



HEART OF TEXAS WORKFORCE BOARD, INC.

Biennial Plan for Fiscal Years 2007 – 2008 Modified in Accordance with TWC WD 15-06, Change 6

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Current Perspective on Workforce Development

The workforce challenge of the first quarter of the twenty-first century is to first recognize people as the key to every business's and industry's success, and then develop and sustain the talent pool necessary to remain competitive in the global marketplace. Thomas Friedman, the three-time Pulitzer Prize winning writer for the *New York Times* and author of the best selling book, *The World is Flat*, summed up the situation in a May 2005 interview with *Wired Magazine*:

“When I was growing up, my parents told me, "Finish your dinner. People in China and India are starving." I tell my daughters, "Finish your homework. People in India and China are starving for your job.”

The on-going loss of jobs to outsourcing, offshoring and supply-chaining challenges our nation's current workforce at the same time it opens unlimited potential. In the global economy where America's greatest asset is creative innovation, the workforce is the critical ingredient to continued prosperity for not only CEOs, but also mid-managers, frontline staff, support staff and all workers. The global market has shown that it can reproduce our products, but not yet our ingenuity. The Heart of Texas Workforce Board, Inc. and area partners and collaborators are awakening to the understanding that the skill sets of the local workforce are a critical key to the economic welfare of the region.

The severe recession which gripped the nation in 2008 has forced a rethinking of the challenges of preparing a workforce for an uncertain future. Though the Heart of Texas region's diverse economic base allowed the region to absorb some of the effects of the national, and global, recession. Nonetheless, unemployment is higher than anytime in the last several years, so this time offers challenges for many residents – especially the under-skilled. The Board is exploring the edges of the increasingly restrictive box the State imposes on publicly supported workforce development services to ensure multiple pathways out of unemployment and off public assistance. For the four-fold increase in residents seeking assistance through the region's Workforce Solutions Center System, every attempt to be flexible, while remaining compliant with State directives, is encouraged.

Even in these difficult economic times, the Board is focused on policy effectiveness, development of an increasingly skillful local talent force and pipeline of youth, and development of an environment in which all employers have the workforce to be profitable and productive.

The Heart of Texas Workforce Board submits this plan in response

- to the immediate local workforce challenges, and
- to creating a future that keeps pace with the expanding global marketplace.

The Board's strategic plan as modified outlines alignment of the workforce system with the area's target industries and key workforce partners. These partnerships include secondary and post-secondary education, economic development entities, community and faith based groups,

industry and workforce-related associations, and local governments. Additionally, the Board intends to maximize the resources within the system to meet the demands of area target industries.

Overview of Local Structure

Overview: Workforce Structure and Governance in The Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board (the Board) is a volunteer body appointed by the Chief Elected Officials of the six-county region. The Board is composed of individuals living in the area who represent local employers, organized labor, economic development, education, community-based organizations, state employment services, state human services department and state rehabilitation services. The majority of the members and the appointed Chair of the Board, presently Mr. Gaylan Beavers, CEO of Tejas Logistics, represent private sector employers, as these are the primary customers of the system.

The Board uses a standing and advisory committee structure to provide contract oversight and to plan services. Standing committees include the Executive Committee and the Oversight Committee. Additionally, the Board has ad hoc committees for budget development and review, for officer nominations, for by-law maintenance, and for other administrative requirements as needed. More information about the Board can be found at the Board's web-site www.hotworkforce.com. A listing of the HOT Workforce Board members and the sector they represent can be seen by clicking on the appropriate link on the above web-site.

The Board administers and oversees all workforce development programs consolidated under state legislation, Senate Bill 642 as amended by House Bill 1863, for the six counties that comprise the Heart of Texas Workforce Region: Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone and McLennan. One Workforce Solutions Center is located in each county, a Full Service Center in Waco, with satellite offices in Clifton, Marlin, Teague, Hillsboro, and Groesbeck.

The Board's Executive Director is Mr. Anthony Billings, who oversees the daily administration of workforce services managed by the Board. These services are funded by federal legislation, which includes:

- Workforce Investment Act, comprised of separate funds for low-income adults, dislocated workers and youth, including a special allocation under the American Recovery and Re-employment Act;
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Services; including a special allocation under the American Recovery and Re-employment Act;
- Employment and training services for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Nutrition Supplementation;
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Act for affected workers, including a special allocation under the American Recovery and Re-employment Act;
- Offender reintegration for ex-offenders; and
- Subsidized Child Care services.

The Board presently has an emergency contract with Arbor Employment and Training for operations of the Workforce Solutions Center System, and a procurement for the permanent operator is underway with a scheduled date on or about July 15 for the transition to the

permanent contractor. The Child Care Services contract is with a local community based organization called the Economic Opportunity Advancement Corporation (EOAC). A contract with Communities in Schools – Heart of Texas (CIS-HOT) is in place for services to eligible younger youth who are in high school.

Funding for programs is provided to the Board by contract with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Besides funding allocations, TWC provides state directives, programmatic and fiscal monitoring, and performance measure evaluation. TWC also maintains the data collection and reporting program, The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST).

Purpose of Plan

Each year, the Board is required to submit a local plan or plan modification to TWC. The planning cycle provides the Board the opportunity to articulate its vision for workforce development, and to provide the public and interested parties an opportunity for input on the local Board's focus on for the immediate future.

Planning Process

The local plans are approved by TWC and sent to the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC). TWIC reviews local plans for alignment with the goals and objectives of the Governor's plan for the state, Destination 2010: Fiscal Year 2004-2009 Strategic Plan for the Texas Workforce Development System (Destination 2010). TWIC then forwards the local plans to the Governor for approval.

Narrative

a. Mission of the Board

The mission of the Board is to support economic development through identification, advocacy for, and facilitating the development of a quality workforce in the six county Heart of Texas region. Through the administration of the funds under its purview, the Board aims to provide quality workforce services, resources, and skill training for industries, businesses, and job seekers to contribute to the economic strength and growth of the Heart of Texas, and the state overall.

The Board's objective is to provide these services in an efficient and customer-oriented manner to strategically enhance the vitality of this area and region in the global marketplace. As important as its administrative oversight of federally funded workforce services, the Board chooses to direct energy toward facilitating important workforce partnerships between educational and economic development entities, industries, small businesses, and community and faith-based organizations that depend upon and interact with the workforce of the counties. The Board is dedicated to increasing employer involvement in the current workforce system and to improving the system for the delivery of services to jobseekers in order to meet their workforce needs. To this end, the Board developed the following characteristics they expect of the workforce system:

- High quality customer service and problem-solving;

- A balance between meeting customer needs and achieving performance;
- User friendly, easily accessible information and services;
- Knowledgeable and professional staff - entry-level through management;
- Awareness of business cultures;
- Honest assessments of job seekers, both in terms of helping customers understand what they need as well as providing businesses with well-matched applicants;
- Engaging and personalized services to job seekers and to employers;
- Well-developed processes and strategies for serving customers; and
- Credibility among stakeholders.

A workforce system with these characteristics demands a rationale, planned and deliberate approach to services based on common functions and customer needs. Such a system allows customers to access a wide array of services that support job seekers in securing the full range of skills needed for employment success. Such a system measures its success on the ability of job seekers to acquire and demonstrate the skills employers need to be productive and profitable, and satisfaction of the placement by the employer.

b. Strategic Foci

The Board has seven strategic focus areas that form the basis of planning and implementing the workforce system with the desired characteristics. These are:

- **Partnership:** Act as a regional neutral convener of key state and local partners to create common focus around workforce issues, to improve the quality and skills of the workforce of the present and of the future.
- **Technology and Logistics:** Identify ways to apply what we know to what we do for more efficient and effective delivery of workforce services, education, and training to rural areas, especially for youth, welfare recipients and current and first-time workers.
- **Access:** Expand access to services for all customer groups, including veterans, youth in foster care, pregnant and parenting youth, individuals with disabilities, older individuals, ex-offenders, low-wage earners, and public assistance recipients.
- **Employer-driven Services:** Develop a depth of understanding of the needs of the business community through regular opportunities for input and by building relationships with industry leaders.
- **Workforce Preparation:** Ensure appropriate training opportunities so that youth, new workforce entrants and returning workers have the necessary transferable and occupational skills to meet area business' needs.
- **Outcomes:** Evaluate the effectiveness of the workforce system using easily understood evaluative measures.
- **Pursue Revenue Resources:** Develop grant revenue sources for unmet workforce needs and develop entrepreneurial approaches that create market-based resources to further the mission of the Board.

c. Targeting Industries and Subsequent High-growth, High-demand Occupations

In the spring of 2005, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) adopted new priorities for the workforce system at the national level. In response to new national priorities, TWC shifted the focus of the local strategic planning process from targeting specific occupations to targeting entire industry sectors and the occupations supporting those.

The Heart of Texas is located in central Texas with the City of Waco and contiguous suburban communities as the leading distribution center for central Texas, and the home of both a community college and a Texas State Technical College campus. In addition to these two post-secondary educational resources, Hill College's main campus is located in Hillsboro, and Navarro College has a campus in Mexia. In early 2009, the region's first proprietary school opened in Waco. Economic activities found in the six county region include lignite mining, varied manufacturing, agribusiness, electric generation and distribution, stone quarries, tourism and the usual food, beverage, retail and other services that meet the needs of the approximately 300,000 residents.

Over the last decade, the region enjoyed steady, but comparatively slow growth compared to other areas of Texas. The most recent civilian labor force estimates from TWC indicate that the Heart of Texas has a civilian labor force of 165,048 as of March 2009, with a 6.1% unemployment rate, up from 4.6% in March of 2008.

The Board conducted an industrial analysis to prioritize industries in the regional economy according to job opening potential. The analysis, dependent on the interpretation and synthesis of various economic indicators and appropriate statistical data, is also reliant on decisions made by the Board based on local wisdom. The process aims to identify trends already underway to inform decisions on a direction. The industry-sector analysis provided the Board's priorities based upon a data-driven review of:

- key industries with large potential for openings due to turnover and separations;
- changes in long-term industry trends that indicate increases or decreases in historical employment in terms of absolute change in the number of jobs added, plus the percentage change for those industries adding jobs at the fastest rate;
- high growth projections for those industries adding the most jobs and/or growing at the fastest rate;
- industries with significant numbers of current and projected job openings;
- industries with regional comparative advantages;
- expected outcomes relating to local economic development efforts; and
- locally supported industry development concentrations or collaborations.

The Heart of Texas performed both a Shift Share Analysis and an Industrial Evaluation (INDEVAL). These methodologies aid labor market analysts in prioritizing industries with the greatest employment potential from among an entire regional economy by examining and ranking those industries based on selected economic variables. The final product is an ordered list of industries ranked by variables that have the strongest effect on the regional labor market,

allowing the Board to derive a targeted industries list from which high-growth, high-demand occupations are identified.

In addition to these tools, the jobs growth forecast for 2009 for Waco conducted by Moody's Economy.com was reviewed to determine if there was agreement among these sources. Lastly, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts published *Texas in Focus: Central Texas* in May, 2009 and data from that report also informed the decisions regarding Targeted Industries. The complete list of industries targeted by the Board is presented in Appendix 2.

After deriving the specific targeted industries, the Board identified key occupations within each industry sector, which met:

- Board policy for training cost, duration;
- Provider availability within commuting distance;
- Expected wage at graduation at least \$9.00 per hour;
- Upward and lateral career progression opportunities;
- High expectation of placement upon completion of training.

Many manufacturers have reduced their workforce in response to lower demand for their products. So in addition to the above criteria, for this modification, public sector job openings which the Board has historically not targeted, are considered, because the sluggish economy in the region demands that these be targeted in order to train low-skilled and semi-skilled dislocated workers where job openings exist.

An analysis of the required knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) required to perform an occupation was conducted using the Occupational Profiles in SOCRATES on each of the targeted occupations. The six cross-occupational skill areas identified in the SOCRATES profiles include: Basic skills, Complex Problem-Solving, Resource Management, Social, Systems and Technical. The definitions of the skill areas were derived from O*Net:

- **Basic skills:** active learning, active listening, critical thinking, learning strategies, mathematics, monitoring, reading comprehension, science, speaking and writing.
- **Complex problem solving skills:** the ability to identify complex problems, review related information, develop and evaluate options, and implement solutions.
- **Resource management skills:** management of financial resources, materials resources, personnel resources and time management.
- **Social skills:** the capacity to work with people to achieve goals through coordination, instruction, negotiation, persuasion, service orientation and social perceptiveness.
- **Systems skills:** judgment and decision-making, systems analysis and evaluation.
- **Technical skills:** equipment maintenance, equipment selection, installation, operation and control, operation monitoring, operations analysis, programming, quality control analysis, repairing, technology design and troubleshooting.

The following chart lists the targeted occupations' necessary entry-level skills. Basic skills are required by 40% of the occupations, complex problem-solving skills by 60%, social skills are required by 40% and technical skills by 65% of the occupations. Skills in the areas of systems and resource management are required in only 15% and 17.5% of the occupations,

respectively. It is clear that workforce preparation should focus on providing individuals with basic skills, complex problem-solving skills, social skills and technical skills to be successful in the high-growth, high-demand occupations in the region. Such common, transferable skills should be infused in occupational skill training whether it takes place in a classroom or on the job.

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Entry-level/Transferable Skills</i>
Aircraft mechanics and service technicians	Basic, complex problem-solving and technical
Aircraft Struct/Surfaces/Rig Asm	Complex problem-solving, technical
Avionics technicians	Complex problem-solving, technical
Automotive service technicians/Mechanics	Complex problem-solving, technical
Automotive Body/Related Repairer	Complex problem-solving, technical
Bookkeeping/Accounting/Auditing	Basic, complex problem-solving
Bus/Truck mechanic/Diesel specialist	Complex problem-solving, technical
Computer Controlled Machine Tool Operator	Complex problem-solving, technical
Computer support specialists	Basic, complex problem solving, social, systems, technical
Correctional Officer/Jailer	Basic, complex problem-solving, social and systems
Customer Service Representative	Resource management, social
Dental assistants	Resource mgt, social, technical
Electric Power Line Instal/Repair	Basic, complex problem solving, systems, technical
Electrical/Electronic Eng Techs	Basic, complex problem solving, systems, technical
Electricians	Basic, complex problem solving, systems, technical
Exec Secretaries/Administrative assistants	Basic, complex prob-solving, resource management, social
Heating/Air condition/Refrigeration mechanics/ installers	Technical
Industrial Engineering Techs	Complex problem-solving, technical
Industrial machinery mechanics	Complex problem-solving, technical
Industrial truck/tractor operators	Technical
Licensed practical/vocational nurses	Basic, complex problem-solving and social
Machinists	Technical
Maintenance/Repair workers, General	Complex problem-solving, technical
Medical assistants	Basic, complex problem-solving and social
Medical secretaries/transcriptionists	Basic, complex problem-solving, social, technical
Medical/Clinical lab technicians	Basic, complex problem-solving, technical
Medical Records and Health Info Technicians	Basic, complex problem-solving, technical
Middle School Teacher	Basic, complex prob-solving, resource management, social
Nursing aides, orderlies and attendants	Basic, complex problem-solving, resource mgt, social
Office Clerks	Basic, Social
Operating engineer/Construction equipment	Technical
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	Basic, complex problem-solving, social and systems
Plumbers/Pipefitters/Steamfitter	Complex problem-solving, social, technical
Radiologic technologists/Technicians	Basic, complex problem-solving, systems, technical
Registered nurses	Basic, complex problem-solving, social and systems
Respiratory Therapists	Basic, complex problem-solving, systems, technical
Secondary Teacher	Basic, complex prob-solving, resource management, social
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer operators	Technical
Water/Waste Treatment Plant Op	Basic, complex problem-solving, technical
Welders, cutters, solderers and brazers	Technical

Local Employer Involvement in Validation

In addition to the employers who serve on the Board and are involved in the review and validation of the entire Workforce Development Plan including targeted high-growth, high demand occupations, the Society for Human Resource Management local chapter reviewed the listing. In addition, employers in the key sectors were contacted for their input on the validity of the list throughout the late winter and spring of 2009.

In February of 2006, the Board conducted a survey of small businesses (up to 499 employees). Because only 13% of the employers took the time to complete the survey (26 out of 197), it cannot be assumed that the data reflects the general trends in the area, but it is interesting that of the respondents 18 are employers in a targeted industry. Two industry clusters were particularly well represented in the sample: Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing, and Biotech and Life Sciences Core with Medical Services.

Key findings of the survey provide insight into the condition of workforce matters for the respondents. These findings are summarized in the chart below.

HOT Workforce Small Business Workforce Survey Key Findings Summary

% of Respondents*	Key Finding
36%	Receive 3 or fewer applicants for open positions
64%	Do not receive skilled and experienced job applicants
50%	Note that technical training for specific job/skill would significantly benefit the business and the employees
82%	Rated on-the-job training in the organization as superior or adequate
55%	Rated area technical and community college training as superior or adequate
30%	Rated area high school training as superior or adequate
62%	Have never been contacted by a school or college about training

*Note: Denominator based on actual respondents and may be less than the total number of respondents to the survey (26).

The survey also solicited information on training needs in areas that the human resource research literature indicates are common among employers nationwide, and the following table shows the local results.

HOT Workforce Small Business Workforce Survey Training Needs Summary

% Indicating Need	Type of Training
48%	Work-related safety training
57%	Customer relations and customer service training
43%	Training in appropriate workplace behavior

10%	Training in basic work related English
52%	Technical training related to a specific job or skill
66%	Critical thinking, Decision-making, Problem-solving
5% (each)	Others Specified (Telecommunications, Professionalism)

In addition to these recent employer efforts, in 2004, an evaluation of the nursing-related occupations in the area conducted by the Baylor Evaluation Services Center at Baylor University, revealed that all nursing-related positions continue to be the jobs most in demand and most difficult to fill. This evaluation not only investigated published data, but also involved area health care providers input. In addition to Baylor's work, the Board facilitated a focused discussion with health care employers, educators, economic development entities and city governments to drill down to specifics about health care employers' challenges and needs. Since that effort, the Board remains connected with health care industry employers who continue to voice concern about the challenge to employ and retain staff in nursing and, indeed, all other health occupations as well.

Board working relationships with small town Chambers of Commerce validate the understanding that employers in rural communities, most with fewer than 100 employees on their payrolls, experience more challenges in filling positions for technicians due to the limited availability of qualified individuals resulting from a lack of close-by post-secondary training programs or inadequate high school technical skill training because of funding limitations and poor county-wide and cross-county public transportation.

Recognizing the severe problem the lack of public transportation causes, the Board proposed for and received a Texas Department of Transportation Job Access and Reverse Commute Grant in September, 2007. This project provides fixed route, scheduled bus service with stops in Riesel, Marlin, Chilton and Robinson. The bus arrives at the Waco Transit System Terminal where transport around the city is accessed. Many young people in these communities take advantage of the "Six to Success" bus to attend community college at MCC or at TSTC.

e. Resource Effectiveness and Coordination

As resources shrank over the last five years, the Board recognized that federal and state funding would always be inadequate to address the workforce development needs of the Heart of Texas. Therefore, the Board took a long-term strategic review of our workforce services system model, resource allocations, and partnership relationships to develop a positive approach to the reality of funding from programmatic sources. The Board has streamlined the system for greater administrative efficiencies, incorporated as a nonprofit entity with IRS Section 50(c)(3) tax exempt status in order to identify and leverage local resources of foundational groups concerned with the circumstances of those our programs target, while increasing system effectiveness for targeted industries, employers, and job seekers. For fiscal year '07, the Board will utilize the following strategies to manage resources to meet our mission.

Expand Training Options

The Board recognizes that business is one of the largest trainers of employees and one

strategy is to provide more employer-based training utilizing the Board's Local Activity and Statewide Funds for incumbent worker training and customized training in the targeted industries. The Board will also work more closely with the area community and technical colleges in utilizing their existing Skills Development Grant funds, and coordinate with them on future proposal submissions.

In addition, to address the increase in dislocated workers who are historically resistant to re-training, the Board collaborated with area colleges to create what one college calls "Marketable Skills Awards" and another calls "Certificates of Skills Mastery" which are modules of four (4) courses in a program that upon completion allow the student entry into a new occupation. In this way, reluctant dislocated workers can "try-on" training and if they find it less intimidating than they feared, they can continue with the program for a second, third or fourth module ultimately achieving an associates degree. Or, should their circumstances preclude continuing the lengthy program, they have several legitimate exit points to employment.

Targeting demand transferable job skills

This year's targeted occupations include the critical cross-occupational skills. The Board intends to distribute training funds in favor of short-term pre-vocational skill development, while still providing ITAs for traditional classroom occupation specific skill training. The Board lists the top entry level/transferable jobs skills for the targeted occupations on Page 8 of this document. The Board will actively engage short-term training providers to incorporate learning objectives in their curriculum that teach Basic, complex problem-solving, social, and technical skills as defined by O*NET (see page 7). The Board will also undertake an inventory of community providers that provide training specifically for these skills that may be available to the Workforce System job-seeking customers through co-enrollment.

Occupational specific skill training in the targeted occupations is also highly desirable, and, therefore, occupational training through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) will be specifically targeted. Thorough individual assessment is the key to coaching a job seeker towards an achievable and appropriate employment goal, including identifying actual training requirements. Therefore, the Board is committed to more effective skill assessments of job seekers, and to ensuring that counselors understand how to use assessment information as a tool for developing the job seekers employment plan.

Assessments should clearly target skill gaps so that individual's enter training at the correct level and complete an entire course of training so that only truly *qualified* job applicants are referred to Heart of Texas employers.

Contract with Community Partners that provide leveraged services

The Board intends to develop a long-term strategy for key partnerships that will include increasing community leveraged resources for workforce investment.

Reduce and Reallocate System Costs for Improved Efficiencies

The Board must re-evaluate the current distribution of funding to continuously "dig out" infrastructure costs that can be reduced or eliminated so as to increase training and industry investment. The Board does not intend to reduce access points to services; however, the Board realizes that it must investigate alternative methods of broadening service while reducing costs.

Technology offers the opportunity to add virtual access points for employers and job seekers. The Internet is a natural access point for many residents of the area. All ready significant numbers of individuals use the Internet to shop, pay bills, bank, and seek information and services. The Board regularly expands the menu on our web-site (www.hotworkforce.com). The plan is to expand it to include not only a listing of services and contact information, but to offer:

- interesting and engaging career exploration tools,
- self-assessment tools and links to other no- or low-cost tools,
- career guidance development based on information from the assessments,
- job seeking tools that assist with resume writing, interview practice, etc,
- job search information (beyond WIT.com).

Business Cooperative for Training

In this next year, the Board in partnership with area training providers will facilitate the development of a business cooperative to expand training opportunities for employers. This “co-op” model allows businesses to train for a common need, such as blue-print reading, at one employer’s location, with a “co-op” business member providing the trainer or the participating businesses share the cost of the trainer. The Workforce Centers identify and refer promising job candidates, who are interviewed/evaluated during the training. Though this does not involve the use of federal training dollars, the Board fulfills its mission for both the job seeker and the employer.

Appendix 1

Elements of System Operation

Background

Achieving a well-developed relationship between the local Workforce Board and Workforce System Operational management is one of the most significant challenges with which the Board wrestles. While the Board is responsible for selecting workforce service contractors that are competent to successfully manage the day-to-day operations, including the ability to meet program performance and Board standards, the Board ultimately, remains fully accountable to the State for the success of the local system. Thus, the Board's relationship with contractors must encompass both a partnership in achieving a common mission and an authoritative relationship wherein the contractors are accountable to the Board.

The Heart of Texas area has faced daunting challenges in creating a successful relationship with a Workforce Center contractor. Within the past five years, the Heart of Texas Workforce Centers had several contractor changes, resulting in a struggle to attain performance measures. This has placed enormous pressure upon the Board to improve performance. Thus, the Board has had to rebuild its relationship with each new Workforce Center contractor in an atmosphere of crisis management and expectations of immediate improvements.

In addition to the challenges of forging a successful relationship with the Workforce Center contractor, these constant changes in management have significantly impacted the core group of front-line and management staff. While contractors changed, most staff did not. Each time, staff who remained had to adjust to new faces, management styles, expectations, policies, procedures and relationships, including changing human resources policies that sometimes affected salaries and benefits. These constant adjustments amidst the pressure of performance understandingly eroded the morale and focus of the staff who ultimately must carry out the steps necessary to improve performance and get the Workforce Centers back on a path of success.

a. System Description

1. The following table provides information on the contractors who are funded to provide services to in the Heart of Texas:

Contractor	Functions
Board Staffing: Heart of Texas Workforce Board (PEO: Region 12 Education Service Center)	The functions of the Board staff are: planning, policy development, procurement, contracting, development of agreements & MOU's, oversight, evaluation, & monitoring, contract and performance management, and so much more....
Fiscal Agent: Education Service Center, Region 12	As fiscal agent, ESCR12 carries out all functions associated with the designation; including, accounting, auditing, record keeping, and reporting to TWC. Comprehensive, timely,

	and accurate financial reporting will be conducted so as to provide the Board a complete picture of resources expended and available for use.
Workforce Solutions Center System Operator: Currently procuring for these services; contract to be in place in the month of July, 2009.	Manages all operations of the Workforce Center System including standard operational procedures for delivery of services to job seekers and to employers, developing mutually beneficial relationships with other local human and social service agencies.
Childcare Contractor: Economic Opportunities Advancement Corporation (EOAC)	HOT Workforce Child Care Services (CCS) provides a centralized mechanism for determining eligibility for subsidized child care services and for management of vendor list.
Youth Services: Communities in Schools – Heart of Texas	Services for low-income youth ages 14-21 who are have one or more of the following barriers: deficient in basic skills; school dropout; homeless, runaway or foster child; pregnant or parenting; offender; and/or individual who requires additional assistance to complete educational programs or to secure and hold employment.
Adapt Publishing	Provides rapid response and rapid re-employment services for businesses who dislocate over 50 workers.

The Board administers the Workforce Center system in the six county area that includes Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone and McLennan counties. A Workforce Center is located in each of these counties, a Full Service Workforce Center in Waco, with satellite offices in Clifton, Marlin, Teague, Hillsboro, and Groesbeck. Addresses of each workforce center can be seen on the HOT Workforce Website at

<http://www.hotworkforce.com>

The Workforce Solutions Center System is also a component of the larger regional system and cooperates with the Boards and Centers of the Central Texas Area, the North Central Texas Area, Tarrant County, Dallas County and Brazos Valley.

The following describes the customer-centered approach endorsed by the HOT Workforce Board at its 2005 Retreat. It is the model of service delivery the Board expects customers to experience in all our centers, and the model on which Board policy is based.

The Center system will use an employment readiness framework that places an emphasis on ensuring *qualified* job seekers for employers. The Board embarked on analysis of the service delivery model in 2005 and discovered a severely disjointed array of services and access to those services. Taking the first step of changing the contractor model to the Managing Director/PEO is intended to provide more direct influence and partnership for creating a logical, structured yet flexible, system of services that achieves the number one request of employers— a qualified applicant.

It is the vision of the Board that the centers run on the premise of customer-centered outcomes. With the complicated history of leadership at the Heart of Texas Workforce Centers, the vision was smothered by administrative demands.

Customer-centered outcomes are the basis of ongoing relationships in business. Many companies learned this lesson the hard way, and the Heart of Texas can be counted among those. The business section of book stores are full of stories of how companies re-invented themselves after realizing that they were stagnating because their customer was no longer the center of their decision-making. The Heart of Texas Workforce has embarked on its own re-invention.

Governmental performance measures are not customer-focused, but process focused. However, these program performance measures are slowly changing under the new DOL “common measures” for WIA. Several of these measures put more emphasis on quality outcomes and value-added service rather than arbitrary process, though other federal agencies from which funding is received and the State continue to measure process.

The next pages characterize the basis of the vision for quality customer service that the Board holds for service provided in the center system. The Board recognizes that a common theme in reinvention stories is that the change process, with an eye on quality as the basis, is neither easy nor quickly accomplished, but also recognizes that the fruits of a tree not planted, are never tasted.

Employment Readiness Framework

The Employment Readiness Framework is the central approach to serving customers through the Workforce Center System. The framework includes:

- Core Services: Serving customers through workforce resource rooms (and eventually through technological access)
- Enhanced Services and Occupational Training: Building customers’ employment readiness and independence
- Employment Facilitation Services: Employment and Qualified Job Seekers

The primary objective of this system is to send Heart of Texas employers *qualified* job seekers. In order to be a demand-driven workforce system, the system must be able to identify or develop qualified job seekers to meet the area skill demands. This paradigm envisioned by DOL and TWC requires that the workforce system expand its job seeker “talent” pool to include higher-skilled workers. However, it is critical that the workforce system work with and provide avenues of development for those workers left out of the economy. This is critical to ensure the economic vitality and “quality of life” issues important to Heart of Texas residents.

The Employment Readiness framework is based upon providing a thorough assessment that guides career and service planning. Career planning is a value-added service that allows the job seeker to view their job search within the larger frame of their work career, make decisions regarding their career and more clearly plan where to place their job search efforts. By understanding the marketability (labor market skill demands) of their skill sets, job seekers can

proactively plan their job search activities as well as plan for skill improvement, thus providing the Heart of Texas with a more informed and attractive talent pool while increasing the workforce system's capability to send qualified applicants to area employers.

Teaching individuals how to manage their careers for a lifetime is value-added for the taxpayer supporting these services. Having a workforce with competitive skill sets enhances the attractiveness of the Heart of Texas as a base of business operations for existing, expanding and new employers. This model is built on the understanding that customers come to the Workforce Center system at different levels of preparation, and the model:

- Recognizes that the primary purpose of Workforce Center services is to send employers qualified applicants and to help customers identify their Employment Readiness needs and to access the services that will advance customers along a continuum of readiness for employment.
- Identifies the specific factors that influence a customer's ability to be "employable" and to develop and implement a career plan.
- Uses a comprehensive, multi-point assessment process to help customers and staff gather individualized employment readiness information and explore all options.
- Ensures that program services are closely linked to different readiness levels and designed to help customer's progress toward full employability.

Customers who come into the workforce system generally fall into one of four "degrees" of Employment Readiness. Each level shares some basic needs and characteristics:

- 1) Pre-Activity Ready—Customers at this level MAY -
 - Have multiple barriers to employment that are not easily resolved;
 - Have substance abuse, mental health or domestic violence issues;
 - Be homeless;
 - Have limited basic literacy and/or English language skills;
 - Have no work history;
 - Have no occupational or transferable skills
 - Have faced limited successes in life and have no experience with work;
 - Lack basic life management skills and have a "failure" mind-set.
 -
- 2) Work Preparation Ready-- Customers at this level MAY –
 - Have more advanced basic literacy and/or English language skills (as compared to the Pre-Activity Ready customer);
 - Be working on a High School Diploma or GED, but still have a fair amount of work left to do;
 - Lack a clearly articulated and appropriately informed/researched career goal or career plan;
 - Have some barriers to employment (such as a need for childcare, transportation, etc.) but the barriers do not interfere with the customer's ability to participate in work preparation activities such as training;
 - Be unfamiliar with ongoing steady employment;
 - Have obsolete occupational skills;

- Lack appropriate transferable and/or interpersonal skills to obtain and retain employment;
 - Lack some basic life management skills.
- 3) Employment Ready-- Customers at this level MAY -
- Have occupational and transferable skills necessary to obtain entry-level employment that does not pay self-sufficiency wages;
 - Have up to 6 months of employment history and/or be a “job hopper;”
 - Customers who are “Employment Ready” may also have no paid employment history—only volunteer experience;
 - Lack a High School Diploma or GED but have the literacy and/or English language skills to obtain entry-level employment;
 - Have learning disabilities that interfere with their ability to achieve educational goals;
 - Have life and career management skills sufficient for them to obtain work and to have a reasonable expectation of keeping the job.
- 4) Career Ready-- Customers at this level MAY -
- Have achieved educational goals, a minimum of a HS diploma or GED;
 - Have a minimum of 6 months steady employment history documented);
 - Have the transferable and occupational skills necessary to obtain self-sufficiency employment;
 - Be able to communicate appropriately verbally and in writing;
 - Have a professional demeanor;
 - Possess the career management skills to market themselves to employers and to develop job search tools;
 - Have a clearly defined and well-informed career plan;
 - Be dependable and stable, having addressed all potential barriers to employment;
 - Have appropriate life management skills to obtain and retain employment.

Assessment is a CRITICAL service in such a system for both the employer and the potential job seeker. Effective assessment, both self-directed and staff assisted help to ensure that the system is effective for employers and job seekers. Assessment for effective career and service planning are the cornerstone to assuring workforce competitiveness. Because customers enter our system with varying levels of ability and information in relation to these employment readiness factors the Center system must:

- Assist customers in identifying their abilities and needs in the employment readiness areas.
- Facilitate customers in the development of an individualized career and job search plan that addresses each customer’s specific needs.
- Provide customers with appropriate programs and services that meet them at their current level of readiness and that will move them to higher levels of readiness, depending on the customer’s goals.

Through the assessment process, we are able to assist customers in identifying their strengths and opportunities for improvement in each area of employment readiness and to begin identifying the most appropriate services for customers based on this information.

Through effective career and service planning, we are able to teach customers how to use assessment information to develop an appropriate plan and how to evaluate their options to make informed choices about next steps, now and in the future.

Core Services

For customers to access the appropriate Workforce Center services when they enter into Core Services, customers must first understand their needs. Assessment at this level is often overlooked or not offered as a universal service. The job seeker can waste valuable time seeking interviews for jobs in which they are not qualified. All job seekers should take an opportunity to self-assess their skills, their career goals, and their next workforce decision based on information that supports the decision.

Particularly in Core Services, with its emphasis on self-directed activities, information must always be linked to developing a complete and relevant job application in Work-in-Texas.com or to determine that other services are needed to make a customer employable.

Core Services provide customers the opportunity to conduct career planning and job search on their own, with only minimal assistance from Workforce Center staff. Customers will be provided supports and resources to identify their Employment Readiness level and potential need for Workforce Center services, as well as resources that will meet those needs to develop an action plan. Based on the results of their self-directed process, customers can determine their needs for services that will improve their employability and/or help them “sell” their employment readiness to potential employers.

Staff assistance comes in the form of either group workshops or staff answering questions from customers who are going through the self-directed assessment process. The ultimate goal of this stage is to ensure that customers who are able to conduct self-directed planning have the appropriate tools and information to do so. For customers who may not be able to utilize self-directed tools, materials provided at this stage will make it clear when and how the customer should seek staff assistance. If a customer is clearly in need of additional assistance, then he/she is referred beyond Core Services for more appropriate help.

Enhanced Services

A comprehensive career assessment is the foundation of effective service planning. For customers who receive Enhanced Services, such as through Choices, WIA, etc., a comprehensive assessment is necessary to provide customers and career center staffs with the information they need to select appropriate activities that will develop the customers’ readiness for employment. It is critical to know where the customer is beginning in order to plan with him/her where to go.

In the comprehensive assessment process, some customers will have gone through Core Services prior to being determined eligible for Intensive Services, while others will be referred directly to Intensive Services. This means that customers will come with various types of assessment information, some with a great deal and some with none at all.

The Comprehensive Assessment for Enhanced Services will be integrated into career and service planning. Customers will participate in group and individual activities to help them

develop a more detailed career plan. They will further research occupational areas and job opportunities and, if appropriate, training opportunities as well. They will develop plans for addressing any barriers to employment success, including planning for how they will handle various issues while enrolled in training, if this is appropriate.

The ongoing assessment and planning provides customers and staff with the information needed to monitor progress and pro-actively identify and address developing issues, needs and/or circumstances. Where possible, assessment processes should allow customers to actually demonstrate any skills they develop (i.e., producing a resume to demonstrate their ability to write a resume). Staff will work with customers to ensure that they update their plans and change their goals and action steps to reflect the changes in readiness for employment.

Job Search/Job Applicant

The job search and career planning process is designed to help customers and staff determine what jobs the customer should apply for and how prepared the customer is to engage in job searching. Customers should only be referred to those jobs for which they are qualified, so **assessment at this stage is meant to appropriately match the customer to employment opportunities**. The purpose of job search preparation is to provide customers with accurate information about the customer's qualifications to ensure effective job matching and to identify the particular skills and tools the customer needs to conduct an independent job search.

If the customer has been enrolled in training, he/she should be assessed to ensure that he/she gained the necessary skills. This information will be used by the customer, and staff to determine if the customer's qualifications match available job opportunities. The other important area for customers at this phase is determining their job search skills. Customers will complete a Job Search Readiness Checklist that will help them identify the tools and skills they may need to develop a job search plan. Staff will assist the customer in this process, ensuring that the customer is well prepared to "sell" him/herself through resumes, cover letters, applications and interviews.

When customers are ready to job search, they will again update their career and service plans. Now they will develop a detailed job search plan that addresses any job search skills they must develop (such as the need to attend a workshop on resume writing), as well as laying out the customer's plan for identifying job leads, applying for jobs, etc.

Once a customer accepts a job, the post-employment phase begins. Now the customer needs assistance in planning for the transition from unemployment to employment—how will the customer ensure that he/she keeps the job? What does the customer need to do to advance along a career path? Through the process of working with the Workforce Centers, the customer will know the importance of ongoing career planning. In this phase, staff will help the customer plan for next steps following employment.

The purpose of post-employment assessment is to provide staff and customers with information on the customer's transitional needs as he/she moves from unemployment to employment; i.e., to provide the customer with a "road map" to ensure job retention and career growth. Customers also consider what future training, on-the-job experiences, etc., they may pursue to advance on the job after they leave the workforce system.

3. Increasing Resources to Training

The Board plans to increase resources for training by funding employer initiative training as discussed in the Narrative in section e. Resource Effectiveness and Coordination. The Board will implement a tiered approach to training that provides for the least prepared job-seeker through the incumbent worker to have opportunities for skill training or upgrading as identified appropriate through assessment.

The Board also recognizes the need for a long-term strategy in which they review all allocations in the system and align them to provide efficiencies in our operation that should also increase resources for training.

4. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

Every HOT Workforce Center facility is required by the Board, as well as the law, to be fully accessible for persons with disabilities. To this end, each location receives a thorough inspection annually and issues are addressed through the landlord or by the Board directly. In January of 2005, the Waco Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities and the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities recognized the McLennan County Heart of Texas Workforce Center for accessible design and construction, and presented "Access for All" decals which are proudly displayed. The decals provide daily public notice that this facility is accessible to customers with disabilities.

Programmatic services are accessible to persons with disabilities and the Center works with the local Department of Adaptive and Rehabilitative Services, the HOT Council on Independent Living, and the local Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation for cross-referral of customers in need of the kinds of services in which each specializes.

5. The Role of Youth Advisory Committee

The role of the Youth and Child Care Advisory Committee is that of an advisory council on youth and child care policy for the Board. This Committee provides strategic planning, youth service delivery recommendations, child care service delivery recommendations, contract review for the WIA youth program and for Child Care Services. As this is an Advisory Committee, the Board must adopt recommendations before they are official policy.

6. Education and Training needs for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

The Board is sensitive to the needs of customers who are Limited English Proficient (LEP). Forms and instructions are in both English and Spanish. Linkage to local English Second Language (ESL) education providers is available throughout the area for referral to supportive service. Signs are posted in the centers in both English and Spanish, asking customers if they require assistance due to limited English proficiency, and offering free interpreter services if needed. The signs direct the customer to the receptionist or any staff person for assistance. If it is any language other than Spanish, center staff will contact local community resources, access online translation websites or contact the McLennan County office to assist in obtaining an interpreter.

The Heart of Texas Workforce provides Vocational English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education, and GED classes at each workforce center. The schedule at each center reflects the needs and usage of locality.

Additionally, Incumbent Workforce Training projects aimed at improving the vocational English skills of employees is a target of these funds. This last year, three of seven projects addressed language needs of incumbent workers at six area businesses. These type of projects will continue to be encouraged with future Incumbent Workforce Training funds provided for in the Local Activity Fund.

b. Service Partners and Stakeholders

The Board and Workforce Centers coordinate services with numerous community partners, many of whom share mutual interests and serve the various needs of our common customers. These collaborations recognize the limitations and restrictions of specific funding while at the same time realizing the benefits of sharing services. The Board respects the initiatives and community interests of other service providers while developing linkages that serve the community. Memoranda of Understanding are in place, or are under development, defining relationships with partners, see Appendix 7.

Service Partners in the Heart of Texas. “X” identifies partners as co-located (C) or not co-located (N), as required (R) or voluntary (V).				
Name of Partner/Program/Services	C	N	R	V
Adult Education (Adult Ed, GED Prep, ESL)	X		X	
Apprenticeship Program	X		X	
TANF Choices (TWC Funded)	X		X	
Food Stamp Employment and Training (TWC Funded)	X		X	
Cross-Culture Experiences dba Mission Waco National and Community Services Act	X	X	X	X
National Literacy Act		X	X	
Credit Post Secondary Career Technology Training		X	X	
Project Re-Integration of Offenders (TWC Funded via TDCJ)	X		X	
Senior Texans Employment Program (STEP)	X		X	
Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TWC Funded)	X		X	
Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (TWC Funded)	X		X	
Access to Unemployment Insurance Benefits	X		X	
Access to Subsidized Child Care Services (TWC Funded)	X		X	
WIA Title I: Adult, Dislocated worker, and Youth (TWC Funded)	X		X	
Veterans’ Employment and Training (Job placement for Veterans)	X		X	
Vocational Rehabilitation under WIA Title IV (DARS)	X			X
Heart of Central Texas Independent Living	X			X
Post-secondary Vocational Education under Carl Perkins Act		X		X
Job Corps under WIA	X			X
Health Human Services Commission		X	X	
Domestic Violence Intervention programs		X	X	

The Board is an active member of the area Nonprofit Network, which meets monthly for a program and to share information of services, service expansions, recent funding awards (or rescissions), and other information that knits us closer as people serving organizations.

Community partnerships are sometimes expressed in a contractual relationship as well. An example is our relationship with the Business Resource Center (BRC). The BRC, under agreement with the Board developed and disseminated the Small Business Survey conducted by the Board in the first quarter of 2006.

Partnerships with Business and Economic Development Organizations

The Board works closely with area economic development organizations to assure that workforce services are available to expanding employers and prospective employers. Typically our involvement with economic development organizations is to provide labor market and labor availability information for outreach to employers. For employers who implement business expansion or startup plans, the Board offers workforce solutions to help implement those plans. Workforce services for this purpose include, outreach and recruitment for new employees, application and resume collection, employee screening, customized or incumbent worker training, on site recruitment and screening.

Economic development organizations share new employer and business expansion information on a confidential and as needed basis during negotiations so that the Board can provide accurate labor market information and plan workforce services accordingly.

Our closest working relationships are with the Waco-McLennan County Economic Development Corporation, and the Board has growing relationships with Falls County/Marlin Chamber of Commerce (C of C) and EDC and Limestone County/Groesbeck C of C. These two community partners include us in area planning events and utilize our services. Other rural/small town economic development organizations with which the Board enjoys good relationships are the Waco Hispanic C of C, Hillsboro C of C, Meridian Economic Development Corporation, Fairfield Economic Development Corporation, McGregor C of C, Mexia Economic Development Corporation, and Teague C of C.

In addition to our working relationships with area business and economic development organizations, the Board provides labor market information and to promote workforce solutions for area employers. Chamber meetings and events are attended to ensure relationships are intact, and Board staff is on the agenda when appropriate to the topic of the meeting to make presentations regarding changes in workforce services and to encourage area employers to use the workforce system. Chamber meeting attendance is a key source of information about employer needs for planning purposes.

Entrepreneurship

During the next year, the Board will increase efforts to support entrepreneurship in the workforce area. Small businesses account for the largest share of total employment in the Heart of Texas. Seminar series in the rural counties will be used to facilitate interest in the small business development concept. The Board has an active relationship with the local Small Business Development Center, locally called the Business Resource Center (BRC) to promote entrepreneurship in our area.

The Business Services Unit and the Texas Model

State Employment Service (ES) staff in the Business Services Unit (BSU) performs their professional activities under the direction of our contracted Managing Director. Center managers supervise the daily activities of the BSU, make work assignments and evaluate their performance. The Board administers the facilities and support necessary for the BSU to conduct Employment Services functions.

These State staff members are a valuable resource for serving area employers and job seekers. They work in local centers along with front line staff to serve job seekers who come for job search assistance. They provide valuable job application completion and resume assistance, and job matching and referral. The BSU also greet employers and take job orders. These staff search our database for skilled job seekers based on the qualifications of the employer's job order. They follow up with employers to verify referral results and modify job orders as needed.

Employment Services staff explain the WorkInTexas.com job matching system to employers empowering employers to make job searches against our data base 24 / 7 from their home or business computer.

The Center System Managing Director makes personnel action recommendations, etc. to the designated TWC HR representative as per the Texas Model HR procedures. The TWC personnel manual and the Texas Model HR procedures are followed for personnel actions regarding agency staff.

Texas Veterans' Commission

By Board Policy, veterans receive priority for services at the Workforce Centers. The term "priority for service" means that an equally qualified, covered person shall be given priority over a non-veteran for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under any and all DOL-funded employment and training programs. In addition, the Board is negotiating a contract for space for VETS staff in the HOT Workforce Center of McLennan County in Waco, and for rural center offices as necessary or requested.

Veterans' priority is not intended to displace existing eligibility provisions. Contractors must use the following guidelines when determining priority for DOL-funded services:

- If the existing provisions are mandatory, a covered person must meet both the existing provisions and the veterans' provision to receive priority. A non-veteran receives priority over a covered person who does not meet the mandatory provisions.
- If the existing provisions are optional, a covered person receives priority.

Though no longer employees of the Center System, the Texas Veterans' Commission VETS personnel work side-by-side with staff who provide training and employment services to all residents. Referrals between the VETS program and other programs or services available at the Center/s are a regular occurrence. In addition, VETS staff are alerted when a veteran is enrolled in services under another program at a Center.

The Workforce Center Employment Services staff must ensure that covered persons receive priority for staff-assisted services in each Center where Wagner-Peyser funds are utilized, by referral to regardless of the availability of Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program or Local Veterans' Employment Representative staff.

Workforce Center staff must ensure that, upon determination of eligibility for WIA Adult, Youth, or Dislocated Worker services, covered persons receive priority over non-veterans meeting the same eligibility criteria. Additionally, Workforce Center staff must ensure that, upon determination of eligibility for Trade Adjustment Assistance, covered persons receive priority over non-veterans meeting the same eligibility criteria.

Choices, Food Stamp Employment & Training, and Project Reintegration of Offenders are not funded by DOL, therefore, the Center staff are not required to provide priority of service for covered persons receiving these services. However, the Board's policy strongly encourages all contractors to provide priority to covered persons receiving these services, to document this status for the customer, and to notify the TVC VETS staff.

Adult Education Services

The local literacy level continues as a concern that has been identified repeatedly over the last fifteen years. The growing need for improved literacy levels is partly based on the rapid increase in the use of technology on the job. The reasons for illiteracy are many and there are many social factors to address. Once someone drops out of school and starts a family it is much more difficult for them to return to school. The problem requires a coordinated effort to improve the lives of people in our community and build a more productive workforce. This is a communitywide problem and requires more resources than the Board can provide. Thus, collaboration with area educators and literacy advocates and providers is critical to addressing this matter.

Census data shows that the number and percent of people in the area attaining high school and post-secondary education has increased since 1990. Still the number of people who are not workplace literate is an issue for employers who need qualified workers.

When job seekers' assessments indicate basic skill deficiencies, they are referred to the local adult literacy and adult education providers. Classes are available at workforce centers; however, customers may choose to participate in classes where it is convenient for them since the Adult Education Cooperative has classroom sites in many locations.

During this next year, the Board will work closely with the Adult Ed Coop to evaluate and possibly re-design the curriculum delivered to customers at workforce centers to incorporate more workplace literacy skills in all classes, including ESL.

Through a grant from TWC the Board established 'I Can Learn' math skills computer based training labs at McLennan Community College and Hill College.

Training Providers

To assure sufficient training resources to meet targeted occupation and other employer training needs, the Board outreaches area institutions to encourage certification of appropriate programs as eligible training providers. Solicitation of training providers is continuous. When the Board identifies a program that matches a targeted occupation which is not on the statewide ETPS, notice is sent to that school and to other area training institutions requesting that they meet the need for training services. The Board conducts annual review of the Targeted Occupations and orientation to the ETPS with all interested training providers.

The Board works closely with the area community and technical colleges not only for targeted occupation training but also for development and delivery of customized training for small businesses participating in the Business Cooperative for training.

The Board's Business Services Committee shall collect data on the effectiveness of skill training in targeted occupations and incumbent worker training, and will offer recommendations on revision (as appropriate) for the current and future workforce skill needs identified in coordination with area employers. In addition, Board staff actively participate in community college and technical college efforts to collect information on skill training needs and the satisfaction of employers with the graduates hired.

Public Training Partners in Heart of Texas
McLennan Community College Serving McLennan and Falls Counties
Hill College Serving Hill and Bosque Counties
Navarro College Serving Limestone and Freestone Counties
Texas State Technical College Serving all of the State of Texas

The community and technical colleges generally provide training at the most reasonable cost. The Board does, however, have career schools on our eligible training provider list. These schools fulfill a special training need either because of the type of training they offer or the open enrollment aspect of their training.

Board staff maintains the eligible training provider list, review new school applications for the list and review requests for renewal of training programs in coordination with TWC staff who maintains the State-wide eligible training provider system. The Board contacts schools for clarification on their new or renewal applications to facilitate timely processing. This effort aims to qualify as many training providers as possible so trainees will have more selection and cost comparison.

c. System Structure

Board, Center Contractor Management Team, and Employment Service (ES) staff work together to provide an effective public employment delivery system that is employer driven. The business services team is designed to meet the needs of employers in the workforce area and to meet the REE Measures set by TWC.

Business Service Unit

The Business Services Unit (BSU) is supervised by a Manager selected by the Center System Managing Director. It is the responsibility of the BSU to provide services and on-going assistance to employers in the Heart of Texas Workforce Area. Outreach to employers is performed to inform about, and assist with access to, services. Aside from using the statewide automated job-matching system, the BSU informs employers about tax credit availability through WOTC and EITC, and about skills development, incumbent worker and customized training possibilities. An equally important part of the outreach is gathering information from employers regarding their needs and when the need cannot be met by the BSU, it is reported to the Board so the Board may be a special advocate for employer needs in various forums.

The roles of Employer Services Staff include:

- Soliciting and monitoring job postings for employers;
- Providing technical assistance for Workintexas.com;
- Providing recruitment and hiring event assistance (job fairs);
- Acting as the single point of contact for key employer accounts and maintaining quality service to those employers;
- Building relationships with local businesses and sustaining those relationships;
- Arranging and promoting business seminars on timely issues;
- Outreach targeted employers/businesses;
- Offering services for a fee, such as applicant assessment and testing;
- Meeting employer engagement measures, such as market share and sustainability.

A successful BSU benefits all workforce center staff and customers, and therefore, must be fully integrated into the workforce center. With plans underway for functional staff integration to achieve the Employment Readiness Framework as described beginning on page 15, the duties of Core Services staff in the rural counties will expand to include employer services for their county.

The Employer Services Staff utilize reports available through WIT.com to identify employers for outreach. Direct and indirect contacts with businesses are made via in person contacts, community events, mail, email, and telephone. The BSU plans to implement a targeting matrix to identify high value employers to fully engage in the workforce system. Employers in the Market share numerator will be targeted using the following order of priority:

- High Value Current: The business is satisfied and knows us, uses us, turns to us for help, comes to us, refers others to us, appreciates and values us.
- High Value Dormant: The business is satisfied, but currently doesn't have a need or doesn't know of needs that we can meet.
- High Value Future: Businesses that have desirable jobs and good growth potential; may be a business new to the geographical area; have not used us, do not know what we can do for them. Would be satisfied and appreciate us.
- Low Value Current: The business is indifferent, hard to satisfy or to successfully meet their needs, but continues to use us with no perceived value.
- Low Value Dormant: The business is indifferent, unsatisfied, currently does not have a need, but consistently returns to us.
- Low Value Future: The business does not have desirable jobs and is not a good fit with services we can provide. The business would not be satisfied with us.

Additionally, employers new to the geographical area will be targeted.

Support for agency staff is funded by a Resource Administration Grant between the Board and the State. Since moving agency staff may result in increased costs to the Board, the Managing Director must consult Board staff before moving agency staff to different offices. The BSU coordinates and interacts with the staff of all centers to ensure the labor exchange system is working smoothly. Training is given to assure the staff in the rural county centers remains aware of the job filling process and the Board's employer focus.

Marketing Services

Outreach to employers is done through an aggressive marketing campaign. We will continue to make full use of all available media events, and promotion opportunities to spread the word about our valuable workforce services. Additionally, outreach to employers is accomplished through special community events sponsored by the Board, and often co-sponsored with colleges, chambers, school districts or local government, targeted at the needs of employers. The Board and BSU staff also participate in Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce meetings and events. Of course, the reality remains that the best marketing tool is the delivery of quality services that provide value to employers.

Outreach to job seekers has proven to be relatively ineffective, and therefore is presently being re-designed with a contracted marketing and media firm. The new approach will focus on broadcast media delivering free and paid announcements regarding weekly job opportunities and profiling successful "stories" about customers. In addition to the numerous employer-specific job fairs conducted at Workforce Centers, the Board will conduct a massive "Job-a-thon" modeled on the outstanding El Paso effort.

All marketing is aimed at employers and job-seekers, but it is believed that the effort also serves to inform the public about workforce development and the impact of services on their communities.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

The Individual Training Account is an account established by the Workforce Center and approved by the Board on behalf of an eligible customer. It is the primary method for providing classroom skill training services. Through ITAs, WIA adult, dislocated worker and youth funds will be used to make payment for purchasing training services from eligible providers selected by the customer in consultation with the case manager.

A customer receiving intensive services receives comprehensive and specialized assessments, in-depth interviewing and evaluation of barriers to employment, and completes an Individual Employment Plan. It is during this case management phase that a participant and the case manager discuss short-term and long-term goals and determine whether enrollment in a training program is merited and a viable option for the participant. Eligible customers select a training program that meets their employment goals from the training provider that best suits their circumstances. Individuals may choose any of the appropriate eligible providers on the statewide list of certified providers.

The customer must demonstrate availability of adequate resources to sustain themselves and/or their family for the duration of the training. Participants must apply for other sources of funding (i.e. other agencies, Pell grants, scholarships, etc), and the case manager will consider

available resources in determining an individual's overall need for WIA funds. The exact mix of funds will be determined based on the availability of funding for training costs and/or supportive services with the goal of ensuring that the cost of the training program the participant selects is fully paid and that necessary supportive services are available so that training can be completed.

Specifically, there are no exceptions to the use of ITAs for classroom skill training other than a customer using other resources to cover expenses associated with attending training.

Duration of Training

The Board is fully aware of the diminishing resources and takes pro-active measures to address the processes for identifying, securing and using other financial resources before committing WIA funds for training. Selection of short-term versus long-term training, depends on each customer's needs to achieve their employment goal. Prior program history shows that long-term training provides long lasting benefits that lead to self-sufficiency. Thus, the Board will not set limits on using short-term training over long-term training; however, the Board requires that all assessment outcomes, informed choice, and the basis for training decisions be clearly documented in counselor notes.

Sharing Information

In addition to open monthly meetings of the Board and its committees, workforce service information is shared among partners, stakeholders and customers through Nonprofit Network meetings, TechPrep Board meetings, and partner/stakeholder meetings (e.g. HHSC, Economic Development Group, Adult Ed Advisory Group, etc).

Because of formula funding reductions, and because of increasing needs for workforce and employer services in the Heart of Texas, the Board plans on aggressive pursuit of grant funding for special projects. These projects shall be community partnerships that address specific employers or that target specific segments of job-seekers with barriers to employment (e.g. out-of-school youth, ex-offenders).

Both the Board and contractors streamlined to a highly efficient point under the current operational model. Local workforce resources will continually be assessed to assure the most effective staff to customer ratio and the most cost effective delivery of services.

Continuum of Services

Individuals entering a Workforce Center have access to universal Core Services to aid them in searching for appropriate employment. If an individual is unable to obtain employment through the Center's Core, Self-assisted Services, staff in the Resource Room where Core Services are accessed may refer struggling customers to Intensive Services Case Manager where eligibility under a WIA is determined.

At the intensive services level, a participant receives comprehensive and specialized testing and assessments, in-depth interviewing to evaluate barriers to employment, and completes the development of the Individual Employment Plan. It is during this case management phase that a participant and the case manager discuss short-term and long-term goals and determine

whether enrollment in a training program is the most viable option for the participant to achieve such goals.

Because WIA is intended to be a customer-driven system, the training services phase is an information-rich environment. The customer is given a training packet containing, the Heart of Texas Targeted Occupation List, information on the certified training programs offered, program cost information, prerequisites required, ITA policy, etc. Based on the information contained in the training packet, the participant's testing and interest evaluation and the determination made during counseling sessions, the participant can make an informed choice as to the training program and the service provider that best meets their needs.

The customer must demonstrate that they have the adequate resources to sustain themselves and/or their family during the period they are in training. Participants are required to apply for other sources of funding (i.e. other agencies, Pell grants, scholarships, etc). The case manager considers available financial resources in determining the overall need for WIA funds. The exact mix of funds is determined based on the availability of funding for either training cost or supportive services with the goal of ensuring that the cost of the training program can be fully paid, and that necessary supportive services are available so that the training can be completed successfully.

The Employment Readiness Framework described previously (Pgs 19-23) more fully explains the basis for moving customers through different levels of service.

Progress toward Integration

The Board is facilitating the development of functionally integrated services at workforce centers to provide more seamless customer service as well as best use of resources. Though little co-enrollment of customers has taken place in the Heart of Texas to date, the Board expects that for FY 06-07, where possible, job seeker customers will be co-enrolled in more than one program to make the best use of available resources and to assure the success of the customer.

Through continuous assessment of job seeker skills, basic core services integrate with intensive services across programs - WIA, CHOICES, Food Stamp Employment and Training, Re-Integration of Offenders, Employment Services, and specialized programs funded under Statewide and Local Activity Funds. Center staff is undergoing extensive training in each program and in best practices in functions across workforce programs. As this matures, it is expected to reduce staff costs and improve customer service. A basic theme of this continuous staff development is emphasis on the employer as the primary customer. The expectation is that every staff member should be able to explain how the services they provide relate to the fulfillment of employer needs.

Our supportive service policy was developed in 2004 to integrate supportive service procedures across all workforce programs. This means that services such as transportation or child care assistance are more fully integrated into the mix of services necessary to make a program customer job ready AND to allow for follow-up services that enhance the retention of placed customers.

Remote Access

All Workforce Centers are continuously reviewed by Board staff to assure accessibility of facilities, programs, and services. In the rural areas offices offer services to targeted populations, but also provide universal job matching through information technology. All centers have data lines and internet accessibility at no charge to our customers. These IT resources allow customer access to the WorkInTexas.com job matching system as well as other web-based employment sites, and the vast resources of labor market information that is available on the internet.

Transportation

We are currently working with TXDOT, Waco Transit, the five rural transportation service providers and interested community agencies to continually improve coordination of transportation services for workforce as well as for other community needs. Transportation resources are coordinated through workforce center staff using funding available to us through a grant with the Texas Department of Transportation and with Supportive Services funding under WIA. Although transportation is a universal problem it is even more of a problem in our more remote area where fewer transportation resources exist. Center staff coordinates with local transportation providers to arrange transportation for our area residents.

d. Performance and Feedback

A review by Board staff evaluates monthly progress on TWC performance measures, with in-depth analysis occurring on a daily basis. Given the restructuring the Center System is undergoing and the sanction status the area has been under, the main goal has been to achieve all performance measures and to build a system that sustains the kinds of services that contribute to performance achievement. Based on the data that comprises common and historic performance measures, the Board can work closely with service delivery management and staff to improve services to employers, adults and youth.

Workforce Effectiveness

The Board's Youth and Child Care Committee collects and reviews data on local conditions and the services directed at ameliorating identified social problems, such as, high school drop-out rates, teen pregnancy and parenting, post-secondary entry and retention, developmentally appropriate child care, qualifications of child-care givers. The Board coordinates with multiple sectarian and non-sectarian youth organizations to coordinate resources and refer customers among programs. The McLennan County Youth Collaboration sponsors semi-annual forums for Teen Leadership Providers, which the Board co-sponsors where research based policy is presented and existing strategies are evaluated as aligned with the research or in need of re-working.

The Board's Business Services Committee conducts an annual workforce assessment of area employers, the results of which are shared with the training providers in the area and used to bring "local wisdom" to the industry and occupation targeting process.

Close association with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development entities, School Districts and Post-secondary training institutions provides on-going sharing of information and status of workforce training and employment opportunities that provide the basis for "tweaking" or making fine adjustments to Board and Service Delivery strategies as needs are

identified. In addition, the Board hosts three to four events to present timely and crucial information to stakeholders – employers, trainers, supporters, project directors, non-profits and so forth – in a professional development environment bringing value to all facets of workforce and child development communities.

Customer Feedback

Primarily the Board obtains customer feedback by administering surveys to employers and job seekers. Survey instruments allow us to match quantitative data with the qualitative data that we receive from informal feedback mechanisms. In the upcoming year, working with various partners in the community, the Board will conduct focus groups and utilize a mystery shopper service to assess the customer experience and customer satisfaction. Informally, Board staff are in contact with employers and jobseekers on a regularly and also have an opportunity to interact with Board members on a monthly basis to discuss community feedback.

Collection Points

All customers will be asked to complete a customer satisfaction survey on-line beginning in BCY06. Additionally, the Board will test the effectiveness of sending an electronic survey to a random sample of customers (employers and job seekers) that have received “enhanced” services from staff. Initially that will be monthly to assess response rates, then it will be done monthly once the methodology is refined.

Continuous Improvement

The Board analyzes data from TWIST, the Texas A&M study and informal feedback to identify system delivery strengths and weaknesses. The Board meets with contractors to solicit their feedback on the factors influencing those strengths/weaknesses. The Board and its contractors brainstorm improvements and/or remedies and adjustments are made as necessary. Additionally, customer input is analyzed to reveal trends or issues that should be addressed via training, revised policies and procedures or staff practices.

A more structure and formal continuous improvement process is under development for implementation in BCY06.

Appendix 2

High-Growth, High-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

HEART OF TEXAS TARGETED INDUSTRIES

NAICS	Industry
2371	Utility System Construction
2382	Building Equipment Contractors
2389	Other Specialty Trade Contractors
3273	Cement & Concrete Product Manufacturing
3323	Architectural and Structural Metals
3364	Aerospace Product & Parts Manufacturing
4841	General Freight Trucking
4931	Warehousing and Storage
5412	Accounting and Bookkeeping Services
5413	Architectural and Engineering Services
5616	Investigation and Security Services
6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools
6221	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
8111	Automotive Repair and Maintenance
8113	Commercial Machinery Repair/Maintenance

RELATED STATE INDUSTRY SECTORS AND CLUSTERS

TWC/LMIC Industry Groups	
NAICS	Title
2371	Distribution, Transportation & Logistics
2382	Heavy and Special Trade Construction
2389	Heavy and Special Trade Construction
3273	Heavy and Special Trade Construction
3323	Production Support & Industrial Machinery
3364	Transportation Equipment
4841	Distribution, Transportation & Logistics
4931	Distribution, Transportation & Logistics
5412	Business and Financial Services
5413	Business and Financial Services
5616	Legal, Protective & Human Support Services
6111	Education, Training & Personal Development
6221	Biotechnology, Life Sciences & Medical
8111	Transportation Equipment

Governor's Industry Clusters	
NAICS	Title
2371	Energy Core Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products Ancillary
2382, 2389, 3273	No Assignment
3323	Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing Ancillary Aerospace and Defense Ancillary
3364	Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing Core Aerospace and Defense Core
4841	Aerospace and Defense Support Information and Computer Technology Support Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products Support
4931	Aerospace and Defense Support Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing Support Information and Computer Technology Support Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products Support
5412	Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing Core Biotech and Life Sciences Core with Medical Services Energy Support Information and Computer Technology Core
5413	Advanced Technologies and Manufacturing Core Aerospace and Defense Support Biotech and Life Sciences Core Energy Support Information and Computer Technology Support Petroleum Refining and Chemical Products Support
5616	Biotech and Life Sciences Core with Medical Services
6221	Biotech and Life Sciences Core with Medical Services
6111, 8111, 8113	* No Assignment *

**HEART OF TEXAS
TARGETED OCCUPATIONS FOR BCY 2009-10**

	Standard Occupational Code	Occupation Title	# of Targeted Industries
1	49-3011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	1
2	51-2011	Aircraft Struct/Surfaces/Rig Asm	1
3	49-3023	Auto Service Techs/Mechanics	1
4	49-3021	Automotive Body/Related Repairer	1
5	49-2091	Avionics Technicians	1
6	43-3031	Bookkeeping/Accounting/Auditing	10
7	49-3031	Bus/Truck Mechanic/Diesel Specialist	3
8	51-4011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operator	2
9	15-1041	Computer Support Specialist	8
10	33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	1
11	43-4051	Customer Service Representative	2
12	31-9091	Dental Assistants	1
13	49-9051	Electric Powerline Install/Repair	2
14	17-3023	Electrical/Electronic Eng Techs	4
15	47-2111	Electricians	4
16	43-6011	Exec Secretaries/Admin Assists	6
17	49-9021	Heating/Air Cond/Refrig Mechanics	1
18	17-3025	Industrial Engineering Technicians	2
19	49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	2
20	29-2061	Licensed Practical/Voc Nurses	1
21	51-4041	Machinists	2
22	51-1011	Manager/Spvsr, Production/Operations Wkrs	3
23	49-9042	Maintenance/Repair Workers, General	1
24	31-9092	Medical Assistants	1
25	29-2012	Medical/Clinical Lab Tech	1
26	29-2071	Medical Records and Health Information Tech	1
27	43-6013	Medical Secretary	1
28	25-2022	Middle School Teacher	1
29	31-1012	Nursing Aides/Orderlies/Attendants	1
30	47-2073	Operating Eng/Construct Equip	2
31	47-2152	Plumbers/Pipefitters/Steamfitter	2
32	33-3051	Police and Sheriffs Patrol Officer	1
33	29-2034	Radiologic Technologists/Technician	1
34	29-1111	Registered Nurse	1
35	29-1126	Respiratory Therapist	1
36	25-20312	Secondary School Teacher	
37	43-6014	Secretaries /exc Legal/Med/Exec	4
38	53-3032	Truck Drivers, Heavy/Tractor-Trailer	2
39	51-8031	Water/Waste Treatment Plant Op	1
40	51-4121	Welders/Cutters/Solderers/Brazer	5

Appendix 3

Local Workforce Development Board Strategic Planning Alignment with Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council) is charged under both state and federal law with the responsibility to recommend Board plans and plan modifications to the Governor for approval. The Council reviews each plan to ensure that the local goals and objectives are consistent with the statewide long-term objectives (LTOs) in the state strategic plan –

Destination 2010: FY 2004-FY 2009 Strategic Plan for the Texas Workforce Development

System. In addition, the Council reviews the previous year's accomplishments to assess the degree to which Boards are effective in achieving state and local goals and objectives. On the following pages, the HOT Board submits the information required for TWIC in this Appendix.

Heart of Texas Workforce Board
Appendix 3
Statewide Goals and Objectives
Texas Workforce Investment Council

Destination 2010: FY2004-FY2009 Strategic Plan for the Texas Workforce Development System (TWDS) Long-Term Objectives				
Required	LTO ID#	SYSTEM LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES	Part 2: If unchanged from FY07 submission, indicate “no change” on the matrix. If	Part 3: Briefly describe annual performance from the effective date of the current local plan. Include actual performance numbers and
R	CU1.0	Increase system-wide, the number of employers using TWDS products and services.	No Change	260 employees of 10 local employers were trained with funding from the Board's Employee Development Fund; 350 more will be trained for the Sanderson Farms start-up operation prior to the end of this contract year – 6 are employers who have not used WFC services before this.
R	CU2.0	Employer Satisfaction levels in system programs and services will increase as determined by the combined satisfactory and above satisfactory categories in the Council's System Employer Survey.	No Change	Employer customer satisfaction increased as services were "beef-up" in the Workforce Centers. Better and more numerous qualified referrals for job openings increased satisfaction as measured by BSU by 6%.
Destination 2010: FY2004-FY2009 Strategic Plan for the Texas Workforce Development System (TWIC) Long-Term Objectives				

Required	LTO ID#	PROGRAM LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES	Part 2:	Part 3:
R	SC4.0	Design and implement a methodology and system for identifying and assessing employer needs.	No Change	Implemented Business Services Committee of the Board, conduct annual survey of
R	SC 5.0	Develop system to review workforce education programs and make recommendations to revise or retire them as appropriate to the current and future workforce needs identified in coordination with employers.	No Change	Conducted joint training on certification of skill programs at our 4 community colleges to communicate program shortages to match job opening needs. Work with Tech-prep consortium and industry advisers to design
R	SC6.0	Increase the awareness; access rates, participation, and relevance of services to small and mid-size businesses throughout the State.	No Change	Conducted Rural Economic Development Summit for small businesses in portions of area outside Waco metro.

**HOT Workforce Small Business Workforce Survey
Key Findings Summary**

% of Respondents*	Key Finding
36%	Receive 3 or fewer applicants for open positions
64%	Do not receive skilled and experienced job applicants
50%	Note that technical training for specific job/skill would significantly benefit the business and the employees
82%	Rated on-the-job training in the organization as superior or adequate
55%	Rated area technical and community college training as superior or adequate
30%	Rated area high school training as superior or adequate
62%	Have never been contacted by a school or college about training

The survey also solicited information on training needs in areas that the human resource research literature indicates are common among employers nationwide, and the following table shows the local results.

**HOT Workforce Small Business Workforce Survey
Training Needs Summary**

% Indicating Need	Type of Training
48%	Work-related safety training
57%	Customer relations and customer service training
43%	Training in appropriate workplace behavior
10%	Training in basic work related English
52%	Technical training related to a specific job or skill
66%	Critical thinking, Decision-making, Problem-solving
5% (each)	Others Specified (Telecommunications, Professionalism)

The Board recognizes that business is one of the largest trainers of employees and one strategy is to provide more employer-based training utilizing the Board's Local Activity and Statewide Funds, especially incumbent worker training, on-the-job training and customized training in the targeted industries. The Board will also work more closely with the area community and technical colleges in utilizing their existing Skills Development Grant funds, and coordinate with them on future proposal submissions.

2. To enhance job-matching services to meet needs for technical and professional positions in addition to lower-skill jobs, the Board instructed the Director of Workforce Centers to assign an ES staff to target businesses and graduates of technical programs as well as dislocated technical and professional workers to match through WIT.com.

The Centers will implement a targeting matrix to identify high value employers to fully engage in the workforce system. Employers in the market share numerator will be prioritized to approach to list their technical and professional jobs according to the following segments:

- High Value Current: The business is satisfied and knows us, uses us, turns to us for help, comes to us, refers others to us, appreciates and values us.
- High Value Future: Businesses that have desirable jobs and good growth potential; may be a business new to the geographical area or employers advertising job openings through other sources.
- High Value Dormant: The business is satisfied, but currently doesn't have a need or doesn't know of needs that we can meet.

3. Marketing, or "selling the system" serves many purposes, such as:

- Generating awareness;
- Motivating prospects to action;
- Establishing credibility;
- Clarifying value of services to employers; and,
- Building and maintaining the network

The Board requires Employer Services Staff to utilize reports available through WIT.com to identify employers for outreach. Direct and indirect contact with businesses is conducted via personal contacts, community events, mail, email, and telephone.

Good working relationships with businesses are critical. Customer satisfaction is the result of successful relationships. Therefore, the Employer Services Staff are evaluated on providing what businesses want:

- Consistency and continuity of services;
- Frequency and type of contacts tailored to the needs of the business;
- Quality services customized to the business;
- Fee-for-service options;
- Meeting or exceeding expectations; and
- Increasing perceived value.

Follow-up is vital to building business relationships. An excellent opportunity to connect with a business is to follow-up on every job postings. These factors will be considered when determining frequency of follow-up:

- Employer preference;
- Closing date of posting (employer's date and wit.com date);
- Difficulty filling certain types of jobs; and
- Time the employer allows for the process of hiring.

Appendix 4

Process Elements

Heart of Texas Workforce Board, Inc.

Public Comment

The Board provided local entities and the general public with an opportunity to review and comment on the plan modification by publishing notice of such an opportunity in the Waco Tribune Herald, 900 Franklin Ave., Waco, TX 76701, on May 10, 2009. The notice stated the purpose of the plan modification and provided instructions on requesting a copy by e-mail or US Post, as well as allowing for on-site review at the corporate office.

The notice was posted at each Workforce Center and sent via e-mail to entities, organizations and individuals who partner with, or are stakeholders in, the public workforce development system. Comments were received through close of business on June 10, 2009.

One comment was received. It was a request by the Chief Elected Officials to add Correction Officers/Jailers to the targeted occupation list. Review of LMCI justified this addition to the list and so it is included.

Fiscal Agent

The Education Service Center (ESC) Region 12, under contract with the Heart of Texas Workforce Board, is the Fiscal Agent for the workforce funding received from the Texas Workforce Commission and other sources. The headquarters is located at 2101 W. Loop 340, P.O. Box 23409, Waco, TX 76702-3409.

Priority of Service

The Board has established criteria determining that resources in the workforce area are restricted based on limited funds. The Board has established a priority of service policy, maintained at the local level, based on the provisions of 20 C.F.R. Section 663.600.

Appendix 5 Signature Page

Heart of Texas Workforce Board

The signatures below certify that the attached Biennial Board plan was reviewed and approved by the Chief Elected Officials and the Heart of Texas Workforce Board.

Judge Cole Word
Bosque County Judge
Lead Chief Elected Official

Mr. Gaylan Beavers
Board Chair

Date

Date

Appendix 6

Assurances

By signature on the statement of approval, the Board Chair and Chief Elected Official certify their acceptance of the assurances below. The following assurances are provided to the best of the Board's knowledge at the time such assurances are submitted to the Commission.

Planning

1. The Board has adopted this plan in accordance with the plan requirements in Texas Government Code §2308.304 and WIA §117.
2. The Board has followed Commission guidelines and, in the preparation and submission of this plan, has taken into consideration the applicable program, administrative, performance, and financial requirements of Commission rule §801.17. This plan shall govern the provision of services in the workforce area, as required by Texas Government Code §2308.304.
3. The Board has developed this plan in consultation with local elected officials, the business community, labor organizations, and other partners, as required by §117(d)(1) and §118(b)(7) of WIA.

General

4. The Board is directly responsible for the strategic planning, operational planning, and administration of all workforce training and services funded through allocations to the workforce area, as required by Texas Government Code §2308.302(b). Such responsibilities shall be carried out in accordance with the following Commission rules:

RULE	TOPIC
800	General Administration
801	Local Workforce Development Boards
809	Child Care and Development
811	Choices
813	Food Stamp Employment and Training
815.28	UI Work Search Requirements
823	General Hearings
841	Workforce Investment Act
847	Project RIO Employment Activities and Support Services
849	Employment and Training Services for Dislocated Workers Eligible for Trade Benefits

5. The Board shall carry out its duties and functions under this plan in compliance with the requirements of applicable federal and state statutes, regulations, and other issuances as provided by:
 - Chapters 302 and 306 of the Texas Labor Code;
 - Chapter 2308 of the Texas Government Code;
 - Chapters 31 and 34 of the Texas Human Resources Code;
 - Commission rules;
 - WIA State Plan provisions;
 - Training and Employment Notices, as applicable;
 - Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs);
 - Workforce Development Letters;
 - Equal Opportunity Letters, as applicable; and
 - any alternative options under WIA and waivers exercised by the state.
6. The Board has developed a business continuity plan to ensure that changes in key staff will not result in a negative impact on service delivery, performance, or administrative functions.
7. The Board will provide for an annual assessment of the language needs of persons with limited English proficiency and ensure that these individuals have access to services, in accordance with TEGL 26-02, issued May 29, 2003.
8. The Board assures that it has a competitive process in place to award grants and contracts, and the Board can identify effective and ineffective providers. The Board further assures that a description of this process is on file and available for review at the Board office. At a minimum, the Board assures that its competitive process meets the requirements of WIA §1 12(18)(B) and §1 18(b)(9); Commission rules, Chapter 801, Subchapter C and specifically Commission rule §801.54; and the Commission's Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts.
9. The Board assures that priority of service is provided to covered persons—including veterans and other eligible persons—in programs funded in whole or in part by DOL, in accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 (38 U.S.C., Chapter 4215).

Appendix 7

Memoranda of Understanding Summary

Required Partner Agency or Program	Expiration Date
WIA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Programs*	Ongoing
TANF Choices*	Ongoing
FSE&T *	Ongoing
Child Care Services*	Ongoing
Project RIO*	Ongoing
Trade Adjustment Act *	Ongoing
Wagner-Peyser Employment and Training, as amended by WIA (includes Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers)*	Ongoing
Texas Veterans' Commission*	Annual renewal
Apprenticeship Programs	Ongoing
WIA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act*	Ongoing
National and Community Services Act	Ongoing
Postsecondary Vocational Education under Carl D. Perkins Act	Ongoing
Senior Community Service Employment Program(s)*	Ongoing
Texas Health and Human Services Commission	Ongoing
UI Compensation *	Ongoing
 Optional Partners and Programs	 Expiration Date
Department of Adaptive and Rehabilitative Services*	Ongoing
Job Corps services under WIA Youth *	Ongoing
Region 12 Education Service Center *	Ongoing
Office of the Attorney General	Ongoing
Department of Family Protective Services (Foster Program)**	Ongoing
Texas Youth Commission	Ongoing
Texas Department of Criminal Justice	Ongoing
Family Abuse Center	Ongoing
Alabama Coushatta Indian Tribe	Ongoing
 Other Local Partners and Programs	
City of Waco Transit System	Ongoing
Economic Opportunity Advancement Corporation*	Annual Renewal
NeighborWorks – Financial Literacy Services	Ongoing
Habitat for Humanity	September 30, 2007
CIS-HOT*	Annual Renewal
Rural Transportation Providers	Ongoing
Smart Start Child Care Directors Association*	Ongoing

* Asterisked agencies and programs by contract or shared facility agreement.

** New MOUs developed and executed during the past year.

Ongoing - renews automatically if neither partner requires changes in the agreement