

Golden Crescent Workforce Development Board Strategic and Operational Plan 2021 – 2024



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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, *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 (2020 Update)*.

After the mandated public comment period, a summary of 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 2021 – 2024 Strategic and Operational Plan is scheduled to be reviewed by the Board’s Policy and Planning Committee and Board of Director’s after the 15-day comment period has expired. The Strategic Plan was posted for public comment beginning February 9, 2021 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 Letter 18-20 dated October 15, 2020. 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

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

Boards 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; 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.

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 residents 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 18-20, 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, and financial literacy through the Board's Student HireAbility Navigator (SHN).

Objective #2

The SHN 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.

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 partnerships to assist youth in GED/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 workforce programs.

Objective #5

Continue to work to ensure that all data and customer information is secure and protected from unauthorized access and exposure.

In accordance Workforce Development Letter 18-20 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, *The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 (2020 Update)*.

B. Board Strategies

(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-Please refer to the goals and corresponding objectives associated with Board Goals #3 and #4. 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.

C. High-Performing Board

(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.

- 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 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

(WIOA §108(b)(1)(A); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(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
- Cost of Living Index
- Industry Snapshot
- Occupation Snapshot
- Industry Clusters
- WSGC Target Occupation List

Demographic Profile

The population in the Golden Crescent was 197,171 per American Community Survey data for 2014-2018. The region has a civilian labor force of 92,763 with a participation rate of 60.6%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in the Golden Crescent, 17.6% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 32.9% in the nation. The median household income in the Golden Crescent is \$55,400 and the median house value is \$128,029.

Summary¹

	Percent			Value		
	Golden Crescent	Texas	USA	Golden Crescent	Texas	USA
Demographics						
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	197,171	27,885,195	322,903,030
Male	49.6%	49.7%	49.2%	97,730	13,849,775	158,984,190
Female	50.4%	50.3%	50.8%	99,441	14,035,420	163,918,840
Median Age ²	—	—	—	37.9	34.4	37.9
Under 18 Years	25.0%	26.2%	22.8%	49,362	7,292,686	73,553,240
18 to 24 Years	8.5%	10.0%	9.6%	16,839	2,777,150	30,903,719
25 to 34 Years	12.6%	14.7%	13.8%	24,837	4,094,297	44,567,976
35 to 44 Years	11.8%	13.5%	12.6%	23,238	3,767,582	40,763,210
45 to 54 Years	11.9%	12.6%	13.2%	23,558	3,511,040	42,589,573
55 to 64 Years	13.0%	11.1%	12.8%	25,580	3,104,626	41,286,731
65 to 74 Years	9.5%	7.2%	8.8%	18,749	2,000,715	28,535,419
75 Years, and Over	7.6%	4.8%	6.4%	15,008	1,337,099	20,703,162
Race: White	81.2%	74.3%	72.7%	160,091	20,720,689	234,904,818
Race: Black or African American	6.1%	12.1%	12.7%	12,011	3,365,783	40,916,113
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%	0.5%	0.8%	541	136,061	2,699,073
Race: Asian	1.2%	4.7%	5.4%	2,365	1,308,257	17,574,550
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	75	23,672	582,718
Race: Some Other Race	8.8%	5.7%	4.9%	17,394	1,600,234	15,789,961
Race: Two or More Races	2.4%	2.6%	3.2%	4,694	730,499	10,435,797
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	41.7%	39.2%	17.8%	82,131	10,921,556	57,517,935
Population Growth						
Population (Pop Estimates) ⁴	—	—	—	196,943	28,995,881	328,239,523
Population Annual Average Growth ⁴	0.5%	1.6%	0.7%	877	419,412	2,146,799
People per Square Mile	—	—	—	32.7	111.0	92.9
Economic						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over) ⁵	60.6%	64.4%	63.2%	92,763	13,728,630	162,248,196
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54) ⁵	80.4%	80.4%	81.8%	57,493	9,095,705	104,136,254
Armed Forces Labor Force ⁵	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	122	89,701	1,028,133
Veterans, Age 18-64 ⁵	5.0%	5.0%	4.7%	5,651	862,771	9,398,789
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64 ⁵	76.9%	77.8%	76.3%	4,345	671,366	7,168,168
Median Household Income ^{2,5}	—	—	—	\$55,400	\$59,570	\$60,293
Per Capita Income ⁵	—	—	—	\$28,363	\$30,143	\$32,621
Mean Commute Time (minutes) ⁵	—	—	—	22.2	26.4	26.6
Commute via Public Transportation ⁵	0.7%	1.4%	5.0%	648	184,848	7,602,145
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64						
No High School Diploma	15.1%	15.7%	11.2%	14,722	2,274,547	18,885,967
High School Graduate	34.9%	24.7%	25.8%	33,891	3,571,759	43,699,272
Some College, No Degree	23.7%	22.1%	21.0%	23,049	3,193,349	35,525,113
Associate's Degree	8.6%	7.5%	9.1%	8,406	1,088,717	15,389,737

Summary¹

	Percent			Value		
	Golden Crescent	Texas	USA	Golden Crescent	Texas	USA
Bachelor's Degree	12.5%	20.0%	20.8%	12,199	2,894,532	35,261,652
Postgraduate Degree	5.1%	10.0%	12.1%	4,946	1,454,641	20,445,749
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®](#)

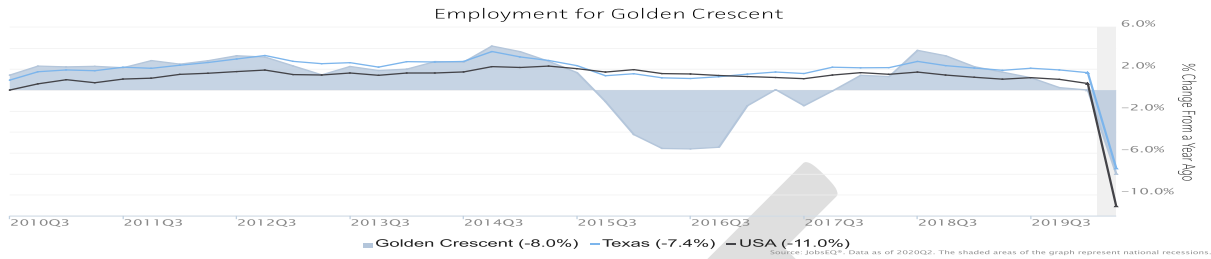
1. American Community Survey 2014-2018, unless noted otherwise.

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

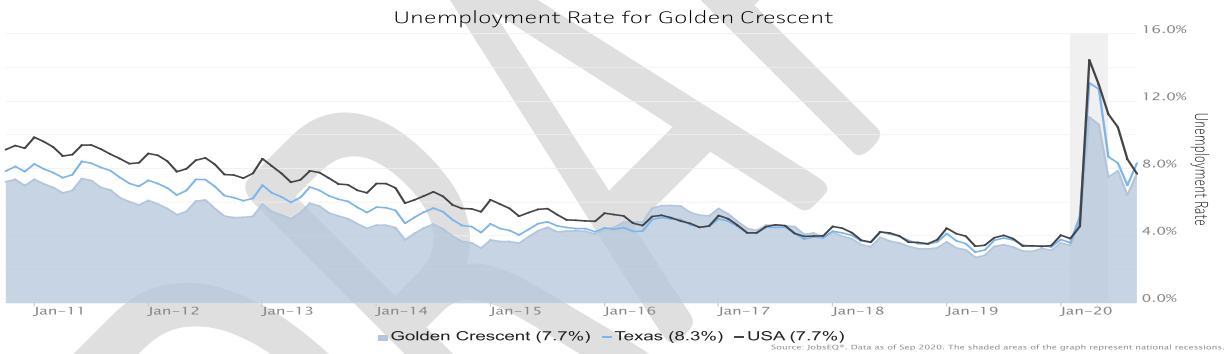
As of 2020Q4, total employment for the Golden Crescent was 88,606 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2020Q4, employment declined 8.2% in the region.



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 2019Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q4.

Unemployment Rate

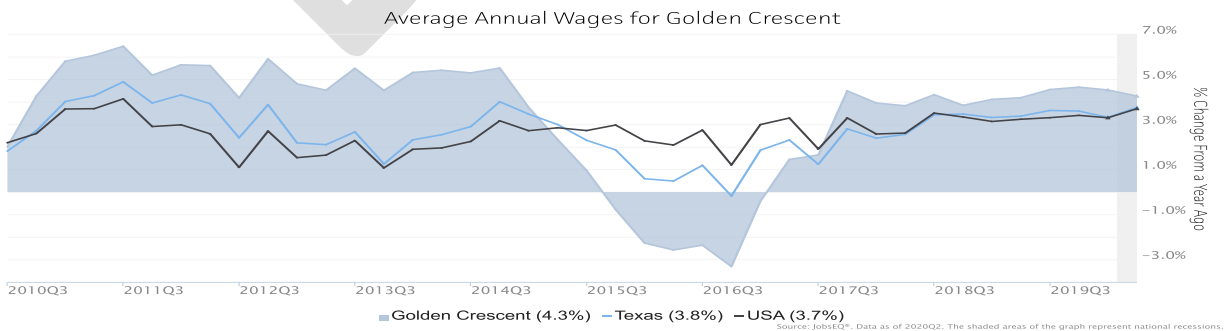
The unemployment rate for the Golden Crescent was 7.2% as of December 2020. The regional unemployment rate was the same as the national rate of 7.2%. One year earlier, in December 2019, the unemployment rate in the Golden Crescent was 3.1%.



Unemployment rate data are from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and updated through December 2020.

Wage Trends

The average worker in the Golden Crescent earned annual wages of \$48,718 as of 2020Q4. Average annual wages per worker increased 4.3% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$58,849 in the nation as of 2020Q4.

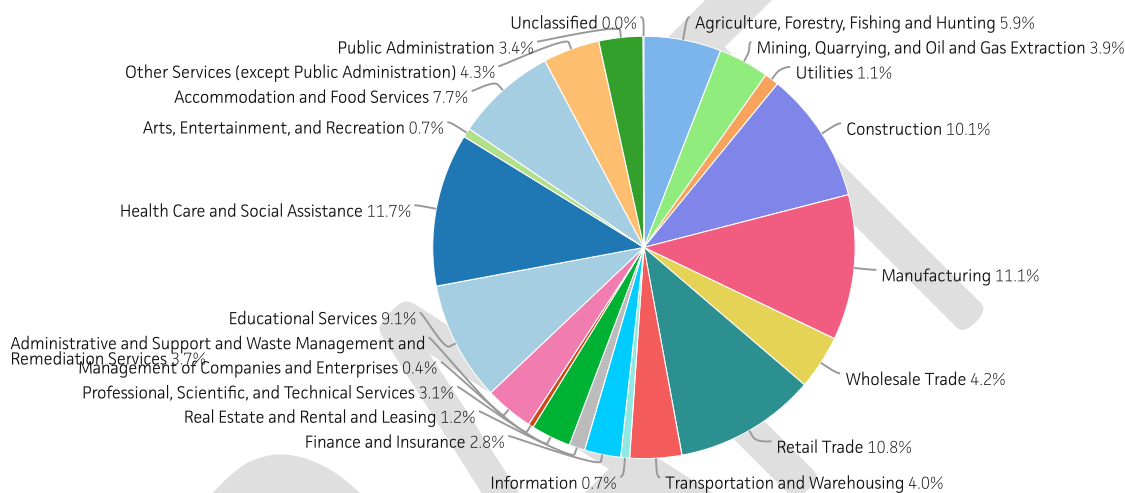


Annual average wages per worker data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2019Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2021Q1.

Industry Snapshot

The largest sector in the Golden Crescent is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 10,391 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Manufacturing (9,868 workers) and Retail Trade (9,604). 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 = 9.34), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (4.39), and Utilities (2.11).

Total Workers for Golden Crescent by Industry



Source: JobsEQ*, Data as of 2020Q2

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 2019Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2021Q1.

Sectors in the Golden Crescent with the highest average wages per worker are Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$98,816), Utilities (\$84,190), and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$83,074). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 5 years are Transportation and Warehousing (+281 jobs), Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (+238), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+184).

Over the next 1 year, employment in the Golden Crescent is projected to expand by 233 jobs, however that projection is likely to change as a result of COVID-19. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction with a +2.1% year-over-year rate of growth but this projection will be impacted by both COVID-19 and the continued downturn in the Energy sector. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Health Care and Social Assistance (+111 jobs), Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (+67), and Accommodation and Food Services (+42).

NAICS	Industry	Empl	Current		5-Year History		Total Demand	1-Year Forecast			
			Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Empl Change	Ann %		Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	10,391	\$45,675	0.80	-800	-1.5%	1,106	483	499	124	1.2%
31	Manufacturing	9,868	\$79,079	1.35	-798	-1.5%	998	379	648	-29	-0.3%
44	Retail Trade	9,604	\$31,140	1.06	-569	-1.1%	1,272	566	715	-10	-0.1%
23	Construction	8,940	\$57,495	1.74	413	1.0%	982	316	564	103	1.2%
61	Educational Services	8,089	\$38,641	1.11	56	0.1%	730	359	388	-17	-0.2%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	6,867	\$18,648	0.92	116	0.3%	1,177	492	620	65	0.9%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5,242	\$24,368	4.39	-245	-0.9%	568	242	326	1	0.0%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,843	\$28,967	0.99	155	0.8%	444	200	238	6	0.2%
42	Wholesale Trade	3,681	\$60,580	1.09	102	0.6%	373	145	241	-13	-0.4%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	3,512	\$64,821	0.84	712	4.6%	379	159	215	6	0.2%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	3,436	\$85,433	9.34	-2,712	-11.0%	392	114	237	40	1.2%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3,308	\$42,211	0.59	503	3.4%	403	162	220	21	0.6%
92	Public Administration	2,991	\$49,535	0.70	-99	-0.6%	281	116	158	7	0.2%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,704	\$63,090	0.44	247	1.9%	255	86	146	23	0.9%
52	Finance and Insurance	2,444	\$56,494	0.68	-174	-1.4%	236	87	142	8	0.3%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,079	\$54,064	0.69	-643	-8.9%	112	50	59	3	0.3%
22	Utilities	976	\$80,514	2.11	-32	-0.6%	86	32	56	-2	-0.2%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	621	\$21,203	0.38	-81	-2.4%	91	39	48	4	0.7%
51	Information	620	\$43,746	0.35	-145	-4.1%	56	22	38	-4	-0.6%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	348	\$89,355	0.25	105	7.5%	33	12	20	2	0.5%
99	Unclassified	43	\$34,465	0.42	28	24.6%	5	2	3	0	0.4%
	Total - All Industries	88,606	\$48,718	1.00	-3,860	-0.8%	10,015	4,131	5,531	352	0.4%

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 2020Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2021Q1. Forecast employment growth uses national projections adapted for regional growth patterns.

Occupation Snapshot

The largest major occupation group in the Golden Crescent is Office and Administrative Support Occupations, employing 9,941 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Management Occupations (8,329 workers) and Sales and Related Occupations (8,289). 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 Construction and Extraction Occupations (LQ = 1.89), Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations (1.84), and Management Occupations (1.45).

Occupation groups in the Golden Crescent with the highest average wages per worker are Architecture and Engineering Occupations (\$90,300), Legal Occupations (\$90,200), and Management Occupations (\$81,800). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 1.7% among Legal Occupations to 9.2% among Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations.

Over the next 1 year, the fastest growing occupation group in the Golden Crescent is expected to be Healthcare Support Occupations with a +1.6% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Construction and Extraction Occupations (+95 jobs) and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (+65). Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Sales and Related Occupations (1,174 jobs) and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (1,174).

Golden Crescent, 2020Q4¹

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Avg Ann Wages ²	Current			5-Year History			1-Year Forecast				
				LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ³	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	9,941	\$35,500	0.88	447	4.2%	235	-880	-1.7%	1,094	479	655	-40	-0.4%
11-0000	Management	8,329	\$81,800	1.45	131	1.7%	163	-257	-0.6%	779	341	413	26	0.3%
41-0000	Sales and Related	8,289	\$39,100	0.97	492	5.6%	635	-564	-1.3%	1,176	464	710	1	0.0%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	7,782	\$42,500	1.89	668	7.5%	107	-1,218	-2.9%	1,029	256	678	95	1.2%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	7,159	\$36,700	0.98	514	6.3%	587	-117	-0.3%	919	323	578	19	0.3%
51-0000	Production	6,873	\$42,500	1.32	377	4.9%	114	-631	-1.7%	767	249	539	-21	-0.3%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	6,577	\$21,600	0.92	684	9.2%	398	-16	0.0%	1,239	481	693	65	1.0%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	5,436	\$45,000	1.09	241	4.6%	88	-38	-0.1%	479	218	261	1	0.0%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	4,443	\$46,500	1.30	207	3.9%	167	-20	-0.1%	458	140	298	20	0.4%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	4,312	\$74,600	0.84	80	1.9%	692	-135	-0.6%	305	117	141	46	1.1%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	3,220	\$68,400	0.65	66	2.4%	70	150	1.0%	328	90	221	18	0.6%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	2,877	\$28,300	0.74	122	3.8%	253	-265	-1.7%	417	174	195	47	1.6%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	2,834	\$26,000	0.94	186	6.0%	161	281	2.1%	391	161	215	15	0.5%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	1,822	\$24,100	0.76	183	8.8%	45	-43	-0.5%	289	125	153	11	0.6%
33-0000	Protective Service	1,643	\$45,400	0.85	40	2.3%	34	-119	-1.4%	165	67	95	3	0.2%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	1,605	\$90,300	1.05	34	2.4%	24	-73	-0.9%	134	38	88	8	0.5%
21-0000	Community and	1,128	\$47,100	0.74	19	2.1%	86	-16	-0.3%	132	42	81	9	0.8%

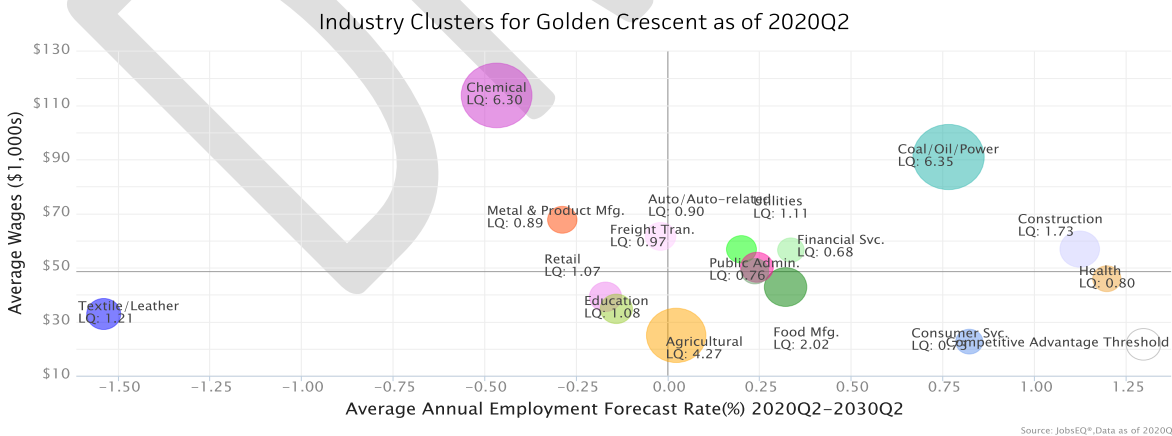
Golden Crescent, 2020Q4¹

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Current				5-Year History			1-Year Forecast				
			Avg Ann Wages ²	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ³	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
	Social Service													
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	1,127	\$70,300	0.42	22	2.4%	67	102	1.9%	92	20	66	7	0.6%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	1,048	\$26,800	1.84	80	7.8%	4	78	1.6%	171	42	128	1	0.1%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	935	\$44,200	0.58	46	6.1%	40	-42	-0.9%	106	37	66	2	0.2%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	815	\$73,200	1.05	17	2.6%	33	-4	-0.1%	77	16	58	4	0.4%
23-0000	Legal	413	\$90,200	0.54	7	1.7%	3	-32	-1.5%	30	11	17	3	0.6%
	Total - All Occupations	88,606	\$46,200	1.00	4,660	5.0%	4,007	-3,860	-0.8%	10,590	3,891	6,347	352	0.4%

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)
 Data as of 2020Q4 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 are as of 2019 and represent the average for all Covered Employment.
 3. Data represent found online ads active within the last thirty days in the selected region; data represents a sampling rather than the complete universe of postings. Ads lacking zip code information but designating a place (city, town, etc.) may be assigned to the zip code with greatest employment in that place for queries in this analytic. 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).
 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 2020Q4, imputed where necessary with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q4. Wages by occupation are as of 2019 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 Coal/Oil/Power with a location quotient of 6.35. This cluster employs 4,921 workers in the region with an average wage of \$90,932. Employment in the Coal/Oil/Power cluster is projected to expand in the region about 0.8% per year over the next ten years.



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 2019Q4 with preliminary estimates updated to 2021Q1. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

The previous table indicates industry sectors with current and forecasted growth potential that will be targeted by the Board.

Additionally, each biennium, or as economic conditions dictate, the Board review 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 re-locate 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.

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 corresponding training options) result in high-demand, self-sufficient "livable" wage careers with demonstrated growth potential.

The Committee reviews the existing Target Occupation list (attached) 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;

- 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

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 revised list is presented to the Policy and Planning Committee for review and recommendation to the Board of Director’s. The following is a list of Target Occupations pending review by the Board on February 25, 2021;

13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
47-2031	Carpenters
15-1552	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
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants
51-8091	Plant Systems/Process Operators
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitter, and Steamfitters
33-3051	Police & Sheriff’s Patrol Officers
29-1111	Registered Nurses
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists
47-2221	Structural Iron & Steel Workers
25-3097	Teachers-Early, Elementary, Middle, Secondary, ESL, & Special Education
53-3032	Truck Drivers, Heavy/Tractor Trailers
51-4121	Welders/Cutters/Solderers/Brazers

B. Knowledge and Skills Analysis

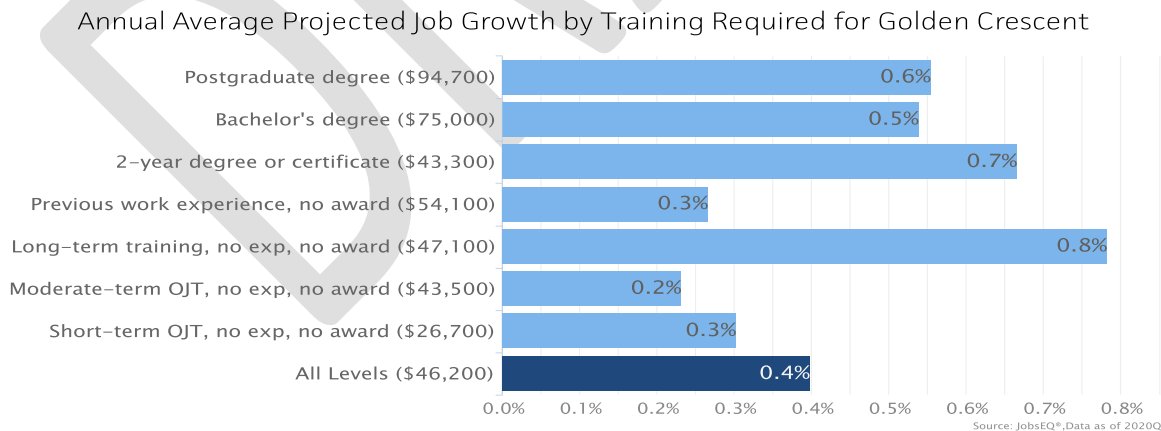
(WIOA §108(b)(1)(B); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(2))

Boards must include an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs for in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations.

Board Response- 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 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 is projected to grow 0.4% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 0.6% per year, those requiring a bachelor’s degree are forecast to grow 0.5% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 0.7% per year or certificate are expected to grow 0.7% per year.



• Employment by occupation data are estimates are as of 2020Q2. 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.

LWDA = 19 - Golden Crescent			Total All Instructional Programs 2019	
Projected Annual Average Job Openings for Occupations: 1,997			Enrollment 3,767	Grads 1,113
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

C. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

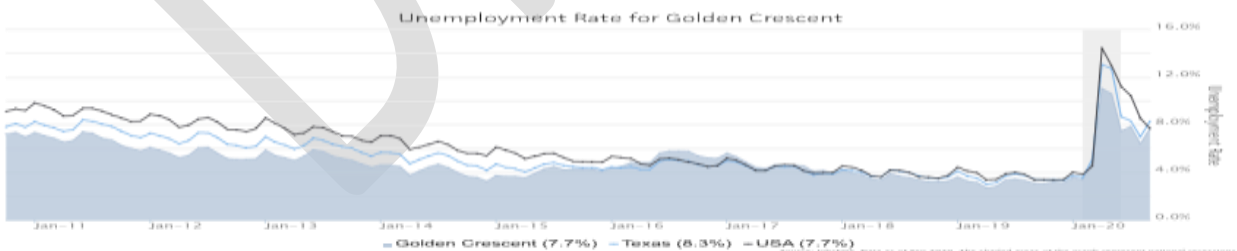
(WIOA §108(b)(1)(C); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(3))

Boards must include an analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force (per WD Letter 18-20, Attachment 2) employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Board Response-In addition to the Labor Market information previously included, the population in the Golden Crescent was 197,171 per American Community Survey data for 2014-2018. The region has a civilian labor force of 92,763 with a participation rate of 60.6%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in the Golden Crescent, 17.6% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 32.9% in the nation. The table below contains additional workforce information, including employment/unemployment trends.

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate for the Golden Crescent was 7.2% as of December 2020. The regional unemployment rate was the same as the national rate of 7.7%. One year earlier, in December 2019, the unemployment rate in the Golden Crescent was 3.1%.



Unemployment rate data are from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and updated through December 2020.

The largest industry sector in the Golden Crescent is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 10,391 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Manufacturing (9,868 workers) and Retail Trade (9,604). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 5 years are Transportation and Warehousing (+281 jobs), Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (+238), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+184).

For additional comprehensive and detailed LMI, please refer to the Board Response under heading; *Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis; A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis.*

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 business 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 GED/high school completion 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.

D. Workforce Development Analysis

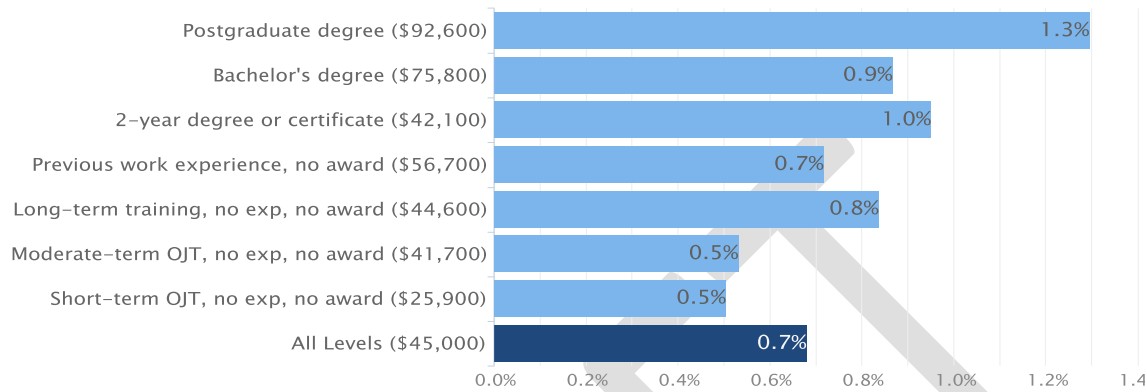
(WIOA §108(b)(1)(D); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(4))

Boards must include an analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including education and training.

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 0.9% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 1.8% per year while those requiring a bachelor’s degree are forecast to grow 1.0% per year. Occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow at a rate of 1.3% per year.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Training Required for Golden Crescent



Employment by occupation data are estimates as of 2020Q4. 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.

The Board regularly analyzes the 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.



Part 3: Core Programs

A. Workforce Development System

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

Boards must include a description of the workforce development system in the workforce area that identifies:

- the programs that are included in the system; and
- how the Board will work with the entities that facilitate core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, that support the strategy identified in the State Plan under WIOA §102(b)(1)(E).

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;
- 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);
- 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.



Table reflects participants served (by program) from 2018-2020

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

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

Boards must include a description of how they 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, including specific career pathways occupations that the Board currently includes on its Target Occupations List, and career pathways occupations that the Board is planning to develop; and*
- *improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).*

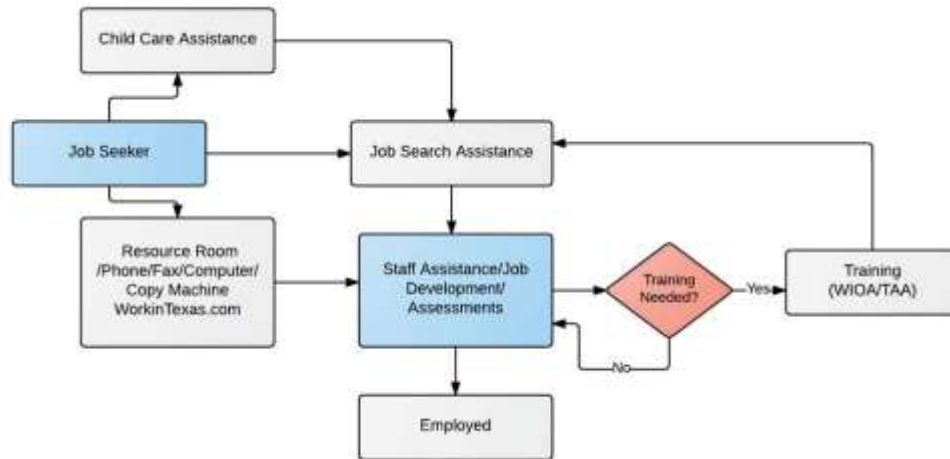
Boards must include a description of the Board's plan for working with at least one of the Governor's industry clusters.

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 8 full-service, one-stop centers,
- 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.
 - comprehensive and specialized assessments (i.e. ProveIt assessments);
 - 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, 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. 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

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

Boards must include a description of the one-stop delivery system in the workforce area, 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 job seekers*
- *How the Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including to remote areas, through the use of technology and other means*
- *How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including the one-stop operators and the 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 the ETPS for; program completion rate, cost, training-related employment and entered employment. Additionally, the Board provides regular oversight and updating of the ETPS.

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 seven 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. With the onset of COVID-19, the Board quickly adapted to utilizing virtual platforms, Zoom, MS Teams, Premier Virtual and enhancing its social media presence, to safely and effectively interact with job seekers, employers, and staff working remotely. Additionally, the Board regularly deploys its 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.

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, 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 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 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. Cooperative Agreements

(WIOA §108(b)(14); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(13))

Boards must provide copies of executed cooperative agreements that explain how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA §107(d)(11)) between the Board or other local entities described in §101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit that administers programs that are carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 720 et seq.) (other than §112 or part C of that title (29 USC 732, 741) and are subject to §121(f) in accordance with §101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals who have disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts.

Board Response- Please refer to the table on the following page for a list of current Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and any cooperative agreements between the Board and partner agencies or organizations. For general information, the following components are included in each Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) the Board executes:

- Board name the partner entity or entities executing the MOU,
- A description of the services to be provided (*i.e.*, a full description of the services and responsibilities of each entity),
- Any other requirements of interest to the parties signing the MOU.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's)				
Name of Provider	Agreement Type	Begin date	End date	Info
Adult Education & Training				
Victoria College Adult Education Program	MOU	9/1/2014	TWC merger	Adult Education and Literacy
TWS Vocational Rehabilitation				
TWS VR	Interagency Agreement	6/23/2014	TWC merger	Vocational Rehabilitation
Miscellaneous				
Community Action Committee of Victoria, TX	MOU	8/1/2009	Indefinite	Assist Low-Income with utility/housing assistance
Community Action Com. of Victoria., TX (OSY)	MOU	11/1/2016	2/28/2017	Assist OSY who lack HS diploma or multiple barriers to employment
Experience Works	MOU	1/1/2016	Indefinite	Assist Older Texans opportunity to work
Texas Dept. of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)	MOU	11/30/2011	11/30/2015	Preparation for Adult Living
Office of Attorney General (OAG)				
OAG	MOU-(OAG#20-COXXX)	pending	pending	NCP-C (Non-Custodial Parent Choices)
Non-Financial Work Site Training & Cooperation Agreements				
Boys & Girls Club-Victoria	NF-Coop. Agreement	10/4/2004	Indefinite	Work Site Training for SNAP Participant.
Christian Women's Job Corps of Gonzales County	NF-Coop. Agreement	3/8/2010	Indefinite	Work Site Training for SNAP Participant.
DeWitt Senior Citizens	NF-Work-Site Training.	9/14/2010	Indefinite	Work Site Training-TANF, SNAP, E&T
Dorothy O'Connor Pet Adoption Center	NF-Coop. Agreement	5/27/2010	Indefinite	Work Site Training for SNAP Participant.
Friends of Elder Citizens-Edna	NF-Work-Site Training.	1/6/2011	Indefinite	Work Site Training-TANF, SNAP, E&T
Gonzales Chamber of Commerce.	NF-Work-Site Training.	3/15/2011	Indefinite	Work Site Training-TANF, SNAP, E&T
Hallettsville Head Start	NF-Coop. Agreement	10/7/2008	Indefinite	Work Site Training for TANF Participant.
Health & Human Services Commission	NF-Work-Site Training.	7/26/2010	Indefinite	Worksite Training Agreement for TANF, SNAP E&T Participant.
Mission Bautista	NF-Coop. Agreement	1/16/2008	Indefinite	Work Site Training for TANF Participant.
VCAM	NF-Coop. Agreement	10/4/2004	Indefinite	Work Site Training-TANF, SNAP E&T.
Victoria Beauty College	NF-Coop. Agreement	1/22/2009	Indefinite	Work Site Training-TANF, SNAP E&T
The Victoria College	NF-Work-Site Training.	4/9/2011	Indefinite	Work Site Training-TANF, SNAP E&T
Miscellaneous Agreements				
Billy T. Cattan Recovery Outreach, Inc.	MOU	4/13/2006	Indefinite	Substance Abuse Intervention

DAV Disabled American Veterans, Victoria Chapter	MOU	6/1/2015	Indefinite	Veteran Support & Assistance (Provide Office Space)
Community Development Institute (CDI) Head Start	Com. Partnership Agreement.	1/7/2011	Indefinite	Provide services to children & their families
Lavaca County Senior Citizens Program	MOU	5/1/2002	Indefinite	Alternative Transportation for TANF clients.
Mid-Coast Family Services	MOU	7/29/2003	Indefinite	Domestic Violence Intervention
Mid-Coast Family Services & Gulf Bend MHMR (Both on same MOU)	MOU	2/9/2009	Indefinite	Substance Abuse & Mental Health
TDCJ-PD Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Parole Division	Local Operating. Agreement.	9/1/2007	Indefinite	Serving Ex-Offenders
VISD EvenStart	MOU	6/16/2008	Indefinite	Assist VISD EvenStart referrals for Jobs & Asst.

All MOU's and agreements are available for review [Monday through Friday 8a-5p] at our office in Victoria;

Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent
120 South Main, Suite #501
Victoria, TX 77901

Or, if you prefer, a copy can be forwarded to you electronically by calling 361.576.5872.

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

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

- *Boards must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the workforce area to do the following:*
- *Facilitate engagement of employers in the workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations*
- *Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area*
- *Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development*
- *Strengthen links 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, use of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies 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, 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 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.

D. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

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

A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding 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 are responsible for providing the core of Wagner-Peyser Act services, with contractor staff supplementing those services where necessary.

E. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management

(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 an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

Board Response- With the onset of COVID-19, and considering since seven 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. Most recently, the Board instituted wide-ranging adjustments to its service delivery model as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within three days of receiving notice of Phase I pandemic protocols, they developed/implemented an action plan for staff members to provide virtual services, deploying hardware and increasing internet capacity at each of the workforce centers to establish safe, stable, and responsive services. The Board quickly adapted to utilization of virtual platforms, Zoom, MS Teams, Premier Virtual and enhancing its social media presence, to safely and effectively interact with job seekers, employers, and staff working remotely. Additionally, the Board regularly deploys its 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 services and to maintain adherence to ADA and WIOA compliance standards.

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

A. Economic Development and Entrepreneurial/Microenterprise Activities (WIOA §108(b)(5); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(4))

Boards must include an explanation of how the Board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the workforce area and how the Board will promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services.

Board Response- WSGC maintains a strong commitment of engaging and aligning workforce development, economic development, and educational efforts, ensuring the Golden Crescent region remains competitive in the economy. We are actively involved with economic development entities, chambers of commerce, and industry/employer associations within the region.

The Board's Executive Director, Business Services Director, WSGC Managing Director and Business Services Unit meet frequently with area economic development entities and collaborate regularly on employer focused services such as business retention and expansion and increased sharing of data to benefit area businesses. We attend and participate in economic development meetings and provide information about workforce programs and collaborate with area EDCs, to actively seek additional or special funding and grants geared toward their respective local priorities including entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services.

B. Rapid Response Activity Coordination

(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 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.

During a Rapid Response meeting, if it is determined that the employer's reduction in force, layoff, or closure, is trade-related, or could be considered negatively impacted by global influences, then information is given regarding the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program.

This federally-funded program is designed to help workers that have lost their job through no fault of their own as a result of foreign trade, imports, or shift of employment abroad. TAA benefits are provided [at no cost to the employer] to help eligible workers return to work at or above their previous skills level and at least 80% of their previous wage.

If there is a possibility that the layoff is “TAA-eligible”, a detailed overview of the program is provided including information on filing the petition. Keeping in mind that it could take some time for the TAA petition to be reviewed/certified by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the dislocated workers are still eligible to receive the following services;

- Job search assistance, (eligibility determination for additional WIOA-funded services).
- Additional assistance to secure employment (comprehensive, specialized assessment of skill level and services need for re-employment).
- Dislocated Worker Services: For employees laid-off because of RIF or closure. Typical services include resume writing, money management, stress management, job search assistance, resource room, labor market information, and referral to vocational training as appropriate.
- Training Services: OJT, occupational skills training, customized (contracted) training, etc.
- Support Services: Transportation assistance, child care, work (or training) related expenses to participate in WIOA-funded activities.

Once DOL has certified the TAA petition, the workers are then eligible for additional TAA-funded benefits which include;

- Job Search Allowances: Travel expenses for job interviews outside the customer’s local area.
- Relocation Allowances: Pays a portion of the moving expenses for the customer if they get a job outside the local area.
- Trade Readjustment Allowances: Additional funding [after regular UI benefits are exhausted] if the customer is enrolled in training full-time.
- Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA): Supplemental pay to customer that is;
 - At least 50 years of age,
 - working full-time,
 - earning less than they had been making in the [TAA-certified] job they were laid off from.
- Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC): Program funded by the IRS that pays partial subsidy towards health insurance premiums. Can be redeemed for continued health coverage or taken as a deduction on annual income tax return.

C. Youth Activities and Services

(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 youth with disabilities.

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	Victoria Business and Education Coalition (VBEC), 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
Entrepreneurial skills training	Career advising, service planning, and referral by Career Counselor	VBEC, 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, 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

D. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

(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 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;

- Victoria College Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE)
- Golden Crescent Regional Talent Pipeline Summit
- University of Houston-Victoria Center of 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.

E. Child Care and Early Learning

(40 TAC §809.12 Board Plan for Child Care Services)

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

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 recently 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 have worked in partnership with TWC to conduct comprehensive reviews of the TRS certification program that has culminated in Texas Rising Star certification guideline improvements. The Commission approved rule changes for Texas Rising Star on January 5th, and the roll-out of the revisions is expected to be fully implemented by April 1, 2021. We are coordinating efforts with our TRS mentors and assessors for completion of the revised training requirements to ensure all assessors complete training and attain certification prior to April 1st implementation deadline.

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.

F. Transportation and Other Support Services

(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 (GCRCPC) 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 GCRCPC 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.

G. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)

(WIOA §108(b)(13); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(12))

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with Adult Education Learning activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II 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 Learning (AEL) Center (TWC-funded WIOA Title II administrative and fiscal agent for provision of AEL services) and the VC AEL Director also serves on our Board. 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; 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

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

Boards must also include the list of assessment instruments (tools) used for adult, dislocated worker, and youth.

Board Response-As one of the only Boards in Texas with a full-service, one-stop, career center in each of the counties we represent, 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
Edna Office 903 South Wells Edna, TX 77957 Tel: 361.782.7526 Fax: 361.782.3650	Jackson County
Goliad Office 329 West Franklin Goliad, TX 77963 Tel: 361.645.2703 Fax: 361.645.2221	Goliad County
Gonzales Office 1617 East Sarah Dewitt Gonzales, TX 78629 Tel: 830.672.2146 Fax: 830.672.5099	Gonzales County
Hallettsville Office 727 South Promenade 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
Yoakum Office 307 Crittenden Yoakum, TX 77995 Tel: 361.741.5100 Fax: 361.741.5102	DeWitt and Lavaca Counties

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, 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 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. 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
- Bee County Junior College
- Area School Districts
- Area DOL-Registered Apprenticeship Programs

B. Priority to Recipients of Public Assistance and Low-Income Individuals (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 the TWC Workforce Development (WD) Letter 12-15, “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth”, revised September 26, 2016.

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 outreaching 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. In late 2018, WSGC Gonzales location integrated offices with VR staff and the same colocation is currently underway in our Victoria Center beginning in 2021. Plans include eventual integration/co-location of all VR and Career Center services in the Golden Crescent.

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

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

Boards must include identification of 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

(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:

SMALL PURCHASE – A relatively simple, informal purchases with an aggregate cost of not more than \$25,000.

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 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 \$25,000 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
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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

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

Boards must include a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with TWC and the CEOs consistent with WIOA §116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the area and to be used by the Board 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 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).

BCY21 Performance Measures for WSGC are detailed in the table on the following page. Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the changes in performance measures statewide, many measures are still pending resolution.

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
18	All Participants-Median Earnings Quarter 2 Post Exit
Other TWC Board Contracted Measures	
1	Claimant Reemployment within 10 weeks
2	Number of Employers Receiving Workforce Assistance
3	Choices Full Work Rate
4	Avg. Children Served Per day

For those measures that are still pending final target resolution by TWC, once established and contracted, they will be automatically incorporated by WSGC.

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 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 The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) and Work in Texas (WIT) reports 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)

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

Boards must include a description of how training services outlined in WIOA §134 will be provided through the use of ITAs, including, if contracts for training services will be used, 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 to be 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

(20 CFR §663.420)

Boards may impose limits on the duration and amount of ITAs. If the state or Board chooses to do so, the limitations must be described in the Board Plan, but must not be implemented in a manner that undermines WIOA's requirement that training services are to be 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 ETPS) 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. Under consideration by the Board of Directors at the February 25, 2021 meeting, is imposing a financial limitation capped at \$7,500.00 per student attending in-county training and a maximum of \$10,000.00 for out-of-county students attending. 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 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

Boards must include a description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs in its workforce area to register with the Eligible Training Provider System in order 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 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 System (ETPS) 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 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 and the Board is currently working on a High Demand Job Training (HDJT) Grant with The Victoria Sales Tax Development Corporation of which one of the projects in the application to TWC, if approved) would provide additional support to the MCA Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship program.

To further promote the advantages of work-based learning the Board and WSGC BSU engage with area higher education partners to outreach and educate employers regarding the benefits of apprenticeship programs.

B. ApprenticeshipTexas

Boards 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. Local education agencies act as fiscal agents for registered apprenticeship training programs.

Recently we received a Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) Grant to provide additional support to a local DOL-Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Program, 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

Boards must include a description of the process used by the Board, consistent with WIOA §108(d), 20 CFR §679.550(b) and §679.560(b) and (e), to:

- *make copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media;*
- *include an opportunity for comment by members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education;*
- *provide 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; and*
- *submit any comments that express disagreement with the plan to TWC along with the plan.*

Board Response- The Board placed a Public Notice in the Texas Register on February 9, 2021, advising that the Golden Crescent Workforce Development Board Strategic and Operational Plan 2021–2024, 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 9, 2021) 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 95,000 subscribers, and is circulated throughout all counties in the Golden Crescent.

Appendix: Demonstrating Alignment with Texas’ Strategic Plan for the Workforce System

A. Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

B. Local Workforce Development Board Strategic Planning

Board Response-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 of Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) to the Governor for consideration for approval. TWIC reviews each Board Plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide goals and objectives in the system plan, The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 (2020 Update), which can be found at <https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/twic/System-Strategic-Plan-Update.pdf>.

Additionally, state law charges TWIC with reporting annually to the Governor and to the Texas legislature on the implementation of the system’s strategic plan and monitoring the operation of the state’s workforce system to assess the degree to which the system is effective in achieving state and local goals and objectives. Therefore, TWIC also reviews Board Plans and plan modifications to determine each Board’s progress in implementing strategies that align with the strategic plan for the Texas workforce system. Following consideration for approval at a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting, TWIC recommends the Board Plans to the Governor for consideration for approval. Boards’ responses to the following planning elements are reviewed by TWIC for alignment and are the basis for recommending approval.

In response to the TWIC requirements and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 (2020 Update) that identify the following four sections below, the Board has described the four system goals that address critical, high-priority system issues for the state. **For each goal, we have described one significant Board strategy or initiative that fulfills the intent of the goal.**

C. Focus on Employers

By accessing critical education and labor data sets, employers can more easily find and plan for skilled workers to meet their needs in both the immediate timeframe and the future. Through greater engagement with employers, education and training providers can better design career and technical education content and delivery options that are more aligned with industry needs. Providers can make adjustments in program content to benefit employers and students, as well as address both state and regional economic needs.

Objective #1

Facilitate development and alliances with partners/stakeholders (businesses, industry associations, economic development entities, chambers of commerce, etc.) within ‘Target Industries’ to identify market challenges and opportunities.

Objective #2

Increase services to employers that are value-added, efficient, and adaptable to meet the varied needs and expectations of each respective industry.

Objective #3

Increase marketing and promotion of available services via WSGC’s Business Services Unit and various media outlets.

Objective #4

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

Objective #5

Continue to work with rural counties to assist with employer retention and expansion strategies and to provide information about any opportunities for grant assistance i.e. Texas Industry Partnership (TIP) Grant Skills Development Fund (SDF) grants, High Demand Job Training (HDJT) Grants, etc.

Initiative: As we learned from the recent 2021 Virtual Town Hall on Registered Apprenticeship expansion, the Department of Labor (DOL) and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) are very interested in promoting more work-based learning and on-the-job training opportunities, particularly apprenticeships, so that participants can earn a wage while simultaneously attending classroom training. Following the actions of the 85th Texas Legislature to align Chapter 837 of TWC's rules with Chapter 133 of the Texas Education Code (enacted by House Bill 2790) more funding for certain apprenticeship training programs was approved. In the summer of 2018, we actively and aggressively began applying for any type of grant that could support any Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RA) in our area. Meanwhile, the local chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) and their Board of Directors were working to create the Mid Coast Construction Academy (MCA) and make them eligible to receive grant funds as well (either with the Board or MCA acting as fiduciary). Later that year, 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 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 as noted, the Apprenticeship and associated Pre-Apprenticeship serve the training needs of both secondary (high school juniors and seniors) and post-secondary students. The results have been phenomenal so far and in fact, the academy in its first year had over 90% of current participants receive NCCER certification that is industry-validated and recognized nationwide.

The first cohort has graduated to the next phase of the Apprenticeship and we have applied for and were 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. Like all training providers, MCA has had to adapt to COVID-19 and the corresponding service delivery constraints and realities of providing training in a virtual platform. This new grant has assisted with the cost of modifying curriculum to virtual delivery and as hoped for and envisioned by all parties, the infusion of these new funds has also been instrumental in not only maintaining the program, but expanding it as well, even amidst a global pandemic. Beyond just serving area HS students, this apprenticeship provides training options/career pathways for many of our program participants as well, including; dislocated workers, non-custodial parents, foster youth, WIOA In-School Youth/Out-of-School Youth, Adult Education participants, ex-offenders, and other populations regularly served in our career centers. At the entry-level, a trainee can attain a short-term

NCCER certificate that is industry-validated and recognized nationwide and upon completion, a trainee is earning wage and can achieve journey-level status in a skilled trade. Moreover, since Workforce Development Board and Contractor staff were involved in the creation of the academy, we take a very active role in the promotion and recruitment to all students of all genders, ethnicities, and ages including those historically underrepresented, especially in the construction trades. Likewise, based on the recruitment activities of all entities (MCA, school districts, Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent), projections of career and technical education (CTE) and RA program referrals, the data confirms the academy will have a consistent flow of participants for program sustainability.

While the training academy has had a very successful first two years, we are continually working to expand Registered Apprenticeship opportunities throughout the Golden Crescent. In fact, we recently (September 2020) met with City of Victoria officials to discuss the possibility of a High Demand Job Training (HDJT) Grant to fund RA expansion. We are grateful for these TIP Grant funds and their usefulness towards addressing the critical shortage both in our area and statewide with a talent pipeline that is working to meet industry needs (current and future). While we are all very pleased with the results so far, we look forward to all the possibilities and opportunities available from TWC and other partners, to assist both trainees and employers throughout our region.

This is but one of many examples of the Board's commitment to accelerating employment and improving efficiencies through shared resources (public and private). This coordination and leveraging of resources, creates funding opportunities for job training that not only serve the needs of all stakeholders, but addresses the critical labor needs of our regional employers.

D. Engage in Partnerships:

Through collaborative and transparent processes, partners focus on outcomes that improve the employability of all program participants—from across a wide spectrum of capabilities and experiences—to meet employer needs. The leveraging of partnerships to enhance system alignment and outcomes depends on trust, a culture of collaboration both within and external to the workforce system, deep working relationships, and technical capacity to communicate to share needs, data, and information. Partnerships can provide for common planning, intake, and reporting on outcomes, as well as ensuring a “no wrong door” approach to the provision of workforce programs and services.

Objective #1

Continue to extend and maintain support for workforce development through formalized and long-term efforts aimed at strengthening communication between employers, educational institutions, service providers, and other relevant partners and stakeholders.

Objective #2

Leverage P-16 education in the region to improve workforce development and increase the number of trained (or trainable) workers in the area.

Objective #3

Facilitate the development of strategic alliances and partnerships in support of workforce development initiatives.

Objective #4

Work with internal partner Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) and local and state Veteran's organizations to expedite the transition of returning veterans into the workforce and increase job placement in the civilian sector.

Objective #5

Develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with partner agencies to leverage available resources (financial and co-location of assets).

Initiative: Currently (Spring 2021) the Board is working with the Victoria Sales Tax Development Corporation (VSTDC) on submission of a High Demand Job Training (HDJT) to TWC. The proposal includes partnering with three highly respected training entities, Victoria College (VC), Victoria ISD (VISD), and Mid Coast Construction Academy (MCA) that collectively operate in each county that Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent (WSGC) serves. Moreover, their projects address training shortages in targeted and demand occupations from a regional perspective and designate funds to a mix of HS (public and private), college students, and adults enrolled in Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships and other classroom-based training program. Perhaps equally important, is that this entire collaboration (VSTDC, VC, MCA, VISD, WSGC) reflects the willingness of the City of Victoria's civic, business, and education leaders to truly invest in the economic vitality of its community and neighbors by supporting these types of initiatives.

E. 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*** by;

- 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.

Initiative: Workforce Development, Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) are key partners in addressing the business talent and labor needs of their communities. To accurately determine those needs they collectively assess and identify skills gaps and other training needs and services to prepare job seekers or an employer's existing workforce for success. We strive to collectively present a common, unified front as workforce development services available through WSGC, VR, and AEL. These include services to businesses, as well as job seekers being served by either WSGC or our AEL/VR customers or consumers. We've developed detailed interagency agreements (MOUs/MOAs), a cross agency point of contact both for business services and job seeker services and have an existing referral and reverse referral system in place. Likewise, key frontline and operational staff meet regularly, especially in instances of partner initiatives; Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL), Paid Work Experience (PWE) or other projects that require continuous collaboration. Otherwise, all interagency staff strive to meet quarterly to assess operational effectiveness and adapt service delivery procedures accordingly (of necessary). Together, we are constantly cross-referencing the list of job postings with the skills of our participants to determine employment suitability. We are regularly working with employers that would be willing to hire an UI claimant, LTU, VR consumer, NCP-Choices, AEL participant, etc. candidate if the job seeker didn't have the necessary skills, then upgrading via most appropriate (allowable) funding stream, always with the goal of matching trainees as quickly as possible with employment or advancement opportunities. As a result of our collective efforts, our partnership we were awarded the Board/AEL/VR Collaboration Award at the 2019 TWC Annual Conference.

F. 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 school districts, 2-year and 4-year post-secondary schools to identify, develop, and support programs and methods that maximize attainment of an industry-recognized degree, license, or certification at all educational levels.

Initiative: The Learning, Exploration, Aspiration, Preparation, Success (LEAPS), initiative was funded by BHP and facilitated by the International Youth Foundation (IYF), Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent and Communities in Schools of the Golden Crescent. The goal of this pioneering program is to prepare young people, ages 14 to 24, with the fundamental skills needed to thrive in the 21st century world of school, work, and life. A community-driven initiative, LEAPS forges partnerships with community organizations to expand access to programs, services, and opportunities that engage and empower the youth in the Golden Crescent. Recently, Board and Contractor staff from the Golden Crescent joined area stakeholders for a regional summit, *Strengthening Youth Opportunities in Rural America* to discuss and address issues facing youth and students in our respective areas. We believe our LEAPS program matches perfectly with the goals of the Governor’s Tri-Agency Initiative a collaborative initiative designed to strategically align the efforts of Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to work together on developing strong links between education and industry, with the goal of

helping Texas grow in economic prosperity. By securing investments (both capital and human) from local business and education partnerships, our LEAPS initiative not only aligns with the Tri-Agency initiative but ensures that young men and women will reap the benefits of LEAPS far into the future via a sustainable, locally-supported, delivery model. The project's main objective is to maximize existing relationships between education, workforce, and industry partners to strategically align their collective resources to equip youth with the fundamental skills to succeed in education, their future employment, and provide them with opportunities to become engaged members of their communities.

As a result of the LEAPS program, the Board was able to leverage some of their federal funding allocations to serve any students identified as WIOA-eligible (ISY or OSY). Combined with the funding received from BHP, Texas Education Agency, participating ISD's, and contributions from United Way, the Board's involvement has been instrumental (and beneficial) in keeping at-risk youth both in school and engaged in positive educational and social activities. This relationship provides the Board with direct access to youth and the opportunity to provide workforce-related guidance, such as career exploration, early exposure to targeted industries and occupations (critically important to the HB 5 career endorsement mandate), career ladders, interviewing techniques, child labor laws, and other relevant and useful, workforce-related information.

Because the LEAPS Program takes a holistic approach to youth development using local entities the project relies upon and benefits from locally-tailored combinations of: grant funds from local entities to increase degree attainment, address any locally identified gaps; support youth civic engagement; increase career education and awareness, and pre-employment and employ skill development. Another goal of the program is sustainability planning and improving organizational and technical capacity to maintain the program beyond BHP financial support. Keeping youth in school to attain their degree and preparing them for making informed decisions about their post-secondary options, is paramount to a successful and thriving economic base. Job seekers are better prepared for entering the labor market if they have a HS diploma, besides the opportunity to increase their overall earning potential. Likewise, employers are provided a better-educated workforce, thereby increasing their revenue-capacity, and productivity as well.

The LEAPS Initiative, as well as other investments in education and training, symbolizes the Board's commitment towards improving regional access for all participants to complete programs of study. The ability to further one's education by earning post-secondary credentials or licensure and gain critical employability skills, results in our employers being better positioned to find and hire employees via an enhanced education and training pipeline.