

## Employer Feedback on Industry-Based Certifications



As part of the strategic plan, *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016-2023*, the Council launched a strategic system initiative to identify and track third-party, industry-based certifications that would result in a positive outcome for a job applicant. One goal is to increase the workforce system's capacity to produce workers with these postsecondary credentials for occupations that are growing in the state. To achieve this goal, the Council sought to gather employer feedback to identify certifications that are of value in the employment hiring process.

The Council convened a task group that was charged with outlining a process to review research conducted on industry-based certifications and refine a list to determine which certifications are of value to Texas employers. This process was conducted through the 28 local workforce development boards who gathered the employer feedback results for certifications based on a value question:

*All else being equal between two applicants, if one applicant earned an industry-based certification relevant to the job, would they be given preference in hiring?*

Initial feedback was received from Texas employers and resulted in preliminary data identifying general STEM and information technology (IT) specific STEM certifications. The final report lists the middle-skill STEM occupations and includes labor market information data to show the projected employment for each occupation by year 2026, the projected employment percentage increase from 2016-2026, and the 2017 median annual wage for the occupation. The report highlights the industry-based certifications that were identified as having value for each occupation based on the employers' feedback. IT specific certifications are reported by the IT functional area and certifying entity or vendor of the IT product.

The feedback received from employers was analyzed and used to determine middle-skill STEM industry-based certifications that are considered of value to Texas employers. This list of certifications is intended to serve as a resource for Texas employers, local workforce development boards, economic development groups, and community and technical colleges.

| MIDDLE-SKILL STEM OCCUPATIONS   | INDUSTRY-BASED CERTIFICATIONS  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurse</b><br/>SOC 29-2061   71,430 workers<br/>Projected employment by 2026: 85,030<br/>Projected employment increase 2016-2026: 19.0%<br/>2017 median annual wage: \$45,394</p> | <p>Licensed Vocational Nurse</p>   |
| <p><b>Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologist</b><br/>SOC 29-2035   2,790 workers<br/>Projected employment by 2026: 3,460<br/>Projected employment increase 2016-2026: 24.0%<br/>2017 median annual wage: \$70,350</p>            | <p>Registered Technologist - Cardiac-Interventional Radiography<br/>Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologist<br/>Registered Technologist - Magnetic Resonance Imaging<br/>Registered Technologist - Computed Tomography</p> |
| <p><b>Mechanical Engineering Technician</b><br/>SOC 17-3027   4,860 workers<br/>Projected employment by 2026: 5,710<br/>Projected employment increase 2016-2026: 17.4%<br/>2017 median annual wage: \$63,232</p>                  | <p>Certified Quality Technician</p>  |
| <p><b>Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technician</b><br/>SOC 29-2012   11,890 workers<br/>Projected employment by 2026: 14,320<br/>Projected employment increase 2016-2026: 20.4%<br/>2017 median annual wage: \$49,776</p>       | <p>Certified Safety Professional<br/>International Medical Technologist<br/>Medical Laboratory Technician<br/>Medical Laboratory Technician</p>  |

## Texas Workforce System Partners and Programs

Texas workforce system partners collaborate to better align, leverage, and integrate system services to develop a world-class workforce and ensure a higher quality of life for all Texans through educational, employment, and economic success. Eight state agencies, local workforce development boards, community and technical colleges, local adult education providers, and independent school districts actively contribute to statewide programs and those highlighted in this report.

The table below shows the partners and primary and supporting programs that constitute the FY 2018 Texas workforce system:

| FY 2018 Texas Workforce System Partners and Programs  |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Texas Department of Criminal Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postsecondary Academic and Technical Education</li> <li>Windham School District<br/>Secondary Academic Education<br/>Secondary Technical Education</li> </ul> <p><b>Texas Education Agency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secondary Schools<br/>Academic Education<br/>Career and Technical Education</li> </ul> <p><b>Texas Health and Human Services Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program<br/>Employment and Training</li> </ul> <p><b>Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community and Technical Colleges<br/>Academic Education<br/>Technical Education</li> </ul> | <p><b>Texas Juvenile Justice Department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secondary Academic Education<br/>Secondary Technical Education</li> </ul> <p><b>Texas Veterans Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Veterans Employment and Training</li> </ul> <p><b>Texas Workforce Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult Education and Literacy</li> <li>Apprenticeship Training, Chapter 133</li> <li>Choices Program for TANF Adults</li> <li>Employment Services</li> <li>Rehabilitation Services</li> <li>Self-Sufficiency Fund</li> <li>Senior Community Service Employment Program</li> <li>Skills Development Fund</li> <li>Trade Adjustment Assistance/NAFTA</li> <li>Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act<br/>Adult<br/>Dislocated Workers<br/>Youth</li> </ul> |



*Texas Workforce System Program Directory: A Guide to Funding and Programs Related to the Texas Workforce System (Revised December 2017)* catalogues the many programs constituting the Texas workforce system into one publication. A companion document to the system strategic plan and the annual evaluation report, it details workforce development programs and related academic programs administered by the state's workforce system partner agencies. A concise reference for policy makers and stakeholders, the directory is distributed to system partners and stakeholders and is posted on the Council's website.

For more information on the Texas Workforce Investment Council and its authority, please visit Texas Government Code, Section 2308.



## Annual Report Fiscal Year 2018 September 1, 2017–August 31, 2018

### About the Council's Role in the Texas Workforce System

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council) was created in 1993 by the Governor and the Texas Legislature to promote the development of a well-educated and highly skilled workforce in Texas. The Council assists the Governor and the legislature with strategic planning, research, and evaluation to support continuous improvement of the Texas workforce system. In addition to its responsibilities in state law, the Council functions as the State Workforce Investment Board under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Council does not operate programs but works to foster collaboration and a systems perspective among its partners and their programs. Its impact is demonstrated through initiatives that improve outcomes for workforce customers—employers and current and future workers of Texas—every one of whom is critical to Texas' economic success.

The Texas workforce system delivers programs, services, and initiatives administered by eight agencies, local workforce development boards, school districts, community and technical colleges, and local adult education providers. The Council's eight partner agencies are: Economic Development and Tourism within the Office of the Governor; the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, the Texas Veterans Commission, and the Texas Workforce Commission.

There are 19 members on the Council. The Governor appoints 14 members representing business, organized labor, education, and community-based organizations. The remaining five members are ex officio representatives of the Council's member state agencies.

The Council produces this annual report, which offers highlights of the Council's work during the past fiscal year (FY). Included in this year's report is information on the third year of implementation of *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023* and on evaluation of system programs.

The Texas workforce system strategic plan and other Council products referenced in this report are posted on the Council's website at <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/twic>.

## Planning System Progress



The Council is continuing the **industry-based certification system initiative** to identify and track third-party, industry-based certifications to increase the workforce system's capacity to produce workers with these postsecondary credentials for occupations that are growing in the state. The initiative is based on research performed by the Council on third-party, industry-based certifications for middle-skill science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) occupations in Texas. Council research found that middle-skill STEM occupations are growing and demonstrate strong employment outcomes.

Additional research determined that third-party, industry-based certifications are underutilized credentials that have value in this segment of the labor market. The Council conducted further research to define the middle-skill STEM occupations in Texas and developed a list of industry-based certifications associated with the occupations. The Council charged a task group of workforce system partners and stakeholders to identify a process to identify those third-party, industry-based certifications that are of value to Texas employers. The task group's preliminary analysis revealed the need to solicit feedback directly from employers. In making the recommendation, the task group recognized that regional labor markets vary considerably and determined that the elimination of any certification from the list should result from direct feedback by employers and system partners at the regional level. The Council envisions this initiative as a starting point toward developing a system that would both identify certifications held in high regard by employers and maintain a list of those certifications. The system would also capture the types and numbers of third-party, industry-based certifications and licenses across the state workforce education and training programs.



The Council is developing a product repository to support the strategic system initiative to leverage discretionary **Wagner-Peyser 7(b) grant outcomes** in Texas. The Wagner-Peyser Act allocates federal funds to the state,

of which the Governor may reserve up to 10 percent of the state's allotment for discretionary 7(b) grants. In March 2018, the program was branded as Texas Talent Connection to emphasize the primary objective of the grants. The program funds workforce training and job placement services. These are intended to increase both wages and job retention through labor exchange services, address special needs populations and youth programs, and support training through competitive grants. This grant program supports innovation in the delivery of services designed to lead to stronger employment outcomes. The repository will allow the state to collect, store, and disseminate products to increase efficiency in the development of grants funded by this competitive grant program and make those products available to accelerate other workforce education and training programs. The initiative recognizes the value of products that have been created to support innovative workforce development programs and services. By evaluating outcomes to determine which products would be housed within the repository, it has the potential to improve efficiency and reduce duplication. When system partners adopt, adapt, or repurpose grant products, the subsequent grant outcomes can be assessed to determine whether efficiencies were gained through this process and how effectively the product performed in the context of a different project. The grant products that will be the focus of collection efforts include training materials such as curricula, courses, assessments, models, tools, and resources. Grant products will start being collected in late 2018.

## Evaluating System Progress

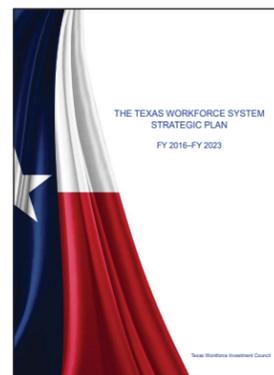


The Council is required by Texas Government Code, Chapter 2308, to monitor the state's workforce system. Annually, the Council reports to the Governor and legislature on the degree to which the system is achieving the state and local workforce goals and objectives of Texas' workforce system strategic plan, *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023*. **Evaluation 2017** is the Council's second evaluation for the eight-year strategic plan period. The report's focal point is a balanced scorecard including two components: the Workforce System Performance Outcomes and the Implementation of System Goals, which identifies program and system performance related to the strategic plan's four goal areas attributable to the efforts and actions of partner agencies.

The Council is charged with the approval of the Texas **combined two-year state plan modification** under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (PY 2016 – PY 2019). The strategic element of the plan describes the state's visions, goals, and strategies for preparing an educated and skilled workforce to close the skills gap and meet employer needs. The operational element of the plan describes each program and the operating systems and policies that support implementing the strategies. In June 2018, the Council considered and subsequently approved endorsement of updates to the combined state plan that required the Governor's approval. The plan was modified to include updated labor market information and economic and workforce analysis, and provided information on the impact of Hurricane Harvey on Texas' workforce development activities along with a summary of hurricane-related waivers approved by the United States Department of Labor. The plan also incorporated adult education and literacy content standards that are aligned to state K-12 and Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. The Governor approved the modified two-year combined state plan on June 18, 2018.

### Successes, Challenges, and Lessons – Implementing the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

The Council is required by Texas Government Code, Chapter 2308, to evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan for Texas' workforce development system and to report to the Governor and the legislature on that implementation. More than two years have passed since the Governor approved the workforce system strategic plan, which was developed by the Council in collaboration with its system partners. Six partner agencies reported to members at the December 2017 and March 2018 meetings on anticipated completion dates and their performance measures associated with the action plans in the strategic plan. They reported on the implementation of the plan respective to their agency and identified and discussed the most significant actions undertaken during the past two years to implement each of their respective action plans.



## Conducting Research

The Council supports system planning, implementation of the system strategic plan, and evaluation through a suite of research products and news updates that are distributed to members, system partners, and workforce stakeholders. Available on the Council's website, the Council's primary products include the strategic plan for the workforce system, evaluation reports, resource publications, reports on critical and emerging issues, and recommendations to the Governor.



### A Guide to Apprenticeship in Texas (June 2018)

This guide focuses on the established training pathway to well-paying jobs in Texas, including trades and middle-skill STEM occupations. The research in this report outlines how apprenticeship programs improve worker outcomes, while helping businesses meet their demand for skilled workers—a strategy that a growing number of states across the nation are turning to as a potential solution to their labor shortages. Registered apprenticeship programs offer participants paid on-the-job and classroom training, allowing the apprentices to receive industry-recognized credentials upon completion. These programs benefit the apprentices as well as the employers, which is key to reducing turnover, integrating apprentices into the organizational culture, generating long-term loyalty, and gaining a skilled workforce.



### Veterans Workforce Services in Texas (June 2018)

When it comes to employment and training, veterans and their families have a number of options. In Texas, there are an estimated 1.7 million veterans, of which 967,000 are working or actively seeking work. This research identifies services that are available to assist service members who are transitioning into civilian life and looking to complete secondary education or obtain relevant licenses or certifications to compete in the job market. State and federal regulations establish a priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses, which applies to any workforce program or service directly funded by state or federal funds. Additional services available are tailored to the individual veteran and include employment assistance, medical care, mental health, and veterans' benefits.



### Work-Based Learning in Career and Technical Education Programs in Texas (December 2017)

Texas employers have expressed difficulty in finding workers with the industry-based certifications and work experience needed for current job vacancies. This work-based learning research focuses on secondary and postsecondary education in Texas. The highlighted programs offer strategies to help students gain practical real-life experience while complementing traditional classroom instruction with hands-on opportunities in real work environments. This process is critical to connecting graduates' competencies to the skills and knowledge required in the current labor market. The research identified that work-based learning is a continuum of coordinated events that include career awareness, career exploration, career preparation, and career training. The research features programs with a high level of employer involvement and a history of activities in the latter phases of the continuum.