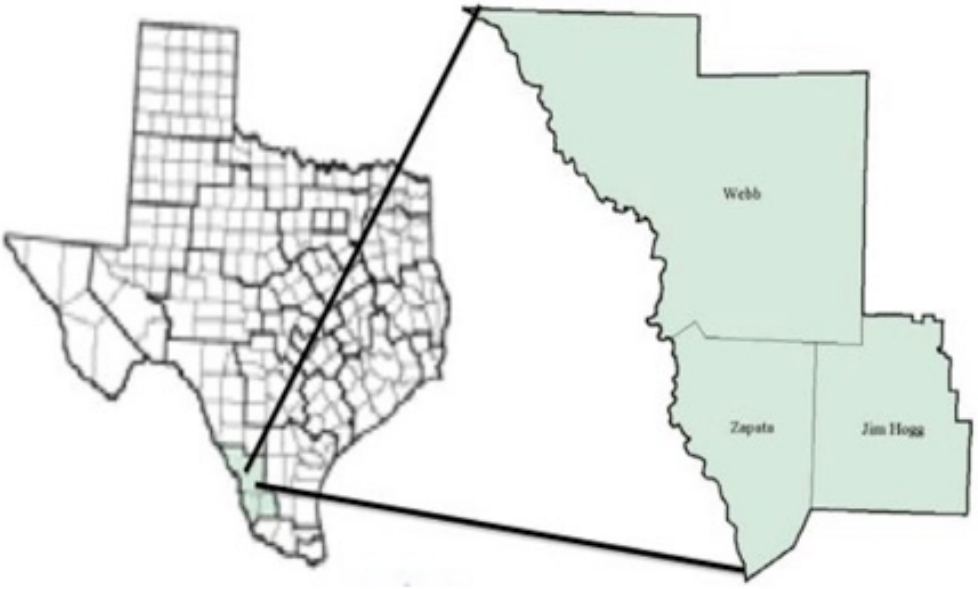
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD PLAN
PROGRAM YEARS 2021-2024



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Workforce Solutions for South Texas Comprehensive Plan
Program Years 2021-2024

WSST Chief Elected Officials

Chief Elected Officials	County or City Represented	Chief Elected Officials	County or City Represented
The Honorable Judge Juan Carlos Guerra	Jim Hogg County	The Honorable Judge Joseph Rathmell	Zapata County
The Honorable Mayor Pete Saenz	City of Laredo	The Honorable Judge Tano E. Tijerina	Webb County

WSST Board of Directors

WSST Board Member	Category Represented	WSST Board Member	Category Represented
Canales, Lupita R.	Private Sector	Carrillo, Alicia	Literacy Council
Castro, Guillermo	Private Sector	Chaparro, Hugo	Private Sector
Dodier, Jose O.	Private Sector	Escamilla, Juan	Private Sector
Garza, Javier	Economic Development	Gonzalez, Jorge	Private Sector
Gonzalez, Jose De Jesus	Private Sector	Gonzalez, Saul	Adult Basic Education
Lopez, Elmo Daniel	Private Sector	Miller, Roger	Community Based Organization
Mills, Allan	Community Based Organization	Noyola, Hector	Community Based Organization
Perez, Cordelia G.	Organized Labor	Pineda, Ludivina	Public Employment Agency
Ramirez, Javier A.	Private Sector	Ramos, Janette	Vocational Rehabilitation
Sanchez, Angelica	Education	Sifuentes, Jessica	Public Assistance
Solis Jr., Federico	Education	Tijerina, Rosaura	Private Sector
Torres, Francisca	Private Sector	Vargas, Miroslava	Private Sector
Zepeda, Lupita	Private Sector		

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS
SOUTH TEXAS

The Workforce Solutions for South Texas Board (WSST) is committed to implementing the Goals and Strategies that are detailed in the 2021 – 2024 Strategic Plan.

WSST, to prepare this plan and to solicit input, held virtual focus groups based on targeted industry sector employers by NAICS including the Transportation, Healthcare, Education, and Construction Industries In addition, a focus group including NAICS employers from a sampling of all WSST industries including the Oil and Gas Industry was held. The Board also held a survey asking for employer input about the expectation of targeted occupations, hiring practices and career ladders. The input and consensus of the participating employers is reflected in the WSST Plan strategies.

The WSST Board ensures the public had the opportunity to provide comment on the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. WSST placed a public notice on February 3, 2021 in the Laredo Morning Times to advise the public of the availability of the WSST Plan and opportunity to comment. The public comment period was set to begin on February 3 and end on February 25, 2021. A user-friendly downloadable copy of the Strategic Plan was made available on the WSST's web site.

The Chief Elected Officials met virtually to review and approve the Plan on February 24, 2021. WSST Board approved the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan at a meeting held on February 25, 2021.

The signatures below confirm the approval to submit the WSST 2021-2024 Strategic Plan was done in a legally posted open meeting.

The following signatures represent the WSST Executive Director and the current WSST Board Chairperson.

WSST Executive Director:

Rogelio Trevino
Typed Name

Executive Director
Title

2-25-2021
Signature Date

WSST Board Chairperson:

Lupita R. Canales
Typed Name

WSST Board Chairperson
Title

Lupita R Canales 2/25/2021
Signature Date

Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

A. Vision and Goals
(WIOA §108(b)(1)(E); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(5))
Following, find a description of the Workforce Solutions for South Texas Board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-wage including:

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

WSST Board Response:

In planning for the development of the South Texas 2021 – 2024 Strategic Plan, the WSST Board has been challenged by the 2019, 2020 COVID-19 pandemic that has created and continues to create a health crisis and economic uncertainty in the 3-county area, Texas, United States and the world. The COVID 19 pandemic is unprecedented in its scale and has created a workforce supply and demand shock as evidenced in the range of fluctuation in the labor force, employed and unemployed rate/numbers in 2020 for the South Texas region.

To better articulate the current gaps between workforce supply and demand as the pandemic continues, WSST implemented a survey, held virtual focus groups and workshops with more than 91 employers. To identify a strategic representative sample of industries, various data intelligence was used including the current top 25 most wanted occupations in the South Texas workforce area. WSST targeted employers in demand industries by NAICS codes using the TWC Employer list.

Employer interview results indicate a convergence of factors that contribute to the staffing challenges they are facing when hiring qualified labor, examples include workforce experience, license, credentials, computer technology skills, customer service etiquette and a need for bi-lingual communication skills. All industry employers interviewed relayed they were following COVID 19 protocols.

To address the staffing challenges, WSST strategic planning requires that strong relationships be maintained with employers, and partner agencies in the community that result in collaborative, leveraged efforts that better prepare or transition staffing to the needed workforce occupational supply. Some of these partnerships comprise the broader youth workforce system serving the WSST workforce area and are coordinated to leverage collective funding for maximum benefit to the youth community.

The WSST Board requires all the workforce center locations to be equipped so the full range of services can be provided to all populations. In addition, WSST operates a Mobile Center that is routinely deployed to rural areas and to agencies serving individuals with barriers to accessing the workforce system. The Mobile Center is staffed, as needed, to provide core and required partner program services and information.

WSST negotiates performance expectations with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) annually, to include Performance Accountability measures for core programs described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A). Relevant performance expectations are included in contracts of service providers responsible for the delivery of WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs in the WSST workforce service area. Performance measures contracted to service providers may be higher than negotiated TWC measures to ensure expectations are exceeded and/or are incentivized to promote workforce system excellence.

The Board established the following Goals, Objectives and Strategies for preparing the workforce area job seekers with the necessary education and skills that employers require to obtain employment. In addition, for planning purposes, the WSST Board's **Key Strategic** objectives are aligned with the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2021–FY 2024, as follows:

Focus on Employers

WSST Goal: Develop a dynamic and integrated workforce development system that meets the needs of job seekers and employers.

- Expand and improve business-driven workforce development system where employers and job seekers have access to a network of information and services.
- Strengthen and improve service delivery system throughout the workforce development area.
- Facilitate marketing strategies for employer input and develop new and innovative systems for educating South Texans.
- Ensure that local labor market information resources are available electronically.

Engage in Partnerships

WSST Goal: Develop initiatives to address workforce skills development that would enable clients to attain marketable skills in demand occupations, which will promote earnings gain and self-sufficiency.

- Push the Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Training and seek employer involvement, encourage women to enter non-traditional professions.
- Work on the establishment of early high school "work study programs" to learn how to work while attending school.
- Work on establishing mandatory school to work adjustment training so expectation of workplace behavior can be aligned with curriculum.
- Establish more work experience opportunities for job seekers
- Establish more job shadowing opportunities for job seekers
- Continue to build on community partnerships to maximize and leverage local resources.
- Dropout prevention is a priority.
- Create partnerships with independent school districts and post-secondary institutions to develop programs for youth by providing post-secondary career path opportunities and training.

Align System Elements

WSST Goal: Ensure access to literacy, education, and workplace skills training.

- Set clear career pathways that show where targeted and in-demand occupations entry level career path may lead.
- Develop strong partnerships with literacy and education agencies through Memoranda of Understanding.
- Set priorities of service for specific targeted populations, including job seekers with basic skill deficiencies and employment barriers.
- Provide training and technical assistance to education institutions on the changing needs of job seekers and employers.

B. Board Strategies
(WIOA §108(b)(1)(F); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(6))
Provide a description of strategies to work with the entities carrying out the core programs and with the required partners to align resources available to the local workforce development area (workforce area) to achieve the vision and goals.

The WSST Board works collaboratively with their contracted service providers to establish clear policies and procedures that leverage service options available via all core programs. Coordinating program and service opportunities for which customers are eligible enables WSST to maximize the impact that the region's workforce resources have on individuals and communities.

The WSST Board has worked continuously to integrate core services and incorporate and align resources with required partners into a One-Stop Workforce Center system. Planning strategies included adding the required square footage and office requirements to the Workforce Center to better accommodate some of the required partners. WSST Goal and Strategies to work with core and required partners aligns with the TWIC Goal Improve and Integrate Programs:

WSST Goal: Increase the effectiveness of the One-Stop Service Delivery Network

- The One-Stop concept will be utilized to ensure that persons seeking services from the WSST Workforce Centers are readily available without duplication of effort.
- Continue improving the integration of workforce development core and required partner programs and leveraged services with local partners.
- Provide labor market information systems on the Internet through the Resource Rooms at the WSST Workforce Centers.

C. High-Performing Board
(WIOA §108(b)(18); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(17))
Describe the actions the Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Board, consistent with the factors developed by the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC).

WSST has a history of working in collaboration with area community partners to maximize resources and opportunities. WSST will work to find any opportunity to align and integrate local programs and initiatives. WSST has a strategic vision and has worked for a number of years to

build relationships and partnerships in the three WSST workforce county areas that include Jim Hogg, Webb and Zapata counties. The WSST Board Goals and Strategies are implemented in alignment with the TWIC Goals - **Focus on Employers, Engage in Partnerships, Align System Elements, and Improve and Integrate Programs.**

Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis ***(WIOA §108(b)(1)(A); 20 CFR §679.560(a)(1))*****Boards must include a regional analysis of the following:**

- **The economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, career pathways, and targeted occupations**
- **The employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, career pathways, and targeted occupations**

TWC industry growth projections for the ten-year period - 2018 - 2028 were utilized to ascertain which industries were projected to have the largest number in job growth and largest number of employees. TWC job growth projections found in Table 1 indicate the WSST workforce area in 2018 had 119,234 persons employed and looking forward to 2028 the workforce is projected to grow by 18,973 (15.91%) to 138,207 jobs by 2028.

The Health Care and Social Assistance Industry **(NAICS 62)** is projected to grow by 3,730 jobs, 22.14% of the overall WSST projected job growth. The industry by 2028 is projected to employ 20,576 persons to remain one of the largest industry employers in the WSST workforce area.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Texas Primary Care Office (TPCO) determined that Zapata, Jim Hogg, and Webb County qualified for designation as a High Needs Geographic Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). The TPCO designation identifies geographic areas with a need to increase the supply, and capacity of primary care, mental health, and dental health care occupations.[1]

Transportation and Warehousing **(NAICS 48-49)** will continue to be a major industry employer in the workforce area, the industry is projected to increase by 27.91% or 4,375 jobs to 20,053 overall jobs by 2028, making the industry the 2nd largest industry sector in the workforce area. According to WorldCity analysis of the latest U.S. Census Bureau data, for the full year in 2020, Port Laredo ranked No. 4 for total trade among the nation's roughly 450 airports, seaports and border crossings. During the full year in 2019, Port Laredo ranked No. 2 for total trade among nations.[2]

The City of Laredo, in 2020 issued 28 warehouse construction permits, adding up to $113 million in value through the third quarter of 2020.[3] Some transportation industry warehouse expansion samplings include, but not limited to:

- Mission Produce, Inc., the world's most advanced avocado network is building a 262,000 square foot mega distribution center in Laredo, Texas, which will initially create approximately 75 jobs and will serve as a major distribution hub for Mexican avocados to the United States.[4]
- Mastronardi Produce is expanding and building the warehousing distribution center for agricultural products cultivated in Mexico for distribution in the United States, it will invest

around $26 million in the expansion. The expansion is estimated to create at minimum, 140 new jobs.[5]

- Averitt Express expanded its facility with the addition of 35,000-square-foot distribution and fulfillment space. The expansion increases the company's ability to provide a wider array of supply chain services to customers that move freight through the trade port with Mexico. The addition of the enclosed distribution and fulfillment center brings the total size of the facility to 62,500 square feet with 48 truck doors.[6]
- Sun Belle Inc purchased 100% of CoolHouse Distribution Center and will maintain the existing CoolHouse third party business under the CoolHouse banner. Sun Belle markets all of Giddings Mexico's conventional and organic blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries; certified biodynamic organic cranberries and blueberries; golden berries and red currants; and green house and specialty produce.[7]
- Nature Fresh Farms has expanded operations with a new 61,000 Distribution Center which, provides a new hub of fresh produce. The center will help service Nature Fresh Farms Mexican winter program and allow for direct shipping of product, shortening their supply chain.[8]
- Gulf Corporation's I-35 Logistics Center, a 131,718-square-foot speculative industrial development, is suitable for logistics, distribution and manufacturing.[9]
- The city of Laredo plans to use $18.5 million from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to expedite expansion of the Laredo International Airport. The airport added Mexican airline Aeromar, which provides nonstop flights from Laredo to Mexico City International Airport.[10]

The Educational Service Industry **(NAICS 61)**, the 3rd largest projected industry in the WSST workforce area is projected to grow 9.25% or 1,366 more jobs by 2028. The Government Industry sector (NAICS 999000) in the WSST area is projected to employ 10,754 workers by 2028, the industry is the 6th largest employer in the 3-county area.

Projection data provided by TWC, indicates all but four industry sectors have some positive percentage of growth projected between the years 2018 – 2028. Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction **(NAICS 21)** with 7,252 employees is projected to decrease by 1,368 jobs to 5,884 jobs by 2028, Finance and Insurance **(NAICS 52)** is also projected to decrease 0.64%, Utilities will decrease by 7.11% and Agriculture **(NAICS 11)** will decrease by 13.76% jobs.

Table 1 - WSST Total Employment – All Industries (2-Digit NAICS)

NAICS Code	Industry Title	Estimated Employment (2018)	Projected Employment (2028)	Change In Employment	Percentage Change
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	16,846	20,576	3,730	22.14
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	15,678	20,053	4,375	27.91
61	Educational Services	14,763	16,129	1,366	9.25
44-45	Retail Trade	12,893	14,331	1,438	11.15
72	Accommodation and Food Services	10,733	13,335	2,602	24.24
999000	Gov't, ex. po, state/local ed/hosp	9,614	10,754	1,140	11.86
56	Administrative and Waste Services	6,952	8,566	1,614	23.22
000670	Self Employed Workers, All Jobs	7,057	7,773	716	10.15
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	7,252	5,884	-1,368	-18.86
81	Other Services, Except Public Administration	3,041	4,246	1,205	39.63
54	Professional and Technical Services	3,073	3,773	700	22.77
42	Wholesale Trade	2,881	3,481	600	20.83
52	Finance and Insurance	2,349	2,334	-15	-0.64
23	Construction	2,056	2,212	156	7.59
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,262	1,452	190	15.06
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	995	1,396	401	40.3
51	Information	762	849	87	11.42
31-33	Manufacturing	721	786	65	9.02
22	Utilities	197	183	-14	-7.11
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	109	94	-15	-13.76
		119,234	138,207	18,973	15.91%
Source: TWC LMI Staffing Patterns					

Per data from TWC's 2nd Quarter QCEW Report, in 2018, there were 5,812 establishments employing an average of 106,327 persons in the WSST 3-county area, the area increased to 5,926 establishments in 2019 employing 109,419 persons.

The 1st Quarter in 2020 shows establishments had decreased to 5,907 hiring 109,339 persons, while the 2nd Quarter in 2020 also shows a decrease between the 1st and 2nd Quarter of 2020 to 5,880 establishments and 12,032 less jobs.

Total Wages shown in Table 2 shows an increase of total wages in the 1st Quarter of 2020 to $1,039,758,693.00; however, the 2nd Quarter in 2020 indicates a decrease of total wages to $958,229,193.00.

Table 2 WSST 3- County Number of Establishments and Total Wages

Year	Quarter of Year	Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wages
2018	**2**	5,812	106,327	$962,025,541.00	$746.00
2019	**2**	5,926	109,419	$1,006,572,640.00	$789.00
2020	**1**	5,907	109,339	$1,039,758,693.00	$804.00
2020	**2**	5,880	97,307	$958,229,193.00	$820.00
Source: TWC QCEW Report 2018,2019 Quarter 2, 2020 Quarter 1 and 2					

Below, Table 3, shows the respective year 2nd Quarter number of establishments, average employment, total wages and average weekly wages broken down by county.

Jim Hogg County in 2020, shows a decrease in the number of establishments in 2020 to 118 when compared to 2018 at 133 establishments, although the number of establishments decreased, the total wages paid at $14,386,190.00 and average wages $820.92 have shown an increase when compared to 2018.

Webb County shows a slight decrease in the number of establishments in the 2nd Quarter of 2020 to 5,572 when compared to 5,609 establishments in 2019. Average employment decreased to 92,979 in 2020 when compared to 104,195 employed in 2019. Total wages for Webb County in the 2nd quarter of 2020 decreased to $906,679,708.00 from $943,842,378.00 in 2019 2nd Quarter. The average weekly wage in the 2nd Quarter shows an increase in 2020 to $814.52 when compared to $745.90 in 2019.

Zapata County data indicates a decrease in the number of establishments to 167 in 2020 when compared to 178 establishments in 2019. The average number of employment also decreased to 2,095 in 2020 when compared to 2,840 in the 2nd Quarter of 2019. The total wages also shows a decrease to $26,788,671 in 2020 when compared to $38,512,142 in 2019. Wages also decreased in 2020 to $767.50 when compared to $777.69 in 2019.

Table 3 Establishments and Wages by County

Year	County	Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wages
2018	Jim Hogg	133	1364	$12,259,686.00	$685.86
2019	Jim Hogg	128	1,410	$13,265,664.00	$803.23
2020	Jim Hogg	118	1,353	$14,386,190.00	$820.92
2018	**Webb**	**5,494**	**101,052**	**$902,403,597.00**	**$745.90**
2019	**Webb**	**5,609**	**104,195**	**$943,842,378.00**	**$786.43**
2020	**Webb**	**5,572**	**92,979**	**$906,679,708.00**	**$814.52**
2018	Zapata	170	2,817	$35,386,287.00	$755.64
2019	Zapata	178	2,840	$38,512,142.00	$777.69
2020	Zapata	167	2,095	$26,788,671.00	$767.50
Source: TWC QCEW Report 2018, 2019, 2020 Quarter 2					

Per TWC Labor Market projection data shown in Table 4, the WSST workforce area's 2018-2028 projected workforce growth occupational category of employees shows the Office & Administrative Support Occupations (43-0000) are projected to employ the largest number of employees in 2028 at 23,268 when they increase jobs by 1,823 employees, representing 17.32% of all occupations. The Office and Administrative Support Occupations have an average of annual exits at 1,064, annual transfers are estimated at 1,533 with 2,779 annual openings.

Transportation and Material Moving Occupations are projecting 30.8% growth or 3,899 more jobs by 2028 to 16,560 employees, which is 12.32% of the total projected occupations in the WSST workforce area projected for 2028.

The Construction and Extraction Occupations (47-0000) are projected to have a slight decrease of 33 employees by 2028 to an estimated total of 3,848 jobs. The Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations held 1,009 jobs in 2018 are also projected to decrease by 27.16% or 274 jobs to 735 jobs in 2028.

Table 4 WSST Occupational Categories with Job Growth Projections

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Estimated Employment (2018)	Projected Employment (2028)	Change In Employment	Percentage Change	Annualized Percent Growth	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Openings
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	21,445	23,268	1,823	8.5	0.82	1,064	1,533	2,779
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	12,661	16,560	3,899	30.8	2.72	626	1,133	2,149
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	11,787	13,233	1,446	12.27	1.16	744	1,088	1,977
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	10,019	12,778	2,759	27.54	2.46	821	1,153	2,250
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	9,984	12,228	2,244	22.48	2.05	826	785	1,835
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	8,470	9,638	1,168	13.79	1.3	359	434	910
11-0000	Management Occupations	5,767	6,795	1,028	17.83	1.65	204	334	641
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	5,407	6,470	1,063	19.66	1.81	231	343	680
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	4,145	4,956	811	19.57	1.8	118	146	345
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	3,955	4,623	668	16.89	1.57	120	278	465
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	3,881	3,848	-33	-0.85	-0.09	121	341	459
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	3,813	4,470	657	17.23	1.6	128	277	471
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	3,188	3,621	433	13.58	1.28	199	248	490
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	2,424	3,113	689	28.42	2.53	131	180	380
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	2,340	2,873	533	22.78	2.07	95	188	336
51-0000	Production Occupations	1,844	2,020	176	9.54	0.92	80	150	248
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	1,009	735	-274	-27.16	-3.12	35	108	116
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	820	1,005	185	22.56	2.06	37	64	119
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	686	803	117	17.06	1.59	13	43	68
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	488	546	58	11.89	1.13	14	32	52
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	340	378	38	11.18	1.07	7	27	38
23-0000	Legal Occupations	301	364	63	20.93	1.92	8	13	27
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	114,774	134,325	19,551	17.03	1.59	5,981	8,895	16,831

Source: TWC Labor Market and Career Information

Shown in Table 5, the Workforce Solutions for South Texas area in 2020, was estimated to have 295,669 persons living in the 3-county workforce area. The WSST area is projected to grow to 313,770 persons or 5.80% by 2028 in the 3-county area. Zapata and Jim Hogg counties area projected to slightly decrease in population by the year 2028. Webb County is projected to show an increase of 18,420 in county population by 2028.

Table 5 - WSST 3-County 2020 – 2028 Population Estimations

Year	Jim Hogg	Webb	Zapata	Total 3-County
2020	5,077	276,183	14,409	295,669
2028	4,834	294,603	14,333	313,770
Source: Texas Demographic Center Population Projections txsdc.utsa.edu				

The fluctuation of the labor force number during the 2020 period because of the COVID 19 pandemic determined a need for further analysis of the WSST population data to give more insight into the change of 16 – 67 years of age population projected for the 3-county area between 2020 and 2028.

When determining the labor force number for the 3- county area, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) defines the labor force as employed and unemployed or actively looking for a job for people over 16. To get a labor force number the BLS calculates the number of adults over 16 in the labor force divided by the adult population, and then multiplies by 100 to get the percentage. The labor pool number decreases when the data (BLS survey) shows the jobless aren't looking for work, have not looked for a job recently or may have decided to go to school, retire, or have family responsibilities.

The Texas Demographic Center (TDC) estimates the WSST 3-county combined 16–67 years of age population considered the primary workforce labor age is projected to increase from 193,064

estimated in 2020 to 203,316 in 2028 an increase of 10,252 population in the 16-67 years of age category as shown in Table .

Drilling down and looking at the range of the data population found in Table 6 - (16-40 years and 41-67 years of age) for each of the 3 counties indicates Jim Hogg County is projected to decrease both in the 16-40 population (-83) and the 41-67 (-83) population to 2,847 between 2020-2028.

Also shown in Table 6, Zapata County is projected to show a decrease in the 16-40 (-146) years range of age population to 4,670 between the 2020-2028 period and an increase in the 41-67 (+170) years of age population to 4,029 by 2028.

Webb County is projected to show an overall increase of 10,395 in the 16-40 (+4,394) years of age population and the 41-67 (+6,001) years of age population between 2020 and 2028.

Table 6 - Population by County 16-40, and 41-67 Years and Growth Projection 2020-2028

Year	County	Total 2020 Age 16-40		Year	County	Total 2028 Age 16-40
2020	Jim Hogg	1,591		2028	Jim Hogg	1,507
2020	Webb	103,417		2028	Webb	107,811
2020	Zapata	4,816		2028	Zapata	4,670
2020	**Total 3- County**	**109,824**		**2020**	**Total 3- County**	**113,988**
Year	County	Total 2020 Age 41-67		Year	County	Total 2028 Age 41-67
2020	Jim Hogg	1,423		2028	Jim Hogg	1,340
2020	Webb	77,958		2028	Webb	83,959
2020	Zapata	3,859		2028	Zapata	4,029
2020	**Total 3- County**	**83,240**		**2020**	**Total 3- County**	**89,328**
Year	County	Total 2020 Age 16-67		Year	County	Total 2028 Age 16-67
2020	Jim Hogg	3,014		2028	Jim Hogg	2,847
2020	Webb	181,375		2028	Webb	191,770
2020	Zapata	8,675		2028	Zapata	8,699
Total 2020 WSST 3- County 16 - 67		**193,064**		**Total 2028 WSST 3- County 16-67**		**203,316**
Source: Texas Demographic Center Population Projections txsdc.utsa.edu						

WSST In-Demand Occupations

WSST selected 11 in-demand occupations based on TWC projection of employment growth and the 25 most wanted occupations. All eleven In-Demand Occupations have been on the 25 most wanted occupations postings during the 2020 year and are projecting to add the most jobs. The eleven occupations are estimated to have 19,057 jobs in 2018 and are projected to grow by 3,325 jobs to 22,382 jobs by 2028.

Table 7 also shows job postings from November 2020 indicating 841 postings for the eleven In-Demand Occupations. The current WIT supply for November 2020 indicates 3,870 for the eleven In-Demand Occupations. Five of the in-demand occupations require the job seeker to hold at a

minimum a high school diploma. Six of the in-demand occupations do not require any formal education or credential. Annual salaries for the 11 in-demand occupations medium wage range from $19,876 – $43,216.

Table 7 WSST Eleven In-Demand Occupations

SOC Code	SOC Title	Education	Current Employment (2019)	Projections (2028)	Number Change 2019 - 2028	Job Postings (Nov 2020)	Annual Medium Wage (2019)	Current Supply (WIT - Nov 2020)
Protective Service Occupations								
33-9032	Security Guards	High-School Diploma or Equivalent	1,070	1,482	412	39	$22,798.00	253
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations								
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	No Formal Educational Credential	740	1,010	270	52	$19,876.00	92
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	No Formal Educational Credential	1,560	1,665	105	75	$21,569.00	96
Sales and Related Occupations								
41-2011	Cashiers	No Formal Educational Credential	4,150	4,317	167	66	$22,354.00	715
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	No Formal Educational Credential	3,240	3,535	295	233	$25,544.00	674
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	High-School Diploma or Equivalent	1,180	1,667	487	117	$43,216.00	131
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations								
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	High-School Diploma or Equivalent	690	934	244	50	$26,244.00	135
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations								
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	No Formal Educational Credential	1,259	1,516	257	54	$23,729.00	481
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	No Formal Educational Credential	2,490	2,850	360	66	$28,364.00	434
53-3033	Light Truck Drivers	High-School Diploma or Equivalent	1,130	1,681	551	45	$42,518.00	241
Office and Administrative Support Occupations								
53-7065	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	High-School Diploma or Equivalent	1,548	1,725	177	44	$27,032.00	618
Total In-Demand Occupations			19,057	22,382	3,325	841		3,870
Source: TWC Projections and 25 Most Wanted								

Table 8 shows the eleven in-demand occupations aligned with the industries that hire the occupation. The industries include: NAICS 6111 Elementary and Secondary Schools, NAICS 4885 Freight Transportation Arrangement, NAICS 4931 Warehousing and Storage, NAICS 7225 Restaurants and other Eating Places, NAICS 601 Self-employed Workers.

Table 8 WSST In-Demand Occupations aligned with WSST Targeted Industries

WSST Targeted Industry NAICS	NAICS Industry Titles	WSST Targeted Occupation SOC Codes and Titles Aligned with NAICS	Total Annual Average Employment 2018	Total Annual Average Projected Employment 2028	Total Number Change 2018 - 2028	Projected Percent Growth 2018-2028
6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools	33-9032 Security Guards 49-9071 Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	12,324	13,864	1,540	12.50%
4885	Freight Transportation Arrangement	53-7051 Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators 53-7062 Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	6,504	6,727	223	3.43%
4931	Warehousing and Storage	43-5081 Stock Clerks and Order Fillers 53-7051 Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	1,279	1,621	342	26.74%
7225	Restaurants and other Eating Places	35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant 41-2011 Cashiers 35-3031 Waiters and Waitresses	9,232	11,358	2,126	23.03%
601	Self-Employed Workers	41-1011 First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers 53-3033 Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers 41-2031 Retail Salespersons	7,057	7,773	716	10.15
Source: TWC Staffing Patterns						

WSST Target Occupations

The WSST 21 targeted occupations found in Table 9 are categorized in the following Occupational Titles, noted with the associated title are the number of targeted occupations:

Management Occupations (1), Business and Financial Operations Occupations (1), Computer and Mathematical Occupations (1), Office and Administrative Support Occupations (4), Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (6), Education and Training Occupations (3), Construction, Wholesale Trade, Maintenance and Repair Occupations (5).

Table 9 below, shows WSST's 21 Targeted Occupations, which in 2018 was estimated at 19,965 positions or 17.40% of the total 114,774 estimated occupational positions in the WSST workforce area (see Table 5 above).

The WSST's 21 targeted occupations listed in Table 9 are projected to grow by 4,542 new positions by 2028, which represents 23.23% of the total 19,551 projected growth for employment in the WSST workforce area.

Table 9 WSST Target Occupations

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Estimated Employment (2018)	Projected Employment (2028)	Change In Employment	Percentage Change	Annualized Percent Growth	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Openings
Management Occupations									
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	1,233	1,489	256	20.76	1.9	28	90	144
Business & Financial Operations Occupations									
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	642	777	135	21.03	1.93	20	46	80
Computer and Mathematical Occupations									
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	222	251	29	13.06	1.24	4	15	22
Office & Administrative Support Occupations									
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1,332	1,458	126	9.46	0.91	85	78	176
43-5011	Cargo and Freight Agents	1,098	1,282	184	16.76	1.56	42	70	130
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	1,690	1,870	180	10.65	1.02	60	117	195
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	808	1,043	235	29.08	2.59	47	56	127
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations									
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	223	294	71	31.84	2.8	5	13	25
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	509	559	50	9.82	0.94	18	23	46
29-1141	Registered Nurses	1,337	1,504	167	12.49	1.18	39	36	92
31-9091	Dental Assistants	188	308	120	63.83	5.06	12	16	40
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	772	864	92	11.92	1.13	44	48	101
31-9092	Medical Assistants	528	719	191	36.17	3.14	24	44	87
Education, Training, & Library Occupations									
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed.	1,679	1,928	249	14.83	1.39	56	77	158
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Ca	1,210	1,392	182	15.04	1.41	36	55	109
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Caree	963	1,101	138	14.33	1.35	32	44	90
Construction/Wholesale Trade/Maintenance, and Repair Occupations									
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,229	6,046	1,817	42.97	3.64	212	373	767
49-3031	Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialist	548	745	197	35.95	3.12	18	42	80
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	354	431	77	21.75	1.99	11	28	47
47-2111	Electricians	234	260	26	11.11	1.06	8	21	32
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mech	166	186	20	12.05	1.14	5	12	19
Total 21 Targeted Occupations		**19,965**	**24,507**	**4,542**			**806**	**1,304**	**2,567**
Source: TWC Projections 2018-2028									

As shown in Table 10, all twenty-one targeted occupations require, at minimum a high school diploma or equivalent. The most common level of educational attainment required for employment for ten of the targeted occupations require a post-secondary non-degree award or some college, no degree and one to five years of experience, the occupations are estimated to earn between $24,244 - $48,184. All twenty-one of the targeted occupations have training identified on the Eligible Training Providers list, provided by Laredo College or Texas A&M International University.

Six of the targeted occupations require a bachelor's degree resulting in employment that pays an estimated Mean Wage range between $57,050- $75,553.00.

Five of the targeted occupations require High School Diplomas or equivalent, the occupations pay the Medium Wage range of $27,324-$46,992.

Table 10 – Targeted Occupations Education and Wages

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Education	2019 Entry Wage	2019 Mean Wage
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	Bachelor's degree	$33,442.00	$75,553.00
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	Bachelor's degree	$41,083.00	$64,225.00
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed.	Bachelor's degree	$50,967.00	$57,050.00
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Te	Bachelor's degree	$50,428.00	$57,136.00
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Caree	Bachelor's degree	$51,210.00	$58,007.00
29-1141	Registered Nurses	Bachelor's degree	$55,285.00	$73,712.00
43-5011	Cargo and Freight Agents	High school diploma or equivalent	$24,539.00	$35,444.00
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	High school diploma or equivalent	$18,864.00	$27,324.00
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	High school diploma or equivalent	$22,142.00	$30,139.00
47-2111	Electricians	High school diploma or equivalent	$31,121.00	$46,992.00
49-3031	Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists	High school diploma or equivalent	$28,484.00	$39,511.00
29-2041	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	Postsecondary nondegree award	$26,935.00	$32,232.00
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Postsecondary nondegree award	$39,323.00	$48,184.00
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	Postsecondary nondegree award	$20,388.00	$25,124.00
31-9091	Dental Assistants	Postsecondary nondegree award	$23,082.00	$34,964.00
31-9092	Medical Assistants	Postsecondary nondegree award	$19,472.00	$24,244.00
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	Postsecondary nondegree award	$20,750.00	$32,900.00
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechan	Postsecondary nondegree award	$22,916.00	$35,457.00
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Postsecondary nondegree award	$25,753.00	$43,387.00
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	Some college, no degree	$26,388.00	$39,293.00
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	Some college, no degree	$20,726.00	$29,914.00
Source: TWC WD-24-20-att-2xls				

Table 11 below, shows ten of the WSST targeted 4-digit industries aligned with the corresponding industry sectors. The 4-digit NAICS targeted industries in 2018, collectively employed 38,452 persons and are projected to increase in employment by 12.83% or 4,935 new positions making a estimated total of 43,387 jobs in the targeted industries by the year 2028.
Table 12 below, shows the eleventh targeted industry, the self-employed workers that represents 10.15% of the annual employment projection growth for 2028 for the WSST workforce area.

Construction
(1) 2382 Building Equipment Contractors;
Transportation and Warehousing
(2) 4885 Freight Transportation, (3) 4931 Warehousing and Storage;
Educational Services
(3) 6111 Elementary and Secondary Schools;
Health Care and Social Services
(4) 6211 Offices of Physicians, (6) 6212 Offices of Dentists, (7) 6214 Outpatient Care Centers, (8) 6216 Home Health Care Services, (9) 622 General Medical and Surgical Hospitals (limited data available);
Government
(10) 9991 Government (Local and Federal)
Self-Employed Worker
(11) 601 Self-Employment

Table 11 WSST 21 Targeted Occupations with Associated NAICS

WSST Targeted Industry NAICS	NAICS Industry Titles	SOC Codes and Titles	Annual Average Employment 2018	Annual Average Projected Employment 2028	Number Change 2018 - 2028	Projected Percent Growth 2018-2028
2382	Building Equipment Contractors	47-2111 Electricians 49-9021 Heating, Air Condition and Refrigeration Mechanic 11-1021 General and Operations Managers	882	967	85	9.64%
4885	Freight Transportation Arrangement	43-5071 Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks 43-5011 Cargo and Freight Agents 11-1021 General and Operations Managers 53-3032 Heavy and Tractor-Truck Drivers 13-2011 Accountants 43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks	6,504	6,727	223	3.43%
4931	Warehousing and Storage	43-5071 Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks 11-1021 General and Operations Managers 13-2011 Accountants 43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks	1,279	1,621	342	26.74%
6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools	25-2021 Elementary School Teachers 25-2031 Secondary School Teachers 25-2022 Middle School Teachers 29-1141 Registered Nurses 47-2111 Electricians 49-9021 Heating, Air Condition and Refrigeration Mechanic 15-1232 Computer User Support Specialists 49-3031 Bus & Truck Mech & Diesel Engine Specialist	12,324	13,864	1,540	12.50%
6211	Offices of Physicians	31-1131 Nursing Assistants 29-2061 Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses 43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks 31-9092 Medical Assistants 43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks 43-6013 Medical Secretaries	1,622	2,002	380	23.43%
6212	Offices of Dentists	31-9091 Dental Assistants 43-6013 Medical Secretaries	462	767	305	66.02%
6214	Outpatient Care Centers	31-9092 Medical Assistants 43-6013 Medical Secretaries 29-1141 Registered Nurses	626	833	207	33.07%
6216	Home Health Care Services	43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks 31-1131 Nursing Assistants 29-1141 Registered Nurses 29-2061 Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses 43-6013 Medical Secretaries 29-2041 Emergency Medical Techs and Paramedics	5,984	6,604	620	10.36%
622	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	29-1141 Registered Nurses 29-2061 Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses 43-6013 Medical Secretaries 31-1131 Nursing Assistants 11-1021 General and Operations Managers 31-9092 Medical Assistants	575	604	29	5.04%
99	Government - Local, and Federal	53-3032 Heavy and Tractor-Truck Drivers 47-2111 Electricians 49-9021 Heating, Air Condition and Refrigeration Mechanic 29-2061 Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses 29-1141 Registered Nurses 49-3031 Bus & Truck Mech & Diesel Engine Specialist 43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks 49-3023 Automotive Service Techs and Mechanics 11-1021 General and Operations Managers 13-2011 Accountants	5,173 3596	5,727 4,275	554 679	10.71% 18.88%
Source: TWC Staffing Patterns, and Projections U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics			39027	43991	4964	12.71%

TWC projection data for self-employed workers shown in Table 12 indicates the area is estimated to increase in the number of workers by 10.15% or 716 new self-employed workers to 7,773 by 2028. Employers surveyed indicated they sub-contract with several different occupations as a general approach when additional help is needed. WSST will also be targeting the self-employed (NAICS 601) Industry.

Table 12 WSST Self-Employed Workers

WSST Targeted Industry NAICS	NAICS Industry Titles	WSST Targeted Occupation SOC Codes and Titles	Total Annual Average Employment 2018	Total Annual Average Projected Employment 2028	Number Change 2018 - 2028	Projected Percent Growth 2018-2028
601	Self-Employed Workers	53-3032 Heavy and Tractor-Truck Drivers 13-2011 Accountants 49-3023 Automotive Service Techs and Mechanics 43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks	7,057	7,773	716	10.15
Source: TWC Staffing Patterns						

B. Knowledge and Skills Analysis

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

In order to determine the current impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on occupational skills and employer expectation, WSST held virtual focus groups, on-line surveys and workshops to solicit current employer skill demands. The result of the survey was used by the WSST Board to gage the training skills that need to be targeted for job seekers and unemployed persons and is reflected in the Plan. Employers were asked to validate the labor market information projections for industry occupations within their business, identify occupations that are evolving or emerging and to identify any gaps in occupational skills needed.

Looking at the targeted occupations to analyze specific knowledge and skill requirements provides further insight into the demand the projected targeted occupational growth will place on the WSST labor market. Table 13 details the collective frequency of occurrence of the Knowledge and Skills for twenty of the twenty-one WSST Target Occupations. WSST extrapolated from O-NET, the top five knowledge base and top five skill areas for each of the targeted occupations. Analysis of the top five required primary knowledge areas that are in common for the targeted occupations reveals there are 19 of the 20 occupations that require a command of the English Language and 17 of the WSST Target Occupations require customer and personal service knowledge.

The analysis in Table 13 also shows that Skill requirements for 16 of the 20 WSST Target Occupations will require Active Listening Skills while 13 of the 20 require speaking to convey information skills. (Note: there was no data available for the Emergency Medical Technician).

The entry mean and experienced wage data for the targeted occupations found in Tables 14 – 18 indicates the entry and internal staffing progressions based on years of experience coupled with the knowledge and skills gained does provide an opportunity for advancement to a higher wage.

The common knowledge and skills each of the targeted occupations required indicates there are career advancement opportunities within the targeted occupations that also result in a higher wage.

Table 13 WSST Target Occupations Top Five KS Frequency of Occurrence

Knowledge	Frequency of Occurrence	Skills	Frequency of Occurrence
English Language	19	Active Listening	16
Customer and Personal Service	17	Speaking To Convey Information	13
Mathematics	9	Critical Thinking	10
Public Safety and Security	6	Reading Comprehension	10
Administration and Management	6	Monitoring Assessing Performance	7
Source: O-NET -KS - No KS Data Available for EMT			

HealthCare Practitioners & Technical Occupations

Twenty-Eight NAICS 62 Health Care and Social Services Employers participated in focus groups and surveys, the employers were identified by NAICS codes found in the TWC Employer database. Participating employers' range in size of employees are as follows:

- Twelve employers have 5-9 employees,
- Six employers have 10 - 19 employees,
- Four employers have 20 - 49 employees,
- Six employers do not have estimated employee numbers or NAICS classifications.

The Health Care and Social Assistance Industry employers validated the need for Registered Nurses, Licensed Vocational Nurses, Dental Assistance, Medical Assistants, and Nursing Assistants.

Health Care and Social Industry employers expressed the need for job seekers to have computer skills or upgraded technology skills with the industry going to electronic systems/paperless and virtual tele-health. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an increased need for training for testing and administering vaccines. The majority of participating employers indicated a willingness to participate in work experience activities.

The Laredo Health Department has been designated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a Bio-Safety Laboratory Level III (BSL III) requiring risk-based enhancements. Laredo one of the largest inland ports and customs district in the U.S. is a prime target for threats of current, emerging and new infectious health diseases that will impact the demand for Health Care occupations.[11]

There are seven target occupations that are identified as Health Care Practitioners & Technical Occupations, the Table 14 shows the top collective Knowledge and Skills for the occupations. The top knowledge area is the English Language and Customer and Personal Service skills for six of the target occupations. All the occupations will require the employee to have Active Listening skills and service orientation. The occupations entry, mean, and experienced wages and education level are listed for each of the seven occupations. The knowledge, skills and education shown in Table 14, indicate the gap in Knowledge and Skills each occupation would have to fill to transition to another target occupation; i.e. LVN to Registered Nurse.

Table 14 HealthCare Practitioners & Technical Occupations (7 of 21 Target Occupations)

TARGET OCCUPATIONS	Medical Assistants	Nursing Assistants	Medical Secretaries	Emergency Medical Technicians	Dental Assistants	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Registered Nurses	Frequency of Occurrence
TOP 5 KNOWLEDGE AREAS - HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS & TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS WSST 7 OF 21 TARGET OCCUPATIONS								
English Language	1	1	1		1	1	1	6
Customer and Personal Service	1	1	1		1	1	1	6
Medicine and Denistry Techniques to Diagnose and Treat	1	1			1	1	1	5
Psychology Human Behavior					1	1	1	3
Computers and Electronics	1		1					2
Administrative and Mgmt of Business		1	1					2
Clerical	1		1					2
Education and Training					1		1	2
Experienced Annual Wage	$26,631	$27,492	$34,138	$34,881	$40,905	$52,615	$82,926	
Mean Annual Salary 2019	$24,244	$25,124	$30,139	$32,232	$34,964	$48,184	$73,712	
Entry Annual Salary 2019	$19,472	$20,388	$22,142	$26,935	$23,082	$39,323	$55,285	
Education	Postsecondary non-degree award	Postsecondary non-degree award	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Postsecondary non-degree award	Postsecondary non-degree award	Postsecondary non-degree award	Bachelor's Degree	
TOP 5 SKILL AREAS - HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS & TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS WSST 7 OF 21 TARGET OCCUPATIONS								
Active Listening	1	1	1		1	1	1	6
Service Orientation		1	1		1	1	1	5
Speaking	1		1		1		1	4
Reading Comprehension	1		1		1	1		4
Coordination adjusting actions		1	1			1	1	4
Source: O-NET TOP 5 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS - NO KSA DATA AVAILABLE FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS								

Office/Mgmt/Business/Computer Occupations

Thirty-Four NAICS 48-49 Transportation and Warehousing Employers participated in the survey, the employers were identified by NAICS codes with the range in size of employees as follows:

- Fourteen employers have 5-9 employees,
- Seven employers have 10 - 19 employees,
- Three employers have 20 - 49 employees,
- Four employers have 50-99 employees
- Six employers do not have estimated employee numbers or NAICS classifications.

The Transportation and Warehousing employers validated the need for Shipping and Traffic Clerks, Cargo and Freight Agents, Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Accountants and CDL Drivers.

Transportation and Warehousing Employers expressed the need for job seekers to have computer skills, forklift operation skills, and knowledge of importing and exporting logistics especially to Mexico. Several employers expressed the need for comprehension skills and personal interaction training, all thirty-four employers were willing to participate in work experience or internships.

There are six target occupations that are identified as Office Management Occupations, the Table 15 below shows the top five common Knowledge and Skills for the occupations. The top knowledge area for the six occupations in the Office Mgmt. category is the English Language and Customer and Personal Service skills. All the occupations will require the employee to have Active Listening, Speaking and Critical Thinking skills. The occupations entry, mean, and experienced wages and education level are listed for each of the six occupations, which indicates that experience for each of the six occupations will provide an estimated wage ranging from $31,554 - $96,609. Table 15 also indicates there are several of the target occupations that have the top five knowledge and skills in common.

Table 15 Office/Mgmt/Business/Computer Occupations (6 of 21 Target Occupations)

TARGET OCCUPATIONS	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	Cargo and Freight Agents	Computer User Support Specialists	Accountants and Auditors	General and Operations Managers	Frequency of Occurrence
TOP 5 KNOWLEDGE AREAS - OFFICE/MGMT/BUSINESS/COMPUTER - WSST 6 OF 21 TARGET OCCUPATIONS							
English Language	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Customer and Personal Service		1	1	1	1	1	5
Mathematics to solve problems	1	1			1	1	4
Administrative and Mgmt of Business and Principles					1	1	2
Clerical Administrative Procedures	1	1					2
Computer and Electronics	1			1			2
Economics and Accounting		1			1		2
Experienced Annual Salary 2019	$31,554	$34,509	$40,897	$45,745	$75,796	$96,609	
Mean Annual Salary 2019	$27,324	$29,914	$35,444	$39,293	$64,225	$75,553	
Entry Annual Salary 2019	$18,864	$20,726	$24,539	$26,388	$41,083	$33,442	
Education	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Some College No Degree	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Some College No Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	
TOP 5 SKILL AREAS - OFFICE/MGMT/BUSINESS/COMPUTER - WSST 6 OF 21 TARGET OCCUPATIONS							
Active Listening	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Speaking	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Critical Thinking	1	1	1	1	1		5
Reading Comprehension	1	1		1	1		4
Monitoring	1		1			1	3

Source: O-NET TOP 5 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Construction/Wholesale Trade/Maintenance, and Repair

Twenty-four NAICS 23 Construction and NAICS 42 Wholesale Trade and NAICS 21 Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Employers participated in the survey, the employers were identified by NAICS codes participating employer size of employees are as follows:

- 8 employers have 5-9 employees,
- 6 employers have 10 - 19 employees,
- 2 employers have 20 - 49 employees,
- 2 employers have 50-99 employees
- 2 employers have 100-249 employees
- 4 employers do not have estimated employee numbers or NAICS classifications.

The Construction Industry employers validated the need for HVAC, and Electricians; however, the majority will be sub-contracting for the occupation. All twenty-four employers indicated they only hire experienced job seekers with license, or certifications. Seventeen of the employers when there is an opening promote from within the company. The Mining, Quarrying Oil and Gas Employers were anticipating no need for new hires in the near future.

There are five target occupations that are identified as Construction/Wholesale Trade/Maintenance, and Repair, the Table 16 below shows the top five common Knowledge and Skills for the occupations. The top common knowledge area for the five occupations are customer and personal service, English language, and mechanical machines, tools, repair.

Trouble shooting, repairing machines or systems, operation monitoring and critical thinking skills are the top required areas. The occupations entry, mean, and experienced wages and education level are listed for each of the five occupations, which indicates that experience for each of the five occupations will provide an estimated wage ranging from $38, 975 - $54,927.

Table 16 Construction/Wholesale Trade/Maintenance, and Repair (5 of 21 Target Occupations)

TARGET OCCUPATIONS	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Electrician	Frequency of Occurrence
TOP 5 KNOWLEDGE AREAS - CONSTRUCTION/WHOLESALE TRADE/MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR - WSST 5 OF 21 TARGET OCCUPATIONS						
Customer and Personal Service	1	1	1	1		4
English Language	1		1	1	1	4
Mechanical Machines, Tools, Repair	1	1		1	1	4
Transportation Principles and Methods			1	1		2
Building and Construction Materials, Methods		1			1	2
Computers and Electronics	1	1				2
Public Safety and Security			1	1		2
Experienced Annual Salary 2019	$38,975	$41,727	$45,025	$52,204	$54,927	
Mean Annual Salary 2019	$32,900	$35,457	$39,511	$43,387	$46,992	
Entry Annual Salary 2019	$20,750	$22,916	$28,484	$25,753	$31,121	
Education	Postsecondary non-degree award	Postsecondary non-degree award	High School Diploma or Equivalent	Postsecondary non-degree award	High School Diploma and License	
TOP 5 SKILL AREAS - CONSTRUCTION/WHOLESALE TRADE/MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR - WSST 5 OF 21 TARGET OCCUPATIONS						
Troubleshooting	1	1	1		1	4
Repairing Machines or Systems	1	1	1		1	4
Operation Monitoring	1	1	1	1		4
Critical Thinking			1	1	1	3
Operation and Control	1		1	1		3
Source: O-NET TOP 5 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS						

Education, Training & Library Occupations

Five NAICS Education, Training & Library Occupation Employers participated in the survey, the employers were identified by NAICS codes with the range in size of employees, participating employer size of employees are as follows:

- 1 employer has 10 - 19 employees,
- 1 employer has 20 - 49 employees,
- 2 employers have twenty locations ranging from 5 – 499 employees
- 1 employer did not have estimated employee numbers or a NAICS classifications.

The participating Education employers validated the need for teachers, some rural education employers felt some teachers were retiring or moving to another town. With the transition to on-line learning, the education employers expressed the need for teachers to have computer literacy skills, which was a challenge for a lot of the teachers. Safety and health precautions will continue to evolve as the schools add more measures in mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

There are three target occupations that are identified as Educational Services Occupations, the Table 17 below shows the top five common Knowledge and Skills for the occupations. All the occupations require the same KS with the exception of the Elementary School Teacher in one of the knowledge and skills categories.

The occupations entry, mean, and experienced wages and education level are listed for each of the six occupations, which indicates the occupations do not range too far apart in salaries.

Table 17 Education, Training & Library Occupations (3 of 21 Target Occupations)

TARGET OCCUPATIONS	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed.	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	Frequency of Occurrence
TOP 5 KNOWLEDGE AREAS - EDUCATION, TRAINING & LIBRARY OCCUPATIONS - WSST 3 OF 21 TARGET OCCUPATIONS				
English Language	1	1	1	3
Computers and Electronics	1	1	1	3
Psychology, Human Behavior and Performance	1	1	1	3
Education and Training Methods for Curriculum Design	1	1	1	3
Customer and Personal Service		1	1	2
Experienced Annual Salary 2019	$60,092	$60,491	$61,405	
Mean Annual Salary 2019	$57,050	$57,136	$58,007	
Entry Annual Salary 2019	$50,967	$50,428	$51,210	
Education	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	
TOP 5 SKILLS AREAS - EDUCATION, TRAINING & LIBRARY OCCUPATIONS - WSST 3 OF 21 TARGET OCCUPATIONS				
Active Listening	1	1	1	3
Speaking	1	1	1	3
Instructing - Teaching	1	1	1	3
Learning Strategies	1	1	1	3
Reading Comprehension		1	1	2
Source: O-NET TOP 5 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS				

Eleven In-Demand Occupations Knowledge and Skills

There are eleven In-Demand occupations that are identified in Table 18 below that shows the top five common Knowledge and Skills for the occupations. Ten of the occupations require the same customer and personal service knowledge with eight needing knowledge of the English language. Eight of the eleven occupations will require Active Listening and the skills to speak to convey information. The occupations entry, mean, and experienced wages and education level are listed for each of the eleven occupations, which indicates the occupations experience wage range from $21,075 - $51,222.

Table 18 In-Demand Knowledge, Skills and Wages

TARGET OCCUPATIONS	Cooks, Restaurant	Waiters and Waitresses	Cashiers	Security Guards	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	Retail Salespersons	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	Light Truck Drivers	Frequency of Occurrence
TOP 5 KNOWLEDGE AREAS - ELEVEN WSST IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS												
Customer and Personal Service	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	10
English Language	1	1		1	1	1		1		1	1	8
Sales and Marketing		1				1				1		3
Adminstrative and Mgmt			1			1				1		3
Public Safety and Security				1	1			1				3
Experienced Annual Wage 2019	$21,075	$23,703	$24,615	$25,490	$25,719	$29,405	$30,043	$30,282	$32,825	$51,076	$51,222	
Mean Annual Salary 2019	$19,876	$21,569	$22,354	$22,798	$23,729	$25,544	$27,032	$26,244	$28,364	$43,216	$42,518	
Entry Annual Salary 2019	$17,476	$17,300	$17,831	$17,412	$19,749	$17,823	$21,011	$18,168	$19,442	$27,495	$25,111	
Education	No Formal Educational Credential	No Formal Educational Credential	No Formal Educational Credential	High School Diploma or Equivalent	No Formal Educational Credential	No Formal Educational Credential	High School Diploma or Equivalent	High School Diploma or Equivalent	No Formal Educational Credential	High School Diploma or Equivalent	High School Diploma or Equivalent	
TOP 5 SKILL AREAS - ELEVEN WSST IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS												
Active Listening	1	1	1	1		1	1			1	1	8
Speaking to convey information	1	1	1	1		1	1			1	1	8
Coordination Adjusting actions	1	1		1	1					1		5
Critical Thinking	1			1				1		1		4
Service Orientation Activity		1	1			1				1		4
Monitoring Assessing Performance	1			1							1	3
Source: O-NET TOP 5 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS - NO KSA Data Available for Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material - TWC 2019 Wages												

C. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

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

The December 2020 average unemployment rate for the WSSST workforce service area shown in Table 19 below, is at 8.4% or 10,334 persons unemployed. The unemployment numbers indicate a fluctuation in the range of unemployment rates from 4% in February of 2020 reaching a high of 14.2% in May of 2020.

Table 19 Employment and Unemployment Rates

2018	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
Unemployment Rate	4.1	4.1	4	3.6	3.5	4.4	4.1	3.9	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.9
Employment	117,476	118,503	118,482	118,580	118,219	117,843	118,905	118,346	118,510	119,507	120,365	120,550	118,774
Labor Force	122,544	123,555	123,395	123,051	122,569	123,266	124,001	123,087	122,991	123,904	124,725	125,276	123,531
# of Unemployed	5,068	5,052	4,913	4,471	4,350	5,423	5,096	4,741	4,481	4,397	4,360	4,726	4,757
2019	**Jan**	**Feb**	**March**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**August**	**Sept.**	**Oct.**	**Nov.**	**Dec.**	**Annual**
Unemployment Rate	4.3	4	3.8	3.3	3.4	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8
Employment	120,073	120,806	120,666	120,877	121,221	120,540	119,924	120,291	121,162	121,226	121,683	121,458	120,827
Labor Force	125,467	125,894	125,445	124,980	125,539	125,629	125,106	125,079	125,534	125,633	126,240	126,108	125,554
# of Unemployed	5,394	5,088	4,779	4,103	4,318	5,089	5,182	4,788	4,372	4,407	4,557	4,650	4,727
2020	**Jan**	**Feb**	**March**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**August**	**Sept.**	**Oct.**	**Nov.**	**Dec.**	**Annual**
Unemployment Rate	4.2	4	5.7	13.4	14.2	9.9	9.4	8	9.5	7.9	9.4	8.4	
Employment	121,071	121,944	118,045	98,770	102,761	109,437	110,857	115,831	113,015	112,969	112,945	113,217	Not
Labor Force	126,400	127,073	125,181	113,991	119,754	121,487	122,342	125,953	124,847	122,705	124,634	123,551	Available
# of Unemployed	5,329	5,129	7,136	15,221	16,993	12,050	11,485	10,122	11,832	9,736	11,689	10,334	
Source: TWC Local Area Unemployment Statistics Report													

Data from the 2015-2019 U.S. Census found in Table 20, show that persons residing in the three counties of Webb (89.90%), Zapata (89.30%) and Jim Hogg (65.30%) speak a language other than English in substantially more households when compared to English speakers. The Census data also indicates there is a 14.80% of the population in Jim Hogg County that under 65 and disabled. Zapata County has the largest population living in poverty at 30.10% when compared to the other two counties.

Table 20 WSST Language Spoken in Home, Disability and Poverty

Census Indicator	Jim Hogg County	Webb County	Zapata County
Population Estimates July 1, 2019	5,200	276,652	14,179
Langage Other than English spoken at home percentage	65.30%	89.90%	89.30%
Number of Persons where Language other than English spoken at home	3,395	248,710	12,661
Persons with a disability, under 65 years 2015 - 2019	14.80%	8.20%	12.00%
Median household income 2015-2019	$38,788.00	$46,475.00	$33,952.00
Number of Persons in poverty	22.80%	20.90%	30.10%
Source: U.S. Census Quick Facts 2015 - 2019			

In Table 21, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the respective WSST 3-county area's persons age 25 and over high school graduate data shows that Webb County has 25.30% of the population 25 years and older completing a high school or equivalency, for Zapata's 25 years or over population there are 30.8% that graduated high school or equivalency, while Jim Hogg had 37.60% of the 25 years or over population holding high school diplomas or equivalency. The 3-counties all have higher high school graduate rates when compared to Texas at 25.20%. All twenty-one of the target occupations require at a minimum a high school diploma or equivalent.

In all three counties the percentage of persons 25 and older that have less than a 9th grade education or did not complete the 9th to 12th grade to receive a diploma is substantial higher when compared to Texas at 7.70%.

In Webb County 13.70% of the 25 years and over population hold bachelor or higher degrees, in Zapata the bachelor or higher degree rate is 10.40%, while in Jim Hogg the rate is 10.60% of the population age 25 or over that hold bachelor or higher degrees, all have lower bachelor degree completion rates lower when compared to Texas at 20.0%.

Table 21 Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment in 2019	Webb	Webb Percent of Population	Zapata	Zapata Percent of Population	Jim Hogg	Jim Hogg Percent of Population	Texas
Total Population 25 and Older	151,324	100.00%	8,042	100%	3,037	100%	18,772,550
Less than 9th Grade	27,482	18,2%	1,930	24.00%	378	12.40%	7.70%
9th to 12th, No Diploma	21,605	14.30%	1,133	14.10%	396	13.00%	7.70%
High School Graduate (includes equiv.)	38,292	25.30%	2,477	30.80%	1,142	37.60%	25.20%
Some College, No Degree	24,900	16.50%	1,253	15.60%	560	18.40%	21.20%
Associate Degree	10,395	6.90%	316	3.90%	153	5.00%	7.50%
Bachelor's Degree	20,686	13.70%	834	10.40%	322	10.60%	20.00%
Graduate, Professional or Doctorate Degree	7,964	5.30%	99	1.20%	86	2.80%	10.80%
Source: U.S.Census Stats							

D. Workforce Development Analysis

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

Employment Needs of Employers

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the 2020 - 2021 planning year for the South Texas workforce area has caused a health crisis, brought business shutdowns and limits on operations, high unemployment numbers, fluctuation in the labor force numbers and a workforce transition to essential, virtual and digital remote home office workers.

To add to the challenge, Educational Institutions have gone to on-line virtual training resulting in a need for space in the home for school education and workforce training. The effect of the 2019, 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped and will continue to re-shape how we educate youth, and how we train the workforce pipeline.

To better articulate the current gaps between workforce supply and demand as the pandemic continues, WSST implemented a survey with local employers in targeted industries. Using the TWC Employer list, WSST held virtual focus groups and workshops with more than 91 employers from specific NAICS industry codes.

Employer interview results indicated a convergence of factors that contribute to the staffing challenges they are facing when hiring qualified labor, examples include workforce experience, license, credentials, computer technology skills, customer service etiquette and a need for bi-lingual communication skills. All industry employers interviewed relayed they were following COVID 19 protocols.

Workforce Activities – Training Services

The South Texas area received Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Skills Development funding and have worked in local partnerships to plan for the need to transition the unemployed to current employment in demand.

As part of the local recovery activities, a promotion to increase the skills and knowledge of the local workforce was implemented. Community partnerships were established with the City of Laredo, Laredo College, Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) and Texas Southmost College. Collaborative marketing strategies were implemented that were aimed at identifying and helping individuals directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to rejoin the workforce.

The collaborative and leveraged partnerships strategically targeted fast track training initiatives focused on industry occupations hired by the Transportation and Warehousing, Health Care and Social Services, and Wholesale Trade industries.

Some of the CARE Act funds received by the City of Laredo allowed over 500 individuals that had been laid-off, furloughed or underemployed due to the pandemic to obtain or upgrade knowledge and skills intended to create pathways to regain employment.

To assist participants that completed training, WSST identified and converse with targeted industry employers to identify those willing to participate in a virtual job fair. WSST worked to prepare participating job fair employers with zoom orientations that consisted of PowerPoints on how to navigate the platform, and how to chat with job seekers.

Student's training completions varied including Bookkeeping/Payroll Certification, Certified Logistics Associate and Technician, Certified Customs and Export Specialist NEI, Medical Admin Assistant, Dental Assistant, Patient Care Aide, ICD-10 Medical Coding, Certified Office Mgr., Child Development Associate, QuickBooks Certification, CompTIA Fundamentals, Certified Forklift Operator, Substitute Teacher and Certified Office Manager.

WSST, in receipt of skills development funding to assist the pandemic impact, implemented a marketing push to mitigate business closures and assist essential workers by contacting employers in the area directly by phone, which resulted in seventeen employers determined eligible to participate. Employers had to agree to submit an application and meet the pay wage in alignment with the prevailing wage for the occupation in the WSST labor market data to participate.

WSST worked in collaboration with training providers including Laredo College, Texas Southmost College and Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) and participating employers to customize different training courses based on the employer's knowledge and skill expectation and needs. Training courses included Managing Business during COVID-19, Leadership, Quick Books, Disinfecting Procedures, Cybersecurity Risk Management, Customer Service and Social Distancing.

Also, part of the skills development fund activities, WSST provided 65 participants the opportunity to obtain a CDL Driver License with the following training providers: LHCT Training Center, Astudillo Elite Truck Driving School or Laredo College Professional Truck Driving School. As of January 27, 2021, 62 participants have completed and obtained their CDL Certification and Driver

License, 33 of the participants have obtained employment with various trucking and transportation industry employers.

WSST continues to push the training necessary to transition the un-employed to employment, upgrade the incumbent worker's skills and assist in preparing the job seekers for the workplace. WSST has a history of collaboration and has an established partnership with the two colleges operating in the WSST workforce area – Laredo College and Texas A&M International. Between the two colleges there is a training program option for all the targeted occupations.

Individuals with Barriers to Employment

All employers surveyed indicated a need for the applicant to have work experience when filling open positions. Independent School Districts and post-secondary training institutions will need to be kept engaged in helping to promote the opportunity for employment in the target and in-demand occupations. A strong work experience program will be needed to facilitate the job placement requirements to meet the employer's expectation.

The education and training to gain knowledge and command of the English language, communication, customer and personal service, active listening skills and the ability to speak and convey information skills is critical to obtaining employment. Data from the 2015-2019 U.S. Census found in Table 20, show that persons residing in the three counties of Webb (89.90%), Zapata (89.30%) and Jim Hogg (65.30%) speak a language other than English in substantially more households when compared to English speakers, this will continue to be a challenge in the 3-county area.

All twenty-one of the WSST Target Occupations require at a minimum a high school diploma or equivalency. In Table 21, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the respective WSST 3-county area's persons age 25 and over high school graduate data shows the 3-counties all have higher high school graduate rates when compared to Texas at 25.20%. However, also found in Table 21 for the three counties, the percentage of persons 25 and older that have less than a 9^{th} grade education or did not complete the 9^{th} to 12^{th} grade to receive a diploma are substantial higher when compared to Texas at 7.70%.

Education Activities including Childhood Education and K – 12

Workforce Solutions for South Texas in collaboration with United and Laredo Independent School Districts, Harmony Academy, Premiere Academy and participating employers worked together to implement a virtual career exploration encounter for students via zoom.

Employers and school districts were provided with zoom orientations by WSST with instructions on how to navigate the platform. Zoom meeting links were created for employers who did not have access to engage with the students. Individual Zoom Meeting booths with employers were created allowing the students to rotate and communicate with all participating industry employer zoom booths. The zoom meeting booths also included information about workforce knowledge and skill expectation for the targeted occupations. Employers were able to talk about their industry and what happens in a workday.

Child Care will continue to be an essential service in WSST the lack of child-care is a significant barrier to employment. In order to comply with health and safety regulations from the Centers for Decease Control and Prevention regarding COVID-19, child-care centers were required to have smaller student to teacher ratios causing a demand for trained teacher assistants.
In order to assist with the demand, WSST provided "boot-camps" that included the required CDA trainings and certifications to become a teacher assistant. Out-reach was strategically targeted at WSST unemployment recipients and included an assessment to determine aptitude for the occupations. The boot-camps prepared five groups of participants with four weeks of training and thirty days of work experience to enter a career pathway to the Education Industry.

15/28/2019 https://dshs.texas.gov/tpco/HPSADesignation/

2https://www.ustradenumbers.com/port/port-laredo/

3https://www.tpr.org/news/2020-12-25/port-of-laredo-sees-gains-in-2020-despite-pandemic-disruptions

4https://worldsfinestavocados.com

5https://mexico-now.com/mastronardi-produce-opens-operations-center-in-laredo-texas/

6https://blog.averittexpress.com/news/laredo-distribution-center

7https://www.sun-belle.com/press/releases

8https://www.naturefresh.ca/nature-fresh-farms-expands-operations-into-texas/

9https://www.gulfcorpusa.com/projects/i-35-logistics-center/

10https://www.spartnerships.com/laredo-airport-expansion-plans-underway/

11https://www.cityoflaredo.com/

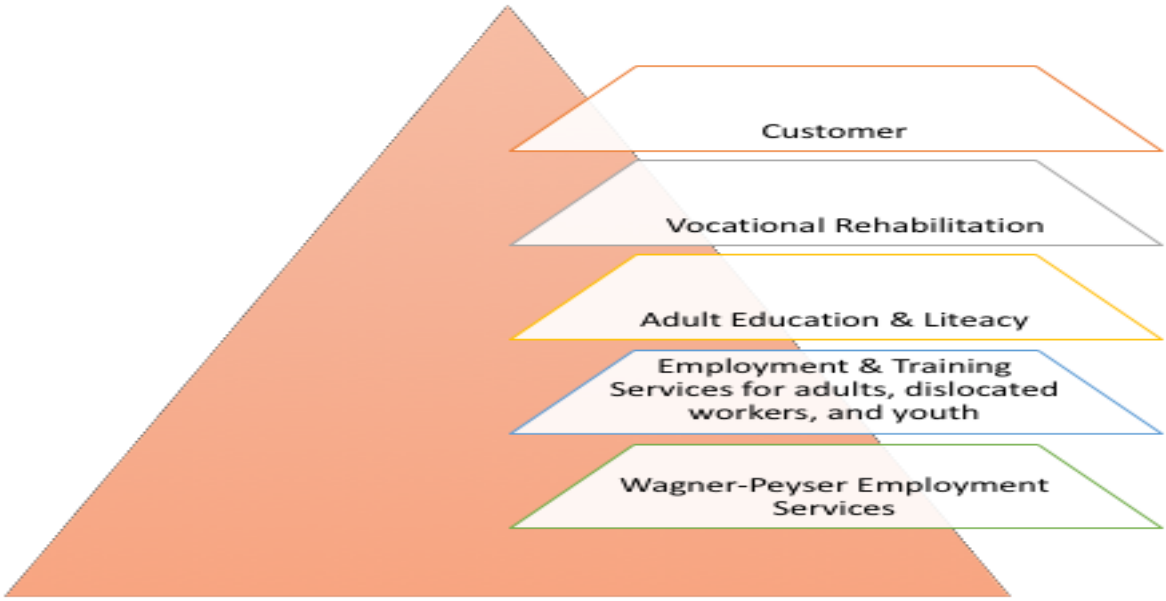
Part 3: Core Programs

A. Workforce Development System

(WIOA §108(b)(2); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(1))
Boards must include a description of the workforce development system in the workforce area that identifies:

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

Workforce Development System Programs and Services: WIOA authorizes and brings together the following core programs of federal investment under the workforce development system to provide services to job seeker and employer customers:



Employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth are provided to the South Texas community by Workforce Solutions for South Texas (WSST) via subcontracted service providers. Core programs under direct oversight of the WSST and its Board of Directors include:

- Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
    - Adult
    - Dislocated Worker
    - Youth (Out-of-School and In-School)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Non-Custodial Parent (TANF NCP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Trade Adjustment Act (TAA)

WSST coordinates service delivery with entities carrying out core programs and other workforce programs, including.

1) Wagner-Peyser Employment Services: WSST operates the program in adherence to the Texas Model, whereby Texas Workforce Commission Employment Services staff fall under direct supervision of the service provider contracted by the Board to operate and manage the Workforce Centers.
2) Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Services: AEL services are provided to the WSST region by Laredo College (LC), under contract with the Texas Workforce Commission. WSST serves in an advisory role to LC and engages in regional planning with AEL partners to align resources and facilitate co-enrollment of customers.
3) Vocational Rehabilitation: WSST is engaged in joint planning activities with the Texas Workforce Solutions Division for Vocational Rehabilitation Services to identify opportunities for coordination of services and to develop joint service strategies that efficiently serve customers with disabilities leveraging partners' collective resources.

4) Partners Operating Additional Workforce Programs: WSST also collaborates with partners operating workforce programs not considered core workforce programs but provide services complementary to core programs. These partners include:
    a. Laredo College
    b. Texas A&M International University
    c. Texas Department of Criminal Justice
    d. Regional Independent School Districts in Zapata, Jim Hogg, and Webb Counties
    e. Texas Health and Human Services Commission
    f. Texas Juvenile Justice Department
    g. United Way of Laredo
    h. Goodwill Industries
    i. Ruthe B. Cowl Rehabilitation
    j. Border Region Behavioral Health Center
    k. Webb County Head Start
    l. Communities in Schools of Laredo
    m. Bethany House of Laredo

Career and Technical Education: WSST actively partners with Career and Technology Education (CATE) programs in the region to promote (1) dual credit opportunities, (2) articulation of credit between training providers, and (3) alignment of Career Pathways across agencies. These efforts are proven to increase completion rates, graduation rates, and overall educational attainment of the region's workforce, addressing significant labor force constraints in the South Texas region. The WSST service area is characterized by low educational attainment rates, and higher than average dropout, illiteracy, and limited English proficiency rates.

To support CATE programs, as well as additional educational programs associated with House Bill 5, WSST:

- Provides labor market information support to improve alignment with secondary and post-secondary programs along defined Career Pathways.
- Serves on education program advisory boards and committees to provide insights concerning current employer skill needs.
- Encourages programs to apply for the Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) that provide articulation and Prior Learning Assessment credit opportunities.
- Offers relevant work experience/internship opportunities for eligible workforce program participants.
- Provides job referral and job development service support for partner programs.

The Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:

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

B. Core Programs—Expand Access, Facilitate Development, and Improve Access
(WIOA §108(b)(3); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(2))
Boards must include a description of how the Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:

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

Expand Access: A key priority of WSST is to improve access to the core programs and other workforce programs directly within its' oversight to residents throughout the service area, regardless of place of residence. The area, however, is challenged by an expansive 3-county geography characterized by a large population center in the City of Laredo, surrounded by many small municipalities, and unincorporated communities. Residents in these smaller communities require both basic and intensive workforce services, but brick and mortar Workforce Centers are not a feasible solution due to the dispersed nature of the population. The region is also home to several population groups with barriers to access that are not geographic, including high incidence of (1) English Second Language (ESL) and (2) disabled customers with unique accommodation and transportation needs.

To address these system access challenges, WSST engages the following strategies:

- Targeted marketing and outreach: To improve awareness of services available through the workforce system, WSST Board staff coordinate with service providers to engage local online, print, and television media outlets to highlight events and services, and to provide informational presentations at partner agencies, conferences, and forums.
- Mobile Center: WSST operates a Mobile Workforce Center unit, equipped with a resource lab, essential office suite and resume software, and Wi-Fi. The mobile unit is scheduled to rotate between smaller communities in the region, not immediately served by a physical Workforce Center, and to provide a presence at special events. Service providers operate the mobile unit, staffing it as needed with Resource Room and specialized program staff. Examples of partner locations served by the mobile unit include Dismas Charities, Health and Human Services, Webb County Larga Vista, US Probation Office, public libraries, Bethany House, Webb County Probation, and the Rio Bravo community center.
- Social Media: WSST engages the community via targeted social media campaigns using Facebook and Twitter. These platforms allow the WSST to engage customers in a non-traditional setting and work beyond physical locations and hours of operation. Messaging services are utilized to communicate directly with customers, providing technical assistance and information regarding additional services.
- Partnerships: WSST works in close coordination with partners serving populations that traditionally have difficulty accessing the workforce system, including Texas Workforce Commission Department Vocational Rehabilitation, Texas Veterans Commission, and parole/probation offices. Examples of partner activities designed to expand access include:

- Laredo Disability Alliance Job Fair: For the past three years, WSST has leveraged resources with regional partners to provide a job fair targeting individuals with disabilities. Partners work collaboratively to outreach employers that actively outreach and accommodate individuals with disabilities. Job fair partners include the Border Region MHMR, City of Laredo, Goodwill Industries, Laredo Independent School District, Laredo Vocational Development Services, Let's Go Professional Staffing, Texas A&M International University, TWC-VRS Division for Blind Services, United Independent School District, U Can Work 2, and VAIL.
- Parole and probation office visits / Mobile Center: WSST provides regularly scheduled services (via the mobile unit or onsite offices and meeting rooms) to regional parole/probation offices to assist customers engaged with the criminal justice system. This service delivery strategy enables WSST to provide services to customers with restrictions that do not allow them to visit Workforce Centers during normal hours of operation, and to reduce participation barriers for customers with a historically low engagement rate with the workforce system. Parole/probation partners view WSST as a reliable and value-adding partner and encourage and/or require customers of their systems to engage WSST programs and services as part of their individual service plans.

Career Pathways and Co-enrollment: WSST leverages multiple strategies (1) to ensure Career Pathway driven programming and (2) to promote co-enrollment opportunities with core and other related workforce programs, including:

1. Adhering to a structured Career Pathways framework in the investment of workforce training and education resources (tied to annual target/demand industry and occupation analysis);
2. Implementing clear co-enrollment policies and practices in core programs directly managed by WSST;
3. Engaging in joint planning with community partners to implement common Career Pathway strategies and coordinate information sharing; and
4. Coordinating with partners operating complementary workforce programs to leverage opportunities for articulation and co-enrollment.

Career Pathways Framework: Each year WSST conducts an intensive labor market study that includes analysis of the latest TWC industry/occupational projections, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, local wisdom, and core program performance, efficacy, and efficiency. The study results in determination of targets for the investment of local workforce resources, including target/demand industries and occupations. WSST utilizes a Career Pathways Framework in analysis and publication of results to ensure customers are provided with the opportunity to engage services that lead to employment in appropriate stages of their chosen Career Pathway, and that long-term career planning focuses on related occupational goals and outcomes.

Co-enrollment Policies and Practices: The WSST Board works collaboratively with their contracted service providers to establish clear policies and procedures that leverage service options available via all core programs. This includes co-enrollment of SNAP and TANF customers into WIOA funded programs, as appropriate, to provide customers access to additional service and training opportunities. Coordinating program and service opportunities for which customers are

eligible enables WSST to maximize the impact that the region's workforce resources have on individuals and communities.

Joint Planning with Community Partners and Coordinating Complementary Workforce Programs: WSST has a history of joint planning with community partners. WSST Board staff regularly engage community partners to develop strategies that align service delivery activities and requirements. WSST will continue to work with partners to develop a common language for discussing Career Pathways, and to design programs and activities that support one another. Joint planning initiatives will target secondary and post-secondary providers, as well as community workforce agencies. Target partners include Laredo College (traditional post-secondary, Adult Education and Learning, and continuing education), regional Independent School Districts (ISD), and community-based literacy programs.

Coordinating Complementary Workforce Programs: WSST works to codify relationships strengthened via joint planning initiatives, where possible. These structured partnerships are characterized by defined referral and coordination procedures that provide customers with seamless service transitions between partner agencies. Emphasis is placed on targeting customers that meet respective agency eligibility requirements and capitalizing on co-enrollment opportunities to provide a broader range of services and to better maximize community leverage resources.

Improve Access to Activities Leading to a Recognized Post-Secondary Credential: During strategic planning, WSST prioritizes strategies and services that articulate into post-secondary credentials. In addition, WSST Board staff actively participate in various advisory groups to ensure the system is informed by the most current industry/employer trends and remains relevant to employer customers.

Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery

A. One-Stop Service Delivery System

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

Boards must include a description of the one-stop delivery system in the workforce area, including explanations of the following:

- How the Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers and how providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers
- How the Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including to remote areas, through the use of technology and other means
- How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including the one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA §188 (related to Non-Discrimination), if applicable, and with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals who have disabilities
- The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners
- A description of how the Board incorporates, coordinates, and integrates the design and management of the delivery of child care services with the delivery of other workforce

employment, training, and educational services *(40 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §809.12)*

Continuous Improvement of Eligible Training Providers: During the WSST's annual analysis of target and demand occupations and industries, Board staff evaluate appropriateness of programs available to ITA customers in the Eligible Training Providers (ETP). A key consideration in this process is not just alignment with the target occupations, but also the effectiveness of the programs in meeting the needs of training customers and employers. Data considered includes:

- Completion rates and training related placement rates for workforce customers
- Overall completion rates
- TWC published performance metrics
- Local wisdom regarding training program alignment with employer needs

For providers under direct contract with WSST, contractual performance standards and service levels are negotiated annually. Contracts also include language prioritizing Board Goals and Objectives. Board staff and contracted provider staff to discuss contractual performance progress and remedies for deficiency.

Facilitating Access: WSST operates a large Workforce Center in the City of Laredo (Webb County) and satellite Workforce Centers in Hebbronville (Jim Hogg County) and Zapata (Zapata County). Centers are strategically located throughout the service area to provide high levels of accessibility to all residents. The WSST service area, however, includes a significant rural population spread across a large geography, presenting challenges in providing consistent access.

To address accessibility challenges and provide non-traditional entry points for customers into the system, WSST has in place the following strategies:

1. Mobile Center: The Mobile Center is utilized to outreach and serve job seekers at locations the WSST service area. The Workforce Mobile Center allows services to be expanded to the employers and the universal and special populations beyond the confines of the three stationary Workforce Centers. The Workforce Mobile Center goes to convenient locations (libraries, schools, community centers, etc.) in the rural areas of all three counties. The Mobile Center responds to businesses that are closing or experiencing a significant reduction in workforce. The Mobile Center assists businesses on site in recruiting and hiring at new or current locations or to assist employers with incumbent worker training, or workshops and training events provided by one of our center partners. In addition, the Workforce Mobile Center is ready to be deployed as soon as possible to assist in any disaster and is fully ADA compliant.
2. Social media: WSST operates targeted social media campaigns via Facebook and Twitter to engage customers in a virtual environment. Via these platforms WSST informs customers about events such as job fairs, career days, etc., job openings, hot jobs, program information, and training opportunities. Customers can also engage Workforce Center staff via messaging to receive technical assistance and career advising information.
3. Partner Locations: WSST partners with area municipalities, libraries, community centers, etc. as collocation or temporary service locations to provide workshops, career advising,

job search, and referral assistance to customers in communities without immediate access to Workforce Centers. Partner locations are also utilized for both Mobile Center locations.

Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and WIOA §188: WSST is committed to adhering to TWC's three core principles in accessibility by:

1. Ensuring that all customers can effectively use workforce products and services;
2. Creating a workspace accessible for individuals with disabilities; and
3. Complying with all federal and state legal requirements.

To ensure (1) all customers can effectively access the workforce system and (2) compliance with ADA and WIOA §188, WSST Board staff conduct annual facility audits that include evaluation of facility layout, signage, and accessibility equipment. In addition, WSST Board staff engage vocational rehabilitation partners to audit Workforce Centers (1) to provide recommendations on how to better accommodate customers and (2) to train staff regarding best practices in serving customers with disabilities.

Additional compliance initiatives undertaken by WSST annually include:

- WSST staff are provided annual training on the basics of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act. TWC training "Disabilities: Access for All — Serving Customers with Disabilities in Texas Workforce Solutions Offices" and/or comparable partner training is required to be completed by all staff.
- WSST Board staff provide continuous training and technical assistance to Workforce Center staff to assist them in understanding and evaluating the needs and employment requirements of unemployed person with disabilities.
- WSST staff works with various community organizations to strengthen the referral and coordination of needed services.
- WSST continuously evaluates and upgrades assistive software, and ensures Workforce Centers are adequately equipped with assistive technology including (but not limited to):

    - Computers - Screen magnification software
    - Screen reading software
    - "Expert Mouse" trackballs
    - Large Print Keyboard
    - Telephones
    - Telephone handset amplifier
    - Video Relay Services
    - Printed Material
    - Large print

To verify the efficacy of WSST strategies to enhance accessibility, the WSST Board's EO Officer and contracted independent monitors perform periodic evaluations to ensure that special populations are provided with equitable access to services. WSST requires all service provider work sites to meet all standards for accessibility of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). WSST Board procurement policy, procedures, and instruments also address special populations and appropriate provisions are included in all resultant contracts.

Roles and Resources of One-Stop Partners and Cooperative Agreements or Contracts:

Table 22 below provides an overview of One-Stop Partners and their role in service delivery. WSST has a Memorandum of Understanding or Contract Agreement with the Table 22 partners.

Table 22: Roles of One-Stop Partners

Partner	Role
WSST (SERCO currently contracted service provider)	Manage and operate Workforce Centers and core programs: WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth; TANF; TANF NCP; SNAP
WSST SERCO currently contracted service provider)	Child Care Services
Texas Veterans Commission	Services to Veterans
TWC State Staff (coordinated management and supervision with WSST)	Wagner Peyser Employment Services
Laredo College	Adult Education contract with TWC / Administrative and fiscal agent
TWC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (located in workforce centers)	Employment Services to individuals with Disabilities
AARP	Training and referral network serving low income individuals 55 years of age and older
Motivation Education and Training (MET)	Employment and Training program for individuals who are ranchers, farm workers and Migrant seasonal workers
Texas Veterans Leadership Program	Resource and referral network connecting returning veterans
WSST (United, Laredo, Zapata and Jim Hogg Independent School Districts, and LC Economic Development Center contracted service providers)	Manage and operate special programs to promote the targeted occupations and career opportunities for employment, and employer expectation that contribute to employer connection.

B. Cooperative Agreements

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

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

disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts.

☐ Include copies of executed cooperative agreements.

WSST will provide MOUs upon request. In addition to the partners listed in Table 22, WSST has established MOUs with the following local service providers that complement the core programs in the workforce centers. These partners include:

a. Laredo College
b. Texas A&M International University
c. Texas Department of Criminal Justice
d. Regional Independent School Districts in Zapata, Jim Hogg, and Webb Counties
e. Texas Health and Human Services Commission
f. Texas Juvenile Justice Department
g. United Way of Laredo
h. Goodwill Industries
i. Ruthe B. Cowl Rehabilitation
j. Border Region Behavioral Health Center
k. Webb County Head Start
l. Communities in Schools of Laredo
m. Bethany House of Laredo
n. Big Brothers and Big Sisters of South Texas
o. Middle Rio Grande Border AHEC

Employer Engagement, Economic Development, and Unemployment Insurance Program Coordination

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

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

- Facilitate engagement of employers in the workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in target occupations and in-demand industry sectors
- Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area
- Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development
- Strengthen links between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs

Facilitate engagement of employers: The WSST Business Services Team is responsible for providing an immediate connection with the business community. This connection allows the local workforce system to stay responsive to the needs of employers and to effectively communicate the capabilities and limitations of the workforce system directly to regional employers.

Emphasis is placed on engagement with targeted industry sectors and employers identified during the annual strategic planning process. This deliberate approach ensures (1) employers are engaged

as both contributors and beneficiaries (customers) in the administration of workforce programs and (2) service opportunities are maximized for customers in Career Pathways and target occupations targeted by WSST, including On-the-Job Training, Work Experience, Subsidized Employment, Apprenticeship, etc. Emphasis is also placed on engaging small employers across industries. WSST is committed to supporting small businesses by strengthening their human resource and labor exchange capabilities to support regional job growth and economic development.

Meeting the needs of businesses: The WSST Board staff work closely with the (service provider managed) Business Services Team and the local Workforce Project Director identify area business needs and develop responsive solutions. Board staff meets with local operations weekly to discuss opportunities and strategies for better system alignment. WSST Board staff's high degree of engagement with the South Texas business community and economic development partners ensures strategies are appropriate, relevant and timely.

Current/projected initiatives in which WSST is engaged to better align to employer needs include:

- ✓ Targeted training to assist in transitioning the unemployed, incumbent and job seeker to fill current job openings based on survey input obtained from employers
- ✓ Policy updates to incorporate new elements and opportunities provided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and CARES Act funds;
- ✓ Analysis of performance of Eligible Training Providers (ETP) to ensure sufficient training opportunities are available to customers and match that trainings mirror labor market demands;
- ✓ Initiatives to increase On-the-Job Training utilization:
    - o Business Services Representatives work closely with targeted industries and program staff to assess the needs for targeted occupation outreach,
    - o Contractor OJT/Customized Training program provides participants with knowledge or skills essential to obtaining and retaining employment - application process gather adequate information prior to contracting for OJT or Customized Training,
    - o A clear outline of funding, contracting requirements, application process, employer suitability, and program specific guidelines are disseminated to all the Workforce Center staff to ensure service flow is seamless;
- ✓ Collaboration with TWC Office of Employer Initiatives, Laredo College, Laredo Development Foundation to promote Skills Development Grant utilization by area employers.
- ✓ Initiatives to increase opportunities for the 3-county area by applying for competitive grants; and
- ✓ Outreach to create opportunities for Apprenticeship and education initiative.

Coordination with economic development: WSST maintains strong partnerships with regional economic development entities throughout the three-county region, and provides critical support through:

- Participation in site location visits to engage and educate prospective employers regarding workforce programs and services available. WSST also provides information about the composition of the regional workforce.

- Customized labor market information and analysis to support economic development initiatives, competitive funding applications, economic impact analysis, employer inquiries, etc.
- Monthly publication of unemployment report and press releases associated with the monthly Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) and Current Employment Statistics (CES) releases from TWC.

In addition, WSST staff are members of and collaborate with numerous regional economic development agencies and serve on numerous economic development committees, panels, and boards. These direct connections and input opportunities ensure the workforce system is highly coordinated with South Texas economic development. A sampling of committees, panels, and boards that WSST participate in, but not limited to, include:

- ✓ Laredo Economic Development Corporation[1]
- ✓ Zapata Chamber of Commerce[2]
- ✓ The P-16 Council for Educational Excellence
- ✓ Laredo Chamber of Commerce[3]
- ✓ Tri-County Economic Development Committee

Strengthening connection with unemployment insurance program: WSST maintains close connections to the unemployment insurance program by (1) providing up to date and informative collateral material in Workforce Centers about the unemployment insurance program, including customer responsibilities and benefits, and (2) training local Workforce Center staff annually on the basic tenets of the unemployment insurance program, as well as limitations on the advice/direction they are free to provide regarding the program.

Workforce Center staff also proactively outreach unemployment insurance claimants early in their benefit cycle via targeted mailings and phone calls to raise awareness of services and programs available. This initial engagement is followed by targeted outreach at key intervals (i.e. 4 weeks, 8 weeks, 16 weeks, and 20 weeks) to minimize the incidence of customers becoming Long-Term unemployed. Each of these engagements is treated as an opportunity to recruit claimants to engage in assessment, and potential workforce program participation. Claimants that have difficulty re-engaging in the local labor market frequently have barriers that can effectively be addressed by WIOA program participation or through other targeted service strategies.

D. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services
(WIOA §108(b)(12); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(11))
A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system.

[1] https://www.laredoedc.org
[2] https://www.zapatachamber.com
[3] http://laredochamber.com/main/
https://www.kgns.tv/content/news/tricounty-414521983.html

WSST is committed to offering workforce services to the community that (1) seamlessly coordinate Wagner Peyser funded employment services with other programs and services offered via the Workforce Centers and (2) remove redundancies in service delivery and avoid duplication of services to customers.

To achieve these objectives, WSST executes the following strategies:

- WSST operates under the Texas Model, whereby Wagner-Peyser funded employment services staff are co-managed by the service provider(s) responsible for management and operation of area Workforce Centers.
- TWC Wagner-Peyser staff are included in all management and staff meetings at the Workforce Centers.
- Staff trainings include, as appropriate, TWC Wagner-Peyser staff.
- Workforce Center staff receive annual training to ensure all staff have information on how to best provide customers with available services and guidance on possible employment and training along Career Pathways. Topics include referrals to Workforce Center programs as well as occupational and basic skills training programs offered in the community and community resources.
- Training topics are reinforced through the Monthly Workforce Program Meetings: Self Sufficiency (TANF, SNAP E&T, NCP), WIOA, Business Services Unit and Career Center Staff Meetings.
- Workforce Center staff participate in NAWDP's recommended vendor training programs including, Youth Worker Certification, Youth Program Certification, Job Developing for individuals with disabilities, Retention, and Leadership Development for management

E. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management
(WIOA §108(b)(21); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(20))
Boards must include a description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

WSST utilizes TWC provided information systems and technology in implementing integrated technology-enabled service delivery strategies, including intake and case management systems for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners. Systems provided by TWC and implemented by WSST are detailed in Table 23 below.

Table 23: WSST Information Systems

System	Description	Customers Impacted
WorkInTexas.com	WorkInTexas.com is a comprehensive online job search resource and matching system developed and maintained by the Texas Workforce Commission. It provides recruiting assistance to Texas employers of all types and sizes, and job search assistance to any individual seeking work in Texas.	Job seekers (includes all virtual only customers), employers
The Workforce	TWIST is an integrated intake, eligibility, case	Job seekers

Information System of Texas (TWIST)	management, and reporting system used for all programs provided through the Workforce Centers. TWIST is a centralized location for demographic data, service information, service plans, counselor notes, and reporting. TWC programs TWIST to interface with additional relevant State of Texas systems including with UI benefits system, Health and Human Services information system, UI tax records, and WorkInTexas.com	(focus on those accessing physical locations), eligible program customers, employers
Child Care Attendance and Automation (CCAA) System	The CCAA system is an automated system that records time and attendance (or absence) of children in child care facilities. Parents and guardians confirm care via by a swipe card and either a telephone or swipe-card Point of Service (POS) device. CCAA is accessible via the Texas Provider Portal (www.workforcesolutionschildcare.com).	Child care customers, child care providers
Workforce Career Center Traffic (WCCT)	WCCT is a check-in system utilized to alert appropriate staff of customers' presence and service needs at the Workforce Center, and to track customer activity, wait time, and additional service details	All customers accessing physical locations

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

A. Economic Development and Entrepreneurial/Microenterprise Activities
(WIOA §108(b)(5); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(4))
B**oards must include an explanation of how the Board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the workforce area and how the Board will promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services.**

WSST staff are actively engaged with regional economic development agencies providing (1) support for site location visits, (2) custom labor market information, (3) monthly unemployment and job growth analyses, and (4) serving in an advisory capacity on committees, panels, and boards (refer to response 4.c Operational Elements for additional details). These engagements inform strategic and service delivery planning with the Workforce Center service provider. WSST leverages these interactions to ensure workforce system service delivery design and resource investments align with economic development priorities and initiatives.

Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services: WSST views supporting entrepreneurship, small businesses development, and microenterprises services as a service delivery priority for the workforce system. Economic trends and characteristics of the WSST region lend themselves to this being an emerging economic development driver. Globalization, ready availability of broadband services, shifts in business models to leveraging outsourced/on-demand talent, and movement away from location-based retail have all created an environment in which people can provide goods and services from anywhere in the world, creating an opportunity for innovation and entrepreneurship by South Texans. The growing diversity of the nation and emergence new cultural characteristics, the prevalence of bilingual communication, and

positioning of Laredo as a key land port for the US provide the region with unique assets on which to capitalize.

To ensure customers have access to entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, the WSST Board has developed a referral network with key partners, including:

- *The Texas A&M International University Small Business Development Center (TAMIU-SBDC)* works with existing and startup businesses providing assistance during every phase of the business life cycle. SBDC staff of counselors, trainers, and researchers provide comprehensive, confidential business counseling services that are at no cost to the client. The TAMIU SBDC also operates a *Small Business Management Certificate Program* that helps participants build essential business skills and knowledge on how to run a successful business.[4]
- The Laredo Development Foundation operates a Loan Assistance Center which is affiliated with SBA's Small Business Development Center program and a 504 Certified Development Corporation.
- *LiftFund* is a nonprofit organization that helps small business owners with limited access to capital. WSST provides referrals for entrepreneurs interested in starting their own business.[5]
- The City of Laredo offers qualified companies a one-time cash award payment through the Project Development Grant, paid after the negotiated performance criteria has been achieved – i.e. number of employees hired above the Laredo MSA Average Wage (annual).
- Azteca Economic Development and Preservation Corporation (Azteca) helps low-income individuals and families by developing job opportunities and bringing capital to new businesses created by low-income individuals in greater Laredo. Azteca assists individuals in preparing all items necessary to start a business. The agency provides small business development and technical assistance for micro entrepreneurs including one-on-on sessions.

B. Rapid Response Activity Coordination
(WIOA §108(b)(8); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(7))

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

The WSST Board's contracted Operator/Manager of Workforce Centers is responsible for coordinating Rapid Response activities, as needed, between the employer, affected workers, Workforce Center Business Services Team, TWC, and other state agencies and additional partners as needed.

Upon receipt of a WARN Notice or otherwise receiving notice of a Mass Layoff, Workforce Center OP/Mgr. Business Services Team contacts the employer to:

[4] http://sbdc.tamiu.edu/
[5] http://laredo.liftfund.com

- ✓ Assess the circumstances of the layoff, to include timing of events and profile of affected workers, and
- ✓ Discuss layoff aversion strategies in consultation with regional economic development partners to ensure all retention strategies are leveraged.

If the layoff cannot be averted, the Workforce Center OP/Mgr. Business Services Team develops a service strategy for the employer and affected workers. The service strategy includes:

- ✓ Profiling affected worker education and experience levels, as well as career advising and support service needs;
- ✓ Identifying companies within the region that are hiring, with the potential to bring on affected workers;
- ✓ Providing an orientation to the programs and services available via local Workforce Centers, to include WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs;
- ✓ Registering affected workers in WorkInTexas.com and providing referrals to matching job postings;
- ✓ Engaging employer and worker representatives, to provide information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and Workforce Center services (including information on the Trade Adjustment Act program), crisis counseling, financial planning assistance and debt management, interview techniques, resume and application preparation, stress and change management and referral to other partner agencies, as needed, and
- ✓ Facilitating targeted workshops to assist in stress management, change management, job search, resume writing, aptitude/interest assessments, etc.; and
- ✓ Program enrollment and training/re-training as necessary.

C. Youth Activities and Services

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

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

WSST offers a full range of workforce investment activities to youth, including the 14 required WIOA elements, via a full-service Workforce Center in the City of Laredo (Webb County) as well as two satellite Workforce Centers in Hebbronville (Jim Hogg County) and Zapata (Zapata County).

The three locations are located strategically and provide access to 90% of the region's residents within a 10-mile radius. WSST also deploys its mobile unit as needed to enhance access to services for area youth, including those residing in rural communities and those served by key regional partners including TDCJ facilities, AEL sites, and agencies serving youth with disabilities (see Operational Elements response #2 for additional details). The mobile unit is staffed, as needed, to provide a full range of WIOA Youth program services.

Table 24 Youth Service Locations

Service Location	Address	County

Laredo Workforce Center	1406 Jacaman Rd. Suite A Laredo, TX 78041 956-794-6500 / 956-726-1475 fax *Business Hours: M-F 8:00AM-5:00PM*	Webb
Hebbronville Satellite	210 North Smith Ave. Hebbronville, TX 78361-2361 361-231-7071 / 361-231-7071 fax *Business Hours: M-F 8:00AM-5:00PM*	Jim Hogg
Zapata Satellite	605 US Hwy 83, Suite B Zapata, TX 78076 956-765-1804 / 956-765-4843 fax *Business Hours: M-F 8:00AM-5:00PM*	Zapata
Mobile Unit	Varied: http://www.southtexasworkforce.org/images/documents/Mobile%20Lab/Oct2016.pdf	All service counties

Partner Youth Workforce Services: WSST maintains strong relationships with partner agencies in the community that provide employment and training services to in-school and out-of-school youth. These partnerships comprise the broader youth workforce system serving the South Texas community, and are coordinated to leverage collective funding for maximum benefit to the community. Key partnerships leveraged to expand service offerings to youth are included in Table 25 below.

Table 25: Key Youth Workforce System Partners

Partner	Service Description	Service Community
Laredo College	Post-secondary education and training, and Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) services.	WSST region
Bethany House	Offers a food pantry which provides assistance to the low income and needy. Other services include clothing, case management, and general advice and support.	WSST region
Communities in Schools of Laredo	Helps at-risk students improve in academics, attendance and/or behavior, encouraging more students to stay in school, graduate and prepare for post-secondary life.	WSST region (collocated in area schools)
Big Brothers and Big Sisters of South Texas	Volunteer mentoring services. **T**he mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Texas is to provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.	WSST region

Youth with Disabilities: WSST works diligently to establish partnerships (1) that provide service options to youth with disabilities and (2) that support these customers with sufficient accommodations for employment, training, and other program activities. The Texas Workforce

Solutions Division for Vocational Rehabilitation is the core partner that assists in serving youth with disabilities. Additional agencies supplement combined services specific to youth with disabilities, including:

- ✓ Border Region Behavioral Health Center (counseling services)
- ✓ El Metro (paratransit)
- ✓ VAIL (independent living)
- ✓ Ruth B Cowl Rehabilitation Center (therapy and counseling services)
- ✓ U Can Work 2 (vocational counseling and job placement services)
- ✓ Let's Go Professional Staffing (vocational counseling and job placement services
- ✓ Big Brothers and Big Sisters of South Texas (mentoring services)
- ✓ City of Laredo Blue Ribbon Committee for People with Disabilities (Advocates for individuals with disabilities by promoting awareness, education and securing resources for their physiological, psychological and social well being; provides guidance to the City of Laredo officials regarding issues affecting people with disabilities.)

WSST will continue to work diligently to strengthen the network of partners and service framework to encourage engage in youth workforce services by individuals with disabilities.

D. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs
(WIOA §108(b)(10); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(9))
Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

WSST is committed to aligning workforce system elements, consistent with the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan Goal 3 by "improving transitions, aligning programs, and ensuring portability and transferability" to improve "access and the ability of all students to complete programs of study, earn credentials, transition to further education, and gain critical employability skills." WSST engages area secondary and postsecondary education institutions and programs using three key strategies to achieve these outcomes:

- Knowledge Sharing/Leveraging Initiatives: Educational institutions in the South Texas region are active in multiple initiatives, associations, and alliances with aligned goals including (1) aligning programs and improved articulation, (2) increasing stackable/portable credentialing opportunities, (3) proliferating dual credit opportunities, and (4) enhancing service delivery efficiency and outcomes. WSST uses its role as a convener of the workforce system to promote knowledge sharing across institutions that fully leverages the broader community's engagement in these initiatives.

  Initiatives in which regional stakeholders are engaged include:

  - Educate Texas: Originally launched in 2004 as the Texas High School Project (THSP), Educate Texas is a public-private alliance that includes the Texas Education Agency, Office of the Governor, Texas Legislature, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, National Instruments, Greater Texas Foundation, and Meadows Foundation. Region One Education Service Center, which includes the South Texas Workforce area, is a member of The Educate Texas Project, part of the Rio

Grande Collective Impact Initiative to improve college readiness, access, and success across the Valley. Achieving excellence in the teaching and learning of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is at the heart of the Educate Texas Project's efforts.

A component of Educate Texas, the Region One Education Service Center houses one of seven funded Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (T-STEM) Centers. T-STEM Centers partner with universities, local education agencies, businesses, and non-profit organizations to provide high quality STEM professional development and instructional materials to STEM Academies as well as all Texas schools to transform teaching and learning methods, improve achievement in STEM education, and ensure all students are college-ready, career-ready, and life-ready.[6]

- North American Advanced Manufacturing Research and Education Initiative: Several regional education partners are members of the North American Advanced Manufacturing Research and Education Initiative (NAAMREI) Consortium, which provides overall guidance to the Rio South Texas project and consists of three regional alliances from the Rio South Texas Region including Webb, Zapata and Jim Hogg:
  - North American Technology & Innovation Alliance;
  - Rio South Texas Manufacturing Alliance; and
  - Region One Education Service Center (ESC) Texas Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (T-STEM) Alliance.
  - The consortium also includes forty-seven private and public partners including economic and workforce agencies, manufacturing association and the education sector.[7]
- South Texas Environmental Education and Research Center (STEER): An educational program of the Department of Family Practice at the Health Science Center sponsors an elective course in Laredo about environmental health issues along the U.S.-Mexico border. STEER provides transforming insight to professionals by providing a compelling, community-based, educational experience that allows them to make the connection between the environment, public health and medicine.[8]
- Excelencia in Education: Works with communities to identify, test and prove the educational tactics, strategies and policies that support greater success for all students. Excelencia in Education links educational research, policy and practice that support Latino academic achievement. WSST has worked with educational partners on strategies to accelerate Latino student success in higher education.[9]
- United Way of Laredo: WSST partners participate with United Way of Laredo in assessing community needs and administer programs to address defined needs. United Way of Laredo, in addition to community assessment and planning, raises funds and

[6] http://www.edtx.org
[7] http://naamrei.org
[8] http://laredo.uthscsa.edu/medicine/steer.asp
[9] http://www.edexcelencia.org

allocates resources, fosters volunteerism, and encourages collaborative efforts to resolve community problems.[10]

- Joint Planning: WSST engages in joint service delivery planning with partners including AEL/ESL providers, secondary and post-secondary institutions to ensure mutually beneficial program design. This collaborative practice helps to reduce waste and duplication of services, minimize the participation burden for customers by eliminating redundancy, and create more seamless transitions between programs for referrals and mutual customers.

- Collaboration and Collective Impact: WSST leverages partnerships and collective impact strategies (1) to enhance the impact the agency's workforce resources have on communities and customers and (2) to implement more comprehensive service strategies by leveraging multiple funding streams to fill service gaps. Examples of collaborative efforts WSST has engaged in, include:

    - Laredo Disability Alliance Job Fair: WSST partners with regional agencies that provide employment and other services to individuals with disabilities to host a job fair. Employers targeted for participation have demonstrated ability to provide appropriate accommodations for employees with disabilities, and numerous support agencies are present to provide related assistance. Job fair partners include Border Region MHMR, City of Laredo, Goodwill Industries, Laredo ISD, Laredo Vocation Development Services, Let's Go Professional Staffing, Texas A&M International University, United Independent School District, U Can Work 2, and VAIL.[11]

    - Mid Rio Grande Border Area Health Education Center (AHEC): AHEC offers Continuing Education Programs and a series of educational programs for health care workers and promotes community-based training by identifying clinical training sites for the trainees. Post-Secondary Education Activities include programs to broaden college student horizon and motivate them to pursue a four-year or higher educational degree. AHEC offers youth programs such as Health Occupations Planning Exposition (HOPE), a college prep incentive training to prepare and offer health care exploration and academic awareness. The AHEC continues to work in collaboration with its partners:

        - to increase the opportunities for entry into health careers
        - improve health status, and impact the quality of life of the region's residents
        - increasing the number of well-trained health care workers servicing Webb, Zapata and Jim Hogg Counties

        AHEC is part of the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio System, which has a Regional Campus located in Laredo, Texas. WSST works with AHEC to expand the number of training and education opportunities provided to the area's residents.[12]

[10] http://www.unitedwaylaredo.org/
[11] http://www.southtexasworkforce.org
[12] http://uthscsa.edu/cstp/areas/MidRGV.aspx

By engaging secondary- and post-secondary education programs and activities via the coordinated and collaborative strategies described above, WSST is better able to (1) integrate unique services available via partners into the broader workforce system, (2) avoid duplication of services and wasted resources, and (3) eliminate redundancies in service delivery for customers.

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

WSST strategically pushes the goal to improve quality initiatives that provide tools and strategies to increase the opportunities for the early learning childcare programs to better prepare children to enter school.

WSST sets an annual goal to increase the number and level of TRS Providers in the workforce area. WSST employs innovative training tactics, all of them linked to the guidelines for the Texas Rising Star Program.

To assist the providers in attaining a higher Star level, WSST provides more than the required clock hours of professional development training. WSST provides training in Caregiver-Child Interactions, linking objective and outcomes to curriculum and how to take child learning outdoors. Providers are continually mentored, encouraged, assisted and guided through the TRS certification process.

The focus of WSST childcare partnerships is specific to ensuring that providers are knowledgeable about the importance of their commitment to quality and why the process of becoming TRS certified is important to the center, and the child's preparation for school.

• Coordinate with employers, economic development, and other industry leaders to increase the awareness and importance of early learning as a workforce and economic development tool

WSST has a history of joint planning with economic development and other community partners. WSST Board staff regularly engages with community partners to develop strategies that align service delivery activities and requirements. WSST will continue to work with partners to develop a common language for discussing the importance of early learning and school readiness and to design programs and activities that support one another. Joint planning initiatives will target secondary and post-secondary providers, economic development, employers and other industry leaders to increase awareness and importance of early learning and school readiness and the shared responsibility of preparing the entire local workforce pipeline.

• Support improved school readiness through higher-quality child care, including Texas Rising Star, and through partnership opportunities such as prekindergarten partnerships

WSST applies a multi-dimensional approach to quality initiatives that also targets relationship-based training for both the teacher and the parent resulting in a shared approach to teaching by using the same strategies and tactics in the classroom and the home. WSST continues to use

strategies from evidenced-based programs such as “FLIP-IT Transforming Challenging Behavior Training and Literacy Program” to create a consistent environment that increases the child’s social-emotional skills, regulates behavior and prepares the child to be successful in kindergarten.

In addition, WSST continues to use strategies and tactics from the Texas School Ready program initiative which provides strategic tools on specific instructional techniques to develop relevant and engaging lessons and activities that resulted in positive effective changes in the child’s classroom experience.

The Texas Early Childhood Assessment Pilot (TECAPP), Kaplan Early Learning Program (Kaplan) and the Childrens Learning Institute - Texas School Ready Program (TSR) in the WSST workforce area project offered tools to provide the family critical assessments about their child’s education and training to support their parenting skills. TECAPP and Kaplan training on assessment tools allowed providers to receive enough professional training to learn how to clearly identify children with high risk factors that indicate possible delays and what teaching strategies may be used to increase the strength rate for the child. Teachers have learned how to assess children to provide very targeted relevant educational training.

WSST’s strategic approach to introduce the teacher, parent and the child to quality initiatives that provide early intervention to prepare the child to enter kindergarten has shown a significant positive impact on school readiness.

Support the needs of the child care industry, which could include assistance with business development or shared services, as well as opportunities to support professional growth and career pathways for early education.

Child Care will continue to be an essential service in WSST the lack of child-care is a significant barrier to employment. In order to comply with health and safety regulations from the Centers for Decease Control and Prevention regarding COVID-19, child-care centers were required to have smaller student to teacher ratios causing a demand for trained teacher assistants.
In order to assist with the demand, WSST provided “boot-camps” that included the required CDA trainings and certifications to become a teacher assistant. Out-reach was strategically targeted at WSST unemployment recipients and included an assessment to determine aptitude for the occupations. The boot-camps prepared five groups of participants with four weeks of training and thirty days of work experience to enter a career pathway to the Education Industry.

F. Transportation and Other Support Services
(WIOA §108(b)(11); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(10))
Boards must include a description of how the Board will provide transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate support services in the workforce area in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities.

WSST assists eligible workforce program customers in removing barriers to program participation, training, and employment through the provision of support services. An overview of categories of support services, including transportation, is provided in Table 26 below.

Table 26 WSST Supportive Services

Category	Support Service
Transportation	✓ Bus fare/pass ✓ Mileage reimbursement ✓ Gas cards ✓ Vehicle maintenance ✓ Insurance payments
Caregiving	✓ Childcare ✓ Dependent care
Health	✓ Eye exams ✓ Physical exams and inoculations
Work related	✓ Work related clothing ✓ Tools and equipment ✓ Health/safety certifications
Interview related	✓ Interview clothing
Emergency assistance	✓ Utilities ✓ Mortgage/rent ✓ Needs related
Miscellaneous	✓ Relocation assistance ✓ Identification Document

Public Transportation: Public transportation in the City of Laredo is provided by El Metro. Bus service is provided to more than 15,000 riders daily to/from 1,300 bus stops, seven days a week. El Metro also provides El Lift Paratransit Service a shared, origin to destination public transportation to people with disabilities that are unable to use El Metro's fixed route buses. Paratransit services are a shared-ride service operated with modern, accessible vehicles. Riders who are unable to access vans using steps may use wheel-chair lifts.

Webb County Community Action Agency provides fixed route bus transportation, as well as elderly and disabled rider transportation to residents of Webb county, both within the City of Laredo and surrounding rural communities.

Public transportation for Jim Hogg County is provided by Rural Economic Assistance League, Inc., while Zapata County is provided service by the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council.[13]

WSST provides bus fare/passes for the services described above to eligible program participants determined to be in need of assistance. The selected public transportation service is determined by residence and destination.

F. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)
(WIOA §108(b)(13); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(12))

[13] ftp://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/ptn/rural_map.pdf

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

WSST engages in joint service delivery planning with WIOA Title I Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) grant recipient Laredo College (LC). WSST and LC are members of an AEL advisory committee that meets monthly.

The goals of the advisory committee and joint planning activities include:

- Positioning Title I and Title II funding and programs as complementary to one another and developing efficient (1) referral processes between LC, WSST, and affiliated service providers and (2) co-enrollment and joint case management strategies.
- Reducing/eliminating redundancies in service delivery, to include assessment, referrals, and service planning.
- Utilizing common Career Pathways in career and education advising between partners, creating continuity in overall community service planning.
- Effectively leveraging funding under the purview of partner agencies, including non-WIOA funding and programs.

WSST will continue to engage in advisory committee and additional joint planning efforts to further coordinate and integrate WIOA Title I and Title II programs/services to enhance the impact of these resources on the South Texas Community.

Review of Local Applications: As a stakeholder in area AEL programming, WSST will participate as needed in the review of applications and proposals associated with AEL services, to include procurement responses to TWC. As a reviewer, WSST will ensure adult education and literacy activities under Title II for the area are consist with local planning. In addition, WSST Board staff will advise applicants to enhance alignment of resources with additional AEL and workforce services, offering technical assistance/training, as well as sharing relevant information as needed to assist applicants.

Part 6: Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Services

A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training

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

Boards must include a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult, dislocated worker and youth employment and training activities in the workforce area.
Boards must also include the list of assessment instruments (tools) used for adult, dislocated worker, and youth.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

- ☐ A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities
- ☐ Assessment instruments (tools) used for Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.

The WSST Board maintains a large full-service Workforce Center in the City of Laredo (Webb County) as well as two satellite Workforce Centers in Hebbronville (Jim Hogg County) and Zapata (Zapata County). The three Workforce Centers are located strategically, and provide access to more than 90% of the region's residents within a 20-mile radius.

All Workforce Centers are equipped to provide the full range of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program services to customers. In addition, WSST operates a Mobile Center that is routinely deployed to rural areas and to agencies serving individuals with barriers to accessing the workforce system (see Operational Elements response #2 for additional details). The Mobile Center is staffed, as needed, to provide WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program services.

Table 27 Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Locations

Service Location	Address	County
Laredo Workforce Center	1406 Jacaman Rd. Suite A Laredo, TX 78041 956-794-6500 / 956-726-1475 fax *Business Hours: M-F 8:00AM-5:00PM*	Webb
Hebbronville Satellite	210 North Smith Ave. Hebbronville, TX 78361-2361 361-231-7071 / 361-231-7071 fax *Business Hours: M-F 8:00AM-5:00PM*	Jim Hogg
Zapata Satellite	605 US Hwy 83, Suite B Zapata, TX 78076 956-765-1804 / 956-765-1799 fax *Business Hours: M-F 8:00AM-5:00PM*	Zapata
Mobile Unit	Varied: http://www.southtexasworkforce.org/images/documents/Mobile%20Lab/Oct2016.pdf	All service counties

In addition to WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, the WSST Board also operates, at times, special initiatives (competitively funded or through special allocations) to expand the services available to Adult and Dislocated Worker customers.

WSST maintains strong partnerships with peer agencies in the community that provide employment and training services to adult and dislocated worker populations. These partnerships comprise the broader workforce system serving the community and are coordinated to leverage collective funding for maximum benefit to the community.

B. Priority to Recipients of Public Assistance and Low-Income Individuals
(20 CFR §679.560(b)(21))
Boards must include the Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, consistent with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the Final Regulations, as well as veterans and foster youth, according to the priority order outlined in the WIOA Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth. Boards must also include a list of any Board-established priority groups, if any.

Minimum Plan Requirements:

The Board policy to ensure priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to the following:

☐ Recipients of public assistance

☐ Other low-income individuals

☐ Individuals who are basic skills deficient

☐ Veterans

☐ Foster youth

☐ List of Board priority groups (if any)

WSST Service Priority for Individualized Career Services and Training Services Policy, dated May 25, 2017 is compliant with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and with §680.600 of the Final Regulations, as well as the TWC Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth requirement that, "individualized career services and training services must be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels; to: public assistance recipients; other low-income adults; and Individuals who are basic skills deficient. Refer to page 62 for Copy of Policy.

Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts

A. Fiscal Agent

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

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

Workforce Solutions for South Texas (South Texas Workforce Development Board) is the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the governor under WIOA §107(d)(12)(B)(i). The Board works with area partners and stakeholders to provide for consistent delivery of associated services throughout the 3-county workforce service area.

B. Sub-Grants and Contracts

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

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

Sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities are awarded by the WSST Board competitively per policies and procedures detailed in the South Texas Workforce Development Board Procurement Manual. The Manual, and included policies and procedures, are compliant with applicable administrative requirements as outlined in the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts (FMGC). An overview of steps required in executing WSST procurements are outlined in Table 28 below.

Table 28 Workforce Solutions for South Texas Procurement Steps

Step	Description

1	Advise WSST Board of Procurement
2	Planning – Establish Timeline, Statement of Work, Criteria and Weights for RFP Drafts
3	RFP ready for issue
4	Public Notice in Newspaper, on Board website, and e-mailed to bidder's list
5	Pre-Proposal Conference – sign-in sheet, document questions
6	Release Questions/Answers – e-mail to pre-proposal attendees, and put on website
7	Courtesy Letter of Intent submitted
8	RFQ for Independent Evaluators, selection and contract, conflict of interest form submitted, and RFP, Q/A and evaluation tool provided
9	Proposals submitted – date and time stamped – checked for responsiveness
10	Send proposals over night to selected Independent Evaluators
11	Evaluation forms submitted and points are aggregated and averaged – evaluator conference call – evaluation phase one completed – Evaluators submit original signed copies and invoice – Evaluators provided Fed-ex number to return proposals
12	Evaluation Phase Two – Questions established based on result of Phase One – same questions and same time asked of each proposer that meets the minimum average score. Conflict of Interest Forms from Board Evaluators submitted. Board committee has 10 points in this phase. Points turned in by each evaluator is aggregated, averaged and added to Phase One average score with top score recommended to Board
13	Recommendation is made to WSST Board for Action.
14	Finalize the Procurement File with all required documentation clearly labeled
15	Pre-award
16	Transition and contract negotiations begin
17	Contract signed by Executive Director and Board President

Part 8: Performance

A. Board Performance Targets

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

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

WSST Board staff are responsible for negotiating performance expectations with TWC annually, including Performance Accountability measures for all core programs. Negotiated performance expectations are included in contracts of relevant contracted service providers. *The following performance measures were set in accordance with WIOA § 116(c):*

- *Adult Employed Q2 Post Exit*
- *Adult Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit*
- *Adult Employed Q4 Post Exit*
- *Adult Credential Rate*
- *Dislocated Worker Employed Q2 Post Exit*
- *Dislocated Worker Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit*
- *Dislocated Worker Employed Q4 Post Exit*
- *Dislocated Worker Credential Rate*

- *Youth Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit*
- *Youth Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit*
- *Youth Credential Rate*

In addition to TWC negotiated performance standards, WSST reserves the right to include local performance measures and service level expectations for contracted service providers. Local measures are intended to ensure that the priorities of the Board, partners, and stakeholders are reflected and emphasized in operation and management of the local workforce system.

Part 9: Training and Services

A. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

A description of the following:

☐ How training services will be provided with the use of ITAs

☐ How contracts for training services will be coordinated (if contracts are to be used)

☐ How the Board will ensure informed customer choice

B. ITA Limitations

(20 CFR §663.420)

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

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) provided to WIOA eligible customers (funded through WIOA Title I) to participate in approved trainings on the TWC Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS). ITA funds can be used for costs associated with tuition, including testing, books, fees, and other training related expenses.

WSST Board Policy 004-2003, Change 3 outlines the process by which eligible customers are provided with ITAs, and includes:

- ✓ Development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that determines the customer (1) is unable to obtain suitable employment without training, (2) is in need of training, (3) has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate, and (4) all testing levels (interest and aptitude) are adequate to ensure success in chosen career field.
- ✓ Customer is informed that selection of training is driven by 'customer choice' and Case Manager will provide advice and consultation to the customer throughout the process.

- ✓ Customer is provided list of target occupations and Eligible Training Providers (ETP) available for training. (Provisions may be made for customer to attend a training outside of local target occupations if relocation is a possibility.)
- ✓ Customer is provided relevant labor market information and ETP performance and cost information.
- ✓ Customer researches ETPs and selects a program, in consultation with Case Manager, to attend. Customers are expected to thoroughly research enrollment, performance outcomes, costs, and prerequisites. Customers are encouraged to visit schools or campuses to fully evaluate environment and transportation needs. Customers are also encouraged to visit relevant employer sites to familiarize themselves with occupational requirements.
- ✓ Customer is required to demonstrate they possess adequate resources to sustain themselves and/or their family during training.
- ✓ Customers are required to apply for additional funding including the Free Application for Federal Student Aide (FAFSA).

WSST does not anticipate utilizing contracts for training services to supplement or replace use of ITAs.

Part 10: Apprenticeship

A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs
Boards must include a description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs in its workforce area to register with the Eligible Training Provider System in order to receive WIOA funding.

Minimum Plan Requirements:
A description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs to do the following:
☐ Register with the Eligible Training Provider System in order to receive WIOA funding

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

According to the Department of Labor, there are no Registered Apprenticeships currently operating in the WSST region.[14] The region job market, however, has characteristics that indicate suitability for Registered Apprenticeship programs including:

- Jobs for which it is difficult to find workers with the right skills
- Positions with high turnover
- Occupations where a highly-skilled workforce is retiring soon
- Challenges helping workers keep pace with industry and technology advances
- Difficulty in attracting new and diverse talent pools

WSST, under the guidance of the Board Employer Initiatives Contract Manager, is working to develop apprenticeship options in the South Texas workforce service area through implementation

[14] https://oa.doleta.gov/new_search.cfm

of ApprenticeshipUSA strategies outlined in Advancing Apprenticeship as a Workforce Strategy: An Assessment and Planning Tool for the Public Workforce System.[15]

The ApprenticeshipUSA model includes the following five steps:

- Step 1: Explore Apprenticeship as a workforce solution
- Step 2: Build Apprenticeship partnerships
- Step 3: Design a high-quality Apprenticeship program
- Step 4: Identify roles and responsibilities
- Step 5: Evaluate performance outcomes

WSST is currently (1) outreaching and engaging area employers in discussions regarding opportunities to establish registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs and (2) convening businesses, education and training institutions, and other community organizations to identify champions and create shared visions for programs. As part of this engagement and outreach phase, WSST is encouraging development of Registered Apprenticeship programs by raising awareness about the many benefits, including:

- Registered Apprenticeship program eligibility in the ETP: Under WIOA, all Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors are automatically eligible to be placed on the ETPS making them eligible to receive federal workforce funding as pre-approved training providers.
- Credentialing and Tax Credits: Registered Apprenticeships result in nationally recognized credentials for apprentices and potential state tax credits for businesses.[16]

As apprenticeship work proceeds in South Texas, WSST will facilitate design and implementation of programs, and participate in evaluation of performance and program modification.

WSST recognizes the value of establishing Registered Apprenticeships in the area for the mutual benefit of trainees and businesses. In addition to initiatives and activities outlined in response #24 of Operational Elements, the Board commits to support TWC's ApprenticeshipTexas effort to realign agency services and promote expansion and implementation of Registered Apprenticeships by:

1. Supporting the classroom training portion through WIOA funding/ITAs.
2. Supporting the OJT component through WIOA funding.
3. Providing supportive services for eligible customers.
4. Working to develop complementary pre-apprenticeship programs.
5. Coordinating with Youth Build and Job Corps to promote and extend apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities.
6. Educating community education partners Texas Education Code, Chapter 133 funding available to educational institutions to support the costs of related classroom instruction in

[15] https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/docs/RA-Planning-Tool.pdf
[16] yhttps://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship/docs/WIOA-RA-Fact-Sheet.pdf

registered apprenticeship training programs (local education agencies act as fiscal agents for registered apprenticeship training programs).

The WSST Board Employer Initiatives Contract Manager will engage resources and expertise from TWC, the US Department of Labor, and other appropriate regional sources as needed to promote establishment and proliferation of Registered Apprenticeships in the region.

Part 11: Public Comment

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

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

Minimum Plan Requirements:

☐ A description of the public comment period process

☐ Any comments that represent disagreement with plan?

☐ Yes

☒ No

The WSST Board ensures the public had the opportunity to provide comment on the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. WSST placed a public notice on February 3, 2021 in the Laredo Morning Times to advise the public of the availability of the WSST Plan and opportunity to comment. The public comment period was set to begin on February 3 and end on February 25, 2021. A user-friendly downloadable copy of the Strategic Plan was made available on the WSST's web site.

In addition, prior to the public comment period, WSST held virtual meetings with local employers and other workforce partners from the 3-county area to solicit input for the WSST Plan, attendees were advised about the public comment period for the plan.

No public comments were received during the Public Comment period. The Chief Elected Officials met virtually to review and approve the Plan on February 24, 2021. WSST Board approved the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan at a meeting held on February 25, 2021.
Proof of Posting in Newspaper

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Public Notice
Strategic Plan 2021-2024 Update

Workforce Solutions for South Texas (WSST) Board hereby announces the Strategic Plan addressing fiscal years 2021-2024 will be available for public comment beginning on February 3 – February 25, 2021. Interested parties may obtain a copy of the proposed plan at www.southtexasworkforce.org or by emailing Bertha Millan at bertha.millan@southtexasworkforce.org WSST Board is responsible for the planning, oversight and implementation of federally funded workforce development programs in Jim Hogg, Webb and Zapata Counties.

Comments regarding the plan may be submitted in writing to the address below, or faxed to (956) 725-2341, or sent via e-mail to: rogelio.trevino@southtexasworkforce.org no later than 12 Noon CST on February 25, 2021.

Workforce Solutions for South Texas
500 E. Mann Rd. Suite B5
Laredo, Texas 78041

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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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Appendix: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements
Local Workforce Development Board Strategic Planning

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) is charged under Texas Government Code §2308.101(5), 2308.302(a), and 2308.304(a)(b)(4), and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) (Public Law 113–128) with recommending the plans of Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) to the governor for consideration for approval. TWIC reviews each Board Plan to ensure that local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide goals and objectives in the system plan, The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023, which can be found at https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/twic/System-Strategic-Plan-Update.pdf.

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

Demonstrating Alignment with Texas' Strategic Plan for the Workforce System
The four sections below list and describe the four system goals from The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2016–FY 2023 (2020 Update) that identify critical, high-priority system issues for the state. **For each goal, briefly describe one significant Board strategy or initiative that fulfills the intent of the goal. Also, please include the corresponding page number(s) within your plan that further details the identified strategy or initiative.**

System Goal 1 and Rationale

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

System Goal 1—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

Board Strategies:

- Expand and improve business-driven workforce development system where employers and job seekers have access to a network of information and services.
- Strengthen and improve service delivery system throughout the workforce development area.

- Facilitate marketing strategies for employer input and develop new and innovative systems for educating South Texans.
- Ensure that local labor market information resources are available electronically.

Board Initiative (pg 26-28):

WSST worked in collaboration with training providers including Laredo College, Texas Southmost College and Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) and participating employers to customize different training courses based on the employer's knowledge and skill expectation and needs. Training courses included Managing Business during COVID-19, Leadership, Quick Books, Disinfecting Procedures, Cybersecurity Risk Management, Customer Service and Social Distancing.

Also, part of the skills development fund activities, WSST provided 65 participants the opportunity to obtain a CDL Driver License with the following training providers: LHCT Training Center, Astudillo Elite Truck Driving School or Laredo College Professional Truck Driving School. As of January 27, 2021, 62 participants have completed and obtained their CDL Certification and Driver License, 33 of the participants have obtained employment with various trucking and transportation industry employers.

System Goal 2 and Rationale

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

System Goal 2—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):

Board Strategies:

- Continue to build on community partnerships to maximize and leverage local resources.
- Create partnerships with independent school districts and post-secondary institutions to develop programs for youth by providing post-secondary career path opportunities and training.
- Establish more work experience opportunities for job seekers
- Establish more job shadowing opportunities for job seekers
- Dropout prevention is a priority.

Board Initiative (pg 26-28):
The South Texas area received Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Skills Development funding and have worked in local partnerships to plan for the need to transition the unemployed to current employment in demand.

To maximize the CARE Act funding, community partnerships were established with the City of Laredo, and Laredo College, and local employers. Collaborative marketing strategies were implemented that were aimed at identifying and helping individuals directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to rejoin the workforce.

Some of the CARE Act funds received by the City of Laredo allowed over 500 individuals that had been laid-off, furloughed or underemployed due to the pandemic to obtain or upgrade knowledge and skills intended to create pathways to regain employment.

WSST received Skills Development funds and assisted 17 employers with COVID-19 training on protocol for their essential workers. In addition, 65 individuals obtained CDL/Truck Driving training with 33 placed to date. The WSST training efforts were coordinated and leveraged with the other appropriated CARES Act training funding.

System Goal 3 and Rationale

Align System Elements
By improving transitions, aligning programs, and ensuring portability and transferability, Texas improves access and the ability of all participants to complete programs of study, earn credentials, transition to further education, and gain critical employability skills. Texas employers are better positioned to find and hire the employees they need through an enhanced education and training pipeline.

System Goal 3—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):
Board Strategies:

- Set clear career pathways that show where targeted and in-demand occupations entry level career path may lead.
- Set priorities of service for specific targeted populations, including job seekers with basic skill deficiencies and employment barriers.
- Provide training and technical assistance to education institutions on the changing needs of job seekers and employers.

Board Initiative (pg 26-28):

As part of the local COVID-19 recovery activities, and through the community partnership established with the City of Laredo, and Laredo College a promotion to increase the skills and knowledge of the local workforce was implemented. The collaborative and leveraged partnerships strategically targeted fast track training initiatives focused on demand industry occupations hired by the Transportation and Warehousing, Health Care and Social Services, and Wholesale Trade industries.

To assist the City of Laredo's program participants that completed training, WSST identified and converse with targeted industry employers to identify those willing to participate in a virtual job fair.

WSST worked to prepare participating job fair employers with zoom orientations that consisted of PowerPoints on how to navigate the platform, and how to chat with job seekers.

Collaborative marketing strategies were implemented that were aimed at identifying and helping individuals directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to rejoin the workforce.

System Goal 4 and Rationale

Improve and Integrate Programs
Accelerate employment and improve efficiencies through shared resources that can be leveraged to create new, relevant, and innovative opportunities that serve the needs of all stakeholders. By addressing high-priority programmatic needs through an integrated strategy, decision-making at the system, partner, and participant levels is improved and system service delivery is enhanced. The changing economic and educational landscapes provide opportunities to share relevant data through appropriate "push" mechanisms in an organized manner to key stakeholders who rely on information generated by system partners.

System Goal 4—Local Board Response

Board response and corresponding plan page number(s):
Board Strategies:

- The One-Stop concept will be utilized to ensure that persons seeking services from the WSST Workforce Centers are readily available without duplication of effort.
- Continue improving the integration of workforce development core and required partner programs and leveraged services with local partners.
- Provide labor market information systems on the Internet through the Resource Rooms at the WSST Workforce Centers.

Board Initiative (page 7):
The WSST Board has worked continuously to integrate core services and incorporate and align resources with required partners into a One-Stop Workforce Center system.

WSST to incorporate a better flow of resources and information, worked with core partners to plan strategies and requirements to procure for adequate workforce center square footage to better accommodate some of the required partners. Collaboration and leveraging of resources for the co-location of core staff in the workforce center has resulted in a workforce system that is integrated and inclusive.

WSST employer survey process was inclusive of all workforce center staff, core partners, education and community partners. The result of the employer surveys and interviews indicated a convergence of factors that contribute to the staffing challenges they are facing when hiring qualified labor, this relevant information is shared with all workforce system partners.

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS
SOUTH TEXAS

DIRECTIVE

Keyword: WIOA
ID/No: 001-2017

DATE: May 25, 2017

TO: Andrea De La Garza, Project Director
Workforce Center Contractor

FROM: Mr. Rogelio Trevino, Executive Director
Workforce Solutions for South Texas

SUBJECT: Service Priority for Individualized Career Services and Training Services

PURPOSE:
To ensure that individualized career services and training services are provided on a priority basis to the population groups stipulated in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) guidelines.

REFERENCE:
Texas Workforce Commission Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth, revised September 26, 2016.

TWC WD Letter 25-15, Applying Priority of Service and Identifying and Documenting Eligible Veterans and Transitioning Service Members, issued October 26, 2015.

TWC WD Letter 43-11, Priority of Service for Eligible Foster Youth, issued November 3, 2011.

ACTION REQUIRED:
Workforce Center Project Director must ensure that appropriate staff is provided with a copy of this policy to ensure implementation and compliance with the requirements set forth in this directive and its policy. Contractor shall amend existing operating procedures and documents, where applicable, to ensure this information is conveyed accordingly. Any procedures hereby requested along with back up documentation to include signatures as to who is being provided with this information must be submitted to the Board Office, attention: Bertha Millan, Workforce Supervisor, before close of business Friday June 2, 2017.

EFFECTIVE DATE:
Immediately

DIRECT INQUIRES:
Contract Management Department, (956)722-3973

Service Priority for Individualized Career Services and Training Services
Effective Date: May 25, 2017

Workforce Solutions for South Texas

POLICY:
Under WIOA priority access to services applies automatically to public assistance recipients, other low-income adults, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, regardless of funding levels.

REFERENCE:
Texas Workforce Commission Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth, revised September 26, 2016.

TWC WD Letter 25-15, Applying Priority of Service and Identifying and Documenting Eligible Veterans and Transitioning Service Members, issued October 26, 2015.

TWC WD Letter 43-11, Priority of Service for Eligible Foster Youth, issued November 3, 2011.

POLICY DESCRIPTION:
Priority for individualized career services and training services must be provided in the following order:

1. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses, as defined in WD Letter 25-15, who ae also recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skill deficient.
2. Foster youth and former foster youth, as defined in WD Letter 43-11, who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.
3. All other individuals who are recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skill deficient.
4. All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses.
5. All other foster youth and former foster youth.
6. All other individuals, including local Board priority groups.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE:

Workforce Center Contractor will determine eligibility for participants seeking individualized career services and training services in accordance to WIOA guidelines. As stipulated in WIOA guidelines, priority of services must be provided in the order described under policy description of this directive.

Workforce Center Contractor is expected to data-enter all required information in TWIST and TWIST counselor notes. Backup documentation for verification must be placed in file.

Service Priority for Individualized Career Services and Training Services
Effective Date: May 25, 2017