

BOARD PLAN 2017-2020



Local Workforce Development Board Planning Guidelines Program Years 2017–2020

Introduction

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) §108, each Local Workforce Development Board (Board) is required to develop and submit to the state a comprehensive four-year plan (Local Plan) that identifies and describes policies and procedures as well as local activities that are in line with the State Plan. This Local Plan must be developed openly and be available to the public for comment for 30 days, particularly to members of the business and educational communities as well as various other labor organizations. Along with submission of the Local 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 and the Board 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.

Part A: Strategic Elements

The strategic elements of the Local Workforce Development Board Planning Guidelines (Guidelines) are as follows:

Board's Vision

1. A description of the Board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. The description must include:
 - a. goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment; and
 - b. goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A).

The mission of Workforce Solutions is: To place North Texans in jobs and equip workers with the skills that foster economic development. Through partnerships and frequent communication, the Board works to determine how to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. In addition to working closely with and sharing information with independent school districts, Region 9 Education Service Center, community colleges, and Midwestern State University, the Board works to ensure that child care quality is promoted along with the value of beginning as early as possible to prepare an educated, self-sufficient workforce.

Examples of Board resources that are used to help prepare an educated and skilled workforce include sharing labor market information through summer presentations for career and technical education teachers and purchasing Career Cruising software licenses for hundreds of area students; hosting the annual youth career fair for thousands of area 8th-graders who are making career pathway choices and the Transition Fair for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities and barriers to employment; providing paid work experience opportunities for area youth; participating in advisory committee discussions about career and technical education programs at the school district, community college, and university levels; and listening to employers at chamber of commerce and economic development meetings about their needs for trained workers.

Meeting performance measures as outlined in WIOA federal legislation and applied by the Texas Workforce Commission definitely is a Board goal, but the main work of the Board and partners is to efficiently and effectively match employers and job-seekers while determining what resources and skills are most needed. The Board coordinates with partners, including adult education and literacy along with the operators of workforce center services, to identify mutual goals and determine how best to track and report success through the numbers of individuals who move to unsubsidized employment with self-sufficient wages following the attainment of recognized skills training and certificates.

2. 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 area, to achieve the vision and goals.

The Board’s strategy is to involve all staff members in the workforce centers and child care office in the planning and implementation of the Board’s vision and goals, to provide periodic reports, and seek input from Board members. Without the “big picture,” staff members may focus only their immediate tasks instead of understanding how each part of the system is linked and dependent. During the procurement phase of establishing new operational contracts, the Board centers attention on providing staff members with the support and tools that they need to work successfully. A positive relationship with the contractor administrators is important, but if the local management staff is not allowed flexibility to meet local needs, success will be less attainable.

In addition to working with the contracted administrators to deliver local services, the Board ensures through Memoranda of Understanding and periodic contact with representatives of a variety of organizations that provide additional resources that service delivery is enhanced. Each Board meeting includes reports from partners that provide data and discussion about workforce center program participation, child care quality, adult education, and featured presentations from representatives of vocational rehabilitation, other area nonprofit organizations, and education. Meetings frequently are scheduled with partners to focus on particular strategies, such as inviting adult education staff members to participate in WIOA orientation sessions at the Wichita Falls workforce center and developing a process to coordinate how to identify and track TANF and SNAP participants; working with child care management staff members to apply new federal

regulations to enroll and track children within a restricted budget; and meeting with vocational rehabilitation representatives of both the state program and a local provider to update and refine the long-time referral process as a result of changing requirements. All of these efforts benefit the entire region as processes developed in Wichita Falls for the largest population and the source of most of the partners are adapted to the more rural areas with a more scattered population.

Economic and Workforce Analysis

1. A regional analysis of the following:
 - a. The economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as well as targeted occupations
 - b. The employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations

As appropriate, a local workforce development area (workforce area) may use an existing analysis, provided that it is recent and provides a current and accurate description of the regional economy.

The North Texas workforce development area includes almost 10,000 square miles spread across 11 counties between the Panhandle and the Metroplex near the Red River where Texas meets Oklahoma. The labor market is shared with southern Oklahoma communities just across the river which is a short 20 miles from Wichita Falls, the largest city at just over 100,000 residents. The next largest community includes about 10,000 residents. Traditionally, the economy is based on agriculture with some cotton fields to the North and West, wheat farms, and cattle ranches, and a strong oil and gas production base. A strong manufacturing presence peaked in the last century and efforts to revive and retain those employers continue. The area population is over 200,000 and continues to age and decline, although there has been success in the numbers of younger residents who have moved away and chosen to return to raise their families amid surrounding family support after they have experienced larger urban areas. This combination of small urban and rural centers Wichita Falls as the hub for higher education and skills training, administration of the services sector, shopping, and health care which also means a choice of Dallas/Fort Worth and Oklahoma City destinations. Other area communities are more rural and choose to market their strengths with historical and quality of life attractions.

The area's largest employer is Sheppard Air Force Base, which hosts the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training program. Most of the 13,000 people at Sheppard are pilot trainees from throughout the world, including The Netherlands, Canada, England, Belgium, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Italy, and others, which enriches the culture of the area with a variety of spoken languages and shared customs. Many retired veterans choose to remain in the area or return to live the rest of their lives. Sheppard is one of 3 military installations within 100 miles along with Fort Sill in Lawton, Oklahoma, and Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma.

Because of the importance of the military and the resulting economic impact, the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce and Industry has chosen to target the aerospace industry

with strategies to attract additional business. This announcement was made at the Chamber's annual meeting in January 2017. During planning sessions in February 2017, the Wichita Falls City Council, with several new members, participated in strategic planning sessions to set goals and objectives. Among the top concerns and areas of continued concentration was the attraction and retention of younger people. Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls attracts a number of students from foreign countries and from more urban areas of the state and efforts to entice them to stay and work are increasing. MSU recently opened its first branch location at Flower Mound, coordinating with North Central Texas College.

While planning to target newer industry, the Chamber and area economic development organizations also continue to concentrate on retaining existing businesses and provide them with trained workers and opportunities for updating required skills. After surviving a prolonged period of drought, the area received replenishing rains that restored the area's water systems. The prolonged drought had threatened to end any plans for growth, expansion, and retention of businesses. The area seems to weather the periodic ups and downs of the oil and gas industry with an expected loss of employment, but revives with the resilience among long-time producers and the maintenance of transferable skills, for example, of welders and truck drivers.

With the decline of manufacturing and the cyclical ups-and-downs of the oil and gas industry, the growth and steadiness of jobs in North Texas are in health care and entry-level wage jobs in the hospitality and service sectors. There are jobs that pay self-sustaining wages, but employers continue to complain about the lack of basic employment skills in a majority of job-seekers. Workforce centers continue to offer job-readiness classes to all residents and staff members offer to host the classes at area locations, such as housing authorities and schools. Representatives of area economic development organizations often strategize about how to retain businesses, develop new interests, and attract younger workers to remain in the area.

2. A list of the in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The list of in-demand industry sectors includes:

- Accommodation and Food Services
- Construction
- Educational Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Retail Trade
- Transportation and Warehousing

The list of in-demand occupations includes:

1. Accountants & Auditors
2. Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education
3. Secondary School Teachers, Except Special, Career & Technical Education

4. Registered Nurses
5. Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses
6. Psychiatric Aides
7. Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers, including Fast Food
8. Waiters & Waitresses
9. Child Care Workers
10. Personal Care Aides
11. Retail Salespersons
12. Medical Secretaries
13. Construction Laborers
14. Maintenance & Repair Workers, General
15. Team Assemblers
16. Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers

3. A list of the target occupations.

The current target occupations list for North Texas is:

<u>O'Net/SOC</u>	<u>Title</u>
1. 13-2011	Accountants and Auditors
2. 49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
3. 43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks
4. 15-1151	Computer Support Specialists
5. 15-1121	Computer Systems Analysts
6. 15-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers
7. 51-4011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operator
8. 33-3012	Correctional Officers/Jailers
9. 31-9091	Dental Assistants
10. 29-2021	Dental Hygienists
11. 49-2094	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment
12. 47-2111	Electricians
13. 25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, except Special Education
14. 29-2041	EMTs/Paramedics
15. 35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers
16. 11-9051	Food Service Managers
17. 11-1021	General and Operations Managers
18. 49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers
19. 29-2061	Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses
20. 51-4041	Machinists
21. 31-9092	Medical Assistants
22. 29-2071	Medical Records/Health Information Technicians
23. 15-1142	Network and Computer Systems Administrators
24. 31-1014	Nursing Assistant
25. 29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians
26. 29-1141	Registered Nurses

- 27. 35-2014 Restaurant Cooks
- 28. 17-3024 Robotics Technicians (or Electromechanical Technicians)
- 29. 25-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career and Technical Education
- 30. 29-2055 Surgical Technologist
- 31. 53-3032 Truck Drivers, Heavy/Tractor-Trailer
- 32. 51-4121 Welders/Cutters/Solderers/Brazers

- 4. An analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand sectors and occupations.

As mentioned above, employers continue to comment on the lack of basic employment skills which the workforce system meets by providing job-readiness classes with individualized assistance for resume preparation, financial literacy, and visits by employers who detail expectations of their particular jobs. These opportunities will help to prepare workers in the in-demand sectors of accommodation and food services and retail trade. Additional training financed through the workforce system will prepare workers with skills required to fill job openings in other sectors, including educational services, manufacturing, transportation, and health care.

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

The December 2016 report from Tracer for the area shows a combined labor force of 94,775 individuals with 90,712 employed and 4,063 unemployed for a rate of 4.3%. The unemployment rate increased from 4.0% in November 2016.

According to the county-based population estimates from the United States Census Bureau, the area changed in population from 224,366 in April 2000 to an estimated 222,860 in April 2010 by -1,506 residents. This reflects a decrease of -0.7 percent in population. During the same time period, the state's population changed by 4,293,741 residents from 20,851,820 to an estimated 25,145,561 persons representing a comparative change of 20.6 percent.

The region's race/ethnic distributions by gender are a product of county data from the 2010 Summary File and are as follows:

<u>All Ages by</u>	<u>Area Statewide</u>			<u>Area Statewide</u>			
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>16 and Over</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White	183,060	82.1	70.4	White	147,705	83.6	72.1
Male	91,524	41.1	34.8	Male	73,400	41.5	35.3
Female	91,536	41.1	35.5	Female	74,305	42.0	36.8
Black	16,126	7.2	11.8	Black	12,452	7.0	11.6
Male	8,894	4.0	5.7	Male	7,005	4.0	5.4

Female	7,232	3.2	6.1	Female	5,447	3.1	6.2
Other	23,674	10.6	17.8	Other	16,586	9.4	16.3
Male	12,641	5.7	9.0	Male	9,077	5.1	8.3
Female	11,033	5.0	8.7	Female	7,509	4.2	8.0
Hispanic*	34,614	15.5	37.6	Hispanic*	23,181	13.1	34.1
Male	18,498	8.3	18.9	Male	12,690	7.2	17.1
Female	16,116	7.2	18.7	Female	10,491	5.9	17.0

* Hispanic count includes White, Black and other representation when reported.

Using a projection scenario, the following table represents population projections for the area as computed in 2012 by The Office of the State Demographer for the State of Texas:

Population Projections and Percent Change Since 2000*											
Year	Total	Pct Chg	Anglo	Pct Chg	Black	Pct Chg	Hispanic	Pct Chg	Other	Pct Chg	
2000	224,366	---	177,785	---	16,641	---	25,271	---	4,669	---	
2005	229,360	2.2	177,777	-0.0	17,425	4.7	28,824	14.1	5,334	14.2	
2010	222,860	-0.7	164,519	-7.5	15,526	-6.7	34,614	37.0	8,201	75.6	
2015	226,654	1.0	163,349	-8.1	15,925	-4.3	38,591	52.7	8,789	88.2	
2020	230,801	2.9	162,045	-8.9	16,365	-1.7	43,014	70.2	9,377	100.8	
2025	235,393	4.9	160,676	-9.6	16,797	0.9	47,916	89.6	10,004	114.3	
2030	239,509	6.7	158,490	-10.9	17,137	3.0	53,229	110.6	10,653	128.2	
2035	242,695	8.2	155,557	-12.5	17,374	4.4	58,517	131.6	11,247	140.9	
2040	244,868	9.1	151,923	-14.5	17,523	5.3	63,666	151.9	11,756	151.8	
2045	246,706	10.0	148,004	-16.8	17,568	5.6	68,953	172.9	12,181	160.9	
2050	248,692	10.8	144,202	-18.9	17,596	5.7	74,419	194.5	12,475	167.2	

The U.S. Department of Census estimated a 2011 poverty population for the region for people of all ages at 30,273 persons. That figure represents 14.6 percent of the non-institutional population compared to a Texas percentage of 17 percent for people of all ages. The estimated number of people under the age of 18 in the study area in poverty was 10,311 in 2011. This figure was 5 percent of all people under 18 in the study area compared to Texas statewide which was 6.7 percent of all people under 18 as estimated in 2011. According to the 2011 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates of the Census Bureau, the number of families living below poverty status in 2011 was 5,851 which was 19.3 percent of all families in the study area. This compared to 19.5 percent of all families statewide living in poverty status in 2011. The total number of individuals living below poverty status was 15,507 in 2011 which was 7 percent of all individuals in the study area. This compared to 7.1 percent of all individuals living below poverty status statewide.

Enrollment: School enrollment data from the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, Bureau of the Census showed that there were 53,859 persons in the population who were 3 years of age and older and enrolled in school in the study area during the census collection period. Of this population, the following table shows a breakdown of what types of schools persons were enrolled compared to similar statewide information:

<u>Type of School</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Area Statewide</u>	
		<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Nursery school or preschool	3,142	5.8	6.2
Kindergarten	3,071	5.7	5.7
Elementary School (grades 1-8)	22,362	41.5	42.8
High School (grades 9-12)	12,056	22.4	21.0
College or graduate school	13,228	24.6	24.3

Educational Attainment: The total number of persons 25 years of age or older who responded to the level of educational attainment question during the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, Bureau of the Census was 144,987. Of those persons, the following presents a table on various levels of educational attainment for this region compared to statewide percentages:

<u>Educational Attainment</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Area Statewide</u>	
		<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Less than 9th Grade	8,907	6.1	9.7
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	15,074	10.4	9.6
H.S. graduate (inc. equiv.)	48,970	33.8	25.3
Some college, no degree	35,770	24.7	22.8
Associate Degree	9,413	6.5	6.4
Bachelor's Degree	18,495	12.8	17.5
Graduate or Prof. Degree	8,355	5.8	8.7

Another useful grouping of these statistics shows that the percent of high school graduates or higher was 83.5 percent for the area compared to 80.7 percent for Texas. Also, the percent with Bachelor's degree or higher was 18.5 percent as compared to 26.2 percent for Texas.

- An analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including education and training.

Note: This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and an evaluation of the effectiveness of programs and services. It must evaluate the Board's capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the identified education and skills needs of the workforce. The analysis must include individuals with barriers to employment. The analysis also must address the employment needs of employers.

The strength of workforce development activities in North Texas is that Workforce Solutions has been progressively recognized, after 20 years, as a valuable resource to employers and job-seekers. Limited resources in a mostly rural area guide the work of organizations to coordinate as effectively as possible. Workforce development begins with education and all levels are represented in the area beginning with subsidized child care services with quality activities through Workforce Solutions, youth activities, community college, the university experience, and adult education. The Board also maintains contact

with educational institutions outside of the area through the ETP (Eligible Training Provider) system to provide opportunities for additional training and skills areas.

For more than 20 years, the Board and its predecessors have formed relationships with area organizations to share information and coordinate to avoid duplication and stretch financial resources. The Board has worked closely with the vocational rehabilitation system to provide employment and training to individuals with barriers to employment. For several years, the VR agency was housed in a building adjacent to the building in Wichita Falls which has been home to the workforce center from the beginning. Case managers and customers traveled back and forth to work with staff members who frequently met to discuss mutual cases and often split the costs of services between the organizations. Another asset in Wichita Falls to the community is Work Services Corporation, a long-time organization that has provided sheltered workshop opportunities and maintains the federal contracts to manufacture all government-provided paper clips, in addition to providing mail and dining hall services at Sheppard Air Force Base. In 2016, Work Services moved to a remodeled bulk mail facility across the street in Wichita Falls from the facility that houses the workforce center. The Board is not waiting until the required co-location of “voc rehab” services in 2018 to start the process of working even more closely together. The Wichita Falls Workforce Solutions office this year began hosting group job-readiness and orientation sessions for individuals with barriers to employment.

In addition to the core programs offered through Workforce Solutions, the Board participates in the following activities:

- *Board members hear presentations at Board meetings every other month about activities such as quality child care, adult education, career and technology programs, in addition to reports about layoffs and activities around the area.*
- *Board and Center staff members participate as members of advisory committees for Vernon College and its Skills Training Center in Wichita Falls, Wichita Falls Independent School District career and technical education, Regional Transportation Committee, Economic Development Advisory Committee at Nortex Regional Planning Commission, a variety of Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce and Industry Leads Groups, and chambers of commerce in about 16 communities in the area. The Board Executive Director is a charter member of the Sheppard Military Affairs Committee, which is the community link to Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, the area’s largest employer.*
- *Adult education and literacy activities are coordinated by Workforce Solutions, Region 9 Education Service Center, and Wichita Adult Literacy Council, Inc. Periodic meetings involve discussion of how better to share expertise and customer referral. An advantage is that activities of all 3 entities are located in the same Wichita Falls building. Partners also work to help develop and support integrated work and education training.*

- *Board staff members are invited by the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce and Industry to participate in introductory sessions with prospective employers to provide details about the available workforce, their skills, and training opportunities. As the Chamber president/CEO has said, workforce is the number one driver in economic development decisions.*
- *Staff members, including business services consultants from the Workforce Solutions Center, often are requested to present informational programs in the area to groups of employers. They also maintain contacts by hosting hiring events for employers such as Texas Department of Criminal Justice and many other private sector businesses.*

Part B: Operational Elements

The Operational Elements of the Guidelines are as follows:

1. A description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies:
 - a. the programs that are included in the system; and
 - b. how the Board will support the strategy identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, 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).

Programs included in the North Texas workforce development system are programs as described in the state plan through WIOA for adults, dislocated workers, and youth; employment and training assistance for recipients of TANF and SNAP benefits; Trade Adjustment Assistance; training and employment opportunities for older workers; vocational rehabilitation; and adult education and literacy.

Management of the programs is coordinated by the Board with key members of contractor staff members for the operation of the workforce centers and subsidized child care program. Management staff members for all programs are at the Wichita Falls location. The workforce centers in Bowie, Graham, and Vernon traditionally employ 2 staff members, in addition to temporary workers through the older worker program. A mobile workforce unit also visits 5 additional communities several times each month to allow residents who do not have close access to a workforce center to participate in job search activities, orientations for Choices and SNAP, and receive information about additional opportunities.

Partners in the area always have practiced a close working relationship with information-sharing and referral. For example, Workforce Solutions and vocational rehabilitation (formerly DARS) may share the costs for training and support services for a mutual customer. Another example is a grant received from the North Texas Area United Way by the Wichita Adult Literacy Council, Inc., to provide financial literacy instruction, which a WALC staff member does each week for the job-readiness classes at the Wichita Falls

Workforce Solutions Center. The grant also helps to support a classroom in the same building for adult education and language instruction.

As mentioned earlier, staff members sit as members of advisory committees for skills training areas at Vernon College and area school districts, including Wichita Falls Independent School District which will open a new Career Education Center in the fall of 2017. Skills training programs have been housed at an aging elementary school with limited space, but a taxpayer-approved initiative to build the new center has allowed the expansion of existing programs, the addition of programs, and enhanced coordination with Vernon College, Midwestern State University, Sheppard Air Force Base, and other entities. The staff members are asked to provide labor market information and share the rationale for developing the area target occupations list. Staff members also are asked to present labor market information at summer workshops for teachers at Region 9 Education Service Center in Wichita Falls. For the past 2 years, the youth career fair, which has been generously funded by TWC, has allowed 8th-grade students who are preparing to select career pathways as required by the legislation of House Bill 5, to experience information and demonstrations of a variety of different opportunities. These efforts support the strategies in the state plan and the tenets of Carl Perkins legislation.

2. A description of how the Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:
 - a. expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;
 - b. facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and
 - c. improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

Efforts to enhance access for eligible individuals already have occurred. The Wichita Falls workforce center recently hosted a job-readiness class for vocational rehabilitation customers. Other local events also have provided increased opportunities for collaboration. Work Services Corporation, which has provided sheltered workshop opportunities, job coaching, and employment through federal contracts at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls since the 1980s, renovated a very large former bulk mail facility across the street from the workforce center building. In addition to expanding the space, the director, who succeeded his retiring predecessor, is investigating additional employment and training opportunities and increasing public awareness of their work, which includes manufacturing all of the paper clips for the federal government and crafting furniture from pallets and other scrap wood. Workforce Solutions Board staff members already have attended meetings to facilitate the referral process to Work Services from DARS. Workforce Solutions staff members are learning more about how services to individuals with limited sight and blindness are delivered. Relationships already have been formed with representatives of organizations that provide services to hearing-impaired

individuals, including sign language interpretation services. Workforce Solutions staff members received training to assist hearing-impaired individuals last year.

Increased facilitation of the development of career pathways and workforce preparation opportunities is occurring through activities already mentioned earlier with the new Career Education Center at the Wichita Falls ISD and the opportunity to present youth career fairs for more than 2,000 area students. In partnership with other organizations, including DARS, the Board has hosted a Transition Fair for more than 15 years for area high school juniors and seniors with disabilities who hear from employers about entering the workforce.

The Board, as mentioned earlier, works with adult education to develop and support more opportunities for integrated training and education projects. Staff members of the programs often meet together to better coordinate how to share information and referral. As an example, Board members learned at the February 2017 Board meeting about projects developed by adult education staff members including working with nursing students at Vernon College, providing assistance with math skills to the sheet metal apprenticeship program, and providing basic skills to food managers in Graham and Bowie with North Central Texas College. One of the newer programs for adult education is working with a group of Nigerian nursing students at Vernon College about language and cultural barriers. One of the Board private sector members, who grew up in Nigeria, volunteered to assist with the project.

Workforce system staff members work with representatives of local community colleges and Midwestern State University to adequately identify programs that will enhance skills development in the target occupations so that access to activities leading to recognized credentials is more streamlined. A recent meeting with the director of the Vernon College Skills Training Center in Wichita Falls resulted in a comprehensive review of course offerings and a guide to facilitate the development of training plans for eligible individuals whose training in identified target occupations is subsidized by workforce funding.

These new opportunities for career development strengthen access to the attainment of industry-recognized certification, but there is a lot more work to be done to connect the establishment of certification to employers. More employers in the area must be willing to provide internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities to area residents, including youth. Another limiting factor to increased availability is the continuing decline of public funding to pay for institution-based training, work experience, and on-the-job training. Enrollment in community colleges seems to thrive after large layoffs and business closures or post-recession economies instead of remaining fairly steady as workers attempt to increase their skills and add proficiency in new ones while providing introductory opportunities to youth.

3. A description of the strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.

As described above, the Board works to communicate and coordinate programs and provide services to fit the needs. In the Wichita Falls workforce center, there are specific case managers for SNAP and TANF recipients and eligible participants in WIOA, including youth. Veterans, of course, receive priority service with center staff members trained to work with veterans, as well as other customers. Staff members are working on strategies to target and provide services for individuals with disabilities. Job-readiness classes, which include financial literacy training provided by a staff member of the Wichita Adult Literacy Council, Inc., are open to all center customers. Customers who are in need of additional services, such as child care, are introduced to the child care office. An example is a pregnant or parenting teen who may be working with the WIOA youth case manager for job placement or training and will receive assistance with information about child care programs.

In addition to the efforts described above for coordinating programs and services for target populations, the Board will continue to learn about the provision of services in the area and facilitate partnerships with additional organizations. Currently, there are representatives from older worker programs in all area locations, but one of the frustrations in trying to keep up with who provides services is the changing of contractors for such programs as Job Corps and SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Programs) for older workers. Contracts change from the national level with operations often centered in another state or with offices in the Metroplex that send representatives to North Texas on a transient basis. Workforce Center staff members keep a comprehensive list of resources to provide to customers when there is a need. Workforce Solutions staff members maintain a strong relationship with 211, which is operated out of the North Texas Area United Way, so that a refreshed list of available resources is known. Board members also share their expertise by offering referrals to private-sector resources. Participation by staff members as described in area organizations and planning groups facilitates closer coordination and knowledge of available resources.

4. A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area:
 - a. To facilitate engagement of employers in the workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations
 - b. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area
 - c. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development
 - d. To strengthen linkages 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.

As mentioned earlier, the engagement of employers in workforce development programs definitely requires improvement to create more opportunities for work-based learning. Employment consultants who are members of the Board's business services unit work hard to attract employers to participate in hiring events and job fairs and enter into worksite agreements for work experience and on-the-job training activities for eligible individuals, but there are not enough funded positions to accomplish all of that work in the area. The Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which is represented on the Board, continues to include Workforce Solutions at initial meetings for prospective employers and relies on the Board's labor market information to add to the area quality-of-life attractions. The Chamber members also ensure that they include representatives from the appropriate skills training areas at Vernon College and Midwestern State University to provide facts about education in the area and information about assistance such as funds for skills development and small business. Participation in the area chamber of commerce organizations by workforce staff members provides the direct link to ensure that job openings are posted and employers know where to go for assistance.

A partnership that works to coordinate workforce development programs and economic development is the economic development advisory group facilitated by a staff member at Nortex Regional Planning Commission. Members includes representatives from several area chambers of commerce and economic development entities, in addition to Workforce Solutions. The group hosted an information session last year about available tax credits, housing grants, skills training funds, grants for agriculture-based projects, and other state and federal programs for area communities. Attendees represented area economic development organizations, chief elected officials, and other members of the group.

Members of the Board Outreach Committee, which includes representatives from the private sector, economic development, and other resource organizations, meet every other month to discuss the area economy and how to ensure that the target occupations list provides the most appropriate information for employers. They have talked about how to provide additional opportunities for outreach to employers, such as workforce summits. The members discuss providing incumbent worker training funding and how to assess the performance of eligible training providers in the system. Another Board committee, the Youth Advisory Group, also meets to plan career pathway initiatives and activities with representatives of education and workforce development.

Linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs are strong as the Board coordinates Rapid Response activities with Employment Services staff members at the workforce center and with a TWC expert who often travels from the Metroplex to provide specific UI information to affected workers. The Board hears a report of layoffs at each Board meeting from the Board's Rapid Response coordinator, who also has other duties, and provides input on hiring and management changes.

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

As mentioned earlier, the Board participates with all regional economic development activities as requested. Although the 3 workforce center locations outside of Wichita Falls in Bowie, Graham, and Vernon each has 2 core staff members, they are involved in their respective communities and respond to the needs of local customers. The Board pays annual membership dues to area Chambers of Commerce and staff members participate in Leads Groups, workforce and education committees, and the regional Economic Development Advisory Committee facilitated by Nortex Regional Planning Commission staff members. A regional economic development plan has been developed with input from economic development groups in more rural communities, in addition to the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which doubles as the economic development organization for the area's largest city. Workforce Solutions staff members participate in activities in their respective communities and travel, for example, with the mobile workforce unit that visits communities that are not close to center locations. Staff members have hosted hiring events for employers, are invited to attend meetings to meet with prospective employers and discuss the available workforce and training opportunities, in addition to working with Vernon College and North Central Texas College on grant applications to customize training for employers. Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls is a vital partner and hosts the Small Business Development Center, internship opportunities for students, and entrepreneurial skills training. In partnership with the Wichita Falls Chamber and the SBDC, MSU annually sponsors a competition for entrepreneurs with as much as \$70,000 in cash prizes and other benefits to the winning entry for new business. The Board is able to refer interested individuals to the most appropriate source for assistance and often has included representatives of organizations to participate in assisting dislocated workers when there have been large layoffs or plant closures to provide information. The Board Executive Director recently attended a Faculty Forum Series panel discussion at MSU on how to incorporate a liberal arts education into lifelong learning and workforce preparation since many employers continue to comment on the lack of basic employment skills and training in workers.

6. A description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including explanations of the following:
 - a. 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;
 - b. 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;
 - c. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including the one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA §188, 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; and
 - d. The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

During the 20-year history of the Board, there has been continuous improvement of eligible providers and how to work best with them to meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job-seekers. The Board follows requirements to procure providers of service and manages the operations in close working relationship with management staff members from the Board and operators. In addition to the provider procurement duties, the Board Administrative Specialist receives and processes requests from training providers for enrollment in the Eligible Training Provider System and equates their offerings to local needs. Additional information may be requested of staff members at the workforce center who work with eligible individuals for training and with employers who post job openings in Work In Texas to ensure that the training matches occupations on the Board's target occupations list. Different attempts have been made through the years to offer the best method for reviewing and reporting performance of training providers. As mentioned, Board and Center staff members participate as members of advisory groups for training providers in the area and are able to receive and share valuable information from employers. When potential problems occur, such as the impending closure several years ago of the main proprietary training program in the area and a recent example of an instructor shortage in a training program where a majority of the Board-subsidized students in training were not meeting requirements, Board and Center staff members are able to coordinate with training providers to offer strategies for how best to accommodate the needs. Representatives of Vernon College and Midwestern State University are members of the Board and its Outreach Committee, where a majority of the work is done to frequently review and revise the target occupations list.

Since 2002, the Board has operated a mobile workforce unit which at least monthly visits several communities whose residents do not live in close proximity to a Center location in Bowie, Graham, Vernon, or Wichita Falls. The mobile unit is housed in a trailer pulled by a heavy-duty pickup truck and parks at a central location in the community such as courthouses, chambers of commerce offices, or parks with notice of the schedule sent to county judges and other local officials. The driver also serves as the staff member who guides individuals to conduct job search activities using a number of laptop computers in the trailer. There also is room for small group settings to facilitate orientation sessions required for participation in the employment and training programs of TANF and SNAP. On many occasions, additional staff members from the different Center locations, including case managers, will accompany the driver to provide additional assistance. Direct contact is available for individuals who visit the unit and request assistance with subsidized child care since there is one central child care assistance office in Wichita Falls. Visitors also are provided referral information to other organizations, either centrally located or in the community. The Board also has worked with area libraries through the years to offer staff or computer training or links to workforce services. The new Board Website this year includes many more interactive opportunities to facilitate remote use, such as an online form for the child care interest list, live maps for locations, and the ability by Board staff members to administer the site, which has not been possible, to revise and enhance offerings, in addition to maintaining a list of current events and activities.

The Board throughout its history has complied with accessibility requirements, both in physical and program access. The Board's designated Equal Opportunity officer, who combines oversight with other duties, completes the required accessibility reviews of facilities. The current Board staff member who conducts those activities came to the Board several years ago when the staff position of Disability Navigator was supported by funding from the Texas Workforce Commission in Austin. That knowledge and experience definitely is an asset as the Board works to incorporate and coordinate with the vocational rehabilitation services that came under TWC supervision in September of 2016. As mentioned earlier, coordination among organizations in North Texas is close because of limited resources. Through the years, the Board often has shared costs of training and support for eligible individuals with the vocational rehabilitation agency. With additional funding provided through the Board contract with TWC, more specific assistive technology and equipment has been purchased by the Board to facilitate service to additional customers. As the Board works to complete the required co-location of workforce and VR programs by September of 2018, staff members of the Wichita Falls Center already have hosted group orientation sessions with sign language interpreters for individuals with disabilities since the VR offices do not have an adequate space for group sessions. All workforce system staff members, including the Board, Center, and child care programs, have participated in training to assist hard-of-hearing and deaf individuals. The mobile workforce unit was built with a handicapped-accessible restroom and a wheelchair lift. The mobile unit also has served TWC to provide outreach services to residents in other areas of Texas and Louisiana affected by tropical storms.

Since the area manager for VR services is a Board member, periodic updates about changes in the provision of services to individuals with disabilities have been presented as part of the agendas for Board meetings. Another important partner is Work Services Corporation, which has moved to a repurposed bulk mail sorting facility across the street from the Wichita Falls Galaxy Center, which houses the workforce center, adult education classes, and the Wichita Adult Literacy Council, Inc. Although coordination traditionally has been close with Work Services, the move to a large facility is allowing expansion of their services, which already include administration of contracts at Sheppard Air Force Base for dining hall and post office services, manufacture of all paper clips provided to federal agencies, a laundry service for the North Texas state hospital in Wichita Falls, and a wood-working shop. The Board always has had a representative of Work Services as a Board member and staff members recently have begun to meet more frequently with staff members from Work Services and vocational rehabilitation to work out referral processes and joint activities.

All one-stop partners play an important role in the provision of services to area employers and residents. Through the years, the Board's allotment of Wagner-Peyser staff members has suffered cuts from about 16 to the current 4. An advantage in North Texas is the longevity and expertise of the staff members, who have been able to move to other state jobs or retire when decreased funding forced the termination of employment with the Center. One staff member spent her entire career with the workforce system and another long-time employment services worker serves as a supervisor for Center staff members. Other ES staff members are valuable members of the Business Services Unit to facilitate

job postings for employers and job development. As mentioned earlier, coordination is very successful with staff members representing other programs, such as adult education, vocational rehabilitation, older workers who serve valuable roles in all area centers assisting job-seekers, and child care services. An example of area coordination is the Child Care Coalition, which meets monthly in the Board conference room and includes representatives from the North Texas Area United Way, Wichita Falls Area Food Bank, Boys and Girls Clubs, 211, school districts, Region 9 Education Service Center, and others. Another example is the annual Transition Fair which is hosted at Midwestern State University for more than 15 years to provide resources and valuable information to area high school juniors and seniors who have disabilities, assisting them with information about education, training, and services from Helen Farabee Centers, military service, area employers, Vernon College and North Central Texas College, Job Corps, among others. Priority of service is, of course, provided to veterans. In addition to staff members provided through the Texas Veterans Commission in the Wichita Falls Center, additional staff members are experienced with assisting veterans with all of the available services, including child care. Representatives of other partners, such as Job Corps and Texas Veterans Leadership Program, send representatives from administrative offices in other areas such as the Metroplex and Abilene, to meet with North Texas area residents who require specific services.

7. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

Any individual may visit a local workforce center to receive assistance with job search activities, including job-readiness classes that also feature financial literacy information provided by a staff member from the Wichita Adult Literacy Council in Wichita Falls, and resume-preparation. Individuals who are eligible to receive education and training as adult and dislocated worker participants are invited to an orientation session to learn about WIOA activities. Case managers in all Center locations, as well as the mobile unit, work with eligible individuals to discuss their support service needs and plans for training to facilitate entry or a return to the workforce. Assistance will include discussion of desired training and the Board's target occupation list to ensure that training is available for funding and will result in job placement. Also included is an assessment of the individual need for support services, such as subsidized child care; access to assistive technology or interpreter services; transportation assistance including bus passes in Wichita Falls or gas cards; supplies for training or work such as uniforms, tools, and supplies; referral to area organizations for food, adult education classes, and individual tutoring, among others. Center staff members maintain an extensive list of area resources to be able to efficiently assess and assist the individual's needs. Eligible individuals then select the desired service and will visit training providers such as Vernon College, which has campus locations in Vernon and Wichita Falls, including the Skills Training Center; North Central Texas College, with campus locations in Bowie and Graham; and Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls. Center staff members also work with area employers to place eligible individuals in work activities, including work experience, on-the-job training, and job development. A recent addition to Center activities is a post-educational workshop for graduates of Vernon College nursing programs to facilitate their

entrance into the workforce and to ensure that they have employment skills in addition to their technical training skills in the provision of healthcare to ensure success in their new careers.

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

A Board staff member with other duties as mentioned earlier serves as the Rapid Response coordinator for the area. When any report or rumor of a layoff is received through a variety of sources, including a visit or call to a Center for assistance, media reports, or sharing of information at meetings, the Rapid Response coordinator contacts the business to confirm information about the layoff or closure and to offer assistance. If the employer consents to a visit by the Rapid Response team, the requested services are coordinated with Board and Center staff members. When available, a representative of TWC from the Metroplex office travels to the area to provide information about unemployment compensation, since a majority of questions from affected workers involve benefits. If the staff member is not available, an experienced Employment Services staff member from the Wichita Falls Center provides the information. Additional information is offered about training opportunities, support services, and may include representation from other organizations to provide information about entrepreneurial opportunities or other services. A variety of arrangements has been made through the years to accommodate the needs of the employer and affected workers, such as coordination about shared work, on-site workforce centers to allow workers to receive information on multiple shifts when a longer amount of time has been given for notice of layoff or closure, orientation sessions at the Center locations for workers whose employment was terminated and access was not granted to workforce staff members to visit with information before the layoff or closure, and the provision of information packets when no access is granted to workers. Services then are provided to dislocated workers as described above. The Board Rapid Response coordinator also maintains and provides a list of area layoff activities in the agendas for the Board meetings to allow Board members to provide any additional knowledge or information. The efficient coordination of service to area dislocated workers and employers prompted a long-time chief elected official who directly experienced the services to comment to the Board, "Now I understand how valuable you are."

9. A description and assessment of the type and availability of workforce investment activities for youth in the local area, including activities for youth who have disabilities. This description must include an identification of successful models of such activities.

Although funding through the years has caused a decrease in available services to area youth, the Board maintains a focus on how best to serve both students and out-of-school youth. Center staff includes a youth case manager who visits area schools and works with organizations, including juvenile probation and foster youth, to provide education and training opportunities. A strong summer youth work program has been reduced to opportunities for a few eligible youth to participate in year-round work experience and skills training. They participate in employment skills training and are eligible to receive incentives, which have included laptop computers. They also are eligible to access support

services, as needed, to include referral to subsidized child care and assistance for transportation and supplies. The Board's Youth Advisory Group includes Board members from school districts, the Wichita Adult Literacy Council, Inc., and Communities in Schools, in addition to representatives from other organizations including Midwestern State University and Region 9 Education Service Center, to hear reports from the Center youth case manager and coordinate youth activities. Several successful models of activities include the Transition Fair, as described earlier which annually attracts several hundred high school juniors and seniors with disabilities to Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls in October for visits with employers, training providers, and area resources, and plans for the annual youth career fair. The Board appreciates the additional funding to host the now annual youth career fair in September which in the first year provided career pathway information at several area sites. Last year's increased funding made it possible to bring more than 2,000 area 8th-grade students to the Wichita Falls Multi-Purpose Events Center (MPEC) for a variety of activities, including hands-on sessions with skills training, visits with employers and their vehicles, including ambulances and fire trucks. The Board also took advantage of the recent additional funding for labor market and career information activities by paying to continue the licenses for Career Cruising software to thousands of students at area schools served by Region 9 Education Service Center and Wichita Falls Independent School District.

10. A description of how the Board will coordinate relevant secondary- and postsecondary-education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

As described earlier, the Board coordinates discussion with training providers and Board members to frequently assess the inclusion of occupations on the target occupations list to ensure that adequate opportunities are available to eligible individuals and to meet the needs of area employers. Board and Center staff members participate as members of advisory committees for training programs at both the secondary and post-secondary levels, including the newly-constructed Career and Education Center for the Wichita Falls school district which is scheduled to open for the fall 2017 semester. The Board's Outreach Committee includes representatives of Vernon College and Midwestern State University, in addition to area employers and vocational rehabilitation, to discuss strategies to assess and meet workforce needs. Board and Center staff member are invited to meet with prospective employers in the area by area chambers of commerce and economic development organizations, along with representatives of MSU and the community colleges. During these meetings, there is always mention about the various education and training programs, in addition to funds for skills development and small businesses provided at the state level. Discussion and information about the services avoid any duplication and work only to provide the most efficient and effective way to meet the needs of area employers, whether they have been in business for a long time or are investigating possible location in North Texas.

11. A description of how the Board will provide transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate support services in the local area in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities.

As mentioned earlier, the Board works to provide a variety of support services to eligible individuals to ensure that they are successful in their workforce preparation. Among the services is the availability of gas cards to facilitate travel from residence in more rural communities to work and training opportunities in more distant communities. Bus passes often are provided to eligible individuals in Wichita Falls which has the only city-provided mass transit system. Coordination of transportation in the area takes place with the regional transportation advisory committee, which is administered at Nortex Regional Planning Commission with grant funds from the Texas Department of Transportation. Several staff members of the Board and Center are members of the advisory committee to ensure that, in addition to available transportation for elderly and disabled individuals, area residents who must travel to work or training in other communities have similar access. The formation of the regional committee certainly improved the formerly siloed system that only directed TxDOT funds to area providers for limited uses. As a result, different projects have been developed and implemented with funding to assist workers to travel in the area, to facilitate the transportation of area veterans to access medical services in Fort Worth and Oklahoma City, to coordinate outreach and marketing activities about available transportation to area residents, and to ensure that all available transportation sources, including senior citizen centers with vehicles, taxis, the American Red Cross, and regional transportation providers work together to provide resources. In addition to workforce and veteran services, the committee includes representatives of the Wichita Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that coordinates city bus service, bicycle and pedestrian travel, and aviation activities; Sharp Lines, the regional van service operated by Rolling Plains Management Corporation out of Crowell which is in the western part of the area; area cities, counties, and economic development organizations; and the Area Agency on Aging; in addition to others. One of the biggest projects of the committee has been to ensure that all residents of the area have access to transportation services. Another area service provider, Texoma Area Paratransit Services, located in the Texoma Board region, received funding to provide transportation to residents in the more eastern part of the area. Changes in operational staff and financial difficulties forced TAPS to curtail services, which left residents in Clay and Montague Counties without access to other communities. Sharp Lines worked with TxDOT and the regional committee to close the gap in the provision of services. At a recent public meeting with TxDOT representatives, information was provided by new staff members at TAPS to regain service to other parts of the region. Several years ago, the City of Wichita Falls constructed a travel center as a central location for transferring from rural van service providers to city buses and for boarding major bus lines for travel outside of the region.

12. 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.

As mentioned earlier, duplication is easily avoided in North Texas because of the limited numbers of available staff members, resources, and funding. Services provided through the one-stop delivery system and by Wagner-Peyser are coordinated through a number of ways. Board and Center staff members participate in area meetings with chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, advisory committees for education and training, adult education and literacy, transportation, regional planning, and military affairs. They also serve as resources to Board committees to monitor performance, plan outreach activities, and services to youth. Board and Center staff members coordinate Rapid Response services, serve as representatives of the Business Services Unit, and plan all workforce activities together, usually at frequent management meetings at the Board office which involve supervisors at the workforce center and child care office. Gaps in service or problems with service delivery are coordinated during meetings or at coordination opportunities in response to specific requests.

13. A description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy 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.

Throughout the 20 years of Board operation, coordination, as mentioned earlier, has been close with other organizations, including adult education and literacy (AEL). Adult education has been provided through Region 9 Education Service Center located in Wichita Falls and literacy activities are coordinated for the area by the Wichita Adult Literacy Council, Inc. (WALC), which moved from Region 9 many years ago to the Galaxy Center in Wichita Falls which also houses the Workforce Solutions Center. The Board executive director is a longtime volunteer tutor, trainer, and Board member for the Wichita Adult Literacy Council, Inc. The Board executive director and workforce center manager also are members of the adult education consortium, in addition to the WALC executive director and representatives of area school districts, libraries, education training providers, apprenticeship training, and others. Workforce Solutions, Region 9 adult education, and WALC have coordinated to develop and implement a number of projects, including a community-wide service program in Vernon which featured education, child care, transportation, and family literacy at one site; tutoring opportunities for literacy and adult education students in Bowie, Seymour, and Vernon, in addition to Wichita Falls; and services for a community of Burmese immigrants at a Vernon employer that included high school equivalency certificate training, English language assistance, and workplace training. Representatives of workforce and AEL meet often to discuss better utilization of staff resources and how to further integrate referral of services. Adult education and literacy also have partnered with workforce services to ensure that workers dislocated by the closure of a longtime clothing sewing plant received assistance with English language instruction for Spanish and Vietnamese speakers, workforce education and training, and adult education classes. As mentioned earlier, coordination efforts continue to support the development of projects integrating work and education.

Customers who visit the Wichita Falls Center and reveal a need for reading instruction, high school diploma equivalency instruction, or difficulty with the English language are

personally escorted down the hall to the WALC office for assistance. Visitors to WALC who express a need for job search assistance or training are referred to the Center. The Center's job-readiness classes feature a segment on financial literacy, which is taught by a WALC staff member who is paid through a grant from the North Texas Area United Way. Management staff members of the Board, Center, adult education, and literacy meet periodically to coordinate additional strategies for more integrated service delivery.

To comply with WIOA requirements, the Board will identify a review team and implement the review of proposals for the local adult education competition based on Agency guidance.

14. 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 U.S.C. 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 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (other than §112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and are subject to §121(f) in accordance with §101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 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.

These agreements with service providers as described do not yet exist, but will be developed with future guidance from TWC. The Board does maintain a variety of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). In addition to agreements which have been executed between the Board and local service providers, the Board is a member of the Rural Workforce Network, which traditionally has included staff members from Boards in Concho Valley, Panhandle, Permian Basin, North Texas, South Plains, and West Central, representing a majority of the counties in Texas. Since regional administration of several programs is centered in Abilene or Lubbock for the Board areas, it is more practical to have one agreement with the stated duties with signatures from all Board areas. Representatives of the Boards also have met on numerous occasions to discuss other ways to jointly provide services, such as regional program appeals, similar target occupations lists, and how to more efficiently share technology services.

15. An identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected officials or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i).

The original partnership agreement crafted when the Boards were formed 20 years ago identifies the Board and its staff as the administrative entity for the provision of workforce services in the North Texas area and Nortex Regional Planning Commission as the local grant subrecipient of the funds as the Board's fiscal agent. The evolution of this

arrangement has included monthly budget meetings with the director of finance and the executive director of Nortex; management and financial staff members of both providers of workforce and child care services; and Board staff members. They review the status of each grant to determine if the expenditure of funds should increase or decrease, be redirected, or if the grant is ready to close. The Board and Nortex, with guidance from the chief elected officials, jointly procure and participate in annual audit activities and preparation of the Board's Form 990 as a nonprofit organization. Contracts from TWC to the Board are reviewed by the Board executive director and signed by the Board chair and the executive director of Nortex.

16. A description of the competitive process that will be used to award the sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.

In North Texas, there traditionally have been two major contracts awarded periodically for the provision of workforce and child care services to separate organizations. During the time frame identified in WIOA and by TWC, the Board conducts competitive procurement activities, as required. Beginning in late fall of the year prior to the awarding of a new contract, Board staff members review and prepare the procurement instrument for reference and adherence to current rules. The Request for Proposal is released in January or early February to an extensive and updated list of prospective bidders with a bidders' conference hosted by the Board. Questions and answers then are provided in writing to all prospective bidders. When proposals are received at a deadline identified in the RFP with at least a month to respond, Board staff members review the proposals for submission of required elements. Since the Board is a small Board with limited resources, volunteer Board members traditionally score and rank the proposals with staff members serving as resources to answer questions and make recommendations. A representative of the Evaluation Committee then makes a recommendation to the Board for approval before contract negotiation begins. The contract then becomes effective by October 1 of that year. Adequate time is included for review, potential visits and meetings with Board representatives from bidders, and negotiation to work out all aspects of the contract. The required competitive process also is utilized to award other sub-grants and contracts for the provision of additional services that may be identified.

17. A description of the local levels of performance negotiated with TWC and the chief elected officials consistent with WIOA §116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local 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 local area.

The Board works to meet or exceed the levels of performance negotiated with TWC as designated in the contracts. In contracts with service providers in the one-stop delivery system, the Board does not impose any additional performance measures. Contracted performance is reviewed by members of the Board Monitoring Committee at each meeting with discussion provided by members of the contractor management team. Members view

the monthly performance reports as provided by TWC for the area and provide input. The performance of the Board fiscal agent is not measured in particular standards, but during monthly budget meetings as described earlier and on a case-by-case basis when resolution of a particular issue is required.

The performance of eligible training providers is reviewed by the Board staff member whose duties include maintaining the system when programs are added or deleted and when training providers are required to update information. The Board follows the process outlined by TWC to review performance. When periodically reviewing the Board target occupations list, members may ask for numbers of individuals enrolled in training programs and status of completion which may be provided through TWIST or by training providers.

As mentioned earlier, performance of the one-stop delivery system is reviewed by members of the Board Monitoring Committee as they review the TWC monthly performance reports. Performance also is noted during consideration of annual contract renewal and as part of the procurement process when it requires the submission of proposals.

The following performance measures were set in accordance with WIOA §116 (c):

*Adult Employed Q2 Post Exit
Adult Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
Adult Employed Q4 Post Exit
Adult Credential Rate
Dislocated Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit
Dislocated Worker Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit
Dislocated Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit
Dislocated Worker Credential Rate
Youth Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit
Youth Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit
Youth Credential Rate*

18. A description of the actions the Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Board.

The Board takes consistent action toward remaining a high-performing Board. As described earlier, members of the Board Monitoring Committee review monthly performance reports at each meeting and provide input about any questioned measures. They also review reports issued by TWC during annual monitoring and technical assistance visits and hear quarterly from the Board Quality Assurance Manager about program and fiscal reviews which have been conducted. Members of the contractor management team present oral and written reports at each Board meeting where performance may be discussed, in addition to information about workforce center activities. Any concerns or recommendations for changes or improvement about performance may be addressed in the meetings. Periodic management meetings are hosted by the Board staff to share information with contractor management team members and to discuss any issues. These efforts have proven successful. At the February 2017 Board

meeting, members heard about the 3 performance incentive checks awarded to the Board at the annual workforce conference in December 2016 and were invited to add input about the proposed expenditure of the funds.

19. A description of how training services outlined in WIOA §134 will be provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (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.

Through contract with the Board, the provider of workforce center services maintains the process of determining how eligible individuals will participate in subsidized training activities. Following the determination of eligibility, case managers work individually to develop a training plan, based on the individual's choice of training and the availability of eligible training providers for the occupations listed on the Board target occupation list. Members of a committee at the service provider review ITAs that have been proposed to determine if the training request meets all of the requirements and that there are adequate training funds to support the individual goals. Often, an individual comes to the center with a prescribed training plan after working with the chosen training provider and is ready to complete the process to begin training. The Board ensures that the provider of services informs customer choice by describing the process during orientation sessions before individuals begin. The individuals receive referral information and are encouraged by staff members to investigate the available choices. The fiscal portion of the ITA process continues during the monthly budget meetings, described earlier, where training and staff costs that have been submitted to the Board fiscal agent for payment are verified and documented that they fit in the allocated budget.

20. 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.

Several years ago, Board staff members learned about paperless systems from the Texoma area Board and identified potential vendors and how to coordinate limited funding resources to be able to purchase a system. The provider of child care services initially used the technology-enabled case management system through Work Flow and helped to guide the provider of workforce services when the Cabinet paperless system was purchased by the Board. Staff members have worked with the vendor to train each other and how to coordinate the use of the system with TWIST and other automated systems for financial management used by the operator of workforce programs. The operator of workforce programs also provides a technology-enabled management and training system for job-seekers. As mentioned earlier, the mobile workforce unit includes access through the use of laptop computers for job-seekers to access services. Workforce Center staff members also utilize the WCT system which introduces job-seekers who visit the Center and identifies the purpose of their visit, in addition to notifying the appropriate staff member of

their presence. The automated systems help to keep detailed registration information to count for various purposes of record-keeping and performance-tracking. The new Board Website also will facilitate increased opportunities for technology-enabled intake.

21. 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.

Board policy ensures that priority of adult individualized career services and training services are given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. The operator of the one-stop delivery system also ensures that procedures follow the Board policy.

22. 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 Local 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.

Current Board policy caps the amount of an ITA at \$10,000. As the Board policies are being reviewed and revised to comply with new program requirements, the ITA cap will be discussed to see if it remains relevant. Rising costs of training and restricted funding allocations may necessitate a revision to the policy to develop a more individualized process.

23. A description of the design framework for youth programs in the local area, and how the 14 program elements required in §681.460 of the Final Regulations are to be made available within that framework.

As described earlier, the operator of the one-stop delivery system works to meet the 14 program elements for eligible youth. A youth case manager develops and implements the activities for youth and maintains close coordination with area resources, including school districts, training providers, employers, juvenile justice, foster youth programs, providers of services for the homeless, in addition to others. The case manager works to ensure that youth have choices to participate in a variety of training, work experience, and educational activities, depending upon the assessment of interests and abilities. The Board and operator of the one-stop delivery system ensure that 75% of the youth funds are expended for out-of-school youth which dictates that often innovative methods are used to identify and attract youth who may have left the public education system. The youth case manager also works with the adult education and literacy program to ensure that individuals who require a high school equivalency certificate receive appropriate guidance. The youth case manager reports on activities at each meeting of the Board's Youth Advisory Group, which

also includes representatives of Region 9 Education Service Center, Midwestern State University, and other organizations, in addition to Board members who represent education and other programs. These meetings are productive and provide input and recommendations to assist the system to meet the needs of area youth. The addition of generous funding to the Board to host the annual youth career fair greatly benefits outreach to youth in the area to provide career pathway information and guidance.

24. A description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs in its area to register with the eligible training provider system in order to receive WIOA funding.

The Board continues to encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs in the area to register with the eligible training provider system. Efforts to identify the programs continue when information is available. The Board has traditionally worked with the Board member representing labor unions to share information and with Region 9 Education Service Center in Wichita Falls that annually applies for and receives TWC funds to support apprenticeship training programs.

25. A description of the Board's strategy and commitment to support Apprenticeship Texas efforts across the state, as applicable.

The Board commits to support Apprenticeship Texas efforts across the state, as applicable. Board staff members attempt to follow-up on information about possible local programs and opportunities when knowledge is received.

Part C: Public Comment

A description of the process used by the Board, consistent with WIOA §108(d), to provide a 30-day public comment period before submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the Local Plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations. Comments submitted during the public comment period that represent disagreement with the plan must be submitted with the Local Plan.

Unfortunately, the Board's new Website was not ready for unveiling by the first of the new year, as planned. Initial public notice of the plan was accomplished by placing an advertisement in the classified advertising section of the Wichita Falls Times Record News, one of only 2 daily newspapers in the area. Mention of the plan has been made at Board meetings and many comments and sources of information heard at meetings of the regional transportation committee, adult education consortium, Nortex Regional Planning Commission, the area economic development advisory committee, the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce and Industry, North Texas Area United Way, Wichita Adult Literacy Council, Inc., and advisory committees for Vernon College and the Wichita Falls Independent School District career and technology program have been included in the description. No comments that represent disagreement with the plan were received.

The Board approved the plan on February 23, 2017.