



SITAC Quarterly Report

System Integration Technical Advisory Committee
Texas Workforce Investment Council
June 2011

System Integration Technical Advisory Committee

The System Integration Technical Advisory Committee (SITAC) is constituted as a Technical Advisory Committee to the Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council). Chaired by a member of the Council's Executive Committee, SITAC includes executive-level representatives from the Council's eight partner agencies, as well as representation from the Texas Association of Workforce Boards. SITAC's key responsibility is the implementation of the workforce system strategic plan.

The current plan, *Advancing Texas: Strategic Plan for the Texas Workforce System (FY2010-FY2015)* (*Advancing Texas*) was approved by Governor Perry on October 23, 2009. It outlines 14 long term objectives (LTOs), grouped by three key performance areas (KPA) that address the critical business issues identified during a yearlong collaborative planning process.

Next Meeting

Thursday, September 8, 2011 – 1:00 p.m.
Teacher Retirement System, Austin

SITAC members meet quarterly, providing status reports on action plans (APs) for which their organization is solely or jointly responsible. The committee is authorized

to create and deploy cross-agency teams in order to devise and execute collaborative solutions to issues associated with the system strategic plan's LTOs.

Featured Action Plan

Increase Veteran Employment [C2]

Veterans, who often have a wide range of disabilities but with training, referral and placement services can return to the civilian workforce, are one of four populations targeted by *Advancing Texas*. LTO C2 specifies that the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) will work to ensure state and leveraged federal services provide veterans with the programs, products and services necessary to accommodate their needs and to enable them to enter the workforce successfully.



TVC offers employment services to Texas veterans and helps employers find qualified veteran job applicants. Through the Veterans Employment Services (VES) program veterans receive assistance with finding employment through job matching, resume assistance and intensive services. The program transferred to TVC from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) in 2006 and has over 190 VES staff located statewide in workforce centers supported through Texas Workforce

Message from the Chair

In March, SITAC heard status reports for several action plans, along with a special presentation on the Texas Veterans Commission's Business Outreach initiative. That project, as it supports the action plan to increase veteran employment, is featured in this issue of the *SITAC Quarterly Report*.

Members were also informed that the *Employer Services* briefing paper has been updated and is available at:

governor.state.tx.us/files/twic/Employer_Services.pdf

In addition, we welcomed two new members who will represent the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services and the Texas Association of Workforce Boards.

As always, I was glad to see several of my fellow Council members in attendance. The reports, presentations and group discussion enable us to better understand the challenges faced by system partners as implementation of *Advancing Texas* continues.

On a mixed note, it was the last meeting for our Vice Chair Gene Crump from the Texas Workforce Commission. The last original SITAC member, Gene has been with the committee since it was convened in 2003 – his experience, wit and wisdom have been an asset to the group and the workforce system. He will be missed, but we wish him well in his upcoming retirement!

Paul Mayer

Solutions, the partnership of TWC and the 28 local workforce boards. Workforce Solutions offices provide veterans with ready access to other employment, training and support services. Intensive services are available for veterans who are disabled, economically or educationally disadvantaged, homeless or facing other barriers to employment.

Veteran Employment [C2] – By 2013, the veteran population will achieve additional employment outcomes.

Owner / Participant: TVC

Employers and VES staff utilize TWC’s WorkInTexas online job search resources, which allows job postings to be designated as ‘veterans only’; however, employers – or staff on their behalf – can also browse for job seekers or link a non-veteran to a job posted as ‘veterans only’.

Historically, performance targets have been negotiated by each state with the United States Department of Labor (DOL) annually, taking prior performance and economic conditions into consideration. In light of the recession, the entered employment rate was renegotiated to a lower rate of 56%. TVC is currently exceeding that new target and performance is slowly increasing. The employment retention rate has not changed significantly; TVC notes once veterans obtain employment they tend to stay employed.

Although the entered employment rate has declined from recent years, progress has been made for major tasks related to LTO C2, including ongoing efforts such as:

- ★ *Transition Assistance Program (TAP)* – In coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), TVC facilitates multi-day TAP seminars that are designed to provide job search and related services to military personnel within 180 days of separation or retirement. Agency efforts to increase the number of seminars have been successful. As of March, 908 veterans had participated compared to 795 over the same period in 2010, with continued increases anticipated.
- ★ *REALifelines* – Working with the DOD and the Veterans Administration, TVC continues to increase outreach, awareness and participation in this program which helps injured veterans return to civilian life.

In addition, TVC is focused on enhancing employer outreach activities. In late 2009, the agency launched a new statewide initiative by hiring a dedicated **Business Outreach Coordinator**. The establishment of this position provides TVC the opportunity to work more closely with employers, TWC and the local boards to leverage more successful training and placement services for veterans. The coordinator works directly with employers – helping them to understand the value of hiring qualified veterans with unique abilities gained through military service.

Business Outreach Initiative		
	11/09-12/10	1/1/11-2/18/11
Job Openings	350	27
Employers	81	6
Resumes Submitted	381	43
Hires	25	11
Average Salary	\$50,377.50	

provide training on use of the WorkInTexas website and in assisting veterans with customizing resumes for specific job applications. This year, the coordinator continues to work with participating companies and is also targeting new employers in the oil and gas, government, and medical fields. He serves as a central point of contact for companies and handles the final screening of job applicants.

Employers such as J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc., one of the largest transportation logistics companies in North America, are consistently recognized as one of the ‘Top 100 Military Friendly Employers’ by *G.I. Jobs* magazine. Founded by a veteran, the company is committed to providing current and former military personnel with career opportunities including their management training program. Initially unfamiliar with TVC and the free services available to employers, J.B. Hunt human resources managers recognized the quality of services provided and are excited about their partnership with TVC and its Business Outreach coordinator.

HIRE A HERO

10 Reasons to Hire Veterans

- ★ Dependability
- ★ Commitment to results
- ★ Accelerated learning
- ★ Leadership
- ★ Teamwork
- ★ Performance under pressure
- ★ Respect for procedures
- ★ Integrity
- ★ Triumph over adversity
- ★ Strong technical skills

Source: TVC website.

Goals for the initiative are two-fold: (1) to establish TVC as a trusted source of veteran job candidates and (2) to provide veterans with better options for higher paying jobs, thus creating advocates for the agency and its services and leading to more veteran-only employment opportunities.

During the first six months the coordinator focused on streamlining processes and developing a consistent approach for working with veterans and employers. For the remainder of 2010, the focus was on working with TVC’s regional staff to

"... jobs require critical thinking skills, technical savvy, leadership skills, and are process driven, and military employees have been exposed to that already ..."

- Eric Airola, Director of Human Resources
J.B. Hunt Transport Services Inc.
(2010 National Employer Award Winner)

TVC's On the Job Training (OJT) program allows newly-hired or promoted individuals, eligible for GI Bill educational benefits, to be in training while performing a new job and earning wages. Employers directly benefit through recruiting assistance, providing company-directed training, and increased employee retention while the employees receive a monthly subsistence benefit while learning work processes, equipment, company policies and skills under the direct supervision of a skilled trainer. TVC is the state agency that approves GI Bill OJT programs in Texas – with programs typically ranging from six months to two years in length.

Since September 2009, TVC has also been providing employment services to spouses and caregivers of active duty service members. Family Employment Assistance Counselors are based at Fort Hood, Fort Bliss and San Antonio's Brooke Army Medical Center, providing the same services as those available to veterans.

Implementation Update: March 2011

In addition to veterans employment [LTO C2], reports for several other *Advancing Texas'* APs were presented at the March 3 SITAC meeting. Summaries are provided below, grouped by the plan's three KPAs.

KPA: Customer Outcomes

To meet the changing demands of Texas' employers, everyone must be part of the critical pool of potential employees. *Advancing Texas* specifies four target populations, including *those with low literacy skills*, who can be assisted through targeted literacy programs to gain or maintain employment.

LTO C3 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and TWC to develop new and enhance existing methods, programs and processes for programs targeted at the over 17 English language learner (ELL) population that address both language and occupation skill acquisition. The ELL population is comprised of individuals who may have a high school diploma or degree in their native country, but for whom English is not their first language.

English Language Learner (ELL) Employment [C3]

– By 2013, design and implement integrated Adult Basic Education and workforce skills training programs to enhance employment outcomes for the English language learner population.

Owner: SITAC

Participants: TEA, TWC

TEA reported that the Adult Basic Education Innovation Grant application was available on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) website. The three agencies are collaborating to issue this career pathways innovation grant which is limited to selected geographic

regions with specific requirements required of the applicants. After the application period closes, submissions will be reviewed by TEA, THECB and TWC staff. Grantees will be awarded \$200,000-500,000 award per grantee with the grant period projected to be May 1, 2011 – August 31, 2012.

KPA: Programs, Products and Services

Middle-skill jobs¹ currently account for nearly half the jobs in the U.S. and in Texas. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects about 45 percent of all job openings over the next decade will require some postsecondary education or occupational training.

However, Texas is facing an increasing need for workers with appropriate middle skills, created by both job growth and future workforce retirements. The projected need crosses a range of industries and occupations, including health care and energy.

Under the Council's leadership, **LTO P2** requires expansion of the 'earn while you learn' model to address employer demand for skilled workers. The Apprenticeship Project Leadership Team (leadership team) appointed by Council Chair Jurey has recommended six projects to the Council's Executive Committee for approval.

Apprenticeship [P2] – By 2012, design, develop, and implement a pilot program to demonstrate flexibility of the 'earn while you learn' model of traditional apprenticeship programs. Where appropriate, expand and replicate into new occupational areas by 2015.

Owner / Participant: Council

The sixth proposed project focuses on the North Texas manufacturing industry. It was presented to the leadership team at its February 18 meeting, with the Executive Committee scheduled to consider the leadership team's recommendation at its March meeting. If approved as a pilot, there will be four pilot and two demonstration projects attached to this LTO with initiatives in a variety of industries including healthcare, information technology, manufacturing and construction trades. The Council continues to

¹ Jobs requiring education and/or training beyond high school, but less than a four-year college degree. Training may range from apprenticeships, certificate programs, and open-ended on-the-job-training, to two-year associate academic or technical degrees.

work with DOL and project staff to develop action plans and identify additional resource needs for all approved projects. Project reporting is underway, with presentations scheduled to begin in May.



Data gaps regarding employers’ needs and customer satisfaction hinder the ability to assess whether existing programs and services adequately meet customer requirements. During the previous strategic plan cycle, several partner agencies increased their efforts to become more familiar with employers’ awareness and perception of existing services, as well as gather information about projected hiring and training needs. LTO P5 incorporates five agency projects, with updates presented for all at the March meeting.

- ★ *Health and Human Services Commission – Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) [P5.1]*– DARS conducted a pilot survey in two areas of the state and staff are reviewing results for potential modification to the survey questions and process. The agency plans to utilize survey feedback to make adjustments to offered training. Use of a survey as the mechanism to determine employer satisfaction led DARS to consider web-based administration of future surveys. Based on that possibility, the agency is considering potential changes to the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant website so that the survey could be accessible from that site. The project goal is to have immediate feedback based on a specific transaction rather than conducting an annual survey.
- ★ *THECB [P5.2]*– THECB is currently surveying community and technical colleges to collect information on strategies colleges are using to determine employer satisfaction and to use that information in their institutional planning processes to improve program delivery. Following the end of the data collection phase in March, THECB plans to identify best practices and to disseminate information to SITAC, other institutions and other THECB staff.
- ★ *TVC [P5.3]*– TVC staff are reviewing the survey format and process used previously and considering random sample options and possible modifications to survey questions. Tentative plans are to conduct surveys in May and October.
- ★ *Texas Youth Commission (TYC) [P5.4]*– In late 2010, TYC conducted a pilot survey and received favorable ratings from the limited number of responses. Of the participating employers, 95% indicated their satisfaction with TYC services as excellent or better (4 or 5 on a 5-point scale). The agency plans to utilize data to adjust current offerings and is considering how to get data in the future from a larger sample of employers.
- ★ *Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) – Windham School District (Windham) [P5.5]* – Windham continues to have a low response rate due to the service population. With Project RIO administration moving from Windham to TDCJ, job fairs are no longer conducted on site; therefore, ready access to employers is limited. As a next step, TWC will be providing Windham with additional employer contact information, including email addresses. When this modification is in place, Windham plans to conduct an electronic survey with the goal of increasing response rates.

Employer Needs / Satisfaction [P5] – Partner agencies will gather data from employer customers at appropriate intervals to determine employer needs and satisfaction.
Owner: SITAC
Participants: HHSC-DARS, THECB, TVC, TYC, TDCJ-Windham

<i>SITAC Members</i>	
<i>Chair</i>	Paul Mayer, Executive Committee Member, Texas Workforce Investment Council
<i>Economic Development and Tourism Division</i>	Keith Graf, Director, Aerospace and Aviation
<i>Texas Association of Workforce Boards</i>	David K. Setzer, Executive Director, Workforce Solutions North Central Texas
<i>Texas Department of Criminal Justice</i>	Debbie Roberts, Superintendent, Windham School District
<i>Texas Education Agency</i>	Vangie Stice-Israel, State Director for Career Technical Education
<i>Texas Health and Human Services Commission</i>	Jim Hanophy, Assistant Commissioner, Division for Rehabilitative Services
<i>Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board</i>	Dr. MacGregor Stephenson, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Research
<i>Texas Veterans Commission</i>	Shawn Deabay, Director, Veterans Employment Services
<i>Texas Workforce Commission</i>	Gene Crump, Deputy Executive Director
<i>Texas Youth Commission</i>	Dr. Clint Carpenter, Superintendent of Education