

Part 1—Demonstrating Alignment with Texas’ Strategic Plan for the Workforce System

The four sections below list and describe the four system goals from *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023* that identify critical, high-priority system issues. For each goal, provide a detailed description of one significant board strategy or initiative that both fulfills the intent of the goal and that could be considered a best or promising practice. Also, include the anticipated quantitative outcomes to be achieved as a result of implementation.

System Goal and Rationale: Focus on Employers:

By accessing critical education and labor data sets, employers can better find and plan for skilled workers to meet their needs in both the immediate timeframe and the future. Through greater engagement with employers, education and training providers can better design career and technical education content and delivery options that are more aligned with industry needs. Providers can make adjustments in program content to benefit employers and students, as well as address both state and regional economic needs.

Board Strategy: WSST will continue to work with partners to develop and design programs and activities that support the increase of Teacher Externships.

Initiative: WSST works with LCC Economic Development Center, United, Laredo, Zapata and Jim Hogg ISDs to plan and execute strategies targeting the required workforce experience and training for local youth to obtain employment. WSST, through funding from TWC, operates a collaborative Teacher Externship program with area Independent School Districts (ISDs) and employers that (1) introduces secondary teachers to “real world” careers via onsite externships at employer sites and (2) results in lesson plans built upon contextualized work place problems related to subject matter. In 2015, 2016, 72 middle and high school teachers participated from Jim Hogg, Laredo, United and Zapata Independent School Districts. Thirty-six employers participated by hosting the teachers on their work sites, attending a pre-program and end of program luncheon, participating on a panel during the Orientation and completing a survey evaluation of the program. Competitive grant, program is contingent upon annual grant award.

The WSST Teacher Externship Program implementation resulted in the following outcomes:

1. The WSST Teacher Externship Program assisted teachers to incorporate into their lesson plans, the observed connections the teachers made between the application of all knowledge, skills and abilities required for the selected targeted industries and occupations and the delivery of the requirements in their teaching strategies and lessons.
2. This program gave teachers the opportunity to observe the application of all employer required skills and facilitate connections so future workforce applicants can be better prepared, when seeking employment - to obtain employment.

3. Teachers become familiar and received training on the use of workforce career and labor market data sources and links to assist in preparing students to make strategic career decisions.
4. Partnerships with employers and teachers provided a meaningful and relevant experience for both the teacher and the employer.
5. Employers expressed the exposure of the company to the teachers created a more in-depth occupational skill and knowledge connection.

System Goal and Rationale: Engage in Partnerships:

Through collaborative and transparent processes, workforce system partners focus on outcomes that improve the employability of all program participants—from across a wide spectrum of capabilities and experiences—to meet employer needs. The leveraging of partnerships to enhance system alignment and outcomes depends on trust, a culture of collaboration both within and external to the workforce system, deep working relationships, and technical capacity to communicate to share needs, data, and information. Partnerships can provide for common planning, intake, and reporting on outcomes, as well as ensuring a “no wrong door” approach to the provision of workforce programs and services.

Board Strategy: WSST will continue to maximize the Mobile Workforce Unit outreach to job seekers with limited transportation options, that reside in rural areas and to those job seekers that are working on completing their GED and workforce readiness training.

Initiative: WSST Mobile Career Center staff have participated in meetings whenever needed and coordinated and worked with clients of the Laredo Food Bank, U.S. Probation office H.H.S.C, Webb County office, Bethany House, South Texas Food Bank, Dismas Charities, US Probation Office, Larga Vista Community Center, La Presa Community Center and Laredo Public Library. The WSST Mobile Career Center staff have worked with collaborative partners and general public to understand the required pre-screening requirements of local employers so applicants can be better prepared and understand the specific qualifications and responsibilities of the local jobs. The coordination allows the employer to have a workforce pool that meets expectation to select from, job seekers are more prepared and aware of employer expectations to hire.

Anticipated quantitative outcomes to be achieved as a result of implementation:

1. WSST coordination of the Mobile Career Center routes and destinations are impacting the economic opportunities throughout the entire WSST workforce area.
2. WSST Mobile Career Center staff working together and engaging with area partners and resources in helping promote the opportunity for job placement resulted in over 700 referrals and 44 clients obtained employment.

3. The coordination, collaboration and regular meetings with workforce partners assist in avoiding duplication of effort and initiatives are supported by all partners resulting in a referral of services continuum that addresses all workforce needs that will enable employment for the job seeker.
4. The mobile unit is providing a employment connection for job seekers, outreach and eligibility determination for all workforce programs, assisting with workforce preparation for upcoming job fairs, and connecting job seekers with community resources that results in an increase in job placement.
5. Many of the clients have limited English proficiency, lack basic work ethic skills, have applied computer technology skill challenges, and lack a GED/High School diploma. The Mobile Career Center has been used at designated spots to outreach job seekers and makes regular consistent visits to provide assistance in collaboration with community workforce system partners that has increased employment opportunities.

System Goal and Rationale: Align System Elements:

By improving transitions, aligning programs, and ensuring portability and transferability, Texas improves access and the ability of all participants to complete programs of study, earn credentials, transition to further education, and gain critical employability skills. Texas employers are better positioned to find and hire the employees they need through an enhanced education and training pipeline.

Board Strategy: WSST will continue to engage in joint service delivery planning with partners to ensure mutually beneficial program design. This collaborative practice helps to reduce waste and duplication of services, eliminate redundancy, and create more seamless transitions between programs for referrals and mutual customers.

Initiative:

WSST partners with regional agencies that provide employment and other services to individuals with disabilities to host a Laredo Disability Alliance Job Fair. Employers targeted for participation have demonstrated ability to provide appropriate accommodations for employees with disabilities, and numerous support agencies are present to provide related assistance. Job fair partners include Border Region MHMR, City of Laredo, Goodwill Industries, Laredo ISD, Laredo Vocation Development Services, Let's Go Professional Staffing, Texas A&M International University, United Independent School District, U Can Work 2, and VAIL.

Anticipated quantitative outcomes to be achieved as a result of implementation:

1. WSST and workforce partners will better integrate unique services available via partners into the broader workforce system,
2. WSST and area partners will avoid duplication of services and wasted resources, and

3. WSST and workforce partners will eliminate redundancies in service delivery for customers.

System Goal and Rationale: Improve and Integrate Programs:

Accelerate employment and improve efficiencies through shared resources that can be leveraged to create new, relevant, and innovative opportunities that serve the needs of all stakeholders. By addressing high-priority programmatic needs through an integrated strategy, decision-making at the system, partner, and participant levels is improved and system service delivery is enhanced. The changing economic and educational landscapes provide opportunities to share relevant data through appropriate “push” mechanisms in an organized manner to key stakeholders who rely on information generated by system partners.

Board Strategy: WSST will continue its’ history of working in collaboration with area community partners to maximize resources and opportunities. WSST will work to find any opportunity to align and integrate local programs and initiatives.

Initiative:

Workforce Solutions for South Texas partnered with the local Texas Office of the Attorney General, the Webb County Family Courts, Border Region MHMR, Serving Children/Adolscents In Need (SCAN), Salvation Army, Bethany House and Laredo Community College (LCC) to establish a strong referral system to provide 293 Non Custodial Parents (NCPs) with a safety net of resources and services. The collaboration built the program to directly assist in addressing the assessed substantial barriers to employment and self-sufficiency such as educational levels ranging from 7th to 12th grade, poor work history, substance abuse, limited workforce and soft skills and behind at an average of \$10,000 in child support.

Anticipated quantitative outcomes to be achieved as a result of implementation:

1. The program collaboration enabled 78% of the participants to enter employment, and pay \$1,522,074.04 in child support payments.
2. The collaboration also assisted the WSST in exceeding the employment and retention performance measures.
3. Structured workshop topics that resulted in a 78% employment rate included basic computer skills for resume development and submission of application assistance, mock interviewing preparation sessions, mentoring, Parenting Employment, Education and Responsibility (PEER) mentoring, group tutoring, CDL certification training, how to legally establish a self-employed business and preparation for specific workforce center hosted job fairs.

Part 2—Identifying Industries of Significance to the Regional Economy

Texas has continued to exhibit economic success over the past decade, and local Workforce

Boards have contributed to regional economic success through the establishment of industry sector or cluster strategies in partnership with employers. These strategies help to drive job creation and stimulate economic growth by providing job candidates with the skills and knowledge that employers require to be competitive. Texas' targeted industry cluster initiative supported this work. WIOA continues that support by encouraging sector partnerships and strategies to ensure that the skills of the workforce meet the needs of local industries. The questions below focus on industry clusters and sectors within the region.

Describe the top three industry clusters/sectors and occupations.

1. Identify the three key industry clusters or sectors within your local workforce development area and provide an explanation as to why those clusters or sectors are important to your region and the regional economy. Please indicate for each whether it is an industry cluster or sector.

Board response:

WSST identified three key industry sectors as strong economic contributors to the workforce service area. The three Targeted Industry Sectors include:

Healthcare & Social Services

TWC data is estimating the Healthcare & Social Assistance Industry Sector (NAICS 62) in 2014, had 15,150 persons employed within the WSST workforce area and is projected to grow by 40.8% or 6,180 new employees by 2024. Moreover, TWC is projecting the Healthcare & Social Assistance Industry Sector, by 2024 will represent 15.51% of the total local industries, making it the largest industry.

Educational Services, Public and Private

TWC data is estimating the Educational Services, Public & Private Industry Sector (NAICS 61) in 2014, had 15,280 persons employed within the WSST workforce area and is projected to grow by 24.1% or 3,690 new employees by 2024. Moreover, TWC is projecting the Educational Services, Public & Private Industry Sector, by 2024 will represent 13.79% of the total local industries, the 2nd largest workforce area employer.

Transportation & Warehousing

TWC data is estimating the Transportation and Warehousing Industry Sector (NAICS 48) in 2014, had 14,360 persons employed within the WSST workforce area and is projected to grow by 23.5% or 3,370 new employees by 2024. Moreover, TWC is projecting the Transportation and Warehousing Industry Sector, by 2024 will represent 12.89% of the total local industries, the third largest industry employer.

2. For each cluster or sector identified in Question 1, identify the top five occupations for which

employer-demand exceeds the number of available workforce or education-program graduates or skilled applicants. Provide labor-market-information data, including the number of jobs, wages, the education required, and projected growth.

Healthcare & Social Services

WSST is targeting eleven occupations that are classified as Healthcare occupations. These occupations had 11,120 positions in 2014 and are projected to grow to 16,070 employees by 2024, which represents a 30.80% growth rate. As shown in the Table below, hourly wages for the targeted occupations range from \$8.40 - \$37.00. In looking at IPEDS data published by Department of Education, the number of regional completions for nurses seems adequate; however, Texas A&M International produces most nursing graduates with Bachelor’s degrees and higher, and some of the graduates do not remain in the WSST workforce area.

OccCode	Occupational Title	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024	Number Change 2014-2024	Percent Growth 2014-2024	Annual Openings due to Growth	Regional Completions	Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Hourly Wage 2015	Annual Wage 2015
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations										
29-1141	Registered Nurses	1,210	1,600	390	32.2%	40	77	Bachelor's degree	\$37.00	\$76,964
29-2061	Licensed Practical Nurses Licensed Vocational Nurses	430	590	160	37.2%	15	28	Postsecondary non-degree award	\$24.72	\$51,422
31-9091	Dental Assistants	160	200	40	25.0%	5	0	Postsecondary non-degree award	\$15.93	\$33,129

Source: WOC TRACER and IPEDS database, U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics

Educational Services, Public and Private

WSST is targeting four occupations that are classified as Education occupations. These occupations had 4,650 positions in 2014 and are projected to grow to 5,830 employees by 2024, which represents a 20.24% growth rate. As shown in the Table below, annual wages for the targeted Education occupations range from \$18,739 - \$54,475. In looking at IPEDS data published by Department of Education, the number of regional completions for teachers in the elementary and secondary level resulted in 128 graduates in 2013 from Texas A&M International and Laredo Community College. Again, Texas A&M International produces most teacher graduates with Bachelor’s degrees and higher, and some of the graduates do not remain in the WSST workforce area.

Occ Code	Occupational Title	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024	Number Change 2014-2024	Annual Openings due to Growth	Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Annual Wage 2015
Education, Training, & Library Occupations							
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Ex. Spec Education	1,520	1,900	380	40	Bachelor's degree	\$51,925
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Ex Special/Career/Technical Ed	770	970	200	20	Bachelor's degree	\$52,178
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Ex Special/Career/Technical Ed	1,020	1,280	260	25	Bachelor's degree	\$54,475

Source: WWC TRACER2 and PEDS database U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics

Transportation & Warehousing

WSST is targeting four occupations that are classified as Transportation and Warehousing occupations. These targeted occupations had 10,350 positions in 2014 and are projected to grow to 12,540 employees by 2024. As shown in the Table below, hourly wages for the targeted occupations range from \$10.18 - \$19.73. Laredo Community College is providing training through continuing education; moreover, employers for these occupations require job seekers to have computer literacy and driving experience.

Occ Code	Occupational Title	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024	Number Change 2014-2024	Annual Openings due to Growth	Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Hourly Wage 2015	Annual Wage 2015
Transportation & Material Moving Occupations								
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,640	5,490	850	85	Postsecondary non-degree award	\$17.83	\$37,088
53-3033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	660	800	140	15	High school diploma or equivalent	\$13.34	\$27,751
53-7051	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators	890	1,110	220	20	No formal educational credential	\$11.53	\$23,986
53-7062	Laborers & Freight, Stock, Material Movers, Hand	2,330	2,880	550	55	No formal educational credential	\$10.18	\$21,177

Source: WWC TRACER2 and PEDS database U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics

3. Identify the planned strategies to address the worker shortages in the occupations identified in Statement 2.

Board response:

Strategy: WSST will work with the local workforce area partners and employers to push Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Training. The Board will work and collaborate with area partners to obtain the required employer involvement to establish Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship training programs.

Strategy: WSST will continue to work with employers, secondary and post-secondary institutions on the development of clear career pathways that show where targeted occupations entry level positions may lead.

Strategy: WSST will work with workforce area partners to develop school to work adjustment training – some preliminary – so students know what is expected in workplace behavior – need to help the teacher trainers to stay aligned with employers on current skill expectation to train according.

Strategy: WSST will work with workforce area partners to work on Need to establish early high school “work study programs” to learn how to work while in school.

Strategy: WSST will work with workforce area partners to identify more job shadowing opportunities for job seekers to understand the work environment expectation

Strategy: WSST will continue to work with workforce area partners to identify funds to implement the Teacher Externship Project

Strategy: WSST will continue to promote Career and Technical Education programs that focus on dual credit for high school students.

Strategy: WSST will continue to work closely with local workforce partners to build on community partnerships that maximize and leverage local workforce system resources.