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Brazos Valley Workforce Board

2025-2028 Local Plan

This Integrated Plan is made available for Public Review
February 25, 2025 through March 11, 2025. Please address all
questions and inquiries concerning the Plan to
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Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board

Local Workforce Development Plan Program Years 2025-2028

Board Vision and Strategies

Vision and Goals

The Brazos Valley Workforce Solution Board's (the Board) is the publicly funded workforce development organization serving the Brazos Valley Workforce Development Area. The Brazos Valley WDA consists of Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson, and Washington counties. The Board's fiscal and administrative agent is the Brazos Valley Council of Governments (BVCOG). The Board's vision is to be the workforce organization of choice for employers and job seekers of the Brazos Valley. The organization's mission statement is to provide employers with a quality workforce.

Goal 1: Increase the visibility of Workforce Solutions in the Brazos Valley Region and promote the workforce center as a resource to employers and jobseekers. Expand collaborations and networking with community-based organizations, the economic development councils and employers in each county of the region. Collaborations shall concentrate on benefit programs such as TANF, health services, secondary and post-secondary education, soft skills and vocational skills training.

- Specifically, to educate community-based organizations and employers about Workforce and Adult Education & Literacy (AEL) services offered by the Board. Improve the education and skills level of jobseekers and encourage the pursuit of post-secondary education and skills training options in high skill, high growth occupations. List the agencies or employers contacted during the month.
- Specifically, to develop Memoranda of Understanding with community partners and employers in all counties in the Brazos Valley Region to identify upskill training requirements.
- Specifically, to promote the workforce center's monthly training to employers and community based organizations that inform job seekers and employers about the workforce center's work readiness training and career assessment tools. SERCO management staff will provide monthly training to workforce center staff to enhance their case management skills. Workforce center management will measure the effectiveness of information posted on the website on a monthly basis and be diligent about ensuring that information posted is current. Workforce center management staff will provide a list of the number of job seekers and workforce center staff who participated in training activities and successfully completed monthly trainings. The workforce center will also provide a list of agencies and employers outreached to inform them about the training offered at the workforce center.

Goal 2: Build awareness about the opportunities offered by the Workforce Center and the Adult Education & Literacy (AEL) Program to Brazos Valley Residents, school districts, employers, community-based agencies, the Brazos Valley Region's Chambers of Commerce and the Economic Development Councils.

- Specifically, to use social media to promote and increase customer's and employer's knowledge of the in-house services available through the various programs offered through

the workforce center. Social Media outlets can include, but not be limited to, X, Facebook, YouTube, Linked In. The workforce center will form a partnership with school districts in the Brazos Valley Region to inform students about the WIOA Youth Program and the advantages of participating in this program. The workforce center will provide a list of services promoted and social media used in the promotion of the service during the month.

- Specifically, to create informational outreach material i.e. monthly or quarterly newsletter or at at-a-glance bulletin (both digital and hard copy) that highlights the workforce center's one-stop services and highlights the workforce center's marketing and enrollment efforts, especially in rural communities. Workforce center staff will distribute information to agency partners and employers and provide on a monthly basis a list of partners and employers to which information was distributed.
- Specifically, to form industry focus groups to facilitate communications about target occupations and labor market information. Explore with industry leaders and businesses the labor supply needed to meet employer skills gaps. Promote workforce services, employer services and workforce programs. The workforce center will provide a list of groups formed and businesses contacted each month.
- Specifically, to organize quarterly seminars for employers to promote the Texas Workforce Commission outreach and employer initiatives (programs and services). These include the Skills Development Fund, Skills Recruit Texas, Skills for Small Businesses, Self-Sufficiency Fund, High Demand Job Training, Texas Industry Partnership and Jobs for Education for Texans (JET). The workforce center will provide the name of the skill development promoted for the seminar(s), how seminar(s) was promoted, date of seminar(s) and list of attendees who attended the seminar(s).

Goal 3: Develop and utilize a triage process that addresses job seeker barrier(s) and pinpoints job seeker skills needed to gain self-sufficiency and identify workforce partners who can alleviate the identified barrier(s).

- Specifically, to work with community partners and employers to determine workplace readiness training job seekers need to develop their skills to make them employable. Provide monthly the community partners and/or employers contacted and the service solicited from them.
- Specifically, to work with community partners to leverage resources needed to establish an effective referral system that addresses job seeker barriers. List the community partner contacted and the barrier that was addressed.

Goal 4: Promote the Workforce Solutions Board Target Occupations List and labor market information to job seekers and employers for post-secondary education, occupational assessments and work readiness training and support.

- Specifically, the Workforce Contractor will provide a monthly report on target occupation and labor market information provided to all workforce customers – jobseekers and employers. Report will include a list of agencies, number of job seekers and number of employers that were counseled about this information.
- Specifically, the Childcare Services Contractor will provide a monthly report on workforce referrals provided to all CCS customers. Report will include a list of agencies and number of customers referred to the agency(ies).
- Specifically, the Workforce Center Contractor will provide a monthly report with the number

of job seekers given the WorkKeys Assessment, the number of employers that utilized the Work Keys Assessment, the number of job seekers the workforce center staff coached for an identified weakness discovered in the Work Keys Talent Assessment, and the number of job seekers obtaining employment based on the Work Keys Assessments.

Board Strategies

The workforce center engages in a reciprocal referral process with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to serve customers with disabilities that have barriers to employment that prevent them from obtaining employment. Workforce center personnel focus on specific trainings that will assist jobseekers who have disabilities obtain meaningful jobs in the workforce.

The region has two counties with a significantly greater proportion of individuals with disabilities than the national average, which is 9.1%. The counties are Leon and Robertson with both having a disability population of 15.6 percent. This increase in the number of job seekers with disabilities in the region shows that attention is needed to add additional accommodations for skills training for the jobseekers in the workplace. The Board works with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to ensure that job seekers with disabilities have access to employment opportunities and access to training, workforce center services and job placement. The Board also works with community partners such as Heart of Texas Goodwill and Junction 505 to assist customers with any life challenges they experience while they are working or in training. The Board makes referrals to agencies that have the resources and programs necessary to address barriers to employment that are not specifically addressed in workforce development programs.

The Board gives special emphasis to students and youth with disabilities to position them for training and employment or post-secondary education. The Board will work with education entities to support the development of career and technical education courses that will enhance transition services for students and youth with disabilities and allow them the ability to assimilate into employment and postsecondary opportunities. The Student HireAbility Navigator works with school districts in the region to promote and implement work-based learning sites so students can have direct connection with career readiness skills and business skills. There are two (2) work-based programs presently in the Brazos Valley Region, one in the Caldwell Independent School District and one in the Hearne Independent School District. The goal is to identify, within the next two years, two (2) additional school districts to develop work-based learning programs.

In the Adult Education program, the Board employs a data-driven approach to identify, evaluate, and target strategic indicators that enhance overall performance. We rely on robust data sources, including labor market information (LMI), regional economic trends, and program performance metrics to identify workforce gaps and opportunities. These insights guide decisions on funding allocations, program design and resource prioritization that will leverage funds among core programs and provide the resources necessary for Adult participants to succeed and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

By advancing these strategic goals and following a clear roadmap for continuous improvement, the Brazos Valley Adult Education Program will drive regional growth, empower learners, and strengthen communities across the seven counties.

The Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board oversees the Brazos Valley Adult Education Consortium that is currently comprised of two (2) adult education providers, across seven (7) counties. We work closely with our contracted service providers to ensure adult education and literacy activities are carried out in accordance with local guidance, state and federal regulations, and services are coordinated with other workforce activities. The Board assists our contractors with coordinating services offered within our one-stop delivery system to help students acquire the skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

Strategic Goals and Objectives of the Adult Education and Learning are as follows:

Goal 1: Expand Access to Employment, Training, Education, and Support Services

- Establish the Workforce & Education Integrated Network (WEIN) as a pilot project, to provide shared space and resources at two Adult Education class locations on a regular and rotating basis.
- The WEIN will deliver accessible supportive services provided in collaboration with WIOA Title I, other core programs, and local organizations to deliver services and a wide array of tangible resources for participants to utilize in an effort to increase and expand access.
- Increase outreach in underserved areas by 25% on an annual basis by utilizing data on underserved populations that will guide us to address barriers to workforce participation.

Goal 2: Facilitate Career Pathways

- Organize and facilitate quarterly round table discussions with local employers in high demand, high growth industries.
- Develop career pathways aligned with regional and local labor market needs.
- Enhance the curriculum to include industry-relevant training and integrated learning experiences.

Goal 3: Improve Access to Recognized Postsecondary Credentials

- Provide stackable, industry-recognized certifications that lead to high-demand middle-skill jobs.
- Partner with credentialing organizations to increase local access to certification testing.
- Integrate digital literacy and workplace communication skills into all credentialing pathways.

Goal 4: Enhance Coordination and Customer Experience

- Establish a regional advisory board to foster collaboration among stakeholders.
- Increase program visibility through public awareness campaigns and community engagement events.

High-Performing Board

The Brazos Valley Workforce Board understands that to continue to be a high-performing board, it must embrace diversity and develop governing policies which provide long term results to its customers. It is important to have a working relationship with the Executive Director and to monitor its workforce contractor's performance monthly to review any measure that may be at risk of not being met. Monitoring the required performance can determine if there is a need to implement corrective actions for the contractor. Continued failure to meet required performance by the contractor may result in the development of a technical assistance plan with specific steps to address deficiencies.

The Board endeavors to be a high-performing and effective Board that delivers a quality product to its customers. The Board also inquires of other Boards for suggestions of best practices. Additional strategies for remaining a high-performing Board include continuous improvement of the quality of customer service, providing high quality labor market information, providing skilled workers for employers in high demand industries and holding board members to high standards. It is also important to update Board members on current and future LMI trends. Reassessing the Board's vision and goals bi-annually continues efforts to help employers meet their human resource needs and helps individuals build careers that can make them self-sufficient. To achieve these goals, the Board must have a better educated and skilled workforce to qualify for better jobs that can bring higher earnings. The goal is to help employers meet their human resource needs and to build careers for customers by contributing to employer job creation and customer loyalty.

The Workforce Board requires that its workforce center contractor work in collaboration with employers to carry out the core and required programs to provide a seamless and integrated service delivery model. These partnerships ensure alignment, expand access to resources, and enhance outcomes for job seekers and employers. By aligning core and required programs, the Board ensures equitable access to employment, training, and support services, fostering pathways to sustainable careers and economic growth. Below is a detailed description of how the Board and its contractor join in with these programs in the Brazos Valley and charts that show employment growth, industry growth or decline and various demographics of the Brazos Valley.

Part 2: Economic and Workforce Analysis

Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis

The Brazos Valley Workforce Development Area (WDA) is located in south central Texas in an area consisting of seven counties: Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson, and Washington. Bryan and College Station are the major cities in the WDA. There are also a number of unincorporated communities in the region. Texas A&M University, located in College Station, is one of the largest employers in the WDA and attracts firms related to high-tech, medical research and agribusiness.

The Brazos Valley Region has experienced growth and decline. The Regional population growth average is 17.2 percent. Two counties, Leon and Robertson, are projected to experience a decline in population by 2030. The civilian labor force at the end of 2024 was 199,876 with the number of individuals employed to be 193,991 which gives us an unemployment rate of 2.9 percent. Educational attainment reports show that the regional population has attained some college or higher, however the region's percentage of Bachelor's Degree and Associate's Degree possession is below the national average of 89.4 percent except in Washington County, which achieved 90.4 percent.

The Brazos Valley Region's largest industries with the highest number of individuals employed are Construction, Manufacturing, Trade, Transportation and Utilities, Education and Health and Leisure and Hospitality. Education and Health Services in Government, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade.

The regional occupation data shows the projected employment in industries for individuals in years 2022 to 2032 will be in Restaurants and Other Eating Places (14,278), Colleges, Universities and Professional Schools (26,121), Elementary and Secondary Schools (10,598) and Self-Employed Individuals (27,255). The largest percentage industry growth 2022 to 2032 will be in Restaurants and Other Eating Places (20.7%), Services to Buildings and Dwellings (66%) Business Support Services (111.3%) Outpatient Care Centers (92.5%) and Other Personal Services (103.6%). For the emerging regional skills training, both soft skills and customer service skills will be necessary in restaurant operations, food service and food preparation, construction and education. Occupations in Healthcare

Support will continue to grow over the next five years. Currently most occupations in this industry are in the Home Health Care Services and Skilled Nursing Facilities. Employers competing for employees in this occupation need jobseekers with nursing, caregiving and medical assistant skills and/or training.

Industries by Employment (3rd Quarter 2024 Percent Change)

Industry	Employment	% of Total	% Quarterly Change	% Yearly Change
Natural Resources and Mining	4,143	2.5%	-3.2%	-7.0%
Construction	10,344	6.3%	0.5%	3.4%
Manufacturing	11,643	7.0%	-0.2%	0.0%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	26,265	15.9%	-0.7%	0.6%
Information	1,562	0.9%	-0.2%	-2.9%
Financial Activities	6,054	3.7%	0.8%	-2.4%
Professional and Business Services	15,012	9.1%	0.0%	3.6%
Education and Health Services	55,178	33.4%	-6.1%	2.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	22,915	13.9%	0.2%	2.7%
Other Services	3,556	2.2%	-0.9%	2.5%
Public Administration	8,506	5.1%	1.7%	7.1%

Source: TWC LMI Profile

Projected Top Ten Fastest Growing Industries in the Region (% Growth 2022-2032)

Industry	% of Growth
Management, scientific and technical consulting services	44.2%
Continuing care, assisted living facilities	38.4%
Machinery, equipment, and supplies merchant wholesalers	38.3%
Scientific research and development services	31.5%
Computer systems design and related services	29.6%
Offices of Dentists	28.4%
Individual and family services	25.3%
Automotive repair and maintenance	24.2%
Other specialty trade contractors	23.5%
Health and personal care retailers	23.3%

Source: TWC LMI Profile

Employment by ownership indicates 70.8 percent of jobseekers are employed in private sector jobs. State government occupations account for 19.2 percent of employment in the region. Local government employs 9.4 percent of individuals in the labor market and Federal government employment is at 0.6 percent. (Source: Texas Workforce Commission Labor Market Information Economic Profile for Brazos Valley December 2024)

Employment by industry shows 33.4 percent of employment is in Education and Health Services. The next largest sector is Trade, Transportation and Utilities at 15.9 percent. Manufacturing employment represents 7.0 percent of the total. Professional and Business Services is 9.1 percent of employment by industry. Construction accounts for 6.3 percent of employment in the region. The trend shows declining or stable employment in all of the 11 industries identified by TWC information except Public Administration. Education and Health Services, Leisure and Hospitality and Professional and Other Services show the least decline. Natural Resources and Mining declined at a rate of -7.0 percent.

As evidenced by the employment by industry, optimizing economic growth will require well-trained workers across a spectrum of occupations. The occupations with the highest overall growth tend to occur in education, government, accommodation and food services, management and health care fields. Technical occupations are important occupations also. Between 2015-2040, the Brazos Valley Region will need workers with Bachelor and Associate degrees or some other type of postsecondary training to meet growth and replacement needs.

The Texas Workforce Commission Labor Market Information Department provides Boards with industry and occupation projection tables.

Projected Employment by Industry to 2032

SOC	Industry	2022 Annual Average Employment	2032 Annual Average Employment	Number change 2022-2032	Percent Growth 2022 - 2032
7225	Restaurants and Other Eating Places	11,827	14,278	2,451	20.7
6113	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	24,113	26,121	2,008	8.3
67	Self-Employed Workers	25,792	27,255	1,463	5.7
5617	Services to Buildings and Dwellings	1,817	3,016	1,199	66.0
5614	Business Support Services	1,030	2,176	1,146	111.3
6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools	9,581	10,598	1,017	10.6
6221	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	3,918	4,839	921	23.5
2371	Utility System Construction	943	1,488	545	57.8
2131	Support Activities for Mining	2,020	2,533	513	25.4
5419	Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	871	1,320	449	51.5
4450	Food and beverage stores (4451 and 4452 only)	3,307	3,701	394	11.9
7211	Traveler Accommodation	1,433	1,782	349	24.4
2382	Building Equipment Contractors	2,325	2,645	320	13.8
6214	Outpatient Care Centers	320	616	296	92.5
4238	Machinery, Equipment, and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	747	1,010	263	35.2
5611	Office Administrative Services	627	884	257	41.0
4441	Building Material and Supplies Dealers	1,243	1,498	255	20.5
930000	Local Government, Except. Education & Hospitals	5,083	5,305	222	4.4
7139	Other Amusement and Recreation Industries	1,332	1,536	204	15.3

SOC	Industry	2022 Annual Average Employment	2032 Annual Average Employment	Number change 2022-2032	Percent Growth 2022 - 2032
5416	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	762	961	199	26.1
8129	Other Personal Services	192	391	199	103.6
6241	Individual and Family Services	564	744	180	31.9
3023	Automotive Repair and Maintenance	911	1,085	174	19.1
920000	State Government, Except. Education & Hospitals	4,738	4,907	169	3.6
6216	Home Health Care Services	1,459	1,619	160	11.0
4471	Gasoline Stations	1,463	1,623	160	10.9

All industries expected to experience some growth. Services industries are expected to have substantial gains in employment. For example, the Other Personal Services, Business Support Services, Outpatient Care Centers and Services to Buildings and Dwellings categories are expected to see an increases of 66% and above. The State and Local government sector, which includes employment at Texas A&M University as well as public schools, is also likely to experience significant job expansion.

Target occupations are presented in the table below. These are the occupations available for WIOA training subsidies in the Brazos Valley for eligible customers. The list presents several new occupations such as Certified Nursing Assistant, Childcare Worker, Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers, Paving, Surfacing and Tamping Operators, Construction Laborer and School Bus Driver.

The criteria for consideration as a target occupation are to have at least 10 average openings annually, a \$14.00 an hour wage or more, and training of two (2) years or less. Occupations that have less than 10 job openings or a wage less than \$14.00 are included because local knowledge has indicated a request for these occupations. For the occupations requiring a Bachelor’s degree, the Board may cover the costs of the last two years of training. Many of the occupations that show a Bachelor’s degree also have one (1) and two (2) year certificate programs that gain individuals entry level jobs in the occupation. Occupations that do not appear to show sufficient annual openings (10 or more) may be included in the target list if evidence of potential future openings are submitted to the Board as “local wisdom”.

Target Occupations List

SOC	Occupational Title
11-1021	General and Operations Managers
15-1252	Software Developers
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists
19-4021	Biological Technicians
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers
25-2022	Middle School Teachers
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers
29-1141	Registered Nurses
29-1292	Dental Hygienists
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technician
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians
29-2055	Surgical Technologists
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
31-2021	Physical Therapy Assistants
31-9091	Dental Assistants
31-9092	Certified Medical Assistant
31-1131	Certified Nursing Assistant
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers
39-9011	Childcare Worker
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks
43-6013	Medical Secretary
47-1011	Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers
47-2031	Carpenters
47-2051	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers
47-2071	Paving, Surfacing and Tamping Operator
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators
47-2111	Electricians
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipe Fitters and Steamfitters
47-5013	Service Unit Operators
47-2061	Construction Laborer
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers
51-4041	Machinists
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers and Brazers
53-3051	Bus Drivers, School
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers

Population Change 2020 to 2030 Brazos Valley WDA				
Area	Population Source	2020 Population	2030 Population Estimate	% change
Brazos County	Texas Demographic Center	233,849	293,987	25.7
Burleson County	Texas Demographic Center	17,642	18,244	3.4
Grimes County	Texas Demographic Center	29,268	31,625	6.8
Leon County	Texas Demographic Center	15,719	13,329	-15.20
Madison County	Texas Demographic Center	13,664	14,088	3.1
Robertson County	Texas Demographic Center	13,455	13,451	-.02
Washington County	Texas Demographic Center	35,805	36,263	1.2
Total		359,402	420,987	17.1

Texas Demographic Center December 2024

Labor Force Analysis and Trends

According to the Texas Workforce Commission report the unemployment rate for the Brazos Valley in December 2024 was 2.9% compared to 3.7% for the State of Texas. The U.S. unemployment rate for the same period was 3.8%. The civilian labor force in Brazos Valley increased to 199,876 as of December 2024.

Industries that saw a drop in employment in the third quarter 2024 were Natural Resources and Mining (-7.0), Manufacturing (-0.2%), Trade, Transportation and Utilities (-0.7%), Financial Activities (0.8%), and Information (-0.2%). The industries that experienced an increase in employment were Construction (0.5), Financial Activities (0.8%) and Public Administration (1.7%).

The population table above, shows a projected population growth of 17.1% for 2020 to 2030 (Texas Demographic Center) and TWC Tracer LMI projections. The bulk of this growth is in Brazos County. Grimes and Washington have projected growth at 6.8% and 1.2% respectively. Madison County's increase was 3.1%. Burleson Counties has a projected growth increase of 3.4% and Leon County is projected to have a negative population of -15.20%. Robertson County is also projected to have a negative population increase of -.02%.

The ethnicity of the Brazos WDA consists of 57.9% Anglo, 17.2% Black, and 24.92% Hispanic. According to Texas Workforce Commission estimates for September 2024 Brazos Valley had a civilian labor force of 199,876. Unemployment for September 2024 was 5,885 or 2.9% of the labor force. Data by county is presented below. Leon and Madison Counties are experiencing a significantly higher unemployment rate at 4.2% and 4.6%. The table below presents labor force data by county.

Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Brazos Valley WDA

AREA	CLF	EMP	UNEMP	RATE
BRAZOS	141,006	137,279	3,727	2.6%
BURLESON	9,640	9,341	299	3.1%
GRIMES	12,306	11,845	461	3.7%
LEON	6,749	6,464	285	4.2%
MADISON	4,862	4,640	222	4.6%
ROBERTSON	8,654	8,338	316	3.7%
WASHINGTON	16,659	16,084	575	3.5%
WDA TOTAL	199,876	193,991	5,885	2.9%

Source: TWC LMI, December 2024

Education plays a key role in obtaining employment at a self-sufficient wage. US Census data indicates that the educational attainment of persons 25 years of age and above in the Brazos Valley is below the national average for attainment of a high school diploma. The region's educational attainment ranges from a high of 90.4 percent, near the national average, to a low of 80.2% in Madison County. The Texas average is 82.4%. Only two counties in the region are below the state average, Grimes and Madison. The presence of Texas A&M University in Brazos County contributes to the higher educational attainment percentage for Brazos County. With the higher educational level, there is opportunity to increase the skill level of the region's workforce. This factor could weigh positively for companies seeking a skilled educated workforce and result in the region being more competitive in national and global markets. Workforce education and skill levels are a key component for location decisions for expanding companies. The workforce will partner with area Independent School Districts to focus on improving the high school graduation rates in all counties, especially the ones with a percentage that is below the national average.

High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25+, by County Brazos WDA

County	Educational Attainment County	Educational Attainment US
Brazos	89.0	89.4
Burleson	85.1	89.4
Grimes	81.9	89.4
Leon	86.3	89.4
Madison	80.2	89.4
Robertson	84.8	89.4
Washington	90.4	89.4

Source: US Census ACS 5 Survey 2019-2023

Percent of Persons with a Disability under 65 Years of Age

County	% Persons with Disability under age 65 by County	US Average
Brazos	7.5	9.1
Burleson	8.7	9.1
Grimes	8.4	9.1
Leon	15.6	9.1
Madison	9.8	9.1
Robertson	15.6	9.1
Washington	9.4	9.1

Source: US Census ACS 5 Survey 2019-2023

The table above presents the percent of persons with a disability under age 65 by county in the Brazos Valley WDA. The region has a significantly greater proportion of individuals with disabilities than the national average. The US average is 9.1%. This increase in the number of job seekers with disabilities in the region shows that attention is needed to add additional accommodations for training in the workplace.

Percent of Persons in Poverty by County

County	% Persons in Poverty	US Average
Brazos	23.7	11.1
Burleson	13.9	11.1
Grimes	14.9	11.1
Leon	17.6	11.1
Madison	18.3	11.1
Robertson	17.0	11.1
Washington	14.5	11.1

Source: US Census ACS 5 Survey 2019-2023

Poverty rates for the Brazos Valley WDA are presented in the table above. The national average for persons in poverty is 11.1%. All counties in the Brazos Valley Region exceed the national poverty rate. The Texas average poverty rate is 14.0%. The more urbanized Brazos County is experiencing more than double the national rate. This represents a significant challenge for workforce development programs and social services. Individuals most in need of skills training often cannot afford to attend training without some form of income support or stipend, which is generally not available in workforce programs.

Number of Veterans in Brazos Valley WDA by County

County	Number of Veterans
Brazos	8,078
Burleson	1,044
Grimes	1,636
Leon	1,229
Madison	736
Robertson	914
Washington	2,054
Total	15,691

Source: US Census ACS 5 Survey 2020-2024

The table above represents the number of veterans by county in the Brazos Valley WDA by county. The region has a significant population of veterans with more than 50.0% of the total number of veterans in the Brazos Valley located in Brazos County alone. Workforce development services to veterans are a priority at both the local, state and national levels. In addition to upskilling needs, some veterans also face barriers to employment due to drug use, PTSD, homelessness and psychological problems affecting their ability to complete training and return to the labor force. While many veterans have social and family networks and resources to tap into for support, some veterans are in need of special targeted assistance both for skills training and for referral to other programs to address their barriers. The Board works with Veterans programs and is part of a veteran coalition to ensure that veterans receive assistance to become gainfully employed and address difficulties with adjusting to civilian life.

Workforce Development Analysis

The Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board is the primary planning and operational entity for workforce development programs in the Brazos Valley Region. The Board is also responsible for the public funding allocated to the Region for adult education and literacy services. The Board works with its partner agencies to ensure that access to services is available for all job seekers in the region and that employers are provided with a pipeline of qualified applicants for available jobs. The Board's mission is to provide employers with a quality workforce so that they may be competitive in the local and regional economy. It partners with entities to provide access to workforce development programs through the workforce center system and through childcare services to provide child care for parents who are working or are in training. Jobseekers go through a series of trainings to become work ready to ensure that they are ready to interact professionally with employers. Jobseekers are provided priority access to job fairs and other workforce center programs. The Board encourages regional employers to actively participate in the workforce development system by providing a high level of quality and responsiveness to the needs of employers. To seek employer input into the operation of business services activities, the Board convenes regular meetings with representatives of major employers in the Region, requires the workforce center contractor staff to attend economic development meetings and provides labor market information to employers. The Workforce Contractor Business Services staff works with employers to understand the employers' business and industry sector so as to anticipate employer needs regarding recruiting, screening and hiring qualified applicants. The workforce center staff obtains employer feedback on the quality of services provided to them by the workforce center contractor. The workforce center is available to employers for hiring events, interviewing and applicant screening, labor market information research and explanation of labor law requirements. The Board's workforce center contractor implements customized training and on-the-job training for employers. Training can be specific to the employer operations and procedures and can be adjusted as needed. Area employers represent more than fifty percent of the workforce board's membership and are active participants in the development of strategies and actions to meet employer needs. On-going oversight of programs and activities by board members through committee meetings, planning sessions, and industry-specific employer meetings ensure employer needs are understood and anticipated in designing programs and services. The Board holds the workforce center contractor to strict standards of conduct in outreaching businesses for workforce development services. Business Services staff reports on employer contacts made, new hires made, and the current and changing economic climate in the region. The Board jobseekers have access to essential skills training through the workforce center's virtual workshops and webinars. The workforce center offers various five-minute professional training modules that cover topics pertinent to gaining job readiness soft skills for employment as well as resume writing, labor market information and interviewing skills. Jobseekers can access these modules on demand. The goal is to meet the specific needs of each jobseeker with customized resources and services. The Board prioritizes services to those experiencing barriers to employment which include poor work history, lack of work experience, lack of educational or occupational skills attainment, dislocation from high-wage salaries, high benefit employment, low levels of literacy, low levels of English proficiency, disability status, homelessness, justice involved status, veterans and foster children. The Board's workforce center contractor outreaches jobseekers with barriers, assesses their eligibility and need for services and develops a service plan that addresses the barriers to provide jobseekers access to employment, training, education and support services. Supportive services provided by the workforce center contractor and agency partners help eliminate barriers. Working with partners helps to provide streamlined services that assist customers in addressing barriers, realizing their goal of skills attainment and employment. Career Navigators examine the jobseeker's employability and develop plans for making the jobseeker marketable for available jobs and occupational demands in the Region by endorsing 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. Employment specialists have access to the Texas Workforce Commission's WorkInTexas database of current job listings to match participants with jobs. The workforce center's job readiness classes focus on the proper completion of work applications, preparing resumes, performing mock interviews and the accomplishment of practical training that readies the jobseeker for competition in the job market. Research has shown that justice-involved individuals with jobs are less likely

to commit new crimes. The Board's goal is to develop relationships with employers willing to hire justice-involved individuals and to help these individuals secure well-paid employment. The workforce center operates the following programs for jobseekers:

Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) –

This program provides assessment, training, case management and job placement services to eligible individuals. In addition, workforce center services in the form of resource rooms for job searching are available to all. Services are provided to adults, dislocated workers, and youth, especially out of school youth, to address individual barriers to employment. Available services are based on income criteria and/or barriers. Services are accessed through the local workforce centers.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Choices –

The Choices program provides a foundation for customers to transition from public assistance to work and self-sufficiency through employment-related services. Choices participants are referred from HHSC, tested, assessed and counseled in basic job search techniques to begin their job search. The expectation is that a participant will attain the necessary job skills to obtain a better paying job and eventually leave the TANF program. Activities include assessment, job search, subsidized and unsubsidized employment and educational services for individuals that have not completed secondary school.

Non-Custodial Parent Program (NCP) –

The program targets unemployed or underemployed non-custodial parents who are behind on child support payments. Services include job search, assessment, intensive case management, development of an employment plan and weekly contact with program staff. Workforce center staff works with the Office of the Attorney General and Judges to support and maximize the participant's journey to sustainability.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) –

SNAP promotes long-term self-sufficiency and independence by preparing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients for employment through work-related education and training activities. Activities include job search, work experience, workfare, non-vocational training and unsubsidized employment. Participants have to meet work requirements to continue receiving SNAP benefits.

Employment Services (ES) –

ES provides comprehensive recruiting, job search and related services to businesses and job seekers to connect employers seeking workers and individuals seeking employment. The program provides recruitment services for employers with job openings, job search assistance, job referral and job placement assistance for job seekers and reemployment services for Unemployment Insurance claimants. Coupled with Employment Services is the business services unit which works in partnership with the ES staff to provide outreach and job matching services for area employers, provide facilities for employer hiring events, advise employers on labor laws and screen applicants for prerequisites prior to job referrals. The business services unit also serves as the conduit between the Board and contractor to listen to and understand employer needs and tailor workforce development services to meet those needs.

Child Care Services –

The Child Care program subsidizes child care services for eligible, low-income families, which helps to promote long-term self-sufficiency by enabling parents to work, attend school or participate in job training. Eligible families of children under the age of 13 may receive child care financial assistance so that parents can work, attend school, or participate in training. Eligible families may choose from providers that meet local and state requirements. The Child Care services program also provides information to customers about child care options. Child care providers can obtain information for provider certification, attendance tracking and child care quality improvements.

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) –

The AEL Program addresses educational deficiencies, which 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 find it difficult to acquire jobs paying a self-sufficient wage. 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 High School Equivalency Programs and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Programs. In these classes job seekers can receive tutoring and attend small group sessions for adults at the 6th grade level or below. Common reasons why these jobseekers have not received a high school diploma include leaving high school early, the inability to pass required courses or mandatory achievement tests, the need to work and other personal problems. The Board has partnered with Educational Service Center Region 6 (ESC6) and the Madisonville Consolidated Independent School District (MCISD) to provide High School Equivalency classes throughout the region. The Board contracts with ESC6 to manage the Adult Education & Literacy classes in all counties except Madison County.

The Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program serves adults who are at least 16 years old or are beyond the compulsory school attendance age and meet any of the following criteria: function below the high school level, lack a high school credential or, are unable to speak, read or write in English. Through the Boards AEL program, customers can obtain their high school equivalency certification as well as work towards their citizenship. Workplace literacy classes provided to employers under the local AEL program provides incumbent workers with access to employer based certifications. Intensive College Readiness AEL classes prepare consumers to take the college entrance exam and successfully transition into post-secondary academic or occupational training certifications. The effectiveness of workforce development programs is measured by the Texas Workforce Commission through its contracted performance measures regarding program outcomes and placement of customers into employment.

Part 3: Core Programs

Workforce Development System

The Board works in collaboration with various entities to execute core and required programs to provide a seamless and integrated service delivery model. These partnerships ensure alignment, expand access to resources, and enhance outcomes for job seekers and employers. By aligning core and required programs, the Board ensures equitable access to employment, training, and support services, fostering pathways to sustainable careers and economic growth. Below is a detailed description of this integration and how the Board shares these programs in the Brazos Valley.

The core workforce development programs that the Board provides through the workforce center system include the following:

1. Youth Workforce Investment Activities

- Focus on serving youth aged 14-24, particularly out-of-school youth (minimum 75% fund allocation).
- Services include career exploration, internships, apprenticeships, and leadership development.

2. Adult Employment and Training Activities

- Provides individualized career counseling, job training, and access to industry-recognized credentials.
- Prioritizes services for public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those with basic skill deficiencies.

3. Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

- Helps individuals impacted by layoffs or industry closures return to work through training, job matching, and Rapid Response services.

4. Adult Education and Literacy Activities

- Collaborates with education providers to deliver GED preparation, ESL programs, and integrated workforce education models.

5. **Employment Services**
 - Offers job-matching services, labor market information, and hiring events to connect job seekers with employers.
6. **Vocational Rehabilitation Services**
 - Provides specialized support, including adaptive technologies and training, to help individuals with disabilities achieve employment.

Required Programs

1. **WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs**
 - Comprehensive workforce development programs supporting adults, youth, and dislocated workers through career services and training opportunities.
2. **Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program**
 - Provides universal access to job search assistance, resume support, and labor market information through American Job Centers.
3. **Unemployment Insurance (UI) Programs**
 - Assists unemployed individuals in accessing reemployment services and training opportunities.
4. **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program**
 - Offers targeted reemployment plans, career counseling, and job matching for UI claimants.
5. **Choices Program (TANF Employment and Training)**
 - Supports low-income families by providing employment services, training, and supportive resources to achieve self-sufficiency.
6. **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**
 - Integrates employment and training services for SNAP recipients, focusing on job readiness and skills training.
7. **Child Care Services**
 - Ensures affordable and accessible childcare for working families to support participation in workforce programs.
8. **National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) Program**
 - Provides temporary employment and workforce development assistance in response to major economic disruptions or disasters.
9. **Apprenticeship Programs**
 - Facilitates industry-specific training through registered apprenticeships that combine on-the-job learning with classroom instruction.

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

The core workforce development programs that the Board provides through the workforce center system include the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), providing Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth with skills training, job search assistance, support services, counseling, case management, work experience and placement services; Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF or Choices program), assisting Choices participants in gaining employment experience, workforce maturity, and access to placement in a job paying a self-sustaining wage; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), providing program recipients with job search assistance and

referral and placement in jobs paying a living wage; Adult Education Literacy Program (AEL) that supports an increase in education and work-related outcomes including secondary and post-secondary training outcomes; and TANF Non-Custodial Parent (NCP), aiding non-custodial parents with education, job training and workforce services. These programs are supported by the Child Care Services Program, which provides childcare assistance to families with parent(s) who are working or in training.

The vision is to be innovative in its delivery of programs to ensure success for the jobseeker. This can be accomplished by growing and sustaining a competitive workforce, aligning programs with employer needs, integrating system services and leveraging partnerships.

The goal is to partner with agencies to share information about customer needs, business developments, services provided to customers, and available shared resources to ensure that workforce development services are effective.

In order to carry out the plan for delivery of the core programs, the Board selects contractors through a competitive procurement process. The process results in one or more contractors being charged with providing access to workforce development and career and training assistance for employers and job seekers. Through local partnerships, the Board is able to ensure that youth customers are outreached and barriers addressed. Partnerships with employer organizations as well as industry groups ensures that the Board contractors understand employer needs and can address those needs through their program design and workforce center system operation.

The workforce center contractor engages the Youth population in their Youth Career Pathway Program Model to experience a robust and meaningful launch into employment. Designed activities support career goals and individual strengths and address needs and challenges youth may have. Youth receive targeted assistance with any deficiencies. The experience begins with career exploration with a Career Navigator. Updates to programs keep Youth informed about hiring events, upcoming classes and training opportunities.

To ensure alignment and effective implementation, the Board undertakes the following actions:

- **Collaboration and Coordination:** Conducts regular meetings with program partners to identify gaps, share resources, and align objectives.
- **Integrated Technology:** Utilizes platforms such as WorkinTexas.com for efficient case management and program integration.
- **Performance Monitoring:** Tracks program outcomes and adjusts strategies based on labor market trends and stakeholder feedback.
- **Co-Enrollment Opportunities:** Promotes co-enrollment in core and required programs to maximize benefits for participants.
- **Expanding Access, Facilitating Development, and Improving Access to Core Programs:** the Board recognizes the critical role of core programs in fostering workforce development and is committed to working collaboratively with entities delivering these programs. This comprehensive approach ensures that Brazos Valley effectively expands access, facilitates career development, and improves opportunities for individuals to achieve sustainable employment and career growth.

The Board aims to expand access to employment, training, education, and support services and to broaden access to services for all eligible individuals, with a particular focus on those facing barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, low-income families, veterans, out-of-school youth, and displaced workers. Strategies to accomplish this will include:

- **Outreach and Awareness Campaigns** - Partner with community organizations, schools, and faith-based entities to disseminate information about available services; use targeted social

media campaigns and digital tools to reach underserved populations, including those in rural or remote areas.

- **Mobile and Virtual Services-** Deploy mobile workforce units to rural areas and underserved communities to provide on-site training, job search assistance, and career counseling; expand virtual services, including online job fairs, workshops, and access to WorkinTexas.com, to eliminate geographical barriers.
- **Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services** - Provide materials and resources in multiple languages; ensure staff are trained to offer culturally competent services to diverse populations.
- **Wraparound Support Services** - Integrate supportive services, such as transportation assistance, childcare, and housing resources, to reduce barriers preventing participation in workforce programs.

In facilitating Development of Career Pathways and Co-Enrollment in Core Programs, the Board works closely with core program entities to create and promote career pathways that provide seamless transitions for individuals at all skill levels and implement the following strategies:

Industry-Specific Pathways:

- Collaborate with employers and industry groups to develop pathways aligned with high-demand occupations and sectors, such as healthcare, technology, manufacturing, and skilled trades.
- Ensure pathways include opportunities for on-the-job training, internships, and apprenticeships.
- **Co-Enrollment Processes:**
 - Develop streamlined intake processes that enable participants to be co-enrolled in multiple core programs, maximizing the benefits they receive.
 - Use integrated case management systems, such as WorkinTexas.com, to track participant progress across programs and avoid duplication of services.
- **Collaborative Partner Engagement:**
 - Conduct regular cross-agency meetings and training sessions to align program objectives and share best practices.
 - Partner with local educational institutions, such as community colleges and vocational schools, to embed career pathway models into curricula.

Improving Access to Recognized Postsecondary Credentials

The Board ensures participants have access to activities that lead to industry-recognized credentials that are portable and stackable, enhancing career mobility and earning potential. Key initiatives include:

- **Employer-Led Training Programs:**
 - Partner with employers to identify in-demand credentials and create training programs tailored to their workforce needs.
 - Offer incentives, such as subsidized training costs, to employers who hire credentialed participants.
- **Credentialing Opportunities Embedded in Programs:**

- Integrate credentialing opportunities, such as certifications and licenses, into all training programs offered by core program entities.
- Develop pathways that allow individuals to stack credentials progressively, building from entry-level certifications to advanced qualifications.
- **Financial Assistance for Credentialing:**
 - Provide scholarships, grants, and financial aid to cover tuition, exam fees, and other costs associated with credentialing.
 - Partner with local organizations to fund credentialing for underserved populations.
- **Data-Driven Program Design:**
 - Use labor market analysis to identify credentials with the highest value in the local economy.
 - Regularly review and update credential offerings to align with evolving industry standards and demands.

Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery System

The Board encourages employers to work with area training providers to ensure that training meets the employer’s needs and such training is within the capacity of the training provider to implement. Tracking of current performance in graduation rates and job placements is one method the Board uses to determine the effectiveness of training programs. In addition, both the local community college and area employers are represented on the Board.

The Board provides through the workforce center system skills training, job search assistance, support services, counseling, case management, work experience and placement services to Workforce Investment Opportunity Act participants, Dislocated Workers, Youth, Choices Program participants, veterans and foster youth. The workforce center contractor helps participants to gain employment experience, develop skills and have access to jobs paying a self-sustaining wage. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients are helped with job search assistance, referral and placement in jobs paying a living wage. These programs are supported by Child Care Services by providing child care assistance to families where the parent(s) are working or in training. The Board has also implemented a priority of services plan to ensure jobseekers needing priority consideration are recognized in the career center.

A large portion of the Region’s population lives in areas that have limited 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. However, the Board collaborates with the Brazos Valley Council of Governments to provide broadband internet service to the rural workforce centers. Many of the services offered by the Workforce Center are available via the internet. This partnership allows customers to access workforce services such as WorkInTexas (WIT) and other TWC and workforce center websites for information about employment and available services along with virtual services such as training modules. The Brazos Valley Council of Government website also has a wealth of information concerning programs offered. Workforce Solutions of the Brazos Valley has a robust website found at bvjobs.org, which offers an abundance of information on programs and services available at the workforce centers in the region. There is information on the resources at the workforce center, labor market information, job search tools, links and resources, and the events calendar, which features employer hiring events, and other events related to employment in the Brazos Valley.

The Workforce Center Facebook page offers information about Workforce Center training and hiring events, job postings and informational employment articles that assist jobseekers with job readiness

skills, interviewing skills and resume development.

The Board's internal monitoring ensures that its activities are in strict compliance with all non-discrimination and ADA requirements. Any deficiencies are noted and immediately addressed in a corrective action plan to bring the deficiency up to compliance. Staff is trained in the EEO and ADA requirements. Required notices are prominently posted in public areas of the workforce centers as well as staff office area. Individuals who need accommodation for their specific disability are provided that accommodation through the workforce center services or through a partner agency, such as Vocational Rehabilitation Services or the Aging & Disability Resource Center. Accommodations are noted in the customer's employment plan and in their case notes. Every one-stop partner in the workforce center system plays a role in providing services to shared customers. Depending on specific grant requirements, partner agencies provide services that may not be available through workforce development funding, such as adaptive equipment for disabled jobseekers, special counseling for personal crises management and financial literacy counseling. Partners support the overall service blend to customers entering the workforce center system. If necessary, the Board works with partner agencies to pay for a share of the costs of the workforce center systems physical space, maintenance and utilities, especially in the outlying counties.

1. Adult Employment and Training Activities

- Provides individualized career counseling, job training, and access to industry-recognized credentials.
- Prioritizes services for public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those with basic skill deficiencies.

2. Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

- Helps individuals impacted by layoffs or industry closures return to work through training, job matching, and Rapid Response services.

3. Adult Education and Literacy Activities

- Collaborates with education providers to deliver GED preparation, ESL programs, and integrated workforce education models.

Employer Engagement, Economic Development, and Unemployment Insurance Program Coordination

The Board is committed to fostering strong relationships with employers, aligning workforce development activities with regional economic needs, and promoting innovative strategies to meet the evolving demands of businesses. By implementing these strategies, the Board will build a robust workforce development system that supports employers, aligns with regional economic goals, and fosters sustainable economic growth.

Facilitating Employer Engagement in Workforce Development Programs

• Outreach to Employers:

- Conduct targeted outreach to engage small employers, high-demand industry sectors, and employers in in-demand and target occupations.
- Host regular employer roundtables, focus groups, and industry-specific forums to gather input and identify workforce needs.

• Customized Recruitment Solutions:

- Provide tailored recruitment services, including pre-screening candidates, hosting job fairs, and organizing hiring events.

- Use labor market intelligence to connect employers with qualified job seekers who match their specific needs.
- **Employer Incentives:**
 - Offer financial incentives, such as wage subsidies and tax credits, to encourage participation in on-the-job training (OJT) programs and apprenticeship initiatives.

Supporting a Local Workforce Development System That Meets Business Needs

- **Business Services Teams:**
 - Establish dedicated business services teams to serve as liaisons between employers and workforce development programs.
 - Provide employers with guidance on navigating workforce resources, including job postings, training grants, and labor market data.
- **Incumbent Worker Training Programs:**
 - Partner with employers to upskill existing employees through customized training programs, ensuring businesses remain competitive.
 - Use Skills Development Fund grants to finance training tailored to specific industry needs.
- **Sector Strategies:**
 - Develop industry sector partnerships to address shared workforce challenges and create collaborative solutions.
 - Focus on sectors critical to the regional economy, such as healthcare, manufacturing, technology, and logistics.

Coordinating Workforce and Economic Development Activities

- **Partnership with Regional Economic Development Organizations:**
 - Collaborate with local chambers of commerce, economic development councils, and regional planning organizations to align workforce strategies with economic goals.
 - Jointly market the region as a business-friendly area with a skilled and ready workforce.
- **Grant-Funded Initiatives:**
 - Pursue federal and state grants, such as National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG), to support workforce investment activities aligned with regional economic development.
- **Integrated Planning:**
 - Conduct regular strategic planning sessions with workforce and economic development stakeholders to identify opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing.

Promoting Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services

- **Entrepreneurship Training:**
 - Partner with small business development centers (SBDCs), community colleges, and nonprofit organizations to deliver entrepreneurship workshops and business planning courses.
 - Offer mentoring programs connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders.
- **Microenterprise Support:**
 - Provide access to resources for starting and scaling small businesses, including assistance with business registration, access to capital, and financial literacy training.
 - Collaborate with local financial institutions to offer microloans and other funding opportunities.

Strengthening Linkages Between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance (UI) Programs

- **UI Claimant Services:**
 - Streamline referral processes between the one-stop delivery system and UI programs to ensure claimants quickly access reemployment services.
 - Provide job search assistance, career counseling, and training opportunities tailored to the needs of UI claimants.
- **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA):**
 - Enhance RESEA program delivery by incorporating personalized reemployment plans and labor market information.
 - Collaborate with UI program staff to identify claimants suitable for workforce programs, including dislocated worker services and training initiatives.

Key Initiatives to Support Employer Services

1. **Career Pathways Initiatives:**
 - Develop clear, actionable pathways that align with employer needs and provide job seekers with progressive career opportunities.
2. **Apprenticeship and Internship Programs:**
 - Partner with employers to create registered apprenticeship and internship programs to develop a pipeline of skilled workers.
3. **Technology-Driven Solutions:**
 - Leverage platforms like WorkinTexas.com to connect employers with job seekers efficiently and provide real-time labor market insights.
4. **Effective Business Intermediaries:**
 - Utilize business intermediaries to act as connectors between employers and workforce programs, facilitating engagement and participation.

Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

The Board is committed to effectively integrating Wagner-Peyser Act services within the one-stop delivery system to ensure seamless service delivery, maximize coordination, and eliminate duplication. Below is a detailed description of the strategies employed:

1. Maximizing Coordination

- **Integrated Service Delivery Model:**
 - Co-locating Wagner-Peyser staff within one-stop centers to facilitate collaboration and seamless delivery of services.
 - Cross-training staff from different programs to ensure a shared understanding of services and resources.
- **Unified Planning and Communication:**
 - Conducting joint planning meetings between Wagner-Peyser representatives and other program stakeholders to align goals and service strategies.
 - Using shared calendars and communication platforms to coordinate job fairs, workshops, and other events.
- **Collaboration with Employers:**
 - Working together with Wagner-Peyser and WIOA teams to provide tailored recruitment, labor market information, and workforce planning services to employers.

2. Improving Service Delivery

- **Customer-Centered Design:**
 - Streamlining the intake process to ensure job seekers access both Wagner-Peyser services and other one-stop services without unnecessary delays.
 - Offering career counseling, resume assistance, and job matching through integrated case management systems.
- **Technology-Driven Enhancements:**
 - Leveraging WorkinTexas.com to provide real-time job postings, automated job matching, and resume-building tools for job seekers.
 - Incorporating virtual services, such as online job fairs and video-based career counseling, to expand reach and convenience.
- **Focus on High-Demand Occupations:**
 - Aligning services with labor market data to prioritize support for industries and occupations in high demand.

3. Avoiding Duplication of Services

- **Centralized Intake and Assessment:**
 - Implementing a single point of entry for Wagner-Peyser services and other one-stop programs to avoid repetitive assessments and service overlaps.
 - Using integrated data systems to track participant progress and prevent duplication in service delivery.

- **Collaborative Service Plans:**
 - Developing individualized service plans in coordination with other program representatives to ensure a unified approach to meeting client needs.
 - Encouraging co-enrollment in WIOA and Wagner-Peyser services to maximize resource efficiency.
- **Regular Performance Reviews:**
 - Conducting audits and feedback sessions to identify and address potential redundancies in service offerings.

Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management

The Board recognizes the importance of integrating technology to streamline intake processes and case management. Below is an outline of the strategies being implemented to transition and utilize **WorkinTexas.com** effectively:

1. Implementation of WorkinTexas.com

- **Platform Transition:**
 - Providing staff and stakeholders with comprehensive training on the functionalities of WorkinTexas.com to ensure smooth adoption.
 - Hosting webinars and tutorials for job seekers and employers to familiarize them with the platform's capabilities.
- **Seamless Integration with WIOA Programs:**
 - Ensuring WorkinTexas.com serves as the primary portal for WIOA program participants to access job matching, training opportunities, and career services.
 - Aligning data systems across programs to enable a unified user experience and shared reporting.
- **Enhanced Features for Job Seekers:**
 - Offering personalized job recommendations based on skills, experience, and career goals.
 - Providing virtual tools for resume creation, interview preparation, and labor market exploration.
- **Transitioning to Technology-Enabled Case Management**
- **Unified Data Systems:**
 - Integrating WorkinTexas.com with other one-stop partner systems to enable real-time data sharing and reduce administrative burdens.
 - Ensuring compliance with data privacy and security regulations during system transitions.
- **Accessibility Enhancements:**
 - Implementing ADA-compliant features, such as screen readers and text-to-speech functionality, to ensure equal access for individuals with disabilities.
 - Providing multilingual support to accommodate the region's diverse population.
- **Tracking and Reporting:**

- Using WorkinTexas.com to generate detailed reports on participant outcomes, service utilization, and performance metrics.
- Enabling case managers to monitor progress and adjust service plans in real-time.

By integrating Wagner-Peyser services within the one-stop delivery system and leveraging WorkinTexas.com, the Board ensures a coordinated, efficient, and customer-centric approach to workforce development. These strategies reduce duplication, enhance accessibility, and align services to meet the needs of both job seekers and employers.

Third Party Partnership in SNAP Employment and Training Programs

The Board is committed to enhancing the SNAP Employment and Training Program. The Board is soliciting viable partners who can work with the workforce center staff to provide skills training, soft skills training and work experience training to jobseekers in the SNAP Employment and Training Program. Special consideration will be given to ABAWDs so that they can be equipped to access employment with living wages. Partners identified are Project Unity, Heart of Texas Goodwill, Brazos Valley Food Bank and Brazos Hunger Solutions.

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

Rapid Response Activity Coordination

The Board allows the workforce center contractor to provide dislocated worker employment and training activities to help individuals impacted by layoffs or industry closures return to work through training, job matching, and Rapid Response services. The workforce center deploys Rapid Response teams to assist displaced workers with immediate access to training, job matching, and support services

Youth Workforce Investment Activities

The Board endeavors to expand its involvement with youth through the WIOA Program. The Board has employed a Career Navigator to concentrate on disseminating information the Region's independent School Districts to promote the workforce centers and their ability to provide services and resources to in school and out of school youth. Primary considerations will be given to:

- Focus on work experience programs, mentorship opportunities, and career exploration services.
- Partner with schools and community organizations to provide integrated academic and workforce preparation.

Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

Improving Access to Recognized Postsecondary Credentials

The Board will ensure participants have access to activities that lead to industry-recognized credentials that are portable and stackable, enhancing career mobility and earning potential. Key initiatives include:

- **Employer-Led Training Programs:**
 - Partner with employers to identify in-demand credentials and create training programs tailored to their workforce needs.
 - Offer incentives, such as subsidized training costs, to employers who hire credentialed participants.
- **Credentialing Opportunities Embedded in Programs:**
 - Integrate credentialing opportunities, such as certifications and licenses, into all training programs offered by core program entities.
 - Develop pathways that allow individuals to stack credentials progressively, building from entry-level certifications to advanced qualifications.
- **Financial Assistance for Credentialing:**
 - Provide scholarships, grants, and financial aid to cover tuition, exam fees, and other costs associated with credentialing.
 - Partner with local organizations to fund credentialing for underserved populations.
- **Data-Driven Program Design:**
 - Use labor market analysis to identify credentials with the highest value in the local economy.
 - Regularly review and update credential offerings to align with evolving industry standards and demands.

Child Care and Early Learning

As part of the Texas Rising Star Mentor program the Early Childcare Programs, daycare providers that serve CCS children can attend an annual Conference held each year in August. This annual conference dedicates one full day to the Leadership, with the emphasis on Business Management. This allows the Directors/Owners to attend training sessions on Leadership, as well as other aspects of Business Management, contributing to the childcare industry.

The Child Care Program prioritizes Readiness by ensuring that programs implement a curriculum that is aligned with Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year Old Early Learning Guidelines and the Texas PreK Guidelines. The Program accomplishes this by providing curriculum training and child development training to staff to build knowledge in how to differentiate instruction based on the individual child's skill level. They also support local education agencies in collaborating with 3-star and 4-star providers in increasing children's school readiness, working with local education agencies to work with programs to provide onsite supports for curriculum implementation and school readiness skills needed for the next chapter of the children's education.

Supporting the needs of the childcare industry, in partnership with CCS and the Texas Rising Star Mentor program the Board Child Care staff implements quarterly trainings for all childcare providers that have a signed agreement with CCS. These trainings are to enhance professional development and quality services for the staff that work within the childcare programs. The topics selected include topics taken from the provider surveys that the Board staff sends out each program year. All the topics selected are to

create opportunities for professional growth within the early childhood education field. Working along with WEX (Working Experience) provides the ability to offer more support and opportunities in the career pathways for early childhood education.

To date CCS has 1822 enrolled children, and 1141 parents/families. Currently the WFBVB Texas Rising Star Mentors are providing Mentor services to 120 local Early Learning Child Development programs within the seven-county area. These programs are waiting to be assessed for either their Entry Level Designation certification or reassessment for increasing their current Star level.

Transportation and Other Support Services

The Board's support services policy provides for assistance with transportation by distributing debit cards for gas cards or bus passes to jobseekers. In some cases, vehicle repair is authorized so customers can participate in training activities or job search. Payments are coordinated/tracked/managed through the workforce center contractor. The Child Care Services program contractor provides childcare services to customers. Board staff serves on the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee.

Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy

The Board is the Title II grantee for the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Program as well as the Title I grantee for WIOA activities in the Region. The workforce center contractor and the adult education and literacy program contractor coordinate access to these services through a referral system. The AEL contractor has labor market information, workforce program applications, and a career navigator to advocate for students across program lines. The AEL contractor uses the WIOA subcontractor for customer support, recruitment, testing, space, and coordinated case management for joint customers. The WIOA subcontractor refers any customers experiencing education and literacy barriers to employment to the AEL contractors for remediation and tutoring. Both contractors participate in monthly staff meetings to triage joint cases. The Board also works with local libraries to provide access to students for distance and virtual learning services.

The Board AEL contractor reviews AEL Program applications for eligibility to determine if the student is an English language learner or does not have a high school diploma.

Part 6:Adult and Dislocated Workers

Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training

Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities help individuals impacted by layoffs or industry closures return to work through training, job matching, and Rapid Response services. Comprehensive workforce development programs support adults, youth, and dislocated workers through career services and training opportunities. Rapid Response teams assist displaced workers with immediate access to training, job matching, and support services. Workforce center staff collaborate with UI program staff to identify claimants suitable for workforce programs, including dislocated worker services and training initiatives.

Service Priority

The priority of service focuses on adult career and training services for recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient as well as veterans, spouses of veterans, and foster children. An additional focus is creating opportunities for out of school youth to engage in labor market and career information resources. The Board's mission is to provide employers with a quality workforce so that they may be competitive in the local and regional economy. Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley partners with entities to provide access to workforce development programs through the workforce center system and through childcare services to provide child care for parents who are working or are in training. Jobseekers go through a series of trainings to become work ready to ensure that they are ready to interact professionally with employers. These jobseekers are provided priority access to job fairs and other workforce center programs and are triaged per the service policy.

Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board Policies and Procedures Manual

WIOA

Service Priority for Individualized Career Services and Training Services Policy

Date Issued: 06/18/ 2015

**Date Revised: 05/04/2020
08/18/2016**

Date Reviewed: 02/05/2021

Policy

The Workforce Center Operator will provide WIOA basic and individualized career services as well as training services, to eligible adults that meet the WIOA eligibility guidelines requirement. The Workforce Center Operator will follow the priority of service order for individualized career services and training services once eligibility for WIOA adult is determined. The Workforce Center Operator will follow the Texas Workforce Commission Guidelines regarding allowable services for basic and individualized career services as well as training services.

Guidelines

WIOA Adult Eligibility

To be eligible to receive WIOA services in the adult programs, an individual must:

1. be 18 years of age or older;
2. be a citizen or noncitizen authorized to work in the United States; and
3. meet Military Selective Service registration requirements (males only).

Priority for WIOA individualized career services and training services must be provided in the following order:

1. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses (as defined in WD Letter 25-15) who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.
2. Non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are also recipients of public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient in the following order:
 - a. Foster youth and former foster youth (as defined in WD Letter 43-11, Change 2) as required by Texas Family Code §264.121
 - b. Non-foster youth
3. All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses.
4. Priority populations established by the Governor and or the Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board in the following order:
 - a. All other foster youth and former foster youth, as required by Texas Labor Code §264.121
 - b. Local Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board priority groups
5. Non-covered individuals outside of the groups given priority under WIOA.

Low-Income Individuals

An individual who meets any *one* of the following criteria satisfies the low-income requirement for WIOA adult services:

1. Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months has received, assistance through SNAP, TANF, or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, or state or local income-based public assistance;
2. Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that, in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current combined U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Level and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines shown on the WIOA Income Guidelines web page at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/workforce-innovation-opportunity-act-eligibility-income-guidelines>;
3. Is a homeless individual as defined in §41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, or a homeless child or youth as defined in §725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;
4. Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the NSLA (**for the WIOA adult program, this only applies to the individual receiving the free or reduced-price lunch**);
5. Is a foster youth, as defined in Texas Family Code §264.101(a-1) and §264.101(d), on behalf of whom state or local government payments are made; or
6. Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets:
 - a. WIOA's income requirements, even if the individual's family income does not meet the income requirements; or
 - b. the income eligibility criteria for payments under any federal, state, or local public assistance program.

Family

A family is defined as two or more individuals related by blood, marriage, or decree of court, who are living in a single residence and are included in one or more of the following categories:

1. A married couple and dependents;
2. A single individual, parent or guardian and dependents; or
3. A married couple.

In a situation in which a job seeker is claiming, for the purpose of defining his or her family, to be in a common-law marriage, written attestation must be obtained from both parties affirming the fact.

Family Income

For the purpose of determining WIOA income eligibility, the following are excluded from income:

1. Needs-based scholarship assistance
2. Financial assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act—Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity grants, Federal Work Study Program, PLUS, Stafford loans, and Perkins loans
3. Cash assistance payments (including TANF, SSI, Refugee Cash Assistance, general assistance, emergency assistance, and general relief)
4. Onetime income received in lieu of TANF cash assistance
5. Income earned by a veteran while on active military duty and certain other veterans' benefits, such as compensation for service-connected disability, compensation for service-connected death, vocational rehabilitation, and education assistance

6. Lump sum payments received as assets in the sale of a house, in which the assets are to be reinvested in the purchase of a new home (consistent with IRS guidance)
7. Payments received as the result of an automobile accident insurance settlement that are being applied to the repair or replacement of an automobile
8. Foster care payments
9. Any withdrawal from an Individual Development Account for the purchase of a home, medical expenses, or educational expenses
10. Onetime cash payment, including tax refunds; loans, which are debt and not income; onetime insurance payments; gifts; and lump sum inheritances
11. Noncash assistance such as employer-paid fringe benefits, food, or housing received in lieu of wages, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, school meals, and housing assistance

Anything that is not listed above as excluded from income is included as income. Additionally, Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration recently clarified in Training and Employment Guidance Letters 19-16 and 21-16 that unemployment compensation, child support payments, regular payments from Social Security, and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) are all “included” as income when determining income eligibility.

Note: When a federal statute specifically provides that income or payments received under such statute shall be excluded in determining eligibility for the level of benefits received under any other federal statute, such income or payments shall be excluded in WIOA eligibility determination (for example, adoption subsidies).

Basic Skills Deficient

An individual who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society satisfies the basic skills deficient requirement for WIOA adult services.

Workforce Center staff must use assessment instruments that are valid and appropriate for the target population and must provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities.

Workforce Center staff may:

- determine the method of assessment and process used to determine an individual’s inability to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society; and
- based on the method of assessment or assessment tool used, set benchmarks for assessment results that determine basic skills deficiency.

Workforce Center staff must document in The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) counselor notes of how basic skills deficiency is determined.

Initial assessment of skills levels and determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from adult and dislocated worker programs are basic career services, which are allowable services and allowable costs for any individual who meets basic eligibility criteria (age, authorization to work in the United States, and Selective Service).

Once determined eligible for individualized career services the Workforce Center operator will provide a comprehensive and specialized assessment of the skills levels and service needs of the customer, which will include:

- In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals to be addressed on the individuals’ employment plan.

- Diagnostic testing or use of other assessment testing tools; and
- Additional specialized assessments for eligible individuals in the individualized career services can be paid for using WIOA funds as part of their Individual Training Account (ITA) after all other resources have been ruled out.

The Workforce Center operator will provide a battery of assessments to WIOA individuals to determine skills deficiencies. These assessments can also be given at a basic career service level prior to eligibility determination:

- O*Net Interest Profiler – used as an initial assessment that can help the customer discover the type of work activities and occupations that the customer would like and find exciting.
- TABE (most current version) – used to provide a solid foundation for effectively assessing the skills and knowledge of adult learners.
- Work Keys Talent Assessment – helps employers find and develop employees by measuring work-related attitudes and behaviors.
- Work Keys Applied Math Assessment – measures critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, and problem solving techniques for situations that occur in today’s workplace.
- Work Keys Graphic Literacy – measures the skill needed to locate, synthesize, and use information from workplace graphics.
- Work Keys Workplace Documents – measures the skills people use when they read and use written text on the job.

If an individual applies for WIOA individual career services then the Workforce Center staff can use the prior assessments to establish skills deficiencies for that eligibility qualification.

Workforce Center staff must document in The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) counselor notes the assessment name and results of the assessment administered.

Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts

Fiscal Agent

The Board's fiscal and administrative agent is the Brazos Valley Council of Government as determined by the partnership agreement.

Subgrants and Contracts

The Board uses a competitive procurement process to select contractors for WIOA activities. The Board releases a Request for Proposal (RFP) for operation of the workforce center system in the Brazos Valley WDA. The RFP contains the requirements and restrictions concerning the contracting and operation of the programs as well as the scoring criteria and timeline for the procurement. The RFP details the submission requirements and narrative and budget instructions. The Board maintains a "bidders list" of vendors who may be interested in submitting a proposal. A notice of the availability of the procurement is posted in local newspapers, on the BVCOG web page and sent to vendors on the bidders list. A "bidders' conference" is held either on-site or by telephone to discuss the RFP elements and to answer questions bidders may have about the RFP. A question/answer document is posted on the BVCOG web page after the bidders' conference and emailed to vendors on the bidders list. Proposals are due on an assigned due date and time. Late proposals are not accepted.

An independent evaluation team reviews proposals submitted in response to the RFP. This team evaluates the proposals using a standardized scoring instrument based on the RFP scoring criteria and instructions. The independent evaluation team submits its report to the Board detailing the evaluation score and strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. The Board reviews the evaluation report and takes action on the evaluation team and staff recommendation to select a proposer for contract negotiations. If negotiations are successful, the successful respondent signs a contract for the services requested.

The Board notifies unsuccessful Proposers about the action taken by the Board. Proposers may elect to receive a debriefing on the evaluation of their proposal. Vendors that want to appeal the decision may follow the Board's appeal process within a certain time from the date of Board action on the procurement.

Part 8: Performance

Board Performance Targets

The performance measures for WIOA are negotiated with TWC by the Board Executive Director based on local information acquired by TWC that can affect performance measures, such as the downturn of a particular industry and the downturn's impact on workers attaining re-employment within 10 weeks. The performance of the Board fiscal agent, BVCOG, is reviewed by the Board's certified public accountant (CPA) annual review, the TWC financial teams annual monitoring and the BVCOG annual financial A-133 audit. The chief elected officials review the BVCOG audit and the Board members review the Board's CPA and TWC financial monitoring report. An initial and annual evaluation of eligible training providers (ETP) is done following TWC requirements concerning performance by Board staff to remain on the training provider list for the area. The Board CPA, Board programmatic monitor and the TWC Sub recipient monitoring team monitor ETPs used by consumers to ensure they are the ETP approved. Brazos Valley performance measures are listed below. There are 27 measures included in the performance matrix.

	Performance Measure	State Target
	I-Career & Training WIOA-based	
1	Active Job Seeker New Employment Connection Rate	55.53%
2	Maintaining Employment Connection Rate	46.42%
3	Credential Rate – All C&T Participants	71.00%
4	NCP Entered Employment Rate	65.00%
5	NCP Employment Retention Rate	50.00%
	II-Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)	
6	RESEA Outreach and Scheduling Rate WEEKLY	100.00%
7	RESEA Initial Appointment Rate QUARTERLY	77.00%
8	RESEA Failure to Report Rate QUARTERLY	23.00%
	III-Others Non-WIOA	
9	Choices Full Engagement Rate	50.00%
10	Claimant Reemployment within 10 Weeks	60%
11	# of Employers Receiving Texas Talent Assistance (TTA)	525
12	Successful Texas Talent Assistance Rate (STTAR)	51.58%
	WIOA Outcome Measures	<i>* Meeting Target range is 90% to 109.99%</i>
13	ADULT -Employed Q2 Post Exit	74.00%
14	ADULT -Employed Q4 Post Exit	74.90%
15	ADULT -Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit	\$7,000.00
16	ADULT -Credential Rate	71.10%

17	ADULT -Measurable Skills Gain	69.70%
18	DW -Employed Q2 Post Exit	79.70%
19	DW -Employed Q4 Post Exit	78.30%
20	DW -Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit	\$9,720.00
21	DW -Credential Rate	77.90%
22	DW -Measurable Skills Gain	75.00%
23	YOUTH - Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit	75.20%
24	YOUTH - Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit	79.90%
25	YOUTH -Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit	\$3,900.00
26	YOUTH -Credential Rate	58.80%
27	YOUTH -Measurable Skills Gain	64.30%

Part 9: Training and Services

Individual Training Accounts

The target occupations list for occupational skills training that is funded through WIOA is posted on the byjobs.org website and is available in the workforce career centers. Local labor market information is available to participants on the Texas Labor Market Information website at texaslmi.com. AEL Program class information is provided in each workforce center, on social media and through local outreach. ONET is used for career exploration, TABE, CASAS or Supra for basic skill deficiency assessment and Work Keys for basic skills assessment. Recruitment for contracted training is provided through the local newspaper, social media, contact with other agency partners and by career center personnel. Workforce Center case managers provide this information to jobseekers through basic career services and individualized career services.

Training Services within the parameters of the target occupations are provided to eligible jobseekers through the TWC eligible training provider system using individual training accounts (ITA). These training accounts have a lifetime benefit of \$10,000.00 per individual with an additional \$5,000.00 that can be used for supportive services. The dollar amount for supportive services excludes childcare services and transportation services.

If an industry in the region identifies a training need that is needed in the area and meets the Board

criteria for self-sufficiency wages, high growth and two-year completion, a competitive procurement could be considered with the cost of the training being allocated to each participants ITA as tuition. Adult Education and literacy activities that lead to a secondary school diploma (WIOA sec 3(3) may be considered as a training services. However, if Title I adult and dislocated worker funds are used for these activities, they must be done concurrently or in coordination with any training activities in WIOA sec 134(c) (3) (D) (i)-(vii). See 680.350. Because the Board is the grantee for TWC state AEL funding for the region, it is open to combining AEL funding to pay for an AEL teacher to provide contextualized high school equivalency (HSE) training while using Title I adult/dislocated funds to provide concurrent targeted occupational training for eligible WIOA participants. This training would be a competitively procured contracted training. The cost of the training would be based on an individual tuition that would be charged to an ITA for particular individuals.

ITA Limitations

The Board limits ITA amounts to a \$10,000.00 lifetime benefit. Supportive services have a limit of \$5,000.00 per individual jobseeker. Any exceptions to this limit are described in the Board's ITA policy.

Part 10: Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Britt Rice Electric, L.P. has a registered apprenticeship program in the Brazos Valley. The Board is committed to supporting all apprenticeship programs in the Brazos Valley and all efforts to develop apprenticeship programs in the region. The Board will work with any apprenticeship programs that are available to the area. The Board's priority of service focuses on adult career and training services for jobseekers who are basic skills deficient as well as veterans and foster children. An additional focus is to create opportunities for engaging jobseekers in the job market by aligning apprenticeship opportunities with industries included on the Target Occupations List.

The Board will encourage all apprenticeship programs to become a part of the Eligible Training Provider System.

Apprenticeship Texas

The Board commits to providing a skilled workforce within the Brazos Valley and to providing workforce services that ensure that every person who wants to work can obtain employment by increasing their skills, minimizing barriers and obtaining quality referrals. This includes an apprenticeship training program that provides hands-on career training in a wide variety of occupations and industries. Apprenticeships provide an education and the potential to earn college credit toward an associate's or bachelor's degree once the apprenticeship is complete. This allows individuals to start their way to a successful long-term career with a competitive salary and little or no educational debt. They can also achieve a national industry certification upon graduation that is recognized and accepted by industry partners across the United States.

To increase the visibility of Workforce Solutions services in the community and to promote the workforce as a resource to employers, the Board works with employers to establish apprenticeship programs that meet the needs of employers and qualify job applicants for skilled positions. The Board works to promote a market driven customer responsive atmosphere that increases the visibility of

Workforce Solutions apprenticeship efforts in the community while promoting the workforce center as a resource to employers. To increase visibility of their apprenticeship offering, the Board will work with the Britt Rice Electric, L.P. apprenticeship program and other apprenticeship programs to build awareness about the availability of the apprenticeship program(s) in the Brazos Valley Region. The Board's workforce center assists jobseekers in applying for apprenticeship programs available in the area. The Board will work with partners to identify and assess employers that are interested in participating in an apprenticeship program(s). The apprenticeships will enhance the skill level and earnings potential for participants. Each partner will play an important role in providing access to workforce development services and identifying businesses to recruit for the apprenticeship program. Apprenticeships will provide jobseekers the opportunity to earn a wage while learning a skill and gaining qualifications to meet industry standards. Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board is committed to promoting the integration of Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) within the Brazos Valley and will encourage these programs to register with the Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) to receive Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding. The Apprenticeship Strategic Plan for Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board will consider occupations listed on the Target Occupations List for apprenticeship programs. This alignment will enhance the accessibility and quality of training opportunities for job seekers while fostering collaboration between training providers and employers as listed below.

1. Outreach and Communication:

- Conduct targeted outreach to existing RAP programs to inform them about the benefits of registering with the ETPS, such as access to WIOA funding, increased visibility to job seekers, and opportunities for collaboration with workforce development partners.
- Develop and distribute informational materials (e.g., brochures, newsletters, and online resources) that outline the registration process, eligibility criteria, and advantages of being part of the ETPS.

2. Partnership Building:

- The Board plans to deepen and maintain the strong partnerships we have with key stakeholders, including local employers, industry associations, labor organizations, and educational institutions, to promote the value of RA programs and their inclusion in the ETPS.
- Host regular meetings, workshops, and seminars with stakeholders to discuss the benefits of WIOA funding, share best practices, and address any concerns or barriers to registration.

3. Technical Assistance and Support:

- By providing one-on-one technical assistance to RA programs throughout the ETPS registration process. We can assist with and provide referral to the Apprenticeship Texas office for further guidance on completing applications, meeting eligibility requirements, and understanding reporting obligations.
- The Board will develop a dedicated support team within the Board to assist RA programs with any technical or administrative challenges they may encounter during the process, in conjunction with Apprenticeship Texas.

4. Incentives and Recognition:

- The Board will explore opportunities to offer incentives, such as financial support or recognition awards, to RA programs that successfully register with ETPS and demonstrate a commitment to providing high-quality training.
- The Board will highlight success stories and best practices from registered RA programs through our Board communications, as well as Brazos Valley Council of Governments, social media, and public events to encourage others to follow suit.

5. Continuous Improvement and Feedback:

- By establishing a feedback mechanism to gather input from RA programs on their experiences with the ETPS registration process; the Board can identify areas for improvement and resolve any concerns.
- The Board continuously evaluates and refines outreach, support, and partnership strategies based on feedback and evolving needs of RA programs and the workforce area.

By implementing these strategies, the Board aims to foster a robust network of Registered Apprenticeship programs that are actively engaged with the ETP, ultimately enhancing the quality and accessibility of training opportunities for job seekers in The Brazos Valley workforce area.

Public Comment

The Workforce Board public notice for the 2025 informs the public that the Workforce strategic plan will be available for review and comment at the Center for Regional Services for a period of 15 days, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm February 25, 2025 through March 11, 2025. The notice informs individuals that the plan could also be viewed on the Workforce Board website at bvjobs.org. The notice lists Vonda Morrison, Board Program Manager, as the contact for questions at vonda.morrison@bvcog.org.

**Appendix: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements
Local Board Plan Requirements
For Alignment to the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan**

The State Plan identifies four goals for its partner agencies. Below is each goal statement and how the Board will support each goal.

Goal 1: Focus on Employers by accelerating the delivery of relevant education and training programs to meet the demand of employers.

The Board focuses on employer needs through the establishment of its business services unit, through the operation of labor exchange services under the Wagner Peyser Act, through employer membership on its board and through its work with employers to outreach veterans to find quality employment. The Board workforce center staff interacts with employers daily with one dominating mission –to understand employers and their business needs and to ensure that information is disseminated to staff and Board members who make program decisions. The goal is to provide and expand education and training programs needed for upskilling and reskilling of workers to meet the needs of the employers. The Board works with providers of career and technical education programs to identify short-term credentials in high-demand occupations to ensure that graduates connect with the workforce center system and gain the competencies needed to meet employer job skill requirements. The Board supports improvements in efficiencies to provide services to rural areas and to improve self-service capabilities within the workforce center system. Local jobseekers and employers use WorkInTexas to access information that facilitates the connection between employer and job seeker. Employers can discover jobseeker skills and capabilities. The workforce center staff tracks jobseeker involvement so that they can ensure that the jobseeker meets requirements for becoming a successful job candidate.

Goal 2: Engage in Learners by accelerating the expansion of and access to work-based skill and knowledge acquisition to respond to the needs of learners.

The Board and its Student HireAbility Navigator collaborate with the education community, especially Texas A&M University’s Center for Disability and Development to provide funding for work-based learning programs in school districts. The goal is to explore occupational skills training that can result in creating a pipeline that moves secondary school graduates into the labor market or on to post-secondary education opportunities. The Board also works to ensure that employers have access to business services staff that can help identify employment opportunities and access to training, workforce center services and job placement. The workforce center staff works with community partners to assist customers with any life challenges they experience while they are working or in training. The Board makes referrals to agencies that have the resources and programs necessary to address barriers to employment that are not specifically addressed in workforce development programs. The Board collaborates with the Adult Education Program to provide support for participants in high school equivalency programs, limited English proficiency programs and apprenticeship programs to help jumpstart careers. The Board works with the Region’s employers to identify apprenticeships that match the Target Occupation List.

Goal 3: Partners by accelerating the development and use of models to support and build system partners' capacity, responsiveness, continuous improvement and decision-making.

The Board works to align programs to ensure all students can complete areas of study, earn credentials and gain employment skills. The Board gives special emphasis to jobseekers who need skills training to position them for employment or post-secondary education. The Board works with the workforce center contractor to identify career pathway opportunities so jobseekers can build on their skill levels to qualify for higher paying jobs. Partnering with various educational entities helps to support this paradigm.

Goal 4: Policy and Planning by accelerating the availability of relevant workforce, education and other data sets and the use of applied analytics to evaluate program outcomes to respond to the needs of policy makers and planners.

The Board's goal is to certify all child care providers to be Texas Rising Star certified. Board Child Care Mentors work with child care staff to ensure that they attain Texas Rising Star status. As part of the Texas Rising Star Mentor program, employees, directors and owners in the Early Childcare Programs that serve Child Care Services children can attend conferences that inspire leadership, with the emphasis on business management. This training enforces the Board's commitment to the childcare industry. These trainings enhance professional development and provide quality services for the staff that works with the childcare programs. The conferences create opportunities for professional growth within the early childhood education field and provides the ability to offer more support and opportunities in the career pathways for early childhood education. To date Child Care Services has 1822 enrolled children, and 1141 parents/families. Currently the Board Texas Rising Star Mentors are providing Mentor services to 120 local Early Learning Child Development programs within the seven-county area. These programs are waiting to be assessed for either their Entry Level Designation certification or reassessment for increasing their current Star level.

Strategic Opportunities

Strategic Opportunity 1 -Employer Engagement

The Board is committed to fostering strong relationships with employers, aligning workforce development activities with regional economic needs, and promoting innovative strategies to meet the evolving demands of businesses. By implementing these strategies, the Board will build a robust workforce development system that supports employers, aligns with regional economic goals, and fosters sustainable economic growth.

Facilitating Employer Engagement in Workforce Development Programs

- **Outreach to Employers:**
 - Conduct targeted outreach to engage small employers, high-demand industry sectors, and employers in in-demand and target occupations.
 - Host regular employer roundtables, focus groups, and industry-specific forums to gather input and identify workforce needs.
- **Customized Recruitment Solutions:**
 - Provide tailored recruitment services, including pre-screening candidates, hosting job fairs, and organizing hiring events.
 - Use labor market intelligence to connect employers with qualified job seekers who match their specific needs.
- **Employer Incentives:**
 - Offer financial incentives, such as wage subsidies and tax credits, to encourage participation in on-the-job training (OJT) programs and apprenticeship initiatives.

Strategic Opportunity 2 – Improving Outcomes for Texans with Barriers to Employment

The Board aims to expand access to employment, training, education, and support services and to broaden access to services for all eligible individuals, with a particular focus on those facing barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, low-income families, veterans, out-of-school youth, and displaced workers. Strategies to accomplish this will include:

- **Outreach and Awareness Campaigns** - Partner with community organizations, schools, and faith-based entities to disseminate information about available services; use targeted social media campaigns and digital tools to reach underserved populations, including those in rural or remote areas.
- **Mobile and Virtual Services**- Deploy mobile workforce units to rural areas and underserved communities to provide on-site training, job search assistance, and career counseling; expand virtual services, including online job fairs, workshops, and access to WorkinTexas.com, to eliminate geographical barriers.
- **Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services** - Provide materials and resources in multiple languages; ensure staff are trained to offer culturally competent services to diverse populations.
- **Wraparound Support Services** - Integrate supportive services, such as transportation assistance, childcare, and housing resources, to reduce barriers preventing participation in workforce programs.

Strategic Opportunity 3 – Use of Data to Support Investment Decisions

The Board support the overall service blend to customers entering the workforce center system. The Board works with partner agencies to share the costs of the workforce center systems physical space, maintenance and utilities, especially in the outlying counties. The following practices help identify strategic investments in employers and jobseekers.

1. **Adult Employment and Training Activities**

- Provides individualized career counseling, job training, and access to industry-recognized credentials.
- Prioritizes services for public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those with basic skill deficiencies.

2. **Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities**

- Helps individuals impacted by layoffs or industry closures return to work through training, job matching, and Rapid Response services.

3. **Adult Education and Literacy Activities**

- Collaborates with education providers to deliver GED preparation, ESL programs, and integrated workforce education models.

- Partner with local organizations to fund credentialing for underserved populations.

• **Data-Driven Program Design:**

- Use labor market analysis to identify credentials with the highest value in the local economy.
- Regularly review and update credential offerings to align with evolving industry standards and demands.

• **Unified Data Systems:**

- Integrating WorkinTexas.com with other one-stop partner systems to enable real-time data sharing and reduce administrative burdens.
- Ensuring compliance with data privacy and security regulations during system transitions.

[In Demand Industries, In Demand Occupations, Target Occupations.xlsx](#)