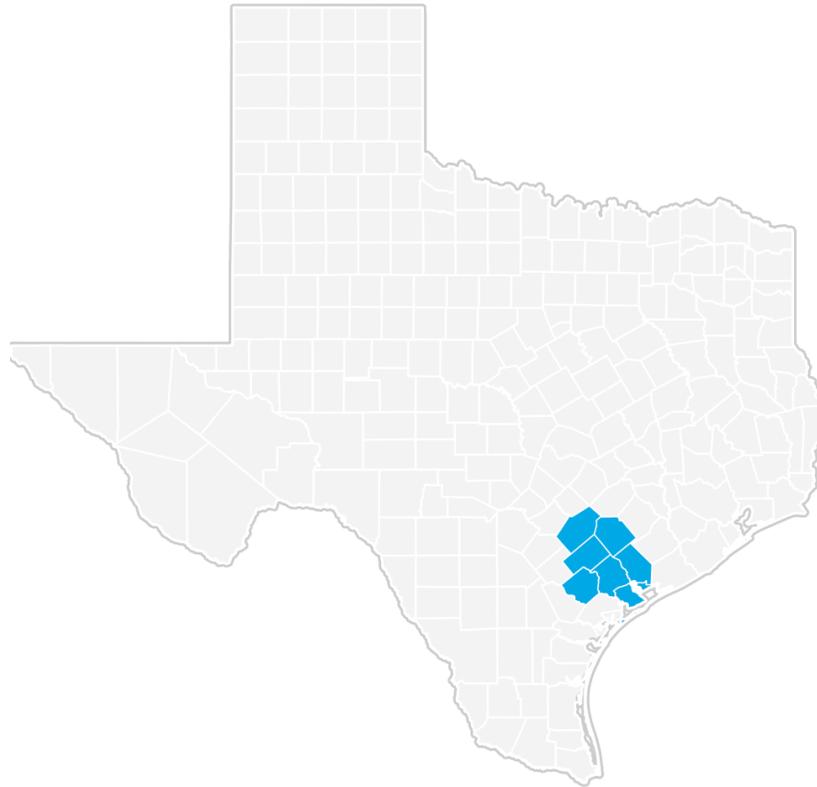


Golden Crescent Workforce Development Board Strategic and Operational Plan 2025 – 2028



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Introduction

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) §108 (20 Code of Federal Regulations §679.500–580), each Local Workforce Development Board (Board) is required to develop and submit to the state a comprehensive four-year plan (Board Plan) that identifies and describes policies and procedures as well as local activities that are in line with the State Plan. This Board Plan must be developed openly and be available to the public for comment for at least 15 days, but no more than 30 days, particularly to members of the business and educational communities as well as various other labor organizations. Along with submission of the Board Plan to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Board must submit all public comments of disagreement with the plan to TWC.

At the end of the first two-year period, the appropriate chief elected officials (CEOs) and the Board will review the local plan and prepare and submit modifications to reflect changes in the labor market and economic conditions, factors affecting the implementation of the plan, changes in financing, changes to the structure of the Board, and/or the need to revise strategies to meet local performance goals.

Afterwards, the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) is charged under Texas Government Code §§2308.101(5), 2308.302(a), and 2308.304(a)(b)(4) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Public Law 113–128) with recommending the plans and subsequent updates to the Governor for final approval. TWIC reviews each Board Plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide goals and objectives in the system strategic plan, *Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031*.

After the mandated public comment period, a summary of the Boards' responses and strategies is provided to TWIC as part of their review and consideration process. Once alignment is confirmed, the plans are submitted to the Governor's Office for final approval.

Our 2025 – 2028 Strategic and Operational Plan is scheduled to be reviewed by the Board's Policy and Planning Committee and Board of Directors in March 2025. The Strategic Plan was posted for public comment beginning February 20, 2025, as detailed under the appropriate section herein.

*The previous "Table of Contents" indicates the questions and required content that each Board is mandated to respond to and include in their Strategic Plan, according to Workforce Development (WD) Letter 11-24 effective October 23, 2024. Workforce Solution Golden Crescent Board's replies to those requirements are indicated throughout the remainder of this Plan under the heading: **Board Response**.*

Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

The required strategic elements of the Local Workforce Development Board Plan are as follows:

A. Vision and Goals

References: (WIOA §108(b)(1)(E); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(5))

Each Board must include a description of the Board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. The description must include;

- *goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including early education services, and services for youth and individuals with barriers to employment as defined by WIOA §3(24);and*
- *goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A).*

Board Response- Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent and its' regional partners recognize the collaborative process as a powerful means to achieve economic growth and vitality that enables the workforce occupational demand to increase, providing the opportunity for more job seekers to reach self-sufficiency.

WSGC recognizes that the coordination of efforts between education, workforce development, and economic development requires that effective partnerships be formed and managed to ensure the success of all involved. WSGC has developed a strong synergy with the regions' community college, university, independent school districts, economic development corporations, non-profits, and vendors, resulting in positive changes and growth in the regions' workforce and economy. Education fills the talent pipeline for the workforce and providing a skilled and productive labor pool is the foundation for economic development. The ability to foster and maintain that pipeline is a vital consideration to attract new business and is a necessary component for expansion of existing businesses. WSGC recognized the importance of community partners in all its activities and continues to facilitate leveraging and matching between partners to maximize the resources of all entities. The partners and organizations involved in education, workforce, and economic development have a common and vested interest in collaborating to create a comprehensive, seamless, and mutually beneficial system. WSGC serves as the logical fulcrum to balance, manage, and lead the effort to align all public and private entities to advance workforce initiatives in the Golden Crescent. We cannot succeed in connecting workers to jobs, if qualified workers are scarce, or there are too few quality jobs, so we remain vigilant in identifying not just entry-level jobs, but employment opportunities with career pathways.

WSGC realizes its primary vision and mission must be to remain an integral part of strengthening the economy of the Golden Crescent by;

- ensuring the economic self-sufficiency of the residents,
- and providing skilled workers for employers,

This is consistent with the core mission of the Board:

To address employer and resident needs through workforce development initiatives, resulting in a skilled labor force and a vibrant economy for the Golden Crescent.

WSGC and its' regional workforce partners have a long tradition of collaborative planning and have aligned strategic initiatives with targeted industry sectors and demand occupations. In

accordance with Workforce Development Letter 11-24, WIOA, and TWIC requirements, our strategic goals outlined below identify the key areas of focus for the duration of this Plan including;

Goal #1: Improve Opportunities for Youth and Job Seekers with Barriers to Employment

By aligning programs and resources that address high-priority programmatic needs through an integrated strategy, WSGC can improve the opportunities and outcomes of ALL participants to complete programs of study, earn credentials, transition to further education, and gain critical employability skills.

Objective #1

Work with employers to assist in the implementation of work-based learning initiatives, including internships, work experience, job shadowing, leadership development activities, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, pre-employment transition, subsidized summer employment (Summer Earn and Learn-SEAL), and financial literacy through the Board's Student HireAbility Navigator.

Objective #2

The Student HireAbility Navigator initiative provides support and coordination around the region to grow and improve workforce transition services offered to students with disabilities & their families. SHN serves as a vital resource and partner to enhance current programs offered by Texas Workforce Commission's Vocational Rehabilitation Services through three areas of focus:

Focus #1 - Raise awareness of resources and activities available to students with disabilities.

Focus #2 - Increase community coordination and provide information, training, and technical assistance.

Focus #3 - Inform and engage employers to increase understanding and develop work-based learning opportunities including upskilling and reskilling opportunities.

Objective #3

Focus on reconnecting WIOA out-of-school youth (OSY) to education and jobs and provide WIOA in-school-youth (ISY) with supports that are necessary for the successful completion of high school.

Objective #4

Work in partnership with Communities In Schools program to assist youth in high school completion activities, tutoring, subsidized employment, college visits, and strategic career information.

Objective #5

Strengthen partnerships with secondary education institutions and AEL providers to promote high school diploma (and equivalency) attainment, and to prevent youth from dropping out of school.

Goal #2: Performance Accountability

Per the performance accountability measures described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A), WSGC Board of Directors and committees evaluate the performance and operations of the system as a whole, and that of each individual component. This framework and the overall Board emphasis on continuous improvement, contributes to maintaining effective and efficient integration and coordination in the workforce system.

Objective #1

Continue to review and refine all contracting and procurement policies, procedures, and processes to ensure compliance and adherence to applicable rules and regulations.

Objective #2

Continue to strengthen systems that support an environment of knowledge and provides the needed insight to attain and excel in all TWC-Contracted performance measures and other contracted grant deliverables.

Objective #3

Maintain adequate internal accounting controls to provide assurance of properly recorded, timely transactions that are in accordance with state and federal regulations, including the provision of accurate financial records to the Board, Local, State, and Federal agencies.

Objective #4

Maintain and promote a continuous improvement process to ensure accountability, integrity, and quality within our entire scope of workforce programs, starting with early childhood education (ECE) and Texas Rising Star (TRS) initiatives to tracking performance participation and individual outcomes of completers.

Objective #5

Ensure all data/customer information is protected from unauthorized access and exposure.

In accordance Workforce Development Letter 11-24 and related attachment, as well as TWIC requirements, these local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide goals and objectives in the system strategic plan, *Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031*.

A. Board Strategies

References: (WIOA §108(b)(1)(F); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(6))

Boards must include a description of the Board's strategy to work with the entities carrying out the core programs and with the required partners to align resources available to the local workforce development area (workforce area) to achieve the vision and goals.

Board Response-Board Goals #3 and #4 and corresponding objectives address the overall alignment of system elements and the Board's efforts to improve and integrate program delivery. Additionally, WSGC has co-hosted and participated in several local and regional integration meetings with core partners. The partners include WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy, WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, local educational institutions, and community-based

organizations. WSGC core partners are committed to consistently provide excellent service to workforce system customers, to align resources available in the Golden Crescent, to achieve these goals and objectives.

Goal #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.

Objective #1

Improve the system's ability and *adaptability* to respond in a meaningful way to workforce problems, with workforce *solutions*.

- Effectively integrate planning initiatives that require partner coordination to ensure alignment.
- College and career readiness is achieved by availability of both academic courses and rigorous career technical education courses to support all students through a continuum of choices (two- and four-year degrees, apprenticeship, and military).
- Improve program and initiative alignment to ensure seamless educational and career transitions through coordinated and integrated planning.
- Increase awareness and educate high school counselors to create a secondary school culture where all students and parents understand the wide range of career and educational choices, including middle-skill careers.
- Expand and integrate middle skills training to meet current and future employer demand.
- Ensure veterans have programs, products, and services to accommodate their needs to enter the workforce and necessary to meet current and future employer demand.
- Enhance planning and collaboration to achieve alignment across workforce system components to meet employer and community needs.
- Programs and services must be aligned with employer needs.

Objective #2

Monitor, evaluate, and continuously strive to improve the quality and quantity of services available to our customers (employers and job seekers).

Objective #3

Address all WIOA defined barriers to employment through Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program activities and partner with community program providers to enhance the skill level and earnings potential for participants with significant barriers to employment.

Objective #4

Work with TWC, AEL, and Vocational Rehabilitation partners to consolidate intake, referral, and service strategies that focus on training and employment.

Goal #4: 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.

Objective #1

Work with employers, educational institutions, and regional partners to identify clear pathways or “mapping” of knowledge, skills and abilities that illustrate the steps necessary to move from one educational or employment milestone to another.

Objective #2

Increase the amount of investment (according to each revenue stream) dedicated to direct customer services (decrease ‘cost-per-participant’).

Objective #3

Increase the number of customers receiving and completing training/employment activities.

Objective #4 Annually, or as conditions warrant, review programs, services, and method of delivery for cost effectiveness and overall impact.

Objective #5

Continually explore and pursue options (grants and related alternative funding opportunities) to supplement WSGC budget of State and Federal monies received as a 501c3.

Objective #6

Work with area partners to continuously improve the referral system to help remove obstacles and barriers to success, to promote successful performance on the job and in school.

Objective #7

Work with the area 2-year and 4-year post-secondary schools to identify, develop, and support methods to maximize transferable credits or military training towards attainment of an industry-recognized degree, license, or certification.

B. High-Performing Board

References: (WIOA §108(b)(18); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(17)

Boards must include a description of the actions the Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Board, consistent with the factors developed by the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC).

Board Response-Per the performance accountability measures described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A), WSGC Board of Directors and committees evaluate the performance and operations of the system as a whole, and that of each individual component. This framework and the overall Board emphasis on continuous improvement, contributes to maintaining effective and efficient integration and coordination in the workforce system. Actions the Board will take toward remaining a high-performing Board include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Continue to review and refine all contracting and procurement policies, procedures, and processes to ensure compliance and adherence to applicable rules and regulations.
- Analyze performance data to maintain and strengthen systems that support an environment of knowledge and provides the needed insight to attain and excel in all TWC-Contracted performance measures and other contracted grants.
- Maintain adequate internal accounting controls to provide assurance of properly recorded, timely transactions that are in accordance with state and federal regulations, including the provision of accurate financial records to the Board, Local, State, and Federal agencies.
- Maintain and promote a continuous improvement process to ensure accountability, integrity, and quality within our workforce programs.
- Continue to work to ensure that all data and customer information is secure and protected from unauthorized access and exposure.

WSGC is proud of their history of high performance including numerous years of meeting or exceeding all TWC-contracted performance measures and receiving multiple awards for performance and service excellence. WSGC has achieved this status through rigorous accountability standards and maintaining a vision of excellence, leadership, and innovation for WSGC staff and their partners.

Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis

References: WIOA §108(b)(1)(A); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(1); WIOA §108(b)(1)(B); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(2); WD Letter 24-20, Change 1

Boards must include a regional analysis of the following:

- *The economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.*
- *The employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.*

Board Response- Comprehensive and detailed Economic and Workforce Analysis for the Golden Crescent region contained on the following pages include;

- Demographic Profile
- Employment and Wage Trends
- Industry Snapshot
- Occupation Snapshot
- Industry Clusters
- WSGC Target Occupation List Including Demand Industries/Occupations

Demographic Profile

The population in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA was 193,379 per American Community Survey data for 2018-2022. The region has a civilian labor force of 89,573 with a participation rate of 59.4%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA, 17.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 35.8% in the nation. The median household income in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA is \$64,051 and the median house value is \$169,665.

Summary¹

| Demographics | Percent | | | Value | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------|------------|-------------|
| | Golden Crescent, TX WDA | Texas | USA | Golden Crescent, TX WDA | Texas | USA |
| Demographics | | | | | | |
| Population (ACS) | — | — | — | 193,379 | 29,243,342 | 331,097,593 |
| Male | 50.1% | 50.0% | 49.6% | 96,916 | 14,624,638 | 164,200,298 |
| Female | 49.9% | 50.0% | 50.4% | 96,463 | 14,618,704 | 166,897,295 |
| Median Age ² | — | — | — | 38.5 | 35.2 | 38.5 |
| Under 18 Years | 24.6% | 25.3% | 22.1% | 47,487 | 7,396,128 | 73,213,705 |
| 18 to 24 Years | 8.6% | 10.0% | 9.4% | 16,671 | 2,936,266 | 31,282,896 |
| 25 to 34 Years | 12.4% | 14.4% | 13.7% | 23,956 | 4,224,194 | 45,388,153 |
| 35 to 44 Years | 12.1% | 13.8% | 12.9% | 23,471 | 4,046,302 | 42,810,359 |
| 45 to 54 Years | 11.2% | 12.3% | 12.4% | 21,597 | 3,597,088 | 41,087,357 |
| 55 to 64 Years | 12.9% | 11.2% | 12.9% | 24,931 | 3,274,387 | 42,577,475 |
| 65 to 74 Years | 10.4% | 7.9% | 9.7% | 20,081 | 2,297,666 | 32,260,679 |
| 75 Years and Over | 7.9% | 5.0% | 6.8% | 15,185 | 1,471,311 | 22,476,969 |
| Race: White | 70.2% | 59.1% | 65.9% | 135,780 | 17,293,460 | 218,123,424 |
| Race: Black or African American | 5.5% | 12.1% | 12.5% | 10,709 | 3,552,579 | 41,288,572 |
| Race: American Indian and Alaska Native | 0.3% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 557 | 169,576 | 2,786,431 |
| Race: Asian | 1.3% | 5.2% | 5.8% | 2,518 | 1,511,069 | 19,112,979 |
| Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.2% | 127 | 27,350 | 624,863 |
| Race: Some Other Race | 7.7% | 7.8% | 6.0% | 14,968 | 2,281,525 | 20,018,544 |
| Race: Two or More Races | 14.9% | 15.1% | 8.8% | 28,720 | 4,407,783 | 29,142,780 |
| Hispanic or Latino (of any race) | 43.2% | 39.9% | 18.7% | 83,461 | 11,665,280 | 61,755,866 |
| Population Growth | | | | | | |
| Population (Pop Estimates) ⁴ | — | — | — | 194,155 | 30,503,301 | 334,914,895 |
| Population Annual Average Growth ⁴ | 0.0% | 1.4% | 0.6% | 15 | 402,366 | 1,885,495 |
| People per Square Mile ⁴ | — | — | — | 32.3 | 116.8 | 94.8 |
| Economic | | | | | | |
| Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over) | 59.4% | 65.0% | 63.3% | 89,573 | 14,674,135 | 167,857,207 |
| Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54) | 79.8% | 81.5% | 82.8% | 55,092 | 9,621,423 | 106,380,520 |
| Armed Forces Labor Force | 0.1% | 0.5% | 0.5% | 187 | 110,177 | 1,236,378 |
| Veterans, Age 18-64 | 4.4% | 4.7% | 4.3% | 4,828 | 835,988 | 8,636,019 |
| Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64 | 76.4% | 78.7% | 77.1% | 3,688 | 658,147 | 6,656,238 |
| Median Household Income ² | — | — | — | \$64,051 | \$73,035 | \$75,149 |
| Per Capita Income | — | — | — | \$32,119 | \$37,514 | \$41,261 |
| Mean Commute Time (minutes) | — | — | — | 23.0 | 26.6 | 26.7 |
| Commute via Public Transportation | 0.4% | 1.0% | 3.8% | 361 | 142,353 | 5,945,723 |
| Educational Attainment, Age 25-64 | | | | | | |
| No High School Diploma | 14.9% | 13.9% | 10.1% | 14,036 | 2,103,422 | 17,373,867 |

Summary¹

| | Percent | | | Value | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| | Golden Crescent, TX WDA | Texas | USA | Golden Crescent, TX WDA | Texas | USA |
| High School Graduate | 34.9% | 24.1% | 25.1% | 32,812 | 3,653,228 | 43,176,248 |
| Some College, No Degree | 23.1% | 20.9% | 19.7% | 21,657 | 3,158,279 | 33,916,989 |
| Housing | | | | | | |
| Total Housing Units | — | — | — | 87,714 | 10,769,900 | 136,384,292 |
| Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) ² | — | — | — | \$128,029 | \$161,700 | \$204,900 |
| Homeowner Vacancy | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.7% | 817 | 95,712 | 1,304,850 |
| Rental Vacancy | 11.2% | 7.7% | 6.0% | 2,749 | 308,747 | 2,822,053 |
| Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units) | 30.5% | 38.1% | 36.2% | 21,414 | 3,635,275 | 43,285,318 |
| Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units) ⁵ | 5.7% | 5.4% | 8.7% | 3,968 | 512,772 | 10,424,934 |
| Social | | | | | | |
| Poverty Level (of all people) ⁵ | 14.8% | 15.5% | 14.1% | 28,487 | 4,213,938 | 44,257,979 |
| Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP | 12.8% | 12.2% | 12.2% | 8,996 | 1,167,725 | 14,635,287 |
| Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population) | 1.4% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 2,795 | 405,822 | 4,442,295 |
| Disconnected Youth ^{3,5} | 3.3% | 2.9% | 2.6% | 342 | 46,016 | 438,452 |
| Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children) ⁵ | 33.4% | 34.6% | 34.3% | 15,509 | 2,402,953 | 23,973,249 |
| Uninsured | 15.7% | 17.4% | 9.4% | 30,239 | 4,764,897 | 29,752,767 |
| With a Disability, Age 18-64 ⁵ | 12.9% | 9.6% | 10.3% | 14,431 | 1,618,704 | 20,240,504 |
| With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size ⁵ | 45.2% | 44.3% | 41.6% | 6,529 | 717,826 | 8,421,018 |
| Foreign Born | 7.4% | 17.0% | 13.5% | 14,642 | 4,736,692 | 43,539,499 |
| Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over) | 7.1% | 14.0% | 8.5% | 13,090 | 3,617,887 | 25,647,781 |

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

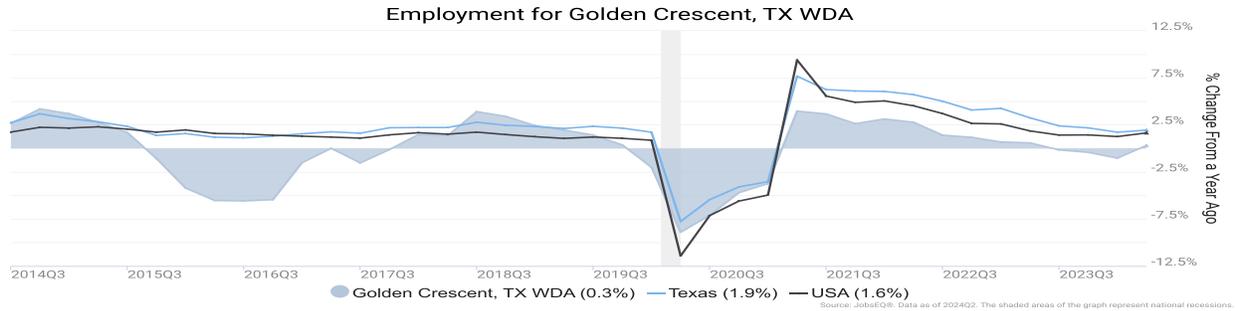
1. American Community Survey 2014-2018, unless noted otherwise.

2. Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.

3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.

Employment Trends

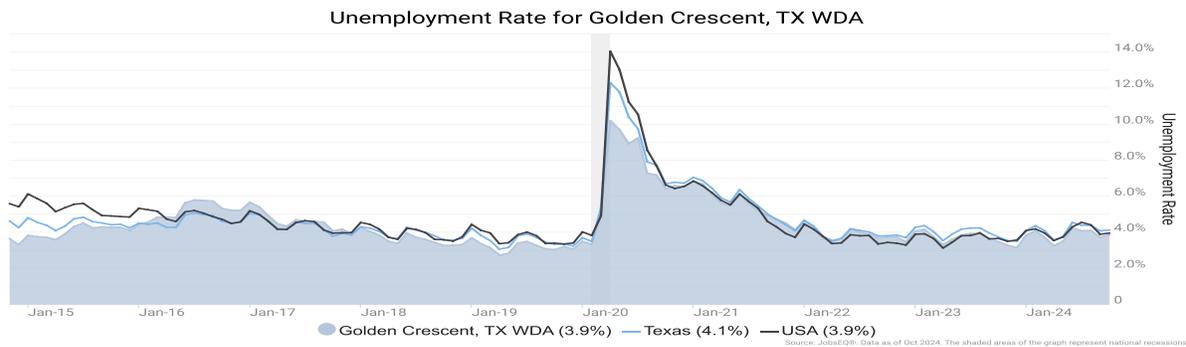
As of 2024Q2, total employment for the Golden Crescent, TX WDA was 88,660 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2024Q2, employment increased 0.3% in the region.



Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2024Q1 with preliminary estimates updated to 2024Q2.

Unemployment Rate

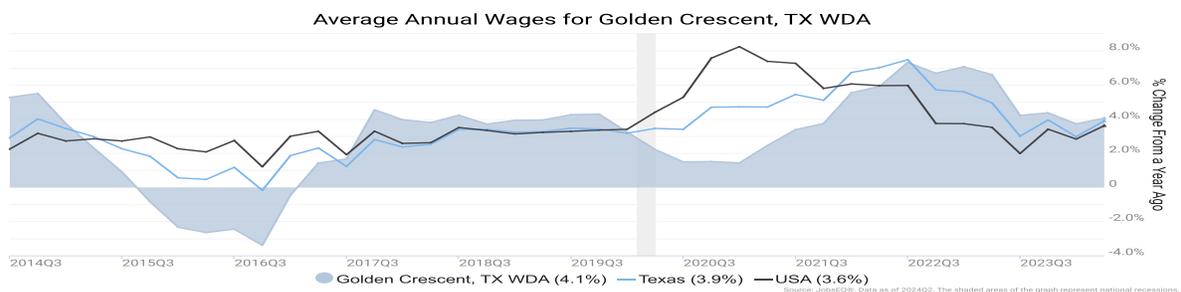
The unemployment rate for the Golden Crescent, TX WDA was 3.9% as of October 2024. The regional unemployment rate was the same as the national rate of 3.9%. One year earlier, in December 2023, the unemployment rate in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA was 3.5%.



Unemployment rate data are from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and updated through October 2024.

Wage Trends

The average worker in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA earned annual wages of \$57,344 as of 2024Q4. Average annual wages per worker increased 4.1% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$72,405 in the nation as of 2024Q2.

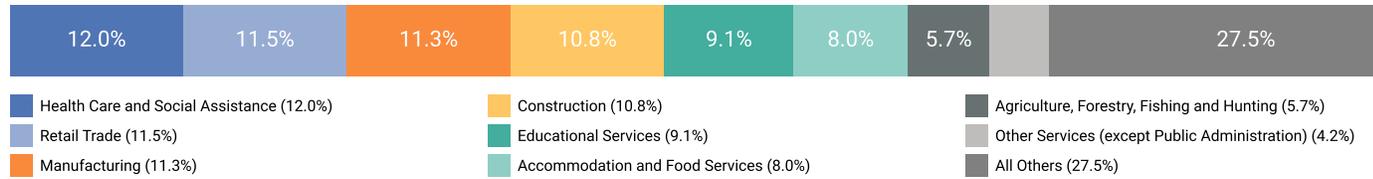


Annual average wages per worker data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2024Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2024Q2.

Industry Snapshot

The largest sector in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 10,681 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Retail Trade (10,182 workers) and Manufacturing (10,062). High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (LQ = 10.35), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (4.66), and Utilities (2.04).

Total Workers for Golden Crescent, TX WDA by Industry



Source: JobsEQ®
 Data as of 2024Q2
 Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2024Q1 with preliminary estimates updated to 2024Q2.

Sectors in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA with the highest average wages per worker are Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$117,894), Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$96,995), and Manufacturing (\$90,253). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 4 years are Construction (+495 jobs), Retail Trade (+372), and Accommodation and Food Services (+293).

Over the next 1 year, employment in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA is projected to expand by 140 jobs. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Management of Companies and Enterprises with a +0.6% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Health Care and Social Assistance (+47 jobs), Construction (+42), and Manufacturing (+41).

Golden Crescent, TX WDA, 2024Q2¹

| NAICS | Industry | Current | | | 4-Year History | | 1-Year Forecast | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| | | Empl | Avg Ann Wages | LQ | Empl Change | Ann % | Total Demand | Exits | Transfers | Empl Growth | Ann % Growth |
| 62 | Health Care and Social Assistance | 10,681 | \$52,674 | 0.81 | 211 | 0.5% | 1,085 | 474 | 566 | 47 | 0.4% |
| 44 | Retail Trade | 10,182 | \$37,232 | 1.17 | 372 | 0.9% | 1,315 | 582 | 804 | 14 | 0.7% |
| 31 | Manufacturing | 10,062 | \$90,253 | 1.43 | 87 | 0.2% | 1,034 | 373 | 641 | 41 | 1.4% |
| 23 | Construction | 9,535 | \$65,822 | 1.80 | 495 | 1.3% | 845 | 300 | 514 | 42 | 0.9% |
| 61 | Educational Services | 8,034 | \$45,027 | 1.13 | 168 | 0.5% | 750 | 340 | 411 | -2 | 0.0% |
| 72 | Accommodation and Food Services | 7,050 | \$22,386 | 0.91 | 293 | 1.1% | 1,256 | 533 | 718 | 5 | 0.1% |
| 11 | Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 5,052 | \$33,366 | 4.66 | -228 | -1.1% | 606 | 292 | 326 | -12 | -0.2% |
| 81 | Other Services (except Public Administration) | 3,710 | \$32,412 | 0.99 | -166 | -1.1% | 425 | 172 | 249 | 4 | 0.1% |
| 42 | Wholesale Trade | 3,403 | \$84,504 | 1.02 | -147 | -1.1% | 334 | 126 | 213 | -5 | -0.1% |
| 21 | Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | 3,339 | \$96,995 | 10.35 | -82 | -0.6% | 311 | 106 | 203 | 2 | 0.1% |
| 92 | Public Administration | 3,222 | \$57,398 | 0.78 | 177 | 1.4% | 293 | 118 | 177 | -2 | -0.1% |
| 48 | Transportation and Warehousing | 2,916 | \$75,345 | 0.66 | -380 | -3.0% | 316 | 128 | 188 | 0 | 0.0% |
| 56 | Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 2,867 | \$50,343 | 0.53 | -293 | -2.4% | 326 | 130 | 195 | 1 | 0.0% |
| 54 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 2,458 | \$71,308 | 0.38 | -220 | -2.1% | 208 | 73 | 124 | 10 | 0.4% |
| 52 | Finance and Insurance | 2,259 | \$69,407 | 0.65 | -77 | -0.8% | 188 | 71 | 115 | 2 | 0.1% |
| 53 | Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 1,305 | \$73,816 | 0.83 | 224 | 4.8% | 122 | 55 | 69 | -2 | -0.2% |
| 22 | Utilities | 934 | \$90,059 | 2.04 | 20 | 0.5% | 72 | 30 | 51 | -9 | -1.0% |
| 71 | Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 736 | \$27,986 | 0.41 | 68 | 2.5% | 111 | 43 | 65 | 3 | 0.4% |
| 51 | Information | 596 | \$54,579 | 0.35 | -16 | -0.7% | 49 | 19 | 33 | -2 | -0.4% |
| 55 | Management of Companies and Enterprises | 257 | \$117,894 | 0.19 | -73 | -6.0% | 23 | 8 | 14 | 1 | 0.6% |
| 99 | Unclassified | 63 | \$38,578 | 0.37 | 37 | 24.7% | 7 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0.1% |
| Total - All Industries | | 88,660 | \$57,344 | 1.00 | 468 | 0.1% | 9,635 | 3,955 | 5,655 | 130 | 0.0% |

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2024Q1 with preliminary estimates updated to 2024Q2. Forecast employment growth uses national projections adapted for regional growth patterns.

Occupation Snapshot

The largest major occupation group in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA is Management Occupations, employing 9,981 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Office and Administrative Support Occupations (8,785 workers) and Construction and Extraction Occupations (7,739). High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations (LQ = 2.02), Construction and Extraction Occupations (1.96), and Management Occupations (1.46).

Occupation groups in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA with the highest average wages per worker are Legal Occupations (\$108,200), Architecture and Engineering Occupations (\$106,300), and Management Occupations (\$104,900). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 1.0% among Legal Occupations to 5.9% among Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations.

Over the next 1 year, the fastest growing occupation group in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA is expected to be in the Healthcare Support, Manufacturing, and Construction Occupations respectively. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Construction and Extraction Occupations and Healthcare Support Occupations. Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations and Sales and Related Occupations.

Golden Crescent, TX WDA, 2024Q2¹

| SOC | Occupation | Current | | | 4-Year History | | | | 1-Year Forecast | | | | | |
|---------|---|---------|-----------------------------|------|----------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|-------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| | | Empl | Mean Ann Wages ² | LQ | Unempl | Unempl Rate | Online Job Ads ³ | Empl Change | Ann % | Total Demand | Exits | Transfers | Empl Growth | Ann % Growth |
| 11-0000 | Management | 9,981 | \$104,900 | 1.46 | 141 | 1.5% | 405 | 311 | 0.8% | 864 | 383 | 471 | 10 | 0.1% |
| 43-0000 | Office and Administrative Support | 8,785 | \$43,400 | 0.85 | 317 | 3.0% | 442 | -474 | -1.3% | 883 | 411 | 535 | -13 | -0.7% |
| 47-0000 | Construction and Extraction | 7,739 | \$52,000 | 1.96 | 438 | 5.0% | 192 | 142 | 0.5% | 694 | 236 | 430 | 42 | 6.3% |
| 41-0000 | Sales and Related | 7,590 | \$45,500 | 0.98 | 404 | 4.7% | 597 | -39 | -0.1% | 943 | 430 | 564 | -22 | -0.7% |
| 53-0000 | Transportation and Material Moving | 7,498 | \$45,100 | 0.97 | 547 | 5.7% | 386 | -49 | -0.2% | 941 | 359 | 572 | 11 | 0.1% |
| 35-0000 | Food Preparation and Serving Related | 6,808 | \$28,700 | 0.93 | 511 | 5.9% | 376 | 406 | 1.5% | 1,317 | 567 | 747 | 13 | 0.9% |
| 51-0000 | Production | 6,439 | \$51,500 | 1.33 | 275 | 3.7% | 133 | -186 | -0.7% | 680 | 244 | 446 | 10 | 0.2% |
| 25-0000 | Educational Instruction and Library | 5,471 | \$59,100 | 1.14 | 118 | 2.4% | 276 | 146 | 0.7% | 472 | 216 | 251 | 24 | 0.1% |
| 49-0000 | Installation, Maintenance, and Repair | 4,763 | \$58,300 | 1.38 | 149 | 2.5% | 295 | 144 | 0.8% | 427 | 167 | 243 | 27 | 0.3% |
| 29-0000 | Healthcare Practitioners and Technical | 4,497 | \$92,000 | 0.85 | 66 | 1.4% | 1,101 | 257 | 1.5% | 275 | 130 | 125 | 29 | 0.4% |
| 13-0000 | Business and Financial Operations | 3,680 | \$79,800 | 0.64 | 72 | 2.1% | 171 | 140 | 1.0% | 302 | 101 | 192 | 9 | 0.2% |
| 31-0000 | Healthcare Support | 2,840 | \$34,300 | 0.70 | 119 | 3.3% | 322 | -37 | -0.3% | 416 | 171 | 222 | 43 | 7.7% |
| 37-0000 | Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance | 2,590 | \$33,100 | 0.89 | 167 | 5.1% | 173 | -147 | -1.4% | 346 | 151 | 195 | 0 | 0.0% |
| 33-0000 | Protective Service | 1,677 | \$55,400 | 0.88 | 52 | 2.7% | 54 | 79 | 1.2% | 163 | 66 | 99 | -2 | -0.1% |

Golden Crescent, TX WDA, 2024Q2¹

| SOC | Occupation | Current | | | | | | 4-Year History | | 1-Year Forecast | | | | |
|---------|--|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| | | Empl | Mean Ann Wages ² | LQ | Unempl | Unempl Rate | Online Job Ads ³ | Empl Change | Ann % | Total Demand | Exits | Transfers | Empl Growth | Ann % Growth |
| 39-0000 | Personal Care and Service | 1,677 | \$31,800 | 0.74 | 75 | 3.8% | 74 | -47 | -0.7% | 289 | 109 | 175 | 45 | 1.3% |
| 17-0000 | Architecture and Engineering | 1,311 | \$106,300 | 0.93 | 27 | 2.3% | 106 | -69 | -1.3% | 92 | 31 | 55 | 6 | 0.5% |
| 15-0000 | Computer and Mathematical | 1,187 | \$93,500 | 0.42 | 21 | 2.0% | 68 | 19 | 0.4% | 74 | 26 | 43 | 5 | 0.4% |
| 21-0000 | Community and Social Service | 1,160 | \$55,000 | 0.71 | 19 | 2.3% | 159 | -49 | -1.0% | 108 | 44 | 59 | 5 | 0.5% |
| 45-0000 | Farming, Fishing, and Forestry | 1,043 | \$34,900 | 2.02 | 59 | 5.7% | 24 | -42 | -1.0% | 154 | 64 | 93 | 12 | 0.2% |
| 27-0000 | Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media | 885 | \$54,600 | 0.55 | 19 | 3.1% | 90 | 3 | 0.1% | 84 | 35 | 50 | 0 | 0.0% |
| 19-0000 | Life, Physical, and Social Science | 717 | \$84,400 | 0.89 | 8 | 1.7% | 62 | -2 | -0.1% | 70 | 11 | 56 | 13 | 0.4% |
| 23-0000 | Legal | 322 | \$108,200 | 0.44 | 3 | 1.0% | 5 | -39 | -2.8% | 19 | 8 | 11 | 4 | 0.1% |
| | Total - All Occupations | 88,660 | \$58,400 | 1.00 | 3,607 | 3.7% | 5,512 | 468 | 0.1% | 9,619 | 3,962 | 5,633 | 90 | 13.0% |

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2024Q2 unless noted otherwise

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

1. Data based on a four-quarter moving average unless noted otherwise.

2. Wage data represent the average for all Covered Employment

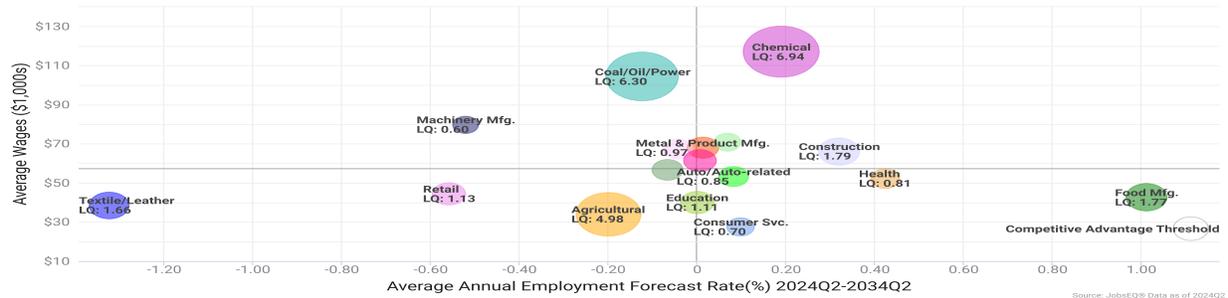
3. Data represent found online ads active within the last thirty days in the selected region. Due to alternative county-assignment algorithms, ad counts in this analytic may not match that shown in RTI (nor in the popup window ad list). Ad counts for ZCTA-based regions are estimates.

• Occupation employment data are estimated via industry employment data and the estimated industry/occupation mix. Industry employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and currently updated through 2024Q1, imputed where necessary with preliminary estimates updated to 2024Q2. Wages by occupation are as of 2024 provided by the BLS and imputed where necessary. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

Industry Clusters

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in the Golden Crescent with the highest relative concentration is Chemical with a location quotient of 6.94. This cluster employs 5,440 workers in the region with an average wage of \$117,025. Employment in the Chemical cluster is projected to expand in the region about 0.2% per year over the next ten years.

Industry Clusters for Golden Crescent, TX WDA as of 2024Q2

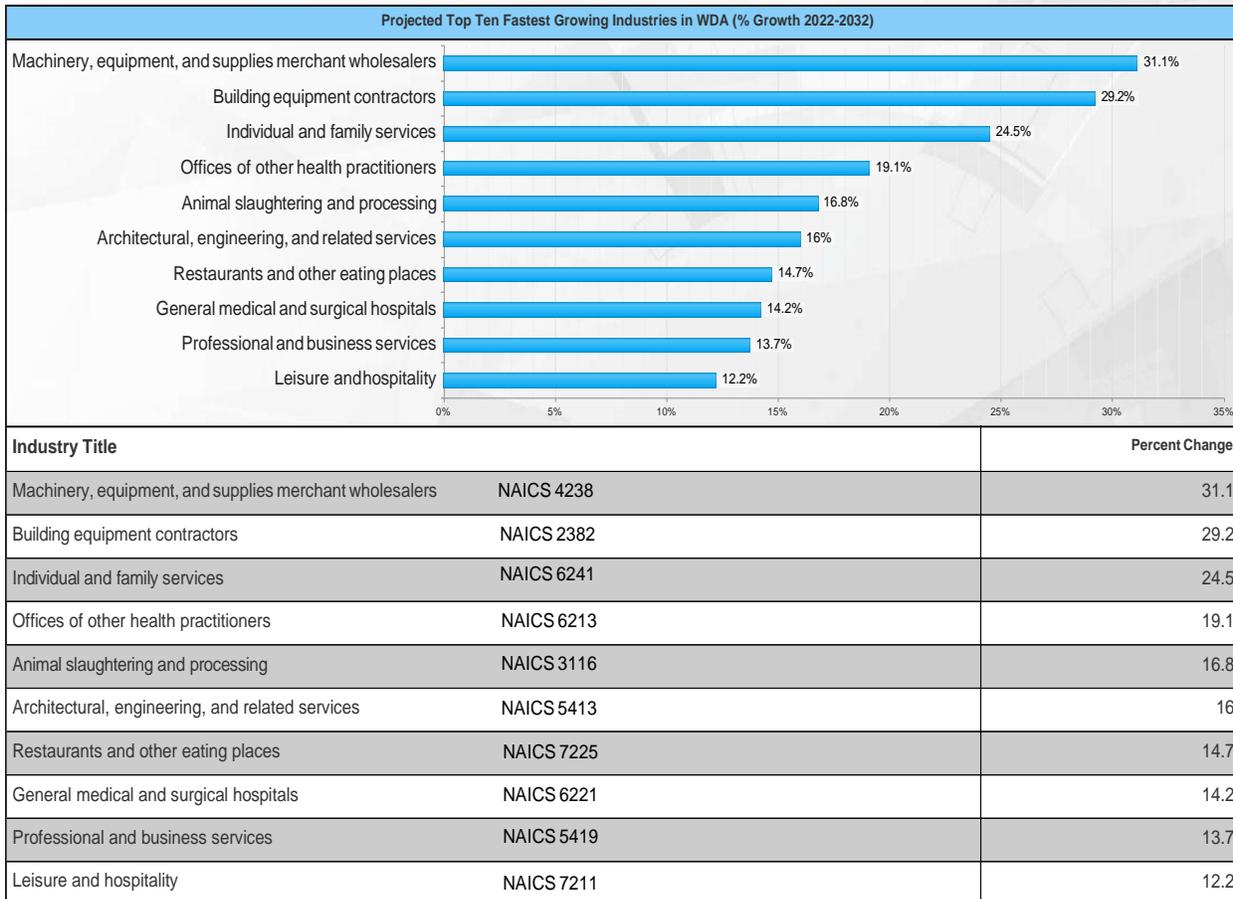


Location quotient and average wage data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, imputed where necessary, and updated through 2024Q2. 10-year forecasted employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

Demand Industries with 10-Year (2022-2032) Industry Growth Projections for the Golden Crescent



Economic Profile for Workforce Development Area for the Month of December 2024 - Projections - Golden Crescent



Source: TWC Labor Market Information Dept.

The previous data and related tables indicate industry sectors with current and forecasted occupational growth potential that will be targeted by the Board.

Annually, or as economic conditions dictate, the Board reviews and updates their *Target Occupation List*. This is a function of our Labor Market Committee, an *Ad Hoc* Committee comprised of several Board members, employers, training providers, Workforce Center staff, and other stakeholders. Collectively, they are charged with evaluating the occupations that are listed, to ensure they accurately reflect the needs of the community (employers and job seekers) as well as the potential needs of industry looking to expand or relocate to our area. Furthermore, we are only allowed to commit WIOA training dollars to occupations designated on that list, through our Individual Training Account (ITA) process.

Considering that WIOA serves as the primary job-training revenue stream, it’s imperative that the occupations on the list, not only mirror the needs of our industry and job-seeker customers,

but that those jobs (and the resulting training options) are actually in high-demand, provide a self-sufficient “livable” wage, and demonstrate sustained growth potential.

The Committee reviews and analyzes the existing Target Occupation list, as well as related labor market data, any employer survey results and input, and applies the selection criteria [designated by TWC and our Board] to each occupation. These include;

- Employment Growth Rate (observed over recent period & percent projected)
- Wages (avg. weekly/monthly earnings & minimum annual salary)
- Job Openings (current/fill rate)
- Area Training that is on or can be added to TWC Eligible Training Provider List
- Can be completed in 2 years or less
- Result in an industry-recognized certificate or licensure
- Local Wisdom (current area information area that might not be reflected in DOL data)

As part of the comprehensive Labor Market analysis, we rely on data gathered from a variety of sources including, but not limited to;

- Lightcast-EMSI
- JobsEQ-Chmura Economics
- Sites on Texas data and reports
- TWC Labor Market and Career Information Reports
- WorkinTexas (WiT) Data
- DOL & BLS data
- Any information gleaned from Committee members and area Eco Dev Directors

The resulting list of occupations are “targeted” by the Board to devote training dollars and needs-related assistance for the participants enrolled in those training disciplines associated with the occupation. Once the “vetting” process is completed in accordance with TWC evaluation criteria, the list is presented to the Policy and Planning Committee for review and recommendation to the Board of Directors.

Targeted vs. Demand

As noted, the *targeted* occupations are those that pay a livable (self-sufficient) wage, are in demand, and require a certain amount of vocational training that typically results in a certificate or credential. Individuals that have the skills to be employed in a targeted occupation should be able to obtain jobs that pay well enough to support themselves/their families. Since Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) training funds may only be allocated to training activities in targeted occupations; colleges, universities, and other training providers are encouraged to offer educational and vocational training opportunities directed at these occupations. *Demand* occupations are those occupations that have a high number of openings (current and projected) in the local labor market. However, while these occupations demonstrate “demand” and potential growth, they don’t necessarily meet other criteria, such as training requirements, career advancement, or livable wages. Growth projections are the primary criteria used by the Board to determine demand industries and occupations.

The following is a list of Target Occupations for the Golden Crescent reviewed and ratified by the Board on January 30, 2025;

| | |
|---------|--|
| 13-2011 | Accountants and Auditors |
| 49-3023 | Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics |
| 43-3031 | Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks |
| 47-2031 | Carpenters |
| 15-1231 | Computer Network Support Specialists |
| 51-4012 | Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) Machine Tool Programmers, Metal, Plastic |
| 33-3012 | Correctional Officers/Jailers |
| 49-3031 | Diesel Mechanics |
| 49-9051 | Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers |
| 47-2111 | Electricians |
| 29-2041 | Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics |
| 33-2011 | Firefighters |
| 49-9021 | Heating/Air Conditioning/Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers |
| 49-9041 | Industrial Machinery Mechanics |
| 17-3023 | Instrumentation/Electrical (I&E) Technicians |
| 29-2061 | Licensed Vocational Nurses |
| 51-4041 | Machinists |
| 31-9092 | Medical Assistant |
| 29-2071 | Medical Records/Health Information Specialists |
| 49-9044 | Millwrights |
| 31-2011 | Occupational Therapy Assistants |
| 29-9011 | Occupational Health and Safety Specialists |
| 47-2073 | Operating Engineers/Construction Equipment, Crane or Heavy Equipment Operators |
| 31-2021 | Physical Therapist Assistants |
| 51-8091 | Plant Systems/Process Operators |
| 47-2152 | Plumbers, Pipefitter, and Steamfitters |
| 33-3051 | Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers |
| 29-2034 | Radiologic Technologists and Technicians |
| 29-1141 | Registered Nurses |
| 29-1126 | Respiratory Therapists |
| 47-5071 | Roustabouts, Oil and Gas |
| 25-3097 | Teachers-Early, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, ESL, & Special Education |
| 49-9052 | Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers (Fiber Optic Technicians) |
| 53-3032 | Truck Drivers, Heavy/Tractor Trailers |
| 51-4121 | Welders/Cutters/Solderers/Brazers |

Targeted Occupations with TWC Wage and 10-Year Projection Data

| SOC Code | Occupation | Annual Average Employment 2022 | Average Annual Employment 2032 | Number Change 2022-2032 | Percent Change 2022-2032 | Entry Wage (hourly) | Experienced Wage (hourly) |
|----------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 13-2001 | Accountants & Auditors | 508 | 583 | 75 | 14.8% | \$24 | \$47 |
| 49-3023 | Auto Service Tech & Mechanics | 587 | 621 | 34 | 5.8% | \$15 | \$27 |
| 43-3031 | Bookkeeper, Accounting Clerk | 927 | 941 | 14 | 1.5% | \$15 | \$24 |
| 47-2031 | Carpenters | 361 | 397 | 36 | 10% | \$15 | \$20 |
| 15-1231 | Computer IT Specialists | 237 | 250 | 13 | 5.5% | \$21 | \$34 |
| 51-4012 | CNC Machinists | 95 | 113 | 18 | 18.9% | \$18 | \$21 |
| 33-3012 | Correctional Officers | 277 | 324 | 47 | 17% | \$21 | \$24 |
| 49-3031 | Diesel Mechanics | 200 | 240 | 40 | 20% | \$19 | \$30 |
| 49-9051 | Electrical Power Line Workers | 142 | 163 | 21 | 14.8% | \$24 | \$38 |
| 47-2111 | Electricians | 801 | 1036 | 235 | 29.3% | \$18 | \$30 |
| 29-2041 | EMT/Paramedics | 139 | 161 | 22 | 15.8% | \$19 | \$27 |
| 33-2011 | Firefighters | 120 | 140 | 20 | 16.7% | \$20 | \$29 |
| 49-9021 | HVAC I/M/R | 160 | 201 | 41 | 25.6% | \$19 | \$31 |
| 49-9041 | Industrial Machinery Mechanics | 515 | 622 | 107 | 20.8% | \$22 | \$38 |
| 17-3029 | I&E Technicians | 107 | 140 | 33 | 30.8% | \$29 | \$47 |
| 29-2061 | LVN | 654 | 729 | 75 | 11.5% | \$22 | \$28 |
| 51-4041 | Machinists | 209 | 230 | 21 | 10% | \$15 | \$27 |
| 31-9092 | Medical Assistant | 218 | 252 | 34 | 15.6% | \$15 | \$19 |
| 29-2071 | Medical Records Clerk | 109 | 122 | 13 | 11.9% | \$15 | \$23 |
| 49-9044 | Millwrights | 219 | 267 | 48 | 21.9% | \$31 | \$34 |
| 31-2011 | Occupational Therapist | 54 | 69 | 15 | 27.8% | \$28 | \$38 |
| 29-9011 | Occupations Health & Safety Spec. | 130 | 142 | 12 | 9.2% | \$21 | \$27 |
| 47-2073 | Operating Engineer, Heavy Equip. | 474 | 511 | 37 | 7.8% | \$19 | \$28 |
| 31-2021 | Physical Therapist Asst. | 113 | 140 | 27 | 23.9% | \$27 | \$37 |
| 51-8091 | Plant System/Process Operator | 432 | 521 | 89 | 20.6% | \$28 | \$39 |
| 47-2152 | Plumbers, Pipefitters, Steamfitters | 363 | 411 | 48 | 13.2% | \$20 | \$31 |
| 33-3051 | Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers | 440 | 475 | 35 | 8% | \$22 | \$32 |
| 29-2034 | Radiologic Techs | 155 | 174 | 19 | 12.3% | \$26 | \$36 |
| 29-1141 | Registered Nurses | 1521 | 1727 | 206 | 13.5% | \$31 | \$44 |
| 29-1126 | Respiratory Therapists | 142 | 169 | 27 | 19% | \$28 | \$36 |
| 47-5071 | Roustabouts, Oil & Gas | 301 | 337 | 36 | 12.9% | \$18 | \$25 |
| 25-3097 | Teachers (Elem., Middle, HS, SE) | 6389 | 6713 | 324 | 5.1% | \$27 | \$41 |
| 49-9052 | Telecommunications-Fiber Optic | 72 | 88 | 16 | 22.2% | \$17 | \$33 |
| 53-3032 | Truck Drivers, Heavy (CDL) | 1745 | 1863 | 118 | 6.8% | \$19 | \$29 |
| 51-4121 | Welders/Cutters/Solderers | 432 | 463 | 31 | 7.2% | \$17 | \$29 |

Data Source: Texas Workforce Commission Labor Market Information Dept.

Demand Occupations with TWC 10-Year Projection

| SOC Code | Occupation | Annual Average Employment 2022 | Average Annual Employment 2032 | Number Change 2022-2032 | Percent Change 2022-2032 |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 35-3023 | Fast Food & Counter Workers | 1815 | 2060 | 245 | 13.5% |
| 41-2031 | Retail Salespersons | 2074 | 2127 | 53 | 2.6% |
| 35-2014 | Cooks, Restaurant | 655 | 882 | 227 | 34.7% |
| 53-7065 | Stockers and Order Fillers | 1630 | 1801 | 171 | 10.5% |
| 35-1012 | Supervisors of Food Prep/ Workers | 641 | 754 | 113 | 17.6% |
| 37-2011 | Janitors/Cleaners | 1015 | 1122 | 107 | 10.5% |
| 31-1120 | Personal Care Aides | 1211 | 1441 | 230 | 19% |
| 47-2061 | Construction Laborers | 1411 | 1542 | 131 | 9.3% |

Data Source: Texas Workforce Commission Labor Market Information Dept.

B. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

References: WIOA §108(b)(1)(C); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(3)

Boards must include an analysis of the regional workforce, including:

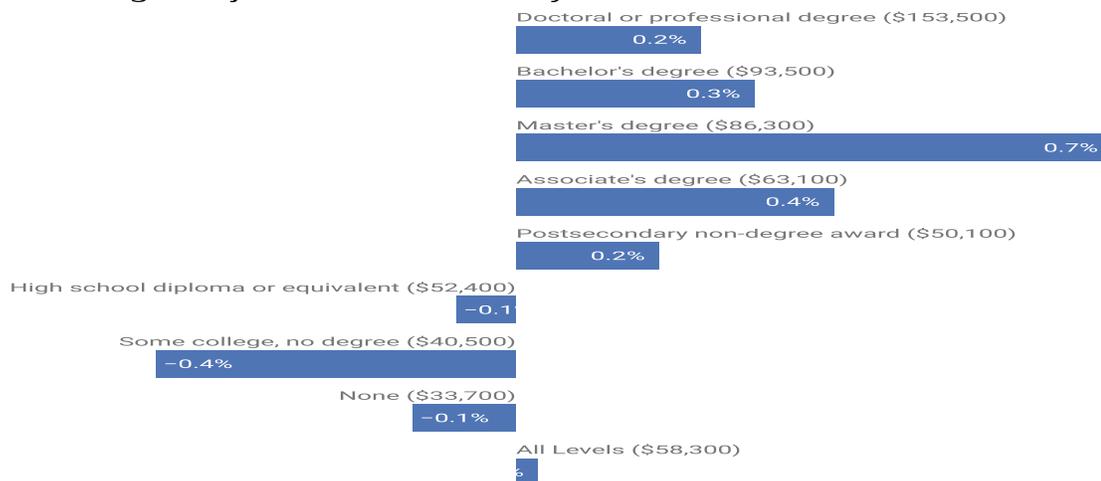
- *current labor force employment and unemployment data;*
- *information on labor market trends; and*
- *the educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.*

Board Response- In addition to the employment and unemployment data and information provided herein, the Board analyzed the in-demand sectors and associated occupations then cross-referenced that data with the workforce characteristics for workers and job seekers (Education Level) in our region. Also included was the average number of graduates and program exiters with a certificate or credential. **The table on the following page shows all the educational programs, enrollments and graduates by Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code that are directly or closely related to the entire group of occupations identified as critical for the designated industry sector or cluster.** Analysis of the report can assist the Board in identifying those educational program areas that might receive priority attention if the objective is to produce more graduates with the educational backgrounds necessary to fill critical occupations in the targeted/demand/industry group or cluster. **All area public colleges and universities whose graduates represent significant contributions to the regional labor market (LWDA) are included in the graduate count.**

Education Levels

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the Golden Crescent, TX WDA is projected to grow over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 0.2% per year, those requiring a bachelor’s degree are forecast to grow 0.3% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 0.4% per year.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Education Levels



Source: JobsEQ®
Data as of 2024Q2

| LWDA = 19 - Golden Crescent | | | Total All Instructional Programs 2023 | |
|--|---|-----|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Projected Annual Average Job Openings for Occupations: 1,777 | | | Enrollment 3,767 | Grads 1,003 |
| CIP | CIP Title | STI | | |
| ▼▲ | ▼▲ | | ▼▲ | ▼▲ |
| 52.02 | Business Administration, Management and Operations | | 1045 | 311 |
| 52.0201 | Business Administration and Management, General | | 1045 | 311 |
| 51.38 | Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing. | | 361 | 254 |
| 51.3801 | Registered Nursing/Registered Nurses | | 297 | 227 |
| 51.3802 | Nursing Administration | | 25 | 12 |
| 51.3805 | Family Practice Nurse/Nursing. | | 35 | 0 |
| 51.3817 | Nursing Education | | 4 | 15 |
| 48.05 | Precision Metal Working | | 66 | 105 |
| 48.0508 | Welding Technology/Welder | | 66 | 105 |
| 15.03 | Electrical Engineering Technologies/Technicians | | 182 | 89 |
| 15.0303 | Electrical, Electronic and Communications Engineering Technology/Technician | | 182 | 89 |
| 42.01 | Psychology, General | | 316 | 56 |
| 42.0101 | Psychology, General | | 316 | 56 |
| 52.01 | Business/Commerce, General | | 355 | 55 |
| 52.0101 | Business/Commerce, General | | 355 | 55 |
| 52.03 | Accounting and Related Services | | 295 | 51 |
| 52.0301 | Accounting | | 295 | 51 |
| 43.01 | Criminal Justice and Corrections | | 199 | 46 |
| 43.0104 | Criminal Justice/Safety Studies | | 167 | 25 |
| 43.0107 | Criminal Justice/Police Science | | 32 | 21 |
| 11.04 | Information Science/Studies | | 162 | 43 |
| 11.0401 | Information Science/Studies | | 162 | 43 |
| 11.01 | Computer and Information Sciences, General | | 168 | 25 |
| 11.0101 | Computer and Information Sciences, General | | 168 | 25 |
| 51.09 | Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, and Treatment Professions | | 61 | 24 |
| 51.0904 | Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic) | | 38 | 15 |
| 51.0908 | Respiratory Care Therapy/Therapist | | 23 | 9 |
| 42.28 | Clinical, Counseling and Applied Psychology. | | 67 | 21 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|--|------------|-----------|
| 42.2803 | Counseling Psychology | | 67 | 21 |
| 52.14 | Marketing | | 76 | 19 |
| 52.1401 | Marketing/Marketing Management, General | | 76 | 19 |
| 52.08 | Finance and Financial Management Services | | 100 | 18 |
| 52.0801 | Finance, General | | 100 | 18 |
| 09.01 | Communication and Media Studies | | 86 | 16 |
| 09.0100 | Communication, General | | 86 | 16 |
| 52.04 | Business Operations Support and Assistant Services | | 45 | 12 |
| 52.0401 | Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General | | 41 | 6 |
| 52.0407 | Business/Office Automation/Technology/Data Entry | | 4 | 6 |
| 11.09 | Computer Systems Networking and Telecommunications | | 24 | 10 |
| 11.0901 | Computer Systems Networking and Telecommunications | | 24 | 10 |
| 41.03 | Physical Science Technologies/Technicians | | 79 | 9 |
| 41.0301 | Chemical Technology/Technician | | 79 | 9 |

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Combined with Graduate/Completer Data from 2 and 4 Year Post-Secondary Institutions and Career Schools, Approved for Training by GCWDB on TWC Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

Regarding those individuals with barriers to employment, the Board continually seeks to improve the ability of all participants to complete programs of study, earn credentials, transition to further education, and gain skills necessary to secure and sustain employment. WSGC has identified strategies to align program administration and implementation with our partners and through our Student HireAbility Navigator. Those are;

- Capitalize on our Communities in School (CIS) affiliation and Student HireAbility Navigator to provide in-school-youth (ISY) with necessary support for the successful completion of high school.
- Continually improve the referral system to remove obstacles and barriers to success, to promote successful performance on the job and in school.
- Address all WIOA-defined barriers to employment through Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program activities and partner with community program providers to enhance the skill level and earnings potential for participants with significant barriers to employment.
- Collaborate with TWC, AEL, and Vocational Rehabilitation partners to consolidate intake, referral, and service strategies that focus on training and employment.
- Work with area businesses and employers to assist in the implementation of work-based learning initiatives, including internships, work experience, job shadowing, leadership development activities, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, subsidized summer employment, and financial literacy.
- Focus on reconnecting out-of-school youth (OSY) to education and jobs, through our HS diploma/graduation initiative with Community Action and area ISD's to promote high school (and equivalency) attainment.
- Work in partnership (WSGC/CIS/ISD's) to assist youth in high school completion (or equivalency) activities, tutoring, subsidized employment, college visits, and strategic career information and employment opportunities in an effort to stymie the exodus of rural HS graduates to urban and metro areas.

C. Workforce Development Analysis

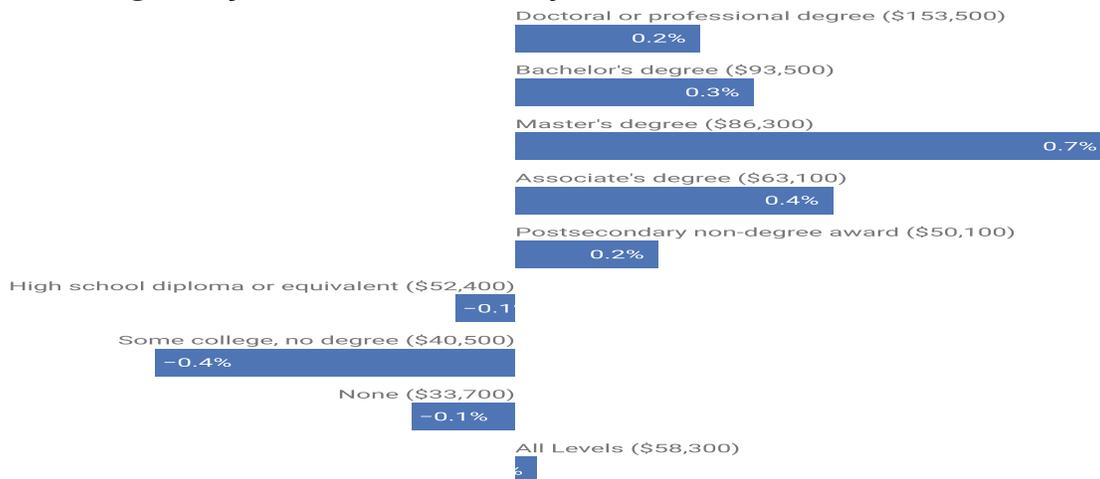
References: WIOA §108(b)(1)(D); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(4)

Boards must include an analysis of:

- workforce development activities in the region, including education and training;
- the strengths and weaknesses of the Board’s workforce development activities;
- the effectiveness of the Board’s programs and services;
- the Board’s capacity to provide workforce development activities to address;
 - the identified education and skills needs of the workforce; and
 - the employment needs of employers.

Board Response-In their role as facilitator in the development of strategic alliances and partnerships of workforce development initiatives, the Board continually collects and reviews data, similar to the Labor Market information provided in previous tables, charts, and graphs within this Plan. Through this analysis, we determine our capacity to address the effectiveness of workforce development activities collectively, as well as an evaluation of the programs and services we offer. Through collaboration with our workforce system partners, including education (secondary and post-secondary) and economic development, we concentrate our efforts on outcomes that leverage regional resources. Anticipated growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the Golden Crescent is projected to grow over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow .4% per year while those requiring a bachelor’s degree are forecast to grow .3% per year. Occupations typically needing a certificate are expected to grow at a rate of .2% per year.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Education Levels



Source: JobsEQ®
Data as of 2024Q2

Employment by occupation data are estimates as of 2024Q2. Education levels of occupations are based on BLS assignments. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

Regarding education and training, as previously noted and highlighted, the Board regularly analyzes the labor market data associated with our region's demand sectors and associated occupations then cross-referenced that data with the workforce characteristics for workers and job seekers (including individuals with barriers to employment) in our region. Also considered is the average number of graduates and program completers with a certificate or credential. Analysis includes educational programs, enrollments, and graduates by Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code that are directly related to the entire group of occupations identified as critical for the designated industry sector or cluster. This analysis assists in identifying those educational programs that should receive priority attention to produce more graduates with the educational background necessary to fill critical occupations in the targeted/demand/industry clusters. Through our strategic partnerships and leveraged investments, we strive to enhance system alignment and promote the shared goals of economic prosperity to the Golden Crescent regional economy via the entire workforce development network. The Board, in partnership with area agencies, educational institutions (primary, secondary, post-secondary), and other community organizations, collectively work to provide comprehensive workforce development activities and initiatives to enhance skills and connect job seekers with employment opportunities. These initiatives include job training programs, apprenticeship opportunities, and an array of workforce innovation programs and services designed to meet the needs of job seekers and employers alike. With a focus on enhancing skills, providing essential training, and facilitating connections between individuals and career opportunities, Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent plays a vital role in driving economic growth and improving the quality of life in the region. The following outlines just some of the essential activities and services we offer, focusing on workforce development initiatives, vocational rehabilitation services, and educational programs, along with an assessment of their effectiveness in addressing regional workforce challenges. Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent provides essential services to both job seekers and employers.

For job seekers, these services include:

- **Career Counseling:** Personalized support to help individuals identify their skills, interests, and suitable career paths.
- **Job Placement Services:** Assistance in finding job openings and connecting with potential employers.
- **Resume Workshops:** Guidance on creating effective resumes and cover letters to enhance job applications.
- **Interview Preparation:** Mock interviews and training on interview techniques to boost confidence and performance.

For employers, we offer such services as:

- **Talent Acquisition:** Assistance in finding qualified candidates for job openings through targeted outreach and recruitment efforts as well as job fairs and targeted hiring events.
- **Training Program Development:** Collaboration with local businesses to design training programs that align with their specific workforce needs.
- **Labor Market Information:** Access to data and analytics on employment trends, wage rates, and industry demands to inform hiring and training strategies.

We will continue these efforts to engage the community and explore new strategies to enhance outreach and support for both job seekers and employers. By adapting to the evolving needs of

the workforce and leveraging innovative communication methods, Workforce Solutions aims to create a more inclusive and effective employment landscape in the region.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Activities

- Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent is dedicated to integrating Vocational Rehabilitation services into its workforce development initiatives. These programs assist individuals with disabilities in finding, retaining, or advancing their employment. These services include:
- *Assessment Services*: Evaluating the individual's abilities and challenges to develop a tailored rehabilitation plan.
- *Job Coaching*: Providing one-on-one support during the job search and onboarding process to ensure successful employment.
- *Training and Education*: Offering skills training and educational programs to enhance employability.
- *Supported Employment*: Assisting individuals with disabilities in securing and maintaining competitive employment with ongoing support.
- *Assistive Technology*: Providing access to tools and resources that aid individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

Childcare Services

Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent also provides low-cost or no-cost childcare options throughout our seven-county area. This program is designed to help parents become self-sufficient by offering childcare at reduced rates, funded through federal resources. The services are available to parents who are employed, seeking employment, or engaged in job training or educational programs. These childcare services support not only the parents' ability to work or train but also enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Regarding the overall demand for childcare in the region, recent reports indicate that there is a consistent need for childcare services that accommodate both single-parent and dual-income families. According to the Texas Workforce Commission's "Childcare by the Numbers Report", an average of almost 1300 children are served daily at over 60 childcare centers throughout our region through the funding we provide. This substantial number highlights the critical role that childcare plays in enabling parents to participate fully in the workforce, contributing to both individual family stability and the broader economic health of the community. To address the growing need for childcare, the Board continues to designate funding toward Childcare and TWC's *Texas Rising Star* program to enhance early childhood education. In 2024, over \$9 million of federal, state, and local funds were allocated to meet childcare needs, emphasizing commitment to support families and enhancing the quality of care available in the region.

Evaluation of Workforce Programs

Workforce programs are evaluated based on their effectiveness in addressing local skills gaps and meeting employer demands. Metrics such as participant completion rates, job placement rates, and feedback from industry partners are essential for assessing program success. For example, the Texas Rising Star program illustrates the importance of aligning quality-based, outcome-oriented, early childhood educational curricula ultimately providing a direct impact on student career readiness later in life.

Strengths and Gaps

Strengths: The region benefits from strong employer partnerships that facilitate the development of relevant training programs and apprenticeship opportunities such as our 3 very successful High Demand Job Training grants discussed later in our plan. Collaboration between educational institutions and industry leaders ensures that training aligns with current job market demands. Furthermore, the presence of established organizations like Victoria College, Mid Coast Construction Academy, and the university of Houston-Victoria enhances the region's capacity to deliver high-quality workforce training.

Opportunities for Improvement: While there are many strengths in the current workforce development initiatives, there are also opportunities for improvement. Challenges such as transportation accessibility, especially in our rural areas, childcare availability, and economic constraints can limit participation in training and job opportunities. Increasing the number of childcare providers would increase our capacity to serve more working families with children. Expanding our operational footprint through our unique affiliation as a Communities In Schools affiliate would increase our exposure to our K-12 population, improving educational outcomes and graduation rates. Enhanced support and access to services for our region’s marginalized or underserved populations, particularly those experiencing barriers to employment, is another of the Board’s goals. By focusing on expanding our core and supportive services, the Board will continue to work to ensure greater access to workforce development activities for all individuals.

Effectiveness of Programs and Services

The effectiveness of the Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent programs and services is evident in terms of the ability to produce skilled workers who are well-prepared to meet the demands of local industries. Through targeted training, robust support services, and collaborative partnerships, we are confident we will continue to make a significant impact on the region's workforce development landscape. We will continue to play a pivotal role in strengthening the local economy by providing a comprehensive range of workforce development initiatives. Through effective collaboration among stakeholders, including job seekers, employers, educational institutions, and vocational rehabilitation services, we are dedicated to enhancing the skills and employability of individuals in the region. As the workforce dynamic continues to evolve, ongoing evaluation and adaptation of programs will be essential to meet the diverse needs of the community and ensure a thriving economy for years to come.



Part 3: Core Programs

A. Workforce Development System

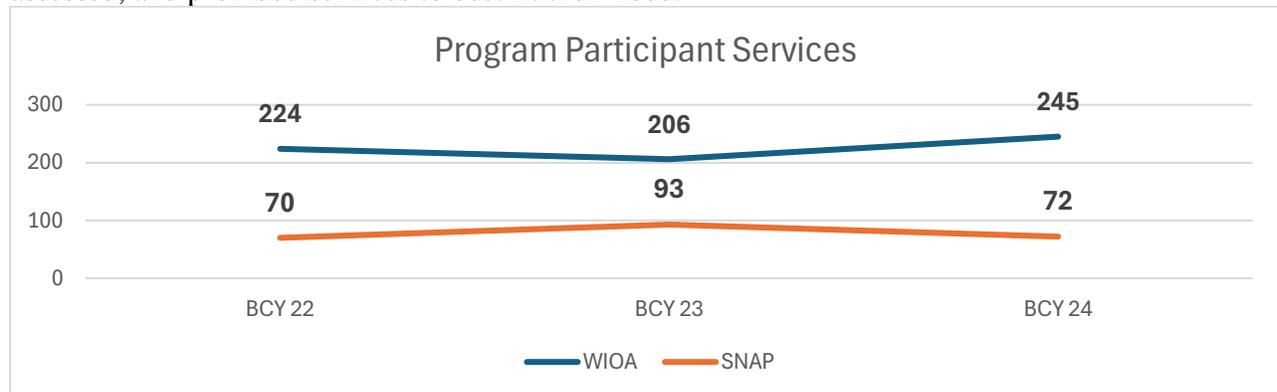
References: WIOA §108(b)(2); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(1)

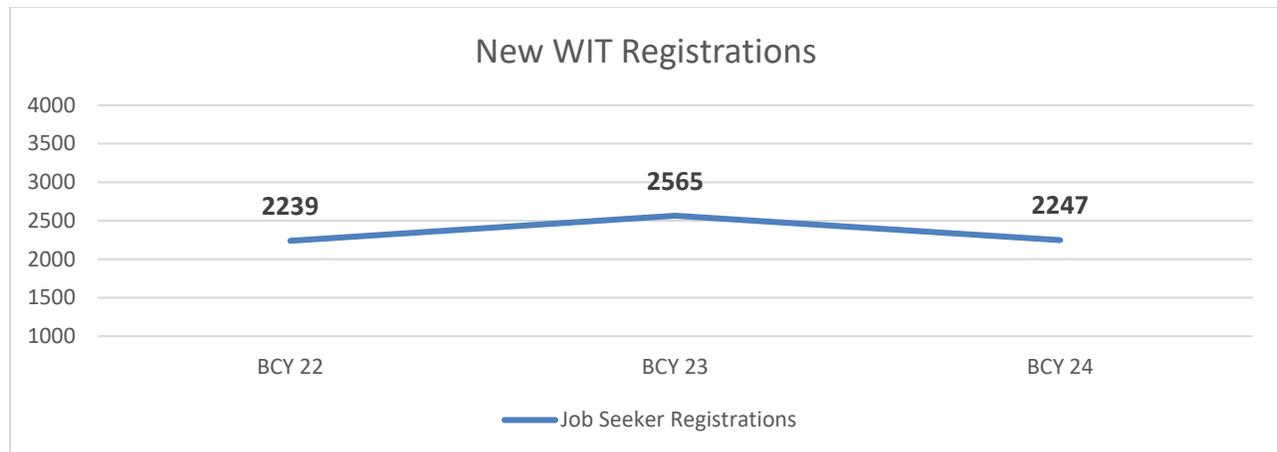
Boards must describe how the local workforce development system will work with entities carrying out core and required partner programs to support alignment to aid in the provision of services that support the strategies identified in TWC’s WIOA Combined State Plan.

Board Response- The core programs that are to be provided by Workforce Solution Golden Crescent are:

- Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker;
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Choices;
- Child Care Services
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)
- Non-Custodial Parent Choices Program (NCP-Choices);
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP);
- Student HireAbility Navigator
- Communities in Schools (CIS)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA);
- Career and Technical Education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 USC §2301, et seq.)
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (TWC staff integrated under the Texas Model);
- Veteran’s Employment Services (employed by the Texas Veterans Commission -TVC)

WSGC has vast experience in serving the universal population, as well as program recipients, Veterans, UI claimants, at-risk youth, and persons with disabilities. All new customers visiting the workforce centers receive one-on-one staff-assisted services. The customer is interviewed, assessed, and provided services to best fit their need.





Tables reflect participants & customers served from 2022-2024

Additionally, the Board supports the strategies identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs that are not under the direct oversight of the Board, such as:

- Adult Education and Literacy (WIOA, Title II);
- Certificate/Postsecondary Career and Training programs;
- Senior Community Service Employment Program and,
- HHSC and Office of the Attorney General (partnership with TWC).

Regarding programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (WIOA §102(b)(1)E), WSGC will continue support, promote, and expand the academic and career and technical skills of secondary education students and postsecondary education students who enroll in career and technical education programs.

B. Core Programs—Expand Access, Facilitate Development, and Improve Access

References: (WIOA §108(b)(3); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(2)

Each Board must include a description of how the Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:

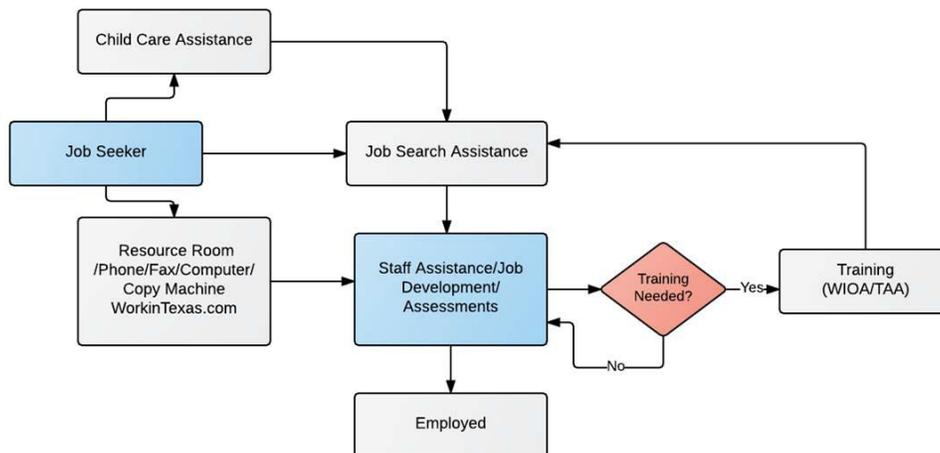
- *expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;*
- *facilitate the development of career pathways and coenrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and*
- *improve access to activities that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential (such as an industry-recognized certificate or certification) that is portable and stackable.*

Board Response- As previously noted, the Board is continually developing agreements with system partners, including:

- 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,
- community and technical colleges,
- independent school districts,
- educational service centers,
- partner community and social service agencies,
- any other stakeholders,

with the goal of expanding access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment.

In our employer-driven system, our primary objective is to create the best match of job-to-worker, based on the experience and education of our job seeker customer and the job requirements of our business and industry customers.



Regarding initial Employment Services, WSGC Center staff will determine eligibility to receive assistance under one of our many core programs. This includes outreach, intake, orientations to information/services, and assessments.

The following services will be included:

- Job Matching through WorkInTexas.com and Resource Room assistance located throughout our full-service, one-stop centers and mobile workforce unit,
- Resume preparation and/or referrals to other programs,
- Career Services/Planning:
 - provision of workforce/labor market analysis and information, including eligible training providers, local area opportunities,
 - availability of program and support services.
 - RESEA services
 - individual employment plans (IEP) development;
 - short-term pre-vocational services;

- subsidized or unsubsidized work experiences;
- workforce preparation activities;
- financial planning or management services;
- job search and relocation assistance; and
- English as a second language (ESL) services/training.

For job seekers who remain unsuccessful in finding or returning to employment and are interested in more extensive training, WSGC can provide training funds, providing federal eligibility guidelines for participation in WIOA have been established. A comprehensive assessment is the first step in determining what training activity (if any) is needed to assist the participant in determining what services are available to move them towards self-sufficiency. These comprehensive and diagnostic assessments measure an examinee's level of aptitude and interest. These tests are combined with an in-depth interview and evaluation to identify employment (or re-employment) barriers and corresponding employment goals. Additional WIOA services include individual career planning, which entails the development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) identifying (at a minimum);

- Employment Goals
- Achievement objectives
- Associated combination of services required to achieve those goals

If it is determined through this comprehensive assessment that training (or re-training) is required **and** the customer demonstrates a commitment to achieve their employment goals, then contingent upon funding availability and consistent with Program guidelines, the following training/career education services are available;

- Occupational Skills Training (short-term certificate/credential, or up to 2 years);
- On-the-Job Training (OJT);
- Apprenticeship/Pre-Apprenticeship (according to DOL and employer guidelines);
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) services, and;
- Customized Training.

As noted previously, training funds are restricted to skills required in WSGC-approved target occupations. Once the customer has made an informed choice and an approved training program has been selected, they will be instructed to apply for admission into the training program and complete any pre-requisites (if necessary). Upon completion of the application process with the appropriate ETPS-approved training provider, the customer and WSGC Case Manager will complete a budget analysis to determine the amount of financial assistance that is required for the participant to successfully complete the course of study. In the case of OJT, the customer will be partnered with a Business Services Representative to locate an employer willing to hire the individual for a training position. Upon completion of the training, the WSGC Case Manager will work with the individual to secure employment in the occupation in which they were trained. For customer's lacking a high school diploma, GED classes are arranged through Adult Education and Literacy or alternative high school diploma-attainment resources.

These training activities are available to *WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth*, respectively. WSGC staff are always mindful of capitalizing on situations or opportunities where the customer may be co-enrolled in multiple programs to maximize benefits to both parties. In the event of limited funding, Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent will determine priority of service based upon the governing rules and regulations for the specific program from which the individual is requesting services. However, it is the goal of the Board to continually seek ways to improve access for *ALL* customers, to activities leading to an industry recognized credential or certificate that are “portable” and part of a clearly-defined career ladder/pathway

Regarding the Board’s plan for working with at least one of the Governor’s Industry Cluster Initiative, the Board fully supports the objective stimulating long-term sustained growth for the Golden Crescent and the state, by focusing the allocation of state resources on key industry sectors.

These "industry clusters" refer to a concentration of businesses and industries in a geographic region that are interconnected by the markets they serve, the products they produce, their suppliers, the trade associations to which their employees belong, and the educational institutions from which their employees or prospective employees receive training.

The Governor’s target industry clusters are:

- Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing
- Aerospace and Defense
- Biotechnology and Life Sciences
- Information and Computer Technology
- Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products
- Energy

Because of our proximity to the shale play, combined with related mid-stream and down-stream energy and petrochemical production, we most closely align with *Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products* and *Energy* sectors, respectively. We recognize that the Governor’s Texas Industry Cluster Initiative is building the future economy of the state of Texas by focusing on strengthening competitive advantage through these targeted industry clusters.

Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery

A. One-Stop Service Delivery System

References: (WIOA §108(b)(6); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(5))

Each Board must include a description of its workforce area’s one-stop delivery system, including explanations of the following:

- *How the Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers and how providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and jobseekers*

- *How the Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including to remote areas, using technology and other means*
- *How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including Boards, contracted service providers, and one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA §188 (related to Non-Discrimination), if applicable, and with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals who have disabilities.*
- *The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners*

Board Response-The Board oversees the management and operation of Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent Career Centers and is therefore responsible for the continuous improvement of all system operations and the continuance of effectively and efficiently meeting the needs of businesses, job seekers, workers, and child care customers.

The Board annually conducts a performance review of each training provider that is certified and on TWC's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for; program completion rate, cost, training-related employment and entered employment. Additionally, the Board provides regular oversight and updating of the ETPL.

To ensure continuous improvement of all eligible providers, the following strategies are in place:

- contract performance measures are continuously monitored and renegotiated annually based on prior year's performance and,
- contract (and subsequent renewal/s) include language obligating contractor to adhere to Strategic Goals and Objectives established by the Board.

The Board and WSGC management team meet regularly to review contractual performance, as well as progress and strategies for deficiencies or areas for improvement. This also includes performance associated with meeting or exceeding the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.

Regarding access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including remote areas, using technology and other means, since several of the full-service centers are located in largely rural counties it is important for WSGC to capitalize on every form of technology available to maintain staff capability for provision of integrated services. The Board regularly utilizes virtual platforms, Zoom, MS Teams, Premier Virtual and enhancing its social media presence, to effectively interact with job seekers, employers, and staff. Additionally, the Board regularly deploys its Mobile Workforce Unit at scheduled locations throughout the region. Through this strategic deployment we are able to serve job seekers, employers and students, especially in our rural areas and can provide access to all the same technology available in our centers.

To compliment the physical and mobile service delivery, our website www.gcworkforce.org can act as a “virtual information center” providing information on job seeker and employer services, eligibility guidelines for various programs, services available to targeted populations (veterans, opportunity youth, individuals with disabilities), labor market information, etc.

The Board also maintains a social media presence to enhance their marketing saturation and quickly deliver information to larger number of users. It is used to promote upcoming events, distribute Unemployment Insurance information, apply for Child Care or other programs, and highlight information useful to employers, job seekers, and youth.

Likewise, in our enhanced capacity to provide Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services as a result of the merger with Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), we continue to fully comply with WIOA §188 and with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In accordance with the legislation passed during the 84th Texas Legislative session creating the merger, the Board is collocated/integrated in most centers to provide seamless One Stop and VR services resulting in an extensive improvement to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also included providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals who have disabilities so that VR consumers would not experience any disruption of services and to maintain adherence to ADA and WIOA compliance standards.

Concerning the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners the Board has entered into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with WSGC partners to compliment the array of workforce-related services offered. These include (but not limited to);

- educational institutions and training providers,
- other state agency partners,
- employer-led organizations,
- mental health providers,
- veterans service organizations,
- economic development entities,
- community and faith-based organizations
- associations of employers, and,

Workforce, economic development, training, and related activities, must be a collaborative effort to leveraging partner resources and maximize return of investments and fills gaps between the needs of the community and the provision of WSGC-funded services.

B. Employer Engagement, Economic Development, and Unemployment Insurance Program Coordination

References: WIOA §108(b)(4); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(3); WIOA §108(b)(5); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(4)

Boards must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the workforce area to:

- *facilitate the engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations, in workforce development programs;*
- *support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area;*
- *coordinate workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local workforce area;*
- *promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services; and*
- *strengthen the linkage between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.*

Note: This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, the use of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies that are designed to meet the needs of regional employers. These initiatives must support the strategy described above.

Board Response- WSGC's Business Services Unit (BSU) serves as the Board's employer engagement team to promote the workforce system services throughout our 7-county region. (BSU) is an integral part of developing standards and procedures in an employer-driven system. The Board, BSU Supervisor, and BSU staff, actively engage employers, marketing workforce services to local businesses. BSU staff regularly contact employers weekly by phone, e-mail, and in person, to assess the current needs of the employer. The Board and BSU representatives are on various college, economic development, and chambers of commerce committees, to help address current workforce issues. BSU is divided into industry clusters and supported by Employer Services with like-industry clusters, to create a greater synergy between employer's needs and the available workforce.

The Board's Business and Employer directives address the employers need for job-ready, well-trained employees, matched to the job skills required. By considering employers as our primary customer, we have both improved and increased direct relationships with employers, resulting in a more effective set of core business activities while simultaneously improving the level of customer satisfaction to both customers (employer and job seeker).

To continue active engagement of Small Business, WSGC BSU team will work closely with;

- University of Houston-Victoria, Small Business Development Center,
- Area Economic Development entities and
- Area Chambers of Commerce
- County Judges and Chief Elected Officials

Additionally, we will work with regional staff in our full-service one-stop career centers, ensuring small businesses in our rural counties have access and knowledge of business and training services available.

Regarding the coordination of workforce and economic development, WSGC staff;

- Meet frequently with area economic development entities and collaborate regularly on employer focused services such as city specific job fairs, regional job fairs, business retention and expansion visits and increased sharing of data to benefit area businesses.
- Attend and participate in economic development meetings and provide information about workforce programs available via the Workforce Career Centers, including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, TANF, NCP-Choices, RESEA, SNAP, and other program funding.
- Collaboration with area EDCs, to actively seek additional or special funding and grants geared toward local priorities (training, business planning, entrepreneurship, etc.)

These partnerships allow for distribution of information on available human resource assistance for businesses as well as skills training, through TWC's High Demand Job Training Grant (HDJT), Texas Industry Partnership Grant (TIP), Skills for Small Business Program, Self-Sufficiency Fund and Skills Development Fund (SDF) Grants.

To strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs, WSGC works to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs by:

- Analyzing the demographics, work history, and education/skill level characteristics of the population of individuals receiving UI, and aligning employer outreach for job postings, work experience, on-the-job training, and other activities;
- Labor exchange and career counseling services, aimed at providing enhanced services to UI job seekers;
- Providing general information to Career Center customers about the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program, as well as contact information for TWC department administering that program. This includes printed "How to apply" for UI benefits material;
- Collaborating with employers laying off individuals to identify retention strategies and/or strategies for rapid placement. Services are tailored to affected worker occupational and skill profiles;
- Continued promotion and marketing Workforce Career Center services and Rapid Response services to the general public to reach individuals that may be engaged with the UI Program, but not actively engaged with the Workforce Career Center;
- Coordinating with TWC UI office representatives to notify them of local layoffs and schedule Rapid Response services, and to enable TWC UI representatives to present at affected employee orientations;
- Working with the TWC statewide Rapid Response coordinator to share information on statewide layoffs and help place affected workers across WDA service boundaries and;
- Provide information to area employers regarding TWC's Shared Work Program and other "layoff aversion" opportunities.

C. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

References: (WIOA §108(b)(12); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(11))

Boards must include a description of the strategies for maximizing coordination, improve service delivery, and avoid duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system.

Board Response- Under the Texas Model, contractor management staff are responsible for providing guidance, in coordination with TWC Integrated Service Area Managers (ISAM), of all merit staff. The arrangement allows for maximum coordination, enhanced and consistent service delivery, and minimal redundancy/duplication. The Board administers Wagner-Peyser through its Agency Board Agreement according to which merit (state) employees are responsible for providing the core of Wagner-Peyser Act services, with contractor staff supplementing those services where necessary.

D. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management

References: (WIOA §108(b)(21); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(20)

Boards must include a description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to WorkinTexas.com for the programs that are carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

Board Response- Considering that several of the full-service centers are located in largely rural counties, it is important for WSGC to capitalize on every form of technology available to maintain staff capability for provision of integrated services. As a result of the pandemic, the Board instituted wide-ranging adjustments to its service delivery model and have continually increased our tech-enabled “footprint” and bandwidth implementing an action plan for staff members to provide virtual services, deploying hardware and increasing internet capacity at each of the workforce centers to maintain stable and responsive services. This includes utilization of virtual platforms, Zoom, MS Teams, Premier Virtual and enhancing its social media presence, to efficiently and effectively interact with job seekers, employers, and staff. Additionally, the Board regularly deploys its “Workforce on Wheels” (WOW) Mobile Workforce Unit at scheduled locations throughout the region. The strategic deployment will be able to serve job seekers, employers and students, especially in our rural areas and can provide access to all the same technology available in our centers.

The Board’s website www.gcworkforce.org can act as a “virtual information center” and we maintain a social media presence through Facebook and other outlets to enhance marketing saturation and quickly deliver information to a larger number of users. It is used to promote upcoming events, distribute Unemployment Insurance information, apply for Child Care or other programs, and highlight information useful to employers, job seekers, and youth.

Likewise, in our enhanced capacity to provide Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) we continue to fully comply with WIOA §188 and with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In accordance with the legislation passed during the 84th Texas Legislative session creating the merger, the Board is currently finalizing colocation/integration of One Stop and VR services resulting in an extensive improvement to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also included providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals who

have disabilities so that VR consumers would not experience any disruption of serves and to maintain adherence to ADA and WIOA compliance standards.

E. Third Party Partnership in SNAP Employment and Training Programs

Reference: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Third-Party Partnership Guide

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission has directed TWC to expand the use of SNAP E&T Third Party Partnerships (TPP) throughout the state, with a goal of implementing TPP in all workforce areas by Federal Fiscal Year 2029. Boards must provide an assurance that they are planning for the expansion of TPP and must describe any planned or completed steps toward implementation.

Board Response- We met with our neighboring Board, Coastal Bend WDB, at the recent (December 2024) TWC annual conference, and at the time of this writing, are in the design and development phase of a formal plan and procedures for implementation of the SNAP E&T Third Party Partnerships (TPP) Program. Coastal Bend is part of a TPP Pilot Project and through our ongoing conversations/meetings, we anticipate having a viable TPP implementation model, patterned after Coastal Bend’s successful design, ready for testing and rollout well in advance of TWC and HHSC’s deadline. Our excellent relationship with Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend, as well as sharing the same contractor, should allow for an effectively designed TPP implementation model. Considering these factors and our longstanding relationship with HHSC in the administration of the SNAP employment and training (E&T) programs, we anticipate a smooth rollout and successful, outcome-driven results.

This model will include strategic partnering with providers, such as local community-based organizations, workforce solutions contractors, and our community college to leverage their expertise in delivering tailored services to eligible SNAP E&T customers.

When developing third-party partnerships, the Board will consider how their expanded SNAP E&T programs will align with our workforce development priorities, such as increasing postsecondary education attainment, growing a skilled workforce and meeting labor market demand.

In the meantime, however, although there is no complete plan for the TTP Expansion, we will have submitted a “Letter of Intent” to TWC ensuring the following will occur in our WDA on or before FY28, in advance of the FY29 implementation deadline:

- Submittal of a Third-Party Partnership plan to be reviewed/approved by the Board and HHSC prior to execution of the agreement.
- Providing relevant and suitable skill-based training that leads to industry-recognized certificates or credentials aligning with SNAP E&T activity components.
- Program activities will not supplant existing nutrition educational programs but will enhance and supplement them.

- Program activities are reasonable and necessary to accomplish SNAP objectives and goals.
- The Board will ensure all program activities are conducted in compliance with all applicable federal laws, rules, and regulations (fiscal and programmatic).
- The Board and third-party partners will work together to verify that all participants are eligible for services received and that SNAP E&T funds are both spent on allowable costs.
- The Board will adhere to TWC procedures and will develop the appropriate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or contract in place and implement proper fiscal controls and monitoring to ensure that all federal and State SNAP E&T guidelines are followed.

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

A. Rapid Response Activity Coordination

References: (WIOA §108(b)(8); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(7)

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the workforce area with statewide rapid response activities described in WIOA §134(a)(2)(A).

Board Response-In accordance with WIOA §134(a)(2)(A) and upon notification that a reduction in force (RIF), layoff, or closure is planned, eminent, or has occurred, the Board's Rapid Response (RR) Coordinator contacts the employer. If allowed, an onsite meeting is scheduled with the employer and includes the Supervisor of the Business Services Unit. A plan to provide Rapid Response services is developed and the TWC Mass Claim process (if applicable) is discussed and information on Trade Adjustment Assistance (if applicable) is provided. At a minimum, the Rapid Response Coordinator schedules Employee Orientations and coordinates (between the employer, designated TWC Unemployment Insurance (UI) Specialist, and assigned Center Staff) to do RR presentation(s).

Presentation(s) will include an Employee Orientation explaining the UI filing process, work search requirements, registration in Work in Texas (WiT) as well as an overview of the services offered at the workforce center. After the attendees are briefed on the filing process for UI benefits, they are asked to complete a RR Service questionnaire regarding workshops, training (or re-training), services they are interested in receiving, and assistance with WiT registration. Although, when possible, RR events/presentations are held on-site at the employer's location, the attendees are advised to visit their nearest workforce center for a full orientation on services available to help them quickly reconnect to the labor market.

Using information gathered at the presentation(s) and after reviewing the RR questionnaire, the RR Coordinator and employer go over the type of workshops that are needed and what is available. Examples include money management, resume writing, stress management, financial aid for higher education, GED or Certificate of High School Equivalency preparation,

entrepreneurship and other small business opportunities, retirement planning, etc. If feasible, the workshops are also held onsite for the convenience of the impacted workers.

Prior to July 2023, if it was determined that the employer's reduction in force, layoff, or closure, was trade-related, or could be considered negatively impacted by global influences, then information was given regarding the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. However, as of this writing, the TAA program under the Trade Act of 1974 is considered terminated, meaning no new worker groups can be certified for benefits. Those who were certified and separated from their jobs before July 2023 can still receive assistance, but essentially, the program is only servicing existing eligible cases and is phasing out gradually.

B. Youth Activities and Services

References: (WIOA §108(b)(9); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(8)

Boards must include a description and assessment of the type and availability of workforce investment activities for youth in the workforce area, including activities for youth with disabilities. This description must include an identification of successful models of such activities.

Board Response- The WSGC Youth Program framework is designed to ensure effective service delivery and to maximize the participation of as many eligible youth as possible. The program serves two main categories of youth: Out-of-School Youth (OSY) and In-School Youth (ISY). Coincidentally, WSGC is the only Board area in the state to administer Communities in Schools (CIS), the nation's leading dropout prevention program. By capitalizing on this unique affiliation, WSGC staff have a foothold in the school system to introduce the array of services available to all students, through the public workforce system. Some examples of youth activities provided through CIS and WSGC concurrently are:

- leadership development,
- community service projects,
- customized career pathway plan
- addressing barriers
- setting goals and related activities
- the documenting of achievements/credentials
- job shadowing,
- tutoring,
- subsidized employment,
- internships, and
- College visits.

Through the deployment of this collaborative youth services model, we are able to leverage the partner assets and provide services that ensure availability of the 14-WIOA Youth Elements and are strategically aligned with the Governor's tri-agency (Education, Workforce, and Economic Development) Initiative. Most importantly though, this model is ideally designed to address the unique challenges faced by in-school youth and out-of-school youth in the Golden Crescent.

Additionally, we capitalize on our Student HireAbility Navigator to ensure sufficient service levels and maximize inclusion to this population. The HireAbility Navigator working with our Youth Director and Communities in Schools staff address the 14 WIOA Youth Elements and expand our presence in area school systems to provide labor market information (LMI) in a virtual and in-class format so they are equipped with the most current information regarding post-secondary and employment opportunities upon graduation. Regarding youth with disabilities, our Student HireAbility Navigator actively partners with Gulf Bend Center, Mid-Coast Family Services and other agencies with resources and competency in serving opportunity youth, youth with disabilities, etc.

The chart on the following page outlines the 14 WIOA Youth Elements and the corresponding WSGC and identified partner services provided, respectively.

| WIOA Youth Element | WSGC Services Provided | Partner Services Provided |
|--|--|---|
| Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent | Students are engaged in an interactive curriculum providing foundational skills instruction encompassing ten career & education-oriented skill and proficiency areas needed in today’s workplace | Victoria Boys and Girls Club, Communities in Schools of the Golden Crescent, area ISD Counselors. |
| Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate | Assessment, Identification of barrier(s) and referral | Victoria College AEC, Graduation Alliance, Community Action-Victoria |
| Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience | Paid work experience and job readiness opportunities are offered year-round to youth participants who are seeking career exploration and the development of work readiness skills | Unique Staffing, Area Employers, Communities In Schools of the Golden Crescent |
| Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the workforce area involved, if WFS determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA §123 | Eligible youth participants are connected with occupational skills training that are aligned with local target and in-demand occupations | Victoria College, ABC Mid-Coast Chapter, Safety Council of the Texas Mid-Coast, TWC Eligible Training Providers or WSGC- contracted trainings |
| Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster | Remediation via AEL or Graduation Alliance | VC AEC, Graduation Alliance, Community Action, Victoria ISD, Region III Education Service Center |
| Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors | Integrated into work experience and Other service options, Junior Achievement | Crossroads Business and Education Coalition (CBEC), Communities in Schools of the Golden Crescent |
| Support services, as defined in WIOA §3(59), which enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities. | Supportive services include child care, transportation assistance, work-related and training-related expenses | Appropriate partner agency according to identified need(s). |
| Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during And after program participation | Integrated into work experience and other service options | Appropriate partner agency according to identified need(s). |
| Follow-up services for not fewer than 12 months after the completion of participation | By WIOA Youth Career Counselors | N/A |
| Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth | | Mid Coast Family Services, Gulf Bend Center, and other appropriate partner agency according to identified need(s). |
| Financial literacy education | On-site interactive module | Money management training, CIS of the Golden Crescent, Wells Fargo Bank, CBEC |
| Entrepreneurial skills training | Career advising, service planning, and referral by Career Counselor | CBEC, UHV Small Business Development Center |
| Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the workforce area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services | Identification of activity by Career Counselor, provision of local LMCI by WSGC BSU | TWC LMCI, Lightcast,(SitesonTexas, JobsEQ-Chmura Economics |
| Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training | Identification of activity by Career Counselor | Communities in Schools of the Golden Crescent |

C. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

References: (WIOA §108(b)(10); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(9))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate its workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

Board Response- In their role as facilitator in the development of strategic alliances and partnerships of workforce development initiatives, the Board continually collects and reviews data. Through this analysis, we determine our capacity to address the effectiveness of workforce development activities collectively, as well as an evaluation of the programs and services we offer. Through collaboration with our workforce system partners, including education (secondary and post-secondary) and economic development, we concentrate our efforts on outcomes that leverage regional resources.

To address the challenges we collectively identify, WSGC seeks to be a Regional Convener via Sector Partnerships, which are employer-driven and include representation from;

- Regional Business Leaders and Industry Associations
- Area School Districts, Universities, Community Colleges and Training Providers
- Regional Economic Development entities and Chambers of Commerce

The Board has regularly attended state and local meetings to enhance its capacity to meet the existing and evolving workforce challenges. Some of those include;

- Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant Conference
- Victoria College Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE)
- Golden Crescent Regional Talent Pipeline Summit
- University of Houston-Victoria Center for Regional Collaboration
- Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission-Regional Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Future of the Region-South Texas

Through these strategic partnerships and leveraged investments, we strive to enhance system alignment and promote the shared educational and training goals for our job seekers and business customers. Furthermore, by working in close coordination with partners and positioning the Board to serve a central and facilitative role in regional partnerships helps to avoid duplication of services, thus enabling WSGC to maximize resources and its impact on the community. Through coordinated and collaborative staff training, as well as regular partner meetings with leadership and frontline staff, assists in creating strong functional partnerships that achieve desired outcomes with minimal duplication.

D. Child Care and Early Learning

References: (40 TAC §809.12)

Boards must include a description of how the Board is strategically managing child care and early learning within the workforce system to enhance school readiness and strengthen and support the child care industry.

Efforts include:

- *coordinating with employers, economic development programs, and other industry leaders to increase the awareness and importance of early learning as a workforce and economic development tool;*
- *supporting improved school readiness through higher-quality child care, including through the Texas Rising Star program and partnership opportunities; and*
- *supporting the needs of the child care industry, such as by providing assistance with business development or shared services, or by providing opportunities to support professional growth and career pathways for early education.*

Board Response- The Board and WSGC Child Care staff, coordinate with employers, economic development, and other industry leaders to increase the awareness and importance of early learning as a workforce and economic development tool. We support TWC’s efforts statewide and applaud the agency’s goal of improved school readiness through high-quality child care. Our commitment to TWC’s Texas Rising Star (TRS) program and other early-learning opportunities such as prekindergarten partnerships, as evidenced by the Board having been awarded a TWC Performance Incentive Award (PIA) for exemplary improvement in TRS service delivery.

We are committed to:

- Setting strategic goals for child care and early learning as a key economic and workforce support mechanism;
- Developing and implementing strategic quality improvement goals to enhance school readiness and;
- Strengthening and supporting the child care industry.

We are proud of our continued support to address the needs of the child care industry, including exploration of opportunities to provide assistance with business development and shared services, as well as opportunities to support professional growth and career pathways for early education.

E. Transportation and Other Support Services

References: (WIOA §108(b)(11); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(10)

Boards must include a description of how the Board will provide transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate support services in the workforce area in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities.

Board Response- WSGC collaborates with the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRCP) to advise and build system capacity. Through this partnership with the Board and other relevant stakeholders, members collectively review the region's transportation system and look for additional funding to expand the services provided by GCRCP and the Victoria Transit system. WSGC provides the group with the latest information concerning the workforce system and offers suggestions on updating bus routes, expanding coverage to rural areas, as well as coordination of transportation for special community events such as job fairs or related events. WSGC provides transportation-related supportive services to eligible customers via gas cards, vehicle related repair assistance and through its provision of bus or alternate transportation vouchers to eligible workforce system customers for job search and other workforce-related needs.

For other appropriate support services in the Golden Crescent and in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities, WSGC provides a broad range of additional support services including emergency assistance, work-related clothing, tools, supplies, books (training-related), and additional supports allowable, based upon respective program guidelines.

Likewise, WSGC develops partnerships with agencies that can supplement workforce system resources to better meet the customer's needs. Appropriate WSGC staff are familiar with area Community and Faith-Based Organizations, Partner Agencies, and other community resources and the services they provide.

F. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)

References: WIOA §108(b)(13); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(12); WD 18-23, Change 2

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with AEL activities under WIOA Title II. Boards must also include the process used to review the local applications submitted under Title II, as consistent with WIOA §§107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA §232.

Board Response- The Board is proud of the excellent relationship they have with their partner, Victoria College Adult Education (TWC-funded WIOA Title II administrative and fiscal agent for provision of AEL services) and the VC AEL Executive Director also serves on our Board of Directors. As a result of this collaboration we jointly convene and coordinate local and regional Adult Education and Literacy activities and ensure alignment with the broader workforce system, including WIOA Title I-funded activities. Recent coordination activities include:

- **Local and Regional Planning Meetings:** WSGC coordinates planning meetings with AEL partners and Workforce staff to exchange information, plan orientations, outline training and service delivery for common customers. Meetings ensure an integrated, coordinated approach to service delivery that results in shared costs, reduction in duplication of services, and expanded enrollments of AEL customers into WIOA Title I programs.
- **Training to Support Integration:** WSGC coordinates with VC AEC to provide training regarding WIOA integration impacts to traditional AEL services. Traditional AEL services, including English as Second Language (ESL), GED, and Adult Basic Education. Integration impacts include emphasis on contextualized learning models

emphasis on career exploration and preparation components, connection to Career Pathways training/education initiatives, employer community engagement, and emphasis on employment-related outcome metrics.

- **Workforce System Training:** WSGC and VC AEL provide training to WSGC Center (WIOA Title I) staff regarding AEL programs to enhance integration. Training emphasizes the importance of the integration process and key to staff training is the understanding that basic skills are linked not only to employment outcomes but also to personal and social well-being. Also, by connecting AEL to the workforce system, the frontline, supervisory, and managerial staff have a working knowledge of the AEL programs and WIOA to ensure consistency of the message to all AEL customers.
- **Labor Market Training:** WSGC provides training regarding understanding local labor market trends and utilization of labor market analysis tools to workforce system staff as well as community partners. Training helps ensure customers of the broader workforce and education system are able to make informed Career Pathways decisions, including employment and education/training choices. Analysis tools highlighted include; Lightcast/EMSI, JobsEQ, TWC LMCI, SitesonTexas and related resources.

Additionally, WSGC and VC AEL regularly engage in joint planning/integration meetings to expand system efficiencies, increase enrollments, and enhance outcomes for regional customers of both agencies. A recent partnership includes a “second-chance” employment and training opportunity for participants with non-violent criminal offenses with the goal of not only reducing recidivism, but addressing the needs of this often difficult-to-serve population. Joint planning and integration emphasize effective referral and co-enrollment procedures, common assessment opportunities, shared placement responsibilities, and reporting requirements. Should another entity engage in a competitive procurement process for delivery of AEL services, the Board will identify a review team and implement the review of proposals for the local adult education competition based on Agency guidance. At a minimum this would include:

- Thoroughly describe the local application review process;
- Reference to local application and timeline associated with the review process;
- Reviewing and scoring of local application(s).

Part 6: Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Services

A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training

References: WIOA §108(b)(7); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(6)

Boards must include a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the workforce area.

Board Response- Golden Crescent Workforce Development Board is proud that we provide the same level of customer (job seeker, employer, UI claimant) access and service across our entire service delivery area, whether metro or rural.

These centers provide access to the full range of programs offered by WSGC including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services. The full range of program offerings and services

is available at all WSGC career centers, including training, employment, supportive services, and related activities. The locations operating in the Golden Crescent and offering *ALL* One-Stop and AmericanJobCenter® services are as follows:

| WSGC Career Canter | County |
|--|-----------------|
| Cuero Office 1137 N. Esplanade Cuero, TX 77954 Phone: 361.277.8870 Fax: 361.277.8340 | DeWitt County |
| Goliad Office 329 West Franklin Goliad, TX 77963 Tel: 361.645.2703 Fax: 361.645.2221 | Goliad County |
| Gonzales Office (pending) | Gonzales County |
| Hallettsville Office 205 East 1 st St. Hallettsville, TX 77964 Tel: 361.798.1046 Fax: 361.798.1044 | Lavaca County |
| Port Lavaca Office 1800 South Hwy. 35, Suite H Port Lavaca, TX 77979 Tel: 361.552.1563 Fax: 361.552.7465 | Calhoun County |
| Victoria Office 120 South Main, Suite 110 Victoria, TX 77901 Tel: 361.578.0341 Fax: 361.572.0194 | Victoria County |

For job seekers who remain unsuccessful in finding or returning to employment and are interested in more extensive training, WSGC can provide training funds, providing federal eligibility guidelines for participation in WIOA have been established. A comprehensive assessment is the first step in determining what training activity (if any) is needed to assist the participant in determining what services are available to move them toward self-sufficiency. These comprehensive and diagnostic assessments, which include the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Career Occupational Preference System (COPS) Interest Inventory measures an examinee's level of aptitude and interest. They are combined with an in-depth interview and evaluation to identify employment (or re-employment) barriers and corresponding employment goals. Additional WIOA services include individual career planning, which entails the development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) identifying (at a minimum);

- Employment Goals
- Achievement objectives
- Associated combination of services required to achieve those goals

If it is determined through this comprehensive assessment that training (or re-training) is required **and** the customer demonstrates a commitment to achieve their employment goals, then contingent upon funding availability and consistent with Program guidelines, the following training/career education services are available;

- Occupational Skills Training (short-term certificate/credential, or up to 2 years);
- On-the-Job Training (OJT);
- Apprenticeship/Pre-Apprenticeship (according to DOL and employer guidelines)
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) services, and
- Customized Training.

As noted previously, training funds are restricted to skills required in WSGC-approved target occupations. Once the customer has made an informed choice and an approved training program has been selected, they will be instructed to apply for admission into the training program and complete any pre-requisites (if necessary). Upon completion of the application process with the appropriate ETPS-approved training provider, the customer and WSGC Case Manager will complete a budget analysis to determine the amount of financial assistance that is required for the participant to successfully complete the course of study. In the case of OJT, the customer will be partnered with a Business Services Representative to locate an employer willing to hire the individual for a training position. Upon completion of the training, the WSGC Case Manager will work with the individual to secure employment in the occupation in which they were trained. For customers lacking a high school diploma or Certificate of High School Equivalency classes are arranged through Adult Education and Literacy or alternative high school diploma-attainment resources.

These training activities are available to *WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth* respectively. WSGC staff are always mindful of capitalizing on situations or opportunities where the customer may be co-enrolled in multiple programs to maximize benefits to both parties. In the event of limited funding, Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent will determine priority of service based upon the governing rules and regulations for the specific program from which the individual is requesting services. However, it is the goal of the Board to continually seek ways to improve access for *ALL* customers, to activities leading to an industry recognized credential or certificate that are “portable” and part of a clearly-defined career ladder/pathway. The Board maintains an excellent relationship with all area training providers including but not limited to:

- Victoria College
- University of Houston-Victoria
- Mid-Coast Construction Academy
- Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX)
- Wharton County Junior College
- Delmar College
- Coastal Bend College
- Bee County Junior College
- Area School Districts
- Area DOL-Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Programs

B. Service Priority

References: (20 CFR §679.560(b)(21)

Boards must include the Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, consistent with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the Final Regulations, as well as veterans and foster youth, according to the priority order outlined in the WIOA Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth. Boards must also include a list of any Board-established priority groups, if any.

Board Response-In accordance with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600, the Board has in place an approved WIOA Policy that provides specific guidance regarding ensuring priority for target populations. The Board's WIOA Policy states:

“Individualized career services and training services must be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels; to:

- public assistance recipients;
- other low-income adults; and
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient.”

The policy is also compliant with all TWC Workforce Development (WD) Letters related to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.

The Boards other target populations include:

Veterans

Veterans compose a critical part of the pool of potential employees in the Golden Crescent, but can often have unique needs for earning credentials, as well as gaining and maintaining employment when transitioning back into civilian life. Having veteran representatives in our center is the most effective approach to assess our veteran's needs and make the appropriate referrals. The Texas Veteran's Commission (TVC) representative works closely with Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent office staff to address the employment and training needs of our veterans. Our TVC representative covers a variety of topics ranging from employment, training, veterans' benefits, education, and medical care and works closely with other area Veteran's service providers in the community. Also, the annual Hiring Red, White, and You (TWC and Governor's office statewide hiring campaign) is committed to serving veterans in the employment search. In addition to the employers on hand, representatives from local and federal government agencies, community service and faith-based organizations, and area training providers, meet with the veterans to discuss job or training opportunities.

The Board is privileged to serve this segment of our population and will always maintain an aggressive approach to outreach and serving our veterans. As a result of this commitment and activities such as these, we were able to serve over 1500 veterans during PY18-20, enrolling over 95 in special programs.

We are proud of the work that we are doing in the Golden Crescent to ensure that our veterans needs are met, striving to make their transition back into civilian life and their reconnection with workforce, as seamless as possible.

Individuals with Disabilities

As previously noted, the agency formerly known as the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) was dissolved and its programs were transferred to TWC. The changes are the result of legislation passed during the 84th Texas Legislative session which places all the state's programs funded through the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) together under one agency. The transition resulted in the creation of TWC's "Vocational Rehabilitation" (VR) services now integrated into many WSGC office, making them true "One-Stop" centers.

Workforce Solutions staff, both locally and across the state, work to ensure a seamless coordination of employment and training services are available. Additionally, a broad range of disability awareness, accommodation, and sensitivity training has been provided to the entire staff. Integration/co-location VR and Career Center services in the Golden Crescent is currently available at the Victoria Center and scheduled for the new Gonzales site, anticipated in 2025.

Likewise, as previously noted, the Board's Student Hireability Navigator initiative provides support and coordination around the region to grow and improve workforce transition services offered to students with disabilities & their families. SHN serves as a vital resource and partner to enhance current programs offered by Texas Workforce Commission's Vocational Rehabilitation Services through three areas of focus:

- Focus #1 - Raise awareness of resources and activities available to students with disabilities
- Focus #2 - Increase community coordination and provide information, training, and technical assistance
- Focus #3 - Inform and engage employers to increase understanding and develop work-based learning opportunities

WSGC remains dedicated to providing outstanding service to individuals with disabilities, with the goal of service provision that is meaningful and accessible to all customers. All WSGC Centers are fully accessible and have the capabilities and technology to assist employers and job seekers with disabilities. Centers are equipped with Telecommunications Device for Deaf (TDD) machines for the hearing impaired, closed-caption monitors, and Zoom Text software to enlarge text on computer screens. The Victoria Center, the only multi-story Center, has an elevator and wheelchair lift, for those unable to climb stairs and automatic doors at all centers.

The Center has cooperative agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) with Gulf Bend MHMR, Mid-Coast Family Services, and various other community partners to assist in addressing the needs of the disabled population and to help ensure they achieve gainful employment.

WSGC is committed to continuing the legacy of these activities and regularly conducts capacity building and systems change throughout the Centers to ensure (and expand) universal access of

the One-Stop delivery system to job seekers [and employers] with disabilities and provide enhanced, comprehensive, employment services to those customers.

Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

TWC estimates that a large and growing population of job seekers in Texas involves individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). The Board is continually searching for strategies to design and implement targeted adult education programs to increase employment outcomes for populations requiring workforce literacy skills. Individuals with LEP face greater challenges gaining employment and retaining employment. The Golden Crescent region has a very diverse population with approximately 38% of the population speaking a language other than English in the home. The Board has a LEP Policy to provide an opportunity for individuals to learn English or improve their fluency in the workplace. All program-eligible job seekers are evaluated for English Proficiency and [based on their results] are being referred to their local literacy council for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and integrated vocational skills-based language training to improve those skills.

For customers with low literacy scores, WSGC is currently partnering with the Victoria College Adult Education Center (VC AEC). With the addition of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program services to TWC, WSGC is charged with exploring new strategies to engage training providers and encourage adults toward literacy advancement, and successful employment leading to self-sufficiency. AEL activities represent an opportunity to incorporate relevant labor market and career information to assist with decisions on directing efforts toward curriculums that promote the occupational needs in the Golden Crescent. To increase adult and youth participation, WSGC and the VC AEC, regularly conduct outreach sessions in Victoria and our rural areas. Additionally, the AEC Director is also a current and active member of the Board and has periodic meetings with workforce center staff to facilitate new ideas and strategies for serving this population. WSGC will continue to integrate English literacy and related AEL activities, with workforce preparation, secondary education, and occupational skills training.

Homeless Individuals

WSGC will continue to collaborate with groups involved in the planning and provision of services to the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless including, for example, the Victoria Homeless Coalition and other area agencies providing these critical services.

Ex-Offenders

WSGC will continue to provide ex-offenders with access to employment and vocational training services. Fidelity bonding for employment is offered and marketed for individuals in the ex-offender population. Collaborative efforts to serve this population include staffing to assist with the reintegration of offenders at the TDCJ Stevenson Correctional Facility in Cuero and other locations. Additionally, WSGC has tenured staff familiar with the former “Project RIO” (Re-Integration of Offenders) and can apply that experience to serving individuals with this barrier.

Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts

A. Fiscal Agent

References: (WIOA §108(b)(15); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(14)

Boards must identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the CEOs or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i).

Board Response- Golden Crescent Workforce Development Board, dba Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent, is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds for the 7-county Golden Crescent region, as described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), and as determined by the chief elected official, or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i). The TWC Agency Board Agreement (ABA) identifies Golden Crescent Development Board as the grant recipient.

Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent Administrative (Corporate) Office is located at 120 South Main, Suite 501, Victoria, TX 77901. WSGC is designated by the IRS as a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization that serves Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca and Victoria Counties in Texas.

B. Sub-Grants and Contracts

References: (WIOA §108(b)(16); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(15)

Boards must include a description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.

Board Response- Procurement is the process and procedures utilized to obtain goods and services from the marketplace. WSGC ensures that the procurement of all goods and services is conducted, to the maximum extent practical, in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with applicable administrative requirements. The estimated amount of award or contract determines the procedure used to competitively procure goods and services. This process includes standards of conduct and detailed procedures for both small and large procurements.

No employee, officer, or agent of WSGC may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract that is supported by federal or state funds if a conflict of interest or apparent conflict of interest would be involved.

WSGC standards of conduct prohibit the solicitation and/or acceptance of gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value by an officer, employee, or agent of WSGC from a bidder or sub-recipient. Every reasonable course of action shall be taken to maintain the integrity of the expenditure of public funds and to avoid any favoritism or questionable conduct. Any situation is avoided which suggests that a decision was influenced by prejudice, bias, special interest, or personal gain. WSGC Board Members, WSGC staff, or agents involved in the procurement process are prohibited from accepting gifts, favors, or anything of monetary value from the existing or potential sub-recipients or contractors. In regard to the competitive process used to award sub-grants and contracts, a brief overview of the procedures used for both large and small procurements is highlighted in this response.

The following procedures are followed based on the type of procurement needed:

MICRO and SMALL PURCHASE – A relatively simple, informal purchase with an aggregate cost of not more than \$3,000.00 (Micro Purchase) or \$150,000.00 (Small Purchase).

In-person, online, or telephone bids are solicited/acquired and documented from a minimum of three responsive providers. The WSGC *Cost Estimate Sheet* found on the back of the *Purchase Requisition* is completed to document the selection process. If a bidder whose price is higher than others is selected, justification will be documented on the *Cost Estimate Sheet*. The *Purchase Requisition* is submitted to the Executive Director for approval and processing.

Procurements of less than \$500 in the aggregate may be purchased without competitive procurement with the approval of the Executive Director.

Steps to be taken by WSGC for Micro/Small Purchases:

| Step # | Step |
|--------|--|
| 1 | Determine the need for a specific good and/or service |
| 2 | Research estimated cost of optimum good and/or service |
| 3 | Obtain approval to purchase good, service, and or property |
| 4 | Determine proximate desired specifications |
| 5 | Determine viable market for the solicitation of the desired item, including small, minority, women-owned, and HUB businesses. Develop Distribution Plan. |
| 6 | Call potential bidders/suppliers to obtain additional information about the good/service prior to conducting the procurement |
| 7 | Prepare phone quote forms prior to making actual calls for price quotes. |
| 8 | Call qualified and eligible bidders in the market determined at step 6 |
| 9 | Complete a quotation form for each bidder contacted |
| 10 | Conduct a comparative analysis of the phone bids and specification information and select the best bid. |
| 11 | Complete and submit Purchase Requisition to obtain approval to purchase good, service, and or property from Executive Director |
| 12 | Notify selected bidder |

LARGE PURCHASE -The chart on the following page provides an overview of the WSGC process for procurements in excess of \$150,000.00 using the RFP process.

| Item | Steps | Performing Party |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Purchase Request | Determine need for procurement; Conduct price analysis; Complete and submit <i>Determination of Need/Procurement Request Form</i> to ED for approval | Procurement, Fiscal or Technology staff, as appropriate |
| Public notice (publicize RFP) | Develop schedule of procurement activities Develop Public Notice with all required elements (15.08g of TWC FMGC) Transmit to Texas Register Publish in appropriate newspapers Submit Purchase Requisition for any related costs Develop Distribution Plan from master list, telephone directories, and other resources, including HUBs Mail Public Notice to appropriate individuals on Bidders List | Procurement, Fiscal or Technology staff, as appropriate |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Bidders' conference | Determine need for Bidders' Conference Develop presentation Set-up sign-in sheet Start on time Orient attendees (agenda topics, conference structure, including Q&A during and after the conference) Make presentation Finish on time | Procurement, Fiscal or Technology staff, as appropriate Executive Director Director/Finance Monitor Subject-expert staff Contractor staff, if needed |
| Bidders' questions after bidders' conference | Respond to questions by date established during bidders' conference Forward Q&A to all parties receiving an RFP Include with transmittal of RFPs disseminated thereafter | Procurement, Fiscal or Technology staff, as appropriate |
| Proposals received | Date stamp each proposal received from bidders Log package Give receipt for hand-delivered packages upon request Set-up a "secured" procurement file | Administrative Assistant or back-up staff Procurement, Fiscal or Technology staff, as appropriate |
| Proposal evaluation | Establish evaluation team Orient evaluation team: Confidentiality, Objectivity, Conflict of interest, Evaluation period, Scoring methodology, Ground rules on discussion between evaluators, Central point for securing proposal during and after evaluation period, Evaluation team leader, Tallying scores Score proposals Submit scoring sheets to Team Leader | Procurement, Fiscal or Technology staff, as appropriate Evaluation Team Team Leader |
| Presentation of scores to Executive Director | Aggregate bidders' scores Present results of proposal review w/o recommendations to Executive Director | Evaluation team leader Procurement/contracting officer |
| Presentation of scores to Board for selection | Scoring results reviewed by ED Scoring results forwarded to Committee, if appropriate Committee recommendation forwarded to Board, if appropriate Selection made & Draft/send notification letter to selected/non-selected bidders | Executive Director Procurement/contracting officer |

All procurement records are maintained for three years following the annual audit or the resolution of questioned costs. Subcontractors will be notified that they shall adhere to the same record retention requirements. If for some reason they cannot do so, all records will be turned over to the Board at the end of the contract period.

Once procurement is completed, a *Procurement File Checklist* is used to ensure that the procurement file is adequately documented.

Procurement File Checklist

- needs assessment determination
- procurement method selected

- procurement authorization(s)
- public media advertisement
- Request for Proposal (RFP)/Invitation for Bids (IFB) document
- proposals received
- rating criteria
- completed staff and/or Board evaluation forms
- independent cost estimates
- cost/price analysis forms and cost reasonableness determination
- notes and other documentation concerning negotiations
- notice of award/non-selection
- fully executed contract, including amendments/modifications
- contract performance evaluation
- signature authorities
- general correspondence related to the specific procurement action
- required reports
- documentation related to disputes, protests, and claims

Part 8: Performance

A. Board Performance Targets

References: (WIOA §108(b)(17); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(16))

Boards must include a description of the local levels of performance that were negotiated with TWC and the CEOs consistent with WIOA §116(c), that will be used to measure the performance of the workforce area and for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the workforce area.

Board Response-To further ensure employer and job seeker needs are met, WSGC performance strategies aim to strengthen the alignment of TWC-Contracted common performance accountability measures with requirements governing the one-stop delivery system, consistent with WIOA §116(c).

BCY25 Performance Measures for WSGC are detailed in the table below. Any changes in performance measures or any measures still pending resolution by TWC, once established and contracted, will be automatically incorporated by WSGC.

| Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Performance Measures | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Adult-Employed Quarter 2 Post Exit |
| 2 | Adult-Employed Quarter 4 Post Exit |
| 3 | Adult-Credential Rate |
| 4 | Adult-Median Earnings Quarter 2 Post Exit |
| 5 | Adult-Measurable Skills Gain |
| 6 | Dislocated Worker- Employed Quarter 2 Post Exit |
| 7 | Dislocated Worker-Employed Quarter 4 Post Exit |
| 8 | Dislocated Worker-Credential Rate |

| | |
|--|--|
| 9 | Dislocated Worker-Median Earnings Quarter 2 Post Exit |
| 10 | Dislocated Worker-Measurable Skills Gain |
| 11 | Youth-Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2 Post Exit |
| 12 | Youth-Employed/Enrolled Quarter 4 Post Exit |
| 13 | Youth-Credential Rate |
| 14 | Youth-Measurable Skills Gain |
| 15 | All Participants-Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2 Post Exit |
| 16 | All Participants-Employed/Enrolled Quarter 2-Qrt 4 Post Exit |
| 17 | All Participants-Credential Rate |
| Other TWC Board Contracted Measures | |
| 1 | Claimant Reemployment within 10 weeks |
| 2 | Number of Employers Receiving Texas Talent Assistance |
| 3 | Choices Full Engagement Rate |
| 4 | Average Number of Children Served per Day |

Under WIOA Title I subtitle B, the Board is also responsible for establishing Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Measures. Eligible Training Providers must adhere to standards articulated in Texas' WIOA ETPS Certification System Notification of Board Performance Requirements. The Board [in open meeting] has adopted these local ETPS performance measures in accordance with TWC-recommended thresholds:

- 60% Program Completion Rate (ALL)
- 60% Entered Employment Rate (ALL)

Regarding the one-stop delivery system, the Board establishes Performance and Expenditure Measures with the WSGC contractor during contract negotiations. The negotiated benchmarks facilitate meeting of TWC performance and expenditure benchmarks for which WSGC is responsible. The Board performs contractor oversight to ensure that all benchmarks are adequately met by reviewing TWC Monthly Performance Reports (MPR) as well as ad hoc data analysis. Failure to meet acceptable measures of performance requires the Board to implement Technical Assistance Plans, Corrective Action Plans and or up to including sanctions for continued low performance.

Part 9: Training and Services

A. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

References: (WIOA §108(b)(19); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(18)

Boards must include a description of how the training services outlined in WIOA §134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts (ITAs), including if the Board will use contracts for training services, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs under that chapter, and how the Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are provided.

Board Response- WIOA §134 provides the framework for a national workforce preparation and employment system designed to meet the needs of both the nation's businesses and job seekers and those who want to further their careers. Board policy is based on the following elements:

- Customers should have choices in deciding the training program that best fits their needs and the organizations that will provide that service. They should have control over their own career development.
- Customers have a right to information about how well training providers succeed in preparing people for jobs. Training providers will provide information on their success rates.

The ITA is an account established by the Board on behalf of an eligible individual. Customers seeking to access training services complete a comprehensive assessment to determine the need, interest and eligibility for training services, and are provided with a full orientation and coaching regarding selection of an appropriate training provider. Information provided to customers seeking to access an ITA includes provider/program performance data, training cost, accessibility, and relevant labor market information and Career Pathway information. ITAs are funded with Youth, Adult and Dislocated worker, and Trade Adjustment Act funds authorized under Title I of WIOA. Individuals may use ITAs in exchange for training services associated with the WSGC Targeted Occupation list (contained herein). ITAs can only be issued for training providers on the approved list of Eligible Training Providers maintained by TWC. A document detailing the amounts, customer name, start and ending dates will then be provided to the customer prior to their initial enrollment into school.

B. ITA Limitations

References: 20 CFR §663.420; WD Letter 14-19, Change 2

Boards may impose limits on the duration and amount of ITAs, of which such limitations must be described in the Board Plan. If the state or Board chooses to impose limitations, such limitations must not be implemented in a manner that undermines the WIOA requirement that training services are provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice in the selection of an Eligible Training Provider. Exceptions to ITA limitations may be provided for individual cases and must be described in Board policies.

Board Response-Board policy currently dictates that the amount of funds authorized for an ITA be commensurate with the training provider's cost (tuition and fees as reflected in the ETPL) and other **required** related program expenses (books, supplies, equipment, tools, uniforms) for the current program year. As a general rule, the Board imposes a maximum amount of time allowed for the use of an ITA as two (2) program years, barring extenuating circumstances. In 2023, the Board of Directors imposed a financial limitation capped at a maximum of \$12,000.00 per participant. This would apply to any training course(s) or programs of study, with the caveat that the training participant utilize their Pell Grant as the *first* funding mechanism (if eligible and awarded). The Executive Director would maintain the authority to consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Adherence to this policy, allows the Board to maximize funding opportunities for more eligible participants, as well as ensuring fidelity to the spirit and intent of WIOA training.

Part 10: Apprenticeship

A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Each Board must include a description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs within its workforce area to register with the Eligible Training Provider System to receive WIOA funding.

Board Response-Registered Apprenticeship is an industry-driven model that combines on-the-job learning with job-related instruction. As an “earn and learn” model, apprentices are employed and earn wages from the first day on the job. Apprenticeship is a flexible training strategy that can be customized to meet the needs of any business. Nationally, there are currently more than 1,000 occupations including careers in;

- health care,
- information technology,
- transportation, and
- energy,

in which apprenticeship is used to meet business needs for qualified workers. By using apprenticeship as a workforce strategy in the Golden Crescent, WSGC will contribute to higher performance outcomes in employment, retention, earnings, and credential attainment.

WIOA includes several changes that strengthen Registered Apprenticeship (RA) as a resource, a training strategy, and as a partner in the workforce system.

- Registered Apprenticeship programs are on ETP List-All Registered Apprenticeship programs, by virtue of their registration, are approved for the Eligible Training Provider List and thereby eligible to receive federal workforce funding as pre-approved training providers. This is one of the most important changes in WIOA, as it expands opportunities for job seekers and for the workforce system to use WIOA funds for related instruction and other apprenticeship costs.
- Promoting work-based learning to meet employer needs for skilled workers WIOA promotes greater use of work-based learning and a stronger emphasis on business services. WIOA provides for increased reimbursement rates for employers for on-the-job training (OJT). OJT can be used to support apprenticeship programs, and this change promotes the greater use of apprenticeship as a strategy to address the needs of both employers and job seekers.
- Supporting career pathways for youth through apprenticeship WIOA supports apprenticeship as a workforce strategy for youth. The law cites pre-apprenticeship activities and work-based learning among the youth program elements. WIOA also recognizes apprenticeship as a career pathway for Job Corps students and supports coordination of the Youth Build program with pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

Using the apprenticeship model as a key strategy in meeting the needs of business, the increased emphasis on work-based learning and business engagement in WIOA provides a new opportunity for the workforce system to integrate apprenticeship into its business services. Since

employers are at the center of the model, apprenticeship automatically brings industry to the table. Therefore, apprenticeship aligns perfectly with sector strategies, industry partnerships, and other investments in meeting the needs of the business community.

WSGC encourages Registered Apprenticeship programs through collaboration with area educational institutions and employers to;

- identify apprenticeship programs currently operating that can be registered with the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and,
- inventory current pre-apprenticeship programs or related initiatives that can be scaled up into full registered apprenticeship programs.

In late 2018, the Board was awarded a Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) Grant in the amount of \$45,865.00 to assist in the creation of a DOL-Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Program for Construction trades, developed by Associated Builder and Contractors (ABC) and specifically targeting the occupations Plumber and Electrician. We worked collectively with secondary and post-secondary training providers to develop the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER) curriculum that is utilized at the Mid-Coast Construction Academy and the Apprenticeship and associated Pre-Apprenticeship serve the training needs of both secondary (high school juniors and seniors) and post-secondary students.

Upon advancement of the first cohort to the next phase of the Apprenticeship, the Board applied for and was awarded a subsequent TIP Grant for \$56,000.00 as part of our Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Alternative Funding for Statewide Activities (WAF) contract, to offset the costs associated with continuation of the program. As of this writing (January 2025), the Board is working on a third High Demand Job Training (HDJT) Grant with The Victoria Sales Tax Development Corporation of which one of the projects in the application to TWC would provide additional support to the MCA program. Since that initial award in 2018, combined TWC TIP and HDJT grants in support of MCA's Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship programs total over \$300,000.00 as of January 2025.

Additionally, Dow-Seadrift Operations, annually has Apprenticeship opportunities available. We are working with Dow and area ISD's to identify apprentices in the fields of Process Technician and Electrical Technician. To further promote the advantages of work-based learning, the Board and WSGC BSU engage with area partners to educate employers on the benefits of RA programs.

B. ApprenticeshipTexas

Each Board must include a description of the Board's strategy and commitment to support ApprenticeshipTexas efforts across the state, as applicable.

Board Response-As noted in the previous response, WSGC is an active participant in promoting Apprenticeship efforts, including the TWC ApprenticeshipTexas program. In addition to the outreach and marketing activities previously listed, WSGC will also support the effort by:

- Include Apprentice Texas logo and hyperlink on WSGC website;
- Provide assistance to local entities, including industry leaders, economic development organizations, etc. in the development of registered apprenticeship training programs in the service area; and
- Develop outreach strategies for both traditional and non-traditional industries.

We will continue to promote that TWC, as authorized in Texas Education Code Chapter 133, grants funds to local public educational institutions to support the costs of related classroom instruction in Registered Apprenticeship Training Programs (RAP). Local education agencies act as fiscal agents for registered apprenticeship training programs.

As noted, to date, we've received multiple Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) Grants and High Demand Job Training (HDJT) Grants to provide additional support to a local DOL-Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), Mid-Coast Construction Academy (MCA). This academy serves the training needs of area secondary and post-secondary students and is also a viable career pathway for dislocated workers, non-custodial parents, AEL participants, ex-offenders, and other populations we serve. At its entry-level, a trainee can attain a short-term National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) certificate that is industry-validated and recognized nationwide. A pipeline of younger workers being trained both on-the-job and in the classroom, creates a steady flow of students at the secondary and post-secondary level. Likewise, this model allows employers the opportunity to make a positive impact by contributing to the work-based component (via their jobsites) towards addressing their worker shortage. This is just one example of our ongoing efforts to maximize growth and encourage coordination with local industry and workforce partners to develop new RA training programs and expand existing RA training programs.

Additionally, for interested parties reviewing this Plan, to qualify for funds, apprenticeship training programs and apprentices must be registered with the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship. If you are an employer, local education agency, or apprenticeship training program seeking information regarding funding for related classroom instruction for adults in registered apprenticeship training programs, contact the Texas Workforce Commission at apprenticeship@twc.state.tx.us.

Part 11: Public Comment

References: WIOA §108(d); 20 CFR §679.550(b) and §679.560(b) and (e)

Boards must provide a description of the public comment process, including:

- *making copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media;*
- *an opportunity for comment by members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education;*
- *providing at least a 15-day, but no more than a 30-day period for comment on the plan before its submission to TWC, beginning on the date that the proposed plan is made available, before its submission to TWC.*

Board Response- The Board placed a Public Notice in the Texas Register on February 20, 2025, advising that the Golden Crescent Workforce Development Board Strategic and Operational Plan 2025–2028, was available for viewing and public comment on the Board’s website at www.gcworkforce.org and at its physical location, 120 South Main, Suite 501, Victoria, TX 77901. Public notice was also placed in the classified/legal section of the Victoria Advocate on the same date (February 20, 2025) which also ran concurrently in their online version at victoriaadvocate.com. Both formats advised of viewing availability and solicitation of comments and input. The Victoria Advocate is the area’s most widely distributed newspaper, with a confirmed readership of over 90,000 subscribers, and is circulated throughout all counties in the Golden Crescent. The Plan was posted for comment for a total of 21 days from February 20, 2025, through March 17, 2025. There were no comments received during the public comment period.

Appendix: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

Local Board Plan Requirements

for Alignment to the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan Requirement

for Workforce Systemwide Alignment

State law requires local workforce development boards (local board) to adopt a plan that “sets broad goals and objectives for all workforce development programs in the local area consistent with statewide goals, objectives, and performance standards,”¹ as outlined in the workforce system strategic plan, [*Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031*](#).

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council *or* TWIC) reviews each board plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the workforce system strategic plan. Under state law and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Council is charged with recommending the local board plans to the Governor for consideration and approval.

Demonstrating Local Alignment with Texas’ Workforce System Strategic Plan

Our local board planning process highlights the importance and interdependence of the constituents and partners of the Texas workforce system. Local boards oversee the delivery of workforce programs and services and are essential in both the development and implementation of system goals and objectives in the system strategic plan. The planning requirements help local boards inform the Council of innovative practices and articulate how local plans translate the workforce system strategic plan into local action that moves the system forward.

Our local board responses apprise the Council—and, with the Council’s recommendation, the Governor—of system alignment, including program implementation, strategic initiatives, and innovative practices. All 28 boards will be represented in the briefing for the approval of the local plans and subsequent Council recommendation to the Governor for consideration for approval in the spring of 2025. Board responses may be included in the Council briefing materials verbatim.

Board responses cover the three strategic opportunities and four system goals in *Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031* that focus system partners on the Council’s mission to produce an agile and resilient workforce. Building on a foundation of continuous innovation and increased collaboration, the system plan calls for accelerated engagement around three strategic opportunities: engagement of employers, improving outcomes for Texans with barriers, and use of data to support investment decisions. Each of these envisions a desirable future state for Texas and lays out essential actions to be implemented that support system goals and stronger outcomes across the Texas workforce system.

The system goals drive accelerated action by system partners in service to Texas employers, learners, partners, and those with policy and planning responsibilities, as follows:

- Employers System Goal: Accelerate the delivery of relevant education and training programs to meet the demand of employers.
- Learners System Goal: Accelerate the expansion of and access to work-based skill and knowledge acquisition to respond to the needs of learners.
- Partners System Goal: Accelerate the development and use of models to support and build system partners’ capacity, responsiveness, continuous improvement, and decision-making.
- Policy and Planning Goal: Accelerate the availability of relevant workforce, education, and other data sets and the use of applied analytics to evaluate program outcomes to respond to the needs of policy makers and planners.

(Texas Government Code Sec. 2308.304, Local Plan.).

Directions for Demonstrating Alignment with the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

Local board plan responses must demonstrate alignment with the workforce system plan and, therefore, require both summary information and citations to the strategies and initiatives that advance progress towards the workforce system goals in [Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031](#). Please refer to the workforce system plan for definitions of specific terms.

Board Response- Throughout the Board’s history, strategic plans have been a core component in its work to improve system integration and ensure the development and continuous improvement of the local workforce system. TWIC’s *Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024–2031* includes high-level system objectives that require collaboration among multiple partners and alignment of programs, initiatives, and outcomes that mirror the overarching goal and objectives of our regional services delivery strategy. It also outlines long-range strategies to achieve each system goal. System priorities developed by TWIC and its partners and stakeholders contain system goals used to create actionable objectives. The four goal areas represent Texas employers, learners, partners, and those with policy and planning responsibilities. These goal areas emphasize the importance and interdependence of the constituents and partners of the Texas workforce system similar to the

alignment reflected in our local plan. In the implementation of the Board's plan, we will continue to strengthen our interconnectivity with partner agencies to initiate the specific action plans identified herein to execute strategies aligned with both the TWC and TWIC system's goals in concert with our regional objectives.

In our Appendix responses, we will provide a narrative summary describing how the processes, activities, or initiatives in our local board plan align with the specific system goal and objective and each strategic opportunity and in accordance with the response guidelines provided. Additionally, we will cite the referenced information in our local board plan by providing the corresponding page number(s) in our plan.

System Goals and Objectives

Employers Goal – Delivery of Relevant Education and Training Programs

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes that accelerate the delivery of relevant education and training programs to meet employers' needs, specifically by increasing:

- *upskilling and reskilling programs that address employers' needs for middle skill workers,*
- *adult learners transitioning to employment through integrated education and training programs, and*
- *attainment of short-term credentials in programs aligned with high-demand occupations.*

Board Response- Our response addresses the following components:

- the institution and/or expansion of upskilling and reskilling programs to meet employers' needs for middle-skill workers,
- the identification and delivery of programs, including with adult education and literacy providers, that support attainment of short-term credentials, industry-based certifications, and licenses,
- populations that require supportive services to improve program completion, certification or attainment of short-term credentials, and employment, and
- data used to track reskilling and upskilling program enrollments and outcomes, including program completions, attainment of short-term credentials and industry-based certifications or licenses, and employment directly related to the credential, license, or certification.

The Golden Crescent Workforce Development Board has a longstanding, mutually beneficial history of collaborating with Victoria College, University of Houston-Victoria, Mid-Coast Construction Academy, and area ISD Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, to develop and implement high-performance training programs tailored to the needs of regional

employers. By partnering with these and other regional training providers and employers, customized training programs are curated to align with the skills required by local industries. Our strategic approach ensures that the workforce is not only equipped with the relevant skills, experience, and knowledge, but is also poised for exceptional performance, meeting and exceeding employer expectations. The Board will utilize a comprehensive approach to enhance employer relationships to gather data and make informed decisions that will lead to a more comprehensive approach to workforce development. Additionally, we will make a concerted effort to continually improve our focus on providing more in-depth customized talent development strategies that will lead to increased opportunities for job seekers with long-term career goals. Sector partnerships, similar to the “Pursuit of Advanced Training in High-Demand Skills” (PATHS) model, highlighted at the recent (December 2024) TWC annual conference will be developed to further understand, and effectively address, industry needs while also rapidly identify emerging labor market trends and shifts in industry within the Golden Crescent. The PATHS Program exemplifies multi-partner collaboration uniting public, private, and philanthropic resources to tackle critical workforce training needs. By bringing together Workforce Boards, employers, educators, and community organizations, PATHS creates a powerful partnership that identifies and addresses skills gaps in industries vital to, or relocating to, our region. PATHS and similar sector partnership collaborative approaches ensure tailored, employer-driven training solutions that empower individuals, strengthen business, and drive sustainable economic growth across our region and the state. We intend to utilize a combination of conventional and innovative training models with flexible formats including virtual, in-person, and hybrid learning ensuring accessibility for diverse populations. Existing agency-required data tracking will be used for reskilling/upskilling program enrollments and outcomes, completions, and credential attainment. (Pages 3-6, 21, 24-27, 35, 43, 62-63)

Learners Goal – Expansion of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes that are expanding work-based experiences, including apprenticeship, to accelerate skills and knowledge acquisition that improves system outcomes for learners.

Board Response- Our response addresses the following:

- work-based learning opportunities with system stakeholders as a pre-employment strategy for youth and adults, including those requiring supportive services and resources,
- the expansion of the employer network participating in and sponsoring work-based learning opportunities, including registered and industry-recognized apprenticeship programs, and
- partnerships that address regular engagement with employers and system stakeholders, including collaboration with a Regional Convener for the Tri-Agency Texas Regional Pathways Network and input on the quality of existing apprenticeship programs and development of new programs.

Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) are promoted to both employers and career seekers as a successful and mutually beneficial work-based learning opportunity. This training model allows employers to attract and retain workers, and career seekers are able to train and gain a new skill while being paid. While we have multiple offerings in the skilled trades, in the coming years, we will focus on diversifying apprenticeship programs in order to create opportunities in various industries, potentially including manufacturing, healthcare, and other “non-traditional” apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities. As noted in the section of our plan highlighting those efforts and accomplishments, to date, grant funds solicited and acquired by the Board, have allowed us to directly assist in the development and expansion of multiple RAPS as evidenced by the over \$300,000.00 in TIP and HDJT funds secured in partnership with the Victora Sales Tax Development Corporation. Additionally, Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent offers a variety of career exploration opportunities to help learners acquire work-based skills and knowledge. Programs like Youth Career Exploration events and Teacher Externships provide valuable insights into different careers and ensure that both students and educators are well-prepared to meet the demands of the job market. These efforts are aligned with the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative, which fosters collaboration between the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education As previously noted in our plan, our uniqueness as a Communities In Schools affiliate embedded in a Workforce Development Board, creates an unrivaled synergy and linkage between education and industry, ensuring a skilled and adaptable workforce. (Pages 4-7, 21-26, , 32-34, 41, 55-57, 63-64).

Partners Goal – Alignment to Support Career Pathways

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes to build the board’s capacity, responsiveness, continuous improvement, and decision-making to:

- *support the identification of credentials of value, and*
- *streamline and clarify existing career pathways and models to increase alignment between secondary and postsecondary technical programs.*

Board Response-Our response addresses the following:

- system stakeholders’ input to assess the alignment and articulation of secondary and postsecondary technical programs supporting career pathways; and
- collaboration with secondary and postsecondary institutions to engage employers to identify credentials of value that respond to local labor market needs, including postsecondary technical sub-baccalaureate credit and non-credit credentials, industry-based certifications, apprenticeship certificates, and licenses; and
- processes to continuously improve career pathways.

The Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative, launched by Governor Greg Abbott in 2016, seeks to achieve the ambitious goal of ensuring that all Texans achieve their full potential and contribute to the state’s continued economic growth. The Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and Texas Workforce Commission are working collaboratively to implement the vision of House Bill 3, the transformative school finance legislation passed in 2019, and to

integrate the goals of that legislation with the goals in Building a Talent Strong Texas, the state's strategic plan to increase higher education completion and workforce readiness. The Tri-Agency partners have numerous ongoing projects that will advance this work and have identified additional priorities and action items in support of the Tri-Agency vision and mission.

Tri-Agency Mission is to build a strong Texas workforce and ensure that Texans are prepared for jobs in the industries that power the state's economy today and tomorrow.

Tri-Agency Vision is for Texans of all ages should have access to high-quality education and workforce training that empowers them to achieve their full potential.

That mission and vision directly aligns with our combined goals as the *only* Workforce Development Board in the nation that also serves as Communities In Schools affiliate.

Therefore, it's not only in our DNA, but we are uniquely equipped with the experience and expertise to emphasize and deliver on our goal of the alignment of workforce training and education opportunities in our region. To meet the demand-driven needs in support of our student and job seeker community combined with industry needs, it's vital that we maintain the overarching goal of the agencies involved (TWC, TWC, and the Higher Education Coordinating Board) to achieve and sustain a healthy and robust workforce. The skills that employers are looking for in the near and long term must be directly integrated into the training and education opportunities that Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent promotes. Because of the existing relationships that we have with education and training partners, in addition to the interactions Board staff and our Business Services Unit (BSU) have with local employers, the public workforce system provides a critical link to bolster workforce industry alignment. Through our Workforce Board's Strategic Plan and considering our unique affiliation with Communities In Schools of the Golden Crescent, we have aligned our work with the Tri-Agency Initiative's strategic plan and provided system stakeholders' input to assess the alignment and articulation of secondary and postsecondary technical programs in support of career pathways and by engaging employers to identify credentials of value in response to local labor market needs. This includes leveraging funding to support programs and partners in developing opportunities for learners to gain skills and knowledge about, at, and through work. By following the strategies laid out by the Texas Education Agency, The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and The Texas Workforce Commission, we ensure that our initiatives are effectively bridging the gap between education and industry needs. (Pages 2, 4-7, 19-26, 27-30, 32-35, 41,42, 64,65).

Policy and Planning Goal – Relevant Data Sets

Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes that support the availability and coordination of relevant workforce, education, and employment data to evaluate program outcomes to respond to the needs of policy makers and planners to:

- *expand high-quality childcare availability,*
- *identify and quantify quality outcomes, including industry-based certification data, and*
- *enhance wage records.*

Board Response-Our response addresses the following:

- engagement with childcare providers and employers to establish on-site or near-site, high-quality childcare facilities and expand Texas Rising Star certifications,
- collaboration with employers to identify enhanced employment and earnings data to gain deeper insight into program outcomes, and
- how the board and its system partners identify, evaluate, and implement ways to streamline and improve timeliness and completeness of data matching and sharing, specifically with industry-based certification attainment, to evaluate program effectiveness and outcomes.

The Board is committed to improving and expanding early learning programs in support of the Texas Rising Star certification program to serve scholarship (subsidized and parent-share-of-cost) families and provide high-quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs for the communities we serve. Our CCS TRS outline contains these vital elements:

1. Expanding High-Quality Childcare Availability

- **Childcare Workforce Data:**
 - Number of childcare workers and their qualifications (e.g., education level, certifications).
 - Availability of professional development opportunities.
 - Turnover rates and workforce retention statistics.
- **Capacity and Access:**
 - Number and geographic distribution of licensed childcare facilities.
 - Data on capacity utilization and waitlists.
 - Population density of children under five relative to childcare facility availability.
- **Cost and Affordability:**
 - Average childcare costs by region.
 - Subsidy availability and usage rates.
- **Demographics and Equity:**
 - Accessibility for underserved communities (e.g., rural areas, low-income families).
 - Data on racial and ethnic disparities in childcare availability.
- **Quality Measures:**
 - Data from quality rating and improvement systems (TRS).
 - Industry-based certification data for childcare providers (e.g., CDA credentials, Montessori certifications).
 - Compliance rates with state childcare standards.
- **Child Outcomes:**
 - Data on developmental benchmarks (e.g., literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional skills).
 - Longitudinal studies tracking the impact of high-quality childcare on academic performance and life outcomes.
- **Parent Satisfaction:**
 - Survey data on parental satisfaction with childcare services.

Regarding identifying enhanced employment and earnings data to gain deeper insight into program outcomes, the Board collaborates closely with employers and our communities to gather and analyze qualitative and quantitative data related to employment opportunities, employer needs and outcomes including placement and earnings. In FY2023 the Board, via its contracted service provider C2 GPS, invested in technology to develop and implement data dashboards that include comprehensive data related to program and service delivery, performance outcomes, demographic information, industry trends, and labor market information. This information will be available on our website to all employers, training providers, and stakeholders. Lastly, the Golden Crescent Workforce Development Board has implemented internal timelines for the development and distribution of reports and data to system partners to identify, evaluate, and implement ways to improve timeliness and completeness of data matching and sharing, specifically with industry-based certification attainment. Additional efforts are taking place to ensure the evaluation of program effectiveness and outcomes, in closer collaboration with training providers, to capture, track, and record credential attainment quickly, while the job seeker is still engaged with the workforce center system. (Pages 4-7, 24-27, 38-39, 61-63).

Strategic Opportunities

Accelerating Alignment: Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2031 envisions a collaborative workforce system capable of accelerating the delivery of workforce programs, services, and initiatives to meet the needs of a thriving economy. The strategic opportunities focus system partners on three critical success factors that will lead to broad achievement of the system plan goals and objectives. Review each strategic opportunity and provide the information requested.

Strategic Opportunity 1 – Employer Engagement

Describe how the local board coordinates with its stakeholders to gain insight into the needs of employers and minimize “asks” that burden employers.

Board Response-Our response addresses the following:

- coordination efforts that gain more insight from employers, including participation in the Tri-Agency Texas Regional Pathways Network, if applicable, and
- reducing the number of regional system partners individually making requests of employers.

The Board coordinates with stakeholders to align workforce strategies with employer needs and streamline processes, reducing the burden on employers. This is typically achieved through the following steps:

1. Engaging Employers Directly

- **Industry Panels and Roundtables:** The Board organizes regular discussions with employers from various sectors to understand their workforce needs and challenges.
- **Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms:** We use surveys or structured interviews to gather

insights directly from employers about skills gaps, hiring challenges, and training needs.

2. Collaborating with Stakeholder Networks

- **Partnerships with Business Associations:** The Board collaborates with chambers of commerce, trade organizations, and economic development agencies to ensure a broad understanding of industry needs.
- **Engagement with Education and Training Providers:** Regular communication with schools, colleges, and vocational training centers helps align curricula with market demand.

3. Data-Driven Decision-Making

- **Labor Market Analysis:** The Board uses real-time labor market data to identify trends, high-demand skills, and employment gaps without repeatedly burdening employers for input.
- **Predictive Modeling:** Advanced tools can forecast future needs, reducing the frequency of direct asks for information.

4. Streamlining Employer Interactions

- **Centralized Points of Contact:** The Board often designates single points of contact or employer liaisons to simplify communications and avoid repetitive requests.
- **Integrated Services:** Coordination across workforce programs ensures employers don't have to navigate multiple agencies for hiring, training, or upskilling support.

5. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- **Post-Engagement Evaluations:** The Board solicits feedback after initiatives or programs to learn what works and adjust their approaches.
- **Regular Updates:** Sharing outcomes and updates with employers ensures transparency and fosters trust, reducing the perceived burden of participation.

6. Proactive Support Services

- **Customized Training Programs:** Developing training solutions tailored to employer needs reduces the necessity for repeated engagement.
- **Grants and Incentives:** Offering incentives like tax credits or workforce training funds can offset employer costs and encourage participation in workforce development efforts.

By maintaining clear, consistent communication and fostering collaborative partnerships, the Board can effectively address employer needs while minimizing redundant or excessive demands. (Pages 2-7, 30-35, 40-43, 67-68).

Strategic Opportunity 2 – Improving Outcomes for Texans with Barriers to Employment

Describe how the local board engages Texans with diverse needs — including those with disabilities, foster youth, sex-trafficking victims, incarcerated juveniles and adults, and opportunity youth — by designing programs that address their needs, maximize outcomes, and improve career opportunities.

Board Response-Our response addresses the following:

- models, initiatives, programs, or processes that effectively engage these populations; and
- promising practices in supportive services models and outcomes that consistently demonstrate success.

Golden Crescent WDB regularly monitors performance and engagement numbers for Texans with diverse needs—including veterans, individuals with disabilities, foster youth, justice-served individuals, opportunity youth, and other vulnerable populations. Through our 2025-2028 Strategic Plan, we are engaged in work that includes:

- a thorough assessment of current community partnerships and required MOUs;
- development of a gap analysis and action plan that considers regional partnerships with talent-adjacent organizations and special populations including veterans, opportunity/at-risk youth, foster youth and justice-involved individuals;
- examination of our Workforce on Wheels (WOW) mobile workforce unit utilization to reach vulnerable populations and an action plan that maximizes WOW usage based on community partnership alignment, ROI and process improvement; recommendations for alternative outreach options;
- quarterly workshops and technical assistance to employers, education partners, training providers and community partners to provide information about tools and resources available to support vulnerable populations, Analysis of baseline data related to the number of individuals in special populations served (foster youth, veterans, justice-served, at-risk and disabled individuals) - by county and across region. (Pages 3-6, 27, 27-34, 39, 42-45, 47-49, 67,68).

Strategic Opportunity 3 – Use of Data to Support Investment Decisions

Describe how the local board uses data and evidence to identify and target strategic investments to improve system performance.

Board Response-Our response addresses the following:

- evidence-based practices and data to strategically implement and fund initiatives; and
- programs that have successfully demonstrated previous program participant credential attainment and employment.

Golden Crescent WDB, via its contracted service provider C2 GPS, utilizes performance dashboards that provide a visual representation of performance indicators and metrics with real-time insights into the performance and progress of measurable targets and goals. The dashboards monitor relevant details including program performance, accuracy rates, expenditures, enrollments and other data that will be used to analyze and support performance across programs, workforce centers, and teams. Through these dashboards, we use data to identify opportunities to target specific populations across the communities we serve. We also utilize dashboards to review our investment in our communities and the related outcomes to help us to more strategically and equitably maximize our investment. (Pages 7,15-16, 19, 22-23,41,67,68).
