

## GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda

Monday, January 29th, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

By Hybrid Meeting

at 3555 Timmons Lane, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor meeting room B/C

or via Zoom at [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_6ce\\_ZKHvRumz1uIm2JAR\\_A](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6ce_ZKHvRumz1uIm2JAR_A)

The presiding officer will be present at the meeting location listed above to convene this meeting.

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson

**2. Committee Member Roll Call**

Roll call of committee members.

**3. Public Comment**

Anyone wishing to make a public comment may do so by appearing in person or by joining online via the link listed above or by dialing 1-877-853 5247 or 1-888-788 0099 (Webinar ID 824 2270 5158; Passcode: 479327)

**4. Family Engagement and Home-Based Provider Services**

Discussion and possible action to award a contract for Family Engagement and Home-based Provider Services.

**5. Adult Education Professional Development**

Discussion and possible action to amend the contract with Education Service Center (ESC) Region VI to add funding to support additional professional development and training needs.

**6. Workforce Attorney**

Discussion and possible action to award a contract for a workforce attorney.

**7. Upcoming Procurement Review**

Review of procurement schedule.

**8. Adjourn**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Workforce Board will provide for reasonable accommodations for persons attending meetings. Requests should be received 24 hours prior to the function by contacting Deborah Duke at 713.993.4522 or [deborah.duke@wrksolutions.net](mailto:deborah.duke@wrksolutions.net).

# Procurement Committee

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## Family Engagement and Home-based Provider Services

### Background

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

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

### Current Situation

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was released in October 2023 to select a service provider capable of implementing this initiative. Seven (7) proposers responded to our request. The evaluation team reviewed and scored the proposals to determine the best candidate for implementing this work and ranked them as follows:

<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Rank</b>
United Way of Greater Houston	1
Emergent ED Child Care Consulting Inc.	2
Avilo Inc.	3
Upwards	4
WEB Strategic Enterprises	5
Craving for A Change Foundation	6
Mother Daughter ISH	7

In addition to the evaluation and scoring of proposals, the team conducted interviews with the final two (2) respondents with the highest scores to complete the evaluation process.

**United Way of Greater Houston** scored the highest of the two finalists. Over the last 20 years, the United Way Bright Beginnings (UWBB) program has supported both center-based and home-based child care programs. Through this program, UWBB provides professional development to in-home providers to train, coach, and otherwise support home-based providers to deliver the same high-quality care provided to children and families in center-based child care facilities.

**Emergent ED Child Care Consulting Inc.** scored second in the scoring. Emergent ED Child Care Consulting, founded in 2020, is an early childhood company providing early childhood training, consulting, and family support services to family child care homes, and child care centers. In addition, they provide a shared services alliance to home-based and center-based child care providers and offer the Texas Director Credentialing Program approved by the State of Texas Health & Human Services Child Care Licensing Division.

## Recommendation

We request Board approval to negotiate a contract with the United Way of Greater Houston for up to \$2,500,000 to develop and implement the Family Engagement and Home-Based Provider Services program.

# Procurement Committee

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## Adult Education Professional Development

### Background

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is integral in elevating adult education in our region, serving as the grantee and fiscal agent for the region's adult education consortium. Our pivotal role encompasses effective oversight and management of allocated funds for adult education initiatives. A key component of this collaborative effort is our partnership with the Education Service Center (ESC) Region VI, which stands as the lead agency. ESC Region VI's responsibilities extend beyond providing technical assistance and support; it is also entrusted with the critical task of conducting professional development, which enhance the capabilities of our consortium partners and the overall Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast system.

The increase in professional development efforts led by ESC Region VI is pivotal. It aims to ensure that all partners have a comprehensive understanding of their contractual responsibilities and the intentional integration of adult education and literacy services into the Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast system, thereby promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the delivery of adult education services. Through this enhanced focus on professional development, we are committed to building a stronger, more informed network of partners, thereby contributing to the collective success and impact of our adult education programs.

### Current Situation

To improve outcomes and foster collaboration among system operators, program divisions, and Board staff, Board staff proposes targeted training opportunities aimed at enhancing the understanding and coordinated delivery of adult education services in the Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast system.

The planned training sessions will include critical areas such as the fundamentals of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL), in-depth analysis of the populations served, effective outreach strategies, achieving the Texas Workforce Commission's performance and production measures, and detailed approaches to testing and assessment. Additionally, we will explore the benefits for employers in participating in AEL programs and how to better design programs to meet employers' needs. This investment in the professional development of organizational leaders is crucial. The skills and knowledge gained from these

professional development sessions are vital. They will enable our leaders to make well-informed decisions, apply effective strategies, and significantly contribute to the enhancement, integration, and impact of adult education services in our region.

In June 2023, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board ratified its contract with ESC Region VI for up to \$1,830,000, and we now seek an increase of this contract by up to \$100,000, not to exceed \$1,930,000 to advance the standards and accessibility of adult education services throughout the region. The objective is to ensure that the parties involved in the delivery of adult education services have a clear, comprehensive understanding of their commitments and the expectations set forth by the Board and the Texas Workforce Commission. By dedicating resources to this area, we aim to enhance the efficacy and coherence of adult education services, ensuring that every stakeholder is equipped with the necessary knowledge and tools to fulfill their roles effectively. This initiative is a crucial step towards strengthening the regional adult education ecosystem and demonstrates our unwavering commitment to quality education and professional development.

## Recommendation

We request Board approval to increase Education Service Center (ESC) Region VI contract by up to a \$100,000, not to exceed \$1,930,000.

# Procurement Committee

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## Workforce Attorney

### Background

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board plays a pivotal role in orchestrating and guiding a multitude of workforce development initiatives and early education activities across a sprawling region encompassing 13 counties. This broad operational scope necessitates a complex network of contractual agreements with various partners, forming the backbone of a collaborative system that delivers a wide array of services.

To navigate this multifaceted legal landscape in workforce effectively, the Board requires specialized legal expertise, and we propose the retention of a qualified and experienced workforce attorney. The presence of a dedicated legal expert specializing in workforce law will provide invaluable insight and guidance, enhance our ability to manage legal risks, adhere to regulatory requirements, make informed decisions on contractual matters, and support improvements within the complex regulatory landscape that guides the Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast system.

### Current Situation

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board operates in a complex environment, intricately bound by an array of federal and state regulations. These regulations govern the diverse range of services we provide, including workforce development initiatives and early education activities. To navigate this multifaceted regulatory landscape, the Board acknowledges the critical need for specialized legal support.

A dedicated workforce attorney, well-versed in the specificities of the Texas Workforce Commission regulations, state and federal laws, and funding intricacies, is essential. This expertise is not just a requirement for legal compliance but is vital for strategic decision-making and effective contract management. With numerous partnerships and collaborative agreements in place, each with its unique legal considerations, the role of a specialized attorney becomes indispensable.

The attorney's role would extend beyond mere legal oversight. It would involve proactive guidance in shaping policies, supporting the negotiation and management of contracts, and ensuring that all Board activities are aligned with legal standards. This legal support is crucial to fortify our commitment to serving

the community's diverse needs while safeguarding the Board's interests and maintaining the integrity of our programs.

In pursuit of this objective, Board staff, in coordination with H-GAC, released an RFP to find a suitable candidate. We received two proposals in response to our solicitation which were reviewed and scored by several staff.

<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Rank</b>
DC Legal PLLC	1
Husch Blackwell LLP	2

**DC Legal PLLC** scored the highest of the two proposals. Vera Jeanette Dela Cruz is a licensed attorney with over 35 years of experience in workforce, labor and employment law including unemployment insurance, payday law, civil rights, and fair housing. Her accomplishments include serving as the former Chief of Staff to the former Texas Workforce Commissioner of Labor, advising on a range of critical areas including legislation, budgeting, information technology, unemployment insurance, civil rights, and workforce policy, directly influencing the welfare of over 14 million workers in Texas.

**Husch Blackwell** - ranked second in the scoring. Husch Blackwell's Texas-based Public Law team supports local governments and special districts with a variety of general counsel services from routine procedures through sensitive matters including the political, regulatory, and financial issues that arise in government-related projects and public disaster situations.

## Recommendation

We request Board approval to negotiate a contract with DC Legal PLLC for up to \$300,000 to provide legal services.

## Procurement Committee

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### Upcoming System Procurements

The table below provides information on the status of the various components of our system, including when they will need to be reprocured:

<b>System Component</b>	<b>Service Provider(s)</b>	<b>Last Procurement</b>	<b>Next Scheduled Procurement (Calendar Year)</b>
Public Information and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach Strategists</li> <li>• Savage Brands</li> </ul>	2022	2024 – First Quarter
Adult Education and Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Region VI ESC and 14 Regional Consortium Partners</li> </ul>	2017	TWC procurement released in November 2023. GCWB application successfully submitted on 1/19/24.
Career Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BakerRipley</li> <li>• Equus</li> <li>• Interfaith of the Woodlands</li> </ul>	2021	2025 – First Quarter
Next Generation Youth Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries (ACAM)</li> <li>• Career Team</li> <li>• SER Jobs</li> </ul>	2021	2025 – First Quarter
Financial Aid Payment Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BakerRipley</li> </ul>	2022	2026 – First Quarter
Financial Aid Support Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equus</li> </ul>	2022	2026 – First Quarter
Quality Early Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UTHSC CLI</li> </ul>	2022	2026 – First Quarter
Employer Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>	2023	2027 – First Quarter