Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas
Board Plan
Program Years 2021-2024

Introduction

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) §108 (20 Code of Federal Regulations §679.500–580), each Local Workforce Development Board (Board) is required to develop and submit to the state a comprehensive four-year plan (Board Plan) that identifies and describes policies and procedures as well as local activities that are in line with the State Plan. This Board Plan must be developed openly and be available to the public for comment for at least 15 days, but no more than 30 days, particularly to members of the business and educational communities as well as various other labor organizations. Along with submission of the Board Plan to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Board must submit all public comments of disagreement with the plan to TWC.

At the end of the first two-year period, the appropriate chief elected officials (CEOs) and the Board will review the local plan and prepare and submit modifications to reflect changes in the labor market and economic conditions, factors affecting the implementation of the plan, changes in financing, changes to the structure of the Board, and/or the need to revise strategies to meet local performance goals.

Board Response:

The Deep East Texas Local Workforce Development Board, dba Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas, is one (1) of twenty-eight (28) Workforce Boards in the state of Texas that is responsible for leading and governing the region's public workforce system. As an administrative body, it provides oversight for employment, training and child care services in our area. Additionally, the Board is responsible for strategic planning to address workforce issues for a twelve (12) county region. The Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas region consists of the counties of: Angelina, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity and Tyler.

The Workforce Development Board consists of twenty-five (25) to thirty-one (31) members. Of these volunteer members, fifty-one percent (51%) of the members shall be made up of members from the private sector business who have substantial management responsibility within their organization. The other members will be comprised of representatives from other entities, such as education, economic development, child care and other community-based organizations which ensure that other workforce needs are addressed regarding jobseekers and other targeted populations. Members are appointed by the Chief Elected Officials of the region with final approval by the Texas Workforce Commissioners. The region's chief elected officials are the County Judges of Angelina, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity, and Tyler counties and the Mayor of Lufkin.

The Board generally meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Meeting notices and agendas are posted at the Angelina County Courthouse and on the Board's website at www.detwork.org. All meetings are open to the public to allow the general public an opportunity to make comments at each meeting.

Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

The strategic elements of the Local Workforce Development Board Planning Guidelines (Guidelines) are as follows:

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(E); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(5))

Boards must include a description of the Board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. The description must include:

·   goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including early education services, and services for youth and individuals with barriers to employment; and

·   goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A).

Board Response:

Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas is a responsive and effective Workforce Development Board overseeing a quality, competitive workforce system for a changing economy. The Deep East Texas Local Workforce Development Board envisions a regional workforce that is educated, innovative and highly skilled in areas that match the skill requirements of the Region's employers. The Board's mission is to: Provide solutions for quality workforce development. The Board's strategic plan for 2021-2024 sets forth the goals and strategies that will guide us toward achievement of our mission.

Meeting the needs of local businesses for qualified staff and helping parents obtain affordable child care is essential to the local and state economy. Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas accomplishes this through partnerships with economic development, other business groups, Independent School Districts (ISDs) and local colleges to identify and find solutions to employer needs; by ensuring good fiscal stewardship in hiring qualified staff who are thoroughly trained; through continual monitoring of performance, fiscal needs and expenditures at all levels; by responding with assistance to negative events such as layoffs or disasters; through Board and contractor staff involvement in the community organizations, child care facilities and schools, both formally and informally, to ensure sufficient services are provided to fully equip workers; by providing information, individualized services, tools, support in qualifying for child care, and workshops to increase job seekers' knowledge of employer expectations and increase the chances of their success in the workplace; and by providing barrier-free access to workforce information, programs and services. Also, through information by supplying parents with educational materials pertaining to their child's growth and development in a Board-produced educational pamphlet that will be distributed to each family enrolled into child care services.

Vision

A regional workforce that is educated, innovative and highly skilled in areas that match the skill requirements of the Region's employers

Goals
1. Employer Relationships
2. Education Integration
3. Child Care Early Learning (Quality Education)
4. Strengthening Community Partnerships
5. Performance Accountability

Goals	Strategies	Results
1. Employer Relationships Foster relationships with employers to build loyalty and increase their utilization of workforce services.	Engage in meaningful outreach i.e. meetings, visits, tours, ongoing conversations, and timely follow-up. Continually assess and understand the needs of the businesses.	Number/percent of the region's employers who use Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas: 2021 Actual: 14.42% quarterly 2022 Actual: 15.16% quarterly 2023 Goal: 18% quarterly 2024 Goal: 19% quarterly
	Deliver quality and timely services. Increase responsiveness to employer needs.	Number of new employers in WorkInTexas.com: Baseline FY'20: 290 2021: Goal 360 / Actual 503 2022: Goal 375(4% increase)/Actual 554 2023: Goal 400 (4% increase) 2024: Goal 416 (4% increase)
	Develop and maintain a database of the region's employers and track/report interactions, manage leads and follow-up activity.	Number of Job Fairs/Recruiting Events: 2021: Goal 84 / Actual 189 2022: Goal 88 / Actual 494 2023: Goal 92 2024: Goal 96 Hiring Results: Number of Job Postings Filled Rate: Baseline FY2022:17% 2023: 25% 2024: 37%
2. Education Integration Enhance alignment among career and technical education in 6th - 12th grades, post-secondary education and industry to provide the workforce area with a pipeline of quality future workers skilled in areas that match the requirements of the region's employers.	Collaborate with school districts, colleges and businesses to offer frequent career exploration experiences for youth.	Participation in all counties: 2020-2024: Minimum of 30 Teacher Externships annually 2021: Goal 30 / Actual 19 2022: Goal 30 / Actual 27 2023: Goal 30 2024: Goal 30 Host at least 4 Career Industries events with a minimum of 6 school districts represented annually and provide career exploration activities to middle and high school students through the Workforce Career and Education Outreach program
	Increase the number of youths prepared to enter the workforce after high school by earning certifications or credentials; facilitate this by promoting Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities in High Schools through funding such as a Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grant.	
	Communicate the benefits of local career opportunities in target industries for youth. Encourage youth investment in occupations that are in demand.	2021: 4 events, 6 ISDs / Actual 15 Events 12 ISDs 2022: 4 events, 6 ISDs / Actual 10 Events 11 ISDs 2023: 4 events, 6 ISDs, reach 12,120 students 2024: 4 events, 6 ISDs, reach 14,544 students
	Prepare and maintain a database of current CTE courses in the region and facilitate direct links to the region's target/demand occupations.	Collaboration of 2 JET Grants with ISD's within the Workforce Development Area (WDA) by the end of 2024.

Goals	Strategies	Results
3. Child Care Early Learning (Quality Education) Create and strengthen the foundation of early childhood education that will support a child's continuation into post-secondary education and then into the workforce. Include parents in all aspects of learning and development in order to allow the education to continue in the home.	Prepare children for public education by providing a high quality, detailed, age-appropriate curriculum at Texas Rising Star (TRS) certified centers. Assigning children a Texas Education Agency (TEA) identification number that will follow them from early education through post-secondary education to identify early intervention success in quality child care.	Meet or exceed target performance number of children in care each program year.
	Assessing and mentoring TRS Centers to meet higher quality standards of child care. Increasing the number of certified TRS centers and increasing current TRS centers Star levels.	TRS Certified Centers Baseline: 42% 2020-2021: 45% / Actual 52% 2021-2022: 50% / Actual 51% 2022-2023: 65% 2023-2024: 85%
	Assessments and recommendations identified by the Child Care Business Specialists will increase the capacity and quality of child care centers/homes throughout the 12-county region	2022-2023: Complete regional assessments, establish relationships with providers, and identify business opportunities 2023-2024: Actively assisting 20 child care providers
4. Strengthening Community Partnerships Strengthen partnerships with economic development corporations, chambers of commerce and other business and community organizations to promote the region's economic prosperity by increasing the skills levels and earning power of the region's workforce.	Provide partners with labor market information, hiring trends and wage occupation data.	2020-2021: 1 TIP Grant / Actual 1 Apprenticeship 2021-2022: 1 Apprenticeship / Actual 1 Apprenticeship and 1 HDJTG 2022-2023: 1 TIP Grant or HDJTG 2023-2024: 1 Apprenticeship
	Engage in meaningful participation in regional economic development activities.	
	Disseminate information regarding funding opportunities for workforce training.	
	Leverage resources among all partners (i.e. Economic Development Corporations (EDCs), private businesses, TWC, education institutions, foundations, and non- profit organizations) to achieve more training opportunities through grants such as skills development funds, apprenticeships, Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) program and High Demand Job Training Program (HDJTG).	
5. Performance Accountability Meet or exceed all the measures set forth by the Texas Workforce Commission.	Review Monthly Performance Report (MPR) to evaluate each performance report on its own merit.	Address areas not meeting or at risk. Provide technical assistance to contractors and assist in development of corrective action plans. Share Board feedback with contractors. 2021: Actual – Missed 2 Measures 2022: Actual – Met all Measures
	Identify measures not meeting or at risk and correcting those negative trends before they impact performance.	
	Review performance measures at each Board meeting to discuss ratings and actions.	

B. Board Strategies

Boards must include a description of the Board's strategy to work with the entities carrying out the core programs and with the required partners to align resources available to the local workforce development area (workforce area) to achieve the vision and goals.

Board Response:

The mission of Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas is to provide solutions for quality workforce development. To accomplish this mission and early education services, Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas is guided by the following principles:

The system will:

- Be efficient and cost effective by integrating programs to eliminate duplication;
- Offer services to meet the diverse needs of job seekers and employers;
- Treat people with concern, dignity, respect, and courtesy; and
- Require people to share responsibility for their outcomes.

The Board's strategy to work with core partners to achieve its vision and goals is to ensure personal contact with other key stakeholders involved in workforce development to form effective partnerships. This is done through community involvement, joint projects, memorandums of understanding and other avenues. In this way, Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas can better understand the services of other organizations to avoid duplication of services and, more importantly, to expand the depth of services that can be offered to job seekers and employers by working together.

C. High-Performing Board

Boards must include a description of the actions the Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Board, consistent with the factors developed by the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC).

Board Response:

Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas utilizes a tiered, team approach to monitoring and improving performance. The approach demonstrated effectiveness in the most recent Performance Year; the Board met or exceeded all performance measures contracted by the Texas Workforce Commission. In an effort to continue performing at the highest levels, Board staff monitors 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.

The Texas Workforce Investment Council identifies these imperatives as the foundational elements of its strategic plan: customer service and satisfaction, data driven program improvement, and continuous improvement and innovation. The Board embraces these core elements in its strategy to grow and sustain a competitive workforce that aligns with employer needs through integration and partnerships.

- Performance monitored and reported monthly. Additional key metrics are tracked and measured as outlined in this plan.
  - Customer satisfaction (employers and job seekers)
  - Key goals and objectives as outlined in this strategic plan
  - Workforce Performance Measures
- Corrective action and/or replication of best practices are implemented as appropriate.
- Annual professional development by Board members is encouraged, either through participation in conferences or other training opportunities. The development of all employees within Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas to continuously evolve is encouraged with on-line training provided by Metrix Learning.

Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(A); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(1))

Boards must include a regional analysis of the following:

·   The economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations

·   The employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations

Board Response:

Economic Conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations

Through the work of the Board's committees, engagement with education, industry and economic development organizations, and local intelligence resources, the Board monitors regional economic conditions and industry demand. The purpose of this regional analysis is to help focus workforce development efforts that will effectively facilitate economic development in the region. It is also used to determine jobs in demand, and occupations for which Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds may be used to assist eligible WIOA customers with training identified on the Targeted Occupation List.

Indicators show that Deep East Texas has experienced flat to slight growth as of the year 2019. Annual gross sales increased for the region by 3.2% during the period from 2013 to 2019, according to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. Additionally, the Real Gross Domestic Product for the region was $13,418,080 in 2018, a growth of 4.5% from 2017. (Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis)

Based on the most current annual labor market data available, 2021, compared to the previous year:

- The labor force has increased by 2.1%
- The number employed has grown by 3.2%
- The number of unemployed fell by 11.5%
- The unemployment rate was down to 7.0%

In 2020-2021, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic greatly impacted the region's economy. While the region experienced a significant number of business closings and employee furloughs or layoffs, including double-digit unemployment rates, businesses have reopened and unemployment has dropped down to 4.8% as of October 2022. The economic impact caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic along with the high inflation and recession concerns of 2022 leave the region with continued challenges forcing businesses to adapt to rapid technology changes and employee demands for more flexible and safe working environments.

The workforce development area consists of twelve (12) rural counties with a labor force of 153,176, encompassing 7,638 employers.

Over a ten (10) year period, the total number of private industry establishments increased overall by 14.5%, going from 6,504 in 2012 to 7,444 in 2022 for Deep East Texas. In the last two (2) years, this change was a 6% increase. Employment in private industry grew by .6% overall in the past ten (10) years in Deep East Texas, while private industry employment grew 5.7% in the last two years.

The four (4) industry sectors with over 10,000 employees are Trade, Transportation and Utilities; Education and Health Services; Manufacturing; and Leisure and Hospitality. The largest ten (10) year percent growth in employment was in the Financial Activities sector. While Manufacturing showed a decrease in the number employed since 2012, the industry's employment number has grown 5.7% over the last two (2) years.

Industries that are projecting growth or have large employment base with sustainable average wages follows:

- Health Care and Social Assistance
  During the second quarter of 2022, this sector's average weekly wage overall was $855, which is below the region's average of $882. However, Ambulatory Health Care Services ($989) and Hospitals ($1,237) average wages exceed the region's average. An in-depth analysis of the Hospital category reveals that Offices of Physicians have the highest wage of $1,605, followed by General Medical and Surgical Hospitals wage at $1,255, then Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories ($1,228), Other Ambulatory Health Care Services ($1,105) and Outpatient Centers ($1,047).

- Manufacturing
  This sector comprises private establishments producing products using machinery and skilled labor. Manufacturing has shown a decline since 2006, but in the most recent two (2) years there has been a 6.7% increase in establishments and 4.6% increase in employment since 2020. Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing has the largest number of establishments, while Wood Product Manufacturing remains the largest category for employment. Average weekly wage in this industry of $1,136 is well above the average of $882 for the region, and has increased 10.3% in two (2) years. The East Texas Manufacturing Alliance, which has membership of over sixty (60) manufacturing businesses, has described a gap between experienced older workers who are nearing the end of their careers and younger, less prepared and less skilled workforce. In the largest county in the region, Angelina, the economic development corporation has attracted new and helped with the expansion of several manufacturing businesses. Several additional counties have attracted new manufacturing facilities or existing facilities are planning for growth. The on-going meetings with the economic development partners have provided insight that manufacturing companies are looking to move or expand their current operations within the Deep East Texas region.

- Wholesale Trade
  This sector comprises establishments engaged in wholesaling merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise. The merchandise described in this sector includes the outputs of agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and certain information industries, such as publishing. More specific industries under these show a wide variety of products - electronic markets and agents and brokers, merchant wholesalers for motor vehicle and parts, lumber and construction supply, commercial equipment, metal and mineral, electric goods, hardware and plumbing, miscellaneous durable goods, druggists' goods, grocery and related products, farm product raw material, chemicals, petroleum, and miscellaneous nondurable goods. The number of establishments and employed workers increased over ten (10) years. The growth rate for all occupations in Wholesale Trade shows an increase with Sales and Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations projecting the largest growth numbers. Wages are very good in this industry, with $1,283 as the average weekly wage, well above the $882 area average.

- Transportation and Warehousing
  This sector includes industries providing transportation of passengers and cargo, warehousing and storage for goods, scenic and sightseeing transportation, and support activities related to

modes of transportation. Truck transportation is by far the largest employer in this sector with average weekly wages at $1,131, slightly above the sector average of $1,127 and well above the region's average wage of $882. Air Transportation and Pipeline transportation wages are much higher, but employment numbers are low.

- Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
This sector comprises establishments that extract naturally occurring mineral solids, such as coal and ores; liquid minerals, such as crude petroleum; and gases, such as natural gas. The term mining is used in the broad sense to include quarrying, well operations, beneficiating (i.e. crushing, screening, washing, and flotation), and other preparation customarily performed at the mine site or as a part of mining activity. The number of establishments grew 1.8% while employment declined over the last two (2) years by 11.8%. Wages overall increased by 6% over the past two (2) years.

- Finance and Insurance
This sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in financial transactions (transactions involving the creation, liquidation, or change in ownership of financial assets) and/or in facilitating financial transactions. The average weekly wage ($1,374) is significantly above the region's average. Information obtained through job postings and employer surveys in this sector of employers indicates the skills gap in the regional workforce, especially in the area of accounting.

- Utilities
This sector comprises establishments engaged in the provision of the following utility services: electric power, natural gas, steam supply, water supply, and sewage removal. The number of establishments remained constant. Employment grew by over 9% over ten (10) years, and increased 1.7% in the last two (2) years. Average weekly wages have grown significantly, 9.7% in the last two (2) years. All occupations within the industry are projected to grow. Furthermore, during an employer needs assessment conducted by the Board, utilities employers expressed they are seeing growing demand for Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers.

- Construction
This sector comprises establishments primarily engaged in the construction of buildings or engineering projects (i.e. highways and utility systems). Establishments primarily engaged in the preparation of sites for new construction and establishments primarily engaged in subdividing land for sale as building sites also are included in this sector. Construction work done may include new work, additions, alterations, or maintenance and repairs. The number of establishments increased by 14.6% and the overall number employed has increased 8.4% over the past two (2) years. Average construction wages are also well above average at $1,043, verses $882 average wage in the region.

Demand Industries

NAICS Code	Industry
213	Support activities for mining
221	Utilities
236	Construction of buildings
237	Heavy and civil engineering construction
238	Specialty trade contractors
321	Wood product manufacturing
325199	All Other Basic Organic Chemical Manufacturing
332	Fabricated metal product manufacturing
423	Merchant wholesalers, durable goods
484	Truck transportation
541	Professional, scientific, and technical services
561	Administrative and support services
621	Ambulatory health care services
623	Nursing and residential care facilities
624	Social assistance

Source: Texaslmi.com and Lightcast 2022

Demand Occupations

SOC Code	Occupation Title
11-9021	Construction Managers
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers
11-1021	General and Operations Managers
13-1198	Project Management Specialists and Business Operations Specialists, All Other
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers
15-1257	^Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers
17-2112	Industrial Engineers
17-3000	Drafters, Engineering Technicians, and Mapping Technicians
17-3024	Electro-Mechanical and Mechatronics Technologists and Technicians
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants
25-2000	Preschool, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Special Education Teachers
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists
29-1141	Registered Nurses
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians
29-2040	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians
29-2055	Surgical Technologists
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
31-1131	Nursing Assistants
31-2011	^Occupational Therapy Assistants
31-9091	Dental Assistants
31-9092	Medical Assistants
31-9097	Phlebotomists
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers
39-9011	Childcare Workers
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators
47-2111	Electricians
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters
47-2231	**Solar Photovoltaic Installers
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
51-2028	*Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, & Finishers
51-4041	Machinists
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers
51-9011	Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators

Target Occupations

SOC Code	Occupation Title
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators
17-3000	Drafters, Engineering Technicians, and Mapping Technicians
25-2000	Preschool, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Special Education Teachers
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists
29-1141	Registered Nurses
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians
29-2040	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians
29-2055	Surgical Technologists
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
31-1131	Nursing Assistants
31-2011	^Occupational Therapy Assistants
31-9092	Medical Assistants
31-9097	Phlebotomists
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators
47-2111	Electricians
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers
51-2028	*Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers
51-4041	Machinists
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers

Source: Texaslmi.com and Lightcast 2022

Regional Employment Needs

The needs of employers in the Demand Occupations are provided in the table below. The Demand Occupations were selected based on data analyzed from texas.lmi.com, Lightcast, Help Wanted Online, WorkInTexas, as well as local knowledge of industry employment trends and economic development activities.

Technically, any occupation for which positive growth is projected is an occupation in demand. Demand occupation is defined by WIOA as one that is projected to have a number of positions great enough to have a significant impact on the state, regional, or local economy. Additionally, the Board considered local knowledge about the importance of an in-demand occupation in the workforce area and gained information from employer surveys and industry and economic development partners.

To develop a list of occupations for general information for a wide variety of workers, certain categories were removed to keep the list manageable. The entire list of two hundred and twenty-one (221) occupations can be viewed at http://www.texaslmi.com. The complete list also shows annual data such as exits from workforce, transfers out of the occupation, change, and openings.

Deep East Texas Demand Occupations Regional Employment Needs

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Estimated Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Change In Employment	Percentage Change	Annualized Percent Growth	Among the top 40 Job Postings	Identified employer need in local market
11-9021	Construction Managers	259	377	118	45.56	3.83		
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	352	442	90	25.57	2.3	Y	
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	2,122	2,588	466	21.96	2.01	Y	
13-1198	Project Management Specialists and Business Operations Specialists, All Other	501	603	102	20.36	1.87		
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	463	535	72	15.55	1.46		
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	167	202	35	20.96	1.92		Y
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	167	178	11	6.59	0.64	Y	Y
15-1244	Network and Computer Systems Administrators	107	116	9	8.41	0.81		Y
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	81	118	37	45.68	3.83	Y	
15-1257	^Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	11,108	13,803	2,695	24.26	2.2		Y
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	133	210	77	57.89	4.67		Y
17-3000	Drafters, Engineering Technicians, and Mapping Technicians	526	556	30	5.7	0.56		
17-3024	Electro-Mechanical and Mechatronics Technologists and Technicians	1,404	1,574	170	12.11	1.15		
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	101	123	22	21.78	1.99		
25-2000	Preschool, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Special Education Teachers	4,688	4,831	143	3.05	0.3		
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	106	114	8	7.55	0.73		
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2,153	2,186	33	1.53	0.15	Y	
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	208	215	7	3.37	0.33		
29-2040	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	359	409	50	13.93	1.31		
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	264	270	6	2.27	0.23	Y	
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	119	122	3	2.52	0.25		
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,249	1,340	91	7.29	0.71	Y	Y
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	1,179	1,240	61	5.17	0.51	Y	
31-2011	^Occupational Therapy Assistants	3,753	5,506	1,753	46.71	3.91		
31-9091	Dental Assistants	290	339	49	16.9	1.57		
31-9092	Medical Assistants	783	897	114	14.56	1.37	Y	Y
31-9097	Phlebotomists	68	72	4	5.88	0.57		
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	682	715	33	4.84	0.47		
39-9011	Childcare Workers	633	650	17	2.69	0.27		
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1,147	1,180	33	2.88	0.28		
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	2,008	2,286	278	13.84	1.31	Y	
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	385	458	73	18.96	1.75		Y
47-2111	Electricians	353	382	29	8.22	0.79		Y
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	180	186	6	3.33	0.33		
47-2231	**Solar Photovoltaic Installers	1,159	2,915	1,756	152			Y
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	357	380	23	6.44	0.63		
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	263	315	52	19.77	1.82		
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	200	279	79	39.5	3.39		
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	256	263	7	2.73	0.27		
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	440	572	132	30	2.66		Y
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	171	243	72	42.11	3.58		Y
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	112	145	33	29.46	2.62		
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,226	1,401	175	14.27	1.34	Y	
51-2028	*Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders,	149	318	169	113			Y
51-4041	Machinists	150	174	24	16	1.5		
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	419	494	75	17.9	1.66		Y
51-9011	Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	58	113	55	95			
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,363	2,852	489	20.69	1.9	Y	
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	418	466	48	11.48	1.09		

Shown below are occupations in this area requiring a Masters or Doctoral Degree.

Demand Masters/PhD

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Estimated Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Change In Employment	Percentage Change
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	118	168	50	42.37
23-1011	Lawyers	170	193	23	13.53
29-1071	Physician Assistants	81	102	21	25.93
21-1012	Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors	250	270	20	8
29-1131	Veterinarians	64	81	17	26.56
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	101	116	15	14.85
29-1021	Dentists, General	94	108	14	14.89
11-9032	Education Administrators, Kindergarten through Secondary	441	454	13	2.95
11-9033	Education Administrators, Postsecondary	86	94	8	9.3
21-1023	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	70	77	7	10
19-3031	Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists	76	79	3	3.95
21-1022	Healthcare Social Workers	92	94	2	2.17
29-1122	Occupational Therapists	105	107	2	1.9
29-1123	Physical Therapists	87	89	2	2.3
29-1215	Family Medicine Physicians	77	78	1	1.3
29-1228	Physicians, All Other; and Ophthalmologists, Except Pediatric	57	58	1	1.75
25-9031	Instructional Coordinators	106	106	0	0
29-1051	Pharmacists	169	158	-11	-6.51

Source: Texaslmi.com Projections Report 2020-2030

The occupations that require no formal training but are growing are below. Demand is generally high for these workers, but most of the demand is generally due to high turnover rates.

Require No Formal Educational Credential

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Estimated Employment (2020)	Projected Employment (2030)	Change In Employment	Percentage Change
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	3,856	4,465	609	15.79
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	963	1,437	474	49.22
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	1,473	1,753	280	19.01
47-2061	Construction Laborers	796	1,048	252	31.66
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	3,205	3,407	202	6.3
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,292	1,466	174	13.47
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,617	1,790	173	10.7
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	753	917	164	21.78
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	698	778	80	11.46
45-2093	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	3,061	3,140	79	2.58
53-7081	Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors	191	249	58	30.37
39-3091	Amusement and Recreation Attendants	205	262	57	27.8
41-2022	Parts Salespersons	250	307	57	22.8
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	418	466	48	11.48
35-3011	Bartenders	144	190	46	31.94
47-5071	Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	187	232	45	24.06
47-2141	Painters, Construction and Maintenance	227	269	42	18.5
53-7061	Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	283	322	39	13.78
35-9021	Dishwashers	194	233	39	20.1
51-6031	Sewing Machine Operators	63	101	38	60.32
35-9031	Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	131	168	37	28.24
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	527	560	33	6.26
47-2051	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	193	221	28	14.51
53-6031	Automotive and Watercraft Service Attendants	161	179	18	11.18
35-3041	Food Servers, Nonrestaurant	99	117	18	18.18
47-5013	Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas	57	71	14	24.56
47-2181	Roofers	51	57	6	11.76
51-6011	Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers	221	226	5	2.26
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	267	260	-7	-2.62
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	692	670	-22	-3.18
51-3023	Slaughterers and Meat Packers	458	428	-30	-6.55
53-7064	Packers and Packagers, Hand	686	636	-50	-7.29
41-2011	Cashiers	3,523	3,364	-159	-4.51

Source: Texaslmi.com Projections Report 2020-2030

Another way to determine what jobs are in demand is to review job postings on WorkInTexas, Jobs Now, Indeed and other employment sites. The following is a list produced by an application called Lightcast, showing positions that were advertised, either in newspapers or on-line, for jobs in this area for a twelve (12) month period.

Top 40 Job Postings September 2021 - August 2022

Rank	SOC	Occupation	Unique Postings
1	29-1141	Registered Nurses	1,497
2	41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	752
3	53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	702
4	41-2031	Retail Salespersons	636
5	35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	412
6	29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	391
7	31-1128	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	375
8	43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	333
9	41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing, Except Technical & Scientific Products	332
10	11-9051	Food Service Managers	312
11	53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	299
12	49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	271
13	31-1131	Nursing Assistants	263
14	29-2099	Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	261
15	11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	251
16	53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	236
17	27-1026	Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	227
18	11-9199	Managers, All Other	221
19	41-2011	Cashiers	205
20	35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	175
21	43-6014	Secretaries & Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, & Executive	163
22	35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	153
23	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	147
24	53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	140
25	11-1021	General and Operations Managers	138
26	51-9199	Production Workers, All Other	135
27	31-9092	Medical Assistants	131
28	33-9032	Security Guards	130
29	29-2018	Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	127
30	37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	127
31	53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	125
32	25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	125
33	29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	121
34	37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	119
35	15-1252	Software Developers	112
36	17-3026	Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians	103
37	13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	101
38	15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	97
39	29-1229	Physicians, All Other	94
40	51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	94

(Source: Lightcast Q3 2022, Job postings are collected from various sources and processed/enriched to provide information such as standardized company name, occupation, skills, and geography.)

B. Knowledge and Skills Analysis

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(B); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(2))

Boards must include an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs for in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.

Board Response:

The table below describes the knowledge and skills needed for some of the Demand Occupations, as obtained from TexasCareerCheck.com, O*NET, and Career One Stop.

SOC Code/Occupation Title	Knowledge Needed	Skills Needed
49-3023, Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	-Computers and Electronics -Engineering and Technology -Mechanical	-Equipment Selection and Maintenance -Quality Control Analysis -Repairing -Troubleshooting
49-3031, Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	-Mechanical -Transportation -Customer and Personal Service	-Troubleshooting -Repairing -Operation Monitoring -Operation and Control -Equipment Maintenance
15-1257, Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	-Computers and Electronics -Mathematics -Engineering and Technology	-Programming -Active Listening --Critical Thinking -Complex Problem Solving -Quality Control Analysis
49-9051, Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	-Mechanical -Customer and Personal Service -Physics -English Language -Mathematics	-Active Listening -Monitoring -Critical Thinking -Troubleshooting -Operation Monitoring
49-9021, Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	-Engineering and Technology -Mathematics and Science	-Equipment Maintenance -Installation -Operation Monitoring -Repairing -Troubleshooting
53-3032, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	-Transportation -Public Safety and Security -Customer and Personal Service	-Operation and Control -Operation Monitoring -Time Management -Troubleshooting
47-2231, Solar Photovoltaic Installers	-Mechanical -Building and Construction -English Language -Design -Customer and Personal Service	-Installation -Active Listening -Monitoring -Active Learning -Critical Thinking
49-9041, Industrial Machinery Mechanics	-Mechanical -Engineering and Technology -Production and Processing -Mathematics	-Equipment Maintenance -Repairing -Operation Monitoring -Troubleshooting
29-2061, Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	-Medical and Dentistry -Customer and Personal Service -Psychology -English Language -Therapy and Counseling	-Service Orientation -Reading Comprehension -Active Listening -Speaking -Monitoring
49-9071, Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	-Mechanical -Building and Construction -Customer and Personal Service -Public Safety and Security -English Language	-Equipment Maintenance -Repairing -Troubleshooting -Operation Monitoring -Operation and Control

31-9092, Medical Assistants	-Customer and Personal Service -Medical and Dentistry -English Language -Clerical -Computer and Electronics	-Speaking -Reading Comprehension -Active Listening -Social Listening -Monitoring
29-1141, Registered Nurses	-Medical and Dentistry -Customer and Personal Service -Psychology -English Language -Therapy and Counseling	-Active Listening -Social Perceptiveness -Service Orientation -Speaking -Critical Thinking
25-2000, Preschool, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, and Special Education Teachers	-Education and Training -English Language -Psychology -Computers and Electronics -Mathematics	-Learning Strategies -Instructing -Speaking -Active Listening -Critical Thinking
17-2112, Industrial Engineers	-Engineering and Technology -Production and Processing -Mechanical	-Critical Thinking -Speaking -Reading Comprehension -Active Listening -Complex Problem Solving
51-4121, Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	-Engineering and Technology -Manufacturing and Production -Mathematics and Science	-Operation Monitoring -Operation and Control -Quality Control Analysis

C. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(C); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(3))

Boards must include an analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Board Response:

Labor Force Employment

In 2020, persons ages sixteen (16) years and older were 80.0% of the area population, compared to 77.1% statewide. This is the population generally considered to participate in the labor market. The labor force participation rate for the area is 52.6%, compared to the state rate of 64.8%. The labor force participation rate for the group of twenty-five (25) to forty-four (44) year olds is a smaller percentage of the population than the state (20.9% /29.9%), which may indicate that this age group moves out of the area for job opportunities. As job opportunities increase, it can be anticipated that age group would have a higher workforce participation rate.

(Source: Census, 2020)

A comparison of the Class of Worker between 2017 and 2020 indicates a decrease of private wage and salary workers for both the region and state, a slight increase in government workers and self-employed workers both locally and for the state, and no change for the unpaid family workers. (Census 2017 and 2020)

Class of Worker	Deep East Texas 2017	Deep East Texas 2020	Difference	Texas 2017	Texas 2020	Difference
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	144,722	148,375	3,653	12,689,069	13,461,358	772,289
Private wage and salary workers	75.2%	74.7%	-0.5%	80.0%	79.7%	-0.3%
Government workers	17.4%	17.6%	0.2%	13.2%	13.3%	0.1%
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers	7.2%	7.6%	0.4%	6.7%	6.8%	0.1%
Unpaid family workers	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%

Class of Worker (Source: Census, 2017 and 2020)

In 2020, of those commuting to work of the civilian labor force sixteen (16) years and older (local/state), most drove a personal vehicle alone (81.7% / 78.7%) or carpooled (10.3% / 9.9%), very few used limited public transportation (0.2% / 1.3%) or walked/used other means (4.1% / 3.1%). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home has become an increasingly significant option for the labor force and, as a result, working from home has been included in the commute data with 3.7% of the Deep East Texas labor force working from home and 7.0% of the Texas labor force working from home. The mean commuting time was 29 minutes for the area, 27 for the state. There was a large variation in time for the counties within the area: 21 minutes for both Angelina and Nacogdoches Counties and 41 minutes for San Jacinto County. (Source: Census, 2020)

According to the chart below, for the five (5) year period between 2018 and 2022, growth continued in the Deep East Texas region in average weekly wages and the number of establishments. Average employment slightly increased in the area but showed more growth for Texas overall. (Source: QCEW, Qtr.1, All Industries)

	Deep East Texas			Texas		
	2018	2022	Difference	2018	2022	Difference
Establishment	7,413	8,050	8.6%	689,064	788,553	14.4%
Average Employment	106,845	106,939	0.1%	12,114,309	12,904,798	6.5%
Average Weekly Wage	$762	$872	14.4%	$1,168	$1,369	17.2%

On The Map data for 2019 shows the following worker demographics:

Work Area Profile Report	Deep East Texas 2019		Texas 2019	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Total Primary Jobs	95,490	100.0%	11,596,846	100.0%
Jobs by Worker Age	Count	Share	Count	Share
Age 29 or younger	21,848	22.9%	2,738,032	23.6%
Age 30 to 54	48,895	51.2%	6,299,660	54.3%
Age 55 or older	24,747	25.9%	2,559,154	22.1%
Jobs by Worker Sex	Count	Share	Count	Share
Male	44,622	46.7%	5,979,118	51.6%
Female	50,868	53.3%	5,617,728	48.4%
Jobs by Worker Race	Count	Share	Count	Share
White Alone	74,766	78.3%	9,083,788	78.3%
Black or African American Alone	17,167	18.0%	1,568,806	13.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	880	0.9%	99,379	0.9%
Asian Alone	1,522	1.6%	649,131	5.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone	83	0.1%	17,644	0.2%
Two or More Race Groups	1,072	1.1%	178,098	1.5%
Jobs by Worker Ethnicity	Count	Share	Count	Share
Not Hispanic or Latino	79,945	83.7%	7,732,300	66.7%
Hispanic or Latino	15,545	16.3%	3,864,546	33.3%
Jobs by Worker Educational Attainment	Count	Share	Count	Share
Less than high school	12,672	13.3%	1,651,457	14.2%
High school or equivalent, no college	22,948	24.0%	2,284,879	19.7%
Some college or Associate degree	24,001	25.1%	2,739,791	23.6%
Bachelor's degree or advanced degree	14,021	14.7%	2,182,687	18.8%
Educational attainment not available (workers aged 29 or younger)	21,848	22.9%	2,738,032	23.6%

Unemployment Data

An unprecedented challenge that arose in 2020 and continued through 2021 was the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact that it had on the state's and the region's job markets. As COVID-19 spread, businesses across Texas and the nation reduced or eliminated jobs. What resulted was massive increase in the number of unemployment claims.

The region is continuing to adapt to the rapid technology changes and evolving expectations among the workforce. We will continue to pursue disaster funds in addition to using available WIOA, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other funding sources to provide funds for training the unemployed for demand jobs. Close ties to the local labor market enable the Board and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to conduct outreach by working with businesses to provide opportunities for work experience and on- the-job training (OJT) and also allow low-skilled workers to build skill sets relevant to the current market. The Skills Development Fund and other state-directed programs provide resources for upskilling current workers in new technologies. Additionally, the Workforce Board is well positioned to work with other community partners, such as economic development organizations, to expand opportunities to all customers.

In 2022, the Unemployment Rate has continued to decline below 5% for the U.S. and Deep East Texas area. Deep East Texas rates continue to be higher than both Texas and the U.S.

Per capita personal income in 2018 was $37,134 (Deep East Texas) compared to $50,355 (Texas), a growth rate from 2017 of 4.8% and 5.1% respectively. (Source: BEA)

The percentage of all families living below the poverty level in 2020 averaged 15.5% in the region, 10.9% in Texas. (Source: Census, 2020)

Geographic Area	Below Poverty Level Percentage of All People
San Augustine County, Texas	26.4%
Newton County, Texas	25.8%
Nacogdoches County, Texas	24.9%
Shelby County, Texas	23.3%
Jasper County, Texas	20.3%
Houston County, Texas	19.0%
Sabine County, Texas	18.8%
Tyler County, Texas	18.5%
Trinity County, Texas	17.8%
Angelina County, Texas	17.3%
Polk County, Texas	16.7%
State of Texas	14.2%
San Jacinto County, Texas	13.6%

All Government transfer payments (Food Stamps/SNAP, Cash Public Assistance Income and Supplemental Security Income) for the region and the state have decreased in the three (3) year period from 2016 to 2019. The table below shows the percentage of households receiving such benefits:

Government Transfer Payments	Deep East Texas			Texas		
	2016	2019	Difference	2016	2019	Difference
Food Stamps/SNAP	17.0%	16.4%	-0.6%	13.1%	11.8%	-1.3%
Cash Public Assistance Income	2.3%	1.6%	-0.7%	1.6%	1.4%	-0.2%
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	7.3%	7.0%	-0.3%	4.9%	4.7%	-0.2%

(Source: Census, 2016 and 2019)

Labor Market Trends

Jobs by Earnings	Deep East Texas 2019			Texas 2019	
	Count	Share		Count	Share
$1,250 per month or less	21,188	22.2%		1,957,859	16.9%
$1,251 to $3,333 per month	37,206	39.0%		3,632,641	31.3%
More than $3,333 per month	37,096	38.8%		6,006,346	51.8%

Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector	Count	Share		Count	Share
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,806	1.9%		55,734	0.5%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,154	1.2%		248,753	2.1%
Utilities	1,109	1.2%		81,161	0.7%
Construction	4,880	5.1%		775,637	6.7%
Manufacturing	12,682	13.3%		895,222	7.7%
Wholesale Trade	2,927	3.1%		590,147	5.1%
Retail Trade	11,431	12.0%		1,223,721	10.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	2,431	2.5%		505,905	4.4%
Information	765	0.8%		205,166	1.8%
Finance and Insurance	2,882	3.0%		539,573	4.7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,098	1.1%		220,265	1.9%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,188	2.3%		803,388	6.9%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	731	0.8%		150,620	1.3%
Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation	4,043	4.2%		745,634	6.4%
Educational Services	13,289	13.9%		1,190,833	10.3%
Health Care and Social Assistance	15,891	16.6%		1,499,835	12.9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	744	0.8%		142,513	1.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	8,186	8.6%		1,034,049	8.9%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	2,004	2.1%		311,580	2.7%
Public Administration	5,249	5.5%		377,110	3.3%

(Source: On The Map 2019)

Inflow and Outflow characteristics are shown in the chart below:

Labor Market (Primary Jobs)	Deep East Texas					Texas			
	2014		2019			2014		2019	
In-Area Characteristics (Primary Jobs)	Count	Share	Count	Share		Count	Share	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	99,542	100.0%	95,490	100.0%		10,552,533	100.0%	11,596,846	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area	128,379	129.0%	124,305	130.2%		10,528,136	99.8%	11,574,881	99.8%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	69,005	53.8%	66,980	53.9%		10,386,899	98.7%	11,415,538	98.6%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	59,374	46.2%	57,325	46.1%		141,237	1.3%	159,343	1.4%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	30,537	30.7%	28,510	29.9%		165,634	1.6%	181,308	1.6%
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-28,837	-	-28,815	-		24,397	-	21,965	-
Interior Flow Job Characteristics (Primary Jobs)	Count	Share	Count	Share		Count	Share	Count	Share
Internal Jobs Filled by Residents	69,005	100.0%	66,980	100.0%		10,386,899	100.0%	11,415,538	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	13,798	20.0%	14,243	21.3%		2,401,961	23.1%	2,690,584	23.6%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	38,158	55.3%	34,774	51.9%		5,861,529	56.4%	6,207,247	54.4%
Workers Aged 55 or older	17,049	24.7%	17,963	26.8%		2,123,409	20.4%	2,517,707	22.1%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	15,798	22.9%	14,293	21.3%		2,016,472	19.4%	1,924,335	16.9%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	29,394	42.6%	26,859	40.1%		3,623,796	34.9%	3,573,714	31.3%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	23,813	34.5%	25,828	38.6%		4,746,631	45.7%	5,917,489	51.8%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	16,347	23.7%	14,887	22.2%		1,824,589	17.6%	1,921,950	16.8%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	10,738	15.6%	10,351	15.5%		2,168,461	20.9%	2,363,061	20.7%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	41,920	60.7%	41,742	62.3%		6,393,849	61.6%	7,130,527	62.5%
Outflow Job Characteristics (Primary Jobs)	Count	Share	Count	Share		Count	Share	Count	Share
External Jobs Filled by Residents	59,374	100.0%	57,325	100.0%		141,237	100.0%	159,343	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	14,183	23.9%	14,515	25.3%		37,977	26.9%	41,825	26.2%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	31,579	53.2%	29,114	50.8%		73,935	52.3%	82,693	51.9%
Workers Aged 55 or older	13,612	22.9%	13,696	23.9%		29,325	20.8%	34,825	21.9%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	12,324	20.8%	10,608	18.5%		32,324	22.9%	29,677	18.6%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	20,811	35.1%	18,769	32.7%		55,897	39.6%	55,390	34.8%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	26,239	44.2%	27,948	48.8%		53,016	37.5%	74,276	46.6%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	15,805	26.6%	15,046	26.2%		44,238	31.3%	53,421	33.5%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	14,587	24.6%	13,881	24.2%		28,756	20.4%	28,996	18.2%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	28,982	48.8%	28,398	49.5%		68,243	48.3%	76,926	48.3%
Inflow Job Characteristics (Primary Jobs)	Count	Share	Count	Share		Count	Share	Count	Share
Internal Jobs Filled by Outside Workers	30,537	100.0%	28,510	100.0%		165,634	100.0%	181,308	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	8,377	27.4%	7,605	26.7%		44,235	26.7%	47,448	26.2%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	15,896	52.1%	14,121	49.5%		86,207	52.0%	92,413	51.0%
Workers Aged 55 or older	6,264	20.5%	6,784	23.8%		35,192	21.2%	41,447	22.9%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	8,184	26.8%	6,895	24.2%		34,936	21.1%	33,524	18.5%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	11,823	38.7%	10,347	36.3%		59,123	35.7%	58,927	32.5%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	10,530	34.5%	11,268	39.5%		71,575	43.2%	88,857	49.0%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	6,205	20.3%	5,635	19.8%		50,932	30.7%	53,396	29.5%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	8,415	27.6%	7,547	26.5%		34,741	21.0%	37,873	20.9%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	15,917	52.1%	15,328	53.8%		79,961	48.3%	90,039	49.7%

(Source: On The Map, 2014 and 2019)

Place of Work vs. Place of Residence

This map shows where the workers live currently compared with where they work. The Blue color (positive numbers) indicates there are more jobs than workers in the zip code. Red (negative numbers) indicates there are more workers than available jobs.
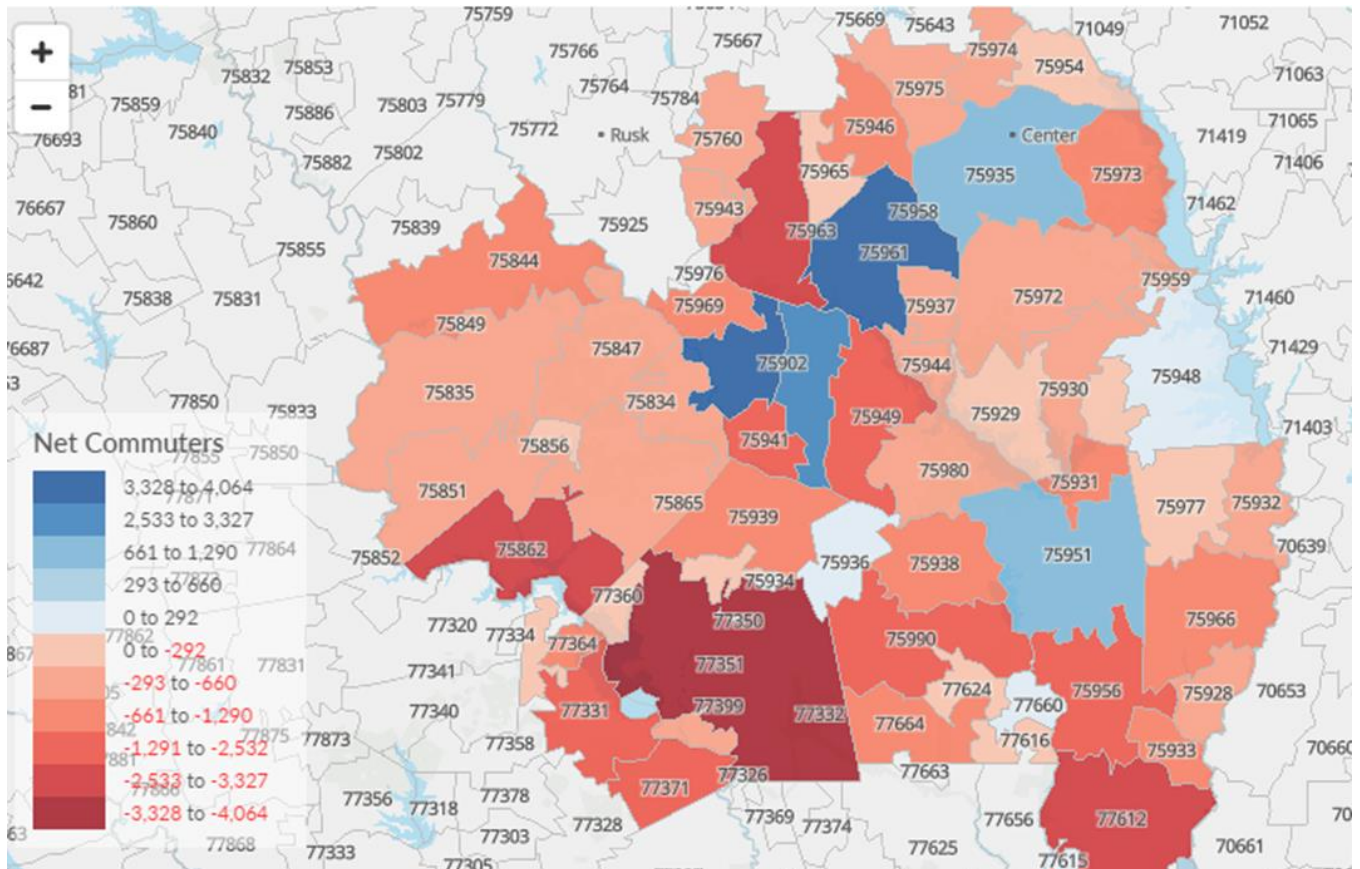
Place of Work vs Place of Residence

Where Talent Works

ZIP	Name	2021 Employment
75904	Lufkin, TX (in Angelina County)	17,198
75901	Lufkin, TX (in Angelina County)	14,733
75961	Nacogdoches, TX (in Nacogdoches County)	9,606
77351	Livingston, TX (in Polk County)	8,905
75935	Center, TX (in Shelby County)	6,657

Where Talent Lives

ZIP	Name	2021 Workers
75904	Lufkin, TX (in Angelina County)	13,134
77351	Livingston, TX (in Polk County)	12,591
75901	Lufkin, TX (in Angelina County)	12,083
75964	Nacogdoches, TX (in Nacogdoches County)	8,359
75965	Nacogdoches, TX (in Nacogdoches County)	6,605

(Source: Lightcast Q4 2022 Data Set, Economy Overview, November 2022)

Industry

Understanding the industry make-up of the region is vital to understanding the needs of local businesses and how workforce development efforts can best be provided.

General Business Information

Businesses are classified in several ways. One way is to look at the size by number of employees. The vast majority of the employment in the region is in establishments with less than ten (10) employees. Establishments with less than one hundred (100) employees in rural areas are and will be the drivers of the regional economy. Establishments with 50+ employees are increasing in the region, while all other businesses with 49 or fewer employees have shown a very slight decrease from 2017 to 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic is likely the leading factor in the decrease in these establishments.

Employment size of establishments	Deep East Texas			Texas		
	Number of establishments 2017	Number of establishments 2020	Difference	Number of establishments 2017	Number of establishments 2020	Difference
Establishments with 1 to 4 employees	3,382	3,349	-1.0%	305,332	325,663	6.7%
Establishments with 5 to 9 employees	1,346	1,343	-0.2%	111,199	110,902	-0.3%
Establishments with 10 to 19 employees	895	882	-1.5%	79,800	81,043	1.6%
Establishments with 20 to 49 employees	576	575	-0.2%	59,535	61,944	4.0%
Establishments with 50 to 99 employees	161	183	13.7%	20,412	21,348	4.6%
Establishments with 100+ employees	70	87	24.3%	16,399	17,372	5.9%
All establishments	6,430	6,419	-0.2%	592,677	618,272	4.3%

(Source: Census, 2017 and 2020)

Education and Skill Levels

The percentage of those enrolled in college or graduate school in 2020 in the area is lower than the state percentage (23.4% / 24.5%). (Source: Census, 2020)

Compared to the state, a higher percentage of the population in the region achieved no more than a high school graduation; see chart below:

Education attainment of those age 25 and older is as follows:	Deep East Texas 2017	Deep East Texas 2020	Difference		Texas 2017	Texas 2020	Difference
Less than high school graduate	18.1%	17.2%	-0.9%		17.2%	15.6%	-1.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	36.9%	36.0%	-0.9%		25.1%	24.7%	-0.4%
Some college, no degree	23.3%	23.6%	0.3%		22.1%	21.5%	-0.6%
Associate's degree	6.5%	6.7%	0.2%		6.9%	7.4%	0.5%
Bachelor's degree	10.3%	11.2%	0.9%		18.8%	19.9%	1.1%
Graduate or professional degree	4.8%	5.4%	0.6%		9.9%	10.8%	0.9%

(Source data: Census, 2017 and 2020)

Workforce Barriers

The 2020 disabled population is larger in Deep East Texas (19.8%) compared to Texas (11.5%), with the percentage of those working at 9.0% in Deep East Texas compared to 5.4% in Texas. Compared to the 2015 data, the 2020 data reflects a more significant increase in percentage of disabled population working in Deep East Texas (7.9% in 2015) from Texas (5.3% in 2015).
(Source: Census, 2020 and 2015)

Workforce activities in the area are designed to address the barriers to employment that include limited rural transportation, lack of post-secondary education entities, disabilities, limited child care or child care funding, lack of soft skills, limited English proficiency, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, among other barriers. The Board, its subrecipients and other service agencies work to address these barriers with thorough evaluation of needs and cross-referrals where appropriate.

The Board uses many resources for serving individuals with barriers to employment, particularly those with disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services is co-located within the Workforce Centers in Angelina, Nacogdoches and Polk counties. The partnership has created a seamless, integrated process for services for workforce and VR customers. In all six (6) Workforce Centers, staff are cross-trained in providing basic services to all customers. Workforce staff work with VR and Veterans staff to learn each program in order to refer job seekers to appropriate enhanced services. These partnerships and co-location integration are critical to increasing the pool of qualified skilled workers.

In all six (6) Workforce Centers, the subrecipient provides assistive devices and services to ensure equal access to customers with disabilities:
- Accessible workstations
- Height adjustable desks and chairs
- Screen magnifier software
- Screen reader software
- Large print and reverse color keyboards
- Large monitors
- Speech amplification systems
- Video relay services

For individuals who have limited English proficiency, the Board's subrecipients use the following strategies:
- Some staff are able to translate for Spanish-speaking persons
- For language other than Spanish, staff have access to a language line service
- The following line is included on all print materials in English and Spanish, "Language services, including interpretation and translation of documents, are available free of charge upon request."

For those with transportation barriers, the subrecipient offers virtual services online and over the phone, including virtual workshops, career counseling, case management, job search, job fairs, hiring events, registering and completing applications.

With limited internet access in large sectors of the rural region, the workforce centers and additional local partner agencies in all twelve (12) counties offer the availability of internet, Wi-Fi, and computer use.

D. Workforce Development Analysis

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(D); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(4))

Boards must include an analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including education and training.

Board Response:

Workforce development activities are very diverse and include many agencies and organizations in the area that work to address employer needs for a skilled and ready workforce. While there will always be jobs for unskilled workers, data indicates that the majority of jobs will need training past high school to fill the demand for more highly skilled technical positions. For those already in the workforce, the need to earn an income often prevents workers from obtaining higher skills. Companies in the area also struggle to compete for skilled laborers because of the higher wages paid in nearby metropolitan areas such as Houston. The Gulf Coast, Southeast and Deep East Texas regions have been impacted by hurricanes, causing many of the Deep East Texas skilled workers to pursue employment in larger areas for higher wages.

The Board has oversight of the six (6) workforce centers and subsidized child care in the area. The Board also works with other organizations to coordinate activities and share labor market information. The workforce centers are strategically placed throughout the rural area so that no one is more than forty-five (45) minutes from the nearest center. The workforce centers are able to provide employer services to help recruit qualified staff and provide resource information. Job seekers are provided with tools that will help make their job search more productive. These tools include the job matching system, WorkInTexas.com, as well as other sites. "How to" workshops demonstrate how to complete resumes, interview, conduct internet job searches, and instill soft skills. Virtual or online services are available as well. Subsidized child care and transportation assistance to help remove barriers to employment until workers can be self-sufficient is also available.

The workforce area contains fifty-five (55) Independent School Districts (ISDs). Middle and High Schools are a key part of workforce development activities. With the emphasis on achieving the goal that 60% of Texans will need a certificate or degree for the state to stay competitive in the global economy, high schools are becoming more targeted in their approach to career and technical education. They are aiming to ensure that students either are college ready or have employment skills upon graduation. Independent school districts in Deep East Texas that offer Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs have course offerings that represent the majority of fourteen (14) career clusters or programs of study set by the Texas Education Agency. These include:

1. Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
2. Architecture and Construction
3. Arts, A/V Technology, and Communication
4. Business Marketing and Finance
5. Education and Training
6. Energy
7. Health Science
8. Hospitality and Tourism
9. Human Services
10. Information Technology
11. Law and Public Service

12. Manufacturing
13. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
14. Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

CTE programs offer a sequence of courses that provide students with coherent and rigorous content. CTE content is aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare for further education and careers in current or emerging professions. Through a growing sampling of High Schools within the Deep East Texas Workforce Development Area's twelve (12) counties, we can identify that each of the fourteen (14) career clusters are represented by course offerings relative to the area of study. (Source: Texas Education Agency) Some of this work is threatened by a lack of funding for dual enrollment in community college, a critical connection with the high schools' ability to provide CTE dual credit courses. The Board is working closely with ISDs as they seek grants and develop programs of study that align with demand industries and occupations in the region.

The Board is further expanding its engagement at the middle and high school levels to address the education and skill needs of the workforce and the needs of area employers. The Board provides a Career and Education Outreach Specialist Program, which began in August 2021. The program deploys Career and Education Outreach Specialists into participating school districts to provide career services to students at public middle and high schools, grades six (6) through twelve (12), to direct students towards High Growth High Demand Occupations. Students will receive in-depth education and direction on career choices as well as access to current labor market and career data.

Adult Education is a critical part of workforce development in that they are able to address the needs of those with low basic skills, limited English speakers, and those without a high school diploma. Bringing the skills of this population up to a standard level for vocational training is critical to their being able to learn the higher skills needed by local employers.

Higher education includes Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU); Angelina College, which serves the majority of the area; and Panola College, which serves Shelby County. Satellite campuses exist throughout the area, and several counties are building or improving existing facilities to expand educational opportunities in their counties. Local community colleges, Angelina and Panola Colleges, provide the first two (2) years of a basic college education for those pursuing a four (4) year degree or higher. They are also a primary source for several levels of vocational training to meet employer needs. Vocational coursework is geared toward the needs of local industry. The Board has worked with the colleges on several special projects to further our mutual needs to understand the industry need and to provide the needed training. SFASU provides four (4) year degrees or higher for the managers, engineers, and other highly skilled occupations and professions. SFASU attracts students from all over Texas, and as with the community colleges, is responsive to changing business needs. SFASU has a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Research and Learning Center within the College of Sciences and Mathematics, whose mission is to facilitate the increase of research capacity within the STEM disciplines and to consolidate SFASU's support for STEM education, particularly by coordinating STEM efforts in grades Kindergarten (K) - twelve (12) and higher education, including teacher development. The Board also works with colleges outside the workforce development area, but near the perimeter counties to ensure educational access for individuals throughout the vast region. AC also houses an active Small Business Development Center, which helps entrepreneurs get from ideas to successful businesses, and SFASU has opened the Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship in the Rusche College of Business with services including loan proposals, marketing, retailing, advertising, budgeting, business planning and personnel management. Small business Development assistance helps entrepreneurs start or expand their businesses which creates jobs and expands the diversity of the local economy. Another resource is the Center for Business and Economic Research at SFASU Rusche College of Business, which offers data analysis, market research and economic impact analysis to the community while providing real-world

training to SFA students.

Workforce development organizations and programs are very successful in many cases. Other aspects of the activities seem to flounder and are based more on an individual's will to be a successful worker. Employers continue to express the need for not only candidates with technical skills, but also emphasized problem-solving, critical thinking and communication skills are necessary for today's workers.

In summary, the Board serves as a catalyst bringing together other agencies to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, especially those who want to succeed. The Board is perpetually reviewing the effectiveness of programs and services to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of activities with the goal of continuous process and performance improvements.

Part 3: Core Programs

A. Workforce Development System

(WIOA §108(b)(2); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(1))

Boards must include a description of the workforce development system in the workforce area that identifies:

·   the programs that are included in the system; and

·   how the Board will work with the entities that facilitate core programs and other workforce development programs **to support alignment to provide services,** 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).

Board Response:

The Deep East Texas workforce development system is designed to meet the current and future needs of local employers through the development of qualified and skilled workers. Board and Workforce Center staff meet regularly to identify future employer needs, employee competencies and skill levels. Program funds that are available from all the partners are deployed to fill the skill gaps and grow those demand and target occupations.

The Board operates six (6) workforce centers serving twelve (12) counties. The comprehensive center is located in Angelina County, and the remaining five (5) affiliate centers are strategically located within the region for easy access for workforce customers.

The Board's Comprehensive One Stop Center along with the core partners are housed within the center operating under the common brand of Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas. This creates a seamless approach to serving employers and job seekers. This seamless case management approach allows for our Case Managers to refer customers internally that will benefit and assist them throughout their visit at the workforce center.

Under the direction of the Board, the Deep East Texas one-stop operator has oversight of the following programs:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Dislocated Worker, Rapid Response, and Youth Programs
- CHOICES/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Employment Program
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training Program
- Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) Program
- Wagner Peyser Employment Services – Texas Workforce Commission Staff
- Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)
- Non-Custodial Parent (NCP)
- Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL)

Also co-located within the one-stop center are:
- Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)
- Texas Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) Services
- Job Corps
- Adult Education and Literacy Program (AEL)
- Child Care Services

The Board works with multiple entities that facilitate core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, 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).

Staff from the different agencies of Workforce Center Operator, TWC, TVC, VR, and AEL meet monthly or as needed to discuss and refer customers to appropriate services to enhance the customer's skill set and resource opportunities. The integration of services has allowed staff to cross-train in providing basic services and follow-up of customer referrals to services offered by partners within the workforce center to achieve positive outcomes for the customer.

The integrated functional team concept provides an opportunity to serve customers with multiple barriers in one (1) easily accessible location.

Services to Veterans

Veteran's Employment Representative staff identify appropriate veteran job seekers through the Work-In-Texas system. Customers are contacted individually or may self-refer for job search assistance, case management, and potential referral to the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), which offers up to twelve (12) months of training assistance to unemployed Veterans, providing training towards an Associate's Degree, Non-College, Degree or Certificate that leads to a high demand occupation. Business Service Unit (BSU) and Veteran's Employment Representative staff also work to educate businesses concerning the availability of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), which offers a $4,800 credit for firms that hire qualifying veterans within one (1) year of discharge or release from active duty, and up to $9,600 for those who have been unemployed for more than six (6) months in the last year. The TWC VRAP and the Board conduct an annual Red, White and You Job Fair specifically to assist veterans and their spouses in their job search activities.

Customers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Texans with low literacy or poor English language fluency are identified through self-reporting, assessment by a Workforce Solutions staff member, and/or via the results of a literacy assessment test, such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS).

When a job seeker identifies that he/she does not read, write or understand English very well, staff may utilize several different options to aid the job seeker. First, in the instance of low English language fluency, the initial method of providing services involves using the language-interpreting service to communicate more fully with the job seeker. Once the formal method of communication has been established, staff commence with identifying the best course of assistance. Staff utilize partnerships with local Adult Education provider Angelina College to offer low or no-cost English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. As budget allows, staff may also refer the job seeker to funded ESL courses at a local community college or proprietary schools.

Customers with Impairments or Disabilities

Through partnership with the Texas Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services, customers who have a physical, mental, or cognitive impairment or disability that makes employment difficult for them are assisted in the areas of preparing, finding, maintaining or advancing in their career.

If customers have one (1) or more of the following [diagnosed or not], they may qualify for Vocational Rehabilitation services:

- Behavioral and mental health conditions
- Hearing impairments, including deafness
- Alcoholism or drug addiction
- Intellectual, learning and developmental disabilities
- Physical disabilities, including traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, back injury, paralysis and impaired movement
- Visual impairments

Customers must meet eligibility requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Customers with impairments or disabilities that meet child care eligibility requirements will not be denied services.

Employers seeking to hire qualified candidates with disabilities are encouraged to ask for a Vocational Rehabilitation Business Relations Coordinator to help with candidate referrals, accommodation, or technical assistance related to hiring individuals with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services is co-located in the Workforce Centers in Angelina, Nacogdoches and Polk counties. The partnership has created a seamless, integrated process for services for workforce and VR customers. In all six (6) Centers, staff are cross-trained in providing basic services to all customers. Workforce Specialists work with program staff to learn each program in order to refer job seekers to appropriate enhanced services. Integration and referrals with Adult Education and Literacy and Vocational Rehabilitation continues to improve access for customers.

> Each orientation, for customers who are experiencing physical or mental challenges, emphasizes the benefits of quick attachment to the labor force with the advantages of job retention and career advancement. Center staff explain the available center services, conduct intake interviews to assist customers in determining the level and scope of services needed and identify any accommodations or support needed to assist the customer in achieving employment success.

TWC's State Plan under WIOA §102(b)(1)(E) allows the Board to partner with the more than fifty (50) Independent School Districts (ISDs) in the Deep East Texas region. Currently, not all fifty (50) ISD's offer dual credit and Career and Technology Education (CTE), but through the Skills Development Fund, Job Education Grant, High Demand Job Training Grant and Texas Industries Partnership Grant funds are available to support, create and expand dual credit and CTE programs that are highly technical in nature, address local employer demand, and allow high school students to complete college credit hours. CTE prepares individuals for careers that meet employer skill needs—specifically targeting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and middle-skilled jobs. The Board supports the State Plan by:

- Identifying career pathways (responding to industry talent needs) and offering customers the opportunity to obtain the skills and credentials necessary to find better jobs at better wages.
- Enhancing employer engagement to build an occupational/skills demand-driven system, improve business services, and provide more work-based learning opportunities.

Career planning for students is vital in closing the skills gaps between employer and job seeker. TWC has given the Board opportunities to link with ISD's, community, state and technical colleges through Externships for Teachers, Governor's Summer Merit and Apprenticeship programs. In summary, the Board is collaborating with our partners to help Texas in reaching the 60X30 plan of a highly skilled and dynamic workforce to meet the demands of employers.

B. Core Programs—Expand Access, Facilitate Development, and Improve Access

(WIOA §108(b)(3); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(2))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:

·   expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;

·   facilitate the development of career pathways and coenrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, including specific career pathways occupations that the Board currently includes on its Target Occupations List, and career pathways occupations that the Board is planning to develop; and

·   improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

Boards must include a description of the Board's plan for working with at least one of the Governor's industry clusters.

Board Response:

The Board will expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Every person who walks through the door, regardless if they are Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), SNAP, UI Claimant, or general job seeker, will be provided a comprehensive array of services that includes workshops, case management and essential forms of support, such as housing, healthcare, transportation, legal assistance, clothing, and a wide range of counseling as appropriate for their respective programs. As we do with all our customers, workforce staff administers detailed assessments to the target populations, allowing us to determine immediate and long-term needs and set internal goals that act as mile markers on the individual's career pathway. Our established relationships with support service and training providers throughout the area will ensure that job seekers have access to the services required to maximize the opportunities for participation in program services. With the safety concerns brought about by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, access to services has expanded virtually by phone, email, on the internet and other methods in order to best meet the needs of each customer and fulfill the program requirements. The Board's workforce contractor offers numerous assessment tools that help job seekers and staff determine what career pathway is best for the individual customer.

The Board will also facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, including specific career pathways occupations that are currently on the Target Occupations List and career pathways occupations that are under development. Industry roundtables are hosted to identify the skills that employers seek. Core partners attend the roundtables so they can hear first-hand the employer needs and they have the opportunity to ask questions so they can better align courses and curriculum with employer needs.

Board and partner meetings are regularly held so that co-enrollments can take place and staff is provided with information on how customers can be co-enrolled. Examples of co-enrollment include: a) WIOA youth without a high school diploma or GED request training services. Youth is referred to the AEL to obtain GED and then AEL refers back to WIOA for possible enrollment into training; b) an AEL customer may be co-enrolled into WIOA so that support services such as the provision of the GED testing fee can be granted; and c) a VRS youth is enrolled in WIOA Youth Services to take part in paid work experience to the youth to gain skills to become employable. The Board relies on the professionalism of its Workforce Contractor and partners to assist customers in understanding what

a career pathway looks like and how it can foster increasing financial stability for the customers.

The Board utilizes the strategic plan, partnering with local economic development entities, the Business Services Team and local employer demand to align the Targeted Occupations with the demand occupations listed in the strategic plan. The Board will share with its educational partners the Targeted Occupation list as a means of building career pathways for secondary and post-secondary students. The secondary level educators will use the Demand Occupation List to apply for grants to strengthen their dual credit and technology career pathways for students.

The Board improves access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable) through co-enrollment amongst core programs and partners. The Board has partnered with and plans to extend relationships with industry and economic development entities to assist secondary and post-secondary institutions in purchasing equipment to provide training so that students can earn national industry-recognized certifications.

The Board provides online tools that provide information about target industries, what can be expected in a particular job, and an online orientation of what services and documentation for specific services is needed. These online tools are provided to improve access to workforce services, which in turn improves access to activities that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials.

In alignment with the Governor's industry cluster of Energy, the Board's plan involves partnering with regional electric cooperatives and other employers, independent school districts, community colleges and other stakeholders and developing more opportunities for youth to become skilled in the demand occupation of electrical power-line installers and repairers. Collaborative partnerships are in development to attract grants and introduce this career pathway beginning in high school in at least two (2) counties of the Board area. The reasons more workers are needed in this occupation is multi-pronged: the aging of the current workforce, the area's susceptibility to hurricane damage, and the anticipated infrastructure needs for broadband expansion.

A. One-Stop Service Delivery System

(WIOA §108(b)(6); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(5))

Boards must include a description of the one-stop delivery system in the workforce area, including explanations of the following:

·   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

·   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

·   How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including the one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA §188 (related to Non-Discrimination), 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

·   The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners

Board Response:

The One-Stop Delivery System

The volunteer Board provides strategic direction, support, oversight, and approves policy. The Board has staff that provide 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 (ETPS); 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 work 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 Solutions Deep East Texas' Equal Opportunity/Section 504 Coordinator reviews program and physical accessibility annually to ensure services and facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities. Additional information regarding addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities is covered in the Non-Discrimination and Service to Individuals with Disabilities section.

Workforce Centers

The Board leases six (6) workforce centers to ensure service delivery to the Board's generally rural population. The comprehensive center is located in Angelina County and the remaining five (5) affiliate centers are strategically located within the region for easy access for workforce customers: Jasper, Polk, Houston, Shelby, and Nacogdoches counties. Each operates under the supervision of a site manager or supervisor. The Board has in the past and will continue to set up temporary special centers to address unusual situations (i.e. transition centers for large layoffs or service centers for hurricane evacuees.)

Angelina, Nacogdoches, Jasper and Polk County centers are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., while Shelby and Houston County centers maintain the same hours except for closure 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 affiliate centers, or not convenient to current workers due to the hours, are available through toll-free numbers to staff at full-service centers, by appointment and virtually.

Each center has a fully equipped resource room; centers in Jasper, Polk, Angelina, Shelby and Nacogdoches counties have employer resource rooms and rooms for workshops or special events. Center staffing varies by location; the smaller centers have two (2) – six (6) staff and the one-stop centers have nine (9) – thirty (30) staff.

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

Access to services in remote areas is accomplished through several virtual methods using technology, including phone, text, fax and internet communication. However, additional strategic efforts are necessary in the workforce area due to barriers such as the lack of internet/cell service and transportation. Through the Rural Services Strategy, staff regularly travel to the six (6) counties without a workforce center and other communities to provide in-person assistance, information and services, as well as access to technology, such as computer laptops and internet capability. The staff works with local community partners, such as agencies, community centers, libraries and chambers of commerce to accomplish these pop-up workforce centers in shared spaces.

Contractors

To provide services to this area, the Board has two (2) main contractors, one (1) 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 as outlined below:

The Board uses a competitive procurement process to select contractors for WIOA activities by following the applicable requirements set forth in the Texas Workforce Commission Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts. The Board's policy and procedures outline the purchases of micro, small and formal procurements. Purchases less than $10,000 are considered micro-purchases and purchases between $10,000.01 to $150,000 are small purchases. The Board requires three (3) quotes for all purchases or documentation of why three (3) quotes cannot be obtained.

The procurement process utilized for purchases that exceed the $150,000 threshold is a Request for Proposal (RFP). Prior to the release of the RFP, a needs analysis, cost estimate and justification are completed to justify the release of the RFP. The Board releases an RFP for operation and management of the workforce centers and an RFP for child care operations. 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, narrative, and budget instructions. The Board maintains a "bidder's 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 bidder's list. A bidder's conference may be held, although participation is not mandatory. Questions are submitted and answered through the bidder's 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 date and time. Late proposals are not accepted.

Proposals received are submitted to an evaluation team for assessment using a standardized scoring instrument based on the RFP scoring criteria and instructions. The bidders that score seventy (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 selects 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 request 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.

Workforce Center Management

The contractor for workforce center operations is Dynamic Workforce Solutions. The initial contract period was October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022, and may be renewed for up to four (4) additional one (1) year periods. The contract is in the first (1st) year of the four (4) year renewable contract period. Dynamic Workforce Solutions is responsible for management of the centers and for the delivery of all workforce services except subsidized child care.

Subsidized Child Care

Goodwill, Inc., is the contractor for subsidized child care services. The initial contract period was October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021, and may be renewed for up to four (4) additional one (1) year periods. The contract is in the second (2nd) year of the four (4) year renewable contract period and is renewed based on satisfactory performance or other factors as determined by the Board. Goodwill operates the child care services office located in Lufkin, Texas, to provide subsidized child care services to the twelve (12) 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. The focus is on employers involved with high demand industries and occupations.

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 (virtually and in-person), 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 events hosted by chambers of commerce and other community organizations, make direct business calls, organize special events such as job fairs, hiring fairs and career exploration activities.

Job Seeker Services

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

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

Participatory Services consist of: training services, individualized career services, staff-assisted basic career services, and youth program elements.

A Job Seeker Unit (JSU) made up of employment services and contractor staff 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 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 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 Talent Acquisition Specialists/Case Managers who focus

on one (1) 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.

Talent Acquisition Specialists/Case Managers 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 pathway for job seekers to access training services varies. Some job seekers enter the center already knowing they want to attend training, while other job seekers may participate in a variety of other services and activities before they decide to pursue training. In determining the need for and appropriateness of training, Talent Acquisition Specialists/Case Managers consider an individual's circumstances, program requirements, ability to succeed in training, desired training, and work readiness. The area uses two (2) systems to fund training; both use vouchers given to eligible participants to present to the training provider. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Dislocated Worker funds and Trade Act funds use the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) 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 on the local target occupation list or the ETPS, a statewide list of eligible training providers and approved courses, depending on the specific funding.

The area is served by two (2) community colleges, Angelina College and Panola College, and by a state university, Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU). Angelina and Panola Colleges have collaborated with local entities to set up satellite centers in Houston, Jasper, Sabine, Polk, and Shelby Counties to provide training in high demand and target occupations. SFASU 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 Case Managers. 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, special events, social media, Texas Workforce Commission website, the Board's website, posting fliers in communities, distributing press releases and public service announcements to area media, attending and sharing information at community events, business/chamber events, virtual stakeholder meetings, and word of mouth. When appropriate, job seekers are also personally invited to participate through direct emails, phone calls and texts.

Support Services

A support service is financial assistance for work-related 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 assess 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 an integral part of job seekers' services as it enables parents with small children to work. Subsidized child care is provided through the child care services office in Lufkin, Texas. The public and workforce center staff access services directly to the center using a toll-free phone number.

Child Care contractor 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 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP ENT). Referrals from the workforce centers are communicated via a Child Care Referral Form. Necessary paperwork (i.e. information, verifications, and agreements) is transmitted by fax, regular mail and online between the parents and Child Care Services.

Staff interview child care applicants by phone, requesting relevant information and verification as necessary, and provide an orientation to services, which covers 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 sent electronically through Adobe Sign or mailed to the applicant. A waiting list for assistance is maintained as needed. From information received during the phone interview and verification process, Child Care Services 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, Child Care Services 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. Case Managers notify Child Care Services when changes occur that would necessitate a change in the parent's child care. Child Care Services 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 Angelina College and SFASU 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 (i.e. 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.

Child Care Services also provides outreach to area child care providers to ensure that registered and licensed facilities are notified of contracting options.

The Board works to certify child care providers who strive to attain quality standards under the Texas Rising Star Program. The program has three (3) certified levels, which make the centers eligible for graduated reimbursement rates.

Continuous Improvement

The Board regularly considers the effectiveness of the service delivery system, the responsiveness of activities and the impact or outcomes. The following elements are applied to regularly evaluate the local system and make improvements: monthly meetings to review performance for all programs and services. The focus is on subrecipient performance and financial management, as well as an assessment of all activities compared to goal measures. Additionally, the subrecipients are required to submit monthly reports, including strategies to overcome deficiencies and customer success stories. The Board Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer reviews program and physical accessibility annually to ensure services and facilities are accessible to individuals.

Non-Discrimination and Service to Individuals with Disabilities

The Board and its subrecipients comply with WIOA §188 (related to Non-Discrimination), 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.

The Board uses many resources for serving individuals with barriers to employment, particularly those with disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation Services is co-located in the Workforce Centers in Angelina, Nacogdoches and Polk counties. The partnership has created a seamless, integrated process for services for workforce and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) customers. In all six (6) Centers, staff are cross-trained in providing basic services to universal customers. Workforce staff work with program staff to learn each program in order to refer job seekers to appropriate enhanced services. These services are critical to increasing the pool of qualified workers.

All six (6) Workforce Centers are equipped with assistive devices and services to ensure customers with disabilities have equal access to programs, services and resources including, but not limited to:
- Accessible workstations
- Height adjustable desks and chairs
- Screen magnifier software
- Screen reader software
- Large print and reverse color keyboards
- Large monitors

- Speech amplification systems
- Video relay services

For customers with hearing impairments, a sign language interpreter may be used to facilitate communication with individual staff or allow job search workshops to be conducted with a certified interpreter, enabling those individuals to receive the same information and guidance.

For individuals who have limited English proficiency, the Board's subrecipients use the following strategies:
- Some staff are able to translate for Spanish-speaking persons
- For language other than Spanish, staff have access to a language line service
- The following line is included on all print materials in English and Spanish, "Language services, including interpretation and translation documents, are available free of charge upon request."

Board EO policies require providing equitable service and ensuring the accessibility of facilities as well as services for individuals with disabilities including:
- Provide reasonable accommodations/modifications
- Prohibition on denying customers access to services or benefits on the basis of a disability or the need for a reasonable accommodation
- Provide services to individuals with disabilities in integrated settings, to the extent possible
- Admittance of service animals
- Use of mobility devices

The Board's website follows the Federal 508 accessibility requirements and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA standards and is available in English and Spanish versions.

B. Cooperative Agreements

(WIOA §108(b)(14); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(13))

Boards must 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 USC 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 USC 720 et seq.) (other than §112 or part C of that title (29 USC 732, 741) and are subject to §121(f)) in accordance with §101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 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.

Board Response:

Not applicable per TWC.

C. Employer Engagement, Economic Development, and Unemployment Insurance Program Coordination

(WIOA §108(b)(4); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(3))

Boards must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the workforce area to do the following:

· Facilitate engagement of employers in the workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations

· Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area

· Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development

· Strengthen links 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.

Board Response:

The Board actively seeks out local employers and encourages active participation in the workforce development system by meeting those employers directly at their business sites and various chamber, economic development and other events. Through the Business Service unit, workforce centers are made available for hiring events, interviewing and applicant screening. Responsiveness and timely service delivery are essential to increase employer engagement and utilization. Staff often provide assistance in obtaining labor market information, including employers in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations. Developing a mutually beneficial relationship between the Board, contractor staff and local employers is essential to local growth.

Furthermore, strategic coordination among businesses and educational institutions to offer youth career exploration of Demand Occupations provides the workforce area with a pipeline of quality future workers skilled in areas that match the requirements of the region's employers. Events and virtual career fairs, tours, internships and externships are organized through collaboration with industry-led organizations such the East Texas Manufacturing Alliance, chambers of commerce, EDCs, and other community organizations. The Board continues to encourage exploration of Skills Development Fund (SDF) opportunities by employers and community colleges. SDF provides site-specific, customized training opportunities for Texas businesses and their employees to increase skill levels and wages of the Texas workforce.

The Board of Directors is made up of over fifty (50) percent private sector businesses covering the twelve (12) county region. These members participate in the development of programs and ideas to best meet local employers' needs. Reviews of programs and activities by Board members ensure employer needs are understood and met when developing programs and services. The Board regularly surveys

the employers to best determine their employee staffing and training needs and then works with the employers on ways to attract qualified 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 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 an orientation to services, assistance in registering with WorkInTexas.com, job referrals, access to the resource room and virtual services for job search and workshops, as well as the opportunity to consider retraining or upskilling during this transitionary period.

D. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

(WIOA §108(b)(12); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(11))

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.

Board Response:

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. Employment Service (ES) staff are integrated in the workforce center system locally and perform job tasks and functions similar to their locally-employed workforce counterparts. Most ES staff are focused on maximizing coordination, primarily the direct service to employers with secondary focus on serving job seeker customers. Daily management and supervision of ES staff is handled by workforce center management, which ensures equity of treatment and responsiveness, and also serves to avoid duplication of Wagner-Peyser services with other one-stop services. 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.

E. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management

(WIOA §108(b)(21); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(20))

Boards must include 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.

Board Response:

The one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake

and case management information system using DocuSign and Adobe. The centers use TWC's automated systems Work in Texas (WIT), Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS), The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST), and Virtual One Stop (VOS) Greeter. The applications for WIOA and child care services are available on-line, as are program orientations. At the Board's direction, the centers have expanded case management activities to occur virtually as needed to meet the needs of the customer. We are currently using Cabinet document storage to facilitate the transition to a complete paperless case management system for child care and looking to expand it into WIOA and other related programs. The Board website, social media and other media are used to outreach and educate consumers regarding job fairs, services, Hot Jobs and child care.

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

A. Economic Development and Entrepreneurial/Microenterprise Activities

(WIOA §108(b)(5); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(4))

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

Board Response:

Four (4) of the twelve (12) Deep East Texas counties are represented by Economic Development Corporations (EDCs). Two (2) of the twenty-nine (29) Board members represent economic development corporations. The Board is actively engaged and collaborates with all four (4) EDCs and provides monthly labor market information, shares related news releases pertaining to economic development and trends that may impact the region. The Texas Forest Country Partnership (TFCP) is a regional economic development organization that is committed to coordinating economic development related activities in the twelve (12) county region. Three (3) workforce Board members and the Board's Executive Director serve on the TFCP Board. The Board meets quarterly with economic development and TFCP to discuss new employers and expansion of current business in the area. The Board's strategic initiative is to develop communication and availability to be a partner on the initial planning phases to attract employers and provide a quality skilled workforce through skills development training.

The Board partners with EDCs and educational institutions to apply for the High Demand Job Training Grants (HDJTG). These partnerships support the Tri-Agency plan of collaborating between Boards and EDCs to provide high-demand occupational job training in local workforce development areas. The HDJTG purchased equipment to increase the technical skills of students from grades 9th – 12th and Associate-level degrees. The Board is currently utilizing the WIOA Alternative Funds for the HDJTG to assist six (6) ISDs expand their welding programs, and midway through the grant more than thirty (30) students have received at least one (1) certification.

The Board promotes entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services through the Small Business Development Center at Angelina College. The Board continues to pursue new avenues of building a strong community business forum through the Teacher Externship, Career Awareness Youth Events and Entrepreneurial boot camps. The Board has received funding through the Texas Workforce Commission to conduct the Teacher Externship program in 2021 and 2022. The 2022 Teacher Externship hosted 26 teachers from 19 ISD's partnering with 22 local employers. The Board partnered with Angelina Junior Achievement (JA) to present the JA Inspire Youth Career Event for students in grades eight (8) – twelve (12). Members of the business community will provide information on how they obtained their positions with several of these leading into entrepreneurial opportunities. Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas received funding from the Texas Workforce Commission to support the child care industry by hiring staff members to focus on child care business start-up and expansions. The staff will focus on current child care providers to help in developing business models and connecting the providers with funding sources to increase their capacity and quality throughout the 12-county region.

B. Rapid Response Activity Coordination

(WIOA §108(b)(8); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(7))

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

Board Response:

Rapid Response activities are business-focused services in response to layoffs and plant closings. When providing Rapid Response services, a coordinated approach is taken between the Board's Business Services Consultant, the Board and Workforce contractor 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 coordination 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.

C. Youth Activities and Services

(WIOA §108(b)(9); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(8))

Boards must include a description and assessment of the type and availability of workforce investment activities for youth in the workforce area, including activities for youth with disabilities. This description must include an identification of successful models of such activities.

Board Response:

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. The contractor partnered with several school districts and offers career preparation and soft skills training sessions to their students. 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 provides youth with real world experience to help them learn basic work skills and do hands on career exploration.

The Board also partners with other organizations to support career exploration activities in regional high demand occupations, such as Manufacturing Day and Junior Achievement's virtual career day.

Teacher Externships offer Career and Technical Education Teachers the opportunity to apply industry specific strategies in the classroom and inform, educate, guide and connect students to industries that match their skill sets.

The Board offers three (3) programs to disadvantaged youth to help them succeed in school and upon completion of their high school education:

1. Dynamic Futures is provided by the workforce contractor to the students to teach soft skills and job readiness preparation.
2. Vocational Rehabilitation Paid Work Experience – the Board partners with TWC VR to place eligible 504 students in work-based learning activities that are designed to help individuals gain soft and hard skills for work, learn about and experience actual work in possible fields of interest, and provide individuals with the opportunity to have hands-on exposure to jobs. Paid Work Experience (WE) is a strategy for providing work-based learning opportunities to individuals with disabilities, and particularly for students with disabilities.
3. Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) for students to gain work readiness and paid work experience through the summer months. The Inter-Agency cooperative between TWC VR and the Board projects to assist between fifty (50) to seventy-five (75) youth in this work-related activity.

D. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

(WIOA §108(b)(10); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(9))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate its workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

Board Response:

The Board will use career fairs to provide initial career path information to students beginning at the middle school level and continuing throughout their education. The Board will use partnerships with ISDs to provide classroom teachers with professional development through Teacher Externship programs. The Board is conducting a cross-walk survey of current and planned CTE programs at ISDs to assist in the development of the Targeted Occupation List. The Board will collaborate with the community colleges and ISDs in submitting applications for funding for the JET grant and Dual Credit Technology application. The Board will apply for the Workforce Career Specialist funding to place staff in selected ISDs to provide labor market information to both students and parents.

The Board has implemented a Career and Education Outreach Specialist Program, which has proven effective in the state's pilot programs during 2019-2020. The program deploys a Career and Education Outreach Specialist into participating school districts to provide career services to students at public middle and high schools, grades 6th – 12th, to direct students towards High Growth High Demand Occupations. Students receive in-depth education and direction on career choices as well as access to current labor market and career data.

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.

E. Child Care and Early Learning

(40 TAC §809.12 Board Plan for Child Care Services)

Each Board must include a description of how the Board is strategically managing child care and early learning within its workforce system to enhance school readiness and strengthen and support the child care industry.

Note: This may include efforts to:

· Coordinate with employers, economic development, and other industry leaders to increase the awareness and importance of early learning as a workforce and economic development tool

· Support improved school readiness through higher-quality child care, including Texas Rising Star, and through partnership opportunities such as prekindergarten partnerships

· Support the needs of the child care industry, which could include assistance with business development or shared services, as well as opportunities to support professional growth and career pathways for early education

Board Response:

The Board strategically manages and coordinates with employers, economic development, and other industry leaders to increase the awareness and importance of early learning as a workforce and economic development tool by sending out an Outreach Coordinator. This Coordinator talks with parents about how to obtain assistance with child care funds and how to return to work. The Board coordinates the workforce training and services to fully integrate safe and stable child care services for enrolling low-income families and reduce the risk of becoming dependent on public assistance.

The Board supports improved school readiness through higher-quality child care, including Texas Rising Star (TRS), and through partnership opportunities such as prekindergarten partnerships by sending Provider Specialist and Child Development Specialist/Texas Rising Star Mentor(s) to help facilitate existing and future child care partnerships. Child Development Specialist/TRS Mentor(s) also spend time coaching and developing existing child care facilities into higher quality facilities by mentoring child care providers to become TRS providers. The Board implements the TRS program by purchasing school readiness curriculum (i.e. Frog Street) and other school supplies (i.e. Dramatic play for social development).

The Board strengthens and supports the needs of the child care industry by assisting with business development, as well as supporting professional growth and career pathways for early education in the twelve (12) counties of Deep East Texas. Professional growth and career pathways occur in multiple ways (i.e. Annual Banquet, conferences and virtual trainings).

The Board will utilize the Child Care Industry support funds provided by the Texas Workforce Commission to employ two (2) Child Care Business Specialists. The specialists will connect with licensed child care providers to assist in staff recruitment/retention, coaching and business training. The specialists will conduct regional needs assessments and develop relationships with child care providers to enhance their growth and serve the families of Deep East Texas.

F. Transportation and Other Support Services

(WIOA §108(b)(11); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(10))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will provide transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate support services in the workforce area in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities.

Board Response:

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 contractor 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 fifty (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 Transit Administration (FTA) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Fixed Routes and Paratransit service, a shared ride service, is available in Angelina, Houston, Nacogdoches, Polk, San Jacinto and Trinity counties. The Texas Veterans Commission provides transportation to veterans as needed and the remaining counties transportation is limited for medical needs only or by taxi services.

G. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)

(WIOA §108(b)(13); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(12))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with AEL 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.

Board Response:

The Adult Education Agency is a critical partner for the Board in providing services to customers that require remediation, English as Second Language (ESL), and High School Equivalency preparation services. Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas currently operates under a Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Agreement with Angelina College to provide these services to Workforce Center customers.

The Board is sensitive to the needs of our ESL customers including:
- Providing forms, brochures, pamphlets available in both English and Spanish
- Our website has a translation button for Spanish and English versions
- Signs are posted in the six (6) workforce centers in both English and Spanish, inquiring of customers if they need assistance due to limited English proficiency
- Free interpreter services are available, if needed.

To effectively meet the needs of the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) customers, the Workforce Center has bilingual staff and materials are provided in both English and Spanish. The Board maintains a referral system to ensure LEP customers of any language are not excluded from participating in workforce center services.

In specialized programs, when assessment indicates the need for additional literacy or English proficiency, workforce center staff include Adult Education services into the individual employment plan. The AEL staff is co-located in our Angelina and Jasper workforce center and as needed in the four (4) other workforce centers and provides individualized or group High School Equivalency, ESL and ABE classes. The workforce center contract staff administers the Spanish version of the TABE, to evaluate the non-English speaking TANF customers.

The Workforce Center contractor, Adult Education and the Board meet quarterly, or more often as needed to discuss continuous improvement initiatives to serve the customers. The Board also partners with other entities as needed to assist customers to successfully complete their education or career pathway. If needed the AEL provides remediation for students who are enrolled in college training programs. Customers participate in post-secondary education and training through WIOA training programs.

The Board utilizes and monitors WIOA Title II funds to ensure activities for eligible adults 16 years and older are used for activities to assist with post-secondary education, training, or employment. The funds are specifically used to serve customers with identified barriers to employment, including ESL and low-income individuals. The coordination of efforts between the Board and adult education activities increases the skill of the customers providing employers with a highly skilled workforce. The partnerships and integration of services meets the mission of providing solutions for quality workforce development.

In the endeavor to conveniently serve customers through collaboration, Angelina College's AEL services office is located within the Jasper County Workforce Center. Additionally, Angelina College staff administer the CASAS testing services inside five (5) workforce centers. Panola College administers CASAS assessment services for customers at the Shelby County Workforce Center. CASAS provides testing of basic and academic skills for youth and adults.

Part 6: Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Services

A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training

(WIOA §108(b)(7); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(6))

Boards must include a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the workforce area. Boards must include a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult, dislocated worker and youth employment and training activities in the workforce area.

Boards must also include the list of assessment instruments (tools) used for adult, dislocated worker, and youth.

Board Response:

Adult and dislocated worker 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 are provided. The Trade Assistance Act program for eligible workers is also available. This program assists with relocation, job search, and retraining. All of these services are provided through the Workforce Solutions offices. The availability of training activities for adults, dislocated workers and youth include the following:

Educational activities include WIOA funded and non-WIOA funded partner-training services. Training services are provided for WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers who require/benefit from vocational training and/or skills certification to enhance their connection with local jobs in demand.

Adult Education

Short-term adult education for literacy GED preparation, English-as-a-second language, and job readiness may be provided to prepare individuals for job search activities or employment.

Referral to adult education may be made at any time without enrollment in WIOA. If enrolled in WIOA and entered as an activity service, adult education cannot exceed twelve (12) months. If this activity extends longer than one (1) year, it becomes a training activity and must be conducted concurrently with vocational training. Minimum Requirements for Adult Education: None. Duration: Maximum twelve (12) months.

Alternative School (Youth Only)

This activity consists of working with school districts or other entities for referrals to institutions offering alternative instruction leading to a secondary school completion.

Cooperative Education Programs (Youth Only)

The cooperative (coop) program is utilized by school districts for students with vocational goals. The program allows for school credit for work situations for students.

Drop-Out Prevention Strategies (Youth Only)

Strategies consist of the use of referrals and/or other WIOA authorized services that address the reason(s) a high school student may drop out of school. Referrals include those to alternative schools, adult learning centers, and Job Corps. Other services may include the use of supportive services, mentoring, guidance and counseling, basic skills education, or referral to adult learning centers to obtain the GED, as appropriate and based on the Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

Entrepreneurial Skills Training

Entrepreneurial skills training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business. Such training must develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship, including, but not limited to, the ability to:

1. take initiative;
2. creatively seek out and identify business opportunities;
3. develop budgets and forecast resource needs;
4. understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option; and
5. communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas. Approaches to teaching youth entrepreneurial skills include, but are not limited to, the following: Entrepreneurship education that provides an introduction to the values and basics of starting and running a business. Entrepreneurship education programs often guide youth through the development of a business plan and may also include simulations of business start-up and operation;
6. Enterprise development, which provides support and services that incubate and help youth develop their own businesses. Enterprise development programs go beyond entrepreneurship education by helping youth access small loans or grants needed to begin business operation and by providing more individualized attention to the development of viable business ideas; and
7. Experiential programs that provide youth with experience in the day-to-day operation of a business. These programs may involve the development of a youth-run business that young people participating in the program work in and manage. Or, they may facilitate placement in apprentice or internship positions with adult entrepreneurs in the community.

Minimum Requirements: Evidence that the participant has the skills and abilities to complete the required coursework (including acceptance by the training entity), and nothing to hinder subsequent employment. Duration: Average 6 months.

Occupational/Vocational Skills Training

Occupational/Vocational skills training is normally offered in a classroom, but due to the changing environment, ETP's are adapting and offering on-line virtual classroom training. Vocational or occupational training may be provided for one (1) or more courses or classes that, upon successful completion, lead to a certificate, an associate degree, a teacher certification (for participants who hold a baccalaureate degree or higher), a competency or skill recognized by employers, or a training regimen that provides individuals with additional skills or competencies generally recognized by employers. Training must be for locally targeted occupations or statewide targeted occupations.

Training may generally be for up to two (2) years, but may exceed this in some cases where a participant has extenuating circumstances or is required to take remedial classes.

Certificate or Associates Degree

Minimum Requirements (except for Short-term Vocational Training): participant has received a GED or high school diploma; and passed at least two (2) sections of the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) or other equivalent college-approved entrance exam(s); and functioning levels: reading – 10th grade; math – 9th grade; and language – 10th grade; or other evidence that the participant has the skills and abilities to complete the required coursework and nothing to hinder subsequent employment and meet the admission requirements of the training provider; and a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above for participants who have completed one (1) full semester of training within the past two (2) years.

Short-term Vocational Training

This includes vocational skills training and job specific skills training that can be completed in less than three (3) months or less than one hundred and forty-four (144) non-credit clock/contact hours.

Short-term Prevocational Services

Short-term prevocational skills are not vocation/occupation-specific and are necessary for success in the workplace. Short-term prevocational training includes the development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance skills, professional conduct, computer skills, and other job retention skills. This activity may be used to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.

Skill Upgrading and Retraining

Skill upgrading and retraining are short-term training courses that build upon the job seeker's existing skills to produce truly marketable skills. Minimum Requirements: Acceptance of the participant by the training provider. Duration: Semester or less.

Tutoring

Tutoring is instruction and guidance in a subject conducted for one (1) student or a small number of students.

Financial Literacy Education

The financial literacy education program element may include any of the following activities that:

- Support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts, and make informed financial decisions;
- Support participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards;
- Teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores, what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information, how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies, and how to improve or maintain good credit;
- Support a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities and to make informed financial decisions;
- Educate participants about identity theft, ways to protect themselves from identify theft, and how to resolve cases of identity theft and in other ways understand their rights and protections

related to personal identity and financial data;

- Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English speaking participants, including providing support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials; and
- Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of youth with disabilities, including connecting them to benefits planning and work incentives counseling.

English Language Acquisition and Integrated Education and Training Programs

These programs allow students to learn the English language in conjunction with other educational activities.

B. Priority to Recipients of Public Assistance and Low-Income Individuals

(20 CFR §679.560(b)(21))

Boards must include 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, as well as veterans and foster youth, according to the priority order outlined in the WIOA Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth. Boards must also include a list of any Board-established priority groups, if any.

Board Response:

In accordance with WIOA §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.

Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts

A. Fiscal Agent

(WIOA §108(b)(15); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(14))

Boards must include identification of the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the CEOs or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i).

Board Response:

The Deep East Workforce Development Board is responsible for the disbursal of grant funds for the twelve (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.

B. Sub-Grants and Contracts

(WIOA §108(b)(16); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(15))

Boards must include a description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.

Board Response:

The Board uses a competitive procurement process to select contractors for WIOA activities by following the applicable requirements set forth in the Texas Workforce Commission Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts. The Board's policy and procedures outline the purchases of micro, small and formal procurements. Purchases less than $10,000 are considered micro-purchases and purchases between $10,000.01 to $150,000 are small purchases. The Board requires three (3) quotes for all purchases or documentation of why three (3) quotes cannot be obtained.

The procurement process utilized for purchases that exceed the $150,000 threshold is a Request for Proposal (RFP). Prior to the release of the RFP, a needs analysis, cost estimate and justification are completed to justify the release of the RFP. The Board releases an RFP for operation and management of the workforce centers and an RFP for child care operations. 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, narrative, and budget instructions. The Board maintains a "bidder's 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 bidder's list. A bidder's conference may be held, although participation is not mandatory. Questions are submitted and answered through the bidder's 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 date and time. Late proposals are not accepted.

Proposals received are submitted to an evaluation team for assessment using a standardized scoring instrument based on the RFP scoring criteria and instructions. The bidders that score seventy (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 selects 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 request 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.

Part 8: Performance

A. Board Performance Targets

(WIOA §108(b)(17); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(16))

Boards must include a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with TWC and the CEOs consistent with WIOA §116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the 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 area.

Board Response:

The Board negotiates local performance measures with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), providing documentation of specific circumstances that affect performance measures. The Board and TWC have negotiated measures for Program Year 2021 (PY'21) with the economic adjustments due to COVID-19 that will impact the performance measures for Deep East Texas.

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
- Measurable Skills Gains - Adult
- Dislocated Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit
- Dislocated Worker Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
- Dislocated Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit
- Dislocated Worker Credential Rate
- Measurable Skills Gains – Dislocated Worker
- Youth Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit
- Youth Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit
- Youth Credential Rate
- Measurable Skills Gains - Youth
- Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – All Participants
- Employed/Enrolled Q2-Q4 Post Exit – All Participants
- Credential Rate – All Participants
- Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – All Participants
- Measurable Skills Gains (YTD)

In addition to the WIOA measures, TWC has established the following performance measures:

- Claimant Reemployment within ten (10) weeks
- Employers Receiving Workforce Assistance
- CHOICES Full Work Rate
- Average Children Served Per Day

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 (ETPs) is done following TWC requirements. Training providers are required to submit performance data to TWC to remain eligible and to be listed on the State Eligible Training Provider List. Any program that does not meet the state's performance criteria will be withdrawn from the statewide list and not eligible for WIOA enrollments.

The Board conducts an annual review of the contracted One-Stop workforce center operator in areas of performance, monitoring, fiscal accountability, customer/employer surveys and response to elements listed in the contract. The Board staff submits the results to the Board for review and approval of extending the contract or release of a Request for Proposal for a new One-Stop workforce contractor.

A. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

(WIOA §108(b)(19); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(18))

Boards must include a description of how training services outlined in WIOA §134 will be provided through the use of 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.

Board Response:

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are essentially training vouchers given to One-Stop Career Center customers who need occupational skills training to become gainfully employed or reemployed. The Board will use the ITA system exclusively for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker vocational training, as funding allows. The ITA represents a cornerstone of self-determination by the customer to enhance their skill set and opportunities. Customers interested in training will be determined eligible for the program, and assessed to enhance the objective of obtaining a successful outcome. The Board is currently using the CASAS assessment to assess reading, math, and language basic skills and the WorkInTexas registration evaluates career exploration interest 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.

Customers and Talent Acquisition Specialist (TAS) discuss assessment results to make informed choices regarding career paths and training and together develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). The IEP outlines goals and timelines for the customer as he/she advances in reaching their goals. The customer and TAS discuss the Targeted Occupation list and Eligible Training Provider list to assist the customer in choosing their career path and training site. The ultimate decision rests with the customer in making this decision, considering the information provided by the TAS and assessment information.

B. ITA Limitations

(20 CFR §663.420)

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 Board 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.

Board Response:

The Board policy states that Individual Training Accounts are limited to $12,000. 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 working part-time or is involved in other workforce activities.

Part 10: Apprenticeship

A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Boards must include a description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs in its workforce area to register with the Eligible Training Provider System in order to receive WIOA funding.

Board Response:

The Board continues to promote apprenticeship with its regional partners and businesses to increase Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) registrations. As part of the Tri-Agency's recommendation to create stackable program opportunities, the Board continues to collaborate with secondary and post-secondary partners to expand their services to include pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. The Board communicates with the educational institutions to establish apprenticeship programs and registrations with the ETPS when funding opportunities open up through WIOA.

The Board has partnered with Legacy Institute for Life to offer information technology and carpentry registered apprenticeship programs (RAP). Both RAPs are listed on the ETPS. The Board continues to work with manufacturing and trades employers to register their apprenticeship programs with the U.S. Department of Labor and the ETPS.

B. Apprenticeship Texas

Boards must include a description of the Board's strategy and commitment to support Apprenticeship Texas efforts across the state, as applicable.

Board Response:

The Board continues to promote apprenticeship with our regional partners and businesses. In our efforts to increase the availability of apprenticeships in the region, the Board has held meetings with local community colleges, Economic Development organizations, ISDs and businesses to discuss expanding both pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships in the areas of IT, Utilities and Manufacturing. The Board included twelve (12) occupations on the Targeted Occupation List that are IT, Utilities or Manufacturing related. As we continue to support the growth of customized training through apprenticeships, the Board's strategy and commitment is to ensure a competent labor force for the employers in Deep East Texas.

Part 11: Public Comment

Boards must include a description of the process used by the Board, consistent with WIOA §108(d), 20 CFR §679.550(b) and §679.560(b) and (e), to:

·   make copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media;

·   include an opportunity for comment by members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education;

·   provide at least a 15-day, but no more than a 30-day period for comment on the plan before its submission to TWC, beginning on the date that the proposed plan is made available, before its submission to TWC; and

·   submit any comments that express disagreement with the plan to TWC along with the plan.

Board Response:

This Board Plan was available on the website, www.detwork.org, for public comment(s) from January 19 through February 2, 2021. No comments from the public, positive or negative, were received during the review period.

This modified Board Plan was available on the website, www.detwork.org, for public comment(s) from January 6 through February 6, 2023. No comments from the public, positive or negative, were received during the review period.

Local Workforce Development Board 2023 Plan Modifications

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) is charged under Texas Government Code §2308.101(5), 2308.302(a), and 2308.304(a)(b)(4), and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Public Law 113–128) with recommending the plans of Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) to the governor for consideration and approval. TWIC reviews each Board plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide goals and objectives in the system plan, The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023.

Additionally, state law charges TWIC with reporting annually to the governor and to the Texas legislature on the implementation of the system strategic plan and monitoring the operation of the state's workforce system to assess the degree to which the system is effective in achieving state and local goals and objectives. Therefore, TWIC also reviews Board plans and plan modifications to determine each Board's progress in implementing strategies that align with the strategic plan for the Texas workforce system. Following endorsement by TWIC at a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting, the Board plans are sent to the governor for consideration and approval. Each Board's responses to the following planning elements are reviewed by TWIC for alignment and are the basis for recommending approval.

Demonstrating Alignment with Texas' Workforce System Strategic Plan

The four sections below list and describe the four system goals from The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 that identify critical, high-priority system issues for the state. Boards inform the development of strategic goals and objectives and are essential to the implementation of the workforce system plan. Board plan responses apprise TWIC of innovative practices and how key strategies in the system plan translate into local action to move the system forward. Examples of select Board responses will be presented to TWIC under each goal. All 28 Boards will be represented in the briefing for the approval of the plans.

For each goal:
- briefly describe how the Board is working to fulfill the intent of the goal as specified in the description; and
- include the corresponding page number(s) within your plan that further details the identified strategy or initiative.

System Goal 1 and Rationale

Focus on Employers

Effective engagement with employers informs many system strategies and functions that address the changing needs of industry as well as state and regional economies. Education and training are a primary system function that may require multiple state and local entities to work with similar employers to design instruction or adjust career and technical education program and delivery options. Coordination and partnerships with employers are essential to gain insight and implement initiatives while ensuring that industrial productivity continues.

System Goal 1—Local Board Response

Please describe how your local Board has improved employer engagement and efforts to collaborate with any other entities that require input, participation, and/or partnership with employers. Specifically, describe how you coordinate efforts to gain more comprehensive insight on employer needs while reducing the demand on the employers who would otherwise be responding to multiple requests. Identify the primary outcomes and, where relevant, list key entities involved and type of information requests for each entity.

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas continues to assess the needs of employers through meetings, interviews and surveys. The information and feedback was shared with education partners, including Stephen F. Austin State University, Angelina College, and regional ISDs. Those partners indicated they incorporated the needs into their planning. The Board worked collaboratively with Angelina College in promoting the Skill Development Fund and Skills for Small Business. The Board worked collaboratively with Panola College and the employer, Portacool, on their SDF grant award. The Board shares relevant information and opportunities for employers in an electronic newsletter that is distributed monthly with the release of the unemployment statistics.

Corresponding plan page number(s): 2-5

System Goal 2 and Rationale

Engage in Partnerships

Workforce system partners leverage local and regional partnerships to enhance system alignment and improve outcomes and reporting. Partnerships rely on a culture of collaboration and trust, deep working relationships, and communication to provide a solid foundation on which to coordinate planning, integrate processes, and develop the collective technical capacity to share needs, data, and information.

System Goal 2—Local Board Response

Please describe your primary (top) partnerships, how you use them to address key strategies in your plan, and the significant outcomes and progress related to the partnerships. In addition, specifically describe partnerships that foster innovation and improved participant engagement and outcomes in workforce development.

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

The Board's fourth (4th) goal is to strengthen Community Partnerships with economic development corporations, chambers of commerce, and education institutions. The partnerships identify training opportunities and the need for a future workforce.

- Partnership with Angelina College Adult Education and Literacy to cross-refer and provide training for more individuals. As a result AEL won the TWC first place AEL Co-enrollment Award.
- Partnerships with economic development corporations. Secured a High Demand Job Training grant for the six school districts participating in the Deep East Texas College and Career Academy through the partnership with Jasper Economic Development Corporation.
- Partnerships with industry groups. Supporting the East Texas Healthcare Alliance with career exploration events and hiring opportunities to achieve their industry goals.
- Partnerships with employers and school districts. Teacher externship project linked 22 employers with 19 school districts and resulted in internship opportunities, job opportunities, training enhancements, tours and speaking opportunities. Career exploration fairs link students with employers. Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialists partner with 22 school districts and introduce local employers and professionals to students planning their futures. These partnerships have strengthened and enhanced the growth of Career and Technical Education programs and aligned education with industry needs.
- Partnerships with private foundations. Secured a Texas Industry Partnership grant for two classrooms in Lufkin ISD through a partnership with the Lufkin ISD Education Foundation.
- Partnership with non-profit organizations. Partnering with Legacy Institute for Financial Education on two registered apprenticeship grants for the expansion of registered apprentices

in the computer technology and carpentry occupations. Partnering with Junior Achievement of Angelina County on youth career exploration projects.

Corresponding plan page number(s): 2-5, 35, 54-56

System Goal 3 and Rationale

Align System Elements

Aligning workforce programs and services ensures transparent processes and efficient "no wrong door" access that can improve transitions and help all participants complete programs of study, earn credentials of value, and gain critical employability skills. Primarily, seamless alignment supports greater portability and transferability for Texans in or preparing to enter the labor market.

System Goal 3—Local Board Response

Please describe alignment efforts and the status, outcomes, and plan for continuous improvement of system alignment in your region. In the description, include barriers, considerations, and proposed actions to overcome the barriers.

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

The Board has aligned the one-stop system with the integration of seamless services between workforce, child care, vocational rehabilitation, veterans and employment services. The Board operates six (6) workforce centers and outreaches the remaining six (6) counties through a rural service strategy approach. Due to the demographics and barriers of our customers, a hybrid approach of in-person and virtual is available to alleviate travel, technology, and broadband barriers. Through monthly meetings and responsiveness to customer needs, continuous improvement is reviewed and strategies implemented to ensure accessibility for customers.
Corresponding plan page number(s): 42-53

System Goal 4 and Rationale

Improve and Integrate Programs

Coordination and integration of system processes focused on high-priority programmatic needs support service delivery; increase participant access, learning, and transitions through education and training; and improve decision-making at the system, partner, and participant levels.

System Goal 4—Local Board Response

Please describe local efforts to integrate processes and share resources across programs in your region. Identify efficiencies realized and improved participant outcomes as a result. Describe how this work can be leveraged to create new, relevant opportunities that serve the needs of all stakeholders.

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

The Board and TWC's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Division have co-located services in three (3) workforce centers: Angelina County, Nacogdoches County and Jasper County. The partnership has created a seamless, integrated process for services for workforce and VR customers.

Additionally, the Board and Angelina College Adult Education and Literacy program have collaborated to better serve customers in a few ways:

1. An AEL services office is located inside the Jasper County Workforce Center.

2. Angelina College staff administer the CASAS testing services inside five (5) workforce centers. Panola College administers CASAS assessment services for customers at the Shelby County Workforce Center. CASAS provides testing of basic and academic skills for youth and adults.

3. Angelina College Adult Education and Literacy and the workforce staff have collaborated to co-enroll customers and provide the most value for their education. The results of this partnership earned Angelina College number one in the State in the category of co-enrollment in 2022.

Corresponding plan page number(s): 33, 39-41, 48, 58-59

Strategic Opportunities to Drive Local Implementation

Before TWIC began the process to develop the new system strategic plan, Board directors were invited to provide input on issues and opportunities for consideration in system planning.

Please consider the responses you provided (above) to local board area implementation of the four primary goals in the current system plan and identify how the new system strategic plan can help future implementation of your regional goals and strategies related to the following:

Increase engagement of target populations, including Opportunity Youth, Texans with disabilities, foster youth, and sex-trafficking victims.

Describe Board strategies that support engagement of sometimes-underserved populations.

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

The Board strategies to serve Youth consist of referrals and partnerships through WIOA, alternative schools, Adult Learning Center and Job Corps. The services provided for youth are identified through the Individual Service Strategy that may identify the need for support services, obtainment of GED or work based learning. The Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) and Student HireAbility Navigator plus the partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) are significant contributors to the success of working with individuals with disabilities.

Through the strategies listed above the Board has placed Youth in work-based learning that has improved their skill set leading to self-sufficiency wages. The SEAL program placed over 50 students with disabilities in temporary jobs that help provide students with work readiness skills.

Corresponding plan page number(s): 33-34, 38-40, 42-43, 48-49, 55-56, 60-62

Improve efficiency and outcomes through data-driven decision-making and investments.

Describe Board strategies that support data-driven decision-making and investments.

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

The data derived from the Bureau of Economic Analysis helped in identifying the key industries projecting growth with sustainable wages. The Board used this data to develop the demand and target occupation lists. The demand list is a primary focus area for Job Education for Texans grant applicants to refer to when applying for funding. The Board utilized Texas.LMI to project regional needs which assist training institutions in developing or expanding their career and technology training. Based on the target occupation the Board assisted through WIOA funding Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth

additional training to enhance their skills to become employable resulting in a decline in the unemployment rate in Deep East Texas.

Corresponding plan page number(s): 7, 9, 13

Based on the additional training Deep East Texas average weekly wage increased 14.4% from 2018-2022. The unemployment rate continued to decline below 5% in 2022. The Board focus on alignment of education reflected a decrease in less than high school graduate and an increase in those age 25 or older earning Associate or Bachelor Degree.

Corresponding plan page number(s): 23, 26, 33