



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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To: Gulf Coast Workforce Board Members

From: Executive Director Juliet K. Stipeche

Date: May 29, 2026

Subject: June 2, 2026, Board Meeting

Thank you for the leadership and heart you bring to this Board. I look forward to seeing each of you on Tuesday, June 2, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. We will meet in person at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Conference Rooms A/B/C, in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The agenda is quite full given that our work has accelerated, and I thank you for your time and dedication.

The meeting will open with remarks from Board Chair Mark Guthrie, followed by my Executive Director's Report and remarks from H-GAC Executive Director Chuck Wemple. Committee updates and related actions will proceed as follows:

- Guy Robert Jackson will present the Audit and Monitoring Committee report.
- Adrian Ozuna will present the Career Services Committee report.
- Dr. Bobbie Henderson will present the Education Committee report.
- Guy Robert Jackson will present the Government Relations report.
- Doug Karr will present the Communications Committee report.
- Chair Mark Guthrie will present the Executive Committee report.

Alan Heskamp will present the Employer Engagement Committee report, including discussion and possible action to adopt the Employer Engagement Committee Charter. Carl Bowles will present the Budget Committee report, including discussion and possible action to approve and submit the revised 2026 budget in the amount of \$510,870,746.

Dr. Bobbie Henderson will present the Procurement Committee report, including discussion and possible action:

- To authorize Board staff to negotiate contract renewals with Houston Community College, Lone Star College, San Jacinto College, and Region 6 ESC, along with a contract extension for BakerRipley, for the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027;
- To renew contracts for one year with the following firms, contingent upon certification by the Texas Workforce Commission, for a combined amount not to exceed \$900,000: Weaver and Tidwell, L.L.P., Christine H. Nguyen, CPA, and Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC;
- To amend the Equus Financial Aid Support Center contract to increase funding by \$357,000, resulting in a revised contract amount not to exceed \$11,857,000;
- To increase contract maximums for BakerRipley, EDSI, and SERCO of Texas by up to \$500,000 each, raising the total contract maximum from \$56,000,000 to \$57,500,000, with stricter monitoring metrics in place.

The Board will also receive staff presentations from Philip Garcia on System Performance and Production; Brandi Brown on the Financial Overview and Expenditures; and Parker Harvey and Mohammad Ahmadizadeh on Labor Market Trends.

Your time and leadership matter deeply to this Board and to our community, and I want to be clear about why, because the dollar figures and the motions can hide the stakes. In the last two months, we launched our first Youth Advisory Board and reached more than 7,000 young people in the region, with Summer Earn and Learn referrals running well above target. We honored Houston's first Fleet Week with hiring events for veterans, which drew national coverage from the U.S. Veterans Administration. We stood aboard the historic Battleship Texas in Galveston, where Davie Defense and Gulf Copper are preparing to build icebreakers and bring complex shipbuilding back to Galveston. We advanced Registered Teacher Apprenticeships across six districts, exceeded our adult-education Integrated Education and Training target by nearly two to one, signed a biomanufacturing partnership with San Jacinto College, and carried this Board's voice to the Economic Mobility Summit, the Texas Workforce Commission's Annual Forum, and the American Leadership Form's Bridge Houston Summit. I do not see these as separate programs. I see one system, doing one thing: connecting people to real opportunity.



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Our system is a three-legged stool. People can rest their weight on it, and trust it, only when all three legs hold; weaken any one and the seat gives way. The first leg is economic mobility. Every credential earned, every apprenticeship filled, every veteran and young person placed is a family's path bent upward and a hard cycle broken. The second leg is competitiveness, and not only ours. The Gulf Coast competes against the best in the world for energy, for maritime and national-security manufacturing, for life sciences, and for advanced technology, and in every one of those contests, talent is the constraint that most decides who wins. Our charge is to align that talent to real employer demand in real time, which is precisely what turns a labor market into a competitive advantage. The third leg is community, and it is the one that steadies the other two. Mobility without belonging does not hold, because the talent we build will walk out the door. Competitiveness without community is brittle, because a workforce that does not feel it shares in the region's success will not sustain it. A region that lifts people up while knitting them in becomes sturdier and more resilient. This is the seat we are building.

We build it here, at this table. Each of you sits as a community connector and a workforce champion, and this is where the three legs are fastened together: where conviction, networks, and expertise are joined into a seat strong enough to hold a family's weight. The table we set is larger than this boardroom. Every worker we train, every employer we connect, and every barrier we remove pulls one more chair up to it, and the work of this Board is to keep widening the network, the connections. This is what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called the Beloved Community: a region knit so closely that one person's success lifts the whole.

Speaking of community, Professor Richard A. Tapia was one of the very best community builders that I have ever met, and he passed on May 22, 2026 at 88. He was the Maxfield and Oshman University Professor at Rice and the first mathematician to hold the title of University Professor, the university's highest academic honor. He was the first U.S.-born Hispanic elected to the National Academy of Engineering and a member of the National Science Board. President Obama awarded him the National Medal of Science, and the National Science Board conferred its highest honor, the Vannevar Bush Award, for his leadership and advocacy in expanding opportunity for underrepresented minorities and women in science and engineering, for his distinguished public service, and for his contributions to computational optimization.



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Those are the honors. What I carry is a mentor, role model, boss, and friend. He was extraordinarily blunt, a one-of-a-kind problem solver, and his colleagues called him the Lion. He earned the name, insisting to every talented young person from a community like mine that they did not merely have a chance, they belonged. I met him first as a frightened eighteen-year-old, a young Latina new to Rice, listening to him speak at a Chicano and Hispanic student event. His words changed my trajectory. He told us that success means learning to ask questions, to ask for help, and to ask early; to find a mentor; to work through adversity; and to never fail to show up. I have lived by that counsel ever since.

Years later, improbably, I came to work for him. In 2014, while I served as president of the Houston ISD Board, we founded the Tapia Math and Science Scholars Program with forty HISD students. Today, through the Tapia Center's leadership and the generosity of ExxonMobil, the Tapia Camps have served more than four thousand students and hundreds of teachers. His generosity reached this Board too. When I began at the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, he opened Rice to our young people through our Tri-Agency Regional Convener conference, just as he had opened doors his whole life. That was who he was: always ready to open opportunity for others. He was a leader, a champion, and a maven in one person, and he demanded excellence while insisting that each of us believe we were capable of it.

More times than I can count, he told me that if you run with the big dogs and act like a big dog, you will become a big dog. He meant it about excellence and about nerve: we rise to the company we keep and the standard we hold ourselves to, and we should never shrink from the room we have earned.

Once, when I asked him plainly how and why he had been so successful, he gave me a three-word answer I have never let go. He said, "I build community." This is the whole of it. Run with the big dogs, and then hold the door so others can run too.

In March, shortly before his passing, Harris County renamed the Ship Channel Bridge, set to become the tallest in Texas, in his honor. It is fitting for a larger-than-life man who spent his life building bridges of opportunity for others. Professor Tapia loved mathematics, muscle cars, and mariachi music, and he loved his beautiful wife Jean, his children, and his students beyond measure.



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Thank you Professor Tapia. Rest well my friend after a life so well lived in service of others.

Let us keep his legacy alive. Professor Tapia asked us to be excellent and to believe in excellence, and he showed us that the way to lift thousands is to build community on purpose, generously, and without waiting. That is the charge I carry into June 2, and I am honored to carry it with all of you. I look forward to our discussion. Until then, I hope you rest this weekend, and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions before we meet.

JKS



GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

AGENDA

Tuesday, June 2, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.
2nd Floor, A/B/C, 3555 Timmons Lane
Houston, Texas 77027

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

- 1. Call to Order (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 2. Roll Call (Desmond Taylor)**
- 3. Adopt Agenda (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 4. Public Comment (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 5. Review of April 7, 2026, Meeting Minutes (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 6. Declare Conflicts of Interest (Board Chair Mark Guthrie)**
- 7. Reports:**
 - a. Board Chair's Remarks: (Board Chair Mark Guthrie),
 - b. Executive Director's Report: (Juliet Stipeche),
 - c. H-GAC Executive Director's Report: (Chuck Wemple),
 - d. Audit and Monitoring Committee Report: (Committee Chair Guy Robert Jackson),
 - e. Career Services Committee Report: (Committee Chair Adrian Ozuna),
 - f. Education Committee Report: Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson),
 - g. Government Relations Committee Report: (Committee Chair Guy Robert Jackson),
 - h. Communications Committee Report: (Committee Chair Doug Karr), and
 - i. Executive Committee Report: (Committee Chair Mark Guthrie).
- 8. Action Items:**
 - a. Employer Engagement Committee Report: Briefing of the Employer Engagement Committee from Chair Alan Heskamp including discussion and possible action regarding the following:
 - i. Adoption of the Employer Engagement Committee Charter.

- b. **Budget Committee Report:** Briefing of the Budget Committee from Chair Carl Bowles including discussion and possible action regarding the following:
 - i. Approval and submission of the revised 2026 budget in amount of \$510,870,746.
- c. **Procurement Committee Report:** Briefing of the Procurement Committee from Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson including discussion and possible action regarding the following:
 - i. Approval to negotiate contract renewals with Houston City College, Lone Star College, San Jacinto College, and Region 6 ESC, along with a contract extension for BakerRipley, for the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027.

Provider	Current	Proposed Max
Houston City College	\$4,060,800	\$5,160,000
Lone Star College	\$2,292,938	\$2,590,000
San Jacinto College	\$1,296,000	\$1,420,000
Region 6 ESC	\$1,885,469	\$2,010,000
BakerRipley, Inc.	\$50,000	\$50,000
Total		\$11,230,000

- ii. Approval to renew contracts for one (1) year with the following firms, contingent upon certification by the Texas Workforce Commission, for a combined amount not to exceed \$900,000:
 1. Weaver and Tidwell, L.L.P.
 2. Christine H. Nguyen, CPA
 3. Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC
- iii. Approval to amend the Equus Financial Aid Support Center contract to increase funding by \$357,000, resulting in a revised contract amount not to exceed \$11,857,000.
- iv. Approval to increase contract maximums for BakerRipley, EDSI, and SERCO of Texas by up to \$500,000 each, increasing the total contract maximum from \$56,000,000 to \$57,500,000, with stricter monitoring metrics in place.



Regions	Current Maximum	Proposed Maximum
East - BakerRipley	\$23,000,000	\$23,500,000
North – SERCO of Texas	\$18,500,000	\$19,000,000
West - EDSI	\$14,500,000	\$15,000,000
Total	\$56,000,000	\$57,500,000

9. Presentations and Information:

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

10. Other Business

11. Adjourn

If you wish to make a public comment you may appear in person or do so by providing your comments in writing no later than 5:00 pm on **Monday, June 1, 2026**, to Dr. Maria Franco Cortes at maria.cortes@wrksolutions.net.

Meeting materials are available on our website at <https://www.wrksolutions.com/events>

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**GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 7, 2026**

1. **Call to Order:** The April 7, 2026, meeting of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) was called to order at 10:04 a.m. by Board Chair Mark Guthrie. The meeting was held on the 2nd Floor, A-C, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027.
2. **Roll Call:** Desmond Taylor, Program Administrator of the GCWB called the roll. The following members of the GCWB were present:

Arcos, Marie	Heskamp, Alan	Ozuna, Adrian
Baker, Jennifer	Jackson, Guy R.	Puente, Paul
Below, Shonda	Johnson, Joyce	Riley, Monica
Bowles, Carl	Karr, Doug	Rodriguez, Grace
Cevallos, Rachel	LaBroski, Jeff	Sarkar, Mou
Cockrell, Dorian	Lindsey, Susan	Sorola-Pohlman,
Ferdinand, Mike	Lowe, Jonathan	Lenora
Garcia, Mia	Makany-Rivera, Tanya	Vazquez, Lizandra
Gonzalez, Melissa	Melton, Edward	Yu, Bin
Guido, Cheryl	Montelongo-	
Guthrie, Mark	Oyervidez, Sara	
Henderson, Bobbie	Oser, Margaret	

Board Chair Guthrie determined a quorum was present.

3. **Introduction of Newly Appointed Board Members (Board Chair Mark Guthrie):** Chair Guthrie acknowledged newly appointed Board Member Mia Garcia. Mrs. Garcia introduced herself and was warmly welcomed by the Board.
4. **Adopt Agenda:** Board Chair Guthrie presented the proposed April 7, 2026 meeting agenda. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion passed.
5. **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
6. **Review of the April 7, 2026, Meeting Minutes:** The minutes of the February 3, 2026 GCWB meeting were distributed electronically to all members before the April 7, 2026 meeting. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

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

8. **Reports:**

- a. **Board Chair's Report:** Chair Guthrie opened his remarks by presenting a resolution for National Apprenticeship Week, April 26-May 2. Paul Puente thanked Chair Guthrie and Juliet Stipeche for their recognition and support of the resolution and the Board's commitment to raising awareness on apprenticeships and their impact on families and individuals.

Chair Guthrie continued with his report on national activities and matters of interest. The remaining FY 2026 federal appropriations packages that local workforce boards rely on were approved by the Congress and signed by the President. The FY 2027 federal appropriations cycle is now underway. Last week, President Trump released his proposed FY 2027 budget, containing high level program and funding priorities for each agency, but with limited details. Like the last budget cycle, the President's budget overview included the proposed Make America Skilled Again (MASA) block grants to states and similar concepts of consolidation of (and funding reductions to) workforce programs as well as an overall funding cut to the Department of Labor (DOL) of 26%. We do not have funding details yet, but we expect, like last year, the block grants would combine several WIOA Title I formula, workforce development, and grant programs and cut the overall funding for workforce development. The fact sheet included with the budget proposal references the continuation of the Administration's intent for states to spend at least 10% of their MASA block grants on registered apprenticeship programs.

The President's Fy 2027 budget also proposes:

- to eliminate Job Corps and the Senior Community Service Employment Programs (SCSEP),
- to further integrate Adult Education and Career and Technical Education programs within DOL, with an added emphasis on Workforce Pell implementation.

More details about the President's proposed budget are expected in the coming weeks. After that, we'll probably see a House budget proposal.

Chair Guthrie shared that he attended the National Association of Workforce Boards Forum annual conference the week before last. He reported that it was a great event with over 1100 attendees and he hopes next year a few Board members will also attend. That meeting will be in New York City. At the Forum, Dr. Henry Mack, Deputy Assistant Secretary over the Employment and Training Administration at the DOL presented. He, like Nick Moore of the Department of Education (DOE), is a proponent of the Administration's positions to shut down the DOE and to significantly consolidate workforce programs (and cut their budgets) in the name of reforms to the system. His remarks demonstrated that he does not understand or appreciate all of the things local workforce boards do, including the job matching, convening and employer service functions of local workforce boards, and the fact it takes staff and infrastructure to perform those functions. He also misquoted statistics about workforce boards (such as 20% of the local boards in the country serve less than 100 participants). It appears that he believes that apprenticeships and training are all local workforce boards do. He stated that his principal goals are to lower the cost per participant training rates, reduce system administrative costs, and increase the worker participation rate. Bottom line, local workforce boards must do a much better job educating our federal elected officials about what workforce boards do.

Additionally, Chair Guthrie mentioned that Mack said that he did not expect Congress to make any progress on reforming or reauthorizing WIOA due to congressional dysfunction and therefore that the Administration planned to act but he did not specify what those actions would be Mack believes WIOA reauthorization won't happen for another 2-3 years.

NAWB's current information about WIOA reauthorization is to expect a more partisan WIOA reauthorization bill in the next few months that will use the last attempt, known as the ASWA bill as the starting point (including the 50% training requirement and the 10% additional state aside for WIOA) and that such a bill will be difficult to pass in the current Congress. NAWB's current information about the appropriations process is to expect it to be similar to last year with an additional potential shut down.

One of the speakers at the NAWB Forum provided an interesting statistic—in December 2025, there were 400,000 un-filled manufacturing jobs in the US and in 2035, it is projected there will be 1.9 million

additional such jobs, and at current rates, the current training and 2-year college providers can only produce 120,000 to fill those jobs.

Additionally, at the NAWB Forum, there were updates on and discussions about efforts in a couple of states, including Oklahoma and Louisiana to consolidate local workforce boards into single statewide boards, at the invitation of the current Administration. There was also information shared of a new launch from the DOL called "Make America AI Ready," which offers a free text-based short course on basic AI skills broken into 10-minute modules over 7 days. To participate, text "ready" to 20202 to get started.

On Texas matters of interest, Chair Guthrie had no information to report.

On local matters of interest, Chair Guthrie commended the Board staff and Outreach Strategists for the excellent Legislative Luncheon held in March, and gave a special "thank you" to the Board members who attended. He encouraged Board staff to make this an annual event. Among other things, we presented our 2025 annual report at the event, which was well-done and well-received.

Lastly, he reported that we are in the process of working on the restructuring of our agreements with H-GAC to better define our roles and responsibilities. He announced that he will involve the Executive Committee in that work and will be meeting with the H-GAC Board chair and H-GAC Executive Director to walk through the proposed agreements.

Chair Guthrie concluded his report and no action was taken.

- b. **Executive Director's Report:** Executive Director Juliet Stipeche opened her remarks by thanking Board members for their continued engagement and participation throughout the March committee meetings and activities. She quoted President John F. Kennedy: "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." She emphasized the importance of the work underway to build a future that meets the needs of employers and individuals across the region.

She described the system's realignment as a transition toward intentionality and urgency, grounded in clarity and connection. Over the preceding two months, SERCO of Texas (North region) led the ROCC meeting in Cypress. Board staff held its managers' meeting at

Allen's Landing, the City of Houston's birthplace; Executive Director Stipeche noted that the nation's energy capital began on a bayou and has since grown into the fourth-largest city in the United States, with substantial opportunity, given our resident's grit, persistence, and ingenuity. She also reported that GCWB staff hosted its first all-staff meeting at Pipefitters Local 211, where staff learned about economic mobility and registered apprenticeship programs and toured the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC) facility.

Board staff also engaged industry leaders at the AMPP Annual Conference, where Executive Director Stipeche served on a workforce-focused panel and learned from engineers, researchers, and corrosion experts in materials protection. Board staff also traveled to Galveston to visit Gulf Copper and Davies Defense, which are advancing a major icebreaker project tied to national security and industrial capacity.

Executive Director Stipeche emphasized the importance of building a stronger, more connected system. A system where employer demand grounds strategy while employer engagement connects people to real opportunities. A system where the career services division prepares and routes talent through training and apprenticeships toward competitive wages and long-term economic mobility. One where the Board, through its convening authority, aligns these efforts in real time.

Executive Director Stipeche further noted that Crosby Brito connected the Houston Gulf Coast Building and Construction Trades Council with the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership to discuss the intersection of workforce, education, and economic development. At that convening, the two organizations discussed the critical need to collaborate, coordinate, and communicate.

This week, the Regional Operation and Coordinating Council (ROCC) meeting will focus on intensive training in employer engagement and the launch of the Board's new employer engagement guide and communications manual. On Friday, Board staff will meet with members of the Asian Chamber of Commerce to discuss careers and opportunities in the energy sector.

Board staff continues to lean forward, move, and create. On Monday, March 30, 2026, following the Legislative Luncheon, Kristi Rangel connected the GCWB with House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, who was visiting Houston's historic East End to tour the Buffalo Bayou

Partnership's LiUNA-GCWB project, an initiative aligning art, preservation, labor, and apprenticeship. Executive Director Stipeche also highlighted the Board's successful partnership with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo for the Jobs Y'all event focused on Hire Gulf Coast Youth. In addition, Board staff is working closely with the Texas Veterans' Commission and Combined Arms on "Fleet Week" and "May the Jobs Be With You" events.

Finally, she highlighted the Board's efforts to meet TWC's performance measures. Executive Director Stipeche concluded her report with a brief recap video from the Legislative Luncheon. No action was taken.

- c. **H-GAC Executive Director's Report:** Chuck Wemple started his report by announcing he looks forward to working with Chair Guthrie to refine the H-GAC and GCWB Partnership Agreement. Meetings between the two entities are underway and he looks forward to providing updates soon on the progress. Additionally, he reported that the third-party efficiency study of H-GAC will conclude on April 21, and he looks forward to providing the H-GAC and GCWB Boards and entire agency with its findings. He thanked the Board members that participated in the interviews and provided meaningful input to improve the agency's efficiencies.

Mr. Wemple stated the agency is reviewing the Local Funds policy again after several concerns were brought to his attention. He informed the Board that he is currently receiving input and revision to the policy from the agency's Chief Officers, including Chief of Workforce Juliet Stipeche. A revised version will be released soon.

Lastly, Mr. Wemple shared that the agency-wide executive search for a new H-GAC Executive Director is ongoing with candidates ranging from across the region, in-state, and across the country. His replacement will be named by June 2026, prior to his departure in August 2026.

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

- d. **Audit and Monitoring Committee Report (Committee Chair Guy Robert Jackson):** Chair Jackson reported that the Audit and Monitoring Committee met in a hybrid meeting at 1:02 pm on March 26, 2026, at H-GAC, 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX, 77027 in conference room 2D and via Zoom. The following Committee members were present: Chair Guy Robert Jackson, Shonda Below, Mike Ferdinand, Carl Bowles, Rachel Cevallos, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Doug Karr, Lenora Sorola-Pohlman,

Jeff LaBroski, Dr. Melissa Gonzalez, Joyce Johnson, and Lizandra Vasquez. Board staff and service providers included: AJ Dean, Thomas Brown, Vanessa Salazar, Brandi Brown, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Kevin Rodney, Kristi Rangel, Philip Garcia, Rebecca Valdes, Janine Haynes, Russell Tomlin, Abdul Kargo, Jenny Johnson, Rauf Baig, Jeanette Dela Cruz, Jennifer Starling, Cheryl Sheppard, Roxana Najarro, Alexandra Mallet, Jessica Smith, Esmeralda Mata, Sabrina Uy, Jonathan Benjamin, Negail Dixon, and Andrea Caines. Chair Jackson provided the following report of the meeting.

KPI Performance Indicators Revision

In November 2025 and January 2026, Board staff reviewed the early education and career services performance measures. New Employer Engagement draft measures were discussed on March 26. Once the updates are finalized, Board staff will be reporting 2026 performance indicators with some 2025 metrics as needed, to provide a more concise view of these activities.

Update of Employer Engagement KPI (2026 metrics)

- **For Business forward strategies** - As we continue to enhance our employer participation in targeted industries and continue to track the share of job postings, we also want to track the number of employers contributing to job postings and expand our employer base.
- **For forging strategic partnerships**, we will continue to track our active participation in advisory council committees, workforce-related councils, and sector partnership meetings. We will report back about the various employer forums where we are developing meaningful relationships with the employer community.
- **For increasing awareness of services and opportunities**, Board staff will begin tracking the newly registered apprenticeship programs created and the number of employers participating in these programs.
- **For improving service delivery**, we want to count the employer-specific services provided and the employer satisfaction score with those services.

Program Highlights

- **In Early education**, we are currently serving approximately 31,000 children in care and with approximately 1,700 network providers.

Of the professionals working at the providers in network, 224 have completed their child development associates and an additional 462 are enrolled in the program and will be pursuing the credential. The number of children served is lower and should be closer to 35,000 aligning with the state performance target. Families are actively being pulled from the waitlist. However, TX3C issues are impacting on the processing time.

- **In Career Services**, we have provided 6,699 distinct services delivered to 3,507 customers since October. Top three services are 42% job search assistance, 27% resume preparation and 23% career guidance. We enrolled approximately 684 customers in training, and the Career Lattice Project is completed.
- **Employer Engagement**, we served approximately 1,600 employers with 6.1% returning for service from the prior year and 37% of job postings are in targeted industries. The website redesign has been completed, and various statistics are being reviewed regarding the webpages getting the most hits.

The employer served number is falling behind compared to last year. We have started active engagement with service providers to quickly make corrections and increase the numbers because this measure is connected to the state measure, Texas Talent Assistance.

TWC Technical Assistance Plan (TAP)

- Board staff presented the TWC – Technical Assistance Plan for 10-week Claimant Reemployment. This measure tracks how quickly individuals receiving unemployment benefits return to work.
- Current performance is below target. This TAP was not unique to Gulf Coast. Currently 23 of 28 Workforce Boards across the state are not meeting the measure.
- Several key challenges were identified. **Strategies** have been implemented, such as:
 - **Early Engagement** by contacting claimants within 48 – 72 hours and prioritizing the rapid connection to employment opportunities.
 - **Career Clubs** which are structured job search groups to increase engagement frequency and accelerate re-employment.

- **Enhanced Case Management** by increasing frequency and quality of staff interactions and strengthening documentation in Work in Texas.
- **Expanding Employer Connections** by increasing direct referrals to active job orders, aligning with high-demand industries, and leveraging sector partnerships.
- **Data-Driven Management** - spreading our data-driven performance management by using dashboards and real-time reporting to identify at-risk claimants that intervene early.
- TAP was submitted and accepted by TWC on March 18th. TWC shared our plan with other boards' workgroup.

TWC Performance Improvement Plan, WIOA Performance Improvement

- Performance improvement actions related to some of our WIOA measures include measurable skills gains, credential attainment, youth outcomes, and post-employment employment.
- A portion of this performance reflects prior program activity under previous service providers.
- The root causes include training misalignment, putting customers into the wrong types of training opportunities, inconsistent case management, delays in documentation and data entry, and operational impacts from the recent provider transition.
- To address these issues, we are strengthening customer assessments, enhancing case management, increasing training provider accountability by updating the standards and guidelines to require that vendors provide performance and credential-related data upon student completion.
- We are reinforcing data-driven performance management through bi-weekly data management workgroups.
- We are continuing to stabilize the transition efforts and trying to align all three of service providers and their understanding of the requirements.

BakerRipley Financial Aid Payment Office - Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Monitoring Update

- The focus remains on system performance, payment processing reliability, and strengthening internal controls.
- FAPO is navigating recent leadership turnover and we are closely monitoring the transition to ensure operational continuity and progress under the PIP.
- For providers not responding to recoupment letters from TX3C errors, Board staff asked FAPO to implement a renewed effort to accelerate recoupment.

Next Meeting

The next Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at the Houston–Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Ln. Houston, TX, 77027.

Mou Sarkar inquired about the Board’s performance plans, specifically, if we designated timelines for improvements. Executive Director Stipeche responded that an improvement timeline has been created and will be shared with the Board.

Chair Jackson concluded the Audit and Monitoring Committee report, and no further discussion or action was taken.

e. Career Services Committee Report (Committee Chair Adrian Ozuna):

Chair Ozuna reported that the Career Services Committee met in a hybrid meeting at 11:08 am on March 9, 2026, at 5599 San Felipe, Suite 2000 (20th Floor), Houston, TX 77056 in conference room IRIS and via Zoom. The following Committee members were present: Chair Adrian Ozuna, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Bin Yu, Lizandra Vasquez, Dr. Michael Webster, Michael Ferdinand, Mou Sarkar, Mark Guthrie, Cheryl Guido, Lenora Sorola Pohlman, Adrian Ozuna, Doug Karr, Alan Heskamp, Guy Robert Jackson, Susan Lindsey, and Paul Puente. Board staff and service providers included: Sabrina Parras, Shawanna Thompson, Jennifer Starling, Philip Garcia, Thomas Brown, Vanessa Salazar, Wen Zheng, Rebecca Valdes, Roxana Navarro, Russell Tomlin, Parker Harvey, Juliet Stipeche, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Jennifer Graves, AJ Dean, Brittany Eaton, Janine Haynes, Carl Salazar, Desmond Taylor, Angelis Barnes, Leigh Ann Arnold, Neil Hanson, Liz McLaughlin, Lorena Campa, Nicole Quintero, and Larry Melf. Chair Ozuna provided the following report of the meeting.

With the regional service delivery model now largely stabilized, our focus is shifting from building structure to driving performance, exercising capital discipline, and producing measurable outcomes. In short, we are moving from coordination to accountability.

Regional Operations Coordination Council (ROCC)

For the program year, the ROCC successfully aligned regions around roles, expectations, and communication. As services expand across offices, community sites, and virtual platforms, the next step is execution. The Committee emphasized that the ROCC must now operate as a performance architecture, using standardized metrics, consistent reporting, and data-driven decision-making to ensure accountability at scale.

Access Points

Access is no longer defined by proximity to a career office. The system is moving toward a networked delivery model that includes co-locations, community-based access points, and virtual services. This approach expands reach, increases flexibility, and directs more resources to direct services rather than facilities.

The Pearland Career Office was reviewed as a case study in capital discipline. Data shows low utilization and a high cost per service relative to regional norms. The Committee agreed that Pearland remains strategically important, and the question is how best to serve the area. A hybrid model—combining community-based access, partnerships, and virtual delivery—offers a way to preserve presence while reducing fixed costs and reinvesting in higher-impact services.

Career Exploration Tool and Career Lattice Dashboard

These tools are critical in translating labor market intelligence into actionable career pathways. It assists the system's focus from placement to progression, supporting long-term economic mobility.

Gulf Coast Provider Network

The GCPN is a performance-based tool that allows the Board to shape the training market, enforce accountability, and align investments with labor demand. Participation is conditional, and Workforce Solutions–Gulf Coast retains authority over all funding decisions.

SNAP Employment and Training Requirements

The anticipated expansion of SNAP Employment and Training requirements beginning in April 2026 will increase system demand,

particularly among Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents. The Committee noted that the system's ability to respond will depend on the very capabilities now being strengthened: distributed access, performance visibility, and disciplined training investments.

Dorian Cockrell inquired about the type of orientation we will provide to the 32,000 SNAP recipients in our region impacted by the federal work requirement changes. Russell Tomlin informed the Board that the service providers will be developing virtual training videos for all impacted customers to review. Chair Guthrie inquired about the costs associated with the added SNAP requirements. Mr. Tomlin responded that he was unsure of the exact dollar amount but informed the Board that we received no additional funding for this federal mandate.

Chair Ozuna concluded the Career Services Committee report, and no further discussion or action was taken.

- f. **Employer Engagement Committee Report (Committee Chair Alan Heskamp):** Chair Heskamp reported that the Employer Engagement Committee met in a hybrid meeting at 10:00 am on March 9, 2026, at 5599 San Felipe, Suite 2000, (20th Floor), Houston, TX 77056 in conference room IRIS and via Zoom. The following Committee members were present: Chair Alan Heskamp, Adrian Ozuna, Doug Karr, Guy Robert Jackson, Mark Guthrie, Alan Heskamp, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Lizandra Vasquez, Lenora Pohlman, Paul Puente, Grace Rodriguez, Dr. Allatia Harris, Rachel Cevallos, Susan Lindsey, Bin Yu, Mou Sarkar, Cheryl Guido, and Carl Bowles. Board staff and service providers included: Russell Tomlin, Carl Salazar, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, AJ Dean, Benjamina Covarrubias, Juliet Stipeche, Ron Borski, Lacy Wolf, Melissa Steinmetz, Sabrina Uy, Crosby Brito, Amber Jefferson, Philip Garcia, Kristi Rangel, Desmond Taylor, Jonathan Benjamin, Traci Nolen, Shawanna Thompson, Brittany Eaton, Thomas Brown, Lorena Campa, Neil Hanson, Andrea de la Garza, Manuel Ugues, Liz McLaughlin, and Leigh Ann Arnold. Chair Heskamp provided the following report of the meeting.

The Committee continues to move toward a more disciplined, sector-focused workforce strategy—one that better aligns what employers need with how we invest in training and deliver services. Across the region, we're seeing strong demand in healthcare, construction, energy, and manufacturing. At the same time, policy changes, labor shortages, and shifting hiring practices are creating added complexity. In response, we are

strengthening employer partnerships, expanding apprenticeships, and aligning training pipelines to high-demand occupations.

Labor Market Intelligence

We are shifting to a more targeted, data-driven approach, particularly in how we plan hiring events and deploy resources—so that we focus on areas with the greatest demand and can improve outcomes for both employers and job seekers.

Healthcare and Life Sciences

Healthcare remains a major driver, but it is under pressure. We are seeing continued workforce shortages, policy constraints around H-1B visas, and more cautious hiring from large systems like Memorial Hermann. At the same time, major investments like the Dementia Prevention and Research Institute of Texas are expected to significantly expand demand for high-skill roles in life sciences and related fields.

Construction and the Skilled Trades

Demand continues to grow. Large-scale projects—like the Davie Shipbuilding expansion—are expected to create thousands of jobs – both internally for the construction of vessels, but also for the \$100 million dollar renovation of the facility. We are also working closely with education partners to expand CTE pipelines and create more structured internship and apprenticeship opportunities in building trades to keep up with the demand. At the same time, there is a stronger regional emphasis on job quality, including wage and safety standards tied to public projects.

Apprenticeships

Through the efforts led by Traci Nolen, we are expanding across multiple sectors, including healthcare, energy, education, and advanced manufacturing. New partnerships are being developed with employers and industry groups to build sustainable, middle-skill career pathways that align directly with employer needs. Employer feedback and demand reinforce this direction. Population-driven industries like healthcare and education continue to drive demand, while skilled trades, transportation, and technical roles remain critical. Most job openings are coming from turnover, not new job creation, which means reskilling and upskilling are essential to maintaining the workforce.

Regional Engagement

Employer Engagement Manager Crosby Brito, continues to lead a coordinated, county-by-county approach across the 13-county region—strengthening partnerships with economic development organizations, Industry Associations, Small Business Development Centers, and other economic driven partners. The focus is on aligning training,

expanding apprenticeships, and delivering customized workforce solutions that address both immediate hiring needs and long-term pipeline development.

Overall, the work reflects a more coordinated, employer-centered system that is grounded in data and focused on outcomes. Our direction is clear: align resources with demand, strengthen pipelines, and build a workforce system that can respond to both current needs and long-term regional growth.

Chair Heskamp concluded the Employer Engagement Committee report, and no further discussion or action was taken.

- g. **Government Relations Committee Report (Committee Chair Guy Robert Jackson):** Chair Jackson reported that the Government Relations Committee met in a hybrid meeting at 2:01 pm on March 26, 2026, at H-GAC, 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX, 77027 in conference room 2D and via Zoom. The following Committee members were present: Chair Guy Jackson, Paul Puente, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Lenora Sorola-Pohlman, Adrian Ozuna, Rachel Cevallos, Dr. Melissa Gonzalez, Jeff LaBroski, Doug Karr, Joyce Johnson, Bin Yu, Marie Arcos, Grace Rodriguez, Dr. Michael Webster, and Shonda Below. Board staff included: Juliet Stipeche, Desmond Taylor, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Romana Paniagua, Thomas Brown, AJ Dean, Rebecca Valdez, Kristi Rangel, Russell Tomlin, Janine Haynes, Lacy Wolf, Jonathan Benjamin, Alexandra Mallet, Esmeralda Mata, Sabrina Uy, and Micah Wilson. Chair Jackson provided the following report of the meeting.

Legislative Luncheon Update

The GCWB successfully hosted its inaugural Legislative Luncheon on March 30 at the Junior League of Houston. We welcomed approximately 100 attendees, including State Representatives, local elected officials, their staff, and 23 of our Board members. The program featured remarks from Board Chair Mark Guthrie and Executive Director Juliet Stipeche, alongside powerful workforce success stories and a presentation on our policy priorities by Desmond Taylor. The event concluded with a roundtable discussion with elected officials and the rollout of our Annual Report. Overall, the luncheon served as a strong platform to highlight opportunities for economic mobility, strengthen relationships with policymakers, and position the Board as a key partner in workforce and economic development conversations across the region.

Texas Legislature Updates

The Texas Senate and House have released their 2026 Interim Charges, which provide early insight into priorities for the 2027 session.

On the Senate side, there is a strong emphasis on program integrity, particularly fraud prevention in public programs like childcare—alongside a growing focus on preparing the Texas workforce for artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.

In the House, the charges reflect a more integrated and outcomes-driven approach. There is a clear focus on aligning workforce development, childcare access, and economic growth. Key areas include strengthening workforce participation, addressing skills gaps, improving childcare systems, and ensuring accountability in how public funds are invested. Notably, these directives signal increased oversight, greater coordination across agencies, and a push to ensure that workforce investments translate into measurable outcomes for both workers and employers.

Each Board member was provided a copy of the current Legislative Directory with all the members of both chambers as well as their current committee assignments. A new version of this book will be printed next year, most likely in February once the general elections are completed in November and new members are assigned committee assignments.

Texas Jobs Council

Governor Greg Abbott recently announced the formation of the Texas Jobs Council, a new advisory body aimed at strengthening workforce development in high-demand industries such as construction, energy, and transportation. The Council will focus on reducing barriers, aligning workforce strategies, and delivering policy recommendations ahead of the next legislative session.

We are especially proud to share that Mr. Lacy Wolf from our Board staff has been appointed to serve on the Council. His leadership presents a valuable opportunity for us to stay closely connected to statewide workforce strategies and contribute to shaping solutions that address regional workforce needs.

Board staff will continue working closely with this committee to refine our legislative and outreach strategy, monitor developments, and ensure we are well-positioned to support the State's priorities while advancing economic mobility across the Gulf Coast region.

Chair Jackson concluded the Government Relations Committee report, and no further discussion or action was taken.

- h. **Communications Committee Report (Committee Chair Doug Karr):** Chair Karr reported that the Communications Committee met in a hybrid meeting at 11:00 am on April 1, 2026, at 5599 San Felipe, Suite 2000 (20th Floor), Houston, TX 77056 in conference room IRIS and via Zoom. The following Committee members were present: Chair Doug Karr, Monica Riley, Mark Guthrie, Guy Robert Jackson, Paul Puente, Lizandra Vasquez, Tanya Makany-Rivera, Lenora Sorola Pohlman, Susan Lindsey, Bin Yu, Jeff LaBroski, Joyce Johnson, and Mike Ferdinand. Board staff and service providers included: Juliet Stipeche, Sabrina Uy, Jennifer Graves, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Alexandra Mallet, Daysy Rojas, AJ Dean, Carl Salazar, Philip Garcia, Romana Paniagua, Crosby Brito, Kristi Rangel, Nicole Quintero, Andrea De La Garza, Lorena Campa, Manuel Ungues, Graig Harrington, and Dr. Michelle Cantu. Chair Karr provided the following report of the meeting.

During the first quarter of 2026, the Board continued to advance communications and outreach efforts that support its strategic priorities of increasing awareness, improving service delivery, and strengthening regional partnerships. Activity in the new year has included the launch of the Workforce Solutions podcast, publication of the Board's first-ever Annual Report, creation of two important service guides, continued growth of WorkforceSolutionsNews.com, and expanded use of social and digital media to share workforce information across the region.

Social Media Report

Facebook Performance

Facebook delivered the strongest performance during this period, with consistent growth compared to late 2025. Total views reached 134.5K, a 47.9% increase, meaning views increased by nearly 50% compared to the prior quarter. The platform reached 55.2K viewers (up 25.7%), indicating that content is reaching a broader audience. Engagement increased to 855 content interactions (up 55.2%), showing that more users are actively engaging with posts. Link clicks totaled 174, more than twice the number recorded in the previous period, meaning more than twice as many users are taking action to learn more about services and resources.

Page visits (4.9K, up 43.7%) and new followers (256, up 14.8%) also increased, reflecting continued audience growth and interest.

LinkedIn Performance

LinkedIn performance showed strong growth compared to the previous three-month period, particularly in visibility and content sharing. Content generated 37,756 impressions, which was a 57.7% increase. Engagement also increased, with 741 reactions (up 37.5%), indicating that more users are responding positively to content. Sharing activity saw the largest increase, with 23 re-posts (up 187.5%), meaning content is being redistributed by others at a higher rate.

This is especially important on LinkedIn, as reposts extend visibility beyond the organization's immediate network into new professional audiences.

Comments totaled 42 (down 8.7%), reflecting a slight decline in direct conversation despite overall higher reach and engagement.

Instagram Performance

Instagram showed mixed results compared to late 2025, with declines in visibility but continued audience growth. Total views were 17.1K, a 59% decrease, meaning content was seen significantly less often than in the previous quarter. Reach also declined to 4.8K (down 11.7%), indicating fewer unique users were exposed to posts. Engagement followed a similar trend, with 356 content interactions (down 37.5%). Despite this, profile visits increased to 847 (up 13.2%), and the account gained 248 new followers (up 4.6%), showing that while fewer people are seeing content overall, those who do engage remain interested.

YouTube Performance

YouTube performance reflects early-stage channel development, with results compared to late 2025. The channel generated 2,055 views. Watch time totaled 89 hours, and the channel gained 21 subscribers. The channel currently has approximately 1,500 subscribers, with 36 views in the last 48 hours, indicating modest but steady ongoing activity.

LinkedIn and LinkedIn Newsletter

LINKEDIN		LINKEDIN NEWSLETTER	
Metric	Results	Metric	Result
Impressions	37,756	Article Views	1,617
Reactions	741	New Subscribers	250
Comments	42	Total Subscribers	3,624
Reposts	23		

Instagram

Metric	Result
Views	17,132
Content Interactions	356
Visits	4,754
Reach	174
Follows	248

Facebook

Metric	Result
Views	134,527
Content Interactions	855
Visits	4861
Link Clicks	174
Follows	256

YouTube

Metric	Result
Views	2,055
Watch Time (hours)	89
New Subscribers	21
Total Subscribers	1,508

Podcast Launch

The GCWB completed the recording of the inaugural episode of its new podcast series on March 19, 2026. The episode, titled *"Connecting People to Opportunity: The Role of Workforce Solutions,"* is scheduled for release on March 24, 2026, with a target runtime of approximately 35–40 minutes.

The recording featured Executive Director Juliet Stipeche as host, who also delivered the introductory and closing remarks. The episode included participation from Board Chair Mark Guthrie and Board Member Doug Karr, as well as an interview with ABC13 reporter Nick Natario. The discussion centered on the role of Workforce Solutions in aligning workforce strategy with the needs of employers and job seekers across the Gulf Coast region. Stipeche led a conversation with Guthrie and Karr focused on leadership perspectives, regional workforce priorities, and the importance of connecting education, training, and employment systems. Nick Natario's segment provided insights based on his experience covering workforce issues during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, including the development of the "Who's Hiring in Houston" initiative and the role of media partnerships in connecting individuals to job opportunities and resources.

Media Highlights and Outreach

Who's Hiring on ABC 13 - February

We are grateful to Nick Natario and KRTK Channel 13 for renewing our news partnership in February. Nick and Juliet met at Outreach Strategists on February 12 to talk about the impact AI is having on job seekers and to promote the Biotech and Healthcare Job Fair held at Lone Star College Montgomery. Nick also interviewed Anna Crockett of the Federal Bank of Dallas and Omar Reid, Chief People Officer at Harris Health Systems.

Total AVE:

\$23,423.60

Total Viewership:

368,655

Dr. Maria Franco on Telemundo Houston

Dr. María Franco Cortes appeared on Telemundo on February 26 to discuss the current state of remote work and what it means for job seekers. During the interview, she explained that remote jobs remain available but are more competitive than in previous years,

with employers placing greater emphasis on digital skills, communication, and job-ready training. The segment also highlighted industries where remote opportunities continue to be strong, including technology, customer service, finance, healthcare administration, and professional and business services.

Total AVE:
\$4,092

Total Viewership:
140,084

Parker Harvey on Fox 26 News

Parker Harvey appeared in a live-streamed interview with FOX 26 Houston's Melissa Wilson on February 26 to discuss the region's 2025 job outlook and key workforce trends. During the conversation, he highlighted continued job growth across major sectors, noting strong demand in industries driving the regional economy. He also addressed recent changes in the unemployment rate, providing context on data signals for both job seekers and employers.

Total AVE:
This was a live-streamed segment. Traditional broadcast AVE is not available.

Total Viewership:
This was a live-streamed segment. Traditional viewership is not available.

February 2026 Newsletter Issue

The February 2026 edition of the Workforce Solutions - Gulf Coast newsletter marked the first issue of the year and continued the publication's focus on connecting regional workforce activity with broader economic conditions across the Gulf Coast. Distributed on a regular cadence of approximately every 45 days, the newsletter serves as an ongoing channel for sharing workforce updates with employers, job seekers, and community partners across the region's 13-county area.

The February issue highlighted several recent workforce initiatives and regional activities. Among them were the Fort Bend of the Future workforce partnership convening and the Waller County Job Fair. In addition to spotlighting these events, the issue shared updates on

regional labor market conditions and ongoing outreach partnerships aimed at expanding awareness of workforce programs and services.

The February distribution also showed solid reach, with 41 bulletins sent to more than 2.2 million recipients and a 98.5 percent delivery rate. The issue saw nearly 887,000 unique opens (40.3 percent open rate) and over 5,700 link clicks, indicating continued engagement from readers across the region.

Fort Bend County Convening

On January 26, 2026, the Board convened regional leaders in Fort Bend County for a luncheon and roundtable hosted at the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce and co-hosted by Fort Bend County Commissioner Andy Meyers. The session brought together employers, educators, workforce partners, and community leaders for a focused discussion on workforce priorities and economic growth in one of the region's fastest-growing counties.

National Assessment Governing Board Panel

On March 4, 2026, Juliet Stipeche participated in a panel discussion hosted by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) titled *"Why NAEP Matters."* The event brought together education and workforce leaders to discuss the role of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the Nation's Report Card, in shaping education and workforce outcomes. The Houston convening marked the first time NAGB has hosted this type of discussion locally. Other panelists included San Jacinto College Chancellor Brenda Hellyer, HISD Superintendent Mike Miles, Iris Tian of the Texas Education Agency, and David Troutman of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Legislative Luncheon

On March 30, 2026, the GCWB hosted a legislative luncheon and roundtable at the Junior League of Houston, bringing together elected officials, Board members, and regional partners. The event provided an opportunity for legislators and their staff to engage with Board leadership and learn more about the Board's work supporting economic mobility and workforce services across the region.

National Apprenticeship Week

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast will participate in the 12th Annual National Apprenticeship Week, April 26 – May 2, joining workforce systems across the country under this year's theme: *America at Work:*

Making America Skilled Again through Registered Apprenticeship. As part of the observance, WFS will host an employer-driven convening through its Apprenticeships Work! Initiative on May 1, 2026 at H-GAC.

HGCY Power of One, Join the Circle Digital Campaign

Staff are currently exploring opportunities to align upcoming outreach for the Hire Gulf Coast Youth (HGCY) summer employment initiative. Early planning has focused on employer engagement efforts through the development of a digital campaign, *The Power of One; Join the Circle*, encouraging businesses across the Gulf Coast region to commit to hiring at least one young person during the summer of 2026.

Board Member Videos Update

Work continues on the Board Member video series designed to highlight the perspectives and expertise of Board leadership across the region. To date, 27 of the Board's 40 members have completed recordings. Efforts are ongoing to coordinate with the remaining members so the series can reflect the full breadth of industry, education, and community representation across the Board.

Success Story Videos Library

The Board has begun developing a library of short success story videos highlighting individuals who have advanced through workforce programs and training opportunities across the region. Through a partnership with the College of Health Care Professions (CHCP), the Board has been able to identify participants willing to share their experiences and perspectives on how workforce services supported their career paths.

WorkforceSolutionsNews.com

During the first quarter of the year (January–March), WorkforceSolutionsNews.com continued to demonstrate steady audience engagement and growing visibility as a trusted workforce information platform. Over this period, the site generated *8,470 total views* from *3,802 unique users*, reflecting continued interest in workforce resources, regional updates, and employment opportunities.

User engagement remained consistent, with visitors averaging *2.24 views per user* and spending an average of *2 minutes and 25 seconds* per session. These metrics indicate that audiences are not only reaching the platform but actively exploring multiple pages and engaging with the available resources.

Communications Advisory Council

The Communications Advisory Council met for the first time on March 10, 2026, to establish a coordinated approach to communications across the Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast system. The council was formed to address the risks associated with fragmented messaging in a multi-provider, multi-region environment, where inconsistent terminology, branding, and outreach can create confusion for customers and employers. Initial work has focused on establishing shared communication standards, messaging consistency, and a framework for centralized tools and templates to be used across regions and providers.

Manuals and Guidebooks

Annual Report

The Board published its 2025 Annual Report in late March. As the Board's first-ever public-facing report of its kind, it opens a new and important channel for communicating the Board's work, impact, and vision to the broader region. The report marks 2025 as the first full year of implementation of the Board's five-year strategic plan, *Innovate. Connect. Thrive. and* reflects meaningful progress across all four of the plan's strategic goals: supporting business-forward strategies, serving as a regional convener, improving service delivery, and increasing awareness of services.

Employer Engagement Guide

The Board has developed a new Employer Engagement Guide for Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast staff - the first guide of its kind and an important step in advancing the Board's strategic goal of improving service delivery across the region. The guide explains how the system works, how staff engage employers, the services available to businesses, and how employer engagement and career services teams work together to support both employers and job seekers. It also outlines how coordination occurs across Board staff and service providers, along with key operational considerations related to program requirements, compliance, and governance.

Employer Engagement Policies and Procedures Manual

The Board is developing an Employer Engagement Policies and Procedures Manual as a companion to the Employer Engagement Guide. Where the guide establishes the framework for how we approach employer relationships, the manual will give staff the operational details they need to put that framework into practice.

Career Services Communications Guide

A Career Services Communications Guide is being created to establish clear, consistent standards for how career offices communicate with the public, employers, and partners across the WFS-GC system. The guide will cover communications principles, roles and responsibilities, the full range of communications tools available across the system, step-by-step guidance for creating and printing materials, social media protocols, story submission processes, messaging standards, and a practical toolkit of templates for career office use.

Complete Guide of Services (Update)

QR codes have now been added throughout the Complete Guide to Services, allowing readers to move directly from the guide to the corresponding pages on the new website for additional program information. The updated guide has also been posted to the WorkforceSolutionsNews.com site, where it is available as a resource for customers, employers, partners, and staff. The addition of QR codes strengthens the guide's usefulness as a practical reference tool by connecting the printed content directly to the Board's online service information.

Chair Karr concluded the Communications Committee report, and no further discussion or action was taken.

9. Action Items:

- a. **Procurement Committee Report (Committee Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson):** Dr. Henderson reported that the Procurement Committee met in a hybrid meeting at 10:00 am on March 31, 2026, at H-GAC, 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, TX, 77027 in conference room 2D and via Zoom. The following Committee members were present: Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Jeff LaBroski, Mark Guthrie, Shonda Below, Joyce Johnson, Doug Karr, Cheryl Guido, Adrian Ozuna, and Mike Ferdinand. Board staff and service providers included: Juliet Stipeche, Romana Paniagua, Desmond Taylor, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, AJ Dean, Kristi Rangel, Thomas Brown, Esmeralda Mata, Jennifer Roberts, Russell Tomlin, Helena Leday, Kristi Hayman, Sabrina Uy, Daysi Rojas, Sable Harris, Philip Garcia, Vanessa Ramirez, Wesley Givan, Sandy Housley, Neil Hanson, Lorena Campa, and Alma Martinez. Dr. Henderson provided the following report of the meeting and requested possible action.

First, she shared that the Procurement Committee during its March 31 meeting, broke a record of the fastest committee meeting in GCWB history—a whopping 8 minutes!

The GCWB contracts with BakerRipley to operate the Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO) which administers financial aid and related payments that support workforce, education, and child care services across the region. These services include the processing and disbursement of education and training scholarships, participant support payments, and child care provider payments, in compliance with state and federal requirements.

Board staff recommended amending the existing contract with BakerRiply to increase the financial aid maximum by \$12,000,000. These funds include carryforward dollars from the prior fiscal year, as well as new funding to support a teacher externship initiative, for which FAPO will administer stipend payments to participating teachers.

This investment will expand access to critical services by:

- Increasing the number of children served,
- Expanding education and training scholarships for individuals pursuing targeted, high-skill high growth occupations,
- Supporting implementation of the state-funded teacher externship program.

The majority of funding will be directed toward direct child care services for eligible children and families, with the remainder supporting scholarships and workforce initiatives.

Staff also requested an additional \$150,000 in operational funding to support the administration and compliance with financial aid activities. This investment will support timely payment processing, maintain compliance, and strengthen overall service delivery.

To effectively manage the increased volume of financial aid activities and strengthen oversight of child care provider activities, the request includes four additional positions:

- Three Vendor Service Representatives to reduce provider caseloads, conduct initial provider visits, and strengthen ongoing engagement with child care providers.
- One Lead Compliance Specialist to enhance oversight through case review, staff coaching, and strengthened compliance processes.

A motion was made and second to authorize staff to negotiate an amendment to the current BakerRipley – Financial Aid Payment Office contract to add amounts not to exceed \$150,000 in operational funding and \$12,000,000 to the financial aid maximum, increasing the total contract amount not to exceed \$393,250,000. The motion passed.

Dr. Henderson concluded the Procurement Committee report with no additional discussion or action.

- b. **Executive Committee Report (Board Chair Mark Guthrie):** Chair Guthrie reported that the Executive Committee met at 1:04 pm on March 9, 2026, at 5599 San Felipe, Suite 2000 (20th Floor), Houston, TX 77056 in conference room IRIS. The following Committee members were present: Chair Mark Guthrie, Guy Robert Jackson, Alan Heskamp, Paul Puente, Doug Karr, and Adrian Ozuna. Board staff included: Desmond Taylor, Juliet Stipeche, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, AJ Dean, Kristi Rangel, Carl Salazar, and Jeanette Dela Cruz. Chair Guthrie provided the following report of the meeting and requested possible action.

The Executive Committee's charge was to discuss the following:

- Proposed H-GAC Local Funds Policy
- Modernization of the Partnership Agreement with the H-GAC Board
- Establishing an Independent Non-Profit

Local Funds Policy

The Committee reviewed a proposed H-GAC policy related to the pooling and use of local unrestricted funds. Concerns were raised regarding the ambiguity of the policy and the potential impact on Board authority over funds included in the Board-approved budget. The Committee reaffirmed that the Board retains authority over all funds incorporated into its approved budget and that any use of those funds must remain consistent with Board approval. The Committee also supported requests for clarification explicitly excluding workforce funds and GCWB-generated local funds from the policy's scope. H-GAC issued a revised policy; however, additional clarification remains under discussion.

Partnership Agreement Modernization

The Committee discussed the current partnership agreement designating H-GAC as fiscal agent and staff to the Workforce Board. Members noted that the agreement, originally established in 1996, no longer reflects current operational realities and has resulted in misalignment between governance authority and administrative execution. The Committee discussed concerns related to transparency, accountability, financial controls, budget alignment, indirect cost allocation, and operational efficiency.

The Committee further discussed the structural challenges created by the current arrangement, including competing lines of accountability for the Executive Director and ambiguity regarding operational authority. Members agreed that modernization of the agreement is necessary to strengthen governance alignment, financial oversight, and operational effectiveness.

The Committee discussed a potential revised governance model in which the GCWB would formally assume the role of administrative entity and one-stop operator, while H-GAC would continue serving as fiscal agent under a revised interlocal agreement. Discussions with H-GAC leadership are ongoing, and any proposed agreement revisions will be brought back to the Board for consideration and action.

Establishment of a Nonprofit Organization

The Committee discussed establishing an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation to support philanthropic investment, pilot innovative workforce strategies, and respond more flexibly to employer and industry needs. Members noted that the nonprofit would operate with independent governance, clear operational boundaries, and compliance with applicable state and federal requirements. Initial formation support is anticipated through funding from the Houston Endowment's Philanthropic Leadership and Resilience Grant. The Executive Committee voted unanimously to advance and recommend this concept for the full Board's discussion, consideration, and vote.

A motion was made and second to authorize the formation of an independent nonprofit corporation to support the GCWB's mission to advance workforce innovation, economic mobility, and strategic initiatives; and authorize the GCWB's Executive Director, or designee, to take all necessary actions to establish the nonprofit entity, including the preparation and filing of formation documents, development of governance and operating structures, and initiation of the process to

obtain federal tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3), consistent with applicable federal and state law. The motion passed.

Chair Guthrie concluded the Executive Committee report, and no further discussion or action was taken.

10. Presentations and Information:

- a. **Performance and Production: Report on the system's performance and production (Philip Garcia).** Board Staff Phillip Garcia presented the following report:

Reporting Infrastructure Enhancements

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast continues to work closely with the Texas Workforce Commission as the state modernizes its reporting infrastructure. While several reporting modules have been updated, data completeness challenges remain. To improve accuracy and consistency, the Board has accelerated standardized reporting tools across all providers, improving the timeliness and reliability of performance data. The region also continues to use predictive models aligned with TWC methodologies to monitor trends and make timely operational adjustments.

Provider Collaboration and Support

Strong provider partnerships remain central to performance improvement. Bi-monthly coordination sessions support alignment, reinforce best practices, and promote shared accountability. In addition, targeted training for providers and Board staff focuses on advanced interviewing, career assessment, and documentation practices to strengthen service delivery and performance outcomes.

What the Current Performance Data Shows

(as of January 2026)

Current FY2026 performance shows mixed results across workforce and program participation measures. While several employment and earnings outcomes are meeting or exceeding targets, a number of credential, skills gain, and youth measures remain below expected performance levels at this point in the program year. Overall, employment outcomes remain comparatively strong, while education and training measures continue to develop as participants progress through programs.

In simple terms:

- Employment outcomes for Adults and Dislocated Workers are largely meeting state targets, particularly in Q2 and Q4 post-exit measures.
- Median earnings after exit exceed state targets for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.
- Credential attainment and measurable skills gains are currently below target levels and may improve later as we collect credential milestones.
- Youth employment and enrollment Q4 outcomes are below targets at this point in the year.
- Reemployment and employer engagement measures are currently not meeting targets.

Overall, several core employment and earnings measures are performing well, while other indicators are currently below target and will continue to be monitored as the program year progresses. Many education and training outcomes are reported later in the program cycle as participants complete services and additional credential milestones are recorded.

Key System Improvements Underway

To sustain positive trends, the Board has accelerated several system-wide improvements:

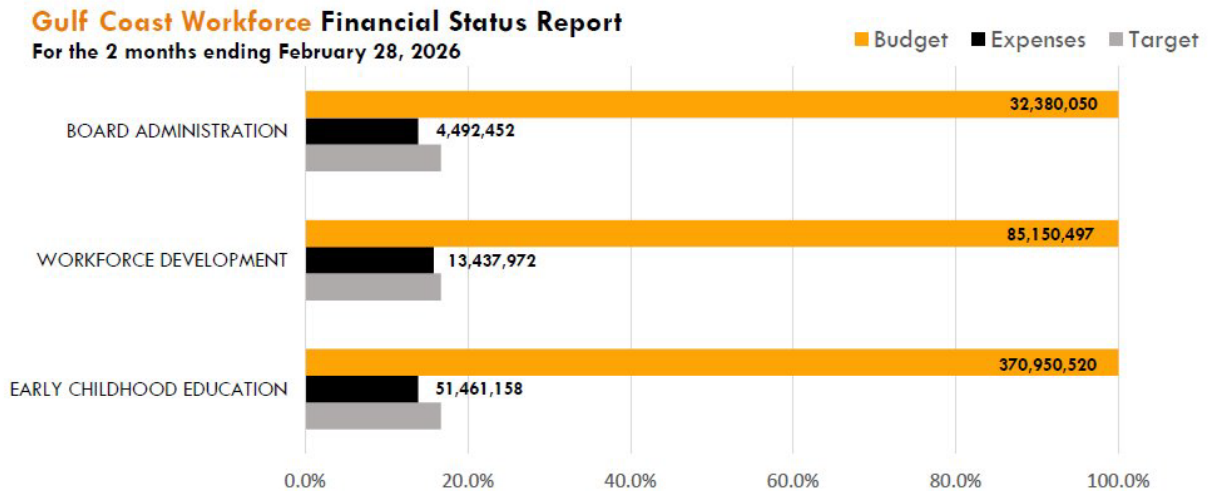
- Enhanced career and skills assessments to better align training with labor market demand.
- Increased focus on short-term, industry-recognized credentials.
- Expanded work-based learning, including on-the-job training and apprenticeships.
- Strengthened provider accountability through ETPL updates and routine performance reviews.
- Expanded year-round youth engagement and post-exit follow-up.

Summary

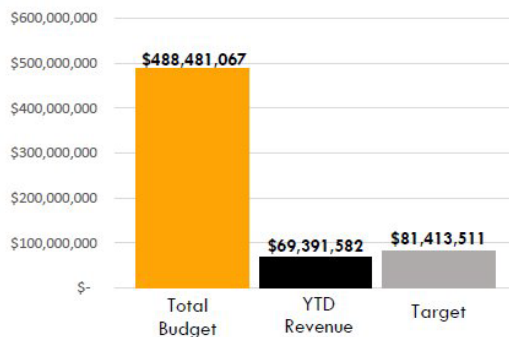
Overall performance shows strong employment and earnings outcomes, while several education, credential, youth, and reemployment measures remain below target and may improve as participants complete training and services later in the program year.

The Board continues to monitor these areas closely while implementing system improvements aimed at strengthening outcomes across all performance measures.

b. Expenditures: Report on the Board’s budget and expenditures (Brandi Brown) Board Staff Brandi Brown presented the following report:

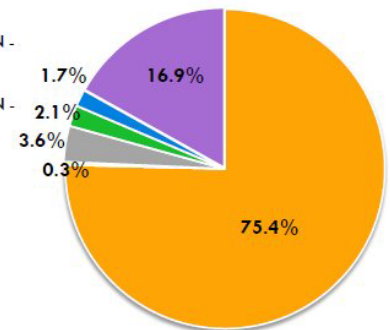


Workforce Revenue



System Expenses

- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - FINANCIAL AID \$49,005,874
- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - QUALITY IMPROVEMENT \$137,694
- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - OPERATIONS \$2,317,590
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - FINANCIAL AID \$1,382,866
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - ADULT EDUCATION \$1,105,952
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - CAREER SERVICES \$10,949,154



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

11. **Other Business:** There was no further business discussed.

12. **Adjourn:** Board Chair Guthrie adjourned the meeting at 12:23 pm.

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD

ARCOS, MARIE

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(713) 557-6575

Category: CBO

County: Harris

Mariearcos713@gmail.com

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

BAKER, JENNIFER

Alief Independent School District
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County: City of Houston

Jennifer.Baker@aliefisd.net

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

BELOW, SHONDA

Northeast Houston American
Federation of Teachers
5310 E Sam Houston Pkwy N, Ste M
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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

BOWLES, CARL

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County: City of Houston

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

DOBERT, MICHAEL

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County: Fort Bend

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

FERDINAND, MICHAEL

Matagorda County Economic
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4000 Avenue F,
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Category: Private

County: Matagorda

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

GARCIA, MIA

Texas Veteran Network-Combined Arms
2929 McKinney St
Houston, TX 77003
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County: Galveston

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Term: January 1, 2026, thru December 31, 2027

GONZALEZ, MELISSA

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melissa.gonzalez@lonestar.edu

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

GUIDO, CHERYL

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cheryl.guido@twc.texas.gov

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

GUTHRIE, MARK

Board Chair

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mguthriegu3@gmail.com

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

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

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JACKSON, GUY ROBERT

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County: Chambers

grj@ccac.net

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

JOHNSON, JOYCE

Why Sales Network
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lamjoycejohnson@gmail.com.

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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27 Canoe Birch Place
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County: Montgomery

raiderkarr@aol.com

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

LABROSKI, JEFFREY

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

LARMOND, SHAREEN

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Category: Private

County: Harris

shareen@wgma.org

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

LOWE, JONATHAN

International Alliance of Theatrical
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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

MAKANY RIVERA, TANYA

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

MELTON, EDWARD

Texas Library Association
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Term: January 1, 2024, thru December 31, 2025

MONTELONGO-OYERVIDEZ, SARA

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

ORDONEZ, SINERIA

Comerica Bank
2 Riverway Drive
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(512) 203-5945
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County: Harris
sineria.o@gmail.com
Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2025

OSER, MARGARET

United Way of Greater Houston
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OZUNA, ADRIAN

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

PUENTE, PAUL J.

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Construction Trades Council
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(713) 926-4433
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County: City of Houston
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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

RILEY, MONICA

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

GLENN, REX

Mechanical Contractors Association of
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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

RODRIGUEZ, GRACE

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808 Travis Street, Suite 102
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Term: January 1, 2025, thru December 31, 2026

SARKAR, MOU

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

SOROLA-POHLMAN, LENORA

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

TAYLOR, SANDRA

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

VAZQUEZ, LIZANDRA

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WEBSTER, MICHAEL

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County: City of Houston

michael.webster@hccs.edu

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

YU, BIN

Asian Chamber of Commerce
3535 Briarpark Drive, Suite 108
Houston, TX 77036
(713) 818-9687

Category: Private

County: City of Houston

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

WORKFORCE BOARD KEY STAFF:

Juliet Stipeche, Executive Director

Desmond Taylor, Program Administrator, Board Relations

Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, Senior Planner, Board Relations

Kristi Rangel, Assistant Director of Workforce

AJ Dean, Senior Manager, Fiscal Administration and Contract Management

Russell Tomlin, Senior Manager, Career Services

Sabrina Uy, Senior Manager, Quality Assurance and Risk

Carl Salazar, Senior Manager, Strategy, and Innovation

Parker Harvey, Manager for Regional Economic Analysis

Alexandra Mallet, Executive Assistant

Houston-Galveston Area Council

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Houston, TX 77227-2777

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Fax: (713) 993-4578

<http://www.wrksolutions.com>

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
- Susan Lindsey

- Paul Puente
- Lizandra Vasquez
- Joyce Johnson
- Mou Sarkar

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
- Sandra Taylor
- Grace Rodriguez
- Jennifer Baker
- Guy Robert Jackson
- Allatia Harris

GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD ATTENDANCE

Board Member	02/03/26	04/07/26	06/02/26	08/04/26	10/06/26	12/01/26
1 Arcos, Marie	✓	✓				
2 Baker, Jennifer	✓	✓				
3 Below, Shonda	✓	✓				
4 Bowles, Carl	✓	✓				
5 Cevallos, Rachel	✓	✓				
6 Cockrell, Dorian	✓	✓				
7 Dobert, Michael						
8 Ferdinand, Mike		✓				
9 Garcia, Mia		✓				
10 Gonzalez, Melissa		✓				
11 Guido, Cheryl	✓	✓				
12 Guthrie, Mark	✓	✓				
13 Harris, Allatia	✓					
14 Henderson, Bobbie Allen	✓	✓				
15 Heskamp, Alan		✓				
16 Jackson, Guy Robert	✓	✓				
17 Johnson, Joyce		✓				
18 Jones, Lavone	✓					
19 Karr, Doug	✓	✓				
20 LaBroski, Jeff	✓	✓				
21 Larmond, Shareen	✓					
22 Lindsey, Susan		✓				
23 Lowe, Jonathan	✓	✓				
24 Makany-Rivera, Tanya	✓	✓				
25 Melton, Edward	✓	✓				
26 Montelongo-Oyervidez, Sara	✓	✓				
27 Ordonez, Sineria						
28 Oser, Margaret	✓	✓				
29 Ozuna, Adrian	✓	✓				
30 Puente, Paul	✓	✓				
31 Rex, Glenn	✓					
32 Riley, Monica	✓	✓				
33 Rodriguez, Grace		✓				
34 Rodriguez, Melanie	✓					
35 Sarkar, Mou	✓	✓				
36 Sorola-Pohlman, Lenora	✓	✓				
37 Taylor, Sandra	✓					
38 Vazquez, Lizandra	✓	✓				
39 Webster, Michael	✓					
40 Yu, Bin	✓	✓				

Audit and Monitoring Committee

Update for May 2026

Executive Summary

The Audit and Monitoring Committee, chaired by Guy Robert Jackson, convened on May 21, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at the Houston-Galveston Area Council. Committee members in attendance included Vice Chair Carl Bowles, Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Cheryl Guido, Doug Karr, Paul Puente, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, and Shonda Below. The Committee received updates regarding key performance indicators (KPIs), performance improvement efforts, technical program compliance reviews, financial monitoring activities, and ongoing accountability and corrective action initiatives across the Gulf Coast Workforce System.

This report provides the Committee's oversight update regarding KPIs, system accountability efforts, program compliance monitoring, financial monitoring, and operational improvement initiatives. These updates support the Board's governance and assurance responsibilities by highlighting performance trends, identifying operational and compliance risks, and summarizing ongoing corrective actions and oversight activities.

Key items in this report include:

- KPI updates across Early Education, Career Services, and Employer Engagement, highlighting childcare services and provider growth, career service activities, workforce engagement, employer outreach, and support, and expanded service access.
- TWC paused the 10-Week Claimant Reemployment TAP after identifying inaccurate employment-outcome reporting data; Board staff continue implementing TAP strategies while also conducting WIOA PIA reviews, targeted file reviews, and provider follow-up related to Measurable Skills Gains, Credential Attainment, and employment outcomes.
- Program compliance monitoring identified significant recurring operational and compliance concerns involving the Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO), particularly related to recoupment processing, payment timeliness, vendor oversight, and internal control execution.
- Financial Aid Support Center (FASC) program monitoring reflected strong eligibility and customer service results in several review areas, while also identifying recurring concerns involving consistency with procedures and documentation.

- Financial monitoring reviews resulted in the resolution of two monitoring reports with questioned costs totaling \$2,348.14. Board staff continue to provide proactive technical assistance to subrecipients.
- BakerRipley completed requirements under its original Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for the Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO). Continued concerns involving Child Care Quality operations, fraud oversight, recoupment, and data integrity resulted in placement under a revised PIP.
- Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI) was also placed on a PIP related to ongoing youth performance deficiencies, while BakerRipley and SERCO continue under enhanced monitoring for similar youth performance concerns.

Through this report, the Committee seeks to keep Board members informed of system performance, compliance posture, operational risks, and continuous improvement efforts while demonstrating active oversight, accountability, and performance management across the Gulf Coast Workforce System.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Update

During the fourth quarter of 2024 and early 2025, Workforce Board staff presented Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the Audit and Monitoring Committee to help inform the development of future performance metrics for the Early Education Program. These KPIs were designed to align with the Workforce Board's four strategic priorities:

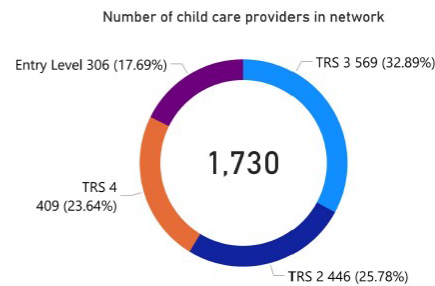
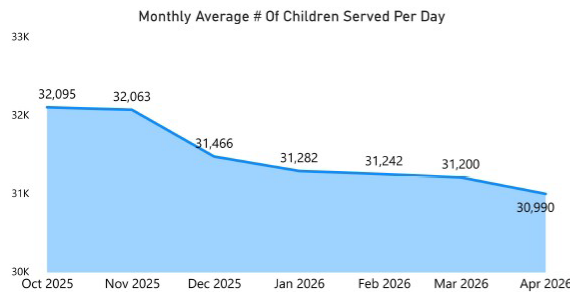
1. Support Business-Forward Strategies to Fuel the Regional Economy
2. Serve as a Convener & Forge Strategic Partnerships
3. Increase Awareness of Services & Opportunities
4. Improve Service Delivery with Technology and Innovation

We revisited all the KPIs and presented updated versions by the March 2026 Audit and Monitoring Committee meeting. We have begun collecting data under the new KPI metrics (2026 metrics) and will continue to collect data under the previous KPI metrics (2025 metrics) when data for the new 2026 metrics are insufficient or unavailable. Below are the performance updates as of April 2026.

Career Services (New)
Employer Engagement
Early Education
Career Services (Previous)
2026-04 (April)
Workforce Solutions GULF COAST

Welcome to Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast
KPI Dashboard - Early Education

We proudly serve early childhood education programs across the Gulf Coast region, partnering with educators, caregivers, and community leaders to build strong foundations for our youngest learners. Our mission is to support early education where it matters most—by providing the tools, insights, and resources that help children thrive, families feel supported, and programs deliver lasting impact.



Early Education – Key Performance Indicators

1. Support Business-Forward Strategies to Fuel the Regional Economy

- *Goal (2025 metric):* Equip parents and guardians with resources to enhance family socioeconomic well-being. The TX3C system challenges are limiting our ability to report in this area.
- *Goal (2026 metric):* Enhance the efficiency and accessibility of parent engagement and referral processes through technology-enabled service delivery. The process to measure the metric ‘percentage of parents successfully connected to career services after digital or automated referrals’ is under development.

2. Serve as a Convener & Forge Strategic Partnerships

- *Goal (2025 and 2026 metric):* Develop and sustain partnerships with high-quality early learning providers. We have added 130 early education providers to this program year (PY26) to date.

3. Increase Awareness of Services & Opportunities

- *Goal (2026 metric):* Promote professional development opportunities that increase awareness of and access to child development credential programs. 296 early education professionals completed the Child Development Associate (CDA) coursework since October 2025. They will move forward with completing the in-class assessment required to receive CDA credentials. Currently, there are 462 individuals enrolled in the class

that began on March 3, 2026, and is scheduled to be completed in May 2026.

4. Improve Service Delivery with Technology and Innovation

- *Goal (2025 metric):* Provide professional development for early education providers through virtual and in-person options. Since October 1, 2025, we have delivered professional development support to 5,002 early childhood education professionals.
- *Goal (2026 metric):* Strengthen family economic stability by supporting parents and guardians in achieving employment and income growth. The process for measuring the metric, number and percentage of parents and guardians who transition out of the program due to income growth exceeding eligibility thresholds, is under development.

Foundational Metrics: As of April 2026, we have 30,990 children enrolled in early education assistance and 1,730 early education providers.

Career Services



Career Services – Key Performance Indicators

1. Support Business-Forward Strategies to Fuel the Regional Economy

- *Goal (2025 metric):* Create and expand opportunities for technical degrees and career pathways. Our Regional Economic Analysis team was conducting a career lattice research project.

The project is 100% complete and currently awaiting professional development to implement the new LMS system, which is 65% complete, and then to execute the curriculum.

- *Goal (2026 Metrics):* Connect job seekers to employment opportunities aligned with regional business needs, supporting workforce advancement and economic growth. *Metric under development:* Employment outcomes and wage quality, measured by the number of customers placed in targeted and non-targeted industries and their median wages.

2. Serve as a Convener & Forge Strategic Partnerships

- *Goal (2026 Metrics):* Increase collaboration among employers, community partners, and job seekers by convening strategic workforce events. *Metric:* Number of collaborative workforce convenings facilitated, including hiring events, career exploration workshops, community events, and workforce forums.

Workforce Solutions facilitated 86 collaborative workforce convenings in April 2026. These activities include:

- 38 hiring events, such as job fairs and employer hiring events;
- 8 community events held to strengthen engagement with local partners and increase awareness of workforce services;
- 27 workshops which focused on skill development and job readiness for customers, and
- 13 other convenings, including meetings and partner collaborations, were facilitated.

3. Increase Awareness of Services & Opportunities

- *Goal (2026 Metrics):* Increase customer awareness and participation in career services through ongoing support and outreach. *Metric:* Customer engagement in career services, measured by the number and type of services accessed across core service categories.

From October 2025 through April 2026, approximately 46,000 individuals received staff-assisted employment-related services, with the highest levels of service activity in the following areas:

(a) Job search (53%),

- (b) Resume preparation (25%),
- (c) Career guidance (19%), and
- (d) Interview preparation assistance (2%).

4. Improve Service Delivery with Technology and Innovation

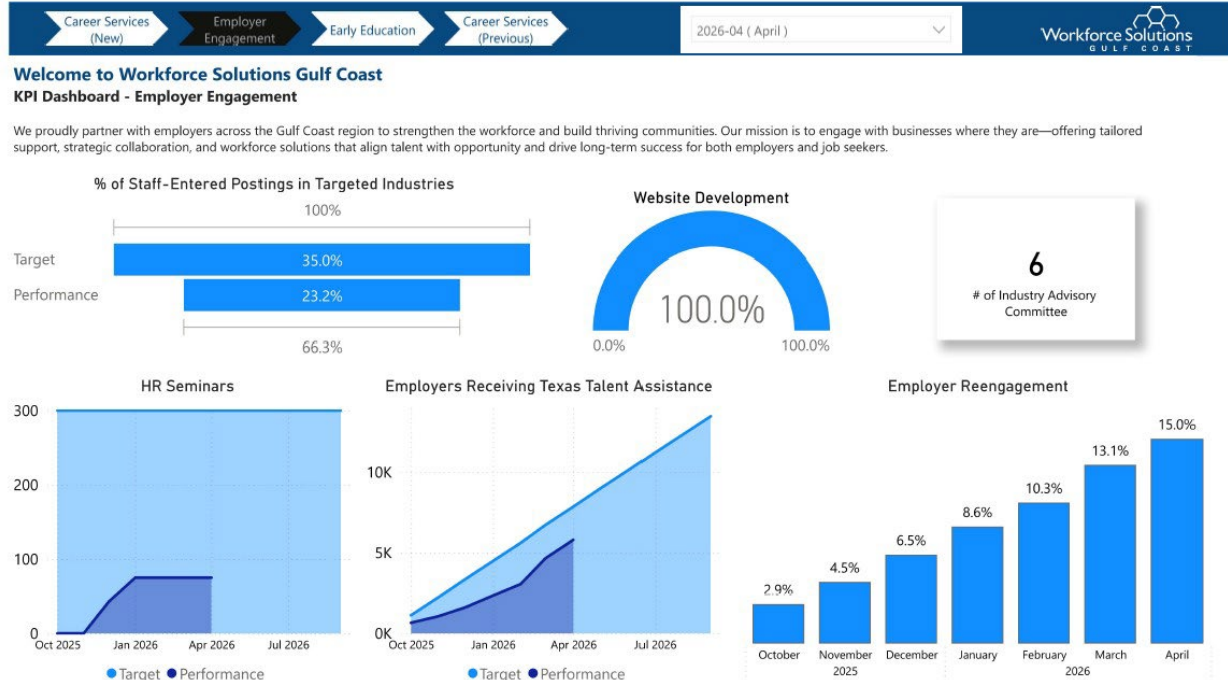
- **Goal (2026 Metrics):** Strengthen Workforce Solutions' presence by expanding access points across diverse locations and communities.
Metric: Number and type of Workforce Solutions access points, including full-service offices, part-time or mobile locations, virtual stations, and other innovative service delivery models.

The Workforce Solutions access network includes 24 Workforce Solutions offices and 18 other access points, such as pop-up events, Workforce on Wheels (WOW), and virtual service options, demonstrating a mix of traditional and innovative methods used to deliver workforce services.

Foundational Metrics

We have 945 customers enrolled in training opportunities. There are 67 active training providers in the Workforce Solutions Network.

Employer Engagement



Employer Engagement Program – Key Performance Indicators (using “2025 metrics”)

1. Support Business-Forward Strategies to Fuel the Regional

Goal (2026 metric): Enhance participation of employers in priority industries and occupations that drive regional economic growth.

Metric: 23.2% of our staff entered job posting are currently in targeted industries.

2. Serve as a Convener & Forge Strategic Partnerships

Goal (2026 Metric): Foster collaboration among industry leaders, workforce partners, and economic development stakeholders to align workforce strategies with employer needs.

Metric: Active participation in industry advisory committees, sector meetings, and workforce-related councils; number of meetings held; and growth in employer involvement.

The monthly Liberty County task force meeting brought together community leaders, city officials, industry partners, and ISD representatives to strengthen alignment among education, workforce development, and industry needs. Discussions focus on identifying workforce challenges, expanding upskilling opportunities for local talent, improving job-readiness, and supporting long-term economic growth in the region.

The April Wharton County Chamber Healthcare Roundtable paired industry with education to create pathways for graduating CNA students from the Wharton CTE programs. Board Staff presented available employer funding from the state to support upskilling and internship opportunities. The roundtable includes representation from WFS, Board Staff, city officials, the mayor’s office, and represents key healthcare stakeholders in the region and maintains strong community involvement, including participation from the Mayor and City Manager.

The April 10th Asian Chamber of Commerce Energy Forum, hosted by Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast and regional partners, brought together workforce, business, and energy sector leaders to discuss workforce development and economic growth opportunities across the region. The forum featured presentations and panel discussions focused on workforce challenges, industry solutions, energy sector development, and employer support resources.

3. Increase Awareness of Services & Opportunities

Goal (2025 Metric): 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 now 100% complete and was launched on January 20, 2026. The new website is expected to significantly enhance the overall digital experience for employers.

Goal (2026 metric): Expand regional apprenticeship programs and increase employer participation by supporting industry-aligned pathways that build workforce skills and careers.

Metric under development: Number of newly registered apprenticeship programs created; number of employers sponsoring or participating in registered apprenticeship programs.

4. Improve Service Delivery with Technology and Innovation

Goal: (2025 Metrics): Enhance employer service efficiency by leveraging technology to provide real-time support, training, and feedback mechanisms.

We have conducted 6 HR-focused seminars, providing 75 unique employers with valuable education on a wide range of workforce-related topics.

Goal (2026 Metric): Elevate the value of Workforce Solutions services to employers through efficient delivery and innovative tools.

Metric under development: Count of employer-specific Workforce Solutions services provided; employer satisfaction score with services received.

Foundational Metrics: We have assisted 5,799 employers this Program year through Texas Talent Assistance so far, of which 15% 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 customer experience evaluations. 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 as the state modernizes its reporting infrastructure. While several reporting modules have been updated, data completeness challenges remain. To improve accuracy and consistency, the Board has accelerated the adoption of standardized reporting tools across all providers, thereby enhancing the timeliness and reliability of performance data. The region also continues to use predictive models aligned with TWC methodologies to monitor trends and make timely operational adjustments.

Provider Collaboration and Support

Strong provider partnerships remain central to performance improvement. Bi-monthly coordination sessions support alignment, reinforce best practices, and promote shared accountability. In addition, targeted training for providers and Board staff focuses on advanced interviewing, career assessment, and documentation practices to strengthen service delivery and performance outcomes.

What the Current Performance Data Shows

(as of February 2026)

Current FY2026 performance shows mixed results across workforce and program participation measures. While several employment and earnings outcomes are meeting or exceeding targets, a number of credentials, skills gain, and youth measures remain below expected performance levels at this point in the program year. Overall, employment outcomes remain comparatively strong, while education and training measures continue to develop as participants progress through programs. In some instances, services used to identify population groups (Adult, DW, Youth) may mistakenly include reportable and follow-up services, potentially inflating or deflating performance rates. Performance status is currently suppressed pending further review.

In simple terms:

- Employment outcomes for Adults and Dislocated Workers are largely meeting state targets, particularly in Q2 and Q4 post-exit measures.
- Median earnings after exit exceed state targets for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.
- Credential attainment and measurable skills gains are currently below target levels and may improve later as we collect credential milestones.
- Youth employment and enrollment Q4 outcomes are below targets at this point in the year.

- Reemployment and employer engagement measures are currently not meeting targets.
- In some instances, services used to identify population groups (Adult, DW, Youth) may mistakenly include reportable and follow-up services, which could inflate or deflate performance rates. Performance status is currently suppressed pending further review.

Overall, several core employment and earnings measures are performing well, while other indicators are currently below target and will continue to be monitored as the program year progresses. Many education and training outcomes are reported later in the program cycle as participants complete services, and additional credential milestones are recorded.

Key System Improvements Underway

To sustain positive trends, the Board has accelerated several system-wide improvements:

- Enhanced career and skills assessments to better align training with labor market demand.
- Increased focus on short-term, industry-recognized credentials.
- Expanded work-based learning, including on-the-job training and apprenticeships.
- Strengthened provider accountability through ETPL updates and routine performance reviews.
- Expanded year-round youth engagement and post-exit follow-up.

Summary

Overall performance shows strong employment and earnings outcomes, while several education, credential, youth, and reemployment measures remain below target and may improve as participants complete training and services later in the program year.

The Board continues to monitor these areas closely while implementing system improvements aimed at strengthening outcomes across all performance measures.

Texas Workforce Commission -TAP and PIA

Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) – 10-Week Reemployment

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) placed the Gulf Coast Workforce Board on a TAP in Program Year 2026 to improve the 10-Week Claimant Reemployment measure. The Board must meet performance for four consecutive months to exit TAP status.

In March 2026, the Board launched a reemployment acceleration strategy focused on early claimant engagement, rapid job matching, and stronger employer connections to improve reemployment outcomes.

TWC later identified a data issue affecting employment-outcome reporting and **paused** the TAP. During this period, the Board continues to implement TAP strategies and work with service providers to strengthen service delivery and ensure readiness for the resumption of full data reporting.

WIOA Performance Improvement Actions (PIAs) – Update

The Board is addressing multiple WIOA PIAs identified as At Risk in the December 2025 performance report, including Measurable Skills Gains, Credential Attainment, and employment outcomes across Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

Since January 2026, Board staff and providers have reviewed participant records to identify gaps and corrective actions. In April 2026, providers were directed to assign one staff member to complete a final review of cases missing key outcomes such as MSGs, credentials, or employment.

In May 2026, the Program Operations team is launching a targeted review of 10 active and 10 recently exited files to assess IEP quality, case management, and outcome documentation. Technical assistance will be provided where gaps are identified.

The team is also developing a WIOA Oversight SOP to strengthen accountability. This effort supports consistent service delivery and improved performance outcomes, including MSGs, credential attainment, and employment.

Service providers continue implementing strategies to strengthen case management, align training with labor market demand, improve documentation, and enhance early performance intervention. These actions are designed to stabilize and improve performance in upcoming reporting periods.

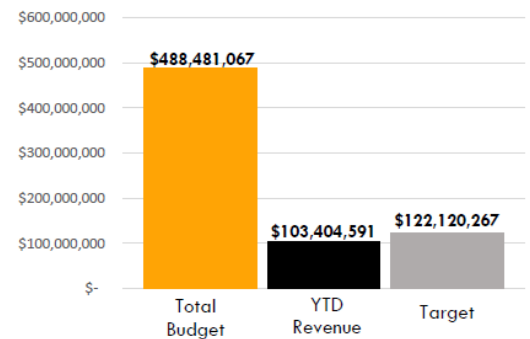
Expenditure Update

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 2026 budgeted revenue totals over \$488 million. The Year-to-Date revenue as of March 2026 is \$103 million, behind target of \$122 million.

Workforce Revenue



Expenditure Overview

For the one month ending March, expenditures are 21% which is behind target for being 25% through the year. The low expenditures are due to Early Childhood Education, specifically Financial Aid for Direct Care. The source of the delay in expenditures is due to low enrollments caused by TX3C system bottlenecks.

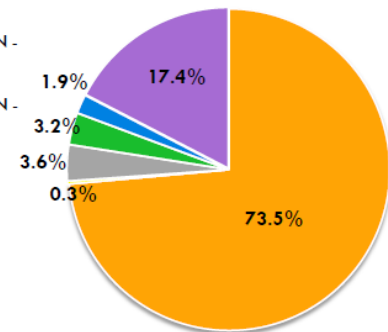
Early Childhood Education represents \$74.3 million of expenditures, with \$70.6 million for Financial Aid, \$218,000 for Quality Improvement, and \$3.52 million for Operations.

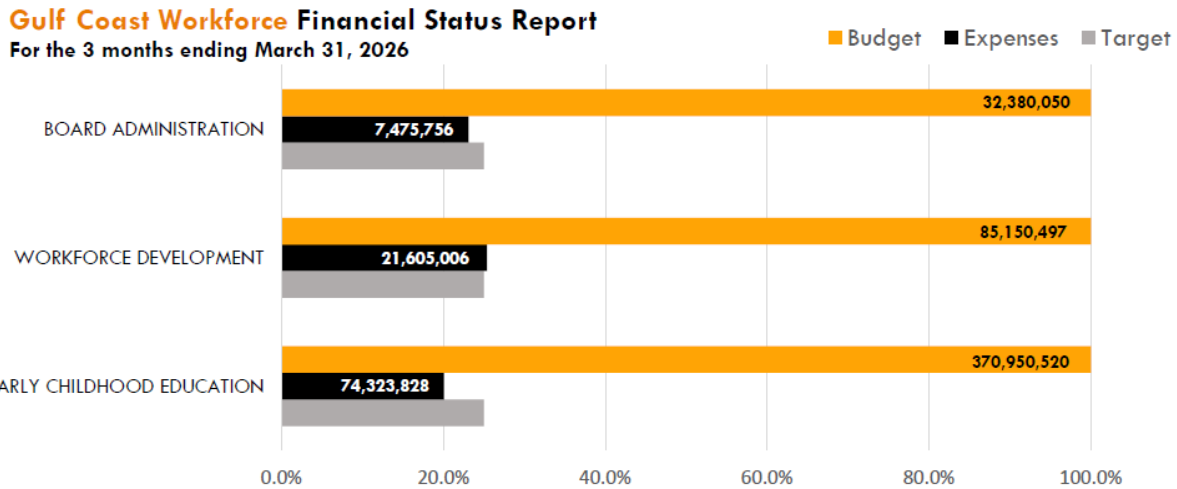
Workforce Development represents \$21.6 million of expenditures, with \$3.1 million for Financial Aid, \$1.8 million for Adult Education, and \$16.7 million for Career Services.

Board Administration is \$7.5 million.

System Expenses

- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - FINANCIAL AID
\$70,634,577
- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
\$218,456
- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - OPERATIONS
\$3,470,795
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - FINANCIAL AID
\$3,108,396
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - ADULT EDUCATION
\$1,776,083
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - CAREER SERVICES
\$16,720,527





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

Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO)

QA completed monitoring activities for the Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO) covering the period of October 2024 through April 2026, including compliance testing, operational reviews, staff training assessments, customer and vendor recoupment activities, vendor payment processing, cash substitute processing, and vendor site visits.

Testing identified recurring compliance and operational concerns related to recoupment processing timelines, required case note documentation, final notice issuance, escalation procedures, PIRTS fact-finding timeliness, vendor attendance/SIA follow-up, and consistent adherence to established internal control processes. While workforce vendor payment processing generally performed better, with approximately 87% of payments processed within required timelines, Child Care Quality incentive payment testing resulted in an 89% timeliness rate, requiring significant and ongoing follow-up by Board staff to monitor payment status, communication, and processing activity.

PIRTS, recoupment, child care vendor site visit, and vendor file review testing identified recurring compliance and operational concerns related to recoupment processing timelines, required case note documentation, final notice issuance, escalation procedures, PIRTS fact-finding timeliness, vendor attendance/SIA follow-up, provider communication, training vendor oversight, and consistent adherence to established internal control processes. Recoupment testing also identified continued deficiencies in corrective processes implemented in response to 2025 TWC findings, which were not consistently followed or sustained, particularly regarding the timeliness and consistency of fact-finding completion, required notices, escalation activities, and recoupment processing.

Child care vendor site visits and vendor file review testing also identified recurring provider oversight and communication concerns, including inconsistent provider understanding of reporting responsibilities, attendance procedures, vendor monitoring requirements, required documentation, and processes for obtaining support related to payment and account activity.

Financial Aid Support Center

QA completed first- and second-quarter monitoring activities for the Financial Aid Support Center (FASC), including childcare eligibility, DFPS eligibility, Initial Job Search, childcare transfers, and customer service call testing. Testing showed strong results in several core eligibility and customer service areas, including 100% pass eligibility in multiple review areas and 100% accuracy in customer service call monitoring in both quarters.

Testing also identified recurring operational and documentation concerns related to timely customer notification, case processing accuracy, documentation consistency, transfer processing, and adherence to established procedures. Initial Job Search and childcare transfer testing identified recurring deficiencies in operational execution and supporting documentation, while childcare eligibility testing identified records with incomplete or unavailable supporting documentation at the time of review, requiring additional follow-up and clarification.

Overall, testing results indicate that FASC generally maintained strong eligibility outcomes in several core program areas; however, continued improvement is needed to strengthen documentation consistency, notice processing, transfer-related procedures, and operational execution.

Financial Systems

The Board engages three CPA firms to conduct comprehensive financial monitoring of all workforce board service providers. Since the last update, we

have resolved two (2) final reports, four (4) final and two (2) draft reports have been received, and seven (7) reviews are currently in progress.

Board staff are currently preparing for the upcoming quarterly training by identifying relevant topics to ensure subrecipients remain current on financial monitoring requirements. In addition, we have engaged in internal discussions to enhance the effectiveness of technical assistance provided and have also implemented a financial monitor feedback form to better strengthen our processes and support data-driven decision-making.

Monitoring Update

We have resolved two (2) monitoring reports with \$2,348.14 in questioned costs.

Final Reports Received

- Houston City College
- Lone Star College
- Region VI
- San Jacinto College

Draft Reports Received

- Equus (Support Center)
- United Way

Reviews in Progress

- Baker Ripley (FAPO, Career Office)
- EDSI (Career Office)
- SERCO (Career Office)
- Systemwide Financial Aid Payments

Training Update

We have continued to provide proactive technical assistance to subrecipients to support compliance and effective financial management. On April 8th, Christine Nguyen hosted a virtual training for board staff and subrecipients (all current subrecipients were present).

As part of the quarterly training plan, LaPorte/Mauldin & Jenkins staff will be hosting a training in June. The topics include best practices and documents typically requested during the engagement. The information provided will help ensure all expenditures are reasonable, necessary, and supported by appropriate documentation. Time will also be allotted for Q&A.

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 GCWB include the following:

GCWB Interventions

BakerRipley – Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO): Since the last update, BakerRipley’s Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO) has successfully completed the requirements outlined in the original Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) issued in May 2025. Based on Board staff’s review of submitted documentation and observed performance, previously identified deficiencies related to financial management, communication, and project management have been sufficiently addressed.

However, through continued monitoring and programmatic review, Board staff identified additional and ongoing concerns within child care operations, specifically in the areas of Child Care Quality (CCQ), fraud oversight, recoupment, and data integrity. These issues present compliance, operational, and reputational risks and warranted the issuance of a revised Performance Improvement Plan.

The newly identified concerns include:

- Persistent payment delays, financial inaccuracies, and limited transparency in financial processes.
- Gaps in standardized procedures, internal controls, and oversight by BakerRipley’s management.
- Communication and staffing challenges impacting responsiveness and operational efficiency.
- Delayed oversight by BakerRipley’s management on fraud case management, timeliness, and adherence to Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) requirements.
- Significant delays and inconsistencies in recoupment tracking, monitoring, and resolution.
- Data discrepancies and integrity issues between internal systems and the Program Integrity Reporting Tracking System (PIRTS)-TWC’s recoupment system.

Board staff have required corrective actions focused on strengthening internal controls, improving data accuracy and reconciliation processes, enhancing oversight structures, and ensuring timely execution of the compliance program.

FAPO is currently operating under the revised Performance Improvement Plan. Board staff will continue enhanced monitoring of financial processing accuracy, recoupment activity, data integrity, and overall program performance to ensure corrective actions are effectively implemented and sustained.

An additional update will be provided at the next meeting.

Career Services – Educational Data Systems, Inc.: The Board continues to actively monitor youth performance outcomes, including work-based learning activities, out-of-school youth enrollment and services, summer employment, and Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) performance. Earlier this month, Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI) was placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) due to continued performance deficiencies in these areas. Prior to the implementation of the PIP, Board staff engaged extensively with the providers through recurring meetings, technical assistance, strategy discussions, and ongoing performance monitoring; however, sufficient improvement was not achieved. EDSI's formal corrective response and improvement plan are due to the Board at the end of the month.

Additionally, the Board's other Career Services providers, BakerRipley, Inc. and SERCO of Texas, continue to experience ongoing youth performance concerns. Both are being closely monitored and may be subject to future corrective action, including possible placement on a PIP, if performance does not improve.

An update on the matters above will be provided at the next meeting.

Compliance and Review Updates

TWC State Monitor Advocate Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers

The first monitoring visit by the TWC State Monitor Advocate to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board focused on services provided to customers and employers in the agricultural industry. The second of two exit meetings was held on May 6, 2026.

As a result of the monitoring visit, the Board is updating policies and procedures related to employment services and outreach efforts supporting customers and employers connected to the agricultural industry. The Executive Summary of the final report is expected within the next several weeks.

DOL RESEA Monitoring Visit

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), coordinated through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), will conduct an RESEA monitoring visit on May 21, 2026, at the Southwest Career Office. DOL, TWC RESEA leadership, and Board staff will meet with service provider staff and review a sample of 10 RESEA cases in Work in Texas.

Next Meeting

We propose scheduling the next committee meeting for 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 16, 2026, at Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, Texas 77027.

Career Services Committee

Update for May 2026

1. Executive Summary

The Career Services Committee met on May 5, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, 3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX 77027, chaired by Adrian Ozuna. Committee members present included Vice Chair Cheryl Guido, Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Michael Dobert, Mou Sarkar, Lizandra Vasquez, Dr. Allatia Harris, Paul Puente, Alan Heskamp, Doug Karr, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Jeff LaBroski, and Guy Robert Jackson.

The Career Services Committee continues to advance strategic initiatives focused on strengthening workforce system alignment, service delivery, and long-term regional workforce competitiveness across the North, East, and West regions. Key priorities include the continued expansion of the Gulf Coast Provider Network (GCPN), which now includes 131 approved vendors and 594 active training programs aligned with regional labor market demand; ongoing analysis of WIOA training expenditures to support balanced, data-driven workforce investments; and phased implementation of the VOS Greeter system to modernize and standardize front-end customer intake across Workforce Solutions offices and access points. Together, these efforts strengthen operational consistency, expand access to industry-driven training, improve data-informed decision-making, and enhance service delivery for both job seekers and employers throughout the Gulf Coast region.

2. Gulf Coast Provider Network (GCPN)

The GCPN continues to strengthen the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's training infrastructure by connecting workforce participants to high-quality, industry-aligned education and training that supports regional labor market demand and workforce development goals. The network currently consists of 131 approved vendors offering 594 active training programs across the Gulf Coast region, reflecting continued expansion and diversification of training opportunities. Recruitment efforts remain focused on increasing provider participation in high-demand sectors and strengthening alignment with evolving employer and workforce needs. During March 2026, outreach targeted 12 schools: 4 are currently in the approval pipeline, 1 is completing the application session, 1 was determined not yet qualified, 1 declined participation, and 5 remain pending response.

3. Vendor Recruitment

This initiative supports key performance indicator (KPI) alignment by expanding training pathways that strengthen talent development, respond to employer demand, and advance regional workforce priorities across high-demand industries. The programs support stackable credential attainment from the associate through the bachelor's level, advancing participant completion, long-term career advancement, and workforce sustainability. Developed in alignment with industry needs, these efforts respond to growing employer demand across the healthcare, energy, manufacturing, and technology sectors while strengthening the regional talent pipeline and contributing to key performance outcomes related to enrollment, credential attainment, completion, and employment.

4. Preliminary Analysis: WIOA Training Expenditures, PY 2026 H1

As part of its workforce investment strategy, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board continues to align WIOA-funded education and training investments with regional economic demand through the High-Skill, High-Growth Scholarship eligible occupations list, which guides training decisions for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth participants. During the first half of Program Year 2026 (October 2025 through April 2026), the Board allocated \$4.59 million across 893 participants enrolled in 172 instructional programs, with \$3.73 million in expenditures and encumbrances to date.

Current trends demonstrate stronger alignment toward balanced investments across priority occupations, including a significant reduction in Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training investments relative to prior years, which reduces overconcentration within a single occupational area. Healthcare and construction programs represent the leading investment categories, together accounting for more than half of all expenditures and participant enrollment, alongside continued investments in mechanics and repair, computer and information technology, and precision production. Ongoing analysis will continue to evaluate program quality, participant outcomes, and allocation strategy to support balanced, data-driven investments aligned with regional labor market demand.

5. Virtual One-Stop: Greeter Implementation

The VOS Greeter, a systemwide digital check-in and lobby management module within the Virtual One-Stop (VOS) platform, continues to advance as a tool to strengthen front-end service delivery and standardize customer intake across Workforce Solutions offices and access points. Following the phased rollout that began in the West Region in February 2026, implementation has been completed in several offices, including the remaining West Region locations of Katy, Missouri City, and Rosenberg earlier this month.

Expansion into the Cypress Station and Northline offices, in partnership with SERCO of Texas and BakerRipley, is scheduled to begin the week of May 25, 2026 with full implementation across all Workforce Solutions offices targeted for completion by July 31, 2026. Early results indicate strong adoption and measurable operational improvements, including increased visibility into customer demand, improved service alignment, enhanced tracking of traffic patterns and peak service times, and stronger data-informed support for staffing and performance oversight.

6. Conclusion

The system enhancements and operational improvements presented reflect the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's continued commitment to strengthening regional workforce alignment, expanding access to high-quality training, and modernizing service delivery across the workforce system. Through the continued expansion of the GCPN, strategic analysis of WIOA investments, and implementation of the VOS Greeter platform, the Board is advancing data-informed, customer-centered strategies that support workforce sustainability, operational consistency, and stronger alignment with regional labor market demand. Collectively, these efforts reinforce the Board's focus on innovation, accountability, and long-term system performance while improving outcomes for both job seekers and employers across the Gulf Coast region.

Education Committee May 2026

June Board Report

Executive Summary

On May 14, 2026, the Education Committee met from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the IRIS Conference Room at 5599 San Felipe, Suite 2000 (20th Floor), Houston, Texas 77056. Committee members present included Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Vice Chair Doug Karr, Cheryl Guido, and Shonda Below. They were joined by Board Chair Mark Guthrie, Joyce Johnson, Guy Robert Jackson, Dr. Allatia Harris, Alan Heskamp, Dr. Jennifer Baker, Dr. Melissa Gonzalez, Mou Sarkar, and Marie Arcos. The Committee received a focused update on child care access, early education quality, and workforce pipeline investments across the Gulf Coast region.

Hire Gulf Coast Youth (HGCY) continues to make strides in connecting youth to career exploration and leadership development. The HGCY Youth Advisory Board has launched with eight young people representing 6 of the region's 13 counties. Summer Youth Jobs and Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) are off to a solid start, supported by strong partnerships with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, elected city and state officials, and area school districts.

Career Pathways is advancing regional and state priorities, including alignment with the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative. Key accomplishments include exceeding the Integrated Education and Training target through Bridge to Apprenticeship programs, expansion of Registered Teacher Apprenticeships with improved guidance and district-centered incentives, implementation of a new CRM system, and continued growth of HGCY. Collectively, these efforts strengthen access, improve quality, and build durable, employer-aligned pathways that support long-term economic mobility across the Gulf Coast region.

Child Care Financial Aid operations continue to experience strain due to persistent TX3C system failures, resulting in processing delays, recertification backlogs, and declining enrollments. Board staff is conducting daily and weekly reviews of its processes and technology to eliminate bottlenecks and reduce delays to the extent possible. Support Center staff continues to work overtime to process cases as quickly as possible. Additional full-time staff is needed to ensure timely responses and assistance for families and providers. Near-term priorities include clearing backlogs, restoring enrollment levels, and coordinating with TWC as TX3C fixes are developed and deployed.

Early Education Quality efforts are shifting toward more direct, family-centered engagement. Following the conclusion of the United Way contract, Board staff determined not to contract with an outside vendor and to bring the work to the Board. The new positions will expand outreach to improve awareness of Workforce Solutions-Gulf Coast services, strengthen partnerships with family-serving organizations, and deliver learning and support activities through Texas Rising Star centers and community venues. This new structure will be launched in October 2026.

The restructuring of how the region's child care services and payments are processed daily has shifted several tasks to the Board level for greater efficiency, oversight, and ownership. Additional staff will be added in Early Child Care Financial Aid and Expansion, and these positions will strengthen workflows and improve service to our customers, communities, and stakeholders.

Hire Gulf Coast Youth

Program Overview

Hire Gulf Coast Youth (HGCY) continues implementation of regional youth workforce strategies focused on career exploration, occupational training, work-based learning (WBL), and employment opportunities aligned to high-skill, high-growth industries across the Gulf Coast region. During the current program year, HGCY has:

- Enrolled 540 new youth participants,
- Placed 124 youth into work-based learning activities, and
- Enrolled 160 youth into occupational skills and academic training programs.

Measure	Gulf Coast	North	East	West
Enrollments	540	196	274	70
Work-Based Learning	124	50	57	17
Training	160	65	78	17
Measurable Skills Gains (% of Target)	110.3%	114.2%	113.2%	98.5%
Credentials (% of Target)	78.4%	62.1%	69.2%	69.8%
Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit (% of Target)	100.8%	–	–	–
Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit (% of Target)	92.7%	–	–	–

Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit (% of Target)	124.4%	130.6%	95.9%	96.6%
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**Source - ROCC Performance Report – 04/2026*

Training participation has increased compared to prior program years, reflecting growth in youth engagement with occupational skills training and career pathway opportunities aligned to regional workforce needs.

Performance Gaps and Corrective Actions

Work-Based Learning (WBL)

As of April 2026, HGCY achieved 124 work-based learning placements against the annual target of 1,050, representing approximately 12 percent of the annual target at the midpoint of the program year. Current placement levels are below the pace required to meet annual contracted goals across all three regions. Primary contributing factors include:

- Limited out-of-school youth recruitment and engagement strategies;
- Insufficient referral partnerships to sustain participant pipelines;
- Limited availability of career pathway-aligned WBL opportunities; and
- Inconsistent employer development activity across regions.

Performance concerns remain most significant in the West Region served by EDSI. A formal Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will be issued in response to continued operational deficiencies and insufficient incremental progress during the first six months of the program year. Board staff met with West Region leadership in February 2026 after no WBL placements were achieved during the first quarter. The provider implemented internal corrective actions during the second quarter, but improvements remained minimal. Performance Improvement Plans are also anticipated for the North and East Regions if measurable progress toward contracted goals is not demonstrated within 60 days.

Corrective Action Underway

Board staff has increased operational oversight of pipeline development and employer engagement. Beginning in May 2026, HGCY will implement a three-tiered WBL framework designed to improve placement quality, increase employer participation, and strengthen alignment between training and employment outcomes. The framework comprises:

- Tier I, Paid Work Experience (PWE): career exposure and workplace readiness opportunities;
- Tier II, Internships: occupational skill-building experiences aligned to high-skill, high-growth industries; and

- Tier III, Advanced Internships: career pathway-aligned experiences connected to occupational training and industry-recognized credentials.

Improvement in placement activity is expected during summer 2026 and will be monitored monthly through regional performance dashboards.

Summer Jobs Initiative

The Summer Jobs initiative is currently performing below benchmark against the regional goal of 3,000 youth hires. Hiring activity across all three regions remains below projected implementation benchmarks at this stage of the summer implementation period.

Primary contributing factors include:

- Insufficient employer pipeline development
- Delayed youth recruitment and outreach activities
- Inconsistent regional hiring strategies
- Limited conversion of employer interest into active hiring opportunities

Corrective Actions Underway

Board staff have implemented the following corrective actions to accelerate hiring outcomes:

- Twice-weekly provider accountability and performance meetings
- Regional job fairs focused on youth hiring and employer recruitment
- Targeted technical assistance related to outreach and pipeline development
- Expanded employer engagement activities focused on seasonal hiring opportunities

Additional hiring activity is anticipated throughout Summer 2026 as employer hiring cycles continue and outreach efforts expand. Performance activity will continue to be monitored weekly throughout the summer implementation period.

Operational Performance and Accountability

Board staff continues focused performance management discussions with provider leadership teams across all three regions related to:

- Productivity and operational effectiveness,
- Alignment of activities to contracted outcomes,
- Workforce pipeline development,
- Employer engagement expectations, and
- Regional operational efficiencies.

Operational challenges also continue related to timely capture and documentation of Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) and Credential Attainment outcomes. Board staff identified gaps in:

- Real-time documentation processes,
- Accountability timelines,
- Performance reporting workflows, and
- Consistency of operational oversight practices.

To address these issues, Board staff are implementing enhanced operational procedures and policy revisions designed to establish clearer timelines, strengthen accountability expectations, and improve real-time performance tracking. Initial implementation of revised operational policies is expected during Summer 2026.

Organizational Capacity and Strategic Investments

New Board Staff Positions

To strengthen regional coordination and improve operational performance, Board staff proposes expanding the HGKY organizational structure through two (2) new Board positions: a Work-Based Learning Liaison and a Senior Planner in Partnerships.

Youth Portal Development

Board staff is developing the HGKY Youth Portal on the myOneFlow platform to improve operational oversight, streamline service delivery, and create a more coordinated experience for youth participants, employers, providers, and Board staff. The portal will function as a centralized operational and customer relationship management (CRM) system supporting:

- Outreach and referral tracking;
- Event registration and attendance;
- Enrollment conversion tracking;
- Training and work-based learning management;
- Employer engagement and onboarding workflows;
- Employment and placement tracking;
- Centralized communication through email and text messaging; and
- Task assignment and participant engagement monitoring.

The platform is intended to resolve operational inefficiencies caused by reliance on multiple disconnected systems currently used for outreach, document management, payroll coordination, communication tracking, and operational reporting. WorkInTexas.com (WIT) will remain the official system of record for

eligibility, case management, and state performance reporting; the myOneFlow portal will serve as the operational management layer, providing real-time visibility into participant pipelines, employer engagement activity, and regional performance trends. Phased implementation is underway in coordination with providers and operational subject matter experts.

Career Exploration and Youth Engagement Events

HGCY hosted or co-hosted multiple youth-focused career exploration, workforce exposure, hiring, and community engagement events during the current program year to increase awareness of workforce services and strengthen connections among youth, employers, education partners, and community organizations across the region. Through these events, HGCY connected with more than 7,000 youth via career fairs, hiring events, industry exploration activities, school and community partnerships, and workforce outreach initiatives.

Event activities focused on increasing exposure to high-skill, high-growth industries, promoting career pathway opportunities, supporting workforce readiness, and connecting youth to employment, training, and work-based learning opportunities available through HGCY and regional workforce partners. Board staff continues to expand regional event strategies to strengthen pipeline development, increase employer engagement, improve outreach to out-of-school youth, and support conversion of engagement activities into program participation, training enrollment, work-based learning placements, and employment outcomes.

HGCY staff also presented at two conferences during the year, expanding awareness of HGCY services and impact:

- Rooted in Action, National Youth Empowerment Coalition (March 31, 2026). Topic: Career Exploration That Delivers: Using Digital Tools and Bridge Programs to Expand Access to High-Wage Careers. Presenters: LaToya Casimere, Danielle Knotts, and Parker Harvey.
- TWC Annual Forum (May 12, 2026). Topic: Advancing Intergenerational Economic Mobility. Presenters: Juliet Stipeche and LaToya Casimere.

Youth Advisory Board

In March 2026, HGCY selected the inaugural Youth Advisory Board (YAB) cohort, comprising eight youth representatives from across the region. The YAB was established to strengthen youth voice in program planning, outreach strategy, and service delivery design. Cohort representation is as follows: Montgomery; Walker; Fort Bend (two); Harris (two); Liberty; and Galveston.

Members completed orientation activities in April 2026 focused on Workforce Solutions-Gulf Coast operations, HGCV initiatives, and workforce system priorities. Throughout the one-year term, members will participate in professional development addressing:

- Career readiness and financial literacy;
- Civic engagement and leadership development;
- Youth advocacy and public policy;
- Public speaking and presentation skills;
- Workplace wellness and mental health awareness; and
- Digital media and content creation.

Current members will also support recruitment to expand representation in counties where membership gaps exist.

Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL)

For Program Year 2026, HGCV received 676 student referrals from Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) against the contracted placement target of 525 students, representing referral volume at approximately 129% of target capacity. As of May 6, 2026:

- Approximately 70% of referred students have been matched to worksites
- Placement activity remains on track to meet or exceed the contracted target

VRS continues encouraging participation in optional work readiness workshops focused on communication, professionalism, workplace expectations, and soft skill development.

The North Region is currently experiencing localized worksite matching delays within the Cypress Station area due to limited availability of participating employers and worksites. Board staff are supporting targeted employer outreach and accelerated worksite development activities to expand placement capacity in the area prior to summer operations.

Financial Empowerment Initiative

Through participation in the Cities for Financial Empowerment (CFE) Summer Jobs Connect initiative, HGCV established a partnership with First National Bank of Texas to expand youth access to financial education and banking services. As part of this initiative:

- Financial literacy content was integrated into the summer work readiness curriculum;

- Youth gained access to a co-branded online financial education platform;
- Participants may open safe, no-cost bank accounts; and
- Free one-on-one financial coaching is available.

Board staff is collecting baseline and post-program data on banking access and financial participation to evaluate long-term impact on economic mobility and workforce outcomes. Board staff is also collaborating with the Bank On coalition to identify additional financial institution partners capable of supporting year-round youth financial empowerment efforts across the region.

Career Pathways

Within the Career Pathways Division, each program area works in close alignment to advance a shared mission: helping employers meet their workforce needs while enabling individuals to build sustainable careers, so that both can compete in a global economy.

Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program: Program Update

Over the past several months, the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program (RTAP) has progressed from initial design and early planning into a more structured, coordinated, and scalable model of implementation across the region. This phase reflects deliberate evolution grounded in district feedback, regional workforce priorities, and lessons learned through early implementation. Through targeted technical assistance, strengthened cross-sector partnerships, and intentional convening, the program is building the conditions necessary for long-term, sustainable success. These efforts are enabling school districts to move beyond concept development into actionable planning and to position themselves to launch high-quality apprenticeship pathways aligned with workforce demand.

Program Performance and District Engagement

RTAP's reach is expanding across the region. The Board is providing active, ongoing technical assistance to six school districts (Aldine ISD, Houston ISD, Huntsville ISD, Odyssey Academy, Spring ISD, and Tomball ISD), together with their higher education partners (University of Houston-Downtown, Sam Houston State University, Texas Woman's University, and University of Houston-Clear Lake). District engagement has deepened, with structured check-ins occurring at least monthly, and often more frequently, to guide planning, clarify decision-making, and maintain alignment with targeted fall 2026 program launches. Four districts have advanced to active engagement with Employer Engagement teams within their local Workforce Solutions offices and are performing at or ahead of expected timelines. This shift from exploration to readiness reflects the growing integration of education systems with workforce infrastructure; through it, the

Board serves as a regional convener and catalyst across a rapidly maturing apprenticeship ecosystem.

Dallas College CREW Participation and Statewide Alignment

Participation in the Dallas College CREW (Center for Reigniting the Educator Workforce) initiative has driven progress and capacity-building for the RTAP team. As participants on two of the five statewide CREW Cohort 1 teams, the Board has maintained close alignment with Tri-Agency partners and emerging statewide policy direction. This proximity has allowed the region to stay ahead of evolving guidance while strengthening local expertise in apprenticeship design, funding alignment, and implementation strategy. As the first year of CREW concludes, interest in Cohort 2 has grown considerably; multiple districts have expressed intent to apply, and the Board is supporting readiness assessments and application development. This sustained interest underscores both the value of CREW and the Board's role as a trusted intermediary, connector, and technical leader in advancing educator workforce solutions.

Advisory Committees and Cross-Sector Engagement

RTAP's growth is reinforced through active participation in key advisory groups, including Houston Excellence in Advancing Readied Teachers (HEART), Communities of Practice (COP), and the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC). Engagement in these forums ensures alignment with broader education, workforce, and youth development strategies while grounding apprenticeship design in real-world insight and regional priorities. These partnerships have directly informed program design, strengthened communication approaches, and elevated the quality and responsiveness of district-facing supports. Participation in these spaces has positioned the Board as a credible and influential voice in shaping educator workforce outcomes at the regional and national levels.

Houston Endowment Teacher Apprenticeship Developments and Structural Transitions

A significant milestone during this period was the final approval and advancement of the Houston Endowment Teacher Expansion Grant and the Teacher Apprenticeship Incentive Program (TAIP). Following multiple rounds of refinement and stakeholder input, the finalized TAIP framework represents a more streamlined, strategic, and district-centered approach to implementation. A key improvement is the transition to a standardized payment of \$2,000 per apprentice. This change moves away from complex, tiered reimbursement structures and provides districts with greater clarity, predictability, and budgeting flexibility while reducing administrative burden.

In parallel, TAIP introduces a strengthened system of wraparound supports designed to drive apprentice success and completion. All participating apprentices are now required to engage in monthly check-ins with workforce staff, mirroring proven WIOA service delivery models. These structured touchpoints ensure that apprentices receive consistent guidance, timely intervention, and access to resources addressing academic and employment-related barriers. Beyond individual support, these engagements serve as a data and feedback loop, enabling the Board to track outcomes, identify effective strategies, strengthen partnerships with educator preparation providers, and continuously improve performance.

Regional Workforce Summits

The Board is advancing a three-part Regional Workforce Summit series. These full-day convenings represent a strategic investment in regional alignment, elevation of workforce priorities, and positioning of the Board as a central driver of economic mobility and talent development across the region. The series is a collaborative effort across multiple workforce divisions, reflecting a unified and coordinated approach to regional workforce strategy.

Each summit is designed to convene employers, education leaders, workforce partners, and community stakeholders to engage in substantive dialogue on workforce challenges and solutions within high-demand, high-growth industries critical to the region's economic future. Beyond convening, the summits serve as action-oriented platforms to strengthen partnerships, align systems, and accelerate the development of responsive career pathways.

The series highlights how labor market intelligence, workforce programming, and cross-sector collaboration intersect to drive regional outcomes. Each convening features keynote speakers, industry experts, and leaders from across Board divisions, providing both strategic context and practical insight, and equipping participants with actionable strategies, shared best practices, and opportunities for continued collaboration.

Upcoming Summit Series:

- **Construction Futures Summit.** June 11, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Wharton County Junior College (West Region). This summit will spotlight construction, one of the fastest-growing sectors in the region, and explore how workforce data and targeted training strategies are addressing labor demand.
- **Life Sciences and Healthcare Futures Summit.** June 18, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. San Jacinto College, CPET Center (East Region). This convening will highlight emerging workforce needs, innovative training

approaches, and opportunities for stronger alignment between education and industry.

- **Education Futures Summit.** July 16, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lone Star College, University Park (North Region). This summit will center on the educator workforce pipeline, addressing teacher shortages, scaling apprenticeship models, and strengthening long-term workforce strategy.

Workforce Education and Literacy

The Houston-Galveston Area Council and GCWB consortium advances adult education, workforce readiness, and long-term employment outcomes across one of the most complex and populous regions in Texas. GCWB's performance reflects both the scale of its reach and the intentional strategies applied to drive quality outcomes for learners and job seekers.

As of March 2026, the consortium has served 4,372 participants against a full-year enrollment target of 8,285, reflecting significant reach midway through the program year. Given the size and diversity of the region, this enrollment volume underscores the consortium's role as a major access point for adult learners within the statewide Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) system. GCWB leverages its regional leadership position to align education, workforce development, and partner coordination in support of both immediate and long-term economic mobility outcomes.

GCWB is also expanding access to Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Intensive service models, which are critical strategies for supporting participants with higher barriers and aligning education with workforce outcomes. As of March 2026, GCWB has enrolled 1,693 participants in IET programming, exceeding its target of 870. This result has been driven in part by Bridge to Apprenticeship programs, which provide clear pathways from foundational skills to career-focused training. GCWB has intentionally moved beyond general basic education to ensure that learners who demonstrate readiness and capacity for skill advancement are supported in progressing along their educational and career pathways.

GCWB is making steady progress in expanding Intensive service enrollment. To date, 290 of 430 participants have been engaged in Intensive enrollment activities, a current rate of 67.44 percent. Continued efforts to strengthen referral processes, participant identification, and service documentation are helping ensure that individuals with higher support needs are effectively served.

Employed or Enrolled, Third and Fourth Quarters After Exit

Against a target of 87 percent, the program has achieved an outcome rate of 86.31 percent, with 1,601 participants employed or enrolled in the third and fourth quarters after exit.

Employed or Enrolled, Second Quarter After Exit

Against a target of 43 percent, 1,156 of 2,202 exiters have been employed or enrolled, a rate of 52.50 percent. This performance reflects GCWB's continued focus on connecting individuals to employment and educational opportunities aligned with their career pathways.

Measurable Skill Gains

As of March data, the program reports 1,369 participants achieving a gain out of 3,941 participants, approximately 34.88 percent, positioning the program to meet the end-of-year target of 43 percent. Achieving this level of progress at this point in the program year indicates that participants are actively engaging in training and advancing along their educational and career pathways. Continued emphasis on consistent engagement, timely documentation, and targeted support will be central to sustaining this trajectory.

Credential Attainment

GCWB has supported 768 exiters in progressing toward credential attainment. To date, 193 participants have achieved a credential, a current attainment rate of 25.13 percent. This rate is expected to continue rising: credential attainment is a lagging indicator, and participants have up to 365 days after their last date of service to earn and report a credential. Effectively supporting a large and diverse participant base requires a strong balance of recruitment, high-quality instruction, coordinated partnerships, and ongoing tracking of long-term outcomes, while remaining responsive to labor market demand. GCWB is well positioned to continue strengthening outcomes through:

- Enhanced instructional alignment to workforce pathways;
- Targeted strategies to increase measurable skill gains;
- Continued emphasis on post-exit employment and education persistence; and
- Ongoing collaboration with regional workforce, education, and employer partners.

The March 2026 Monthly Performance Report reflects services delivered at scale, meaningful long-term outcomes, and a strong foundation for continued improvement across the Houston-Galveston region.

Strategic Program Developments and Regional Workforce Impact

A key advancement has been collaborative work with the MC3 program to design and implement a week-long math curriculum that strengthens foundational skills for participants entering the program. The curriculum is designed to bridge critical skill gaps by focusing on applied math concepts directly relevant to the construction trades.

For the initial pilot, the Manager of Career Pathways personally delivered both the MC3 course and the new math component, ensuring quality implementation and yielding direct insight into curriculum effectiveness. Building on this effort, GCWB is partnering with San Jacinto College to identify an instructor with the specialized skill set required to deliver the curriculum going forward. The curriculum follows a non-traditional model, condensing a substantial sequence of math concepts into an intensive 40-hour format and requiring an educator capable of accelerated, contextualized instruction. As a next step, GCWB will collaborate with Dr. Anne Papakonstantinou, a recognized leader in high-quality teacher development, student enrichment, and research on mathematics teaching and learning.

The Board is expanding its presence and delivering targeted workforce development initiatives within the Wharton community, an area identified as a key growth opportunity. Through collaboration with Wharton County Junior College, the Board is supporting curriculum alignment planning with Lamar Consolidated ISD to ensure that education and training pathways are responsive to both student needs and local employer demand. GCWB participates in the monthly Wharton Task Force meetings, providing information on available resources and services while strengthening its footprint within the community.

In addition, GCWB is partnering with Judge Spenrath in the early planning stages of a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training program to support the Wharton community. This initiative focuses on upskilling the local workforce, particularly individuals employed within school districts and municipal operations, to increase the number of certified CDL drivers and build capacity in critical public service roles.

Further strengthening the construction workforce ecosystem, the Board convened a Construction Coalition meeting in partnership with Jobs for the Future (JFF). The convening brought together industry leaders, training providers, employers, and workforce partners to discuss workforce challenges and emerging opportunities in the construction sector. Discussions focused on increasing the attractiveness of construction careers, expanding awareness of available pathways, and aligning training programs with industry needs. A second

convening is scheduled for August to advance these strategies and deepen collaboration.

Teacher Externship

The Teacher Externship initiative has launched, expanding workforce-connected learning opportunities for educators across the region. Applications are open for both teacher externs and teacher mentors, available on the Workforce Solutions website under Career Pathways. Funded through a recently awarded grant, the externship is a short-term, high-impact professional development experience designed to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-world workforce demands, providing educators with direct exposure to industry environments and practical insight they can translate into relevant classroom instruction.

The program is open to a broad range of education professionals, including middle and high school teachers, Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructors, school counselors and administrators, student teachers, and Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) providers. Participants will engage in a ten-day, cohort-based summer externship hosted at employer worksites within four priority industries identified through Board labor market data as critical to regional growth: construction, healthcare, education, and technology. A key deliverable is the development of interdisciplinary lesson plans aligned to both TEKS standards and industry competencies, connecting classroom learning directly to in-demand careers.

The program has demonstrated strong regional support, with letters of commitment received from Alief ISD, Aldine ISD, Houston ISD, and Pasadena ISD. A virtual informational session was hosted on April 14, 2026, and outreach continues with district leaders, CTE directors, and education partners across the region.

Customer Relationship Management System

Implementation of the myOneFlow CRM system remains on track and is progressing with strong coordination across all workforce divisions, representing a significant step forward in data integration, operational efficiency, and cross-program alignment. All divisions are actively building out their respective CRM components, including Hire Gulf Coast Youth, Workforce Education and Literacy (WEL/AEL), and Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Programs (RTAP). Each division is ensuring that its workflows, data tracking needs, and program-specific requirements are integrated into the system design, creating a unified platform that reflects the full scope of workforce services while preserving the flexibility needed to support diverse program models.

To support implementation, cross-functional teams meet multiple times per week to refine workflows, align system functionality with program requirements, and ensure the platform meets the goals outlined in program proposals. The myOneFlow system will serve as a centralized data infrastructure, allowing partners to:

- Track participant progress and program milestones in real time;
- Improve data accuracy and consistency across programs;
- Streamline reporting, including apprenticeship and workforce program requirements;
- Reduce duplication and administrative burden; and
- Strengthen transparency and shared accountability among partners.

The CRM will also support a more integrated referral system across programs, creating clearer pathways among youth services, adult education, and apprenticeship opportunities. The project is on schedule, with a targeted go-live date in June. Once fully implemented, myOneFlow will enhance the region's capacity to manage programs at scale, support data-informed decision-making, and drive continuous improvement across all workforce initiatives.

Early Education Quality

Overview

The Board continues to advance its commitment to strengthening early childhood education across the region by supporting families and improving access to critical resources. Our goal is to place a stronger emphasis on direct family engagement to reduce barriers, increase awareness, and expand access to Workforce Solutions services for families throughout the region.

Program Transition

During budget discussions over the past month, senior leadership reviewed opportunities to improve operational efficiency and decided to transition the Family Engagement and Outreach program to an internal operational model rather than continue with the RFP process. Last year, we began aligning additional child care functions at the board level and believe that bringing the activities currently supported through the Family Engagement and Outreach program in-house will create stronger operational alignment, improve coordination across services, and increase efficiency in program oversight and service delivery. We also believe this approach will provide greater flexibility and enhance our ability to respond more effectively to the needs of families.

New Proposed Positions Include:

- 1 Program Administrator, and
- 4 Outreach Coordinators.

The newly proposed staff will be responsible for implementing the following activities across the 13- county region:

- Engage families currently receiving Child Care Scholarships, families on the scholarship waitlist, and families who may be unaware of Workforce Solutions services.
- Increase awareness of Workforce Solutions programs and connect families to available regional resources.
- Strengthen partnerships with organizations across the Gulf Coast region that serve families.
- Provide family learning opportunities within Texas Rising Star childcare centers and at community-based events.

Board staff will update the Education Committee once leadership has finalized the implementation approach for in-house delivery. The initiative remains on track for launch in October 2026.

Early Child Care Financial Aid

Overview

We continue to experience operational challenges due to pending system fixes from TWC, including the nonfunctional recertification automation link. In addition, fraud prevention has become a major focus this year. TWC has implemented new policies aimed at reducing fraud, including increased accountability for providers in reporting attendance infractions. These changes have placed additional strain on enrollment efforts, as providers are requesting the removal of multiple children and identifying the need for increased staffing.

TX3C Updates

Child Care Financial Aid is currently operating at approximately 3,000 children below the 95% year-to-date target, with a 24-month non-priority waitlist and continued TX3C failures. Increased outreach and operational adjustments are underway to close this gap.

Improvement Efforts:

- Increased family outreach efforts to 2,500 families per week in April.
- Implemented daily and weekly status reporting.
- Conducting weekly management team meetings with Support Center.

- After the Board's approval for additional funding at the last Board meeting, the Support Center is in the process of hiring 20 additional staff. These new staff primary functions will assist families needing to update their care. This will remove this function from the eligibility staff, allowing them to solely focus on recertifying families and adding new children to care.
- Continued staff overtime to support processing efforts.

With the increase in staffing and expanded outreach efforts, Board staff anticipates reaching the target by the end of June 2026.

Waitlist Outreach

- Over the past six months, more than 20,000 families have been contacted.
- Priority cases are now being processed in under one month.
- While outreach to non-priority families has increased, the non-priority waitlist remains at approximately 24 months.

Recertifications

- The TX3C automated recertification link remains nonfunctional.
- DocuWare continues to be used as a temporary solution.
- A collaboration session with other Board areas is scheduled later this month to discuss best practices for manual outreach within TX3C.

Technical Assistance

- TWC conducted an on-site visit to the Support Center on April 9–10.
- Staff processes were reviewed, with feedback indicating our processing timelines align with regional averages.
- TWC introduced updated procedures for ending care in TX3C, extending the process from one day to approximately two weeks.
- Additional staffing has been requested by the Support Center to accommodate these changes.

New Contract Year Staffing

A new RFP has been released to consolidate the Support Center and the Payment Office into the Child Care Scholarships Division. This integration is designed to improve coordination and efficiency between teams. The Vendor Relations team will not be merged in the newly formed division but will transition to the Board to strengthen relationships with child care providers. To support this restructuring, staffing in the child care scholarships team will increase from 4 to 16 employees.

New Proposed Positions Include:

- One Senior Manager, providing oversight of all Child Care Scholarships functions;

- One Program Administrator, bridging policy, compliance, and provider operations with higher-level oversight;
- One Senior Program Coordinator, assisting with policy, compliance, and provider operations;
- Eight Program Coordinators, responsible for coordination and oversight of Child Care Scholarship provider operations to ensure compliance, continuity of care, and enrollment growth; and
- One Administrative Coordinators, supporting day-to-day operations of the Child Care office.

Next Steps

Board staff will continue working closely with TWC and the Support Center to reach the child care target while developing a transition plan for vendor management.

Early Education Operations and Systems Support

The team took deliberate time to reflect on the scope of its work and to define the role it now plays. The result extends well beyond the original concept of expansion. Today, the team functions as critical infrastructure: a bridge across systems that builds provider capacity, strengthens data integrity, and advances access, quality, and economic mobility. Its function is best captured in the language of coordinator, foundation, stabilizer, and systems builder. This evolution has been driven by the increasing scale and complexity of the needs the team supports. Scaling the team is a strategic step to sustain performance, protect quality, and maintain impact.

Program Evolution

The Early Education Expansion initiative began with a clear, focused mission: to increase awareness of child care services, coordinate resources, and oversee a contractor charged with promoting program visibility and provider engagement. That work was targeted and primarily outward facing. Over time, the needs of the region and the increased expectations established through the Texas Rising Star (TRS) framework have grown significantly. In response, the unit has evolved into a foundational central operational hub supporting more than 1,800 child care providers and 66 mentors, strengthening alignment across internal teams and external stakeholders while ensuring consistent coordination, accountability, and program integrity. The scope of responsibilities, scale of financial oversight, and impact on regional child care quality have become foundational. The original staffing structure can no longer adequately support the operational demands of the program.

Current Functions: Accountability and Sustainability

The team maintains its original mission while anchoring the operational functions that drive improvement across the region. Key functions include:

1. Incentive and application management: developing and managing applications for quality improvement incentives, wage supplements, and other stipends; conducting eligibility and program accuracy reviews to ensure compliance and appropriate use of funds; and conducting follow-up and corrective action when deliverables are not met.
2. Procurement and resource coordination: facilitating acquisition of instructional materials and equipment aligned with TRS standards; reviewing orders and invoices for accuracy, allowable costs, and alignment with approved activities; and ensuring that resources contribute directly to measurable quality improvement.
3. Financial processing and payment oversight: coordinating invoice submission to contractor staff for timely payment; supporting payments to professional development providers, universities, trainers, and child care programs; and monitoring the payment process with quality assurance checks on all disbursements.
4. Data management, reporting, and quality control: maintaining real-time tracking of provider activities, incentives, and professional development engagement; monitoring outcomes tied to TRS assessments and quality benchmarks; ensuring audit-ready, high-integrity processes; and providing insight to guide continuous improvement.
5. Provider engagement and support: serving as a centralized point of contact through the Child Care Quality line; supporting provider and parent communication and application announcements; facilitating virtual provider feedback sessions to address needs and reduce barriers; and resolving inquiries related to incentives, payments, and participation.
6. TRS compliance reviews for quality impact: conducting quality control reviews of TRS mentor activities; reviewing case files, documentation, and adherence to TRS requirements; monitoring inclusion rates and other key indicators; and ensuring consistency, accountability, and program fidelity.
7. Stakeholder engagement and Local Match management: managing relationships with Local Match contributors; reviewing quarterly and performance reports against funding requirements; and cultivating new partnership opportunities to support long-term sustainability.

Without additional operational capacity, the unit risks processing delays, reduced responsiveness to providers, and greater vulnerability in functions requiring financial oversight, compliance monitoring, and data integrity.

Impact and Proposed Structure

The proposed staffing model was developed through deliberate assessment of operational growth, workflow complexity, compliance expectations, and the increasing volume of provider support functions managed by the unit. The evaluation reviewed the current distribution of responsibilities, identified operational bottlenecks, analyzed areas of concentrated risk, and assessed the sustainability of maintaining expanded functions under the existing structure.

As the unit evolved, responsibilities that were once transactional became increasingly technical, compliance-driven, and interconnected. Functions such as incentive processing, invoice review, data validation, TRS quality monitoring, stakeholder coordination, and provider engagement now require focused oversight, continuous quality controls, and real-time coordination across internal and external systems.

The proposed structure groups responsibilities into core operational areas through a functional alignment method that reduces operational risk, improves accuracy, and strengthens accountability:

- Incentive and financial oversight;
- Data management and integrity;
- Quality control and compliance monitoring;
- Provider engagement and operational coordination; and
- Stakeholder and Local Match management.

The addition of a Senior Manager provides strategic oversight across all operational areas while ensuring consistency, accountability, and alignment with organizational goals. The Program Administrator establishes dedicated leadership for the unit's highest-risk and highest-volume functions: financial and incentive operations and data integrity and reporting. The Senior Program Coordinator provides the day-to-day operational supervision necessary to maintain efficiency and continuity. The proposed increase from 7 to 15 full-time positions reflects the operational reality that the current staffing model no longer aligns with the complexity, scale, and technical demands of the work. Proposed positions include one Senior Manager, one Program Administrator, one Senior Program Coordinator, and five Program Coordinators.

Government Relations Committee

Legislative Updates

Executive Summary

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) continues to strengthen its leadership role in workforce policy and legislative engagement at the federal, state, and local levels. Following the successful March 30, 2026 Legislative Luncheon, Board staff has begun coordinating outreach to members of Congress regarding key workforce issues, including WIOA reauthorization, adult education funding, apprenticeship expansion, workforce training requirements, and preserving local flexibility within the workforce system. Individual meetings with members of the Gulf Coast congressional delegation and their staff are planned following the midterm runoff elections to ensure focused dialogue on regional workforce priorities and legislative impacts.

Congressional Delegation Outreach

With the overwhelming support by local and state elected officials attending our Legislative Luncheon on March 30, 2026, Board staff seeks to engage Members of the region's Congressional delegation, particularly around issues of WIOA reauthorization, training requirements, adult education funding, apprenticeship opportunities, and local control among other matters of interest. Board staff in collaboration with Outreach Strategists recommends the following:

1. Following the midterm primary election runoff cycle, Board staff will schedule meetings with each member of our congressional delegation and their staff to discuss opportunities and challenges around the items listed above. Due to extreme partisanship and the region's size and diversity, Board staff believes an individualized approach would be more beneficial and allow for intentional dialogue between the GCWB and congressional staff on the impacts of current and proposed legislation. Moreover, coordinated engagement strategies will help elevate regional needs and position the GCWB as a collaborative resource for policymakers. Future outreach efforts will include continued briefings, participation in legislative meetings, and monitoring of federal policy developments.

Board staff requests that Committee members identify members of the Congressional delegation with whom they have existing relationships and indicate their availability to participate in scheduled meetings in their capacity as Board members. To encourage meaningful and focused dialogue, meetings will remain intentionally small, with attendance limited

to no more than eight participants, including the Congressional member and staff.

Members of the Gulf Coast delegation:

- Senator Ted Cruz
- Senator John Cornyn
- Rep. Dan Crenshaw
- Rep. Lizzie Fletcher
- Rep. Morgan Luttrell
- Rep. Al Green
- Rep. Christian Menefee
- Rep. Troy Nehls
- Rep. Sylvia Garcia
- Rep. Brian Babin
- Rep. Wesley Hunt
- Rep. Randy Weber
- Rep. Michael T. McCaul

90th Texas Legislative Session Priorities

Since the last legislative session (89th Texas Legislative Session), the Gulf Coast Workforce Board has established legislative priorities that are intended to guide advocacy efforts and legislative engagement during the session. Key focus areas include workforce readiness, access to quality child care and early education, economic mobility, and support for policies that strengthen regional competitiveness.

The priorities will serve as a foundation for evaluating legislative proposals and bills, coordinating advocacy activities, and communicating policy positions with elected officials and external stakeholders. Additionally, like during the 89th Legislative Session, Board staff will work with Outreach Strategists to develop a push card listing the Board's mission, map, services, QR code to a success story, Board staff leadership, and below priorities:

- **Expand Apprenticeships and Career Pathways:** Invest in apprenticeships, career pathways, and workforce development initiatives that connect youth and adults to high-skill, high-demand industries. These efforts will provide businesses with skilled workers while offering individuals opportunities for economic mobility and career success.
- **Ensure Affordable, High-Quality Child Care:** Champion accessible, high-quality child care solutions for a productive workforce. Reliable child care reduces employee turnover, boosts retention, and fosters economic stability, benefiting both working families and businesses.

- **Promote Economic Mobility Through Workforce Investment:** Prioritize strategies that remove barriers to employment, strengthen career advancement opportunities, expand access to skills training and supportive services, and connect Texas families to sustainable wages in high-growth industries that achieve long-term economic stability, while helping employers build and retain a competitive workforce.
- **Build a Seamless Work-Based Learning Continuum Across TWC, TEA, and THECB**
Authorize a unified Texas workforce and education system that aligns the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to create seamless pathways from career exploration and paid work-based learning to apprenticeships, postsecondary credentials, and employment. Empower local workforce development boards as the lead conveners connecting employers and talent, while streamlining funding and reporting across agencies to provide Texans with a simple, coordinated workforce system.

Texas Jobs Council

On March 16, 2026, Governor Greg Abbott announced the launch of the Texas Jobs Council, a new advisory body aimed at strengthening workforce development and ensuring Texans are prepared to meet growing demand in high-skill, high-demand industries (e.g., construction trades, energy, and transportation).

The Council brings together leaders from business, labor, and workforce systems to align efforts and maintain Texas' competitive edge in job creation and economic growth. The initiative emphasizes collaboration between industry and labor to address workforce shortages and expand training pathways.

The Council will focus on key priorities, including:

- Identifying immediate executive actions to reduce regulatory barriers in workforce development
- Developing policy and legislative recommendations for the 90th Texas Legislative Session
- Delivering a final report by November 2026 outlining actionable strategies to strengthen the state's workforce system

Appointed Members of the Texas Jobs Council include:

- **Co-Chair, Brent Taylor** VP South Teamsters Local 745 & Teamsters Joint Council 80
- **Co-Chair, Megan Mauro** Interim President Texas Association of Business
- **Tony Bennett** President Texas Association of Manufacturers
- **Todd Staples** President Texas Oil and Gas Association

- **Hector Rivero** President Texas Chemistry Council
- **Scott Norman** President Texas Association of Builders
- **Robert Mele** President Teamsters Local 988
- **Robert Wayne Lord** Business Manager Plumbers Local Union 68
- **Alan Robb** Assistant General International Longshoremen's Assoc.
- **Lacy Wolf** Local 22 President Heat and Frost Insulators Local Union 22
- **Mark Maher Jr.** Business Manager International Union of Operating Engineers 450
- **Bryan Edwards** Business Manager Pipefitters Local Union 211

GCWB's Lacy Wolf was appointed to serve on the Jobs Council. With his guidance, our goal is to work collaboratively with the Council to ensure the Gulf Coast Workforce Board is proactively assisting the State in addressing workforce gaps, specifically:

- Expanding partnerships between employers and K-12 districts to embed industry-recognized credentials and hands-on training into CTE programs,
- Increasing investments in affordable, high-quality child care to address one of the largest barriers to workforce,
- Designating local workforce development boards as regional conveners responsible for aligning employers, education providers, and workforce partners, and
- Streamlining reporting requirements across the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to reduce duplication and administrative burden for employers and training providers participation, and
- Expanding state-supported registered apprenticeship programs in construction, energy, transportation, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and maritime industries.

Harris County Coalition on Early Childhood Education and Care

In January, Harris County Commissioners Adrian Garcia (Precinct 2) and Lesly Briones (Precinct 4) launched the Harris County Coalition on Early Childhood Education and Care, bringing together public, private, philanthropic, and community partners to identify and prioritize constraints across four key themes: access and awareness, provider capacity, data and quality, and workforce development. Over the past few months, the coalition has convened a series of working sessions culminating in a report-out of key findings and priority actions. The following members of the GCWB staff serve on the steering committee and sub-committees: Juliet Stipeche, Kristi Rangel, Jacinth Chapman, and Desmond Taylor.

On April 16, 2026, during the Harris County Commissioners Court, a framework supporting the coalition's recommendations was introduced. Juliet Stipeche and Desmond Taylor provided testimony supporting the measures alongside several other local stakeholders. Recommendations included:

1. **Strengthen Child Care Businesses:** Harris County, led by its Department of Economic Equity and Opportunity, will develop an Early Child Care Business Accelerator program to provide technical assistance and operational support to providers, with the goal of expanding their capacity, improving compliance, and strengthening long-term business sustainability.
2. **Identify Local Barriers:** Harris County, in partnership with the Harris County Fire Marshal, Harris County Public Health, and other relevant departments, will assess all points of interaction with child care providers — particularly related to facility permits, licenses, and inspection requests.
3. **Increase Advocacy Efforts:** Harris County will actively engage in coordinated advocacy to advance early childhood education and care at the state level.
4. **Connect Families to Child Care Resources:** Harris County will identify gaps in outreach and promotion of child care scholarships, early learning programs, and related resources, and develop a coordinated strategy to improve access and uptake for families with young children.

The items proposed by Commissioners Briones and Garcia – items developed out of the work by the coalition – passed unanimously at Commissioners Court on April 16, 2026. The Court approved items included: the development of a business accelerator program, a facilities crosswalk, an outreach and communications assessment, and an increased advocacy strategy that now officially includes early childhood education and care.

Below are some great press highlights:

- **Harris County to push for early childhood education reform in 2027**
Texas legislative session: <https://communityimpact.com/houston/cy-fair-jersey-village/government/2026/04/15/harris-county-to-push-for-early-childhood-education-reform-in-2027-texas-legislative-session/>
- **Harris County commissioners to propose early childhood education accelerator to ease workforce strain:** <https://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2026/04/16/commissio-ners-briones-garcia-early-childhood-care.html>

We thank Harris County Commissioners Lesley Briones and Adrian Garcia for their leadership in this effort. The GCWB will continue engaging with the Harris County Coalition on Early Childhood Education and Care as part of its responsibility to align workforce, education, and economic development systems to drive economic mobility. Also, we are committed to helping shift the region from fragmented problem-solving to coordinated system alignment. This creates a pathway for more effective local action while positioning the Gulf Coast region to influence state policy in ways that reduce barriers, strengthen early child care provider capacity, and improve workforce outcomes.

Texas Workforce Investment Council Task Group

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board was invited to participate in the Texas Workforce Investment Council's statewide workforce system initiative focused on expanding work-based learning and strengthening alignment between career and technical education (CTE) programs and employment opportunities through student skills competitions. The taskforce held its first meeting on May 28 at 10:00 am at the Texas State Technical College, Waco campus. Executive Director Juliet Stipeche attended the taskforce meeting.

The initiative will be carried out by a task group over the next six to nine months and will focus on:

- Mapping skills competitions to workforce and occupational needs
- Identifying regions and industries needing greater participation
- Informing and engaging regional workforce partners and stakeholders
- Increasing employer engagement through competitive events

The TWIC regular meeting is scheduled on June 5 at 9:00 a.m. at the Austin Community College Highland Campus.

Legislative Engagement: House Committee on Public Health Testimony

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has been in active coordination with the Office of State Representative Gary VanDeaver, Chair of House Committee on Public Health through the Committee Clerk, to present invited testimony in Austin on June 4, 2026. The testimony will address the Board's work to strengthen the allied health and healthcare workforce pipeline and will highlight the programs developed to expand the supply of qualified healthcare employees across the Gulf Coast region.

Communications Committee

Strategic Update May 2026

Executive Summary

The Communications Committee, chaired by Doug Karr, convened on May 26, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at 3555 Timmons Lane, Meeting Room 2D, Houston, Texas 77027. Committee members in attendance included Doug Karr (Chair), Monica Riley (Vice Chair), Mark Guthrie, Paul Puente, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, and Cheryl Guido. Additional board members present included Paul Puente, Doug Karr, Mia Garcia, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Mark Guthrie, Cheryl Guido, and Monica Riley.

During April and May 2026, communications activity centered on workforce events, hiring initiatives, employer outreach, and expanded public visibility for workforce services across the region. The period also advanced several larger communications projects, including the Workforce Solutions podcast, the Board Member video series, the regional newsletter redesign, new employer engagement materials, and the Communications Guide under development for the WFS-GC system.

Hiring fairs, workforce events, and employment-focused campaigns generated the strongest audience engagement during this period and shaped much of the organization's digital outreach. Social media content tied to job fairs, workforce success stories, podcast clips, and short-form video performed consistently well across platforms, with the strongest results concentrated in content connected to youth employment, military transition, and regional hiring opportunities. The period also marked a more intentional approach to content planning, characterized by greater emphasis on campaign-based outreach and a deliberate reduction in high-volume informational posts.

Media outreach remained active through the Board's ongoing partnership with ABC13 Houston, including segments on youth employment and maritime workforce demand. Spanish-language coverage on Univision and Telemundo extended the reach of hiring fairs, workforce preparation resources, and employment services to audiences across the region. Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast also participated in several major regional workforce and economic mobility events, addressed in greater detail later in this report.

Multiple operational communications projects took shape during this period. The Communications Advisory Council continued developing the Career Services Communications Guide to establish clearer procedures and expectations across career offices, providers, and Board staff. Work also advanced on the Employer Engagement Manual, expanded employer outreach collateral, planning for the Hire Gulf Coast Youth Power of One campaign and Youth Summit, and continued production of Board Member videos featuring leadership perspectives from across the region. Board staff also shared information about several outreach activities from job fairs to presentations at the Texas Workforce Commission's mid-year forum.

Social Media Report

This reporting period reflects a shift from broad social media activity to a more focused, impact-driven content strategy. Since the last reporting period in March, social media performance has shown measurable improvement across all actively developed channels. This period also reflects a broader strategic shift from high-volume posting toward more intentional, impact-focused content designed to drive stronger audience engagement and action.

The clearest takeaway is that employment-focused content, event promotion, podcast repurposing, short-form video, and success stories are becoming the strongest pillars of the social media strategy. Job fair content continues to produce the highest spikes in engagement, while May event carousels, success stories, and podcast-based content are helping extend the life of key messages across multiple formats.

The performance changes this period show that the team is learning where the audience is most responsive and adjusting accordingly. Instagram and Facebook both showed growth in meaningful engagement areas, including profile visits, page visits, and link clicks. These increases suggest that the content mix is not only reaching followers but encouraging them to take action.

Overall, the story this period is one of strategic refinement: moving from more content to better-aligned content, focusing on high-traction formats, and building a clearer connection between social media activity and community impact.

a) Facebook

Facebook remains our largest reach channel. Compared to the previous period, the audience that sees GCWFS content is now visiting our page, clicking through, and following at meaningfully higher rates. Diverse Job Fair posting in mid-April demonstrated that community events and opportunity-posting can drive

engagement and the metrics that signal real audience intent have remained strong since. Data analytics include:

- **Page visits grew 35.4%.** More people are intentionally seeking us out, not just passively encountering us in their feed.
- **Link clicks grew 21.2%.** The audience is converting from viewers into actors, clicking through to read, sign up, or learn more.
- **New follows grew 27.9%.** Net audience growth accelerated, indicating sustained interest beyond the Job Fair spike.
- **Engagement quality improved** even as total interactions softened slightly. The modest decline in content interactions reflects a shift away from high-volume posting toward more targeted content, while action-oriented metrics such as page visits, follows, and link clicks all increased significantly.

Metric	Result
Views	181,238
Content Interactions	1,181
Visits	5,428
Link Clicks	254
Follows	326

b) Instagram

Instagram showed some of the strongest momentum this reporting period, particularly in audience growth, profile activity, and content reach. Compared to the previous reporting period, follower growth nearly doubled while profile visits increased by more than 70 percent, indicating that content is reaching new audiences and generating stronger interest in the organization overall. Performance this period suggests that audiences are responding most strongly to visually driven and story-centered content. Event carousels, success story carousels with still images, short-form video, and repurposed podcast clips consistently generated higher engagement and stronger visibility than static informational posts alone.

Job fair content remained one of the highest-performing categories on the platform, with the April Job Fair campaign producing one of the largest engagement spikes of the year. May event carousels also continued driving interaction, reinforcing that timely, community-focused content performs especially well on Instagram.

Success stories further strengthened engagement by presenting workforce outcomes in a more personal and visual format. Together, these trends suggest

that Instagram is becoming one of the organization’s strongest channels for audience growth, community visibility, and human-centered storytelling.

Metric	Result
Views	27,581
Content Interactions	764
Visits	1,091
Reach	5,743
Follows	260

c) LinkedIn and LinkedIn Newsletter

LinkedIn continues to be one of the strongest platforms for professional visibility, workforce storytelling, and partner engagement. This period, the content that performed best was tied to clear audience value: job fair campaigns, event carousels, success stories, short-form videos, and repurposed podcast content. The April Job Fair campaign produced the largest engagement spike of the period, reinforcing that employment-focused content remains one of the highest-traction formats. May event carousels also helped sustain engagement, showing that event-based content can continue driving visibility beyond a single post. Success stories added a stronger impact-focused layer to the platform.

By using both carousel and video formats, these stories helped highlight community outcomes while reaching audiences in different ways. Podcast content also supported this strategy by turning episodes into quote posts, guest highlights, and shorter clips. Overall, LinkedIn generated 62,674 impressions, 1,444 reactions, 65 comments, and 25 reposts. The LinkedIn Newsletter also showed strong growth, reaching 4,014 total subscribers and adding 509 new subscribers this period.

LINKEDIN		LINKEDIN NEWSLETTER	
Metric	Results	Metric	Result
Impressions	62,674	Article Views	1,570
Reactions	1,444	New Subscribers	509
Comments	65	Total Subscribers	4,014
Reposts	25		

d) YouTube

YouTube continued to function as a long-form storytelling and educational platform during this reporting period. Content was strategically uploaded to showcase a variety of topics: workforce education, success stories, job fair preparation, and podcast episodes helped diversify how information was delivered while extending the reach of existing campaigns and programs. During the reporting period, the channel generated approximately 1,387 views, 62.1 hours of watch time, and 21 new subscribers. Performance was strongest on practical and informational content, particularly videos connected to workforce preparation and participant success stories.

Success-story content performed well on the platform, including the Hire Gulf Coast Youth: Rachel Hohman Success Story, which became one of the top-viewed videos this period. Educational and guidance-based videos also continued attracting steady traffic, including content explaining workforce readiness, career preparation, and SNAP Employment & Training orientation requirements. Newer uploads tied to the SNAP Employment & Training program showed encouraging early engagement, suggesting there is audience interest in direct, step-by-step workforce guidance content. Podcast episodes uploaded to YouTube also helped expand the visibility and lifespan of conversations already being used across social media platforms.

Metric	Result
Views	1,387
Watch Time (hours)	62.1
New Subscribers	21
Total Subscribers	1,534

What is working and Why:

Not all formats produce equal results. Based on the engagement data and the audience response patterns from this period, here is how each format is performing:

Content format	Performance	Evidence from this period
Job fair posts	★ BEST	Job Fair campaign (April 13–15) drove our single largest content spike of the year so far.
Event carousels (May)	STRONG	May event carousels driving a second wave of engagement and link clicks.

Content format	Performance	Evidence from this period
Job fair posts	★ BEST	Job Fair campaign (April 13–15) drove our single largest content spike of the year so far.
Success story carousels	STRONG	Eight success stories published (Angel Reach, Compassion United, City of Ames, Glen Spitz, Tiffs Thrifts, Ms Price, Effex, Paid Work Experience Program).
Success story videos	STRONG	Video format extends story content beyond the still-image carousel and reaches different audience preferences.
Podcast repurposed as quote posts	STRONG	Episodes are being broken into quote graphics, extending the lifetime of each episode across weeks of posts.
Meet the team spotlights	STEADY	14 staff spotlights provide a reliable baseline of human-interest content between larger campaigns.

Key format insights

- **Job fair posts are the single best-performing content type.** The April Job Fair campaign alone drove roughly a third of Facebook's total reach for the period. This is a repeatable, high-leverage format.
- **Carousels are working for events AND success stories.** The May event carousels are sustaining engagement past the Job Fair spike, and the success story carousels are giving us a strong second pillar of community-focused content.
- **Format variety is paying off on Instagram especially.** The 60.8% jump in Instagram content interactions reflects the mix of carousels, videos, and quote posts: different formats reaching different audience moments.
- **Podcast repurposing is extending content lifetime.** Each episode is now generating multiple posts: quote graphics, guest highlights, and short clips. This is the most efficient use of our flagship content asset.

Social Media Strategies for 2026: Updated

Three strategic priorities guide social media planning for the remainder of 2026. The focus will be on converting current momentum into more consistent, predictable growth while positioning the organization as a trusted regional voice on workforce issues. Strategies include:

1. Expand high-performing content categories

The strategy will prioritize the formats proving most effective: job fair posts, event carousels, success story carousels, success story videos, and podcast-based content. These categories are generating stronger audience attention because they connect directly to employment opportunities, community outcomes, and practical workforce information.

2. Leverage flagship reports to stabilize traffic peaks

Flagship content such as LMI releases, workforce snapshots, annual reports, and major publications will be used to create more predictable engagement moments throughout the year. Rather than relying on isolated spikes, these larger content assets can anchor planned campaigns and generate recurring traffic across platforms.

3. Increase consistent social distribution to diversify traffic sources

The strategy will continue using repurposing as a core distribution model. Podcast episodes, reports, success stories, and major announcements can be broken into multiple posts across LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. This increases the value of each content asset, reaches different audiences by platform, and reduces dependence on any single channel.

4. Strengthen media highlights and outreach

Media highlights and partner outreach will support broader visibility beyond owned channels. Featuring press mentions, partner activity, elected officials, chambers of commerce, and regional workforce conversations can help expand reach, strengthen credibility, and position the organization as an active voice in the regional workforce ecosystem.

Media Highlights and Outreach

a) Workforce Solutions in the News (Stories)

Who's Hiring on ABC 13

The Board's ongoing "Who's Hiring" partnership with ABC13 continued this spring with segments focused on youth employment and maritime workforce demand.

April 2026

The April segment focused on youth employment and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Youth Job Fair at NRG Stadium. Juliet Stipeche and LaToya Casimere discussed Hire Gulf Coast Youth and the importance of connecting young people ages 14 to 24 to jobs, training, and career exploration opportunities. The segment also featured representatives from HCA Healthcare and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's Industrial Craft Competition, along with Hire Gulf Coast Youth participant Rachel Hohman, who shared her experience in the

program and how it helped connect her to employment opportunities and career direction.

Segment aired during KTRK (ABC) - HOUSTON 13 Eyewitness News at 4:50 pm, KTRK-TV [ABC 13] - HOUSTON at 6:20 pm, and KIAH (CW) - HOUSTON ABC 13 Eyewitness news at 9:00 p.m.

- **Total AVE: \$20,161**
- **Total Viewership: 142,566**

May 2026

The May segment aired from the Davie Defense/Gulf Copper shipyard aboard the Battleship Texas in Galveston and focused on workforce demand in the maritime transportation and ship repair industries. The historic warship is presently undergoing a multi-million-dollar restoration by Gulf Copper and representatives discussed the range of skilled trades involved in shipfitting, ship maintenance and repair, current hiring needs, and apprenticeship opportunities tied to maritime careers.

The segment also discussed Davie Defense acquisition of Gulf Copper to build at least five ice breakers for the U.S. Coast Guard over the next 5-7 years, which is the first time ships are going to be built in the Port of Galveston in 81 years. This multi-billion-dollar project includes the creation of a new shipbuilding facility in the Port of Galveston. The Director of the Galveston College Continuing Education Department discussed the Shipfitter Registered Apprentice Program and their partnership with Davie Defense and Gulf Copper. Current apprentices shared their experiences and perspectives on the livestream, including what this unique opportunity means to them and their families.

- **Total AVE: \$2,600**
- **Total Viewership: 162,593**

Interview on Univision Houston

Dr. Maria Franco Cortes appeared on the April 27, 2026, 5 p.m. newscast on Univision Houston to discuss workforce preparation and career pathways for new graduates entering the job market. During the interview, she encouraged students and young adults to begin preparing for their job search early and highlighted the range of free services available through Workforce Solutions, including resume assistance, hiring events, and connections to local employers. The segment also introduced apprenticeships as an alternative pathway for individuals looking to gain hands-on experience while building long-term career opportunities.

Katy Mills Hiring Fair

The Katy Mills Hiring Fair received coverage on Telemundo Houston between April 22 and April 24, with three segments airing during the station's 11 a.m., 10 p.m., and morning news broadcasts. The coverage promoted the hiring event to viewers across the region and helped connect local job seekers with available employment opportunities, as well as Workforce Solutions resources and support services available throughout the hiring process.

- **Total AVE: \$780**
- **Total Viewership: 86,678**

Turnaround Houston Job Fair

The Turnaround Houston Job Fair, hosted in partnership with the City of Houston Office of Business Opportunity, connected job seekers with local employers hiring across multiple industries. Held at the Alief Neighborhood Center, the event provided attendees with opportunities to meet directly with employers, explore available positions, and access workforce resources and career information. The event featured participation from 25 local employers and included attendance from community leaders and local officials, including Houston City Council Member Edward Pollard, City of Houston Office of Business Opportunity Director Cylenthia Hoyrd, and Daniel Rodriguez, Chief Operations Officer for Harris County Precinct 4, representing Commissioner Lesley Briones. Attendees arrived prepared with resumes and engaged with employers throughout the event to discuss job openings, qualifications, and career pathways. The job fair also served as an opportunity for workforce and community partners to connect with residents seeking employment and workforce training opportunities.

- **Total AVE: \$230**
- **Total Viewership: 81,240**

b) Job Fairs and Outreach Events

Fleet Week

As part of Houston's first-ever Fleet Week, Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast partnered with Combined Arms, Texas Veterans Network, and the Texas Veterans Commission to host the Fleet Week VetConnect Career Exploration Event on April 20 at San Jacinto College. The event brought together transitioning service members, veterans, military spouses, employers, and workforce partners for a day focused on career exploration, hiring opportunities, and workforce connections.

More than 75 employers and organizations participated, representing industries including energy, healthcare, construction, transportation, public service, and

skilled trades. Throughout the event, attendees connected directly with recruiters, explored training and career pathways, and accessed workforce resources designed to support successful transitions into civilian careers.

The event reflected continued regional collaboration to strengthen workforce opportunities for the military community while helping employers connect with skilled and experienced talent. Strong participation from both employers and attendees reinforced ongoing demand for workforce initiatives that support veterans and military families across the Gulf Coast region.

National Apprenticeship Week

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast planned the Regional Apprenticeship Learning Forum in recognition of National Apprenticeship Week, with the event scheduled for May 1 at the H-GAC Conference Center in Houston. The employer-focused forum was designed to bring together employers, HR professionals, workforce leaders, and business decision-makers from across the Gulf Coast to explore apprenticeship strategies and workforce development solutions.

Planned programming included sessions focused on workforce pipeline development, apprenticeship expansion strategies, talent retention best practices, and regional workforce collaboration opportunities. The event was set to highlight Apprenticeships Work!, our new regional resource and technical assistance center designed to support employers in developing and sustaining registered apprenticeship programs.

The event was ultimately canceled due to severe weather conditions. Prior to cancellation, registration interest was strong, with approximately 60 to 80 registrants confirmed. Initial discussions have explored rescheduling the forum for August, due to refurbishment and closure of the H-GAC conference rooms which would prevent the event from being rescheduled before that time.

May The Jobs Be With You

Workforce Solutions - Gulf Coast partnered with Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center and regional workforce and veteran-serving organization Combined Arms to support the "May the 4th Be With You" Vet Connect Job Fair, a large-scale hiring and resource event focused on connecting veterans, transitioning service members, and military families with employment opportunities and support services across the region.

The event brought together approximately 150 employers and hundreds of veterans for direct hiring conversations, career exploration, and workforce support. Participating employers represented industries including healthcare,

logistics, construction, public service, manufacturing, and transportation, reflecting continued demand for skilled workers across the Gulf Coast region. In addition to hiring opportunities, attendees had access to workforce preparation resources, community organizations, and support services designed to assist with long-term career success and transition into employment. The event demonstrated continued regional collaboration between workforce, healthcare, veteran, and employer partners while reinforcing Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast's ongoing commitment to supporting veterans and military families through targeted workforce initiatives.

The event was so intergalactically significant that it made the national VA news: [May The 4th Be With You: Houston VA And Partners Unite For Epic Veteran Event | VA Houston Health Care | Veterans Affairs](#). More specifically, it shared:

The Force was strong in Pasadena, Texas on May 4th. More than 1,000 Veterans gathered at the Pasadena Convention Center for a Star-Wars-themed benefits and career fair that was equal parts fun and life-changing....lightsabers, costumes, and all.

The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston joined forces with Combined Arms and the Work Force Solutions Gulf Coast to put on an event that connected Veterans with more than 150 employers representing a wide range of industries, all while making sure no Veteran left without knowing about the full spectrum of benefits they've earned.

And yes....the Houston VA's hospital director wore a lightsaber.

Podcasts

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast Podcast

The Workforce Solutions - Gulf Coast podcast continued production during this period with the release of its second episode, focused on registered apprenticeship programs. The episode examines how apprenticeships create new career pathways for job seekers while helping employers meet growing workforce demand. The conversation featured Board Member Paul Puente and ATS Founder and Owner, Martin Trevino, and Employer Engagement Manager Crosby Brito, who brought perspectives spanning apprenticeships, entrepreneurialism, employer practice, and the regional workforce system.

The podcast is framed to bring expert insights and real stories from workforce leaders, educators, employers, and community innovators to the evolving world of work, career readiness, and economic opportunity. The episode is distributed across the system's digital channels, including our YouTube channel and Spotify,

extending its reach to job seekers, employers, and partners across the region. ([Episode 2: Apprenticeships Work! Building a Stronger Workforce](#)).

Building on this foundation, we are launching a series of shorter-format podcast episodes designed to make the system's services more accessible and more widely understood. The series features Juliet, Crosby Brito, LaToya Casimere, Dr. Maria Franco Cortes, and Parker Harvey and will deliver concise, audience-specific information for youth, adults, and employers. This includes the launch of our first podcast in Spanish. This format advances a deliberate communications objective: translating the breadth of the workforce system into clear, navigable guidance for the distinct populations it serves, and ensuring that information reaches residents across the region with parity.

Newsletter and Website

2026 Newsletter Issue Update

The newsletter launched a redesign in April, giving it a cleaner, more modern look better suited to the range of content the organization produces. Issue 7, released April 7, 2026, focused on workforce education, and featured the Board's first-ever Annual Report, a recap of the Legislative Luncheon, a partner spotlight on Eric Bing of The College of Health Care Professions, labor market data, and a Board member profile on Dorian Cockrell. The redesign gave the publication a more polished, professional presence that better reflects the stature of the organization. Issue 8, released May 20th, leads with the podcast as its cover story, a strategic choice that gives this new communications channel prominent exposure.

Reaching an average of 600,000 readers, the newsletter will provide significant early visibility for the podcast as we work to grow the audience. Rather than serving as a simple announcement, the coverage highlights past guests and available episodes, and provides readers with direct links and information on how to access and listen to episodes.

The May issue also includes coverage of the Houston Economic Mobility Summit, the Texas Workforce Commission's 2026 Workforce Forum, the Fleet Week VetConnect Career Exploration Event, partner spotlights on Board member Mia Garcia and ABC13's Nick Natario, updated labor market data, and upcoming events including the Live, Work and Ride Job Fair.

As part of a broader effort to expand readership and visibility, the May issue will be promoted across social media, Workforce Solutions News, and direct distribution to Board members and career office and Board staff. The next newsletter will be sent July 1st, 2026.

Workforce Solutions Website Launch (Metrics)

Since its launch on January 17, 2026, the website has reached more than 185,000 active users, demonstrating sustained community engagement with Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions' programs and services. Users are spending an average of 1 minute and 25 seconds actively engaging with site content, indicating strong interaction with workforce resources and program information.

The homepage remains the primary entry point, generating more than 132,000 views and reinforcing its role as the central hub for users seeking information about GCWS services and initiatives. Program-specific pages continue to see significant engagement, with the Childcare Financial Assistance page receiving over 72,000 views, reflecting continued demand for family support resources and accessible program information.

The Calendar page has also emerged as a major destination, generating more than 75,000 views as users actively search for workforce events, workshops, and training opportunities. In addition, the Find a Career Office page received over 64,000 views, demonstrating strong user intent to connect directly with workforce services and in-person support.

Traffic patterns show that the majority of users are reaching the website through direct traffic, followed closely by organic search, indicating growing public awareness of the organization while also demonstrating strong visibility through search engines. Overall, user behavior reflects continued engagement with both high-level organizational information and actionable workforce resources, highlighting the website's effectiveness in connecting the community to services and opportunities.

Workforce Solutions News

During the second quarter (April–June), WorkforceSolutionsNews.com maintained strong audience engagement and continued to grow its reach as a regional workforce information resource. The site recorded 7,657 page views from 3,506 individual users over the quarter. Visitors viewed an average of 2.21 pages per session and spent nearly three minutes on the site, patterns that suggest people are actively exploring content rather than briefly passing through. April was the strongest month of the quarter, generating 5,346 page views. Traffic dipped in May to 2,626 views, with June figures still being finalized.

Audience behavior offers useful insight into what visitors are looking for. Beyond the homepage, which drew more than 950 views, the Opportunities page and Posts section were consistently among the most visited areas of the site,

reflecting interest in practical resources and employment-related content alongside general news.

The quarter's top-performing articles reinforce that pattern. A profile of workforce leader Dorian Crockell, a piece on Houston City College's EKG Technician training program, and coverage of Fleet Week VetConnect, a hiring event for transitioning military members, each surpassed 200 views. The three had one thing in common: they gave readers someone to know or somewhere to go. A training program to enroll in, a job fair to attend, a workforce leader to follow. Content that inspires action consistently outperforms content that simply informs.

Communications Advisory Council (CAC)

The Communications Advisory Council held its second meeting on April 28, 2026 and continued work on the Communications Guide currently in development for the WFS-GC system. The guide is intended to establish clearer communications procedures, expectations, timelines, approval processes, and brand standards across career offices, providers, and board staff.

The guide will help standardize communications procedures that are currently being handled differently across teams, offices, and providers throughout the region. Once finalized, it will provide staff with a centralized resource including processes such as flyer development and review timelines, social media requests, event planning and coordination, media engagement procedures, and photo, video, and success story submissions.

The CAC has an important role in shaping the guide to reflect operational realities across the system, and committee feedback is being incorporated into the next draft. A finalized version is anticipated in mid-June.

Manuals and Guidebooks

Employer Engagement Manual

We successfully completed the Employer Engagement Guidebook, but given the technical needs of the Employer Engagement Manual, we have devoted more time and attention to completing this complex document. This multi-chapter, first-of-its-kind document currently remains in development and is set to serve as a comprehensive internal manual for staff across the system to better serve employers and residents. It will establish consistent direction across programs and functions while supporting more efficient implementation, documentation, and oversight of employer engagement activities and work-based learning services. Designed as a single operational resource, the manual will provide standardized guidance to support staff compliance and consistent adherence to

correct processes across all related activities. The manual will be finalized in mid-to late June 2026.

Employer Engagement Collateral

An expanded suite of collateral is being developed to better meet the needs of the employer engagement team as it works to improve outreach efforts and increase the number of employer partnerships across the region. For instance, in addition to an employer push card updated this spring, a similar one has been created specifically geared to HR professionals. Others will be created that also target specific audiences. A new Registered Apprenticeship tri-fold brochure was developed and available for staff to use as needed. More in-depth employer engagement material is a priority next step.

Other Business

American Leadership Forum: Bridge Houston Forum

On April 13 and April 20, 2026, Juliet Stipeche, Director Kristi Rangel, and Assistant Director AJ Dean participated in the two-day Bridge Houston Forum, hosted by American Leadership Forum Houston/Gulf Coast at the newly opened Ismaili Center. Bridge Houston is an American Leadership Forum initiative designed to convene leaders across sectors, industries, and geographies in service of a shared regional agenda. This convening focused on advancing economic mobility for the Gulf Coast region, bringing together partners from nonprofits, government, philanthropy, education, and the private sector to align effort around one of Houston's most consequential challenges. The Forum focused on moving from analysis to possibility, with participants examining adaptive leadership and the systems-level collaboration required to resolve complex regional challenges.

Ms. Stipeche delivered the closing remarks, framing the work of regional change through the logic of jazz. Drawing on the art form's origins in convergence and improvisation, and on its influence beyond music in the late work of Henri Matisse and the collaborative method of Miles Davis, she argued that durable progress emerges not from static plans or isolated programs but from alignment and autonomy operating together: a shared framework within which capable actors listen, respond, and build in real time. She positioned the GCWB at the intersection of people and the economy, responsible for operationalizing that coordination so that opportunity becomes accessible rather than intangible and abstract. Her central charge was that the region's challenge is not effort but whether its institutions function as a coordinated system. Her remarks reinforced the Board's commitment to cross-sector partnership, economic mobility, employer relevance, and durable, data-informed regional solutions.

Economic Mobility Summit

Workforce Solutions - Gulf Coast participated in the Houston Economic Mobility Summit on May 11, 2026 joining workforce professionals, community leaders, educators, employers, and regional partners for discussions focused on expanding economic opportunity and long-term mobility across the Houston region. Hosted in partnership with United Way of Greater Houston, the Greater Houston Community Foundation, the Greater Houston Partnership, Good Reason Houston, and the Kinder Institute at Rice University, the summit centered on collaborative approaches to strengthening workforce systems and improving pathways to opportunity.

Juliet Stipeche, Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast, delivered the summit's closing remarks and emphasized the importance of building stronger, better-connected systems that support long-term success for individuals and families. The event also reflected the strategic value of regional partnerships, highlighting collaboration among organizations as examples of the GCWB's broader convener role within the region's workforce and economic mobility strategy.

Discussions throughout the summit focused on economic challenges in the local economy over the past decade, workforce participation, transportation, childcare, housing, education, and regional collaboration strategies tied to economic mobility and workforce development. The event reinforced the importance of cross-sector partnerships and continued regional coordination to address barriers to opportunity while supporting stronger workforce outcomes across the Gulf Coast region.

Texas Workforce Commission Annual Forum

Executive Director Juliet Stipeche and LaToya Casimere, Manager of Hire Gulf Coast Youth, presented at the Texas Workforce Commission's Annual Workforce Forum on May 12, 2026, in Austin, Texas. Their session, "Advancing Intergenerational Economic Mobility," focused on how workforce systems can better align training, supportive services, education, and employer partnerships to address the realities many working families face, particularly around childcare, transportation, and balancing workforce participation with caregiving responsibilities.

Using the Board's pilot approach as a case study, the presentation highlighted the importance of coordinated service delivery, cross-system alignment, and wraparound support in improving workforce outcomes for both parents and children. The session also examined how workforce systems can address the complexity of what families need to achieve lasting economic stability.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board was among a select group of regional boards presenting at the forum, giving Texas workforce leaders an opportunity to see how the Board has built a model that demonstrates what coordinated, family-centered strategy looks like in practice.

Houston Student Success Summit

On May 16, 2026, Juliet also served as a panelist at the 2026 Houston Student Success Summit. The summit, hosted by Teach Plus Texas and EdTrust in Texas, convened at Rice University's Anderson-Clarke Center. It brought together educators, policy fellows, advisory council members, and community leaders to examine strategies that advance student success and career-connected learning.

Ms. Stipeche spoke on a panel addressing work-based learning. She emphasized the imperative of connecting classroom instruction to real labor market demand, anchoring her remarks in employer engagement, defined career pathways, and meaningful exposure to high-skill, high-growth occupations. She also shared information about the resources, programs, and convenings offered by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and Workforce Solutions - Gulf Coast, which the audience received with marked interest. This response underscored a recurring theme: the services and support that we provide *must* become more widely known across the community. Her remarks reinforced the Board's strategic priority to strengthen alignment among education, workforce, and industry, positioning students, and families to access economic mobility across the Gulf Coast region.

The summit also featured welcome remarks, a Research and Passion Project Fair showcasing the work of Houston Policy Fellows and Education Advisory Council members, and structured networking among educators, advocates, and regional leaders committed to improving student outcomes.

HGCY Power of One Campaign

The Hire Gulf Coast Youth (HGCY)'s Power of One/Join the Circle campaign is a targeted employer engagement effort designed to expand hiring opportunities for young adults across the region. Anchored by the broader Hire Gulf Coast Youth initiative, the campaign will bring employers directly into the workforce conversation while highlighting the value of investing in emerging talent and strengthening the region's future workforce pipeline.

Planned strategies include LinkedIn outreach, chamber presentations, employer engagement efforts, and supporting digital content designed to increase awareness and participation. Messaging will focus on connecting employers to workforce and training resources while encouraging greater involvement in youth hiring initiatives.

A regional Youth Summit is tentatively planned for August. It will serve as the campaign's primary public launch and bring together youth, employers, and training providers in one space with a focus on direct hiring opportunities, internships, workforce connections, and on-site engagement. The initiative is also targeting strong employer participation across key industries including construction, healthcare, and IT.

Board Member Videos

Work continues on the Board Member video series designed to highlight the perspectives and expertise of Board leadership across the region. To date, 30 of the Board's 40 members have completed recordings. Efforts are ongoing to coordinate with the remaining members so the series can reflect the full breadth of industry, education, and community representation across the Board.

As part of the broader digital strategy, interview content is also being repurposed into short-form vertical videos for Instagram and Facebook Reels to extend the reach and lifespan of the series across social platforms. Based on current cross-platform averages, the strongest-performing videos to date include:

- Mark Guthrie: approximately 1.5K views
- Juliet Stipeche: approximately 1.2K views with the highest share count (16)
- Doug Karr: approximately 863 views
- Dorian Crockell: generated some of the highest audience interaction relative to reach, including 6 comments and 6 shares

Content centered around personal storytelling, leadership perspective, and community impact continues to generate the strongest engagement overall. The series continues to support long-term visibility, leadership awareness, and consistent storytelling around the mission and impact of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board.

Next Meeting

We will discuss the scheduling of our next Communications Committee meeting including the date, time, and location.

Executive Committee

June Board Report

Executive Summary

Chair Mark Guthrie called the Executive Committee to order on May 14, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. at 5599 San Felipe, 5599 San Felipe Street, Houston, Texas 77056. Board Members present included Dr. Michael Webster, Alan Heskamp, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Adrian Ozuna, Carl Bowles, and Doug Karr. Board staff present included Juliet Stipeche, AJ Dean, Kristi Rangel, Russell Tomlin, Desmond Taylor, and Dr. Maria Franco Cortes. Workforce counsel, Jeanette De La Cruz was also present. The meeting adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

The Executive Committee reviewed proposed minor updates to the Partnership Agreement and received a presentation from legal counsel Jeanette Dela Cruz on the proposed Interlocal Agreement for Grant Recipient and Fiscal Agent Services between the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) and the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). Following the Committee's feedback and edits, counsel transmitted the draft documents to H-GAC Executive Director Chuck Wemple and to incoming H-GAC Chair and Designated Chief Elected Official, County Judge Ty Prause, for review and negotiation on May 21, 2026. The Committee did not reach the discussion of a name for the Board's independent nonprofit given time constraints.

Statutory Framework

Under Texas Government Code Chapter 2308, the chief elected officials (CEOs) must enter into written agreements. A Consortium Agreement among the CEOs forms the local workforce development board, designates a CEO to act on behalf of all CEOs, determines board size and member terms, and determines how resources are allocated among the parties.

Proposed New Partnership Agreement

The proposed Partnership Agreement formally designates the GCWB as the Administrative Entity and One-Stop Operator and retains H-GAC as Grant Recipient and Fiscal Agent. The specific terms for H-GAC's role as Grant Recipient and Fiscal Agent are detailed in a separate draft Interlocal Agreement between H-GAC and the Board.

Why a Separate Interlocal Agreement?

Separating the instruments keeps the Partnership Agreement focused on the Section 2308 governance matters: the Designated CEO authority, the GCWB's

independence, and the selection and retention of the Grant Recipient and Fiscal Agent. The Grant Recipient and Fiscal Agent duties, controls, reporting, remedies, and compliance firewalls are better documented in a dedicated Interlocal Agreement. This structure increases flexibility for future changes, since the parties may amend, terminate, or replace the Fiscal Agent by written amendment and a successor Interlocal Agreement without renegotiating the full Partnership Agreement. It supports clear accountability and oversight, confirms that workforce funds are spent in compliance with federal and state requirements and that Board staff remain under the direction and control of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board and its Executive Director, and reduces negotiation risk and delay.

Interlocal Agreement: Section Summary

The following summary tracks the section structure of counsel's presentation:

- Sections 1 and 2, Purpose and Recitals: State what the agreement is for and why the parties are entering into it: setting forth H-GAC's responsibilities as Grant Recipient and Fiscal Agent and the Board's duties as the independent Administrative Entity.
- Section 3, Definitions: Defines key roles and terms, including Administrative Entity, Grant Recipient, Fiscal Agent, Chief Elected Officials, and other recurring terms.
- Section 4, Term: Begins on the Effective Date and continues automatically (evergreen) unless canceled; either party may cancel on 60 calendar days' written notice; amendments must be in writing and signed by both parties; the parties must review and amend upon a new fiscal agent, new grant recipient, or material legal or regulatory change.
- Section 6, H-GAC Duties as Grant Recipient: H-GAC receives, holds, and disburses workforce funds under GCWB direction and approved budgets and contracts; TWC award requirements control in any conflict; H-GAC notifies GCWB within two business days of audit or monitoring findings or repayment demands and coordinates major responses; and it may not commit non-TWC, GCWB-related funds except at the direction of the GCWB Board and Executive Director, consistent with the approved budget and law.
- Section 7, H-GAC Duties as Fiscal Agent: H-GAC serves as the accounting function for workforce funds, keeping records, filing reports, and responding to audits; it may not make GCWB policy or program decisions or major purchases without GCWB approval and must avoid conflicts of interest; and costs must be controlled and transparent, with no separate administrative fee absent GCWB approval and indirect costs documented and approved by GCWB.
- Section 8, Procurement and Contracting: H-GAC follows federal and state procurement standards; roles are split, with H-GAC providing administrative and compliance support and GCWB leading procurement

and contract management; GCWB approves most awards, H-GAC signs contracts, and the GCWB Executive Director may execute limited items such as micro-purchases and nonfinancial MOUs.

- Sections 9 and 10, Office Space and Infrastructure Support: H-GAC provides dedicated, safe office space and operational basics and ongoing administrative and facilities support; the space must meet health, safety, and accessibility standards; GCWB may choose a different setup if more cost-effective; and any costs charged to workforce funds must be documented and allocated under the agreement.
- Section 11, Financial Safeguards: Strong financial systems and internal controls, transparent reporting to GCWB, external audit compliance and corrective action, subrecipient audit oversight, property inventory with GCWB approval for acquisitions and disposals, insurance and fidelity coverage, conflict-of-interest policies addressing H-GAC's dual role, and records and Public Information Act alignment.
- Section 12, Staffing and Cost Allocation: Distinguishes GCWB Staff, aligned under the GCWB Executive Director, from H-GAC Shared Staff, who remain H-GAC employees outside the Executive Director's supervisory chain; the Executive Director directs day-to-day work and priorities while H-GAC handles payroll and benefits administration and acts on written instruction for GCWB Staff; and charges to workforce funds must be allowable, allocable, reasonable, documented, separately coded, and non-duplicative.
- Section 15, GCWB Branding: GCWB approves use of its branding and reviews covered public communications; federally funded materials must include the required funding acknowledgment.
- Sections 16 and 17, GCWB General Duties and Duties as Administrative Entity: GCWB is the program lead and Administrative Entity. It sets strategy and policy, coordinates one-stop services, competitively procures and monitors providers and subrecipients, prepares the plan, budgets, and reports, and oversees and negotiates costs through the cost allocation process.
- Section 18, Confidentiality and Data Security: Both parties safeguard PII and confidential information; H-GAC limits use to performing the agreement and to need-to-know, reports security incidents within two business days, flows protections to vendors and cloud providers, and returns or destroys data at the end, subject to retention.
- Section 23, Termination: Termination for convenience on 60 days' notice; termination for cause with a 60-day cure period; orderly transition and closeout with survival of key duties; and no automatic termination due to personnel changes.
- Sections 24 to 26, Legal Terms: Governmental and sovereign immunity preserved with no consent to suit; indemnification by H-GAC to the extent

allowed by law; and limitation on liability excluding incidental, indirect, special, or consequential damages to the fullest extent permitted by law.

- Section 34, Loss of Funding: Obligations depend on the annual budget and current revenues; if funds are not approved or certified, or run out, the impacted party may end its obligations.
- Section 40, Authority, Execution, and Effective Date: Each signer confirms authority to execute; each party confirms its governing body's approvals; and the agreement becomes effective on the stated effective date once executed.
- Standard legal terms: Authorization under state and federal workforce law, seven-year records retention, non-discrimination, Texas Public Information Act cooperation, force majeure and dispute resolution, notices, order of precedence for conflicts, no third-party beneficiaries, venue and entire-agreement provisions, warranties and assignment, and survival, severability, and no-partnership provisions.

Status and Next Steps

Incorporating the Committee's feedback, counsel finalized the drafts of both agreements. Board Chair Mark Guthrie issued a notice to renegotiate, dated May 18, 2026, providing the proposed Interlocal Agreement and revised Partnership Agreement. He requested confirmation of points of contact upon installation of the incoming Chair, coordination of an effective date aligned to that transition, and a meeting to review the agreements. The documents were transmitted to Mr. Wemple and Judge Prause on May 21, 2026.

The agreements are now under review by H-GAC and the Designated Chief Elected Official, and a meeting to review and negotiate terms has been requested by the Board Chair. Juliet Stipeche issued an email to Chuck Wemple asking for a meeting on May 26, 2026. Desmond Taylor met with H-GAC's OGA team requesting their assistance in facilitating a meeting on May 27, 2026, following up with a written email request on May 28, 2026. We will report our progress at the next Board meeting.

Independent Nonprofit Naming

The Committee did not reach the discussion of a name for the Board's independent nonprofit. Chair Guthrie asked that any name retain the words "Gulf Coast" and "Workforce." The Board will take up the naming discussion and receive recommendations from members at a future meeting.

Employer Engagement Committee

Update for May 2026

Executive Summary

The Employer Engagement Committee convened on May 5, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. in a hybrid format at 3555 Timmons Lane, Conference Room 2D, Houston, Texas, and via Zoom, chaired by Alan Heskamp. Committee and Board members present were Alan Heskamp, Jeff LaBroski, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Guy Robert Jackson, Mou Sarkar, Paul Puente, Lizandra Vasquez, Mark Guthrie, Dr. Allatia Harris, and Cheryl Guido. The meeting focused on regional employer engagement outcomes, workforce development initiatives, sector-based partnerships, apprenticeship expansion, labor market responsiveness, and strategic workforce alignment across the Gulf Coast region.

The meeting highlighted continued progress in healthcare and life sciences workforce development, construction and infrastructure workforce initiatives, regional economic partnerships, apprenticeship pipeline development, and employer engagement event outcomes. Committee discussions also addressed strengthening workforce alignment through real-time labor market responsiveness, expanding employer partnerships, and advancing governance through the Employer Engagement Committee Charter.

Sector and Industry Updates

Healthcare and Life Sciences

Principal Industry Liaison Melissa Steinmetz continued to strengthen Workforce Solutions' presence within the healthcare and life sciences ecosystem through active engagement with regional industry leaders, educational institutions, and workforce stakeholders. Ms. Steinmetz discussed ongoing partnerships with the Texas Healthcare and Bioscience Institute (THBI) and its Texas Life Sciences Summit, the Greater Houston Partnership Life Sciences Committee, the Greater Houston Partnership Synthetic Biology Task Force, and San Jacinto College, reinforcing collaborative workforce development strategies within the growing biotechnology sector.

A major milestone was the April 2026 signing of the San Jacinto College Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) supporting the Biomanufacturing Internship Program. This initiative represents a significant advancement in regional biotechnology workforce development and supports the creation of direct, employer-aligned career pathways for students entering high-demand life sciences occupations.

Ms. Steinmetz also discussed collaboration with the Texas Medical Center's BioPath mobile laboratory initiative, designed to provide middle and high school students with early exposure to laboratory sciences and biotechnology careers. Current funding is supported through private grant resources, while additional funding opportunities and expansion strategies continue to be explored. Additional updates included the continued expansion of the biotechnology internship initiative in partnership with Immatics and San Jacinto College, as well as efforts to onboard a second biotechnology employer, PackGene, which has committed to hosting five interns through the program.

Building and Construction Trades

Principal Industry Liaison Lacy Wolf discussed continued momentum throughout the building and construction sector, driven by healthcare infrastructure expansion, sports-related capital projects, data center development, and regional workforce policy initiatives. Significant discussion centered on the Harris Health hospital expansion projects involving the Ben Taub and LBJ Hospital facilities, with emphasis on compliance concerns related to wage standards, apprenticeship participation, and construction safety requirements.

Mr. Wolf also provided updates on major sports infrastructure projects across the region, including the Houston Texans training facility, Toyota Center renovations, and Astros parking garage planning. These projects are expected to generate substantial construction and skilled trades workforce demand while reinforcing regional investment in long-term infrastructure growth. Additional discussion focused on Harris County's efforts to apply strengthened workforce standards to county-supported projects, including minimum wage requirements of approximately \$20.65 per hour, OSHA compliance standards, and apprenticeship participation requirements.

Regional Engagement

Principal Industry Liaison Traci Nolen provided updates on regional engagement initiatives and workforce coalition-building efforts throughout Liberty County and surrounding communities. Ms. Nolen discussed ongoing efforts to establish the Liberty County Career Task Force through partnerships with economic development corporations, chambers of commerce, independent school districts, and higher education institutions. Meetings continue to rotate between Liberty and Cleveland, fostering regional collaboration and building momentum around workforce planning and employer engagement. The North service provider continues supporting foundational workforce initiatives while strengthening local stakeholder participation.

Further discussion centered on the Gulf Inland Logistics Park in Dayton, a large-scale industrial development spanning approximately 3,800 acres, with Phase One having opened in October 2025. Economic development partners have requested

that Workforce Solutions be integrated into the core suite of services available to incoming tenants, with planning underway for workforce-focused employer engagement events supporting tenant recruitment and workforce development.

Elected Official Engagements and Community Events

Employer Engagement Manager Crosby Brito provided a comprehensive recap of employer engagement events, community partnerships, and workforce outreach initiatives conducted throughout the region. Mr. Brito discussed the successful Councilwoman Tarsha Jackson Hiring Event held on April 9, which drew 241 attendees, participation from 40 employers, 78 onsite interviews, and approximately 120 job openings represented.

Additional discussion highlighted the Energy and Manufacturing Forum conducted in partnership with the Asian Chamber of Commerce. The event attracted 47 unique employers, many of whom had not previously used Workforce Solutions services. Multiple follow-up meetings with employers are underway to further develop workforce partnerships and customized service strategies.

Performance and Production

Philip Garcia, Manager of Data Analytics and Accountability, provided updates on workforce performance metrics, employer activity, and job order trends throughout the region. Mr. Garcia discussed continued improvement in Texas Talent Assistance (TTA) performance, with progress increasing from approximately 48 percent to nearly 60 percent despite substantial increases in state performance targets.

Additional discussion highlighted significant growth in employer job order activity, with job postings increasing from approximately 9,000 to 16,000 between March and April. Top posting industries included administrative support services, retail trade, food service, public administration, and technical services. Mr. Garcia emphasized the Board's growing ability to respond proactively to workforce demand through near real-time workforce data systems, which provide more immediate labor market insight than traditional state-level reporting timelines.

Employer Engagement Committee Charter and Industry Council Strategy

Senior Manager Carl Salazar discussed the completion of the Employer Engagement Committee Charter. Chair Alan Heskamp presented the charter, and a motion to advance the charter for the full Board's consideration was approved.

Discussion then turned to the long-term strategy for developing Industry Advisory Councils and strengthening employer representation across workforce initiatives. Committee members considered approaches for structuring advisory councils, including whether to establish individual industry-specific councils or a broader regional structure representing multiple sectors simultaneously. Leadership

confirmed that the Advisory Council structure will initially begin as a broad regional council representing multiple industries and geographic areas throughout the Gulf Coast region, with the potential for industry-specific subcommittees to develop over time as workforce priorities evolve.

Looking Ahead

Chair Alan Heskamp emphasized the importance of continued collaboration among Workforce Solutions, employers, education partners, elected officials, and economic development organizations to strengthen workforce pipelines, address regional labor market demands, and support sustainable economic growth across the Gulf Coast region. The date of the next Employer Engagement Committee meeting is to be determined.

**Attachment
8a-1**

Gulf Coast Workforce Board Employer Engagement Committee Charter

I. Purpose

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board Employer Engagement Committee is established to provide oversight, guidance, and strategic recommendations related to partnerships and activities with the business community across the region. The Committee will assist in developing strategies, reviewing outcomes, and strengthening the Board's approach to employer engagement. The Committee works in collaboration with the Board and staff to ensure we are supporting 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 Employer Engagement Committee operates as a standing committee of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. The Committee has the authority to:

- Review and recommend strategies for employer outreach, engagement, and retention to ensure alignment with Board goals.
- Monitor performance outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of business services and employer partnerships.
- Review and recommend adjustments to employer engagement models, sector strategies, and resource alignment or recommended resource allocation priorities.
- Review, monitor, and provide recommendations to support compliance with federal, state, and local workforce development regulations related to employer services and industry partnerships.
- Recommend policies and procedures that promote continuous improvement, innovation, and responsiveness to regional labor market needs for adoption by the Board.
- Provide oversight of the Employer Engagement Advisory Council.

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 representation from business, economic development, or other workforce-related sectors.
- Committee representation shall encompass a diverse range of counties across the Gulf Coast region, striving for balanced geographic representation and alignment with regional workforce needs.

Gulf Coast Workforce Board Employer Engagement Committee Charter

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

Employer Engagement Strategy and Oversight

- Monitor the design, implementation, and effectiveness of employer engagement strategies across the region.
- Review data related to employer participation, satisfaction, job placements, work-based learning, and sector initiatives.
- Support continuous improvement efforts to strengthen business relationships and service delivery models.
- Promote industry sector partnerships and demand-driven workforce strategies.

Business Services and Performance

- Review performance metrics associated with business services, including employer utilization of workforce programs.
- Evaluate alignment between employer needs and workforce training investments.
- Provide guidance on strengthening service delivery to small, mid-size, and large employers across targeted industries.

Policy Development and Compliance

- Review and monitor employer engagement and business services, and provide recommendations to support compliance with applicable federal, state, and local workforce regulations.
- Recommend policies and procedures that reflect best practices in employer engagement and sector-based workforce development.

Strategic Alignment and Collaboration

- Promote alignment of employer engagement initiatives with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's mission, vision, and strategic goals.
- Foster collaboration among Board committees, Workforce Solutions staff, employers, economic development entities, chambers of commerce, and other partners.

Oversight of the Employer Engagement Advisory Council

- The Committee shall provide oversight and direction to the Employer Engagement Advisory Council ("Council"), an advisory body that reports to the Employer Engagement Committee and supports alignment between workforce strategies and employer needs.

Gulf Coast Workforce Board Employer Engagement Committee Charter

In this capacity, the Committee shall:

1. Review and evaluate employer-driven recommendations regarding workforce challenges, industry trends, skills gaps, and talent pipeline development.
2. Support collaboration among employers, educational institutions, workforce partners, and economic development entities.
3. Review labor market data, employer feedback, and measurable performance indicators to inform decision-making and continuous improvement.
4. Promote balanced private-sector representation and adherence to governance, ethics, and conflict-of-interest standards.
5. Elevate advisory recommendations to the full Board, as appropriate.

The Council will serve in an advisory capacity only and shall not exercise decision-making authority over Board operations, funding, or staffing.

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 Employer Engagement 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 Employer Engagement Committee.

VIII. Review and Amendments

This charter shall be reviewed annually by the Employer Engagement Committee. Any proposed amendments shall be advanced to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board for discussion and possible action. Amendments shall become effective only upon approval by a majority vote of the Gulf Coast Workforce Board.

Gulf Coast Workforce Board Employer Engagement Committee Charter

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

Board Chair
Gulf Coast Workforce Board

Date

DRAFT

Budget Committee Report

Update for May 2026

Executive Summary

The Budget Committee was called to order by Chair Carl Bowles at 3:04 p.m. on May 21, 2026, at the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). Mark Guthrie, Dr. Bobbie Henderson, Guy Robert Jackson, Doug Karr, Paul Puente, Mou Sarkar, Adrian Ozuna, Shonda Below, and Cheryl Guido attended. The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

Brandi Brown, Workforce Fiscal Administration Manager, presented the Financial Status Update as of March 31, 2026. Year-to-date revenue was \$103 million against a target of \$122 million, with the variance attributed primarily to low child care enrollments caused by TXC3C system bottlenecks. Ms. Brown then presented the 2027 TWC Planning Estimates recently received, reflecting a projected \$3 million decrease in WIOA, a \$6 million increase in Child Care, and Adult Education and Literacy remaining flat at \$10 million. These estimates will be incorporated into the 2027 budget.

Ms. Brown then presented the Proposed 2026 Revised Workforce Board Budget. The proposed revised budget is \$510,870,746, reflecting a 4.6 percent increase of approximately \$22 million from the originally adopted \$488 million budget. The increase is driven primarily by a \$19.2 million increase in early education funds, with additional revenue from the Workforce Innovation Fund grant award, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, the externship for teachers, and the Texas Internship Initiative. Under the revised budget, 7 percent of total revenue is designated for board operations at \$35,831,628 (a 10.7 percent increase from the original budget), and 93 percent is allocated for contracted service delivery at \$475,039,118 (a 4.2 percent increase from the original budget).

The revision proposes 37 FTE additions at the Board level. As staff explained, the additions are tied to the transition of childcare scholarship and childcare quality services to the Board level, additional staffing for the childcare expansion team to enhance capacity for quality initiatives, and the establishment of a child care fraud team in accordance with TWC requirements, along with other programmatic and administrative positions. Staff noted that these changes align with the new structure under which workforce and childcare payment functions will be administered through two separate contracts.

The Committee engaged in substantive discussion of the indirect cost allocation. Mr. Guthrie noted that the indirect cost line increased by approximately \$400,000 while the total H-GAC indirect cost base increased by only \$61,000. Staff explained that the proposed 37 FTE additions shift GCWB's share of the agency's indirect cost pool, with

Mr. Guthrie's calculation indicating that GCWB now bears approximately 40.1 percent of the pool.

Mr. Guthrie inquired whether the federal cognizant agency had approved that 40.1 percent. Staff clarified that the 40.1 percent represents GCWB's allocated share of the indirect cost pool, while H-GAC's overall indirect cost rate is approximately 30 percent, which is the rate approved by the federal cognizant agency. Staff agreed to provide a summary letter explaining the rate structure and the distinction between the overall rate applied to salaries and GCWB's allocated share.

Mr. Guthrie asked whether the recently completed H-GAC Efficiency Report prepared by Weaver contained discussion of the indirect cost structure and requested that a copy be provided to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. Mr. Wemple stated that he could not recall the specifics off the top of his head, that he had distributed the full report internally to his team, and that the report would be released externally in approximately a month, with GCWB among the first recipients. The Committee discussed that any implications of the report would affect the 2027 budget cycle, not the mid-year.

The Committee unanimously passed a motion recommending approval of the proposed revised 2026 budget in the amount of \$510,870,746 to the full Gulf Coast Workforce Board for adoption.

Mr. Wemple then presented an update on the H-GAC budget process. He explained that the decisions made by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board would be taken to the H-GAC Board on June 16, 2026, for information only, with action scheduled for the July 22, 2026 meeting. In response to a Committee question regarding whether the H-GAC Board could modify the budget after GCWB approval, Mr. Wemple stated: "Technically they could. Last time we had the change that we had here, my recommendation was to adopt it as presented by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. And they did, but technically they could do that. But my recommendation is, let's talk first before we do any kind of modification."

Board Chair Mark Guthrie observed: "My understanding of the law is that the workforce board has to approve its budget." A subsequent question asked whether the H-GAC Board could override specific FTE decisions made by GCWB. Mr. Wemple responded: "That would be highly... I've never seen that happen because it would cause a lot of issues if it did. So I mean, technically they could seek an action on that. I don't think anything like that would pass."

For additional context regarding the budgetary process, the current CEO Partnership Agreement is hereby attached as Attachment 1 and incorporated by reference for all points and purposes as if fully set forth herein.

Financial Status Report

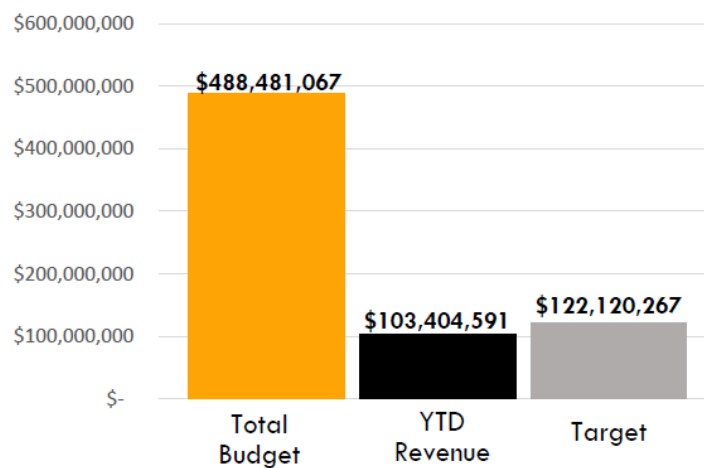
Background

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

Revenue Overview

The 2026 budgeted revenue totals over \$488 million. The Year-to-Date revenue as of March 2026 was \$103 million behind target of \$122 million.

Workforce Revenue

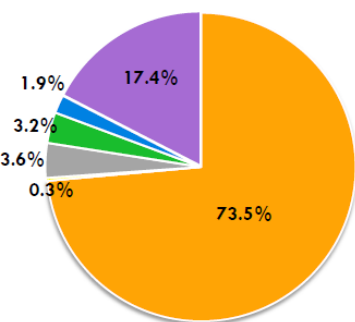


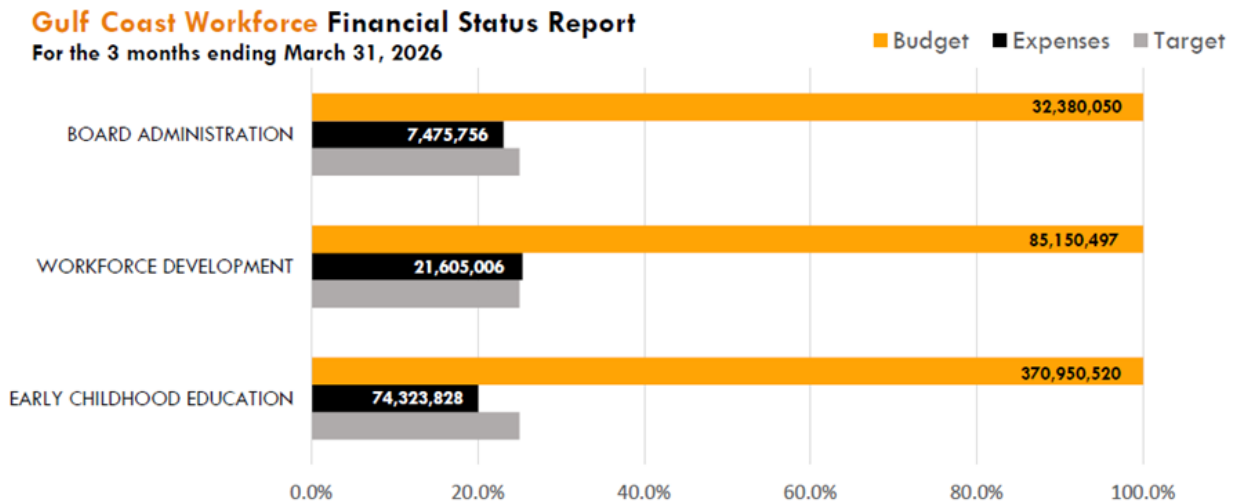
Expenditure Distribution

For Board Operations, Board Administration was \$7.5 million. For System Operations, Early Childhood Education represented \$74.3 million of expenditures, with \$70.6 million for Financial Aid, \$218,000 for Quality Improvement, and \$3.52 million for Operations.

Workforce Development represents \$21.6 million of expenditures, with \$3.1 million for Financial Aid, \$1.8 million for Adult Education, and \$16.7 million for Career Services.

System Expenses





Revenue Projection

The 2027 Planning Estimates from Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) were provided May 15, 2026 for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Child Care, and Adult Education and Literacy (AEL). WIOA funding has a projected decrease of \$3 million. Child Care projected funding increases by \$6 million, and AEL remains flat at \$10 million. These revenue updates will be incorporated into the 2027 budget.

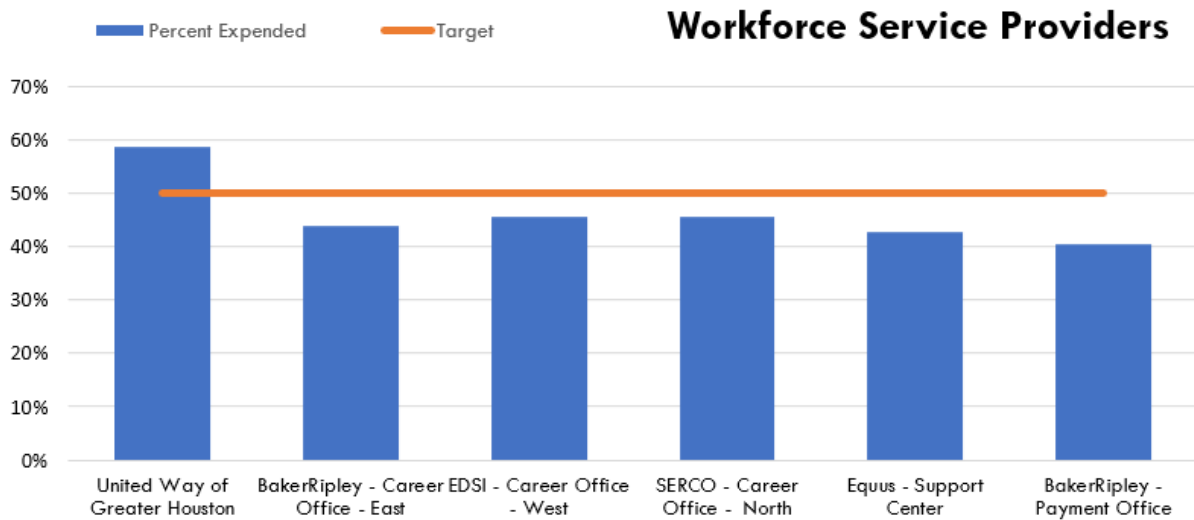
**Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2026 Budget
Source and Use**

Source		Use	
Federal & State Revenue	487,084,067	Board Operations	32,380,050
Other Sources	1,397,000	System Operations	456,101,017
Total	\$488,481,067	Total	\$488,481,067

Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2026 Budget to Actual as of March 31, 2026
Use Summary

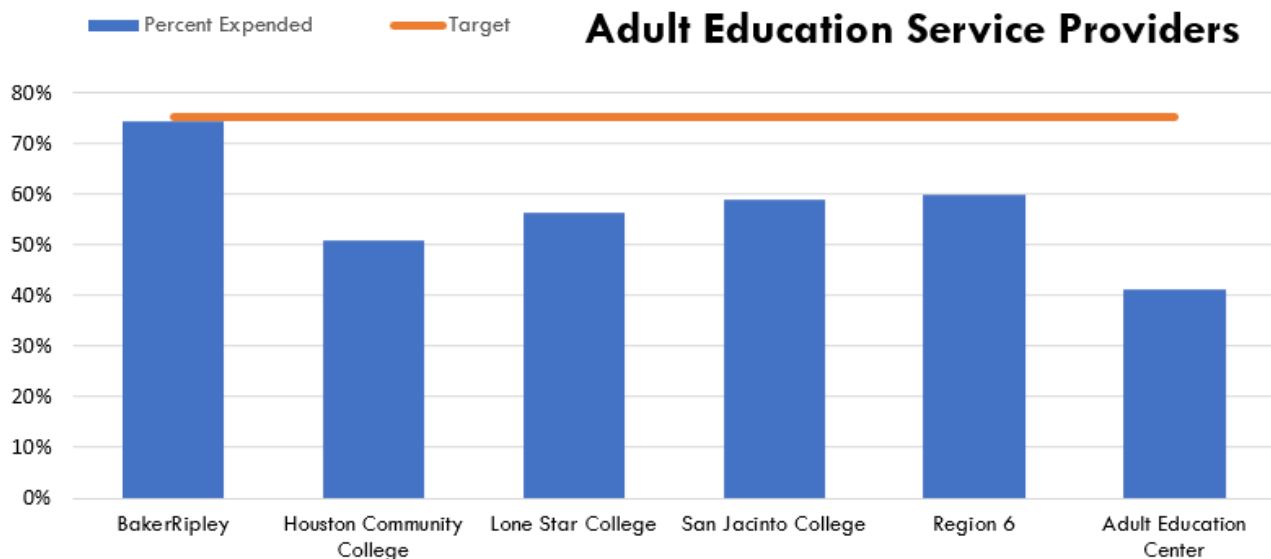
	Actual	Budget	% of Budget
Board Operations	7,475,756	32,380,050	23.1%
Salaries and Benefits	4,518,068	18,599,844	24.3%
Contracted Services	350,525	2,501,000	14.0%
Rent	282,154	1,376,030	20.5%
Other	258,088	1,592,067	16.2%
Travel	28,429	510,500	5.6%
Indirect	1,411,870	5,739,760	24.6%
Information Technology	626,622	2,060,848	30.4%
System Operations	95,928,834	456,101,017	21.0%
Workforce Development			
Career Services	16,720,527	55,644,201	30.0%
Adult Education	1,776,083	9,635,207	18.4%
Financial Aid	3,108,396	19,871,089	15.6%
Early Childhood Education			
Operations	3,470,795	16,248,000	21.4%
Quality Improvement	218,456	1,700,000	12.9%
Financial Aid	70,634,577	353,002,520	20.0%
Total	103,404,591	488,481,067	21.2%

Service Provider Expenses



Financial status as of: March 31, 2026

Workforce	Budget	Expenses	Percent Expended
United Way of Greater Houston	2,700,868	1,586,867	59%
BakerRipley - Career Office - East	22,304,974	9,784,493	44%
EDSI - Career Office - West	13,157,084	6,000,462	46%
SERCO - Career Office - North	16,903,327	7,708,284	46%
Equus - Support Center	11,500,000	4,907,070	43%
BakerRipley - Payment Office	374,310,022	151,492,715	40%
		Target	50%



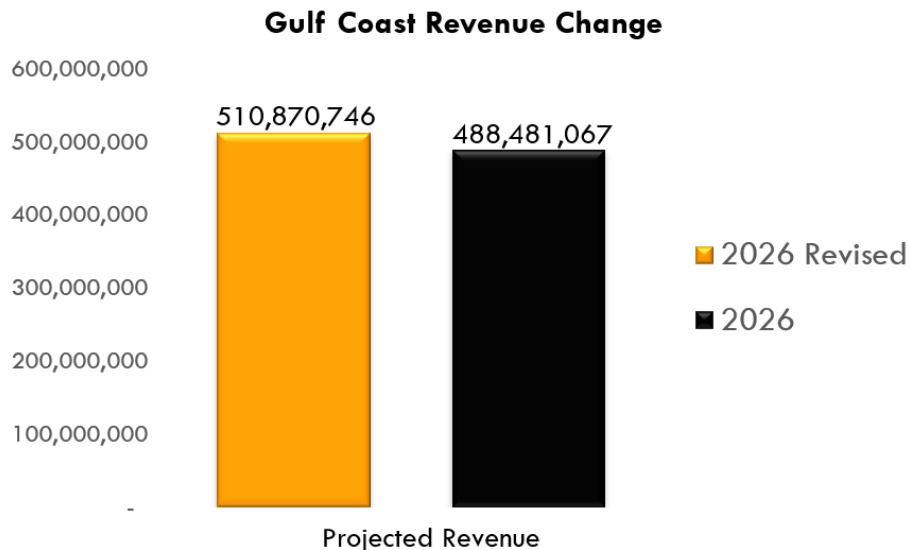
Financial status as of: March 31, 2026

Adult Education	Budget	Expenses	Percent Expended
BakerRipley	50,000	37,152	74%
Houston Community College	4,060,800	2,055,838	51%
Lone Star College	2,292,938	1,289,229	56%
San Jacinto College	1,296,000	762,392	59%
Region 6	1,885,469	1,126,732	60%
Adult Education Center	50,000	20,545	41%
		Target	75%

Proposed 2026 Board Budget Revision

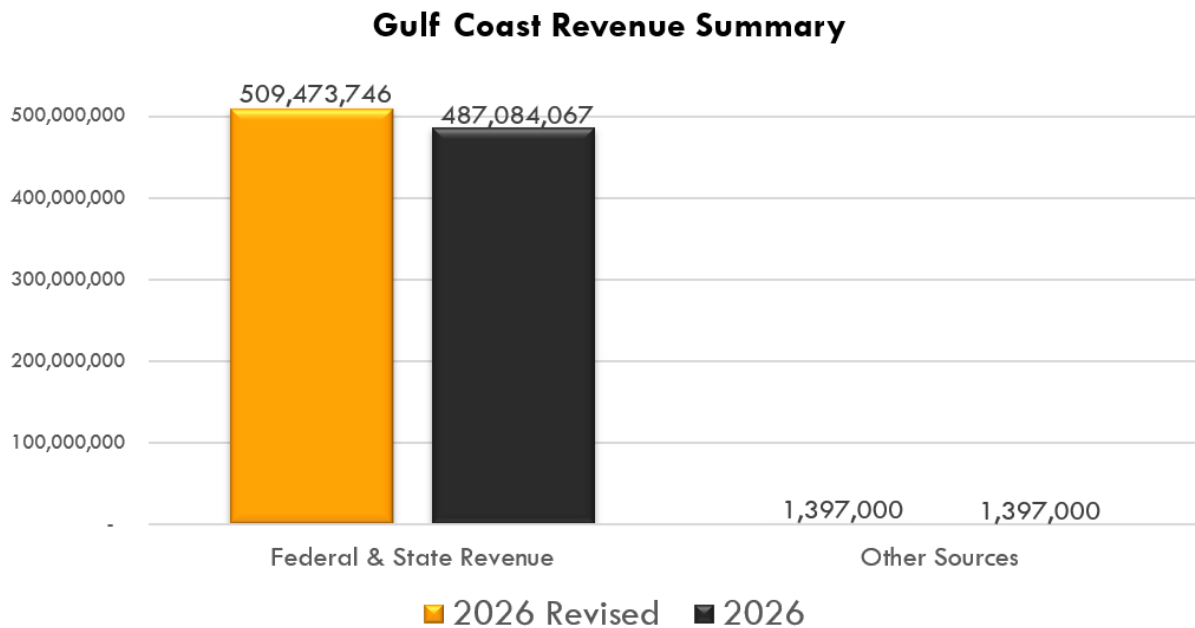
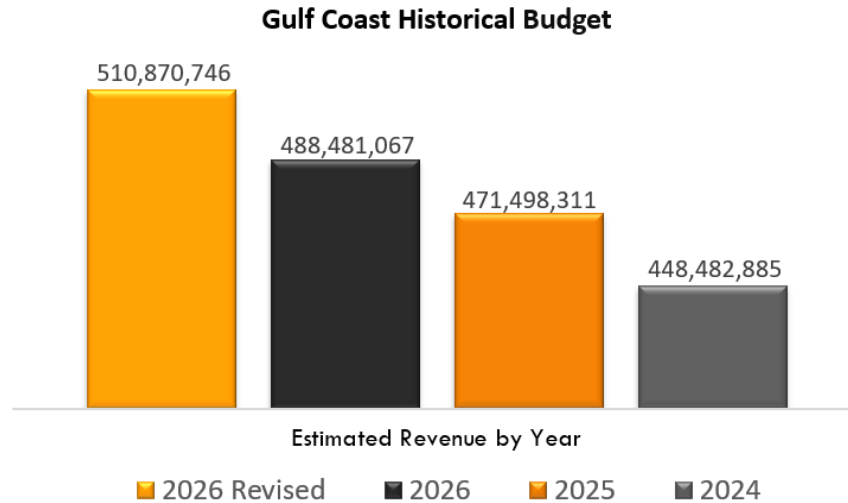
Background

Periodically the Workforce Board must adjust its annual budget to reflect significant revenue changes and incorporate modifications to planned activities. This year there is an increase to Federal & State revenue dollars which necessitates a budget adjustment.



Current Situation

The proposed revised 2026 budget represents a 4.6% increase, totaling approximately \$22 million, and brings the overall budget to \$510,870,746.



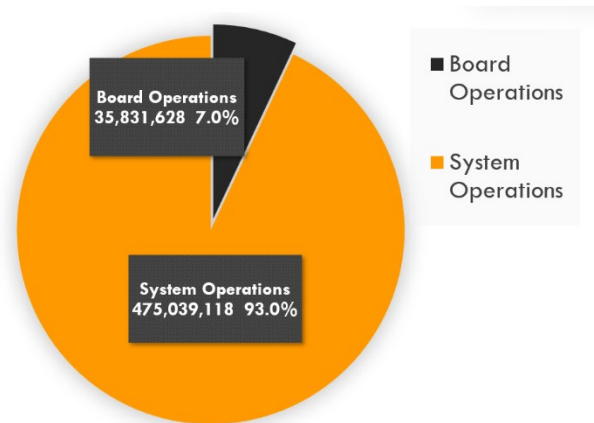
- An increase in early education funds totaling \$19.2 million is the primary driver of the overall growth in general revenue.
- Additional increases to general revenue include Workforce and Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – Workforce Innovation Fund, Adult Education, and Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, totaling \$2.6 million.
- Receipt of Other Federal & State Revenue grant awards include Externship for Teachers and Texas Internship Initiative total about \$400,000.

Proposed Distribution

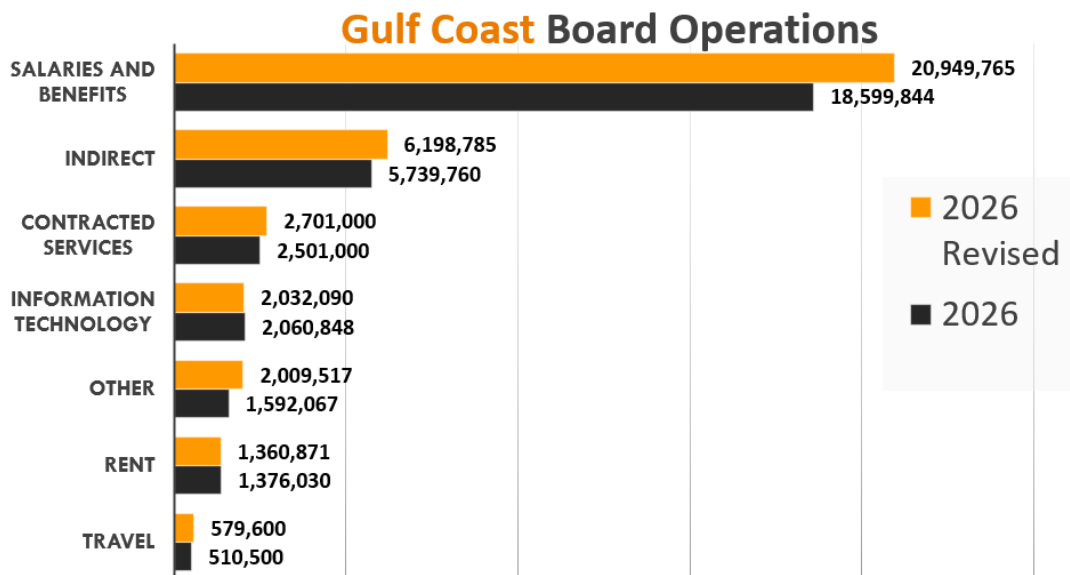
The revised 2026 Board budget reserves 7.0% of total revenue for operations at the administrative level. The remaining 93.0% delivers direct service to customers.

Suggested Board operations total \$35,831,628 for 2026 which is a 10.7% increase from the original budget. The increase is primarily due to expanding organizational capacity to meet program demand and comply with TWC requirements for child care.

Recommended System operations have increased to \$475,039,118 reflecting a 4.2% increase from the original budget.



Board Operations Highlights:



We propose adjusting the Board administrative operations budget to just under \$36 million.

- The Salaries and Benefits are increasing due to the proposed staff for the transition of Child Care Scholarship and Child Care Quality services to the Board level. Additional staffing for the Child Care Expansion team will enhance capacity for child care quality initiatives. These changes align with and support the new structure for the Payment Office and Support Center, under which Workforce and Child Care payment functions will be administered through two separate contracts. Other positions include the establishment of a Fraud team in accordance TWC requirements, as well as and other programmatic and

administrative positions necessary to effectively support and manage expanded responsibilities.

Team	Current	Proposed	Total
Youth & Career Pathways	10	2	12
Quality Assurance, Finance, & Contracts	24	8	32
Career Services	23	1	24
Strategy & Innovation	17	-	17
Executive & Board Relations	6	1	7
Child Care	88	25	113
TOTAL	167	37	204

- The increase to Indirect represents allocation of shared costs provided by H-GAC due to proposed increase in Workforce FTEs. These costs support centralized agency functions such as procurement, contracts, finance, personnel, payroll, printing, network, communications, and administration. The total base of Indirect costs for H-GAC to be allocated to all departments increased by about \$62,000.

FUNCTION/COST CENTER	2026 MID-YEAR INDIRECT COST CENTER TOTALS	2026 INDIRECT COST CENTER TOTALS	Difference
COST CENTER 101 - ADMINISTRATION - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	\$ 1,126,010	\$ 1,125,180	\$ 830
COST CENTER 102 - CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER - FINANCE	\$ 1,510,542	\$ 1,491,383	\$ 19,159
COST CENTER 103 - OUTREACH & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS	\$ 470,574	\$ 470,103	\$ 471
COST CENTER 104 - ACCOUNTING	\$ 1,664,543	\$ 1,663,832	\$ 711
COST CENTER 105 - CHIEF INNOVATIVE OFFICER - OPERATIONS	\$ 283,857	\$ 283,376	\$ 481
COST CENTER 112 - INTERNAL AUDIT	\$ 1,170,477	\$ 1,168,489	\$ 1,988
COST CENTER 114 - HUMAN RESOURCES	\$ 2,098,021	\$ 2,098,572	\$ (551)
COST CENTER 124 - PURCHASING	\$ 2,013,050	\$ 1,981,098	\$ 31,952
COST CENTER 134 - FACILITIES/PRINTSHOP	\$ 798,112	\$ 794,241	\$ 3,871
COST CENTER 144 - NETWORK	\$ 4,311,776	\$ 4,309,117	\$ 2,659
TOTAL	\$ 15,446,963	\$ 15,385,391	\$ 61,572

Original 2026 Workforce Indirect Budget	\$	5,739,760
Revised 2026 Workforce Indirect Budget	\$	6,198,785
Difference (increase)	\$	459,025

Workforce Allocation Rate of H-GAC Indirect Pool (increase from 37.33%) 40.13%
 (\$6,198,785 / \$15,446,963 = 40.13%)

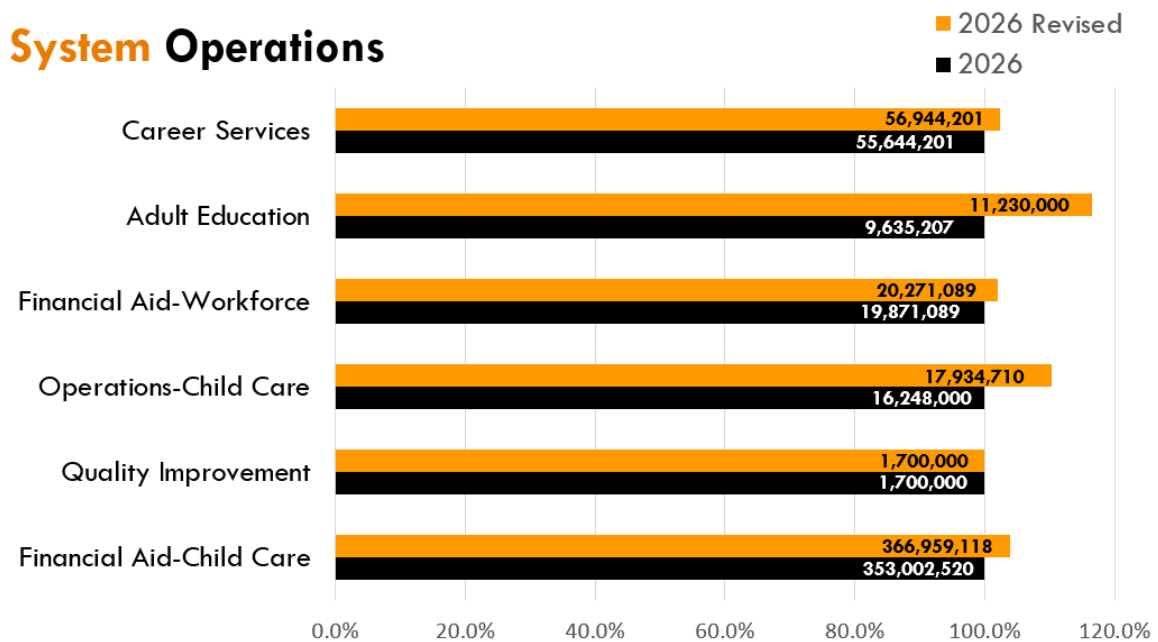
Breakdown of Increase to Workforce Indirect Budget

Increase to H-GAC Indirect Pool (\$61,572 x 40.13%)	\$	24,709
Additional Workforce FTEs (37)	\$	434,316
Total Increase	\$	459,025

- The Consultants and Contracts budget increase is due to the anticipated need for temporary staffing to support program operations.

- The Information Technology budget represents Workforce system operations managed by the H-GAC Data Services department. The slight decrease is due to the reduction of salaries, benefits, and indirect.
- The Other budget category reflects increases to Employee Development, Software, Expendable Equipment, Outside Printing, and Maintenance & Repair. These adjustments support staffing growth and implementation of enhanced technologies to improve operational efficiency.
- We propose increasing the Travel budget to incorporate rising average costs and the increased number of staff.

System Operations Highlights



Workforce Development encompasses Career Services, Adult Education, and Financial Aid for training and support services. Increases to Career Services and Financial Aid are due to additional Wagner-Peyser Employment Services allocation and receipt of Externship for Teachers and Texas Internship Initiative grant awards.

Early Childhood Education includes Operations, Quality Improvement, and Financial Aid for direct care and quality initiatives. A slight increase to Operations reflects the need to implement TX3C workarounds while the state conducts system enhancements. The increase to Financial Aid is the result of carryforward child care funding.

Action

Approval and submission of the revised 2026 budget in amount of \$510,870,746 to the Board for approval.

**Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2026 Proposed Revised Budget
Source and Use**

Source		Use	
Federal & State Revenue	509,473,746	Board Operations	35,831,628
Other Sources	1,397,000	System Operations	475,039,118
Total	\$510,870,746	Total	\$510,870,746

**Gulf Coast Workforce
2026 Proposed Revised Budget
Source Summary**

	2026 Revised	2026	Dollar Change	% Change
Federal & State Revenue	509,473,746	487,084,067	22,389,679	4.6%
Child Care Services	409,980,465	390,768,841	19,211,624	4.9%
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity	49,644,526	49,394,526	250,000	0.5%
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	17,013,269	17,013,269	-	0.0%
Adult Education	12,243,155	10,595,275	1,647,880	15.6%
Vocational Rehabilitation	6,699,231	6,361,304	337,927	5.3%
Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment	4,487,802	4,687,802	-200,000	-4.3%
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance	3,398,722	3,398,722	-	0.0%
Wagner-Peyser Employment Services	3,615,027	2,895,055	719,972	24.9%
NDW Disaster Relief Employment	840,000	840,000	-	0.0%
Veterans Employment and Training	576,500	576,500	-	0.0%
Apprenticeship Grants	287,249	287,249	-	0.0%
Texas Education Agency - Regional Convener	237,000	237,000	-	0.0%
Other Federal or State Revenue	450,800	28,524	422,276	1480.4%
Other Sources	1,397,000	1,397,000	-	0.0%
Houston Endowment	1,350,000	1,350,000	-	0.0%
Local H-GAC & Workforce	47,000	47,000	-	0.0%
Total Revenue	510,870,746	488,481,067	22,389,679	4.6%

**Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2026 Proposed Revised Budget
Use Summary**

	2026 Revised	2026	% of Total 2026 Revised Budget	Dollar Variance from 2026	% Variance from 2026
Board Operations	35,831,628	32,380,050	7.0%	3,451,578	10.7%
Salaries and Benefits	20,949,765	18,599,844	4.1%	2,349,921	12.6%
Contracted Services	2,701,000	2,501,000	0.5%	200,000	8.0%
Rent	1,360,871	1,376,030	0.3%	(15,159)	-1.1%
Other	2,009,517	1,592,067	0.4%	417,450	26.2%
Travel	579,600	510,500	0.1%	69,100	13.5%
Indirect	6,198,785	5,739,760	1.2%	459,025	8.0%
Information Technology	2,032,090	2,060,848	0.4%	(28,759)	-1.4%
System Operations	475,039,118	456,101,017	93.0%	18,938,101	4.2%
Workforce Development					
Career Services	56,944,201	55,644,201	11.1%	1,300,000	2.3%
Adult Education	11,230,000	9,635,207	2.2%	1,594,793	16.6%
Financial Aid	20,271,089	19,871,089	4.0%	400,000	2.0%
Early Childhood Education					
Operations	17,934,710	16,248,000	3.5%	1,686,710	10.4%
Quality Improvement	1,700,000	1,700,000	0.3%	-	0.0%
Financial Aid	366,959,118	353,002,520	71.8%	13,956,598	4.0%
Total	510,870,746	488,481,067	100.0%	22,389,679	4.6%

**Gulf Coast Workforce Board
2026 Proposed Revised Budget
Budget Detail**

	Board Operations			
	2026 Revised	2026	Dollar Variance	Percent Variance
Contracted Services	2,701,000	2,501,000	200,000	8%
Public Information & Outreach	1,050,000	1,050,000	-	0%
Financial Monitoring	900,000	900,000	-	0%
Legal Services	350,000	350,000	-	0%
Temporary Staffing	350,000	150,000	200,000	133%
H-GAC Independent Audit	51,000	51,000	-	0%
Other	2,009,517	1,592,067	417,450	26%
Employee Development	366,550	329,300	37,250	11%
Software	752,000	385,000	367,000	95%
Communications	250,000	250,000	-	0%
Expendable Equipment	195,867	152,667	43,200	28%
Capital Equipment	-	100,000	- 100,000	-100%
Outside Printing	140,000	80,000	60,000	75%
Subscriptions & Dues	75,000	75,000	-	0%
Insurance	60,000	60,000	-	0%
Supplies	48,000	48,000	-	0%
Employee Recruitment	40,000	40,000	-	0%
Meeting Expenses	24,000	24,000	-	0%
Food & Beverage	15,000	15,000	-	0%
Postage & Delivery	12,800	12,800	-	0%
Legal Notices	12,000	12,000	-	0%
Maintenance & Repair	16,000	6,000	10,000	167%
Books & Publications	1,500	1,500	-	0%
Licenses & Permits	800	800	-	0%
Travel	579,600	510,500	69,100	14%
In-Region Travel	172,600	150,000	22,600	15%
Out-of-Region Travel	407,000	360,500	46,500	13%
Information Technology & Network Support	2,032,090	2,060,848	- 28,759	-1%
Salaries	327,870	347,442	- 19,572	-6%
Benefit Allocation	153,902	162,012	- 8,110	-5%
Indirect Allocation	156,929	184,604	- 27,675	-15%
Allocated Rent	27,313	26,790	523	2%
Software	1,318,575	1,292,500	26,075	2%
Consultants	26,500	26,500	-	0%
Communication	11,500	11,500	-	0%
Maintenance and Repair	9,500	9,500	-	0%
Expendable Equipment	-	-	-	0%

**Attachment
8b-2**

Workforce Board/Chief Elected Official Agreement

WHEREAS, the Gulf Coast Workforce Development Board is certified by the Governor of Texas as a board under the terms of the Workforce and Economic Competitiveness Act ; and,

WHEREAS, all of the chief elected officials who are required to be parties to this agreement, including all County Judges and required Mayors, have unanimously selected the Houston-Galveston Area Council Board of Directors as their authorized representative to enter into this agreement on their behalf, and designated an Chief Elected Official to execute agreements;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT WE THE UNDERSIGNED DO HEREBY AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:

The terms of this agreement are effective from the date of signing until such times as all parties to this agreement agree to amendment(s). This agreement may be terminated by either party with 60 days notice.

The Houston-Galveston Area Council will serve as the entity responsible for developing the local job training plan to be approved by the Workforce Development Board and Chief Elected Official before it is submitted to the Governor.

The Houston-Galveston Area Council will serve as the grant recipient for the service delivery area and perform necessary functions, including: (1) receiving funds authorized under Texas Senate Bill 642, as amended by Texas House Bill 1863, (2) accounting for grant funds, and (3) disbursing funds according to the job training plan and administrative policy.

The Houston-Galveston Area Council will serve as the administrative entity and will perform the necessary functions, including: (1) allocation of funds, (2) responsibility to take action against subcontractors, subgrantees, and other recipients to eliminate and prevent any misuse of funds and program abuse, (3) insure eligibility of those enrolled in programs, (4) insure open and competitive procurements, (5) provide proper contract administration and fiscal management, and (6) be responsive as staff to the Workforce Development Board and Chief Elected Official.

Workforce Board/Chief Elected Official Agreement

The following describes generally describes the functions and responsibilities of the Workforce Development Board and Chief Elected Official:


Gulf Coast Workforce Development Board

Select target population
Prioritize training occupations
Determine required occupational skills
Determine necessary support services
Establish outcome goals
Select service mix
Approve budgets
Review and evaluate performance
Develop and approve plans
Approve service providers


H-GAC Board of Directors

Board of Directors approve plan
Board of Directors approve providers

APPROVED BY:


Allan Moody, Chair
Gulf Coast Workforce Development Board

1/29/97
Date


John Willy, Brazoria County Judge
Chief Elected Official

02/18/97
Date

Procurement Committee

Executive Summary

On May 26, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson convened a meeting of the Procurement Committee to review contract renewal and amendment recommendations, receive informational updates regarding upcoming procurement activities, and to receive a presentation from the Houston-Galveston Area Council Procurement and Contracts Department. Committee members in attendance included Chair Mark Guthrie, Doug Karr, Cheryl Guido, Paul Puente, and Adrian Ozuna.

Board staff discussed possible authorization for staff to execute contract renewals and amendments in accordance with the funding amounts below and provided information on upcoming system procurements.

Item	Amended/Renewed Maximum Contract Amount (Not to Exceed)
<i>I. Contract Renewal: Adult Education and Literacy</i>	
Houston City College	\$5,160,000
Lone Star College	\$2,590,000
San Jacinto College	\$1,420,000
Region 6 ESC	\$2,010,000
BakerRipley, Inc.	\$50,000
<i>II. Contract Renewal: Financial Monitors</i>	\$900,000
Weaver and Tidwell, L.L.P.	
Christine Nguyen CPA	
Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC	
<i>III. Contract Amendment: Financial Aid Support Center</i>	\$11,857,000
<i>IV. Contract Amendment: Career Services</i>	
BakerRipley, Inc	\$23,500,000
SERCO of Texas	\$19,000,000
EDSI	\$15,000,000

I. Adult Education and Literacy - Renewals

Background

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, which authorizes the activities for publicly funded adult education, is part of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (Title II of the Act). The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is the grantee and fiscal agent for the Gulf Coast Adult Education Consortium. This consortium is composed of five organizations: 1 community-based organization, 3 community colleges, and 1 education service center, which plays a dual role with delivering direct services and serving as the lead agency that provides technical assistance and support across the consortium.

In 2024, the Board was awarded responsibility for providing adult education services across 9 counties: Austin, Colorado, Fort Bend, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, Wharton, and approximately 60% of Harris County. Instruction is offered through face to face, virtual, and hybrid formats and includes a broad range of services: English language instruction, literacy classes, adult basic education, adult secondary education, GED preparation, and occupation skills training, college and career readiness, employability skills, job search assistance, training, workplace literacy, and digital literacy. These services are designed to meet learners where they are and support their goals for employment, further education, and greater self-sufficiency.

Historically, funds have been allocated annually with clear guidelines on total available funding and performance expectations. These funds are used to support service delivery through the consortium of members who rely on timely and consistent allocations to plan staffing and program operations.

Current Situation

As previously reported to the Audit and Monitoring Committee and full Gulf Coast Workforce Board, Adult Education Center has ceased operations and is no longer participating in the Gulf Coast Adult Education Consortium. The remaining consortium members continue to provide AEL services throughout the service area with active and ongoing oversight by Board staff.

During the current contract period, the Board has maintained regular communication with consortium members to monitor performance, review expenditures, and provide technical assistance as needed. Houston City College, Lone Star College, Region 6 Education Service Center, and San Jacinto College continues to deliver instructional and support services, while Baker Ripley continues to provide follow-up services to previously exited program participants, all in alignment with their approved scopes of work and the Board's strategic priorities.

To date, the consortium has served 4,372 students across the following program categories:

Production Performance	TWC Target	Current Performance	% Achieved to Target
Total Enrollment	8,285	4,372	52.77%
Integrated Education and Training	870	1,693	194.59%
Intensive Services	430	290	67.44%

Outcome Performance	TWC Target	GCWB Performance
Employed or Enrolled – 3rd & 4th Quarter After Exit	87%	86.31%
Employed or Enrolled – 2nd Quarter After Exit	43%	52.50%
Measurable Skill Gains (MSG)	43%	34.88%
Credential Attainment	43%	25.13%

These results reflect the consortium’s continued efforts to provide accessible adult education services and support participant progress toward educational and workforce outcomes.

Proposed Strategic Partnership: UHCL Transforming Lives Partnership

The Board is proposing to explore a strategic partnership between Houston City College (HCC) and the University of Houston–Clear Lake (UHCL) to support the Transforming Lives program. This proposed partnership would be grounded in data-driven decision-making and is intended to strengthen pathways that connect individuals to both two-year and four-year degree opportunities, while positioning this work in a more innovative and forward-thinking way.

A key focus of this proposed effort is to expand support for justice-involved individuals, a population where there is an identified need to strengthen outcomes within current incentive strategies, particularly related to reducing recidivism and increasing long-term educational attainment.

The proposed partnership would also include the Windham School District, leveraging its extensive experience providing educational services “behind the walls” and supporting reentry-focused programming. Together, these partners would create a more seamless continuum from incarceration to postsecondary education and career pathways. Under this proposed partnership:

- Houston City College (HCC) would deliver bridge-to-apprenticeship programs and micro-credential training, enabling participants to achieve

Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs) and earn industry-recognized credentials. HCC brings extensive experience working within correctional settings, including providing GED services in jails across our region.

- Upon completion of micro-credential training, participants would transition to the University of Houston–Clear Lake (UHCL) to pursue bachelor’s degree programs, supporting continued postsecondary enrollment as an additional measurable skill gain and advancing long-term career mobility.

UHCL is proposed to serve as a subcontractor to HCC and will support AEL services in an amount of up to \$500,000.

This proposed partnership is intended to strengthen alignment between education, workforce, and reentry strategies, ensuring the program not only addresses immediate training needs but also builds sustainable pathways that support economic mobility and successful reintegration.

Action Requested: Staff request Board approval to negotiate contract renewals with Houston City College, Lone Star College, San Jacinto College, and Region 6 and a contract extension with BakerRipley in the amounts shown below for the period of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. This recommendation is contingent upon Texas Workforce Commission funding and approvals.

Provider	Current	Proposed Max
Houston City College	\$4,060,800	\$5,160,000
Lone Star College	\$2,292,938	\$2,590,000
San Jacinto College	\$1,296,000	\$1,420,000
Region 6 ESC	\$1,885,469	\$2,010,000
BakerRipley, Inc.	\$50,000	\$50,000
Total		\$11,230,000

II. Financial Monitors – Renewals

Background

The Board contracts with accounting firms to support financial monitoring and review of Workforce Solutions subrecipients, contractors, and programs. These reviews include, but are not limited to, accounting systems, disbursements, payroll, procurement, and cost allocation. Firms are required to demonstrate experience with public funds and federal workforce programs, and at least one principal must be a licensed Certified Public Accountant.

In 2025, the Board released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to procure qualified firms to perform these services. Based on evaluation scores and demonstrated

experience, contracts were executed with Weaver and Tidwell, L.L.P.; Christine H. Nguyen CPA; and Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC (formerly LaPorte, A Professional Accounting Corporation).

Board staff coordinates the work performed by these firms, participates in monitoring activities, and ensures that any identified findings are appropriately addressed.

Current Situation

Over the past contract year, the selected firms have provided ongoing financial monitoring and review services across Workforce Solutions programs and subrecipients. This work has supported the Board's oversight responsibilities by identifying risks, evaluating internal controls, and providing recommendations to strengthen financial management and compliance.

Utilizing multiple firms has allowed the Board to effectively manage workload, maintain flexibility in scheduling and assignments, and ensure timely completion of monitoring activities. Collectively, the firms have enhanced visibility into subrecipient financial operations and supported corrective actions, as needed.

These firms include:

- **Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC** has completed reviews of Houston City College and San Jacinto College and is currently conducting a review of the Equus Financial Aid Support Center.
- **Weaver and Tidwell, L.L.P.** has completed reviews of Lone Star College and United Way of Greater Houston, with reviews of BakerRipley – Career Services and SERCO of Texas currently in progress. The firm is also conducting process mapping for child care and Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO) operations.
- **Christine H. Nguyen** has completed reviews of BakerRipley – Adult Education and Literacy and Region 6. A review of EDSI is currently in progress.

By end of contract year, each monitor will have provided monitoring training to Workforce Solutions subrecipients.

Based on performance during the current contract year, Board staff recommend continuing these services to maintain consistency in monitoring, preserve institutional knowledge, and ensure ongoing compliance with federal and state requirements.

Action Requested: Staff request Board approval to renew contracts for one (1) year with each of the following firms, contingent upon certification by the Texas Workforce Commission, for a combined amount not to exceed \$900,000:

- Weaver and Tidwell, L.L.P.
- Christine H. Nguyen CPA
- Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC

III. Financial Aid Support Center – Contract Amendment

Background

In 2022, Equus was contracted to manage the Financial Aid Support Center (FASC). The Support Center provides centralized services for childcare scholarship programs, including processing financial aid applications, responding to customer inquiries, arranging childcare, reviewing appeals, and managing ongoing eligibility exceptions. Equus supports a broad range of stakeholders, including customers, the Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO), and Board staff.

Current Situation

The current contract year has presented sustained operational challenges, including increased customer demand, system limitations associated with Texas Child Care Connection (TX3C), and higher volumes of inbound calls and casework. These factors have contributed to longer processing times, increased call volumes, and strain on existing staffing resources. These issues have impacted our ability to meet the Average Children in Care performance target:

Month	Number of Children in Care
October 2025	33,259
November 2025	33,187
December 2025	31,450
January 2026	31,278
February 2026	31,752
March 2026	32,129
TARGET: 35,078	

To address these challenges and to improve service levels, Equus has requested additional funding to support expanded staffing capacity, as well as necessary software and hardware enhancements. The proposed staffing expansion includes a combination of temporary and permanent positions to improve processing efficiency, reduce wait times, and stabilize daily operations.

Board staff have reviewed the request and determined that the additional resources are reasonable and necessary to support continued service delivery and performance expectations.

Action Requested: Staff request approval to amend the current contract with Equus' Financial Aid Support Center to increase funding by \$357,000, for a revised total contract amount not to exceed \$11,857,000.

IV. Career Services – Contract Amendments

Background

In 2025, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to procure career services providers across three regions. Following a competitive evaluation process and Board approval, contracts were awarded to BakerRipley (East), Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI) (West), and SERCO of Texas (North). These providers are responsible for delivering integrated career and employer services under the Board's regional service delivery model.

- **BakerRipley**

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

- **EDSI**

Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI) is a national workforce development and consulting firm headquartered in Dearborn, Michigan. Established in 1979, EDSI has over 47 years of experience delivering services such as job search assistance, career coaching, training access, and employer engagement strategies. The company operates across 10 states and partners primarily with workforce development boards and municipalities to support jobseekers, employers, and government agencies.

- **SERCO of Texas**

SERCO of Texas, Inc. is a for-profit workforce services provider based in Corpus Christi, Texas, and a subsidiary of SERCO, Inc., headquartered in Detroit. Since 2006, it has operated employment and training programs across Texas for Workforce Development Boards in regions. SERCO delivers WIOA) services, along with TANF/Choices, SNAP E&T, and childcare

Action Requested: Staff request approval to increase the contract maximums for BakerRipley, EDSI, and SERCO of Texas by up to \$500,000 each.

This increase is supported by additional State funding and will enable targeted investments in staffing capacity and mobile service delivery tools to expand access to workforce services. The updated contract maximum amounts are below:

Regions	Current Maximum	Proposed Maximum
East – BakerRipley	\$23,000,000	\$23,500,000
North – SERCO of Texas	\$18,500,000	\$19,000,000
West – EDSI	\$14,500,000	\$15,000,000
Total	\$56,000,000	\$57,500,000

V. Upcoming Procurements

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

System Component	Service Provider(s)	Last Procurement	Next Scheduled Procurement (Calendar Year)
Grant Fund Management	New	In Progress	TBD
Family Engagement & Outreach	United Way of Greater Houston	Canceled	NA
Financial Aid Payment Office	BakerRipley	In Progress	2030
Financial Aid Support Center	Equus	In Progress	2030

Performance and Production

Update for May 2026

Reporting Infrastructure Enhancements

Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast continues to work closely with the Texas Workforce Commission as the state modernizes its reporting infrastructure. While several reporting modules have been updated, data completeness challenges remain. To improve accuracy and consistency, the Board has accelerated standardized reporting tools across all providers, improving the timeliness and reliability of performance data. The region also continues to use predictive models aligned with TWC methodologies to monitor trends and make timely operational adjustments.

Provider Collaboration and Support

Strong provider partnerships remain central to performance improvement. Bi-monthly coordination sessions support alignment, reinforce best practices, and promote shared accountability. In addition, targeted training for provider and Board staff focuses on advanced interviewing, career assessment, and documentation practices to strengthen service delivery and performance outcomes.

What the Current Performance Data Shows (as of February 2026)

Current FY2026 performance shows mixed results across workforce and program participation measures. While several employment and earnings outcomes are meeting or exceeding targets, a number of credential, skills gain, and youth measures remain below expected performance levels at this point in the program year. Overall, employment outcomes remain comparatively strong, while education and training measures continue to develop as participants progress through programs. In some instances, services used to identify population groups (Adult, DW, Youth) may mistakenly include reportable and follow-up services, potentially inflating or deflating performance rates. Performance status is currently suppressed pending further review.

In simple terms:

- Employment outcomes for Adults and Dislocated Workers are largely meeting state targets, particularly in Q2 and Q4 post-exit measures.
- Median earnings after exit exceed state targets for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.
- Credential attainment and measurable skills gains are currently below target levels and may improve later as we collect credential milestones.

- Youth employment and enrollment Q4 outcomes are below targets at this point in the year.
- Reemployment and employer engagement measures are currently not meeting targets.
- In some instances, services used to identify population groups (Adult, DW, Youth) may mistakenly include reportable and follow-up services, which could inflate or deflate performance rates. Performance status is currently suppressed pending further review.

Overall, several core employment and earnings measures are performing well, while other indicators are currently below target and will continue to be monitored as the program year progresses. Many education and training outcomes are reported later in the program cycle as participants complete services and additional credential milestones are recorded.

Key System Improvements Underway

To sustain positive trends, the Board has accelerated several system-wide improvements:

- Enhanced career and skills assessments to better align training with labor market demand.
- Increased focus on short-term, industry-recognized credentials.
- Expanded work-based learning, including on-the-job training and apprenticeships.
- Strengthened provider accountability through ETPL updates and routine performance reviews.
- Expanded year-round youth engagement and post-exit follow-up.

Summary

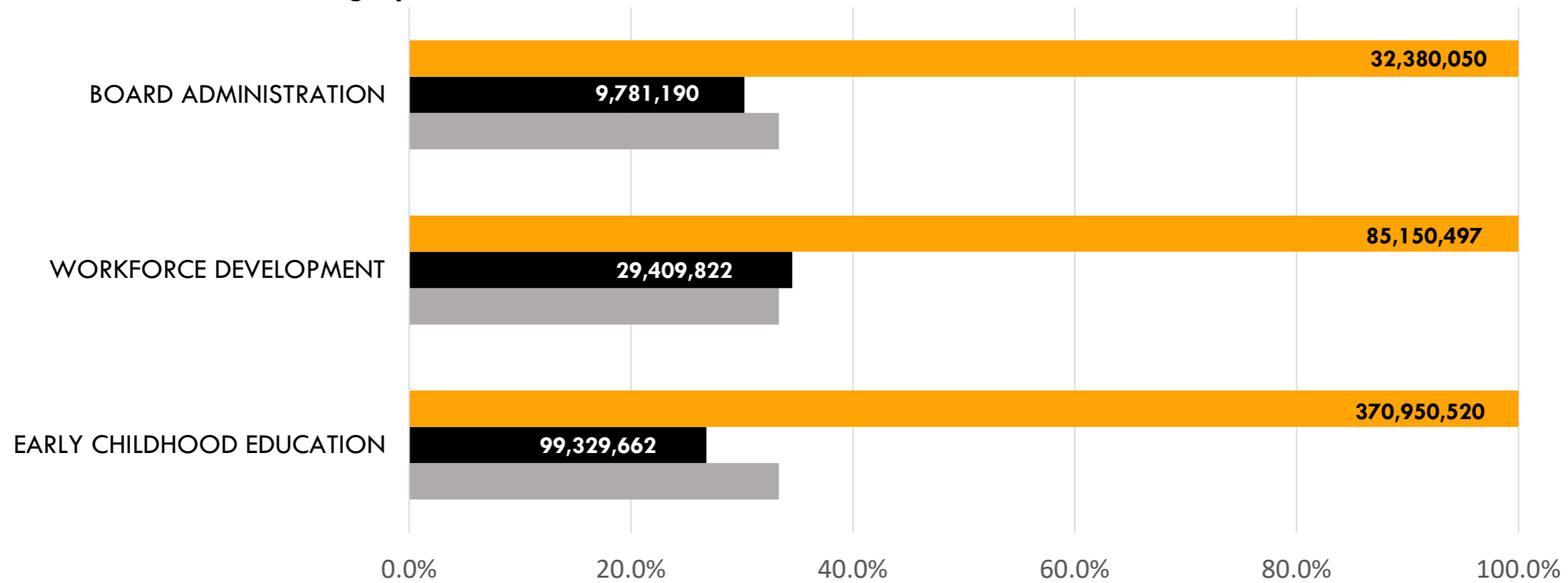
Overall performance shows strong employment and earnings outcomes, while several education, credential, youth, and reemployment measures remain below target and may improve as participants complete training and services later in the program year.

The Board continues to monitor these areas closely while implementing system improvements aimed at strengthening outcomes across all performance measures.

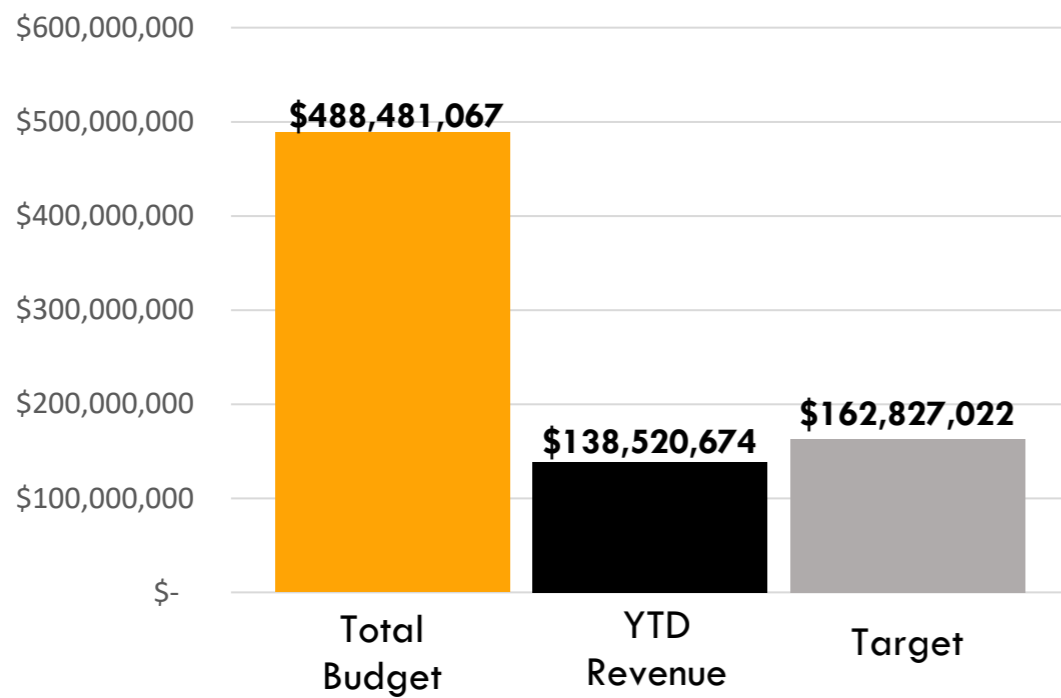
Gulf Coast Workforce Financial Status Report

For the 4 months ending April 30, 2026

■ Budget ■ Expenses ■ Target



Workforce Revenue



System Expenses

- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - FINANCIAL AID \$94,167,748
- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - QUALITY IMPROVEMENT \$300,852
- EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION - OPERATIONS \$4,861,062
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - FINANCIAL AID \$4,786,966
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - ADULT EDUCATION \$2,454,274
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - CAREER SERVICES \$22,168,581

