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# Local Workforce Development Board Plan Program Years 2025-2028

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# Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

## A. Vision and Goals

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

The mission of Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) is to place North Texans in jobs and equip workers with skills that foster economic development.

By forging regional partnerships and maintaining open lines of communication, WSNT can create, implement, and refine programs that align with the employment needs of the North Texas region. The WSNT Board is dedicated to supporting regional economic growth and fostering economic self-sufficiency.

### **Key Initiatives**

#### **Education and Youth Programs**

WSNT places a strong emphasis on education as a foundation for a self-sufficient workforce. This commitment is evident through several programs:

- *Youth Career Fair:* Annually targeting eighth graders, this event introduces students to in-demand careers, aiding them in making informed decisions about their future educational and career paths.
- *Transition Fair:* Designed for high school students with disabilities or barriers to employment, this fair assists in their transition to work or further training after high school.
- *Paid Work Experience:* Providing practical work experience opportunities for area youth to prepare them for the workforce.

#### **Collaborations and Community Engagement**

To ensure that programs meet the evolving needs of the workforce, WSNT actively participates in:

- *Advisory Committees:* Engaging in discussions about career and technical education at school districts, community colleges, and universities.
- *Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Meetings:* Collaborating with employers to understand their needs for trained workers.

### **Strategic Goals**

Meeting performance measures as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and applied by the Texas Workforce Commission is a crucial aspect of WSNT's mission. However, the true essence of WSNT's work lies in:

- *Matching Employers and Job Seekers:* Identifying the most needed resources and skills, and addressing these needs through targeted education and training.

- *Coordinating with Partners:* Working closely with adult education, literacy programs, and workforce center operators to set mutual goals and track successes.

### **Measuring Success**

Success for WSNT is not just about meeting predefined performance metrics but also about ensuring individuals secure unsubsidized employment with self-sufficient wages. This is achieved by:

- *Skills Training and Certification:* Promoting recognized skills training and certifications that lead to sustainable employment.
- *Tracking Progress:* Monitoring the transition of individuals to self-sufficient employment as a measure of success.

Through these comprehensive efforts, WSNT aims to build a robust and resilient workforce, ready to meet the demands of the modern economy.

## **B. Board Strategies**

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

The Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) Board has adopted a comprehensive strategy to ensure the successful implementation of its vision and goals by actively involving all staff members across workforce centers, childcare facilities, and vocational rehabilitation (VR) offices. This inclusive approach extends to seeking valuable input from Board members, enhancing the effectiveness of the Board's initiatives.

### **Inclusive Planning and Implementation**

To foster a cohesive understanding of the WSNT Board's strategic objectives, management meetings are regularly convened with Board staff, workforce, childcare, and VR management. These meetings aim to provide a "big picture" perspective, helping staff members appreciate the interdependence of various parts of the system. In doing so, the Board ensures that staff members are not solely focused on their immediate tasks but understand how their roles contribute to overarching goals.

### **Support During Procurement Phase**

During the procurement of new operational sub-recipients, the WSNT Board emphasizes providing staff members with essential support, tools, and resources necessary for success. A positive relationship with sub-recipient administrators is crucial, but the Board recognizes the importance of granting local management staff the flexibility to address specific local needs. This flexibility is vital for achieving success in service delivery.

### **Enhancing Service Delivery Through Partnerships**

The WSNT Board actively collaborates with sub-recipients and various organizations to enhance service delivery. Memoranda of Understanding and regular communication with organizational representatives play a key role in providing additional resources. Each Board meeting features reports from partners, offering data and narratives on program participation, childcare quality, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation. Additionally, presentations from nonprofit organizations and educational representatives further enrich these meetings.

### **Key Collaborative Initiatives**

To support its strategic vision, the WSNT Board has implemented several key initiatives:

- *Quarterly Partnership Meetings:* The Board convenes quarterly meetings with Adult Education, Vernon College, North Central Texas College, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Workforce Centers to discuss educational support and programs for populations facing employment barriers.
- *WIOA and GED Orientation Sessions:* Adult education staff are invited to participate in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) orientation sessions at the Wichita Falls workforce center. In turn, workforce staff attend GED orientation sessions at Region 9 Education Service Center.
- *Childcare Management Collaboration:* The Board works with childcare management to apply new federal regulations effectively, facilitating the enrollment and tracking of children within a restricted budget.
- *Vocational Rehabilitation Meetings:* Meetings with vocational rehabilitation representatives from both state programs and local providers are held to update and refine referral processes in response to changing requirements.
- *Engagement with Economic Development:* The Board actively engages with the local Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development to ensure WSNT is involved in regional planning efforts.

These partnerships and initiatives underpin the WSNT Board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and promote economic self-sufficiency for the communities it serves. By fostering collaboration and flexibility, the Board aims to create a more integrated and effective service delivery system.

## **C. High-Performing Board: Initiatives and Community Outreach**

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

The Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) Board is actively involved in various initiatives to ensure effective monitoring, communication, and service delivery within its jurisdiction. This involves a collaborative approach with sub-recipients, stakeholders, and community partners to enhance workforce development and support services.

### **Monitoring and Review Processes**

#### **Board Monitoring Committee**

The WSNT Board Monitoring Committee is responsible for reviewing performance reports and providing feedback on any questionable measures. They also examine reports from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) during annual monitoring and technical assistance visits. Quality Assurance staff contribute insights from program reviews conducted on a rotational basis.

### ***Sub-recipient Management Team***

The sub-recipient management team presents both oral and written reports detailing performance and workforce center activities. Any concerns or recommendations for improvements in performance are addressed during these meetings. To ensure impartiality, the WSNT Board has engaged a third-party entity to conduct fiscal and program reviews for sub-recipients. These reviews are completed before the annual TWC monitoring reviews.

### ***Management Meetings***

WSNT Board staff host management meetings to share information with sub-recipient management team members and address any arising issues. This has fostered quality relationship-building and communication, helping to prevent larger issues from developing. If further assistance is needed, the WSNT Board can consult the TWC's Technical Assistance department.

## ***Expanding Service Delivery to Rural Communities***

### ***Career Stations***

WSNT has expanded service delivery to rural communities by establishing Career Stations in 16 rural libraries across an 11-county area. These stations are equipped with video capabilities, software, and other tools to facilitate virtual interviews and job search activities. Resources available at each Career Station include:

- *Resource Guides:* Covering topics like unemployment information, agencies for rent and utility assistance, and food pantry schedules.
- *Direct Contacts:* Librarians have direct contact information for local workforce centers for personalized assistance.

### ***Remote Workspace: "The Office"***

In collaboration with the City of Seymour, Texas, WSNT opened a remote workspace named, "The Office," funded through an Innovation Grant from the TWC. This facility aims to improve digital literacy and support remote work in rural Baylor County.

Features of The Office:

- *High-Speed Fiber Internet:* Ensures reliable connectivity for remote work and virtual collaboration.
- *Modern Amenities:* Includes 19 state-of-the-art cubicles, two executive private offices, desks, office chairs, computers, and a printer/scanner/copier.
- *Community Partnerships:* The City of Seymour and the Nortex Regional Planning Commission partnered on infrastructure upgrades to revitalize the building.

"The Office" is a strategic initiative that enhances digital skills and provides a secure, flexible working environment for the local community, supporting their participation in the digital economy.

## **Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis**

### **A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis**

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

The North Texas workforce development area (WDA) is a region that spans nearly 10,000 square miles across 11 counties, bridging the Panhandle and the Metroplex near the Red River, where Texas borders Oklahoma. This area includes Wichita Falls, the largest city with a population exceeding 104,000, along with nearby communities such as Burkburnett and Iowa Park. According to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau Statistics, the population of Wichita Falls and its immediate surroundings was 152,144.

#### ***Economic Landscape***

Traditionally, the economy of this region has been grounded in agriculture, with diverse activities such as cotton farming in the northern and western parts, wheat cultivation, and robust cattle ranching. Additionally, the area benefits from significant oil and gas production. While manufacturing reached its zenith in the previous century, ongoing efforts aim to rejuvenate and sustain these employers.

Despite a general trend of an aging and declining population, the region has seen some younger residents return after experiencing life in larger urban areas, drawn back by the appeal of family support and quality of life. Wichita Falls serves as the central hub for higher education, skills training, administration, services, shopping, and healthcare, providing a strategic location with access to both Dallas/Fort Worth and Oklahoma City.

#### ***Key Employer: Sheppard Air Force Base***

The largest employer in the Wichita Falls area is Sheppard Air Force Base, established in 1941. It is renowned for hosting the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training program, involving 14 nations. Sheppard is distinguished as the most diverse training base within the Air Education and Training Command, providing both technical and flying training.

The base supports two training wings with over 5,900 military, civilian, and contractor personnel, alongside 81,900 joint trainees annually. The presence of trainees from countries such as the Netherlands, Canada, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Denmark, Spain, and Italy enriches the cultural fabric of the region. Many retired veterans choose to remain or return to the area post-retirement. Sheppard Air Force Base is one of three military installations within a 100-mile radius, alongside Fort Sill Army Base in Lawton, Oklahoma, and Altus Air Force Base in Oklahoma.

#### ***Adapting to Change: Service Delivery Innovations***

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the introduction of virtual, curbside, and in-person services, which continue to be offered to facilitate engagement with customers and employers, even when travel is constrained. This shift has fostered creative thinking among staff and management, proving successful beyond the pandemic restrictions. By maintaining non-traditional service delivery

methods, the region enhances accessibility for participants who might otherwise face barriers in utilizing workforce services.

### ***Economic Development and Future Outlook***

Economic development organizations in the area are collaborating to retain businesses, develop new ventures, and entice younger workers to remain in the region. The next section will delve into the in-demand industries and occupations within the area, alongside demographic information about the communities served.

### ***Identification of In-Demand Industries, In-Demand Occupations, and Target Occupations in North Texas***

The WSNT Board Education Committee, comprised of private, public, education, and community-based organization representatives, met in October 2024. This committee identified changes to labor market information in North Texas and realigned the in-demand and target lists. These lists indicate areas of high growth in the region.

Projections and wage data were pulled from TexasLMI.com. For occupations in which local wages were not available due to a small sample size, the statewide Texas wage data was used. After the committee review, the full board ratified the lists, and they were officially adopted on November 7, 2024. These lists are reviewed annually by the committee and recommended changes are ratified by the board.

## In-Demand Industries

### Defined as:

- Having substantial current or potential impact (including jobs that lead to employment opportunities that provide both economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) on the state, regional, or local economy and that contribute to the growth or stability of other supporting businesses or to the growth of other industry sectors; or
- Currently have or are projected to have a substantial number of open positions (including positions that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) great enough to have a significant impact on the state, regional, or local economy.

### Criteria for Selection: **GROWTH**

- >1,000 Employment 2022,
- >100 Employment # Change 2022-2032, and/or
- >25% Employment Change 2022-2032

North Texas WDA In-Demand Industries			
<i>Date of Approval: November 7, 2024</i>			
NAICS INDUSTRY	2022 Employment	2022-2032 Growth	2022-2032 % Growth
<b>21 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction</b>			
2131 Support Activities for Mining	1,537	458	29.8%
2381 Building Foundation And Exterior Contractors	390	227	58.2%
2382 Building Equipment Contractors	1,045	115	11.0%
<b>42 Wholesale Trade</b>			
4234 Professional and Commercial Equipment and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	140	45	32.1%
<b>45 Retail Trade</b>			
4551 Department Stores	1,191	321	27.0%
4552 Warehouse Clubs, Supercenters, and Other General Merchandise Retailers	1,544	393	25.5%
<b>49 Transportation and Warehousing</b>			
4922 Local Messengers and Local Delivery	74	24	32.4%
<b>54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</b>			
5415 Computer Systems Design and Related Services	112	30	26.8%
5419 Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	291	122	41.9%
<b>56 Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services</b>			
5611 Office Administrative Services	225	95	42.2%
5617 Services to Buildings and Dwellings	1,008	110	10.9%

<b>61 Educational Services</b>			
6111 Elementary and Secondary Schools	6,672	252	3.8%
<b>62 Health Care and Social Assistance</b>			
6211 Offices of Physicians	1,885	146	7.7%
6213 Offices of Other Health Practitioners	740	142	19.2%
6216 Home Health Care Services	2,224	448	20.1%
6219 Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	192	100	52.1%
<b>72 Accommodation and Food Services</b>			
7225 Restaurants and Other Eating Places	6,791	697	10.3%

## In-Demand Occupations

### Defined as:

- Currently have or are projected to have a substantial number of open positions (including positions that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) great enough to have a significant impact on the state, regional, or local economy.

### Criteria for Selection: **GROWTH**

- >500 Annual Average Employment,
- >50 Employment # Change 2022-2032, and/or
- >25% Employment Change 2022-2032

North Texas WDA In-Demand Occupations				
Date of Approval: November 7, 2024				
Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)	Occupation	2022 Employment	2022-2032 Growth	2022-2032 % Growth
<b>Management</b>				
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	354	54	15.3%
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	2,580	248	9.6%
<b>Community and Social Service</b>				
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	191	57	29.8%
<b>Educational Instruction and Library</b>				
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1243	62	5.0%
<b>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical</b>				
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	128	33	25.8%
29-1141	Registered Nurses	1797	191	10.6%
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	100	44	44.0%
<b>Healthcare Support</b>				
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	1171	56	4.8%
31-9092	Medical Assistants	412	69	16.7%
31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	52	24	46.2%
<b>Food Preparation and Serving Related</b>				
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	821	87	10.6%
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	711	157	22.1%
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	852	88	10.3%
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	2395	237	9.9%
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	1224	78	6.4%

<b>Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance</b>			
37-2011 Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1239	104	8.4%
<b>Sales and Related</b>			
41-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	966	54	5.6%
41-2011 Cashiers	2158	146	6.8%
41-2031 Retail Salespersons	2067	126	6.1%
<b>Construction and Extraction</b>			
47-2051 Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	123	37	30.1%
47-5011 Derrick Operators, Oil and Gas	78	23	29.5%
47-5012 Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas	137	41	29.9%
47-5071 Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	327	94	28.7%
<b>Installation, Maintenance, and Repair</b>			
49-2022 Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	112	52	46.4%
49-9052 Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	73	33	45.2%
49-9071 Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	947	63	6.7%
<b>Transportation and Material Moving</b>			
53-3032 Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1334	179	13.4%
53-3033 Light Truck Drivers	501	61	12.2%
53-7062 Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	990	103	10.4%
53-7065 Stockers and Order Fillers	1677	274	16.3%
53-7073 Wellhead Pumpers	112	33	29.5%

## Target Occupations

### Defined as:

- Have or are projected to have a substantial number of openings (due to job growth rather than job turnover) to have a significant impact on the state, regional, or local economy; and
- Result in wages that meet a Board’s self-sufficiency requirements or have been identified by the Board as a career pathway to an occupation that leads to self-sufficient wages.
- Target occupations generally include a training component that is related to the occupation.

### Criteria for Selection: GROWTH

- >500 Employment in 2032, **or**
- >20 Employment # Change 2022-2032, **or**
- >10% Employment Change 2022-2032, **AND**
- Wages at the 25th percentile “prevailing wage” meet or exceed the North Texas self-sufficiency wage of \$16.26 hourly.

### Additional Rationale and Local Wisdom

Workforce area local wisdom and additional information that cannot be captured by other data sources are crucial components of the selection process. For example:

- An occupation or industry that is new to an area will not be reflected in employment projections because the projections are based on existing positions in the workforce area; and
- Some occupations will not appear at the top of one industry but will appear in many industries and can be selected for that reason.

Additional rationale and local wisdom were considered by the WSNT Board Education Committee for occupations in which most workers are self-employed leading to under-reported wage data. It was also considered for occupations that fell below the wage threshold, but which require a formal training and/or certification component AND are part of an in-demand career path were considered.

North Texas WDA Target Occupations					
<i>Date of Approval: November 7, 2024</i>					
Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Occupation	2022-2032 % Growth	Average Entry-Level Wage	25th Percentile Wage	Typical Entry-Level Education*	
<b>Management</b>					
11-3021 Computer and Information Systems Managers	10.3%	\$42.83	\$48.21	B	
11-3031 Financial Managers	16.8%	\$37.53	\$43.79	B	
11-9051 Food Service Managers	11.1%	\$17.37	\$19.25	HS	
11-9111 Medical and Health Services Managers	15.3%	\$30.77	\$36.29	B	

11-1021 General and Operations Managers	9.6%	\$18.64	\$23.07	B
<b>Business and Financial Operations</b>				
13-1111 Management Analysts	15.9%	\$28.87	\$35.69	B
13-1131 Fundraisers	10.3%	\$18.63	\$20.28	B
13-1161 Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	15.2%	\$16.80	\$21.22	B
13-2011 Accountants and Auditors	9.2%	\$22.26	\$25.37	B
<b>Computer and Mathematical</b>				
15-1211 Computer Systems Analysts	29.8%	\$23.99	\$27.25	B
15-1232 Computer User Support Specialists	23.4%	\$15.08	\$16.26	SC
15-1244 Network and Computer Systems Administrators	18.6%	\$26.03	\$29.41	B
15-1252 Software Developers	12.5%	\$36.41	\$43.69	B
<b>Architecture and Engineering</b>				
17-2112 Industrial Engineers	11.6%	\$34.16	\$38.52	B
17-2141 Mechanical Engineers	10.4%	\$31.21	\$35.17	B
17-2171 Petroleum Engineers	22.4%	\$36.22	\$44.96	B
17-3023 Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians	10.9%			A
17-3029 Engineering Technologists and Technicians, Except Drafters, All Other	10.7%	\$21.69	\$24.52	A
<b>Community and Social Service</b>				
21-1018 Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	29.8%	\$16.03	\$17.53	B
21-1022 Healthcare Social Workers	10.9%	\$16.93	\$18.59	M
<b>Educational Instruction and Library</b>				
25-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	5.0%			B
25-2022 Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	5.1%			B
25-2031 Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	5.4%			B
25-3041 Tutors	14.4%	\$13.93	\$16.63	SC
25-9045 Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	4.4%			SC
<b>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical</b>				
29-1071 Physician Assistants	23.1%	\$46.10	\$51.35	M
29-1122 Occupational Therapists	12.0%	\$32.23	\$39.85	M
29-1123 Physical Therapists	14.6%	\$35.96	\$40.98	D
29-1126 Respiratory Therapists	21.1%	\$27.12	\$29.97	A
29-1127 Speech-Language Pathologists	25.8%	\$29.06	\$31.86	M
29-1141 Registered Nurses	10.6%	\$29.94	\$32.06	B
29-1171 Nurse Practitioners	20.2%	\$44.01	\$49.56	M
29-1292 Dental Hygienists	20.7%	\$33.12	\$36.64	A

29-2042 Emergency Medical Technicians	16.3%	\$12.35	\$13.57	PS
29-2043 Paramedics	22.1%	\$18.37	\$18.77	PS
29-2052 Pharmacy Technicians	7.1%	\$15.46	\$17.01	HS
29-2055 Surgical Technologists	15.4%			PS
29-2061 Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	3.5%	\$20.41	\$22.42	PS
29-2099 Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	13.4%	\$16.80	\$17.52	PS
<b>Healthcare Support</b>				
31-1131 Nursing Assistants	4.8%	\$13.16	\$13.97	PS
31-2021 Physical Therapist Assistants	17.2%	\$26.08	\$31.04	A
31-9011 Massage Therapists	22.0%			PS
31-9091 Dental Assistants	20.1%	\$13.62	\$14.14	PS
31-9092 Medical Assistants	16.7%	\$14.47	\$15.00	PS
31-9097 Phlebotomists	21.6%	\$14.98	\$15.62	PS
<b>Protective Service</b>				
33-2011 Firefighters	10.8%	\$17.59	\$20.28	PS
33-3012 Correctional Officers and Jailers	-2.4%	\$19.10	\$20.03	HS
33-3051 Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	-2.3%	\$21.28	\$23.19	HS
<b>Food Preparation and Serving Related</b>				
35-1012 First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	10.6%	\$12.26	\$13.59	HS
<b>Personal Care and Service</b>				
39-5012 Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	8.8%	\$10.19	\$10.81	PS
<b>Sales and Related</b>				
41-3091 Sales Representatives of Svc, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial, & Travel	9.4%	\$15.91	\$18.72	HS
41-4011 Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Mfc, Technical & Scientific Products	14.7%	\$19.56	\$24.21	B
<b>Office and Administrative Support</b>				
43-5052 Postal Service Mail Carriers	8.6%	\$19.74	\$19.94	N
43-5061 Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	5.5%	\$17.32	\$21.39	HS
<b>Construction and Extraction</b>				
47-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	6.4%	\$20.96	\$23.14	HS
47-2051 Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	30.1%	\$16.05	\$17.33	N
47-2111 Electricians	10.6%	\$15.93	\$17.57	HS
47-2152 Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	9.5%	\$15.69	\$18.27	HS
47-2211 Sheet Metal Workers	13.4%	\$16.13	\$18.67	HS
47-3015 Helpers--Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	11.6%	\$11.70	\$13.43	HS
47-5011 Derrick Operators, Oil and Gas	29.5%	\$19.37	\$21.67	N

47-5012 Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas	29.9%	\$18.16	\$19.00	N
47-5013 Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas	22.2%	\$19.59	\$21.32	N
47-5071 Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	28.7%	\$16.44	\$18.24	N
<b>Installation, Maintenance, and Repair</b>				
49-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	6.1%	\$20.41	\$23.04	HS
49-2022 Telecommunications Equipment Installers & Repairers, Except Line Installers	46.4%	\$16.22	\$17.05	PS
49-3011 Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	6.9%	\$23.63	\$28.73	PS
49-3021 Automotive Body and Related Repairers	10.7%	\$14.74	\$16.59	HS
49-3023 Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	2.1%	\$14.61	\$17.03	PS
49-9021 Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	12.8%	\$14.98	\$16.43	PS
49-9041 Industrial Machinery Mechanics	9.8%	\$18.58	\$21.11	HS
49-9043 Maintenance Workers, Machinery	13.8%	\$17.84	\$21.62	HS
49-9098 Helpers--Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers	10.5%	\$11.85	\$13.39	HS
<b>Production</b>				
51-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	4.3%	\$19.51	\$21.36	HS
51-4041 Machinists	11.8%	\$16.75	\$17.83	HS
51-4121 Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	7.0%	\$16.12	\$17.81	HS
<b>Transportation and Material Moving</b>				
53-3032 Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	13.4%	\$17.52	\$19.25	PS
53-3033 Light Truck Drivers	12.2%	\$12.56	\$14.26	HS
53-7051 Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	7.5%	\$15.80	\$17.36	N
53-7073 Wellhead Pumpers	29.5%	\$18.06	\$20.54	HS
* N = No formal educational credential HS = High School Diploma or Equivalent PS = Post-secondary, non-degree award SC = Some College, no degree A = Associate's Degree B = Bachelor's Degree M = Master's Degree D = Doctoral or Professional Degree				

## B. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

Total North Texas Population 2024: 217,804

Total North Texas Households 2024: 84,979

*owner-occupied (2020) 55,418*

*renter-occupied (2020) 28,601*

Total North Texas Civilian Labor Force (CLF) 2024: 98,648

Unemployment decreased by .1% in 2024, going from 4.0% unemployment in January 2024 to 3.9% in December with the peak for unemployment in 2024 during the months of February and June at 4.4%. The spikes in these months are on trend with local, state, and national fluctuations.

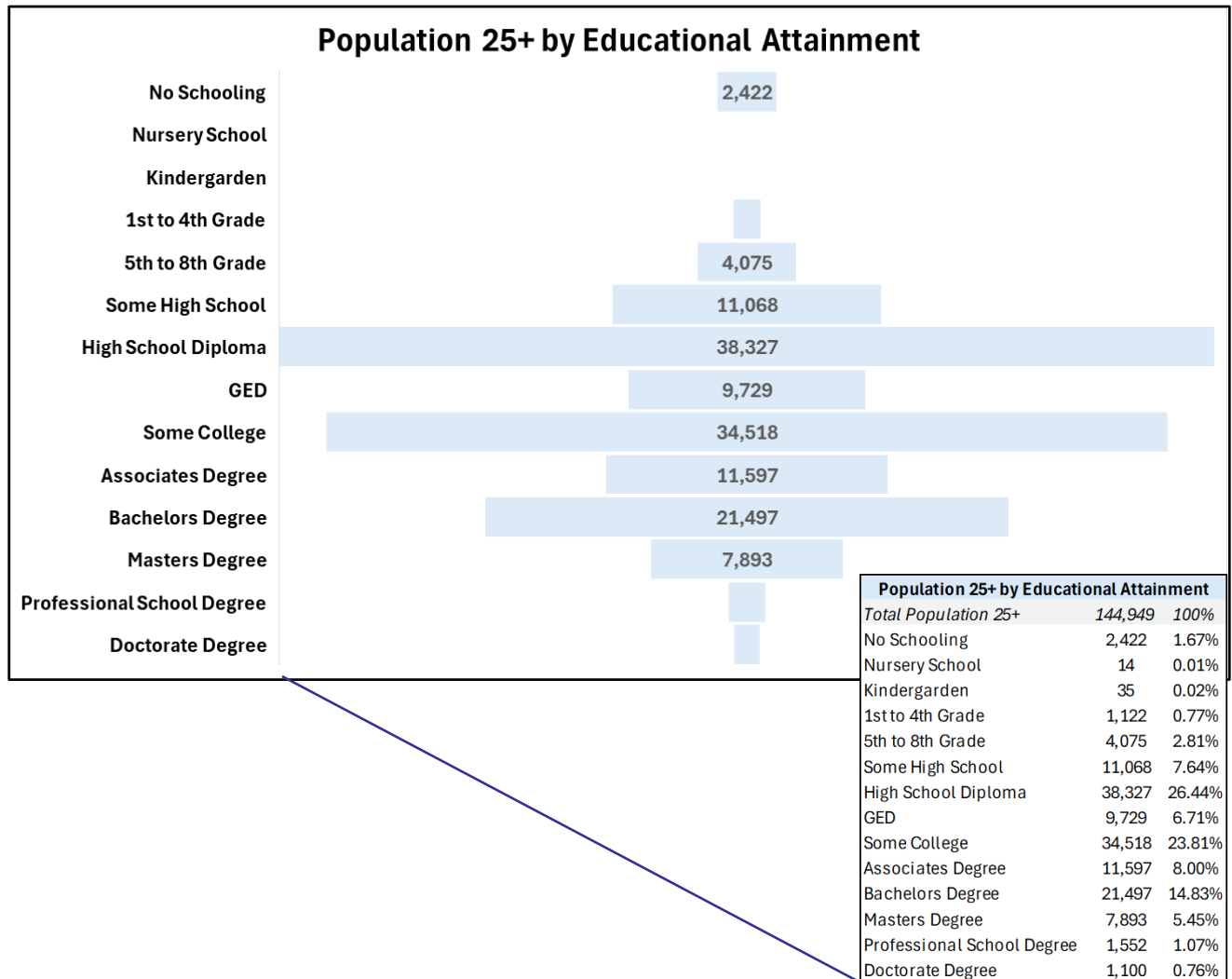
### **Year-End Labor Force Trends for North Texas WDA vs. Texas Statewide vs. U.S.**

<b>North Texas Labor Force Statistics</b>			
	<i>December 2024</i>	<i>December 2023</i>	<i>Yearly Change</i>
Civilian Labor Force	98,648	95,357	3,291
Employed	95,260	92,250	3,010
Unemployed	3,388	3,107	281
Unemployment Rate	3.4%	3.3%	0.1%
<b>Statewide Texas Labor Force Statistics</b>			
	<i>December 2024</i>	<i>December 2023</i>	<i>Yearly Change</i>
Civilian Labor Force	15,591,398	15,090,824	500,574
Employed	15,012,362	14,564,917	447,445
Unemployed	579,036	525,907	53,129
Unemployment Rate	3.7%	3.5%	0.2%
<b>US Labor Force Statistics</b>			
	<i>December 2024</i>	<i>December 2023</i>	<i>Yearly Change</i>
Civilian Labor Force	167,746,000	166,661,000	1,085,000
Employed	161,294,000	160,754,000	540,000
Unemployed	6,452,000	5,907,000	545,000
Unemployment Rate	3.8%	3.5%	0.3%
<b>Continued Unemployment Claims for the Week of the 12th</b>			
	<i>December 2024</i>	<i>December 2023</i>	<i>Yearly Change</i>
North Texas	501	521	-20
Statewide Texas	122,026	114,107	7,919

### Historical Unemployment Trends: North Texas WDA vs. Texas Statewide

Month	2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
	North Texas	Statewide Texas	North Texas	Statewide Texas	North Texas	Statewide Texas	North Texas	Statewide Texas	North Texas	Statewide Texas
Dec	3.4	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.7	3.9	4.1	6.2	6.7
Nov	4.1	4.2	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.8	4.2	4.4	6	6.8
Oct	4	4.1	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.8	4.4	4.7	5.8	6.7
Sept	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.8	4.7	5	6.4	7.7
Aug	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.2	3.9	4	4.9	5.5	6.3	7.9
Jul	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.2	4	4.1	5.3	5.9	7.8	9.7
Jun	4.4	4.5	4	4.2	4.2	4.2	5.8	6.4	8	10.4
May	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.6	3.6	5.1	5.7	8.6	11.8
Apr	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	5.2	5.9	9.5	12.3
Mar	4	4.1	4	4	3.7	3.8	5.9	6.4	4.7	5.4
Feb	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.3	6.3	6.9	3.1	3.5
Jan	4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.6	6.4	7	3.2	3.7

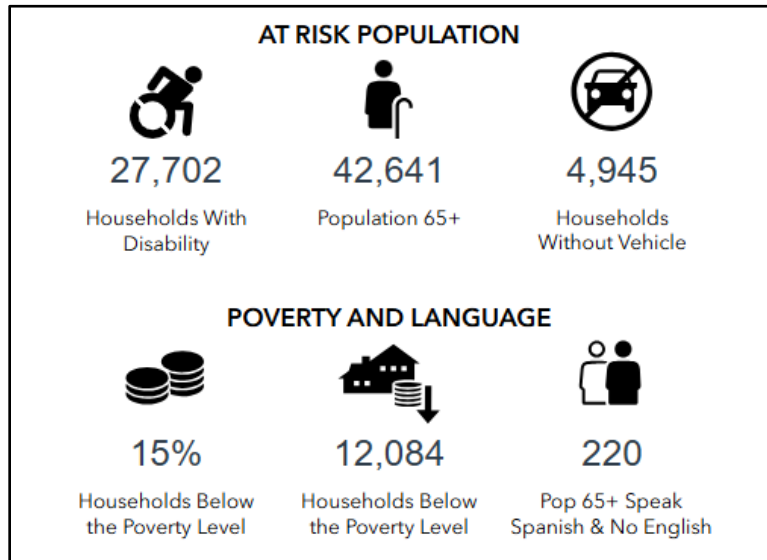
### Education and Skill Levels of North Texas WDA Workforce



## Individuals with Barriers to Employment

- 27,702 (33.3%) households with at least one person with a **disability** in residence
- 383 households with someone(s) ages 18-64 who **speaks no English**
- 250 households with someone(s) 65 or older who **speaks no English**
- 4,495 (5.3%) households are **without a personal vehicle**

*3,614 renter-occupied households without a personal vehicle  
1,331 owner-occupied households without a personal vehicle*



Language Abilities for 18 to 64 year olds in North Texas			
	Single Language	Also speak English	
		"very well" or "well"	"not well"
English Only	112,354	n/a	n/a
Spanish Only	373	12,427	2,058
Other Indo-European Language Only	-	1,137	196
Speak Asian and Pacific Island Language Only	6	1,461	206
Speak Other Language(s) Only	4	724	-

Language Abilities for 65 years and over			
	Single Language	Also speak English	
		"very well" or "well"	"not well"
English Only	34,728	n/a	n/a
Spanish Only	220	1,713	290
Other Indo-European Language Only	-	135	25
Speak Asian and Pacific Island Language Only	30	184	79
Speak Other Language(s) Only	-	-	-

In 2024, our team recognized the pressing need for employment support for individuals in North Texas who have experienced justice involvement. Understanding the challenges faced by these individuals in securing stable employment, we embarked on an initiative to provide them with opportunities to rebuild their lives and careers.

### ***Partnership with Local Homeless Shelter***

Our journey began with a strategic partnership with a local homeless shelter. This collaboration laid the groundwork for our first "second chance" hiring event. Designed as a closed, invitation-only event, it aimed to directly connect job seekers with potential employers in a supportive environment. Four employers participated, and we were able to serve 48 job seekers. The event's success was a testament to the effectiveness of targeted initiatives in addressing employment barriers.

### ***Expanding the Vision: Inaugural Second Chance Job Fair***

Encouraged by the success and positive feedback from the initial event, we quickly realized the potential for a broader reach. Within just two months, our dedicated team expanded the event to the public. By October 2024, the inaugural Second Chance Job Fair was launched, marking a significant milestone in our efforts to support those seeking a fresh start.

- ***Event Highlights***

- Participation: The job fair attracted 26 employers, offering a diverse range of opportunities across various industries.
- Impact: A total of 156 job seekers attended, each bringing unique skills and experiences. Notably, 14 of the attendees were veterans, highlighting the event's inclusivity and broad appeal.
- Outcome: The fair provided a valuable platform for both employers seeking dedicated employees and job seekers eager for a second chance.

- ***Moving Forward***

- The overwhelming success of the Second Chance Job Fair has inspired ongoing efforts to support justice-involved individuals in North Texas. As we look to the future, our team is committed to expanding these initiatives, continually refining our approach to meet the evolving needs of both job seekers and employers.

Together, we are fostering an inclusive community where everyone can succeed, regardless of their past.

<b>Total Criminal Convictions by County 2018 - 2022</b>					
<b>County</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Archer</b>	236	201	139	116	97
<b>Baylor</b>	48	43	32	27	15
<b>Clay</b>	170	136	101	96	116
<b>Cottle</b>	13	11	7	16	16
<b>Foard</b>	3	9	3	9	1
<b>Hardeman</b>	172	128	97	75	86
<b>Jack</b>	164	207	128	170	93
<b>Montague</b>	453	321	278	216	125
<b>Wichita</b>	3,566	3,127	1,796	1,925	1,802
<b>Wilbarger</b>	490	345	408	475	418
<b>Young</b>	626	681	443	560	418
<b>Total North Texas WDA</b>	<b>5,941</b>	<b>5,209</b>	<b>3,432</b>	<b>3,685</b>	<b>3,187</b>

**SOURCE NOTES:**

*Labor force data was collected from [TexasLMI.com](https://www.texaslmi.com)*

*Demographic data was collected from [Sites on Texas sitesontexas.teex.tamus.edu](https://sitesontexas.teex.tamus.edu)*

*County conviction data was collected from [dps.texas.gov](https://dps.texas.gov)*

### **C. Workforce Development Analysis**

In North Texas, our workforce development activities are essential in keeping our 11-county region competitive, expanding job growth, and ensuring that job seekers can secure skills and careers that foster self-sufficiency. Our communities thrive and progress economically through these efforts, starting with quality early learning experiences for our youngest residents.

#### ***Early Childhood Education Initiatives***

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) places a strong emphasis on improving the quality of childcare to boost school readiness, long-term educational attainment, and economic prosperity. By facilitating professional development, WSNT guides early childhood educators to advance their education aspirations, promoting quality childcare practices. Additionally, WSNT provides resources to Texas Rising Star-credentialed childcare providers to enhance learning environments, supporting both educators and children. Our ongoing efforts, such as wage supplements and initiatives informed by survey data from Early Learning Programs, aim to improve teacher retention.

#### ***Career Exploration and Externships***

Career exploration is crucial in equipping youth with the necessary skills and knowledge for successful careers. Through partnerships with employers, community colleges, local universities, school districts, and the Region 9 Education Service Center, WSNT hosts interactive career

exploration events for hundreds of students annually. These events help students understand the skills and educational requirements for various careers, leading to sustainable employment.

Moreover, WSNT participates in the Externships for Teachers grant, providing middle and high school teachers with opportunities to gain industry experience at local businesses. This enables them to develop industry-related curricula and share real-world insights with students.

### ***Inclusive Work and Education Environments***

Our Student Hire Ability Navigator works with employers, colleges, ISDs, and Region 9 Education Service Center to create inclusive work and educational environments for students with disabilities. WSNT leverages its Target Occupations List and Eligible Training Providers List to offer training opportunities in in-demand occupations, supported by customized Labor Market Information (LMI).

### ***Community Engagement and Networking***

WSNT staff actively participate in community events, such as Meals on Wheels, serving at local shelters, and supporting research walks, which foster partnerships and enhance community engagement. Staff also engage in Chamber of Commerce networking groups like Business After Hours and Leader to Leader meetings, promoting workforce services among community business leaders.

### ***Educational Support and Collaboration***

Through grants like Texas Talent Connection and Jobs and Education for Texans (JET), WSNT supports educational institutions in implementing or enhancing career and technical education (CTE) programs. These collaborations ensure our training programs align with industry needs, strengthening our community.

### ***Focus on Rural Areas***

Recognizing the limited resources in rural areas, WSNT coordinates with local organizations to maximize effectiveness. Partnerships with 16 rural libraries to install workforce Career Stations and the City of Seymour to develop remote workspaces highlight the importance of collaboration in strengthening workforce development.

### ***Support for People with Disabilities***

WSNT collaborates closely with the vocational rehabilitation system to provide employment and training for people with disabilities. Co-locating Vocational Rehabilitation in two workforce centers has increased awareness and support. Work Services Corporation, a non-profit providing jobs for people with disabilities, remains a valuable partner by hosting on-the-job and work experience training contracts.

In summary, workforce development in North Texas is a multifaceted effort involving education, community engagement, and strategic partnerships. By enhancing early childhood education, offering career exploration opportunities, supporting inclusive environments, and focusing on rural areas, WSNT ensures a resilient and prosperous future for our community.

## Part 3: Core Programs

### A. Workforce Development System

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

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) is dedicated to enhancing the economic vitality of the North Texas region by providing valuable programs and services to employers and job seekers. As a pivotal entity, WSNT administers and oversees the direct service delivery of workforce and child care services through its Subrecipient partners. These services are designed to foster economic growth and align with broader workforce development strategies at the local, state, and national levels.

WSNT serves as a regional connector and convener, addressing workforce development issues by bringing together stakeholders from various sectors. This collaborative approach ensures that the workforce needs of the community are met efficiently and effectively. WSNT's oversight guarantees that services are provided in a seamless and integrated manner, maximizing the benefits to both employers and job seekers.

#### **Service Delivery Strategies**

The workforce subrecipient, under the guidance of the WSNT board, implements a variety of service delivery strategies designed to meet the unique needs of employers and job seekers. These strategies include:

- *Employer Services:* Tailored solutions to help businesses recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce. This includes job matching, candidate screening, and customized training programs.
- *Job Seeker Services:* Comprehensive support for individuals seeking employment, including career counseling, job search assistance, and access to training programs that enhance employability.
- *Child Care Services:* Recognizing the importance of child care in workforce participation, WSNT ensures that child care services are accessible and affordable for working families. This support enables parents to pursue employment opportunities without the barrier of child care concerns.

#### **Alignment with Strategic Goals**

WSNT's programs are carefully aligned with strategic goals at various levels:

- *Local Strategies:* Addressing specific workforce needs within the North Texas community, promoting local economic development, and supporting regional industries.
- *State Strategies:* Collaborating with state agencies to implement workforce initiatives that enhance the overall economic competitiveness of Texas.
- *National Strategies:* Contributing to national workforce development goals by fostering a skilled and adaptable workforce that meets the demands of a changing economy.

Workforce Solutions North Texas is committed to being a leader in workforce development, providing essential services that empower employers and job seekers alike. Through strategic oversight and collaboration, WSNT ensures that the North Texas region remains a vibrant and thriving economic hub.

## **WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs**

### ***WIOA Adult Program***

The WIOA Adult Program focuses on helping adults obtain employment by providing job search assistance and access to training opportunities. The program prioritizes the following groups when allocating funds for employment and training activities:

- Recipients of public assistance
- Low-income individuals
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient

By prioritizing these groups, WSNT ensures that those who need the most support receive the necessary services to improve their skills and secure sustainable employment.

### ***WIOA Dislocated Worker Program***

The WIOA Dislocated Worker Program is aimed at helping individuals who have become unemployed due to job loss, layoffs, or economic sector transitions. The program's primary goal is to facilitate a quick return to the workforce by overcoming employment barriers. Services provided through this program include:

- Workforce education and training
- Employment programs
- Integrated support services

These services are delivered through WSNT's workforce centers to equip dislocated workers with the skills and resources needed to successfully re-enter the job market.

### ***WIOA Youth Program***

The WIOA Youth Program is designed to cater to the unique needs of young individuals seeking to enhance their educational and employment prospects. The program offers a comprehensive range of services, including:

- Tutoring and alternative secondary school services
- Paid and unpaid work experiences: such as summer and year-round employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training
- Occupational skill training
- Education combined with workforce preparation and training
- Leadership development opportunities
- Supportive services and mentoring
- Follow-up services

- Comprehensive guidance and counseling
- Financial literacy education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Labor market and employment information services
- Postsecondary education and training preparation activities

By offering these diverse services, the WIOA Youth Program aims to empower young individuals, providing them with the tools and experiences necessary for successful careers.

Workforce Solutions North Texas, through its WIOA programs, is committed to supporting adults, dislocated workers, and youth in achieving their workforce goals, ultimately contributing to a stronger and more resilient local economy.

## **Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program**

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) collaborate as integral components of the Texas Model. Their partnership is dedicated to bridging the gap between employers and job seekers, ensuring a seamless employment process that benefits both parties.

### ***Assisting Employers***

One of the primary roles of WSNT within this partnership is to assist employers in effectively filling job vacancies. Here's how they contribute:

- *Recruiting Qualified Candidates:* WSNT actively searches for suitable candidates who meet the specific needs and requirements of various employers across North Texas.
- *Screening Potential Employees:* By thoroughly evaluating candidates, WSNT ensures that only the most qualified individuals are considered for positions, saving employers time and resources.
- *Referring Suitable Applicants:* After screening, WSNT refers these qualified job seekers to employers, facilitating a streamlined hiring process.

### ***Supporting Job Seekers***

WSNT is equally committed to supporting job seekers in their quest for meaningful employment:

- *Finding Employment Opportunities:* Job seekers are provided with access to a wide range of employment opportunities that match their skills and qualifications.
- *Career Guidance and Resources:* WSNT offers valuable resources, including career counseling, resume workshops, and interview preparation, to enhance job seekers' chances of securing employment.
- *Connecting with Employers:* By maintaining strong relationships with local businesses, WSNT helps job seekers network and connect with potential employers more effectively.

### ***The Impact of the Texas Model***

The Texas Model, with WSNT and TWC at its core, exemplifies a successful public-private partnership aimed at boosting employment rates and strengthening the local economy. This collaborative approach not only helps employers find the right talent but also empowers job

seekers to achieve their career aspirations. This collaborative model plays a crucial role in fostering a thriving workforce in North Texas. By focusing on recruitment, screening, and referral processes, they ensure that both employers and job seekers benefit from a dynamic and efficient employment ecosystem.

## **Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs**

The administration of the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program is managed by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Workforce centers, however, play a crucial role in supporting UI claimants throughout the process. These centers provide a variety of resources and services designed to assist claimants with their claims and improve their employment prospects.

### ***Resources and Assistance for UI Claimants***

Workforce centers offer a comprehensive suite of services aimed at helping UI claimants navigate the complexities of the claims process. These services include:

- *Filing Claims:* Workforce center staff are available to assist claimants in filing their UI claims, ensuring that the process is as smooth and efficient as possible.
- *Appeals Participation:* For claimants facing disputes or appeals, workforce centers provide guidance and support to help them understand and participate effectively in the appeals process.
- *Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program:* UI claimants have access to the RESEA program, which offers personalized reemployment services and assessments to improve their chances of returning to work.

### ***Coordination and Communication***

A designated staff member is responsible for communication with the state regarding issues related to UI claimants. This coordinator plays a vital role in ensuring that any concerns or problems affecting claimants are promptly addressed.

### ***Active Job Search and Employment Planning***

Workforce center staff are committed to helping UI claimants actively search for employment. They provide:

- *Employment Plan Development:* Assistance in creating a tailored employment plan that aligns with the claimant's skills, experiences, and career goals.
- *Outreach and Early Intervention:* The workforce subrecipient conducts outreach to claimants, offering early intervention services that connect them with comprehensive resources and support to enhance their employment prospects.
- When issues with claims are detected, the UI coordinator communicates with the state to address the situation efficiently.

In summary, workforce centers serve as a critical support system for UI claimants, offering a range of resources and services that facilitate claim filing, employment search, and overall claimant success. By maintaining open lines of communication and providing individualized assistance,

these centers empower claimants to navigate the UI system and transition back into the workforce effectively.

## **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program**

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program is designed to assist individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits in finding employment and ensuring that these benefits are allocated correctly. The program is structured around four main goals that aim to support participants effectively:

### **1) Finding Jobs**

One of the primary objectives of the RESEA Program is to help participants find employment more quickly. By offering personalized assistance and guidance, the program aims to expedite the job search process for individuals who are receiving UI benefits.

### **2) Stopping Wrong Payments**

Ensuring that UI payments are distributed accurately is another critical goal of the RESEA Program. By verifying the eligibility of recipients, the program helps prevent incorrect or fraudulent payments, ensuring that the benefits reach the rightful individuals.

### **3) Qualifying Participants for Additional Resources**

The RESEA Program also connects participants with additional services and resources that can help them secure jobs that maximize their earning potential. This includes access to training programs, workshops, and other tools that enhance their job readiness and skills.

### **4) Connecting the Workforce System**

RESEA serves as an entry point for participants to engage with other workforce programs and services. By connecting individuals to a broader network of employment resources, the program facilitates a more comprehensive approach to job searching and career development.

Participation in the RESEA Program is mandatory for selected customers. These individuals will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with a career coach, who will provide personalized support and guidance throughout their job search journey. This program helps bridge the gap between unemployment and re-employment for individuals and helps ensure the integrity of the unemployment insurance system.

## **Choices/TANF employment and training program**

The Choices Program is an essential initiative designed to support individuals involved with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance. This program serves not only current recipients but also applicants, non-recipient parents, and former recipients. The primary aim is to facilitate a smooth transition from welfare to work by engaging participants in various work-related activities.

### **Goals of the Choices Program:**

- Promoting Employment
- Enhancing Skills
- Providing Support

### **Key Components:**

- Work-Related Activities
  - Job Search and Job Readiness Classes
  - Basic Skills Training
  - Educational and Vocational Training
- Support Services

To assist participants in achieving their employment goals, the program provides various support services that address common challenges faced by job seekers.

### **Partnership and Case Management**

Collaboration with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is essential to deliver integrated services that ensure seamless referrals and integrated case management.

- Participants receive timely referrals to appropriate services and programs.
- Participants experience a cohesive approach to managing individual cases, aligning work goals and program requirements effectively.

By offering a comprehensive suite of activities and support services, and through strategic partnerships, the program successfully helps participants achieve independence and secure sustainable employment.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP)**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) initiative is a critical resource designed to support SNAP recipients in gaining sustainable employment. By focusing on employment and training, the program aims to enhance participants' ability to secure regular employment, boost their earnings, and diminish their reliance on public assistance.

#### **Goals of the SNAP E&T Program:**

- Improving Job Acquisition
- Increasing Earnings
- Reducing Public Assistance Dependency

#### **Partnership and Case Management**

Collaboration with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is essential to deliver integrated services that ensure seamless referrals and integrated case management.

- Participants receive timely referrals to appropriate services and programs.
- Participants experience tailored support to meet individual work goals and program requirements.

Through a supportive environment, participants can achieve independence and secure sustainable employment.

## **Child Care Services (CCS)**

CCS offers crucial support for families and children, enhancing early childhood education and care. These services are designed to aid families who are actively working, undergoing job training, attending educational programs, or seeking employment.

### ***Key Components and Impact to Families***

- **Eligibility and Support**  
CCS are available to eligible families who meet certain criteria such as being employed, participating in job training, or pursuing educational programs. Additionally, families searching for employment can also benefit from these services, providing a vital support system during transitional periods.
- **Texas Rising Star Program (TRS)**  
TRS is a quality rating and improvement system for child care providers, ensuring that children receive high-quality early learning experiences. By choosing a TRS program, parents can rest assured that their children are in environments conducive to their development and future success in school.
- **Benefits of Quality Child Care**  
Quality child care is not just a safe place for children while their parents are at work or school—it lays the foundation for lifelong learning and success. Research indicates that children who engage in early learning programs are better prepared for academic challenges later in life. Quality child care supports cognitive, emotional, and social development, which are critical during the early years.
- **Support for Early Learning Programs**  
CCS also play a pivotal role in improving the quality of child care through support and development initiatives. They provide mentoring and coaching to educators within the early childhood field. This professional development helps educators improve their teaching practices, which in turn enhances the learning experiences of the children they serve.

CCS are a crucial resource for families, offering support for parents and fostering the early development of children. By promoting quality child care and supporting educators, these services ensure that children have the best possible start in life, setting the stage for future educational success.

## **Subsidized Child Care**

Access to quality child care is not just a family or community concern; it is fundamentally a workforce issue. When parents have reliable child care, they are better able to focus on their work and contribute effectively to the economy. Conversely, lack of access to quality child care can hinder parents' ability to work, attend school, or participate in job training, affecting their economic mobility and stability.

- ***The Role of Financial Assistance***  
To support eligible parents, financial assistance for child care is crucial. This assistance enables parents to afford quality care, which is often a significant expense. By alleviating

this financial burden, parents can concentrate on their professional and educational pursuits without the constant worry of how to manage child care costs.

- ***WSNT's Collaborative Approach***

The Workforce Solutions Network Team (WSNT) plays a pivotal role in addressing the child care needs of working parents. Through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or cooperative relationships, WSNT coordinates and facilitates the delivery of services in partnership with other programs. This collaborative approach ensures that resources are efficiently utilized and that families receive comprehensive support.

- ***Access to Employment Assistance***

Participants in these programs benefit from more than just financial assistance for child care. They also gain access to employment assistance through WSNT workforce centers. These centers provide valuable services such as job search resources, resume building workshops, and career counseling. By linking child care support with employment assistance, WSNT helps parents enhance their job prospects and work towards long-term career growth.

- ***The Broader Impact***

By addressing child care as a workforce issue, communities can improve overall economic health. When parents are supported in their professional endeavors, they can contribute more effectively to their workplaces and, by extension, to the broader economy. Moreover, children in quality child care settings benefit from early learning opportunities that lay the foundation for future academic and social success.

Access to quality child care is integral to building a robust workforce. Initiatives like those provided by WSNT demonstrate how coordinated efforts can empower parents, strengthen families, and ultimately boost economic prosperity.

## **Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs**

In today's competitive job market, the ability to speak English can be a pivotal factor in a participant's success. Recognizing this, WSNT actively collaborates with the Region 9 Education Service Center (Region 9) to provide essential instruction and remediation services, including English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. This is a crucial component of the participant's service continuum, designed to bolster their employability and career prospects.

WSNT is committed to engaging in activities that foster student success both in their careers and in higher education pursuits. By partnering with Region 9, WSNT ensures that educational services are seamlessly incorporated into the broader support framework, promoting a holistic approach to participant development.

### ***Region 9 Education Service Center's Role***

Region 9 offers Adult Education & Literacy (AEL) services across the 11-county North Texas WDA. Transitional concerns and needs are shared with Region 9, providing a platform for students and businesses to learn about and access all available services. This collaborative approach ensures that participants receive comprehensive support tailored to their specific requirements.

### ***Key Features of the AEL Services***

- *Customized Learning Plans:* Each participant receives a personalized learning plan that aligns with their educational and career goals. This approach ensures that individuals receive the necessary skills to advance in their chosen paths.
- *Workforce Integration:* WSNT partners with local businesses to create training programs that match current job market demands. This integration helps bridge the gap between education and employment, facilitating smoother transitions into the workforce.
- *Resource Accessibility:* Students and businesses have access to a wide range of resources, including technology tools, educational materials, and expert guidance, to support their learning and development processes.
- *Community Engagement:* WSNT and Region 9 actively engages with community organizations to foster a supportive environment for learners. This engagement helps in building a network of support that enhances the educational experience.
- *Continuous Feedback and Improvement:* Regular feedback from participants and stakeholders is sought to improve the services offered. This ensures that the programs remain relevant and effective in meeting the evolving needs of the community.

By leveraging these features, Region 9 AEL programs effectively equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in today's dynamic world.

## **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs**

TAA helps workers by providing services and benefits to help them find employment. This federal program operates at no cost to employers and is administered by TWC through WSNT.

### ***Benefits and Services***

- *Employment and Case Management Services:* offers skills assessments, career counseling, job search assistance, information on training and more
- *Training:* vocational and remedial training for a new occupation
- *Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA):* Pays benefits if enrolled in an approved training by your waiver/in training deadline
- *Alternative/Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (A/RTAA):* Supplements wages if you are at least 50 and returned to work earning less in your new job.
- *Job Search Allowance:* Covers costs of an out-of-area job search
- *Relocation Allowance:* Pays out-of-area moving costs

TAA helps workers by providing new skills, certifications, and resources to find employment. To qualify, an individual must be laid off from a job covered under a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) certification.

## **Vocational Rehabilitation programs**

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services are crucial in supporting individuals with disabilities to achieve independence and employment. The Texas Workforce Commission's Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC VR) program provides comprehensive, individualized work-related services through trained counselors. These counselors play a vital role in facilitating the independence, integration, and inclusion of people with disabilities into the workforce.

## **Role of VR Counselors**

VR Counselors are trained professionals dedicated to assisting individuals with disabilities in navigating their path to employment.

- *Facilitating Independence:* Helping clients develop the skills and confidence needed to live independently and pursue employment opportunities.
- *Promoting Integration:* Ensuring that clients are integrated into work environments that are inclusive and supportive.
- *Encouraging Inclusion:* Advocating for clients to be included in all aspects of community life, particularly in the workplace.

## **Integration with Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT)**

Integration has been successfully implemented in the Wichita Falls and Graham offices. This collaboration is a significant step towards creating a cohesive system that supports individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment goals.

- *Leveraging Resources:* By combining efforts, WSNT and VRS can utilize resources more efficiently to benefit shared customers.
- *Aligning Services:* Better alignment ensures that services are streamlined, reducing duplication and enhancing the customer experience.
- *Enhanced Service Delivery:* Customers receive more comprehensive and coordinated support.

The ongoing efforts to integrate Vocational Rehabilitation Services with Workforce Solutions are a testament to the commitment to serving the community effectively. By continuing to build on these foundations, we can ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the support they need to thrive in the workforce.

## **Apprenticeship programs**

Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) development and expansion is a key focus for the Workforce Solutions of North Texas (WSNT) moving forward. The WSNT Board staff is committed to providing education and support for the development of new Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs, as well as the expansion of existing ones. This will be achieved through strategic industry outreach, backed by labor market data, and collaborative efforts with community partners and stakeholders.

### **Key Strategies for Apprenticeship Development and Expansion**

- *Industry Outreach:* WSNT plans to engage in targeted industry outreach to identify and meet employer needs. By analyzing labor market data, WSNT can pinpoint industries with high demand for skilled workers and potential for apprenticeship programs.
- *Collaboration with Community Partners:* Roundtable collaborations with community partners and stakeholders is a cornerstone of the engagement approach. By fostering open communication and cooperative efforts, WSNT aims to create a supportive environment for the development and expansion of RAPs.

- *Funding Opportunities:* Identifying and securing funding opportunities is essential for supporting program development and growth. WSNT is dedicated to finding resources that will assist in the establishment and expansion of RAPs, ensuring that apprentices receive necessary support during their training.

The diversity of the North Texas region provides vast career opportunities for workers and students across various industries, including:

- Aviation and Defense
- Healthcare
- Manufacturing

WSNT’s strong relationships with local employers and apprenticeship intermediaries will continue to bolster the adoption of apprenticeships in these sectors. By maintaining these partnerships, WSNT ensures that the workforce remains competitive and well-prepared for the demands of the evolving job market.

## **Career and Technical Education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006**

According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, “The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), was signed into law on July 31, 2018. The act provides an increased focus on the academic achievement of career and technical education students and emphasizes alignment with state-level and local needs.” And according to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), “One of the most significant changes introduced in the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (Perkins V) is the comprehensive local needs assessment (CLNA).

Career and Technical Education (CTE) plays a crucial role in preparing students for the workforce by aligning educational content with challenging academic standards. This ensures that students are equipped with both the academic and technical skills needed for success in various careers. In North Texas, school districts and community colleges carry out programs that align CTE services with the workforce and business needs.

### ***Key Components of CTE***

- *Alignment with Academic Standards*  
CTE courses must be designed to meet challenging academic standards, ensuring that students gain a comprehensive education that integrates both technical and academic learning.
- *Career Guidance and Academic*  
Counseling Programs must include career guidance and counseling, providing students with information on baccalaureate degree programs and other educational pathways.
- *Articulation Agreements*

These agreements facilitate the transition between secondary and postsecondary education, ensuring that students can smoothly progress in their educational journey without losing credits or momentum.

- **Scientifically Based Research**  
CTE programs should be informed by the latest research, ensuring that teaching methods and curricula are effective and evidence-based.
- **Tech Prep for Secondary and Postsecondary Students**  
Focused on creating a seamless pathway from high school to postsecondary technical education, tech prep programs help students gain specialized skills in their chosen fields.

WSNT supports education entities applying for Perkins funding. By providing specific labor market information to benefit their applications and assessment of need, we ensure that CTE programs are aligned with industry demands and effectively support workforce development in our communities.

## **Veteran Employment and Training programs**

Veterans are identified at the point of entry and triaged to ensure they are placed with staff who specialize in not only employment assistance but veteran affairs. Regardless of their path, veterans receive priority service in our offices, including moving to the top of the queue if there are any customers waiting for assistance.

The partnership between WSNT and the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) serves as a model for other organizations aiming to enhance their service provision to veterans. By housing Texas Veterans Commission staff within the workforce center, WSNT ensures that veterans have direct access to knowledgeable personnel who can address their unique needs.

### ***Key Components of the Partnership***

- **Integrated Service Model:** Veterans have access to a comprehensive range of services under one roof, facilitating a more streamlined and effective support system.
- **Expert Guidance:** The presence of TVC staff ensures that veterans receive personalized advice and support tailored to their individual circumstances.
- **Community Engagement:** The collaboration fosters a strong sense of community, as both organizations work together to support the needs of veterans transitioning to civilian life.

The WSNT and TVC partnership not only exemplifies the best practices in veteran service provision but also sets a benchmark for other organizations. Our commitment to excellence and innovation in supporting veterans has rightfully earned us recognition and accolades. In 2023 and 2024, the WSNT Business Services Team was honored with the prestigious ***Business Services Team of the Year*** award. As we continue our work, our collaborative team serves as an inspiring example of how working together can lead to significant positive outcomes for veterans and their communities.

## **Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP)**

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists play crucial roles in supporting veterans as they transition into civilian

employment. Both positions are guided by Title 38, which outlines the eligibility and services provided to veterans. Although their efforts are interconnected, each has distinct responsibilities focused on outreach and direct client services.

### ***LVER Staff Responsibilities***

LVER staff are dedicated to serving all veterans who qualify for their services under Title 38. Their primary role involves:

- *Outreach Efforts:*  
LVER staff engage with local employers to enhance employment opportunities for veterans. They work to raise awareness among employers about the availability and benefits of hiring veterans, thereby increasing job prospects within the community.
- *Employer Engagement:*  
By collaborating with employers, LVER staff help to create a veteran-friendly hiring environment. This involves educating employers on the skills and experiences that veterans bring to the workforce.

### ***DVOP Specialists' Role***

DVOP Specialists focus on veterans who are identified as most in need of intensive employment and training assistance. Their responsibilities include:

- *Direct Client Services:*  
DVOP staff provide personalized support to veterans facing significant barriers to employment. This includes developing tailored employment and training plans to address individual needs.
- *Facilitation of Assistance:*  
They facilitate access to resources and services that can support a veteran's journey to employment, including workshops, job fairs, and resume writing assistance.

### ***Collaborative Efforts***

Both LVER and DVOP staff work closely together to ensure that veterans receive comprehensive support. Their collaboration aims to:

- *Increase Hiring Opportunities:*  
Through joint outreach efforts, LVER and DVOP staff strive to create more job openings for veterans by building strong relationships with local employers.
- *Provide Targeted Support:*  
By concentrating on those veterans most in need, they ensure that support is both effective and efficient, maximizing the impact of their services.

In summary, LVER and DVOP staff are essential components of the support network for veterans seeking employment through Workforce Solutions North Texas. Their combined efforts help to break down barriers to employment and create a more inclusive workforce for those who have served.

## **Job Corp programs**

Job Corps is the nation's largest free, residential career training and education program for low-income young adults ages 16 through 24. WSNT has a pending MOU agreement with Job Corps for a full-time Admissions Counselor to be housed in our Wichita Falls workforce center.

## **Native American programs**

Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Department of Economic Development is the administering agency of a Native Pathways Program under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), program funded under Title I of Public Law 105-220, Section 166. As such it is bound by the Federal Rules and Regulations governing implementation of the act. The objectives of the program are to employ and increase the future employability of economically disadvantaged Native Americans and to help coordinate and improve existing approaches in decreasing the employment barriers of the participant. The program's main activities are to provide meaningful work experience leading to permanent employment and WSNT has a MOU agreement with Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo to provide services as needed.

## **US Department of Housing and Urban Development programs**

Under the guidance of the U.S. Department of Labor, Workforce Boards are encouraged to create collaborative partnerships with Employment and Training (E&T) programs funded by various federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The collaboration between the Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) and the Wichita Falls Housing Authority represents a strategic initiative under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This partnership aligns with the U.S. Department of Labor's directives to integrate Employment and Training (E&T) programs funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with housing assistance services to foster self-sufficiency among low-income families.

### ***Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS)***

Under the FSS program, families receiving HUD assistance are provided with a variety of opportunities and support services, including:

- *Education:* Access to educational resources and programs that enhance skills and knowledge.
- *Job Training:* Practical training aimed at increasing employability in various industries.
- *Counseling:* Comprehensive counseling services that address educational, career, and personal development.
- *Social Services:* Additional support to overcome barriers to self-sufficiency.

The combined efforts of WSNT and the Wichita Falls Housing Authority focus on equipping HUD-assisted families with essential skills and resources. The goal is to enable these families to secure education, employment, and acquire social skills necessary to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency while living in assisted housing.

By fostering such partnerships, we can create a cohesive and supportive network that not only addresses immediate needs but also encourages long-term independence and empowerment for families in need.

## **Reintegration of Offenders programs**

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Parole Division plays a crucial role in the reintegration of offenders into society. It supervises individuals who have been released from prison and are serving the remainder of their sentences within Texas communities. The division's mission is to enhance public safety while fostering positive changes in offenders through effective supervision, programs, and services.

### ***Collaboration with WSNT***

In partnership with WSNT, the Wichita Falls District Parole Office, and Wichita Falls Adult and Juvenile Probation, the TDCJ Parole Division enhances support for the justice-touched population. This collaboration focuses on:

- *Referrals and Co-enrollment:* Assisting participants in accessing necessary programs and services
- *Job Training and Placement:* Providing opportunities for skill development and employment
- *Employer Engagement:* Building a network of local employers open to hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds

### ***Community Support Services***

Local workforce staff contribute to the success of this initiative by:

- Offering resume writing and interview skills workshops to incarcerated individuals
- Focusing on those within six months of release at facilities like the Lindsey State Jail and the James V. Allred Prison

Through these efforts, the TDCJ Parole Division, in collaboration with community partners like WSNT, strives to not only enhance public safety but also facilitate the successful reintegration of offenders into society. By providing vital resources and support, they help individuals overcome the challenges associated with criminal backgrounds and build a more positive future.

## **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a pivotal initiative designed to support older Americans in gaining valuable work experience and skills. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, SCSEP focuses on providing training and employment opportunities specifically for low-income, unemployed seniors. This program plays a significant role in helping older adults transition into the workforce by offering work-based job training.

To qualify, an individual must meet certain criteria:

- Age 55+
- Unemployed

- Family income not exceeding 125% of the federal poverty rate

Additionally, priority for enrollment is given to (1) veterans and qualified spouses; (2) Age 65+; (3) persons with disabilities; (4) low literacy or limited English proficiency; (5) rural residents; (6) homeless or at-risk of homelessness; (7) People with low employment prospects; (8) persons unable to find employment after using WSNT services

Workforce Solutions North Texas is a host site for this program and provides office space through an MOU and a worksite for two participants in our rural workforce center offices in Graham and Vernon.

## **Rapid Response Services (RR)**

Rapid response services (RR) are early interventions to provide transition and reemployment services to individuals facing a layoff or closure. The goal is to help affected worker transition to employment quickly and ideally before they qualify for unemployment benefits.

RR are available to employers when one or more of the following circumstances occur:

- Announcement or notice of a permanent closure of a facility, store, enterprise, or plant, regardless of the number of workers affected.
- Announcement or notice of a mass layoff affecting 50+ workers, or when a company files a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN), regardless of the number of workers affected by the announced layoff.
- A mass job dislocation resulting from a natural or other disaster event, as defined by state or local emergency management policies
- The filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition, in accordance with §221(a)(2)(A) of the Trade Act.

WSNT offers RR for layoffs involving fewer than 50 employees at our discretion. The primary services provided through on-site, one-on-one, or virtual RR services may include:

- Job search assistance
- Labor market information
- Information and support for filing an unemployment claim
- Information about the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) program, when appropriate

Employers are also invited to direct workers to a local Workforce Solutions North Texas office where they may receive rapid response services by group or one-on-one instead of on-site.

## **Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL)**

The SEAL program provides pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) for students ages 14-22 with a disability, as required under Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which modified the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The program's success relies on participation from employers and integrated partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

### ***Key Takeaways of SEAL:***

- Pre-employment work readiness training and preparation for the work experience placement
- Work experience and transferable job skills gained from worksite
- Paid hourly compensation in exchange for work

The ultimate goal is to increase work-based learning opportunities and job skills that provide a foundation for future sustainable employment and/or postsecondary education.

## **Student Hire Ability Navigator**

The Student HireAbility Navigator (SHN) initiative provides support and coordination around the region to grow and improve workforce transition services offered to students aged 14-22 with disabilities and 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:

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

While the SHN does not provide direct services to students, the program ensures that students with differing abilities receive tailored support, making their transition into adulthood smoother and more successful. The initiative not only benefits the students but also enriches the workforce by bringing diverse talents and perspectives into the job market.

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

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

Efforts to enhance access to training and childcare programs for eligible individuals in the Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) area are ongoing and constantly evolving. The local workforce center is actively collaborating with partner agencies to foster increased opportunities for collaboration and, particularly during community events, raise awareness of available services.

### ***Collaborative Partnership Meetings***

Board, workforce, and childcare staff participate in monthly and quarterly partnership meetings. Attendees include staff from various agencies and schools within the service area such as Wichita Falls Housing Authority, Region 9 Education Service Center, and Vernon College. The aim is to continuously inform partners about available services, thereby facilitating stronger referral networks and improving service delivery.

## ***Career Pathways and Workforce Preparation***

There is a marked increase in participation in the development of career pathways and workforce preparation opportunities. This is largely due to activities with the Career Education Center at Wichita Falls ISD. WSNT hosts annual youth career events that reach over 2,000 students in the area and collaborates with school districts in North Texas to promote services effectively.

One of the annual career events, the Transition Fair, began in 2006 and is tailored specifically for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. This event offers insights into what it will be like to enter the workforce or pursue further education and training. Starting in 2025, the Transition Fair will expand to include all high school grades, rather than being limited to juniors and seniors. This change aims to provide more comprehensive support and exposure to career opportunities, benefiting a wider range of students as they prepare for their futures.

## ***Innovation in Career Education***

The introductions of a Student HireAbility Navigator and a Career Coach have expanded outreach efforts. These professionals spend time in area high schools, engaging students with interactive virtual reality headsets and promoting and educating students about available careers and workforce services. This innovative approach facilitates ongoing career exploration throughout the school year. Additionally, workforce staff provide job readiness skills training and resume and interview workshops to equip students with the necessary skills for future employment.

## ***Enhancing Workforce Development through Education and Collaboration***

In today's rapidly evolving job market, identifying and addressing skills needs for target occupations is crucial. Workforce system staff members collaborate with representatives from local community colleges and Midwestern State University (MSU) to develop programs that align with these needs. By coordinating with educational entities, we streamline the workforce pipeline from program enrollment to sustainable employment.

- ***Education Committee and Labor Market Analysis:*** Representatives from MSU and Vernon College actively participate in our Board's Education Committee. This committee plays a vital role in reviewing labor market data on an ongoing basis, ensuring that we have accurately identified target occupations for our market. This collaboration ensures that educational programs remain relevant and effective in preparing students for high-demand careers.
- ***Career Development and Industry-Recognized Certifications:*** Opportunities for career development are vital for strengthening access to and attainment of industry-recognized certifications. While training individuals is essential, additional efforts are needed for workforce success. One significant obstacle is encouraging employers to provide internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities for area residents, including youth. Additionally, the decline in public funding for institution-based training and on-the-job training opportunities poses a challenge.
- ***Engagement with Local Employers:*** WSNT actively engages with local employers to identify necessary skills and coordinates with Workforce Subrecipient staff. These staff members offer case management to career seekers enrolled in core programs, helping to

match skilled individuals with quality jobs. An Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) partner works with eligible customers in core programs to provide vocational workplace literacy.

- **Workforce Services and Support:** Information about WIOA Individualized Career and Training services is offered at all workforce orientations. Orientation audiences include those attending Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) for UI claimants, Rapid Response events, TANF Applicants, and participants who access Supplemental and Nutritional Assistance Programs (SNAP). These sessions aim to inform and educate participants about workforce services that assist in applying for financial aid, accessing WIOA training services, and developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), which may include training services.

Through collaboration with educational institutions and local employers, as well as the provision of comprehensive workforce services, we strive to build a robust pipeline that prepares individuals for successful careers. By overcoming obstacles such as limited internships and funding, we aim to enhance workforce development and create opportunities for sustainable employment.

### ***Case Management and Workforce Career Center Services***

- **SNAP and TANF Recipients:**  
Separate case managers assist recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). These case managers provide guidance and resources to enhance recipients' employment prospects and overall well-being.
- **WIOA Participants:**  
For the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participants, dedicated case managers serve adults and youth. These professionals support each participant's pursuit of job placement, training, and other employment-related goals.
- **Priority Services for Veterans and Foster Youth:**  
Veterans and foster youth are given priority service at all WSNT locations. The staff are well-trained to screen all customers to identify eligible veterans and foster youth promptly. Once identified, these individuals are referred to specialized staff who offer services tailored to their unique needs, ensuring they receive the most effective support possible.
- **Services for Individuals with Disabilities:**  
WSNT continually develops strategies to target and provide services for individuals with disabilities. This ongoing effort is part of WSNT's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring that all customers receive the support they need to succeed in their job search and career development.
- **Job-Readiness and Financial Literacy:**  
WSNT also offers job-readiness classes to all customers. These classes cover essential skills, including financial literacy, thanks to collaboration with the Wichita Adult Literacy Council, Inc. Participants gain valuable knowledge and skills that prepare them for the workforce and help manage their finances effectively.
- **Childcare Support:**  
For customers requiring additional services such as childcare, staff at our Workforce Centers provide introductions to the childcare office. For example, pregnant or parenting

teens working with a WIOA youth case manager on job placement or training will receive a direct referral to Child Care Services. This ensures that participants can pursue their employment goals without being hindered by childcare responsibilities.

The Wichita Falls Workforce Center remains committed to offering comprehensive support and services to its customers, ensuring they have access to the resources and assistance needed to thrive in the workforce.

### ***Ongoing Efforts to Enhance Community Service Coordination***

The WSNT Board is committed to continuously improving its coordination of programs and services for target populations. This involves not only maintaining strong partnerships with existing community organizations but also actively seeking out new collaborations that can better address the needs of our customers.

- ***Current Partnership Challenges***

One of the biggest challenges we experience is due to frequent staffing and contractor changes within programs like SCSEP and Job Corps. These changes can disrupt the continuity of services and complicate the process of providing quality referrals.

- Frequent Staffing Changes: Regular changes in staff and contractors make it challenging to maintain a consistent level of service.
- National Contract Changes: Operations sometimes shift to another state or are managed from offices located over two hours away in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area, resulting in transient representation in North Texas.

- ***Resource Management and Community Engagement***

To address these challenges, WSNT maintains a comprehensive list of resources for customers. This list is continuously updated with the assistance of the 211 service operated by the North Texas Area United Way, ensuring that accurate and current information is always available.

- ***Board and Staff Contributions***

Board members contribute significantly by sharing their expertise and offering referrals to private-sector resources, enhancing the support available to our customers. Staff members actively participate in area organizations and planning groups, which helps foster closer coordination and increased awareness of available resources.

Through these efforts, the WSNT Board is dedicated to ensuring that we provide the best possible support to our customers by leveraging both existing and new community resources.

### ***Enhancing Workforce Development through Employer Engagement***

Engaging employers in workforce development programs is crucial for expanding work-based learning opportunities. This engagement helps bridge the gap between education and employment, creating a more skilled and adaptable workforce. Here's how various entities are working together to achieve this goal.

- ***Role of Business Services Consultants***

WSNT Business Services Consultants play a pivotal role in building relationships with the business community.

- Hiring Events and Job Fairs
- Recruiting Worksites for work experience and on-the-job training activities, which are vital for providing eligible individuals with practical, hands-on experience.
- **Challenges in Employer Engagement**

With just under 9,000 employers in our service area, the task of fostering business relations is monumental. Unfortunately, there are not enough funded positions to fully capitalize on potential collaborations between employers and workforce development programs. This highlights the need for strategic resource allocation and innovative solutions to maximize employer engagement.

- Collaboration with the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce has been key in these efforts. As a representative on the WSNT Board, the Chamber actively includes WSNT in initial meetings with prospective employers. This collaboration ensures that labor market information is utilized to illustrate the area's quality-of-life attractions, making it more appealing for both employers and employees.
- Chamber of Commerce participation across the region by workforce staff members is essential. It ensures that employers are aware of where to seek assistance and that job openings are posted and filled. This direct link facilitates a seamless connection between job seekers and employers, fostering a more dynamic and responsive job market.
- WSNT and the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce work diligently to connect employers with educational resources. They include key industry program representatives from Vernon College, North Central Texas College, and Midwestern State University in discussions to provide comprehensive information about local education and training opportunities including funding available for skills development and small businesses, which are crucial for workforce development.

In summary, the engagement of employers in workforce development is a multi-faceted endeavor that requires collaboration among workforce centers, chambers of commerce, educational institutions, and employers. By working together, these entities can create a robust framework for work-based learning, ultimately benefiting both the workforce and the economy.

### ***Economic and Workforce Development in North Texas***

The Nortex Regional Planning Commission plays a pivotal role in coordinating workforce development programs and economic development initiatives across the 11 counties of North Texas through its Economic Development Committee. This committee is facilitated by the Community & Economic Development Director and includes representatives from various economic development entities including WSNT Board Business and Outreach Manager. The group maintains regular communication to identify and leverage economic development opportunities within the region.

The following outlines key strategic partnerships for ongoing regional economic development.

- ***Economic Development Committee***

The Economic Development Committee serves as a collaboration hub for stakeholders from diverse sectors. Members work together to:

- Discuss and strategize on economic opportunities within North Texas.
- Encourage the development of target occupations that align with the local labor market needs.
- Plan career pathways and training initiatives with educational institutions and workforce development organizations.

- ***WSNT Board Education Committee***

The WSNT Board Education Committee meets quarterly and involves representatives from the private sector, economic development, and education. Their focus includes:

- Analyzing the regional economy to ensure workforce training programs meet local demands.
- Developing initiatives to support career pathways that enhance workforce readiness.
- Coordination with Unemployment Insurance Programs

- ***Regional Economic Development Activities***

The WSNT Board actively participates in regional economic development by:

- Engaging in activities initiated by area Chambers of Commerce and the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce.
- Involving workforce center staff across locations in Bowie, Graham, and Vernon to address local needs.
- Supporting community development through participation in Leads Groups and other economic discussions.

- ***Partnerships and Community Engagement***

Collaboration is central to the WSNT Board's strategy, with efforts including:

- Partnering with educational institutions like Vernon College and North Central Texas College to develop customized training programs.
- Working with Midwestern State University (MSU) to provide internship opportunities and entrepreneurial training.
- Supporting entrepreneurial competitions that offer substantial funding and benefits for new business ventures through referrals. For example, one such contest is a partnership between the Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Development Center at MSU. They host an annual competition for funding and other benefits for entrepreneurs who are awarded up to \$250,000 to support new business.

- ***WSNT Board's Role in Supporting Unemployment Insurance Programs***

- Coordinating Rapid Response activities to assist workers facing layoffs.
- Collaborating with a regional Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) UI representative to provide specific information to affected workers.
- Reporting on layoffs to TWC and at each board meeting through the Rapid Response Coordinator.

- ***Support for Dislocated Workers***

- The WSNT Board is dedicated to assisting dislocated workers by:
- Referring individuals to the most appropriate assistance sources.

- Including organizational representatives in efforts to support those affected by large layoffs or plant closures.

Through these comprehensive strategies, the WSNT Board and its partners strive to foster a robust economic and workforce development landscape that addresses the diverse needs of North Texas communities.

## **Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery**

### **A. One-Stop Service Delivery System**

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

***How Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers and how providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.***

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) Board has devoted 29 years to continuously improving collaborations with eligible training providers. The primary goal is to effectively meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.

#### ***Provider Procurement and Management***

WSNT adheres to specific requirements to procure service providers, maintaining close working relationships with management staff from both WSNT Board and sub-recipients. This ensures that operations run smoothly and efficiently.

#### ***Enrollment and Training Alignment***

The WSNT Business and Outreach Manager is responsible for receiving and processing requests from training providers seeking enrollment in the Eligible Training Provider System. The Manager aligns these training offerings with local employment needs. Staff at the workforce center may also gather additional information from eligible individuals and employers to ensure that the training provided matches occupations on WSNT Board's Target Occupations List.

#### ***Performance Review and Reporting***

Over the years, WSNT has explored various methods for reviewing and reporting training provider performance. Both Board and Workforce Center staff serve as members of advisory groups for local training providers, facilitating valuable information exchange with these entities and employers.

#### ***Addressing Challenges***

When challenges arise, such as the closure of a major training program or an instructor shortage, WSNT Board and Workforce Center staff collaborate with training providers to devise strategies to meet these challenges. This includes coordination with Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs to offer tutoring for students needing help with college coursework.

#### ***Collaboration with Educational Institutions***

Representatives from Vernon College and Midwestern State University are active members of the WSNT Board and its Education Committee. This committee convenes as needed to discuss economic trends and to ensure that the target occupations list supports the most appropriate workforce and training solutions for the local market.

***How WSNT will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including remote areas, using technology and other means.***

WSNT offers a variety of solutions to reach rural communities and to bridge technology gaps often experienced outside of urban environments.

***Mobile Unit***

Since 2002, WSNT has operated a mobile workforce unit dedicated to serving communities that are isolated from the WSNT Workforce Centers—located in Bowie, Graham, Vernon and Wichita Falls—and visits these more remote locations twice per month.

The mobile unit is a Ford Transit van, which parks at central and recognizable locations in each community, such as courthouses, chambers of commerce, or other public sites familiar to local residents. The schedule for these visits is communicated monthly to county judges and other local officials to ensure community awareness.

The driver of the mobile unit is a case manager knowledgeable about all the available programs. They provide guidance and assistance to individuals with job search activities and offer additional support and resources as needed.

***Career Stations in Rural Libraries***

In addition to the mobile unit, the WSNT Board has established career stations in 16 rural libraries across North Texas. These stations enable residents to access workforce services conveniently. Librarians were also given an orientation on Workforce services and on the technology that was installed, ensuring that customers have a knowledgeable resource at hand if they encounter difficulty when using the stations. Library staff also have Workforce staff contact information if additional troubleshooting or workforce services are needed.

***Online Resources***

The WSNT Board's website offers several interactive features to support remote access to services. These include:

- An online form for joining the childcare interest list
- Live maps to find workforce service locations
- Administrative access for Board staff to update and improve services

These tools empower Board staff to adjust resources, promote current events, and communicate activities to the public effectively.

***How WSNT, and other entities within the one-stop delivery system, will comply with WIOA §188 (related to non-discrimination), 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.***

Throughout its history, WSNT Board has complied with accessibility requirements, both in physical and program access. WSNT Board's designated Equal Opportunity Officer, who combines oversight with other duties, completes the required accessibility reviews of facilities. This position aides in coordinating with the vocational rehabilitation services to ensure that our workforce centers and offices comply with accessibility standards that our customers need to receive quality services from our locations. Coordination among organizations in North Texas is essential because of limited resources. Through the years, WSNT Board has often shared costs of training and support for eligible individuals with the vocational rehabilitation agency. With additional funding provided through WSNT Board contract with TWC, more specific assistive technology and equipment has been purchased by WSNT Board to facilitate service to additional customers. The mobile unit can also provide outreach services to residents in other areas of Texas or our bordering neighboring states affected by natural disasters.

WSNT is fortunate to have funding to host a full-time Student HireAbility Navigator who works closely with our center staff and the regional schools and employers to ensure that staff are kept aware of the most up to date technology and assistance for individuals with a disability. In addition, the Texas Technology Access Program is a grant offered to the University of Texas Disability Studies based on the Assistive Technology Act of 2004. This program is designed to help persons with disabilities test or utilize equipment before it is purchased by places like VR or other companies for at home use. The program is also used to allow for a more accessible culture in whatever setting it is used for, in our case, job search and job placement. The Wichita Falls Workforce Center is a demo site for assistive technology and staff are trained in how to help both customers and employers with the equipment.

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, whose main location is across the street from our main workforce center in Wichita Falls. Although coordination traditionally has been close with Work Services, the move to the larger facility across the street has allowed them to expand their services, which already include federal 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, a wood-working shop, and roadway litter collection services across the region. WSNT Board always has had a representative of Work Services as a Board member and staff members meet regularly with staff members from Work Services and vocational rehabilitation to work out referral processes and joint activities.

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

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

### ***Strategies and Services to Facilitate Engagement of Employers of All Sizes and Meet the Needs of Businesses in North Texas***

Facilitating opportunities for work-based learning is crucial for the success of workforce development programs. One effective strategy is enhancing collaboration among various stakeholders, including employers, educational institutions, and workforce development boards.

Sub-recipient Business Services Consultants play a pivotal role in engaging employers. They focus on attracting participation in hiring events and job fairs, as well as forming worksite agreements for work experience and on-the-job training for eligible individuals. With just under 9,000 employers in the service area, the challenge lies in the limited number of funded positions available for expanding business relations.

The Wichita Falls Chamber of Commerce, represented on the WSNT Board, is instrumental in fostering these collaborations. The Chamber includes WSNT in initial meetings with prospective employers, utilizing WSNT Board's labor market information to promote the area's quality of life. This partnership also ensures the involvement of Vernon College and Midwestern State University representatives to provide information on education and available assistance for skills development and small business support.

Participation in chamber of commerce organizations by workforce staff is crucial. It creates a direct connection with industry leaders and recruiters to ensure job openings are posted and employers are aware of available assistance. This engagement facilitates a seamless flow of information and opportunities between the workforce development programs and the business community.

The WSNT Board Education Committee, comprising representatives from the private sector, economic development, education, and related organizations, meets quarterly. These meetings focus on discussing the local economy and ensuring that the target occupations list is aligned with workforce and training needs. Strategic planning includes career pathway initiatives and activities developed in collaboration with education and workforce development representatives.

By fostering these collaborative efforts, workforce development programs can create a more dynamic and responsive environment for work-based learning opportunities, ultimately benefiting both employers and job seekers in the region.

### ***Strategies and Services to Strengthen the Linkage between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance Programs.***

The collaboration between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs is crucial for effectively supporting workers facing layoffs. The WSNT Board plays a pivotal role in coordinating these efforts, particularly through their Rapid Response activities. This collaboration ensures that affected workers receive timely and accurate information about unemployment insurance (UI) options and other support services.

- ***Coordination of Rapid Response Activities***
  - The WSNT Board coordinates Rapid Response activities with Business Services staff members at the workforce center.
  - A regional Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) UI representative often travels to provide specific UI information directly to affected workers.
  - This direct communication ensures that workers understand their options and can make informed decisions during challenging times.

- **Regular Updates and Community Involvement**
  - The WSNT Board's Rapid Response Coordinator provides regular updates on layoffs at each Board meeting, ensuring that board members are informed of the current economic landscape.
  - This coordinator also contributes to discussions on hiring and management changes, helping to shape the workforce strategy.
- **Community Engagement and Economic Development**
  - The WSNT Board is actively involved in regional economic development activities, working closely with community partners.
  - Despite having only two core staff members at each of the workforce center locations outside Wichita Falls, in Bowie, Graham, and Vernon, the board ensures these centers are responsive to local needs.
  - The WSNT Board demonstrates a strong commitment to community engagement by paying annual membership dues to area Chambers of Commerce.
  - Staff members actively participate in various committees, including chamber of commerce networking groups, workforce and education committees, and the regional Economic Development Advisory Committee facilitated by the Nortex Regional Planning Commission Community.
- **Regional Economic Development Plan**
  - A comprehensive regional economic development plan has been developed through the Nortex Regional Planning Commission's Economic Development Advisory Committee comprised of rural and urban economic development directors, WSNT, and other rural and urban industry leaders.
  - An inclusive approach ensures that the plan addresses the unique needs of both urban and rural areas, promoting balanced growth and development across the region.

In summary, the WSNT Board's proactive approach in coordinating Rapid Response activities, engaging with community stakeholders, and contributing to regional economic planning fosters a robust support system for workers and businesses alike.

### ***Strategies and Services to Promote Entrepreneurial-Skills Training and Microenterprise Services***

WSNT is actively involved in its communities, ensuring that both urban and rural needs are addressed. The mobile workforce unit, specifically, travels to rural towns to provide direct services to communities and individuals without transportation to a career center location.

Staff members play a crucial role in organizing hiring events tailored for employers. These events provide opportunities for employers to meet potential candidates and discuss workforce needs. Additionally, staff are frequently invited to attend meetings with prospective employers to explore available workforce and training opportunities.

### ***Employer Engagement and Training Opportunities***

Staff members are actively involved in organizing hiring events for employers, providing a platform for companies to connect with potential employees. These events are crucial for matching qualified

candidates with suitable job opportunities. Additionally, staff often attend meetings with prospective employers to discuss the local workforce's capabilities and the range of training opportunities available. This engagement ensures that employers are well-informed about the skills landscape and can make strategic hiring decisions.

### ***Collaborative Training Programs***

A significant aspect of workforce development involves collaboration with educational institutions such as Vernon College and North Central Texas College. These partnerships focus on customizing training programs to meet the specific needs of employers. By applying for grants, these colleges can offer tailored training solutions, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the skills required by local industries. This approach not only benefits employers but also enhances the employability of the workforce.

### ***Entrepreneurial Support and Funding***

Midwestern State University (MSU) in Wichita Falls plays a pivotal role in supporting economic growth and workforce development. The university hosts the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which provides critical resources for budding entrepreneurs. Additionally, MSU offers internship opportunities for students, enabling them to gain practical experience and develop entrepreneurial skills. These initiatives foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within the community.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Wichita Falls Chamber, the SBDC at MSU sponsors an annual competition for entrepreneurs. This event provides up to \$250,000 in funding and other benefits to the winning entry, encouraging the development of new businesses. Such substantial support not only helps startups to launch and grow but also stimulates the local economy by creating jobs and fostering innovation.

### ***Support for Dislocated Workers***

WSNT plays an essential role in supporting individuals affected by layoffs and closures. By connecting individuals to the most suitable sources of assistance, they can quickly transition to new employment opportunities. Including representatives from various organizations ensures that affected workers receive direct, comprehensive support and information. This approach facilitates a smoother transition during challenging times.

## **C. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services**

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

The Texas Model integrates Employer Services (ES) staff into a one-stop delivery system, which forms a key part of an efficient and cohesive workforce framework. This model ensures that all center staff have clearly defined duties and responsibilities that align with the broader goals of the workforce system.

### ***Training and Cross-Training***

To maximize efficiency and consistency, staff receive comprehensive training in the integrated model. This training covers how each program and function interacts with and affects all other programs within the service delivery model. Additionally, staff are cross-trained to enhance service delivery across all programs.

### ***Communication and Coordination***

Regular staff meetings are held to share updates on process changes, new directives, and any challenges within the system. During these meetings, staff coordinate and collaborate on hiring events as a unified team. Workforce Center Managers oversee the daily activities of ES staff, ensuring their functions align with those of all center staff. Management also collaborates with TWC Integrated Service Area Managers to address human resources concerns and stays informed about any potential issues.

### ***WSNT Subrecipient Role***

The WSNT Subrecipient plays a crucial role by coordinating with ES staff to provide universal access to various services, including job search and placement assistance, job referrals, and labor market information to both career seekers and employers.

### ***Economic Development and Employment Opportunity***

WSNT acknowledges the connection between economic development, employment opportunities, and sustainability. By actively engaging with regional economic developers, WSNT creates and implements strategies that address the specific skill demands of local employers. This involves equipping job seekers with the necessary skills to meet these demands.

### ***Strategic Partnerships***

Our primary goal is to enhance and sustain economic vitality and employment opportunities in our region. WSNT's partnerships enable the development, implementation, and refinement of programs and services that align closely with the employment and skills training needs of North Texas. We are committed to maintaining strategic alliances with workforce and economic development organizations to adapt to the evolving economy, identify job growth opportunities, and cultivate a well-trained and prepared workforce to meet the needs of local employers.

## **D. Integrated Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management**

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

### ***Active Involvement from the Start***

WSNT has been deeply engaged from the onset of the Work in Texas (WIT) system's development. Board staff have been integral members of TWC's WIT team, providing immediate feedback throughout the system's creation and deployment.

### ***Ensuring a Smooth Transition***

To facilitate a seamless transition to the new WIT system, WSNT has prioritized strong communication across all organizational levels, including:

- Board Staff
- Subrecipient Upper Management
- Program Managers
- Front-line Staff

This has been achieved through various communication channels such as training sessions, conference calls, and detailed research on WIT's new processes.

### ***Dedicated Support and Training***

A specialized team has been formed to address any issues or concerns, ensuring that all staff are informed about the latest WIT changes and updates. Training sessions are available for both new and existing staff, featuring interactive activities and demonstrations of the WIT process.

### ***Embracing a Paperless Environment***

In addition to the new WIT system, WSNT employs a paperless environment using the Cabinet/SAFE platform. This system allows for efficient and confidential management of documents and customer files. Staff with designated security access can retrieve documents from any location, facilitating intake and case management tasks across various programs.

### ***WSNT Mobile Workforce Unit***

The WSNT Mobile Workforce Unit functions as a mobile workforce center, providing direct services in areas lacking a physical workforce center. Equipped with high-speed internet, it offers job seekers assistance with job searches, resume improvements, and case manager support. The unit's driver is also a knowledgeable case manager, ready to guide individuals through job search activities and provide additional resources as needed.

### ***Career Stations in Rural Libraries***

To further extend workforce services, the WSNT Board has installed career stations in 16 rural libraries across North Texas. These stations allow residents to connect with workforce services, making resources more accessible to underserved communities.

## **E. Third Party Partnership in SNAP Employment and Training Programs**

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

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

WSNT Board has not implemented the SNAP E&T Third Party Partnerships at this time but do plan implementation over the course of 2025.

## Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

### A. Rapid Response Activity Coordination

*References: WIOA §108(b)(8); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(7); §134(a)(2)(A).*

Rapid Response services are designed to transition dislocated workers from layoff status to productive employment as quickly as possible. These services apply from the time of the initial layoff notification until the worker is reemployed or enrolled in WIOA funded services. This process provides the seamless transition of dislocated workers from Rapid Response services to longer-term employment or training services if appropriate.

The North Texas Rapid Response Coordinator is a member of the WSNT Board staff. When any report or rumor of a layoff is received, staff contacts the business to confirm information about the layoff or closure and to help. These reports of layoffs come from a variety of sources—a visit or call to a workforce center for assistance, media reports, community meetings, etc.

Rapid Response services are initiated upon receipt of notification of an impending layoff or closure by the Rapid Response Team, which consists of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Dislocated Worker Unit, the Board Rapid Response Coordinator (BRRRC), the TWC Unemployment Insurance (UI) Field Representative and the Local Rapid Response Coordinator (LRRC). Notification can occur in the following formats:

- Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification Act (WARN notice);
- A telephone call from an employer, labor union or employee at a company with an impending layoff;
- Affected workers begin using Workforce Center services and notify staff therein;
- An article in a newspaper or other publication;
- Notification from a community organization; or
- A Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Petition filed with the Department of Labor (DOL).

The layoff notification is then shared with the Rapid Response Team and contact is established with the employer within 48 hours to investigate, confirm, offer, and coordinate Rapid Response services. If possible, an onsite or virtual meeting with the employer is scheduled. This meeting provides the employer with an overview of the Rapid Response program and its early intervention services and Unemployment Information. The meeting is held as soon as possible and includes attendance of designated Team members and all appropriate company personnel and union and/or bargaining unit representatives.

The TWC Rapid Response Coordinator provides a Rapid Response event number used to record services provided to employers and participants in TWC's WIT database. The Business Service team will collaborate with Rapid Response staff where appropriate to identify when hiring events with similar employers can be held to help place affected workers. This has been a successful strategy utilized in previous years.

The TWC UI Field Representative will brief the employer on relevant UI filing processes including mass claims, and Shared Work.

The Board Rapid Response Coordinator also maintains and provides an accounting of area layoff activities at the bi-monthly Board meetings to give Board members additional knowledge or information. The efficient coordination of services to dislocated workers and employers is key between our board and sub-recipient to deploy our Rapid Response Team in a timely manner with minimal wait time for those affected by the layoff/closures.

## **B. Youth Activities and Services**

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

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) provides comprehensive support and services aimed at helping young individuals, including those with disabilities, achieve their educational and employment goals. Here's a breakdown of the services and initiatives offered:

### ***Youth Case Management***

WSNT Workforce Center staff includes a Youth Case Manager who works closely with participants to provide personalized support through:

- ***One-on-One Intake and Assessment:*** Evaluating the specific needs of each participant.
- ***Individual Service Planning:*** Creating tailored plans that address participants' unique requirements.

The Case Manager acts as an advocate, facilitating access to both in-house services and those offered by local community stakeholders, such as:

- Adult Education and Literacy programs
- Secondary and post-secondary educational institutions
- Local employers

Additionally, the Case Manager collaborates with schools and organizations, including juvenile probation and foster care agencies, to disseminate information about educational and training opportunities.

### ***Workforce Readiness Outreach Program***

WSNT has recently enhanced its outreach efforts by hiring a dedicated staff member for the Workforce Readiness Outreach Program. This program focuses on:

- ***School Presentations:*** Engaging school-age young adults with information about career and postsecondary pathways, apprenticeships, and employability skills.

### ***Support for Youth with Disabilities***

WSNT is committed to supporting youth with disabilities by:

- Partnering with experts in Vocational Rehabilitation and mental health services to ensure participants can achieve their employment and educational goals.

- **Student Hire Ability Navigator Program:** This initiative, part of the Pathways to Careers Initiative (PCI) approved by the Texas Workforce Commission, enhances pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities. The Navigator’s key roles include:
  - Planning and coordinating strategies for quality Pre-ETS
  - Promoting and developing systemic collaborations

Participants also have access to Virtual Reality headsets to experience career simulations, enhancing engagement and understanding of various professions.

### **Community Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement**

WSNT actively participates in community and stakeholder meetings across its 11-county service area to support:

- At-risk, out-of-school, homeless, and foster youth
- Streamlining processes for youth to receive training and secure high-demand, high-wage jobs

### **Employment Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities**

WSNT offers programs to connect youth with disabilities to employment opportunities, including:

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Offers direct employment opportunities where participants receive customized job training aligned with their interests and needs.
- **Paid/Unpaid Work Experience:** Provides youth with the chance to develop essential work and occupational skills under real-world conditions.
- **Summer Earn & Learn (SEAL) Program:** WSNT’s summer youth work program has transitioned into year-round opportunities. SEAL in particular assists youth with disabilities transitioning to college by offering employment skills training and incentives such as laptops. Participants also receive support services, including subsidized childcare and transportation aid as needed.

These initiatives help youth build valuable networks, gain practical experience, and set them on a pathway to further occupational or educational advancement.

In summary, WSNT Workforce Center offers a robust array of services and programs designed to empower youth, particularly those facing additional challenges, to thrive in their educational and professional endeavors.

## **C. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs**

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

### **Coordination Between Training Providers and Board Members**

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) plays a pivotal role in fostering collaboration between training providers and Board members. Regular discussions are held to review and update the in-

demand and target industry and occupations lists. The goal is to ensure that ample opportunities are available for eligible individuals while meeting the demands of area employers.

### ***Participation in Advisory Committees***

Both Board and workforce center staff actively participate in advisory committees for training programs. This involvement spans both secondary and post-secondary education levels, including the recently established Career and Education Center for the Wichita Falls Independent School District. By engaging with these committees, WSNT ensures that training programs align with current workforce needs.

### ***WSNT Education Committee***

The WSNT Education Committee is comprised of representatives from Vernon College, Midwestern State University, area employers, and vocational rehabilitation services. This diverse team meets to review labor market data and develop strategies for assessing and fulfilling workforce requirements. Their collaborative efforts aim to create a responsive and effective workforce development system.

### ***Engagement with Prospective Employers***

WSNT and workforce center staff are frequently invited to meet with prospective employers through the chambers of commerce and economic development organizations. These meetings, which also include representatives from the community colleges, explore various education and training opportunities. Additionally, they address skills development and small business funding options available through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

Discussions during these meetings focus on avoiding duplication of services and ensuring the most efficient and effective methods are employed to meet the needs of area employers. This applies to both longstanding businesses and those considering relocation to North Texas.

### ***Support Through Educational Grants***

The Workforce System and its partners support educational institutions with various grants which WSNT aids in promoting throughout the region, including:

- Texas Talent Connection
- Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE)
- Jobs and Education for Texans (JET)
- Dual Credit Grants

These grants provide funding to implement and enhance career and technical education (CTE) programs, thereby strengthening the region's workforce development initiatives.

## **D. Child Care and Early Learning**

*References: 40 TAC §809.12*

The WSNT Board is committed to enhancing early learning and childcare services through various initiatives:

- ***Coordination with Key Stakeholders:*** Collaborating with employers, economic development programs, and industry leaders to emphasize the role of early learning as a crucial workforce and economic development tool.
- ***School Readiness and Childcare Quality:*** Enhancing school readiness by supporting high-quality childcare through the Texas Rising Star (TRS) program and partnership opportunities.
- ***Childcare Industry Support:*** Assisting the childcare sector with business development, shared services, and professional growth opportunities to create robust career pathways in early education.

### ***Provider and Parental Support***

#### ***Provider Services***

- ***Business and Employment Functions:*** WSNT aids early care and education providers by coordinating Business Services to address their business and hiring needs through platforms like WorkInTexas.com.

#### ***Parental Support***

- ***Enrollment and Resources:*** Providing parents with enrollment materials and resources within the workforce system.
- ***Workforce Services Referrals:*** Offering referrals for job loss, reduced hours, job search assistance, education completion, training, and upskilling for career advancement.

### ***Quality Initiatives***

***Training and Professional Development*** to aid in increasing skills within our area providers.

- ***Child Development Associate (CDA) Program:*** Providing training and certification in collaboration with Vernon College, covering tuition, books, and certification costs.
- ***Certification Impact:*** Measuring success through the number of certified teachers in TRS facilities and the application of newly acquired skills.

#### ***Texas Rising Star (TRS) Accreditation***

- ***TRS Accreditation:*** Nearly 50% of WSNT-contracted centers hold TRS accreditation due to ongoing strategies to raise awareness and offer incentives for accreditation.
- ***Beyond the Page Initiative:*** Supplying TRS classrooms with books and learning materials, and training teachers in read-aloud strategies, early literacy, and engagement skills. Progress is tracked via evaluations and quarterly observations.

#### ***Needs Assessment and Curriculum Development***

- ***Annual Quality Needs Assessment:*** Targeting TRS facilities to evaluate new TRS revisions and virtual training needs, anticipating investment in professional development and curriculum updates.
- ***Curriculum and Equipment:*** Procuring TEA-approved curricula and training for directors and staff, alongside upgrading learning environments based on Needs Assessment feedback.

### ***WSNT Board and Community Engagement***

- ***Mentorship and Specialist Support:*** The WSNT Board includes TRS Mentors, an Infant/Toddler Specialist, a TECPDS Specialist, and a Provider Services Liaison, each supporting providers with training, resource delivery, and quality assessments.
- ***Public Awareness and Engagement:*** Promoting the importance of quality childcare through community awareness efforts and promotional materials to enhance TRS program engagement.
- ***Early Childcare Coalition:*** WSNT’s participation in a coalition with local organizations focuses on early childhood education and addressing adverse childhood experiences. The coalition’s groups work on fatherhood engagement, literacy, family self-sufficiency, and nutrition/health, with WSNT contributing to family self-sufficiency initiatives.

### ***Current Key Community Partnerships***

Partnerships play a vital role in maintaining and enhancing the quality of childcare education in North Texas. The Board has developed and engaged in several initiatives to support this goal. These partnerships ensure a seamless and comprehensive educational experience for children in the region. Here are some of the key initiatives the Board is currently involved in:

- ***TXAEYC (Texas Association for the Education of Young Children) Chapter*** implementation for the year 2025-2026 and in partnership with Midwestern State University, Region 9, and the WFISD.
- ***WFISD/WSNT Board Pre-K Partnership***
- ***United Way Board*** WNST Board Child Care Contract Manager sits on the United Way Board and chairs their education committee.
- ***Child Care Advisory Council*** meets quarterly and is in partnership with the United Way Early Childhood Coalition, Region 9, and the WFISD as well as several TRS providers. Our Child Care Advisory Council has 22 participating members.
- ***WSNT Board*** one of our TRS 4-star owners joined the WSNT Board of Directors in 2024 and also sits on the Child Care Advisory Council.

By implementing these comprehensive strategies, the WSNT Board fosters an environment conducive to early learning excellence, thereby benefiting children, families, and the community at large.

## **E. Transportation and Other Support Services**

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

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) covers 11 counties, spanning nearly 10,000 square miles, primarily consisting of rural landscapes. The largest county within this area is Wichita County, where the main Workforce Center is located. Each county offers community resources dedicated to supporting their citizens.

### ***Workforce Centers and Community Resources***

- Local provider listings are updated biannually and made available to all participants during workforce orientations and to any visitor of the workforce centers.
- Support Services: WSNT offers various support services to eligible individuals to ensure their success in workforce preparation.

### ***Transportation Services***

#### ***Gas Cards and Bus Passes***

- Gas Cards: Facilitates travel for individuals living in rural areas to access work and training opportunities in distant communities.
- Bus Passes: Provided to eligible individuals in Wichita Falls, which has the only city-provided mass transit system.

#### ***Transportation Advisory Committee***

Administered by the Nortex Regional Planning Commission with grant funds from the Texas Department of Transportation, this committee coordinates transportation in the area. The Board's Executive Director is a member to ensure inclusive transportation access.

- Projects and Initiatives:
  - Development of projects to assist workers with travel.
  - Facilitation of transportation for veterans to access medical services in Fort Worth and Oklahoma City.
  - Coordination of outreach and marketing about available transportation.
  - Integration of all available transportation sources and regional providers.
- Committee Membership:
  - WSNT
  - Wichita Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): Coordinates city bus service, bicycle and pedestrian travel, and aviation activities.
  - Sharp Lines: A regional van service operated by Rolling Plains Management Corporation.
  - Area Cities and Counties: Economic development organizations and the Area Agency on Aging, among others.
- Addressing Service Gaps

One of the committee's major projects has been ensuring all area residents have access to transportation services.

  - Texoma Area Paratransit Services (TAPS): Funded to provide transportation in the eastern part of the area. Operational changes and financial difficulties led to a reduction in services, affecting Clay and Montague Counties.

- Sharp Lines: Collaborated with TxDOT and the regional committee to fill service gaps.

A recent public meeting with TxDOT representatives provided updates from new TAPS staff about regaining services in other parts of the region.

### ***Travel Center in Wichita Falls***

The City of Wichita Falls operates a travel center as a central hub for transferring from rural van services to city buses and boarding major bus lines for travel outside the region.

## **F. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy**

*References: WIOA §108(b)(13); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(12); WD 18-23, Change 2; §§107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA §232*

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) collaborates with various partners to enhance educational and employment opportunities for community members. Below is an overview of the key projects and initiatives currently in place.

### ***Partnership with Region 9 Education Service Center***

WSNT has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Region 9 Education Service Center, located in Wichita Falls. This partnership, along with the Wichita Adult Literacy Council, Inc. (WALC), focuses on coordinating literacy activities across the region. Several collaborative projects have been developed and implemented to address community needs.

### ***Support for English Language Learners***

WSNT is committed to supporting customers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Measures include:

- Providing forms and instructions in both English and Spanish.
- Displaying bilingual signs in Workforce Centers, offering free interpreter services if needed.
- Employing bilingual staff and providing materials in both languages.
- Utilizing Boost Lingo for interpretation services to ensure accessibility for all LEP customers, regardless of their primary language.
- Administering TABE assessments to English as a Second Language (ESL) customers.

### ***Bi-Monthly Partnership Meetings***

Representatives from WSNT, Adult Education and Literacy (AEL), and various community partners hold bi-monthly meetings. These meetings, hosted by the Director of Region 9 AEL, include participants from:

- Local WSNT leadership
- WIOA case management staff
- Vocational Rehabilitation staff

- Vernon College Continuing Education staff
- Community partners such as Catholic Charities and Rolling Plains Management Company

These meetings facilitate collaboration on upcoming events and provide opportunities to address the needs of students and customers.

### ***Orientation and Supportive Services***

Throughout the year, the WIOA team presents during orientations at Region 9 Adult Education Service Center for High School Equivalency (HSE) classes. These sessions, offered both virtually and in person, cover:

- Workforce Career Center services
- WIOA program details
- Supportive services

WSNT also assists with the AEL's HUB (Helping U Build) program, which supports current or future college students through tutorials and workforce preparatory skills. This includes resume development, WIOA program orientation, and Work in Texas registration. Supportive services may include laptops, gas cards, and tuition coverage. The HUB partnership has produced multiple quality referrals to the WIOA program for eligible individuals.

### ***Educational Support and Tutoring***

WSNT and Region 9 collaborate to support students in skilled trade programs, such as Welding, Machining, or HVAC, by offering basic math tutoring. Additionally, tutoring is available for Certified Nurse Aide and Licensed Vocational Nursing students, including ESL students in CNA tutoring. A referral process is in place to connect struggling students with necessary tutoring services.

### ***Literacy and Job-Readiness Programs***

Customers visiting the Wichita Falls workforce center who require literacy or high school diploma equivalency instruction are referred to the Wichita Adult Literacy Council (WALC). Conversely, WALC visitors in need of job search assistance are directed to the workforce center. Job Readiness Workshops at the Workforce Career Center include a financial literacy segment taught by a WALC staff member, funded by a North Texas Area United Way grant.

### ***Ongoing Coordination and Development***

WSNT continues to coordinate efforts with partners to develop projects that integrate work and education. Regular meetings among management staff from the Board, Center, adult education, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation ensure ongoing improvement and integration of 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.

## Part 6: Adult and Dislocated Workers

### A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training

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

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 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 and 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 includes a 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 childcare;
- access to assistive technology or interpreter services;
- transportation assistance including bus passes in Wichita Falls or gas cards for all areas;
- 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. Partner agencies are also available when needed for additional assistance. 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 both 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.

### B. Service Priority

*References: 20 CFR §679.560(b)(21); §134(c)(3)(E) and 20CFR §680.600*

Board policy ensures that priority of adult individualized career services and training services are given to veterans, foster youth, and 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.

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) ensures that veterans and eligible spouses receive priority of service for all Department of Labor-funded job training programs, including Workforce Innovation

and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Individualized Career and Training Services must be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, in the following order:

- 1) Eligible veterans and eligible spouses, as defined in WD Letter 01-21, change 1, who are also recipients of public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient;
- 2) Non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are also recipients of public assistance, low income or basic skills deficient in the following order:
  - a. Foster youth and former foster youth, as defined in WD Letter 43-11, Change 2, as required by Texas Family Code §264.121
  - b. Non-foster youth
- 3) All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses;
- 4) Priority populations established by the governor in the following order:
  - a. All other foster youth and former foster youth, as required by Texas Labor Code §264.121

## **Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts**

### **A. Fiscal Agent**

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

On December 18, 1996, Governor George W. Bush certified North Texas Workforce Development Area. The Chief Elected Officials of the 11-county WDA identified 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. This arrangement includes monthly budget meetings with the Director of Finance and the Executive Director of Nortex Regional Planning Commission; management and financial staff members of both workforce and childcare subrecipients; 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 the grant is ready to close. The Board and Nortex, with guidance from the Chief Elected Officials, 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.

### **B. Subgrants and Contracts**

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

The competitive process used in awarding grants and contracts complies with federal procurement principles, TWC directives and the TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts, which requires "full and open competition", fair and equal treatment, and "arm's length" relationships with all potential proposers. These principles are addressed in policies and procedures, which require that: (1) selection of a service provider shall be made on a competitive basis to the extent practicable; (2) the process be conducted according to strict ethical standards, including a code of conduct for Board members and staff, and a policy to guard against "real or apparent" conflicts of interest; (3) confidentiality and non-disclosure of submission information are maintained prior to the procurement decision; (4) a policy of openness and access to public records apply after the decision; and (5) fairness and objectivity are maintained in evaluation of proposals, selection, negotiations, and contract management. Positive efforts are made to use Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) to provide services. These efforts allow those sources the maximum feasible opportunity to compete for a contract. The final selection is based on a system that best serves the interests of the North Texas Workforce Development Area. The award of a contract is made only to an entity who has demonstrated competence and qualifications, including: a satisfactory record of past performance, contractor integrity and business ethics; fiscal accountability; financial and technical resources; ability to meet the requirements of the RFP, and any applicable regulations of the Board's funding source

Traditionally, there have been two separate contracts awarded for the provider of workforce services and childcare services. During the period identified in WIOA and by TWC, the Board conducts competitive procurement activities, as required. Starting in late fall of the year before awarding 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 during the first quarter of the award year to an extensive and updated list of prospective bidders with a bidders' conference hosted by the Board. Questions and answers are then 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 the 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 negotiations to finalize all aspects of the contract. The required competitive process is also utilized to award other sub-grants and contracts for the provision of additional services that may be identified.

## Part 8: Performance

### A. Board Performance Targets

*References: WIOA §108(b)(17); §116(c); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(16)*

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) is committed to meeting or exceeding the performance levels negotiated with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as outlined in their contracts.

#### ***Performance Measures and Incentives***

The Board has implemented additional performance measures in contracts with subrecipient service providers related to the one-stop delivery system. These measures include monetary incentives for achieving specific goals. This approach encourages performance excellence and ensures that service providers strive to meet enhanced requirements.

#### ***Monitoring and Review Process***

- ***Board Monitoring Committee*** reviews contracted performance at each meeting. This process involves discussions with the sub-recipient management team, who provide insights and updates. Members of the committee also evaluate monthly performance reports provided by TWC and offer their input.
- ***Board Fiscal Agent*** The performance of the Board's fiscal agent is not measured by standard performance metrics. Instead, it is assessed during monthly budget meetings and on a case-by-case basis when specific issues arise. Any concerns are promptly communicated to the CEOs during these meetings to ensure that they are addressed efficiently.

#### ***Workforce Contractor and State Performance Advocate***

To enhance performance management, the WSNT workforce contractor has established a state performance position. This role is designed to provide expertise and assistance to staff in meeting performance benchmarks. Additionally, the position is responsible for training and developing staff to effectively support individuals within the community.

#### ***Eligible Training Providers***

The performance of eligible training providers is reviewed by WSNT Board staff Eligible Training Provider Coordinator. Their responsibilities include maintaining the system when programs are added or removed and ensuring training providers update their information. The Board adheres to TWC's outlined process for performance review.

#### ***Reviewing Target Occupations and Training Programs***

The Board reviews the target occupations list at least annually. During these reviews, members may request data on the number of individuals enrolled in training programs and their completion status. This information can be obtained through the TWIST system or directly from the respective training providers.

## ***Annual and Procurement Review***

Performance within the one-stop delivery system is also assessed during the annual contract renewal process and as part of the procurement process, which requires the submission of proposals. This ensures that performance is continuously monitored and aligned with the Board's objectives.

The following performance measures and board targets for BCY' 25 and BCY' 26 were set in accordance with WIOA §116 (c):

### ***Adult***

- Employed Q2
- Median Earnings Q2
- Employed Q4
- Credential Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains (MSG)

### ***Dislocated Worker (DW)***

- Employed Q2
- Median Earnings Q2
- Employed Q4
- Credential Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains (MSG)

### ***Youth***

- Employed/Enrolled Q2
- Median Earnings Q2
- Employed/Enrolled Q4
- Credential Rate
- Measurable Skill Gains (MSG)

## **Part 9: Training and Services**

### **A. Individual Training Accounts (ITA)**

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

#### ***Determining Eligibility for Training***

The sub-recipient provider of workforce center services is responsible for determining how eligible individuals will participate in subsidized training activities, as outlined in their contract with the WSNT Board. After establishing eligibility, case managers collaborate with individuals to create a personalized training plan. This plan is influenced by the individual's choice of training and the availability of eligible training providers for occupations listed on the Board's target occupation list.

#### ***Review and Approval of Training Plans***

The Individual Training Account (ITA) Committee, which includes case managers, accounting staff, business services staff, and program management, reviews proposed ITAs. They ensure each training request meets all necessary requirements and confirm there are sufficient funds to support the individual's training goals.

#### ***Orientation and Support for Individuals***

Often, individuals arrive at the workforce center with a predetermined training plan after consulting with their chosen training provider. They are then ready to proceed with the training process. The Board ensures that sub-recipient operators at the workforce center provide clear information about customer choices during orientation sessions, which occur before training begins. Individuals receive referral information and are encouraged by staff to explore various educational and training options available to them.

#### ***Fiscal Management of Training Funds***

The financial aspect of the ITA process is addressed during monthly budget meetings. During these meetings, the Board's fiscal agent reviews and verifies that the submitted training and staff costs align with the allocated budget. This ensures that all expenditures support the individual's training goals while adhering to financial constraints.

### **B. ITA Limitations**

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

WSNT has an ITA funding limit of \$10,000. The Subrecipient can increase the limit of an ITA by \$1000.00 for a total of \$11,000.00 depending on the participants' need. Documentation of need and the subrecipient approval authorizing the ITA increase must be included in the participant's record and in case notes.

The subrecipient must first consider the availability of other sources of grants, excluding loans, to pay for training costs so that WIOA funds are used to supplement but not supplant other sources.

WIOA funding for training is limited to participants who are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to cover the cost of their training or require assistance beyond that available under grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training. In making the determination, the subrecipient must consider the full cost of participating in training services, including the cost of supportive services (such as transportation, cost of dependent care, and other support services).

## **Part 10: Apprenticeship**

### **A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs**

The Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) Board continues to encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs in the area to register with the eligible training provider system (ETPS). Efforts to identify the programs continue when information is available.

### **B. ApprenticeshipTexas**

WSNT joined forces with United Regional Health Care System (URHCS) and Vernon College to tackle the nursing shortage affecting both Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) in North Texas through the development of a nursing registered apprenticeship (RA).

#### ***On-the-Job Learning Opportunities***

Through this partnership, RN and LVN apprentices engage in on-the-job learning experiences at URHCS facilities. These practical experiences complement their classroom instruction at Vernon College, allowing them to quickly become highly skilled nurses in our local workforce.

#### ***Successful Externship Program***

Prior to the development of the nursing RA, URHCS offered a successful 10-week summer externship program for RNs entering their final semesters of training. This program proved effective in developing highly skilled RNs. Nursing instructors reported that students who complete the externship are "light years ahead of their classmates."

#### ***Expanding Opportunities with a Nursing Apprenticeship***

The URHCS nursing apprenticeship expanded their successful externship model. It provides an additional path for hands-on learners to gain in-depth, practical experience while completing their academic studies. Furthermore, apprentices earn wages as they learn, making this an attractive option for aspiring nurses.

## Part 11: Public Comment

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

The Board's plan was available for public comment online and as a hard copy upon request. The plan was posted on our Board's website at [www.ntxworksolutions.org](http://www.ntxworksolutions.org), on February 7, 2025. We published a Public Notice in the Times Record News newspaper announcing the document availability for review on the board's website. Public comments were invited to be submitted electronically by email or in writing by mail. This process offers the public an opportunity to provide feedback for the required 15-day period.

# Appendix: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

## Local Board Plan Requirements

*for Alignment to the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan*

### Requirement for Workforce Systemwide Alignment

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

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

### Demonstrating Local Alignment with Texas’ Workforce System Strategic Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Directions for Demonstrating Alignment with the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

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

- 1) Provide a summary describing how the processes, activities, or initiatives in the local board plan align with the specific system goal and objective and each strategic opportunity. Response guidelines are provided.
- 2) Accurately cite the referenced information in the local board plan by providing the corresponding page number(s) in the plan.

# System Goals and Objectives

## 1. Employers Goal – Delivery of Relevant Education and Training Programs

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

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

Response should address the following:

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

### **WSNT Board Response:**

Workforce Solutions North Texas strives to develop strong collaboration and partnerships with local colleges and universities to meet the needs of our local employers through ongoing coordination to implement high-performance training programs tailored to the needs of our area. Partnering allows for customized training programs to be created that align with the skills required by local industries. This approach ensures that the workforce is not only educated with the relevant skills and knowledge but is also equipped for exceptional performance, meeting, and exceeding employer expectations. WSNT utilizes this approach to enhance employer relationships to gather data and make informed decisions that will lead to a positive outcome for workforce development. WSNT will focus on providing more in-depth customized skills development strategies that will lead to more opportunities for career seekers. Sector partnerships will be developed to further understand industry needs and keep WSNT engaged in ongoing conversation about growth, emerging trends and shifts in industries in the region. The sector partnerships will be employer-led, focusing on agendas and points of discussion brought forth by industry. The participation of other community partners will connect employers to other resources to assist in other areas outside of WSNT expertise. *(Pages 3, 5-6, 8, 20-51, 57-58, 62-65, 70-72)*

## 2. Learners Goal – Expansion of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship

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

Response should address the following:

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

### **WSNT Board Response:**

Workforce Solutions North Texas provides an array of opportunities and strategies for individuals to take advantage of work activities, including work experience, on-the-job training, and job development. This method allows employers to attract and retain workers and career seekers can train and gain new skills while being paid.

WSNT offers career exploration in area high schools around the region promoting and educating youth on our services through using interactive virtual reality headsets and other opportunities such as the Jobs Y'all Eighth Grade Career Fair, that allow for ongoing career exploration throughout the school year. (Pages 3-4, 5, 20-48, 51, 56-65, 70-72)

## 3. Partners Goal – Alignment to Support Career Pathways

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

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

Response should address the following:

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

### **WSNT Board Response:**

Aligning training and education opportunities to be demand-driven in support of community and industry needs is a vital component of maintaining a healthy and robust workforce. The skills that employers are looking for in the near and long term must be directly integrated into the training and education opportunities that WSNT promotes. Because of the existing relationships that WSNT has with education and training partners, in addition to the interactions Board staff have with local employers, the public workforce system provides a critical link to bolster workforce industry alignment.

Through our strategic plan, we have aligned our work with the Tri-Agency Initiative's strategic plan. This includes leveraging funding to support programs and partners in developing opportunities for learners to gain skills and knowledge about, at, and through work. By following the strategies laid out by the Texas Education Agency, The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and The Texas Workforce Commission, we ensure that our initiatives are effectively bridging the gap between education and industry needs. (Pages 3-4, 7-21, 23, 33-34, 36-37, 39-41, 44, 46, 50-51, 56-58, 64)

## **4. Policy and Planning Goal – Relevant Data Sets**

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

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

Response should address the following:

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

### **WSNT Board Response:**

Informing the public of the importance of choosing quality childcare centers is crucial for engagement with the Texas Rising Star program. Community awareness is vital to keep our clients and providers aware of what the Texas Rising Star can do for their children. Promotional materials provide this awareness needed for continued advancement and growth of the TRS to all childcare facilities.

WSNT partnerships are a critical piece of continuity and education for childcare in North Texas. Staff participate with the following groups to share critical information and evaluate program effectiveness:

- TXAEYC (Texas Association for the Education of Young Children) Chapter implementation for the year 2025-2026 in partnership with Midwestern State University, Region 9, and the Wichita Falls Independent School District (WFISD)
- WFISD/WSNT Board Pre-K Partnership program.
- WNST Board Child Care Contract Manager serves as the Chair for the United Way Board Education committee.
- WSNT Child Care Advisory Council meets quarterly in partnership with the United Way Early Childhood Coalition, Region 9, and the WFISD as well as several TRS providers. Our Child Care Advisory Council has 22 participating members.
- WSNT Board participation from one of our TRS 4-star owners who also sits on the Child Care Advisory Council.

Meeting performance measures as outlined in WIOA federal legislation and applied by the Texas Workforce Commission is only a piece of our Board's goal. The main work of WSNT Board and its partners is to match employers and job seekers while determining what resources and skills are most needed, then supporting that need of the workforce through education and training. WSNT Board coordinates with partners like adult education and literacy and the operators of workforce center services to identify mutual goals and determine how best to track and report successes. This is achieved by tracking the numbers of individuals who move to unsubsidized employment with self-sufficient wages following the attainment of recognized skills training and certificates. *(Pages 5, 21, 23, 29-30, 50-51, 58-60)*

# Strategic Opportunities

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

## Strategic Opportunity 1 – Employer Engagement

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

Response should address the following:

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

### WSNT Board Response:

The WSNT board staff regularly attend meetings that are comprised of key industry stakeholders and community partners within our region through fostering strong partnerships with local chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and regional educational institutions. These collaborations enable the board to leverage existing relationships and communication channels, further reducing the need for multiple, separate requests to employers. Through these coordinated efforts, WSNT effectively engages with employers, gains valuable insights, and minimizes the burden of multiple requests, fostering a more responsive and efficient workforce development system. *(Pages 3-5, 21-22, 32-35, 37-40, 42-45, 48-51, 55-56, 58)*

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

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

Response should address the following:

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

## **WSNT Board Response:**

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) Student Hire Ability Navigator serves as a resource in the workforce area to support, expand, and enhance the provision of preemployment transition services (Pre-ETS) that are provided by VR as well as by other partners and programs in the workforce area. The primary role and responsibility of the Student Hire Ability Navigator is the planning, coordination, promotion, and development of systemic and collaborative strategies that result in the provision of quality Pre-ETS for students with disabilities in the workforce area.

WSNT holds and attends stakeholder and community partnership meetings throughout our 11-county service area that also serve at-risk, out-of-school, homeless, and foster youth to streamline processes that lead to more at-risk youth receiving training and employment in high-demand, high wage jobs.

WSNT offers services to youth with disabilities that include a direct link to employment opportunities in the form of On-the-Job Training and Paid or Unpaid Work Experience. WSNT partners with agencies that specifically serve disabled youth, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, to leverage funds and services so that the youth's needs are appropriately addressed. On-the-Job training opportunities create an avenue for workforce staff to develop specific job opportunities customized to the interests and specific needs of the participant. Employers directly invest in their own workforce pipeline by developing a customized employee training plan to fit their business needs. In the Paid or Unpaid work experience model, youth are provided an opportunity to develop basic work skills as well as occupational skills under the guidance of a real-world employer. The experience gained through the development of skills, work experience, career/industry exploration, networking connections and confidence is a valuable first step in developing an occupational or education pathway

A strong summer youth work program transitioned to opportunities for eligible youths to take part in year-round work experience and skills training. The addition of the Summer Earn & Learn (SEAL) program has also provided added services to youth with disabilities transitioning to college. They participate in employment skills training and are eligible to receive incentives, which have included laptop computers. They are also eligible to access support services, as needed, to include referral to subsidized childcare and aid for transportation and supplies. Employers look forward to this program each year as well and volunteer to be host worksites during SEAL.

WSNT, in partnership with the Wichita Falls District Parole Office and Wichita Falls Adult and Juvenile Probation supports the justice-touched population through referrals and co-enrollment of participants, to provide job training and placement opportunities for program participants, and to develop a local network of employers willing to look beyond criminal background challenges for well-qualified candidates. In addition, local workforce staff provide resume and interview workshops to incarcerated individuals in the local county jails, and those within 6 months of release at the Lindsey State Jail and the James V. Allred Prison. *(Pages 3, 6-8, 19-22, 24-39, 41-42, 47-48, 53-54, 56-57, 59-65)*

### Strategic Opportunity 3 – Use of Data to Support Investment Decisions

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

Response should address the following:

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

#### **WSNT Board Response:**

Workforce Solutions North Texas (WSNT) utilizes various platforms provided by the subrecipient, Texas Workforce Commission, and other tools that provide a visual representation of performance indicators and metrics with real-time or near real-time insights into the performance and progress of measurable targets and goals. These tools monitor relevant details including program performance, expenditures, enrollments, and other data that will be used to analyze and support performance across programs, workforce centers and teams. Through these various tools, we can use data to identify opportunities to target specific populations and geographic areas. WSNT workforce contractor has created a state performance position that provides knowledge and expertise to assist staff in meeting performance benchmarks. This position also assists in training and developing staff to successfully assist individuals in our communities. (Pages 52-53, 61-62, 66-69)

*Workforce Solutions North Texas is an equal opportunity employer/program.*

*Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Relay Texas: (800)735-2989 (TDD) or (800)735-2988(Voice) or 711.*

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