GULF COAST WORKFORCE BOARD PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda
Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 11:00 a.m
By Hybrid Meeting
at H-GAC – 3555 Timmons Lane, Conference Room 2D, Houston, TX 77027
Or via
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81051118895?pwd=xDr1cbzIQJxd1rl6sl3UALtMLxYEnJ.1

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1. **Call to Order**, Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson

2. **Committee Member Roll Call**, Desmond Taylor

3. **Public Comment**: Anyone wishing to make a public comment may do so by appearing in person or by joining online via the link listed above, or by dialing 1-877-853 5247 or 1-888-788 0099 (Webinar 810 5111 8895; Passcode: 929784)

4. **Contract Renewal – Adult Education and Literacy**: Discussion and possible action to renew or extend contracts for Adult Education and Literacy consortium members. (Staff Contact: Thomas Brown)

5. **Contract Renewal – Financial Monitors:** Discussion and possible action to renew contracts for financial monitoring services. (Staff Contact: Thomas Brown)

6. **Contract Amendment – Financial Aid Support Center:** Discussion and possible action regarding an amendment to Equus' Financial Aid Support Center's contract to incorporate additional funding. (Staff Contact: Thomas Brown)

7. **Contract Amendment – Career Services:** Discussion and possible action regarding amendments to the Career Services providers' contracts to incorporate additional funding. (Staff Contact: Thomas Brown)

8. **Upcoming Procurements:** Overview of upcoming procurements, including anticipated timelines. (Staff Contact: Thomas Brown)

9. **H-GAC Procurement:** Discussion and possible action regarding H-GAC Procurement procedures and support for Gulf Coast Workforce Board workforce-related procurements, including reference-check procedures, procurement division staffing, FY 2025 and FY 2026 workforce procurement activity, and FY 2025 and FY 2026 procurement department budget information. (Staff Contact: Kristina Kollaja)

10. **Other Business:** Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson

11. **Next Meeting:** Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson

12. **Adjourn:** Chair Dr. Bobbie Henderson

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Workforce Board will provide for reasonable accommodations for persons attending meetings. Requests should be received 24 hours prior to the function by contacting Dr. Maria Franco Cortes at 713-993-2410 or maria.cortes@wrksolutions.net.

Item 4: Contract Renewal – Adult Education and Literacy

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.

Recommendation

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**

Procurement Committee

Item 5: Contract Renewal – Financial Monitors

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.

Recommendation

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

Item 6: Contract Amendment – Financial Aid Support Center

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.

Recommendation

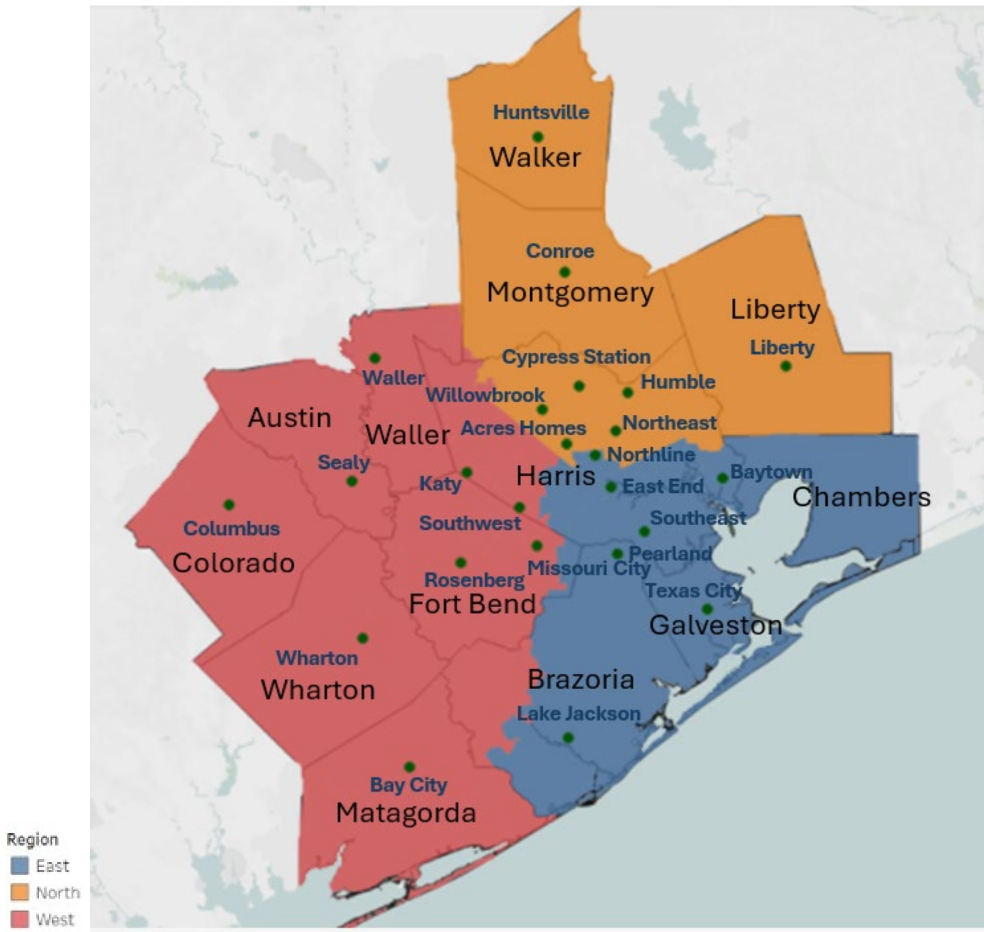
Staff request approval to amend the current contract with Equus' Financial Aid Support Center to increase funding by $357,000, for a revised total contract amount not to exceed $11,857,000.

Item 7: Contract Amendment – Career Services

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 coordination. It also partners with local colleges for employer-driven training initiatives and youth development programs.



Current Situation

Since contract execution, all three providers have navigated the transition to the regional service delivery model, including key activities such as staffing, operational setup, and service alignment. While overall performance has not yet fully met all expectations, each provider remains actively engaged with Board staff and is working toward improvement through ongoing coordination, monitoring, and technical assistance.

The State has allocated additional funding to support expanded service delivery and increased access to workforce services across the region. Board staff intend to direct these funds toward targeted staffing enhancements and the purchase of mobile service delivery tools, such as kiosks and other related equipment. These investments will support service delivery beyond traditional office settings and improve access for jobseekers and employers.

Recommendation

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**

Item 8: 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