

# EVALUATION 2017

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OUTCOMES OF THE TEXAS WORKFORCE SYSTEM

**The Mission of the Texas Workforce Investment Council**

*Assisting the Governor and the Legislature with strategic planning for and evaluation of the Texas workforce system to promote the development of a well-educated, highly skilled workforce for Texas.*



January 2018

Dear Fellow Texan:

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council) is pleased to present the *Evaluation 2017* report on the Texas workforce system. Guided by *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023*, the report was approved unanimously at the Council's December 8, 2017, meeting.

*Evaluation 2017* is the second report for the system strategic plan period, providing a system perspective of the progress and achievement of partner agencies and other system stakeholders. State statutes require that the Council evaluate the workforce system and report annually to the Governor and the legislature. Statutory requirements addressed in the report include:

- ▶ system strategic plan implementation
- ▶ formal and less formal performance measures
- ▶ welfare to work initiatives
- ▶ adult education and literacy
- ▶ skill standards system

The focal point of this report is a balanced scorecard that presents outcome and 14-year trend data for system performance. Through the delivery of over 18 workforce education and training programs, state and local system partners served over 4.5 million individuals in the last reporting year. Of those participating in workforce system programs and services, almost 526,000 individuals completed a degree, certificate, or other measure of educational achievement. Over 1.5 million Texans who participated in a workforce program found a job, stayed in a job, and/or enrolled in further education or training.

With the second year of implementation complete, I am pleased to report that progress was made toward achieving the system goals and objectives contained in the eight-year plan. In the year ahead, the Council and its system partners will continue efforts to address cross-agency, high-priority issues related to employers, partner engagement, system alignment, and program improvement and integration. In addition, work will continue on a major system initiative to identify and track third-party, industry-based certifications in Texas.

I commend this report to you.

Sincerely,

Wes Jurey, Chair

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# Evaluation 2017

Accomplishments and Outcomes of the Texas Workforce System

Texas Workforce Investment Council  
December 2017



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## Introduction

Guided by *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023*, system partners work collaboratively to ensure Texas has a workforce that achieves success in the dynamic global economy. The *Evaluation 2017* report to the Governor and legislature—the second report for the strategic plan period—provides a system perspective of the progress and achievement of partner agencies and other system stakeholders. The focal point of the report is a balanced scorecard that presents outcome and trend data for system performance.

### The Council and Texas’ Workforce System

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council) was created in 1993 by the 73<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature. The Council is charged to promote the development of a highly skilled and well-educated workforce for Texas, and to assist the Governor and the legislature with strategic planning for and evaluation of the Texas workforce system. The 19-member Council includes representatives from business, labor, education, community-based organizations, and member agencies.

The Texas workforce system is composed of the workforce programs, services, and initiatives administered by eight state agencies and 28 local workforce boards, as well as independent school districts, community and technical colleges, and local adult education providers. System partners are responsible for the delivery of 23 programs and services focused on education, workforce education, and workforce training for adults, adults with barriers, and youth.

The Council collects and disseminates performance data and descriptive information on 18 workforce programs, as well as five academic education programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Information and data from these five programs assist stakeholders to understand the state’s efforts to prepare students to transition to further education or enter the workforce.

Approved by Governor Greg Abbott, *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023* was developed by the Council and its system partners to align Texas workforce programs, services and initiatives. The plan elevates the system-level approach established under the previous two strategic plans and guides system partners in implementing workforce strategies that are designed to achieve specific system objectives. These outcomes are based on

## Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023

### Vision

An innovative, world-class Texas workforce system ensures success in the dynamic global economy.

### Mission

The mission of the Texas workforce system is to position Texas as a global economic leader by growing and sustaining a competitive workforce, aligning programs with employer needs, integrating system services, and leveraging partnerships.

### System Partners

- ★ Governor’s Office of Economic Development and Tourism
- ★ Texas Association of Workforce Boards
- ★ Texas Department of Criminal Justice and its Windham School District
- ★ Texas Education Agency
- ★ Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- ★ Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- ★ Texas Juvenile Justice Department
- ★ Texas Veterans Commission
- ★ Texas Workforce Commission

The system strategic plan and other Council products are posted on the Council’s website at:

<https://gov.texas.gov/organization/twic>

key issues identified throughout Texas, which shape the goals, system objectives, action plans, and key performance indicators of the plan.

### Annual Evaluation

The Council is required by Texas Government Code, Chapter 2308, to monitor the state’s workforce system. As part of that responsibility, the Council annually reports to the Governor and the legislature on the degree to which the system is achieving workforce goals and objectives. This is the second evaluation report for the eight-year strategic plan period. Statutory requirements addressed in the report include:

- ▶ system strategic plan implementation
- ▶ formal and less formal performance measures
- ▶ welfare to work initiatives
- ▶ adult education and literacy
- ▶ skill standards system

Workforce system goals and objectives are the focus of this annual evaluation. Developed collaboratively by the Council and its system partners, many objectives require multi-partner collaboration or alignment of programs, initiatives, and outcomes. Four goal areas address cross-agency, high-priority issues related to employers, partner engagement, system alignment, and program improvement and integration.

By design, this report presents a system perspective of progress and achievement for partner agencies and other system stakeholders, and meets statutory requirements for reporting to the Governor and legislature. A balanced scorecard aligns with the plan’s structure and supports reporting and performance assessment.

### Balanced Scorecard

Performance accountability remains a key element under the new system plan and the balanced scorecard supports Council and system partner efforts to continuously improve the workforce system’s efficiency and effectiveness. The five components—illustrated in the graphic at right—present system and goal-specific performance outcomes attributable to the efforts and actions of partner agencies and their delivery agents.

Workforce System Performance Outcomes (formal measures): The first scorecard presents system performance outcomes for the four formal measures, which are essentially consistent across programs and were first approved in 2003. Thirteen-year performance trend data are presented, as well as system and partner agency aggregate data for the most recent 12-month program reporting period.

Implementation of System Goals (Goals 1–4, less formal measures): The plan’s four goal areas include action plans that outline partner agencies’ strategies, activities, and timelines to achieve the less formal measures associated with each system objective. Each goal area scorecard includes data for the relevant less formal measures—the key performance indicators that provide data on agencies’ actions to accomplish the strategies outlined in the plan. Agency implementation highlights and additional data elements that help illustrate accomplishments are also presented.



## Key Performance Indicators

Two types of measures were included in the system strategic plan: formal and less formal. The measures meet the statutory requirement for the Council to conduct performance measurement by developing and maintaining a comprehensive system of data gathering and reporting. The formal and less formal measures are presented in the table below.

<b>Formal and Less Formal Measures</b>
<b>Formal – Workforce System Performance Outcomes</b>
Educational attainment
Entered employment
Employment retention
Customers served
<b>Less Formal – Goal Area 1: Focus on Employers</b>
Rate of employer satisfaction
Percentage of revised career and technical education programs of study reviewed by business and industry
Type and number of third-party, industry-based certifications successfully completed by program participants
Certification success rate: total successfully completed certification assessments divided by total attempted certification assessments
<b>Less Formal – Goal Area 2: Engage in Partnerships</b>
Percentage of consumers participating in integrated work-based learning activities
Percentage of individuals co-enrolled in vocational rehabilitation and workforce programs
Percentage of individuals co-enrolled in adult education and workforce programs
Educational attainment rate of students successfully completing Accelerate Texas programs at community and technical colleges
Entered employment rate of students successfully completing Accelerate Texas programs at community and technical colleges
Rate of employer satisfaction
<b>Less Formal – Goal Area 3: Align System Elements</b>
Percentage of grade twelve secondary students who receive career and technical education dual credit, enroll in a two-year institution, and receive credit at the institution
Career and technical education time to degree
Percentage of students and youth with disabilities who participated in transition services and subsequently enrolled in postsecondary education and training
Percentage of students and youth with disabilities who participated in transition services and subsequently entered competitive integrated employment
Percentage of community and technical college students who receive program-of-study-based course credit who transfer to another two-year institution and have that credit recognized
Percentage of career and technical education programs approved for dual credit
Percentage of students successfully completing dual credit career and technical education courses
<b>Less Formal – Goal Area 4: Improve and Integrate Programs</b>
Percentage of students using technology for course content delivery
Utilization of labor market information products
Utilization of self-service options
Utilization of online professional development courses
Percentage of consumers served who have identified as veterans with disabilities
Percentage of consumers served with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, autism, and deaf-blindness who subsequently enter competitive integrated employment
Percentage of child care providers who are certified as Texas Rising Star providers
Entered employment rate of parents receiving child care
Employment retention rate of parents receiving child care

Formal Measures: Four measures approved in 2003 and 2009 were incorporated in the FY 2016–FY 2023 strategic plan: educational achievement, entered employment, employment retention, and customers served. These system

measures, which cross workforce programs and are outcome-oriented, establish responsibility for end outcomes or outputs that are central to the system's success.

Formal measures are included in agency legislative appropriation requests, and may or may not be specified as key measures<sup>1</sup>. A formal measure is required to be reported to the Council if it is determined to be a significant intended outcome for a workforce program. As required by statute, program-level data are submitted to the Council by six partner agencies for 23 programs focused on education, workforce, and workforce training services.

Less Formal Measures: This type of measure provides information and feedback that is essential in both the development and the implementation of the system strategic plan. Less formal measures may apply to some or all agency partners. Usually aligned with actions considered critical in determining implementation of a plan strategy, these measures demonstrate success of the plan over time.

Less formal measures are specified in the plan, with measures related to the adult education referral system to be developed at a later date. For some measures, data will become available in future years for different reasons, e.g.: (1) partner agencies need to build or modify data collection and reporting mechanisms, (2) measure definition and methodology will be beta-tested during a pilot period, or (3) measure(s) will be developed later in the plan period.

### **Data Treatment and Limitations**

Agency Negotiation: Data definitions and methodologies were first negotiated with agencies in 2004. To achieve a higher degree of consistency when aggregating data across programs, the Council requested that federal common definitions be adopted for the formal measures where relevant, and that similar program periods also be used. After renegotiation in 2009, definitions and program periods continued to differ slightly from those used during the previous strategic plan period.

In 2016, Council staff worked with partner agencies to review and update the formal measure definitions and methodologies, and to further align them with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requirements. Both entered employment and employment retention are essentially consistent across partner agencies and, where required, the program periods for reporting were adjusted based on federal guidance. Also of note, during the 84<sup>th</sup> legislative session the Windham School District was granted the authority to award high school diplomas. Definitions and methodologies for all less formal measures were also negotiated with partner agencies.

Technical Document: Additional information is available by request, including a list of the 23 programs included in formal measures reporting; program-level data by formal measure, by agency; and less formal measures data by goal area, by agency.

Program-Level Data: Formal measures data are reported by program by each partner agency as required by statute. For the purpose of this evaluation report, these data are aggregated and reported as system-level data. Measures are presented as both an absolute number and as a percentage, and are from the most recent 12-month reporting period available. As noted above, program-level data are included in the technical document that is available by request.

Unduplicated Data: In most cases, data are unduplicated and conform to reporting definitions and methodologies agreed to by partner agencies. Where known, totals are adjusted to provide an unduplicated count. For example, educational achievement data may include duplicate data where a participant has outcomes for both education and training programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Key measures indicate the extent to which a state agency is achieving its goals or objectives and consist of the outcome, output, efficiency, and explanatory measures referenced in the General Appropriations Act for each agency. [Legislative Budget Board, *Performance Reporting for New Key Measures* (December 2015)]

Data Revisions: In October 2017, TWC submitted data revisions for formal and less formal measures for 2016. In addition, TWC reported that its case management systems offer few ways to track post-exit enrollment in education/training programs and historically there has been little need to track this information making it largely unavailable for reporting this year. TWC will be modifying the case management systems over the next year to capture this information and is exploring matching with external data.

Rounding Convention: A rounding convention has been applied to the formal and less formal measures data displayed as a percentage: .001 to .004 has been rounded down to .00; .005 to .009 has been rounded up to the next highest hundredth. Rounding rules are applied after completion of all applicable mathematical operation(s) such as division or subtraction.

Data Ownership: Some partner agencies process their own data, while others have interagency agreements with other partner agencies for data processing. Raw data are confidential records owned by the applicable agency.

#### Unemployment Insurance Records:

- ▶ *Time Lag* – There is a significant delay in receiving and analyzing unemployment insurance wage records for measuring employment performance. For example, employment retention is based on participants' status a full year following program completion. Several factors must be considered, including the time allowed for employers to submit data to the Texas Workforce Commission and the time necessary for agencies to process and report the data to the Council. This means that the performance data reported each year reflects the outcomes of people who exited services one or two years prior.
- ▶ *Coverage* – An unknown number of program exiters obtain jobs that are not covered by the Texas unemployment insurance system. For example, those who are self-employed or in other contract work, those who relocate and become employed in another state, and those who live in Texas but are employed across state lines are not reported. This lack of coverage results in lower levels of documented employment, reflected in lower outcomes when education and training programs are evaluated. More complete data sets may be available where the agency can use other databases—such as the Wage Record Interchange System or the Federal Employment Data Exchange System—to identify employment with employers who do not file unemployment insurance wages in Texas.

#### **Issues Identification**

System partners operate in a complex, changing economic environment as they strive to provide employers, current workers, and future workers with services that are comprehensive, timely, and relevant. By 2025, the Texas population is projected to exceed 30.7 million people, with almost 12 million workers being 25 to 54 years of age. The demographic composition is expected to continue to change, with Hispanic growing to the largest percentage of the population (43.55 percent) and the number of females slightly exceeding that of males.<sup>2</sup>

Growth in middle-skills jobs—those that require more than a high school degree but less than a four-year degree—continues to increase the demand for workers with industry-based certifications. The Texas workforce employed in middle-skill occupations in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields is projected to increase by 24 percent to nearly 1.5 million workers in the next decade. This growth will include significant increases in healthcare, construction, and manufacturing fields.<sup>3</sup> In Texas, future workers will also be needed in the growing

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<sup>2</sup> Texas State Data Center, based on the 0.5 migration scenario (<http://demographics.texas.gov/>, October 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Texas Workforce Investment Council, *Defining Middle-Skill STEM Occupations in Texas* (December 2015).

industries of computer systems design and related services, as well as service-related industries.<sup>4</sup>

The Council is charged with facilitating the development of a systemic, integrated approach to the delivery of programs and services that meet the needs of employers and individuals. This task is accomplished in part through identifying issues and working with system partners to achieve issue resolution. Over the eight-year plan period, issues directly related to the scope as outlined above are included in the annual evaluation report.

The Council also identifies and works to address issues related to the state's workforce system through other strategies and methods, including:

- ▶ *Council Strategy and Listening Sessions* – Convened in addition to, or in conjunction with, regular Council meetings in order to identify and address systemic issues.
- ▶ *Issue Briefs and Reports* – Produced periodically to address specific workforce issues or to provide demographic profiles for population segments such as mature workers, people with disabilities, and veterans.
- ▶ *Stakeholder Roundtables or Surveys* – Conducted periodically to obtain feedback regarding system stakeholder needs and to assess workforce system usage and satisfaction levels.

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<sup>4</sup> Texas Workforce Commission LMCI Tracer, *Texas Fastest Growing Industries* ([www.tracer2.com/](http://www.tracer2.com/), October 2017).

## Balanced Scorecard

The balanced scorecard framework complements the system strategic plan's structure and supports reporting and performance assessment. By design, a balanced scorecard provides a framework for developing, implementing, and managing strategy by linking objectives, measures, and initiatives to the strategy. The structure of the FY 2016–FY 2023 system plan readily aligns with a balanced scorecard framework—based on four goal areas that address cross-agency, high-priority issues determined critical to achieving the plan's vision and mission.

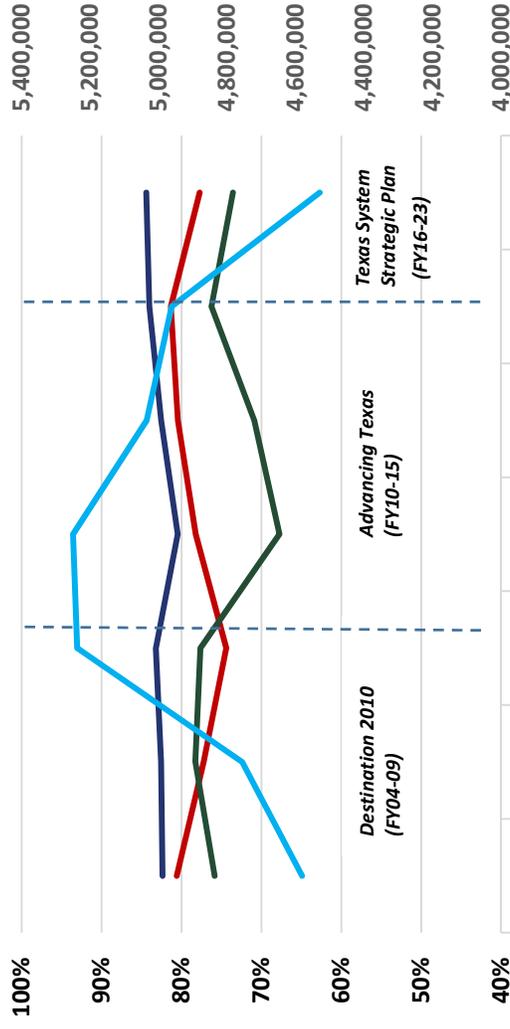
The Council believes the balanced scorecard supports both Council and system partner efforts to continuously improve the workforce system's efficiency and effectiveness. The components incorporate narrative and graphics to illustrate achievements by both the system and partner agencies, as reported that fiscal year (FY). This evaluation design also supports communication between the Council and its partner agencies and provides an assessment of progress and outcomes to internal and external customers, including the Governor, legislature, and other system stakeholders.

The balanced scorecard presents formal and less formal measures data reported to the Council by six partner agencies:

- ▶ Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and its Windham School District
- ▶ Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- ▶ Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)
- ▶ Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD)
- ▶ Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)
- ▶ Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

## Workforce System Performance Outcomes

### Formal Measures 2004-2017



### Fiscal Year 2017 Outcomes

**525,666 (77.73 percent)** individuals completed a degree, certificate, or other measure of educational achievement

**922,627 (73.57 percent)** individuals entered employment and/or were enrolled in education or training after program exit

**629,625 (84.41 percent)** individuals retained employment and/or were enrolled in education or training after program exit

**4,529,891** individuals received services through the Texas workforce system

System Partner	Educational Achievement (EA)	Entered Employment (EE)	Employment Retention (ER)	Customers Served (CS)
Criminal Justice	1,560	n/a	n/a	3,301
Education	482,363	143,973	n/a	2,939,735
Higher Education	33,220	109,374	92,147	654,817
Juvenile Justice	586	n/a	n/a	3,645
Veterans	n/a	14,636	14,046	16,650
Workforce	9,497	621,760	523,432	915,044
<b>Total</b>	<b>525,666</b>	<b>922,627</b>	<b>629,625</b>	<b>4,529,891</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>77.73%</b>	<b>73.57%</b>	<b>84.41%</b>	<b>n/a</b>

## Workforce System Performance Outcomes

To further align formal measures with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requirements, last year Council staff worked with partner agencies to review and update the formal measure definitions and methodologies. Both entered employment and employment retention are essentially consistent across partner agencies and, where required, the program periods for reporting were adjusted based on federal guidance. The new federal regulations significantly affected the reported outcomes of certain programs such as Adult Education – WIOA, Title II. Despite these changes, system trends remain consistent when considering funding levels and economic factors.

The recession and ensuing recovery were contributing factors to changes in the longitudinal trend lines over the 13-year period displayed for formal measures. As noted in *Evaluation 2013*, data reported for all formal measures had shown the effects during and since recovery from the economic recession. This was true to some degree in *Evaluation 2009* for customers served, and began to be evidenced later for the employment-related measures due to delay in receiving and analyzing unemployment insurance wage records for measuring performance.

Minor changes occur across programs and over time. However, key changes that affect the trend lines include federal or state legislation and policy changes, and significant increases or decreases in federal or state funding levels—including funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111–5). Customers served, which is the most volatile trend line, clearly shows customer growth during the recession and a decline thereafter. During the recession, more Texans needed workforce programs and services, just as more students accessed higher education. Combined with the influx of federal recovery funding available through Texas' workforce system, a significant increase in demand for services is evident during the period 2009 to 2011.

The longitudinal trend lines for educational achievement, entered employment, and employment retention demonstrate comparatively consistent performance across time. The recessionary period is evident in data reported by agencies from 2009 through 2011. Despite the fact that Texas fared far better than most states during the recession, both entered employment and employment retention moved downward during this period. In 2012 and 2013, these data trends had not yet returned to their pre-recession highs. While there is no definitive causal information to which this movement can be attributed, it is likely that higher unemployment, business contraction, and significantly reduced hiring by employers during that period were contributing factors.

While these employment measures were trending lower during the recession, educational achievement was trending higher before declining in 2015 and remaining relatively unchanged this year. Higher enrollment in postsecondary institutions is often evidenced during periods of economic contractions or recession, and this is consistent with patterns during previous recessionary periods.

### Data Notes

Most programs are designed to serve participants that meet specific eligibility criteria and have unique needs. Program objectives and desired outcomes vary, and approved definitions and methodologies are program-specific. Additionally, integrated service delivery strategies may result in duplication of customer counts across programs. Data subsets (duplicates) include Postsecondary Community and Technical College Corrections – Academic and Technical, which has been adjusted to provide unduplicated counts for educational achievement and customers served.

In October 2016, TWC notified the Council that Apprenticeship Chapter 133 educational achievement data were not available and that prior year data (2004–2015) were invalid. The agency determined that the current dataset did not allow differentiation between participants completing a year in the program versus completing the program. TWC is making data collection improvements in order to report consistently with the approved definition and methodology. Program data have been removed from the educational achievement trend line.

# Goal Area 1: 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.

## What are the objectives?

## How are system partners addressing them?

## What was accomplished this year?

Increase business and industry involvement.

TVC is expanding outreach programs to employers to assist veterans in finding quality employment.

Employer satisfaction data was not reported.

TEA is involving business and industry in Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills review and programs of study.

In applicable years, TEA will report the number of revised career and technical education programs of study reviewed by business and industry.

**125,285** third-party, industry-based certifications successfully completed by program participants:

★ 72,777 (TEA)

★ 21,535 (THECB)

★ 3,260 (TWC), including 263 awarded to veterans

★ 27,713 (Windham)

Certification success rate:

★ **80.0 percent** (TEA)

★ **82.1 percent** (Windham)

Expand licensure and industry certification.

Five system partners are using third-party, industry-based certifications where relevant as an education or training outcome to connect graduate competencies to job skill requirements: TEA, THECB, TVC, TWC, and Windham.

## Focus on Employers: Action Plan Implementation Summaries

By improving access to 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 Partner Strategy	Agency	System Objective	System Goal
Expand outreach programs to employers to assist veterans to find quality employment.	TVC	Increase business and industry involvement.	<i>Focus on employers</i>
Involve business and industry in Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills review and programs of study.	TEA		
Use third-party, industry-based certifications where relevant as an education or training outcome to connect graduate competencies to job skill requirements.	TWC TEA THECB TVC TDCJ	Expand licensure and industry certification.	
Align career and technical education program content and outcomes with third-party, industry-based certifications.	TEA THECB		

Five partner agencies are focused on increasing business and industry involvement, as well as expanding licensure and industry certification to more effectively assist employers in finding skilled talent.

The following pages include action plan reports from each of the partner agencies. **Please note that the reports contain information verbatim as submitted by the agencies.**

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Education Agency		
<b>Goal Area</b>	1 – Focus on Employers		
<b>Strategy</b>	Involve business and industry in Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills review and programs of study.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

FY 2017 Status	Actual [mm/yy]		Action	Specified in Plan	
	Start Date	End Date		Start Date	End Date
Not started	09/19		Involve business and industry representatives on committees for the review and revision of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for career and technical education (CTE).	Initiate next review cycle	Date set by the State Board of Education
Not started	09/19		Solicit informal feedback and public comment on drafts of TEKS for career and technical education from specific business and industry representatives.	Initiate next review cycle	Date set by the State Board of Education
In progress	09/17		Identify and review relevant industry-based certifications, and incorporate examples into the revision of programs of study content.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/17		Request assistance from the Texas Workforce Commission in soliciting business and industry input on revised programs of study.	Ongoing	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

- The State Board of Education has published a proposed TEKS review schedule. Beginning in 2019-2020, selected CTE Career Cluster TEKS will be reviewed and adopted every year. The first clusters to be reviewed will be STEM and Health Science.
- State accountability industry recognized credentials were approved and will be incorporated into programs of study.
- Programs of study are being revised in cooperation with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Business and industry input will be requested.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Education Agency				
<b>Goal Area</b>	1 – Focus on Employers				
<b>Strategy</b>	Use third-party, industry-based certifications where relevant as an education or training outcome to connect graduate competencies to job skill requirements.				
<b>Part 1–Status Update for Actions</b>					
	<b>Actual [mm/yy]</b>			<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
Finalized	09/16	08/17	Collect third-party, industry-based certification information on the Perkins annual performance evaluation report.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16		Identify and include third-party, industry-based certifications, as relevant, as examples in revised programs of study.	Ongoing	FY 2019
<b>Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities</b>					

-Industry recognized credential information is being collected from school districts through the 2016-2017 Perkins Performance Effectiveness Report.

-Industry-based certifications will be incorporated into programs of study as examples.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Education Agency		
<b>Goal Area</b>	1 – Focus on Employers		
<b>Strategy</b>	Align career and technical education program content and outcomes with third-party, industry-based certifications.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

		<b>Actual [mm/vv]</b>		<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
Not started	09/19		Align Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills to industry-based certifications, where relevant.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16		Include industry certifications as examples in programs of study and college and career planning guides.	Ongoing	FY 2019
Finalized	09/16	08/17	Identify industry certifications offered by Early College High Schools.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16		Design processes for career and technical education programs of study that identify relevant industry certifications and licenses and incorporate related career and skill information into program content where appropriate.	Ongoing	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

- The State Board of Education has published a proposed TEKS review schedule. Beginning in 2019-2020, selected CTE Career Cluster TEKS will be reviewed and adopted every year. The first clusters to be reviewed will be STEM and Health Science. Where relevant, industry based certifications will be aligned.
- The college and career planning guides will be updated during 2017-2018 and will include industry certifications as examples.
- Beginning in February 2018, reports of industry certifications offered by Early College High Schools will be available.
- A process for identifying industry certifications and licenses for programs of study is in progress.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board		
<b>Goal Area</b>	1 – Focus on Employers		
<b>Strategy</b>	Use third-party, industry-based certifications where relevant as an education or training outcome to connect graduate competencies to job skill requirements.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

		<b>Actual [mm/yy]</b>		<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
In progress	09/16		Identify and incorporate industry-based certifications as milestones in programs of study.	FY 2016	FY 2019
Not started	09/19		Consider industry-based certifications as potential success points in formula/performance funding.	FY 2019	FY 2019
In progress	04/17		Revise existing Workforce Education Course Manual course review process to include discipline-specific professional development to encourage statewide adoption and use of industry-based certifications.	FY 2016	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

The Workforce Education Course Manual Advisory Committee (WECM-AC) was established by the Board in April 2017. The WECM-AC had their first meeting this summer. The Committee has been tasked to develop a course revision process that is not tied to a periodic review cycle, but that is more responsive to the needs of business and industry. The Committee has been tasked to incorporate recommendations for industry based certifications as part of the course review process. This task is ongoing.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board		
<b>Goal Area</b>	1 – Focus on Employers		
<b>Strategy</b>	Align career and technical education program content and outcomes with third-party, industry-based certifications.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

	<b>Actual [mm/vv]</b>		<b>Action</b>	<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>		<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
In progress	09/16		Develop discipline-specific statewide advisory groups to provide input concerning skills, certifications, and licenses required by business and industry.	Varies by program disciplines	FY 2019
In progress	09/16		Construct processes to develop and revise programs of study that identify relevant industry-based certifications and licenses, as well as the occupational information that can be incorporated into those programs.	FY 2016	FY 2019
Not started	09/18		Provide statewide professional development workshops, by discipline, to share best practices and improve student outcomes.	FY 2018	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

As discussed previously, the WECM-AC has just begun the process of revising the WECM course review process to include industry based certification. Information will need to be made available to the colleges and their faculty as the revision process is implemented. Professional development will be included in the conversations with the WECM-AC. Coordinating Board staff will continue to communicate with the two-year colleges as these processes evolve.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Veterans Commission	
<b>Goal Area</b>	1 – Focus on Employers	
<b>Strategy</b>	Expand outreach programs to employers to assist veterans to find quality employment.	

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

FY 2017 Status	Actual [mm/yy]		Action	Specified in Plan	
	Start Date	End Date		Start Date	End Date
In progress	09/16	08/17	Integrate with Texas Workforce Commission business service units across the state.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16	08/17	Partner with employers and veteran service organizations on hiring events.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16	08/17	Participate in corporate events, panel discussions, and presentations.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16	08/17	Partner with employer organizations, the Society for Human Resource Management, and chambers of commerce.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16	08/17	Conduct semi-annual employer satisfaction surveys, analyze survey data, and evaluate ways to improve outreach programs to employers.	Ongoing	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Our Local Veterans Employment Representatives located within each Local Workforce Development Area continue to advocate for veteran employment through outreach to employers. The Texas Veterans Commission provides additional services to employers in all aspects of employment. During FY 17 the Texas Veterans Commission hosted a series of job fairs with the Customs and Border Protection Agency in five different locations throughout the state of Texas. We continue to maintain a strong relationship with the Hiring our Heroes organization with the U. S. Chamber of Commerce organizing hiring events and educating employers on veteran's skills. We work closely with the Texas Workforce Commission to become more closely integrated with the Business Service Units, the Texas Veterans Leadership Program, and Commissioner Ruth R. Hughs and the "We Hire Vets" initiative.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Veterans Commission				
<b>Goal Area</b>	1 – Focus on Employers				
<b>Strategy</b>	Use third-party, industry-based certifications where relevant as an education or training outcome to connect graduate competencies to job skill requirements.				
<b>Part 1–Status Update for Actions</b>					
	<b>Actual [mm/yy]</b>			<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
In progress	09/16	08/17	Work with regulatory agencies to use the Texas Department of Licensure and Regulation’s primer for developing service credit for occupational licensing as a guide for accurately evaluating military service credit by developing standardized training for other regulatory agencies to adopt and tailor for their specific agency.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16	08/17	Work with regulatory agencies to establish a process for a military service member or veteran to submit an application for a license or apprenticeship and to obtain credit for verified military experience, service, training, or education.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16	08/17	Work with regulatory agencies to post those Military Occupational Standard classifications or designators that correspond to licensed occupations to establish a clear support system to ensure as many veterans as possible are aware of job options.	Ongoing	FY 2019
<b>Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities</b>					

Texas Department of Licensure and Regulations is an integrated partner and workgroup committee member in the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services. The Texas Veterans Commission works closely with other agencies that have licensing or apprenticeship authority to ensure that the equivalent military experience is appropriately considered.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Workforce Commission		
<b>Goal Area</b>	1 – Focus on Employers		
<b>Strategy</b>	Use third-party, industry-based certifications where relevant as an education or training outcome to connect graduate competencies to job skill requirements.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

	<b>Actual [mm/yy]</b>		<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>

Finalized	01/15	12/16	FY 2016	FY 2017
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Expand training strategies and options to increase industry-based certifications offered in response to employer-defined needs by working through local workforce boards to identify certifications that support local employers and building capacity to provide those certifications.

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Expand training strategies and options to increase industry-based certifications...

In January 2015, the Commission distributed \$2.5 million to the local workforce development boards for an Industry Recognized Skills initiative. Certifications were awarded in a number of areas such as manufacturing, healthcare, construction, information technology, and transportation.

Over 250 certifications were received in manufacturing in areas such as 55 Manufacturing Skill Standards Council, 20 National Institute for Metalworking Skills, 19 Computerized Numerical Control machinists, 119 American Welding Society welders, etc. In the healthcare field 237 certifications were awarded, such as 110 registered nurses, 20 licensed vocational nurses, 71 certified nurse aides/certified medication aides, and 12 medical coding. In construction, 13 certifications were awarded in HVAC, 2 in plumbing, 9 in pipefitting, and 10 in masonry. Forty-three certifications were awarded in information technology, 140 in transportation, 125 in health and safety fields, and 38 in a variety of fields. In total, over 850 certifications were received.

<b>Agency</b>	Windham School District (Texas Department of Criminal Justice)		
<b>Goal Area</b>	1 – Focus on Employers		
<b>Strategy</b>	Use third-party, industry-based certifications where relevant as an education or training outcome to connect graduate competencies to job skill requirements.		

<b>Part 1–Status Update for Actions</b>			
	<b>Actual [mm/yy]</b>		<b>Specified in Plan</b>
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Start Date      End Date</b>
In progress	09/16		FY 2016      FY 2016
	Continue to develop and maintain partnerships between industry and the Windham School District in order to provide certifications to students that will fulfill job requirements in the current workforce market.		
In progress	09/16		FY 2016      FY 2019
	Expand the number of career and technical education classes providing industry standard certifications.		
In progress	09/16		FY 2016      FY 2019
	Expand the career and technical education programs offered by Windham School District, and evaluate program effectiveness.		

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

WSD would like to request to change the end date for the first line action (begins with "Continue to develop and maintain partnerships") to FY 2020. Development with industry companies is on-going. Currently 25 partnerships have been developed with industry companies. As a result, partners assisted WSD Career and Technical Education staff in modifying curriculum. Improvement included adding current industry practices which help students prepare for the workforce.

WSD has expanded the following CTE programs at the State Jail facilities:  
 Electronic Systems Technician, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Programs--Introduction to Telecommunications Connections, Copper Cabling, Energy Management, Fiber Optics Cabling and Audio/Visual Systems  
 Expanded Computer Numerical Control Machining (5 Axis and Milling) at State Jails and Institutional Division.  
 Expanded OSHA, Construction Fundamentals, and Safety programs at State Jails, Institutional Division and Transfer Facilities.

WSD evaluates our program effectiveness by the increase in industry certifications from 18,532 in SY 16 to 24,876 in SY 17 (YTD). The Windham School District Program Evaluation Report, published in January 2017 includes the biennial evaluation of our CTE programs. The report may be found at: [http://www.wsdtx.org/images/PDF/legislative\\_required\\_reports/85/Windham\\_School\\_District\\_Program\\_Evaluation\\_Report.pdf](http://www.wsdtx.org/images/PDF/legislative_required_reports/85/Windham_School_District_Program_Evaluation_Report.pdf)

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## Goal Area 2: 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 ensure a “no wrong door” approach to the provision of workforce programs and services.

### *What is the objective?*

Expand partnerships with system partners and stakeholders to promote collaboration, joint planning, and enhanced participant outcomes.

### *How are system partners addressing it?*

TWC is working to improve rehabilitation employment outcomes by establishing additional partnerships with secondary and postsecondary entities, and with employers.

TWC is creating greater access and effective services by promoting collaboration and regional planning.

THECB and TWC are increasing access to, referral between, and outcomes of adult education programs and services.

Windham is establishing and leveraging regional employer partnerships to benefit students pre- and post- release.

### *What was accomplished this year?*

**1.37 percent** of vocational rehabilitation consumers participated in integrated, work-based learning activities

**10.19 percent** of individuals in vocational rehabilitation programs were co-enrolled in workforce programs

**7.21 percent** of individuals in adult education programs were co-enrolled in workforce programs (TWC)

Of students successfully completing a community and technical college Accelerate Texas program that integrated basic skills with career and technical pathways: (THECB)

★ **7.94 percent** received a Level 1 or Level 2 certificate or an associate’s degree

★ **81.73 percent** entered employment and/or were enrolled in education or training

Employer satisfaction data was not reported.

## Engage in Partnerships: Action Plan Implementation Summaries

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.

System Partner Strategy	Agency	System Objective	System Goal
Improve rehabilitation employment outcomes by establishing additional partnerships with secondary and postsecondary entities, and employers.	TWC	Expand partnerships with system partners and stakeholders to promote collaboration, joint planning, and enhanced participant outcomes.	<i>Engage in partnerships</i>
Create greater access and effective services by promoting collaboration and regional planning.	TWC		
Increase access to, referral between, and outcomes of adult education programs and services.	TWC THECB		
Establish and leverage regional employer partnerships to benefit students pre- and post-release.	TDCJ		

Three agencies are committed to expanding partnerships to better serve employers and workforce program participants

The following pages include action plan reports from each of the partner agencies. **Please note that the reports contain information verbatim as submitted by the agencies.**

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board		
<b>Goal Area</b>	2 – Engage in Partnerships		
<b>Strategy</b>	Increase access to, referral between, and outcomes of adult education programs and services.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

FY 2017 Status	Actual [mm/vv]		Action	Specified in Plan	
	Start Date	End Date		Start Date	End Date
In progress	09/10	08/19	Increase the number of community and technical colleges providing targeted adult education services that transition students into higher education.	FY 2016	FY 2019
In progress	01/11	08/19	Provide statewide program support and professional development to improve targeted adult education services provided through community and technical colleges.	FY 2016	FY 2019
In progress	09/10	08/19	Increase the number of community and technical colleges partnering with local adult education and literacy providers to support the transition of students into and through higher education.	FY 2016	FY 2019
In progress	10/16		Develop and implement a student referral system between federally funded adult education and literacy providers and community and technical colleges to assist individuals seeking adult education services find a program responsive to their needs. If deemed appropriate, consider integration of community-based providers into the referral system. (Referral system measure to be developed prior to implementation.)	FY 2016	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

- In FY 2011, THECB funded 8 community college systems to do targeted adult education services to transition students to integrated education and training and intensive college readiness programs. By the start of FY2016, 27 districts had received or were still funded to support adult education services that supported student transition.
- At the close of FY 2017, 24 districts are continuing to receive funding.
- To meet the needs of under-prepared students who fall far below college readiness on the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSA), all 50 community college districts are required to have on-campus programs for students in need of adult education services or be in partnership with adult education services in the community.
- From FY 2011 through FY 2016, THECB held two technical assistance meetings per year for funded and non-funded community and technical colleges, partnering workforce boards, and social service agencies working with adult learners on supporting the transition and credential completion of students identified as eligible for adult education services.
- In FY 2017, THECB supported four statewide regional meetings and invited all community and technical colleges in the region to learn about evaluation outcomes of the THECB-funded Accelerate TX program from 2014 through 2017.
- Held initial meeting with TWC’s AEL program about the referral system; TWC indicated that they have the provider directory housed at TCALL for anyone to use to identify providers by zip code, city, or services. Also held a meeting with representatives from the Texas Connector who are working with TWC’s AEL program to pilot the Connector with a few AEL providers to support connecting students to social service providers and other services in their region. Without funds, it is not possible to explore a more robust referral system that allows students to access multiple services in one place and to share their history or services and activities with higher education advisors.
- Further, as of the 85th Texas Legislature (2017), THECB no longer has funds to support targeted adult education services and transition programs in coordination with community and technical colleges.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Workforce Commission		
<b>Goal Area</b>	2 – Engage in Partnerships		
<b>Strategy</b>	Improve rehabilitation employment outcomes by establishing additional partnerships with secondary and postsecondary entities, and employers.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

		<b>Actual [mm/vv]</b>		<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
In progress	01/17		Develop and expand partnerships with system partners, including independent school districts, educational service centers, community and technical colleges, stakeholders, and employers to increase the availability and coordination of integrated work-based learning opportunities such as work experience, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, internship, job shadowing, and on-the-job training.	FY 2016	FY 2018
In progress	09/17		Develop and implement a coordinated approach to serving employers through collaboration with local workforce boards and workforce centers.	FY 2016	FY 2019
In progress	09/15		Expand collaboration with state and federal partners to increase engagement of employers, including federal contractors, to promote awareness, recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities.	FY 2016	FY 2017
In progress	09/15		Expand partnerships with federal, state, and local partners, such as the Veterans Administration and community mental health service providers, to enhance collaboration and coordination of services for veterans with disabilities.	FY 2016	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Develop and expand partnerships...

The Commission approved a Vocational Rehabilitation Pathways to Careers Initiative (PCI) on January 31, 2017. PCI will expand Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to Texas students with disabilities and build upon the Pre-ETS activities already underway. PCI will effectively prepare students with disabilities to achieve competitive, integrated employment through participation in employability skills and work readiness training, career exploration activities, work experience, and postsecondary education. PCI includes five new strategies comprised of two statewide strategies and three demonstration projects: Summer Earn and Learn, Charting the Course: Planning for Life and Careers after High School, Career Pathways Academies, Explore STEM!, and Transition Planning for Students in Private and Home Schools. The strategies will be implemented in Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018.

The first PCI strategy to be implemented is Summer Earn and Learn. Launched in May 2017, this strategy is a work-based program conducted in partnership with the twenty-eight Local Workforce Development Boards and their employer partners. Through Summer Earn and Learn, more than 1,500 Texas students with disabilities participated in employability skills training and a five to eight-week paid work experience assignment.

### ***The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023: Action Plan Reports for Evaluation 2017***

Develop and implement a coordinated approach to serving employers...

In FY 2017, TWC launched a statewide HireAbility campaign to educate employers on the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities. The campaign began in September 2016, and featured informational publications and other resources, such as video testimonials to assist employers in hiring individuals with disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff, in coordination with community partners and local workforce development boards also conducted a variety of HireAbility events in their communities, including job fairs, student career expos and employer disability awareness presentations and events. These HireAbility events were conducted in October 2016, in conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Expand collaboration with state and federal partners to increase engagement of employers...

In FY 2017, TWC VR continued to coordinate with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), the Veterans Administration, and local workforce development boards to plan and conduct joint hiring events for federal contractors and subcontractors to support of their implementation of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 503) and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA) regulations. Section 503 requires federal contractors and subcontractors to proactively recruit, employ, train, and promote qualified individuals with disabilities. VEVRAA regulations strengthen the provisions that require contractors to recruit and hire protected veterans and improve job opportunities for protected veterans. In FY 2016 and FY 2017 to date, over 300 federal contractors have participated in disability awareness and hiring events around the state and many have hired persons with disabilities. Events such as business symposiums and targeted job fairs for federal contractors have offered valuable job search opportunities for almost 3,000 VR customers. TWC VR is working to expand this effort by coordinating more closely with the Veterans Career Advisors and Employer Liaisons in the Workforce Solutions Offices.

Expand partnerships with federal, state, and local partners...

TWC VR continues to work with the Veterans Administration and community mental health providers to coordinate services for veterans with disabilities; however, the development and implementation of additional partnerships or strategies has been delayed to FY 2018.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Workforce Commission		
<b>Goal Area</b>	2 – Engage in Partnerships		
<b>Strategy</b>	Create greater access and effective services by promoting collaboration and regional planning.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

		<b>Actual [mm/vv]</b>		<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
Finalized	09/15	08/17	Conduct regional identification and planning in cooperation with local workforce boards, in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.	FY 2016	FY 2017
Finalized	07/15	08/17	Conduct planning in cooperation with vocational rehabilitation services, in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.	FY 2016	FY 2016
In progress	03/16		Collaborate with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency on initiatives to increase access to consumer information and to develop, implement, and support effective education and training models.	FY 2016	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Conduct regional identification and planning...

Texas’ Boards are currently accomplishing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act’s expectations for regional planning. Texas’ Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) configuration largely supports regionalism. And in areas with single county coverage, local partnerships exist to support regional collaboration. Long before a federal requirement existed, Boards across Texas had a demonstrated history of collaboration beyond the designated workforce areas. These regional collaborative efforts have resulted in workforce system leaders partnering to align workforce policies and services with regional economies and supporting service delivery strategies tailored to these needs. Based upon this, TWC noted in the WIOA Combined State Plan that the existing LWDA configuration accomplished the WIOA intent for regional planning. The Departments of Labor and Education have approved this plan. Examples of regional collaboration include:

The Capital Area Board has participated in the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) National Evaluation study, funded by DOL’s Workforce Innovation Fund. ACE is driven by a consortium of nine workforce investment boards, ten community colleges, and employer partners across four states, tasked with reducing poverty by linking education, training, and workforce services to create skill-building opportunities and career pathways for low-skilled, low-income individuals.

The Rural Workforce Network (RWN) Consortium Biotechnology/Life Sciences–Medical Targeted Industries Project was designed to further build capacity to meet the skills readiness and skills training needs of employers and job seekers in the RWN region, through an understanding of employers’ needs, assessments of job seekers’ skills, and the creation and credentialing of a work-ready workforce. Five Boards—Concho Valley, West Central Texas, Permian Basin, North Texas, and South Plains—four employers, and nine public colleges participated in this project.

The Greater Dallas, North Central Texas, and Tarrant County Boards have created the Dallas/Fort Worth Regional Workforce Leadership Council (RWLC), the driving force for a cooperative approach to promoting the region’s strongest industries and supporting the region’s key clusters. RWLC works to meet industries’ needs through the collaboration of the Boards with chambers of commerce and business leaders.

## ***The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023: Action Plan Reports for Evaluation 2017***

Conduct planning in cooperation with vocational rehabilitation services...

TWC has engaged in opportunities to conduct planning in collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). From July through September 2015, a series of seven public meetings across the state regarding WIOA plan development and the transition of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services from the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to TWC were conducted. These meetings allowed for valuable input from stakeholders on both topics. Locations included Austin, Dallas, McAllen, Houston, Tyler, Lubbock, and El Paso. In addition to the comments received addressing workforce planning elements, there were many commenters who provided input on the upcoming transition of vocational rehabilitation to TWC. TWC also held additional meetings leading up to the creation of a new Vocational Rehabilitation Division. TWC also conducted seven public meetings in January 2017 to provide the public with the opportunity to offer comments about the combination of the former DARS Division for Rehabilitation Services and Division for Blind Services into one combined division.

Collaborate with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency...

In March 2016, Governor Abbott established the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative and tasked the Commissioners of the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to work together on several charges centered on developing strong links between education and industry.

The Commissioners of the three agencies held eight regional meetings in Midland, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, El Paso, McAllen, Tyler, and Austin from April through June 2016. The purpose of the meetings was to seek input from industry leaders, business executives, ISD superintendents, economic and workforce development leaders, directors of community and nonprofit organizations, elected officials, higher education administrators, and other stakeholders. Following the regional meetings, the agencies developed a set of recommendations and major initiatives to address the Governor's charges and submitted the Tri-Agency Report to the Office of the Governor. Staff of the three agencies continue to meet regularly. Some initiatives resulting from the Tri-agency work include:

Internship Challenge

The Texas Internship Challenge is a statewide campaign to increase and promote internships for students in Texas. Launched in February 2017 by Texas Tri-Agency Partners, TWC, TEA, and THECB, the campaign challenges industry and employer partners to offer more paid internships; universities and colleges to promote the campaign and grant academic credit for internship opportunities; and to students to apply for internships. The cornerstone of the campaign is the internship portal, Texas Internship Challenge, a free website where employers can post positions and students can apply for them.

Operation Welcome Home

TWC is partnering with the Texas Workforce Solutions network to assist recently separated service members who are experiencing challenges in translating their military skills into civilian terms, locating employment, completing two- to four-year college programs or obtaining the appropriate licensure or certifications to compete in the job market. Up to \$4 million of the Skills Development Fund will be made available to train approximately 2,000 transitioning service members over two years. Training will target high-demand occupations identified in the local board's targeted and high-demand occupations lists. There will be no cost for the training to the service member or the military. In addition, the Military Family Support program provides \$1 million in grants to fund employment assistance for military spouses including enhanced job search assistance, assessment of skills, labor market information, and resume writing and interview skills assistance.

Texas Industry Cluster Innovative Academy Partnership Demonstration

TWC provided \$3.2M in partnership with TEA and THECB for the Texas Industry Cluster Innovative Academy Partnership Demonstration.

In addition, TWC is working with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board regarding articulation partnerships between two or more educational institutions documenting transfer policies for specific academic programs or degrees, and allow registered apprenticeship training programs across the state to be recognized and gain college credit and a pathway towards an associate's degree.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Workforce Commission		
<b>Goal Area</b>	2 – Engage in Partnerships		
<b>Strategy</b>	Increase access to, referral between, and outcomes of adult education programs and services.		
<b>Part 1–Status Update for Actions</b>			

		<b>Actual [mm/yy]</b>	<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
In progress	09/15		FY 2016	FY 2019
		Enhance collaboration between federally funded adult education and literacy grantees and local workforce boards.		
In progress	09/15		FY 2016	FY 2017
		Improve the capacity of community-based providers not receiving adult education and literacy funds to provide adult education and literacy services and to effectively coordinate services with federally funded adult education and literacy grantees.		
In progress	09/15		FY 2016	FY 2019
		Develop and implement a student referral system between federally funded adult education and literacy providers and community and technical colleges to assist individuals seeking adult education services find a program responsive to their needs. If deemed appropriate, consider integration of community-based providers into the referral system. (Referral system measure to be developed prior to implementation.)		

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Enhance collaboration between federally-funded AEL grantees...

In 2015, TWC conducted 10 regional workforce and adult education integration meetings. TWC provided \$160,000 to Boards to further local AEL and workforce integration opportunities. Boards use the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis and solution strategies developed during the 2015 regional workforce and adult education integration initiative meetings to lead policy and procedural enhancement efforts, that incorporate integration of AEL objectives into Board strategic initiatives, employer engagement and contractor procedures.

These collaborations are further reflected in local board plans. In October and December 2016, TWC issued local planning guidance to provide Boards with information and guidance on the development and submission of local plans. Boards were required to include a description of how they planned to coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. TWC's three-member Commission approved the Board plans on May 23, 2017. The plans were then reviewed and approved by the TWIC on June 9, 2017. Each of the plans were subsequently approved by the Governor on June 30, 2017.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides numerous collaborative opportunities for the Texas Workforce System to help job seekers secure employment, education, training and support services that align with market-driven forces. To facilitate these collaborations, TWC hosted four WIOA Regional Forums in October 2016 to highlight some of the key elements of WIOA, and the new accountability and performance measurement system.

Staff from across our Texas Workforce Solutions partners, including Boards and their service providers, AEL providers and vocational rehabilitation staff attended the following sessions:

- WIOA's impact on Texas Workforce Solutions partners, including board plans, referrals and youth program changes
- WIOA and the Vocational Rehabilitation program
- AEL Integrated Education and Training

- Performance Accountability in the World of WIOA, including outcomes, target setting and measure results.

Training sessions locations and dates:

- Dallas: Thursday, Oct. 6, 2016
- Lubbock: Friday, Oct. 7, 2016
- Austin: Thursday, Oct. 13, 2016
- Houston: Tuesday, Oct. 18, 2016

Improve the capacity of community-based providers not receiving AEL funds...

TWC approved over \$500,000 for a competitive grant solicitation to provide professional development to tutors, instructors, program administrative staff, and trainers of non-profit adult literacy organizations in Texas. Professional development services include training on literacy volunteer management, which may include volunteer recruitment, training, placement, monitoring, and retention; low literacy instruction/tutoring for either native English or non-native English speakers; developing collaborative partnerships that benefit students with Adult Education and Literacy grant recipients, including data sharing relationships; and other areas based on the results of the needs assessment and input from the committee. The grantee planned 7 training events and estimated 850 to be served.

Develop and implement a student referral system between federally funded AEL providers and community and technical colleges...

TWC has charged AEL grantees with improving connections with post-secondary opportunities. TWC has established performance expectations for both Career Pathways and Integrated Education and Training offerings. Some examples of local initiatives, include:

- In the Alamo area, the Region 20 Educational Service Center (ESC) AEL consortium and the Alamo Colleges Academic Success office created a universal referral form for students in developmental education programs who could benefit at no-cost from AEL remedial services. Alamo Colleges' advisors refer students to the Region 20 ESC AEL consortium in which students receive targeted remedial services integrated with a college knowledge curriculum, at no cost, supporting a rapid transition back to Alamo Colleges. System partners are currently developing a joint online universal referral form that all agencies can use to refer customers to the system.
- Amarillo College, in the Texas Panhandle, refers incoming college students who test low on the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) for enrollment in the no-cost AEL College On-Ramp program from which they benefit by college and resource integration, workforce integration, and digital literacy skills for those entering integrated education and training. Among the topics covered in transition classes are career counseling; time management; note- and test-taking skills; team building; TSIA preparation; rapid review math, academic reading, and writing, including supports for English language learners; database research; work-citing skills; math lab use; Microsoft Word formatting for Modern Language Association/American Psychological Association styles; online system's Blackboard use; and financial aid counseling.
- In the Southeast Texas workforce area, the Board and AEL provider, Region 5 ESC, have developed joint service arrangements that include shared assessments, cross-referral options, workforce training through WIOA Title I funds, training, case management, child care, transportation assistance, workforce preparation activities, and job placement. To further program integration, the Board provided Region 5 ESC training on using the Texas Workforce Information System of Texas and the Board and Region 5 ESC have a data sharing agreement to facilitate referrals and co-enrollment. Through a separate discretionary grant managed by the Board, AEL students received workforce training to prepare for the Child Development Associate certification.
- Rural areas are perhaps the most stretched for resources. Two AEL providers—Community Action, Incorporated, and Angelina College—have implemented cross-referral systems across rural areas in their respective workforce areas, Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area and Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas. Customers who are basic-skills deficient participate in a comprehensive service model that includes utility assistance, workforce preparation activities, child care, and food and transportation for eligible customers.

<b>Agency</b>	Windham School District (Texas Department of Criminal Justice)		
<b>Goal Area</b>	2 – Engage in Partnerships		
<b>Strategy</b>	Establish and leverage regional employer partnerships to benefit students pre- and post-release.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

FY 2017 Status	Actual [mm/vv]		Action	Specified in Plan	
	Start Date	End Date		Start Date	End Date
In progress	09/16		Develop partnerships with employers and implement pre-employment career and technical education programs to meet needs of employers for potential student employment.	FY 2016	FY 2019
In progress	09/16		Expand opportunities for offenders, pre- and post-release, through career expos and reentry job fairs to access service providers and employment in order to reenter society successfully.	FY 2016	FY 2018
In progress	09/16		Continue to provide access and develop awareness of employment opportunities, service providers, and employer surveys on the Windham School District website.	FY 2016	FY 2019
Not started	10/17		Establish semi-annual employer survey on pre-employment career and technical education activities and hiring experiences.	FY 2016	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

WSD has partnered with companies in SY 17 resulting in CTE department curriculum changes to enhance student employability skills.

For SY 17 WSD hosted eight career expos in the state jail and institutional division facilities and WSD was represented at six post release job fairs for offenders.

WSD distributes information cards to offenders, their families and to our partnership companies during graduations, career expos and job fairs. We also have the jobview kiosk located in seven state jail facilities. WSD teachers instruct the students on how to search for jobs offline using key words, per WSD curriculum. The jobview kiosk link is also located on the WSD website. The combined number of website and kiosk views for SY 17 is 41,491.

09/01/17 Developed companies with partnership in SY 17 and will develop survey for employers to fill out survey.

Scheduled start of action item 4 was delayed due to an emphasis on developing partnerships with companies.

## Goal Area 3: 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.

### *What are the objectives?*

Improve and enhance services, programs, and policies to facilitate effective and efficient transitions.

### *How are system partners addressing them?*

TEA and THECB are developing and implementing programs of study in community and technical colleges and aligning them with secondary programs of study.

TWC is enhancing transition services for students and youth with disabilities to competitive integrated employment or to postsecondary education and training followed by competitive integrated employment.

THECB is working to ensure consistent credit transfer based on programs of study and common technical core curriculum.

Develop and implement policies and processes to ensure portable and transferrable credit and credentials.

TJJD is expanding career and technical education courses to provide additional opportunities for dual credit.

### *What was accomplished this year?*

**20.42 percent** of grade 12 secondary students who received career and technical education dual credit enrolled in and received credit at a two-year institution (TEA)

**Excess semester credit hours** for career and technical education time to degree (THECB)

- ★ **25 hours** – Certificate Level 1
- ★ **36 hours** – Certificate Level 2
- ★ **30 hours** – Associate’s degree

Of students and youth with disabilities who participated in transition services:

- ★ **18.56 percent** subsequently enrolled in postsecondary education and training
- ★ **59.33 percent** subsequently entered competitive integrated employment

**65.50 percent** of community and technical college students who received program-of-study-based course credit transferred to another two-year institution and had that credit recognized

Data reporting for two measures began this year:

- ★ **7.14 percent** of career and technical education programs approved for dual credit
- ★ **3.11 percent** of students successfully completing dual credit career and technical education courses

## Align System Elements: Action Plan Implementation Summaries

By improving transitions, aligning programs, and ensuring portability and transferability, Texas improves access and the ability of all students to complete programs of study, earn credentials, transition to further education, and gain critical employability skills. Through the implementation of a common technical core curriculum that is recognized statewide, programs of study can enhance delivery efficiency, dual-credit effectiveness, and improve student outcomes and transitions. Texas employers are better positioned to find and hire the employees they need through an enhanced education and training pipeline.

System Partner Strategy	Agency	System Objective	System Goal
Develop and implement programs of study in community and technical colleges and align with secondary programs of study.	TEA THECB	Improve and enhance services, programs, and policies to facilitate effective and efficient transitions.	<i>Align system elements</i>
Enhance transition services for students and youth with disabilities to competitive integrated employment or to postsecondary education and training followed by competitive integrated employment.	TWC		
Ensure consistent credit transfer based on programs of study and common technical core curriculum.	THECB	Develop and implement policies and processes to ensure portable and transferrable credit and credentials.	
Expand career and technical education courses to provide additional opportunities for dual credit.	TJJD		

Four agencies are focused on aligning policies, processes, services, and programs to more effectively serve workforce system participants and facilitate system outcomes.

The following pages include action plan reports from each of the partner agencies. **Please note that the reports contain information verbatim as submitted by the agencies.**

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Education Agency		
<b>Goal Area</b>	3 – Align System Elements		
<b>Strategy</b>	Develop and implement programs of study in community and technical colleges and align with secondary programs of study.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

		<b>Actual [mm/yy]</b>		<b>Action</b>	<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Start Date</b>		<b>End Date</b>	
In progress	09/16			Collaborate with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop and implement programs of study to facilitate secondary to postsecondary student transition.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16			Align secondary and postsecondary programs of study systems by working with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.	Ongoing	FY 2019
Not started	09/17			Collaborate with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop and adopt policies and procedures that facilitate consistent credit transfer from secondary to postsecondary-based programs of study.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/17			Enhance programs of study by including statewide-articulated, Advanced Technical Credit, and Workforce Education Course Manual courses.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/17			Provide training to secondary administrators, counselors, and teachers in the proper use of programs of study.	Ongoing	FY 2019
Substantially complete	09/16	08/17		Collaborate with relevant state agencies to align policies related to workforce education.	Ongoing	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

- Advisory committees have been developed for the Health Science and Architecture and Construction career clusters. These committees are composed of faculty from secondary, post-secondary, and representatives from business and industry. As the committees continue to work to develop programs of study they will be asked to identify key industry certifications as appropriate.
- An advisory committee has been named to manage the WECM course review process. The committee has met once and is in the process of developing its work plan for reviewing the course inventory.
- THECB will be contacted to begin collaboration for adopting policies and procedures regarding credit transfer on programs of study.
- Training will be provided during Leadership Academy. Considering the addition of a slide show with audio to the Texas CTE Resource Center.
- Governor’s Tri-Agency group is working on workforce education.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board		
<b>Goal Area</b>	3 – Align System Elements		
<b>Strategy</b>	Develop and implement programs of study in community and technical colleges and align with secondary programs of study.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

FY 2017 Status	Actual [mm/yy]		Action	Specified in Plan	
	Start Date	End Date		Start Date	End Date
In progress	09/16		Develop and adopt programs of study that provide a coordinated non-duplicative sequence of secondary and postsecondary academic and career and technical education courses designed to help students transition seamlessly from high school to a public community or technical college.	FY 2016	FY 2019
In progress	09/16		Expand and support program of study initiatives and adoption rate of a common group of Workforce Education Course Manual courses per discipline.	FY 2017	FY 2017
In progress	09/16		Align secondary and postsecondary programs of study systems by working with the Texas Education Agency.	FY 2018	FY 2019
Not started	09/18		Facilitate consistent credit transfer from secondary to postsecondary based on programs of study by working with the Texas Education Agency to develop and adopt relevant policies, procedures, and rules.	Ongoing	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Advisory committees have been developed for the Health Science and Architecture and Construction career clusters. These committees are composed of faculty from secondary, post-secondary, and representatives from business and industry. As the committees continue to work to develop programs of study they will be asked to identify key industry certifications as appropriate. An advisory committee has been named to manage the WECM course review process. The committee has met once and is in the process of developing its work plan for reviewing the course inventory.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board		
<b>Goal Area</b>	3 – Align System Elements		
<b>Strategy</b>	Ensure consistent credit transfer based on programs of study and common technical core curriculum.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

FY 2017 Status	Actual [mm/yy]		Action	Specified in Plan	
	Start Date	End Date		Start Date	End Date
In progress	09/16		Solicit input from business and industry in the identification of essential knowledge, skills, and abilities required for each program of study.	Ongoing	FY 2019
In progress	09/16		Conduct discipline-specific workshops with faculty to identify common program-level learning outcomes and common sequences of courses.	FY 2016	FY 2019
Not started	09/18		Publish statewide programs of study on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s websites, distribute widely to other state agencies, and link to other career and technical education and workforce activities.	FY 2016	FY 2019
Not started	09/18		Revise existing rules, policies, and protocols to include adoption of programs of study.	FY 2016	FY 2016
Not started	09/18		Reduce number of Workforce Education Course Manual courses offered at only one or two colleges.	FY 2018	FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Program of Study Advisory Committees have begun the work related to the development of Programs of Study. No Programs of Study have been fully developed and approved by the Coordinating Board. Once they are approved they will be posted on the website and information will be distributed to the two-year college sector.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Juvenile Justice Department		
<b>Goal Area</b>	3 – Align System Elements		
<b>Strategy</b>	Expand career and technical education courses to provide additional opportunities for dual credit.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

FY 2017 Status	Actual [mm/yy]		Action	Specified in Plan	
	Start Date	End Date		Start Date	End Date
Finalized	04/16	05/16	Contact local community colleges and technical schools to broker working relationships and begin discussions regarding dual credit opportunities.	FY 2016	FY 2016
Finalized	05/16	06/16	Meet with community college and technical school representatives to outline requirements needed to assess dual credit opportunities.	FY 2016	FY 2016
Finalized	06/16	06/16	Gather and provide teacher credential and other information and material request.	FY 2016	FY 2016
Finalized	05/16	07/16	Coordinate and host meetings between instructors of eligible career and technical education programs and college or technical school representatives to address curriculum and data reporting.	FY 2016	FY 2016
Finalized	08/16	09/16	Implement dual credit courses for eligible students.	Timeline: upon completion of instructor accreditation by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.	

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Currently three TJJD Schools offer dual credit in their welding courses.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Workforce Commission		
<b>Goal Area</b>	3 – Align System Elements		
<b>Strategy</b>	Enhance transition services for students and youth with disabilities to competitive integrated employment or to postsecondary education and training followed by competitive integrated employment.		

**Part 1—Status Update for Actions**

		<b>Actual [mm/yy]</b>		<b>Specified in Plan</b>	
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
In progress	09/16		Evaluate, identify, and implement revisions to vocational rehabilitation program policy, procedures, and staffing strategies to improve consistency and effectiveness in the delivery of transition services for students and youth with disabilities.	FY 2016	FY 2016
In progress	09/15		Develop and deploy a core group of subject matter experts to assist in implementation of program improvements in transition services, including the development and coordination of training and guidance to increase staff capacity to assist students and youth with disabilities.	FY 2016	FY 2017
In progress	09/15		Collaborate with other states, providers, and system partners to develop policy, curriculum, resources, and staff capacity to enhance provision of transition services for students and youth with disabilities. [Transition services include but are not limited to career exploration, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for postsecondary education and training, job readiness skills training, and self-advocacy instruction.]	FY 2016	FY 2019

**Part 2—FY 2017 Key Activities**

Evaluate, identify, and implement revisions to vocational rehabilitation program policy...

TWC VR policies pertaining to transition services for students with disabilities have been revised in FY 2017 to reflect the changes contained within the final regulations for WIOA and to provide additional guidance to staff regarding services to students. In August 2017, TWC issued a revised and expanded Guidance Memorandum to VR staff to provide guidance on the policy changes as well as accompanying changes in procedures. In FY 2017 TWC also created the structure for the combined VR Division, as required by Senate Bill 208 (84th Texas Legislature). The combined structure will be effective on October 1, 2017 and includes the redistribution and classification of 27 vacant positions as Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor positions. This staffing strategy will increase the number of VR counselors focusing exclusively on serving students with disabilities. At the state level, in December 2016 TWC VR created a four-member team of statewide transition program specialists to focus exclusively on policy, technical assistance, field consultation, and strategy development for services to students and youth.

Develop and deploy a core group of subject matter experts to assist in implementation of program improvements...

The state office team of transition program specialists, along with the regional transition teams comprised of the regional transition program specialist and transition counselors, constitute the core group of subject matter experts envisioned by this action plan. The team is actively working to support improvements to services for students with disabilities. In September and October of 2016, the lead State Program Specialist for Transition met with the transition teams in each region to conduct training and a collaborative work session on the regulations and policy

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guidance issued by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on WIOA Pre-Employment Transition Services. In FY 2017 the lead State Program Specialist for Transition attended meetings of transition counselors in four of the six regions to provide guidance and share information. Transition Strategies Training was developed in the fall of 2016 and three groups were trained in the spring of 2016, totalling almost half of the school-assigned counselors in the Rehabilitation Services Division. The core group continues to collaborate to provide assistance and consultation regarding the latest guidance on Pre-ETS and other transition strategies. In addition to the core group, each week a leadership team comprised of the VR Operations Director, a Regional Director, statewide transition program specialists, a program manager, and other program specialists, meets by conference call to address questions from the field and identify opportunities to improve services.

Collaborate with other states, providers, and system partners to develop policy...

TWC VR staff coordinates with Education Service Centers to develop group skills training opportunities for blind and visually impaired students. In addition TWC VR staff are actively participating in training events and conferences conducted by TWC and state transition associations, such as the Texas Association of Vocational Adjustment Counselors (TAVAC), to provide training and capacity building for staff regarding the provision of transition services to students and youth with disabilities. In FY 2017, TWC VR also conducted an open enrollment solicitation to expand the number of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) offering Pre-ETS services to students with disabilities. TWC anticipates that it will enter into provider contracts with at least 40 CRPs to provide additional services to students.

The state office transition team regularly participates in meetings of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Transition Committee, as well as calls led by other states to collaborate on transition services strategies. The purpose of these calls is to share challenges, best practices, ideas for implementing transition services, and successful strategies for implementing Pre-ETS across the country. The TWC state office transition and leadership teams have also consulted with the RSA-funded national Workforce Innovation Network Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to identify promising strategies in other states and to seek clarification on the final WIOA regulations for Pre-ETS. TWC has twice invited WINTAC to come to Texas to provide training and a national perspective on Pre-ETS, including the all managers meeting in July 2016 and a Post-Forum training session for a cross-section of more than 160 VR staff in April 2017. Finally, TWC VR staff continued to work with the Texas Education Agency in FY 2017 to develop a new Memorandum of Understanding that will guide TWC VR and Local Education Agency coordination efforts in the coming years. The new MOU will be executed in the fall of 2017.

## 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.

### *What is the objective?*

TJJD and TWC are identifying and implementing new, relevant technology and service delivery options to expand program and service outcomes.

TWC is increasing competitive integrated employment outcomes by increasing awareness of vocational rehabilitation services and better serving underserved populations.

Employ enhanced or alternative program and service delivery methods.

TWC is enhancing the quality of and increasing access to quality child care to support parents in obtaining and retaining employment.

### *What was accomplished this year?*

**49.69 percent** of students that using technology for course content delivery (TJJD)

**1,238,951** utilized labor market information products (TWC)

**1,160,135** utilized the WorkInTexas self-service resource (TWC)

**2,829** child care providers utilized online professional development courses (TWC)

**3,980** adult education providers utilized online professional development courses (TWC)

**3.47 percent** of consumers served identified as veterans with disabilities

**53.89 percent** of consumers served with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, autism, and deaf-blindness subsequently entered competitive integrated employment

**12.55 percent** of child care providers were certified as Texas Rising Star providers

Of parents receiving child care:

★ **70.36 percent** entered employment and/or were enrolled in education or training

★ **84.77 percent** retained employment and/or were enrolled in education or training

## Improve and Integrate Programs: Action Plan Implementation Summaries

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.

System Partner Strategy	Agency	System Objective	System Goal
Identify and implement new, relevant technology and service delivery options to expand program and service outcomes.	TJJD TWC	Employ enhanced or alternative program and service delivery methods.	<i>Improve and integrate programs</i>
Increase competitive integrated employment outcomes by increasing awareness of vocational rehabilitation services and better serving underserved populations.	TWC		
Enhance quality of and increase access to quality child care to support parents in obtaining and retaining employment.	TWC		

Two agencies are working to increase system outcomes by designing, planning, and implementing alternative delivery methods.

The following pages include action plan reports from each of the partner agencies. **Please note that the reports contain information verbatim as submitted by the agencies.**

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Juvenile Justice Department		
<b>Goal Area</b>	4 – Improve and Integrate Programs		
<b>Strategy</b>	Identify and implement new, relevant technology and service delivery options to expand program and service outcomes.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

FY 2017 Status	Actual [mm/yy]		Action	Specified in Plan	
	Start Date	End Date		Start Date	End Date
In progress	08/17	01/18	Identify and implement a web design course that can be taught within a correctional infrastructure.	Ongoing	FY 2016
Substantially complete	08/15	02/16	Implement a blended learning environment with a secure student wireless network driven by Google Apps for education and mobile devices.	Ongoing	FY 2016

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Currently only one facility is able to offer wireless access and it's only in one classroom where students are utilizing Chrome Books for instruction. Expansion to more than one classroom is underway. Funding restrictions currently prohibit implementation of wireless access at other TJJD facilities.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Workforce Commission		
<b>Goal Area</b>	4 – Improve and Integrate Programs		
<b>Strategy</b>	Identify and implement new, relevant technology and service delivery options to expand program and service outcomes.		

**Part 1–Status Update for Actions**

	<b>Actual [mm/yy]</b>		
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
In progress	09/15		Expand self-service and distance learning options for the delivery of workforce services, including adult education and literacy services and professional development for child care providers and adult education and literacy service providers.
In progress	09/15		Enhance ease of access to and use of labor market information tools to address the needs of multiple audiences, including job seekers, employers, students, researchers, and other workforce stakeholders.

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Expand self-service and distance learning options for the delivery of workforce services...

TWC has provided approximately \$250,000 over the last three years to manage AEL professional development registration, documentation, and in-house training materials while at the same time providing a platform for on-demand courseware and virtual interactive training. The LMS is a cloud-based, full-featured, off-the-shelf secure system with course registration and management for in-person, hybrid, and online training events. Funds also support access to a cloud-based course library and interactive resources, a web conferencing integrated add-in, and training fees to sufficiently accommodate the necessary instructors, administrators, and software content to provide a full array of professional development services across Texas.

TWC approved \$500,000 for an initiative to provide funding to implement a call center to support Texas adults struggling in mathematics. The focus is to provide live tutor support for high school equivalency exams (GED, HiSet, and TASC) and other gateway tests, including the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) and the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Call center staff utilize online tutoring software to provide visual support to students in addition to phone support.

In March 2015, TWC approved funding for AEL providers to support a more robust expansion of distance learning. The project included a special emphasis on the use of distance learning software and related costs to address the rigor of the GED 2014 test, Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency.

Regarding distance learning opportunities to support child care providers, Texas Agri-Life Extension Service developed on-line training courses for child care providers with funding previously provided from TWC (2010). TWC also contracted with DFPS to enhance and expand the child care training offerings (2014). All of these child care online training resources continue to be available on the AgriLife Extension website at [http://extensiononline.tamu.edu/courses/child\\_care.php](http://extensiononline.tamu.edu/courses/child_care.php).

TWC has also partnered with the Children’s Learning Institute, part of the UT Health Science Center, to support child care providers who are designated as Texas Rising Star (TRS) providers. CLI’s online Engage platform <https://cliengage.org/public/> provides a comprehensive, integrated set of resources that provides online professional development, including video-based demonstrations of effective instructional practices. Providers also have access to provide early childhood teachers training hours needed to apply for the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential TM. TWC plans to expand access to the online Engage professional development resources to child care providers who apply to become TRS-certified.

In accordance with Rider 30, Article VII, General Appropriations Act (GAA), 84th Texas Legislature (2014), and Rider 29, Article VII-40, GAA, 85th Texas Legislature (2015), TWC dedicated \$500,000 in each year of the biennium for programs that encourage early childhood professionals increased participation in continuing professional development for early childhood professionals. These funds are competitively procured. In 2016-2017, the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC) was selected to provide professional development opportunities for child care professionals.

Enhance ease of access to and use of LMI...

Work began with a Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) website redesign in September 2015 and continued through FY 2017. To date, in addition to the redesigned LMCI home page, the labor market information and career development sub-pages were redone; the Reality Check web application was rewritten; the Texas CARES career exploration tool was replaced by Texas Career Check; the Texas Wages web site was rewritten; a new workforce supply-demand tool, Texas Labor Analysis, is under development for launch in December 2017; and initial developmental activities are underway to replace the TRACER2 data retrieval site. In addition, the monthly Texas Labor Market Review was redesigned; the Texas Internship Challenge site was launched; and the tri-agency student-educator portal, Texas OnCourse, was developed. Also, numerous printed publications were rewritten and include fully accessible electronic versions.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Workforce Commission		
<b>Goal Area</b>	4 – Improve and Integrate Programs		
<b>Strategy</b>	Increase competitive integrated employment outcomes by increasing awareness of vocational rehabilitation services and better serving underserved populations.		

<b>Part 1—Status Update for Actions</b>			
	<b>Actual [mm/vv]</b>		<b>Specified in Plan</b>
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Start Date      End Date</b>
In progress	09/16		FY 2016      FY 2018
	Conduct research and collaborate with stakeholders, providers, and partners to identify best and promising practices in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to underserved populations, including those with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, and individuals who are deaf-blind.		
In progress	09/16		FY 2017      FY 2019
	Develop, pilot, and implement new or revised services and/or service delivery methods to increase employment outcomes for underserved populations.		
Not started	10/17		FY 2018      FY 2019
	Build staff and provider capacity to effectively serve underserved populations through development and implementation of policy, standards, guidance, and training.		
In progress	09/16		FY 2016      FY 2019
	Collaborate with stakeholders and research best practices to identify and implement improvements in the coordination of information and services to veterans with disabilities.		

**Part 2—FY 2017 Key Activities**

Conduct research and collaborate with stakeholders, providers, and partners to identify best and promising practices...

Customers with Neurodevelopmental Disorders are the largest population that Vocational Rehabilitation serves. TWC VR has developed and implemented policy and services to improve successful outcomes for individuals with Neurodevelopmental Disorders, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. VR counselors receive training on Neurodevelopmental Disorders annually through six regional training sessions. In addition, a new service available to VR customers with Neurodevelopmental Disorders is the Environmental Work Assessment, which assesses how a customer responds to variables in a work environment. Results of this assessment identify those variables that impact the person's ability to perform successfully in a given work environment. Accurate assessment of the correlations between a customer's performance and environmental variables is critical to his or her obtaining and maintaining employment.

Develop, pilot, and implement new or revised services and/or service delivery methods...

In FY 2017, TWC VR restructured the deafblind program to increase resources available to deafblind customers, with the goal to increase customers served and improve employment outcomes. Most of the deafblind program and staff became part of the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center, which better enables deafblind customers to successfully participate in a wider array of training opportunities. In addition, TWC expanded training facilities for deafblind customers by increasing the number of apartments used for skills training from one to two. The remainder of deafblind program staff were assigned to work at the regional level, better positioning them to serve deafblind customers and consult with VR counselors serving deafblind customers.

Collaborate with stakeholders and research best practices to identify and implement improvements...

In FY 2015, VR established a Veterans Think Tank to review program policy and discuss strategies for improving services to veterans with disabilities. Participants included VR Counselors, partners from the VA, representatives from the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services, and the Health and Human Services Commission. Topics discussed included strategies that would increase the number of veterans who apply for services and strategies and tools that lead to successful closures. In FY 2016, new VR policy was created and implemented to provide guidance to counselors. Working relationships have been established with the VA to coordinate services between VR and the VA to serve mutual customers.

<b>Agency</b>	Texas Workforce Commission		
<b>Goal Area</b>	4 – Improve and Integrate Programs		
<b>Strategy</b>	Enhance quality of and increase access to quality child care to support parents in obtaining and retaining employment.		
<b>Part 1–Status Update for Actions</b>			

	<b>Actual [mm/yy]</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Specified in Plan</b>
<b>FY 2017 Status</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Start Date</b> <b>End Date</b>
In progress	09/15	Increase the number of child care providers certified as meeting the Texas Rising Star or other recognized quality rating system standards in the child care system.	FY 2016      FY 2019
In progress	09/15	Facilitate the employment outcomes of parents through access to child care.	FY 2016      FY 2019

**Part 2–FY 2017 Key Activities**

Increase the number of child care providers certified as meeting the TRS...

Texas Rising Star providers have increased from 835 on September 1, 2015, to nearly 1,100 by May 1, 2017.

In August 2016, the Commission approved \$250,000 in Child Care and Development Funding (CCDF) to support the use of Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System’s Texas Workforce Registry (TWR) by Texas Rising Star (TRS) certified providers or child care providers applying for and working with TRS mentor to achieve TRS certification. TWR is a web-based application for early childhood education (ECE) professionals who work with children birth to age 8, to keep track of their education and employment history, and training hours. The TWR is administered by the Texas Head Start Collaboration Office of the Children’s Learning Institute (CLI).

This funding increased staff support for TWR, significantly reduced the annual registry fees, and increased awareness and benefits of the TWR for ECE professionals and child care center directors. The project will allow all TRS providers in the state to use the registry to submit staff education and credential information for validation and scoring by the TRS assessors.

The IAC with CLI was executed on April 12, 2017 with a scheduled full implementation in January 2018.

In FY2015 TWC implemented substantial changes to the TRS certification system. These changes strengthened the certification criteria to provide a higher level of quality standards. TWC also provides additional funds to Boards to hire TRS mentors and assessors to provide additional assistance to providers in meeting the higher TRS standards. TRS continues to provide ongoing funding to Boards for TRS assessor and mentor staffing as well as funding to improve the quality of child care services.

Facilitate the employment outcomes of parents...

Effective October 2016 and pursuant to the CCDBG Reauthorization, TWC amended the child care rules to require that a child’s eligibility for child care services continue for 12 months regardless of any temporary change in the parent’s employment status. The change also requires 3-months of continued care if the parent experiences a permanent loss of employment during the 12-month eligibility period. This change is expected to provide greater stability for continued child care services in order to assist parents in maintaining employment or becoming re-employed during the 12-month period. It should be noted that even though this will provide greater child care stability, the requirement for 12-months of child care will also result in fewer children being served.

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## Strategic Pillars

To achieve the vision of an innovative, world-class Texas workforce system, the Council identified three core competencies, or imperatives, that must be strengthened across the system: customer service and satisfaction, data-driven program improvement, and continuous improvement and innovation. These three imperatives serve as the foundational pillars upon which the system's capacity to identify and respond to changing market conditions and the needs of all system customers are enhanced. Examples of related system and partner agency initiatives are outlined below.

### Strategic System Initiatives

The Council's approach to develop and implement strategic system initiatives is structured around six phases in the life cycle of an initiative, including research, launch, proof of concept, plan, execute, and institutionalize the innovation and learning developed through the process. This approach provides the Council with direct oversight in the planning and management of each phase of any system initiative and the flexibility to introduce new initiatives or adapt, merge, and scale promising practices into system initiatives over the strategic plan period.

### Industry-Based Certifications System Initiative

At the June 2016 meeting, the Council approved the project scope and primary objectives for its first strategic system initiative following extensive research on middle-skill occupations and industry-based STEM certifications. This initiative would seek to identify and track third-party, industry-based certifications in Texas. The overarching goal is to increase the system's capacity to help students and workers earn credentials of value in the Texas labor market. With two distinct project cycles, the initiative addresses all three strategic pillars. It is directly aligned to the employer-related strategy to use industry-based certification as an education or training outcome to connect graduate competencies to job skill requirements in order to expand licensure and industry certification in the state.

Based on the Council research, the initiative focuses on two issues: the changing demand for middle-skill workers and the increasing demand for workers with industry-based certifications. Council research has shown that workers with STEM skills at all levels of educational attainment experience stronger employment outcomes and higher lifetime earnings.<sup>1</sup> The work is further supported by Council research reports that define third-party, industry-based certifications; define and identify middle-skill STEM occupations; and link those occupations with associated certifications.<sup>2</sup> An initial list of industry-based certifications for middle-skill STEM occupations in Texas has been compiled, based on the definition in the research.

The Council charged a task group to lead the development and execution of the first cycle of the project. Task group members included representatives from employers, external stakeholders, and partner agencies. The group designed a replicable process to analyze and reduce the list of approximately 1,500 industry-based certifications that support middle-skill STEM occupations in Texas. In September 2017, acting on recommendations from the task group, the Council endorsed a process that would engage Texas employers through the local workforce boards to determine which of the certifications have value in the hiring process.

The local board executive directors and board chairs were briefed and strongly supported the approach to facilitate feedback by employers in each region of the state. The middle-skill STEM occupations have been assigned to each of the 28 local workforce development areas (WDA). Each WDA will receive a regional profile that will include instructions for the data collection and feedback submission process as well as fillable forms for each occupation, the associated industry-based certifications, the value question, and directions to guide the

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Workforce Investment Council, "STEM as a Workforce Advantage," *Research to Support Strategic Planning* (June 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Texas Workforce Investment Council, *Tracking Industry-Based Certifications* (June 2015), *Defining Middle-Skill STEM Occupations in Texas* (December 2015), and *Identifying Industry-Based Certifications for Middle-Skill STEM Occupations in Texas* (February 2016).

employers. The occupations included in each regional profile match those indicated in the local board plan's demand and target occupations lists. Additional occupations may also be assigned using supplemental labor market information (projected employment by WDA 2014–2024) and based upon a percentage increase of 10 percent growth or more for the WDA.

In fiscal year 2018, the local boards will implement the statewide employer feedback process to determine which industry-based certifications for an occupation make a positive difference in the hiring process. Additional information will be collected to allow the responses to be analyzed in aggregate and by company size and location, to consider distinctions between urban and rural labor markets. The resulting list of certifications will serve as a resource for system partners in the development, review, and enhancement of education and training programs that align with regional and state occupational demand.

The second cycle in this system initiative will focus on developing a system to capture the types and numbers of third-party, industry-based certifications and licenses across state workforce education and training programs. In time, the workforce system would ideally be able to provide data on third-party, industry-based certifications that support employment and increased wages, and potentially link individuals with certifications to the state labor exchange and labor market information systems.

### **Developing a Grant Products Repository to Leverage Discretionary Wagner-Peyser 7(b) Grant Outcomes in Texas – A System Initiative**

Valuable products in the form of curricula, assessments, training models, and other resources are developed each year to support workforce programs and services that are funded through competitive grants. When similar needs develop in other industries, workforce populations, or regions of the state, system partners may be able to reuse or repurpose these products. Research was conducted to determine whether other states allocate Wagner-Peyser 7(b) funding through competitive grants, and if so, whether and how grant products are collected, stored, and disseminated to support other initiatives. When no examples could be found, the Council launched its second strategic system initiative at its meeting in June 2017 to create a vehicle for collecting, storing, and managing grant products that have been created through the Wagner-Peyser 7(b) grants program and making the products directly available to the workforce development community.

The goal of this system initiative is to leverage effective products created with grant funding to accelerate specific objectives in future grants and workforce programs to reduce any duplication of time and effort. This would make content that has demonstrated success in a previous grant available to future grant recipients and other system partners. The size and scope of the Wagner-Peyser 7(b) grant program offers an opportunity to capture innovative products and practices and initiate the development of a repository. An information repository stores information in a centralized place to provide a single resource where stakeholders can directly access information that is useful to the work being conducted. The grant products repository will be designed to help grant applicants and system partners locate products that can be reused or repurposed to jump start future programs and services.

The primary users of this repository would be grant applicants, system partners, and stakeholders that may include state agencies; local workforce development boards; institutions of higher education—particularly community and technical colleges; local school districts; and economic development, faith-based, and other not-for-profit community-based organizations. Potential applicants and other workforce education and training providers would be able to access the repository to identify available resources that support workforce development needs and grant application proposals.

In collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission, changes were introduced in the 2017 grant application and contracts to prepare the program to begin collecting products. The revised application directly references the types of products that will be collected, the format in which the product must be remitted, and the deadline by which the products will be due. Wagner-Peyser 7(b) grants provide funding for one year and the contract language

requires that products will be due no later than 60 days prior to the end of the grant. The state will begin receiving products in the latter part of 2018 as the grant contracts close.

For the current and future grant cycles, all products that are created using grant funds are required to be remitted at the end of the contract; however, not all products from all grants would be stored in the repository. Retention will be based upon indicators of the quality of each product. To develop a product repository that promotes continuous improvement, a process will be developed to evaluate the products and determine which products contribute to successful outcomes and may be useful to future grants. The evaluation process will be implemented as grant products are received, and only the products that meet the criteria defined by this process will be stored in the repository.

The Wagner-Peyser 7(b) grant program objectives emphasize innovation in delivering programs and services that increase credential attainment and attachment to employment for youth and populations with special needs. These outcomes will serve as organizing principles for the repository design that will determine how the selected products are stored and maintained and how information about the products will be accessed by system partners and stakeholders. The repository will be made openly accessible online to allow searches that can help applicants identify products that may advance new project objectives and to directly disseminate the products. Once the site specifications for the repository have been determined, a solution for hosting and requirements will be identified and an ongoing process for maintenance will be developed to determine how the repository will be kept up-to-date and refreshed at specific intervals.

The nature of this initiative means that there will necessarily be a long event horizon. Each step is complex and requires a thoughtful decision process to advance the initiative to the next phase. The revisions to the grant application highlight the program's emphasis on innovation and the performance outcomes of the grants. Implementation of the repository will be contingent upon the nature and quality of the grant products.

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## Texas Skill Standards System

Preparing workers with the skills and knowledge required for jobs in today's economy is a major goal of the Texas workforce system. In particular, employers have been struggling to fill middle-skill occupations, especially those requiring science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Closing the skills gap and hiring qualified employees is one of the key contributors to the success of any organization. But before workers can be prepared with targeted education and training for any job, both the work content and the skills and knowledge needed to perform the work must be identified. Such job specifications and worker characteristics are sometimes called competency profiles or skill standards. And facilitating industry to develop skill standards is one of the main functions of the Texas skill standards system, which is legislatively required to encompass middle-skill occupations. Skill standards are a tool for industry to communicate occupational requirements to education and training providers.

### History

In 1995, the 74<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature established the Texas Skill Standards Board (TSSB) to develop a statewide system of industry-defined and industry-recognized skill standards. TSSB's role was to facilitate industry to: define the content of major, skilled, high-demand, high-wage sub-baccalaureate (or middle-skill) occupations; and identify the knowledge, skills and proficiency levels required by workers to perform the jobs. TSSB was also charged to:

- recognize standards that meet TSSB-established validity and reliability criteria,
- promote the voluntary system to employers,
- assist education and training providers to use the standards in their workforce programs, and
- facilitate the portability of skills by recognizing standards and credentials from other states and nations.

Over the next 21 years, TSSB recognized skill standards that met its validity and reliability criteria, whether those standards were developed within the state or endorsed by a national or state industry group or government body. The validity and reliability criteria were documented in TSSB's *Guidelines for the Development, Recognition, and Usage of Skill Standards*, which provided guidance and requirements for industry groups developing skill standards for recognition. Currently, skill standards for 43 occupations are posted in the public domain on the Texas skill standards website. A labor market information model was developed to identify those occupations that met the legislative criteria for the skill standards system but also did not conflict with existing industry-based certifications. The model identified occupations for standards development, mostly for STEM-related, technician occupations, many of them emerging and evolving, including: fuel cell system technician nanotechnology technician biomanufacturing digital forensics technician geographic information systems technician photonics technician web development and administration and manufacturing production and logistics technicians.

In collaboration with its workforce system partner, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which provided incentive grant funding, TSSB developed an initiative to recognize community and technical college programs that incorporated skill standards into their curriculum. This initiative required colleges to teach and assess students on the standards. TSSB developed a second policy document, *Guidelines for the Certification and Credentialing of Skill Attainment*, to provide guidance and requirements for colleges applying for program recognition. The program recognition policy included a renewal requirement every three years.

### Transfer under Sunset Legislation

In 2015, during the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas legislative session, the Texas Workforce Investment Council underwent Sunset review in accordance with Texas Government Code, Chapter 325 (Texas Sunset Act). The Sunset Advisory Commission noted the following in its final report. TSSB had accomplished most of its key tasks. TSSB's remaining duties could easily and more efficiently be assumed by the Council, encompassed within its broader directive to promote the development of a well-educated and highly skilled workforce. The commission concluded that this consolidation would effectively streamline the administration of related workforce development

functions under a single entity. Thus, it recommended that TSSB be abolished and its functions be fully integrated into the Council by the end of fiscal year 2015. On September 1, 2015, House Bill 1606 transferred the statutory functions of TSSB to the Council, and charged it with developing and maintaining the skill standards system. In December 2015, the Council adopted both sets of policy documents governing the system, and recognized the skill standards previously recognized by TSSB.

### **FY 2017 Progress**

Two colleges initially renewed the Council recognition for four programs, which required them to have assessments in place to measure students' mastery of all the skill standards' competencies. An additional 12 colleges, which had previously submitted proof of their assessments at initial renewal, subsequently renewed the recognition for 14 programs. As of the end of FY 2017, there were 53 recognized programs at 28 community and technical colleges in Texas.

While the Council is mandated to develop and maintain the Texas skill standards system, participation by industry and colleges in the system is voluntary. Thus, promoting the development and use of skill standards among those groups is an important part of meeting the mandates. In FY 2017, the Council considered and endorsed the following strategies to address each mandate in the upcoming year.

#### Mandate 1

The first mandate specifies that the Council shall "validate and recognize nationally established skill standards," which is addressed with its conditional recognition policy. According to the development guidelines, this designation relates to standards developed by another state or by a national or international industry group or other stakeholder such as a recognition authority. The second part of the mandate directs that the standards be used to "guide curriculum development, training, assessment, and certification of workforce skills." The primary vehicle to address this mandate is program recognition, which provides an incentive for community and technical colleges to use skill standards because the recognition signals to employers that the colleges' graduates have been prepared with the skills and knowledge specified by industry in the standards. The Council's FY 2018 strategies to address this mandate include searching for new and updated national industry standards for conditional recognition; storing and maintaining the standards in the website repository; and promoting program recognition to community and technical colleges.

#### Mandate 2

The second mandate refers to recognition of standards developed by industry groups for "industries and occupations in which standards have not been established or adopted." As indicated in the Council's development guidelines, these standards, which are developed in Texas by a Texas industry group, are designated as recognized. The scope of the Texas skill standards system, as defined by the legislature, encompasses "major skilled sub-baccalaureate occupations with strong employment and earnings opportunities." The Council uses a labor market information (LMI) model to identify the occupations that fit these criteria. In FY 2018, the Council will use the LMI model to generate a list of relevant occupations from which to consider skill standards for recognition; provide technical assistance to industry groups that want to develop new, or review and update existing, skill standards for recognition; and maintain the standards on the website.

#### Mandate 3

This mandate involves two elements: review and recognize standards developed by other states and nations, and enter into agreements for mutual recognition of standards between Texas and those other states and nations. In FY 2018, the Council will continue its initiative to increase the use of industry-based certifications, which are similar to skill standards, as they contain skills and knowledge required for competent job performance. Certifications may be nationally recognized. Thus, the promotion of industry-based certification meets the intent of this mandate. In addition, the Council will search for standards from other states and nations for recognition.

#### Mandate 4

This mandate, to promote the use of standards and credentials among employers, is addressed with the Council's program recognition policy, credential seal strategy, and the Texas skill standards website. Recognized programs are posted to the industry groups section of the website, where they are displayed prominently with a message to employers. That message explains the significance of the designation and suggests that employers consider the recognized programs first in their recruitment efforts for qualified applicants. In addition, a gold-embossed seal on the credentials of all recognized programs' graduates is the visible symbol for employers that those graduates have been prepared with the skills and knowledge required by industry in the standards. In FY 2018, the Council will facilitate program recognition with community and technical colleges; process renewal applications of colleges with program recognitions scheduled to expire; continue to implement the credential seal strategy with new and existing recognized programs; and post recognized programs to the Texas skill standards website.

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## Welfare to Work Data

Previous iterations of the evaluation report for workforce system performance included welfare to work data reported by program. Programs in the Adults with Barriers category met at least one of four criteria as a characteristic of the participant population: economically disadvantaged, educationally disadvantaged, incarcerated, or physically or mentally impaired and requiring adaptive or rehabilitative services. Data for these programs addressed the Council’s mandate to report on work development programs that focus on welfare to work initiatives.

For the current system strategic plan, relevant program data are incorporated in the aggregated Formal performance measures of entered employment, employment retention, and customers served. Additional agency program data are provided below:

### Texas Health and Human Services Commission:

1. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and State Program cases and recipients for fiscal year 2017 (listed separately by month).

TANF CASES				TANF RECIPIENTS			
Benefit Month	Basic	State Program	Total	Benefit Month	Basic	State Program	Total
Sep-16	25,450	748	26,198	Sep-16	62,628	2,764	65,392
Oct-16	26,138	784	26,922	Oct-16	64,369	2,929	67,298
Nov-16	25,477	730	26,207	Nov-16	62,746	2,690	65,436
Dec-16	24,793	704	25,497	Dec-16	60,742	2,607	63,349
Jan-17	24,412	710	25,122	Jan-17	59,782	2,605	62,387
Feb-17	23,461	673	24,134	Feb-17	57,289	2,472	59,761
Mar-17	22,729	604	23,333	Mar-17	55,131	2,169	57,300
Apr-17	22,560	585	23,145	Apr-17	54,460	2,098	56,558
May-17	22,721	596	23,317	May-17	55,007	2,161	57,168
Jun-17	22,783	605	23,388	Jun-17	55,378	2,188	57,566
Jul-17	23,440	658	24,098	Jul-17	57,229	2,410	59,639
Aug-17	24,036	693	24,730	Aug-17	59,049	2,597	61,647
Average	24,000	674	24,674	Average	58,651	2,474	61,125

2. For August 2017, or the latest 12 months for which data are available, total number of TANF and State Program cases (listed separately by month) new to TANF.

New TANF Cases by Program Type							
Month <sup>1</sup>	Basic	State Program	Total	Month <sup>1</sup>	Basic	State Program	Total
Sep-16	3,408	158	3,566	Mar-17	1,962	81	2,043
Oct-16	3,266	159	3,425	Apr-17	2,268	90	2,358
Nov-16	2,720	114	2,834	May-17	2,323	117	2,440
Dec-16	2,488	123	2,611	Jun-17	2,684	124	2,808

<sup>1</sup> These are cases that were not actively receiving TANF as of August 2016. The month is the indication of the first month they appeared on the TANF rolls.

New TANF Cases by Program Type							
Month <sup>1</sup>	Basic	State Program	Total	Month <sup>1</sup>	Basic	State Program	Total
Jan-17	2,244	120	2,364	Jul-17	2,637	142	2,779
Feb-17	2,014	102	2,116	Aug-17	2,981	149	3,130
				Total	30,995	1,479	32,474

3. Adult TANF Recidivism Rate – For August 2016 to July 2017.

This data consists of the monthly average of TANF clients who had more than one spell on TANF in the previous five years. "More than one spell" is defined as a break in assistance of more than one month.

Clients on TANF in FY 2017	FY 2017 #	Monthly Avg. %
No breaks	6,209	71.46%
More than one spell	2,480	28.54%
Totals	8,689	100.00%

	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17
No breaks	6,296	6,638	7,082	6,781	6,464	6,317
More than one spell	2,715	2,711	2,789	2,662	2,552	2,529
Totals	9,011	9,349	9,871	9,443	9,016	8,846

No breaks	69.87%	71.00%	71.75%	71.81%	71.69%	71.41%
More than one spell	30.13%	29.00%	28.25%	28.19%	28.31%	28.59%
Totals	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

	Feb-17	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17
No breaks	5,836	5,561	5,508	5,745	5,940	6,336
More than one spell	2,374	2,237	2,186	2,243	2,302	2,459
Totals	8,210	7,798	7,694	7,988	8,242	8,795

No breaks	71.08%	71.31%	71.59%	71.92%	72.07%	72.04%
More than one spell	28.92%	28.69%	28.41%	28.08%	27.93%	27.96%
Totals	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

4. Number of TANF and State Program Applications: Processed and Approved for FY 2017.

TANF APPLICATIONS APPROVED				TANF APPLICATIONS PROCESSED			
Benefit Month	Basic	State Program	Total	Benefit Month	Basic	State Program	Total
Sep-16	3,535	151	3,686	Sep-16	27,900	1,902	29,802
Oct-16	4,026	191	4,217	Oct-16	31,230	2,277	33,507
Nov-16	3,818	171	3,989	Nov-16	27,881	2,137	30,018
Dec-16	2,896	134	3,030	Dec-16	22,005	1,573	23,578

TANF APPLICATIONS APPROVED				TANF APPLICATIONS PROCESSED			
Benefit Month	Basic	State Program	Total	Benefit Month	Basic	State Program	Total
Jan-17	3,077	150	3,227	Jan-17	24,214	1,747	25,961
Feb-17	2,948	142	3,090	Feb-17	23,134	1,617	24,751
Mar-17	2,655	104	2,759	Mar-17	20,462	1,314	21,776
Apr-17	2,794	107	2,901	Apr-17	20,253	1,308	21,561
May-17	3,795	184	3,979	May-17	28,006	1,864	29,870
Jun-17	3,248	139	3,387	Jun-17	22,320	1,541	23,861
Jul-17	3,874	178	4,052	Jul-17	26,866	1,904	28,770
Aug-17	4,108	186	4,294	Aug-17	27,752	1,837	29,589
Average	3,398	153	3,551	Average	25,169	1,752	26,920

**Texas Workforce Commission:**

1. TANF Choices Population Data – State average hourly wage for all participants entering employment for fiscal year (FY) 2017. \$10.04
2. Adult education for TANF recipients – funding for FY 2017, including: Federal Section 231 funds, state general revenue (GR) funds, TANF funds, and state GR (TANF Maintenance of Effort) funds. \$5.8 million
3. Adult education for TANF recipients – for FY 2017, the number of customers served with 12+ hours. 7,539
4. Adult education for TANF recipients – for FY 2017, the total attendance hours for students with 12+ hours. 757,881.25
5. Adult education for TANF recipients – for FY 2017, the number of customers served with 12+ hours who completed one level. 4,401
6. Adult education for TANF recipients – for FY 2017, the number of customers served with 12+ hours who advanced one or more levels. 3,479
7. Adult education for TANF recipients – for FY 2017, the credential achievement rate. Time period reported: January 2015-December 2015 43/221 = 19.46%
8. Self-Sufficiency Fund – the number of participating employers in FY 2017. Time period reported: September 1, 2016-August 31, 2017 45

For TWC data, unless otherwise noted, time period reported is State FY 2017: July 2016-June 2017.

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# Texas Workforce Investment Council

## System Partners

Economic Development and Tourism  
Texas Department of Criminal Justice  
Texas Education Agency  
Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
Texas Juvenile Justice Department  
Texas Veterans Commission  
Texas Workforce Commission

## Members

Wes Jurey (Chair), Arlington  
Sharla Hotchkiss (Vice Chair), Midland  
Mark Barberena, Fort Worth  
Robert Cross, Houston  
Mark Dunn, Lufkin  
Carmen Olivas Graham, El Paso  
Thomas Halbouty, Southlake  
Richard Hatfield, Austin  
Robert Hawkins, Bellmead  
Larry Jeffus, Garland  
Paul Jones, Austin  
Richard Rhodes, Austin  
Joyce Delores Taylor, Houston  
Mike Morath, Austin  
Raymund Paredes, Austin  
Charles Smith, Austin  
Larry Temple, Austin  
Bryan Daniel, Austin

## Representing

Business and Industry  
Community-Based Organizations  
Labor  
Labor  
Business and Industry  
Education  
Business and Industry  
Labor  
Labor  
Education  
Labor  
Education  
Business and Industry  
Texas Education Agency  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
Texas Health and Human Services Commission  
Texas Workforce Commission  
Office of the Governor, Economic Development  
and Tourism



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