



# SITAC Quarterly Report

*System Integration Technical Advisory Committee  
Texas Workforce Investment Council  
Quarter Ending June 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, September 6, 2012 – 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 (LTOs), 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 LTOs.

## 2012 Update to *Advancing Texas*

In March 2012, the Council approved the *2012 Update* to the workforce system strategic plan, which was signed by the Governor on May 24, 2012. This is the first update for *Advancing Texas*, which covers a six-year period. The plan outlines the vision for the state's workforce system and contains the action plans (APs) that guide plan execution. The *2012 Update* serves as the foundation of system partner actions and will continue to guide implementation of *Advancing Texas*.

Texas Government Code also requires an annual status update to the Governor and legislature. This requirement is met by the Council's annual evaluation report and periodic plan updates.

The iterative nature of the planning and status reporting processes provide for progress evaluations and recommendations for further action. The APs are reviewed and modified periodically to indicate accomplishments and milestones achieved as well as other changes such as the addition of dependencies or tracking measures.

For the *2012 Update*, all APs and agency projects associated with **LTO P5-Employer Needs/Satisfaction** and **LTO P6-Use of Employment Data for Program**

### ***Message from the Chair***

In June, we welcomed our new member from the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, as well as several Council members.

Status reports for several action plans and partner agency initiatives were discussed, including updates on the recent Texas Association of Workforce Boards' meeting and Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas' federal H-1B Technical Skills.

The Texas Education Agency and Texas LEARNS presented on pilot projects designed to improve the employment prospects of individuals needing workplace literacy skills. Overviews of the project updates are included in this issue of the *SITAC Quarterly Report*.

With the first update to *Advancing Texas* finalized, staff is working closely with system partners on the Council's annual evaluation report. Scheduled for Council consideration in December, this report will document program performance outcomes as well as partner efforts and progress made toward improving Texas' workforce system this year.

**Paul Mayer**

*Advancing Texas and implementation updates available at:  
[http://governor.state.tx.us/twic/twic\\_strategic\\_plan/](http://governor.state.tx.us/twic/twic_strategic_plan/)*

Improvement were reviewed and updated. Partner agency reports to SITAC, as well as formal reporting for the *Evaluation 2011* report, provided much of the information needed for the update. Staff also worked with applicable system partner(s) to revise or establish performance measures and/or targets for several LTOs.

Updates were proposed and approved for all action plans and agency projects, primarily to (1) indicate achievement of major tasks and (2) add or update dependency or interim output information. Significant changes included:

- ★ *System Partner Change* – Senate Bill 653 (82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature) abolished the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. Effective December 1, 2011, duties assigned to the two agencies were transferred to the new Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) which has been added as a new system partner agency.
- ★ *Projects Completed and Closed* – Two agency projects associated with **LTO P5-Employer Needs/Satisfaction** have been completed and were closed. Under a modified plan of work for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) project, Blinn College and Lone Star College System were selected as models of promising practice and formally recognized by the Council in December 2011. TYC completed all major tasks, with implementation of the reformatted employer satisfaction survey on hold. TJJD plans to continue the survey when budget and staff are available.

## Featured Action Plan: Adult Basic Education / Low Literacy Level Employment [C4]

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

**LTO C4** requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to develop new and enhance existing methods, programs and processes for programs targeted at the over age 17 adult education population to 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.

**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**

A workgroup with local workforce board, adult education provider, partner agency representatives and Council staff designed a model of program outreach and delivery. It fits within existing adult education funding, program offerings and initiatives, and can be offered concurrently with adult education levels 4 through 6.

In late 2010, TWC completed an assessment that identified three local boards – Alamo, Capital Area and Gulf Coast – which have strong

relationships with adult education providers as pilot program candidates. TEA committed \$400,000 in Adult Education State Leadership funds for the pilots.

A nationally recognized career awareness curriculum, previously offered by some Texas sites with highly successful results, was selected. The pilots 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. The providers received technical assistance as well as the guidelines and timelines for launching the pilot initiatives. Pilot objectives include:

- ★ formation of a local workforce literacy resource team including adult education providers and workforce partners;
- ★ development of a cross-agency referral process to track learners' educational and workforce-related activities;
- ★ development of a strong memorandum of understanding that can withstand crises and changes in personnel at the local level;
- ★ a clear understanding and common language regarding eligibility criteria and characteristics of a successful transition from adult education to further training and employment;
- ★ development of clear guidelines for navigating local workforce centers;

### *The C4 Initiative: A Workforce-Related Opportunity for Adult Learners*

*Critical roles in the pilots include those of the instructor, adult education's career or transition counselor, and key one stop center staff ... heavily reliant on strong partnerships between adult education and one stop career workforce centers.*

*- SHOP TALK #57, Texas LEARNS  
(February 21, 2012)*

- ★ shared reports of student activities in the TEAMS student tracking and other data systems (e.g., documentation of GED® Test completion and referral and placement in training and/or jobs);
- ★ use of the *Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE & ESOL Classroom* curriculum that intensifies GED® Test preparation and introduces learners to the soft skills needed for successful employment;
- ★ documented evidence of counseling and support in linking learners with training and work opportunities; and
- ★ exploration of ways to recognize student accomplishments that are portable and recognized by workforce partners.

*"This has definitely opened a door for me to further my education. I'm not stopping here! I am going to continue my education and go for my LVN license."*

- Lockhart Class Participant  
Community Action Inc. of Central Texas  
(June 2012)

Negotiations are underway to extend the pilots for a second year. The regional workforce literacy resource teams formed to assist with pilot implementation will continue to meet quarterly, with tentative plans to hold a joint meeting in winter or spring 2013.

Next steps include development of tracking mechanisms that will assist with linkages between adult education and workforce partners. This may enable tracking of additional training and support services (e.g., transportation, uniform purchase) provided through the workforce centers. In addition, data collected from the initial pilot cohorts will be analyzed to determine if additional data elements/points will be collected in the future, as well as to assist in documentation of best practices.

### By the Numbers ... as of June 7, 2012

- ★ \$400,000 divided by 3 regions serving the Alamo, Gulf Coast, Capital and Rural Capital local workforce development areas:
  - San Antonio ISD
  - Houston area
  - Austin/San Marcos area
- ★ 3 fiscal agents (one per region)
- ★ 7 providers
- ★ 21 sites
- ★ 27 classes
- ★ 480 served
- ★ 61.25 contact hours per student
- ★ 104 obtained GED

Source: Texas LEARNS (June 7, 2012)

## Implementation Update: June 2012

Reports for three additional *Advancing Texas'* APs were presented at the June 14, 2012 SITAC meeting. Each included actions required in the **Programs, Products and Services KPA**. Summaries for each are provided below.

### 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.

*"In occupations in which apprenticeship is the typical on-the-job training, employment is projected to grow by 22.5 percent, faster than for any other on-the-job training category."*

- Employment Projections – 2010-20,  
U.S. DOL, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2/1/2012)

Texas is facing an increasing need for workers with appropriate middle skills, created by job growth and future workforce retirements for a myriad of industries and occupations. Under the Council's leadership, **LTO P2** requires expansion of the earn while you learn model to address employer demand for skilled workers in middle-skill occupations.

assigned the Executive Committee the responsibility of overseeing implementation and reporting to the full Council. A project leadership team, including members from system partners THECB, the Texas Veterans Commission and TWC, was created in 2010 and charged with identifying and recommending potential projects. The team considered target industries in allied healthcare, health information technology, energy, aviation, and logistics and distribution and recommended six projects that were approved by the Executive Committee. Four of the six projects are active, including:

- ★ Two pilots – partnership formed to develop a registered apprenticeship program in an occupational area that has not traditionally used apprenticeship as a means to train its workforce:
  - Community Health Worker – Coastal Area Health Education Center
  - Health Information Technology – Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council Education and Research Foundation

**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**

- ★ *Two demonstrations* – partnership formed to adapt an existing registered apprenticeship program to meet emerging industry demand:

- Comprehensive-National Electrician Solar Training (C-NEST) – Austin Electrical Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee and the Capital Area Workforce Board
- Pre-Apprenticeship, Distance Learning and Outreach to Underserved Populations – Youth and Women – Independent Electrical Contractors of Texas

The Council worked with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and pilot project staff to develop action plans with major tasks and timelines for development and implementation of the new programs.

The project's reporting process provides for:

- ★ quarterly submission of written reports by all pilot and demonstration projects;
- ★ compilation of a *Quarterly Update* for use at Council, Executive Committee and leadership team meetings; and
- ★ periodic leadership team conference calls with verbal updates from project representatives.

Based on May quarterly status reports, all active 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 member's background and position; assist in identifying funding and other resources; and monitor project progress. In March, the leadership team met jointly with the Executive Committee and received updates from project representatives.

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## Competitive Data

Data is required to ensure that system initiatives will be developed and executed to strategically position Texas in the global marketplace. Data must be available to benchmark Texas against other states and countries in the most significant and strategic education, workforce and market outcomes.

**LTO P3** calls for continuation of the Council's efforts to produce a data set that allows system stakeholders to ascertain Texas' position relative to key indicators of competitiveness.

In 2003, indicators were chosen that met the conceptual frameworks which are now the foundation of the *Texas Index (Index)*. These frameworks are Dr. Michael Porter's model of cluster competitiveness and the OECD's Science, Technology, and Industry Scoreboard. Porter's model provides a basis for indicators that show an economic performance measure to address current performance and also focuses on the innovation output of a knowledge-based economy. The OECD scoreboard focuses on indicators that quantify the changing relationship between science, innovation, and economic performance in order to analyze trends in a knowledge-based economy. While both affirming selection of the recommended indicators and serving as the conceptual basis for the *Index*, Porter's model and the OECD's scoreboard also provided the possibility of using the *Index* indicators as elements of reliable and recognized models.

Since 2005, the Council has compiled data used to publish the *Index*. This research report currently provides data for 41 indicators organized into four domains: Training and Education; Research and Development; Market Composition and Characteristics; and Participant Access and Contribution. Data in the four domains are based on the important value proposition that skilled and educated people create innovations that result in commercialized products and services. These products are sold in the marketplace, generating economic activity that builds wealth for the state, and subsequently increases the standard of living for Texans.

The 2012 edition of the *Texas Index* is currently in production, with distribution expected in fall 2012.

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## Local Board Plan Alignment

As the system's front line partners, local workforce boards must understand and meet the needs of their local communities by providing relevant workforce programs and services. **LTO P4** addresses the statutory requirement that local board plans align with the system strategic plan, *Advancing Texas*.

### Congratulations to C-NEST Partner - Workforce Solutions Capital Area!!

The Capital Area local workforce board (Austin, TX), a partner in the C-NEST demonstration project, was awarded the **2012 Workforce Investment Board Excellence Grand Prize** at the National Association of Workforce Board's Forum 2012.

*"The award recognizes our ongoing commitment to building collaborative partnership and developing innovative solutions in developing a world-class workforce that meets the needs of our region's employers and prepares people for good jobs with good wages."*

*- Alan Miller, Executive Director – Workforce Solutions Capital Area (March 16, 2012)*

The Council is charged in federal and state law with recommending to the Governor approval of local board plans or plan modifications as required by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, the Wagner-Peyser Act and other applicable statutes. Under WIA, boards are required to develop and submit to the Governor a comprehensive local plan consistent with the WIA State Plan. The Council, as the designated State Workforce Investment Board, assists the Governor in review of the board plans.

Texas Government Code specifies that local plans must include a strategic component that sets broad goals and objectives for local workforce programs, and that outcomes must be consistent with statewide goals, objectives, and performance standards. *Advancing Texas* established these statewide goals and objectives. In previous years, TWC issued local board planning guidelines that included an appendix requesting quantitative and qualitative information needed for the Council's review. The Council typically analyzes the local board plans for:

- ★ data to demonstrate performance in specified areas;
- ★ explicit strategies that address critical business issues and success factors noted in *Advancing Texas*, and
- ★ other information as requested related to broad system priorities and/or initiatives.

**Local Board Plan Alignment [P4]** – Local boards will align with and support the workforce system strategic plan through their planning processes and related initiatives. This will be documented in board plans and plan modifications, which are submitted to the Council for approval.

**Owner / Participant: Local boards**

After determining that local plans meet the statutory requirements, the Council approves the plans and recommends them to the Governor for approval. Following the Governor's approval, local boards are able to enter into contracts for the purpose of operating the local workforce centers that deliver programs and services. TWC extended the existing, approved board plans through September 2012; therefore, the Council was not required to endorse or recommend board plans to the Governor in 2011.

TWC staff has convened a workgroup with representatives from 14 local boards and will seek their input during development of local board planning guidelines. Local board plans will be submitted later this year, with Council action projected for March 2013.

## Additional Updates

### State Workforce Plan

As the State Workforce Investment Board, the Council is also charged with approval of the Strategic State Workforce Plan for WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser. WIA requires that states have an approved state plan in place in order to receive WIA formula funding.

In March 2012, DOL's Employment and Training Administration issued guidance requiring state submission of a new five-year state workforce plan by April 16, 2012, or between April 17 and September 15, 2012. As allowed under the DOL guidelines, TWC requested and received a temporary extension to the current state plan in April 2012. DOL also specified that states have the option of submitting a unified plan or an integrated plan for WIA and Wagner-Peyser. As in previous plan submissions, TWC will develop an integrated state plan. Once developed, the draft plan will be posted for public comment on the TWC website. After the public comment period, TWC will consider and approve the final version of the state plan and transmit it to the Council for consideration and endorsement.

The Council is scheduled to consider endorsement of the state plan at its September 2012 meeting. Following endorsement, the Council will recommend final approval by the Governor and transmittal to the U.S. Secretary of Labor.

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Two reports were presented that directly relate to several of the critical business issues outlined in *Advancing Texas*. (see sidebar at right)

### Texas Association of Workforce Boards (TAWB) Update

The Council's March 2012 meeting included a workshop for members and invited guests focusing on aging workers, with presentations by Goodwill Industries of Houston and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). As a follow-up, the TAWB Chair invited Goodwill Industries and CAEL representatives to report on the Aging Worker Initiative (AWI) at the association's May meeting.

Supported by a DOL demonstration grant, the AWI seeks to expand the workforce system's understanding about how to best serve older workers and to develop models to share with all local workforce areas. AWI grants focus on providing training and related

### *Advancing Texas' Critical Business Issues*

*Everyone must be part of the critical pool of potential employees that is and will be required by Texas employers ...*

*Local workforce boards must understand and meet the needs of their local communities because they are the system's front line partner in offering relevant programs and services.*

services for individuals age 55 and older that result in employment and advancement opportunities in high-growth sectors. Goodwill is partnering with CAEL for technical assistance, documentation of best practices, leveraging lessons learned, and replication of models developed during the grant period.

In recent months, TAWB presentations and discussions have also addressed:

- ★ What can be done to increase manufacturing competitiveness across the state, the aging workers in the industry, and the misalignment of education and training.
- ★ WIA reauthorization and recent Congressional committee meetings.
- ★ Focus on career and technical education in school districts and the need to prepare students for careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.

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### **Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas – H-1B Technical Skills Grant Training Award**

Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas (WSNCT) and its training partners have been awarded a four-year \$4,991,839 grant as part of DOL's second round of funding under the H-1B Technical Skills Training Grant Competition. The money is part of more than \$183 million given to 43 public-private partnerships in 28 states in the second round of funding. In the first round last October, DOL awarded over \$159 million to 36 grantees.

WSNCT's IMPACT project focuses on the IT and STEM fields. These occupational areas are projected to grow by nine and eight percent, respectively, in the Dallas-Fort Worth region over the next three years. In the target occupations, WSNCT has identified an estimated 19,000 IT-related positions and 2,700 STEM-related positions currently open. Key project partners include IBM, Lockheed Martin, AT&T, Labinal, Business Control Systems, and North Central Texas College (NCTC).

This year, NCTC will equip a \$200,000 CISCO training lab and establish courses that meet industry demands. Advanced STEM and IT training will be ongoing.

The project focuses on advancing the career of 3,951 current IT and STEM professionals within the business partners. In addition, 200 long term unemployed individuals with IT or STEM backgrounds will receive training to address their current skills gap. Average hourly wage projections are \$44 for incumbent workers and \$24 for the long term unemployed.

The DOL grants are funded through fees paid by employers to bring foreign workers into the U.S. under the H-1B program. The intent is to raise the technical skill levels of American workers and, over time, help businesses reduce their need to use the H-1B program.



*"This grant will provide us with the incredible opportunity for incumbent and long-term unemployed workers to receive training in fields that employers might otherwise have to bring in foreign workers to do."*

*- David Setzer, WSNCT Executive Director  
(February 23, 2012)*

<b>SITAC Members</b>	
<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, Superintendent 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