

SITAC Quarterly Report

System Integration Technical Advisory Committee
Texas Workforce Investment Council
Quarter Ending June 2013

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.

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.

Next Meeting

Thursday, September 5, 2013 – 1:00 p.m.
Teacher Retirement System, Austin

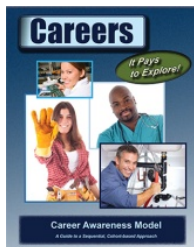
SITAC members typically meet quarterly, providing status reports on action plans for which their organization is solely or jointly responsible. The committee is authorized to create and deploy cross-agency teams in order to devise and execute collaborative solutions to issues associated with the system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

Implementation Update: June 2013

At the June 2013 SITAC meeting, reports were presented for three of *Advancing Texas'* action plans. Summaries are provided below.

Career Awareness – Increase Knowledge and Value Perception

Career information and awareness may assist with the transition to further education or the workforce. With Executive Committee oversight, the Council researched, identified, and validated best practices for providing information to improve understanding of educational pathways to careers.



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 in 2011 convened a workgroup to develop a model based on findings in the report.

Message from the Chair

Our system partners actively participated in the recent legislative session. Members provided updates and will be reporting on final outcomes at our September meeting. We will also hear a presentation on the Council's new demographic report series.

During this very busy period, work on many projects continued as we strive to improve opportunities and options for the state's workforce. This issue of the quarterly report includes updates for projects related to career awareness, apprenticeship, and training for those with low literacy levels.

On behalf of the Council, thank you to system partners for the hard work and collaboration!

Paul Mayer

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

The resulting guide details the model developed using the Council's best practices research. Entitled *Career Awareness Model: A Guide to a Sequential, Cohort-Based Approach*, it includes:

- ★ a letter stating the importance of students understanding the career options available to them after high school and college as well as the educational requirements of these options;
- ★ a short description of how the model was designed by a stakeholder team using the results from the Council's research study; and
- ★ a detailed description of program components and implementation standards.

★ ★ ★

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, mid- to long-term on-the-job-training, and 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 (CHW) – Coastal Area Health Education Center – As frontline public health workers, CHWs serve as liaisons between underserved communities and healthcare and social service providers. Demand is projected to increase due to the healthcare provider shortage and the continuing need for cost containment. The project goal is to increase the quality and quantity of CHWs in Texas and other states, which would assist in meeting industry demand.

The project team created a hybrid instructional model with 2,000 to 2,200 hours of on-the-job learning and classroom instruction: 160 hours focus on eight state-required core competencies and 140 hours of differential training allow movement into other healthcare fields or specializations (e.g., diabetes, geriatrics). Based on the Coastal Region's submission, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) approved CHW as a recognized apprenticeable occupation in 2010.



Health Information Technology (HIT) – The North Texas Regional Extension Center (NTREC) was established as a program by the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council Education and Research Foundation. With a two-year federal grant of almost \$8.5 million, the NTREC assists primary care providers to achieve "meaningful use" of electronic health records through HIT workforce development. The focus is to offset physician and provider implementation costs. Grant funds of \$175,000 financed the apprenticeship initiative, including an investment of \$10,000 per apprentice.

The project facilitates time-based apprenticeship models using DOL-approved IT classifications: Project Manager and Generalist. The grant, extended through 2014, is now scheduled to end in September 2013.



Electrical – The Independent Electrical Contractors of Texas (IEC) sponsors four-year electrical training with classroom- and distance-learning options for 12 IEC chapters that reach all 254 counties in Texas. The goal is to implement training strategies statewide that result in a ready supply of well-trained electrical workers.

The project incorporates strategies approved by DOL in revised federal regulations, which include distance learning. Chapters select one or more strategies that are compatible with their goals and resources. In partnership with IEC Atlanta, the Fort Worth/Tarrant County Chapter designed the distance-learning option.

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

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

Based on May quarterly status reports, the projects have made progress toward achieving their goals and objectives. The leadership team has continued to provide technical assistance based on each member's background and affiliation, assist in identifying funding and other resources, and monitor project progress. Work is currently underway to identify and document promising practices, such as IEC's distance-learning model.



Adult Basic Education – Low Literacy Level Employment

Individuals with low literacy skills can be assisted through targeted literacy programs to gain or maintain employment. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) are developing more effective methods for workforce literacy acquisition targeted at the over age 17 workforce literacy population. 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

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 as defined by the National Reporting System.

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 were extended for an additional year and scheduled to run through mid-2013.

Performance reporting for the projects began in 2012, with graduate and employment data published in the Council's annual evaluation report. Other results are presented in the table at right.

Innovative practices contributing to the initiative's success include:

- ★ strengthened partnerships with local partners brought together in local Workforce Literacy Resource Teams;
- ★ intensified GED instruction coupled with career awareness and career readiness activities; and
- ★ hiring of transition counselors/coordinators to assist learners in making wise choices and successful transitions to postsecondary education, training, and employment.

Pilot Project Data	Year 1	Year 2 (as of May)
Adult learners served	482	488
Number of classes	27	48
Number of sites	21	23
Average hours of instruction over 6-8 weeks	64	68
Number receiving extended class time via distance learning	116	150
Number obtaining GED certificate	104	113

Pilot execution is complete and the program will be evaluated to determine strengths and weaknesses, and to make recommendations for change. Next steps include:

- ★ Texas LEARNS is preparing a toolkit containing the deliverables developed by participating programs. It will be distributed statewide in July 2013.
- ★ A participant survey may be conducted in order to evaluate student outcomes not captured in TEAMS, the Texas Educating Adults Management System.
- ★ In December 2013, participant data will be matched with unemployment insurance records to determine if unemployed participants were working following exit from the program and if they retained employment.

Additional Updates

Adult Education Transfer

Senate Bill 307 (83rd Legislature) requires the transfer of adult education and literacy programs from TEA to TWC. Transition planning is underway, with a projected transfer date of September 1, 2013.

In June and July, TWC is holding a series of adult basic education stakeholder meetings across the state to collect ideas and suggestions about current successes and challenges. Major areas of interest include: professional development for teachers and administrators, clearinghouse and central point of contact functions and academic research, technical and program assistance, contracting processes and management, funding, and innovative ideas for change.



State of Texas Soldier Employment Initiative

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) and TWC are partnering on the State of Texas Soldier Employment Initiative. The initiative is part of a \$750,000 DOL-funded pilot project to help returning U.S. Army veterans find employment prior to separating from the service, particularly in growth industries such as the medical, energy, and technology fields.

Texas was one of four states chosen for the project due to the high population of Army veterans and its history of active collaboration with DOL and the Army to improve veterans' access to employment.



As part of the initiative, TVC and TWC representatives will work with military, community, and employer organizations, including the Army Career and Alumni Program and the Transitional Assistance Program, to identify areas of need for veteran employment services and to implement data sharing among partners to increase program efficiencies and avoid overlap of services.

Dedicated project staff will also create a computer database service that will consider a soldier's wide range of knowledge and translate that experience into skills statements understood and validated by civilian employers.

Initiative representatives, all veterans themselves, will be located in four local workforce areas that provide services to communities near Fort Hood in Killeen, Fort Bliss in El Paso, Camp Mabry in Austin, and Ellington Air Field in Houston. Outreach efforts will be enhanced for specific veterans' populations, including active duty soldiers within 90 days of separation from the Army, Texas Army National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers returning from deployment, veterans already separated from the military and currently receiving Army Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members (UCX), and veterans of other service branches who also are receiving military UCX. In addition, the Veterans Resource and Referral Specialists with TWC's Texas Veterans Leadership Program will continue to identify and reach out to veterans receiving UCX benefits to assist them with their reemployment efforts.

More information about veteran workforce services is available through Vets.Texasworkforce.org.

<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 Setzer, Executive Director, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas
<i>Texas Department of Criminal Justice</i> – Veronica Casanova, Interim 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. Garry Tomerlin, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Community and Technical Colleges
<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