

Workforce Solutions Borderplex Local Workforce Development Board Planning Guidelines Program Years 2017–2020 Board Plan Modifications

Introduction

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) §108, each Local Workforce Development Board (Board) is required to develop and submit to the state a comprehensive four-year plan (Local Plan) that identifies and describes policies and procedures as well as local activities that are in line with the State Plan. This Local Plan must be developed openly and be available to the public for comment for 30 days, particularly to members of the business and educational communities as well as various other labor organizations. Along with submission of the Local Plan to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Board must submit all public comments of disagreement with the plan to TWC.

At the end of the first two-year period, the appropriate chief elected officials (**CEOs**) and the Board **will** review the local plan, and prepare and submit modifications to reflect changes in the labor market and economic conditions, factors affecting the implementation of the plan, changes in financing, changes to the structure of the Board, and/or the need to revise strategies to meet local performance goals.

Part A: Strategic Elements

The strategic elements of the Local Workforce Development Board Planning Guidelines (Guidelines) are as follows:

Boards' Vision

1. A description of the Board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. The description must include:
 - a. goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment; and
 - b. goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A).

Board Response:

The Board's strategic vision is, "Empower the most dynamic workforce to achieve global competitiveness and regional prosperity," and supports regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency through numerous strategies. First, the Board recognizes its

role as the premier organization charged with improving the availability of a skilled workforce to support a regional economy. Through its Strategic Plan, Workforce Solutions Borderplex has established several goals focused on job placement and skills enhancement including:

- **Grow non-formula grant funding to 10% of total budget by end of FY 2019.**
- **Re-assess all fixed costs, particularly leased space, to ensure we maximize resources.**
- **Integrate technology to maximize effectiveness**
 - **All centers and programs will be paperless by end of calendar year 2018.**
 - **Expand virtual ES access throughout region.**
 - **Develop strategies to increase consumer utilization of technology available to them to include staff training on the technology platforms.**
- **Continue to cross-train staff and reassess vacancies as they arise to determine whether to fill.**
- **Maintain succession planning focus to ensure a strong pipeline of future leaders for the workforce system.**
- **Identify strategic partners and continue to look for ways to collaborate.**
- **Continue to develop Board of Directors working knowledge of WSB to expand their ability to promote WSB to their constituencies.**
- **Strengthen Industry Sector Partnerships; let the private sector lead**
- **Enhance On-the-Job training and internships to further develop talent pipeline in high demand occupations**
- **Focus on career pathways via mentorship opportunities and efforts to guide a student or job seeker into a career path with some entry point in the system and clear understating of upward mobility and credentials required**
- **Continue to connect training providers with industry sectors so they can better adapt to the real skills demands (both near term and future forward)**
- **Continue skill gap analysis in key sectors to align training with gaps**
- **Create consortiums for small/medium size businesses to garner some economies of scale to support training investments and OJT opportunities**
- **Work with employers to raise awareness of value of upskilling workers. Develop resources to help employers upskill their workers and plan for succession. Work with training providers to assist employers in systematizing their OJT programs.**
- **Align training investments and initiatives with businesses to ensure they hire graduates at end of training program (ex, YouthBuild and CompTIA cohorts)**
- **Build and expand upon marketing and outreach to include paid media, PSAs and social media outreach in order to increase and raise awareness of WSB services**
- **Enhance research capabilities and information sharing to provide more data analytics and artificial intelligence in real time**
- **Develop an Advocacy Agenda**
- **Transition to a targeted industry/high demand job approach for priority populations (veterans and military personnel, foster youth, migrant farm workers and persons with disabilities) with 2-3 targeted industry sector approaches by the end of 2019**
- **Focus on wages and career paths**

- Better prepare job seekers before they show up for job fairs or interviews to ensure highest quality of applicant and greater success rate
- Expand upon cohort model to produce more candidates with needed targeted credentials and work experience in most efficient manner possible, i.e., YouthBuild and CompTIA cohorts
- Decrease unemployment rate for veterans to that of general population
- Increase # of persons with disability securing full-time employment
- Increase # of out of school youth being served successfully
- Increase # of trainings offered by AEL Consortium that align with industry needs
- Protect services to rural counties (manage funding cuts to minimize adverse impact to rural areas)
- Ensure all TWC and local metrics are met by contractors

The Workforce Solutions Borderplex also has a Strategic Goal to “Win at least two TWC Awards at TWC Annual Conference (1 Board and 1 Performance)”. All of the goals listed above have been built into performance measures for the center operator and the business services contractor. Those contracts also have incorporated into them the quarterly TWC measures and profit is tied to the meeting or exceeding of each measure. Both service operators have common measures that are shared between the two and profit is tied to them. The profit for having achieved the common goals is shared between the two operators, which encourages their efficiency and collaboration within the workforce system flow.

In addition to its Workforce Center and its Business Services contractors’ roles with economic growth, the Workforce Solutions Borderplex Child Care Services contractor has a vital role in supporting economic growth and economic self-sufficiency through the workforce system. Likewise, child care is a benefit to employers because stable child care facilitates regular work attendance which in turn fosters economic growth. Child care positively impacts workers, business, children and the community.

Stable child care is a necessity for families throughout the workforce region so parents can work or attend education or training programs to obtain skills in demand by employers so that employment can be obtained. WSB provides subsidized child care to over 5,500 children each year which allows parents to engage in work, education and training that fosters movement towards financial stability.

A lack of child care not only impacts parents, but it impacts business. In the September 17, 2014, Knowledge@Wharton article, “Why Child Care is the Economy’s ‘Invisible’ Driver”, it was reported that employee absenteeism due to breakdowns in child care costs U.S. businesses \$3 billion annually. WSB Child Care Services allows thousands of workers to attend work on a regular basis which in turn positively impacts business.

Longitudinal research of quality early childhood education and child care, such as The Carolina Abecedarian Project and The HighScope Perry Preschool, has demonstrated that children reap long-term benefits in terms of school readiness, post-secondary training and educational attainment, and employment. As reported on its website, the Abecedarian Project demonstrated economic benefits; “For every dollar spent on the program, taxpayers saved \$2.50 as a result of higher incomes, less need for educational and government services, and reduced health care costs.” Thus, it was demonstrated that children and the community benefit from quality early childhood education and care.

As a means of promoting quality in child care, the WSB actively partners with child care providers by providing mentoring services to providers who want to meet child care standards that go above and beyond the standards set forth by Child Care Licensing. WSB offers training in early childhood education and care to child care providers and staff, has established scholarships to attend early childhood education classes at the local community college, has purchased classroom curriculum that aligns learning at child care facilities with pre-K through the public schools, and has purchased equipment and learning materials for child care facilities. The goal of these activities is to increase the quality of child care in the region and increase the number of child care facilities participating in Texas Rising Star (TRS) program so that parents can attend work, education or training, employers have a stable and skilled workforce, children are prepared for school, and the community reaps economic benefits.

Similar to performance expectations for the workforce center operator and business services contractor, the Board has incorporated the applicable goals and performance targets into the Child Care Services contract as a means to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency in the region and achieve the goals set forth by the Board.

2. A description of the Board’s strategy to work with the entities carrying out the core programs and with the required partners to align resources available to the local area to achieve the vision and goals.

Board Response:

As mentioned above, all WSB service contractors have contracts with explicit performance measures that require them to collaborate and coordinate with one another. The success of one leads to the success of the other, all for the benefit of the regional employers and job seekers, existing or potential.

Aside from the contracted performance standards, WSB staff facilitates actions between partners to carry out core programs and align resources through. This is led by the Board through Industry Project Managers that have a focus on the region’s target industries and approach all activities as a project and/or initiative that includes budget, vendor, task, milestones, and measurement tracking. The Industry Project Managers convene the necessary staff from all partners, contracted or otherwise, and manage forward progress. An informal/ad-hoc “team” is formed for each project/initiative and

will braid resources, external partners, co-enrollment among core programs, training and job placement.

WSB has several strong partnerships with regional entities and local government organizations, many through contractual agreements, aimed at leveraging resources and improving workforce skills among the region. Some of those partners include the Borderplex Economic Alliance, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Rio Grande Council of Governments, El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Council for Regional Economic Expansion and Entrepreneurship Development. WSB relies on a “Street Team” made of up staff that is mobile and agile and able to provide employment services, program enrollment, and partner linkages on-site at locations requested by partners, education institutions and employers. WSB has also established agreements with the local university, community college and medical school to obtain dedicated space on campus for which to directly provide these services to students.

In addition to its Workforce Center and its Business Services contractors’ roles with economic growth, the Workforce Solutions Borderplex Child Care Services contractor has a vital role in supporting economic growth and economic self-sufficiency through the workforce system. Stable child care is a necessity for families throughout the workforce region so parents can work or attend education or training programs to obtain skills in demand by employers so that employment can be obtained. ~~Likewise, child care is a benefit to employers because stable child care facilitates regular work attendance which in turn fosters economic growth. WSB provides subsidized child care to over 5,500 children each year which allows parents to engage in work, education and training that fosters movement towards financial stability and allows thousands of workers to attend work on a regular basis which in turn positively impacts business.~~

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Furthermore, in 2017, WSB developed a comprehensive web-based directory of regional community resources. Named “Services Navigator,” the directory catalogues service providers and organizations that provide an array of workforce development services, including employment services, vocational services, training and education services, and supportive services. Services Navigator is utilized by AJC center staff as means to provide referrals to jobseekers, partners and staff.

Economic and Workforce Analysis

3. A regional analysis of the following:
 - a. The economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as well as targeted occupations
 - b. The employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations

As appropriate, a local workforce development area (workforce area) may use an existing analysis, provided that it is recent and provides a current and accurate description of the regional economy.

Board Response:

WSB is currently following a regional strategic plan called the *Regional Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020* released in June 2015 by the Borderplex Alliance (the study was conducted by Angelou Economics). The report identified six target industries that show growth potential through 2020: Defense & Aerospace, Life Sciences, Tourism, Advanced Manufacturing, Business Services, and Advanced Logistics . The strategic plan was developed following more than a year of work conducting interviews, focus groups and online surveys with 985 business and resident stakeholders in El Paso, Cd. Juarez, and Southern New Mexico. The Borderplex Alliance’s Regional Strategic Plan 2015-2020 is available online at: <http://www.borderplexalliance.org/resources/regional-strategicplan-2015-2020>.

WSB adapted its priorities to align with a substantive analysis of our region’s economy. An example of this was through WSB’s alignment of workforce training with the industries identified through the *Regional Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020*. The WSB created local target and demand occupations lists that identify top jobs in these industries, which guide staff in identifying high demand jobs or program-supported training for our jobseekers. "Target Occupations" are defined as having 10% or more Employment Growth within 10 years, 20 or more openings per year, and ~~\$12.00~~ \$12.22 or more Entry Hourly Wage. "~~Demand Occupations~~" are defined as having 10% or more Employment Growth within 10 years and 15 or more openings per year. A list of the target and in-demand

occupations is below (see number 4 and 5 of this section). Through the course of its work in developing the target occupations, WSB identified high job growth within the education sector, and added Education as a target industry on the Targeted Occupation List.

4. A list of the in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

| SOC Code | Occupational Title | Industry |
|----------|--|---------------------------|
| 13-2011 | Accountants and Auditors | Business Support Services |
| 17-3022 | Civil Engineering Technicians | Business Support Services |
| 17-2051 | Civil Engineers | Business Support Services |
| 13-1041 | Compliance Officers | Business Support Services |
| 15-1152 | Computer Network Support Specialists | Business Support Services |
| 15-1121 | Computer Systems Analysts | Business Support Services |
| 15-1151 | Computer User Support Specialists | Business Support Services |
| 13-1051 | Cost Estimators | Business Support Services |
| 15-1141 | Database Administrators | Business Support Services |
| 13-2051 | Financial Analysts | Business Support Services |
| 11-3031 | Financial Managers | Business Support Services |
| 11-1021 | General Operations and Business Managers | Business Support Services |
| 13-1071 | Human Resources Specialists | Business Support Services |
| 41-3021 | Insurance Sales Agents | Business Support Services |
| 13-2072 | Loan Officers | Business Support Services |
| 13-1111 | Management Analysts | Business Support Services |
| 15-1142 | Network and Computer Systems Administrators | Business Support Services |
| 13-2052 | Personal Financial Advisors | Business Support Services |
| 11-9141 | Property, Real Estate & Community Assoc. Mgr. | Business Support Services |
| 49-2098 | Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers | Business Support Services |
| 15-1132 | Software Developers, Applications | Business Support Services |
| 13-1151 | Training and Development Specialists | Business Support Services |
| 33-3021 | Detectives and Criminal Investigators | Defense |
| 33-2011 | Firefighters | Defense |
| 33-3051 | Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers | Defense |
| 11-9032 | Education Admin., Elementary & Secondary | Education |
| 21-1012 | Educational, Guidance, School, and Vocational Counselors | Education |
| 25-2021 | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed. | Education |
| 25-2012 | Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | Education |
| 25-4021 | Librarians | Education |

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|---------|--|---------------|
| 25-2022 | Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | Education |
| 25-2031 | Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | Education |
| 25-2052 | Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School | Education |
| 25-2054 | Special Education Teachers, Secondary School | Education |
| 25-1194 | Vocational Education Teachers, Postsecondary | Education |
| 21-1021 | Child, Family, and School Social Workers | Life Sciences |
| 29-2021 | Dental Hygienists | Life Sciences |
| 29-2061 | Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses | Life Sciences |
| 31-9011 | Massage Therapists | Life Sciences |
| 29-2012 | Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians | Life Sciences |
| 29-2011 | Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists | Life Sciences |
| 21-1014 | Mental Health Counselors | Life Sciences |
| 29-1171 | Nurse Practitioners | Life Sciences |
| 29-1122 | Occupational Therapists | Life Sciences |
| 29-2052 | Pharmacy Technicians | Life Sciences |
| 31-2021 | Physical Therapist Assistants | Life Sciences |
| 29-2034 | Radiologic Technologists | Life Sciences |
| 29-1141 | Registered Nurses | Life Sciences |
| 21-1015 | Rehabilitation Counselors | Life Sciences |
| 29-1126 | Respiratory Therapists | Life Sciences |
| 29-1127 | Speech-Language Pathologists | Life Sciences |
| 29-2055 | Surgical Technologists | Life Sciences |
| 49-3031 | Bus & Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists | Logistics |
| 53-3021 | Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity | Logistics |
| 43-5011 | Cargo and Freight Agents | Logistics |
| 53-3032 | Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (HEO-CDL Combo) | Logistics |
| 13-1081 | Logisticians | Logistics |
| 47-4011 | Construction and Building Inspectors | Manufacturing |
| 11-9021 | Construction Managers | Manufacturing |
| 47-2111 | Electricians | Manufacturing |
| 49-1011 | First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers | Manufacturing |
| 49-9021 | Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers | Manufacturing |
| 49-9041 | Industrial Machinery Mechanics | Manufacturing |
| 51-4041 | Machinists | Manufacturing |
| 49-9043 | Maintenance Workers, Machinery | Manufacturing |
| 47-2073 | Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators | Manufacturing |
| 35-1011 | Chefs and Head Cooks | Tourism |
| 27-3031 | Public Relations Specialists | Tourism |

5. An analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand sectors and occupations.

Board Response:

~~Along~~ In partnership with the Borderplex Economic Alliance, ~~and others,~~ WSB has conducted three industry skills gap analyses to identify where there is a mismatch between the available labor force and available jobs – Business & Financial Services, Manufacturing & Life Sciences, and Information Technology. WSB and the Borderplex Alliance are trying to anticipate what the labor market will look like in the future in order to grow local talent to fill those jobs. Each skills gap analyses ~~of each of the industries~~ ~~will~~ has allowed WSB and other key stakeholders to gain a more thorough understanding of the skills gaps in the regional workforce. ~~These analyses~~ and have helped guide WSB and its community partners in developing programs and initiatives for incumbent worker training, develop new curriculum or adjust existing curricula, and create career awareness initiatives.

~~The first skills gap analysis was completed for the Business Services and Advanced Logistics industries. Problems identified through the analysis included 1) students not being aware of certain careers in high demand or the educational programs that exist, 2) employers unable to advertise high demand jobs directly to students, and 3) educators unaware of what employers are looking for. The next skills gap analysis will be for the Life Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing industries. It is anticipated that the gap analysis will provide some basis for new curricula at an early college high school and help refine existing school curriculum around the city.~~

WSB also hosts bi-monthly economic development partner meetings with the City of El Paso Economic Development Department, El Paso County Economic Development Department, Medical Center of the Americas Foundation, and Borderplex Economic Alliance. These meetings provide insight into short-term business attraction and expansion projects that might require response from the various partners and also provide a long-term perspective into the future workforce needs of industries looking to move to or expand in the area.

All of the information gathered through the analyses and partner meetings is validated by the WSB Business Services Team of Business Consultants that visit with local employers on a daily basis. Those personalized visits are meant to garner a direct comprehension of our existing industry needs, plans for future growth, and opportunity for innovative talent sourcing and development.

6. An analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Board Response:

In 2017 in El Paso County, Texas 21.5% had less than a high school education, 24.1% had a high school diploma or equivalent, 31.5% had some college or an Associate degree, and 22.9% had a bachelor's degree or professional degree. (Source: Census/2017 American Community Survey)

In October 2018, the unemployment rate for the city of El Paso in October 2018 was at 3.8% which signified a 0.3% decrease from the previous month. In addition, the unemployment rate for the city of El Paso decreased by 0.1% since last year. The unemployment rate for the city of El Paso was higher than the unemployment rate for the state of Texas (3.5%); and higher than the National unemployment rate (3.5%). The unemployment rate for El Paso County in October 2018 was 3.9%, which was higher than the unemployment rate for the state of Texas (3.5%), and higher than United States (3.5%).

Labor Force for the Borderplex area (Brewster, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Hudspeth, Presidio and El Paso county) in October 2018 was 370,855, which indicates an increase of 1,496 from the previous month. Over the year, Labor Force increased by 7,975. The number of employed in the Borderplex area for the month of October 2018 was 356,390, which reflects an increase of 2,615 from the previous month. Over the year, the number of employed increased by 8,247.

The number of unemployed in the Borderplex area for the month of October 2018 was 14,465, which indicates a decrease of 1,119 from the previous month. Over the year, the number of unemployed decreased by 272.

Total nonfarm employment for the El Paso MSA in October 2018 was 321,700. This reflected an increase of 0.6% since the previous month. The total nonfarm employment for the El Paso MSA increased by 2.3% from a year ago (October 2017).

The three Super Sectors with the greatest employment for the El Paso MSA in October 2018 were (1) Government; (2) Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; and (3) Education and Health Services. These three Super Sectors represented 59% of the total nonfarm employment.

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The three Super Sectors with the least employment for the El Paso MSA in October 2018 were (1) Financial Activities; (2) Other Services and (3) Information. These three Super Sectors represented 8% of the total nonfarm employment

Despite the unemployment rate being at a record low in the Borderplex region, wages are still at a level lower than many competing cities. In 2018, WSB completed a comprehensive wage analysis of in-demand occupations and comparing wages in El Paso to wages in major metro areas, comparable border areas, and regional cities. The analysis also took into account cost-of-living and indicated that the Borderplex area has a historical and significant behavior of paying low wages which continues to plague the community with a talent drain. WSB and its economic development partners are utilizing this analysis to advocate for higher wages and talent retention.

The data was gathered from the Texas Labor Market Review, Texas Workforce Commission, November 2018, Labor Market & Career Information, Texas Workforce Commission, November 2018. WSB presents this information on a regular basis through our WSB LMCI reports, which are available through the WSB Workforce Trends and Data section on its website at:

<http://www.borderplexjobs.com/regional-statistics/workforce-trends-and-data>

7. An analysis of workforce development activities in the region, including education and training.
Note: This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and an evaluation of the effectiveness of programs and services. It must evaluate the Board's capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the identified education and skills needs of the workforce. The analysis must include individuals with barriers to employment. The analysis also must address the employment needs of employers.

Board Response:

~~The collaboration between workforce development and economic development organizations to recruit employers to the workforce region as well as to identify the needs of employers so the needs can be addressed through workforce development activities such as customized training, the Skills Development Fund, soft skills and hard skills training is a strength that assists employers to be competitive in the global marketplace.~~

As described above, WSB has conducted extensive skills gap analyses in various target industries that have identified gaps in skills and has also identified opportunities for success through targeted populations, curriculum, and resources. Aside from the Target Occupations List, WSB has developed the In-Demand Occupation List and utilizes both to influence curriculum provision among the various education and training providers.

WSB is an active member of the education provider organization planning committees, including the AEL and Career & Technical Education Committees among the regions independent school districts. Through these task forces, focus groups, industry round table discussions, and one-on-one interviews, WSB and its partners are continuously working to identifying employer skills and hiring needs within the target industries. It was noted that following discussions with businesses it was difficult to convey the information learned to educators who have the power to make necessary changes in education or to offer training to fill the need. To remove this obstacle, WSB is spearheading the effort to include training providers in these discussions, as it did for its Tourism industry round table in December 2016. WSB and its partner the Borderplex Alliance are also facilitating a skills gap analysis of each of the regional target industries, and will include educators in the information gathering process. Another difficulty in making the link between employers and educators is the lack of funding to make training come to fruition. WSB will make efforts to include information on funding resources in future discussions.

WSB has instituted quarterly Training Provider Forums to meet with each local education institution. The one-on-one meetings have proven to be highly successful in identifying capacity, process and logistics matters, and the development of innovative training models. In 2019, WSB will institute a local scorecard to measure the effectiveness of its Eligible Training Providers, based on criteria it has determined to be most relevant to the area.

WSB continues to identify alternative funding sources to target industries and/or populations to address the skills and talent gaps in the region. WSB heavily promotes the Programs such as the Skills Development Fund which provides access to employers to develop a customized incumbent worker training program. enables training providers to assess the skills needs of employers, along with the learning needs of workers, in order to customize a training curriculum for the business. However, businesses must have the staff capacity to handle the stringent fund application and reporting requirements, in addition to having to pay workers while they are not working but receiving training. This overall burden leads to mostly larger businesses applying for Skills Development Funds, which demonstrates the limitations of this one fund despite it being a major benefit to those who are able to take advantage of it.

WSB also utilizes various funding mechanism and resources to target specific industry needs. Below is a list of the grants/special initiatives WSB has undertaken to address needs most relevant to the WSB region:

- YouthBuild (funding from Department of Labor) – targets disconnected youth into in-demand construction occupations with training and OJT;
- Reboot (funding from Wagner Peyser) – targets disconnected youth into in-demand information technology occupations with training and OJT;

- **Cyber-Security (funding from Wells Fargo and TWC) – targets military transitioning soldiers into high-demand cyber-security technology occupations with five industry credentials and job placement.**

~~More funds for these public-private partnerships would be useful and WSB is seeking such funds via a fund development program to build on the Board's prescribed government funds. A change in the culture of the region's educational system is needed where educators keep a pulse on industry needs, and consistently produce pipelines of workers prepared to immediately meet the needs of employers. To help foster this culture change, WSB is beginning an education "roadshow" where staff presents workforce data such as the *Regional Strategic Plan 2015–2020*, the target industries and occupations list, and program funds available to disadvantaged populations for education and training to educators.~~

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there were 488,602 individuals between the ages of 18 and 64 years with 48,265 reported to have a disability; and approximately 18,040 had employment. During the last fiscal year, WSB provided workforce services to 1,275 individuals with disabilities. Board and contractor staff in concert with the Board's Disability Subcommittee members strategize on employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Ability hiring fairs are held, employers are informed about accommodations through workshops, transitional jobs through WIOA are options for job seekers with disabilities, and summer employment opportunities are made available to youth with disabilities. WSB partners with TWC Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) staff to braid services to customers with disabilities.

The 2012-2016 American Community Survey disclosed that there were 49,071 veterans in El Paso County. Veterans are a priority group for WSB. WSB provided workforce services activities to 2,767 veterans during the last fiscal year, October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018. To better assist transitioning military members, WSB operates a workforce center on Fort Bliss in the building where transitional soldiers receive Soldiers for Life – Transitional Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) services. WSB coordinates with SFL-TAP staff and Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) staff to tailor workforce services to the individual transitioning service member. Additionally, WSB takes part in job fairs targeting veterans, transitioning military members, and military spouses and family members throughout the year. Every November, WSB holds the Hiring Red, White and You! job fair that is a TWC statewide initiative for veterans, transitioning service members and military family members.

WSB has one of the largest service areas of all workforce development boards in the state, serving six counties. The largest being El Paso County, which represents 97% of the population and vast majority of businesses in the WSB service area. The University of El Paso, Texas Tech, and El Paso Community College along with 23 TWC-certified

Career Schools and Colleges and over 150 training options, reside in El Paso County making access to workforce training relatively simple for El Paso County residents.

However, residents of the five rural counties have limited access to other education and training providers. The largest education institution is in Sul Ross State University in Brewster County but is 87 miles from Presidio, TX, 101 miles from Van Horn, TX and 166 miles from Sierra Blanca, TX.

WSB is pursuing alternative training modes to provide additional training options to its rural county residents to include: online training (such as Texas Tech's online nursing program), entrepreneurial training provided by the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and on-the-job training.

Part B: Operational Elements

The Operational Elements of the Guidelines are as follows:

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

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions Borderplex system is a vibrant workforce system that focuses on economic development through workforce development and matching employer needs with qualified workers. WSB offers a multitude of services to employers, job seekers, and youth throughout the counties of Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis and Presidio. The WSB administers many employment and training programs that include:

- x Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth**
- x Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**
- x Employment Services (ES)**
- x Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Choices program (Choices)**
- x Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP)**

E&T)

- x Non-Custodial Parent program (NCP)**
- x Business Services Unit (BSU)**
- x Child Care Services**
- x Rapid Response Services**

In addition to the programs under the purview of WSB which includes oversight of Wagner-Peyser ES staff, the WSB system includes partners who also provide services that address the workforce needs of the community, business, job seekers and youth. WSB works closely with Motivation, Education and Training (MET), the local National Farmworkers Jobs Program, which provide services to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers and their families. MET staff is co-located in one of the WSB's American Job Centers. The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) staff is also co-located in WSB's American Job Centers to provide services to veterans. Together with Center staff, veterans are provided employment and training services and coordinated visits to employers are made by TVC and BSU staff. AARP partners with WSB to place older individuals at WSB American Job Centers for paid work experience.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), the local Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) consortium, and the local community college are vital partners of the WSB system. VRS is now also co-located in our workforce center, VRS staff assist individuals with disabilities obtain training and employment and assist with the Breaking Barriers initiative to provide paid summer employment to youth. The AEL partners assist with literacy and adult education throughout the workforce area and they continue to build contextual learning in key occupational areas to better meet the needs of employers. AEL can also provide alternative training modes to outlying counties; i.e; distance learning access to ESL and HSE materials, (Edmentum and Burlington English). El Paso Community College (EPCC) provides numerous job training programs authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. WSB and EPCC staff work together to ensure job seekers have access to training programs, to include apprenticeship training, that provide for the knowledge and skills in demand by employers.

WSB ensures alignment with core partners and other workforce entities through monthly workforce center partner meetings and other regularly scheduled meetings. Ongoing communication is a key strategy to: a) providing the services that employers, job seekers and youth seek; b) avoiding duplication of effort; and c) braiding of services.

In addition to the required partners that WSB collaborates and coordinates services with, WSB partners with 25 Eligible Training Provider System training providers to offer training services to individuals seeking to gain skills in demand by employers and assists training providers to learn which skills are needed for specific occupations. Another partner of WSB is Goodwill Industries. WSB shares space in Goodwill Job Link sites to bring workforce services to more rural areas of El Paso County. Goodwill has staff

available who can assist customers with WIT.com registration as well as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC) available to assist customers with disabilities at the Job Link sites.

~~Lastly, WSB is completing an asset mapping to identify other organizations throughout the workforce region that also assist in preparing a skilled workforce for employers and/or who provide services that compliment and further meet the needs of WSB system customers. A launch party will take place whereby organizations and WSB staff (to include partners) will have an opportunity to learn more about the organizations and services offered so services can be further aligned throughout the workforce region.~~

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

Board Response:

2.a. The Board works with the entities carrying out the core programs to expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers. The Board meets at least monthly with its Career Center Operator that provides WIOA, Choices, NCP, SNAP E&T and TAA services, its Business Services contractor that provides services to employers as well as ES and RESEA services to job seekers and those receiving unemployment benefits, and its Child Care Services contractor who provides subsidized child care for parents who are working, attending school or attending training to identify how services can be further aligned and expanded. Board, contractor and partner meetings with TVC, MET, AEL, and El Paso Community College are also ongoing to discuss co-enrollment of customers, streamlining of services, employer needs, and how funding and services may be braided to expand access to services.

2.b. WSB offers numerous assessment tools that help job seekers and staff determine what career pathway is best for the individual customer. Industry roundtables are hosted to identify the skills that employers seek. Education partners attend the roundtables so they hear first-hand the employer needs and they have the opportunity to ask questions so they can better align courses and curriculum with employer needs. WSB and partner meetings are regularly held so that co-enrollments can take place and WSB staff is provided with information on how staff can be co-enrolled. Examples of co-enrollment include: a) a WIOA youth from a MSFW family

may be co-enrolled with MET so that services can be braided to better address the youth's needs; b) an AEL customer may be co-enrolled into WIOA so that support services such as the provision of the GED testing fee can be granted; and c) a VRS youth is enrolled in WIOA Youth Services to take part in Breaking Barriers to provide paid work experience to the youth. WSB relies on the professionalism of its Career Navigators and its partners to assist customers in understanding what a career pathway looks like and how it can foster increasing financial stability for the customers.

Using the strategic plan commissioned by the local economic development entity, the Borderplex Alliance, the WSB aligned its Targeted Occupations with the industries identified in the strategic plan. WSB also shared the Borderplex Alliance Strategic Plan and the Targeted Occupations List with its education partners as a means of building career pathways. The buy-in of educational institutions, from AEL through postsecondary education, was important so that courses to build career pathways would be available.

2.c. WSB improves access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable) through co-enrollment amongst core programs and partners. WSB has partnered with a local non-profit that offers customer service training. The partner organization provides for the cost of the training and WSB provides the fee for the national industry-recognized certification exam for co-enrolled participants. Another example of how WSB improves access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential is through its YouthBuild grant. Youth participating in YouthBuild are co-enrolled into WIOA Youth Services and AEL services so they gain the skills needed by employers in the construction industry while obtaining GEDs and industry-recognized certifications.

WSB also partners with El Paso Community College on various initiatives that lead to industry-recognized certifications such as through the VIP Skills Development Fund initiative, Project Higher that assists individuals with disabilities obtain certifications and through ensuring that career pathway programs are on the Eligible Training Provider System. Another example of how WSB improves access to industry recognized postsecondary credentials is through its partnership with the local AEL consortium to provide industry recognized credentials in the hospitality, construction, and information technology industry. Joint meetings were held with employers from the industry to identify the needs and the curriculum that would be used leading to industry-recognized post-secondary credentials.

~~WSB received a grant of \$20,000 from the Paso del Norte Health Foundation to pay for industry-recognized skills certifications for students graduating with healthcare-related degrees. This program built on an existing, finite statewide initiative called the Industry Recognized Skills Certification grant. In total, WSB served about 276 graduates through this program.~~

Lastly, WSB provides online tools that provide information about target industries, what can be expected in a particular job, and an online orientation of what services and documentation for specific services is needed. These online tools are provided to improve access to WSB system services which in turn improves access to activities that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials.

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

Board Response:

As previously stated, WSB coordinates programs and services with core programs and partners to enhance services to workforce system customers. Strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations include:

- × Increasing employment for veterans in partnership with employers. WSB BSU staff promotes the hiring of veterans to employers and the Veterans Hold in WorkinTexas.com is employed with job orders. WSB has an American Job Center on Fort Bliss to provide Employment Services (ES) to transitioning soldiers and veterans. WSB also coordinates services among core programs and as appropriate with TVC and other partners to ensure veterans receive the services that are needed to obtain employment. Job fairs targeting veterans, transitioning military members, and military spouses are coordinated by the Board's Business Services Unit. Assistance is provided by the workforce center contractor and TVC to refer military customers to the job fairs as well as help with staffing the larger job fairs such as the annual Hiring Red, White and You! job fair held in November.**
- × Partnering with school districts to identify and reach out to out-of-school youth to complete their education. WSB has built relationships with the school districts, alternative school and Job Corps in the region as a means of identifying out-of-school youth. When eligible out-of-school youth are identified, they enrolled into WIOA Youth or WIOA Adult programs and provided with services that will allow youth to reconnect to the education system and earn their high school diploma or its equivalent.**
- × Continuing promotion of science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) into post-secondary initiatives by increasing the number of partners. The STEAM Fiesta is WSB's annual multi-faceted event that promotes STEAM to middle and high school students through exhibits and competitions. By engaging secondary students in STEAM, youth are better prepared to select a STEAM endorsement that will lead to STEAM-related post-secondary education. Prudential became a partner in 2016, sponsoring the Prudential Math Challenge and providing funding for math clubs in winning secondary schools. Prudential awarded WSB with a second-round grant to continue the initiative in 2018-19. WSB has also partnered with the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) in their Accelerate Texas grant designed to support females in the engineering field. WSB is coordinating with UTEP to identify employers who will provide quality internships to engineering students.**

- x **Promoting post-secondary education and employment to individuals with disabilities.** WSB continues to partner with VRS, Volar Center for Independent Living, EPCC and other partners to provide paid work experience to individuals with disabilities. Due to changes in WIOA Youth, WSB shifted its focus to out-of-school youth for its **Breaking Barriers** initiative. It is expected that in the future, VRS will be positioned to provide paid work experience to in-school youth thereby expanding exposure to the world of work to many more youth with disabilities. WSB and VRS are consulting about how individuals with disabilities may benefit from WIOA Adult Transitional Jobs with the expectation of integrated competitive employment as an outcome.

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

Note: This may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, use of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers. These initiatives must support the strategy described above.

Board Response:

- a. **WSB continuously engages local businesses by way of task forces, focus groups, industry round table discussions, or one-on-one interviews, focusing on businesses in target industries identified in the Regional Strategic Plan.**
- b. **WSB methodically collects information from employers to learn their hiring needs. It then conveys this labor market and career information to educators via presentations to educators, parents, and students, to help them plot career pathways from career interest through college educational programs.**
- c. **WSB hosts bi-monthly economic development partner meetings with the City of El Paso Economic Development Department, El Paso County Economic Development Department, Medical Center of the Americas Foundation, and Borderplex Economic Alliance. These meetings provide insight into short-term business attraction and expansion projects that might require response from the various partners and also provide a long-term perspective into the future workforce needs of industries looking to move to or expand in the area.**
- d. **Strategies and services for strengthening linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance (UI) programs include:**

- x **Assisting with UI** by making appeals telephones and space available to UI Claimants and providing individuals with information about UI in accordance with Texas Workforce Commission guidance.
 - x **Reconnecting Claimants to Employment** by providing Rapid Reemployment Services, Employment Services, and job readiness and training services.
 - x **Job Search Qualification for UI Claims** is established through WSB setting policy on the required number of weekly job searches as UI Claimant must make to qualify for UI claims. WSB analyzes the unemployment rate by county based upon the most current quarter; the labor force and the number of relevant employment opportunities to annually establish the policy.
 - x **Assisting UI Claimants with Identifying Transferrable Skills** to reconnect with the labor force.
 - x **Working Closely with Employers** when groups of workers are laid off to match skills with the employers' workforce needs.
 - X **AEL Referrals** FormStack referrals are provided to UI claimants to link them with AEL programs
5. An explanation of how the Board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the Board will promote entrepreneurial-skills training and microenterprise services.

Board Response:

Workforce Solutions Borderplex actively engages and collaborates with several regional economic development agencies including Borderplex Alliance, City of El Paso Economic Development Department, Medical Center of the Americas, Council for Regional Economic Expansion and Education Competitiveness, El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Hub of Human Innovation, and Adult Education Literacy Consortium. WSB CEO Joyce Wilson serves as Chair of the Borderplex Alliance 2020 Regional Strategic Plan.

Workforce Solutions Borderplex also has several Memorandums of Understanding with all of the above partners for specific workforce related projects as described below:

- x **With Borderplex Alliance on business and advanced logistics industry skills gap analysis. WSB is leading efforts towards executing recommendations to fill those gaps through industry certification curriculum via local education and training providers;**
- x **With City of El Paso on business retention and expansion efforts to match employer workforce needs with recruitment and/or training resources available through WSB;**
- x **With the Council on Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development**

(CREEED) on STEAM related activities including “Girls Who Code” initiative aimed at encouraging technology related occupations to young girls; certifications and degrees to remain competitive in a globally changing market.

- x With Medical Center of America on another skills gap analysis for the life sciences and medical device manufacturing industry sector;**
- x With El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for regional entrepreneurship trainings;**
- x With Adult Education Consortium to provide for GED training as well as provide training for industry recognized credentials;**
- x With Hub for Human Innovation to provide technology skills training and job placement with local technology and innovation start-up companies.**

Additionally, WSB collaborates with institutions of higher education and education partners, to include CREEED, to ensure that the next generation of El Pasoans graduate ready for 21st century jobs. For example, WSB joined with CREEED during a forum to discuss how the region can meet the statewide goals outlined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s initiative: 60x30TX. It became evident that in order for the region to meet the 60 percent attainment goal, WSB and other key stakeholders will need to engage those who are already in the workforce—and help them gain new skills, certifications and degrees to remain competitive in a globally changing market.

6. A description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including explanations of the following:
 - a. How the Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers and how providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers;
 - b. How the Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including to remote areas, through the use of technology and other means;
 - c. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including the one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA §188, if applicable, and with applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals who have disabilities; and
 - d. The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

Board Response:

- 6.a. **WSB convenes a quarterly Industry Roundtable panel of business members that face day-to-day challenges with employability of El Paso, Texas and its greater area. The group addressed a series of questions to provide a business perspective for the Workforce Solutions Borderplex. At the same time the Education and Workforce Development Committee at Borderplex Alliance (Borderplex 2020 Plan) is working**

with UTEP, EPCC, and ISDs to find ways the committee can support and/or expand programs and initiatives that aim to increase college enrollment.

Also, WSB has created an agreement to establish a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship between the Eligible training providers and Workforce Solutions Borderplex to set forth the relative responsibilities as it relates to promote and provide Training Providers the opportunity to submit their performance achievements. Eligible Training Provider will be required to comply with the WSB Policy, Evidence of Employer Partnership, Eligible Training Provider System – Initial Eligibility and performance standards. Training Providers will keep and provide WSB staff accurate student records and data demonstrating adherence to policy attendance requirements and performance measures to approved Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) courses.

Training providers will be required to allow WSB to publicly display and provide to workforce program participants the locally developed Training Provider Scorecard and provide a calendar of the start and end dates for each training program.

Workforce Solutions Borderplex will ensure that WSB staff maintains frequent, open and proactive communication with Training Providers in obtaining data relevant to performance measurement; collect participant attendance, completion, and job placement data in a timely basis (per standards established internally); host quarterly forums with all Training Providers in an effort to communicate adherence to strategic goals, skills training needs, performance tracking, process improvements and anything else relevant to ensuring a positive and collaborative partnership.

Should a Training Provider fail to provide timely and accurate data as set forth, WSB will place Training Provider on a 90-day probationary status. During this period, WSB will not refer nor approve workforce program participants for enrollment into Training Provider courses to be paid for by WSB funds. The Board local policy will reflect changes.

- 6.b. The Board facilitates access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including to remote areas, through the use of technology and other means. WSB has a mobile unit that operates throughout the remote/rural counties of the workforce region. The mobile unit has computers whereby individuals can create a resume in WorkinTexas.com and receive job matching and referral services. Customers may also receive program services from staff in the mobile unit. Recognizing that the majority of businesses in the rural counties are small businesses and “mom and pop shops”, WSB partners with the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to provide information about entrepreneurship in the rural counties as a means of fostering business development and self-sustaining employment. WSB has installed technology in its rural American Job Centers to connect customers to all program staff.

WSB has invested in Interviewstream a virtual job interview technology that allows job seekers to practice job interviews. Interviewstream also enables employers to use video interviews of job candidates for their hiring needs. This is especially

convenient for employers who are hiring for positions outside of the workforce area and for job seekers who may reside in a remote area of the workforce region.

WSB also facilitates access to its services through its brick and mortar sites by placing them in heavily trafficked areas of the region. WSB continues to evaluate the usage pattern of its customers and has recently partnered with Goodwill Industries to co-locate in strategically situated Goodwill Job Links to further promote access to services. Additionally, to provide ease of access to military family members and transitioning military service members, WSB operates a workforce center on Fort Bliss.

Online information about workforce services is available through the Board's website. Individuals can access the Tour of Services which provides information about available services and what an individual can do to prepare for the first WSB visit. In addition, sections of the Tour of Services are geared towards employer customers to market the services available to match employer openings with qualified candidates. The Career Services Orientation provides details about specific funded programs for participation, including necessary documentation for enrollment. The 5 Minute Countdown Series provides a one-stop virtual training space for four layers of job seekers and employed individuals throughout the local area. Industry Scholars provides a suite of eLearning courseware designed to assist with matching potential job seekers with appropriate career pathways to promote in demand careers in the Borderplex communities. All of these services are designed to facilitate access to services.

- 6.c. For seven years, WSB has led a trio of service providers to offer opportunities for competitive employment, economic self-sufficiency, and independent living through skill development and long-term support services. Each entity has a valuable role in the collaborative: WSB provides career preparation and work-based learning experiences while Vocational Rehabilitation and Volar Center for Independent Living support with complimentary connecting activities, family involvement, and intensive case management. The result is a workforce system with full participation from individuals with disabilities; promoting self-determination, informed choice, and joint-participation in decision making.

Goodwill Industries of El Paso is a recent addition to the WSB service network. Goodwill was sub-contracted because of their 62-years of expertise in training and employing individuals with significant barriers to employment. WSB/Goodwill's Job Link Centers were instituted to further extend access to universal services.

WSB also actively participates in October Disability Awareness Month, the UTEP and Volar Disabilities Conference & Service Providers Expo, and hosts specialized hiring fairs to foster hiring of individuals with disabilities.

Workforce Solutions Borderplex is a cornerstone for the coordination and collaboration of Texas workforce system services for individuals with disabilities in the Borderplex Region. In 2017, WSB:

- x Increased hiring of individuals with disabilities**
- x Enhanced assistive technology and access at all career centers to improve access and comfort of the customer regardless of personal circumstance;**
- x Continued interest and expansion of summer employment efforts with yearround services to expand focus towards permanent employment.**
- x Increased sensitives to needs of jobseekers with disabilities thru ongoing sensitivity training for all WSB employees and contract staff.**
- x Improved data collection to better measure program effectiveness**
- x Expanded diversity of Disability Subcommittee membership and improving its visibility among all local boards in Texas, as well as within the workforce service area of Borderplex.**

6.d. Over the last year, WSB has been working to modify its exiting One-Stop Workforce Centers and satellite offices to better accommodate and serve its partners and job seekers including the center operator, business and childcare services, Veterans services, migrant seasonal farm worker services, and now vocational rehab. Each center is managed by a center manager who coordinates job seeker workshops, job fairs, center partner meetings, staff trainings and special events.

One-Stop Partners and occupants include:

- x Dynamic Workforce Solutions – center operations, case management staff, WIOA program case management, resource center management and youth program case management. DWFS also provides curriculum for web-based skills training, soft skills training, and job readiness.**
- x Manpower Inc. – business relationship development and maintenance, universal client employment services, rapid response, Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment and call center management.**
- x YWCA – childcare services. Resources include child care provider mentors and trainers.**
- x Texas Veterans Commission – employment services for veterans and transitioning soldiers.**
- x Motivation & Education Training – services for migrant seasonal farmworkers**
- x Vocational Rehabilitation – services for job seekers with barriers to employment**

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

Board Response:

The type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities are numerous. Activities include, but are not limited to:

- × Job Readiness and the Borderplex Certified Series, an intensive workshop series focused on mid- to high-level job seeking skills and strategies**
- × Job Search and Job Matching Services**
- × Rapid Response and Rapid Reemployment Services**
- × Adult Education and Literacy Services**
- × Education and Job Training in Targeted Occupations**
- × Apprenticeships**
- × On-the-Job Training**
- × Supportive Services**
 - × Hiring Fairs**

Activities are tailored to the individual needs of the customer and may be made available through the WSB, in concert with core partners, or through public and private-for-profit and private-not-for profit organizations. Customers may choose education and training through the AEL consortium, the local community college or universities, or through Career School and Colleges institutes with training programs listed on the Eligible Training Provider System. Services are available in English and Spanish and accommodations are available for individuals with disabilities.

Post-secondary education and training is primarily available in the urban area of the WSB region. In the rural counties, AEL services are available, and training is available through Sul Ross State University and WSB continues to work with the university to certify more programs through the Eligible Training Provider System. As previously reported, the WSB partnered with the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to bring entrepreneurial information to the residents of the rural counties. ~~and to those who reside in the urban count of El Paso.~~

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

Board Response:

Rapid Response activities are business-focused services in response to layoffs and plant closings. Services are available to businesses and affected workers. When providing Rapid Response services, a coordinated approach is taken between the WSB Business Services Unit (BSU) and the Career Center Operator as a means of ensuring both companies and affected workers are made aware of the multitude of services available to them. Generally, services begin with an on-site visit with the employer to discuss available services to the company and the affected workers. A list of affected workers and layoff dates are provided to WSB and dates for meeting with the affected workers are set for WSB to go on-site to explain services to the workers. Information about

available services is provided to the affected workers and registration in WorkinTexas.com is often made available on-site. Depending upon the affected workers choice, he/she may want to take time to process the information or he/she may set up an appointment with workforce center staff to discuss in detail services that are tailored to his/her needs. WSB coordinates workforce investment activities based upon individuals' needs and in a manner that assists with rapid reattachment to the workforce for affected workers.

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

Board Response:

Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) has facilitated a successful WIOA Youth program that has supported in-school youth to continue attending secondary school and enter post-secondary or work placement upon graduation. WSB has also provided work experience to both in and out of school youth through a summer program wherein youth work in a setting where they obtain both technical and soft skills that are necessary to be successful when they enter the workforce. WSB has supported out-of school youth to obtain a secondary equivalent and enter post-secondary or work placement. WSB has worked with businesses in the community to provide on-the-job training for out of school youth. WSB will continue to serve in and out of school youth that meet WIOA eligibility to support them and guide them in entering post-secondary school or permanent work placement. WSB has utilized its YouthBuild grant as a model that will facilitate the development of 40 young men and women who are interested in obtaining their GED, learning and obtaining industry certifications, and ultimately job placement in that field.

WSB has established a job fair specifically for job seekers with disabilities, the HireAbility Job Fair. Many employers in the Borderplex are willing to hire individuals with disabilities and each year support this effort by recruiting job seekers at this job fair.

WSB has also established a reverse job fair for youth. The reverse job fair is different as it features a small group of youth that have completed a week-long job readiness program and have learned how to present themselves, promote their skills and compete for jobs.

WSB offers many programs to disadvantaged youth, especially out of school youth, including a Dynamic Futures Program that offers students a two-week job preparation course that teaches them many soft skills employers say their employees and job applicants do not usually have.

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

Board Response:

As an active member of the Region 19 Education Service Center Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee, WSB provides labor market data to the various school districts to encourage alignment between secondary education curriculum and post-secondary career pathways. WSB facilitates connections by and between the ISDs, training providers, El Paso Community College, University of Texas at El Paso, and employers to create complimentary linkages between high-school and post-secondary. Some examples of these linkages is the development of a manufacturing skills program that begins in the high school CTE program, continues with additional classes at El Paso Community College that lead towards an Associates Degree in Mechanical Engineering, and ultimately is transferrable towards a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering at the University of Texas at El Paso.

WSB has also developed a public presentation (aka "WSB Roadshow") where staff presents workforce data to educators such as the regional strategic plan, the target industries and occupations list, and program funds available to disadvantaged populations for education and training.

~~In partnership with Education Service Center Region 19, WSB makes available the Campus2Careers digital platform that helps students and teachers plot career pathways from career interest through college educational programs.~~

~~As a result of the skills gap analysis for the business services and advanced logistics industries, WSB is partnering with the Borderplex Alliance to coordinate its first Career and Job Fair for both youth and adults, with a focus on high demand occupations in the business services and advanced logistics industries. This is to address some problems identified in the analysis such as 1) students being unaware of certain careers in high demand or the educational programs that exist, 2) employers unable to advertise high-demand jobs directly to students, 3) educators unaware of what employers are looking for. The Fair will give employers and training providers opportunity to converse about skills needs and training solutions so that training providers can align their curriculum to better address the real skill demands of business. This also provides employers the opportunity to identify possible talent pipelines emerging from the training programs.~~

~~The Career and Job Fair provides youth with an opportunity to learn more about industries and career opportunities and also provides a venue for youth and adults to apply for existing employment opportunities with the employers in attendance. The training providers will have booths to advertise their services, and employers will be~~

~~encouraged to both advertise careers to build awareness and to offer employment for current job openings.~~

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

Board Response:

WSB has collaborated with various organizations that provide resources in the region to assist those in need of support services. Before support services are provided with workforce funding, coordination and partnership with other entities, both within the workforce center and those not co-located, occurs to ensure non-duplication of support services, as required in WIOA.

Support services are provided to eligible customers, as funding permits, and when the support services are reasonable and, necessary and directly related to participation in eligible career services, programs and authorized rules and regulations. Support services include but are not limited to child care assistance and transportation assistance. Child care may be provided through community resources or if those are not available then through workforce program assistance to include subsidized child care through the WSB Child Care Services. WSB Child Care Services coordinates with pre-K and Head Start to make wrap around child care available when possible.

If transportation assistance is available through other resources in the community, workforce customers are connected with those resources. However, if after an assessment is made that external organizations cannot provide those resources eligibility is determined for supportive services. Transportation assistance is provided in coordination with WIOA Title 1 workforce activities through bus cards or gasoline cards to assist WIOA participants in traveling to and from workforce activities.

WSB has completed its asset mapping project and has now provided a resource for our service providers, the service navigator is an online tool that provides an accurate assessment and inventory of the resources available in the WSB six county region.

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

Board Response:

Through ongoing regular meetings and sharing of information, the WSB assures that coordination of services occurs and duplication of services is avoided. Services are tracked in TWIST and/or WIT.com so that WSB and TVC staff can determine what

services have been provided. Ongoing coordination between staff for co-enrolled customers is essential to enhance services and avoid duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act and other services provided through the WSB workforce system. This is achieved through phone calls, staffing, and case notes. Additionally, a monthly calendar is published that advises all one-stop partners of the weekly hiring fairs that occur at the workforce centers so shared and non-shared customers can be prepared and attend the hiring events.

WSB and TVC work closely to ensure services are streamlined by 1) using the TWC triage tool designed for services to veterans and 2) through regular communication. Additionally, job postings are coordinated so that duplication of effort does not occur. WSB works closely with TVC to ensure targeted hiring fairs for veterans and transitioning military members, as well as for military spouses are organized, outreach efforts are appropriate to reach the target audience, and coordinated employer outreach occurs so employers are not bombarded with staff marketing services to employers who hire veterans.

Program staff refers job ready customers to Wagner-Peyser ES staff for job matching and referral services. This process ensures that services are not duplicated and that the expertise of ES staff is provided to job seekers. Partner staff such as MET may also refer customers to ES staff for assistance.

With VRS staff becoming a part of TWC and the workforce system, plans and strategies are being discussed with the goal of further maximizing the coordination of service delivery, determining how Wagner-Peyser services can be utilized and how job postings can be placed into WIT.com.

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

Board Response:

Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) has been working with the Far West Adult Education Consortium (FWAEC) over the last four years. Integration of services has been continuous with consistent communication on delivery of services including AEL. Case Managers have trained AEL staff on intake best practices as well as co-hosted outreach sessions in collaboration with other AEL providers, partners, and employers. Meetings are being coordinated and held with workforce staff leadership and AEL directors to ensure full awareness and collaboration on the utilization of AEL services is implemented in workforce centers.

The AEL consortium serves the following population: Individuals who need to gain or retain employment, want to improve basic skills, require a GED to find a job or enter

college, seek to improve computer skills, look to attain citizenship, wish to earn an industry-recognized certification.

The AEL Consortium has established several tracks for adults to enroll into GED Classes that combine training with an industry-recognized certificate. Options available to adults include:

- Security Officer
- Apprenticeship Electrician Certification
- Customer Service Representative (Microsoft Office Specialist)
- Hotel, Motel, & Resort Certifications (curriculum adopted from American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute)
- Welding & Maintenance Repair Technician Networking and IT Security certificates

More industry-recognized certifications are developing as AEL continues to work with WSB business services unit to identify employers who can partner with AEL to create customized curriculum.

The AEL consortium has a process by which to enroll individuals.

1. Information Session
2. Verification of Documents (Texas ID, etc.)
3. Completion of Application
4. Interview (goal-setting, initial career planning, identification of barriers and support systems, educational background, needs assessment)
5. Assessment
6. Orientation – expectations, policies & procedures, goal-setting, student learning plan, assessment scores, student contract, and rights & responsibilities
7. Length and Order of Events vary depending on course and location

Contingent on eligibility through the process above AEL is able to provide the following services.

- Tuition
- Training materials (where applicable)
- Exam certification cost (where applicable)
- Transliteration costs (where applicable)

Partnership with WSB enhances job readiness services and for those that are co-enrolled with WSB programs they would be eligible to receive additional support services.

As applications under Title II are received by WSB, they will be reviewed by key program staff and administration to ensure alignment with WIOA and board plan activities, consistent with WIOA §§107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA §232.

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

Board Response:

This is not applicable at this time.

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

Board Response:

The Workforce Solutions Borderplex, Inc. (Board) is the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. The Board is the fiscal agent for WSB funding.

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

Board Response:

For purchases over \$3,000.00 to \$150,000, three quotes must be obtained, documented, and submitted as backup for the requisition before the requisition is approved for payment. Before the payment is approved, management must also approve the requisition and payment.

The procurement process for purchases needed that are over \$150,000 will be completed via RFP/RFQ. On the RFP Release date, the full RFP will be made available to all potential Respondents/bidders and the general public at the same time via posting to the

WSB website. The RFP will, also, be posted on the Texas State Registry at this time. A Bidders' Conference Call may be held and is open to all potential bidders, to clarify Scope of Work and to respond to questions. Outside of the Bidders' Conference, questions are only accepted by submission in writing, up to the published Question Submission Deadline. An effort is made to respond to questions within two days, or as prescribed in the RFP document. All questions and answers are posted on the WSB website, for public view.

Evaluators will independently review proposals and score these, using the evaluation tool and criteria. Individual evaluation scores and recommendations will remain intact and documented for the Procurement file and to ensure the integrity of the evaluation process. After the evaluation is completed by the evaluation team, the summary with recommendations and scores/ranking are provided to the Department Manager who will review and make subsequent recommendation. A Contractor is selected, based on evaluation teams' scores and recommendations as well as the best value for the organization (and the outcome of the fiscal integrity review).

WSB will procure major contracts at least every four years.

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

Board Response:

The National Association of Workforce Boards document indicated the following: The purpose of The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) is to better align the workforce system with education and economic development to create a collective response to economic and labor market challenges on the national, state, and local levels. WIOA continues the trend in workforce legislation by further engaging the private sector to lead local workforce development efforts and focuses on introducing increased flexibility and accountability of board members. WIOA encourages an improved response to labor market needs by connecting board performance to outcomes that require an understanding of the correlation between training investments and economic return. Changes in WIOA prompt Workforce Development Boards to be increasingly engaged in the business of collaboration, convening and partnership. WIOA may be best summarized in the following statement: ‘... to provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local systems that increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase attainment of recognized credentials by participants, and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet the skill requirements of employers, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation.’

Table below indicates the WIOA Measures

1. **Employed Q2 Post Exit – Adult**
2. **Employed Q4 Post Exit – Adult**
3. **Credential Rate – Adult**
4. **Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – Adult**
5. **Employed Q2 Post Exit – DW**
6. **Employed Q4 Post Exit – DW**
7. **Credential Rate – DW**
8. **Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – DW**
9. **Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – Youth**
10. **Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit – Youth**
11. **Credential Rate – Youth**
12. **Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – All Participants**
13. **Employed/Enrolled Q2-Q4 Post Exit – All Participants**
14. **Credential Rate – All Participants**
15. **Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – All Participants**

In addition to the WIOA Measures, Texas Workforce Commission has established the following performance measures:

1. Claimant Reemployment within 10 weeks

The percent of monetarily eligible, registered initial claimants subject to work search reemployed within 10 weeks.

2. # Employers Receiving Workforce Assistance

The number of employer locations that receive Services such as: Taking job postings, providing specialized testing to job seekers on behalf of an employer, performing employer site recruitment, Job Fairs, providing employer meeting or interview space, providing customized or incumbent worker training, entering a subsidized/unpaid employer agreement, Providing Rapid Response, Job Development, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, etc.

3. Choices Full Work Rate

The % of Employment Expected Choices Families that meet their Participation Goal exclusively thru paid employment (or school for teens) supplemented by Employment Preferred Families and those in the 2-month Ramp Up phase who meet participation exclusively thru paid employment (or school for teens)

4. Average Children Served Per Day Combined.

The Board will adopt the definitions set by TWC.

Note: The Board will adopt new measures established by TWC.

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

Board Response:

Prior to WIOA, WSB understood the value of community partnerships and strong collaboration efforts to better support our customers. In concert with its workforce center operator, the Board has been able to cultivate and enhance relationships with the school districts, community organizations, and training providers. The workforce operator has an extreme customer service approach and utilizes technology efficiently to better service our customers. The center operator has a quality plan that ensures accurate and timely services for all customers with improved customer accountability. The board has also implemented a training provider report card to create more accountability with the training related placements under WIOA.

Many of WSB's strategic plan goals were created and implemented with the overall goal of being a high performing board. The goals are aligned with the needs of the community and represent the community that is served by WSB.

WSB actively pursues alternative funding and grant opportunities to expand our community reach. ~~Hired in 2015, Incite has created an annual Fund Development Plan that is based upon the Board's strategic plan and that aligns with partner strategies and activities as well.~~ WSB looks for additional funding primarily through Department of Labor grants and workforce related foundations. Over the last two years, WSB has obtained over \$815,000 that has enabled WSB to serve more of our target populations through innovative programs. ~~In 2017, WSB plans to submit ten applications for additional funding.~~

One other action the Board has taken for being and remaining a high-performing Board is through its contracts. The WSB set forth the goals established by the Board of Directors and local performance measures in addition to the performance measures established by the Texas Workforce Commission in its workforce contracts. Local measures established were as follows:

Work based Learning Activities

Expend no less than twenty percent (20%) of the WIOA Youth direct program funds for work based learning activities. Exceeding performance will be twenty-five percent (25%) quarterly.

Borderplex Certification

Provide universal and UI mandatory customers access to Borderplex certification and other job readiness workshops to ensure they have all tools to enter the workforce, job ready.

Increase Borderplex Certified job seekers placed in employment by 10% quarterly.

Rural Plan

Develop and implement a plan to increase WSB presence in rural areas including virtual presence for customers to video/teleconference.

Customer Satisfaction Rate

The average rating (on scale 1-10) for level of satisfaction.

Work based Learning Employer Satisfaction Rate

The average rating (on scale 1-10) for level of satisfaction.

Timely and Accurate Submission of Invoices

Timely and accurate submission of invoices and appropriate backup

OSY Engagement Rate

Create job readiness curriculum and assessment for HS Seniors in partnership with urban and rural school districts to better prepare young adults to be more marketable in the workforce.

Transitional Job WIOA Adult/DW

Develop transitional jobs program to help individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have inconsistent work history and are combined with comprehensive career and support services.

Staff Development

Strengthen competitiveness and provide growth opportunities for staff with 50% of staff certified in area of expertise.

Technology Innovation

Develop Innovative Technology to increase relevance to employers by designing and launching for new/updated products annually.

GED Attainment

Partner with school districts and outreach to out-of -school youth to complete their education with the goal of increasing GED's.

Internships, Subsidized Employment, Work experience, Summer Employment and Apprentenships

Increase the number of paid and unpaid internships, subsidized employment, work experience, summer employment and apprenticeships.

Transition from On-the-Job Training, Subsidized Employment and Work Experience into Unsubsidized Employment

Increase the number of customers transitioning from: On-the-Job Training, Subsidized Employment and Work Experience into Unsubsidized Employment.

Training Related

Increase the number of customers that were enrolled in training and are placed in employment in a related field.

Employers Attending Industry Councils New

Employers attending Industry Councils.

Job Openings Filled

Job Openings Filled

Employers Served in the Rural Areas Employers

Served in the Rural Areas.

Job Postings Created in Targeted Occupations Job

Postings Created in Targeted Occupations.

New Employers Served

Increase net new employer relationships.

High performance is rewarded through the contracting process.

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

Board Response:

Workforce Solutions Borderplex has updated its Training Policy to include Eligibility Performance Measures. The policy is centered around the principles of the measures set forth by TWC

× 60% completion rate

× 60% job placement rate

× 80% wage placement rate (per BLS entry wage)

× 60% placement in field of study

Scorecards will be continually updated with data reported to WSB and collected by case management staff. They will be published quarterly and provided to job seekers to assist them with making an informed decision when selecting a training provider.

All Eligible Training Providers approved by TWC to serve the WSB service area will have a contractual agreement that will require adherence to the Boards requirement for accepting ITAs, student tracking, payment processing, student data (as listed above), and ultimately the successful completion of training programs by the students.

WSB may also utilize contracts to provide training as allowed by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act at Section 134. It is anticipated that ITAs will be utilized and information about contracted training and the Eligible Training Provider List will be provided to customers as a means of ensuring informed customer choice.

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

Board Response:

~~**In preparation for WIOA implementation WSB went out for procurement for a one stop center operator. Part of the new RFP requirements asked bidders to have innovative**~~

~~ideas on how to create efficiencies by utilizing technology.~~ The Career Center contractor selected has implemented many strategies to transition to an integrated technology enabled intake. All customers are greeted at the workforce center doors by a Customer Service Representative who utilizes a tablet to screen and direct customers to an appropriate service and staff person within the workforce center who will assist them. The appropriate service may be with the workforce center contractor, Wagner-Peyser ES services, or with partner agencies. This technology approach is fostering the transition to an integrated intake system.

WSB utilizes Workforce Center Customer Tracking (WCCT) interface with The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) along with SARA, a customer tracking software that assists Case Managers. TWIST is also utilized by its one-stop partner, TVC, and WSB is carefully considering how TWIST access by other partners may assist in an integrated intake and case management system. Additionally, preliminary discussion has begun with VRS staff to develop a streamlined intake and case management system for shared customers. It is anticipated that once this system is developed, shared intake forms will be automated for ease in use.

Social media has become an important tool for outreaching individuals for workforce services. This coupled with online orientations of services, career assessment, and online training are fostering a technology-enabled system that provides information to customers without having to come to a brick and mortar workforce center.

WSB has also implemented a mobile texting service software, EngageMe, that allows staff to communicate with its audience. The platform is utilized directly between two-parties (Case Manager and Job Seeker), and broadly to the masses. The tool is an effective alternative to traditional communication methods.

21. The Board policy to ensure that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, consistent with WIOA §134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600 of the Final Regulations.

Board Response:

The Board's Priority of Service policy clearly delineates that priority for adult individualized career services and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. The Board also created Priority of Service stickers that are provided to recipients so that they are easily identified as a priority group as soon as they walk into the center, and receive priority of services. Policy language regarding priority for adult individualized career services and training services read as:

“Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Funds, priority must be provided to:

- x Recipients of public assistance;**
- x Other low-income individuals; and**
- x Individuals who are basic skills deficient**

WIOA funding for individualized career services and training services will be limited to participants who:

- x are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay for individualized career services and training services; or**
- x require assistance beyond that available under grant assistance from other sources to pay for these services.”**

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

Board Response:

Board policy limits the amount of ITAs to a two- year period and a maximum of \$10,000 for training. Policy language regarding the duration and amount of ITAs reads as follows:

“3. Customers who have completed training with assistance from Workforce Solutions Borderplex may receive additional training assistance when:

- Training is within the career pathway of the occupation for which they were trained (e.g., medical assistant to RN); or**
- The customer is unable to perform the job (e.g., due to disability); or**
- The customer requires additional training to retain employment in the field originally trained for at a self-sufficient wage; or**
- The skills gained through training are no longer in demand by employers; or**
- Circumstances are justified, and documented in case record, to provide additional training.**

4. ITAs are limited to a two-year period and a maximum amount of \$10,000 for training programs, except for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) training. TAA rules and regulations will be implemented and adhered to when providing training services to eligible TAA customers.”

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

Board Response:

Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) through its operations contractor facilitates a TEKS aligned curriculum that provides both in-school and out-of-school youth with career development skills. These include soft skills, entrepreneurial skills, leadership skills, and financial literacy. WSB through partners and their operations contractor provide activities that help youth prepare for post-secondary education and work placement such as labor market and employment information, paid and unpaid work experience that have academic and occupational education as components; they include summer employment, pre-apprenticeships, internships, and On-the-Job training opportunities. Youth attending secondary school and working to achieve their GED are provided with tutoring to help them to prepare for tests. WSB partners with organizations such as Job Corps and other alternative secondary education providers to support disconnected youth to achieve academic and employment goals. Support services are provided to eligible customers, as funding permits, and when the support services are reasonable and, necessary and directly related to participation in eligible career services, programs and authorized rules and regulations. Before support services are provided coordination and partnership with other entities, both within the workforce center and those not co-located, will occur to ensure non-duplication of support services, as required in WIOA. Finally, WIOA Youth Program participants are provided with follow up services for one year with the intent to support continued success in post-secondary education or work placement.

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

Board Response:

In the initial onset of the WIOA implementation WSB reached out to all the unions in the WSB region to reconnect with them and explain the emphasis that WIOA placed on apprenticeship. ~~Six unions attended a meeting with the WSB Chief Executive Officer and staff. Because of the meeting, there are now three registered apprenticeships in the ETPS system which WSB customers can choose.~~ WSB continues to promote apprenticeship with its regional partners and businesses to increase ETPS registrations. In its efforts to increase the availability of apprenticeships in the region, WSB is looking beyond the established apprenticeships to expand into unchartered apprenticeship territory. Specifically, WSB is pursuing apprenticeship development in the health care and information technology industries. Meetings have been held with community college staff to discuss expanding apprenticeships into industry when customized training is requested by an employer. Conversations are being held with individuals who have launched a

coding apprenticeship in another region of the state and guidance has been sought from the Texas Workforce Commission and the U.S. Department of Labor on best practices for creating apprenticeships.

Pre-apprenticeship is a workforce activity that WSB has utilized in the recent past to increase enrollment into apprenticeships and is an option that WSB is also considering for the future.

WSB will continue to encourage all apprenticeship programs in the WSB area to register with the Eligible Training Provider System in order to receive WIOA funding. Encouragement is done through face-to-face meetings and telephone calls. Media communication may be used in the future.

25. A description of the Board’s strategy and commitment to support ApprenticeshipTexas efforts across the state, as applicable.

Board Response:

WSB understands the value of apprenticeships and has begun the process of engaging employers to promote their importance in the workplace. WSB’s partnerships with economic development agencies and employers have assisted in hosting industry council meetings with employers to identify training needs. WSB actively seeks apprenticeship programs’ placement on the Eligible Training Provider System and promotes the advantages of the earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship model. WSB is actively pursuing ways in which apprenticeship programs can be expanded in the workforce area to encompass apprenticeships for industries beyond the construction field. Apprenticeship areas of interest include coding and healthcare as well as other areas in which employers are seeking customized training.

Once an apprenticeship program is placed on the Eligible Training Provider System, WSB supports the apprenticeship efforts by providing referrals of qualified individuals, providing support services, connecting AEL services with the program if needed, and assisting with on-the-job training to eligible individuals when appropriate.

Part C: Public Comment

A description of the process used by the Board, consistent with WIOA §108(d), to provide a 30day public comment period before submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the Local Plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations. Comments submitted during the public comment period that represent disagreement with the plan must be submitted with the Local Plan.

Board Response: In progress. The public comment period will be from January 21, 2019 to February 21, 2019.

The public comment period will be from January 21, 2019 through February 21, 2019.

The Board provided a 30-day public comment period before submission of the Board Plan. Notification of the 30-day public comment period was posted on the Workforce Solutions Borderplex website, and a press release was sent to the following major local newspapers listed, as well as to other Borderplex media outlets to alert the public.

- **El Paso Times**
- **El Paso Inc.**
- **Alpine Avalance**
- **Big Bend Sentinel**
- **The International**
- **Van Horn Advocate**
- **Jeff Davis County Mountain Dispatch**
- **Hudspeth County Herald**

An advertisement notice was also placed in the El Paso Times, the newspaper outlet with the highest circulation in the region, for appearance on Monday, January 21, 2019 to alert the public about the public comment period as well.

Furthermore, notice of the public comment period was sent electronically to educational institutions, economic development partners and employer groups.

The plan was made available at the Board's Administrative office located at 300 E. Main, Suite 800, El Paso, TX 79901, during regular business hours, Monday through Thursday, from 7 am – 6 pm.

