



Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas

Local Board Plan 2025-2028

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Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

1.A: Vision and Goals: Each Board must include a description of the Board’s strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. The description must contain:

- goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including the provision of early education services and services for youth and individuals with barriers to employment as defined by WIOA §3(24); and*
- goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on the performance indicators described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A).*

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas (Board) Mission: To be a driving force in the area to provide employers with workforce support for the economic benefit of the communities we serve. The Board has guidance and oversight responsibility for workforce development services in Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River and Titus Counties. The Board is committed to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency within the Northeast Texas region. The Board’s strategic plan for workforce development services is aligned with the following statewide plans:

- Texas Workforce Commission 2023-2027 Strategic Plan
- Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2024-2031
- WIOA Combined State Plan Program Years 2024-2027
- Adult Education and Literacy Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2021-2026
- Child Care Workforce Strategic Plan 2023-2025

The Board applies a “systems approach” to address workforce development challenges. To fully address these issues, the Board developed a structure that cuts across the disciplines of economic development, education, and employment & training programs. The Board understands that coordination of the disciplines is absolutely necessary to create a system to effectively deliver services.

In partnership with the Board of Directors and Chief Elected Officials, Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas will continue to prepare an educated and skilled workforce that responds to employer needs.

As the leader for workforce development for the area, the role of Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is to bring together the key stakeholders in the region to partner in an efficient and effective manner to produce results aimed at supporting economic growth and self-sufficiency. The strategic vision of the Board is to provide effective programs and resources to individuals and employers. This includes aligning the Board’s efforts with industry needs, by furthering collaborations with area employers to identify workforce needs. The Board will continue to provide comprehensive career services, address employment barriers, and promote upskilling, in an effort to support area job seekers along their career pathways. Partnerships are critical to the Board’s workforce development efforts. Strengthening existing partnerships and fostering new partnerships is central to the Board’s mission to impact the region. The Board’s efforts focus on creating pathways to high-demand, high-wage careers, aligning with regional economic development strategies to support individuals and businesses.

The Board has developed a number of guiding principles and goals to accomplish the strategic plan and adhere to the ideals of the strategic vision.

Goal	Strategy
<p>Goal #1: Employers: Build lasting partnerships with employers by aligning workforce development programs with business needs, ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled talent to meet current and future workforce demands. The Board’s goal and strategies focusing on employers aligns with the Texas Workforce System 2024-2031 strategic plan and the Texas Workforce Commission 2023-2027 strategic plan.</p>	1.1: Build meaningful partnerships with employers to understand and anticipate their workforce needs.
	1.2: Promote workforce programs and incentives
	1.3: Support employee upskilling through postsecondary partnerships
	1.4: Facilitate successful employment outcomes
<p>Goal #2 Skilled Workforce: Increase the availability of a skilled workforce to meet the needs of regional employers. Align education, training, and career pathways with the needs of those employers. Empower youth through career exploration and work-based learning opportunities.</p>	2.1: Enhance career exploration and workforce readiness activities for youth
	2.2: Expand access to and completion of industry-aligned training and credentials, for high demand, high wage occupations
	2.3: Develop and implement career pathways, for job seekers to progress from entry-level to advanced roles, aligning education, training, support services, and work-based learning to meet employer needs and economic priorities.

<p><u>Goal #3 Child Care:</u> Expand access to high-quality child care services, empowering workforce participation and driving economic growth by addressing the child care needs for working families and overcoming challenges within the child care industry. The Board’s goals and strategies for child care closely aligns with the Texas Workforce Commission’s Child Care Workforce 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.</p>	3.1: Strengthen and support the child care workforce
	3.2: Promote and support high quality child care throughout the region
	3.3: Strengthen parent engagement and education on child care services
	3.4: Maximize the impact of available child care funds
<p><u>Goal #4 Increase Brand Awareness and Improve Communication:</u> Increase brand awareness and improve communication to ensure employers, job seekers, partners, and other local/regional/statewide stakeholders are informed about programs and services offered by the Board, as well as the outcomes and impact of those programs.</p>	4.1: Increase awareness of program impact and success stories
	4.2: Enhance digital presence and engagement
	4.3: Enhance impact of communication efforts

Strategic Goal 1: Employers

Build lasting partnerships with employers by aligning workforce development programs with business needs, ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled talent to meet current and future workforce demands. The Board’s goal and strategies focusing on employers aligns with the Texas Workforce System 2024-2031 strategic plan and the Texas Workforce Commission 2023-2027 strategic plan.

Strategy	Action
<p>1.1: Build meaningful partnerships with employers to understand and anticipate their workforce needs.</p>	<p>1.1.1: Create employer advisory groups for each of the Board’s demand industries: manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology. An additional miscellaneous focus group will be added to cover other industries as well</p>
	<p>1.1.2: Host bi-annual roundtables of the employer advisory groups</p>
	<p>1.1.3: Enhance communication with employers, including an email newsletter, to ensure employers are informed on workforce trends and resources</p>
	<p>1.1.4: Annual surveys to gather feedback from employers on workforce needs</p>
	<p>1.1.5: Implement an employer recognition program to highlight partnerships</p>
	<p>1.1.6: Ensure outreach to and participation from employers in the Board’s most rural counties</p>
	<p>1.1.7: Expand outreach efforts to include new employers and employers who do not regularly utilize workforce services</p>
<p>1.2: Promote workforce programs and incentives</p>	<p>1.2.1: Develop guides for employers to develop work-based learning programs such as internships, industry tours, and apprenticeships</p>
	<p>1.2.2: Distribute information on workforce subsidies and grants available to support employers and workers</p>
	<p>1.2.3: Develop an incentive dashboard that highlights available hiring and retention programs</p>
	<p>1.2.4: Identify and share success stories from employers using incentives and workforce programs</p>

	1.2.5: Promote inclusive hiring initiatives by educating employers on the benefits of hiring individuals with barriers to employment, as an often-overlooked workforce
1.3: Support employee upskilling through postsecondary partnerships	1.3.1: Continue to meet with College Presidents' Roundtable to discuss current curriculum and potential programs aligned with high demand industries
	1.3.2: Partner with Texas Workforce Commission Employer Engagement division to communicate training grants with local employers and postsecondary education
	1.3.3: Share information with employers on incumbent worker training grants, including the application process
	1.3.4: Share information with employers on incumbent worker training grants, including the application process
1.4: Facilitate successful employment outcomes	1.4.1: Host industry-specific hiring events
	1.4.2: Provide support services to individuals with barriers to employment, designed to help them successfully complete training programs and gain employment
	1.4.3: Provide pre-employment workshops on work readiness
	1.4.4: Communicate employer hiring efforts with job seekers through direct communication, social media, and partnerships
	1.4.5: Regular communication with employers to gather feedback on workforce customers and the effectiveness of workforce programs

Strategic Goal 2: Skilled Workforce

Increase the availability of a skilled workforce to meet the needs of regional employers. Align education, training, and career pathways with the needs of those employers. Empower youth through career exploration and work-based learning opportunities.

Strategy	Action
2.1 Enhance career exploration and workforce readiness activities for youth	2.1.1: Strengthen partnerships with local independent school districts (ISDs) to introduce career exploration programs and workshops.
	2.1.2: Host career fairs, interview events, job shadowing initiatives, and facility tours for students across industries
	2.1.3: Create summer internship and externship work-based learning programs for high school students
	2.1.4: Promote apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships for area youth.
	2.1.5: Convene partnerships between schools and area employers with a focus on connecting the workplace to the classroom through increased interactions
	2.1.6: Partner with the Region 8 Education Service Center to gather feedback from schools and students, aimed to shape career exploration and work-based learning programs offered by the Board
	2.1.7: Expand the network of employers participating in work-based learning opportunities, and connect them with are teachers
	2.1.8: Host summer externships for high school, adult education, and community college instructors. The program will place teachers with a local employer for one week during the summer in order to gain a better understanding of workforce needs, and take that information back to their classrooms and students

<p>2.2: Expand access to and completion of industry-aligned training and credentials, for high demand, high wage occupations</p>	<p>2.2.1: Utilize WIOA funding to provide job seekers with an opportunity to participate in local technical training programs and on-the-job training (OJT) programs</p>
	<p>2.2.2: Track progress for WIOA training participants and provide support to strengthen credential achievement outcomes</p>
	<p>2.2.3: Monitor progress of WIOA participants to identify and celebrate skills gains achieved as part of their individual employment/training plan</p>
	<p>2.2.4: Utilize partnerships to ensure all individuals have access to upskilling programs, including individuals with disabilities, Veterans, foster youth, adult learners, second chance population</p>
	<p>2.2.5: Utilize labor market information and local rationale to identify high-demand, high-wage occupations, including emerging occupations critical to the economic growth of the region. Ensure training programs exist to train individuals for success in these careers</p>
	<p>2.2.6: Provide access to labor market information to job seekers, employers, and educators, for better informed, data-driven decision making</p>
	<p>2.2.7: Strengthen communication with decision makers in high demand industries to gather feedback on employer workforce needs, including credentials of value and work-based learning opportunities</p>
	<p>2.2.8: Communicate the availability of workforce development programs and funding to support area job seekers</p>
	<p>2.2.9: Identify opportunities to increase participation from customers in the Board's most rural counties</p>

<p>2.3 Develop and implement career pathways, for job seekers to progress from entry-level to advanced roles, aligning education, training, support services, and work-based learning to meet employer needs and economic priorities</p>	<p>2.3.1: Build upon the existing work the Board has accomplished under the Texas Education Agency, Tri-Agency Regional Convener initiative</p>
	<p>2.3.2: Continue to meet with Pathways Leadership team in order to ensure a regional “voice” and approach to pathway development</p>
	<p>2.3.3: Grow dual-credit offerings for rural school districts through shared resources and distance learning opportunities</p>
	<p>2.3.4: Outreach employers with programs to upskill entry level workers and fill middle-skill jobs in demand</p>
	<p>2.3.5: Partner with adult education providers to support GED graduates in their pursuit of academic and career pathways. Connect programs with employer partners for information on hiring practices and career success</p>
	<p>2.3.6: Host interview day event for students to practice their interview skills with local employers</p>
	<p>2.3.7: Co-host Transfer Fairs with regional community colleges to support students continuing their education at area universities</p>

Strategic Goal 3: Child Care

Expand access to high-quality child care services, empowering workforce participation and driving economic growth by addressing the child care needs for working families and overcoming challenges within the child care industry. The Board’s goals and strategies for child care closely aligns with the Texas Workforce Commission’s Child Care Workforce 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.

Strategy	Action
3.1 Strengthen and support the child care workforce	3.1.1: Provide financial support and/or incentives for child care workers pursuing certifications
	3.1.2: Host professional development workshops for child care workers and providers on early education best practices
	3.1.3: Ensure workforce staff are familiar with the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS), and actively support providers use of the system
	3.1.4: Explore additional training opportunities for child care workers by partnering with local community colleges
	3.1.5: Establish early childhood educators as a priority group for receiving child care financial assistance
3.2 Promote and support high quality child care throughout the region	3.2.1: Gather feedback from child care providers on ways the Board can support quality improvements
	3.2.2: Create an annual quality plan to identify how the Board will invest quality improvement funds, using provider feedback as the foundation for this plan
	3.2.3: Explore additional opportunities to improve quality initiatives through child care staff development
	3.2.4: Host annual events for providers to distribute information and resources focused on improving child care service quality
	3.2.5: Promote and support the attainment of Texas Rising Star certification for new providers, and advancing star level for existing TRS providers

<p>3.3 Strengthen parent engagement and education on child care services</p>	<p>3.3.1: Organize annual workshops for parents to distribute information on child care resources to continue early childhood education at home</p>
	<p>3.3.2: Gather feedback from parents to improve child care quality improvements</p>
	<p>3.3.3: Provide information to potential child care customers via the Board’s social media channels and other media sources</p>
<p>3.4 Maximize the impact of available child care funds</p>	<p>3.4.1: Continue to meet with the Child Care Advisory Committee to gather input from committee members, which includes Board staff, contracted service provider staff, child care providers, parents, regulatory organizations, and other stakeholders</p>
	<p>3.4.2: Utilize data to make informed decisions on resource allocation and to share the positive impact of the program</p>
	<p>3.4.3: Utilize partnerships with employers and economic developers to identify those interested in opening new centers in the region</p>
	<p>3.4.4: Support new and potential child care providers with information and resources to help them succeed</p>

Strategic Goal 4: Increase Brand Awareness and Improve Communication

Increase brand awareness and improve communication to ensure employers, job seekers, partners, and other local/regional/statewide stakeholders are informed about programs and services offered by the Board, as well as the outcomes and impact of those programs.

Strategy	Action
4.1 Increase awareness of program impact and success stories	4.1.1: Develop more efficient mechanism to collect success story details from customers, including job seekers, employers, students, teachers, and partners
	4.1.2: Share success stories on the Board’s website and social media channels to raise awareness of successful outcomes
	4.1.3: Interview successful participants and employers to develop testimonials
	4.1.4: Develop videos of customer testimonials and events
	4.1.5: Share images and videos from successful events and initiatives
	4.1.6: Host events to celebrate achievements (annual celebration, SEAL awards ceremony, career signing days, etc)
	4.1.7: Create and distribute visually engaging impact infographics that highlight program outcomes
4.2 Enhance digital presence and engagement	4.2.1: Develop a social media calendar and use multiple platforms to post regularly
	4.2.2: Develop e-newsletter to share information on workforce programs and services
	4.2.3: Explore digital outreach campaigns targeting specific audiences and areas
	4.2.4: Create a network of media partners, including social media, to expand outreach. Ensure rural counties are represented on list
	4.2.5: Track metrics to evaluate the most effective outreach strategies for various programs

4.3 Enhance impact of communication efforts	4.3.1: Conduct surveys to focus groups to gather feedback from employers and job seekers on how to improve communication
	4.3.2: Develop targeted outreach campaigns that address the needs of different stakeholder groups
	4.3.3: Train staff on the impact of communications and identify ways everyone can support these efforts
	4.3.4: Create a Workforce Ambassador program, by training partners within the community to promote workforce programs

1.B: Board Strategies: Boards must provide a description of their strategies to work with the partners that carry out Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) activities to align the resources available to the local workforce development area (workforce area) to achieve the Boards' vision and goals.

The Board collaborates with entities carrying out Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) activities and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to align resources effectively, support the Board's vision and goals, and integrate these core programs into the local workforce system.

To strengthen the delivery of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs, the Board maintains partnerships with two contracted providers: Texarkana College Adult Education and Literacy Program and the Red River Valley Adult Education Consortium. These providers serve as both service delivery agents and fiscal agents for their respective areas. The Board fosters strong relationships with these partners through active participation in AEL activities and regular communication. Quarterly meetings between Board staff, contractor staff, and AEL providers focus on referrals, co-enrollment, program development, and resource alignment.

The Board collaborates closely with Texarkana College to offer high school equivalency instruction within the Greater Texarkana Workforce Center, ensuring seamless integration of services. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) with both AEL partners solidify the operational and financial framework of these collaborations. Additionally, the Board provides labor market information quarterly, including hiring trends, in-demand occupations, required skills, and certifications, enabling AEL providers to tailor their programs to meet regional workforce needs.

Innovative efforts like integrating AEL instructors into the Teacher Externship Program highlight the Board's commitment to aligning education and workforce development. Through this program, AEL instructors gain firsthand industry insights, which they then translate into lesson plans to better prepare students for local workforce opportunities. Furthermore, the Board actively promotes AEL programs and enrollment through its website, social media platforms, and workforce centers, ensuring broad visibility and participation in AEL activities.

In regard to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, the Board played a critical role in integrating VR programs into the Texas Workforce System, ensuring the seamless relocation of all VR staff and services to Northeast Texas Workforce Centers by February 2019. The Board has taken steps to ensure compliance with regulations for VR equipment and facilities, creating an inclusive environment for VR staff and customers. Infrastructure Funding Agreements with VR partners cover recurring costs associated with co-location, enhancing the financial sustainability of these efforts.

The integration of VR services has enabled the Board to better serve customers with disabilities, leveraging resources for programs like Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) and expanding services through the Student HireAbility Navigator. This Navigator initiative increases awareness of workforce and VR services among students with disabilities, employers, and educators, fostering a stronger connection between workforce programs and VR services. Regular meetings between Board and VR staff ensure coordination on referrals, co-enrollment, and program delivery, while frequent cross-referrals between VR and workforce programs optimize access to resources.

Through these collaborative strategies, the Board aligns AEL and VR resources to deliver comprehensive, integrated services that support the Board's vision of workforce excellence and its goals for sustainable regional economic growth.

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

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is dedicated to maintaining its status as a high-performing Board while fostering continuous improvement in the local workforce development system. Guided by the Texas Workforce Investment Council's (TWIC) framework, the Board will implement the following strategies to ensure consistent, high-level performance:

Engaging Employers Meaningfully: Employers are central to the workforce development system. The Board will strengthen its partnerships with existing employers while expanding outreach to engage new business partners. To facilitate targeted feedback and program development, the Board plans to establish industry sector advisory groups for each of its target industries. These groups will provide relevant insights to improve workforce services, enhance employer satisfaction, and address industry-specific workforce challenges.

Enhancing Communication and Transparency: The Board is committed to maintaining clear and effective communication internally and externally to ensure the delivery of high-quality services. Regular meetings with key partners—such as Chief Elected Officials, internal and external affairs committees, college presidents, and advisory groups—are critical to gathering input, ensuring accountability, and achieving program integrity. Communication with the contracted service provider staff will continue to focus on performance, project updates, and identifying challenges. To improve outreach, the Board will upgrade its communication strategy by leveraging video, audio, web, and print formats to deliver messages in clear, relatable, and accessible language. This enhanced strategy will improve the flow of information to customers, stakeholders, and the public.

Ensuring Program Monitoring and Quality Assurance: To ensure program accountability, the Board contracts with an independent consulting firm specializing in workforce program service delivery. Written reports are provided following monitoring reviews, and corrective action plans are required for any deficiencies posing significant risks. Monitoring outcomes are shared with the Internal Affairs Committee and the Board to ensure transparency and accountability. This comprehensive approach supports continuous improvement and high-quality service delivery.

Maintaining Strong Fiscal Oversight: To ensure fiscal accountability, the Board contracts with an independent consulting firm specializing in workforce development to conduct quarterly fiscal monitoring. Reviews of cash disbursements, payroll, and procurement ensure expenditures are reasonable, allocable, and allowable. These audits uphold financial integrity and enable effective resource utilization.

Driving Policy and Strategic Planning: The Board's strategic plan serves as a foundation for program development and enhancement, guiding efforts to maximize resources and respond to the workforce needs of the Northeast Texas region. While remaining flexible to adapt to changes, the Board's policy development and planning efforts are aligned with regional economic priorities. Policies are regularly reviewed and shared with the workforce services provider to optimize service delivery and maintain program integrity.

Gathering and Responding to Customer Feedback: Customer input is essential to improving workforce services. The Board uses surveys to collect feedback from employers, job seekers, and participants in job fairs and other events. Insights gained are analyzed collaboratively with Workforce Centers to refine the service delivery model. The Board will explore additional feedback mechanisms to ensure services align with customer needs and expectations.

Investing in Staff Development: The Workforce Development Board recognizes that investing in staff development is essential to maintaining a skilled, knowledgeable, and innovative workforce that can effectively meet the needs of the system customers and stakeholders. Through targeted training opportunities, the Board equips its staff with the tools and expertise necessary to navigate the evolving workforce landscape. This includes participation in state and national workforce conferences, specialized workshops, and leadership development programs, as well as hosting training sessions in collaboration with industry experts and other workforce areas. The Board participates in Texas Workforce Commission events, including the Annual Conference and Quality-Assurance Network (QAN) meetings, and hosts training sessions in collaboration with other workforce areas. This commitment to continuous learning enhances the team's ability to deliver high-quality services, drive innovation, and create meaningful impact for job seekers, employers, and community partners.

Using Data Integration and Evidence-Based Decision Making: The Board relies on accurate, relevant data to guide decisions and support regional partners. Data is used to identify target occupations for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) training, provide labor market insights to educators, assist students with career exploration, and support economic development efforts.

Performance data is also analyzed to identify areas for service delivery improvement and operational efficiency.

By implementing these actions, Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas will continue to excel as a high-performing Board, ensuring that workforce development programs remain innovative, responsive, and effective in meeting the needs of the regional economy.

Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis

3.A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis

- *Economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations*
- *Employment needs of employers, including the knowledge and skills needed to meet such employment needs, within in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.*

The Northeast Texas region, comprised of nine counties, is a largely rural corner of the state but enjoys many substantial economic development advantages. Its proximity to Dallas/Fort Worth, access to Interstate 30, and pro-business climate provide companies with a strong foundation for success. In essence, businesses throughout the region enjoy easy access to the large customer base and sophisticated supplier networks. As a result, the region benefits from the presence of a surprisingly diverse and strong foundation of major industrial employers, ranging from transportation equipment to food processing manufacturers.

Average Weekly Wages: Average weekly wages (AWW) are an indicator of wealth accumulation and economic activity. The table below shows the AWW for each of the 9 counties in the Northeast Texas WDA. This is a snapshot of AWW for the 1st Quarter of 2018 - 2024. The year over year (YOY) change shows the change from the 1st quarter of 2023 to the 1st quarter of 2024. The change column shows a positive change for 7 of the 9 counties. All counties showed a positive 5 year change in the average weekly wage. Additionally, the Northeast Texas WDA showed an AWW of \$990 2024 Quarter 1, which is the highest quarter 1 wage the region has ever experienced and the trend shows that it will continue to grow.

	Average Weekly Wages							
County	2018 1Q	2019 1Q	2020 1Q	2021 1Q	2022 1Q	2023 1Q	2024 1Q	YOY Change
Bowie	746	761	782	800	878	963	1003	40
Cass	680	713	742	736	768	848	887	39
Delta	464	498	523	556	657	738	826	88
Franklin	788	858	821	805	812	957	1079	122
Hopkins	761	751	792	804	874	976	1027	51
Lamar	789	829	836	876	976	1057	988	-69
Morris	1041	1046	983	906	975	1056	1073	17
Red River	623	671	747	716	755	870	797	-73
Titus	758	742	742	799	921	928	983	55

WDA	759	775	790	810	891	968	990	22
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Source: TexasLMI.com – Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Report

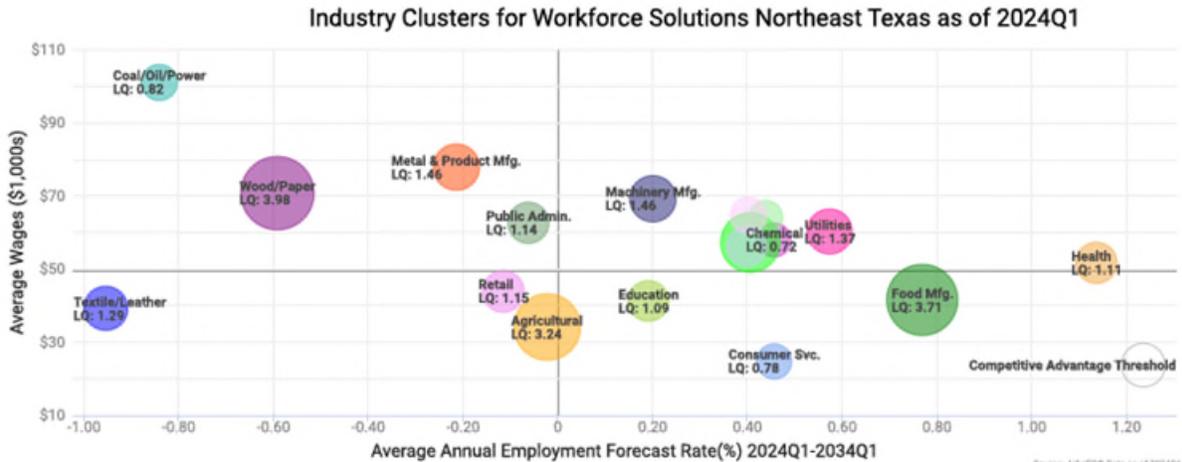
Industry Snapshot: The largest sector in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 20,451 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Manufacturing (19,823 workers) and Retail Trade (14,443). The Manufacturing industry gained the most jobs from 2020 to 2024, with an additional 1,629 jobs. The Construction Industry gained 1,108 jobs in that same timeframe. High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (LQ = 3.09), Manufacturing (1.96), and Utilities (1.28).

Sectors in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area with the highest average wages per worker are Management of Companies (\$94,020), Utilities (\$86,723), and Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$73,260). Over the next 5 years, employment in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area is projected to increase by 2,364 jobs. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Health Care and Social Assistance with a +1.1% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Health Care and Social Assistance (+1,189 jobs), Manufacturing (+274), and Construction (+162).

NAICS	Industry	Current			5-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	20,451	\$52,412	1.10	11,441	4,937	5,315	1,189	1.1%
31	Manufacturing	19,823	\$65,686	1.96	10,315	4,019	6,023	274	0.3%
44	Retail Trade	14,443	\$35,809	1.16	9,741	4,378	5,492	-128	-0.2%
61	Educational Services	11,239	\$43,903	1.11	5,401	2,603	2,699	98	0.2%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	11,061	\$20,719	1.01	9,975	4,423	5,395	158	0.3%
23	Construction	7,953	\$57,145	1.05	3,626	1,405	2,060	162	0.4%
92	Public Administration	6,155	\$64,128	1.05	2,805	1,246	1,578	-19	-0.1%
42	Wholesale Trade	5,286	\$67,187	1.11	2,690	1,074	1,600	16	0.1%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	5,253	\$30,860	0.98	3,114	1,319	1,703	92	0.3%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4,814	\$35,040	3.09	2,841	1,395	1,475	-28	-0.1%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,806	\$40,934	0.61	2,913	1,199	1,588	126	0.5%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	4,135	\$59,709	0.66	2,449	1,003	1,294	151	0.7%
52	Finance and Insurance	3,497	\$64,190	0.70	1,553	620	856	78	0.4%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,895	\$66,810	0.31	1,301	484	711	106	0.7%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,349	\$52,999	0.60	680	314	342	25	0.4%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	927	\$24,665	0.36	739	298	405	37	0.8%
22	Utilities	831	\$86,723	1.28	325	146	211	-31	-0.8%
51	Information	685	\$53,461	0.28	317	121	186	10	0.3%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	502	\$94,020	0.26	237	89	129	19	0.7%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	204	\$73,260	0.44	98	36	59	3	0.3%
99	Unclassified	76	\$40,765	0.32	44	19	24	1	0.4%
Total - All Industries		126,386	\$49,628	1.00	71,809	30,621	38,824	2,364	0.4%

Source: JobsEQ Data as of 2024Q1 (Economic Overview)

Industry Clusters: A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas with the highest relative concentration is Wood/Paper with a location quotient of 3.98. This cluster employs 3,748 workers in the region with an average wage of \$70,796. Employment in the Wood/Paper cluster is projected to contract in the region about 0.6% per year over the next ten years.



Location quotient and average wage data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, imputed where necessary, and updated through 2023Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2024Q1. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

Occupation Snapshot: The largest major occupation group in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is Office and Administrative Support Occupations, employing 13,595 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Production Occupations (12,679 workers) and Management Occupations (11,411). High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Production Occupations (LQ = 1.81), Management Occupations (LQ = 1.21), and Health Care Support (LQ = 1.18)

Occupation groups in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas with the highest average wages per worker are Legal Occupations (\$99,800), Management Occupations (\$94,000), and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (\$93,100). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 1.2% among Legal Occupations to 6.3% among Transportation and Material Moving Occupations.

Over the next 5 years, the fastest growing occupation group in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is expected to be Healthcare Support with a +1.7% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Healthcare Support Occupations (+587 jobs) and Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (+361). Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (10,314 jobs) and Office and Administrative Support Occupations (7,461).

SOC	Occupation	Current						1-Year History		5-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Mean Ann Wages ²	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ¹	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	13,595	\$41,600	0.89	512	3.6%	620	-79	-0.6%	7,125	3,502	3,959	-336	-0.5%
51-0000	Production	12,679	\$43,700	1.81	614	4.8%	253	80	0.6%	7,051	2,748	4,251	52	0.1%
11-0000	Management	11,411	\$94,000	1.21	202	1.8%	669	-23	-0.2%	5,027	2,267	2,528	232	0.4%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	11,404	\$42,300	1.03	792	6.3%	856	-26	-0.2%	7,714	2,992	4,361	361	0.6%
41-0000	Sales and Related	10,702	\$42,700	0.96	570	5.1%	1,221	-88	-0.8%	7,145	3,307	3,932	-95	-0.2%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	10,657	\$28,000	1.04	678	6.3%	847	386	3.8%	10,455	4,726	5,588	141	0.3%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	7,883	\$51,100	1.16	212	2.8%	285	-63	-0.8%	3,539	1,716	1,700	124	0.3%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	7,845	\$93,100	1.05	124	1.7%	2,108	183	2.4%	2,664	1,289	1,017	359	0.9%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	6,758	\$30,400	1.18	260	4.0%	532	-238	-3.4%	5,465	2,323	2,555	587	1.7%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	5,775	\$52,500	1.17	169	2.7%	436	10	0.2%	2,685	1,137	1,418	130	0.4%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	5,670	\$46,700	0.98	361	5.8%	190	151	2.7%	2,602	984	1,471	147	0.5%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	5,119	\$71,300	0.64	148	2.8%	324	98	1.9%	2,183	790	1,282	110	0.4%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	3,902	\$31,800	0.94	220	5.4%	211	-79	-2.0%	2,738	1,250	1,411	76	0.4%
33-0000	Protective Service	2,426	\$49,700	0.89	77	3.1%	163	-15	-0.6%	1,184	541	648	-5	0.0%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	2,271	\$31,200	0.72	114	4.6%	115	-122	-5.1%	2,014	776	1,156	82	0.7%
21-0000	Community and Social Service	1,930	\$52,400	0.84	57	3.2%	208	5	0.3%	966	390	478	99	1.0%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	1,724	\$88,500	0.43	47	2.4%	214	11	0.7%	634	204	333	96	1.1%

Source: JobsEQ (Economic Overview: Occupation Snapshot)

The Board collaborates with a variety of workforce partners to identify employment needs of the region's employer base, and respond proactively to those needs. To ensure training is available, staff continuously works with the Eligible Training Providers (ETP) providers to keep the training list relevant. If training for a particular occupation is not available in the region, the Board works to identify training providers and encourage them to become certified through the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPS). The Board also works closely with the College President's Roundtable, which includes the Executive Director for the Board and the Presidents of Texarkana College, Northeast Texas Community College, Paris Junior College, and Texas A&M University – Texarkana. The Roundtable acts as an Advisory Group to the Board regarding educational and training matters, and in turn the Board communicates business intelligence to the institutions. Each partner has a responsibility to share information regarding matters pertinent to industry and workforce education, support regional economic development efforts, and leverage available financial and non-financial resources to that end.

Board staff also participate in a number of advisory groups throughout the region, including the Sulphur Springs ISD Career and Technology (CTE) group, Texas High's STEM advisory group, Chapel Hill ISD's CTE advisory group, North Lamar ISD's CTE advisory group, and Texas A&M University Texarkana at NTCC's advisory group. These groups meet periodically to discuss the quality of existing programs and the need for additional training programs at both area high schools and community colleges. Staff are also in regular communication with the Region 8 Education Service Center, collaborating on many projects. Region 8 also invites Board staff to participate in meetings with high school counselors. Discussions during these meetings focus on student training needs and workforce readiness topics. The Board has supported the region's community colleges and school districts in Jobs and Education for

Texans (JET) grant applications. These grants provide funds to support the growth and expansion of training programs related to high demand occupations. The Board's support for these grants includes input on types of training and written support on each application. Since 2016, the region has received 17 JET grants, with an award total of \$3.99 million, with a total economic impact of \$27.37 million.

The Board also meets with the Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group on a regular basis. This advisory group includes Economic Development directors from the Northeast Texas region. Among other topics, the group discusses employer needs related to existing and potential training programs. Members of this group, along with the Board, have successfully applied for and received 9 High Demand Job Training Grants from the Texas Workforce Commission. These grants included a monetary commitment from EDC partners of \$842,000 matched with grant funds of \$842,000 for a total investment of \$1.684 million. These grants are designed to enhance or create training programs related to high demand jobs within the region. Local training programs impacted by these funds include CNC Machinist, Robotics, Welding, Aircraft Mechanics, Computer Networking, Construction, Automotive Technician Services, and Health Sciences. The Board will continue to rely on these resources of local information about employer needs to drive the creation of new training programs in the region.

The two largest industry sectors in Northeast Texas are Manufacturing and Health Care/Social Assistance. Both of these industries need a large number of workers at varying levels of skill.

- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas has strong partnerships with area manufacturing employers. Over the past year, the Board hosted a Manufacturing focused job fair at the Texarkana workforce center. Additional events are planned for the future. Additionally, the Board is in the process of expanding these partnerships through Industry Sector Advisory Groups. These industry sector advisory groups, including manufacturing, will allow the Board to strengthen employer partnerships and gather additional input on employer workforce needs. The Board also partners with economic development and post-secondary education to pursue grant funding to expand training opportunities for manufacturing. The High Demand Job Training grant has funded more than \$1 million in training equipment at the high school and community college level, with the majority of training programs focused on manufacturing. As manufacturing technology continues to move forward, employer training needs are changing. Modern manufacturing facilities require employees familiar with high technical equipment, such as robotics and automation. The Board has worked with area community colleges to share feedback from employers on their training needs. This communication helps education providers alter training programs to best meet the needs of local employers.
- Health Care has a wide variety of employment needs, but the largest need is in the area of nursing. There are a number of different levels of nursing within the health care industry, making it an excellent example of a career pathway. Nursing is one of the fastest growing occupation groups in the country and health care employers need skilled nurses across the entire spectrum, from Nursing Assistants to Registered Nurses. This career pathway allows job seekers to work towards and obtain an entry-level certification that will increase their chances of finding employment. While working, additional certifications can be added, improving their opportunities for advancement and increased wages.

Northeast Texas employers have a variety of workforce related needs. The main workforce concern for area employers is the number and availability of employable applicants. The Board and several area partners have introduced programs to address this issue. First, many ISD's have implemented workplace etiquette/behavior training throughout their curriculum. Additionally, community colleges require students to wear work attire and clock in for each class. These types of real-world scenarios help change the mindset of the future workforce. The Board continues to implement this type of information into

youth focused programs. The Board’s Career Coaches speak with high school students every day. Staff emphasize the need for technical skills, but also point out that employability and soft skills can be just as important.

The Board will continue to rely on two primary resources when analyzing workforce training programs in Northeast Texas. These two resources include labor market information and local knowledge. Board staff have multiple credible sources to gather labor market information. This information is regularly analyzed for changes in the local economy. In addition to this data, the Board requests local knowledge from employers, Independent School Districts, Community Colleges, Universities, Economic Development Corporations, Chambers of Commerce, and municipalities. The Board will continue to use labor market data and local knowledge to drive decisions about workforce training initiatives in Northeast Texas.

A list of the in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The Northeast Texas region is home to a number of strong industries that support economic stability and growth in the region. The industries the Board has identified include those that have a substantial current or projected economic impact. In-Demand industries also include those that provide self-sufficiency opportunities and opportunities for advancement. Demand industries include those with 10 year forecasted employment of at least 500, annual demand of 50+, and an average wage equal to or above the Board’s self-sufficiency wage level (\$34,255 annual). The Board has identified some of these demand industries as emerging industry sectors that have a strong potential to grow and diversify the regional economy. Emerging industries are those that do not have a large current employment number, but show the potential for growth over the next decade. The Board has identified Other Electrical Equipment and Component Manufacturing, Other Ambulatory Health Care Services, and Investigation and Security Services as emerging industries. These industries are expected to grow by at least 18.8% over the next 10 years. In discussions with local economic development professionals, these emerging industries also represent targets for growth and expansion in the region. The Board uses labor market information sources to compile data for this list, including TWC LMCI resources, JobsEQ, and Labor Insight. See demand industry file in appendices for full data set. The Board gathered feedback, through surveys, on the demand industries and occupations from several area partners, including secondary education, post-secondary education, economic development, community-based organizations, and private industry.

In-Demand Industries					
2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code (4-digit)	NAICS Industry Title	Annual Average Employment 2022	Annual Average Employment 2032	Number Change 2022 - 2032	Percent Growth 2022-2032
2373	Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction	638	693	55	8.6%
2382	Building Equipment Contractors	1,558	1,578	20	1.3%
2389	Other Specialty Trade Contractors	588	536	-52	-8.8%
322	Paper Manufacturing	1,849	1,813	-36	-1.9%
3329	Other Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing*	1,792	1,819	27	1.5%
3359	Other Electrical Equipment and Component Manufacturing*	152	210	58	38.2%
3362	Motor Vehicle Body and Trailer Manufacturing	3,601	3,789	188	5.2%
484	Truck Transportation	1330	1,594	264	19.8%
493	Warehousing and Storage	1112	1,251	139	12.5%
5415	Computer Systems Design and Related Services	425	552	127	29.9%
6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools	10,289	10,597	308	3.0%
6211	Offices of Physicians	2,227	2,526	299	13.4%
6213	Offices of Other Health Practitioners	587	699	112	19.1%
6214	Outpatient Care Centers	651	788	137	21.0%
6216	Home Health Care Services	4,160	4,325	165	4.0%
622	Hospitals	4,370	4,212	-158	-3.6%
8111	Automotive Repair and Maintenance	1,048	1,242	194	18.5%
6231	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	1868	1814	-54	-2.9%
3114	Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing	1175	1205	30	2.6%
4231	Motor Vehicle and Motor Vehicle Parts and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	1169	1331	162	13.9%
6112	Junior Colleges	930	936	6	0.6%
6219	Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	351	422	71	20.2%
5616	Investigation and Security Services	205	294	89	43.4%

Source: TWC Projections 2022-2032. *JobsEQ Projections 2024-2034

The Board has identified 54 in-demand occupations, displayed in the table below. The In-Demand Occupations list represents occupations in Northeast Texas with current employment of at least 300 or projected annual demand of at least 10, or current employment of 150, annual demand of at least 10, meets the Board's self-sufficiency wage of \$16.47 an hour, and has a training period within the Board's goal for education/training. Additional occupations may be included based on local wisdom. Board uses labor market information sources to compile data for this list, including TWC LMCI resources, JobsEQ, and Labor Insight. The Board used online surveys to outreach area employers, small businesses, economic development corporations, and chambers of commerce, for feedback on the demand occupation list. See demand occupation file for full data set.

In-Demand Occupations

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)	In-Demand Occupation Job Title	Annual Average Employment 2022	Annual Average Employment 2032	Number Change 2022–2032	Percent Change 2022–2032
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	3,515	3,841	326	9.3%
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	393	500	107	27.2%
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	515	541	26	5.0%
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	285	307	22	7.7%
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1,616	1,676	60	3.7%
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Technical Education	943	979	36	3.8%
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special a& Career/Technical Education	1,177	1,225	48	4.1%
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2,453	2,467	14	0.6%
29-1292	Dental Hygienists	121	142	21	17.4%
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	62	70	8	12.9%
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	250	276	26	10.4%
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technicians	187	201	14	7.5%
29-2043	Paramedics	161	176	15	9.3%
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	377	417	40	10.6%
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,148	1,204	56	4.9%
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	1,275	1,328	53	4.2%
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	135	153	18	13.3%
31-9091	Dental Assistants	222	259	37	16.7%
31-9092	Medical Assistants	488	570	82	16.8%
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	613	618	5	0.8%
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	965	1,201	236	24.5%
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	896	1,303	407	45.4%
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	1,149	1,280	131	11.4%
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,644	1,753	109	6.6%
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,585	1,629	44	2.8%
41-2011	Cashiers	3,196	3,265	69	2.2%
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	3,137	3,281	144	4.6%
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1,372	1,325	-47	-3.4%
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1,100	1,061	-39	-3.5%
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	1,707	1,673	-34	-2.0%
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	975	1,022	47	4.8%
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Execu	1,550	1,394	-156	-10.1%
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	1,764	1,682	-82	-4.6%
47-2061	Construction Laborers	1,017	1,043	26	2.6%
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	318	310	-8	-2.5%
47-2111	Electricians	559	584	25	4.5%
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	271	270	-1	-0.4%
49-3011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians *	85	80	-5	-5.9%
49-3021	Automotive Body and Related Repairers	175	200	25	14.3%
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	906	991	85	9.4%
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	280	306	26	9.3%
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	573	500	-73	-12.7%
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	262	277	15	5.7%
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	502	602	100	19.9%
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,513	1,563	50	3.3%
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	1,032	1,049	17	1.6%
51-4041	Machinists	296	307	11	3.7%
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1,907	2,031	124	6.5%
51-9161	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators	207	197	-10	-4.8%
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,129	2,382	253	11.9%
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	695	774	79	11.4%
53-7061	Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	408	461	53	13.0%
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,726	2,716	-10	-0.4%
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	2,408	2,564	156	6.5%

Source: TWC Projections 2022-2032. *JobsEQ data for Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians

Target Occupations					
Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Code (6-digit)	Target Occupation Job Title	Annual Average Employment 2022	Annual Average Employment 2032	Number Change 2022-2032	Percent Growth 2022-2032
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	515	541	26	5.0%
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	285	307	22	7.7%
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2453	2467	14	0.6%
29-1292	Dental Hygienists	121	142	21	17.4%
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	250	276	26	10.4%
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	377	417	40	10.6%
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1148	1204	56	4.9%
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	135	153	18	13.3%
31-9091	Dental Assistants	222	259	37	16.7%
31-9092	Medical Assistants	488	570	82	16.8%
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	613	618	5	0.8%
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1100	1061	-39	-3.5%
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	318	310	-8	-2.5%
47-2111	Electricians	559	584	25	4.5%
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	271	270	-1	-0.4%
49-3021	Automotive Body and Related Repairers	175	200	25	14.3%
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	906	991	85	9.4%
49-3031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	280	306	26	9.3%
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	573	500	-73	-12.7%
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	262	277	15	5.7%
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	502	602	100	19.9%
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1513	1563	50	3.3%
51-4041	Machinists	296	307	11	3.7%
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1907	2031	124	6.5%
51-9161	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators	207	197	-10	-4.8%
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2129	2382	253	11.9%
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1616	1676	60	3.7%
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Technical Education	943	979	36	3.8%
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Technical Education	1177	1225	48	4.1%
29-2043	Paramedics	161	176	15	9.3%
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technicians	187	201	14	7.5%
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	62	70	8	12.9%
49-3011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians *	85	80	-5	-5.9%

Source: TWC Projections 2022-2032. *JobsEQ data for Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians

A list of the target occupations.

The target occupations are identified as a priority for the Board and the region. The target occupations are training priorities and authorized for WIOA funding expenditures. As funding allows, the Board will partner with Eligible Training Providers and employers to fund training and work experience activities associated with target occupations. The Board will also explore additional grant funding to support training activities associated with target occupations. The Board has set criteria for the region's target occupations lists. This criterion is identified as an occupation with a mean hourly wage of \$16.47 (self-sufficiency wage level for Northeast Texas) per hour or more, a combined job growth and replacement total of at least 10 per year, current employment of at least 150, and a training period within the Board's goal for education or on-the-job training (OJT). Local wisdom is used to include occupations that do not meet one or more of these requirements. The Board used online surveys to outreach area employers, small businesses, economic development corporations, and chambers of commerce, for feedback on the target occupation list.

Data is gathered by identifying the targeted industries for the region and using both Texas LMI and JobsEQ to identify occupations within those industries. A filter was applied for mean hourly wage, anticipated growth and replacement rates, and training preferences. There were a few exceptions to the filtering criteria, which can be explained by looking at the current job postings for the area using Lightcast or by applying local wisdom.

The Board gathers local wisdom in a variety of ways. Board staff maintain communications with workforce center management and the Business Service Unit (BSU) team members. BSU maintains constant contact with employers and gathers information from them during employer visits and job fair events. The Board is a member of multiple chambers of commerce in the region and the Board hosts advisory group meetings of economic developers from across the region. Board staff and BSU staff collaborate when needed to identify training needs for a particular occupation within the region. In the development of the target occupation list, the Board gathered feedback, through surveys, on the demand industries and occupations from several area partners, including secondary education, post-secondary education, economic development, community-based organizations, and private industry. See separate Target Occupation file for full data set.

Knowledge and Skills Analysis: An analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.

Texas Career Check, an Internet-based analysis tool created by the TWC Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) staff, tabulates the knowledge, skills, and abilities appearing most often in the profiles of detailed work activities (DWAs) for groups of occupations, weighted by regional employment.

The following table shows the top ten prime knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) most commonly required for the targeted occupations and industries in Northeast Texas. The number in parentheses next to each KSA denotes the number of times it appears in the target occupation list. The KSAs for Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics is not listed within the labor market analytic.

Prime Knowledge	Prime Skills	Prime Abilities
English Language (23)	Monitoring (31)	Oral Comprehension (31)
Customer and Personal Service (23)	Speaking (29)	Problem Sensitivity (31)
Mathematics (20)	Critical Thinking (29)	Near Vision (31)
Computers and Electronics (18)	Active Listening (28)	Oral Expression (30)
Mechanical (16)	Time Management (27)	Information Ordering (30)
Public Safety and Security (15)	Complex Problem Solving (24)	Deductive Reasoning (30)
Education and Training (14)	Judgement & Decision Making (24)	Speech Recognition (28)
Administration and Management (13)	Reading Comprehension (21)	Selective Attention (28)
Administrative (11)	Coordination (19)	Inductive Reasoning (28)
Psychology (9)	Active Learning (19)	Written Comprehension (27)

The following table shows the top ten prime knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) most commonly required for the demand occupations in Northeast Texas. The Board has 54 in-demand occupations. The number in parentheses next to each KSA denotes the number of times it appears in the target occupation list.

Prime Knowledge	Prime Skills	Prime Abilities
English Language (52)	Active Listening (54)	Oral Comprehension (54)
Customer and Personal Service (48)	Speaking (52)	Oral Expression (52)
Administration and Management (45)	Critical Thinking (50)	Problem Sensitivity (50)
Clerical (40)	Reading Comprehension (48)	Deductive Reasoning (48)
Mathematics (38)	Monitoring (45)	Inductive Reasoning (45)
Computers and Electronics (35)	Coordination (43)	Written Comprehension (43)
Education and Training (32)	Social Perceptiveness(40)	Speech Clarity (40)
Psychology (30)	Time Management (38)	Near Vision (38)
Public Safety and Security (28)	Judgement and Decision Making (36)	Information Ordering (36)
Medicin and Dentistry (25)	Service Orientation (34)	Speech Recognition (34)

The KSA analysis shows both a number of similarities and differences across the region’s demand industries/occupations and target occupations. The region’s demand industries range from manufacturing, healthcare, construction, warehousing/logistics, and information technology. While the specific training needs of these industries vary, there are a number of KSA’s that benefit all employers and workers. The Board coordinates with employers, training providers, and other workforce partners to better understand the employment needs in Northeast Texas. The one recurring theme from all of these discussions is the need for soft skills/employability skills and the seeming decline in these areas over the past 20 years. Employers need workers who show up on time, communicate effectively, make decisions, think critically, and listen, among others. In addition to soft skills, the KSA list also reveals a number of technical skills important to employers and workers in Northeast Texas. These skills are more industry dependent than the soft skills in the lists. Manufacturing is driven by technology and machinery, and therefore understanding how the equipment works and how to repair machinery is paramount. Healthcare employers and workers must have a solid foundation of patient care, but must also stay informed on policy changes on safety and patient information. Information technology companies and employees must be knowledgeable of the seemingly daily changes in the industry, while ensuring cyber security is top of mind. The Board will continue to communicate with employers, training providers, and other community partners to ensure area training is meeting employer, job seeker, and worker needs.

The list below is a definition of each Knowledge, Skill and Ability based on the Targeted Occupations:
 Prime Knowledge:

- English Language — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Customer and Personal Service — Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
- Mathematics — Knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.
- Computers and Electronics — Knowledge of circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware and software, including applications and programming.
- Mechanical — Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
- Public Safety and Security — Knowledge of relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.
- Education and Training — Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.
- Administration and Management — Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
- Administrative — Knowledge of administrative and office procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and workplace terminology.
- Psychology — Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.

Prime Skills:

- Monitoring — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- Speaking — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- Critical Thinking — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- Active Listening — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- Time Management — Managing one's own time and the time of others.
- Complex Problem Solving — Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
- Judgment and Decision Making — Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
- Reading Comprehension — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
- Coordination — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- Active Learning — Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.

Prime Abilities:

- Oral Comprehension — The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- Problem Sensitivity — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing that there is a problem.
- Near Vision — The ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
- Oral Expression — The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
- Information Ordering — The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).
- Deductive Reasoning — The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
- Speech Recognition — The ability to identify and understand the speech of another person.
- Selective Attention — The ability to concentrate on a task over a period of time without being distracted.
- Inductive Reasoning — The ability to combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).
- Written Comprehension — The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.

2. B. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

Boards must include an analysis of the regional workforce, including:

- *current labor force employment and unemployment data;*
- *information on labor market trends; and*
- *the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.*

In the last five years the Northeast Texas region has seen a balancing of their labor force. We have had gains and losses since 2019, however the region is showing stability and growth. Comparing five-year growth on a monthly basis in 2024, you can see a growth of the Labor Force and Employment throughout the year. In September 2024, the Labor Force increased 3,361 people and Employment grew by 2,811. The Northeast Texas workforce largely concentrated into 5 industries, which account for 61% of total employment: Health Care and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Education Services, and Accommodation and Food Services. Average annual wages for the region are \$49,628, with the following industries having a higher average annual wage: Mining, Wholesale Trade, Professional/Scientific/Technical Services, Manufacturing, Finance/Insurance, Public Administration, Utilities, Transportation/Warehousing, Construction, Management of Companies/Enterprises, and Health Care/Social Assistance.

Labor Force							
	September 19	September 20	September 21	September 22	September 23	September 24	YOY Change
Northeast Texas	123,179	123,793	125,485	124,322	124,561	126,540	1,979
Bowie	39,430	38,897	38,955	38,378	38,513	39,089	576
Cass	12,304	12,361	12,388	11,939	12,070	12,239	169
Delta	2,428	2,423	2,464	2,521	2,527	2,551	24
Franklin	4,618	4,846	5,202	5,301	5,057	5,110	53

Hopkins	17,448	17,656	18,084	18,289	19,043	19,753	710
Lamar	24,052	24,087	24,621	24,368	23,935	24,039	104
Morris	4,813	4,875	4,626	4,521	4,605	4,703	98
Red River	5,080	5,245	5,413	5,114	4,987	4,931	-56
Titus	13,006	13,403	13,732	13,891	13,824	14,125	301

Data from TexasLMI.com LAUS Report

The Northeast Texas labor force has grown significantly in the last year. This is a great sign for the region, as it means more people are returning to the labor force and/or workers are moving to the region. Employment has also grown significantly during that time. Economic development efforts across the region are extremely positive and active. New employers are moving to the area, and existing employers have the resources available to grow their business and workforce.

Employment							
	September 19	September 20	September 21	September 22	September 23	September 24	YOY Change
Northeast Texas	118,470	115,427	118,902	118,986	119,422	121,281	1,859
Bowie	37,738	36,147	36,878	36,630	36,930	37,422	492
Cass	11,784	11,360	11,672	11,412	11,504	11,636	132
Delta	2,344	2,296	2,346	2,416	2,417	2,450	33
Franklin	4,459	4,595	4,987	5,114	4,841	4,911	70
Hopkins	16,944	16,762	17,349	17,669	18,430	19,110	680
Lamar	23,272	22,583	23,299	23,328	22,956	23,103	147
Morris	4,569	4,239	4,211	4,252	4,331	4,419	88
Red River	4,852	4,927	5,112	4,858	4,747	4,702	-45
Titus	12,508	12,518	13,048	13,277	13,266	13,528	262

Data from TexasLMI.com

Unemployment levels peaked in 2020, during the Covid pandemic. Employment has exceeded pre-pandemic levels in most counties. A large increase in unemployment occurred for Morris County in 2020 due to Lone Star Steel closing, which was a major source of employment in that area. The county is recovering and has reduced their unemployment by more than 50%, but it still remains the highest in the region. Overall, the region shows a large return to the employment and labor participation that previously made the region strong.

Unemployment Rate							
	September 19	September 20	September 21	September 22	September 23	September 24	YOY Change
Northeast Texas	3.8	6.8	5.2	4.3	4.1	4.2	0.1
Bowie	4.3	7.1	5.3	4.6	4.1	4.3	0.2
Cass	4.2	8.1	5.8	4.4	4.7	4.9	0.2
Delta	3.5	5.2	4.8	4.2	4.4	4.0	-0.4
Franklin	3.4	5.2	4.1	3.5	4.3	3.9	-0.4
Hopkins	2.9	5.1	4.1	3.2	3.2	3.3	0.1

Lamar	3.2	6.2	5.4	4.3	4.1	3.9	-0.2
Morris	5.1	13.0	9.0	6	6.0	6.0	0.0
Red River	4.5	6.1	5.6	5.0	4.8	4.6	-0.2
Titus	3.8	6.6	5.0	4.4	4.0	4.2	0.2

Data from TexasLMI.com

Educational levels in Northeast Texas indicate areas of strengths and weaknesses for a regional workforce. It is essential for Northeast Texas to have an educated workforce. Increasing the number of degree and certificate completers will have a significant impact on the regional economy. The table below represents percentages and numbers of highest achieved level of education. Updates from the education report between 2019 and 2024, include increases in the percentage (2% increase) and number of people (+1,784) in Northeast Texas who achieved either a degree (Associate’s, Bachelor’s or Postgraduate). This suggests an increase in the overall education of the region. Degree completion is extremely important to the local workforce, as the area aims to increase the overall level of education. Northeast Texas residents with an Associate’s Degree is now at 11,723 compared to 10,937 in 2019, an increase of 786. Total degree completions went from 37,091 in 2019 to 38,875, a gain of 1,784.

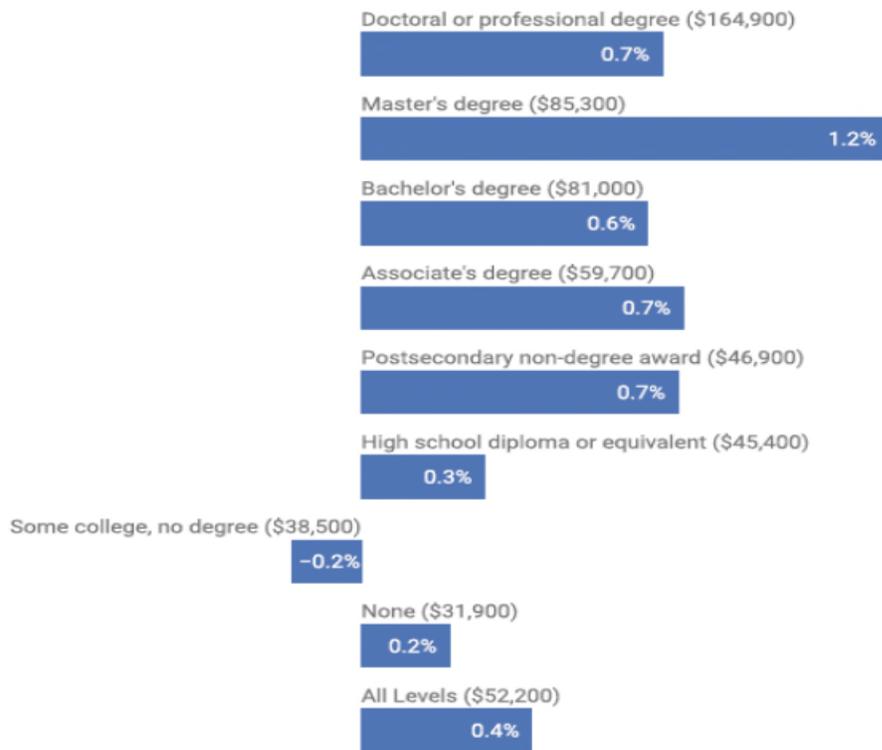
	Percent			Value		
	Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	Texas	USA	Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	Texas	USA
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64						
No High School Diploma	12.3%	13.9%	10.1%	16,804	2,103,422	17,373,867
High School Graduate	36.2%	24.1%	25.1%	49,468	3,653,228	43,176,248
Some College, No Degree	23.1%	20.9%	19.7%	31,612	3,158,279	33,916,989
Associate's Degree	8.6%	7.9%	9.2%	11,723	1,199,146	15,886,884
Bachelor's Degree	13.8%	21.7%	22.4%	18,868	3,281,456	38,451,123
Postgraduate Degree	6.1%	11.5%	13.4%	8,284	1,746,440	23,058,233

All Data from Jobs EQ – Demographic Profile

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas, in partnership with area education institutions fully support the 60x30TX plan from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The 60x30TX plan calls for 60% of Texas residents aged 25-34 to have a degree or credential by the year 2030. The Board and education partners participated in a local outreach campaign to increase awareness about the importance of these goals. The Board will continue to champion area training providers as an affordable opportunity to earn a degree or certificate. The overall increase in both Associate’s Degrees and Bachelor’s Degrees is an excellent indicator of progress towards the 60X30TX goals for the region and the state. Although these numbers indicate positive results in several areas, there is definitely room for improvement in the pursuit of a more educated workforce in Northeast Texas. Northeast Texas still has a lower percentage of people with a Bachelor’s Degree and Postgraduate Degree than Texas. Conversely Northeast Texas has a higher rate of High School Graduates, Some College and Associate’s Degree than Texas and higher than the US percentage of High School Graduates and Some College. The Board will continue to work with area education partners to support new training programs and methods that increase the odds of degree completion.

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in Northeast Texas is projected to grow 0.4% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 0.7% per year, those requiring a bachelor’s degree are forecast to grow 0.6% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 0.7% per year. The largest growth seems to be the Master’s Degree. This is a good sign for the economic growth of the region. These occupations will typically pay more, creating a more significant impact on the local economy. This chart is a great visualization for the importance of post-secondary training in Northeast Texas and the success of the regional economy.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Education Levels



Source: JobsEQ®
Data as of 2024Q1

The Board uses labor market information to analyze a number of regional socioeconomic factors. Many of these factors are related to individuals with barriers to employment, as defined by WIOA. The Northeast Texas region’s percentage of people living below the poverty level is higher than percentages for both Texas and the USA. Additionally, the area’s percentage of households receiving SNAP benefits is also higher. The Board is in a good position to assist people in these categories, as many of them are in contact with workforce center staff on a regular basis. The Northeast Texas region is also home to a higher percentage of people with disabilities, as compared to Texas and the USA. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff and services are now fully integrated into the Northeast Texas workforce centers. In addition to referrals between contractor and VR staff, the contract also employs a Student HireAbility Navigator. The Student HireAbility Navigator position is designed to support students with disabilities who are preparing to transition to post-secondary education or employment.

	Percent			Value		
	Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	Texas	USA	Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	Texas	USA
Social						
Poverty Level (of all people)	16.5%	13.9%	12.5%	44,558	3,990,326	40,521,584
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	12.2%	11.5%	11.5%	12,977	1,209,485	14,486,880
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.5%	1.5%	1.4%	4,110	433,670	4,476,703
Disconnected Youth ³	3.0%	3.0%	2.5%	420	50,502	430,795
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children)	37.4%	34.1%	34.0%	23,263	2,400,195	23,568,955
Uninsured	16.8%	17.6%	8.7%	45,495	5,056,008	28,315,092
With a Disability, Age 18-64	13.3%	9.7%	10.5%	20,595	1,710,522	20,879,820
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size	38.2%	49.8%	45.5%	7,872	851,439	9,492,098
Foreign Born	6.5%	17.1%	13.7%	18,274	4,987,855	45,281,071
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	4.4%	13.0%	8.2%	11,609	3,538,224	25,704,846
Source: JobsEQ®						
1. American Community Survey 2018-2022, unless noted otherwise						
2. Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.						
3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.						
4. Census Population Estimate for 2023, annual average growth rate since 2013.						
5. The Census's method for calculating median house values changed with the 2022 data set, so pre-2022 values are not directly comparable with later data.						
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2.C. Workforce Development Analysis

Boards must include an analysis of:

- *workforce development activities in the region, including education and training;*
- *the strengths and weaknesses of the Board's workforce development activities;*
- *the effectiveness of the Board's programs and services;*
- *the Board's capacity to provide workforce development activities to address;*
 - > the identified education and skills needs of the workforce; and*
 - > the employment needs of employers.*

Workforce development activities are the building blocks of a cohesive and thriving local economy. The role of Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is to foster the strength and growth of the symbiotic employer and job seeker relationship, by the utilization of programs designed to prepare the current and emerging workforce for the future. As each program has unique strengths and weaknesses, this information is provided under each activity description. These activities include:

Workshops: Designed for universal job seekers wishing to enhance self-marketing skills. Topics include resume writing, interviewing skills, applications, financial literacy, guide to employment for ex-offenders, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and an overview of WorkinTexas.com. While the available trainings may not appeal to all job seekers, the topics do address the issues relayed by employers as the most problematic areas often seen in the hiring process. In addition to the in-person workshops offered at the workforce centers, the Board has developed virtual workshop alternatives. Virtual workshops are offered via recorded videos, available on the Board's website. Strengths of these workshops include the virtual option for participants to utilize on their own time. However, changing information within the virtual workshops can be staff intensive and complicated. Another strength is the variety of workshops offered, however low attendance can result in a lower return on time invested.

Work Experience: for WIOA Adult, WIOA Youth, and Choices customers. It is intended for customers with little or no actual work experience to gain hands-on work related skills while also earning a wage. Additionally, it may be beneficial to individuals who have been out of work for an extended period of time, such as those listed above. Work Experience is a very time limited activity and can therefore only provide basic instruction, however it offers the opportunity for invaluable soft skills training many customers desperately need. Issues revolving around soft skills are some of the most frequently discussed

by local employers; therefore, work experience is also quite beneficial to area employers looking for experienced and work ready staff. Alternatively, there are some negative aspects to the program. Employers are under no obligation to hire the individuals at the completion of the assigned hours, so many times the participants must continue to job search upon completion. However, since participants are now armed with soft skills and in most cases some transferable skills, employability of the individual is greatly enhanced. This activity is used heavily in the Choices program and its success is evidenced by Choices participation rates in recent years.

On-the-Job Training (OJT): for WIOA Adult, WIOA Youth, WIOA Dislocated Workers, and Choices customers. Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas has a robust OJT program that assists both employers and job seekers simultaneously. It allows job seekers to gain employment in a field with little or no experience, while allowing employers to offset the extraordinary cost of training new employees. OJT is a viable and essential program for individuals who may not be inclined to function well in traditional classroom instruction or for those who need to return to work quickly and are unable to devote the time to a lengthy training program. While OJT does offer valuable experience and transferable skills, the narrow focus of the training may be more limited in scope than and not as marketable as a traditional occupational or vocational training program. However, the program is a perfect fit for those customers who need to earn money right away while acquiring new skills. A strength of the program is the success rate, with more than 80% of participants completing the training period and maintaining employment with the company.

Job Shadowing: For WIOA Youth, job shadowing allows a youth customer to explore future career options before pursuing employment in a particular occupation or industry. The idea of a specific job can differ greatly from its reality; therefore, job shadowing is designed to bring the reality to the forefront so the youth can make an informed decision about the future. Since much of the service area is rural, virtual job shadowing will also be utilized to offer the widest range of options available. It may also be beneficial to youth who have particular barriers to employment such as offenders, and those who are basic skills deficient to help them establish and reach realistic goals. Job shadowing is very limited in duration, and is not designed to be a full view of all available career paths, but rather should be used as a tool for in-depth career exploration, stacked with other activities to provide a well-rounded career planning experience. The Board's virtual job shadowing platform, allows students to explore a large number of careers in a small amount of time.

Vocational and Occupational Skills Training: For WIOA Adults, WIOA Youth, WIOA Dislocated Workers, SNAP E&T, and TANF/Choices customers. These services are provided through a partnering institution such as a local community college or trade school and are designed to assist customers with the attainment of skills and credentials in demand occupations. These training programs are the best pipeline of qualified labor for positions requiring specialized skills or credentialing. The Board works with training partners to identify and provide new courses and curriculum as the local market dictates. These training programs offer the best labor pipeline for many of the industries in demand in Northeast Texas. The Board also utilizes the Metrix Learning online training platform as a method for WIOA customers to learn new skills. Metrix Learning offers more than 5000 courses, available at no cost to eligible workforce customers in Texas. Staff work with WIOA customers to identify career and training interests, and then assist customers in signing up for related courses. Metrix Learning offers an online training option that customers can complete on their own timeline and pace. The strengths of occupations skills training is evident by the Board's consistent achievement of statewide performance measures such as credential attainment, measurable skills gain, enrolled/employed q2/q4 post exit, as well as median earnings of exiters. Occupational and vocational skills training is the most utilized service offered to eligible customers, and the one with the most impact on the individual. Conversely, it can be difficult, especially for dislocated workers to enter into a long-term training program that might eliminate their ability to work full time and maintain adequate participation in the chosen course of study. However,

these programs are life-changing and can exponentially increase the earning potential of an individual, especially in a rural area with limited employment options.

Early Childhood Education: Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas believes preparing an educated and skilled workforce starts in the area's child care centers. The heart of child care quality improvement lies within proper training for directors and teachers. Proper training, even if it is repetitive, encourages child care professionals to implement quality practices in their centers and classrooms. Although training is paramount, child care centers must also have the proper tools to create successful learning environments. The Board provides monthly trainings for child care providers and staff, as well as creative and fun activities to aid teachers with curriculum implementation. The training provided is for children birth to kindergarten as well as after school activities for school age students. Pre-K curriculum is a main focus for training to help prepare children to be school ready when they enter the public education system. All training provided ensures child care staff and directors meet the required number of training hours to maintain licensing requirements. It can be difficult to find available dates and times for the trainings that accommodate the busy schedules of the owners, directors, and teachers. Typically, these trainings must be conducted after business hours and on weekends, requiring multiple sessions so everyone can attend. However, the board recently transitioned to conducting most trainings via Zoom which has eliminated some of the barriers to attendance. The strength of these training programs is evident as the participating providers in the region are rarely sanctioned for lack of training or insufficient curriculum. As child care provider workers are at different levels of experience and knowledge, it can be challenging to make trainings relevant to everyone.

K-12 Students: The Board has several programs and initiatives related to K-12 students. In past years, the Board has hosted career exploration events for eight grade students and high school seniors. During the 2023 and 2024, the Board hosted a new event for high school juniors. The FLY, or Financial Literacy for Youth, combined career exploration with a financial literacy simulation. The FLY event included employer panel discussions with representatives from manufacturing, health care, information technology, and public service. Students also participated in a financial literacy simulation, that starts with them selecting a career. After the selection, they are provided information on that career, including the average annual wages, typical education, current job openings, and career pathway options. Students then made several financial decisions on housing, transportation, meals, insurance, entertainment, and other options. At the end of the financial simulation, students met individually with a staff member to go over their expenses, and if they went over budget, discussed alternative decisions they could have made to stay within budget. A strength of the FLY event is the relevant information provided by local employers. However, a weakness, is the way in which the information is provided does not always engage students of this age. The Board is exploring ways to make this information more exciting and engaging for students.

Pathways to College and Careers: The Board's Pathways to College and Careers program places workforce staff in several school districts across the region. The Board has identified a number of partner schools, who have signed agreements for participation in the program. Career Coaches spend time at each of their partner schools. Services include one-on-one sessions with students to discuss career interests and local employment opportunities. Also, these staff make group presentations to classes about labor market information, career resources, post-secondary training programs, financial aid, and workforce services, among others. These staff members have also developed workshops for students on FASFA, Resume Creation, and Interviewing. The program has been very successful and well received based on feedback provided by administrative staff. The Career Coaches also have a number of Virtual Reality headsets to use with students, that provide virtual exploration of several different careers. They also make special presentations with the VR headsets to non-partner schools and at Board events such as LEAP and Future Forward. Career coaches also assist schools with job fairs and career exploration events. These staff members have expanded their network beyond the partner schools, and are offering presentations to

students throughout the region. A strength of this program includes the ability for career coaches to work with the same students over time. This allows the career coaches to better understand the student's needs related to workforce information and training plans. This regular communication allows the career coaches to help students develop plans and regularly monitor the progress on those plans. The weakness of this program is the low number of dedicated staff. Due to limited funds, the Board only has two career coaches covering the nine-county region, and trying to reach as many students as possible. Additional funding would make this program more impactful.

Employers: The Board and Contracted Service Provider staff work together to gather feedback on the training and employment needs of employers in Northeast Texas. Feedback is gathered through face-to-face meetings, advisory group meetings, customer surveys, and job fair events. Specific employer needs vary; however, a universal need is a workforce that is equally competent in both soft skills and technical skills. In many cases, employers need workers with a solid foundation in technical skills, willing to learn business-specific processes. These needs are confirmed by the projected growth of occupations in the region and the corresponding education requirements. The majority of job growth in the area will require, at a minimum, a technical certificate. Employers also need a way to upgrade worker skills to match technological and process changes. The Board provides information on the local incumbent worker training funds available to areas employers. The Board also provides information on the state's Skills Development Fund and Skills for Small Business to the employer community, as a way to upgrade new and incumbent worker skills. The strength of the employer programs is evidenced through the continued involvement and support of local employers by participation in events such as job fairs and youth expos, as well as acting as training sites for work experience and on-the-job training. Additionally, the Board consistently meets or exceeds state performance measures such as Employer Workforce Assistance. The Board has been and will continue to be a successful focal point for bringing community stakeholders together to expand and advance the economic development of the region. There are also challenges to identifying and responding to employer needs. Employer needs are fluid, and staff members at those locations also change. The Board must continuously communicate with employers to gather information on their needs and develop relationships with new employer contacts.

The Northeast Texas Board consistently demonstrates a strong capacity to meet both the education needs of the workforce and the workforce demands of employers through a wide range of innovative programs. By leveraging data analysis and strategic partnerships, the Board effectively aligns its services with regional needs. Collaborations with educators, employers, economic development organizations, and other stakeholders play a vital role in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of workforce development activities.

Regular communication with area school districts and community colleges allows the Board to stay informed about the state of education and the needs of students preparing to enter the workforce. These discussions, combined with input from employers, provide valuable insights that enhance the Board's ability to design and deliver impactful services for both job seekers and businesses.

Despite its successes, the Board faces challenges related to scalability, engagement, and program duration. Addressing these issues by securing additional funding, increasing outreach efforts, and introducing more flexible program options will further strengthen the Board's impact. Continued collaboration to align training initiatives with employer requirements and provide comprehensive support for job seekers will be essential to achieving sustained success for individuals and employers across the region.

Part 3: Core Programs

3.A: *Workforce Development System:* *Boards must describe how the local workforce development system will work with entities carrying out core and required partner programs to support alignment to aid in the provision of services that support the strategies identified in TWC's WIOA Combined State Plan.*

The Board is committed to delivering exceptional service to job seekers, employers, and the Northeast Texas community. By aligning with the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan, the Board collaborates closely with various entities to provide core and required partner programs. This alignment ensures comprehensive, streamlined service provision for diverse workforce needs across the region. Core programs offered include, but are not limited to:

- WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs
- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) /Choices
- SNAP Employment & Training (E&T)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Child Care Services
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Adult Education and Literacy Programs
- Employment Services
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Services
- Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program
- Veteran Employment and Training Programs – Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER)
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs
- Reintegration of Offenders Programs
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEEP)

Coordination and Service Delivery

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas service provider administers key programs, including WIOA, Child Care Services, TANF, SNAP, RESEA, and TAA. Workforce centers, operated in collaboration with program partners, provide extensive services to both job seekers and employers. Programs not directly operated by the Board are delivered through referrals and close partnerships with external providers.

Collaborations Include:

- Adult Education and Literacy Providers: Frequent communications and referrals to providers, including the Red River Valley Adult Education Consortium and Texarkana College, facilitate co-

enrollment where possible. Labor market insights are shared to inform training for in-demand careers.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Co-location with vocational rehabilitation staff ensures customers receive coordinated services. Programs like the Summer Earn and Learn, providing work experiences for students with disabilities, exemplify the Board's commitment to inclusive employment services.
- Veteran Services: With support from the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), the Board helps eligible veterans access resources to support career transitions and job search efforts.
- Texas Workforce Commission Programs: Collaboration with TWC supports UI, RESEA, TAA, and migrant/seasonal farmworker services, ensuring resources and training align with TWC standards.
- Additional partners:
 - Reintegration of Offenders Programs: Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is actively partnering with the Texas Workforce Commission and the Federal Correctional Institution Texarkana to implement the Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD) grant. This initiative focuses on engaging individuals while they are still incarcerated, developing employment plans, and connecting them with resources to support successful reintegration upon release. The Board also collaborates with county judges and sheriff's offices across Northeast Texas to promote employment opportunities for justice-involved individuals.
 - Community Services Block Grant (CSBG): Community Services of Northeast Texas, Inc. serves as the designated CSBG provider for the region. Workforce Solutions maintains open communication with the organization to coordinate resources and support for shared customers. Both entities engage in mutual referrals to ensure individuals receive comprehensive assistance.
 - Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP): The Board works closely with the local SCSEP provider to identify and refer eligible individuals for participation in the program. Additionally, workforce centers occasionally serve as host sites for SCSEP participants, offering meaningful work-based learning experiences in supportive environments.

Job Seeker Services:

- Information relating to support services for employment, including child care and transportation
- Career, employment and labor market information
- Resume writing templates and support materials
- Job readiness training and workshops including interview skills, proper work attire, interacting with customers and co-workers, attendance expectations, and resume writing
- Soft skills
- Internet job search
- Career and skill assessment tools and services
- Information on financial aid for occupational and vocational training
- An expanded scope of services and training available to eligible jobseekers and workers through partner programs.

- Financial literacy training

Employer Services:

- Assistance in finding employees, including instructions on how to provide quality job postings resulting in matches with the most qualified workers.
- Interview facilities at local workforce center offices.
- Labor market information.
- Rapid response to mass layoffs and business closings.
- Onsite and customized hiring events
- Information about training and hiring incentives such as on-the-job training programs, Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC), and Fidelity Bonding

Regional Partnerships

By partnering with economic development entities, chambers of commerce, educational institutions, and other stakeholders, the Board amplifies workforce development efforts. These partnerships enhance access to training and support services, strengthen career and technical education, and improve pathways to career success. The Board will work to fulfill the following goals:

- Collaborate with local employers to determine current and future needs while identifying training opportunities in the region.
- Maintain a strong partnership with the Region 8 Education Service Center to determine strategies to best acquaint local school districts with the labor market and career information. In addition, the Board's Pathways to College and Careers (PC2) program will continue to connect middle and high school students as well as parents with information on career opportunities and educational requirements for high growth, high demand occupations.
- Continue to provide industry tours for Career and Technology teachers.
- Work with the Business Services unit to explore industries to highlight for local students.
- Explore opportunities for providing industry tours for high school seniors.
- Increase internship opportunities.
- Ensure school guidance counselors and teachers have current labor market information about high growth and in-demand career options.
- Continue to have Pathful's career videos available for all school districts through the PC2 program.
- Identify and promote youth college and career fairs throughout the region.
- Continue to expand youth exploration events, including the Financial Literacy for Youth (FLY) event for high school juniors. Continue to improve the Board's Pathways to College and Careers (PC2) program, designed to connect high school students directly with career and/or training information in the Northeast Texas area.
- Expand the Teachers Externship Program as funding allows.
- Use the Board's website and social media presence to promote information on career pathways.

Aligned with TWC's strategic direction, the Board's co-location and franchise service delivery model ensure consistent service quality across all workforce centers in Northeast Texas. Through these partnerships, the Board enhances service efficiency, enabling uniform support for diverse workforce needs.

3.B: Core Programs—Expand Access, Facilitate Development, and Improve Access: *Each Board must include a description of how the Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:*

- *expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;*
- *facilitate the development of career pathways and coenrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and*
- *improve access to activities that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential (such as an industry-recognized certificate or certification) that is portable and stackable.*

Expanding Access to Employment, Training, Education, and Support Services

The Board is dedicated to working with entities that facilitate core programs to expand access for all eligible individuals, including those facing employment barriers, to the services and support they need for meaningful workforce participation. Key partners include the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Contracted Service Provider, Texarkana College Adult Education and Literacy, the Red River Valley Adult Education Consortium, and Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation. Together, these entities focus on delivering comprehensive, accessible services to enhance workforce development across the region.

Strategies for expanding access include:

- Enhance Accessibility Through Technology: The Board continues to invest in updated technology within Workforce Centers, expanding service access in resource rooms and through self-service options for job seekers.
- Partnership Development: The Board collaborates with nonprofits, social service agencies, and community colleges to reach and serve individuals with specific employment barriers, such as those with limited work history or prior incarceration.
- Support for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals: Through initiatives like the PROWD grant, the Board provides tailored services to reduce recidivism by offering career pathway guidance and employment resources. This includes collaboration with local correctional facilities and events focused on educating employers on the value of hiring these individuals.
- Rural Outreach: The Board is committed to strengthening services in rural counties, ensuring resources are accessible across all parts of Northeast Texas.
- Improving Virtual Service Options: To expand access, the Board is enhancing virtual service delivery through video conferencing, digital transaction tools, and online workshops.

- Adult Education Collaboration: The Board works closely with Adult Education providers to facilitate cross-referrals, presentations, and job search support for adult learners, helping them gain the skills needed to enter or re-enter the workforce.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership: Co-location with vocational rehabilitation services at Workforce Centers in Texarkana, Paris, and Sulphur Springs facilitates a one-stop approach for customers, especially those with disabilities.

Facilitating Career Pathways and Co-enrollment in Core Programs

The Board is dedicated to creating and supporting career pathways that offer seamless access to employment and training opportunities through coordinated efforts with community colleges, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation providers. Co-enrollment in core programs is encouraged to provide holistic, accessible services that address the unique needs of Northeast Texas residents.

Key Initiatives for Career Pathways Development:

- Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant: As a recipient of this grant, the Board leads a regional steering committee to identify and develop career pathways. This includes analyzing gaps, targeting high-demand industries, and creating work-based learning opportunities for students and job seekers.
- Community College Collaboration: The Board maintains a strong relationship with local community colleges, providing labor market information for new program development and ensuring alignment with workforce demands.
- Industry Tours: Through industry tours, Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers and counselors gain firsthand knowledge of employer needs and workforce skills, which they can integrate into curricula to better prepare students.
- Teacher Externship Program: Teachers and counselors participate in job-shadowing experiences with local employers, resulting in career-focused lesson plans that align with regional workforce needs. The program has grown annually, with plans to expand as demand increases.
- Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation: Regular meetings between Board and vocational rehabilitation staff ensure strong referral processes and seamless co-enrollment for individuals with disabilities.

Improving Access to Recognized Postsecondary Credentials

The Board aims to increase access to postsecondary credentials that are portable and stackable, ensuring job seekers acquire skills and certifications recognized by regional employers. These credentials are aligned with industry demand, allowing individuals to build career pathways that support ongoing skill development and employment success.

Initiatives to Support Postsecondary Credentials:

- Partnerships with Region 8 Education Service Center: Collaborating on initiatives to promote Career and Technical Education (CTE), the Board highlights career pathways that include industry-recognized credentials.

- Career Information Resources: The Board provides career information videos through Pathful, with a focus on occupations that require a postsecondary credential within the Career Pathways model.
- Employer Advisory Councils: In development, these councils will engage demand industries to identify high-value credentials and connect individuals to relevant training programs.
- Financial Literacy for Youth (FLY) Event: Targeting high school juniors, FLY provides information on local career pathways, industry-recognized credentials, and employment opportunities, with interactive employer panels and financial simulations.
- Promoting the Metrix Learning Program: This online training resource offers free, short-term training that complements community college programs, helping job seekers gain certifications aligned with local industry demand.
- Strengthening School Partnerships: The Board works with local Independent School Districts (ISDs) to provide on-campus student support, introducing career pathways, job readiness, and real-time labor market insights to students. Career Coaches offer workshops on essential skills and career exploration using virtual reality tools, helping students identify relevant postsecondary options.
- Community College Collaboration: With strong relationships across the region's community colleges, the Board frequently coordinates on certification programs, particularly in high-demand fields, promoting short-term training options that lead to valuable certifications.

Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery

4.A: *One-Stop Service Delivery System:* *Each Board must include a description of its workforce area's one-stop delivery system, including explanations of the following:*

- How the Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers and how providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers*
- How the Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including to remote areas, using technology and other means*
- How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including Boards, contracted service providers, and one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA §188 (related to Non-Discrimination), if applicable, and with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals who have disabilities.*
- The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners*

One-Stop Delivery System for Northeast Texas

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board is focused on creating an accessible, responsive, and continuously improving one-stop delivery system that meets the needs of employers, job seekers, and the wider community. Partnering with Principle Concepts, LLC, the single contracted service provider for workforce and child care services, the Board ensures integrated service delivery with a consistent franchise model across all workforce centers.

Continuous Improvement of Providers and Service Quality

To meet local employment needs effectively, the Board emphasizes the continuous improvement of eligible providers through established standards and performance measures:

- Minimum Standards for Operation: Developed by the contracted service provider, this foundational document outlines service delivery requirements, reviewed and updated regularly to align with changes from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) or Board policies.
- Local Performance Measures: Annual performance goals are set by the Board to assess and improve providers' capabilities, ensuring services are aligned with local labor market demands and meet the evolving needs of employers, workers, and job seekers.

Expanding Access through Technology and Other Means

The Board is committed to facilitating access to workforce services throughout Northeast Texas, especially in remote and rural areas, using advanced technology and innovative methods:

- Virtual Access and Technology Enhancements: Workforce centers are equipped with up-to-date computer hardware and software. Public events, workshops, and recorded content are made available through the Board’s website, social media, and a mobile app for Apple and Android devices, allowing remote access to job-seeking resources.
- Career Connection Kiosks: Located in five counties without workforce centers, these kiosks provide access to job search resources, upcoming events, and contact information, ensuring that individuals in rural areas have a physical connection to workforce services.
- Chatbot on Website: To streamline access to information, the Board has implemented a chatbot feature on its website, which answers frequently asked questions, helping customers connect with resources efficiently.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI): The Board will continue to explore ways in which AI can be utilized to enhance service delivery and customer outcomes.

Non-Discrimination and Accessibility Compliance

The Board is dedicated to ensuring non-discrimination and full accessibility of programs and services in accordance with WIOA §188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Key accessibility initiatives include:

- Accessible Technology and Equipment: Workforce centers are equipped with assistive technology, including adjustable tables, large monitors, alternative input devices, screen reading software, and video magnifiers. Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) and UbiDuo communication solutions are also available.
- Partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation: Co-located Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff at Workforce Centers provide convenient, one-stop access to services for individuals with disabilities. The Board works closely with VR to ensure all workforce centers and services are ADA-compliant.
- Student HireAbility Navigator: This dedicated role enhances support for individuals with disabilities, building connections between local schools, employers, and VR services to promote inclusivity.

Roles and Resource Contributions of One-Stop Partners

The success of the one-stop delivery system relies on collaborative partnerships across various organizations, including:

- Business Services Unit (BSU): Through employer outreach, BSU gathers data on local business needs and connects employers to resources like training grants from the Texas Workforce Commission’s Employer Engagement team. This outreach informs service improvements and allows the Board to direct resources effectively.

- Texas Veterans Commission (TVC): As a key partner housed in the workforce centers, TVC ensures veterans receive priority of service and provides resources to support their employment journey.
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL): In collaboration with Texarkana College and the Red River Valley Adult Education Consortium, the Board offers a range of AEL services. Texarkana College has a classroom in the Texarkana Workforce Center, enhancing access to GED preparation and remedial courses for workforce center clients.
- Higher Education Partnerships: The Board collaborates with area community colleges and universities to ensure workforce training aligns with the demands of local employers. Community colleges develop and provide certification and degree programs for in-demand occupations.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Working closely with the Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services Division, the Board provides job training, counseling, and placement services. Programs like Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) and year-round work experience initiatives help individuals with disabilities gain valuable skills.

Summary

Through its one-stop delivery system, the Board emphasizes continuous improvement, accessibility, non-discrimination, and a cohesive network of partnerships. These efforts ensure that Northeast Texas employers, job seekers, and workers benefit from a robust, responsive workforce development system that adapts to community needs and provides equitable, inclusive access to services.

4.B: Employer Engagement, Economic Development, and Unemployment Insurance Program Coordination: Boards must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the workforce area to:

- *facilitate the engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations, in workforce development programs;*
- *support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area;*
- *coordinate workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local workforce area*
- *promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services; and*
- *strengthen the linkage between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.*

Employer Engagement in Workforce Development Programs

The Board is committed to being a primary resource for employers, including small businesses and employers in in-demand industries. Through an employer-driven model, the Board builds strong relationships between employers and job seekers, using a dedicated Business Services Unit (BSU) to engage local businesses and identify needs. Business and Employment Consultants (BECs) work directly with employers, supporting recruitment, labor market information, training incentives, and resource sharing to help meet workforce demands.

Employer Engagement Strategies:

- **Direct Support and Outreach:** BEC team members conduct employer outreach, post job openings, screen candidates, and provide insights on available training resources such as On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Work Opportunity Tax Credits. Additionally, these staff solicit feedback from employers on their workforce needs.
- **Customized Employer Services:** Workforce centers offer interview rooms, host job fairs, support hiring events, and provide access to labor market information. Employers also receive guidance on ADA compliance and workplace accommodations.
- **Specialized Training Grants:** Employers can apply for Skills Development Fund (SDF) and Skills for Small Business grants. The Board actively promotes these grants, particularly for small employers, by raising awareness through BSU outreach and partnerships with local economic development agencies.

Supporting a Local Workforce Development System Aligned with Business Needs

The Board prioritizes a system that aligns training and development activities with the requirements of Northeast Texas businesses, offering targeted support to ensure a skilled workforce that meets the needs of both existing and prospective employers.

System Support Initiatives:

- **Advisory Groups:** The Board convenes several groups to guide workforce strategies, including the College Presidents' Roundtable, Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group, Child Care Committee, and the Career Pathways Leadership Team. These groups collaborate to address labor market challenges, develop relevant training, and secure funding for workforce programs, including High Demand Job Training grants.
- **Industry-Specific Programs:** Through close collaboration with advisory groups and employers, the Board has acquired grant funding to establish or enhance programs in fields such as CNC, welding, robotics, aircraft maintenance, and health sciences, directly in response to employer feedback on workforce needs.
- **Regional Collaboration on Training Programs:** Community colleges in Northeast Texas work together to reduce costs by rotating shared training programs, allowing students access to necessary skills without duplicating resources. Additionally, the Board is currently working with the Region 8 Education Service Center, Northeast Texas Community College, and five rural school districts to establish the Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership Program (R-PEP), designed to utilize shared resources to create additional training opportunities for students.

Coordinating Workforce and Economic Development Activities

To strengthen ties between workforce and economic development, the Board works closely with regional organizations, providing essential labor market insights and participating in initiatives that support local business growth and attraction efforts.

Economic Development Coordination Efforts:

- Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group: This group, comprising economic development professionals, discusses workforce trends and shares insights, helping the Board align resources with economic development goals.
- Targeted Occupation and Workforce Campaigns: The Board collaborates on initiatives like regional data analysis for target occupations. This data analysis allows the Board to focus resources on high-demand, high-wage job training. The Board is also expanding work based learning opportunities such as teacher externships and student internships.
- Economic Development Partnerships: Board staff regularly supply economic development organizations with labor market data, participate in employer visits, and provide workforce service information to support business retention and expansion efforts.

Promoting Entrepreneurial Skills and Microenterprise Services

In partnership with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Board promotes entrepreneurial skills and services that support microenterprises, contributing to the growth of local businesses and job creation.

Entrepreneurial and Microenterprise Support Strategies:

- SBDC Collaboration: SBDC directors are included in Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group meetings, strengthening ties between workforce resources and small business needs.
- Resource Promotion: The Board shares information on workforce programs for small businesses, such as Skills for Small Business, through its website and social media.
- Business Training Resources: The Board partners with the Texas Workforce Commission Employer Engagement team to promote training resources for small businesses, including targeted outreach to businesses that have not previously accessed these resources.

Strengthening Linkages Between One-Stop System and Unemployment Insurance Programs

The Board enhances the connection between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance (UI) programs, offering direct support to employers and affected workers during times of layoffs or economic transitions.

UI and One-Stop Linkage Strategies:

- **Rapid Response Services:** In cases of layoffs and plant closings, the Board coordinates rapid response services for affected workers, including virtual and in-person sessions that provide information on workforce services, job search assistance, and retraining opportunities.
- **UI Specialist Collaboration:** The Board works closely with a regional UI representative to ensure affected workers receive up-to-date information on Texas UI benefits, shared-work programs, and mass claim filing. The UI specialist also attends rapid response events to support individuals transitioning to new employment.
- **UI Access and Assistance:** Information on UI services is prominently displayed at all workforce centers, and staff provide assistance with UI applications and navigation of the UI online portal and phone system.

Summary

Through targeted employer engagement, strategic partnerships, robust economic development coordination, and focused support for entrepreneurship and UI linkages, the Board supports a comprehensive workforce development system in Northeast Texas. By fostering these connections, the Board helps create a resilient, adaptable workforce that meets the needs of the region's businesses, enhances economic growth, and expands access to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for all residents.

4.C: Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services : Boards must include a description of the strategies that are used to maximize coordination, improve service delivery, and avoid the duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services that are provided through the one-stop delivery system.

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas partners with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to deliver employment services under the Wagner-Peyser program. The Board engages a contracted service provider to manage the region's workforce centers. Within these centers, TWC Employment Services (ES) staff deliver Wagner-Peyser services. To ensure seamless service integration and avoid duplication, the contracted provider may offer guidance to TWC ES staff, supporting a coordinated approach that enhances service delivery for customers.

Also, as the Board only contracts with one service provider, all four workforce centers and all programs are operated using one all-encompassing service model. The service provider utilizes a franchise model, meaning that all services and activities are carried out identically, regardless of the office location. Programs and staff are supervised not by center but rather by department and program, ensuring coordination, consistency, and accuracy.

4.D: Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management Boards must include a description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to WorkinTexas.com for the programs that are carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

Implementation and Transition to WorkinTexas.com for WIOA Programs and One-Stop Partners

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board has prioritized a comprehensive and smooth transition to WorkinTexas.com (WIT) as the state's new case management data system, which supports the implementation of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs and other partner services at one-stop centers.

Transition and Training Process:

- Board Involvement in Development: A Board staff member actively participated on the state's development team for WIT, providing regular updates to both Board and service provider staff, ensuring early familiarity with the new system.
- Train-the-Trainer Model: Management staff from both the Board and the service provider participated in TWC's train-the-trainer sessions, allowing them to deliver in-depth training to frontline staff. This approach ensured all staff were adequately prepared and practiced on the system before the official launch.
- Ongoing Feedback and Issue Resolution: The Board continuously seeks feedback from service provider staff on WIT's functionality and any issues that arise. This feedback is shared with TWC to address system-wide concerns and improve the platform for all users.

Technology and Document Management Enhancements:

- Paperless Document Management: The Board uses a paperless system that supports all aspects of workforce center case management and child care files. This repository also includes updated policies, procedures, forms, and training materials, allowing staff to access these resources seamlessly within the new system.
- Fiscal and Workflow Integration: The Cabinet system's workflow functions are utilized to support all fiscal activities, ensuring that staff have a streamlined process for managing both case management and financial tasks.

Virtual Service Expansion:

- Remote Access and Digital Signatures: Virtual conferencing, video assistance, and electronic signature platforms provide flexibility for customers who cannot visit workforce centers in person. Customers can complete case management activities, including eligibility determinations, counseling sessions, referrals, and assessments, in a secure virtual environment.
- Mobile Lab for Rural Access: The Board maintains a mobile lab with laptops to facilitate on-site hiring events, community outreach, and remote service delivery in rural areas. This ensures that all customers, regardless of location, have access to the resources and support provided through WorkinTexas.com.

Customer Information Protection:

The Board has implemented rigorous measures to safeguard customer information within WIT, ensuring that all data management processes adhere to privacy and security standards. This focus on security reflects the Board's commitment to providing a safe, accessible environment for all customers, whether they are accessing services virtually or in person.

By leveraging WorkinTexas.com and integrating it into a flexible, secure, and comprehensive service delivery model, the Board is well-positioned to support workforce development across Northeast Texas.

4.E: Third Party Partnership in SNAP Employment and Training Programs: The Texas Health and Human Services Commission has directed TWC to expand the use of SNAP E&T Third Party Partnerships (TPP) throughout the state, with a goal of implementing TPP in all workforce areas by Federal Fiscal Year 2029. Boards must provide an assurance that they are planning for the expansion of TPP and must describe any planned or completed steps toward implementation.

Third-Party Partnerships (TPP) is a new initiative offering the boards an opportunity to expand the current service model for SNAP E&T recipients. The Board, in conjunction with TWC will begin planning for this expansion and will participate in all training, meetings, and strategic conversations on the program. This is a new concept, so preparations are in the very early stages. The Board plans to find, assess, and vet potential TPPs, discuss service provision, negotiate a budget, train the TPP on program requirements including case management, and enter into contracts for the provision of these services.

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

5.A: *Rapid Response Activity Coordination* Each Board must include a description of how the Board will coordinate workforce investment activities that are carried out in the workforce area with the statewide rapid response activities described in WIOA §134(a)(2)(A).

Coordination of Local Workforce Investment Activities with Statewide Rapid Response

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board coordinates closely with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to deliver rapid response services that assist employers and workers in navigating layoffs, closures, or job dislocations. Rapid Response services are integral to helping businesses manage transitions effectively and offering immediate support to affected workers.

Circumstances Triggering Rapid Response Services:

The Board provides Rapid Response services under the following conditions:

1. Notification of a permanent facility, store, enterprise, or plant closure.
2. Notification of a mass layoff, either involving 50+ workers or requiring a WARN Act notice.
3. Job dislocation due to a state- or locally defined disaster.
4. Filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition.

Beyond these scenarios, the Board makes Rapid Response services accessible to any employer or eligible worker in the region. The Board's Business Services Unit actively promotes these services, ensuring employers are aware of the support available during times of transition.

Coordination and Information Flow:

The governor has delegated responsibility and funding for Rapid Response activities to local Workforce Solutions Boards. Funding is allocated to Boards based on a formula that considers factors like the unemployment rate and long-term UI claims.

- **Rapid Response Team:** The Board's team includes the authorized Rapid Response Coordinator and a contracted service provider representative. The Rapid Response Coordinator collaborates with TWC's Dislocated Worker/Rapid Response unit to ensure rapid information-sharing about layoffs, closures, or other dislocations.
- **Employer Engagement:** The Rapid Response Coordinator engages employers as soon as a closure or layoff is reported, gathering key information and initiating a response plan that includes assessing the layoff's cause, potential impacts on related entities, and confidentiality needs.

Planning for Layoff Aversion and Impact Reduction:

In response to potential layoffs, the Board prioritizes layoff aversion strategies and impact mitigation efforts. Rapid Response actions include:

- Evaluating the layoff's cause and potential effects on related entities, such as suppliers.

- Informing employers about UI programs like Shared Work, which can minimize layoff impacts.
- Coordinating resources to support affected workers with short- and long-term needs, including registration on WorkInTexas.com, job search support, and UI filing assistance.

On-Site Rapid Response Services and Information Sessions:

The Board conducts on-site meetings with affected employers and employees, featuring representatives from the Board, contracted service provider, and TWC’s Unemployment Insurance division. These sessions include:

- Access to Workforce Services: Information on reemployment services, job search resources, and support available through Workforce Solutions Offices.
- Assistance with WorkInTexas.com: Helping workers register in the state’s job exchange and case management system.
- Resource Information: Providing details on job fairs, workshops, financial and stress management, crisis counseling, and labor market information.
- Unemployment Insurance and TAA: Guidance on filing for UI and information on Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits for workers affected by trade-related layoffs.

For services beyond the Board’s scope, staff provide referrals to local organizations that offer additional support.

Summary

By maintaining a well-coordinated rapid response process with TWC, the Board ensures timely, supportive interventions that help employers manage transitions and provide displaced workers with immediate access to reemployment and support resources. This proactive approach mitigates the impact of layoffs and supports a swift return to workforce participation, fostering resilience within the Northeast Texas economy.

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

Workforce Investment Activities for Youth, Including Youth with Disabilities

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board recognizes that youth are essential to the future workforce and economic development of the region. The Board offers a range of activities for both in-school and out-of-school youth, designed to prepare them for the workforce by providing essential skills, career exploration opportunities, and support in overcoming employment barriers. These activities are inclusive and accessible, ensuring that youth with disabilities have full participation in all available programs.

Types of Workforce Investment Activities for Youth:

- Work Readiness and Job Search Assistance: Youth have access to job search support, workshops, career counseling, and short-term educational training, preparing them for successful entry into the workforce.
- Work Experience Programs: A key component of the youth program, work experiences provide hands-on learning, enabling youth to develop valuable workplace skills. These experiences are especially beneficial for youth new to employment, as they offer practical skill-building and career exploration opportunities.
- Job Shadowing and Career Exploration: Youth engage in both virtual and real-world job shadowing, supported by resources like the Pathful platform, which offers career exploration videos, assessments, and interactive activities. Additionally, the Board facilitates career exploration events for youth to learn from local employer representatives and ask questions to further their career interests.
- Specialized Workshops for Youth: Workforce centers host workshops available to youth, including financial literacy, future planning, and goal-setting. These workshops also include financial simulations, demonstrating the impact of education and career choices on financial stability.
- Career Coaching: Career Coaches provide personalized support to middle and high school students, connecting them with career information, training opportunities, and post-secondary options. Career Coaches also deliver workshops on workforce readiness skills, such as resume writing, interviewing, and soft skills.

Support for Youth with Disabilities:

The Board's programs are inclusive, ensuring that youth with disabilities can fully participate in all activities. A dedicated Student Hireability Navigator collaborates with local schools to connect students with disabilities to career opportunities and training resources. The Navigator also partners with Texas A&M's IGROW project, which offers a four-year program focused on pre-employment and leadership training for students with disabilities aged 14-22. Additionally, the Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Division provides support for accommodations, if needed, to ensure equitable access.

Successful Models of Youth Workforce Investment Activities:

- Career Coach Program: With a strong track record in the Northeast Texas region, the Career Coach program provides career exploration, post-secondary guidance, and career-related workshops across partner high schools. Using virtual reality technology, Career Coaches engage students in hands-on career exploration, allowing them to experience various professions in a virtual environment. Coaches also collaborate with the Region 8 Education Service Center to offer workforce readiness training to educators, helping them support students in their career planning.
- SEAL Program and VR/WIOA Co-Enrollment: The Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program, operated in partnership with VR, provides work experience opportunities for youth with disabilities. The Board consistently meets or exceeds SEAL participation goals. A successful model for VR and workforce integration, the program allows WIOA and VR staff to collaborate, co-enrolling youth with disabilities to ensure they gain both academic and hands-on skills for employment. This co-enrollment model has proven effective for youth who, after completing post-secondary training, may still need work experience to secure employment. Business Services staff work to place these

individuals in roles aligned with their credentials, offering both workplace experience and potential job placement with employers.

- **Focus on Career Pathways and Sustainable Employment:** The Board’s model emphasizes work experience and occupational training aligned with established career pathways, providing a proven approach to helping youth secure sustainable employment. This approach has led to consistent success in meeting youth performance measures, including post-exit employment and competitive starting wages.

Through these comprehensive, inclusive, and hands-on programs, the Board prepares youth in Northeast Texas for meaningful, long-term employment and supports the region’s goal of developing a skilled, resilient workforce for the future.

5.C: Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid the duplication of services.

Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board prioritizes strong collaboration with secondary and postsecondary education institutions to coordinate workforce investment activities, enhancing service delivery, and avoiding duplication. This approach aims to equip students with the skills needed for in-demand careers while aligning education offerings with regional workforce needs.

Coordination with Secondary Education Programs:

1. **Pathway to College and Careers Program:** Career Coaches work directly with students from grades 6-12, providing resources for career exploration, college admissions, resume building, job search skills, and labor market insights. The program includes Virtual Reality (VR) headsets with career exploration software, allowing students to engage in virtual career experiences across various industries. This program has fostered a stronger connection between the Board and regional schools, expanding to include more occupations and career pathways for students to explore.
2. **Collaboration with Region 8 Education Service Center:** The Board works closely with Region 8 to share labor market data and guide school districts in aligning their programs with high-demand occupations. This partnership supports the creation of curriculum aligned with local workforce needs, helping school administrators make informed decisions on course offerings and grant applications, such as the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grant.
3. **Teacher Externship Program:** Through a summer externship program, teachers, counselors, and adult education instructors are matched with local employers related to their instructional areas. Teachers gain firsthand knowledge of industry requirements, allowing them to create lesson plans that integrate real-world workforce needs, bringing valuable insights back to students. This collaboration with Region 8 enhances the program’s reach, benefiting both educators and students across the region’s 46 school districts.

Coordination with Postsecondary Education Programs:

The Board partners with three regional community colleges—Texarkana College, Northeast Texas Community College, and Paris Junior College—and Texas A&M University-Texarkana. These partnerships are vital to providing students with accessible career pathways that support employment and further education.

1. College Presidents' Roundtable: Regular meetings of the College Presidents' Roundtable facilitate discussions on workforce trends, educational offerings, and career pathways. This communication helps align the Board's workforce activities with the colleges' programs, ensuring efficient resource use and reducing redundancy in program offerings.
2. Career Pathways and Articulation Agreements: Community colleges offer workforce education certificates for skills-based careers, allowing students to transition seamlessly into associate degree programs if they choose. Texas A&M University-Texarkana supports career pathways by creating articulation agreements with community colleges, allowing students to continue their studies toward higher degrees in aligned fields. These coordinated pathways support students' career advancement while minimizing service duplication.
3. TEA Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant: The Board's recent award of the Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant facilitates the development and enhancement of career pathways in the region. By working with secondary and postsecondary institutions, the Board assesses existing pathways and work-based learning opportunities. A primary goal is to connect smaller, rural school districts with resources that enable them to offer dual-credit career and technical education courses, expanding access to specialized training and career pathways.

Summary

Through collaboration with secondary and postsecondary institutions, the Board effectively coordinates workforce investment activities, ensuring that services are aligned, comprehensive, and accessible. These partnerships foster workforce readiness, reduce redundancy, and provide students with meaningful career pathways that support the workforce needs of Northeast Texas.

5.D: *Child Care and Early Learning*: Boards must include a description of how the Board is strategically managing child care and early learning within the workforce system to enhance school readiness and strengthen and support the child care industry.

Efforts include:

- *coordinating with employers, economic development programs, and other industry leaders to increase the awareness and importance of early learning as a workforce and economic development tool;*
- *supporting improved school readiness through higher-quality child care, including through the Texas Rising Star program and partnership opportunities; and*
- *supporting the needs of the child care industry, such as by providing assistance with business development or shared services, or by providing opportunities to support professional growth and career pathways for early education.*

Strategic Management of Child Care and Early Learning within the Workforce System

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board actively supports quality child care and early learning as essential elements of a thriving workforce system. Through strategic partnerships and continuous improvement initiatives, the Board enhances school readiness, supports the child care industry, and maximizes child care access for families striving for economic independence.

Coordination with Employers and Industry Leaders: To increase awareness of the importance of early learning as both a workforce and economic development tool, the Board collaborates with area employers, civic organizations, and economic development entities. Child care staff participate in job fairs and Chamber of Commerce meetings, visiting employers to educate them on child care benefits available to employees. The Board provides employers with materials to share with their workforce, emphasizing the role of child care in supporting employee productivity and retention.

Support for School Readiness and High-Quality Child Care: The Board works with Texas Rising Star (TRS) mentors and providers to enhance child care quality and promote school readiness. TRS mentors, experts in early learning, partner with child care providers to implement strategies that support early literacy, social-emotional development, and school readiness. Providers in the Board's network must meet TRS standards, and staff ensure they receive the training and resources necessary to achieve and maintain high-quality ratings.

1. Training and Quality Improvement: Monthly training sessions, delivered by TRS mentors, cover key topics such as pre-K curriculum, classroom management, and age-appropriate activities for infants to kindergarten. These sessions help child care professionals build strong foundations for early learning, meeting both TRS and state licensing requirements.
2. Brightwheel Classroom Management: TRS providers have access to Brightwheel, an interactive classroom management platform. This system facilitates parent engagement, allowing families to track their child's activities and progress. Providers benefit from tools that simplify business management, attendance tracking, and lesson planning.
3. Lena Grow System for Language and Literacy Development: Lena Grow focuses on improving teacher-student interactions, a critical component of early childhood learning. Using data-driven feedback, TRS mentors help teachers enhance communication and literacy skills in the classroom, fostering strong early language development.

Incentives for Professional Development: Recognizing the importance of staff retention and professional growth, the Board provides incentives to TRS teachers and directors. These incentives, awarded based on factors such as higher education achievements and tenure, support teachers in their pursuit of credentials, such as Child Development Associate (CDA) certifications, with scholarship opportunities available to aid in funding these qualifications.

Efforts to Maximize Access to Child Care for Families: The Board continuously balances child care program enrollment with available funding, ensuring that eligible children receive quality care. Outreach about child care services is ongoing, utilizing social media, news outlets, and presentations to reach families. Workforce centers also promote child care benefits to customers in job training and employment programs (RESEA, SNAP E&T, VR, TANF), and the job search child care program provides three months of support for unemployed parents as they seek employment, which has been a successful model for transitioning families into stable jobs.

Support for the Child Care Industry: The Board supports child care providers by investing in classroom supplies, curriculum materials, and training resources. Funding allocations are determined based on facility size and the percentage of subsidized children, allowing providers to enhance their learning environments and work toward higher TRS ratings. The Board also actively recruits new providers and educates them on TRS standards, strengthening the region’s child care infrastructure.

1. Child Care Committee: This committee provides a forum for feedback and collaboration among child care professionals, regulatory organizations, and parents. The committee addresses issues related to policy, funding, and program performance, offering insights to the Board on how to support the child care industry.
2. Business Support and Career Pathways: Recognizing that child care providers often face business challenges, the Board provides support for business development, shared services, and professional growth. Opportunities for providers to advance their careers through training and certification are emphasized, creating clear career pathways for early childhood educators in Northeast Texas.

By integrating child care services with workforce and educational programs, the Board supports school readiness, strengthens the child care industry, and enables parents to pursue stable employment and self-sufficiency, ultimately benefiting the local workforce and economy. Through continuous improvement, strategic partnerships, and resource allocation, the Board is committed to building a high-quality, accessible child care system that supports the needs of families and employers across Northeast Texas.

5.E: Transportation and Other Support Services: Each Board must include a description of how the Board will provide transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate support services in the workforce area in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities.

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is fortunate in that three of the four largest cities in the area have some form of public transportation. For those in rural communities, a low-cost transportation service is available through the ArkTex Council of Governments. Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas assists customers with the utilization of these services by purchasing transportation passes when appropriate. In addition, Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas provides transportation assistance through the use of fuel cards as a support service if necessary to allow customers to participate in and complete assigned educational or work-based activities. Other support services that are directly related to training and/or employment activities may be provided on a case-by-case basis as needed to enter into or maintain classroom participation or employment.

5.F: Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy: Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with AEL activities under WIOA Title II. Boards must also include the process used to review the local applications submitted under Title II, as consistent with WIOA §§107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA §232.

Coordination of WIOA Title I Workforce Investment Activities with WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Activities

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board maintains a close partnership with the region's Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) providers, Red River Valley Adult Education Consortium and Texarkana College Adult Education and Literacy. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Board and AEL providers collaborate to deliver integrated services that align with local, state, and federal guidelines. This partnership ensures that both workforce investment and adult education activities are coordinated to meet the needs of mutual customers effectively.

Key Areas of Coordination:

1. Efficient Referral and Communication: The Board and AEL providers work together to establish a streamlined referral process, ensuring that potential customers receive access to both workforce and adult education services. Regular communication about mutual customers, within policy and privacy guidelines, ensures that participants receive consistent, comprehensive support.
2. Staff Education and Liaison Support: Both the Board and AEL providers commit to educating each other's staff on programmatic and eligibility requirements, including the designation of a liaison to address questions and provide resources. This fosters a cohesive approach to service delivery, ensuring customers receive informed guidance across both systems.
3. Career Pathway Development: The Board collaborates with AEL providers to develop career pathways that align with local business needs in high-demand occupations. Utilizing a reverse referral process, potential participants are identified and directed to the most suitable training and educational services. The Board's Business Services Unit supports this effort by sharing insights into local labor demands and introducing business partners to AEL providers, strengthening ties between education and industry.
4. Occupational Demand Information: To support targeted training, the Board provides AEL providers with a quarterly list of in-demand occupations by county. This data helps AEL providers guide students toward areas of study that align with regional workforce needs, enhancing job placement outcomes.
5. Resource Accessibility: Information on adult education opportunities, support services, and career resources is made available through the Board's website and social media channels. This online presence ensures that both potential students and workforce customers can easily access information on AEL programs, including points of contact and pathways to career advancement.
6. Accessibility and Support for Individuals with Barriers: Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas prioritizes accessibility for all individuals, including those with barriers to employment. Translation services are available for limited English proficient customers, and public access rooms are equipped with various accessibility tools to accommodate individuals with disabilities.

Local Application Review Process for Title II Proposals:

The Board follows a thorough process to review all local applications submitted under Title II, ensuring alignment with WIOA regulations and the Board's workforce plan. The review process includes:

1. Conflict of Interest Management: The Board reviews all proposals except those that may present a conflict of interest, ensuring an impartial and transparent evaluation.
2. Review Committee: A committee of at least three Board staff evaluates all Title II applications to ensure they align with the Board's workforce goals and WIOA standards.

3. Recommendations to TWC: After reviewing proposals, the Board provides recommendations to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), supporting alignment with the local workforce plan and promoting strategic collaboration between workforce and adult education services.

Through coordinated efforts with AEL providers, data sharing, and streamlined referral processes, the Board integrates workforce investment and adult education services to support skill development, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency for Northeast Texas residents. This strategic alignment ensures that workforce and educational resources are utilized efficiently, meeting both the immediate and long-term needs of the region's workforce.

Part 6: Adult and Dislocated Workers

6.A: Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training: Boards must include a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the workforce area.

Description and Assessment of Employment and Training Activities for Adults and Dislocated Workers

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas provides a comprehensive range of employment and training activities tailored to the needs of adults and dislocated workers. These services support job readiness, skills training, and career advancement, assisting individuals in overcoming employment barriers and securing meaningful employment.

Employment and Training Activities:

1. Work Readiness and Job Search Assistance: The Board offers staff-assisted job search services, workshops on resume writing and interview skills, and various work readiness training sessions. These activities are customized through each participant's individual employment plan and are designed to enhance engagement in the job search process, with the ultimate goal of employment.
2. On-the-Job Training (OJT): This program provides eligible participants with structured, hands-on skills training directly in the workplace. Through OJT, customers are employed by local businesses while receiving training for up to six months, during which employers are reimbursed 50% of the training wage. This program is particularly effective for dislocated workers who seek immediate employment with a steady income. With an 80% completion rate, OJT has proven successful in bridging skill gaps and offering steady employment pathways for individuals with barriers to employment.
3. Occupational and Vocational Training: For eligible adults and dislocated workers, the Board offers occupational and vocational training through individual training accounts. Training is provided through community colleges and technical schools listed on the Eligible Training Provider List. By focusing on in-demand industries, these programs offer pathways to sustainable employment, meeting or exceeding state goals for training completion and employment outcomes.
4. Online Training via Metrix Learning: In partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission, the Board offers access to the Metrix online training catalog, which features over 5,000 courses, including skill tracks leading to industry certifications. This flexible online option allows customers to complete courses at their convenience, providing an opportunity to reskill or upskill for high-demand occupations.

Assessment Tools Used for Adult and Dislocated Worker Services:

To ensure that customers receive appropriate support and are matched with suitable training programs, the Board employs a variety of assessment instruments:

- TABE and CASAS: These assessments determine educational functioning levels and identify basic skills deficiencies among adult and dislocated worker customers. These tools provide insights into customers' readiness for specific training programs.
- Accuplacer: If a customer has already been assessed by a local community college, the Board accepts Accuplacer scores to determine academic levels and suitability for vocational training.

- CareerScope: This career assessment evaluates customers' interests and aptitudes, providing guidance on career suitability. CareerScope is a valuable tool in creating tailored employment plans that align with customers' strengths and aspirations.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement:

The Board continuously assesses the effectiveness of its employment and training activities by monitoring program completion rates, employment outcomes, and customer satisfaction. Success in these programs is evidenced by high completion rates, positive employment outcomes, and achievement of state performance goals. By offering targeted training programs and leveraging both in-person and online resources, the Board ensures that adult and dislocated workers have access to the necessary tools to succeed in the Northeast Texas workforce.

These efforts strengthen the region's workforce, support economic stability for individuals and families, and build a skilled labor pool that meets the needs of local employers.

6.B: *Service Priority: Boards must include the Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as consistent with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and 20 CFR §680.600, along with veterans and foster youth, according to the priority order outlined in the WIOA Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth. Boards must also include a list of any Board-established priority groups, if any.*

POLICY STATEMENT:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) individualized career services and training services must be delivered to eligible adults in adult and dislocated worker programs on a priority basis as required by WIOA regulations.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

Priority of service will be determined 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 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 Board in the following order:
 - a) All other foster youth and former foster youth, as required by Texas Labor Code §264.121
 - b) No Local Board designated priority groups
- 5) Non-covered individuals outside of the groups given priority under WIOA.

REASONS FOR POLICY:

To ensure WIOA individualized career services and training services are provided according to the WIOA mandated priority of service regulations.

Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts

7.A: *Fiscal Agent: Boards must identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the CEOs or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i).*

The North East Texas Workforce Development Board, DBA Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas, is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected officials or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i).

7.B: *Subgrants and Contracts: Boards must include a description of the competitive process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.*

The Board has established procurement policies and procedures intended to comply with the general requirements of Title 48 Federal Acquisition Regulations System, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR, Part 200), Texas Uniform Grant Management Standards, and the TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts. More specifically, the underlying purposes and policies of the Procurement Policy are:

- a) To simplify and clarify the laws and regulations governing procurement by the Board;
- b) To permit the continued development of acceptable procurement policies and practices;
- c) To provide consistency in the procurement practices of the Board in compliance with pertinent procurement laws;
- d) To increase public confidence in Board procurements;
- e) To ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all persons/entities who participate in the procurement process;
- f) To provide increased economy and efficiency in procurement activities by avoiding unnecessary, unwarranted and duplicative procurements;
- g) To foster free and open competition;
- h) To provide safeguards for the maintenance of a procurement system of quality and integrity;
- i) To ensure that full accounting is available and given for all procurements;

The first step in any procurement will begin with the determination and justification of need for a good or service and a pre-procurement cost analysis. A staff member from any Board department initiates this process by completing the Procurement Initiation Request. The Executive Director and Finance Director shall review and approve requests to solicit and procure goods and services.

Upon approval of the procurement, a list of prospective providers is compiled, using the official Bidders List, telephone directory, HUB directory, and other known resources as deemed appropriate. The opportunity is publicly advertised, at a minimum, in accordance with the Board's approved policies regarding procurement. Published notices will include the following:

- A brief description of the issuing agency and services to be provided
- A description of the geographic area to be served
- How to obtain an RFP package

- A deadline for obtaining an RFP package and deadline for submitting an offer
- A date of bidders conference, if applicable
- A name and phone number of the contact person

When goods and/or services are to be procured using a Request for Proposals (RFP), the solicitation must provide sufficient information so that bidders clearly understand what is being sought. The performance expectations must be fully and clearly communicated in the RFP. The Board RFP's shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- Time/date: This element includes statements regarding the periods of time during which services are to be performed and due dates established for responses to be considered
- Protest procedures
- Purpose
- Overview of the complexity/scope of work being procured
- The evaluation process/procedures to be used
- The period of contract performance
- Approvals required by local procedures
- Proposal submission instructions
- Requirements for budget submission;
- Administrative/Governance Provisions

All contract awards will be made consistent in dollar value and category with the intentions stated in the procurement document.

Selection Consideration: Consideration in selecting agencies or contractors to deliver services shall include:

- Their effectiveness in delivering comparable or related services based on demonstrated performance, the likelihood of meeting performance goals, cost reasonableness, quality of training, contractor integrity, compliance with public policy and financial and technical resources.
- Board staff and/or evaluator recommendations for proposals to enter into contract negotiations shall be made to the Executive Director. Documentation of the evaluation process and ranking shall be provided to and discussed with the Executive Director.

Selection Approval: The Executive Director will review and approve the process and recommendations and make the final decision on selection of proposals for negotiation.

Contract Negotiation: The negotiation process may take multiple meetings with each selected awardee to complete development of the following contract documents:

- Statement of Work
- Budget
- Performance Data and Standards or
- Participant Planning Summary (Where applicable)

Negotiation will ensure compliance with the program design criteria established by the solicitation specifications, adequacy of staffing, administrative and financial systems capabilities, cost reasonableness, allowable cost and allocation of proposed budget items, total available funding,

population numbers and characteristics to be served for the workforce development area, and the program mix of services to be provided based on the Board's plan and needs assessment.

Contract Award: Upon completion of successful negotiation, Board staff will prepare the final results to be presented to the Executive Director and as appropriate to the Board for their review and approval for contract. Unsuccessful negotiations may be brought to the Executive Director and/or Board for further discussion and guidance with a staff recommendation for action.

Part 8: Performance

8.A: *Board Performance Targets: Boards must include a description of the local levels of performance that were negotiated with TWC and the CEOs, consistent with WIOA §116(c), that will be used to measure the performance of the workforce area and for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the workforce area.*

For Board Contract Year (BCY) 25, the Board will utilize the twenty-nine (29) performance measures contracted with the Texas Workforce Commission to measure performance. Those measures are as shown below. These measures encompass the 15 required WIOA Adult/DW/Youth outcome measures, 5 career and training WIOA-based measures, 3 reemployment services and eligibility assessment (RESEA) measures, 2 Texas talent assistance (TTA) measures, 2 child care, choices full engagement rates, and claimant reemployment within 10 weeks. As of the development of this plan, the WIOA measures have BCY 26 targets but the others do not.

The Texas Workforce Commission provides all Boards with information about the development of performance measures, including methods and formulas used to reach performance goals. The Board provides information to the Texas Workforce Commission on performance targets, including relevant local events and wisdom that might result in a deviation from historic performance numbers.

- WIOA Measures
 - Adult
 - Employed Q2
 - Median Earnings Q2
 - Employed Q4
 - Credential Rate
 - Measurable Skills Gain (MSG)
 - Dislocated Worker
 - Employed Q2
 - Median Earnings Q2
 - Employed Q4
 - Credential Rate
 - Measurable Skills Gain (MSG)
 - Youth
 - Employed Q2
 - Median Earnings Q2
 - Employed Q4
 - Credential Rate
 - Measurable Skills Gain (MSG)
- Career and Training WIOA-based Measures

- Active Job Seeker New Employment Connection Rate
- Maintaining Employment Connection Rate
- Credential Rate – All C&T Participants
- NCP Entered Employment Rate
- NCP Employment Retention Rate
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Measures
 - RESEA Outreach and Scheduling Rate
 - RESEA Initial Appointment Rate
 - RESEA Failure to Report Rate
- Choices Full Engagement Rate
- Claimant Reemployment within 10 Weeks
- Number of Employers Receiving Texas Talent Assistance (TTA)
- Successful Texas Talent Assistance Rate (STTAR)
- Child Care
 - Average Children Per Day
 - Initial Job Search Success Rate

In addition to the state contracted measures, the Board utilizes twenty (20) local performance measures in the contract with the Contracted Services Provider to measure Integrated Outcomes, Employer Engagement/Assistance, Average Wage at Placement, Child Care, Youth, and program success.

Part 9: Training and Services

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

Training Services through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas provides training services for eligible WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker customers through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). ITAs allow customers to access targeted training programs that align with the Board's high-demand occupations list, supporting participants in developing skills needed for sustainable employment. Training funds are managed carefully to maximize assistance for eligible individuals while ensuring responsible use of program resources.

Process for ITA Management and Funding Allocation:

1. Establishing ITA Accounts: ITAs are set up based on eligibility, financial need, and program requirements, with a funding cap of \$20,000 per individual. Each customer's budget worksheet assesses all financial resources available, including Pell Grants, student loans, scholarships, and other assistance programs, to determine the ITA amount.
2. Cost Management and Documentation: The ITA agreement documents training expenses and sets expectations between the program and the customer. Costs are capped at in-state resident rates, with financial aid applied first to tuition and fees to prevent duplicate payments. The total cost aligns with the approved cost on the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) list, ensuring transparency and accountability.
3. Program Eligibility and Duration: ITAs are issued for Board-approved programs of two years or less in duration, or for the final 30 hours of a four-year degree if aligned with Board criteria and ETP status. Training must lead to an occupation on the Board's targeted occupation list or one with high demand and growth potential in the local area.
4. Coordination with Financial Aid: To avoid duplicating costs, WIOA funds do not cover expenses already paid through loans or by the customer. ITAs can be extended by up to 12 months for participants who are employed and need additional time to complete their training.

Coordination of Training Services with Contracts (if used):

While ITAs are the primary method for delivering training, the Board may use contracts for specialized training needs that are not effectively met through individual accounts. These contracts are coordinated with ITAs to avoid overlap and are used in scenarios where group training can provide more efficient or specialized instruction that benefits multiple customers simultaneously. Contracted training is aligned with high-demand fields and supports specific needs within the workforce area.

Ensuring Informed Customer Choice:

The Board emphasizes informed customer choice by providing detailed information on available training options and supporting tools that guide customers in making decisions:

1. CareerScope Assessment: All ITA customers receive a CareerScope assessment to evaluate their interests and aptitudes for specific careers. Case managers review assessment results with customers to ensure alignment with career goals and aptitudes.
2. Educational Readiness Testing: If needed, CASAS or TABE assessments are administered to verify customers' readiness for training. For programs with specific educational requirements, these tests ensure customers are prepared to succeed without additional remediation.
3. ETP Information and Labor Market Insights: Case managers share details on training programs available through the ETP list, including program costs, school locations, and course descriptions. They also provide labor market information (LMI) to discuss job prospects, wage expectations, and demand for specific occupations. This data-driven approach helps customers make informed choices about training programs with strong employment prospects.
4. Customer-Driven Decision-Making: Ultimately, the Board respects each customer's choice in selecting a training program. Case managers provide comprehensive information and guidance, but final decisions are left to the customer to ensure alignment with their career interests and goals.

By managing ITAs responsibly, coordinating any contracted training as needed, and empowering customers with information, Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas supports effective, informed training choices that meet both individual needs and regional workforce demands.

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

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas has developed an ITA policy, approved by the Board of Directors, which limits the amount of an ITA to \$20,000 and the duration of an ITA to 2 years. Despite the previously mentioned ITA limitations, there is still a significant number of available training programs available to customers based on the Board's target occupation list. Training programs vary across five major industry groups. Careers on the target occupation list vary by skillset, work environment, and typical job responsibilities. Proposed exceptions to the ITA limitations are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions may be approved by the Executive Director.

Part 10: Apprenticeship

10.A: Registered Apprenticeship Programs: *Each Board must include a description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs within its workforce area to register with the Eligible Training Provider System to receive WIOA funding.*

The Board is dedicated to fully integrating and aligning WIOA apprenticeship strategies with the local workforce system. To encourage Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs to register with the Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) and access WIOA funding, the Board will implement the following actions:

- Raise Awareness About ETPS Registration Benefits: The Board will educate employers, training providers, and workforce partners about the benefits of registering apprenticeship programs with the ETPS. Outreach information will demonstrate how ETPS registration opens access to WIOA funding, supports workforce pipeline development, and enhances program visibility to job seekers and partners in the region.
- Direct Employer Engagement: The Board's Business Services team will engage employers currently offering or considering apprenticeship programs. Through one-on-one meetings and presentations, staff will provide information on ETPS registration, explain the streamlined process for apprenticeship programs, and offer step-by-step guidance.
- Collaborate with the Texas Workforce Commission: The Board will partner with the Texas Workforce Commission's Department of Apprenticeship to host informational sessions for employers and training providers. These sessions will explain the registration process and the advantages of becoming an ETPS-listed program. Employer surveys will be used to measure interest and tailor additional support.
- Develop Marketing and Educational Materials: The Board will create easy-to-understand materials explaining the ETPS registration process, eligibility requirements, and associated benefits. These resources will be distributed through workforce centers, shared during employer outreach events, and made available online.
- Expand Partnerships with Educational Institutions: The Board will work with community colleges and training providers to incorporate Registered Apprenticeships into their program offerings and assist with ETPS registration.

By implementing these strategies, the Board will effectively encourage the registration of apprenticeship programs with the ETPS, ensuring they can access WIOA funding to support workforce development efforts and meet the needs of employers and job seekers in the region.

10.B: ApprenticeshipTexas: Each Board must include a description of the Board's strategy and commitment to support ApprenticeshipTexas efforts across the state, as applicable.

The Board is committed to fully integrate and align WIOA apprenticeship strategies with the local workforce system. The Texas Workforce Commission has increased the targeted number of individuals to be trained through registered apprenticeship programs. The Board will take appropriate steps to support ApprenticeshipTexas.

- Promoting ApprenticeshipTexas Programs: The Board will actively promote the benefits of ApprenticeshipTexas to employers, educators, and workforce partners. This includes providing information about the initiative through workshops, employer roundtables, and workforce center outreach. By highlighting the value of apprenticeships in building a skilled workforce, the Board will encourage greater participation in apprenticeship programs.
- Employer Engagement and Support: The Board will work with employers to identify workforce needs that can be addressed through apprenticeship programs. Business Services staff will educate employers about apprenticeship resources towards creating apprenticeships and connect employers with local training providers to develop tailored apprenticeship models.
- Collaboration with Training Providers: The Board will partner with community colleges, technical schools, and other training providers to support the development of apprenticeship programs. Regular engagement through advisory groups and roundtables will ensure alignment between apprenticeship opportunities and the region's workforce needs.
- Providing Data and Labor Market Insights: To strengthen ApprenticeshipTexas efforts, the Board will provide labor market information to help identify in-demand occupations and skills that can be addressed through apprenticeships. This data will guide employers and training providers in designing apprenticeship programs that meet workforce priorities.
- Supporting Apprenticeship Expansion: The Board will actively support the establishment of new apprenticeship programs in high-demand industries, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and technology. This includes working with employers to navigate the registration process and aligning programs with ApprenticeshipTexas standards.

Part 11: Public Comment

Boards must provide a description of the public comment process:

- *making copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media;*
- *an opportunity for comment by members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education;*
- *providing at least a 15-day, but no more than a 30-day period for comment on the plan before its submission to TWC, beginning on the date that the proposed plan is made available, before its submission to TWC.*

The proposed plan will be posted to the Board's website starting on December 10, 2024. An electronic comment form will be available on the website as well for interested parties to comment on the plan. Deadline for comment forms will be 5:00 PM on January 3, 2025.

The Board will publicize this process through a press release and social media channels. Additionally, information about this process will be emailed to partners, including education, employers, labor organizations, and economic development. Any comments received through this process will be included in the final plan.

The Board Received no public comments during the public comment period.

Appendix: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

Local Board Plan Requirements

Plan Requirement for Workforce Systemwide Alignment

State law requires local workforce development boards (local board) to adopt a plan that “sets broad goals and objectives for all workforce development programs in the local area consistent with statewide goals, objectives, and performance standards,”¹ as outlined in the workforce system strategic plan, [*Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031*](#).

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council) reviews each board plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the workforce system strategic plan. Under state law and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Council is charged with recommending the local board plans to the Governor for consideration and approval.

Demonstrating Local Alignment with Texas’ Workforce System Strategic Plan

The local board planning process highlights the importance and interdependence of the constituents and partners of the Texas workforce system. Local boards oversee the delivery of workforce programs and services and are essential in both the development and implementation of system goals and objectives in the system strategic plan. The planning requirements help local boards inform the Council of innovative practices and articulate how local plans translate the workforce system strategic plan into local action that moves the system forward.

Local board responses apprise the Council—and, with the Council’s recommendation, the Governor—of system alignment, including program implementation, strategic initiatives, and innovative practices. All 28 boards will be represented in the briefing for the approval of the local plans and subsequent Council recommendation to the Governor for consideration for approval in the spring of 2025. Board responses may be included in the Council briefing materials verbatim.

Board response cover the three strategic opportunities and four system goals in *Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031* that focus system partners on the Council’s mission to produce an agile and resilient workforce. Building on a foundation of continuous innovation and increased collaboration, the system plan calls for accelerated engagement around three strategic opportunities: engagement of employers, improving outcomes for Texans with barriers, and use of data to support investment decisions. Each of these envisions a desirable future state for Texas and lays out essential actions to be implemented that support system goals and stronger outcomes across the Texas workforce system.

The system goals drive accelerated action by system partners in service to Texas employers, learners, partners, and those with policy and planning responsibilities, as follows:

- Employers System Goal: Accelerate the delivery of relevant education and training programs to meet the demand of employers.

- Learners System Goal: Accelerate the expansion of and access to work-based skill and knowledge acquisition to respond to the needs of learners.
- Partners System Goal: Accelerate the development and use of models to support and build system partners' capacity, responsiveness, continuous improvement, and decision-making.
- Policy and Planning Goal: Accelerate 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.

(Texas Government Code Sec. 2308.304, Local Plan.).

Directions for Demonstrating Alignment with the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

Local board plan responses must demonstrate alignment with the workforce system plan and, therefore, require both summary information and citations to the strategies and initiatives that advance progress towards the workforce system goals in [Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031](#). Please refer to the workforce system plan for definitions of specific terms.

1. Provide a summary describing how the processes, activities, or initiatives in the local board plan align with the specific system goal and objective and each strategic opportunity. Response guidelines are provided.
2. Accurately cite the referenced information in the local board plan by providing the corresponding page number(s) in the plan.

System Goals and Objectives

1. Employers Goal – Delivery of Relevant Education and Training Programs

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes that accelerate the delivery of relevant education and training programs to meet employers' needs, specifically by increasing:

- > upskilling and reskilling programs that address employers' needs for middle skill workers,
- > adult learners transitioning to employment through integrated education and training programs, and
- > attainment of short-term credentials in programs aligned with high-demand occupations.

Response should address the following:

- the institution and/or expansion of upskilling and reskilling programs to meet employers' needs for middle-skill workers,
- the identification and delivery of programs, including with adult education and literacy providers, that support attainment of short-term credentials, industry-based certifications, and licenses,
- populations that require supportive services to improve program completion, certification or attainment of short-term credentials, and employment, and

- data used to track reskilling and upskilling program enrollments and outcomes, including program completions, attainment of short-term credentials and industry-based certifications or licenses, and employment directly related to the credential, license, or certification.

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas implements targeted strategies to deliver relevant education and training programs that address employers’ needs by focusing on upskilling and reskilling middle-skill workers, supporting the attainment of short-term credentials and certifications, and tracking data to make informed decisions and improve outcomes.

Upskilling and Reskilling Programs for Middle-Skill Workers

- Collaborations with Employers: The Board partners with employers and advisory groups in high-demand industries, such as manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology, to identify critical skill gaps and shares that information with education providers to ensure training programs are available to close those gaps.
- On-the-Job Training (OJT): OJT programs allow individuals to gain hands-on experience while earning wages, with employers receiving reimbursements for training costs. This program supports job seekers and employers
- Online Training Resources: Through platforms like Metrix Learning, the Board offers access to over 5,000 courses, including tracks that lead to industry certifications. This flexible approach supports workers seeking to reskill or upskill at their own pace.
- Incumbent Worker Training Grants: The Board promotes funding opportunities, such as Skills Development Fund grants, to help employers upskill their current workforce, enhancing productivity and retention.

Adult Learners Transitioning to Employment

- Integrated Education and Training (IET) Programs: The Board collaborates with Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) providers, such as Texarkana College and Red River Valley Adult Education Consortium, to deliver programs that combine basic education with occupational training. The Board provides labor market data on high demand jobs in the region to AEL providers on a quarterly basis.
- Career Pathways Development: By aligning AEL services with regional labor market needs, the Board helps adult learners transition seamlessly into high-demand occupations through structured career pathways.
- Support Services for Success: To ensure program completion, the Board provides supportive services, including child care, transportation assistance, and financial aid for training-related expenses, removing barriers to participation for adult learners. Staff meet regularly with AEL providers to discuss current challenges and ensure the referral process is effective.

Attainment of Short-Term Credentials in High-Demand Occupations

- Targeted Training Programs: The Board prioritizes training programs that lead to short-term credentials recognized by regional employers, such as certifications in welding, CNC

operations, healthcare, and logistics. These programs are designed to align with the region's target occupations list, which are high demand jobs that pay a self-sufficient wage.

- Employer-Driven Curriculum Development: The Board works with community colleges and training providers to discuss employer workforce needs and discuss ways to ensure training programs are relevant to those needs.
- Labor Market Insights: Quarterly labor market data is shared with training providers to help align educational offerings with current and emerging workforce needs. This ensures programs remain relevant and responsive to employer demands.
- Teacher Externship Program: Educators participate in externships with local employers to gain industry insights, which they integrate into lesson plans to better prepare students for high-demand careers.
- Enrollment and Outcomes Tracking: The Board uses tools such as WorkinTexas.com to monitor participant enrollments, program completions, and credential attainment.
- Performance Reporting: Regular data sharing with stakeholders ensures continuous improvement, with outcomes used to refine programs and address gaps.

2. Learners Goal – Expansion of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes that are expanding work-based experiences, including apprenticeship, to accelerate skills and knowledge acquisition that improves system outcomes for learners.

Response should address the following:

- work-based learning opportunities with system stakeholders as a pre-employment strategy for youth and adults, including those requiring supportive services and resources,
- the expansion of the employer network participating in and sponsoring work-based learning opportunities, including registered and industry-recognized apprenticeship programs, and
- partnerships that address regular engagement with employers and system stakeholders, including collaboration with a Regional Convener for the Tri-Agency Texas Regional Pathways Network and input on the quality of existing apprenticeship programs and development of new programs.

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is dedicated to expanding work-based learning opportunities to accelerate skills and knowledge acquisition, addressing regional workforce needs while supporting system stakeholders and learners. Key initiatives include:

Work-Based Learning Opportunities as Pre-Employment Strategies

- The Board facilitates pre-employment work-based learning strategies such as internships, job shadowing, facility tours, and summer externship programs for youth and adults, including those facing barriers to employment.
- Programs like Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) provide meaningful work experience for youth with disabilities, integrating supportive services to ensure their success.
- Career exploration activities, including industry tours, career fairs, and workshops, help youth and adult learners connect classroom learning with workplace applications.
- The Financial Literacy for Youth (FLY) event combines a real-world financial simulation with a Q&A session from local employers. The event aims to help high school students understand the correlation between education and employment, while learning what it takes to be successful, directly from area hiring managers.
- Support services such as transportation, child care, and financial assistance for educational materials are offered, as appropriate, to ensure learners can participate fully and succeed in these programs.

Expanding Employer Networks for Work-Based Learning

- The Board is planning to actively expand its employer network through advisory groups for industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology. These groups will provide insights into workforce needs and opportunities for collaboration on work-based learning programs.
- As part of the Tri-Agency Regional Convener strategic plan, the Board plans to create an employer recognition program, highlighting successful partnerships and encouraging more businesses to participate in apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.
- The Board promotes Registered Apprenticeships and industry-recognized programs, collaborating with the Texas Workforce Commission and local training providers to simplify the registration process and increase employer participation.

Partnerships to Strengthen Employer and Stakeholder Engagement

- As the Northeast Texas Regional Convener within the Tri-Agency Regional Pathway Networks, the Board works with area partners to align educational programs with regional workforce demands. These efforts ensure that career pathways and work-based learning opportunities are relevant and accessible.
- The Board's regional convener strategic plan, includes strategies to connect smaller school districts with dual-credit opportunities, career pathways, and technical training programs, expanding options for learners in rural areas.

- Regular engagement with employers and educational institutions helps assess and improve existing apprenticeship programs while identifying opportunities to create new ones in high-demand sectors.
- The Board’s Teacher Externship Program enables educators to gain firsthand knowledge of industry requirements, which they integrate into classroom instruction, enhancing the connection between learning and workplace success.

3. Partners Goal – Alignment to Support Career Pathways

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes to build the board’s capacity, responsiveness, continuous improvement, and decision-making to:

- > support the identification of credentials of value, and
- > streamline and clarify existing career pathways and models to increase alignment between secondary and postsecondary technical programs.

Response should address the following:

- system stakeholders’ input to assess the alignment and articulation of secondary and postsecondary technical programs supporting career pathways; and
- collaboration with secondary and postsecondary institutions to engage employers to identify credentials of value that respond to local labor market needs, including postsecondary technical sub-baccalaureate credit and non-credit credentials, industry-based certifications, apprenticeship certificates, and licenses; and
- processes to continuously improve career pathways.

Support for the Identification of Credentials of Value

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board actively supports the identification of credentials of value by engaging system stakeholders, including employers, educational institutions, and industry groups, to align workforce programs with regional economic needs:

- Advisory groups in high-demand industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology will provide guidance on the credentials and skills most critical to the local labor market.
- Labor market data, is analyzed and shared with educational institutions and employers to ensure alignment between workforce needs and the training offered.
- Partnerships with local community colleges, technical schools, and independent school districts (ISDs) focus on identifying and promoting sub-baccalaureate credentials, industry certifications, and licenses that align with in-demand occupations.

- The Board works closely with the College Presidents' Roundtable to align educational offerings with employer needs, ensuring that technical programs are designed to meet the requirements for high-value credentials.

Streamlining and Clarifying Career Pathways

The Board is committed to creating and improving seamless career pathways to help students transition from secondary to postsecondary programs and into the workforce:

- Collaboration with Region 8 Education Service Center ensures that high school career and technical education (CTE) programs align with postsecondary and industry requirements.
- Dual-credit programs and articulation agreements between ISDs and community colleges provide students with clear pathways to advanced training and credentials.
- Through the Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant, the Board works with stakeholders to streamline career pathways, particularly in rural districts. The initiative focuses on expanding access to shared resources, enabling smaller school districts to participate in technical and dual-credit programs.
- The Teacher Externship program allows secondary and postsecondary educators to work with local employers during the summer to gain real-world insights into workforce needs. The knowledge gained is incorporated into curricula and career guidance programs for students, improving alignment with employer workforce needs.

4. Policy and Planning Goal – Relevant Data Sets

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes that support the availability and coordination of relevant workforce, education, and employment data to evaluate program outcomes to respond to the needs of policy makers and planners to:

- > expand high-quality childcare availability,
- > identify and quantify quality outcomes, including industry-based certification data, and
- > enhance wage records.

Response should address the following:

- engagement with childcare providers and employers to establish on-site or near-site, high quality childcare facilities and expand Texas Rising Star certifications,
- collaboration with employers to identify enhanced employment and earnings data to gain deeper insight into program outcomes, and
- how the board and its system partners identify, evaluate, and implement ways to streamline and improve timeliness and completeness of data matching and sharing, specifically with industry-based certification attainment, to evaluate program effectiveness and outcomes.

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board engages in several activities, initiatives, and processes to ensure the availability and coordination of relevant workforce, education, and

employment data. These efforts are aimed at evaluating program outcomes and meeting the needs of policymakers and planners.

Expanding High-Quality Childcare Availability

- The Board actively collaborates with employers about the need for high-quality child-care availability for their workforce. Employers are provided information on the Texas child care system. Business Services staff will explore successful employer on-site child care models from other areas in the state, in order to share success stories with Northeast Texas employers.
- Texas Rising Star (TRS) mentors work with providers to enhance childcare quality, offering training sessions on early education best practices, classroom management, and curriculum development.
- The Board promotes TRS certification to new and existing providers, providing resources and incentives to encourage quality improvement and certification attainment
- Through partnerships with early childhood education experts and the Board's Child Care Advisory Committee, the Board ensures childcare facilities focus on literacy, social-emotional development, and school readiness, directly contributing to workforce stability by enabling parents to remain engaged in employment.

Identifying and Quantifying Quality Outcomes

- The Board collaborates with employers to identify certifications, licenses, and credentials aligned with high-demand industries. Staff use this feedback, along with labor market information to identify target occupations, with a high likelihood of successful employment outcomes and self-sufficient wages.
- Partnerships with education providers, such as community colleges and adult education programs, ensure training outcomes meet regional labor market demands.
- Staff will begin additional analysis on training outcomes and certification data, to align with the strategic goals of the Board's Tri-Agency Regional Convener plan. As part of this process, staff will explore additional opportunities to collect outcomes data.
- As part of the Board's contracted performance measures, staff track credential attainment, employment placement rates, and median wages post-training to measure the success of workforce programs and improve decision-making.

Streamlining and Improving Data Matching and Sharing

- The Board employs data tools like WorkinTexas.com, JobsEQ, and state secondary/postsecondary data sources to centralize and streamline the collection of training and certification data.

- Staff will enhance data sharing by including additional data sets and explaining relevancy for various stakeholder groups. Data will be shared regularly with system partners. Staff will also request feedback on additional data sets partners need in order to make more informed decisions.
- Performance data is analyzed and shared with stakeholders, providing insights into the effectiveness of workforce programs, credentialing outcomes, and employment trends.

Strategic Opportunities

[*Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031*](#) envisions a collaborative workforce system capable of accelerating the delivery of workforce programs, services, and initiatives to meet the needs of a thriving economy. The strategic opportunities focus system partners on three critical success factors that will lead to broad achievement of the system plan goals and objectives. Review each strategic opportunity and provide the information requested.

Strategic Opportunity 1 – Employer Engagement

Describe how the local board coordinates with its stakeholders to gain insight into the needs of employers and minimize “asks” that burden employers.

Response should address the following:

- > coordination efforts that gain more insight from employers, including participation in the Tri- Agency Texas Regional Pathways Network, if applicable, and
- > reducing the number of regional system partners individually making requests of employers.

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board prioritizes strong stakeholder collaboration and streamlined communication to gather meaningful insights from employers while minimizing redundant or burdensome requests.

Coordination Efforts to Gain Employer Insights

- The Board is planning to organize industry-specific advisory groups for key sectors, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology. These groups will meet regularly to discuss workforce needs, industry trends, and emerging challenges. Their insights guide training programs, career pathways, and support initiatives. Additionally, the Board will communicate with system partners such as education and economic development to avoid duplication of such advisory group participants, and to share feedback.
- The Board’s leadership in the Tri-Agency Regional Convener initiative strengthens its role in facilitating employer feedback, avoiding duplication of outreach efforts, and ensuring that input is translated into actionable strategies. As part of this process, the Board has discovered the extensiveness of similar efforts across the region and the importance of coordinating those efforts for efficiency.
- The Board provides employers with labor market insights, including in-demand occupations, skill gaps, and credential needs. This data-driven approach fosters informed dialogue with employers and enhances the relevance of workforce initiatives.

Reducing Redundant Employer Requests

- By utilizing advisory groups and roundtables, the Board consolidates requests for employer feedback, reducing the need for individual outreach from multiple system partners. Employers can engage with multiple stakeholders in a single setting, maximizing efficiency.

- The Board works closely with education institutions, economic development organizations, and industry associations to coordinate employer outreach. This collaboration reduces overlapping requests and ensures that employers are not approached by multiple organizations for similar information.
- The Board prioritizes initiatives with tangible outcomes for employers, such as the Teacher Externship Program, which directly connects educators to industry partners to align classroom instruction with workforce needs. Employers benefit from these engagements without repetitive requests for participation.

By leveraging collaborative partnerships, consolidating employer engagement efforts, and having a better understanding of similar efforts, the Board gains valuable insights from employers while minimizing the burden of redundant “asks.” These strategies ensure a coordinated approach to addressing workforce needs and fostering stronger relationships with the business community.

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

Describe how the local board engages Texans with diverse needs — including those with disabilities, foster youth, sex-trafficking victims, incarcerated juveniles and adults, and opportunity youth — by designing programs that address their needs, maximize outcomes, and improve career opportunities.

Response should address the following: models, initiatives, programs, or processes that effectively engage these populations; and promising practices in supportive services models and outcomes that consistently demonstrate success.

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board designs and implements programs, initiatives, and processes that address the unique needs of Texans with diverse needs and barriers to employment. These efforts focus on maximizing outcomes and improving career opportunities for these populations.

Models, Initiatives, and Programs

- Student HireAbility Navigator: The Navigator provides specialized career exploration, workplace readiness training, and employer engagement to connect students with disabilities to meaningful employment opportunities. This staff member also speaks with community groups and connects students with disabilities to those additional resources to support their career goals.
- Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL): This program combines paid work experience with job readiness training, helping students with disabilities gain real-world skills.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Co-Location: The co-location of VR staff at workforce centers ensures seamless access to resources, accommodations, and co-enrollment opportunities.

- Foster Youth Career Exploration: The Board prioritizes foster youth for WIOA services, providing career exploration, internships, and individualized support through Career Coaches and workforce programs. Career coaches provide information on workforce services to area school districts, including information specific to foster youth.
- Collaboration with Social Services: The Board partners with several community-based organizations to share information and ensure each organization knows resources available to connect individuals to safe housing, counseling, and training opportunities tailored to their unique needs. The Board participates in area Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCGs) in order to expand these partnerships and better serve customers.
- Pathways for Reentry Program: The Board is working with the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Texarkana to provide career readiness workshops, vocational training, and reverse referrals to workforce centers upon release for offenders. Staff are also working with this population to develop career and training plans. The Board has also hosted a justice involved job fair for Hopkins County, with plans to host additional events.
- Workforce Partnerships with Employers: The Board educates employers on hiring justice-involved individuals and connects them to incentives such as bonding programs and tax credits. The Board hosted an event for area employers to explain more information about hiring ex-offenders.
- Career Pathways and Youth Internships: In order to connect with opportunity youth, staff working closely with area education providers and the Region 8 Education service center to disseminate information about workforce programs and support services. Additionally, as part of the Tri-Agency Regional Convener grant, the Board is expanding career pathways. As part of these efforts staff are working with Region 8 to better understand the specific needs of opportunity youth and most effective ways to engage with them.

Promising Practices in Supportive Services Models

- Transportation and Child Care: The Board offers fuel cards, public transportation passes, and access to subsidized child care to reduce barriers to program participation and employment.
- Support for Housing and Basic Needs: Partnerships with local nonprofits and housing agencies provide access to temporary housing, clothing, and food assistance.
- Accessibility Enhancements: Workforce centers are equipped with assistive technology and ADA-compliant resources, ensuring all customers, including those with disabilities, can access services.
- Employer Engagement: Regular feedback from employers informs the development of inclusive hiring initiatives and training programs aligned with labor market needs.
- Referral Networks: Established referral networks connect individuals to counseling, financial literacy, and health services, ensuring a comprehensive approach to workforce development. The Board is actively working to grow this network, in order to improve service delivery that meets the diverse needs of customers.

Consistent Success in Outcomes

Programs designed for these diverse populations have shown consistent success in improving career opportunities and outcomes:

- High placement rates for SEAL participants with local employers. A number of participants receiving offers of full employment after the program. This program has proven successful, with positive evaluations from both students and employers.
- The Board's efforts to support justice-involved individuals has varied in the past few years. However, with the new PROWD program, staff are actively engaged with helping this population development career/training plans. This grant has also provided the Board with access to individuals currently incarcerated at the local FCI, and helped staff better understand the challenges this population faces in finding employment. While this is a relatively new program, early participation is a great indicator of potential success.

Strategic Opportunity 3 – Use of Data to Support Investment Decisions

Describe how the local board uses data and evidence to identify and target strategic investments to improve system performance.

Response should address the following:

- > evidence-based practices and data to strategically implement and fund initiatives; and
- > programs that have successfully demonstrated previous program participant credential attainment and employment

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board utilizes data and evidence-based practices to guide strategic decisions, improve system performance, and ensure alignment with regional workforce needs. The Board's approach emphasizes informed decision-making to maximize the impact of resources and provide effective programs for employers and job seekers.

Data and Evidence Based Decision Making

- The Board uses LMI to identify target occupations, high-demand occupations, emerging industry trends, and skills gaps in the region. Data on employment trends, wages, and industry growth informs program development and ensures alignment with employer needs.
- Quarterly labor market reports are shared with training providers, employers, and workforce stakeholders to guide planning and investments.
- Outcomes such as program completions, credential attainment, job placements, and wages are tracked through systems like WorkinTexas.com. Staff review this performance data to identify areas for improvement and implement procedures to improve outcomes.

- Performance data on median earnings, measurable skills gains, and employment retention rates guide adjustments to service delivery and resource allocation.
- The Board evaluates existing initiatives using historical performance data to identify successful models. Outcomes and feedback guide decisions on program updates.
- Input from advisory groups, employers, and training providers is collected through surveys, roundtables, and direct engagement. This information, combined with labor market data, helps the Board ensure successful program outcomes.

Successful Programs for Credential Attainment and Employment

- The Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program provides work experience for students with disabilities, achieving high participation and completion rates. Many participants have been provided the opportunity to transition to permanent roles with participating employers.
- Collaboration with AEL providers has resulted in successful transitions for GED graduates into credentialed training programs. These pathways prepare participants for employment.
- The Board funds Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for programs aligned with the Target Occupations List. Participants consistently achieve high credential attainment rates. The target occupation list is developed by the Board to represent high demand careers in the region. For this reason, customers completing training programs related to the target occupations have a high success rate in finding employment.