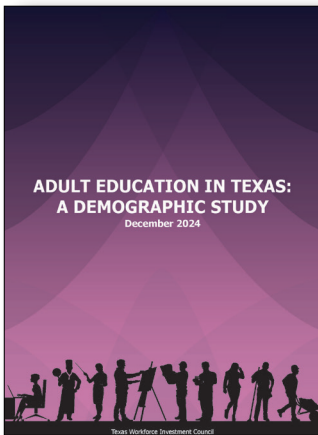


Adult Education in Texas: A Demographic Study

December 2024



The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council) prepared this report to detail the individuals eligible for AEL services in Texas. This report is an update to *Understanding the Need for Adult Education in Texas* which was last published in September 2018. The data presented in this report supersedes the data reported in the previous report. The Council further analyzed the current population in need of AEL services and examined the geographic dispersion of this need across local workforce development areas (LWDAs) in Texas.

Adult Education is often applied as a broad reference for numerous and distinct types of adult learning activities. Individuals most in need of services or hardest to serve, including those with multiple barriers to educational enhancement, are considered eligible. For the purpose of the Council's work, the definition of Adult Education and Literacy is determined by Title II of the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), specifically the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. AEL programs generally emphasize basic skills in reading, writing, math, and English language competency to prepare adults for jobs or further academic instruction.

Current Population in Need of Adult Education

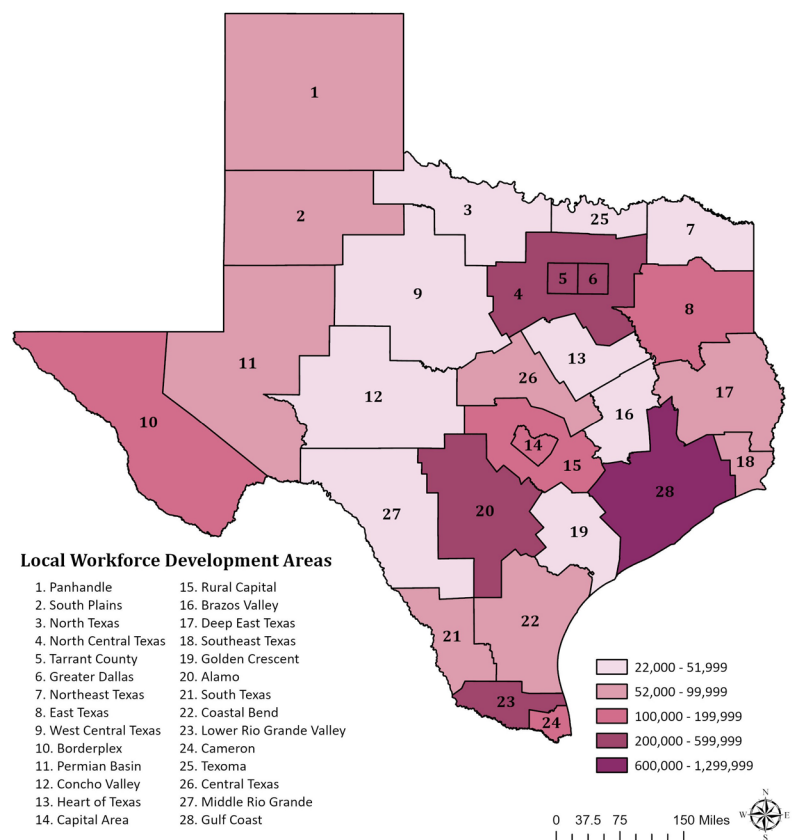
Over 4.7 million people (4,700,115 which is approximately 21 percent) in Texas are in need of adult education services, a slight decrease from 4,807,600 in 2018. This eligibility is due to their lack of English fluency and/or the absence of a high school diploma, GED, or other high school equivalency. Looking specifically at the group of individuals traditionally considered as prime working age, between the ages of 16 and 64, 3,917,473 individuals qualified for adult education services. Other findings in the report include the following:

- Of the 4,700,115 individuals who qualify for adult education services, 2,961,455, or 63 percent, are English fluent and have less than a high school level of education.
- Approximately 37 percent (1.7 million individuals) of Texans eligible for adult education services are unable to speak English. For example, an immigrant may have a college degree from his or her home country but is not able to communicate fluently in English.
- Hispanics account for the largest percentage of individuals who qualify for services in all the educational attainment categories by both nativity and fluency.

To assist workforce system stakeholders in coordinating program planning and delivery, the Council identified the 28 LWDAs to analyze the geographic distribution of current populations needing AEL services. Over 1.2 million Texans in the Gulf Coast area are eligible for AEL services. The Gulf Coast area has the highest number of individuals followed by Greater Dallas (514,430), Alamo (396,467), and North Central Texas (334,467) as shown by the dark purple on the map.

About 40 percent of Texans 16 years and over in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, South Texas, Cameron, and Borderplex areas are eligible for AEL services. Thus, for every ten adults who are 16 years and over, four are eligible for AEL services in these LWDAs. There are 1,738,660 Texans eligible for AEL programs who are not fluent in English. A large portion of this group, specifically 1,559,329 individuals, were born outside of the United States. Among these foreign-born residents, Hispanics represent the largest segment, totaling 1,364,463. Asians, the fastest-growing racial group in Texas is the second largest cohort, with 150,030 individuals who are not fluent in English.

Individuals Age 16 and over Eligible for Adult Education by LWDA, 2022



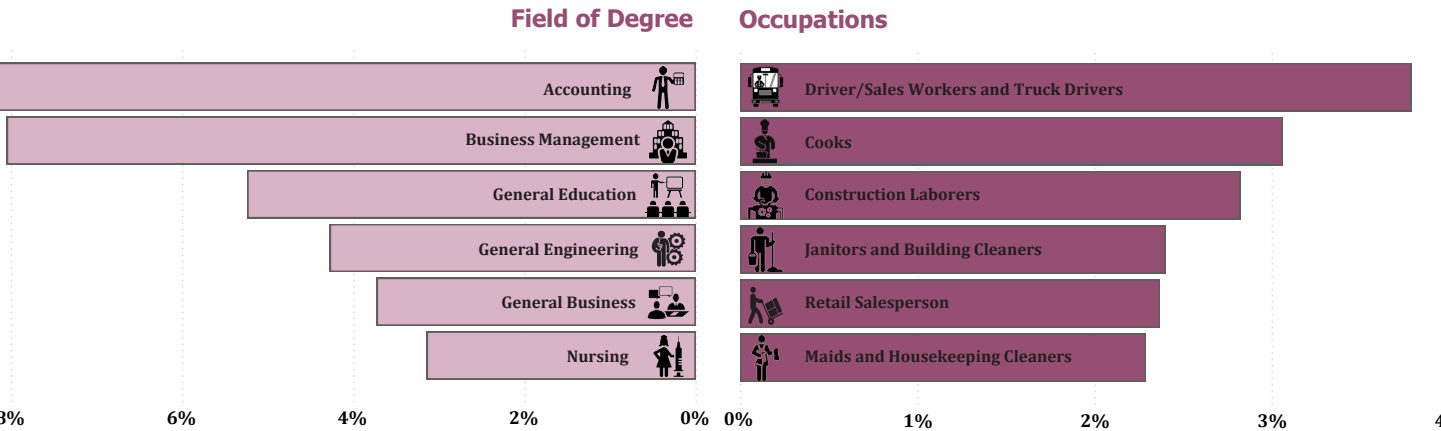
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022.

Highly Skilled Foreign Born Individuals

There are 103,041 highly skilled foreign-born individuals in Texas who are eligible for AEL services. These individuals hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, while many are from other countries where English is not the primary language.

Approximately 58 percent (59,457) of these individuals participate in the labor force, while 42 percent (43,584) are not part of the labor force. Among them, around eight percent (4,873) have a degree in accounting, and a similar percentage (4,784 individuals or eight percent) hold a degree in business management and administration.

In terms of employment, roughly four percent (2,252) worked as drivers, sales workers and truck drivers. Additionally, there are 1,821 individuals (3.1 percent) employed as cooks and 1,679 individuals (2.8 percent) worked as construction laborers.



The highly skilled foreign born Texans who are not English fluent are mostly located in the workforce boards in areas such as the Houston metro area, San Antonio-New Braunfels, Austin-Round Rock, and Dallas Fort Worth metro areas. The Gulf Coast accounts for the highest number of these individuals with 34,612 (33.6 percent), followed by Greater Dallas with 11,988 (11.6 percent), North Central Texas with 10,471 (10.2 percent), Lower Rio Grande Valley with 7,298 (7.1 percent), and Alamo with 6,468 (6.3 percent).

The highly skilled foreign born Texans who are not fluent in English are more concentrated in the Houston metro area, San Antonio-New Braunfels, Austin-Round Rock, and Dallas Fort Worth metro areas. The Gulf Coast accounts for the highest number of these individuals with 34,612 (33.6 percent), followed by Greater Dallas with 11,988 (11.6 percent), North Central Texas with 10,471 (10.2 percent), Lower Rio Grande Valley with 7,298 (7.1 percent), and Alamo with 6,468 (6.3 percent).

Comparative Data for Adult Education Since 2010

Since *Understanding the Need of Adult Education* was published in 2018, the Texas population in need of adult education declined by approximately 100,000 people—from 4,807,600 to 4,700,115 in 2024. A comparative analysis was conducted by evaluating data from current and previous reports. The following table highlights the numbers of individuals eligible for adult education services in Texas in 2018 and 2024. Data are presented by age and educational attainment, and the percent change since 2018 is calculated for each category.

Educational Attainment	Total					
	2018 Report		2024 Report		Percent Change	Percent Change
	Age 16+	16-64	Age 16+	16-64	Age 16+	16-64
0 to 4th Grade	609,954	395,320	706,566	488,108	15.8%	23.5%
5th to 8th Grade	1,008,201	783,509	817,509	610,947	-18.9%	-22.0%
9th to 12th Grade (no diploma)	2,600,431	2,326,857	2,523,827	2,257,016	-2.9%	-3.0%
High School Graduates	321,474	293,671	336,159	298,455	4.6%	1.6%
GED or High School Equivalency	38,327	33,153	43,452	34,076	13.4%	2.8%
Some Colleges or Associate's Degree	139,413	124,614	151,932	128,990	9.0%	3.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	89,800	74,542	120,670	99,881	34.4%	34.0%
Total	4,807,600	4,031,666	4,700,115	3,917,473	-2.2%	-2.8%

The Texas Workforce Investment Council was created in 1993 by the 73rd Texas Legislature. As an advisory body to the Governor and the legislature, the development of an integrated strategic plan for the workforce system is one of the Council’s primary responsibilities. Because all Texans are part of the critical pool of potential employees that is and will be required by Texas employers, *Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024–2031* includes action plans targeted for increased employment outcomes for populations in need of adult education. Detailed demographic analyses and maps are available at <https://gov.texas.gov/twic>.