

Workforce Solutions South Plains PY 2021-PY 2024 Strategic Plan



Table of Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. Programs and Activities Administered by the Board
 - A. Contracted Performance
 - B. Proposed PY 2021 Measures
- III. The Board’s Vision, Mission and Goals
- IV. Economic and Workforce Analysis
 - A. Economic Conditions
 - B. Targeted Industries
 - C. Occupational Demand
 - D. Targeted Occupations
 - E. Knowledge and Skills Needed to Meet Employment Needs
 - F. The South Plains Population – Workforce Analysis
 - G. Racial/Ethnic Distribution
 - H. Educational Attainment
 - I. Regional Labor Force
 - J. Available Employment, Training and Educational Services
- V. Operational Plan for PY 2021 through PY 2024
- VI. Public Comment

I. Introduction

The regional workforce development system consists of the education, training, guidance and career development programs administered by state and local governmental agencies and public institutions of secondary and postsecondary education in the region. Within this system, the South Plains Workforce Development Board (hereinafter “the Board”) serves as the lead workforce entity in the region responsible for administering State and federal employment and training programs. The Board is directly responsible and accountable to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) for the planning and oversight of all workforce training and services and the evaluation of all workforce development programs funded by the TWC through the Board for the benefit of residents of the 15-county South Plains Workforce Development Area (WDA).

The Board was certified as the Local Workforce Development Board in 1996 to administer workforce development services for the 15-county South Plains WDA Region (hereinafter “Region”) which consists of Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Dickens, Floyd, Garza, Hale, Hockley, King, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Motley, Terry and Yoakum Counties. The Board is comprised of 35 members with diverse interests and abilities who lead and oversee the workforce development system. Pursuant to Texas Government Code §2308.256, Board members are appointed by the local Chief Elected Officials and reflect the ethnic, gender and geographic diversity of the region. At least 51% of the board’s membership must be representative of the private sector. Overall, Board members represent private business; labor; local education and training providers including adult education and institutions of higher education; representatives of local educational agencies; and, representatives of governmental, economic and community development entities, vocational rehabilitation programs, and agencies administering supportive service programs.

The functions of the Board include:

- ✚ Serving as a single point of contact for local businesses to communicate their skill needs and to influence the direction of all work workforce development programs in the workforce development area;
- ✚ Developing a local plan to address the workforce development needs of the workforce development area;
- ✚ Creating local career development centers and identifying service providers;
- ✚ Being responsible and accountable for the management of all workforce development funds available to the board;
- ✚ Reviewing regional plans for workforce education to ensure that the plans address the needs of local businesses and recommending appropriate changes in the delivery of education services;
- ✚ Assuming the functions and responsibilities of local workforce development advisory boards, councils, and committees authorized by federal or state law, including private industry councils, quality workforce planning committees, job service employer committees, and local general vocational program advisory committees;
- ✚ Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the career development centers, state agencies and other contractors providing workforce training and services, and vocational and technical education programs operated by local education agencies and institutions of

higher education to ensure that performance is consistent with state and local goals and objectives;

- ✚ Promoting cooperation and coordination among public organization, community organizations, charitable organizations, religious organizations, and private businesses providing workforce development, in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination principles and safeguards stated in 42 U.S.C. Section 604;
- ✚ Leading efforts to develop career pathways and promote other proven and promising practices including establishment of industry or sector partnerships; and,
- ✚ Developing strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system for employers, and workers and jobseekers.

The complete list of the functions assigned to the local Board by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, Chapter 2, Section 107(d) can be found online at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ128/pdf/PLAW-113publ128.pdf>

Every four years, the Board engages in a strategic planning process to establish the direction and align resources to efficiently manage operations in support of the Board's mission and goals. The Board's goals are broadly aligned with the goals of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) which include increasing access to and opportunities for employment, education, training and support services for individuals with barriers to employment; promoting alignment of workforce investment, education and economic development systems in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system; and, improving the quality of the workforce, increasing economic self-sufficiency, reducing welfare dependency, meeting employer skill requirements, and enhancing the nation's productivity and competitiveness. The Board's strategic plan is also aligned with the Texas Combined State Plan for WIOA for Program Years 2021 to 2024. The Board's plan outlines 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 used to evaluate program effectiveness described in WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A).

II. Programs and Activities Administered by the Board

TWC allocates federal funds to the 28 local boards across the State that are responsible for comprehensive strategic and operational planning, oversight and evaluation of federal and state workforce programs in their local areas. Most funds are allocated through federally mandated formulas. The Board receives approximately \$18 Million in formula funds each year to administer the following programs.

- ✚ Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs;
- ✚ the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program;
- ✚ Trade Adjustment Assistance Act Program;
- ✚ Choices, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training program;

- ✚ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training programs; and,
- ✚ Subsidized Child Care programs through Child Care Services (CCS).

Approximately half of the funds allocated to the Board are dedicated to the provision of subsidized child care services (CCS).

The Board’s WIOA Program Year begins July 1 and ends June 30th of the subsequent year. During Program Year 2019 which began July 1, 2019, the Board received \$22,910,279 Million in formula and discretionary funds to administer employment and training programs as illustrated below. Discretionary funds included a National Emergency Grant received during spring 2020 to provide training and reemployment services to workers dislocated due to the COVID-19 pandemic and two High Demand Job Training Grants received during 2019 and 2020 to train hundreds of students at South Plains College and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center for the high demand, high wage careers of truck driving, nursing, respiratory therapy, and EMS.

FUND	PERCENTAGE	\$ AMOUNT
Child Care	74%	17,030,194.24
Choices Temporary Assistance To Needy Families	5%	1,203,097.58
WIOA – Youth	4%	937,417.20
WIOA – Dislocated Workers	3%	763,104.46
Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA)– Adult	3%	656,369.38
SNAP & E&T	2%	407,871.63
National Emergency Grant	0%	17,181.50
Trade	0%	52,143.98
Other	8%	1,842,899.44
Total	100%	22,910,279.41

The South Plains Board is the steward of all workforce funds allocated to the South Plains Workforce Development Area and is contractually responsible for ensuring efficient & effective use of these resources. The Board contracts with the TWC to provide fiscal and programmatic administration of funded programs in the region. The Board’s contract with TWC includes performance measures and targets that are negotiated annually by the parties, with targets established based on local economic conditions and other factors. The Board consistently meets or exceeds performance targets on the contracted performance measures.

A. Contracted Performance

The Board is contractually bound to meet or exceed performance standards established by the TWC each year. The Board’s contracted performance measures for the current program year

include the four indicators of successful performance listed in Table 1 below. Table 1 lists the performance measure and the Board’s performance as of 12/31/20.

PY 2020 – PY 2021 Board Contracted Performance Measures

Indicators of Success		Performance Rolling Performance Period As of December 2020
	Target	Percent of Current Target
Claimant Reemployment within 10 weeks	N/A	N/A
Number of Employers Receiving Workforce Assistance	N/A	N/A
Choices Full Work Rate – All Family	N/A	N/A
Average Number of Children Served Per Day – Combined	2,473	98.10%

B. Proposed PY 2021 Measures

The performance targets for PY 2020-21 are provided in Table 2. Based on current performance, the Board is confident in its ability to meet or exceed targets for each of the 15 WIOA performance measures by the end of the program year.

PY 2020-21 WIOA Performance Measures

Indicators of Success Q=Quarter; DW-Dislocated Worker		Performance <u>Year to Date</u> <u>Performance Period</u> As of December 2020
	Current Target	Percent of Current Target
Claimant Reemployment within 10 weeks	N/A	N/A
Number of Employers Receiving Workforce Assistance	N/A	N/A
Choices Full Work Rate – All Family	N/A	N/A
Average Number of Children Served Per Day – Combined	2,473	98.10%
Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – C&T Participants	N/A	N/A
Employed/Enrolled Q2 to Q4 Post Exit – C&T Participants	N/A	N/A
Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – Adult	\$6,538.98	123.60%
Credential Rate – Adult	88.75%	108.39%
Employed Q2 Post Exit – Adult	78.53%	96.91%
Employed Q4 Post Exit – Adult	75.00%	106.00%
Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – DW	\$8,164.40	158.81%
Credential Rate – DW	91.48%	103.52%
Employed Q4 Post Exit – DW	88.28%	104.89%
Employed/ Q2 Post Exit – DW	92.90%	88.75%
Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – Youth	80.05%	93.07%
Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit – Youth	82.20%	109.12%

Credential Rate – Youth	72.50%	115.86%
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III. The Board’s Vision, Mission and Goals

The South Plains Regional Workforce Board envisions a future where the region’s workforce is educated, innovative and highly skilled in areas that match the skill requirements of the region’s employers enabling businesses to become highly productive and to compete successfully in local and global markets. The Board’s mission is to meet the needs of the region’s employers for a highly skilled workforce by educating and preparing workers. Successful fulfillment of the mission will result in a better educated workforce, more competitive employers, increased employment opportunities, higher incomes, and a fair rate of return on taxpayer investment. The Board’s core values of individual opportunity, service, responsibility, effectiveness and respect for the dignity of each unique individual serve as the foundation for and guide the work of the Board. Helping people, spending money wisely, being fair in decision-making, and maintaining accountability in the execution of programs and services are guiding principles.

The Board’s strategic plan for the Program Years 2021 to 2024 sets forth the goals and strategies that will serve as the roadmap to guide program operations toward achievement of our mission. Over the next four years, the Board will attain:

- ✚ **increased services to business** to nurture and preserve the region’s economic prosperity;
- ✚ **increased educational opportunities** to increase the skills levels and earning power of the region’s workforce,
- ✚ **increased services to the rural areas** to ensure equity in the provision of services to residents of all 15 counties we serve; and,
- ✚ **increased branding and awareness** to ensure that all those in need of the Board’s services are informed and empowered to access the services they need and to establish and maintain the Board’s influence as strategic leader of the region’s workforce development system.

These overarching goals are undergirded by strategies that are designed to ensure that performance goals are met and that programs and services are responsive to the needs of business, the needs of youth and to the needs of individuals with barriers to employment. Table 3 below briefly summarizes the goals, strategies and activities that the Board has adopted for implementation during PY 2021 through PY 2024. Section V provides the operational plan that describes the programs and services available in the Board area and how the Board’s resources will be allocated to support the strategies adopted for implementation throughout the period of this plan.

Goals Matrix					
Strategy	Objective				
		PY 2021	PY 2022	PY 2023	PY 2024
Goal 1: Increase Employer Services					
1. Expand access to labor market information (LMI) offered online.	Develop the capability to facilitate ‘user friendly’ access to TWC’s and other online LMI resources.	Develop website to facilitate access to LMI and economic data for employers.	Update website with the latest LMI and economic data for employers and stakeholders	Update website with the latest LMI and economic data for employers and stakeholders	Update website with the latest LMI and economic data for employers and stakeholders
		Analyze site statistics monthly, revise and update as needed to increase responsiveness to employer needs.			
2. Collaborate with EDCs to increase employer engagement.	Partner with EDCs to disseminate information regarding funding for workforce training.	Conduct ongoing follow-up. Maintain meaningful and ongoing contact with at least 20 major employers.	Conduct ongoing follow-up. Maintain meaningful and ongoing contact with at least 20 major employers.	Conduct ongoing follow-up. Maintain meaningful and ongoing contact with at least 20 major employers.	Conduct ongoing follow-up. Maintain meaningful and ongoing contact with at least 20 major employers.
		Hold at least 5 meetings annually in partnership with 5 regional EDCs.			
Goal 2: Increase Educational Opportunities					
1. Increase participation in work-based training	a. Increase Adult/DW participation in OJT.	Contract with at least 3 employers to provide OJT. Train at least 10 OJT participants.	Contract with at least 3 employers to provide OJT. Train at least 10 OJT participants.	Contract with at least 3 employers to provide OJT. Train at least 10 OJT participants.	Contract with at least 3 employers to provide OJT. Train at least 10 OJT participants.
	Provide training to contractor staff annually on best practices.				
	b. Increase Adult/DW participation in customized training.	Contract with at least 5 employers to provide training. Train at least 20 incumbent workers.	Contract with at least 5 employers to provide training. Train at least 20 incumbent workers.	Contract with at least 5 employers to provide training. Train at least 20 incumbent workers.	Contract with at least 5 employers to provide training. Train at least 20 incumbent workers.
Provide training to contractor staff annually on best practices.					
		Utilize 3% of WIOA Adult/DW funds for incumbent worker training.	Utilize 3% of WIOA Adult/DW funds for incumbent worker training.	Utilize 3% of WIOA Adult/DW funds for incumbent worker training.	Utilize 3% of WIOA Adult/DW funds for incumbent worker training.
2. Increase career exploration experiences for youth.	Increase the number of youth prepared to enter the workforce after high school.	Collaborate with rural high schools to hold at least 3 rural career fairs; assist high schools to secure funding.	Collaborate with rural high schools to hold at least 3 rural career fairs; assist high schools to	Collaborate with rural high schools to hold at least 3 rural career fairs; assist high	Collaborate with rural high schools to hold at least 3 rural career fairs; assist high

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTH PLAINS 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategy	Objective				
			secure funding.	schools to secure funding.	schools to secure funding.
		Continue funding and sponsorship of South Plains Career Expo.			
		Continue collaboration with EDCs to leverage funds for High Demand Job Training Grant Project to promote CTE program certifications for high school students.			
		Maintain and enhance career roadmaps to increase responsiveness to workforce needs.	Maintain and enhance career roadmaps to increase responsiveness to workforce needs.	Maintain and enhance career roadmaps to increase responsiveness to workforce needs.	Maintain and enhance career roadmaps to increase responsiveness to workforce needs.
Goal 3: Increase Rural Services					
1. Increase access to workforce services for self-employed and sole proprietorships.	a. Increase workforce assistance to self-employed workers.	Maintain website and update to increase responsiveness to needs.	Maintain website and update to increase responsiveness to needs.	Maintain website and update to increase responsiveness to needs.	Maintain website and update to increase responsiveness to needs.
		Increase # of industry-recognized certifications earned by self-employed workers by 5%. Track progress.	Increase # of industry-recognized certifications earned by self-employed workers by 5%. Track progress.	Increase # of industry-recognized certifications earned by self-employed workers by 5%. Track progress.	Increase # of industry-recognized certifications earned by self-employed workers by 5%. Track progress.
	b. Collaborate with SBDC and regional Chambers of Commerce to increase access to entrepreneurship services for entrepreneurs and sole proprietorships.	Maintain relationships. Track outcomes and publish success stories.	Maintain relationships. Track outcomes and publish success stories.	Maintain relationships. Track outcomes and publish success stories.	Maintain relationships. Track outcomes and publish success stories.
2. Increase access to Child Care Services.	a. Automate processes to facilitate access to CCS for rural customers.	Maintain and publicize the online application and online reporting capability.	Maintain and publicize the online application and online reporting capability.	Maintain and publicize the online application and online reporting capability.	Maintain and publicize the online application and online reporting capability.
		Evaluate utilization of automated forms and assess impact on services. Report to Board with recommendations for	Evaluate utilization of automated forms and assess impact on services. Report to Board with recommendations for improvement.	Evaluate utilization of automated forms and assess impact on services. Report to Board with recommendations for	Evaluate utilization of automated forms and assess impact on services. Report to Board with recommendations for

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTH PLAINS 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategy	Objective				
				improvement.	improvement.
3. Facilitate employment opportunities for youth in rural areas.	Identify youth employment needs and increase job development efforts.	Survey youth participants to identify employment needs.	Survey youth participants to identify employment needs.	Survey youth participants to identify employment needs.	Survey youth participants to identify employment needs.
		Increase youth in employment by 10%. Track participation.	Increase youth in employment by 10%. Track participation.	Increase youth in employment by 10%. Track participation.	Increase youth in employment by 10%. Track participation.
Goal 4: Increase Branding and Awareness					
1. Facilitate communications with rural customers.	Increase capability to provide customer service online.	Develop website chat feature to facilitate real-time online communications. Establish baseline and performance standards.	Monitor and evaluate service provision. Revise as needed.	Monitor and evaluate service provision. Revise as needed.	Monitor and evaluate service provision. Revise as needed.
2. Raise awareness of Board’s successful outcomes.	a. Make better use of customer surveys to inform community of successful outcomes.	Conduct quarterly customer satisfaction surveys for all programs. Increase level of satisfaction by at least 5% or as appropriate.	Conduct quarterly customer satisfaction surveys for all programs. Increase level of satisfaction by at least 5% or as appropriate.	Conduct quarterly customer satisfaction surveys for all programs. Increase level of satisfaction by at least 5% or as appropriate.	Conduct quarterly customer satisfaction surveys for all programs. Increase level of satisfaction by at least 5% or as appropriate.
		Publish success stories online to raise awareness of successful outcomes.	Publish success stories online to raise awareness of successful outcomes.	Publish success stories online to raise awareness of successful outcomes.	Publish success stories online to raise awareness of successful outcomes.
	b. Maintain access points in rural areas to facilitate access to workforce services.	Collect and review data to monitor the effectiveness of access points.	Collect and review data to monitor the effectiveness of access points.	Collect and review data to monitor the effectiveness of access points.	Collect and review data to monitor the effectiveness of access points.
		Maintain access points.	Maintain access points.	Maintain access points.	Maintain access points.

IV. Economic and Workforce Analysis

Demographic Profile

The population in the South Plains WDA was 430,602 per American Community Survey data for 2014-2018.

The region has a civilian labor force of 211,580 with a participation rate of 63.3%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in the South Plains WDA, 25.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 32.9% in the nation.

The median household income in the South Plains WDA is \$49,661 and the median house value is \$113,154.

	Percent			Value		
	South Plains WDA	Lubbock, TX MSA	Texas	South Plains WDA	Lubbock, TX MSA	Texas
Demographics						
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	430,602	313,123	27,885,195
Male	50.0%	49.4%	49.7%	215,298	154,529	13,849,775
Female	50.0%	50.6%	50.3%	215,304	158,594	14,035,420
Median Age ²	—	—	—	31.9	31.0	34.4
Under 18 Years	25.0%	24.2%	26.2%	107,520	75,736	7,292,686
18 to 24 Years	14.9%	16.7%	10.0%	64,182	52,372	2,777,150
25 to 34 Years	14.3%	14.6%	14.7%	61,594	45,618	4,094,297
35 to 44 Years	11.6%	11.5%	13.5%	49,972	35,880	3,767,582
45 to 54 Years	10.7%	10.4%	12.6%	46,111	32,692	3,511,040
55 to 64 Years	10.7%	10.4%	11.1%	46,175	32,699	3,104,626
65 to 74 Years	7.1%	6.9%	7.2%	30,595	21,454	2,000,715
75 Years, and Over	5.7%	5.3%	4.8%	24,453	16,672	1,337,099
Race: White	83.2%	81.4%	74.3%	358,331	254,801	20,720,689
Race: Black or African American	6.2%	7.1%	12.1%	26,782	22,280	3,365,783
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.9%	1.1%	0.5%	3,980	3,330	136,061
Race: Asian	1.7%	2.1%	4.7%	7,125	6,635	1,308,257
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	214	190	23,672
Race: Some Other Race	5.1%	5.5%	5.7%	22,095	17,260	1,600,234
Race: Two or More Races	2.8%	2.8%	2.6%	12,075	8,627	730,499
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	41.0%	35.6%	39.2%	176,354	111,526	10,921,556
Population Growth						
Population (Pop Estimates) ⁴	—	—	—	438,104	322,257	28,995,881
Population Annual Average Growth ⁴	0.8%	1.2%	1.6%	3,169	3,602	419,412
People per Square Mile	—	—	—	32.2	119.9	111.0
Economic						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over) ⁵	63.3%	65.0%	64.4%	211,580	159,285	13,728,630
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54) ⁵	80.1%	82.6%	80.4%	126,162	94,083	9,095,705
Armed Forces Labor Force ⁵	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%	236	231	89,701
Veterans, Age 18-64 ⁵	3.9%	4.4%	5.0%	10,578	8,661	862,771
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64 ⁵	79.0%	80.5%	77.8%	8,360	6,971	671,366
Median Household Income ^{2,5}	—	—	—	\$49,661	\$50,125	\$59,570
Per Capita Income ⁵	—	—	—	\$25,480	\$26,907	\$30,143
Mean Commute Time (minutes) ⁵	—	—	—	17.6	17.3	26.4
Commute via Public Transportation ⁵	0.7%	0.9%	1.4%	1,472	1,319	184,848
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64						

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTH PLAINS 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

	Percent			Value		
	South Plains WDA	Lubbock, TX MSA	Texas	South Plains WDA	Lubbock, TX MSA	Texas
No High School Diploma	16.0%	12.7%	15.7%	32,562	18,595	2,274,547
High School Graduate	28.1%	26.9%	24.7%	57,378	39,503	3,571,759
Some College, No Degree	23.7%	24.6%	22.1%	48,374	36,130	3,193,349
Associate's Degree	6.9%	6.8%	7.5%	13,988	10,012	1,088,717
Bachelor's Degree	16.5%	18.6%	20.0%	33,672	27,353	2,894,532
Postgraduate Degree	8.8%	10.4%	10.0%	17,878	15,296	1,454,641
Housing						
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	178,935	130,854	10,769,900
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) ²	—	—	—	\$113,154	\$128,002	\$161,700
Homeowner Vacancy	1.7%	1.5%	1.6%	1,569	1,015	95,712
Rental Vacancy	8.8%	9.0%	7.7%	6,331	5,251	308,747
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	41.1%	44.3%	38.1%	63,839	51,493	3,635,275
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units) ⁵	5.6%	5.6%	5.4%	8,625	6,505	512,772
Social						
Poverty Level (of all people) ⁵	18.5%	19.0%	15.5%	76,120	57,007	4,213,938
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	13.3%	12.7%	12.2%	20,636	14,799	1,167,725
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%	5,641	3,871	405,822
Disconnected Youth ^{3,5}	2.2%	1.9%	2.9%	618	426	46,016
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children) ⁵	38.6%	40.1%	34.6%	38,703	28,292	2,402,953
Uninsured	15.5%	13.7%	17.4%	65,288	42,412	4,764,897
With a Disability, Age 18-64 ⁵	11.8%	12.0%	9.6%	30,704	23,578	1,618,704
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size ⁵	46.3%	48.0%	44.3%	14,208	11,308	717,826
Foreign Born	7.7%	5.9%	17.0%	32,954	18,486	4,736,692
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	7.3%	5.3%	14.0%	29,357	15,360	3,617,887

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

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

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

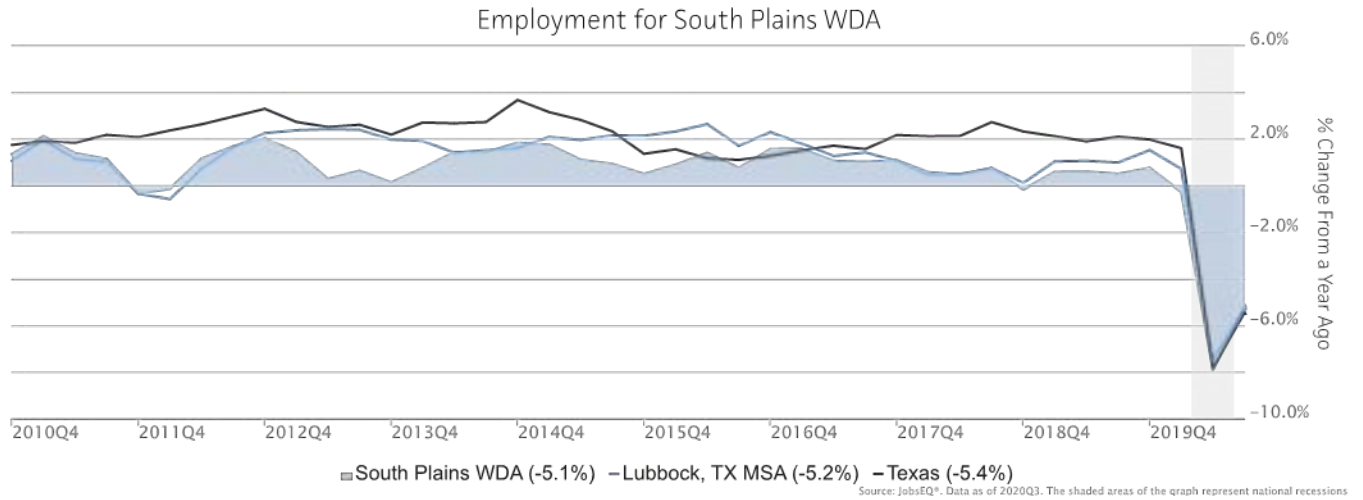
3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19 year olds who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.

4. Census 2019, annual average growth rate since 2009

5. See Rio Arriba errata note in the Data Dictionary.

A. Employment Trends

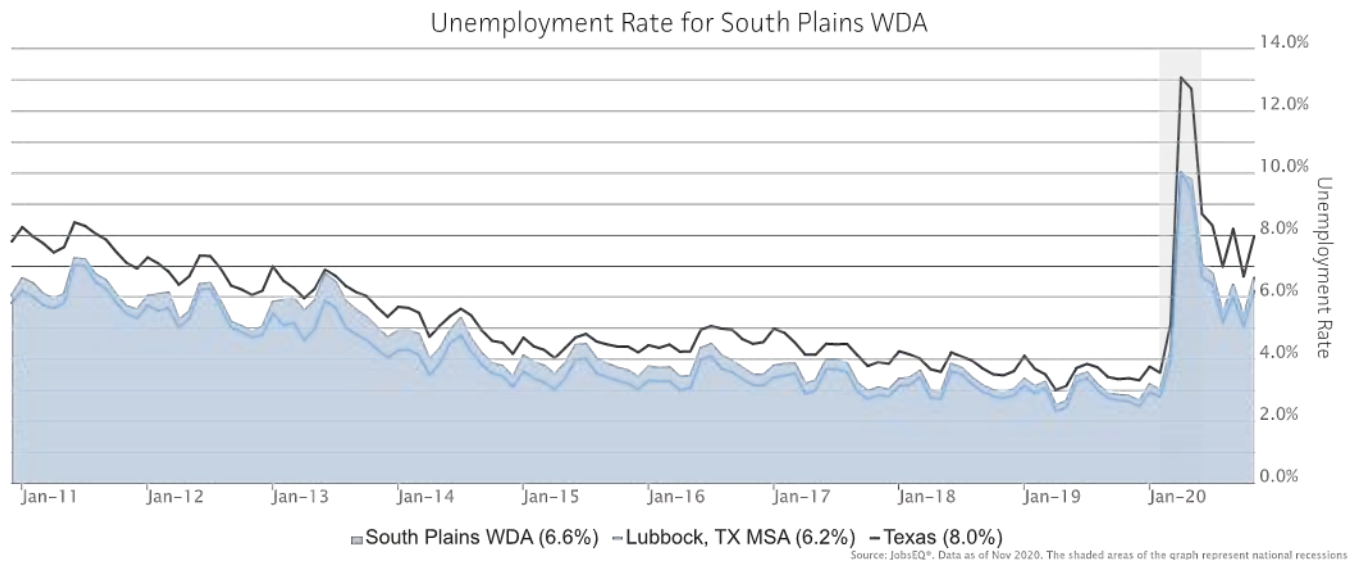
As of 2020Q3, total employment for the South Plains WDA was 195,956 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2020Q3, employment declined 5.1% in the region.



Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2020Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q3.

B. Unemployment Rate

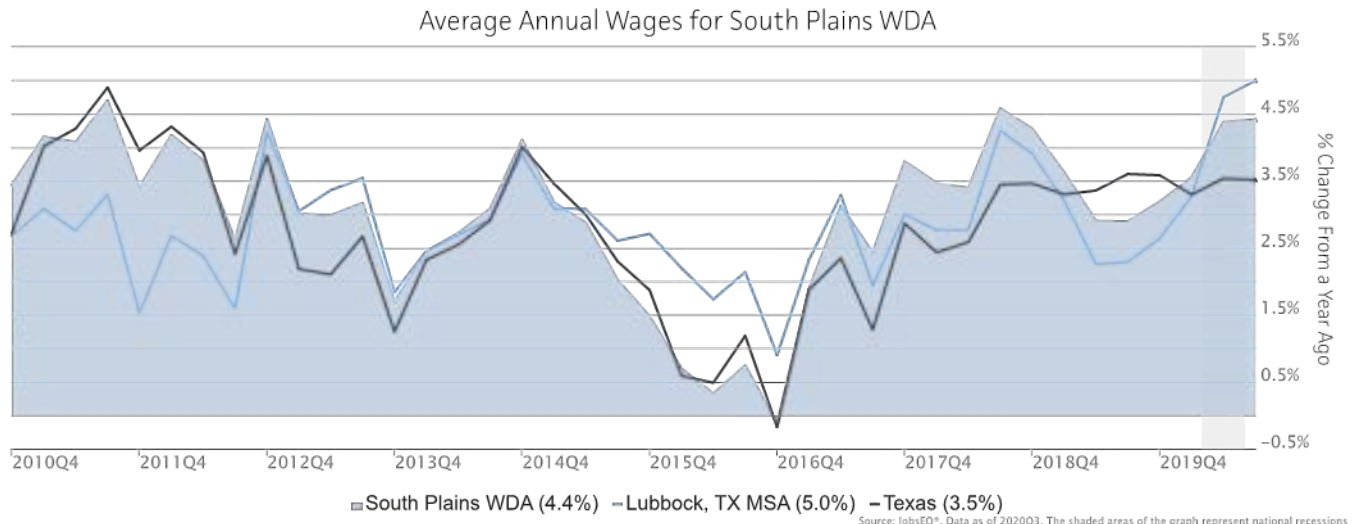
The unemployment rate for the South Plains WDA was 6.6% as of November 2020. The regional unemployment rate was higher than the national rate of 6.4%. One year earlier, in November 2019, the unemployment rate in the South Plains WDA was 2.8%.



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

C. Wage Trends

The average worker in the South Plains WDA earned annual wages of \$46,861 as of 2020Q3. Average annual wages per worker increased 4.4% in the region over the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$60,042 in the nation as of 2020Q3.



Annual average wages per worker data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2020Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q3.

D. Cost of Living Index

The Cost of Living Index estimates the relative price levels for consumer goods and services. When applied to wages and salaries, the result is a measure of relative purchasing power. The cost of living is 9.3% lower in South Plains WDA than the U.S. average.

Cost of Living Information

	Annual Average Salary	Cost of Living Index (Base US)	US Purchasing Power
South Plains WDA	\$46,861	90.7	\$51,663
Lubbock, TX MSA	\$46,298	92.9	\$49,836
Texas	\$59,458	94.6	\$62,828
USA	\$60,042	100.0	\$60,042

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

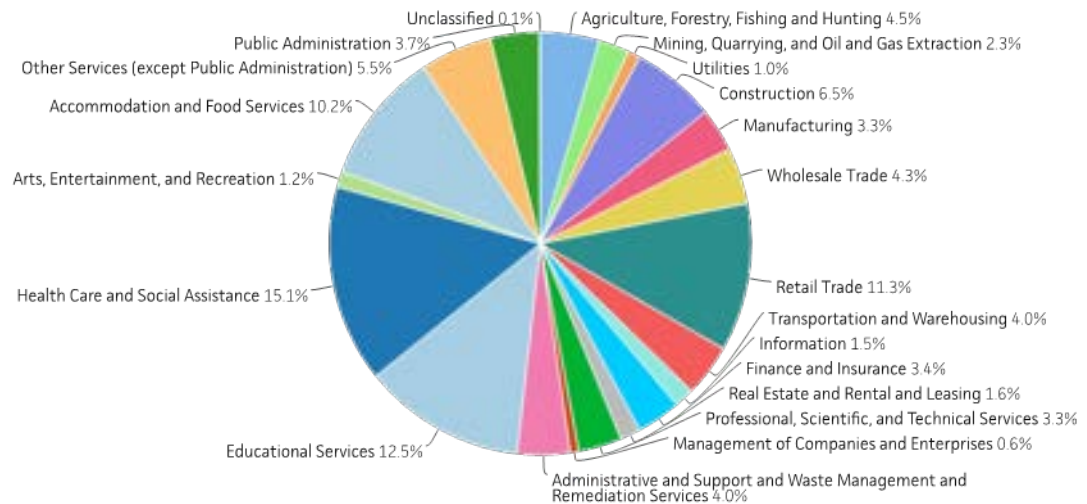
Data as of 2020Q3

Cost of Living per C2ER, data as of 2020q3, imputed by Chmura where necessary.

E. Industry Snapshot

The largest sector in the South Plains WDA is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 29,599 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Educational Services (24,410 workers) and Retail Trade (22,167). High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (LQ = 5.85), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (3.32), and Utilities (1.83).

Total Workers for South Plains WDA by Industry



Source: JobsEQ*. Data as of 2020Q3

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2020Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q3.

Sectors in the South Plains WDA with the highest average wages per worker are Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$99,938), Utilities (\$81,338), and Management of Companies and Enterprises (\$71,848). Regional sectors with the best job growth (or most moderate job losses) over the last 1 year are Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (+61 jobs), Utilities (+33), and Public Administration (+1).

Over the next 5 years, employment in the South Plains WDA is projected to expand by 3,864 jobs. The fastest growing sector in the region is expected to be Health Care and Social Assistance with a +1.4% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Health Care and Social Assistance (+2,059 jobs), Accommodation and Food Services (+777), and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (+315).

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTH PLAINS 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

NAICS	Industry	Empl	Current		1-Year History		Total Demand	5-Year Forecast			Ann % Growth
			Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Empl Change	Ann %		Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	29,599	\$52,191	1.02	-102	-0.3%	16,428	7,065	7,304	2,059	1.4%
61	Educational Services	24,410	\$52,666	1.51	-390	-1.6%	11,430	5,435	5,864	131	0.1%
44	Retail Trade	22,167	\$31,680	1.10	-578	-2.5%	14,457	6,498	8,210	-251	-0.2%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	19,911	\$18,040	1.26	-1,798	-8.3%	17,152	7,247	9,127	777	0.8%
23	Construction	12,728	\$52,430	1.11	-42	-0.3%	6,530	2,255	4,034	241	0.4%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	10,799	\$28,863	1.26	-267	-2.4%	6,516	2,837	3,387	291	0.5%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	8,887	\$52,965	3.32	-257	-2.8%	4,348	2,007	2,706	-365	-0.8%
42	Wholesale Trade	8,467	\$64,423	1.13	-219	-2.5%	4,353	1,665	2,759	-71	-0.2%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	7,896	\$31,535	0.64	-397	-4.8%	4,892	1,955	2,666	271	0.7%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	7,832	\$51,067	0.84	-211	-2.6%	4,257	1,778	2,406	74	0.2%
92	Public Administration	7,314	\$53,627	0.76	1	0.0%	3,388	1,421	1,934	33	0.1%
52	Finance and Insurance	6,653	\$70,363	0.82	-48	-0.7%	3,156	1,176	1,931	49	0.1%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	6,540	\$56,804	0.48	61	0.9%	3,081	1,054	1,784	243	0.7%
31	Manufacturing	6,532	\$48,470	0.40	-77	-1.2%	3,284	1,245	2,132	-92	-0.3%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	4,544	\$99,938	5.85	-1,049	-18.8%	2,704	777	1,612	315	1.4%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,051	\$48,114	0.89	-29	-1.0%	1,549	702	840	7	0.0%
51	Information	2,992	\$70,119	0.77	-206	-6.4%	1,410	518	918	-25	-0.2%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,360	\$19,545	0.70	-488	-17.1%	1,865	764	944	157	1.3%
22	Utilities	1,901	\$81,338	1.83	33	1.8%	708	300	529	-121	-1.3%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,267	\$71,848	0.42	-233	-15.5%	623	214	365	43	0.7%
99	Unclassified	109	\$37,073	0.54	-47	-30.3%	64	26	36	2	0.4%
Total - All Industries		195,956	\$46,861	1.00	-6,345	-3.1%	111,493	46,001	61,628	3,864	0.4%

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and imputed where necessary. Data are updated through 2020Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q3. Forecast employment growth uses national projections adapted for regional growth patterns.

F. Occupation Snapshot

The largest major occupation group in the South Plains WDA is Office and Administrative Support Occupations, employing 25,086 workers. The next-largest occupation groups in the region are Sales and Related Occupations (19,524 workers) and Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (19,517). High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupation groups in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The major groups with the largest LQs in the region are Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations (LQ = 3.00), Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (1.28), and Educational Instruction and Library Occupations (1.26).

Occupation groups in the South Plains WDA with the highest average wages per worker are Management Occupations (\$95,400), Legal Occupations (\$93,300), and Architecture and Engineering Occupations (\$81,400). The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 1.6% among Legal Occupations to 11.1% among Personal Care and Service Occupations.

Over the next 5 years, the fastest growing occupation group in the South Plains WDA is expected to be Healthcare Support Occupations with a +2.0% year-over-year rate of growth. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (+852 jobs) and Healthcare Support Occupations (+835). Over the same period, the highest separation demand (occupation demand due to retirements and workers moving from one occupation to another) is expected in Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (17,492 jobs) and Office and Administrative Support Occupations (14,282).

South Plains WDA, 2020Q3¹

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Mean Ann Wages ²	Current			1-Year History			5-Year Forecast				
				LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ³	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	25,086	\$36,300	1.00	1,052	4.1%	838	-788	-3.0%	13,780	6,041	8,241	-502	-0.4%
41-0000	Sales and Related	19,524	\$38,400	1.03	1,069	5.3%	1,451	-739	-3.6%	13,545	5,384	8,291	-131	-0.1%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	19,517	\$22,200	1.28	2,178	10.1%	1,291	-1,658	-7.8%	18,344	7,181	10,311	852	0.9%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	15,671	\$34,000	0.95	1,094	6.6%	1,092	-526	-3.3%	10,279	3,632	6,369	278	0.4%
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	13,886	\$48,700	1.26	954	6.5%	222	-299	-2.1%	6,351	2,812	3,368	170	0.2%
11-0000	Management	13,384	\$95,400	1.04	288	2.1%	469	-296	-2.2%	5,851	2,195	3,587	69	0.1%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	12,178	\$78,200	1.07	198	1.6%	1,069	-58	-0.5%	4,203	1,662	1,950	590	1.0%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	10,810	\$42,300	1.18	941	8.3%	183	-616	-5.4%	6,770	1,755	4,614	401	0.7%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	8,580	\$45,600	1.15	350	4.0%	495	-166	-1.9%	4,425	1,357	2,920	148	0.3%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	8,137	\$26,200	0.93	286	3.5%	401	86	1.1%	6,267	2,578	2,855	835	2.0%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	7,804	\$66,000	0.71	196	2.5%	287	-65	-0.8%	3,965	1,089	2,681	196	0.5%
51-0000	Production	6,858	\$36,100	0.60	417	5.6%	249	-354	-4.9%	3,868	1,349	2,608	-89	-0.3%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	6,497	\$25,600	1.00	410	6.0%	274	-202	-3.0%	4,578	1,869	2,491	218	0.7%
39-0000	Personal Care and	4,613	\$26,600	0.89	571	11.1%	110	-337	-6.8%	3,837	1,620	2,016	202	0.9%

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTH PLAINS 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

South Plains WDA, 2020Q3¹

SOC	Occupation	Empl	Mean Ann Wages ²	Current			1-Year History			5-Year Forecast				
				LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Online Job Ads ³	Empl Change	Ann %	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
	Service													
33-0000	Protective Service	4,516	\$45,300	1.06	102	2.3%	100	-106	-2.3%	2,263	949	1,308	5	0.0%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	3,922	\$27,600	3.00	345	8.0%	15	-71	-1.8%	2,969	757	2,329	-117	-0.6%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	3,674	\$67,700	0.61	85	2.3%	242	16	0.4%	1,559	320	1,086	153	0.8%
21-0000	Community and Social Service	3,368	\$44,400	0.98	66	1.9%	207	2	0.1%	2,157	654	1,264	239	1.4%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	2,850	\$51,200	0.82	200	6.7%	119	-104	-3.5%	1,677	581	1,030	66	0.5%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	2,205	\$81,400	0.65	59	2.6%	86	-44	-2.0%	905	262	620	23	0.2%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	1,613	\$61,700	0.92	50	3.0%	66	-17	-1.0%	800	163	600	37	0.5%
23-0000	Legal	1,262	\$93,300	0.76	20	1.6%	16	-3	-0.3%	466	164	265	37	0.6%
	Total - All Occupations	195,956	\$45,400	1.00	10,933	5.4%	9,279	-6,345	-3.1%	118,944	44,373	70,805	3,766	0.4%

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2020Q3 unless noted otherwise

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

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

2. Wage data are as of 2019 and represent the average for all Covered Employment

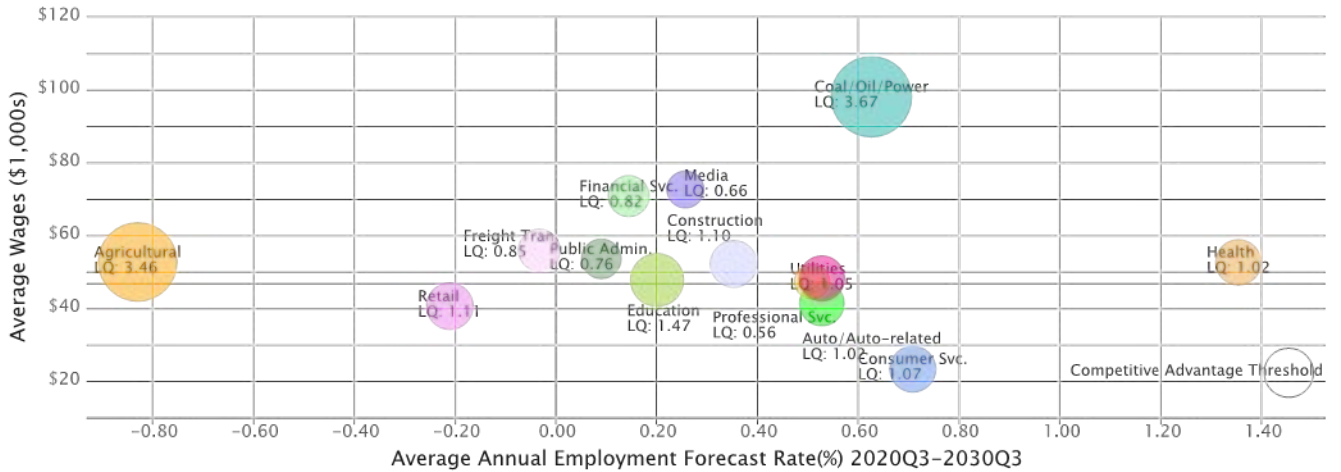
3. Data represent found online ads active within the last thirty days in the selected region; data represents a sampling rather than the complete universe of postings. Ads lacking zip code information but designating a place (city, town, etc.) may be assigned to the zip code with greatest employment in that place for queries in this analytic. Due to alternative county-assignment algorithms, ad counts in this analytic may not match that shown in RTI (nor in the popup window ad list).

Occupation employment data are estimated via industry employment data and the estimated industry/occupation mix. Industry employment data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and currently updated through 2020Q2, imputed where necessary with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q3. Wages by occupation are as of 2019 provided by the BLS and imputed where necessary. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

G. Industry Clusters

A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in the South Plains WDA with the highest relative concentration is Coal/Oil/Power with a location quotient of 3.67. This cluster employs 6,206 workers in the region with an average wage of \$98,114. Employment in the Coal/Oil/Power cluster is projected to expand in the region about 0.6% per year over the next ten years.

Industry Clusters for South Plains WDA as of 2020Q3



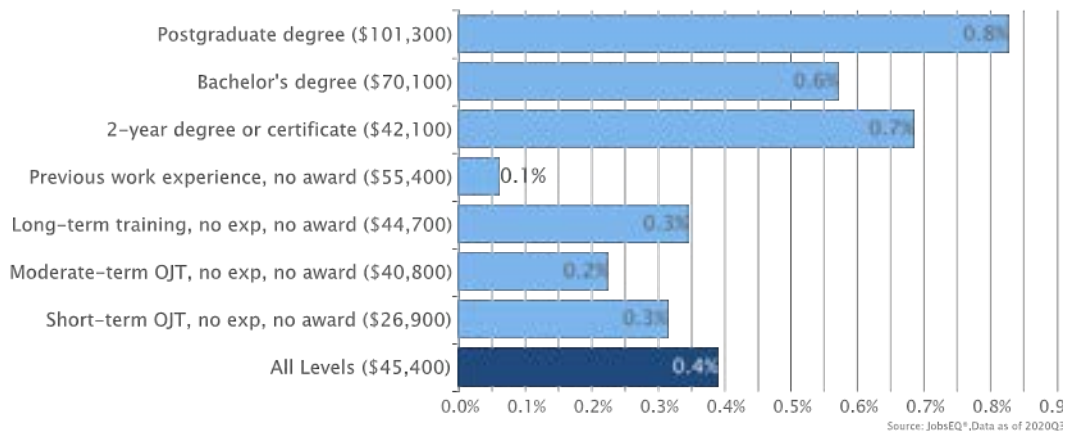
Source: JobsEQ®, Data as of 2020Q3

Location quotient and average wage data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, imputed where necessary, and updated through 2020Q2 with preliminary estimates updated to 2020Q3. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

H. Education Levels

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in the South Plains WDA is projected to grow 0.4% over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 0.8% per year, those requiring a bachelor’s degree are forecast to grow 0.6% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 0.7% per year.

Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Training Required for South Plains WDA



Employment by occupation data are estimates are as of 2020Q3. Education levels of occupations are based on BLS assignments. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

I. Gross Domestic Product

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. In 2019, nominal GDP in the South Plains WDA expanded 3.1%. This follows growth of 7.7% in 2018. As of 2019, total GDP in the South Plains WDA was \$20,578,218,000.



Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2019.







Of the sectors in the South Plains WDA, Health Care and Social Assistance contributed the largest portion of GDP in 2019, \$2,330,802,000. The next-largest contributions came from Educational Services (\$2,143,211,000); Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$2,112,946,000); and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (\$1,707,309,000).



Gross Domestic Product data are provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, imputed by Chmura where necessary, updated through 2019.

J. Targeted Industries

The Board's Labor Market Information (LMI) Advisory Committee guides the selection of targeted industries and establishes the criteria for targeting. The Board's workforce investments fund training for the key occupations that support the industries targeted by the Board. Industries selected for targeting meet the following criteria:

-  Industries are projected to grow at a rate of over 10% at both the 3-digit and 4-digit industry levels.
-  Industries have a high Location Quotient.
-  Industries are projected to offer the greatest number of job openings due to growth and replacement need.
-  Industry represents a significant share of regional employment.
-  Industry is an emerging industry.
-  Local wisdom identified a local need based on regional economic conditions.

Based on a review of labor market information and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Board targeted the following industries for WIOA expenditures for PY 2021.

Industry Title	Annual Average Employment 2018	Annual Average Employment 2028	Number Change 2018-2028	Percent Change 2018-2028
Total, All Industries	205,591	222,302	16,711	8.1
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	17,348	21,679	4,331	25.0
Offices of Physicians	3,933	5,081	1,148	29.2
Oil and Gas Extraction	1,108	1,707	599	54.1
Building Equipment Contractors	3,388	3,933	545	16.1
Outpatient Care Centers	746	1,245	499	66.9
Nonresidential Building Construction	1,357	1,850	493	36.3
Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	1,532	1,955	423	27.6
Individual and Family Services	1,036	1,440	404	39.0
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,438	1,801	363	25.2
Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	657	911	254	38.7
Traveler Accommodation	1,460	1,705	245	16.8
Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors	1,077	1,322	245	22.7
Clothing Stores	1,492	1,714	222	14.9
Computer Systems Design and Related Services	719	941	222	30.9
Child Day Care Services	1,169	1,384	215	18.4
Health and Personal Care Stores	1,190	1,397	207	17.4
Offices of Other Health Practitioners	894	1,074	180	20.1
Office Administrative Services	540	712	172	31.9
Offices of Dentists	988	1,157	169	17.1
Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	861	1,011	150	17.4
Residential Building Construction	648	786	138	21.3

K. Occupational Demand

Occupations that currently have or are projected to have a number of open positions (including positions that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) great enough to have a significant impact on the state, regional, or local economy are identified as in-demand occupations in the South Plains WDA. A list of the occupations in demand in the Board area is shown below.

In Demand Occupations	5-Year Forecast				
	Occupation	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth
Fast Food and Counter Workers	7,619	3,294	3,880	445	1.2%
Waiters and Waitresses	3,084	1,079	1,924	81	0.5%
Personal Care Aides	2,628	1,182	1,038	408	2.7%
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,019	898	1,045	76	0.5%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,926	600	1,254	71	0.5%
Cooks, Restaurant	1,526	494	820	212	2.4%
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,321	364	903	54	0.7%
General and Operations Managers	1,317	297	933	88	0.6%
Registered Nurses	1,311	595	553	163	0.8%
Construction Laborers	1,184	335	793	56	0.6%
Nursing Assistants	1,062	478	514	70	0.8%
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	1,002	293	636	73	1.0%
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	921	315	558	49	0.5%
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	844	354	423	68	1.0%
Medical Assistants	775	235	429	111	1.9%
Home Health Aides	760	298	321	141	2.7%
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	531	210	259	62	1.0%
Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	419	65	266	88	2.0%
Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	410	75	279	56	2.2%
Medical and Health Services Managers	348	82	179	87	2.9%
Social and Human Service Assistants	348	101	199	48	2.0%
Health Specialties Teachers,	322	118	147	56	1.8%

Postsecondary					
Financial Managers	304	73	182	49	1.6%
Nurse Practitioners	158	34	58	65	4.3%
Total - All Occupations	118,944	44,373	70,805	3,766	0.4%

L. Targeted Occupations

The Labor Market (LMI) Advisory Committee also establishes criteria for targeting key occupations that support the targeted industries. The Board funds formal training to prepare individuals to work in these occupations through Individual Training Accounts that assist with the cost of tuition, fees, books, and other training-related costs. Occupations selected for targeting meet the following criteria:

- ✚ The occupation is a key occupation that supports at least one of the targeted industries.
- ✚ The entry-level wage is greater than the Board’s Self-Sufficiency Wage (SSW) Standard.
- ✚ The occupation will add more than 100 jobs between 2018 and 2028.
- ✚ The occupation will grow at a rate of 10% or more between 2018 and 2028.
- ✚ The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that formal training is needed to enter the occupation.
- ✚ Local wisdom establishes a need for training funds to address skills gaps based on:
 - ✓ Employer Survey responses establish priority.
 - ✓ Occupation is an emerging occupation.

Based on a review of labor market information and the recommendations of the (LMI) Advisory Committee, the Board targeted the following occupations for WIOA expenditures for 2021.

PY 2021 South Plains Targeted Occupations

Target Occupation Job Title (Name)	Annual Average Employment 2018	Annual Average Employment 2028	Number Change 2018- 2028	% Change 2018- 2028	2019 Mean Annual Wage	Total Annual Openings	Typical Education Needed for Entry into Occupation
Software Developers, Applications	264	415	151	57.2	\$74,087	39	Bachelor's degree
Office Clerks, General	5,162	5,301	139	2.7	\$36,244	640	High school diploma or equivalent
Dental Assistants	430	533	103	24.0	\$34,478	64	Postsecondary nondegree award
Medical Assistants	729	954	225	30.9	\$28,890	115	Postsecondary nondegree award
Billing and Posting Clerks	674	781	107	15.9	\$35,525	90	High school diploma or equivalent
Computer User Support Specialists	741	905	164	22.1	\$44,388	83	Some college, no degree
Respiratory Therapists	221	285	64	29.0	\$56,407	19	Associate's degree
Medical Secretaries	1,500	1,878	378	25.2	\$30,019	227	High school diploma or equivalent

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTH PLAINS 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

Heating, AC, & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	427	490	63	14.8	\$46,711	50	Postsecondary nondegree award
Pharmacy Technicians	591	697	106	17.9	\$34,269	63	High school diploma or equivalent
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	928	1,093	165	17.8	\$49,434	128	High school diploma or equivalent
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,967	2,049	82	4.2	\$46,585	161	Postsecondary nondegree award
Registered Nurses	4,152	4,791	639	15.4	\$68,852	303	Bachelor's degree
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,012	2,242	230	11.4	\$44,675	265	Postsecondary nondegree award
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,679	2,059	380	22.6	\$32,720	323	High school diploma or equivalent
Electricians	838	965	127	15.2	\$49,052	118	High school diploma or equivalent
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine	582	658	76	13.1	\$44,116	65	High school diploma or equivalent

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTH PLAINS 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

Specialists							
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,602	1,802	200	12.5	\$35,535	185	High school diploma or equivalent
Radiologic Technologists	453	535	82	18.1	\$55,859	35	Associate's degree
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	583	669	86	14.8	\$35,977	78	High school diploma or equivalent
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	1,143	1,263	120	10.5	\$57,849	97	High school diploma or equivalent
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1,089	1,158	69	6.3	\$50,542	116	Postsecondary nondegree award
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	481	549	68	14.1	\$36,638	41	Postsecondary nondegree award
Machinists	244	275	31	12.7	\$41,130	30	High school diploma or equivalent
Billing and Posting Clerks	674	781	107	15.9	\$35,525	90	High school diploma or equivalent
Construction Laborers	2,876	3,213	337	11.7	\$31,370	373	No formal educational credential

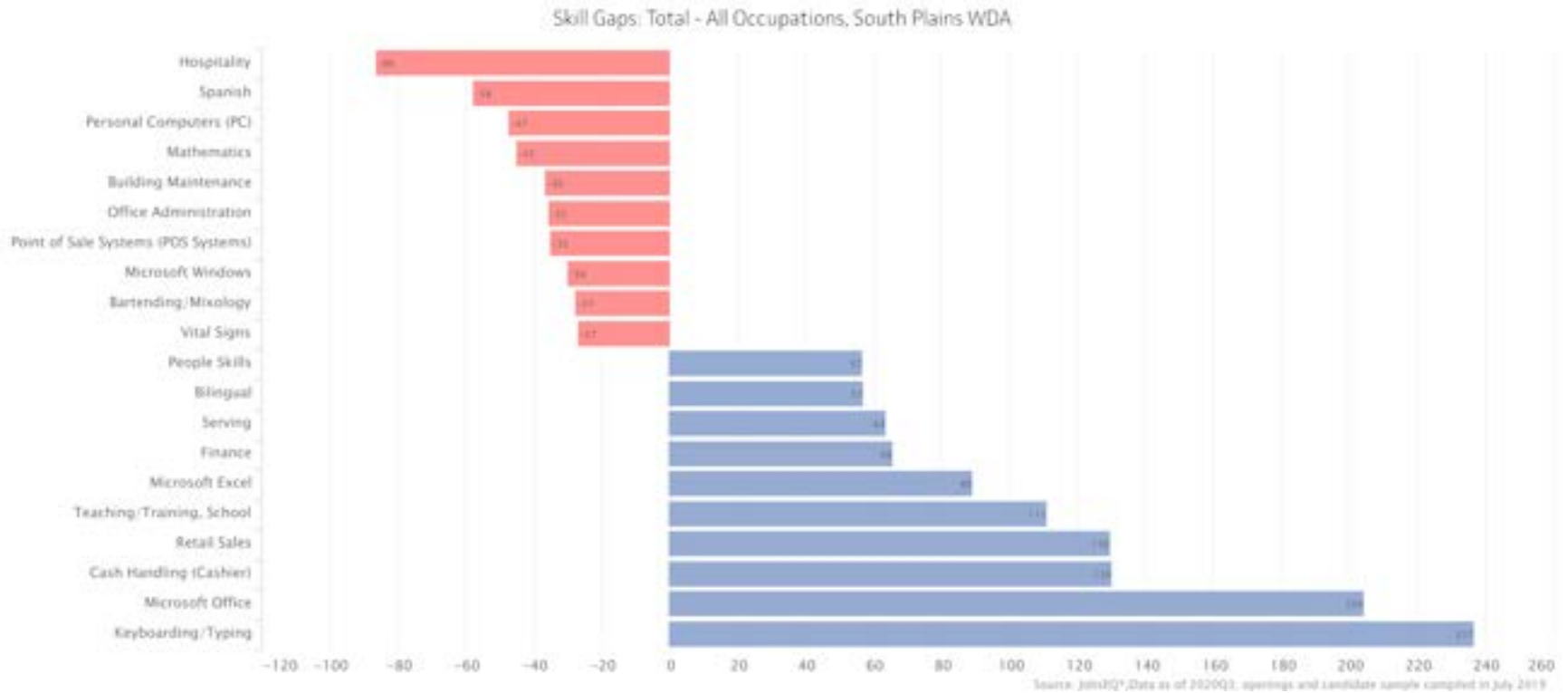
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTH PLAINS 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

General and Operations Managers	2,719	3,093	374	13.8	\$94,364	289	Bachelor's degree
Medical and Health Services Managers	573	749	176	30.7	\$104,827	70	Bachelor's degree
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	739	854	115	15.6	\$29,326	92	Associate's degree
Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors	360	477	117	32.5	\$35,740	70	No formal educational credential
Service Unit Operators, Oil, Gas, and Mining	1,146	1,338	192	16.8	\$53,931	194	No formal educational credential
Wind Turbine Service Technicians* <small>Statewide data; local data not available</small>	2,038	3,728	1,690	82.9	\$53,178	479	Postsecondary nondegree award

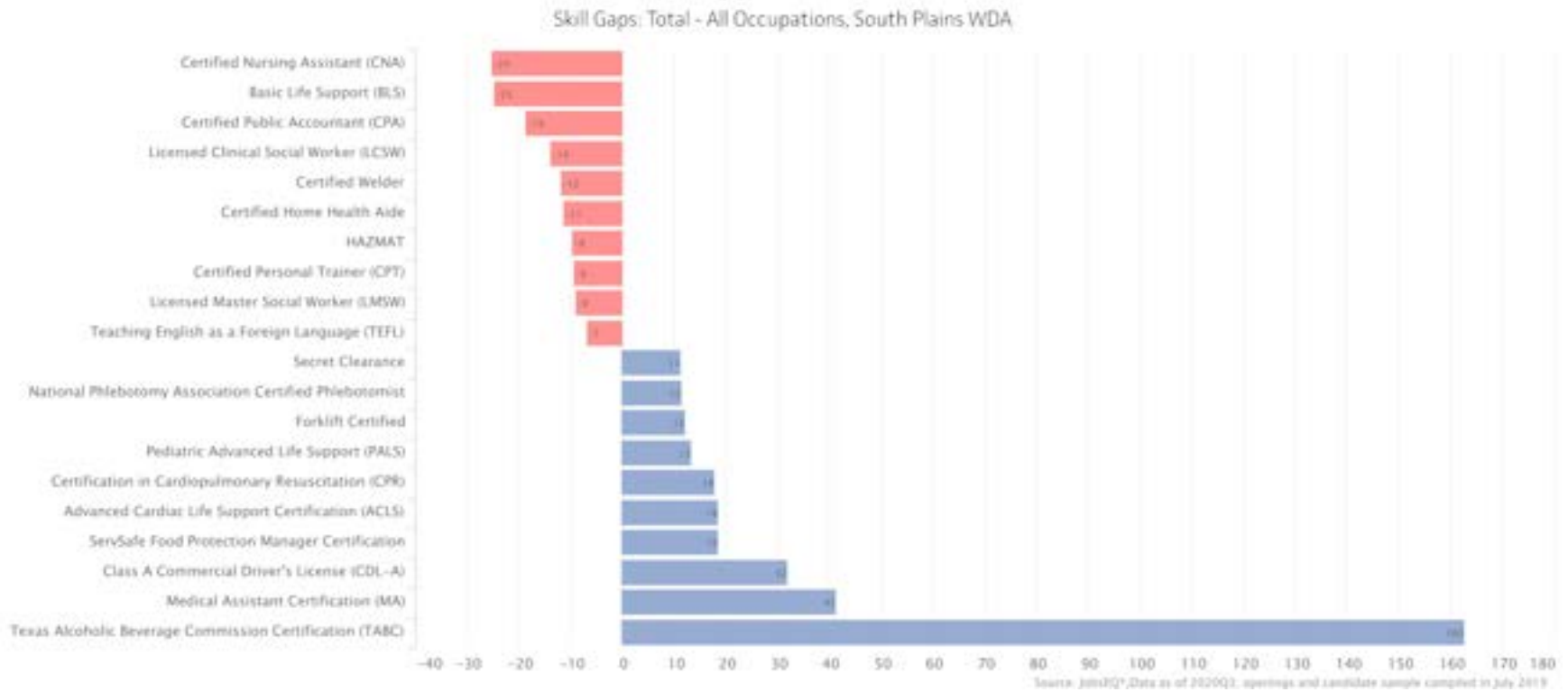
M. Knowledge and Skills Needed to Meet Employment Needs

The following tables illustrate the hard skills and certifications which are in under- and over-supply in the South Plains WDA.

Hard Skills Gaps

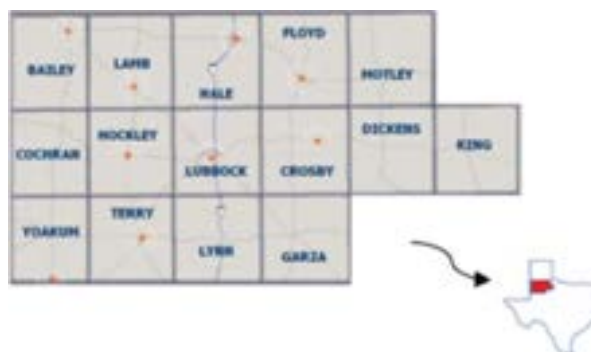


Certifications Gaps



N. The South Plains Population – Workforce Analysis

The South Plains region shown in the graphic below includes residents of the Lubbock Metropolitan Statistical Area which includes Lubbock, Crosby and Lynn Counties. The region includes 12 surrounding rural and sparsely populated counties: Bailey, Cochran, Dickens, Lamb, Hale, Hockley, Floyd, Garza, Motley, King, Terry, and Yoakum. The region encompasses 13,618 square miles. The Board maintains five full-service career centers located in Bailey, Hale, Levelland, Lubbock, and Terry Counties.



The annual average population growth of the South Plains region 0.8% or 3,169 persons. Lubbock MSA’s annual average population growth is 1.2% or 3,602 persons. In comparison, the State’s rate is 1.6% percent.

The chart below on pages 34-36 illustrate the age structure and composition of the Region’s population as of the latest data available. The relatively larger population in the 20 to 24 year-old age group reflects the presence of three major four-year universities, including Texas Tech University where enrollment for the fall 2020 semester set a record of more than 40,000 students enrolled. How the COVID-19 pandemic will impact enrollment numbers in Lubbock remains to be seen.

While the majority of these college students will leave the region after completion of their studies, the region strives to retain this talent as it contributes significantly to the region’s innovative capacity. A major challenge for the next four years is to develop the quality and quantity of jobs that would enable the region to retain a large share of students in this age group after they complete school.

The percentage of the South Plains population between the ages of 25 to 44 is 25.9% per 2018 population estimates as compared to the State’s percentage of 28.2% in that age group. A larger population in this age group is preferable since this group contains the greatest share of the labor force. Decreases over time in this group can be an indication that people are moving out of an area they consider to be a poor labor market.

Currently, the percentage of South Plains residents who are 65 years of age and over is estimated to be 12.8% which is lower than the State average of 12%.

O. Racial/Ethnic Distribution

Diversity is our Region’s greatest source of innovation potential. Our diverse, multicultural society with many different views and skills represented is a major advantage. The racial composition of the region’s population is illustrated in the chart below on pages 34-36.

According to 2018 estimates, 41% of the population is Hispanic (of any race). According to projections by the Texas State Demographer, the Hispanic population is fast becoming the majority ethnic group and is projected to comprise over 50% of the South Plains population by the year 2040.

P. Educational Attainment

The number of youth between 18 and 24 years of age who have not earned a high school diploma is slightly higher than the state number. Educational attainment rates for the population between the ages of 25 and 64 years of age are illustrated in the chart below on pages 34-36.

55.9% of South Plains residents have some postsecondary education. This is lower than the State’s rate of 59.6%. Our challenge is to encourage youth to earn an industry-recognized certification, progress to an Associate’s or higher degree and then continue learning throughout their lifespan. The Board collaborates with educational providers to facilitate a return to postsecondary education for youth who are in need of training to become self-sufficient.

Demographics	Percent			Value		
	South Plains WDA	Lubbock, TX MSA	Texas	South Plains WDA	Lubbock, TX MSA	Texas
Population (ACS)	—	—	—	430,602	313,123	27,885,195
Male	50.0%	49.4%	49.7%	215,298	154,529	13,849,775
Female	50.0%	50.6%	50.3%	215,304	158,594	14,035,420
Median Age ²	—	—	—	31.9	31.0	34.4
Under 18 Years	25.0%	24.2%	26.2%	107,520	75,736	7,292,686
18 to 24 Years	14.9%	16.7%	10.0%	64,182	52,372	2,777,150
25 to 34 Years	14.3%	14.6%	14.7%	61,594	45,618	4,094,297
35 to 44 Years	11.6%	11.5%	13.5%	49,972	35,880	3,767,582
45 to 54 Years	10.7%	10.4%	12.6%	46,111	32,692	3,511,040
55 to 64 Years	10.7%	10.4%	11.1%	46,175	32,699	3,104,626
65 to 74 Years	7.1%	6.9%	7.2%	30,595	21,454	2,000,715
75 Years, and Over	5.7%	5.3%	4.8%	24,453	16,672	1,337,099
Race: White	83.2%	81.4%	74.3%	358,331	254,801	20,720,689
Race: Black or African American	6.2%	7.1%	12.1%	26,782	22,280	3,365,783
Race: American Indian and Alaska Native	0.9%	1.1%	0.5%	3,980	3,330	136,061
Race: Asian	1.7%	2.1%	4.7%	7,125	6,635	1,308,257
Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	214	190	23,672

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTH PLAINS 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

	Percent			Value		
	South Plains WDA	Lubbock, TX MSA	Texas	South Plains WDA	Lubbock, TX MSA	Texas
Race: Some Other Race	5.1%	5.5%	5.7%	22,095	17,260	1,600,234
Race: Two or More Races	2.8%	2.8%	2.6%	12,075	8,627	730,499
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	41.0%	35.6%	39.2%	176,354	111,526	10,921,556
Population Growth						
Population (Pop Estimates) ⁴	—	—	—	438,104	322,257	28,995,881
Population Annual Average Growth ⁴	0.8%	1.2%	1.6%	3,169	3,602	419,412
People per Square Mile	—	—	—	32.2	119.9	111.0
Economic						
Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 16 years and over) ⁵	63.3%	65.0%	64.4%	211,580	159,285	13,728,630
Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate and Size (civilian population 25-54) ⁵	80.1%	82.6%	80.4%	126,162	94,083	9,095,705
Armed Forces Labor Force ⁵	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%	236	231	89,701
Veterans, Age 18-64 ⁵	3.9%	4.4%	5.0%	10,578	8,661	862,771
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64 ⁵	79.0%	80.5%	77.8%	8,360	6,971	671,366
Median Household Income ^{2,5}	—	—	—	\$49,661	\$50,125	\$59,570
Per Capita Income ⁵	—	—	—	\$25,480	\$26,907	\$30,143
Mean Commute Time (minutes) ⁵	—	—	—	17.6	17.3	26.4
Commute via Public Transportation ⁵	0.7%	0.9%	1.4%	1,472	1,319	184,848
Educational Attainment, Age 25-64						
No High School Diploma	16.0%	12.7%	15.7%	32,562	18,595	2,274,547
High School Graduate	28.1%	26.9%	24.7%	57,378	39,503	3,571,759
Some College, No Degree	23.7%	24.6%	22.1%	48,374	36,130	3,193,349
Associate's Degree	6.9%	6.8%	7.5%	13,988	10,012	1,088,717
Bachelor's Degree	16.5%	18.6%	20.0%	33,672	27,353	2,894,532
Postgraduate Degree	8.8%	10.4%	10.0%	17,878	15,296	1,454,641
Housing						
Total Housing Units	—	—	—	178,935	130,854	10,769,900
Median House Value (of owner-occupied units) ²	—	—	—	\$113,154	\$128,002	\$161,700
Homeowner Vacancy	1.7%	1.5%	1.6%	1,569	1,015	95,712
Rental Vacancy	8.8%	9.0%	7.7%	6,331	5,251	308,747
Renter-Occupied Housing Units (% of Occupied Units)	41.1%	44.3%	38.1%	63,839	51,493	3,635,275
Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle Available (% of Occupied Units) ⁵	5.6%	5.6%	5.4%	8,625	6,505	512,772
Social						
Poverty Level (of all people) ⁵	18.5%	19.0%	15.5%	76,120	57,007	4,213,938
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	13.3%	12.7%	12.2%	20,636	14,799	1,167,725
Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population)	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%	5,641	3,871	405,822

	Percent			Value		
	South Plains WDA	Lubbock, TX MSA	Texas	South Plains WDA	Lubbock, TX MSA	Texas
Disconnected Youth ^{3,5}	2.2%	1.9%	2.9%	618	426	46,016
Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children) ⁵	38.6%	40.1%	34.6%	38,703	28,292	2,402,953
Uninsured	15.5%	13.7%	17.4%	65,288	42,412	4,764,897
With a Disability, Age 18-64 ⁵	11.8%	12.0%	9.6%	30,704	23,578	1,618,704
With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate and Size ⁵	46.3%	48.0%	44.3%	14,208	11,308	717,826
Foreign Born	7.7%	5.9%	17.0%	32,954	18,486	4,736,692
Speak English Less Than Very Well (population 5 yrs and over)	7.3%	5.3%	14.0%	29,357	15,360	3,617,887

Q. Regional Labor Force

Not all residents of the South Plains share equitably in the region’s prosperity. The average annual wages across the South Plains range from \$30,089 in Dickens County to \$64,115 in Yoakum County. The average annual wage per worker in the South Plains is \$46,861 compared to \$59,458 at the State level.

Region	Avg Ann Wages per Worker
Dickens County	\$30,089
Crosby County	\$41,503
Hale County	\$41,546
Motley County	\$42,383
Garza County	\$42,409
King County	\$42,660
Terry County	\$44,732
Floyd County	\$45,517
Lubbock County	\$46,294
Lubbock, TX MSA	\$46,298
South Plains WDA	\$46,861
Bailey County	\$47,961
Lamb County	\$50,481
Lynn County	\$50,675
Cochran County	\$50,702
Hockley County	\$57,231
Texas	\$59,458
Yoakum County	\$64,115

South Plains' Wage Levels

Mean Wage	Entry Wage	Experienced Wage	PCT 50 Median Wage
\$21.84	\$9.80	\$27.86	\$16.59
\$45,400.00	\$20,400.00	\$57,900.00	\$34,500.00

The Board establishes a Self-sufficiency Wage Standard, revised annually, to determine whether individuals who are employed are receiving self-sufficiency wages in the local workforce development area or are in need of Career and Training Services. The Self-sufficiency Wage Standard is based on family size or number of persons in the household (PHH). The Board's Priority of Service policy allows expenditures of up to 25% of funding on training services for individuals with household income higher than the low-income level (approximately 70% of the poverty level) but less than the Self-sufficiency Wage Standard.

Self-sufficiency Wage Standard			
Family Size	1	2	3
Income	\$29,325	\$36,875	\$44,425

The percentage of persons in poverty within the 15 counties in the region is as high as 23.9% as shown in the chart. All but three South Plains' counties are above the State poverty rate of 15.5%.

South Plains' Poverty and Uninsured Levels by County

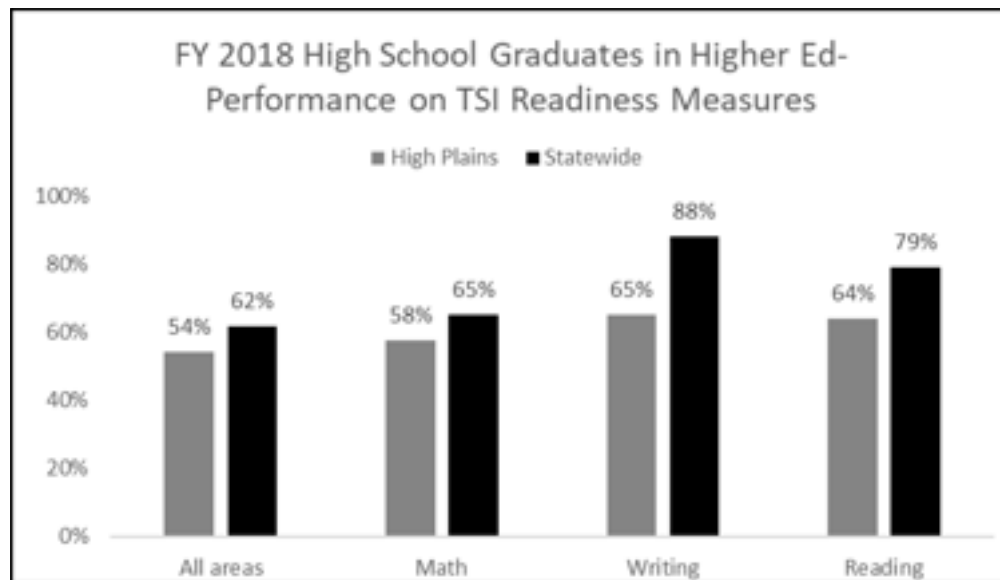
	Percent Poverty Level	Population Poverty Level	Percentage Uninsured
Bailey	14.5%	987	20.6%
Cochran	23.9%	685	28.0%
Crosby	20.7%	1,194	20.4%
Dickens	17.2%	360	18.8%
Floyd	19.1%	1,114	22.4%
Garza	17.7%	778	17.5%
Hale	18.7%	5,918	19.1%
Hockley	15.7%	3,496	18.4%
King	8.8%	20	7.9%
Lamb	23.6%	3,064	23.0%
Lubbock	18.9%	54,723	13.5%
Lynn	18.9%	1,090	17.5%
Motley	17.6%	1,225	22.1%
Terry	15.7%	1,807	22.4%

Yoakum	9.0%	773	22.4%
South Plains WDA	18.5%	76,120	15.5%
Texas	15.5%	4,213,938	17.4%

R. Available Employment, Training and Educational Services

Education is critical to our region’s ability to innovate. The South Plains is home to four nationally-recognized 4-year universities including Texas Tech University and Texas Tech Health Sciences Center, Lubbock Christian University and Wayland Baptist University. South Plains College, the region’s 2-year public community college, located in Levelland, Texas, serves the Lubbock and surrounding communities. The Board’s Eligible Training Providers - providers who are eligible to receive workforce funds for providing occupational skills training to program participants approved for training services - includes 7 providers offering 230 programs.

The percentage of college-ready high school graduates in the High Plains Region is shown in the graph below. In the 2018 school year, the number of High Plains high school graduates who were considered college ready fell behind the Statewide numbers in all performance categories. The High Plains Region includes the South Plains and Panhandle Workforce Development Areas.



The Higher Education Coordinating Board’s 60x30TX report also indicated a decline in 2018 in the percentage of high school graduates who pursued university degrees after graduation in the High Plains Region.

Percent of High School Graduates Enrolling in Higher Education the Following Fall			
	2016	2017	2018
High Plains	51.2%	50.3%	49.1%
HS Grads in HE*	4,903	4,947	4,838
HS Grads**	9,580	9,844	9,853
Statewide	51.9%	52.3%	51.6%

The South Plains College, Texas Tech University and Texas Tech University Health Science Center have steadily been increasing the numbers of degrees awarded over the last three years of data available.

South Plains College

Degrees and Certificates Awarded

Degrees and certificates awarded for students at public 2-year institutions. Percent change is from first to last year displayed.

	2017	2018	2019	Percent Change
	Count	Count	Count	
Total	1,514	1,520	1,551	2.4 %
Certificate 1	652	598	593	-9.0 %
Certificate 2	33	61	52	57.6 %
Advanced Technology Certificate				
Associate	829	861	908	9.3 %
Bachelor's				

Texas Tech University

Degrees and Certificates Awarded

Degrees and certificates awarded for students at public 4-year institutions. Percent change is from first to last year displayed.

	2017	2018	2019	Percent Change
	Count	Count	Count	
Total	7,797	8,435	8,482	8.8 %
Certificate				
Associate				
Bachelor's	5,664	6,302	6,440	13.7 %
Master's	1,590	1,628	1,567	-1.4 %
Doctoral Research Scholarship	346	349	340	-1.7 %
Doctoral Professional Practice	197	155	135	-31.5 %

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

Degrees and Certificates Awarded

Degrees and certificates awarded for students at public 4-year institutions. Percent change is from first to last year displayed.

	2017	2018	2019	Percent Change
	Count	Count	Count	
Total	2,153	2,182	2,271	5.5 %
Certificate				
Associate				
Bachelor's	1,228	1,228	1,233	0.4 %
Master's	511	500	583	14.1 %
Doctoral Research Scholarship	45	55	43	-4.4 %
Doctoral Professional Practice	369	399	412	11.7 %

Analysis of Workforce Development Activities

Career Center Services

Workforce Solutions ensures that workforce education and training programs are available to support customer needs for career preparation and advancement. Career services, training services, and support services are individualized and made available to facilitate success for each participant.

In PY 2019 the Board provided case management services to 1,432 program participants and funded occupational/vocational training for 104 jobseekers to prepare them for employment in the Board’s targeted occupations. Overall, 11,537 customers including 11,394 job seekers, 70 youth and 111 WIOA Adult Dislocated Workers were served from July 2019 to June 2020. Employment and training services were provided to individuals with barriers to employment. The Board also served 1,895 employers and 501 veterans in PY 2019.

Services provided to assist individuals with barriers to employment include the provision of labor market information, job search assistance, work readiness workshops, career planning, leadership development workshops, support services, and development of Individual Employment Plans. Individuals in need of work experience may be placed in subsidized employment. Funding is provided through Individual Training Accounts to cover the cost of tuition, books, and other training-related costs to enable individuals in need of training to attend occupational skills training.

From PY 2021 through 2024, as described in Goal 2, Strategy 1, the Board has committed to increase participation in work-based training and enroll at least 40 individuals in on-the-job training, customized training, or incumbent worker training. Also during the period of this plan, the Board will increase access to services by enhancing the website to include a chat feature and information on certified Eligible Training Provider programs. See strategies included under Goals 2, 3, and 4.

In addition to services provided to individuals, services are available through the Career Center to assist employers with their hiring and training needs. Some services are provided at no charge. BSU staff routinely provide Rapid Response Services to assist employers who are laying off all or part of their workforce. Staff assist employers with screening, recruiting and posting job orders in the automated labor exchange system, WorkinTexas.com. The BSU also provides services at cost to support employer needs. Employers can rent meeting space to hold hiring events. The Business Services Unit provided workforce assistance to 9,101 employers during the period July 2019 through June 2020. In 2020 the Board procured a virtual job fair program that allows employers and jobseekers to interact completely virtually. This will be a lasting improvement to employer services beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board's Business Services Unit (BSU) staff meet regularly with regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC) partners to promote services to employers. Goal 1, Strategy 2, of the Board's strategic plan includes plans to partner with EDCs to disseminate information and collaborate on workforce training projects with the goal of continuing development of meaningful, ongoing relationships with at least 20 employers annually through PY 2024. The BSU will also work with Chambers of Commerce and other stakeholders to increase access to services for sole proprietorships.

To increase access to services for rural customers, the Board purchased a bus in 2016 to serve as a mobile career center that will serve outlying areas on a rotating basis. The mobile career center is equipped with 7 computer stations and internet to serve jobseekers. While the bus was sidelined for much of 2020 due to COVID-19 safety concerns, we expect it to be back in full operation in PY 2021. In 2020 the bus was rewrapped as a billboard showcasing workforce services and contact information.

The Board applies for discretionary grants to supplement available grant funds. In 2020, the Board received a DOL National Dislocated Worker Grant in the amount of approximately \$2,000,000 to increase services to workers dislocated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds are being used to assist workers dislocated because of the pandemic to gain temporary employment as COVID-19 contact tracers.

Regional Collaboration to Leverage Resources

In addition to services offered through the Workforce Solutions Career Centers, the Board collaborates with training providers, employers and employer organizations to leverage resources and increase and enhance training and employment opportunities available to our customers. Examples of the collaborations with workforce development partners include:

- ✚ The Workforce Solutions South Plains CEO chairs the Community Workforce Partnership (CWP). The CWP membership includes the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, Lubbock Chamber of Commerce, Region 17, South Plains College and Career and Technology Coordinators representing several school districts. In 2017, the Board is expanding to include the Director of Academic Engagement for Texas Tech University. The CEO also chairs the Lubbock ISD Career and Technology Advisory Committee and serves on the South Plains College (SPC) Byron Martin

Advisory Committee that has spearheaded the development of the new SPC Lubbock Center campus. Through these relationships, the Board plays a strong role in the development of secondary and postsecondary educational initiatives in the region.

- ✚ In 2019 and 2020 the Board collaborated with Amerigroup to host United We Work. In February 2020 the 2nd annual event provided 94 South Plains youth with disabilities from 12 ISDs opportunities to observe the daily activities of 23 local employers in order to explore their interest in pursuing various careers, participate in mock interviews and learn job interview skills from local business professionals. Board staff also added a 2nd United We Work annual event in Levelland held in March 2020 and serving 30 students with disabilities. At the annual Texas Workforce Commission Conference held in 2019 the Board was recognized for the United We Work program by receiving the HireAbility \$20,000 award.
- ✚ Three major job fairs, including two regionwide fairs and the Red, White and You Job Fair (to promote the hiring of veterans) are held annually to assist employers with their hiring needs. In 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the Board sponsored a South Plains Job Fair, a collaboration between Workforce Solutions South Plains, South Plains College, Texas Tech University Career Center, Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, Lubbock Avalanche Journal, Giles W. Dalby Correctional Facility, and Convergys, to assist employers with their hiring needs. A total of 64 employers and 750 job seekers participated in the event. The Board collaborated with TWC to promote and host the Red, White and You Job Fair in November to promote the hiring of veterans. 60 employers participated in the event. On average, 80 employers participate in each event. The Board procured a virtual job fair platform in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in 2020 and 2021 has held 4 virtual job fairs serving a total of 127 employers and 468 job seekers.
- ✚ The Board provided letters of support to partner organizations including the Community Health Center, South Plains College (SPC), the Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center, multiple ISDs, and Texas Tech Health Sciences Center and served as a resource for development of grant applications for job training.
- ✚ In 2019 Goodwill Industries of Northwest Texas won the Texas Small Employer of the Year award at the Texas Workforce Commission's Annual Conference. The Board nominated Goodwill for this award.
- ✚ In collaboration with Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA), the Board received its seventh and eighth High Demand Job Training Grants both in the amounts of \$150,000 and \$140,700 matched by contributions from LEDA in the amounts of \$251,000 and \$140,734. These grants purchased truck driving simulators for South Plains College's CDL program and medical simulators for South Plains College's and Texas Tech University's nursing programs. These investments will allow for hundreds to be trained in the high demand, high wage careers of nursing and truck driving.

- ✚ The Board also received \$150,000 in WIOA Alternative funding which was matched by \$500,000 from LEDA, \$15,000 from Anton ISD, \$10,000 each from Plainview, Levelland Littlefield, Brownfield, and Idalou EDCs, and \$50,000 from Texas Mutual Insurance Company. This partnership purchased CTE equipment for 25 school districts to train 1,890 high school students in high demand careers.

- ✚ In February 2020, the Board received the National Association of Workforce Board's W.O. Lawton Award in recognition of the Board's High Demand Job Training Project which has given \$2,213,668 in equipment to 35 high schools in the South Plains resulting in 4,074 students being trained, earning industry recognized certifications and college credits that transfer into high demand careers upon graduation. The Board was once again recognized for this Project in June 2020 by receiving the TEDC's Workforce Excellence Award with LEDA for the 2nd year in a row.

- ✚ The Board sponsors the annual South Plains Career Expo to provide an opportunity for youth to explore career options. Over 3,000 high school students from schools all over the South Plains and beyond attended the event held in October 2019 and had the opportunity to explore over 100 exhibits and hands-on interactive displays from business and educational sponsors. In October 2020 the Board utilized the virtual job fair platform to facilitate the South Plains Career Expo. 44 businesses and 383 students attended.

- ✚ In PY 2019 The Board, in conjunction with TWC, Tri-Agency initiative partners, the Governor's Office of Economic Development & Tourism, and industry associations hosted 5 Careers in Texas Industries events in Plainview, Muleshoe, Levelland, Lubbock and Plainview. 1,437 students from 26 area schools received the opportunity to explore careers in growing Texas Industry Clusters. 171 featured exhibitor booths participated in these events. In 2020 the Board utilized the virtual job fair platform to facilitate a virtual career exploration event for 8th graders throughout the South Plains. 39 Businesses and 657 students attended. During PY 2021 through PY 2024, the Board will increase access to employment and training services by collaborating with rural high schools and providing funds to continue facilitating additional rural career fairs.

- ✚ In PY 2019 Board staff facilitated the Summer Earn and Learn program (SEAL), which provides students with disabilities workplace readiness training, 5 weeks of work experience, and transferable skill learning opportunities while they earn compensation for time worked on the job site. Through the program 59 students were placed in Paid Work Experience programs with 26 different employers.

- ✚ Each year, the Board sponsors an annual Youth Job Fair in June to provide an opportunity for youth to obtain summer employment. An estimated 600 youth attended the job fair in PY 2019 and approximately 60 students obtained employment.

V. Operational Plan for PY 2021 through PY 2024

The Board receives formula funds and discretionary grants to fund the administration, operation, and oversight of employment and training programs in the 15-County South Plains Region. In fulfillment of its role as lead workforce development entity in the Region, the Board designs a service delivery plan that addresses diverse customer needs; sets standards for the local workforce system; makes decisions about workforce services and funding in the local community and sets policy appropriately; and, forms a network of services to offer customers including employers and community stakeholders. Previous sections of this strategic plan outlined the Board's vision, mission and goals for the period from PY 2021 and PY 2024. This section describes the program and services provided by the Board and describes how the system will implement the strategies and activities to achieve those goals. Additionally, in this section, we demonstrate how the Board's goals, strategies and priorities are aligned with and support the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan FY 2021 - FY 2024, the Texas Workforce Commission Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024, the Combined State Plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 PY 2021 - PY 2024, and the Adult Education and Literacy Strategic Plan for FY 2021 - FY 2024.

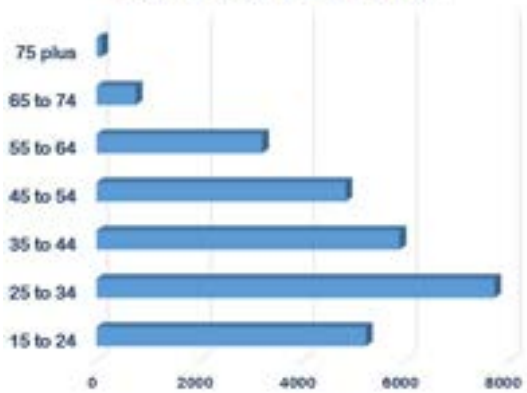
1. A description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in the system and how the Board will support the strategy identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to 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 Section 102(b)(1)(E).

During PY 2019, 11,394 job seekers received employment and training services, 1,895 employers received workforce assistance services, and subsidized child care services were provided to an average of 2,276 children per day through local day care centers or relative providers.

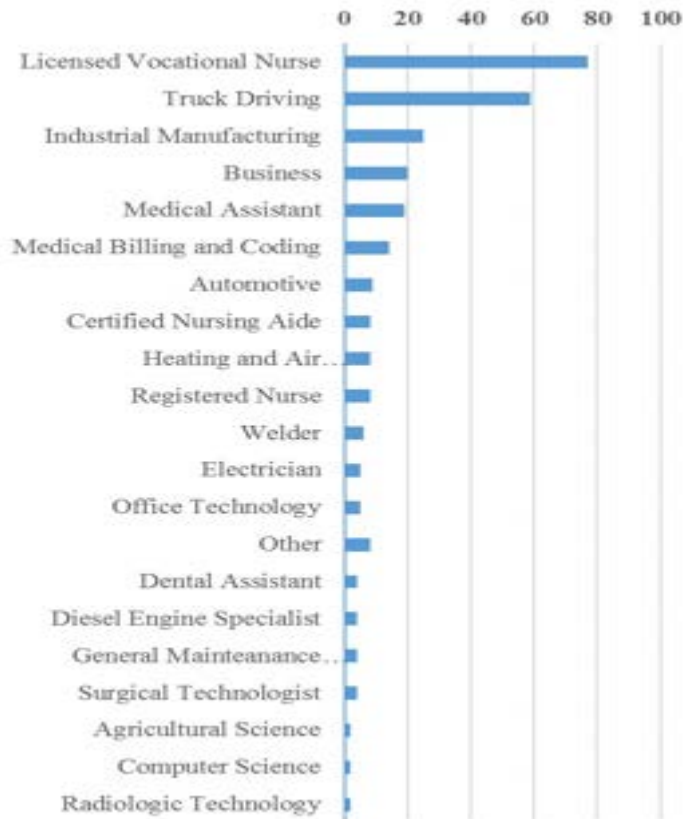
Available services for jobseekers include basic and individualized career services and training services customized to meet the needs of participants in the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs; Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program; Noncustodial Parent Choices (NCP/Choices) Program; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Choices Program; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Program; and Child Care Services. NCP Choices, TANF programs services include staff assisted job search and subsidized employment and other services as applicable. SNAP program services include staff assisted job search, vocational training, non-vocational training, work experience, workfare and other services as applicable. Career counselors outreach recipients of TANF public assistance who are exempt from employment requirements on a bi-weekly basis to provide information about workforce services including staff assisted job search, support services (child care, fuel assistance, work attire) and job readiness workshops.

The majority of job seekers who are currently registered in the State’s automated job matching system, WorkinTexas.com (WIT), are 25 to 34-years of age as shown in the chart to the right. The median level of education is 12 years. The majority of registrants are male (55%) and Hispanic (48.7). The Board assists these jobseekers to find employment by sponsoring a series of job fairs annually. Two major regional South Plains Job Fairs are held each year in collaboration with partner agencies. In addition, the Board sponsors the Hiring Red, White and You Job Fair in collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission. On average, 80 employers attend each event to promote their job openings to jobseekers. In 2020 the Board started hosting additional virtual job fairs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

WorkinTexas Jobseekers by Age Group (n=27,791)



All jobseekers have access to the resource center which makes available computers, printers and other resources to facilitate their job search. In addition, the TWC and Board make online resources available for career planning including state and local labor market information. Jobseekers in need of individualized career services meet with a career counselor for assistance in obtaining employment or training. Program participants who are in need of training services and are determined eligible may receive assistance through a system of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Through ITAs, the Board funds training for jobseekers in need of assistance to obtain or retain employment in the Board’s high demand occupations. In PY 2019, the Board provided case management services to 1,432 program participants and funded occupational/vocational training and support services for 124 jobseekers to prepare them for employment in the Board’s targeted occupations. The chart to the right provides a breakdown of training by occupation for program completers.



The Board assists Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants to access the benefits administered by the Texas Workforce Commission and assists them during their job search. One of the

Board's performance measures tracks the percentage of UI claimants who are reemployed within 10 weeks. In PY 2020, the Board was awarded a National Dislocated Worker Grant in the amount of \$2,000,000 to assist workers dislocated because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of whom currently receive or have exhausted UI benefits. Dislocated workers in need to retraining to upgrade their skills may be eligible for tuition assistance and support services.

The Board provides priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses of veterans in the provision of services. Priority of service is also afforded to the following categories of applicants in the provision of individualized career services and training services regardless of funding levels:

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

Eligible veterans and eligible spouses of veterans continue to receive priority of service for all Department of Labor (DOL)-funded job training programs, which include WIOA Adult services. The Board coordinates with the Texas Veteran's Commission staff in the provision of the following employment services customized to meet the needs of the region's veterans:

- Intensive services
- Converting military occupation to civilian occupations for resume and job search
- Job matching and referrals
- Resume assistance
- Employer outreach
- Job search workshops
- Vocational guidance
- Labor market information
- Referrals to training
- Other supportive services

The Board collaborates with the regional correctional agencies to deliver workforce services to incarcerated persons and to assist in the transition to employment. A career counselor provides workforce orientations on-site at the Lubbock County Detention Center on a periodic basis. Employment counselors are informed regarding resources such as fidelity bonding that are available to employers to facilitate employment of ex-offenders. Employment Services staff provide job placement assistance to ex-offenders including providing job search workshops that support them in their job search.

The region's labor force includes approximately 14,987 individuals with disabilities. Of these, 13,267 are employed and 1,720 are seeking work. Approximately 16,293 individuals with disabilities are not in the labor force. The Board collaborates with the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program to help individuals with disabilities to transition from school to work and to obtain and retain employment. Other available services include career counseling, training, access to assistive devices, job placement assistance and other services necessary to facilitate the customer's employment or career goals.

The Board also collaborates with partners to prepare the future workforce. In collaboration with the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA), Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and South Plains College the Board received its seventh and eighth High Demand Job Training Grants both in the amounts of \$150,000 and \$140,700 matched by contributions from LEDA in the amounts of \$251,000 and \$140,734. These grants purchased truck driving simulators for South Plains College's CDL program and medical simulators for South Plains College's and Texas Tech University's nursing programs. These investments will allow for hundreds to be trained in the high demand, high wage careers of nursing and truck driving.

The Board also received \$150,000 in WIOA Alternative funding which was matched by \$500,000 from LEDA, \$15,000 from Anton ISD, \$10,000 each from Plainview, Levelland Littlefield, Brownfield, and Idalou EDCs, and \$50,000 from Texas Mutual Insurance Company. This partnership purchased CTE equipment for 25 school districts to train 1,890 high school students in high demand careers. The Board's High Demand Job Training Project has given \$2,213,668 in equipment to 35 high schools in the South Plains resulting in 4,074 students being trained, earning industry recognized certifications and college credits that transfer into high demand careers upon graduation.

Annually, the Board hosts the South Plains Career Expo that brings together industry, education, and community to provide an opportunity for high school students to explore careers in high demand and begin to make choices about college and/or career options after high school. Over 4,000 youth from 60 area schools attend the event each year and over 80 employers and education entities set up demonstrations and exhibits to promote their industries. Employers from every major sector participate in the event. In 2020 this event was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board also holds career exploration fairs in school districts outside of Lubbock county in partnership with TWC, Tri-Agency initiative partners, the Governor's Office of Economic Development & Tourism, and industry associations. During the period covered by this plan, the Board will continue to host the annual South Plains Career Expo to bring together industry, education, and community to prepare high school students for college and/or career success after high school. In addition, the Board will continue to collaborate with rural school districts to fund and host at least 3 rural career fairs per year to facilitate provision of career and labor market information to rural youth.

Also, during the period of this plan, the Board will continue to enhance and update its online resource to assist high school students with career planning. The Board's new webpage, implemented in 2019, offers career roadmaps that align regional training programs subsidized by the Board with the Board's targeted occupations. Youth have access to labor market information for each of the targeted occupations to assist them and their parents in making an informed choice regarding the careers most likely to lead to self-sufficiency and long-term economic stability.

2. 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).

The Board executes Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with entities carrying out core programs including with Region 17 Education Service Center, the Adult Education and Literacy Provider (AEL), with MET, Inc., the State Community Senior Employment Program (SCSEP) and National Farmworker Program provider. AEL assists individuals in need of basic adult education services and language instruction. The Board routinely refers individuals to Region 17 AEL for GED and English as a Second Language instruction and co-enrolls individuals who can benefit from both AEL/ESL and occupational skills training. The Board works closely with our contractor and partners, such as AEL/Region 17, to ensure a clear understanding of co-enrollment and when to use it to ensure the customer benefits from services without duplication of efforts. All adults have the opportunity to receive basic career services to access information on career pathways and information on the regional labor market. Career counselors provide outreach, intake and initial assessment of skills levels, including literacy, numeracy and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps) and support services. Career counselors work closely with the contractor and partners to support AEL program participants and assist them in earning postsecondary credentials. To facilitate program improvement, the Board monitors activities monthly on an ongoing basis to ensure performance outcomes meet or exceed state requirements.

SCSEP subsidizes training and employment services to help low-income Texans 55 or older gain the skills needed to get jobs and become financially self-sufficient. The Board collaborates with MET to identify placement opportunities for older workers and also assists in the transition of SCSEP participants from subsidized part-time employment to unsubsidized full-time employment at the appropriate time. The Board's Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program (MSFW) staff collaborate with MET to serve the needs of the MSFW population. Outreach counselors locate workers who may be in need of counseling, testing, job training or referral services. The Board works to ensure that services provided to eligible MSFW are qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to services provided to participants who are not classified as MSFW as required by law. Two of the region's counties, Floyd County and Bailey County, are designated MSFW counties due to a relatively large number of farmworkers residing in the county or migrating from other areas of the State to work. During PY 2019, outreach counselors contacted MSFW customers to provide outreach activities in Bailey and Floyd Counties and adjacent areas in Hale, and Crosby Counties. The Board's BSU staff and outreach counselors solicit job postings from area employers in need of seasonal or temporary farm labor. ES staff and outreach counselors offer MSFWs the opportunity to apply for WIOA services to retrain for permanent, nonagricultural jobs. In alignment with the Texas Agricultural Outreach Plan, the Board will implement strategies to increase access to computers located at access points throughout the rural areas of the region and will widely publicize these resources through community organizations and churches who can refer farmworkers to these resources.

The Board collaborates with the VR Program to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. TWC VR staff were relocated into the Workforce Solutions Lubbock office in July 2018, and the TWC Regional VR office relocated into the Workforce Solutions Board office in 2020.

To improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential and facilitate co-enrollment, the Board began offering online career roadmaps in PY 2019 that provide information on training programs subsidized by the Board. The interactive roadmaps provide information on the programs offered by Eligible Training Providers to prepare individuals to work in the targeted occupations and provide information on provider completion and placement rates to facilitate customer choice. In addition, the roadmaps link to labor market information provided by the TWC and other state and federal sources such as the Department of Labor. The Board plans to continue to update and add to the website with a goal of having roadmaps for all of the South Plains' targeted occupations hosted on the website by PY 2024.

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

The Board will continue strategies that have proven successful for coordinating programs and services for target populations. The Board executes MOUs with core and optional workforce partners to outline respective responsibilities for achieving successful outcomes for target populations including veterans, individuals with disabilities, foster youth, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, older workers, ex-offenders, and other individuals with barriers to employment. These formal relationships facilitate the referral process and enable the Board to leverage resources that other partners bring to the table in support of target populations. The Board Executive Director and Board and career center staff sit on various boards to engage with partners in the work of addressing workforce system issues. The Executive Director chairs the Community Workforce Partnership Board whose membership includes the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, Lubbock Chamber of Commerce, Region 17, South Plains College and several school districts. The CEO also chairs the Lubbock ISD Career and Technology Advisory Committee and serves on the South Plains College (SPC) Byron Martin Advisory Committee that has spearheaded the development of the new SPC Lubbock Center campus. Board staff sit on the P-20 Council Board, the SHRM Board, the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce and Lubbock Economic Development Alliance Boards and other boards that bring major influence to bear on the region's workforce system. Through these relationships, the Board plays a strong role in the development of secondary and postsecondary educational initiatives in the region and addresses barriers to education and employment faced by target populations including populations in the rural areas of the region.

During PY 2021 through PY 2024, the Board will continue to maintain and enhance our multiple access points throughout the region. The Board will update our equipment (as it becomes available) that provides access to workforce services and is located in libraries, county offices, and other organizations that provide complementary programs. The Board will seek out opportunities to better equip and maintain resource areas so that rural customers without computer access will not have to travel to one of the six career centers to conduct an online job search or attend a virtual job fair.

In PY 2015, the Board procured and equipped a mobile career unit that travels on a regular schedule to various communities across the region and makes computers and online access available to rural residents. The multiple access points combined with the mobile career unit visits increase accessibility to career center resources for rural customers with limited transportation options. More importantly, these access points provide additional opportunities to

serve an increased number of residents and stay abreast of workforce trends and needs in the rural areas of the region. a bus in 2016 to serve as a mobile career center that will serve outlying areas on a rotating basis. While the bus was sidelined for much of 2020 due to COVID-19 safety concerns, we expect it to be back in full operation in PY 2021. In 2020 the bus was rewrapped as a billboard showcasing workforce services and contact information.

4. A description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to facilitate engagement of employers in the workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations; to support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of business in the local area; to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

Over the next four years, the Board will continue to provide training to build the capacity of workforce center staff to broker employer contracts for on-the-job and customized training. Additionally, the Board will collaborate with regional EDCs to promote workforce programs and engage employers in utilizing Skills Development, Skills for Small Businesses, and other TWC grant funds. The goal is to hold 5 meetings each year in collaboration with 5 EDCs in the rural areas and to nurture and maintain the relationships formed.

To support employers, the Board will continue to improve the Board website to facilitate access to current labor market information (LMI) offered online by TWC and other state and federal agencies. The Board receives regular requests for labor market information from employers and will utilize the website to provide user friendly access to LMI on topics most often requested. Board staff will analyze site statistics monthly and revise and update the site as needed to increase responsiveness to employer needs.

During PY 2021 to PY 2024, the Board will implement strategies to improve services to non-employers, sole proprietorships, and self-employed workers. The Board will implement best practices to outreach self-employed workers to facilitate access to workforce services for this population. Many self-employed workers are not eligible for UI benefits when contract employment is terminated. These workers may be eligible for employment and training services to obtain or retain employment. The Board will maintain an asset map of available state and federal resources and make resources available online and seek funding to assist self-employed workers to earn industry-recognized certifications; collaborate with SBDC and regional Chambers of Commerce to increase access to entrepreneurship services for entrepreneurs and sole proprietorships; and establish an MOU and ongoing referral process with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, the Rural Export Assistance Program and other state and federal programs that support non-employers and other members of the contingent workforce in rural areas.

Career counselors provide many services to UI claimants including Work in Texas registration, Rapid Reemployment Services (RRES), computers to access the UI website, resume' assistance and staff assisted job search. Other services available to jobseekers include Job Readiness Workshops and training services if eligible for WIOA Program services. Staff refer dislocated workers with the Unemployment Benefits 1-800 number in order to activate their claims and can

assist them with basic UI questions. Claimants are referred to UI Field Specialists for individual assistance. Rapid Response (RR) staff assist dislocated workers after a layoff event with work searches, with instruction on how to register in Work in Texas and with training opportunities available to them. Staff also provide labor market information to assist them with similar or better job opportunities and with salary information. Rapid Response (RR) staff also assist employers who are downsizing or closing their businesses for economic reasons. The RR team consists of the UI Field Specialist, WIOA representative from Career Center and the Board's RR Coordinator.

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

As stated above, the Board will pursue strategies to increase services to non-employers and sole proprietorships. The Board will collaborate with SBDC and regional Chambers of Commerce to increase access to entrepreneurship services for entrepreneurs and sole proprietorships and maintain an ongoing referral process with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, the Rural Export Assistance Program and other state and federal programs that provide entrepreneurial training and support.

The Board collaborates with the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA) to leverage funding for the High Demand Job Training Grant. In collaboration with the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA), Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and South Plains College the Board received its seventh and eighth High Demand Job Training Grants both in the amounts of \$150,000 and \$140,700 matched by contributions from LEDA in the amounts of \$251,000 and \$140,734 to support CDL, nursing, respiratory therapy and EMT occupational training. The Board also collaborates with EDC throughout the South Plains and South Plains' high schools to leverage funding to purchase CTE equipment for area high schools to train students in high demand careers.

6. A description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including explanations of 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 Section 188, if applicable, and with the applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, program and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals who have disabilities; and the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

Through FY 2024, the Board will implement strategies to employ new, relevant technology and service delivery options to expand program and service outcomes. As part of a strategy to increase access to rural customers and promote greater awareness of workforce services, the Board will develop a website with an interactive chat feature that will be staffed by career center

counselors to answer questions from the general public. Also in alignment with the Strategic Plan, the Board will continue to maintain and promote its online application and an online change reporting form for parents in need of childcare services. The Board will also include a chat feature and an interactive locator map to assist parents in locating quality child care services convenient to their home or workplace on the CCS webpages. By increasing access to quality child care, the Board supports parents in obtaining or retaining employment. The Board will also continue to enhance the website to facilitate access to labor market information and information on Eligible Training Providers.

During PY 2021 through PY 2024, the Board will continue to maintain and enhance our multiple access points throughout the region. The Board will update our equipment (as it becomes available) that provides access to workforce services and is located in libraries, county offices, and other organizations that provide complementary programs. The Board will seek out opportunities to better equip and maintain resource areas so that rural customers without computer access will not have to travel to one of the six career centers to conduct an online job search or attend a virtual job fair.

In PY 2015, the Board procured and equipped a mobile career unit that travels on a regular schedule to various communities across the region and makes computers and online access available to rural residents. The multiple access points combined with the mobile career unit visits increase accessibility to career center resources for rural customers with limited transportation options. More importantly, these access points provide additional opportunities to serve an increased number of residents and stay abreast of workforce trends and needs in the rural areas of the region. a bus in 2016 to serve as a mobile career center that will serve outlying areas on a rotating basis. While the bus was sidelined for much of 2020 due to COVID-19 safety concerns, we expect it to be back in full operation in PY 2021. In 2020 the bus was rewrapped as a billboard showcasing workforce services and contact information.

Workforce Solutions South Plains offers necessary accommodations to provide job seekers with disabilities effective and quality services that include basic career services, individualized career services, follow up and support services. Technology is in place to serve the needs of individuals with visual and auditory impairments. The Board provides access to education and training to staff to ensure the needs of all customers are met and to ensure equity in the provision of services regardless of barriers to employment. Also, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff are co-located in the one-stop center to provide counseling and support services not available through the workforce center programs. The Board employs an Equal Opportunity Officer responsible for training career center staff to ensure they are equipped to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities for employment and training services.

The Board will continue to develop resources and materials for individuals with disabilities and will annually assess the physical and programmatic accessibility of programs and services of all workforce centers operating in the local area as required by law in accordance with section 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

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

The one-stop partners in Workforce Solutions South Plains career centers collaborate effectively to provide an integrated system of services. All active partners work together in a collaborative fashion and coordinate activities and services in a manner that meets the needs of one-stop customers. Partner staff participate in orientations and cross training sessions and staff meetings.

Job Corp is a partner that has been given the option to be housed in the Workforce Solutions Lubbock office on a full-time basis beginning in 2021. Job Corp staff provide in-reach and out-reach services to youth ages 16-24. Job Corp staff have a long-term relationship with Workforce Solutions youth program staff and each serve as a point of contact for program referrals and information. Job Corp staff are an integral part of the one-stop system and participate in orientations and other one-stop activities. The Job Corp Contractors contribute towards the infrastructure cost of the Lubbock one-stop office on a monthly basis under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Plains Board.

Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) staff and Workforce Solutions Lubbock staff provide integrated services to veterans needing employment assistance. This relationship has been beneficial to both partners with TVC providing more intensive services to veterans and Workforce Center staff providing priority access to programs and services to veterans. These roles are well defined and it is a mutual goal to provide the highest level of services to veterans. The one-stop provides access to all universal services on a priority basis and will continue to follow federal guidance and assure only veterans in need of more intensive services are referred to DVOPS. The TVC Veterans Employment Representative coordinates employer outreach with the Business Service Unit (BSU) of the one-stop. The Veterans Employer Representative is considered to be a part of the BSU and is in the chain of communications. TVC funds are allocated to support the co-location cost of TVC staff. The TWC Local Veterans Outreach Worker is housed on a full-time basis in the Workforce Solutions Lubbock office. The one-stop will continue to expand coordination with the local worker. TWC resource funds support the co-location cost of the Local Veterans Outreach Worker.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff is now integrated into the one-stop system. VR is a full-time one stop partner supporting the overall infrastructure cost of the one-stop system.

Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) services are provided in rural one-stop locations in Terry County and Hockley County. The Workforce Solutions South Plains Board in partnership with AEL provides lab space with computers and software. AEL provides instructors who teach a minimum of four days per week. This partnership is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding.

Individualized career services are available to Adult and Dislocated Workers if determined to be appropriate in order for the individual to obtain or retain employment. Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skills may include diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment or training goals. An individual employment plan is developed to identify the

employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals. Applicants for training services receive information regarding training programs offered by the State's Eligible Training Providers to prepare individuals to work in one of the Board's targeted occupations.

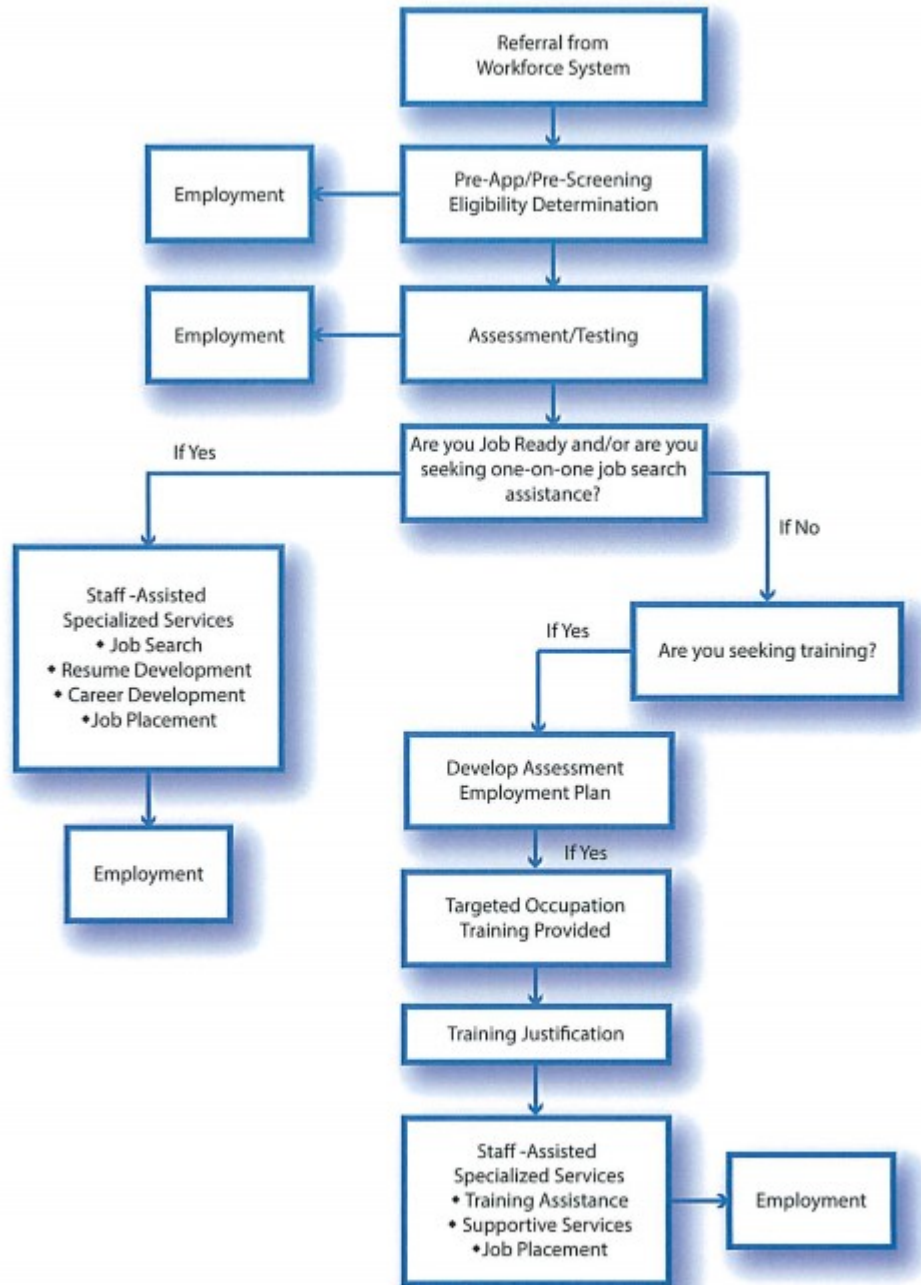
Career counselors work within the existing service delivery process to facilitate success for adults and dislocated workers. The diagrams below illustrate the Adult and Dislocated Worker customer flows and customer flows for special populations. Basic or Individualized Career Services include outreach, job search assistance and workshops, labor market information, job placement services, intake, initial and comprehensive assessments, and referrals.

Training participants approved for an Individual Training Account (ITA) can receive up to \$7,500 for employment and training services to fund training in one of the Board's targeted occupations. While actively participating in the training services, participants are eligible to receive supportive services which may include transportation costs, child care, utility payments, housing payments, etc. that will enable them to continue participation and have a successful outcome.

Reemployment services for dislocated workers include individualized career service options such as prevocational training that can assist workers with the adjustment to new work environments and short-term occupational skills training that provides industry-recognized certifications and can facilitate the transfer of existing skill sets to new industries and occupations. These services are more viable options for workers who would prefer to return to work quickly rather than engage in long-term training.

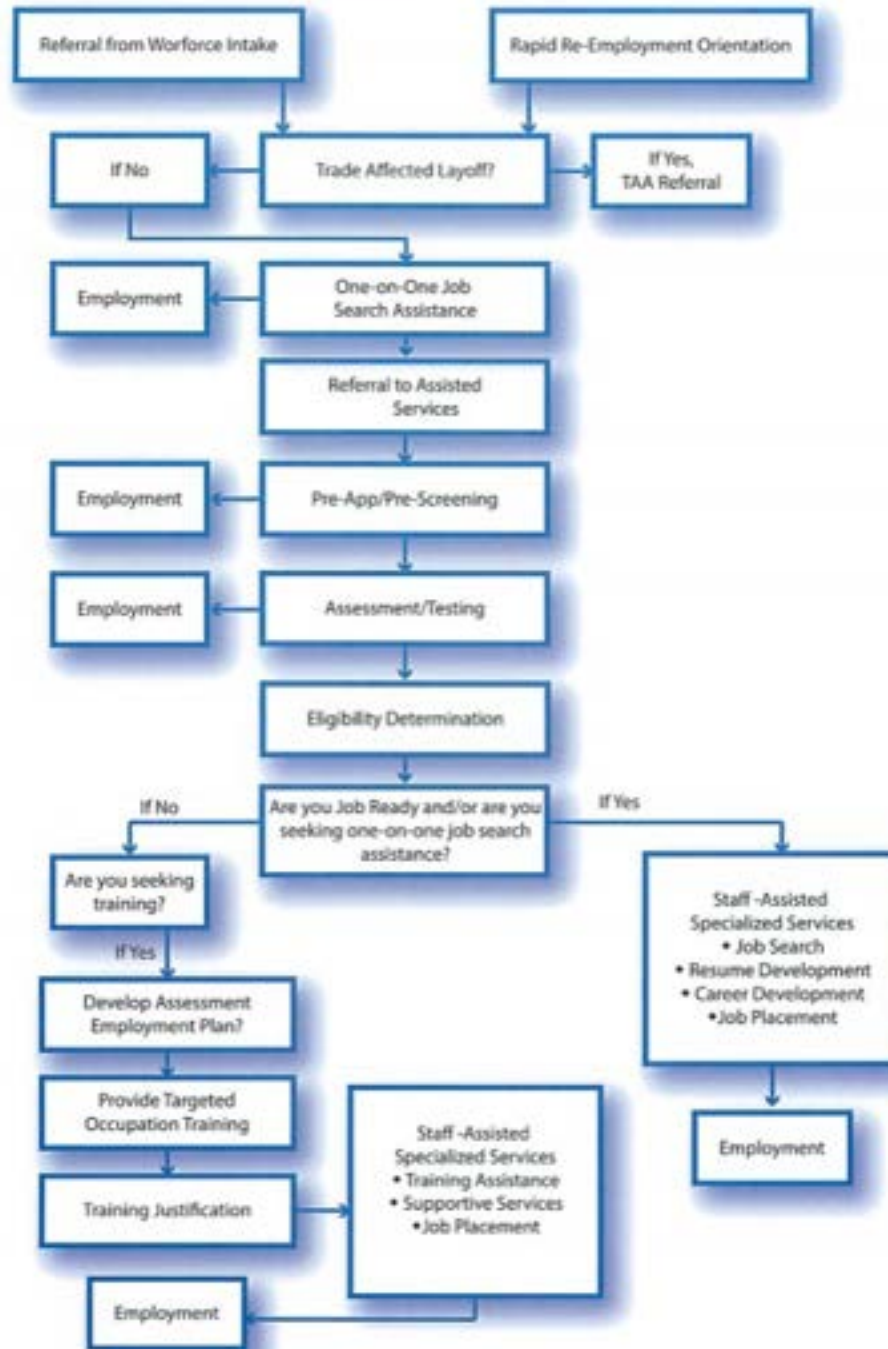
Over the next four years, the Board will continue to increase the number of trainees who participate in work-based training, including apprenticeships, to earn industry-recognized certifications that are portable and stackable. Professional development training will be provided annually to career center and BSU staff to enable them to facilitate on-the-job training and customized training contracts. In addition, the Board will allocate 3% percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funding to fund incumbent worker training projects each year for the next four years. The Board will continue to enhance and add to its online career roadmaps informing jobseekers of available training programs that offer stackable credentials and align with the region's targeted occupations.

WIOA Customer Flow



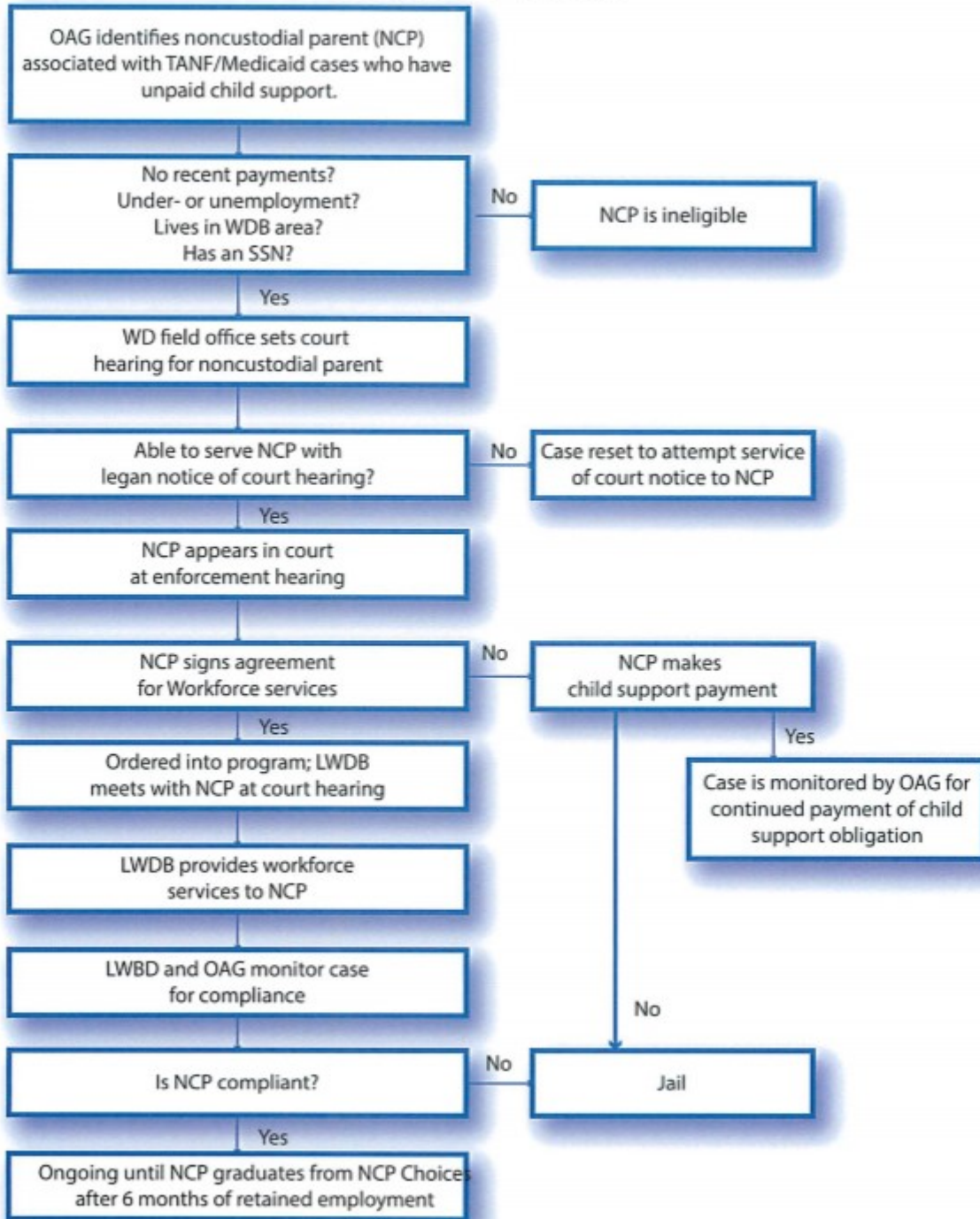
South Plains Community Action Association, Inc.

Dislocated Worker Customer Flow



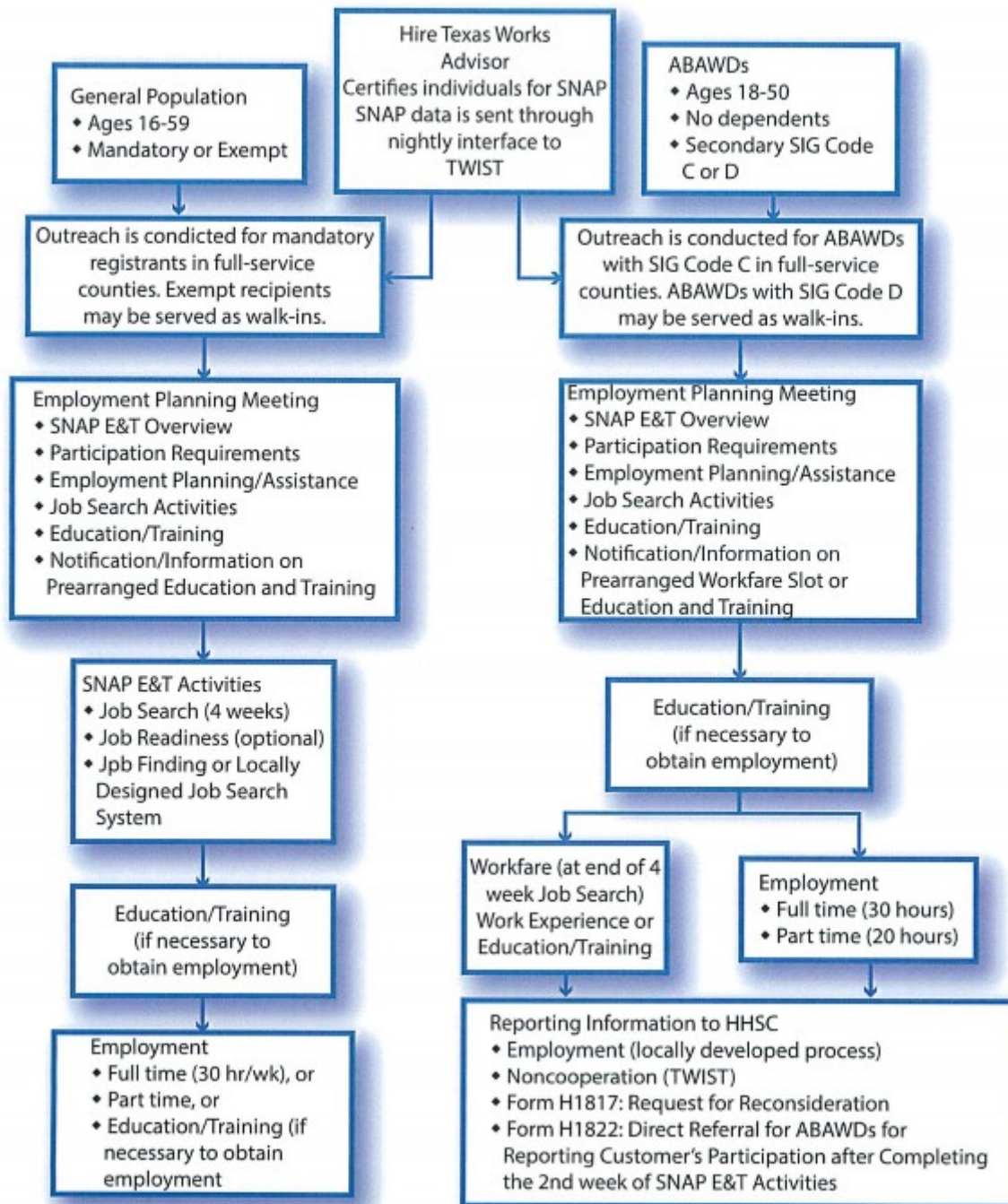
South Plains Community Action Association, Inc.

NCP Choices Customer Flow

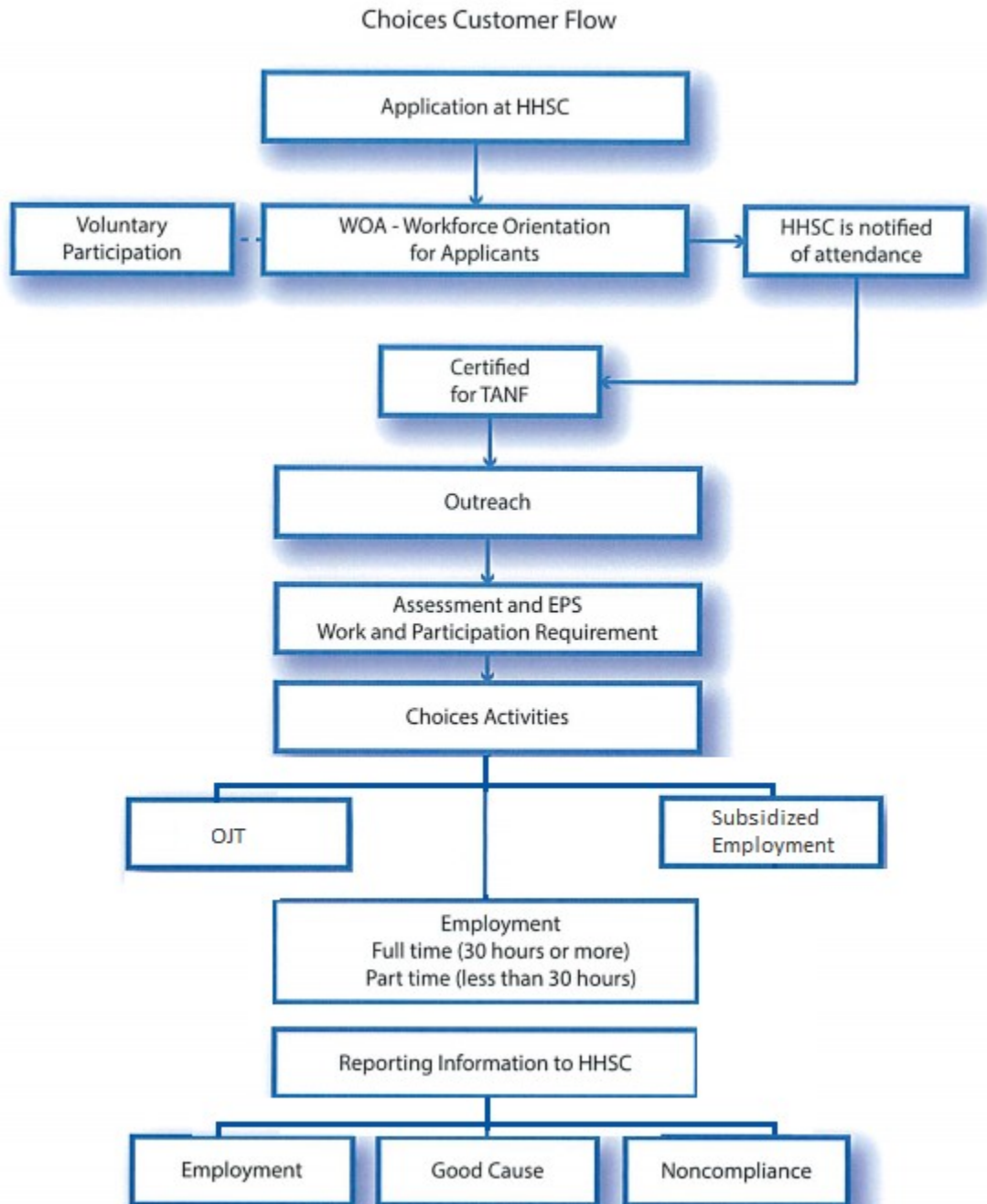


South Plains Community Action Association, Inc.

SNAP E&T Customer Flow



South Plains Community Action Association, Inc.



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

The Board will continue to support local businesses who are reducing their workforce and/or closing their businesses by providing Rapid Response Services. This will be accomplished by organizing a team that will consist of the State’s Unemployment Information Field Specialists, WIOA Career Center Representative, Business Services Representative and the Rapid Response Coordinator. This will be accomplished by setting up an orientation meeting in order to meet

with all dislocated workers. Workers will receive information on how to access UI benefits, how to register for work in WorkinTexas.com and how they will receive their payments. Career Center representatives will provide information about WIOA approved training, the application process, and basic guidelines and eligibility. Information on short-term and long-term training opportunities, on the job training, veteran's services, how to create a resume, and how to conduct required work searches is also provided to dislocated workers.

In 2020, the Board received a DOL National Dislocated Worker Grant to increase services to workers dislocated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The additional funding will be used to supplement available training funds to serve dislocated workers identified through the Board's Rapid Response services to employers in the industry who are downsizing or closing due to the economic downturn.

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

WIOA establishes minimum standards for delivery of workforce services to youth. Youth who are between the ages of 16 and 24 years of age receive specialized services designed to assist them in completing their high school education and pursuing secondary education. The Board's allocation of funding to serve youth must be expended in services to youth who have dropped out of high school (out-of-school youth), have completed high school but require assistance to obtain employment or training, or are attending high school but are at risk of not completing successfully (in-school youth). Please see response to Question 23 below for additional information regarding the Youth Program.

The Board has developed strategies to outreach and increase educational opportunities for eligible youth. Once basic eligibility is determined, the youth are assessed for the type or types of services needed, skill level/work experience, and their interests. TABE test is administered and may be used to assist in determining if the youth is basic skills deficient. All information is considered when developing the Individual Service Strategy (ISS). Special consideration may be given to individuals with disabilities. Workforce Solutions South Plains staff use a variety of assessment tools to gauge barrier markers, as well as tests which have been approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, which are listed below. Workforce Solutions will add new instruments as needed.

- ❖ TABE – Test for Adult Basic Education/Grade level assessment
- ❖ TABE CLAS-E to assess ABE for non-English speakers
- ❖ O-Net for the interest inventory
- ❖ Texas Career Check by the LMCI Department of TWC

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

The Board collaborates with the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA) and other EDCs in the South Plains to leverage sales tax funds to secure funding to enhance secondary Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs and high demand occupation training at the post-secondary level. In collaboration with Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA), the Board received its seventh and eighth High Demand Job Training Grants both in the amounts of \$150,000 and \$140,700 matched by contributions from LEDA in the amounts of \$251,000 and \$140,734. These grants purchased truck driving simulators for South Plains College's CDL program and medical simulators for South Plains College's and Texas Tech University's nursing programs. These investments will allow for hundreds to be trained in the high demand, high wage careers of nursing and truck driving. The Board also received \$150,000 in WIOA Alternative funding which was matched by \$500,000 from LEDA, \$15,000 from Anton ISD, \$10,000 each from Plainview, Levelland Littlefield, Brownfield, and Idalou EDCs, and \$50,000 from Texas Mutual Insurance Company. This partnership purchased CTE equipment for 25 school districts to train 1,890 high school students in high demand careers. The Board's High Demand Job Training Project has given \$2,213,668 in equipment to 35 high schools in the South Plains resulting in 4,074 students being trained, earning industry recognized certifications and college credits that transfer into high demand careers upon graduation.

The Board Executive Director is the President of the Community Workforce Partnership (CWP), a 501(c)(3) with a mission that is aligned with the mission of the workforce board. The CWP Board of Directors includes CTE Directors from area school districts, the LEDA CEO, the Lubbock Chamber CEO, the Dean of Workforce Development for SPC, and the Director of Workforce Development for the South Plains Association of Governments, the local COG. The Board meets quarterly to discuss opportunities to leverage resources and to engage partner support.

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

Support services are provided, if needed, to program customers to address barriers to employment or participation in work-based services, basic and individualized career services and career pathways, education and training services, re-employment services, post-employment and follow-up services (i.e. job retention services for SNAP E&T), and access to child care services. Support services are subject to availability of resources and funding, and provided based on individual program guidelines. Transportation-related support services are allowable for all eligible workforce participants if they are reasonable, necessary, and directly related to program participation. Services include:

- ✚ Bus passes (issued daily, weekly, or monthly)
- ✚ Basic Cash Allowance
- ✚ Prepaid gas cards at variable amounts, depending on mileage
- ✚ Toll Road Charges
- ✚ Mileage reimbursement (personal vehicles only)
- ✚ Car pools
- ✚ Minor car repairs with prior approval.
- ✚ Taxicab services

- ✚ Contracts with private entities, such as transit providers that provide shuttle or van services
- ✚ Car insurance (except for SNAP E&T Recipients)
- ✚ Driver license fees (includes renewals)
- ✚ Vehicle inspection fees and registration fees (except for SNAP E&T Recipients)
- ✚ Purchase of tires or automobile batteries (except for SNAP E&T Exempt Recipients)

In addition, the Board's workforce services provider, South Plains Community Action Association, operates the rural transportation program and provides 'curb to curb' service for residents of the rural transit district. 'Door to Door' service is available to seniors and individuals with disabilities. The service is available to all counties in the South Plains WDA for a minimal fare and the fare can be reimbursed for eligible WIOA participants.

Childcare is a vital support services for working parents and individuals engaged in training. During the period PY 2021 through PY 2024, the Board anticipates subsidizing childcare for over 2,250 children per day on average. Care is provided by licensed childcare providers as well as self-arranged childcare providers for eligible children. Children under 13 years of age (or at Board option, 19 if child with disability) are eligible if they:

- Are a U.S. citizen or legal immigrant;
- Reside with
 - an income eligible family whose *total assets do not exceed \$1 million* OR a family that is experiencing homelessness
 - parents (or a person standing in loco parentis) who require care in order to work or attend education/training for 25 hours (single parent)/50 hours (dual parents)

Child Care Program (CCS) rules were revised during PY 2016 in response to changes in Child Care Development Fund legislation and were implemented beginning October 1, 2016. Under the new guidelines, the eligibility criteria are only applied at initial eligibility and eligibility redetermination after 12 months of care. Once certified, children are considered to be eligible and will continue to receive services for 12 months with a few exceptions.

Currently, CCS Program staff are located in the Lubbock Center only. Customers in the rural areas travel to Lubbock to visit with their CCS case manager. Alternately, they can apply and report changes through the new, online child care paperless documentation system, email, fax, or regular mail. The Lubbock center also maintains the Betty Anderson Resource Center that CCS providers can use to prepare teaching materials. The Child Care Services staff travel to rural areas weekly in the Frog Bus to make resource materials available to CCS providers. In PY 2019 the Board rewrapped the Frog Bus as a billboard promoting Child Care Services. In PY 2021 through PY 2024 the Board will add a website feature allowing parents to communicate with staff in real time through an interactive chat feature. The paperless application system has already shortened application processing times and helped mitigate long waits in line to see case managers at the Lubbock career center.

Workforce Solutions Child Care Services strives to ensure access to quality child care providers for families across the South Plains. The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program is a voluntary quality-based rating system of child care providers participating in the TWC's subsidized child

care program. TRS certification is available to licensed center and licensed and registered child care home providers who meet the certification criteria. The TRS certification system offers three levels of certification (Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star) to encourage providers to attain progressively higher certification requirements leading to a Four-Star level.

Since the TRS system is a voluntary program, CCS Provider Services staff will continue to promote the benefits for provider participation in an effort to increase the number of TRS certified providers. Benefits include, but are not limited to online professional development, one-on-one teacher mentoring, and increased child subsidy reimbursements.

Additionally, Workforce Solutions Child Care Services strives to educate parents about the benefits of enrolling their child(ren) in a TRS facility. Parent information includes links from the WSSP website to the TRS website which provides information of the numerous studies showing that at-risk children who attend higher quality child care programs are more prepared for school entry than children who do not attend quality child care programs.

Programs services provided through the career centers include the use of the resource room for job search, staff-assisted job search, workforce orientations or requests for labor market information and other assistance. In addition to career center visits, the Board receives requests through an online contact form. By implementing the online chat feature, the Board anticipates being more responsive to customers requesting services. The Board can also facilitate requests for information and requests for support services in a timely manner.

12. A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing, coordinating, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act Services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system:

Workforce Solutions South Plains Wagner-Peyser staff are fully integrated into the local one-stop system. The one-stop operator follows the Texas Model and there is not a duplication of services in service delivery. The Board follows the requirements in the Agency Board Agreement with the Texas Workforce Commission.

The Board coordinates with TWC to ensure the delivery of employment services to the universal population and to employer customers and to ensure that assessment and reemployment services are provided as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act.

13. A description of how the Board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA Sections 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Section 232:

The Board maintains a strong partnership with the region's Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) provider to increase access to and referrals between the workforce system and the AEL provider with the goal of improving outcomes for customers. The MOU between the Board and the Region 17 Education Service Center, the AEL Program provider, facilitates a 2-way referral system and establishes the process for conducting follow-up on referrals made to ensure contact

has been established with AEL for those referred and in need of their GED. All AEL participants looking for employment are registered into WorkInTexas.com and assisted one on one at the AEL orientation or in the resource area when they visit the career center. WIOA Adult and Youth Program Managers attend monthly meetings with AEL and other partners such as Region 17, Texas Tech University/East Lubbock Promise, Learn Inc., Literacy Lubbock, South Plains College, and Lubbock Housing Authority to discuss services and programs offered by each organization and to discuss upcoming events. Workforce Career Center staff coordinate with AEL activities in various ways including attending AEL orientations on a monthly basis to provide information on Workforce Services, to assist participants with registration in WorkInTexas.com to facilitate their job search, and to identify AEL customers who are interested in WIOA Programs. Board staff are also invited by TWC to a bi-weekly conference call with the AEL Providers to promote coordination of activities and the creation of local plans.

The Board will review local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA Sections 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Section 232:14, as requested by local applicants or by TWC. The Executive Director of Region 17 ESC is a Workforce Solutions Board member and has input into the development of workforce plans and policies.

14. Not applicable.

15. An identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described I WIOA Section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the CEOs or the Governor under WIOA Section 107(d)(12)(B)(i):

The South Plains Regional Workforce Development Board, dba Workforce Solutions South Plains, is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as governed by the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) of the 15 counties that comprise the South Plains Workforce Development Region.

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

The Board maintains a Board Financial Management Manual (FMM) that sets forth Board policies and procedures for procurement, award and contract administration of goods and services in support of the Board's mission. The Board has an assigned Procurement Officer who is responsible for formal procurements and most small purchase procurements for Board services. The procurement process is initiated when a requirement for goods or services is identified and the Chief Executive Officer signals that procurement is needed in order to fulfill the requirement. The Procurement Officer, with the assistance of staff responsible for the specific program area requesting the procurement, will develop and write the RFP and coordinate the procurement process to ensure compliance with the Board's FMM and applicable federal and state regulations. The final document must be reviewed by the Executive Director. Final contracting authority will be retained by the administrative staff.

All procurement transactions (regardless of whether verbal or written price quotations, sealed bids or by negotiation and without regard to dollar value) will be conducted in a manner that provides maximum, full and open competition. Procurement procedures will not restrict or

eliminate competition. For Workforce/ Child care contracts, the start of the process is approximately nine months prior to the expiration of the current contract in order to have ample time for the process.

A Procurement Checklist that provides a list of steps required in the procurement process is completed as part of every procurement transaction. The steps required include:

Needs Assessment Determination

Once a need for services or goods is established, the Procurement Officer may begin the purchase process by developing a Request for Proposals or an Invitation to Bid.

Procurement Method Selected

- a. Competitive negotiation (Request for Proposals, RFP).
- b. Non-competitive negotiation (sole source).

Procurement Authorization (CEO)

The Chief Executive Officer signals that procurement is needed. The Board approval will be noted in the Board of Directors Board Minutes.

Cost/Price Analysis Forms and Cost Reasonableness Determination

A proposal cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action on all RFP proposals is the first step of the evaluation process. The method and degree of analysis will be dependent upon the facts surrounding the particular procurement situation.

Rating Criteria Developed – Included in the RFP document.

The Procurement Officer, with the assistance of staff responsible for the specific program area develops a criteria summary which includes a technical review and the evaluation criteria to be used on the proposals received.

Procurement Instrument Completed/Approved

Prior to issuance of the document to the general public, final approval of the procurement document must be obtained from the Executive Director.

Public Media Advertisement/Proof of Publication

At a minimum, formal procurements are advertised in the legal notice or public notice section of the regional newspaper at least one time or posted on the Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD) website: http://esbd.cpa.state.tx.us/bid_show.cfm?bidid=110832. Procurements are posted on the Board's website as well.

RFP/Bid Mailing List (also, proof of attempts to use HUBs).

A list of Individuals/organizations who have requested to be informed of RFPs or IFBs will be maintained. The registered bidder's list will be updated on a regular basis and reviewed for changes once every program year. Identifying qualified small and minority (HUB'S) businesses on solicitation lists included.

E-mail list available. Also record of undeliverable e-mail and attempts to contact.

Using the "bidder's list," appropriate individuals and/or organizations will be identified and mailing labels which include the name and address of the individual/organization as well as a contact person, if known, will be developed for issuing Proposal Packets. (In this case, emails were conducted)

Bidder's Conference Documentation (Including Questions and Answers)

A Bidder's Conference shall be held when the estimated procurement cost exceeds \$100,000. The Bidder's Conference will occur at a time prior to the bidding deadline at a time and place designated in the procuring document. All proposal questions must be written and will be accepted until and during the Bidder's Conference. No questions relating to the IFB or RFP will

be accepted after the Conference. After the Bidder's Conference, all questions and answers pertaining to the IFB or RFP will be distributed to those who were issued a Proposal Packet. Attendance at the Bidder's Conference will be recorded; attendance may be mandatory if determined necessary to ensure a clear understanding of the Board's requirements, particularly in the case of workforce services procurements.

All Proposals Submitted in Response to the RFP or IFB or all Quotes Taken.

One person will be designated to receive all proposals. It is the responsibility of this individual to date stamp and note the time of arrival on each proposal and to maintain proposals in a central location. No proposals will be accepted after the due date.

EPLS/Debarred Vendor List

The Excluded Parties List Search (EPLS) includes information regarding entities debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, excluded or disqualified under the non-procurement common rule, or otherwise declared ineligible from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits. A thorough review of applicable databases is conducted to ensure that no award is made to entities who are debarred or otherwise ineligible to receive state and federal funds.

Completed Staff and/or Board Evaluation Forms

An evaluation instrument will be developed and used in accordance with the RFP requirements. Responsive proposals will be evaluated and scored by either an independent team of reviewers contracted for this purpose or by an internal team of Board staff. In all cases, reviewers will all use the same standardized instrument to evaluate proposals.

Professional References Obtained

If necessary to engage an independent team of external reviewers, a request for qualifications (RFQ) is solicited for qualified external evaluators to evaluate proposals. At least three prospective contractors will be compared based on their ability to perform as well as their proposed cost/price. For the high scored qualified consultants to evaluate, South Plains Workforce will use a Contract for Services or a Letter of Agreement for these Consultant Contracts.

Documentation of SPRWDB/Committee Review

When Board approval is required, the action taken by the Board is documented in the Board Committee Meeting Minutes.

Notice of Award/Non-Selection

Notification to all proposers regarding contract award will be mailed after the selection of the approved proposers by the South Plains Workforce. A copy of each letter will be maintained in the procurement file. The notification letter, which will include the right to protest the decision, must be signed by the Executive Director.

Notes and Other Documentation Concerning Debriefings/Protests/Negotiations

Upon receipt of the notice identifying the contract award recipient a proposer who wishes to protest the decision must notify the Director in writing within fifteen (14) days of the mailing date of the notification letter. See Paragraph 23 below.

Signature Authorities

Part of the contract administration system.

Subcontracts Negotiated

If the offeror proposes to use subcontractors, the proposed subcontract must be analyzed also. The work to be performed by the subcontractor should be clearly identified, described, and justified in the cost proposal.

Fully Executed Contract, Including Amendments/Modifications

All South Plains Workforce Board contracts, including modifications, must be written and properly signed by the appropriate official(s), and must include any beginning and ending dates related to contract performance and payment. All modifications must be executed by both Board's Executive Director or his/her designee and the Contractor's Authorized Representative, except for unilateral modifications.

Contract Performance Evaluation

Contract closeout documents, records, progress reports and closeout reports (include any required contractor's self-evaluations and staff evaluations). Part of the contract administration system.

Required Reports

Part of the contract administration system.

Documentation Related to Disputes, Protest and Claims

A protester should exhaust all administrative remedies through the Board before pursuing a protest/dispute at a higher level. Offerors will be notified as soon as possible if the proposal is found to be unresponsive and will not be considered. Once the Workforce Solutions Board of Directors has agreed upon selection(s), all offerors will be notified in writing of the results within ten (10) working days of the decision.

Any unsuccessful offeror has the option to protest the procurement decision. Complaints or protests must be submitted in writing by registered mail to Director of Operations, Workforce Solutions South Plains, 1500 Broadway, Ste. 800, Lubbock, Texas 79401. A clear statement of the complaint or protest and the reason(s) or grounds must be made. Protests must be received by the Board within 14 calendar days of the mailing date of the notification of non-selection. An acknowledgment of receipt of the protest will be provided to the protestor along with specific instructions and dates for the protest process.

The protesting party is first given an opportunity for an informal review of the evaluation, ranking and selection process with the Board staff. This review is designed to allow the protesting party an opportunity to examine documentation related to the procurement, understand the reasons for their particular evaluation score, provide them with information that may allow them to prepare a more successful response in future solicitations. The objective of this informal review is to provide an opportunity for resolution and avoid, if possible, the need for a formal hearing.

If after the informal review, the protesting party is not satisfied, a formal hearing will be scheduled. Hearings shall be conducted by the Board EO Officer within thirty (30) days of the filing of a protest and decisions shall be made not later than sixty (60) days after such filing. Except for complaints alleging fraud or criminal activity, complaints shall be made within one year of the alleged occurrence. Protests not resolved to the satisfaction of the protesting party may be pursued through the Texas Workforce Commission.

Offerors not selected for award of a contract may receive a debriefing to determine the reasons for non-selection if the debriefing is requested in writing to the contact person for this procurement, and the request is made within thirty (30) days of the date the notice of non-selection is postmarked.

General Correspondence Related to the Specific Procurement Action

Any correspondence applicable to procurement is maintained on file as required by records management guidelines.

Micro Purchase Process

Procedures for procurement of goods and services costing less than \$10,000 in the aggregate may be completed without soliciting price or rate quotations if the price is determined to be reasonable based on information such as research, experience, purchases, or other information.

- The basis used to determine price reasonableness of a purchase is noted in support documentation.
- Purchases made under such procedures are distributed equitably among qualified suppliers to the extent practicable.

Actions to verify price reasonableness of goods and services that fall within the threshold will be taken if:

- the purchasing entity has information that the price is not reasonable (e.g. comparison to the previous price paid, or personal knowledge of the supply or purchase), or
- purchasing a good or service for which comparative pricing information is not readily available (e.g. purchasing a good or service that is not the same as, or similar to other goods or services that have recently been purchased on a competitive basis).

Aggregate purchases shall not be divided in order to fall within the small purchase procurement threshold (or a micro-purchase threshold) and avoid procurement requirements

Small Purchase Process

Small purchase procedures involve simple and informal procurement methods that are sound and appropriate for a procurement of services, supplies or other property, costing between \$10,000 and \$250,000 in the aggregate. When transacting a small purchase, the basis for placing the order with the successful bidder and the factors considered in determining the lowest and best bid must be documented by the procuring staff member and filed with all other documentation related to the transaction. The staff member must document a price or a rate quote from a least three providers. Small purchases will not require newspaper advertising.

Goods and services purchased for \$250,000 or less are subject to these small purchase procedures and conducted in accordance with the Board's procurement policies unless the policies are less restrictive than those of the FMGC. In the event of an emergency, when goods or services are so badly needed that financial loss or operational damage will occur, the Executive Director is authorized to approve emergency purchases.

17. A description of the local levels of performance negotiated with TWC and the CEOs consistent with WIOA Section 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 training providers under WIOA Title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area:

The Board is contractually bound to meet or exceed performance standards established by the TWC each year. The Board's contracted performance measures for the previous and current program years include the nine indicators of successful performance listed earlier in this plan. Listed earlier are the performance measure and the Board's performance for Program Year 2020. Effective July 1, 2021, new measures will be introduced to reflect changes in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) requirements.

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

The Board contracts all performance targets to the one-stop operator. Board staff provide technical assistance, support, and information to the one-stop operator. Board and career center staff meet on a monthly basis to discuss all aspects of the programs' goals and performance. The Board's certified monitor analyzes and monitors program performance and outcomes. The Board will recognize high performance with incentives and when necessary take corrective action when performance goals are not being met. The Board will closely analyze and evaluate practices that are effective and those that are not. The Board will work in conjunction with the workforce services provider to ensure that the service model is designed for the success of the customer.

The Board will continue to seek out best practices and communicate with high performing boards across the state to ensure the local system continues to provide the highest level of customer service. The Board will seek out best practices across the nation and replicate successful models of service delivery when possible. The Board will utilize technology and seek ways to provide services to customers in an efficient manner. During PY 2021 through PY 2024, the Board will continue to maintain and promote its online CCS application and CCS change reporting capability and also begin to offer an online chat feature and continue to enhance and add to its interactive career roadmaps through the Board website. The Board will seek approaches to services that will create success for customers. The Board will target occupations in demand in the region and work with educational institutions and training providers to develop services that meet the needs of the customer. The Board and workforce services provider will continually evaluate program design to ensure the Board is responsive to customer needs.

19. A description of how training services outlined in WIOA Section 134 will be provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs under that chapter, and how the Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training providers, regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

Before training services are provided, career center counselors guide customers through the completion of an Individual Employment Plan. Assessments are conducted to ensure that a customer meets Math, Reading and vocational requirements applicable to a specific program before the individual is being approved for training services and referred to the training provider he or she has selected. The training program selected by the customer must be directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local areas or in another area to which the trainee is willing

to locate. Occupational skills training will only be funded if the training prepares the individual to work in one of the Board's targeted occupations. Individuals will be required to apply for other sources of funding (i.e. other agencies, Pell grants, scholarships etc.) before applying and being approved for an ITA. An ITA will be commensurate with the service provider's cost (tuition, books and fees) for the current program year. Per Board policy, an ITA is limited to a maximum of seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500) and programs must be completed within three (3) years. There are no exceptions to the maximum ITA limits.

Currently, applicants for training services are provided with a list of training providers who offer training programs in their chosen occupation and who are eligible to receive workforce funding to facilitate customer choice. In PY 2021 through PY 2024, the Board will continue to enhance and add to its interactive career roadmaps on the Board's website to inform customers of the training programs subsidized by the Board. The training programs will be linked to information on the performance, including completion and placement rates, for each of the Eligible Training Providers.

20. A description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners:

The one-stop centers will utilize technology and resources provided by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to integrate case management information. One-stop partners' systems integration will be aligned when allowable such as is the case with Child Care Services. WIOA case managers and CCS case managers are currently using The Workforce Information Systems of Texas and other integrated systems that enable them to provide adequate case management services.

21. The Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individual 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 Section 134(c)(3) and Section 680.600 of the Final Regulations:

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.

Eligible veterans and eligible spouses of veterans continue to receive priority of service for all Department of Labor (DOL)-funded job training programs, which include WIOA Adult services. The Contractor must ensure that information is available to veterans and the public regarding veteran's priority access to services.

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

1. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient.
2. Foster youth and former foster 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 skills deficient.
4. All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses.
5. All other foster youth and former foster youth.
6. Employed Individuals whose income does not exceed the Board's Self-Sufficiency Wage.

Priority access to WIOA Adult services must be provided first to eligible veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who are also recipients of public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient. Priority must then be given to all other individuals who are recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.

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

The amount of funding provided through an Individual Training Account may not exceed seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500). Additionally, the training program funded by the ITA must be completed within three (3) years. There are no exceptions to the ITA cap amount or to the three-year time-limit for training.

Currently, applicants for training services are provided with a list of training providers who offer training programs in their chosen occupation and who are eligible to receive workforce funding to facilitate customer choice. In PY 2021 through PY 2024, the Board will continue to enhance and add to its interactive career roadmaps on the Board's website to inform customers of the training programs subsidized by the Board. The training programs will be linked to information on the performance, including completion and placement rates, for each of the Eligible Training Providers.

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

Youth Program services include the following 14 youth service elements required by WIOA Section 129(c) (2):

- ✚ Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent or postsecondary credential;
- ✚ Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services;

- ✚ Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component, such as summer and nonseasonal employment, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job-training, in the private for-profit or nonprofit sectors;
- ✚ Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials in in-demand industries or occupations in the local area;
- ✚ Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation;
- ✚ Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors;
- ✚ Support services, such as linkages to community services, assistance with transportation, child and dependent care, assistance with housing, needs-related payments, assistance with educational testing, reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities, referrals to health care, and assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and tools;
- ✚ Adult mentoring for at least 12 months;
- ✚ Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after completing participation;
- ✚ Comprehensive guidance and counseling, such as drug and alcohol abuse, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate;
- ✚ Financial literacy education;
- ✚ Entrepreneurial skills training;
- ✚ Services providing labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and,
- ✚ Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

The Board contracts with a Youth Program service provider through a competitive procurement process to ensure that all 14 program elements are available to WIOA youth participants. Youth Program staff determine which elements are appropriate to provide to a participant based on the participant's assessment and Individual Service Strategy (ISS). An ISS is developed for each participant to identify their short and long term goals. Case managers review the youth's identified barriers to determine how the Program, directly or through partnering agencies, can assist to remove the barriers. Over the course of participation, case managers track the progress the customer is making toward meeting his or her goals.

Youth Program staff identify appropriate services and career pathways by utilizing an objective assessment. This process includes a review of the academic and occupational skills levels and service needs. Staff also utilize this process to develop the ISS. The objective assessment includes a review of:

- ✚ Basic skills
- ✚ Occupational skills
- ✚ Work Experience
- ✚ Employability
- ✚ Interests/Aptitudes

- ✚ Support service needs
- ✚ Developmental needs

WIOA requires that at least 75% of Youth Program funding be expended on services to out-of-school youth. Expenditures on WE activities meet or exceed 20% of local youth formula funds. To meet this requirement, the Youth Program offers a summer employment program to connect youth with area employers. Business Services Unit and ES staff make contact with employers throughout the region and to identify placements for youth. These teams work in tandem with Youth Program staff to facilitate successful work experiences for program participants. Work experience (WE) is a priority as it is important for the youth to not only obtain skills but also explore careers to assist them in gaining self-sufficiency. The Board has implemented an incentive policy to encourage successful completion of work experience and training activities.

Designated staff within the Workforce division, including Youth staff, serve on a variety of Advisory Boards throughout the Community such as SHRM, DARS, local Chambers, Goodwill, the Adult Education Coalition, etc. These memberships assist in developing, and maintaining, community relationships with agency partners. Youth Program staff maintain current, active, and ongoing collaborations with entities such as:

- ✚ Adult Education Coalition
- ✚ Migrant Programs
- ✚ Training Providers
- ✚ Juvenile Probation
- ✚ Catholic Charities
- ✚ Buckner Children and Family Services
- ✚ Vocational Rehabilitation
- ✚ School District's At-Risk/Drop-Out Coordinators/ISD Officers

Youth staff maintain partnerships with agencies such as Buckner Children and Family Services and refer youth to these agencies to address specific barriers for special populations and to access services included as part of the 14 essential service elements. Buckner's serves youth aging out of foster care. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program provides services to youth with disabilities. The partner agencies collaborate with the Board to ensure that all 14 youth program elements are available to participating youth.

Youth staff utilize various tools, including the internet, networks, laptops, telephone, etc., to better assist participants in the rural communities. Alternately, individuals can apply and report changes through the new, online paperless documentation system, email, fax, or regular mail. During PY 2021 through 2024, the Board will develop an interactive online chat feature to enable communications with customers in rural areas. Laptops will be utilized to meet the technical needs of rural youth, and Youth staff will arrange to meet with participants in locations other than the workforce centers. Laptops will have Wi-Fi and be equipped with the TABE assessment in particular, so that the test will be readily available to Youth Participants on an as-needed basis.

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

The Board reaches out to apprenticeships operating in the region periodically to invite them to apply. There are 12 registered apprenticeship programs currently operating in the region and these providers will be invited to the annual Eligible Training Provider Meeting that's held in the spring of each year. The Board's ETP Coordinator provides technical assistance to all interested providers to facilitate creation of apprenticeships. Technical assistance is also provided to apprenticeship sponsors to assist with the submission and approval of ETP program applications.

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

The Board's BSU staff is knowledgeable of apprenticeship policies and able to provide information to interested employers on how to form and register an apprenticeship as well as information on the funding available through on-the-job training contracts to subsidize wages paid to apprenticeships enrolled in registered programs. The Board also reviews applications from apprenticeship programs that apply for the State's Chapter 133 Apprenticeship Program funds and completes a Board review form certifying that the occupations are targeted by the Board for expenditures of workforce funds.

During workforce orientation sessions, career center staff provide information on apprenticeship training and funding available to assist trainees with the cost of tuition, fees, tools and books as well as support services. Apprenticeship providers listed on the Board's ETP list provide the career centers with information on their enrollment processes and application periods and this information is communicated to customers during orientations and in printed outreach materials. Participants approved for training services are provided with the list of ETP's and have the option of selecting an apprenticeship provider as their training provider.

During PY 2021 through PY 2024, the Board will continue efforts described above in support of Apprenticeship Texas goal of increasing participation in apprenticeship training.

VI. Public Comment

The draft local plan for the South Plains Workforce Development Board Area is available for public comment at <http://workforcesouthplains.org/about/strategic-plan/>. The public, including representatives of businesses, education and training providers, and labor organizations, are invited to have input into the development of the local plan and submit comments to the Board during the public comment period. Comments will be accepted by phone, mail, or email or through the online response form. Contact information is provided below.

Rocky Brown, Chief Operating Officer
Workforce Solutions South Plains
1500 Broadway, Ste. 800
Lubbock, Texas 79401
(806) 744-1987
Rocky.brown@spworkforce.org

A notice announcing the availability of the plan on the Board's website will be published in the Lubbock AJ newspaper. The plan will be available on the Board's website: <http://workforcesouthplains.org/about/strategic-plan/>. After the comment period, the plan and the Board's response to comments received will be submitted to the Texas Workforce Commission.

Sources

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)
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