

## Part B: Operational Elements

1. **A description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies:**
  - a. **the programs that are included in the system; and**
  - b. **how the Board will support the strategy identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, that support the strategy identified in the State Plan under WIOA §102(b)(1)E).**

The local workforce development system includes many programs and partners. Workforce Solutions provides mandatory services to the universal population and to special groups through five full-service workforce centers and one satellite center. Subsidized child care is provided through a call center in Lufkin, Texas. Mandatory populations are Unemployment Recipients, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity eligible dislocated workers, and low-income adults and youth, eligible Trade Assistance Act workers, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Choices customers, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) populations, Non-custodial Parents, and those eligible for subsidized child care. Workforce Solutions also serves employers in the workforce area.

Vocational Rehabilitation provides assistance and support to individuals with disabilities to ensure they are work-ready. Functioning with Workforce Solutions expands the offerings available for this population.

Education, including secondary, post secondary, and adult education providers, is a large part of the system. Primary and secondary education prepare youth with basic skills and some career information and preparedness. HB5 has also provided opportunities to provide technical education during secondary school. Post-secondary education provides the necessary skills to become successful in many local industries. Adult Education assists limited English Speakers and those who are functioning below basic skill levels.

Business groups, such as Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development are also part of the system as they identify and promote the needs of local employers for a skilled workforce and facilitate a responsive local business environment.

The Board will support the State Plan by working with area employers and colleges to build a strong workforce to meet the needs of local employers through a well-trained workforce. This includes identifying demand and target occupations, distributing labor market information to schools and older job seekers.

- 2. A description of how the Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:**
- a. expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;**
  - b. facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and**
  - c. improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).**

The Board provides mandated workforce services and coordinates with partners to develop a skilled workforce that meets the needs of area business. The Board and contractors will network with other public service organizations to become informed of services available to meet the needs of customers, develop Memorandums of Understanding when possible, and develop a customer friendly referral system so that barriers to employment may be addressed.

The Board's approach to services is to provide a variety of tools needed by job seekers, address their barriers to employment, and encourage them to acquire skills. All workforce centers are in compliance with applicable regulations; and to ensure adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment, and supplies are provided. The staff will work with the customer to develop a service plan to overcome the barriers and gain employment. In cases where the customer's needs are unable to be met by the workforce center, the staff coordinates with area partners to alleviate those barriers.

Career pathways are designed to lead entry-level customers to become self-sufficient. The end goal is the acquisition of skills that allows for career growth opportunities and lead to a higher quality of life. Essential to success with this approach is skills development, either by work experience, on-the-job training, and/or occupational skills training. Without gaining skills, the customer will continue the cycle of one low paying job to the next with no progress thus continuing to struggle with life's daily needs. The approach can only be accomplished working with other entities and local businesses who are able to give customers the real-world, first-hand information and experience; as well as other entities that can provide help for those with low basic skills or disabilities in combination with workforce services

The Board has and will continue to work with local colleges to ensure that industry recognized credentials are available. Manufacturing skills courses which lead to Manufacturing Skills Standards Certifications, are offered at Angelina College. As the Board continues to learn of opportunities for other credentials, it will share those with high schools and colleges to ensure a well-trained workforce.

**3. A description of the strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.**

Customers are interviewed to identify their principal needs. Once these needs are ascertained a plan is developed to help the customer best reach the desired goals. Immediate barriers are identified and if necessary, customers are referred to partner agencies that are better equipped to serve that need. The service plan will have specific steps to address the barriers, lists of classes and activities offered by the center and by area partners that will help the customer develop a stronger skill set, again outside referrals may be made if necessary.

A youth customer will be interviewed for barriers and a plan will be developed on how best to overcome those barriers and achieve success.

Individuals on public assistance are also assessed of their skills and barriers to employment. Individuals referred through Choices are assigned to a case manager, provided help with a plan to address barriers, given assistance on how to job search and to report participation hours and provided access to child care and transportation services as needed and when funds allow.

**4. A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area:**

- a. To facilitate engagement of employers in the workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations**
- b. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area**
- c. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development**
- d. To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs**

**Note: This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, use of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers. These initiatives must support the strategy described above.**

The Board encourages local employers to be active participants in the workforce development system by outreaching those employers at various chamber, economic development and job search events. Workforce centers are made available for hiring events, interviewing and applicant screening. Staff often provide assistance in obtaining labor market information. Developing a mutually beneficial relationship between the Board, contractor staff and local employers is essential to local growth.

The Board of Directors is made up of over fifty percent private sector businesses covering the twelve-county region. These members participate in the development of programs and ideas to best meet local employer's needs. Review of programs and activities by board members ensure

employer needs are understood and met when developing programs and services. The Board periodically surveys the employers to best determine their employee needs and then works with the employers on ways to attract the best employees for their business. Incumbent worker funds are used when available to assist businesses in the development of additional skills needed to grow their businesses.

Board staff attend local economic development meetings in several counties and with a regional economic development entity. Information gathered at these meetings is used to develop systems and strategies, and training to help the communities to continue to grow.

The workforce center staff work with individuals receiving unemployment insurance to ensure their prompt re-entry into the workforce. UI claimants are provided assistance in registering with WorkInTexas.com and job referrals, orientation to services, including access to the resource room for job search, and referrals to workshops such as resume preparation and on-line job search.

**5. An explanation of how the Board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the Board will promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services.**

The Board is represented and participates in most of the area's economic development meetings. Through this representation, the Board is aware of economic development initiatives in the local area and able to contribute information regarding the local labor market and the availability of various local resources and training funds. The Board then helps to identify needs of new and expanding businesses and develop solutions to meet those needs. The Board works with economic development groups and the community colleges to identify training funds when training needs are identified by business.

Several Board staff were recently involved with a region-wide project initiated by the Texas Forest Country Partnership (TFCP), a regional economic development entity, that is called "Stronger Economies Together." This is a program developed through the state and federal Departments of Agriculture and Texas A&M. The goal was to develop a local plan for economic development. Meetings were held in each county and attracted concerned citizens from businesses, nonprofits, area chambers, education, and other stakeholders such as County Judges. Goals and strategies were developed. The plan has been developed and implemented by the TFCP through a grant from the T.L.L. Temple Foundation and partnerships with other organizations.

The Board promotes entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services through the Small Business Development Center and Procurement Center at Angelina College.

**6. A description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including explanations of the following:**

**a. How the Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers and how providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers;**

**b. How the Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including to remote areas, through the use of technology and other means;**

**c. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including the one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA §188, if applicable, and with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals who have disabilities; and**

**d. The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.**

### **The Board**

The volunteer Board provides strategic direction, support, oversight, and approves policy. The Board has staff that provides planning, oversight, and evaluation/monitoring of the local workforce system. These functions include strategic and operational planning; development and management of the budget; procuring and contracting for services, facilities, and supplies; management of property; providing and maintaining information systems; processing training provider applications for the Eligible Training Provider System; providing program/technical assistance to subcontractors; processing complaints; conducting program and facility accessibility; oversight and monitoring of the system; development and implementation of a marketing plan; and other administrative duties associated with Board functions.

Board staff also works closely with Economic Development and Chambers of Commerce by providing information and attending meetings to ensure that workforce services and activities are coordinated to augment economic development activities that will enhance the area's economy.

TWC and Board policy prohibits the Board from any action related to staffing of the workforce center. The Board ensures this by contracting with independent entities to provide services.

### **Workforce Centers**

The Board leases six workforce centers to ensure service delivery to the Board's generally rural population. Of those centers, five are full-service centers and are located in Jasper, Livingston,

Lufkin, Shelby and Nacogdoches. Each operates under the supervision of a site manager or supervisor; with one satellite center in Houston County. The Board has in the past and will continue to set up temporary special centers to address unusual situations (e.g.-transition centers for large lay-offs or evacuation centers for hurricane evacuees.)

All centers are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., small satellite centers are closed between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m. Centers remain open beyond the regular schedule for special events such as large job fairs or for special appointments. Services not available at the satellite centers, or not convenient to current workers due to the hours, are available through toll-free numbers to staff at full-service centers and by appointment.

Each center has a fully equipped resource room; the one-stop centers have employer resource rooms and rooms for workshops or special events. Center staffing varies by location; the smaller centers have 2-6 staff, the one-stop centers have 15-25 staff.

The centers have toll-free phone numbers, all centers have internet and fax machines for staff and customer resource rooms, as well as to meet business needs. All centers are ADA compliant; and all advertising, brochures and customer forms indicate the TX Relay numbers.

### **Contractors**

To provide services to this area, the Board has two main contractors, one for the operation and management of the workforce center, the other for subsidized child care services. The Board maintains compliance relating to procurement of workforce services, details are outlined in this section answer #16.

#### **Workforce Center Management**

The contractor for workforce center operations is Dynamic Solutions. The current contract is for the period October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019. This is the second year in the four-year renewable contract. Dynamic Solutions is responsible for management of the centers and for the delivery all workforce services except subsidized child care.

#### **Subsidized Child Care**

Goodwill, Inc. is the contractor for subsidized child care services. The contract period is October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019, the last year of their renewable contract. Goodwill operates a call center located in Lufkin, Texas, to provide subsidized child care services to the twelve-county area.

### **Service Delivery**

Regular business and job seeker services are delivered from the local centers and are coordinated by workforce center management, except for subsidized child care which is

explained below. Services involve outreach, information, career training and vary based on individual needs.

### Business Services

Business services consist of outreach, labor market and training information, employee recruitment, applicant screening, job matching assistance, job fairs, testing services, use of center facilities for interview and other employment purposes, informational workshops, on-the-job training contracts, and incumbent worker and customized training grants as funding permits. Most employers in deep east Texas are small to mid-size businesses with the majority employing less than 100 workers. As such most business services focus on small to mid-size employers.

Specific workforce center staff are designated to the business services unit (BSU) to provide business services. The unit is comprised of both employment services staff and contractor staff. The BSU team makes outside employer contacts, conducts job development, provides Rapid Response services, develops and manages subsidized employment contracts, develops work experience or work activity agreements, develops and manages incumbent and customized training contracts, handles employer phone calls, applicant screening, and scheduling of facility space for employer use.

Job orders are maintained by the business services staff that takes the order to allow for better continuity and follow-up. The teams work together to provide workshops, job fairs, and employer focus groups. Testing services are provided to prospective employees by the Job Seeker Unit or Resource Room staff in the centers.

To increase awareness of services to business and outreach new employers, BSU staff attend, and occasionally make presentations to, chambers of commerce and other community organizations, direct business calls, advertising for special events, and other businesses.

### Job Seeker Services

Job Seeker services may be viewed as either basic or enhanced. Basic services consist of self-service or those requiring minimal staff assistance.

#### *Basic Services*

Job seeker services consist of the provision of basic services such as job matching services and job search tools offered in Resource Rooms in each center. Job search tools consist of various printed materials, videos, and internet tools that can provide a job seeker help with resume preparation, career exploration, job boards, and self-assessment.

A Job Seeker Unit (JSU) made up of employment services and contractor staff to provide an orientation to services for individuals new to the system and to Unemployment Insurance Benefit (UI) Claimants, individual Rapid Response services to potential Trade-affected workers, ensure that WiT.com applications are correct and complete to ensure better job matching,

make referrals to job postings, assist with job fairs, skills testing, outreach UI Claimants, provide minimal job search assistance, conduct a basic assessment of the job seekers work readiness, make referrals to community services, and refer individuals pursuing training to career and training services. Customers are informed of available resources and how to access those services.

### *Career and Training Services*

Career and Training services are provided by Career Specialists who focus on one or more employment and training programs and consists of staff-assisted job search, labor market and training information, job clubs, job development, referrals to community services, testing and assessment to help identify career goals and barriers to employment, workshops, career counseling, employment planning, funding for training, work experience and subsidized employment, and supportive services.

Career Specialists conduct a comprehensive assessment, work with individuals to develop an employment plan, provide career counseling, ensure that participants in mandatory programs meet program requirements, and assign a suitable mix of activities to help ensure participants reach their employment goals.

The determination of the need for and appropriateness of training is made by Career Specialists, who consider an individual's circumstances, program requirements, ability to succeed in training, desired training, work readiness. The area uses two systems to fund training, both use vouchers given to eligible participants to present to the training provider. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Dislocated Worker funds and Trade Act funds use the Eligible Training Provider System. TANF Choices, SNAP Employment and Training, and WIOA participants are referred to training providers with whom the Board has an Agreement using an individual referral process. Training for which assistance is granted must be, depending on the specific funding, on the local target occupation list or the Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS), a statewide list of eligible training providers and approved courses.

The area is served by two community colleges, Angelina College and Panola College, and by a state university, Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA). Angelina and Panola Colleges have collaborated with local entities to set up satellite centers away from the main campus in Houston, Jasper, Sabine, Polk, and Shelby Counties to provide training in demand occupations. Unfortunately, 2018 brought discussions of closure to several satellite centers as they are losing money, and the colleges may not be able to afford to continue to operate them as is. SFA and the community colleges offer distance learning courses. Opportunities for additional distance learning resources continue to expand due to the increase of internet-based training.

### *Case Management*

Case management and related activities are handled by Career Specialists.

An integrated case-file system and information system helps to ensure there is no duplication of service.

### *Outreach*

Job seekers are made aware of center services through partner agencies, advertising for special events, social media, Texas Workforce Commission web site, the Board's web site, and word of mouth.

### *Support Services*

A support service is financial assistance for work- or training-related expenses. There are various types of support depending on the need of workers or students – child care, transportation, job search related, classroom related, work related, and relocation assistance. Support services are provided to job seekers who require the aid to participate in program activities, who cannot obtain the assistance elsewhere, and as program rule and policy allow and based on available funding.

Support services are provided in compliance with program limits and restrictions using vouchers, checks, or purchase orders in compliance with procurement guidelines. Workforce staff assesses the customer's need for all support services using a needs assessment form, which determines the difference between available participant resources and expenses. All support services are provided by Career Specialists in the workforce centers except subsidized child care.

### *Child Care*

Child care assistance is considered to be an integral part of services for job seekers as it enables parents with small children to work. Subsidized child care is provided through Goodwill's call center in Lufkin, Texas. The public and workforce center staff access services directly to the call center using a toll-free phone number.

Goodwill determines eligibility for subsidized care for low-income and other special programs not managed by the workforce centers. Workforce center staff determine eligibility for care for Choices, and SNAP ENT. Referrals from the workforce centers are communicated via a Child Care Referral Form. Necessary paperwork, (e.g.-information, verifications, and agreements) is transmitted by fax, email and regular mail between the parents and Goodwill.

Staff interview child care applicants by phone, requesting relevant information and verification as necessary, and providing an orientation to services, which provides information about tips for determining quality care and the importance of choosing quality child care. Child care applicants may use center phones for this purpose. Applicants are informed of the parent choice policy which leaves the choice of child care provider to the parents. Parents are offered

the option of choosing from registered family homes, group homes, day care centers, or self-arranged care from an eligible source.

Forms and agreements that must be signed, as well as other informational material, are mailed to the applicant with a postage-paid return envelope. A waiting list for assistance is maintained as needed. From information received during the phone interview and verification process, Goodwill determines eligibility and the parent's share-of-cost. Parent share-of-cost is paid by parents directly to the child care center.

When an eligible applicant chooses a day care center, Goodwill staff phones the business to notify them of the referral and eligibility.

Open cases are reviewed periodically by the entity who determined eligibility to determine continued eligibility for care. Career specialists notify Goodwill when changes occur that would necessitate a change in the parent's child care. Goodwill routinely reviews cases and informs parents to report changes of income and circumstances as they occur.

Families who need child care assistance that the Board is not able to provide are referred to various resources in the community. These resources include Head Start programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, pre-k programs, and child care centers that charge based on a sliding scale. The Board also has local match agreements with the Angelina College and Stephen F. Austin State University which allows us to draw down federal funds to provide child care that might not otherwise be available to low-income parents who are attending college. These resources allow the Board to fund child care for as many families as possible.

The local population is generally familiar with the availability of child care assistance. Outreach efforts include posters that are displayed in the workforce centers, local day care providers, and other agencies as well as a brochure explaining subsidized child care services. Social Media (FaceBook) is also used as a reliable source to reach interested parties. Workforce center staff also share information about how to access child care assistance with parents.

Goodwill also provides outreach to area child care providers to ensure that registered and licensed facilities are notified of contracting options. Child care specialists attend all the Child Care Licensing orientation sessions to explain the child care system to all prospective child care providers.

Goodwill and the Board also work together to certify child care providers who strive to attain quality standards under the Texas Rising Star Program. The program has 3 levels, which make the center eligible for graduated reimbursement rates.

## **7. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.**

Adult and dislocated workers services in the area include resources for job search, assessment and service planning. As indicated by the assessment and service planning, other services such as career exploration, work experience, basic skills training referrals, job search, and occupational and technical training. Trade Assistance Act services for eligible workers are also available. This program assists with relocation, job search, and retraining. All of these services are provided through the Workforce Solutions offices.

**8. A description of how the Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities described in WIOA §134(a)(2)(A).**

The Board and contractor will coordinate efforts to provide rapid response services for workers who experience disasters, mass layoffs, plant closings or other incidents which may trigger increases in unemployment in the Deep East Texas area. These efforts will include coordinating with statewide rapid response activities. Statewide rapid response activities include the dissemination of information, providing technology services to allow those affected to apply for Unemployment Insurance or Emergency Unemployment Insurance, providing services that allow those affected access to WorkInTexas.com and other job banks, assisting businesses or workers to file a Trade Petition, and services that can be provided under National Dislocated Worker Grants such as jobs for dislocated workers to assist with disaster clean up.

**9. A description and assessment of the type and availability of workforce investment activities for youth in the local area, including activities for youth who have disabilities. This description must include an identification of successful models of such activities.**

The Board partners with area ISDs and the community colleges to provide access to workforce center services for youth. The workforce center contractor also conducts outreach at area schools to inform students of services available and to assist students to remain in school. Social media is utilized to alert students in the area of special events such as Youth Fairs. Career and Resource fairs inform youth of services to increase their chances of success in the workforce and in life. Post-secondary education is promoted through the distribution of information on demand and target occupations in coordination with workforce activities. Work experience now provides a great number of youth with real world experience to help them learn basic work skills and do hands on career exploration.

**10. A description of how the Board will coordinate relevant secondary- and postsecondary- education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.**

The Board screens applicants for training services to determine if other funds are available and to what extent. Before implementing any new programs, several schools are surveyed to determine the availability of existing programs to ensure that duplicate services are not

offered. Applicants for training services must apply for the Pell Grant and other scholarships, if available for the desired coursework.

**11. A description of how the Board will provide transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate support services in the local area in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities.**

In the workforce centers, the need for transportation assistance is assessed, as are all support service requests, using a needs-assessment form that compares income to expenses. Transportation assistance is available to eligible participants, depending on the availability of transportation options and the needs of the customer. Transportation assistance may include either bus passes or gas cards, depending on individual situation, circumstances, and transportation resources available in local areas. The workforce center operator will use the most cost-effective method that allows for adequate financial tracking and accountability, and based on individual need and options. "Commuting Area" is defined as 50 miles using the shortest one-way distance from the customer's residence to the destination.

A general public transportation provider that serves several area counties is called The District. They receive funding through the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Fixed Routes & Paratransit service, a shared ride service, is available in Lufkin and Nacogdoches.

**12. A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system.**

The workforce center contractor is responsible for all functions within the workforce center. Access to Wagner-Peyser services, or employment services, is made through the workforce center system. Board staff oversee program operations to ensure that they are being managed by the contractor in the most efficient way possible. The contractor provides monthly reports of activities and progress, these reports are shared with Board Members at committee and Board meetings on a regular basis.

**13. A description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA §§107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA §232.**

The alignment of adult education and literacy services by TWC to the local workforce development areas has streamlined the partnership with that program and the workforce centers. Meetings are held between workforce and the adult education provider staff to

familiarize each with the services offered by the other, and the referral process has been explained to each staff.

The Board will review local application submitted under Title II as directed by TWC.

**14. Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements that explain how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA §107(d)(11)) between the Board or other local entities described in §101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit that administers programs that are carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (other than §112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and are subject to §121(f) in accordance with §101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals who have disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts.**

Not applicable per TWC.

**15. An identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i).**

The Deep East Workforce Development Board is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds for the 12-county Deep East region, as described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i). The area Inter-local Agreement and the Partnership Agreement identify the Board as the grant recipient.

**16. A description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.**

The Board uses a competitive procurement process to select contractors for WIOA activities. The Board releases a request for proposal for operation and management of the workforce center system. The RFP contains the requirements and restrictions concerning the contracting and operation of the programs as well as the scoring criteria and timeline for the procurement. The RFP details the submission requirements and narrative and budget instructions. The Board maintains a "bidders list" of interested parties. A notice of the availability of the procurement is posted on the Board's web page and the Texas Registry and sent to entities on the bidders list. A bidder's conference may be held although participation is not mandatory. Questions are submitted and answered through the Bidders Conference or via email. The question/answer

document will be distributed to all bidders' conference attendees and then posted on the website. Proposals are due at an assigned due date and time. Late proposals are not accepted.

Proposals received are submitted to an evaluation team for evaluation using a standardized scoring instrument based on the RFP scoring criteria and instructions. The bidders that score 70 or above are considered "responsive". The evaluation team submits its report to the Board detailing the evaluation score and strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. An Action Item is prepared for the Board which recommends an applicant based on a best value analysis. The Board reviews the evaluation report and takes action to select a proposer for contract negotiations. If negotiations are successful, a contract is signed.

Proposers are notified of the action taken by the Board. Bidders that want to appeal the decision may follow the Board's appeal process within a certain time period from the date of Board action on the procurement.

**17. A description of the local levels of performance negotiated with TWC and the chief elected official consistent with WIOA §116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the Board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area.**

*The following performance measures were set in accordance with WIOA § 116(c):*

*Adult Employed Q2 Post Exit*

*Adult Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit*

*Adult Employed Q4 Post Exit*

*Adult Credential Rate*

*Dislocated Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit*

*Dislocated Worker Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit*

*Dislocated Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit*

*Dislocated Worker Credential Rate*

*Youth Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit*

*Youth Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit*

*Youth Credential Rate*

The performance measures for WIOA are negotiated with TWC. The performance of the Board as fiscal agent is reviewed during the annual audit and the TWC monitoring. The board members and chief elected officials receive the annual audit and TWC monitoring report.

An initial and annual evaluation of eligible training providers (ETP) is done following TWC requirements. The Board adopted requirements to monitor performance on as follows:

1. Nonexempt Training Programs must submit and continue to meet annual performance and be in compliance with either the Texas Workforce Commission's Career Schools and Colleges or another regulating state or governmental entity;
2. Exempt Training Programs must be in compliance with governmental regulation such as the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board or another regulating state or governmental entity; and
3. Programs that fail to meet the performance criteria will be withdrawn from the statewide list.

**18. A description of the actions the Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Board.**

Staff monitor performance monthly. If a measure is at risk of not meeting it is reviewed and corrective actions are discussed with the contractor. The consistent communication and working relationship with the contractor are essential in developing best practices that lead to success in maintaining status as a high performing Board.

**19. A description of how training services outlined in WIOA §134 will be provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs under that chapter, and how the Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided.**

The Board will use the ITA system exclusively for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker vocational training, as funding allows. Those interested in an ITA will be determined eligible for the program, and assessed to ensure that a successful outcome is indicated. Part of the assessment is basic skills evaluation and the other is career exploration to ensure that the desired training is a "good fit". Those that meet all qualifications are given vouchers for training, fees, books and supplies for each semester of study. Progress must be seen for the customer to continue to receive assistance. Individual Referral contracts are written for in-school youth and certain out-of-school youth, as well as for pre-vocational courses. All training information is presented to those customers interested in training.

**20. A description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.**

The one-stop centers use TWC's automated systems Work in Texas (WIT), Eligible Training Providers (ETPS), TWIST, and Workforce Center Customer Tracking (WCCT) system. The application for WIOA and child care services is on-line. Social media is used to outreach and educate consumers regarding job fairs, services, Hot Jobs and child care.

**21. The Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, consistent with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the Final Regulations.**

In accordance with WIOA A §134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 adult career and training services are provided to all eligible individuals who could benefit from these services and who have the ability to successfully complete training.

Local Board-approved WIOA policy states:

Service Priority for Individualized Career Services and Training Services must be provided in the following order:

1. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
2. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
3. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

**22. Boards may impose limits on the duration and amount of ITAs. If the state or Board chooses to do so, the limitations must be described in the Local Plan, but must not be implemented in a manner that undermines WIOA's requirement that training services are to be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice in the selection of an Eligible Training Provider. Exceptions to ITA limitations may be provided for individual cases and must be described in Board policies.**

The Board policy states that Individual Training Accounts are limited to \$8,500. Generally, no ITA may be written if the training cost exceeds this amount, unless the customer has access to additional, known, training funds to pay the remainder of costs. Generally, a two-year limit to training is enforced, unless the individual is attending part-time to work or is involved in other workforce activities.

**23. A description of the design framework for youth programs in the local area, and how the 14 program elements required in §681.460 of the Final Regulations are to be made available within that framework.**

Youth Activities in the local area are provided primarily through the workforce center system, although not all 14 program elements are offered by the workforce centers. Those services indicated for youth that are not offered through the workforce centers are provided through referrals to partner agencies which offer the service.

**24. A description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs in its area to register with the eligible training provider system in order to receive WIOA funding.**

The Deep East Texas region does not have any Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the area. The Board will support apprenticeship efforts should they become available.

**25. A description of the Board's strategy and commitment to support ApprenticeshipTexas efforts across the state, as applicable.**

Currently the Deep East Texas region does not have Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the area. The Board will support apprenticeship efforts should they become available. Information will be provided about ApprenticeshipTexas to companies that express an interest.

**Part C: Public Comment**

*All comments of disagreement received from the public during the public review period will be included in this section when the plan is submitted to the Texas Workforce Commission. on or prior to March 15, 2019.*

No comments from the public, positive or negative, were received during the initial plan review period or for the 2019 updates.