.

### **II. Authority**

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

- Provide oversight over the programmatic and financial monitoring of subrecipients.
- Review decisions over program, grants, or contracts based on performance or monitoring outcomes.
- Oversee and guide Board staff in risk assessments and mitigation strategies.
- Review grantor agencies' monitoring of the Board's compliance with policies and regulations.

### **III. Membership**

- Members shall be appointed by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Chair.
- The Committee shall consist of no fewer than three (3) members.

### **IV. Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Oversight over monitoring**
  - Provide oversight over the Board's quality assurance and monitoring activities for subrecipients.
  - Review Board staffs' recommendations on corrective actions, technical assistance, and recommendations for improvement over the performance of subrecipients and contractors.
  - Review overall performance of grants and contracts approved by the Board.
  - Review decisions on continuing, modifying, or terminating program, grants, or contracts based on the financial, programmatic, or regulatory monitoring outcomes and quality of performance.
- **Risk assessments and mitigation strategies**
  - Provide oversight and guidance on the Board staff's risk assessment and mitigation strategies, ensuring alignment with strategic goals.

- Review key performance indicators for effectiveness of programmatic strategies.
- **Compliance Policies**
  - Ensure Board staff's participation in audits by grantor agencies and implementation of corrective actions, if applicable.
  - Review overall compliance with policies and procedures, in alignment with regulations and grantors' guidelines.
- **Communication & Reporting**
  - Provide regular reports and recommendations to the full Board.
  - Ensure transparency and accountability in programmatic decision-making.

## **V. Meetings**

- The committee shall meet six times a year or more frequently as needed.
- A majority of members shall constitute a quorum.
- Minutes shall be maintained for all meetings and submitted to the full Board.

## **VI. Conflict of Interest**

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

## **VII. Confidentiality**

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

## **VI. Review and Amendments**

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

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

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Board Chair

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Date

## Attachment B

### New Conflict of Interest Form for Board Members



#### Gulf Coast Workforce Board Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form

**Board Member Name:**

**Representing Category:**

Pursuant to WIOA §107(h) codified at 29 U.S.C. §3122(h), Texas Government Code §2308.257, 40 Texas Administrative Code §802.41 and the Gulf Coast Workforce Board By laws, Board members and Board nominees must disclose any substantial business interests or relationships that could create a conflict of interest or even the appearance of a conflict of interest. Board members are prohibited from voting on or participating in decisions that would provide direct financial benefit to themselves, their immediate family, or entities they represent. Violations of the Board's Conflict of Interest rules may lead to removal from the Board.<sup>1</sup>

#### Conflict of Interest Disclosure Requirements for Board Members

- 1. Initial Disclosure** - Board Nominees must provide a written disclosure of all Substantial Business Interests or relationships they or their immediate family members have with all businesses or organizations that have received, currently receive, or are likely to receive contracts or funding from the Board prior to taking office. Disclosures are to be sent to the Board Chair or Executive Director.
- 2. Ongoing Disclosure** - Sitting Board Members must update declarations on file within 30 days to reflect any changes in such business interests or relationships. Updated disclosures are to be sent to the Board Chair or Executive Director.
- 3. Annual Written Declaration** - Board members must submit a written declaration to the Board Chair and Executive Director on an annual basis.

**Please check all the boxes that apply:**

- ☐ New Board Member (Initial Disclosure)
- ☐ Sitting Board Member (Annual Disclosure)
- ☐ Disclosure Update (For reporting any changes in business or representational interests within 30 days of the change)
- ☐ Disclosure related to matters currently pending before the Board (For disclosing interests related to specific matters currently under Board consideration).

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<sup>1</sup> Bylaws of Gulf Coast Workforce Board, art. VI, §F.3



## Section 1: Substantial Business Interests or Relationships

Gulf Coast Workforce Board By-laws define "a Substantial Business Interest" as: (1) ownership of ten percent or \$5,000 or more of the fair market value of the business; (2) receiving ten percent or more of gross income during the previous or current year from the business; or (3) ownership in real property of the business valued at \$2,500 or more.<sup>2</sup>

An "Immediate Family Member" is defined as: (1) a great-grandfather, great-grandmother, grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, brother, sister, daughter, son, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt, uncle, great-granddaughter, great-grandson, granddaughter, grandson, nephew or niece of the Board member, and/or (2) the present or former spouse of the Board member, and/or (3) a great-grandfather, great-grandmother, grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, brother, sister, daughter, son, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt, uncle, great-granddaughter, great-grandson, granddaughter, grandson, nephew or niece of the Board member's present or former spouse. Each of these terms includes step-relatives and adopted family members.<sup>3</sup>

### Disclosure(s)

1. Do you or any of your Immediate Family Members (including step relatives and adopted family members) own 10% or more, or \$5,000 or more of the fair market value, of any business entity that may be affected by Board actions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Do you or any of your immediate family members, receive 10% or more of your gross income during the previous or current year from any business entity that may be affected by Board actions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Do you, or any of your immediate family members own real property of a business valued at \$2,500 or more that may be affected by Board actions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have answered "yes" to any of the above questions, please provide details regarding the substantial business interest, the identity of the immediate family member involved (if applicable) and the business entity, organization or property in question.

<sup>2</sup> Bylaws of Gulf Coast Workforce Board, art. VI, §F.5

<sup>3</sup> Bylaws of Gulf Coast Workforce Board, art. VI, §F. 6



**IF "YOU HAVE ANSWERED YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, YOU MUST ABSTAIN FROM VOTING, DISCUSSING, OR OTHERWISE PARTICIPATING IN THIS MATTER UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED WRITTEN DIRECTION FROM THE BOARD CHAIR OR THE BOARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.**

## Section 2: Representational Interests

Gulf Coast Workforce Board By-laws define "a Representational Interest" as: (1) employed by or under contract with the organization, and/or (2) a member of the board of directors, commission, council, or other direct governing body of the organization. A "Representational Interest" does not include members of advisory boards, commissions or councils which are not direct governing bodies of an organization, and the member is not compensated for their service.<sup>4</sup>

4. Are you, or any of your immediate family members, currently employed by or under contract with any organization that may be affected by Board actions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Are you, or any of your immediate family members, a member of the board of directors, commission, council or other direct governing body of any organization that may be affected by Board actions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Are you, or any of your immediate family members, involved in any organization in a capacity that could influence or be influenced by decisions of the Board?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Are you, or any of your immediate family members, serving on any advisory boards, commissions, or councils of an organization that is a direct governing body and for which you and your family member are compensated?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Are there any other personal or financial interests you or your immediate family members have that could create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict with your duties as a Board member?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have answered "yes" to any of the above, please provide details regarding the nature of the interest, the identity of the immediate family member involved and the organization in question.

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<sup>44</sup> Bylaws of Gulf Coast Workforce Board, art. VI, §F.7



**IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED "YES" TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, YOU MUST ABSTAIN FROM VOTING, DISCUSSING, OR OTHERWISE PARTICIPATING IN THIS MATTER UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED WRITTEN DIRECTION FROM THE BOARD CHAIR OR THE BOARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.**

### Section 3: Discussion, Consideration and Action on Matters to pending before the Board

Prior to a discussion, vote, or decision on any matter before a Board, if a member, or a person in the immediate family of such member, has a substantial interest in or relationship to a business entity, organization, or property that would be pecuniarily affected by any official Board action, that member shall disclose the nature and extent of the interest or relationship and shall abstain from voting on or in any other way participating in the decision on the matter.<sup>5</sup> All such abstentions shall be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting.<sup>6</sup>

9. Do you, or any of our immediate family members, have a substantial interest in or relationship to any business entity, organization or property or personal interest that could be pecuniarily affected by any official action of the Board?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Do you, or any of your immediate family members, have a substantial business interest or representational interest in any proposal or request for funds currently pending before the Board?

☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Do you, or any of your immediate family members, have a substantial business interest or representational interest in any person or entity making a proposal or request for funds to the Board?

☐ Yes ☐ No

12. Will the outcome of this vote or decision potentially provide a financial benefit directly or indirectly to you or your immediate family member?

☐ Yes ☐ No

<sup>5</sup> ByLaws of Gulf Coast Workforce Board, art. VI, §F.2

<sup>6</sup> 40 Texas Administrative Code §802.41(d) Board Member Conflicts of Interest





13. Are you affiliated with, employed by or otherwise connected to any organization or business that is the subject of this action or that may be pecuniarily affected by it?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have answered "yes" to any of the above, please explain your or your family member's interest or relationship with the affected entity or property.

**IF A MATTER IS PENDING BEFORE THE BOARD IN WHICH YOU OR YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER HAS A SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST OR RELATIONSHIP, YOU MUST ABSTAIN FROM VOTING ON OR OTHERWISE PARTICIPATING IN THE DECISION UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED WRITTEN DIRECTION FROM THE BOARD CHAIR OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. NOTE THAT ANY ABSTENTIONS SHALL BE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING.**

#### Section 4: Discussion, Consideration and Action on Request for Proposals or Funding Requests

A Board member who personally has or has Immediate Family Members who have Substantial Business Interests or Representational Interests in proposals, requests for funds or persons or entities making them, may not vote, attempt to influence, or initiate or participate in discussion on any proposals or requests for funds which compete with the proposals, requests for funds, or persons or entities making them in which the Board member or Immediate Family Member has the interest.<sup>7</sup>

14. Do you, or any of your immediate family members, have a substantial business interest or representational interest in any proposal or request for funds currently pending before the Board?

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. Do you, or any of our immediate family members, have a substantial interest in or representational interest in any person or entity submitting a proposal or request for funds to the Board?

☐ Yes ☐ No

16. Are there any proposals or requests for funds currently before the Board that compete with a proposal, request for funds, or person or entity in which you or your immediate family member has a substantial business or representational interest?

☐ Yes ☐ No

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<sup>7</sup> Bylaws of Gulf Coast Workforce Board, art. VI, §F.2



If you have answered "yes" to any of the above, please explain your or your family member's interest or relationship with the request for proposals or funding requests.

**IF THE ANSWER TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS IS "YES," YOU MUST ABSTAIN FROM VOTING, DISCUSSING, OR OTHERWISE PARTICIPATING IN THE MATTER UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED DIRECTION FROM THE BOARD CHAIR OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### Section: 5 Certification

I have read the Gulf Coast Workforce Board By-Laws Conflict of Interest Policy. I agree to fully comply with its terms and conditions during my service as a Committee and Board member. I further certify that the information provided in this form is true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand and agree that I am required to disclose any conflicts of interest as they arise and to update this form within 30 days of any changes. I further acknowledge that, if a conflict of interest exists, I will abstain from voting, discussing, or otherwise participating in any related matters until I receive further direction or instruction from the Board Chair or Executive Director.

I will discharge my duties in good faith, with ordinary care, and in a manner that represents the best interest of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board.

Signature:

ENTER NAME

Date:



# Budget Committee Report

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## Update for September 2025

### Executive Summary

On September 22, 2025, the Budget Committee convened under the leadership of Chair Carl Bowles to deliberate upon H-GAC's proposed mid-year budget revision for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB). The session, attended by Chair Mark Guthrie, Vice Chair Doug Karr, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Paul Puente, Adrian Ozuna, and Mou Sarkar. The committee reviewed and analyzed budget materials produced by H-GAC Finance and discussed the structural underpinnings of cost allocation, the risks associated with shifting federal appropriations, and the strategic imperatives of maintaining fiscal credibility in the eyes of public and philanthropic funders.

The Committee ultimately voted to recommend approval of the revised 2025 budget totaling \$492,436,736, contingent on execution of all Inter-Departmental Agreements (IDAs). H-GAC has since confirmed that as of October 2, 2025, all IDAs have been fully executed, thereby satisfying this condition precedent.

### Mid-Year Budget Discussion

Chair Guthrie pressed for clarity regarding discrepancies between prior Budget Committee handouts and the official H-GAC records, particularly in the reporting of Internal and Shared Services. The CFO, Christina Ordóñez-Campos, emphasized that the definitive figures are maintained in Questica, the Council's financial management system, and that earlier variances reflected document formatting rather than substantive divergence. Going forward, all reconciliations and crosswalks between adopted budgets and revisions will be drawn directly from Questica and OpenBook, thereby ensuring a consistent evidentiary base for the Board's oversight.

### Indirect Cost Structures

For the current fiscal year, the Board operates under an EPA-approved indirect cost rate of 11.22%, a figure aligned with long-standing practice. The proposed FY26 methodology, however, would consolidate Internal Services and Network/GIS charges into the indirect pool, a structural change that could propel the effective rate toward 30–40%. While H-GAC views this consolidation as a rational simplification, Committee members voiced apprehension that such a shift could:

- Trigger resistance from the cognizant federal agency;
- Diminish competitiveness for smaller philanthropic and foundation awards, which are highly sensitive to overhead ratios; and
- Blur accountability by collapsing line-item visibility into a monolithic rate.

The Committee instructed staff to pursue mitigation strategies, including scenario modeling, transparency in allocation bases, and overhead-reduction initiatives, to preserve both compliance and external credibility.

### **Cost Drivers and Organizational Duplication**

The mid-year increases were propelled by a combination of personnel and fringe costs, consultant engagements, legal retainers, expanded travel, professional memberships, and technology expenditures by various H-GAC divisions outside of workforce. Notably, the budget packet documents allocations for cybersecurity investments (Splunk SIEM solutions, Cloudflare protections, and expanded licensing), upgrades to workforce IT infrastructure, and enhanced employee development programs.

The Committee also questioned the risk of duplication between workforce-dedicated personnel and H-GAC central staff, particularly in the domains of Finance, Government Affairs, and Communications. While H-GAC asserted that reductions are made when workforce funds cover parallel functions, the Committee underscored the necessity of more deliberate coordination to avoid redundancy and to safeguard the principle of value-for-money.

### **Facilities and Occupancy Costs**

The San Felipe sublease for Child Care Quality staff remains in final review, with occupancy expected within days of execution. Concerns were raised regarding the allocation of rent across sites, as the Early Education Quality staff are currently included in the Timmons rent pool but will transition to San Felipe once the sublease is executed. Negotiations are also underway to address parking shortages and space constraints at 3555 Timmons, an issue that carries both operational and reputational implications. (Update: As of October 2, 2025, the lease still has not been executed)

### **Federal Fiscal Uncertainty**

Given the looming prospect of Congressional funding reductions and potential restructuring of workforce programs, the Committee urged adoption of forward-looking scenario planning. Members stressed that austerity measures, should they materialize, must be distributed equitably across both administrative and programmatic domains rather than disproportionately borne by frontline services.

### **Committee Recommendations and Next Steps**

The Committee recommends that the Board:

1. Approve the revised 2025 budget of \$492,436,736, with the acknowledgement that all IDAs have been executed as of October 2, 2025.
2. Direct H-GAC Finance and Board staff to implement a formal quarterly timesheet reporting process for allocated staffing beginning Q4 2025.

3. Require a joint methodology review of indirect and shared services allocations, ensuring alignment with federal guidance and minimization of duplicative charges.
4. Request that H-GAC Facilities finalize the San Felipe sublease, resolve rent allocation adjustments, and conclude parking/space negotiations for 3555 Timmons.
5. Instruct H-GAC Finance to deliver a clearer narrative of cost increases unrelated to Child Care Quality staff growth.
6. Mandate continued scenario planning and overhead-reduction strategies to protect the region's competitiveness in federal, state, and private grant markets.

### **Conclusion**

The Budget Committee underscored a recurrent theme: the imperative of transparency, accountability, and foresight in financial stewardship. The mid-year budget revision, while substantial in both scale and complexity, is necessary to align resources with the realities of expanded programming and administrative requirements. With the execution of all IDAs, the Board is now positioned to approve the revised budget.

## Proposed 2025 Board Budget Revision

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

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

### Gulf Coast Workforce 2025 Revised Budget Source Summary

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

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

	2025 Revised	2025	% of Total 2025 Revised Budget	Dollar Variance from 2025	% Variance from 2025
<b>Board Operations</b>	<b>32,574,545</b>	<b>27,651,962</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>4,922,583</b>	<b>17.8%</b>
Salaries and Benefits	17,173,263	11,854,545	3.5%	5,318,718	44.9%
Consultants & Contracts	3,681,089	7,394,850	0.7%	(3,713,761)	-50.2%
Travel	462,100	268,000	0.1%	194,100	72.4%
Other	1,600,600	999,800	0.3%	600,800	60.1%
Information Technology	1,385,535	1,325,534	0.3%	60,001	4.5%
Rent	1,034,725	628,805	0.2%	405,920	64.6%
Indirect	2,055,870	1,458,776	0.4%	597,094	40.9%
Internal & Shared Services <sup>1</sup>	5,181,363	3,721,652	1.1%	1,459,711	39.2%
<b>System Operations</b>	<b>459,862,191</b>	<b>468,187,031</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>(8,324,840)</b>	<b>-1.8%</b>
Employer Service					
Employer Engagement	6,750,000	9,000,000	1.4%	(2,250,000)	-25.0%
Quality Improvement	2,500,000	4,600,332	0.5%	(2,100,332)	-45.7%
Resident Service					
Career Services	52,284,646	55,200,000	10.6%	(2,915,354)	-5.3%
Adult Education	7,723,031	13,000,000	1.6%	(5,276,969)	-40.6%
Financial Aid					
Early Educational Care	350,608,772	341,386,699	71.2%	9,222,073	2.7%
Training & Support	23,891,228	29,000,000	4.9%	(5,108,772)	-17.6%
Operations	16,104,514	16,000,000	3.3%	104,514	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>492,436,736</b>	<b>495,838,993</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>(3,402,257)</b>	<b>-0.7%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes New and Vacant personnel costs allocated to Workforce. These positions were reviewed and approval by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Executive Director.

**Action Item:**

Board staff hereby asks for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board to approve the revised 2025 budget in amount of \$492,436,736.

**Item 9b.**  
**Attachments**

**H-GAC 2025 BUDGET AND SERVICE PLAN – SHARED POSITIONS AGREEMENT**  
**Between the**  
**HUMAN SERVICE DEPARTMENT**  
**And**  
**ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT**

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:**

The budget for each department at our agency includes shared positions. These positions are a portion of the labor for individual team members in other departments that work on specific activities that support the workforce program. Examples include internal auditing, communications, and data services. These shared positions reside within the various departments outside of Human Services and are intended to provide value.

As we seek to work within an environment of mutual accountability, transparency, and trust, a better understanding of the work provided via shared positions will help ensure department directors can justify and explain their budgets to Board members, auditors, and funding partners.

The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth the common understandings and collaborative relationship between departments regarding shared positions. Indirect charges are not part of this agreement and will be handled via a broader discussion around our agency's approach to indirect charges.

The information contained in the shared positions agreement will also ensure team members can accurately and confidently present budget updates to their governing bodies and committees and will help fulfill a request for greater transparency and understanding requested by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget Committee on Thursday, November 7, 2024.

This agreement is intended to be prepared in the spirit of collaboration and customer service.

**SERVICES PROVIDED VIA SHARED SERVICES:**

Directors of both departments will certify this document as part of mutual accountability and commitment.

The Accounting Department will provide:

- Update project codes for Microix and MIP.
- Check invoices for payment
- Help facilitate monitoring with Texas Workforce Commission and Single Audit (Annual Audit) of the workforce program.
- Submit cash draws, expenditure reports, and closeout reports timely.
- Provide grant schedule and grant summary for the monthly intra-agency meetings.
- Complete HB1 and Cost survey.

The Human Service Department will:

- Provide financial contribution for staff costs.
- Communicate requests in a timely manner allowing sufficient time to complete requests.
- Coordinate on any scope revisions, schedule adjustments, or budget modifications, as needed.

- Provide necessary project codes for staff charges.
- Participate in regular intra-agency meetings and provide oversight, review, and guidance on all project activities.

#### **DELIVERABLES:**

The Accounting Department will deliver work as follows, with the assistance of the Human Services Department, as needed.

- Tasks and deliverables as outlined in above terms.
- Management review letters and memos to file as required.
- Monthly status reports

#### **TIME OF PERFORMANCE:**

Accounting Department agrees to commence and complete work on this project between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025.

#### **PROJECT CONTACTS:**

Director or Manager	Department
Juliet Stipeche	Human Services
Gilda Mendoza	Accounting

#### **DEPARTMENT STAFF**

***List staff allowed to charge to this project and proposed labor hours. Please provide a brief description of duties pertaining to the Workforce Program:***

Name	Title	Description	Hours
MENDOZA, MARY GILDA	Controller	Attend monthly department meetings, trainings, help approve closeouts, approve invoices in Microix workflow, backup CFO on approving workforce related EFT's.	272
DOWNIE, SHAUN	Manager	Update projects to MIP (accounting software). Attend monthly department meetings. Approve invoices in workflow (Microix). Approve journal entries when needed. Review and post manual bills in MIP.	363
VASQUEZ, TREEBIE	Sr. Accountant	Attend monthly departmen meetings, grant schedule, summary and admin reports, AEL billing report, consultant invoices, HHA billing report, VR navigation report (QTR), TEA Billing report, Workforce allocation, cash draw, TWC CDER expenditure report, AR recon (QTR), VR location billing report (Monthly), Grant closeout, initiate JE request as needed, manual billings, process refunds to TWC, monitoring Audit requests, Cost survey (annual).	1814



**PROJECT EXPENSES:**

Funding amounts identified in the table below are for the term of performance identified above. Any unused funding, upon completion of this project, will not carry forward and/or may not be available for additional scope activities. The Accounting Department should coordinate with the Human Services Department project manager for approval on use of any remaining funds. Please

Source	Expense Type	Funding Amount
TXWC.25.0900	Personnel	\$188,406.13
TXWC.25.0900	Travel	\$0
TXWC.25.0900	Rent	\$6,450.67
TXWC.25.0900	Indirect	\$21,139.17
TXWC.25.0900	Internal or Shared Services	\$30,392.09
TXWC.25.0900	Other	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$246,388.06</b>

**APPROVED****HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

  
Juliet Stipeche (Sep 23, 2025 18:06:54 CDT)

09/23/2025

Juliet Stipeche  
Human Services Director

Date

**ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT**

  
Gilda Mendoza  
Controller

09/23/2025  
Date

**H-GAC 2025 BUDGET AND SERVICE PLAN – SHARED POSITIONS AGREEMENT**  
**Between the**  
**HUMAN SERVICE DEPARTMENT**  
**And**  
**INTERNAL AUDIT DEPARTMENT**

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:**

The budget for each department at our agency includes shared positions. These positions are a portion of the labor for individual team members in other departments that work on specific activities that support the workforce program. Examples include internal auditing, communications, and data services. These shared positions reside within the various departments outside of Human Services and are intended to provide value.

As we seek to work within an environment of mutual accountability, transparency, and trust, a better understanding of the work provided via shared positions will help ensure department directors can justify and explain their budgets to Board members, auditors, and funding partners.

The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth the common understandings and collaborative relationship between departments regarding shared positions. Indirect charges are not part of this agreement and will be handled via a broader discussion around our agency's approach to indirect charges.

The information contained in the shared positions agreement will also ensure team members can accurately and confidently present budget updates to their governing bodies and committees, and will help fulfill a request for greater transparency and understanding requested by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget Committee on Thursday, November 7, 2024.

This agreement is intended to be prepared in the spirit of collaboration and customer service.

**SERVICES PROVIDED VIA SHARED SERVICES:**

Directors of both departments will certify this document as part of mutual accountability and commitment.

The Internal Audit Department will provide:

- ANNUAL DESK REVIEWS OF SINGLE AUDITS OR FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF SUBRECIPIENTS
- PRE-AWARD REVIEWS OF SUBRECIPIENT CONTRACTS; INCLUDING NEW, AMENDMENTS, EXTENSIONS, NOTICE OF OBLIGATIONS
- PRE-AWARD REPORTS FOR REVIEWS OF MATERIAL, NEW AND RENEWAL SUBRECIPIENT CONTRACTS, WITH EMPHASIS OF AND ADDITIONAL WORK FOR NEW SUBRECIPIENTS, INCLUDING PROVIDING RECOMMENDATIONS
- PRE-AWARD REVIEWS OF MATERIAL CONTRACTOR AND VENDOR AGREEMENTS
- ROTATIONAL SITE VISITS WITH WF STAFF TO SUBRECIPIENTS, TO ESTABLISH ADDITIONAL MONITORING PRESENCE AND AUGMENT THE WORK OF GCWF BOARD, BASED ON ASSESSED RISKS AND PRIORITY

- ROTATIONAL CYBERSECURITY REVIEWS OF SUBRECIPIENTS IN CONJUNCTION WITH HGAC-IT DEPARTMENT, BASED ON SIZE AND RISK ASSESSMENT
- CONDUCT SYSTEMS TESTING IN COORDINATION WITH GCWF BOARD-QA TEAM UTILIZING IT AUDITING TECHNIQUES
- INVESTIGATIONS AS REQUESTED BY MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING OF ISSUES STEMMING FROM THE WHISTLE-BLOWER HOTLINE PROGRAM
- ASSISTANCE TO WF CONTRACT MANAGERS ON REVISIONS TO CONTRACT, PROGRAM GUIDELINES, ROLLOUT OF PRESENTATIONS/TRAININGS TO SUBRECIPIENTS
- JOINT MEETINGS WITH GCWF BOARD STAFF AND SUBRECIPIENTS IN MONITORING OR TRAINING ACTIVITIES, AS REQUESTED
- REVIEW OR OVERSIGHT SUPPORT TO WF BOARD STAFF OF EXTERNAL FINANCIAL MONITOR'S PROCESS AND WORK PRODUCTS, AS REQUESTED BY WF BOARD STAFF
- PREPARATION OF ANNUAL MATRIX OF GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT OF WF'S SUBRECIPIENTS
- PROVIDE ADVISORY, ASSURANCE SERVICES OR CARRY OUT SPECIAL PROJECTS TO AUGMENT MONITORING OR COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES OF WFS, AS REQUESTED BY WFS OR HGAC MANAGEMENT

The Human Service Department will:

- Provide financial contribution for staff costs.
- Communicate requests in a timely manner allowing sufficient time to complete requests.
- Coordinate on any scope revisions, schedule adjustments, or budget modifications, as needed.
- Provide necessary project codes for staff charges.
- Participate in regular intra-agency meetings and provide oversight, review, and guidance on all project activities.

#### **DELIVERABLES:**

The Internal Audit Department will deliver work as follows, with the assistance of the Human Services Department, as needed.

- Tasks and deliverables as outlined in above terms.
- Management review letters and memos to file as required.
- Monthly status reports

#### **TIME OF PERFORMANCE:**

Internal Audit Department agrees to commence and complete work on this project between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025.

**PROJECT CONTACTS:**

Director or Manager	Department
Juliet Stipeche	Human Services
Charles Hill	Director, Internal Audit

**DEPARTMENT STAFF**

***List staff allowed to charge to this project and proposed labor hours. Please provide a brief description of duties pertaining to the Workforce Program:***

**CHARLES HILL: 300 HOURS**

OVERSIGHT, APPROVAL, AUTHORIZATION OF WORK PLANS AND PROJECTS  
 REVIEW OF REPORTS AND WORK PRODUCTS  
 COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES WITH DIRECTOR OF HUMAN SERVICES

**SABRINA UY/DANIEL PRITCHETT, DILLON MARSH: 600 HOURS, 150 HOURS**

SUPERVISORY OF IA STAFF FOR ABOVE SERVICES  
 COORDINATE ANNUAL RISK ASSESSMENTS-MATRIX AND FRAMEWORK  
 COORDINATION WITH WF BOARD STAFF PRE-AWARD AND SITE VISITS  
 CONSULTING SERVICES, AND/OR  
 CONDUCTING THE WORK FOR THE ABOVE SERVICES

**ALTHEA EDWARDS, MURAD ALNAJJAR, PAMELA FANNIEL, CHRISTINA MEDINA: 402 HOURS, 150 HOURS, 125 HOURS, 200 HOURS**

DESK REVIEWS  
 PRE-AWARDS  
 SELECT SITE VISITS  
 AUDITS, CYBER-SECURITY VISITS, SELECT WORK, AS ASSIGNED

**SANDRA MCKNIGHT (ADMIN ASSISTANT/AUDIT SPECIALIST):****80 HOURS**

COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES AND  
 LIMITED AUDITS AND REVIEWS UNDER SUPERVISION

**(VACANT IT AUDITOR): 150 HOURS**

CONDUCT SYSTEMS TESTING IN COORDINATION WITH GCWF BOARD-QA TEAM TO  
 AUGMENT THE TESTING PROCEDURES

**PROJECT EXPENSES:**

Funding amounts identified in the table below are for the term of performance identified above. Any unused funding, upon completion of this project, will not carry forward and/or may not be available for additional scope activities. The Internal Audit Department should coordinate with the Human Services Department project manager for approval on use of any remaining funds. Please

Source	Expense Type	Funding Amount
TXWC.24.0900	Personnel	\$128,345.00
TXWC.24.0900	Travel	\$0.00
TXWC.24.0900	Rent	\$0.00
TXWC.24.0900	Indirect	\$33,923.00
TXWC.24.0900	Internal or Shared Services	\$0.00
TXWC.24.0900	Other (i.e. Staff Benefits)	\$60,322.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$222,590.00</b>

*The other amount is to cover possible increases during the year.*

**APPROVED****HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
Juliet Stipeche (Sep 25, 2025 07:52:57 CDT)

Juliet Stipeche  
Human Services Director

09/25/2025

Date

**INTERNAL AUDIT DEPARTMENT**

Charles D. Hill  
Director of Internal Audit

9/24/2025

Date

**H-GAC 2025 BUDGET AND SERVICE PLAN – SHARED POSITIONS AGREEMENT**  
**Between the**  
**HUMAN SERVICE DEPARTMENT**  
**And**  
**H-GAC (INTERNAL SERVICES COSTS)**

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:**

The budget for each department at our agency includes shared positions. These positions are a portion of the labor for individual team members in other departments that work on specific activities that support the workforce program. Examples include internal auditing, communications, and data services. These shared positions reside within the various departments outside of Human Services and are intended to provide value.

As we seek to work within an environment of mutual accountability, transparency, and trust, a better understanding of the work provided via shared positions will help ensure department directors can justify and explain their budgets to Board members, auditors, and funding partners.

The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth the common understandings and collaborative relationship between departments regarding shared positions.

The information contained in the shared positions agreement will also ensure team members can accurately and confidently present budget updates to their governing bodies and committees and will help fulfill a request for greater transparency and understanding requested by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget Committee on Thursday, November 7, 2024.

This agreement is intended to be prepared in the spirit of collaboration and customer service.

**SERVICES PROVIDED VIA SHARED SERVICES:**

Directors of both departments will certify this document as part of mutual accountability and commitment.

The Internal Services will:

- Maintain H-GAC personnel policies.
  - Daily central telephone services.
  - Process and orient new employees.
  - Policy guidance and development for the agency.
  - Negotiate new benefit rate for Employee health plan.
  - Maintain personnel records for employees.
  - Administer H-GAC benefit and wellness programs.
  - Respond to salary survey questionnaires and provide compensation review and analysis.
  - Administer personnel processing including hiring, terminating, and disciplinary actions.
  - Establish, deliver and monitor Employee Handbook and various policies.
  - Interface with federal agencies such as the Department of Labor and the EEOC.
  - Recruit and fill open positions from local and national talent pools.
  - Implement and maintain Human Resource Management Systems.
  - Manage employee engagement programs.
  - Design, implement and track Performance Management Programs.
  - Design and implement general training programs for the agency.
  - Develop training and career pathing for the agency.
- 
- Document increased efficiency by administering centralized contracting and purchasing functions.

- Maintain agency procurement policy and procedures and revise as required for compliance with local and federal regulations.
- Transition the agency to a new contracts management software system.
- Finalize the agency contracts policy.

#### Printing

- Daily operation and maintenance of duplicating equipment.
- Staff support for production of documents.
- Reporting on cost and use of duplication equipment for equitable allocation of costs.
- Administer centralized processing for shipping and receiving.
- Administer phone systems and office supplies for agency.
- Provide service to telecommuting employees including pickup of equipment and supplies.

#### Facility

- Maintenance of office space within leased premises.
- Furniture and equipment acquisition and maintenance for general office use.
- Safety and property risk compliance.
- Manage all capital improvement projects from inception to completion within budget.
- Coordinate construction of office renovation. The

Human Service Department will:

- Provide financial contribution for staff costs.
- Communicate requests in a timely manner allowing sufficient time to complete requests.
- Coordinate on any scope revisions, schedule adjustments, or budget modifications, as needed.
- Provide necessary project codes for staff charges.
- Participate in regular intra-agency meetings and provide oversight, review, and guidance on all project activities.

#### **DELIVERABLES:**

The Departments will deliver work as follows, with the assistance of the Human Services Department, as needed.

- Tasks and deliverables as outlined in above terms.
- Management review letters and memos to file as required.
- Monthly status reports

#### **TIME OF PERFORMANCE:**

Departments agrees to commence and complete work on this project between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025.

#### **PROJECT CONTACTS:**

Director or Manager	Department
Juliet Stipeche	Human Services
Chuck Wemple	Executive Director

## DEPARTMENT STAFF

***List staff allowed to charge to this project and proposed labor hours. Please provide a brief description of duties pertaining to the Workforce Program:***

See attached, Budget Lines Summary\_Workforce Direct Costs 08.01.25 and Workforce Position Allocations 08.01.25



**PROJECT EXPENSES:**

Funding amounts identified in the table below are for the term of performance identified above. Any unused funding, upon completion of this project, will not carry forward and/or may not be available for additional scope activities. The Departments should coordinate with the Human Services Department project manager for approval on use of any remaining funds. Please

Source	Expense Type	Funding Amount
ALLOCATED	Personnel	\$0.00
ALLOCATED	Travel	\$0.00
ALLOCATED	Rent	\$0.00
ALLOCATED	Indirect	\$0.00
ALLOCATED	Internal or Shared Services	\$1,990,772
ALLOCATED	Other	\$0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,990,772</b>

**APPROVED****HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

Juliet Stipeche (Sep 25, 2025 15:45:15 CDT)

Juliet Stipeche  
Human Services Director

09/25/2025

Date

**H-GAC**

Chuck Wemple (Sep 24, 2025 16:52:44 CDT)

Chuck Wemple  
Executive Director

09/24/2025

Date

**H-GAC 2025 BUDGET AND SERVICE PLAN – SHARED POSITIONS AGREEMENT**  
**Between the**  
**HUMAN SERVICE DEPARTMENT**  
**And**  
**H-GAC (NETWORK AND GIS)**

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:**

The budget for each department at our agency includes shared positions. These positions are a portion of the labor for individual team members in other departments that work on specific activities that support the workforce program. Examples include internal auditing, communications, and data services. These shared positions reside within the various departments outside of Human Services and are intended to provide value.

As we seek to work within an environment of mutual accountability, transparency, and trust, a better understanding of the work provided via shared positions will help ensure department directors can justify and explain their budgets to Board members, auditors, and funding partners.

The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth the common understandings and collaborative relationship between departments regarding shared positions.

The information contained in the shared positions agreement will also ensure team members can accurately and confidently present budget updates to their governing bodies and committees and will help fulfill a request for greater transparency and understanding requested by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget Committee on Thursday, November 7, 2024.

This agreement is intended to be prepared in the spirit of collaboration and customer service.

**SERVICES PROVIDED VIA SHARED SERVICES:**

Directors of both departments will certify this document as part of mutual accountability and commitment.

The Network and GIS Services will:

Information Technology Support

- Develop strategic plans for the agency's information technologies to support various program needs and to align with industry standards and trends.
- Maintain agency's network infrastructure, telecommunication services and enterprise data management.
- Provide applications support and helpdesk services.
- Maintain and support a host of applications and web services for both internal and external users.
- Oversee the operation of agency computer networks including agency shared software. Develops agency hardware standards and oversee hardware acquisitions.
- Develop, plan and implement agency information systems and cybersecurity policies and procedures.

Application Development and Support

- Providing content management system (CMS) support and training to H-GAC staff.
- Delivering data analysis of web traffic to inform strategic decisions.
- Supporting department and program needs through development of workflow automations and PowerPlatform solutions.
- Maintaining high staff engagement and adoption of Asana, the agency's project management tool.
- Supporting, monitoring, and training staff on the use of internal collaboration platforms

including Intranet, Extranet, SharePoint, Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, OneNote, Microsoft Forms, and Booking.

- Maintaining and supporting Adobe Sign, the agency's enterprise digital signature platform.
- Consulting with business units to integrate technology and data into their workflows to better support operational and programmatic goals.

#### Business Intelligence/Artificial Intelligence

- Gather business units' data requirements and develop information and insights into the data for intelligent and informed decisions for the programs.
- Develop an agency wide data governance strategy to ensure quality data that is structured in a useable and workable format.
- Develop and implement an artificial intelligence strategy to allow business units to incorporate AI into their work for increased efficiency and quality.

#### Information Security

- Implement and update processes and tools to improve and streamline identification and remediation of threats to agency information and resources.
- Conduct security awareness training and complete other compliance requirements.
- Develop outreach initiatives to engage external organizations and entities to promote cybersecurity within the region.
- Conduct IT and cybersecurity assessments on our vendors and subrecipients as part of the pre-award process and ongoing improvement of the programs' cybersecurity posture.

#### Data Visualization and Application Development

- Update and enhance interactive web mapping tools and dashboards for transportation, community and environmental planning. Provide technical and analytical support.
- Participating in diverse strategic planning and tool development initiatives, including regional industrial cluster analysis, regional growth forecast, regional travel patterns, and a congestion monitoring management dashboard.
- Provide informational services and analytical support to various H-GAC programs, regional planning agencies, local governments, and their consultants in support of regional planning activities and studies.

#### GIS Management

- Maintenance of GIS data and ArcGIS online. SDE data development, updates, and maintenance. Agency-wide GIS support and troubleshooting. ArcGIS Open Data Hub maintenance.
- Redesign of H-GAC regional Data Hub.
- Assessment of GIS cloud migration / computing.

#### The Human Service Department will:

- Provide financial contribution for staff costs.
- Communicate requests in a timely manner allowing sufficient time to complete requests.
- Coordinate on any scope revisions, schedule adjustments, or budget modifications, as needed.
- Provide necessary project codes for staff charges.
- Participate in regular intra-agency meetings and provide oversight, review, and guidance on all project activities.

#### **DELIVERABLES:**

The Departments will deliver work as follows, with the assistance of the Human Services Department, as needed.

- Tasks and deliverables as outlined in above terms.
- Management review letters and memos to file as required.

- Monthly status reports

**TIME OF PERFORMANCE:**

Departments agrees to commence and complete work on this project between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025.

**PROJECT CONTACTS:**

Director or Manager	Department
Juliet Stipeche	Human Services
Chuck Wemple	Executive Director

**DEPARTMENT STAFF**

*List staff allowed to charge to this project and proposed labor hours. Please provide a brief description of duties pertaining to the Workforce Program:*


See attached, Budget Lines Summary\_Workforce Direct Costs 08.01.25 and Workforce Position Allocations 08.01.25

**PROJECT EXPENSES:**

Funding amounts identified in the table below are for the term of performance identified above. Any unused funding, upon completion of this project, will not carry forward and/or may not be available for additional scope activities. The Departments should coordinate with the Human Services Department project manager for approval on use of any remaining funds. Please

Source	Expense Type	Funding Amount
ALLOCATED	Personnel	\$0.00
ALLOCATED	Travel	\$0.00
ALLOCATED	Rent	\$0.00
ALLOCATED	Indirect	\$0.00
ALLOCATED	Network and GIS Services	\$2,094,038
ALLOCATED	Other	\$0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,094,038</b>

**APPROVED****HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

  
Juliet Stipeche (Sep 25, 2025 15:44:48 CDT)

Juliet Stipeche  
Human Services Director

09/25/2025

Date

**H-GAC**

  
Chuck Wemple (Sep 24, 2025 16:52:44 CDT)

Chuck Wemple  
Executive Director

09/24/2025

Date

**H-GAC 2025 BUDGET AND SERVICE PLAN – SHARED POSITIONS AGREEMENT**  
**Between the**  
**HUMAN SERVICE DEPARTMENT**  
**And**  
**OUTREACH & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:**

The budget for each department at our agency includes shared positions. These positions are a portion of the labor for individual team members in other departments that work on specific activities that support the workforce program. Examples include internal auditing, communications, and data services. These shared positions reside within the various departments outside of Human Services and are intended to provide value.

As we seek to work within an environment of mutual accountability, transparency, and trust, a better understanding of the work provided via shared positions will help ensure department directors can justify and explain their budgets to Board members, auditors, and funding partners.

The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth the common understandings and collaborative relationship between departments regarding shared positions. Indirect charges are not part of this agreement and will be handled via a broader discussion around our agency's approach to indirect charges.

The information contained in the shared positions agreement will also ensure team members can accurately and confidently present budget updates to their governing bodies and committees, and will help fulfill a request for greater transparency and understanding requested by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget Committee on Thursday, November 7, 2024.

This agreement is intended to be prepared in the spirit of collaboration and customer service.

**SERVICES PROVIDED VIA SHARED SERVICES:**

Directors of both departments will certify this document as part of mutual accountability and commitment.

The Outreach & Government Affairs Department will provide:

- Strategic outreach planning
- Campaign development & execution
- Targeted audience outreach
- Program support (employer services, youth services, career centers, etc.)
  - Event promotion
  - Public outreach
  - Promotional collateral
  - Webpage content
  - Annual reports
- Audience messaging
- Public meeting planning & support
- Community relations
- Media relations
- Media interview training
- Email marketing
- Social media
- Copywriting

- Graphic design
- Videography
- Photography
- H-GAC member government relations
- Boards & committees management
- H-GAC channel promotion
  - “Regional Focus” mass distribution email newsletter
  - “What’s Happening at H-GAC” video series
  - “The Insider” internal employee email newsletter
  - www.H-GAC.com
  - Social media accounts
- Cross-agency collaboration (present opportunities to promote/support Workforce Solutions among other departments, including Transportation, Public Services, C&E, DAR, etc.
- External agency management
- Vendor scope of work and request for proposal development

The Human Service Department will:

- Provide financial contribution for staff costs.
- Communicate requests in a timely manner allowing sufficient time to complete requests.
- Coordinate on any scope revisions, schedule adjustments, or budget modifications, as needed.
- Provide necessary project codes for staff charges.
- Participate in regular intra-agency meetings and provide oversight, review, and guidance on all project activities.

#### **DELIVERABLES:**

The Outreach & Government Affairs Department will deliver work as follows, with the assistance of the Human Services Department, as needed.

- Tasks and deliverables as outlined in above terms.
- Management review letters and memos to file as required.
- Monthly status reports

#### **TIME OF PERFORMANCE:**

Outreach & Government Affairs Department agrees to commence and complete work on this project between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025.

#### **PROJECT CONTACTS:**

<b>Director or Manager</b>	<b>Department</b>
Juliet Stipeche	<b>Human Services</b>
Miguel Segura	<b>Outreach &amp; Government Affairs</b>

## DEPARTMENT STAFF

*List staff allowed to charge to this project and proposed labor hours. Please provide a brief description of duties pertaining to the Workforce Program:*


- **MIGUEL SEGURA, DIRECTOR: 10 HOURS**, OVERSIGHT OF REQUESTED PROJECTS AND SUPPORT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF PROGRAM PUBLIC AFFAIRS
- **(VACANT) MANAGER: 200 HOURS**, OVERSIGHT OF REQUESTED PROJECTS AND SUPPORT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF PROGRAM PUBLIC AFFAIRS
- **MARKITA SAMUEL: 50 HOURS**, OVERSIGHT OF REQUESTED PROJECTS AND SUPPORT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF PROGRAM PUBLIC AFFAIRS
- **ALEXANDRIA BROCK: 100 HOURS**, SUPPORT WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATIVE REQUESTS, SPECIALIZING IN CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT AND TARGETED OUTREACH
- **SARA HART: 10 HOURS**, SUPPORT WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATIVE REQUESTS, SPECIALIZING IN CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT AND TARGETED OUTREACH
- **KELLY SHANNON: 10 HOURS**, SUPPORT WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATIVE REQUESTS, SPECIALIZING IN CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT AND TARGETED OUTREACH
- **GINETTE CORREA: 275 HOURS**, SUPPORT WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATIVE REQUESTS, SPECIALIZING IN CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT AND TARGETED OUTREACH
- **SANDRA LEIVA: 20 HOURS**, SUPPORT WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATIVE REQUESTS, SPECIALIZING IN CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL MEDIA, CONTENT DEVELOPMENT, AND TARGETED OUTREACH
- **TRICIA BENTLEY: 25 HOURS**, SUPPORT WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATIVE REQUESTS, SPECIALIZING IN CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT, MEDIA RELATIONS, CONTENT DEVELOPMENT, AND TARGETED OUTREACH
- **KEITH GARBER: 25 HOURS**, SUPPORT WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATIVE REQUESTS, SPECIALIZING IN CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT AND GRAPHIC DESIGN
- **JESSICA VANDERVOOT: 150 HOURS**, SUPPORT WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATIVE REQUESTS, SPECIALIZING IN CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT AND GRAPHIC DESIGN
- **WILFREDO MENDOZA: 200 HOURS**, SUPPORT WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATIVE REQUESTS, SPECIALIZING IN PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY



**PROJECT EXPENSES:**

Funding amounts identified in the table below are for the term of performance identified above. Any unused funding, upon completion of this project, will not carry forward and/or may not be available for additional scope activities. The Public Affairs Department should coordinate with the Human Services Department project manager for approval on use of any remaining funds. Please

Source	Expense Type	Funding Amount
TXWC.25.1900	Personnel	\$73,730.58
TXWC.25.1900	Travel	\$0.00
TXWC.25.1900	Rent	\$2,647.93
TXWC.25.1900	Indirect	\$8,809.76
TXWC.25.1900	Internal or Shared Services	\$8,105.85
TXWC.25.1900	Other	\$8,526.31
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$101,820.43</b>

**APPROVED****HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
Juliet Stipeche (Sep 24, 2025 15:52:10 CDT)

Juliet Stipeche  
Human Services Director

09/24/2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**OUTREACH & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**  
Miguel Segura (Sep 24, 2025 15:35:17 CDT)

Miguel Segura  
Director of Public Affairs

09/24/2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**H-GAC 2025 BUDGET AND SERVICE PLAN – SHARED POSITIONS AGREEMENT**  
**Between the**  
**HUMAN SERVICE DEPARTMENT**  
**And**  
**DATA SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:**

The budget for each department at our agency includes shared positions. These positions are a portion of the labor for individual team members in other departments that work on specific activities that support the workforce program. Examples include internal auditing, communications, and data services. These shared positions reside within the various departments outside of Human Services and are intended to provide value.

As we seek to work within an environment of mutual accountability, transparency, and trust, a better understanding of the work provided via shared positions will help ensure department directors can justify and explain their budgets to Board members, auditors, and funding partners.

The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth the common understandings and collaborative relationship between departments regarding shared positions. Indirect charges are not part of this agreement and will be handled via a broader discussion around our agency's approach to indirect charges.

The information contained in the shared positions agreement will also ensure team members can accurately and confidently present budget updates to their governing bodies and committees, and will help fulfill a request for greater transparency and understanding requested by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board Budget Committee on Thursday, November 7, 2024.

This agreement is intended to be prepared in the spirit of collaboration and customer service.

**SERVICES PROVIDED VIA SHARED SERVICES:**

Directors of both departments will certify this document as part of mutual accountability and commitment.

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The Data Services Department will provide:

- Provide wide area network (WAN) support for over twenty-eight (28) Workforce Solutions career offices in the region and providing access to applications and resources hosted on the TWC private network.
- Facilitate data circuit adds, moves, and or changes for the Workforce Solutions career offices.
- Maintain the Workforce Solutions network account database, e-mail and web services.
- Maintain and provide Office 365 technical support including e-mail, SharePoint, OneDrive, extranet services, access permissions for 1130 Workforce Solutions career office employees.
- Host and maintain childcare financial assistance program's web application and database.
- Conduct an annual cybersecurity end user training.
- Perform IT/Cybersecurity assessments of the program contractors and sub-recipients.
- Develop and manage the infrastructure and content of the Workforce Solutions website.

The Human Service Department will:

- Provide financial contribution for staff costs.
- Communicate requests in a timely manner allowing sufficient time to complete requests.
- Coordinate on any scope revisions, schedule adjustments, or budget modifications, as needed.
- Provide necessary project codes for staff charges.
- Participate in regular intra-agency meetings and provide oversight, review, and guidance on all project activities.

**DELIVERABLES:**

The Data Services Department will deliver work as follows, with the assistance of the Human Services Department, as needed.

- Tasks and deliverables as outlined in above terms.
- Management review letters and memos to file as required.
- Monthly status reports

**TIME OF PERFORMANCE:**

Data Services Department agrees to commence and complete work on this project between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025.

**PROJECT CONTACTS:**

Director or Manager	Department
Juliet Stipeche	Human Services
Viet Dang	Data Services

**DEPARTMENT STAFF**

*List staff allowed to charge to this project and proposed labor hours. Please provide a brief description of duties pertaining to the Workforce Program:*

<p><b>HOURS ARE BASED ON 80 HOUR PAY PERIOD.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>ANCHONDO, PHILLIPPE – 0.20 FTE (363 HOURS)</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>LEAD WEB DEVELOPER MANAGING WEB DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS</b></li></ul></li><li>• <b>LARSON, SARAH – 0.40 FTE (726 HOURS)</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>WRKSOLUTIONS.COM WEBSITE CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT.</b></li></ul></li><li>• <b>LE, CHAU – 0.20 FTE (363 HOURS)</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>MANAGER FOR APPLICATIONS DEVELOPMENT. LEADING BUSINESS APPLICATION IMPLEMENTATION AND INTEGRATION. SUPPORT FOR O365 APPS AND CUSTOM WORKFLOWS.</b></li></ul></li><li>• <b>RIZVI, YUSHA – 0.50 FTE (907 HOURS)</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>SHAREPOINT ADMINISTRATOR FOR SHAREPOINT IMPLEMENTATION, PERMISSIONS MANAGEMENT, CONTENT UPDATES, EXTRANET CONFIGURATION AND SUPPORT FOR BOTH BOARD STAFF AND WFS.</b></li></ul></li><li>• <b>MCGHIE, CHRISTOPHER – 0.20 FTE (363 HOURS)</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>ADMINISTRATOR FOR LISO OPERATIONS AND ACCOUNT ADMINISTRATION.</b></li></ul></li><li>• <b>ORTIZ, JAMES – 0.80 FTE (1,451 HOURS)</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>INFORMATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATOR MANAGING SECURITY FUNCTIONS INCLUDING POLICY UPDATES, INCIDENT RESPONSE,</b></li></ul></li></ul>
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**PERFORMING IT/CYBERSECURITY ASSESSMENTS, SECURITY TRAINING.**

- **SHERIF, MALIK – 0.40 FTE (726 HOURS)**
  - **SENIOR SYSTEMS ANALYST MANAGING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING OFFICE 365 SYSTEM CONFIGURATIONS, EMAIL FLOW, DATA BACKUP AND RESTORE, AND WEB HOSTING PLATFORM.**
- **TRAN, JOHN – 0.50 FTE (907 HOURS)**
  - **INFORMATION SECURITY MANAGER OVERSEEING CYBERSECURITY PROGRAM INCLUDING POLICY UPDATES, IT/CYBERSECURITY ASSESSMENTS, INCIDENT RESPONSE.**
- **SYSTEMS SPECIALIST (TO BE FILLED) - 0.40 FTE (726 HOURS)**
  - **ADMINISTRATOR FOR LISO OPERATIONS AND ACCOUNT ADMINISTRATION.**


**PROJECT EXPENSES:**

Funding amounts identified in the table below are for the term of performance identified above. Any unused funding, upon completion of this project, will not carry forward and/or may not be available for additional scope activities. The Data Services Department should coordinate with the Human Services Department project manager for approval on use of any remaining funds. Please

<b>Source</b>	<b>Expense Type</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
TXWC.25.0901	Personnel	\$524,677
TXWC.25.0901	Travel	\$0
TXWC.25.0901	Rent	\$17,787
TXWC.25.0901	Indirect	\$62,745
TXWC.25.0901	Internal or Shared Services	\$108,662
TXWC.25.0901	Other	\$39,844
TXWC.25.0901	Wide Area Network	\$250,000
TXWC.25.0901	Maintenance & Repair	\$9,500
TXWC.25.0901	Software	\$1,026,035
TXWC.25.0901	Capital Equipment	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,039,250</b>

**APPROVED**


**HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

  
Juliet Stipeche (Sep 24, 2025 09:17:43 CDT)  
Juliet Stipeche  
Human Services Director

09/24/2025

Date

**DATA SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

  
Viet Dang (Sep 24, 2025 09:22:11 CDT)  
Viet Dang  
Director of Data Services

09/24/2025

Date



## Performance and Production

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### Update for September 2025

#### **Reporting Infrastructure Enhancements**

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast continues to work closely with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as the state enhances its reporting infrastructure. While progress has been made with several modules successfully updated, challenges remain around data completeness. To address this, the Board has accelerated the rollout of standardized reporting tools across service providers. These tools are designed to strengthen consistency, accuracy, and efficiency in data collection and reporting, ensuring leadership has access to timely and reliable insights. In parallel, Gulf Coast continues to use predictive models aligned with TWC methodologies, giving the region the ability to monitor performance proactively and refine operations in real time.

#### **Provider Collaboration & Support**

Partnership with service providers remains a top priority. Bi-monthly coordination sessions with providers have created a strong platform for alignment, shared best practices, and system-wide accountability. At the same time, a comprehensive training series has been deployed to both provider staff and Board personnel, equipping frontline teams with advanced interviewing techniques and career assessment tools. These efforts are helping staff connect job seekers to higher-quality employment pathways and ensuring that regional strategies translate into measurable results.

#### **Performance and Regional Comparison Summary (October 2024 – June 2025)**

Midway through FY2025, the Gulf Coast region is demonstrating strong performance compared to statewide outcomes. Adults and Dislocated Workers continue to excel in employment and earnings measures, with Gulf Coast participants more likely to secure jobs quickly and achieve higher wages than the statewide average. Measurable Skills Gains are also a standout strength, reflecting strong alignment between training investments and employer needs.

Reemployment outcomes remain a regional highlight, with Gulf Coast participants returning to work faster than those in other parts of the state. Employer engagement efforts also continue to deliver results, as shown by high participation rates in talent assistance programs. Child care services further

reinforce the system's success, with more families supported daily than the statewide benchmark.

Credential attainment remains an area of opportunity, particularly among Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Career & Technical participants. While Gulf Coast continues to trail statewide levels, the region has already launched targeted strategies aimed at strengthening credential outcomes, including closer alignment with training providers and enhanced support for participants pursuing certifications. These efforts are designed to build on existing performance strengths and ensure credentials more directly translate into quality employment.

Youth outcomes were not available for this cycle; however, ongoing improvements to data systems are expected to enhance accuracy and provide a clearer picture of youth performance in upcoming reporting periods.



# Performance and Production – TWC update through June 2025

Measure		% of Target			% of Target		
		Dec-24			Apr-25		
		Gulf Coast Performance	State Performance	Difference	Gulf Coast Performance	State Performance	Difference
WIOA Outcome Measures	Employed Q2 Post Exit - Adult	94.73%	94.86%	-0.13%	103.66%	102.20%	1.46%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - Adult	90.51%	89.14%	1.37%	102.02%	100.35%	1.67%
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Adult	91.89%	87.26%	4.63%	96.79%	89.29%	7.50%
	Credential Rate - Adult	78.20%	91.22%	-13.02%	80.98%	93.53%	-12.55%
	Measurable Skills Gains - Adult	93.26%	87.24%	6.02%	105.25%	97.57%	7.68%
	Employed Q2 Post Exit - DW	95.63%	90.34%	5.29%	106.22%	101.81%	4.41%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - DW	80.72%	87.29%	-6.57%	96.65%	101.12%	-4.47%
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - DW	99.53%	98.29%	1.24%	114.55%	99.32%	15.23%
	Credential Rate - DW	72.06%	91.28%	-19.22%	76.91%	92.39%	-15.48%
	Measurable Skills Gains - DW	90.93%	79.92%	11.01%	100.73%	87.26%	13.47%
	Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Credential Rate - Youth	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Measurable Skills Gains - Youth	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Employed/ Enrolled Q2 - C&T	87.21%	88.82%	-1.61%			
	Employed/ Enrolled Q2-Q4 - C&T	91.67%	91.19%	0.48%			
	Credential Rate C&T	74.51%	88.87%	-14.36%	79.42%	91.69%	-12.27%

# Performance and Production – TWC update through June 2025

Measure		% of Target	
		Dec-24	Apr-25
		Gulf Coast Performance	Gulf Coast Performance
WIOA Outcome Measures	Employed Q2 Post Exit - Adult	94.73%	103.66%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - Adult	90.51%	102.02%
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Adult	91.89%	96.79%
	Credential Rate - Adult	78.20%	80.98%
	Measurable Skills Gains - Adult	93.26%	105.25%
	Employed Q2 Post Exit - DW	95.63%	106.22%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - DW	80.72%	96.65%
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - DW	99.53%	114.55%
	Credential Rate - DW	72.06%	76.91%
	Measurable Skills Gains - DW	90.93%	100.73%
	Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----
	Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----
	Credential Rate - Youth	-----	-----
	Measurable Skills Gains - Youth	-----	-----
	Employed/ Enrolled Q2 - C&T	87.21%	
	Employed/ Enrolled Q2-Q4 - C&T	91.67%	
	Credential Rate C&T	74.51%	79.42%

% of Target		
Jun-25		
Gulf Coast Performance	State Performance	Difference
103.68%	103.24%	0.44%
102.28%	100.46%	1.82%
100.94%	95.20%	5.74%
86.20%	95.56%	-9.36%
114.82%	106.85%	7.97%
105.48%	103.28%	2.20%
99.58%	102.52%	-2.94%
118.02%	99.23%	18.79%
85.74%	95.72%	-9.98%
105.53%	96.35%	9.18%
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-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
86.94%	97.24%	-10.30%

# Performance and Production – TWC update through June 2025

Measure		% of Target	
		Dec-24	Apr-25
		Gulf Coast Performance	Gulf Coast Performance
WIOA Outcome Measures	Employed Q2 Post Exit - Adult	94.73%	103.66%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - Adult	90.51%	102.02%
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Adult	91.89%	96.79%
	Credential Rate - Adult	78.20%	80.98%
	Measurable Skills Gains - Adult	93.26%	105.25%
	Employed Q2 Post Exit - DW	95.63%	106.22%
	Employed Q4 Post Exit - DW	80.72%	96.65%
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - DW	99.53%	114.55%
	Credential Rate - DW	72.06%	76.91%
	Measurable Skills Gains - DW	90.93%	100.73%
	Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----
	Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----
	Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit - Youth	-----	-----
	Credential Rate - Youth	-----	-----
	Measurable Skills Gains - Youth	-----	-----
	Employed/ Enrolled Q2 - C&T	87.21%	
	Employed/ Enrolled Q2-Q4 - C&T	91.67%	
	Credential Rate C&T	74.51%	79.42%

% of Target		
Jun-25		
Gulf Coast Performance	State Performance	Difference
103.68%	103.24%	0.44%
102.28%	100.46%	1.82%
100.94%	95.20%	5.74%
86.20%	95.56%	-9.36%
114.82%	106.85%	7.97%
105.48%	103.28%	2.20%
99.58%	102.52%	-2.94%
118.02%	99.23%	18.79%
85.74%	95.72%	-9.98%
105.53%	96.35%	9.18%
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-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
86.94%	97.24%	-10.30%

# Performance and Production – TWC update through June 2025

Measure		% of Target	
		Dec-24	Apr-25
		Gulf Coast Performance	Gulf Coast Performance
Reemployment and Employer Engagement Measures	Claimants Reemployment within 10 weeks	112.70%	102.87%
	Texas Talent Assistance Rate	135.98%	272.54%
Program Participation Measures	Average Children Served Per Day	101.91%	98.11%
	Childcare Initial Job Search Success Rate		
	Choices Full Engagement Rate	-----	-----
Adult Education	Adult Ed Total 12+ Hour Students	84.03%	83.40%
	Integrated Education/Training - IET (AEFLA)	56.84%	62.10%
	Intensives	76.53%	86.00%
	Popular	67.38%	80.71%
	Measurable Skills Gain	94.96%	115.15%

% of Target		
Jun-25		
Gulf Coast Performance	State Performance	State vs Gulf Coast Difference
99.43%	96.05%	3.38%
313.01%	-----	-----
99.99%	95.38%	4.61%
77.85%	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
83.65%	119.20%	-35.55%
68.64%	96.13%	-27.49%
85.24%	126.09%	-40.85%
79.75%	-----	-----
121.97%	123.83%	-1.86%

# Performance and Production – TWC update through June 2025

Measure		% of Target	
		Dec-24	Apr-25
		Gulf Coast Performance	Gulf Coast Performance
Reemployment and Employer Engagement Measures	Claimants Reemployment within 10 weeks	112.70%	102.87%
	Texas Talent Assistance Rate	135.98%	272.54%
Program Participation Measures	Average Children Served Per Day	101.91%	98.11%
	Childcare Initial Job Search Success Rate		
	Choices Full Engagement Rate	-----	-----
Adult Education	Adult Ed Total 12+ Hour Students	84.03%	83.40%
	Integrated Education/Training - IET (AEFLA)	56.84%	62.10%
	Intensives	76.53%	86.00%
	Popular	67.38%	80.71%
	Measurable Skills Gain	94.96%	115.15%

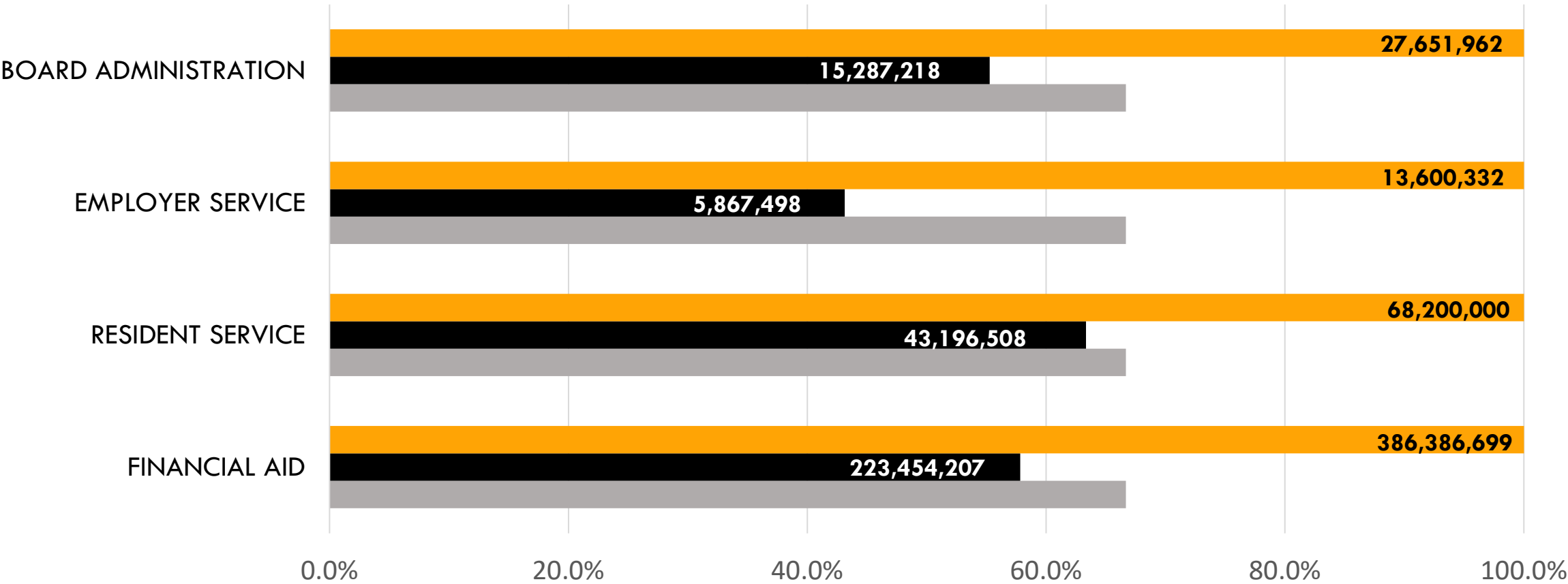
  

% of Target		
Jun-25		
Gulf Coast Performance	State Performance	State vs Gulf Coast Difference
99.43%	96.05%	3.38%
313.01%	-----	-----
99.99%	95.38%	4.61%
77.85%	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
83.65%	119.20%	-35.55%
68.64%	96.13%	-27.49%
85.24%	126.09%	-40.85%
79.75%	-----	-----
121.97%	123.83%	-1.86%

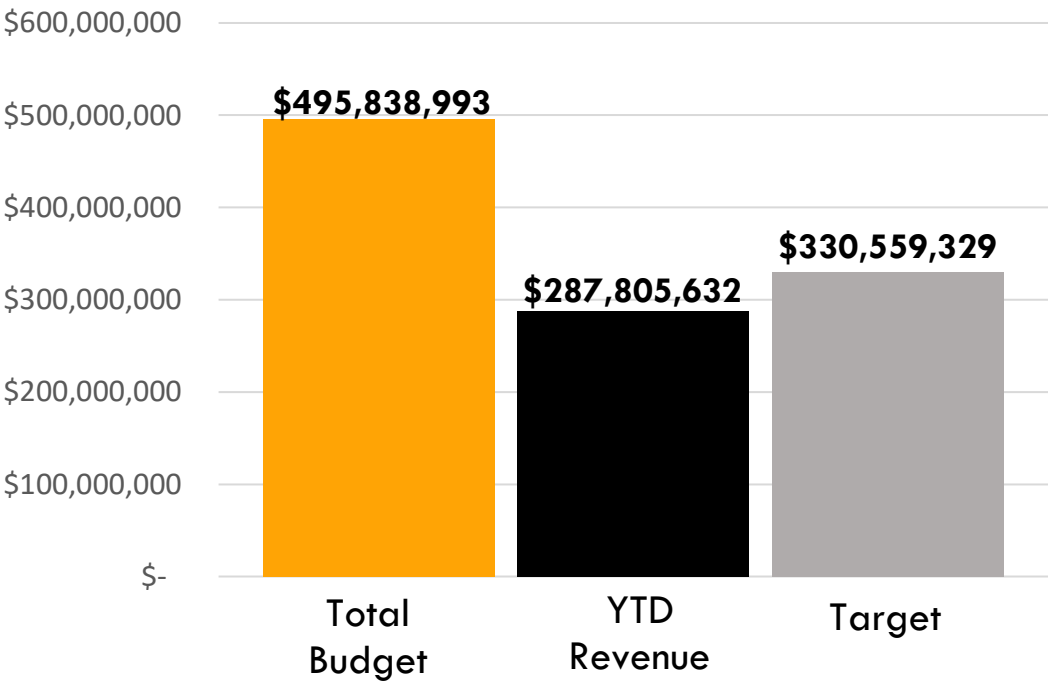
# Gulf Coast Workforce Financial Status Report

For the 8 months ending August 31, 2025

Budget Expenses Target



## Workforce Revenue



## System Expenses

- FINANCIAL AID - EARLY EDUCATION \$202,902,741
- FINANCIAL AID - TRAINING & SUPPORT \$11,449,628
- FINANCIAL AID - OPERATIONS \$9,101,837
- CAREER SERVICES \$36,572,014
- EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT \$4,964,943
- QUALITY IMPROVEMENT \$902,555
- ADULT EDUCATION \$6,624,495

