



SITAC Quarterly Report

System Integration Technical Advisory Committee
Texas Workforce Investment Council
Quarter Ending December 2012

System Integration Technical Advisory Committee

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

Next Meeting

Thursday, March 7, 2013 – 1:00 p.m.
Teacher Retirement System, Austin

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

input from all partner agencies, was approved by the Council on March 9, 2012 and by the Governor on May 24, 2012.

SITAC members typically meet quarterly, providing status reports on action plans for which their organization is solely or jointly responsible. The committee is authorized to create and deploy cross-agency teams in order to devise and execute collaborative solutions to issues associated with the system strategic plan's objectives.

Year 3 Implementation Highlights

The action plans in *Advancing Texas* outline the steps to be taken to accomplish the long term objectives and are implemented by system partners as directed and monitored by SITAC. Fiscal year (FY) 2012 was the third year of *Advancing Texas*' six-year plan period. The following are implementation examples:

Career Technical Education (CTE) - Increase Student Completion – The Texas Education Agency (TEA) made progress on college and career readiness initiatives, with the intent of increasing the availability of academic and rigorous CTE courses. Key outcomes include:

- ★ Over 190 CTE courses have been developed and adopted by the State Board of Education, including 17 that meet the graduation requirements for fourth year math and science, as well as options for English, fine arts and speech.
- ★ Professional development for teachers is ongoing, with the final content courses to be available this year.
- ★ Nine new early college high schools were designated in FY 2012 for a total of 62.
- ★ TEA is working with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to design, develop and coordinate policies and processes related to dual credit courses and credit transfer.

Message from the Chair

With our third year of *Advancing Texas*' implementation complete, I am pleased to report that progress has been made in many areas. This issue of the quarterly report notes a few implementation highlights in addition to our regular reports.

System partners continue to collaborate as work proceeds on new and ongoing projects. In the coming year, we look forward to hearing more about pilot projects underway that are designed to address critical areas such as apprenticeship training, and programs designed to meet the needs of English language learners and those with low literacy levels.

In December, we received a detailed progress report on the Texas Veterans Commission's efforts to increase veteran employment. Agencies responsible for several action plans provided updates on recent achievements and members also outlined priorities for the upcoming legislative session.

On behalf of the Council, my congratulations and thanks to system partners for the achievements made this year!

Paul Mayer

Advancing Texas and implementation updates available at:
http://governor.state.tx.us/twic/workforce_system/

Increase Blind/Disabled Employment – The Health and Human Services Commission’s Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) leads efforts to ensure employment outcomes for people with disabilities or who are blind or visually impaired. After developing a model for fee-based embedded training, DARS replaced successful cost reimbursement contracts with ongoing, fee-based arrangements with community rehabilitation providers and businesses.

DARS’ Division for Rehabilitation Services received a five-year, \$1.25 million Texas Council for Development Disabilities’ grant. The grant will assist developmentally-disabled individuals in Hidalgo County to attend South Texas College with the goal of obtaining a continuing education certificate, vocational certificate or degree and, ultimately, finding employment.

Increase Veteran Employment – The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) offers a range of programs, products and services to individuals and employers in order to increase veteran employment. At no cost, veterans business representatives provide personalized services by assessing employers’ needs in order to match the skills, abilities and experiences of veteran job candidates. Outreach to major corporations is ongoing. An *Employer Spotlight* on TVC’s website is updated quarterly and *Employers of the Year* are honored annually. TVC also provides individualized job training, counseling and re-employment services to assist severely injured veterans return to civilian life, and staffs employment representative positions at local workforce board offices across the state to offer one-on-one assistance to veterans and to establish and facilitate contact with employers.

Data Set [Texas Index] – The Council published the *Texas Index 2012* with trend data for 38 indicators across four domains or categories: Training and Education; Research and Development; Market Composition and Characteristics; and Participant Access and Contribution. Ten-year trend data are included for most indicators for 2002 through 2011.

Employer Needs/Satisfaction and Use of Employment Data for Program Improvement – Work on eight projects at five partner agencies began under the previous workforce system strategic plan and continued under *Advancing Texas*. Two agency projects associated with determining employer satisfaction – THECB and Texas Youth Commission – were completed and closed in conjunction with approval of the *2012 Update to Advancing Texas*. DARS, TVC and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice’s Windham School District work on projects related to both objectives is ongoing.

Featured Action Plan: Increase Veteran Employment

Veterans have a wide range of abilities and with training, referral and placement services can return to the civilian workforce. They are one of four populations targeted by *Advancing Texas*. TVC is leading the work on one action plan that is designed to ensure state and leveraged federal services provide veterans with the programs, products and services necessary to accommodate their needs and to enable them to enter the workforce successfully.

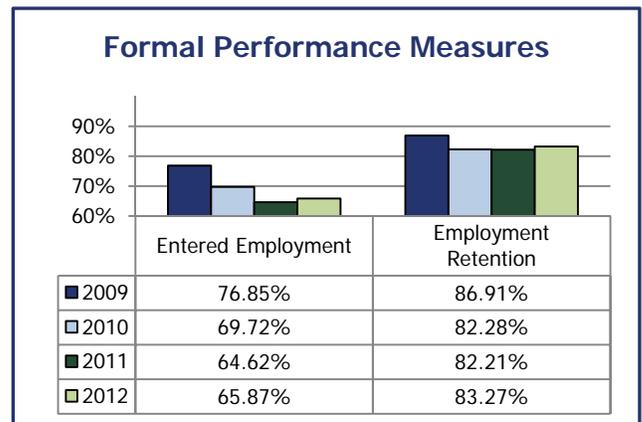


TVC offers employment services to Texas veterans and helps employers find qualified veteran job applicants. Veterans Employment Services (VES) staff are located statewide in workforce centers supported through Texas Workforce Solutions, the partnership of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the 28 local workforce boards. Currently, 169 representatives are located at local workforce board offices in 65 cities. They offer one-on-one assistance, focusing on recently separated veterans, and establish and facilitate contact with employers. Workforce

Solutions offices provide veterans with ready access to other employment, training and support services. Intensive services are available for veterans who are disabled, economically or educationally disadvantaged, homeless or facing other employment barriers.

Employers and VES staff use TWC’s WorkInTexas online job search resources, which allows job postings to be designated as ‘veterans only’. However, employers can also browse for job seekers or link a non-veteran to a job posted as ‘veterans only’. As illustrated in the chart on the right, the veteran entered employment rate declined since 2009. A slightly higher rate was reported this year and progress continued to be made for the action plan’s major tasks.

In 2009, TVC launched a new statewide initiative by hiring a dedicated business outreach coordinator to work more closely with employers and also with TWC and local workforce boards to leverage more training and placement services for veterans. TVC expanded this successful initiative last year, and veterans business representatives are now strategically located in central Texas, the Dallas/Ft. Worth area, San Antonio and Houston. These representatives assist employers by providing no-cost personalized services – assessing employers’ needs in order to match the skills, abilities and experiences of veteran job candidates. In program year 2011, employers



recruited veterans for 825 jobs through the referral of over 1,000 resumes. Those veterans hired earned an average annual salary of \$41,000.

Earlier this year TVC announced a new partnership with AT&T which committed to hire Texas veterans to fill more than 600 premises technicians positions for AT&T's new U-verse integrated digital TV, high speed Internet and voice service. TVC business and employment representatives work in conjunction with local workforce staff to fill positions with qualified veterans.

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

Owner / Participant: TVC

"They are all phenomenal workers. They all know a little bit about everything and take pride in their work. That's one thing that helps make the ReStore so successful."

- Ruby Ruiz, Director
Golden Crescent Habitat for Humanity ReStore
(2012 Small Employer Award Winner)

★ ★ ★

ReStore employs eight staff which includes four veterans with a combined 94 years of military service.

TVC works closely with employers through the veterans business representative initiative and employer satisfaction survey effort and continues to look for ways to recognize employers that are committed to hiring veterans. An *Employer Spotlight* section has been added to their website and is updated quarterly. In addition, *Employers of the Year* have been honored annually since 2010 to recognize: national employer, large employer, medium employer, small employer, and disabled veteran employer. This year, three recognitions were added: TWC local workforce center, TWC regional board and extra mile award.

Senate Bill 1796 (82nd Legislature) established the Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services to coordinate activities of state agencies that assist veterans, coordinate outreach efforts, and facilitate relationships among state, federal, and local agencies to identify and address issues affecting veterans. Chaired by TVC, the group has drafted a report that outlines specific issues related to service provision for Texas' veterans. The Coordinating Council's initial report to the

Legislature, submitted October 1, includes recommendations in six areas including employment and higher education.

Progress continues to be made for major tasks related to the veterans employment action plan, including ongoing efforts such as:

- ★ **Transition Assistance Program** – In coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), TVC facilitates multi-day seminars to provide job search and related services to military personnel within 180 days of separation or retirement. The number of seminars and participants has increased with the military draw down and enactment of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, which makes participation mandatory for most service members. Beginning in early 2013, the program will be administered on a national basis. TVC will continue to partner with the Family Support Centers and the Army Career and Alumni Program.
- ★ **REALifelines** – Working with the DOD and the Veterans Administration, TVC provides individualized job training, counseling and re-employment services to assist severely injured veterans in returning to civilian life. Counselors are located at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Bliss and Fort Hood. Over the past year, these counselors enrolled in intensive services and worked with 590 severely wounded veterans.
- ★ **On the Job Training** - TVC's on the job training program allows newly-hired or promoted individuals, eligible for GI Bill educational benefits, to be in training while performing a new job and earning wages. Employers directly benefit through recruiting assistance, providing company-directed training, and increased employee retention while the employees receive a monthly subsistence benefit while learning work processes, equipment, company policies and skills under the direct supervision of a skilled trainer. TVC is the state agency that approves GI Bill on the job training programs in Texas – with programs typically ranging from six months to two years in length. TVC currently has over 275 employers with approved programs.

Veterans' Services by the Numbers ...

- ★ **1 in 3** veterans jobs found by veteran employment agencies in the top 10 funded states were in Texas
- ★ **169** Veterans Employment Representatives located at local workforce board offices in **65** cities
- ★ **Over 69,000** veterans received employment assistance from TVC during the most recent 12 month period
- ★ **\$1.4 billion** in wages earned last year by veterans who received TVC employment assistance
- ★ **276 employers** with approved on-the-job training programs
- ★ **4 regionally-based** Veterans Business Representatives provide no-cost services to employers
- ★ **Employers expressing overall satisfaction with Veterans Business Representative services:**
 - 54% Strongly Agree and 38% Agree (January 2012 survey; 43% response rate)
 - 29% Strongly Agree and 42% Agree (October 2012 survey; 40% response rate)

Texas Veterans Commission (November 2012)

Implementation Update: December 2012

Reports for four additional *Advancing Texas'* action plans were presented at the December 6, 2012 SITAC meeting. Summaries for each are provided below.

Dual Credit Transfer

CTE provides valuable skills training and often lessens the risk of students dropping out. Texas needs enhanced and more effective integration of academic and CTE options at both the secondary and postsecondary levels in order to increase graduation rates and assist with the transition to further education or the workforce. Streamlining processes, and in some cases shortening time to program completion, should help increase student enrollment and completion of courses, credentials and degrees. One plan objective focuses on the processes for transferring dual credit from high schools to postsecondary institutions.

THECB defines dual credit as a process by which a high school junior or senior enrolls in a college course and receives simultaneous academic credit from both the college and the high school. Dual credit courses are often taught at secondary schools for high school students only; however, high school students can also take courses at a college campus and earn both high school and college credits. Dual credit enrollment has risen significantly since record keeping began in 1999, dipping slightly in 2010 before rising to an all time high of 94,550 in 2011 (6.4 percent of total fall enrollments).

TEA and THECB continue to work together on all aspects of the infrastructure for transferring academic and technical dual credit courses from high schools to community colleges and four-year institutions. Key actions include:

- ★ *Study of Early Assessment and Early Intervention Models*, prepared by Jobs for the Future, was published in November. It fulfills the requirements of House Bill 3468 (82nd Legislature) which required TEA, in consultation with THECB, to conduct a study of best practices for and existing programs offering early assessments of high school students to determine college readiness, identify any deficiencies in college readiness, and provide intervention to address any deficiencies before high school graduation.
- ★ TEA plans to fund a research study to assess utilizing dual credit as a substitute for end of course exams. These assessments are being phased in beginning in 2011 with ninth grade students, adding successive grades annually. TEA previously reported that the study is scheduled to begin in 2013, coinciding with implementation of grades 11 and 12 exams.
- ★ The agencies are also improving data systems for tracking and evaluating student outcomes. Beginning fall 2011, THECB data systems allowed the tracking of students from dual credit into college level courses with associated course grades included. This provides significantly greater opportunities to evaluate the preparedness level of students who take courses as dual credit versus as a traditional college course in addition to the success that each group has in successive college courses. Data analysis will be limited to the number of cohorts included in the system, beginning with the FY 2012 cohort.
- ★ THECB is working with community college and university faculty to develop explicit learning outcomes that will be consistent across academic courses taught statewide. This collaborative process has been completed for approximately 65 percent of lower division credit hours. Work will continue, with the intent of having all academic dual credit courses required to meet the statewide learning outcomes.
- ★ TEA continues to deploy early college high schools (ECHS). There are currently 62, including five T-STEM academies. The agency has implemented an application process for schools seeking initial or renewed ECHS designation.
- ★ TEA also works with public high schools to meet the Texas Education Code §28.009 mandate to offer all students at least 12 hours of college credit. School districts have local authority over which methods to use, with options including dual credit, advanced placement, international baccalaureate, and advanced technical credit courses, as well as locally articulated courses.

Dual Credit Transfer [S3] – By 2013, education and training partners will have the infrastructure necessary (policies, procedures, data processes, rules, and capabilities) to facilitate the effective and efficient transfer of academic and technical dual credit courses from high schools to community colleges and four-year institutions.

Owners / Participants: THECB, TEA



Career Technical Education – Increase Knowledge and Value Perception

CTE programs may assist with the transition to further education or the workforce. The Council, with Executive Committee oversight, researched, identified and validated best practices to improve the perception of CTE as a desirable career option. The intent is to ensure all students and parents understand the wide range of available education and career choices. This is increasingly important

as many high skill, high wage jobs critical to Texas' economy require some postsecondary education, but less than a four-year degree.

To accomplish the objective, the Council published *Research Findings: Raising Awareness of Career Technical Education in Texas Schools* (September 2010) and convened a workgroup to develop a Request for Applications for schools interested in implementing a model of CTE outreach and awareness. Due to funding eligibility requirements, an alternative method for packaging and distributing the model was developed this year.

CTE Demo – Improve Knowledge / Value Perception [S4] – By 2013, design and implement a demonstration program targeted to improve perception of career options that career technical education (CTE) programs enable.

Owner / Participant: Council

In September, the Council's Executive Committee approved a revised plan, which requires an informational guide to be developed and distributed to schools interested in implementing a best practice model of career and technical education pathways, as well as career information and options. The guide will detail the model developed by a workgroup using the Council's 2010 best practices research. It includes: a description of how

the CTE outreach and awareness model was designed by a stakeholder team using the results from the Council's research study; program components and implementation standards; and a resource list of tools, and online sites that support activities in the guide.

The guide will be disseminated to public high school principals, CTE directors/teachers, and counselors.



Adult Basic Education – Low Literacy Level Employment

Individuals with low literacy skills can be assisted through targeted literacy programs to gain or maintain employment. TEA and TWC are developing new and enhancing existing methods and processes for programs targeted at the over age 17 workforce literacy population that address workplace literacy acquisition. Workforce literacy skills are the basic and soft skills considered necessary to perform in entry-level occupations or the skills needed to adapt to technological advances in the workplace.

In late 2010, TWC completed an assessment that identified three local workforce boards – Alamo, Capital Area and Gulf Coast – as pilot program candidates based on their strong relationships with adult education providers. A work group designed a model of program outreach and delivery that fits within existing adult education funding, program offerings and initiatives, and can be offered concurrently with adult education levels 4 through 6.

ABE / Low Literacy Level Employment [C4] – By 2013, design and implement targeted Adult Basic Education programs to enhance employment outcomes for populations requiring workplace literacy skills.

Owner: SITAC
Participants: TEA, TWC

TEA committed \$400,000 in Adult Education State Leadership funds for the pilots, which include a career exploration awareness component that focuses on workplace literacy skills designed to facilitate a smooth transition from adult education to workforce training. Pilots were negotiated with multiple adult education providers in the three regions. They have been extended for an additional year and are currently scheduled to run through June 2013. Performance reporting for the projects began this year, and plans for evaluating strengths, weakness and recommended changes are in progress.



Apprenticeship

Middle-skill jobs currently account for nearly half the jobs in the U.S. and Texas. These are jobs requiring education and/or training beyond high school, but less than a four-year college degree. Training ranges from apprenticeships, certificate programs, and mid- to long-term on-the-job-training, to two-year associate academic or technical degrees. Texas is facing an increasing need for workers with appropriate middle skills, created by both job growth and future workforce retirements for a myriad of industries and occupations.

Under the Council's leadership, this objective requires expansion of the apprenticeship model to address employer demand for skilled workers in middle-skill occupations. Three projects are currently active, including:

- ★ Community Health Worker – Coastal Area Health Education Center;
- ★ Health Information Technology – Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council Education and Research Foundation; and

★ Pre-Apprenticeship, Distance Learning and Outreach to Underserved Populations – Youth and Women – Independent Electrical Contractors of Texas

Based on November quarterly status reports, all projects are making progress toward achieving their goals and objectives. As implementation proceeds, the leadership team continues to provide: support and technical assistance based on each member's background and affiliation; assist in identifying funding and other resources; and monitor project progress. In March 2012, the leadership team met jointly with the Executive Committee to hear updates from project representatives, and last met by conference call in November.

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

Owner / Participant: Council

The grant period for the Comprehensive-National Electrician Solar Training (C-NEST) ended in July. It was funded by a Department of Labor grant of over \$4.8 million awarded to Workforce Solutions – Capital Area, the Austin Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee and ImagineSolar. Based on a final grant report, 2,008 participants enrolled in training, including 340 who exited but returned for additional training. Of 1,986 total participants, 1,219 successfully completed and over 46 percent earned a credential as of September 30.

C-NEST was recognized by the National Governors Association as a promising practice and the local board was awarded the National Association of Workforce Boards' 2012 Workforce Investment Board Grand Prize, in part for this project.

<i>SITAC Members</i>	
<i>Chair</i>	Paul Mayer, Executive Committee Member, Texas Workforce Investment Council
<i>Economic Development and Tourism Division</i>	Keith Graf, Director, Aerospace and Aviation
<i>Texas Association of Workforce Boards</i>	David K. Setzer, Executive Director, Workforce Solutions North Central Texas
<i>Texas Department of Criminal Justice</i>	Debbie Roberts, Superintendent, Windham School District
<i>Texas Education Agency</i>	Vangie Stice-Israel, State Director for Career Technical Education
<i>Texas Health and Human Services Commission</i>	Jim Hanophy, Assistant Commissioner, Division for Rehabilitative Services
<i>Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board</i>	Dr. MacGregor Stephenson, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Research
<i>Texas Juvenile Justice Department</i>	Amy Lopez, Senior Director of Education Services
<i>Texas Veterans Commission</i>	Stan Kurtz, Operations Manager, Veterans Employment Services
<i>Texas Workforce Commission</i>	Luis Macias, Chief of Staff