

Workforce Solutions South Plains PY 2025- 2028 Strategic Plan

South Plains Workforce Development Board - Program Years 2025–2028

Board Plan Development Guidelines

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies	4
A. Vision and Goals.....	4
B. Board Strategies	6
C. High-Performing Board.....	13
Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis.....	13
A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis.....	13
B. Labor Force Analysis and Trends.....	33
C. Workforce Development Analysis.....	41
Part 3: Core Programs.....	44
A. Workforce Development System.....	44
B. Core Programs—Expand Access, Facilitate Development, and Improve Access.....	47
Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery.....	50
A. One-Stop Service Delivery System.....	50
B. Employer Engagement, Economic Development, and Unemployment Insurance Program Coordination.....	53
C. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services	55
D. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management.....	57
E. Third Party Partnership in SNAP Employment and Training Programs	58
Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities.....	58
A. Rapid Response Activity Coordination	58
B. Youth Activities and Services.....	59
C. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs	62
D. Child Care and Early Learning	65
E. Transportation and Other Support Services.....	66
F. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy.....	68
Part 6: Adult and Dislocated Workers	69
A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training	69

B. Service Priority	71
Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts	72
A. Fiscal Agent	72
B. Subgrants and Contracts	73
Part 8: Performance	74
A. Board Performance Targets.....	74
Part 9: Training and Services	77
A. Individual Training Accounts	77
B. ITA Limitations.....	78
Part 10: Apprenticeship	78
A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs.....	78
B. ApprenticeshipTexas.....	79
Part 11: Public Comment	79
Appendix: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements.....	81
Local Board Plan Requirements	81
Requirement for Workforce Systemwide Alignment	81
Demonstrating Local Alignment with Texas’ Workforce System Strategic Plan.....	81
Directions for Demonstrating Alignment with the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan.....	82
System Goals and Objectives	82
1. Employers Goal – Delivery of Relevant Education and Training Programs.....	82
2. Learners Goal – Expansion of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship.....	83
3. Partners Goal – Alignment to Support Career Pathways	84
4. Policy and Planning Goal – Relevant Data Sets	85
Strategic Opportunities.....	86
Strategic Opportunity 1 – Employer Engagement	86
Strategic Opportunity 2 – Improving Outcomes for Texans with Barriers to Employment	87
Strategic Opportunity 3 – Use of Data to Support Investment Decisions.....	88

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 1998 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; child care workforce representative; 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 2025 to 2028. 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).

Part 1: Board Vision and Strategies

A. Vision and Goals

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

Each Board must include a description of the Board’s strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. The description must contain:

- *goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including the provision of early education services and services for youth and individuals with barriers to employment as defined by WIOA §3(24); and*
- *goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on the performance indicators described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A).*

Board Response:

The South Plains Regional Workforce Development 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 2025 to 2028 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. The Goals Matrix on pg. 9 provides a concise overview of the objectives, strategies, and activities that the Board has adopted for implementation during Program Years 2025 through 2028. It includes the operational plan, which outlines the programs and services available within the Board area and details how the Board's resources will be allocated to support the strategies adopted for implementation throughout this period.

B. Board Strategies

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

Boards must provide a description of their strategies to work with the partners that carry out Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) activities to align the resources available to the local workforce development area (workforce area) to achieve the Boards' vision and goals.

Board Response:

The Board recognizes the importance of leveraging funding by co-enrolling individuals eligible for both Workforce-funded programs and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs to support training and career pathways.

The Board collaborates closely with VR to enhance access to quality programs and opportunities for customers. The co-location of VR staff in our workforce center has facilitated improved interactions among staff, allowing VR and workforce staff to share information and resources informally.

South Plains maintains a strong collaborative partnership with our AEL provider. Regular meetings between Board staff, contractor staff, and AEL staff aim to reduce duplication and maximize resources. Triage meetings with local Board contract managers, workforce solutions staff, South Plains College, and AEL staff effectively identify and assess co-enrollment opportunities, ensuring individuals progress to employment. These meetings blend financial and other resources to support individuals nearing high school equivalency completion and ensure coordinated case management. AEL staff may be provided space at the Workforce center as needed.

The Board will review local applications submitted under Title II to ensure they align with WIOA §107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA §232 and provide services consistent with the local plan. The Board will consult with applicants, provide recommendations to promote alignment with the local plan, and establish cooperative agreements to enhance services for all customers.

The AEL Program delivers essential foundational skills, workforce preparation, workforce training, and other career advancement services necessary to prepare individuals to support their families, careers, and communities. AEL fosters growth by offering programs for individuals with barriers to employment, identifying transferable skills valued by employers, and delivering education and training to individuals seeking to complete postsecondary education and training and find employment in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Region 17 Education Service Center (ESC) is the Workforce Solutions South Plains (WSSP) AEL Service Provider, assisting adult students in gaining the basic skills needed to succeed in the workforce, earn a high school equivalency, or enter college or career training. Region 17 collaborates with WSSP and Workforce Service Providers in performing intake, determining program eligibility, assisting with enrollment in classes, coordinating supportive services as needed, and facilitating the process of connecting customers to provide English

language, math, reading, and writing instruction to help students acquire the skills necessary for success.

The staff of WSSP and Service Provider staff coordinate with Region 17 to enhance workforce, secondary, and postsecondary education and training outcomes. This coordination aims to expand capacity to reach new customers with barriers to employment through enhanced outreach and recruitment, and to implement outreach and follow-up services for populations requiring additional support, such as justice-involved individuals and adult learners with disabilities. This collaboration also promotes AEL as an educational resource for individuals seeking to obtain enhanced literacy and basic education skills.

Strategies Include:

- Improving data collection methods to streamline customer intake and assessment processes, efficiently and accurately pinpointing intrinsic needs of eligible adult customers.
- Identifying and developing career pathways and integrated employment plans that create data-driven career choices aligned with demand, delivering appropriate and necessary services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- Enhancing AEL customers' educational and career advancement through the organization of appropriate AEL activities, work readiness and job preparation activities, occupational training, and other services specifically designed to meet the identified needs of adult individuals.
- Strengthening coordination and collaboration on partnerships to increase access to essential services for adults who are basic skills deficient, low income, have other barriers to employment, or are otherwise unprepared or ill-equipped to enter or retain employment.
- Increasing potential for customer success by ensuring AEL activities are integrated with and relevant to workforce training, aligned with common learning objectives and activities, and enhancing successful personal outcomes and program completion rates for work-based and occupational training.
- Concentrating focus on completion of a recognized postsecondary credential in an In-Demand or Target Occupation, assisting individuals in entering or advancing within specific In-Demand or Target Occupations or Industries, as determined by the WSSP and aligned with local and regional economic and labor market analysis.
- Utilizing co-enrollment and simultaneous participation in basic skills education and occupational training to accelerate customer progress on a pathway to successfully entering a high-demand occupation and ultimately achieving self-sufficiency.
- Developing innovative methods for using current technology to increase customer access to AEL services, including virtual learning and online classes.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The WSSP and Workforce Service Providers can better serve the workforce needs of individuals with disabilities and ensure compliance with WIOA §188 and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAA) through ongoing collaboration with Texas Workforce Solutions VR Services programs and staff. This collaboration includes regular visits to rural locations by mobile units.

Through continued collaboration and joint planning with VR Services, an effective transition plan reflecting shared goals is achieved. This plan provides a seamless approach for access to integrated workforce services, literacy education, vocational rehabilitation, and in-demand workplace skills that lead to self-sufficient employment and advancement for individuals with disabilities. It also promotes partnerships with employers and system stakeholders to overcome barriers to meeting workforce needs through creative use of technology and innovation.

Strategies and methods continue to be developed and implemented based on examination of successes and lingering challenges to increase the quality and effectiveness of workforce services provided to this priority population. VR Services include counseling, training, medical treatment, assistive devices, job placement assistance, and other services to assist individuals with disabilities in preparing for or maintaining their independence. Integration of these services affords the local workforce system increased opportunities to better serve individuals with disabilities in our region and improve overall employment outcomes for employers and the potential for self-sufficiency for the individuals served.

The Goals Matrix below, outlines the strategic objectives and initiatives for Program Years (PY) 2025 through 2028. The Board aims to enhance employer services, increase educational opportunities, expand rural services, and improve branding and awareness. Key strategies include expanding access to labor market information, collaborating with Economic Development Corporations (EDCs) to increase employer engagement, increasing participation in work-based training and career exploration for youth, improving workforce assistance for self-employed individuals, automating processes to facilitate access to Child Care Services, and enhancing communication capabilities with rural customers. These efforts are designed to ensure responsiveness to employer needs, support career advancement, and foster economic growth in the region.

Goals Matrix					
Strategy	Objective				
		PY 2025	PY 2026	PY 2027	PY 2028
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.	Update 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.
		Participate in regional EDC meetings as needed to ensure collaboration and employer engagement.			
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 3 employers to provide training. Train at least 15 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	Utilize 3% of WIOA Adult/DW funds for	Utilize 3% of WIOA Adult/DW funds for	Utilize 3% of WIOA Adult/DW funds for

Strategy	Objective				
		incumbent worker training. The Board will attempt to allocate up to the allowable 20% for Incumbent Worker Projects and will actively conduct outreach to employers in the region.	incumbent worker training.	incumbent worker training.	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 secure funding.	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 secure funding.
		Continue funding and securing sponsorships to host the 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. The Board collaborated with EDC's annually since 2014 to receive High Demand Grants from TWC.			
		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.

Strategy	Objective				
		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. Assist parents and providers with TWC’s new KinderSystems attendance tracking and payment system to facilitate access to CCS for all customers in the WDA.	Continue to provide support to parents and providers with KinderSystem attendance tracking and payment system.	Continue to provide support to parents and providers with KinderSystem attendance tracking and payment system	Continue to provide support to parents and providers with KinderSystem attendance tracking and payment system.	. Continue to provide support to parents and providers with KinderSystem attendance tracking and payment system
		Evaluate utilization of KinderSystem and assess impact on services. Report to Board with recommendations for improvement.	Evaluate utilization of KinderSystem and assess impact on services. Report to Board with recommendations for improvement.	Evaluate utilization of KinderSystem and assess impact on services. Report to Board with recommendations for improvement.	Evaluate utilization of KinderSystem and assess impact on services. Report to Board with recommendations for 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 to ensure Board is meeting or exceeding measure. Track participation.	Increase youth in employment to ensure Board is meeting or exceeding measure. Track participation.	Increase youth in employment to ensure Board is meeting or exceeding measure. Track participation.	Increase youth in employment to ensure Board is meeting or exceeding measure. Track participation.
Goal 4: Increase Branding and Awareness					

1. Facilitate communications with rural customers.	Increase capability to provide customer service online.	Continue improving 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	a. Make better use of customer surveys to inform	Conduct quarterly customer satisfaction surveys for all	Conduct quarterly customer satisfaction	Conduct quarterly customer satisfaction	Conduct quarterly customer satisfaction
Strategy	Objective				
outcomes.	community of successful outcomes.	programs. Increase level of satisfaction by at least 5% or as appropriate.	surveys for all programs. Increase level of satisfaction by at least 5% or as appropriate.	surveys for all programs. Increase level of satisfaction by at least 5% or as appropriate.	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.

C. High-Performing Board

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

Boards must include a description of the actions each Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Board, consistent with the factors developed by the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC).

Board Response:

The Board continues to focus on continuous system improvement. We do this by collaborating with our partners to ensure that as a system we meet our performance goals. These goals are aligned with the Texas Workforce Investment Council's goal to better align, leverage, and integrate system services to ensure the communities we serve reach their desired quality of life through educational, employment, and economic success. In addition, the Board consistently focuses on performance outcomes that support performance improvement objectives. The Board contracts all performance measures to the one-stop operator. Board staff provide technical assistance, support, and information to the one-stop operator. Board and career center staff meet monthly 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. 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.

Part 2. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis

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

Boards must include a regional analysis of the following:

- *Economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations*

- *Employment needs of employers, including the knowledge and skills needed to meet such employment needs, within in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations*

The Board must include its In-Demand Industries List, In-Demand Occupations List, and Target Occupations List

Board Response:

The South Plains Regional Workforce Development Board, situated in West Texas, comprises 15 counties: Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Dickens, Floyd, Garza, Hale, Hockley, King, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Motley, Terry, and Yoakum. Collectively, the South Plains spans an area exceeding 13,000 square miles. Lubbock, located in Lubbock County, serves as the principal and largest city within the South Plains region.

Regional Labor Force: Job Growth in the South Plains region has been steady with eight counties demonstrating growth of at least 1% from 2019 to 2024. Notably King County experienced a remarkable job growth rate of 88%, while Lubbock County saw a significant increase of 17%. These figures underscore the positive economic developments in these areas. Not all residents on the South Plains share equitably in the region’s prosperity. The median wage across the South Plains ranges from \$41,597 in Cochran County to \$80,317 in Yoakum County.

County Name	Adult Civilian Population	Median Household Income
Cochran County, TX	1,848	\$41,597
Terry County, TX	8,580	\$42,694
Dickens County, TX	1,261	\$46,638
Floyd County, TX	3,973	\$49,321
Crosby County, TX	3,844	\$50,268
Hale County, TX	23,704	\$50,721
Lynn County, TX	4,080	\$52,996
Hockley County, TX	15,767	\$53,283
Lamb County, TX	9,444	\$54,519
Garza County, TX	4,851	\$56,215
King County, TX	165	\$59,375
Lubbock County, TX	237,485	\$61,911
Motley County, TX	1,008	\$66,528
Bailey County, TX	5,044	\$69,830
Yoakum County, TX	5,168	\$80,317

The percentage of persons in poverty within the 15 counties in the region is as high as 27.8% in King County and as low as 9.4% in Motley County.

South Plains Poverty and Uninsured Levels by County

County Name	Adult Civilian Population	Disabled Population	Total Population	% Children Under 18 Poverty Level	Employed Population with Health Insurance	% Poverty Level
Lubbock County, TX	237,485	39,736	311,509	17.8%	117,703	17.2%
Hale County, TX	23,704	3,760	32,525	24.8%	8,748	18.5%
Hockley County, TX	15,767	3,344	21,495	18.4%	6,556	15.1%
Lamb County, TX	9,444	2,094	13,024	20.1%	3,181	17.4%
Terry County, TX	8,580	1,549	11,816	37.4%	3,239	22.4%
Yoakum County, TX	5,168	688	7,630	20.3%	2,462	13.6%
Bailey County, TX	5,044	876	6,902	15.1%	1,932	12.7%
Garza County, TX	4,851	787	5,735	25.9%	1,071	15.4%
Lynn County, TX	4,080	1,096	5,619	29.5%	1,784	18.8%
Floyd County, TX	3,973	835	5,386	18.6%	1,230	19.0%
Crosby County, TX	3,844	1,086	5,157	39.7%	1,531	23.6%
Cochran County, TX	1,848	450	2,529	31.0%	716	25.8%
Dickens County, TX	1,261	303	1,570	7.0%	387	12.3%
Motley County, TX	1,008	282	1,223	6.5%	297	9.4%
King County, TX	165	27	216	13.7%	79	27.8%

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 the South Plains WDA than the US average.

Cost of Living	United States	Texas	South Plains	Lubbock, TX
Regional Metrics				
COL Index	100	96.6	96.1	96.6
Median Household Income (2022)	\$75,149	\$73,035	\$49,800	\$61,535
Industry Metrics				
Target Industries				
Job Change %	12%	19%	19%	20%
Jobs (2022)	67,930,161	6,515,583	107,517	94,185
Jobs (2032)	76,371,843	7,730,578	127,926	113,204

Employment Concentration (2024)	1	1.07	1.26	1.3
Occupation Metrics				
Target Occupations				
Historical Jobs (2019)	33,715,174	3,057,076	47,027	39,613
Historical Job Change % (2019 - 2024)	7%	13%	13%	15%
Job Change %	10%	17%	12%	13%
Jobs (2022)	35,056,523	3,298,422	50,730	43,251
Jobs (2032)	38,551,679	3,871,981	56,929	49,062
2024 Employment Concentration	1	1.06	1.14	1.15
Projected Jobs (2029)	37,854,591	3,752,431	55,812	48,046
Projected Job Change % (2024 - 2029)	5%	9%	5%	6%
Median Hourly Earnings	\$28.25	\$27.67	\$23.72	\$23.71
Median Annual Earnings	\$58,769	\$57,544	\$49,329	\$49,322

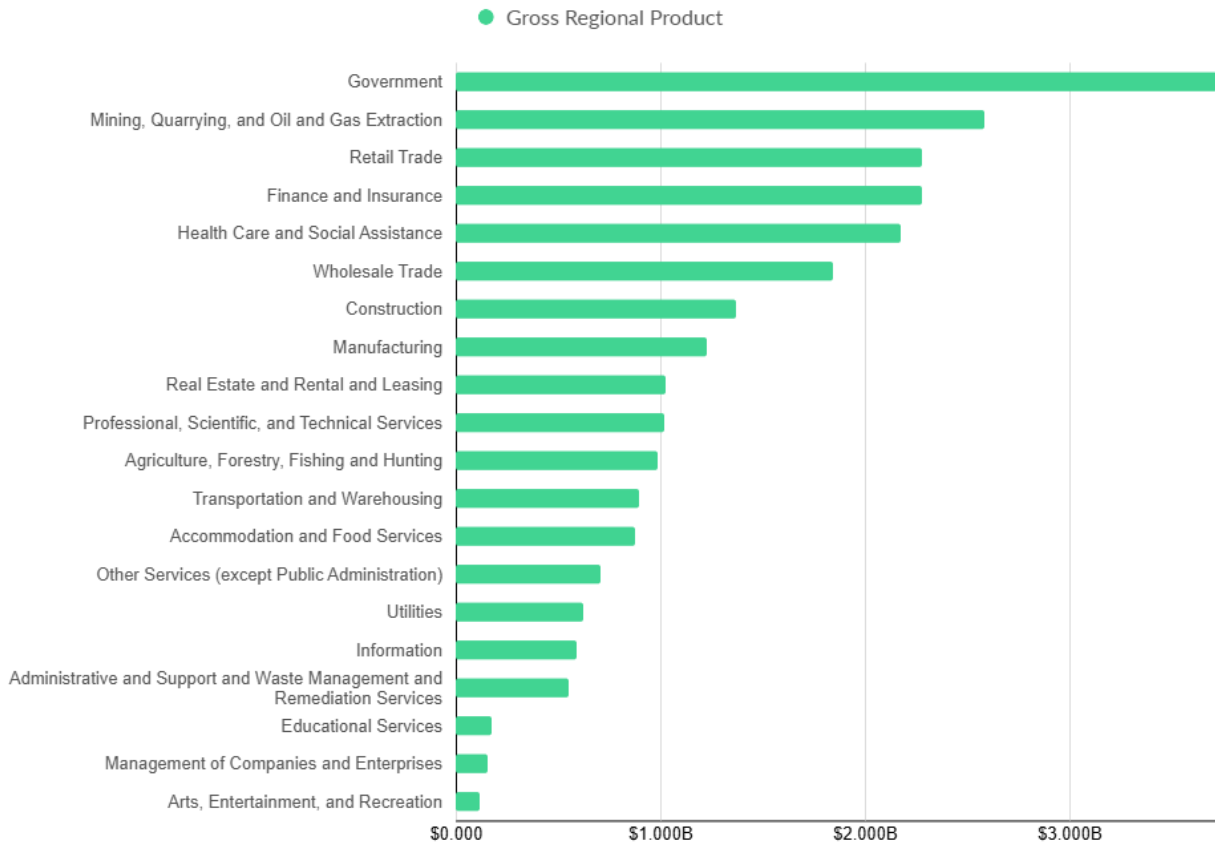
Gross Regional Product (GRP) is the total value of goods and services produced by a region. Industries located on the South Plains increased by 9,039 jobs (8.6%) from 2019 to 2024, outpacing the national growth rate of 6.2%. The industries are projected to increase by 9,716 jobs (8.5% from 2024-2029, outpacing the national growth rate of 6.2%). In 2024, nominal GRP on the South WDA expanded by 1.99%.

Gross Regional Product (GRP)

\$7.7B	\$1.7B	\$347.1M	\$9.7B
Earnings (2024)	Property Income (2024)	Taxes (2024)	Total GRP (2024)

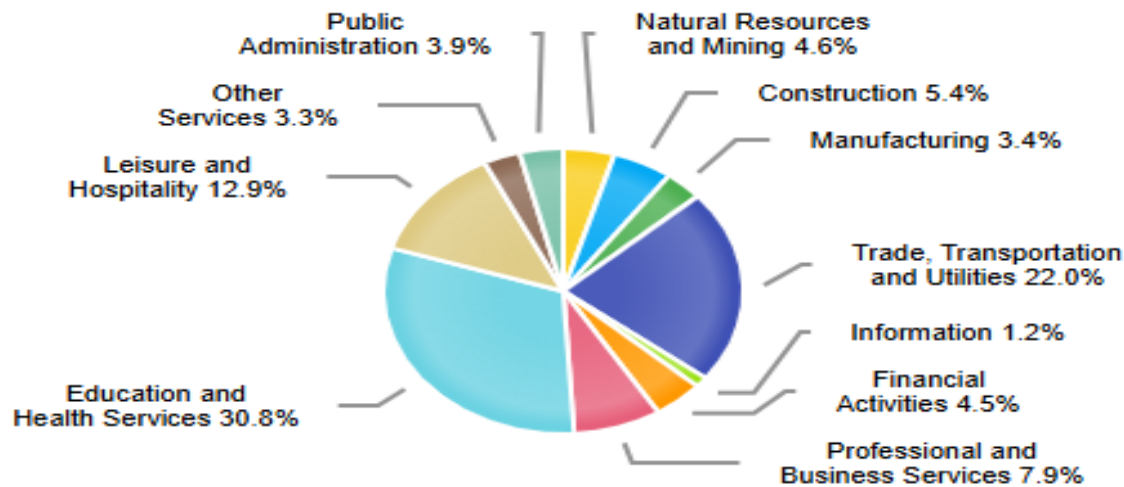
Of the sectors in the South Plains WDA, Government contributed the largest portion of GRP in 2024, \$3,720,000,000 dollars. The next largest contribution came from Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (\$2,584,000,000); Retail Trade (\$2,800,000,000); and Finance and Insurance (\$2,284,000,000).

Top Industry GRP



Industry Snapshot: The largest employment sector in the South Plains workforce Development Area is Education and Hospitals (Local Government); which employs 21,705 workers. Following closely are the sectors of Restaurants and Other Eating Places, with 18,989 workers, and Education and Hospitals (State Government), employing 22,167 workers. High location quotients indicate sectors where the region has a high concentration of employed compared to the national average. In the South Plains WDA, the sectors with the highest LQs are Mining,

Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (LQ=5.21), Agriculture, forestry, Fishing and Hunting (LQ=2.04), and Transportation Equipment (LQ=1.47)



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 Education and Knowledge Creation. This cluster employs 24,240 workers in the region. The Average cluster score is 22 (out of 100) points.

This is not a benchmark against other regions; it only compares the relative performance of your local industry clusters to each other. Clusters ranked higher than 22 are above average for the WDA, while clusters ranked lower than 22 are below average.

Top clusters must have a score of at least 29, while bottom clusters must have a score of 15 or less. These thresholds are determined by applying the average deviation (plus or minus 7) to the average cluster score of 22.

Highest Ranked Clusters for the South Plains WDA:

- Education and Knowledge;
- Local Education and Training
- State Government Services
- Electric Power Generation and Transmission
- Oil and Gas Production and Transportation
- Local Utilities
- Financial Services
- Nonmetal Mining

Education and Knowledge Creation: 85

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
541714	Research and Development in Biotechnology (except Nanobiotechnology)	80	16
541715	Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology)	28	25
541720	Research and Development in the Social Sciences and Humanities	45	9
611210	Junior Colleges	17	11
611310	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	1,127	1
611691	Exam Preparation and Tutoring	113	9
611699	All Other Miscellaneous Schools and Instruction	30	8
611710	Educational Support Services	231	17
813920	Professional Organizations	42	22
902612	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (State Government)	14,442	100
903612	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (Local Government)	8,086	74

Local Education and Training: 51

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
611110	Elementary and Secondary Schools	1,123	28
611519	Other Technical and Trade Schools	24	12
611610	Fine Arts Schools	198	7
624310	Vocational Rehabilitation Services	189	12
903611	Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government)	13,594	55

Oil and Gas Production and Transportation: 36

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
211120	Crude Petroleum Extraction	779	90
211130	Natural Gas Extraction	99	43
213111	Drilling Oil and Gas Wells	567	32
213112	Support Activities for Oil and Gas Operations	2,683	21
324110	Petroleum Refineries	218	38
333132	Oil and Gas Field Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing	31	18
486210	Pipeline Transportation of Natural Gas	48	39
486910	Pipeline Transportation of Refined Petroleum Products	12	23
541360	Geophysical Surveying and Mapping Services	18	17

Financial Services: 30

NAICS	Industry	Jobs	Score
522180	Savings Institutions and Other Depository Credit Intermediation	36	19
522220	Sales Financing	17	15
522291	Consumer Lending	206	17
522292	Real Estate Credit	196	27
522299	International, Secondary Market, and All Other No depository Credit Intermediation	173	38
522390	Other Activities Related to Credit Intermediation	33	16
523150	Investment Banking and Securities Intermediation	138	49
523160	Commodity Contracts Intermediation	19	23
523910	Miscellaneous Intermediation	34	30
523940	Portfolio Management and Investment Advice	249	32
523991	Trust, Fiduciary, and Custody Activities	29	17

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 jobs 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 2024.

2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code (4-digit)	NAICS Industry Title	* Annual Average Employment 2022	* Annual Average Employment 2032	* Number Change 2022-2032	* Percent Growth 2022-2032
9036	Education and Hospitals (Local Govt)	21705	24864	3159	14.6%
7225	Restaurants and Other Eating Places	18989	21084	2095	11.0%

9026	Education and Hospitals (State Govt)	12707	16826	4119	32.4%
6211	Offices of Physicians	3973	4437	464	11.7%
5617	Services to Buildings and Dwellings	3131	3702	571	18.2%
2131	Support Activities for Mining	3039	3567	528	17.4%
6216	Home Health Care Services	2972	3331	359	12.1%
4552	Warehouse Clubs, Supercenters, and other General Merchandise Retailers	2932	3238	306	10.4%
9029	State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	2830	3972	1142	40.4%
8111	Automotive Repair and Maintenance	2660	2980	320	12.0%
6231	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	1783	2165	382	21.4%
2381	Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior Contractors	1560	1852	292	18.7%
6213	Office of Other Health Practitioners	1480	1664	184	12.4%
2361	Residential Building Construction	1392	1610	218	15.7%
6233	Continuing Care Retirement Communities and Assisted Living Facilities for the Elderly	1332	1528	196	14.7%
6241	Individual and Family Services	1290	1885	595	46.1%
5413	Architectural Engineering, and Related Services	1184	1414	230	19.4%
4413	Automotive Parts, Accessories, and Tire Retailers	1176	1404	228	19.4%
5415	Computer Systems Design and Related Services	1164	1435	271	23.3%
6212	Offices of Dentists	1116	1441	325	29.1%
5511	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1102	1355	253	23.0%
6214	Outpatient Care Centers	1088	1430	342	31.4%

5171	Wired and Wireless Telecommunications (except satellite)	1036	1312	276	26.6%
5412	Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, and Payroll Services	1018	1180	162	15.9%
5419	Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	979	1288	309	31.6%
2211	Electric Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution	764	884	120	15.7%
5312	Offices of Real Estate Agents and Brokers	722	911	189	26.2%
5616	Investigation and Security Services	707	924	217	30.7%
6111	Elementary and Secondary School Teachers	690	1567	877	127.1%
4842	Specialized Freight Trucking	644	804	160	24.8%
5611	Office Administrative Services	617	849	232	37.6%
5222	No depository Credit Intermediation	612	683	71	11.6%
6223	Specialty (except Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Hospitals)	598	744	146	24.4%
3323	Architectural and Structural Metals Manufacturing	575	771	196	34.1%
6219	Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	505	705	200	39.6%

Occupational Snapshot: The largest major occupational group in the South Plains Workforce Development Area (WDA) is Office and Administrative Support Occupations, employing 27,137 workers. The next-largest occupational groups in the region are Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations, with 21,131 workers, and Sales and Related Occupations, with 19,703 workers.

High location quotients (LQs) indicate occupational groups where the region has a higher concentration of employment compared to the national average. In the South Plains WDA, the major groups with the highest LQs are Crop Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations (LQ = 18.55), Support Activities for Mining (LQ = 8.94), and Cattle Ranching and Farming (LQ = 8.47).

The occupational groups in the South Plains WDA with the highest average wages per worker are Legal Occupations, with an average annual wage of \$104,228.80; Management

Occupations, with an average annual wage of \$94,910.40; and Architecture and Engineering Occupations, with an average annual wage of \$87,360. The unemployment rate in the region varies among the major groups, ranging from 1.6% among Legal Occupations to 11.1% among Personal Care and Service Occupations.

Over the next ten years, the fastest-growing occupational group in the South Plains WDA is expected to be Healthcare Support Occupations, with a projected year-over-year growth rate of 2.0%. The strongest forecast by number of jobs over this period is expected for Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations, with an increase of 852 jobs, and Healthcare Support Occupations, with an increase of 835 jobs. During the same period, the highest separation demand (occupational demand due to retirements and workers transitioning to other occupations) is expected in Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (17,492 jobs) and Office and Administrative Support Occupations.

SOC	Description	2022 Jobs	2032 Jobs	2022 - 2032 Change	2022 - 2032 % Change	Avg. Hourly Earnings
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	27,137	27,219	82	0%	\$19.31
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	21,131	23,378	2,247	11%	\$13.21
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	19,703	20,822	1,119	6%	\$21.83
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	19,332	20,769	1,437	7%	\$20.01
11-0000	Management Occupations	17,783	19,796	2,013	11%	\$45.63
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	16,703	20,718	4,015	24%	\$28.08
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	13,467	15,240	1,773	13%	\$40.25
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	10,738	11,781	1,043	10%	\$23.67
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	10,230	11,158	928	9%	\$24.72
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	8,807	10,205	1,398	16%	\$14.56
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	8,133	9,295	1,162	14%	\$34.94

37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	8,018	8,648	631	8%	\$15.27
51-0000	Production Occupations	7,014	7,153	139	2%	\$20.76
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	6,468	7,210	742	11%	\$15.83
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	4,798	4,300	-498	-10%	\$17.14
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	4,371	4,832	461	11%	\$25.22
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	3,891	4,564	673	17%	\$24.79
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	3,266	3,896	631	19%	\$36.81
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	2,890	3,180	290	10%	\$32.30
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	1,807	2,099	292	16%	\$42.00
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	1,664	1,988	324	19%	\$34.85
23-0000	Legal Occupations	1,050	1,178	128	12%	\$50.11
55-0000	Military-only occupations	439	448	9	2%	\$24.27

Occupational Demand: Occupations that currently have or are projected to have several 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.

Occupation	2022 Jobs	2032 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2022-2032)	% Change
Fast Food and Counter Workers	7,086	8,618	1,532	22%
General and Operations Managers	6,049	6,581	531	9%
Retail Salespersons	5,671	6,134	463	8%
Registered Nurses	4,752	5,228	476	10%
Office Clerks, General	4,630	5,395	766	17%
Stockers and Order Fillers	4,417	4,980	563	13%
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	4,318	5,162	844	20%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,557	3,822	266	7%
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	3,388	3,911	523	15%
Waiters and Waitresses	3,370	3,520	151	4%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,902	3,246	344	12%
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	2,371	2,464	94	4%
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2,235	2,319	84	4%
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	2,197	2,515	317	14%
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	2,185	2,372	187	9%
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	2,081	2,429	347	17%

Cooks, Restaurant	2,042	2,622	580	28%
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	1,852	2,227	375	20%
Construction Laborers	1,845	2,122	277	15%
Nursing Assistants	1,759	1,952	193	11%
Receptionists and Information Clerks	1,534	1,557	23	2%
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	1,521	1,621	99	7%
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1,434	1,615	181	13%
Light Truck Drivers	1,350	1,426	76	6%
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,334	1,389	55	4%
Accountants and Auditors	1,255	1,378	123	10%
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	1,226	1,309	83	7%
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1,137	1,316	178	16%
Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	1,075	1,212	137	13%
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	1,039	1,123	84	8%
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	1,010	1,074	64	6%
Managers, All Other	1,006	1,202	195	19%
Computer User Support Specialists	985	1,018	33	3%
Security Guards	980	1,152	171	17%
Electricians	960	1,143	183	19%

Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	936	1,090	154	16%
---	-----	-------	-----	-----

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 2022 and 2032.
- The occupation will grow at a rate of 10% or more between 2022 and 2032.
- 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 2024.

SOC	Description	2022 Jobs	2032 Jobs	2022 - 2032 Change	2022 - 2032 % Change	Avg. Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	2024 Jobs	Typical Entry Level Education
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	1,255	1,378	123	10%	\$39.12	\$33.46	1,245	Bachelor's degree
17-3011	Architectural and Civil Drafters	120	123	4	3%	\$24.97	\$23.32	113	Associate's degree
27-4011	Audio and Video Technicians	105	107	2	2%	\$19.96	\$18.40	100	Postsecondary nondegree award
49-3021	Automotive Body and Related Repairers	269	369	100	37%	\$22.63	\$21.88	320	High school diploma or equivalent

49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1,434	1,615	181	13%	\$22.34	\$20.43	1,497	Postsecondary nondegree award
53-3051	Bus Drivers, School	406	406	0	0%	\$20.43	\$21.11	406	No formal educational credential
25-2032	Career/Technical Education Teachers, Secondary School	281	358	77	27%	\$27.04	\$27.60	344	Bachelor's degree
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	985	1,018	33	3%	\$23.77	\$22.45	936	Some college, no degree
47-2061	Construction Laborers	1,845	2,122	277	15%	\$19.94	\$16.88	1,937	No formal educational credential
31-9091	Dental Assistants	431	561	130	30%	\$18.24	\$17.64	476	Postsecondary nondegree award
29-1292	Dental Hygienists	187	243	55	29%	\$38.47	\$38.02	201	Associate's degree
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	111	121	10	9%	\$39.54	\$37.49	113	Associate's degree
47-2111	Electricians	960	1,143	183	19%	\$24.78	\$23.29	1,029	High school diploma or equivalent
17-3024	Electro-Mechanical and Mechatronics Technologists and Technicians	11	12	1	12%	\$44.64	\$36.91	11	Associate's degree

25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	2,197	2,515	317	14%	\$26.17	\$28.13	2,317	Bachelor's degree
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technicians	231	248	18	8%	\$17.48	\$16.22	229	Postsecondary nondegree award
41-3395	Financial Managers	600	777	177	29%	\$69.47	\$61.36	666	Bachelor's degree
33-2011	Firefighters	509	551	42	8%	\$24.95	\$24.74	531	Postsecondary nondegree award
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	2,185	2,372	187	9%	\$17.18	\$15.92	2,190	High school diploma or equivalent
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	6,049	6,581	531	9%	\$47.06	\$36.93	6,167	Bachelor's degree
27-1024	Graphic Designers	212	236	25	12%	\$22.97	\$18.44	213	Bachelor's degree
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	549	628	79	14%	\$24.92	\$22.19	574	Postsecondary nondegree award
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,557	3,822	266	7%	\$26.33	\$23.61	3,652	Postsecondary nondegree award
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	80	112	32	40%	\$44.58	\$44.64	81	Bachelor's degree

29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,313	1,280	-33	-3%	\$25.34	\$25.02	1,216	Postsecondary nondegree award
51-4041	Machinists	194	171	-23	-12%	\$23.60	\$22.33	167	High school diploma or equivalent
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	2,371	2,464	94	4%	\$18.88	\$17.66	2,306	High school diploma or equivalent
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	791	1,142	352	44%	\$50.31	\$47.24	950	Bachelor's degree
31-9092	Medical Assistants	889	1,012	123	14%	\$16.79	\$16.83	881	Postsecondary nondegree award
31-9093	Medical Equipment Preparers	76	66	-10	-13%	\$19.24	\$19.03	62	High school diploma or equivalent
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	936	1,090	154	16%	\$26.91	\$28.11	1,003	Bachelor's degree
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	1,759	1,952	193	11%	\$15.24	\$14.76	1,870	Postsecondary nondegree award
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	4,630	5,395	766	17%	\$16.66	\$14.25	5,282	High school diploma or equivalent

23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	341	381	40	12%	\$24.82	\$21.93	353	Associate's degree
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	658	782	123	19%	\$18.87	\$18.21	699	High school diploma or equivalent
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	789	849	60	8%	\$25.12	\$22.39	796	High school diploma or equivalent
33-3051	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	1,039	1,123	84	8%	\$32.68	\$33.19	1,052	High school diploma or equivalent
25-2011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	650	758	108	17%	\$15.67	\$14.04	689	Associate's degree
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	400	399	-1	0%	\$32.10	\$29.79	385	Associate's degree
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents	718	903	185	26%	\$43.81	\$22.99	785	High school diploma or equivalent
29-1141	Registered Nurses	4,752	5,228	476	10%	\$39.14	\$36.84	5,001	Bachelor's degree
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	238	258	20	9%	\$33.33	\$31.17	236	Associate's degree
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	2,081	2,429	347	17%	\$27.74	\$28.57	2,247	Bachelor's degree

47-5013	Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas	246	359	112	46%	\$30.66	\$26.16	327	No formal educational credential
15-1253	Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	54	75	20	38%	\$46.73	\$44.47	59	Bachelor's degree
27-4014	Sound Engineering Technicians	11	16	5	42%	\$29.36	\$20.24	15	Postsecondary nondegree award
25-2057	Special Education Teachers, Middle School	84	59	-25	-30%	\$23.61	\$24.46	52	Bachelor's degree
25-2058	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	138	138	0	0%	\$25.16	\$24.64	123	Bachelor's degree
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	183	192	9	5%	\$26.29	\$27.24	183	Postsecondary nondegree award
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	670	709	38	6%	\$23.48	\$21.64	667	High school diploma or equivalent
49-9081	Wind Turbine Service Technicians	152	281	129	84%	\$27.50	\$26.73	193	Postsecondary nondegree award

B. Labor Force Analysis and Trends

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

Boards must include an analysis of the regional workforce, including:

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

Board Response:

As of 2024 the South Plains region's population increased by 0.4% since 2019, growing by 1,893. Population is expected to increase by 2.4% between 2024 and 2029, adding 10,706.

Jobs have grown by 6,748 over the last 5 years and are projected to grow by 11,354 over the next 5 years.

Concerning educational attainment, 17.9% of the selected region's residents possess a bachelor's degree (3.6% below the national average), and 8.1% hold an associate degree (0.8% below the national average)

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.

According to 2024 estimates, 39.34% 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.

The number of youths 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.

53% 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 need training to become self-sufficient.

Educational Attainment by Level

Education Level	2022 Population	2032 Population	2022 % of Population	2022 State % Population	2022 National % Population
Less Than 9th Grade	18,985	14,862	7%	8%	5%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	21,640	18,586	8%	7%	6%
High School Diploma	72,878	77,987	27%	24%	26%
Some College	58,844	57,917	22%	21%	20%
Associate's Degree	20,016	26,652	8%	8%	9%
Bachelor's Degree	45,786	54,234	17%	21%	21%
Graduate Degree and Higher	27,520	35,447	10%	12%	13%
	265,670	285,685	100%	100%	100%

Race/Ethnicity	2022 Population	2032 Population	2022 Less Than High School	2022 High School Diploma	2022 College Degree
White, Non-Hispanic	140,728	140,354	8,280	66,381	66,067
Black, Non-Hispanic	15,774	17,030	1,871	9,846	4,057
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Non-Hispanic	1,302	1,796	341	635	326
Asian, Non-Hispanic	4,812	5,735	378	1,025	3,408
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	204	369	10	132	62
Two or More Races, Non-Hispanic	2,294	3,718	494	1,213	587
White, Hispanic	94,512	107,112	27,492	49,328	17,692
Black, Hispanic	1,643	2,494	464	861	318
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic	2,589	3,621	774	1,349	466
Asian, Hispanic	394	766	117	205	73
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic	182	358	53	96	33
Two or More Races, Hispanic	1,236	2,330	351	651	234
	265,670	285,685	40,625	131,722	93,322

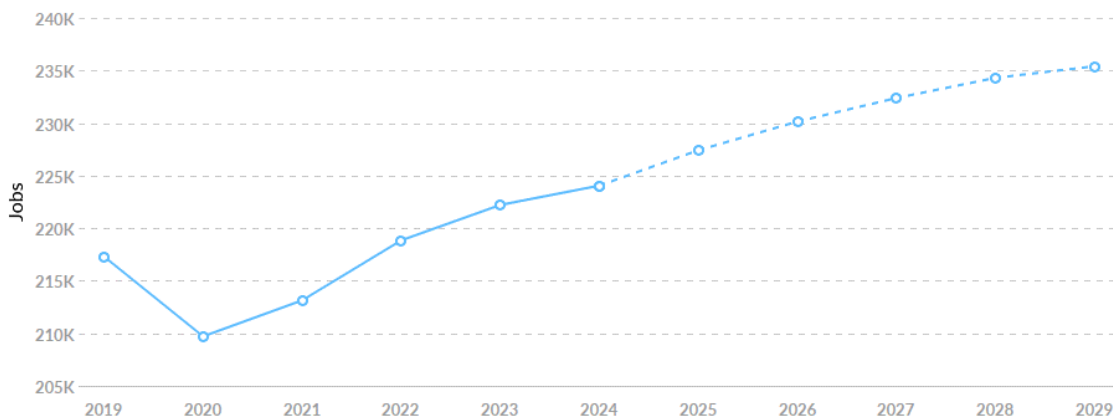
Gender	2022 Population	2032 Population	2022 Less Than High School	2022 High School Diploma	2022 College Degree
Males	130,159	139,451	20,790	66,054	43,315
Females	135,511	146,234	19,835	65,668	50,007
	265,670	285,685	40,625	131,722	93,322

Population by Age Cohort

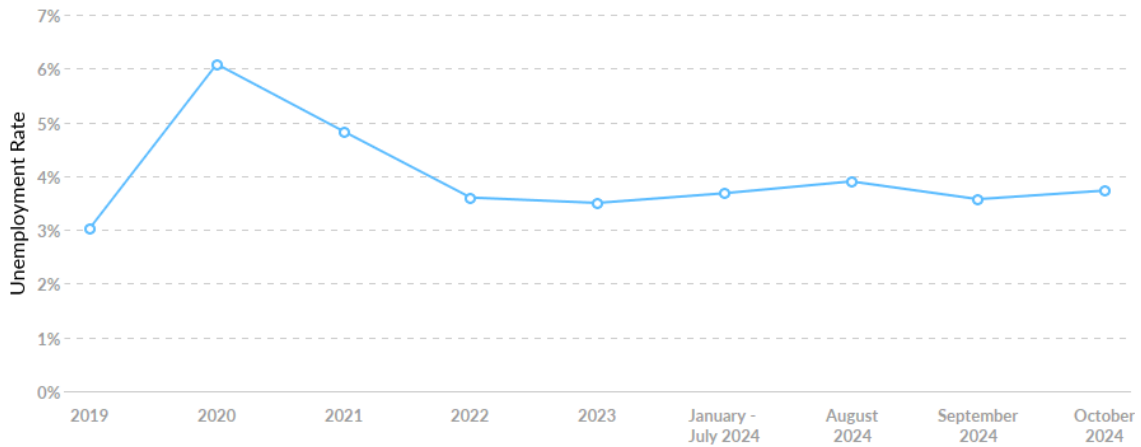
Age Cohort	2025 Population	2028 Population	Change	% Change	2028 % of Cohort
------------	-----------------	-----------------	--------	----------	------------------

Under 5 years	28,214	28,695	481	2%	6.40%
5 to 9 years	28,337	28,058	(279)	(1%)	6.26%
10 to 14 years	29,872	30,280	407	1%	6.75%
15 to 19 years	37,083	35,743	(1,340)	(4%)	7.97%
20 to 24 years	46,160	47,680	1,520	3%	10.63%
25 to 29 years	31,606	31,714	108	0%	7.07%
30 to 34 years	29,550	28,921	(629)	(2%)	6.45%
35 to 39 years	28,839	29,878	1,038	4%	6.66%
40 to 44 years	28,371	28,612	241	1%	6.38%
45 to 49 years	24,375	26,708	2,333	10%	5.96%
50 to 54 years	21,861	22,762	901	4%	5.08%
55 to 59 years	21,121	21,556	435	2%	4.81%
60 to 64 years	21,833	19,991	(1,842)	(8%)	4.46%
65 to 69 years	21,200	21,204	3	0%	4.73%
70 to 74 years	17,000	17,905	905	5%	3.99%
75 to 79 years	12,614	13,795	1,181	9%	3.08%
80 to 84 years	7,532	8,331	799	11%	1.86%
85 years and over	6,542	6,617	75	1%	1.48%
Total	442,111	448,449	6,338	1%	100.00%

Employment Trends: Between 2019 and 2024, the South Plains Region experienced a 3.1% increase in employment, with the number of jobs rising from 217,299 to 224,047. Despite this growth, the region’s employment expansion lagged behind the national average, which saw a 3.9% increase during the same period. This discrepancy of 0.85% highlights a slower pace of job creation in the South Plains compared to the broader national trend.



Unemployment Rate: As of October 2024, the unemployment rate for the South Plains stood at 3.73%, marking a significant increase from the 1.7% rate that was recorded five years earlier. This current unemployment rate surpasses both the state average of 4.2% and the national average of 3.8%, indicating a relatively high level of joblessness in the South Plains WDA compared to broader benchmarks.

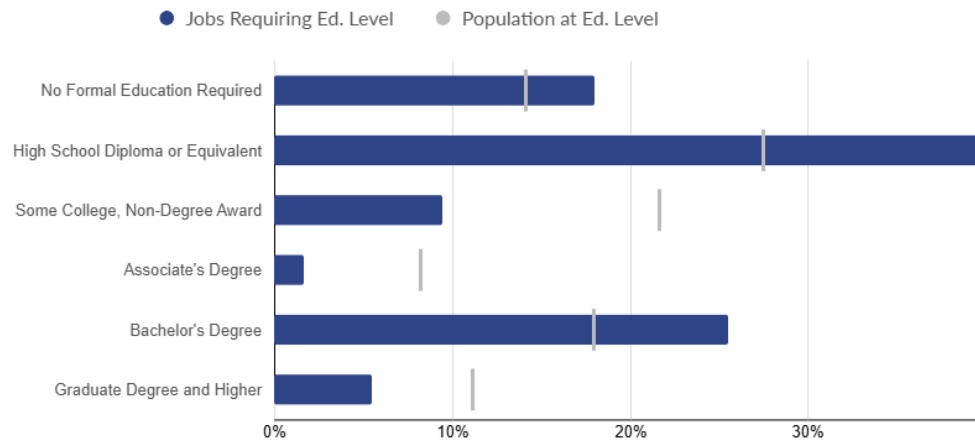


Wage Trends: The average weekly wage in the South Plains Region increased from \$1,046 in the third quarter of 2024 to \$1,074 in the third quarter of 2023, reflecting a quarterly growth of \$28 and an annual increase of \$25. In comparison, the state of Texas saw its average weekly wage rise from \$1,335 in the third quarter of 2023 to \$1,396 in the third quarter of 2024, indicating a quarterly growth of \$15 and an annual increase of \$61.

	Q3 2024	Q2 2024	Q3 2023	Quarterly Change	Yearly Change
WDA	\$1,046	\$1,018	\$1,021	\$28	\$25
Texas	\$1,396	\$1,381	\$1,335	\$15	\$61
US	N/A	\$1,390	\$1,334	N/A	N/A

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. Concerning Education attainment, 17.9% of the selected region’s residents possess a bachelor’s degree (3.6% below the national average), and 8.1% hold an associate degree (0.8% below the national average).

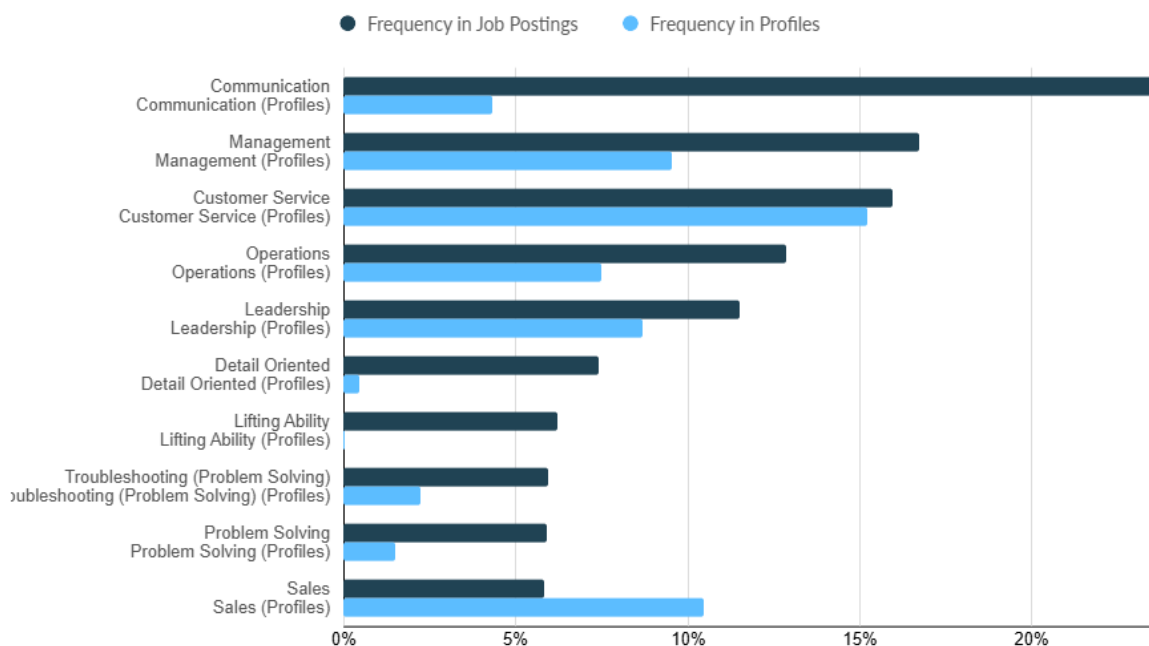
Underemployment



Education Level	Jobs Requiring Ed. Level	Population at Ed. Level	Difference
No Formal Education Required	18%	14%	4%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	40%	27%	12%
Some College, Non-Degree Award	9%	22%	-12%
Associate's Degree	2%	8%	-6%
Bachelor's Degree	25%	18%	8%
Graduate Degree and Higher	6%	11%	-6%

Knowledge and Skills Needed to Meet Employment Needs: The following table illustrates the common skills required to meet employment needs. Currently Communication skills are lagging with a projected growth of (+3.6%). In contrast, troubleshooting (problem solving) skills are rapidly increasing with a projected growth of (+19%).

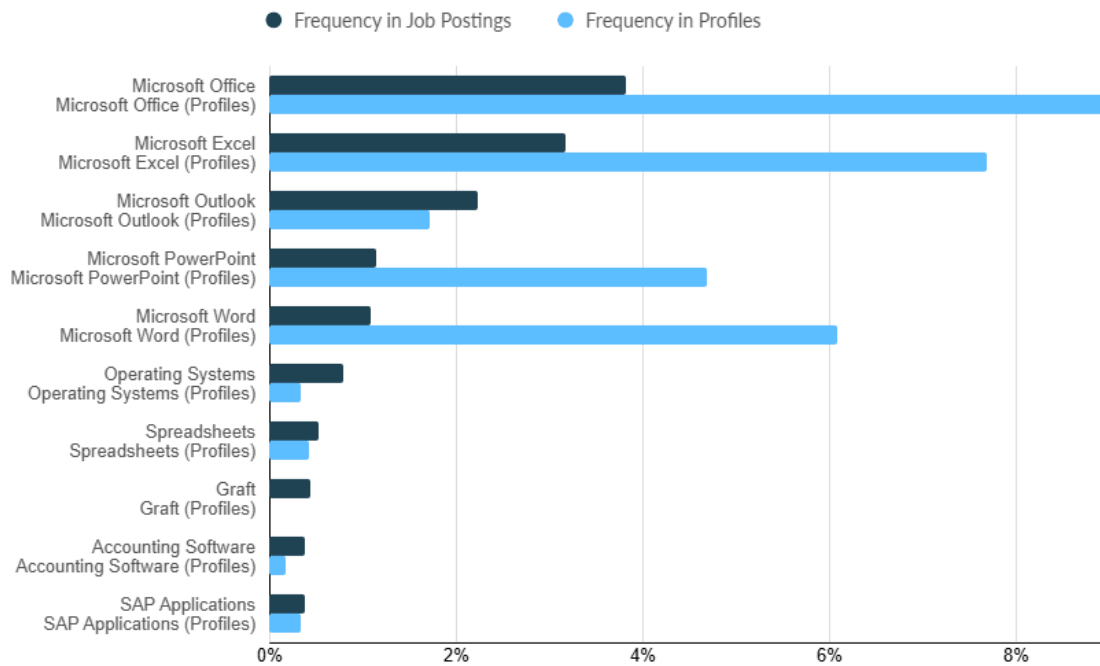
Top Common Skills



Skills	Postings	% of Total Postings	Profiles	% of Total Profiles	Projected Skill Growth	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Communication	2,568	24%	871	4%	+3.6%	Lagging
Management	1,820	17%	1,922	10%	+5.3%	Stable
Customer Service	1,734	16%	3,059	15%	+5.2%	Stable
Operations	1,399	13%	1,505	7%	+8.1%	Stable
Leadership	1,252	12%	1,747	9%	+8.5%	Stable
Detail Oriented	808	7%	91	0%	+7.1%	Stable
Lifting Ability	678	6%	7	0%	+10.6%	Growing
Troubleshooting (Problem Solving)	646	6%	453	2%	+19.0%	Growing
Problem Solving	641	6%	304	2%	+11.3%	Growing
Sales	633	6%	2,108	10%	+7.8%	Stable

The following table illustrates the software skills required to meet employment demands. All software skills are in demand, with Microsoft PowerPoint and Outlook showing the highest projected growth at 26.1% and 25% respectively.

Top Software Skills



Skills	Postings	% of Total Postings	Profiles	% of Total Profiles	Projected Skill Growth	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Microsoft Office	416	4%	1,805	9%	+18.5%	Growing
Microsoft Excel	345	3%	1,546	8%	+17.7%	Growing
Microsoft Outlook	243	2%	347	2%	+25.0%	Rapidly Growing
Microsoft PowerPoint	124	1%	943	5%	+26.1%	Rapidly Growing
Microsoft Word	119	1%	1,223	6%	+7.2%	Stable
Operating Systems	86	1%	69	0%	+22.6%	Rapidly Growing
Spreadsheets	58	1%	87	0%	+22.2%	Rapidly Growing
Graft	48	0%	0	0%	+24.2%	Rapidly Growing
Accounting Software	42	0%	36	0%	+20.5%	Rapidly Growing
SAP Applications	41	0%	67	0%	+21.6%	Rapidly Growing

Community Indicators

County	County Name	Adult Civilian Population	Avg. Family Size	Avg. Household Size	Disabled Population	% Disabled Population
48303	Lubbock County, TX	237,485	3.1	2.5	39,736	12.9%
48189	Hale County, TX	23,704	3.3	2.7	3,760	12.3%
48219	Hockley County, TX	15,767	3.2	2.6	3,344	15.7%
48279	Lamb County, TX	9,444	3.5	2.8	2,094	16.3%
48445	Terry County, TX	8,580	3.3	2.7	1,549	14.0%
48501	Yoakum County, TX	5,168	3.3	2.9	688	9.0%
48017	Bailey County, TX	5,044	4.1	3.5	876	13.0%
48169	Garza County, TX	4,851	3.1	2.6	787	18.1%
48305	Lynn County, TX	4,080	3.3	2.7	1,096	19.7%
48153	Floyd County, TX	3,973	3.3	2.8	835	15.6%
48107	Crosby County, TX	3,844	3.0	2.5	1,086	21.4%
48079	Cochran County, TX	1,848	3.0	2.5	450	18.2%
48125	Dickens County, TX	1,261	3.1	2.3	303	20.2%
48345	Motley County, TX	1,008	3.3	2.7	282	23.1%
48269	King County, TX	165	2.8	2.7	27	12.5%

C. Workforce Development Analysis

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

Boards must include an analysis of:

- *workforce development activities in the region, including education and training;*
- *the strengths and weaknesses of the Board's workforce development activities;*
- *the effectiveness of the Board's programs and services;*
- *the Board's capacity to provide workforce development activities to address;*

- *the identified education and skills need of the workforce; and*
- *the employment needs of employers.*

Board Response:

Workforce Solutions South Plains benefits from the presence of South Plains College, which is geographically located across three counties: Hockley, Lubbock, and Hale. This strategic positioning provides numerous educational opportunities for residents in rural counties to continue their post-secondary education.

The South Plains Development Board maintains a robust partnership with economic development leaders, enhancing the workforce service delivery system. This collaboration extends to government and quasi-government organizations, ensuring a cohesive approach to workforce development.

- **Resource for Stakeholders:** The Board and Workforce Solutions staff are recognized as reliable resources for employers, economic developers, educators, and jobseekers.
- **Expanding Partnerships:** The Board is committed to expanding partnerships to create training and employment opportunities. This includes working with economic development agencies to increase awareness of beneficial employer services such as on-the-job training, apprenticeships, upskill grants, and incumbent worker grants.

The Board maintains a close relationship with the local Eligible Training Providers in the Texas Workforce Commission Eligible Training Provider (ETP) system, enabling innovative student engagement initiatives. Additionally, we work closely with TWC to ensure skills development grants and funds are made available for customized training as needed. The Board has hosted the TWC Business Liaison staff in presenting the various grants available to our partners, including training providers, Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, and the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce.

The Board understands the importance of quality education and training programs in the region to support employers and promote economic stability for our communities. Employers seek individuals who are ready to work and possess the necessary skills to learn on the job. WSSP continues to pursue opportunities to serve all job seekers, practicing inclusion across various populations, including veterans, persons with disabilities, single parents, out-of-school youth, at-risk youth, low-income adults, dislocated workers, and offenders. The goal is to ensure each job seeker is well-prepared and the best candidate available.

Many individuals fall into multiple categories of need, and WSSP aims to address each of these needs to develop self-sufficiency through a holistic approach. This is achieved through dedicated customer engagement, comprehensive service plans, and partnerships with community agencies to provide seamless support.

Workforce development begins within the education system, and the Board actively engages and supports education in every possible way. Rural school systems offer flexibility, allowing many programs to be initiated as pilot projects before expanding to larger school systems.

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 to facilitate success for each participant.

In Program Year (PY) 2023, the Board provided case management services to 1,432 program participants and funded occupational/vocational training for 103 jobseekers to prepare them for employment in targeted occupations. Overall, 9,273 customers, including 11,394 job seekers, 70 youth, and 79 WIOA Adult Dislocated Workers, were served from July 2023 to June 2024. Employment and training services were provided to individuals with barriers to employment. Additionally, the Board supported 27,671 employers and 222 veterans.

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

From PY 2025 through 2028, as outlined in Goal 2, Strategy 1, the Board is committed to increasing participation in work-based training and enrolling at least 40 individuals in on-the-job training, customized training, or incumbent worker training. Strategies under Goals 2, 3, and 4 will support this initiative.

In addition to individual services, the Career Center offers services to assist employers with their hiring and training needs, some of which are provided at no charge. The Business Services Unit (BSU) staff routinely provide Rapid Response Services to assist employers undergoing layoffs. Staff assist with screening, recruiting, and posting job orders in the automated labor exchange system, WorkinTexas.com. The BSU also supports employer needs by creating 6,888 job orders and providing 30,769 job referrals. Employers can hold hiring events or rent meeting space for various hiring or interviewing needs. In 2020, the Board procured a virtual job fair program, allowing employers and jobseekers to interact virtually. Since its inception, monthly attendance has averaged over 100 job seekers and 10 employers.

The Board's BSU staff regularly collaborate with regional EDC partners to promote services to employers. Goal 1, Strategy 2, of the Board's strategic plan includes partnering with EDCs to disseminate information and collaborate on workforce training projects, aiming to develop meaningful, ongoing relationships with at least 20 employers annually through PY 2028. The BSU will also work with Chambers of Commerce and other stakeholders to increase access to services for sole proprietorships.

The Board is committed to strengthening workforce activities such as the Statewide Incumbent Worker Program, by addressing the increasing need for smaller business owners to remain competitive in the dynamic job market. In response to the flourishing new businesses in the region, the Board has overhauled its outreach strategy to streamline the application process, making it more accessible for businesses to submit requests and receive guidance throughout the process.

Businesses participating in this program will experience several key benefits, including enhanced

competitiveness through workforce skill upgrades, cost savings via reimbursement for training expenses, and layoff prevention by improving employee skills. Additionally, the program offers customized training tailored to specific business needs, leading to increased productivity and efficiency. Collaboration opportunities with organizations like the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center further support businesses in identifying specific needs, targeting necessary skills, and dispelling misconceptions about the program. To further support this initiative, the Board plans to deliver formal and user-friendly presentations at job fairs and career exploration events. These efforts aim to establish a pipeline of interested businesses and compile a comprehensive catalog of essential business skills.

Moreover, the Board has been collaborating with the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center to identify businesses with specific needs, target the necessary skills, and dispel misconceptions about the Incumbent Worker Program. This partnership is crucial in ensuring that the program effectively meets the demands of the evolving job market and supports the growth and competitiveness of small businesses in the South Plains.

Part 3: Core Programs

A. Workforce Development System

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

Boards must describe how the local workforce development system will work with entities carrying out core and required partner programs to support alignment to aid in the provision of services that support the strategies identified in TWC's WIOA Combined State Plan.

Board Response:

Our workforce development system is focused on developing South Plains residents to meet the future needs of our local employers. Board, Workforce Center, and partner staff collaboratively work in line with the Texas Workforce Commission's WIOA Combined State Plan to enhance workforce development across the state. The plan aims to create a competitive workforce by aligning education and training programs with industry needs, leveraging technology to improve service delivery, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

The workforce centers utilize the following strategies to screen and refer customers to enhanced services. Referrals to individual programs are made from those attending orientation and career planning sessions.

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – strategically coordinates core workforce development programs like Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, and requires specific accommodations for vulnerable populations, aiming to connect individuals with barriers to employment to career opportunities.
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES) – In collaboration with TWC, the WSSP Board is tasked with supporting employers in filling job vacancies by recruiting, screening, testing, and

referring qualified candidates. WSSP Board assists job seekers in securing employment opportunities that match their qualifications.

- Unemployment Insurance (UI) Programs – Unemployed customers are outreached and informed about additional services available in the Workforce Centers during orientation.
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program – Rapid Response services that are business-focused strategies designed to swiftly address layoffs and business closures. By coordinating workforce services, these strategies provide companies and their affected workers with immediate access to necessary support. Rapid Response Services promote economic recovery by quickly and efficiently identifying, planning for, and responding to layoffs, thereby preventing, or minimizing the impact on workers, businesses, and the local community. WSSP has consistently demonstrated exceptional performance in its Rapid Response program, continually meeting and surpassing program measures.
- Choices Program—Services provided through the Choices program are designed to assist unemployed and under-employed career seekers who are applicants for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services or are current or former TANF recipients in preparing for, obtaining, and retaining self-sufficient unsubsidized employment. Co-enrollment in job training programs, subsidized employment, and on-the-Job Training (OJT) are components of the program.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)— Services provided through this program assist both Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) and SNAP E&T General Population participants by improving their ability to obtain self-sufficient unsubsidized employment and reduce their dependency on public assistance. Workforce center staff provide guidance, instruction, and support to assist program participants in preparing for, obtaining, and retaining full-time employment.
- Child Care Services – Access to quality childcare is an essential element of a robust workforce economy. Child Care Services offer financial assistance to eligible parents who are employed, actively seeking employment, attending school, or participating in jobs training programs. This support enables parents to secure reliable and high-quality childcare, ensuring they can focus on their professional and education pursuits.
- Adult Education and Literacy Program - The WSSP Board will continue to partner with Region 17 AEL and community partners to increase access to adult literacy education programs that will help individuals improve basic literacy skills essential to workforce success
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program – A federal initiative designed to support workers who have been adversely affected by foreign trade. Customers may learn about the TAA during UI profiling sessions with orientations held weekly. The primary objective of the program is to facilitate the rapid and effective transition of trade affected workers into suitable employment.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Programs – The WSSP Board and contractor staff will continue to partner with VR staff to assist individuals with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining,

maintaining, and advancing in meaningful employment. Referrals for these programs are sent and received to offer a range of services including career counseling, job placement, paid work experience, training, and access to assistive devices.

The Board is committed to supporting the strategies in the State Plan, including strengthening and expanding all existing and developing partnerships to better serve our customers. The opportunities provided by the adoption of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Texas Workforce Commission, now serving as the administrative umbrella for all WIOA core program partners, allows us to plan, implement, and continuously improve services and performance for all program partnerships.

WIOA provides new opportunities for the Board and Career and Technology Education (CTE) partners such as area schools (ISDs), Education Service Center, community colleges and universities, to work together to prepare individuals for careers that meet employer skill needs—specifically targeting STEM and middle-skilled jobs. The Board supports the State Plan by:

- identifying career pathways (responding to industry talent needs) and offering customers the opportunity to obtain the skills and credentials necessary to find better jobs at better wages.
- enhancing employer engagement to build an occupational/skills demand-driven system, to improve business services, and provide more work-based learning opportunities.
- aligning individual program policies, procedures, and processes (when not constrained by program-specific law or regulation) to achieve greater partnership in service delivery—working side-by-side with ISD’s and our post-secondary education partners.
- seeking practical opportunities to share resources, reduce redundancies and waste, and make integrated service delivery more streamlined for customers.
- improving access to up-to-date labor market and career information aligned with career pathways and occupational areas of study.
- assigning Board staff to serve on education advisory committees.
- assigning business service and youth career staff to work with ISDs, business and industry, EDCs, and COCs staff on youth career fairs.
- if available, providing teacher internships with industries—designed to improve teacher knowledge of industry skills needed in stem and middle-skilled careers; and,
- Supporting partner programs in achieving success with the performance indicators.

Adult Education and Literacy activities- The board will continue to partner with community partners to increase access to adult literacy education programs that will help individuals improve basic literacy skills essential to workforce success.

Vocational Rehabilitation services- The board will continue to work closely with the vocational rehabilitation department to increase access to quality programs and opportunities for customers.

Apprenticeship programs- The board will work with TWC, Workforce Solutions, and area employers to improve access to apprenticeship opportunities for qualified customers.

Veteran Employment and training programs (LVER)- The board will continue to work closely with the Veteran services department to continue to offer premium programming and opportunities to our veteran population.

US Department of Housing and Urban Development programs- The board will coordinate with Workforce Solutions and the Lubbock Housing Authority to provide access and opportunity for low-income individuals and families to occupy suitable and sustainable housing.

Community Services Block Grant Act- The board will coordinate with Workforce Solutions and the South Plains Community Action Agency to support programming that will empower low-income individuals and families. to deliver services that reduce poverty, improve self-sufficiency, and enhance the overall well-being of communities.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)- The board will work with the SCSEP and Workforce Solutions to support programming and opportunities to help older job seekers, age 55 and above, who have a low income. Participants earn a small wage for working part-time at nonprofit groups or government agencies. This helps participants learn new skills or improve the ones they already have.

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

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

Each Board must include a description of how the Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:

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

Board Response:

The Board executes contracts with our service providers to carry out core programs or Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with entities to expand access to employment, training, education, and support services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Examples of MOUs include Region 17 Education Service Center, the

Adult Education and Literacy Provider, MET, Inc., the State Community Senior Employment Program (SCSEP), and the 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 contractors and partners, such as AEL/Region 17, to ensure a clear understanding of WIOA and how co-enrollment can to maximize customer benefits without duplication of efforts and to facilitate the development of career pathways and programs that can lead to a recognized post-secondary credential. All adults can receive basic career services to access information on career pathways and regional labor market data. Career counselors provide outreach, intake, and initial assessment of skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and support services. Career counselors collaborate with contractors and partners to support AEL program participants in earning postsecondary credentials. To facilitate program improvement, the Board monitors activities monthly to ensure performance outcomes meet or exceed state requirements.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

SCSEP subsidizes training and employment services to help low-income Texans aged 55 or older gain the skills needed to secure jobs and achieve financial self-sufficiency. The Board collaborates with MET to identify placement opportunities for older workers and assists in transitioning SCSEP participants from subsidized part-time employment to unsubsidized full-time employment at the appropriate time.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program (MSFW)

The Board's MSFW staff collaborate with MET to serve the needs of the MSFW population. Outreach counselors locate workers who may need counseling, testing, job training, or referral services. The Board ensures that services provided to eligible MSFWs are qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to services provided to non-MSFW participants, as required by law. Floyd County and Bailey County are designated MSFW counties due to the relatively large number of farmworkers residing or migrating there. During PY 2019, outreach counselors contacted MSFW customers 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 at access points throughout rural areas and will widely publicize these resources through community organizations and churches.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

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

Online Career Roadmaps

To improve access to activities leading to recognized post-secondary credentials and facilitate co-enrollment, the Board began offering online career roadmaps in PY 2019. These interactive roadmaps provide information on training programs subsidized by the Board, programs offered by Eligible Training Providers, provider completion and placement rates, and labor market information from TWC and other state and federal sources. The Board plans to continue updating the website with a goal of hosting roadmaps for all South Plains' targeted occupations by PY 2028.

Comprehensive Workforce Assistance

Every individual seeking workforce assistance is provided a comprehensive array of services, including assessments, training and upskilling opportunities, case management, and essential support such as housing, healthcare, transportation, legal assistance, clothing, and counseling. Detailed assessments determine immediate and long-term needs, setting internal goals as mile markers on the individual's career pathway. Established relationships with support service and training providers ensure job seekers have access to necessary services to maximize participation in program services.

Targeted Services for Specific Populations

- **Low-Income Adults/Choices (TANF) Recipients:** Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) are developed for TANF recipients, including short- and long-term goals, and assistance in education and financial planning to result in higher wages and increased productivity. The service plan includes collaboration with local businesses, identification of workers with unsatisfactory skills, and provision of information to local low-income neighborhood associations and community centers. The workforce team ensures this population gains work-readiness skills through work experience, training provided by partners, online training, and job readiness facilitation.
- **SNAP Recipients:** Workforce Center staff provide daily support for supervised and supported job search during the required participation period for SNAP recipients. Assistance includes registration in WIT, resume development, job leads, assisted job search, and application support. Development of job skills and completion of GED and AEL classes through local partners are available to all SNAP recipients.
- **Individuals with Disabilities:** Workforce Centers collaborate with TWC Vocational Rehabilitation to provide services to individuals with disabilities. Participants are assessed for placement with businesses, and information about hiring job seekers with disabilities is provided to ensure individuals are placed in suitable situations to succeed. Strong partnerships with agency and program partners, along with specialized equipment and resources in Centers, assist non-hearing, non-speaking, or blind job seekers. Targeted hiring events for workers with disabilities are also organized.
- **Ex-Offenders:** The workforce team works to ensure individuals with criminal records have every opportunity to succeed. Collaboration with probation, parole, and detention centers, such as the United States Probation Office and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, facilitates registration of job seekers in WIT. Support during job search,

determination of program eligibility, and ongoing assistance throughout program participation are provided.

Noncustodial Parent (NCP) Program

Workforce Center staff, in coordination with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), work with individuals who do not meet their child support obligations. These individuals are identified by the OAG and ordered into the NCP program by the Child Support Judge. The program aims to reduce jail time and increase the amount and timeliness of child support payments through intensive job search and employment retention programming. A Talent Development Specialist completes an assessment, develops an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), and discusses available services in the Workforce Centers, such as Choices and SNAP Center services orientation. NCP customers register in WorkinTexas.com (WIT) and receive assistance in job placement and support services as needed.

Veterans Services

Our work with veterans involves translating military skills and experiences into civilian terms that businesses understand, in direct coordination with Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) and Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP) staff. Veterans are provided with priority services and support for skill upgrades and work experience opportunities. We collaborate closely with veteran-serving agencies and organizations, such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) chapters, and National Guard units, to ensure veterans are aware of available services. Throughout the year, the Board implements and supports hiring events and educational initiatives aimed at making veterans aware of these services.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants

Individuals on unemployment are quickly connected to businesses through close collaboration with the Business Services Unit (BSU). The workforce team provides comprehensive support to UI claimants to facilitate their return to full employment as swiftly as possible. Standard procedures for service to UI claimants include:

- Any visitor to the Workforce Centers requesting information about filing for unemployment will receive assistance and be registered in WIT on their first visit.
- Resume assistance through WIT, and if appropriate, professional resume services are offered.
- Information on available training opportunities to assist claimants in developing additional skills or refreshing computer skills, customer service skills, and job search/interview skills is provided.

Part 4: One-Stop Service Delivery

A. One-Stop Service Delivery System

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

Each Board must include a description of its workforce area's one-stop delivery system,

including explanations of the following:

- *How the Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers and how providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers*
- *How the Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including to remote areas, using technology and other means*
- *How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including Boards, contracted service providers, and one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA §188 (related to Non-Discrimination), if applicable, and with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals who have disabilities.*

Board Response:

The Board conducts regular meetings with the Workforce Center Operator and staff to review the status of all aspects of the contract for the delivery of workforce services. To ensure continuous quality, the agenda includes discussions on the following areas from the monthly report:

- **Performance**
- **Number of customers served** (previous month and year-to-date)
- **Program expenditures and obligations**
- **Status of progress** in remediating monitoring and QA findings
- **Program participant summary** (reviewing customer successes and areas for improvement)
- **Staffing and employee engagement**
- **BSU reports** on employer interactions.

Access to Services

The Board's certified Comprehensive Center is located in Lubbock County, with additional workforce locations in:

- Plainview, TX (Hale County)
- Levelland, TX (Hockley County)
- Muleshoe, TX (Bailey County)
- Brownfield, TX (Terry County)

In addition to our physical service delivery locations, the Board provides web-based information on services available to customers, including business services, job seeker services, childcare services, labor market information, and a link to Work in Texas for self-service by both employers and job seekers.

Adaptive Equipment and Services

The Workforce Center operator ensures customers have equal opportunity to access all facilities, programs, and services without regard to race, color, religion, gender, marital status, age, national origin, disability, political affiliation, or belief. We manage and operate the South Plains Area Workforce in compliance with EO and ADA requirements.

Minimum Accessibility Standards

To comply with minimum accessibility standards, we have expanded the array of adaptive equipment and services provided for customer use to ensure full accessibility to all available programs and center services. Below is a list of adaptive strategies used by contractor staff in each office to assist customers requiring accommodation:

- JAWS Screen Reading Software
- Zoom Text
- Purple (Mobile interpreter App)
- Screen Magnifier Software
- Microsoft Windows Magnifier
- Microsoft Windows Narrator
- Microsoft Windows On-Screen Keyboard
- Large Print Keyboards
- Trackball Mouse(s)
- Bi-Level Adjustable Height Workstations
- One-On-One Staff Assistance
- Bilingual Staff Available
- Language Identification Cards

Roles and Resource Contributions of Partners

The Board has fostered trust and team spirit among center partners, promoting integration and cooperation. Effective communication from management to staff is essential for aligning goals and ensuring successful integration. Regular supervisor and site meetings disseminate performance and program information, encouraging dialogue on service delivery and problem resolution.

New staff members undergo an intensive orientation covering workforce center operations, customer service, information systems, and other essential topics. This orientation introduces them to the Workforce Services management system and tools such as programmatic procedures, quality assurance, and monitoring tools.

The co-location of Vocational Rehabilitation staff within our workforce center has enhanced interactions and facilitated the sharing of information and resources on an informal basis.

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

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

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

- *facilitate the engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in-demand occupations, and target occupations, in workforce development programs;*
- *support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the workforce area;*
- *coordinate workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local workforce area;*
- *promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services; and*
- *strengthen the linkage between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.*

Board Response:

The Board is committed to enhancing workforce development and economic growth in our service area. We will focus on building the capacity of workforce center staff, collaborating with regional Economic Development Corporations in the WDA, and improving our online resources to better serve employers and job seekers. By aligning our programs with the priorities of economic developers and expanding our outreach efforts, we aim to support a thriving and diverse economy in the South Plains region.

Over the next four years, the Board will continue to enhance workforce center staff capabilities in brokering employer contracts for on-the-job and customized training. Additionally, the Board will collaborate with regional Economic Development Corporations to promote workforce programs and engage employers in utilizing Skills Development Grants, Skills for Small Businesses, and other Texas Workforce Commission grant funds. The goal is to participate in regular EDC meetings, particularly in rural areas, to nurture and maintain established relationships.

To support employers, the Board will improve its website to facilitate access to current labor market information (LMI) provided online by TWC and other state and federal agencies. The Board receives regular requests for LMI from employers and will utilize the website to provide user-friendly access to the most requested topics. Board staff will analyze site statistics monthly and update the site as needed to increase responsiveness to employer needs. Efforts are underway to configure a locally relevant LMI dashboard on the website, offering customized labor market information tailored to the South Plains.

During PY 2025 to PY 2028, the Board will implement strategies to improve services for non-employers, sole proprietorships, and self-employed workers. Best practices will be adopted to

facilitate access to workforce services for self-employed workers, who may not be eligible for UI benefits when contract employment is terminated. These workers may qualify for employment and training services to obtain or retain employment. The Board will maintain an asset map of available state and federal resources, make resources available online, and seek funding to assist self-employed workers in earning industry-recognized certifications. Collaboration with SBDC and regional Chambers of Commerce will increase access to entrepreneurship services, and MOUs and referral processes will be established with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, the Rural Export Assistance Program, and other relevant programs.

Career counselors provide various services to UI claimants, including Work in Texas registration, Reemployment Services, resume assistance, and staff-assisted job searches. Jobseekers can access Job Readiness Workshops and training services if eligible for WIOA Program services. Dislocated workers are referred to the Unemployment Benefits 1-800 number to activate their claims and receive assistance with basic UI questions. Rapid Response (RR) staff assist dislocated workers after layoffs with job searches, registration in Work in Texas, and training opportunities. They also provide labor market information to help workers find similar or better job opportunities and salary information. RR staff assist employers downsizing or closing their businesses for economic reasons, with the RR team consisting of the UI Field Specialist, WIOA representative, and the Board's RR Coordinator.

To better align with industry needs, the Board will refine its business services approach, enhancing employer engagement and solidifying collaborative relationships as part of the Board's strategic plan. WSSP will gain a deeper understanding of regional industry needs and develop solutions to improve employer competitiveness and diversify career opportunities. Employer engagement strategies will be refined to enhance relationships and obtain qualitative information for a comprehensive workforce development approach. This includes convening employer and partner meetings, one-on-one employer meetings, frequent Business Retention and Expansion visits, and WSSP-facilitated forums and presentations.

The Board will use targeted occupation data, in-demand occupation data, and local economic development information to engage employers in workforce development discussions. This data will aid in developing strategic employer outreach strategies and lead to more specific conversations regarding workforce needs. The Board corroborates with sector partnerships to enhance understanding of industry needs and facilitate solution development. These partnerships will be data-driven and representative of industry demands, addressing both workforce and non-workforce-related issues. Relevant community partnerships will be established, including economic development, higher education, independent school districts, and non-profit organizations. Sector partnerships will be employer-led, focusing on agendas and issues raised by industry.

The coordination of Board workforce development programs and economic development activities within our service area is essential for maximizing the impact of our resources. To enhance the alignment of our programs with those of economic developers, we will actively engage with various economic development organizations to understand their long-term priorities and pressing challenges. By listening to these organizations' needs, we aim to incorporate their priorities into our strategic plan, ultimately benefiting their work and the employer community at large. Our future outreach efforts will expand to cover more geographic points within our diverse service region, recognizing recurring themes to support our growing economy.

WSSP connects services at workforce centers to Unemployment Insurance claims through multiple access points. In the event of significant layoffs, Rapid Response services may be coordinated with affected employers to provide dislocated workers with services at the worksite, local center, or a remote site. During business closures or reductions in force, staff may provide on-site computers for immediate access to online claim filing and work registration. Individuals can also initiate contact by visiting or calling the local workforce center.

From the moment an individual becomes unemployed, the local workforce center often serves as the first point of contact for services. The workforce center maintains open access for all customers needing to file for benefits. Workforce staff assist individuals in accessing services through the Texas Workforce Commission's website, which offers direct links to essential information, including filing procedures, eligibility requirements, and ongoing benefit information. The website is up-to-date, accurate, available 24/7, and accessible in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Workforce staff are available to assist customers who may be uncomfortable with computers or need extra help filing their claims. Customers receive informational printouts with clear directions for accessing Unemployment Information services and processes. Workforce center resources, such as conference rooms for appeal hearings, fax machines for submitting documentation, and computers for checking claim status, are available to customers. If a customer has unmet needs regarding UI information, center staff can contact a UI representative via a direct line not available to the public. WSSP staff engage claimants early, ensuring quality job referrals through complete registrations in the Work in Texas job matching system.

The Board coordinates with the workforce center operator and the Lubbock Small Business Development Center to offer services and training that promote entrepreneurial skills and microenterprise services. Entrepreneurial skills training provides individuals with the knowledge, tools, and mindset needed to start, manage, and grow a business, emphasizing practical skills, innovation, problem-solving, and business acumen. This training extends into micro enterprising, educating customers on how families and individuals with limited resources can creatively and sustainably operate with low start-up costs in local and niche markets.

Through strategic initiatives, enhanced training, and robust partnerships, the WSSP Board is dedicated to fostering a cohesive and dynamic workforce development environment. By addressing the needs of employers, non-employers, and self-employed workers, and by leveraging data-driven insights, we will continue to drive economic growth and improve career opportunities for our community. Our commitment to collaboration and innovation ensures that we remain responsive to the evolving needs of the workforce and the broader economic landscape.

C. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services

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

Boards must include a description of the strategies that are used to maximize coordination, improve service delivery, and avoid the duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services that are provided through the one-stop delivery system.

Board Response:

The Board Wagner-Peyser staff are fully integrated into the local one- stop system working side-by-side with Center staff. 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.

The Onestop Operator has worked systematically to develop trust and a team spirit among Workforce Center staff to promote integration and cooperation for both staff and programs. All Workforce Center staff, including partner staff, have access to immediate supervisors and support staff whose leadership provides consistent information and direction.

Supervisor and site meetings are held monthly or more frequently to disseminate factual, performance and program information to staff and to promote dialog among staff members about changing service delivery and problem resolution. Information and orientation meetings are held to inform and connect staff facing transition into a more integrated service model and to apprise all staff of these changes. Staff training opportunities continue to become more integrated. Topics such as FMLA, Sexual Harassment, ADA Compliance, Violence in the Workplace, Communication, Anger Management, Destructive Behavior and Problem Solving are a few of the module's staff are requested to review. The training program is an innovative computer-based system that guides and engages staff in real workplace scenarios and situations.

Each new staff member receives an intensive New Employee Orientation that covers workforce center operations, customer service, information systems, and other topics. The orientation also introduces new staff to the workforce management system; and the tools available to each Workforce Center staff member, such as SharePoint, programmatic procedures, quality assurance, monitoring tools, etc.

Our staff members are expected to deliver services in a way that implements the Board's vision and mission and complies with all governing rules and policies. We provide them with the ongoing training needed to meet this expectation. All current staff received and continue to receive on-going training in documenting case files, utilizing State information, use of reporting systems such as WIT and are proficient in these areas, as applicable to their respective jobs. Monthly, meetings are held with program staff, by group, during which policy and procedure updates and skills-training is conducted.

Training plans have been developed by job description for all staff. Each new staff member participates in program specific training plans outlined to train staff in both universal topics and program specific topics. Training methods will include online self- training, along with group and one-on-one training provided by managers. This approach to training will ensure more consistent and comprehensive skills for everyone.

The online staff training includes the following topics:

- Cyber Security, FMLA, ADA, Sexual Harassment, and Preventing Violence in the Workplace
- Annual ethics and ADA/EO training,
- Policy and systems training, and other topics as needed to ensure contract compliance, attainment of performance goals and continuous quality improvement.

All workforce center employees are required to complete annual ethics training, which covers confidentiality of information. Guidelines regarding proprietary information are provided to each new staff member during new employee orientation and at numerous times during the year. In addition, confidentiality of information is addressed on the P41 and Standards of Conduct forms, which each staff member is required to sign.

The Workforce Operator has worked systematically to develop trust and a team spirit among Workforce Center staff to promote integration and cooperation for both staff and programs. All Workforce Center staff, including partner staff, have access to immediate supervisors and support staff whose leadership provides consistent information and direction. ES staff are embedded into the one-stop delivery model with services provided by ES staff as part of an integrated workforce system. All center staff duties and responsibilities are clearly outlined and are aligned with the overall roles and responsibilities of the workforce system. Staff receive comprehensive training in the integrated model and how each program/function interacts and impacts all programs in the service delivery model. Center staff are cross trained to ensure services are provided consistently across all programs to provide efficiencies.

Centers conduct regular huddles and meetings with all staff to discuss the needs of employers and career seekers to avoid duplication of services. Workforce Center Managers provide daily supervision of ES staff and their functions consistent with the supervision of all center staff.

D. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management

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

Boards must include a description of how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to WorkinTexas.com for the programs that are carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions South Plains Board is committed to utilizing state-of-the-art systems to enhance service delivery and ensure compliance with Texas Workforce Commission guidelines. The integration of these systems is pivotal in streamlining operations and improving accessibility for both employers and job seekers.

In accordance with TWC guidelines, one-stop centers transitioned to the use of the state-required systems, including WorkInTexas.com Case Management system for programs carried out under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and other case-managed programs in mid-April 2024. Prior to the launch of the new system, staff were required to attend TWC-initiated training to ensure proficiency in utilizing the new system. The Board WIT Liaison attends monthly TEAMS meetings with TWC to ensure any changes or updates are shared with staff and is available to provide training as needed.

WorkInTexas.com: This system is also used for integrated intake, eligibility, case management, and reporting of employment and training services. It allows for the sharing of intake and service history information among staff, accessible statewide, and incorporates a paperless environment for efficient document and information management.

E. Third Party Partnership in SNAP Employment and Training Programs

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

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

Board Response:

The Board is aware of the SNAP E&T Third Party Partnerships (TPP) expansion and is planning for the expansion of TPP in accordance with the implementation goals.

Part 5: Workforce Investment Activities

A. Rapid Response Activity Coordination

References: WIOA §108(b)(8); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(7)

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

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions South Plains Board is committed to supporting local businesses facing workforce reductions or closures by providing comprehensive Rapid Response Services. These services are designed to assist dislocated workers and ensure a smooth transition during challenging times.

To effectively deliver Rapid Response Services, the Board will organize a dedicated team

comprising the State’s Unemployment Information Field Specialists, WIOA Career Center Representatives, Business Services Representatives, and the Board Rapid Response Coordinator. This team will conduct orientation meetings with dislocated workers, providing essential information on accessing Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits, registering for work on WorkInTexas.com, and understanding payment processes. Career Center representatives will offer guidance on WIOA-approved training, the application process, eligibility criteria, and available short-term and long-term training opportunities. Additionally, information on on-the-job training, veteran services, resume creation, and required work searches will be provided.

The WSSP Board will partner with the State Rapid Response unit to ensure timely and appropriate services for local employers and workers. The need for Rapid Response Services may be identified through various channels, including: Announcements or notifications of permanent business closures, regardless of the number of workers affected; announcements or notifications of mass layoffs affecting 50 or more workers, or notices that a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notice has been filed; mass dislocations resulting from natural disasters or other events, as defined by state or local emergency management sources; the filing of a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition.

Once the need for Rapid Response Services is identified, the Rapid Response Coordinator will collaborate with the assigned Business Solutions Consultant to engage the employer in discussions about layoff aversion, transition, and re-employment services for affected workers. The Business Solutions Consultant will work with the employer’s authorized representative to determine the best method for delivering information to employees. Following this agreement, the Rapid Response Coordinator and Business Solutions Consultant will prepare and provide the necessary information to affected employees, including:

- Training on and registration in WorkInTexas.com.
- Information on basic eligibility for unemployment benefits and how to apply for UI.
- Job search assistance.
- Access to resources.
- Job application and résumé preparation.
- Assessment of accomplishments and skills.
- Résumé development assistance.
- Interviewing skills and effective interviewing techniques.
- Labor market information, including target and demand occupations.
- Customized lists of current job openings; including hot jobs.
- Customized and targeted job fairs.
- Coordination of language interpreters and services for the visually and hearing impaired.
- Information on how to petition for TAA.

Through these coordinated efforts, the WSSP Board aims to provide comprehensive support to local businesses and dislocated workers, ensuring a seamless transition and promoting re-employment opportunities. By partnering with the State Rapid Response unit and leveraging targeted services, the Board is dedicated to fostering resilience and stability within the workforce community.

B. Youth Activities and Services

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

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

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act establishes minimum standards for delivering workforce services to youth aged 14 to 24. These specialized services are designed to assist youth in completing their high school education and pursuing secondary education. The WSSP Board is committed to utilizing allocated funding to serve out-of-school youth, in-school youth at risk of not completing high school, and those who have completed high school but require assistance to obtain employment or training.

The Board has developed strategies to increase educational opportunities for eligible youth. Once basic eligibility is determined, youth are assessed for the type of services needed, skill level, work experience, and interests. The Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) is administered to determine if the youth is basic skills deficient. All information is considered when developing the Individual Service Strategy (ISS), with special consideration given to individuals with disabilities. Workforce Solutions South Plains staff use various assessment tools approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, including:

- 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
- CASAS

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

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies leading to a high school diploma or its equivalent or postsecondary credential.
- Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services.
- Paid and unpaid work experiences with academic and occupational education components, such as summer and nonseasonal employment, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training.
- Occupational skills training, prioritizing programs leading to recognized postsecondary credentials in in-demand industries or occupations.
- Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for specific occupations.

- Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and positive social and civic behaviors.
- Support services, such as linkages to community services, transportation assistance, child and dependent care, housing assistance, needs-related payments, educational testing assistance, reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities, health care referrals, and assistance with uniforms or work attire and tools.
- Adult mentoring for at least 12 months.
- Follow-up services for at least 12 months after participation.
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referrals.
- Financial literacy education.
- Entrepreneurial skills training.
- Services providing labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.
- 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 all 14 program elements are available to WIOA youth participants. Youth Program staff determine which elements are appropriate based on the participant's assessment and ISS. Case managers review identified barriers and track progress toward meeting goals, utilizing partnering agencies when necessary.

Youth Program staff identify appropriate services and career pathways through an objective assessment, reviewing academic and occupational skills levels and service needs. This process includes:

- Basic skills
- Occupational skills
- Work experience
- Employability
- Interests/aptitudes
- Support service needs
- Developmental needs

WIOA mandates that at least 75% of Youth Program funding be expended on services for out-of-school youth, with expenditures on work experience activities meeting or exceeding 20% of local youth formula funds. The Youth Program offers a summer employment program to connect youth with area employers, facilitated by Business Services Unit and ES staff.

Designated staff within the Workforce division, including Youth staff, serve on various Advisory Boards throughout the community, such as SHRM, DARS, local Chambers, Goodwill, and the Adult Education Coalition. These memberships help develop and maintain community relationships with agency partners. Youth Program staff maintain 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 refer youth to agencies like Buckner Children and Family Services to address specific barriers and access services included in the 14 essential service elements. Buckner serves youth aging out of foster care, while the Vocational Rehabilitation Program provides services to youth with disabilities.

Youth staff utilize various tools, including phone, virtual services, onsite visits with laptops or tablets to assist participants in rural communities. Individuals can apply and report changes through the online paperless documentation system, email, fax, or regular mail.

The WSSP Board is dedicated to providing comprehensive and accessible services to youth, ensuring they receive the support needed to achieve their educational and career goals. Through strategic implementation, community collaboration, and technological integration, the Board aims to foster a supportive environment that empowers youth to succeed.

C. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs

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

Boards must include a description of how the Board will coordinate workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid the duplication of services.

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions South Plains Board is dedicated to fostering collaboration with secondary and postsecondary programs to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and prevent duplication. These efforts are crucial for maximizing the impact of workforce development initiatives and ensuring seamless service delivery.

The Board regularly convenes with relevant secondary and postsecondary programs to discuss co-enrolled participants, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, target occupations, career pathways, and grant opportunities. These meetings are instrumental in aligning strategies and enhancing service delivery.

WSSP leverages partnerships to plan and execute joint career fairs, providing initial career path information to area students. The Board disseminates emerging in-demand skills information and relevant labor market data to school counselors, parents, students, and employers, ensuring informed career pathway decisions.

The Board coordinates with Adult Education and Literacy partners to better integrate adult education job seekers into the workforce. This includes expanding adult programs in in-demand occupations and providing integrated education and training (IET) opportunities. WSSP utilizes career fairs to provide career path information to students from middle school through their educational journey. Career Progression Lattices are used to share skills information with school counselors, parents, students, and employers. Additionally, the Board collaborates with local Chambers and Independent School Districts (ISDs) to offer professional development through teacher externship programs. These programs enable teachers to gain industry-specific knowledge and share their experiences with colleagues and students.

The Board collaborates with the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA) and other Economic Development Corporations in the South Plains to leverage sales tax funds for enhancing secondary CTE programs and high-demand occupation training at the postsecondary level. Recent grants have funded 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 train hundreds in high-demand, high-wage careers. Additional funding has supported CTE equipment for 25 school districts, training 1,890 high school students in high-demand careers. The High Demand Job Training Project has provided \$2,213,668 in equipment to 35 high schools, resulting in 4,074 students earning industry-recognized certifications and college credits.

The Board Executive Director serves as the President of the Community Workforce Partnership (CWP), a 501(c)(3) organization aligned with the workforce board's mission. 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 South Plains College, and the Director of Workforce Development for the South Plains Association of Governments. The Board meets quarterly to discuss resource leveraging and partner engagement.

Through strategic coordination, collaboration, and community engagement, the WSSP Board is committed to enhancing workforce development services and supporting the educational and career aspirations of the South Plains community. These efforts ensure that students, job seekers, and employers receive the resources and support needed to thrive in a dynamic and evolving workforce landscape.

The CEO of Workforce Solutions South Plains chairs the Community Workforce Partnership (CWP), which includes key stakeholders such as the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance,

Lubbock Chamber of Commerce, Region 17, South Plains College, and Career and Technology Coordinators from various school districts. In 2017, the Board expanded to include the Director of Academic Engagement from Texas Tech University. Additionally, the CEO chairs the Lubbock ISD Career and Technology Advisory Committee and serves on the South Plains College (SPC) Byron Martin Advisory Committee, which has been instrumental in developing the new SPC Lubbock Center campus. Through these strategic relationships, the Board significantly influences the development of secondary and postsecondary educational initiatives in the region.

The Board collaborates with Vocational Rehabilitation staff to host the "United We Work" initiative, in partnership with Amerigroup, Lubbock Independent School District, Workforce Board, and Vocational Rehabilitation. This initiative aims to organize local employers based on students' interests, allowing them to shadow businesses for a few hours. The annual event averages approximately 150 South Plains youth with disabilities from ISDs across 15 counties. It provides these students with opportunities to observe the daily activities of local employers, explore various career interests, participate in mock interviews, and learn job interview skills from local business professionals.

Annually, the Board hosts three major job fairs, including two region-wide fairs and the "Red, White and You Job Fair," which promotes the hiring of veterans. In collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission, the Board promoted and hosted the "Red, White and You Job Fair" in November, where 47 employers participated and welcomed 159 job seekers.

The Board also provides letters of support to partner organizations such as the Community Health Center, South Plains College (SPC), the Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center, multiple ISDs, and Texas Tech Health Sciences Center. These letters serve as resources for developing grant applications for job training.

In 2024, 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 due to their ongoing partnership with Workforce Solutions South Plains.

In collaboration with the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA), the Board received two High Demand Job Training Grants, each amounting to \$150,000, with additional contributions from LEDA totaling \$213,639. These grants facilitated occupational training at the secondary level, preparing 995 school and community college students for high-demand occupations.

The Board also received a \$150,000 TIP Grant, matched with \$100,000 from Texas Mutual Insurance Company, \$10,000 from LEDA, and \$10,000 from the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce. This partnership provided training for 105 healthcare occupation students at South Plains College, Lubbock Christian University, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, and Covenant School of Nursing.

The Board sponsors the annual South Plains Career Expo, offering youth the opportunity to explore career options. In October 2024, over 3,000 high school students from schools across the South Plains and beyond attended the event, which featured over 100 exhibits and hands-on interactive displays from business and educational sponsors.

In Program Year 2024, the Board hosted three "Jobs Y'all Career Exploration Events" in Levelland,

Plainview, and Lubbock. Each event featured a guest speaker who engaged with students, emphasizing the importance of education and training. These events served a total of 3,929 students, included 267 exhibitors, and were attended by representatives from 67 independent school districts.

Additionally, in Program Year 2024, Board staff facilitated the Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program, which provides students with disabilities workplace readiness training, five weeks of work experience, and transferable skill learning opportunities while they earn compensation for their time worked on the job site. Through this program, 54 students were placed in paid work experience programs with 32 different employers.

D. Child Care and Early Learning

References: 40 TAC §809.12

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

Efforts include:

- *coordinating with employers, economic development programs, and other industry leaders to increase the awareness and importance of early learning as a workforce and economic development tool;*
- *supporting improved school readiness through higher-quality child care, including through the Texas Rising Star program and partnership opportunities; and*
- *supporting the needs of the childcare industry, such as by providing assistance with business development or shared services, or by providing opportunities to support professional growth and career pathways for early education.*

The Board recognizes the critical importance of safe, high-quality, and stable early care and education as a cornerstone for economic development in rural areas. Our childcare and early learning services are designed to support both parents and childcare providers, ensuring they thrive as businesses and employers.

WSSP offers comprehensive support to parents enrolled in the childcare program. Parents receive informational materials about available resources and assistance through the workforce system, along with emails, updates on programs and services, and invitations to workshops and virtual events. Additionally, WSSP convenes quarterly meetings with workforce and childcare contractors to enhance the referral mechanism between both programs. Systems are developed to facilitate ongoing communication and interaction using state-provided information systems. Child Care Solutions refers parents to Workforce Solutions in the following instances:

- Parents who have lost employment and are on a time-limited job search.
- Parents nearing the completion of an education or training component.

- Parents continuing participation with Child Care Services who may be interested in upskilling for career enhancement.

The WSSP Board works with Child Care Providers receiving Workforce Solutions childcare services to ensure successful attainment of Texas Rising Star (TRS) certification, in accordance with TWC guidelines. Texas Rising Start training is routinely offered to providers along with working one-on-one with an assigned mentor. The TRS program is a quality rating and improvement system for childcare programs in Texas, offering three tiers of certification (Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star) to encourage higher levels of quality that exceed Child Care Regulation standards. All childcare programs serving children in TWC's Child Care Services (CCS) scholarship program must participate in the TRS program.

A local Child Care Advisory Council has been established to improve, sustain, and support the childcare workforce. This council includes representatives from licensed childcare centers and homes participating in the CCS program, families currently or formerly served by CCS, Board CCS contractors, Board members and staff, and other childcare stakeholders. The council ensures a well-rounded group of members to gather input from various entities interested in early childhood topics and issues. It also provides training opportunities to showcase the advantages of being a CCS provider.

Currently, no Child Care providers have taken advantage of the contracted slot agreements opportunities. However, the WSSP Board will continue to conduct outreach to providers, informing them of the benefits of this initiative.

During 2024, two child care programs in the WDA have developed formal Pre-K partnerships. The Board continues to share information on the benefits of Pre-K partnerships as required annually and at various provider trainings and meetings.

The WSSP Board is dedicated to supporting both parents and childcare providers, recognizing their vital role in the economic development of rural areas. Through strategic collaborations, comprehensive support systems, and continuous outreach, we aim to enhance the quality and stability of early care and education services, ultimately benefiting the entire community.

E. Transportation and Other Support Services

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

Each Board must include a description of how the Board will provide transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate support services in the workforce area in coordination with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities.

Board Response:

The Board provides comprehensive support services to address barriers to employment and enhance participation in workforce activities. Our approach ensures that participants receive the necessary assistance to achieve their career goals.

As part of the individual assessment process, a career navigator conducts a needs assessment to identify strengths and barriers to participation in workforce activities. If support service needs are identified, the career navigator provides participants with information on accessing local community resources. In cases where community resources are unavailable, allowable support services may be offered. The career navigator works directly with participants to ensure all local referrals are addressed, supporting documentation is obtained, and requests are generated in a timely manner. Allowable support services include, but are not limited to, transportation assistance, housing assistance, utilities assistance, and work-related expenses. WSSP also provides expanded access through virtual services to reduce transportation barriers and enhance service delivery within our workforce development area.

The Board coordinates a mix of supportive services based on individual job seekers' needs, such as childcare, transportation, work-related expenses, and other financial assistance. These collaborations extend beyond our partners in the one-stop center to include local human services agencies and educational institutions. Support services are provided to program customers to address barriers to employment or participation in work-based services, basic and individualized career services, career pathways, education and training services, re-employment services, post-employment and follow-up services (e.g., job retention services for SNAP E&T), and access to childcare services. Support services are subject to the availability of resources and funding and are provided based on individual program guidelines.

Transportation-Related Support Services

Transportation-related support services are available to all eligible workforce participants if they are reasonable, necessary, and directly related to program participation. These 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)
- Carpools
- Minor car repairs with prior approval
- Taxicab services
- Contracts with private entities, such as transit providers that offer shuttle or van services
- Car insurance (except for SNAP E&T recipients)
- Driver license fees (including 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)

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

The WSSP Board is committed to offering a comprehensive range of support services to help participants overcome barriers to employment and achieve their career objectives. Through coordinated efforts, expanded access, and strategic partnerships, we strive to provide the necessary resources and assistance to support the success of our workforce community.

F. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy

References: WIOA §108(b)(13); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(12); WD 18-23, Change 2

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

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions South Plains Board is committed to enhancing access to Adult Education and Literacy programs and improving outcomes for customers through strong partnerships and strategic collaborations. By fostering a seamless referral system and coordinating efforts with the Region 17 Education Service Center, the AEL Program provider, we aim to provide comprehensive support to individuals seeking educational and employment opportunities.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Board and the Region 17 Education Service Center facilitates a two-way referral system and establishes a process for conducting follow-up on referrals to ensure contact has been established with AEL for those in need of their GED. All AEL participants seeking employment are registered in WorkInTexas.com and receive one-on-one assistance during AEL orientation or when visiting the career center. WIOA Adult and Youth Program Managers attend monthly meetings with AEL and other partners, including Region 17, Texas Tech University/East Lubbock Promise, Learn Inc., Literacy Lubbock, South Plains College, and Lubbock Housing Authority, to discuss services, programs, and upcoming events.

Workforce Career Center staff coordinate with AEL activities by attending monthly AEL orientations to provide information on Workforce Services, assist participants with registration in WorkInTexas.com, and identify AEL customers interested in WIOA Programs. Board staff also participate in bi-weekly conference calls with AEL Providers, facilitated by TWC, to promote coordination of activities and the creation of local plans.

The Board reviews 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 TWC.

Strategies to Improve Access

To enhance access to AEL programs and services, the following strategies have been identified:

- Strengthen the referral process between the workforce center and AEL programs, with a system to track participants across both entities for documentation of program participants served.
- Offer individual one-on-one information in addition to orientations for AEL students, especially those currently unemployed.
- Identify employers willing to speak to AEL classes.
- Share notices with AEL contractors when scheduling job fairs to notify AEL customers.
- Identify employers who hire many Spanish-speaking individuals to facilitate English as a Second Language classes onsite.
- Offer orientation to AEL staff about Workforce services.

The goals for continued coordination with AEL programs include:

- Increasing exposure and understanding of each program through marketing information.
- Expanding the use of social media to provide information to customers and potential customers.
- Expanding the partnership to include AEL components in rural counties.

Workforce Solutions staff may provide labor market and career information to AEL teachers for classroom display and distribution to AEL students. The Board will continue to capitalize on grant funds provided by TWC to offer targeted technical training to eligible AEL students and support the development of integrated career pathways to increase post-secondary credentialing and employment opportunities for AEL students.

Through strategic partnerships, coordinated efforts, and targeted strategies, the WSSP Board is dedicated to enhancing access to Adult Education and Literacy programs and improving outcomes for customers. By fostering collaboration and leveraging resources, we aim to provide comprehensive support to individuals seeking educational and employment opportunities, ultimately contributing to the economic development of our region.

Part 6: Adult and Dislocated Workers

A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training References: WIOA §108(b)(7); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(6)

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

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions South Plains (WSSP) Board is dedicated to providing comprehensive career services to all customers entering the workforce center. Our approach ensures that individuals receive the necessary support to achieve their employment goals through a range of basic, individualized, and training services.

Basic Career Services

Upon entering the workforce center for the first time, customers receive basic career services, which include:

- Outreach, intake, and orientation to information and other services available in the workforce system.
- Preliminary needs assessment.
- Job search and job placement assistance, including information on nontraditional employment and in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- Referral and coordination with other programs and services within and outside the workforce system.
- Provision of workforce and labor market information (LMI) at local, regional, state, and national levels, including:
 - Job vacancy listings.
 - Job skills required for vacant positions.
 - Information on earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement in demand occupations.
- Information and assistance for filing unemployment insurance (UI) claims.
- WorkInTexas (WIT) registration.
- Job search and job referrals (self or staff-assisted), placement assistance, and career counseling.
- Internet browsing related to career or training search.
- Use of self-directed career exploration and other online resources.
- Referrals to other community resources.
- Resume critique.
- Use of resource room materials, equipment, and information.
- Use of the Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) for training provider information.
- Group sessions and workforce center workshops.
- Initial screening for referrals and information about activities leading to other workforce center programs.
- Referral to other staff or workshops.
- Other self-service and information services.

Individualized Career Services

For customers eligible for WIOA services and requiring individualized career services to obtain or retain employment, WIOA Talent Development staff develop an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP). This plan includes individual career services, career pathways, occupational goals, and steps to achieve these goals. Individualized career services may include:

- Comprehensive assessment using diagnostic testing to determine skill levels and in-depth interviewing.
- Development of an IEP to identify employment goals, barriers, and support service needs.
- Short-term prevocational services, including training for communication, interviewing, punctuality, personal maintenance, and professional conduct skills (soft skills) to prepare customers for unsubsidized employment.
- Non-occupationally specific skills in demand by employers, such as Microsoft Office and

- introductory classes to industry clusters.
- Workforce preparation activities.
- Financial literacy.
- Computer literacy.
- Internships paid and unpaid work experience linked to a career pathway.
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs (IET).
- Soft skills for long-term job seekers and professional development.
- Out-of-area job search and relocation assistance.

Training Services

Training services may be available to customers who:

- Are unlikely to obtain or retain employment leading to a self-sufficiency wage.
- Are unlikely to obtain or retain employment with wages comparable to or higher than previous employment.
- Have the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services.

Workforce center staff determine customer eligibility through interviews, assessments, and career planning. If appropriate and WIOA eligible, Talent Development Specialists develop or amend the IEP to include training services. Training services may include:

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment in target occupations as defined by the Workforce Solutions South Plains Area board.
- Integrated education and learning that combines academics and occupational training.
- On-the-job training (OJT), including registered apprenticeship.
- Incumbent worker training.
- Workplace training and cooperative education programs.
- Private sector training programs.
- Skills upgrading and retraining.
- Entrepreneurial training.
- Transitional jobs.
- Job readiness training provided in combination with other training listed above.
- Adult education and literacy, including English language acquisition (ELA) and IET programs in combination with training.
- Customized training with employer commitment to hire customers upon successful program completion.

The WSSP Board is committed to providing a comprehensive range of career services to support individuals in achieving their employment goals. Through basic, individualized, and training services, we ensure that customers receive the necessary assistance to succeed in their career pathways. Our dedication to expanding virtual training options further enhances accessibility and support for all participants.

B. Service Priority

References: 20 CFR §679.560(b)(21)

Boards must include the Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as consistent with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and 20CFR

§680.600, along with veterans and foster youth, according to the priority order outlined in the WIOA Guidelines for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth. Boards must also include a list of any Board-established priority groups, if any.

Board Response:

Priority for WIOA 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. Non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are recipients of public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient in the following order:
 - i. Foster youth and former foster youth (as defined in WD Letter 43-11, Change 2)
 - ii. Non-foster youth
3. All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses.
4. Priority populations established by the governor and/or the WSSP in the following order:
 - i. All other foster youth and former foster youth, as required by Texas LaborCode§264.121
 - ii. Victims of Human Trafficking
 - iii. Employed Individuals whose income is below the Board's self-sufficiency level
 - iv. Displaced Homemakers
 - v. Individuals with a Disability
 - vi. Individuals with limited work experience and/or poor work history (less than three months)
 - vii. Special participant populations that face multiple barriers to employment to include:
 - Individuals who are English language learners or face substantial cultural barriers
 - Ex-Offenders-Homeless individuals
 - viii. Older individuals, age 55 or older
5. Non-covered individuals outside of the groups given priority under WIOA

Part 7: Fiscal Agent, Grants, and Contracts

A. Fiscal Agent

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

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

Board Response:

The South Plains Regional Workforce Development Board, dba Workforce Solutions South Plains is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

B. Subgrants and Contracts

References: WIOA §108(b)(16); 20 CFR §679.560(b)(15) Boards must include a description of the competitive process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.

Board Response:

In accordance with the Texas Workforce Commission Agency Board Agreement, the Board employs formal procurement procedures for competitive procurements that exceed the simplified acquisition threshold adopted by the Uniform Guidance (UG). Competitive proposals are solicited through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The following steps ensure a transparent and competitive procurement process:

Procurement Process

- Procurement Calendar: A procurement calendar is prepared, identifying Board staff and their tasks in developing the RFP.
- Public Notices: Notices of intent to issue and the issue date are posted on the Board's website and may be advertised in the Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD), Texas Register, local newspapers, and sent to entities on the bidder's list.
- RFP Posting: The RFP is posted on the issue date on the Board's website and the ESBD.
- Board of Directors Notification: The Board of Directors is informed of the RFP issuance and begins forming an Ad Hoc committee to review subsequent recommendations.
- Bidders Conference: A Bidders Conference may be held.
- Q&A Responses: Responses to questions (Q&A) are posted on the Board's website.
- Proposal Logging: Proposals are logged upon arrival.
- Responsiveness Review: Each proposal is reviewed for responsiveness. Evaluators, who may be internal or external, are assigned to score each responsive proposal.
- Evaluator Meeting: The evaluation process begins with an Evaluator Meeting, covering:
 - Code of Conduct
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Score Sheets and scoring criteria
- Score Compilation: Evaluator scores are compiled.
- Oral Interviews: Oral interviews may be held.
- Final Recommendation: A final recommendation is submitted for the Board of Directors' approval.
- Notification of Intent to Negotiate: Once approved, a notification of intent to negotiate is sent to the selected proposer, and other proposers are informed.

- Contract Negotiations: Contract negotiations begin.
- Debriefings: Debriefings are scheduled with non-awardees upon request.

By adhering to these formal procurement procedures, the Board ensures a fair, transparent, and competitive process that aligns with the TWC Agency Board Agreement and promotes the effective use of resources.

Part 8: Performance

A. Board Performance Targets

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

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

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 received approximately \$18 Million in formula funds each year to administer the following programs.

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: 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 childcare services (CCS).

The Board’s WIOA program year begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the subsequent year. During Program Year 2023, the Board received \$27,410,404.32 million in formula and discretionary funds to administer employment and training programs as illustrated below. The Board Received two High Demand job Training Grants of \$150,000 each. Updated Board funding for the Program year is listed underneath the chart.

Board Funding for PY 2023-2024	Percent	Budget
Childcare – All	72.88%	\$19,976,059.32
Choices – Temporary Assistance for Needy	5.27%	\$1,445,309.00

Families		
WIOA Youth	4.79%	\$1,313,648.00
WIOA Dislocated Worker	3.90%	\$1,068,545.00
WIOA Adult	3.51%	\$936,021.00
WIOA Rapid Response	0.08%	\$22,169.00
WIOA Upskills	0.26%	\$71,007.00
SNAP E&T	0.87%	\$238,016.00
TAA	1.24%	\$10,000.00
Reemployment Services and Eligibility Access	1.24%	\$338,622.00
Non-Custodial Parents Choices Program	0.83%	\$226,890.00
TWC Initiatives	0.17%	\$46,233.00
High Demand Job Training Grant (2)	1.09%	\$300,000.00
Wagner Peyser (ES)	0.44%	\$121,197.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	4.51%	
Summer Earn and Learn		\$315,775.00
Paid Work Experience		\$287,500.00
Student Hire ability Navigator		\$407,751.00
Co-Location Contracts		\$226,000.00
Other	0.12%	\$32,662.00
	100.00%	\$27,410,404.32

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.

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 12/31/2023.

PY 2022-2023 Board Contracted Performance Measures

Indicators of Success		Performance Year to Date Performance Period as of Jan 2023,
	Target	Percent of Current Target
Claimant Reemployment within 10 weeks	60.00	112.42%

Number of Employers Receiving Workforce Assistance	1778	113.84%
Choices Full Work Rate – All Family	50%	110.48%
Average Number of Children Served Per Day – Combined	2,329	106.91%

The performance targets for PY 2023-2024 are provided in Table 2. Based on current performance the Board is confident in its ability to meet or exceed the targets for each of the 15 WIOA performance measures by the end of the program year.
 PY 2023-2024 WIOA Performance Measures

Indicators of Success Q=Quarter; DW-Dislocated Worker		Performance Year to Date Performance Period As of January 2024,
	Current Target	Percent of Current Target
Claimant Reemployment within 10 weeks	60.00%	107.28%
Number of Employers Receiving Workforce Assistance	1773	183.32%
Choices Full Work Rate – All Family	50.00%	102.27%
Average Number of Children Served Per Day – Combined	2,420	102.58%
Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – C&T Participants	66.00%	105.29%
Employed/Enrolled Q2 to Q4 Post Exit – C&T Participants	84.00%	100.24%
Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – Adult	\$8,610	113.70%
Credential Rate – Adult	84.00%	84.60%
Employed Q2 Post Exit – Adult	85.00%	110.47%
Employed Q4 Post Exit – Adult	82.60%	103.75%
Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – DW	\$11,200	121.46%
Credential Rate – DW	85.00%	105.88%
Employed Q4 Post Exit – DW	85.00%	117.65%
Employed/ Q2 Post Exit – DW	85.00%	117.65%

Part 9: Training and Services

A. Individual Training Accounts

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

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

Board Response:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) provide funding for eligible WIOA customers to attend approved training programs. These accounts are designed for customers who are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than their current or previous employment through career services alone.

Before training services are provided, career center counselors guide customers through the completion of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). Assessments are conducted to ensure that customers meet the math, reading, and vocational requirements applicable to their chosen program before approval for training services and referral to the selected training provider. The training program must be directly linked to employment opportunities in the local area or another area where the trainee is willing to relocate. Occupational skills training will only be funded if it prepares the individual for work in one of the Board's targeted occupations. Customers are required to apply for other sources of funding (e.g., Pell grants, scholarships) before applying for and being approved for an ITA. The ITA will cover 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 \$15,000 and must be completed within three years, with no exceptions to these limits.

All individuals entering a Workforce Center have access to multiple assessments. The results of these assessments, along with the customer's skills, interests, abilities, and experience, form the basis for the individualized employment plan, which includes a career pathway. Customers interested in occupational training research available training programs, discuss their findings with a case manager, and select a program to enter. The case manager then submits an ITA request to a manager for review. The manager ensures that:

- The training is directly linked to employment opportunities listed on the Board's Target Occupation List.
- The training is conducted by approved providers listed in the state's Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) or appropriately procured.
- The job seeker has applied for the Pell Grant, if appropriate.
- The cost of the training is reasonable.

Currently, applicants for training services are provided with a list of training providers who

offer programs in their chosen occupation and are eligible to receive workforce funding to facilitate customer choice. From PY 2025 through PY 2028, the Board will continue to enhance and expand its interactive career roadmaps on the Board’s website to inform customers about the training programs subsidized by the Board. These training programs will be linked to performance information, including completion and placement rates, for each of the Eligible Training Providers.

B. ITA Limitations

References: 20 CFR §663.420; WD Letter 14-19, Change 2 Boards may impose limits on the duration and amount of ITAs, of which such limitations must be described in the Board Plan. If the state or Board chooses to impose limitations, such limitations must not be implemented in a manner that undermines the WIOA requirement that training services are provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice in the selection of an Eligible Training Provider. Exceptions to ITA limitations may be provided for individual cases and must be described in Board policies.

Board Response:

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are capped at a maximum amount of \$15,000 per program participant, with a duration limit of two years.

Participants may select training programs that exceed the maximum ITA amount if additional funding sources, such as Pell Grants, scholarships, or severance pay, are available to supplement the ITA.

The use of ITA funds is restricted to required tuition and fees, books, supplies, and other related costs mandated by the training provider as listed in the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

Exceptions to the ITA amount and duration limits may be granted on a case-by-case basis, subject to the approval of the Project Director

Part 10: Apprenticeship

A. Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Each Board must include a description of how the Board will encourage Registered Apprenticeship programs within its workforce area to register with the Eligible Training Provider System to receive WIOA funding.

Board Response:

WSSP encourages and supports employers throughout the region in developing and increasing access to Registered Apprenticeship programs. WSSP will educate companies and regional leaders on the value that apprenticeships add to the workforce/talent development system through events and seminars and provides guidance and technical assistance in how to develop registered apprenticeships.

B. Apprenticeship Texas

Each Board must include a description of the Board's strategy and commitment to support Apprenticeship Texas efforts across the state, as applicable.

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions South Plains Board is committed to actively promoting apprenticeship opportunities to job seekers, students, and the broader community. By leveraging partnerships and utilizing various platforms, we aim to enhance awareness and participation in apprenticeship programs.

WSSP will actively promote apprenticeship opportunities through multiple channels:

- **Job Seekers:** Information will be disseminated within the career center to ensure job seekers are aware of available apprenticeship programs.
- **Regional Outreach:** Apprenticeship opportunities will be promoted across the region through social media platforms.
- **Students:** Information will be shared with students in regional Independent School Districts (ISDs) to encourage early engagement with apprenticeship programs.

To celebrate and promote apprenticeship opportunities, WSSP will partner with community stakeholders to distribute information and organize community events. These efforts will help raise awareness and highlight the benefits of apprenticeship programs.

WSSP will develop and strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders to increase the availability of integrated work-based learning opportunities. These partnerships include:

- **Local Economic Development Corporations:** Collaborating to align apprenticeship programs with regional economic needs.
- **Community Colleges:** Partnering to provide educational support and resources for apprenticeships.
- **Independent School Districts:** Engaging with schools to introduce students to apprenticeship opportunities.
- **Trades-Related Employers:** Working with employers to create and expand apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training programs.

Part 11: Public Comment

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

Boards must provide a description of the public comment process, including:

- making copies of the proposed local plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media;

- an opportunity for comment by members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education;
- providing at least a 15-day, but no more than a 30-day period for comment on the plan before its submission to TWC, beginning on the date that the proposed plan is made available, before its submission to TWC.

Board Response:

A public notice is posted website and through social media that the plan modification is available on the Board's website for public comment, the plan is also reviewed and voted on in an open Board meeting to ensure transparency and offer the public an opportunity to make comments. The Board draft Strategic Plan for Program years 2025-2028 is posted from March 31, 2025, until April 15, 2025. This meets the 15-day requirement. No comments were received .

Appendix: Texas Workforce Investment Council Requirements

Local Board Plan Requirements

for Alignment to the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

Requirement for Workforce Systemwide Alignment

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

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

Demonstrating Local Alignment with Texas’ Workforce System Strategic Plan

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

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

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

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

- **Employers System Goal:** Accelerate the delivery of relevant education and training programs to meet the demand of employers.

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

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

Directions for Demonstrating Alignment with the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

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

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

System Goals and Objectives

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

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

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

Response should address the following:

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

- data used to track reskilling and upskilling program enrollments and outcomes, including program completions, attainment of short-term credentials and industry-based certifications or licenses, and employment directly related to the credential, license, or certification.

Board response:

Workforce Solutions South Plains continues to develop strong collaboration and partnerships with employers, education and training partners, including the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA) to assist in creating and implementing high demand training programs for our area. We do this in various ways, but one most successful is our meeting with the Community Workforce Partnership (CWP) group which is comprised of this group and includes area ISD Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. This type of partnership is required to ensure training needs and programs are created and implemented and include the skills required by local industries.

This approach ensures that our trained workforce is not only equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge but also prepared for to meet/exceed employer expectations. Our CWP meeting focus on the agendas and issues raised by employer needs to the workforce. Collaboration with other community partners, such as Region 17 Adult Basic Ed for adult learners that are transitioning to employment through education and EL ROBI (East Lubbock Resident Owned Business Initiative) a 501c3 organization helps us link employers to a broader range of resources. EL ROBI also works directly with employers to develop a short-credential training which is a 6-week on-the-job training program and paid work placement to ensure individuals are well-prepared for a career in skilled trades. Workforce Solutions South Plains participated in the TWC Middle Skills Grant and worked closely with EL ROBI to assist with the purchase of required tools and support services for individuals who had completed their certification and had been offered employment. Workforce Solutions South Plains will continue to partner with TWC on any reskilling or upskilling grants to ensure we meet employer needs as they continue to increase. (Refer to pages 6; 13; 43; 51; 63; 69)

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

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

Response should address the following:

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

Board Response:

As mentioned above, Workforce Solutions South Plains continues to develop strong collaboration and partnerships with employers, Region 17 ISDs and ETPL training providers in our area. Many times, we do so in collaboration with LEDA with which we've been granted almost a dozen TWC High Demand Grants over the years to assist CTE programs in our WDA in implementing high demand training programs for youth in our area. These youth may go immediately into unsubsidized employment, on-the-job training program, or to secondary education to further their industry recognized certificates. Youth and adults alike are afforded the opportunity to view and select from TWC's ETPL for eligible training and apprenticeship programs and the TWC Texas Internship Challenge websites and explore career opportunities.

Workforce Solutions South Plains hosts at least three youth Jobs Y'all Career Exploration events annually (2 of which are in rural areas) to assist youth in making educated and informed decisions in their career exploration and choose their career pathways with the training vendors participating in these events. Additionally, we partner with TWC Vocational Rehab to ensure students with disabilities are afforded the same opportunities by ensuring our VR partners are aware of the event and have invited their students. We average a total of 3,500+ students attending these events (combined). Workforce Solutions South Plains also works with VR in the Paid Work Experience program that offers paid on-the-job training to students with disabilities year-round and the Summer Earn and Learn Work Experience program during the summer months. WSSP hosts job fairs directed to youth as the summer months approach to prepare them for work opportunities during the summer. WSSP will continue to work with TWC to ensure we are expanding work-based learning opportunities for individuals in our WDA area. (Refer to Pages 40; 45; 60; 64; 71; 78; 79)

3. Partners Goal – Alignment to Support Career Pathways

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

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

Response should address the following:

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

BOARD RESPONSE:

To support the identification of credential value and streamline and clarify existing pathways key activities have been implemented. These activities help in aligning secondary and post-secondary educational programs, certifications, and skill sets with the current job market and industry standards. These activities include:

Labor Market Analysis – WSSP utilizes the TWC Labor Market Information along with Lightcast data reporting tools to identify the demand for specific skills, certifications, and qualifications within an industry. This provides real time job market needs.

Stakeholder Collaboration – WSSP regularly meets with key stakeholders such as employers and secondary and post-secondary educators at various job fairs, career exploration events, and the CWP Committee meetings to review the alignment of skills and credentials with real job expectations. Employers provide insight into the needed skills and abilities they value most.

Continuous Improvement – WSSP gathers feedback from employers and educators to assess the relevance and effectiveness of current credentialing programs mostly through our CWP meetings. Our stakeholders use this information to refine and update career pathways and credentials.

By implementing these activities, and others, WSSP creates a more efficient and effective system for identifying credential value by being responsive to employer needs. (Refer to pages 6-12; 20; 27; 33; 42-46; 61-63; 65; 69)

4. Policy and Planning Goal – Relevant Data Sets Describe local board activities, initiatives, or processes that support the availability and coordination of relevant workforce, education, and employment data to evaluate program outcomes to respond to the needs of policy makers and planners to:

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

Response should address the following:

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

BOARD RESPONSE:

WSSP TRS Mentors have worked diligently with our 121 childcare providers to ensure they have the opportunity to become Texas Rising Star certified. Currently, 89 of 121 (73%) WSSP childcare providers are Texas Rising Star certified. Of those 89 providers, 59 are above a 2-Star level! WSSP understands the importance of quality childcare, not only for the child, but for the parent(s) and the employers they may work with.

WSSP staff participate in various childcare groups/activities such as TXAEYC, Pre-K Partnership programs, Child Care Advisory Group, Child Care Committee, and the Child Care Network to keep abreast of the challenges and benefits of quality childcare facilities.

WSSP works closely with childcare providers as employers to provide comprehensive and relevant Labor Market Information, including labor force trends and wage analysis, to identify potential wage disparities, as we are all aware teachers at childcare facilities are low wage earners.

WSSP offers childcare providers stipends through quality funds to help increase employee retention and reduce turnover.

WSSP will continue to promote collaboration among all stakeholders, including educational institutions, economic development organizations, and industry partners, through various meetings to identify key data points for collection and using said data to improve the timeliness and completeness of data matching and evaluate program effectiveness and outcomes. (Refer to pages 6; 13; 41; 46-47; 49; 59; 65; 69; 77)

Strategic Opportunities

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

Strategic Opportunity 1 – Employer Engagement

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

Response should address the following:

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



BOARD RESPONSE:

WSSP not only holds regular meetings with stakeholders, but WSSP is located in the same building as LEDA and the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce. This allows us to quickly come together and address employer needs and challenges. Additionally, WSSP has a designated Director of Business Development who serves as the main point of contact and works closely with our stakeholders to gain insight into the needs of employers and assists in minimizing the ‘asks’ placed on our employers. (Refer to pages 6; 33; 40; 46; 51-53)

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

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

Response should address the following: models, initiatives, programs, or processes that effectively engage these populations; and

- promising practices in supportive services models and outcomes that consistently demonstrate success.

BOARD RESPONSE:

In compliance with TWC and WIOA the Board adheres to the priority of service as noted below:

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

- Eligible veterans and eligible spouses (as defined in WD Letter 01-21, Change 2) who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient.
- Non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are recipients of public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient in the following order:
 - Foster youth and former foster youth (as defined in WD Letter 43-11, Change 2) as required by Texas Family Code §264.121
 - non-foster youth
- All other eligible veterans and eligible spouses.
- Priority populations established by the governor and/or Board in the following order:
 - All other foster youth and former foster youth, as required by Texas Labor Code §264.121
 - Local Board priority groups
- Non-covered individuals outside of the groups given priority under WIOA.

WSSP also works closely with TWC VR and participates in Paid Work Experience and Summer Earn and Learn which offers paid work experience opportunities to students with

disabilities.

WSSP participates in the Foster Youth monthly discussion calls and attends the annual Foster Youth conference to ensure all Texas youth with diverse needs — including those with disabilities, foster youth, sex-trafficking victims, incarcerated juveniles and adults, and opportunity youth — are provided the opportunity to participate in our programs where we can reduce their barriers to success. In collaboration with our partners, we address their needs, maximize outcomes, and improve career opportunities. (Refer to pages 6; 43; 59; 66; 71)

Strategic Opportunity 3 – Use of Data to Support Investment Decisions

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

Response should address the following:

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

BOARD RESPONSE:

WSSP utilizes the TWC Monthly Performance Reports, Tableau, and WorkInTexas.com reports to track, analyze, and identify areas that need improvement or areas where we are meeting/exceeding the contracted performance. WSSP Board Contract Year 2024 Year End Report indicated the following out of 22 Board Contracted Measures which include various separate measures for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Reemployment, Employer Engagement, Choices, and Child Care:

- 12 measures had Positive Performance (55%)
- 9 measures were Meeting Performance (41%)
- 1 measure with Negative Performance (4%)

WSSP will continue to collect feedback from stakeholders, including employers, training providers, and participants, to gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of programs and services. WSSP will continue to use this feedback to make informed decisions to strategically implement and fund initiatives. Additionally, we will continue to review programs that have successfully demonstrated previous program participant credential attainment and employment to make informed adjustments and improvements (Refer to pages 13; 33-40; 46; 69-71; 73)