



**LOCAL BOARD PLAN
PROGRAM YEARS 2017–2020**

CONTENTS

Part A: Strategic Elements	3
<i>Boards' Vision</i>	3
1. <i>A description of the Board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.</i>	3
2. <i>A description of the Board's strategy to work with the entities carrying out the core programs and with the required partners.</i>	7
<i>Economic and Workforce Analysis</i>	9
3. <i>A regional analysis of the following:</i>	9
4. <i>A list of the in-demand industry sectors and occupations.</i>	14
5. <i>A list of the target occupations.</i>	16
6. <i>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 sectors and occupations.</i>	17
7. <i>An analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.</i>	19
8. <i>Analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including education & training.</i>	21
Part B: Operational Elements	24
9. <i>A description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies:</i>	24
10. <i>A description of how the Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:</i>	25
11. <i>Description of the strategies for coordinating programs & services for target populations.</i> .	27
12. <i>A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area:</i>	30
13. <i>An explanation of how the Board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities</i>	32
14. <i>A description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area:</i>	33
15. <i>A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.</i>	35
16. <i>A description of how the Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities</i>	35
17. <i>A description and assessment of the type and availability of workforce investment activities for youth in the local area, including activities for youth who have disabilities</i>	36
18. <i>A description of how the Board will coordinate relevant secondary- and postsecondary- education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.</i>	37
19. <i>A description of how the Board will provide transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate support services in the local area in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities.</i>	37

20.	<i>A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services.....</i>	38
21.	<i>A description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II.....</i>	38
22.	<i>An identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA as determined by the chief elected officials or the governor under</i>	39
23.	<i>A description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.</i>	39
24.	<i>A description of the local levels of performance negotiated with TWC and the chief elected officials consistent with WIOA §116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the Board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area.....</i>	42
25.	<i>A description of the actions the Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Board.....</i>	43
26.	<i>A description of how training services outlined in WIOA §134 will be provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).....</i>	44
27.	<i>A description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.</i>	45
28.	<i>The Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, consistent with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the Final Regulations.....</i>	46
29.	<i>Boards may impose limits on the duration and amount of ITAs. If the state or Board chooses to do so, the limitations must be described in the Local Plan, but must not be implemented in a manner that undermines WIOA’s requirement that training services are to be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice in the selection of an Eligible Training Provider. Exceptions to ITA limitations may be provided for individual cases and must be described in Board policies.</i>	46
30.	<i>A description of the design framework for youth programs in the local area, and how the 14 program elements required in §681.460 of the Final Regulations are to be made available within that framework.</i>	47
31.	<i>A description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs in its area to register with the eligible training provider system in order to receive WIOA funding.</i>	49
32.	<i>A description of the Board’s strategy and commitment to support Apprenticeship Texas efforts across the state, as applicable.....</i>	50
Part C: Public Comment.....		51

Appendices

Appendix A: Demand Occupations

Appendix B: Target Occupations

Appendix C: Demand Industries

Appendix D: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

PART A: STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

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

BOARDS' VISION

1. *A description of the Board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. The description must include:*
 - a. *goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment; and*
 - b. *goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A).*

Board Response: 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 fully aligned with the Texas Workforce Commission’s Combined State Plan for PY 2017-2020.

The Board applies a “systems approach” to addressing workforce development issues. 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 the economic growth of the area. The Board has partnerships and a memorandum of understanding with both required and optional partners.

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.

1. Employer Driven – Employers are the Board’s primary customer, therefore employer engagement and participation is vital to every aspect of the plan. The Board will continue to engage regional employers, providing information on the workforce system.

The Board will collaborate with education partners to align training programs to meet employer workforce needs.

- Expand outreach within employer community: The Board will work with the Contracted Service Provider and Business Services Unit to expand outreach to the employers in Northeast Texas. The Board will explore additional methods for providing information on workforce development services, highlighting the positive impact they can have on employers. Identify industries and employers that have not utilized workforce services in the past, as potential customers.
 - Employer Seminars: Explore the possibility of holding Employer Seminars to address questions about topics such as Employment Law, Workforce Services, Training Funds, and Training Programs. The Board will partner with Community Colleges, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Corporations, and Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM) groups.
 - Employer Feedback: The Business Services Unit currently uses a combination of surveys and face-to-face meetings to gather employer feedback. The Board will explore methods to enhance this feedback by working with partners such as Economic Development Corporations and Chambers of Commerce. The Board will create a database of employer feedback, which will be used as guidance in workforce development activities.
2. Shared Action and Shared Success through Partnerships - The Board recognizes that no single entity can affect all of the desired change in the region. The Board's role is not to do everything, but to convene the necessary stakeholders and foster partnerships to do the right work – and then share the recognition for success.
- Continue to convene Advisory Groups to discuss regional economic growth: The Board has three Advisory Groups that meet on a regular basis to discuss regional economic growth. The College Presidents' Round Table, Education and Training Advisory Group, and Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group meet with the purpose of discussing regional challenges and opportunities. The Board will continue to explore ways for these groups to work together to further regional economic success.
 - Communicate success through website, newsletter, and social media: The Board understands the importance of recognizing success as a way to build momentum and strengthen partnerships. The Board will continue to recognize partnerships through the website, monthly newsletter, social media, and annual awards banquet. The Board will also explore additional methods for identifying and recognizing workforce success stories.
 - Expand partnership network: The Board will expand the current partnership network. The Board will explore potential new members for Advisory Groups and enhance the current communication plan to ensure all partners are aware of workforce activities within the region. The Board will continue to utilize the monthly workforce newsletter, social media, and website to communicate with partners.
3. Increase Technically Skilled Talent Pool – The Board will take steps to increase the technical skills of the regional workforce. A pipeline of workers with technical skillsets

is essential to fill current job openings, replace retiring workers, allow current companies to expand operations, and to attract new industry. These strategies will target adult learners, students, youth, and individuals with barriers to employment.

- Increase awareness among In-School (IS) and Out-of-School (OS) Youth about the job market in Northeast Texas and the importance of technical skills: The Board will continue to increase outreach to students, parents, and teachers, making the connection between technical skillsets and job opportunities. Expand career exploration tools, focusing on internet based options, including the Board's website and career video series. The Board will continue to hold the LEAP Career Expo for area 8th grade students, and explore ways to add value for the students.
 - Work with Community College partners to increase number of degree/certificate completers: The Northeast Texas region has a relatively low number of Associates/Bachelor's Degree holders. However, the region has a high number of people that have some college, but no degree. The Board will work with Community Colleges and other workforce partners to determine reasons for non-completers, and work to move those students towards degree/certificate completion.
 - Emphasize Career Pathways: The Board will continue to develop and improve career pathway information for the region. The Board will work with Community Colleges, K-12 Educators, employers, and other workforce partners to develop a set of relevant career pathways for the region. Information about the Northeast Texas Career Pathway Model will be provided to all school districts in the region.
 - Utilize Technology to Connect with Students: The Board will continue to expand the use of Social Media and other relevant forms of technology to connect with regional students. The Board will provide students with information about the local labor market, career exploration, local training options, and workforce services.
4. Service Delivery – The Board will continue to support an integrated and seamless service delivery model for workforce services. The Board will explore methods for expanding and enhancing service delivery.
- Utilize Technology to Enhance Service Delivery: The Board will continue to expand the use of text messages and social media, using both to connect with job seekers and employers. Additionally, the Board will explore the possibility of creating a series of videos about Workforce Solutions and workforce services. These videos will be used to outreach existing and potential customers. The Board has developed a Mobile App to compliment the Board's website, and provide information about available services.
 - Career Expos: Continue to hold annual Career Expos throughout the region. The Board will explore ways to improve and enhance the career expo for both the employers and job seekers. Additionally, the Board will gather feedback from employers and job seekers on ways to improve expos.
 - Integrate Workforce Partners into Service Delivery at the Local Level: The Board will continue to explore ways to integrate workforce partners into service delivery. The Board is currently partnering with a local Bank to provide

Financial Literacy classes at the workforce center in Texarkana. The Board partners with a local Adult Education and Literacy contractor to provide high school equivalency instruction in a classroom setting in the Greater Texarkana Workforce Center. Additionally, the Board is preparing to integrate Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the Greater Texarkana Workforce Center on October 1, 2017. The Board will explore ways to increase these types of partnership into service delivery.

- Individuals with Barriers to Employment: The Board and Contracted Service Provider staff will work with individuals whom have barriers to employment, by working to place them in positions to succeed. In addition to the services provided through the Texas Workforce System, these individuals often need services from other organizations to overcome employment barriers. The Board will continue to use the existing network of partners in Northeast Texas for referrals, as well as explore new partnerships that can have a positive influence on customer outcomes.
 - Texas Rising Star Providers: The Board and Contracted Service Provider staff work together to improve the availability and quality of child care services throughout Northeast Texas. The Board will work with existing Texas Rising Star providers to improve their service quality. The Board will also expand outreach to other child care providers, providing information about the benefits of becoming a Texas Rising Star provider.
5. Performance accountability measures: The Board has three standing committees: Executive, Internal, and External. All three play a role in performance evaluation and guidance. Additionally, the Board and Contracted Service Provider management teams meet regularly as the Utilization Management team, to discuss performance measures and status of ongoing initiatives. The Board will continue to ensure performance accountability through a variety of methods.
- Committee oversight: The Board will continue to work with the Contracted Service Provider staff and Board Committees to ensure performance accountability. The Board communicates performance measures, definitions, status and plans to all standing committees. Discussion and open dialogue during committee meetings is important to overall accountability and oversight.
 - Monitoring: The Board will continue to utilize the Monitoring Plan to ensure the contracted service provider is meeting or exceeding performance expectations. Written reports providing the result of administrative monitoring reviews for each service area monitored are prepared and provided to the Contracted Service Provider. All findings are documented in the report and a time-phased corrective action plan is required for deficiencies that are determined to be frequent, recurrent, pervasive, fraudulent, or that pose substantial risk to the Board. All completed Contracted Service Provider monitoring is reported bimonthly to the Board Internal Affairs Committee. A status of ongoing monitoring as well as reports of completed monitoring is provided at each meeting of the Committee.
 - Educating on Performance Measures: The Board has a dedicated quality assurance staff member responsible for analyzing performance measures. The Manager of Program Integrity and Oversight provides information to both Board and Contract staff members, explaining the components of each performance

measure. This staff member also works closely with the Texas Workforce Commission to make sure the Board is aware of any changes or updates in performance.

2. A description of the Board's strategy to work with the entities carrying out the core programs and with the required partners to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the vision and goals.

Board Response: The Board works with the entities carrying out core programs and required partners by fostering an environment of open communication and accountability. The Board and Contracted Service Provider work in partnership to strengthen the workforce development system in Northeast Texas. The Contracted Service Provider for the Northeast Texas area has responsibility for WIOA (adult, dislocated worker, and youth) programs, TANF, SNAP, and Wagner-Peyser Employment Services. The Utilization Management Team, comprised of the Board and Contracted Service Provider management, meet on a regular basis to discuss core program status and relevant information. These meetings, as well as constant open dialogue, ensure the goals and vision for the local workforce development system are always in the forefront of initiatives and actions taken.

The Board has also taken steps to further the integration of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) and the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs into the Texas Workforce system at the local level.

- Northeast Texas has two contracted AEL providers: Bowie Cass Adult Education Cooperative and the Red River Valley Adult Education Consortium. Each of these programs operates as both the service provider and fiscal agent for their respective service delivery areas. The Board has maintained a strong relationship with both groups and will continue to be an active participant in adult education activities moving forward. The Board partners with the Bowie Cass Adult Education Cooperative to provide high school equivalency instruction in a classroom setting in the Greater Texarkana Workforce Center. The Board coordinates integration efforts through regional AEL meetings comprised of representatives from the two AEL providers and career planners from the workforce center.
- The Board has also played a role in the integration of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs into the Texas Workforce System. VR integration is still in the early stages, but the Board has taken steps to make sure the transition is carried out successfully and without an interruption of services to customers. The Board has hosted meetings with both local and state VR staff to discuss the transition process. The VR programs will be located at the Workforce Center offices. The Board and Workforce Centers have taken the proper steps to ensure equipment and facilities meet regulations for VR staff and customers. The Board is preparing to integrate Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the Greater Texarkana Workforce Center on October 1, 2017. The Board will continue to respond to guidance from the Texas Workforce Commission on the VR transition process.

The Board also has Advisory Groups and partnerships in place to ensure workforce partners are able to align available resources for the local area. The Board maintains partnerships with Community Colleges, Economic Development Corporations, K-12 Education, Adult Education, and

Child Care providers through Advisory Groups. These groups play an active role in working with the Board to develop regional workforce goals. The Advisory Groups also act as an accountability system for the Board, ensuring workforce goals are accomplished and adjusted as necessary.

ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

3. A regional analysis of the following:

- a. The economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as well as targeted occupations
- b. The employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations

As appropriate, a local workforce development area (workforce area) may use an existing analysis, provided that it is recent and provides a current and accurate description of the regional economy.

Board Response: 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 an excellent location. 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 2013-2016. The year over year (YOY) change shows the change from the 1st quarter of 2015 to the 1st quarter of 2016. The change column shows a positive change for 6 counties, a negative change for 2 counties, and no change for 1 county. Additionally, this table shows the largest YOY for Morris County. Morris County is home to a US Steel manufacturing plant. Employees at the US Steel plant earn wages well above the regional average, resulting in a high AWW for a small county. Recently, the US Steel plant experienced a massive layoff, in which the great majority of workers lost their jobs. This event will dramatically lower the AWW for Morris County. The two largest counties, Bowie and Lamar, have experienced little change in AWW over the past four years.

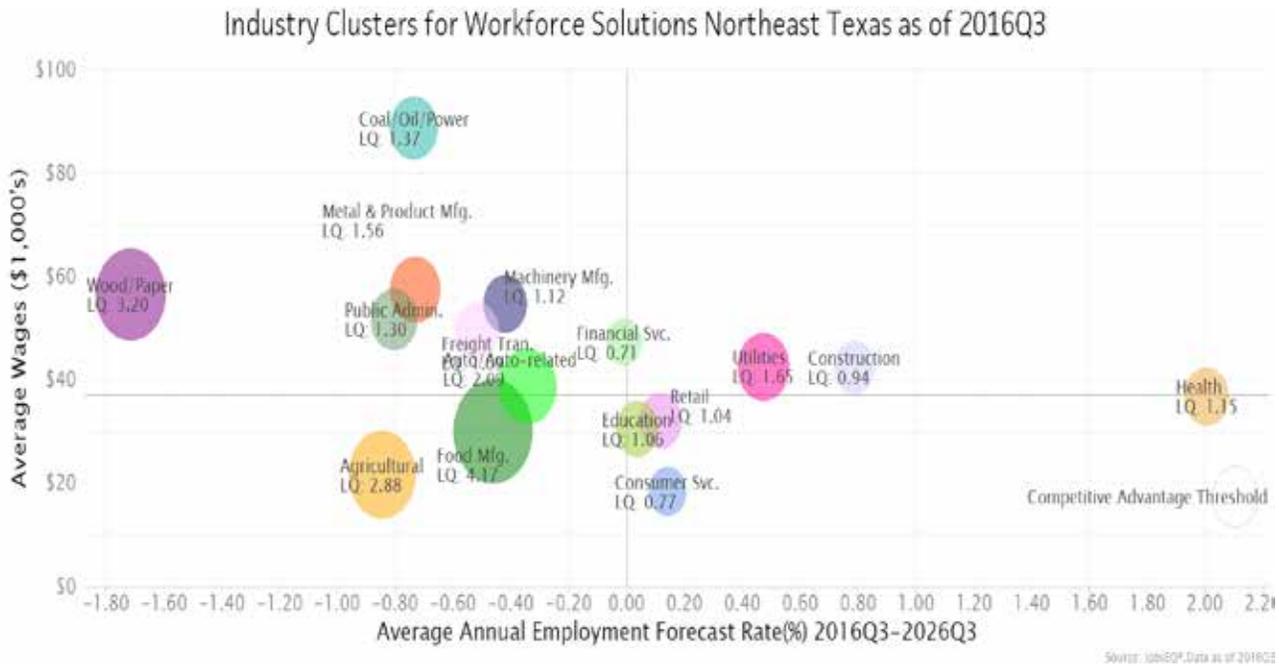
Average Weekly Wages					
County	2013 1Q	2014 1Q	2015 1Q	2016 1Q	YOY Change
Bowie	710	702	706	702	-4
Cass	635	739	667	698	31
Delta	383	372	372	387	15
Franklin	614	653	651	669	18
Hopkins	685	715	676	679	3
Lamar	744	755	750	750	0
Morris	903	871	945	777	-168
Red River	560	552	555	580	25
Titus	625	666	670	684	14

Industry Snapshot: The largest sector in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 19,606 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Manufacturing (16,717 workers) and Retail Trade (14,286). 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 = 3.05), Utilities (1.70), and Manufacturing (1.66).

Sectors in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area with the highest average wages per worker are Utilities (\$90,816), Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$77,963), and Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$64,424). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 5 years are Accommodation and Food Services (+1,525 jobs), Transportation and Warehousing (+653), and Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (+577). Over the next 10 years, employment in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area is projected to expand by 2,966 jobs. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Health Care and Social Assistance with a +2.0% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Health Care and Social Assistance (+4,304 jobs), Construction (+527), and Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (+282).

		Current			Forecast		
		Four Quarters Ending with 2016q3			Over the Next 10 Years		
NAICS	Industry	Current Employment	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient	Total Approx Repl Demand	Total Growth Demand	Avg. Annual Growth Percent
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5,477	\$22,552	3.05	1,840	-475	-0.9%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	636	\$77,963	1.21	155	11	0.2%
22	Utilities	1,113	\$90,816	1.70	275	-70	-0.6%
23	Construction	6,315	\$42,726	0.94	1,281	527	0.8%
31	Manufacturing	16,717	\$50,384	1.66	3,724	-1,331	-0.8%
42	Wholesale Trade	4,440	\$46,941	0.93	977	17	0.0%
44	Retail Trade	14,286	\$27,514	1.08	4,435	203	0.1%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	4,778	\$50,061	0.95	1,219	-169	-0.4%
51	Information	981	\$39,181	0.40	216	-162	-1.8%
52	Finance and Insurance	3,441	\$47,075	0.71	807	-4	0.0%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,231	\$37,571	0.60	267	-61	-0.5%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,518	\$50,749	0.32	531	147	0.6%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	523	\$64,424	0.30	111	1	0.0%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,958	\$27,713	0.63	1,135	282	0.6%
61	Educational Services	11,036	\$33,525	1.10	2,304	79	0.1%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	19,606	\$36,576	1.15	4,121	4,304	2.0%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	829	\$18,906	0.35	256	32	0.4%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	10,083	\$15,594	0.93	3,542	187	0.2%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,991	\$22,676	0.92	1,249	31	0.1%
92	Public Administration	7,566	\$52,212	1.30	1,755	-587	-0.8%
99	Unclassified	68	\$33,126	0.25	17	2	0.3%
	Total - All Industries	121,595	\$37,176	1.00	29,789	2,966	0.2%

Industry Clusters: A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area with the highest relative concentration is Food Mfg. with a location quotient of 4.17. This cluster employs 5,641 workers in the region with an average wage of \$30,007. Employment in the Food Mfg. cluster is projected to contract in the region about 0.5% per year over the next ten years. Additionally, the Texarkana MSA is a regional hub for Health Care Services. Although the location quotient does not show a significant concentration, the health care industry in Northeast Texas is the largest single industry sector, employing more than 19,000 workers. The Health Care sector also projects the largest increase in employment over the next 10 years, at 2.0%.



Occupation Snapshot: The largest major occupation group in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area is Office and Administrative Support Occupations, employing 15,444 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Sales and Related Occupations (11,967 workers) and Production Occupations (11,749). 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 = 1.56), Healthcare Support Occupations (1.33), and Management Occupations (1.27).

Occupation groups in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area with the highest average wages per worker are Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations (\$117,800), Management Occupations (\$88,800), and Legal Occupations (\$82,200). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 1.8% among Legal Occupations to 9.3% among Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations.

Over the next 10 years, the fastest growing occupation group in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area is expected to be Healthcare Support Occupations with a +2.4%

year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Healthcare Support Occupations (+1,283 jobs) and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (+1,183). Over the same period, the highest replacement demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Management Occupations (3,989 jobs) and Sales and Related Occupations (3,976).

		Current					Forecast			
		Four Quarters Ending with 2016q3			2016q3		Over the Next 10 Years			
SOC	Title	Empl	Avg. Annual Wages ¹	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Current Online Job Ads ²	Total Repl Demand	Total Growth Demand	Avg. Annual Growth Percent
11-0000	Management Occupations	9,337	\$88,800	1.27	171	1.9%	297	3,989	-308	-0.3%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	4,372	\$62,000	0.74	181	4.3%	82	951	22	0.0%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	1,362	\$65,100	0.41	61	4.3%	110	202	47	0.3%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	1,257	\$78,300	0.62	34	2.6%	26	316	-60	-0.5%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	779	\$117,800	0.80	17	2.5%	41	239	-6	-0.1%
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	1,778	\$42,300	0.92	61	3.5%	44	397	142	0.8%
23-0000	Legal Occupations	605	\$82,200	0.63	11	1.8%	4	118	-1	0.0%
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	7,995	\$40,000	1.16	524	6.5%	61	1,719	138	0.2%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	1,210	\$41,000	0.57	59	4.9%	49	421	-60	-0.5%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	7,762	\$68,700	1.13	167	2.4%	459	1,787	1,183	1.4%
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	4,751	\$23,500	1.33	302	6.7%	155	1,090	1,283	2.4%
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	1,747	\$36,900	0.74	87	5.0%	36	440	-24	-0.1%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	10,122	\$19,800	0.96	957	9.3%	598	3,806	213	0.2%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	4,086	\$22,500	0.93	289	7.2%	132	921	108	0.3%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	4,560	\$19,900	0.94	262	5.9%	141	1,157	878	1.8%
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	11,967	\$32,600	0.94	770	6.3%	1,133	3,976	157	0.1%
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	15,444	\$31,400	0.84	893	5.8%	474	3,412	-323	-0.2%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	978	\$27,100	1.23	68	6.7%	2	480	-93	-1.0%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	5,344	\$36,500	0.98	389	6.8%	69	1,020	359	0.7%

49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	5,366	\$41,200	1.15	256	4.8%	203	1,342	87	0.2%
51-0000	Production Occupations	11,749	\$31,900	1.56	982	8.1%	111	3,006	-752	-0.7%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	9,026	\$30,300	1.10	856	9.0%	227	2,310	-27	0.0%
00-0000	Total - All Occupations	121,595	\$39,000	1.00	n/a	n/a	4,454	33,098	2,962	0.2%

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 Provider System (ETPS) 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 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, Texas A&M University – Texarkana and Texas A&M University – Commerce. The Roundtable, which meets quarterly, 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.

The two largest industry sectors in Northeast Texas are Manufacturing and Health Care. Both of these industries need a high number of workers at varying levels of skill. Technology has greatly changed the manufacturing industry over the past 20 years. In order to remain competitive, manufacturers must improve efficiencies while still providing a high quality product and a safe work environment. Manufacturing operates in a very lean system, making it important for employees to have a variety of skill sets. Northeast Texas manufacturing relies upon maintenance technicians, as much or more than any other position. Manufacturers rely on machinery and equipment in every aspect of the operation. Maintenance technicians ensure that equipment and machinery is operating properly to avoid production downtime. Maintenance technicians must be able to troubleshoot and apply critical thinking analysis daily to repair and maintain machinery.

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.

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

Board Response: The Northeast Texas region is home to a number of strong industries that support economic stability and growth in the region. The Board has identified demand industries as those with a current employment of at least 500 and a 10 year growth percentage of at least 10%. The Board uses local wisdom to explain the inclusion of industries that do not meet these two requirements.

Industry Code	Industry Title	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024	Number Change 2014-2024	Percent Growth 2014-2024
3362	Motor Vehicle Body & Trailer Manufacturing	2100	2800	700	33%
6221	General Medical & Surgical Hospital, Public & Private	4460	5150	690	15%
6231	Nursing Care Facilities, Skilled Nursing	2150	2500	350	16%
4841	General Freight Trucking	1090	1390	300	28%
8111	Automotive Repair & Maintenance	970	1200	230	24%
4931	Warehousing & Storage	1270	1440	170	13%
3329	Other Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	1470	1630	160	11%
2211	Power Generation & Supply	570	660	90	16%
2373	Highway, Structure & Bridge Construction	430	460	30	7%
3221	Pulp, Paper, and Paperboard Mills	860	800	-60	-7%
3114	Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing	920	1040	120	13%
3116	Animal Slaughtering and Processing	3805	4597	792	21%
3222	Converted Paper Product Manufacturing	775	823	48	6%

The Board has identified 14 high demand occupations, displayed in the table below. Some of the high demand occupations may also be found on the Target Occupation list. WIOA training funds will be expended on Target Occupations only. The Demand Occupations list represents occupations in Northeast Texas with 10-year projected growth rates of at least 20%. The Demand Occupation list does not limit occupations based on wages or required education.

SOC Code	In-Demand Occupation Job Title (Name)	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024	Number Change 2014-2024	Percent Growth 2014-2024
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1490	1830	340	22.8%
41-2011	Cashiers	3030	3510	480	15.8%
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers Incl. Fast Food	4230	5150	920	21.7%
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Ex. Special Education	1460	1690	230	15.8%
11-1021	General & Operations Managers	1380	1610	230	16.7%
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2000	2400	400	20.0%
37-2011	Janitors & Cleaners, Ex. Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	1540	1770	230	14.9%
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	1240	1490	250	20.2%
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	3770	4880	1110	29.4%
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2370	2890	520	21.9%
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	4040	4990	950	23.5%
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Ex. Special/Career/Technical Ed	1430	1660	230	16.1%
43-5081	Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	1460	1710	250	17.1%
51-2092	Team Assemblers	1320	1540	220	16.7%

5. *A list of the target occupations.*

Board Response: 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 \$12 per hour or more, a combined job growth and replacement total of at least 10 per year, and a training period within the Board’s goal for education or on-the-job training (OJT).

Data is gathered by identifying the targeted industries for the region and using both TRACER and JobsEQ to identify occupations within those industries. A filter was applied for mean hourly wage, anticipated growth and replacement rates, and training preferences. Please note that the majority of the occupations identified, outside of the healthcare industry, require short-term educational, work readiness skills training or OJT. There were a few exceptions to the filtering criteria, which can be explained by looking at the current job postings for the area using Wanted Analytics or by applying local wisdom.

The Board gathers local wisdom in a variety of ways. Board staff members attend quarterly meetings with the workforce centers’ Business Services Unit (BSU) to discuss the jobs and skills most requested by employers. The BSU maintains constant contact with employers and gathers information from them during employer visits and job fair events. The Board is a member of three 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.

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)	Target Occupation Job Title
29-1141	Registered Nurses
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses
51-2092	Team Assemblers
43-6014	Secretaries & Admin Assistants, EX. Legal/Medical/Executive
49-3023	Auto Service Technicians and Mechanics
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Ex. Engines
43-6013	Medical Secretaries
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics
51-4041	Machinists
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, & Weighers
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, & Traffic Clerks

47-2111	Electricians
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics
31-9091	Dental Assistants
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks
47-2031	Carpenters
49-3021	Auto Body & Related Repairs
49-9021	Heating, AC, & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers
51-3092	Food Batchmakers
51-4011	Computer Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal/Plastic
51-9111	Packaging & Filling Machine Operators & Tenders
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production & Operating Workers
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists
31-9092	Medical Assistants
49-9044	Millwrights
51-4081	Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, & Tenders
51-9122	Painters, Transportation Equipment
29-2012	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians
29-2055	Surgical Technologists
47-2073	Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators

6. 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 sectors and occupations.

Board Response: The Strategic Workforce Assessment Program (SWAP), 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 prime knowledge, skills, and abilities most commonly required for the target occupations and demand industries in Northeast Texas.

Prime Knowledge	Prime Skills	Prime Abilities
Administration and Management	Critical Thinking	Deductive Reasoning
Clerical	Installation	Information Ordering
Mechanical	Operation and Control	Manual Dexterity
Production and Processing	Writing	Problem Sensitivity
Medicine and Dentistry	Quality Control Analysis	Written Expression

Prime Knowledge:

- 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.
- Clerical — Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.
- Mechanical — Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
- Production and Processing — Knowledge of raw materials, production processes, quality control, costs, and other techniques for maximizing the effective manufacture and distribution of goods.
- Medicine and Dentistry — Knowledge of the information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.

Prime Skills:

- Critical Thinking — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
- Installation — Installing equipment, machines, wiring, or programs to meet specifications.
- Operation and Control — Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
- Writing — Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
- Quality Control Analysis — Conducting tests and inspections of products, services, or processes to evaluate quality or performance.

Prime Abilities:

- Deductive Reasoning—The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
- 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).
- Manual Dexterity — The ability to quickly move your hand, your hand together with your arm, or your two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.
- 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 there is a problem.
- Written Expression — The ability to communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.

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

Board Response: The Northeast Texas region has faced some challenging economic events over the past year, but there are signs pointing to the region overcoming these challenges. The Northeast Texas workforce largely concentrated into 5 industries, which account for 60% 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 \$37,176, with both Health Care and Manufacturing paying wages in excess of that average.

Northeast Texas has experienced an increase in both the Labor Force and Employment levels over the past year. Labor Force has increased by 1734, while employment has increased by 800. Increases in both of these categories are a positive sign for the region. An increase in the regional labor force shows both population growth and a return to the labor force by those job seekers that had previously stopped actively searching for employment.

Labor Force			
	September 15	September 16	YOY Change
Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	120733	122467	1734
Bowie	39471	39848	377
Cass	12147	12367	220
Delta	2606	2640	34
Franklin	4466	4497	31
Hopkins	16927	17134	207
Lamar	22365	23051	686
Morris	5200	5111	-89
Red River	4915	4961	46
Titus	12636	12858	222

Employment			
	September 15	September 16	YOY Change
Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	114385	115185	800
Bowie	37594	37733	139
Cass	11306	11388	82
Delta	2494	2528	34
Franklin	4233	4250	17
Hopkins	16228	16395	167
Lamar	21294	21818	524
Morris	4732	4458	-274
Red River	4606	4641	35
Titus	11898	11974	76

Although employment and labor force levels are on the rise, the region has seen an increase in the unemployment rate over the past year. While a portion of this increase can be attributed to an increase in the number of job seekers actively looking for work, a more significant portion is directly related to job loss across the region. A large steel production operation in Morris County closed operations in 2016, resulting in a number of dislocated workers. Additionally, downturns in the Oil/Gas and Energy Industries affected employers in Lamar, Titus, and Hopkins counties. Although the layoffs occurred in the aforementioned counties, several other Northeast Texas counties were negatively impacted as well. Considering the number of jobs lost as a result of these economic challenges, a net growth of 800 jobs for the region is a positive sign for the current workforce.

Unemployment Rate			
	September 15	September 16	YOY Change
Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	5.3	5.9	0.6
Bowie	4.8	5.3	0.5
Cass	6.9	7.9	1
Delta	4.3	4.2	-0.1
Franklin	5.2	5.5	0.3
Hopkins	4.1	4.3	0.2
Lamar	4.8	5.3	0.5
Morris	9	12.8	3.8
Red River	6.3	6.5	0.2
Titus	5.8	6.9	1.1

Educational levels in Northeast Texas indicate areas of strengths and weaknesses for a regional workforce. Areas of strengths include the region's percentage of Associate's Degrees. Northeast Texas has a higher percentage of Associate's Degrees at 7.4% than the state of Texas at 7.1%. Another number in the following chart representing a challenge for the area is the high percentage of people with "Some College, No Degree". Northeast Texas has a higher percentage than both Texas and the USA in this category. This number indicates the area has a large number of students starting a degree or certificate program but failing to complete the program. It is essential for Northeast Texas to have an educated workforce and increasing the number of degree and certificate completers can have a significant impact on the regional economy. An area of concern is the high percentage of High School Graduates that do not pursue higher education and the low percentage of people holding a Bachelor's Degree. Analyzing this data indicates that the area needs to improve its ability to transfer students from one level of education to another. Northeast Texas needs to move more students from High School Graduate Level, to Associate's Degrees, and more Associate Degree holders to Bachelor's Degrees.

Summary						
	Percent			Value		
	Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	Texas	USA	Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	Texas	USA
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64						
No High School Diploma	15.0%	17.1%	12.0%	21,262	2,319,575	19,939,890
High School Graduate	35.2%	24.7%	26.5%	49,796	3,357,076	44,000,387
Some College, No Degree	26.1%	23.2%	21.9%	37,039	3,145,643	36,270,359
Associate's Degree	7.4%	7.1%	8.7%	10,442	959,102	14,487,486
Bachelor's Degree	11.1%	18.9%	19.7%	15,726	2,560,609	32,646,533
Postgraduate Degree	5.2%	9.1%	11.2%	7,391	1,234,968	18,533,513

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board area is projected to grow 0.2% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 1.0% per year, those requiring a bachelor's degree are forecast to grow 0.3% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 0.8% per year.



8. An analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including education and training.

Note: This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and an evaluation of the effectiveness of programs and services. It must evaluate the Board's capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the identified education and skills needs of the workforce. The analysis must include individuals with barriers to employment. The analysis also must address the employment needs of employers.

Board Response: 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. These activities include:

Workshops: designed for universal job seekers wishing to enhance self-marketing skills. Topics include WorkInTexas basics, resume writing, interviewing skills, applications 101, workplace diversity, and financial literacy. 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. These workshops will assist those who may have been out of the job market for an extended interval, such as veterans, the homeless, or individuals with disabilities.

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.

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.

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.

Vocational and Occupational Skills Training: For WIOA Adults, WIOA Youth, WIOA Dislocated Workers, and 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.

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. As part of a grant from the Department of Defense, the Board is also in the early stages of a Workforce Needs Analysis for the region. The Board will contract with a consultant to gather information from employers on current training needs and anticipated training needs for the future. The results of this analysis will be used in discussions with workforce development partners, including Community Colleges, Economic Development Corporations, K-12 Educators, and Board Advisory Groups. The Board will use this information to further align workforce services with employer needs.

PART B: OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS

The Operational Elements of the Guidelines are as follows:

9. *A description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies:*

- a. *the programs that are included in the system; and*
- b. *how the Board will support the strategy identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, that support the strategy identified in the State Plan under WIOA §102(b)(1)E).*

Board Response: The Board strives to provide superior service to all customers. WIOA offers a comprehensive list of core programs for job seekers in the Northeast Texas region. Programs are provided at one of four Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas workforce center offices and include:

- WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Service
- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) /Choices
- SNAP E&T – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training and
- TAA - Trade Adjustment Assistance

Additionally, services for job seekers at the workforce centers include:

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

Customers that require assistance of any services have trained staff members available to answer questions and assist them.

Northeast Texas customers also include local employers. Services that are provided to all employers at their request include:

- 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.
- Information about training incentives such as on-the-job training programs

The Board partners with a number of organizations throughout the region. These include economic development entities, chambers of commerce, community colleges, universities and school districts to strengthen the region’s workforce. These partnerships assist the Board in helping job seekers with access to employment, education, training and support services.

Partnerships also aid in supporting career and technical education. The Board will work to fulfill the following goals:

- To meet the demands of local employers, the Board will continue to work with them to recognize training opportunities in the region.
- Continue to work with the Region 8 Education Service Center to determine strategies to best reacquaint local school districts with the Board’s Make it Work in Texas campaign each year.
- Continue to provide industry tours for Career and Technology teachers.
- Work with the Business Services unit to explore industries for tours.
- Explore opportunities for providing industry tours for high school seniors.
- Ensure school guidance counselors and teachers have the best possible information about career options.
- Continue to have Virtual Job Shadow’s career videos available for all school districts on the Board’s website and mobile App.
- Provide annual newsletter to high school and community college counselors informing them of current demand occupations, LMI data, and new companies in the area along with job offerings.
- Identify youth job fairs throughout the region.
- Continue to expand the LEAP (Learning Endorsements and Professions) Expo for 8th grade students.
- Use the Board’s website and social media app to promote information on career pathways.

The Board will continue to support the Texas Workforce Commission’s state strategy to work with entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs. Through co-location efforts and the “franchise” service delivery model, customers can receive service efficiency and identical services at any of the four workforce centers in Northeast Texas. The Board has facilitated the integration of formal training programs by developing partnerships with local community colleges. This integration includes allowing a Workforce Center Career Planner to work from the Texarkana College campus, further aligning workforce development services for area students and job seekers.

10. A description of how the Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:

- a. expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;*

- b. facilitate the development of career pathways and coenrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and*
- c. improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).*

Board Response: The Board works closely with entities carrying out core programs to improve the workforce development system in Northeast Texas. Entities carrying out core programs include Principle Concepts (Workforce Center Contracted Service Provider), Bowie Cass Adult Education, Red River Valley Adult Education Consortium, and the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services. Working in partnership, these entities are focused on enhancing service delivery.

The Board and workforce partners will continue to explore methods for expanding access to workforce services. Methods for expanding access include:

- Continue to expand technology at the Workforce Centers to enhance accessibility of services, resource rooms and self-service options for job seekers.
- The Workforce Center has a dedicated Career Planner that spends scheduled time each week on the Texarkana College campus. The Career Planner speaks with students about workforce services. The Board and Contracted Service Provider will explore ways to expand this service, by including career planners at Northeast Texas Community College and Paris Junior College.
- Continue to work with current partners and expand outreach, exploring new potential partnerships. Partnerships are vital in workforce development, and expanding those partnerships will allow the Board to reach a wider group of customers.

The Board will work with the Contracted Service Provider, Community Colleges, and Adult Education providers to strengthen the Career Pathways Model for Northeast Texas, focusing on outreach and co-enrollment.

- Provide more structure and detail to the current career pathways model.
- Work with community colleges to develop contacts for implementing cross referrals.
- Continue to work with the College President's Roundtable to provide labor market information for new program development.
- Continue to provide industry tours for Career and Technical Education teachers. Industry tours provide an inside look at employers operations. Teachers get a better understanding of job opportunities and the skillsets needed for those jobs. The Board will incorporate career pathways into these discussions.

The Board will continue to offer several initiatives supporting postsecondary credentials and information about local training programs. The Board will also work with Advisory Groups to expand these initiatives and explore additional options.

- Continue to partner with Region 8 Education Service Center to promote Career and Technical Education throughout the region.
- The Board provides career information videos from Virtual Job Shadow. The Board will highlight those careers that require a postsecondary credential and those that can be found in the Career Pathways model.

- Continue to promote the Board’s Make it Work in Texas campaign to give students a glimpse at manufacturing opportunities in the area. When funding allows, update the materials. Expand the target audiences to include Adult Education and Literacy and Vocational Rehabilitation groups in the region.
- Continue to work with middle schools in the region to promote careers through the LEAP Expos. The Youth Career Expos offer students a glimpse at area employers and training providers. The Board will explore ways to incorporate information about postsecondary credentials into this event.
- The Board will work with Advisory Groups and the employer community to develop a list of postsecondary credentials and industry recognized certifications, relevant to Northeast Texas.

11. A description of the strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.

Board Response: The Board utilizes a single contract with Principle Concepts, LLC as the Workforce Services and Child Care Provider. Contracting with a single entity allows for total integration of service delivery and facilitates the efficacy and economy of service across multiple funding sources. Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas operates four workforce centers under a “franchise” model ensuring adherence to policies and procedures is consistent without regard to the location of the services provided.

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas has developed and published a document containing the Minimum Standards for Operation of the Workforce Centers. These standards create the foundation for providing services and are the basis from which the quality of the customer driven service delivery system is measured. Adherence to these quality standards is a requirement of the Workforce Services Provider contract. Additionally, local performance measures are negotiated annually and made a part of the contract each fiscal year. The performance measures and goals are aligned with and designed to ensure the employment needs of local employers and customers are met and that a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of achieving those goals is accomplished on a continuous basis. The Utilization Management Committee, comprised of Board staff and Contracted Service Provider management, meets bi-weekly to review performance and conduct a root cause analysis of any impediments to continuous improvement.

Additionally, the Board meets on a regular basis with a number of Advisory Groups. These groups are designed to include representatives from different areas in Northeast Texas, each offering a different and important perspective on the quality of workforce services. The Board aims to provide information to the Advisory Groups and solicit advice that can be used to enhance program services for target populations.

The Board has a number of target populations, including Employers, Job Seekers, Workers, Veterans, Individuals with Disabilities, and Youth.

Employers: The service delivery model for employer engagement is focused around a dedicated Business Services Unit. Business and Employment Consultants (BEC) work with area employers by posting openings in the WorkinTexas system, screening and referring qualified applicants and providing local intelligence such as labor market information. In addition, BEC assist employers with business expansion opportunities by providing information regarding Work Opportunity Tax Credits, On-the-Job Training, and Skills Development Grants, thus allowing employers to save time and money. Employer outreach and engagement are crucial,

and as such, two BEC positions covering the nine-county region are devoted entirely to this objective. These staff members work closely with area businesses to identify needs such as current labor pool skills gaps and supply linkages to local training providers to ensure a skilled and ready workforce exists to meet employer needs. These services increase employer capacity and allow employers to be more competitive in the current local economy.

Job Seekers: The Board and Workforce Center staff work in partnership to develop strategies that will help job seekers find employment. Workforce center staff members provide Career Services in accordance with WIOA regulations. Career services provided to job seekers include:

- Outreach, intake and orientation
- Initial assessment
- Labor exchange services
- Eligibility for services
- Referrals to programs
- Performance and cost information
- Information on unemployment insurance
- Financial aid information
- Follow-up services
- Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
- Career planning and counseling
- Comprehensive assessment
- Short-term Educational and/or Work Readiness Skills Training
- Internship and work experience including transitional jobs and industry partnerships
- Workforce preparation
- Out-of-area job search
- English language acquisition
- Financial literacy

The Business Services Unit (BSU) at the workforce centers work closely with Northeast Texas employers. This relationship is also used to understand employer hiring needs and connect job seekers with job opportunities that meet their skill levels and career goals.

The Board and Workforce Center teams also work together to provide Career and Community Resources Expos throughout the region on a periodic basis. These Expos provide a great opportunity to job seekers, allowing them to speak with several employers in a short amount of time, increasing their chances of finding employment.

The Board also explores opportunities for additional funding to provide training to area job seekers. The Board has recently been successful in securing additional funds through Dislocated Worker Grants, provided by the Department of Labor. These grants are provided in response to large, unexpected layoff events causing significant job losses. Funds are used to assist dislocated workers by providing them the opportunity to receive training and increase their skillsets, with an ultimate goal of helping them obtain full-time employment.

Workers: The Board maintains relationships with a number of workforce partners, including Community Colleges, Economic Development Corporations, Chambers of Commerce, and employers. The Board takes an active role in convening these groups to identify and respond to employer and worker needs. The Board and Community College partners take an active role in pursuing Skills Development Fund (SDF) grants for regional employer partners. These grants allow Northeast Texas employers to train new and existing workers, in an effort to remain competitive in the marketplace. Providing current workers with an opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills also strengthens the Northeast Texas workforce. A strong workforce increases expansion potential for existing employers and improves the region's marketability to new employers.

Veterans: The Board is dedicated to providing outstanding services to veterans. By partnering with the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to provide one stop services through local, well trained staff dedicated to meeting the unique needs of the veteran population, Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas ensures the delivery of expedited and quality services. In addition, veterans receive priority of service in all Workforce Solutions offices and applicable programs. The Board also takes part in local and state veteran initiatives to support our service members. The Workforce Centers and Board staff coordinate and facilitate projects such as the Wounded Warrior and Red, White, and You veteran job fair initiatives, at the local level. Veterans are outreached by the Veteran Career Advisor (VCA) staff through job posting contacts, mailing of WorkInTexas.com updates, telephone contacts, mailing, or emailing of veteran employment services letters and emailing VET Central job posting information to veterans for the purpose of job development services. The Veterans County Service Officers (VCSOs) of Bowie County and Miller County are contacted regularly to identify veterans in need of TVC and Workforce Solutions employment services.

Individuals with Disabilities: The Board strives to achieve seamless delivery of services and universal access to individuals with disabilities and language barriers and to provide area employers with the most qualified labor force. Workforce Solutions centers have expanded existing technology to enhance accessibility of services, resource rooms, and self-service options for job seekers with a wide range of visual, hearing, physical, cognitive, and other disabilities. Resource rooms are equipped with access stations that include: adjustable tables, large screen monitors on moveable mounting arms, alternative input devices such as track ball and hands free mice, as well as oversized keyboards and touch screen technology. In addition, text magnification and screen reading software is available on workstations designed for the sight impaired; as well as a video magnifier for printed materials. Portable assisted living devices are available to the hearing impaired as are text based Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD).

In addition to these services, the Board is committed to working with the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) now transferred to the Texas Workforce Commission. Co-location of DARS at the Workforce Centers will provide a one-stop delivery system for individuals with disabilities. The Board plans to work with DARS in partnership to help these customers find employment.

Youth: Youth populations represent the future workforce and a key element of a thriving local economy. Through the youth program administered by Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas, customers are able to take advantage of an array of different activities designed to prepare them for the world of work. Youth can take advantage of many of the same offerings available to other populations such as staff assisted job search, workshops, assessment, short-term educational training, work readiness skills training, on-the-job training and secondary education equivalency services. One of the main components of the youth program is Work Experience, which allows youth, many of whom have never been exposed to employment, the opportunity to get practical hands on work experience while gaining valuable skills. For youth who are basic skills deficient, Workforce Center staff work with them to improve literacy and numeracy skills through a variety of computer based remediation exercises designed to refresh and improve reading comprehension and mathematical computation.

12. A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area:

- a. To facilitate engagement of employers in the workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations*
- b. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area*
- c. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development*
- d. To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs*

Note: *This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, use of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers. These initiatives must support the strategy described above.*

Board Response: The goal of the Board is to be the primary provider of human capital to employers in the area. The Workforce Centers serve as a central point of contact for employers and promote knowledge and continuing use of Workforce services. The Board has established an employer-driven system dedicated to sustaining and promoting business development in the region. Providing quality, value-added services to local employers allows Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas to propagate the relationship between employers and job seekers.

The service delivery model for employer engagement is focused around a dedicated Business Services unit. Business and Employment Consultants (BEC) work with area employers by posting openings in the WorkinTexas system, screening and referring qualified applicants and providing local intelligence such as labor market information. In addition, the BEC assists employers with business expansion opportunities by providing information regarding Work Opportunity Tax Credits, On-the-Job Training, and Skills Development Grants, thus allowing employers to save time and money.

Employer outreach and engagement are crucial, and as such, two BEC positions covering the nine-county region are devoted entirely to this objective. These staff members work closely with area businesses to identify needs such as current labor pool skills gaps and supply linkages to local training providers to ensure a skilled and ready workforce exists to meet employer

needs. These services increase employer capacity and allow employers to be more competitive in the current local economy.

Integrated services are provided to all employers at their request through a single point of contact to support local and regional economic and workforce development efforts. These services, at a minimum, include:

- Assistance in finding employees including instructions on how to provide quality job postings resulting in matches with the most qualified workers;
- Labor exchange;
- Rooms for employers' usage and interview facilities (available on a first-come, first-served basis)
- State and/or federally generated Labor Market Information (LMI);
- State and/or federally generated information on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- Information regarding consultations on workplace accommodations for persons with disabilities;
- Information on and referral to business start-up, retention, and expansion services;
- Information on and referral to sources for developing customized training programs;
- Information on and referral to career preparation activities;
- Rapid response to mass layoffs and business closings;
- Information about training incentives such as on-the-job training programs (based on worker eligibility); and,
- State and/or federally generated information on tax credits for new hires.

The Board has several Advisory Groups focused on regional collaboration and responding to the needs of local employers. The College Presidents' Roundtable is comprised of the College Presidents of the three Community Colleges and two universities in Northeast Texas. The Education and Training Advisory Group is a combination of both K-12 representatives and Higher Education representatives. The Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group is represented by Economic Development Corporations, Chambers of Commerce, and others working in the economic development profession. The Child Care Advisory Group is comprised of local child care professionals. These groups meet on a regular basis to discuss regional challenges and opportunities. One of the primary objectives of all four groups is providing a skilled workforce for the success of existing industry and the attraction of new industry. These groups have successfully responded to industry needs on many occasions, including the High Demand Job Training Grants that used state and local funds to start new Computer Numerical Control (CNC) training programs. These programs were created in response to employer needs. The College Presidents' Roundtable has also been able to develop shared programs. While the need for some training programs exists, there is not enough demand to justify the cost of separate programs at each Community College. The College Presidents work together to rotate the programs each year, reducing costs, while continuing to meet the workforce needs of local employers.

The Board works with the Business Services Unit, Community Colleges, and Economic Development Corporations to outreach employers concerning the benefits of the Skills Development Fund (SDF) program. The Board works with these partners to actively develop SDF projects in Northeast Texas. Employers are provided information about SDF grants, including benefits for the employers, employees, and community college. Several employers in Northeast Texas have taken advantage of SDF grants in the past few years, but there remain a large number of potential employer partners that have never participated in a SDF project. The

Board will explore expanding outreach and target those employers that have not participated in a previous SDF grant.

The Board will continue to meet the needs of dislocated workers throughout the Northeast Texas region. Quality and relevant services are critical in assisting these workers with reemployment opportunities. Dislocated Workers (DLW) are priority customers for placement in On-the-Job Training (OJT) training activities, shortening the time they are out of work. Business Services team members evaluate DLW customer profiles to assess relative skills and abilities in order to make quality job matches, while identifying high quality employment opportunities. Northeast has executed in excess of one hundred twenty five on-the-job training agreements during the past twenty four months and is skilled in utilizing this method of obtaining reemployment for DLW. Business Services staff also work closely with area employers to make connections between DLW and employers looking to hire strong candidates. The Board works to identify additional funding opportunities to assist in the reemployment process. The Board has applied for and received multiple Dislocated Worker Grants, designed to provide vocational and occupational training for DLW in Northeast Texas. These training programs are identified as those with a high probability of employment after completion, again shortening the amount of time a DLW is unemployed.

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

Board Response: The Board will continue to strengthen partnerships with Economic Development organizations in Northeast Texas. The Board convenes the Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group to discuss regional economic development challenges and opportunities. This group is comprised of economic development professionals from across the region. Acting as an advisory group to the Board's External Affairs Committee, the Workforce and Economic Development group provides insight and expertise on the economic development climate in Northeast Texas.

The Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group has provided input to help establish the Board's Target Occupation List. Acting as a source of local wisdom, the group has insight about employer training needs that is not always apparent in the labor market data. The Advisory group also played an important role in determining the target certifications for the Industry Recognized Certification Grant.

The Board brought the High Demand Job Training Grant opportunity to the Workforce and Economic Advisory Group members. Several of the members were interested in this opportunity and pledged the matching fund requirements. The Board was recently awarded a third High Demand Job Training Grant from the Texas Workforce Commission. Each of the three Northeast Texas grants has been a collaboration involving multiple Economic Development Organizations. Combined, the three HDJT grants have secured \$250,000 from the Texas Workforce Commission and \$250,000 matching funds from Economic Development partners, resulting in \$500,000 to create and enhance high demand community college training programs in Northeast Texas.

The Board realizes the importance of Economic Development partnerships, and will continue to align workforce program activities with economic development activities in Northeast Texas. In order to maintain and strengthen these Economic Development partnerships, the Board will:

- Continue to meet with the Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group on a regular basis, both as a means to provide and receive information on regional activities and opportunities.
- Explore additional Workforce/Economic Development grant opportunities to leverage local funds.
- Participate in economic development business retention, expansion, and recruitment efforts. Provide labor market information and potential training funds as requested.
- Convene economic development and education partners as appropriate to provide guidance on workforce development initiatives.

The Board will promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services in partnership with the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The Board will take the following steps to expand outreach of entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services:

- Include SBDC director in Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group meetings as appropriate.
- The Board has a series of instructional videos covering a variety of small business topics, including start-up and operations. These videos will be available on the Board's website, and promoted through the Board's social media channels. The Board will also expand the outreach of this training tool to local job seekers and small business owners.
- The Board will continue to work with Texas A&M Texarkana to promote entrepreneurship. Texas A&M Texarkana hosted the first Startup Weekend Texarkana in April 2016. Startup Weekend Texarkana is an event designed for entrepreneurs to meet, share ideas and launch new businesses. The Board will continue to support these events in the future and look for ways to expand this opportunity to other areas in Northeast Texas.
- Momentum Texas is a non-profit organization helping Veterans start and/or grow a business. The Board partnered with Momentum Texas to host a Veterans Entrepreneurship Boot Camp in Texarkana. The Board will continue to support these efforts and look for ways to expand this training opportunity.

14. A description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including explanations of the following:

- a. 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;*
- b. How the Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including to remote areas, through the use of technology and other means;*
- c. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including the one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA §188, 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; and*

d. The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

Board Response: Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is a business-driven system focused on meeting the needs of business and industry. Principle Concepts, LLC manages the single contract as the Workforce Services and Childcare Provider. The contract ensures total integration of service delivery and facilitates the efficacy and economy of service across multiple funding sources.

The Board's Contracted Service Provider has developed and published the document, Minimum Standards for Operation of the Workforce Centers. This document created the foundation for the provision of services and is the basis for measurement of customer driven service delivery. As part of the workforce services provider contract, it is a requirement to follow the Minimum Standards for Operation.

The contract also includes local performance measures that are negotiated each year. The performance measures and goals are aligned with and designed to ensure the employment needs of local employers and customers are met and a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of achieving those goals is accomplished on a continuous basis.

One-stop services should be readily available and easily conveyed to all interested job seekers. The services provided to the public, such as workshops, are delivered in simple to comprehend language, with assistive technology available if needed. One-on-One workshops can also be provided if necessary. The Board remains committed to using available and emerging technology to assist customers, particularly those who may be located a distance from a center and with limited transportation. Priority is placed on maintaining up-to-date computer hardware and software available to the public. Currently, those wishing to apply for child care services can do so from any computer through the Board's website. All public events are marketed through the board's website, Facebook page, and Twitter. To further expand the virtual presence of Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas, the Board has developed a mobile app to be available for Apple and Android devices outlining the services available to both job seekers and employers. In addition, staff will soon undertake a project to record all workshops so they will be available to the public at any time through the utilization of the newly redesigned Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas website.

The Board strives to achieve seamless delivery of services and universal access to individuals with disabilities and language barriers and to provide area employers with the most qualified labor force. Workforce Solutions centers have expanded existing technology to enhance accessibility of services, resource rooms, and self-service options for job seekers with a wide range of visual, hearing, physical, cognitive, and other disabilities. Resource rooms are equipped with access stations that include: adjustable tables, large screen monitors on moveable mounting arms, alternative input devices such as track ball and hands free mice, as well as oversized keyboards and touch screen technology. In addition, text magnification and screen reading software is available on workstations designed for the sight impaired; as well as a video magnifier for printed materials. Portable assisted living devices are available to the hearing impaired as are text based Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD). In addition to these services, the Board is committed to working with the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). Co-location of DARS at the Workforce Centers will provide a one-stop delivery system for individuals with disabilities. The Board plans to work closely with DARS to ensure regional employers understand employment law concerning individuals with disabilities.

Partnerships are essential to a successful and growing local workforce system. The Board partners with many employer organizations, economic development groups, educational institutions, municipal entities and faith-based and community-based organizations. In addition, the Board works closely with the Texas Veterans Commission representatives housed in the centers to ensure Veterans receive priority of service for training and other workforce activities. Adult Education is another partner working to cross refer those in need of services. The Bowie Cass Adult Education Cooperative has a classroom at the Greater Texarkana Workforce Center to serve center customers quickly and easily. The Board will continue to work with TWC Rehabilitative Services Division to assist individuals with disabilities gain skills, training and employment.

15. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

Board Response: The Board provides a full array of work readiness and training opportunities for the Adult and Dislocated Worker populations in the area. Activities such as staff assisted job search, workshops, assessments; short-term educational training, work readiness skills training, adult education, and work experience are all available and are provided on an as needed basis as directed by the customer's individual employment plan. These activities are designed to promote active engagement in the work search which will ultimately culminate in employment. As these activities have proven successful for many program participants, continuation will be part of the service delivery plan.

In regards to training activities, Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas offers on-the-job training opportunities for eligible customers who are in need of skills training or upgrading. Through this long standing program, eligible customers are placed with an employer for a period of time not to exceed six months, during which time the employer trains the participant for a position. The participant is a full-time employee and subject to the same benefits as other employees. To help offset the tremendous cost of training a new and relatively unskilled employee, the employer is reimbursed fifty percent of the training wage for the contract period. Customers participating in this program have a greater than eighty percent contract completion rate. It also allows participants to start earning money from the onset of training. This is particularly important for the dislocated worker population who is often interested in getting back into employment with a steady income as quickly as possible.

Occupational and vocational training is also available to qualifying Adults and Dislocated Workers based on priority of service requirements through the utilization of individual training accounts. All local community colleges and local career and technical schools have trainings available through the Eligible Training Provider system. Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas training participants typically achieve and surpass state established goals for training completion and entered employment.

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

Board Response: The Board is responsible for coordinating the delivery of Rapid Response services with the State Rapid Response Unit at the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to employers and workers in the event of a layoff or closure. The primary purpose of these

services for businesses is to assist in the management of human resource needs, control unemployment insurance costs, and Workers' Compensation costs during a transition and to assist the employer to maintain good standing in the community.

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas covers a large, rural area. It is not unusual for a layoff or closure of fewer than 50 workers to have a negative impact on the economic well-being of the area. For this reason, Rapid Response services are offered to any business requesting those services regardless of the size of the layoff.

The governor has delegated (through the Texas Workforce Commission) the responsibility and funding to the 28 local Workforce Solutions Boards. A portion of the state's WIOA Rapid Response funds are allocated to each of the Boards under a formula that provides an equal base amount and then an additional allocation based on factors such as number of long term UI Claimants, Unemployment Rate, counties with a UI rate at or greater than 6.5% for the preceding year. The Board has a Rapid Response Team (Team) including the Board's authorized Rapid Response Coordinator and a member from the Contracted Service Provider staff. The Board's designated Rapid Response Coordinator works closely with the state's Dislocated Worker/Rapid Response unit to ensure any information regarding layoffs, closures and/or natural disasters is quickly shared. The contracted service provider's staff ensures the Rapid Response Coordinator is notified of any pending layoffs in our area.

In the event of a layoff or closure, attempts will be made to contact the employer within 48 hours of receipt of notice and shall establish a date and time for an on-site meeting to occur. At a minimum the initial on-site meeting shall include the Rapid Response Coordinator and management representatives from the business affected. For affected workers the primary purpose of services is to assist in finding new employment prior to their layoff date or to link them to continuing services until employment can be secured.

If a layoff cannot be averted, the Team offers affected workers an on-site orientation to include access to and information regarding comprehensive workforce services, IRS Tax responsibilities, Unemployment Insurance, and employment and training activities, including information on the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Most Rapid Response services shall be provided in a group setting, however, vendors shall be maintained to expedite the provision of individualized crisis counseling and financial counseling in cases where such services are critical to the well-being of the individual in question.

17. A description and assessment of the type and availability of workforce investment activities for youth in the local area, including activities for youth who have disabilities. This description must include an identification of successful models of such activities.

Board Response: The Board understands that youth are the future of the workforce and a key element of a thriving local economy. Youth are able to take advantage of an array of different activities designed to prepare them for the world of work. Youth can take advantage of many of the same offerings available to other populations such as staff assisted job search, workshops, assessment, short-term educational training, work readiness skills training, on-the-job training and secondary education equivalency services. One of the main components of the youth program is work experience, which allows youth, many of whom have never been exposed to employment, the opportunity to get practical hands on work experience while gaining valuable skills.

Job Shadowing is another component of the youth program that allows for career exploration in both a virtual and real world option. The Board, through a program designed by Strivven Media, has recently launched a virtual job shadowing component that encourages youth to explore a variety of potential career choices.

For youth who are basic skills deficient, staff members will work with the youth to improve literacy and numeracy skills through a variety of computer based remediation exercises designed to refresh and improve reading comprehension and mathematical computation.

The Workforce Centers will host specialized workshops, specifically for youth to address issues unique to the population, such as financial preparedness and planning for the future based on desired outcomes and realistic expectations.

The Board is a proponent of inclusion; youth with disabilities can participate in all of the activities available to all youth. If necessary, TWC Rehabilitative Services Division may be consulted to offer assistance if accommodations are needed, but it is of tantamount importance that all youth are included, regardless of their disability status.

Occupational and Vocational training services are also available to youth. Youth may choose the same trainings available to Adults and Dislocated Workers.

18. A description of how the Board will coordinate relevant secondary- and postsecondary-education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

Board Response: The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas region is served by three community colleges; Texarkana College, Northeast Texas Community College, Paris Junior College along with one university, Texas A&M University-Texarkana. The partnerships with the institutions are vital in providing opportunities for customers. Working closely with each group will ensure enhancement of services and that any duplication of services is kept to a minimum.

The community colleges offer workforce education certificate programs designed to provide specific skills for students so they may seek immediate employment. Students who complete certificate programs may also have the option to continue their career pathway by working towards an associate degree and receiving credit for studies they have completed. The university offers career pathway programs through articulation agreements with the regions community colleges.

19. A description of how the Board will provide transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate support services in the local area in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities.

Board Response: 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 Ark-Tex 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.

20. A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system.

Board Response: Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas utilizes the Texas Model for workforce system service delivery. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) implemented the Texas Model for the delivery of Employment Services (ES) (Wagner-Peyser Act services). The Board contracts with a service provider to operate the area's workforce centers. The service provider has full responsibility for day-to-day supervision of TWC (state) ES staff. While TWC retains administrative oversight regarding human resource issues, local managers employed by the service provider directs daily assignment and work activities, in addition to setting and monitoring performance goals, interviewing and selecting potential employees, and initiating disciplinary action, if needed. As the Board has fully implemented and works under the Texas model, coordination within the system is ensured and any duplication of services are kept at a minimum.

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 region, ensuring coordination, consistency, and accuracy.

21. A description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA §§107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA §232.

Board Response: The Board and the Red River Valley Adult Education Consortium and Bowie/Cass Adult Education Consortium will be working toward issues of common interest, challenges and potential solutions. For workforce customers who lack a high school diploma, GED preparation classes are held on site at the Greater Texarkana Workforce Center and referrals to GED preparation classes held in other counties in the Northeast Texas region are available through each Workforce Center site.

Since the beginning of the Regional Workforce and Adult Education Initiative, the Board has participated and will continue with the following:

- Quarterly meetings with the consortiums to determine the needs of AEL providers in the region and determine ways to work together toward fulfilling those needs.
- The Board will continue to partner with Bowie/Cass Adult Ed to provide GED classes at the Greater Texarkana Workforce Center
- Work with the consortiums to expand on a reverse referral process between the AEL providers and the Workforce Centers.

- With the WIOA's focus on Out of School youth, Adult Education providers are to be included as part of the outreach process.

The Board will work with Adult Education providers to:

Develop and continue working with an Adult Education and Literacy Advisory Group to include Workforce Solutions representatives. The advisory group will be composed of adult education providers, board staff, contracted service provider staff and vocational rehabilitation staff. The contracted service provider staff will include TANF/Choices and Youth program case managers. The advisory group will continue to assist in developing solutions for items identified in the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis completed June 2015. The group will meet quarterly to share their ideas and recommendations.

Collaborate with local businesses for career pathways: The Board will work with Adult Education providers and continue to identify career pathways in targeted occupations where training is needed. A reverse referral process can be used to identify potential customers for Workforce Solutions and Adult Education.

Information regarding local business needs can be provided by the Business Services Unit and will be incorporated as part of the pathway process. Introduction of business partners to the Adult Education providers will also assist in learning of local business needs and identifying potential customers.

Establish a portal on the Boards website for Adult Education information: Place resource material and general information regarding the Adult Education program that will include points of contact, career opportunities and support services available for the student on the Board's website. This information will also be available to potential customers via the Board's social media application.

The Board will identify a review team and implement the review of proposals for the local adult education competition based on Agency guidance.

- 22. An identification of the entity 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).*

Board Response: 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).

- 23. A description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.*

Board Response: The Board has established procurement policies and procedure intended to comply with the general requirements of OMB Circulars A 102 and A 87, Texas Uniform Grant

Management Standards, and the TWC Financial Manual. 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 and/or the Executive Director 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 TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts (FMGC). 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 a RFP package
- A deadline for obtaining a 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 competition anticipated
- The evaluation process/procedures to be used.
- The period of contract performance.
- Approvals required by local procedures.
- Proposal submission instructions
- The RFP will require a line item budget;
- 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, allow-ability and allocability of budgeted 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.

24. A description of the local levels of performance negotiated with TWC and the chief elected officials consistent with WIOA §116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the Board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area.

Board Response: The Board utilizes the nineteen (19) performance measures contracted with the Texas Workforce Commission to measure performance. Those measures are as shown below. These measures encompass the 11 required WIOA Adult/DW/Youth measures and 4 integrated WIOA-based measures (substituting the state Employed Q2-Q4 Post-Exit for the federal Employed Q4 Post-Exit because it is a more meaningful measure).

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.

- Claimant Reemployment w/in 10 Weeks
- Number of Employers receiving WF Assistance
- Choices Full Work Rate
- Avg Kids Served Per Day – Discretionary At Risk
- Employed Q2 Post Exit – Adult
- Employed Q4 Post Exit – Adult
- Credential Rate – Adult
- Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – Adult
- Employed Q2 Post Exit – DW
- Employed Q4 Post Exit – DW
- Credential Rate – DW
- Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – DW
- Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – Youth
- Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit – Youth
- Credential Rate – Youth
- Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – All Participants
- Employed/Enrolled Q2-Q4 Post Exit – All Participants
- Credential Rate – All Participants
- Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – All Participants

In addition to the state contracted measures, the Board utilizes twelve (12) local performance measures in the contract with the Contracted Services Provider to measure Outcomes;

Employer Engagement; Average Wage at Placement; TANF/Choices; Child Care; and Board Incentive Awards.

25. A description of the actions the Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Board.

Board Response: Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas is committed to remaining a high-performing Board, while striving for continuous improvement of the local workforce development system. The Board will take the following actions to sustain a high level of performance and identify areas for improvement:

Continue to place emphasis on communication and transparency: The Board will continue to communicate both internally and externally to ensure quality services are delivered through the workforce development system. The Board meets with a number of workforce development partners on a regular basis, including the Chief Elected Officials, Internal Affairs Committee, External Affairs Committee, College Presidents' Roundtable, Education and Training Advisory Group, Child Care Advisory Group, and Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group. Input, feedback, and direction from each of these groups is vital to the success of the Board and workforce system. Communication with these groups holds the Board accountable for program integrity and successful outcomes.

Program Monitoring and Quality Assurance: The Board has developed and utilizes a Monitoring Plan to ensure the Contracted Service Provider is meeting or exceeding expectations in the following areas:

- Compliance with Board policies and contractor procedures
- Adequacy of controls
- Ability to meet contracted performance
- Data integrity
- Effective internal monitoring
- Findings resolution
- Personnel turnover
- Continuous improvement
- Cost effectiveness
- Appropriate utilization of resources
- Effectiveness of service delivery

Written reports providing the result of administrative monitoring reviews for each service area monitored are prepared and provided to the Contracted Service Provider. All findings are documented in the report and a time-phased corrective action plan is required for deficiencies that are determined to be frequent, recurrent, pervasive, fraudulent, or that pose substantial risk to the Board. All completed Contracted Service Provider monitoring is reported bimonthly to the Board Internal Affairs Committee. A status of ongoing monitoring as well as reports of completed monitoring is provided at each meeting of the Committee.

Fiscal Monitoring: The Board contracts with a consulting firm, specializing in various financial and programmatic aspects of workforce development, to perform fiscal monitoring. Fiscal monitoring is done on a quarterly basis. Cash disbursements, payroll, and procurement samples are selected from both Board and Contracted Service Provider expenditures and tested to ensure items are reasonable, allocable, and allowable.

Customer Feedback: The Board is committed to enhancing workforce services to both employers and job seekers. Customer surveys are used to gather feedback. After an employer or job seeker utilizes workforce services or meets with a staff member, that employer or job seeker is asked to complete a survey designed to provide feedback regarding the quality of service provided. The Board and Workforce Centers collaborate to review this information and to identify ways to improve the service delivery model. The Board will continue to explore additional methods for gathering and responding to customer feedback.

Staff Development: The Board places priority on staff development, participating in Texas Workforce Commission events such as the Annual Conference, Forum and Quality-Assurance Network (QAN) meetings. The Board has also partnered with the Workforce Center and other Board areas to host WIOA and Business Services training. Additionally, four members of the Board staff have participated in the Texas Workforce Commission Leadership Academy provided by the Governor's Center for Management Development. The Board also plans to send additional staff members to the Leadership Academy in the future.

26. A description of how training services outlined in WIOA §134 will be provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs under that chapter, and how the Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

Board Response: Based on eligibility and available funding, The Board will provide eligible WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker customers with funding for a full range of training services by establishing an Individual Training Account (ITA). In order to benefit the majority of customers, the accumulative spending cap on any one individual served by the Board may not exceed overall guidelines (\$10,000) or specific program limitations. A budget worksheet that includes the customer's financial situation will include an assessment of all financial resources available to the individual including: Pell grants, student loans, scholarships, household income, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and other sources of assistance.

The Individual Training Account document itself is a cost disclosure and agreement between the program and the customer. It sets up an account for the customer and indicates the amount of funds budgeted for the training program and all supportive cost for the duration of the training program. This is reflected on The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) ITA financial tracking tab.

- The budgeted amount of the training will cover only in-state resident cost of training, less any financial aid applied to the cost prior to WIOA payment. Financial aid such as Pell Grants, GI Bill, scholarships, Veteran's Administration assistance, and Department

of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) assistance are applied first to the cost to pay for tuition/fees prior to approval of the training funds and total support amount. Additional grants or financial aid shall be evaluated every 6 months to prevent duplication in the payment of tuition. If duplication is found, tuition shall be reimbursed by the training provider.

- The total allowed for training is computed based on each training program's reported cost.
- The amount spent on training with a state-approved training provider will not exceed the amount of the reported cost of the approved training program. Costs exceeding the reported cost of the training program will be the responsibility of the customer.
- The Contracted Service Provider shall inform customers that the overall general spending maximum may not be encumbered based on the possibility of future unknown need.
- Individual training expenses are based on the IEP and may encumber the actual funds needed over more than one fiscal year. The Training Payment Approval Form submitted is valid only for the expense for which it is issued.
- ITAs will be issued only for Board approved training programs of two years or less published duration. This includes paying for the last 30 hours of a four-year degree as long as it meets the Board's criteria and is a training provider on the Statewide List of Eligible Training Providers.
- Training services funded through ITAs must be directly linked to:
 - occupations on the Board's targeted occupations list, or on the targeted occupations list for another local workforce development area to which an adult or dislocated worker is willing to commute or relocate; or
 - occupation's that have been determined on a case-by-case basis to have a high potential for sustained demand and growth in the workforce area, based on sufficient and verifiable documentation, in accordance with the Board's procedures and TWC rule 841.34(b).
- Customers who are unemployed must attend training full time as determined by the training provider's definition of a full-time student.
- The Contracted Service Provider may add an additional twelve months to the ITA time availability authorized for a customer who is enrolled in training and is employed on a full or part-time basis if this will allow the customer to complete the training.
- The ITA document must indicate training costs are subject to the availability of WIOA program funds.
- WIOA funds must not be used to pay training costs:
 - for any portion or term of training for which the customer has signed a loan as part of financial aid; or
 - were paid by the customer (or other source) prior to WIOA program registration.

27. A description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

Board Response: Technology plays an integral part in many aspects of the daily operation of Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas. Staff utilizes WorkInTexas to foster the symbiotic relationship between employers and job seekers by providing a centralized location for job postings, resumes, and matching services. All staff uses the TWIST system to track case

management and child care activities. In addition, management uses web reports and custom built Infomaker reports to track real time performance issues. In 2013 The Board made it a priority to acquire a paperless document management system to be executed project wide. The system, Cabinet NG was implemented for all workforce center case management and child care files. In addition, all fiscal activities are now conducted using the workflow functions in the Cabinet system.

28. The Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, consistent with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the Final Regulations.

Board Response:

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:

For an adult to advance into individualized career and/or training services, after basic eligibility has been determined through basic career services, priority of service level for the adult must be determined in the following order:

1. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses as defined in Workforce Development (WD) Letter 25-15, dated 10/26/2015, who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.
2. Foster youth and former foster youth as defined in WD Letter 43-11, issued on November 3, 2011, and entitled, "Priority of Service for Eligible Foster Youth"—who are also recipients of public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient.
3. All other individuals who are recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.
4. All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses.
5. All other foster youth and former foster youth.
6. All other individuals.

REASONS FOR POLICY:

To ensure WIOA individualized career services and training services are received by adults in the adult and dislocated worker programs according to the WIOA mandated priority of service regulations.

29. Boards may impose limits on the duration and amount of ITAs. If the state or Board chooses to do so, the limitations must be described in the Local Plan, but must not be implemented in a manner that undermines WIOA's requirement that training services are to be provided in a manner that

maximizes customer choice in the selection of an Eligible Training Provider. Exceptions to ITA limitations may be provided for individual cases and must be described in Board policies.

Board Response: Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas has developed an ITA policy, approved by the Board of Directors, which limits the amount of an ITA to \$10,000 and the duration of an ITA to 2 years.

Refer to response #19 for additional information regarding the guidelines used to manage ITAs in Northeast Texas.

30. A description of the design framework for youth programs in the local area, and how the 14 program elements required in §681.460 of the Final Regulations are to be made available within that framework.

Board Response: The Board and Contracted Service Provider strive to provide all aspects of the required program elements in an innovative way that relies on leveraging community services and partnering with other agencies that have a vested interest in the outcome.

1) Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized or for a recognized postsecondary credential;

- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas partners with the forty school districts within the service area, all of whom have cohesive drop-out prevention strategies. Also, computer based tutoring is available through the workforce centers for those students participating in the youth programs. Additionally, a close partnership with the various Adult Education agencies in the area ensures that any youth who is not successfully outreached by the dropout prevention programs will have an alternative method to receive a secondary credential.

2) Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;

- Again, all of the partnering school districts in the area provide structured and aggressive dropout prevention program, with many offering alternative school for those youth who do not thrive in a conventional classroom setting.

3) Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:

- (i) Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
- (ii) Pre-apprenticeship programs;
- (iii) Internships and job shadowing; and
- (iv) On-the-job training opportunities;
- Work experience, job shadowing, internships, and on-the-job training are all offered by Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas to qualifying youth. With the new mandate that twenty percent of youth funds must be spent on work activities, Workforce

Solutions Northeast Texas will continue to grow and expand many of the current work place learning activities available to qualified youth.

4) Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved;

- As previously stated, occupational skills training is a key component of a successful youth program. Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas will offer training to youth based on approved trainings available through the ETPS system, which ensures all trainings will align with in-demand occupations. Career pathways will be established to ensure credential attainment is incrementally achieved and beneficial, based on the needs and abilities of the youth.

5) Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas assists in-school youth by providing work readiness trainings simultaneously while attending secondary and post-secondary education through workshops and employment directed case management.

6) Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors;

- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas partners with both the community colleges and the school districts to promote and foster youth leadership activities. Youth are encouraged to take on leadership roles within various school organizations such as student council, and extracurricular clubs. Youth are incentivized to donate their time to non-profit community based organizations where they can also gain work experience, and are encouraged to choose likewise organizations for internship opportunities.

7) Supportive services

- Support services are provided to youth on an as needed basis, and only when a demonstrated need has been determined. Assistance with transportation expenses, clothes or tools to find or maintain employment, rent, and utilities are available. Additionally, youth may earn incentives for achieving milestones in employment and educational activities.

8) Adult mentoring for duration of at least 12 months, which may occur both during and after program participation;

- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas works with a variety of community and faith based organizations, in addition to local community colleges and school districts that offer both adult and peer-to-peer mentoring activities.

9) Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation;

- Follow-up services have always been an integral part of the youth program. Career Planners maintain quarterly contact with all youth participants via mail, phone, email, and/or social media to ensure youth remain on the path to success.

10) Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth;

- Career planners offer a variety of counseling to youth, which includes academic, work based, and sometimes basic guidance on like issues. If it is determined a youth may require more in-depth professional counselling services, the career planner can reach out to local mental health agencies for assistance and referral.

11) Financial literacy education;

- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas partners with local financial institutions to provide financial literacy education to all customers. Youth often have different financial concerns than adults and periodic workshops specifically for youth populations are offered through the workforce centers.

12) Entrepreneurial skills training;

- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas partners with local small business administrations to provide insights for those youth interested in entrepreneurship. A series of training DVD's were developed by Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas and can be used for basic entrepreneurial training. Additionally, referrals can be made to the local community colleges for more in-depth training.

13) Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and

- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas can provide extensive labor market information upon request to youth interested in specific occupations utilizing the Tracer and Socrates programs. Additionally, youth participating in program activities can take advantage of computer based job shadowing to explore career basics.

14) Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

- Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas works with the local community colleges to prepare campus tours, class audits, and on campus event directed at secondary and transitioning students.

31. A description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs in its area to register with the eligible training provider system in order to receive WIOA funding.

Board Response: The Board is committed to fully integrate and align WIOA apprenticeship strategies with the local workforce system. The Board is currently in discussions with a

regional medical center and community college about the creation of a registered apprenticeship program. Although these discussions are in the preliminary stages, the Board is committed to advancing the process and registering the program with the eligible training provider system.

In order to encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs to enroll in the eligible training provider system, the Board will take the following actions:

- Educate potential employer partners and apprenticeship programs: All Registered Apprenticeship programs, by virtue of their registration, can be on a state's Eligible Training Provider List and thereby eligible to receive federal workforce funding as pre-approved training providers. The Business Services unit will educate employers about these changes under WIOA and the opportunity to receive workforce funding for Registered Apprenticeship programs.
- Identify existing apprenticeship programs: The Board will identify a list of existing registered apprenticeship programs in Northeast Texas. These programs may be used as "Success Stories" in outreach efforts. The Board will also work to identify programs similar to apprenticeships, but have not yet been registered.
- Educate workforce partners through Advisory Groups: The Board will inform workforce partners about Registered Apprenticeship programs. Registered Apprenticeship programs will be included on the agenda at upcoming meetings of the College President's Roundtable, Workforce and Education Advisory Group, and Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group.

32. A description of the Board's strategy and commitment to support Apprenticeship Texas efforts across the state, as applicable.

Board Response: As mentioned in question #24, 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 statewide apprenticeship efforts.

- Communicate Apprenticeship information through Board's website, social media, and newsletter: The Board uses a variety of methods to communicate information about workforce development activities, including through the website, social media, and a monthly newsletter. Information about apprenticeship programs will be included in all three of these communication outlets.
- Success Stories: The Board will identify successful apprenticeships in Northeast Texas and highlight those success stories in outreach efforts. The Board will also explore success stories from across the state, stressing the positive impact apprenticeships can have on employers and employees.

PART C: PUBLIC COMMENT

A description of the process used by the Board, consistent with WIOA §108(d), to provide a 30-day public comment period before submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the Local Plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations. Comments submitted during the public comment period that represent disagreement with the plan must be submitted with the Local Plan.

Board Response: An electronic version of the Local Plan was posted on the Board's website for a 30-day public comment period. Notification of the Board Plan and public comment opportunity was given to all Board Advisory Groups and Workforce partners. The Board's monthly newsletter recipient list was also notified of the plan and public comment period. A press release announcing the public comment period was issued to news outlets in Northeast Texas.

The Board received no comments during the 30-day public comment period.

Appendix A

WIOA In-Demand Occupations List								
Board Name:	Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas			Date Submitted or Updated:	2/28/2017			
Use this template to identify the Board's occupations most in demand, regardless of the training or wage component involved.								
Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) or Occupational Information Network (O*NET) Job Code	In-Demand Occupation Job Title (Name)	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024	Number Change 2014-2024	Percent Growth 2014-2024	Annual Openings due to Growth	Additional Rationale, Local Wisdom, and Comments ¹	Labor Market and Career Information Data Source(s)
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1490	1830	340	22.8%	35	None	Tracer 2
41-2011	Cashiers	3030	3510	480	15.8%	50	None	Tracer 2
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers Incl. Fast Food	4230	5150	920	21.7%	95	None	Tracer 2
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Ex. Special Education	1460	1690	230	15.8%	25	None	Tracer 2
11-1021	General & Operations Managers	1380	1610	230	16.7%	20	None	Tracer 2
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2000	2400	400	20.0%	40	None	Tracer 2
37-2011	Janitors & Cleaners, Ex. Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	1540	1770	230	14.9%	25	None	Tracer 2
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	1240	1490	250	20.2%	25	None	Tracer 2
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	3770	4880	1110	29.4%	110	None	Tracer 2
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2370	2890	520	21.9%	50	None	Tracer 2
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	4040	4990	950	23.5%	95	None	Tracer 2
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Ex. Special/Career/Technical Ed	1430	1660	230	16.1%	20	None	Tracer 2
43-5081	Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	1460	1710	250	17.1%	25	None	Tracer 2
51-2092	Team Assemblers	1320	1540	220	16.7%	20	None	Tracer 2
				0				

In order to complete this process, TWC recommends completing the In-Demand Occupation List first, then the Target Occupation List, and finally the In-Demand Industry List.

As leading industries, occupations, and training needs change, Boards must update their lists and e-mail the updated list to Board.Plans@twc.state.tx.us.

Approximately 40 to 50 in-demand occupations are recommended. Please insert rows as needed. Occupations must correspond to a six-digit SOC code. In-demand occupations do not have to be listed in any specific order.

Basis for Selection: Key types of labor market indicators are available in Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) tools for use in evaluating and ranking the demand for occupations. Boards must fully explore this data in their analyses, so they can identify what data elements they will use in selecting in-demand occupations.

¹ Additional Rationale, Local Wisdom, and Comments: This column is to identify any additional indicators used in selecting the occupation, and, if applicable, must include information on local wisdom that further supports or validates the inclusion of the in-demand occupation in the workforce area. This may include, but need not be limited to, information gained from surveys of employers; local or regional labor market or occupational studies; or other information gained from industry, economic development, or professional or occupational organization partners.

Note: In addition to the Target Occupation List required under prior Board Plans, Boards are now required to submit an In-Demand Occupation List with the Board Plan as well.

SOC codes can be found at: <http://www.bls.gov/soc/>

O*NET codes can be found at: <http://www.onetonline.org/>

Appendix B

WIOA Target Occupations List

Board Name:	Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	Date Submitted or Updated:	2/28/2017
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Use this template to identify the Board's target occupations, which are occupations that: 1) are in demand, 2) have a dedicated training component, and 3) provide wages that meet a Board's self-sufficiency requirements.

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) or Occupational Information Network (O*NET) Job Code	Target Occupation Job Title (Name)	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024	Number Change 2014-2024	Percent Growth 2014-2024	Annual Openings due to Growth	Starting Salary per Hour (Entry Wage)	Top Salary per Hour (Experienced Wage)	Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation	Are there Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) offering training for this occupation? ¹	How many individuals will ETPs train and/or certify to fill current openings?	Additional Rationale, Local Wisdom, and Comments ²	Is this a Career Pathway Occupation? (yes or no)	Labor Market and Career Information Data Source(s) ²
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2370	2890	520	21.9%	50	\$22.18	\$31.16	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers	1490	1830	340	22.8%	35	\$10.16	\$19.35	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2000	2400	400	20.0%	40	\$11.63	\$21.87	Postsecondary non-degree award	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1760	1990	230	13.1%	25	\$9.94	\$19.39	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	1440	1630	190	13.2%	20	\$15.28	\$20.74	Postsecondary non-degree award	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
51-2092	Team Assemblers	1320	1540	220	16.7%	20	\$10.04	\$15.24	High school diploma or equivalent	No	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
43-6014	Secretaries & Admin Assistants, EX. Legal/Medical/Executive	1880	2060	180	9.6%	20	\$9.58	\$16.14	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
49-3023	Auto Service Technicians and Mechanics	890	1020	130	14.6%	15	\$10.37	\$19.83	Postsecondary non-degree award	Yes	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Ex. Engines	1130	1230	100	8.8%	10	\$20.99	\$24.64	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	990	1180	190	19.2%	20	\$10.00	\$14.00	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	400	490	90	22.5%	10	\$15.54	\$23.37	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
51-4041	Machinists	290	380	90	31.0%	10	\$14.87	\$21.66	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, & Weighers	560	590	30	5.4%	5	\$11.93	\$22.86	High school diploma or equivalent	No	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, & Traffic Clerks	430	480	50	11.6%	5	\$9.21	\$18.55	High school diploma or equivalent	No	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
47-2111	Electricians	350	430	80	22.9%	10	\$12.31	\$23.39	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	400	450	50	12.5%	5	\$24.10	\$36.60	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	220	260	40	18.2%	5	\$12.17	\$24.19	Some college, no degree	Yes	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics	220	260	40	18.2%	5	\$9.84	\$17.23	High school diploma or equivalent	No	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
31-9091	Dental Assistants	160	200	40	25.0%	5	\$9.56	\$17.82	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	1100	1070	-30	-2.7%	0	\$10.41	\$18.77	Some college, no degree	Yes	Unknown	Labor market data shows a decline in the number of jobs for this occupation over the next 10 years. The Board does not believe that this will be the case, as these positions have regular job postings within the region. This is an occupation that can easily be outsourced, and this may be the reason for the negative forecast. The Board will continue to monitor this occupation moving forward.	No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
47-2031	Carpenters	310	340	30	9.7%	5	\$12.29	\$18.02	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
49-3021	Auto Body & Related Repairs	170	200	30	17.6%	5	\$12.21	\$26.77	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
49-9021	Heating, AC, & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	230	290	60	26.1%	5	\$15.16	\$22.47	Postsecondary non-degree award	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
51-3092	Food Batchmakers	320	370	50	15.6%	5	\$11.13	\$20.90	High school diploma or equivalent	No	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
51-4011	Computer Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal/Plastic	230	290	60	26.1%	5	\$12.04	\$20.26	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
51-9111	Packaging & Filling Machine Operators & Tenders	430	470	40	9.3%	5	\$8.57	\$16.43	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production & Operating Workers	690	760	70	10.1%	5	\$19.26	\$35.80	High school diploma or equivalent	No	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	160	200	40	25.0%	5	\$20.75	\$26.80	Associate's Degree	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
31-9092	Medical Assistants	340	410	70	20.6%	5	\$10.18	\$14.47	Postsecondary non-degree award	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
49-9044	Millwrights	150	190	40	26.7%	5	\$9.74	\$18.43	High school diploma or equivalent	No	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
51-4081	Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, & Tenders	150	180	30	20.0%	5	\$15.11	\$21.78	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown		Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
51-9122	Painters, Transportation Equipment	190	250	60	31.6%	5	\$11.87	\$20.72	High school diploma or equivalent	No	Unknown		No	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
29-2012	Medical & Clinical Laboratory Technicians	80	100	20	25.0%	0	\$12.17	\$22.00	Associate's Degree	Yes	Unknown	Labor market data shows a low growth rate for this occupation. The Board believes this occupation will continue to be in demand for the region, along with many other healthcare occupations. The healthcare industry is expected to experience large occupation growth over the next 10 years, and this occupation should remain in that same pattern.	Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ

29-2034	Radiologic Technologists	210	220	10	4.8%	0	\$18.20	\$26.29	Associate's Degree	Yes	Unknown	Labor market data shows a low growth rate for this occupation. The Board believes this occupation will continue to be in demand for the region, along with many other healthcare occupations. The healthcare industry is expected to experience large occupation growth over the next 10 years, and this occupation should remain in that same pattern.	Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	250	290	40	16.0%	5	\$10.39	\$15.47	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown	Labor market data shows a low growth rate for this occupation. The Board believes this occupation will continue to be in demand for the region, along with many other healthcare occupations. The healthcare industry is expected to experience large occupation growth over the next 10 years, and this occupation should remain in that same pattern.	Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	80	90	10	12.5%	0	\$13.75	\$19.21	Postsecondary non-degree award	Yes	Unknown	Labor market data shows a low growth rate for this occupation. The Board believes this occupation will continue to be in demand for the region, along with many other healthcare occupations. The healthcare industry is expected to experience large occupation growth over the next 10 years, and this occupation should remain in that same pattern.	Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ
47-2073	Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators	360	380	20	5.6%	0	\$15.01	\$20.58	High school diploma or equivalent	Yes	Unknown	Labor market data shows a low growth rate for this occupation. The construction industry is difficult to forecast because new projects are difficult to predict. The Board believes the area will continue to experience growth in both commercial and residential buildings, and highway construction as well.	Yes	Tracer 2/ Wanted Analytics/ Jobs EQ

In order to complete this process, TWC recommends completing the In-Demand Occupation List first, then the Target Occupation List, and finally the In-Demand Industry List.

As leading industries, occupations, and training needs change, Boards must update their lists and e-mail the updated list to Board.Plans@twc.state.tx.us.

To complete the process, Boards shall first develop their target occupation list, and then answer the questions related to eligible training providers (ETPs). The answers related to ETPs for an occupation have no bearing on an occupation's inclusion on the Target Occupation List.

Approximately 20 to 25 target occupations are recommended. Occupations must correspond to a six-digit SOC code. Target occupations do not have to be listed in any specific order.

Basis for Selection: Key types of labor market indicators are available in Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) tools for use in evaluating and ranking the relative importance of occupations. Boards must fully explore this data in their analyses, so they can identify what data elements they will use in selecting target occupations.

¹ ETP Questions: If a Board does not have an ETP in their Board area, they should work with employers and eligible training providers to develop a curriculum for the occupation. If a Board refers its customers to an ETP in another Board area, please provide details in the comments section of this document (column M). An occupation shall not be excluded due to a lack of current training providers.

² Additional Rationale, Local Wisdom, and Comments: This column is to identify any additional indicators used in targeting the occupation, and, if applicable, must include information on local wisdom that further supports or validates the importance of the target occupation in the workforce area. This may include, but need not be limited to, information gained from surveys of employers; local or regional labor market or occupational studies; or other information gained from industry, economic development, or professional or occupational organization partners.

SOC codes can be found at: <http://www.bls.gov/soc/>

O*NET codes can be found at: <http://www.onetonline.org/>

Appendix C

WIOA In-Demand Industries List

Board Name:	Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	Date Submitted:	2/28/2017
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Use this spreadsheet to identify the Board's top 10 to 15 high demand industries. The Board's high demand industries may include, but need not be limited to, industries related to the governor's industry clusters.

2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code (4-digit) ¹	NAICS Industry Title (Name)	Annual Average Employment 2014	Annual Average Employment 2024	Number Change 2014-2024	Percent Growth 2014-2024	Does Industry Match to a Governor's Industry Cluster? (yes or no) ¹	Additional Rationale, Local Wisdom, Comments ²	Labor Market and Career Information Data Source(s)
3362	Motor Vehicle Body & Trailer Manufacturing	2100	2800	700	33%	yes	The number of current positions for this industry should be considered much higher. Red River Army Depot is a Federal Facility, and therefore not classified by the private sector. However, the majority of workers at RRAD possess and use skillsets related to motor vehicle body manufacturing.	Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
6221	General Medical & Surgical Hospital, Public & Private	4460	5150	690	15%	no		Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
6231	Nursing Care Facilities, Skilled Nursing	2150	2500	350	16%	no		Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
4841	General Freight Trucking	1090	1390	300	28%	no		Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
8111	Automotive Repair & Maintenance	970	1200	230	24%	no	The number of current positions for this industry should be considered much higher. Red River Army Depot is a Federal Facility, and therefore not classified by the private sector. However, the majority of workers at RRAD possess and use skillsets related to automotive repair and maintenance.	Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
4931	Warehousing & Storage	1270	1440	170	13%	no	The number of current positions for this industry should be considered much higher. The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) has a facility located at Red River Army Depot. Much like RRAD, DLA is not classified as Warehousing and Storage, but the operations and worker skillsets are strongly related to this industry.	Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
3329	Other Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	1470	1630	160	11%	no		Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
2211	Power Generation & Supply	570	660	90	16%	yes		Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
2373	Highway, Structure & Bridge Construction	430	460	30	7%	no		Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics

3221	Pulp, Paper, and Paperboard Mills	860	800	-60	-7%	no	Although projections show a net job loss for this industry, it is represented by a large employer in Cass County. This employer is a significant economic driver for Cass County. The employer is projecting to lose a large percentage of their skilled workforce to retirement over the next few years. Plans must be created to replace this workforce and keep the employer operating at a competitive level.	Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
3114	Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing	920	1040	120	13%	no		Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
3116	Animal Slaughtering and Processing	3805	4597	792	21%	no		Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
3222	Converted Paper Product Manufacturing	775	823	48	6%	no	Similar to Industry 3221, this is represented by two major employers that will experience significant employee retirement. Steps must be taken to train a replacement workforce.	Tracer 2/Jobs EQ Chmura Economics
				0				
				0				
				0				

In order to complete this process, TWC recommends completing the In-Demand Occupation List first, then the Target Occupation List, and finally the In-Demand Industry List.

As leading industries, occupations, and training needs change, Boards must update their lists and e-mail the updated list to Board.Plans@twc.state.tx.us.

Approximately 10 to 15 in-demand industries are recommended. Industries must correspond to a 4-digit NAICS code provided in the supporting documents. In-demand industries do not need to be listed in any particular order.

Basis for Selection: Key types of labor market indicators are available in Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) tools for use in evaluating and ranking the demand of industries. Boards must fully explore this data in their analyses, so they can identify what data elements they will use in selecting in-demand industries.

¹ Does Industry Match to a Governor's Industry Cluster? (yes or no) Please refer to attachment 5 to ascertain whether the industry matches to a Governor's Industry Cluster.

² Additional Rationale and Local Wisdom: This space must be used to identify any additional indicators used in selecting an industry, if applicable, and to describe any additional local information sources or knowledge regarding the importance of in-demand industries in the workforce area. This may include, but need not be limited to, information gained from local or regional labor market or industry studies, industry or economic development partners, or employer surveys.

Note: To align with WIOA terminology, the WIA Target Industry List is now referred to as the WIOA In-Demand Industry List.

SOC codes can be found at: <http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/sssd/naics/naicsrch?chart=2012>

Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

Local Workforce Development Board Strategic Planning

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) is charged under Texas Government Code §§2308.101(5), 2308.302(a), and 2308.304(a)(b)(4) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Public Law 113–128) with recommending the plans of Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) to the governor for final approval. TWIC reviews each Board Plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide goals and objectives in the system strategic plan, *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023*, which can be found at [www.gov.texas.gov/files/twic/Texas_Workforce_System_Strategic_Plan_\(FY2016-FY2023\).pdf/](http://www.gov.texas.gov/files/twic/Texas_Workforce_System_Strategic_Plan_(FY2016-FY2023).pdf/).

Additionally, state law charges TWIC with reporting annually to the governor and to the Texas Legislature on the implementation of the system strategic plan and monitoring the operation of the state’s workforce system to assess the degree to which the system is effective in achieving state and local goals and objectives. Therefore, TWIC also reviews Board Plans and plan modifications to determine each Board’s progress in implementing strategies that align with the strategic plan for the Texas workforce system.

A summary of Boards’ responses and strategies is provided to TWIC before TWIC considers the plans for approval and recommendation to the governor. Boards’ responses to the following planning elements are reviewed by TWIC for alignment with the strategic plan for the Texas Workforce system and are the basis for recommending approval.

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

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

System Goal and Rationale

Focus on Employers:

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

System Goal and Rationale

Board Strategy or Initiative and Quantitative Outcomes

The Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas Board has long-realized the importance of regional partnerships. The Board meets regularly with regional Economic Development organizations and Community Colleges to discuss workforce challenges and opportunities. The Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Committee and the College Presidents Roundtable are both chartered committees of the Board and meet on a regular basis with published agendas and action items to focus on employer needs in workforce delivery and training.

A new opportunity presented itself in the form of the High Demand Job Training Grant from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). This grant provided Texas Workforce Boards the chance to receive up to \$75,000 that could be used to enhance or create training programs for local jobs in high demand. One of the requirements of this grant was a dollar-for-dollar match from a Type A or Type B Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Three regional EDCs expressed interest and ultimately agreed to provide the matching funds. Economic Development Corporations from Sulphur Springs, Mount Pleasant, and Paris all provided \$25,000 each, allowing the Board to apply for and receive the \$75,000 grant from the Texas Workforce Commission.

The Board then convened a discussion with participating EDCs and the Community Colleges from each area. Northeast Texas Community College serves the Mount Pleasant area, and Paris Junior College has a campus in both Paris and Sulphur Springs. The Board provided the group with labor market information, including a list of high demand occupations for Northeast Texas. The Board also provided the EDCs and Community Colleges with local business intelligence, including training needs for the region. This information helped the group identify Computer Numerical Controlled (CNC) training as the target for this project. The grant funds were used to create CNC training programs at both community colleges.

The Texas Workforce Commission released a second round of the High Demand Job Training Grant. Again, the EDCs from Sulphur Springs, Mount Pleasant, and Paris all agreed to participate at \$25,000 each. The Board was awarded the grant and these funds will be used to enhance the CNC training programs. The combination of grant funds and EDC match funds represents a \$300,000 investment into CNC training programs, aiming to provide the Manufacturing Industry with a skilled workforce.

System Goal and Rationale

Engage in Partnerships:

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

Board Strategy or Initiative and Quantitative Outcomes

System Goal and Rationale

The Board's mission and vision for the region relies heavily on the strength of various partnerships and collaborations. The Board has developed and will continue to cultivate partnerships with education, economic development, city government, chambers of commerce, employers, non-profits, and several others. One of those partnerships that has been extremely beneficial during the past year is the relationships with Economic Development professionals throughout the region.

The Board meets on a regular basis the Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group. The group is comprised of Economic Development Professionals from Mount Pleasant, Sulphur Springs, Texarkana, Paris, Mount Vernon, Linden, Atlanta, Nash, Texarkana Chamber of Commerce, and TexAmericas Center. The Advisory Group meets to discuss regional economic development and workforce issues. The Advisory Group has provided advice to the Board for both the Texas Workforce Commission grants: Recognized Skills Certification Grant and Local Innovation Partnership Grant. The Board also brought the High Demand Job Training Grant Opportunity to the Economic Development Advisory Group. The Board has been awarded two High Demand Job Training Grants. The Economic Development Corporations from Mount Pleasant, Sulphur Springs, and Paris committed \$50,000 each as the matching requirements for the grants, which was then matched with \$150,000 from TWC.

The Ark-Tex Council of Governments' (ATCOG) service area is very similar to the Board's area, and earlier this year the ATCOG Executive Director reached out to the Board with the idea of combining Economic Development meetings. The ATCOG also works closely with Economic Developers and had a need to meet with them on a regular basis. The Board and ATCOG worked together to combine the two meetings, which saves time for all group members and opens up new conversations and partnership opportunities.

The overarching goal of the Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group is to review and discuss regional issues related to economic development and workforce. The group's focus is discovering new and improved ways to provide a quality workforce for the benefit of existing and new employers. Providing a quality workforce for area employers is a top priority for all involved and will continue to steer the direction of the Advisory Group.

System Goal and Rationale

Align System Elements:

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

Board Strategy or Initiative and Quantitative Outcomes

System Goal and Rationale

The Board has worked with area Community Colleges and employers to focus training outcomes on industry recognized credentials. Strategies to achieve these outcomes include distribution of information, service alignment, and enhanced communication.

The Board and Contracted Service Provider provide labor market and career information to customers. Specifically this information identifies target occupations for the Northeast Texas region, starting wages, training programs, and credential/certification information. This information allows customers to make informed decisions about training courses. The Board also distributes this information to youth in Northeast Texas. Providing career information at an early age can help students successfully navigate their career pathway.

The Board is partnering with Texarkana College to align workforce services for local students. A staff member from the workforce center is dedicating time each week to work from the Texarkana College campus. The workforce staff member will meet with students to discuss workforce programs, financial aid, and job search. The Board will look for ways to expand this type service alignment, including expansion to Paris Junior College and Northeast Texas Community College.

The Board has developed several strategies for communicating with workforce partners, including advisory groups and employer outreach. The Board Executive Director meets quarterly with the Presidents of the three local Community Colleges and the four year Texarkana A&M University to discuss workforce issues and other strategic initiatives of interest. The Board also meets with community college representatives on a regular basis to discuss workforce training, with a focus on industry recognized credentials. The Business Services Unit meets with Northeast Texas employers throughout the year with face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and emails. Information gathered from these communication efforts is used to enhance program alignment and enhanced training programs.

These efforts have helped the Board achieve some significant outcomes, including 83 customers earning a credential during the past year which is an 89% success rate. Those customers that found employment achieved an average starting wage of \$12.36. Through these partnerships the Board was also able to increase the number of American Welding Society (AWS) welding certifications awarded in Northeast Texas and assist Northeast Texas Community College to become a certified AWS testing center. The Board also worked in partnership with several Economic Development Corporations, Community Colleges, and employers to start three new Computer Numerical Controlled (CNC) training programs, responding to a training need of local employers.

System Goal and Rationale
System Goal and Rationale

Improve and Integrate Programs:

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

Board Strategy or Initiative and Quantitative Outcomes

The Board has embraced technology as a mechanism for outreach, service delivery, and system efficiency. During the past year, the Board worked with a number of Workforce partners, including employers, educators, and economic developers to establish new forms of outreach and communication. The Board’s website was overhauled in both appearance and content. The new website offers a number of improvements including methods for collecting feedback from customers and new options for highlighting program opportunities. In addition to the website upgrade, the Board recently launched a mobile app. The app provides information about programs and services, including a map of childcare providers, a map of job openings, events calendar, and more. The Board understands the shift in the way customers receive and consume information. Providing information through the app will reach a larger number of the Board’s target population.

The Board has also worked with employers, educators, and economic developers to provide a series of career based videos to area youth and job seekers. The career videos are available for anyone to view and can be accessed through the Board’s website and mobile app. The video series highlights a number of careers, interviewing professionals and offering insight into their career pathway. The videos cover a variety of topics including education and basic job responsibilities. Additional information is available through the video series, including local and statewide training programs, local job postings, and salary information. The Board is working with the Region 8 Education Service Center, area community colleges, and area Independent School Districts to spread the word about this career exploration tool.

The Board will continue to explore ways to better connect with target populations. Understanding each customer group will be key to making that connection. The Board will continue to improve service delivery methods in order to enhance the local workforce development system.

Part 2—Identifying Industries of Significance to the Regional Economy

Texas has continued to exhibit economic success over the past decade, and local Workforce Boards have contributed to regional economic success through the establishment of industry sector or cluster strategies in partnership with employers. These strategies help to drive job

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

Describe the top three industry clusters/sectors and occupations.

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

Board response: The three key industry sectors for Northeast Texas are:

- Emerging Biotechnology, Life Sciences and Medical Sector
- Agriculture, Forestry and Food Sector
- Transportation Equipment Sector

The Emerging Biotechnology, Life Sciences and Medical Sector is important because health care is the largest industry in Northeast Texas, employing 19,606 workers. The city of Texarkana, located in Bowie County, is a regional medical center hub. Surrounded by rural areas for many miles, Texarkana is home to two regional hospitals, Christus St Michael and Wadley Regional Medical Center. Additionally, medical centers in Mount Pleasant, Sulphur Springs, and Paris serve as regional medical centers for the rural areas they serve. The health care industry represents a large percentage of total employment, offers above average wages, and contains a number of career pathway opportunities.

The Agriculture, Forestry and Food Sector is important due to the large number of food and beverage manufacturers in the region. The Food Manufacturing Industry (NAICS 311) employees 5,688 workers in Northeast Texas. The region's western end is home to several large manufacturing employers, ranging from poultry processing, to dairy production, to soup and beverage production. These manufacturing employers represent a large number of jobs in Northeast Texas, most paying high wages and offering employee benefits. This sector represents a concentration of employee skillsets in Northeast Texas, making it attractive for existing business expansion and/or new business location.

The Transportation Equipment Sector is important to the region because the region's largest employer, Red River Army Depot (RRAD), is a military installation with a focus on the repair and recapitalization of combat and tactical wheeled vehicles. RRAD and the military contractors that operate in a similar capacity currently employ around 5,000 workers. Many of these occupations are not classified as manufacturing because RRAD is a federal facility. In addition to RRAD, a number of trailer manufacturing companies are located in Northeast Texas, representing a large percentage of the region's workforce.

2. For each cluster or sector identified in Question 1, identify the top five occupations for which employer-demand exceeds the number of available workforce or education-program

graduates or skilled applicants. Provide labor-market-information data, including the number of jobs, wages, the education required, and projected growth.

Board response:

The Board uses labor market information and local wisdom to evaluate employer demand and workforce supply. The following lists represent the top five occupations in which employer demand is outpacing available workforce and graduate supply. Several of the occupations have a typical entry level education of “high school diploma or equivalent”. While this may be true when analyzing the occupation from a statewide standpoint, locally some of these occupations require a certificate or credential to obtain employment. The education requirements for each occupation vary by employer.

Emerging Biotechnology, Life Sciences and Medical Sector

Occ Code	Occupational Title	Annual Average Emp 2014	Annual Average Emp 2024	Entry Wage	Experienced Wage	Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2,370	2,890	\$22.18	\$31.16	Bachelor's degree
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,440	1,630	\$15.28	\$20.74	Postsecondary non-degree award
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	1,240	1,490	\$8.16	\$11.27	Postsecondary non-degree award
31-9092	Medical Assistants	340	410	\$10.18	\$14.47	Postsecondary non-degree award
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	250	290	\$10.39	\$15.47	High school diploma or equivalent

Agriculture, Forestry and Food Sector

Occ Code	Occupational Title	Annual Average Emp 2014	Annual Average Emp 2024	Entry Wage	Experienced Wage	Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation
53-3032	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,000	2,400	\$11.63	\$21.87	Postsecondary non-degree award
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, & Weighers	560	590	\$11.93	\$22.86	High school diploma or equivalent
51-9111	Packaging & Filling Machine Operators & Tenders	430	470	\$8.57	\$16.43	High school diploma or equivalent
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	400	490	\$15.54	\$23.37	High school diploma or equivalent
51-3092	Food Batchmakers	320	370	\$11.13	\$20.90	High school diploma or equivalent

Transportation Equipment Sector

Occ Code	Occupational Title	Annual Average Emp 2014	Annual Average Emp 2024	Entry Wage	Experienced Wage	Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers	1,490	1,830	\$10.16	\$19.35	High school diploma or equivalent
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production & Operating Workers	690	760	\$19.26	\$35.80	High school diploma or equivalent
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, & Weighers	560	590	\$11.93	\$22.86	High school diploma or equivalent
51-4011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal/Plastic	230	290	\$12.04	\$20.26	High school diploma or equivalent
51-2041	Structural Metal Fabricators & Fitters	80	100	\$10.85	\$15.53	High school diploma or equivalent

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

Board response: Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas utilizes internal communication and partnerships to develop strategies that address worker shortages in demand industry sectors.

Medical Sector shortages: Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas works closely with employers in the medical community to identify worker shortages. Recent discussion between employers, K-12 educators, community colleges, and economic development professionals has resulted in a renewed focus on providing career information to area youth and focusing on internships/apprenticeships. Strategies include:

- The Board will increase the distribution of labor market information to area school districts. This information will include demand occupations, education requirements, career pathways, and career exploration videos. Students can explore health care careers through occupation videos on the Board’s website.
- The Board is working with a regional medical center and local community college to explore apprenticeship possibilities within the health care industry. This group had a recent meeting to discuss apprenticeships and is working together towards establishing an apprenticeship program within a career pathway for nursing.
- The Board will continue to partner with local health care employers and training providers by exploring grant opportunities that expand training options. This includes distance training opportunities for rural areas in Northeast Texas.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Sector shortages: The western half of the Northeast Texas workforce region is concentrated with food manufacturing. The Board has worked with the food manufacturing industry, including On the Job Training (OJT) contracts, Skills Development Fund Grants, industry tours, and recruitment/hiring assistance. Strategies to address worker shortages include:

- The Board will continue to outreach area school districts with information about careers in food manufacturing. The Board has partnered with Region 8 Education Service Center to provide Industry Tours for high school Career and Technology

- Teachers. Several food manufacturing employers have been included as industry tour locations. Teachers are able to tour the manufacturing facility, gaining a better understanding of job opportunities and training needs. Teachers are able to incorporate this experience into their curriculum development and pass this information along to their students.
- The Board will continue to expand outreach efforts for the “Make it Work in Texas” program, aimed at informing students about careers in manufacturing. The video series highlights current employees from manufacturing employers, talking about topics including education/training, working conditions, and wages.
 - The Board assisted Texarkana College in the development of a Truck Driver training program. The Board provided labor market information, identifying the need for a truck driver training program. This combined with local wisdom of employer training needs helped the college support the creation of the program.

Transportation Equipment Sector shortages: The Board has a strong working relationship with Red River Army Depot (RRAD). RRAD and the military contractors operating at the depot, require a large number of skilled workers to ensure high operational performance. Northeast Texas is also home to a number of trailer manufacturing companies. These companies also require a mix of semi-skilled and high-skilled employees. Strategies to address worker shortages include:

- The Board meets with a Workforce and Economic Development Advisory Group and the College Presidents Roundtable on a regular basis. During each of these meetings, employer needs, including worker shortages are discussed. The groups worked together to identify Computer Numerical Controlled (CNC) operators as a worker shortage and need for local manufacturing employers. The Board applied for and received two High Demand Job Training Grants from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Along with the grant funding from TWC, three Economic Development Corporations provided matching funds towards the grant. These funds were used to create three CNC training programs in the region, which will address employer needs and worker shortages. The Board will continue to work with these partners to identify grant opportunities that can be used to address training needs.
- The Board also worked with the Workforce and Economic Development Group and College Presidents Roundtable to identify the need for American Welding Society (AWS) certified welders in the region. The welding profession has varying levels of skill, each requiring different levels of education and certification. The AWS certification is a high level certification for welders. The Board used grant funding from TWC to increase the number of AWS welding certifications by expanding information about local programs and establishing a new program. The Board provided funding to train job seekers at Texarkana College and Paris Junior College, all of whom obtained the AWS certification. These funds were also used to certify the welding program at Northeast Texas Community College (NTCC). The NTCC welding program can now offer the AWS certification course.
- The Board also uses Industry Tours, “Make it Work in Texas”, and Career Exploration videos to inform students and job seekers about the opportunities in the transportation equipment sector.