

**Board Integrated Plan**  
**Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley**  
**FY2013 – 2017**

**Section I – Strategic**

**Introduction:**

The Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley (WSBV) is comprised of seven counties – Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson and Washington. The Brazos Valley Workforce is located in the center of the Texas Triangle anchored by the cities of Bryan and College Station. Energized by the tremendous resources of the Texas A & M University System (TAMU), its flagship Texas A&M University and Blinn College the Brazos Valley is a unique place where innovation, traditions, and values are core to its culture and its future. Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley (WSBV) is the publically funded employment and training agency responsible for providing employers with a skilled labor force and job seekers with self-sufficient employment. WSBV is the critical labor force component for economic development in the Brazos Valley Region. Key partnerships connect WSBV with the community, employers, job seekers and other agencies. Serving as a gateway to the local business friendly community and the university environment, WSBV fosters an innovation-driven business climate. Local workforce and economic strategies are designed to attract desired skilled labor and to take advantage of innovative programs that enhance opportunities for jobs.

The strengths of the region include the geographical location within the Texas Triangle, comprised of Dallas, Houston and Austin. Being located on Interstate 45 and State Highway 6 with easy access to State Highway 290 allows for good trucking and rail logistics. The geographical location of the Brazos Valley also allows for affordable land for employers who are priced out of the Houston port area. Being only 150 miles from the Houston port allows for containers to be off loaded and transported to other more affordable factory locations. State level planning discussions connecting Houston, Dallas and Austin by commuter fast rail include the Bryan/College Station area in planning documents.

The total employment for the Brazos Valley grew by 3,500 jobs between January 2009 and December 2011. This is an increase of 2.86% while the national average for this time period was only 1.75%. This demonstrates how aggressively the communities of the Region work towards assisting employers with growing their workforce in this area.

The median age of the Region's population in the 2000 Census was 24.4 which have increased by 1 year since the 1990 census. However the age group 20 to 24 accounts for 15.6% of the labor force in the 2000 census. By 2016 this group is projected to equal 16.2% of the region's population. While this is due in part to the population of Texas A & M University, it is also an economic strength because many of the graduates want to stay in the area. With most of America dealing with an aging work force the Brazos Valley has a built in pipeline of young skilled workers, if employment opportunities can be provided for them locally.

Texas A & M University increases its graduate student population it is expected that there will be more two-parent families attracted to the area with many of these students bringing prior work experience with them before returning to work with graduate degrees. These students are normally older and could be expected to increase the population groups 25 to 44, which in the 2000 census equaled 26.20% of the population. The 2016 census for this population group does not show a significant increase; however, but the Board believes it is underestimating the returning veteran population that is seeking TAMU enrollment and does not take into consideration local knowledge of all that TAMU is doing to attract graduate students.

The area is a racially mixed area with the distribution in 2010 being 73.7% white, 12.9% black, 20.9% Hispanic and 13.4% other. A racially mixed area is more welcoming to a variety of workers so the Board believes this is strength. Also for the area disability status between the ages of 21 to 64 with a physical, mental or emotional condition lasting 6 months or more was reported in the 2000 Census the region to be 16.7% compared to 19.9 % in the state overall. Of this group 59.5% were working which proves the region has an untapped labor pool.

While the 2000 Census reports that the Brazos Valley average house hold income was \$43,019.00 the projected growth by 2016 will be \$56,501.00... As the job opportunities locally become more skilled the salaries will become more aligned with the salaries of urban areas. Local employers are recognizing that skilled employees are willing to commute longer distances for higher pay and in a rural area it does not take as long. The average commute distance in 2000 for the Brazos Valley was 18 minutes. With improved transportation access the labor shed will grow within the region grows.

The Texas A & M System is one of the largest systems of higher education in the nation, with a budget of \$3.3 billion. Through a statewide network of 11 universities, seven state agencies and a comprehensive health science center, the A & M System educates more than 120,000 students of which 50, 227 are in College Station. On average over 700 new patents are registered every year out of Texas A & M University discoveries and newly developed technology. This in turn encourages the development of new businesses in the area which is nurtured by the local economic development corporations with various supports and incubator activities for business.

Due to TAMU internationally recognized expertise in medicine, defense, agriculture, engineering and veterinary medicine the region has become a resource for these industries as

they develop new innovations that use technologies developed within other disciplines of study. One example of the trifecta created locally between science, agriculture and medicine is in the engineering development of laser surgical tools. These tools were developed to be less invasive and allow for a shorter recovery time. To train to use these lasers medical doctors perform surgery on animals at the veterinarian school improving both animal and human health. Developments in genetically modified agriculture products and advances in plant based vaccine production have allowed the University to become one of three national grants awardees to become a national center for influenza vaccine production. In June of 2012 TAMU received \$285.6 million in public-private partnership to enhance the nation's biosecurity preparedness and create jobs in Texas. This Center will not only develop and manufacture vaccines, it will also provide therapies in the event of chemical biological, radiological and nuclear threats, and perform advanced development of future vaccines and other biosecurity products plus train the next generation of professionals in the associated fields. This is being done in conjunction with the National Center for Advanced Therapeutic Manufacturing which is producing the pharmaceutical products.

Locally there are four hospital systems serving the region with two new hospitals under construction. This allows more seniors to relocate to the area to meet their health needs and take advantage of lower cost housing options. Hospitals in the area are providing learning sites for future health professionals. Tele-medicine has been developed in the region to help provide health care to more rural citizens and this opens up more infrastructure support for employees who work in rural areas.

Another example of an economic strength in the area is Blinn College. This community college is rated as one of the least expensive to attend. While Blinn's focus is on preparing students for a four year college degree, it is expanding its technical education program. Blinn College with private employers successfully developed the Hodde Technical Education Center in Brenham and a technical education center in Bryan. Both of these Centers are expanding in the certification programs they offer. Blinn College has been active in the pursuit of Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Skill Development grant applications with private employers. Blinn is also growing its on-line educational opportunities which are making it easier for the rural population to access training.

Another economic strength of the region is the increasing development of secondary education technical education high schools. Both Bryan and College Station have recently opened new high schools with an emphasis on technical education. Two other large school districts within the Region, Brenham and Navasota, also have strong technical education programs. This move by the secondary education systems within the Region to highlight technical education along with their academic achievements is positioning the Region to meet the demands of skilled technical occupations.

Three additional characteristics within the region also support economic growth. The first is the development of several new or expanded industrial parks in various communities. The second is a Texas Connect project designed to distribute and maintain over 81 public access computers. The third is a Regional Transportation Committee that is coordinating various public transportation providers and the needs of the region for better transportation.

In conclusion the region's unique location, knowledge based institutions, young population, supportive government and non-profit organizations are growing an area that is not only attractive and healthy for business but also for its labor force.

### **Part I – Board's Vision:**

#### **Vision:**

To be the workforce agency of choice for the employers and job seekers in Brazos Valley Region.

#### **Mission:**

To provide employers a quality workforce.

### **Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board Goals and Objectives**

The goal of the Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board is to provide customers leadership, guidance and resources necessary to equip job seekers to become self-sufficient and assist employers to be successful and competitive. The Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board aspires to produce verifiable results for services rendered to local customers through the efforts of the workforce center staff, educational partners and community based partners geared to the successful attainment of skills for jobseekers, helping them to become skilled, productive employees. The Board's focus is to provide the education, training, support programs and career planning to create world-class employees that will thrive in the current and future economy. The Board's efforts are in support of the economic development of the Brazos Valley region, endeavoring to connect industry and education, to provide job seekers with access to opportunities for careers in successful businesses, and to support industry competitiveness and innovation in the region.

**Goal One: Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board is a valuable recognized resource to the region's employers.**

**Objective 1:** Enhance the Board's involvement in economic development efforts to support the continued prosperity of the citizens of the Brazos Valley region.

**Objective 2:** Expand and align the skilled labor pool available to Brazos Valley employers

**Goal Two: Workforce Services Brazos Valley provides responsive business services**

**Objective 1:** Help grow businesses, especially small businesses, by meeting their needs for skilled qualified workers

**Objective 2:** Support initiatives for new businesses development

**Goal Three: The Workforce Center system provides qualified workers for the labor force to employers.**

**Objective 1:** Improve education and skill level of the Region's labor force for employers by providing training for workers to diversify or upgrade skills.

**Objective 2:** Educate youth, job seekers and workers about barriers to employment opportunities and assist them in addressing those barriers.

**Goal Four: The Workforce Center System provides job seekers with access to a wide range of job opportunities.**

**Objective 1:** Encourage job seekers to pursue education and skills training options in high skill, high growth jobs.

**Objective 2:** Provide more training opportunities in the Brazos Valley for those who need occupational skills training to obtain employment.

These goals and objectives are based on the strengths and needs required to provide a skilled workforce within the Brazos Valley. The first two goals address employer needs by leveraging and aligning resources. The Board believes that WSBV is a valuable resource to local employers that employers may not be aware of that can help them grow their businesses. The objectives under these two goals identify tasks that can be done to provide workforce services that are specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable and timely. The third and fourth goals focus on increasing the job seeker services to ensure that every person who wants to work can obtain employment by increasing their skills, minimizing their barriers, and obtaining quality referrals.

The Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley intends to increase the visibility of Workforce Solutions services in the community and promote the workforce centers as a resource to employers through civic organizations through community events, and through working with its partners. Visibility requires the dissemination of information about Workforce Solutions resources and benefits available to employers, job seekers and partner organizations. By understanding the needs of the customer (employers and job seekers), workforce development services can promote a market-driven customer responsive atmosphere and increase the visibility of Workforce Solutions in the community while promoting the workforce centers as a resource to employers. .

The Board focuses on developing the skills, knowledge and abilities of the workforce center system staff to enable them to identify the service needs of employers and job seekers, identify the resources to address these needs and act as coaches/consultants to customers as they help them realize a future built on successful careers and profitable enterprise. This will be accomplished by providing a professional environment focused on staff excellence and customer responsiveness. Through the workforce center system the Board hopes to meet the needs of the region's employers for qualified job applicants by ensuring that only qualified applicants with the necessary workforce maturity skills (or soft skills) are referred for job openings. Job seekers who need assistance in addressing reading and math deficiencies will have the opportunity to improve these skills. Individuals with little work experience or barriers to employment will have the opportunity to attain experience in safe, supportive work experience activities in relevant occupations. Individuals who need occupational skills training will have access to training that meets the region's current and future employer needs that support and sustain business retention and expansion.

The Workforce Center system will emphasize service coordination between the Business Services Unit, Career Coaches and customers to provide qualified applicant referrals to employers by matching applicant skills to employer job requirements. The quality of applicant referrals to employers will be assessed monthly, along with quality of Work In Texas registration, number of WIA and Choices job seekers enrolled in skills training and the number of individuals who complete and are placed in occupations quarterly.

The Board will provide skills training opportunities to those in need of occupational skills to access employment in high skill, high wage occupations. Job seekers will be counseled on the experiences and elements in their lives that affect their employability, such as basic skills deficiencies, drug abuse, or criminal records. Workforce center staff will make referrals to appropriate partners to address those barriers which cannot be addressed through workforce center services.

### **Key Issues for Regional Workforce:**

There are four main critical labor force issues facing the Brazos Valley. They are 1) labor force skills gap, 2) insufficient public transportation 3)) an increasing number of job seekers with a criminal background history and (4) addressing educational deficiencies.

**Skill Gaps** - Even though Texas is experiencing a growing workforce with workforce development and training opportunities, apprenticeship programs and employment support services, there are too few jobseekers with skills to match available jobs. A significant segment of today's labor force does not have the requisite skills demanded by employers. Training programs for the occupations in demand are becoming scarce because of federal cuts to job training funds. The Workforce Brazos Valley Board seeks additional resources and employer-provided training to address the lack of training funds, partnering with educational entities and

businesses where possible to augment training opportunities funded through the Board. Adding to the skills shortage is the impending retirement of skilled craftsmen-plumbers, pipefitters, welders, electricians, machinists-so called Baby Boomers retiring with few younger workers to take their place. Two reasons for this shortage are 1) craftsmen are on average older than the overall workforce and are beginning to retire. In the next four to six years, 20 percent of the skilled craftsmen in the construction industry will be retiring. 2) the educational system has de-emphasized vocational education in secondary and post-secondary schools; fewer students are going into craft based industries. More students are being steered away from vocational and technical schools and tracked toward traditional four-year college degrees. The state of Texas is facing skilled employee shortfalls in several industries: health care, construction, transportation, oil and gas, and manufacturing. A national survey conducted by the Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte Consulting showed that two-thirds of businesses are experiencing a moderate to severe shortage of qualified workers.

Training opportunities have not kept up with market demand for skilled workers. The Board continues to focus on matching occupational skills training to occupations in demand now and in the future, taking into account the growing skills gap due to retirements. Training and matching individuals to jobs is vital to assisting job seekers find employment. The Board and its partners plan to continue providing training opportunities to address the area's skill gap. Blinn College, Texas A&M University and the Texas Engineering Extension Service are key partners in addressing this issue by providing training through classroom instruction and on-the-job training to alleviate the lack of certified skilled craft workers. As the Board reviews market needs that address the deficiency of skilled workers, training models will be designed to address shortfalls and in these identified areas. Jobseekers will be informed about targeted occupations, those expected to have increased job openings, and will be advised to apply for available training as funding allows. The result should be an increase in the number of jobseekers trained in the skills needed to secure employment.

**Public transportation-** The lack of public transportation cripples efforts of jobseekers and other individuals without their own transportation to be able to access available jobs, training or things needed in everyday life, especially in rural areas. Available transportation resources are limited and do not meet the demand for transportation for individuals without a personal vehicle. Area residents using public transportation are hindered by limited routes and inconvenient scheduling. Public transportation can play a significant role in finding smart solutions to the challenges facing jobseeker if access was enhanced to include more frequent service and services to the rural region with fixed routes. There have been past endeavors for employers to subsidize transportation routes but these efforts have proven to be cost prohibitive. Public transport services are usually funded by government subsidies and fares are charged to each passenger. Public transportation in the Brazos Valley is subsidized by the cities or counties, but there are no extra dollars for expansion without additional taxes. The Brazos Valley Board advocates the need to increase available transportation options for better access to jobs and schools. WSBV

proposes to work with local and regional governments to improve public access to affordable transportation alternatives.

**Barriers to employment – criminal records** - A growing number of job seekers have had problems with drugs and petty crimes, resulting in criminal records that hinder their ability to find employment or enter training programs. Most employers employ drug testing as part of their applicant screening process. The number of potentially unemployable individuals is growing while resources to address “offender” populations continue to decline. The State funded Project RIO which provided targeted job search and employment opportunities for offenders has been discontinued, with no replacement program offered by the Governor or the Legislature. The Board will address this issue by working with partner agencies, such as ISDs, BVCASA, Project Unity, and county Probation departments, to provide job seeking assistance and training opportunities to offenders.

Individuals with drug or alcohol related offenses cannot be insured for 5-7 years after they are released from confinement because employers cannot or will not obtain liability insurance for these individuals. Approximately 65 percent of the Choices Program population has an offense on record, making it difficult to place them in jobs. The workforce needs and the public’s perception of training and employing offenders offer unique challenges. The evaluation process for ex-offenders is a multi-step approach that includes information gathering, goal-setting, self-assessment and program placement and requires staff to encourage participants to take advantage of educational and vocational services offered at the center. Cooperation continues among the partner agencies in providing testing, counseling, guidance, case management, and job placement services to improve the employment and self-sufficiency outcomes as jobseekers with criminal histories as a population that needs to be served.

The Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley’s goal remains to reduce recidivism through employment, helping the ex-offender obtain employment as soon after release as possible. Ex-offenders participating in workforce center programs are encouraged to take advantage of educational and vocational services necessary for employment. Services offered help ex-offenders by providing job preparation services for employment. Ex-offenders are assigned to assessment specialists who develop individualized treatment plans to identify a career path for the offender and to guide placement decisions. Case workers examine the individual’s employability and develop plans for making the jobseeker marketable for available jobs and occupational demands in the community/region by recommending appropriate academic or vocational programs within the center that concentrate on developing job readiness training to hone interview skills, life skills and job search skills for the ex-offender. Employment specialists also have access to the Texas Workforce Commission’s entire database of current job listings to match participants with jobs. Job readiness classes that focus on the proper completion of a work application, preparing a resume and performing in a mock interview complete practical training that readies the ex-offender for competition in the job market. Research has shown that ex-offenders with jobs are less likely to commit new crimes. The Board’s goal is to develop

relationships with employers willing to hire ex-offenders and to help ex-offenders secure well-paid employment.

**Educational Deficiencies** - Addressing educational deficiencies is the beginning to effective academic and career options that will allow jobseekers to achieve the successful completion of courses needed to attain needed skills. As the labor market becomes more specialized and economies demand higher levels of skill, most upwardly mobile positions require at the very least a high school diploma or equivalent. Individuals with limited English proficiency will find it difficult to acquire jobs paying a self-sufficient wage. In the Brazos Valley region, 14.4 percent of individuals have no high school diploma. The Texas economy is growing rapidly so employers need access to every available skilled worker. Lack of a high school diploma or lack of English proficiency reduces the number of qualified job seekers in the labor force. Adult Education Programs provide classes for GED Programs and English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs. In these classes job seekers can receive tutoring and small group sessions for adults at the 6th grade level or below. Common reasons for GED and ESL participants not having received a high school diploma include leaving high school early, the inability to pass required courses or mandatory achievement tests, the need to work, personal problems, and wanting to get into college early. Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley has partnered with BVCOG Choices Housing Section 8 Family Self Sufficiency GED program and Region VI Educational Service Center to provide GED classes at the Center for Regional Services on weekdays and week nights. Region VI ESC provides multiple GED and ESL classes in the seven counties. The state funded Region VI ESC GED classes are filled to capacity with a waiting list. The Board intends to work with its partners to expand access to basic skills training for those without a high school diploma or who are deficient in English.

The Board is also interested in helping secondary education institutions pursue a hybrid advanced career high school diploma. Such a hybrid could have several pathways to successfully finishing high school with multiple advanced high school recommended plans such as 4x4 math, 4x4 technical education or 4x4 fine arts. All recommended plans would be equally rigorous but allow youth flexibility to achieve success as they design it.

Another issue pertinent to the educational deficiencies problem is the use of testing as the basis for identifying skills learned. “High stakes” testing doesn’t drive success. Students not only need to learn skills but also have to know how to apply them in the “work-a-day” world. Experiential, team based projections cutting across multiple disciplines presents students with a realistic opportunity to understand how to apply skills learned and documents that attainment. The Board supports this approach to addressing educational deficiencies.

**Rural Area** - The Brazos Valley region consists of seven counties: Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson and Washington and is considered a rural area. This multi-County region has an estimated population of 319,447. The region consists of a population density of 62.54 residents per square mile compared to a statewide density of 95.92. According to the

county-based population estimates from the United States Census Bureau, Multi-County changed in population from 267,085 in April, 2000 to an estimated 319,447 in April, 2010 by 52,362 residents. This reflects an increase of 19.6 percent in population. Employment growth has followed the same general pattern as the population. Agriculture accounts for nearly 13 percent of the jobs in rural counties but the largest share of rural jobs and employment growth comes from various non-agricultural services. Rural Texas suffers from higher unemployment rates than do the state's metro areas. According to the USDA, the nation's working poor are more likely to live in rural areas than urban areas; about 30 percent of the poor who are full-time, full-year workers live in rural areas.

Connecting people who live in rural environments is a major challenge. Since the Brazos Valley is considered a rural area, one of the great challenges for the area is internet access, especially in the small towns included in the region – Navasota, Hearne, Centerville, Madisonville and Brenham. Most rural areas are not equipped with Digital Subscriber Lines (DSL) or cable access due to the excessive cost of installation by the cable providers. In cities where the population density is low, connectivity is usually expensive. While 66% of Americans had an Internet connection in 2010, that figure was only 50% in rural areas, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project. Even though Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISPs) are rapidly becoming a popular broadband option for rural areas, obtaining a high speed Internet connection in a rural area can be a challenge depending on the location. Fiber-optic broadband Internet service is the newest and fastest type of connection, but due to the fact that it is a new form of broadband Internet, the service areas are still somewhat limited because it requires laying fiber-optic cable, leaving most rural areas underserved in terms of broadband access.

Most rural populations live out-of-reach of the existing communications infrastructure, the typical average revenue per user is low, and the rural environment poses numerous economical and operational difficulties such as rough terrain, limited power supply and dearth of skilled labor. Many services offered by the Workforce Center are available via the internet. Customers can access WorkinTexas and other TWC websites for information about employment and available services. The Brazos Valley Council of Government website also has a wealth of information concerning programs offered. The Board supports community initiatives to address this “digital divide” in the region.

## **Partners**

The Board has an effective relationship with diverse partners who help to seamlessly link jobseekers to needed services and training.

Other partners which form a link with the Board to seamlessly blend core services offered to the universal population of the Workforce Development Area include the following: Blinn College, Education Service Center Region VI, Project Unity, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Research Valley Partnership

Economic Development Corporation, Burluson County Economic Development Corporation, Leon County Economic Development Corporation, Grimes County Economic Development Corporation, Washington County Economic Development Corporation, Robertson County Economic Development Corporation, Madison County Economic Development Corporation, Caldwell Economic Development Council, Brenham Economic Development Council, Madisonville Economic Development Council, Chamber of Commerce of Bryan-College Station, Chamber of Commerce of Hearne, Chamber of Commerce of Madisonville, Chamber of Commerce of Caldwell, Chamber of Commerce of Navasota, Chamber of Commerce of Brenham, Chamber of Commerce of Caldwell, Brazos Valley United Way, Brazos Valley Council of Governments, Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, the Brazos Valley Regional Transportation Steering Committee, Brazos Valley Council on Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Brazos Valley Mental Health Mental Retardation, Area Agency on Aging, Texas Engineering Extension Service, and Texas AgriLife Extension Service (formerly Texas Cooperative Extension) and the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Referrals to the various community-provided services are made by Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley GLI staff and 211 (United Way) staff. Once eligible job seekers have been assessed by case managers, they are assigned, in priority order, to services on the basis of where funds and other resources can be best used, are most needed, or are most likely to achieve success for the jobseeker.

For jobseekers who qualify for training services, the Board has developed a list of vendors on the Eligible Training Providers Certification System list which may be utilized for training for any of the occupations listed on the local or statewide Target Occupations List. Program eligible participants are encouraged to seek employment and skills development in occupations listed in the Board's Targeted Occupations List so that they may achieve self-sufficiency.

Blinn College operates and manages Rapid Response services to employers as their respective needs are identified and serves as a major training provider in the Brazos Valley. The Education Service Center, Region VI provides traditional literacy services such as General Education Development (GED), ESL, and financial literacy classes without charge to multiple locations throughout the region. DARS works with the Workforce disability Navigator to provide assistance to jobseekers with disabilities and has an MOU with the Board. Project Unity, a community-based organization, provides jobseeker support. The United Way operates the 211-information referral system.

All programs offered by Brazos Valley Workforce Board are set to engage the participant on a path to self-sufficiency and have convenient and ready access that support the Advancing Texas philosophy that integrates an interconnected partner network of state agencies, educational institutions and community based organizations. The Board works with local Chambers of Commerce in the region to bring the business community together to develop strong local networks, which can result in a business-to-business exchange. The Chambers work to develop

pro-business initiatives and further the interests of businesses. Some of their main interests are vocational training and regional economic development.

Employer needs are identified by direct conversations with employers about their workforce needs and analysis of labor market data to understand skill gaps specific to the particular occupation. Board staff works with the employer to address workforce needs identified by data analysis or to locate needed training and/or training providers. Outreach to employers involves coordinated planning and the identification of initiatives needed to solve workforce issues. Many of the training needs are handled through our training provider Blinn College.

The Brazos Valley Region has an Integrated Service Delivery System. The programs listed on the next few pages are individually funded but delivered by career coaches to job seeker customers as an integrated service delivery by providing the customer with the particular services available in each program as needed by the customer. The priority of service for each program is veterans, spouses of veterans, foster care youth, then job seekers and workers with insufficient income to be self-sufficient.

#### **Methods for identifying economic needs and coordination to meet those needs.**

Locally WSBV coordinates with each county economic development corporation to support their efforts to recruit and retain employers. WSBV is on call to provide each county with labor market information for any site selectors who are considering the County for a business site. If a county economic development corps or chamber identifies an employer need that WSBV can fulfill or coordinate then it is addressed. As part of BVCOG workforce services are presented each month to local elected officials and many of them contact WSBV for services that benefit their counties economically. For example when the cities of Bryan/College Station needed to facilitate Section 3 certification of vendors for community development funding projects, WSBV hosted a training seminar on the new process and made itself a resource for employers interested in qualifying. In Burleson County when it was identified that businesses needed QuickBooks training WSBV coordinated with the Small Business Development Center to host a training session.

#### **Methods for identifying and meeting employer need (and how needs are identified)**

WSBV Board members and staff participate in a number of community employer associations such as chambers of commerce, education foundations, United Way, Community Partnership Network which gives the Board access to employers and a method for getting employer input on their labor force needs. Also being able to present services to new or expanding employers in the community allows for firsthand knowledge of their labor needs. WSBV services to employers are flexible enough to accommodate most employer requests. For example a new computer consulting company is locating a new branch in College Station. Their recruiter is in Atlanta Georgia and was not familiar with the Workforce Solutions network. After a brief orientation the company will have personalized recruitment in the region, will use workforce offices for

interviews, are connected to TWC skills development funds, and are assured that their employment needs will be met.

### **Methods for ensuring a skilled workforce with focus on business stabilization and expansion**

WSBV is committed to maintaining local flexibility while maintaining strong accountability in delivery of its services to the citizens of the Brazos Valley. WSBV has two customers, businesses (employers) and job seekers. To assure quality in the delivery of services monitors ensure compliance and career coaches look to achieve the goals of providing a skilled labor force to employers and self-sufficiency for job seekers. Customer service to both employers and job seekers is tracked by phone conversations, surveys, and follow up contacts. When problems with employers are identified services are offered if WSBV can provide them or if the problem is with some other aspect of business the employer is put in touch with resources to assist them in resolving the issue.

### **List Programs and Services**

#### **WIA**

Workforce Investment Act customers are a diverse group with different levels of learning. The one basic commonality for this group is the need for permanent, long-term employment. This common goal presents different and complex needs as assessed by the current population of Workforce customers. The local workforce system is addressing the basic need of employment by offering different elements of support to assist in the goal of obtaining employment.

Workforce development services are delivered by offering:

Thorough assessment detailing a customer's prior work experience and skills set, regardless of educational level, followed by intensive job search

Addressing barriers to employment identified in the assessment: adult literacy, skill gaps, and lack of work maturity skills or experience.

Career coaches work with the customer to build a comprehensive plan for employment, based on assessing the customer's barriers and knowledge of the regional economy and building a stable skill set for long term employment.

Review and set skills competencies for a training path as an avenue to employment, in addition to reviewing income capability to support short or long term training.

Meeting with each customer a maximum of six weeks to review skill level, prior work history educational and transferrable skills that might indicate the path for each customer.

Reviewing the customers learning outcomes to assess if training is a viable option on the path to employment.

Providing access to occupational skills training in targeted occupations delivered through local training providers. Provide customized training to increase skill sets based on employer need and employee interest.

Review customer's application and resume's for quality and accuracy.

Prepare customers for in-demand emerging occupations for the region or designated area.

Providing access to career counseling and support services such as child care and transportation to facilitate the customer's enrollment in training.

The Workforce Investment Act's three funding sources: WIA Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker encompass varied populations and diverse skills sets between the funding sources.

**WIA Adult Population** – The WIA Adult Program serves a population of adults with skills sets that are varied from limited to extensive and diverse employment histories from supervisory management positions to food service workers. Household income information indicate a growing number of young singles with kids, young singles, married persons with one spouse working and a limited group of 55 and over –engaging in the workforce until retirement.

To address skilled gaps in this population, Workforce Investment Act has partnered with Blinn College to have articulated programs that offer post-secondary level courses that will allow customers to establish skills sets that are marketable to local employers.

**WIA Dislocated Worker Population** – serves the group of customers with established skill sets, who have been laid off to business downsizing or closings. This population has a wide range of occupations across various industry clusters. Training as an option for dislocated workers is minimal, due to the need to replace relatively high incomes (compared to other WIA populations) and the urgency to re-enter the workforce immediately to retain homes, etc.

The immediate need for this group is employment at or near the salary paid by the previous employer. Due to economic conditions, positions previously held are not available. To acknowledge and assist in the road to employment, Workforce offers training, and one-on-one job search for a career similar in pay grade and skill level. Training strategies include individual enrollment in occupational skills training to establish new career, short term vocational or pre-employment skills training to sharpen skills, and customized training with specific employers who might have a need for individuals trained in company specific skills.

### **Layoff Aversion**

WIA funds are utilized to assist employers in layoff aversion.

Layoff aversion is described as the following:

1) saving an employee's job with an existing employer at risk of downsizing or closing; or 2) transitioning an employee at risk of dislocation to a different job with the same employer or a new job with a different employer, with a minimal period of unemployment.

The overall goal of layoff aversion is to save jobs. The Board and its contractors have the knowledge and skills of the local economy and strategies to assist employers in reduced work hours to maintain current employment and have production continue to save jobs and the company. Layoff aversion services can be requested by an employer or the Rapid Response Coordinator can approach a company upon notification of a possible layoff.

**Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program** for the dislocated population offers assistance to laid off workers due to employers moving jobs overseas to save labor costs. As a result TAA offers training assistance for workers to be re-trained for a different career track or upgrade the skills of a worker. Trade Readjustment Assistance provides additional UI benefits during the course of a workers training program or while they are doing job search to assist laid off workers in obtaining training and finding employment. TAA assistance covers remedial education skills, English as a Second language or GED courses. Dislocated Workers receive assistance for services geared toward assisting them in re-entering the workforce as soon as they were notified of their layoff status. Rapid Response services are offered in various forms to assist laid off workers with the opportunity to return to the workforce.

Workforce partners geared to assist WIA customers to address their barriers and obtain employment at a self-sufficient wage are:

Blinn College – provides community college level academic and technical education

Region VI – GED services – provides adult literacy, GED testing and ESL services

BVCOG GED services - provides adult literacy and GED preparation

RSVP Volunteer Organizations – provides volunteer training, recruitment and retention

Gear-UP – long term grant to promote educational achievement now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year

City/State Economic Development – retain and recruit employers

Chamber of Commerce – provides business support network

### **Training**

WIA customers are enrolled in targeted occupations – those that are projected to grow in the Brazos Valley region or in other parts of the state over the next five years. These occupations are reviewed and updated annually. Current targeted occupations are:

Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
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Registered Nurses
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education
Biological Technicians
Construction Laborers
Truck Drivers, Heavy
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
Licensed Vocational Nurses
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers
Operating Engineers and Other Equipment Operators
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers
Maintenance and Repair Workers
Supervisors of Construction Trades
Automotive Service Technicians
Computer Support Specialists
Electricians
Medical Assistants
Roustabouts, Oil and Gas
General and Operations Manager
Correctional Officers and Jailers
Carpenters
Physical Therapists
Driver/Sales Worker
Industrial Machinery Mechanics
Middle School Teachers
Medical Secretaries
Machinists
Plumbers, Pipefitters and Steamfitters
Teachers and Instructors, All Other
Secretaries and Admin Assistants
Secondary School Teachers

Occupations in demand in the region are identified through a process of comparing labor market projections for key industries that make up the economic base of the region and identifying potential jobs that will experience increased numbers of openings in the future. Training for these occupations is accessed through Blinn College and other training partners. Training can be short term consisting of a few weeks to up to two years. All the training certified by the Board compliments and is in line with the targeted occupation list.

Customized training based on employer need may be arranged if employers are willing to hire those trainees who successfully complete and meet the employer's requirements for hire through TWC skill development grants. All training options are explored. For example the nursing field is a field where there is a noted shortage. Workforce works with the different educational entities and employers to bring training for the different levels of nursing. Customers are given intensive structured review of the targeted occupations and the skill set that is required for the occupation prior to enrollment in training.

### **Training Cost**

The estimated cost of academic training for 12 semester hours is \$3000.00, compared to the approximately \$1000.00 for a workforce education certification in a demand occupation. Workforce on average funds training for 300 plus customers each year. Training for those occupations requiring a bachelor's degree may be supported for up to two years of training (i.e. the last two years before graduation). **Youth Employment**

The youth population has little exposure to the world of work. Youth face a lack of employable skills and a lack of workforce maturity skills – which are soft skills needed to be successful in their first job. Youth who drop out of high school face additional significant barriers to employment since most jobs require at least a high school diploma. Youth are provided a job readiness class – for in school youth (ISY) and a work readiness class for out of school youth (OSY).

Statistics indicate that 30% of youth find full-time employment after leaving high school. The wages for this youth population usually do not exceed \$7.50 per hour. High school graduates obtain up to 75% of the available temporary jobs. The lack of job retention for high school students is a continued problem. Youth need opportunities to experience work, earn a wage, and develop the maturity necessary to become productive citizens. The foundation of that effort is a high school diploma or a GED. Workforce services offer youth GED classes and remediation to assist in them in the goal of obtaining a GED.

Workforce services offer youth different real –life world experiences to prepare them for the world or work. If immediate employment is the goal – workforce mandates that job each youth attend work readiness classes for a week. A review of the youths TABE assessment will be conducted by career coaches. Out of School Youth are required to be TABE tested. If youth does not have a grade level score of 8.9, mediation is mandated and work experience is not given until a grade level gain is accomplished. The focus is for youth to be well rounded, being able to comprehend assigned job duties, take direction and being skill ready. Work readiness consists of the following components:

- Labor Market Information
- Work Readiness Skills assessment
- Work Maturity Skills
- Taking directions, working in teams

- Taking Initiative
- Occupational Skills Training
- Support Services
- Employment
- Job Retention

### **Barriers to Employment**

Regardless of the WIA funding available there are specific issues that prevent some individuals from entering the world of work or enrolling in occupational skills training.

The specific barriers are:

- Adult Illiteracy
- Lack of English speaking or reading skills
- Physical or mental Disabilities

Illiteracy is an issue that affects both youth and adults. Being an adult with low literacy level affects a customer's self-esteem and level of optimism, coping skills and resilience, in addition to motivation. Once a customer has performed at a level that provides comprehension of the literacy, the outcomes for work and additional training are achieved.

Adult literacy training in conjunction with GED classes is offered to help increase a customer's literacy level. English as Second Language classes are offered to assist this population in using a familiar language to help them learn English. Customers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are provided with translators or documents translated to assist in the comprehension of services.

Person with Disabilities- There are numerous opportunities for persons with disabilities to achieve the goal of training or employment. American Disabilities Associations have pushed for laws that enhance access to persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are given enhanced access to transportation, education and necessary accommodations. Workforce customers are provided the services of an Adult Disability Resource Center that was established to assist this population with areas not offered in mainstream programs for persons with disabilities. Employers are encouraged to keep persons with disabilities at work or help them to return to work.

Veterans are another population that is increasing and in need of employment and training opportunities. Workforce provides job fairs to eligible veterans and services that review their skill sets and job develop to employers to hire veterans that have the necessary background for stable employment. Veteran services are available in the Workforce component of services.

### **Childcare**

Child Care Services is an integral part of the workforce development system. Child care services are necessary to allow individuals and families to obtain and retain employment, or attend school or training programs. 1200 children in the Brazos Valley area need subsidized care in order for their families to be successful. The average cost of child care for one child in the region is \$600 per month. This is a substantial piece of a family's income. By helping with these costs the Board's child care services program supports engagement in employment and training programs.

The goal for the next 5 years in child care is to increase awareness of child care services to the families who might be eligible and to increase the quality of child care services available in the Brazos Valley region. To increase awareness the Board will be targeting outreach to families who have been in the program prior and might not be aware of new rule changes and other issues that might make them eligible. Funds for outreach will need to be increased to build a waitlist pool of families who are eligible for care and ready when another eligible family drops off the program. The Board already targets both teen and young parents who have not heard of child care services. The Board intends to increase this outreach to encompass more college students at both Blinn and Texas A&M University.

The Board supports improving the quality of care at child care centers. Child care providers don't typically have funds for training their staff due to the low wage and high turnover experienced in this industry. With the Board's quality funds these employees can be trained to be more skilled, gain more hands-on experience, and hopefully not change jobs as frequently. The steady turnover at child care facilities keeps most centers in a constant hiring situation and leaves them less time for building quality centers. The Department of Families and Protective Services (DFPS) has certain requirements that each employee and center must meet, however these are just the basics. Building a quality employee takes more than these basic courses. WSBVB plans to host an annual child care conference for local providers. This conference would bring in top notch speakers and provide training in the region that is usually only available in the bigger cities. In addition to this annual conference the Board would like to hold a minimum of 8 seminars per year with topics that providers in the region are looking for to train their staff. Purchasing curriculum for each center is also a need. The Board plans in the next 5 years are to assist each center in updating their reading curriculum.

By ensuring that employees who work multiple shifts or odd hours have quality care available local employers will be more prosperous. A comprehensive study of employer and employees needs for child care will be done to identify the needs for child care providers.

## **Choices**

The Federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds the State Choices program, an employment first program that provides employment assistance to work- mandatory and work- exempt customers receiving TANF. The eligibility for these services is determined by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Applicants for TANF

are referred to WSBV as part of their eligibility determination for HHSC. Once these customers are outreached by Workforce and agree to participate they are provided job readiness training, job matching, career planning, child care and supportive services such as transportation assistance to obtain employment. If they are exempt from the HHSC work requirements and still want to participate employment is sought to meet the work requirements of their particular disability. Success in this program is measured by obtaining employment, self-employment, subsidized employment or on-the-job training. Barriers to employment are identified and addressed by coordinated case management. Other community based agencies are involved as the needs for each customer are identified. Examples of other community services used include adult literacy/GED, mental health counseling, alcohol/drug abuse counseling, bonding, and public housing. By co-enrolling in the WIA program these customers can also obtain occupational training. Choices mandatory work customers are required to job search, participate in community service or work 20 to 30 hours per week depending upon certain criteria. Once these customers obtain employment they are able to retain some of their TANF benefits while they transition to self-sufficiency.

### **SNAP E&T**

Individuals seeking assistance from the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program for employment and training customers are determined eligible by HHSC for food assistance. To meet their work requirements these customers attend an orientation about workforce services. If they are not working due to medical exemptions they are still offered services by workforce to try to finding suitable employment. If they are working but not earning enough they are encouraged to become involved with workforce programs to find self-sufficient employment. Supportive services, job matching and placement in employment are offered to these customers.

### **Wagner- Peyser Services**

Wagner Peyser services focus on the job seekers who are receiving unemployment insurance (UI) or trade assistance (TAA) from the State of Texas. These workers have lost their jobs through no fault of theirs and receive financial assistance from the State. Once they are registered for UI they are required to register with their local workforce office for employment services. The State profiles UI customers to determine their risk in getting another job. The customers at greater risk for not obtaining employment are required to attend an in person orientation at the workforce center. Workshops are developed for customers around registering on WorkinTexas, resume writing, labor market information, and support groups, other employment programs they may qualify for and job matching. These customers are provided as much assistance with finding a job as they request.

Customers who lost their jobs through trade affected business closures are also provided the same UI services but they also qualify for occupational re-training. Workforce center staff provides the information and case management for the TAA customers.

## **Coordination of Activities**

To effectively coordinate multiple programs and provide quality service to the business community, the Business Services Unit works hand-in-hand with program staff located in the workforce center and community partners. Career Coaches and Business Services Representatives continually communicate their customer's needs to one another. To that end, Career Coaches and Business Services Staff meet on a weekly basis to discuss recent issues, trends, and changes. The topics for these meetings may include:

- Current number of jobseekers in the system with appropriate skill levels
- Individuals in training due to exit, timeframe, degrees, certifications
- Job orders currently in the system or coming into the system,
- Issues with referrals or employers for a particular industry cluster
- Economic outlook of the community

The Career Coaches are mandated to discuss employment activities and opportunities with participants nearing completion of training programs. The Career Coaches, utilizing WorkInTexas perform job matching activities for the participant and consult with the Business Services Representative on potential employment opportunities. In addition, BSU staff and Program Staff meet on a regular basis to staff hard-to-place individuals. As a unit they review the background, skills, barriers, specific needs of an individual and design an action plan to meet the needs of the individual.

One member of the Business Services Team is identified as the Job Developer for Choices, SNAP, and other hard to place customers. The Job Developer works hand-in-hand with the Career Coach to develop an employment plan for each individual that will support the successful obtainment of a job that leads to self-sufficiency. The Job Developer meets with the Career Coach and the participant to develop an in-depth action plan. The Career Coach is responsible for verifying that the participant is following the employment plan. The Job Developer establishes close working relationships with local employers to facilitate the hiring of hard-to-place customers and once employment is obtained, he/she follows up with the participant and the employer on a regular basis to ascertain the success of the placement. This staff member also recruits employers for subsidized work experience slots for Choices participants. The Job Developer acts as a mentor for the participant during the subsidized work experience. These positions offer the individual the opportunity to demonstrate to the employer his/her capabilities and work ethics. The Job Developer is also tasked to establish community service opportunities for Choices participants when employment or subsidized employment is not appropriate. Again, the Job Developer works closely with the Career Coach to ensure the success of this activity.

## **Sharing of Workforce Service Information**

Workforce service information is shared between partners in a variety of ways. Contractually all partners are required to work with each other, this is normally handled by monthly meetings, during which partner staff discuss any problems. Additionally information is sent via email to subcontractors to inform them of new policies and changes to current ones, technical assistance guides, and other information.

Workforce service information is shared about participants between partners in the manner described in MOUs and in standardized operating agreements.

Participants receive workforce prevocational services through orientation, outreach letters, employment counseling sessions, and the Board's website [www.bvjobs.org](http://www.bvjobs.org).

### **Referral of Jobseekers**

Jobseekers are triaged in the Resource Room to identify need for services and barriers to employment. Once a Business Services Staff member is assigned, the individual's WorkInTexas application is reviewed and appropriate referrals are made. Eligible participants are referred to Job Readiness training once their assessment and Employment Plan are completed. During Job Readiness classes, job referrals are made.

In Employment Counseling, the Career Coaches assist the jobseeker with career planning and make job referrals. If a job development is needed the Career Coach contacts a Business Services Representative. If the assessments or counseling determines unmet skills deficiencies, then appropriate referrals are made to improve those skills levels. Referrals to appropriate community resources, short-term prevocational training, and/or certified training providers are made as needed. Once an individual has obtained a job, the Career Coaches follow up with that individual for one year to assist them in job retention and provide the career planning necessary to continue to diversify their skills. The goal of the employment referral for all job seekers is retention of self-sufficiency employment.

The overall goal of the Brazos Valley Workforce System is to effectively implement regional processes that will maximize competitiveness as well as achieve economic transformation resulting in opportunities for increase in the number of highly skilled workers and high wage jobs, as well as greater access to business opportunities in emerging industries. Thru the Business Services Unit Brazos Valley will continue to survey existing employers to identify gaps in the training for specific job skills for high growth industries and to enhance current job skills of the incumbent and unemployed worker. This information will be used to work with the education institutions and other training providers to identify short term training, customized training and on-the-job training opportunities to address the skills needed to ensure workforce skills training is in alignment and consistent with employers. This strategy will continue to provide opportunity to quickly upgrade skills for under-skilled adults and permanent employees.

The Brazos Valley Workforce System is comprehensive in nature and consists of a full array of available resources for both job seekers and employers. As stated earlier, the Business Service Unit is the lead component of this system and is the bridge between a skilled and an unskilled labor force. Brazos Valley will continue to implement strategies that build on a strong partnership with local employers to align workforce activities and career pathways that lead to economic growth of the entire region.

## **Part II – Economic and Workforce Analysis**

### **Identification of workforce needs of businesses – and how addressed**

Employers in the Brazos Valley have difficulty finding skilled workers for the higher wage high demand jobs. This is demonstrated by the local supply and demand analysis of Work in Texas job postings and job seeker registration. Of the 19,601 total jobs posted in fiscal year 2011, 14,169 were in high wage high growth industries. For the same period of the 113,487 active job seekers registered on WorkinTexas 76,567 were in those high wage high growth industries. So there are adequate numbers of job seekers in the region but they are not necessarily skilled to the level needed or in the growth industries where the labor need exist. In working with various employers relocating and currently in the region various labor market analysis have been done that shows limited numbers of job seekers in the occupations they are looking to hire. Shortages of skilled workers are showing up in computer technologies, health care, advanced manufacturing, skilled journey man, and energy. To address this need WSBV has been educating its employers on the need to look at other industries where the labor force skills are similar and can be modified with TWC skill development grants or on-the-job training contracts. WSBV has also been providing this labor market information to job seekers to educate them on the need to diversify their skills. Supply and demand statistics are share monthly with the WSBV Board membership so that they can share the information with other community based groups they are affiliated with to effect change. Board staff serves on advisory committees to College Station ISD, Bryan ISD Gear up, Housing Authorities, and other community groups to share the need for educating the community on skill needs.

Employers also have difficulty finding more experienced management level workers given the population reduction in the age groups 25 to 44. It is generally accepted that workers need to have been in the industry for some period of time before they are moved into management thus they are older. In 2000 this age population totaled 26.20% and in 2016 it is projected to be 24.50%. One reason for this projected decline is that this age worker normally demands a higher wage. A decline can mean that this age group is moving out of an area they consider being a poor labor market. The Brazos Valley rate is 24.50% compared to a 30.9% statewide. While employers can find entry level workers, finding their management teams with more experienced workers is a struggle to recruit and retain. To assist with this issue the Board is helping

employers grow their own managers by making employers aware of TWC skill development training. Also WSBV is doing wage analysis for employers upon request and in review of job postings to let the employer know what the average State wage rate is for the occupation they are trying to fill. This information helps the employer be more competitive with their wages.

There is a misconception given the large young population that labor in the region is cheap. While local wages are generally lower than more urban areas of the State for entry level workers, if experience is required the pool of workers is smaller than the overall State average and can generally demand higher wages. For example computer-controlled machine tool operators, metal and plastic earn an average of \$20.74 in the region versus the State average wage of \$16.79 per hour. Production Workers earn an average wage of \$14.61 while the State average wage is \$ 12.66 per hour.

Employers in the Brazos Valley need a pipeline of skilled workers for future growth in the high wage high growth industries. While TAMU, Blinn and local ISDs can be that pipeline the students need to be directed to acquire skills and knowledge in the growth industries of the region. WSBV promotes developing a future pipeline of workers by participating with youth and various groups to promote interest in high wage jobs in high growth industries to not only the youth but also their parents and educators.

### **Identification of workforce needs of job seekers and how addressed**

The primary need for job seekers is a basic education that allows them to go into post-secondary education and/or technical training without taking remedial classes. Job seekers also need more opportunity for just in time training to be able to quickly upgrade their job skills.

The balance between need and the cost of providing the training is a challenge in the region. For ESL and GED preparation it is the need for more classes in rural areas. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) funding to Region VI ESC is not sufficient to have multiple classes in rural counties and some years the classes are forced to close for several months in the summer. BVCOG GED preparation classes meet Monday-Friday 8 to 5 and on two nights a week but they are only in Brazos County. WSBV staff serves on the Region VI ESC advisory board for adult literacy. WSBV is also paying for workforce students to have their own set of books. For occupational training frequently to make a class cost effective a minimum of 8 participants are needed. There frequently are not 8 participants interested in taking the class at the same time. Waiting until there are sufficient students to make a class delays job seekers from getting into jobs that require them to increase their skill level to be competitive. Job seekers training needs change and in a rural region there frequently is not the volume of students necessary to support a large variety of technical education training options. Another training challenge is having most of the provider training based on a semester basis as opposed to just in time training.

Job seekers also need reliable affordable public transportation to get to work. This is especially true for disabled job seekers. There are inadequate fixed routes in Brazos County and limited or

non-existent routes in outlying counties. Given that employers depend upon a labor shed that involves all seven counties improved public transportation is critical to maintaining a job.

Job seekers also need a variety of ways to handle any history of criminal background as this is a significant barrier in finding employment. WSBV has met with Windham School District personnel to discuss labor market information, educational needs, fidelity bonding, referrals and growth industries for individuals being released into the region.

### **Identification of workforce needs of workers (facing dislocation, long term unemployed) – and how addressed**

Board partners and contractors report that currently employed workers need affordable child care, public transportation and ways to diversify their skills to maintain employment. While child care in Brazos County is more affordable and available than in outlying counties it is still a major expense for workers. Child care for night shifts, weekends or sick children are very limited in all the counties.

The need for reliable affordable public transportation for currently employed and job seekers are the same need. Many current workers are at risk of losing employment if their car needs repairs without a public transportation system. Many of the regions workers with disabilities depend upon the public transportation system which limits the jobs they can take due to the times the fixed routes run and where they run regardless of the skills these workers possess.

Training to remain competitive and diversify skills is another challenge for currently employed workers. Employers report not being able to afford to have their staff takes off during work so most workers are juggling both work and family commitments to get additional training. These workers need night classes, on-line classes and the ability to test out of classes to obtain additional certifications. Frequently an additional barrier to these workers obtaining on-line training is that their home location does not have adequate internet connectivity.

## **Section II      Operational Template**

### **Part I – Services to Target Populations**

#### **How the Board will ensure continuous improvement of eligible providers of services and ensure that providers meet employment needs of local employers and participants**

Board members, the BVCOG Executive Director and Board staff works with each of the County economic development entities ( Brazos, Burleson, Robertson, Leon, Grimes, Madison, and Washington) to offer employment and training assistance to new and expanding industries to build a world class workforce. The Board’s Business Services Workgroup addresses issues such as skill gaps and wages on an annual basis during the Boards planning process. Working within

industry clusters, the Board has identified a significant shortage of skilled employees in several occupations so it has engaged in planning with training providers to work to meet the needs of various employers within these identified clusters, which include energy, construction, biotech, and manufacturing areas. Planning with training providers requires outreach to specific industries identified as areas needed for skills development.

The Board endeavors to engage training providers to deliver training based on the needs of employers in the region by coordinating with education entities and employers to ensure that the skills being learned in the training are those that the employer needs on the job. When a skill area appears to be in demand but is unavailable through current providers, the Board will attempt to work with employers to arrange customized training or procure additional training providers to meet these training needs.

In addition, as large employers engage in the planning process to locate within the region, the existing workforce education programs are reviewed by Board staff per the Board's performance expectations of completion and employability to ensure that the training providers are ready to meet employer training needs. The Board has a close positive working relationship with TWC, Texas A & M Engineering Extension Service, Blinn College and other training providers throughout the region and the state and discusses with them the need to provide relevant and responsive training that fits the evolving needs of employers.

The Board establishes minimum requirements for training provider eligibility and reviews yearly the specific economic, geographic, and demographic factors in the local areas in which providers seeking eligibility. Board staff has developed a process for considering requests from participants for training in occupations not on the demand list if sufficient and verifiable documentation of demand is provided. The Board considers the following for determining training providers: the characteristics of the populations served by providers seeking eligibility, including the demonstrated difficulties in serving such populations, where applicable; current and projected occupational demand within the local area; the performance of a provider of a program(s) of training services, including the extent to which the annual standards of performance established by the Board have been achieved; the program cost of training services; and the involvement of employers in the establishment of skill requirements for the training program. On-site visits are made by Board staff to conduct performance verification throughout the year to ensure training programs are set up as stated on applications and performance of these providers will be reviewed annually to certify adherence to program guidelines.

### **Description/assessment of type and availability of adult and dislocated worker training activities.**

Within the region there is a state university system, TAMU, two community colleges (Blinn College and Navarro College), TEEX (Texas Engineering Extension Service), Texas Agri Life, Region VI Educational Service Center, and limited private and non-profit providers of training.

Most of the educational institutions offer on-line training. Training for residents of the Brazos Valley is also provided in adjacent workforce regions by Lone Star Community College, Sam Houston State University, Austin Community College, TSTC (Texas State Technical College) and various private for profit certified training providers. The certified training providers are chosen to be on the Board's list of available training by providing training identified on the Board's targeted occupation list. If an employer desires to have customized skills development training they are referred to the community college authorized for their county and TEEEX. Non certified training, such as quick books, is provided through the Small Business Development Center for a fee that the participant pays themselves. Also WSBV child care management services provide quality seminars to meet the needs of licensed day care providers in the region with procured trainers.

Adult and dislocated workers are serviced through the Workforce Center with Workforce Investment Act funds. Approximately 250 individuals are involved in training activities each year. These customers are a diverse group with different levels of learning competencies. The goal of the program is to offer in-demand emerging occupational training for customers. Training is based on employer needs for different occupations, as identified by the target industries for the region. This occupational training for customers is based on Texas employment statistics. Commonly requested training includes nursing, welding, medical office specialist, truck driving and physical therapy, which are all part of the Board's target industries and are set up with the Board's training providers. Each customer has a lifetime training monetary limit of \$7000.00 or as funding is available. To qualify for training, customers are TABE tested to assess if training is a viable option on their path to employment or re-employment. Customer must achieve a minimum score of an 8.9 grade average to qualify for training. The most common training pursued by customers is usually certificate programs that take six months or less to complete.

**How the Board will coordinate workforce investment activities with Rapid Response activities, as appropriate.**

Rapid Response Services are offered to the dislocated worker population at the notification of a company or agency layoff. Rapid Response services are offered in various elements to assist laid off workers with tools to assist in returning to the workforce. Workforce provides immediate and efficient services to both the worker and employers, when a company downsizes, lays off or closure occurs. Outplacement services are provided through workshops and seminars, orientation to the workforce system services, in addition to core, intensive and training services. Rapid Response services are provided at an employer's worksite or at the Workforce facility. Rapid Response services are available for all seven counties of the region and offer the following workshops to enhance job readiness for workers - Resume Writing, Application and Interview Skills, Job Search Assistance, Work In Texas Orientation. The Workforce contracts with Blinn College to facilitate the Rapid Response workshops.

**Description/assessment of the type and availability of youth activities, including successful providers.**

The WIA youth population covers two categories - In School Youth (ISY) ages 14-17 and Out of School Youth (OSY) ages 18-21. The two categories vary in skills and impact on the emerging workforce. The youth program is a year round comprehensive program that offers the following components to impact work readiness for youth –

- Academics – provided by their local ISD or private tutoring
- Mentoring- provided by churches, non-profit organizations and/or Center case manager
- Career Counseling – Center case manager
- Follow-up Services- Center Case manager
- Leadership Development – Center Youth Leader
- Occupational Skills Training – Referred to TWC certified training provider or is part of work experience training contract
- Paid/Unpaid Work Experience – private and non-profit organizations trained and under agreement with Center operator
- Support Services – depending upon the need could be provided by Center operator staff or non-profit community based organization, ISD, or employer

As a generation readies itself for the boomer generation to retire or continue working, this younger generation is emerging into the world of careers without the knowledge of the previous generation’s work readiness skills. Many youth do not have the grades or the initiative to obtain a high school diploma. Youth also lack basic skills to be workplace ready. To address this issue, leadership development is being offered to assist youth in obtaining skills necessary for workplace success. The Workforce Center offers a leadership academy each month for youth that focuses on the importance of academics and work readiness skills. Workforce staff promotes and emphasize the work readiness components in an effort to assist youth in making a seamless transition to the job market and they highlight the in-demand and emerging occupations. This enables the youth to align their career choices based on specific clusters.

**List the current and projected employment opportunities in the workforce area for the occupations targeted for training, using Attachment 3, the Target Industries and Occupations Template.**

Board staff used information from TRACER and SOCRATES to identify occupations that show signs of growth potential in the Brazos Valley region. Additionally, staff worked with regional Economic Development organizations, monitored local media, and other sources for information beyond the scope of the available data. Occupations were selected based upon a wage of \$9.00, which is the minimum income that would allow a single adult without children to be self-sufficient, according to the Center for Public Policy Priority’s Family Budget Estimator. In addition, the selected occupations require no more than two years of training, are considerably

stable, and are projected to have a substantial number of job openings for each of the next ten years. Local wisdom obtained from Board membership (i.e. includes banking, health care, day care, manufacturing, education, economic development, retail, production), Chamber of Commerce meetings, Regional Economic and Community Development meetings, and a Board-sponsored forum was also utilized in finalizing this list.

**Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley**

**2010-2020**

**FY 13 Target Occupations List**

<i>SOC Code</i>	<i>Occupational Title</i>
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
29-1111	Registered Nurses
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education (limit to first or last 2 years)
19-4021	Biological Technicians
47-2061	Skilled Construction Worker/Cement finisher/punch out crew member/post framer/drain layer/
53-3032	Truck Drivers, Heavy
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
29-2061	Licensed Vocational Nurses
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Equipment Operators
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers
47-1011	Supervisors of Construction Trades

49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians
15-1041	Computer Support Specialists
47-2111	Electricians
31-9092	Medical Assistants
47-5071	Roustabouts, Oil and Gas
11-1021	General and Operations Manager
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers
47-2031	Carpenters
29-1123	Physical Therapists Assistant
15-1121	Computer Systems Analysts
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical
43-6013	Medical Secretaries
51-4041	Machinists
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters
25-3999	Teachers and Instructors, All Other
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Med
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technic

**Services provided for Trade Adjustment Assistance.**

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program is for the dislocated population and offers assistance to laid off workers with a skill set or industry specific skill set that was migrated overseas for workers there to perform the job function. As a result, TAA offers training assistance for workers to be re-trained for a different career track or to upgrade their skills, in addition to providing Trade Readjustment Assistance additional UI benefits during the course of a workers training program or while they are doing job search to locate permanent employment.

TAA assistance covers remedial, English as a Second language and GED courses. Remedial and pre-requisites are not covered by WIA funding; therefore workers are given an extended time to acquire training certifications.

### **How the Board will work with the local Senior Community Service Employment Programs (SCSEP).**

The Board has an MOU with Experience Works and provides older Texans the opportunity to work and train for meaningful employment. Enrollees work in a variety of positions in private sector or public employment on an unsubsidized basis. The Board shares information regarding the availability of on-the-job training positions, and other training opportunities, and accept eligible applicants for services and other training opportunities. The Board also serves as a referral for employers seeking older workers or provides training related workshops, as requested or necessary, with appropriate documentation.

The Brazos Valley Area Agency on Aging (BVAAA) provides information about the enormous range of human services available in the seven county service areas for individuals over the age of 60 years old. BVAAA assesses customer needs, evaluates appropriate resources, assesses appropriate response modes, indicates organizations capable of meeting those needs and provides information about partner agencies to allow customers to make informed choices about available services and alternative resources. BVAAA is visible advocate and leader in the planning, development and implementation of a system of comprehensive and coordinated services for older persons, which promote dignity, independence and quality of life for seniors.

## **PART II – Customer Services**

### **How Business Services Units will effectively coordinate multiple programs and provide quality customer service.**

Business Services is the lead component of the Brazos Valley Workforce System. Through these services, Brazos Valley will market a wide range of information and services to employers throughout the region, including:

- General economic and labor market information;
- Testing skill levels, interests, and aptitudes of incumbent workers;
- Wage and salary information for the region;
- Recruiting, testing, screening, and referring qualified applicants for current or project job openings;
- Education and training for new workers;
- Information and technical assistance on federal and state rules and regulations affecting employment;

- On-the-Job training;
- Information on state operated programs such as skills Development fund, Skills for Small Business, Self-Sufficiency fund, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Apprenticeship and others.

The Board has created a regional Business Services Plan to better serve the Brazos Valley. This plan is implemented by the Business Services Unit (BSU) that includes Board and Workforce Center Operator staff. The purpose of the Business Services Unit is to improve employer service quality and job seeker satisfaction by establishing uniform standards for engagement of employers, data entry of job orders, referrals on job orders, job placement, and communication between staff. At this time, the Business Services Unit is made up of a combination of Wagner Peyser Employment Services staff and Workforce Center Contractor staff. Future efforts to coordinate activities include inclusion of Veterans services staff and other Workforce System partners as appropriate on the Business Services Unit. The Business Services Staff is housed within the Workforce Center and meet weekly to discuss employer issues. During these meetings, information is exchanged with the Board Staff. The team provides information on current and new businesses, reviews the initial targeted industries and occupations, and offers their business plan to become part of the Board planning process.

The Business Services Unit is responsible for gathering, analyzing, and verifying statistical information on the regional labor market; surveying employers to identify their needs for labor market information and workforce services; determining the kinds of information and services to be provided; developing and disseminating information on the available services to employers throughout the region, responding to employers' requests and providing the appropriate services in a timely and effective fashion; marketing services directly to employers in targeted industries or clusters; communicating labor market information back to the job, education and training seeker services part of the workforce system; and ensuring that employers throughout the region receive high-quality information and services.

The Business Services Team work directly with employers throughout the region to address their labor market information and workforce services needs and actively market the workforce system's services to employers. As the primary point of contact the Business Services Representative is responsible for developing effective working relationships with local employers by providing quality information and services that enhance the employer's ability to achieve business objectives. A major component of providing this quality service is listening to the employer. The Business Representative listens to their needs then uses this knowledge to design a package of services to meet the employer's specific needs. To do this successfully, each BSU staff member is knowledgeable on all workforce programs and coordinates efforts to utilize applicable programs to meet the employer's needs.

**How Boards will support and promote state operated programs (Skills Development Fund, Skills for Small Business, Self-Sufficiency Fund, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Apprenticeship, other contracts).**

The state operated programs, such as the Skills Development Fund, and Skills for Small Business are an integral part of the Brazos Valley Workforce Program. During the past year, Brazos Valley Workforce has partnered with the Texas Work Commission, local educational institutions, Chambers of Commerce, and local business men to support and promote state operated programs. Staff from the Texas Workforce Commission was invited to address the Workforce Development Board concerning these programs. Brazos Valley Workforce utilizing local Board members also sponsored events in each of the rural counties, of which TWC staff attended some to promote these programs. During these events TWC staffs were provided the opportunity to discuss each of the state operated programs, as well as, to distribute informational brochures. Additionally, the state staffs were able to discuss the programs with local education institutions such as Blinn Community College and TEEX. When staff states were unable to attend the functions Workforce Center State provided an overview of the programs and distributed informational brochures.

The Business Services Unit is responsible for distributing information concerning the state operated programs on a day-to-day basis. When visiting new employers or revisiting inactive employers, the Business Services Staff provides a packet of information to the employer. The packet includes information on the state operated programs. When an employer discusses training needs, the Business Services Representative discusses the Skills Development Fund, Skills for Small Business, and the Self-Sufficiency Fund with the employers. The Business Services Representative then facilitates the connecting of the employer to the appropriate training institution and follows up on the outcome of their discussion. During meetings with employers, the Business Services Representatives also discusses other state operated programs such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Apprenticeship programs when appropriate.

During Job Fairs sponsored by the Brazos Valley Workforce, a specific individual is designated to take the time to discuss training needs with each employer in attendance. Often the state operated programs are discussed and the discussion often leads to follow-up inquiries by the employer.

Information concerning all of the state operated programs can be accessed through the Brazos Valley Workforce System website.

Additionally, informational brochures concerning each of these programs are distributed at every event that Brazos Valley Workforce participates in. They are also promoted when Board and Center staff present to organizations throughout the region. These efforts are further supported by a close relationship with Blinn Community College and TEEX (Texas Education Extension) at Texas A & M. The Board staff works closely with these education institutions in their

endeavors to support local business and assists them with the development of a proposal for submission to the Texas Workforce Commission.

**How the Board will use technology (i.e. mobile units, job search aggregators, social media) to provide services to employers and job seekers.**

Workforce Solutions of the Brazos Valley has a robust website, [bvjobs.org](http://bvjobs.org), which offers a plethora of information on programs and services available at the workforce centers in the region. There is information on the Resource Rooms, Labor Market Info, Job Search Tools, Links and Resources, and the Events Calendar which features Job Fairs, Employers in the Lobby, and other events related to employment in the Brazos Valley.

The Workforce Center Facebook and Twitter pages offers information on upcoming events happening at the Workforce Center or events being sponsored by the Workforce Center, recent job postings and informational employment articles that provide help to jobseekers on job readiness, interviewing skills or resume development.

**Part III—Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) Requirements**

**Veterans**

The priority of service for each program is veterans, spouses of veterans, foster care youth, then job seekers and workers with insufficient income to be self-sufficient. Priority services are also given to Special Disabled Veterans, other Disabled Veterans and other Eligible Veterans.

Veteran Services include assessment, counseling/case management, testing, job search assistance, referral and placement for eligible veterans which is defined as those individuals who served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days and was discharged/released with other than dishonorable discharge, were discharged/released from active duty because of a service-connected disability or served as a member of a reserve component or National Guard unit under an order to active duty on active duty for any length of time during a period of war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge was authorized and was discharged/released from such duty other than a dishonorable discharge.

The Workforce Center applies veteran's priority of service to the following qualified job training programs: universal access programs (e.g., Wagner-Peyser - funded services) that deliver services as a whole and that do not target specific groups; discretionary targeting programs (e.g., Workforce Investment Act-funded services) that focus on certain groups but do not specifically mandate that target groups be served before other eligible individuals; and statutory targeting programs (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families-funded services) that are mandated by federal law to provide priority or preference to certain groups or spending requirements or limitations.

Workforce Center staff has been trained to inform veterans and foster youth about their priority of service status. The waitlist for services is designed so that veterans are given priority. Information about the veteran program located on the BVJOBS.org website states that veteran services include priority of services along with assessment, counseling, testing, career planning and job search assistance. The bvjobs.org website also contains websites veterans can access for information on education and training opportunities, professional and administrative openings and many VA health care job vacancies and open positions in health care occupations and other career fields.

Eligibility is determined by veteran self-attestation in the Workforce Center Customer Tracking system during registration. Once identified, the veteran meets with a Workforce Development Specialist who ensures that the resume is complete including career objectives, work history and references, summary of qualifications and education. Depending upon need and fund availability, supportive services include transportation, clothing, tools, rent, utility payments and training. These services are made available to all eligible customers within Board guidelines. Veterans, other eligible members and foster youth receive supportive services first.

The Board meets monthly with Workforce Center staff, the Local Veteran Employment Representative and members of the local Veteran's Coalition to emphasize priority of service to veterans with emphasis on veterans completing their job portfolio in WorkinTexas so the Business Service Unit can refer veterans to jobs to which they match. The Local Veteran Employment Representative also attends a weekly meeting with the Business Services Unit within the center.

### **Texans with low literacy or poor English fluency**

Bilingual employees assigned at the Workforce Center are able to assist with job identification. Adult Literacy is an issue consistent in the youth and adult populations because outcomes for work and additional training are affected. Having low literacy skills affects a customer's self-esteem, level of optimism, coping skills, resilience and motivation. To positively affect the outcomes of customers with low literacy skills or poor English proficiency, customers with low literacy or low English proficiency are referred to the Education Service Center Region VI Adult Basic Education classes and GED classes. Adult literacy and GED classes are offered to help increase a customer's literacy level.

### **People with Disabilities**

All of the Workforce Centers within the Brazos Valley region comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Adaptive equipment for employers and job seekers include TYY, Texas Relay, Zoomtech devices and JAWS software. Each center has computer accessible desks in the Resource Room. Program access has been designed for all individuals with or without a

disability. A disability resource folder has also been distributed to all workforce centers in the region for career coaches and business service personnel to access when helping a disabled customer. This folder includes the summaries of state and federal legislation, the Ten Commandments of Communication, pictures and explanations of auxiliary aids and services, information on disclosure, SSA work incentives, desk reference, and ADA toolkit for employers and WOTC.

The Board maintains a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and Blind Services that allows on-site intermittent workspace at the Workforce Centers for DARS staff, provides information on workforce programs at DARS meetings, as requested, refers potential Workforce Center customers needing assistance to DARS, and provides access to Workforce Center Resource Rooms. One of the members of the Board is an employee of the Brazos Valley Mental Health and Mental Retardation Agency and works closely with the Workforce Centers to ensure accessibility for all jobseekers.

The Board endeavors to expand universal access of the One-Stop delivery system to job seekers who are blind or disabled and to provide enhanced, comprehensive and seamless employment services to those individuals by reaching out to the disability community with resource fairs and job fairs, providing guidelines and disability training to Texas Workforce Center staff who serve individuals with disabilities and building and enhancing community partnerships with agencies such as DARS and the Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living that serve individuals with disabilities. Board staff meets monthly with partner agencies that have formed a Disability Resource Team to discuss services available to customers with disabilities and to share input about issues facing job seekers with disabilities and works with the Workforce Center staff to observe how the Resource Room staff interacts with the blind or disabled customer. Business Service staff meets with various employers in the region to provide information about hiring individuals with disabilities and promotes face to face interaction between job seekers and employers that will allow employment issues to be addressed. The goal is to facilitate seamless and comprehensive services to persons with disabilities and to identify appropriate community resources that expand access to programs and services.

**Innovative strategy that includes collaboration with two or more system partners.**

Effective August 2011 WSBV began coordinated case management with the BVCOG Choices Housing Voucher Family Self-sufficiency Program to move joint housing, adult literacy, and workforce customers off of all public assistance. This program involves housing families voluntarily agreeing to a 5 to 7 year service plan that involves multiple agencies working towards getting the customer a GED or improve literacy knowledge as needed; creating an individual development account; and obtaining self-sufficient employment. The individual development account accumulates funding throughout the families service plan and once they graduate from the program can be used to make a down payment on a home, attend post-

secondary education or start a business. WSBV role in this program is to provide job readiness review and training, child care as needed, career coaching, employment supportive services, job development, and team case manage the services provided to the family. Region VI ESC and BVCOG GED program provide the adult literacy needs. BVCOG Choices Housing Voucher Family Self-sufficiency program provide housing, match for the individual development account and on-going case management.

**Rationale for strategy in item 1 and intended outcomes.**

The rationale for the strategy used to move families off of all public assistance is a multi-discipline strengths approach addressing housing, education and employment needs the families agree to. The service plan is designed around the family's strengths the first of which is volunteering for this program. The individual development account, which builds during the family's participation, motivates them to look beyond their current living situations and employment barriers to visualize self-sufficiency goals they have identified for themselves. Frequent review of the family's progress by the multi-discipline team allows for rapid intervention when problems or lack of progress is identified and evaluated. Additional agencies (i.e. Project Unity, Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority, Brazos Valley Center for Alcohol and Substance Abuse, etc.) can be involved as needed.

**Describe how both the process and the outcomes of the strategy will be evaluated to determine the strategy's success over time.**

The process is evaluated monthly by the partners against achieving the service plans designed with the family's input. The program is monitored by HUD (Housing Urban Development) who awarded the grant through reports provided by the BVCOG Choices Housing Voucher Family Self-sufficiency program staff. Success is measured by the number of families that graduate from the program and move off of all public assistance. Since August 2011 27 families have graduated from the program. The program has tripled its output since partnering with WSBV.

**Part IV—Grants**

The Brazos Valley Council of Government is the administrative and fiscal entity for Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley and is responsible for the receipt and disbursement of funds to subcontractors, vendors and participants.

The Board uses a competitive request for proposal process to select entities for contract negotiation. The RFP is developed based on guidelines and requirements set out in the TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts. Notices are posted in the Texas Register and area newspapers announcing the availability of the RFP. Proposals are submitted within the proscribed timeline, are reviewed by independent evaluators using a standardized instrument. The results of the evaluation are presented to a select Board committee who then makes a recommendation to the full Board for contract consideration. Selected entities must complete a

pre-award review of their operations and controls and a fiscal integrity review to ensure that they have the capability to provide the requested services. Contracts resulting from the procurement process may be extended for additional years pending successful performance and Board approval.

## **Part V—Public Comment**

### **Describe the process used to provide an opportunity for public comment.**

The Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board Integrated Plan draft public notice appeared in the November 9, 2012 issue of *The Eagle*, 1729 Briarcrest Drive, Bryan, TX 77802, and a newspaper serving all counties in the Brazos Valley region. The notice indicated that the plan draft would be available for public viewing from November 9, 2012 through December 10, 2012 at the WSBVB offices. The plan was presented to the members of the Board at the November 15, 2012 open Board meeting. Their input was received, and the plan was adjusted accordingly.

During the public comment period, the Integrated Plan was made available at the Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley office located at 3991 E. 29<sup>th</sup> St, Bryan, TX 77802. Contained in a binder along with the plan were a sign-in sheet, a form to allow members of the public to make comments, an envelope to submit their forms and business cards for their reference. However, no comments were received from the public during this time.

The draft Plan was also made available to Board members in the November monthly Board packet as the plan was being developed for input.

**Part VI—Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

Include copies of the MOUs between the Board and each of the one-stop partners concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system.

REQUIRED PARTNER AGENCY OR PROGRAM	Expiration Date
<b>WIA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs</b>	<b>Under contract with TWC; No MOU required</b>
<b>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Choices</b>	<b>Under contract with TWC; No MOU required</b>
<b>Supplemental Nutrition Program Employment and Training</b>	<b>Under contract with TWC; No MOU required</b>
<b>Child Care Services</b>	<b>Under contract with TWC; No MOU required</b>
<b>Trade Act</b>	<b>Under contract with TWC; No MOU required</b>
<b>Wagner-Peyser Employment and Training, as amended by WIA (includes Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers)</b>	<b>Under contract with TWC; No MOU required</b>
<b>Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, as amended by the Jobs for Veterans Act</b>	<b>Under contract with TWC; No MOU required</b>

<b>APPRENTICESHIP</b>	
<b>Texas A&amp;M University Physical Plant Apprenticeship Program</b>	<b>05/28/2014</b>
<b>WIA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act</b>	<b>06/30/2015</b>
<b>National and Community Services Act</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Postsecondary Vocational Education Activities under the Carl D. Perkins Act Blinn College</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Experience Works</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Senior Texan Employment Program</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Coordinated Choices Case Management with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission</b>	<b>05/31/2013</b>
<b>Unemployment Insurance</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Texas Department of Family and Protective Services - Preparation for Adult Living Program</b>	<b>11/17/2016</b>
<b>OPTIONAL PARTNERS AND PROGRAMS</b>	
<b>Vocational rehabilitation programs and services – DARS Rehabilitative Services</b>	<b>1/31/2020</b>
<b>Job Corps services under WIA youth</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Native American programs under WIA – Alabama-Coushatta ITC Employment and Training Program</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Community Services Block Grant programs</b>	
<b>BVCOG Housing Choices Voucher Program</b>	<b>08/31/2016</b>
<b>Community Development Block Grant recipients Project Unity</b>	<b>08/31/2016</b>
<b>Area Information Center and Community Information</b>	<b>08/31/15</b>

<b>Center with United Way of the Brazos Valley</b>	
<b>Brazos Valley RSVP Senior Corps</b>	<b>09/30/15</b>
<b>LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES</b>	
<b>Bryan ISD English Literacy Civics Education Program</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Bryan ISD Even Start Family Literacy Program</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Vocational educational agencies – DARS, Blind Services</b>	<b>01/31/2016</b>
<b>TEEX</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Texas Cooperative Extension</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Brazos Valley Area Agency on Aging and ARCIL</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Brazos Valley Mental Health &amp; Mental Retardation</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Brazos Valley Council on Alcohol &amp; Substance Abuse</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>MHMRA</b>	<b>01/31/2014</b>
<b>Education Service Center, Region VI</b>	<b>06/30/2015</b>
<b>Office of the Attorney General</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Regional Economic Revitalization and Utilization Plan</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>SER Jobs for Progress National, Inc.</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services</b>	<b>01/31/2020</b>
<b>Texas Veterans Commission</b>	<b>09/30/2013</b>
<b>Twin City Mission Home Partners</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Twin City Mission Youth and Family Services</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Other Local Partners and Programs</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>REQUIRED PARTNER AGENCY OR PROGRAM</b>	<b>Expiration Date</b>

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<b>WIA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act</b>	<b>06/30/2015</b>
<b>National and Community Services Act</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Postsecondary Vocational Education Activities under the Carl D. Perkins Act Blinn College</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Experience Works</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Senior Texan Employment Program</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Coordinated Choices Case Management with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission</b>	<b>05/31/2013</b>
<b>Unemployment Insurance</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Texas Department of Family and Protective Services - Preparation for Adult Living Program</b>	<b>11/17/2016</b>
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<b>Vocational educational agencies – DARS, Blind Services</b>	<b>01/31/2016</b>
<b>TEEX</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Texas Cooperative Extension</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Brazos Valley Area Agency on Aging and ARCIL</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Brazos Valley Mental Health &amp; Mental Retardation</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Brazos Valley Council on Alcohol &amp; Substance Abuse</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>MHMRA</b>	<b>01/31/2014</b>
<b>Education Service Center, Region VI</b>	<b>06/30/2015</b>
<b>Office of the Attorney General</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Regional Economic Revitalization and Utilization Plan</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>SER Jobs for Progress National, Inc.</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services</b>	<b>01/31/2020</b>
<b>Texas Veterans Commission</b>	<b>09/30/2013</b>
<b>Twin City Mission Home Partners</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Twin City Mission Youth and Family Services</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<b>Other Local Partners and Programs</b>	<b>N/A</b>

